

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal – Appendix A.15

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

Final report

Prepared by LUC

August 2026



Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal – Appendix A.15

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald

AONB: Wider LCA 6E

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Registered office:
250 Waterloo Road
London SE1 8RD

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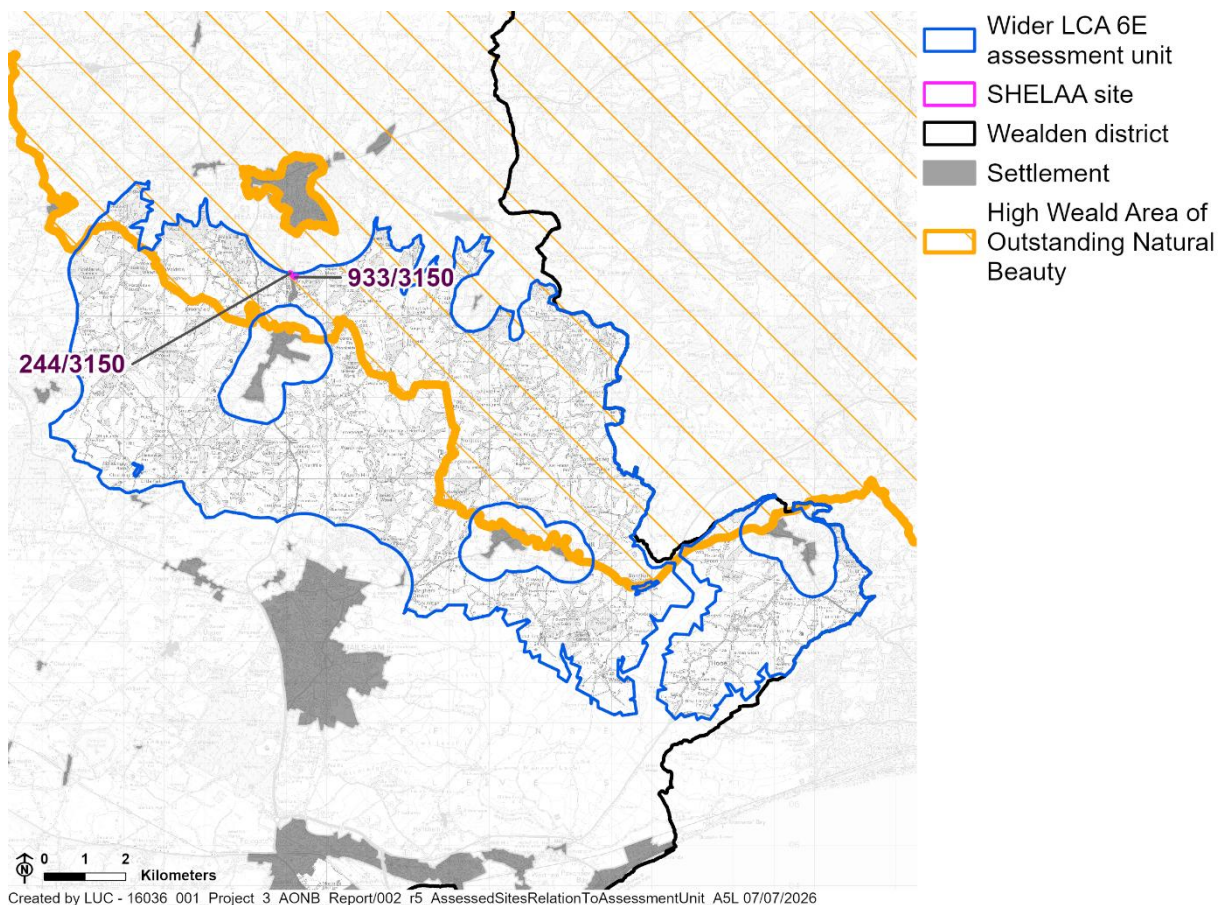
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Wider LCA 6E Assessment Unit

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

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

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



Settlement pattern

Settlement pattern

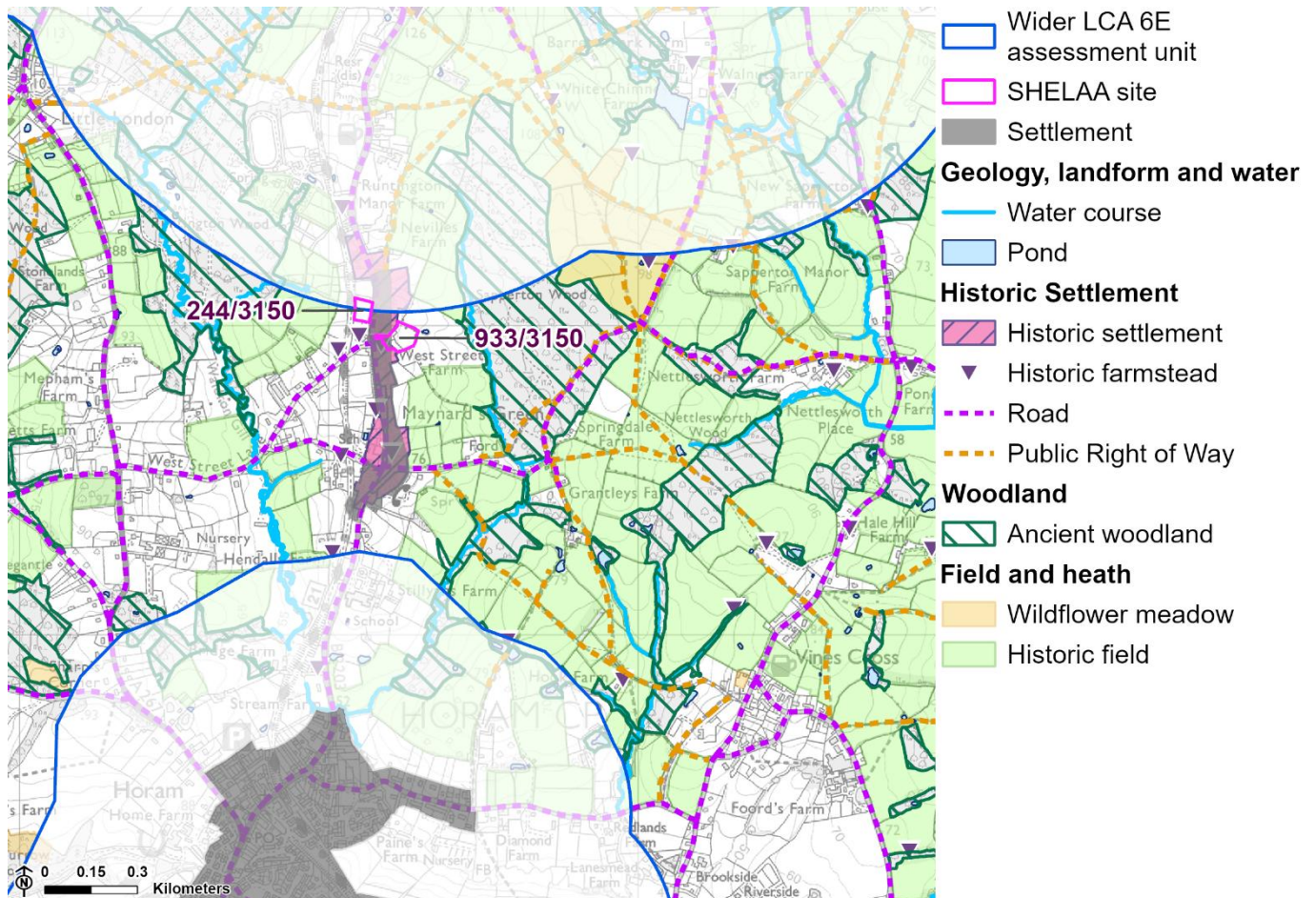
The wider LCA 6E has a historic settlement pattern of small and dispersed ridge-top villages, a defining component of character of the High Weald AONB, with farmsteads, manors and cottages strung along rural roads.

There has been some ribbon development and urban expansion close to Horam and Hailsham.

Mapped information for the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB

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

Figure 2: Core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_3_AONB_Report/003_r6_CoreCharacterComponentsNatBeautyAONB_A5L_Wider5Band6E 07/07/2026

Figure 3: Tranquillity

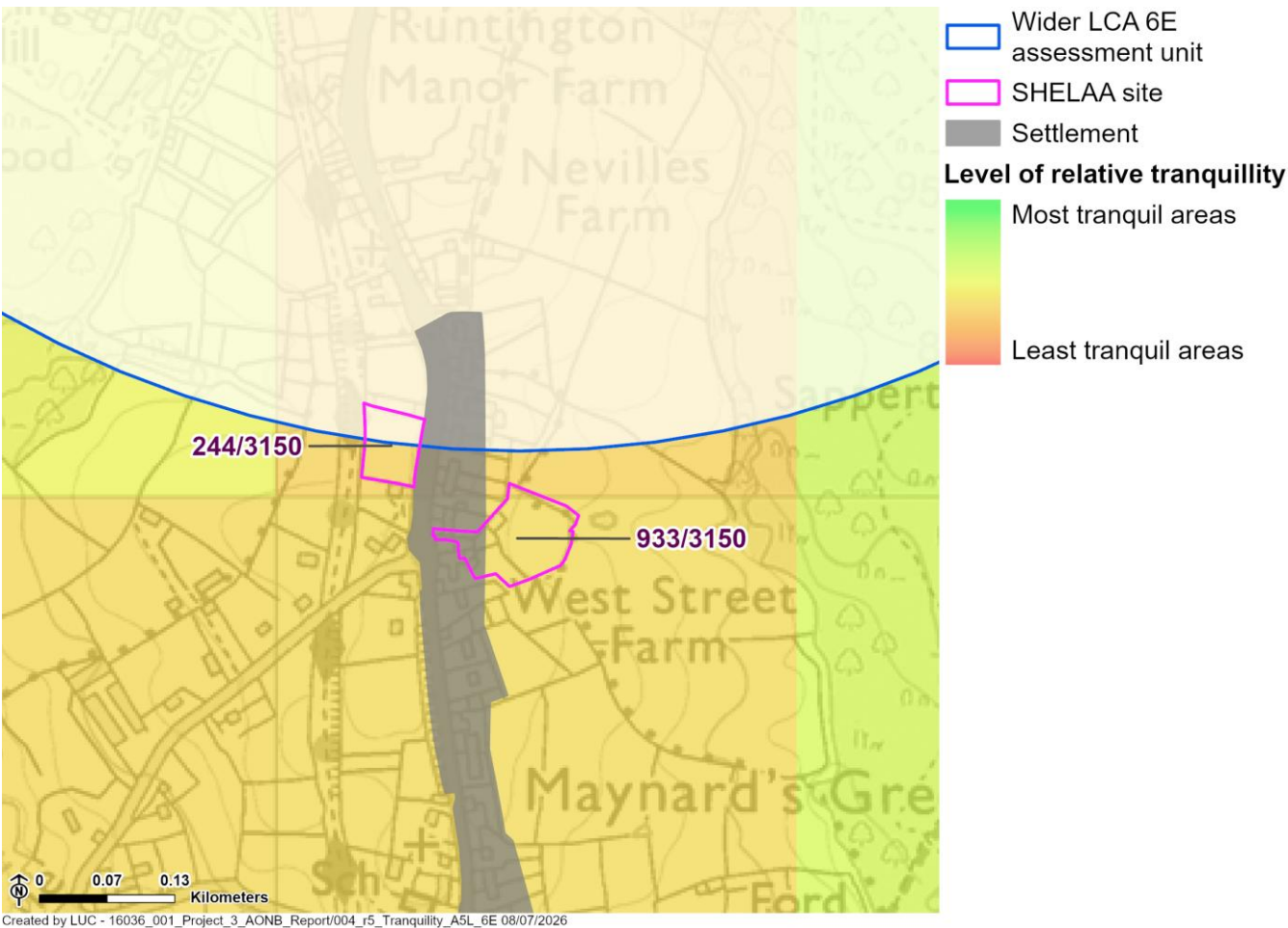
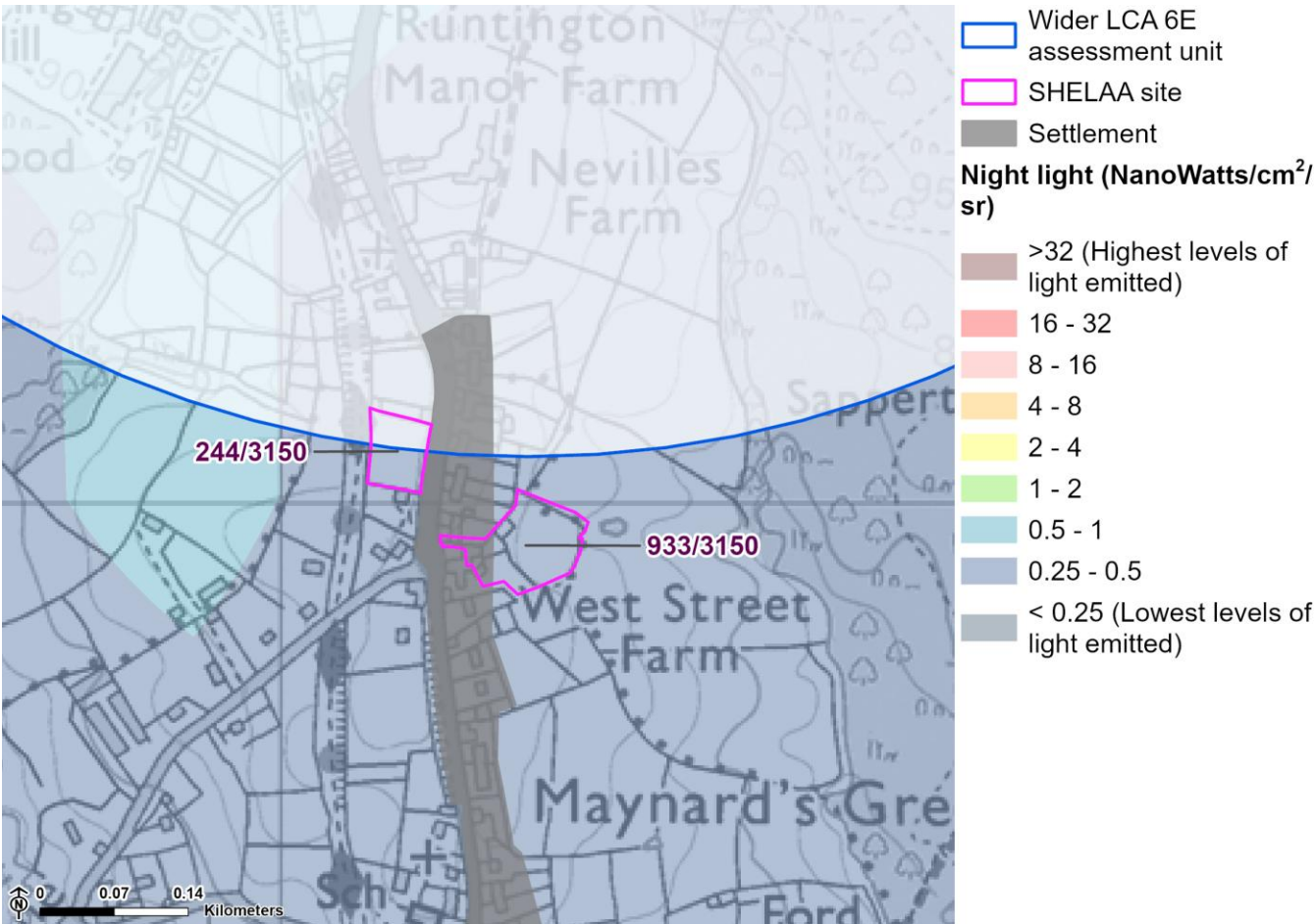


Figure 4: Dark skies



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_3_AONB_Report/005_r5_DarkSkies_A5L6E 08/07/2026

Landscape sensitivity context for the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit

The landscape sensitivity of the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit, described in the <i>Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development (2023)</i>			
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the assessment unit	Small scale residential 2-2.5 storey housing	Medium scale residential 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	Commercial/ industrial e.g. industrial units or hotels
	H	H	H
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the assessment unit	■ The complex ridge and valley landform in the north. ■ Mature deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin) interconnecting with shaws and hedgerows. ■ Areas of priority habitat lowland meadows and good quality semi-improved grassland. ■ The relics of the Wealden Iron Industry, the Registered Park and Garden at Herstmonceux Castle and numerous historic villages designated as Conservation Areas which contribute to the time-depth of the landscape. ■ The strongly dispersed settlement pattern. ■ The wooded and rural backdrop provided to the numerous scattered small villages and larger nearby settlements. ■ The strong network of public rights of way. ■ The rural character with areas of remoteness and tranquillity. ■ Location of the north of assessment unit within the High Weald AONB, and intervisibility with some areas of the High Weald AONB and South Downs National Park.		
Guidance	■ Retain areas of habitat interest, notably ancient woodland and priority habitat lowland meadows and semi-improved grassland. ■ Retain, and where possible restore, broadleaved woodland including linear riparian woodland along watercourses, in line with the aims of the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). ■ Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow an appropriate buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). ■ Replace any unavoidable losses of trees or woodland, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network in line with the aims of the BOAs which are located within the unit. Where there is unavoidable loss of, or damage to, hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities and setting of the Scheduled Monuments, Herstmonceux Castle Registered Park and Garden and numerous historic villages designated as Conservation Areas.		

- Consider key views, as noted in the Conservation Area appraisals, to the surrounding countryside and key views towards the skyline features within historic settlements.
- Protect the characteristic settlement pattern of historic villages, cottages and farmsteads, by limiting the amount and scale of development in rural areas.
- Consider views of development from popular public rights of way.
- Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced.
- Consider any expansion of Heathfield, Horam and Hailsham and urban fringe uses carefully, ensuring new development is in keeping with the local vernacular, and minimises influence on the dispersed settlement pattern.
- Carefully integrate any development into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using native species that are in character with the wider landscape.
- Retain key views to the Herstmonceux Observatory, from within and outside the assessment unit.
- Retain the characteristic contrast between areas of enclosed character and long open views to the Pevensy Levels, South Downs and landmark church towers.
- Consider views of development from the wider High Weald AONB, particularly in distant elevated views from ridgetop settlements within the AONB including Heathfield and Punnett's Town.
- Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'¹, 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'² and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan³.
- Ensure development does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, particularly the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB.

¹ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html>

² <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html>

³ <https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

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

Site Details	
Potential development	Residential development of 9 dwellings, proposed on the site as shown below. Site not Allocated or considered an Option in the draft Focused Local Plan 2026.
Site location	This site is located to the east of Maynard's Green, off the B2203.

Figure 5: Site location and constraints

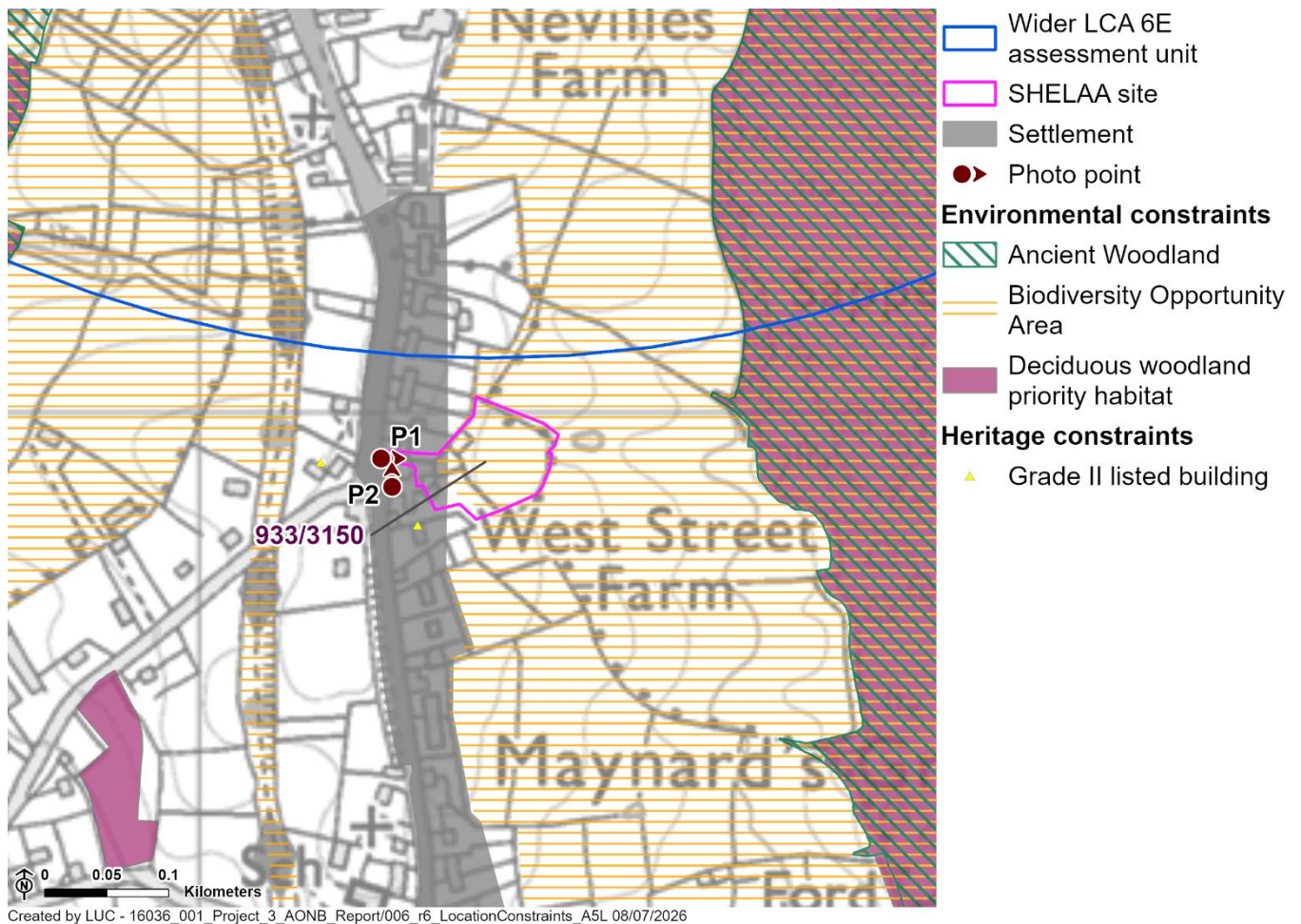
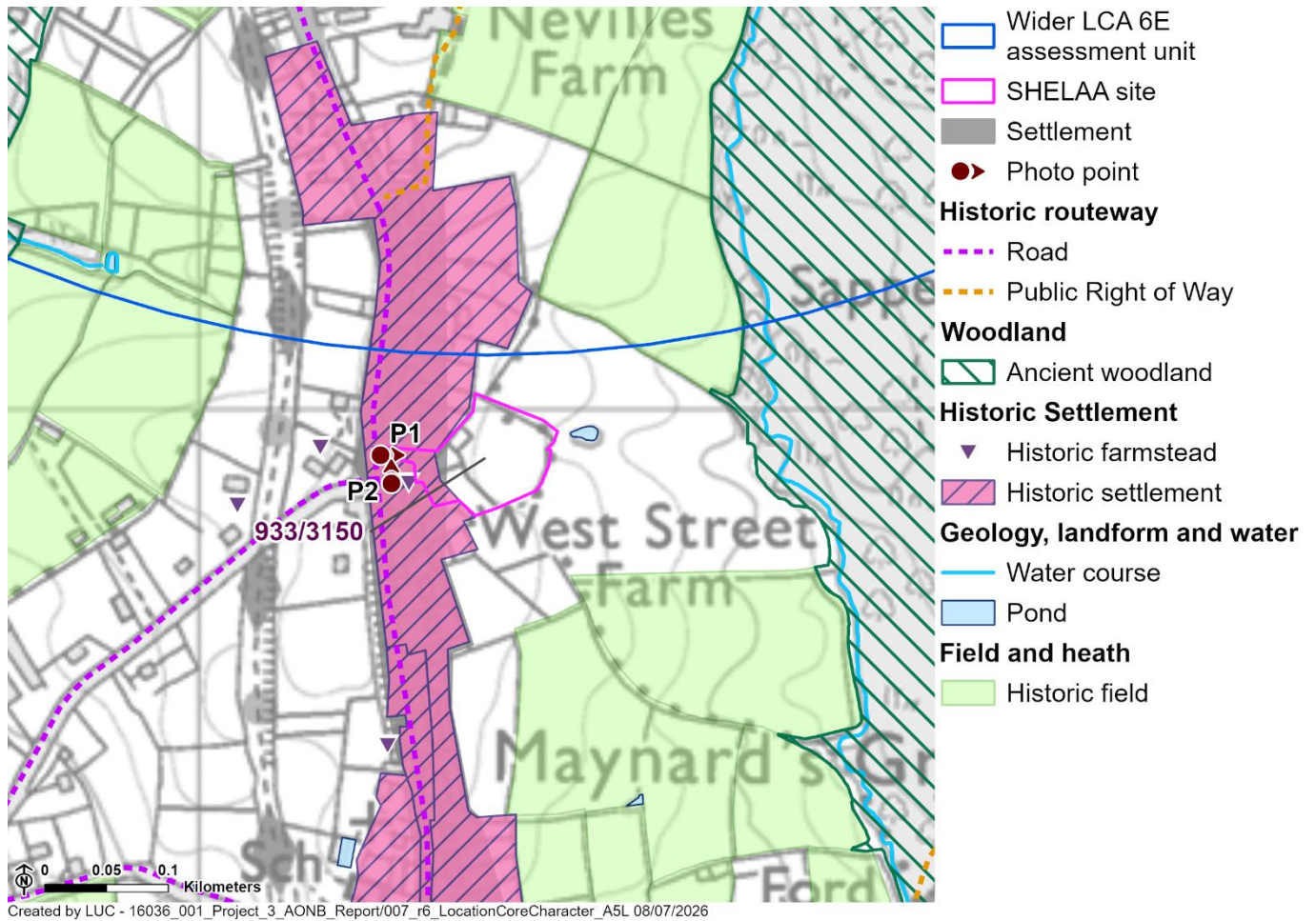


Figure 6: Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



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



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

Baseline Analysis

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

Expression of the 'core character components of natural beauty' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Natural systems (geology, soils, water and climate) – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with highly variable, relatively undisturbed soils and numerous headwaters (gill streams) functioning under an oceanic climate.	The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB, and its location towards the top of a ridge contributes to the <u>pattern of faults and folds</u>. A pond lies adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site, contributing to the <u>high density of ponds</u> across the AONB. Another pond appears to have been recently constructed within the centre of the site, although this has not been identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset. There are no distinctive geological features.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads, hamlets and late-medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.	The site lies to the east of Maynard's Green, which is recorded as a historic settlement and is <u>a hamlet occurring around the junction of routeways</u>. West Street Farm is recorded as a <u>historic farmstead</u> along the western boundary of the site, although its expression has been masked by the expansion of the settlement to the north and south.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the site. The B2203, to the west of the entrance to the site is recorded as a historic drove and contributes towards the <u>dense radiating network</u> of historic routeways, although its expression is masked by its use as a B-road with associated modern road markings.
Woodland – an abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws.	The eastern and southern boundaries of the site are bound by hedgerows and occasional hedgerow trees, which contribute towards the <u>highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods...and outgrown hedges</u> of the AONB.
Fieldsapes and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bound by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths and inned river valleys (reclaimed marshland).	The site consists of a small <u>irregular field</u> defined by hedgerows and mature vegetation, with original boundaries generally intact. The site is used for <u>grazing livestock</u>.
Dark night skies – intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible.	The site is located within an <u>intrinsically dark landscape with a sense of naturalness</u>. It is located adjacent to the edge of Maynard's Green which is a hamlet <u>with few street lamps</u>. The adjacent B2203 is an <u>unlit road</u>.
Aesthetic and perceptual qualities – arising from the interaction of people with the landscape, including the notion of a quintessential English pastoral landscape, intimacy of scale, a sense of history and timelessness; rurality and tranquillity; glimpsed long views; freedom to explore and make connections with the natural world, and a rich legacy of features and ideas left by writers, poets and gardeners inspired by the landscape.	The combination of grazing and surrounding hedgerows provides a <u>pastoral feel</u> and contributes to the <u>recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats</u>. The trees and hedgerows bounding the site and woodland to the east contribute to the <u>sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness owing to the heavily treed landscape</u>.
Land-based economy and rural living – with roots extending deep into history, and which has visibly and culturally shaped the landscape.	The current use of the site relates to the <u>predominantly pastoral mixed farming with an absence of industrial scale farming</u> key characteristic.

Baseline Summary

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

The Assessment Unit

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

The Site

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and is considered to be of **moderate-high** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The site sits within the linear ridgetop hamlet of Maynard's Green and provides a rural setting to the settlement. It comprises a field used for pasture (with a recently constructed pond), and the eastern part of the site is within the Pevensy, Rother, Cuckmere Watershed BOA. It therefore demonstrates some of the characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. However, the site is relatively enclosed, which slightly reduces its sensitivity.

Variations in Sensitivity

There is no variation in sensitivity across the site.

How strongly the core components of character are expressed on the site

The site expresses some of the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB. In summary:

- Its location towards the top of a ridge contributes towards the pattern of faults and folds;
- The pond adjacent to the eastern edge of the site and within the site contribute to the high density of ponds found within the AONB (although the latter has recently been constructed and has not been identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset);
- West Street Farm adjacent to the western edge of the site contributes to the high density of historic farmsteads along the western boundary of the site, although its expression has been masked by the expansion of the settlement to the north and south;
- The hedgerows and hedgerow trees along the boundaries of the site forms part of the highly interconnected woodland habitats and define the irregular field pattern;
- The grazing of livestock and surrounding hedgerows contribute to the pastoral feel of the landscape, linking to the history of the land-based economy;
- The site forms part of the rural context to the historic settlement of Maynard's Green (which is a hamlet occurring around the junction of routeways); and
- The site forms part of a landscape with dark skies.

Overall, it is considered that there is a **moderate expression** of the core components of character.

Potential effects of developing the site, including on the core character components of natural beauty

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

Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Core character component of natural beauty potentially affected	Relevant key characteristics of the core character component potentially affected	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features			
Removal of mature trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in providing a semi-enclosed character and interconnectivity of habitats.	Woodland	<i>Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands....and outgrown hedges...</i>	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially hedgerows and hedgerow trees along the boundaries of the site (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives W1 and PQ2). ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows around the site through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors (that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable (in accordance with the AONB's Objective W2). ■ Take up opportunities listed in the Pevensey, Rother, Cuckmere Watershed BOA, where possible (in accordance with the AONB's Objective W2).
	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	<i>A sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness owing to the heavily treed landscape.</i>	
Loss or deterioration of the grazed pastures and the small-scale field pattern with largely intact hedgerow field boundaries.	Fieldscape and heath	■ <i>A generally irregular field pattern with individual fields relatively small</i> ■ <i>Fields mostly used for grazing livestock.</i>	■ Loss of pasture would be unavoidable with development of the site, as development would remove land from agricultural use with limited opportunities to retain areas due to the small scale of the site. However, field boundaries should be retained and enhanced, where possible, to avoid complete loss of field pattern (in accordance with the AONB's Objective FH2).

	Land-based economy and rural living	■ <i>Predominantly pastoral mixed farming with an absence of industrial scale farming.</i>	
Modifications to the B2203 (recorded as a historic drove) to facilitate site access (e.g. road widening, creation of junction)	Routeways	<i>A dense radiating network with a variety of origins...</i>	■ Reduce the impact of access works required to the road, where possible, protecting the hedgerows along it where possible (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives R1 and R2).
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight, including the potential introduction of streetlights along B2203 if used for access.	Dark night skies	■ <i>Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of naturalness.</i> ■ <i>Many rural villages with few street lamps or no street lighting.</i> ■ <i>Numerous unlit roads...</i>	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary (in accordance with the AONB's Objective DS1). ■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance⁴ and use dark sky-friendly lighting (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives DS1 and DS2).
Settlement form edge and setting			
Extension of Maynard's Green down the slope, which is not in keeping with the ridgetop linear settlement form.	Settlement	<i>Hamlet occurring around the junction of routeways.</i>	■ Locate development in the west of the site, to limit the extent of development 'spilling' beyond the ridge crest, to relate to the existing linear ridgeline settlement pattern (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S2). ■ Maintain the existing settlement pattern and its character by following the scale and built form of the existing properties along the B2203 (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives S1 and S2). ■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S2). ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'⁵, 'Guidance on the selection and

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

⁵ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html>

			use of colour in development ⁶ and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan ⁷ (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S2).
Visual amenity			
Visibility of development seen by: ■ residents along the B2203 adjacent to the site.	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	■ <i>The homely, pastoral feel to the whole landscape arising from its human-scale pattern and productivity.</i> ■ <i>A recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats.</i> ■ <i>A sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness owing to the heavily treed landscape.</i>	■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local species to maintain the rural character of the wider area (in accordance with the AONB's Objective PQ2). ■ Reduce the density to encompass more space between/around buildings, interspersed with soft landscaping and tree planting, to soften visual impact and enhance integration of built form within the landscape (in accordance with the AONB's Objective PQ2).
Overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB			
Moderate impact	The baseline analysis identifies that the site (and immediate surrounds) expresses some of the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB, with a moderate level of expression. This is due to the presence of hedgerows and hedgerow trees; the site's location within and adjacent to the historic ridgetop settlement of Maynard's Green; the generally irregular field pattern of the area; grazed pastures; and being part of a landscape with dark night skies. Development of the site is judged to have a moderate impact on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, therefore somewhat affecting / impacting the ability of the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. If the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities set out above are applied, potential impacts as a result of the development on the site could potentially be reduced. However, there would still be inevitable adverse impacts on the grazed pastures which would be lost, and an alteration of the settlement pattern of mostly single row dwellings along the B2203. <u>Variation to overall impact</u> There is no variation to the overall impact considered above.		

⁶ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html>

⁷ <https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

Summary and recommendations

The site-specific recommendations for this site are as follows:

- Retain, protect and enhance the hedgerows and hedgerow trees along the boundaries of the site.
- Take up opportunities listed in the Pevensey, Rother, Cuckmere Watershed BOA, where possible.
- Locate development in the west of the site, to limit the extent of development 'spilling' beyond the ridge crest, to relate to the existing linear ridgeline settlement pattern.
- Maintain the existing settlement pattern and its character by following the scale and built form of the existing properties along the B2203.

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

Site Details	
Potential development	Residential development of 7 dwellings, proposed on the site as shown below. Site not Allocated or considered an Option in the draft Focused Local Plan 2026.
Site location	This site is located to the west of Maynard's Green, between the Cuckoo Trail to the west and the B2203 to the east.

Figure 7: Site location and constraints

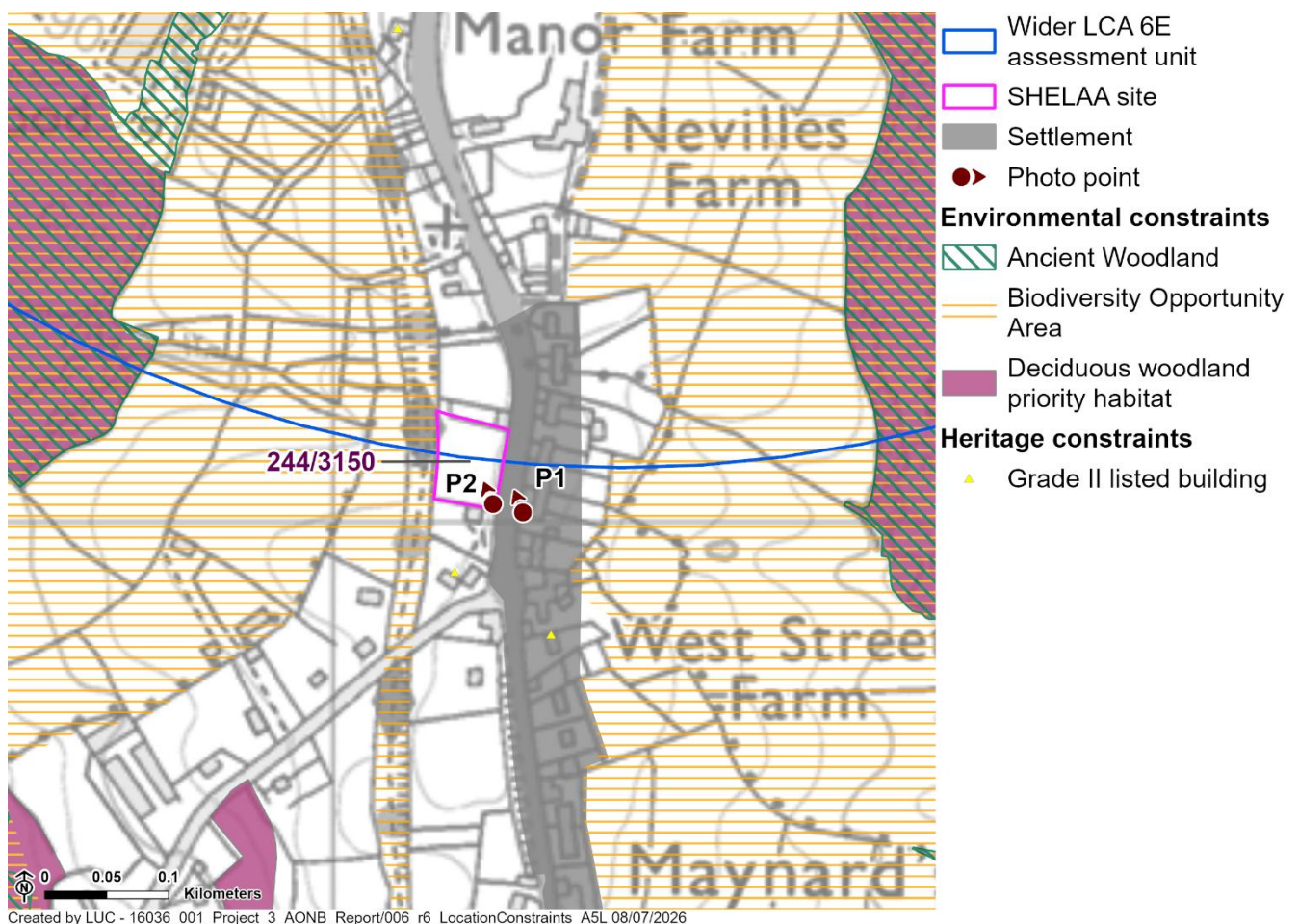
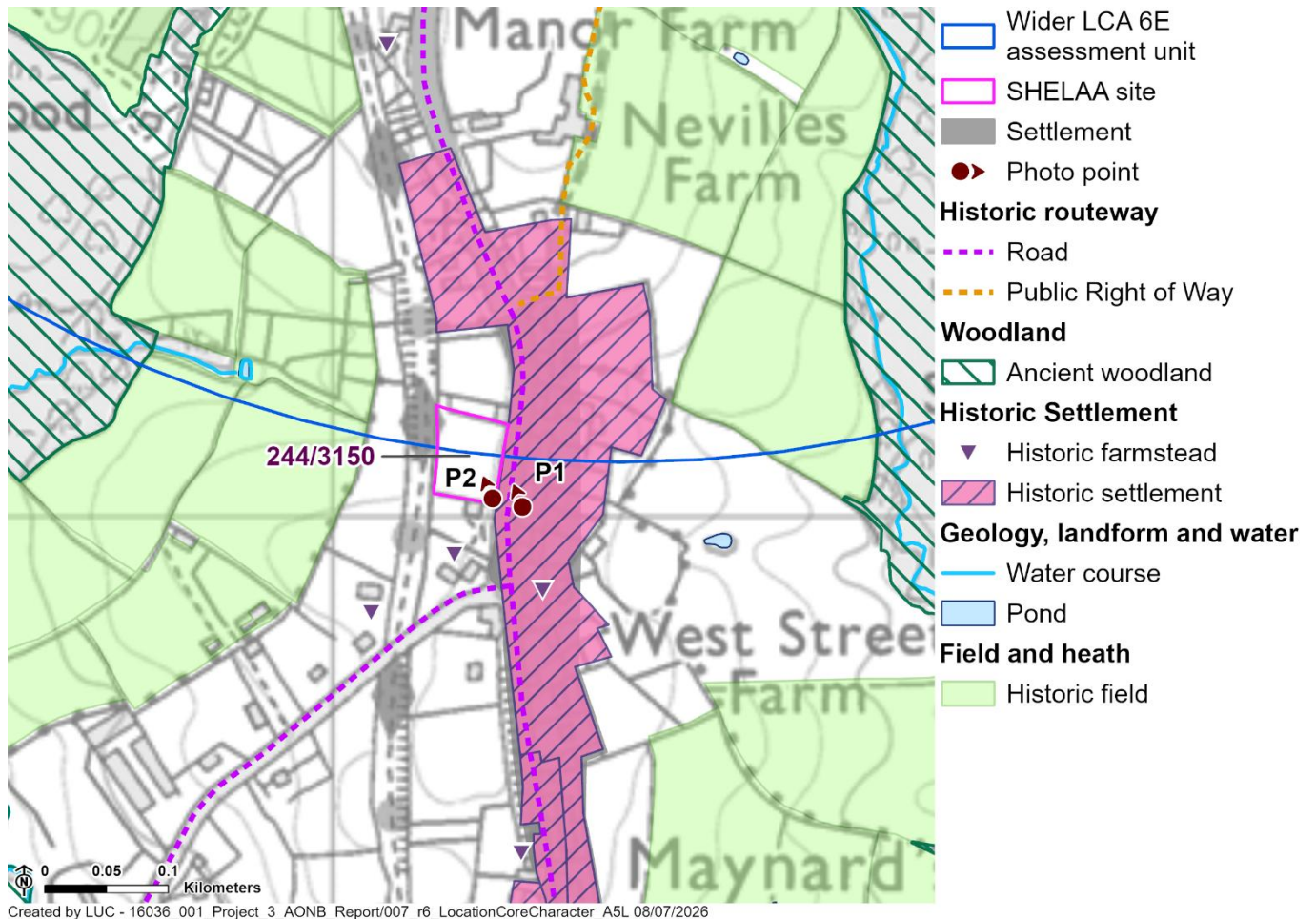


Figure 8: Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



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



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

Baseline Analysis

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

Expression of the 'core character components of natural beauty' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
Natural systems (geology, soils, water and climate) – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with highly variable, relatively undisturbed soils and numerous headwaters (gill streams) functioning under an oceanic climate.	The site forms part of the wider rolling ridges of the High Weald AONB, and its location towards the top of a ridge contributes to the <u>pattern of faults and folds</u>. No distinctive geological or water features fall within the site.
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads, hamlets and late-medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.	The site lies to the west of Maynard's Green, which is recorded as a historic settlement and is <u>a hamlet occurring around the junction of routeways</u>.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the site. The B2203 along the eastern boundary is recorded as a historic drove and contributes towards the <u>dense radiating network</u> of historic routeways, although its expression is masked by its use as a B-road with associated modern road markings.
Woodland – an abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws.	The northern and eastern site boundaries are bound by hedgerows (with occasional hedgerow trees) and wooded belts along the southern and western boundaries, which contribute towards the <u>highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods...and outgrown hedges</u> of the AONB.
Fieldsapes and heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bound by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths and inned river valleys (reclaimed marshland).	The site consists of a small regular field, defined by hedgerows and mature vegetation, with original boundaries generally intact.
Dark night skies – intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible.	The site is located within an <u>intrinsically dark landscape with a sense of naturalness</u>. It is located adjacent to the edge of Maynard's Green which is a hamlet <u>with few street lamps</u>. The adjacent B2203 is an <u>unlit road</u>.
Aesthetic and perceptual qualities – arising from the interaction of people with the landscape, including the notion of a quintessential English pastoral landscape, intimacy of scale, a sense of history and timelessness; rurality and tranquillity; glimpsed long views; freedom to explore and make connections with the natural world, and a rich legacy of features and ideas left by writers, poets and gardeners inspired by the landscape.	The trees and hedgerows bounding the site and woodland to the west contribute to the <u>sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness owing to the heavily treed landscape</u>. The Cuckoo Trail adjacent to the site's boundary contributes the <u>sense of freedom arising from access to a dense network of public rights of way...suitable for walking, cycling...</u>
Land-based economy and rural living – with roots extending deep into history, and which has visibly and culturally shaped the landscape.	There are no distinctive features that relate to the land-based economy and rural living.

Baseline Summary

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

The Assessment Unit

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

The Site

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

Variations in Sensitivity

There is no variation in sensitivity across the site.

How strongly the core components of character are expressed on the site

The site expresses some of the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB. In summary:

- Its location towards the top of a ridge contributes towards the pattern of faults and folds;
- The hedgerows, hedgerow trees and wooded belts along the boundaries of the site, as well as the new tree planting within the site, forms part of the highly interconnected woodland habitats;
- The site forms part of the rural context to the historic settlement of Maynard's Green (which is a hamlet occurring around the junction of routeways); and
- The site forms part of a landscape with dark skies.

Overall, it is considered that there is a **moderate expression** of the core components of character.

Potential effects of developing the site, including on the core character components of natural beauty

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

Potential effects as a result of development on the site	Core character component of natural beauty potentially affected	Relevant key characteristics of the core character component potentially affected	Potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities
Landscape character and features			
Removal of mature trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in providing a semi-enclosed character and interconnectivity of habitats.	Woodland	<i>Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands....and outgrown hedges...</i>	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site where possible, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows along the boundaries of the site (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives W1 and PQ2). ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows around the site through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable (in accordance with the AONB's Objective W2). ■ Take up opportunities relevant to the adjacent Cuckoo Trail Habitat Link BOA, where possible (in accordance with the AONB's Objective W2).
	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	<i>A sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness owing to the heavily treed landscape.</i>	
Modifications to the B2203 (recorded as a historic drove) to facilitate site access (e.g. road widening, creation of junction)	Routeways	<i>A dense radiating network with a variety of origins...</i>	■ Reduce the impact of access works required to the road, where possible, protecting the hedgerows along it (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives R1 and R2).
Influence of lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight, including the potential introduction	Dark night skies	■ <i>Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of naturalness.</i>	■ Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary (in accordance with the AONB's Objective DS1).

of streetlights along B2203 if used for access.		■ <i>Many rural villages with few street lamps or no street lighting.</i> ■ <i>Numerous unlit roads...</i>	■ Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance⁸ and use dark sky-friendly lighting (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives DS1 and DS2).
Settlement form edge and setting			
Extension of development beyond the historic linear settlement form.	Settlement	<i>Hamlet occurring around the junction of routeways.</i>	■ Locate development in the east of the site along the B2203, to retain the linear settlement pattern of Maynard's Green (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S1). ■ Provide front gardens facing the B2203 to retain the set-back character of existing properties on the east of the road (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S1). ■ Design new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S2). ■ Development to draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'⁹, 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'¹⁰ and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan¹¹ (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S2).
Visual amenity			
Visibility of development seen by: ■ pedestrians, motorists, cyclists and residents along the B2203 adjacent to the site; and	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	■ <i>A sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness owing to the heavily treed landscape.</i> ■ <i>A recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats.</i>	■ Set development back from the Cuckoo Trail on the western boundary, to retain the general impression of green space when glimpsed through vegetation from the public right of way (in accordance with the AONB's Objective PQ2). ■ Screen new development with additional planting using local native species where possible /suitable, especially along the western boundary to maintain

⁸ See the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance for further information: <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/>

⁹ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html>

¹¹ <https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

■ users of the Cuckoo Trail to the west of the site.		■ <i>Sense of freedom arising from access to a dense network of public rights of way...suitable for walking, cycling...</i>	the rural character of the Cuckoo Trail (in accordance with the AONB's Objective PQ2). ■ Reduce the density to encompass more space between/around buildings, interspersed with soft landscaping and tree planting, to soften visual impact and enhance integration of built form within the landscape(in accordance with the AONB's Objective PQ2). ■ Enhance public access and provide links to the Cuckoo Trail (in accordance with the AONB's Objective PQ3).
Overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB			
Moderate impact	The baseline analysis identifies that the site (and immediate surrounds) expresses some of the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB, with a moderate level of expression. This is due to the presence of mature trees, woodland and hedgerows; the site's location adjacent to the historic ridgetop settlement of Maynard's Green; and being part of a landscape with dark night skies. Development of the site is judged to have a moderate impact on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, therefore somewhat affecting / impacting the ability of the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to further the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. If the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities set out above are applied, potential impacts as a result of the development on the site could potentially be reduced further. <u>Variation to overall impact</u> There is no variation to the overall impact considered above.		

Summary and recommendations

The site-specific recommendations for this site are as follows:

- Retain, protect and enhance mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows along the boundaries of the site.
- Take up opportunities relevant to the adjacent Cuckoo Trail Habitat Link BOA, where possible.
- Locate development in the east of the site along the B2203, to retain the linear settlement pattern of Maynard's Green.
- Provide front gardens facing the B2203 to retain the set-back character of existing properties on the east of the road.
- Set development back from the Cuckoo Trail on the western boundary, to retain the general impression of green space when glimpsed through vegetation from the public right of way.
- Screen new development with additional planting using local native species where possible /suitable, especially along the western boundary to maintain the rural character of the Cuckoo Trail.
- Enhance public access and provide links to the Cuckoo Trail.

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

Two sites have been assessed within the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit. The preceding site assessments have judged the overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB to be:

Site	Overall impact on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB	Variations
Land at Oast Lodge, Maynard's Green Road, Maynard's Green (933/3150)	Moderate impact	No variation
Land adjacent to Funnell's Farm, Maynard's Green Road, Maynard's Green (244/3320)	Moderate impact	No variation

If both sites were brought forwards for development to the extents as assessed, it would result in a potential of up to 16 dwellings being built on the edges of Maynard's Green. Potential residential development would likely impact on a few components of character of the High Weald AONB. The sites are located on the top of a ridge (with contributions to the pattern of faults and folds), form part of the rural context to the historic settlement of Maynard's Green and are part of a landscape that experiences dark skies, with these components likely to be affected to some degree. Development of both sites would result in a small amount of settlement expansion, reducing the green spaces on the edge of the hamlet and slightly altering its historic pattern.

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

Overall, it is considered that the cumulative impact of developing the two potential sites on the core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB will be no greater than the sum of their individual impacts.