Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

New Settlements and Large Urban Extensions

Final report
Prepared by LUC
November 2023



Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal
New Settlements and Large Urban Extensions

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Chapter 1
Introduction

This section introduces the study and presents generic guidance for accommodating built development into the landscape.

1.1 LUC was commissioned by Wealden District Council in 2021 to prepare a number of evidence base studies to inform the Local Plan making process. This included a Landscape Character Assessment, Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of SHELAA sites.

1.2 In tandem with this, LUC was also commissioned to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal of several potential growth areas that had been submitted for the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). The aim of the appraisal was to ascertain the suitability of the potential development sites to accommodate growth (in landscape and visual terms), as well as determine any site specific constraints and design considerations.

1.3 Eleven potential development sites, located on the fringes of six settlements, were appraised as follows:

- East Hoathly – 'North of East Hoathly'
- Hailsham – 'North of Hailsham' and 'West of Hailsham'
- Horam – 'South of Horam'
- Polegate/Willingdon – 'Polegate' and 'Polegate/Willingdon'
- Tunbridge Wells – 'South of Tunbridge Wells'
- Uckfield – North of Uckfield', 'East of Uckfield', 'South of Uckfield' and 'West of Uckfield'

1.4 The overall findings of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal for each of the potential development sites is set out in **Appendix A**.

1.5 Specific guidance for each site is also set out within **Appendix A**. This includes measures to avoid/minimise any potential landscape and visual effects that could arise from the introduction of development, as well as potential landscape enhancement measures.

1.6 The following summarises guidance that is generic across all potential development sites, including:

- Set development back from the edge of ancient woodland to create a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage; 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 grassland).
- Retain and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding a site, including woodlands, trees, and hedgerows; any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible/appropriate.
- Enhance the connectivity of the local habitat network through tree planting and hedgerow corridors (protection, enhancement, restoration and/or new planting); where relevant this should also be done in line with relevant Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.
- Conserve and enhance priority habitat; development should avoid such areas and retain areas of open space to provide a buffer to development.
- Development should be set back from land designated as Flood Zone 3.
- Retain areas of historic field pattern (e.g. assarts, or consolidated strip fields) where practicable, particularly where they are a defining component of character.
- Consider the character and setting of any heritage assets (e.g. listed buildings or registered parks and gardens).
- Retain and enhance woodland along site boundaries to screen views of development.
- Avoid development in the more open and elevated areas of the site.
- Consider intervisibility with the South Downs National Park and High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the siting and design of development; include corridors to retain and frame any existing views.
- Retain and enhance public access across the site (where this currently exists) and consider sequential views from public rights of way.
- Locate development to fit with the existing settlement pattern and respect any features that define the existing settlement edge nearby (e.g. river valleys, crests of higher ground etc.).
- Development should be sited to minimise the perception of coalescence between distinct settlements/areas of a settlement.
- The height of development should integrate with the adjacent surrounding settlement edges, both existing and consented.
- Consider opportunities to integrate development with recent development in the vicinity (where applicable), to ensure a cohesive character to the expanded settlement.
- Green open space and tree planting should be interspersed within a 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 form should be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of surrounding development by using high quality materials suggestive of the local vernacular. In particular, design cues could be taken from nearby conservation areas for example.
- Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance and use dark sky-friendly lighting where outdoor lighting is necessary.
- If suitable, lower ground could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features, incorporating habitat creation.

Structure of the Report

1.7 This report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1** introduces the study and presents generic guidance for accommodating built development into the landscape.
- **Chapter 2** presents the background, purpose and policy context.
- **Chapter 3** sets out the methodology for the landscape and visual appraisal.
- **Appendix A** contains the appraisal for each site or groups of sites.
- **Appendix B** contains the sources of information used in the appraisal.
- **Appendix C** contains a glossary of terms.

Chapter 2
Background and Purpose of the Study

This section sets out the background and purpose of the study and presents the policy context.

Background and Purpose

2.1 Wealden's rural landscapes have a distinctive character and are a valuable resource for the district. A large proportion of the district is located within the nationally protected landscapes of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the north of the district and the South Downs National Park to the south[1].

2.2 At the same time the district is facing the need to accommodate substantial housing and employment growth and will be required to allocate growth in its Local Plan,. It will be important to deliver future growth in a way that protects and enhances valued landscapes, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, as well as contributing to and enhancing the natural local environment.

2.3 To help inform the Local Plan making process, LUC was commissioned by Wealden District Council in 2021 to prepare a Landscape and Visual Appraisal of a number of growth areas that have been submitted for assessment in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).

2.4 The aim of the study was to produce a landscape and visual appraisal of the suitability of potential growth areas (potential development sites) in landscape and visual terms to help determine their suitability to accommodate growth as well as determine any site specific constraints and design considerations, as appropriate.

Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

2.5 The UK Government published an updated and revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2021, which sets out the environmental, social and economic

[1] South Downs National Park is the Planning Authority for the area of the National Park that sits within Wealden District.

planning policies for England. Central to NPPF policies is a presumption in favour of sustainable development; that development should be planned for positively and individual proposals should be approved wherever possible.

2.6 However, one of the overarching objectives that underpins the NPPF is set out in Paragraph 8: *"an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment"*.

2.7 Paragraph 174 states that *"planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by **protecting and enhancing valued landscapes**"* and *"**recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside**"*.

2.8 Paragraph 20 states *"Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for:*

- *a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;*
- *b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);*
- *c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and*
- *d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation"*.

2.9 Paragraph 130 states *"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:*

- *a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- *c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- *d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- *e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- *f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience"*.

2.10 Paragraph 175 states *"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries"*.

2.11 Paragraph 185 contains one reference to sensitivity as follows *"Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, **as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development**…"*.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

2.12 Further guidance is provided in the NPPG. Paragraph 037[2] which notes the following under the heading of 'How can the character of the landscape be assessed?': *"…Landscape sensitivity can inform policy development and appropriate locations for development and can also be one of the considerations to be taken into account when making decisions on planning applications"*.

2.13 To help assess the type and scale of development that might be able to be accommodated without compromising landscape character, a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment can be completed. To demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used.

[2] Reference ID: 8-037-20190721, Revision date: 21.07.2019.

Chapter 3
Methodology

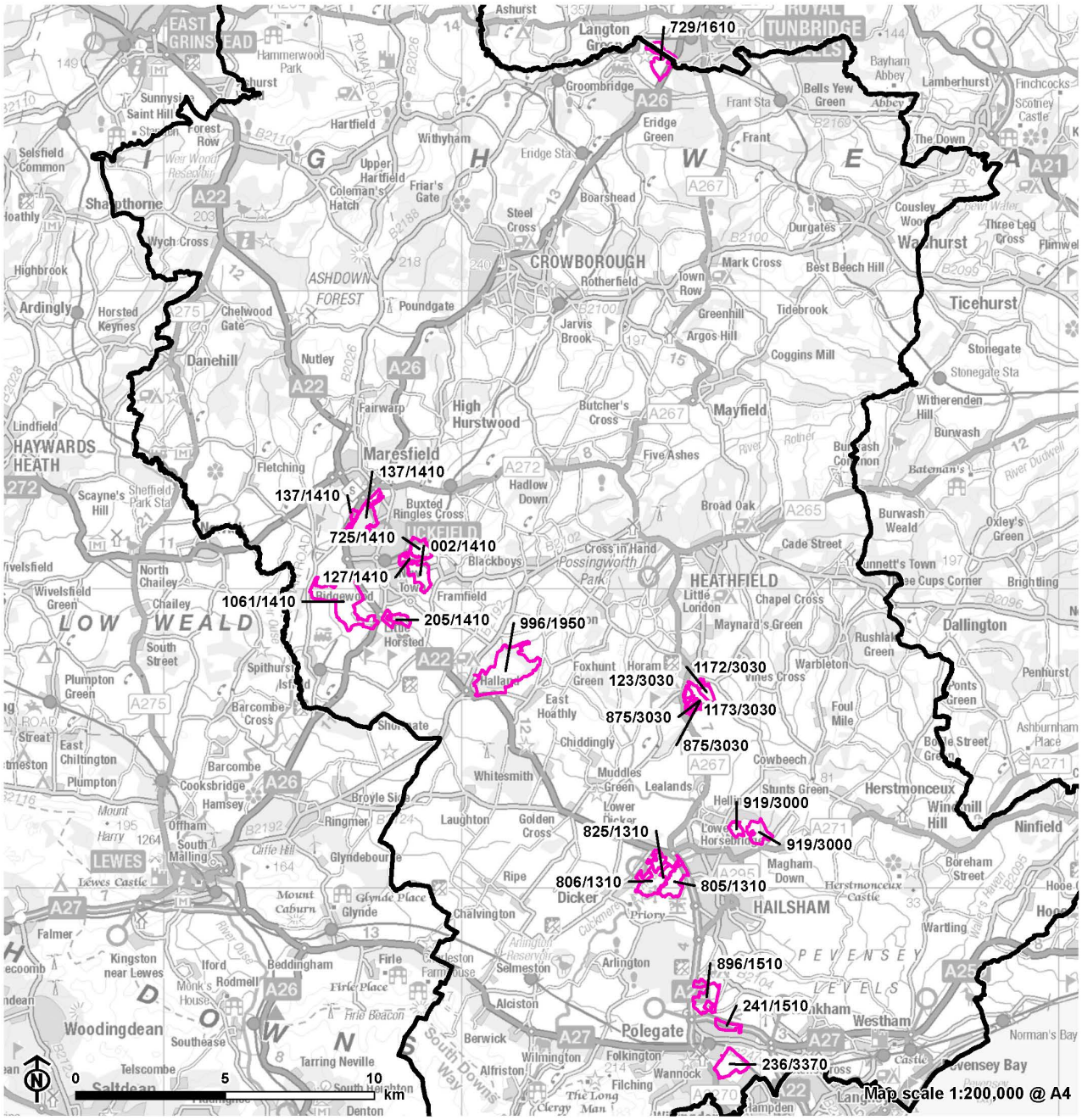
This section presents the scope of the study and the approach to landscape and visual appraisal.

Approach to Landscape and Visual Appraisal

3.1 The approach to this study was informed by current good practice guidance in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3)[3] and Natural England's 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management'[4]. The approach draws on best practice in recent assessments completed by LUC and others.

[3] Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition)

[4] Christine Tudor Natural England (2019) An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management



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Figure 3.

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CB:JT EB:Horton_K LUC FIG_x_x_11610_r0_SHELAA_sites_Frontend_A4L 09/11/2023
Source: OS

The Process of Appraisal

3.2 The process for undertaking the study involved the following main stages:

Part 1: Desk based assessment

3.3 The initial stage of the study involved a desk-based assessment drawing on descriptions and evaluations in the Landscape Character Assessment for Wealden[5] and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Residential and Employment Development[6], as well as further sources of spatial and descriptive information regarding the landscape.

3.4 Information from relevant documents and available GIS data were reviewed to understand the wider landscape context for the potential development sites. Key sources of information used to inform the appraisal are listed in **Appendix B**.

Part 2: Field verification

3.5 A structured process of field survey verification was undertaken in spring 2022 by landscape professionals in order to verify and refine the outputs from the desk study. Each potential development site was visited to record information and take photographs.

Part 3: Analysis

3.6 For each potential development site, an analysis of the potential effects of development was undertaken. This included identification of the potential effects of development on:

- Landscape character and features – How potential development could affect key landscape qualities/sensitivities or conflict with relevant guidance (as identified in the Wealden Landscape Character Assessment or the Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment).
- Designated landscapes – How potential development could affect the special qualities or defining components of character of the South Downs National Park or High Weald AONB.
- Existing settlement form and setting – How potential development could affect settlement pattern (including potential for coalescence between settlements and existing separation between them).
- Visual amenity – How potential development could affect sensitive visual receptors (including views from designated landscapes).
- Cumulative effects were considered for each potential development site in relation to other major development sites, particularly at settlement level.

Constraints and Opportunities

3.7 For each potential development site, an analysis of constraints and opportunities was undertaken, including:

- Potential opportunities for development with reference to key constraints/more sensitive areas and to robust boundaries to development dictated by the landscape.
- Potential for mitigation/enhancement – Advice on suitable mitigation measures to avoid or minimise adverse effects and opportunities to enhance the landscape.

Summary and Recommendations

3.8 The suitability of the landscape across the potential development site was summarised and illustrated with a constraints/opportunities plan with guidance on locations within each site where development can best be accommodated in landscape and visual terms.

Part 4: Reporting

3.9 The findings of the assessment were updated following field survey, and a draft and final report provided.

Units for Appraisal

3.10 This study assessed the landscape and visual sensitivity of sites identified by Wealden District Council for potential large strategic growth areas within Wealden District. These potential development sites are mapped on **Figure 3.1**.

3.11 Each potential development site was assessed in relation to the type of development (housing or employment) proposed within the Wealden Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). These sites are intended to incorporate between 300-2,500 residential dwellings and other associated land uses, including employment, open space, community uses and infrastructure.

3.12 These potential development sites are located on the fringes of the following settlements:

- East Hoathly;
- Hailsham;

[5] LUC (2022) Wealden Landscape Character Assessment

[6] LUC (undated) Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Residential and Employment Development

- Horam;
- Polegate/Willingdon;
- Tunbridge Wells; and
- Uckfield.

3.13 Sites on the fringes of Tunbridge Wells within the High Weald AONB were assessed separately as part of **Project 5: Landscape and Visual Appraisal of Growth Areas in the High Weald AONB**.

3.14 A number of individual sites submitted to the Council's SHELAA are located either adjacent to other sites or are in close proximity to each other and could therefore be considered as a large growth area when considered cumulatively. These sites have also been assessed as part of this project. A full list of sites can be found in **Table 3.1** below:

Table 3.1: Potential development sites

Potential Development Site	Individual Site Reference
East Hoathly	
North of East Hoathly	996/1950 Hesmonds Stud
Hailsham	
West of Hailsham	825/1310 Land to the NW of Hempstead Lane
	806/1310 Land at Starnash Farm
	805/1310 Land NW of Hemstead Lane
North of Hailsham	919-3000 Land at Park Farm, New Road, Hellingly
Horam	
South of Horam	875/3030 Coxlow Farm
	1054/3030 Oakhurst House
	123/3030 Land adjoining Coxlow House
	1059/3030 Land adjacent Burlow Cottage
	1173-3030 Land at Burlow, Horam (formerly part of Oakhurst Farm)
	1174-3030 Land east of Horam Road
Polegate/Willingdon	
Polegate	Land at Shepham Lane, Polegate
	896/1510 Land at North Polegate
Polegate/Willingdon	236-3370 Mornings Mill Farm, Eastbourne Road, Willingdon
Tunbridge Wells	
South of Tunbridge Wells	729-1610 Spratsbrook Farm
Uckfield	
East of Uckfield	002/1410 Bird in Eye Farm (South)
	127/1410 Bird in Eye Farm (North)

Potential Development Site	Individual Site Reference
	725/1410 Land at Hempstead Lane
South of Uckfield	205/1410 Land at Horstedpond Farm
West of Uckfield	1061/1410 Land at Owlsbury Farm
North of Uckfield	137/1410 Land at Downlands Farm

Assessment Profiles

3.15 The full assessment profiles are included in **Appendix A**. The assessment profiles are ordered by settlement and are structured in a common format as follows:

Landscape Context

3.16 The landscape context for each potential development site, including:

- Site details;
- Settlement context; and
- Landscape character (as described in the Wealden Landscape Character Assessment).

Landscape Sensitivity Context

3.17 The landscape sensitivity context for each potential development site including:

- Overall landscape sensitivity rating, key sensitivities and guidance for the wider area (as described in the Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment).

Site Baseline

3.18 The baseline landscape and visual information for each potential development site, including:

- Key landscape features and qualities of the site and how these relate to the character of the wider LCA.
- Designations which may inform development, including:
  - Absolute Constraints to development – Flood Zone 3 and statutory international ecological designations – Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC);
  - Landscape designations – South Downs National Park and High Weald AONB;
  - National and local ecological designations – National Nature Reserves (NNR), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ancient woodland, Biological Opportunity Areas (BOA), and Priority Habitats; and
  - Heritage designations – Scheduled monuments, Listed buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered battlefields, and Conservation Areas.
- Relation of the site to the existing settlement form and edge.
- Baseline visual character identifying potential visual receptors, including potential inter-visibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park.

3.19 Maps including:

- The location of the site in relation to the settlement;
- Historic form of the settlement (historic mapping);
- The location of the site in relation to Landscape Character Type/Area;
- The site location and boundary; and
- Constraints to development.

Site Analysis

3.20 An analysis of the potential effects of development in landscape and visual terms, including effects on:

- Landscape character and features;
- Designated landscapes;
- Settlement form, edge and setting; and
- Visual amenity.

3.21 Cumulative effects are also considered.

Constraints and Opportunities

3.22 An analysis of the suitability of the landscape for development across the potential development site (illustrated by a constraints/opportunities plan) in terms of:

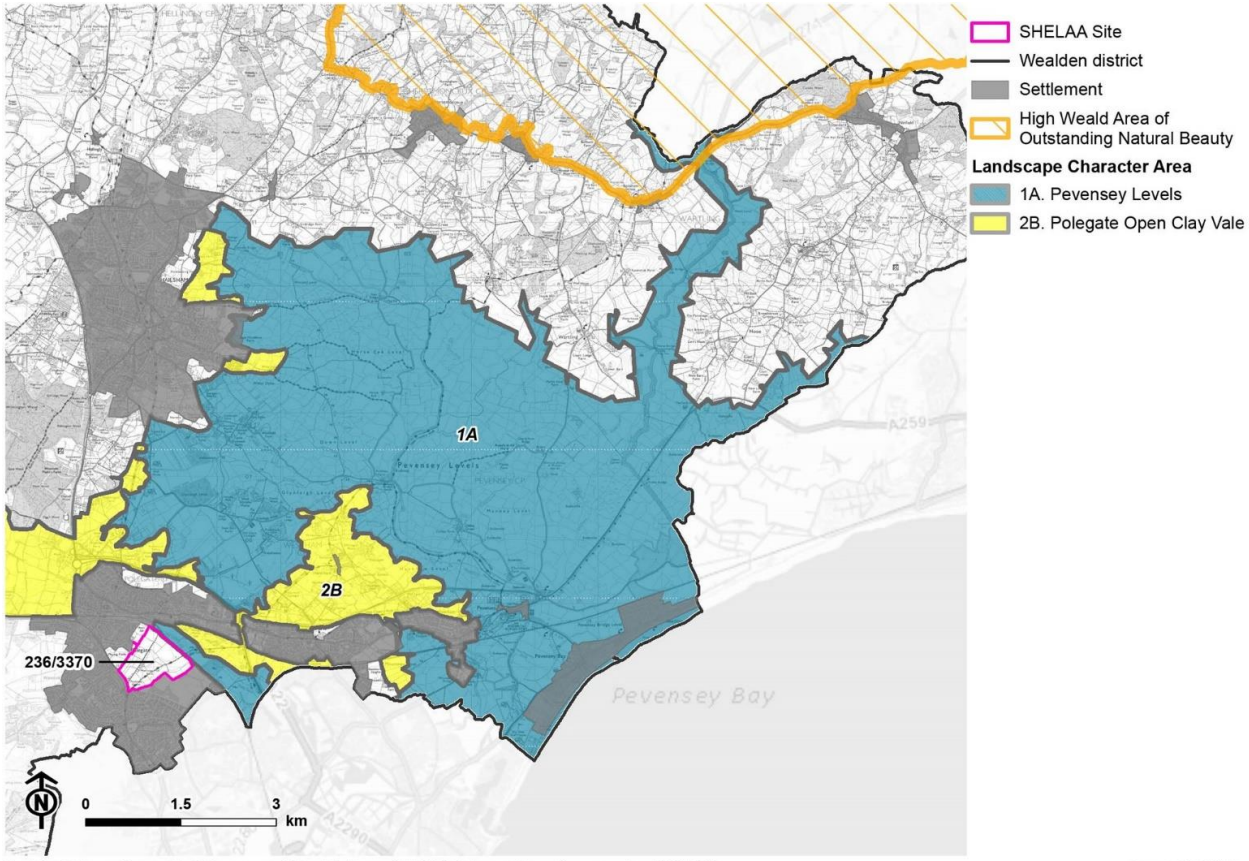
- Potential opportunities for development; and
- Potential for mitigation and enhancement.

Appendix A

Landscape and Visual Appraisals

LCA 1A: Pevensey Levels

Figure A.1: Site locations in relation to the Landscape Character Area



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Source: OS, WDC

NB Site 236/3370 sits adjacent to two LCAs, which are listed below.

LCA Description	LCA 1A: Pevensey Levels is located in the south-east of the district. It is a distinctive flat and low-lying landscape, which has a relatively remote character. The landscape is dominated by reclaimed salt marsh, now in use as grazed wet meadows, with some arable fields. The wetland landscape is of high ecological value, supporting internationally and nationally important wetland flora and fauna. Settlement within the LCA is generally confined to low-density dispersed farmsteads on medieval sites, with the exception of 20th century development at Pevensey Bay. A shingle beach shoreline at Pevensey Bay is the district's only shoreline outside the South Downs National Park. The southern and western edges of the LCA are influenced by urban fringe elements on the edge of Polegate, Stone Cross, Westham and Hailsham, and the busy A259 is a modern intrusion in the east and south-east. LCA 2B: The Polegate Open Clay Vale (Low Weald) is a low-lying landscape of mixed arable and pasture farmland, with a small-scale settlement pattern linked by a network of enclosed rural road corridors. The landscape comprises small-medium fields with a strong hedgerow network. Limited tree cover leads to open views south towards the South Downs. The rural character of the landscape is compromised by its proximity to Hailsham and Polegate and the busy A27 and A22, which crosses the landscape.

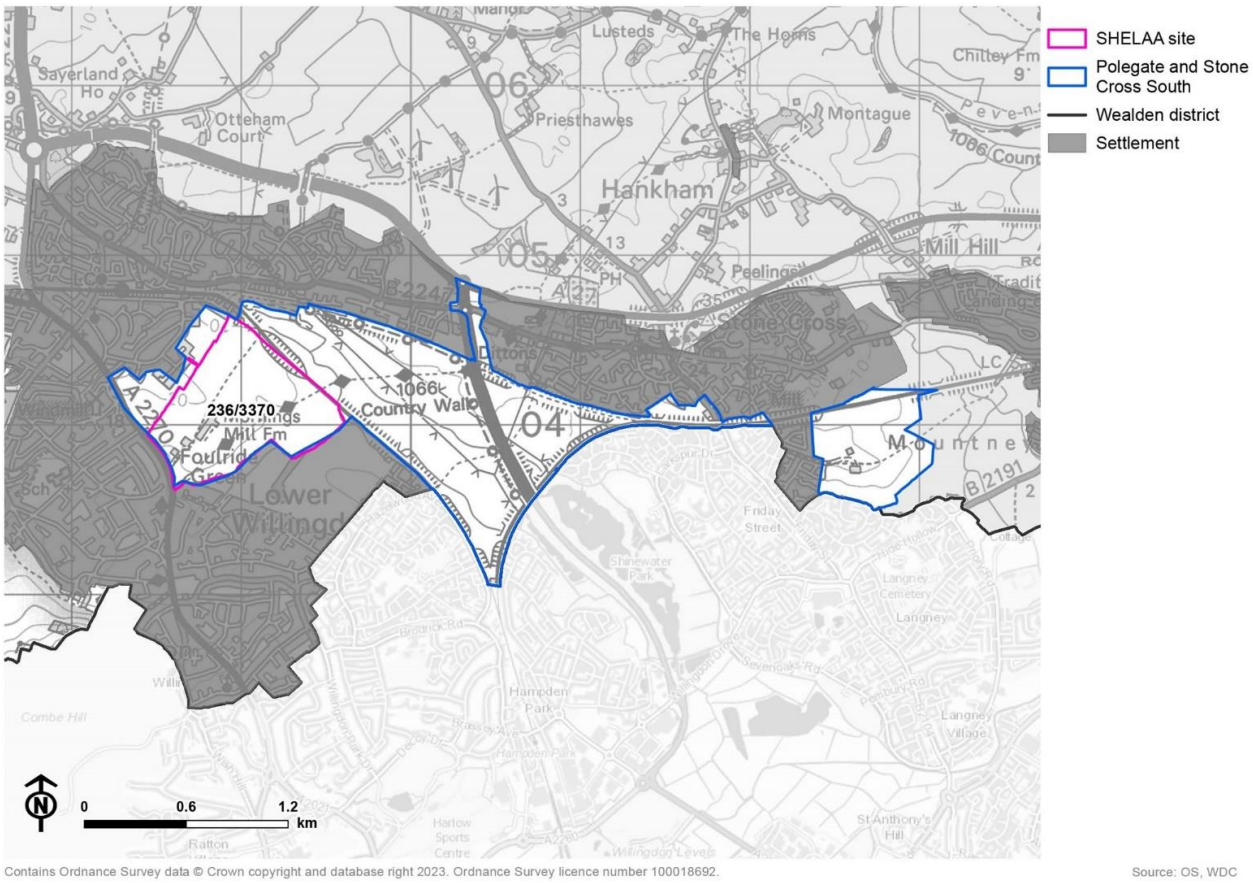
Valued Features and Key Qualities of the LCA	LCA 1A ■ The complex system of streams, including Waller's Haven, dykes and drainage ditches. ■ The distinctive shingle ridge between the reclaimed saltmarsh and the sea. ■ The wet meadows, grazing marsh, scrub (some trees), reed-fringed ditches and areas of standing water, including those designated as SSSI, SAC, and Ramsar. ■ The unsettled character of the floodplain landscape. ■ The historic features of the landscape (drainage and field patterns, former salt works, medieval settlement sites, the fishing village of Wallsend and buildings constructed from local materials). ■ The sense of tranquillity and rural remoteness experienced via the extensive network of public rights of way. ■ The long open views across the landscape, including towards the South Downs and High Weald. ■ The strong historic links to the coastline, with a symbolically important Roman/Saxon site at Pevensey Castle that witnessed the beginning of Norman rule in Britain and other defensive structures including Martello Towers. LCA 2B ■ The small streams and drainage ditches that cross the LCA. ■ The scattered woodlands and hedgerow boundaries with mature hedgerow trees. ■ The pattern of woodlands, some ancient, traditional orchards and hedgerow network with mature hedgerow trees. ■ The floodplain grazing marsh and lowland fen associated with the Pevensey Levels. ■ The mixed agricultural character. ■ The historic features of the landscape (historic field patterns, historic buildings and designed landscape at Wootton Manor). ■ The vernacular of flint and brick. ■ The public rights of way and promoted routes such as the 1066 Country Walk. ■ Open views from the LCA to the South Downs, Abbot's Wood and over the Pevensey Levels.

Landscape Sensitivity Context: Polegate and Stone Cross South Assessment Unit

One potential development site is considered with the Polegate and Stone Cross South assessment unit:

- 236/3370 Morning Mills Farm, Eastbourne Road, Willingdon

Figure A.2: Site locations in relation to the assessment unit



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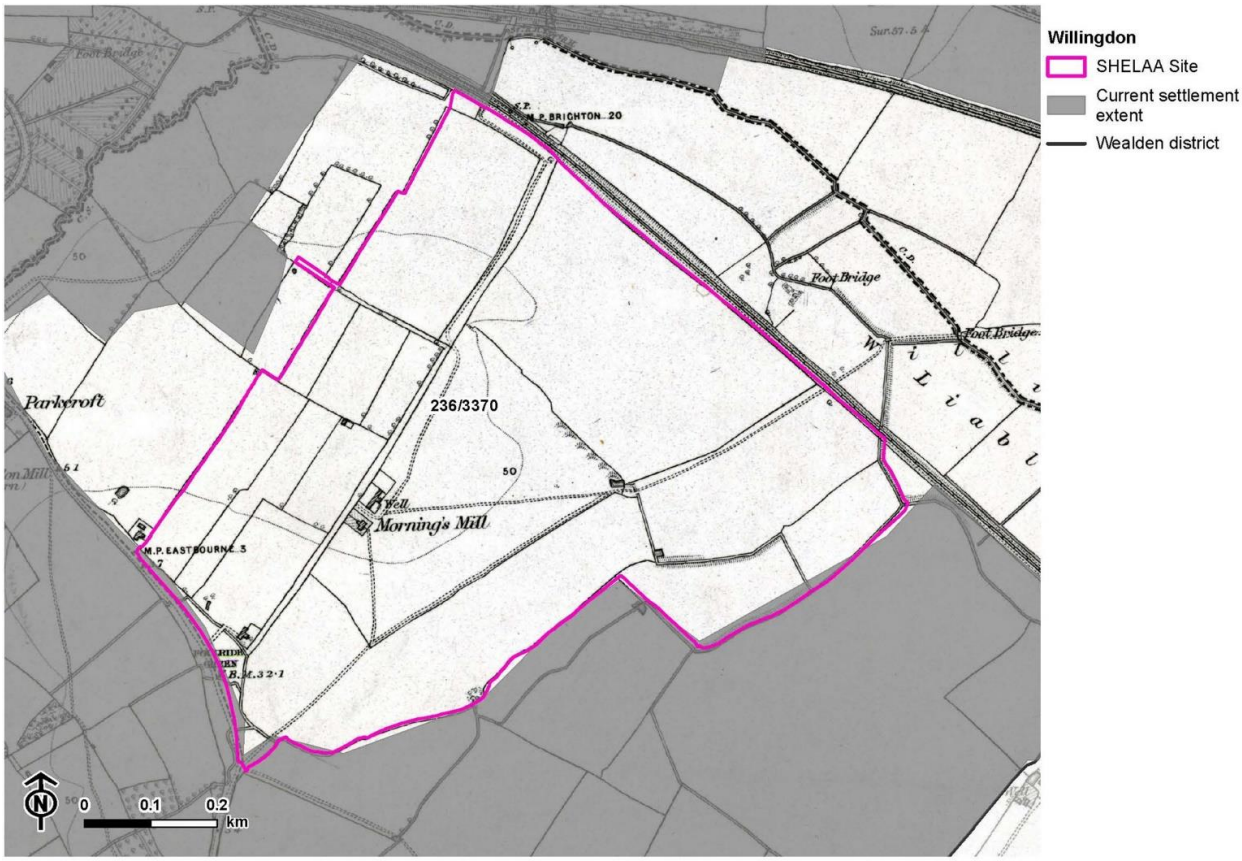
Source: OS, WDC

Settlement Context

Settlement Location and Context	Polegate and Willingdon are in the south-east of the district, at the transition between the Pevensey Levels (LCA 1A) and the Polegate Open Clay Vales (LCA 2B). Both settlements lie north of Eastbourne, west of Stone Cross and south of Hailsham.
Settlement Evolution	Polegate developed along the Roman road from Pevensey to Lewes, on ground above the floodplain. The town grew significantly from the 1840s following the opening of the railway between Brighton and Hastings via Lewes, with later branches connecting Eastbourne and Hailsham (see **Figure A.3** below). Polegate became a significant junction, serving the market town of Hailsham to the north and the local brick making industry. As a result, the town expanded, with development predominantly to the north, east and south. Although the railway routes to Hailsham and Horam closed in the 20th century, the town has continued to expand and recent 21st century development has been predominantly on its northern and eastern edges. Willingdon and Lower Willingdon developed as small villages on the road between Eastbourne and Polegate. Construction of the A22 (now Eastbourne Road) in the early 20th century led to

	extensive residential development between Eastbourne Road and Wannock Road at Lower Willingdon, and further development at Willingdon to the south. This has led to the perceived continuous built development along Eastbourne Road between Willingdon and Polegate. Development under construction at Brodrickland and Hamlands Farm in Willingdon will further reduce the perceived separation between Willingdon and Polegate. Possible development to the west of the site (Hindsland) will comprise up to 180 dwellings as bungalows, houses and flats and a medical centre. This will further decrease the perceived separation between Polegate and Willingdon.
Settlement Pattern and Edge Character	Polegate is contained to the north and north-west by the A27 Polegate Bypass, to the east by the A22 Golden Jubilee Way (which provides some separation between Polegate and Stone Cross), and to the south-east by the 'Brighton to Eastbourne' railway line and associated branch (now dismantled and in use as the Cuckoo Trail). The Cuckoo Trail provides the northern settlement boundary, although this has been interrupted in the 20th century by residential development north of Dittons Road, and commercial development at Dittons Corner. To the south-west, development south of the railway line has extended along Eastbourne Road (predominantly to the west) which has caused perceived coalescence with Willingdon. However, open farmland (including that of the site) to the east of Eastbourne Road provides some sense of separation between Polegate and Willingdon. This will be eroded by development under construction at Brodrickland and Hamlands Farm, Willingdon. The settlement edges generally consist of two storey 20th or 21st century housing, with the exception of Chaucer Business Park in the east, which consists of larger scale low-rise industrial and commercial units. Vegetation along the major road corridors encloses the existing settlement edge of Polegate, particularly to the north, north-west and east. To the west of Polegate, small woodlands enclose the settlement, including ancient woodland at Wannock Coppice and Shaw. Willingdon is partially contained by Eastbourne Road to the east, and Wannock Road to the west, although this containment has been eroded by development west of Wannock Road. Development south-west of Willingdon is constrained by the rising foothills of the South Downs National Park. The settlement edges generally consist of two storey 20th or 21st century housing, set back from the roads.

Figure A.3: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



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Source: OS, WDC

The Landscape Sensitivity of Polegate and Stone Cross South Assessment Unit Described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA Assessment Unit	Polegate and Stone Cross South			
Landscape Sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA 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
	Low-Moderate (LCA 2B)	Moderate (LCA 1A)	Moderate	Moderate-High
Key Sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to develop identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	■ Pockets of ecologically valued priority habitat grazing marsh. ■ Intact small-scale historic field pattern, especially consolidated strip fields east of Eastbourne Road. ■ Contribution to the sense of separation between Polegate and Stone Cross, Polegate and Willingdon, Stone Cross and Eastbourne, and Stone Cross and Westham. ■ Recreational opportunities provided by the Cuckoo Trail and 1066 Country Walk. ■ The open floodplain landscape with intervisibility with the South Downs National Park.			
LSA Guidance	■ Locate development in the north, adjacent to the settlement edge of Polegate, well enclosed by vegetation where development would be less visible and have less influence on landscape character.			

	■ Retain priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh. ■ Undertake opportunities identified in the Eastbourne Marshes BOA, including wetland habitat creation. ■ Retain in-field trees from the impacts of development. Replace any unavoidable losses with native tree 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. ■ The height of development should be carefully considered in this low-lying and relatively flat landscape. ■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing vegetation, or using species that are in character with the wider landscape. ■ Take opportunities to reduce the visual impact of the railway and roads, and existing urban edge development. ■ Consider views from public rights of way, such as the Cuckoo Trail and 1066 Country Walk, when siting and designing development in the landscape. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect views from or special qualities of the South Downs National Park, and take opportunities to provide new views of the South Downs National Park where possible. ■ Preserve existing separation between Polegate and Stone Cross, and retain a sense of travelling between settlements at Polegate and Willingdon.

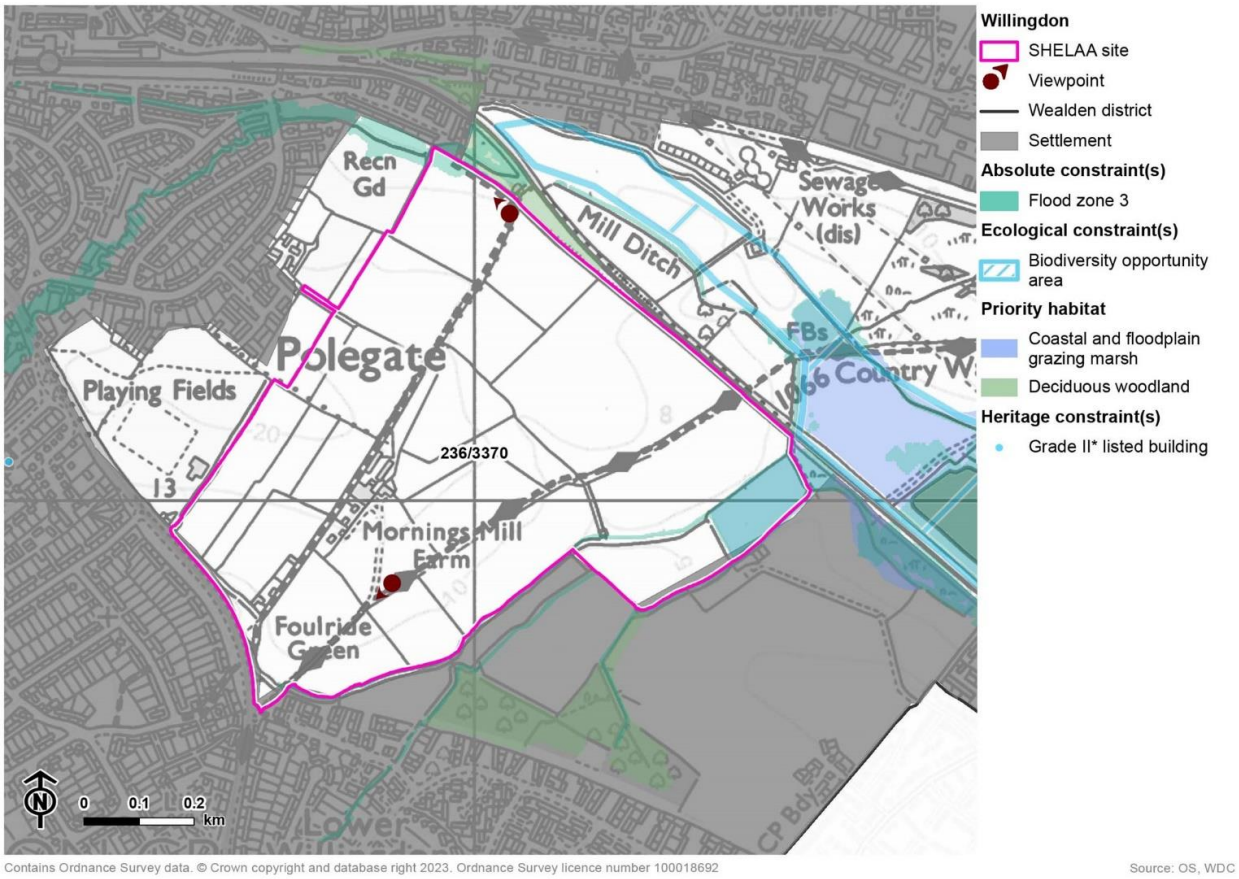
Site Assessment: Willingdon/Polegate

Site Details

SHELAA Site Name/ Reference	Mornings Mill Farm, Eastbourne Road, Willingdon	236/3370
Potential Development	700 residential dwellings, employment floorspace, medical centre, primary school, community centre, retail, playing fields, children's play space, allotments, amenity open space, internal access roads, cycle and footpath routes and associated landscaping and infrastructure.	
Site Location	The site is located to the north-east of Willingdon and south-east of Polegate. Its north-eastern boundary is defined by the 'Brighton to Eastbourne' railway line and western and south-western boundary by Eastbourne Road (A2270). The south-eastern boundary is defined by land with planning permission at Brodrickland and Hamlands Farm (540/3370).	

Site Baseline

Figure A.4: Site location and constraints



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Source: OS, WDC

Representative Site Photos



Viewpoint 1: Open grazing fields with clear views of South Downs over Willingdon to south.



Viewpoint 2: Low hedgerows which allow views back to the settlement edge of Polegate.

Baseline Landscape Character of Site 236/3370 in relation to the Wider Assessment Unit

Key Features and Qualities of the Site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	**Landform and drainage** The site consists of a gently undulating landform, rising gradually from 5m AOD in the east to 20m AOD in the west, and is more undulating than the wider assessment unit. **Natural character** The site comprises a series of pastoral fields defined predominantly by low hedgerows with occasional mature hedgerow trees, albeit with a higher concentration of mature hedgerow trees in the north-west of the site. A small area of priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh lies in the south-east, and is covered by Flood Zone 3. The hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees provide landscape structure and habitat connectivity. These are typical of the wider assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** As is typical of the wider assessment unit, the site has a varied field pattern with consolidated strip fields in the north-west, planned private enclosure in the south-east and irregular piecemeal enclosure in the east. **Recreational value** Two public rights of way cross the site, including the 1066 Country Walk, connecting Polegate and Willingdon with the Pevensey Levels. This is not typical of the wider assessment unit, which has limited public access. **Perceptual character** Built development within the site is limited to farm buildings associated with Mornings Mill Farm, located centrally. Detracting features include views of the existing settlement edges of Polegate (including Chaucer Business Park) and Willingdon, and noise from Eastbourne Road and the railway line which forms the north-east boundary. These are typical of the wider assessment unit.
Designations which are Constraints to Development	Flood Zones 2 and 3 related to watercourses leading to the Pevensey Levels cross the north-west and south-east of the site respectively.
Settlement Form and Edge Character and	The existing settlement edge around the site in Willingdon and Polegate generally consists of 20th century two-storey development, including detached and semi-detached housing and short terraces. Development under construction at Brodrickland and Hamlands Farm to the south-east

Extent of Built Development	of the site will consist of two to two and a half storey semi-detached dwellings, with some three and a half storey buildings to the east of the site. Possible development to the west of the site (Hindsland) will comprise up to 180 dwellings as bungalows, houses and flats and a medical centre. This will decrease the perceived separation between Polegate and Willingdon. Development immediately borders the site to the west on Eastbourne Road (albeit this is set back from the road by front gardens and/or driveways) and to the south off Oxendean Gardens. Elsewhere, the surrounding development is generally separated from the site by intervening fields and hedgerows. As part of the consented Brodrickland and Hamlands Farm development, the land immediately adjacent to the east of the site is proposed to be used for sports pitches and an ecological area. Eastbourne Road and associated hedgerows and tree cover provides a relatively strong boundary feature between the existing Willingdon settlement edge and the site to the west and south-west, although this has already been breached by existing development to the north and south. Remnant consolidated strip fields (now used partly for informal recreation and playing fields) provide some boundary between the site and existing development to the north-west. The strip fields to the south -west also contribute to the sense of separation between Polegate and Willingdon when travelling between the two along Eastbourne Road, with views available across this open land.

Baseline Visual Character

Baseline Visual Character	The sloping topography and the low, clipped nature of the majority of the hedgerows result in a sense of visual openness across much of the site. There is, however, a slightly greater sense of visual enclosure to the south-west in proximity to Mornings Mill Farm, owing to a higher concentration of mature hedgerow trees in this area. Two public rights of way cross the site, including the 1066 Country Walk, connecting Polegate and Willingdon with the Pevensey Levels. There are views from these routes across the site towards the surrounding residential edges of Polegate and Willingdon. Views are also available into and across the site from many of the adjacent residential areas. Views are also obtained from adjacent roads, in particular Eastbourne Road to the west. Views from further afield are generally restricted by intervening vegetation and/or built form. However, there are some longer-range views towards the site from elevated land within the South Downs National Park to the west and south-west. Views back towards the South Downs are also available from within the site, seen beyond the intervening built-up area. Views are also available north towards the High Weald AONB, albeit these are not as prominent as those towards the national park. Views to the north also feature the Chaucer Business Park and Shepham turbines in the middle-ground, which are detracting features.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park	Long views to the South Downs National Park are visible across the site, with Coombe Hill and Folkington Hill particularly prominent. Views north to the High Weald AONB are also possible in places, albeit the AONB is located over 9km from the site.

How the Site Relates to the Sensitivity of the Wider Assessment Unit

The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment assesses the Polegate and Stone Cross South assessment unit as having **low-moderate sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing) for land within in 2B: Polegate Open Clay Vales and **moderate sensitivity** for land within LCA 1A: Pevensey Levels. The assessment unit is judged to have **moderate sensitivity** to medium-scale residential housing in both LCAs.

Within LCA 1A: Pevensey Levels the sensitivity analysis indicates that the floodplain marsh, historic field pattern, visual openness, intervisibility with the South Downs National Park and the role the landscape plays in the separation of Polegate, Stone Cross and Willingdon increase sensitivity. The flat landform, lack of historic features and proximity to the settlement edges of Polegate and Willingdon and the A22 reduce sensitivity.

In LCA 2B: Polegate Open Clay Vale the sensitivity analysis indicates that the recreational value, intervisibility with the South Downs National Park, visual openness, role the landscape plays in the separation of Polegate, Stone Cross and Willingdon, and prominence of the areas east of the A2270 Eastbourne Road and south-east of Stone Cross increase sensitivity. The low-lying landform, lack of historic features, influence of visible and audible signs of human activity and modern development due to proximity to the settlement edges and busy roads reduce sensitivity.

The Site

The site has more of the characteristics of LCA 2B: Polegate Open Clay Vale and demonstrates many of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit that increase sensitivity, primarily recreational value through the 1066 Country Walk, strong intervisibility with the South Downs National Park, visual openness and the role the site plays in the perceived separation of Polegate and Willingdon. The site also has a small area of floodplain grazing marsh in the south-east and a varied historic field pattern including consolidated strip fields in the north-west, and these parts of the site are more sensitive than the wider assessment unit.

However, the low-lying landform, lack of historic features, proximity to the settlement edges of Polegate and Willingdon, influence of the Eastbourne Road and the railway line in the north-east, and views to the Chaucer Business Park and Shepham turbines decrease sensitivity.

Overall, it is considered that the site conforms to the sensitivity of the assessment unit for land within LCA 1A: Pevensey Levels, and has a **moderate sensitivity** to small-scale and medium-scale residential development.

Potential Effects of Developing the Site and Mitigation/Enhancement Opportunities

Potential Effects as a Result of Development	
Landscape Character and Features	Development on the site could affect: ■ Priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh in the south-east. ■ The strong network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. ■ The intact, small-scale historic field pattern of consolidated strip fields in the north-west. ■ The unsettled character of the floodplain landscape, which provides a rural setting to Polegate and Willingdon. ■ The role the site plays in the perceived separation of Polegate and Willingdon. ■ The recreational opportunities provided by the 1066 Country Walk, and other public rights of way. ■ Long open views across the landscape, including towards the South Downs National Park.
Designated Landscapes	Views to and from the High Weald AONB are at such a distance they are unlikely to have an impact on the defining components of character. Development on the site has the potential to impact the 'diverse, inspirational landscapes and breath-taking views' that are one of the special qualities of the South Downs National Park, as seen from Combe Hill and Folkington Hill.
Settlement Form, Edge and Setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The robust boundary provided by Eastbourne Road, albeit this has already been breached by development to the north and south of the site. ■ The rural setting the site provides to the settlements of Polegate and Willingdon to the west, north-west and south-east. ■ The perceived separation between Polegate and Willingdon, and the sense of travelling between settlements along the Eastbourne Road.
Visual Amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Users of public rights of way within and adjacent to the site, including the 1066 Country Walk and Cuckoo Trail. ■ Informal users of the recreation ground and playing fields to the west of the site.

	■ Local community to the north-west of the site, including residents at Spurway Park and Heron Ridge. ■ Local community adjacent to the site along Eastbourne Road to the west and south-west. ■ Residents within the site at Mornings Mill Farm. ■ Residents to the south of the site at Oxendean Gardens. ■ Future residents of the consented development at Brodrickland and Hamlands Farm to the south-east. ■ People travelling on roads adjacent to the site, including Eastbourne Road. ■ Visitors to the South Downs National Park, in particular to Folkington and Coombe Hills.
Cumulative Issues	
Potential for Cumulative Effects with Other Large Strategic Site	The site is not in proximity to any other strategic sites considered in this assessment. However, as noted above the site is adjacent to development under construction at Brodrickland and Hamlands Farm, and potential development at Hindsland to the west. Development of this site would result in the perceived separation between Willingdon and Polegate being reduced.
Potential for Mitigation and Enhancement	

Landscape and visual effects from development could be avoided /minimised by following the guidance below:

- Development should be set back from the priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh in the south-east of the site.
- Additional planting should be used to screen new development and maintain the rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any 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. Planting species should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible.
- Hedgerows should be retained where practicable, protecting mature specimen trees. Opportunities to enhance hedgerows should also be taken, replacing those affected by development and strengthening the local habitat network.
- Set development back from Eastbourne Road to retain a sense of openness along the settlement boundary and to replicate the character of existing development along the western side of the road; this will also help to retain the perceived sense of separation between Polegate and Willingdon hen travelling along Eastbourne Road.
- Site development to include corridors to retain and frame existing views towards the South Downs to the west and south-west.
- Consider views from the South Downs National Park, siting development to avoid the impression of continual development between Polegate and Willingdon.
- Retain areas of historic field pattern where practicable, including consolidated strip fields in the north-west of the site, by avoiding or reducing development in these areas; this will also help to retain the perceived sense of separation between Polegate and Willingdon.
- Minimise the visibility of development from public rights of way within and adjacent to the site as far as possible, to help retain the rural character enjoyed along these routes through the site.
- Retain areas of open space within the east of the site to form a buffer between development and the Pevensey Levels and Eastbourne Marshes to the east of the railway line.
- Consider opportunities to integrate development with new development surrounding the site, to ensure a cohesive character to the expanded settlement.
- Introduced built form to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of its surroundings by using high quality materials suggestive of the local vernacular.
- The height of development should integrate with the adjacent surrounding settlement edges, both existing and consented.
- Conserve and enhance the priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh in the south-east of the site, and consider linkages with the Eastbourne Marshes BOA to the east of the railway line.
- Enhance local connectivity by retaining and improving pedestrian and cycle routes through the site, including connections between the settlement edges of Polegate and Willingdon (including the consented development at Brodrickland and Hamlands Farm) and the Cuckoo Trail and other public rights of way to the east.

- Lower ground within the site could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features, incorporating habitat creation.

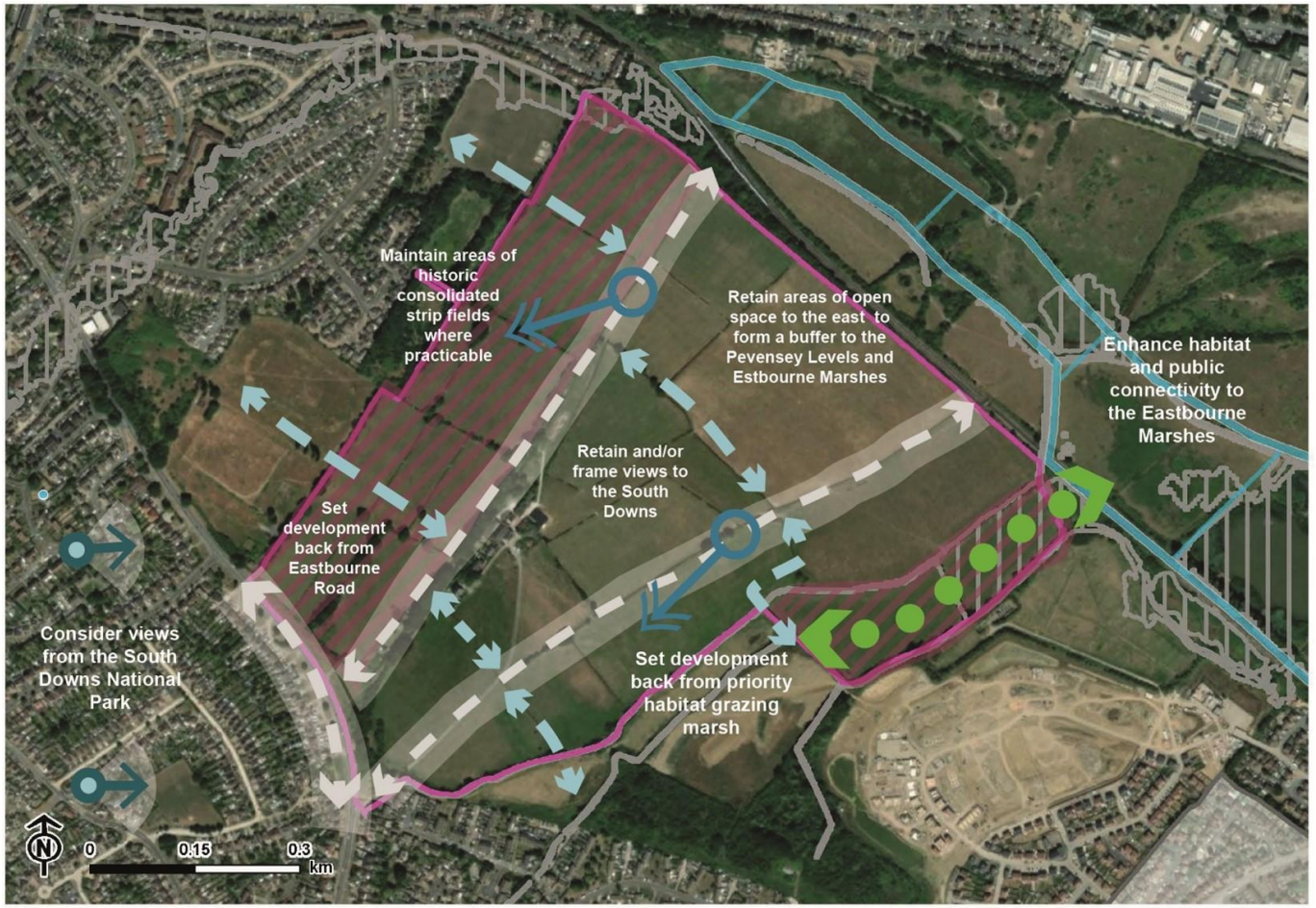
Summary

The site is located adjacent to the settlement edges of Polegate and Willingdon, including development under construction at Brodrickland and Hamlands Farm to the east. Development of this site would extend development along Eastbourne Road, reducing the perceived gap between Polegate and Willingdon.

If the site is considered for development, it would need to be planned with care and consideration, especially in relation to the key sensitive features of the site, including areas of priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh in the south-east, historic consolidated strip fields in the north-west, the rural character of the public rights of way through the site, visual openness and intervisibility with the South Downs National Park. Development should be set back from Eastbourne Road to relate to the existing set backs on the settlement edges of Polegate and Willingdon, to retain some open views for residents along Eastbourne Road and to help retain some sense of separation between Polegate and Willingdon. Views to the South Downs National Park should be incorporated into the design of the development. Opportunities should be considered for enhanced habitat linkages between priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh in the south-east of the site and the adjacent Eastbourne Marshes.

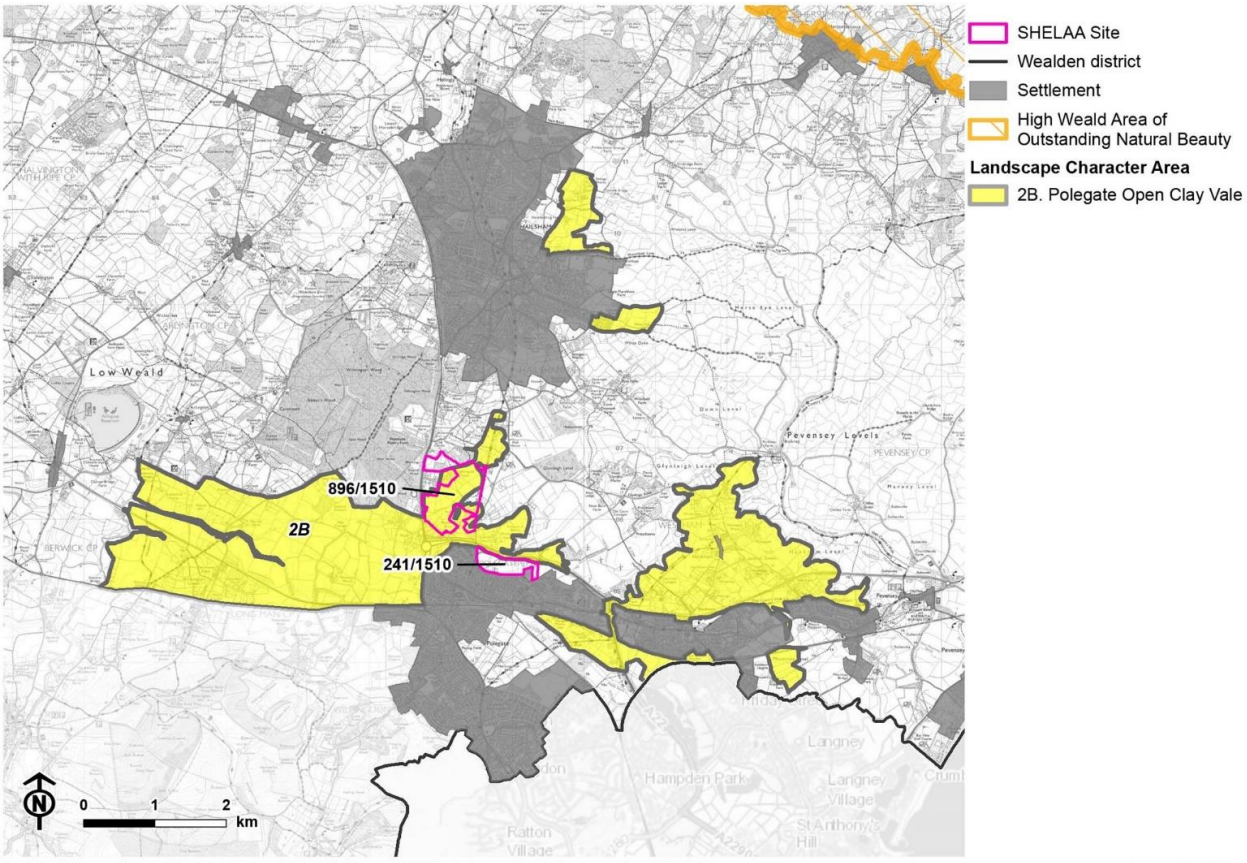
A summary map indicating key constraints and opportunities, including areas more sensitive to development are shown on **Figure A.6** below.

Figure A.5: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



LCA 2B: Polegate Open Clay Vale

Figure A.6: Site locations in relation to the Landscape Character Area



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Source: OS, WDC

Landscape Character Type (LCT) and Area (LCA)	LCT 2: Open Clay Vales LCA 2B: Polegate Open Clay Vale The east of site 896/1510 lies within LCA 1A: Pevensey Levels, and the north-west within LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale. Sites 241/1510 and 236/3370 were not assessed as part of the Landscape Character Assessment. All three sites demonstrate characteristics most related to LCA 2B: Polegate Open Clay Vale.
LCA Description	LCA 2B: Polegate Open Clay Vale (Low Weald) is a low-lying landscape of mixed arable and pasture farmland, with a small-scale settlement pattern linked by a network of enclosed rural road corridors. The landscape comprises small-medium fields with a strong hedgerow network. Limited tree cover leads to open views south towards the South Downs. The rural character of the landscape is compromised by its proximity to Hailsham and Polegate and the busy A27 and A22 (that are duelled carriageways in part), which cross the landscape.
Valued Features and Key Qualities of the LCA	■ The small streams and drainage ditches that cross the LCA. ■ The scattered woodlands and hedgerow boundaries with mature hedgerow trees. ■ Soils that are under permanent pasture and woodland.

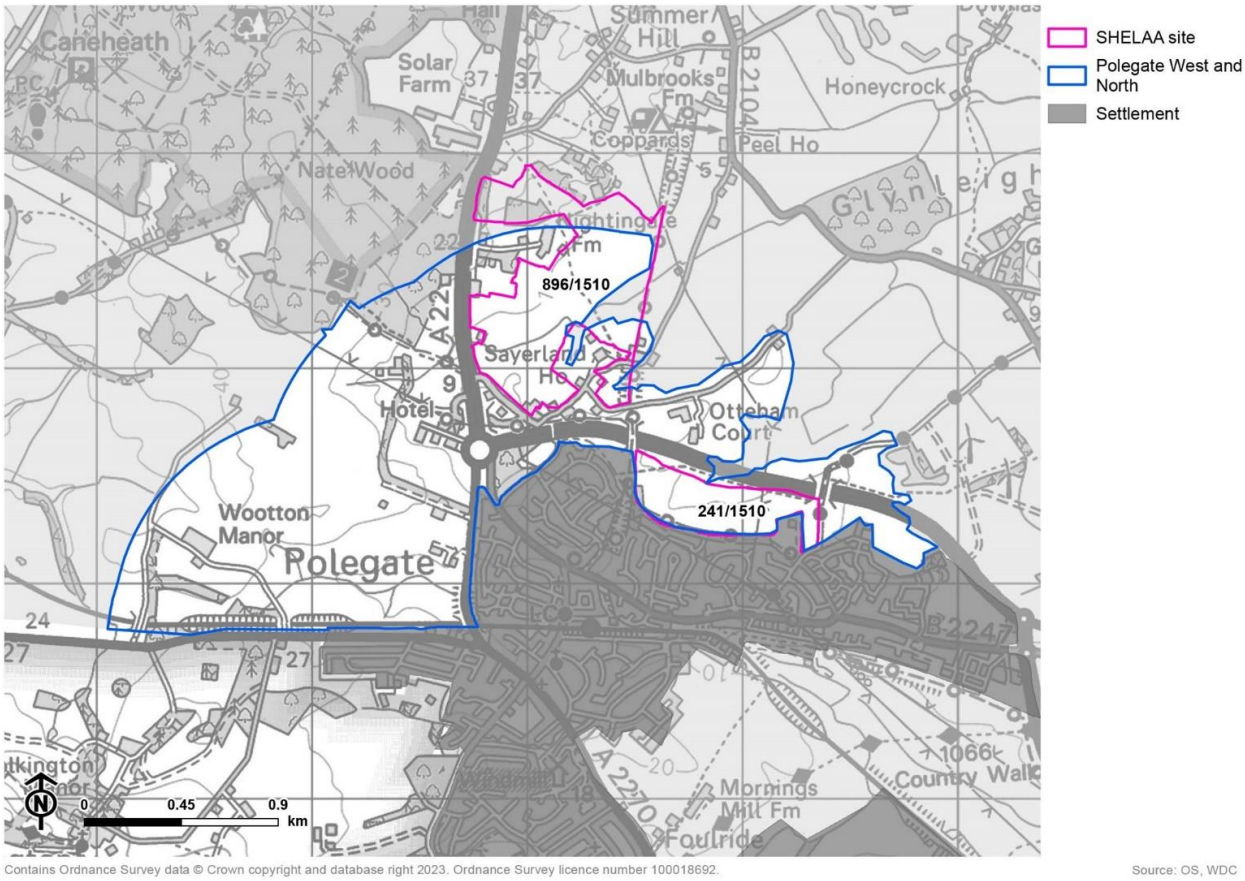
	■ The pattern of woodlands, some ancient, traditional orchards and hedgerow network with mature hedgerow trees. ■ The floodplain grazing marsh and lowland fen associated with the Pevensey Levels. ■ The mixed agricultural character. ■ The historic features of the landscape (historic field patterns, historic buildings and designed landscape at Wootton Manor). ■ The vernacular of flint and brick. ■ The public rights of way and promoted routes such as the 1066 Country Walk. ■ Open views from the LCA to the South Downs, Abbot's Wood and over the Pevensey Levels.

Landscape Sensitivity Context: Polegate West and North Assessment Unit

Two potential development sites are considered within the Polegate West and North assessment unit:

- 896/1510 – Land at North Polegate
- 241/1510 – Land at Shepham Lane, Polegate

Figure A.7: Site locations in relation to the assessment unit



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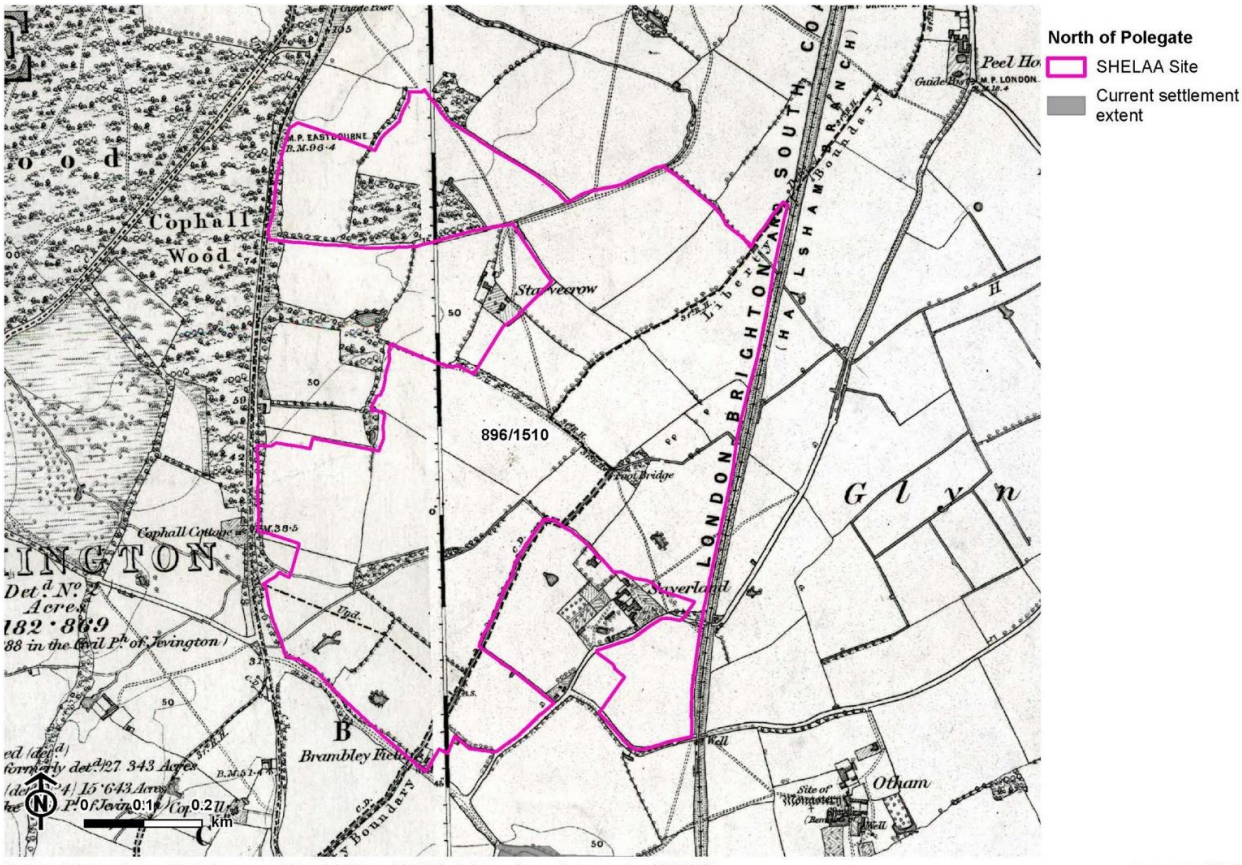
Source: OS, WDC

Settlement Context

Settlement Location and Context	Polegate is a town in the south-east of the district, at the transition between the Pevensey Levels (LCT 1) and the Open Clay Vales (LCT 2). It lies to the north of Eastbourne, west of Stone Cross and south of Hailsham.
Settlement Evolution	Polegate developed along the Roman road from Pevensey to Lewes, on ground above the floodplain. The town grew significantly from the 1840s following the opening of the railway between Brighton and Hastings via Lewes, with later branches connecting Eastbourne and Hailsham. Polegate became a significant junction, serving the market town of Hailsham to the north and the local brick making industry. As a result, the town expanded, with development predominantly to the north, east and south. Although the railway routes to Hailsham and Horam closed in the 20th century, the town has continued to expand and recent 21st century development has been predominantly on its northern and eastern edges.

Settlement Pattern and Edge Character	Polegate is contained to the north and north-west by the A27 Polegate Bypass, to the east by the A22 Golden Jubilee Way (which provides some separation between Polegate and Stone Cross), and to the south-east by the 'Brighton to Eastbourne' railway line and associated branch (now dismantled and in use as the Cuckoo Trail). The Cuckoo Trail provides the northern settlement boundary, although this has been breached in the 20th century by residential development north of Dittons Road, and commercial development at Dittons Corner. To the south, development has extended along Eastbourne Road (predominantly to the west of the road) which has caused perceived coalescence with Willingdon. However, open farmland to the east of Eastbourne Road provides some sense of separation between Polegate and Willingdon. This will be impacted by development under construction at Brodrickland and Hamlands Farm, Willingdon, and potential development at Hindsland along Eastbourne Road. The settlement edges generally consist of two storey 20th or 21st century housing, with the exception of Chaucer Business Park in the east which consists of larger scale low-rise industrial and commercial units. Vegetation along the major road corridors encloses the settlement, particularly to the north, north-west and east. To the west, small woodlands enclose the settlement, including ancient woodland at Wannock Coppice and Shaw.

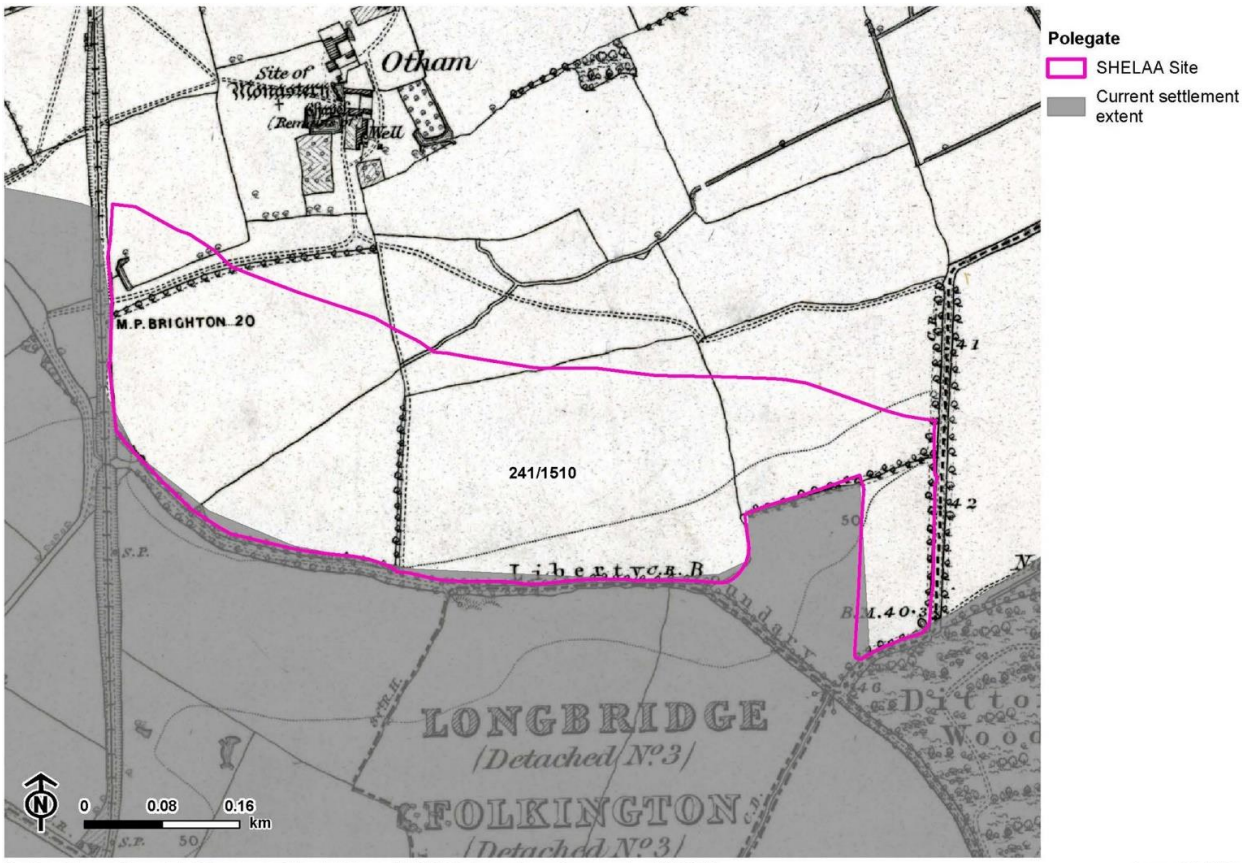
Figure A.8: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



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Source: OS, WDC

Figure A.9: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



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Source: OS, WDC

The Landscape Sensitivity of Polegate West and North Assessment Unit Described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA Assessment Unit	Polegate West and North		
Landscape Sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA 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
	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High
Key Sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to develop identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	■ Mature deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin). ■ The strong network of thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees. ■ Small-scale intact historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts. ■ Historic features at Otham Court and the designed landscape at Wootton Manor. ■ The limited settlement within the landscape. ■ The strong settlement boundaries of Polegate provided by the A27 and A22. ■ Contribution to the sense of separation between Polegate and Hailsham. ■ The wooded horizons provided by Ogg's Wood. ■ Occasional views to the South Downs National Park.		

LSA Guidance	■ Locate development adjacent to the existing Polegate settlement edge, south of the A27, using existing vegetation to integrate development into the landscape. ■ Retain and protect broadleaved woodland. Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow an appropriate buffer around them. ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Wilmington Woodlands and Watershed, Cuckoo Trail Habitat Link and Wooton Manor Grasslands Link BOA, where possible including the management, creation and extension of woodland and wetland habitats. ■ Retain, protect and enhance hedgerow and / or in-field trees, including tree clumps, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. 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. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities around Wootton Manor and Otham Court. ■ Ensure development north of the A27 does not lead to a perception of coalescence with Hailsham. ■ Consider views from public rights of way, including the Cuckoo Trail when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape. ■ Integrate any development carefully into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using species that are in character with the wider landscape and native where appropriate. ■ There may be opportunities to use development and associated planting to reduce the impact and better integrate the modern development at Cophall Services and on Bay Tree Lane. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced.

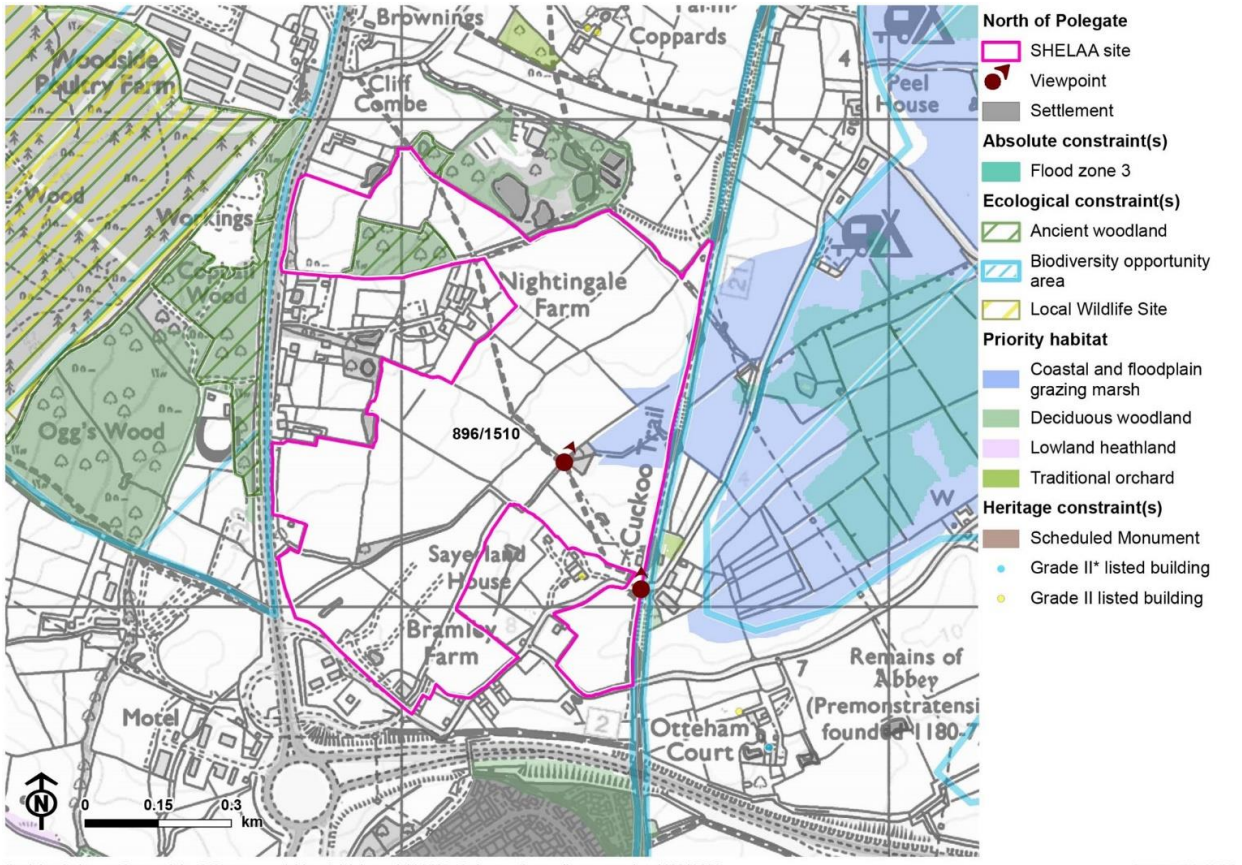
Site Assessment: North of Polegate

Site Details

SHELAA Site Name/ Reference	Land north of Polegate	896/1510
Potential Development	Employment B8 use (Storage and Distribution).	
Site Location	The site is located to the north of Polegate, between the A22 Polegate Road to the west and the dismantled 'Eridge to Polegate' railway line (Cuckoo Trail) to the east. The A27 Polegate Bypass separates the site from the edge of Polegate.	

Site Baseline

Figure A.10: Site location and constraints



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Source: OS, WDC

Representative Site Photos



Viewpoint 1: Grazing fields with mature hedgerow trees. Abbot's Wood and Willington Wood form a wooded backdrop.



Viewpoint 2: Mature hedgerow trees and vegetation leads to semi-enclosed views into the site from the Cuckoo Trail. Fields subdivided for horse grazing.

Baseline Landscape Character in relation to the Wider Assessment Unit

Key Features and Qualities of the Site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	**Landform and drainage** The site is undulating, rising gradually from the Pevensey Levels in the east to slightly higher ground to the north-west. The land therefore drains west to east, with small streams in the south and north of the site. This is typical of the assessment unit. **Natural character** The site contains land in both pasture and arable use, with horse grazing common in the east. One area of ancient woodland and priority habitat deciduous woodland (Nightingale Farm Shaw) is located in the north-west of the site. A small area of priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh is also recorded in the east. The remainder of the site has no recorded priority habitats. However, there are hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees along Otham Court Lane and Sayerland Lane, and within the internal boundaries of the site. Extensive tree cover also lines the A22 on the western boundary, and the Cuckoo Trail is relatively well-vegetated. The latter is designated as the Cuckoo Trail Habitat Link BOA. This is typical of the assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** The historic field pattern is typical of the wider assessment unit, comprising medieval cohesive assarts and early medieval to early modern planned private enclosure. The historic field pattern is largely intact, although there has been some hedgerow boundary loss and the field pattern was disrupted by construction of the 'Eridge to Polegate' railway (now dismantled and in use as the Cuckoo Trail). There are no recorded historic features within the site, although the Grade II listed Sayerland House lies within 40m of the site. **Recreational value** Two public rights of way cross the site, and the Cuckoo Trail lies adjacent to the eastern edge. This is typical of the wider assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** Built development within the site is limited to agricultural buildings at Bramley Farm in the south-west. Adjacent small-scale industrial units along Bay Tree Lane to the south and Haulaway site to the north of the site introduce human activity. Proximity to Polegate, the A27 and A22 reduce dark skies and tranquillity in the west, south and south-west, and have a modern influence on the landscape of the site. Away from the roads, the site retains a rural character and intervening

	vegetation reduces the visual influence of the road infrastructure. This is typical of the assessment unit. The presence of equestrian facilities in the south and east, a number of paddocks defined by horse tape and post and wire fencing, reduces the traditional rural character of the site in these locations.
Designations which are Constraints to Development	Ancient woodland is recorded at Nightingale Farm Shaw in the north-west. A small area of priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh is also recorded in the east.
Settlement Form and Edge Character and Extent of Built Development	The existing settlement edge of Polegate to the south of the site is strongly defined by the well-treed route of the A27. The woodland and the A27 separate the site from Polegate. This limits the relationship between the site and Polegate. Development close to the site is typical of the assessment unit and consists of scattered individual houses and cottages along Otham Court Lane and Sayerland Lane, and small groups of houses along the A22. There are also some small-scale industrial units off Bay Tree Lane to the south and off Summer Hill Lane to the north. These buildings are out of character with the wider landscape but are generally screened from view by mature vegetation.

Baseline Visual Character

Baseline Visual Character	The site has a generally enclosed character, typical of the assessment unit. The gently undulating topography and presence of woodland and well-established hedgerows within and surrounding the site generally restricts views into and across the site. Longer distance views are restricted by mature vegetation and woodland, including woodland along the A22 to the west and A27 to the south. However, two footpaths cross the site, from which there are limited views across the site. The Cuckoo Trail runs along the course of a dismantled railway to the east of the site, although views into the site are partially restricted by mature vegetation lining the route. There are however some filtered views into eastern parts of the site. There may also be some filtered views into the site from neighbouring residential properties on Otham Court Lane, Sayerland Lane and Bay Tree Lane to the south, as well as from the local road network.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park	There are limited glimpsed views of the distinctive South Downs National Park to the south, particularly from the more elevated parts of the site to the north.

How the Site Relates to the Sensitivity of the Wider Assessment Unit

The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development assesses the Polegate West and North assessment unit to have a **moderate-high sensitivity** to commercial / industrial development. The assessment unit indicates that the priority habitat deciduous woodlands, some of ancient origin, and floodplain grazing marsh, together with the strong hedgerow network, small-scale intact historic field patterns, occasional views to the South Downs National Park and physical separation from Polegate due to the A22 and A27 increase sensitivity. Sensitivity is reduced by the assessment unit's flat landform, its limited historic features, its enclosed character and presence of the service station at Cophall roundabout.

The sensitivity analysis notes that areas of ecologically valued broadleaved woodland, including ancient woodland, are of higher sensitivity than the wider assessment unit. The analysis also notes that areas immediately adjacent to the Cophall roundabout may have a slightly lower sensitivity to medium-scale and large-scale development as larger-scale buildings are already present in these locations.

The Site

The site demonstrates most of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit, including ancient woodland at Nightingale Farm Shaw, proximity to the Cuckoo Trail Habitat BOA, complex historic field pattern, limited development within the site, occasional views to the South Downs National Park, and strong settlement boundaries of Polegate provided by the A27.

It is considered that the site conforms to the **moderate-high sensitivity** to new commercial / industrial development that has been determined for the whole assessment unit.

Potential Effects of Developing the Site and Mitigation/Enhancement Opportunities

Potential Effects as a Result of Development	
Landscape Character and Features	Development on the site could affect: ■ The small watercourses, with some priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh in the east. ■ The mature woodland at Nightingale Farm Shaw in the north-west of the site, which is designated as ancient woodland and priority habitat deciduous woodland. ■ The strong network of hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees. ■ The intact historic field patterns, including medieval assarts in the north and south. ■ The limited settlement within the landscape. ■ The strong settlement boundary of Polegate provided by the A22. ■ The sites rural character away from the A27 and A22. ■ Occasional views to the South Downs National Park from the north of the site.
Designated Landscapes	Views to the South Downs National Park are at such a distance that development on the site is unlikely to have a significant impact on the special qualities of the National Park.
Settlement Form, Edge and Setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The role the site has as part of the wooded arable and pasture landscape that forms the wider rural setting of Polegate. Development would cross the strong boundary feature formed by the well-treed route of the A22. ■ The rural gap the site contributes to between Polegate and Hailsham to the north.
Visual Amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Users of local public rights of way that cross the site. ■ Users of promoted Cuckoo Trail to the east. ■ Residents on Otham Court Lane, Sayerland Lane and Bay Tree Lane to the south, including Sayerland House and Bramley Farm. ■ Residents on the A22 to the west of the site. ■ Users of the local road network, including Otham Court Lane, Sayerland Lane and Bay Tree Lane.
Cumulative Issues	
Potential for Cumulative Effects with Other Large Strategic Site	Although the site lies within 230m of Land at Shepham Lane, Polegate, there is very limited intervisibility between the two sites due to intervening vegetation, particularly along the A27. However, if both sites were to be developed, the impact on the Cuckoo Trail should be considered. Users of the trail are likely to experience sequential views of development when travelling along the route.
Potential for Mitigation and Enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects from development could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Retain and enhance priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh in the east, providing connections to the Pevensey Levels.	

- Retain and protect ancient woodland at Nightingale Farm Shaw and utilise new planting to enhance connectivity with other woods, shaws and the mature hedgerow network.
- Development should avoid and be set back from the ancient woodland at Nightingale Farm Shaw in the north-west with a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage . 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).
- Enhance and strengthen the hedgerow network, replacing post and wire fencing with hedgerows where possible, to strengthen the connectivity of the local habitat network. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible.
- Retain and enhance hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees within the site where practicable.
- Retain the intact historic field patterns, including medieval assarts to the north-west and south-east, where possible, reinstating internal hedgerow boundaries where these have been lost.
- Consider the setting of Grade II listed Sayerland House when siting development.
- Situate development in the southern and western areas of the site to relate better to the existing commercial development on Bay Tree Lane, the A22 and nearby development at Cophall Services (to the south and west of the A22).
- Introduced built forms should be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials and appropriate colours.
- Additional planting should be used to screen new development and maintain the enclosed rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any 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. Planting species should be in character with the locality and native where possible / appropriate.
- The height of any built form should be considered so as to reduce any adverse visual impact on the surrounding rural landscape, including any views from the South Downs National Park.
- Enhance public access through the south-west of the site, providing links to surrounding public rights of way including the Cuckoo Trail and rights of way west of the A22 (e.g. through Ogg's Wood and Nate Wood).
- Set development back from the Cuckoo Trail and public rights of way through the site, helping to retain the rural character of views into the site.
- Create a more coherent character along Bay Tree Lane, using planting to integrate existing and new commercial development into the landscape.

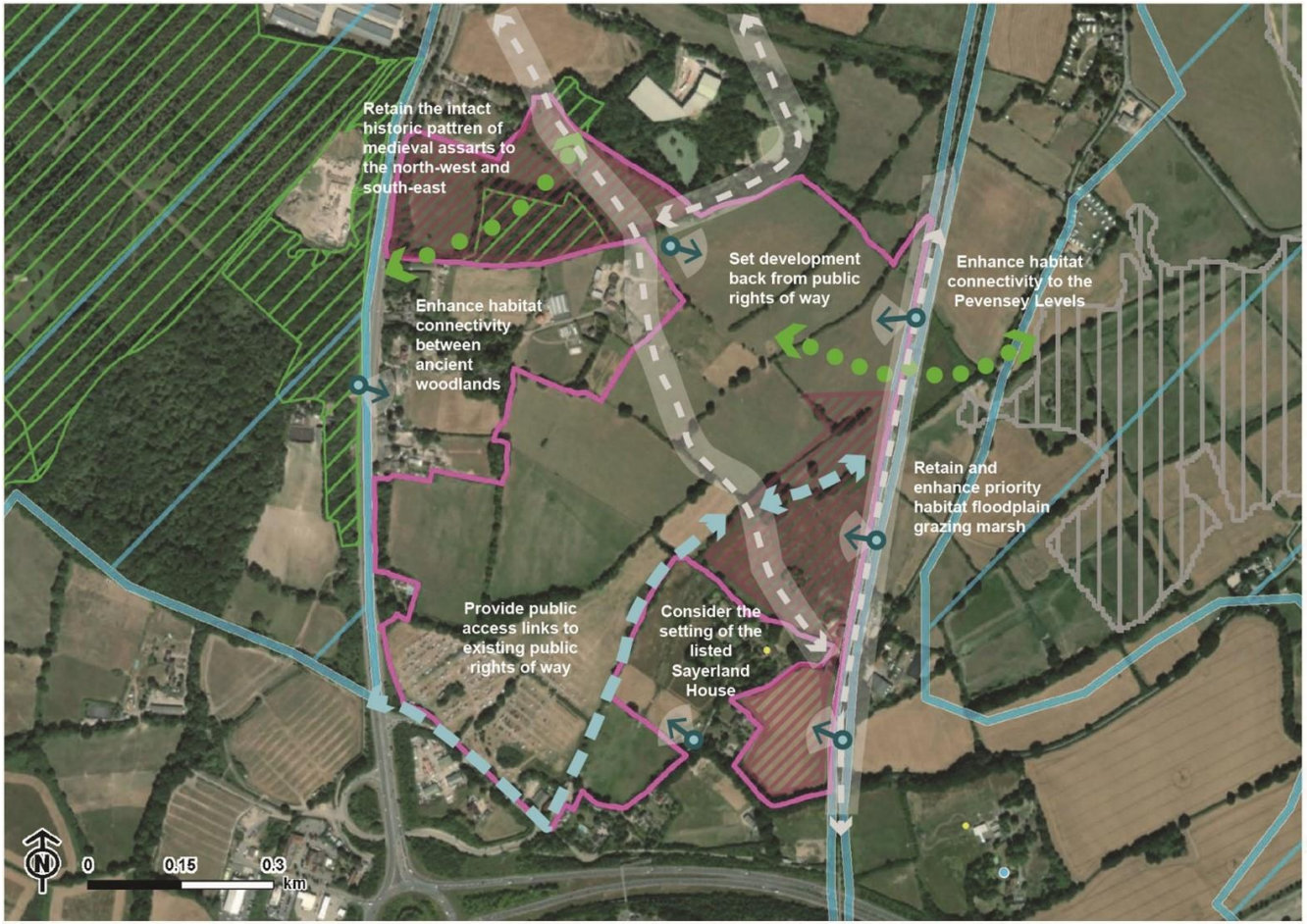
Summary

The site is located north of Polegate, and east of the A22. Development on this site would cross the strong boundary feature formed by the wooded A27. Large-scale commercial development would be at odds with the current limited and small-scale settlement pattern, despite the presence of some small-scale commercial buildings off Bay Tree Lane and Summerhill Lane to the south and north of the site.

If the site is considered for commercial/industrial development, any proposed development would need to be planned with great care and consideration of key sensitivities, including ancient woodland at Nightingale Farm Shaw, priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh in the east, intact historic field patterns, strong hedgerow network including mature hedgerow trees, access through the site on public rights of way and views into the site from the Cuckoo Trail. Development should be predominantly located in south-western areas of the site to relate better to the A22 to the west and existing commercial development at Bay Tree Lane and at the nearby Cophall Services.

A summary map indicating the key constraints and opportunities, including areas more sensitive to development are shown on **Figure A.12** below.

Figure A.11: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



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

Source: WDC, NE, HE

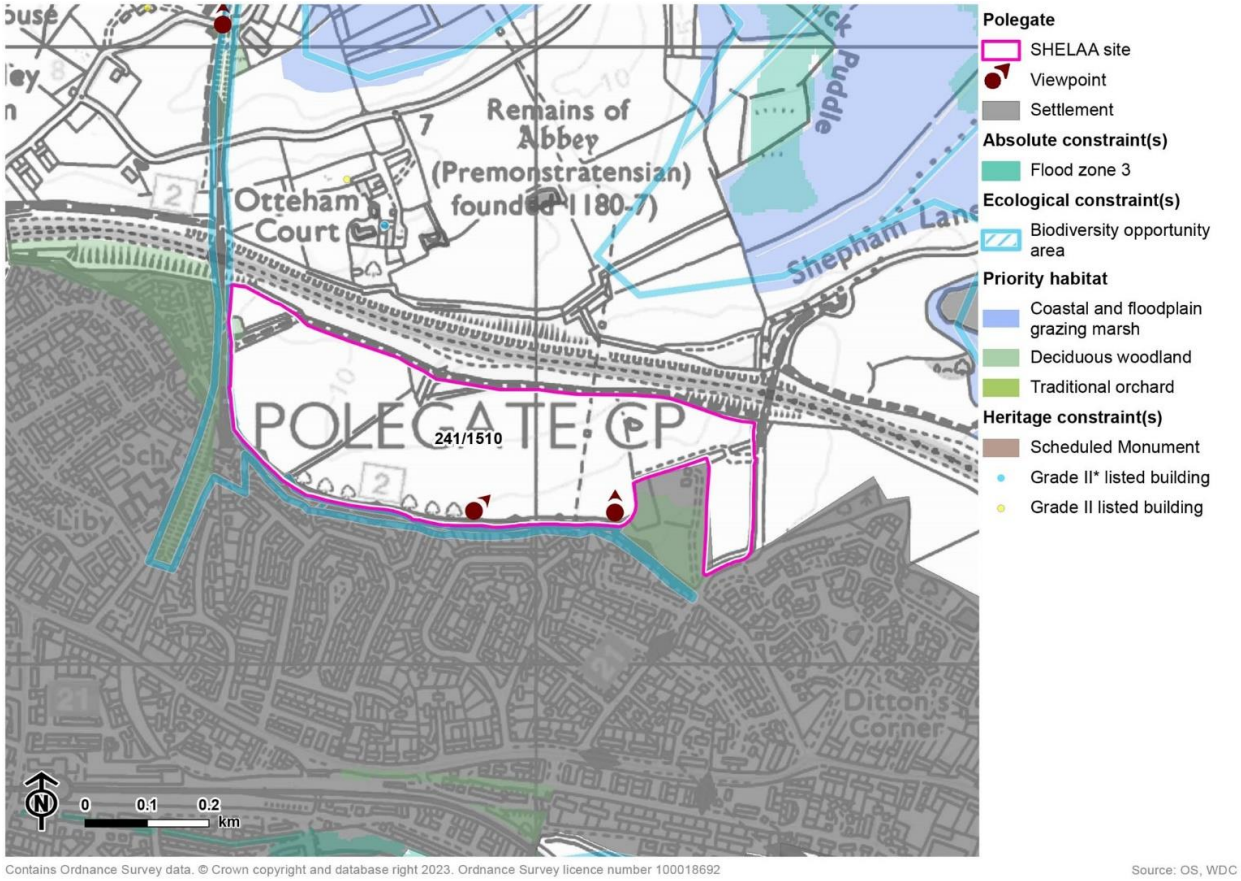
Site Assessment: Land at Shepham Lane

Site Details

SHELAA Site Name/ Reference	Land at Shepham Lane, Polegate	241/1510
Potential Development	300 residential dwellings.	
Site Location	The site is located to the north of Polegate. The northern boundary is marked by woodland adjacent to the A27 Polegate Bypass, while the southern and western boundaries are defined by woodland along the Cuckoo Trail, which follows the northern settlement edge of Polegate. The eastern boundary is formed by Shepham Lane, which is also the route of National Cycle Network route 21. A site to the south-east of the site at Little Shepham has been granted planning permission for up to 108 dwellings.	

Site Baseline

Figure A.12: Site location and constraints



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Source: OS, WDC

Representative Site Photos



Viewpoint 1: Open arable fields with views across wooded A27 to High Weald in the background. An electricity pylon reduces rurality.



Viewpoint 2: Enclosed character along the Cuckoo Trail due to mature trees and vegetation, restricts views into the site and provides separation between the site and the settlement edge of Polegate.

Baseline Landscape Character in relation to the Wider Assessment Unit

Key Features and Qualities of the Site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	**Landform** The site is largely flat, rising gently from 10m in the north to 15m AOD in the south and east. This is generally in keeping with the assessment unit. **Natural character** The site is predominantly arable farmland, with a small area of grazing in the east. Internal boundaries are varied, with some low hedgerows and some mature hedgerow trees. External field boundaries are more intact and contain numerous mature hedgerow trees, resulting in a semi-enclosed character. A small area of priority habitat deciduous woodland is recorded in the west. The hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees provide landscape structure and habitat connectivity to support biodiversity. This is typical of the wider assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** The site is recorded as having a regular piecemeal enclosure pattern, which also relates to fields north of the A27. This is less sensitive than the wider assessment unit, which has a varied field pattern. The field pattern of the site has had some alteration in the north-west due to the construction of the A27 and some hedgerow loss in the centre of the site. There are no recorded historic features within the site, which is typical of the assessment unit. **Recreational character** Public rights of way allow access along the boundaries of the site, which is a greater level of access than the wider assessment unit. The Cuckoo Trail runs along the western and southern boundaries of the site, a public right of way runs along the northern boundary, and National Cycle Route 21 runs along the eastern boundary. **Perceptual aspects** There is no development within the site, which is typical of the assessment unit. Proximity to the A27 reduces tranquillity, although views of the A27 are largely contained by woodland along the road corridor. An electricity pylon route in the east introduces infrastructure elements to the site. These are typical feature of the wider assessment unit.

Designations which are Constraints to Development	A single TPO is on the southern boundary to the site along the Cuckoo Trail.
Settlement Form and Edge Character and Extent of Built Development	The settlement edge of Polegate lies to the south of the site, and planning permission has been granted for 108 dwellings at Little Shepham, adjacent to the site to the south-east, and for 40 dwellings at Greenland Gardens adjacent to the site to the west. The site itself provides some limited rural setting to Polegate, although it is cut off from the wider countryside by the A27. This is atypical of the assessment unit. The existing settlement edge of Polegate to the south of the site consists of 20th century semi-detached bungalows, arranged in closes facing away from the site. The settlement edge to the west of the site comprises 20th century semi-detached bungalows and two storey houses. To the south-east of the site 21st century development off Kensington Way is a mixture of two and three storey houses and apartments. The Cuckoo Trail, with mature trees and hedgerows, provides a strong boundary feature between the site and the existing settlement edge to the south and west, as noted in the assessment unit. No development in Polegate has crossed the Cuckoo Trail, which is the historic extent of development. However, permitted development to the south-east of the site at Little Shepham will cross the Cuckoo Trail.

Baseline Visual Character

Baseline Visual Character	The generally flat topography within the site and mature vegetation around the site provides a semi-enclosed character, typical of the assessment unit. Views from the north are further restricted by vegetated embankments along the A27, and views from the west, south and east by intervening built form and vegetation. Clear views are available across the site from the public right of way that runs along its northern boundary, largely parallel with the A27. Some views into the site are also available through gaps in vegetation from the Cuckoo Trail, which runs to the west and immediately south of the site. Whilst some filtered views are available from properties immediately to the south of the site (e.g. on Hythe Close and North Close), particularly in winter months, the mature vegetation along the Cuckoo Trail and Shepham Lane generally restricts views into the site from the settlement edge further to the south and east. There are also some limited long distance views north-east towards the High Weald from within the site, albeit partially restricted by vegetation along the A27.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park	There are distant views from within the site to the High Weald AONB to the north-east, above the treeline along the A27. This is not typical of the wider assessment unit. Views of the South Downs National Park are possible from areas surrounding the site to the south and south-east, including Shepham Lane, and may be possible from within the site. This is typical of the assessment unit. Intervisibility with the South Downs National Park is likely to be filtered through intervening vegetation along the southern boundary.

How the Site Relates to the Sensitivity of the Wider Assessment Unit

The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment assesses the Polegate West and North assessment unit to have a **moderate sensitivity** to small-scale (2-2.5 storey) and medium-scale (3-4 storey flats) residential development. The LSA indicates that the priority habitat deciduous woodlands, some of ancient origin, and floodplain grazing marsh, strong hedgerow network, small-scale intact historic field patterns, occasional views to the South Downs National Park and physical separation from Polegate due to the A22 and A27 increase sensitivity. Sensitivity is reduced by the flat landform, limited historic features, enclosed character and presence of the service station at Cophall roundabout.

The sensitivity analysis notes that areas of ecologically valued broadleaved woodland, including ancient woodland, are of higher sensitivity than the wider assessment unit. The analysis also notes that areas south of the A27 may have a lower

sensitivity to small-scale residential development as they would relate to the existing settlement form, and be contained by the strong boundary feature of the A27.

The Site

The site demonstrates some of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit, including priority habitat deciduous woodland which is within the west of the site, its strong hedgerow network and views to the South Downs National Park. The site does not have an intact historic field pattern, and is closer to the settlement edge of Polegate, although the Cuckoo Trail provides a boundary feature. It lies south of the A27, which is indicated in the wider assessment unit as an area having lower sensitivity, and a pylon route through the site also reduces its sensitivity.

Overall it is considered that the site has a slightly lower sensitivity than the wider assessment unit, and is of **low-moderate sensitivity** to small and medium-scale residential development.

Potential Effects of Developing the Site and Mitigation/Enhancement Opportunities

Potential Effects as a Result of Development	
Landscape Character and Features	Development on the site could affect: ■ The priority habitat deciduous woodland in the west. ■ The strong network of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. ■ The unsettled character of the landscape, which contributes some limited rural setting to Polegate. ■ Recreational opportunities provided by the Cuckoo Trail and other public rights of way. ■ Long open views from the site, including towards the High Weald AONB to the north-east.
Designated Landscapes	Views to and from the High Weald AONB are at such a distance that they are unlikely to have an impact on the defining components of character. Views to and from the South Downs National Park are at such a distance they are unlikely to have an impact on the special qualities.
Settlement Form, Edge and Setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The robust northern settlement boundary of Polegate provided by the Cuckoo Trail. ■ The rural setting the site provides to the settlement edge of Polegate. ■ The separation between the settlement edge and the A27 provided in part by the site.
Visual Amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Users of public rights of way within and adjacent to the site, including the Cuckoo Trail and National Cycle Route 21. ■ Residents immediately to the south of the site, particularly in winter. ■ Future residents of the consented development at Little Shepham to the south-east and Greenland Gardens to the west.
Cumulative Issues	
Potential for Cumulative Effects with Other Large Strategic Site	Although the site lies within 230m of Land at North Polegate, there is very limited intervisibility between the two sites due to intervening vegetation, particularly along the A27. However, if both sites were to be developed, the impact on the Cuckoo Trail should be considered. Users of the trail are likely to experience sequential views of development when travelling along the route.
Potential for Mitigation and Enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects from development could be avoided /minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Conserve, protect and enhance the priority habitat deciduous woodland in the west of the site. ■ Take opportunities to enhance the ecological networks as identified in the Cuckoo Trail Habitat Link BOA. ■ Conserve, protect and enhance the mature vegetation and hedgerows within and adjoining the site.	

- Hedgerows and surrounding areas of woodland (including along the A27 to the north) should be retained, protecting mature specimen trees. Opportunities to enhance hedgerows should also be taken, replacing hedgerows if they are affected by development and strengthening the local habitat network. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible / appropriate.
- Retain areas of open space within the north of the site to form a buffer between development and the A27, maintaining some sense of openness between the road and the new settlement edge, particularly where there is an alternative strong boundary feature (e.g. well-established hedgerow).
- Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built form, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built form within the landscape. Planting species should be in character with the locality and use native species where possible / appropriate.
- Enhance local connectivity by retaining and improving pedestrian and cycle routes through the site, including connections between the site and consented development at Little Shepham to the south-east and Greenland Gardens to the west.
- Consider opportunities for view corridors to retain views, including from the Cuckoo Trail, towards the High Weald.
- Minimise visibility of any proposed development from the various public rights of way within and adjacent to the site, retaining the rural character enjoyed along the public rights of way through the site.
- Retain and enhance existing mature vegetation and hedgerows to provide enclosure and screening for the site.
- Consider opportunities to integrate development with the recently constructed development at Kensington Way to the south-east and consented development at Little Shepham and Greenland Garden, to ensure a cohesive character to the expanded settlement.
- 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.

Summary

If the site is considered for small- or medium-scale residential development, any proposed development would need to be planned with great care and consideration of key sensitivities. These include the priority habitat deciduous woodland, strong hedgerow network, and access along the site boundaries, views to the north-east to the High Weald AONB and views into the site from the public rights of way, the Cuckoo Trail in particular. The north of the site is more sensitive to development as it provides a sense of separation between the A27 and settlement edge of Polegate. The Cuckoo Trail should retain its rural, semi-enclosed character. Careful consideration should be given to the relationship between the site, the existing settlement edge of Polegate and consented developments to the east and west.

A summary map indicating the key constraints and opportunities, including areas more sensitive to development are shown on **Figure A.15** below.

Figure A.13: Summary map of constraints and opportunities

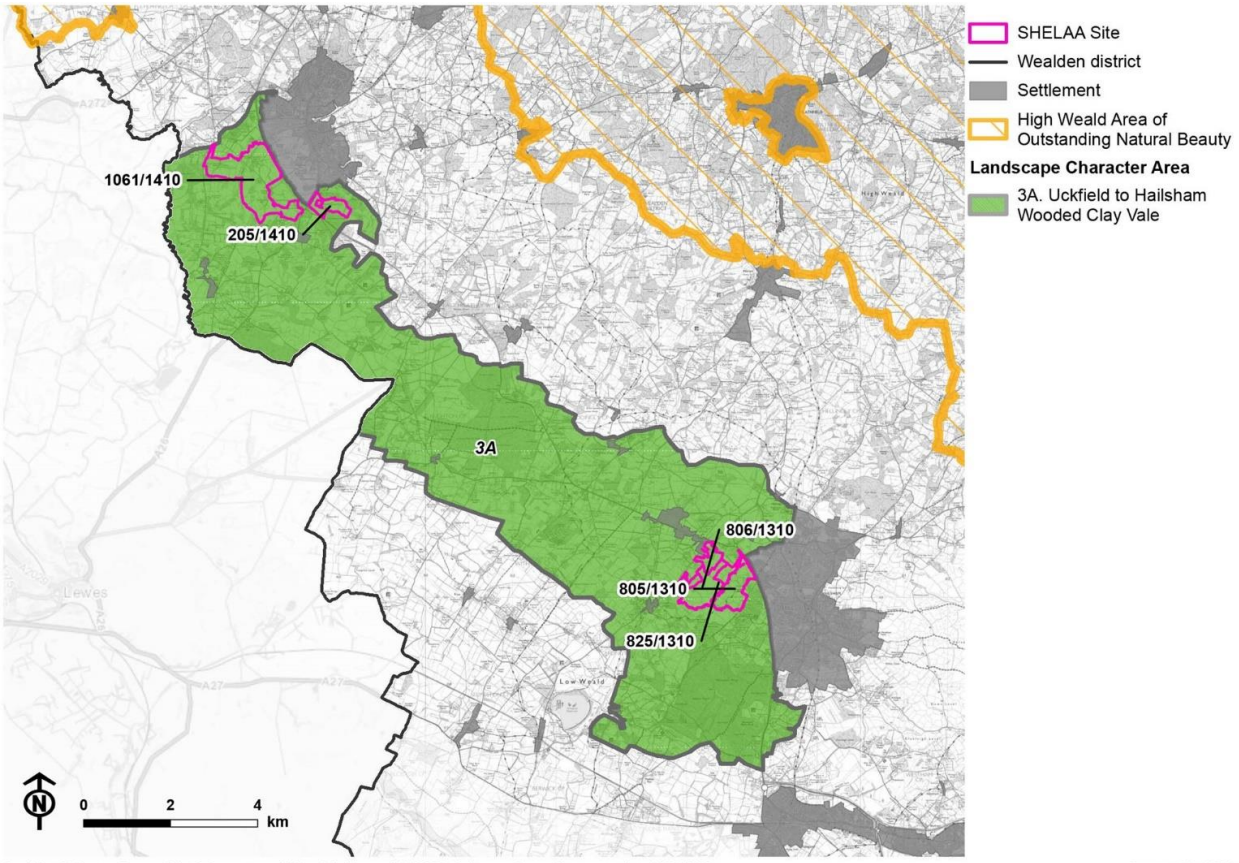


Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale

Figure A.14: Site locations in relation to the Landscape Character Area



Landscape Character Type (LCT) and Area (LCA)	LCT 3: Wooded Clay Vale (Low Weald) LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale
LCA Description	LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale is a low-lying landscape crossed by the narrow river valleys of the Uck and its tributaries in the west and the Cuckmere in the east. The landscape supports a patchwork of arable and pastoral fields, interspersed with areas of woodland, much of ancient origin, and more extensive mixed plantations. Scattered linear settlements and farmsteads are strung along the rural road network. The edge of the LCA is strongly influenced by its proximity to Hailsham and Uckfield.
Valued Features and Key Qualities of the LCA	■ The river valleys of the Cuckmere, Ouse and Uck catchments. ■ The extensive woodlands, including deciduous woodlands, copses, mixed plantations and hedgerow boundaries. ■ The semi-natural habitats, including deciduous woodland, heathland and grasslands, some designated as SSSI. ■ Historic field patterns, rural hamlets and villages, country houses and parkland estates. ■ Public rights of way and open access woodlands.

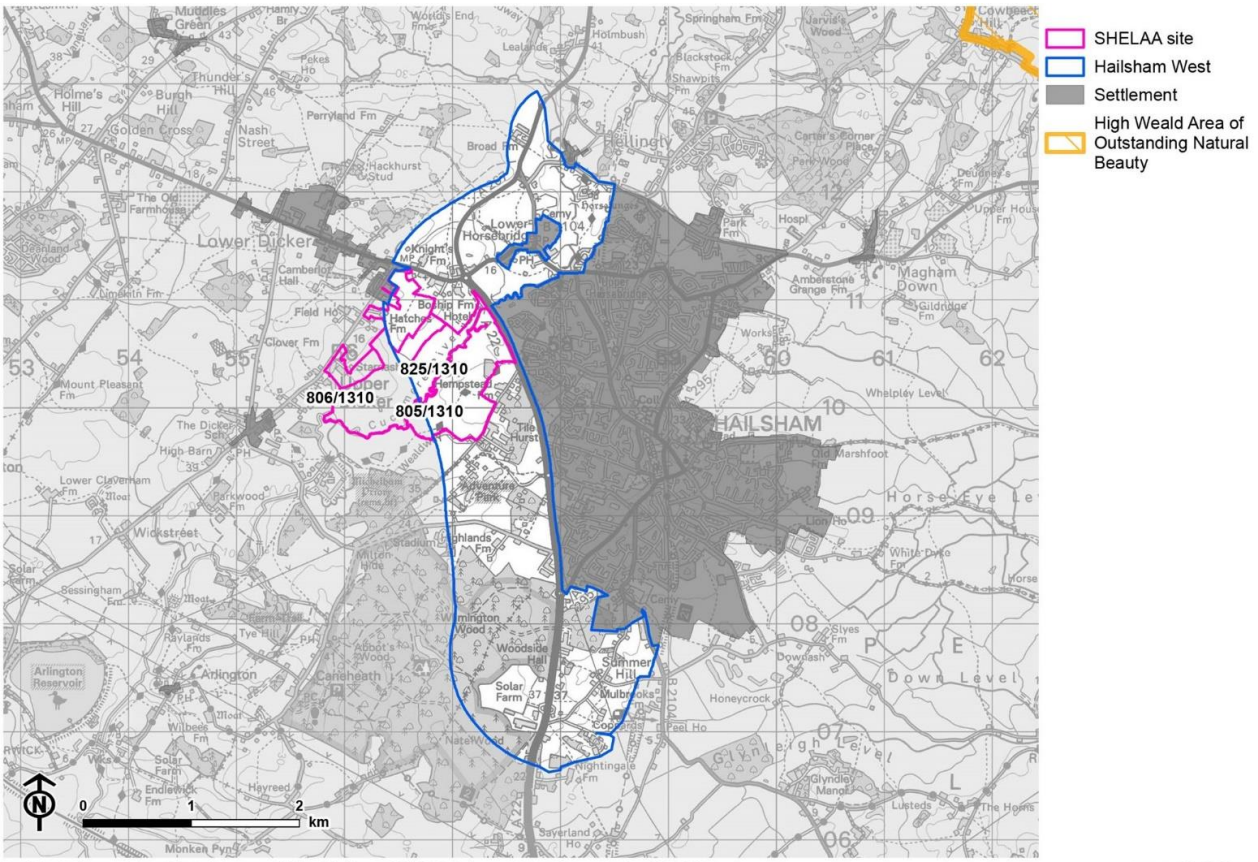
	■ The rural landscape, with a traditional small-scale pattern of small villages and scattered farms enclosed by woodlands. ■ Visual contrasts between an enclosed character from woodland and hedgerows and long views to the South Downs.

Landscape Sensitivity Context: Hailsham West Assessment Unit

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

- Group comprising 825/1310 Land to the NW of Hempstead Lane (which encompasses 805/1310 Land NW of Hempstead Lane) and 806/1310 Land at Starnash Farm (particularly encompassed by Site 825/1310).

Figure A.15: Site locations in relation to the assessment unit



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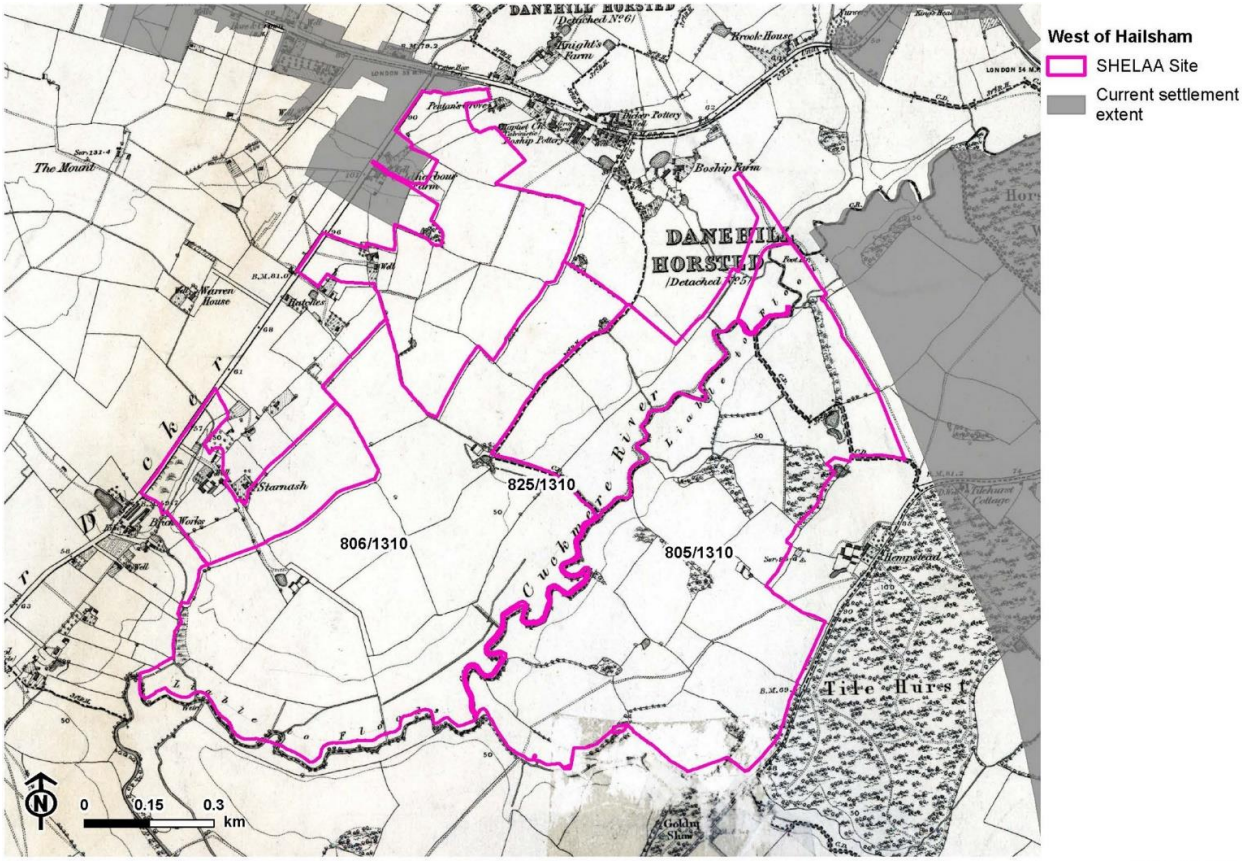
Source: OS, WDC

Settlement Context

Settlement Location and Context	Hailsham is the largest settlement in the south of Wealden district, located between the River Cuckmere to the west and the Pevensey Levels to the east. The landscape to the west of the town lies within LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale.
Settlement Evolution	Hailsham is mentioned in the Domesday Book and was granted a market charter in 1252. The medieval town was focussed on Market Street, High Street, George Street and Vicarage Road, the area indicated today by the extent of the Hailsham Conservation Area. Following the opening of the railway between Hailsham and Polegate in 1849 (which was later extended north to Eridge), the town expanded slightly to the south and west of the railway station. Despite the closure of the railway line in 1968, substantial growth occurred after the Second World War. From this period through to the early 21st century the town has greatly expanded, predominantly to the north and west. This has resulted in its coalescence with the formerly separate hamlets of Lower and Upper Horsebridge, as well as Amberstone to the north.

Settlement Pattern and Edge Character	The western settlement edge of Hailsham consists mainly of two-storey 20th or 21st century detached houses. The western settlement edge is defined by the well-wooded and strong boundary feature of the A22 Hailsham Bypass (dual carriageway).

Figure A.16: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



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Source: OS, WDC

The Landscape Sensitivity of Hailsham West Assessment Unit Described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA Assessment Unit	Hailsham West		
Landscape Sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA 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
	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Key Sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to develop identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	■ The narrow river valleys of the Cuckmere and tributaries. ■ Extensive mature deciduous woodlands, particularly in the south (many of which are ancient in origin). ■ The network of thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees. ■ Intact historic field patterns, particularly assarts in the west of the assessment unit. ■ Historic character of Horselunges Manor, and the historic character and form of Hellingly, as shown by its Conservation Area.		

	■ The rural setting the assessment unit provides to Hailsham. ■ The rural setting and sense of separation provided in the north to Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge, and in the south to Hailsham and Polegate. ■ Strong recreational opportunities. ■ Rural character, with areas of tranquillity and dark skies within Wilmington Wood / Abbot's Wood. ■ Occasional long-distance views to the South Downs National Park from higher ground. ■ The wooded skyline Wilmington Wood / Abbot's Wood provides in views from the east and south of the assessment unit and outside it.
LSA Guidance	■ Locate development on lower-lying flat fields, where it is well enclosed by landform and vegetation, so that development would be less visible and have less influence on landscape character. ■ Protect and enhance the narrow valley of the River Cuckmere, maintaining the floodplain as grazing land. ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Pevensey and Cuckmere Valley Link, River Cuckmere Habitat Link and Wilmington Woodlands and Watershed BOAs, where possible, including woodland and wetland creation. ■ Avoid development on sites in areas of habitat interest, notably semi-natural woodlands and riparian habitats along the River Cuckmere and its tributaries, and in fluvial flood areas. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland, including linear riparian woodland along watercourses. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow a suitable and appropriate buffer around them, to avoid root damage. ■ Retain in-field and roadside trees, including tree clumps, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible / appropriate, 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 harm to, hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the west, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities or setting of Horselunges Manor with its moated site, or the intact historic form and character of Hellingly, and the rural setting the landscape provides, as set out in the Conservation Area appraisal. ■ Retain the strong woodland corridor along the A22. ■ Retain the rural character along the country lanes. ■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using species that are in character with the wider landscape, native where possible / appropriate. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Where possible, preserve the rural setting and separation between Lower Horsebridge and Hellingly, and Lower Horsebridge and Hailsham. ■ Consider views from public rights of way, such as the Wealdway, when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape. ■ Consider the existing views towards Hellingly church tower in the design of development. ■ Ensure development does not affect the occasional long-distance views to the South Downs National Park, and that areas of relative tranquillity in the larger woodlands are retained.

Site Assessment: Land to the West of Hailsham

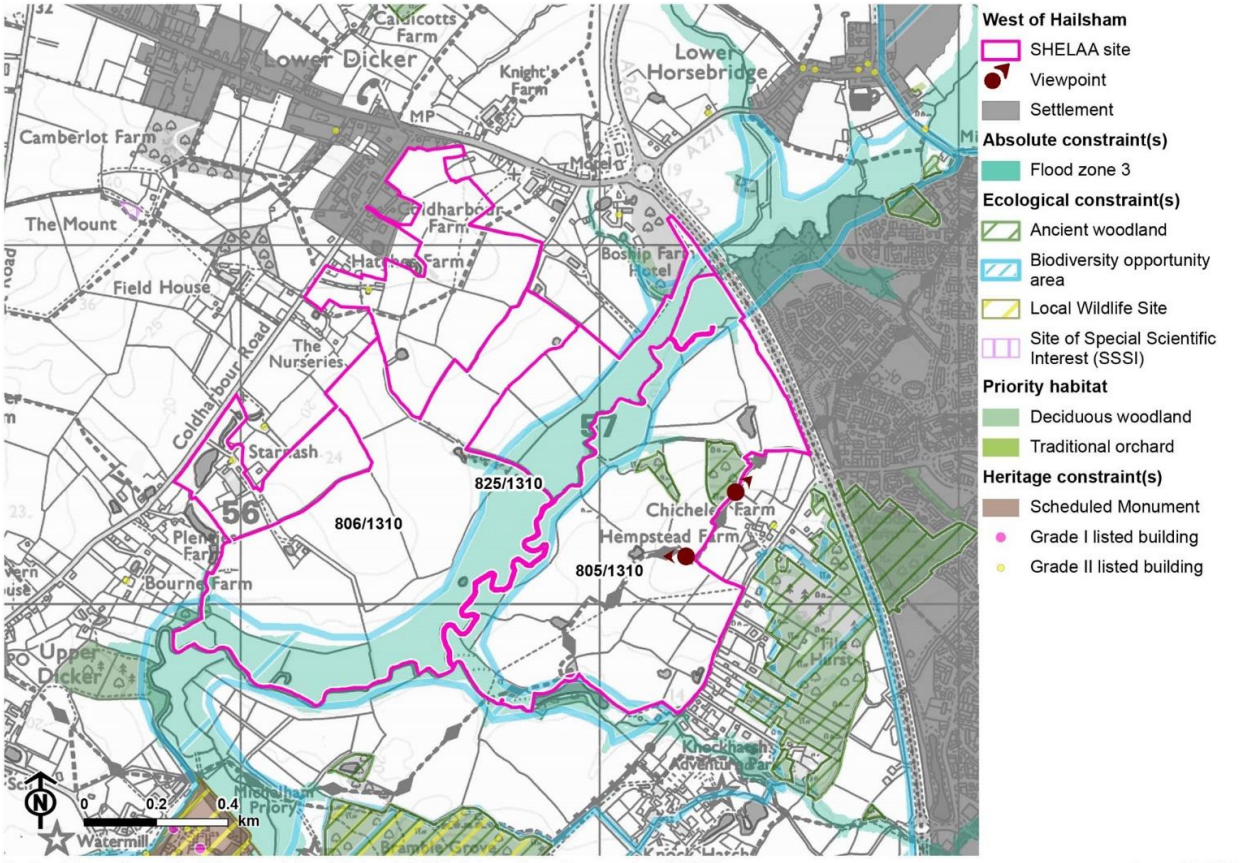
The following potential development sites are assessed as one, with individual elements highlighted where appropriate.

Site Details

SHELAA Site Name/ Reference	Land to the NW of Hempstead Lane	825/1310
	Land NW of Hempstead Lane	805/1310
	Land at Starnash Farm	806/1310
Potential Development	2,000 residential dwellings, Primary School, Community Uses, Retail, Neighbourhood Hub.	
Site Location	The site is located to the west of Hailsham and the A22 Hailsham Bypass, between Hempstead Lane and Coldharbour Road.	

Site Baseline

Figure A.17: Site location and constraints



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Source: OS, WDC

Representative Site Photos



Viewpoint 1: Glimpsed views across the A22 towards the settlement edge of Hailsham.



Viewpoint 2: Larger scale pastoral fields occasionally contained by woodland.

Baseline Landscape Character in relation to the Wider Assessment Unit

Key Features and Qualities of the Site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	**Landform** The site is typical of the river valley of the assessment unit and consists of gently undulating arable and pastoral farmland, between 15m to 30m AOD, rising from the floodplain of the River Cuckmere in the centre of the site. **Natural character** Hedgerows across the site area vary, with some well-established and featuring mature hedgerow trees (which are typical of the wider assessment unit), some low and clipped, and others deteriorated and/or replaced by post and wire fencing. Small pockets of surviving ancient woodland are located within the south-east of the site. Several wooded ponds are located across the site, with a particular concentration in the east. Riparian woodland extends along the winding River Cuckmere corridor. Woodland cover within the wider assessment unit is typically more extensive than the small pockets of woodland within the site. **Landscape pattern and time depth** Arable fields west of the River Cuckmere have resulted in modern field amalgamation. However, there are some smaller areas of surviving piecemeal enclosure on higher slopes in the north of the site and medieval assarts in pastoral use to the east of the river. This varied field pattern is typical of the assessment unit, with assarts forming a key sensitivity for the wider assessment unit. There are two Grade II listed buildings located within the site (Starnash Farm and Hatches Farm), and three further listed buildings (Knightsacre, Boship Farm and Hempstead) within close proximity of the site boundary. There are no other recorded historic features within the site. Michelham Priory Scheduled Monument is located approximately 0.5km to the south-west of the site. **Recreational value** Two public rights of way cross the site, including the promoted Wealdway in the south of the site. These routes contribute to the wider network of public rights of way which is typical of the assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** The east of the site is influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge of Hailsham, the A22 and Knockhatch adventure park which disrupts the tranquillity and the experience of dark skies

	typical of the wider assessment unit. The north-east and north is also influenced by development along the A22 and the A22/A267/A271 junction. However, the river corridor and areas in the south and west of the site have a stronger rural character and sense of tranquillity, which is typical of the assessment unit.
Designations which are Constraints to Development	Flood Zones 2 and 3 located along the River Cuckmere in the centre of the site, and the associated River Cuckmere Habitat Link BOA. Grade II Listed Building (Hatches Farmhouse) in the north-west and Grade II Listed Building (Starnash Farm Cottage) are located within the site to the west. Small pockets of ancient woodland in the east.
Settlement Form and Edge Character and Extent of Built Development	The A22 Hailsham Bypass forms a boundary feature to the western edge of Hailsham, although this has been breached by development along Hempstead Lane to the south. The wooded nature of the A22 limits views into the site from the settlement edge. Development to the east of the A22 at Hailsham is relatively dense and consists of 20th and 21st century two storey detached and semi-detached properties, with some three storey flats and townhouses in places. The site is also bordered by existing smaller areas of settlement, largely comprising ribbon development extending along roads on the edge of Hailsham. To the north of the site, two-storey residential housing in Lower Dicker extends along the A22, and to the west occasional dispersed farmsteads and residential properties in Upper Dicker extend along Coldharbour Road. The adjacent area of settlement to the south-east of the site consists of 20th century detached two-storey residential housing, which extends as ribbon development along Hempstead Lane. This includes some industrial uses.

Baseline Visual Character

Baseline Visual Character	The site has a partially enclosed character, typical of the wider assessment unit, with views into and across the site restricted by the rolling landform and intervening woodland and mature hedgerows, particularly along the River Cuckmere corridor. Some glimpsed, close and middle-distance views across the site are available from footpaths and roads bordering the site. This includes views from parts of the Wealdway, which crosses the south-eastern half of the site, and the public right of way that crosses the northern part of the site. Views are also available from the farmsteads of Starnash Farm, Hatches Farm Knightsacre all of which include listed buildings) within and to the west of the site. There are sections of roads bordering the north-west and south-east of the site (Coldharbour Road and Hempstead Lane) from which views into the site are available, particularly where hedgerows are low or where there are gaps in vegetation. Visitors to the Knockhatch adventure park to the south-east also have glimpsed views into the site. Michelham Priory Scheduled Monument is located approximately 350m to the south-west of the site. However, views into the site from the priory, and adjacent sections of the Wealdway, are generally screened by intervening vegetation. More distant views looking into and out from the site are generally restricted by intervening topography and vegetation. However, there are occasional glimpsed views towards the South Downs National Park, particularly from more elevated areas in the north and east of the site. There are also glimpsed views south towards the wooded skyline formed by ancient woodland at Tile Hurst.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park	Views of the site are afforded from elevated areas of the South Downs National Park, including from the Long Man of Wilmington and Firle Beacon. However, the site is seen in relatively distant views from these locations (approximately 7-9km) and viewed in the context of existing development at Hailsham.

How the Site Relates to the Sensitivity of the Wider Assessment Unit

The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment assesses the Hailsham West assessment unit to have a **moderate sensitivity** to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing) and a **moderate-high sensitivity** to both medium scale residential development (3-4 storey flats/ care homes) and commercial/industrial development. The LSA indicates that the considerable deciduous woodland coverage, much of ancient origin, the varied field pattern, with medieval assarts and piecemeal enclosure, strong settlement boundary formed by the A22 Hailsham Bypass, strong network of public rights of way, a high degree or remoteness and tranquillity in the River Cuckmere valley and occasional intervisibility with the South Downs National Park increase sensitivity. The areas of modern field amalgamation, limited heritage features, impact on perceptual character due to the proximity of Hailsham and A22, and the visually enclosed character of much of the area reduces sensitivity. The River Cuckmere valley, with its high degree of remoteness and tranquillity, is noted as being of higher sensitivity to development than the wider assessment unit.

The Site

The site demonstrates many of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit, including a gently undulating topography associated with the River Cuckmere valley, mature deciduous woodlands (including some of ancient in origin to the east), a mixed field pattern, remoteness and tranquillity, a rural setting to the west of Hailsham, and occasional glimpsed views to the South Downs National Park.

The following would increase sensitivity in comparison to the wider assessment unit: presence of the River Cuckmere valley (covering the western half of SHELAA Site 805/1310, eastern parts of SHELAA Site 806/1310 and north-eastern parts of SHELAA Site 825/1310), noted in the wider assessment unit as being of higher sensitivity; the potential for habitat connectivity along the river valley; the presence of intact historic assarts to the east (covering the majority of SHELAAA Site 805/1310); the presence of several wooded ponds, with a particular concentration in the east (SHELAAA Site 805/1310); open land forming the immediate setting of listed farm buildings to the west (covering a small part of SHELAA Site 806/1310 and 825/1310); remoteness and tranquillity experienced along the River Cuckmere valley, particularly to the south and west away from urbanising influences (south-western parts of SHELAA Site 805/1310 and south-eastern parts of SHELAA Site 806/1310); the network of public rights of way, including the promoted Wealdway; open views to the South Downs National Park; relatively open views across the river floodplain experienced from within the site; and the A22 Hailsham Bypass forming a strong boundary feature to the west of Hailsham.

However, areas of field amalgamation to the west (including the majority of SHELAA Sites 825/1310 and806/1310) and the proximity of the site development along A22 to the north (covering the northern parts of SHELAA Site 825/1310) and the busy Hailsham Bypass, Knockhatch adventure park and development along Hempstead Lane (covering the eastern parts of SHELAA Sites 825/1310 and 805/1310) decreases sensitivity in these areas.

Overall, the site is considered to be of slightly higher sensitivity than the wider assessment unit and is considered to be of **moderate-high sensitivity** to new small scale (2-2.5 storey) residential development and a **high sensitivity** to both medium scale residential development and commercial/industrial development.

Potential Effects of Developing the Site and Mitigation/Enhancement Opportunities

Potential Effects as a Result of Development	
Landscape Character and Features	Development on the site could affect: ■ Some areas of intact historic field patterns, particularly assarts in the east. ■ The network of mature deciduous woodland, mature hedgerow, hedgerow trees and roadside trees, including the wooded corridor of the A22, which forms a settlement boundary to Hailsham. ■ The linear riparian woodlands extending along the River Cuckmere and relatively open views across the river floodplain experienced from within the site. ■ The rural character of the landscape with areas of remoteness and tranquillity, particularly in the south and west away from the settlement edge and A22. ■ The network of public rights of way, including the promoted Wealdway.

Designated Landscapes	Though distant views towards the site may be afforded from elevated areas within the South Downs National Park, at distances exceeding 7km, views of the development will be seen in the context of existing development at Hailsham and are unlikely to adversely affect the special qualities of the National Park.
Settlement Form, Edge and Setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The settlement boundary formed by the wooded A22 corridor to the western edge of Hailsham, albeit this has already been breached by development along Hempstead Lane to the south. ■ The wider rural setting of Hailsham (however, views into the area are generally limited by woodland along the A22 as noted above). ■ The perception of coalescence between Hailsham and the smaller settlements of Lower Dicker and Upper Dicker.. The settlement of Upper Dicker is considered to be more sensitive, given the more dispersed settlement form and stronger sense of rurality and tranquillity. However, woodland along the eastern edge of Upper Dicker screens some views towards the site. In contrast, Lower Dicker lies along the busy A22 and has some perceived sense of coalescence with Hailsham (due to ribbon development along the A22 and A271), which indicates a lower sensitivity.
Visual Amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Pedestrians and residents along the western settlement edge of Hailsham and road users on the A22. However, views are generally glimpsed due to the presence of intervening vegetation. ■ Residents and road users along Coldharbour Road and Hempstead Lane. ■ Residents within the site at the Starnash and Hatches farmsteads. ■ Users of public rights of way within the site, including the promoted Wealdway. ■ Visitors to the South Downs National Park, although views of development would be at distance, appearing in the context of existing development at Hailsham and partially screened by intervening woodland located to the south-west and west of the site. ■ Visitors to Knockhatch adventure park.
Cumulative Issues	
Potential for Cumulative Effects with Other Large Strategic Site	This site, in combination with the other strategic site to the north of Hailsham (Site 205/1410, 919/3000) would result in a general expansion of the settlement into the surrounding rural landscape. However, given the intervening distance between the sites and the well-wooded character of the surrounding landscape, significant visual cumulative effects are unlikely.
Potential for Mitigation and Enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. Development should avoid and be set back from the ancient woodlands at Hempstead Farm with a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage[7]. 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). ■ Woodland along the A22, Coldharbour Road and Hempstead Lane should be retained and enhanced so as to limit views into the site from existing residential properties and from the road. ■ The connectivity of woodlands should be retained and enhanced through tree planting and hedgerow corridors, in line with the River Cuckmere Habitat Link Biodiversity Opportunity Area. ■ Conserve and manage the streamside woodlands, riverside vegetation and wetland habitats, to 'slow the flow' and assist in reducing flood risk as well as increase biodiversity, in line with the aims of the River Cuckmere Habitat Link Biodiversity Opportunity Area.	

[7] See Natural England and Forestry Commission Guidance for further information.

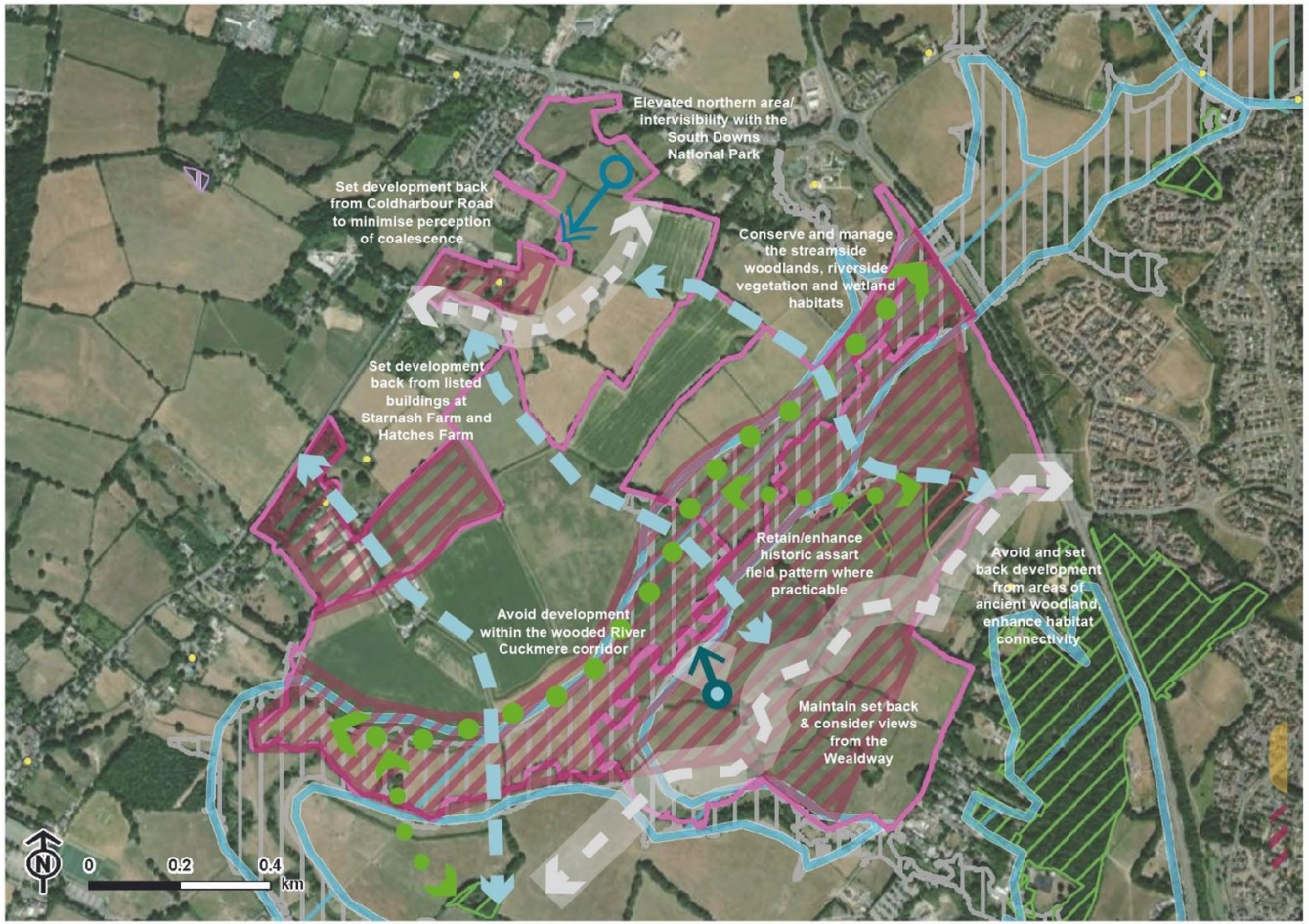
- Development should avoid and be set back from the incised wooded river valley in the centre of the site.
- Lower ground, outside of Flood Zone 2 and 3, could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features, incorporating habitat creation.
- Retain and protect the historic field pattern where practicable, but particularly the historic assarts in the east of the site.
- Development should be set back from the listed farmsteads at Starnash Farm and Hatches Farm within the site and additional listed farmsteads at Knightsacre, Boship Farm and Hempstead located within close proximity to the site boundary, to help retain their rural character.
- Retain the relatively open character of views across the river valley experienced from within site.
- Minimise visibility of any proposed development from the public rights of way within the site and adjacent to it, including the promoted Wealdway.
- Distant views of the site from the South Downs National Park should be considered in the siting and design of development.
- Site development to include corridors to retain and frame existing views towards the South Downs National Park.
- Enhance public access, providing opportunities to experience longer views from higher ground in the north of the site across the wider landscape and towards the South Downs National Park.
- The rural context and intervisibility between the site and the small settlements of Upper Dicker and Lower Dicker should be considered in the siting and design of development, so as to minimise the perception of coalescence between these settlements and Hailsham.
- Additional planting should be used to screen new development and maintain the rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built form, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built form within the landscape. Planting should be in character with the locality and use native species where possible.
- Introduced built forms to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of their surroundings by using high quality materials suggestive of the local vernacular.
- The height of development should integrate with the adjacent surrounding settlement edges, both existing and consented.

Summary

Development of the site would extend development beyond the boundary feature of the wooded A22 corridor onto the open valley sides of the River Cuckmere to the west of Hailsham. If the site is considered for development, any proposed development would need to be planned with great care, especially in relation to the key sensitive features within and adjacent to the site, setting development back from the floodplain and incised topography of the river valley. Development should also be set back from ancient woodlands on the site and adjacent to it, with appropriate buffers provided to protect the woodlands. Development should be predominantly located in the north and west of the site so as to avoid the sensitive River Cuckmere corridor, areas of perceived higher remoteness and tranquillity, areas of remnant ancient woodland and areas of historic assart field pattern. However, development should be set back from Coldharbour Lane to the west so as to protect the rural character of listed buildings. There is also some scope for development to the south-east to relate to existing linear development along Hempstead Lane.

A summary map indicating the key constraints and opportunities, including areas more sensitive to development are shown on **Figure A.21** below.

Figure A.18: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



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

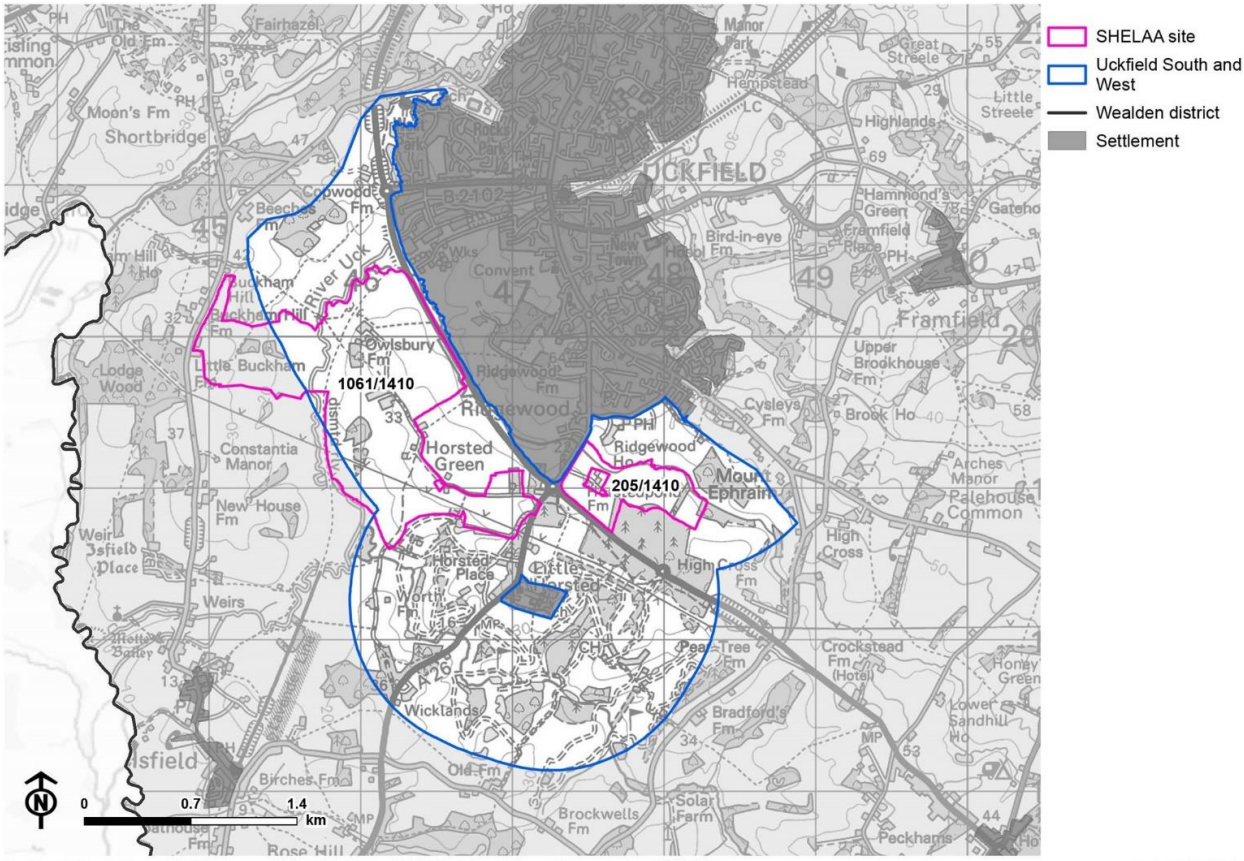
Source: WDC, NE, HE

Landscape Sensitivity Context: Uckfield South and West Assessment Unit

The following potential development sites are considered within the Uckfield South and West assessment unit:

- 205/1410 – Land at Horstedpond Farm
- 1061/1410 – Land at Owlsbury Farm

Figure A.19: Site locations in relation to the assessment unit



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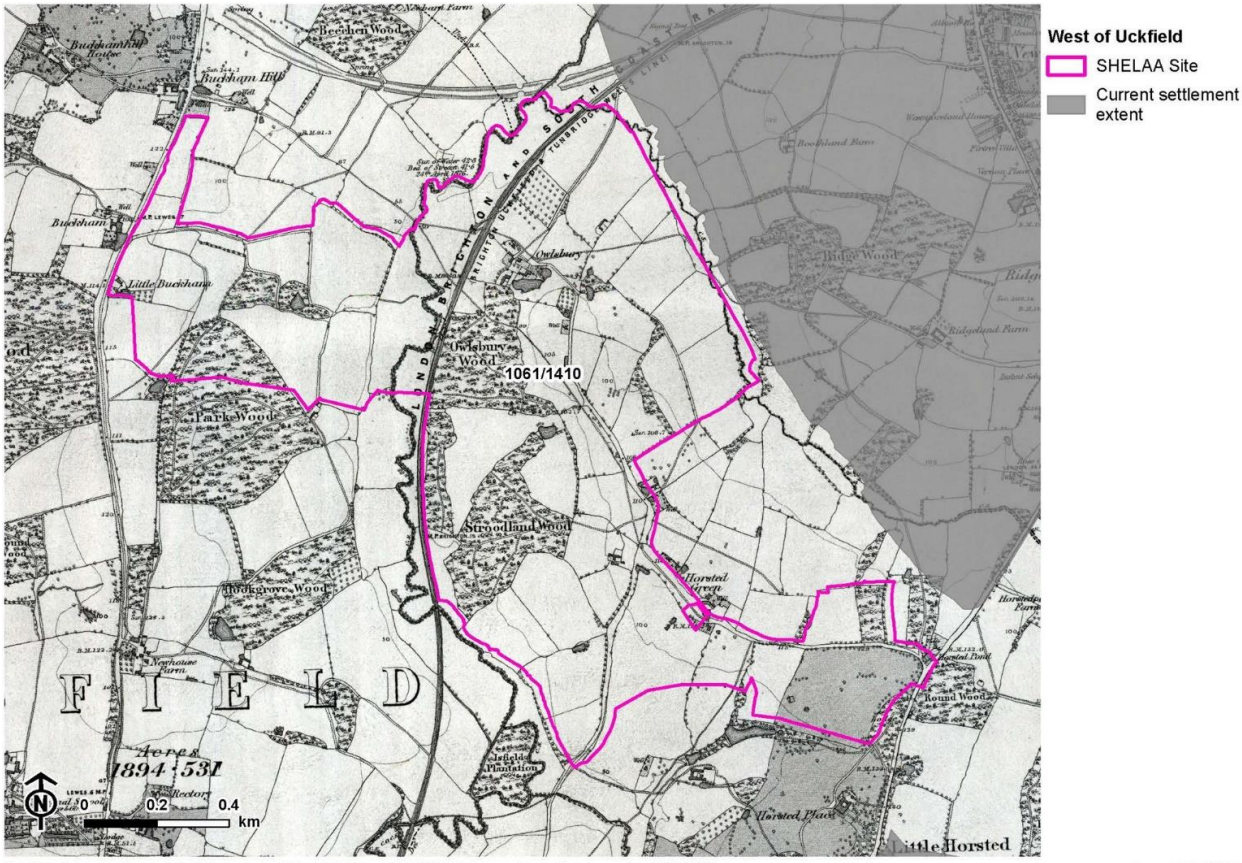
Source: OS, WDC

Settlement Context

Settlement Location and Context	Uckfield is a relatively large market town located in the west of the district, at the transition between the Wooded Clay Vales of the Low Weald (LCT 3) and the Wooded Slopes of the High Weald (LCT 6).
Settlement Evolution	The town developed where the road linking Canterbury, Chichester and Lewes crossed the River Uck. The original settlement was focussed primarily along Church Street (around the medieval chapel) and High Street, an area designated as the Uckfield Conservation Area. Later development extended further north and south along High Street and along Framfield Road (the New Town area) to the south-east, resulting in a linear north-south settlement pattern. The arrival of the railway in the 19th century stimulated further growth and by the early and mid-20th century, development greatly increased the size of the town. This later expansion has resulted in the town's merging with the formerly separate hamlets of Ringles Cross and Ridgewood to the north and south respectively. New development is currently under construction at Ridgewood,

	and will form a settlement extension of 1,000 new homes on the western edge of Uckfield, bordering the A22 to the east.
Settlement Pattern and Edge Character	The settlement still retains its linear north-south form, although more recently industrial and residential development has extended the settlement to the north-west as far as the Uckfield Bypass (A22) and to the north-east as far as Views Wood (ancient woodland) and the River Uck. The Uckfield Bypass was constructed in 1982 and today defines the western and south-western edges of the settlement. The settlement edge to the east and south-east is generally defined by the valley forms of the River Uck and Framfield Stream, with only a small amount of development along the B2102 beyond this. The settlement edges of Uckfield generally consist of two storey 20th or 21st century housing, with the exception of Bellbrook Industrial Estate to the west, which consists of larger scale low-rise industrial and commercial units. Extensive woodland encloses the settlement, particularly to the north and south.

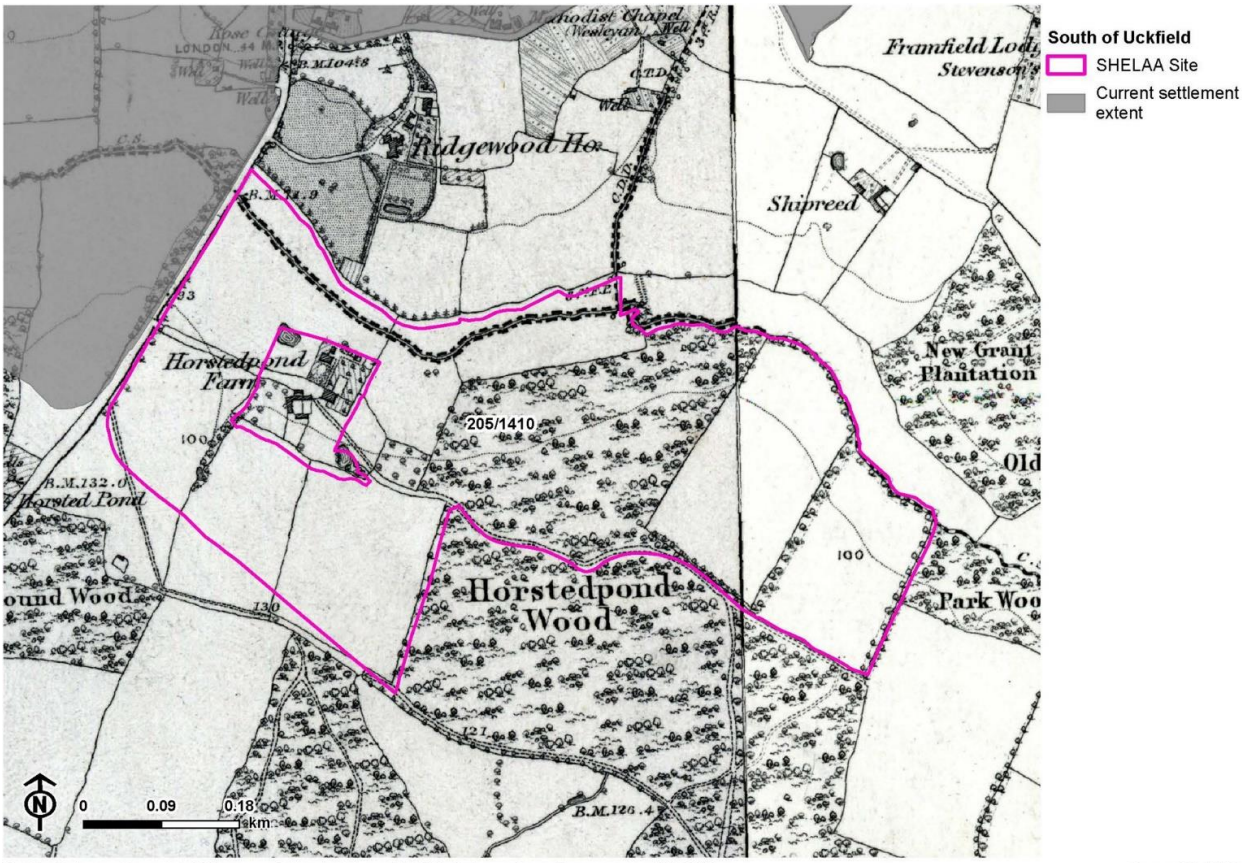
Figure A.20: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



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Source: OS, WDC

Figure A.21: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and southern settlement edge



The Landscape Sensitivity of Uckfield South and West Assessment Unit Described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA Assessment Unit	Uckfield South and West		
Landscape Sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA 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
	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
Key Sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to develop identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	■ The River Uck and Ridgewood stream corridors and associated riparian woodlands and priority habitats, which form part of the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA. ■ Numerous semi-natural ancient woodlands in the north and south / south-east. ■ Strong network of mature, intact hedgerow boundaries. ■ Intact historic field patterns and assarts in the north and east of the area. ■ Historic features at Buckham Hill in the north and Horsted Place in the south, including a Scheduled monument, Registered Garden, and Grade II listed buildings. ■ The rural setting and sense of separation provided to Uckfield and Little Horsted. ■ The network of public rights of way. ■ Rural character with areas of tranquillity and dark skies along the Uck Valley and among the numerous woodlands to the north.		

	■ Occasional long-distance views to the wooded ridges of the High Weald AONB from areas of higher ground.
LSA Guidance	■ Locate development on low lying flat fields, where well enclosed by landform and vegetation, where development would be less visible and have less influence on landscape character. ■ Avoid development on sites of habitat interest, notably riparian habitats along the River Uck and Ridgewood Stream. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow an appropriate buffer around them, to avoid root damage. ■ Retain 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 appropriate. ■ Retain, protect and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Replace hedgerows if they are affected by development. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible / appropriate. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly cohesive and medieval assarts in the north and east. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities of Horsted Place and Little Horsted, and at Buckham Hill. ■ 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 and native where possible / appropriate. ■ Consider opportunities to minimise the impacts of the A22 and electrical pylons on the landscape. ■ Take opportunities to reduce the visual impact of the western settlement edge of Uckfield. ■ 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 relative tranquillity, particularly in the Uck Valley and numerous woodlands to the north and east. ■ Preserve the separation between Uckfield and Little Horsted when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape. ■ Ensure development does not affect existing views to the High Weald AONB.

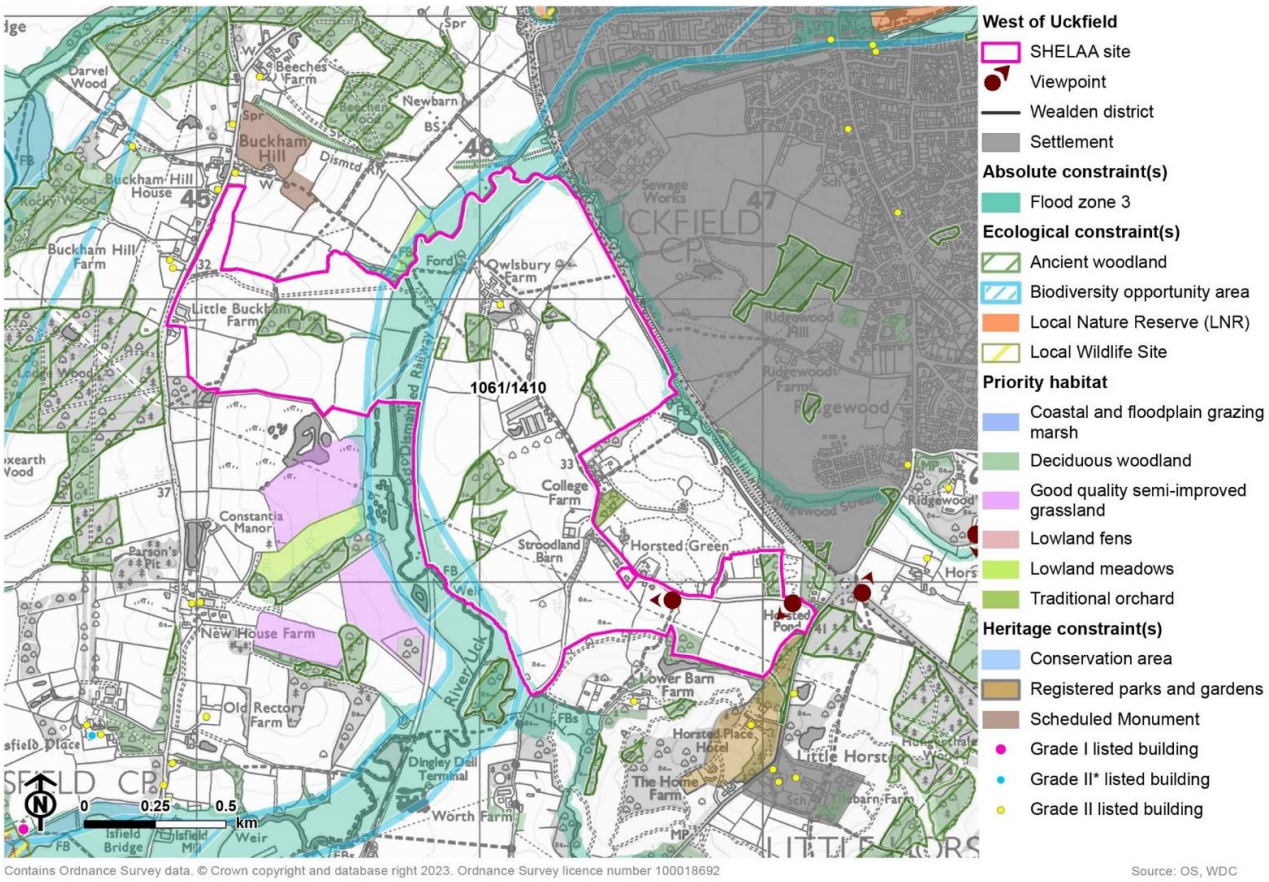
Site Assessment: West of Uckfield

Site Details

SHELAA Site Name/ Reference	Land at Owlsbury Farm, Lewes Road, Uckfield	1061/1410
Potential Development	2,000 residential dwellings, primary school, retail/community uses, SANGs, and playing pitches.	
Site Location	The site is located to the west of the settlement, beyond the Uckfield Bypass (A22. Its north-western boundary is defined by Station Road at Buckham Hill and to the west/south-west by the dismantled 'Lewes to Uckfield line' railway.	

Site Baseline

Figure A.22: Site location and constraints



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Source: OS, WDC

Representative Site Photos



Viewpoint 1: View west from Horsted Pond Lane, with an influence of electricity infrastructure.



Viewpoint 2: Distant glimpsed views south and south-west across the site towards the South Downs National Park.

Baseline Landscape Character in relation to the Wider Assessment Unit

Key Features and Qualities of the Site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	**Landform** The site is typical of the Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale LCA and consists of a low-lying landscape crossed by the narrow river valleys of the River Uck and Ridgewood Stream. Topography is gently undulating, rising from the river valley, between 15m AOD and 35m AOD, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. **Natural character** The site comprises a patchwork of arable and pastoral fields defined predominantly by mature hedgerows, interspersed with areas of woodland, much of which is ancient. The woodland and hedgerow boundaries provide landscape structure and habitat connectivity to support biodiversity and are a key characteristic of the wider assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** Within the north-west of the site there is a more intact historic field pattern, including assarts and piecemeal enclosure identified within the Sussex Historic Land Characterisation (HLC). However, the field pattern of much of the site is influenced by modern field amalgamation. There are no recorded historic features within the site, apart from a Grade II listed building at Owlsbury Farmhouse. The Horsted Place Registered Park and Garden is located directly south of the site boundary and the medieval farmstead at Buckham Hill Scheduled Monument is located to the north of the site. **Recreational value** A number of interconnected public rights of way cross the site and contribute to the network of public rights of way within the wider assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** Detracting features include a series of electricity pylons to the south and the auditory impacts from the A22 to the east and A26 to the south Away from these detracting elements to the north and west, the landscape has a more rural character with a sense of tranquillity and dark skies, which is typical of the wider assessment unit, particularly along the Uck Valley and among the numerous woodlands and to the west.

Designations which are Constraints to Development	Flood Zones 2 and 3 associated with the River Uck, which runs approximately north-east to south through the centre of the site, and the Ridgewood Stream, which defines the eastern edge of the site along with the A22. Several blocks of ancient woodland within the site, including Bean's Wood in the north-west; Owlsbury Wood, Owlsbury Farm Shaw and Honeyspot Shaw in the north-east; Stroodland Wood in the south; and Hoathfield Wood in the south-east. A number of ancient woodlands also border the site, including The Eyes Plantation to the south-west and Walk Shaw and Round Wood to the south-east. The 'River Uck and its headwaters' Biodiversity Opportunity Area follows the course of the river through the site. The site also borders Horsted Place (Grade II Registered Park and Garden (RPG)) to the south-east and is located in proximity to the Medieval farmstead at Buckham Hill (Scheduled Monument) to the north-west. The Grade II Listed Owlsbury Farmhouse is also located within the site to the north.
Settlement Form and Edge Character and Extent of Built Development	The existing western settlement edge of Uckfield consists predominantly of 20th century detached two storey residential housing around New Town and Lewes Road, and larger scale low rise industrial and commercial units within Bellbrook Industrial estate. Consent for a large residential-led mixed use urban extension (Ridgewood Development) will also form a further area of development to the south of Bellbrook Industrial Estate and alongside the A22. This existing and emerging development is located east of the A22. The A22 and riparian woodland along Ridgewood Stream together provide a strong boundary feature between the site and the new settlement edge. The boundary feature formed by the A22 and the rural scenic backdrop to the town formed by the valley sides of the River Uck are key characteristics of the wider assessment unit. However, a consented solar electric forecourt (Gridserve Development) has been permitted to the north of the site at Copwood Farm (at the Copwood Roundabout). Therefore, the boundary has been breached. The site itself is sparsely settled, with development limited to scattered farmsteads within and immediately adjacent to the sit, as well as scattered agricultural cattle barns.

Baseline Visual Character

Baseline Visual Character	Mature hedgerows and numerous areas of woodland, in combination with a moderately undulating landform, generally limits longer-distance view across the site. This is particularly true on the lower slopes and river floodplain. However, there are some longer range views from parts of the site. For example elevated landform within the South Downs National Park is visible in the distance from eastern parts of the site, including from Horsted Pond Lane and adjacent public rights of way, and rising ground at Ridgewood to the east is also visible. There are also some slightly elevated longer-range views west across the valley of the River Uck (incorporating the site) from the edge of Uckfield, including from Victoria Park. There are also some medium and near-distance filtered and glimpsed views available from some public viewpoints within and adjacent to the site. This includes from public rights of way that pass through the site, from Horsted Green Park to the east, from roads near the site and residential areas within and near the site.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park	There are some distant views to the South Downs National Park and High Weald AONB from parts of the site, including to the south around Horsted Pond Lane and the adjacent public right of way.

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 Uckfield South and West assessment unit to have a **moderate sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey

housing), a **moderate-high sensitivity** to medium scale residential development (3-4 storey flats/ care homes) and a high sensitivity to commercial/industrial development. The LSA indicates that the stream corridors and associated riparian woodlands, numerous ancient woodlands, strong network of hedgerows, intact historic field patterns including assarts, rural setting provided to Uckfield, network of public rights of way, rural character and occasional long-distance views to the High Weald AONB increase sensitivity. The gently undulating valley landscape, some presence of modern field amalgamation and proximity to new development at Ridgewood Farm and the A22 which reduce tranquillity and rurality reduce sensitivity.

The Site

The site demonstrates many of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit that increase sensitivity, including the undulating landscape crossed by the narrow valley of the River Uck; the 'River Uck and its headwaters' Biodiversity Opportunity Area follows the course of the river through the site; a patchwork of arable and pastoral fields defined predominantly by mature hedgerows, interspersed with scattered blocks of ancient woodland in the south-east, west, north-east and north-west of the site; an area of assarts and piecemeal enclosure to the north-west; forms an open setting to the Grade II listed Owlsbury Farmhouse within the north of the site and to Horsted Place Registered Park and Garden and Buckham Hill Scheduled Monument located directly south and north of the site; the A22 and riparian woodland along Ridgewood Stream together forming a strong boundary to the emerging settlement edge of Uckfield; a number of interconnected public rights of way cross the site; longer range views towards the South Downs National Park from eastern parts of the site, including from Horsted Pond Lane and adjacent public rights of way; and rural character with a sense of tranquillity and dark skies along the Uck Valley and among the woodlands and to the west,

However, the field pattern of much of the site is influenced by modern field amalgamation, a consented solar electric forecourt (Gridserve Development) to the north of the site at Copwood Farm will breach the strong boundary formed by the A22, and the proximity of the site to the busy A22 decreases sensitivity to the east.

Overall, it is considered that the site conforms to the **moderate sensitivity** of the wider assessment unit, in relation to its potential for accommodating small- or medium-scale residential development, **moderate-high sensitivity** to accommodating medium scale residential development and a **high sensitivity** to accommodating commercial/industrial development.

Potential Effects of Developing the Site and Mitigation/Enhancement Opportunities

Potential Effects as a Result of Development	
Landscape Character and Features	Development on the site could affect: ■ The undulating valley landform along the River Uck and Ridgewood Stream, and associated floodplains. ■ The areas of semi-natural ancient woodlands within and immediately adjacent to the site. ■ The network of mature, intact hedgerows. ■ Intact historic field patterns, including assarts and piecemeal enclosure in the north-west of the site. ■ Riparian woodland along the River Uck and Ridgewood Stream. ■ The undeveloped valley sides of the River Uck, which provide a rural setting to the west of Uckfield. ■ The network of public rights of way that traverse the site. ■ Heightened areas of tranquillity and dark skies in western parts of the site, along the Uck Valley and among the numerous woodlands. ■ The Registered Park and Garden at Horsted Place to the south, the Scheduled Monument at Buckham Hill to the north-west and the Grade II listed Owlsbury Farmhouse to the north. Development on the site would extend the edge of Uckfield further into the countryside and could adversely impact their historic character and rural setting.
Designated Landscapes	Views to and from the High Weald AONB are at such a distance they are unlikely to have an impact on the defining components of character.

	Views to and from the South Downs National Park are at such a distance they are unlikely to have an impact on the special qualities.
Settlement Form, Edge and Setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The robust boundary provided by the A22 and the wooded course of the Ridgewood Stream. ■ The wider rural setting of Uckfield; expanding development into the open and rural character of the Uck Valley. ■ The historic village at Little Horsted, narrowing the gap between settlements.
Visual Amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Users of public rights of way within and adjacent to the site. ■ Visitors to Horsted Green Park to the east of the site. ■ Local residents adjacent to the site at Buckham Hill to the north-west and Horsted Green to the south. ■ Residents within the site at Little Buckham Farm, Owlsbury Farm, Dick's Barn and Stroodland Barn. ■ People travelling on roads within and adjacent to the site, including Horsted Pond Lane, the A22 to the east, Station Road to the north-west and the A26 to the south-east.
Cumulative Issues	
Potential for Cumulative Effects with Other Large Strategic Site	This site lies in relatively close proximity to strategic site 205/1410 and in combination would result in a general expansion in the size of Uckfield to the west and south-west. There would also be potential for cumulative sequential visual effects experienced by people travelling along public rights of way and the A22, the A26 and Lewes Road. Development of both sites would also cumulatively affect the potential for coalescence between the historic village at Little Horsted and Uckfield.
Potential for Mitigation and Enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided /minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Avoid development along the open valleys and floodplains of the River Uck and Ridgewood Stream to retain their open floodplain character and the rural setting/backdrop this provides to the wider settlement. Riparian woodland along Ridgewood Stream (along with the A22) also provides a strong boundary feature along the settlement edge and helps reduce the influence of the A22 on the site. ■ Conserve and enhance the River Uck and its headwaters Biodiversity Opportunity Area, including habitat creation and restoration where possible. ■ Lower ground, excluding areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3, could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features incorporating habitat creation. ■ Locate development sensitively so as to protect the historic character and rural setting of the Registered Park and Garden at Horsted Place to the south, the Scheduled Monument at Buckham Hill to the north-west and the Grade II listed Owlsbury Farmhouse to the north. ■ Retain areas of historic field pattern, including assarts and piecemeal enclosure in the north-west. ■ Retain, protect and enhance woodland within and adjacent to the site to maintain the strong degree of visual enclosure. This will help reduce the presence of built development in views, particularly from slightly elevated areas to the east. ■ Development should be set back from the numerous ancient woodlands and other priority habitats within the site and adjacent to it, with a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage . 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). ■ Additional planting should be used to screen new development and maintain the rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built form, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built form within the landscape. Planting should be in character with the locality and use native species where possible.	

- Hedgerows should be retained, protecting mature specimen trees. Opportunities to enhance hedgerows should also be taken, replacing those affected by development and strengthening the local habitat network. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible.
- Development should be set back from Horsted Pond Lane and associated farmsteads, to help retain their rural character. This is particularly important around the Grade II listed Owlsbury Farmhouse to the north.
- Minimise visibility of any proposed development from the various public rights of way within and adjacent to the site.
- Enhance local connectivity by introducing new pedestrian and cycle routes through the site, including improved connections between Uckfield and the rural landscape to the west. This could include increased access along the River Uck and/or dismantled railway.
- Retain glimpsed distant views towards the South Downs National Park, including from Hosted Pond Lane and adjacent public rights of way.
- 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.
- The height of development should integrate with the adjacent surrounding settlement edges, both existing and consented.

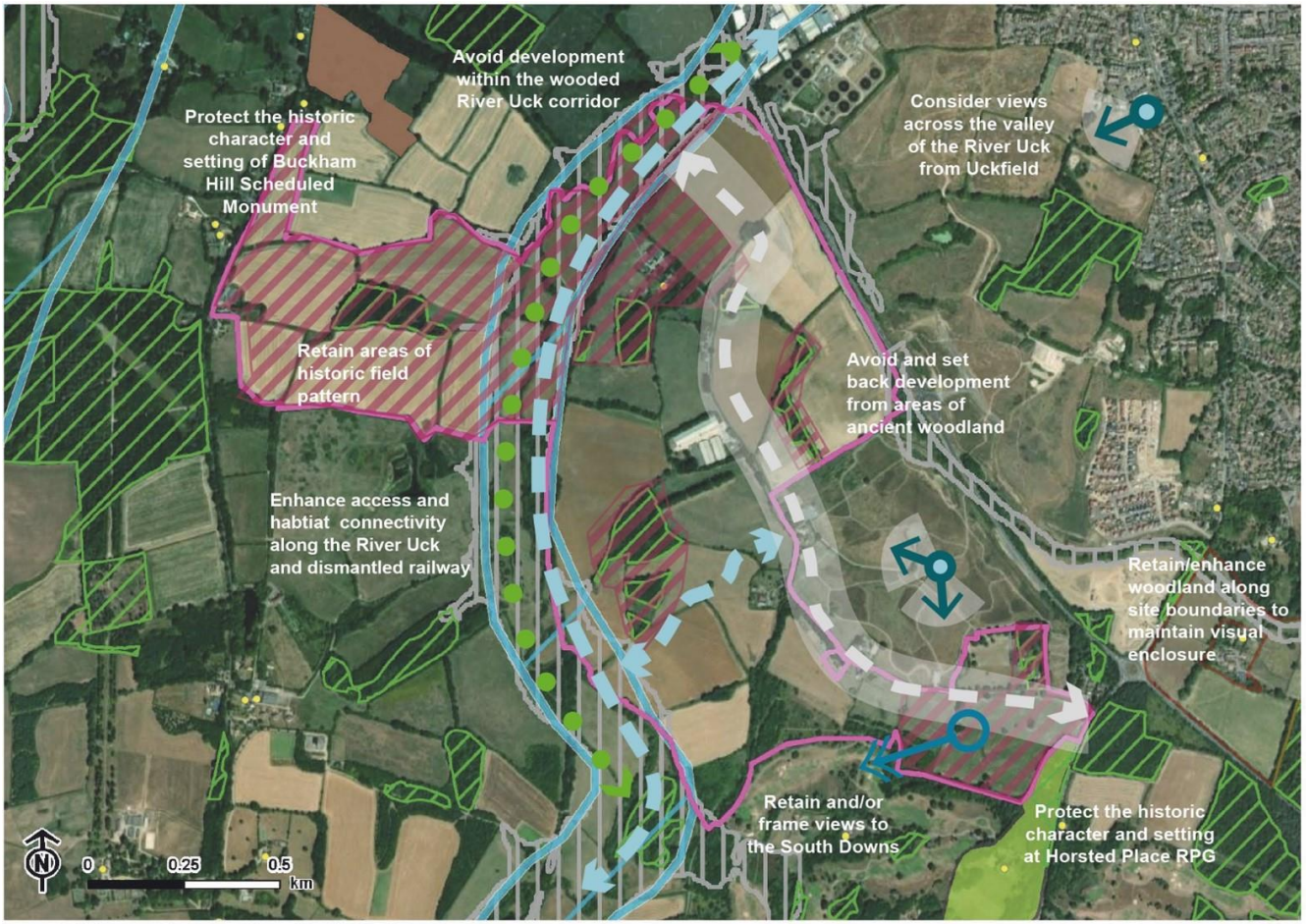
Summary

Development of this site would extend development onto the open and steep valley sides of the River Uck to the west of Uckfield, and beyond the distinctive settlement boundary feature formed by the A22 and the wooded course of Framfield Stream.

If the site is considered for development, it would need to be planned with great care and consideration, especially in relation to the key sensitive features within and adjacent to the site, and development should focus on the eastern areas of the site, which are less sensitive, so as to relate better to the existing settlement pattern. Development should avoid the south-east of the site so as to limit the perception of coalescence between Uckfield and the smaller village of Little Horsted and to maintain the rural character of outward views from Horsted Place Registered Park and Garden. The historic field pattern in the north-west of the site, which forms part of a relatively tranquil and rural setting to the Buckham Hill Scheduled Monument should be retained.

A summary map indicating the key constraints and opportunities, including areas more sensitive to development are shown on **Figure A.26** below.

Figure A.23: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



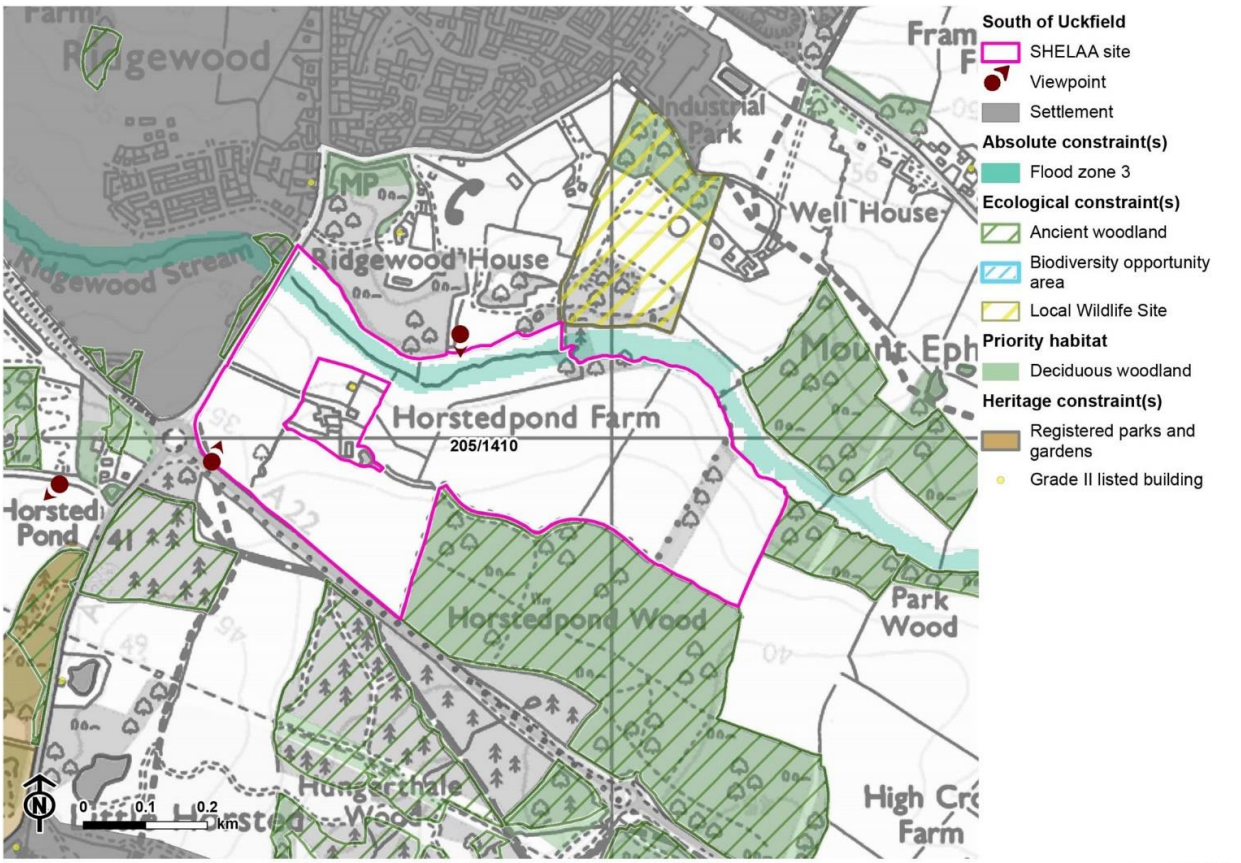
Site Assessment: South of Uckfield

Site Details

SHELAA Site Name/ Reference	Land at Horsted Farm, Lewes Road, Uckfield	205/1410
Potential Development	450 residential dwellings, SANGS.	
Site Location	The site is located to the south of Uckfield. Its north-western and south-western boundaries are defined by Lewes Road and the Uckfield Bypass (A22) respectively. The northern boundary roughly follows Ridgewood Stream, and the southern boundary is defined by Horstedpond Wood.	

Site Baseline

Figure A.24: Site location and constraints



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Source: OS, WDC

Representative Site Photos



Viewpoint 1: Filtered views towards the site from Uckfield Millennium Green across the Ridgewood Stream valley. Horstedpond Wood can be seen in the background of the site, across sloping arable fields.



Viewpoint 2: The settlement edge of Uckfield to the north, contained by Ridgewood Stream and adjacent wooded areas. Roadside vegetation on Lewes Road to the west is also well=established.

Baseline Landscape Character in relation to the Wider Assessment Unit

Key Features and Qualities of the Site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	**Landform** The site is typical of the wider assessment unit. It forms the southern valley side of the Ridgewood Stream, with the landform gently rising from 25m AOD in the north along the Ridgewood Stream to 35m AOD in the south, which is representative of the wider LCA. An area of Flood Zones 2 and 3 follows the course of the Ridgewood Stream in the north. **Natural character** The site is largely in arable use, with some pasture to the north-west on lower-lying ground, which is consistent with the mixed pastoral and arable fields noted in the assessment unit analysis. Mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees are also present in the site, with those in the east more intact. Roadside vegetation on Lewes Road to the west is also well-established, with numerous mature hedgerow trees, resulting in some sense of enclosure on this boundary. In contrast to the well-wooded landscape noted in the wider assessment unit, the site does not contain any ancient woodlands. It does lie adjacent to Horstedpond Wood and Park Wood ancient woodlands to the south-east and east, with New Grant Plantation/ Oldmill Wood ancient woodland in close proximity to the north-east. The site is also adjacent to Ridgewood Clay Pit LWS to the north, which contains species rich grassland, willow car and scrub. These woodlands, along with the hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees, provide landscape structure and habitat connectivity to support biodiversity. **Landscape pattern and time depth** The site is recorded as having a historic assart field pattern, which is also typical of the wider assessment unit. This historic field pattern is largely intact, although this has been disrupted by the construction of the Uckfield Bypass to the south-west. There are no recorded heritage assets within the site, although the Grade II listed Old Farmhouse Horstedpond is encircled by the site boundary (i.e. this land is not included as part of the SHELAA Site). The Registered Park and Garden at Horsted Place and Scheduled Monument at Buckham Hill are identified as having higher sensitivity. These features lie 230m and over 2km respectively from the site, with little to no intervisibility, and are therefore not relevant considerations to this site. **Recreational value** One public right of way crosses the south-west of the site and connects across the A22 to the wider landscape. There is no other public access, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit.

	Perceptual aspects There is no built development on the site itself, although the Horstedpond Farm complex is encircled by the site to the west. Proximity to the A22, prominent electricity pylons and intervisibility with the new development at Ridgewood Place are noted in the LSA analysis as creating lower sensitivity to perceptual aspects. This is relevant to the site. Modern influences include views from the east and south-east of the site towards the new settlement edge of Uckfield at Ridgewood Place, and proximity to the A22 which reduces tranquillity. The A22 and Ridgewood Stream are noted as boundary features for the settlement edge of Uckfield. The site lies between these two boundary features. The assessment unit is noted as providing a scenic backdrop and positive contribution to the rural setting of Uckfield, which is also characteristic of the site.
Designations which are Constraints to Development	Flood Zones 2 and 3 along Ridgewood Stream lie to the north of the site. Ancient woodland at Horstedpond Wood and Park Wood is recorded adjacent to the south-east and east.
Settlement Form and Edge Character and Extent of Built Development	The LSA analysis notes limited development within the assessment unit, with isolated properties dotted along rural country lanes being well-integrated into the landscape by mature vegetation. This is consistent with the character of the site and its immediate surroundings. There is no development within the site itself, however the site boundary encircles Horstedpond Farm, including the Grade II listed rebrick Old Farmhouse and a number of more modern houses and barns. The existing and emerging settlement edge of Uckfield to the north and north-west of the site is contained by Ridgewood Stream valley and adjacent wooded areas as well as the Uckfield Bypass further west. The settlement edge along New Road to the north is mixed, with semi-detached Victorian cottages, small terraces from the early 20th century and semi-detached and detached 20th century housing. Red brick is the unifying building material. This area is well-contained by woodland cover to the south, including that along the Ridgewood Stream and around Ridgewood House, which provides a strong physical and visual separation from the site. Ongoing development at Ridgewood Place to the north-west consists of 2 and 3 storey detached and semi-detached red brick houses. This development is not integrated well by vegetation, and is more apparent from the wider surrounding landscape (e.g. clearly visible from Horsted Green Park to the east).

Baseline Visual Character

Baseline Visual Character	Typical of the wider assessment unit, the site has a semi-enclosed character. Ancient woodland to the south-east, east and north-east; riparian woodland along Ridgewood Stream to the north; and mature tree cover around Ridgewood House to the north-west provide enclosure. The site is also enclosed by mature hedgerows and roadside vegetation along Lewes Road to the west. This generally restricts medium and long range views into the site from these directions. However, there are some filtered views available south into the site from Uckfield Millennium Green, Ridgewood Clay Pit LWS and nearby public rights of way, particularly in winter months when trees are not in leaf. Within these views Horstedpond Wood forms a wooded backdrop, seen beyond gently sloping arable fields. There are open short-range views into the site from the public right of way that passes along its south-western boundary. Similar views are available from southern parts of Lewes Road and the A22, although these are only likely to be experienced by motorists using this busy road. Views across the site are also likely to be available from Horstedpond Farm (including the listed building), which is encircled by the site. Views from within the site towards the emerging development at Ridgewood Place to the north-west are generally filtered through mature hedgerow trees along Lewes Road.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park	There is no intervisibility with the High Weald AONB or the South Downs National Park.

How the Site Relates to the Sensitivity of the Wider Assessment Unit

The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment assesses the Uckfield South and West assessment unit to have a **moderate sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The LSA indicates that the stream corridors and associated riparian woodlands, numerous ancient woodlands, strong network of hedgerows, intact historic field patterns (including assarts), rural setting provided to Uckfield, network of public rights of way, rural character and occasional long-distance views to the High Weald AONB increase sensitivity. The gently undulating valley landscape, some presence of modern field amalgamation and proximity to new development at Ridgewood Farm and the A22, which reduce tranquillity and rurality, reduce sensitivity.

The Site

The site demonstrates some of the above characteristics, including the stream corridors and associated riparian woodlands along Ridgewood Stream to the north, intact assart field pattern covering the majority of the site, an open setting provided to the historic buildings at Horstedpond Farm, and rural setting provided to the south of Uckfield. Proximity to the new development at Ridgewood Farm to the north-west and the A22 to the south reduce tranquillity and decreases sensitivity.

Overall, it is considered that the site conforms to the **moderate sensitivity** that has been determined for the wider assessment unit.

Potential Effects of Developing the Site and Mitigation/Enhancement Opportunities

Potential Effects as a Result of Development	
Landscape Character and Features	Development on the site could affect: ■ The gently undulating valley landform along the Ridgewood Stream. ■ The proximity to priority habitat deciduous woodland and ancient woodland at Horstedpond Wood and Park Wood. ■ The intact mature hedgerows, particularly in the east. ■ The intact historic assart field pattern covering the majority of the site. ■ The proximity to Grade II listed Old Farmhouse, Horstedpond. ■ The strong settlement boundary provided by the Ridgewood Stream. ■ The scenic, rural setting provided to Uckfield.
Designated Landscapes	There are no views to the High Weald AONB or South Downs National Park, and development on the site is unlikely to adversely affect the defining components of character of the AONB or the special qualities of the National Park.
Settlement Form, Edge and Setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The current robust boundary of Uckfield provided by the Ridgewood Stream valley, although this may be altered by construction of new development at Ridgewood Place. ■ The rural setting the site provides to the south of Uckfield.
Visual Amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Users of public rights of way within the site and to the north of the site. ■ Recreational users at Uckfield Millennium Green and Ridgewood Clay Pit Local Wildlife Site (LWS) to the north. ■ Residents at Horstedpond Farm. ■ The future local community to the west of the site at the new Ridgewood Place development where construction is underway. ■ People travelling on roads adjacent to the site, including Lewes Road and the A22.

Cumulative Issues	
Potential for Cumulative Effects with Other Large Strategic Site	The site is to the east of Ridgewood Place, which is currently under construction, comprising up to 1,000 homes, primary school, retail, health, and leisure and employment development. Development on this site would extend the new urban extension at Ridgewood Place east of Lewes Road further. This site, in combination with strategic SHELAA site 1061/1410, would result in a general expansion to Uckfield to the west and south-west. The site lies in reasonably close proximity to SHELAA site 1061/1410 and, despite limited intervisibility between the two, if both sites were brought forward for development there would be a degree of perceived visual coalescence between the two sites. This could result in cumulative impacts, with people travelling along public rights of way and the A22, the A26 and Lewes Road experiencing sequential visual views of development; and in relation to the historic village at Little Horsted, with development of the two sites narrowing the gap between it and Uckfield.

Potential for Mitigation and Enhancement

Landscape and visual effects could be avoided /minimised by following the guidance below:

- Development should be set back from land designated as Flood Zone 3 around Ridgewood Stream in the north of the site.
- Development should be set back from the ancient woodland at Horstedpond Wood and Park with a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage . 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).
- Hedgerows should be protected and retained where practicable, protecting mature specimen trees. Opportunities to enhance hedgerows should also be taken, replacing those affected by development and strengthening the local habitat network. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible.
- Consider the rural setting of Grade II listed The Old Farmhouse, Horstedpond, which lies in the centre of the site (although outside the site boundary).
- Consider opportunities to integrate development with the new development at Ridgewood Place, to ensure a cohesive character to the expanded settlement and pedestrian links between the developments.
- Additional planting should be used to screen new development and maintain the rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure and open space provision, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape. Planting species should be in character with the locality and native where possible / appropriate.
- Introduced built form to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of its surroundings by using high quality materials suggestive of the local vernacular.
- The height of development should integrate with the adjacent surrounding settlement edges, both existing and consented.
- Enhance local connectivity by improving pedestrian and cycle routes through the site, including the potential for connections between Uckfield Millennium Green and Ridgewood Pits LWS to the north and the site.
- Lower lying ground to the north could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features, incorporating habitat creation (outside of any areas within Flood Zone 2 or 3).
- Extend and enhance woodland cover along the A22 to the south-west to increase visual enclosure and strengthen habitat connectivity.

Summary

Development of this site would extend development from the existing urban edge of Uckfield, and reduce the rural setting the site provides to the settlement.

If the site is considered for development, any proposed development would need to be planned with great care and consideration, especially in relation to the key sensitive features within and adjacent to the site. This includes setting

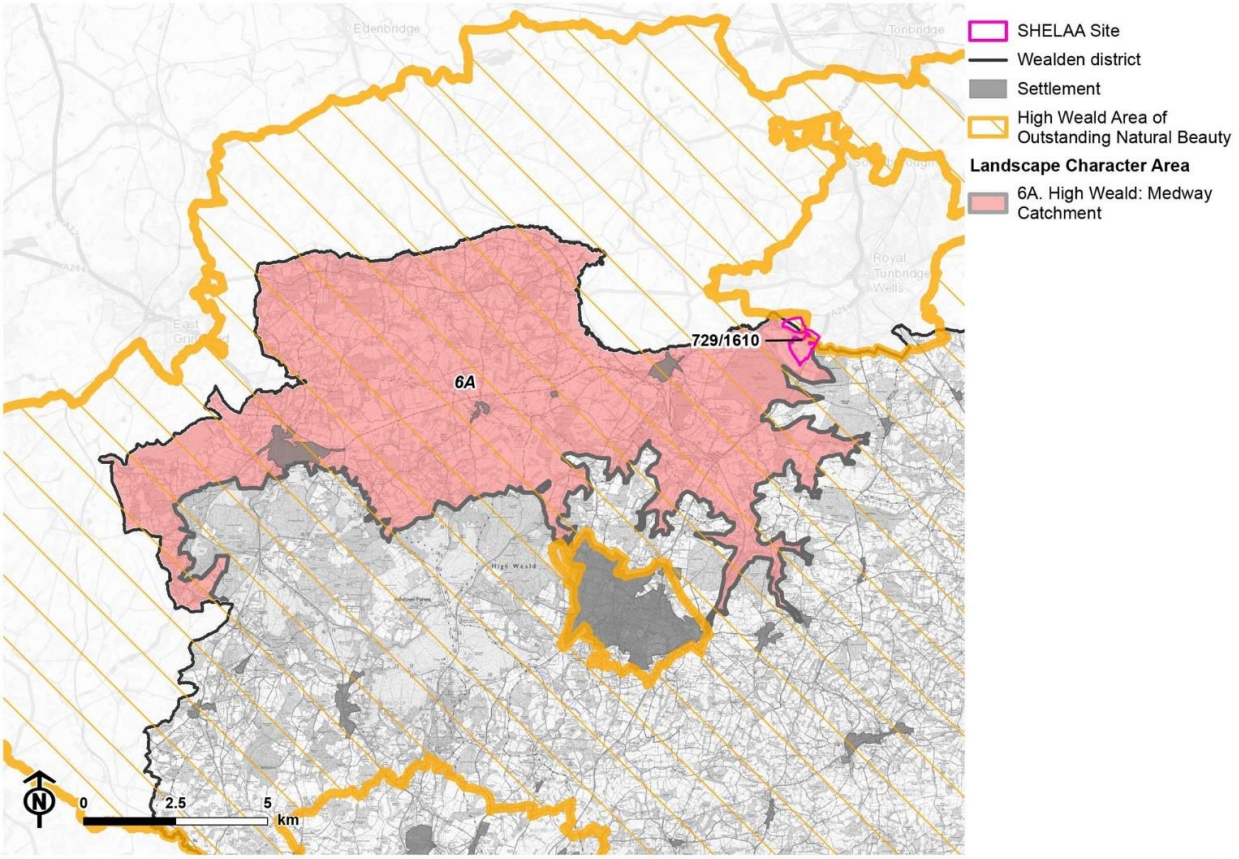
development back from Flood Zones 2 and 3 to the north, preserving the course of Ridgewood Stream and focusing on the western parts of the site, so as to relate development better to Lewes Road and the nearby emerging development at Ridgewood Place. Care should be taken to avoid impacting the heritage setting of the Grade II listed The Old Farmhouse, Horstedpond. Suitable development buffers should be put in place to avoid adverse impacts on ancient woodland at Horstedpond Wood and Park Wood, and opportunities taken to preserve the better represented assart field pattern in the east. Areas more sensitive to development are shown on **Figure A.29** below.

Figure A.25: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



LCA 6A: High Weald Medway Catchment

Figure A.26: Site locations in relation to the Landscape Character Area



Landscape Character Type (LCT) and Area (LCA)	LCT 6: Wooded Slopes (High Weald) LCA 6A: High Weald – Medway Catchment
LCA Description	LCA 6A is a rolling landscape of ridges and valleys containing the River Medway and its tributaries that drain northwards from Ashdown Forest into Sevenoaks District. This is a heavily wooded landscape with a pattern of small irregular fields, streams and scattered picturesque and historic settlements including Groombridge, Forest Row and Hartfield. The entirety of the LCA is located within the High Weald AONB.
Valued Features and Key Qualities of the LCA	■ The distinctive landform of ridges, spurs and valleys associated with the River Medway. ■ The ponds, streams and open water (including the Wier Wood Reservoir Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). ■ The woodland, riparian vegetation and wetland habitats of the Medway catchment. ■ The extensive woodland cover (with a high proportion of ancient woodland), coppices, shaws, trees and mature hedgerows. ■ Semi-natural habitats including deciduous woodland, semi-improved grassland and wet meadows.

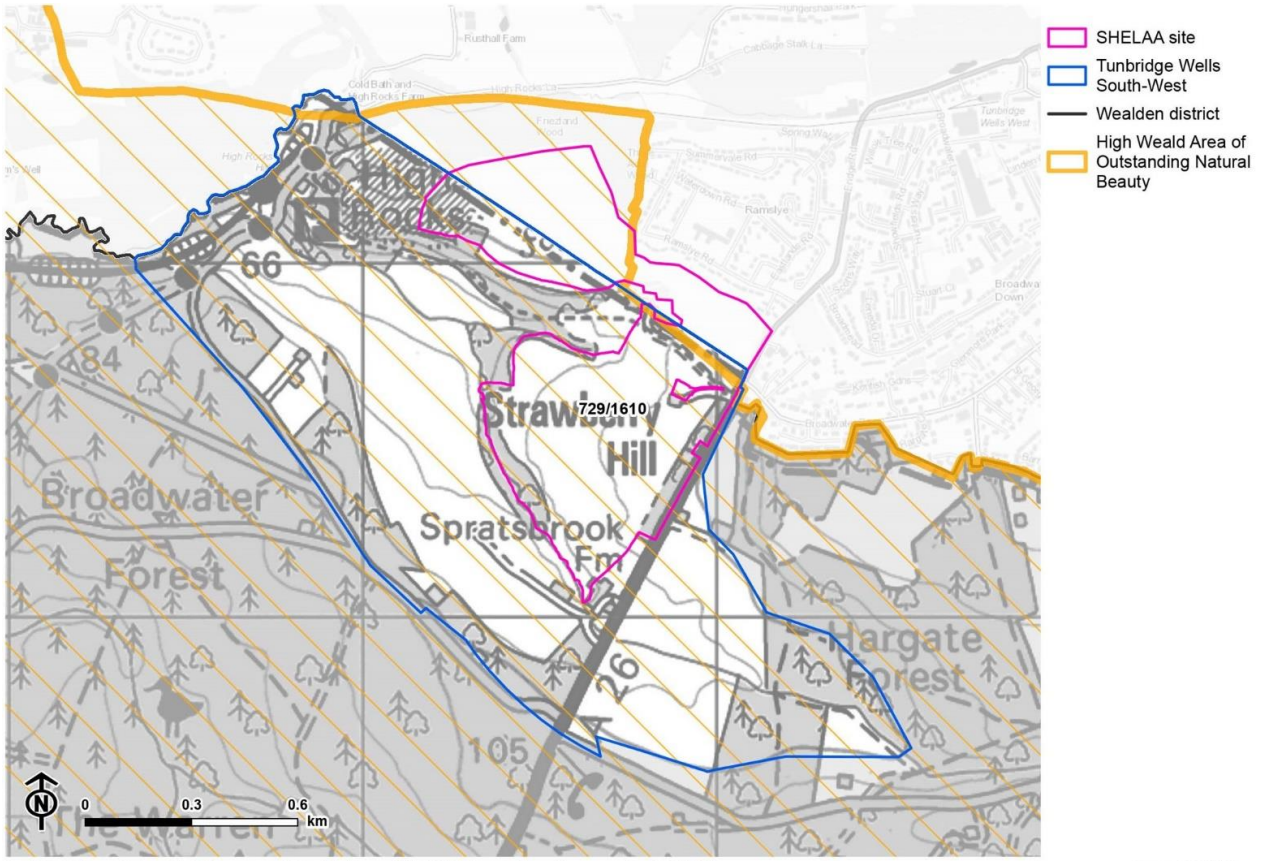
	■ Distinctive sandstone outcrops that are recognised through designation at Harrison's Rocks and the Eridge Green, Penn's Rocks and High Rocks SSSIs. ■ The small-scale medieval field patterns with sinuous hedgerow boundaries. ■ Hammer ponds, coppiced woodlands and remnants of iron forges. ■ The dispersed pattern of ridge-top villages (whose value is recognised through designation as Conservation Areas) linked by winding hedged lanes. ■ The vernacular architecture of brick, oak and sandstone with a distinctive architectural colour palette. ■ The 18th-19th century parkland and gardens of Hammerwood Park, Buckhurst Park and Kidbrooke Park. ■ The extensive network of public rights of way. ■ The harmonious small-scale landscape pattern of mixed farms, dense woodland and open views across the wooded ridges and valleys. ■ The strong sense of tranquillity and experience of dark night skies, particularly on the wooded valley floors and within larger woodlands. ■ Associations with Winnie the Pooh and Ashdown Forest.

Landscape Sensitivity Context: Tunbridge Wells South-West Assessment Unit

One potential development site is considered within the Tunbridge Wells South-West assessment unit:

- 729/1610 – Land at Ramslye Farm (Spratsbrook Farm), Tunbridge Wells

Figure A.27: Site locations in relation to the assessment unit



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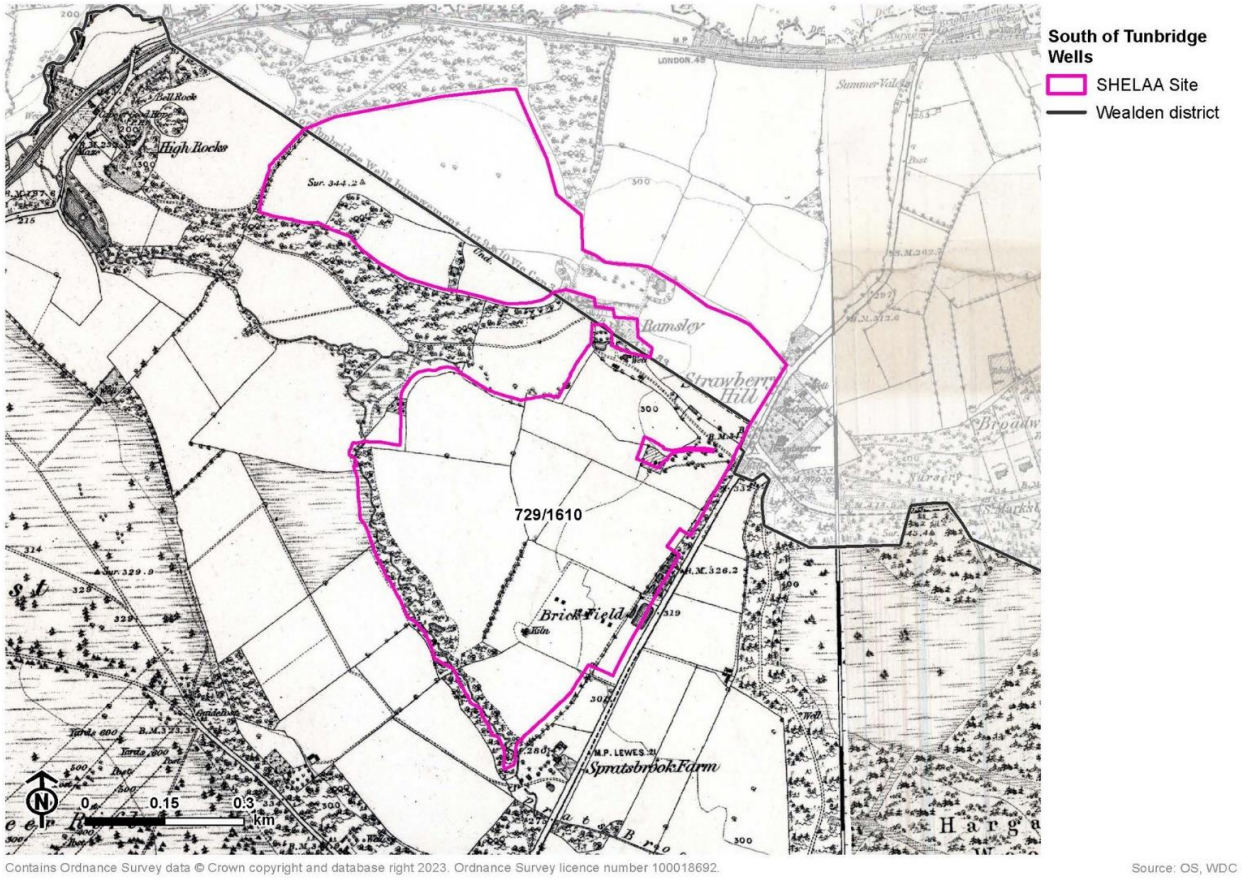
Source: OS, WDC

Settlement Context

Settlement Location and Context	Tunbridge Wells is a large town located within the borough of Tunbridge Wells, to the north of Wealden District. The town is excluded from, but surrounded in all directions by, the High Weald AONB. The landscape to the south of the town, and therefore this site, 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. The 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 led 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, such as at Ramslye to the north of the site.

	Despite this later sprawl, the south-western settlement edge is often enclosed by woodland or contained by roads.
Settlement Pattern and Edge Character	The south-western edge of Tunbridge Wells consists mostly of one and two storey detached and semi-detached houses, and is partially defined by the flood zone of the River Grom (a tributary of the River Medway), the Spa Valley Railway and associated woodlands. The southern settlement edge is less defined, due to the expansion of late 20th century development south of the River Grom at Ramslye. The settlement edge here is fringed by woodland, which is denser along the River Grom.

Figure A.28: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



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Source: OS, WDC

The Landscape Sensitivity of Tunbridge Wells South-West Assessment Unit Described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA Assessment Unit	Tunbridge Wells South-West		
Landscape Sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA 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
	Moderate-High	High	High
Key Sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to develop	■ The undulating valley landform. ■ Interconnecting mature deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin) within the Eridge and Broadwater BOA.		

identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	■ The ecological, historic and recreational value associated with the High Rocks Scheduled Monument and SSSI. ■ The strong rural character and dispersed settlement pattern with areas of relative remoteness and tranquillity. ■ The rural context that the area forms for views south from Tunbridge Wells towards the High Weald AONB.
LSA Guidance	■ Locate development on elevated ground in close proximity to settlement to the north-east, where development would better relate to the existing pattern of ridgetop development. Avoid the perception of development 'spilling' into the valley landscape. ■ Avoid development on the valley sides and in the incised and heavily wooded stream valleys in the centre and north-west 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 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. ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Eridge and Broadwater BOA, especially woodland management and restoration, where possible. ■ Retain in-field and roadside trees along the A26, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. 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 field boundaries are deteriorated in the centre and west of the assessment unit, 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. ■ Avoid development on sites in areas of habitat interest, notably deciduous woodland, the High Rocks SSSI and riparian habitats along the River Grom. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the north. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities of the High Rocks Scheduled Monument and listed buildings associated with the High Rocks Inn. ■ Retain woodland along the public rights of way, the Spa Valley Heritage Railway and near the High Rocks Scheduled Monument to maintain the wooded landscape character and screen views towards development. ■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using species that are in character with the wider landscape, and native 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'[8], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[9] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[10]. ■ 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.

[8] High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2019) High Weald Housing Design Guide: Building batter, building beautiful in the AONB
[9] High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2017) Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development
[10] High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2019) Management Plan 2019-2024

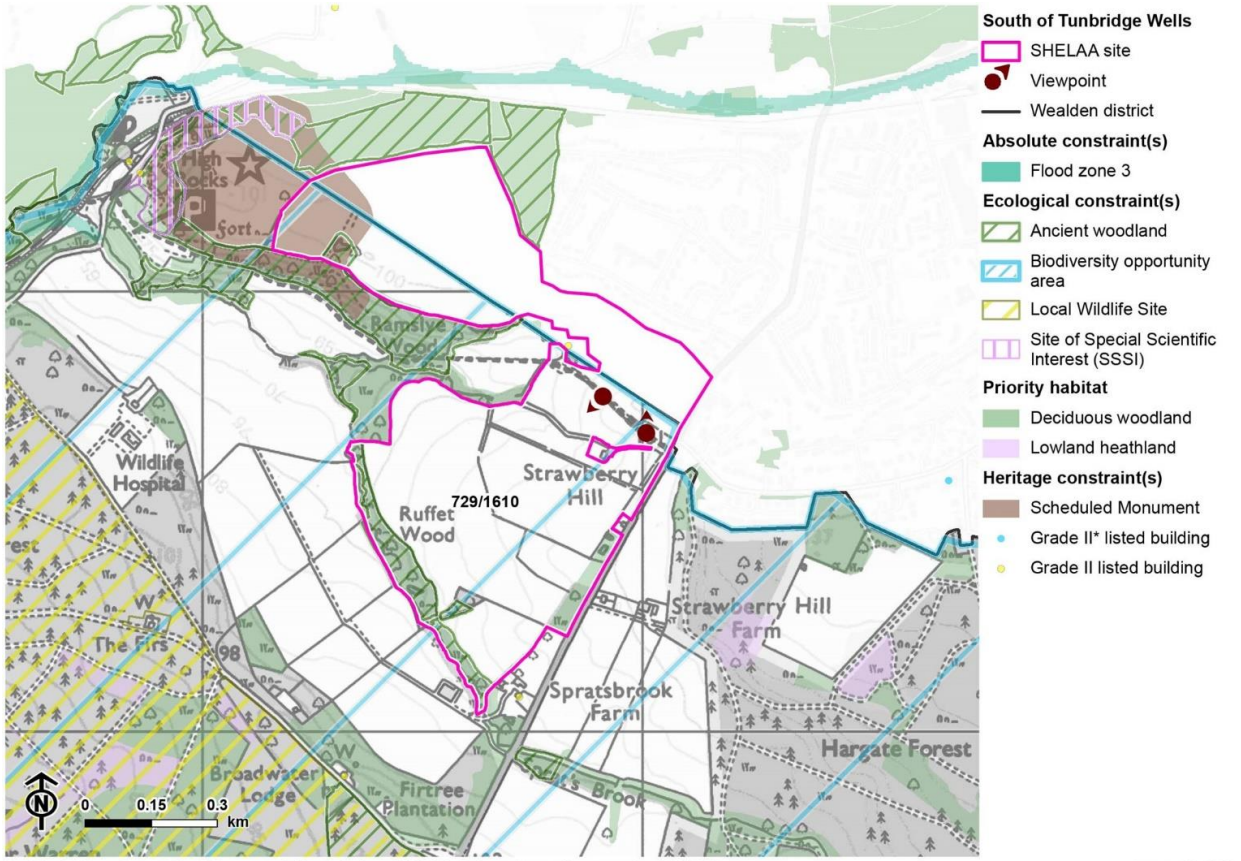
Site Assessment: Tunbridge Wells

Site Details

SHELAA Site Name/ Reference	Land at Ramslye Farm (Spratsbrook Farm), Tunbridge Wells	729/1610
Potential Development	550 residential dwellings (within Wealden District) ; SANGs; Community Uses. There are also a further 120 net dwellings forming part of a draft allocation in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Local Plan (Regulation 19). For the purposes of this appraisal, the entire cross-district red line boundary of the proposed site is considered.	
Site Location	The site is located to the south-west of Tunbridge Wells and to the west of the Eridge Road (A26). The site straddles the boundary between the Wealden District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council administrative areas. The administrative boundary between the two does not follow any defined feature on the ground, rather it passes in a straight line directly through the northern half of the site between Eridge Road and High Rocks Lane.	

Site Baseline

Figure A.29: Site location and constraints



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Source: OS, WDC

Representative Site Photos



Viewpoint 1: Views south-west across the site, towards the incised wooded stream corridor and to more distant wooded ridges of the High Weal AONB.



Viewpoint 2: Views across the north of the site towards the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells.

Baseline Landscape Character in relation to the Wider Assessment Unit

Key Features and Qualities of the Site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	**Landform** The site consists of undulating valley slopes which are typical of the wider assessment unit, between 70m and 100m AOD, which fall away from more elevated ridged landform to the east of the site. The north-west of the site is located on a slight spur (including High Rocks), which extends from the more prominent ridgeline to the east. An incised wooded corridor of Sprat's Brook defines the southern and south-western site boundary. **Natural character** There are linear areas of riparian ancient woodland along the southern and south-western boundary of the site at Sprat's Brook, Ruffet Wood and Ramslye Wood. Deciduous woodland, including that which is ancient, is typical of the wider assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** Fields are arable and are bounded by a combination of well-established hedgerows featuring mature hedgerow trees and low and clipped hedgerows. The field pattern is predominantly later post-medieval and early modern planned private enclosure, with an influence of modern field amalgamation. There are some small areas of surviving medieval historic assart field pattern in the north and west of the site lying predominantly within Tunbridge Wells Borough. The mixed field pattern is a key characteristic of the wider assessment unit. **Recreational value** Areas of higher recreational value within the wider assessment unit are focused near the High Rocks Scheduled Monument and SSSI, located to the west of the site (this partly located in the administrative boundary of Wealden District). The public right of way which crosses the site provides access and connectivity with the recreational areas associated with the High Rocks. **Perceptual aspects** More elevated areas of the site to the east and north-west have a relatively open character. This contrasts with the more enclosed character of the wooded lower-lying areas of the site, and the enclosed wooded character of the wider assessment unit. The site is influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells to the north-east and the A26 to the east, which disrupts tranquillity and the experience of dark skies resulting in a lower sensitivity. However, wooded areas along the south-western and western boundary of the

	site, and areas in the north-west have a stronger rural character and sense of tranquillity and higher sensitivity, similar to the wider assessment unit. Views from the A26 Eridge Road across the north-east of site and towards the River Grom valley (located within Tunbridge Wells Borough) are noted in the Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area appraisal. The wooded character of the southern approach into Tunbridge Wells from the A26 Eridge Road is also noted in the Conservation Area appraisal.
Designations which are Constraints to Development	The majority of the site, excluding the north-eastern corner (within Tunbridge Wells Borough), is located within the High Weald AONB. There is ancient woodland within the site at Spratsbrook and Ruffet Wood to the south-west, Ramslye Wood to the west and Friezland Wood to the north-west (within Tunbridge Wells Borough). The High Rocks Scheduled Monument is located partly within the north-west of the site (lying across the administrative boundary between Wealden District and Tunbridge Wells Borough). The Eridge and Broadwater Biodiversity Opportunity Area covers the entirety of the site (within Wealden District Council administrative area). There are no listed buildings within the site, but one Grade II listed building at Ramslye Old Farm House is located in close proximity and encircled by part of the north-western site boundary (within the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council administrative boundary). Another Grade II listed building is located in proximity to the south-east along the A26 at Spratsbrook Farmhouse. The north-east of the site is located adjacent to the Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area.
Settlement Form and Edge Character and Extent of Built Development	The settlement form of Tunbridge Wells strongly relates to the underlying ridged landform, with development predominantly located along the ridge crests. There is some existing development to the north-east of the site (at Ramslye) that is located within the lower-lying River Grom valley; however, this development is relatively well contained by the surrounding wooded landform. Woodland and rolling fields provide a scenic rural backdrop to the south of the town, formed by a relatively tranquil area of the High Weald AONB. This is apparent in views from properties along the southern edge of Tunbridge Wells, particularly those in Ramslye. Settlement density increases to the north-east of the site at Tunbridge Wells and consists of 20th and 21st century two storey detached and semi-detached properties. To the south of the urban edge along the A26, the settlement pattern becomes one of dispersed farmsteads (e.g. Spratsbrook Farm).

Baseline Visual Character

Baseline Visual Character	Close and middle-distance views across the site are available in places from the relatively open valley slopes. However, views into the site from surrounding areas are generally restricted by woodland along the site boundaries, including areas of ancient woodland to the south and west and roadside trees to the east of the site along the A26. However, there are some longer-range views available from the more elevated parts of the north-west and east of the site looking south and west which increases sensitivity. One public right of way crosses the site, from which some views across the site are available to the east. However, this route passes through Ramslye Wood further west (on approach to the High Rocks Scheduled Monument), which largely screens outward views. Whilst the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk and Spa Valley Heritage Railway pass along the River Grom Valley to the north-west and north of the site, the heavily wooded nature of the valley means that views into the site are screened. There are glimpsed views into the north of the site (within the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council administrative area) from permissive footpaths within the access land at Friezland Wood. Views into the site are available from properties on the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells to the north and north-east (including within the Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area), particularly those along Ramslye Road, elevated properties along the western edge of Broadwater Down, and from Ramslye Old Farm House and Strawberry Hill Cottages. Filtered views into the site are also

	available from dispersed properties located further south along the A26, including at Strawberry Hill Farm. Views from the A26 are heavily filtered by intervening vegetation, with some glimpsed views in between breaks in vegetation.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park	Most of the site is located within the High Weald AONB (excluding the north-eastern part of the site located within the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council administrative area) and there is some intervisibility with other parts of the AONB including the wooded ridges formed by Broadwater Forest and The Warren to the west and Hargate Forest to the south-east. However, these ridges contain more distant views across the wider AONB than those obtained from within 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, ridges and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams.'	The site lies between the incised corridor of the River Grom to the west and a ridge of higher ground to the east, and includes a spur of higher ground to the north-west (High Rocks). It is also incised by small gill stream corridors, notably Sprat's Brook which forms the southern and western boundaries of the site. The site therefore contributes to the **numerous gill streams** and forms part of the wider **deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform** of the AONB.
'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 influenced by the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells to the north-east. However, the settlement pattern to the south becomes increasingly dispersed, with two listed buildings associated with historic farmsteads (Ramslye Old Farm House and Spratsbrook Farmhouse) located within close proximity of the site along the historic routeway passing south of Tunbridge Wells. The surrounding fields within the site contribute to the setting of these historic farmsteads and the surviving **dispersed historic settlement pattern**, forming part of the **separation between settlements**.
'Routeways – A dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).'	A historic public right of way, lined by ancient woodland, passes through the site, from the A26 Eridge Road towards the sandstone outcrops, prehistoric rock shelters and a multivallate hillfort at the High Rocks Scheduled Monument. The A26 Eridge Road, which abuts the site, is recorded as a historic lane. The site therefore contributes to the **network of historic routeways**, and **variation of habitat** found along these routes. However, this section of the A26 is relatively busy and has a modern appearance.
'Woodland – Abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings.'	There are areas of ancient woodland along the northern, southern and western site boundaries, and further areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland along the western and eastern site boundaries, which form an interconnected habitat network. Areas of woodland are irregular in shape, particularly to the north and west of the site. Woodland along the site boundaries therefore contributes to the wider **network of interconnected 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.'	The underlying field pattern is predominantly post-medieval planned private enclosure. However, there are some smaller areas of historic assart field pattern in the north, associated with the historic Ramslye Old Farm House. There are some areas of interconnecting mature hedgerow with occasional sinuous woodland, some of which is ancient. However, internal field boundaries within the site have been influenced by modern field amalgamation due to arable farming on the site. Parts of the site therefore contribute to the **medieval character of the field pattern**; however, there has been some merging of internal field boundaries.

Overall Contribution of the Site to the 'Defining Components of Character' of the High Weald AONB

The site contributes positively to the ridged and valley landform with incised streams, pattern of rural fields which are occasionally medieval in character, network of historic routeways and small interconnected areas of woodland of the wider High Weald AONB. The north-eastern part of the site lies outside the AONB and expresses fewer 'defining components of

character' of the AONB than the rest of the site. Development of this part of the site would therefore have no direct effects on the High Weald AONB. However it would result in some indirect effects on the setting of the High Weald AONB.

How the Site Relates to the Sensitivity of the Wider Assessment Unit

The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 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 areas of complex undulating valley landform, the ecological, historic and recreational values, particularly associated with the High Rocks Scheduled Monument and SSSI, the strong rural character and dispersed settlement pattern and the location within the High Weald AONB increase the sensitivity of the assessment unit. The semi-enclosed character, influence of modern development along the settlement edge and busy trunk roads, such as the A26 and A267 decreases the sensitivity of the assessment unit.

The Site

The site demonstrates many of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit, including an undulating topography which falls to the incised stream corridor of Sprat's Brook in the south and west; linear areas of ancient woodland to the south and west along Sprat's Brook and at Ruffet Wood and Ramslye Wood; some small areas of surviving medieval historic assart field pattern in the north and west of the site; the historic and recreational value of High Rocks Scheduled Monument, which lies partially within the north-west of the site; the strong rural character of much of the landscape, away from the edge of Tunbridge Wells and the A26 Eridge Road; and the rural context that the site forms in views from Tunbridge Wells towards the High Weald AONB.

However, parts of the site to the north-east and east are influenced by proximity to the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells and the A26 which disrupts tranquillity and the experience of dark skies and results in a lower sensitivity.

The majority of the site is considered to conform to the moderate-high sensitivity for accommodating new small scale (2-2.5 storey) residential development that has been determined for the whole assessment unit. However, areas in proximity to the urban edge of Tunbridge Wells and the A26 are considered to have slightly lower sensitivity than the wider assessment unit, and is of moderate sensitivity for accommodating new small scale residential development.

Potential Effects of Developing the Site and Mitigation/Enhancement Opportunities

Potential Effects as a Result of Development	
Landscape Character and Features	Development on the site could affect: ■ The undulating valley side landform, transitioning to ridges and spurs further north and north-east. ■ Some small areas of historic field patterns, particularly assarts in the north-west. ■ The network of mature deciduous woodland, mature hedgerow, hedgerow trees and roadside trees. ■ Linear riparian woodlands extending along the stream corridor in the south and west of the site. ■ Relatively open views across the sloping landform of the site from higher ground to the north and east. ■ The rural character of the landscape with areas of remoteness and tranquillity, particularly in the west away from the settlement edge and A26.
Designated Landscapes	The site is located within the High Weald AONB, and development within the site may affect the following 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB: ■ The deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform, particularly the contrast between the lower-lying valley landscape to the south of the site, and the more elevated ridged landform to the north and east. ■ The numerous small streams, including incised gill stream corridors in the south and west of the site.

	■ The dispersed settlement pattern of historic farmsteads to the south of the site and separation between farmsteads provided by the fields within the site (although the proximity of Tunbridge Wells exerts an influence on the settlement pattern to the north of the site). ■ The dense radiating network or historic routeways and associated heritage features, including the historic public right of way between Eridge Road and High Rocks. ■ The highly interconnected areas of woodland, with a high proportion of ancient woodlands and gill woodlands, including areas of ancient woodland along the northern, southern and western site boundaries. ■ The irregular field pattern and medieval character of assarts with sinuous wooded and mature field boundaries, including small areas of historic assart field pattern in the north.
Settlement Form, Edge and Setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The settlement form of Tunbridge Wells, which relates to the underlying ridged landform. Areas in the north of the site are located on a slight spur of higher ground, and therefore would relate more strongly to the existing settlement pattern. However, development in the south of the site would appear to 'spill' into the valley landscape beyond the ridge crest. ■ The wooded rural setting formed by the site to the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells, particularly properties along the southern edge of Ramslye.
Visual Amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Users of the public right of way, which crosses the site, including those accessing the High Rocks Scheduled Monument. ■ Walkers at Friezland Wood access land (of relevance for the north of the site within the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council administrative area). ■ Pedestrians and residents along the south-western settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells, particularly along Ramslye Road and in Broadwater Down (within the Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area) and dispersed properties along the A26. ■ Users of the A26.
Cumulative Issues	
Potential for Cumulative Effects with Other Large Strategic Site	The site is not in close proximity to any other strategic sites considered in this assessment.
Potential for Mitigation and Enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Locate development on elevated ground in close proximity to settlement to the north-east, where development would better relate to the existing pattern of ridgetop development. Avoid the perception of development 'spilling' into the valley landscape. ■ Development should avoid and be set back from the incised and wooded gill stream corridors, which are a defining component of character of the High Weald AONB. Lower ground could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features, incorporating habitat creation. ■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, including woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. ■ Set development back from the edge of ancient woodland, which is a defining component of character of the High Weald AONB, to create a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage[11]. 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).	

[11] See Natural England and Forestry Commission Guidance for further information

- Improve the connectivity of woodlands through tree planting and hedgerow corridors, in line with the aims of the Eridge and Broadwater Biodiversity Opportunity Area, and to contribute to the wider interconnected network of woodland which is a defining component of character of the High Weald AONB.
- Enhance hedgerows where eroded, replacing those affected by development and strengthening the connectivity of the local habitat network. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible.
- Retain the historic assart field pattern in the north-west of the site as far as is practicable, which is a defining component of the character of the High Weald AONB.
- Retain and enhance woodland along the A26 to minimise views of development. Replace any unavoidable losses with species that are in character with the locality and use native species where possible , ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting.
- Consider views of development from the Tunbridge Wells Conservation Area, particularly the elevated ridgeline of Broadwater Down and views across the site from the approach into the Conservation Area from the A26 Eridge Road.
- Set development back from the public right of way, which crosses the site, maintaining its rural character.
- Enhance public access providing opportunities to experience areas of woodland, the High Rocks Scheduled Monument and the wider rural landscape.
- Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities of the High Rocks Scheduled Monument; avoid and set back development from the Scheduled Monument and the adjacent ancient woodland, which forms the setting to the Scheduled Monument.
- Consider views of development from residential properties along the settlement edge, including along Ramslye Road, retaining relatively open views towards wooded skylines of the wider High Weald AONB, including towards Broadwater Warren to the south of the site.
- Additional planting should be used to screen new development and maintain the rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any 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. Planting species should be in character with the locality.
- Introduced built form 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 new development reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in the use of materials. Developments should 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].
- 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.

Summary

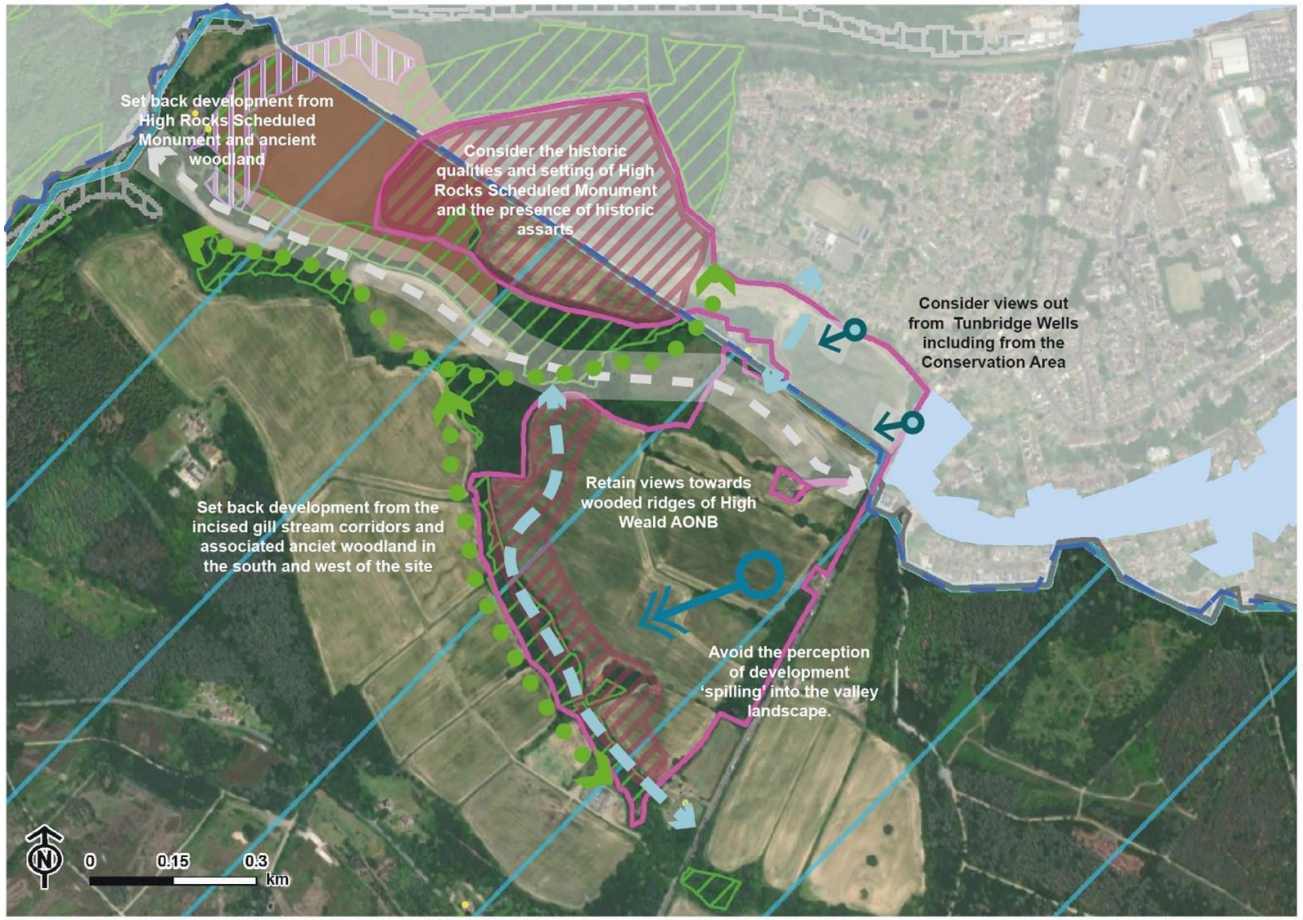
Development of the site will extend development beyond the ridge crest, which largely defines the settlement pattern of Tunbridge Wells, into a landscape that forms the rural context to the south of Tunbridge Wells. However, containment by woodland limits views into the site and reduces sensitivity to some extent.

If the site is considered for development, it would need to be planned with great care and consideration, especially in relation to the key sensitive features within and adjacent to the site. This includes development being set back from the incised wooded gill stream valleys as well as the ancient woodlands on the site and adjacent to it, and from the High Rocks Scheduled Monument and SSSI. Development should focus on areas of higher ground in the north-eastern parts of the site so as to better relate to the existing settlement pattern, and locally appropriate planting should be used to integrate the development into the landscape and help maintain the rural character of the wider area. The 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB should be protected and views towards wooded skylines of the wider High Weald AONB, including towards Broadwater Warren to the south of the site, should be retained where possible.

[12] High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2019) High Weald Housing Design Guide: Building batter, building beautiful in the AONB
[13] High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2017) Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development
[14] High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2019) Management Plan 2019-2024

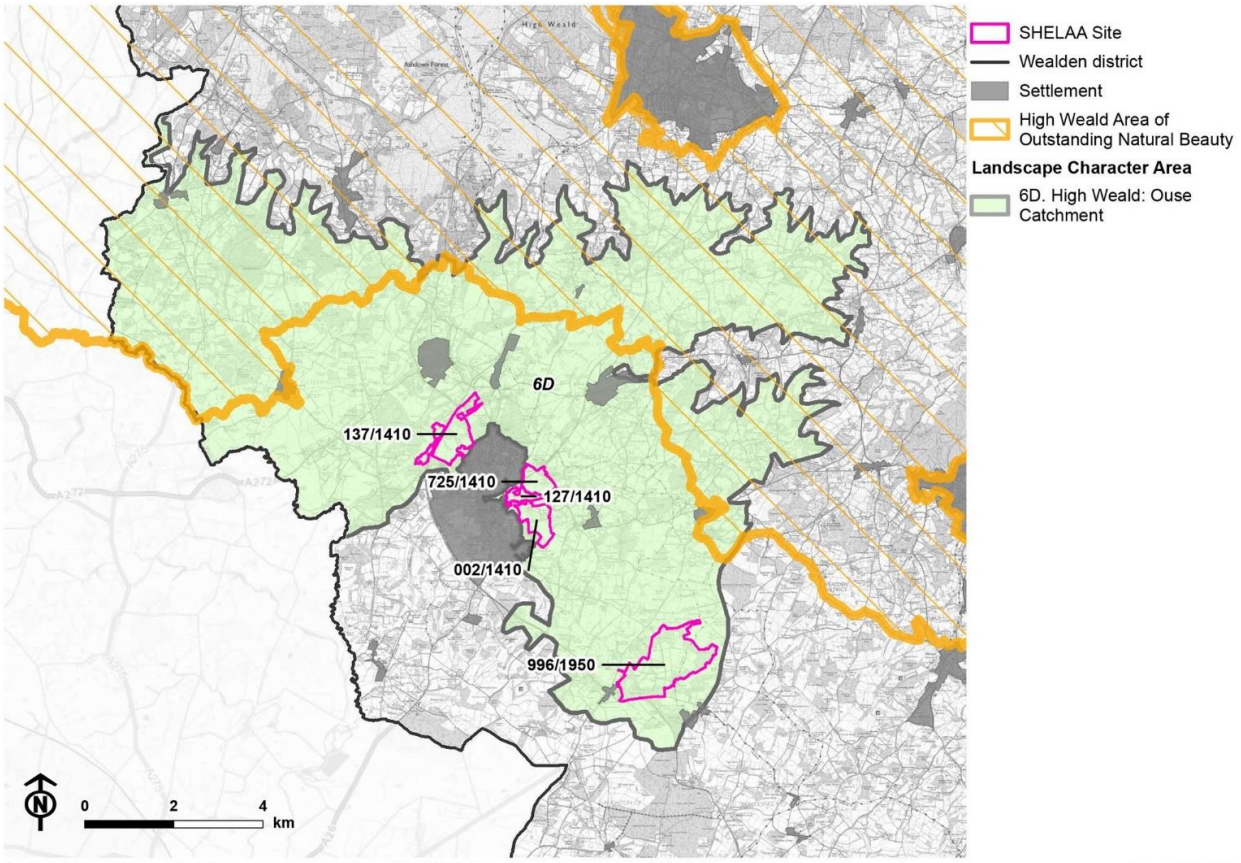
A summary map indicating the key constraints and opportunities, including areas more sensitive to development are shown on **Figure A.35** below.

Figure A.30: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



LCA 6D: High West – Ouse Catchment

Figure A.31: Site locations in relation to the Landscape Character Area



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Source: OS, WDC

Landscape Character Type (LCT) and Area (LCA)	LCT 6: Wooded Slopes (High Weald) LCA 6D: High Weald – Ouse Catchment
LCA Description	LCA 6D: The High Weald: Ouse Catchment is a rolling landscape of ridges and valleys containing the River Ouse and its tributaries that drain south-westwards from Ashdown Forest and the Central High Weald into Lewes District. A wooded landscape with an intricate pattern of small irregular fields, streams and small, historic ridge-top settlements. The High Weald AONB extends into the north of this LCA, west of Fletching and to the east of Blackboys and Buxted.
Valued Features and Key Qualities of the LCA	■ The distinctive landform of ridges and valleys associated with the River Ouse. ■ Hammer ponds and ghyll streams that support wetland habitats. ■ The woodland, riparian vegetation and wetland habitats of the Ouse and Uck catchments. ■ The mixed and deciduous plantations and coppiced woodland, ancient woodland, shaws, trees and hedgerows. ■ The wet meadows, unimproved and acid grassland, heathland and broadleaved woodland (including Buxted Park and Stockland Farm Meadows Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)).

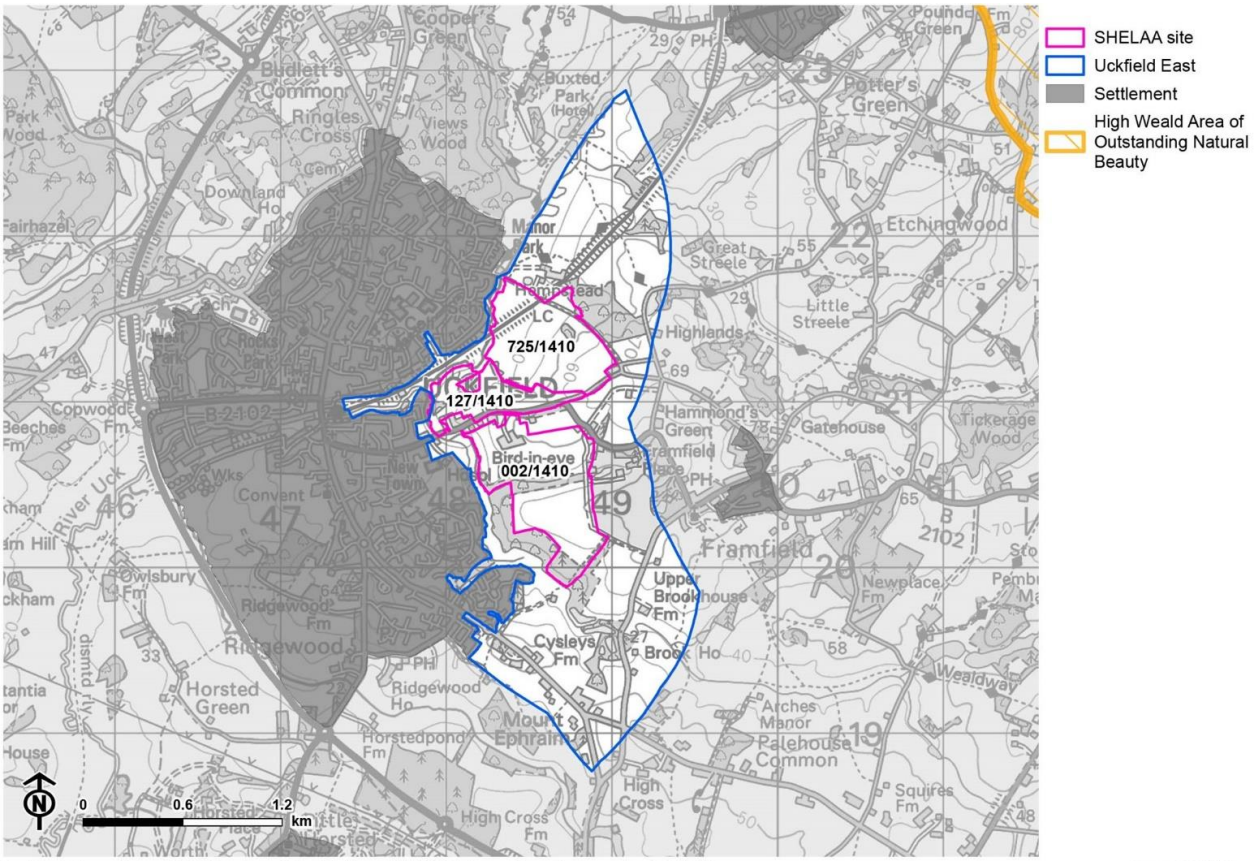
	■ The small-scale medieval field patterns, with sinuous hedgerow boundaries. ■ Hammer ponds, coppiced woodlands and remnants of forges provide a link to the Wealden iron industry. ■ The dispersed pattern of ridge-top villages (whose value is recognised through designation as Conservation Areas), with landmark church spires and towers, and linked by winding rural lanes. ■ The vernacular architecture of brick, oak, sandstone and flint, which reflects the locally available materials. ■ Designated parklands at Sheffield Park, Buxted Park and Framfield Place. ■ The public rights of way provide recreational opportunities, with contrasting long views to the south, including the South Downs and enclosed views within the landscape. ■ Rural roads resulting from transhumance patterns of movement are part of the medieval landscape of the High Weald AONB. ■ The harmonious small-scale landscape pattern of mixed farms, dense woodland and open views across the wooded ridges and valleys contribute to the strong scenic quality of the area, reflected in its designation as an AONB. ■ The sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies in some areas, particularly away from the larger settlements in the south of the LCA, such as Uckfield.

Landscape Sensitivity Context: Uckfield East Assessment Unit

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

- Group comprising 725/1410 – Land at Hempstead Lane, Uckfield; 002/1410 – Bird in Eye Farm (South), Bird in Eye Hill, Uckfield; and 127/1410 – Bird in Eye Farm (North)

Figure A.32: Site locations in relation to the assessment unit



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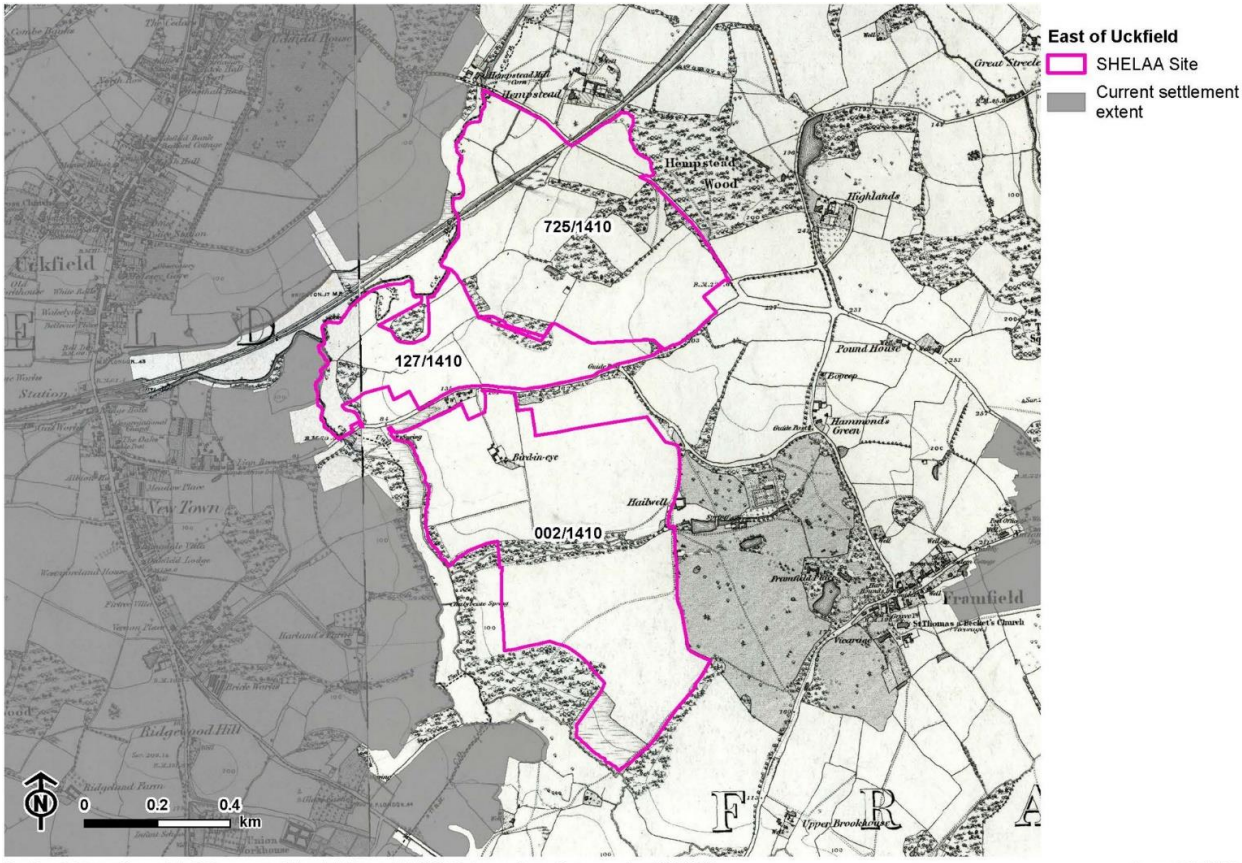
Source: OS, WDC

Settlement Context

Settlement Location and Context	Uckfield is a relatively large market town located in the west of the district, at the transition point between the Wooded Clay Vales of the Low Weald (LCT 3) and the Wooded Slopes of the High Weald (LCT 6).
Settlement Evolution	The town developed where the road linking Canterbury, Chichester and Lewes crossed the River Uck. The original settlement was focussed primarily along Church Street (around the medieval chapel) and High Street, an area designated as the Uckfield Conservation Area. Later development extended further north and south along High Street and along Framfield Road (the New Town area) to the south-east, resulting in a linear north-south settlement pattern. The arrival of the railway in the 19th century stimulated further growth and by the early and mid-20th century, development greatly increased the size of the town. This later expansion has resulted in the town's merging with the formerly separate hamlets of Ringles Cross and Ridgewood to the north and south respectively. New development is currently under construction at Ridgewood,

	and will form a settlement extension of 1,000 new homes to the west / south-west of the town (east of the A22 Uckfield Bypass).
Settlement Pattern and Edge Character	The settlement still retains its linear north-south form, although more recently industrial and residential development has extended the settlement to the north-west as far as the Uckfield Bypass (A22) and to the north-east as far as Views Wood (ancient woodland) and the River Uck. The Uckfield Bypass was constructed in 1982 and today defines the western and south-western edges of the settlement. The settlement edge to the east and south-east is generally defined by the valley forms of the River Uck and Framfield Stream, with only a small amount of development along the B2102 beyond this. The settlement edges of Uckfield generally consist of two storey 20th or 21st century housing, with the exception of Bellbrook Industrial Estate to the west, which consists of larger scale low-rise industrial and commercial units. Extensive woodland encloses the settlement, particularly to the north and south.

Figure A.33: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



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Source: OS, WDC

The Landscape Sensitivity of Uckfield East Assessment Unit Described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA Assessment Unit	Uckfield East		
Landscape Sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA 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
	Moderate	High	High

Key Sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to develop identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	■ The undulating valley landform. ■ 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 to the south and north-east of the assessment unit. ■ Historic features throughout the assessment unit including scattered oast houses and Framfield Park in the south. ■ Riparian woodland and other wetland habitats along the River Uck and its tributaries. ■ Prominent open valley sides in the south of the assessment unit, which provide a rural setting to the settlement. ■ The open character of the floodplain meadows along the River Uck. ■ Strong settlement boundaries, including extensive woodland to the north and wooded river/stream valleys elsewhere. ■ The network of Public Rights of Way. ■ Areas of tranquillity and dark skies along the Uck Valley and within the large woodlands to the north.
LSA Guidance	■ Avoid development on the steep open valley sides in the south of the unit, due to their visual prominence and the rural setting they provide to the wider settlement. ■ Avoid development on the open floodplain meadows along the River Uck. ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA where possible, including wetland habitat creation. ■ Locate development on low lying flat fields, or lower slopes in close proximity to the settlement, well enclosed by landform and vegetation where development would be less visible and have less influence on landscape character. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland, including linear riparian woodland along watercourses. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow a suitable and appropriate buffer around them to avoid root damage. ■ Avoid development in areas of habitat interest, notably semi-natural woodlands, grassland habitats in Buxted Park or riparian habitats along the River Uck and its tributaries. ■ Retain in-field or roadside 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. ■ 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 south of this assessment unit. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the appreciation of historic features, such as riverside mills, or listed buildings. ■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using species that are in character with the wider landscape. ■ Take opportunities to reduce the visual impact of the railway and roads, and existing urban edge development. ■ Consider views from popular public rights of way, such as the Wealdway, when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Ensure development does not affect the open character of the river valley, and areas of relative tranquillity in the larger woodlands.

Site Assessment: East of Uckfield

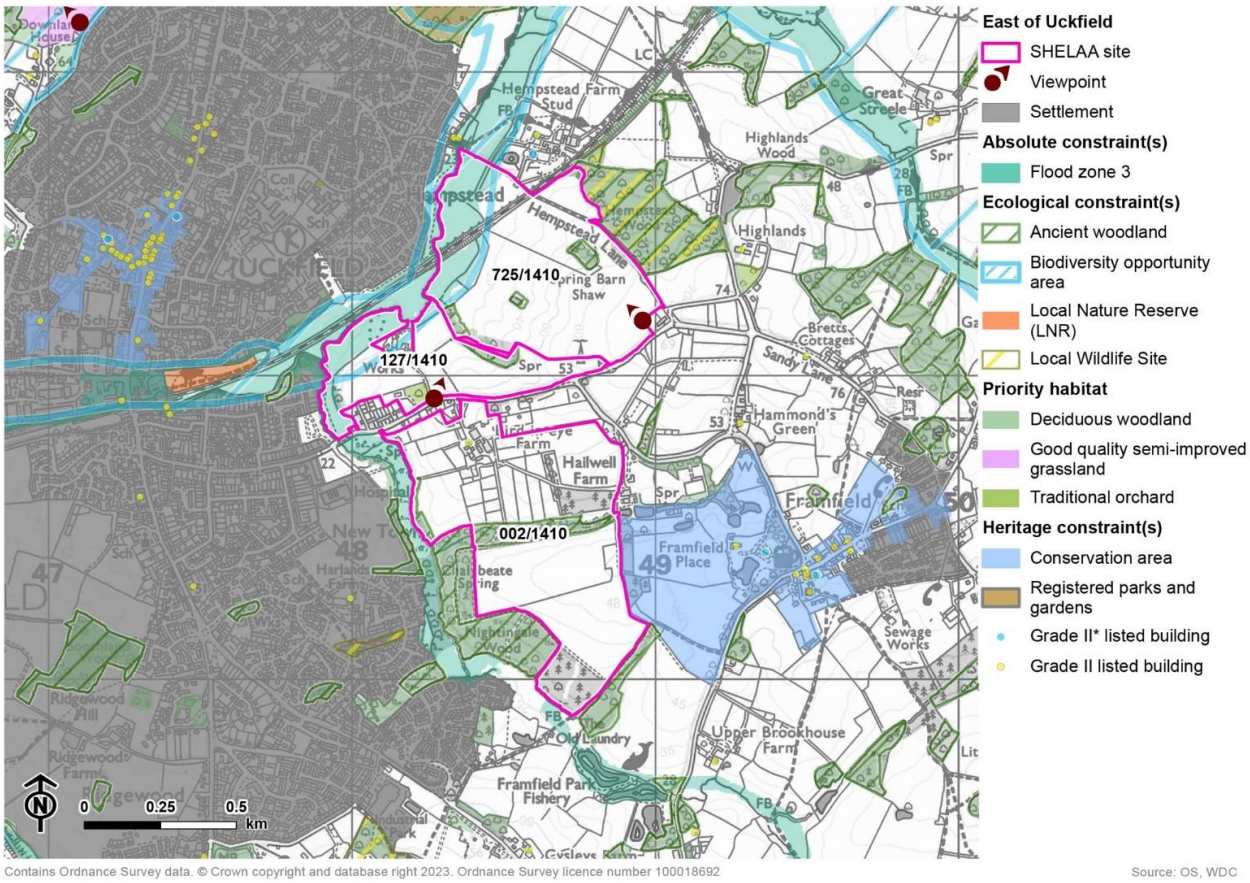
The following potential development sites are assessed as one, with individual elements highlighted where appropriate.

Site Details

SHELAA Site Name/ Reference	Land at Hempstead Lane, Uckfield	725/1410
	Bird in Eye Farm (South), Bird in Eye Hill, Uckfield	002/1410
	Bird in Eye Farm (North)	127/1410
Potential Development	320 residential dwellings (Site 725/1410); 290 residential dwellings (Site 002/1410); 240 residential dwellings (Site 127/1410); and SANGs.	
Site Location	The site is located to the east of the settlement, predominantly lying between the River Uck and Hempstead Lane to the north and with Nightingale Wood and the Framfield Park Fishery to the south. The site is located to the north and south of the B2102.	

Site Baseline

Figure A.34: Site location and constraints



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Source: OS, WDC

Representative Site Photos



Viewpoint 1: An arable field boundary by mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees, looking north-west over the River Uck corridor and modern residential edge of Uckfield over SHELAA Site 127/1410.



Viewpoint 2: A sloping, semi-enclosed arable field with expansive views north-west over the wooded River Uck corridor toward Uckfield over SHELAA Site 725/1410.

Baseline Landscape Character in relation to the Wider Assessment Unit

Key Features and Qualities of the Site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	**Landform** The site consists of a steep open valley slope rising from the floodplain of the River Uck, between 20m to 65m AOD, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. The site reaches a high point in the east near Hempstead Lane and Sandy Lane (SHELAA Site 725/1410). Areas in the west of the site are generally at lower elevation between 20m to 45m AOD (SHELAA Sites 127/1410 and 002/1410). **Natural character** Both the river floodplain and rising valley slopes are relatively open in character, with limited woodland, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. However, riparian woodland along the River Uck to the north and west and linear woodland lining the 'Cowden to Lewes' railway line that crosses the north-east of the site (SHELAA Site 725/1410). There are also surviving pockets of ancient woodland at Spring Bran Shaw within the centre and north-east of the site (SHELAA Sites 127/1410 and 725/1410) and south-west of the site at Nightingale Shaw (SHELAA Site 002/1410). There is also more extensive ancient woodland to the east of SHELAA Site 725/1410 boundary at Hempstead Wood. Ancient woodlands are typical of the wider assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** The site consists of large arable fields, located on the higher valley slopes, resulting from modern field amalgamation in the later 20th century. Smaller irregular pastoral fields, some of which are identified in the Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) (2014) as being surviving areas of historic piecemeal enclosure on the lower slopes and in the floodplain to the north (SHELAA Sites 127/1410 and 725/1410), are bounded by thick hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. The south of the site (SHELAA Site 002/1410) is located directly west of the Framfield Conservation Area. The Grade II listed building at Bird in Eye Farmhouse is encircled by SHELAA Site 002/1410, and three additional listed buildings are located within close proximity of the northern boundary of SHELAA Site 725/1410. **Recreational value** a public rights of way passes along the north-eastern boundary of SHELAA Site 725/1410, including part of the promoted Wealdway, contributing to the network of public rights of way for the wider assessment unit.

	Perceptual aspects The site is influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge of Uckfield, which disrupts the experience of dark skies. Whilst land to the east (SHELAA Site 725/1410 and parts of SHELAA Site 127/1410) are located away from the settlement edge, the rising topography means the settlement is apparent in views west. Detracting elements within and adjacent to the site include a telecommunications mast in the east of SHELAA Site 127/1410; areas of modern agricultural development, including at Bird in Eye Farm adjacent to the south-east of the site (SHELAA Sites 127/1410 and SHELAA Site 002/1410); an area of light industrial/employment adjacent to the northern boundary of SHELAA Site 127/1410; and ribbon development extending east of Uckfield along the B2102 between SHELAA Sites 127/1410 and 002/1410. However, the river corridor and agricultural fields in the north of SHELAA Sites 127/1410 and 725/1410 have a strong rural character with a sense of tranquillity, which is typical of the wider assessment unit.
Designations which are Constraints to Development	Flood Zones 2 and 3, associated with the River Uck and Framfield Stream, lie along the northern boundary of SHELAA Sites 127/1410 and 725/1410 and western boundary of the SHELAA Sites 127/1410 and 002/1410. Ancient woodland at Spring Barn Shaw, Hempstead Wood and Nightingale Shaw. The River Uck and its Headwaters BOA is located along the northern site boundary (SHELAA Site 127/1410 and 725/1410).
Settlement Form and Edge Character and Extent of Built Development	The adjacent settlement of Uckfield to the north and west of the site consists of 20th century two-storey detached, semi-detached and short terrace residential housing extending south from Hempstead Lane and to the east of Eastbourne Road. Uckfield Hospital forms part of the settlement edge to the west of the site, which is of slightly larger scale in comparison to nearby residential development. Consented residential development at Keld Drive and north of Mallard Drive will also form part of the settlement edge to the west of the site. The River Uck and associated riparian woodland provide a strong boundary feature between the site and this settlement edge, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. However, a small area of ribbon development along the B2102 at Bird in Eye Hill extends beyond this in the vicinity of the site. The railway line along the north-western boundary of the site is also a strong boundary feature. The site plays a role in the separation between Uckfield and the smaller village of Framfield (that is partly designated as a Conservation Area).

Baseline Visual Character

Baseline Visual Character	The open elevated slopes in the east of the site (SHELAA Site 725/1410) afford some open elevated views west across the River Uck towards Uckfield, including from the public rights of way on Hempstead Lane. The open slopes are also visible in glimpsed outward views from parts of the settlement edge, including from Hempstead Road, from which slightly elevated views across the river valley are afforded. Views of the rising slopes in the south-west of the site are glimpsed beyond woodland and the allotments near Uckfield Hospital, with the buildings at Bird in Eye Farm (some of which are historic listed buildings) seen beyond. However, more typically of the wider assessment unit, the lower slopes and river floodplain to the north and west of the site are well contained by vegetation along the River Uck. Therefore, views into these areas of the site are generally more limited, including from most residential properties along the settlement edge, such as at Roman Way, Keld Drive and Mallard Drive. Partially screened views into the site are afforded from residential properties located along the B2102 at Bird in Eye Hill, and from further dispersed residential properties along Hempstead Lane and Sandy Lane.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park	None.

How the Site Relates to the Sensitivity of the Wider Assessment Unit

The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment assesses the Uckfield East assessment unit to have a **moderate sensitivity** to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The LSA indicates that the undulating landform with open slopes, ecological, historic and recreational values, and rural character of much of this assessment unit increase its sensitivity to development. The strong settlement boundary features and the good public access also indicate higher sensitivity. However, the presence of urban edge development at Uckfield and the railway, decrease sensitivity.

The Site

The site demonstrates many of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit, including the undulating river valley landform of the River Uck to the north of SHELAA Sites 725/1410 and 127/1410 and west of SHELAA Site 002/1410 and 127/1410, and prominent open upper slopes to the east of SHELAA Site 725/1410; areas of historic piecemeal enclosure on the lower slopes and in the floodplain to the north of SHELAA Sites 127/1410 and 725/1410; the strong settlement boundary features formed by the River Uck and 'Cowden to Lewes' railway line to the north of SHELAA Sites 725/1410 and 127/1410 and by the River Uck to the west of the SHELAA Site 127/1410 and 002/1410; riparian woodland and other wetland habitats along the River Uck; and some areas of ecologically valued ancient woodland at Spring Bran Shaw within the centre and north-east of the site (SHELAA Sites 127/1410 and 725/1410) and south-west of the site at Nightingale Shaw (SHELAA Site 002/1410). However, the semi-enclosed character the lower slopes reduces visibility and proximity of the settlement edge of Uckfield influences tranquillity, which decreases sensitivity.

Overall, it is considered that the site conforms to the **moderate sensitivity** to accommodating new small scale residential development that has been determined for the wider assessment unit, noting that many of the features of higher sensitivity are found in the east of the site.

Potential Effects of Developing the Site and Mitigation/Enhancement Opportunities

Potential Effects as a Result of Development	
Landscape Character and Features	Development on the site could affect: ■ The rural character of the open slopes of the more elevated valley sides. ■ The small-scale and open pastoral character of the floodplain along the River Uck. ■ The linear deciduous woodlands extending along the River Uck and Framfield Stream and the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge. ■ Mature deciduous woodland, including ancient woodlands, such as Hempstead Wood, Spring Barn Shaw and Nightingale Shaw, both within and adjacent to the site. ■ Further loss of the historic field pattern, particularly areas of piecemeal enclosure within the floodplain. ■ The strong network of thick hedgerow, mature hedgerow and roadside trees, and copses. ■ Rural tranquillity away from the settlement edge.
Designated Landscapes	The High Weald AONB is located approximately 2.7km to the north-east of the site at its nearest point. However, given the limited intervisibility any development is unlikely to adversely affect the 'defining components of character' of the AONB. Views to and from the South Downs National Park are at such a distance they are unlikely to have an impact on the special qualities.
Settlement Form, Edge and Setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The robust boundary provided by the wooded course of the River Uck, Framfield Stream and the railway line. ■ The wider rural setting of Uckfield. Expansion of development would have an impact on the perceived openness of the Uck Valley.

	■ The historic parkland and village at Framfield. Development on the site (specifically the eastern parts of SHELAA Sites 002/1410) would extend further into the countryside, narrowing the gap between the settlements of Uckfield and Framfield.
Visual Amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Pedestrians and residents along the settlement edge of Uckfield, particularly at Hempstead Road, Roman Way and Keld Drive. ■ Residents at dispersed properties located along the B2102 at Bird in Eye Hill, Hempstead Lane and Sandy Lane. ■ Users of the public footpath along Hempstead Lane and sections of the Wealdway nearest the site. ■ Visitors to Uckfield Hospital and the nearby allotments. ■ Road users of the B2102.
Cumulative Issues	
Potential for Cumulative Effects with Other Large Strategic Site	This site, in combination with other strategic sites to the north, south and west of Uckfield would result in a general expansion of Uckfield into the surrounding rural landscape. However, given the intervening distances between the sites and the well-wooded character of the surrounding landscape, significant visual cumulative effects would be limited.
Potential for Mitigation and Enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Avoid development on the steep open valley sides, particularly at higher elevations in the east of the SHELAA Site 725/1410, due to their visual prominence and the rural setting they provide to the wider settlement. ■ Avoid development in eastern parts of SHELAA Site 002/1410 to retain the sense of separation between Uckfield and the smaller village of Framfield, particularly parts close to the Framfield Conservation Area. ■ Avoid development along the floodplain of the River Uck and Framfield Stream, where riparian woodland provides a strong boundary feature along the existing settlement edge. Any development should also retain the open and/or small-scale floodplain character along the River Uck. ■ Conserve the watercourse of the River Uck, enhancing the ecological interest of the river and its valley floodplain, in line with the aims of the River Uck and its headwaters BOA. ■ The lower ground could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features, incorporating habitat creation, away from areas of flood risk (Flood Zones 2 and 3). ■ Retain and extend ecologically rich areas of habitat interest along the course of the river, including pastoral meadows within the floodplain, in line with the aims of the River Uck and its headwaters BOA. ■ Retain the largely intact pre-18th century piecemeal enclosure field pattern of the floodplain. ■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. Development should avoid and be set back from the ancient woodlands at Spring Barn Shaw and Nightingale Shaw within the site and Hempstead Wood adjacent to it with a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage . 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). ■ Conserve and manage the streamside woodlands, conserving and restoring riverside vegetation and wetland habitats, to ‘slow the flow’ and assist in reducing flood risk as well as and increase biodiversity, in line with the River Uck and its headwaters BOA. ■ Additional planting should be used to screen new development and maintain the rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built form, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built form within the landscape. Planting should be in character with the locality and use native species where possible / appropriate. ■ Development should be set back from the public right of way along Hempstead Lane, to retain the rural character of this route.	

- Minimise visibility of any development from the public right of way along Hempstead Lane and consider views from the Wealdway.
- Enhance public access, providing opportunities to experience the river/stream valleys and longer views out from upper slopes across the wider landscape.
- Introduced built form to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of its surroundings by using high quality materials suggestive of the local vernacular.
- The height of development should integrate with the adjacent surrounding settlement edges, both existing and consented.

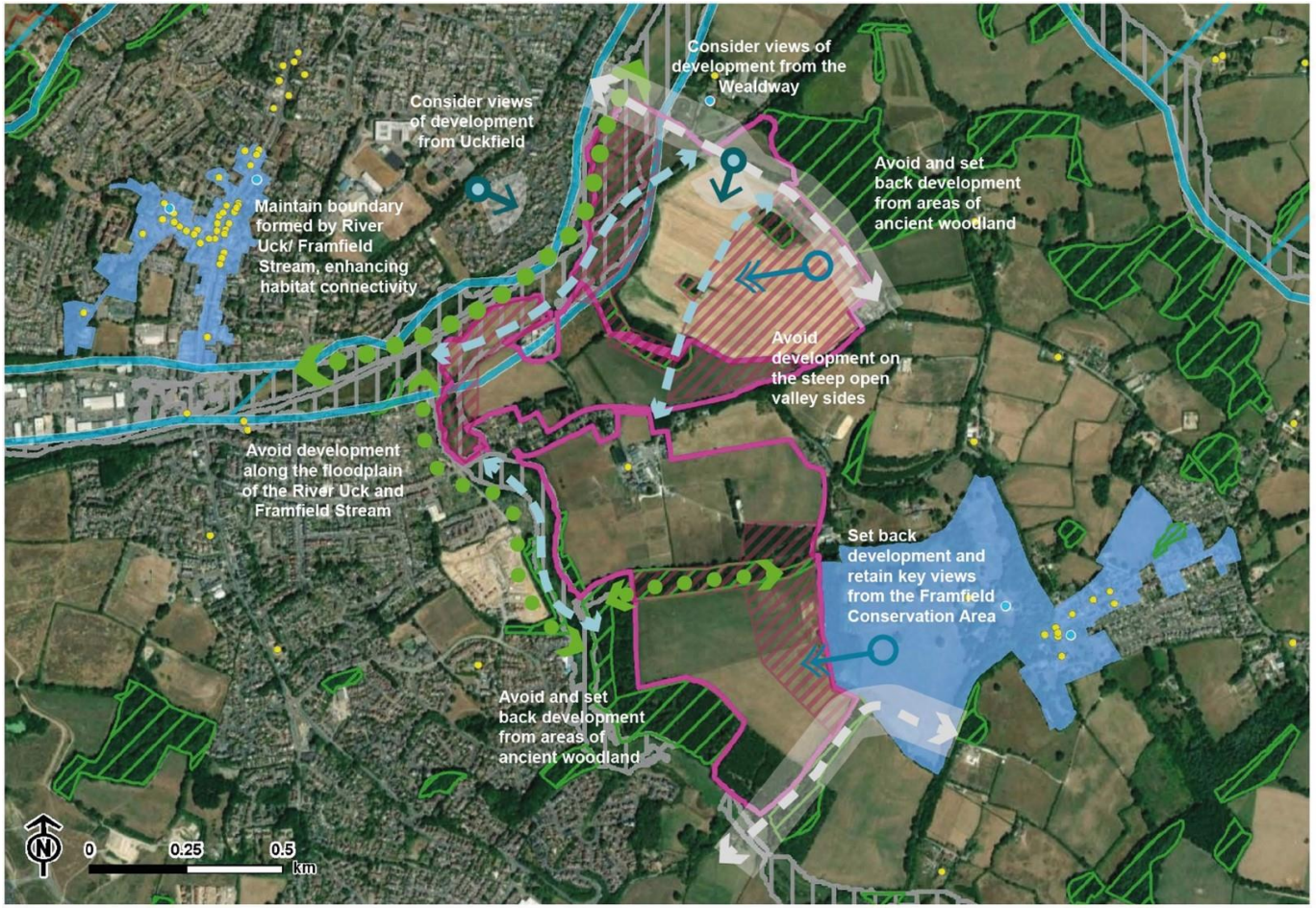
Summary

Development of this site would potentially extend development onto the open and steep valley sides of the River Uck and Framfield Stream surrounding Uckfield, and beyond the distinctive boundary features that they form, which increases sensitivity.

If the site is considered for development, the site would need to be planned with great care and consideration, especially in relation to the key sensitive features within and adjacent to the site, including being set back from the floodplain and open pastures of the valley floor and avoiding the more elevated valley sides within SHELAA Site 725/1410, which provide a rural backdrop to the settlement. Development should be set back from ancient woodlands within the site and adjacent to it, with a suitable and appropriate buffer provided to protect the woodlands from the impacts of development. Development should also be set back, and minimise visibility, from the Framfield Conservation Area located to the south-east of the site.

A summary map indicating the key constraints and opportunities, including areas more sensitive to development are shown on **Figure A.41** below.

Figure A.35: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



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

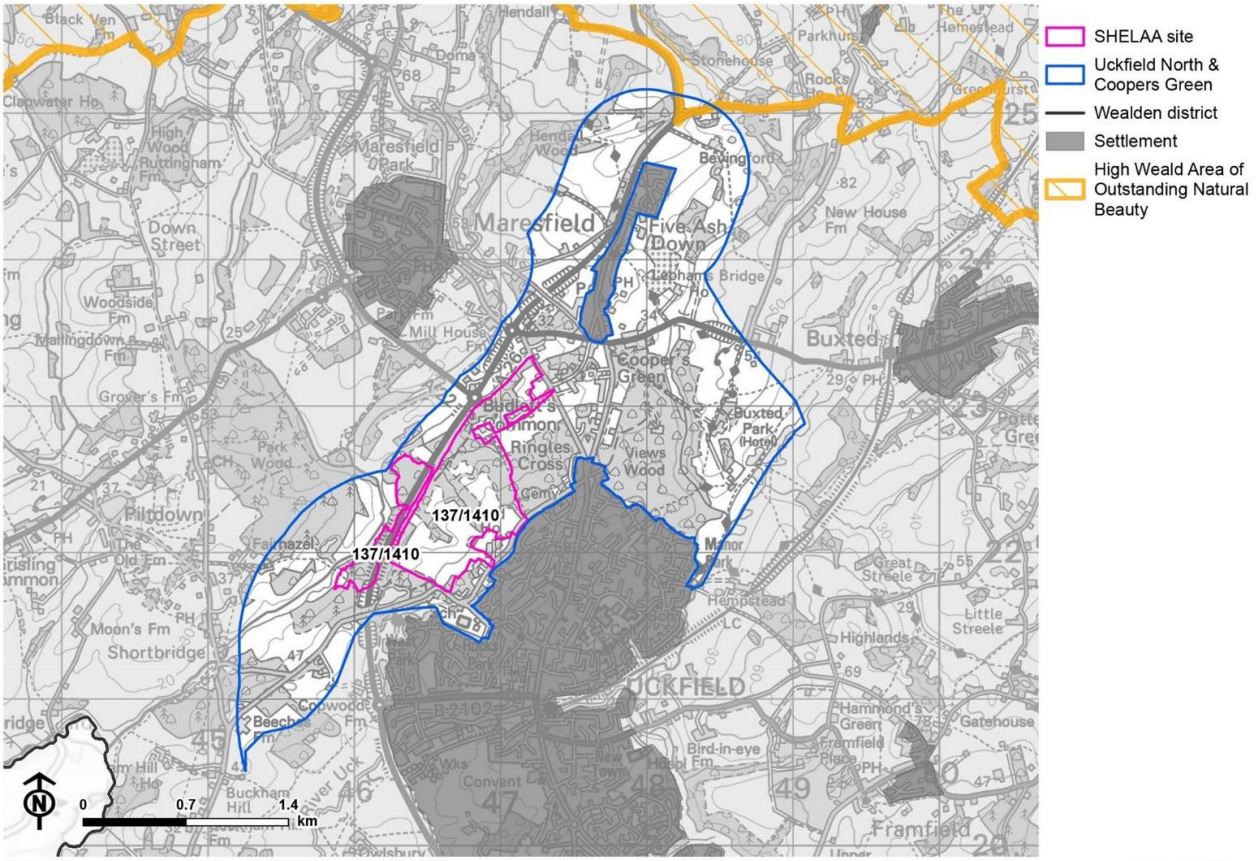
Source: WDC, NE, HE

Landscape Sensitivity Context: Uckfield North

The following potential development site is considered within the Uckfield North assessment unit:

- 137/1410 – Land at Downlands Farm

Figure A.36: Site locations in relation to the assessment unit



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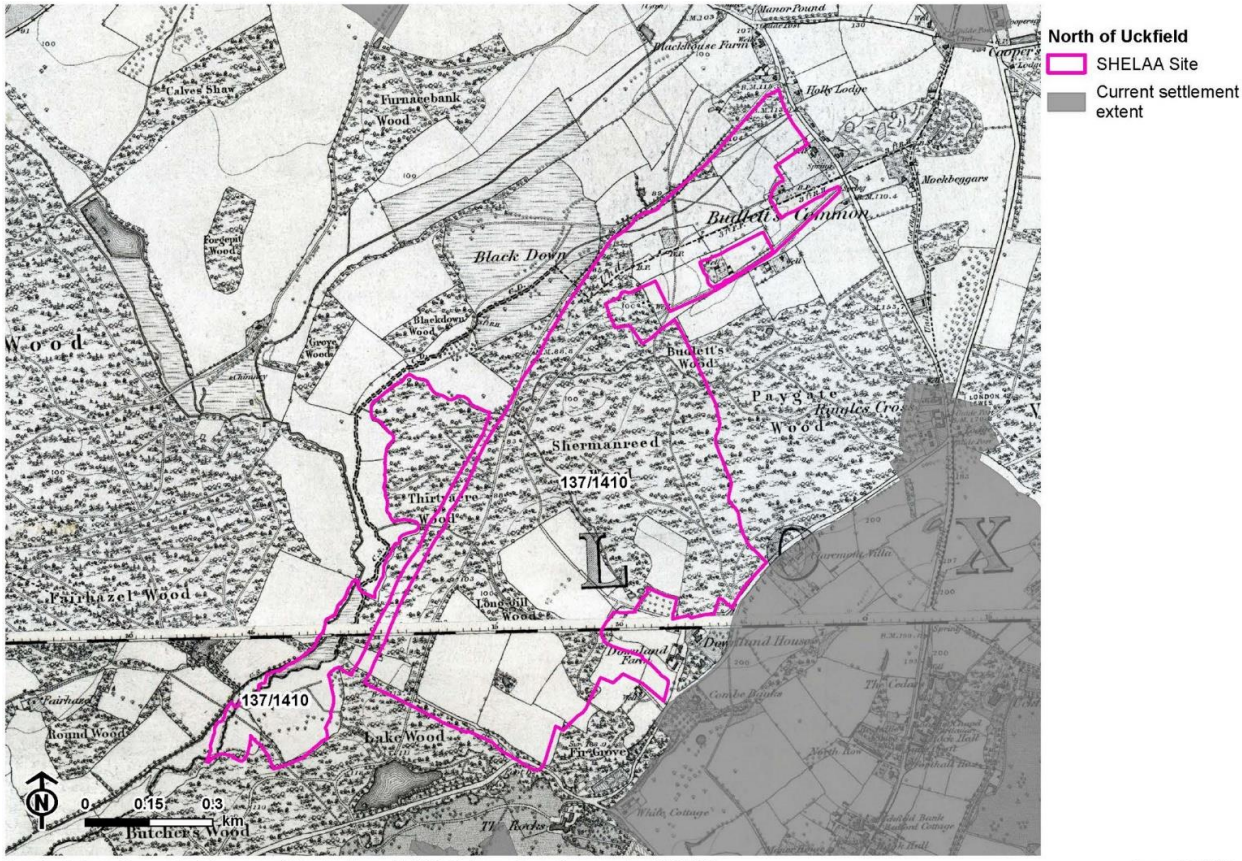
Source: OS, WDC

Settlement Context

Settlement Location and Context	Uckfield is a relatively large market town located in the west of the district, at the transition point between the Wooded Clay Vales of the Low Weald (LCT 3) and the Wooded Slopes of the High Weald (LCT 6).
Settlement Evolution	The town developed where the road linking Canterbury, Chichester and Lewes crossed the River Uck. The original settlement was focussed primarily along Church Street (around the medieval chapel) and High Street, an area designated as the Uckfield Conservation Area. Later development extended further north and south along High Street and along Framfield Road (the New Town area) to the south-east, resulting in a linear north-south settlement pattern. The arrival of the railway in the 19th century stimulated further growth and by the early and mid-20th century, development greatly increased the size of the town. This later expansion has resulted in the town's merging with the formerly separate hamlets of Ringles Cross and Ridgewood to the north and south respectively. New development is currently under construction at Ridgewood, and will form a settlement extension of 1,000 new homes.

Settlement Pattern and Edge Character	The settlement still retains its linear north-south form, although more recently industrial and residential development has extended the settlement to the north-west as far as the Uckfield Bypass (A22) and to the north-east as far as Views Wood (ancient woodland) and the River Uck. The Uckfield Bypass was constructed in 1982 and today defines the western and south-western edges of the settlement. The settlement edge to the east and south-east is generally defined by the valley forms of the River Uck and Framfield Stream, with only a small amount of development along the B2102 beyond this. The settlement edges of Uckfield generally consist of two storey 20th or 21st century housing, with the exception of Bellbrook Industrial Estate to the west, which consists of larger scale low-rise industrial and commercial units. Extensive woodland encloses the settlement, particularly to the north and south.

Figure A.37: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



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Source: OS, WDC

The Landscape Sensitivity of the Wider Area Described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA Assessment Unit	Uckfield North		
Landscape Sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA 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
	Moderate	High	High
Key Sensitivities	■ The undulating ridge and valley landform in the north. ■ Numerous areas of ancient and priority habitat deciduous woodlands in the south and west of the assessment unit, and priority habitat acid grassland in the east.		

The key landscape sensitivities to develop identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	■ Extensive network of mature, intact hedgerows. ■ Intact historic field patterns, particularly assarts in the south and east of the assessment unit. ■ Historic parkland at Buxted Park, and listed buildings at Cooper's Green. ■ The Wealdway long distance footpath and open access at Manor Park. ■ The rural character with areas of tranquillity and dark skies within Shermangreen Wood and Thirty Acres Wood, at Manor Park, and along the River Uck valley.
LSA Guidance	■ Locate development on low lying flat fields in close proximity to the settlement, where well enclosed by landform and vegetation, where development would be less visible and have less influence on landscape character. ■ Retain riparian habitats along the River Uck and tributaries. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow an appropriate buffer around them. ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA, including restoration of floodplain woodland and increased woody cover along streams. ■ Retain the strong woodland corridor along the A22/A26. Replace any unavoidable losses with native species, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain in-field trees, including tree clumps, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Replace any unavoidable losses with native species, 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, as identified in the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA. Where there is unavoidable loss of hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities of Buxted Park, or appreciation of historic features, including listed buildings at Coopers Green. ■ Consider views from public rights of way, such as the Wealdway, 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 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 relative tranquillity. ■ Preserve the clear separation between Maresfield, Coopers Green, and Uckfield when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape.

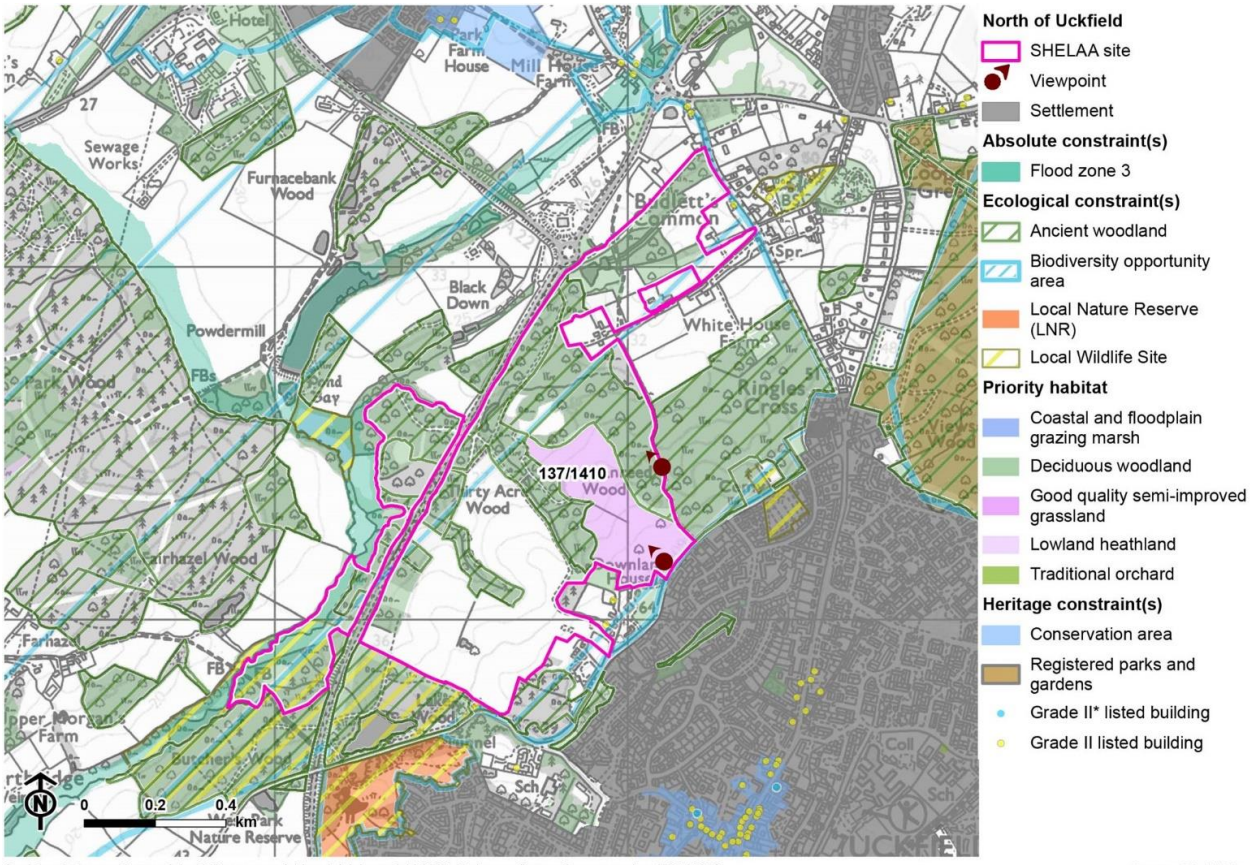
Site Assessment: North of Uckfield

Site Details

SHELAA Site Name/ Reference	Land at Downlands Farm, Snatts Road, Uckfield	137/1410
Potential Development	450 residential dwellings, SANGS.	
Site Location	The site is located to the north-west of Uckfield. It predominantly sits between the settlement edge along Snatts Road and the Uckfield Bypass (A22), albeit with a smaller area west of the A22. Lake Wood Local Wildlife Site defines the site's southern boundary, and it extends as far as Budlett's Common on London Road to the north-east. A public right of way through Shermanreed Wood defines the north-eastern boundary.	

Site Baseline

Figure A.38: Site location and constraints



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Source: OS, WDC

Representative Site Photos



Viewpoint 1: Improved grassland and scrub bound by woodland within eastern parts of the site.



Viewpoint 2: Public right of way through Budlett's Wood, designated as ancient woodland.

Baseline Landscape Character in relation to the Wider Assessment Unit

Key Features and Qualities of the Site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	**Landform** The topography of the site is typical of the wider assessment unit. The site falls from 60m AOD in the south-east to 20m AOD in the west adjacent to the Shortbridge Stream, which is a tributary of the Ouse. An area of Flood Zone 3 follows the course of the Shortbridge Stream in the west. **Natural character** The site comprises woodland, agricultural fields and some areas of scrub. The majority of the woodlands within the site are of ancient origin, with some ancient replanted woodland at Thirty Acre Wood west of the A22. Wooded ghylls are present at Longwood, Shermanreed and Long Gill Woods. Extensive ancient and priority habitat woodlands are typical of the wider assessment unit. Priority habitats include good quality semi-improved grassland that is found in the non-wooded areas of the site to the south-east. The Butcher's Wood, Uckfield LWS extends into the south-west of the site, designated for its ancient woodland with sandstone outcrops. The entire site is part of the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA. **Landscape pattern and time-depth** The wider assessment unit notes a varied field pattern, with a mix of small and medium scale regular and irregular piecemeal enclosures and assarts concentrated in the south and west. The field pattern across most of the site is typical of the wider assessment unit, comprising regular piecemeal enclosure in the east and south-west and areas of assart woods. However, there are modern amalgamated fields in the south of the site, which are atypical of the wider assessment unit. There is also an area of planned private enclosure pattern around White House Farm in the north-east. There are no recorded historic assets within the site, which is typical of much of the wider assessment unit. However, three Grade II listed buildings lie in proximity to the site boundaries – Budletts House in the north-east, and Oast Cottage and barn at Downlands Farm to the south-east. **Recreational value** Unlike the wider assessment unit, the site does not have a strong public right of way network; two footpaths cross the site to the south-west and along the eastern boundary. However, woodland in the east of the site appears to be well-used recreationally, with several informal footpaths branching off from the public right of way.

	Perceptual aspects There is no existing built development on the site. Small-scale ribbon development along Snatts Road and at White Horse Farm that lies adjacent to the site introduces modern elements in views from the site. The north, north-east and south-east of the site have more light pollution due to proximity to development, while the parts of the site west of the A22 are more tranquil, despite proximity to the A22. This is typical of the wider assessment unit. However, the Shortbridge Stream valley is noted in the wider LSA analysis as rural with areas of tranquillity and dark skies, indicating higher sensitivity. Snatts Road is a winding rural lane and is enclosed by woodland and mature tree cover. The areas close to Uckfield are noted as having limited dark skies and tranquillity due to proximity to the settlement, which is true for the site.
Designations which are Constraints to Development	Flood Zone 3 is related to Shortbridge Stream that runs along the west of the site. Ancient woodland is recorded at Budletts Wood, Thirty Acre Wood, Thirty Acre Shaw, Long Gill Wood and Shermanreed Wood, concentrated in the north, and north-west of the site. There are also considerable areas of ancient woodland adjacent to the site to the north-east and south-west.
Settlement Form and Edge Character and Extent of Built Development	The existing settlement edge of Uckfield is largely contained by Snatts Road, although this has been breached by development at Ringles Cross and further to the south. The settlement edge of Uckfield comprises a mix of detached, semi-detached and small terraces from the 19th and 20th centuries. Small closes are also situated off Snatts Road, and there has been a recent development of five houses at Charlwood Manor. Budlett's Common is a loose collection of generally large, detached houses set back from London Road. The houses date from the 19th and 20th centuries. There is no development within the site boundary, however the site lies adjacent to Downland House in the south-east and White House Farm in the north-east. These contain some Grade II listed buildings and a number of more modern houses and barns. Snatts Road and the ancient woodland north and west of the road provide a strong boundary feature to the existing settlement edge of Uckfield, as noted in the wider assessment unit. Development is contained and screened by Budlett's Wood and Shermanreed Wood, as noted in the assessment unit. The gently undulating wooded slopes contribute to the rural scenic setting to Uckfield and Coopers Green.

Baseline Visual Character

Baseline Visual Character	The LSA analysis notes an enclosed visual character due to woodland, intact hedgerow networks, and roadside vegetation, indicating lower sensitivity to visual prominence. Although the site is generally well enclosed from public view, there are some long-distance views from more elevated open parts of the site to the south-west north towards the High Weald AONB, which increases sensitivity. The site is largely enclosed by woodland to the south and west, which generally restricts views into and out of the site. This is typical of the wider assessment unit. However, owing to the sloping topography, and its northerly and north-westerly aspect, some long-range views out of the site are available from more elevated parts of the site to the south and south-west. Mature tree cover along Snatts Road also largely restricts views into the site from the west, although there are some close-range filtered views available in places where the vegetation is less dense. Woodland also lines the A22 to the north-west and west, meaning views into the site from the road are screened. There are some more open views available from the two public rights of ways, which cross the site in the south-east and north-east. There are also some more open views into the north-eastern parts of the site from London Road.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park	There are some long-distance views to the wooded horizon provided by the High Weald AONB to the north.

How the Site Relates to the Sensitivity of the Wider Assessment Unit

The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment assesses the Uckfield North assessment unit to have **moderate sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The LSA indicates that the undulating ridge and valley landform, extensive ancient woodlands in the south and west and priority habitat acid grassland in the east, extensive mature hedgerows, historic assart field patterns, historic parkland at Buxted Park and listed buildings at Cooper's Green, the Wealdway and open access at Manor Park, and the rural character and tranquillity of Shermanreed Wood, Thirty Acres Wood, Manor Park and the River Uck valley increase sensitivity. Industrial units along the A26, the impact on tranquillity of the trunk roads and settlement edges of Uckfield and Maresfield, and the enclosed visual character decrease sensitivity.

The Site

The site demonstrates many of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit, including the undulating river valley associated with the Shortbridge Stream; ancient woodlands, including Thirty Acre Wood and wooded ghyls at Longwood, Shermanreed and Long Gill Woods; assart field patterns, concentrated in the south and west; and areas of tranquillity at Thirty Acres Wood. Although the lack of historic features, proximity to the settlement edge of Uckfield and the A26 impact tranquillity and limited public access decreases sensitivity, there is visibility with the High Weald AONB from elevated and open areas to the south-west and the site provides an attractive rural setting to Uckfield. The site also contains extensive areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland and good quality semi-improved grassland that is found in the non-wooded areas of the site to the south-east.

Overall, it is considered that the site has a higher number of landscape sensitivities than the wider assessment unit, and is considered to have moderate-high sensitivity to small-scale (2-2.5 storey) residential development.

Potential Effects of Developing the Site and Mitigation/Enhancement Opportunities

Potential Effects as a Result of Development	
Landscape Character and Features	Development on the site could affect: ■ Gently sloping valley landform of the Shortbridge Stream. ■ Considerable priority habitat deciduous woodland and ancient woodland within and adjacent to the site, particularly in the north and north-west. ■ Priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland in the south-east of the site. ■ Historic pattern of assart woods. ■ Proximity to Grade II listed buildings at Downland House and White House Farm. ■ Strong settlement boundary provided by ancient woodland along Snatts Road. ■ The scenic, rural setting provided to Uckfield. ■ Occasional long views to the wooded horizon provided by the High Weald AONB.
Designated Landscapes	Views to and from the High Weald AONB are at such a distance they are unlikely to have an impact on the defining components of character of the AONB.
Settlement Form, Edge and Setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The robust boundary provided by ancient woodland along Snatts Road. ■ The rural setting the site provides to Uckfield.
Visual Amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Users of public rights of way within the site and to the south-east and north-east of the site. ■ Residents at Downland House. ■ Residents at White House Farm. ■ Residents along Snatts Road and London Road.

	■ People travelling on roads adjacent to the site, including Snatts Road and London Road.
Cumulative Issues	
Potential for Cumulative Effects with Other Large Strategic Site	This site, in combination with other strategic SHELAA sites to the south, east and west of Uckfield (SHELAA sites 205/1410, 725/1410 and 1061/1410) would result in a general expansion of Uckfield into the surrounding rural landscape in several directions. However, given the intervening distance between the sites and the well-wooded character of the surrounding landscape, significant visual cumulative effects would be limited for this site. There are a number of strategic sites west of the A26, and if these were brought forward with this site, could result in the perceived coalescence of Uckfield and Maresfield.
Potential for Mitigation and Enhancement	

Landscape and visual effects could be avoided /minimised by following the guidance below:

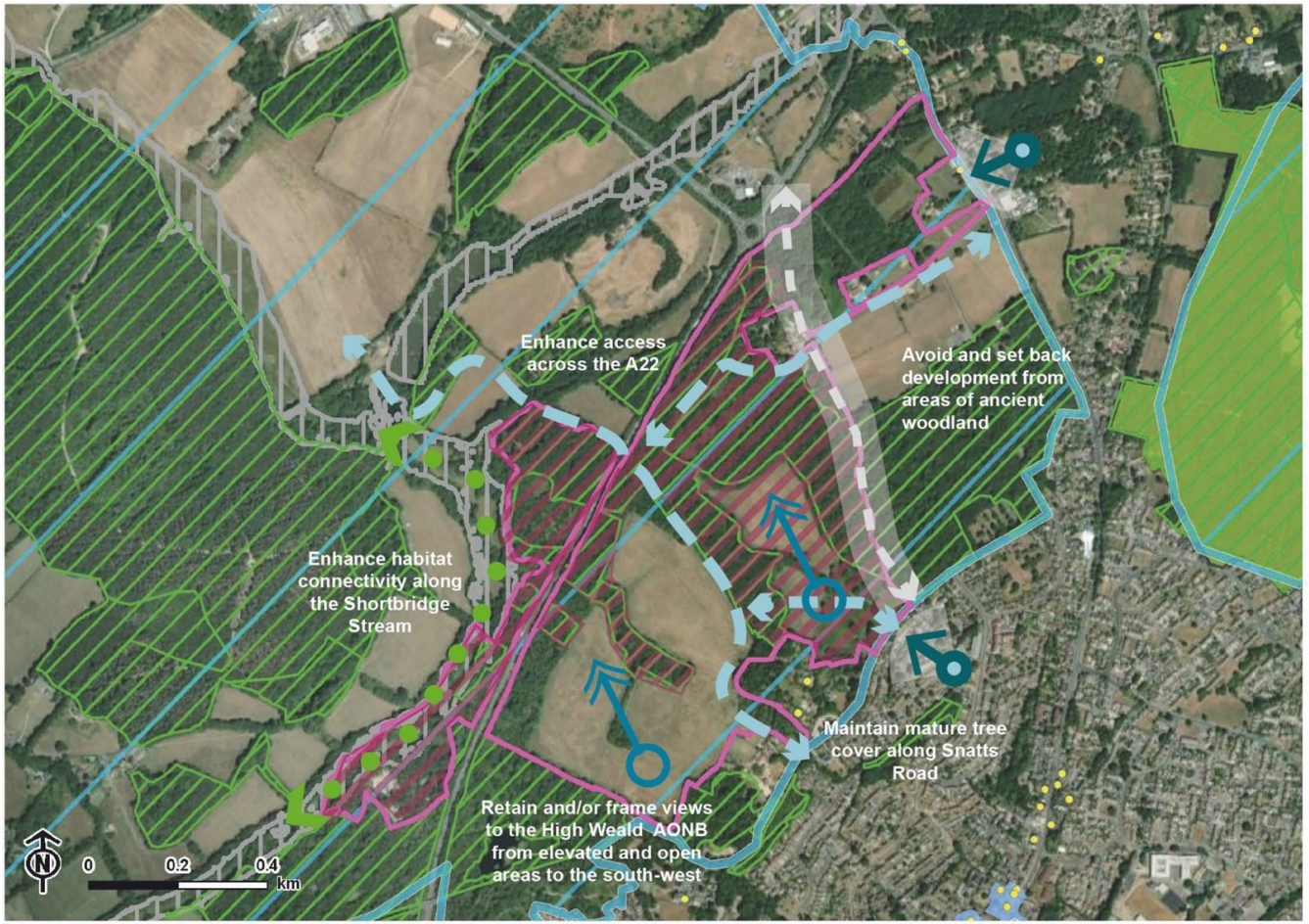
- Development should be set back from land designated as Flood Zone 3 around Shortbridge Stream in the west of the site.
- Development should be set back from ancient woodland within the site, at Budlett's Wood, Shermanreed Wood, Long Gill Wood, Thirty Acre Wood and Shaw, and from ancient woodland adjacent to the site at Paygate Wood, Lake Wood and Butcher's Wood (which is also designated as a LWS). Suitable and appropriate buffers zones of at least 15m should be provided to avoid root damage . These buffers 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).
- Additional planting should be used to screen new development and maintain the rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any 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. Planting species should be in character with the locality.
- Consider the rural setting of adjacent historic listed buildings – barn at Downlands Farm, Oast Cottage and Budletts House.
- 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.
- The height of development should integrate with the adjacent surrounding settlement edges, both existing and consented.
- Consider opportunities to create further pedestrian/recreational linkages across the A22 to enhance connection between Uckfield and the wider countryside.
- Retain and/or frame views towards the High Weald AONB from elevated and open areas to the south-west.
- Enhance local connectivity by improving and/or formalising access routes through the site, providing connections between the site and the existing settlement edges of Uckfield and Budlett's Common/Cooper's Green.
- Lower-lying land to the west and north-west (outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3) could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features, enabling habitat creation.

Summary

Development of this site would extend development from the existing urban edge of Uckfield, which has a robust boundary along Snatts Road. Development would also reduce the rural setting the site provides to the settlement. As noted above, the site has a number of sensitivities, and if the site is considered for development, any proposed development would need to be planned with great care. Development should be set back from Flood Zone 3 in the west and appropriate buffers provided to ancient woodland within the site and adjacent to it. Development should focus on the south, south-west and north-east of the site so as to relate better to the existing settlement pattern of Uckfield and Budlett's Common/Cooper's Green. This results in a relatively small area of the site, which in landscape and visual terms, could be used for new development.

A summary map indicating the key constraints and opportunities, including areas more sensitive to development are shown on **Figure A.46** below.

Figure A.39: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



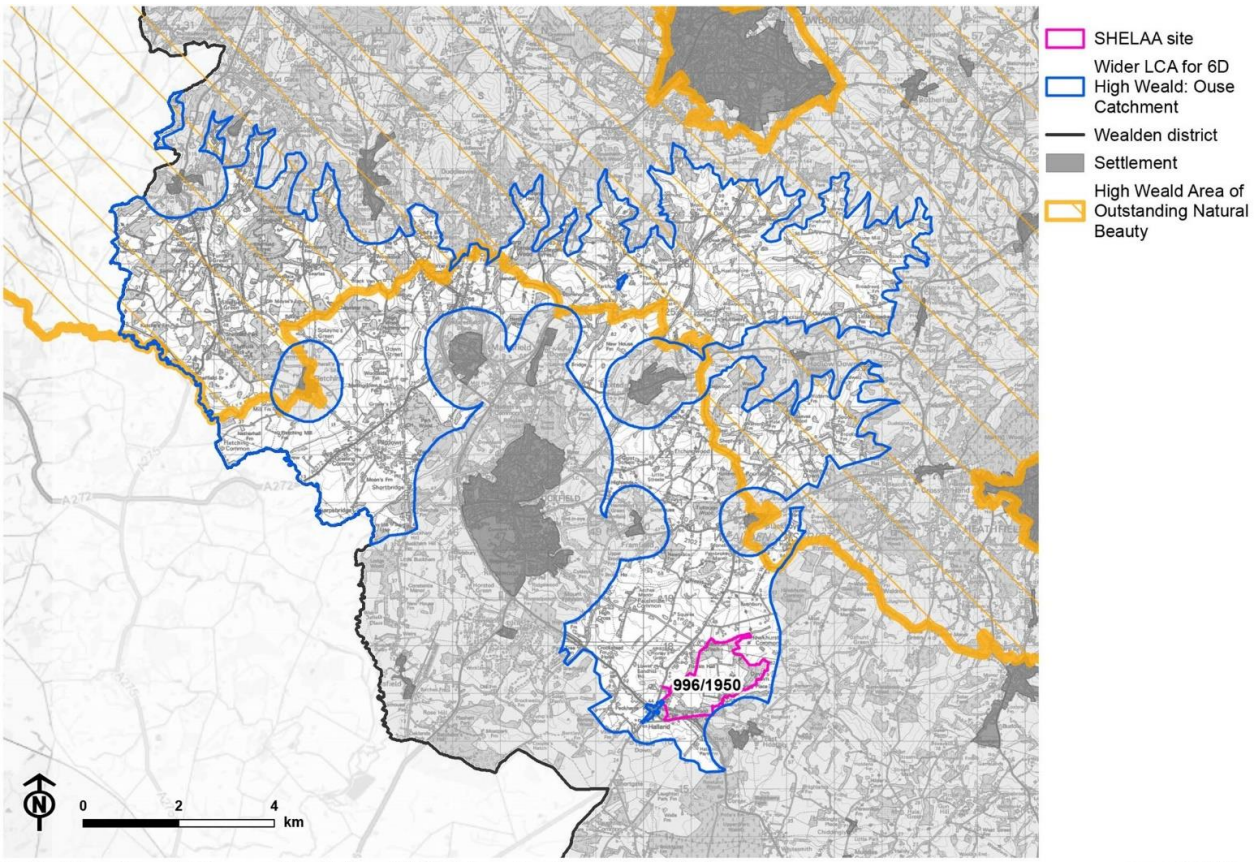
Landscape Sensitivity Context: Wider LCA 6D Assessment Unit

The following potential development sites are considered within the Wider LCA 6D assessment unit:

- 996/1951 – Hesmonds Stud, East Hoathly

Given the proximity of the site to East Hoathly (within the East Hoathly assessment unit) and Halland, the context of both these settlements is described below.

Figure A.40: Site locations in relation to the assessment unit



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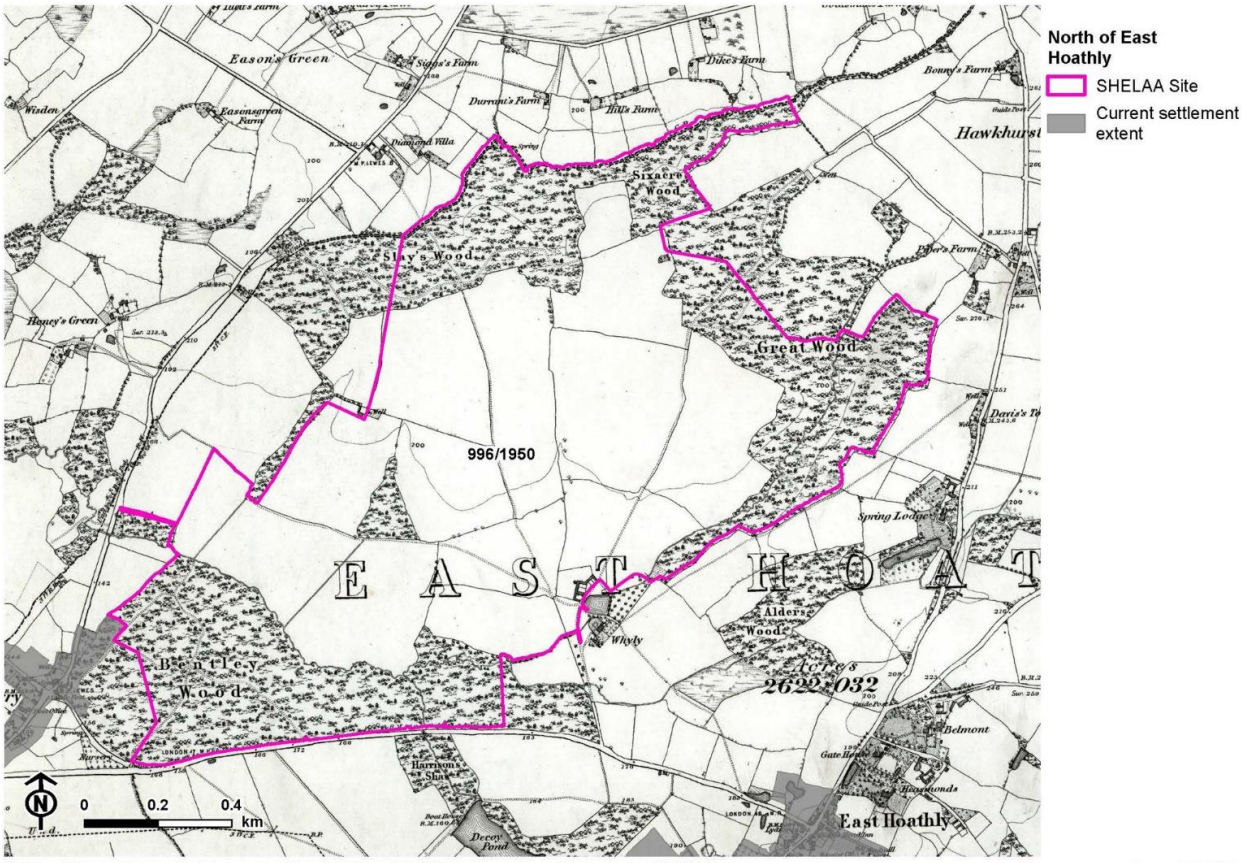
Source: OS, WDC

Settlement Context

Settlement Location and Context	East Hoathly and Halland are small villages located in the central and western part of Wealden District, at the transition point between the High Weald – Ouse Catchment (LCA 6D) and High Weald – Cuckmere / Pevensey Catchment (LCA 6E).
Settlement Evolution	Both villages have medieval origins, and grew in the late 16th, 17th and 18th centuries primarily as a result of iron works and other industries (trug making and brick making) in the locality. The original settlement form of East Hoathly comprised linear development extending north-east to south-west along High Street, South Street and Waldron Road. The historic parts of development are indicated today by several listed buildings and the East Hoathly Conservation Area. Further expansion of the village occurred in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, with the

	introduction of residential development either side of South Street in the south-west of the village. Originally, development in Halland was also linear, arranged north-east to south-west along Lewes Road. Ribbon development was added to the north-west of this in the mid-20th century along Eastbourne Road and Knowle Road.
Settlement Pattern and Edge Character	East Hoathly largely retains its linear form. However, the later development in the 20th and 21st centuries altered the settlement form to the south-west of the village. In Halland, the introduction of ribbon development along Eastbourne Road and Knowle Road in the 20th century has altered the settlement form, extending development to the north-west. The settlement edges in both villages predominantly comprise two-storey detached and semi-detached housing, with some examples of terraced cottages within the historic core of East Hoathly. Development density is generally low, with both settlements largely retaining their character as rural villages.

Figure A.41: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



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Source: OS, WDC

The Landscape Sensitivity of the Wider LCA 6D Assessment Unit Described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA Assessment Unit	LCD 6D – wider LCA area		
Landscape Sensitivity	Small scale residential 2-2.5 storey housing	Medium scale residential 3-4 storey flats/care homes	Commercial/Industrial e.g. industrial unites or hotels

The rating that applies to the relevant LSA assessment unit	Moderate-High	High	High
Key Sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to develop identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	■ Gently rolling landscape, bisected by river and stream corridors, with elevated ridgelines to the north and east. ■ Ecologically valued woodlands, including ancient woodland throughout the assessment unit. ■ Intact historic field pattern, including assarts and co-axial fields, mostly concentrated within the High Weald AONB. ■ Pasture and arable fields bound by hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees. ■ Dispersed, rural settlement pattern. ■ Historic features including the historic farmsteads and houses, Scheduled Monuments and the Grade I listed Sheffield Park. ■ Good access on public rights of way through the landscape, including the promoted Vanguard Way and Wealdway. ■ Rural character with limited modern intrusions. ■ Views to the High Weald AONB in the north and South Downs National Park (in the south-east of the LCA).		
LSA Guidance	■ Avoid development on elevated landforms and ridges, particularly those with intervisibility with the High Weald AONB. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands, and allow an appropriate buffer around them (for root protection). ■ Retain in-field 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, or damage to, hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest, River Uck and its Headwaters BOAs, where possible, including wetland management. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities of Sheffield Park, or appreciation of historic features including listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments. ■ Integrate any development carefully into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or species that are in character with the wider landscape and native where possible. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Consider views from public rights of way, such as the Vanguard Way and Wealdway, when siting and designing development in the landscape. ■ Retain views to the High Weald AONB and occasional views to the South Downs. ■ Ensure development does not affect the rural character, dark night skies or tranquillity of the 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'[15], 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'[16] and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan[17]. ■ Ensure development does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, particularly in the east and south where these are defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB.

[15] High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2019) High Weald Housing Design Guide: Building batter, building beautiful in the AONB
[16] High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2017) Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development
[17] High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (2019) Management Plan 2019-2024

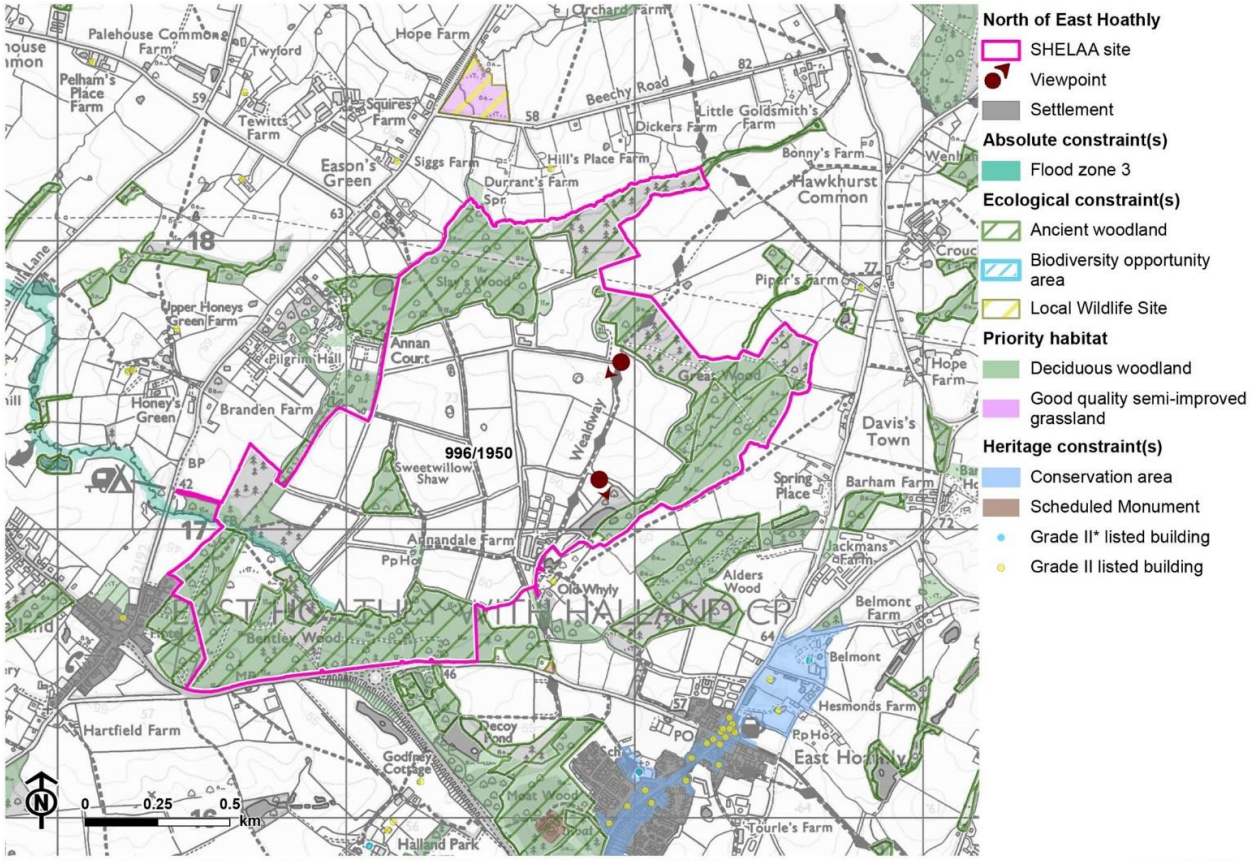
Site Assessment: Hesmonds Stud, East Hoathly

Site Details

SHELAA Site Name/ Reference	Hesmond Stud, East Hoathly	996/1950
Potential Development	2,500 residential dwellings, Primary School, Retail, Neighbourhood Centre, Employment Uses.	
Site Location	The site is located to the north-west of East Hoathly and its south-western boundary is partially contiguous with the smaller village of Halland.	

Site Baseline

Figure A.42: Site location and constraints



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Source: OS, WDC

Representative Site Photos



Viewpoint 1: The character of the site is strongly influences by horse paddocks, which has led to the deterioration of hedgerow field boundaries.



Viewpoint 2: Distant views towards the South Downs National Park are available from the relatively open and elevated central and northern parts of the site.

Baseline Landscape Character in relation to the Wider Assessment Unit

Key Features and Qualities of the Site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	**Landform** The topography of the site is typical of the river valley and wider assessment unit, undulating between 40m to 80m AOD, and is more steeply incised along the Ridgewood Stream valley in the south, and other smaller stream valleys in the north and east. The landform rises to a high point of 83m AOD in the north-east of the site. **Natural character** The site is typical of the undulating wooded pastoral landscape of the wider assessment unit. However, the character of the site is strongly influenced by horse paddocks. The site is almost entirely surrounded by woodland, with that to the north, south and east identified as ancient woodland. This is typical of the assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** Internal areas of the site consist predominantly of small to medium scale assarts with some smaller areas of piecemeal enclosure in the west. Fields to the south-west are generally bounded by mature hedgerow trees, as well as some remnant blocks of ancient woodland (Sweetwillow Shaw and Cindergill Shaw), which is typical of the wider assessment unit. However, across the majority of central areas of the site there is an extensive presence of horse paddocks, which has led to some deterioration of hedgerow field boundaries and reinforcement by post and wire fencing. This has resulted in a relatively open character experienced within these areas of the site, particularly within the more elevated areas in the centre and north of the site from which long range outward views are available. **Recreational value** A strong interconnected network of public rights of way crosses the site, including the Wealdway. These routes contribute towards the wider network of public rights of way within the assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** The site is located within a relatively tranquil rural area with dark skies, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. Overhead electricity infrastructure and pylons cross the north of the site; however, the woodland limits their influence.

Designations which are Constraints to Development	There are areas of ancient woodland defining the outer boundaries of the site to the south-west (Bentley Wood), north (Slay's Wood) and north-east (Great Wood). There are also two small remnant blocks of ancient woodland within the south-west of the site (Sweetwillow Shaw and Cindergill Shaw). There are areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 located along the Ridgewood Stream corridor in the south-west.
Settlement Form and Edge Character and Extent of Built Development	The site is located in an area with a limited and relatively dispersed rural settlement pattern, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. The site has a very limited relationship to the historic linear settlement of East Hoathly, which is located over 600m to the south-east and is separated by extensive woodland cover (some of which is ancient woodland). The site is partly contiguous with the north-eastern settlement edge of Halland, albeit this area of the site comprises ancient woodland at Bentley Wood which encloses the village.

Baseline Visual Character

Baseline Visual Character	Views across the centre of the site are relatively open, including views from the numerous public rights of way which cross the site. Woodland along the edges of the site and the gently undulating topography of the river valley generally limits medium and longer-distance views into the site from the surrounding landscape and from the settlements of East Hoathly and Halland. Views into the site from surrounding roads, including the A22, B2192, Hollow Lane, Beechy Road and East Hoathly Road are generally screened by the woodland surrounding the site.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park	Distant views towards the South Downs National Park are available from the relatively open and elevated central and northern parts of the site, excluding areas where intervening woodland screens outward views. There are also some elevated longer-distance views towards the site available from the South Downs National Park.

How the Site Relates to the Sensitivity of the Wider Assessment Unit

The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment assesses the wider LCA 6D assessment unit to have **moderate-high sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing) and **high sensitivity** to medium scale residential (3-4 storey flats/ care homes) and commercial/industrial development. The sensitivity analysis indicates that undulating landform, ecologically valued woodlands, historic field patterns with hedgerows and hedgerow trees, rural character with occasional intervisibility with the South Downs National Park and the dispersed settlement pattern increase sensitivity of the wider LCA 6D assessment unit.

The Site

The site demonstrates many of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit which increases sensitivity, including extensive areas of woodland on the peripheries of the site, much of which is ancient in origin; a historic field pattern of small to medium scale assart and piecemeal enclosure; the network of public rights of way which cross the site including the Wealdway; intervisibility with the South Downs National Park; and the strong rural character and sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies. However, there is an extensive presence of horse paddocks across central areas of the site which has influenced the historic field pattern and resulted in a relatively open character, and the site is relatively contained in medium and longer-distance views from the surrounding landscape.

Overall, the site generally conforms to the **moderate-high sensitivity** to small-scale residential development and **high sensitivity** to medium scale residential and commercial/industrial development.

Potential Effects of Developing the Site and Mitigation/Enhancement Opportunities

Potential Effects as a Result of Development	
Landscape Character and Features	Development on the site could affect: ■ The undulating valley landform along Ridgewood Stream and smaller incised stream valleys. ■ The rural character of the landscape and the historic field pattern of assarts and piecemeal enclosure, particularly in the south-west of the site. ■ The network of mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees, particularly in the south-west; this has been deteriorated in other areas of the site due to the subdivision of fields for horse paddocks. ■ Mature deciduous woodland, including semi-natural and replanted ancient woodlands, such as Slay's Wood, Great Wood and Bentley Wood both within and adjacent to the site. ■ Heightened areas of rural tranquillity and dark night skies away from the busy A22 and Halland. ■ The network of public rights of way, including the promoted Wealdway. ■ Distant views towards the South Downs National Park, including from the promoted Wealdway and other public rights of way, which cross the site.
Designated Landscapes	Although long-range views towards the site may be available from elevated areas within the South Downs National Park, at distances exceeding 8km, development within the site is unlikely to adversely affect the special qualities of the National Park.
Settlement Form, Edge and Setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The low density dispersed rural settlement pattern of small villages, hamlets and farmsteads. ■ The wider rural setting of the nearby villages of East Hoathly and Halland.
Visual Amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Users of public rights of way within and adjacent to the site. ■ Residents within the site at Annandale Farm to the south. ■ Residents at Annandale Court to the north-west. ■ Visitors to the South Downs National Park, including from the elevated landform to the east of Lewes and near Firle Beacon.
Cumulative Issues	
Potential for Cumulative Effects with Other Large Strategic Site	The site is not in close proximity to any other strategic sites considered in this assessment.
Potential for Mitigation and Enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Retain all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, including woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. 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 grassland). ■ Retain, protect and enhance woodland along the site boundaries to screen views of development. ■ Avoid development in the incised wooded stream valleys in the north, south and east of the site. Conserve and manage the streamside woodlands, conserving and restoring riverside vegetation and wetland habitats to increase biodiversity.	

[18] See Natural England and Forestry Commission Guidance for further information

- Lower ground could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features, incorporating habitat creation.
- Restore and enhance hedgerows where eroded and influenced by the current presence of horse paddocks, replacing those affected by development and strengthening the connectivity of the local habitat network, including between areas of ancient woodland in the north and south of the site and the surrounding area. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible.
- Avoid development in the more open and elevated areas in the north of the site.
- Development should be set back from public rights of way, including the promoted Wealdway, to help retain their rural character as far as practicable. Retain and enhance public access across the site and consider sequential views from the Wealdway and other public rights of way which cross the site.
- Distant views of the site from the South Downs National Park and views towards the National Park in the north of the site should be considered in the siting and design of development.
- The rural context and intervisibility between the site and the small settlements of Halland and East Hoathly should be considered in the siting and design of development, so as to minimise the perception of coalescence between these settlements.
- Additional planting should be used to screen new development and maintain the rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any 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. Planting species should be in character with the locality, using native species where appropriate.
- Introduced built form to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of its surroundings by using high quality materials suggestive of the local vernacular.
- 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.

Summary

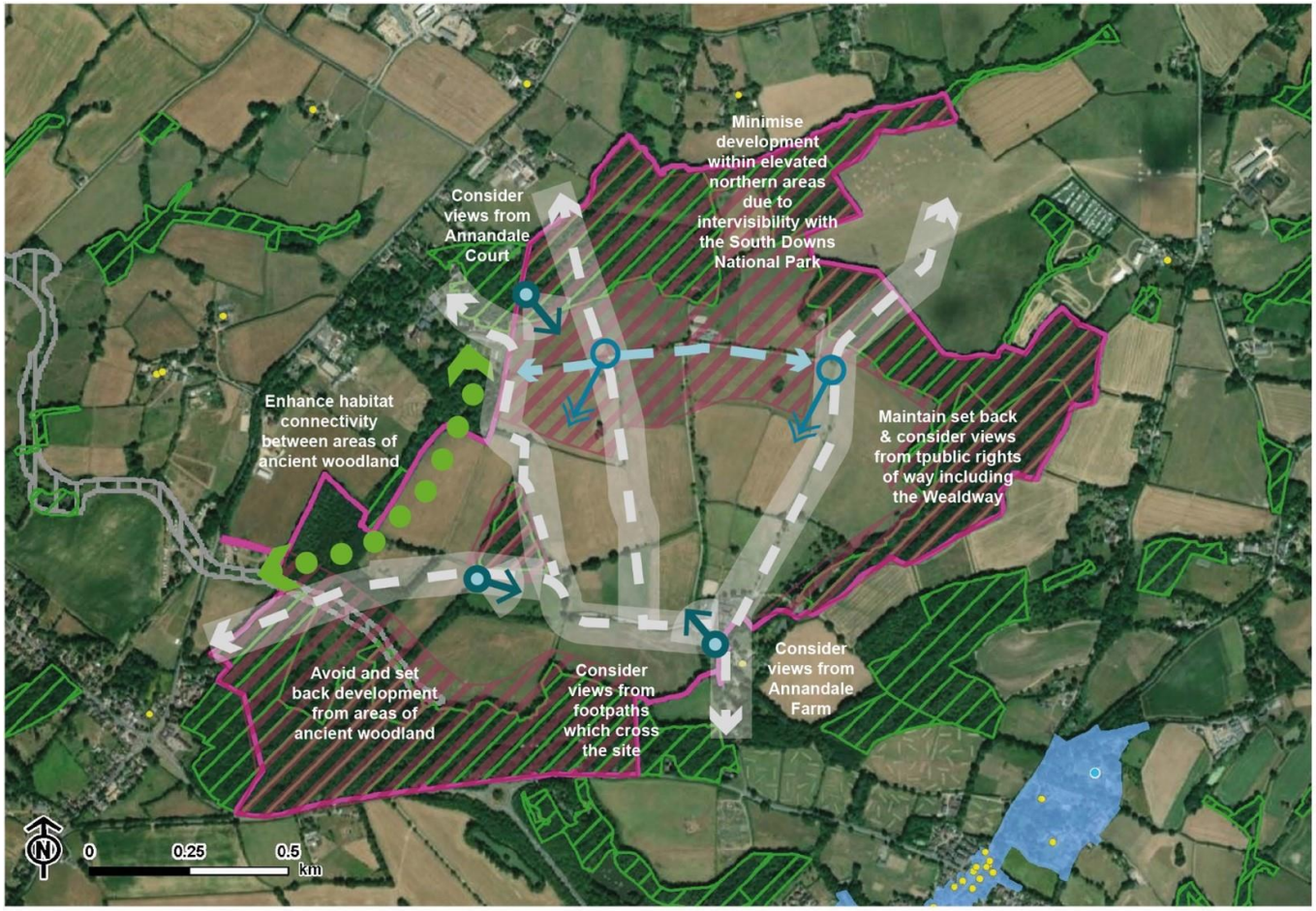
Development of this site would result in development into a relatively rural and tranquil area, It would have a limited relationship to the small villages of East Hoathly and Halland and would therefore be a stand-alone new settlement. Also, the site is much larger in size than these existing settlements and may lead to some perception of coalescence between East Hoathly and Halland. The sloping valley landform and intervisibility with the South Downs National Park also increases sensitivity.

If the site is considered for development, the site would need to be planned with great care and consideration, especially in relation to the key sensitive features within and adjacent to the site, including being set back from ancient woodland and the steep-sided incised stream valleys. The perception of coalescence between Halland and East Hoathly should be considered through the siting and design of development, and the retention of woodland within and on the boundary of the site. Development should focus on the centre of the site and be set back from the wooded boundaries and away from the more elevated areas in the north.

A summary map indicating the key constraints and opportunities, including areas more sensitive to development are shown on **Figure A.51** below.

[19] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance for further information

Figure A.43: Summary map of constraints and opportunities

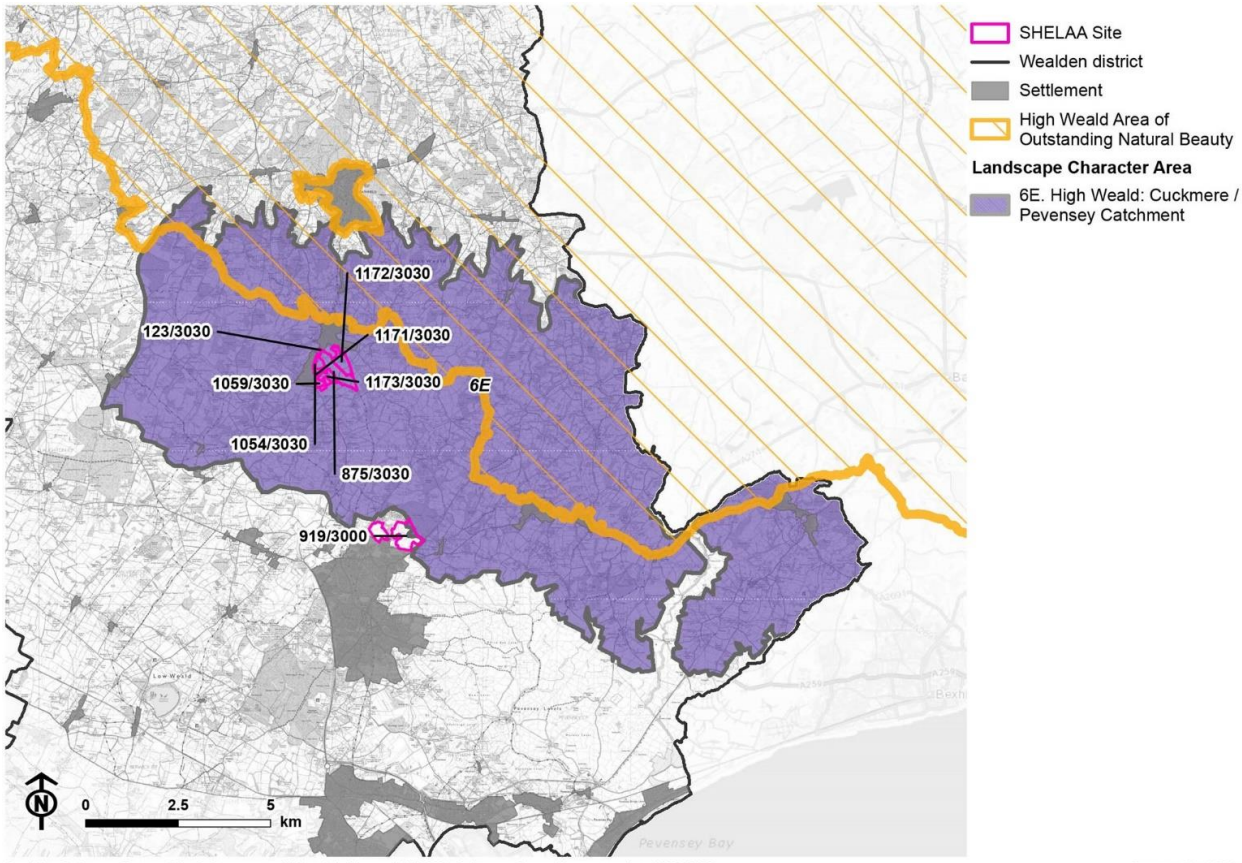


Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

Source: WDC, NE, HE

LCA 6E: High Weald – Cuckmere/Pevensey Catchment

Figure A.44: Site locations in relation to the Landscape Character Area



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Source: OS, WDC

Landscape Character Type (LCT) and Area (LCA)	LCT 6: Wooded Slopes (High Weald) LCA 6E: High Weald – Cuckmere/Pevensey Catchments
LCA Description	The High Weald – Cuckmere / Pevensey Catchments LCA is a rolling landscape of ridges and valleys containing the River Cuckmere and its tributaries that drain south from the Central High Weald into the Low Weald, and the tributaries of Waller's Haven that drain east into the Pevensey Levels. A wooded landscape with a pattern of small-scale irregular fields, streams and historic ridge-top villages. The LCA is separated into two sections by LCA 1A Pevensey Levels at Waller's Haven (and the District boundary). The north of the LCA, north of Horam, Windmill Hill and Ninfield, lies within the High Weald AONB.
Valued Features and Key Qualities of the LCA	■ The landform of ridges and valleys associated with the River Cuckmere and Waller's Haven. ■ Hammer ponds and gill streams, and associated wetland habitats. ■ The woodland, riparian vegetation and wetland habitat of the Cuckmere and Waller's Haven catchments.

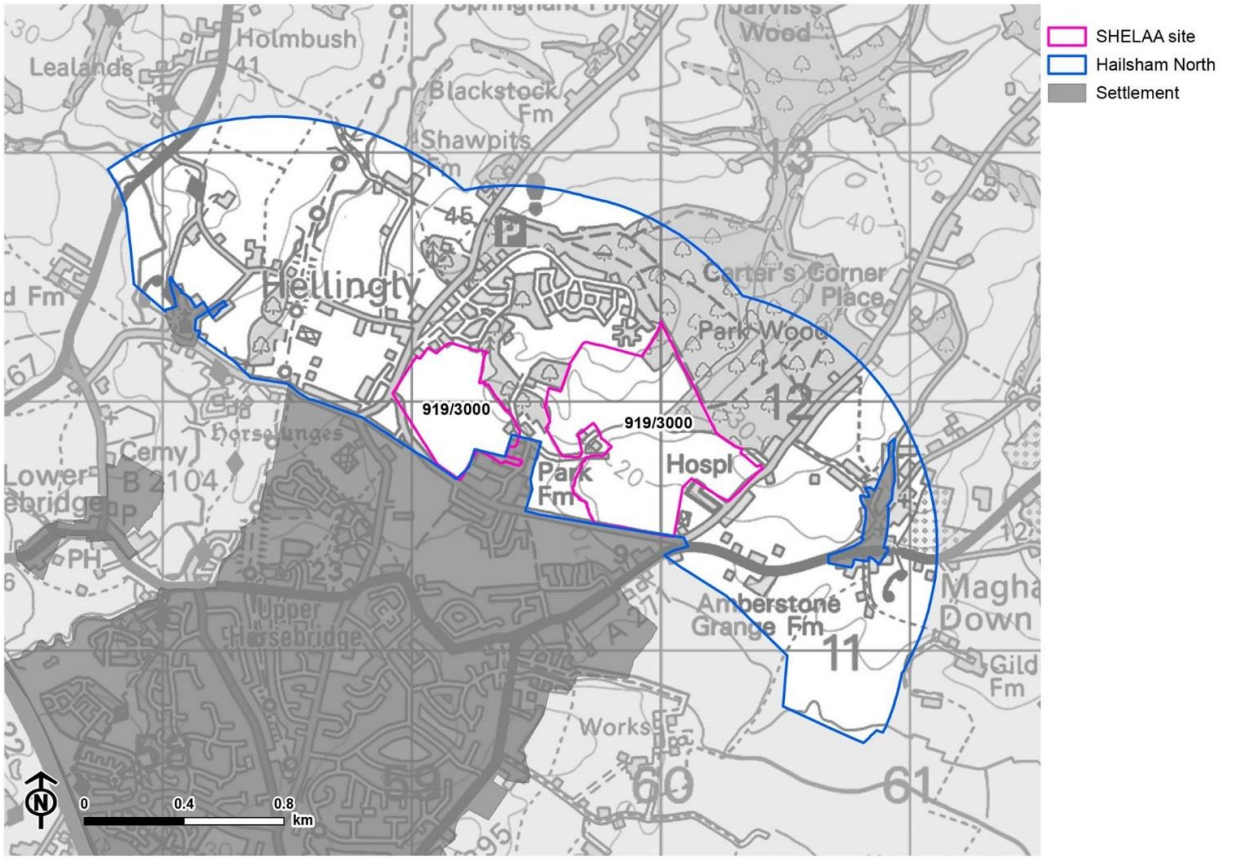
	■ The numerous woodlands (with a high proportion of ancient woodlands), trees and mature hedgerows. ■ Semi-natural habitats including deciduous woodland, grassland and wet meadows, some designated as SSSI. ■ The small-scale medieval field patterns, with sinuous hedgerow boundaries. ■ Hammer ponds, coppiced woodlands and historic forges provide a link to the Wealden iron industry. ■ The pattern of historic ridgetop villages (whose value is recognised through designation as Conservation Areas), linked by winding rural lanes. ■ The vernacular of red brick, oak timber, sandstone and flint which reflects the locally available materials. ■ Herstmonceux Castle, Observatory and parkland form distinctive landmarks in the landscape. ■ The extensive network of public rights of way. ■ Contrasts between the enclosed character around woodlands and sunken lanes, and open views to the Pevensey Levels and the South Downs. ■ The harmonious small-scale landscape pattern of mixed farms, dense woodland and open views across the Pevensey Levels contribute to the strong scenic quality of the area, reflected in its partial designation as an AONB. ■ The low density of settlement provides a sense of rural tranquillity and experience of dark skies.

Landscape Sensitivity Context: Hailsham North

The following potential development site is considered within the Hailsham North assessment unit:

- 919/3000 – Land at Park Farm, New Road, Hellingly

Figure A.45: Site locations in relation to the assessment unit



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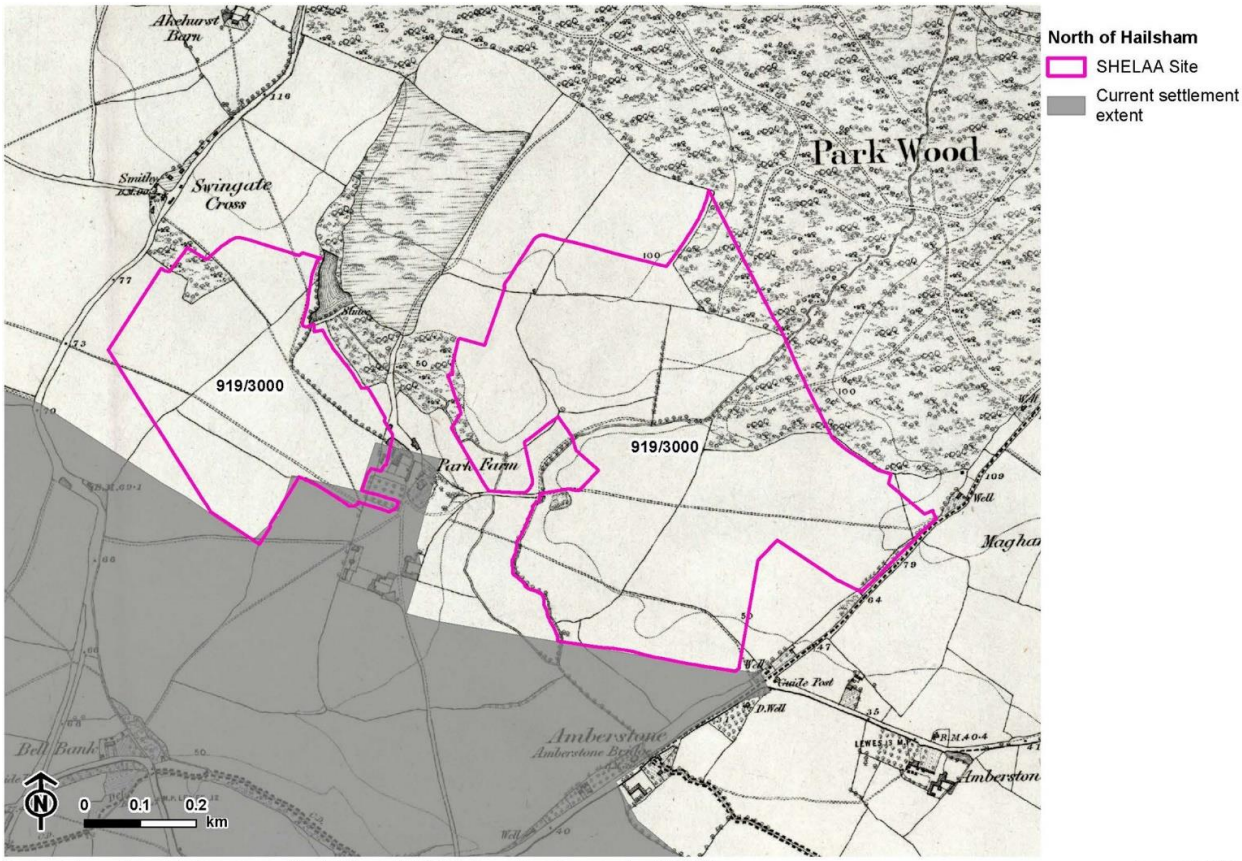
Source: OS, WDC

Settlement Context

Settlement Location and Context	Hailsham is the largest settlement in the south of Wealden district, located between the River Cuckmere to the west and the Pevensey Levels to the east. The landscape to the north of the town lies within LCA 6E 'High Weald: Cuckmere / Pevensey Catchment'.
Settlement Evolution	Hailsham is mentioned in the Domesday Book, and was granted a market charter in 1252. The medieval town was focussed around Market Street, High Street, George Street and Vicarage Road, the area indicated today by the extent of Hailsham Conservation Area. Following the opening of the railway between Hailsham and Polegate in 1849, which was later extended north to Eridge, the town expanded slightly to the south and west of the railway station. Despite the closure of the railway line in 1968, substantial growth occurred after the Second World War. From this period through to the early 21st century, the town has greatly expanded, predominantly to the north and west. This has resulted in its coalescence with the formerly separate hamlets of Lower and Upper Horsebridge and Amberstone to the north.

Settlement Pattern and Edge Character	Hailsham has a sprawling character, loosely centred on the former railway (now Cuckoo Trail) and constrained to the west by the A22 and to the east by the Pevensey Levels. The settlement edge has recently expanded to the north as far as New Road, with the construction of a large area of modern two-storey red brick detached and semi-detached houses. Development immediately north of New Road is limited to Park Farm, which includes three listed buildings, a small-scale 20th century housing estate and Hailsham House care home. Further to the north of the site there is an area of recently constructed development off The Drive (the 'Woodside Development'), comprising a mix of two-storey housing and some larger three and four storey residential blocks.

Figure A.46: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



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Source: OS, WDC

The Landscape Sensitivity of Hailsham North Assessment Unit Described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA Assessment Unit	Hailsham North		
Landscape Sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA 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
	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
Key Sensitivities	■ Undulating landform incised by the River Cuckmere and its tributaries. ■ River Cuckmere and associated riparian habitats.		

The key landscape sensitivities to develop identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	■ Priority habitat deciduous woodland, including ancient woodland at Park Wood, and priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh in the south-east. ■ Strong network of thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees. ■ Largely intact historic irregular field patterns, including assarts in the north-west. ■ The historic character and form of Hellingly and its intact historic settlement edge. ■ The rural character of much of the assessment unit, which provides a scenic backdrop to Hellingly, Magham Down and Hailsham. ■ The assessment unit, particularly Park Wood and the River Cuckmere provide strong boundary features between Hailsham and the wider rural area. ■ Strong recreational opportunities, with a network of public rights of way, including the Wealdway and the Cuckoo Trail long distance footpaths. ■ Occasional long-distance views to the South Downs National Park from areas of higher ground.
LSA Guidance	■ Locate development on lower-lying flat fields, where it is well enclosed by landform and vegetation, so that development would be less visible and have less influence on landscape character. ■ Protect and enhance the narrow valley of the River Cuckmere and its tributaries, maintaining riparian habitats along its course. ■ Retain the extensive areas of broadleaved woodland and floodplain grazing marsh in the south-east. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodland and allow an appropriate buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). ■ Retain in-field and roadside trees, including tree clumps, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. 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. ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Pevensey and Cuckmere Valley Link and Cuckoo Trail Habitat Link BOAs, including woodland and wetland habitat management, enhancement and extension. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly assarts. ■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using species that are in character with the wider landscape. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Consider views from promoted long distance footpaths such as the Wealdway when considering siting and design of development in the landscape. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the intact historic form and character of Hellingly, and the rural setting the landscape provides, as set out in the Conservation Area appraisal. ■ Take account of views towards Hellingly church when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape. ■ Ensure development does not affect the occasional long-distance views to the South Downs National Park, and that areas of relative tranquillity, such as Park Wood, are retained.

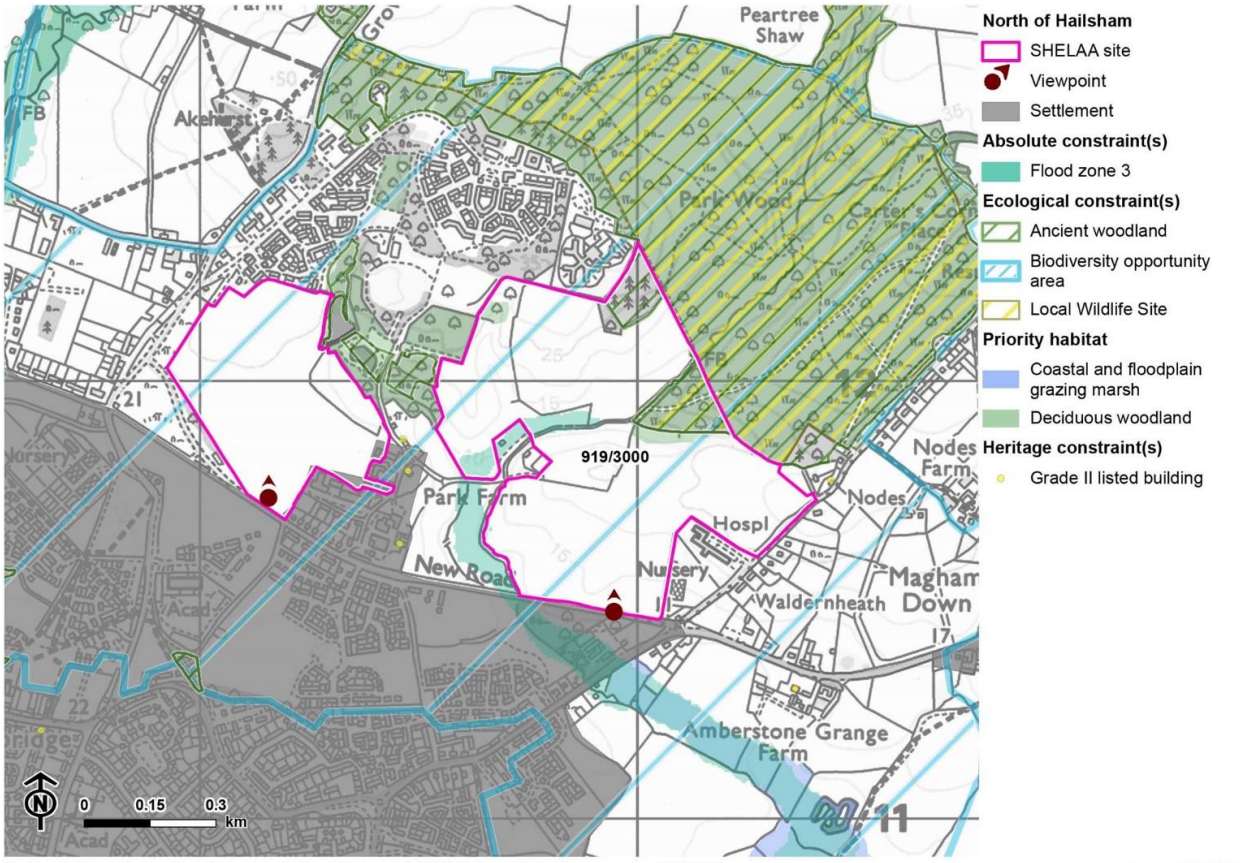
Site Assessment: North of Hailsham

Site Details

SHELAA Site Name/ Reference	Land at Park Farm, New Road, Hellingly	919/3000
Potential Development	414 residential dwellings, Playing Pitches.	
Site Location	The site is located to the north of Hailsham, north of New Road and west of Featherbed Lane. Park Wood forms the north-eastern boundary. The site comprises two parts. The western part gained outline planning permission in April 2021 for up to 370 dwellings (WD/2019/2542/MAO) and subsequent reserved matters consent in January 2023 (WD/2022/2135/MRM). It is therefore not considered as part of this assessment.	

Site Baseline

Figure A.47: Site location and constraints



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Source: OS, WDC

Representative Site Photos



Viewpoint 1: Sloping arable fields seen from New Road with wooded backdrop of Park Wood.



Viewpoint 2: Arable field, not currently in use, with views to Hellingly Hospital, woodland and development along The Drive.

Baseline Landscape Character in relation to the Wider Assessment Unit

Key Features and Qualities of the Site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	**Landform and drainage** The eastern part of the site is undulating, incised from the valley of the Hurst Haven, a tributary of the River Cuckmere, which runs through the centre of the site. Flood Zones 2 and 3 follows the course of the Hurst Haven. This is typical of the assessment unit. The western part of the site is flatter. **Natural character** The site is in arable use, with medium to large fields. There is a small area of grazing meadows along the stream corridor in the eastern part, which includes riparian woodland. Ancient woodland, which is also identified as priority habitat deciduous woodland, is concentrated in the east and north-east of the eastern site within Park Wood. Park Wood is also recorded as an LWS. Ancient woodland lies adjacent to the north-east boundary of the western site. A small area of deciduous woodland is recorded in the north-west of the eastern site. There are mature hedgerow trees and low hedgerows along New Road, and some internal hedgerow boundaries. Both parts of the site are covered by the Cuckmere and Pevensey Valley Link BOA. This is typical of the assessment unit. The remainder of the eastern site have no recorded priority habitats, which lowers sensitivity in these areas. This is not typical of the wider assessment unit. **Landscape pattern and time depth** The historic field pattern is typical of the LCA, being of early medieval or medieval irregular piecemeal enclosure, although the LSA analysis notes a mixed historic field pattern in the wider assessment unit. There has been some loss of hedgerow boundaries and the field pattern has been interrupted by the construction of New Road. There are no recorded historic features within the site, although three Grade II listed buildings lie approximately 100m to the west at Park Farm (including Park Farmhouse and a granary and oasthouse). This is typical of the assessment unit away from Hellingly. **Recreational value** There is no public access to the site, which indicates a lower sensitivity than the wider assessment unit. A permissive footpath runs through Park Wood on the north-eastern boundary of the eastern part. Hellingly County Park and Roebuck Park Cricket Ground lies between the sections of the site.

	Perceptual aspects There is no built development in the site itself, although the site is bordered by development, which is visible from the site. Proximity to the new settlement edge of Hailsham, south of New Road, is a modern influence on the landscape, and impacts on dark skies and tranquillity. The site contributes to the rural setting of Hailsham, as well as the perceived separation of Hailsham and Amberstone/Magham Down to the north-east.
Designations which are Constraints to Development	Flood Zones 2 and 3 related to the Hurst Haven lies in the eastern site. Ancient woodland lies in the north-east of the eastern site and is in close proximity between the two sites.
Settlement Form and Edge Character and Extent of Built Development	New Road forms the existing northern settlement edge of Hailsham and consists of two and two and a half storey 21st century detached and semi-detached housing. The Woodside Development to the north comprises 20th and 21st century development consisting of a mixture of two-storey housing and some larger three and four storey residential blocks, and a low-rise medical centre. Other development in proximity to the site includes Park Farm, a small-housing estate of detached houses, and Hailsham House care home to the west; and Amberstone Hospital and ribbon development along Featherbed Lane to the east. This is typical of the assessment unit. New Road forms a boundary to the settlement edge, and the site is separated from the recent developments by mature vegetation including roadside vegetation. Development on the site would lie between development south of New Road and the Woodside Development, effectively linking them.

Baseline Visual Character

Baseline Visual Character	The site has a semi-enclosed character and is not visually distinctive. This is typical of the assessment unit, as indicated in the LSA analysis, which lowers visual sensitivity. Park Wood to the north-east is locally prominent in views. There is no public access to the site itself. However, there are glimpsed views available into the site from the permissive footpath within Park Wood along the north-eastern boundary and from within Hellingly County Park and Roebuck Cricket Club between the two areas of the site. The presence of mature woodland at Park Wood and Hellingly County Park restricts views into the eastern part of the site from areas further to the west, north and north-east. Garden vegetation largely restricts views into the western part of the site from Chichester Road and properties off The Drive, and mature roadside vegetation restricts views from Park Road and the New Road extension to the south-west. Views into the site from New Road to the south are partially filtered by roadside hedgerows and occasional mature hedgerow trees. The rising topography to the south-east of Hurst Haven further obscures views into the centre of the eastern site from the south-east. There are unlikely to be views from new residential properties to the south of New Road, due to the intervening vegetation. There are views into the site from the vicinity of residential properties at Park Farm, particularly into the western part of the site which is adjacent to Park Farm. Views from Park Farm to the eastern part of the site are partially obscured by vegetation and the undulating topography associated with Hurst Haven. There are unlikely to be views from Featherbed Lane and associated residential properties to the east, due to the presence of mature roadside vegetation.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park	There are limited glimpsed views of the distinctive South Downs National Park to the south from areas of higher ground in the north and east of the eastern part of the site. These intermittent views are typical of the assessment unit. Park Wood restricts views towards the High Weald AONB to the north.

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 Hailsham North assessment unit as having a **moderate sensitivity** to small-scale residential development and a **moderate-high sensitivity** to medium-scale residential development. The LSA indicates that the considerable areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland, much of ancient origin, priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh relating to the Pevensey Levels, Hellingly Conservation Area, nucleated settlement form at Hellingly which is well-integrated into the landscape, the strong boundary feature formed by Park Wood to the north, scenic backdrop provided to Hellingly and Magham Down, and strong rural characteristics around Hellingly and Park Wood increase sensitivity. Sensitivity is reduced by the limited historic features and proximity to the settlement edge of Hailsham and the A271.

The sensitivity analysis notes that Park Wood and its setting are of higher sensitivity due to its ecological value and designation as ancient woodland.

The Site

The east of the site demonstrates many of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit, including an undulating landform incised by the valley of the Hurst Haven, a tributary of the River Cuckmere; priority habitat deciduous woodland, including ancient woodland at Park Wood, and priority habitat grazing meadows to the east; designation as part of the Cuckmere and Pevensey Valley Link BOA; an early medieval or medieval irregular piecemeal enclosure; limited development; and occasional views to the South Downs National Park from high ground. However, the south of the east of the site contains no priority habitats, has no public access, and is in proximity to the new settlement edge of Hailsham, south of New Road, which impacts on dark skies and tranquillity.

It is considered that the site conforms to the moderate sensitivity to small-scale (2-2.5 storey) residential development that has been determined for the whole assessment unit. The east of the site is more exposed in the wider landscape, with long range views provided from the ridge in the centre over the surrounding area, meaning it has a higher sensitivity. The west of the site has a flatter topography and is adjacent to existing development on Park Road to the south, and Woodside in the north, therefore it has a slightly lower sensitivity.

Potential Effects of Developing the Site and Mitigation/Enhancement Opportunities

Potential Effects as a Result of Development	
Landscape Character and Features	Development on the site could affect: ■ Undulating landform with incised streams. ■ Mature deciduous woodlands within and adjacent to the site, which are ancient in origin, at Park Wood in the east and Hellingly Hospital to the west. ■ Agricultural nature of the site, with arable and pasture fields. ■ The network of hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees, particularly in the south-west of the site. ■ The course of the Hurst Haven with grazing meadows and riparian vegetation in the centre of the site. ■ Partially intact historic irregular field patterns. ■ New Road is a strong boundary feature to the extended northern settlement edge of Hailsham, albeit that this has been eroded by recent development.
Designated Landscapes	Views to and from the South Downs National Park are at such a distance they are unlikely to have an impact on the defining special qualities of the national park.
Settlement Form, Edge and Setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The wider rural setting of Hailsham. Potential to integrate the Woodside Development as part of Hailsham (currently perceived as a detached area of development). Development

	on this site could link the two areas of the settlement. The granted development on the western field of this site (ref WD/2019/2542/MAO) would also have this effect.
Visual Amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Residents at Park Farm and adjacent residential properties, between the parts of the site. ■ Residents on Featherbed Lane to the south-east and east of the site. ■ Residents in the Woodside Development to the north and north-west of the site. ■ Recreational users of Hellingly County Park between the parts of the site. ■ Recreational users of the Roebuck Cricket Ground between the parts of the site. ■ Recreational users of the permissive path within Park Wood along the north-eastern boundary of the site. ■ Motorists using New Road to the south. ■ Motorists using Park Road to the east.
Cumulative Issues	
Potential for Cumulative Effects with Other Large Strategic Site	The site is not in close proximity to any other sites considered in this strategic assessment. This site, in combination with the strategic site to the west of Hailsham (site 825/1310) would result in a general expansion of the settlement into the surrounding rural landscape. However, given the intervening distance between the sites and the well-wooded character of the surrounding landscape, landscape and visual cumulative effects would be limited.
Potential for Mitigation and Enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Development should avoid and be set back from the ancient woodland at Park Wood in the east and north-east and Hellingly Hospital to the west to create a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage. 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). ■ Retain, protect and enhance hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees along New Road, Park Road and Featherbed Lane. Where appropriate replace those hedgerows affected by development and strengthen the connectivity of the local habitat network. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. ■ Retain, protect and enhance riparian vegetation along the Hurst Haven stream corridor. Set development back from the stream corridor and avoid development within Flood Zones 2 and 3. ■ The areas of the Hurst Haven stream corridor not in Flood Zones 2 and 3 could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features with habitat creation, and connectivity with ponds located in Hellingly County Park. This should consider the aims of the Pevensey & Cuckmere Valley Link BOA. ■ Consider intervisibility with, and the setting of, listed buildings at Park Farm. ■ Consider the relationship between development on the site, new development south of New Road and the Woodside Development to the north. ■ Provide pedestrian and recreational access and links between the areas of development, including links to Hellingly County Park and permissive paths at Park Wood. ■ Locate development in the southern areas of the site to fit with the existing settlement pattern, and avoid development on the higher slopes to the north and east. ■ Additional planting should be used to screen new development and maintain the rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any 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. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. ■ Retain, protect and enhance the historic field pattern, replanting internal hedgerow boundaries where these have been lost or eroded. ■ Introduced built form to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials suggestive of the local vernacular.	

Summary

The analysis above indicates that development within the east of this site would extend development into the arable and pastoral landscape which contributes to the setting of the northern edge of Hailsham. Park Wood and woodland within Hellingly County Park provides containment of the site to the west, north and north-east, and restricts any visibility with the High Weald AONB.

If the site is considered for development, any proposed development would need to be planned with great care and consideration of key sensitivities including areas of ancient woodland at Park Wood and Hellingly Hospital, the incised Hurst Haven stream valley with riparian vegetation, proximity to listed buildings at Park Farm to the west and proximity to Hellingly County Park to the west and north-west. Views to the South Downs National Park from more elevated areas in the north and east of the site, historic assart fieldscapes with thick hedgerows and hedgerow trees (particularly in the south-west) should also be considered. Development should focus on the southern areas of the site, which are less sensitive and better relate to the existing settlement.

A summary map indicating the key constraints and opportunities, including areas more sensitive to development are shown on **Figure A.57** below.

Figure A.48: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



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

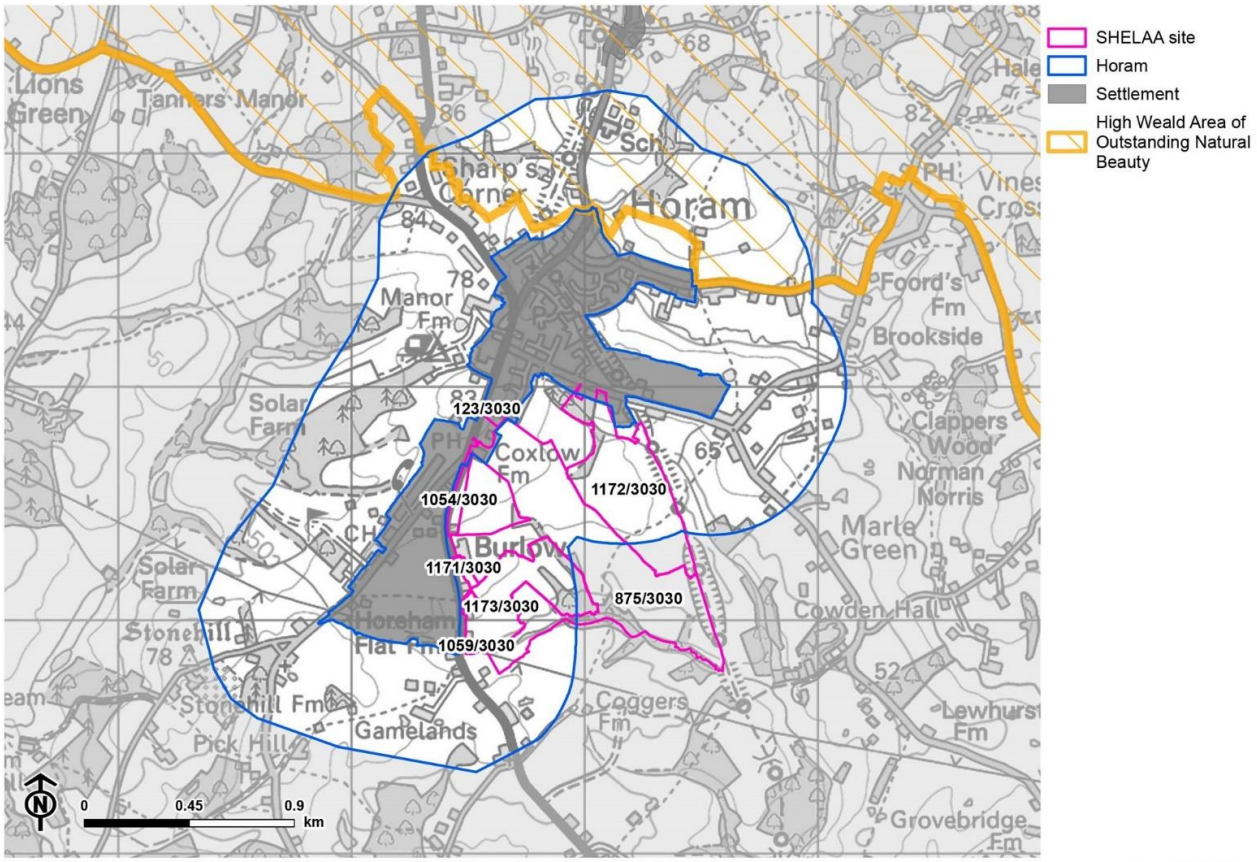
Source: WDC, NE, HE

Landscape Sensitivity Context: Horam Assessment Unit

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

- Group comprising sites 123/3030; 875/3030; 1054/3030; 1059/3030; 1171/3030; 1172/3030; and 1173/3030.

Figure A.49: Site locations in relation to the assessment unit



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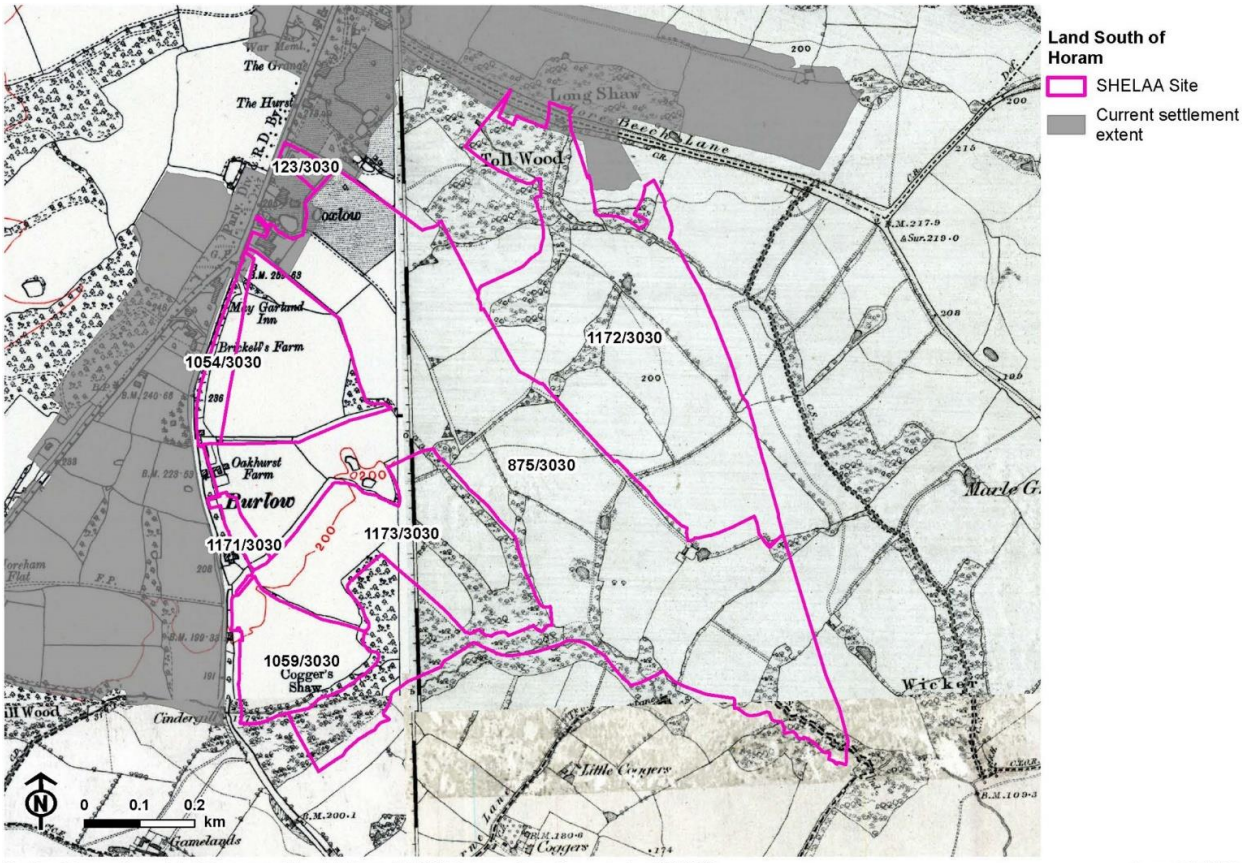
Source: OS, WDC

Settlement Context

Settlement Location and Context	Horam is a large village located centrally within Wealden District, within LCA 6E 'High Weald - Cuckmere / Pevensey Catchments'.
Settlement Evolution	The original settlement at Horam comprised dispersed development in the vicinity of Horam Manor. The settlement developed into a larger village with the arrival of the railway line between Hailsham and Eridge in 1880, which subsequently closed to passengers in 1965. The former railway line is now used as the Cuckoo Trail recreational path which forms a wooded linear feature passing through the village. Development was focussed around the station along the High Street (B2203) and Little London Road (A267), the area which forms the centre of the village today. In the second half of the 20th century further expansion occurred, notably to the south, with development extending along Heathfield Road (A267), Chiddingly Road and Horebeech Lane.

Settlement Pattern and Edge Character	The centre of the village remains to the north of Horebeech Lane, centred around the A267 and B2203. However, further expansion in the second half of the 20th century has resulted in a linear pattern of development to the south of the village, with ribbon development extending along Heathfield Road and Chiddingly Road. In addition, some recently constructed development off Horebeech Lane has extended the settlement edge further eastwards beyond the dismantled railway line/ Cuckoo Trail. The settlement edge consists of single and two storey 20th or 21st century houses, with examples of detached, semi-detached and short terraces. Extensive woodland encloses the settlement edges, particularly to the north-east and west of the settlement. Several small woodland blocks also enclose the south-eastern settlement edge along Horebeech Lane some of which is ancient woodland.

Figure A.50: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



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Source: OS, WDC

The Landscape Sensitivity of Horam Assessment Unit Described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA Assessment Unit	Horam		
Landscape Sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA 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
	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
Key Sensitivities	■ The complex ridge and valley landform, particularly in the north.		

The key landscape sensitivities to develop identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	■ 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.
LSA 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. ■ 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. ■ Preserve and enhance opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape. ■ 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.

Site Assessment: South of Horam

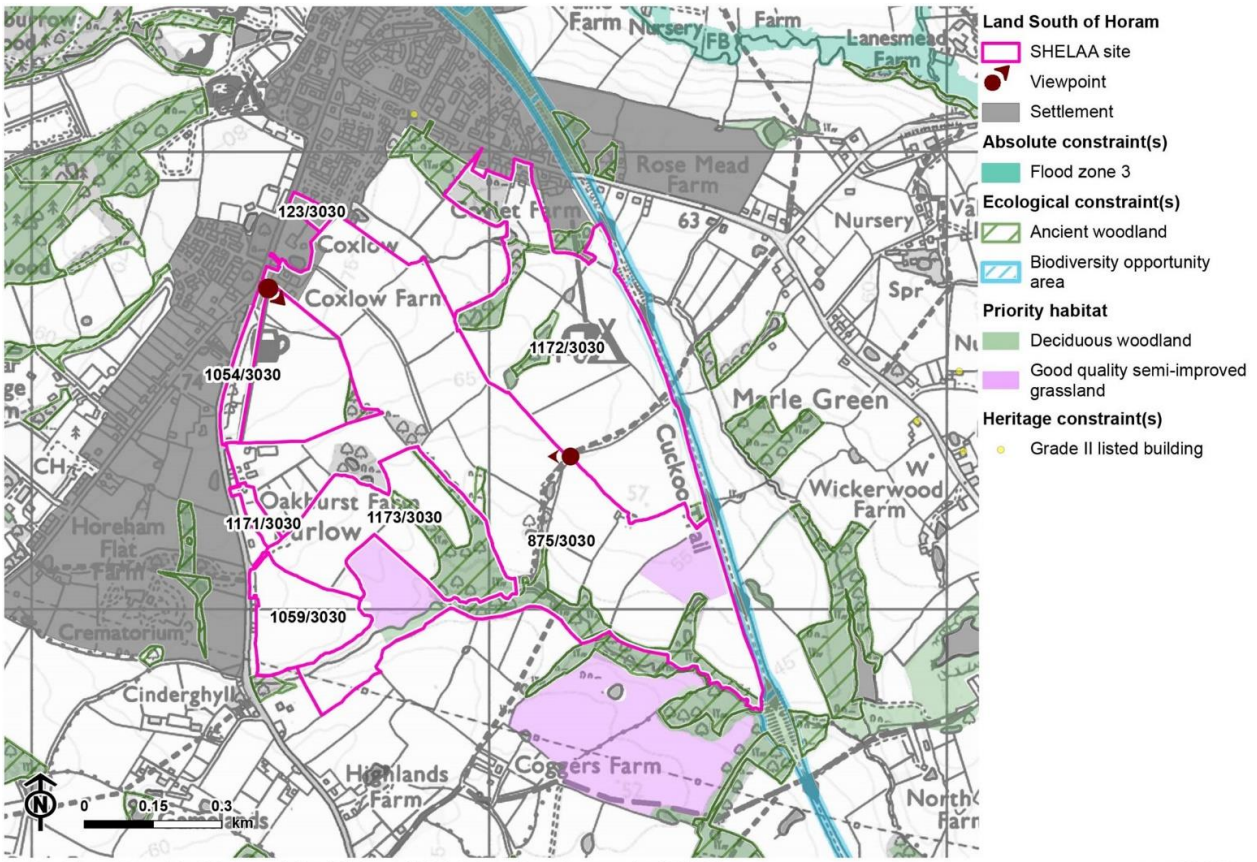
The following potential development sites are assessed as one, with individual elements highlighted where appropriate.

Site Details

SHELAA Site Name/ Reference	Land adjoining Coxlow House, A267	123/3030
	Coxlow Farm	875/3030
	Oakhurst House/Studio, A267	1054/3030
	Land adjacent Burlow Cottage, A267	1059/3030
	Land east of Horam Road	1171/3030
	Land at Chestnuts Farm, Horebeech Lane	1172/3030
	Land at Burlow, Horam	1173/3030
Potential Development	750 residential dwellings, Primary School, Employment Uses.	
Site Location	The site is located to the south-east of the settlement between the A267, Horebeech Lane and the Cuckoo Trail.	

Site Baseline

Figure A.51: Site location and constraints



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Source: OS, WDC

Representative Site Photos



Viewpoint 1: View west towards wooded field boundaries from the public right of way near the eastern site boundary.



Viewpoint 2: View east from A267 near Coxlow Farm, with some existing influence of electricity infrastructure.

Baseline Landscape Character in relation to the Wider Assessment Unit

Key Features and Qualities of the Site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	**Landform** The site consists of a gently undulating wooded pastoral landscape, between approximately 40m to 80m AOD, becoming more complex along the wooded stream corridor in the south of the site (along the southern edge of SHELAA Sites 1059/3030, 1173/3030 and 875/3030). The gently undulating ridge and valley landscape is typical of the Horam assessment unit. **Natural character** Pastoral land use is typical of the wider assessment unit, and the site forms the rural context to the settlement edge of Horam. Small scale areas of deciduous and ancient woodland are a key characteristic of the Horam assessment unit, though woodland to the north of the settlement is more extensive. Small pockets of priority habitat deciduous woodland, some of which are ancient in origin, are located across the site. Cogger's Shaw and Ten Acre Wood form a wooded boundary in the south of the site (south of SHELAA Sites 1173/3030 and 875/3030) and are recorded as gill woodland of ancient origin. There are smaller pockets of ancient woodland located across the site at Coxlow Farm Shaw (on the western edge of SHELAA Site 875/3030), Marle Green Shaw and the Coylet Farm Shaws (SHELAA Site 1172/3030) and Toll Wood (partly within SHELAA Site 1172/3030). There are several wooded ponds associated with the stream corridor in the south of the site (SHELAA Sites 1173/3030 and 875/3030) and smaller watercourses and ponds in the north of the site near Toll Wood and Coylet Farm Shaw (SHELAA Site 1172/3030). There are two small areas of priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland located in the south of the site (SHELAA 875/3030). **Landscape pattern and time depth** The field pattern is relatively irregular and medium in scale and is defined generally by assarts with thick hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees, which is typical of the assessment unit. Areas of ancient woodland at Coxlow Farm Shaw, Cogger's Shaw, Ten Acre Wood, Coylet Farm Shaw, Marle Green Shaw and Toll Wood, are located across the site and add to time depth. There are no recorded historic features within the site. The Grade II listed Horam War Memorial is located to the north of the site; however, buildings and intervening woodland to the south of the memorial limit intervisibility. **Recreational value** One public right of way passes through the south-east part of the site (SHELAA Site 1172/3030) and connects to the Cuckoo Trail, which passes along the eastern boundary of the site. These routes contribute towards the wider network of public rights of way within the assessment unit. **Perceptual aspects** As is typical of the assessment unit, proximity to Horam and the A267 influences dark skies. However, woodland minimises this influence and areas in the south-east of the site have relatively dark skies. Proximity to Horam, the busy A267, the Wealden Crematorium, and overhead electricity infrastructure also influences the sense of rural tranquillity, particularly in the north and west of the site.
Designations which are Constraints to Development	Ancient woodland at Coxlow Farm Shaw, Cogger's Shaw, Coylet Farm Shaw, Marle Green Shaw and Toll Wood.
Settlement Form and Edge Character and Extent of Built Development	To the west of the site, adjacent development consists of detached two-storey housing and dispersed farmsteads (some of which have been converted to residential use and/or have modern agricultural buildings). Recent settlement expansion to the west of the A267 (on Autumn Drive, opposite the site and development under construction between Chiddingly Road and the A267) has increased the density of development along the southern extent of Horam. However, development is set back and relatively well screened from the road. To the north-west and west of the site, the settlement pattern is denser and consists of 20th century detached and semi-detached one and two storey residential housing. As noted for the assessment unit, the pastoral landscape and woodland within the site provide a rural setting to the east of the settlement.

	There are no features within the site which form a distinctive boundary to the eastern settlement edge of Horam. However, woodland cover to the north-east at Toll Wood and along the A267 partially screens and softens the settlement edge, as is typical of the wider assessment unit.

Baseline Visual Character

Baseline Visual Character	One public right of way passes through the south-east part of the site, connecting the Cuckoo Trail to the north-east with Cogger's Cross on the A267 (via Cogger's Shaw) to the south-west. Whilst views south from the footpath are partially screened by woodland, more open views are afforded north and north-west across the site. Views from the Cuckoo Trail (including National Cycle Route 21), which passes approximately 50m to the east of the site at its nearest point, are largely screened by tree cover and linear woodland along the route. Residential properties located at Grange Close to the north-west have views into the north of the site; however, wooded field boundaries limit more distant views across the site from this location. Residential properties located to east of the A267, have relatively open views east across the site, however views of the site from the road are screened and filtered by vegetation. From elsewhere, the site is relatively enclosed by woodland, resulting in limited views into the site. This includes from residential properties located along Chiddingly Road to the west and along Horebeech Lane to the north-east.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park	There are limited glimpsed views of the distant wooded ridges of the High Weald AONB to the north and north-east. Views back towards the site from within the AONB are also generally limited by the high proportion of woodland cover.

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), **moderate-high sensitivity** to medium-scale residential development (3-4 storey flats/ care homes) and **high sensitivity** to commercial/ industrial development. The sensitivity analysis indicates that areas of undulating landform, 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

The site demonstrates many of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit which increase sensitivity, including areas of more complex topography in the south of the site; small pockets of ancient woodland, concentrated predominantly to the south; the historic assart field pattern with mature and wooded field boundaries; several wooded ponds associated with the stream corridor in the south of the site and smaller watercourses and ponds in the north-east of the site; areas of priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland located in the south; and sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies in the south-east of the site away from the edge of Horam and the A267. However, proximity to the A267 and edge of Horam to the west and north-west reduces influences the sense of rural tranquillity, the semi-enclosed character of the site, and some deterioration of the historic field pattern and field boundaries in the north and west decreases sensitivity.

Overall, it is considered that the site conforms to the **moderate sensitivity** to accommodating new small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing) that has been determined for the wider assessment unit and the **moderate-high sensitivity** for medium-scale residential and **high sensitivity** commercial/ industrial development.

Potential Effects of Developing the Site and Mitigation/Enhancement Opportunities

Potential Effects as a Result of Development	
Landscape Character and Features	Development on the site could affect: ■ Mature deciduous woodlands within and adjacent to the site, many of which are ancient in origin, most notably at Cogger's Shaw, Ten Acre Wood and Coxlow Farm Shaw. ■ The network of thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees, particularly in the south-west of the site. ■ Areas of priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland in the south of the site. ■ Some areas of intact historic field patterns, particularly small scale assarts in the south-west of the site, which provide a strong rural setting to the existing settlement of Horam. ■ The rural character of the landscape with areas of remoteness, tranquillity and dark skies away from the busy A267, particularly to the south-east.
Designated Landscapes	Though glimpsed views are afforded towards the wooded ridges of the High Weald AONB, intervisibility is limited. Development on the site is therefore unlikely to adversely affect the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB.
Settlement Form, Edge and Setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The wider rural setting of Horam through advancement into the countryside to the south-east. ■ Whilst development within the site would not cross a defined boundary feature from the west along the A267, it would go beyond woodland cover to the south of Horebeech Lane, which provides a strong boundary feature. However, this has already been breached by the development along Grange Close to the north-west of the site.
Visual Amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Local residents along the settlement edge of Horam, mostly limited to properties at Grange Close to the north-west and dispersed farmsteads along the A267 to the west. ■ Users of the public right of way extending across the south-east of the site. ■ Users of the A267 to the west.
Cumulative Issues	
Potential for Cumulative Effects with Other Large Strategic Site	The site is not in proximity to any other sites considered in this strategic assessment.
Potential for Mitigation and Enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Development should avoid and be set back from the ancient woodland at Cogger's Shaw, Ten Acre Wood, Coxlow Farm Shaw and along the northern site boundary at Toll Wood and Coylet Farm Shaw. Set development back from the edge of ancient woodland to create a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage[20]. 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 grassland). ■ Areas of woodland along the settlement edge (including ancient woodland at Toll Wood noted above) and along the A267 should be retained, protected and enhanced so as to limit views into the site from existing residential properties and from the road. ■ Development should avoid areas of priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland. Retain habitat connectivity of the wider area of semi-improved grassland by enhancing and maintaining the structural complexity and species diversity of planting along the southern site boundary.	

[20] See Natural England and Forestry Commission Guidance for further information

- Development should be set back from the public right of way which crosses the south-east of the site, to retain the rural and partially wooded character of this route.
- Avoid development, and seek to minimise future urban influences / effects, in the incised wooded stream valleys in the south of the site and where wooded ponds are present.
- Lower ground could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features incorporating habitat creation, and connectivity with the incised stream corridor habitat in the south of the site.
- Enhance and retain the historic field pattern, particularly where the small scale assart fieldscape is strongly expressed in the south-east of the site.
- Hedgerows should be retained, protected and enhanced/strengthened, protecting mature specimen trees. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible.
- Views into the site from residential properties at Grange Close and within the west of the site should be considered in the siting and design of development.
- Minimise visibility of development from the public rights of way within the site and adjacent to the site, including the Cuckoo Trail.
- Enhance public access, particularly in the north and south-west of the site, providing additional opportunities to experience the surrounding pastoral landscape, and improve connectivity with the Cuckoo Trail.
- Additional planting should be used to screen new development and maintain the rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built form, strengthen green / blue infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built form within the landscape. Planting species should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible.
- Introduced built form to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of its surroundings by using high quality materials suggestive of the local vernacular.
- The height of development should integrate with the adjacent surrounding settlement edges, both existing and consented.
- Protect the rural character and sense of remoteness, tranquillity and dark skies away from the settlement edge and A267 to the south-east.
- Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance[21] and use dark sky-friendly lighting.

Summary

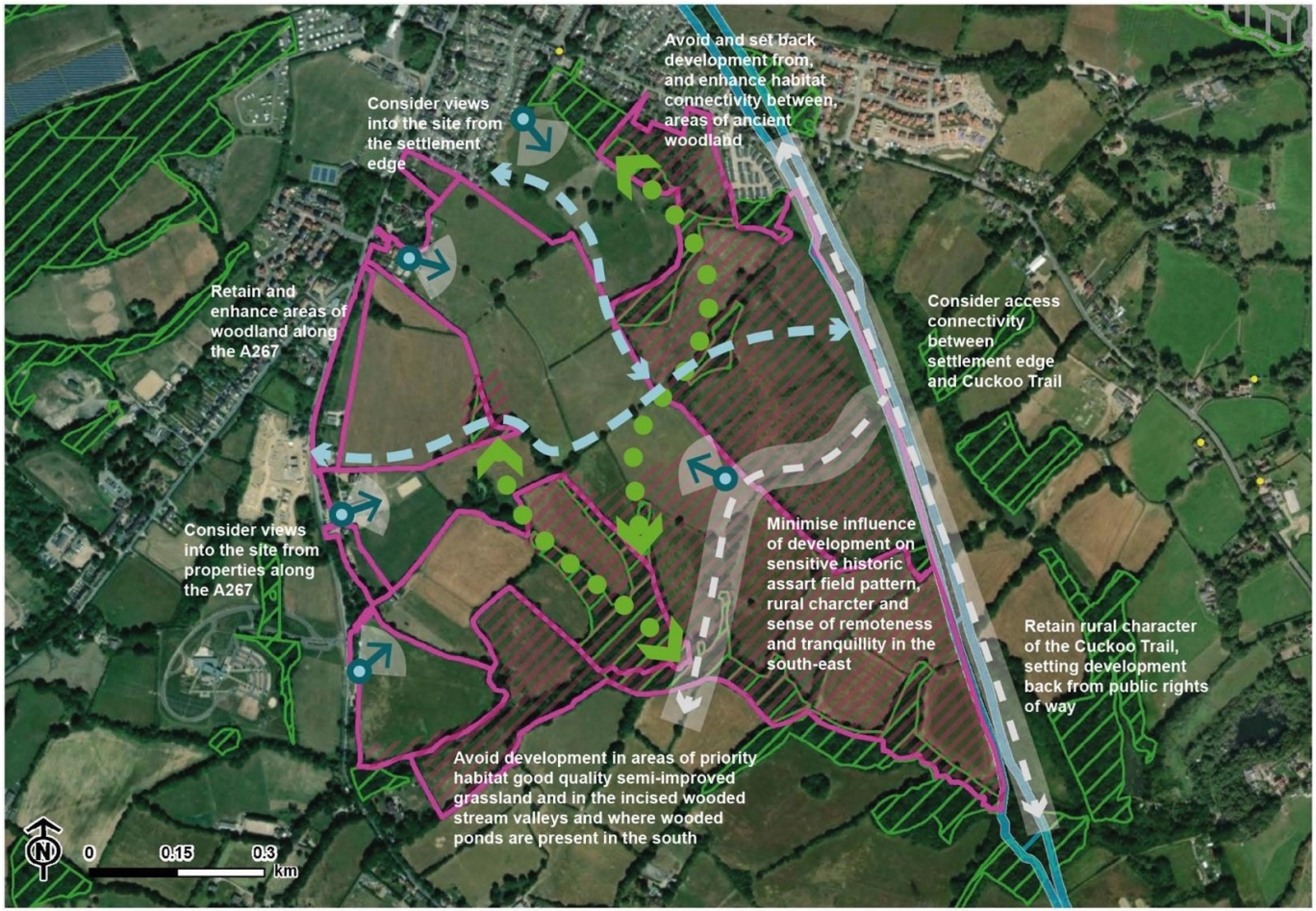
The site is located to the south and east of the built-up settlement core of Horam. Development of this site would extend development into the rural and tranquil pastoral landscape, which forms the setting to the south-eastern edge of the settlement of Horam. However, the influence of ribbon development extending south along the A267 and Chiddingly Road and the sense of enclosure due to surrounding woodland reduces sensitivity.

If the site is considered for development, the site would need to be planned with great care and consideration, especially in relation to the key sensitive features within and adjacent to the site, including the complex topography of the incised wooded stream valley at Cogger's Shaw to the south; areas of ancient woodland concentrated predominantly to the south and north-east; the and historic assart fieldscapes with thick hedgerows and hedgerow trees (particularly in the south-west); several wooded ponds associated with the stream corridor in the south of the site and smaller watercourses and ponds in the north-east of the site; areas of priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland located in the south; and sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies in the south-east of the site away from the edge of Horam and the A267. Development should be set back from ancient woodland on the site and adjacent to it, ensuring that suitable buffers are provided to protect the ancient woodland. Development should focus on northern, north-western and central areas of the site, which are less sensitive, so as to relate better to the existing settlement and expansion along the A267.

A summary map indicating the key constraints and opportunities, including areas more sensitive to development are shown on **Figure A.62** below.

[21] See the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance for further information

Figure A.52: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



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

Source: WDC, NE, HE

Appendix B

Sources of Information

Data	Data Source
Background Mapping	
■ Aerial Imagery	ESRI
■ OS MasterMap ■ OS 25k ■ OS 50k	Wealden District Council
Boundary	
■ Local Authority boundary	Ordnance Survey
Landscape Character Assessment	
■ Wealden Landscape Character Assessment (2022)	Wealden District Council/LUC
Cultural Heritage	
■ Listed Buildings ■ Scheduled Monuments ■ Registered Parks and Gardens ■ Heritage at Risk ■ WHS	Historic England
■ Conservation Areas ■ Conservation Area Appraisals (including draft Appraisals) ■ Locally Listed Buildings (including any interim date being prepared for the new Local Plan) ■ Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)	Wealden District Council
Natural Heritage	
■ Local Nature Reserves (LNR) ■ Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) ■ National Nature Reserve (NNR) ■ Ancient Woodland Index (AWI) ■ Priority Habitats ■ Special Protection Areas (SPA) ■ Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) ■ Ramsar/Proposed Ramsar	Natural England

Data	Data Source
■ National Forestry Index (NFI)	Forestry Commission
■ Important Bird Areas (IBA)	RSPB
■ Regional Important Geological Sites (RIGS)/Local Geological Sites ■ Broad Habitat Types ■ Wildlife Verges ■ Green Infrastructure Areas ■ Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)	Wealden District Council
Landscape	
■ Light Pollution ■ Tranquillity	CPRE
■ National Character Areas ■ High Weald AONB ■ South Downs National Park ■ Heritage Coasts	Natural England
■ Topography	Ordnance Survey
■ Flood Zone 2/3 ■ Areas that benefit from flood defences ■ Flood Storage Areas (FSA) ■ Spatial Flood Defence (SFD) ■ Source Protection Zone (SPZ)	Environment Agency
■ Lakes	Ordnance Survey (meridian)
■ Flood Zone 3a and 3b ■ Land at risk rom groundater flooding	Wealden District Council
Access and Recreation	
■ National Cycle Network	Sustrans
■ National Trails ■ Common Land ■ Country Parks	Natural England
■ National Trails	National Trust
■ Green Space	Ordnance Survey
■ Accessible Natural Greenspace ■ Public Rights of Way/Promoted Routes ■ Brownfield Lands	Wealden District Council
Planning	

Data	Data Source
■ Settlement Boundaries ■ Consented Sites/Committed Sites/Allocations ■ Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Sites	Wealden District Council
Agriculture	
■ Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)	Natural England
■ CORNE Landcover 2018	EEA

Appendix C

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum (sea level).
Aesthetic	Concerning the visual appeal of a feature or landscape.
Agricultural Land Classification	The classification of agricultural land in England in Wales.
Alluvium	Loose soil or sediments, which have been eroded, reshaped by water in some form, and redeposited.
Analysis	The process of breaking the landscape down, usually in descriptive terms, into its component parts in order to understand how it is made up.
Ancient trees and veteran trees	Individual trees or groups of trees with wood pastures, historic parkland, hedgerows, orchards, park, and other areas. They are often found outside ancient woodlands. irreplaceable habitats with some or all of the following characteristics: ■ Ancient trees – An ancient tree is exceptionably valuable. Attributes can include its great age, size, condition, biodiversity value (as a result of significant wood decay and the habitat created from the ageing process), cultural and heritage value. ■ Veteran trees – A veteran tree may or may not be very old, but it has decay features, such as branch death and hollowing. These features contribute to its biodiversity, cultural and heritage value.
Ancient Woodland	Woodland which the evidence shows has had had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD and has only been cleared for underwood or timber production. It is an extremely valuable ecological resource, with an exceptionally high diversity of flora and fauna.
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – a statutory national landscape designation.
Approach	The stepwise process by which a landscape assessment is undertaken.
Arable	Land used for growing crops.
Assessment	An umbrella term used to encompass all the many different ways of looking at, describing, analysing, and evaluating landscape.
Assart	A piece of land converted from forest to agricultural use. Most such piecemeal enclosures date to the medieval or early post-medieval period and are bounded by species rich hedgerows, an indicator of land assarted from woodland.
Assarting	The act of clearing forested lands for use in agriculture or other purposes (in English land law, it was illegal to assart any part of a Royal Forest).
BAP	UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species and habitats were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK BAP. The original lists of UK BAP priority habitats were created between 1995 and 1999 and were

Term	Definition
	subsequently updated in 2007. See http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5155 for further information.
Biodiversity	The measure of the variety of organisms present in different ecosystems.
Brownfield Site	A development site which is re-using previously developed land.
Built form	The characteristic nature of built development.
Carr woodland	Marsh or fen woodland in waterlogged terrain. Characteristic trees include alders and willows.
Characteristic	An element that contributes to local distinctiveness (e.g. narrow winding lanes, vernacular building style).
Classification	A process of sorting the landscape into different types, each with a distinct, consistent, and recognisable character.
Combe	A small dry valley, without a permanent watercourse.
Condition	A judgement on the intactness and condition of the elements of the landscape.
Coppicing	The traditional method of woodland management in which trees are cut down to near the ground to encourage the production of long, straight shoots, which can subsequently be harvested.
Description	Verbal description of what a landscape looks like. This is usually carried out in a systematic manner, but it may also include personal reactions to the landscape.
Designated landscape	Areas of landscape identified as being of importance at international, national or local levels, either defined by statute or identified in development plans or other documents.
Drift	The name for all material of glacial origin found anywhere on land or at sea, including sediment and large rocks.
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
Element	A component part of the landscape (e.g. hedges, roads, woods).
Enclosure	The placing in private hands of land to which there were previously common rights; the merging of commonly held strip fields to form a block surrounded by hedges.
Equine development	A term used to describe areas on the fringes of settlements which are dominated by horse paddocks, stable buildings, and associated paraphernalia.
Feature	A prominent, eye-catching element (e.g. wooded hilltop, church spire).
Floodplain	The area that would naturally be affected by flooding if a river rises above its banks, or if high tides and stormy seas cause flooding in coastal areas.
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
Grassland	Land used for grazing. Grassland can be improved (by management practices) semi-improved (modified by management practices and have a range of species less diverse than unimproved grasslands), or unimproved (not treated with fertiliser, herbicide or intensively grazed and consequently species diversity is high).

Term	Definition
Greenfield site	A development site, usually on the fringes of a settlement, which has not previously been used for built development.
Habitat	The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation – A method of identification and interpretation of the varying historic character within an area that looks beyond individual heritage assets to help understand the whole landscape and townscape into repeating HLC Types.
Hydrology	The science dealing with the occurrence, circulation, distribution, and properties of the waters of the earth and its atmosphere.
Innings	From verb 'to inn' meaning to reclaim.
Intact	Not changed or diminished.
Land cover	Combinations of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.
Landmark	An object or feature of a landscape or town that is easily seen and recognized from a distance, especially one that enables someone to establish their location.
Landscape	The term refers primarily to the visual appearance of the land, including its shape, form, and colours. However, the landscape is not a purely visual phenomenon; its character relies on a whole range of other dimensions, including geology, topography, soils, ecology, archaeology, landscape history, land use, architecture, and cultural associations.
Landscape character	A distinct pattern or combination of elements that occurs consistently in a particular landscape.
Landscape character area (LCA)	A unique geographic area with a consistent character and identity, which forms part of a landscape character type.
Landscape character type (LCT)	A generic term for landscape with a consistent, homogeneous character. Landscape character types may occur in different parts of the county, but wherever they occur, they will share common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation, or human influences.
Landscape condition	Based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It reflects the state of repair or intactness of individual features or elements (relating to that feature's primary condition or ultimate desire).
Landscape strategy	Principles to manage and direct landscape change for a particular landscape type or character area including identification of any particular management needs for specific elements.
Landscape value	The relative value that is attached to different landscapes. In a policy context the usual basis for recognising certain highly valued landscapes is through the application of a local or national landscape designation. Yet a landscape may be valued by different communities of interest for many different reasons without any formal designation, recognising, for example, perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness; special cultural associations; the influence and presence of other conservation interests; or the existence of a consensus about importance, either nationally or locally.

Term	Definition
Landscape and Visual Appraisal	An appraisal of the suitability of a site in landscape and visual terms to accommodate development, as well as to determine any site specific constraints and design considerations.
Linear settlement	A settlement that is built along a road, in comparison to a nuclear or dispersed settlement.
Listed Building	A building, object or structure that has been judged to be of national importance in terms of architectural or historic interest.
Local Plan	A development plan prepared by local planning authorities.
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
Martello towers	Small defensive forts that were built across the British Empire during the 19th century.
Natural character	Character as a result of natural or semi-natural features such as woodland, grassland, hedgerows etc.
National Character Areas (NCAs)	National Character Areas are defined within the National Character Area Study, Natural England (2013). NCAs divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNR	National Nature Reserve
Nucleated settlement	A settlement that is clustered around a centre, in comparison to a linear or dispersed settlement.
Open-field system	An area of arable land with common rights after harvest or while fallow. The fields date from the medieval period and are usually without internal divisions (hedges, walls, or fences).
OS	Ordnance Survey
Parliamentary fields/enclosure	Fields formed by a legal process of enclosure (or inclosure), typically during the 18th and 19th centuries – by passing laws causing or forcing enclosure to produce fields for use by the owner (in place of common land for communal use).
Pastoral	Land used for keeping or grazing sheep or cattle.
Pollarding	A traditional woodland management practice in which the branches of a tree are cut back every few years to encourage new long, straight shoots for harvesting. Differs from coppicing because the cuts are made at sufficient distance from the ground to prevent them from being eaten by animals.
Potential development sites	Potential growth areas that have been submitted for assessment in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).
PRoW	Public Right of Way
Ramsar	Wetlands of international importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat.
RPG	Registered Park and Garden; included in Historic England's 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England'.

Term	Definition
Remediation	Process by which a contaminated or damaged site is repaired and brought back into more general use, or for a specific purpose (e.g. wildlife conservation).
Remnant	A part or quantity left after the greater part has been used, removed, or destroyed.
Riparian habitat	Riverbank habitat.
RNR	Roadside Nature Reserve
SAC	Special Area of Conservation (EC Directive 92/43/EEC Habitats Directive)
SANGS	Suitable Alternative Green Space
Scheduled Monument	Nationally important archaeological sites or historic buildings, given protection against unauthorised change.
Semi-natural vegetation	Any type of natural vegetation which has been influenced by human activities, either directly or indirectly.
Sense of Place	A person's perception of a location's indigenous characteristics, based on the mix of uses, appearance and context that makes a place memorable.
Sensitive	The response to change or influence.
Skyline	The outline of a range of hills, ridge or group of buildings seen against the sky.
SPA	Special Protection Area (EC Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds)
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
Time depth	The time period expressed in the landscape, or the extent to which the landscape reflects a certain time period (a landscape with greater time depth will comprise older elements than a landscape with lesser time depth).
Topography	Combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the land surface.
Valued landscape attributes	Positive features and characteristics that are important to landscape character and that, if lost, would result in adverse change to the landscape.
Vernacular	Buildings constructed in the local style, from local materials. Concerned with ordinary rather than monumental buildings.
Visual amenity	The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through and area.