Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: Appendix A

Final report
Prepared by LUC
January 2024



Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal
Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: Appendix A

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Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: LCA 5B – Bells Yew Green

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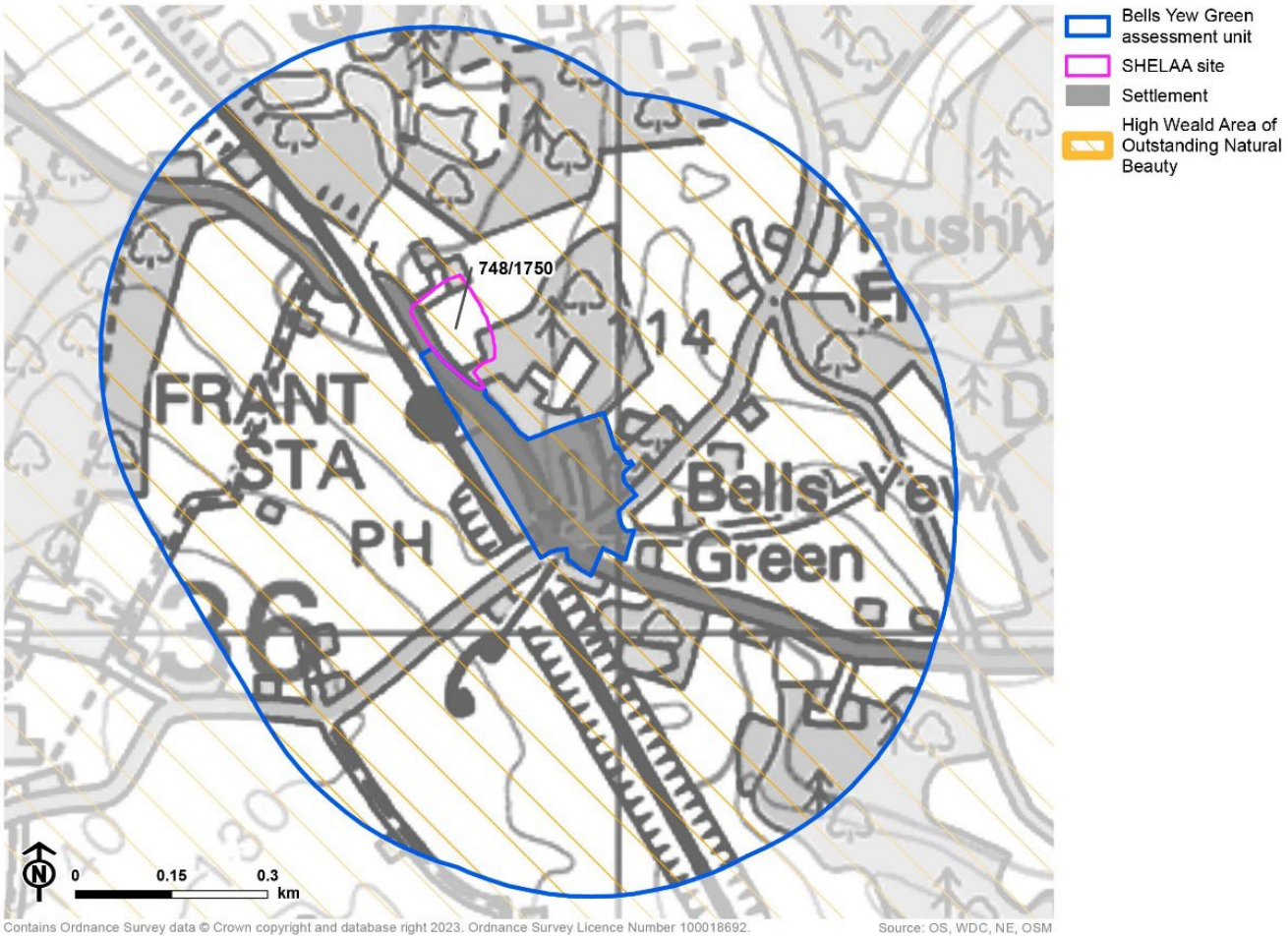
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Chapter 1
Bells Yew Green Assessment Unit

One potential development site is considered within the Bells Yew Green assessment unit:

- **Land between Court Lodge and Bells Yew Green Industrial Estate (748/1750)**

Figure 1: Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



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Source: OS, WDC, NE, OSM

Settlement location, evolution and pattern

Settlement location and context	Bells Yew Green is a small commuter village located in the north-east of the district, with fast rail connections to London. It is located on a low ridge, with valleys to the north and south, and sits within the northern part of the High Weald AONB. The settlement lies within the Wooded Ridges of the High Weald (LCT 5).
Settlement evolution	Historically the area was heavily wooded, and the village lightly settled. The original settlement pattern comprised buildings that were dispersed around the common green, with isolated farmsteads dispersed along radiating country lanes. Buildings included the chapel, the Brecknock Arms public house and a Goods Shed by the station. New housing (along Rushlye Close) was introduced in the middle of the 20th century to the north-east of the chapel and further housing was later constructed between the railway line and Bayham Road.
Settlement pattern and edge character	Modern infill development off Bayham Road (in proximity to the rail station) and along Rushlye Close has slightly altered the dispersed pattern (focussed around the village green) and generally consists of two storey detached and semi-detached buildings. The settlement is contained east of the railway line, and dense woodlands soften the settlement edge to the north and east. The Bells Yew Green Industrial Estate is located adjacent to the northern settlement boundary and contains large sheds/units that are enclosed by the woodland to the north and east.

Mapped information for the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB's defining components of character that are found within the Bells Yew Green assessment unit have been mapped in **Figure 2.** Tranquillity and dark skies (which form part of the perceptual qualities) are shown in **Figures 3 and 4** respectively.

Figure 2: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB

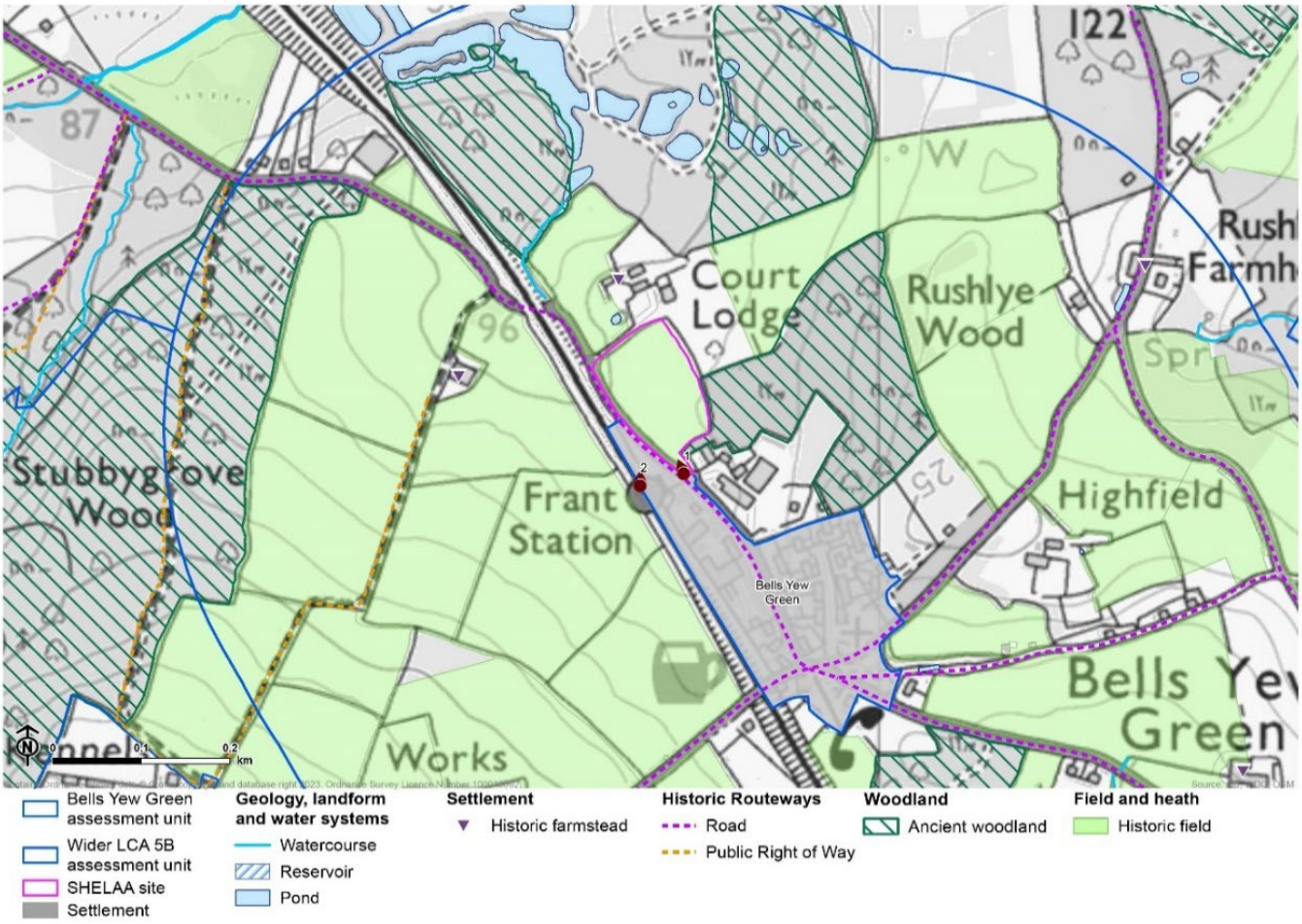


Figure 3: Tranquility

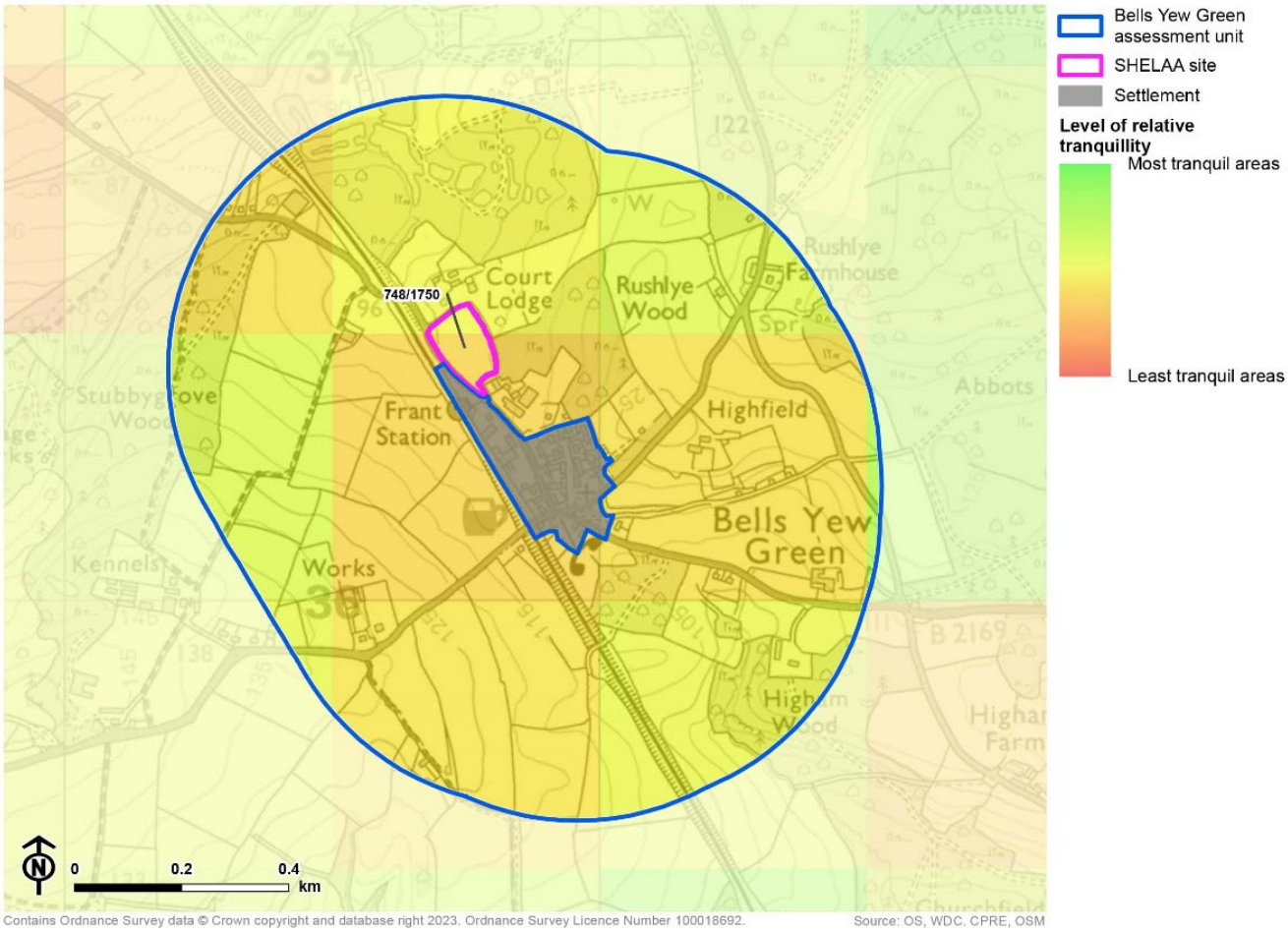
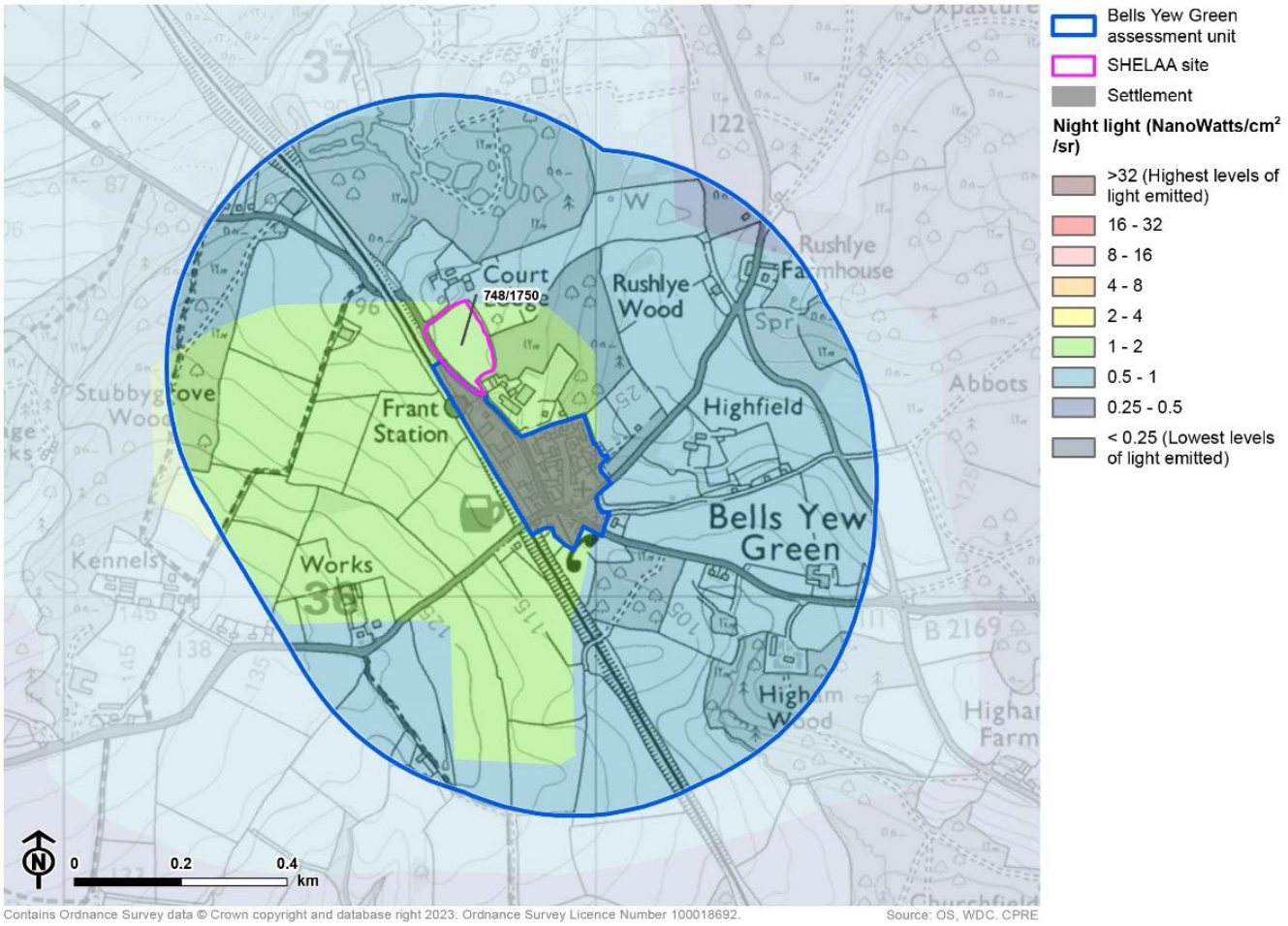


Figure 4: Dark skies



Landscape sensitivity context for the Bells Yew Green assessment unit

*The landscape sensitivity of the Bells Yew Green assessment unit, described in the **Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development***			
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the assessment unit	**Small scale residential** 2-2.5 storey housing	**Medium scale residential** 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	**Commercial/ industrial** e.g. industrial units or hotels
	MH	**MH**	**H**
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the assessment unit	■ The complex ridge and valley landform. ■ Areas of ancient and priority habitat woodland at Stubbygrove, Rushlye, Higham, and Park Woods. ■ Intact historic field patterns in the east and north, including large areas of cohesive assarts, characteristic of the AONB. ■ The network of thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees in the west. ■ A rural landscape with areas of dark skies and tranquillity.		
Guidance	■ Locate development away from steeper slopes and where it is well enclosed by landform and vegetation, where development would be less visible and have less influence on landscape character. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow a buffer around them. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly cohesive assarts which are concentrated in the south, north and east of this assessment unit. ■ Consider views from public rights of way, when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape. ■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using species that are in character with the wider landscape. ■ Ensure development does not cause the perception of coalescence between Bells Yew Green and Frant, avoiding further ribbon development along Bells Yew Green Road. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Ensure development does not affect the rural character of the landscape, and areas of tranquillity in the assessment unit, where the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB are most strongly expressed. ■ Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[1], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[2] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[3].		

[1] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[2] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[3] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Land between Court Lodge and Bells Yew Green Industrial Estate (748/1750)

Site Details	
Potential development	20 residential dwellings
Site location	This site is located to the north of the settlement and situated to the north-west of Bells Yew Green Industrial Estate, south of Court Lodge, west of Rushlye Wood and east of Bayham Road and Frant railway station.

Figure 5: Site location and constraints

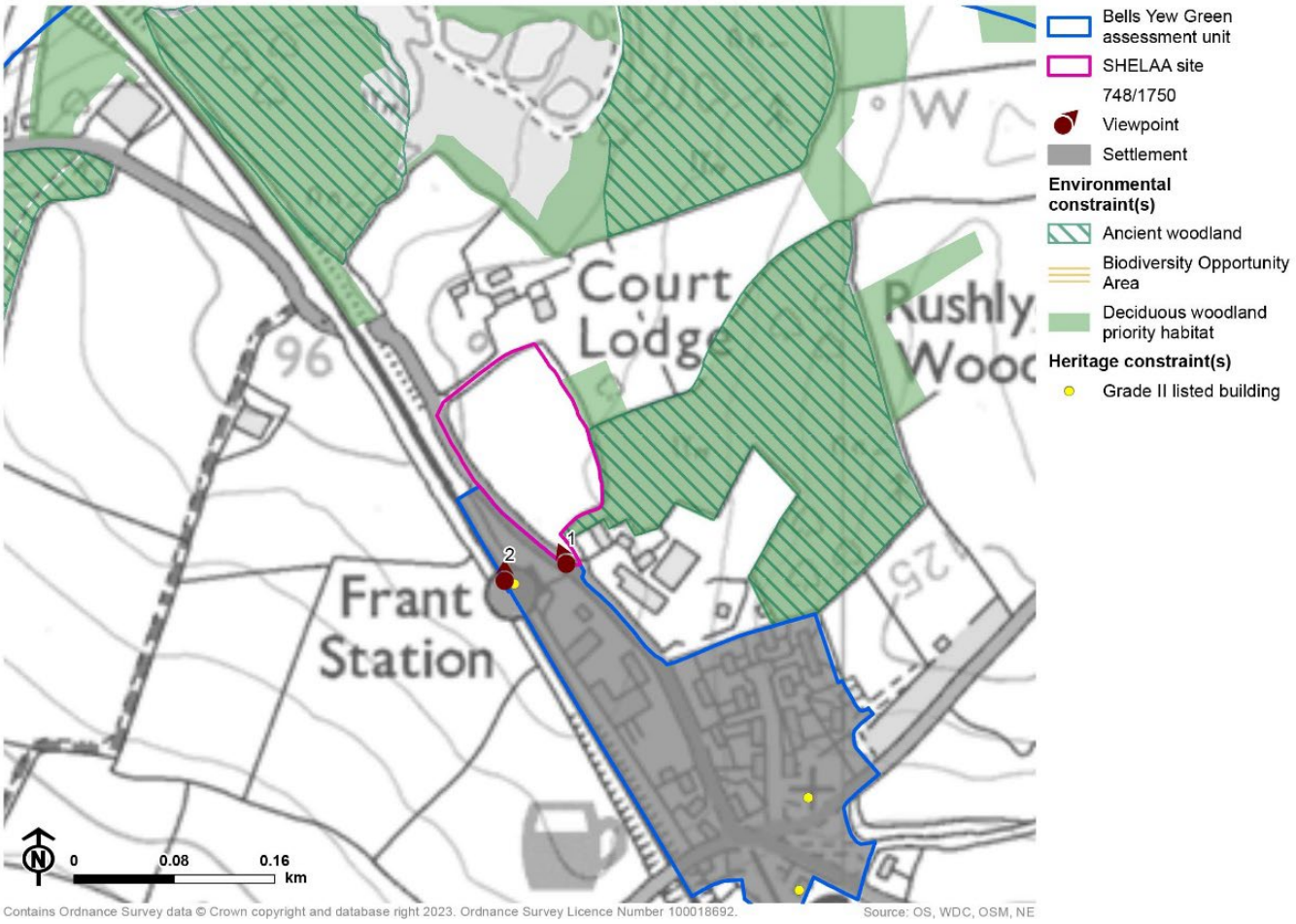
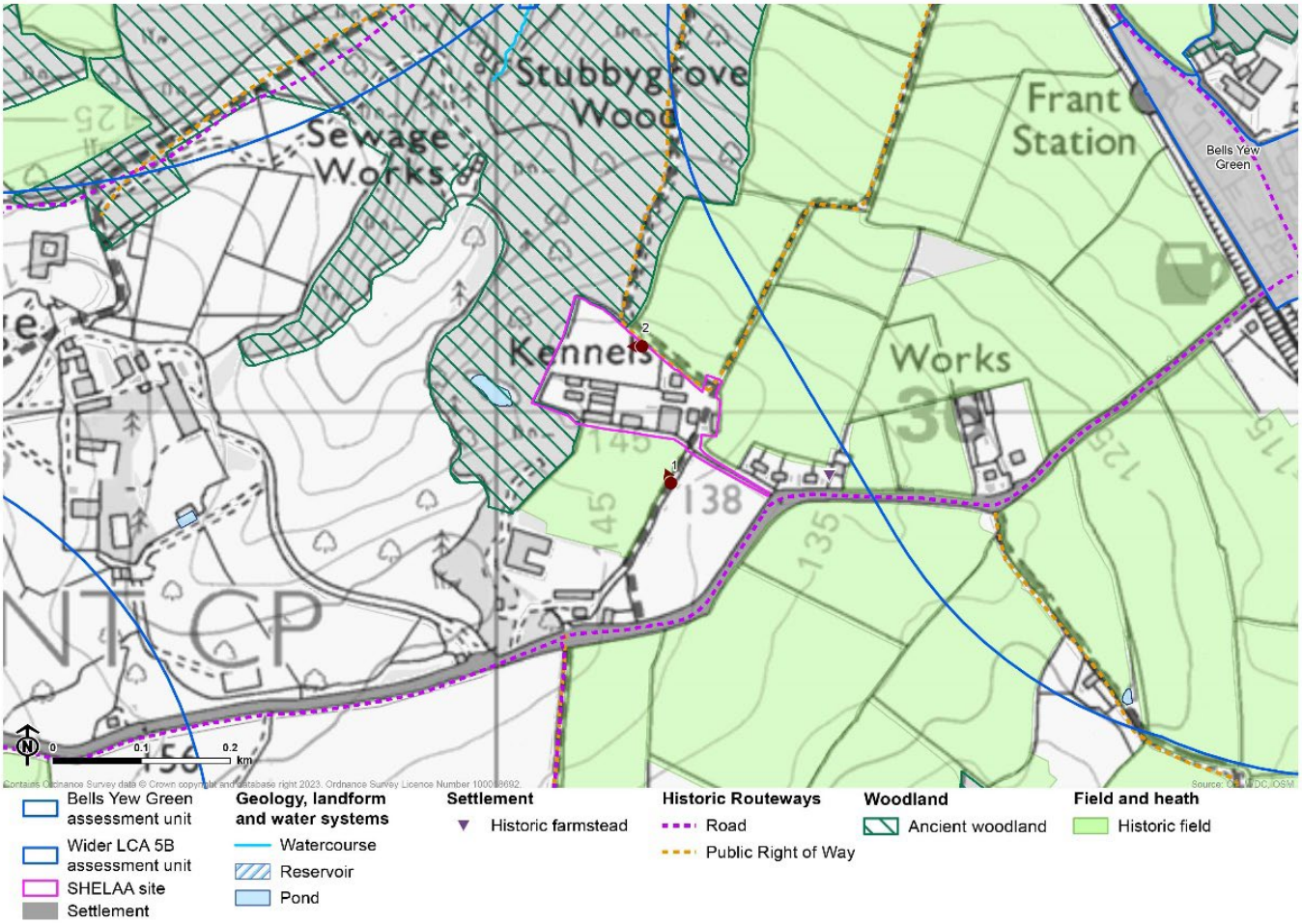


Figure 6: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: View from the south-western corner with views between the edge of Rushlye Wood and hedgerow along Bayham Road



Viewpoint 2: View north-east over the hedgerow along Bayham Road from the pedestrian bridge over the railway line

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site is relatively flat, comprising a gentle slope rising between 100m AOD in the north-west to 105m AOD in the south-east, which is not typical of the wider assessment unit. However, the site forms part of an elevated ridgeline which is typical of the 'relatively complex ridge and valley landforms' of the wider assessment unit. **Natural character** ■ Ancient deciduous woodland and priority habitat at Rushlye Wood encloses the site to the south-east, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Other trees/woodland associated with Court Lodge adjoin the eastern and northern boundaries which is also typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Thick, tall hedgerows along Bayham Road enclose the western boundary and a clump of mature deciduous trees lies within its centre, which is representative of the wider assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site consists of a small pasture grazed field bounded by hedgerows and woodland that forms part of the 'Informal parkland' landscape associated with Court Lodge (as classified in the Sussex HLC, although this is atypical of the wider assessment unit). **Perceptual aspects** ■ The site is influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge of Bells Yew Green, Bayham Road and Frant railway station, which reduce the experience of dark skies (light levels are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 3**) and levels of tranquillity (which are recorded as relatively low in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 4**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site provides separation between the settlement edge of Bells Yew Green and Court Lodge. The adjacent settlement edge to the south of the site consists of woodland and Bayham Road, beyond which is a car park and some modern infill development, including two-storey detached and semi-detached housing in proximity to the rail station. Industrial units are located beyond Rushlye Wood, to the south-east of the site. Rushlye Wood provides a strong boundary feature between the south-east of the site and the industrial estate. Bayham Road, and thick, tall hedgerows along its edges, also provide a strong boundary between the south-western edge of the site and the adjacent train station car park/ railway line.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The surrounding woodland, trees and hedgerows enclose the site and limit its visibility from the surrounding landscape, including from the nearby residential properties along the settlement edge. Views into the site are afforded from the pedestrian bridge that crosses the railway line and from the edge of Rushlye Wood (designated as open access land), with glimpsed views from Court Lodge. There are also some open views of the site from higher elevations, including the footpath between Bayham Road and Bells Yew Green Road, which crosses the upper valley slopes.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the site are limited by landform, as the site sits lower than surrounding slopes, as well as by trees around the site.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	There are no distinctive geological, landform or water features within the site.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Court Lodge (adjacent to the site) contributes towards the *high density of historic farmsteads*[4] found within the AONB and while it is not within the site it lies adjacent to it.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the site. However, Bayham Road along the western boundary of the site is recorded as a historic lane and contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Rushlye Wood encloses the site to the south-east and contributes towards the *high proportion of ancient woodland* and the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges* of the AONB. Other trees/woodland associated with Court Lodge adjoin the eastern and northern boundaries and also form an interconnected habitat network. Although the above features are outside (and adjacent) to the site, the central clump of trees within the site contributes towards the *wood-pasture and parkland* character.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The small field is used for *grazing livestock* and enclosed by woody and thick hedged boundaries.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	Dark skies and sense of tranquillity are limited by the adjacent road and railway car park. The site contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, although long views of the site are limited by vegetation enclosing the site.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Bells Yew Green assessment unit to have a **moderate-high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the ridge and valley landform, with historic field patterns, extensive ancient and priority habitat woodland, wooded settlement edge, the role the landscape plays in providing separation between Bells Yew Green and Frant, and the rural setting increases the unit's sensitivity to development. The relatively enclosed visual character in the east, lack of recreational or heritage assets, and presence of larger scale development in proximity to the railway station reduces sensitivity.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **moderate** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing) development. The site is a pastoral field (enclosed by thick hedgerows and ancient and priority habitat woodland) that forms part of a historic field pattern on the edge of Bells Yew Green, and so the site demonstrates a number of the characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. However, the site does not contain any heritage features, is not crossed by any public rights of way, is visually enclosed and is influenced by proximity to settlement, larger scale industrial units and the train station, decreasing its sensitivity (compared to the wider assessment unit).

[4] As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 6)

The site also expresses some of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. Court Lodge (adjacent to the site) contributes to the high density of historic farmsteads with the site contributing towards its setting; Rushlye Wood and site vegetation contribute to the high proportion of ancient woodland and the highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods and outgrown hedges, and the site contributes to the scenic beauty of the wider AONB.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable.
Loss or deterioration of features contributing towards the parkland character of the site, particularly the circular clump of deciduous trees within the centre of the site and the grazed pastures. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Wood-pasture and parkland. ■ Fields mostly used for grazing livestock.	■ Retain, protect, and set back development from, the central clump of deciduous trees. ■ Loss of pasture would be unavoidable with development of the site, as development would remove land from agricultural use with limited opportunities to retain areas due to the small scale of the site. Field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern.
Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland at Rushlye Wood which adjoins the southern and south-eastern edges of the site. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ High proportion of ancient woodland.	■ Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland to create a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage[5]. ■ The buffer zone could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity).
Settlement form edge and setting	

[5] See Natural England and Forestry Commission guidance for further information:https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions

Extension of development beyond the robust boundary provided by woodland between the site and industrial units on the edge of the settlement.	■ Locate development in the south of the site to relate better to the existing settlement pattern (taking into account appropriate buffers from ancient woodland). ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[6], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[7] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[8].
Reduction in the separation between the settlement of Bells Yew Green and the Court Lodge historic farmstead, and impingement on the setting of Court Lodge. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ High density of historic farmsteads.	■ Locate development in the south of the site to relate better to the existing settlement pattern and to minimise encroachment towards the boundary of Court Lodge historic farmstead (further assessment relating to the setting of heritage assets advised).
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ users of the pedestrian bridge over the railway line; ■ recreational users of Rushlye Wood; ■ walkers on the public footpath between Bayham Road and Bells Yew Green Road; ■ residents of Court Lodge; and ■ motorists/cyclists along Bayham Road (which is recorded as a historic lane).	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the thick hedgerow boundaries that enclose the site. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Consider views of development from the Court Lodge historic farmstead along the northern edge of the site, retaining and enhancing trees/ woodland to screen views into the site. ■ Enhance public access and provide opportunities to experience the surrounding woodlands.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend development beyond the existing robust wooded boundary of the settlement, although the wooded nature of the site limits views into it. However, should development come forward on this site, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain and enhance woodland, trees and hedgerows.
- Apply suitable offsets in the form of buffer zones to the ancient woodland at Rushlye Wood.
- Locate development in the south of the site, taking into consideration suitable offsets to ancient woodland, to better relate to the existing settlement and minimise encroachment towards the historic farmstead at Court Lodge.

[6] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[7] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[8] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities of development on the site.

Figure 7: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Bells Yew Green assessment unit

As there is only one site within the Bells Yew Green assessment unit, cumulative effects have not been considered.

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: LCA 5B - Crowborough North

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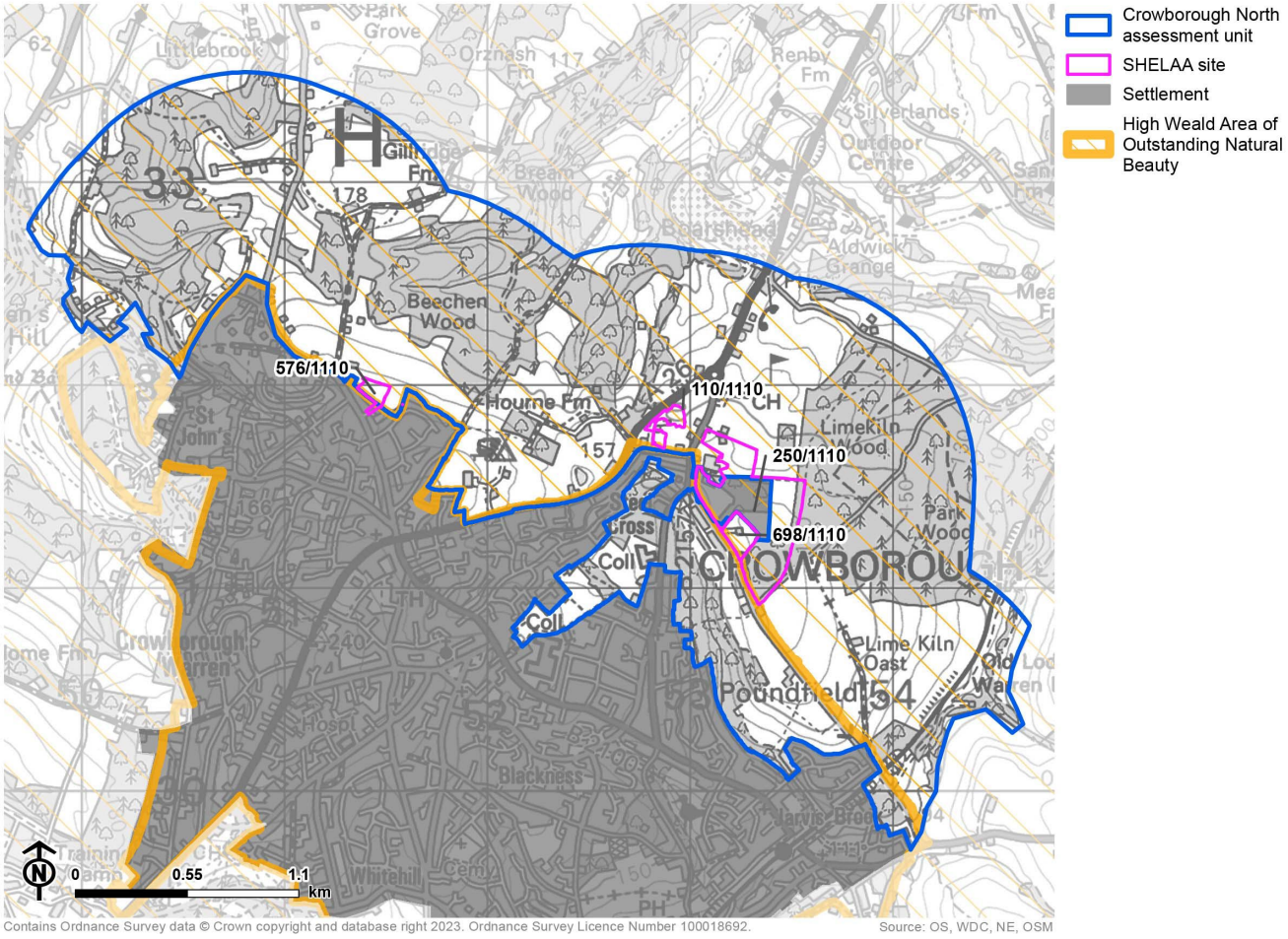
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Chapter 2
Crowborough North Assessment Unit

The following potential development sites are considered within the Crowborough North assessment unit:

- **Land at Hodes, Steel Cross Road (110/1110)**
- Group comprising **Land at Steel Cross Farm Green Lane (250/1110)** and **Land at Byeways, Palesgate Lane (698/1110)**
- **Land to the rear of Cooks Corner Farm and to the north of London Road (576/1110)**

Figure 1: Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



Settlement location, evolution and pattern

Settlement location and context	Crowborough is a nucleated town located in the north of Wealden District. The settlement is excluded from, but surrounded in all directions by, the High Weald AONB, and is located at the highest point of one of the principal east-west ridges of the High Weald.
Settlement evolution	The historic core of the town is centred on the crossroads now formed by the A26 and the London Road/B2100 and a small Conservation Area relates to the late Victorian and early Edwardian development in this area. The settlement was relatively dispersed up until the introduction of the railway in the 19th century. The town was also a popular health resort, aided by railway links to London, in the late 19th century.
Settlement pattern and edge character	The A26 passes through the centre of the town, with a significant amount of 20th and 21st century growth extending to the north and south of the road and some ribbon development to the west and east of the settlement edge. The settlement edge is relatively sprawling; however the settlement is often fringed by woodland, which is extensive to the north. Ashdown Forest forms a soft boundary to the west of the town, beyond 20th century development at Crowborough Warren. The northern settlement edge of Crowborough consists mostly of one and two storey detached and semi-detached houses.

Mapped information for the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB's defining components of character that are found within the Crowborough North assessment unit have been mapped in **Figure 2**. Tranquillity and dark skies (which form part of the perceptual qualities) are shown in **Figures 3 and 4** respectively.

Figure 2: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB

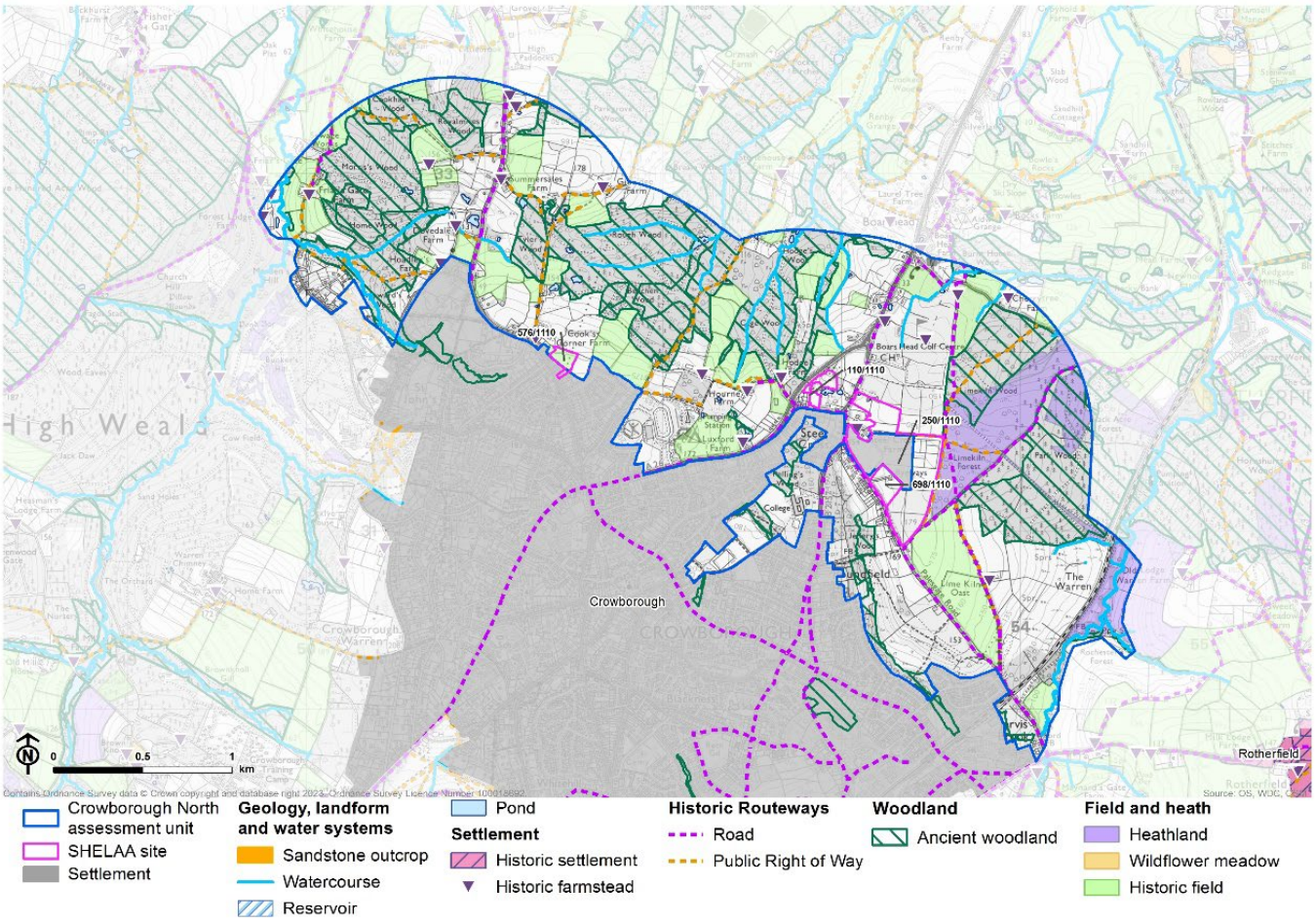


Figure 3: Tranquillity

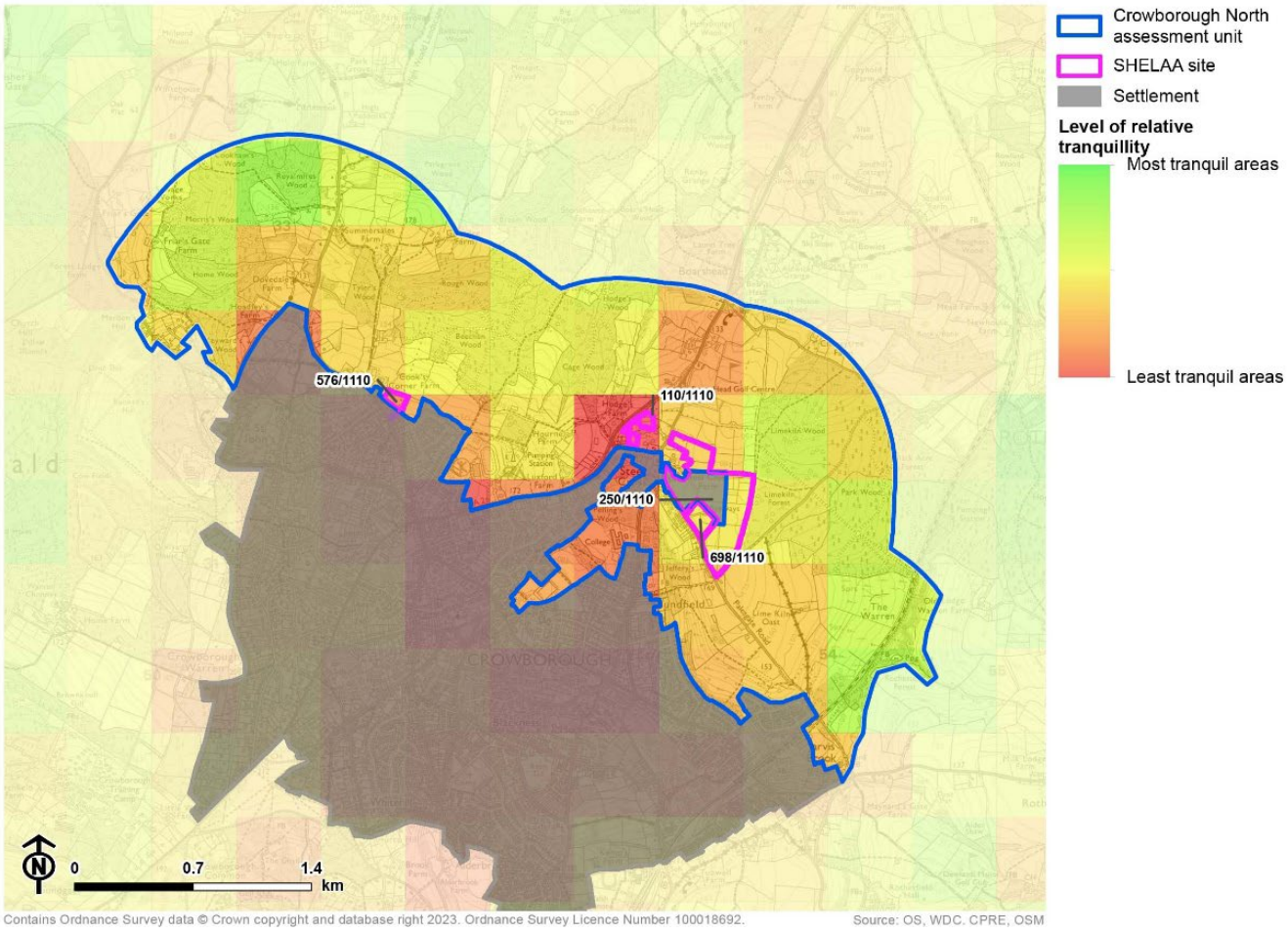
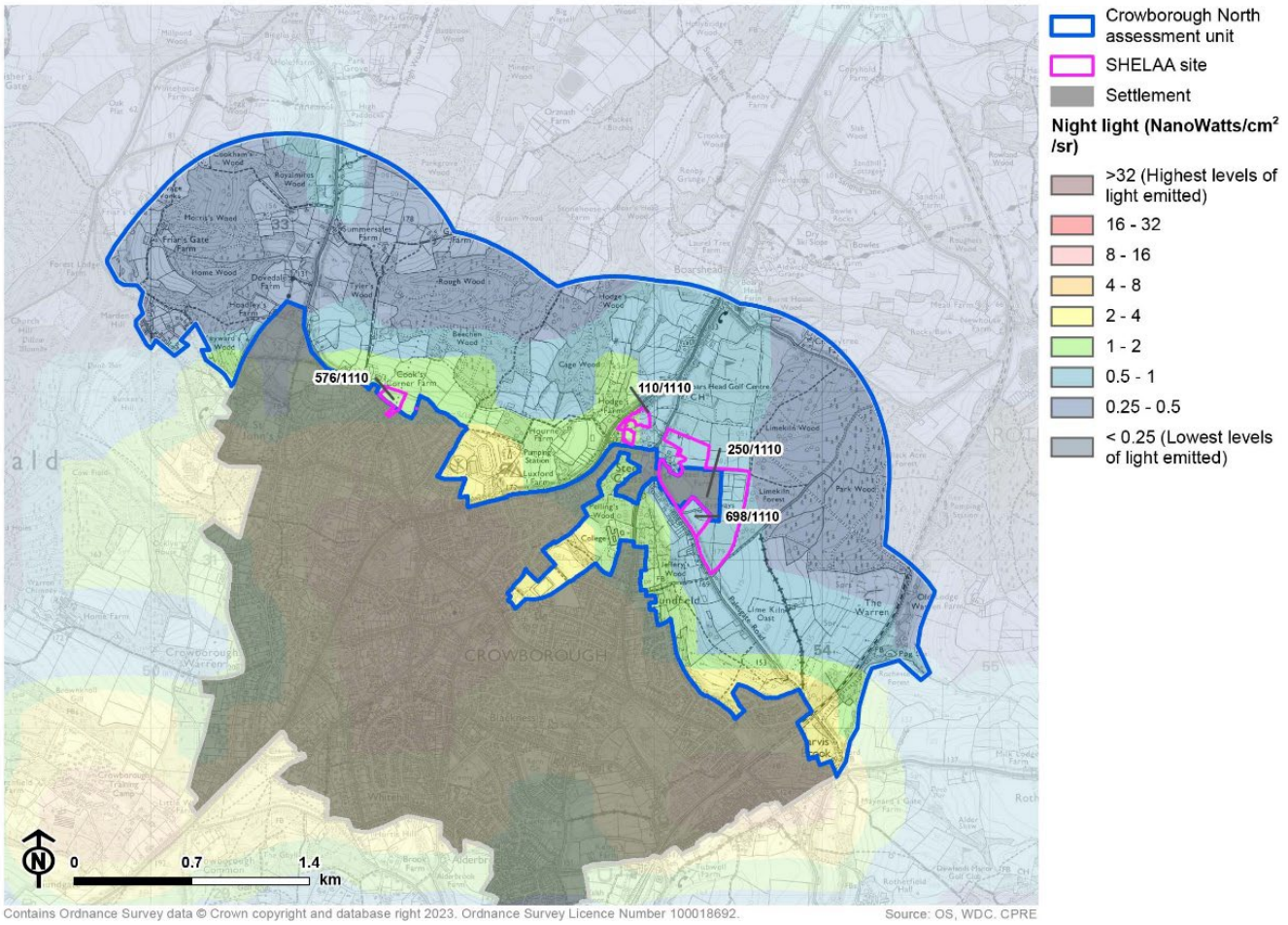


Figure 4: Dark skies



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Source: OS, WDC. CPRE

Landscape sensitivity context for the Crowborough North assessment unit

*The landscape sensitivity of the Crowborough North assessment unit, described in the **Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development***			
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the assessment unit	**Small scale residential** 2-2.5 storey housing	**Medium scale residential** 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	**Commercial/ industrial** e.g. industrial units or hotels
	MH	**H**	**H**
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the assessment unit	■ The elevated position of the landscape within a complex ridge and valley landform. ■ Mature interconnected deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin). ■ Intact historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the centre of the unit. ■ The wooded backdrop, formed by woodland in the east and west of the unit, to the settlement edge of Crowborough. ■ The network of public rights of way, particularly those which provide connectivity with the Ashdown Forest. ■ The strong rural character with areas of remoteness and tranquillity. ■ Location within and intervisibility with lower-lying areas of the High Weald AONB.		
Guidance	■ Consider views of development from the lower-lying landscapes to the north (within LCA 6A), siting development where well enclosed by vegetation and where it would relate to the existing ridgeline settlement pattern. ■ Avoid development in areas of habitat interest, notably ancient woodland. ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest and Medway, Ouse and Rother Watershed BOA, especially woodland management and restoration, where possible. ■ Avoid development in the incised stream valleys of LCA 6A and heavily wooded slopes of LCA 5B. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland. Avoid loss of, harm or deterioration to the interconnecting ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow a buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain or replace roadside trees along the A26, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the centre of the assessment unit. ■ Consider views from public rights of way, particularly within or near the Ashdown Forest in the west of the unit, when siting and designing development in the landscape. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced.		

	■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using native species that are in character with the wider landscape. ■ Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[1] , 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[2] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[3]. ■ Ensure development does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, particularly the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB.

[1] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[2] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[3] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Land at Hodes, Steel Cross Road (110/1110)

Site Details	
Potential development	10 residential dwellings
Site location	This site is located to the north of Crowborough and situated between the A26 and Eridge Road.

Figure 5: Site location and constraints

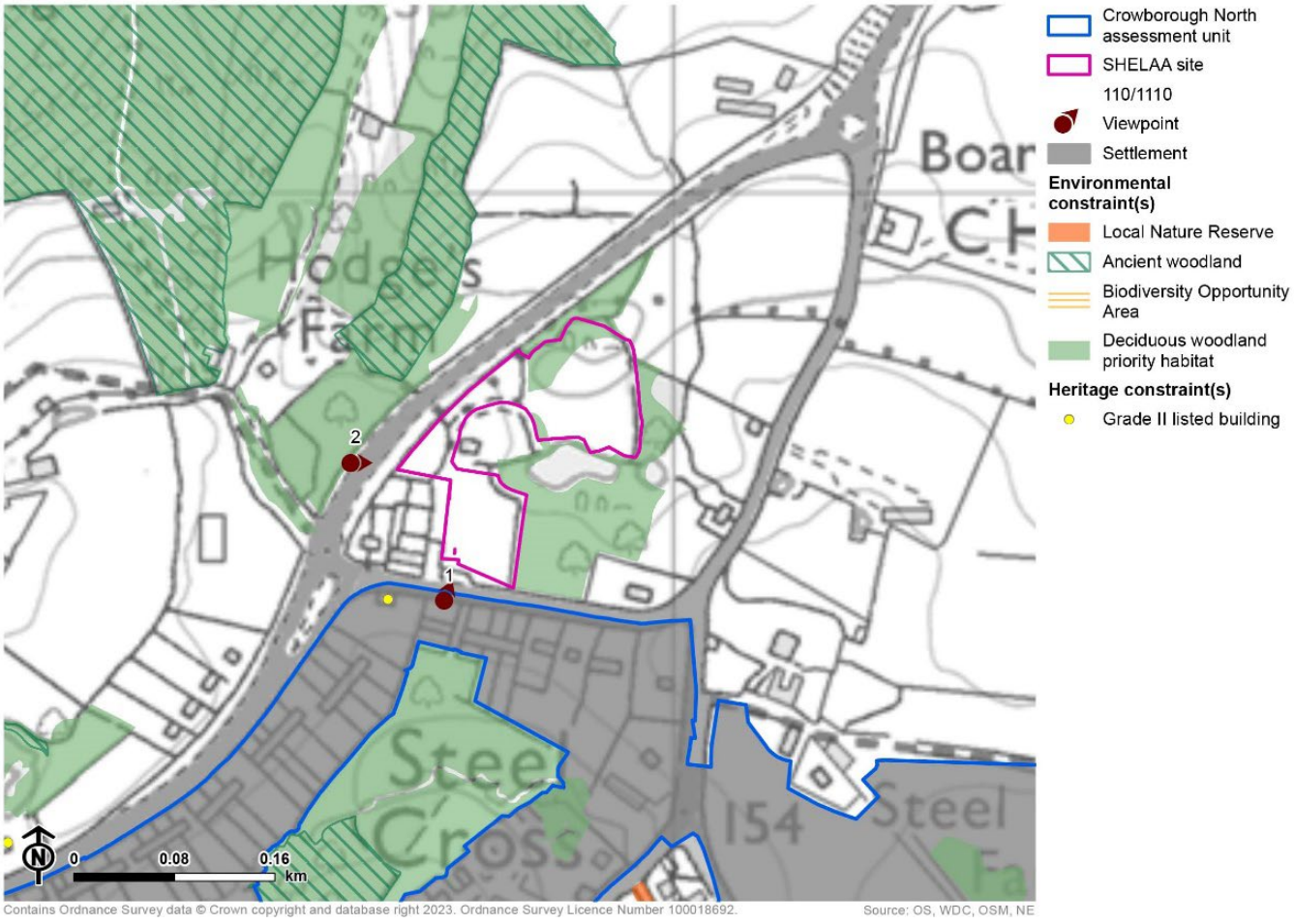
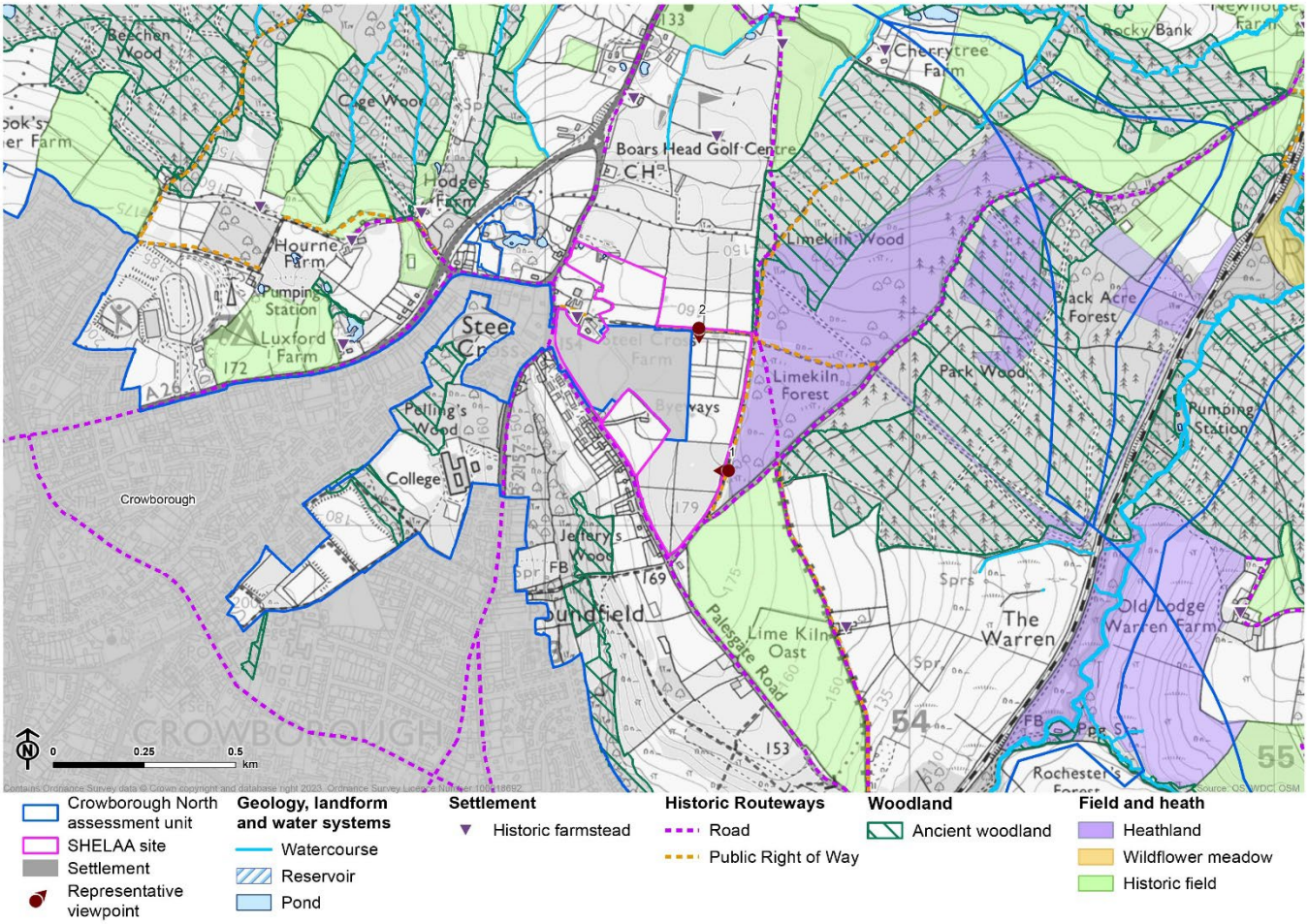


Figure 6: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Screened views looking north towards the site from Eridge Road



Viewpoint 2: Screened views looking north-east towards the site from the A26

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms part of an elevated ridgeline of the High Weald - Central LCA which is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ It is relatively flat, which is atypical of the assessment unit, and lies between 150m and 160m AOD. **Natural character** ■ The site is wooded, which is typical of the wider assessment unit, with areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland in the north-east and surrounding the site to the east and south-east. ■ Parts of the site are influenced by the designed landscape associated with the nearby residential property. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site comprises a designed landscape (as classified in the Sussex HLC) with an informal parkland character. The area surrounding the site is influenced by ribbon development and regenerated woodland and therefore has limited time depth, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit. ■ There are no historic features within the site, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. One Grade II listed building (Tinkers Farmhouse) is located approximately 60m to the south-west. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The site is influenced by its proximity to Crowborough and the busy A26 trunk road on its western boundary, which disrupts the experience of dark skies (light levels are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**) and levels of tranquillity (which are recorded as low in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**) for the site and the wider assessment unit.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	As for the wider assessment unit, the site does not play an important role in settlement separation. The site forms part of the settlement edge to Crowborough, with existing residential development extending to the south, east and west of the site along Eridge Road. Settlement surrounding the site includes predominantly detached one and two storey houses fringed by woodland directly north of the properties and to the north-west along the A26.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The surrounding woodland and mature trees enclose the site and limit its visibility from the surrounding landscape including from the nearby residential properties along the settlement edge and from the A26. There are some limited glimpsed views into the site in between breaks in vegetation from some residential properties along Eridge Road to the south of the site and some partially filtered views from the A26 to the west of the site, including from the footpaths parallel to the A26, which connect to the public right of way leading to Hourne Farm to the west of the site.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the site are limited by the enclosed nature of the site.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site is located on the *principal ridge* of the High Weald (Forest Ridge), contributing towards the *pattern of faults and folds*. However, there are no distinctive geological, landform or water features within the site.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	There are no surviving elements of historic settlement within the site.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the site. However, Eridge Road to the south is recorded as a historic lane and contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Priority habitat deciduous woodland extends through the north of the site, forming part of a *highly interconnected* habitat network and contributes to the *wood-pasture and parkland* character.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The site comprises informal parkland associated with the nearby residential property, and therefore does not represent a field or heath landscape.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, although long views are limited by vegetation enclosing the site. Dark skies and sense of tranquillity are limited due to the site being on the edge of Crowborough and the busy A26 trunk road to the west.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Crowborough North assessment unit to have a **moderate-high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that areas of complex undulating ridged landform and incised stream valleys, areas of woodland, areas of intact historic field pattern, the scenic backdrop the landscape provides to Crowborough, and the location within, and visual relationship with, the wider High Weald AONB increase the assessment unit's sensitivity to development. However, the presence of existing urban fringe land uses such as golf courses, sports fields and a camp site, enclosure by woodland, relatively few known historic features and disturbance from human activity close to Crowborough and the A26 trunk road reduce the sensitivity of the assessment unit.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **moderate** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The site demonstrates few of the characteristics which increase sensitivity for the assessment unit, except for the areas of priority habitat woodland to the north of the site, which are key landscape features of the site, and typical of the wider assessment unit. The site is relatively flat, does not have a historic field pattern and does not contain any heritage features, which are atypical characteristics of the wider assessment unit and decrease sensitivity.

The site expresses some of the defining components of character of the AONB. It is on a principal ridge and is part of the pattern of faults and folds, and woodland in the site contributes to the highly interconnected woodland habitat network with wood pasture and parkland character, which increases sensitivity.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature priority habitat woodlands and trees. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodland through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors (that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible).
Loss or deterioration of features contributing towards the parkland character of the site. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Wood-pasture and parkland.	■ Retain and protect mature/veteran trees, tree clumps and enhance the wooded parkland character of the site.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Extension of development into woodland which forms a soft settlement boundary feature and a wooded backdrop in outward views from the settlement edge.	■ Retain, protect and enhance woodland and mature trees along the site boundaries to minimise visibility of development. ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[4], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[5] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[6].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ residents at nearby residential properties on Eridge Road; and ■ road users and pedestrians on Eridge Road to the south of the site and the A26 to the west of the site, including pedestrians accessing the public right of way to the west of the A26.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the wooded boundaries that enclose the site in views from Eridge Road and the A26. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of

[4] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[5] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[6] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

	built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Introduced built forms to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of its surroundings by using high quality materials, suggestive of the local vernacular. ■ Ensure pedestrian access is retained to the footpaths along the A26, which connect to the wider network of public rights of way.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would increase the density of development along the settlement edge and extend development into woodland which forms a soft settlement boundary feature and forms part of the wider interconnected habitat network. However, the wooded nature of the site limits views into it. Should development come forward on this site, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance priority habitat woodland and trees, particularly woodland along the site boundaries which limits views into the site.
- Ensure public access and connectivity with the wider existing network of public rights of way to the west of the A26 is retained.

Land at Steel Cross Farm, Green Lane (250/1110) and Land at Byeways, Palesgate Lane (698/1110)

Site Details	
Potential development	Site 250/1110: 30 residential dwellings Site 698/1110: 30 residential dwellings For the purpose of this landscape and visual appraisal the above SHELAA sites have been considered together.
Site location	These sites are located to the north-east of Crowborough and situated to the east of the B2157, between Palesgate Lane and Limekiln Wood.

Figure 7: Site location and constraints

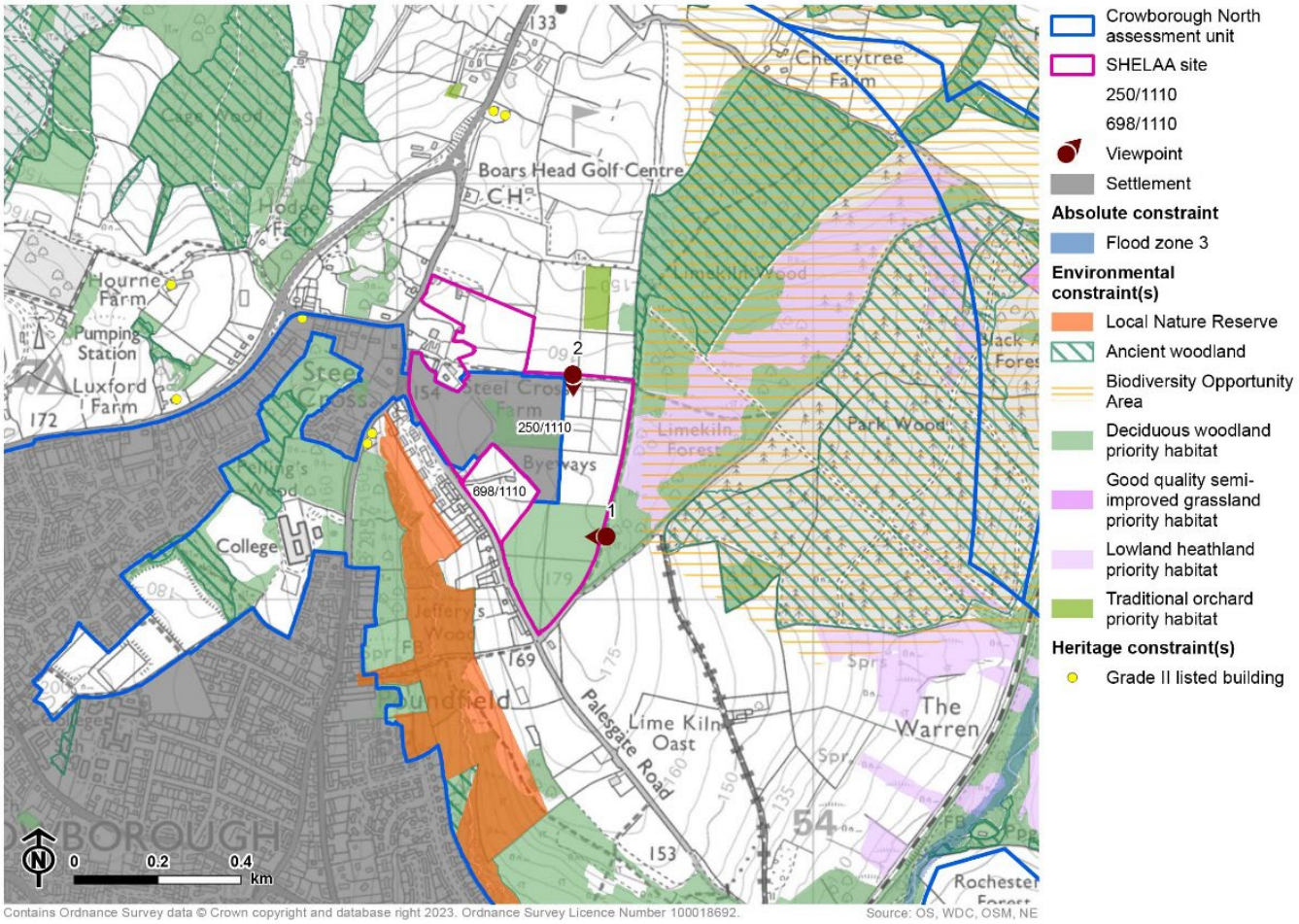
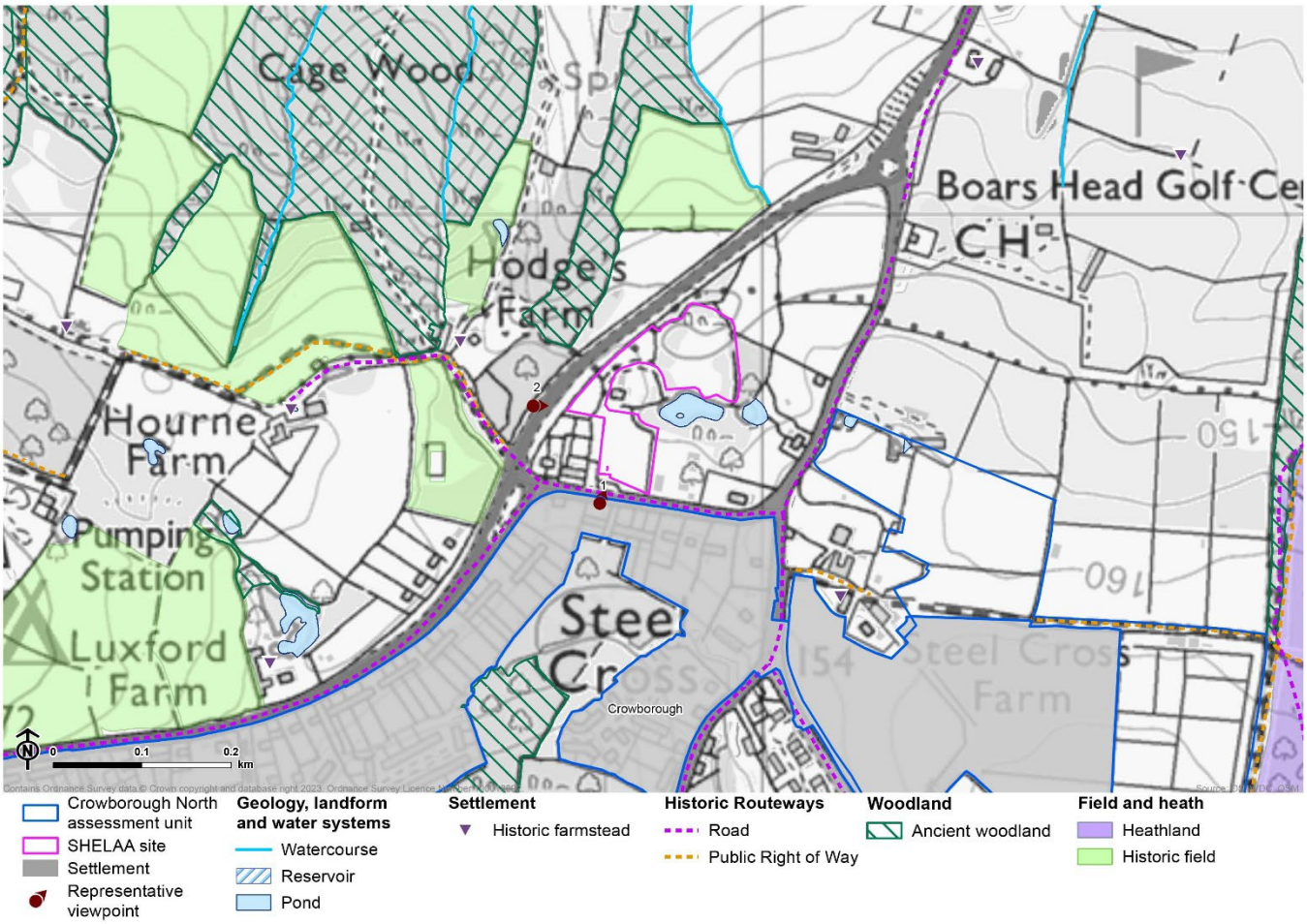


Figure 8: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: View looking west across woodland in the south of Site 250/1110, from the public right of way which passes through Limekiln Wood



Viewpoint 2: View looking south across horse paddocks from the public right of way which crosses Site 250/1110

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ These sites form part of an elevated and gently undulating ridgeline of the High Weald - Central LCA, typical of the wider assessment unit, with topography rising between 154m AOD to 179m AOD. **Natural character** ■ **Site 250/1110** is predominantly pastoral in character, which is typical of the wider assessment unit, though currently used for horse grazing. There is existing modern agricultural development in the east of the site. The existing residential dwelling within **Site 698/1110** influences the natural character of the site, however surrounding woodland limits visibility of the dwelling and the influence it has on the rural character of the surrounding area. ■ Interconnected areas of mature woodland and field boundaries are located across the sites, with some scattered in field trees located in the centre of **Site 250/1110** and the north of **Site 689/1110**. The wooded character is typical of the wider assessment unit. There are areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland in the centre and south of **Site 250/1110**, the latter of which extends from Limekiln Wood ancient woodland to the east of the site. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The underlying field pattern of **Site 250/1110** comprises small to medium scale fields derived from planned private enclosure (as classified in the Sussex HLC), with relatively linear field boundaries. The small to medium scale of fields is typical of the assessment unit, although the field pattern is relatively regular in comparison to the wider assessment unit. ■ **Site 698/1110** comprises informal parkland associated with a residential property, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The sites are influenced by their proximity to the settlement edge of Crowborough, most notably in the west of **Site 250/1110** near Eridge Road (levels of tranquillity are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**), which is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Dark night skies are experienced from both sites (light levels are recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**), which is typical of the assessment unit away from the settlement edge.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The sites do not play a role in settlement separation. The north-west of **Site 250/1110** plays a role in the separation between development along Palesgate Lane and the historic farmstead at Steelcross Farm; however, there is little separation between the historic farmstead and the modern settlement edge, given the presence of existing modern development along Eridge Road to the west and north-west of the historic farmstead. The sites form part of the wooded pastoral context to the north-eastern settlement edge of Crowborough and 20th century ribbon development along Palesgate Lane. The existing residential dwelling within **Site 698/1110** is located beyond the settlement edge, but is in keeping with the dispersed settlement pattern of the wider assessment unit. Woodland surrounding **Site 698/1110** limits visibility of this existing development. Woodland in the south of **Site 250/1110** extends east towards Limekiln Wood, which is partly ancient woodland and forms part of a soft settlement boundary feature. The adjacent settlement to the west of the site consists of

	bungalows and two storey detached and semi-detached modern housing, typically fringed by woodland. Part of Site 250/1110 has planning permission for 103 residential dwellings, which, if built would extend the settlement edge into the open countryside. However, development would not extend into Limekiln Wood, which would continue to form a wooded edge to the settlement.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The surrounding woodland, trees and hedgerows enclose the sites and limit visibility from the surrounding landscape including from the nearby residential properties along the settlement edge. Woodland and hedgerows screen and filter views into the sites from Palesgate Lane, Green Lane and Eridge Road. Glimpsed views in between gaps in vegetation and at field gates are available across **Site 250/1110** from the public right of way which crosses the site. There are also some limited glimpsed views available across **Site 250/1110** from the public right of way which passes through Limekiln Wood to the east of the site boundary, however distant outward views are generally enclosed by woodland. The surrounding woodland and mature trees enclose **Site 698/1110** and limit its visibility from the surrounding landscape including from the nearby residential properties along the settlement edge and Palesgate Lane.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the site are limited by the enclosed nature of the site.
Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The sites are located on the *principal ridge* of the High Weald (Forest Ridge), contributing towards the *pattern of faults and folds*. There are two ponds in the north of **Site 250/1110**, which contribute to the *high density of ponds* found within the AONB.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Steelcross Farm (located to the west of **Site 250/1110**) contributes towards the *high density of historic farmsteads*[7] found within the AONB.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	A historic routeway (public right of way) passes through the north of **Site 250/1110** towards Limekiln Wood. Numerous historic routeways pass near the site boundaries, including the recorded historic lanes of Eridge Road, Green Lane and Palesgate Lane, and the track within Limekiln Wood, contributing towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	There is no ancient woodland within the sites, however there is an area of ancient woodland within Limekiln Wood to the north-east of **Site 250/1110,** which contributes towards the *high proportion of ancient woodland* in the AONB. Within the sites, areas of deciduous woodland, in field trees and mature field boundaries form a *highly interconnected* habitat network. In-field trees in the north of **Site 250/1110** and tree clumps within **Site 698/1110** contribute towards the *wood-pasture and parkland* character.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	Whilst the fields located within **Site 250/1110** are small in scale and defined by *mixed woody boundaries and thick hedges*, the field pattern is relatively linear and regular.

[7] As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 8)

Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The sites contribute to the *scenic beauty* of the area, although long views are limited by vegetation enclosing the sites. The public right of way which crosses **Site 250/1110** provides *opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature.* The sites are located within a *relatively dark landscape*.

How the sites relate to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Crowborough North assessment unit to have a **moderate-high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that areas of complex undulating ridged landform and incised stream valleys, areas of woodland, areas of intact historic field pattern, the scenic backdrop the landscape provides to Crowborough, and the location within, and visual relationship with, the wider High Weald AONB increase the assessment unit's sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of existing urban fringe land uses such as golf courses, sports fields and a camp site, enclosure by woodland, relatively few known historic features and disturbance from human activity close to Crowborough and the A26 reduce the assessment unit's sensitivity to development.

The Sites

Overall, it is considered that the sites have a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and are considered to be of **moderate** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). Woodland in the south of **Site 250/1110** and along both site boundaries form part of a soft boundary to the settlement edge and **Site 250/1110** is crossed by a public right of way, which demonstrates some of the characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. However, **Site 250/1110** and **Site 698/1110** have a relatively gently undulating topography and there are no known historic features on the sites. The field pattern of **Site 250/1110** is derived from planned private enclosure with relatively linear field boundaries. The internal field scale is subdivided by wooden fencing for horse paddocks, which decreases sensitivity.

The sites express some of the defining components of character of the AONB. Both sites sit on the principal ridge and form part of the pattern of faults and folds. **Site 250/1110** contains ponds which contribute to the high density of ponds found within the AONB, a historic routeway crosses site **250/1110** contributing to the dense radiating network of routeways, woodland within both sites contributes to the highly interconnected woodland networks and the wood pasture and parkland character, and the public right of way through **250/1110** allows for enjoyment of the landscape.

Although the sites have an overall **moderate** sensitivity to development, the areas of priority habitat woodland in the centre and south of **Site 250/1110** are considered to conform to the **moderate-high** sensitivity that has been determined for the assessment unit, as the landscape characteristics of these areas are very susceptible to change.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the sites, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. Woodland along Palesgate Lane, Green Lane and Eridge Road should be retained to minimise visibility into the sites. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors (that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible).
Loss or deterioration of features contributing towards the parkland character of the sites, particularly the in-field trees and tree clumps. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Wood-pasture and parkland.	■ Retain, and set back development from, the infield trees in the north of **Site 250/1110** and tree clumps within **Site 698/1110**.
Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland at Limekiln Wood which abuts the north-east of the site. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ High proportion of ancient woodland.	■ Set development back from the edge of ancient woodland to create a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage[8]. ■ The buffer zone could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity).
Loss or deterioration of ponds in the north of **Site 250/1110.** **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ High density of ponds.	■ Retain and set back development from the ponds in the north of **Site 250/1110** to create a buffer zone. The buffer zone could incorporate new semi-natural habitat relating to the ponds.
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[9] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Loss of the historic routeway and public right of way that passes from Green Lane (recorded as a historic	■ Retain and enhance existing access via the public right of way which crosses the north of **Site 250/1110** and the rural character of the route.

[8] See Natural England and Forestry Commission guidance for further information:https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions
[9] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

lane) through the north of **Site 250/1110** towards the historic track within Limekiln Wood. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ A dense radiating network of historic routeways with a variety of origins.	
Settlement form edge and setting	
Extension of development into woodland in the south of **Site 250/1110**, which contributes to the soft settlement boundary feature formed by Limekiln Wood.	■ Avoid development in the south of **Site 250/1110** to minimise encroachment of the settlement edge beyond the soft boundary feature formed by Limekiln Wood.
Deterioration of the rural character of the sites which contribute to the setting of Crowborough.	■ Minimise visibility of the proposed development and maintain the wooded character of views from the settlement edge. ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[10], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[11] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[12].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ users of the public right of way which crosses **Site 250/1110** and the public right of way which passes through Limekiln Wood to the east of **Site 250/1110**; ■ residents along the settlement edge, including along Palesgate Lane, Green Lane and Eridge Road and motorists/cyclists on these roads. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the wooded boundaries that enclose the sites in views from Eridge Road, Green Lane and Palesgate Lane. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using native local species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Retain existing public access across the north of **Site 250/1110,** which provides connectivity with Limekiln Wood. Enhance public access and provide further opportunities to experience the surrounding woodlands at Limekiln Wood. ■ Minimise visibility of the proposed development and maintain the wooded character of views from the public footpath which crosses **Site 250/1110** and passes along the eastern site boundary through Limekiln Wood. ■ Enhance public access, including links to the existing footpaths and provide opportunities to experience the surrounding woodlands.

[10] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[11] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[12] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

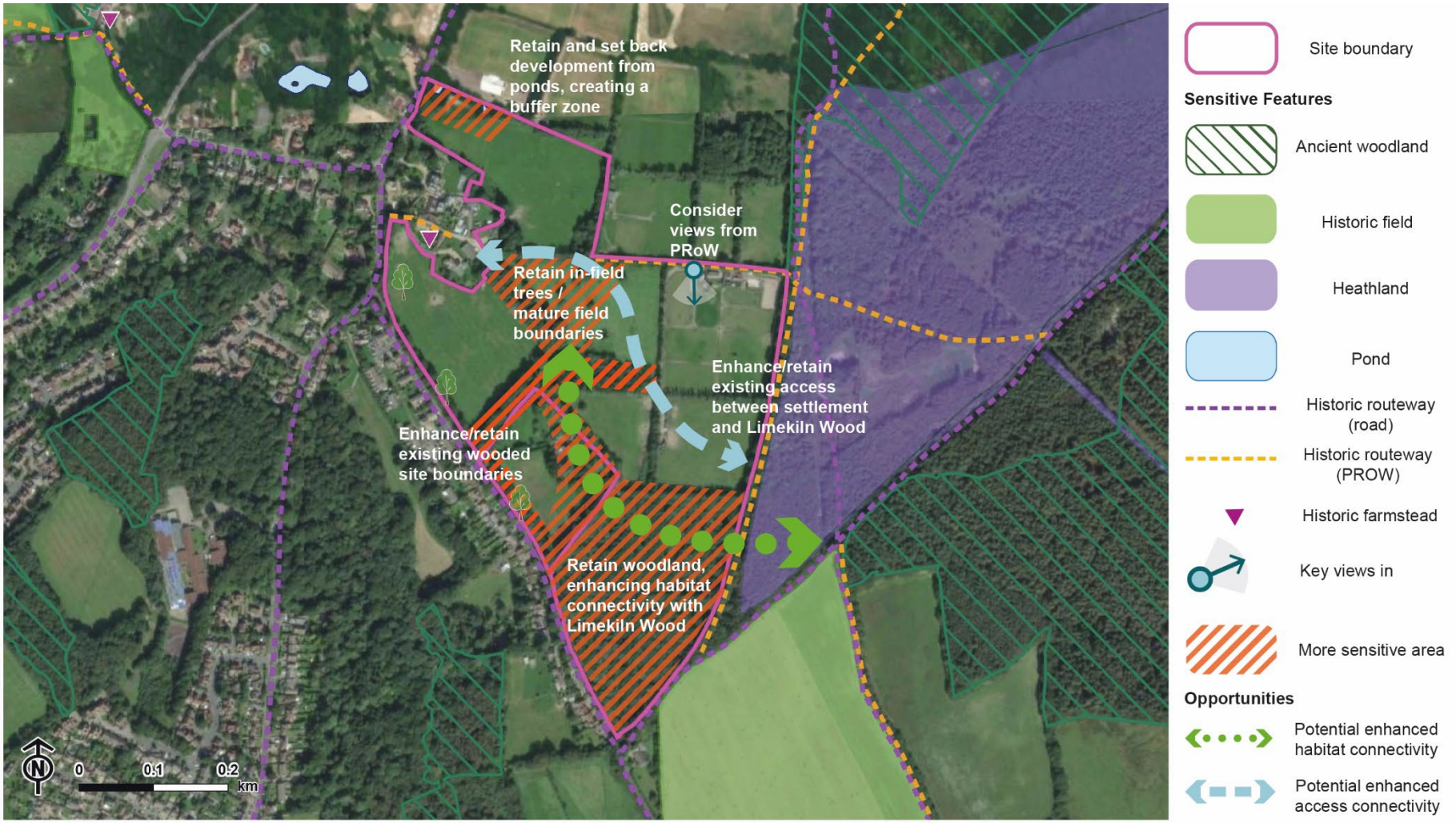
Summary and recommendations

Development of these sites would extend development into the countryside which forms the rural context to Crowborough. However, part of Site 250/1110 has planning permission for 103 residential dwellings, which, if built would extend the settlement edge into the open countryside. Development in the south of **Site 250/1110** and the west of **Site 698/1110** would extend development beyond the existing wooded boundary of the settlement, which also forms part of the wider interconnected habitat network, although the wooded nature of the site boundaries limits views. However, should development come forward on these sites, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance woodland, trees and hedgerows which screen views into the sites.
- Apply suitable buffers to the ancient woodland at Limekiln Wood and avoid development in the interconnected area of priority habitat deciduous woodland in the south of **Site 250/1110**.
- Enhance and retain public access and provide opportunities to experience the surrounding woodlands at Limekiln Wood.

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities of development on the sites.

Figure 7: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

Land to the rear of Cooks Corner Farm and to the north of London Road (576/1110)

Site Details	
Potential development	15 residential dwellings
Site location	This site is located to the north of Crowborough and situated north of London Road, between Gillridge Lane and Pleasant View Road.

Figure 9: Site location and constraints

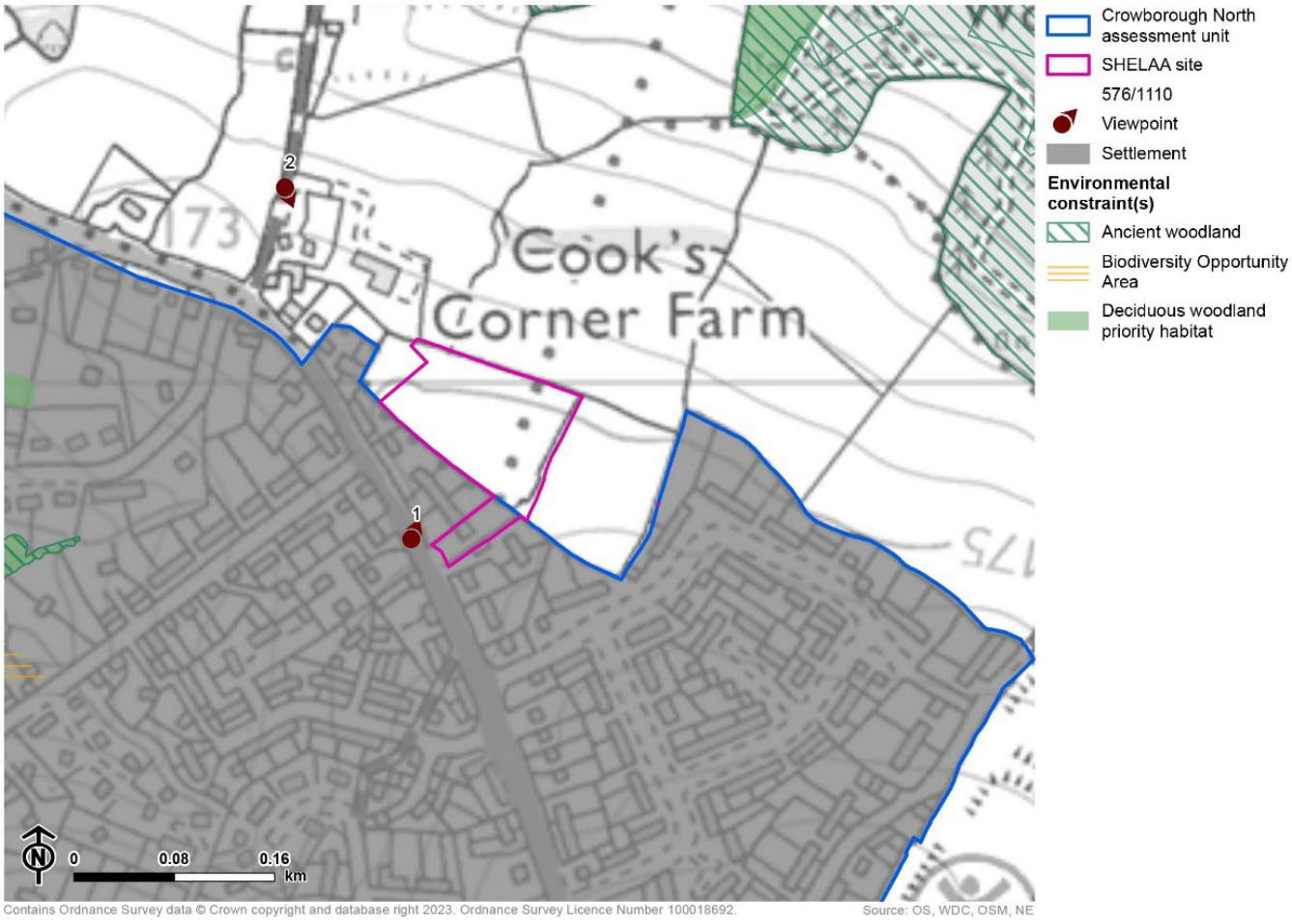
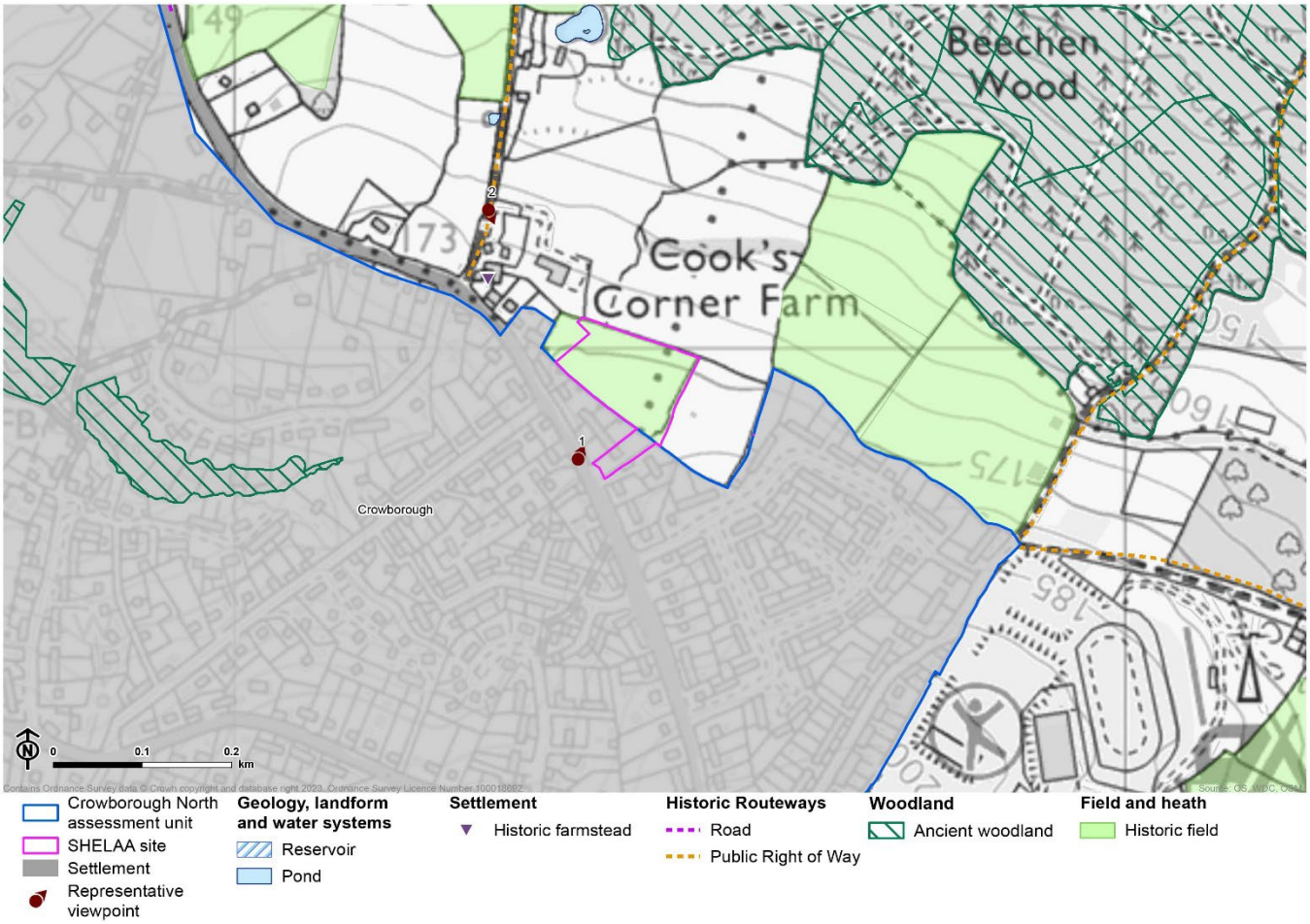


Figure 10: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: View north-east towards the site from London Road, where existing residential properties and associated landscaping screen views.



Viewpoint 2: Oast house at the historic farmstead at Cooks Corner Farm (west of the site).

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms part of the crest of an elevated ridgeline of the High Weald: Central LCA, which is typical of the ridged landform of wider assessment unit. ■ The site gently slopes down towards the north, with the majority of the site lying at approximately 175m AOD. Landform beyond the northern site boundary descends steeply away from the ridgeline towards Beechen Wood. **Natural character** ■ Mature hedgerows and trees, which are typical of the wider assessment unit, line the site boundaries. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site is located within a medium scale field derived from piecemeal enclosure (as classified in the Sussex HLC), with mature linear field boundaries, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ There are no known historic features within or near the site, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The site is influenced by its proximity to Crowborough, which disrupts the experience of dark skies (light levels are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**) and levels of tranquillity (which are recorded as relatively low in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**) for the site and the wider assessment unit.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site does not play a role in settlement separation. The site forms part of the settlement edge to Crowborough, with existing residential development extending to the south, south-east and west of the site along London Road. The settlement form of Crowborough relates to the underlying ridged landform, with existing development predominantly located along the ridgeline. Settlement surrounding the site consists of predominantly detached bungalows and two storey houses with wooded field boundaries forming a soft settlement edge.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Wooded field boundaries and existing residential development enclose the site. However, glimpsed and partially filtered views into the site are afforded from surrounding residential properties on London Road, Norbury Close and the westerly properties on Pleasant View Road. Intervening residential properties and associated landscaping screen and filter views experienced by motorists, cyclists and pedestrians on these roads. Outward views from public rights of way within 500m of the site, including those which pass through Beechen Wood, are enclosed by woodland.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	The wooded and enclosed character of the site limits views across the wider AONB.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site is located on the *principal ridge* of the High Weald (Forest Ridge) contributing to the *pattern of faults and folds*. However, there are no distinctive geological, landform or water features within the site.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Cooks Corner Farm (located 110m to the west of the site) contributes towards the *high density of historic farmsteads*[13] found within the AONB.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways pass through or adjacent to the site.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Wooded field boundaries form part of a wider *highly interconnected* habitat network.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The underlying field pattern is derived from piecemeal enclosure with relatively linear field boundaries. However, field boundaries are defined by *mixed woody boundaries and thick hedges*.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, although long views are limited by vegetation enclosing the site. Dark skies and the sense of tranquillity are limited due to the proximity to Crowborough.

How the sites relate to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Crowborough North assessment unit to have a **moderate-high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that areas of complex undulating ridged landform and incised stream valleys, areas of woodland, areas of intact historic field pattern, the scenic backdrop the landscape provides to Crowborough, and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of existing urban fringe land uses such as golf courses, sports fields and a camp site, enclosure by woodland, relatively few known historic features and disturbance from human activity close to Crowborough and the A26 reduce sensitivity.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **moderate** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The site demonstrates few characteristics which increase sensitivity for the wider assessment unit. The site is relatively flat, enclosed by surrounding wooded field boundaries, does not contain any heritage features and is not crossed by a public right of way, which decrease sensitivity. The field pattern of the site is derived from piecemeal enclosure, which is characteristic of the

[13] As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 10)

assessment unit, however the field pattern is medium in scale and with relatively linear field boundaries, which also decreases sensitivity.

The site expresses few of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB, albeit it is on the principal ridge, which contributes to the pattern of faults and folds, and field boundaries contribute to the interconnected woodland habitat network, which increase sensitivity.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors (that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible).
Settlement form edge and setting	
Extension of development beyond the ridge crest, which would be at odds with the existing pattern of settlement.	■ Set development back from the northern site boundary, so as to avoid the perception of development extending north beyond the ridge crest or 'spilling' into the valley below. ■ Given the location of the site on the edge of the ridge crest, the height and massing of development should be considered in relation to the scale of existing development in the area.
Deterioration of the wooded and rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Crowborough.	■ Minimise visibility of the proposed development and maintain the wooded character of views from the settlement edge. ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[14], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[15] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[16].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by:	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the wooded boundaries that enclose the site, particularly in views from London Road, Pleasant View Road and Norbury Close.

[14] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[15] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[16] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

■ residents along the settlement edge, including London Road, Pleasant View Road and Norbury Close and motorists/cyclists on these roads.	■ Screen new development with additional planting, using native local species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Introduced built forms to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of its surroundings by using high quality materials suggestive of the local vernacular. ■ Enhance public access and provide opportunities to experience the surrounding countryside and Beechen Wood.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend development into the wooded and rural countryside which forms the setting for the northern settlement edge of Crowborough; however, it would not cross a distinct boundary feature and the wooded nature of the site boundaries limits views into it. Development in the north of the site may be perceived to extend beyond the ridge crest. However, should development come forward on this site, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance woodland, trees and hedgerows which screen views into the site and contribute to the interconnectivity of habitats.
- Avoid development in the north of the site to limit the perception of development extending north beyond the ridge crest or 'spilling' into the valley below.
- Enhance public access, providing opportunities to experience the surrounding countryside and Beechen Wood.

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Crowborough North assessment unit

Four sites have been assessed within the Crowborough North assessment unit. If all sites were brought forward for development, it would result in a potential 85 dwellings being built. The sites have been assessed as three groups. Sites **110/1110**, **250/1110** and **698/1110** are located within relatively close proximity of each other. The development of all three sites may lead to the perception of the north-eastern settlement edge extending into the countryside and woodland, which forms a soft settlement boundary feature. However, there is an existing presence of settlement expansion and ribbon development near the sites, which has resulted in a relatively dispersed settlement edge. Woodland within and surrounding the sites, if retained, will limit visibility of development and intervisibility between the sites. Larger areas of woodland located further north beyond the sites, including Limekiln Wood, Cage Wood and Beechen Wood, form more distinctive boundaries to the settlement. Cumulative landscape and visual effects would be limited.

Site 576/1110 is located approximately 1.2km to the west of Sites **110/1110**, **250/1110** and **698/1110**. Given the intervening distance and screening by intervening vegetation between the sites, cumulative landscape and visual effects are considered unlikely.

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: LCA 5B - Crowborough South

Final report
Prepared by LUC
January 2024



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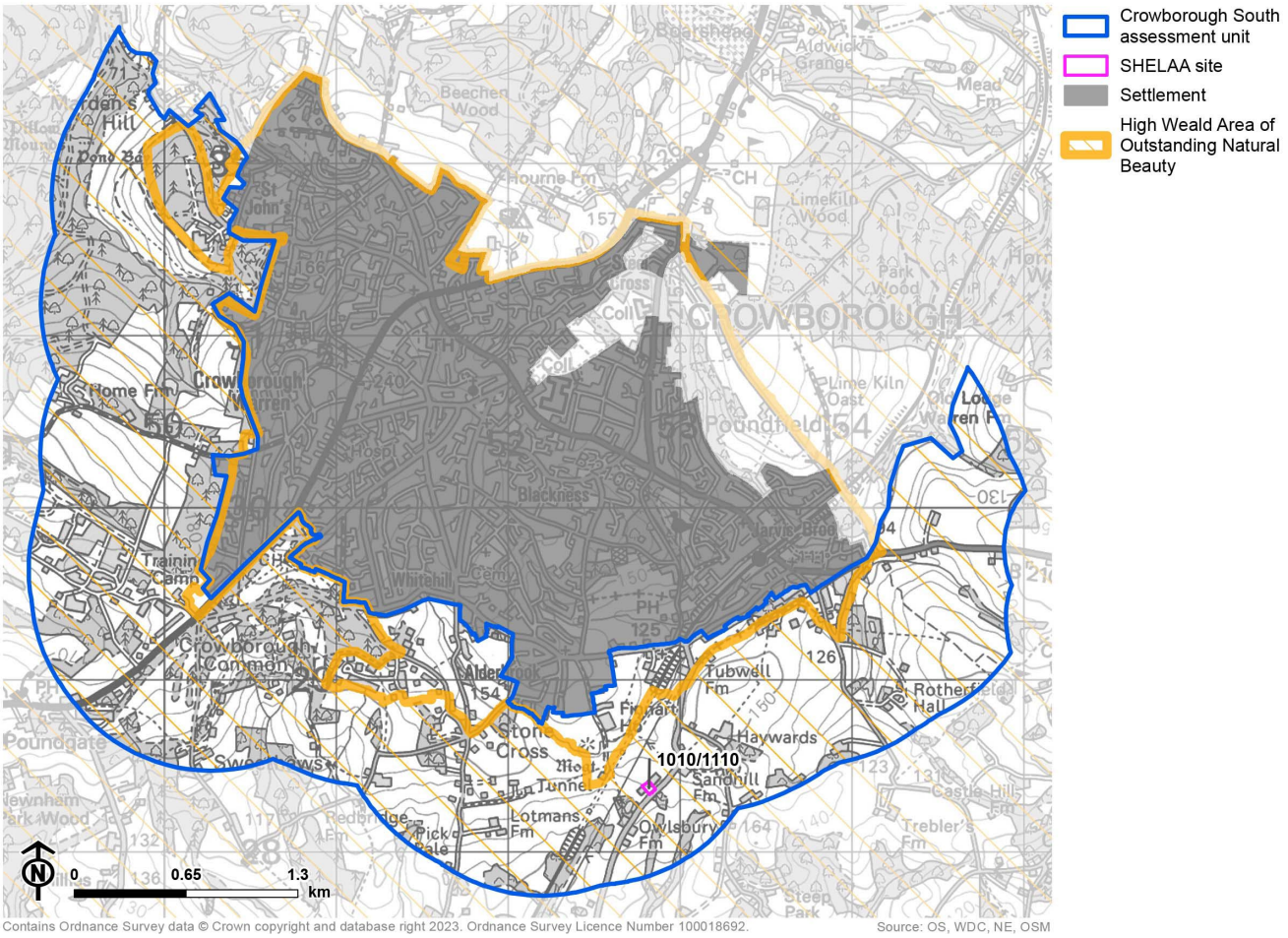
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Chapter 3
Crowborough South Assessment Unit

One potential development site is considered within the Crowborough South assessment unit:

- **Owlsbury Depot, Hadlow Down Road (1010/1110)**

Figure 1: Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



Settlement location, evolution and pattern

Settlement location and context	Crowborough is a nucleated town located in the north of Wealden District. The settlement is excluded from, but surrounded in all directions by, the High Weald AONB, and is located at the highest point of one of the principal east-west ridges of the High Weald.
Settlement evolution	The historic core of the town is centred on the crossroads now formed by the A26 and the London Road/B2100. A relatively small Conservation Area extends across this part of the settlement and relates to the late Victorian and early Edwardian development around the crossroads. Settlement in the area was relatively dispersed up until the introduction of the railway in the 19th century. The town was also a popular health resort, aided by railway links to London, in the late 19th century.
Settlement pattern and edge character	The A26 passes through the centre of the town, with a significant amount of 20th and 21st century growth extending to the north and south of the road. The settlement edge is relatively sprawling, however settlement is often fringed by woodland. Ashdown Forest forms a soft boundary to the west of the town, beyond 20th century development at Crowborough Warren. The southern settlement edge of Crowborough consists mostly of one and two storey detached and semi-detached houses, and some urban fringe development and a railway line in the south-east. The Crowborough barracks are located to the south-west of the settlement. Settlement is fringed by woodland, which is denser in the west and east.

Mapped information for the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB's defining components of character that are found within the Crowborough South assessment unit have been mapped in **Figure 2**. Tranquillity and dark skies (which form part of the perceptual qualities) are shown **in Figures 3 and 4** respectively.

Figure 2: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB

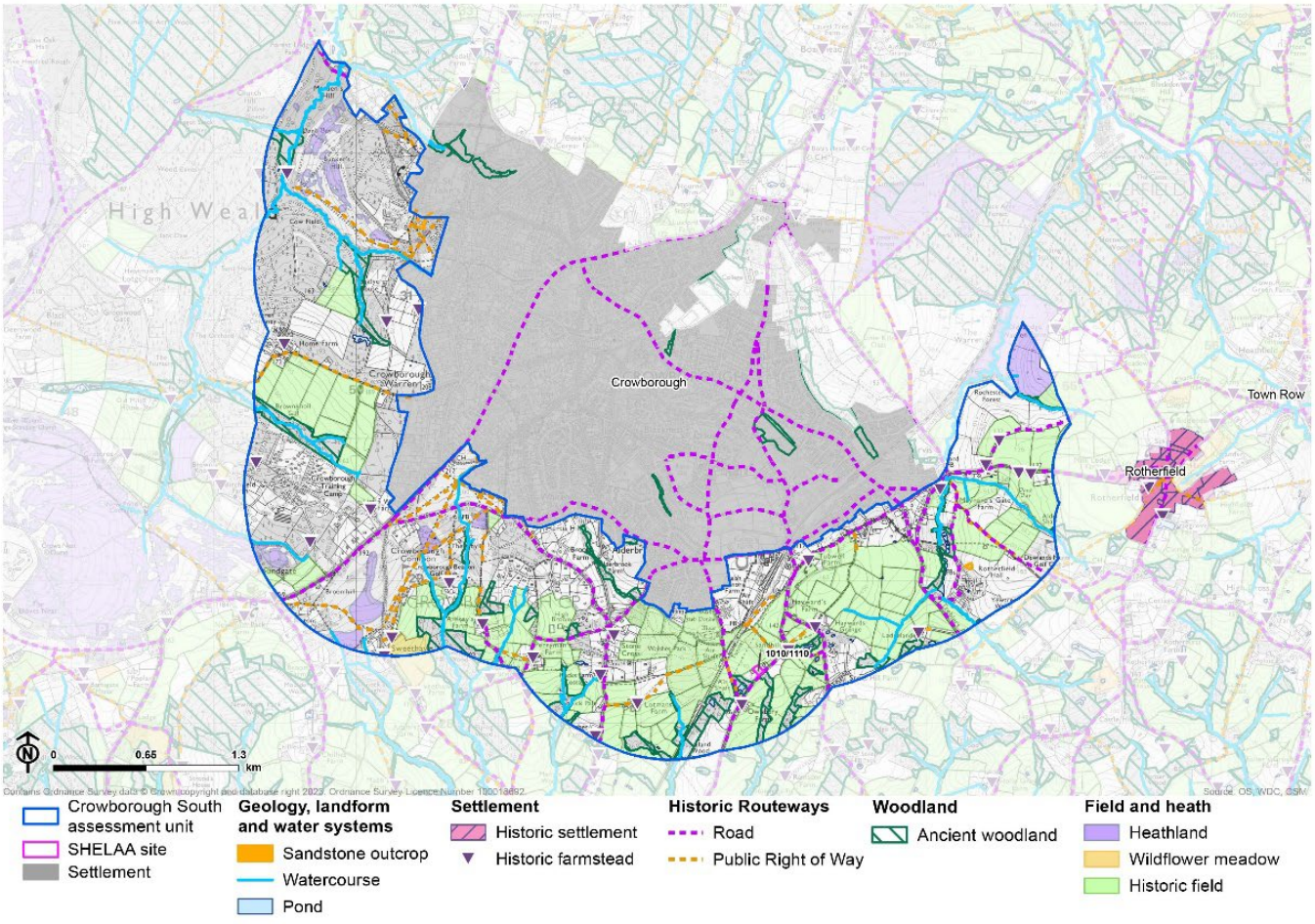


Figure 3: Tranquillity

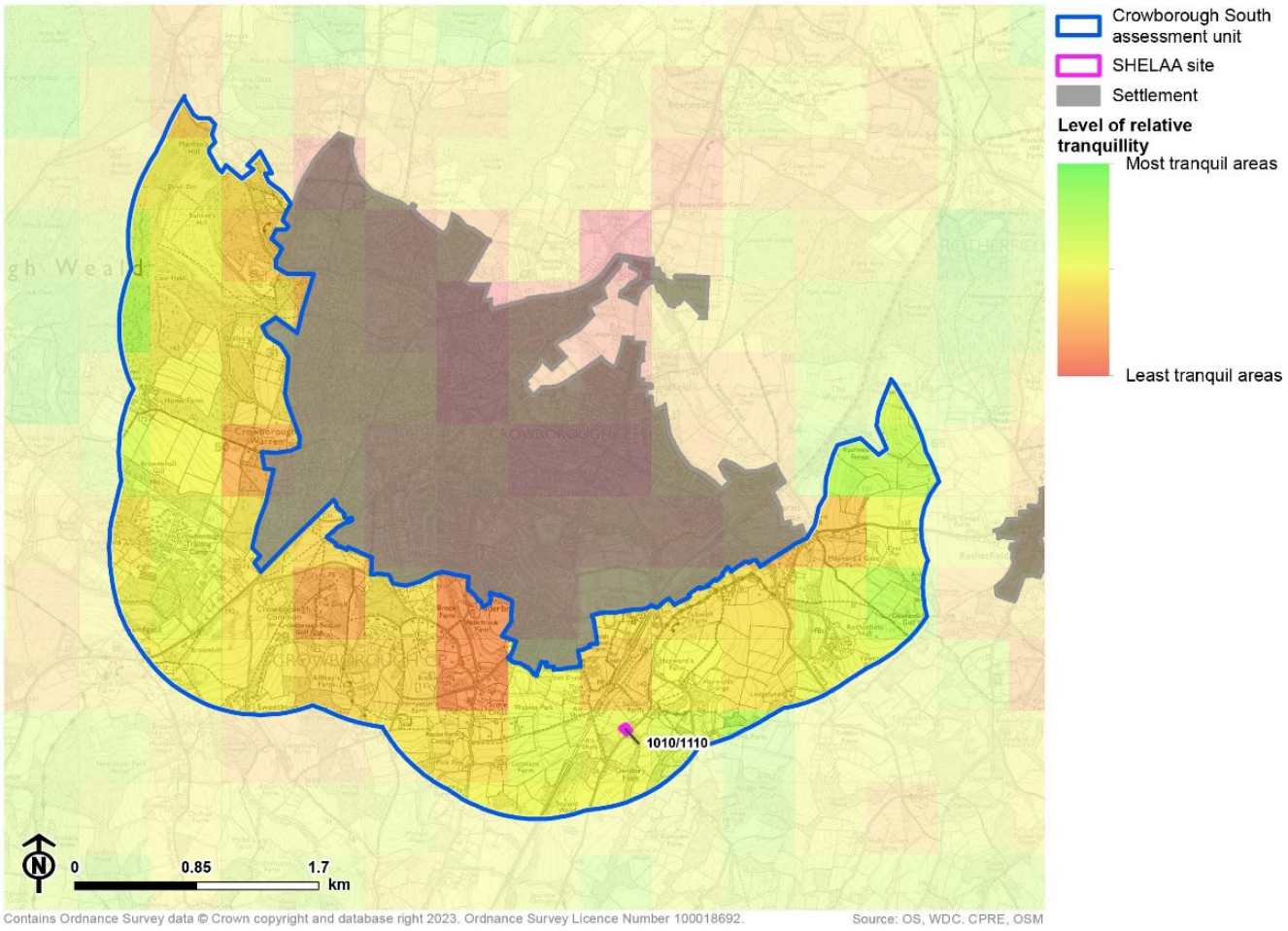
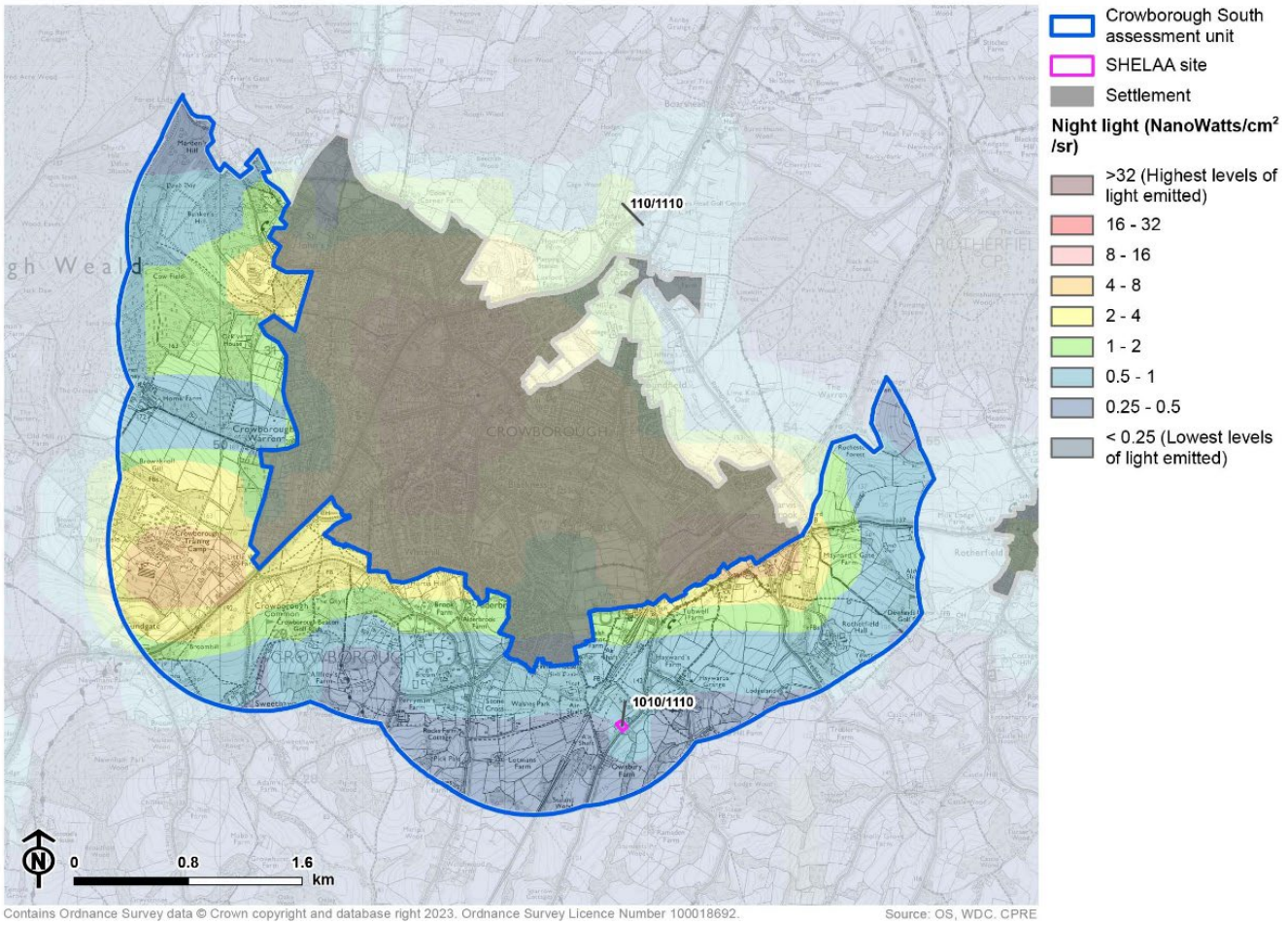


Figure 4: Dark skies



Landscape sensitivity context for the Crowborough South assessment unit

*The landscape sensitivity of the Crowborough South assessment unit described in the **Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development***			
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the assessment unit	**Small scale residential** 2-2.5 storey housing	**Medium scale residential** 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	**Commercial/ industrial** e.g. industrial units or hotels
	MH	**H**	**H**
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the assessment unit	■ The elevated and undulating ridged landform. ■ Mature interconnected deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin). ■ Areas of semi-improved grassland and lowland heathland in the south-west and east of the area. ■ Intact historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the south-west and south-east of the assessment unit. ■ The wooded and rural backdrop to the settlement edge of Crowborough. ■ The network of public rights of way, particularly those providing connectivity with Ashdown Forest. ■ The strong rural character with areas of remoteness and tranquillity. ■ Location within and intervisibility with wooded ridges of the High Weald AONB.		
Guidance	■ Consider views of development from the lower-lying landscapes to the south, siting development where well enclosed by vegetation and where it would relate to the existing ridgeline settlement pattern. ■ Avoid development in areas of habitat interest, notably ancient woodland and lowland heathland. ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest and River Uck and its headwaters BOA, especially woodland and heathland management and restoration, where possible. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland. Avoid loss of, harm or deterioration to the interconnecting ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow a buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible / suitable, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain roadside trees along the A26, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable. Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible / suitable, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain, protect and enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the south-west and south-east. ■ Consider views from public rights of way and the Ashdown Forest, when siting and designing development in the landscape. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced.		

	■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using native species that are in character with the wider landscape. ■ Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[1] , 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[2] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[3]. ■ Ensure development does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, particularly the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB.

[1] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[2] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[3] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Owlsbury Depot, Hadlow Down Road (1010/1110)

Site Details	
Potential development	Employment use
Site location	This site is located to the south-east of Crowborough and situated to the north of Hadlow Down Road and east of Walshes Park.

Figure 4: Site location and constraints

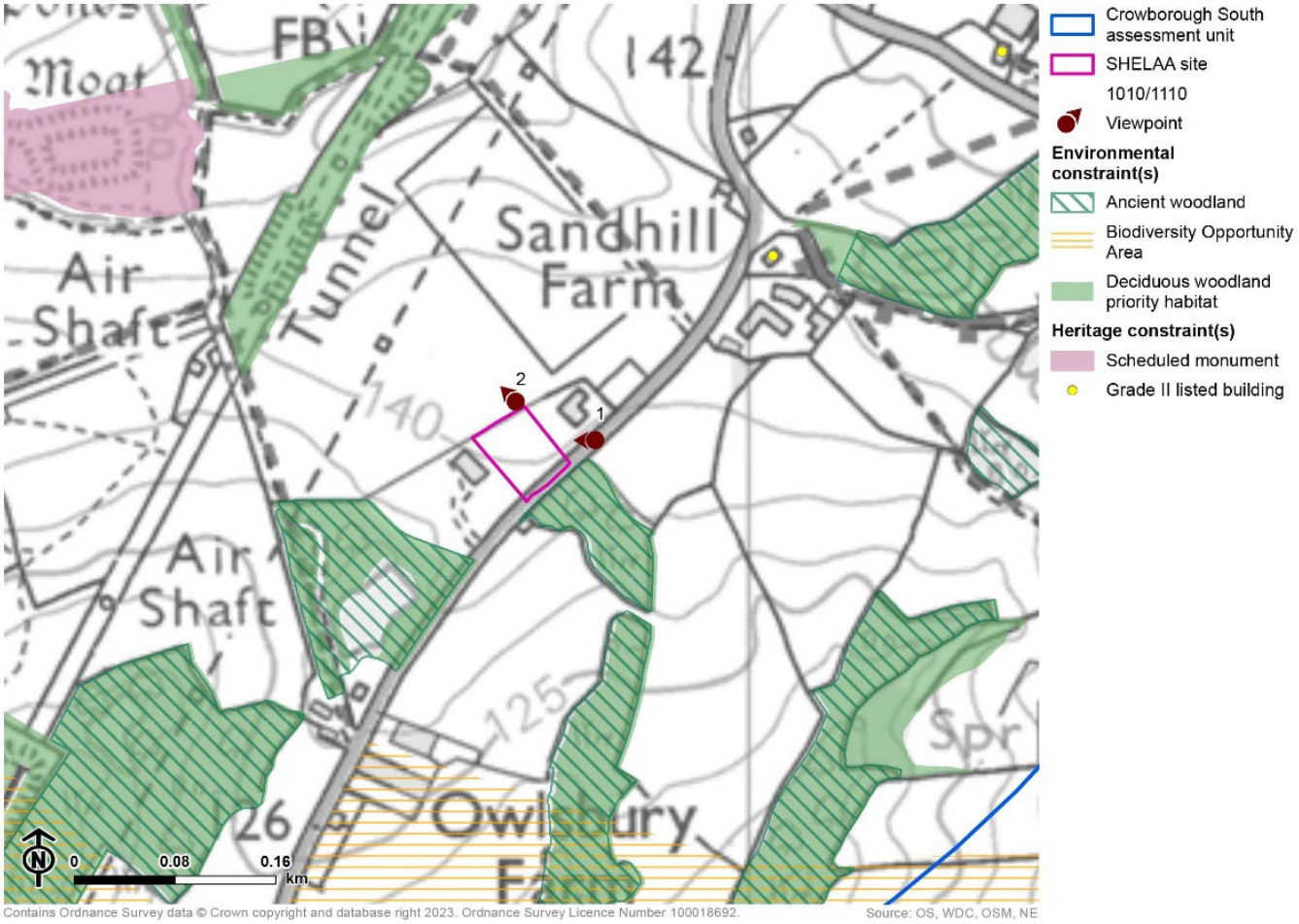
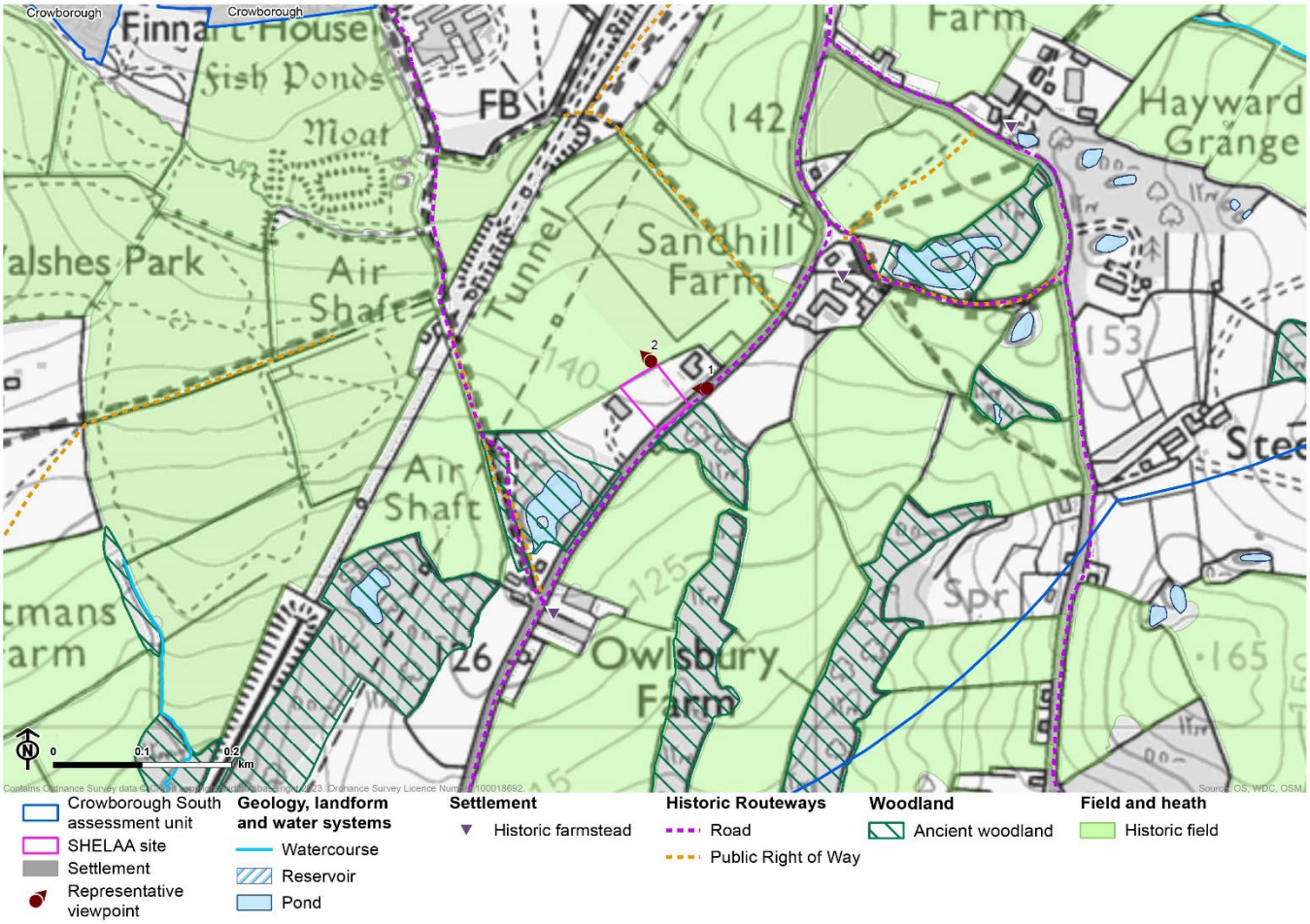


Figure 5: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Close views looking west into the site from Hadlow Down Road



Viewpoint 2: Distant views north away from the site screened by woodland and influenced by electricity infrastructure

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the sites in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site is located on one of the elevated ridgelines of the High Weald – Central LCA, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. However, the site is relatively flat, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit, and lies at approximately 140m AOD. **Natural character** ■ Existing commercial use of the site and nearby overhead electricity infrastructure has influenced the natural character, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Mature trees and woodland extend along the southern and western site boundaries, which are typical of the wider assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The underlying field pattern of the site is influenced by the existing commercial use, which has eroded the historic field pattern and is atypical of the wider assessment unit. ■ No heritage features have been recorded within the site, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The sense of rural tranquillity and scenic value for the site and wider assessment unit is influenced by its current commercial use and nearby overhead electricity infrastructure to the north (levels of tranquillity are recorded in the middle band of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**). ■ Dark night skies are experienced from the site (light levels are recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**), which is typical of the wider assessment unit.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site does not play a role in settlement separation. Intervening woodland and mature field boundaries result in a limited visual relationship between the site and the settlement edge of Crowborough. Development near the site, along Hadlow Down Road, comprises dispersed farmsteads, some of which are gentrified and are typically well integrated with the surrounding landscape. Walshes Park and the wooded railway line to the north-west of the site form soft settlement boundary features.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The surrounding woodland, trees and hedgerows enclose the site and limit its visibility from the surrounding landscape including from the nearby residential properties along Hadlow Down Road. Gaps in roadside vegetation along Hadlow Down Road allow for some close views looking north into the site. Solid panel fencing encloses the northern and western site boundary, limiting visibility into the site from the allotments and public right of way located to the north-east of the site. Outward views from the railway line, which passes in a cutting to the north and north-west of the site, are screened by woodland and landform.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the site are limited by the largely enclosed nature of the site and surrounding woodland. There are some glimpsed long views north-east from the site, however these are influenced by nearby overhead electricity infrastructure and partially filtered by fencing which encloses the allotments.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems - a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site is located on the *principal ridge* of the High Weald (Forest Ridge), contributing towards the *pattern of faults and folds*. However, there are no other distinctive geological, landform or water features within the site.
Settlement - dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	The site is in existing commercial use and therefore does not contribute to the dispersed historic settlement pattern of the wider area.
Routeways - a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the site. Hadlow Down Road, which passes to the south of the site, is recorded as a historic lane and contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland - abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Claylands Shaw is located to the south of the site and contributes towards the *high proportion of ancient woodland* in the AONB. Other trees which form part of the field boundaries along the site boundary contribute towards an interconnected habitat network.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The wider field pattern of piecemeal enclosure within and to the north of the site has been subdivided for the existing commercial use of the site and the adjacent allotments, which has influenced the historic field pattern affecting time depth.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	Some *glimpsed long views* north-east are afforded from the site, beyond vegetation at the adjacent allotments; however, surrounding woodland and vegetation limits views in other directions. The site is located within a relatively *dark landscape*. However, tranquillity is influenced by the existing commercial use of the site and nearby overhead electricity infrastructure.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Crowborough South assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to commercial/industrial development. The sensitivity analysis indicates that areas of complex landform, areas of woodland and heathland, areas of intact historic field pattern, presence of some historic features, the scenic backdrop the landscape provides to Crowborough, and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of urban fringe land uses and development (such as golf courses, pylons and the railway), enclosure by woodland, and disturbance from human activity close to Crowborough, reduce sensitivity.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **moderate** sensitivity to commercial/industrial development. The site demonstrates few of the characteristics which increase sensitivity for the assessment unit as a whole to development. The site is relatively flat, enclosed by surrounding woodland, influenced by existing commercial development, does not contain any heritage features and is not crossed by a public right of way. These characteristics are atypical of the wider assessment unit and decrease sensitivity.

The site expresses few of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB, albeit it is located on the principal ridge, which contributes to the pattern of faults and folds, Hadlow Down Road is a historic lane that contributes to the dense radiating network of routeways, there are glimpsed long views north-east and the site is part of a relatively dark landscape, which increases sensitivity.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands (including priority habitat deciduous woodland) and trees. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors (that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible).
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[4] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form edge and setting	
The dispersed and rural character of settlement along Hadlow Down Road.	■ The height and massing of development should be considered in relation to the scale of existing development in the area. ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[5], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[6] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[7].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ road users on a short section of Hadlow Down Road nearest the site; ■ visitors to the allotments and users of the public right of way to the north-east of the site; and	■ Retain all existing vegetation including the mature vegetation that encloses the site, particularly roadside woodland along Hadlow Down Road.

[4] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/
[5] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[6] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[7] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

■ workers at the businesses adjacent to the site.	■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would involve replacement development on a site that is partially previously developed land, and mature vegetation limits views into the site. Should development come forward, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance mature vegetation surrounding the site to screen new development and contribute to the interconnectivity of habitats.
- Consider the height and massing of development in relation to the scale of existing development in the area and glimpsed distant views across the wider AONB.

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Crowborough South assessment unit

As there is one site within the Crowborough South assessment unit, cumulative effects have not been considered.

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: LCA 5B - Frant

Final report
Prepared by LUC
January 2024



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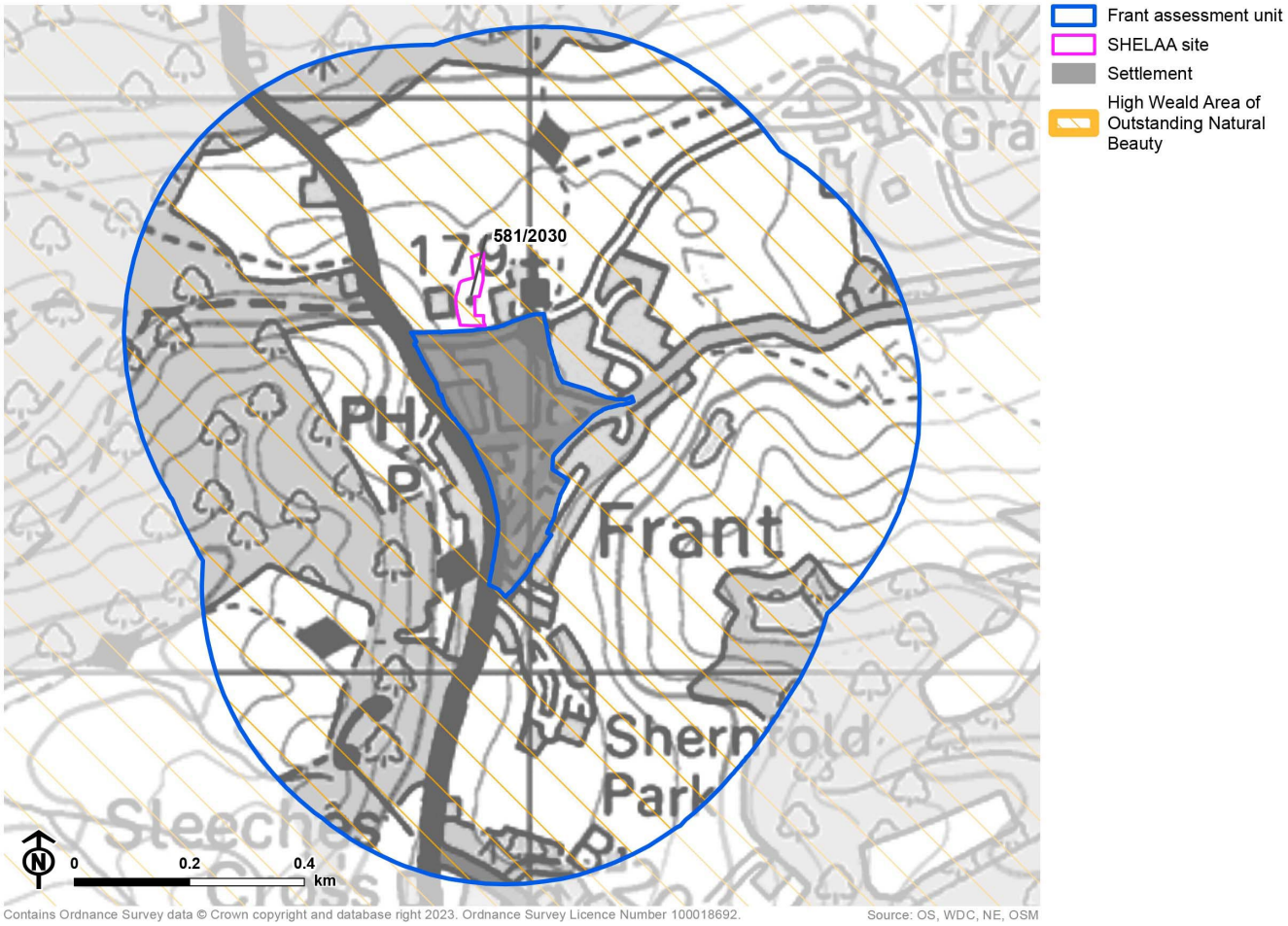
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Chapter 4
Frant Assessment Unit

One potential development site is considered within the Frant assessment unit:

- **The Glebe Land, Church Lane (581/2030)**

Figure 1: Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



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Source: OS, WDC, NE, OSM

Settlement location, evolution and pattern

Settlement location and context	Frant is a nucleated village located in the north-east of the district. The village is located on one of the principal ridges of the High Weald, within the High Weald AONB. The historic core of the village is centred around the Church of St Alban and emerged as a market town, which served dispersed rural farmsteads in the late 13th century.
Settlement evolution	The village grew as a result of iron works in the locality from the 16th century. Agriculture, particularly the growing of hops, was a key contributor to the growth of the village between the 17th to early 20th centuries. Proximity to Tunbridge Wells, and its popular spas, also influenced the growth of the village in the 18th and 19th centuries.
Settlement pattern and edge character	The village has largely retained its historic nucleated form, with some modest 20th and 21st century development located along the settlement fringes. Development consists of bungalows and two storey detached and semi-detached houses, with some occasional terraced properties. Development is typically well integrated into the surrounding rural landscape of rolling fields, with woodland (within the Frant Court and Eridge Park Registered Park and Gardens) forming a soft settlement edge feature to the west. Given the elevated position of the village, significant views across the High Weald AONB are afforded, particularly looking south and south-east from the village green and glimpsed views north from the Church of St Alban.

Mapped information for the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB's defining components of character that are found within the Frant assessment unit have been mapped in **Figure 2.** Tranquillity and dark skies (which form part of the perceptual qualities) are shown in **Figures 3 and 4** respectively.

Figure 2: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB

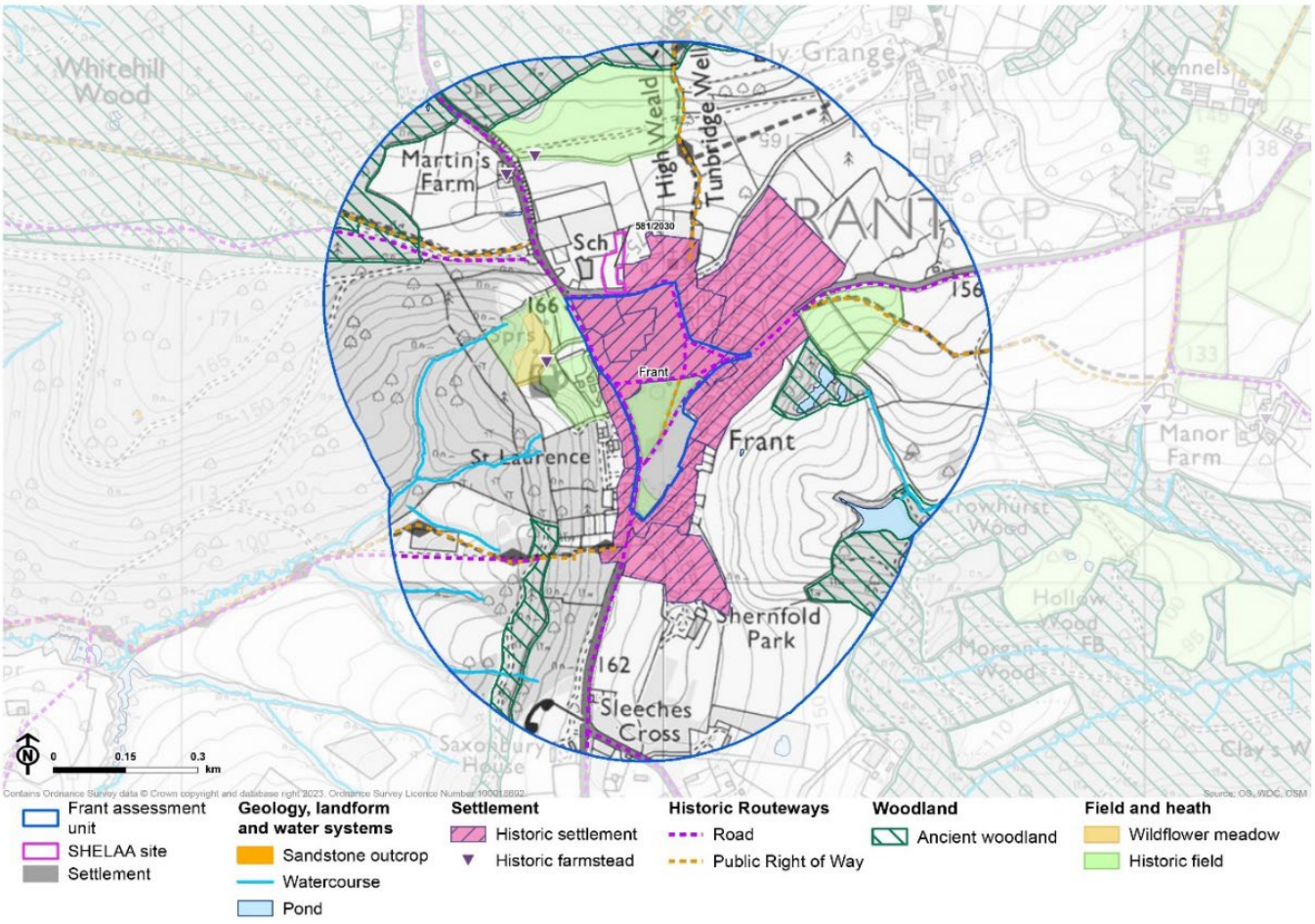


Figure 3: Tranquillity

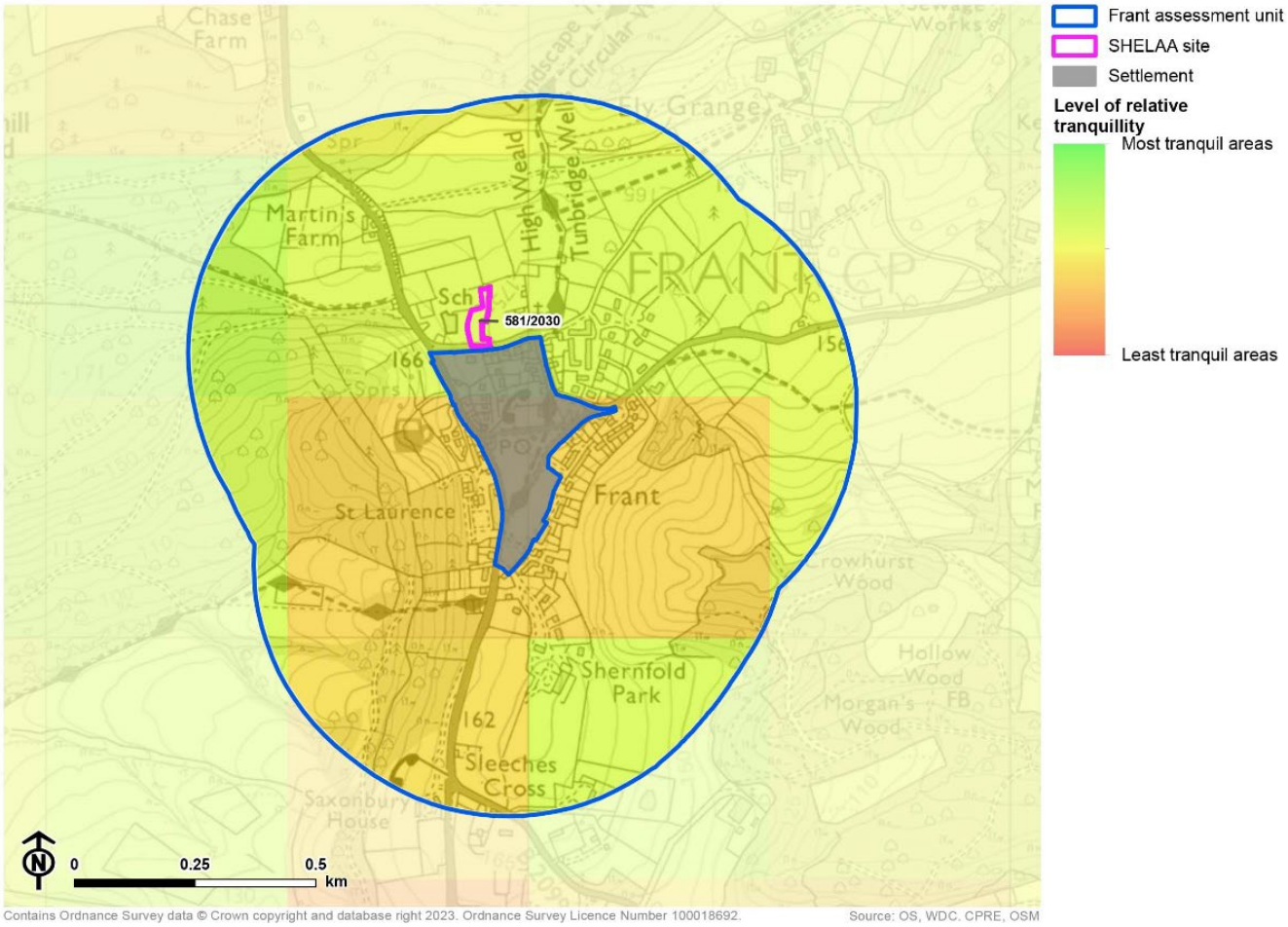
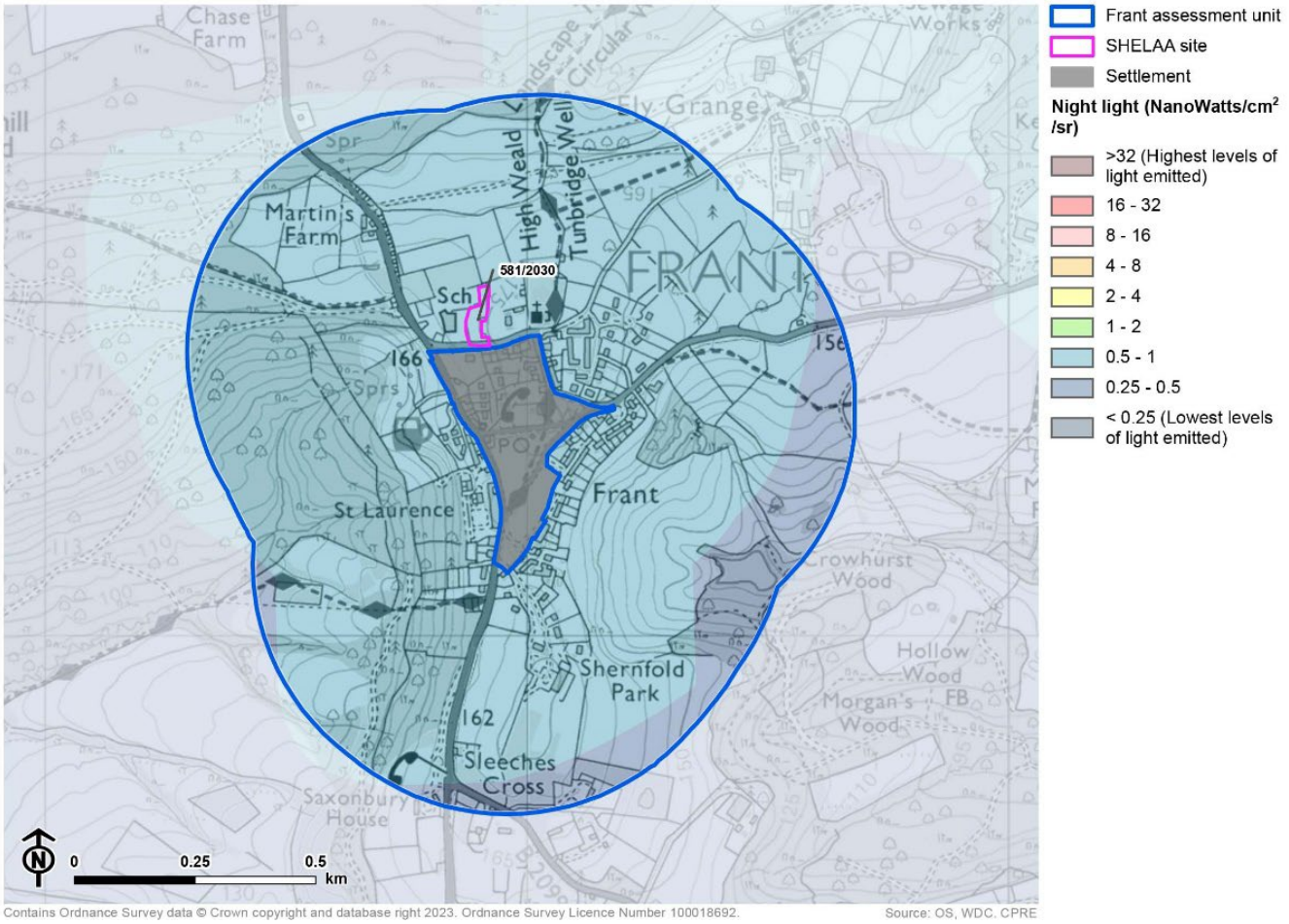


Figure 4: Dark skies



Landscape sensitivity context for the Frant assessment unit

*The landscape sensitivity of the Frant assessment unit, described in the **Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development***			
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the assessment unit	**Small scale residential** 2-2.5 storey housing	**Medium scale residential** 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	**Commercial/ industrial** e.g. industrial units or hotels
	H	**H**	**H**
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the assessment unit	■ The complex ridge and valley landform. ■ Mature interconnected deciduous woodlands, particularly in the west (including at Eridge Park SSSI), and some of which is ancient along the edges of the assessment unit. ■ Priority habitat semi-improved grassland in the west. ■ Historic qualities, distinctive settlement form and architectural vernacular of the Frant Conservation Area. ■ Historic qualities of the Frant Court and Eridge Park Registered Park and Gardens, and the contribution of these areas to the wooded landscape context in the west. ■ Strong relationship of settlement form to the underlying topography. ■ Strong rural character with areas of tranquillity and dark night skies. ■ Location within and intervisibility with more distant areas of the High Weald AONB.		
Guidance	■ Be located where well enclosed by vegetation, where development would be less visible from lower-lying landscapes and have less influence on landscape character, avoiding prominent ridgelines. ■ Avoid the incised stream valleys and steep heavily wooded valley slopes. ■ Avoid areas of habitat interest, notably ancient woodland and the Eridge Park SSSI. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to the interconnecting ancient semi-natural woodlands in this area and allow a suitable and appropriate buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Eridge and Broadwater BOA, especially woodland management and restoration, where possible. ■ Retain or replace hedgerow or roadside trees along the A267, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of, or damage to, hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly in the north of the assessment unit. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the intact historic form, character and key outward views from the Frant Conservation Area. Particular attention should be paid to the historic settlement edges of Conservation Area, particularly where development would influence the relatively small-scale nucleated form of the settlement.		

	■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities and wooded character of the Frant Court and Eridge Park Registered Parks and Gardens. ■ Consider views from public rights of way when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape. ■ Be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, and / or using species that are in character with the wider landscape, preferably native. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Consider views from the wider landscape of the High Weald AONB, particularly lower-lying landscapes to the south, towards the prominent ridgelines of the assessment unit. ■ Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[1], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[2] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[3]. ■ Ensure development does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, where the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB are most strongly expressed.

[1] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[2] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[3] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

The Glebe Land, Church Lane (581/2030)

Site Details	
Potential development	8 residential dwellings
Site location	This site is located to the north-west of the settlement and situated between Frant C of E Primary School and Frant Grange.

Figure 5: Site location and constraints

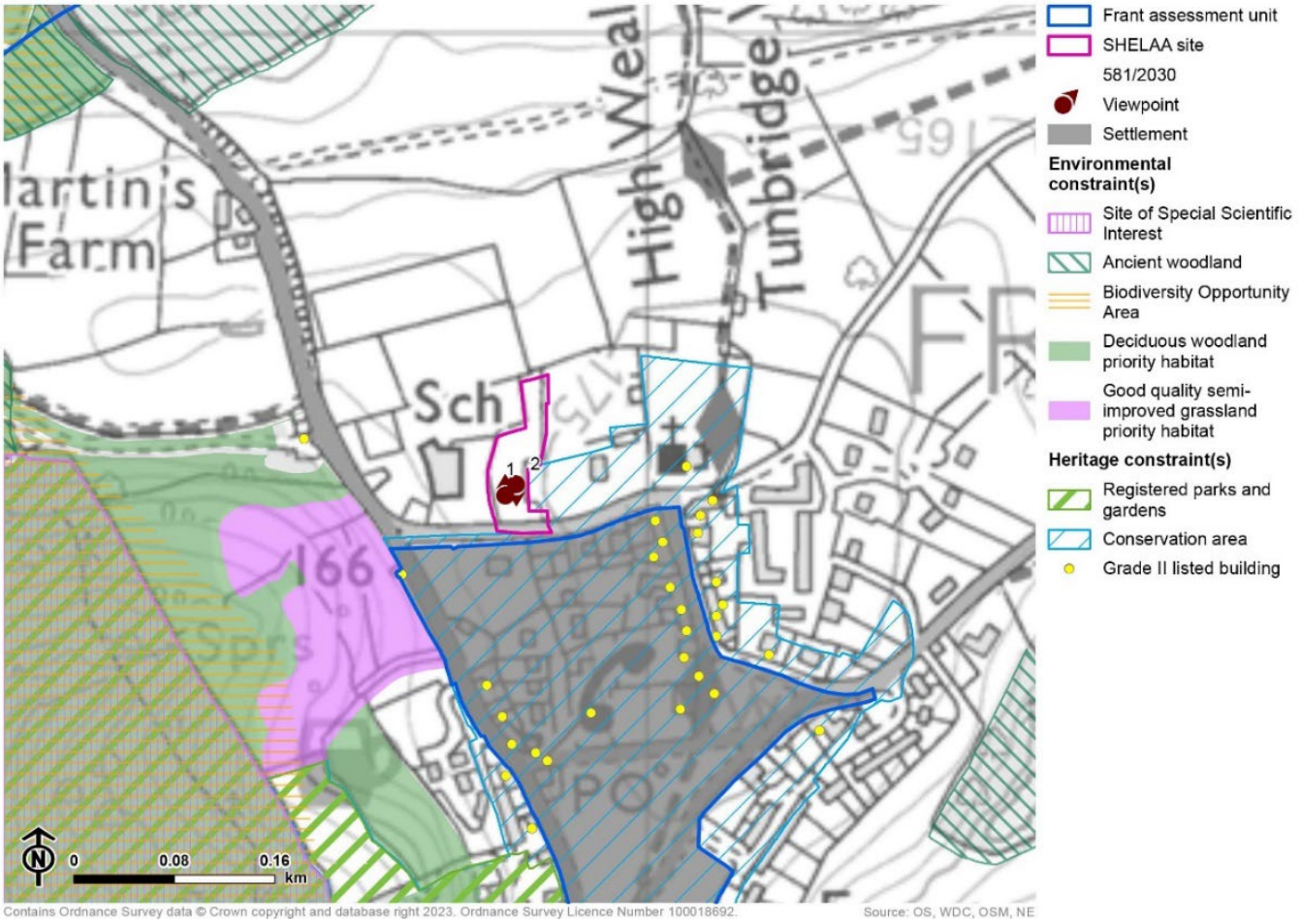
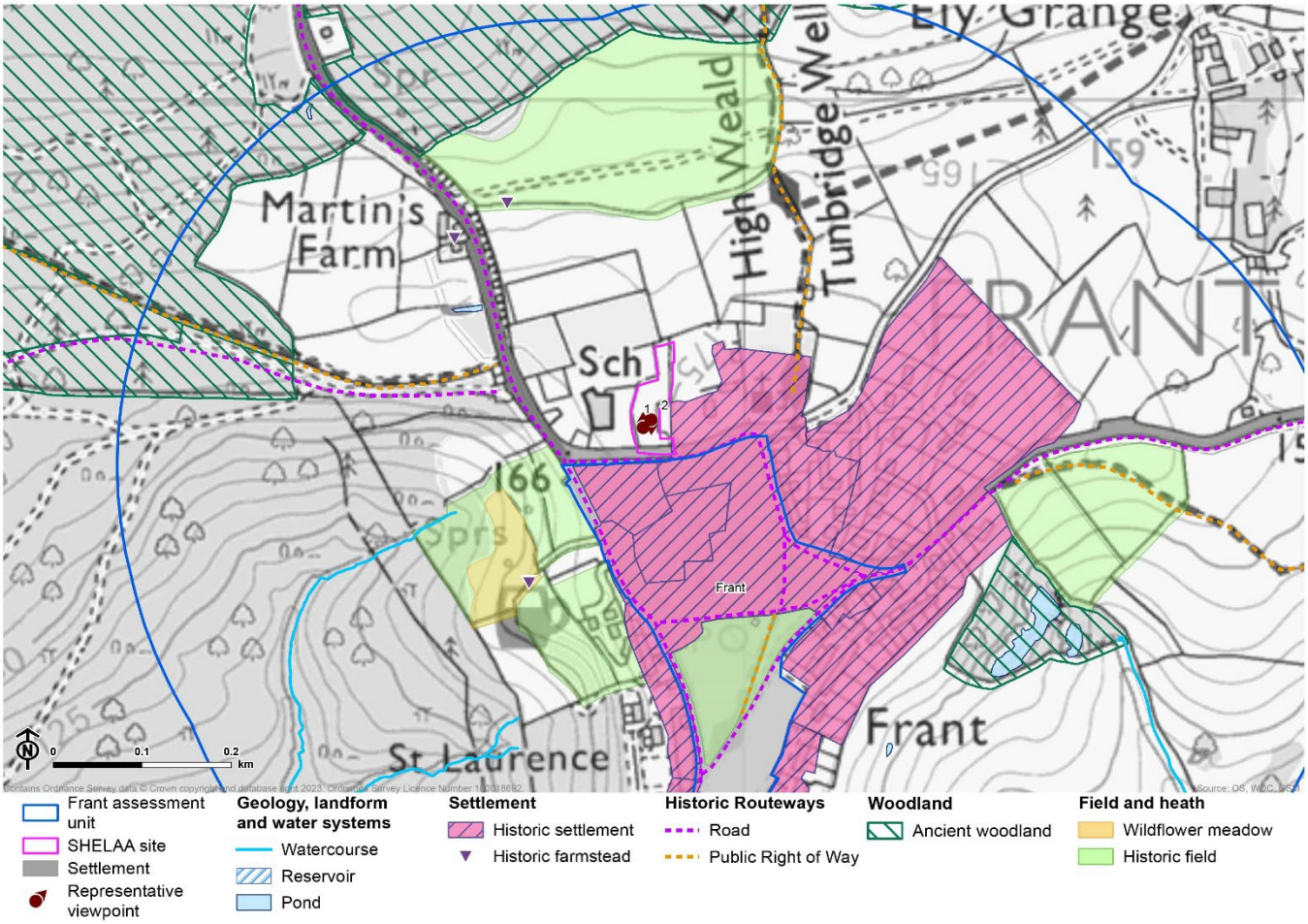


Figure 6: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: View north from the southern end of the track within the site



Viewpoint 2: View south from within the site looking towards properties along Church Lane, large trees and hedgerow along the road

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site is relatively flat (at 170m AOD) and forms a small part of a T-shaped ridge in the north of the High Weald: Central LCA that is primarily occupied by the village of Frant, extending east to west between Ely Grange and Whitehill Wood, and south to Sleeches Cross. **Natural character** ■ Tree groups and hedgerow associated with the adjacent properties at Frant Grange and The Rectory St Albans abut the eastern boundary of the site, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Thick hedgerows with trees along the edge of the school grounds and along Church Lane enclose the western and southern boundaries of the site - which is typical of the wider assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site consists of a small field of regular piecemeal enclosure (as classified in the Sussex HLC and a feature of the wider assessment unit). However, it lacks time depth as it comprises a track providing access between Church Lane and the school playing fields and mown grass. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The site is bordered by development within Frant including residential settlement south of Church Lane, and the school to the west. Despite this proximity, the site experiences dark skies (light levels are recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**) and some sense of tranquillity (which is recorded in the middle bands in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The adjacent settlement edge to the south of the site consists of a thick hedgerow containing very tall trees which provides a relatively strong boundary feature, beyond which are 2-storey semi-detached and detached houses fronting onto Church Lane. However, the settlement edge is fragmented as development extends to the north of Church Lane with the modern school buildings, church and Frant Grange. The settlement edge to the east of the site consists of thick hedgerow and trees along the boundary with Frant Grange which also provides a robust boundary.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The surrounding trees, hedgerows and buildings partially enclose the site and limit its visibility from the surrounding landscape including from the school to the west and Frant Grange to the east. The residential properties along the settlement edge to the south (Church Lane) partly overlook the site with views afforded from upper storeys.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the site are mainly limited by landform, trees, hedgerows and buildings around the site, although there is a framed long view north from the northern part of the site.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB contributing towards the *pattern of faults and folds*. There are no distinctive geological or water features within the site.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Frant is a *village of Medieval origin* with its settlement edge along the southern and eastern boundaries of the site.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths)	There are no historic routeways which cross the site. However, Church Lane along the southern boundary of the site is recorded as a historic lane and contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	There are no distinctive woodland features.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	There are no distinctive field and heath features.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site is located within a relatively *dark landscape*. However, the south of the site feels part of Frant, which reduces any sense of remoteness and tranquillity. The north of the site has a more rural character. The site contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, although long views of the site are generally limited by vegetation and buildings enclosing the site (apart from a *glimpsed long view* north from the northern edge of the site).

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Frant assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform, priority habitat woodland (including ancient woodland) and grassland, historic features in the Frant Conservation Area and the rural setting provided to it all increase sensitivity to built development. Further factors which increase sensitivity to built development are the historic features in the Frant Court and Eridge Park Registered Park and Gardens, strongly expressed historic settlement edge, the visual prominence of the assessment unit and its location within, and visual relationship with, the wider High Weald AONB. Detractors within the assessment unit, which are not enough to reduce the overall sensitivity, are, the occasional influence of modern development and busy A267, areas of eroded historic field boundaries and partially contained nature of views.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **moderate** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing) due to it being flat and comprising of mown grass, which is not characteristic of the wider area or the High Weald AONB as a whole. However, the boundary hedges and trees are more sensitive than the field itself as they provide visual enclosure as well as contributing to the interconnected nature of the site with the wider landscape.

The site expresses a few of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB as it forms part of the pattern of faults and folds, it is within a dark landscape, and possesses scenic beauty and a glimpsed long view towards the wider AONB in the north.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature tree groups and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and partially screening the settlement edge.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site where possible.
Influence of lighting on the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[4] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Extension of development beyond the robust boundary to the south and east, provided by trees and hedgerow between the site and properties on the edge of the settlement. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Village of Medieval origin.	■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[5], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[6] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[7].
Visual amenity	
Limited visibility of development seen by: ■ residents and motorists/ cyclists along Church Lane; ■ residents at Frant Grange; and ■ users of Frant C of E Primary School.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the trees and hedgerows that enclose the site. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native local species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Introduced built forms to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of its surroundings by using high quality materials suggestive of the local vernacular. ■ Enhance public access.

[4] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/
[5] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[6] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[7] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Summary and recommendations

There are limited landscape and visual sensitivities of this site, which is in close proximity to existing development along Church Lane, Frant C of E Primary School and Frant Grange. However, should development come forward on this site, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance trees and hedgerows.
- Screen new development with additional planting.

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Frant assessment unit

Only one site has been considered within the Horam assessment unit within this Landscape and Visual Appraisal of Potential Development sites in the High Weald AONB. The assessment of cumulative effects is therefore not required.

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: LCA 5B - Heathfield

Final report
Prepared by LUC
January 2024



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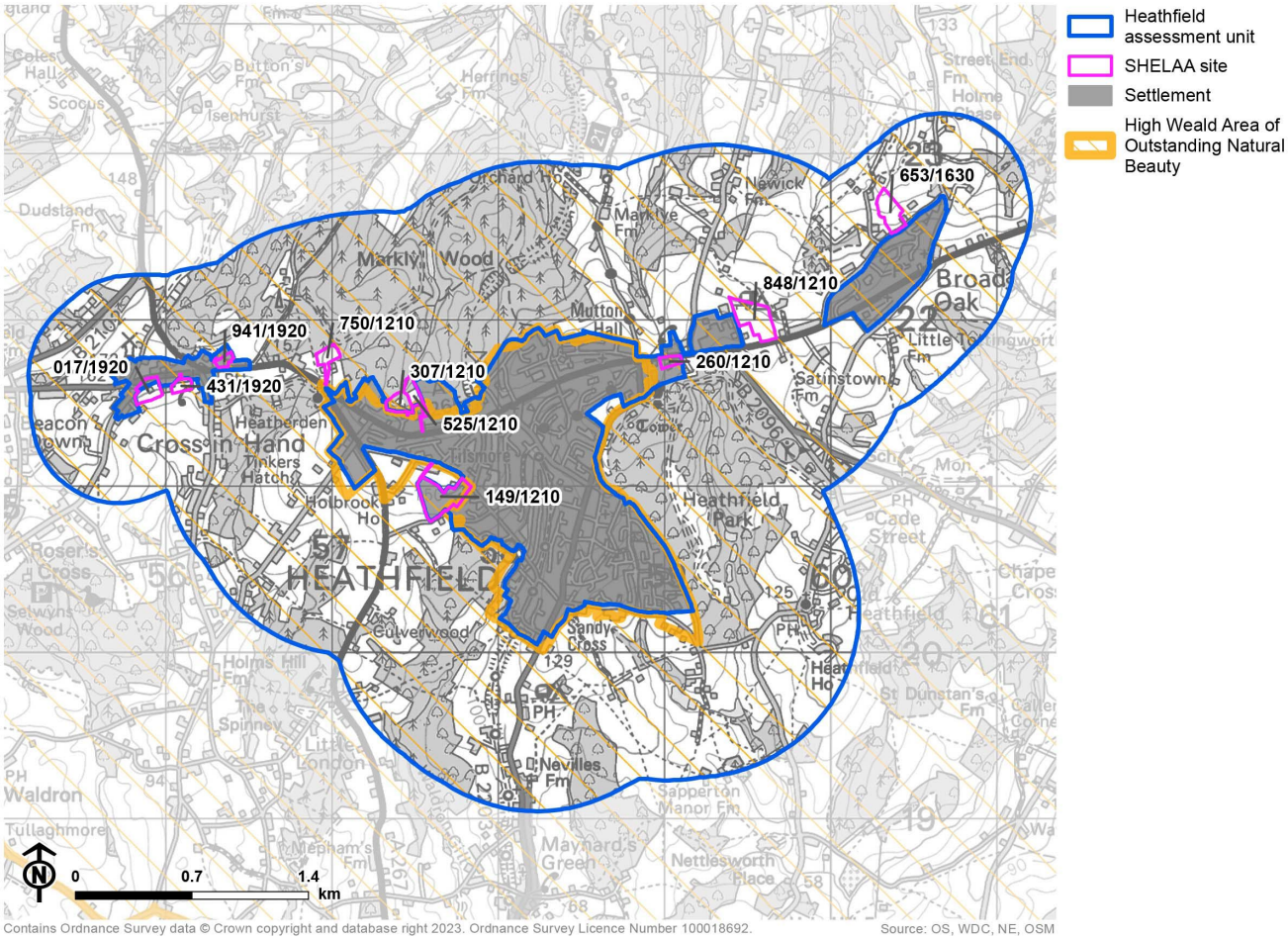
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Chapter 5
Heathfield Assessment Unit

The following potential development sites are considered within the Heathfield assessment unit:

- **Land adjacent to Street End Lane, Broad Oak (653/1630)**
- **Collins Field, Burwash Road (848/1210)**
- **Land south of Burwash Road and east of Tower Street (260/1210)**
- **Land south west of Ghyll Road, Tilsmore (149/1210)**
- Group comprising **Land to the rear of Rothershaw, High Street (525/1210)** and **Land at Tilsmore Nurseries, off Nursery Way (307/1210)**
- **Land at Snatchells Farm, A256 (750/1210)**
- **Land at Sunnyside, A267, Cross in Hand (941/1920)**
- Group comprising **Land to rear of Brenton House (north), B2102, Cross in Hand (431/1920)** and **Field to the east of Burnetts Farm, Firgrove Road, Cross in Hand (017/1920)**

Figure 1: Location of sites in relation to the settlement



Settlement location, evolution and pattern

Settlement location and context	Heathfield is a nucleated town located in the central east of Wealden District. The settlement is located on one of the principal east-west ridges of the High Weald and is excluded from, but surrounded in all directions by, the High Weald AONB. The landscape to the south of the town is located within LCA 6E: High Weald – Cuckmere / Pevensey Catchment, and a small area to the north is located within LCA 6C: High Weald – Rother Catchment.
Settlement evolution	The historic core of Heathfield is centred along the A265 and B2203, and was originally formed by linear clusters of properties with some further dispersed properties located along elevated ridgeline roads. The town is located on a historic routeway which facilitated transhumance movement between the South Downs and the Weald. The town expanded as a result of the iron industry in the area in the 16th and 17th centuries, with further expansion resulting from the introduction of the railways in the 19th century (although these have since closed). Heathfield grew significantly in the late 20th century, with a number of housing estates expanding from the historic core. The medieval settlement of Old Heathfield is located to the south-east of the settlement and designated as a Conservation Area. Old Heathfield maintains its historic linear form, with Heathfield Park forming a boundary feature between Old Heathfield and the modern day town of Heathfield.
Settlement pattern and edge character	The settlement edge is relatively sprawling; however settlement is often fringed by woodland. Heathfield Park and Markly Wood form soft settlement boundaries to the east and north, respectively. The settlement comprises one and two storey detached and semi-detached properties, with some older two storey terraced properties located within the historic core of the settlement. The assessment unit also contains the smaller villages of Cross in Hand and Broad Oak, both located along the A265. Cross in Hand maintains a relatively linear pattern, with some separation between the village and Heathfield formed by woodland and pastoral fields. The settlement form of Broad Oak is less linear, with settlement extending north from the A265. There is some separation between Broad Oak and Heathfield formed by the pastoral landscape and relatively open views looking south from the A265.

Mapped information for the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB's defining components of character that are found within the Heathfield assessment unit have been mapped in **Figure 2.** Tranquillity and dark skies (which form part of the perceptual qualities) are shown in **Figures 3 and 4** respectively.

Figure 2: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB

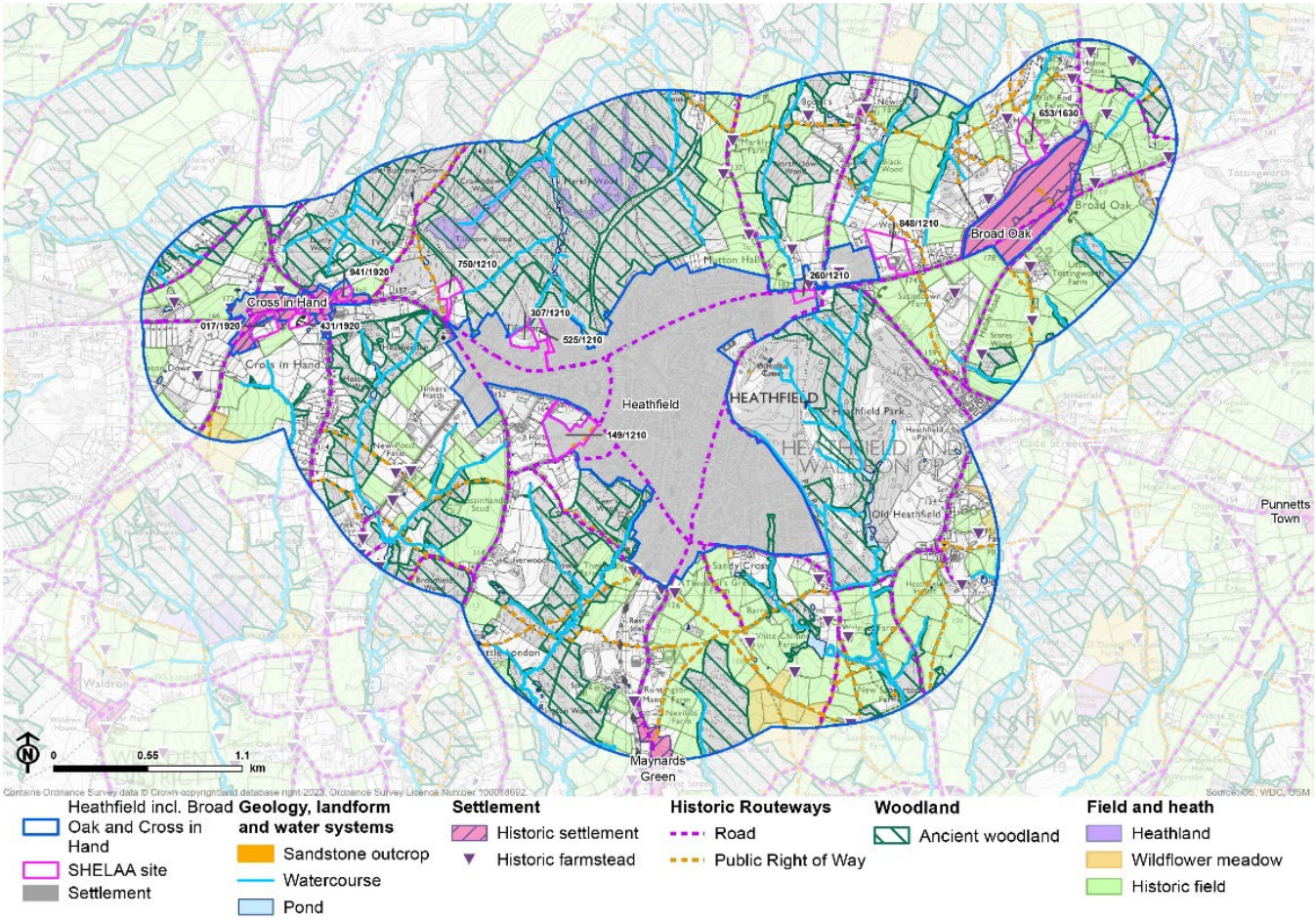


Figure 3: Tranquillity

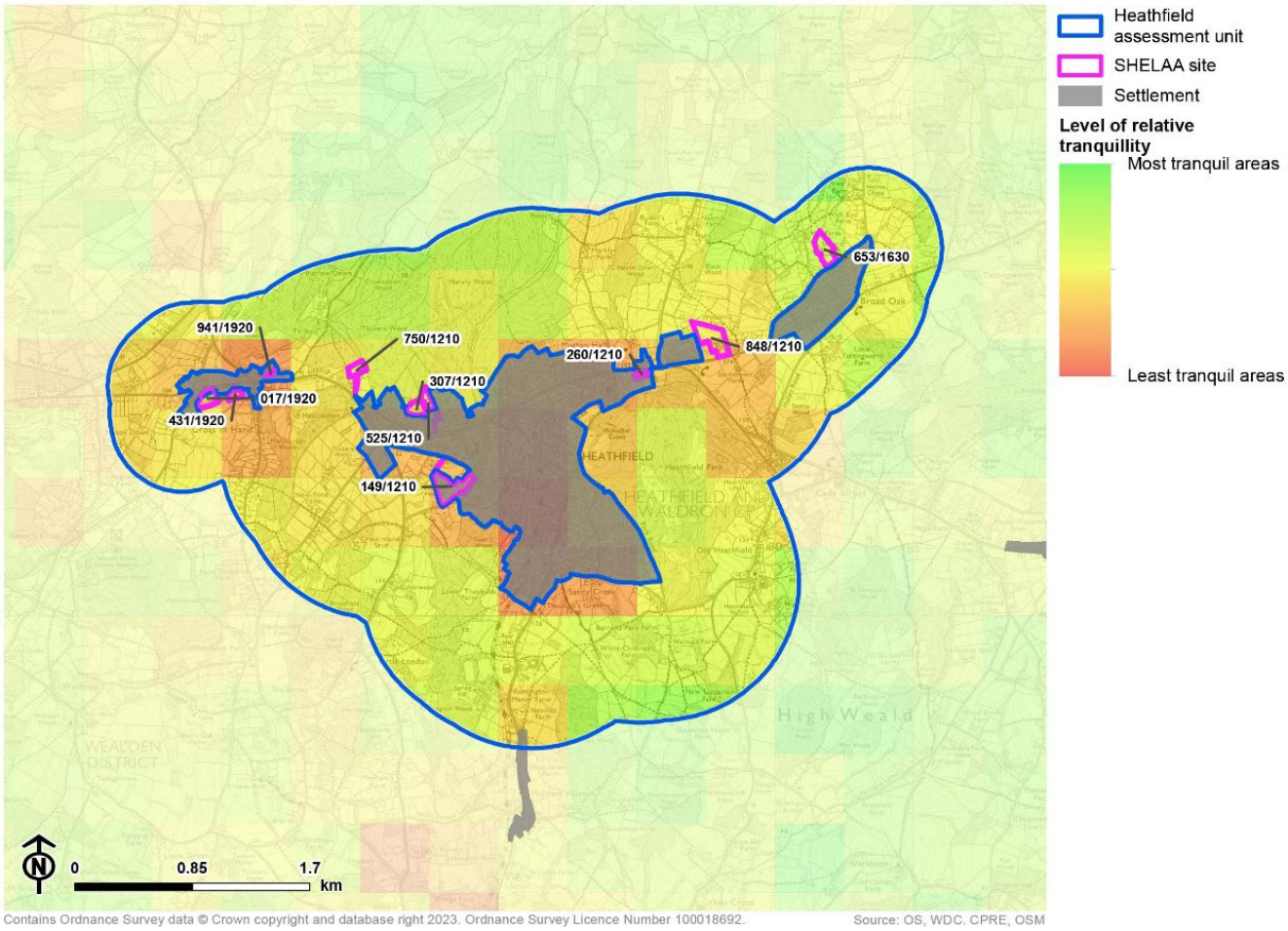
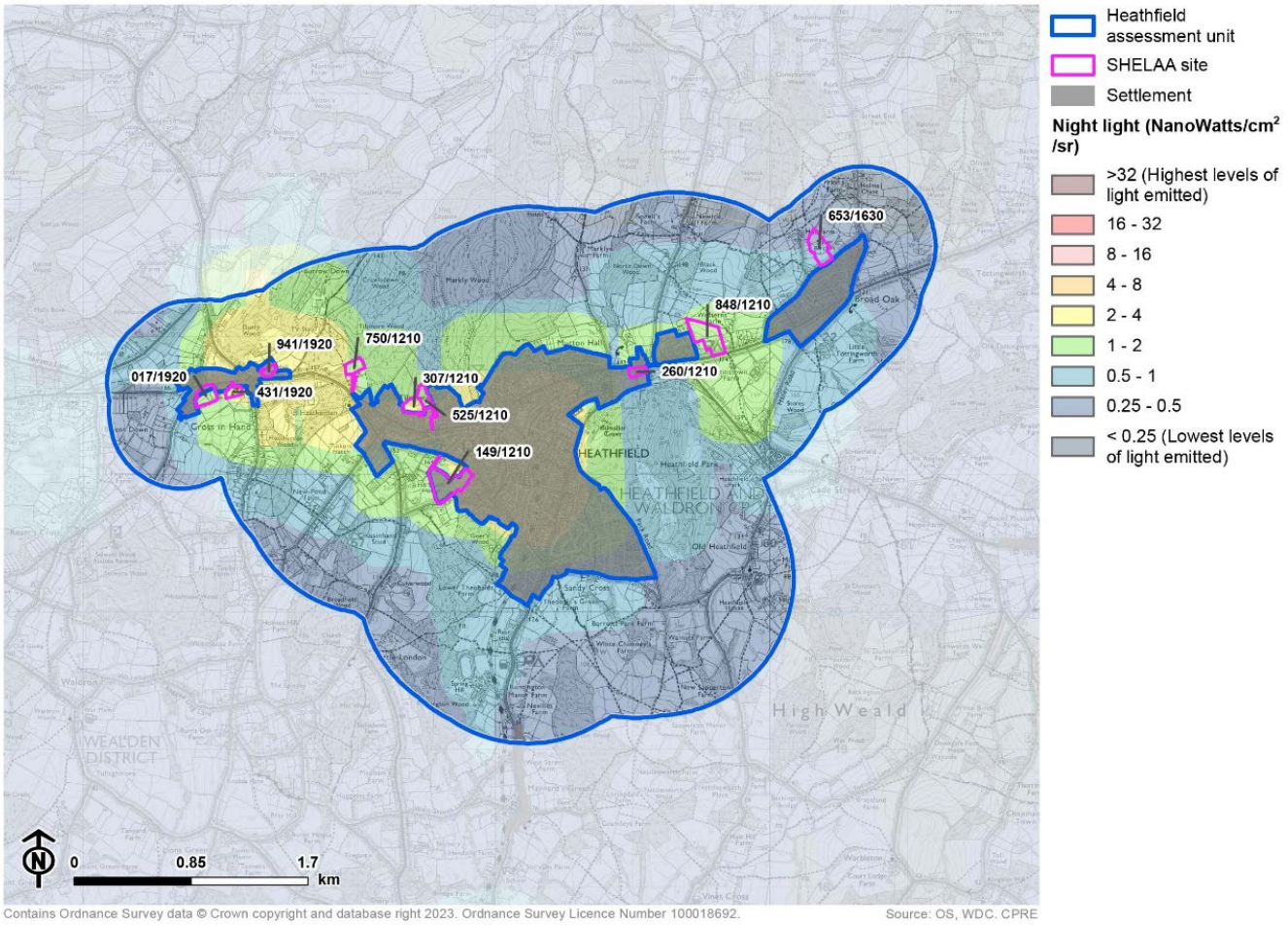


Figure 4: Dark skies



Landscape sensitivity context for the Heathfield assessment unit

*The landscape sensitivity of the Heathfield assessment unit as described in the **Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development***			
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the assessment unit	**Small scale residential** 2-2.5 storey housing	**Medium scale residential** 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	**Commercial/ industrial** e.g. industrial units or hotels
	MH	**H**	**H**
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the assessment unit	■ The complex ridge and valley landform. ■ Mature deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin), particularly in the north and east of the assessment unit and the Heathfield Park SSSI. ■ Areas of lowland meadow, semi-improved grassland and heathland in the south and north of the assessment unit. ■ Intact historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the north-east and south of the assessment unit with mature hedgerows and wooded field boundaries. ■ The historic character and value of Heathfield Park and the Old Heathfield Conservation Area. ■ The wooded backdrop to the northern and eastern settlement edge of Heathfield. ■ The network of public rights of way including the Cuckoo Trail. ■ The strong rural character with areas of remoteness and tranquillity, particularly within larger areas of woodland. ■ Location within and intervisibility with more distant areas of the High Weald AONB.		
Guidance	■ Consider views of development from the lower-lying landscapes to the north and south of the ridgeline, siting development where well enclosed by vegetation and relating it to the existing settlement pattern. ■ Avoid the incised stream valleys and heavily wooded valley slopes. ■ Avoid areas of habitat interest, notably ancient woodland (including the Heathfield Park SSSI), lowland meadow, semi-improved grassland and heathland. ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Heathfield Habitat Link and Pevensey, Rother, Cuckmere Watershed BOAs, especially woodland and heathland management and restoration, where possible. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to the interconnecting ancient semi-natural woodlands in this area and allow an appropriate buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain roadside trees along the A267, including tree clumps, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of, or damage to, hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible.		

	■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the north-east and south. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the intact historic form, character and setting of the Old Heathfield Conservation Area. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities of the parkland landscape at Heathfield Park. ■ Minimise the potential for further coalescence between settlements along the A265. ■ Consider views from public rights of way, including the Cuckoo Trail, when siting and designing development in the landscape. ■ Be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, and / or using species that are in character with the wider landscape, native species where possible. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide[1]', 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[2] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[3]. ■ Ensure development does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, particularly the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB.

[1] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[2] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[3] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Land adjacent to Street End Lane, Broad Oak (653/1630)

Site Details	
Potential development	8 residential dwellings The south of the site has planning permission for 4 homes under planning reference WD/2022/1833/F.
Site location	This site lies to the north-east of Broad Oak, north of Street End Lane and east of Magreed Lane.

Figure 5: Site location and constraints

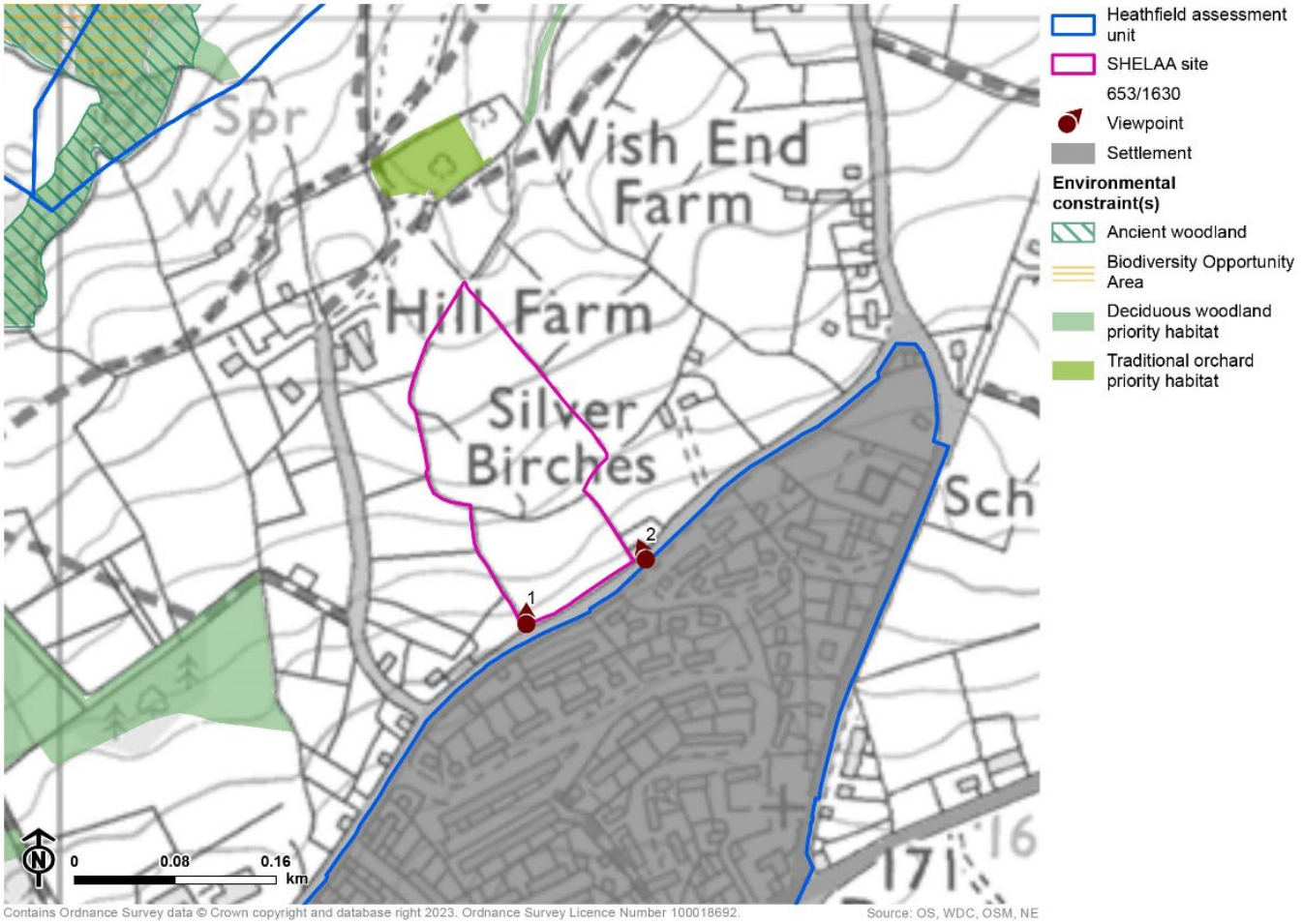
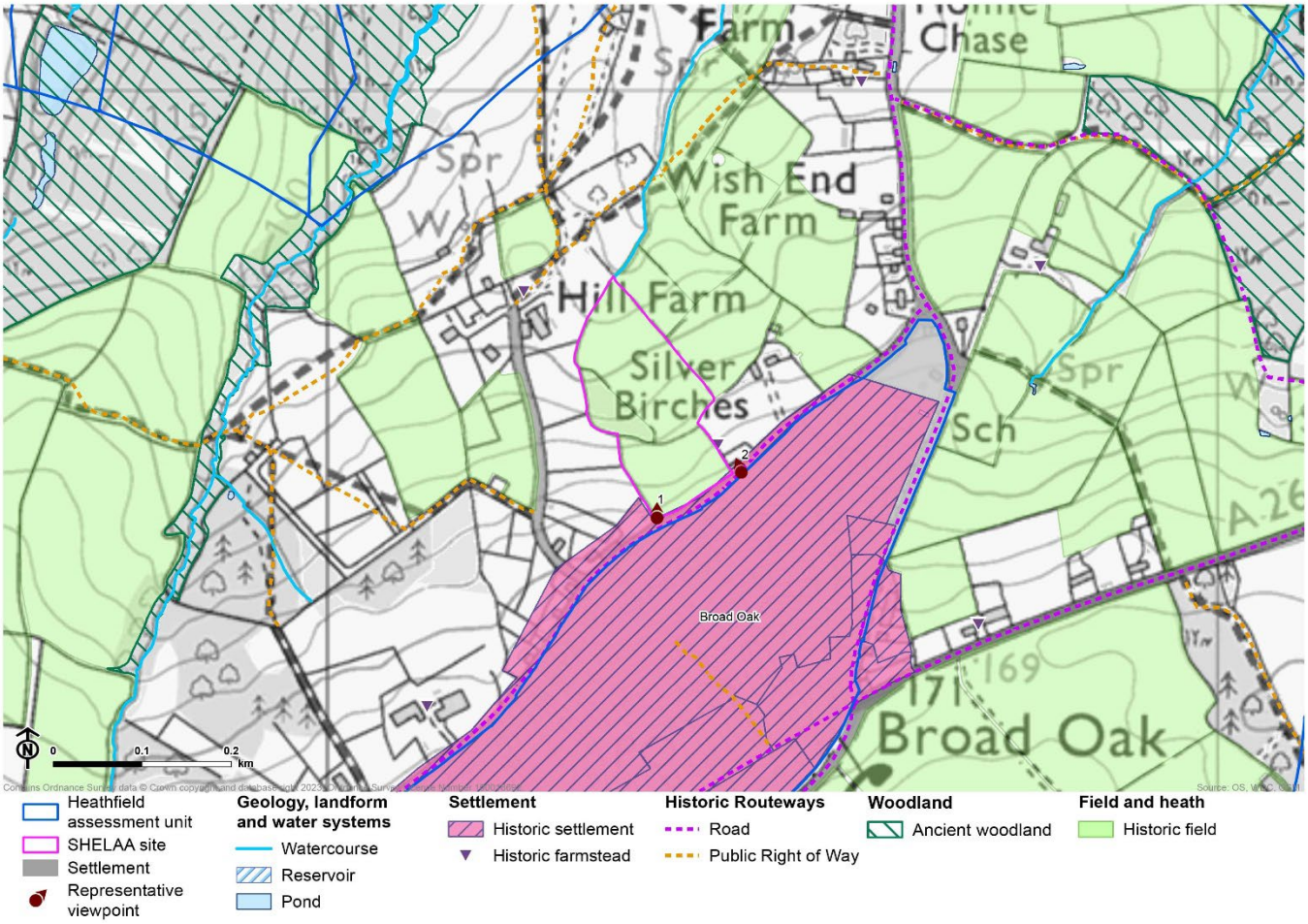


Figure 6: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Glimpsed views north-east across the site with mature in-field trees and long views across a valley to the wider High Weald AONB



Viewpoint 2: Falling topography with mature vegetation along boundaries and long views to the wider wooded High Weald AONB.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the sites in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald Central LCA and a small part of the 'complex ridge and valley landform' of the wider assessment unit. ■ It comprises a relatively steep slope, which falls from 150m AOD in the south to 120m AOD in the north towards an incised stream valley. **Natural character** ■ The site is pastoral in character, bounded by mature hedgerows on all sides, (which is typical of the wider assessment unit). ■ Mature wooded tree belts line the eastern and western boundaries, and there is a clump of mature trees in the centre and north-west corner of the site (remaining from a small woodland). **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The south of the site is derived from a regular piecemeal enclosure field pattern, while the north is part of a cohesive assart field pattern (as classified in the Sussex HLC and typical of the wider assessment unit). **Perceptual aspects** ■ Although the site is influenced by proximity to the settlement edge of Broad Oak, it experiences dark skies (light levels are recorded in the lower bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**) and some sense of tranquillity (which is recorded in the middle bands in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site provides separation between the settlement edge of Broad Oak and the historic farmstead at Hill Farm. The adjacent settlement edge to the south of the site runs along the top of the ridge and consists of Street End Lane, beyond which are bungalows and two-storey houses, with large, detached houses in closes and cul-de-sacs. The mature hedgerow along Street End Lane provides a strong boundary feature between the site and settlement. However, planning permission has been granted for four houses in the south of the site along Street End Lane, which will alter this strong boundary feature.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Mature hedgerows and vegetation along Street End Lane limit some visibility for people travelling along the road, although there may be more glimpsed views through gaps in vegetation in the winter months (when not in leaf). Residential properties on Street End Lane are elevated above the road, and therefore have close, open views into the site. Residents on roads further south within Broad Oak (e.g. Bracken Way and Gorse Hill) also have glimpsed views of the site through the gaps between properties. Views from Magreed Lane and the public right of way to the north are enclosed by mature hedgerows and vegetation, and the site's mature internal vegetation.
Extent of intervisibility within the High Weald AONB	Long glimpsed views from Street End Lane across the site to the wooded hills of the High Weald AONB.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems - a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB, contributing towards the *pattern of faults and folds.* There are no distinctive geological or water features within the site, although the northern tip of the site abuts the source of a stream.
Settlement - dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Broad Oak is a *village of Medieval origin* with its modern settlement edge along the southern boundary of the site. Hill Farm and Meadow Cottage contributes towards the *high density of historic farmsteads*[4] found within the AONB and while they are not within the site, they lie adjacent to it.
Routeways - a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths)	No historic routeways cross the site. However, Street End Lane along the southern boundary is recorded as a historic lane and contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland - abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Mature trees, the clump of trees/ deciduous woodland in the centre and north-west corner, and hedgerows along the field boundaries contribute towards the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges*, and part of an *irregularly shaped small woodland* remains in the north-west.
Field and heath - small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	*Generally irregular field pattern*, defined by hedgerows and mature vegetation, and used for *grazing livestock.* The small field in the north was created through assarting, contributing towards the *dominant Medieval character* of the AONB.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, with some *glimpsed long views* to the north across the small stream valley, towards wooded hills of the wider High Weald AONB, although roadside hedgerows limit views. The site is located within a relatively *dark landscape*. However, the sense of remoteness and tranquillity is influenced by proximity to the settlement of Broad Oak.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assesses the Heathfield assessment unit to have a **moderate-high sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform; strong natural character including areas of woodland, lowland meadows, grassland and heathland; areas of intact historic field pattern; historic features in the south-east; the rural setting provided to Heathfield and Old Heathfield; and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increases sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of existing ribbon development, modern agricultural buildings and a caravan park, and enclosure by woodland decrease sensitivity.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site is of **moderate-high sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), in line with the wider assessment unit. The site is undulating, is in pasture use, and contains mature tree belts and a tree clump in the centre. The north of the site retains a cohesive assart field pattern, and the site as a whole has a rural and relatively tranquil character, with long views across the site to the wider High Weald AONB, although this diminishes at the southern boundary when adjacent to the settlement. The site, therefore, demonstrates a number of the characteristics that increase sensitivity to development across the assessment unit. Vegetation along Street End Lane provides a semi-enclosed character to the site, which is one of the characteristics that decreases sensitivity across the

[4] As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 6).

wider assessment unit. The site also does not contain any priority habitats, ancient woodland, or any historic features which are characteristics that increase sensitivity to development in the wider assessment unit. The planning permission granted in the south of the site will not alter the sensitivity of the site as a whole, although the strong settlement boundary of the hedgerow along South End Lane will be weakened.

The site expresses some of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. In particular it forms part of the pattern of faults and folds and has mature field boundaries, with the irregularly-shaped woodland in the north-west contributing to the highly interconnected woodlands in the locality. The site also has a small irregular field pattern with the assart field pattern in the north contributing towards the dominant Medieval character across the AONB, and there are glimpsed long views north to the wooded hills of the wider High Weald AONB.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Changes to the relatively steeply sloping valley side as a result of interventions/ earthworks upon the landform. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Pattern of faults and folds.	■ Limit the extent of development 'spilling' beyond the ridge crest onto the relatively steep valley side, to minimise alterations to the landform.
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the screening they provide, the role they play in defining the settlement edge and the rural character. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods… and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature trees, hedgerows and the clump of trees/ deciduous woodland in the centre/ north-west corner of the site. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors, that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible and suitable).
Loss of grazed pastures and the assart field pattern (which contributes to the medieval character and time depth), as well as the loss/ deterioration of the small-scale field pattern with largely intact hedgerow field boundaries. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ A generally irregular field pattern. ■ Medieval character. ■ Fields mostly used for grazing livestock.	■ Loss of pasture and the assart field pattern would be largely unavoidable with development of the site, as development would remove land from agricultural use. However, field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern.
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary.

High Weald AONB character component: ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[5] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Deterioration of the rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Broad Oak. Ridgetop settlement pattern eroded by development located on the valley slopes. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Village of Medieval origin.	■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[6], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[7] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[8]. ■ Locate development in the south of the site to relate to the existing ridgetop settlement pattern.
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ pedestrians, motorists/cyclists and residents along Street End Lane to the south; ■ residents along Gorse Hill and Bracken Way to the south; ■ residents at Hill Farm and to the north-west ■ residents at Meadow Cottage to the south-east; and ■ recreational users along the footpath to the north.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the mature trees and hedgerows. ■ Retain the glimpsed long views from Street End Lane across the site, over the stream valley to the wooded hills of the wider High Weald AONB. ■ Screen development from the historic farmstead at Hill Farm to the north-west and Meadow Cottage to the south-east. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local, native species, where possible / suitable, to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within the site to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Consider views of development from the wider AONB to the north, siting development where well enclosed by vegetation. ■ Enhance public access.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend development beyond the existing robust boundary of Street End Lane, although there are residential buildings north of Street End Lane to the west of the site. Development in the north of the site, on the valley slopes, would not confirm with the existing ridgetop settlement pattern. Development of this site would also result in the loss of an assart field pattern.

Should development come forward on this site, the key recommendations are to:

[5] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/
[6] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[7] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[8] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

- Retain, protect and enhance mature trees/ deciduous woodland and hedgerows within and bounding the site.
- Retain glimpsed long views from Street End Lane across the site, over the stream valley to the wooded hills of the wider High Weald AONB.
- Locate development in the south of the site to better relate to existing settlement and to minimise any development 'spilling' onto the relatively steep valley side.

Collins Field, Burwash Road (848/1210)

Site Details	
Potential development	Employment use
Site location	This site lies between Heathfield and Broad Oak, north of the A265 Burwash Road, adjacent to the Burwash Road Business Area.

Figure 7: Site location and constraints

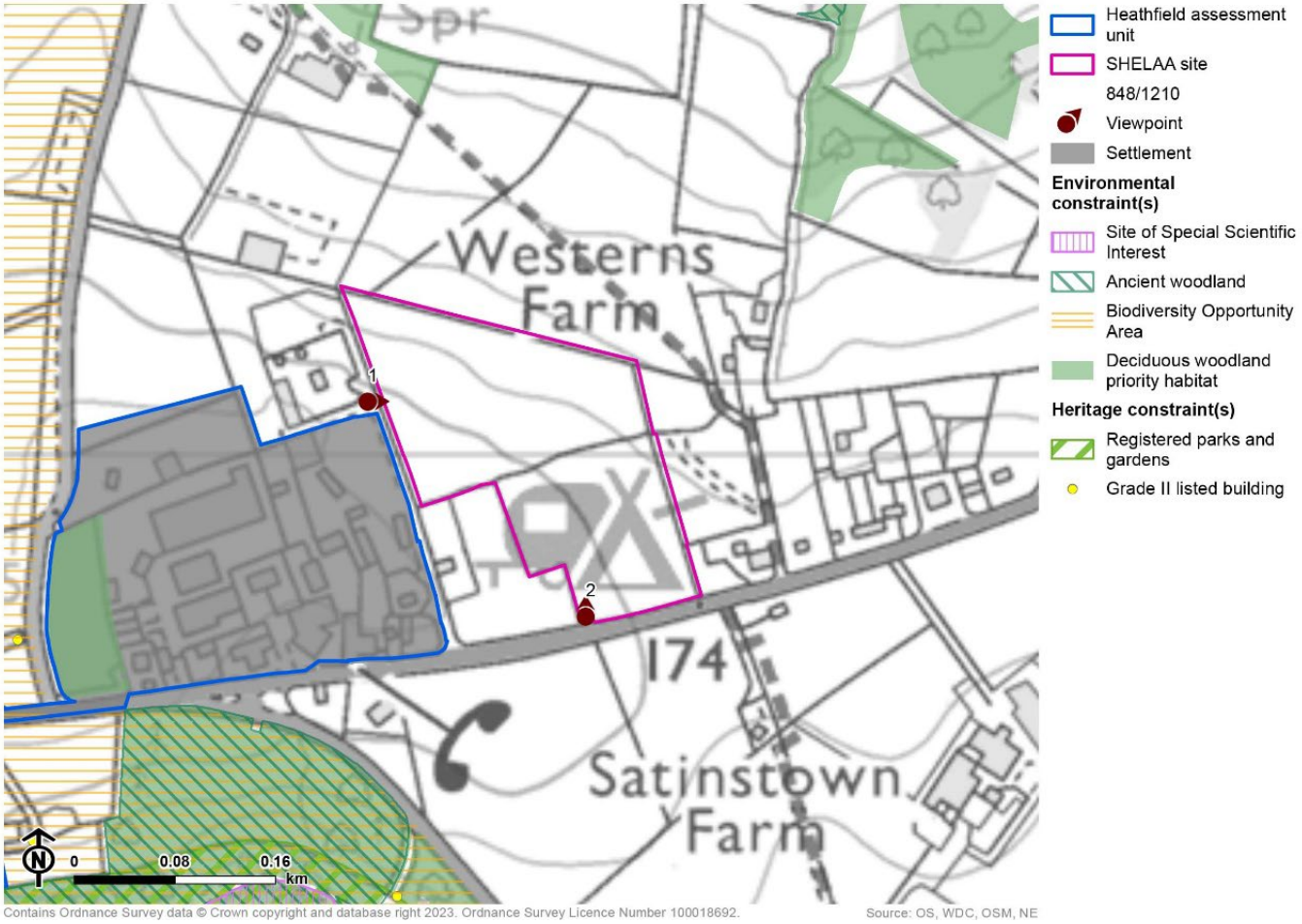
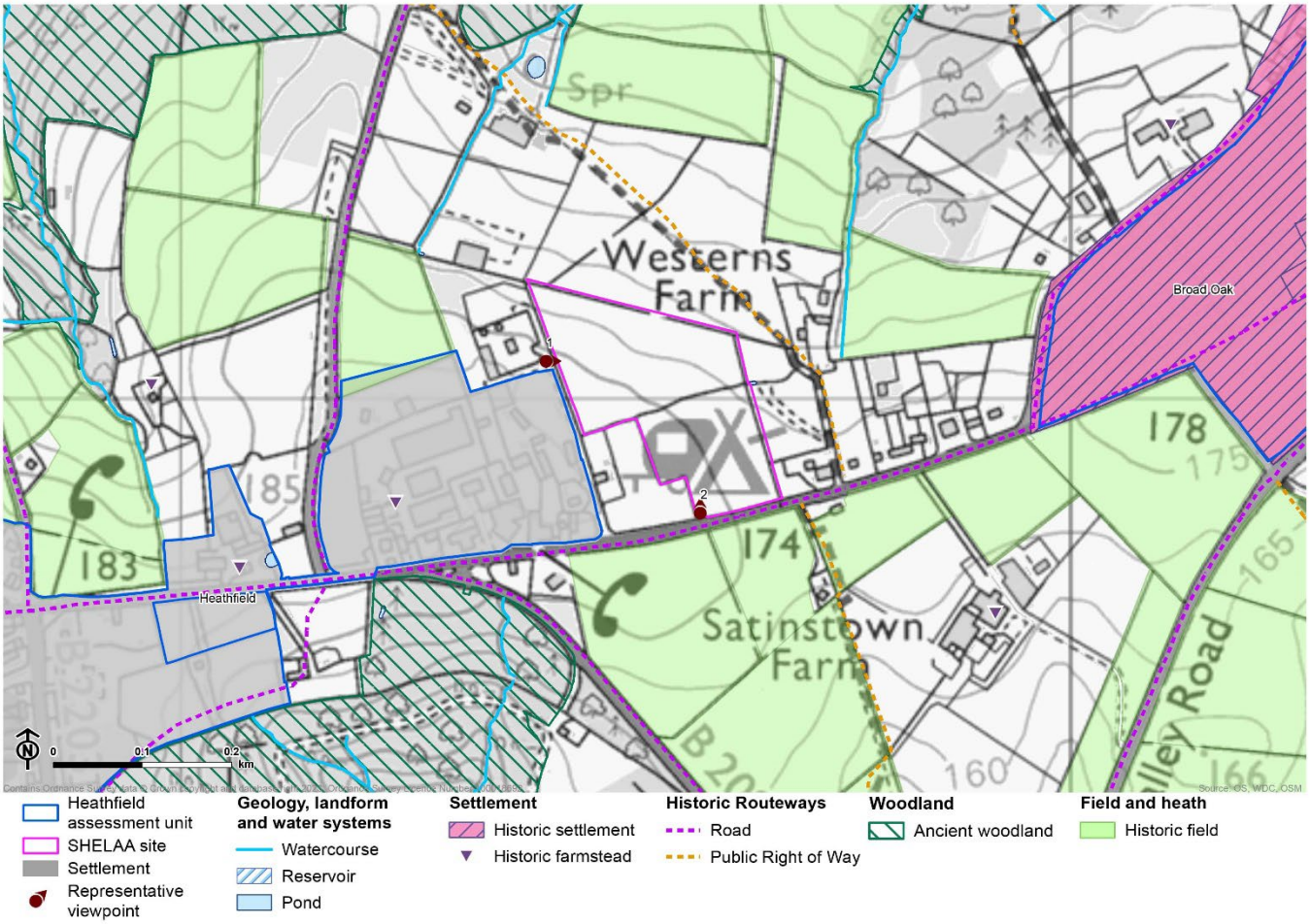


Figure 8: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Site in use for cow grazing, with long views east to the wider High Weald AONB through mature hedgerows and vegetation on the site boundaries



Viewpoint 2: Grassland field with mature hedgerow trees along internal boundaries.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald Central LCA, and a small part of the 'complex ridge and valley landform' of the wider assessment unit. ■ It gently slopes from 180m AOD in the south to 170m AOD in the north. **Natural character** ■ The site is in grazing use, with mature hedgerow trees marking the internal field boundaries, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ There are some in-field trees in the south of the site. Mature vegetation and hedgerows line the A265 Burwash Road and on the western site boundary. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The south of the site is derived from a regular piecemeal enclosure field pattern, while the north is part of a planned private enclosure field pattern (as classified in the Sussex HLC and typical of the wider assessment unit). **Perceptual aspects** ■ The south of the site is influenced by proximity to the A265 Burwash Road and Burwash Road Business Area, with relatively low levels of tranquillity recorded in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping (**Figure 3**), whereas the north of the site has relatively high levels of tranquillity. The A265 Burwash Road and proximity to settlement disrupt the experience of dark skies – light levels are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping (**Figure 4)**.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site lies 380m east of Heathfield and 280m west of Broad Oak. The edges of Heathfield and Broad Oak are not well-defined due to considerable ribbon development along the A265 Burwash Road. This includes the Burwash Road Business Area of low-lying large commercial units, household recycling centre, a 3.5 storey residential apartment block, caravan park and detached two storey houses. The western edge of the site is adjacent to the business centre, with hedgerows separating the site from the commercial area.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Mature hedgerows and trees along the A265 Burwash Road limit visibility for people travelling along Burwash Road. Residential properties on Burwash Road are at an oblique angle to the site and would have limited views. Users of the informal carpark to the west of the site have clear views into the site. Views into the site from the road leading to the household recycling centre are partially screened by hedgerows. Users of the public right of way to the north-east experience some views into the site, although these are limited by the mature field boundaries around the site.
Extent of intervisibility within the High Weald AONB	Long glimpsed views of the wooded hills of the wider High Weald AONB to the north-east and south across the A265 Burwash Road. There are few views from the AONB looking back to the site.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems - a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB, contributing towards the *pattern of faults and folds.* There are no distinctive geological or water features within the site.
Settlement - dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	There is no historic settlement (including historic farmsteads) within or adjacent to the site.
Routeways - a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths)	No historic routeways cross the site. However, the A265 Burwash Road along the southern boundary is recorded as a ridgeway, which contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland - abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	The mature trees along the internal field boundary are *trees used for boundary markers* and contribute towards the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges.*
Field and heath - small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The site fits into a wider, generally *irregular field pattern*, defined by hedgerows and mature vegetation. The site is used for *grazing livestock.*
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, with some *glimpsed long views* to the north-east and south towards wooded hills of the wider High Weald AONB. The north of the site is relatively tranquil, despite proximity to the A265 Burwash Road.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit
The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assesses the Heathfield assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to commercial/ industrial development. The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform; strong natural character including areas of woodland, lowland meadows, grassland and heathland; areas of intact historic field pattern; historic features in the south-east; the rural setting provided to Heathfield and Old Heathfield; and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increases sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of existing ribbon development, modern agricultural buildings and a caravan park, and enclosure by woodland decrease sensitivity.

The Site
Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **moderate-high** sensitivity to commercial/industrial development. The site has a gently undulating topography, is in pasture use and contains mature hedgerow trees. It retains its historic field pattern, contributes to the separation of development along the A265 and has high levels of tranquillity in the north, with glimpsed views to the wider AONB. The site therefore demonstrates some of the characteristics that increase sensitivity to development across the assessment unit. However, the site has a semi-enclosed character and is adjacent to existing ribbon and commercial development, which are some of the characteristics that contribute to a lower degree of sensitivity across the wider assessment unit. The site also does not contain any ancient woodland, priority habitats or historic features, which are characteristics that increase sensitivity in the wider assessment unit. The south of the site is more sensitive along Burwash Road as it has an important role in the perception of separation of Heathfield and Broad Oak.

The site does not strongly express many of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. The components of character that it does express are that it forms part of the pattern of faults and folds, its use for grazing

livestock, its highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of outgrown hedges, the irregular field pattern, and the glimpsed long views to the wooded hills of the wider High Weald AONB to the north-east and south.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature trees and hedgerows, affecting the screening role they provide and the rural character. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges. ■ Trees used for boundary markers.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature trees, hedgerows and the mature hedgerow trees along the internal field boundary in the centre of the site. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors (that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible).
Loss or deterioration of the grazed pastures, and the loss/ deterioration of the small-scale field pattern. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ A generally irregular field pattern. ■ Fields mostly used for grazing livestock.	■ Loss of pasture would be unavoidable with development of the site, as development would remove land from agricultural use with limited opportunities to retain areas due to the small scale of the site. However, field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Extension of development along the A265 Burwash Road, reducing the separation between Heathfield and Broad Oak. Deterioration of the rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Heathfield and Broad Oak.	■ Provide some set back to any development in the south of the site along the A265 Burwash Road to retain the perception of separation between Heathfield and Broad Oak. ■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[9], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[10] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[11].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by:	■ Retain, enhance and protect all existing vegetation including the hedgerow boundaries that enclose the site to the north and east.

[9] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[10] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[11] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

■ pedestrians, motorists/cyclists and residents along the A265 Burwash Road to the south; ■ users of the Burwash Road Business Area including the recycling centre; ■ users of the informal car park to the west of the site; and ■ users of the footpath to the north-east.	■ Screen new development with additional planting, using native local species, where possible / suitable, to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Set back any development in the south of the site from the A236 Burwash Road to reduce the impact on views from users of the A265 Burwash Road and the informal car park to the west of the site. This will also avoid the perception of continual commercial development from Newick Lane in the west to Iden's Lane in the east. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development on the site to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Consider views of development from the footpath to the north-east, retaining and enhancing trees/woodland to screen views into the site. ■ Enhance public access and provide opportunities to experience the surrounding woodlands.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend commercial/employment development along the A265 Burwash Road and increase the perception of coalescence between Heathfield and Broad Oak. Development on the site would not cross a distinctive boundary feature, and hedgerows and mature trees largely limit views into the site.

Should development come forward on the site, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance mature trees and hedgerows.
- Set development back from the A265 Burwash Road to avoid perceptions of coalescence, and away from the footpath to the north-east.
- Intersperse any development in the south along the A265 Burwash Road with green open space and tree planting to avoid perceptions of continual commercial development along the road.

Land south of Burwash Road and east of Tower Street (260/1210)

Site Details	
Potential development	20 residential dwellings
Site location	This site lies east of Heathfield, to the south of the A265 Burwash Road and east of recent development at Blackberry Mews.

Figure 9: Site location and constraints

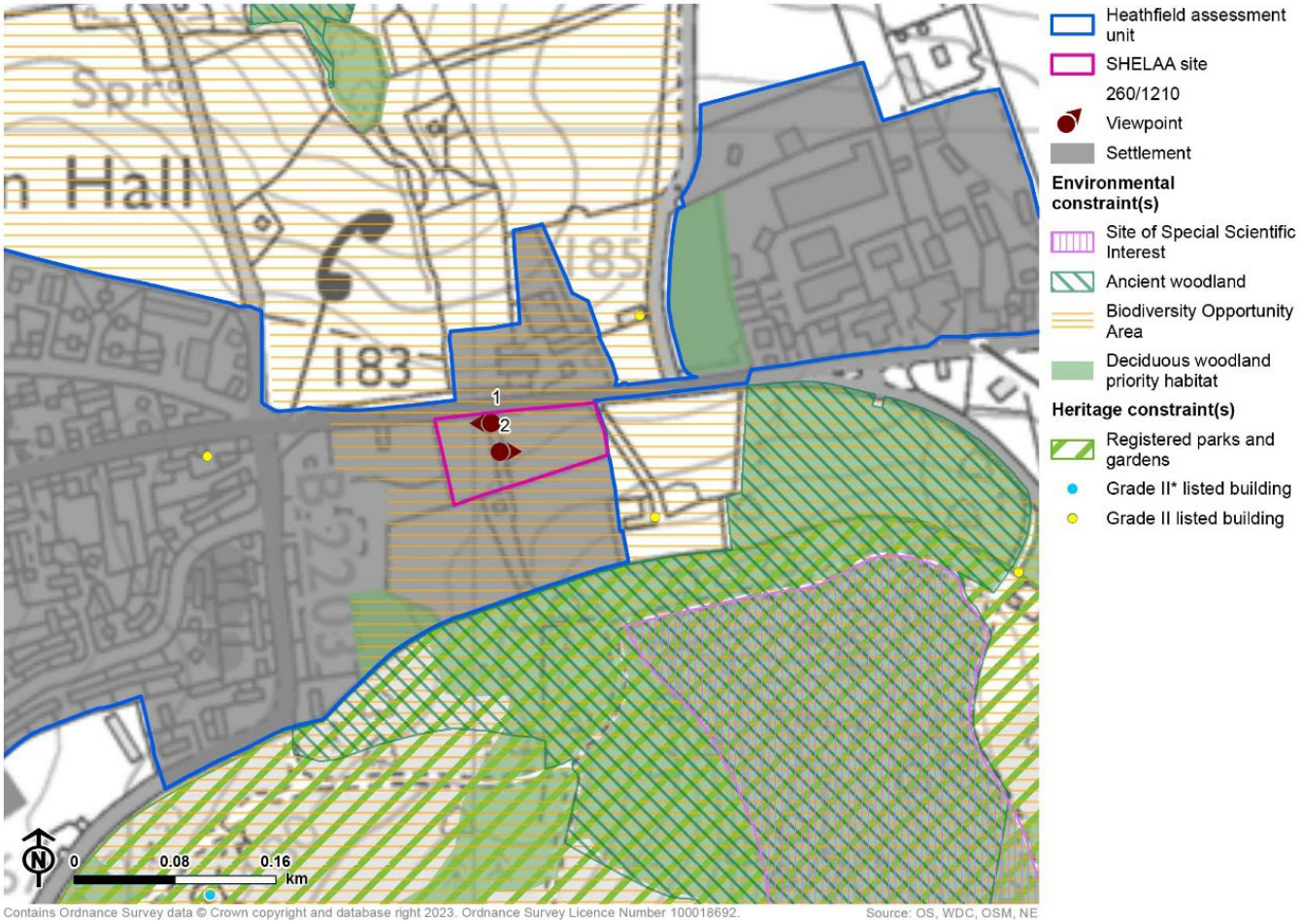
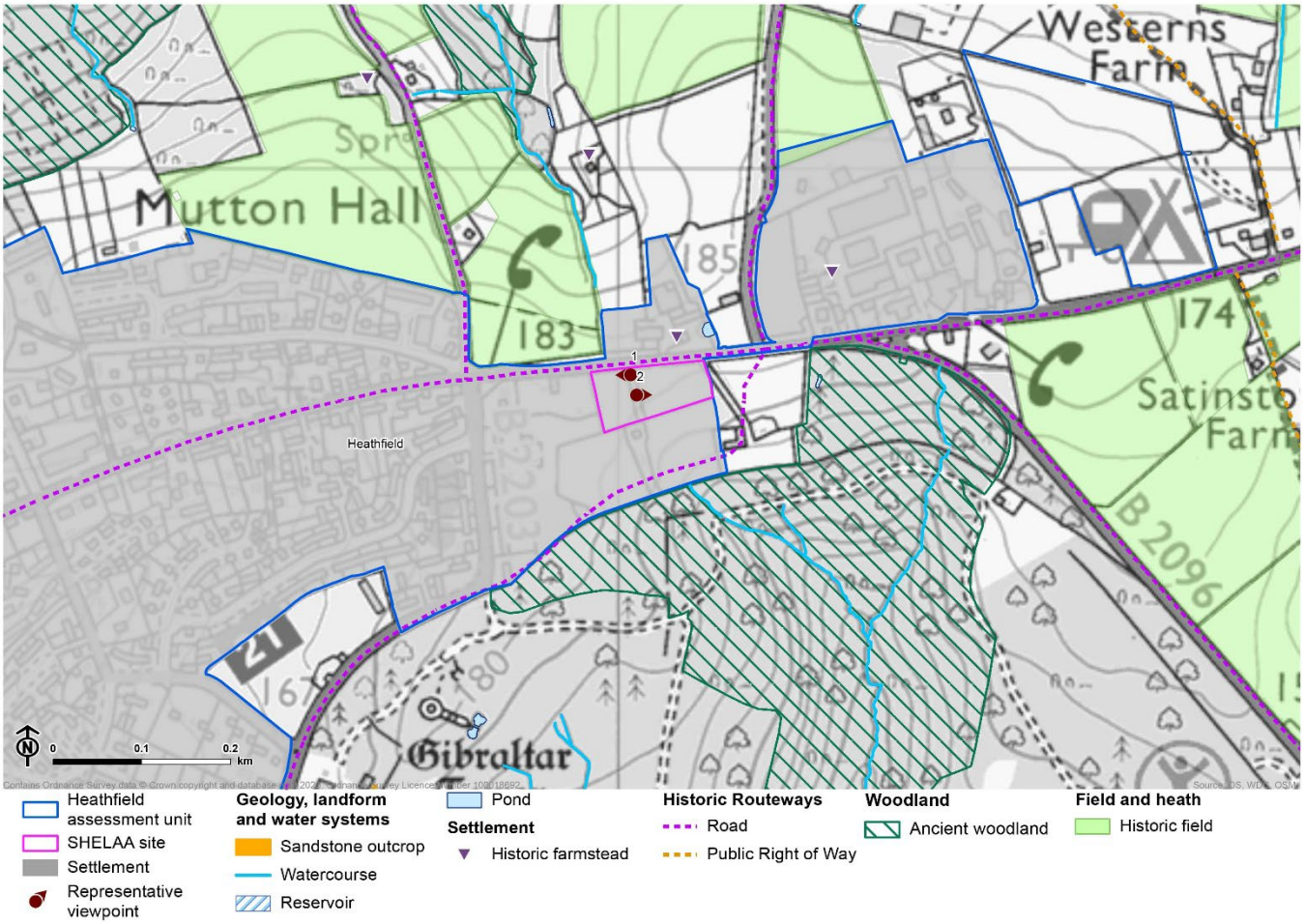


Figure 10: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: View into the western part of the site with scrubby grassland, and views to development in Blackberry Mews to the west.



Viewpoint 2: View into the eastern part of the site with a meadow character and mature in-field tree.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site is generally flat, and lies around 180m AOD, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit. **Natural character** ■ The eastern part of the site comprises grassland, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. The western part of the site is scrubby grassland with piles of stones and waste and does not appear to be in use. ■ Mature hedgerows with occasional trees line the A265 Burwash Road (along the northern boundary of the site), and there are some mature in-field trees in the east of the site. The site is within the Heathfield Habitat Link BOA, which is common within the wider assessment unit. ■ The site lies 75m north of ancient woodland at Heathfield Park and 130m north of the Heathfield Park SSSI. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site is derived from a regular piecemeal enclosure field pattern (as classified in the Sussex HLC and typical of the wider assessment unit). ■ A Grade II listed building lies 60m south-east of the site, and the Heathfield Park Registered Park and Garden is 80m to the south. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The site is influenced by its proximity to the A265 Burwash Road and settlement edge of Heathfield, as shown in the relatively low levels of tranquillity recorded in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping (**Figure 3**). These also disrupt the experience of dark skies – light levels are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping (**Figure 4**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The eastern settlement edge of Heathfield is relatively dispersed; however, Heathfield Park forms a soft settlement boundary. The settlement edge along Tower Street consists of bungalows and two-storey 20th century detached houses. A new development of four houses in a cul-de-sac at Blackberry Mews off the A265 Burwash Road has extended the settlement edge further east, and this marks the western boundary of the site. A new development of seven houses and eight flats is currently under construction opposite the northern edge of the site.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Mature hedgerows and trees along the A265 Burwash Road restrict visibility for people travelling along the road. Views from Blackberry Mews to the west are limited by mature vegetation and fencing, although some views are possible. A single house, Parklands, lies to the south of the site, and there is visibility of the site. There will be some views into the site from the entrance of the new development to the north of the A265 Burwash Road.
Extent of intervisibility within the High Weald AONB	Mature vegetation and hedgerows result in very limited intervisibility with the wider High Weald AONB, although there are some glimpsed long-distance views to the south.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems - a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	There are no distinctive geological, landform or water features within the site.
Settlement - dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	North Down farmstead to the north of the site contributes to the *high density of historic farmsteads* found within the AONB.
Routeways - a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths)	No historic routeways cross the site. The A265 Burwash Road along the northern boundary is recorded as a ridgeway, which contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways, although it is urbanised at this location.
Woodland - abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	The east of the site contains mature in-field trees, which contribute towards the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges*.
Field and heath - small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	Generally *small irregular field pattern*, defined by hedgerows and mature vegetation.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, although is enclosed by vegetation, and its proximity to the A265 Burwash Road reduces tranquillity and dark night skies.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assesses the Heathfield assessment unit to have a **moderate-high** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform; strong natural character including areas of woodland, lowland meadows, grassland and heathland; areas of intact historic field pattern; historic features in the south-east; the rural setting provided to Heathfield and Old Heathfield; and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increases sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of existing ribbon development, modern agricultural buildings and a caravan park, and enclosure by woodland decrease sensitivity.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit, and has a **moderate** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The site contains a small area of grassland in the east, mature hedgerows and in-field trees, retains its historic field pattern, and has some glimpsed long-distance views of the wider AONB, all of which are features that increase sensitivity to development in the wider assessment unit. However, the site is adjacent to existing ribbon development, including some modern housing development to the west and north, is next to the busy A265 Burwash Road which reduces tranquillity and is largely enclosed from view. These are features that decrease sensitivity to development across the assessment unit. The site is also relatively flat and does not contain any ancient woodland, priority habitats, or historic features, which are characteristics that increase sensitivity in the wider assessment unit. The west of the site is less sensitive due to its relationship with the existing settlement edge of Heathfield and will be close to development under construction to the north.

The site expresses a few of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. In particular, the site has a regular field pattern and the North Down farmhouse contributes to the high density of historic farmsteads. The in-field trees

within the site contribute to the highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands and outgrown hedges in the wider AONB and the site contributes towards the scenic beauty of the wider AONB.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, particularly the mature in-field trees in the east. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible and suitable. ■ Take up biological opportunities listed in the Heathfield Habitat Link BOA, where possible.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Extension of development further east from the existing edge of Heathfield. Deterioration of the rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Heathfield.	■ Locate development towards the west of the site to better relate to the existing settlement pattern, including recent development at Blackberry Mews. Provide pedestrian access between the site, Blackberry Mews and the residential edge of Heathfield. ■ Consider visual and access links between any development on the site and development under construction to the north of the A265 Burwash Road. ■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[12], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[13] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[14].
Reduction in the perceived separation between the settlements of Heathfield and Broad Oak.	■ Set development back from the A265 Burwash Road to retain the perception of separation between Heathfield and Broad Oak.
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ pedestrians, motorists and cyclists, and residents along the A265 Burwash Road (including	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the thick hedgerow boundaries that enclose the site.

[12] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[13] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[14] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

development currently under construction) to the north; ■ residents of Parklands, to the south of the site; and ■ residents at Blackberry Mews to the west.	■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable, to maintain the rural character of the wider assessment unit and landscape. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within the development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Consider views of development from Parklands to the south, retaining and enhancing trees/ hedgerows to screen views into the site. ■ Enhance public access and provide opportunities for pedestrian links between the site, Blackberry Mews and the residential edge of Heathfield.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend development further along the A265 Burwash Road. However, the site has a visual and physical connection with existing development on the A265 Burwash Road, and roadside vegetation and in-field trees limit views into the site.

Should development come forward on this site, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance trees and hedgerows, including mature in-field trees in the east.
- Locate development towards the west of the site to better relate to the existing settlement edge.

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities of development on the site.

Figure 11: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

Land south-west of Ghyll Road, Tilsmore (149/1210)

Site Context	
Potential development	35 residential dwellings
Site location	This site lies west of Heathfield, to the west of Jubilee Park and north of Pook Reed Lane.

Figure 12: Site location and constraints

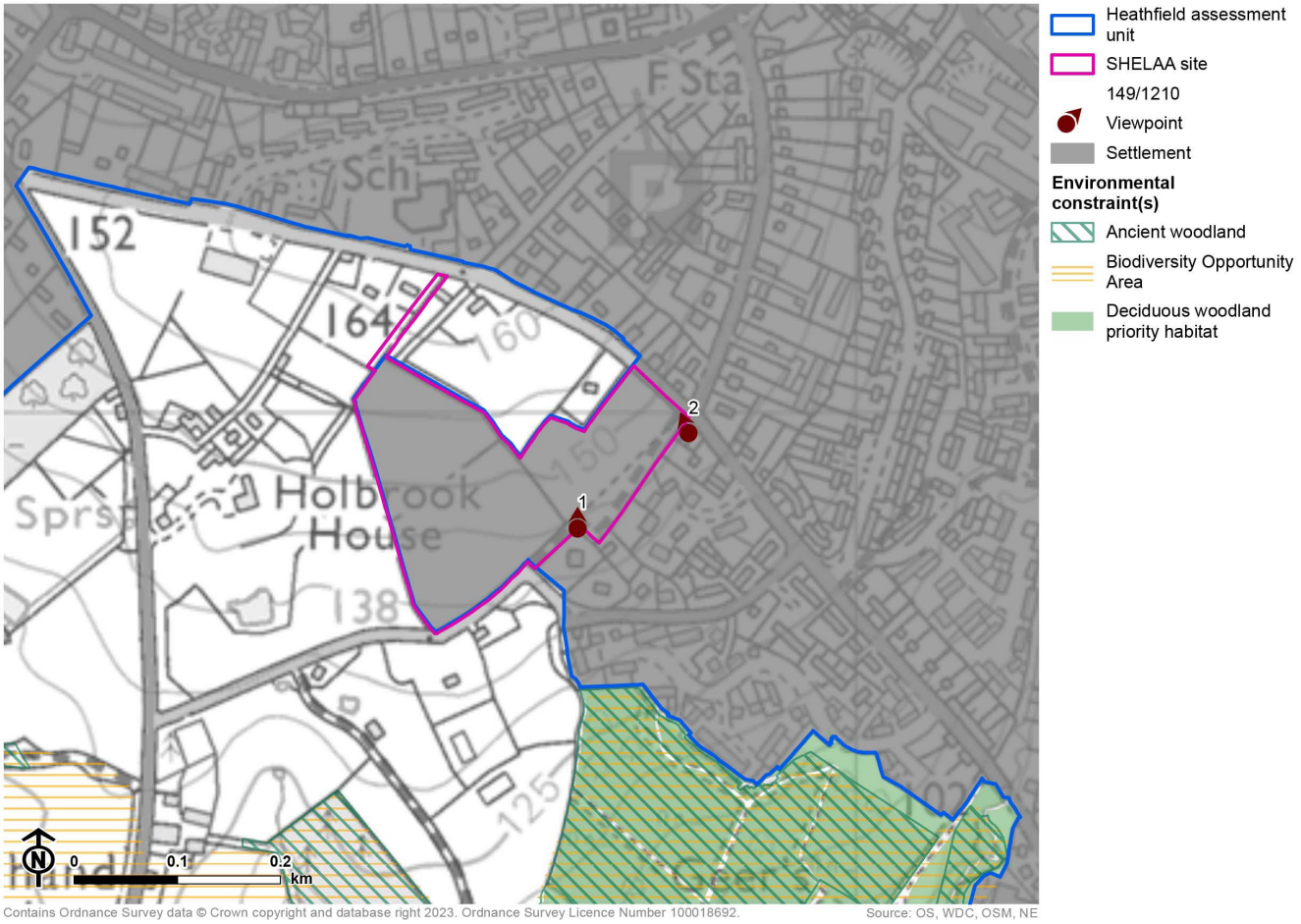
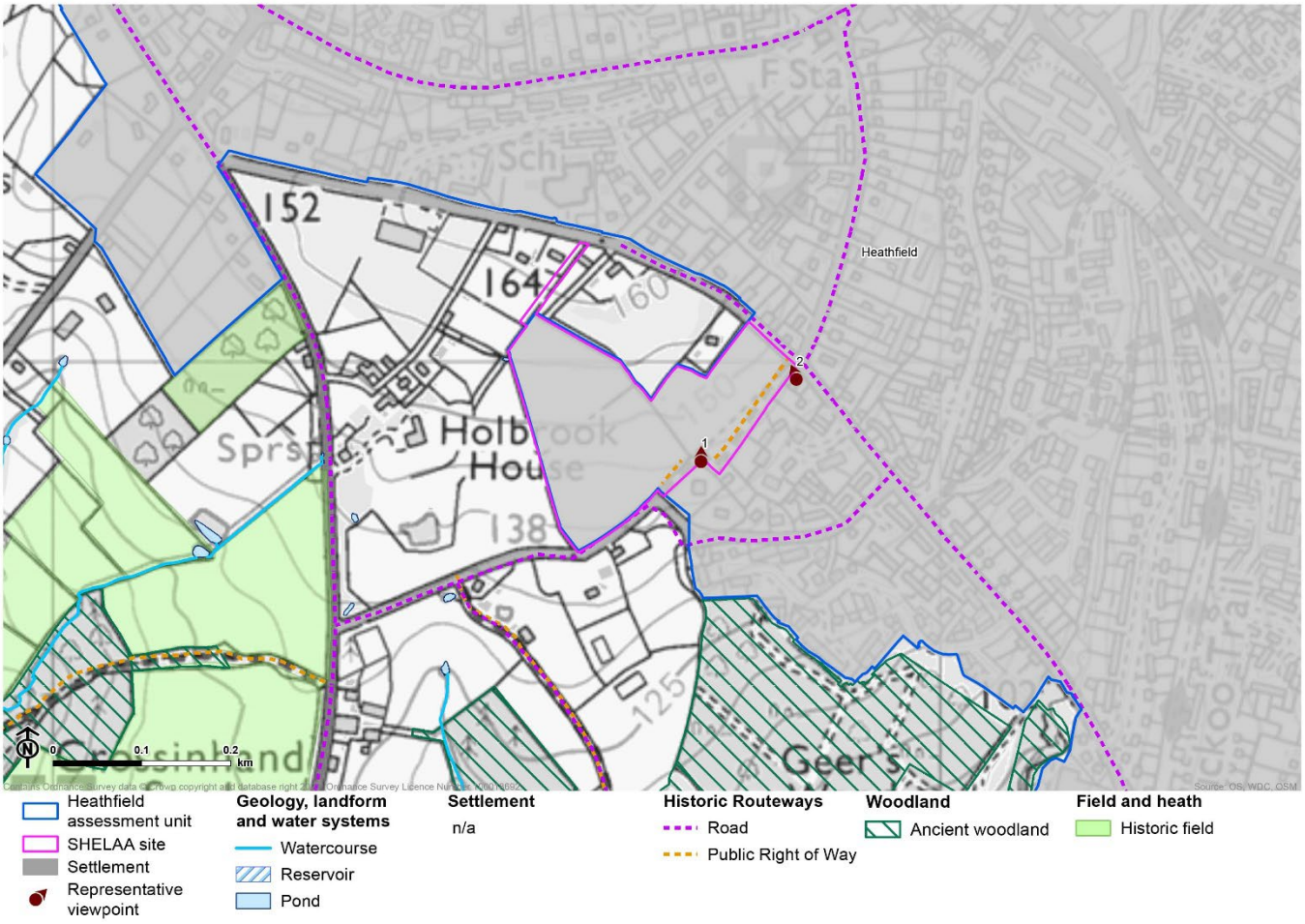


Figure 13: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Eastern part of site in use for grazing, with small barns along the northern boundary and mature internal field boundaries



Viewpoint 2: Mature vegetation along the public right of way along the south-eastern boundary restricts views into the site.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald Central LCA, and a small part of the 'complex ridge and valley landform' of the wider assessment unit. ■ It comprises a gentle slope falling from 155m AOD in the north-west to 140m AOD in the south-west. **Natural character** ■ The site is in use for grazing, and bounded by mature hedgerows on the southern and eastern boundaries, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Trees and a young woodland in the south-west are valued semi-natural habitats (typical of the wider assessment unit). **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The whole site is derived from a regular piecemeal enclosure field pattern, as classified in the Sussex HLC and typical of the wider assessment unit. However, the infield trees and grazing lead to a parkland character in the west. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The site is influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge of Heathfield, with low levels of tranquillity (as recorded in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping) (**Figure 3)** and limited experience of dark skies (light levels are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping) (**Figure 4**). ■ The west of the site has a more rural character.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The western settlement edge of Heathfield was originally contained by Ghyll Road; however development at Wayside Walk and Geers Wood in the 20th century has crossed this boundary to the south-east of the site. The settlement edge along Ghyll Road along the eastern site boundary, and Wayside Walk to the south-east consists of bungalows and two-storey 20th century detached and semi-detached houses. Jubilee Park provides a recreational edge to development east of Ghyll Road. The settlement pattern along Pook Reed Lane to the south-west is more dispersed, with individual large detached houses, often with long driveways are set back from the road. The hedgerows and mature trees along Ghyll Road and Pook Reed Lane provide strong boundary features between the site and settlement.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Mature hedgerows and trees along Ghyll Road and Pook Reed Lane limit visibility for people travelling along the south-eastern and south-western boundaries, and for residents on these roads. Jubilee Park is next to the east of the site, and there are some limited views from the park. Views from the park are generally screened by mature vegetation and hedgerows. A public right of way runs along the south-eastern site boundary, with occasional views into the site at gated entrances.
Extent of intervisibility within the High Weald AONB	Mature vegetation and hedgerows result in limited intervisibility with the wider High Weald AONB.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems - a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB, contributing to the *pattern of faults and folds,* falling to a *small stream* to the south.
Settlement - dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	There is no historic settlement (including historic farmsteads) within or adjacent to the site.
Routeways - a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the site. However, Ghyll Road and Pook Reed Lane are recorded as a historic lane and track respectively, contributing towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland - abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Mature in-field trees and grazing contribute to a *wood-pasture and parkland* character in the west. *Trees used as boundary markers* are apparent in hedgerows and contribute towards the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges*.
Field and heath - small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The site consists generally of *irregular field pattern*, defined by hedgerows and mature vegetation. The site is used for *grazing livestock.*
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site is largely enclosed by vegetation, although there are *glimpsed long views* across the site from Jubilee Park. The site is surrounded by residential development to the south-east and east, which reduces tranquillity and dark night skies, although there is a more rural character in the west of the site, away from the existing settlement edge.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assesses the Heathfield assessment unit to have a **moderate-high sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform; strong natural character including areas of woodland, lowland meadows, grassland and heathland; areas of intact historic field pattern; historic features in the south-east; the rural setting provided to Heathfield and Old Heathfield; and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increases sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of existing ribbon development, modern agricultural buildings and a caravan park, and enclosure by woodland decrease sensitivity.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site is also of **moderate-high** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), in line with the wider assessment unit. The site is undulating, is in use for grazing and contains mature hedgerows with an intact historic field pattern, and therefore demonstrates some of the characteristics that increase sensitivity to development across the assessment unit. However, it contains no ancient woodland, priority habitats, or historic features except for the field pattern. The east of the site is in close proximity to residential development along Ghyll Road, Wayside Walk and Pook Reed Lane, and is largely contained by woodland, all of which contribute to a decrease in sensitivity to development across the assessment unit. Trees and young woodland in the west of the site are of a higher sensitivity than the fields in the east.

The site also expresses some of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. In particular, it forms part of the pattern of faults and folds and the west of the site has a wood-pasture and parkland character. The field boundaries and in-field trees contribute to the highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands and

outgrown hedges within the AONB. The site also has an irregular field pattern and there are glimpsed long views across the site to the wider High Weald AONB.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature trees and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows, particularly in the west, through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable.
Loss or deterioration of features contributing towards the parkland character of west of the site, particularly the in-field trees and the grazed pastures. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ A generally irregular field pattern. ■ Wood-pasture and parkland. ■ Fields mostly used for grazing livestock.	■ Retain, and set back development from, the in-field trees and young woodland in the west. ■ Loss of pasture would be unavoidable with development of the site, as any development would remove land from agricultural use, with limited opportunities to retain areas due to the scale of the site. However, field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Deterioration of the rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Heathfield. Extension of development beyond the robust boundary provided by the hedgerow and mature trees between the site and properties on the edge of the settlement.	■ Locate development along Ghyll Road in the east of the site, so it relates to the existing settlement edge. ■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[15], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[16] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[17].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ pedestrians, road users, and residents along Ghyll Road to the south-east;	■ Retain the semi-rural character of the footpath along the south-eastern boundary by setting development back from the footpath.

[15] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[16] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[17] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

■ pedestrians, road users and residents along Pook Reed Lane to the south; ■ recreational users of Jubilee Park to the east; and ■ users of the footpath along the south-eastern boundary.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the thick hedgerow boundaries that enclose the site. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species, where possible / suitable, to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Enhance public access including linking development on the site with Wayside Walk and Pook Reed Lane, and the recreational opportunities at Jubilee Park. ■ Position development within the site to retain the glimpsed long views from Jubilee Park across the site to the wider High Weald AONB.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would increase development along the west of Ghyll Road and would be perceived as advancement into the countryside. However, hedgerows and mature trees largely limit views into the site, and there is existing residential development to the south-east and north-east of the site.

Should development come forward on this site, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance mature trees and hedgerows.
- Retain the parkland character in the west of the site.
- Locate development to the east along Ghyll Road to better relate to the existing settlement edge.

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities of development on the site.

Figure 14: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

Land to the rear of Rothershaw, High Street (525/1210) and Land at Tilsmore Nurseries, off Nursery Way (307/1210)

Site Context	
Potential development	525/1210: 15 residential dwellings 307/1210: 15 residential dwellings Total: 30 residential dwellings. For the purpose of this landscape and visual appraisal the above SHELAA sites have been considered together.
Site location	These sites are adjacent to the northern boundary of Heathfield, to the south of Tilsmore and Markly Woods (ancient woodlands). The sites are located between recent development at Millennium Way and Centenary Drive to the east and Fallow Drive to the west.

Figure 15: Site location and constraints

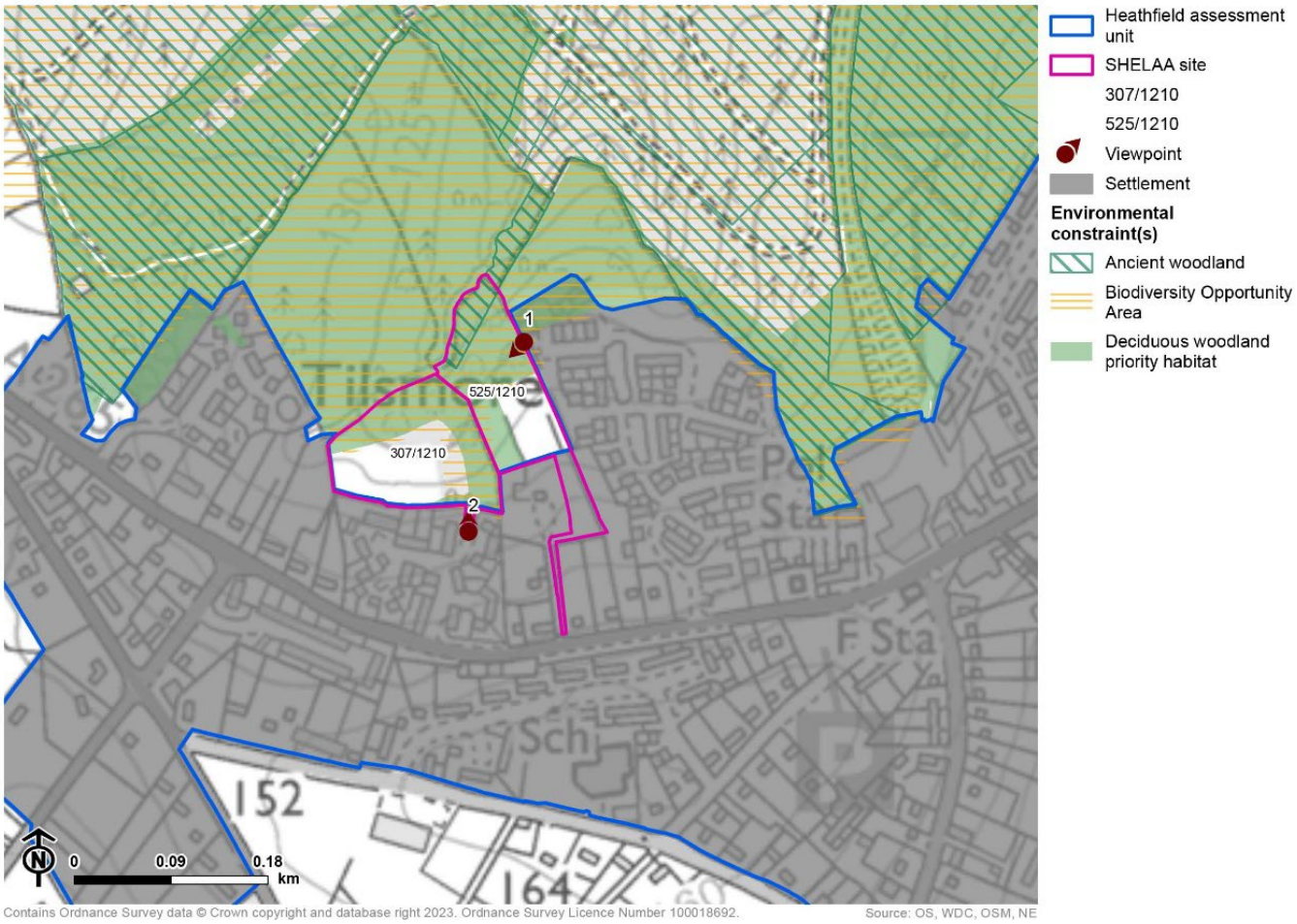
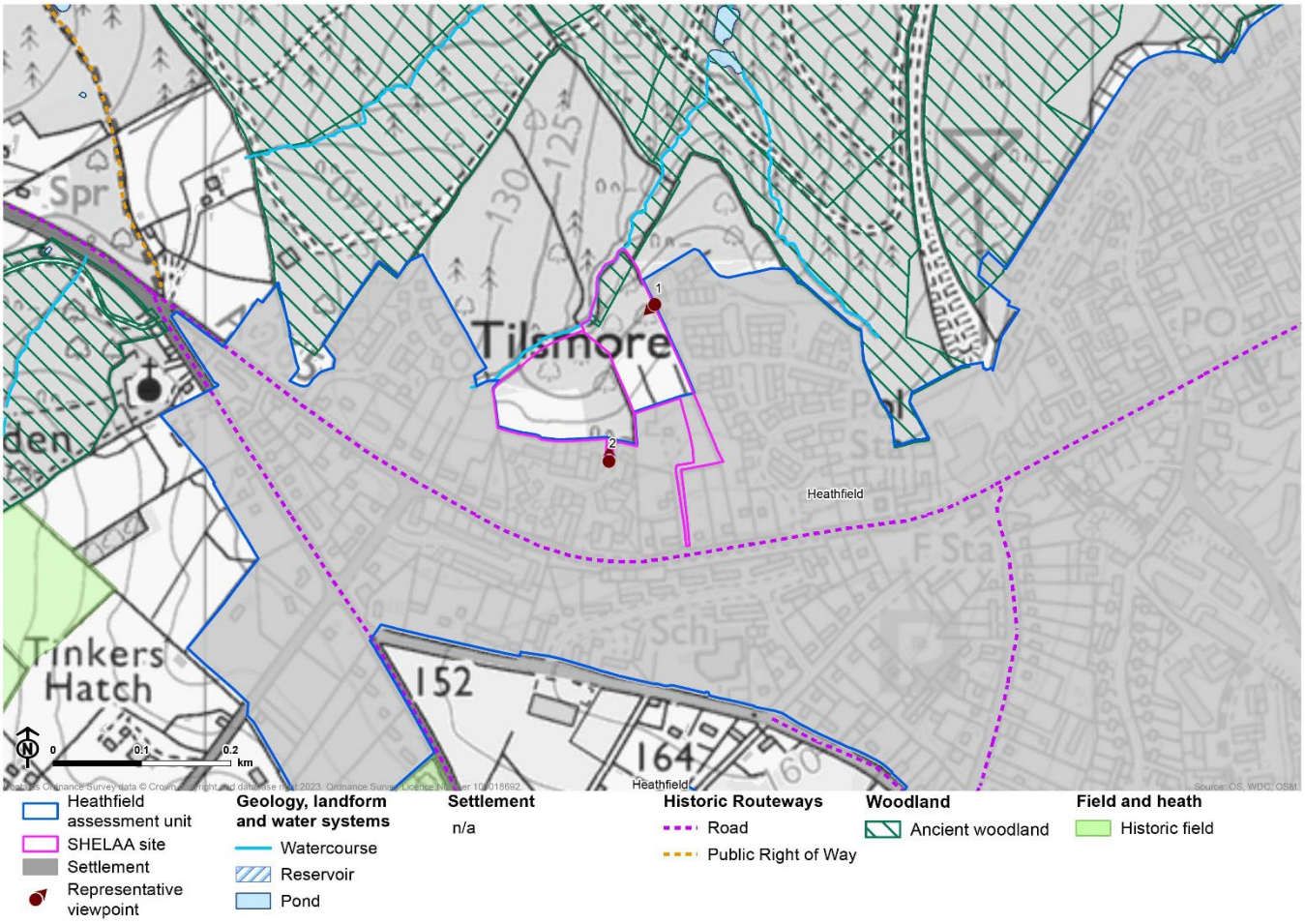


Figure 16: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Woodland character of **site 525/1210** seen from Century Drive.



Viewpoint 2: Woodland and parkland character of **site 307/1210** seen from Nursery Way.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The sites form part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald Central LCA, and a small part of the 'complex ridge and valley landform' of the wider assessment unit. ■ The sites slope from 150m AOD in the south to 125m AOD in the north. **Natural character** ■ Priority habitat deciduous woodland covers the majority of both the sites, with a small area of ancient woodland (at Markly Wood) within site **525/1210** (typical of the wider assessment unit). The wooded areas in both sites form part of the Heathfield Habitat Link BOA. ■ Outside the areas designated as priority habitat deciduous woodland, there are mature hedgerows and in-field trees. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The southern parts of both the sites, outside the wooded areas, are derived from a planned private enclosure field pattern, as classified by the Sussex HLC, and typical of the wider assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The sites are influenced by their proximity to the settlement edge of Heathfield, particularly the east of **site 525/1210** and the south of **site 307/1210,** and the A265 High Street, with levels of tranquillity recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping (**Figure 3**), and the experience of dark skies in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping (**Figure 4**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The sites are both north of the settlement edge of Heathfield which has recently expanded to the east and west of the sites at Millennium Way/Century Drive and Fallow Drive. These recent developments are formed of two and three storey detached and semi-detached houses. The properties are set in cul-de-sacs and closes and are separated from the site by wooded tree belts. Development along the A265 High Street to the south-east and south-west of the sites consists of 20th century one and two storey detached houses, set back from the road.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Existing development along the A265 High Street to the south limits views into the sites for pedestrians and people travelling along the road. Residents along the road may have views into the sites from the rear of their houses. Residential properties on Millennium Way, Nursery Way and Fallow Drive have views to the woodland character of the site. There are no public rights of way near to the sites.
Extent of intervisibility within the High Weald AONB	There are long views from the southern parts of both the sites across Tilsmore and Markly Woods to the wooded hills of the wider High Weald AONB.
Representativeness of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The sites form part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB, contributing to the *pattern of faults and folds.* A *small stream* runs along the north-west of **site 525/1210**.

Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	There is no historic settlement (including historic farmsteads) within or adjacent to either of the sites.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths)	No historic routeways cross the sites.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	*Ancient woodland* in **site 525/1210,** and priority habitat deciduous woodland in both sites are part of the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges*.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	Generally *irregular field pattern* across both sites, defined by hedgerows and mature vegetation.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	Dark skies and sense of tranquillity are reduced by the adjacent settlement edge and nearby roads, particularly in the east of **site 525/1210** and south of **site 307/1210**. There are *glimpsed long views* from the southern parts of both the sites to the north across the small stream valley, towards wooded hills of the wider High Weald AONB.

How the sites relate to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assesses the Heathfield assessment unit to have a **moderate-high sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform; strong natural character including areas of woodland, lowland meadows, grassland and heathland; areas of intact historic field pattern; historic features in the south-east; the rural setting provided to Heathfield and Old Heathfield; and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increases sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of existing ribbon development, modern agricultural buildings and a caravan park, and enclosure by woodland decrease sensitivity.

The Sites

Overall, it is considered that both the sites are also of **moderate-high sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), in line with the wider assessment unit. The sites contribute to the wooded scenic backdrop to Heathfield as they both contain areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland, with **site 525/120** containing ancient woodland. The sites retain their historic field pattern and have glimpsed long views to the wooded hills of the wider AONB. Therefore, both sites demonstrate some of the characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit to development (although they have no historic features within them). However, the semi-enclosed character of the sites, and their proximity to existing development in Heathfield are characteristics that reduce sensitivity to development in the wider assessment unit.

The sites also express some of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. In particular, they form part of the pattern of faults and folds, and a small stream runs along the north-west of **site 525/1210**. The woodland within both sites (including the ancient woodland in **site 525/1210)**, together with the outgrown hedges, forms part of the highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands in the locality. The sites also have an irregular field pattern and glimpsed long views to the north to the wider High Weald AONB.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the sites and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of priority habitat deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in screening and defining the settlement edge and their contribution to the interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods and outgrown hedges. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the sites, especially priority habitat deciduous woodland. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible. ■ Take up biological opportunities listed in the Heathfield Habitat Link BOA, where possible.
Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland at Markly Wood that extends into **site 525/1210.** **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ High proportion of ancient woodland	■ Set development back from the edge of ancient woodland to create a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage[18]. ■ The buffer zone could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity).
Loss/ deterioration of the small-scale field pattern with largely intact field boundaries. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ A generally irregular field pattern.	■ Loss of fields would be largely unavoidable with development of the sites. Field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Deterioration of the rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Heathfield. Extension of development beyond the wooded tree belts between the site and properties on the edge of the settlement.	■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Locate development to the east of **site 525/1210** and the south of **site 307/1210** to relate better to the existing settlement edges. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[19], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[20] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[21].
Visual amenity	

[18] See Natural England and Forestry Commission guidance for further information:https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions
[19] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[20] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[21] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Visibility of development seen by: ■ residents on Millennium Way/Century Drive to the east; ■ residents on Nursery Way to the south; and ■ residents on Fallow Drive to the west.	■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local species to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Enhance public access, including pedestrian links between the sites and existing developments at Millennium Way, Nursery Way and Fallow Drive. ■ Provide opportunities to experience the surrounding woodlands. ■ Retain the long views north towards wooded skylines of the wider High Weald AONB.

Summary and recommendations

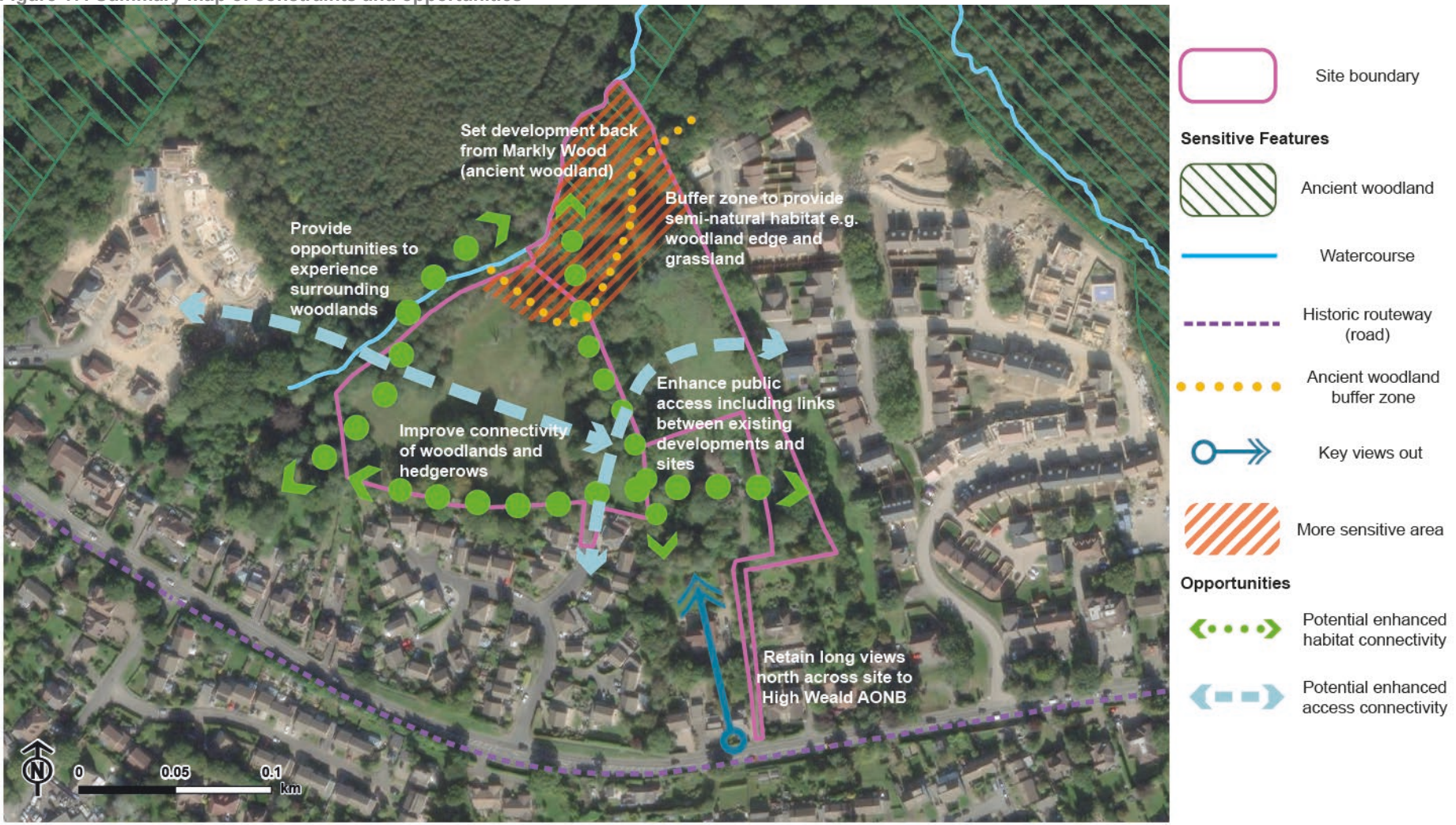
Development of these sites would further extend development to the edge of Tilsmore and Markly Woods, although their wooded character limit views.

Should development come forward on these sites, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance priority habitat deciduous woodland, in line with the Heathfield Habitat Link BOA.
- Apply suitable buffers to the ancient woodland at Markly Wood.
- Locate development to relate to existing developments on Millennium Way, Nursery Drive and Fallow Drive.

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities of development on the sites.

Figure 17: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

Land at Snatchells Farm, A256 (750/1210)

Site Context	
Potential development	24 residential dwellings
Site location	The site lies to the north-west of Heathfield, adjacent to Snatchells Farm to the north of the A265 Cross in Hand Road.

Figure 18: Site location and constraints

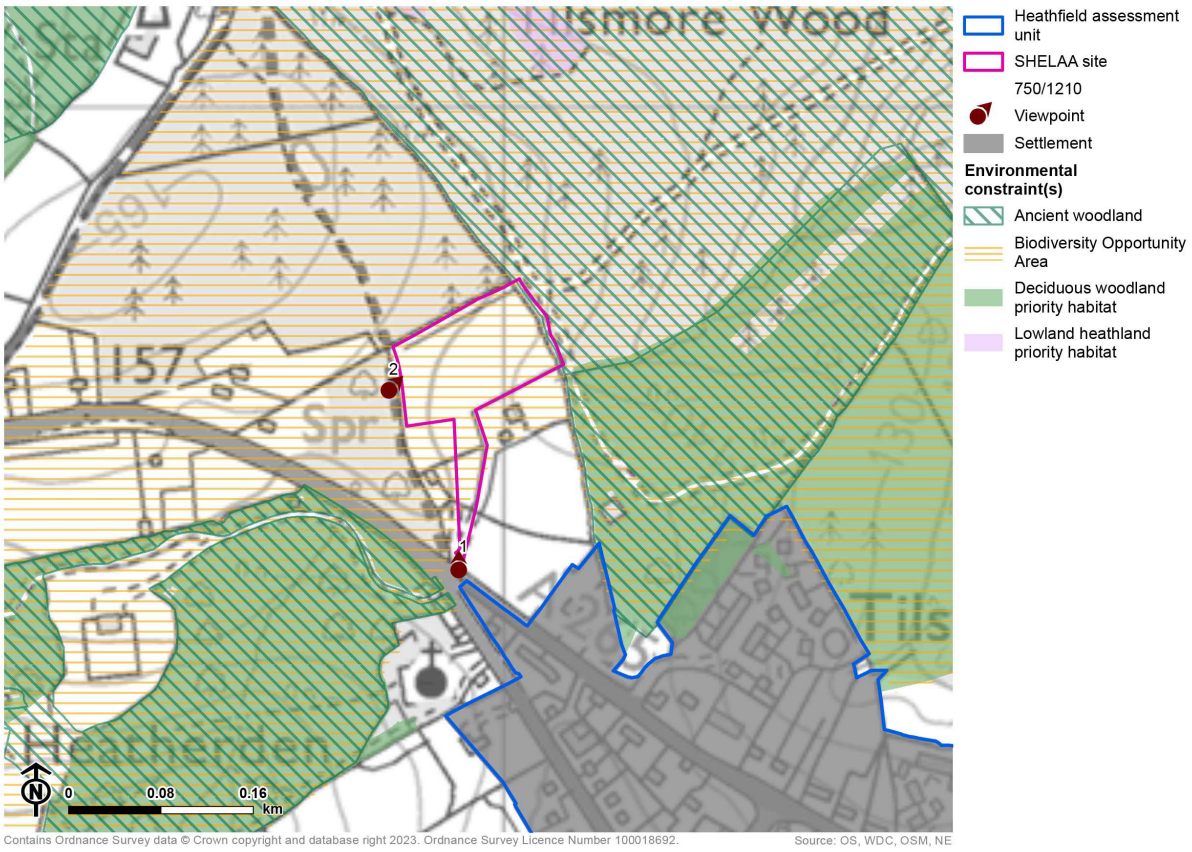
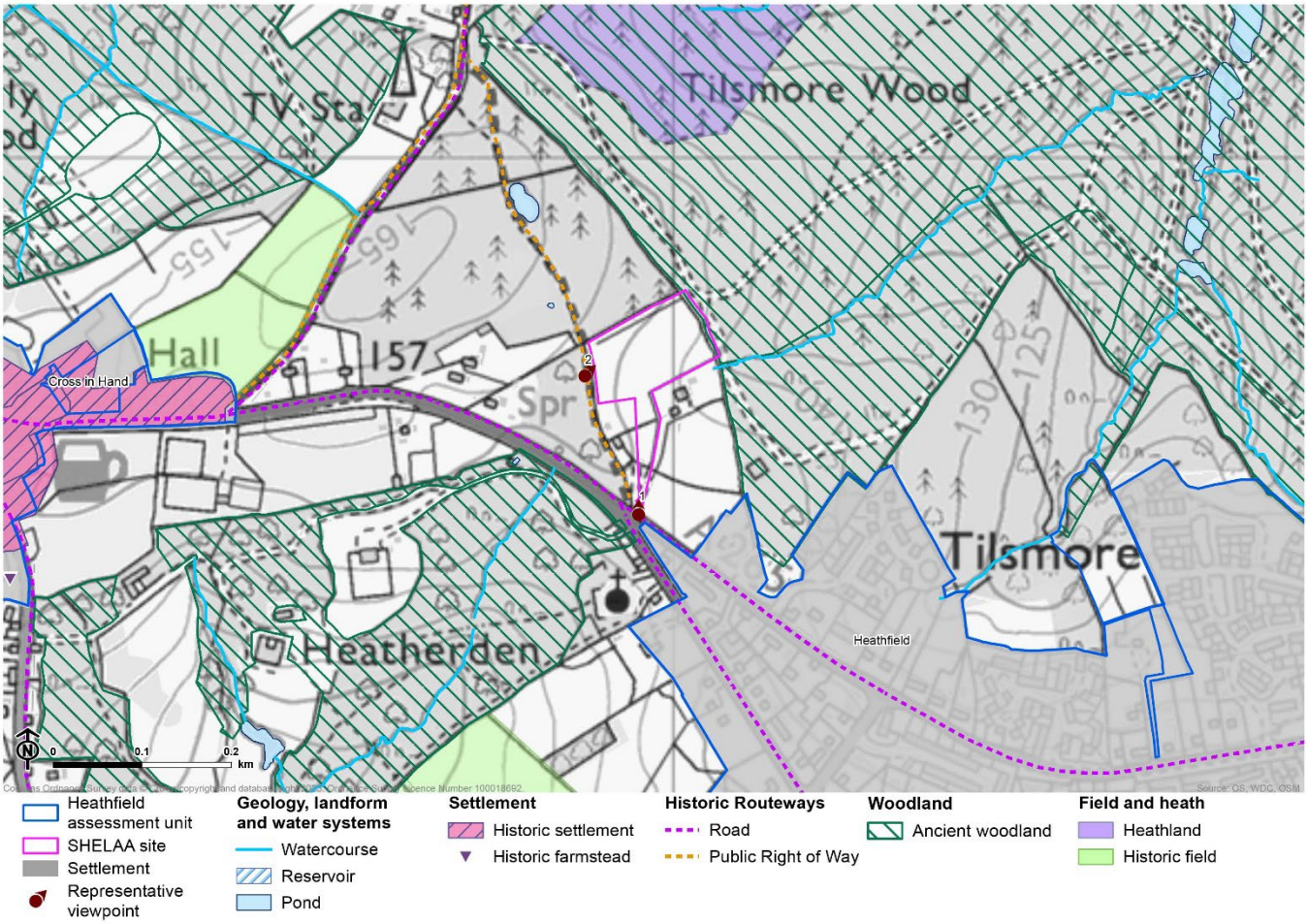


Figure 19: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Site entrance seen from the A265 Cross in Hand Road.



Viewpoint 2: Glimpsed views of grassland and well-defined woodland edges in the site from the public right of way along the western boundary.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald Central LCA, and a small part of the 'complex ridge and valley landform' of the wider assessment unit. ■ It is generally flat, falling gently from 150m AOD in the west to 145m AOD in the east. **Natural character** ■ The site is a grass field, bounded by mature trees, hedgerows and vegetation, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Markly Wood extends into the east of the site, with a small area of priority habitat deciduous woodland (typical of the wider assessment unit). The woodland is recorded as ancient, replanted woodland (PAWS). The site is within the Heathfield Habitat Link BOA. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site is derived from a regular piecemeal enclosure field pattern, as classified in the Sussex HLC and typical of the wider assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The site is influenced by proximity to the settlement edge of Heathfield and the A265. Tranquillity and dark night skies are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping and CPRE's Night Blight Mapping (**Figures 3 and 4**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	Markly Wood provides a strong boundary to the northern edge of Heathfield. Heathfield has expanded along the A265 in a westerly direction, although the junction of the A265 and Little London Road to the south of the site marks the current extent of settlement. Development along the A265 consists of bungalows and two storey detached 20th century houses. Recent development at Fallow Drive to the east of the site is one of several closes and cul-de-sacs that have been built to the north of the A265.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Mature hedgerows and trees along the A265 limit visibility from the south. The site is adjacent to Snatchells Farm, and residents will have clear views into the site. Views into the site for recreational users of the public right of way along the western boundary are limited due to the mature vegetation along the path.
Extent of intervisibility within the High Weald AONB	Mature vegetation and hedgerows restrict intervisibility with the wider High Weald AONB.
Representativeness of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB	
Geology, landform and water systems - a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB and contributes towards the *pattern of faults and folds.* There are no distinctive geological or water features in the site, although the site falls eastwards towards a *small stream*.
Settlement - dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late	There is no historic settlement (including historic farmsteads) within or adjacent to the site.

Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	
Routeways - a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths)	A public right of way which runs along the western boundary is recorded as a historic routeway, which contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland - abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Trees in the east are part of the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedge* and areas of *ancient woodland.*
Field and heath - small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	Generally *irregular field pattern*, defined by hedgerows and mature vegetation.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, although it is enclosed by vegetation, limiting long-distance views. Proximity to the A265 reduces tranquillity and dark night skies. The footpath along the western boundary contributes to the *intricate network of footpaths.*

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assesses the Heathfield assessment unit to have a **moderate-high** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform; strong natural character including areas of woodland, lowland meadows, grassland and heathland; areas of intact historic field pattern; historic features in the south-east; the rural setting provided to Heathfield and Old Heathfield; and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increases sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of existing ribbon development, modern agricultural buildings and a caravan park, and enclosure by woodland decrease sensitivity.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **moderate** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The site comprises a pasture field, which retains its historic field pattern and contains a small area of ancient woodland and priority habitat deciduous woodland, contributing to the wooded backdrop of Heathfield. Therefore, the site demonstrates some of the characteristics that increase sensitivity to development across the assessment unit. The site is also separated from the main settlement form of Heathfield, which increases sensitivity. However, the site contains no historic features and has no visual relationship with the wider AONB, which are characteristics which increase sensitivity across the wider assessment unit. The site is also enclosed by woodland and in close proximity to a busy trunk road, which are characteristics that contribute to a lower degree of sensitivity across the wider assessment unit. The highest sensitivity in the site is in the east where the priority habitat deciduous woodland and ancient woodland are, and in the west along the footpath.

The site also expresses some of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. In particular, it forms part of the pattern of faults and folds, with its woodland, trees and hedgerows contributing to the ancient woodland and highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands and outgrown hedges within the locality. The site falls to a small stream and it has an irregular field pattern, while the public right of way contributes to the dense radiating network of historic routeways.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature trees and vegetation along the site boundaries, affecting the enclosed character and wider wooded character of the area. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible. ■ Take up biological opportunities listed in the Heathfield Habitat Link BOA, where possible.
Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland at Markly Wood on the eastern boundary. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ High proportion of ancient woodland.	■ Set development back from the edge of ancient woodland to create a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage[22]. ■ The buffer zone could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity).
Settlement form edge and setting	
Deterioration of the rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Heathfield. Further extension of development towards the woodland on the edge of Heathfield.	■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[23], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[24] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[25].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ pedestrians, motorists, cyclists and residents along the A265 Cross in Hand Road to the south; ■ residents at Snatchells Farm next to the site; and ■ users of the public footpath along the western boundary.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation along the northern and western boundaries. ■ Set development back from the footpath along the western boundary. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local species to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape.

[22] See Natural England and Forestry Commission guidance for further information:https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions
[23] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[24] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[25] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

	■ Enhance public access, including links to the existing footpath and provide opportunities to experience the surrounding woodlands.

Summary and recommendations

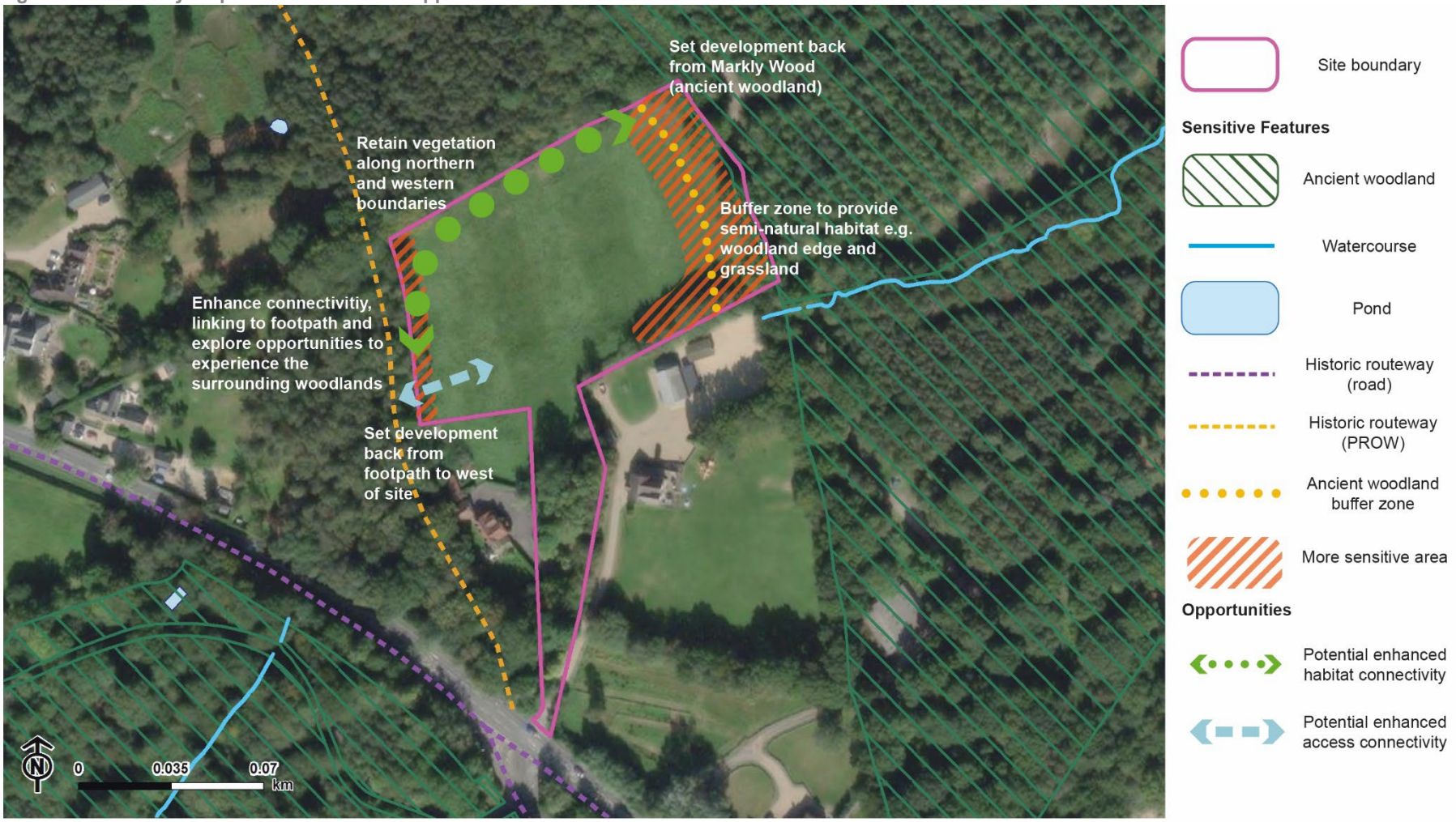
Development of this site would further extend development to the edge of Markly Wood. However, the wooded character will limit views.

Should development come forward on this site, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance woodlands, trees and hedgerows.
- Apply suitable buffers to the ancient woodland at Markly Wood.

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities of development on the site.

Figure 20: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Land at Sunnyside, A267, Cross in Hand (941/1920)

Site Context	
Potential development	9 residential dwellings
Site location	This site lies to the north-east of Cross in Hand, north of the A267 Heathfield Road. The site is adjacent to a petrol station and the Isenhurst Country Club to the west and Cross in Hand village hall to the east.

Figure 21: Site location and constraints

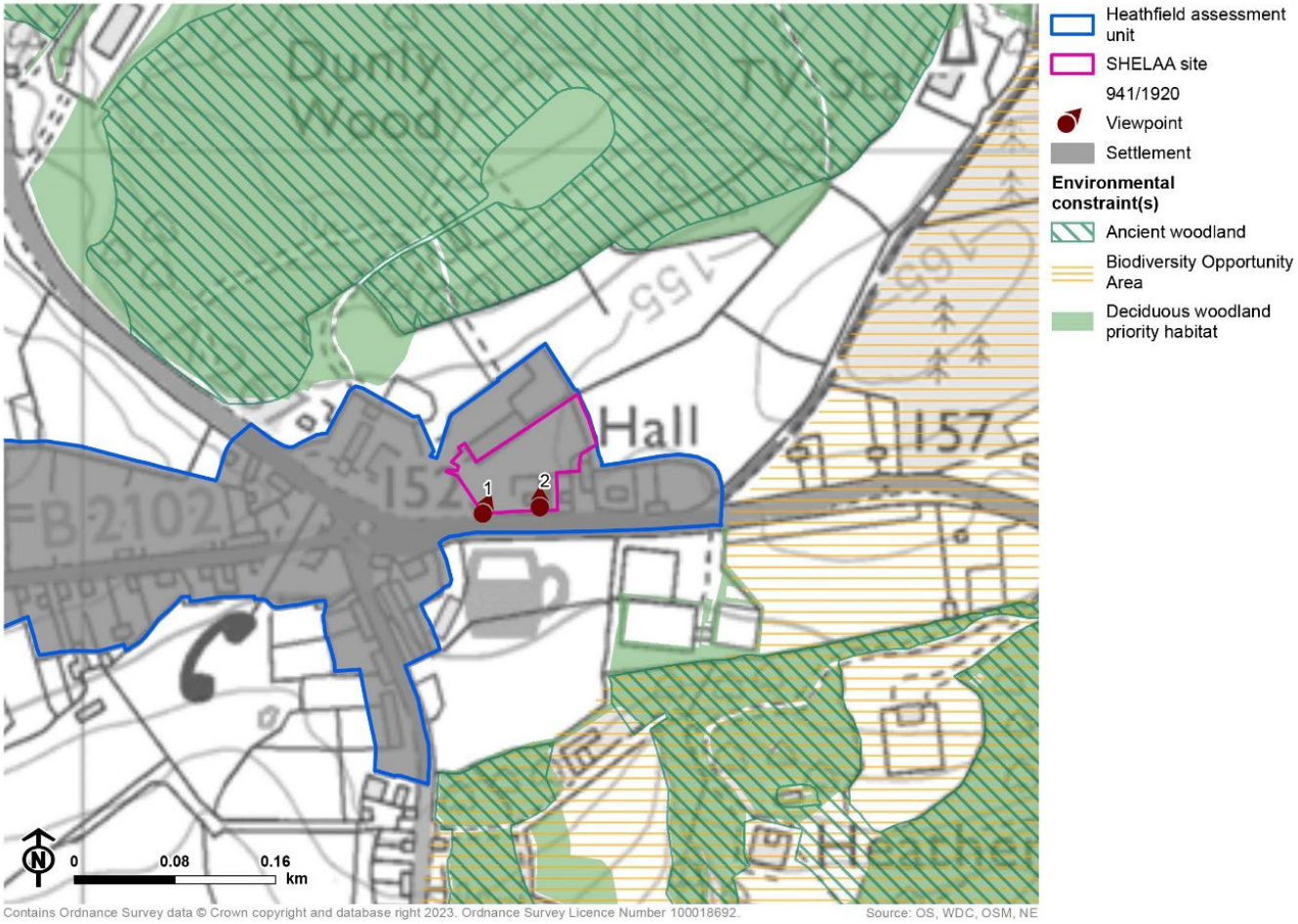
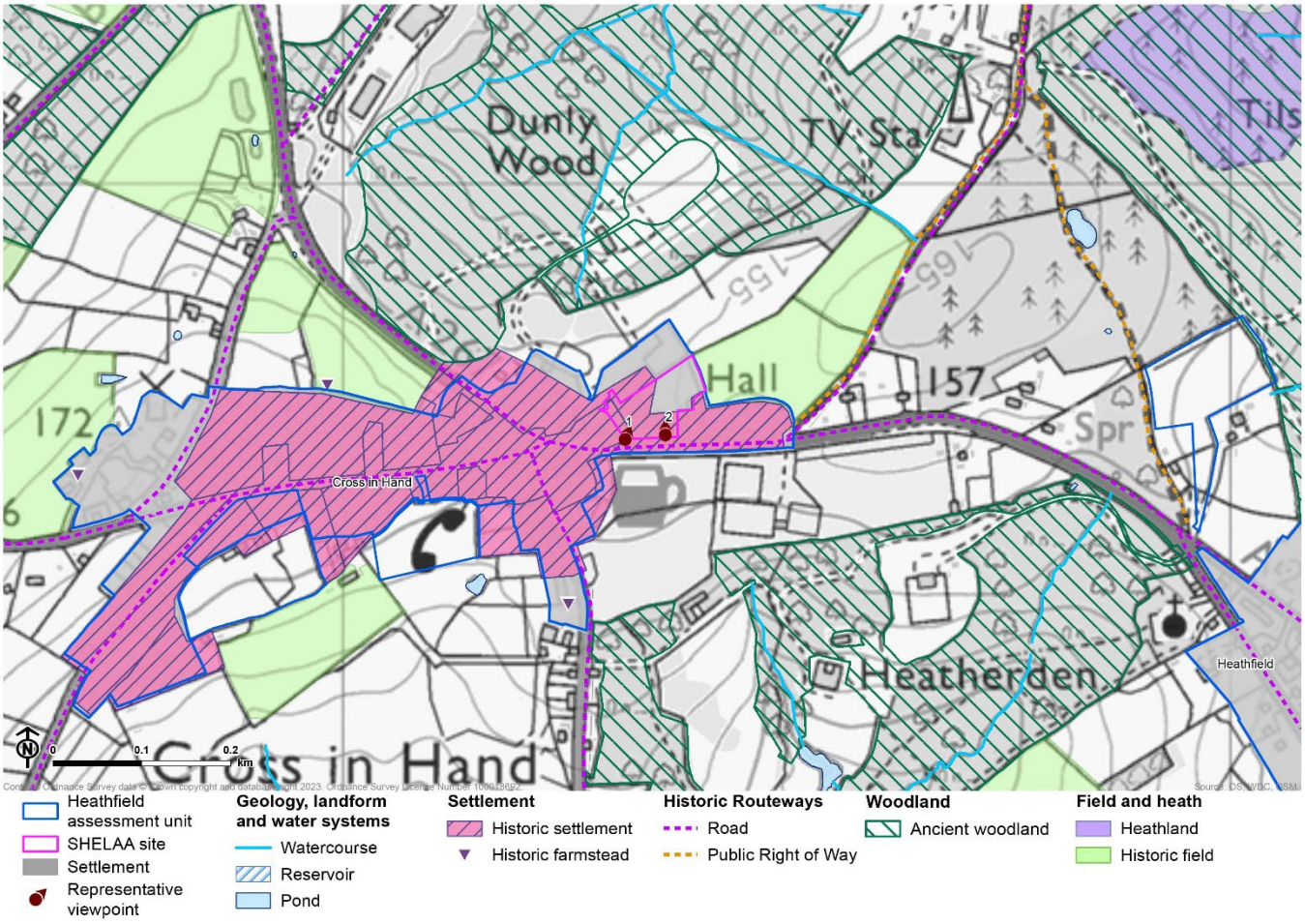
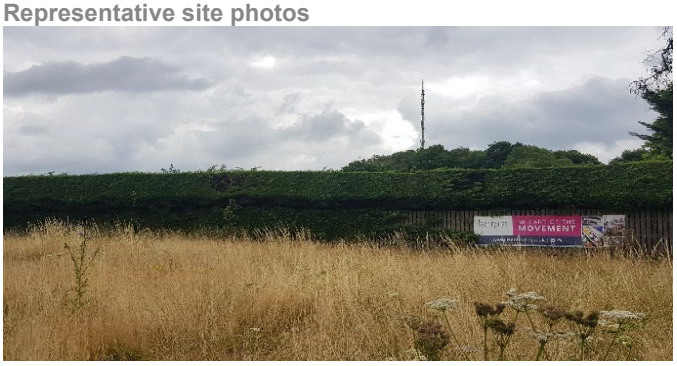


Figure 22: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: A hedge restricts views into the site from the A295



Viewpoint 2: Existing property within the site is barely visible above the hedge.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site is largely flat, lying around 155m AOD, which is not typical of the wider assessment unit. **Natural character** ■ A high hedge with occasional mature trees lines the southern boundary, and there is a mature wooded shaw in the east, which are valued semi-natural habitats and typical of the wider assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site has a cohesive assart field pattern as classified in the Sussex HLC and typical of the wider assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The site is influenced by proximity to the settlement edge of Cross in Hand and the A267. Tranquillity is recorded in the lower (relatively least tranquil) bands of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping (**Figure 3**), and dark skies is recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping (**Figure 4**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The A267 previously provided a strong boundary to the north-east of Cross in Hand. However, this has been breached by development along the northern side of the A267, particularly to the east of the site. Dunly Wood provides a strong boundary to the north. There is existing bungalows and two storey development north of the A267 including a petrol station, country club and village hall. A small number of detached houses also sit north of the A267, including one two-storey brick building within the site.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	A clipped hedge lines the A267 Heathfield Road, and combined with the occasional mature trees, this limits views of the site for pedestrians and road users. Residents in properties to the east of the site will have some oblique views to the site. Users of local businesses close to the site may also have views, including from the petrol station and Cross in Hand Inn to the south-west. Local recreational facilities at Isenhurst country club, Heathfield and Waldron RFC and Cross in Hand Lawn Tennis Club lie south of the A267, and there may be some views from these sports facilities. However, views are generally restricted by hedges along the A267.
Extent of intervisibility within the High Weald AONB	Mature vegetation and hedgerows result in limited intervisibility with the wider High Weald AONB.
Representativeness of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB	
Geology, landform and water systems - a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	There are no distinctive geological, landform or water features.
Settlement - dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Cross in Hand is a *village of Medieval origin* with the south and west of the site falling within the historic settlement boundary.

Routeways - a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths)	No historic routeways cross the site. The A267 along the southern boundary is recorded as a historic ridgeway, which contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways, although it has a more urban character in this location.
Woodland - abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Trees in the east of the site are part of the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges.*
Field and heath - small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The field pattern was created through assarting, contributing to the *dominant Medieval character* of the AONB. The site has a generally *irregular field pattern*, defined by hedgerows.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, although the site is enclosed by vegetation, restricting long-distance views. Proximity to the A267 Heathfield Road reduces tranquillity and dark night skies.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assesses the Heathfield assessment unit to have a **moderate-high sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform; strong natural character including areas of woodland, lowland meadows, grassland and heathland; areas of intact historic field pattern; historic features in the south-east; the rural setting provided to Heathfield and Old Heathfield; and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increases sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of existing ribbon development, modern agricultural buildings and a caravan park, and enclosure by woodland decrease sensitivity.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **moderate sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The site demonstrates few of the characteristics that contribute to the wider assessment unit's sensitivity rating of moderate-high, although it does contain a wooded shaw and areas of trees, as well as retaining its historic assart field pattern, which are characteristics that increase sensitivity in the wider assessment unit. However, the site is adjacent to existing ribbon development, and is enclosed by vegetation, which are characteristics that reduce sensitivity in the wider assessment unit.

The site expresses few of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. It does however have trees in the east which contribute to the highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands and outgrown hedges within the locality, as well as the irregular assart field pattern which contributes to the Medieval character of the AONB.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of the wooded shaw in the east, mature trees and hedge affecting the role they play in providing enclosure to the site and the wider wooded character of the area.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially the wooded shaw in the east.

High Weald AONB character component: ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible.
Loss or deterioration of the cohesive assart field pattern. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Dominant Medieval character.	■ Loss of the assart field pattern would be largely unavoidable with development of the site, as development would remove land from agricultural use. However, field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Further expansion of Cross in Hand north of the A267 Heathfield Road. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Village of Medieval origin.	■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[26], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[27] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[28].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ pedestrians, road users, business users and residents along the A265 Heathfield Road to the south, east and west; and ■ users of Heathfield and Waldron RFC and Cross in Hand Lawn Tennis Club to the south.	■ Retain, protect and enhance existing vegetation especially the mature trees and hedgerow in the east. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, especially along the A265 Heathfield Road, using local species to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape.

Summary and recommendations

Development of the site would be between the settlement edge of Cross in Hand and Heathfield, along A265 Heathfield Road, the petrol station and Isenhurst Country Club.

Should development come forward on the site, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance mature vegetation, particularly in the east.
- Use soft landscaping and planting to integrate new development and surrounding recreational/employment development into the settlement of Cross in Hand.

[26] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[27] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[28] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Land to rear of Brenton House (north), B2102, Cross in Hand (431/1920) and Field to the east of Burnetts Farm, Firgrove Road, Cross in Hand (017/1920)

Site Context	
Potential development	431/1920 - 15 residential dwellings 017/1920 – 10 residential dwellings Total: 25 residential dwellings. For the purpose of this landscape and visual appraisal the above SHELAA sites have been considered together.
Site location	These sites lie to the south of Cross in Hand, south of High Street and between Fir Grove Road and Back Lane, behind existing properties.

Figure 23: Site location and constraints

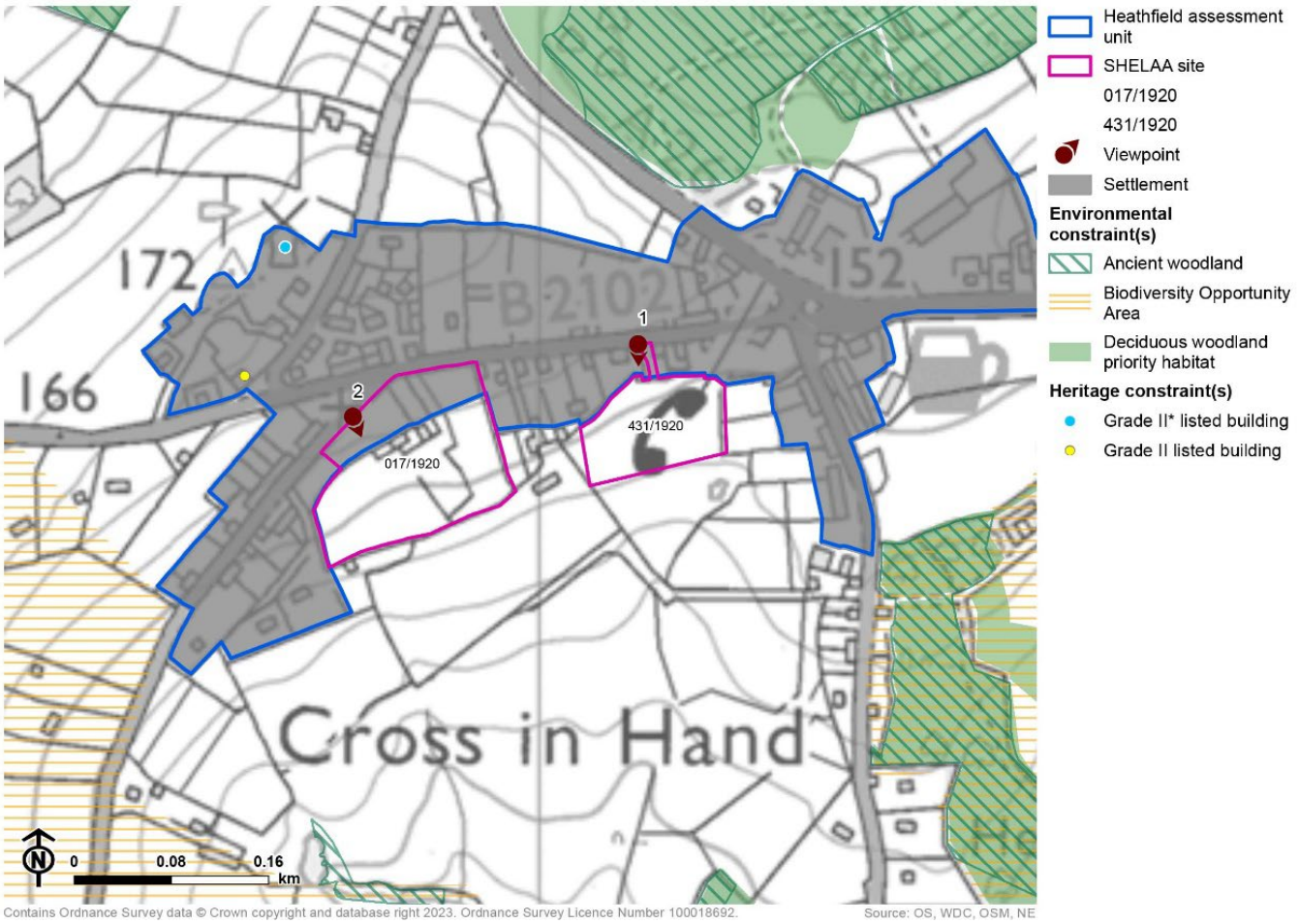
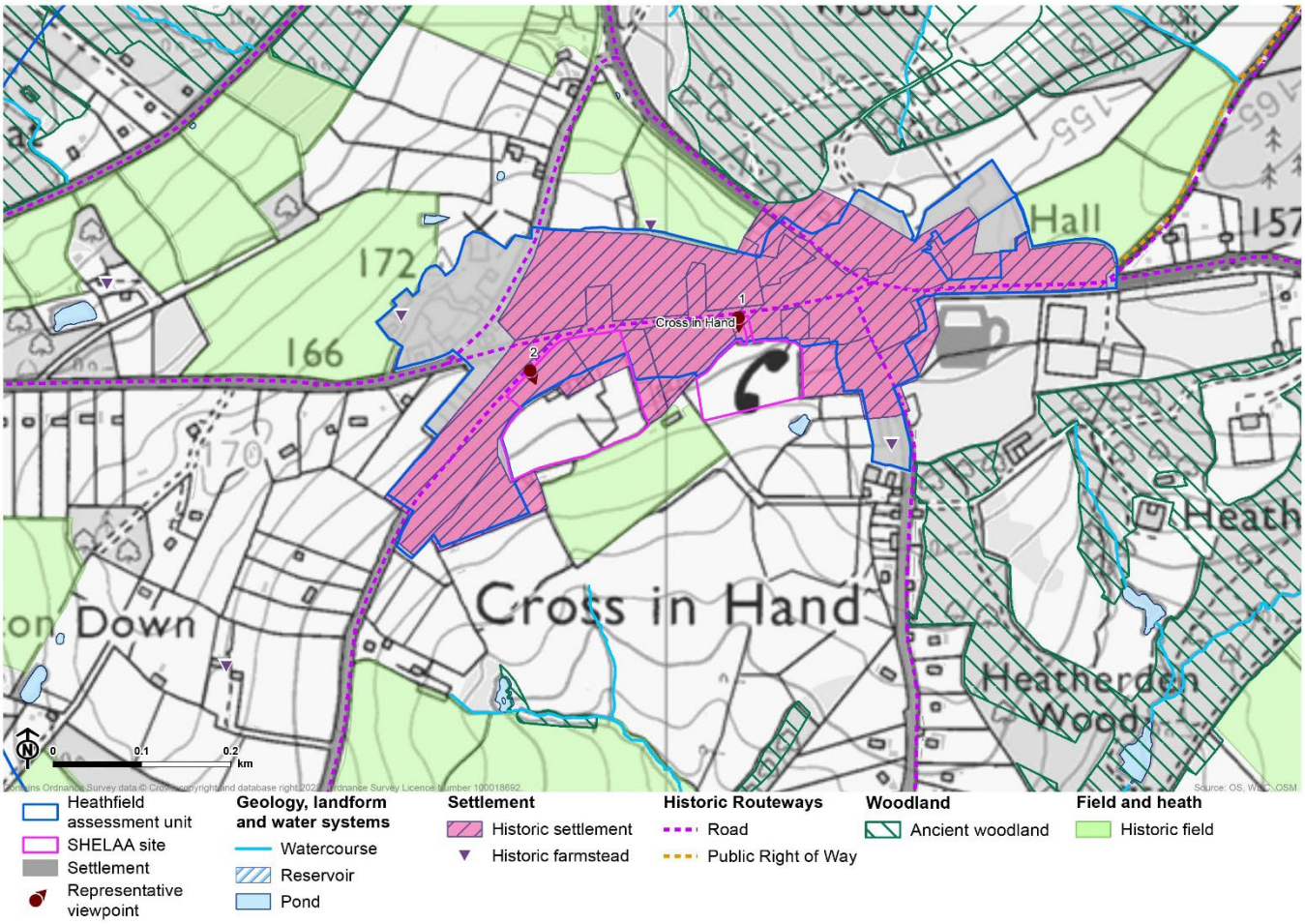


Figure 24: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Long distance views south from **431/1920** across the High Weald AONB to the South Downs National Park.



Viewpoint 2: Mature vegetation on High Street and Fir Grove Road restrict views into site **017/1920.**

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The sites form part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald Central LCA, and a small part of the 'complex ridge and valley landform; of the wider assessment unit. ■ The sites fall from 155m AOD in the north to 145m AOD in the south-east. **Natural character** ■ Site **431/1920** is a grass field, while **017/1920** consists of grass fields, a farmstead and large garden. Mature trees, hedgerows and vegetation surround the sites, and a small woodland lies within **017/1920** which are valued semi-natural habitats (and typical of the wider assessment unit). **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ Site **431/1920** and the east of **site 017/1920** are derived from a regular piecemeal enclosure field pattern, as classified in the Sussex HLC, and typical of the wider assessment unit, although field boundaries have been altered. The HLC records the west of **017/1920** as forming part of a large landscaped garden. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The sites are influenced by proximity to the settlement edge of Cross in Hand. Tranquillity is recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping (**Figure 3**). Darker skies are recorded in the west of site **017/1920** (light levels are recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping on **Figure 4**) while the east of the site and site **431/1920** are recorded in the middle bands. ■ **017/1920** has an enclosed character, while site **431/1920** has long-distance views south over the wider High Weald AONB.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	Cross in Hand is a largely linear historic settlement, set along High Street, Fir Grove Road and Back Lane, with houses set in a single row along the roads. This pattern has been altered slightly in the north of the village with the recent development at Windmill Place between High Street and Dads Hill. Development in Cross in Hand consists of bungalows and two storey detached and semi-detached houses with long back gardens. Red brick and tile-hung upper stories are common. Burnett Farm lies within **017/1920.** The sites contribute to the rural setting of Cross in Hand.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Mature hedgerows, vegetation and properties along High Street and Fir Grove Road limit views into the sites from these streets. Residents on the south side of High Street and east of Fir Grove Road will have views into the sites from the rear of their properties.
Extent of intervisibility within the High Weald AONB	From **site 431/1920** there are long views south to the rolling hills of the wider High Weald AONB and the South Downs National Park beyond.

Representativeness of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB	
Geology, landform and water systems - a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The sites form part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB, contributing towards the *pattern of faults and folds*.
Settlement - dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Cross in Hand is a *village of Medieval origin* and the north of site **017/1920** falls within the historic settlement boundary.
Routeways - a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths)	No routeways cross the sites. High Street to the north of both sites is recorded as a ridgeway, and Fir Grove Road to the north-west of site **017/1920** is recorded as a historic track. Both contribute towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland - abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	A small woodland in the north and west of **site 017/1920** and the east of site **431/1920** forms part of the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges*.
Field and heath - small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	Generally *irregular field pattern*, defined by hedgerows and mature vegetation, in use for grazing.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	Site **431/1920** contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, with some *glimpsed long views* south across the wider AONB. Tranquillity and dark night skies are influenced by proximity to the settlement edge of Cross in Hand Road although with darker skies in the west of site **017/1920**.

How the sites relate to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assesses the Heathfield assessment unit to have a **moderate-high sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform; strong natural character including areas of woodland, lowland meadows, grassland and heathland; areas of intact historic field pattern; historic features in the south-east; the rural setting provided to Heathfield and Old Heathfield; and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increases sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of existing ribbon development, modern agricultural buildings and a caravan park, and enclosure by woodland decrease sensitivity.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the sites are also of **moderate-high sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), in line with the wider assessment unit. The sites form part of the undulating landform and provide a rural setting to Cross in Hand, with long-distance views south afforded from **site 431/1920** over the wider AONB. Both the sites therefore demonstrate some of the characteristics that increase the sensitivity to development of the wider assessment unit. However, the sites do not contain ancient woodland, priority habitats, or historic features, which are features which increase sensitivity in the wider assessment unit. **Site 017/1920** has an enclosed character, which is one of the characteristics which reduces sensitivity across the assessment unit.

The sites also express some of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. In particular, they form part of the pattern of faults and folds, with an irregular field pattern, small woodlands forming part of the interconnected woodlands in the locality and glimpsed long views south to the wider High Weald AONB.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the sites and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the sites and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of woodland and mature vegetation in the north of **site 017/1920** and along the site boundaries of both sites, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge, and in the wooded character of the wider area. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the sites, especially the area of woodland in the north of **site 017/1920**. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible.
Loss of grazed pastures in **site 431/1920** and within both sites the loss/ deterioration of the medium-scale field pattern with largely intact field boundaries. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ A generally irregular field pattern. ■ Fields mostly used for grazing livestock.	■ Loss of pasture would be largely unavoidable with development of the site, as proposed development would remove land from agricultural use. However, field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid the complete loss of field pattern.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Deterioration of the rural character of the sites which contribute to the setting of Cross in Hand. Expansion of linear settlement form of Cross in Hand, with houses currently set in a single row along the roads. Potential demolition of existing property within **site 017/1920.** Removal of agricultural fields which provide a rural setting to the south of Cross in Hand. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Village of Medieval origin.	■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[29], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[30] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[31].
Visual amenity	

[29] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[30] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[31] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Visibility of development seen by: ■ Pedestrians, road users, and residents along High Street and Firgrove Road.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the mature vegetation to the north of **site 017/1920**. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Retain the glimpsed long views south across the wider AONB from **site 431/1920**.

Summary and recommendations

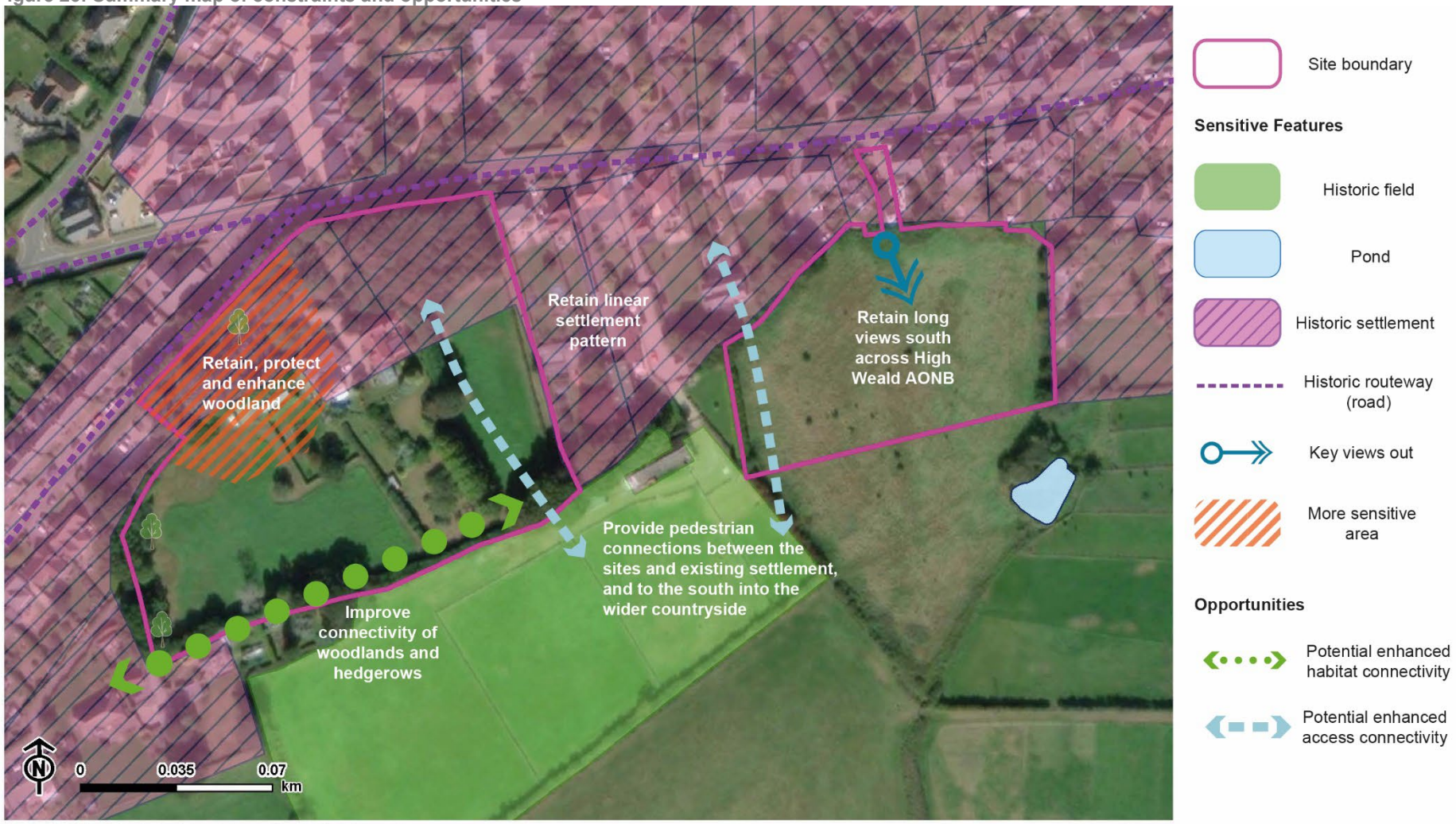
Development on these sites would extend development south of Cross in Hand, further altering the historic linear settlement pattern of houses. However, development on the sites would not cross a distinct boundary feature, and there are limited public views to the sites.

Should development come forward on these sites, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance mature vegetation surrounding the sites, particularly mature vegetation north of **site 017/1920.**
- Provide pedestrian access between the sites and existing residential developments, and into the wider countryside to the south.
- Retain long-distance views south from **site 431/1920** across the wider AONB.

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities of development on the sites.

Figure 25: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Heathfield assessment unit

Ten sites have been assessed within the Heathfield assessment unit. If all sites were brought forward it would result in a potential additional 143 dwellings and one area of employment use being built. This could result in a large loss of fields, hedgerow boundaries and trees within the High Weald AONB. Substantial vegetation cover, existing development and the sloping topography reduces intervisibility between the sites, and due to their small scale, the cumulative visual effects with each other would be limited.

If sites **525/1210**, **307/1210** and **750/1210** on the north-western edge of Heathfield were all brought forward, the cumulative effect would see the settlement edge of Heathfield in the north extended to meet Tilney / Markly Wood. This would reduce the gap between the settlement edge of Heathfield and the ancient woodlands of Tilney / Markly Wood, and would result in the loss of undeveloped land, thus reducing rurality in this area. However, the small-scale nature of the other sites assessed and their locations close to the settlement edges of Broad Oak, Heathfield, and Cross in Hand mean that the cumulative landscape effects would be limited.

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: LCA 5B – Rotherfield

Final report
Prepared by LUC
January 2024



Contents

Chapter 6
Rotherfield Assessment Unit **135**

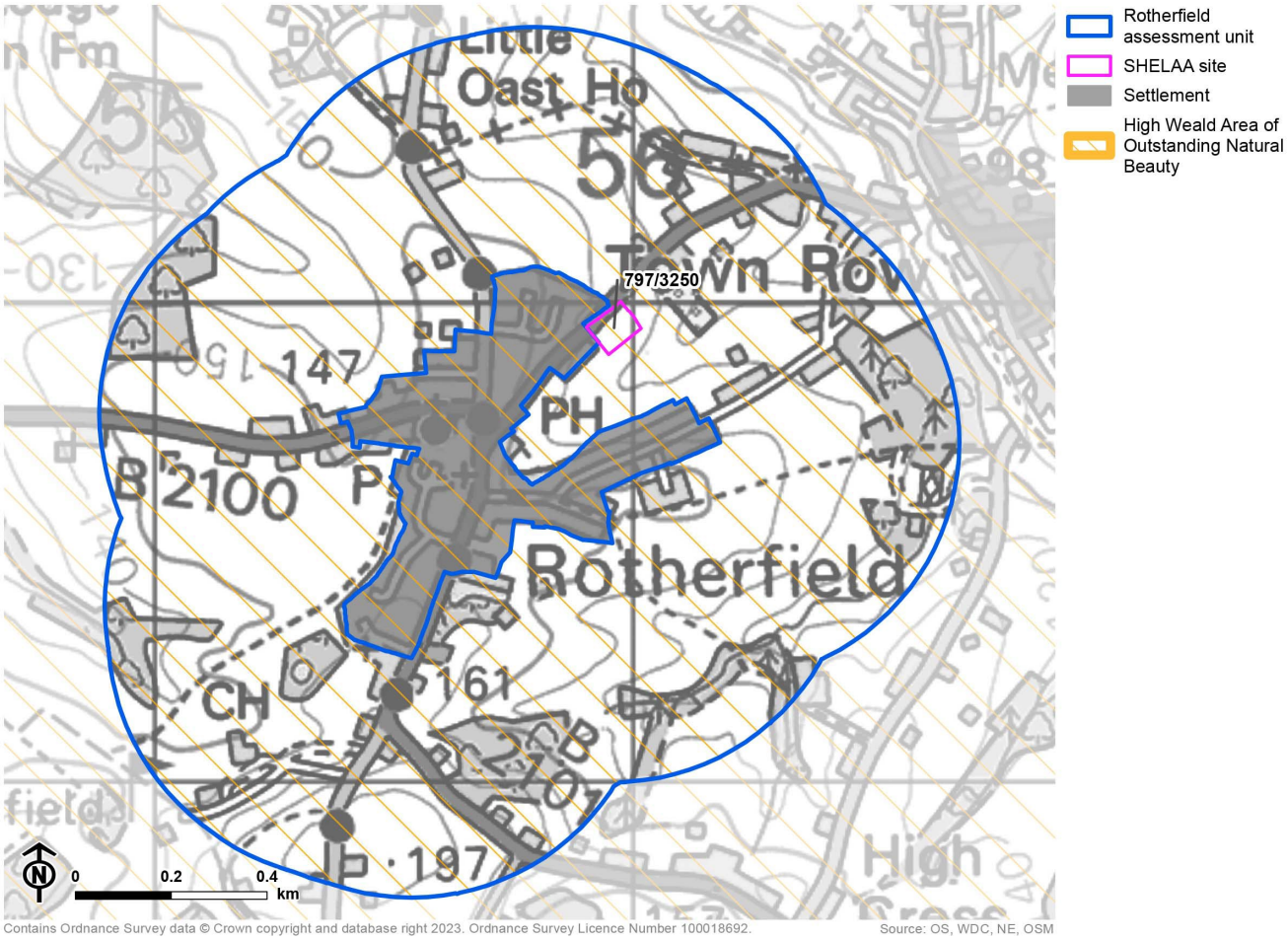
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Chapter 6
Rotherfield Assessment Unit

One potential development site is considered within the Rotherfield assessment unit:

- **Land at Station Road (797/3250)**

Figure 1: Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



Settlement location, evolution and pattern

Settlement location and context	Rotherfield is a nucleated settlement located in the north of the district. The village is located on one of the principal east-west ridges of the High Weald, within the High Weald AONB.
Settlement evolution	The historic core of the village (designated as Conservation Area) is centred around the High Street and St Denys Church. The settlement is one of the oldest in the High Weald, and dates to the establishment of a church and priory in the 8th century. The settlement took a nucleated form in the 13th century with growth centred around the market and church. Growth of the village can be attributed to the iron industry in the locality, prominent from the 16th century, with further modest growth of the village resulting from agriculture, including the growing of hops. There was some 20th century redevelopment within the historic core and settlement expansion, most notably to the north, south-west and east.
Settlement pattern and edge character	Development consists of bungalows and two storey detached and semi-detached houses, and some terraced properties within the historic core of the Conservation Area and in the north. Development is typically fringed by pastoral fields and occasionally woodland (primarily in the south). Historic buildings, including the spire of St Denys Church, form prominent focal features locally and within the surrounding landscape, given the elevated ridgeline position of the village.

Mapped information for the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB's defining components of character that are found within the Rotherfield assessment unit have been mapped in **Figure 2.** Tranquillity and dark skies (which form part of the perceptual qualities) are shown in **Figures 3 and 4** respectively.

Figure 2: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB

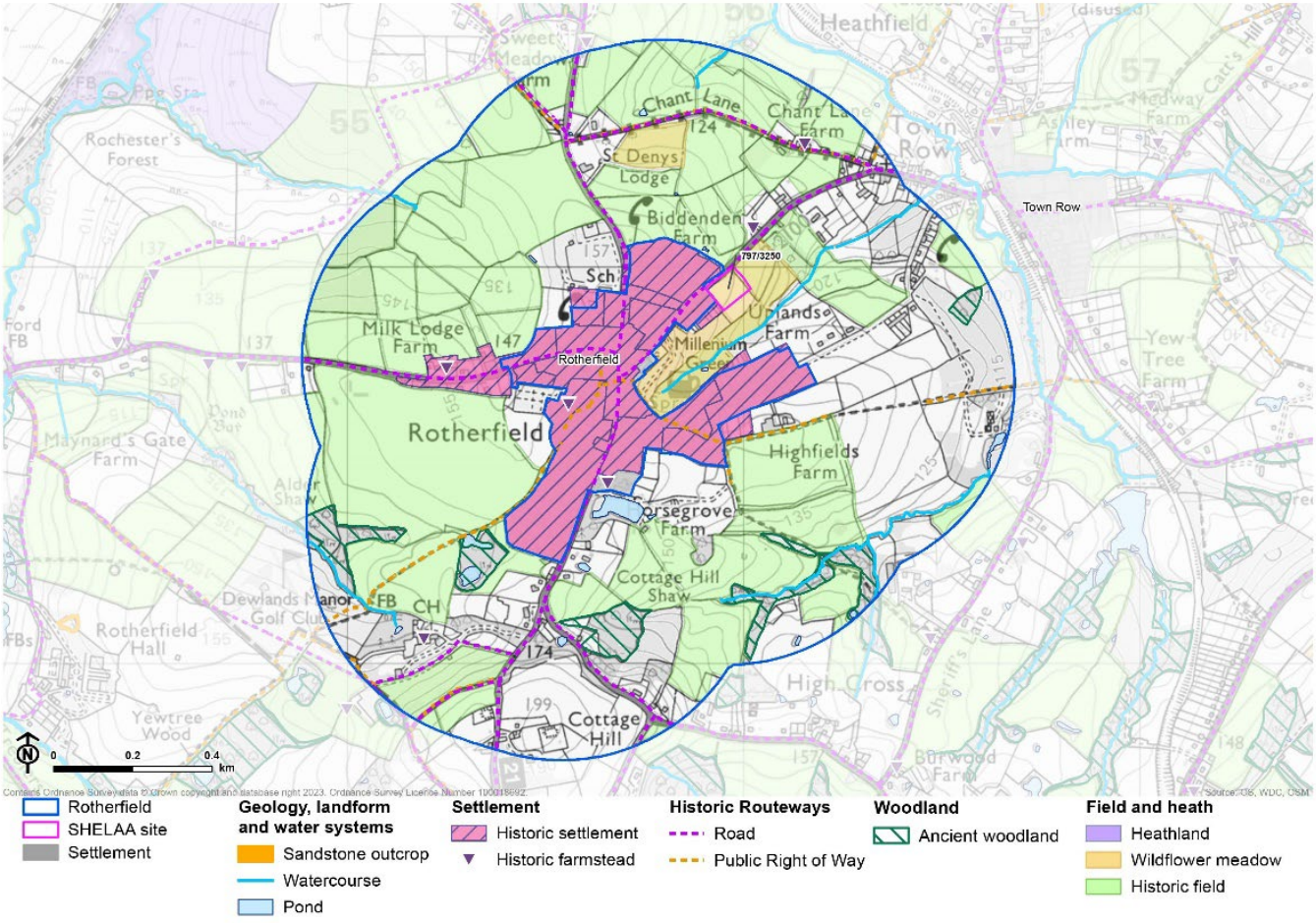


Figure 3: Tranquillity

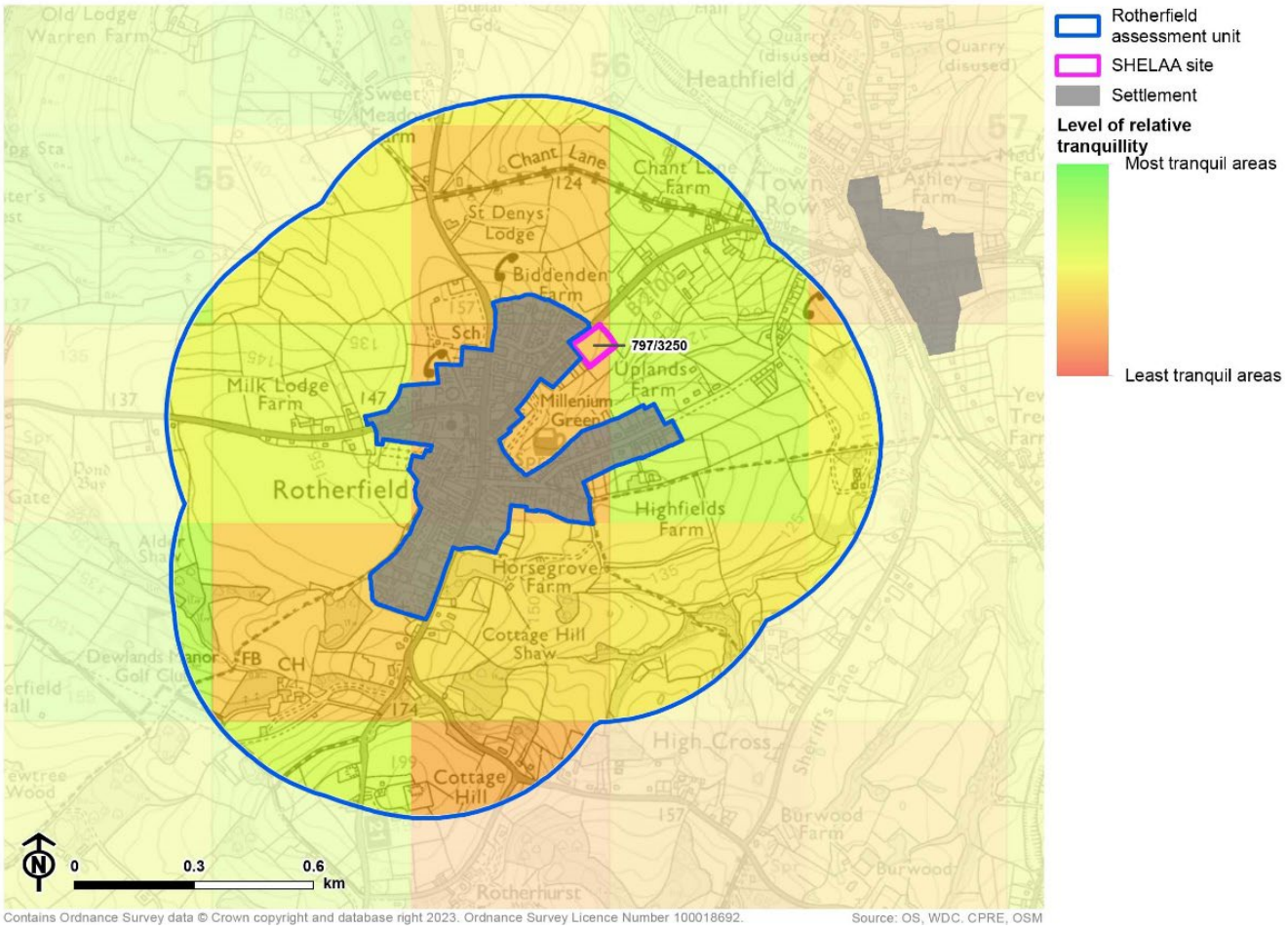
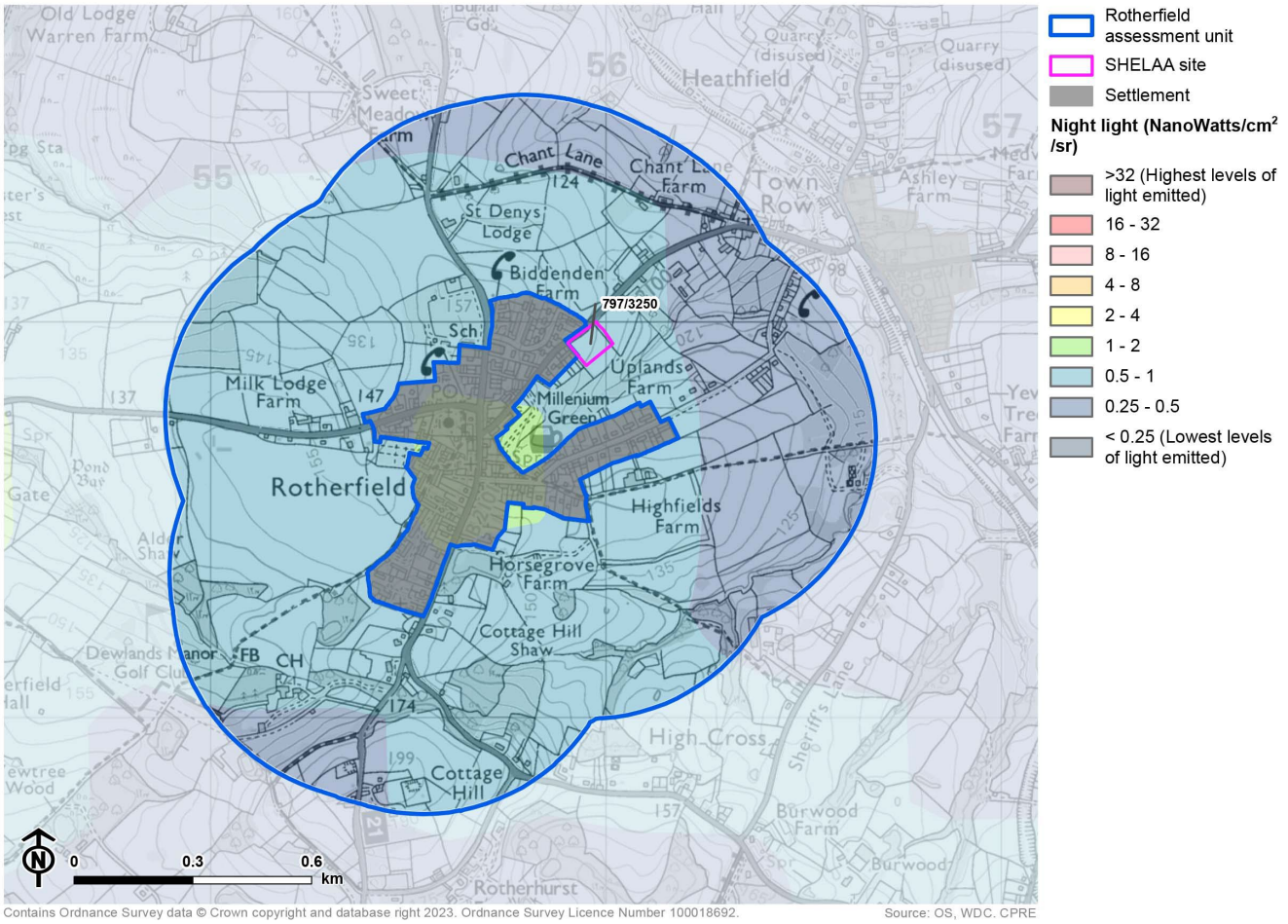


Figure 4: Dark skies



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Landscape sensitivity context for the Rotherfield assessment unit

*The landscape sensitivity of the Rotherfield assessment unit, described in the **Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development***			
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the assessment unit	**Small scale residential** 2-2.5 storey housing	**Medium scale residential** 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	**Commercial/ industrial** e.g. industrial units or hotels
	H	**H**	**H**
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the assessment unit	■ The complex ridge and valley landform. ■ Interconnecting areas of mature deciduous woodland (some of which is ancient in origin), primarily located in the south of the assessment unit, and which typically fringes settlement. ■ Areas of priority habitat semi-improved grassland in the east. ■ Intact historic field patterns, particularly small to medium scale piecemeal enclosure, and some planned private enclosure and small areas of medieval assarts in the south-east. ■ The historic qualities, distinctive settlement form and architectural vernacular of the Rotherfield Conservation Area. ■ The strong rural character with areas of tranquillity and dark night skies, which forms the context for outward views from the Rotherfield Conservation Area. ■ Location within and intervisibility with more distant areas of the High Weald AONB particularly elevated areas on the ridgeline.		
Guidance	■ Avoid being located on prominent ridgelines. Any development should be located where well enclosed by vegetation, to be less visible from lower-lying landscapes and have less influence on landscape character. Avoid development in the incised stream valleys and heavily wooded valley slopes, particularly in the east of the assessment unit. ■ Avoid development in areas of habitat interest, notably ancient woodland and semi-improved grasslands. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland and hedgerow trees. ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Medway, Ouse and Rother Watershed BOA, especially woodland management and restoration, where possible. ■ Avoid loss of, harm or deterioration to the semi-improved grasslands and to the interconnecting ancient semi-natural woodlands in this area and allow a buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows, particularly where deteriorated, and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly concentrations of medieval assarts located in the south-east. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the nucleated historic form and character of Rotherfield. Particular attention should be given to the historic settlement edges of the Conservation Area, where development would further influence the historic settlement edge to the east and south-east.		

	■ Consider views from public rights of way when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, and / or using species that are in character with the wider landscape, preferably native.. ■ Consider views from the wider landscape of the High Weald AONB, particularly lower-lying landscapes to the north and south, towards the prominent ridgelines of the assessment unit. ■ Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[1] , 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[2] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[3]. ■ Ensure development does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, where the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB are most strongly expressed.

[1] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[2] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[3] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Land at Station Road (797/3250)

Site Details	
Potential development	10 residential dwelling units
Site location	This site is located to the north-east of the settlement and situated to the east of the B2100 Station Road.

Figure 5: Site location and constraints

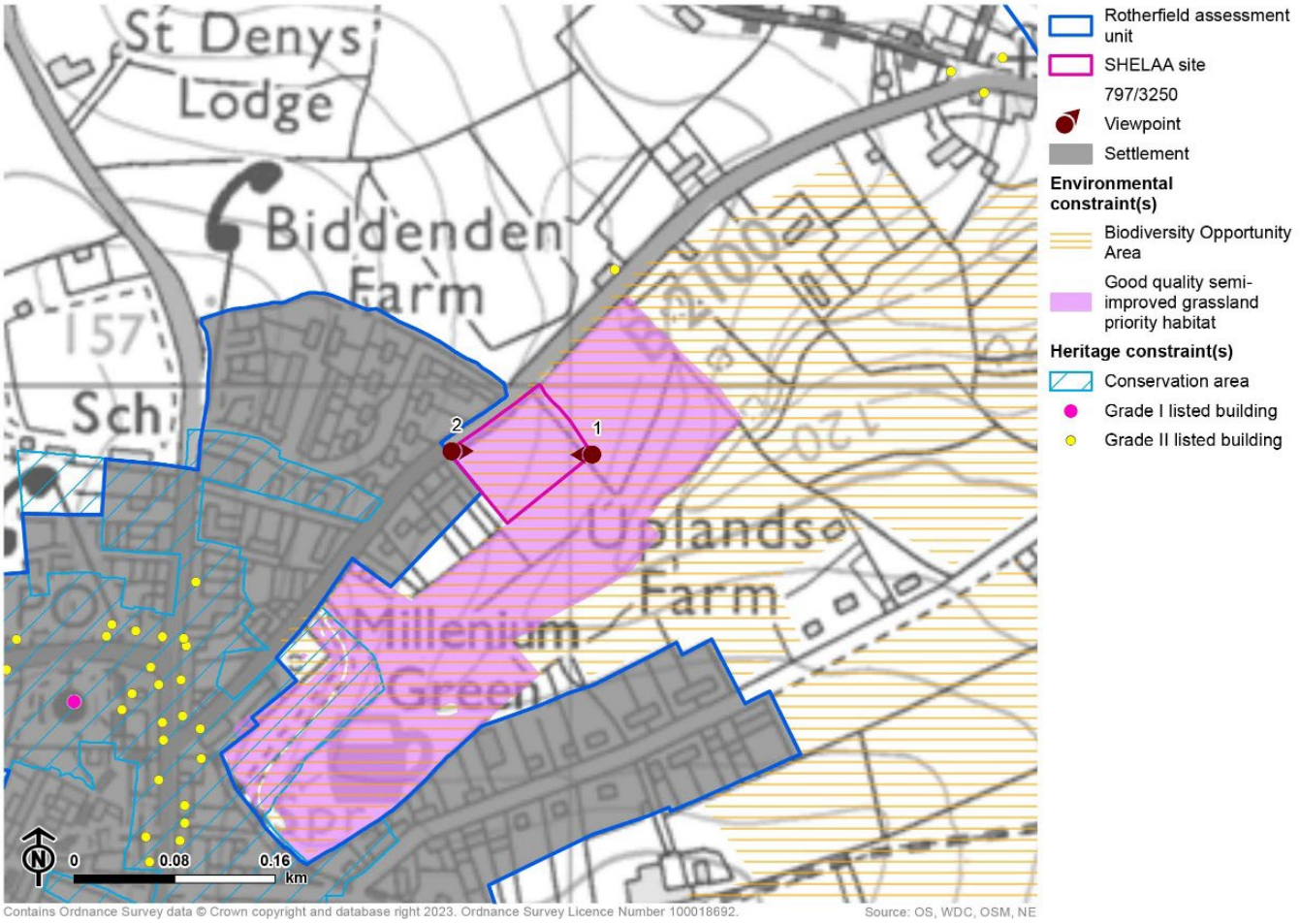
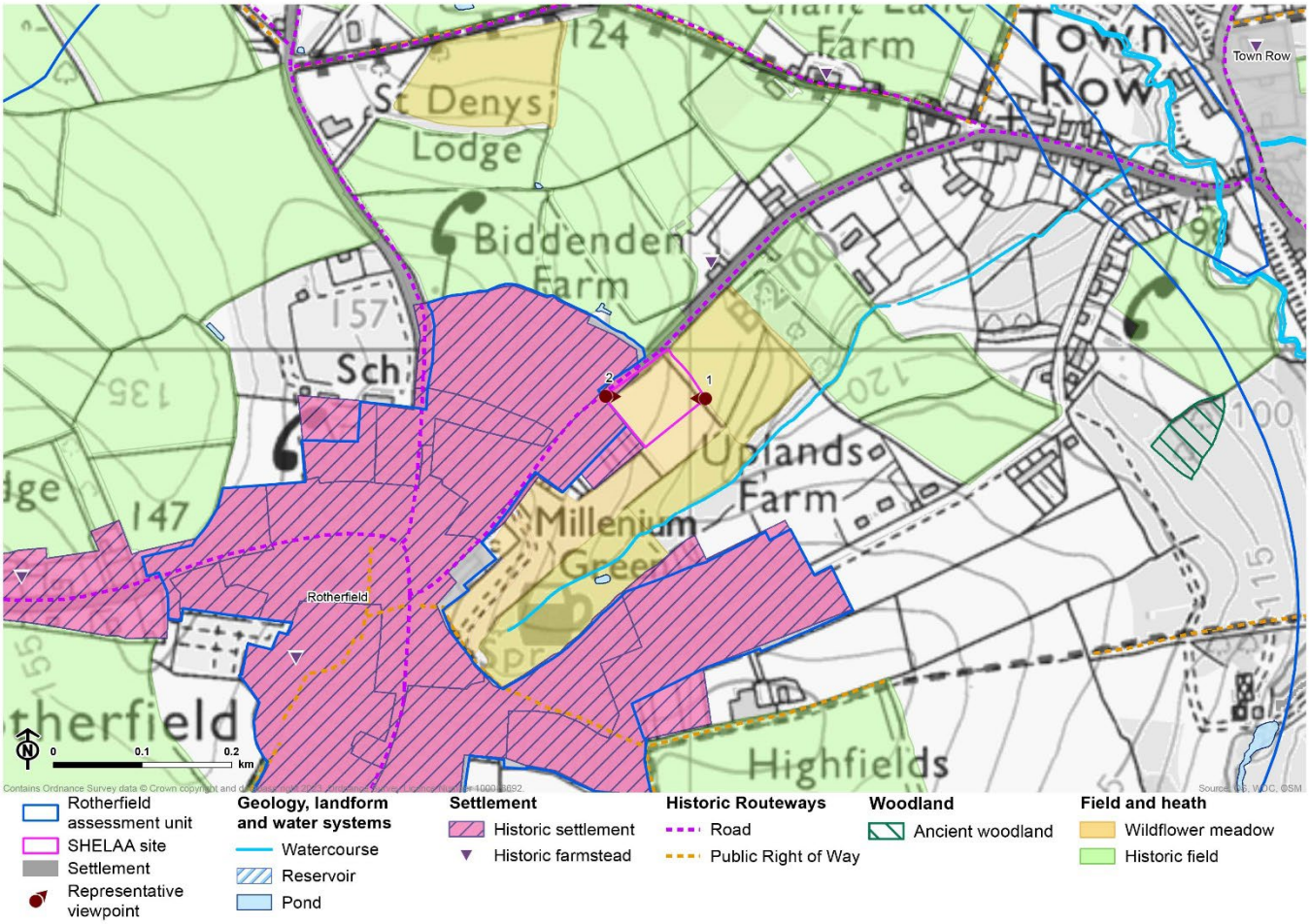


Figure 6: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: View north-west across the site looking towards residential properties along Station Road and Hornshurst Road



Viewpoint 2: Screened views looking south-east towards the site from Station Road

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site is located on the upper slopes to one of the elevated ridgelines of the High Weald – Central LCA and forms a small part of the 'complex undulating ridged landform' of the wider assessment unit. ■ It comprises a gentle slope, which falls from 135m AOD in the west to 130m AOD in the east towards an incised stream valley. **Natural character** ■ The site is pastoral in character, bounded by mature hedgerows to the north, east and south, (which is typical of the wider assessment unit); however, a garden fence forms one of the boundaries (along the western edge). ■ The north-eastern site boundary comprises a wooded tree belt and occasional mature trees are located along the other boundaries. ■ All of the site is identified as priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland and is located within the Medway, Ouse, Rother Watershed BOA (typical of the wider assessment unit). **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site consists of a small pasture grazed field derived from planned private enclosure (as classified in the Sussex HLC and typical of the wider assessment unit). **Perceptual aspects** ■ The site is influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge of Rotherfield and the B2100 Station Road, which reduce levels of tranquillity (which are recorded as relatively low in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping); however, some dark night skies are experienced (light levels are recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping) which is typical of the wider assessment unit (**Figures 3 and 4).**
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site forms part of the Rotherfield Millennium Green and the pastoral context to Rotherfield; particularly the 20th century settlement expansion to the north and north-east of the historic settlement core along Station Road and Hornshurst Road. The adjacent settlement edge to the north-west of the site consists of thick hedgerows along the B2100 Station Road, beyond which are gardens associated with two storey semi-detached properties along Hornshurst Road. The adjacent settlement edge to the south-west of the site consists of a property boundary in the form of a garden fence beyond which are the gardens and two storey detached and semi-detached properties along the B2100 Station Road. The mature hedgerow along the B2100 Station Road provides a strong boundary feature between the site and settlement.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Slightly elevated views overlooking the site are afforded from the upper storeys of residential properties along Hornshurst Road to the north-west of the site. Relatively open views to the north-east and east are also afforded from the residential properties located to the south-west of the site along Station Road. However, views into the site from Station Road are screened by the hedgerow and embankment, with some glimpsed views into the site at field gates or in between gaps in vegetation.

	Views across the site are also available by recreational receptors visiting the Rotherfield Millennium Green, which the site forms a part of. Distant views of the site from properties along New Road, to the south-east of the site, are partially screened by intervening woodland.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Whilst relatively close views of the site are afforded from the surrounding area, landform and woodland partially encloses the site in more distant views across the wider AONB.
Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site is located on the *principal ridge (Forest Ridge)* of the High Weald, contributing to the *pattern of faults and folds* of the AONB. There are no distinctive geological or water features within the site however.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Rotherfield is a *village of Medieval origin* with its modern settlement edge along the north-western and south-western boundaries of the site.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the sites. However, the B2100 Station Road along the northern boundary of the site is recorded as a ridgeway on high ground, and contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	The mature and wooded field boundaries contribute to the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of … outgrown hedges*.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The small field is used for *grazing livestock* and enclosed by woody and thick hedged boundaries. The good quality priority habitat semi-improved grassland contributes to the *high proportion of good quality flowery grassland* of the wider AONB.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, with some *glimpsed long views* south from the site. The site is located within a relatively *dark landscape*. However, the sense of remoteness and tranquillity is influenced by proximity to the settlement. Public access and use of the site as the Rotherfield Millennium Green provides *opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature*.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Rotherfield assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that areas of complex landform, priority habitat woodland (including ancient woodland) and grassland, areas with an intact historic field pattern, historic features in the Rotherfield Conservation Area and the rural setting provided to it, the separation provided between settlements, the visual prominence of the assessment unit and its location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. However, the occasional influence of modern development, the few known historic features (outside of the conservation area), partially contained nature of outward views in wooded areas along the southern and north-western edges of the assessment unit and existing expansion beyond the historic settlement edge decreases sensitivity.

The Site

Whilst the site has some characteristics which are atypical of the wider assessment unit and decrease sensitivity, including a regular field pattern, gently sloping topography and limited intervisibility with the Rotherfield Conservation Area, overall, it is considered that the site is of **high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), in line with the wider assessment unit. The site is a pastoral field of good quality semi-improved grassland (enclosed by mature and partially wooded field boundaries) that forms part of the Rotherfield Millennium Green and the wider pastoral context in outward views from the settlement edge, and so the site demonstrates a number of characteristics which increase sensitivity to development across the assessment unit.

The site expresses a number of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. It lies on a principal ridge and is part of the pattern of faults and folds, with mature field boundaries contributing to the highly interconnected woodlands in the locality. The good quality semi-improved natural grassland contributes to the high proportion of good quality flowery grassland within the AONB, and there are glimpsed long views south. The use of the site as part of the Rotherfield Millennium Green contributes to the opportunities for informal outdoor recreation. These characteristics increase sensitivity.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of … outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation surrounding the site, especially mature trees and hedgerows, in line with the biodiversity opportunities listed for the Medway, Ouse and Rother Watershed BOA. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors (that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable).
Loss or deterioration of pastoral semi-improved grassland. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Good quality flowery grassland. ■ Fields mostly used for grazing livestock.	■ Retain habitat connectivity of the wider area of semi-improved grassland by enhancing and maintaining structural complexity and species diversity along the southern and eastern site boundaries. ■ Loss of pasture and good quality semi-improved grassland would be unavoidable with development of the site, as development would remove land from agricultural use with limited opportunities to retain areas due to the small scale of the site. Field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern.

Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[4] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Deterioration of the rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Rotherfield. Extension of development beyond the robust boundary provided by mature hedgerows between the site and properties on the edge of the settlement. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Village of Medieval origin.	■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[5], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[6] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[7].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ users of the Rotherfield Millennium Green, which includes the site; ■ motorists/cyclists and residents along the B2100 Station Road; and ■ residents of Hornshurst Road. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all the wooded and mature hedgerow boundaries that enclose the site (including the mature hedgerow along the B2100 Station Road) to minimise visibility into the site. ■ Retain the long views south across the wider AONB from the settlement edge. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using native local species, where possible, to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Existing public access across the site, which provides connectivity across the Rotherfield Millennium Green, should be retained.

[4] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/
[5] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[6] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[7] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend development into the rural landscape which forms the context to the settlement, although mature hedgerows along the site boundaries limit views into it. Development would also result in loss of '*good quality flowery grassland'* which is a defining component of character of the High Weald AONB.

Should development come forward on this site, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance trees and hedgerows, in line with the biodiversity opportunities listed for the Medway, Ouse and Rother Watershed BOA.
- Retain, protect and enhance habitat connectivity of the wider area of semi-improved grassland to the south and east of the site.
- Retain the rural character of outward views from the settlement edge, particularly from properties along the B2100 Station Road and Hornshurst Road.
- Retain public access across the site and connectivity with the Rotherfield Millennium Green.

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Rotherfield assessment unit

As there is only one site within the Rotherfield assessment unit, cumulative effects have not been considered.

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: LCA 5B - Tunbridge Wells South-East

Final report
Prepared by LUC
January 2024



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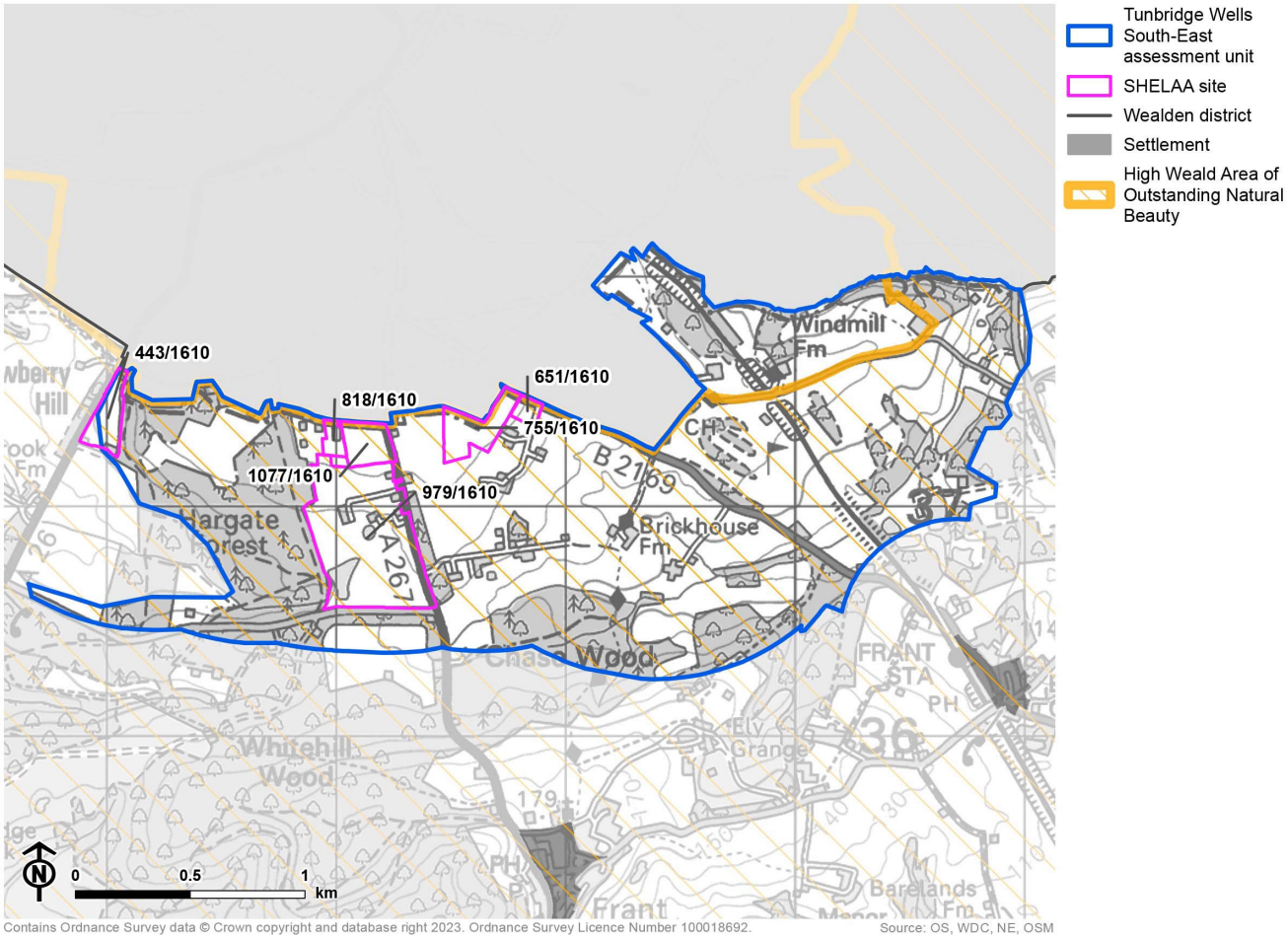
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Chapter 7
Tunbridge Wells South-East Assessment Unit

The following potential development sites are considered within the Tunbridge Wells South-East assessment unit:

- **Strawberry Hill Farm, Eridge Road (443/1610)**[1]
- Group comprising **Land off Bayham Road (755/1610) and Land at Bayham Road (651/1610)**
- Group comprising **Land at Whinlatter, St Mark's Road (818/1610), Land lying to the west side of Frant Road (1077/1610), and Pinewood Farm, Frant Road (979/1610)**

Figure 1: Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



[1] Site 443/1610 falls within both LCA 5B: High Weald – Central and LCA 6A: High Weald - Medway Catchment. For the purpose of this assessment, it has been considered under LCA 5B as the majority of the Tunbridge Wells South-East assessment unit is covered by this LCA.

Settlement location, evolution and pattern

Settlement location and context	Royal Tunbridge Wells is a large town located within Tunbridge Wells Borough, just to the north of Wealden and outside the local authority's boundary. The settlement is excluded from, but surrounded in all directions by, the High Weald AONB. The landscape to the south of the town is located within LCA 6A: High Weald – Medway Catchment and LCA 5B: High Weald – Central.
Settlement evolution	The origins of the town date to the 17th century when Tunbridge Wells was established as a spa retreat due to the presence of a chalybeate spring. Rising popularity of the town's healing springs led to further expansion in the 18th century. The historic core of the settlement is located along the Pantiles promenade, which extends south-west from the wells. Railway services were introduced in the 19th century and, given its proximity to London, the town grew steadily throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. As the town expanded from the valley-floor Pantiles, development was originally focussed along the ridge lines that carry the major roads. However, more recently development has also expanded from this down on to the slopes. Despite this later expansion of development, the settlement edge is often enclosed by woodland or contained by roads.
Settlement pattern and edge character	The south-eastern edge of Tunbridge Wells consists mostly of two and two-and-a-half storey detached and semi-detached houses, and some urban fringe elements including sewage works, a crematorium and cemetery, and a golf club located along the south-eastern settlement edge near the B2169. Part of the southern settlement edge is defined by woodland at Hargate Forest.

Mapped information for the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB's defining components of character that are found within the Tunbridge Wells South-East assessment unit have been mapped in **Figure 2.** Tranquillity and dark skies (which form part of the perceptual qualities) are shown in **Figures 3 and 4** respectively.

Figure 2: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB

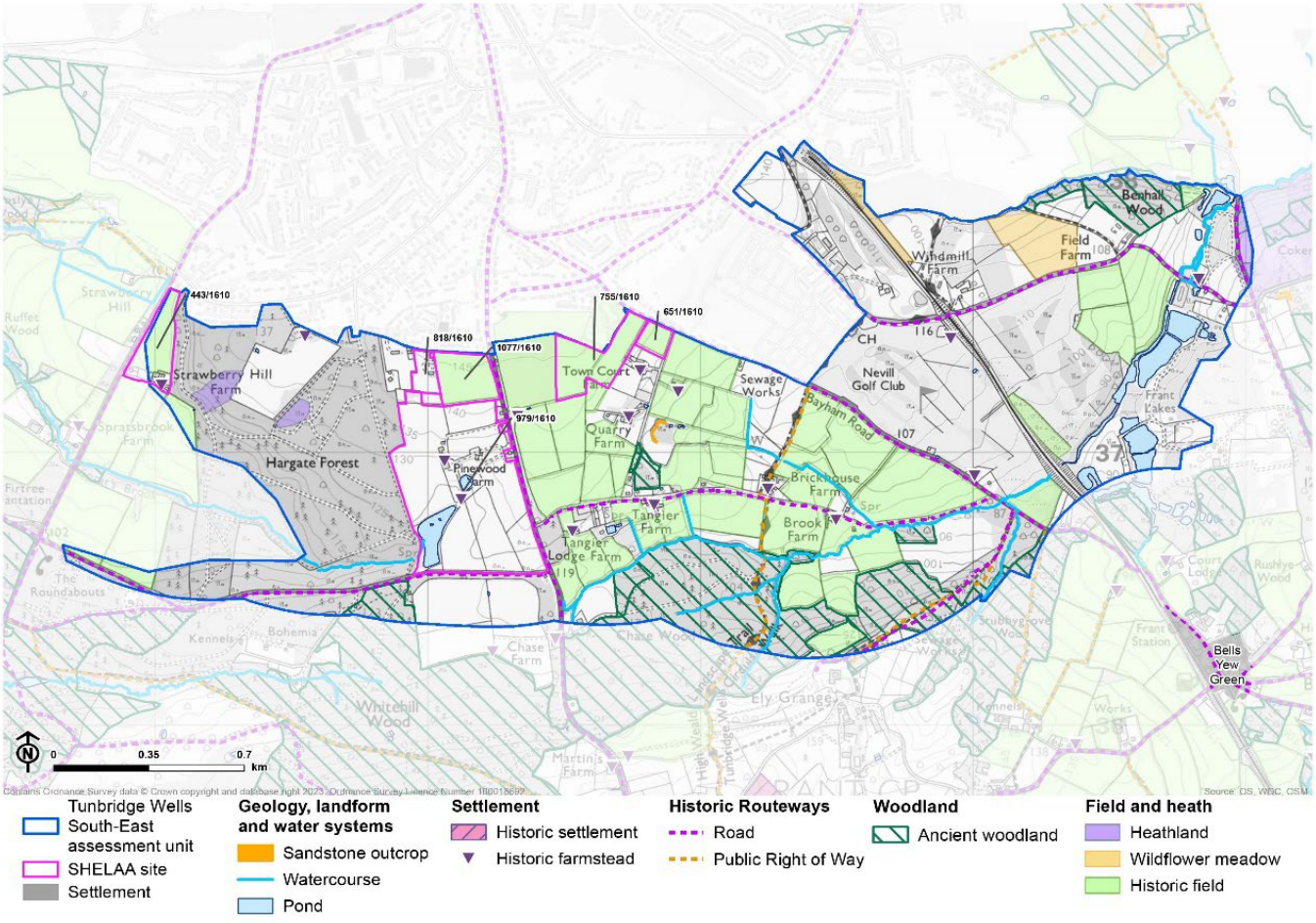


Figure 3: Tranquillity

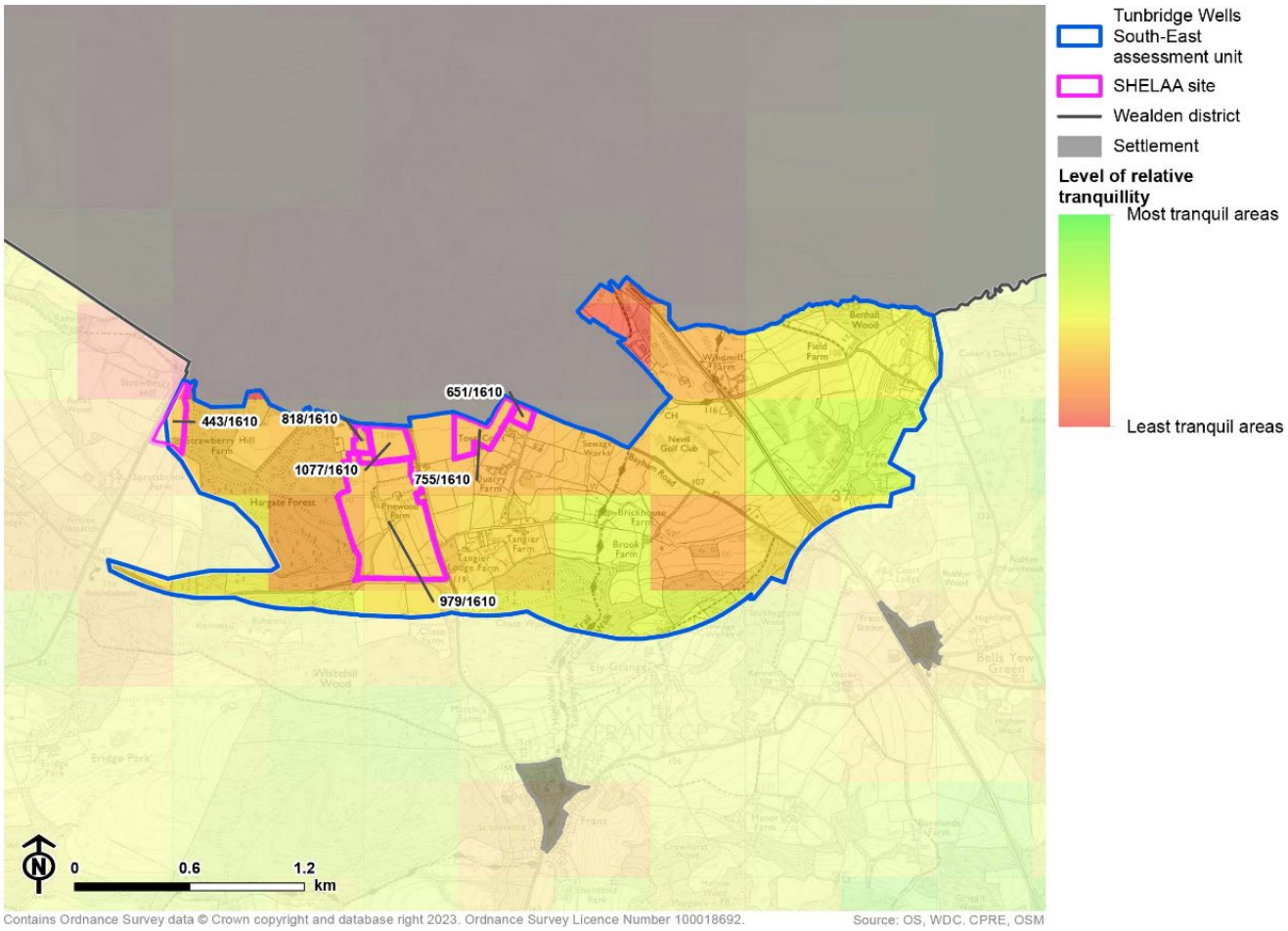
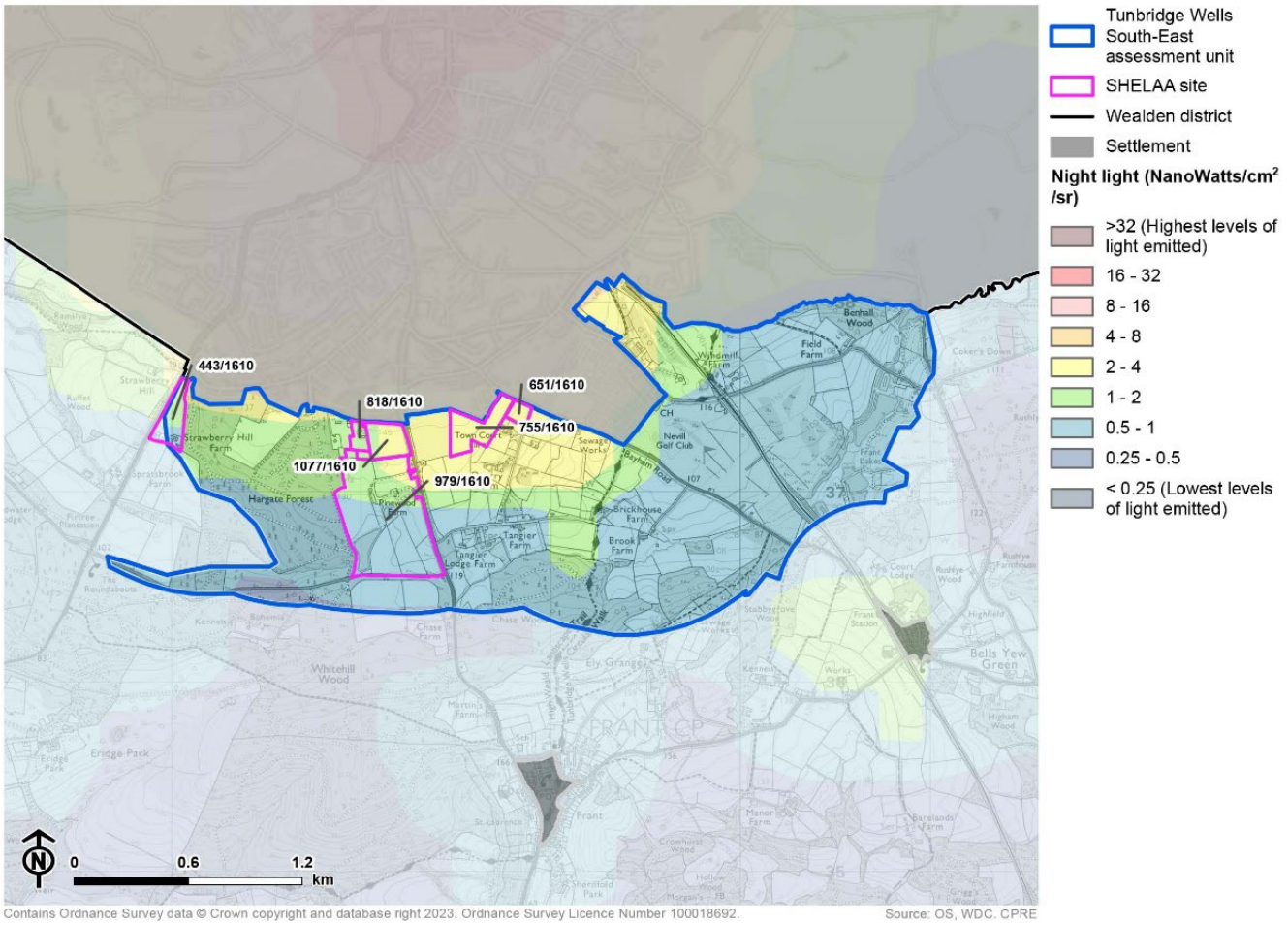


Figure 4: Dark skies



Landscape sensitivity context for the Tunbridge Wells South-East assessment unit

*The landscape sensitivity of the Tunbridge Wells South-East assessment unit described in the **Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development***			
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the assessment unit	**Small scale residential** 2-2.5 storey housing	**Medium scale residential** 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	**Commercial/ industrial** e.g. industrial units or hotels
	MH	**H**	**H**
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the assessment unit	■ The complex ridge and valley landform. ■ Mature deciduous woodlands (some of which are ancient in origin), particularly in the west and south of the unit. ■ The role the area plays in separation between the larger settlement of Tunbridge Wells and smaller settlements located further south within the High Weald AONB and Wealden District, including Frant and Bells Yew Green. ■ The wooded backdrop, formed by woodland in the west of the unit, to the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells. ■ The network of public rights of way including the promoted High Weald Landscape Trail and Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk and open access land at Hargate Forest. ■ The rural character of the landscape with areas of remoteness, tranquillity and dark skies away from busy roads and the settlement edge. ■ Location within and intervisibility with more distant areas of the High Weald AONB.		
Guidance	■ Relate development to the existing pattern of settlement, which is focused along ridgelines and avoids valley sides and incised stream valleys (LCA 6B). ■ Avoid development on sites in areas of habitat interest, notably deciduous woodland, lowland heath and riparian habitats along stream valleys. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland and heathland. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to the interconnecting ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow an appropriate buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Eridge and Broadwater Watershed BOA, especially woodland and heathland management and restoration, where possible. ■ Retain in-field and roadside trees along the A267 and B2169, including tree clumps, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the south. ■ Minimise the potential for coalescence with small settlements located to the south, and the sequential experience of settlement as experienced when travelling south on roads from Tunbridge Wells into the interior of the High Weald AONB.		

	■ Consider views from public rights of way, particularly from the High Weald Landscape Trail and Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk, and glimpsed outward views from open access woodland at Hargate Forest when siting and designing development in the landscape. ■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, and / or using species that are in character with the wider landscape, preferably native. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[2] , 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[3] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[4]. ■ Ensure development does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, particularly the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB.

[2] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[3] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[4] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Strawberry Hill Farm, Eridge Road (443/1610)

Site Details	
Potential development	70 residential dwellings
Site location	This site is located to the south of Tunbridge Wells and situated between the A26 to the west and Hargate Forest to the east.

Figure 5: Site location and constraints

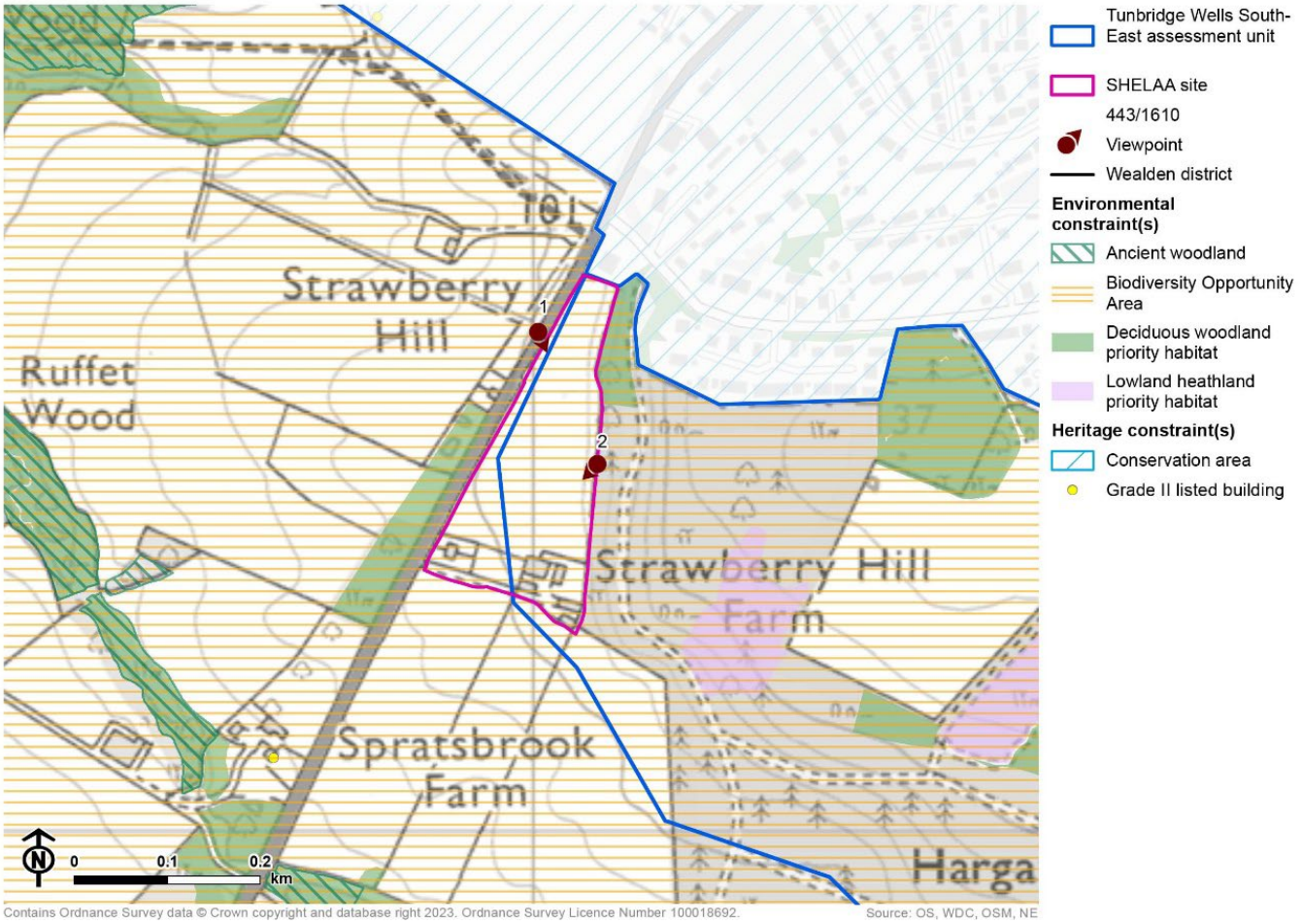
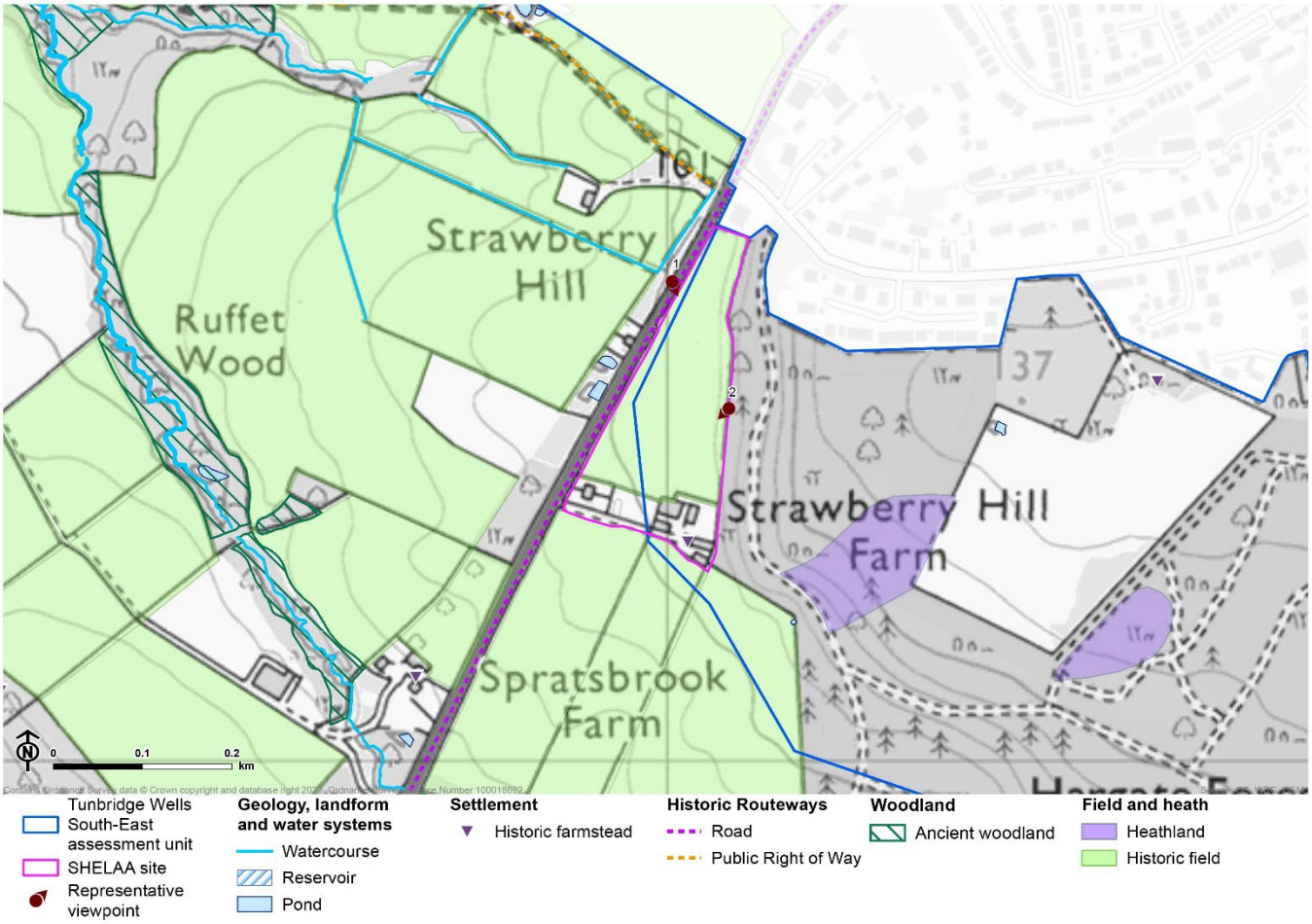


Figure 6: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Glimpsed view looking south-east across the site from the A26



Viewpoint 2: Partially screened views looking south-west across the site from Hargate Forest

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms part of the transitional slope descending from the ridge crest to the north-east and east of the site (LCA 5B) towards the stream corridor to the south-west of the site (LCA 6A), which is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Landform gently slopes from 105m AOD in the south-west to 115m AOD in the north-east. **Natural character** ■ The site is predominantly pastoral in character, which is characteristic of the wider assessment unit, with thick mature hedgerows and trees lining the site boundary. ■ The natural character in the south of the site is influenced by modern agricultural buildings, which form visible manmade features in the landscape. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site is located within an area of medium scale fields derived from planned private enclosure (as classified in the Sussex HLC), which is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ No known heritage features are located within the site, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ The Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area (designated by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council) is located approximately 40m to the north of the site, however woodland and existing built development limits intervisibility between the site and the Conservation Area. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The site and the wider assessment unit are influenced by the proximity to Tunbridge Wells and the A26 Eridge Road, which disrupts the experience of dark skies (light levels are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping. **Figure 4**) and levels of tranquillity (which are recorded as relatively low in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site does not play a role in settlement separation. The site lies to the south of the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells along the A26 Eridge Road. Roadside vegetation along the A26 and at Hargate Forest provides an enclosed and wooded setting to the southern edge of Tunbridge Wells. Existing development to the north of the site consists of bungalows along Strawberry Close, two storey detached residential properties within the Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area and a three-storey care home facility along Broadwater Down. Settlement at Tunbridge Wells to the north is located within a relatively elevated area and avoids lower-lying valleys and steep slopes. The settlement pattern strongly relates to the underlying ridged landform. There is some existing development which extends beyond the ridge crest towards the River Grom at Ramslye, to the north of the site. Existing development to the south of the site consists of dispersed farmsteads and cottages, including the existing farmstead in the south of the site.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Mature roadside vegetation along the A26 creates an enclosed character along the western site boundary. Mixed woodland at Hargate Forest creates an enclosed character along the eastern site boundary.

	Residents at the Strawberry Hill House care home experience partially screened elevated views across the site towards the wooded ridges of Broadwater Forest and Whitehill Wood. Views towards the site from properties located along Strawberry Close are screened and filtered by intervening vegetation including woodland at Hargate Forest. The residential property located along the A26 across from the site experiences framed views into the site in between a gap in roadside vegetation. There are no public rights of way crossing through or near the site from which views of the site are afforded. There are some limited glimpsed views into the site which may be experienced by walkers accessing the western extents of the Hargate Forest open access land.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	There are some glimpsed long views south from the site towards the wooded skyline formed by Broadwater Forest and Whitehill Wood and closer views east towards Hargate Forest; however, this woodland limits more distant views towards and from the wider AONB.
Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site is located on the transitional slopes descending from the *principal ridge* of the High Weald (Forest Ridge), contributing towards the *pattern of faults and folds*.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	The farm in the south-east of the site is recorded as part of the historic farmstead[5] associated with Spratsbrook Farm (located to the south-west of the site), and contributes to the *high density of historic farmsteads* found within the AONB.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the site. The A26 Eridge Road to the west of the site is recorded as a historic lane[6], and contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways, although it now has a modern appearance.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Trees and woodland along the site boundaries contribute towards a *highly interconnected* habitat network.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The underlying field pattern of the site contributes to the *relatively small irregular field pattern*, defined by hedgerows and mature vegetation.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	Dark skies and sense of tranquillity are limited by proximity to the A26 and Tunbridge Wells. The site contributes to the *rural landscape* of the wider area, with some *glimpsed long views* south towards the wooded skyline formed by Broadwater Forest and Whitehill Wood, although vegetation enclosing the site generally limits views out.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development assesses the Tunbridge Wells South-East assessment unit to have a **moderate-high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform, areas of woodland, the wooded and scenic

[5] As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 6).
[6] As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 6).

rural qualities of the unit, which contribute towards the setting of Tunbridge Wells, and the location of the majority of the assessment unit within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of modern farm buildings and some areas of field amalgamation, enclosure by woodland, relatively few known historic features and proximity to Tunbridge Wells and major roadways (the A26 and A267) reduces sensitivity.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the wider assessment unit, and is of **moderate** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The site comprises a relatively small-scale field in pasture use, is enclosed in character, has a relatively flat landform, and is influenced by the proximity of the settlement edge and the A26, as well as modern agricultural buildings, all of which decrease the site's sensitivity to development. In addition, there are no known historic features or public rights of way within the site and no priority habitats, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit and slightly decreases sensitivity. However, field boundaries along the A26 form part of the wooded approach to the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells, which increases sensitivity. The site lies beyond the existing settlement boundary of Tunbridge Wells and extends beyond the ridge crest towards the lower-lying valley landscape, which increases the site's sensitivity.

The site also expresses some of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. The topography of the site contributes to the pattern of faults and folds and the farm complex in the south-east contributes to the high density of historic farmsteads within the High Weald AONB. The trees and woodlands bordering the site contribute to the highly interconnected woodlands across the AONB, and the small irregular field pattern contributes to the field and heath component of character within the AONB. These characteristics increase sensitivity.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerow along the A26 which screen views into the site. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable.
Encroachment/ loss of the farm complex in the south-east of the site (recorded as part of the historic farmstead associated with Spratsbrook Farm located to the south-west of the site). **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ High density of historic farmsteads.	■ Locate development in the north of the site to relate better to the existing settlement pattern and to minimise encroachment towards the boundary of the historic farmstead at Spratsbrook Farm (further assessment relating to the setting of heritage assets advised).
Settlement form edge and setting	
Extension of development beyond the ridge crest is not in keeping with the existing pattern of settlement.	■ Focus development in the north of the site, so as to better relate to existing settlement to the north of the site and to avoid the

	perception of development extending onto lower-lying ground to the south. ■ Given the location of the site on the edge of the ridge crest, the height and massing of any development should be carefully considered in relation to the scale of existing development and underlying topography in the area.
Deterioration of mature hedgerows and woodland which contributes to the wooded backdrop in outward views from the settlement edge and from the approach into the settlement from the south.	■ Retain, protect, and enhance woodland and mature trees along the site boundaries to minimise visibility of development. ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[7], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[8] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[9].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ residents of Strawberry Hill House care home, and the residential property located along the A26 Eridge Road to the west of the site; ■ visitors to the open access land at Hargate Forest; and ■ motorists/cyclists and pedestrians on the A26 Eridge Road to the west of the site.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the wooded boundaries that enclose the site in views from the A26 and Hargate Forest. ■ Consider views of development from the Strawberry Hill House care home, retaining and enhancing trees/woodland to screen views into the site. ■ Retain glimpsed long views from the site and Strawberry Hill House care home looking south towards the wooded skyline formed by Broadwater Forest and Whitehill Wood ancient woodlands. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable, to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Enhance public access and provide opportunities to link to the open access land at Hargate Forest.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend development into the rural countryside (including its wooded backdrop), which forms the setting for the southern settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells. However, it would not cross a distinct boundary feature and the wooded nature of the site boundaries limits views into it. Development in the south of the site may be perceived to extend onto lower slopes, which descend from the ridgeline to the north and east, which would be at odds with the existing pattern of settlement.

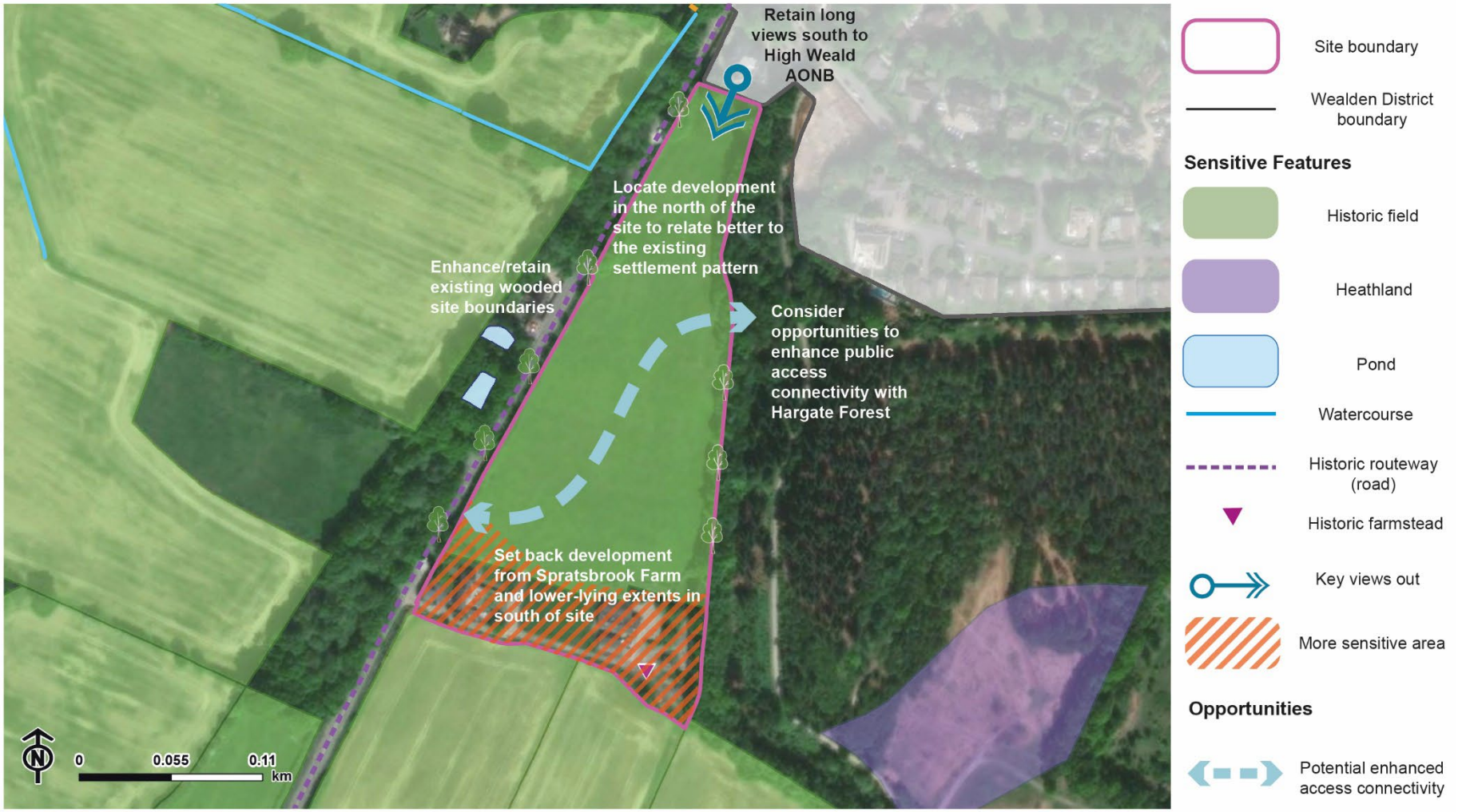
[7] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[8] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[9] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Should development come forward on the site, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain and enhance woodland, trees and hedgerows which screen views into the site and contribute to interconnectivity of habitats.
- Avoid development in the south of the site to limit the perception of development extending beyond the ridge crest or 'spilling' onto the lower slopes.
- Enhance public access, providing opportunities to experience the surrounding countryside and Hargate Forest.

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities of development on the site.

Figure 7: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

Land off Bayham Road (755/1610) and Land at Bayham Road (651/1610)

Site Details	
Potential development	Site 755/1610: 100 residential dwelling units Site 651/1610: 30 residential dwelling units For the purpose of this landscape and visual appraisal the above SHELAA sites have been considered together.
Site location	These sites are located to the south of the settlement and situated to the south-west of the B2169.

Figure 8: Site location and constraints

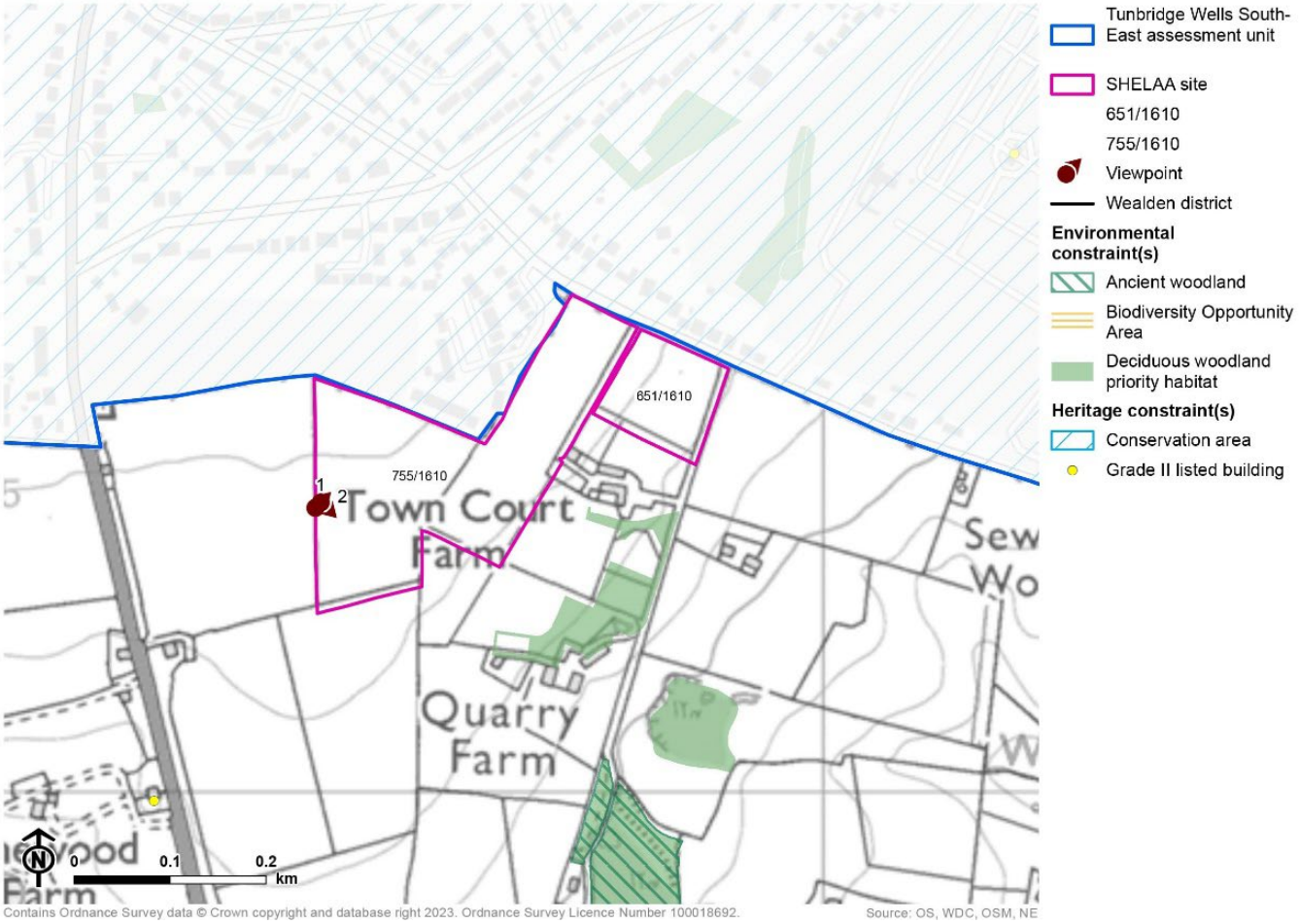
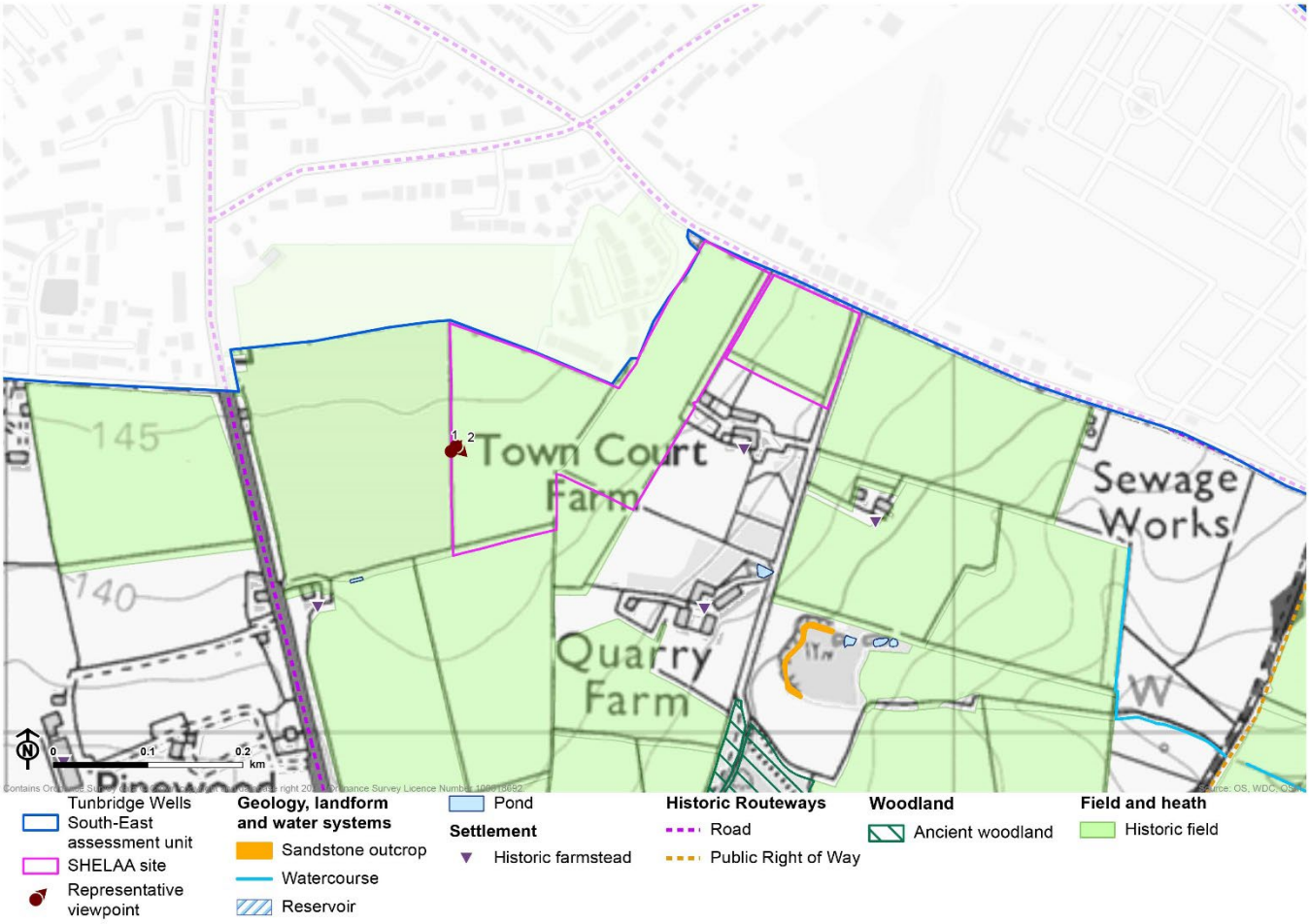


Figure 9: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: View north-east across Site 755/1610 looking towards properties along Dukes Drive



Viewpoint 2: Views south-east across Site 755/1610, glimpsed in between a break in the containing field boundary

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The sites form part of the rolling ridged landform, which is typical of the wider assessment unit, sloping gently from 130m AOD in the south-east to 145m AOD in the north at the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells. ■ The sites are located on the crest of the ridgeline, with landform gently descending to the south of the site towards an incised stream corridor. **Natural character** ■ The sites are currently predominantly arable, with an influence of modern agricultural development (a plant nursery with polytunnels) in the north-east of **Site 755/1610**, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Interconnected and partially wooded field boundaries, which are typical of the wider assessment unit, are located along the site boundaries. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The underlying field pattern of the sites comprises small to medium scale fields derived from planned private enclosure as classified in the Sussex HLC, with relatively linear field boundaries, which are typical of the wider assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The site and wider assessment unit are influenced by the proximity to Tunbridge Wells, which disrupts the experience of dark skies (light levels are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**) and levels of tranquillity (which are recorded as relatively low in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The sites form part of a wider pattern of fields which provide a rural context to the southern edge of Tunbridge Wells. The sites lie to the south of the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells along the B2169 Bayham Road. Linear development extends along the northern side of the B2169 Bayham Road to the north-east and east of the sites. Mature field boundaries provide an enclosed setting to the settlement edge, particularly in views from properties along Bayham Road and Dukes Drive, however the settlement edge is not very well-defined. Development near the sites consists of large detached houses on Forest Road and the B2169 Bayham Road, and more recent 21st century semi-detached properties located on cul-de-sacs at Copperfields and Dukes Drive to the north of the sites.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The surrounding woodland, trees and hedgerows enclose the sites and limit their visibility from the surrounding landscape including from the nearby residential properties along the settlement edge, particularly for the north-east of **Site 755/1610** and **Site 651/1610**. There are glimpsed views into the west of **Site 755/1610** from the cricket club and sports pitches to the west of the site. There are very limited glimpsed views into the sites in between gaps in vegetation and at field gates from the B2169 Bayham Road.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the sites are limited by the enclosed nature of the sites, including mature and wooded field boundaries along all site boundaries and woodland to the south of the sites. However, longer-distance glimpsed views south towards the elevated wooded ridges of the High Weald AONB are afforded from more elevated areas in the north-west of **Site 755/1610.**

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the sites	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The sites are located on the *principal ridge* of the High Weald (Forest Ridge), contributing towards the *pattern of faults and folds*.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Town Court Farm (located to the south of the sites) contributes towards the *high density of historic farmsteads*[10] found within the AONB.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the sites. However, the B2169 Bayham Road along the eastern boundary of the sites is recorded as a historic lane, which contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	The mature and wooded field boundaries form a *highly interconnected* habitat network.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	Whilst the fields located within the sites are small in scale and defined by *mixed woody boundaries and thick hedges*, the field pattern is relatively linear and regular.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	Dark skies and the sense of tranquillity are limited by proximity to the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells. The site contributes to the *rural landscape* of the wider area, with some *glimpsed long views* south towards the wooded ridges of the wider AONB; however, vegetation enclosing the sites generally limit long views out elsewhere.

How the sites relate to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development assesses the Tunbridge Wells South-East assessment unit to have a **moderate-high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform, areas of woodland, the wooded and scenic rural qualities of the unit which contribute to the setting of Tunbridge Wells, and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of modern farm buildings and some areas of field amalgamation, enclosure by woodland, relatively few known historic features and proximity to Tunbridge Wells reduce sensitivity.

The Sites

Overall, it is considered that the sites are of slightly lower sensitivity than the wider assessment unit, and are of **moderate** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sites are predominantly arable, relatively enclosed in character by mature boundary vegetation and trees as well as being influenced by the proximity of the settlement edge in terms of tranquillity / dark skies, all of which decrease sensitivity. However, the field boundaries of both sites form part of the wooded and rural backdrop to the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells, particularly properties along Bayham Road and Dukes Drive, as well as providing connectivity to the wider habitat network, all of which increase their sensitivity to development. The western extents of **Site 755/1610** are considered to be of **moderate-high** sensitivity, given the more open and elevated nature of this part of the site and intervisibility with the wider High Weald AONB.

In addition, the sites also express some of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. The sites are on a principal ridge, and form part of the pattern of faults and folds. Field boundaries contribute to the highly

[10] As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 9).

interconnected woodland network, and the sites contribute to the rural landscape of the wider area. These characteristics increase sensitivity.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing these sites and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the sites, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Deterioration of the rural character of the sites which contribute to the setting of Tunbridge Wells.	■ Minimise visibility of development and maintain the filtered and rural character of views from the settlement edge. ■ Retain glimpsed long views south across the wider AONB, avoiding development in the more elevated extents of the west of **Site 755/1610**, where longer outward views are available, and from the lower-lying extents in the south of **Site 755/1610**, which forms the rural foreground of these views. ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[11], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[12] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[13].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ visitors to the cricket club and sports pitches to the west of Site 755/1610; and ■ residents along the settlement edge, including on the B2169 Bayham Road and Dukes Drive, and motorists/cyclists on these roads.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the wooded boundaries that enclose the sites, particularly in views from the B2169 Bayham Road, Dukes Drive and sports pitches to the west of the sites. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local species to maintain the rural character of the wider area.

[11] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[12] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[13] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

	■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Enhance public access and provide opportunities to experience the wider countryside.

Summary and recommendations

Development of these sites would extend development into the rural countryside which forms the setting for the southern settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells, although the wooded and semi-enclosed nature of the sites limits views into them.

Should development come forward on these sites, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain and enhance woodland, trees and hedgerows to minimise visibility of development from the settlement edge.
- Retain glimpsed long views south from the sites across the wider AONB.
- Enhance public access and provide opportunities to experience the wider countryside.

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities of development on the sites.

Figure 10: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

Land at Whinlatter, St Mark's Road (818/1610), Land lying to the west side of Frant Road (1077/1610) and Pinewood Farm, Frant Road (979/1610)

Site Details	
Potential development	Site 818/1610: 7 residential dwellings; Site 1077/1610: 90 residential dwellings; and Site 979/1610: 170 residential dwellings (Total: 267 residential dwellings) For the purpose of this landscape and visual appraisal the above SHELAA sites have been considered together.
Site location	These sites are located to the south of the settlement and situated between the A267 and Hargate Forest.

Figure 11: Site location and constraints

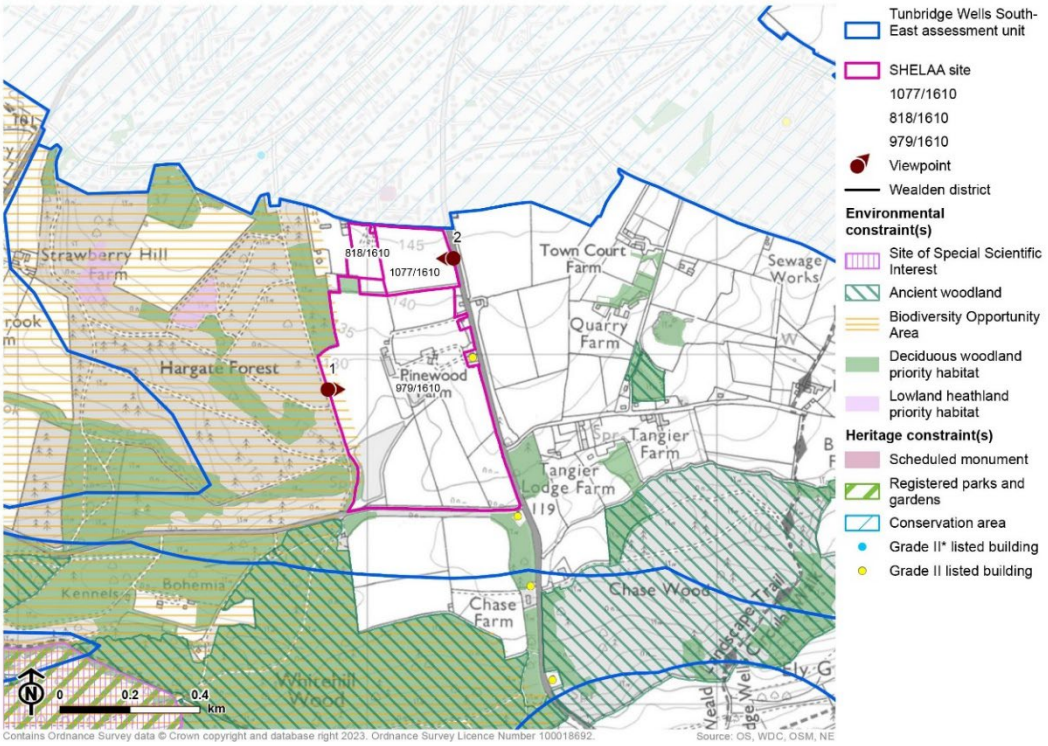
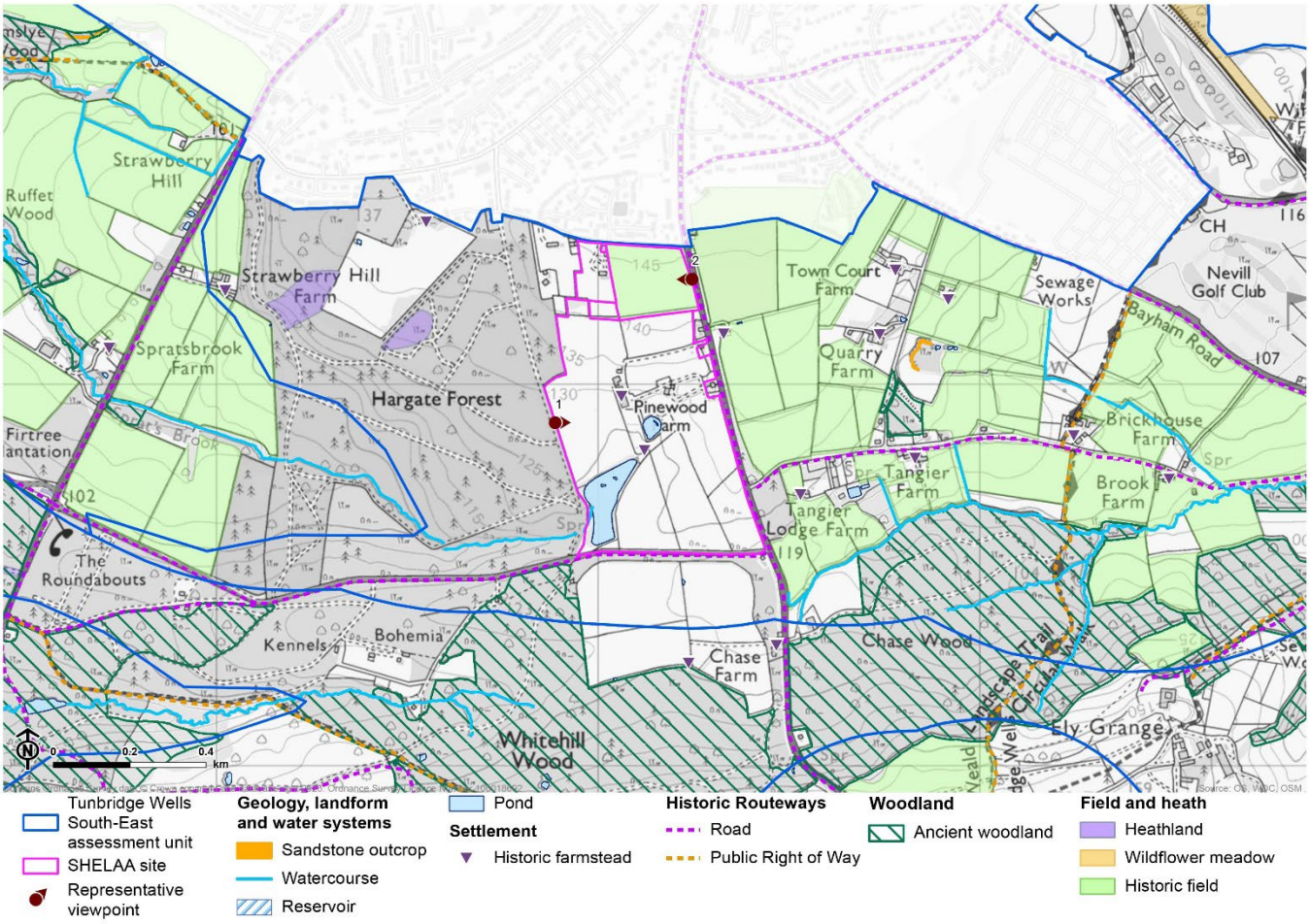


Figure 11: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Looking into **site 979/1610** from Hargate forest, with buildings associated with Pinewood Farm visible.



Viewpoint 2: View west into **site 1077/1610** from A267 Frant Road, with a wooded backdrop.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the sites in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The sites form part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald Central LCA, typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ They slope gently from 125m AOD in the south to 145m AOD in the north-east at the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells. **Natural character** ■ Priority habitat deciduous woodland extends into site **979/1610** from Hargate Forest to the west, and north-west which is representative of the numerous woodlands found across the wider assessment unit. ■ Whitehill Wood ancient woodland lies approximately 40m to the south-west of site **979/1610** which is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Mature trees line a large pond (a feature of the assessment unit) within the south-western part of Pinewood Farm (Site **979/1610**), linked to a spring that runs west through Hargate Forest. Mature trees line the southern boundaries of sites **979/1610** and **1077/1610** which is representative of the wider assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ Site **818/1610** is part of the landscaped garden of Whinlatter, which is atypical of the assessment unit. ■ Site **1077/1610** and the north, west and south-east of site **979/1610** have a planned private enclosure field pattern, and the centre and south of site **979/1610** have a regular piecemeal enclosure field pattern (as classified in the Sussex HLC and typical of the wider assessment unit). Yew Tree Cottages Grade II listed building lies adjacent to the east of site **797/1610** and Frant Bottom Lodge (another Grade II listed building) is located approximately 20m to the south-east of **797/1610** (these are the only listed buildings throughout the assessment unit). ■ A Scheduled Monument at Moat Farm and the Royal Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area lie approximately 60m north of site **1077/1610**, however intervening modern residential development limits intervisibility between the site and the Scheduled Monument. Few other historic features are found in the wider assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The sites are influenced by their proximity to the A267 Frant Road (which runs along the eastern boundary of sites **1077/1610** and **979/1610**), and the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells along St Mark's Road which disrupt the experience of dark skies. Light levels are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping for sites **818/1610, 1077/1610** and the northern half of **979/1610**, while the southern half is more towards the lower/darker end (see **Figure 4**) and levels of tranquillity, which are recorded as relatively low in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The sites lie to the south of the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells along St Mark's Road. The settlement edge is relatively well-defined to the north of St Mark's Road, with the settlement pattern becoming noticeably more dispersed to the south of the road. Hargate Forest, to the west of the sites, acts as a soft boundary feature to part of the settlement edge. Roadside vegetation along St Mark's Road provides an enclosed, rural setting to the town. Development along St Mark's Road consists of

	large detached houses, semi-detached houses and small closes and cul-de-sacs. A plant nursery and individual cottages line Frant Road, outside the site boundaries. Pinewood Farm within site **979/1610** contains a farmhouse and a number of large modern agricultural barns. The sites form part of a wider pattern of fields which provide separation between the settlement edges of Tunbridge Wells to the north and Frant to the south.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Mature roadside vegetation along St Mark's Road creates an enclosed character in the north, and limits visibility into sites **1077/1610** and **818/1610** from nearby residential properties along St Mark's Road. Gaps in roadside vegetation along the A267 Frant Road allow for some close views into the sites from the east for people travelling along the road, and residents at properties along the A267 Frant Road. Hargate Forest to the west is open access land, and there may be glimpsed views into the sites from walkers in the wood.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the sites are limited by the largely enclosed nature of the sites.
Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems - a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The sites form part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB contributing towards the *pattern of faults and folds*. Site **979/1610** also contributes towards the *high density of ponds* with two ponds that lie south and south-west of Pinewood Farm. There are no distinctive geological features.
Settlement - dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Pinewood Farm (within site **979/1610)** contributes towards the *high density of historic farmsteads*[14] found within the AONB and the fields associated with this individual historic farmstead contribute towards the *separation between settlements* at Tunbridge Wells and Frant. The Yew Tree Cottages Grade II listed building adjacent to the eastern boundary of site **979/1610** contributes towards the *high concentration of historic buildings.*
Routeways - a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the sites. However, the A267 Frant Road along the eastern boundary of the sites is recorded as a ridgeway on high ground, while Bunny Lane to the south of site **979/1610** is recorded as a historic lane, which both contribute towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland - abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Whitehill Wood lies adjacent to the south-west of site **979/1610** and contributes towards the *high proportion of ancient woodland* and the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges* of the AONB. Other trees/woodlands adjoin the sites (including Hargate Forest to the west) and exist within internal field boundaries, forming an interconnected habitat network.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The small fields within the sites contribute towards the *generally irregular field pattern*. Site **1077/1610** partially retains its historic field boundaries, contributing towards the *Medieval character*. The sites are mostly used for *grazing livestock* and enclosed by woody and thick hedgerow boundaries (including frequent hedgerow trees).
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	Dark skies and sense of tranquillity are generally limited by proximity to the adjacent A267 and settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells. However the southern half of site **979/1610** is within a relatively *dark landscape*.

[14] As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 11).

	The sites contribute to the *scenic beauty* of the area, with some *glimpsed long views* south towards wooded hills; however, vegetation enclosing the sites generally limit long views out elsewhere.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Tunbridge Wells South-East assessment unit to have a **moderate-high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform, areas of woodland, the wooded and scenic rural qualities of the assessment unit which contribute to the setting of Tunbridge Wells, and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increases the sensitivity of the assessment unit. The presence of modern farm buildings and some areas of field amalgamation, the enclosure by woodland, relatively few known historic features and proximity to Tunbridge Wells reduces sensitivity of the assessment unit.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the sites are of **moderate-high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), in line with the wider assessment unit. The sites are part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB, and comprise pastoral fields enclosed by ancient and priority habitat woodland, with small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland contained within **Site 979/1610**. The mature trees along the boundaries of the sites, and a large pond within **979/1610**, the historic field pattern of sites **1077/1610** and **979/1610**, and the darker night skies in the south of **979/1610** demonstrate some of the characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. However, the sites do not contain any heritage features, although there are listed buildings adjacent to **Site 979/1610,** and have a less tranquil character than the wider assessment unit.

The sites also express some of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. Their landform is part of the pattern of faults and folds, while Pinewood Farm contributes to the high density of historic farmsteads within the AONB and the listed buildings next to the sites contribute to the high concentration of historic buildings. There is a high density of ponds within the southern part of Site 979/1610. The sites contribute to the separation of settlements, with their irregular historic field pattern, scenic beauty and glimpsed long views south.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the sites and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge along St Mark's Road and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the sites, especially mature woodlands (including priority habitat deciduous woodland), trees, and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable.
Loss or deterioration of two small ponds in the south-west of site **979/1610.**	■ Retain, and set back development from, the ponds in the south-west of site **979/1610** to create a buffer zone.

High Weald AONB character component: ■ A high density of ponds.	■ The buffer zone should incorporate new semi-natural wetland and woodland relating to the ponds.
Loss of grazed pastures and loss/ deterioration of the small-scale field pattern with largely intact field boundaries. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ A generally irregular field pattern. ■ Medieval character. ■ Fields mostly used or grazing livestock.	■ Loss of pasture and the historic small-scale field pattern would be largely unavoidable with development of the site, as development would remove land from agricultural use. Field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid the complete loss of the historic field pattern.
Encroachement to the Yew tree Cottages Grade II listed building which lies adjacent to the east of site **979/1610.** **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ High concentration of historic buildings.	■ Set development back from Yew Tree Cottages to create a buffer zone (further assessment relating to the setting of heritage assets advised). ■ The buffer zone could incorporate new planting and semi-natural habitat.
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies (for the southern half of site **979/1610)** resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[15] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Deterioration of the rural character of the sites which contribute to the rural setting of Tunbridge Wells. Extension of development beyond the roadside vegetation along St Mark's Road, which, in combination with Hargate Forest, provides a wooded and enclosed boundary to the settlement edge.	■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[16], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[17] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[18].
Reduction in the separation between the settlement of Tunbridge Wells and the historic farmstead at Pinewood Farm, and impingement on the setting of Pinewood Farm.	■ Locate development in sites **818/1610, 1077/1610** and the north of **979/1610** to relate better to the existing settlement pattern and to minimise encroachment towards the boundary of Pinewood Farm (further assessment relating to the setting of heritage assets advised).

[15] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/
[16] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[17] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[18] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

High Weald AONB character component: ■ High density of historic farmsteads.	
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ residents, pedestrians, motorists and cyclists along the A267 Frant Road to the east; ■ recreational users in the open access land of Hargrave Forest to the west; ■ residents at Pinewood Farm; and ■ motorists/cyclists along A267 Frant Road (which is recorded as a ridgeway on high ground).	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the mature vegetation that encloses the site, particularly along the A267 Frant Road. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local species where possible, to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Enhance public access and provide opportunities to link to the open access land at Hargrave Forest. ■ Retain the long views south towards wooded skylines of the wider High Weald AONB.

Summary and recommendations

Development of these sites would extend development beyond the existing vegetated boundary of Tunbridge Wells along St Mark's Road, expanding the settlement edge. However, mature vegetation limits views into the sites, and they have some relationship with the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells.

Should development come forward on these sites, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance mature vegetation surrounding the site.
- Retain, protect and enhance ponds south and south-west of Pinewood Farm.
- Concentrate development in sites **818/1610, 1077/1610,** and the north of **979/1610** to better relate to the settlement edge on St Mark's Road and minimise encroachment to Pinewood Farm.

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities of development on the site.

Figure 12: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Tunbridge Wells South-East assessment unit

Six sites have been assessed within the Tunbridge Wells South-East assessment unit. The sites have been assessed above as three groups. If all sites were brought forward for development, it would result in a potential 467 dwellings being built. The sites south of St Mark's Road (**1077/1610, 818/1610** and **979/1610**) and Bayham Road (**755/1610** and **651/1610**) are in closest proximity (approximately 215m) from each other, and development of these sites together would considerably expand the south-east of Tunbridge Wells. This would result in the loss of open countryside, and the landscape setting to the south of Tunbridge Wells and would result in greater cumulative landscape effects than if just one of the groups of sites were brought forward. However, mature vegetation on the A267 Frant Road, reduces intervisibility between the sites and would limit cumulative visual effects.

Site **443/1610** is separated from the St Mark's Road sites (**1077/1610, 818/1610** and **979/1610**) by Hargate Forest. There would be no cumulative effects if both groups were developed.

Site **443/1610** is adjacent to site **729/1610** Spratsbrook Farm, which is assessed in the Wealden District Council Landscape and Visual Appraisal, New Settlements and Large Urban Extensions. Development of both sites would result in the loss of open countryside, and increase development along Eridge Road, expanding the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells and altering the pattern of development within the assessment units. This would result in cumulative landscape and visual effects. If both sites were brought forward, cumulative visual effects would be experienced by residents, motorists, pedestrians and cyclists on the A26 Eridge Road as there would be development to both the east and west of the road.

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: LCA 5B - Wadhurst

Final report
Prepared by LUC
January 2024



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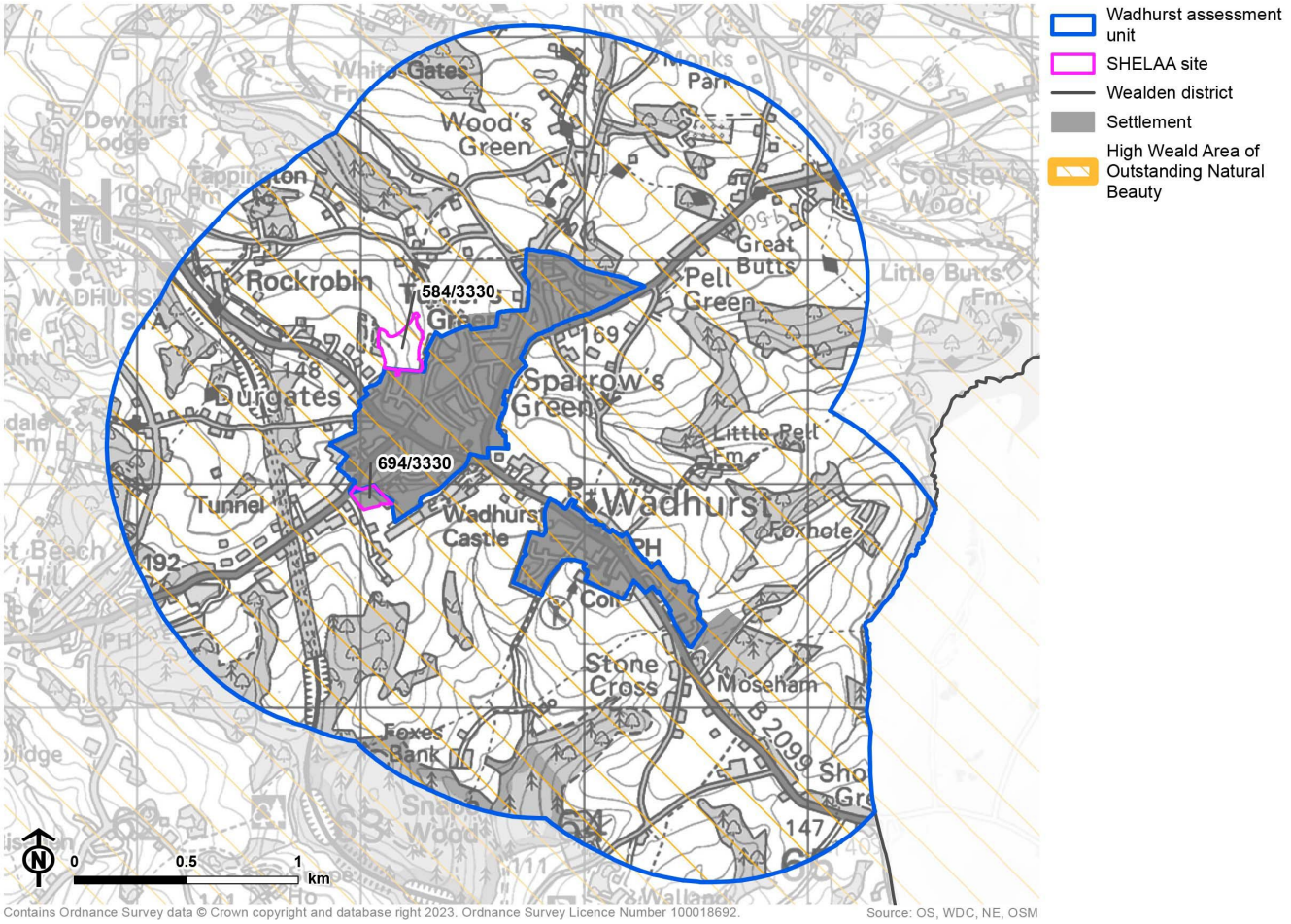
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Chapter 8
Wadhurst Assessment Unit

Two potential development sites are considered within the Wadhurst assessment unit:

- **Land adjacent to Jonas Drive (584/3330)[1]**
- **Land at Windmill House, Windmill Lane (694/3330)**

Figure 1: Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



[1]Site 584/3330 falls within both LCA 5B: High Weald – Central and LCA 6B: High Weald – Teise Catchment. For the purpose of this assessment, it has been considered under LCA 5B as the majority of the Wadhurst assessment unit is covered by this LCA.

Settlement location, evolution and pattern

Settlement location and context	Wadhurst is a linear village located in the north-east of Wealden District. The village is located on one of the principal east-west ridges within the High Weald AONB. The historic core of the village is centred around the former market place at St James' Square, located along the B2099. Wadhurst is designated as a Conservation Area, which extends to the north-west beyond the settlement boundary to include the churchyard, two large Georgian houses and their associated grounds and pastoral fields which form the setting to these historic residences and Wadhurst Castle. This assessment unit includes the village of Durgates, which is located to the north-west of Wadhurst near the junction of the B2099 and B2100. The Wadhurst Conservation Area extends to the southern boundary of Durgates. The small historic villages of Pell Green and Cousley Wood, designated as Conservation Areas, are located in the north-east of the unit along the B2100.
Settlement evolution	Wadhurst has its origins as a market village, with further growth of the village between the 15th to 18th centuries attributed to the iron industry in the locality. Agriculture, particularly the growing of hops, also played a role in the expansion of the village. The village has retained much of its historic linear form, apart from some modern development that extends south-west, including Uplands Community College. Late 20th century growth of the village can be attributed to the London to Hastings railway, which enables residents to commute to London.
Settlement pattern and edge character	Development consists of one and two storey detached and semi-detached houses, including historic properties within the Conservation Area, with some two storey 20th century terraced properties in the south-west. The surrounding pastoral fields form the context for the settlement, with the Wadhurst Castle Registered Park and Garden forming a soft boundary feature to the south-west of the settlement. The spire of the village church forms a prominent skyline feature in the landscape.

Mapped information for the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB's defining components of character that are found within the Wadhurst assessment unit have been mapped in **Figure 2.** Tranquillity and dark skies (which form part of the perceptual qualities) are shown in **Figures 3 and 4** respectively.

Figure 2: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB

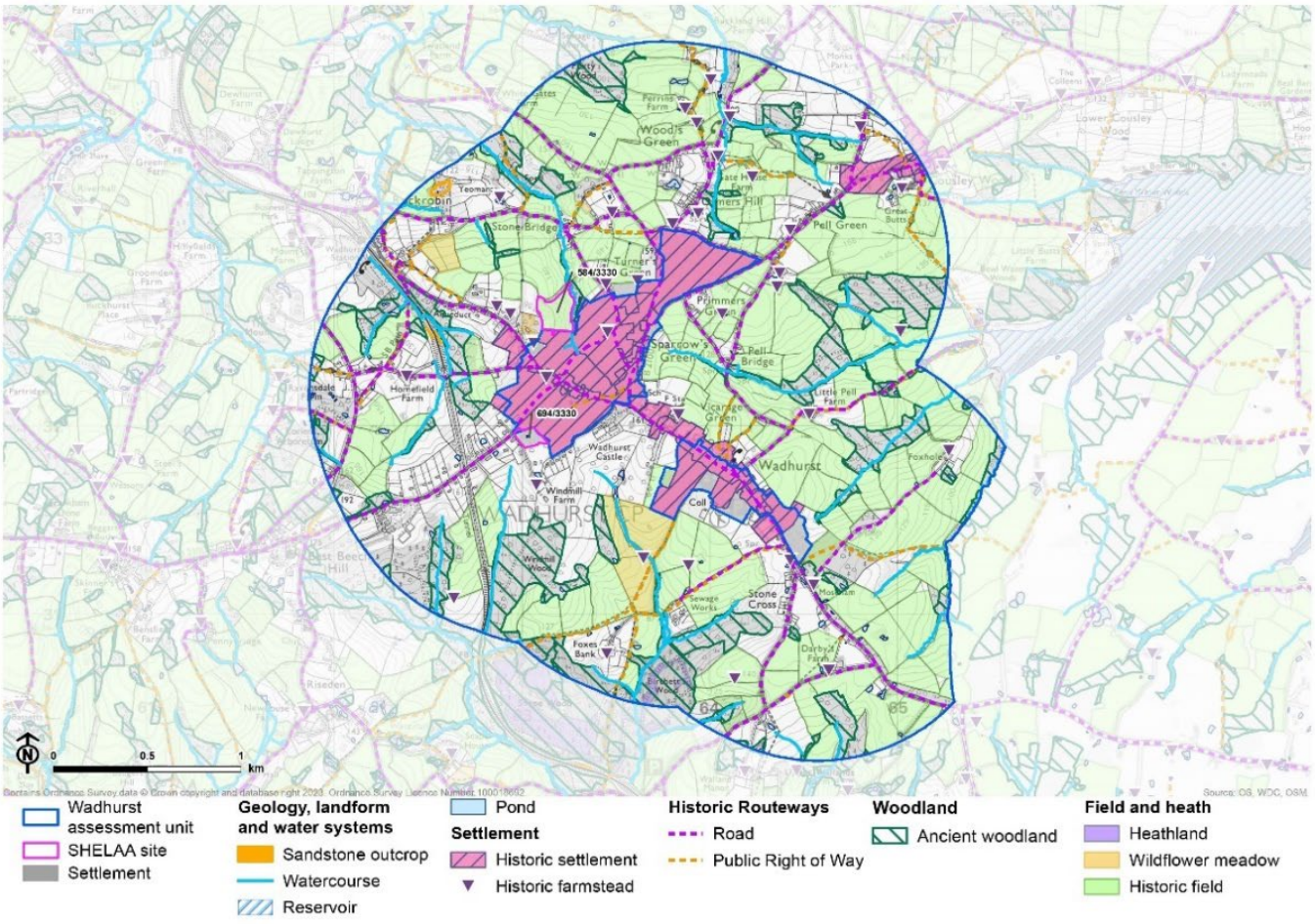


Figure 3: Tranquillity

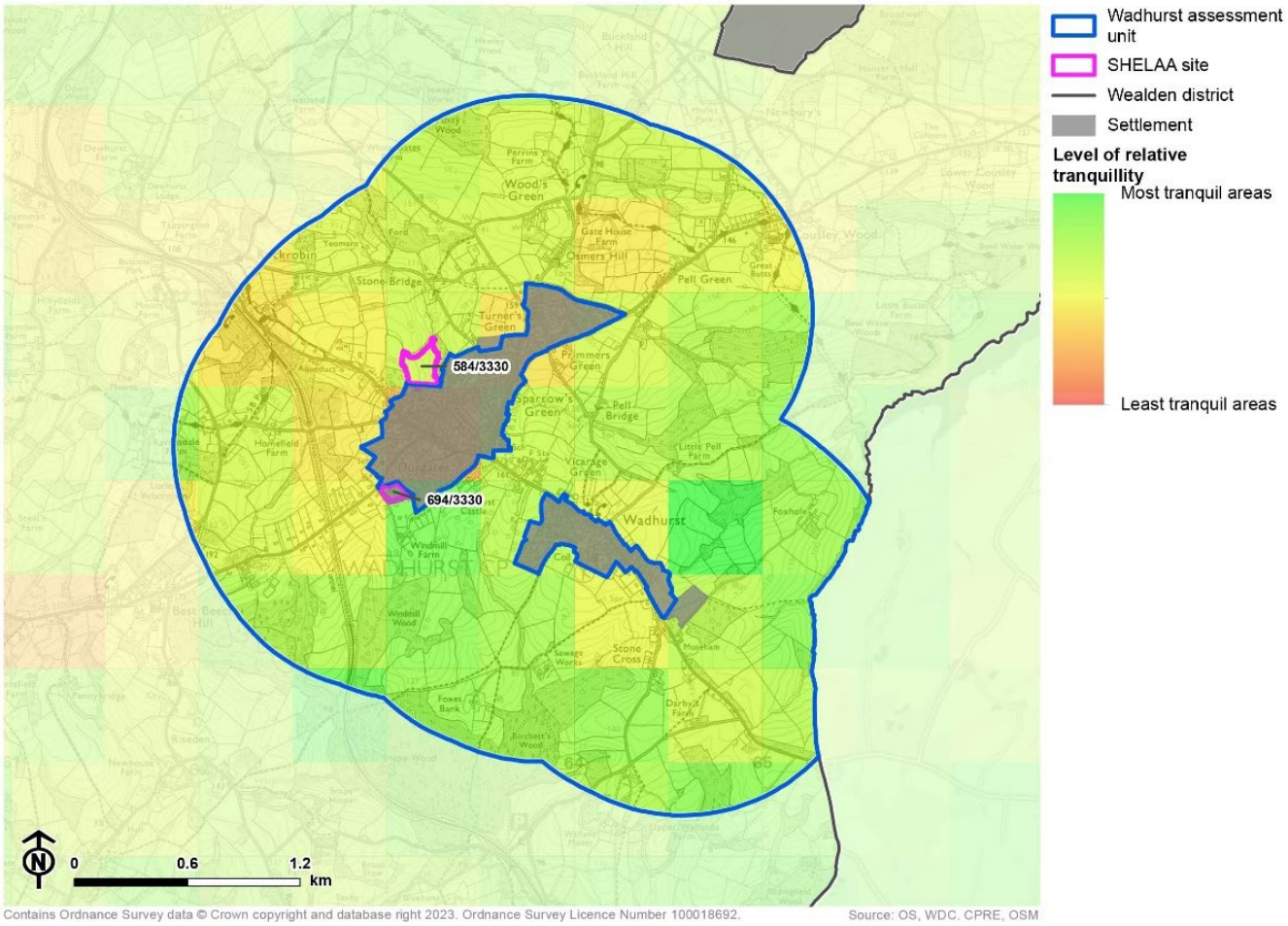
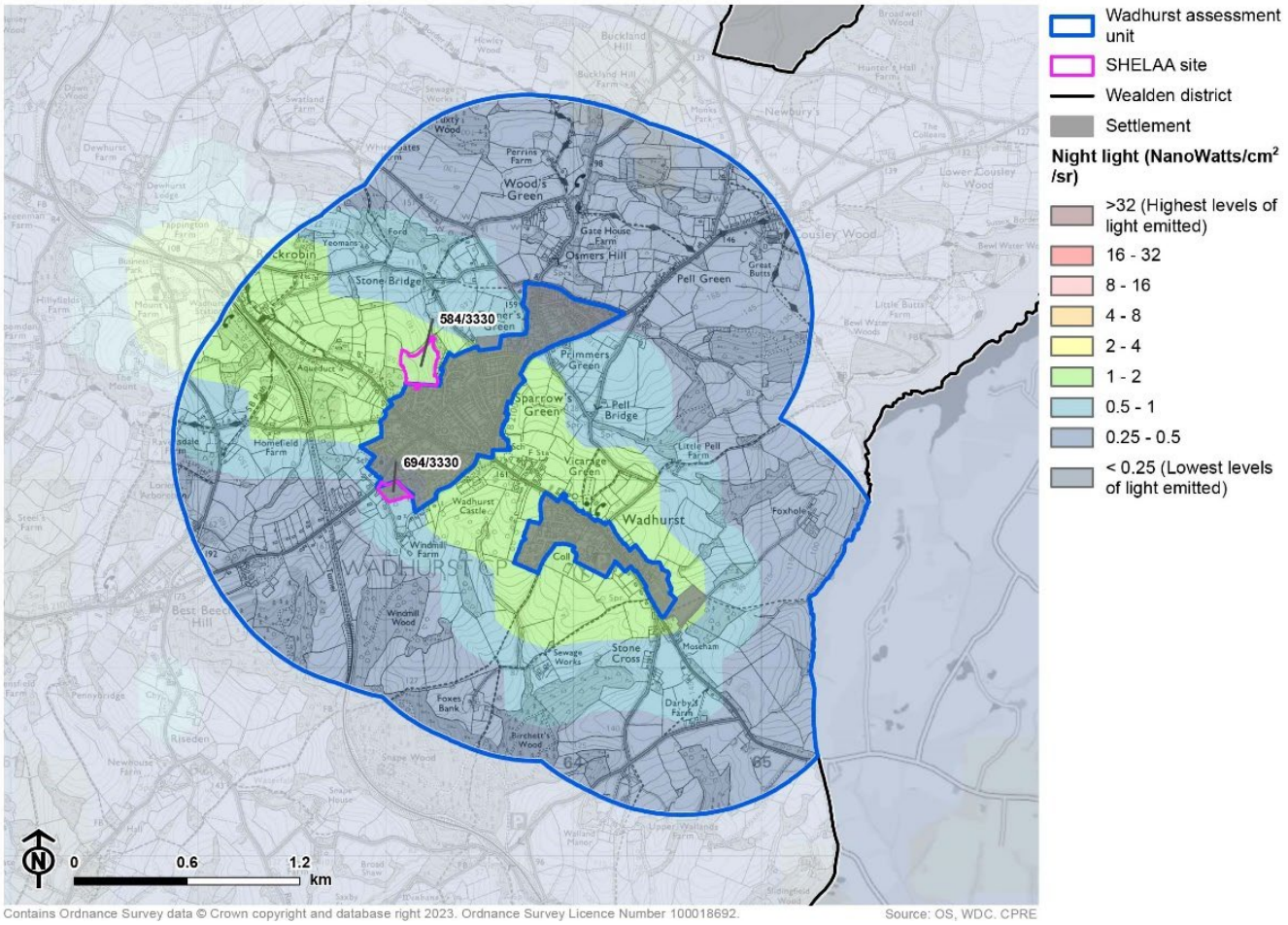


Figure 4: Dark skies



Landscape sensitivity context for the Wadhurst assessment unit

*The landscape sensitivity of the Wadhurst assessment unit, described in the **Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development***			
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the assessment unit	**Small scale residential** 2-2.5 storey housing	**Medium scale residential** 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	**Commercial/ industrial** e.g. industrial units or hotels
	H	**H**	**H**
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the assessment unit	■ The complex ridge and valley landform. ■ Interconnecting areas of mature deciduous woodland (many of which are ancient in origin), located throughout the assessment unit. ■ The pastoral landscape with areas of semi-improved grassland and lowland meadows in the south-west and west. ■ Historic features including the Wadhurst, Pell Green and Cousley Wood Conservation Areas, with a strongly expressed architectural vernacular, the Wadhurst Castle Registered Park and Garden and numerous listed buildings. ■ Intact historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts located throughout the assessment unit. ■ The strong rural character with areas of remoteness and tranquillity, particularly on the wooded slopes and valleys away from main settlements. ■ Location within and intervisibility with some significant distant views of the High Weald AONB. ■ The scenic rural backdrop provided to Wadhurst, Pell Green and Cousley Wood.		
Guidance	■ Consider views of development from the wider AONB, particularly from lower-lying landscapes (within LCA 6B/6C), siting development where well enclosed by vegetation and white it would relate to the existing ridgeline settlement pattern. ■ Avoid development 'spilling' beyond the ridge crest onto heavily wooded valley sides and the lower-lying incised stream valleys of LCA 6B/6C. ■ Avoid development in areas of habitat interest, notably ancient woodland, semi-improved grasslands and lowland meadows. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland. Avoid loss of, harm or deterioration to the interconnecting ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow a buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain or replace hedgerow or in-field trees, including tree clumps, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts located throughout the assessment unit.		

	■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the intact historic form and character of the villages of Wadhurst, Pell Green and Cousley Wood. ■ Retain and enhance the historic settlement edges of Conservation Areas, particularly where development would influence the linear form of the historic villages. ■ Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[2] , 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[3] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[4]. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the parkland landscape setting of the Wadhurst Castle Registered Park and Garden. ■ Minimise the potential for further coalescence between Wadhurst and Durgates, maintaining the separation between the settlements. ■ Consider views from popular public rights of way when siting and designing development in the landscape. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using species that are in character with the wider landscape. ■ Consider views from the wider landscape of the High Weald AONB, particularly lower-lying landscapes to the north and south (LCA 6B/6C), towards the prominent ridgelines of the assessment unit. ■ Ensure development does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, and where the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB are most strongly expressed.

[2] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[3] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[4] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Land adjacent to Jonas Drive (584/3330)

Site Details	
Potential development	30 residential dwellings
Site location	This site is located to the north-west of the settlement of Durgates and situated between Station Road and Old Station Road.

Figure 5: Site location and constraints

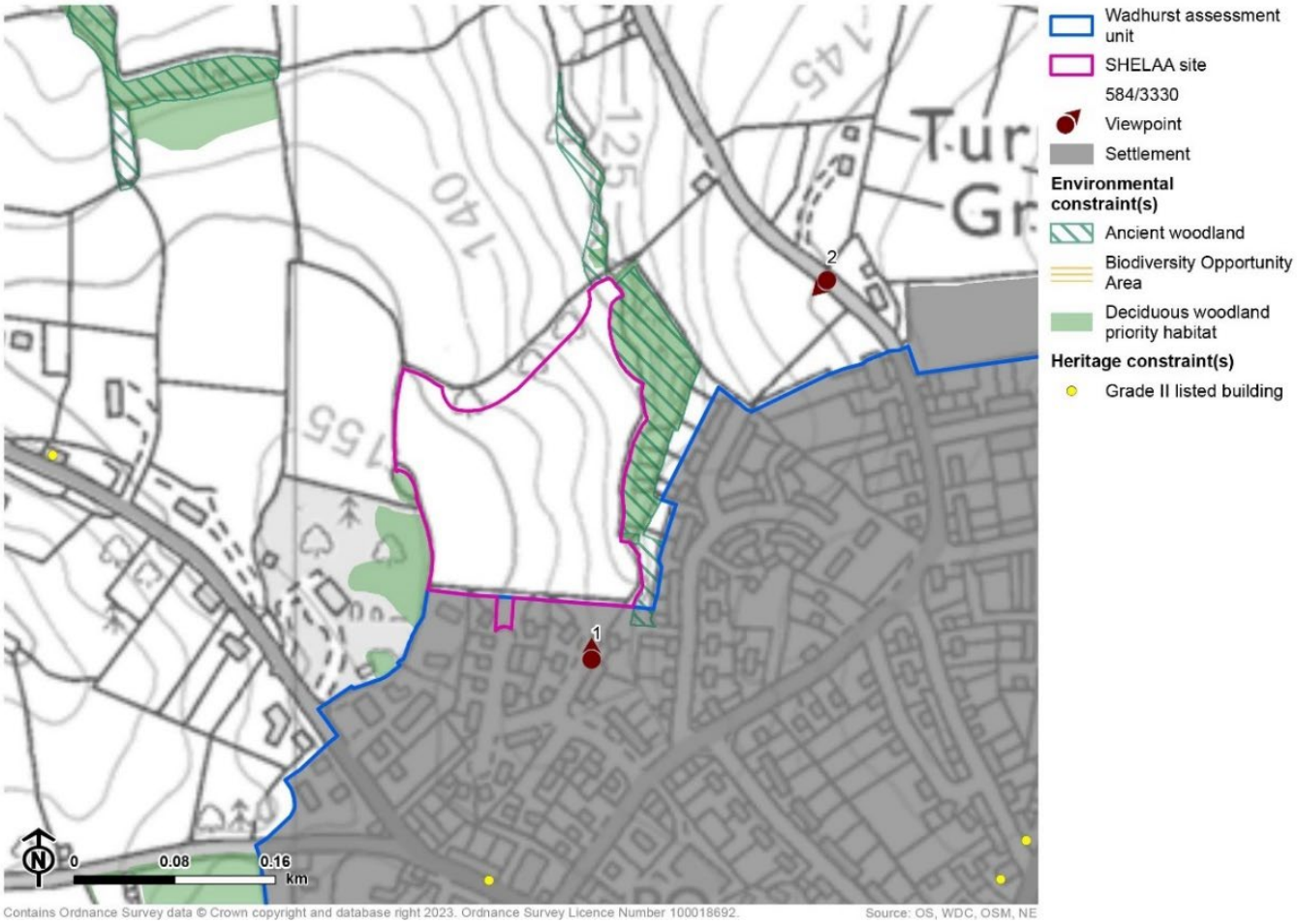
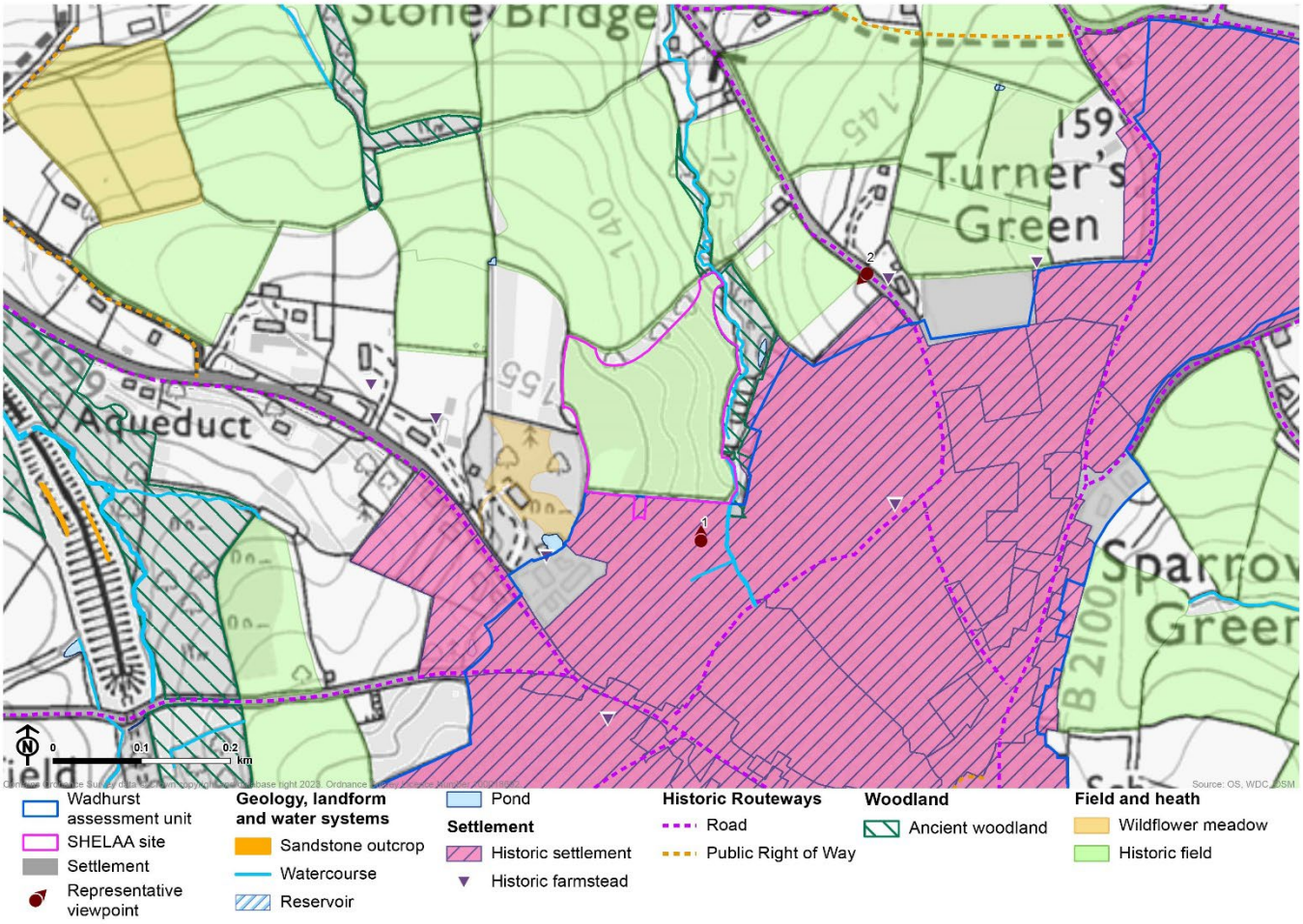


Figure 6: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: View north from the end of Jonas Drive with the site obscured by vegetation along the southern boundary



Viewpoint 2: View south-west from Old Station Road with glimpses of the site visible between vegetation including Pump House Shaw

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms part of an incised stream valley of the High Weald: Central and Teise Catchment LCAs and forms a small part of the 'complex undulating ridged landform' of the wider assessment unit. ■ It comprises a steep slope rising between 125m AOD in the north-east to 155m AOD in the south-west, where it forms part of ridge that extends south-west to Best Beech Hill. ■ A stream runs along the eastern boundary of the site and a pond exists on its opposite side (approximately 20m from the site boundary), a feature not identified as being typical of the wider assessment unit. **Natural character** ■ Ancient deciduous woodland and priority habitat at Pump House Shaw lines the stream and encloses the site to the east, and other priority habitat woodland encloses the site to the west, which is representative of the numerous woodlands found across the assessment unit. ■ Infield trees / tree clumps, which are typical features of the wider assessment unit, are scattered across the site extending from the woodland edges, with particularly dense coverage in the north, east and south. ■ Shaws enclose the northern and southern boundaries which is characteristic of the assessment unit, where areas of woodland are interconnected by wooded shaws. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site consists of a small-scale assarted field (as classified in the Sussex HLC) surrounded by woodland and shaws – a key feature of the wider assessment unit. ■ The ancient semi-natural woodland on the steep slope that falls towards the incised stream corridor contributes to time depth. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The site is influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge of Durgates, as well as Old Station Road and Station Road, which reduce the experience of dark skies (light levels are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**) and levels of tranquillity (which are recorded in the middle bands in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The adjacent settlement edge to the south of the site consists of a wooded shaw, beyond which are bungalows and 2-storey semi-detached houses along the cul-de-sacs of Jonas Drive and the large, detached houses of Little Foxes and Birch Lodge. The ancient woodland at Pump House Shaw forms the settlement edge to the east, beyond which are 2-storey semi-detached houses along Queens Cottages. Beyond the woodland to the south-west of the site are the detached dwellings, outbuildings and gardens of Marling House/ Marling Cottage. The shaws and woodlands provide strong boundary features between the site and the built edge of Durgates.

Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The surrounding and internal woodland, trees and shaws enclose the site and limit visibility from the surrounding landscape including from the properties along Jonas Drive. Open views are afforded from the Little Foxes and Birch Lodge properties which abut the south-western corner of the site, as vegetation does not intervene. A brief glimpse of the site is afforded from along Old Station Road, seen over a field gate directly to the north-east. Due to the elevated nature of the site (particularly its western part), there may also be glimpsed views through gaps in vegetation in the winter months (when not in leaf), from some of the properties along Queens Cottages. This may also be the case from an isolated dwelling (Brookfields) along Old Station Road and from higher elevations, including the footpath between Turner's Green and Stone Bridge, which crosses the upper valley slopes north-east of the site.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the site are limited by the surrounding and internal woodland, trees and shaws. Within winter months (when vegetation is not in leaf) there may be glimpsed middle distance views from the site northwards and eastwards towards the opposing ridge across the adjacent valley (between White Gates Farm and Turner's Green). Views towards the western part of the site may be afforded from this area.
Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB contributing towards the *pattern of faults and folds* and a small part of the wider *principal ridge (Forest Ridge)*. The eastern boundary of the site contributes to the *numerous small streams* found across the AONB. There are no distinctive geological features.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Durgates is a *village of Medieval origin* with its modern settlement edge along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site, influenced by 20th and 21st century residential development.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	There are no historic routeways which cross or abut the site.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Woodland at Pump House Shaw encloses the site to the east and contributes towards the *high proportion of ancient woodland* and the *high density of gill woodlands,* and along with other woodland surrounding the site, also contributes towards the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and numerous linear gill woodlands, shaws…* of the AONB. Infield trees/ tree clumps also form an interconnected habitat network.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The small field was created through assarting, contributing towards the *dominant Medieval character* of the AONB. It is used for *grazing livestock* and enclosed by thick woody boundaries. The field is aligned to the linear watercourse (running along its eastern boundary) and is an example of the *strong influence exerted by topography.*
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	Dark skies and sense of tranquillity are reduced by the adjacent settlement edge and nearby roads. The site contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, although long views of the site are limited by vegetation enclosing the site.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Wadhurst assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform, ecological value of strong natural character including areas of interconnecting woodland, grassland and lowland meadows, areas of intact historic field pattern, historic features throughout the assessment unit, the role the landscape as a rural setting to Wadhurst, Pell Green and Cousley Wood, strongly expressed linear historic settlement form, visual prominence and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. However, the influence of modern development at Durgates, partially contained nature of views and existing coalescence between settlements reduce the sensitivity of the assessment unit.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site is of **high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), in line with the wider assessment unit. The site is an assart on an incised stream valley with steeply sloping landform, enclosed by ancient and priority habitat woodland, and shaws, forming part of a wooded backdrop in surrounding views, and so the site demonstrates a number of the characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. Although adjacent to 20th/21st century housing along the settlement edge of Durgates, the woodland within and surrounding the site separates the site from the settlement edge.

The site also expresses a number of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. It forms part of the wider principal ridge and the pattern of faults and folds and its eastern boundary contributes to the numerous small streams within the AONB. The ancient woodland (also a gill woodland) encloses the site and contributes to the highly interconnected woodlands in the locality, while the site forms part of a wider assart field pattern, which contributes to the Medieval character of the AONB and scenic beauty of the rural landscape.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Changes to the steeply sloping valley side as a result of interventions/ earthworks upon the landform. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Pattern of faults and folds. ■ Principal ridge (Forest Ridge).	■ Limit the extent of development 'spilling' beyond the ridge crest onto the steep wooded valley side and the lower-lying incised stream valley to minimise alterations to the landform.
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and shaws, affecting the role they play in defining and partially screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. **High Weald AONB character component:**	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site where possible, especially mature woodlands, shaws and trees. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and shaws through new tree planting that is in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable.

■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and numerous linear gill woodlands, shaws…. ■ High density of gill woodlands.	
Loss of the grazed pastures and the assart which contributes to the medieval character and time depth. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Fields mostly used for grazing livestock. ■ Dominant Medieval character.	■ Loss of pasture and assart would be unavoidable with development of the site, as development would remove land from agricultural use. Field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern.
Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland at Pump House Shaw which abuts the eastern edge of the site. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ High proportion of ancient woodland.	■ Set development back from the edge of ancient woodland to create a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage[5]. ■ The buffer zone could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity).
Settlement form edge and setting	
Deterioration of the rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Durgates. Extension of development beyond the robust boundary provided by woodland and shaws between the site and properties on the edge of the settlement. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Village of Medieval origin.	■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[6], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[7] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[8].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ residents of Jonas Drive; ■ residents of Queens Cottages; ■ residents at Little Foxes and Birch Lodge; ■ motorists/cyclists and residents along Old Station Road (which is recorded as a historic lane); and	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the woodland, shaws and trees, that enclose the site. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of

[5] See Natural England and Forestry Commission guidance for further information:https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions
[6] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[7] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[8] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

■ walkers on the public footpath between Turner's Green and Stone Bridge.	built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Consider views of development from the wider AONB to the east, siting development where well enclosed by vegetation and where it would relate to the existing ridgeline settlement pattern. ■ Enhance public access and provide opportunities to experience the surrounding woodlands.

Summary and recommendations

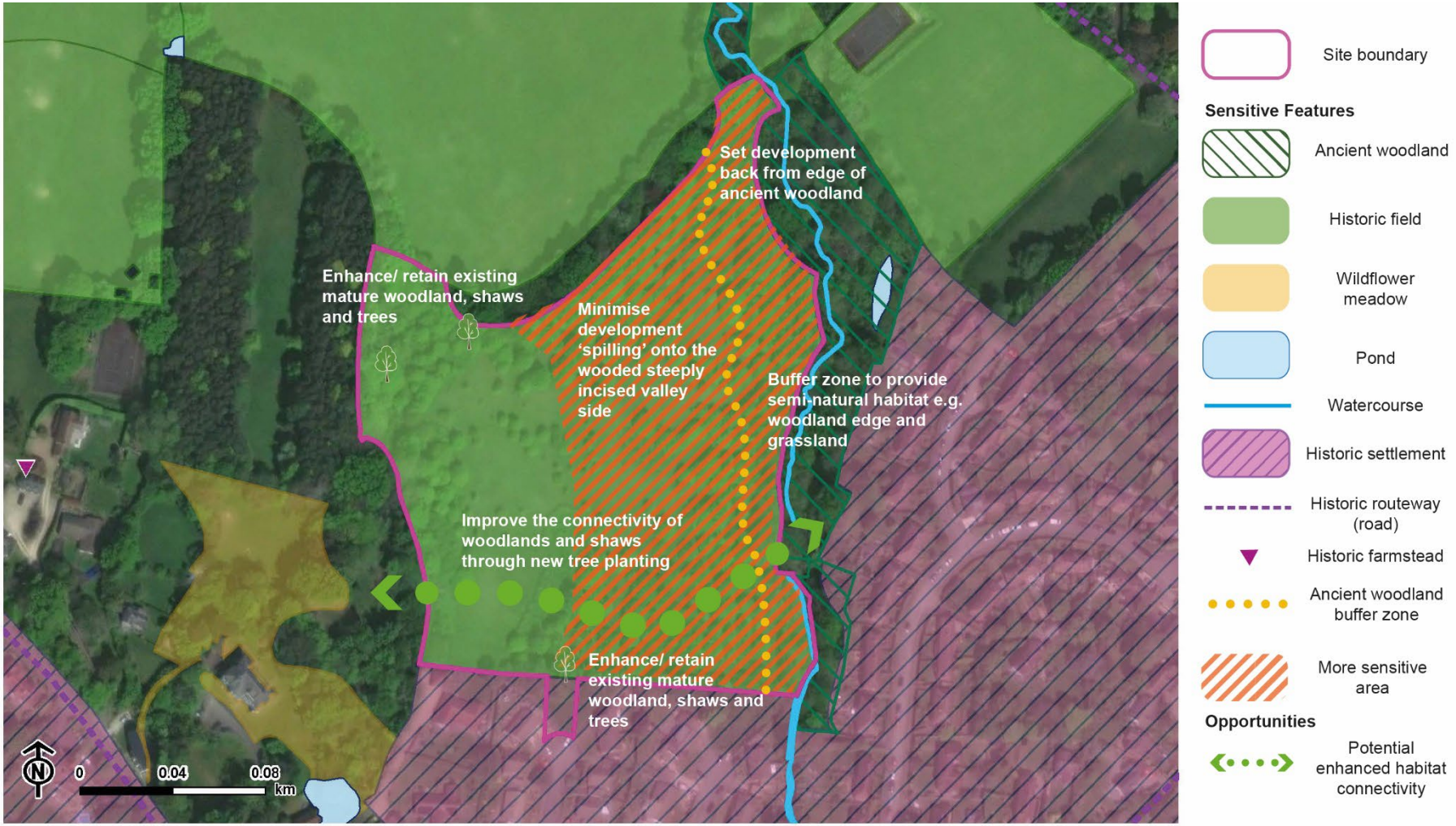
Development of this site would extend development beyond the existing robust wooded boundary of the settlement and result in the loss of an assart fieldscape, which contributes to the dominant Medieval character of field patterns found within the High Weald AONB. Development in the east of the site would also be at odds with the relatively complex topography of the site, which contributes to the pattern of faults and folds within the High Weald AONB, and would appear to 'spill out' beyond the ridge crest.

Should development come forward, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance woodland, trees and shaws.
- Apply suitable buffers to the ancient woodland at Pump House Shaw.
- Locate development in the west to better relate to existing settlement and to minimise development 'spilling' onto the steeply wooded incised valley side.

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities of development on the site.

Figure 7: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

Land at Windmill House, Windmill Lane (694/3330)

Site Details	
Potential development	20 residential dwellings
Site location	This site is located to the south-west of the settlement of Durgates and situated to the south-east of the B2100 Mayfield Lane, south of Baldock Road, east of Windmill Lane, and west of Bocking Close.

Figure 8: Site location and constraints

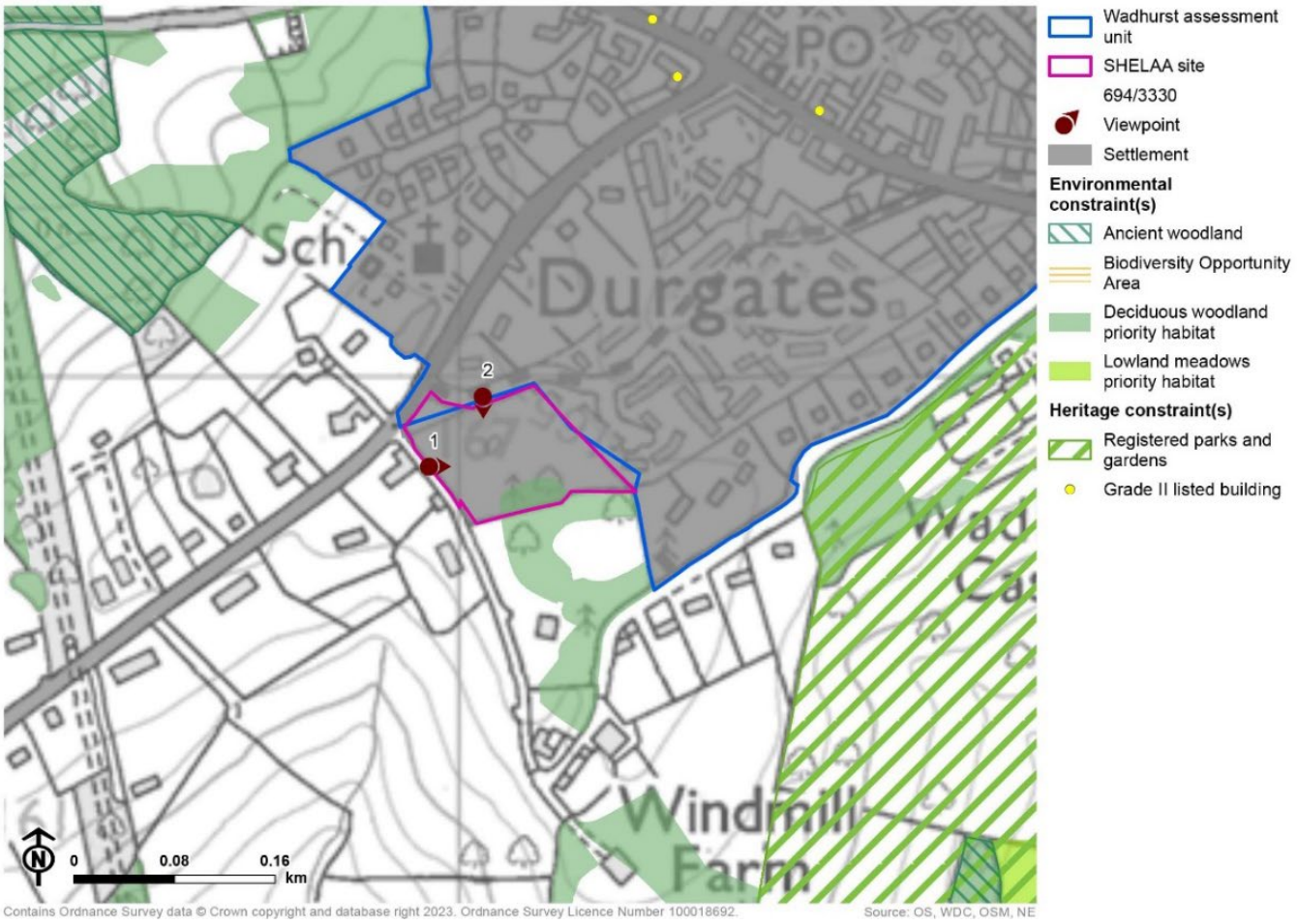
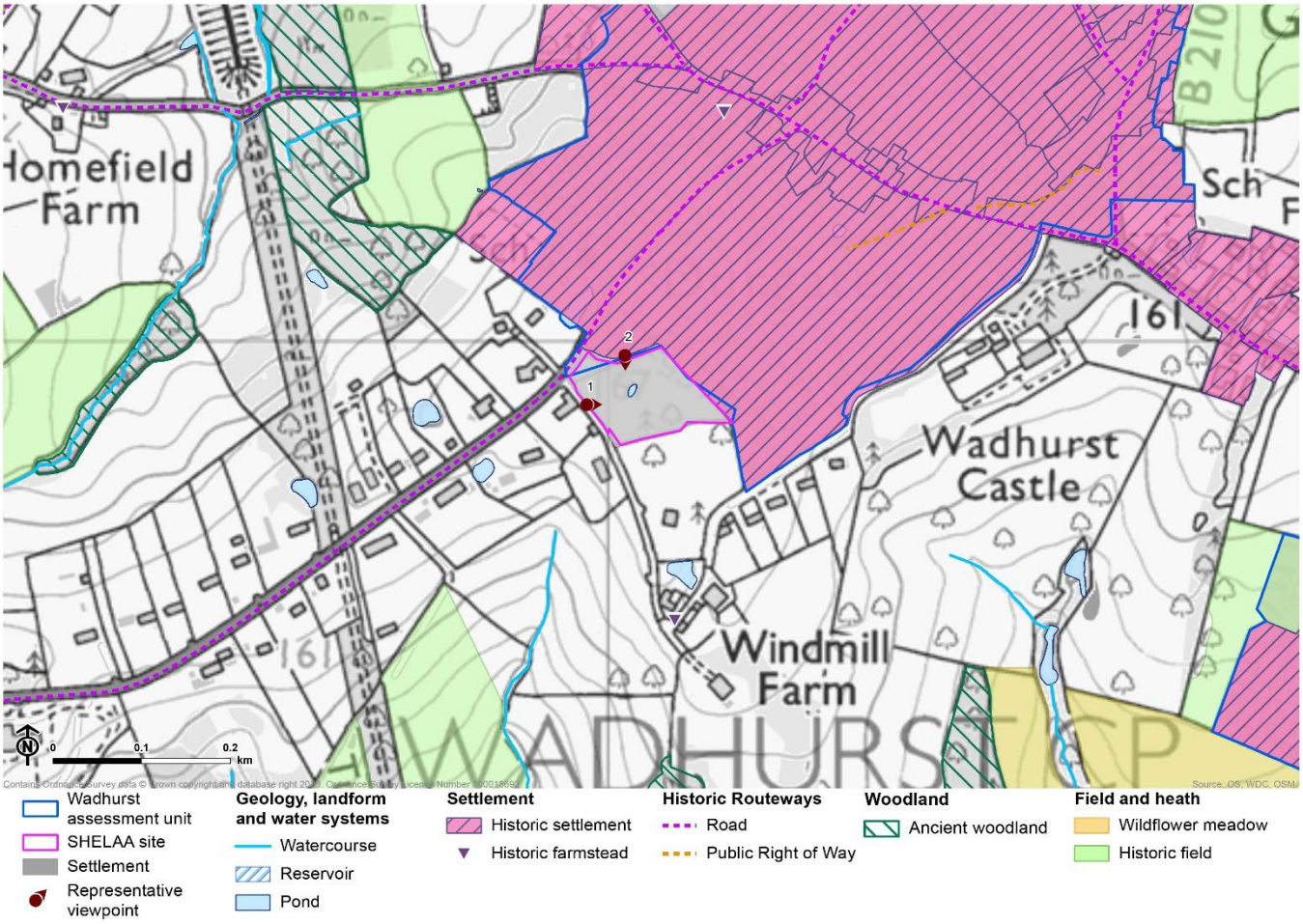


Figure 9: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viepwoint1: View east into the site from Windmill Lane, with priority habitat woodland and back of Bocking Close properties visible



Viewpoint 2: View south into the site from Baldock Road, with the clump of mature trees around a pond visible in the centre

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site is flat (at 165m AOD) and forms a small part of a ridge that extends across the eastern part of the High Weald: Central LCA between Stone Bridge in the north and Best Beech Hill in the south-west and a small part of the 'complex undulating ridged landform' of the wider assessment unit. **Natural character** ■ Priority habitat deciduous woodland encloses the site to the south and partly extends into its southern part, which is representative of the numerous woodlands found across the assessment unit. ■ A clump of mature deciduous trees circle the small pond within the centre of the site, and other tall infield trees exist, extending from the northern and western boundaries of the site. Clumps of trees/ infield trees are also typical features of the wider assessment unit. ■ An avenue of trees along Windmill Lane abut the south-western edge of the site, reflecting the designed landscapes that characterise the LCA (e.g. around the Wadhurst Castle registered park and garden). **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site consists of a small pasture grazed field of irregular piecemeal enclosure as classified in the Sussex HLC, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit, with boundaries largely defined by post and wire fencing and garden boundaries of adjacent residential properties, in the form of hedges and fencing, which are atypical of the wider assessment unit. Though currently used for livestock grazing, the site is of similar character to the informal parkland landscape directly south, although this landscape pattern is not identified as being typical of the wider assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** ■ Although the site is partly influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge of Durgates and the B2100 Mayfield Lane, it experiences dark skies (light levels are recorded in the lower bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**) and levels of tranquillity (which are recorded as relatively high in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site provides separation between the formal settlement edge and a row of large, detached houses along the B2100 to the west. The adjacent settlement edge to the east of the site consists of garden boundaries in the form of a hedge and fencing, beyond which is a bungalow and 2-storey detached houses along the cul-de-sac of Bocking Close. The adjacent settlement edge to the north of the site consists of a post and wire fence running along the edge of Baldock Road, with garden fencing and properties located beyond. Clumps of trees line the northern edge of the site, providing some filtering of the settlement edge and the B2100 Mayfield Lane. Given the presence of ribbon development along the B2100 to the west of the site, Castle Walk and Windmill Lane to the south of the site, and limited defining boundary features along the settlement edge to the north and east, the settlement edge near the site is not very well defined.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The surrounding woodland provides enclosure to the southern boundary of the site and limits visibility from along Castle Walk and the properties located along it.

	However, due to the open nature of the other site boundaries (which typically comprise post and wire fencing with some clumps of trees), views are afforded from along Windmill Lane (including from the properties along it) and from Baldock Road which also doubles up as a footpath that extends north-east towards Sparrow's Green. Residents along Bocking Close will also experience views of the site including from within rear gardens which back onto the site. The wooded and built-up nature of the site's immediate surrounds generally limits views into the site from the wider landscape.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the site are limited by landform, buildings and vegetation within the vicinity of the site.
Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	Whilst the site itself is relatively flat, it forms part of the wider rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB contributing towards the *pattern of faults and folds* and a small part of the wider *principal ridge (Forest Ridge)*. It also contributes towards the *high density of ponds* with one that lies within the centre. There are no distinctive geological features.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Durgates is a *village of Medieval origin,* however its modern settlement edge along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site is influenced by 20th and 21st century residential development.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	There are no historic routeways which cross the site. However, the B2100 Mayfield Lane along the north-western boundary of the site is recorded as a ridgeway on high ground, and contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Woodland along the southern boundary of the site contributes towards the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods* of the AONB. Infield trees/ tree clumps (including around the central pond) contributes towards the *wood-pasture and parkland* character.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The small field is used for *grazing livestock*.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site is located within a relatively *dark landscape with a sense of tranquillity*. The site contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, although long views of the site are limited by landform, buildings and vegetation within the vicinity.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Wadhurst assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform, strong natural character including areas of interconnecting woodland, grassland and lowland meadows, areas of intact historic field pattern, historic features throughout the assessment unit, the role of the landscape as a rural setting to Wadhurst, Pell Green and Cousley Wood, strongly expressed linear historic settlement form, visual prominence and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increases the sensitivity of the assessment unit. The influence of modern development at Durgates, partially contained nature of views and existing coalescence between settlements reduces the sensitivity of the assessment unit.

The Site

Overall, it is concluded that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **moderate** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The site is a pastoral field, enclosed by priority habitat woodland to the south, and so it demonstrates only a few of the characteristics that increase sensitivity to development across the assessment unit. The site is relatively flat, adjacent to 20th/21st century housing along the settlement edge of Durgates, which has few defining settlement boundary features, does not have a historic field pattern or mature field boundaries, and is partly enclosed by woodland in views from the wider landscape, which lower its sensitivity from that of the assessment unit.

The site also expresses a few of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB in that it forms part of the wider principal ridge and the pattern of faults and folds, woodland partly encloses the site and contributes to the highly interconnected woodlands in the locality, while the site also has wood-pasture and a parkland character, and contributes to scenic beauty.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland and trees, affecting the role they play in providing enclosure to the southern boundary of the site and interconnectivity of habitats. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands and trees. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodland through new tree planting that is in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable.
Loss or deterioration of the small pond in the centre of site. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ A high density of ponds.	■ Retain and set back development from the pond in the centre of the site to create an appropriate buffer zone. The buffer zone should incorporate new semi-natural habitat relating to the ponds.
Loss or deterioration of features contributing towards the parkland character of the site, particularly the infield trees/ tree clumps and the grazed pastures. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Wood-pasture and parkland. ■ Fields mostly used for grazing livestock.	■ Retain, and set back development from, the infield trees/ tree clumps including those around the central pond. ■ Loss of pasture would be unavoidable with development of the site, as development would remove land from agricultural use. Field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern.
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:**	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary.

■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[9] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Extension of development from the settlement edge and reduction in its separation from properties along the B2100 Mayfield Lane. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Village of Medieval origin.	■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[10], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[11] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[12].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ residents of Bocking Close; ■ motorists/cyclists and residents along Windmill Lane; ■ motorists/ cyclists along Baldock Road; and ■ walkers on the public footpath that runs along Baldock Road and extends towards Sparrow's Green.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the woodland and trees. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local species to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Enhance public access and provide opportunities to experience the surrounding woodland to the south.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend development from the boundary of the settlement, reducing its separation with the properties along the B2100 Mayfield Lane in the south-west and would result in open views of new development from adjacent roads and properties, although the wooded and built-up nature within the vicinity of the site will limit views into it from the wider landscape.

Should development come forward, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance woodland and trees.
- Screen new development with additional planting.
- Retain, protect and enhance the pond within the centre of the site.

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities of development on the site.

[9] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/
[10] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[11] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[12] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Figure 10: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Wadhurst assessment unit

Two sites have been assessed within the Wadhurst assessment unit and they lie approximately 525m from one another. If both sites were brought forward it would result in up to 50 dwellings being built, and therefore a limited expansion of the settlement into the surrounding rural landscape. This could result in the loss of fields, hedgerow boundaries, woodland and trees within the High Weald AONB. However, due to the small scale of the sites, the intervening distance between them, and the well-wooded character surrounding them, cumulative landscape and visual effects would be limited.

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: Wider LCA 5B

Final report
Prepared by LUC
January 2024



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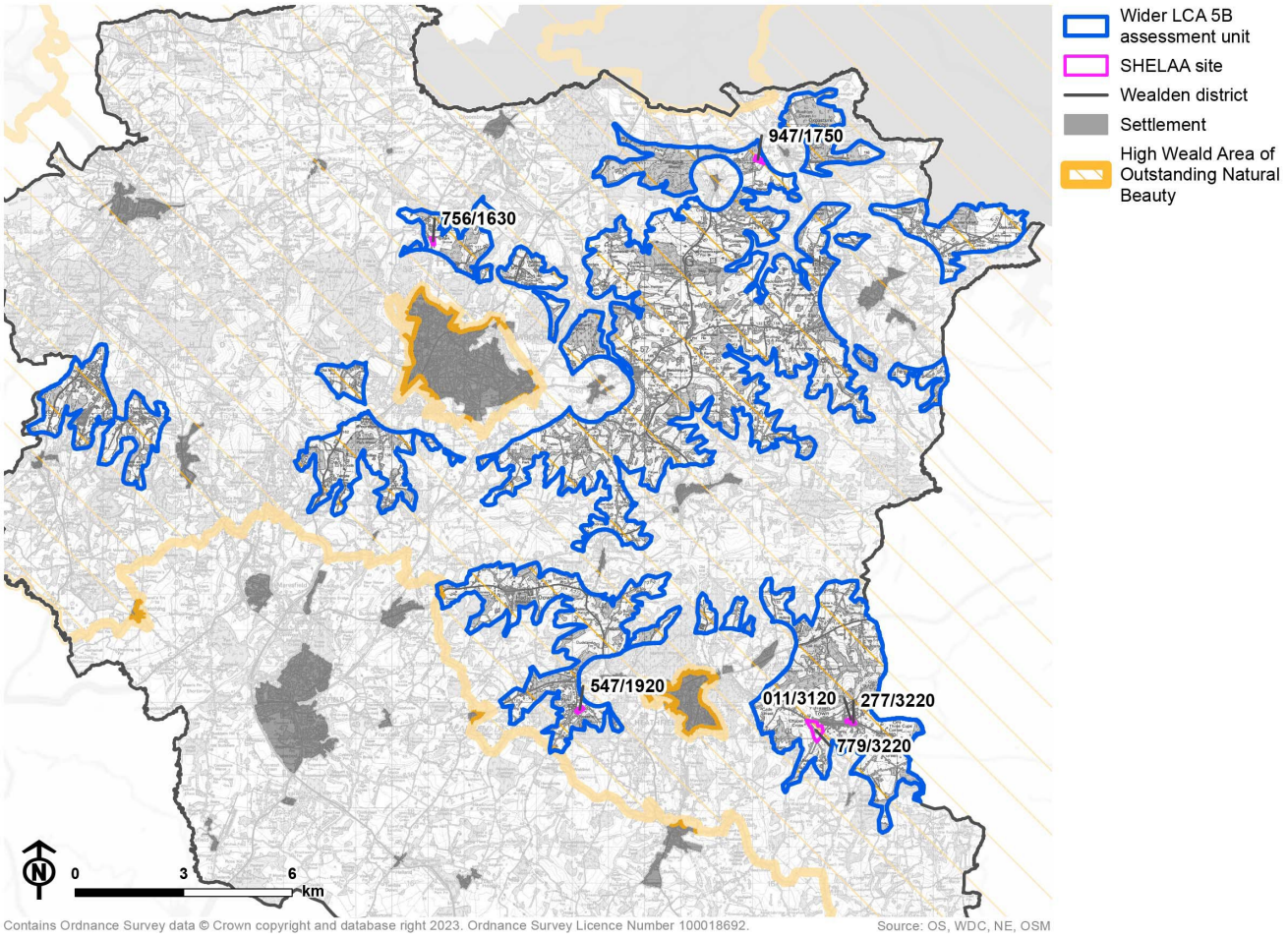
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Chapter 9
Wider LCA 5B Assessment Unit

The following potential development sites are considered within the Wider LCA 5B (High Weald – Central) assessment unit:

- **Land at Royal Mires Nursery, London Road, Lye Green (756/1630)**
- **Land at Stubby Grove Business Park, Bells Yew Green Road (947/1750)**
- **Land to the north-west side of Fir Grove Road Cross in Hand (527/1920)**
- **Land adjoining Owlsbury, Chapel Cross Lane, Chapel Cross (779/3220)**
- Group comprising **Land adjacent to Little Home Farm, Forest Lane, Punnetts Town (011/3120)** and **Scots Paddock, Forest Lane, Punnetts Town (277/3220)**

Figure 1: Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



Settlement pattern

Settlement pattern	The wider LCA 5B has a strongly dispersed rural settlement pattern of farmsteads and houses, which is a defining component of character of the High Weald AONB, with some occasional ribbon development and urban expansion near settlements. There are some occasional small settlements located on main roads. The existing pattern of development relates to the underlying ridged landform, with development predominantly located at higher elevation along the ridgelines, avoiding steep slopes and lower lying areas.

Mapped information for the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB's defining components of character that are found within the wider LCA 5B assessment unit have been mapped in **Figures 2 to 5.** Tranquillity and dark skies (which form part of the perceptual qualities) are shown in **Figures 6 and 7** respectively.

Figure 2: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB (north of LCA 5B)

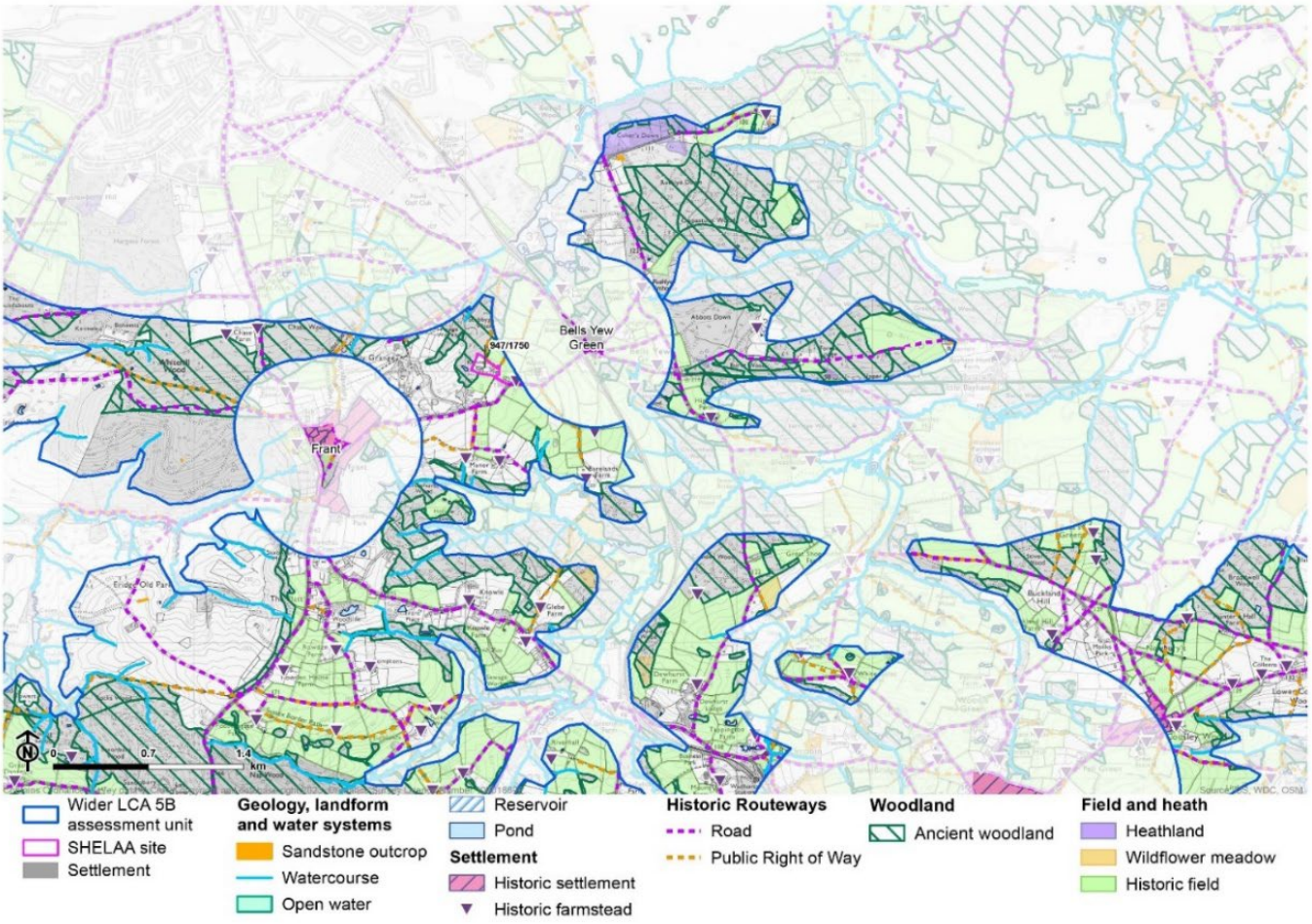


Figure 3: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB (south of LCA 5B)

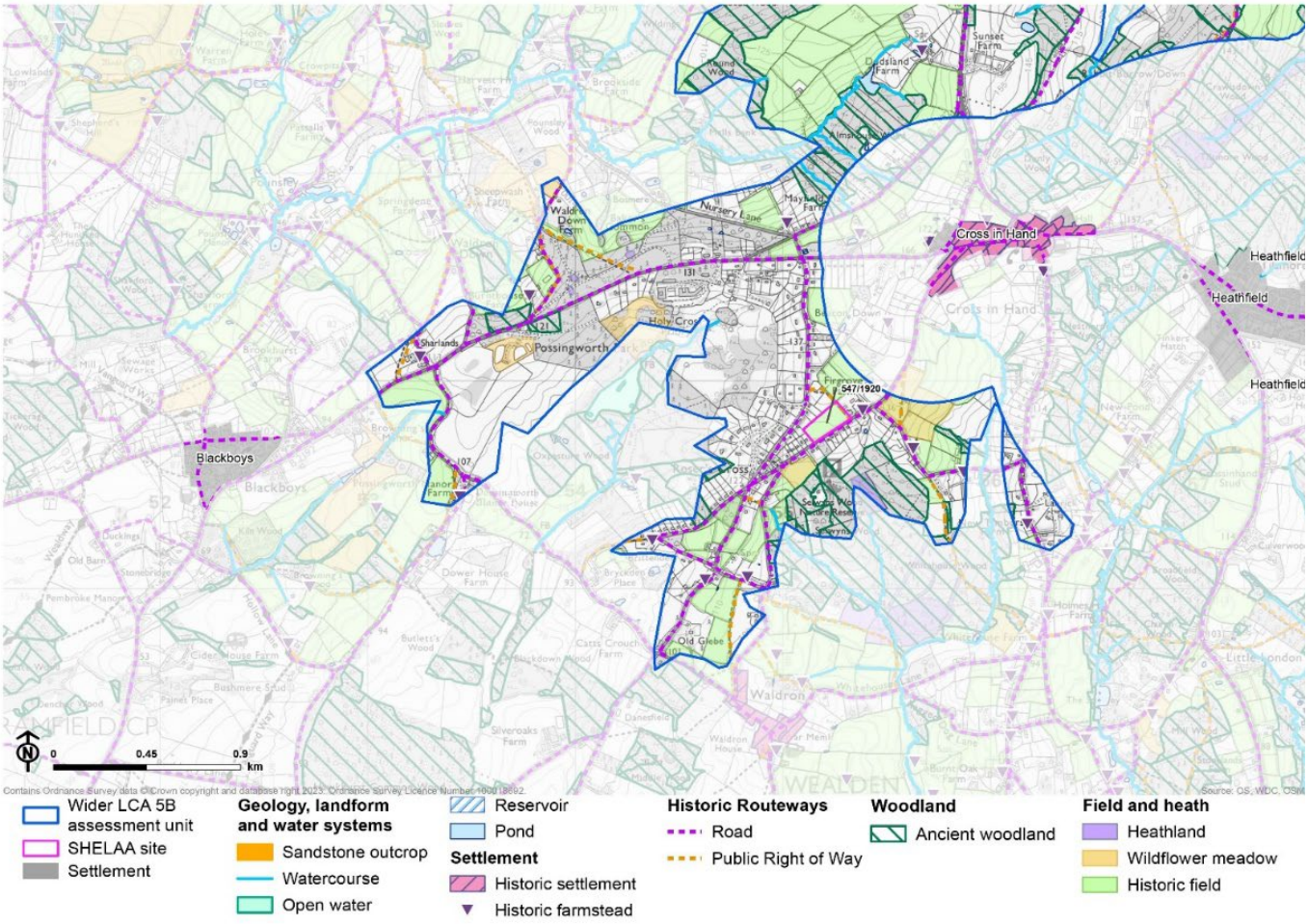


Figure 4: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB (east of LCA 5B)

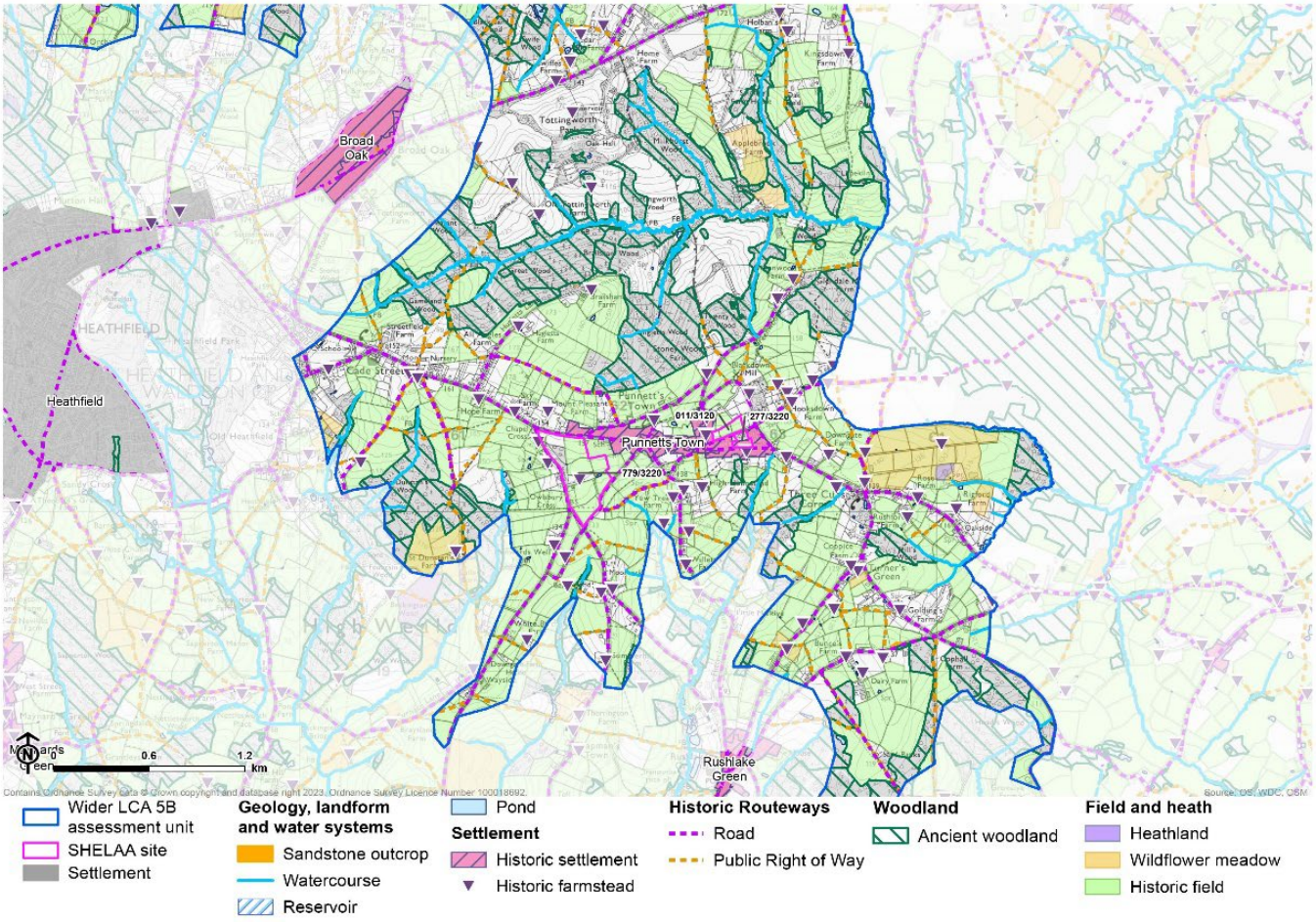


Figure 5: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB (west of LCA 5B)

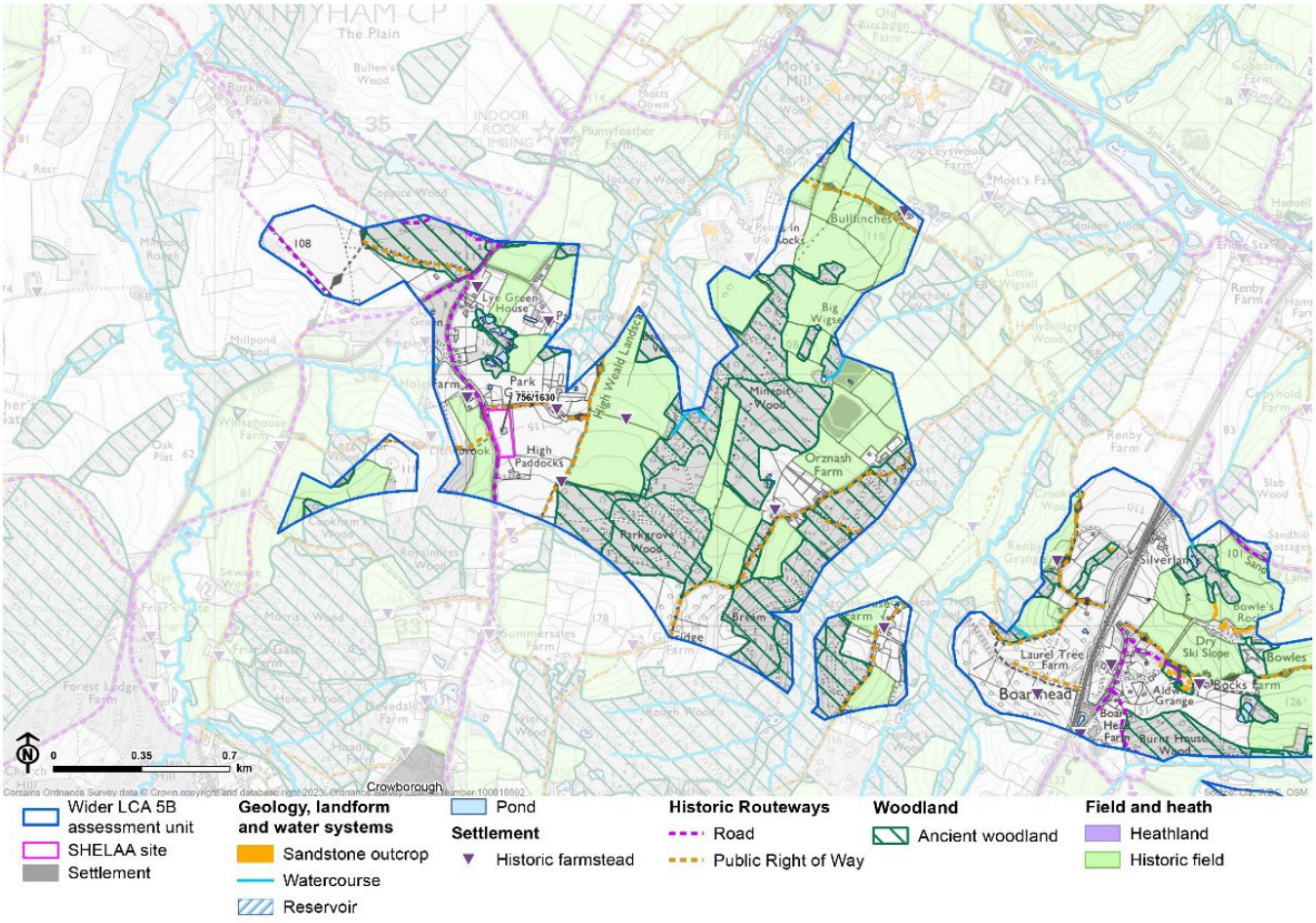


Figure 6: Tranquillity

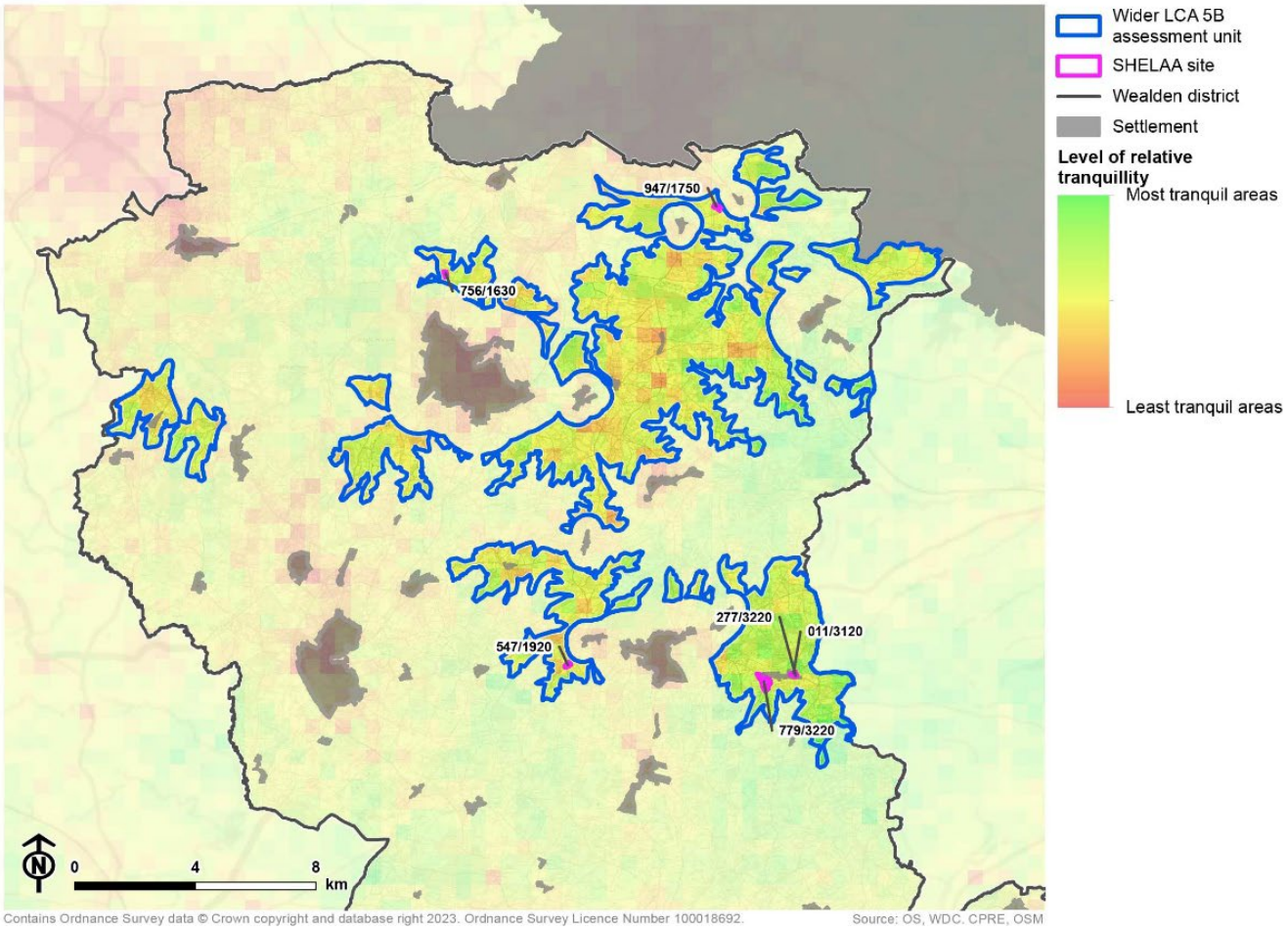
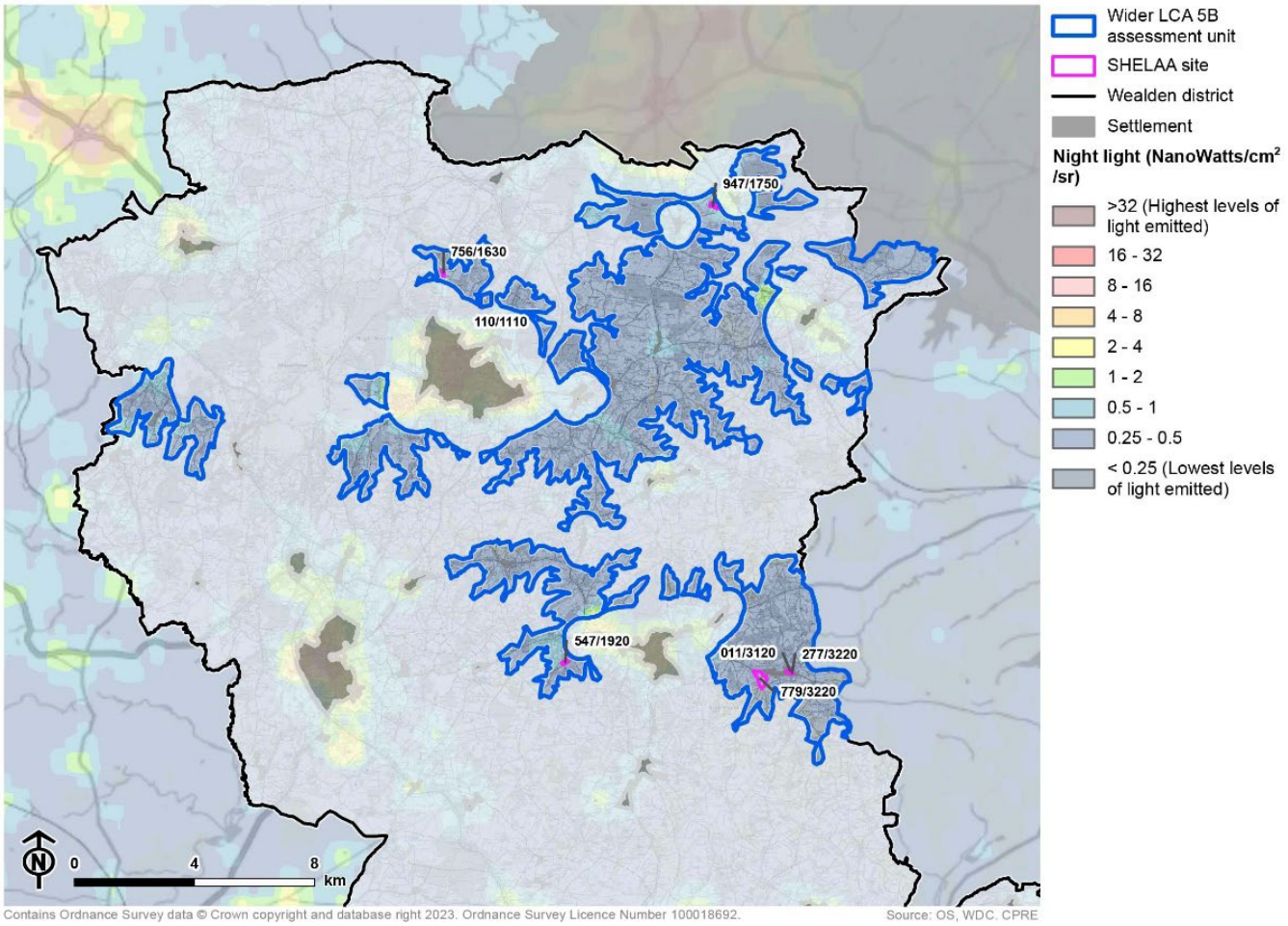


Figure 7: Dark skies



Landscape sensitivity context for the Wider LCA 5B assessment unit

*The landscape sensitivity of the Wider LCA 5B assessment unit, described in the **Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development***			
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the assessment unit	**Small scale residential** 2-2.5 storey housing	**Medium scale residential** 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	**Commercial/ industrial** e.g. industrial units or hotels
	H	**H**	**H**
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the assessment unit	■ The complex ridge and valley landform. ■ Mature deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin). ■ Areas of priority habitat heathland, lowland meadows, and good quality semi-improved grassland. ■ Intact historic field patterns, particularly small to medium scale assarts and piecemeal enclosure. ■ The historic value of the Cousley Wood and Old Heathfield and Cade Street Conservation Areas, Eridge Park Registered Park and Garden and Saxonbury Hill Scheduled Monument. ■ The strongly dispersed settlement pattern. ■ The wooded and rural backdrop formed by the assessment unit to the surrounding settlements. ■ The strong network of public rights of way including long-distance walking trails. ■ The strong rural character with areas of tranquillity and dark skies. ■ Its location within the High Weald AONB and intervisibility with more distant areas of the nationally designated landscape, contrasting with the semi-enclosed character.		
Guidance	■ Avoid prominent ridgelines. Development should be located where well enclosed by vegetation, to be less visible from lower-lying landscapes and have less influence on landscape character. ■ Avoid areas of habitat interest, notably ancient woodland and priority habitat heathland, lowland meadows, good quality semi-improved grassland. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland. Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the multiple BOAs which cover the assessment unit, especially woodland management and restoration, where possible. ■ Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to the interconnecting ancient semi-natural woodlands in this area and allow a suitable and appropriate buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network in line with the aims of the BOAs located within the unit. Where there is unavoidable loss of, or damage to, hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns. ■ Ensure it does not adversely affect the historic qualities and setting of the Cousley Wood and Old Heathfield and Cade Street Conservation Areas, Eridge Park Registered Park and Garden and Saxonbury Hill Scheduled Monument.		

	■ Consider key views to the surrounding countryside experienced from the Cousley Wood and Old Heathfield and Cade Street Conservation Areas. ■ Consider views from public rights of way when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, and/or using species that are in character with the wider landscape, preferably native. ■ Consider views from the wider landscape of the High Weald AONB, particularly where long-distance outward views are afforded from elevated ridgetop settlements and views from lower-lying settlements towards the prominent ridgelines of the assessment unit. ■ Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[1], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[2] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[3]. ■ Ensure it does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, where the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB are most strongly expressed. ■

[1] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[2] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[3] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Land at Royal Mires Nursery, London Road, Lye Green (756/1630)

Site Details	
Potential development	5 residential dwelling units
Site location	This site is located to the east of London Road, approximately 1.2km to the north of the settlement of Crowborough.

Figure 8: Site location and constraints

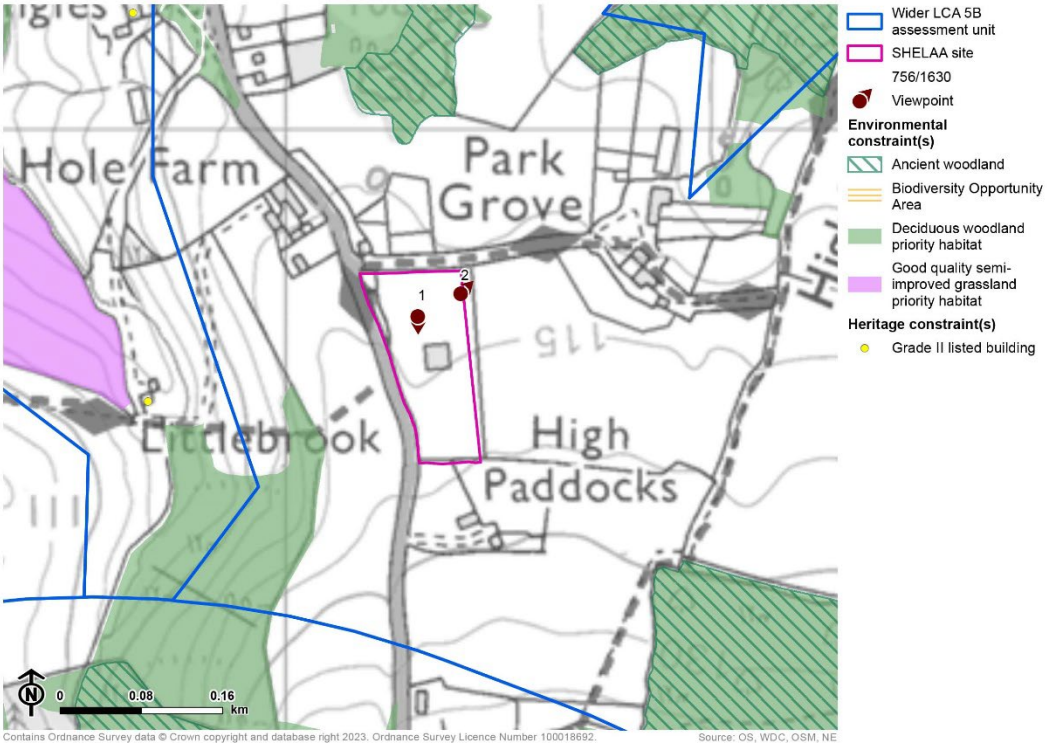
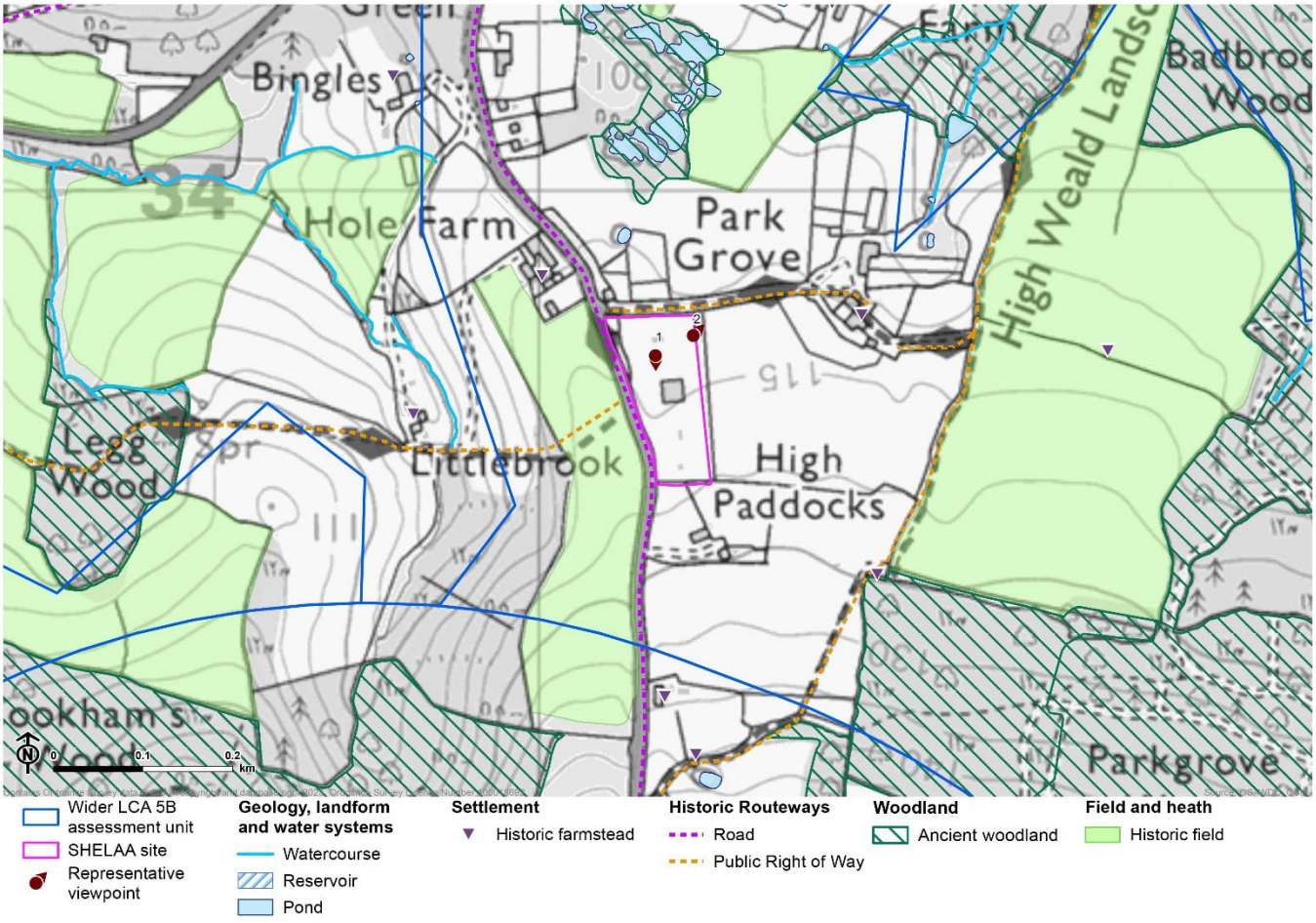


Figure 9: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Existing use of the site as a plant nursery influences the natural character.



Viewpoint 2: Wooded site boundaries result in an enclosed character.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms a small part of the middle valley slopes of the High Weald: Central LCA, and part of the 'complex ridge and valley landform' of the wider assessment unit. ■ It comprises a gentle slope rising between 115m AOD in the north-west to 120m AOD in the south-east. **Natural character** ■ The site is influenced by existing commercial agricultural (nursery) development which is atypical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Mature hedgerows, trees and woodland extend along the boundaries of the site, which are typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Wooded hedgerows along the western site boundary (along London Road) are partially deteriorated and reinforced by palisade fencing, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The underlying field pattern of the site is derived from piecemeal enclosure, as classified in the Sussex HLC and typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ While external mature field boundaries have largely been retained along the northern, eastern and southern site boundaries, the existing use of the site as a commercial nursery limits time depth. **Perceptual aspects** ■ Although the site is influenced by the human activity that occurs across it and London Road, it experiences dark skies (light levels are recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 7**) and some sense of tranquillity (which is recorded in the middle bands in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 6**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site forms part of the wider wooded pastoral landscape of LCA 5B. Settlement near the site consists of dispersed clusters of farmsteads, some of which are gentrified, and cottages situated along London Road. A gentrified farmstead exists to the south of the site at High Paddocks, and a small cluster comprising two detached residential properties and two single storey commercial buildings lie to the north-west of the site. The wooded character of the area limits the influence and intervisibility of existing settlement in the area.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The surrounding woodland, trees and hedgerows enclose the site and limit its visibility from the surrounding landscape including from nearby residential properties, the High Weald Landscape Trail (which runs along the northern site boundary) and London Road, although glimpsed views may be afforded in winter months when vegetation is not in leaf. There are close views east into the site in between gaps in vegetation from the nearest section of London Road.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the site are limited by the enclosed nature of the site.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site is located on a spur of the *principal ridge* of the High Weald (Forest Ridge), contributing to the *pattern of faults and folds*. There are no distinctive geological, landform or water features within the site.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	The existing commercial use of the site as a plant nursery does not contribute to the dispersed historic settlement pattern of the wider area.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	There are no historic routeways which cross the site. However, London Road (along the western boundary of the site) is recorded as a historic lane. The High Weald Landscape Trail (along the northern site boundary) is also a historic routeway. These routes contribute towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	The mature and wooded field boundaries contribute to the wider *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands … outgrown hedges*.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The underlying field pattern is derived from piecemeal enclosure with relatively linear field boundaries. The existing commercial use of the site as a plant nursery exerts influence on the field pattern internally. However, field boundaries are defined by *mixed woody boundaries and thick hedges*.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site is located within a relatively *dark landscape.* The site's man-made influences limit its contributions to the scenic beauty of the area.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the wider LCA 5B assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates the complex landform, priority habitat woodland (including ancient woodland), heathland, lowland meadows and good quality semi-improved grassland, the intact historic field pattern, historic features throughout the assessment unit, the strongly dispersed settlement pattern, the rural setting provided to ridgetop settlements, the strong network of public rights of way, the rural character with areas of tranquillity and dark night skies, and its location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. The semi-enclosed character, areas of modern field amalgamation and urban fringe development, particularly near larger settlements including Heathfield and Tunbridge Wells located adjacent to the assessment unit, and proximity to main roads reduces sensitivity.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is judged to be of **moderate** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). Given the existing commercial use of the site as a plant nursery, the site demonstrates few characteristics which increase the sensitivity for the wider assessment unit. The site is relatively flat, influenced by existing development and is not crossed by any public rights of way. However, the presence of mature and wooded field boundaries increase sensitivity; but their role in enclosing the site decreases its sensitivity.

The site also expresses few of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB, although it is located on a spur of the principal ridge and forms part of the pattern of faults and folds, with the field boundaries contributing to the highly interconnected woodlands in the locality, whilst the site is in a relatively dark landscape.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the site. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors (that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible), particularly where existing field boundaries are deteriorated along London Road.
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[4] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form edge and setting	
The wooded setting and dispersed settlement pattern of the wider rural area of LCA 5B.	■ An increase in the density of residential development along London Road would be unavoidable with development of the site. Minimise visibility of development by enhancing and retaining mature and wooded field boundaries, which would screen new development. ■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[5], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[6] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[7].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ residents located at properties near the site along London Road,	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the wooded boundaries that enclose the site.

[4] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/
[5] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[6] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[7] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

■ motorists/cyclists along London Road; and ■ users of the High Weald Landscape Trail and further public rights of way to the south and west of the site. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature.	■ Screen new development with additional planting, particularly in views from London Road to the west of the site and the High Weald Landscape Trail to the north of the site, using local species to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Retain the wooded character of views from the High Weald Landscape Trail, which passes to the north of the site. ■ Enhance public access, providing connectivity to the High Weald Landscape Trail and further opportunities to experience the surrounding countryside.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would change the existing character from commercial to residential and may influence the dispersed settlement character within the area, although the wooded and enclosed character of the site limits views into it.

Should development come forward, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance woodland, trees and hedgerows, particularly along the western site boundary (along London Road).
- Screen new development with additional planting.
- Enhance public access and provide opportunities to experience the surrounding countryside.

Land at Stubby Grove Business Park, Bells Yew Green Road (947/1750)

Site Details	
Potential development	Employment use
Site location	This site is located approximately 0.6km to the west of Bells Yew Green and 0.8km to the east of Frant, situated adjacent to the south-eastern edge of Stubbygrove Wood and north of Bells Yew Green Road.

Figure 10: Site location and constraints

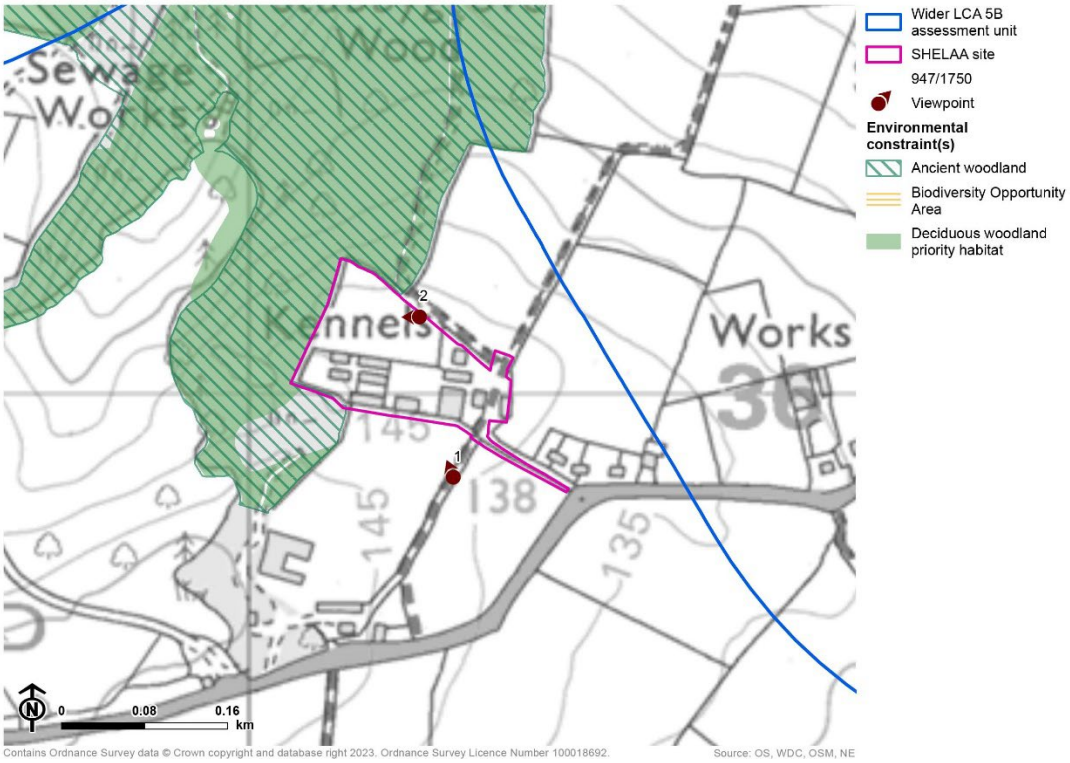
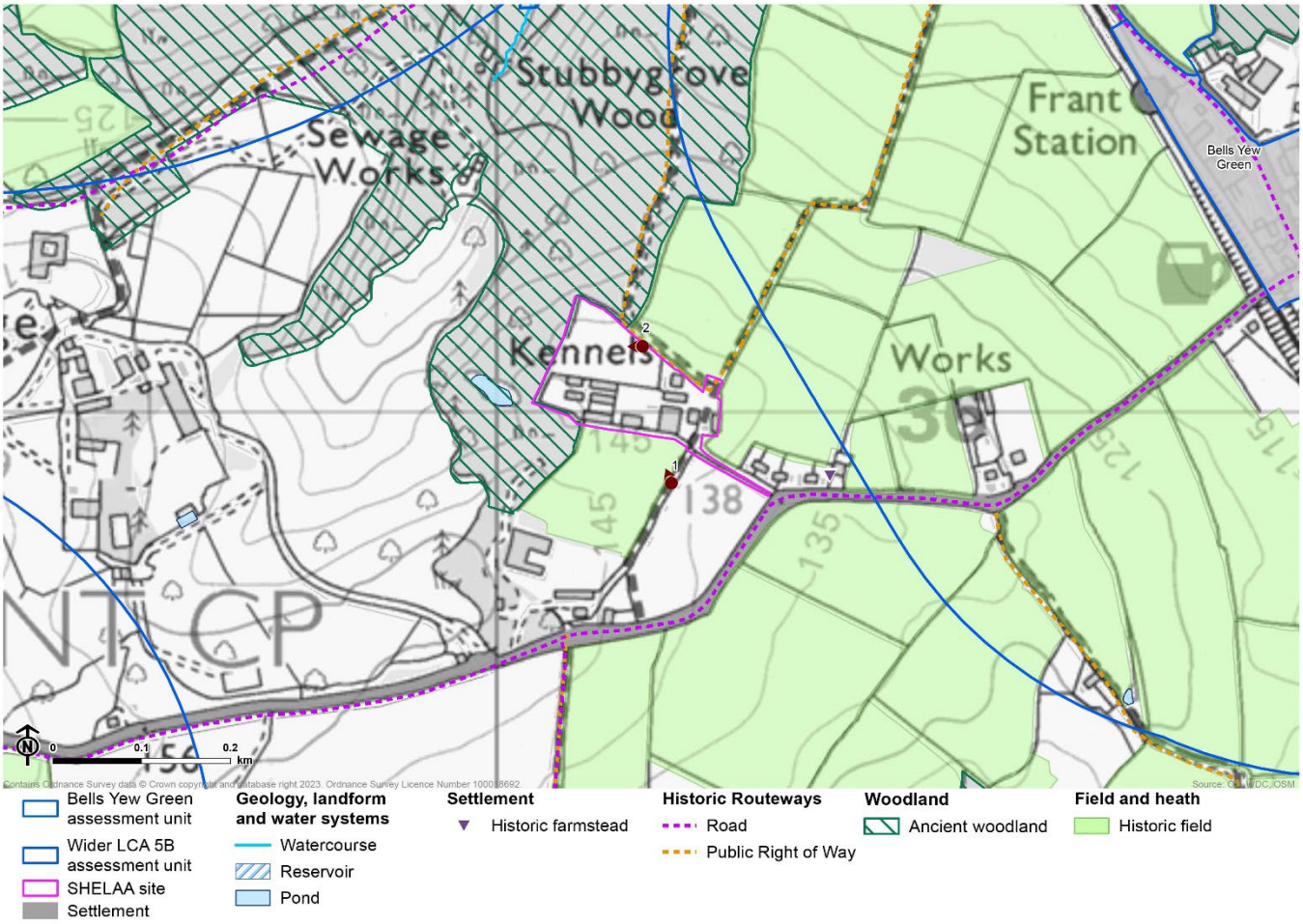


Figure 11: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: View north from public footpath south of the site, looking towards the existing industrial units along the southern edge of the site



Viewpoint 2: View south-west from the public footpath that runs along the northern site boundary, looking into the assart in the north

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms a small part of the middle valley slopes of the High Weald: Central LCA, and part of the 'complex ridge and valley landform' of the wider assessment unit. ■ It comprises a gentle slope rising between 138m AOD in the north-west to 145m AOD in the south-west. **Natural character** ■ Priority habitat deciduous woodland, recorded as ancient, at Stubbygrove Wood encloses the site to the west which is representative of the numerous woodlands found across the wider assessment unit. ■ Shaws extend from the woodland in the west and abut the northern boundary of the site as well as forming a field boundary that crosses through the centre of the site. ■ The southern and eastern boundaries are defined by fencing. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ Most of the site contains an existing industrial estate with sheds, storage containers and hard surfacing limiting time depth. ■ A small assart in the north, as classified in the Sussex HLC, is surrounded by woodland and shaws – a key feature of the wider assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** ■ Although the site is influenced by the human activity that occurs across it, other industrial units and houses along Bells Yew Green Road to the south and east, and by the road itself, it experiences dark skies (light levels are recorded in the lower bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 7**) and some sense of tranquillity (which is recorded in the middle bands in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 6**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site forms part of the wider wooded pastoral landscape of LCA 5B. Settlement near the site is limited and consists of relatively dispersed farmsteads, some of which are gentrified. There is a row of cottages to the south-east of the site and a former oast house, which has been converted for residential use. There are also commercial buildings to the south-west and east of the site. The wooded character of the area limits the influence and intervisibility of existing settlement in the area.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The surrounding woodland, trees and hedgerows enclose the site and limit its visibility from the surrounding landscape to the north and west; however, there are open views from the nearest cottage where sheds within the eastern part of the site are clearly visible. Views into the site are also afforded from the public footpaths that run along the northern boundary of the site into Stubbygrove Wood and cross its eastern part (extending between Bayham Road and Bells Yew Green Road).
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the site are mainly limited by landform, trees, hedgerows and buildings around the site, although some long views north are afforded from open areas of the existing industrial estate in the north-east of the site.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	There are no distinctive geological, landform or water features within the site.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	The existing commercial use of the site does not contribute to the dispersed historic settlement pattern of the wider area.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	A historic routeway (recorded as a historic PRoW) runs along the northern boundary of the site (with a small part located within the north-eastern corner), contributing towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Stubbygrove Wood encloses the site to the west and contributes towards the *high proportion of ancient woodland,* the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods, larger forests…shaws…and outgrown hedges* and the *few very large woods* of the AONB.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The small field in the north was created by assarting, contributing towards the *dominant Medieval character* of the AONB and is used for *grazing livestock*.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site is located within a relatively *dark landscape*. The site's man-made influences limit its contributions to the scenic beauty of the area. Public access through the site provides *opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature*.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Wider LCA 5B assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to commercial/ industrial development. The sensitivity analysis indicates the complex landform, priority habitat woodland (including ancient woodland), heathland, lowland meadows and good quality semi-improved grassland, the intact historic field pattern, historic features throughout the assessment unit, the strongly dispersed settlement pattern, the rural setting provided to ridgetop settlements, the strong network of public rights of way, the rural character with areas of tranquillity and dark night skies, and its location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. The semi-enclosed character, areas of modern field amalgamation and urban fringe development, and proximity to main roads reduces sensitivity.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the wider assessment unit and is considered to have a **moderate-high** sensitivity to commercial/ industrial development. The site contains a pastoral field enclosed by shaws, ancient and priority habitat deciduous woodland that forms part of a historic field pattern (assart), with a public right of way along its northern boundary. The site demonstrates some of the characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. However, the site mainly comprises existing industrial/ commercial development, which affects the rural character, remoteness and tranquillity of the area.

The site also expresses a few of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB, principally a historic routeway; ancient woodland which contributes to the highly interconnected woodlands in the locality and the few very large woods in the AONB. The site also has a Medieval character from the assart, is within a dark landscape and offers opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in partly screening the site. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of small woods, larger forests…shaws…and outgrown hedges. ■ Few very large woods.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site where possible. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors (that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible).
Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland at Stubbygrove Wood which abuts the eastern edge of the site. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ High proportion of ancient woodland.	■ Set development back from the edge of ancient woodland to create a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage[8]. ■ The buffer zone could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity).
Loss of the grazed pastures and assart in the north, which contributes to the Medieval character and time depth. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Fields mostly used for grazing livestock. ■ Dominant Medieval character.	■ Loss of pasture and assart would be unavoidable with development of the site, as development would remove land from agricultural use with limited opportunities to retain areas due to the small scale of the site. Where possible, field boundaries should be retained and enhanced to avoid complete loss of field pattern.
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[9] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Visual amenity	

[8] See Natural England and Forestry Commission guidance for further information:https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions
[9] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

Limited visibility of development seen by: ■ residents at the nearest cottage (to the south-east); and ■ public footpaths along the northern boundary of the site into Stubbygrove Wood and which cross its eastern part (extending between Bayham Road and Bells Yew Green Road). **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the shaws, trees and hedgerows that enclose the site. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Introduced built forms to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of its surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[10], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[11] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[12]. ■ Consider views of development from the nearest cottage to the south-east of the site, enhancing the boundary of the site with new planting to screen views into it. ■ Retain public access and the opportunities to experience the surrounding woodland.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would be replacement development, with the addition of a small pastoral field being developed, although the wooded nature of the site will partly limit views into it.

Should development come forward, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance woodland, shaws, trees and hedgerows.
- Apply suitable and appropriate buffers to the ancient woodland at Stubbygrove Wood.
- Screen new development with additional planting.

[10] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[11] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[12] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Land to the north-west side of Fir Grove Road, Cross in Hand (547/1920)

Site Details	
Potential development	Employment use
Site location	This site lies between Roser's Cross and Firgrove Farm, adjacent to the Firgrove Business Centre.

Figure 12: Site location and constraints

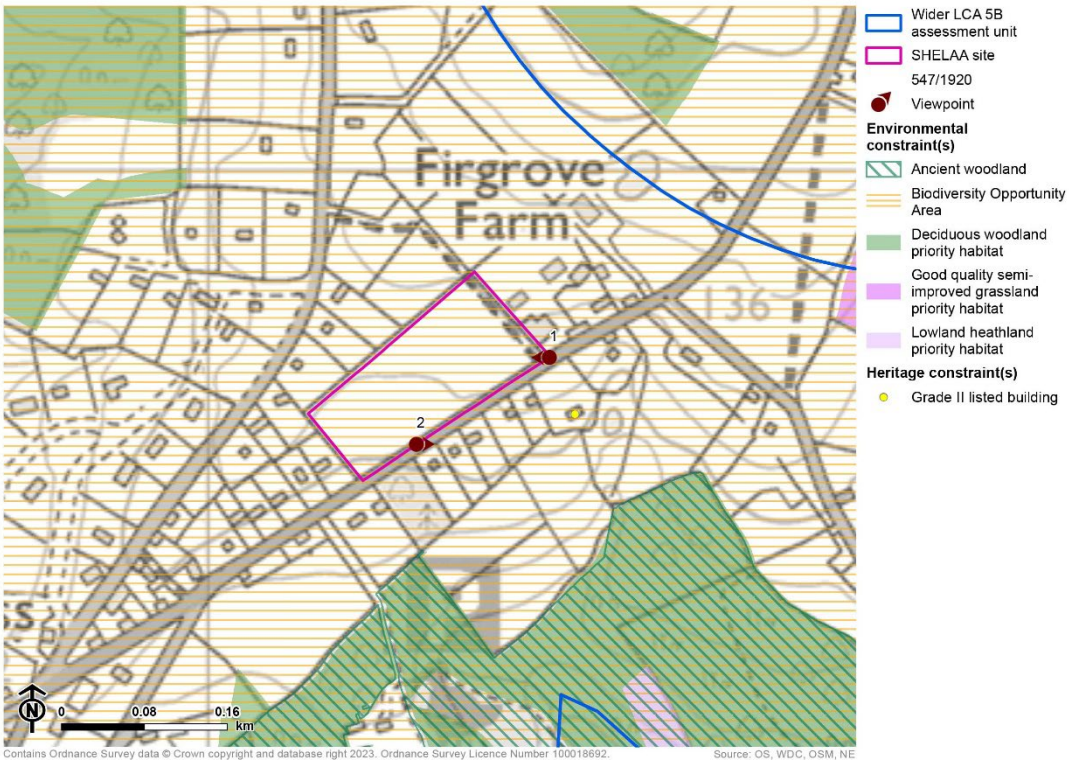
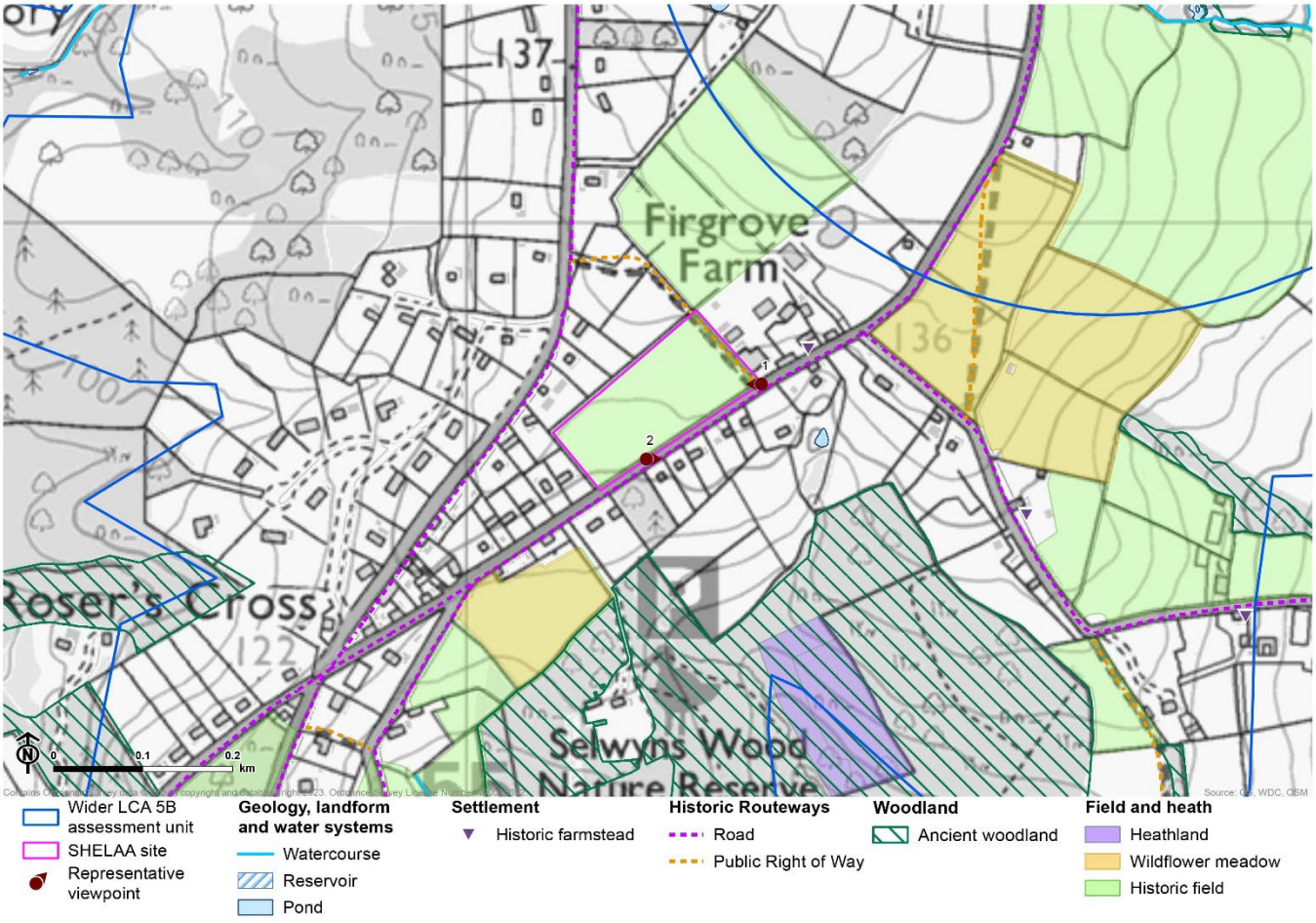


Figure 13: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Grassland field with woodland along northern edge, and some views from properties on the edge of Roser's Cross.



Viewpoint 2: Mature vegetation along Fir Grove Road restricts views into the site.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald Central LCA, and a small part of the 'complex ridge and valley landform' of the wider assessment unit. ■ It rises gently from 125m AOD in the south-west to 135m AOD in the north-east. **Natural character** ■ The site is grassland, bounded by mature trees on the northern and eastern boundaries and hedgerows on the western and southern boundaries, typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ The site lies within the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA. It is 45m to the north-east of the Selwyns Wood Sussex Wildlife Trust Reserve. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site is derived from a planned private enclosure field pattern (as classified in the Sussex HLC but not identified as a feature of the assessment unit), and historic field boundaries have been retained. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The site is influenced by proximity to the settlement edge of Roser's Cross, however the levels of tranquillity recorded in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping are relatively high (**Figure 6)**, and the experience of dark skies are towards the lower/darker end of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping (**Figure 7)**.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site lies to the east of Roser's Cross, a small linear hamlet set along Fir Grove Road and Warren Lane. The linear settlement form has been altered by closes off Warren Lane, at Forest Place and Warren Close. The hedgerow on the site's western boundary provides a vegetated edge to the hamlet. Development on Fir Grove Road consists of large detached two storey houses set back from the road, often with one-storey outbuildings. Firgrove Business Park to the east of the site consists of a number of low one-storey brick and timber sheds. The site separates the settlement edge of Roser's Cross from the business park.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Mature hedgerows along Fir Grove Road limits some visibility for people travelling along the road. Residential properties to the south of the site are set back from the road, but have some views of the vegetation along Fir Grove Road, and there may be views from upper storeys. Residents to the west on Fir Grove Road and Warren Lane have limited views into the site due to screening by mature trees and hedgerows. A public right of way runs along the eastern site boundary, and there are clear views into the site from along it. Selwyn's Wood Meadow Local Wildlife Site is 80m south-west of the site, however there is no intervisibility due to roadside vegetation on Fir Grove Road.
Extent of intervisibility within the High Weald AONB	Mature vegetation along the boundaries of the site prevents long distance views across the wider High Weald AONB.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems - a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB, and contributes to the *pattern of faults and folds*.
Settlement - dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Firgrove Business Park to the east is recorded as a *historic farmstead*[13], although with some loss of features.
Routeways - a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	The existing public right of way is recorded as a historic routeway, and Fir Grove Road on the southern boundary as a historic track. These contribute towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland - abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Mature trees along the field boundaries contribute towards the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges*.
Field and heath - small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	*Relatively small irregular field pattern*, defined by hedgerows and mature vegetation, with retained historic field boundaries.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site is located within a relatively *dark landscape* and has a sense of tranquillity. The site contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, although long views of the site are generally limited by vegetation.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Wider LCA 5B assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to commercial/ industrial development. The sensitivity analysis indicates the complex landform, priority habitat woodland (including ancient woodland), heathland, lowland meadows and good quality semi-improved grassland, the intact historic field pattern, historic features throughout the assessment unit, the strongly dispersed settlement pattern, the rural setting provided to ridgetop settlements, the strong network of public rights of way, the rural character with areas of tranquillity and dark night skies, and its location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. The semi-enclosed character, areas of modern field amalgamation and urban fringe development, and proximity to main roads reduces sensitivity.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **moderate-high** sensitivity to commercial/ industrial development. The site is part of the undulating landform, lies within the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA, is in pasture use, retains its historic field pattern, and has a rural character with high relative remoteness, therefore demonstrating some of the characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. Balanced against this, the site has a semi-enclosed character and is in proximity to residential and commercial development on Fir Grove Road, which are two of the characteristics that decrease sensitivity across the assessment unit. The site also contains no ancient woodland or priority habitats and no recorded historic features or public rights of way, which are features which increase sensitivity in the wider assessment unit.

[13] As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 13).

The site expresses some of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. The site is part of the pattern of faults and folds and it is adjacent to a historic farmstead. The mature trees and hedgerows contribute to the highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands and outgrown hedges within the locality and the public right of way in the east (which is a historic routeway), the small irregular field pattern, dark skies and scenic beauty are also defining components of character.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature trees and hedgerows, affecting the rural character and settlement edge of Roser's Cross. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected areas of woodland.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature trees and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors (that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible). ■ Take up biological opportunities listed in the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA, where possible.
Loss / deterioration of the small-scale field pattern with largely intact hedgerow field boundaries. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ A generally irregular field pattern.	■ Field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern.
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[14] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Deterioration of the rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Roser's Cross. Loss of separation between the residential edge of Roser's Cross and employment development at Firgrove Business Park.	■ Locate development in the east of the site to relate to the existing employment development at Firgrove Business Park. ■ Restrict building heights to one or two storeys to fit with the existing development style. ■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular.

[14] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

	■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[15], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[16] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[17].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ pedestrians, motorists, cyclists and residents along Fir Grove Road to the south; ■ employees and visitors to Firgrove Business Park to the east; ■ residents along Warren Lane to the north; and ■ users of the footpath in the east of the site.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation, especially the mature trees and hedgerows to the north, west and south. ■ Locate development in the east of the site, away from the residential edge of Roser's Cross. ■ Set development back from Fir Grove Road, to fit with the existing pattern and limit views for users of the road and local residents. ■ Conserve the rural character of the footpath in the east by setting back development from the path. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local species to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Introduced built forms to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of its surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site could result in coalescence between the residential edge of Roser's Cross and employment development at Firgrove Business Park. However, the site does not cross a distinct boundary feature, and hedgerows on the boundaries limit some views into the site.

Should development come forward, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain and enhance mature trees and hedgerows within and along the boundaries of the site, in line with the aims of the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA.
- Retain the rural character of the public right of way through the east of the site.
- Locate development in the east to relate to existing employment development at Firgrove Business Park.

[15] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[16] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[17] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Land adjoining Owlsbury, Chapel Cross Lane, Chapel Cross (779/3220)

Site Details	
Potential development	10 residential dwellings
Site location	This site lies between Heathfield and Broad Oak, north of the A265 Burwash Road, adjacent to the Burwash Road Business Area.

Figure 14: Site location and constraints

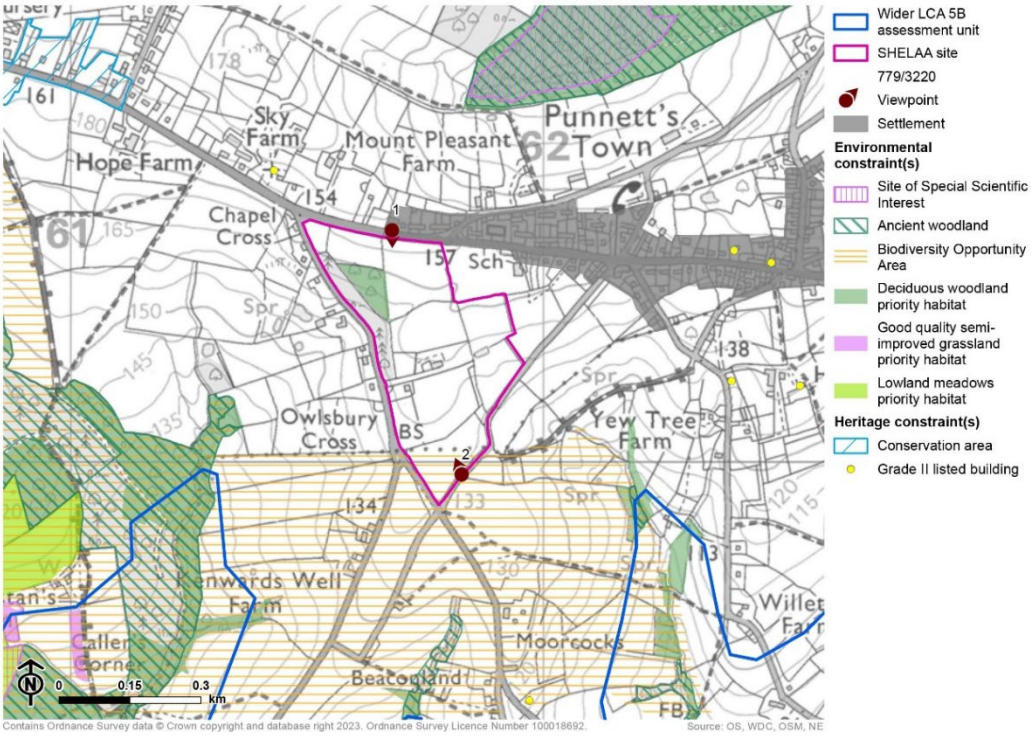
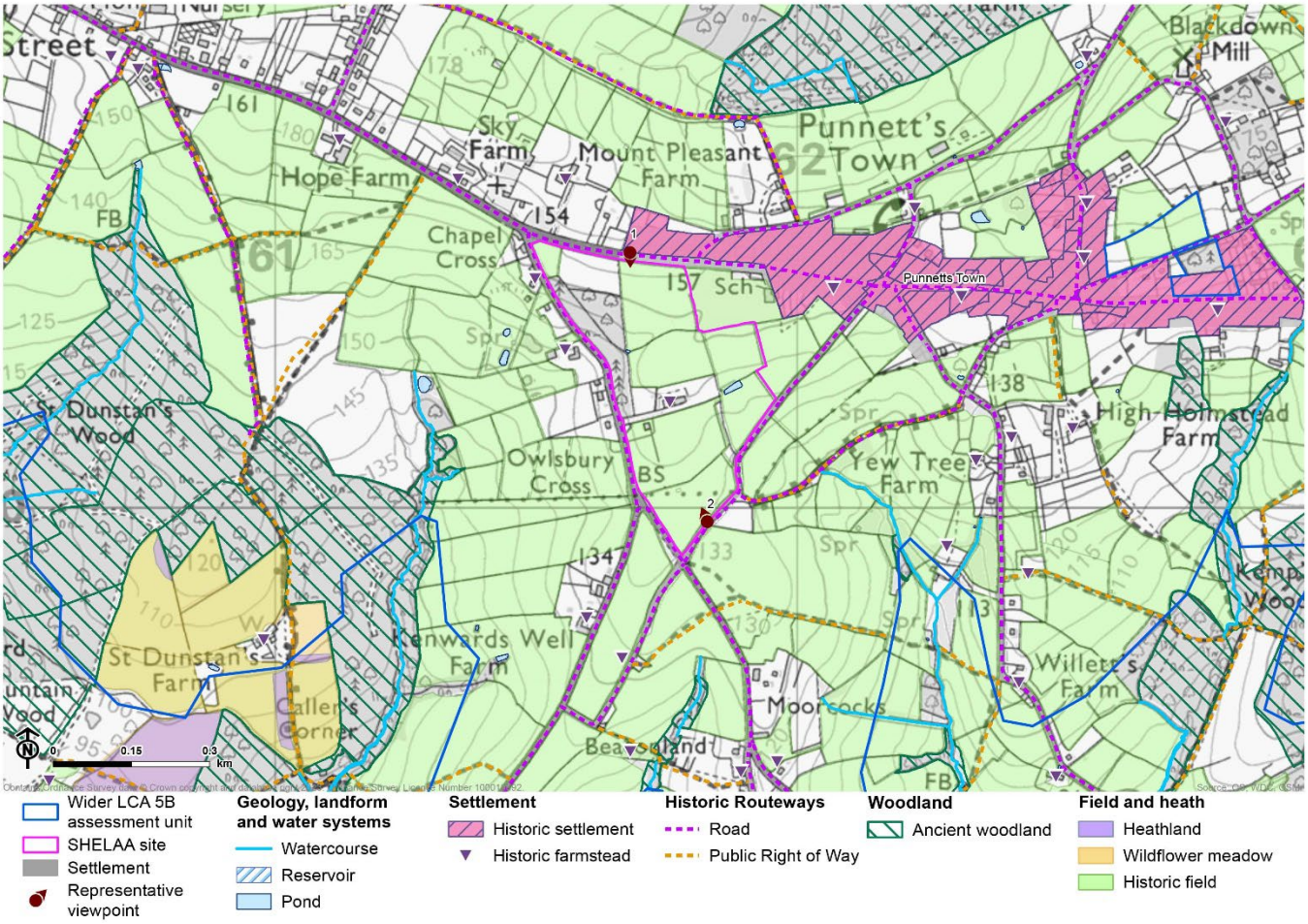


Figure 15: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Mature vegetation along B2096 restricts views into the site.



Viewpoint 2: Mature hedgerow trees and hedgerows on banks limit views from Barley Mow Lane.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald Central LCA, and a small part of the 'complex ridge and valley landform' of the wider assessment unit. ■ The site rises from 135m AOD in the south to 155m AOD in the north. **Natural character** ■ The site is in pasture use, bound by hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees along Barley Mow Lane in the south-east, and with strong internal field boundaries in the east. The northern boundary is bound by a hedge running along the B2096 Battle Road. Priority habitat deciduous woodland in the west is part of a mixed woodland, and typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ The south of the site is within the Pevensey, Rother, Cuckmere Watershed BOA. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The majority of the site is derived from a regular piecemeal enclosure field pattern, as classified in the Sussex HLC and typical of the wider assessment unit. Field patterns in the west are derived from plantation woodland and a large landscaped garden. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The north of the site is influenced by proximity to the B2096 Battle Road. However, the site has relatively high levels of tranquillity recorded in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping (**Figure 6**), and experiences dark skies – light levels are recorded in the lower/ darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping (**Figure 7**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site lies to the south-west of Punnetts Town. Punnetts Town is a historic linear ridgetop settlement, based along the junction of North Street and B2096 Battle Road. The edges of Punnetts Town are not well defined. Housing within Punnetts Town is generally two storey semi-detached houses, with some bungalows, often set back from the road. Owlsbury, a large house set within its own grounds, lies within the site.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Mature hedgerows and vegetation limit views into the site from Barley Mow Lane and Chapel Lane, although there are some views through gaps in hedgerows. Views from the B2096 Battle Road on the northern boundary are partially obscured by a low hedgerow. The mature trees and woodland in the west of the site are visible from Battle Road. A byway runs from the south-east corner of the site, and users are afforded views into the site at the junction with Barley Mow Lane. A recreation ground lies to the north-east of the site, although there is minimal visibility of the site from it due to intervening mature hedgerow boundaries.
Extent of intervisibility within the High Weald AONB	The site is largely enclosed from intervisibility with the wider AONB, although there are some glimpsed long distance views from the south-west of the site.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems - a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB, and contributes to the *pattern of faults and folds.* Three small ponds are part of the *high density of ponds* across the AONB.
Settlement - dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Owlsbury Park in the centre of the site is recorded as a *historic farmstead*[18]. Punnetts Town to the north and east is recorded as a historic settlement, and is a *hamlet occurring around the junction of routeways.*
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the site. However, the three roads bounding the site (Barley Mow Lane, Chapel Lane and the B2096 Battle Road) are recorded as historic routeways, which contribute towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Woodland in the west and the mature hedgerows and boundary vegetation are part of the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges.*
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	*Relatively small irregular field pattern*, defined by hedgerows and mature vegetation, with original boundaries generally intact. The site is used for both arable and *grazing livestock.*
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site contributes to the *scenic beauty* of the area, with *glimpsed long views* from the south-west of the site to the south across the wider AONB and towards the South Downs National Park. The site is located within a relatively *dark landscape,* and experiences relative tranquillity, especially in the south, despite proximity to the B2096 Battle Road.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Wider LCA 5B assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform, priority habitat woodland (including ancient woodland), heathland, lowland meadows and good quality semi-improved grassland, the intact historic field pattern, historic features throughout the assessment unit, the strongly dispersed settlement pattern, the rural setting provided to ridgetop settlements, the strong network of public rights of way, the rural character with areas of tranquillity and dark night skies, and its location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. The semi-enclosed character, areas of modern field amalgamation and urban fringe development, and proximity to main roads reduces sensitivity.

The Site

It is considered that the site is of **high** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), in line with the wider assessment unit. The site demonstrates many of the key features that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. It is part of the undulating topography of the AONB landscape and contains priority habitat deciduous woodland in the west, and the south is part of the Pevensey, Rother, Cuckmere Watershed BOA, has strong internal field boundaries and a historic field enclosure pattern. The site has a tranquil, rural character with a good experience of dark night skies and glimpsed long distance views across the wider AONB. The semi-enclosed character, and proximity to the

[18] As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 15).

B2096 in the north are characteristics that decrease sensitivity. The site also does not contain any recorded historic features or public rights of way, which are features which increase sensitivity in the wider assessment unit.

The site expresses some of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. The site forms part of the pattern of faults and folds and contributes to the high density of ponds within the AONB. Owlsbury Park in the centre of the site contributes to the high density of historic farmsteads, whilst the woodland in the west forms part of the highly interconnected woodlands in the locality. The site also has an irregular field pattern, glimpsed long views to the south-west across the wider AONB, dark skies, tranquillity and scenic beauty.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of woodland, mature trees and hedgerows, affecting the rural character. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially woodland, mature trees and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable. ■ Take up opportunities listed in the Pevensey, Rother, Cuckmere Watershed BOA, where possible.
Loss or deterioration of the grazed pastures and loss/ deterioration of the small-scale field pattern with largely intact hedgerow field boundaries. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Relatively small irregular field pattern. ■ Fields mostly used for grazing livestock.	■ Loss of pasture would be unavoidable with development of the site, as proposed development would remove land from agricultural use. However field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern.
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[19] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Extension of Punnetts Town down the slopes, which is not in keeping with the ridgeline linear settlement form, and impingement on the setting of Owlsbury Park.	■ Locate development in the north along the B2096 Battle Road along the ridgeline to limit the extent of development 'spilling' beyond the ridge crest, to relate to the existing linear ridgeline settlement pattern and to minimise encroachment towards the

[19] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

High Weald AONB character component: ■ Hamlet occurring around the junction of routeways. ■ High density of historic farmsteads.	boundary of Owlsbury Park. Further assessment relating to the setting of the historic farmstead[20] is advised. ■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[21], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[22] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[23].
Deterioration of the rural character of the sites which contributes to the setting of Punnetts Town.	■ Retain rural agricultural character of land in the south of the site, to maintain a rural setting to the south of Punnetts Town.
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ pedestrians, motorists, cyclists and residents along the B2096 Battle Road; ■ pedestrians and motorists along Barley Mow Lane and Chapel Lane; ■ residents at Owlsbury Park farm (a historic farmstead); and ■ users of public right of way to the south-east of the site.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the woodland in the west, and mature hedgerows along Chapel Lane and Barley Mow Lane. Where there are gaps in hedgerows plant new hedgerow trees, where possible / suitable. ■ Set development back from the historic farmstead at Owlsbury Park. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local species to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Consider views of development from the byway to the south-east. Avoid siting an entrance near the junction of the byway and Barley Mow Lane. Retain and enhance trees/ woodland to screen views into the site from this location.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend Punnetts Town into the countryside that forms a setting to the south of Punnetts Town. Development of this site would also be perceived to extend development down the slope from its current ridgeline location, which would be at odds with the existing pattern of settlement. However, topography and mature hedgerows along the site boundaries limit views into the site.

Should development come forward, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance trees and hedgerows, especially the mature woodland in the west, and land within the Pevensey, Rother, Cuckmere Watershed BOA..
- Locate development in the north along the B2096 Battle Road to retain the ridgetop linear settlement form of Punnetts Town and minimise encroachment to Owlsbury Park.

[20] As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 15).
[21] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[22] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[23] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Land adjacent to Little Home Farm, Forest Lane, Punnetts Town (011/3120) and Scots Paddock, Forest Lane, Punnetts Town (277/3220)

Site Details	
Potential development	011/3120 – 5 residential dwellings 277/3220 – 10 residential dwellings Total: 15 residential dwellings. For the purpose of this landscape and visual appraisal the above SHELAA sites have been considered together
Site location	These sites lie in the east of Punnetts Town, and to the north and south of Forest Lane.

Figure 16: Site location and constraints

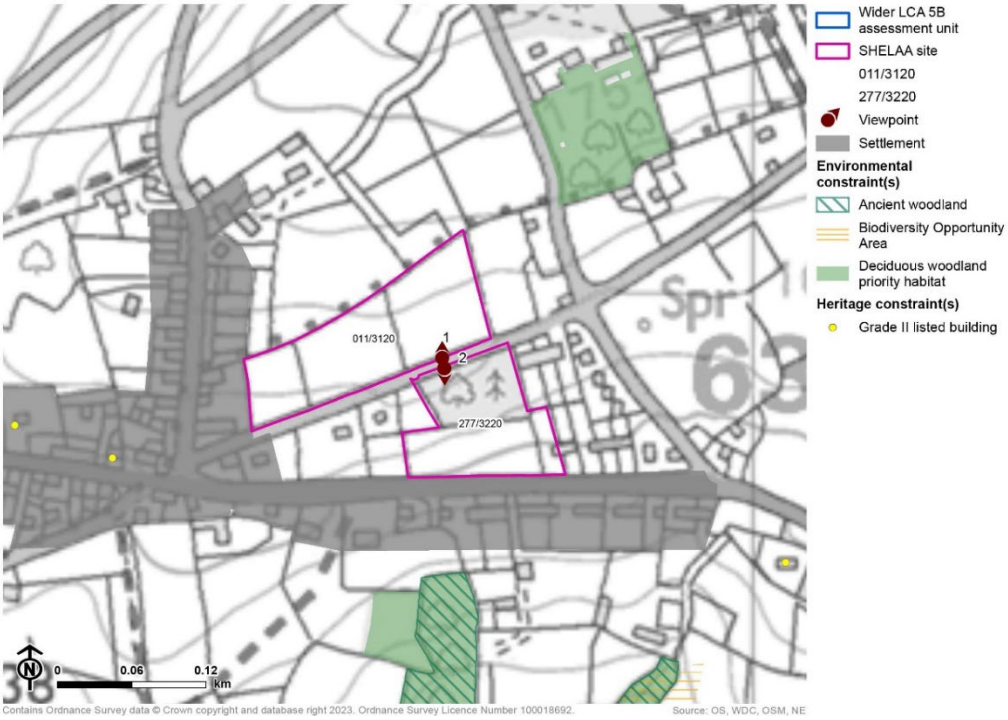
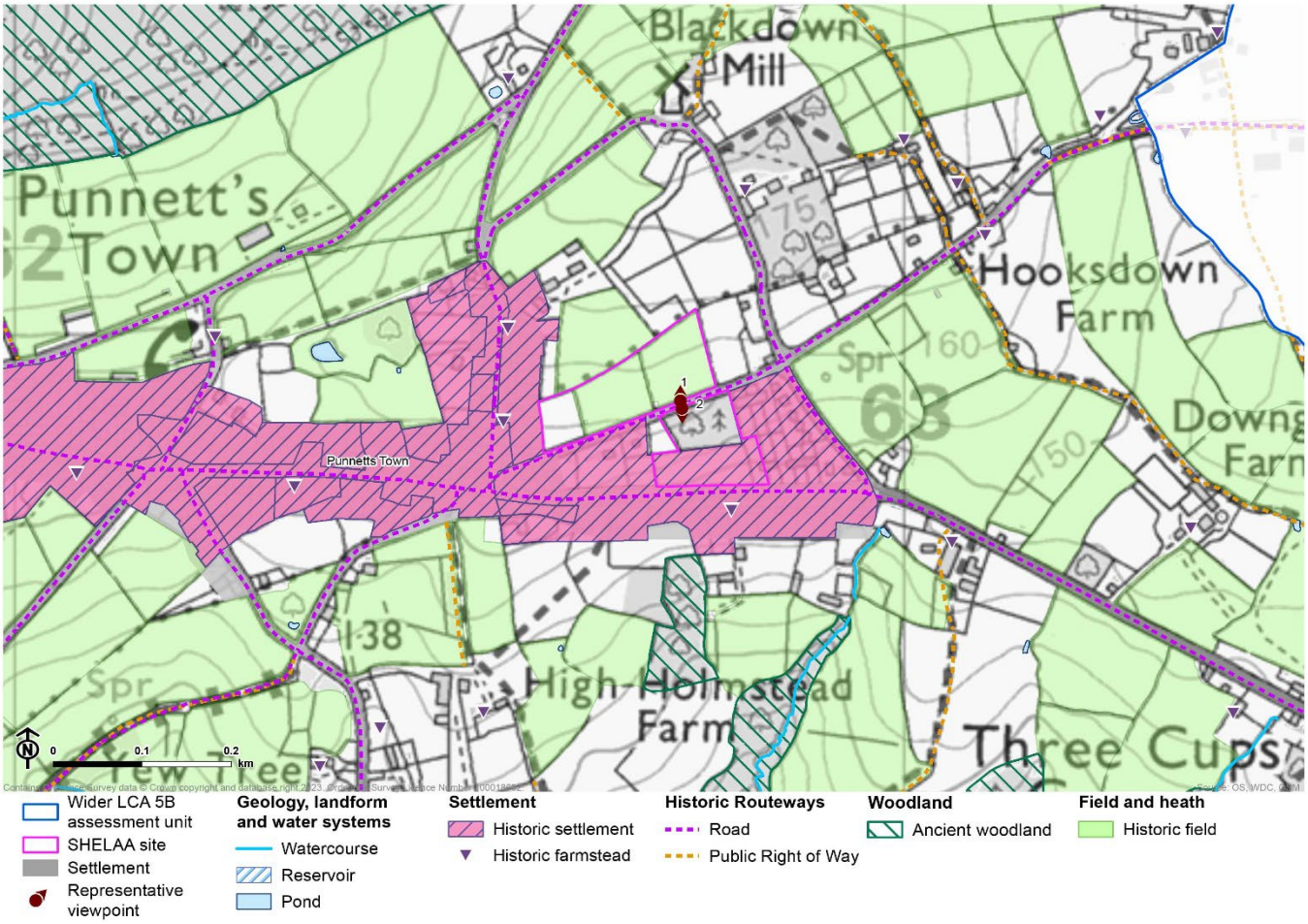


Figure 17: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: **Site 011/3120** with grazed grassland and mature internal shaw boundaries providing enclosure.



Viewpoint 2: **Site 277/3220** with grazed grassland, mature boundary vegetation and glimpsed views south to the South Downs.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The sites rise gently from the south-east from 150m AOD to 160m AOD in the north of site **011/3120.** The sites form part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald Central LCA, and a small part of the 'complex ridge and valley landform' of the wider assessment unit. **Natural character** ■ The sites are pasture, typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Site **227/3220** contains a mixed woodland in the north, and mature hedgerow trees along the southern boundary (B2096 Battle Road). The fields within the east of site **011/3120** are bound by mature shaws, mature hedgerows and trees along Forest Lane, which are all valued semi-natural habitats (although not priority habitats). **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ **Site 011/3120** and the south of site **227/3220** are derived from a planned private enclosure field pattern as classified in the Sussex HLC, but not identified as a feature of the assessment unit. The historic field boundaries have not been altered. The woodland in **227/3220** is recorded as plantation. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The sites are influenced by proximity to the settlement edge of Punnetts Town, and site **277/3220** by proximity to the B2096 Battle Road. However, CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping (**Figure 6**) records relatively high levels of tranquillity and dark skies are experienced (recorded in the lower/ darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 7**). ■ The west of site **011/3120** is in use as an informal parking area and reduces the rural character of the site.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The sites lie to the east of Punnetts Town. Punnetts Town is a linear ridgetop settlement, based along the junction of North Street and B2096 Battle Road. The edges of Punnetts Town are not well defined. Existing development is generally two storey semi-detached houses, with some bungalows, set back from the road. In the east houses are set in a single row along the roads, and the linear settlement pattern based around the junction of North Street and B2096 Battle Road is retained. Large, detached houses on Forest Road are set back from the road, and are not considered part of Punnetts Town.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Mature hedgerows, trees and woodland generally screen views for people travelling along Forest Lane and the B2096 Battle Road, although there are some glimpsed views into both sites from Forest Lane and into **277/3220** from the B2096 Battle Road. There are no public rights of way within or close to the sites. There are glimpsed views from the upper stories of houses along North Street into site **011/3120.**
Extent of intervisibility within the High Weald AONB	Mature vegetation and hedgerows result in limited intervisibility with the wider High Weald AONB, although there are some glimpsed views from the east of

	011/3120 to woodland in the High Weald to the south, and from site **277/3220** across the AONB the South Downs National Park.
Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems - a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	There are no distinctive geological, landform or water features within the site.
Settlement - dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	The south of site **277/3220** is recorded as part of Punnets Town, a historic settlement, which is a *hamlet occurring around the junction of routeways.*
Routeways - a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the sites. However, Forest Lane and the B0296 Battle Road are recorded as a lane and ridgeway respectively, which contribute towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland - abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	The hedgerows, trees and small wood in **277/3220** are part of the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges.*
Field and heath - small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	*Relatively small irregular field pattern*, defined by shaws and mature vegetation.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The sites contribute to the *scenic beauty* of the area, with *glimpsed long views* from **Site 277/3220** across the High Weald AONB. The sites are located within a relatively *dark landscape,* despite proximity to the edge of Punnetts Town and the B2096 Battle Road.

How the sites relate to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Wider LCA 5B assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform, priority habitat woodland (including ancient woodland), heathland, lowland meadows and good quality semi-improved grassland, the intact historic field pattern, historic features throughout the assessment unit, the strongly dispersed settlement pattern, the rural setting provided to ridgetop settlements, the strong network of public rights of way, the rural character with areas of tranquillity and dark night skies, and its location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. The semi-enclosed character, areas of modern field amalgamation and urban fringe development, and proximity to main roads reduces sensitivity.

The Sites

Overall, it is considered that the sites have a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole, and are considered to be of **moderate-high** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sites demonstrate some of the characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. Site **227/3220** contains a mixed woodland in the north, and mature hedgerow trees, while site **011/3120** is bound by mature shaw hedgerows. The sites are part of the undulating topography of the wider High Weald AONB, retain a historic field pattern, provide a scenic background to Punnett's Town, are in a relatively dark landscape, experience tranquillity and retain a rural character. The semi-enclosed character and use of the west of site **011/3120** for informal parking are some of the characteristics which decrease sensitivity across the assessment unit, and therefore these sites as well. The sites do not contain any priority habitats or

historic features, or public rights of way, which are characteristics that increase sensitivity for the wider assessment unit. The west of site **011/3120** and south of site **277/3220** have fewer sensitive features than the rest of the sites.

The sites express few of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. These are their position next to the historic settlement of Punnetts Town, the hedgerows, trees and small woods in **277/3220** which form part of the highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods and outgrown hedges as well as the interconnected woodlands. Both sites also have a small irregular field pattern, experience dark skies, tranquillity and scenic beauty, and there are glimpsed long views from site **277/3220**.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the sites and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous tree, woodlands, shaws and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in contributing towards the rural character of the area. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods….shaws…and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the sites, especially the small wood in the north of **277/3220**. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable.
Loss/deterioration of pasture fields and the small-scale field pattern with intact field boundaries **High Weald AONB character component** ■ A generally irregular field pattern.	■ Loss of pasture would be unavoidable with development of the site, as proposed development would remove land from agricultural use. However, field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern.
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[24] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Extension of development further east from the existing edge of Punnetts Town. Deterioration of the rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Punnetts Town.	■ Locate development in the south-west of **011/3120** and the south-east of site **277/3220 t**o relate to the existing settlement pattern. Retain the existing pattern of single row houses set back from the road.

[24] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

	■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[25], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[26] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[27].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ pedestrians, motorists, cyclists, and residents along Forest Lane to the south of **011/3120;** ■ residents along North Street to the west of **011/3120**; and ■ pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, and residents along the B2096 Battle Road to the south of **277/3220.**	■ Retain all existing vegetation including the shaw boundaries in **011/3120** and the mature wood in **277/3220**. ■ Retain views across the wider AONB (towards the South Downs National Park) from Forest Lane when looking south across site **277/3220.** ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local species to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within] development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape.

Summary and recommendations

Development of these sites would extend Punnetts Town to the east, which could alter the historic settlement pattern. However, hedgerows and mature trees limit views into the sites.

Should development come forward, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance mature woods, trees and hedgerows.
- Locate development to the south-west of **011/3120** and the south-east of site **277/3220** to better relate to the existing settlement edge.
- Retain the pattern of single row houses along the roads, with the houses set back from the road.

[25] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[26] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[27] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Cumulative effects of development sites in the Wider LCA 5B assessment unit

The six sites proposed for development within the Wider LCA 5B assessment unit would add a potential 30 additional dwellings and three areas of employment into the landscape. This would result in a small increase in built development within the rural landscape. If all sites come forward the cumulative impact will result in the loss of fields, vegetation, and hedgerows across the assessment unit, and a slight decrease in rurality in this largely unsettled landscape. The small-scale of the sites means that cumulative landscape impacts will be limited.

The assessment unit is large, and the majority of the sites are some distance from each other. Sites **756/1630, 947/1750** and **547/1920** have no visual relationship with each other and if developed there would be no cumulative visual effects. Sites **779/3220, 011/3120** and **277/3220** are in Punnett's Town and would result in a small expansion of the settlement into the surrounding rural landscape, although with no visual interactions between them. Due to the small scale of the sites, the intervening distance between them, and the well-vegetated character surrounding them, visual cumulative effects would be limited.

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: Groombridge

Final report
Prepared by LUC
January 2024



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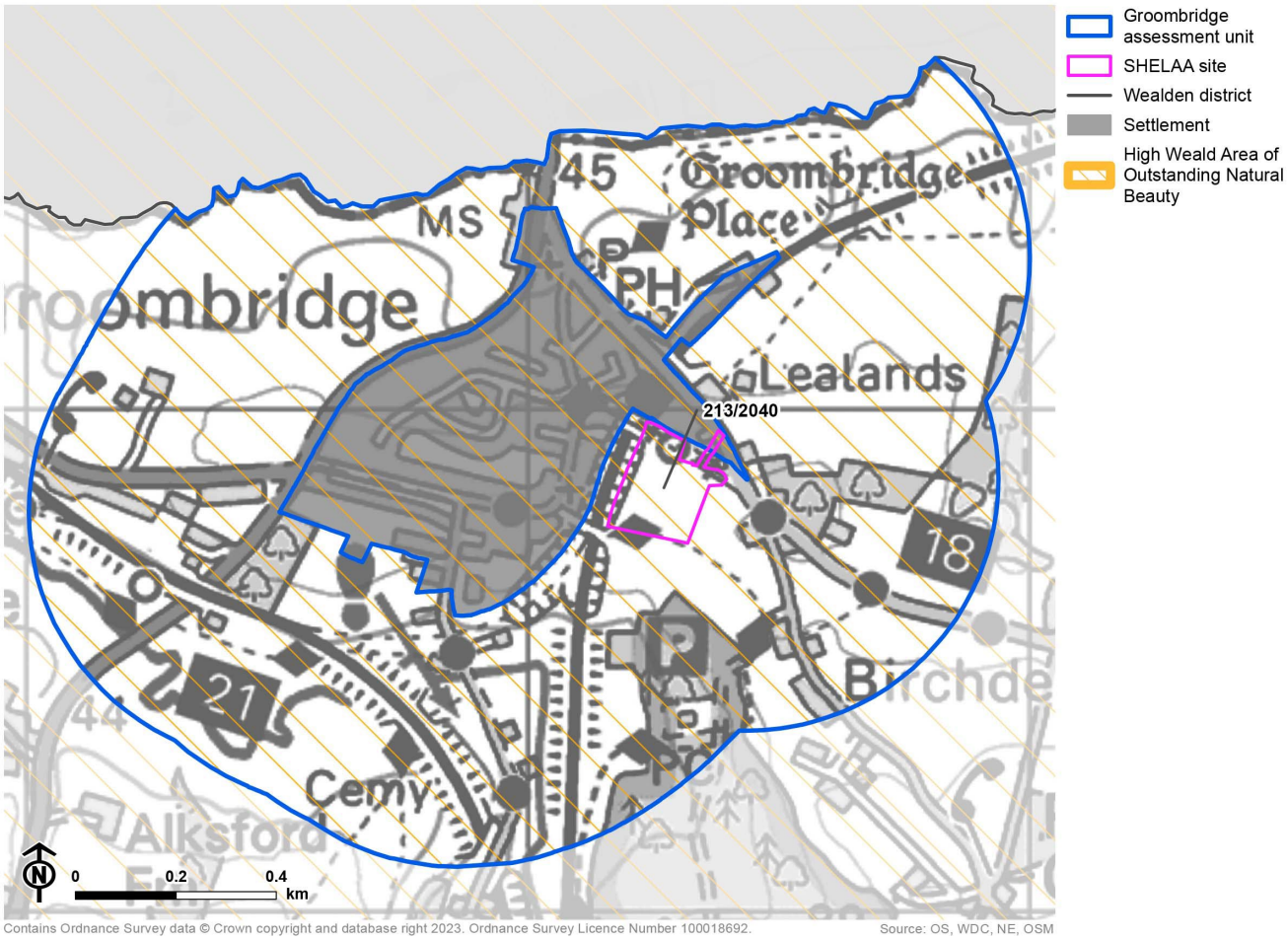
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Chapter 10
Groombridge Assessment Unit

One potential development site is considered within the Groombridge assessment unit:

- **Land south of Back Lane and to the west of railway line (213/2040)**

Figure 1: Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



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Source: OS, WDC, NE, OSM

Settlement location, evolution and pattern

Settlement location and context	Groombridge is a village located in the north of Wealden district, within the High Weald AONB. The village is located within a relatively broad part of the undulating River Medway Valley and is framed by the lower-lying River Grom and Eridge Stream corridors to the north and south.
Settlement evolution	The historic core of the village is relatively linear, and situated along the B2188 (extending north of the district boundary, and designated as a Conservation Area within Tunbridge Wells Borough). The village has medieval origins as a chapelry and market town and historically several prominent families were resident in the area, including the Russells at Groombridge Place. The introduction of the railways in the 19th century resulted in modest growth of the village. Whilst the main railway line closed to passengers in 1985, the town still forms the terminus of the Spa Valley Heritage Railway.
Settlement pattern and edge character	The historic linear form of settlement was eroded by modern development in the 20th and 21st centuries, resulting in the nucleated form of the settlement present today between the B2188 and Station Road in the north and the railway to the south. This primarily consists of one and two storey detached and semi-detached houses. The village is bound by the B2188 and Station Road in the north, the wooded railway line to the south and east. Settlement is typically fringed by woodland, which is denser in the south and east, and mature field boundaries. Views looking west from the settlement edge are relatively open.

Mapped information for the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB's defining components of character that are found within the Groombridge assessment unit have been mapped in **Figure 2**. Tranquillity and dark skies (which form part of the perceptual qualities) are shown in **Figures 3 and 4** respectively.

Figure 2: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB

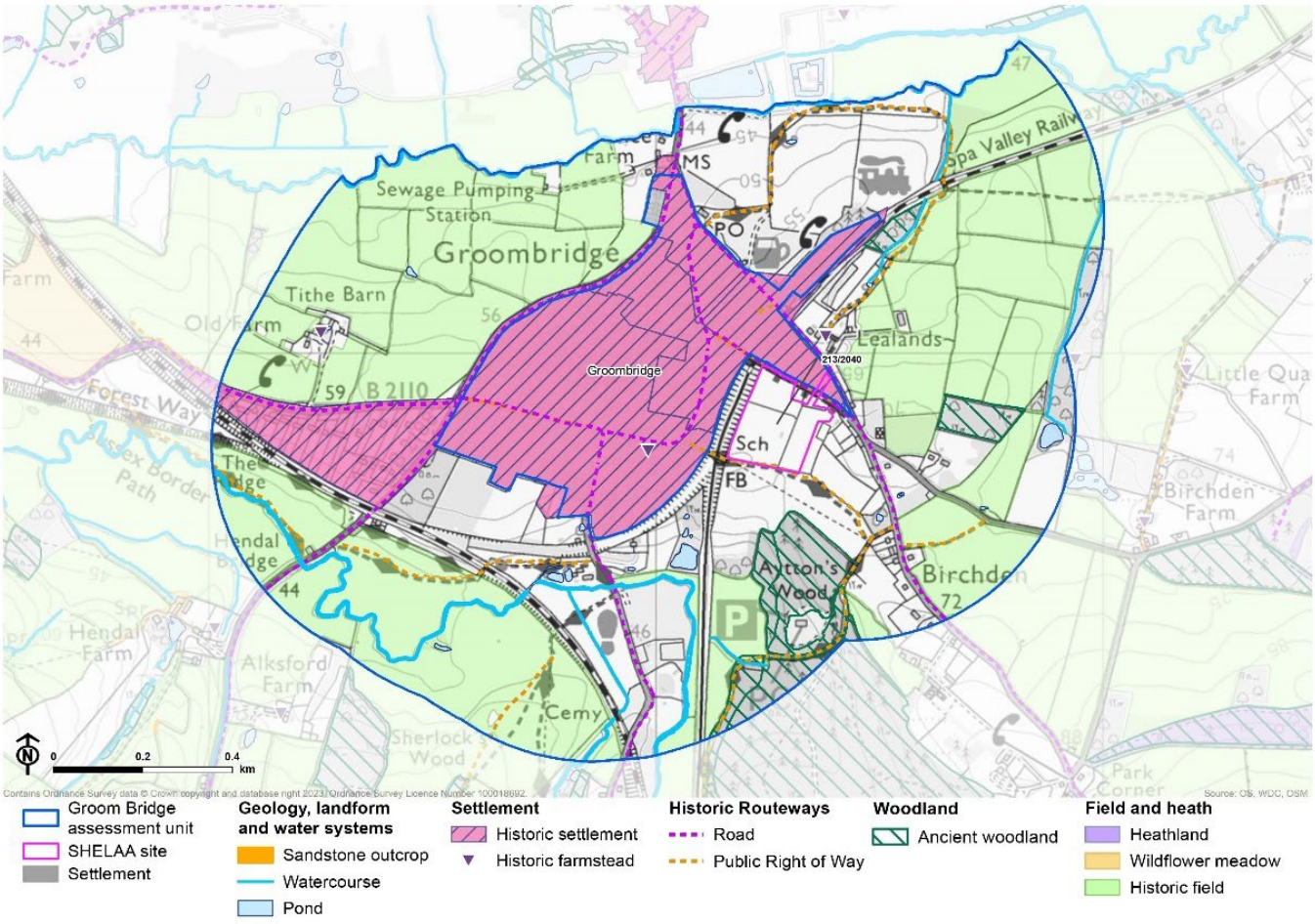


Figure 3: Tranquillity

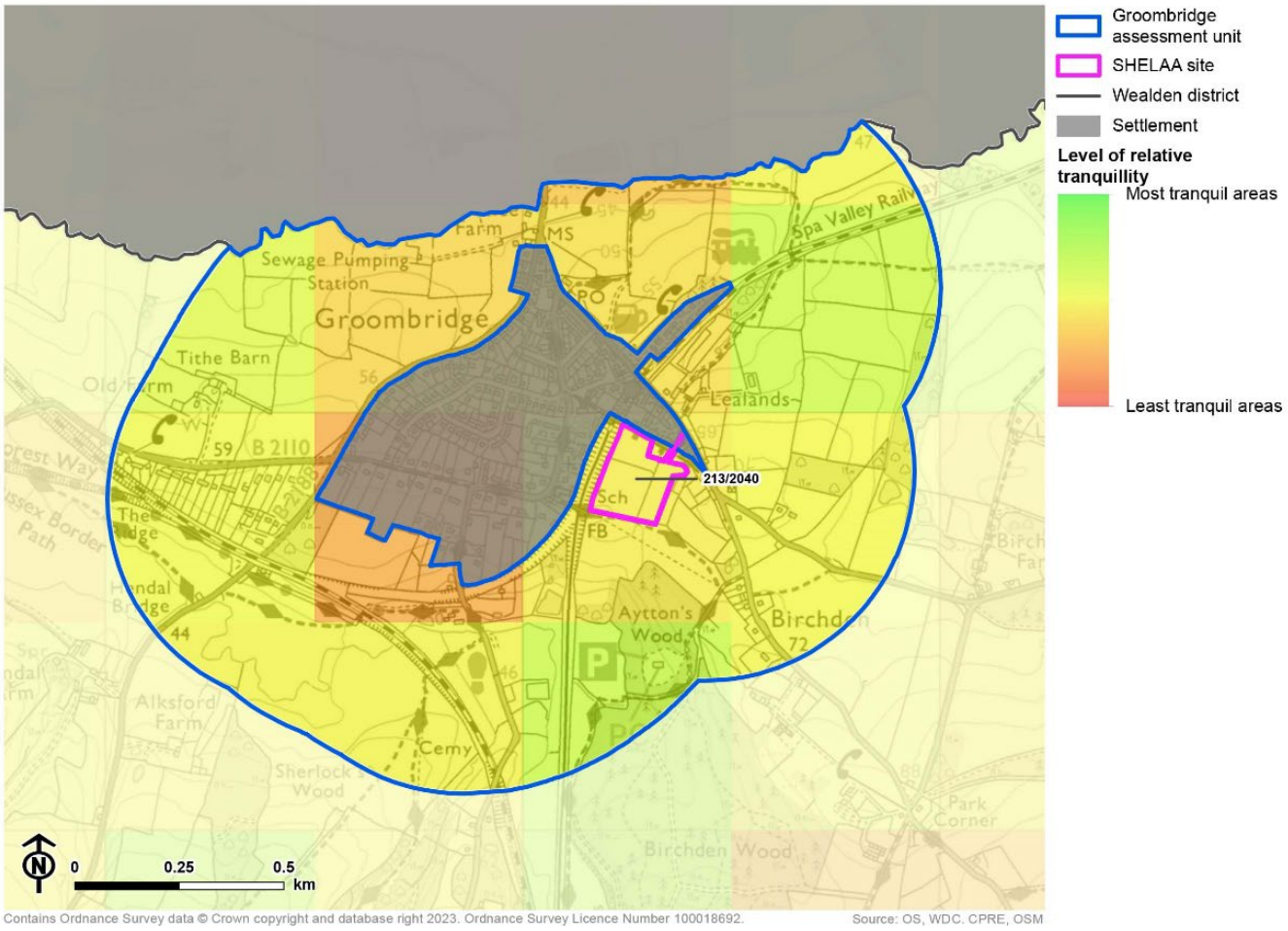
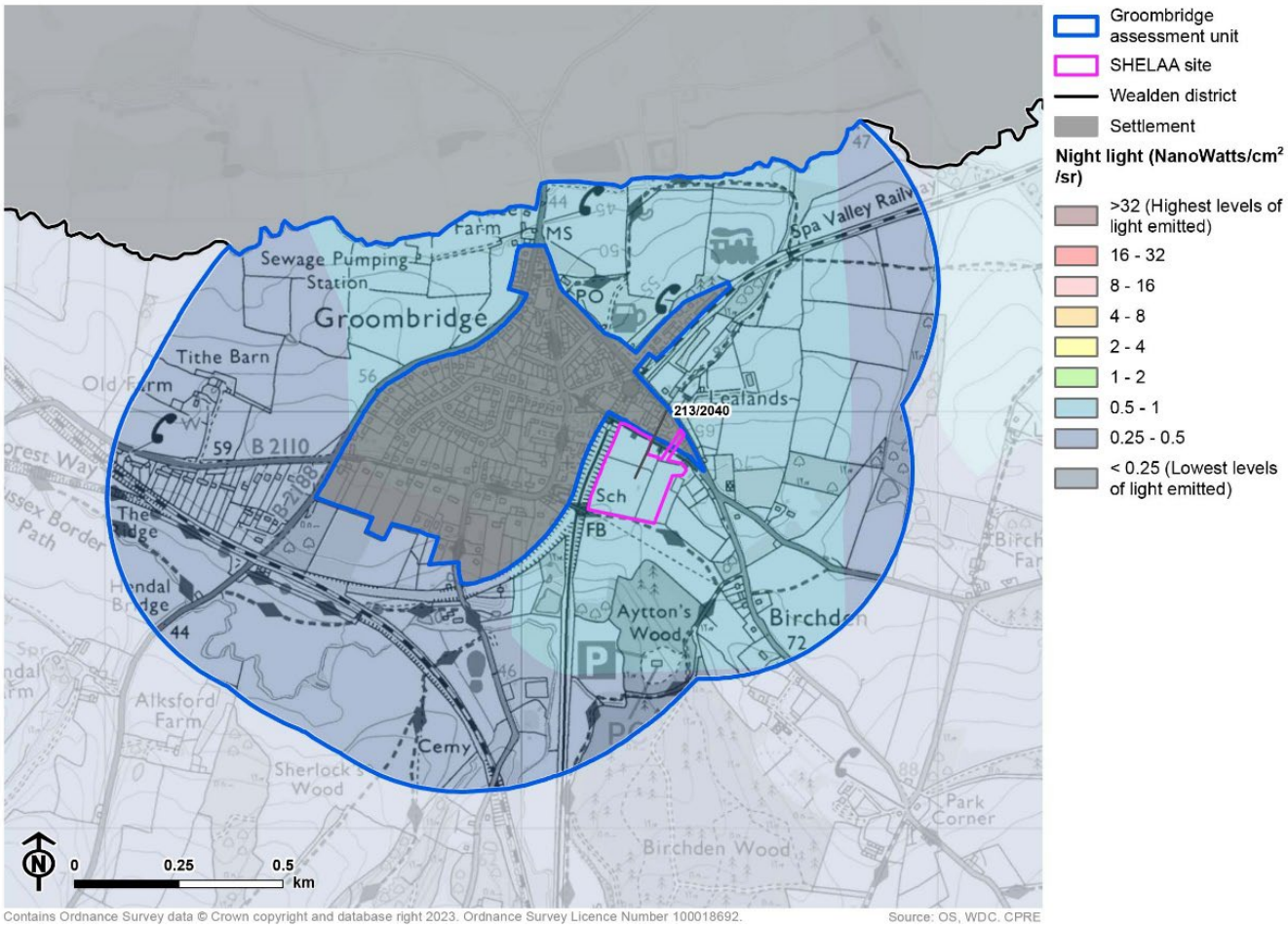


Figure 4: Dark skies



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Source: OS, WDC. CPRE

Landscape sensitivity context for the Groombridge assessment unit

*The landscape sensitivity of the Groombridge assessment unit, described in the **Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development***			
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the assessment unit	**Small scale residential** 2-2.5 storey housing	**Medium scale residential** 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	**Commercial/ industrial** e.g. industrial units or hotels
	H	**H**	**H**
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the LSA unit	■ Complex undulating river valley landform with incised stream corridors to the north and south. ■ Small areas of deciduous woodland, some of which are ancient in origin. ■ Intact historic field pattern, particularly assarts in the west. ■ Groombridge Place Registered Park and Garden in the north. ■ The network of public rights of way, including the Forest Way Country Park, Sussex Border Path and footpaths in Birchden Wood. ■ The boundary features formed by the B2110, Station Road and the wooded current and former railway corridors, which define the settlement edge. ■ The strong rural character with areas of tranquillity and experience of dark skies, which forms the backdrop to the settlement. ■ Location within and intervisibility with areas of the High Weald AONB.		
LSA Guidance	■ Minimise the influence of development in significant views afforded from the settlement, particularly along the B2110, looking towards the wooded ridges of the High Weald AONB and across the pastoral valley landscape. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland, including at Birchden Wood. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow a buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain or replace hedgerow trees, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows, and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the west. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities and setting of the Groombridge Place Registered Park and Garden. ■ Consider key views from the Groombridge Conservation Area. ■ Avoid crossing the distinctive boundary features formed by the B2110, Station Road, and wooded railway lines which contain the settlement. ■ Consider views of development from popular public rights of way, including the Forest Row Country Park, Sussex Border Path and footpaths within Birchden Wood.		

	■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using species that are in character with the wider landscape. ■ Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[1], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[2] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[3]. ■ Ensure development does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, particularly the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB.

[1] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[2] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[3] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Land south of Back Lane and to the west of railway line (213/2040)

Site Details	
Potential development	21 residential dwellings
Site location	The site is located to the south of Station Road and to the east of the former railway line, which partially forms the eastern settlement edge of Groombridge.

Figure 5: Site location and constraints

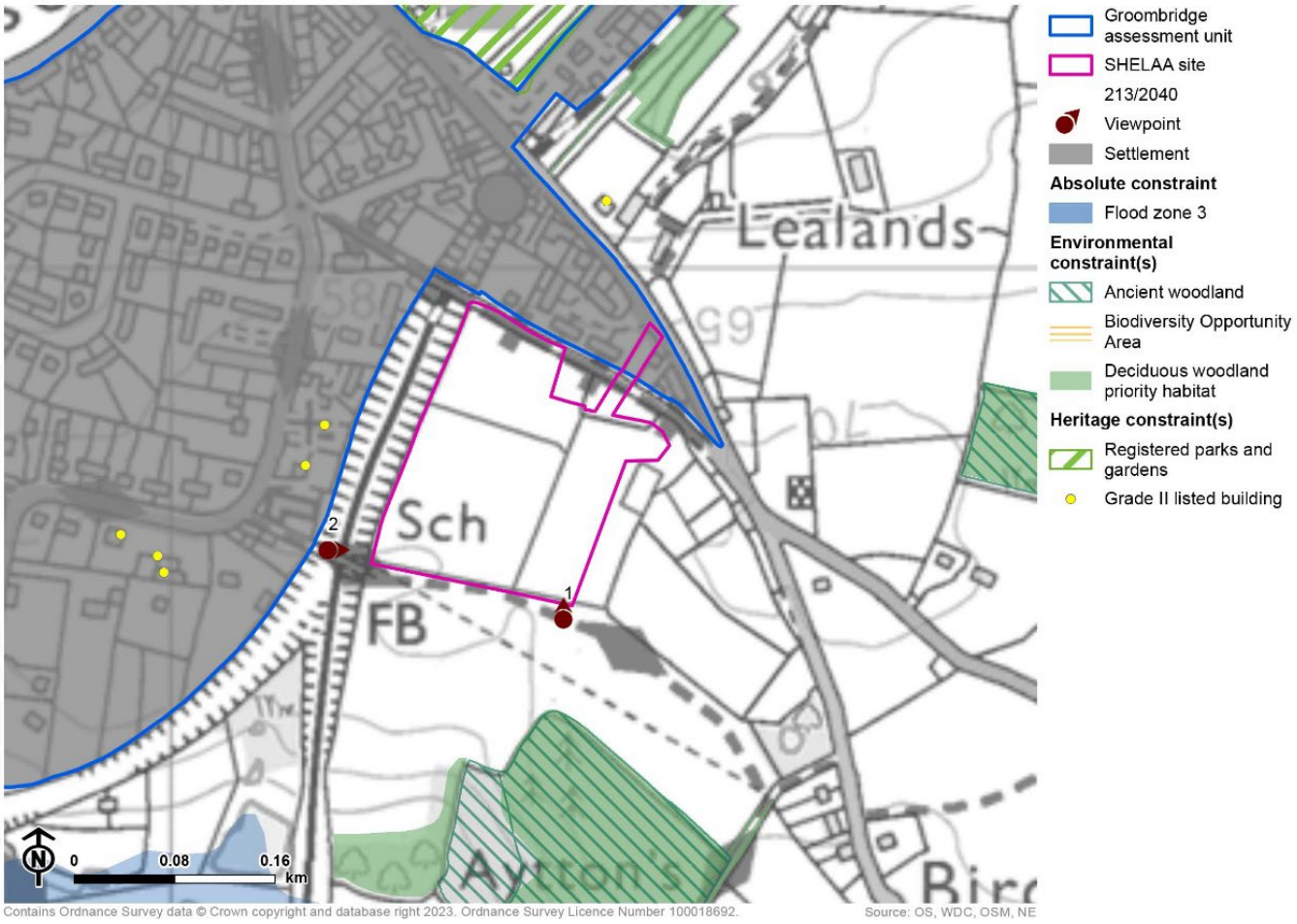
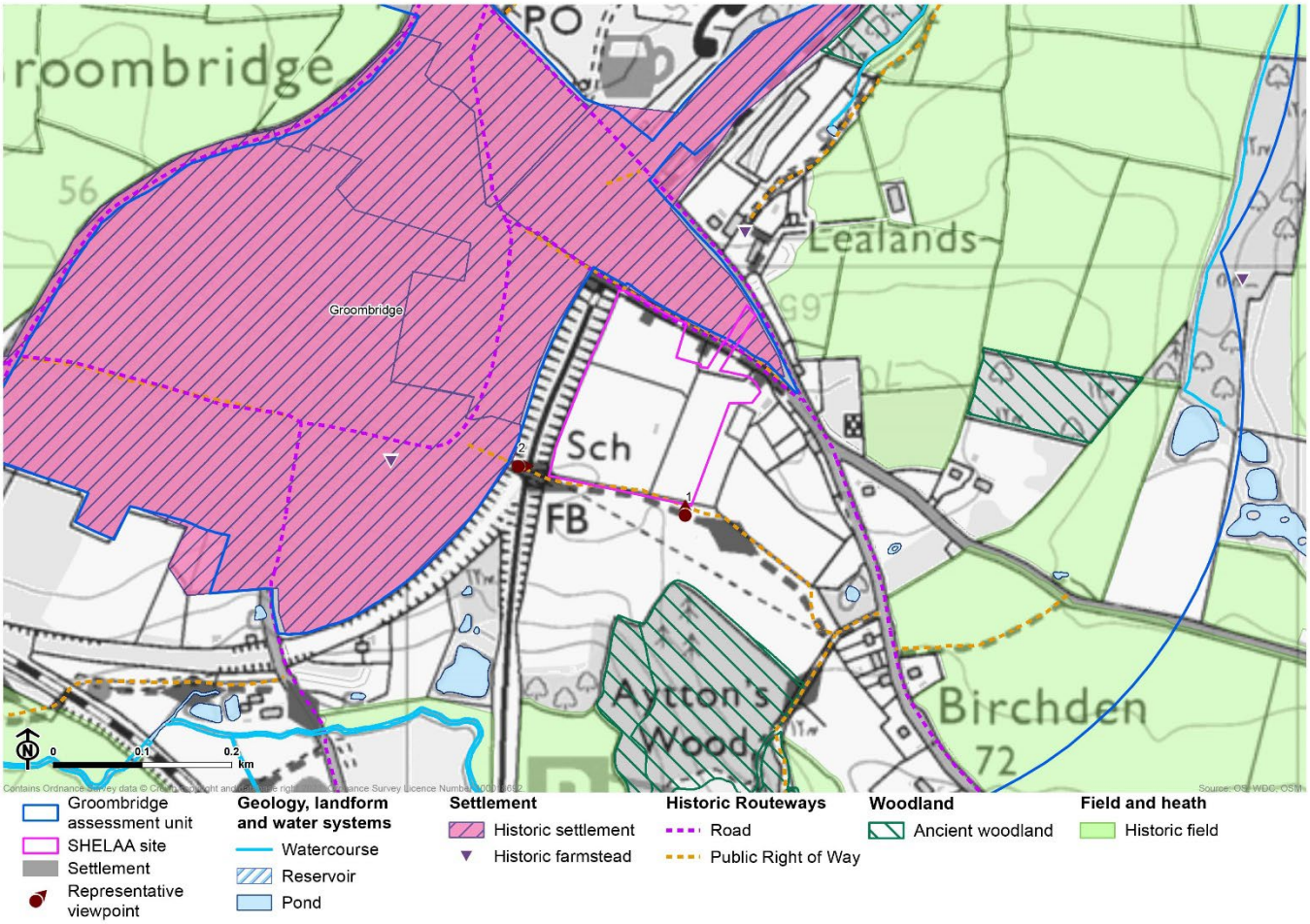


Figure 6: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Subdivision of fields with post and wire fencing seen in glimpsed views looking north from the Wealdway



Viewpoint 2: Partially screened views looking north-east towards the site from the Wealdway and railway bridge

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site is located across a relatively flat and slightly elevated area, located above the River Medway Valley, surrounded by rising undulating topography (which is more typical of the wider assessment unit) to the north-east and south. There is a deep cutting for the railway line to the west of the site. **Natural character** ■ The site is predominantly pastoral in character, though currently used for horse paddocks, with mature and occasionally wooded hedgerows which are typical of the wider assessment unit. Some scattered in field trees are located in the east of the site. ■ Proximity of residential properties and landscaped gardens, which extend to the south of the public right of way, exert a suburban influence and decrease the natural character in the north and north-east of the site, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site is located within an area of medium scale fields derived from piecemeal enclosure (as classified in the Sussex HLC) which are typical of the wider assessment unit. Subdivision of fields with post and wire fencing for horse paddocks has influenced the internal pattern of the site. ■ No heritage features are recorded within the site, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** ■ Dark night skies are experienced from the site and wider assessment unit (light levels are recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**) and there is a sense of rural tranquillity which is occasionally influenced by the proximity to the village (levels of tranquillity are recorded in the middle band of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site does not play a role in the separation of settlements. The site lies to the east of the settlement edge of Groombridge, and east of the railway cutting which partially forms a settlement boundary. However, there is existing development to the north of the site which extends east of the railway line along Station Road. Existing development to the north of the site comprises predominantly two storey detached residential properties with some two storey terraced properties. Existing development to the west of the site, located to the west of the railway, comprises two storey detached residential properties and a school. Woodland along the railway line forms part of a soft settlement boundary and partially screens views into the site from the west.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The surrounding woodland, trees and hedgerows enclose the site and limit its visibility from the surrounding landscape including from the nearby residential properties and the school located along the settlement edge to the west of the site. Partially screened views into the site are afforded from residential properties along Lealands Close and Station Road to the north of the site. A public right of way passes along the northern site boundary and crosses a small part of the north-east of the site. The High Weald Landscape Trail passes along the southern site boundary. Users of the public rights of way which pass to the north and south of the site, including users of the High Weald

	Landscape Trail, experience glimpsed views into the site, in between breaks in vegetation. Outward views from the open access land at Aytton's Wood to the south of the site are screened by intervening woodland.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the site are limited by the enclosed nature of the site.
Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	No distinctive geological, landform or water features are located within the site.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Groombridge is a *village of Medieval origin* with its modern settlement edge along the northern and western boundaries of the site, influenced by 20th and 21st century residential development.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	A historic lane passes along the northern boundary of the site, passing into the site in the north-east and a historic routeway (public right of way) passes along the southern boundary. These routes contribute towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Wooded field boundaries form part of a wider *highly interconnected* habitat network.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	Whilst the fields of the site are defined by *mixed woody boundaries and thick hedges*, the field pattern is relatively linear and regular and medium in scale.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The public rights of way which pass along the site boundaries provide *opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature.* The site is located within a relatively *dark landscape with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity*. However, these qualities are adversely influenced by proximity to Groombridge.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Groombridge assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that areas of complex landform, strong natural character including deciduous woodland, historic features including Groombridge Place Registered Park and Garden, defined settlement edge, low-rise residential character of the existing settlement edge, the strong rural and scenic character of the surrounding landscape, attractive rural landscape backdrop provided to the settlement, and location within and intervisibility with the wider AONB increase sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of ribbon development, few historic features in the wider assessment unit, and contained nature of views in some areas reduce the assessment unit's sensitivity to development.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **moderate-high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The site demonstrates some qualities which increase sensitivity for the wider assessment unit, including its location beyond the settlement boundary formed by the railway line, the rural and tranquil character of the site and the proximity to public rights of way, including the promoted Wealdway. However, the site demonstrates some characteristics which are atypical of the wider assessment unit and decrease sensitivity. Views into the site are enclosed by surrounding woodland. The site is located across a relatively flat area, which is pastoral in character but currently used for horse grazing. The historic field pattern has been eroded by the extension of gardens from properties to the north of the site and the amalgamation/subdivision of the fields by post and wire fencing for horse paddocks.

The site expresses few of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. However, the historic routes through the site contribute to the dense radiating network of historic routeways, the field boundaries form part of the highly interconnected woodland habitats within the locality, the public rights of way allow informal outdoor recreation, and the site is part of a dark landscape with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.

The section below sets out the potential effects of development the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors (that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable).
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[4] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Loss of the historic lane that passes through the north of the site. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ A dense radiating network of historic routeways with a variety of origins.	■ Retain and enhance existing access across the north of the site.
Settlement form edge and setting	

[4] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/

Extension of development beyond the settlement boundary feature formed by the wooded railway to the west of the site. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Village of Medieval origin.	■ Minimise visibility from properties along the western settlement edge. ■ Locate development in the north of the site to relate to existing development which extends to the west of the railway along Station Road and Lealands Close. ■ Enhance, protect and maintain woodland along the western site boundary.
Deterioration of the rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Groombridge, particularly properties along Lealands Close.	■ Minimise visibility of development and maintain the wooded character of views from the settlement edge. ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[5], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[6] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[7].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ users of the public rights of way which pass to the north and south of the site, including the High Weald Landscape Trail to the south of the site; and ■ residents along the settlement edge, including along Lealands Close and Station Road and at the school. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the wooded boundaries that enclose the site in views from the settlement edge. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, particularly in views from Lealands Close and Station Road, using local species to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Enhance and retain the wooded and enclosed character of views from the public rights of way which pass to the north and south of the site, including the High Weald Landscape Trail. ■ Existing public access across the north of the site should be retained.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend development beyond the existing robust wooded settlement boundary formed by the railway line, although the wooded nature of the site limits views into it.

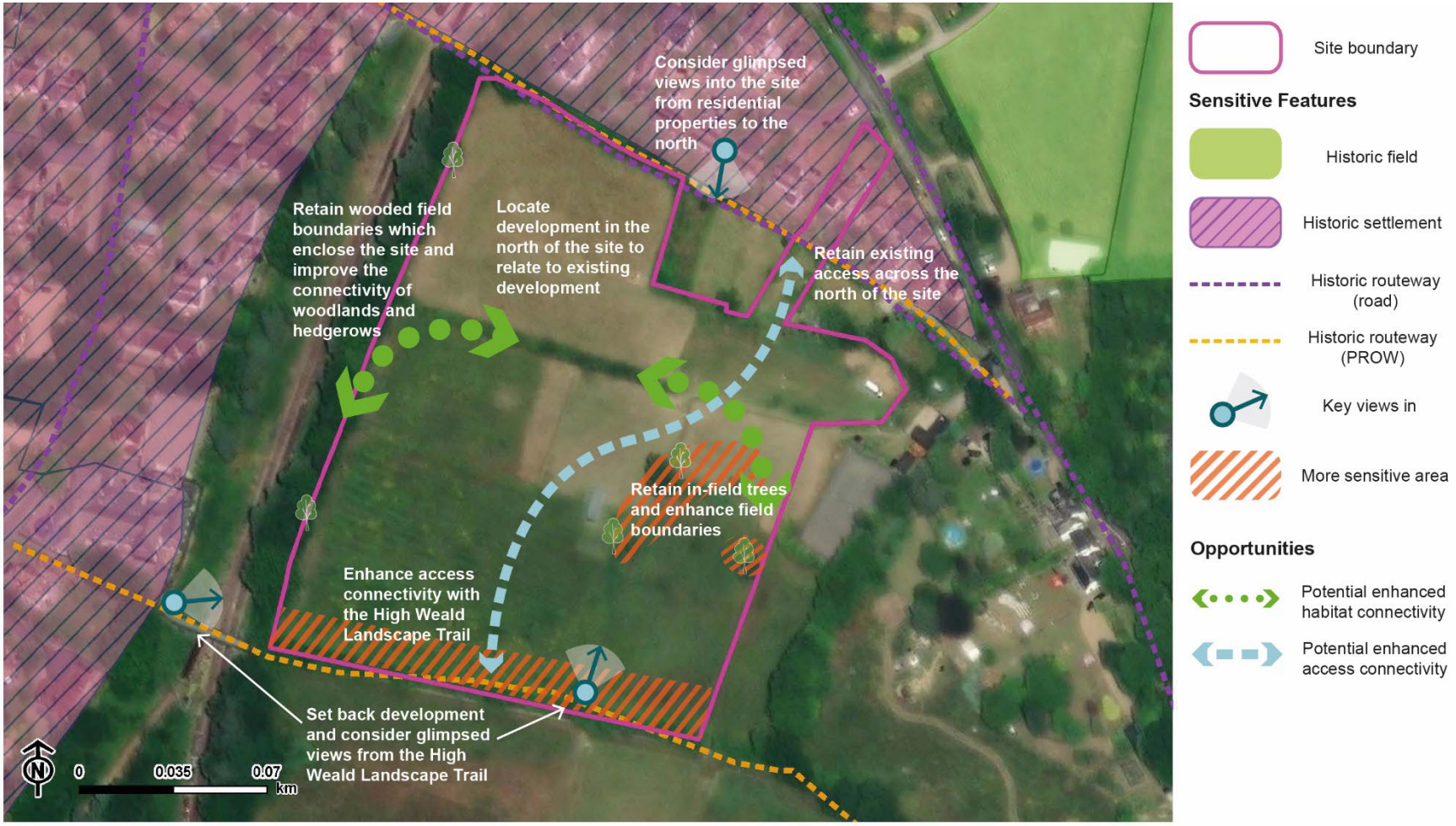
Should development come forward, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance woodland, trees and hedgerows.
- Locate development in the north of the site to relate to existing residential development which has extended east beyond the railway line.
- Minimise visibility of development from properties along Lealands Close, Station Road and from the public rights of way (including the High Weald Landscape Trail) which pass to the north and south of the site.

[5] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[6] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[7] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities of development on the site

Figure 7: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Groombridge assessment unit

As there is only one site within the Groombridge assessment unit, cumulative effects have not been considered.

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: LCA 6A - Hartfield

Final report
Prepared by LUC
January 2024



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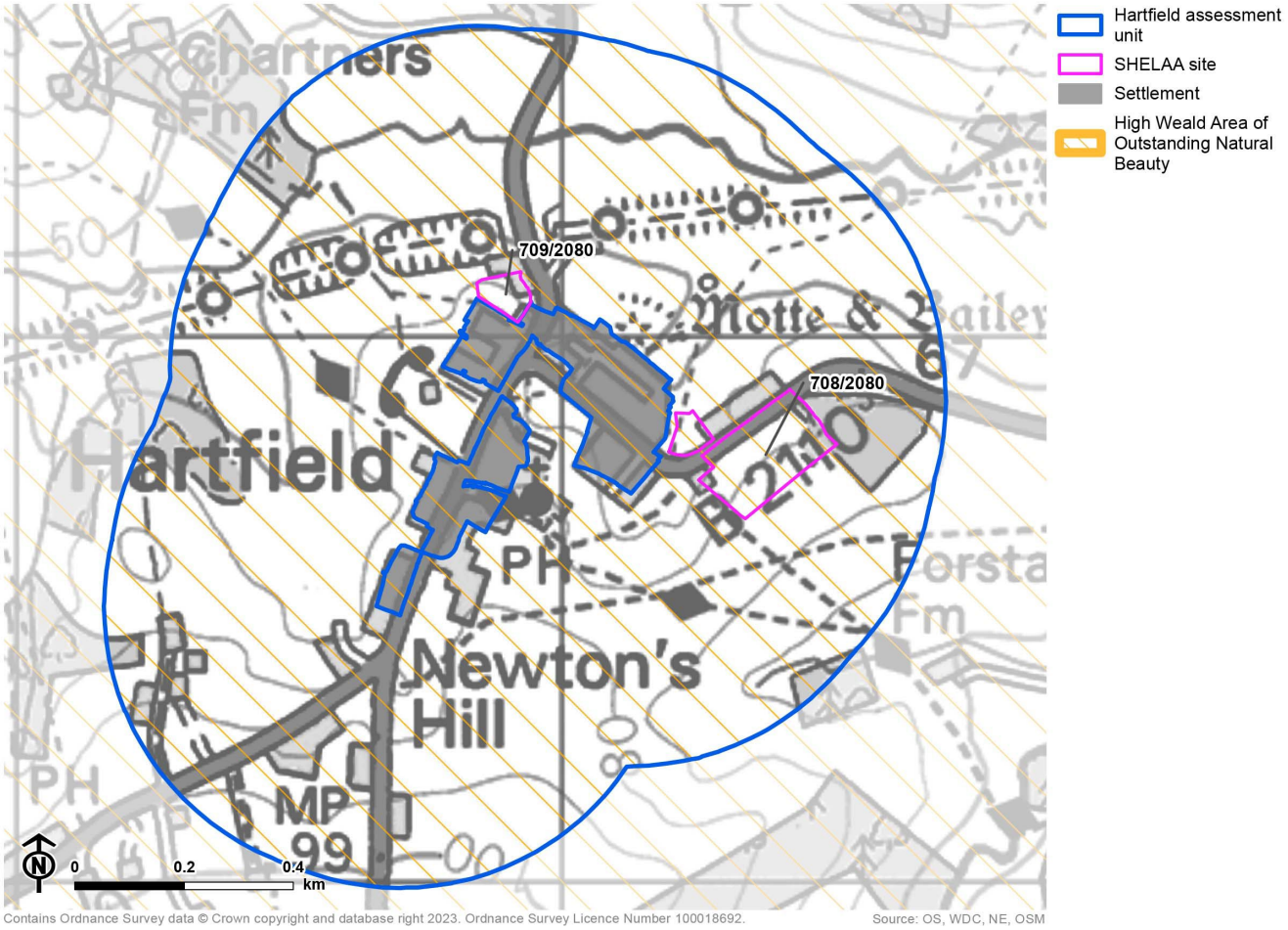
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Chapter 11
Hartfield Assessment Unit

The following potential development sites are considered within the Hartfield assessment unit:

- **Land at Castle Farm, Withyham Road (708/2080)**
- **Land at Old Crown Farm, Edenbridge Road (709/2080)**

Figure 1: Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



Settlement location, evolution and pattern

Settlement location and context	Hartfield is a village located in the north-west of Wealden district and within the High Weald AONB. The village occupies a slight spur above the River Medway. The settlement lies within the Wooded Slopes of the High Weald (LCT 6).
Settlement evolution	The historic core of the village is relatively linear and centred around the High Street and Church Street. The town has medieval origins, with significant growth from the 15th century onwards resulting from the iron industry in the locality. Further growth in the 19th century can be attributed to agriculture and the introduction of the railways (which subsequently closed to passengers in 1967). However, most significant growth from the historic core occurred in the late 20th century.
Settlement pattern and edge character	Development consists predominantly of one and two-storey detached and semi-detached properties, with some older terraced properties located in the historic settlement core. There are also some 20th and 21st century two storey terraced properties along the northern settlement edge. The village has retained much of its historic form, with some modest urban expansion to the east along Castlefield and the B2110, and south along the B2026. The Forest Way Country Park and River Medway form soft boundary features to the north of the settlement. Settlement is fringed by woodland and mature field boundaries.

Mapped information for the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB's defining components of character that are found within the Hartfield assessment unit have been mapped in **Figure 2.** Tranquillity and dark skies (which form part of the perceptual qualities) are shown in **Figures 3 and 4** respectively.

Figure 2: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB

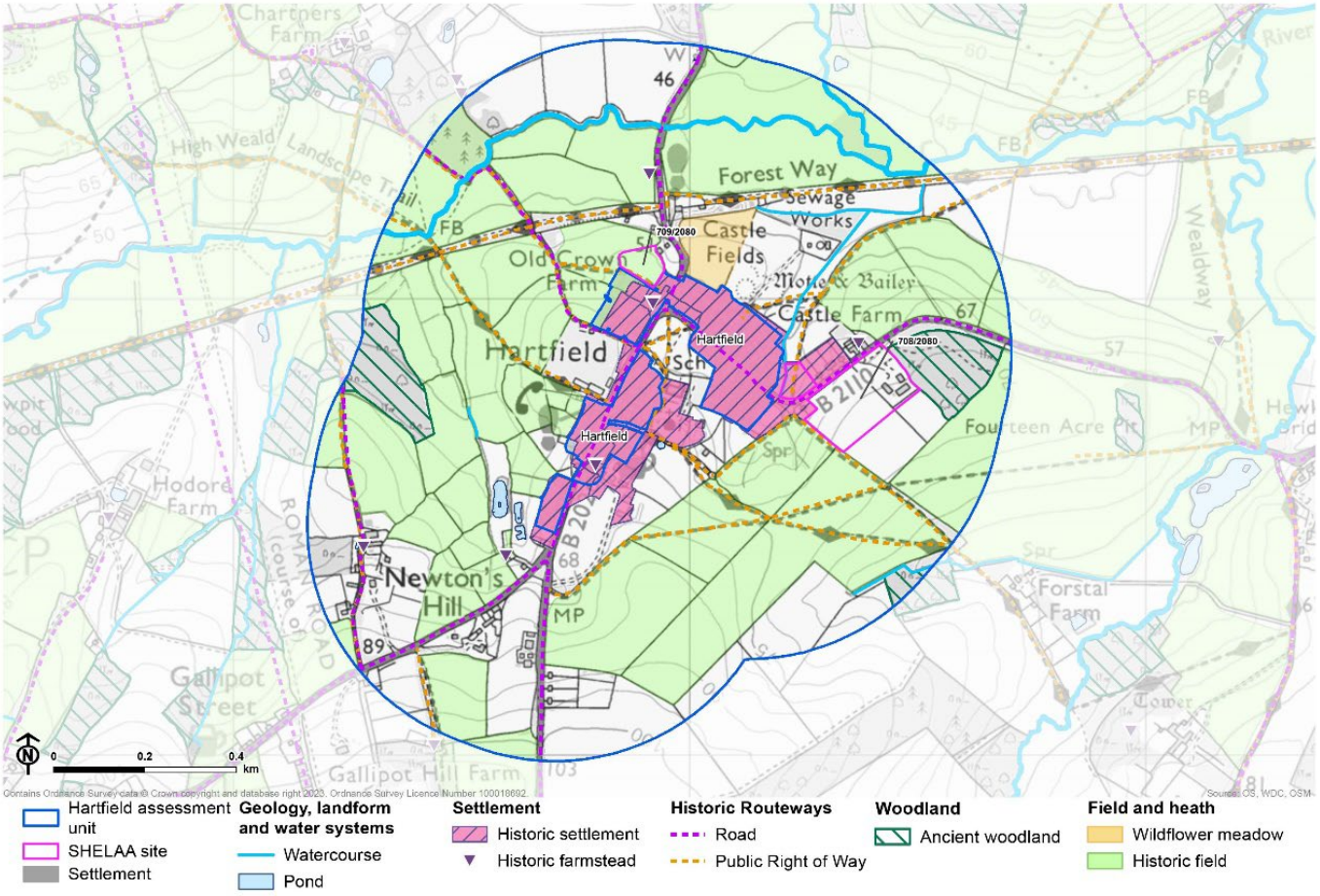
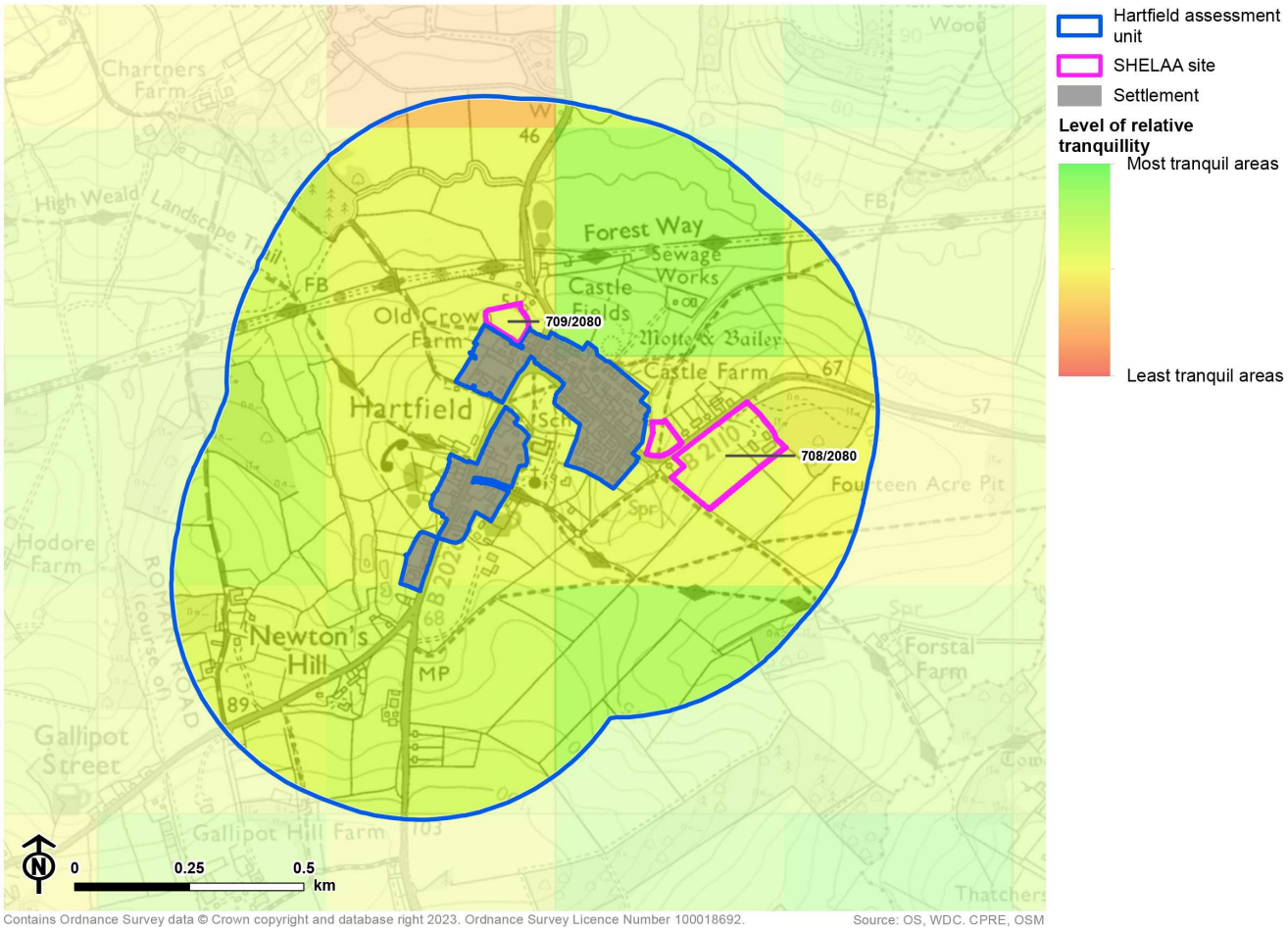
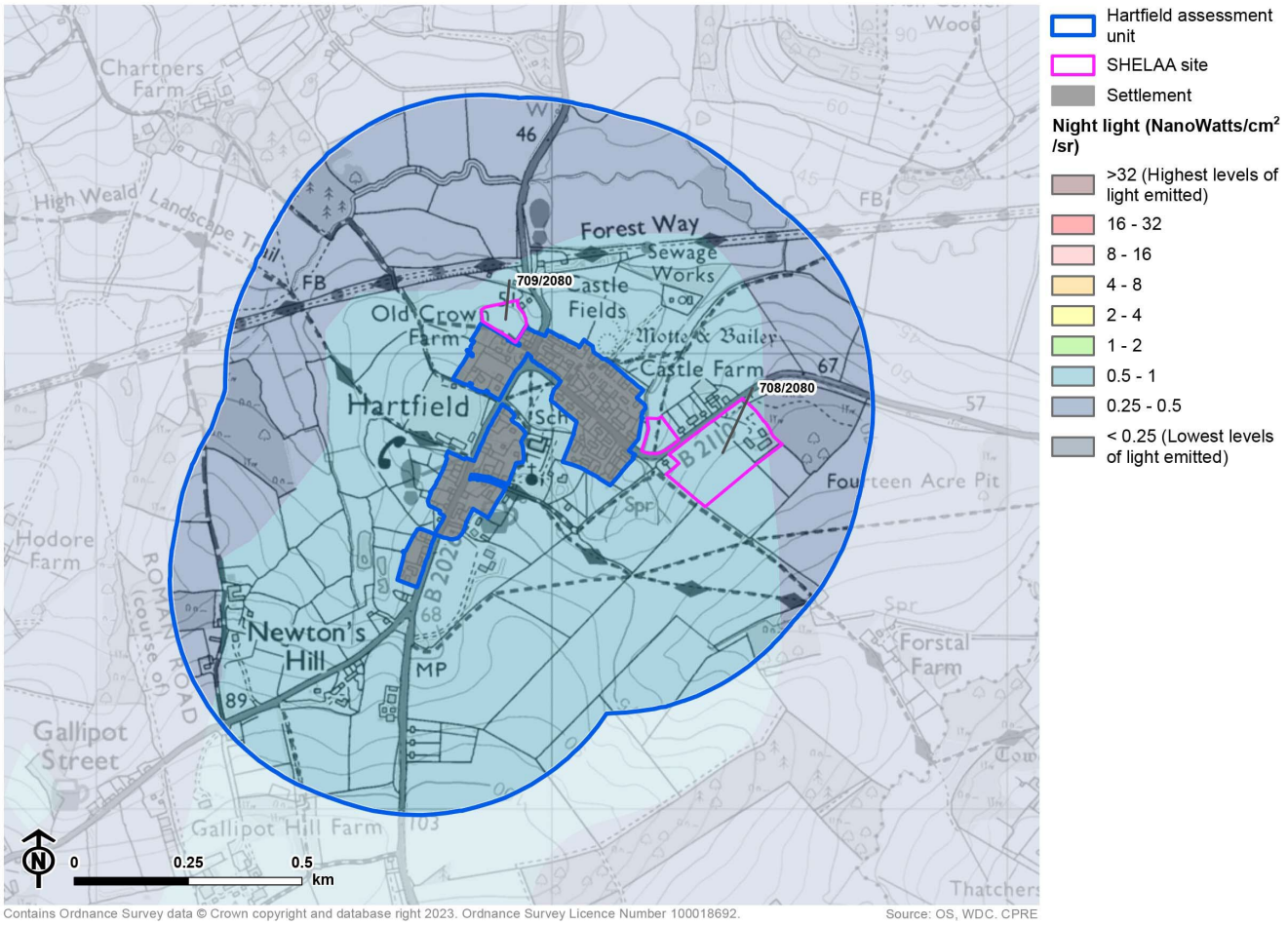


Figure 3: Tranquillity



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Source: OS, WDC. CPRE, OSM

Figure 4: Dark skies



Landscape sensitivity context for the Hartfield assessment unit

*The landscape sensitivity of the Hartfield assessment unit, described in the **Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development***			
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the assessment unit	**Small scale residential** 2-2.5 storey housing	**Medium scale residential** 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	**Commercial/ industrial** e.g. industrial units or hotels
	H	**H**	**H**
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the assessment unit	■ The complex ridge and valley landform. ■ Small areas of mature deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin), particularly in the west and east. ■ Intact historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the west of the assessment unit. ■ The Hartfield Conservation Area and Castle Mound Scheduled Monument. ■ Strongly expressed historic settlement edge with a strong relationship to the surrounding pastoral landscape. ■ The strong rural character with areas of remoteness and tranquillity, which forms the context for outward views from the Hartfield Conservation Area. ■ Location within and intervisibility with more distant areas of the High Weald AONB.		
Guidance	■ Consider views from the River Medway valley towards the prominent wooded slopes of the High Weald AONB to the south. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland, including linear woodland in the Forest Way Country Park. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow a buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain or replace hedgerow trees, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows, and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network in line with the aims of the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest Biodiversity Opportunity Area. Where there is unavoidable loss of hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the west. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the intact historic form, character and key outward views from the Hartfield Conservation Area. Particular attention should be given to the historic settlement edges of Conservation Area, where development would influence the relatively small-scale form of the settlement. ■ Minimise influence of development in significant views afforded from the Hartfield Conservation Area, looking towards the wooded ridges of the High Weald AONB and across the River Medway Valley. ■ Consider views of development from popular public rights of way, including the Forest Row Country Park and High Weald Landscape Trail. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced.		

	■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using species that are in character with the wider landscape, preferably native. ■ Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[1], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[2] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[3]. ■ Ensure development does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, particularly the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB.

[1] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[2] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[3] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Land at Castle Farm, Withyham Road (708/2080)

Site Details	
Potential development	5 residential dwellings
Site location	The site is located to the north-east of the settlement and comprises two fields, located on either side of the B2110.

Figure 5: Site location and constraints

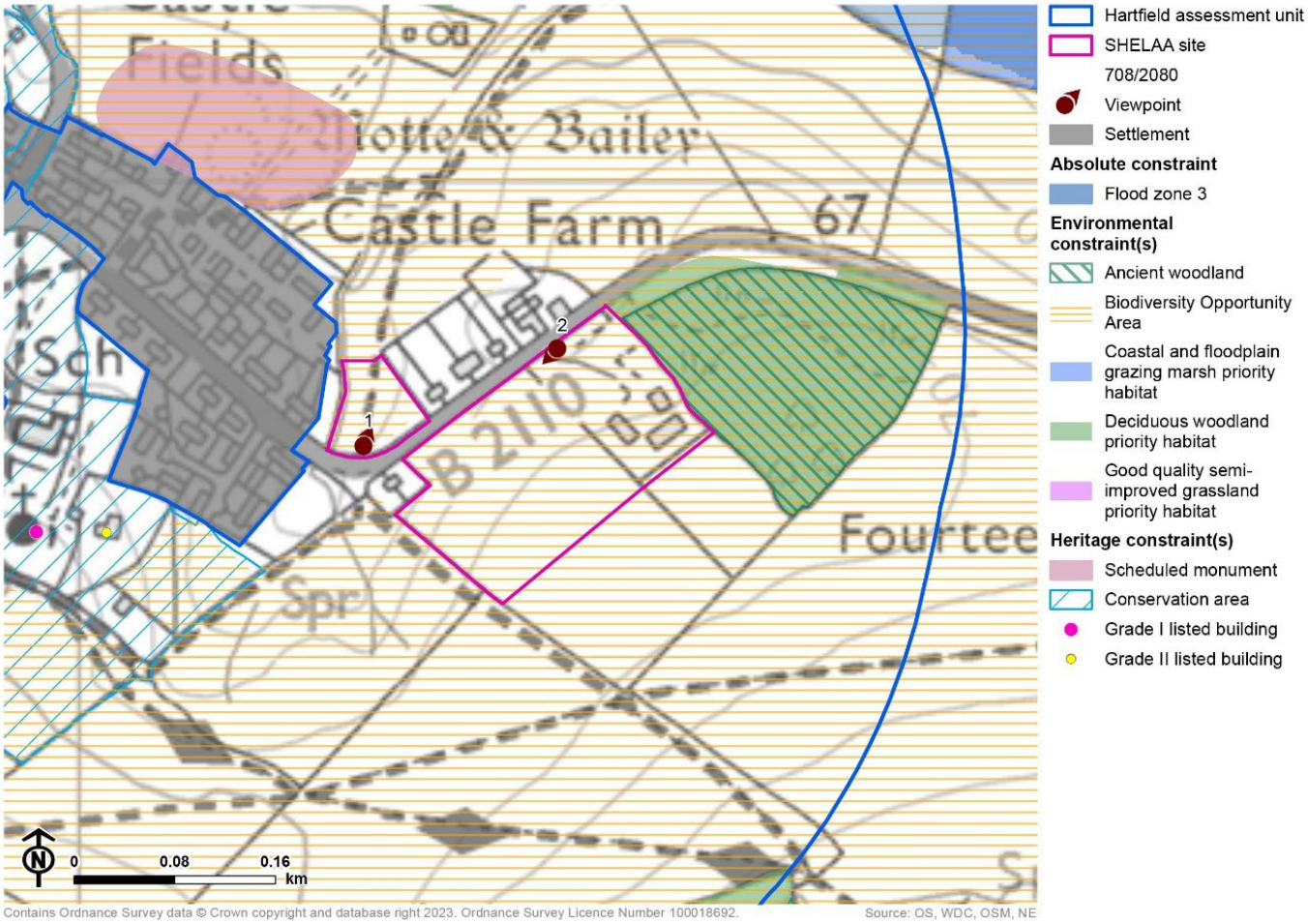
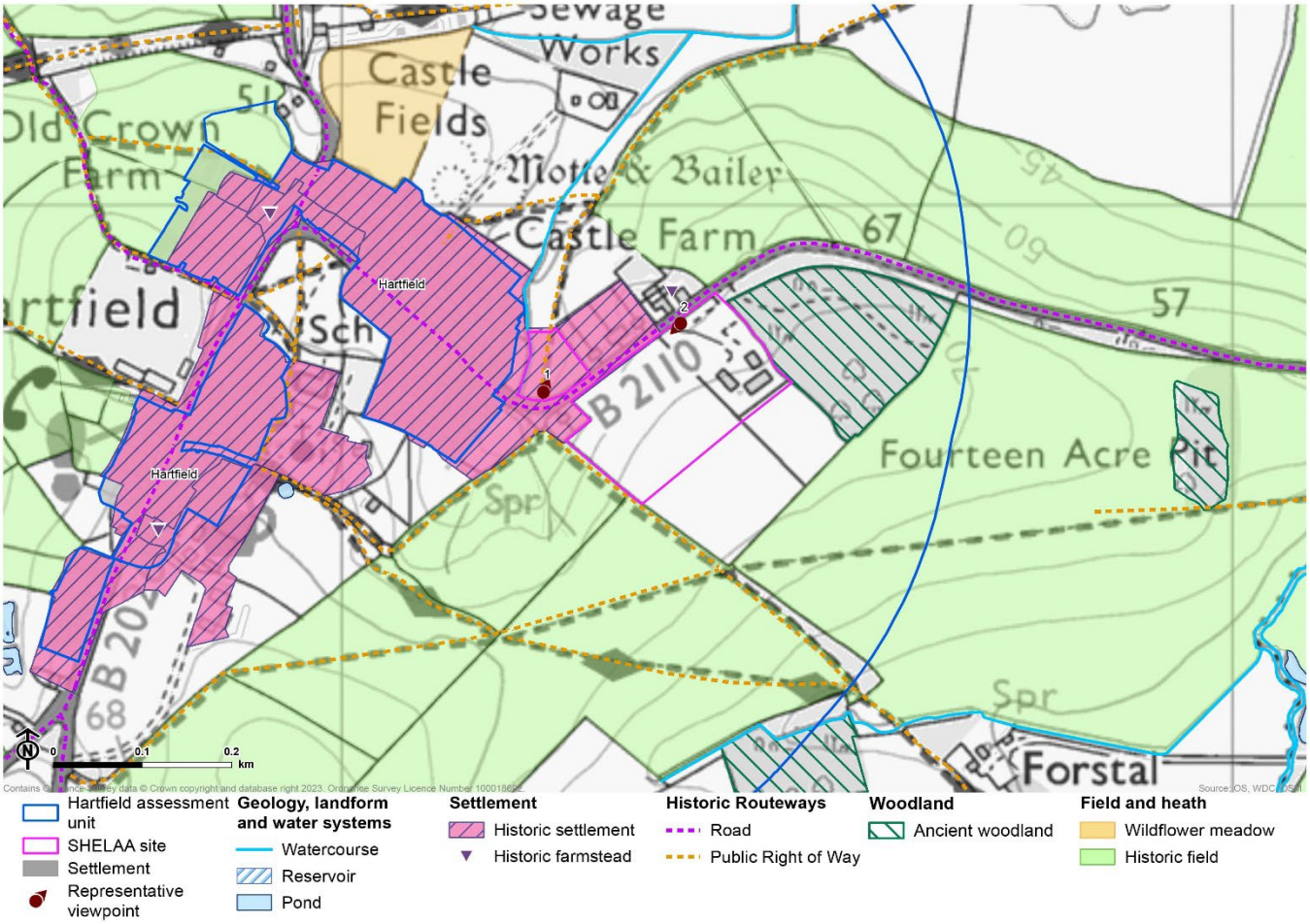


Figure 6: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Relatively flat western extents of the site seen in views from the public right of way



Viewpoint 2: Skyline formed by the elevated eastern extents of the site seen in views looking east from the B2110

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms part of the undulating river valley slopes, rising from 55m AOD in the western parcel of the site (west of the B2110) to 70m AOD in the eastern parcel of the site. An undulating topography is typical of the wider assessment unit. **Natural character** ■ The site is predominantly pastoral in character with mature hedgerows, some of which are wooded, lining the boundaries of the site. Hedgerows along the B2110 are clipped. The pastoral character is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Priority habitat ancient and semi-natural deciduous woodland at Hartfield Grove encloses the site to the north-east. Areas of woodland are typical of the wider assessment unit. The site is within the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA. ■ Modern agricultural development in the north of the eastern parcel of the site influences the natural character. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site comprises small to medium scale fields derived from piecemeal enclosure (as classified in the Sussex HLC), which are typical of the wider assessment unit, as well as some planned private enclosure. ■ No heritage features have been recorded within the site, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit. The site is located approximately 130m south-east of the Castle mound Scheduled Monument. However, intervening 20th century development influences the relationship between the site and this asset. ■ There is some intervisibility between the elevated eastern extents of the site and the Hartfield Conservation Area to the west, notably the village green. However, the western parcel of the site (west of the B2110) is relatively well-screened. **Perceptual aspects** ■ Dark night skies are experienced from the site and wider assessment unit (light levels are recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**) and there is a sense of rural tranquillity which is occasionally influenced by the proximity to the village and the B2110 (levels of tranquillity are recorded in the middle band of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**), which is typical of the wider assessment unit.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The open fields of the eastern parcel of the site play a slight role in separation between Hartfield and the smaller village of Withyham to the east, although existing ribbon development along the B2110 to the north of the site exerts an existing influence on the sense of separation between these villages. The site lies to the north-east of the settlement edge of Hartfield, adjacent to 20th century settlement which extends along Castlefields and the B2110 from the historic settlement core. The western parcel of the site is located between Castlefields and the linear ribbon development along the B2110. Development near the site comprises bungalows and two storey semi-detached residential properties, a one storey commercial use building to the west of the B2110 and dispersed farmsteads to the east of the B2110. The site forms part of the rural context to the settlement with woodland and hedgerows providing a soft settlement boundary. The elevated eastern part of the site forms a

	particularly prominent slope in outward views from the settlement, partially screened by intervening woodland.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Relatively open views into the site beyond low and clipped hedgerows are afforded from the B2110 and residential properties located along the road. Users of the public right of way which crosses the west of the site also experience open views across the site. Partially screened views of the site are available from the public rights of way which pass from the B2110 to the west and south of the site. More distant views are afforded from the eastern settlement edge from residential properties along the B2110 Castlefields and Motte Field, although views are glimpsed in between gaps in intervening woodland and vegetation. The elevated eastern extents of the site form part of the rural skyline in views from the Hartfield Village Green, within the Conservation Area, and sections of the B2110 Castlefields and High Street. The St Mary church spire (within the Conservation Area) is seen in outward views from the elevated eastern extents of the site, beyond intervening woodland.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Some long views to and from the site across the River Medway valley are afforded, particularly towards and from the elevated eastern extents of the site. Long views from the lower-lying western extents of the site are occasionally screened and filtered by woodland.
Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	No distinctive geological, landform or water features are located within the site. A stream passes along the north-western boundary of the site and contributes to the *numerous small streams*.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Castle Farm, located to the north of the site, contributes towards the *high density of historic farmsteads*[4] found within the AONB. The fields associated with this individual historic farmstead (including those within the site) contribute towards the *separation between settlements*, particularly between Hartfield and the smaller village of Withyham.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	A historic routeway (public right of way) crosses through the western parcel of the site, connecting to the B2110 Castlefields, which is recorded as a historic lane. These routes contribute towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	There is no ancient woodland within the site, however there is an area of ancient woodland to the east of the site at Hartfield Grove, which contributes towards the *high proportion of ancient woodland* in the AONB. Mature and wooded field boundaries within the site, contribute to the wider *highly interconnected* habitat network.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The west of the site comprises a small *irregular field* used for *grazing livestock* and enclosed by woody and thick hedged boundaries.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The public right of way which crosses the site provides *opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature.* *Scenic and glimpsed long views* across the rolling river valley are afforded, particularly from the elevated slopes in the east of the site.

[4] As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 6).

	The site is located within *a relatively dark landscape with some sense of remoteness and tranquillity.*

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Hartfield assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that areas of complex landform, historic features associated with the Hartfield Conservation Area and Castle Mound Scheduled Monument, retained historic settlement edge, low-rise residential character of the existing settlement edge, the strong rural and scenic character of the surrounding landscape, and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. However, the occasional semi-enclosed character, the presence of modern development such as modern farm buildings and sewage works and relatively few known historic features throughout the wider assessment unit (outside of the Hartfield Conservation Area) reduce sensitivity for localised parts of the assessment unit.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site is of **high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), in line with the wider assessment unit. The site demonstrates a number of characteristics, which result in its **high** sensitivity, that are in common with the assessment unit. The site comprises two pastoral fields with undulating topography and the eastern extents of the site are highly visible within the wider landscape, forming a prominent skyline in views from the B2110 and properties along the eastern settlement edge, with some intervisibility with the Hartfield Conservation Area. However, the western parcel of the site is considered to be of slightly lower sensitivity to development than the eastern parcel, given the presence of residential development to the east and west of this parcel and the lower-lying nature topography of this parcel, which makes it slightly less visible in the wider landscape.

The site also expresses many of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. A small stream (along the western boundary of the western parcel of the site) contributes to the density of streams within the AONB whilst Castle Farm (located within the eastern parcel) is part of the high density of historic farmsteads within the AONB. The site contributes to the separation of Hartfield and Withyham, and its field boundaries contribute to the highly interconnected woodland habitats within the AONB. The site also has an irregular field pattern, whilst the public right of way contributes to the historic routeways of the AONB, and allows informal enjoyment of the landscape. There are also scenic long-distance views, and the site is within a dark landscape with a good sense of remoteness and tranquillity.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors (that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable). ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed for the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA, where possible.

Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland at Hartfield Grove which abuts the north-east of the site. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ High proportion of ancient woodland.	■ Set development back from the edge of ancient woodland to create a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage[5]. ■ The buffer zone could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity).
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[6] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Loss of the historic routeway and public right of way that passes from the B2110 Castlefields (recorded as a historic lane) through the western parcel of the site. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ A dense radiating network of historic routeways with a variety of origins.	■ Retain and enhance existing access via the public right of way which crosses the western parcel of the site.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Extension of development in the countryside which forms the rural setting to Hartfield, particularly the elevated eastern extents of the site which forms part of the rural skyline in views from the settlement (including within the Conservation Area).	■ Avoid development in the elevated eastern extents of the site, which form a prominent slope in outward views from the settlement. ■ Locate development in the lower-lying western parcel of the site, where there is an existing influence of adjacent development which extends beyond the settlement edge along the B2110.
Deterioration of the rural character of the sites which contribute to the setting of Hartfield.	■ Minimise visibility of development in views from the settlement, including outward views from the Conservation Area. ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[7], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[8] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[9].

[5] See Natural England and Forestry Commission guidance for further information:https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions
[6] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/
[7] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[8] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[9] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Encroachment into the fields associated with the historic farmstead at Castle Farm (to the north of the site), affecting the separation between settlements. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ High density of historic farmsteads. ■ Separation between settlements formed by fields associated with individual historic farmsteads.	■ Locate development in the lower-lying western extents of the site (within the western parcel), between the historic farmstead and the settlement edge. (further assessment relating to the setting of heritage assets advised).
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ users of the public right of way which crosses the west of the site and further public rights of way to the south and west of the site; ■ users of the Hartfield Village Green; ■ residents along the settlement edge, including along B2110 Castlefields and High Street; and ■ motorists, cyclists and pedestrians along the B2110 (recorded as a historic lane) **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the wooded boundaries that enclose the west of the site. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, particularly in views from the B2110, using local species to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Avoid development in the elevated prominent eastern slope of the site, which forms a prominent skyline in views from the settlement edge. ■ Minimise visibility of development and maintain the rural character of views from the public right of way which crosses the west of the site and other public rights of way to the south and west of the site. ■ Existing public access across the western parcel of the site (recorded as a historic routeway) should be retained. ■ Enhance public access and provide opportunities to experience the surrounding countryside.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend development into the countryside which forms a rural setting to Hartfield.

Should development come forward, the key recommendations are to:

- Locate development in the western parcel of the site, between existing development located along the B2110.
- Avoid development on the prominent elevated slopes in the east of the site.
- Retain, protect and enhance woodland, trees and hedgerows, particularly along the B2110 to minimise visibility of development, taking up biodiversity opportunities listed for the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA, where possible.
- Apply suitable offsets to the ancient woodland at Hartfield Grove.

Land at Old Crown Farm, Edenbridge Road (709/2080)

Site Details	
Potential development	12 residential dwellings
Site location	The site is located to the west of the settlement, north-west of the junction of the B2026 and B2110.

Figure 7: Site location and constraints

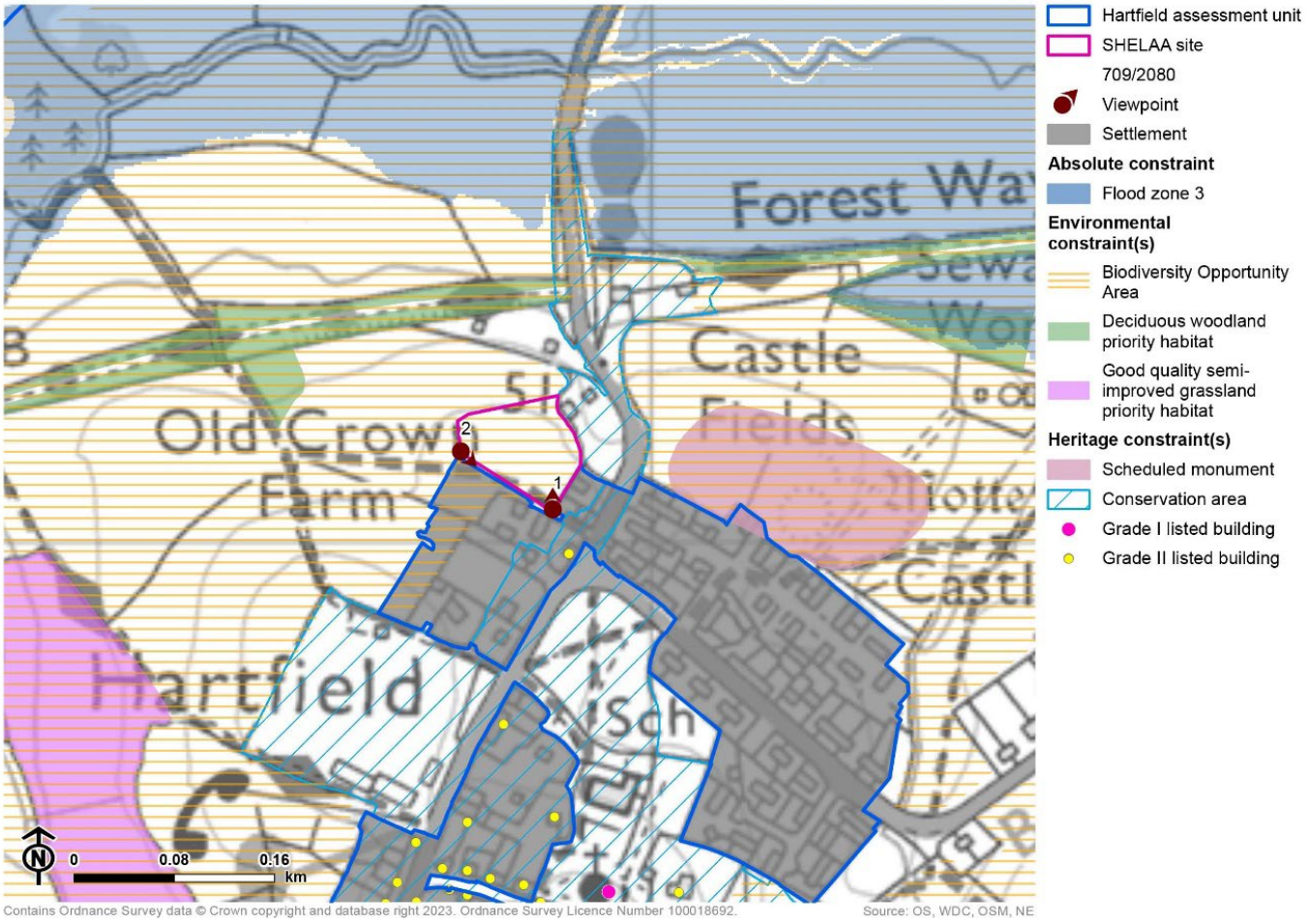
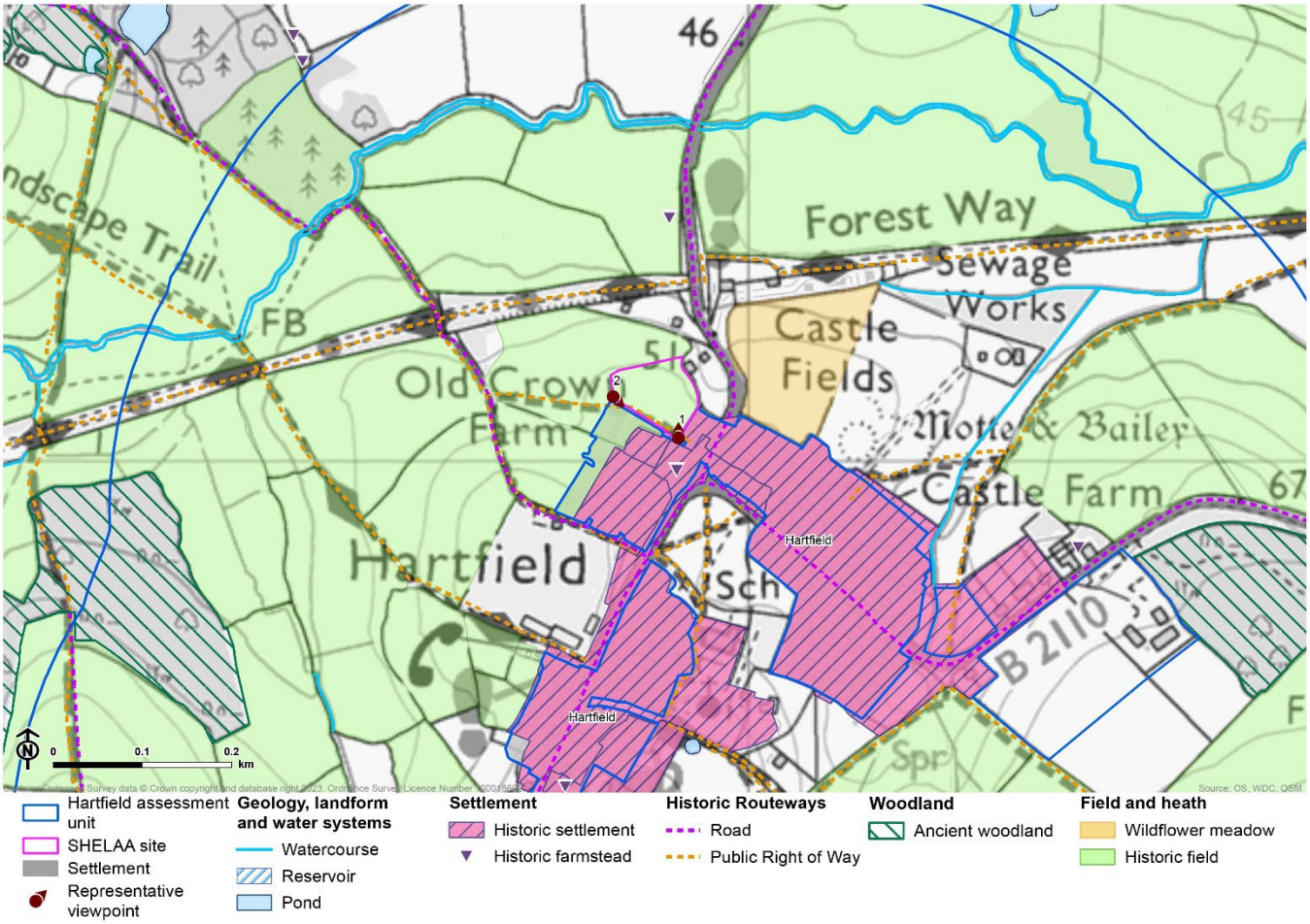


Figure 8: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: View north-east across the relatively flat landform of the site from the public right of way



Viewpoint 2: 21st century development along Sackville Lane, adjacent to the site boundary

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms a small and relatively flat area, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit, laying at approximately 60m AOD, gently sloping to the lower-lying extents of the river valley to the north and north-east. **Natural character** ■ The site is predominantly pastoral in character, with some mature field boundaries and woodland along the north-eastern and western site boundary. The pastoral character is typical of the wider assessment unit. The site lies within the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA. ■ Existing residential development to the north-east, east and south of the site influences the natural character, including domestic scale solar arrays to the north-east of the site. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site is located within an area of medium scale fields derived from piecemeal enclosure (as classified in the Sussex HLC) with a slightly irregular field pattern, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ There are no recorded historic features within the site, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. However, the site is located adjacent to the Hartfield Conservation Area boundary and forms part of the pastoral context to the historic settlement. Trees and embankment to the north-east of the site screens and filters views from the Conservation Area. ■ The site is located approximately 80m to the west of the Castle Mound Scheduled Monument. However intervening vegetation and existing residential development limits intervisibility. **Perceptual aspects** ■ Dark night skies are experienced from the site and wider assessment unit (light levels are recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**) and there is a sense of rural tranquillity, which is occasionally influenced by the proximity to the village (levels of tranquillity are recorded in the middle band of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**). ■ Buildings and vegetation partially enclose the western, north-eastern and southern site boundary, however the site is relatively open in character to the north towards the River Medway valley. More distant views north are partially screened and filtered by woodland along the Forest Way. Glimpsed views across the River Medway valley, on balance with a semi-enclosed character, are typical of the wider assessment unit.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site does not play a role in settlement separation. The site forms part of the rural context to the west of the village and Conservation Area. Development adjacent to the site comprises two storey terraced dwellings to the south and one storey small scale commercial buildings along Sackville Lane, which are relatively exposed. To the north-east of the site, two storey detached properties along the B2026 Edenbridge Road (within the Conservation Area) are located at a lower elevation than the site, with trees and embankment to the east of the site forming part of a soft boundary to the historic settlement edge.

Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Relatively open views into the site are afforded from residential and commercial properties along Sackville Lane, partially screened and filtered by fencing and vegetation. Partially screened views are also available from residential properties located along the B2026 Edenbridge Road, and oblique partially screened views of the site are experienced from the road, which passes at a lower elevation towards the river floodplain. Views across the site are experienced by users of the public right of way which crosses the site. Views from other public rights of way to the north and west of the site, including the Forest Way, are screened by intervening woodland. Distant, partially screened views of the site are afforded from elevated properties along Butcherfield Lane near Hartwell, to the north of the River Medway. The site is seen in the context of the Hartfield settlement edge in these views.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the site are limited by the enclosed nature of the site. However, there are some distant views towards the wooded ridges to the north and west.
Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	No distinctive geological, landform or water features are located within the site.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	Old Crown Farm, located to the south of the site, contributes towards the *high density of historic farmsteads*[10] found within the AONB. However, intervening 21st century development limits the intervisibility between the historic farmstead and the site. The site is located adjacent to the historic core of Hartfield, which is of *medieval origin* and designated as a Conservation Area.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	A historic routeway (public right of way) crosses through the south of the site, connecting to the B2026 Edenbridge Road to the east, which is recorded as a historic lane, and a historic track to the west. These routes contribute towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	The mature and wooded field boundaries contribute to the wider *highly interconnected* habitat network.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The small field is used for *grazing livestock* and enclosed by woody and thick hedged boundaries.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity,, dark skies, scenic quality	The public right of way which crosses the site provides *opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature.* *Scenic and glimpsed long views* towards distant wooded ridges are afforded in views north from the site. The site is located within a relatively *dark landscape* with some *sense of remoteness and tranquillity.*

[10] As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 8).

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Hartfield assessment unit to have a **high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that areas of complex landform, historic features associated with the Hartfield Conservation Area and Castle Mound Scheduled Monument, retained historic settlement edge, low-rise residential character of existing settlement edge, the strong rural and scenic character of the surrounding landscape, and the location within and visual relationship with the wider High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to built development. However, the occasional semi-enclosed character, the presence of modern development such as modern farm buildings and sewage works and relatively few known historic features throughout the wider assessment unit (outside of the Hartfield Conservation Area) reduce sensitivity for localised parts of the assessment unit.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole, and is considered to be of **moderate-high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The site is located adjacent to the Hartfield Conservation Area, has a slightly irregular field boundary and is crossed by a public right of way, and therefore demonstrates some characteristics which increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. However, the topography of the site is relatively flat, with a partially enclosed character, which limits visibility into the site from the Conservation Area and is influenced by adjacent modern residential development.

The site expresses some of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. The historic tracks through the site contribute to the radiating network of historic routeways; the field boundaries contribute to the highly interconnected woodland habitats; the public right of way allows for enjoyment of the landscape; there are scenic and glimpsed long views overlooking the River Medway valley and towards wooded ridges to the north, and the site is part of a dark landscape with some remoteness and tranquillity.

The section below sets out the potential effects of development the site and the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts upon the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the site and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature priority habitat woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors (that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable), particularly along the northern, western and southern site boundary. ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed for the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA, where possible.

Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[11] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Loss of the historic routeway and public right of way that crosses through the site, connecting to the B2026 Edenbridge Road to the east, which is recorded as a historic lane, and a historic track to the west of the site. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ A dense radiating network of historic routeways with a variety of origins.	■ Retain, protect and enhance existing access via the public right of way which crosses the site and the rural character of the route.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Deterioration of the rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Hartfield (including the Conservation Area)	■ Minimise visibility of development and maintain the wooded character of views from the settlement edge. ■ Locate development in the south of the site, where it relates to existing 21st century development along Sackville Lane and is set back from the Conservation Area boundary. ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[12], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[13] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[14].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ residents at nearby residential properties on Sackville Lane and the B2026 (within the Conservation Area); ■ users of the public right of way which crosses the site; ■ more distant residents along Butcherfield Lane at Hartfield; and	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the wooded boundaries that enclose the site to the west and north-east, taking opportunities for new planting to soften the settlement edge along Sackville Lane to the south. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, particularly in views from the Conservation Area to the north-east and from residential properties along Sackville Lane to the south, using local species to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of

[11] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/
[12] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[13] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[14] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

■ workers at the commercial properties on Sackville Lane. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Opportunities for informal outdoor recreation and experiencing the beauty of nature.	built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend development into the open countryside which forms the rural setting to Hartfield; although existing modern residential development and some mature hedgerows and areas of woodland limits views into it from the settlement edge.

Should development come forward on the site, the key recommendations are to:

- Minimise the visibility of development in views from the Hartfield Conservation Area, setting development back from the Conservation Area boundary.
- Retain, protect and enhance hedgerows, woodland and trees, softening the northern, western and southern site boundaries and reducing visibility into the site from residential properties along Sackville Lane, taking up biodiversity opportunities listed for the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA, where possible.
- Enhance and retain public access, providing opportunities to experience the wider countryside.

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Hartfield assessment unit

Two sites have been assessed within the Hartfield assessment unit. If both sites were brought forward for development, it would result in 17 potential dwellings being built. The sites are located to the north-west and east of the settlement, within approximately 350m of each other. The development of both sites may lead to the perception of the settlement edge extending into the countryside, affecting the rural setting of the settlement. Combined intervisibility of both sites within the Hartfield Conservation Area is limited, however partially screened views of **Site 709/2080** are afforded from the B2026 and views of **Site 708/2080** are available from the Village Green, and development of both sites may affect sequential key views experienced by people travelling through the Conservation Area. Visibility of both sites is generally limited to close distance views. However, given the prominence of the elevated eastern extents of **Site 708/2080**, development within this part of the site should be avoided to minimise potential for cumulative effects.

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: LCA 6E - Horam

Final report
Prepared by LUC
January 2024



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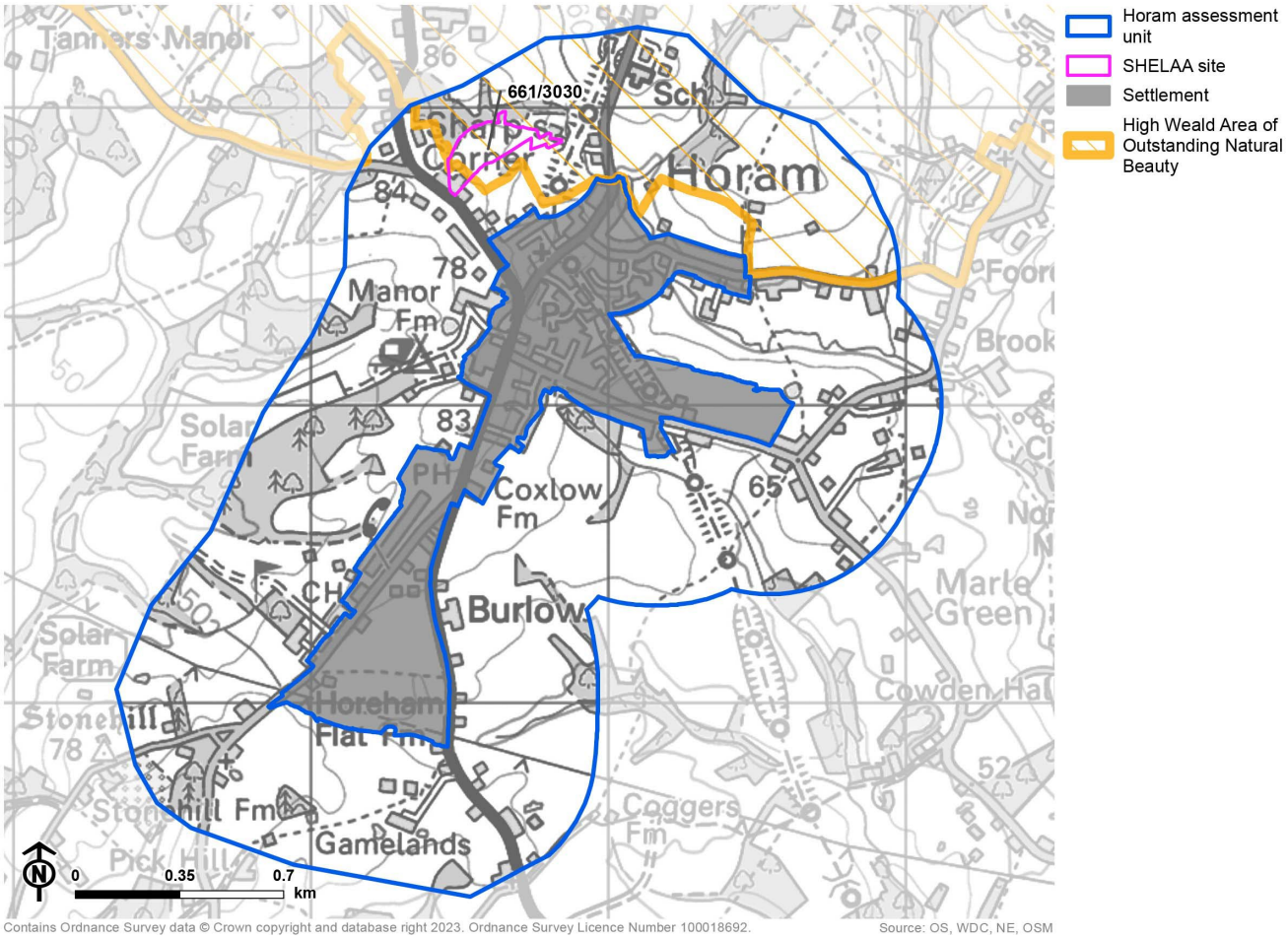
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Chapter 12
Horam Assessment Unit

There is one potential development site considered within the Horam assessment unit:

- **Land at Linda House, Little London Road (661/3030)**

Figure 1: Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



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Source: OS, WDC, NE, OSM

Settlement location, evolution and pattern

Settlement location and context	Horam is the largest village within LCA 6E, and is located in the central eastern part of Wealden district. The boundary of the High Weald AONB is located directly north of the settlement.
Settlement evolution	Horam developed as a railway village with the arrival of the London, Brighton and South Coast railway line in 1880, which subsequently closed to passengers in 1965. The former line is now used as the Cuckoo Trail recreational path which forms a wooded linear feature passing through the village. The historic form of the settlement comprises relatively dispersed properties located along Heathfield Road. Further expansion and infill in the second half of the 20th century has resulted in an expanded settlement, centred around the A267 and B2203 mostly to the east between Horebeech Lane and Vines Cross Road, with ribbon development along roads extending from the village.
Settlement pattern and edge character	Horam consists of one and two storey detached and semi-detached houses, with some three storey terraced houses in the centre of the village. The settlement edges are relatively well integrated into the surrounding landscape by hedgerows and trees, although ribbon development extends along the roads, including Little London Road, which results in an undefined settlement edge.

Mapped information for the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB's defining components of character that are found within the Horam assessment unit have been mapped in **Figure 2**. Tranquillity and dark skies (which form part of the perceptual qualities) are shown in **Figures 3 and 4** respectively.

Figure 2: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB

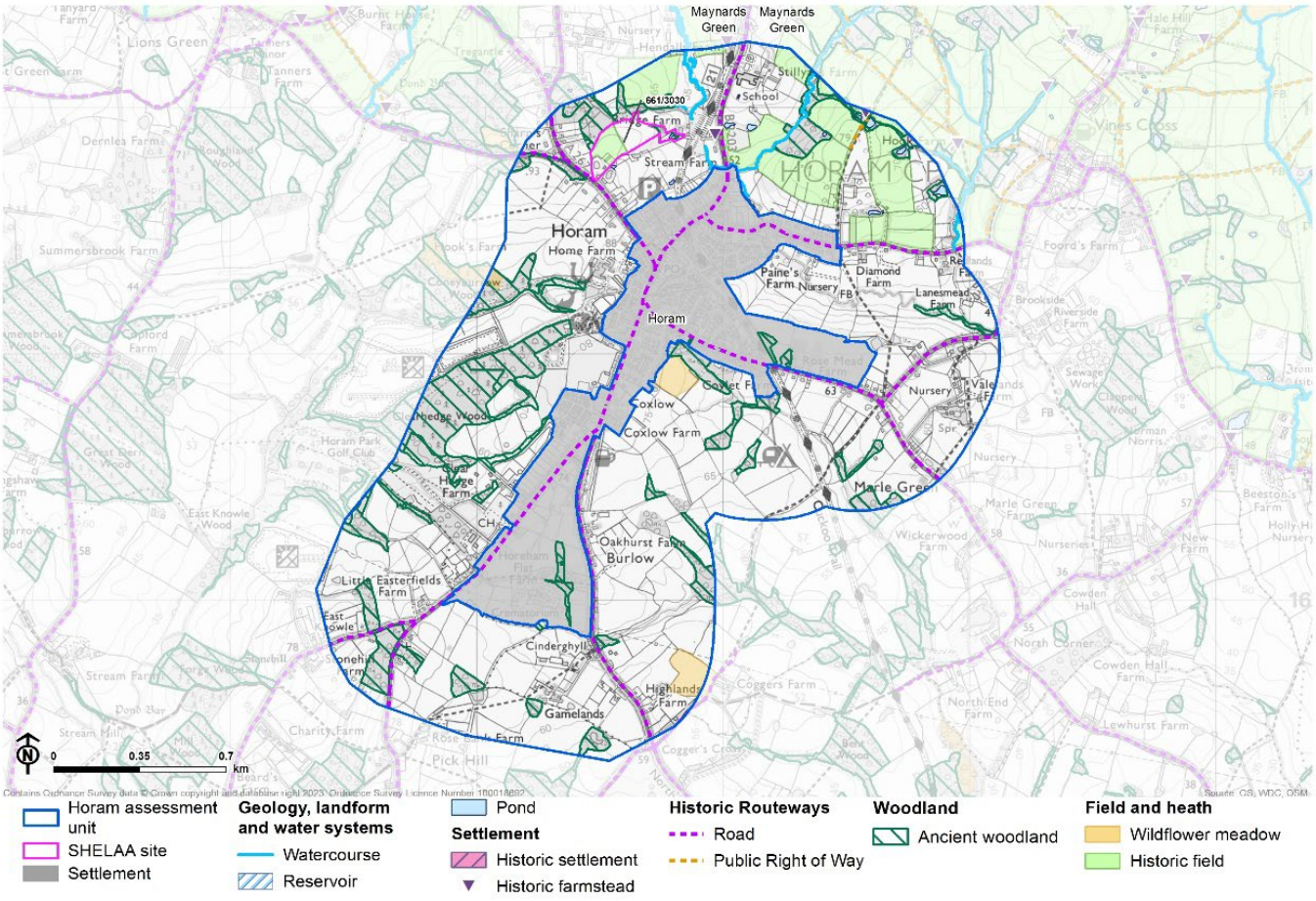


Figure 4: Tranquillity

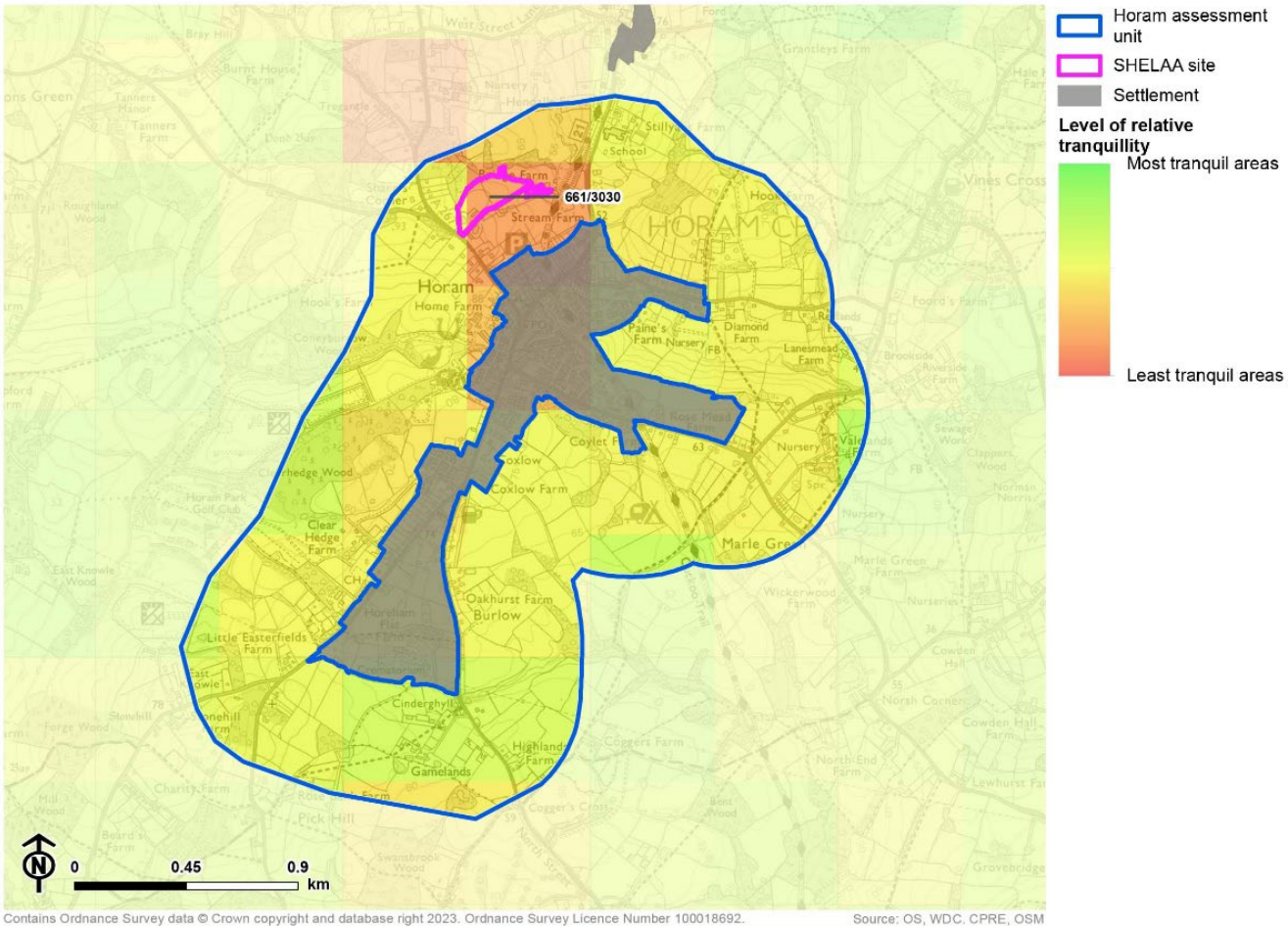
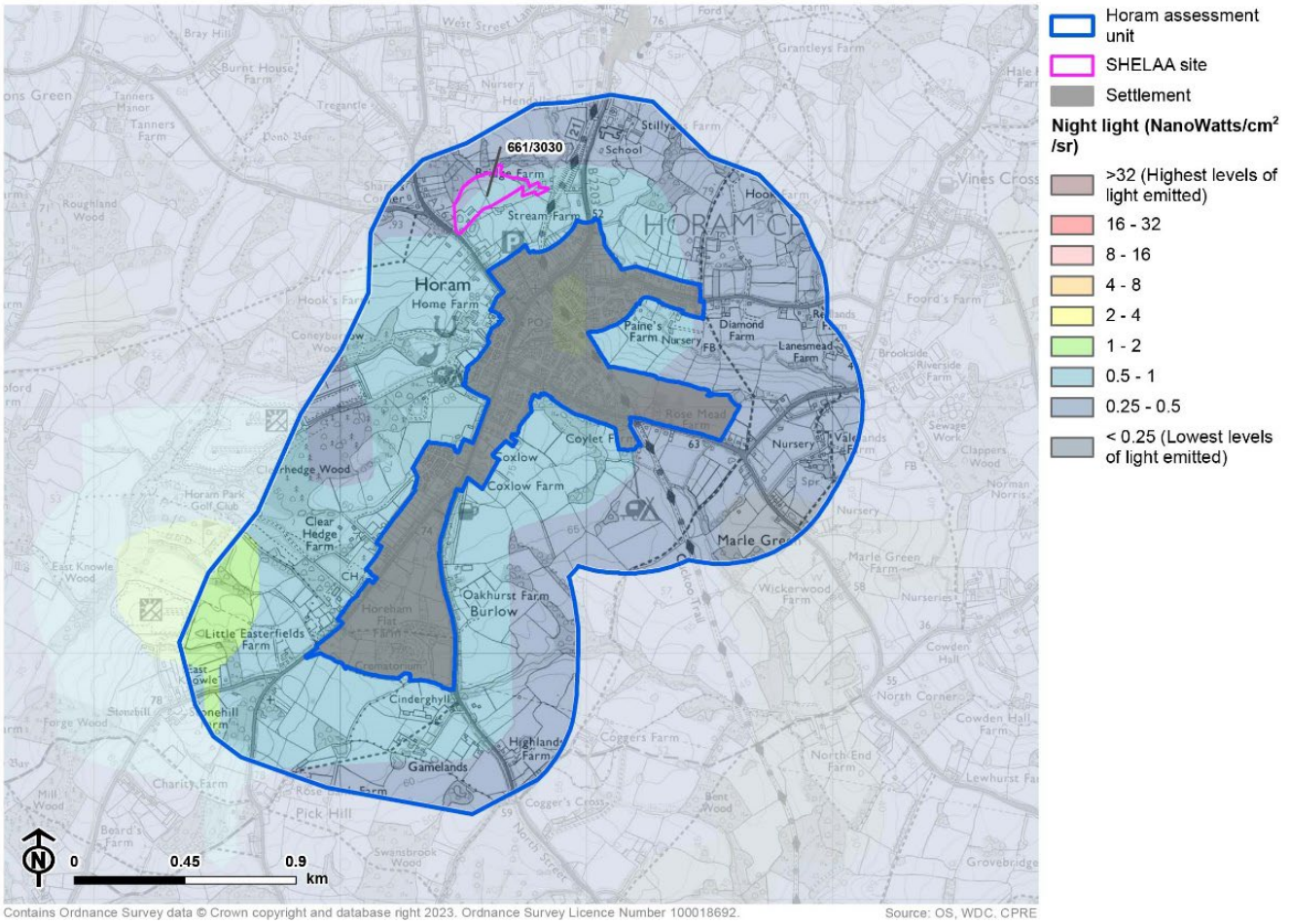


Figure 5: Dark skies



Landscape sensitivity context for the Horam assessment unit

*The landscape sensitivity of the Horam assessment unit described in the **Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development***

Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant assessment unit	**Small scale residential** 2-2.5 storey housing	**Medium scale residential** 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	**Commercial/ industrial** e.g. industrial units or hotels
	M	**MH**	**H**
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the assessment unit	■ The complex ridge and valley landform, particularly in the north. ■ Interconnecting mature deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin). ■ The strong network of thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees. ■ Intact historic field patterns, particularly assarts most strongly expressed in the south-east of the area, which provide a strong rural setting to the settlement. ■ The rural character of the landscape with areas of remoteness, tranquillity and dark skies, particularly in the north and east, away from busy roads, the settlement edge and electricity infrastructure. ■ Occasional intervisibility with the High Weald AONB.		
Guidance	■ Locate development on low lying flat fields, or lower slopes in close proximity to the western settlement edge, well enclosed by landform and vegetation where development would be less visible and have less influence on landscape character. ■ Avoid development in the incised stream valleys and heavily wooded valley slopes to the north of the assessment unit. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland, including linear riparian woodland along watercourses. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to the interconnecting ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow a buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Avoid, where possible, development on sites in areas of habitat interest, notably deciduous woodlands, grassland habitats and riparian habitats along the Waldron Gill and other tributaries of the of the River Cuckmere. ■ Retain or replace hedgerow or roadside trees along the road network, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts which are concentrated in the south-east of this assessment unit. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities or appreciation of historic features, such as the listed farmhouse buildings on the edge of the settlement.		

	■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using species that are in character with the wider landscape. ■ Consider views from public rights of way, such as the Cuckoo Trail, when siting and designing development in the landscape. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Minimise the influence of development on the strong rural character of the landscape, areas of relative tranquillity and the experience of dark night skies and the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB, applying suitable mitigation.

Land at Linda House, Little London Road (661/3030)

Site Details	
Potential development	25 residential dwellings
Site location	This site lies to the north-west of Horam, to the east of Little London Road, bound by Fridge Farm Shaw to the north and Bridge Farm to the east.

Figure 6: Site location and constraints

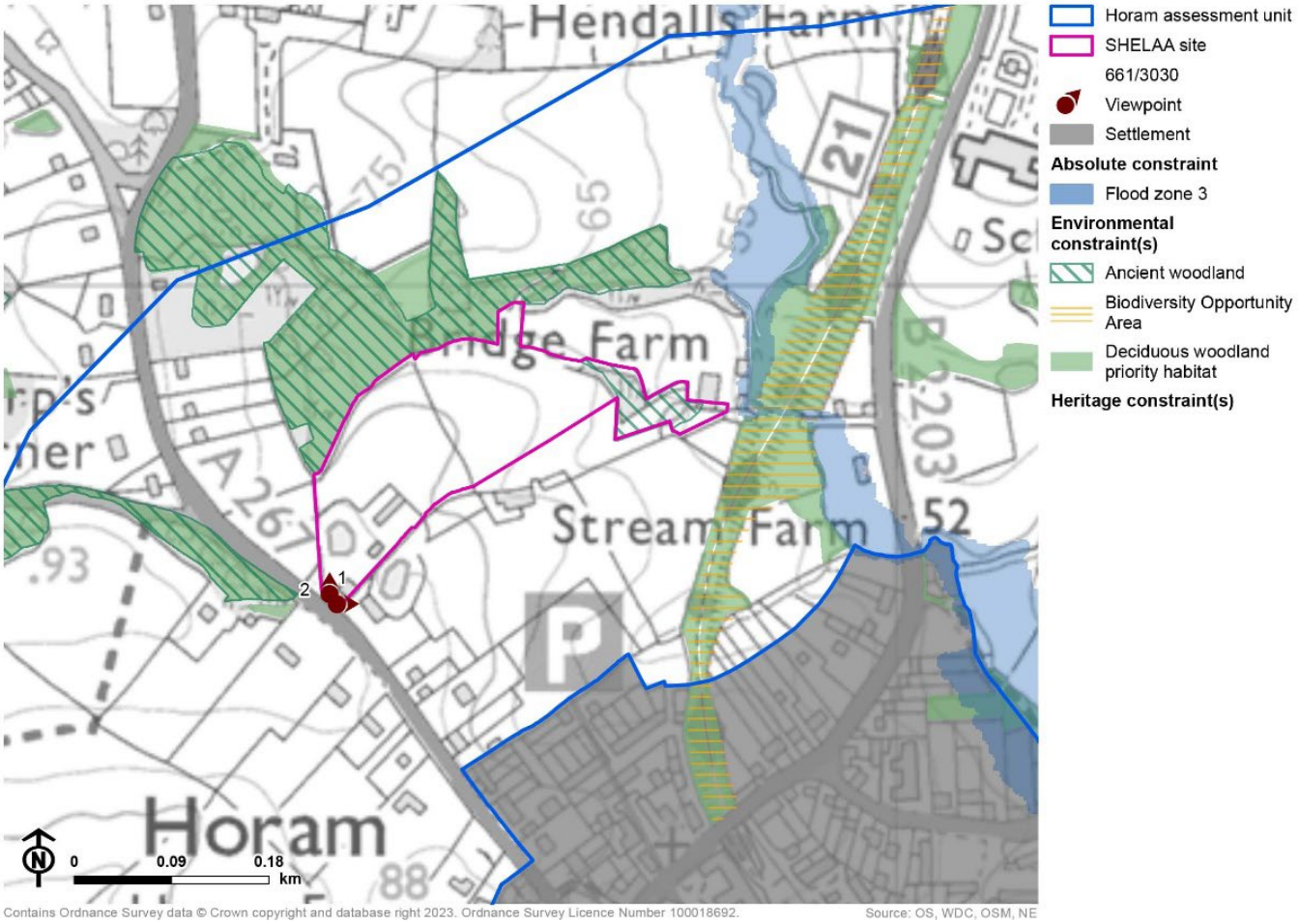
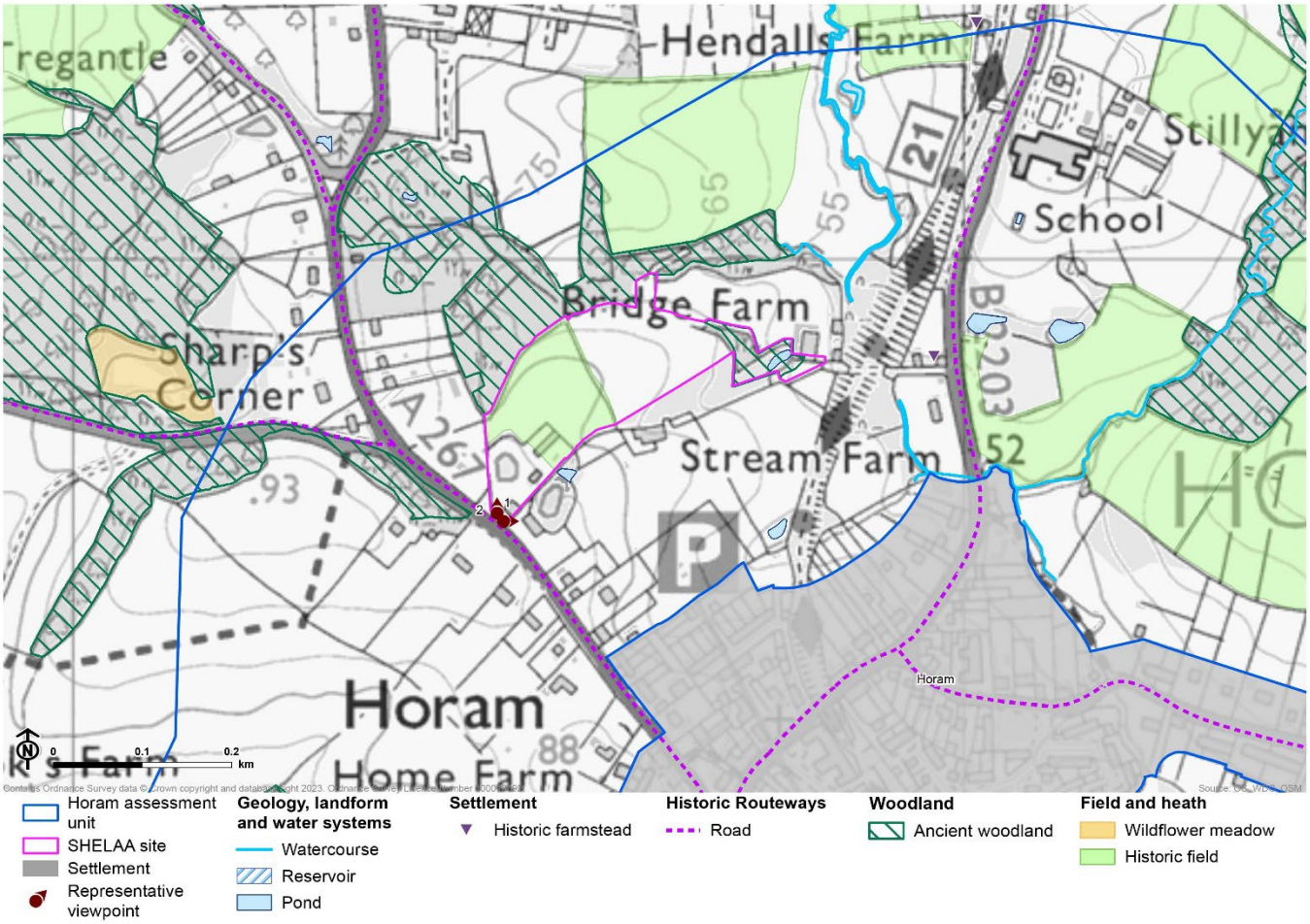


Figure 7: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: The existing property on the site is visible from Little London Road, while the wider site is hidden behind the house.



Viewpoint 2: There are glimpsed views to the wider High Weald AONB across the current garden of Linda's House.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the sites in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site is part of the complex landform of ridges and valleys, typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ It rises from the Waldron Gill to the east, from 55m AOD to 80m AOD in the west. **Natural character** ■ Bridge Farm Shaw ancient woodland extends into the east of the site, and also bounds the site to the north (where it is also designated as priority habitat deciduous woodland), typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ A small pond lies within Bridge Farm Shaw in the east of the site, typical of the wider assessment unit within the AONB. ■ A mature shaw field boundary in the centre of the site is a valued semi-natural habitat, typical of the wider assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site is derived from an aggregate assart field pattern, as set out in the Sussex HLC, and typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Ancient woodland at Bridge Farm Shaw also provides time-depth within the landscape. **Perceptual aspects** ■ The site is rural, with the existing property on the site and Little London Road the only human influences. It experiences dark night skies (light levels are recorded in the lower/ darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**), and relatively high tranquillity (recorded in the higher bands of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**), despite proximity to the busy Little London Road.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site lies to the north-west of Horam, and the settlement edge is contained by woodland. Open fields and woodland separate the site from the settlement edge. The east of the site meets Little London Road, which has large detached houses set in large plots as ribbon development out from the settlement edge. A small industrial unit and car park lies adjacent to the east of the site, also contained by woodland and the Waldron Gill.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	A lack of public access to the site, mature vegetation along Little London Road and woodland between the settlement edge of Horam and the site limit views into the site. Glimpsed views of the site are possible from gaps between houses on Manor Road to the south of the site, although these are partially screened by vegetation.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	There are limited glimpsed views across the site to the wider High Weald AONB to the east.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems - a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB contributing towards the *pattern of faults and folds*. A small pond in the east contributes towards the *high density of ponds*. There are no distinctive geological features within the site.
Settlement - dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	The site contains existing properties but does not contribute to the dispersed historic settlement pattern of the wider area.
Routeways - a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths)	No historic routeways cross the site. Little London Road on the south-western boundary is recorded as a historic lane, which contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways, although it is now a busy rural road.
Woodland - abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	Bridge Farm Shaw ancient woodland lies within the east and to the north of the site and contributes towards the *high proportion of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges* and *high density of gill woodlands* of the AONB. Mature internal shaw field boundaries also form part of an interconnected habitat network.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The small fields within the site contribute towards the *generally irregular field pattern*. The assart field pattern contributes to the *Medieval character.* The site is mostly used for *grazing livestock* and enclosed by mature shaw field boundaries and vegetation.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site is part of a *dark landscape* and has a good experience of tranquillity due to its distance from the settlement edge of Horam and main roads. The site is enclosed by vegetation and there are no long views.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assesses the Horam assessment unit to have **moderate** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the undulating landform in the north, with areas of dense woodland and mature hedgerows and areas of intact historic field pattern of this assessment unit, increase sensitivity. However, the presence of urban edge development; including electricity infrastructure; areas of simpler landform to the south; limited historic features and the contained nature of views decrease sensitivity.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site is of higher sensitivity than the wider assessment unit and is considered to be of **moderate-high** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). This increase in sensitivity is because the site contains many of the characteristics of the assessment unit and components of character of the High Weald AONB, as well as being detached from the existing settlement edge of Horam. The site is an assart on an incised stream valley, containing, and enclosed by, ancient and priority habitat woodland and shaws. However, the site does not contain any historic features, and is adjacent to ribbon development along Little London Road extending from the undefined settlement edge, reducing its sensitivity somewhat. Although the south of the site, closest to Little London Road, is outside of the High Weald AONB, development in the south of the site would have an impact on the adjacent AONB.

The site expresses many of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. The site is part of the pattern of faults and folds; has a pond which contributes to the high density of ponds across the AONB; contains and is bounded by Bridge Farm Shaw ancient woodland, which contributes to the high proportion of ancient woodland and the highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands and outgrown hedges as well as the high density

of gill woodlands; has an irregular assart field pattern which contributes to the Medieval character, and it is part of a dark landscape.

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the site and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise the impacts on the landscape and visual baseline, should this site be considered suitable for development should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature vegetation, shaw field boundaries and hedgerows. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small wood….and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands (including priority habitat deciduous woodland), trees, and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable.
Loss or deterioration of the small pond in the east. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ A high density of ponds.	■ Retain and set back development from the pond in the east to create a buffer zone. The buffer zone should incorporate new semi-natural habitat relating to the ponds.
Loss/ deterioration of the assart field pattern (which contributes to the Medieval character and time-depth), as well as loss/deterioration of the small-scale field pattern with largely intact field boundaries. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ A generally irregular field pattern. ■ Medieval character.	■ Loss of the assart field pattern would be largely unavoidable with development of the site. However, field boundaries should be retained and enhanced, where possible, to avoid complete loss of field pattern.
Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland at Bridge Farm Shaw in the east of the site and which abuts the northern boundary. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ High proportion of ancient woodland. ■ High density of gill woodlands.	■ Set development back from the edge of ancient woodland to create a buffer zone of at least 15m to avoid root damage[1] . ■ The buffer zone could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity).
Influence of lighting on the dark night skies resulting in night blight.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary.

[1] See Natural England and Forestry Commission guidance for further information:https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions

High Weald AONB character component: ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[2] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Extent of development is not related to the existing settlement edge of Horam or linear development concentrated along the A267. Extension of Horam beyond the wooded boundary.	■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[3], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[4] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[5].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ residents, pedestrians, motorists and cyclists along Little London Road to the west; and ■ employees and visitors to Bridge Farm to the east.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the mature vegetation that encloses the site, and mature trees in the west of the site, close to Little London Road. ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible /suitable, to maintain the rural character of the wider area. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Enhance public access and provide opportunities to access Bridge Farm Shaw.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend development beyond the existing vegetation containing the north-western settlement edge of Horam, and would be at odds with the existing settlement pattern. However, mature vegetation limits views into the site.

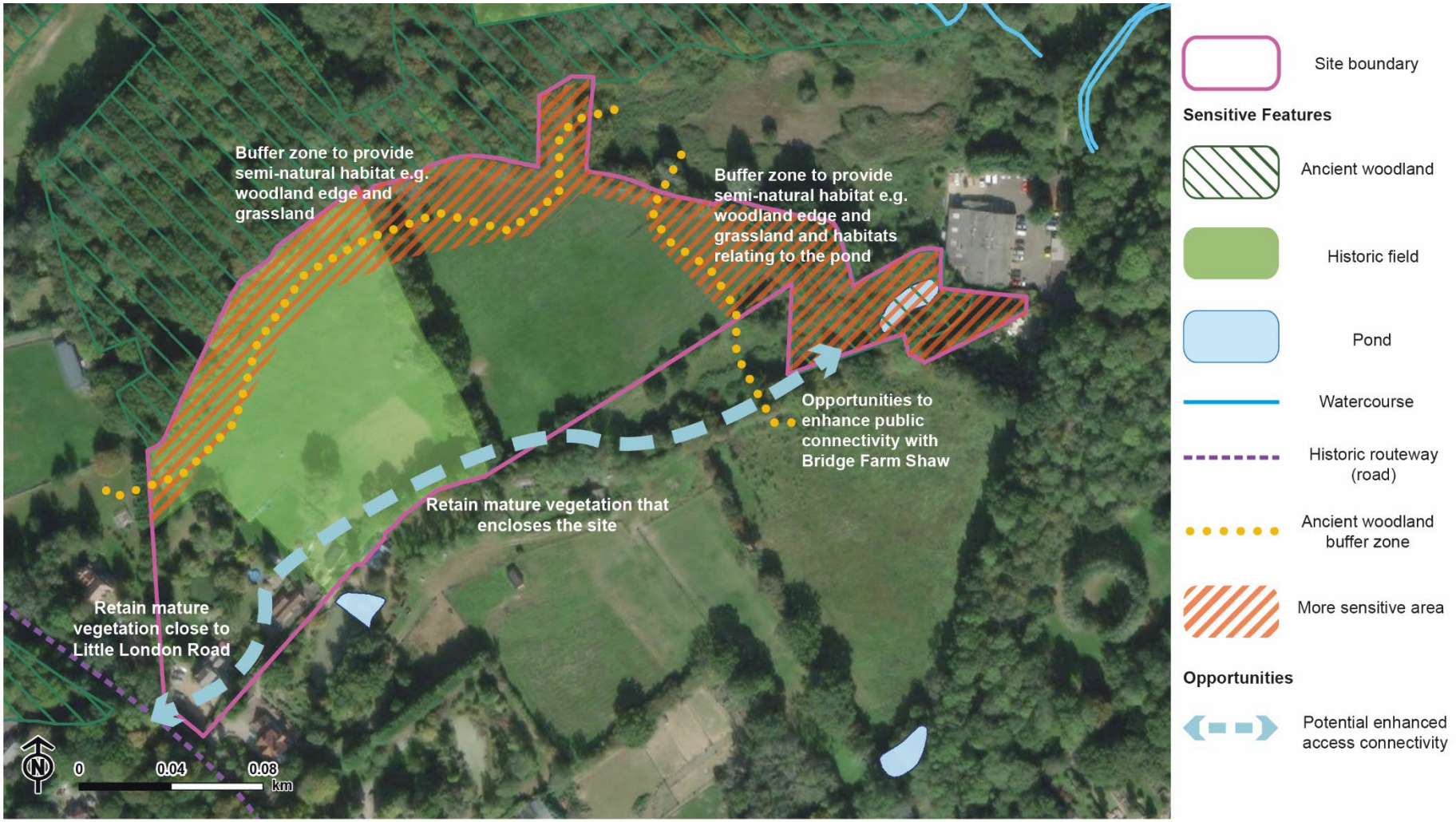
Should development come forward, the key recommendations are to:

- Apply suitable offsets to the ancient woodland at Bridge Farm Shaw.
- Retain, protect and enhance mature vegetation surrounding the site.
- Retain, protect and enhance the pond in the east, within Bridge Farm Shaw.

The following map illustrates a summary of the constraints and opportunities for development on the site.

[2] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/
[3] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[4] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[5] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

Figure 8: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Horam assessment unit

Only one site has been considered within the Horam assessment unit within this Landscape and Visual Appraisal of Potential Development sites in the High Weald AONB. The assessment of cumulative effects is therefore not required.

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald AONB: Wider LCA 6E

Final report
Prepared by LUC
January 2024



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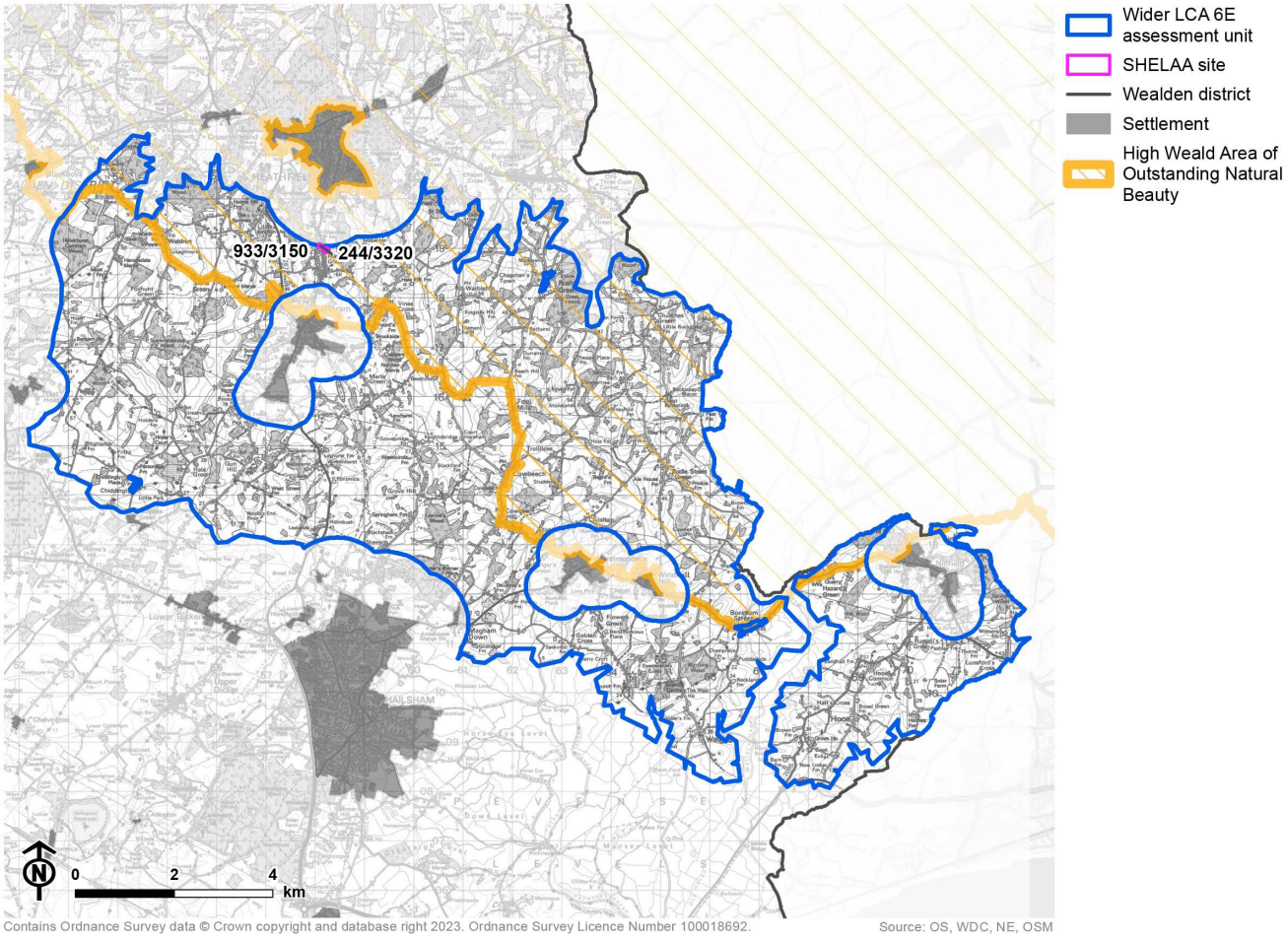
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Chapter 13
Wider LCA 6E Assessment Unit

Two potential development sites are considered within the Wider LCA 6E (High Weald - Cuckmere / Pevensey Catchment) assessment unit:

- **Land at Oast Lodge, Maynard's Green Road, Maynard's Green (933/3150)**
- **Land adjacent to Funnell's Farm, Maynard's Green Road, Maynard's Green (244/3320)[1]**

Figure 1: Location of assessed sites in relation to the assessment unit



[1] Site 244/3320 also partly falls within the Heathfield assessment unit. For the purpose of this assessment, it has been considered under the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit as most of the adjacent settlement at Maynard's Green is located within this assessment unit.

Settlement pattern

Settlement pattern	The wider LCA 6E has a historic settlement pattern of small and dispersed ridge-top villages, a defining component of character of the High Weald AONB, with farmsteads, manors and cottages strung along rural roads. There has been some ribbon development and urban expansion close to Horam and Hailsham.

Mapped information for the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB's defining components of character that are found within the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit have been mapped in **Figure 2**. Tranquillity and dark skies (which form part of the perceptual qualities) are shown in **Figures 3 and 4** respectively.

Figure 2: Defining components of character of the High Weald AONB

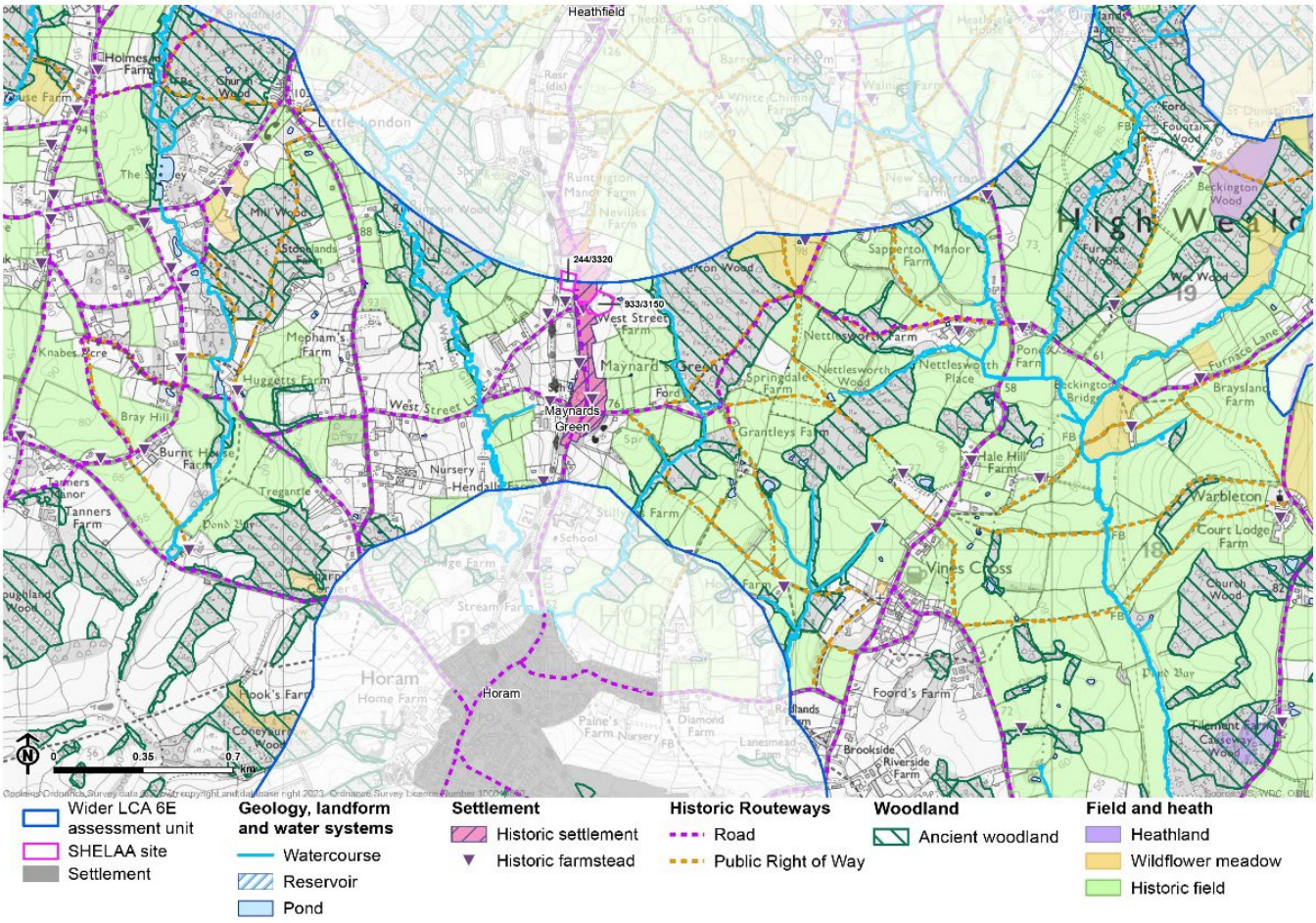


Figure 3: Tranquillity

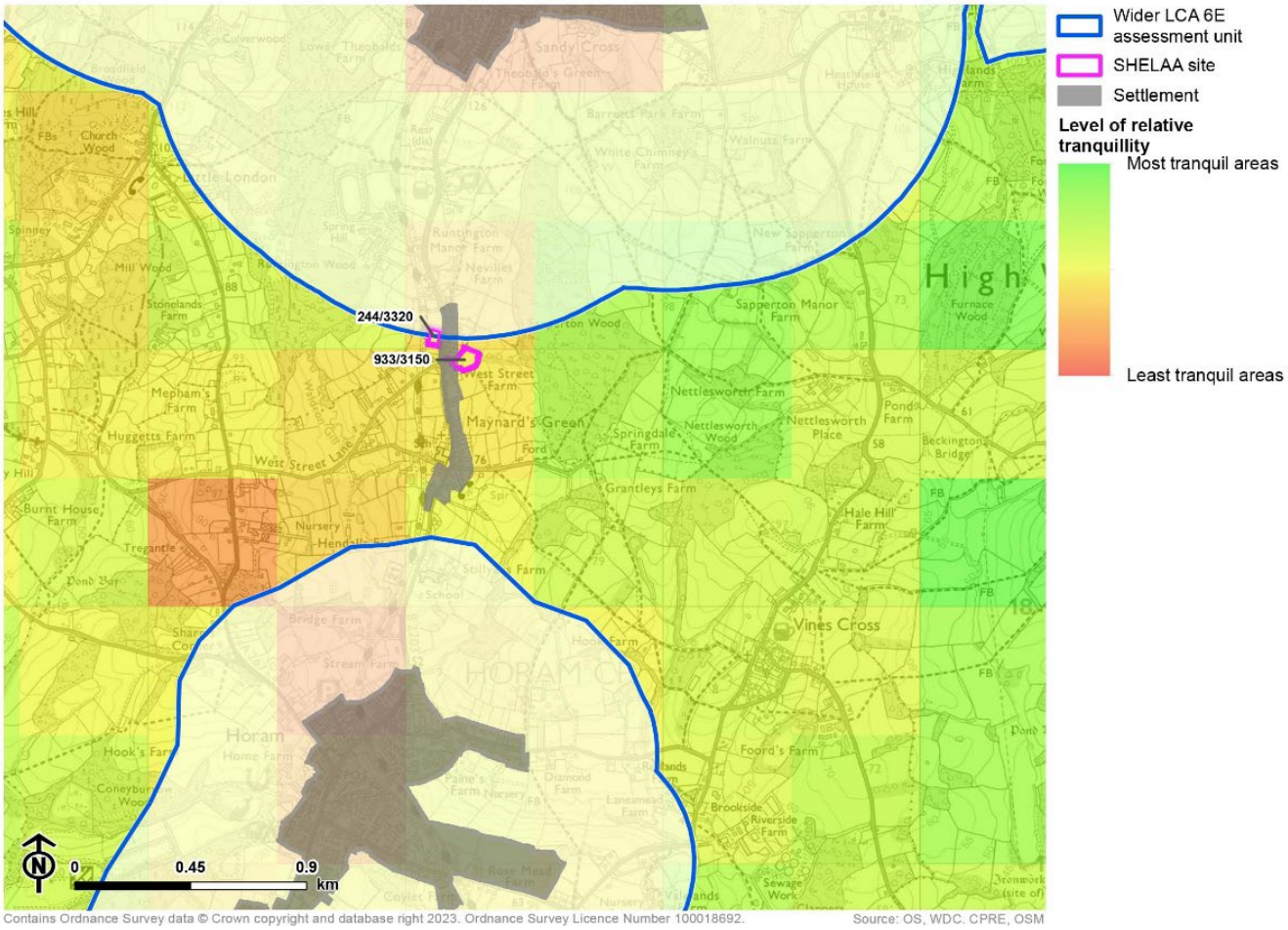
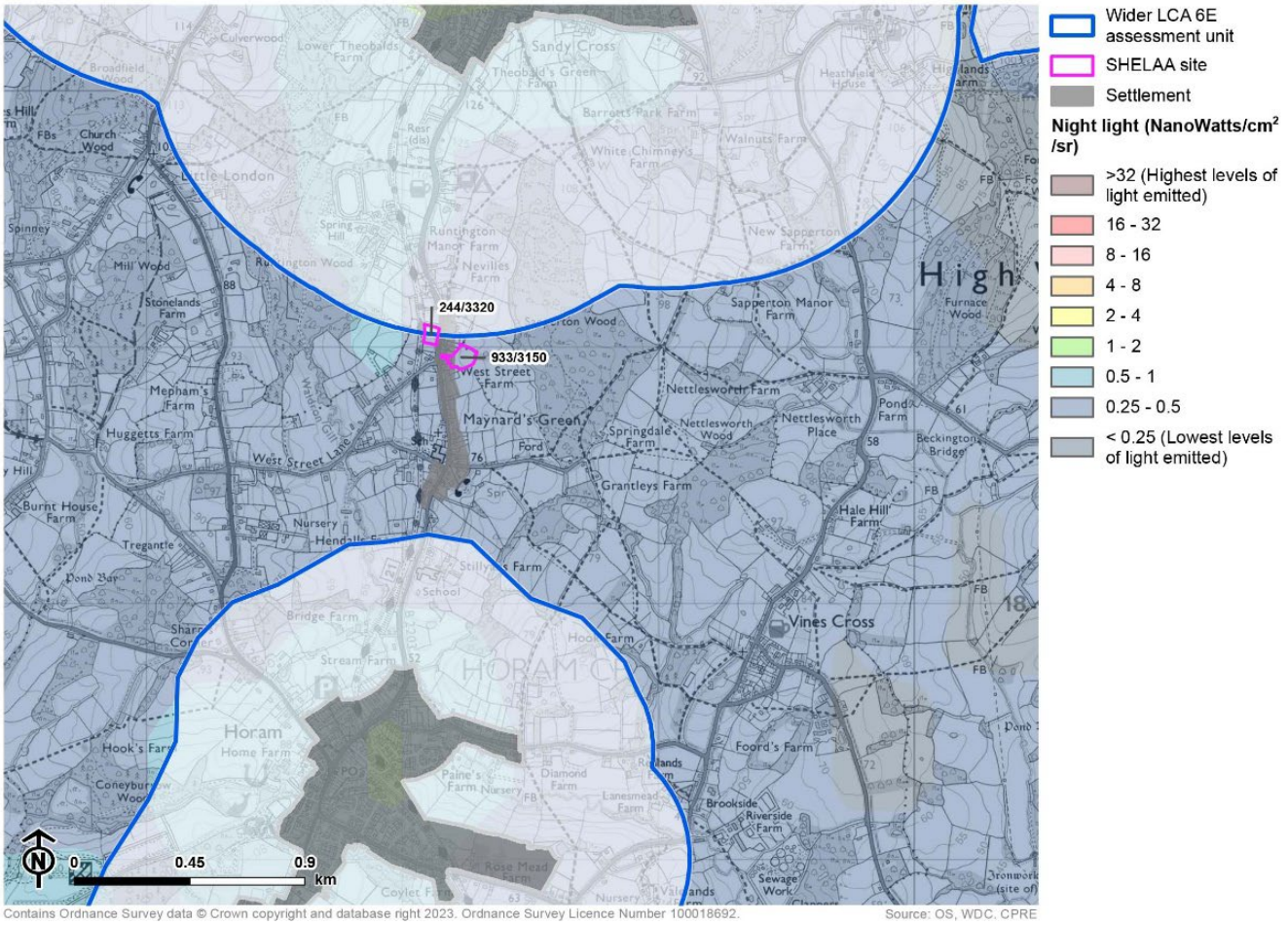


Figure 4: Dark skies



Landscape sensitivity context for the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit

*The landscape sensitivity of the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit, described in the **Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development***			
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the assessment unit	**Small scale residential** 2-2.5 storey housing	**Medium scale residential** 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	**Commercial/ industrial** e.g. industrial units or hotels
	H	**H**	**H**
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the assessment unit	■ The complex ridge and valley landform in the north. ■ Mature deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin) interconnecting with shaws and hedgerows. ■ Areas of priority habitat lowland meadows and good quality semi-improved grassland. ■ The relics of the Wealden Iron Industry, the Registered Park and Garden at Herstmonceux Castle and numerous historic villages designated as Conservation Areas which contribute to the time-depth of the landscape. ■ The strongly dispersed settlement pattern. ■ The wooded and rural backdrop provided to the numerous scattered small villages and larger nearby settlements. ■ The strong network of public rights of way. ■ The rural character with areas of remoteness and tranquillity. ■ Location of the north of assessment unit within the High Weald AONB, and intervisibility with some areas of the High Weald AONB and South Downs National Park.		
Guidance	■ Retain areas of habitat interest, notably ancient woodland and priority habitat lowland meadows and semi-improved grassland. ■ Retain, and where possible restore, broadleaved woodland including linear riparian woodland along watercourses, in line with the aims of the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). ■ Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow an appropriate buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). ■ Replace any unavoidable losses of trees or woodland, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network in line with the aims of the BOAs which are located within the unit. Where there is unavoidable loss of, or damage to, hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities and setting of the Scheduled Monuments, Herstmonceux Castle Registered Park and Garden and numerous historic villages designated as Conservation Areas. ■ Consider key views, as noted in the Conservation Area appraisals, to the surrounding countryside and key views towards the skyline features within historic settlements.		

	■ Protect the characteristic settlement pattern of historic villages, cottages and farmsteads, by limiting the amount and scale of development in rural areas. ■ Consider views of development from popular public rights of way. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Consider any expansion of Heathfield, Horam and Hailsham and urban fringe uses carefully, ensuring new development is in keeping with the local vernacular, and minimises influence on the dispersed settlement pattern. ■ Carefully integrate any development into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using native species that are in character with the wider landscape. ■ Retain key views to the Herstmonceux Observatory, from within and outside the assessment unit. ■ Retain the characteristic contrast between areas of enclosed character and long open views to the Pevensey Levels, South Downs and landmark church towers. ■ Consider views of development from the wider High Weald AONB, particularly in distant elevated views from ridgetop settlements within the AONB including Heathfield and Punnett's Town. ■ Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[2], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[3] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[4]. ■ Ensure development does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, particularly the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB.

[2] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[3] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[4] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

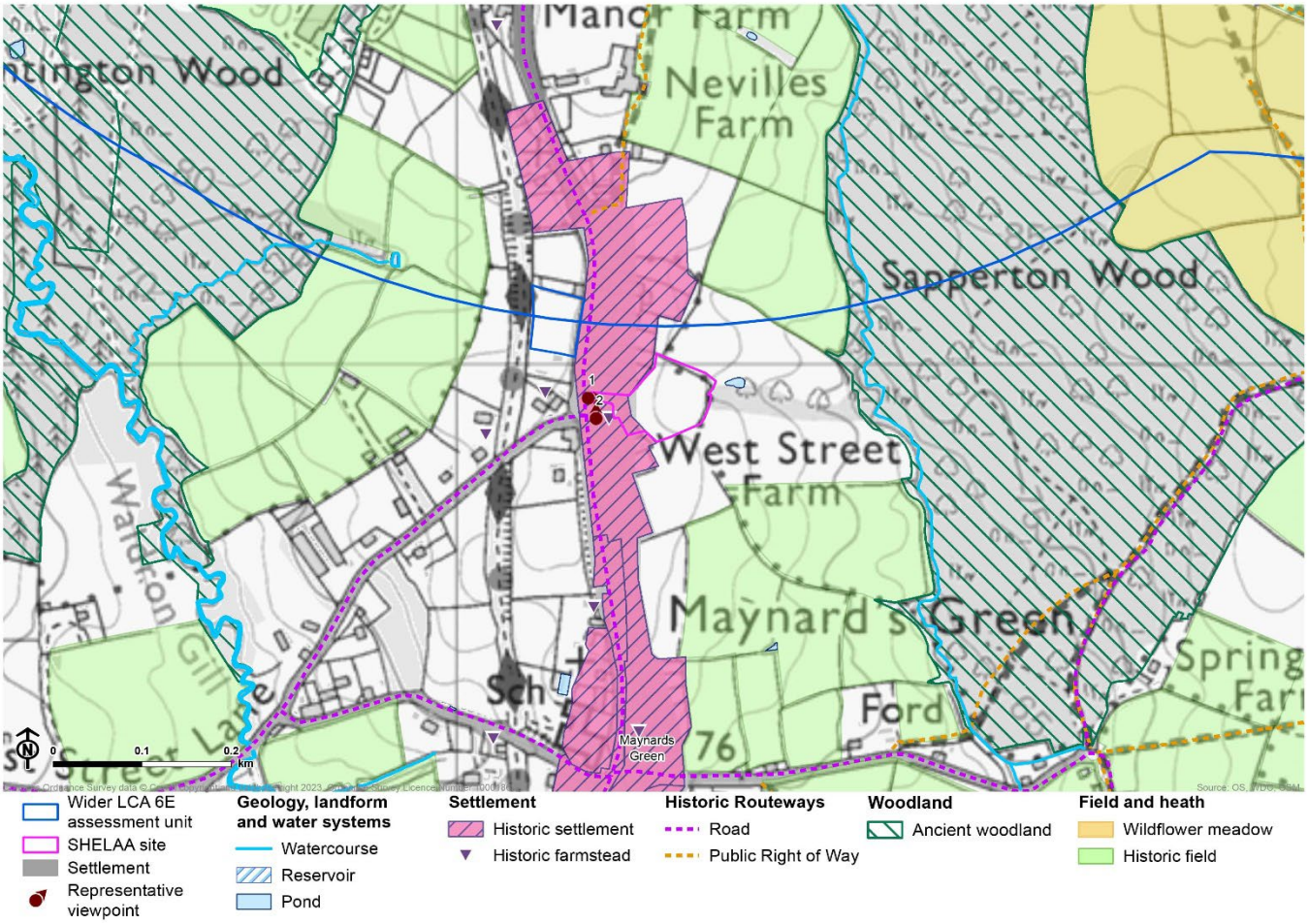
Land at Oast Lodge, Maynard's Green Road, Maynard's Green (933/3150)

Site Details	
Potential development	9 residential dwellings
Site location	This site is located to the east of Maynard's Green, off the B2203.

Figure 5: Site location and constraints



Figure 6: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: The site lies behind an existing property on the B2203, which restricts views into the site.



Viewpoint 2: There are no publicly available views into the site.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms a small part of the lower valley slopes of the High Weald: Cuckmere/Pevensey Catchment LCA, part of the 'incised stream valleys' of the wider assessment unit. ■ It comprises a gentle slope rising between 85m AOD in the east to 90m AOD in the west. **Natural character** ■ The site has mature vegetation along the southern and eastern boundaries, which are valued semi-natural habitats. The east of the site is part of the Pevensey, Rother, Cuckmere Watershed BOA. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The east of the site consists of a small pasture grazed field which is derived from regular piecemeal enclosure, as set out in the Sussex HLC, and typical of the wider assessment unit. The west of the site contains residential development. **Perceptual aspects** ■ Despite close proximity to Maynard's Green, the site has some sense of rural and tranquil character (recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**). The site is also within an area that experiences dark skies (recorded in the lower/ darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**). It is generally enclosed by vegetation and existing development, with no long-distance views.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site lies adjacent to the eastern edge of Maynard's Green - a historic largely linear settlement that has grown both northwards and southwards from a hamlet centred on the junction of the B2203, Tubwell Lane and Sicklehatch Lane. Buildings within Maynard's Green are generally two storey detached and semi-detached redbrick houses, with tile hung upper stories common. The site contains an existing property and outbuilding and lies behind existing properties on the B2203.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The trees and hedgerows within the site, woodland to the east and lack of public access result in very limited visibility into the site from publicly accessible locations. Views of the existing residential development are possible from the B2203, and there are some views into the site from the rear of adjacent properties on the B2203.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Existing development and vegetation around the site restrict any longer distance views into the wider High Weald AONB.
Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	No distinctive geological, landform or water features fall within the site.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late	The site lies to the east of Maynard's Green, *a hamlet occurring around the junction of routeways.*

Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths)	No historic routeways cross the site. The B2203, to the west of the entrance to the site is recorded as a historic drove and contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	The eastern and southern boundaries of the site are bound by hedgerows and occasional hedgerow trees, which contribute towards the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges* of the AONB.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The site consists of a small *generally irregular field pattern.*
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site is located in a relatively *dark landscape*, and despite its close proximity to Maynard's Green retains a rural character, with good *relative tranquillity*.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assess the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit to have **high** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform in the north; interconnecting woodlands and shaws; the historic field pattern; historic features which add time-depth to the landscape; the historic dispersed settlement pattern; the rural setting provided to settlements; the strong network of public rights of way; the rural character with areas of remoteness and tranquillity and location of the north of the assessment unit within the High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to development. The semi-enclosed character and areas of modern field amalgamation slightly reduce the assessment unit's sensitivity to development.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **moderate-high** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The site sits within the linear ridgetop hamlet of Maynard's Green, comprises a field used for pasture, and the east is within the Pevensey, Rother, Cuckmere Watershed BOA. It therefore demonstrates a few of the characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. However, the site does not contain any priority habitats or historic features, is not crossed by any public rights of way and is enclosed, restricting long-distance views, reducing its sensitivity in comparison to the wider assessment unit. Development on the site may alter the linear settlement pattern, and could extend development off the ridgetop.

The site has limited expression of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. Those components of character that the site does possess, which contribute to its sensitivity, include its location within and to the east of the historic hamlet of Maynard's Green, the generally irregular field pattern of the area, the vegetation within the site which is part of the highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods and outgrown hedges, and that the site is part of a relatively dark landscape.

The section below sets out the potential effects on developing the site and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts on the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature trees and hedgerows. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors (that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible). ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Pevensey, Rother, Cuckmere Watershed BOA, where possible.
Loss of grazed pastures. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Fields mostly used for grazing livestock.	■ Loss of pasture would be unavoidable with development of the site, as development would remove land from agricultural use with limited opportunities to retain areas due to the small scale of the site. However, field boundaries should be retained and enhanced, where possible, to avoid complete loss of field pattern.
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[5] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Extension of development beyond the historic linear settlement form. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Hamlet occurring around the junction of routeways.	■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Locate development in the west of the site, to better fit with the historic linear settlement form of Maynard's Green. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[6], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[7] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[8].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ residents along the B2203 adjacent to the site.	■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local species to maintain the rural character of the wider area.

[5] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/
[6] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[7] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[8] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

	■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend development beyond the existing linear settlement pattern of Maynard's Green, slightly altering the form and pattern of the historic hamlet. However, the site is screened from view by existing properties and vegetation.

Should development come forward, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance trees and hedgerows, providing screening for adjacent properties, and in line with the Pevensey, Rother, Cuckmere Watershed BOA.

Land adjacent to Funnell's Farm, Maynard's Green Road, Maynard's Green (244/3320)

Site Details	
Potential development	7 residential dwellings
Site location	This site is located to the west of Maynard's Green, between the Cuckoo Trail to the west and the B2203 to the east.

Figure 7: Site location and constraints

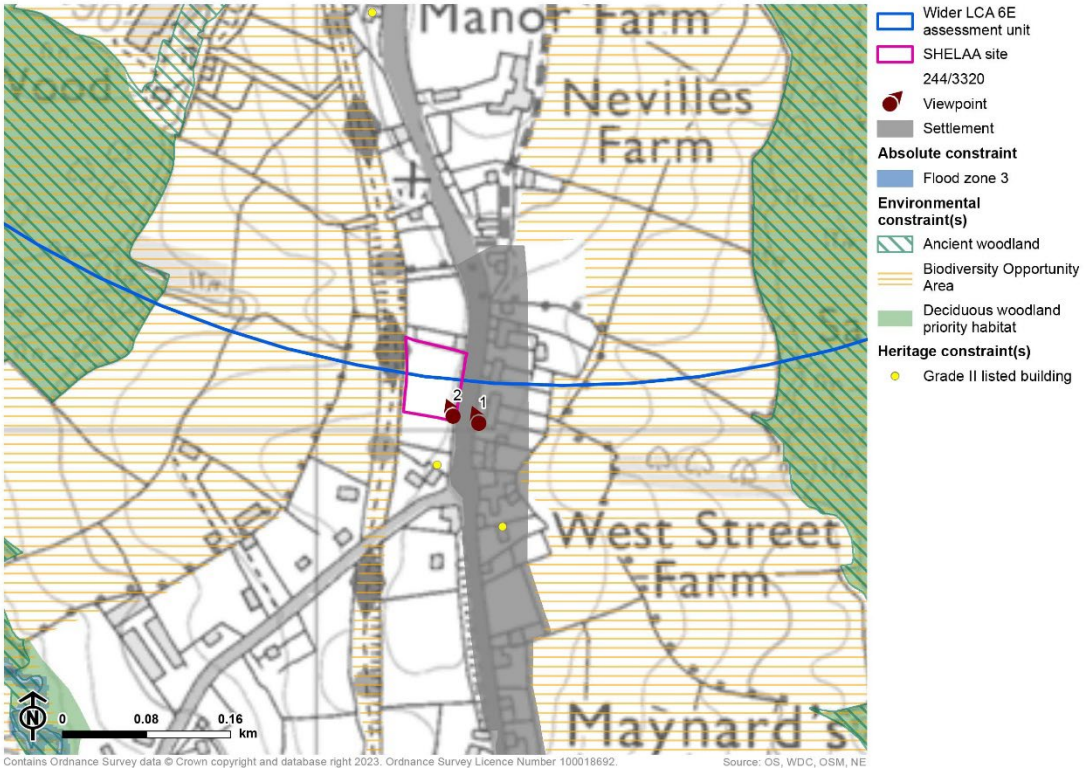
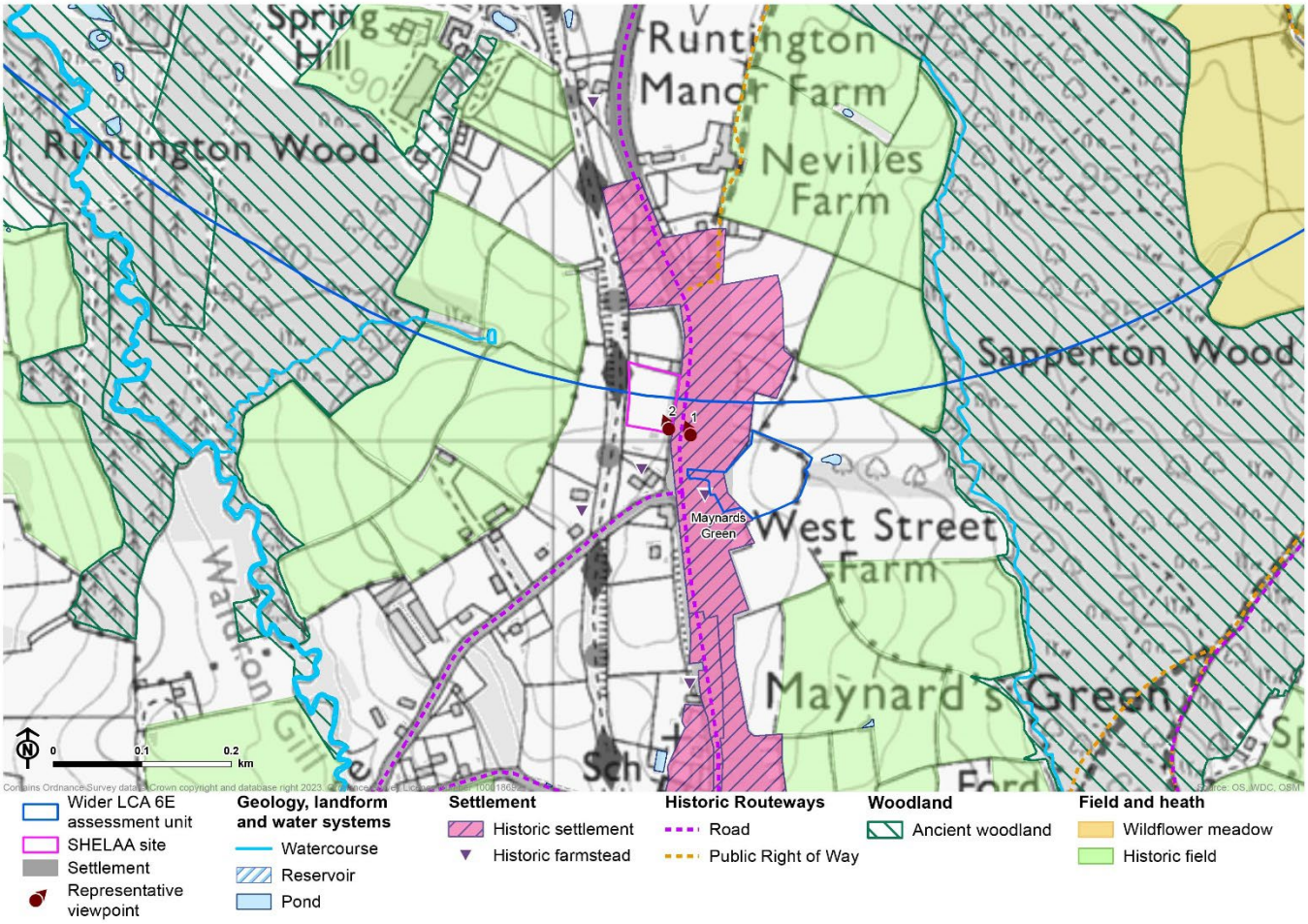


Figure 8: Site location and defining components of character of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: A hedge along the B2203 restricts views into the site.



Viewpoint 2: The site is an unmanaged field of grassland, with some new tree planting in the centre. A gate in the south is the only access.

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	**Landform** ■ The site forms a small part of the lower valley slopes of the High Weald: Cuckmere/Pevensey Catchment LCA, part of the 'incised stream valleys' of the wider assessment unit. ■ It is generally flat and lies around 95m AOD. **Natural character** ■ In use as a grassland field, the site is bound by mature hedgerows along the northern and eastern boundaries, with wooded belts along the southern and western boundaries, which are valued semi-natural habitats and typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ The site lies adjacent to the Cuckoo Trail Habitat Link BOA. **Landscape pattern and time depth** ■ The site is derived from a regular piecemeal enclosure, as set out in the Sussex HLC, and typical of the wider assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** ■ Despite proximity to Maynard's Green, the site has some sense of a rural and tranquil character (recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, **Figure 3**). The site is also within an area that experiences dark skies (recorded in the lower bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, **Figure 4**). It is generally enclosed by vegetation and existing development, with no long-distance views.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site lies to the west of the B2203, opposite Maynard's Green, which largely lies to the east of the B2203. Maynard's Green is a historic, largely linear settlement that has grown from a hamlet centred on the junction of the B2203, Tubwell Lane and Sicklehatch Lane. Buildings within Maynard's Green are generally two storey detached and semi-detached redbrick houses, with tile hung upper stories common. Development is generally concentrated to the east of the B2203, although there are houses to the west of the B2203 to the north and west of the site. The site forms a gap in development to the west of the B2203.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The wooded belts, trees and hedgerows along the boundaries of the site, woodland to the east and lack of public access result in very limited visibility from publicly accessible locations. Views from the B2203 are generally screened by the hedge along the road, with views only possible from the south of the site where there is a gate into the field. There are glimpsed views into the site from the Cuckoo Trail through mature wooded vegetation, including from a bench on the Cuckoo Trail adjacent to the site boundary.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Existing development and vegetation around the site restrict any longer distance views into the wider High Weald AONB.

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams	No distinctive geological, landform or water features fall within the site.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries	The site lies to the west of Maynard's Green, *a hamlet occurring around the junction of routeways.*
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths)	No historic routeways cross the site. The B2203 along the eastern boundary is recorded as a historic drove and contributes towards the *dense radiating network* of historic routeways.
Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings	The northern and eastern site boundaries are bound by hedgerows (with occasional hedgerow trees) and wooded belts along the southern and western boundaries, which contribute towards the *highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges* of the AONB.
Field and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys	The site consists of a small regular field.
Perceptual qualities – tranquillity, dark skies, scenic quality	The site is located in a relatively *dark landscape*, and despite proximity to Maynard's Green, retains a rural character, with good *relative tranquillity*.

How the site relates to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assess the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit to have **high** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that the complex landform in the north; interconnecting woodlands and shaws; the historic field pattern; historic features which add time-depth to the landscape; the historic dispersed settlement pattern; the rural setting provided to settlements; the strong network of public rights of way; the rural character with areas of remoteness and tranquillity and location of the north of the assessment unit within the High Weald AONB increase sensitivity to development. The semi-enclosed character and areas of modern field amalgamation reduce the assessment unit's sensitivity to development.

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **moderate** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The site demonstrates few of the characteristics which give the wider assessment unit a high sensitivity rating. While the site sits within the linear ridgetop hamlet of Maynard's Green and consists of a field of unmanaged grassland, with some new tree planting, it does not contain any priority habitats or historic features, and is enclosed with no long-distance views. The site is not crossed by any public rights of way, although the Cuckoo Trail runs along the western boundary.

The site also has a limited expression of the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. It lies within undeveloped fields west of the B2203 within the historic hamlet of Maynard's Green, vegetation within the site contributes to the highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands and outgrown hedges and is part of a relatively dark landscape.

The section below sets out the potential effects on developing the site and the potential mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities that should be considered to minimise impacts on the landscape and visual baseline should this site be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/ enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features	
Removal of mature trees and hedgerows. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods…and outgrown hedges.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site where possible, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable. ■ Be aware of and take up any biodiversity opportunities relevant to the adjacent Cuckoo Trail Habitat Link BOA, where possible.
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[9] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.
Settlement form edge and setting	
Extension of development beyond the historic linear settlement form. **High Weald AONB character component:** ■ Hamlet occurring around the junction of routeways.	■ Locate development in the east of the site along the B2203, to retain the linear settlement pattern of Maynard's Green. ■ Provide front gardens facing the B2203 to retain the set-back character of existing properties on the east of the road. ■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular. ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'[10], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[11] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[12].
Visual amenity	
Visibility of development seen by: ■ pedestrians, motorists, cyclists and residents along the B2203 adjacent to the site; and	■ Set development back from the Cuckoo Trail on the western boundary, to retain the general impression of green space when glimpsed through vegetation from the public right of way.

[9] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/
[10] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html
[11] https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html
[12] https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html

■ users of the Cuckoo Trail to the west of the site.	■ Screen new development with additional planting using local native species where possible /suitable, especially along the western boundary to maintain the rural character of the Cuckoo Trail. ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. ■ Enhance public access and provide links to the Cuckoo Trail.

Summary and recommendations

Development of this site would extend development on the west of the B2203, albeit that there are examples of this to the north and south. If set in the west of the site development would extend beyond the existing linear settlement pattern of Maynard's Green, slightly altering the form and pattern of the historic hamlet.

Should development come forward, the key recommendations are to:

- Retain, protect and enhance trees and hedgerows, particularly to provide screening for the Cuckoo Trail, in line with the Cuckoo Trail Habitat Link BOA.
- Locate development in the east along the B2203, providing front gardens to set houses back from the road to follow the existing settlement pattern.

Cumulative effects of development sites proposed in the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit

The two sites within the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit are both located on the edge of Maynard's Green. Development of both sites would add a potential 16 additional houses to the hamlet, and would reduce the green spaces on the edge of the hamlet. This would result in a limited settlement expansion.

Although the sites are roughly 45m away from each other along the B2203, there will be limited intervisibility as Site **933/3150** is set behind existing properties on the road. Due to the small scale of the sites, and the well-vegetated character surrounding them, landscape and visual cumulative effects would be limited.