

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal – Appendix A.2

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

Final report

Prepared by LUC

August 2026



Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal – Appendix A.2

Potential Development Sites in the High Weald

AONB: LCA 5B - Crowborough North

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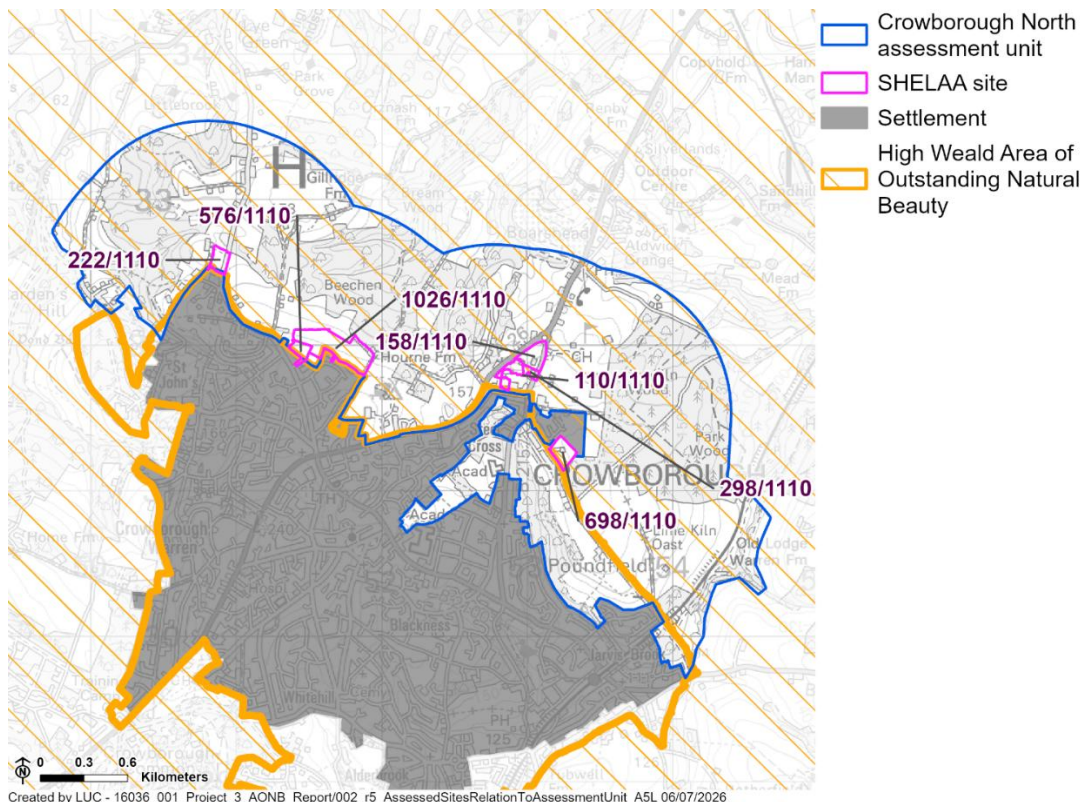
Appendix A.2

Crowborough North Assessment Unit

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

- Land at Hodes, Steel Cross Road (110/1110)
- Group comprising of Land at junction of Eridge Road and A26, Steel Cross (158/1110) and Spring Cottage, Eridge Road (298/1110)
- Land at Byeways, Palesgate Lane (698/1110)
- Land to the rear of Cooks Corner Farm and to the north of London Road (576/1110)
- Land at Beechenwood Farm (1026/1110)
- Adds Farm, Hoadleys Lane (222/1110)

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



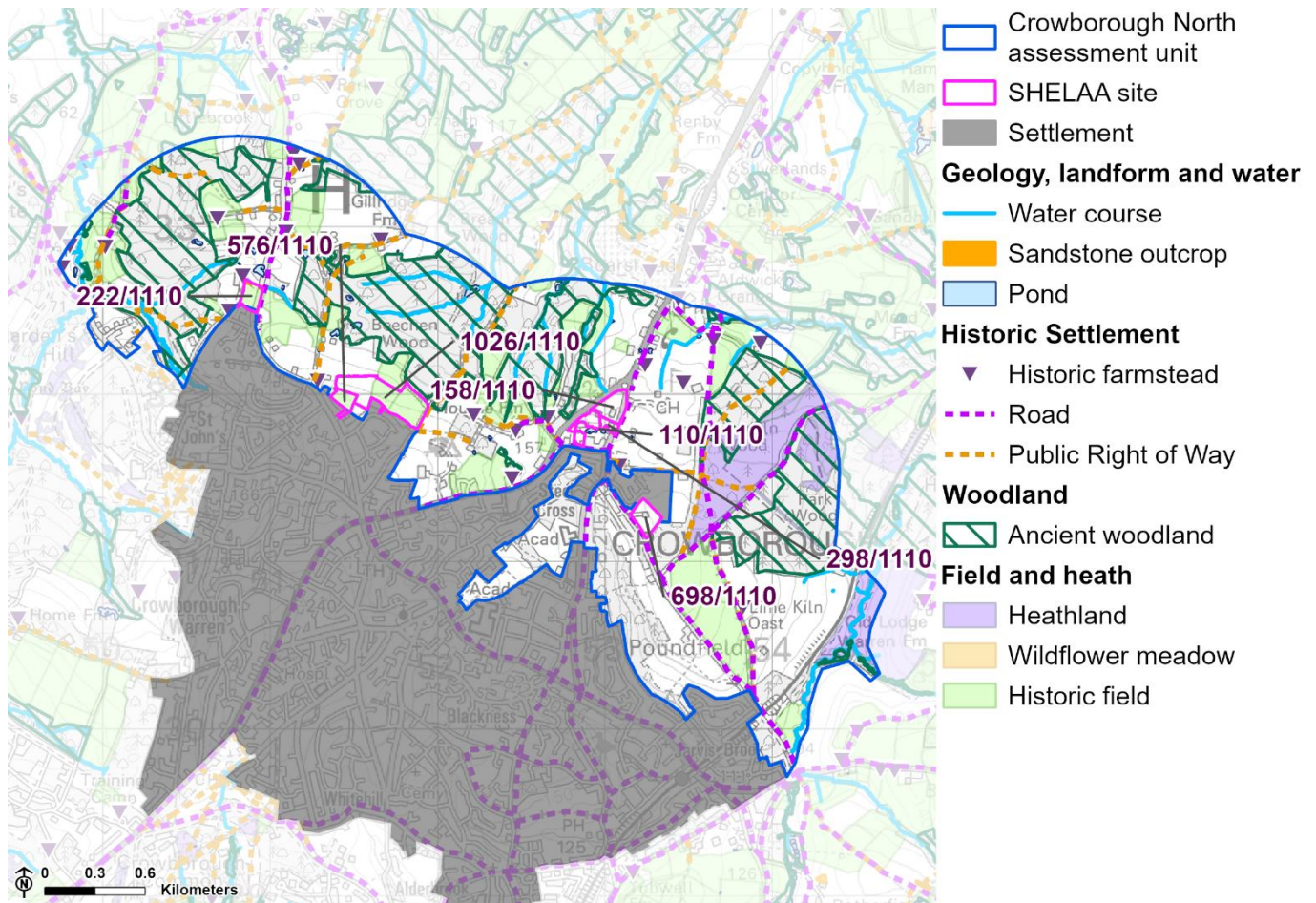
Settlement location, evolution and pattern

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

Mapped information for the 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 Crowborough North 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_r5_CoreCharacterComponentsNatBeautyAONB_A5L 06/07/2026

Figure 3: Tranquillity

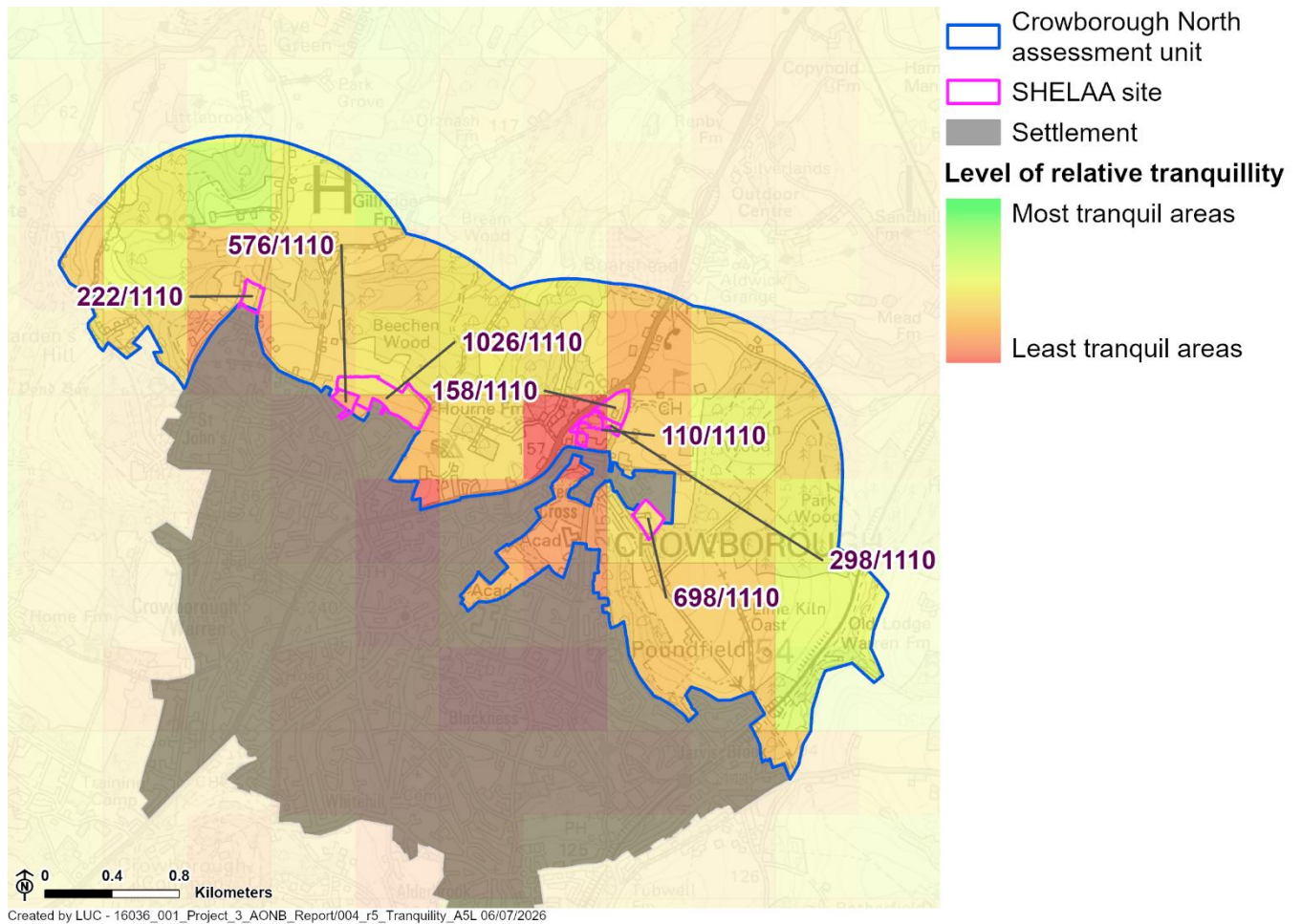
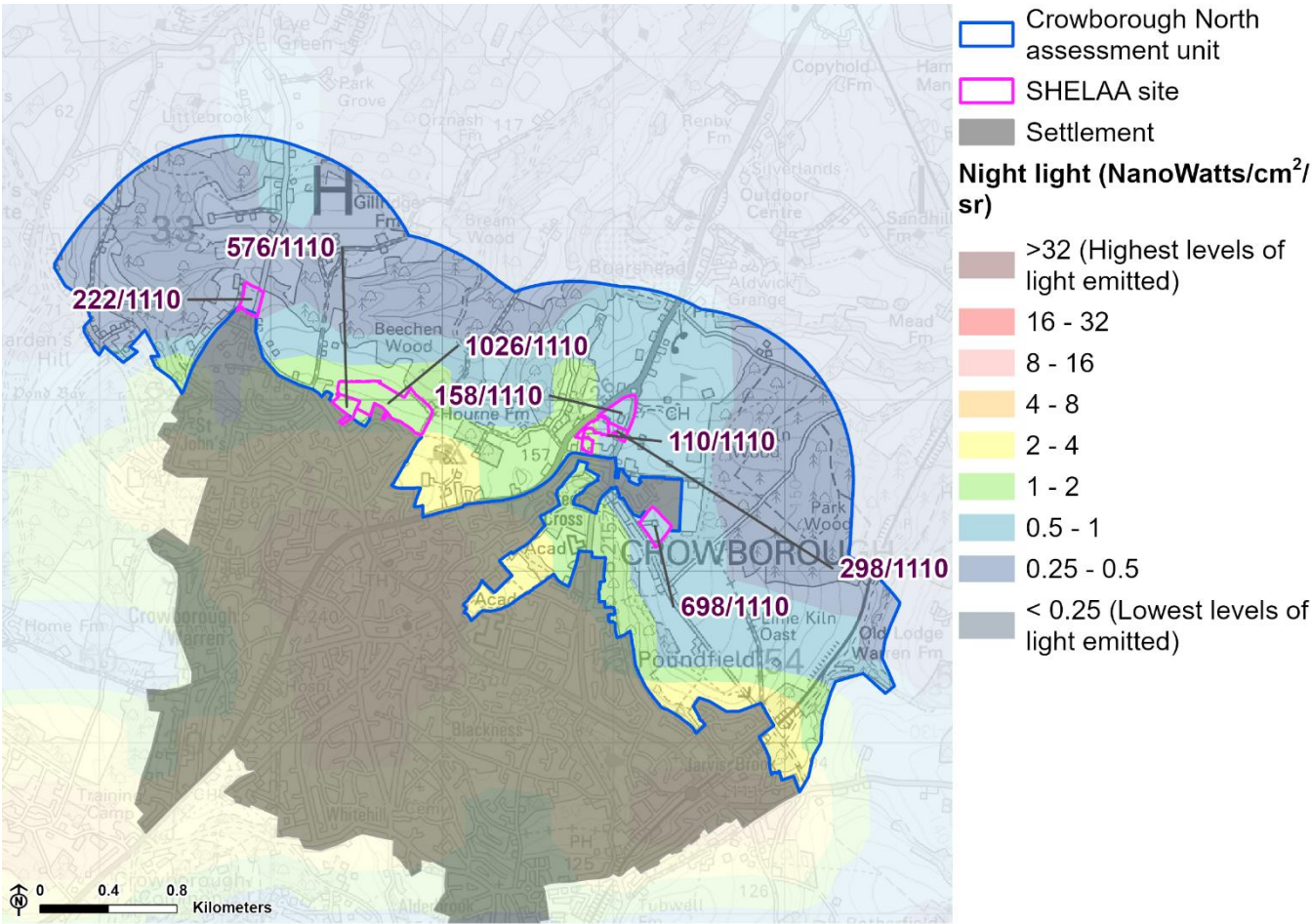


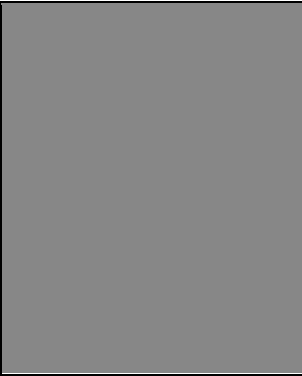
Figure 4: Dark skies



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_3_AONB_Report/005_r5_DarkSkies_A5L 06/07/2026

Landscape sensitivity context for the Crowborough North assessment unit

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

- 
- Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using native species that are in character with the wider landscape.
 - Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the High Weald AONB 'High Weald Housing Design Guide'¹, 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'² and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management 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 Hodes, Steel Cross Road (110/1110)

Site Details	
Potential development	Residential development of 10 dwellings, proposed on the site as shown below. Site not Allocated or considered an Option in the draft Focused Wealden Local Plan 2026.
Site location	This site is located to the north of Crowborough and situated between the A26 and Eridge Road.

Figure 5: Site location and constraints

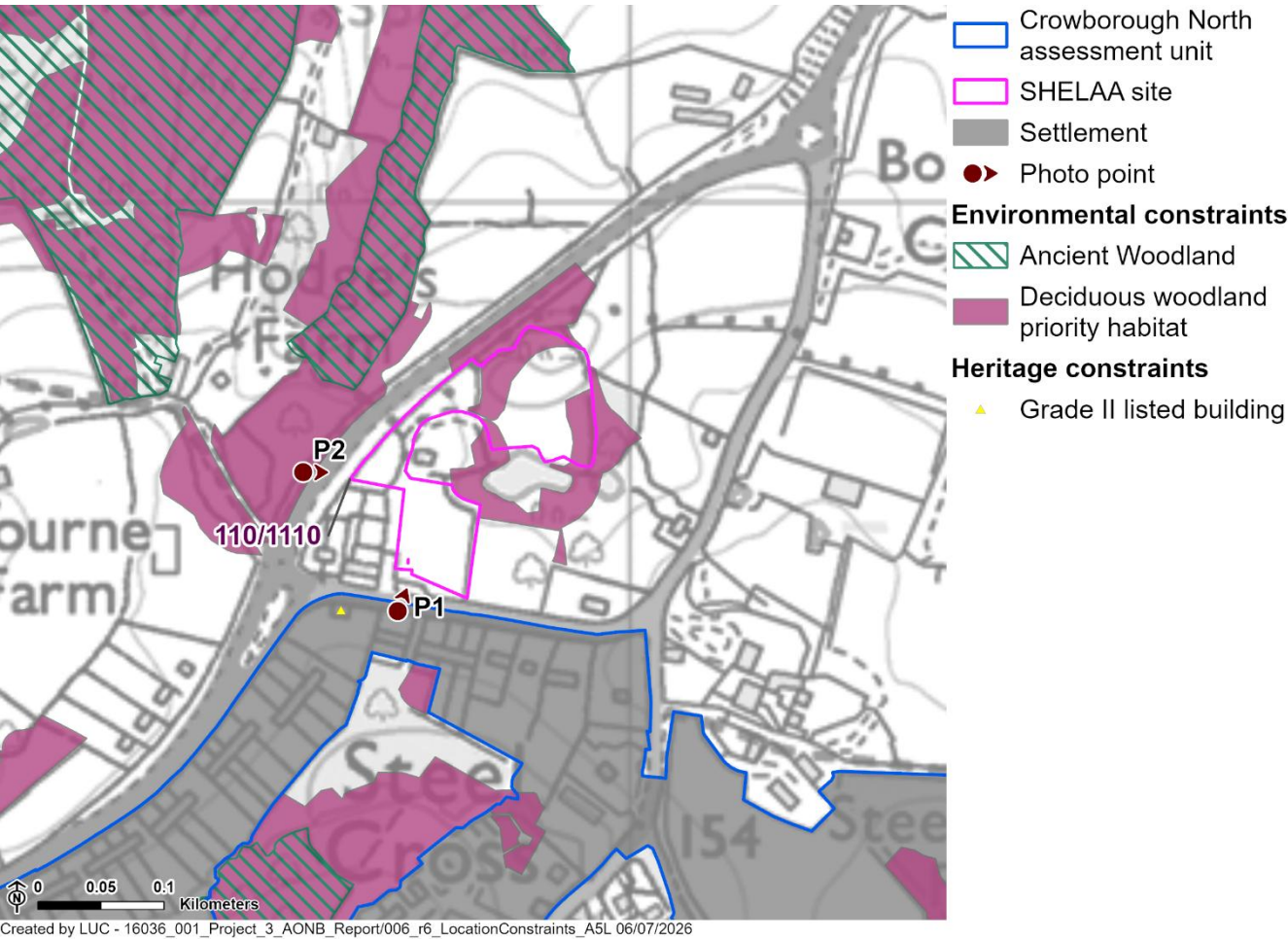
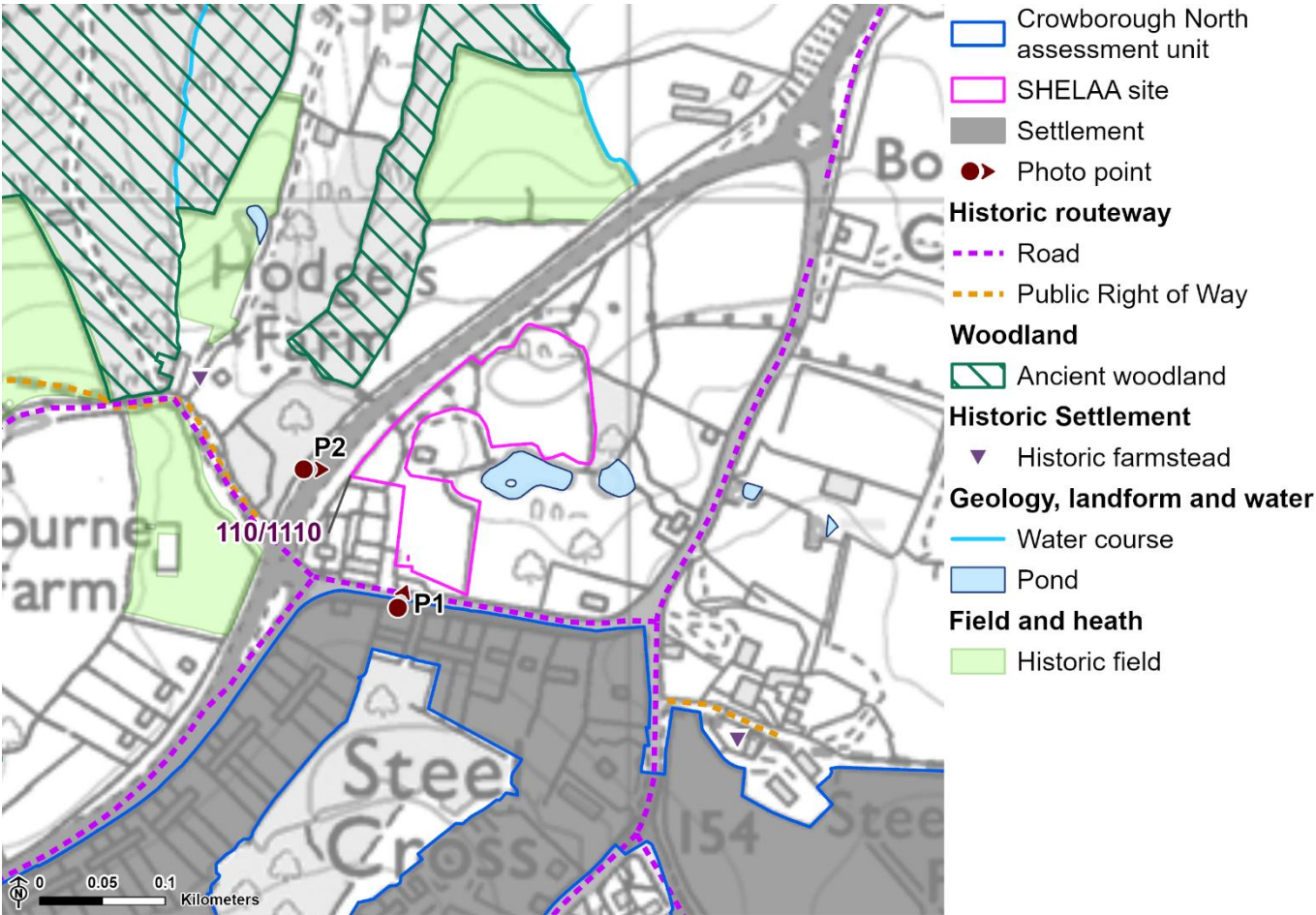


Figure 6: Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_3_AONB_Report/007_r6_LocationCoreCharacter_A5L 06/07/2026

Representative site photos



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



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

Baseline Analysis

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

Expression of the core character components 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 is located on the <u>principal ridge</u> of the High Weald (Forest Ridge), although it is relatively flat and its contribution towards the <u>pattern of faults and folds</u> is not strongly expressed. There are no distinctive geological or water features 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.	There are no surviving elements of historic settlement within the site.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the site. However, Eridge Road to the south is recorded as a historic lane and contributes towards the <u>dense radiating network</u> of historic routeways.
Woodland – an abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws.	Priority habitat deciduous woodland extends through the north of the site, forming part of a <u>highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods...and outgrown hedges</u> of the AONB, and contributes to the <u>wood-pasture and parkland</u> character.
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 comprises informal parkland associated with the nearby residential property, and therefore does not represent a field or heath landscape.
Dark night skies – intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible.	The site forms part of an <u>intrinsically dark landscapes</u> although the sense of naturalness is affected by the existing buildings within the southern part of the site. The site is located adjacent to a part of Crowborough <u>with few street lamps</u> , and the A26 to the west 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 vegetation within the site contributes to <u>a 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.	This character component of natural beauty is not expressed within the site.

Baseline Summary

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

The Assessment Unit

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

The 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 **low-moderate** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The site is relatively flat, visually enclosed and demonstrates few of the characteristics which increase sensitivity for the assessment unit, except for the areas of priority habitat woodland to the north of the site, which are key landscape features of the site, and typical of the wider assessment unit.

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 few core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB. In summary:

- It forms part of the principal Forest Ridge, although the site itself is relatively flat and so its contribution the pattern of faults and folds is not strongly expressed;
- Woodland within the site contributes to the highly interconnected woodland habitats with wood pasture and parkland character, as well as providing a sense of intimacy and enclosure; and
- The sites form part of a landscape with dark skies.

Overall, it is considered that there is a **weak 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 deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats.	Woodland	<i>Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands....and outgrown hedges...</i>	Retain, protect and enhance mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially the areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland that are of the greatest ecological value within the site (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives W1 and PQ2).
	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	<i>A sense of intimacy, enclosure... owing to the heavily treed landscape.</i>	
Loss or deterioration of features contributing towards the parkland character of the site.	Woodland	Wood-pasture and parkland...	Retain and protect, mature/veteran trees and tree clumps where possible, and enhance the wooded parkland character of the site (in accordance with the AONB's Objective W1).
Modifications to Eridge Road (recorded as a historic routeway) to facilitate site access (e.g. road widening, creation of junction)	Routeways	A dense radiating network with a variety of origins...	Reduce the impact of access works required to the road, retaining the character of the historic lane and 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 additional streetlights along Eridge Road if used for access.	Dark skies	■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of naturalness. ■ Many rural villages with few street lamps or no street lighting.	■ 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 guidance ⁴ and use dark sky-friendly lighting (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives DS1 and DS2).
Settlement form edge and setting			
Further extension of development into woodland which forms a soft settlement boundary feature and a wooded backdrop in outward views from the settlement edge	N/A	N/A	■ Maintain the existing settlement pattern and its character by following the scale and built form of the recent development within the south of the site and by interspersing new development within the existing woodland so that it appears as a seamless extension to the existing wooded settlement edge (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives S1 and S2). ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular (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 use of colour in development'⁶ and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan⁷ (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S2).
Visual amenity			
Visibility of development seen by: ■ residents at nearby residential properties on Eridge Road; ■ road users and pedestrians on Eridge Road to the south	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	■ A sense of intimacy, enclosure... owing to the heavily treed landscape.	■ Retain, protect and enhance the mature woodland and trees along the outer boundaries of the site that enclose it in views from Eridge Road and the A26 (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S1). (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives W1 and PQ2).

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

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

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

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

of the site (which is recorded as a historic lane); and road users and pedestrians on the A26 to the west of the site, including pedestrians accessing the public right of way to the west of the A26.			Reduce the density of buildings 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			
Low impact	The baseline analysis identifies that the site (and immediate surrounds) expresses few core character components of natural beauty, with a weak level of expression. Development of the site is judged to have a low impact on the landscape and visual qualities/features that define the AONB, and is therefore unlikely to affect / impact 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 priority habitat deciduous woodland, as well as woodland and trees along the outer boundaries that contain the site and limit views into it.
- Maintain the existing settlement pattern and its character by following the scale and built form of the recent development within the south of the site and by interspersing new development within the existing woodland so that it appears as a seamless extension to the existing wooded settlement edge.

Land at junction of Eridge Road and A26, Steel Cross (158/1110) and Spring Cottage, Eridge Road (298/1110)

Site Details	
Potential development	Site 158/1110 - Residential development of 12 dwellings, proposed on the site as shown below. Site not Allocated or considered an Option. Site 298/1110 - Residential development proposed on entirety of site mapped below, and is proposed as draft Allocation CR7 (identified for 10 dwellings) in the Focused Wealden Local Plan (2026). Total: 22 residential dwellings For the purpose of this landscape and visual appraisal the above SHELAA sites have been considered together.
Site location	These sites are located to the north-east of the settlement and situated to the east of the A26 and west of Eridge Road and Crowborough Rugby Football Club.

Figure 7: Site location and constraints

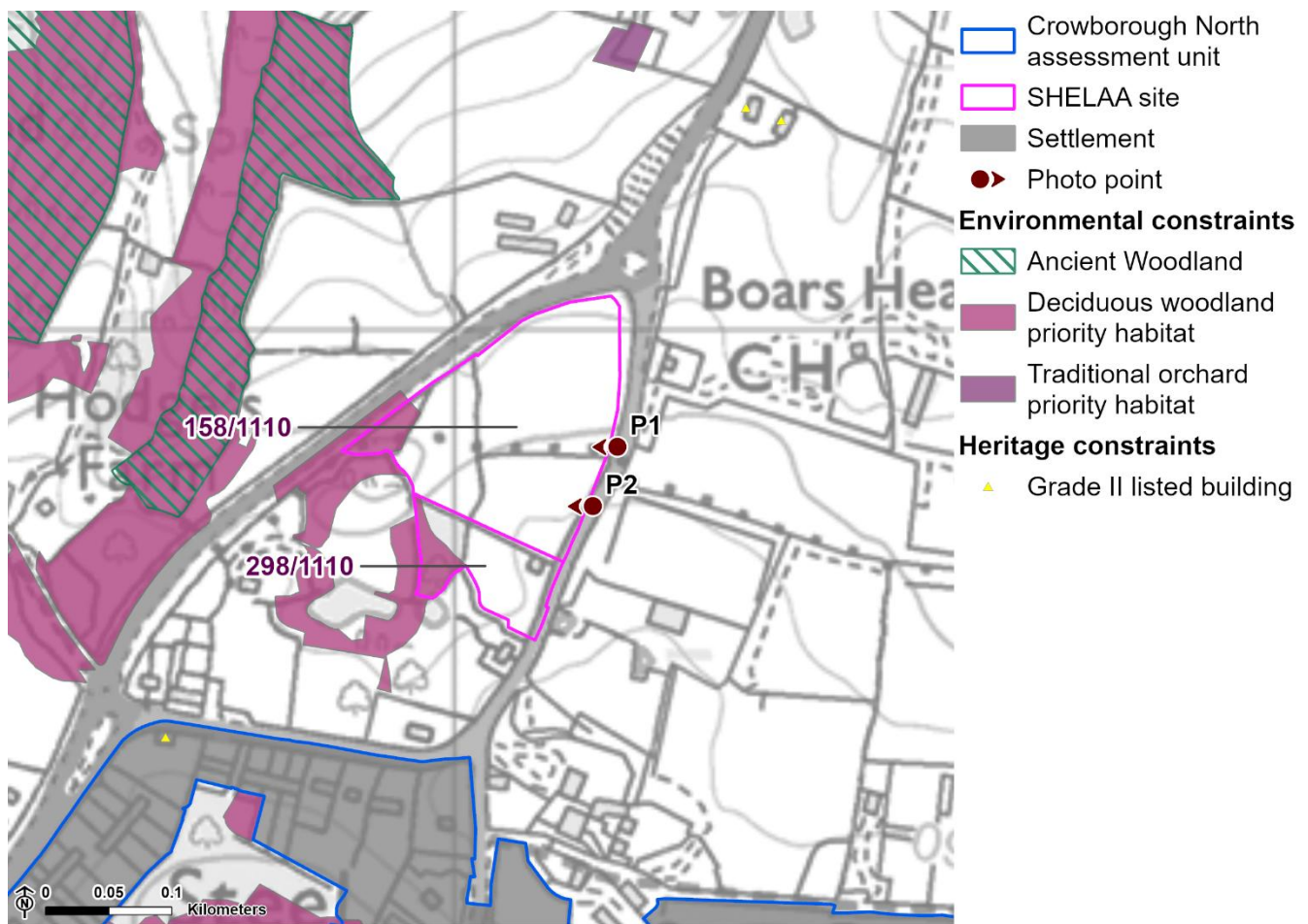
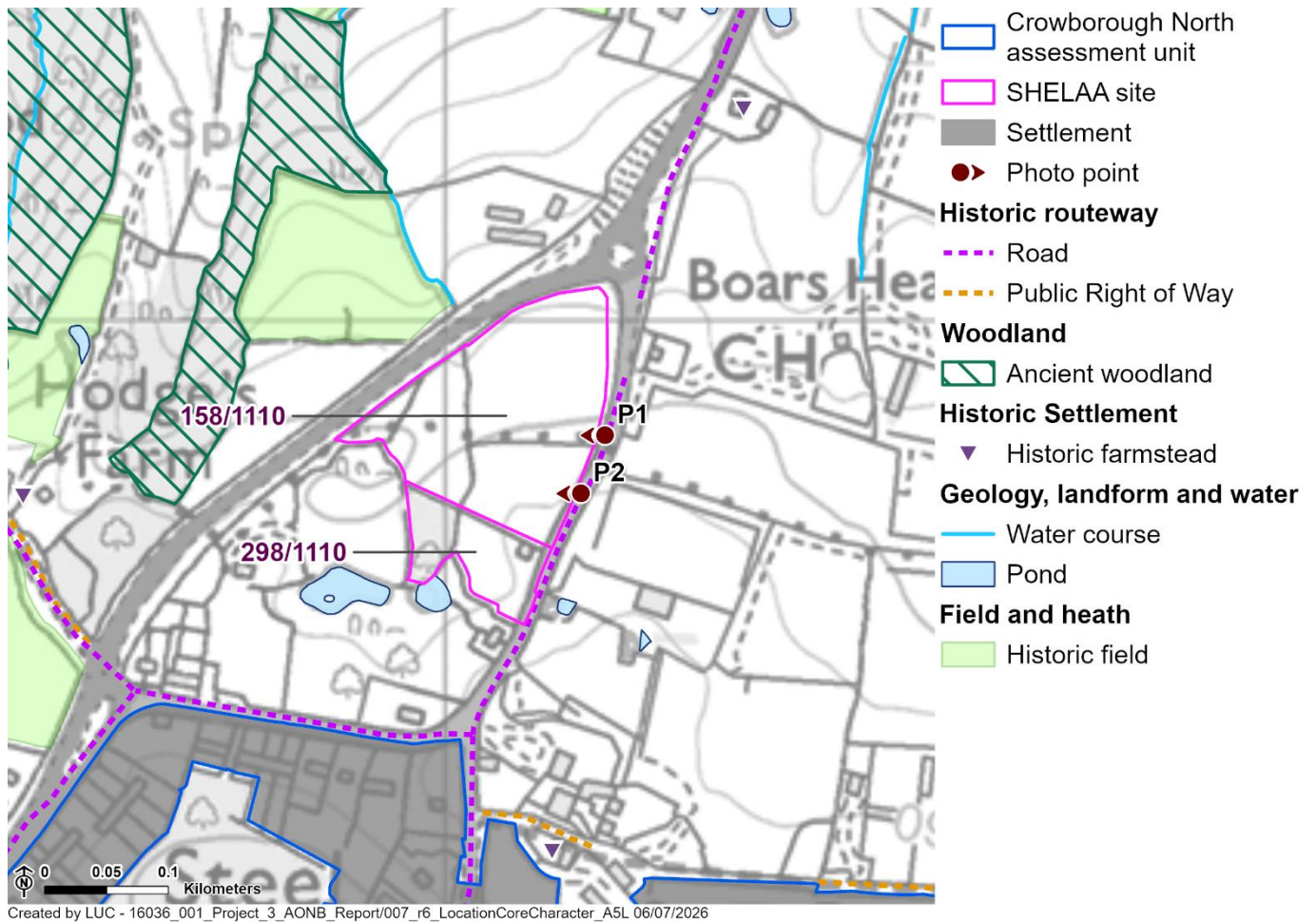


Figure 8: Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Photo 1: Glimpsed view from Eridge Road looking west across a pastoral field of site 158/1110



Photo 2: Recently constructed housing within the south-eastern corner of site 158/1110

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	Landform ■ The sites form part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald Central LCA. ■ They comprise a north-west facing gentle slope rising between 145m AOD in the north-west to 155m AOD in the south-east, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. This sloping topography forms part of the 'complex undulating ridged landform' that is typical of the wider assessment unit. Natural character ■ Wooded belts (shaws) containing mature trees form the boundaries to site 158/1110, and define some of the internal field boundaries, contributing to the strong network of mature hedgerows, shaws and hedgerow trees of the wider assessment unit. ■ A tall hedgerow with mature hedgerow trees forms the eastern boundary to site 298/1110 along Eridge Road. ■ Small areas of deciduous woodland priority habitat abut the sites to the south-west and partly extend into the western corner of site 158/1110 and south-western corner of site 298/1110. Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The fields within site 158/1110 form part of a cohesive assart field pattern (as classified in the Sussex HLC and typical of the wider assessment unit). There has been some alteration to the field pattern as a result of two recently constructed detached houses within the south-eastern corner of site 158/1110. ■ The Sussex HLC also indicates that site 298/1110 forms part of an area of regenerated woodland, although cleared where the buildings and lawn associated with Spring Cottage are located. Perceptual aspects ■ Levels of tranquillity are largely affected by the surrounding roads (which are recorded as relatively high in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, Figure 3). However, the site experiences relatively low levels light levels which increases the experience of dark skies (light levels are recorded in the lower bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, Figure 4).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site lies to the north of the north-eastern settlement edge and plays a role in the settlement separation between Steel Cross and Boars Head, although is well contained by mature vegetation. The adjacent settlement edge to the south of the site consists of woodland, beyond which are residential properties along Eridge Road (mostly comprising two-storey detached housing) that are interspersed with wooded vegetation. The woodland to the south provides a robust boundary feature between the site and the settlement edge, whilst Eridge Road and the thick, tall hedgerows along its edges also provide a strong boundary between the site and the adjacent Crowborough Rugby Football Club and Boars Head Golf Course. That being said, the settlement edge does extend into the sites with Spring Cottage located within site 298/1110 and two recently constructed detached houses within site 158/1110.
Baseline visual character	

Potential visual receptors	The surrounding woodland, trees, shaws and hedgerows enclose the site and limit its visibility from the surrounding landscape, including from the nearby residential properties along the settlement edge (with the exception of those located within the sites). There are also limited glimpsed views in between gaps in vegetation and at entrances to properties from Eridge Road.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Views to the site are limited due to the well-treed boundaries. Long views from the site are seasonally available towards the valley landform to the north.

Expression of the 'core character components of natural beauty' of the High Weald AONB on the sites	
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 sites are located along the <u>principal ridge (Forest Ridge)</u> of the High Weald, with the sloping landform contributing to the <u>pattern of faults and folds</u> of the AONB. There are no distinctive geological or water features within the sites, although the south-western corner of site 298/1110 abuts two <u>ponds</u> .
Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads, hamlets and late-medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.	There is no historic settlement (including historic farmsteads) within or immediately adjacent to the sites. Steel Cross Farm and Hodges Farm contribute to the <u>high density of historic farmsteads</u> found within the AONB, but are located over 180m and 250m to the south-east and south-west of the sites respectively.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the sites. Eridge Road along the eastern boundary of the site is recorded as a historic lane and contributes towards the <u>dense radiating network of historic routeways</u> , although its expression is slightly masked by some modern road markings.
Woodland – an abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws.	Mature woodland, trees, shaws and hedgerows that enclose the site and define internal field boundaries, contribute to the <u>highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of small woods...shaws...and outgrown hedges...</u> of the AONB. Some ancient woodlands lie within the wider landscape, and the mature vegetation around the site help to connect Limekiln Wood in the east to Luxford Shaw to the west.
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 fields within site 158/1110 are used for <u>grazing livestock</u> and were created through assarting, contributing towards the <u>dominant medieval fieldscape character</u> of the AONB, with <u>sinuous mixed woody boundaries and shaws, and thick hedges</u> . However, the historic field pattern has been altered with the arrival of the A26 bypass.
Dark night skies – intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible.	The sites form part of an <u>intrinsically dark landscapes</u> although the sense of naturalness is affected by the existing buildings within the sites. The sites are located adjacent to a part of Crowborough <u>with few street lamps</u> , although lighting associated with the adjacent roundabout to the north has a localised impact on dark skies.
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 open fields and surrounding woodland in the north of site 158/1110 provides a <u>pastoral feel</u> and contributes to the <u>recognisable and unifying mosaic of open fields and wooded habitats</u> . The sense of rurality and tranquillity is limited by the adjacent roads and the existing buildings within the sites. Long views of the sites are limited by vegetation enclosing the site which contributes to the <u>sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness...</u>
Land-based economy and rural living – with roots extending deep into history, and which has visibly	The current use of site 158/1110 relates to the <u>predominantly pastoral mixed farming with an absence of industrial scale farming</u> key characteristic.

and culturally shaped the landscape.

Baseline Summary

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

The Assessment Unit

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

The Sites

Overall, it is considered that the sites have a lower sensitivity than the assessment unit as a whole and are considered to be of **moderate** sensitivity to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). Site **158/1110** comprises an assart and is enclosed by mature trees, shaws and hedgerows, with strong internal field boundaries that emphasise the historic field pattern. Both sites contain small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland within corners and together contribute towards the settlement separation between Steel Cross and Boars Head. All of these factors demonstrate characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. However, the sites are visually enclosed and contained by mature vegetation, do not contain any heritage features, and are influenced by proximity to the A26 and the existing buildings within the sites (including recently constructed houses within site **158/1110**), therefore decreasing sensitivity (compared to the wider assessment unit).

Variations in Sensitivity

Site **158/1110** (particularly its northern half) is considered to be more sensitive than site **298/1110** as it demonstrates more of the characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit, with the latter mostly in existing residential use (comprising buildings and a large lawned garden). The southern half of site **158/1110** is also influenced by existing residential properties making it less sensitive than the northern half, although not to the extent that there would be a change to the moderate sensitivity rating considered above.

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

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

- The sloping landform forms part of the principal Forest Ridge;
- Site **158/1110** forms part of an assart field pattern, which contributes to the medieval character of the AONB;
- The mature shaws, trees and hedgerows along the boundaries of the sites and along internal field boundaries within site **158/1110**, contribute to the highly interconnected habitats and sense of enclosure;
- The grazing of livestock and mature hedgerows within site **158/1110** contribute to the pastoral feel of the landscape, with links to the history of the land-based economy; and
- The sites form 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 sites, including on the core character components of natural beauty

The section below sets out the potential effects of developing the sites, 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 these sites be considered suitable for development.

Potential effects as a result of development on the sites	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 deciduous woodland, trees, shaws and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats.	Woodland	- Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods....shaws...and outgrown hedges... - Many irregularly shaped small woodlands interlinked with shaws...forming an intimate part of the farmed landscape.	- Retain, protect and enhance mature vegetation within and surrounding the sites, especially the areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland that extend into the corners of the sites, the shaws and hedgerows along the outer boundaries that contain the sites, and the mature trees and hedgerows that define internal field boundaries within site 158/1110 (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives W1 and PQ2). - Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable (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 of the grazed pasturs and assart within site 158/1110 which contributes to the medieval character and time depth.	Fieldsapes and heath	<i>Fields, mostly permanent pasture, used for grazing livestock...</i> <i>Medieval fieldscape character dominant, with a high proportion of field systems created by assarting (woodland clearance) with sinuous mixed woody boundaries and shaws, and thick hedges common.</i>	Loss of pasture and assart would be unavoidable with development on site 158/1110, 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 along the edges and between the sites should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern, strengthening the enclosure pattern and maintaining landscape structure (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 Eridge Road (recorded as a historic routeway) 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 Eridge Road, retaining the character of the historic lane and 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.	Dark skies	■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of naturalness. ■ Many rural villages with few street lamps or no street lighting. ■ Numerous unlit roads...	■ 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 guidance⁸ and use dark sky-friendly lighting (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives DS1 and DS2).
Settlement form edge and setting			
Further extension of development beyond the robust boundary provided by the mature woodland between the sites and the residential edge of the settlement.	N/A	N/A	■ Maintain the existing settlement pattern and its character by following the scale and built form of the recent development within the south-eastern corner of site 158/1110 and by interspersing new development with new tree planting that over time will form an extension to the existing wooded settlement edge (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives S1 and S2). ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular (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

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>

			use of colour in development' ¹⁰ and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan ¹¹ (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S2).
■ Reduction in the separation between the settlement of Steel Cross and the Boars Head.	■ N/A	■ N/A	■ Retain and enhance the mature vegetation that encloses the sites and separates them from the settlement of Boars Head to the north to limit visual coalescence between Steel Cross and Boars Head (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S1).
Visual amenity			
Visibility of development seen by: ■ residents along the edge of Steel Cross, particularly those within the properties within the sites; and ■ motorists/cyclists along Eridge Road (which is recorded as a historic routeway).	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	■ The homely, pastoral feel to the whole landscape arising from its human-scale pattern and productivity. ■ A recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats. ■ A sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness owing to the heavily treed landscape.	■ Retain, protect and enhance the mature trees, shaws and hedgerows along the outer boundaries of the sites (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives W1 and PQ2). ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area (in accordance with the AONB's Objective PQ2). ■ Reduce the density of buildings 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 sites (and immediate surrounds) express some of the core character components of natural beauty, with a moderate level of expression. This is due to the presence of mature woodland, shaws, trees and hedgerows; site 158/1110 forming part of an assart field pattern (contributing to the medieval character) with 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.		

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

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

	If the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities set out above are applied, some of the potential impacts as a result of the development on the sites could potentially be reduced. However, there would still likely be inevitable adverse impacts on the grazed pastures and assart which would be lost. <u>Variation to overall impact</u> Development on the northern half of site 158/1110 is considered to have a greater impact on the core character components than the southern half and on site 298/1110 given the existing residential development within these parts; although not to the extent that there would be a change to the moderate impact considered above.
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Summary and recommendations

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

The site-specific recommendations for these sites are as follows:

- Retain, protect and enhance the areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland that extend into the corners of the sites, the shaws and hedgerows along the outer boundaries that contain the sites, and the mature trees and hedgerows that define internal field boundaries within site **158/1110**.
- Maintain the existing settlement pattern and its character by following the scale and built form of the recent development within the south-eastern corner of site **158/1110** and by interspersing new development with new tree planting that over time will form an extension to the existing wooded settlement edge.

Figure 9: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_3_AONB_Report/008_r2_AerialOppsCons_A5L 15/05/2026

Land at Byeways, Palesgate Lane (698/1110)

Site Details	
Potential development	Residential development proposed on entirety of site mapped below, and entirety of the site is proposed as draft Allocation CR4 (identified for 30 dwellings) in the Focused Wealden Local Plan (2026).
Site location	The site is located to the north-east of Crowborough and situated to the east of the B2157, between Palesgate Lane and Limekiln Wood.

Figure 10: Site location and constraints

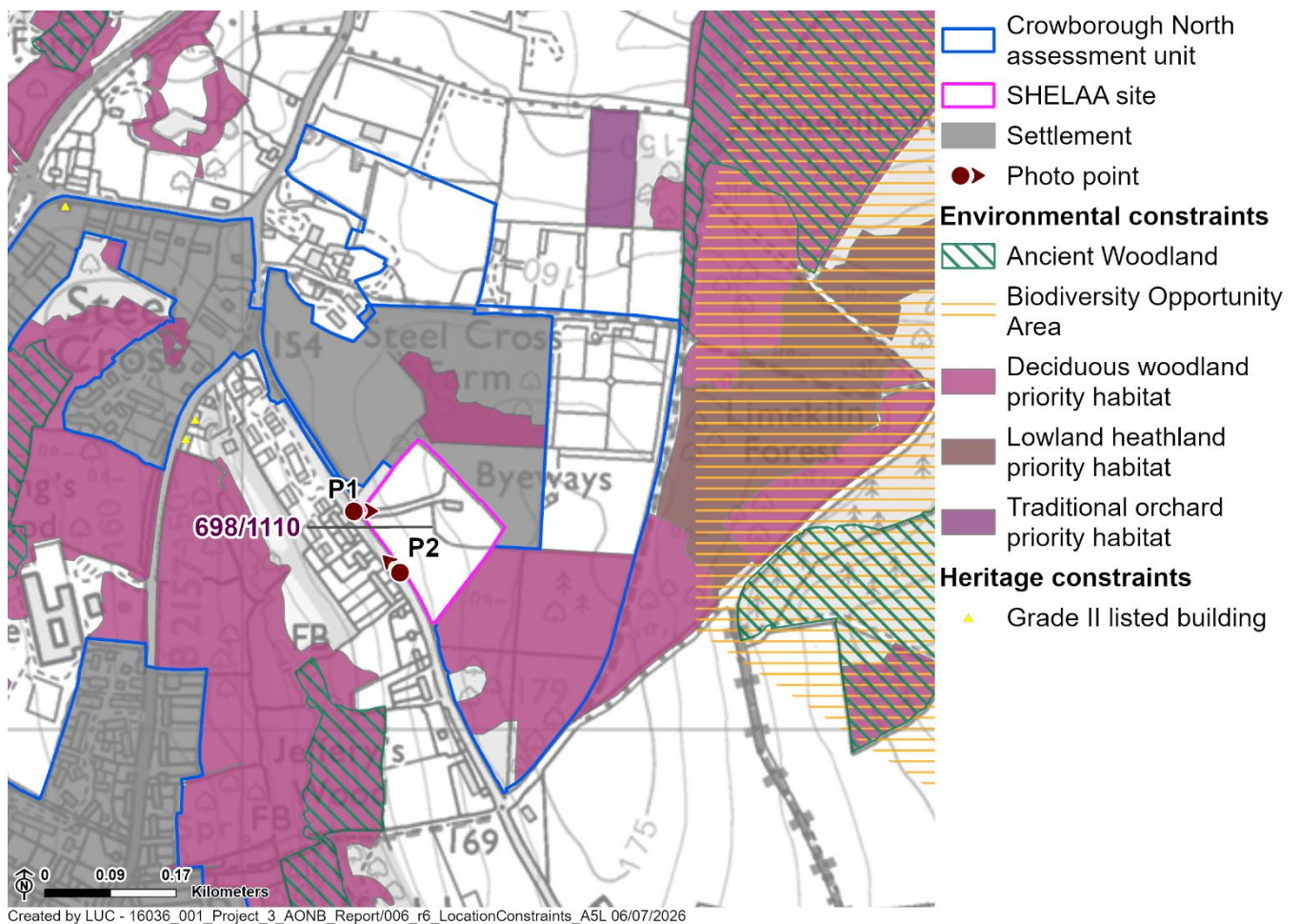
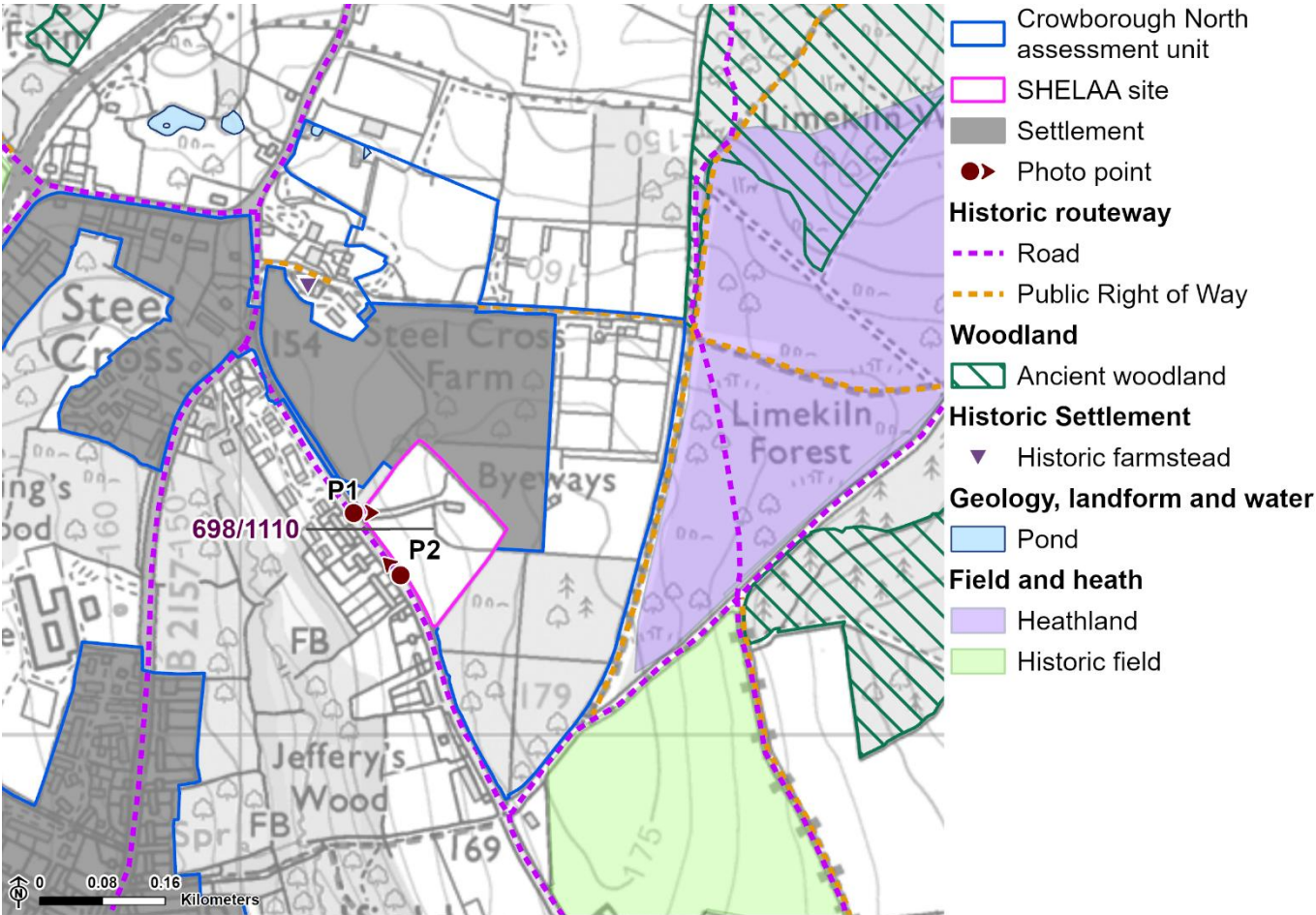


Figure 11: Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_3_AONB_Report/007_r6_LocationCoreCharacter_A5L 06/07/2026

Representative site photos



Photo 1: View looking into the site from a field gate along Palesgate Lane



Photo 2: Mature woodland and hedgerow along Palesgate Lane limits views into the site

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	Landform - The site forms part of an elevated and gently undulating ridgeline of the High Weald - Central LCA, typical of the wider assessment unit, with topography rising between 160m AOD to 175m AOD. Natural character - The existing residential dwelling within the site and new residential development to the north-west, influences the natural character of the site, however surrounding woodland limits visibility of the dwelling and the influence it has on the rural character to the east. - Interconnected areas of mature woodland and field boundaries are located across the site with some scattered in field trees in the north. The wooded character is typical of the wider assessment unit. Landscape pattern and time depth - The site comprises a designed landscape (as classified in the Sussex HLC) with an informal parkland character, associated with a residential property, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit. Perceptual aspects - The site is influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge of Crowborough. The adjacent recent housing development results in the site being surrounded to the north, east and west by residential development which affects levels of tranquillity (which are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, Figure 3, which is typical of the wider assessment unit). - Dark night skies are experienced from the site (light levels are recorded in the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, Figure 4), which is typical of the assessment unit but for areas away from the settlement edge.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site does not play a role in settlement separation. The site forms part of the wooded pastoral context to the north-eastern settlement edge of Crowborough and 20th and 21st century ribbon development along Palesgate Lane. The existing residential dwelling within the site is located beyond the settlement edge, but is in keeping with the dispersed settlement pattern of the wider assessment unit. Woodland surrounding the site limits visibility of this existing development. Land to the north-west has recently been developed for residential housing (comprising mostly two-storey detached properties), and further residential development is under construction to the north-east of the site at the time of writing. The adjacent settlement to the west of the site consists of bungalows and two storey detached and semi-detached modern housing, typically fringed by woodland.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The surrounding woodland, trees and hedgerows enclose the site and limit visibility from the surrounding landscape including from the nearby residential properties along the settlement edge.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the site are limited by the enclosed nature of the site.

Expression of the '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 is located on the <u>principal ridge</u> of the High Weald (Forest Ridge), with the gently sloping landform contributing towards the <u>pattern of faults and folds</u> . There are no distinctive geological or water features 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 south-east of Steel Cross, a small <u>hamlet occurring around the junction of routeways</u> which now forms part of Crowborough.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	Palesgate Lane runs along the south-western boundary of the site and is recorded as a historic lane and contributes towards the <u>dense radiating network</u> of historic routeways.
Woodland – an abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws.	Deciduous woodland, in field trees and mature field boundaries within the site form part of the <u>highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods...and outgrown hedges, and isolated trees</u> within the AONB. Tree clumps contribute towards the <u>wood-pasture and parkland</u> character.
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 fields have an <u>irregular field pattern</u> with <u>sinuous mixed wood boundaries...and thick hedges</u> .
Dark night skies – intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible.	The site forms part of an <u>intrinsically dark landscape</u> although the sense of naturalness is affected by the existing buildings within and surrounding the site.
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 woodland and field within the site contribute to the <u>recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats</u> . The sense of tranquillity is limited by the adjacent settlement edge. Long views of the site are limited by vegetation enclosing the site, which contributes to the <u>sense of intimacy, enclosure...</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 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development* assesses the Crowborough North assessment unit to have a **moderate-high** sensitivity to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The sensitivity analysis indicates that areas of complex undulating ridged landform and incised stream valleys, areas of woodland, areas of intact historic field pattern, the scenic backdrop the landscape provides to Crowborough, and the location within, and visual relationship with, the wider High Weald AONB increase the assessment unit's sensitivity to built development. However, the presence of existing urban fringe land uses such as golf courses, sports fields and a camp site, enclosure by woodland, relatively few known historic features and disturbance from human activity close to Crowborough and the A26 reduce the assessment unit's sensitivity to development.

The 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 mature woodland, tree clumps and hedgerows form part of a soft boundary to the settlement edge and increase sensitivity. However, the site has a relatively gently undulating topography, is visually enclosed and contained by mature vegetation, and influenced by the surrounding residential development, therefore decreasing sensitivity (compared to the wider assessment unit).

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:

- The gently sloping landform forms part of the principal Forest Ridge;
- Woodland within the site contributes to the highly interconnected habitats and sense of enclosure;
- Tree clumps contribute towards the wood-pasture and parkland character;
- The fields have an irregular field pattern; 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 deciduous woodland, trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats.	Woodland	<i>Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands....and outgrown hedges, and isolated trees.</i>	Retain, protect and enhance mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially the woodland and hedgerows along the outer boundaries that contain the site, including along Palesgate Lane (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives W1 and PQ2).
	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	<i>A sense of intimacy, enclosure...owing to the heavily treed landscape.</i>	
Loss or deterioration of features contributing towards the parkland character of the site, particularly the in-field trees and tree clumps.	Woodland	- Large numbers of isolated trees (often remnants from lost woodlands or hedges), such as in-field trees that provide additional connectivity to the wider landscape, as well as shelter and food source to a wide range of species. - Wood-pasture and parkland...	Retain and protect, mature/veteran trees and tree clumps where possible, and enhance the wooded parkland character of the site (in accordance with the AONB's Objective W1).

Modifications to Polesgate Lane (recorded as a historic lane) 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, retaining the character of the historic lane and 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.	Dark skies	<i>Intrinsically dark landscapes...</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 guidance¹² and use dark sky-friendly lighting (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives DS1 and DS2).
Settlement form edge and setting			
Deterioration of the rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Crowborough.	N/A	N/A	■ Minimise visibility of the proposed development and maintain the wooded character of views from the settlement edge (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S1). ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular (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'¹³, 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'¹⁴ and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan¹⁵ (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S2).
Visual amenity			
Visibility of development seen by: ■ residents along the settlement edge, including along	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	■ A recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats.	■ Retain, protect and enhance the mature woodland, hedgerows and trees along the outer boundaries of the site that enclose it in views from Palesgate

¹² 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/>

¹³ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html>

¹⁴ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

Palesgate Lane and new properties to the north-west and north-east; and ■ motorists/cyclists along Polesgate Lane (which is recorded as a historic lane).		■ A sense of intimacy, enclosure...owing to the heavily treed landscape.	Lane and from the new properties to the north-west and north-east of the site (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives W1 and PQ2). ■ Reduce the density of buildings 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, with a moderate level of expression. This is due to the gently sloping landform; presence of woodland and tree clumps; irregular field pattern; and forming part of a landscape with dark 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, some of the potential impacts as a result of the development on the site could potentially be reduced. <u>Variation to overall impact</u> There is no variation to the overall impact considered above.		

Summary and recommendations

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

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

- Retain, protect and enhance the vegetation along the outer boundaries that contain the site, including along Palesgate Lane.
- Retain and protect, mature/veteran trees and tree clumps where possible, and enhance the wooded parkland character of the site.

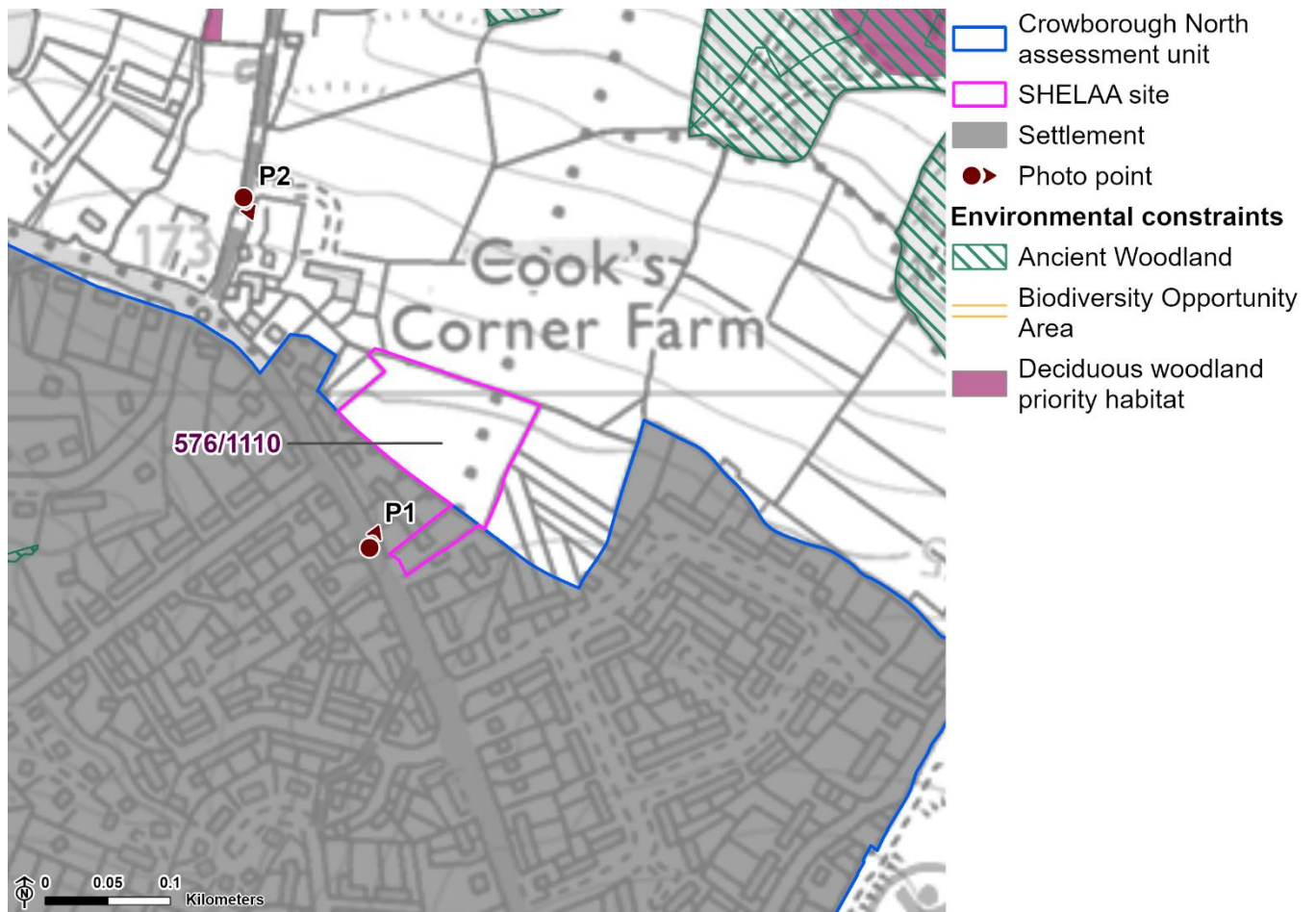
Figure 12: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



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

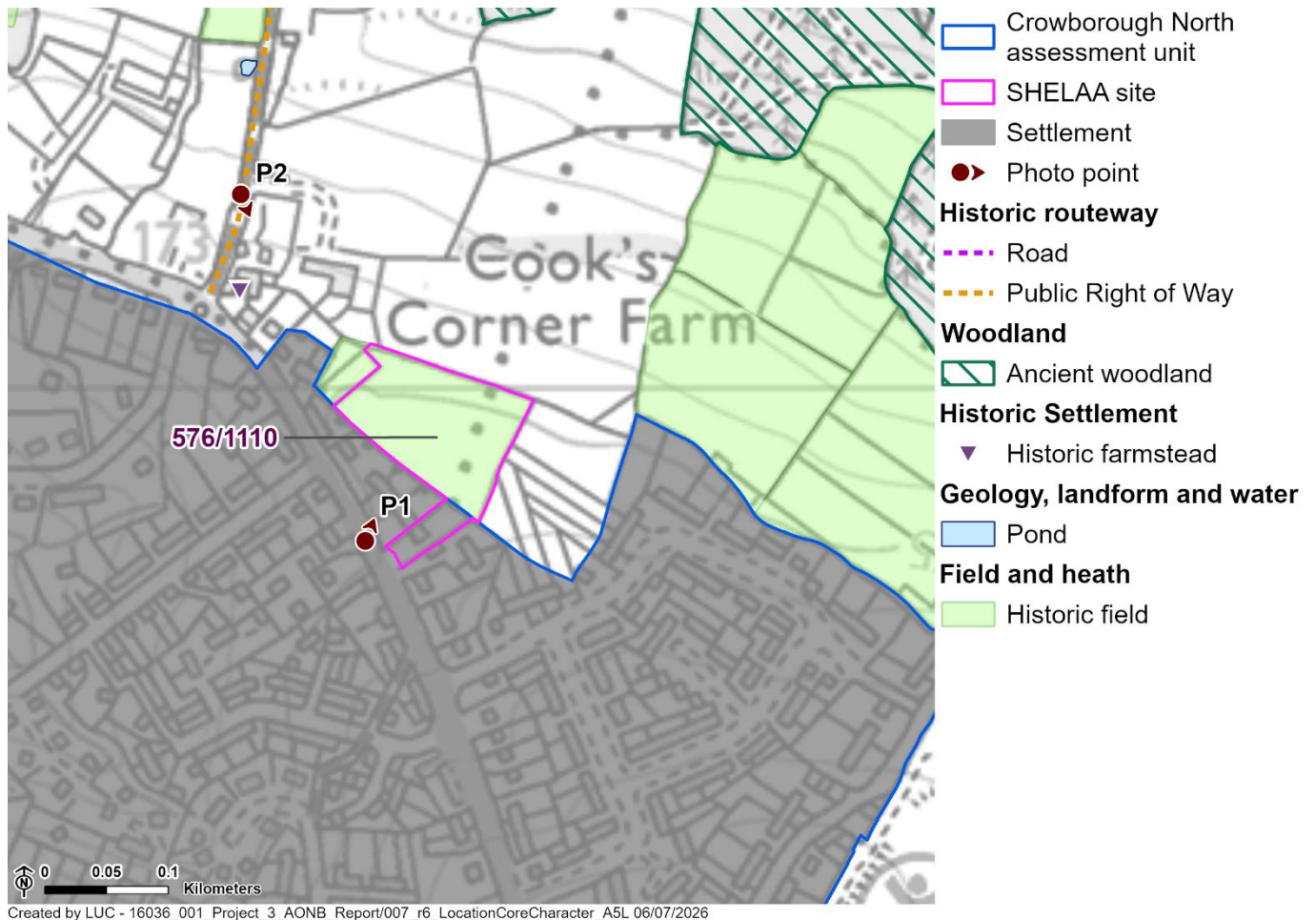
Site Details	
Potential development	Residential development proposed on entirety of site mapped below, and entirety of the site is proposed as draft Allocation WIT2 (identified for 15 dwellings) in the Focused Wealden Local Plan (2026).
Site location	This site is located to the north of Crowborough and situated north of London Road, between Gillridge Lane and Pleasant View Road.

Figure 13: Site location and constraints



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_3_AONB_Report/006_r6_LocationConstraints_A5L 06/07/2026

Figure 14: Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



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



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

Baseline Analysis

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

Expression of the 'defining components of character' of the High Weald AONB on the site	
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 is located on the <u>principal ridge (Forest Ridge)</u> of the High Weald with the underlying ridgeline contributing to the <u>pattern of faults and folds</u> . There are no distinctive geological or water features 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.	Cooks Corner Farm contributes towards the <u>high density of historic farmsteads</u> ¹⁶ found within the AONB and while it is not within the site it lies close to its north-western corner.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways pass through or adjacent to the site. The nearest historic routeway, which remains a public right of way, lies 130m west of the site.
Woodland – an abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws.	Wooded field boundaries form part of a wider <u>highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods ... and outgrown hedges</u> .
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 has retained its historic field pattern with <u>sinuous mixed woody boundaries... and thick hedges...</u> The field is used for <u>grazing livestock</u> .
Dark night skies – intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible.	Dark skies are limited due to the proximity to the settlement edge and lighting along London Road.
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 the open field and surrounding wooded vegetation provides a <u>pastoral feel</u> and contributes to the <u>recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats</u> . The sense of rurality and tranquillity is limited by the adjacent residential area. Long views of the site are limited by vegetation enclosing the site which contributes to the <u>sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness...</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.

¹⁶ As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 14)

Baseline Summary

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

The Assessment Unit

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

The 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 sits on an elevated that forms part of the complex undulating ridged landform of the wider assessment unit, enclosed by mature trees and hedgerows, and forms part of a historic field pattern derived from piecemeal enclosure. These factors demonstrate characteristics that increase sensitivity for the wider assessment unit. However, the site is visually enclosed, does not contain any heritage features, with tranquillity influenced by the proximity of the settlement edge, therefore decreasing sensitivity (compared to the wider assessment unit).

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 few of the core components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB. In summary:

- The site forms part of the principal ridge of the High Weald and contributes to the pattern of faults and folds;
- Cooks Corner Farm (north-west of the site) contributes to the high density of historic farmsteads with the site contributing towards its setting;
- Mature field boundaries contribute to highly interconnected habitats and sense of enclosure;
- The site maintains the historic field layout; and
- The grazing of livestock and mature hedgerows contribute to the pastoral feel of the landscape, with links to the history of the land-based economy.

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			
Changes to the elevated landform as a result of interventions/ earthworks upon the landform.	Natural systems	■ A principal ridge (Forest Ridge) running east – west from Horsham to Cranbrook... ■ A pattern of faults and folds that distinguishes the High Weald from the rest of the south and east of England, with a high concentration of springs associated with fault lines...	■ Limit the extent of development extending down onto the valley side to minimise alterations to the landform and retain its expression as part of the principal Forest Ridge and contribution to the pattern of faults and folds (in accordance with the AONB's Objective G2).
Removal of mature deciduous trees and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats.	Woodland	<i>Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands...and outgrown hedges, and isolated trees.</i>	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation surrounding the site, especially the mature trees and hedgerows along the outer boundaries that contain the site (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives W1 and PQ2). ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows within and 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).
	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	<i>A sense of intimacy... enclosure...owing to the heavily treed landscape.</i>	

Loss of the grazed pastures.	Fieldsapes and heath	<i>Fields, mostly permanent pasture, 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, strengthening the enclosure pattern and maintaining landscape structure (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>	
Influence of further lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight	Dark skies	<i>Intrinsically dark landscapes</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 guidance¹⁷ 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 ridge crest, which would be at odds with the existing pattern of settlement. Deterioration of the wooded and rural character of the site which contributes to the setting of Crowborough.	N/A	N/A	- Set development back from the northern site boundary, so as to avoid the perception of development extending north beyond the ridge crest or 'spilling' into the valley below (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S1). - Given the location of the site on the edge of the ridge crest, the height and massing of development should be considered in relation to the scale of existing development and underlying topography in the area (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S1). - Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular (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'¹⁸, 'Guidance on the selection and

¹⁷ 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/>

¹⁸ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html>

			use of colour in development ¹⁹ and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan ²⁰ (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S2).
Reduction in the separation between the settlement edge and the Cooks Corner Farm historic farmstead, and impingement on the setting of Cooks Corner Farm.	Settlement	<i>High density of historic farmsteads...</i>	Minimise encroachment towards the boundary of Cooks Corner Farm historic farmstead (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S3). Further assessment relating to the setting of heritage assets is advised.
Visual amenity			
Visibility of development seen by: - residents along the settlement edge, including along London Road, Pleasant View Road and Norbury Close. - Motorists / cyclists along these roads.	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	- The homely, pastoral feel to the whole landscape arising from its human-scale pattern and productivity. - A recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats.	- Retain, protect and enhance the wooded boundaries that enclose the site, particularly in views from London Road, Pleasant View Road and Norbury Close (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives W1 and PQ2). - Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area (in accordance with the AONB's Objective PQ2). - Reduce the density of buildings 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, with a moderate level of expression. This is due to the site forming part of the principal ridge landform; the presence of mature trees and hedgerows; grazed pastures; and Cooks Corner Farm historic farmstead (north-west of the site). 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.		

¹⁹ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html>

²⁰ <https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

	If the potential mitigation and enhancement opportunities set out above are applied, some of the potential impacts as a result of the development on the site could potentially be reduced. However, there would still be inevitable adverse impacts on grazed pastures which would be lost.
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Variation to overall impact

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 the mature trees and hedgerows along the outer boundaries that contain the site.
- Set development back from the northern site boundary, so as to avoid the perception of development extending north beyond the ridge crest or 'spilling' into the valley below
- Consider the height and massing of development in relation to the scale of existing development and underlying topography in the area, given the location of the site on the edge of the ridge crest.

Land at Beechenwood Farm (1026/1110)

Site Details	
Potential development	Residential development proposed on entirety of site mapped below, but site is only considered an Option (OCR2) for 120 dwellings in the Focused Wealden Local Plan (2026).
Site location	This site is located to the north of the settlement and situated to the north of London Road and Pleasant View Road, west of Pilmer Road, north-west of Goldsmiths Recreation Park, and south of Beechen Wood.

Figure 15: Site location and constraints

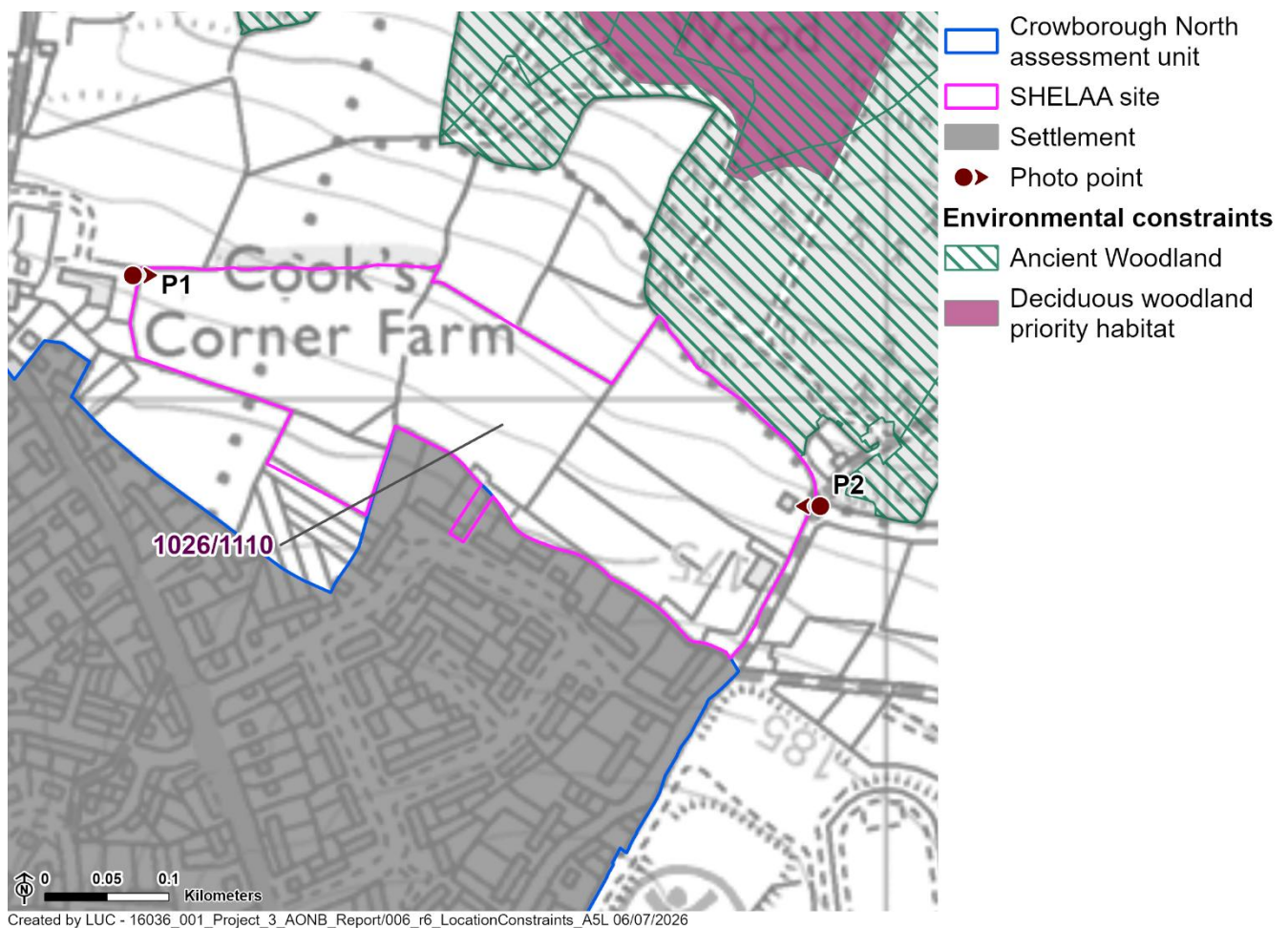
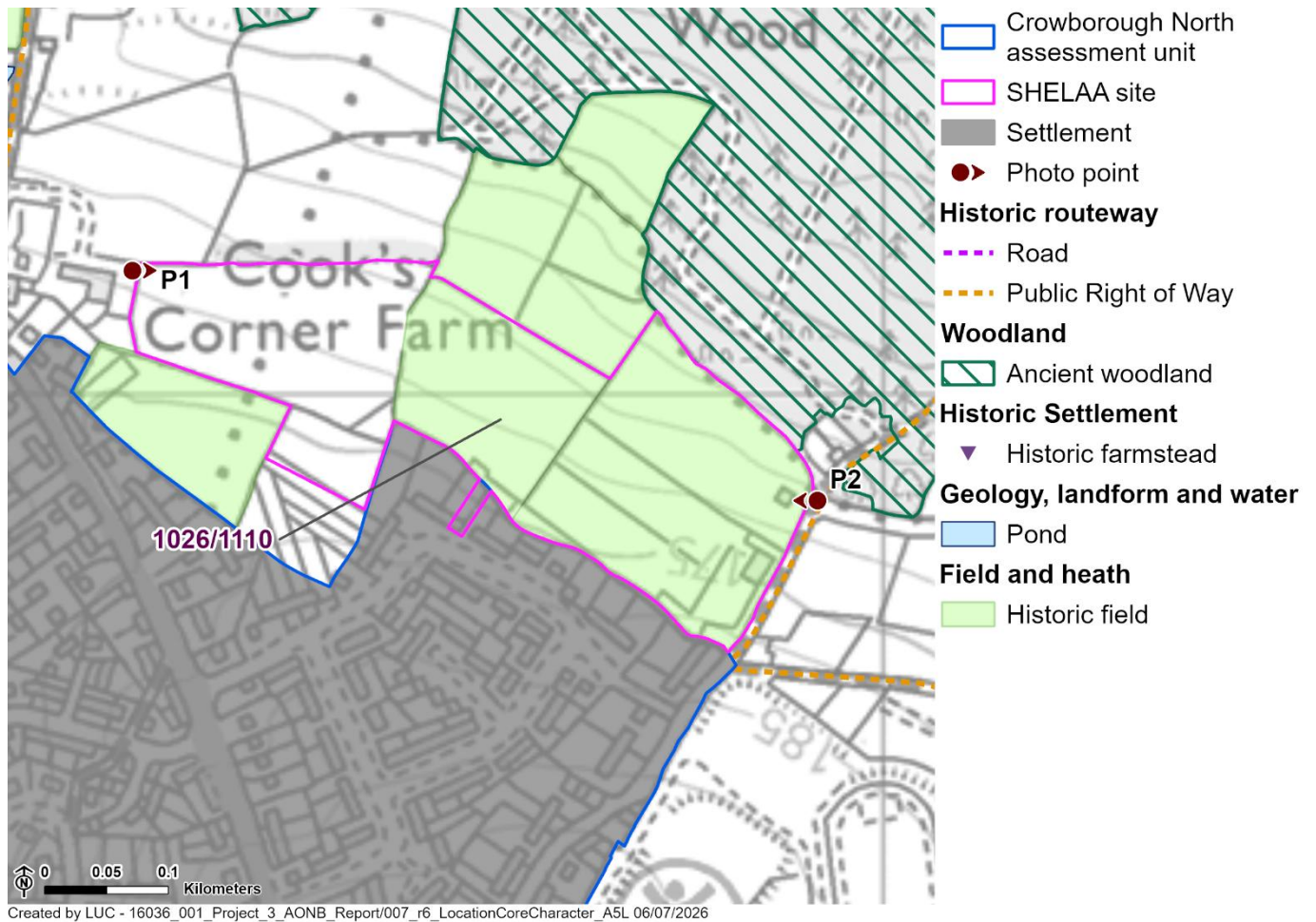


Figure 16: Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Photo 1: View from near Cooks Corner Farm into the western part of the site



Photo 2: View from along Pilmer Road into the eastern part of the site

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	Landform ■ The site forms part of the rolling ridges of the High Weald Central LCA. ■ It comprises a north-facing slope falling from approximately 180m AOD at the settlement edge to 160m AOD at the site's northern boundary adjacent to the edge of Beechen Wood. This sloping topography forms part of the 'complex undulating ridged landform' that is typical of the wider assessment unit. Natural character ■ Mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees define outer and internal field boundaries in the west. A remnant shaw creates the northern boundary of the westernmost field while a tall hedgerow along Pilmer Road forms the eastern boundary of the site. These features are typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Priority habitat deciduous woodland of ancient origin at Beechen Wood abuts the site to the north, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. Landscape pattern and time depth ■ According to the Sussex HLC, the field pattern within the eastern half was formed by medieval assarts from Beechen Wood (which is typical of the wider assessment unit), with the fields in the western half comprising a regular piece meal enclosure pattern. ■ The site consists of several small to medium sized fields used for grazing, paddocks and an occasional campsite which has partially eroded the historic field pattern. The fields within the western half maintain their historic pattern with boundaries defined by hedgerows and mature trees, whereas internal field boundaries within the eastern half of the site have been lost and replaced with post and rail fencing. Perceptual aspects ■ The site is influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge of Crowborough, which reduces levels of tranquillity (which are recorded as relatively low in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, Figure 3) and experience of dark skies (light levels are recorded in the middle bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, Figure 4).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site follows the existing north-eastern edge of Crowborough, formed by residential garden boundaries along Pleasant View Road. Development in this area comprises late mid-20th-century two-storey detached houses between Pilmer Road and London Road. Garden boundaries for properties along Pleasant View Road, along the south-eastern edge of the site, are defined by fragmented low hedgerows and fencing, forming a relatively weak and exposed edge between the site and the adjacent properties. More mature tree cover along Pilmer Road in the east, forms a stronger boundary. The eastern edge of the site contains sheds and storage areas. The site does not play a role in settlement separation, although it is part of the gap between the edge of Crowborough and Beechen Wood.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	Despite the site's sloping landform, views of and into the site from the wider landscape are largely limited by surrounding woodland, trees and hedgerows. However, the nearby residential properties along the settlement edge to the south are

	afforded with views into the site, with clear views particularly from the properties along Pleasant View Road. There are also glimpsed views from within parts of the Cooks Corner Farm historic farmstead to the north-west, and in between gaps in vegetation from the PRow along Pilmer Road to the east. The elevated edge of Goldsmiths Recreation Park to the south-east of the site is also afforded with views overlooking the fields within the eastern half of the site.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the site are limited by landform, and mature woodland to the north of the site. Glimpsed mid-range views are more available from the higher ground in the south of the site that look north towards wooded skylines.

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 is located along the <u>principal ridge (Forest Ridge)</u> of the High Weald, with the sloping landform contributing to the <u>pattern of faults and folds</u> of the AONB. There are no distinctive geological or water features 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.	Cooks Corner Farm contributes towards the <u>high density of historic farmsteads</u> ²¹ found within the AONB and while it is not within the site it lies adjacent to its western edge.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	No historic routeways cross the site. Pilmer Road along the eastern boundary of the site is recorded as a historic lane and contributes towards the <u>dense radiating network of historic routeways</u> , and contributes to this character through being lightly sunken, narrow, and lacking in modern road markings.
Woodland – an abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws.	Beechen Wood borders the site to the north-east and contributes towards the <u>high proportion of ancient woodland</u> and the <u>highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods...shaws...and outgrown hedges</u> of the AONB. Other trees/woodland associated with the area adjoin the eastern and northern boundaries and also form an interconnected habitat network, including the shaw that runs along the north-western edge of the site.
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 fields within the eastern half of the site were created through assarting; however, their contribution towards the <u>dominant medieval fieldscape character</u> of the AONB is masked by the loss of internal field boundaries, having been replaced by post and rail fencing, and as a result of the land use as paddocks and campsite. The western half of the site has retained the historic field pattern with <u>sinuous mixed woody boundaries and shaws, and thick hedges...</u> The fields are also used for <u>grazing livestock</u> .
Dark night skies – intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible.	The adjacent Pilmer Road to the east is an <u>unlit road</u> , however dark skies are limited by the adjacent residential area and associated lighting.
Aesthetic and perceptual qualities – arising from the interaction of people with the landscape, including the notion of a quintessential English pastoral	The ancient woodland at Beechen Wood on the northern edge of the site contributes to the <u>sense of history and timelessness</u> . The combination of open fields and surrounding woodland provides a <u>pastoral feel</u> and contributes to the <u>recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats</u> . The sense of rurality and

²¹ As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 16)

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

The 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 eastern half of the site comprises an assart and is abutted by priority habitat deciduous woodland of ancient origin, while fields within the western half have strong internal field boundaries that emphasise the historic field pattern and are enclosed by a shaw to the north. The sloping landform of the site forms part of the complex undulating ridged landform of the wider assessment unit. All of these factors demonstrate characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. However, the site is visually enclosed, with tranquillity influenced by the proximity of the settlement edge and partial use as paddocks and a campsite, therefore decreasing sensitivity (compared to the wider assessment unit).

Variations in Sensitivity

The eastern half of the site is considered to be less sensitive than the western half, although not to the extent that there would be a change to the moderate sensitivity rating considered above. This is due to the loss of internal field boundaries (having been replaced by post and rail fencing), the weaker settlement edge between the properties along Pleasant View Road and fields within the site, and the influence of the existing sheds and storage areas along the eastern edge of 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:

- The sloping landform forms part of the principal Forest Ridge;
- The eastern half of the site forms part of an assart field pattern although this is now expressed weakly due to the loss of internal field boundaries (replaced by post and rail fencing), and current land use as paddocks and campsite.
- Cooks Corner Farm (south-west of the site) contributes to the high density of historic farmsteads with the site contributing towards its setting;

- Beechen Wood contributes to the high proportion of ancient woodland, and along with the mature shaw (along the north-western boundary), and other trees and hedgerows, contribute to the highly interconnected habitats and sense of enclosure;
- The site maintains the historic field layout within the western half of the site; and
- The grazing of livestock and mature hedgerows contribute to the pastoral feel of the landscape, with links to the history of the land-based economy.

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			
Changes to the relatively steeply sloping landform as a result of interventions/ earthworks upon the landform.	Natural systems	■ A principal ridge (Forest Ridge) running east – west from Horsham to Cranbrook... ■ A pattern of faults and folds that distinguishes the High Weald from the rest of the south and east of England, with a high concentration of springs associated with fault lines...	■ Limit the extent of development extending down the slope onto the valley side to minimise alterations to the landform and retain its expression as part of the principal Forest Ridge and contribution to the pattern of faults and folds (in accordance with the AONB's Objective G2).
Removal of mature deciduous woodland, trees, shaws and hedgerows, affecting the role they play in defining and screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats.	Woodland	■ Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woodlands....and outgrown hedges, and isolated trees. ■ Many irregularly shaped small woodlands interlinked with shaws...forming an intimate part of the farmed landscape.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially the shaw and hedgerows along the outer boundaries that contain the site, and the mature trees and hedgerows that define internal field boundaries within the western half of the site (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives W1 and PQ2). ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows within and around the site through new tree planting and hedgerow corridors that are in character

	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	<i>A sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness owing to the heavily treed landscape.</i>	with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable (in accordance with the AONB's Objective W2).
Deterioration of and/or encroachment on the ancient woodland at Beechem Wood, which abuts the north-eastern edge of the site.	Woodland	<i>High proportion of woodland is categorised as ancient woodland...</i>	■ Set development back from the edge of the ancient woodland to the required minimum buffer zone (in accordance with the AONB's Objective W1). ■ 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 – in accordance with the AONB's Objective W2).
	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	<i>A sense of history and timelessness...</i>	
Deterioration of the historic routeway and public right of way along Pilmer Road on the eastern boundary and potential modifications (if used for access) to facilitate site access (e.g. road widening)	Routeways	<i>A dense radiating network with a variety of origins...</i>	■ Retain, protect and enhance existing recreational access via this public right of way and the rural character of the historic route (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives R1 and PQ3). ■ Reduce the impact of access works required to Pilmer Road if used for access, where possible, retaining the character of the historic lane and protecting the hedgerows along it (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives R1 and R2).
Loss of the grazed pastures.	Fieldsapes and heath	<i>Fields, mostly permanent pasture, 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 (in the western half) and enhanced (in the eastern half) where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern, strengthening the enclosure pattern and maintaining landscape structure (in accordance with the AONB's Objective FH2).
Influence of further lighting in the dark night skies resulting in night blight, including the potential introduction of streetlights along Pilmer Road if used for access.	Dark skies	<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 guidance²² 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 existing residential settlement edge.	N/A	N/A	■ Locate development in the south of the site to relate better to the existing settlement pattern, taking into account appropriate buffers from ancient woodland (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S1). ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular (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'²³, 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'²⁴ and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan²⁵ (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S2).
Reduction in the separation between the settlement edge and the Cooks Corner Farm historic farmstead, and impingement on the setting of Cooks Corner Farm.	Settlement	<i>High density of historic farmsteads...</i>	■ Minimise encroachment towards the boundary of Cooks Corner Farm historic farmstead (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S3). Further assessment relating to the setting of heritage assets is advised.
	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	<i>A sense of history and timelessness...</i>	
Visual amenity			
Visibility of development seen by: ■ walkers on the public footpath along Pilmer Road;	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	■ A sense of history and timelessness arising from an ancient countryside with a human-scale agricultural tapestry; veteran and ancient trees...	■ Retain, protect and enhance the mature woodland, shaw, trees and hedgerows along the outer boundaries of the site (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives W1 and PQ2).

²² 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/>

²³ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html>

²⁴ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html>

²⁵ <https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

■ residents on Pleasant View Road; ■ residents and visitors to Cooks Corner Farm; and ■ recreational users of Goldsmiths Recreation Park.		■ The homely, pastoral feel to the whole landscape arising from its human-scale pattern and productivity. ■ A recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats. ■ A sense of freedom arising from access to a dense network of public rights of way...	■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area (in accordance with the AONB's Objective PQ2). ■ Intersperse green open space and tree planting within development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built forms, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built forms within the landscape (in accordance with the AONB's Objective PQ2). ■ Consider views of development from the Cooks Corner Farm historic farmstead near the south-west edge of the site, retaining and enhancing trees/ woodland to screen views into the site (in accordance with the AONB's Objective PQ2). ■ Enhance public access and provide opportunities to experience the surrounding woodland (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, with a moderate level of expression. This is due to the sloping landform; presence of adjacent mature woodland (including ancient woodland), and shaw, as well as trees and hedgerows; grazed pastures; historic assart in the east; and Cooks Corner Farm historic farmstead (south-west of the site). 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, some of the potential impacts as a result of the development on the site could potentially be reduced. However, there would still be inevitable adverse impacts on grazed pastures which would be lost. <u>Variation to overall impact</u> Development within the western half of the site is considered to have a slightly greater impact on the core character components than the eastern half due to the historic field pattern being more intact than the eastern half, and proximity to Cooks Corner Farm historic farmstead; although not to the extent that there would be a change to the moderate impact considered above.		

Summary and recommendations

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

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

- Locate development in the south of the site, limiting the extent of development extending down the slope and applying a suitable offset in the form of a buffer zone to the ancient woodland at Beechem Wood.
- Retain, protect and enhance the shaw and hedgerows along the outer boundaries that contain the site, and the mature trees and hedgerows that define internal field boundaries within the western half of the site.
- Minimise encroachment towards the boundary of Cooks Corner Farm historic farmstead.
- Consider views of development from the Cooks Corner Farm historic farmstead near the south-west edge of the site, retaining and enhancing trees/ woodland to screen views into the site.
- Enhance public access and provide opportunities to experience the surrounding woodland.

Figure 17: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Adds Farm, Hoadleys Lane (222/1110)

Site Details	
Potential development	Residential development of 10 dwellings, proposed on the site as shown below. Site not Allocated or considered an Option.
Site location	This site is located to the north-west of the settlement and situated to the east of Dovedale Farm, south of Pennyridge Lake, west of Summersales Burial Ground and London Road, and to the north of properties off London Road/ Hoadleys Lane.

Figure 18: Site location and constraints

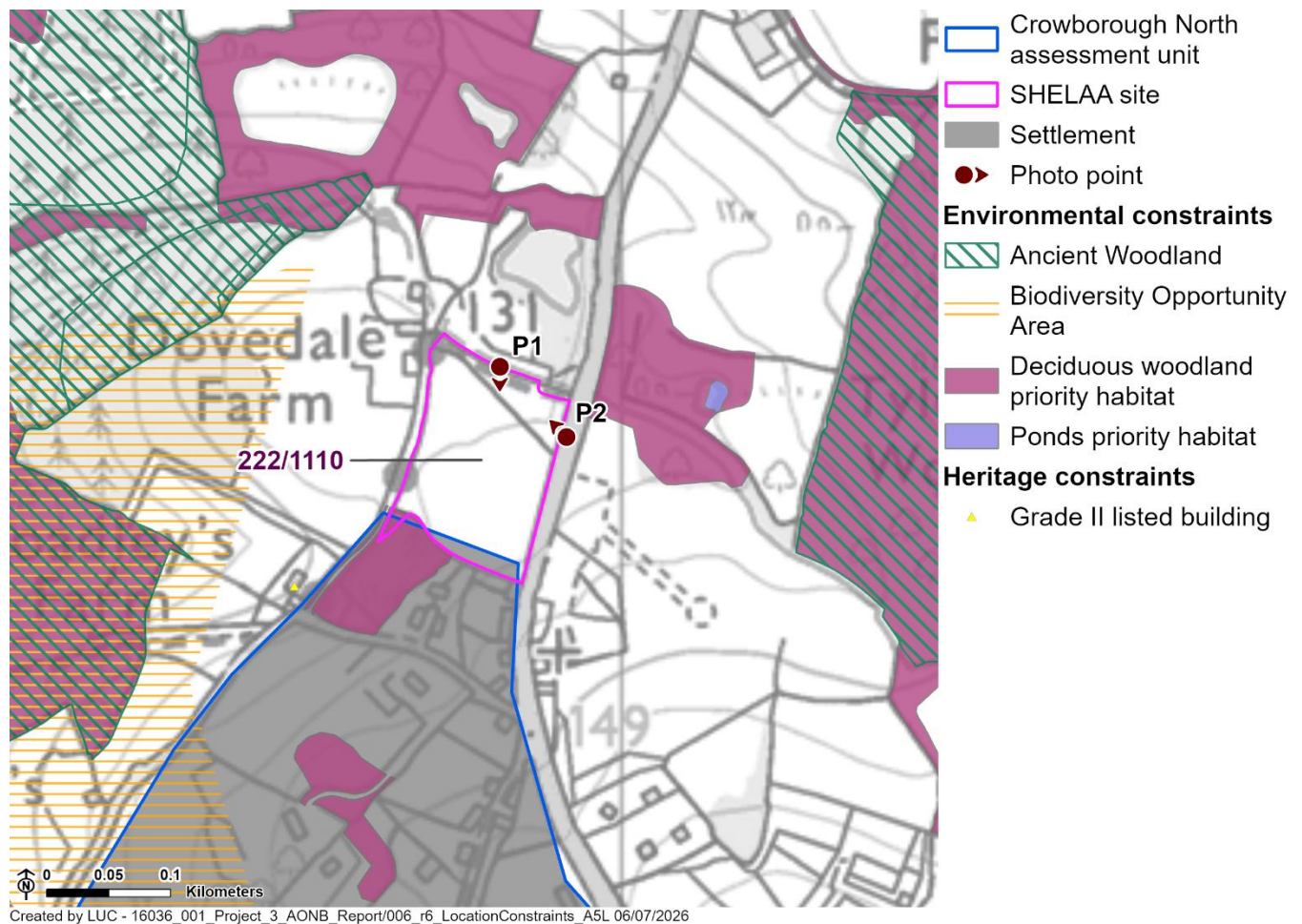
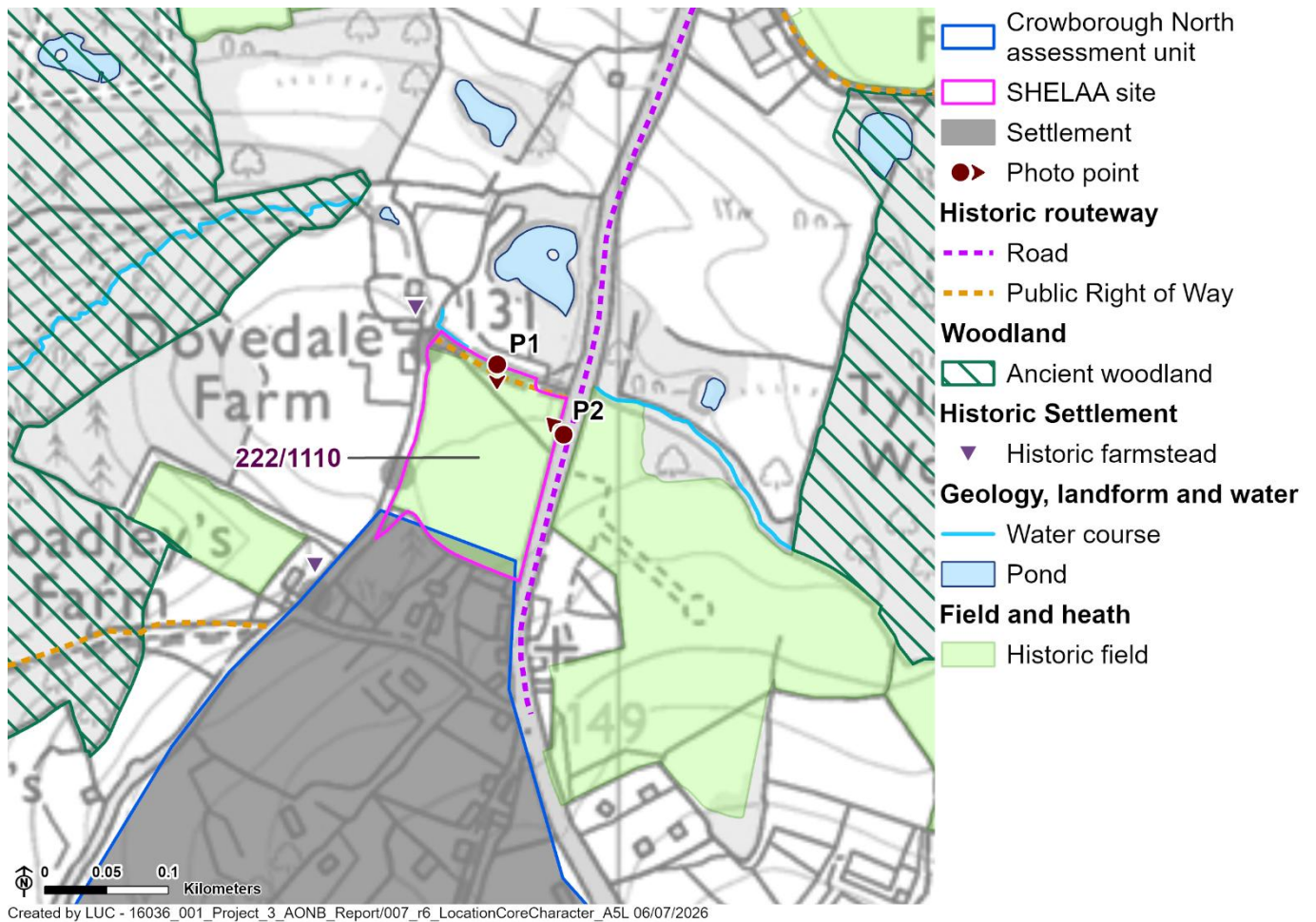


Figure 19: Site location and core character components of natural beauty of the High Weald AONB



Representative site photos



Photo 1: View from the PRow along the northern edge of the site looking south



Photo 2: View west across the site towards the historic farmstead at Dovedale Farm

Baseline Analysis

Baseline landscape character	
Key features and qualities of the site in relation to the wider assessment unit	Landform ■ The site forms part of an elevated ridgeline of the High Weald Central LCA which is typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ It is relatively flat, comprising a gentle slope rising between 130m AOD in the north-west to 140m AOD in the south-east, which atypical of the wider assessment unit. It also contributes to the transition towards the incised stream valleys that characterise the wider landscape. Natural character ■ The site is predominantly pastoral in character, though currently used for horse grazing. ■ It is enclosed on all sides by mature blocks of woodland, shaws and hedgerows which connects with Tylers Wood (located east of the site). A block of priority habitat deciduous woodland abuts the south-western edge of the site. The wooded character is typical of the wider assessment unit. Landscape pattern and time depth ■ The site is derived from an aggregate assart field pattern, as set out in the Sussex HLC, and typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Subdivision of the field into four parts by fencing for horse paddocks has influenced the internal pattern of the site, which is atypical of the wider assessment unit. ■ There are no historic features within the site, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. Perceptual aspects ■ Tranquillity of the site is influenced by its proximity to London Road and the settlement edge of Crowborough (levels of tranquillity are recorded as relatively low in CPRE's Tranquillity Mapping, Figure 3). However, the surrounding woodland and mature wooded hedgerows provide a sense of enclosure, and the site experiences dark skies (light levels are recorded within the lower/darker bands of CPRE's Night Blight Mapping, Figure 4).
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site provides separation between the settlement edge of Crowborough and Dovedale Farm. The adjacent settlement edge to the south of the site consists of woodland, beyond which are residential properties along London Road/ Hoadleys Lane (including two-storey semi-detached and terraced housing) that are interspersed with wooded vegetation, and the Forest Fold Baptist Chapel and car park. The woodland to the south provides a strong boundary feature between the site and the settlement edge, whilst London Road and the thick, tall hedgerows along its edges also provide a strong boundary between the site and the adjacent Summersales Burial Ground.
Baseline visual character	
Potential visual receptors	The surrounding woodland, trees, shaws and hedgerows enclose the site and limit its visibility from the surrounding landscape, including from the nearby residential properties along the settlement edge. Views into the site are afforded by users of the PRow that runs along the northern boundary of the site, whilst glimpsed/ filtered views are experienced by visitors to the

	Summersales Burial Ground to the east of the site. There are also limited glimpsed views in between gaps in vegetation and at field gates from London Road. Views into the site from Dovedale Farm are framed by vegetation at the northern corner of the site. Views experienced by residents of properties along London Road/ Hoadleys Lane are heavily filtered by the wooded vegetation along the southern boundary of the site.
Extent of visibility within the High Weald AONB	Long views to and from the site are limited by surrounding vegetation.

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, located along the <u>principal ridge (Forest Ridge)</u> , although it is relatively flat and its contribution towards the <u>pattern of faults and folds</u> is not strongly expressed. There are no distinctive geological or water features 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.	Dovedale Farm (adjacent to the northern corner of the site) contributes towards the <u>high density of historic farmsteads surrounded by their own fields</u> ²⁶ found within the AONB and while it is not within the site it lies adjacent to it. Hoadleys Farm is also identified as a historic farmstead (approximately 80m to the south-west) although is separated from the site by woodland.
Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).	A historic routeway (public right of way) runs along the northern boundary of the site. It provides a connection to London Road (B2188) which runs along the eastern boundary of the site. This road is recorded as a historic lane, although its expression is masked by its use as a B-road with associated modern road markings. These routes contribute towards the <u>dense radiating network</u> of historic routeways.
Woodland – an abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws.	Mature woodland, trees, shaws and hedgerows that enclose the site contribute to the <u>highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of small woods...shaws...and outgrown hedges...</u> of the AONB. Several ancient woodlands lie within the wider landscape, and the mature vegetation around the site help to connect Home Wood/ Morris's Wood in the west to Tyler's Wood in the east.
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 small field was created through assarting, contributing towards the <u>dominant medieval fieldscape character</u> of the AONB, with <u>sinuous mixed woody boundaries and shaws, and thick hedges</u> .
Dark night skies – intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible.	The site forms parts of an <u>intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of naturalness</u> . It is located adjacent to a part of Crowborough <u>with few street lamps</u> . The adjacent London Road and Hoadleys Lane are both <u>unlit roads</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	The combination of the historic Dovedale Farm (adjacent to the site), the assart and ancient woodland within the wider landscape contribute to the <u>sense of history and timelessness</u> . The site and surrounding vegetation contribute to the <u>recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats</u> . The sense of rurality and tranquillity is limited by the horse paddocks within the site (and associated fencing),

²⁶ As identified in the High Weald AONB character components dataset (see Figure 19)

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.	and the adjacent London Road.. Long views of the site are limited by vegetation enclosing the site which contributes to the <u>sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness....</u> The public right of way which runs along the northern boundary of the site contributes to the <u>sense of freedom arising from access to a dense network of public rights of way...suitable for walking...</u>
Land-based economy and rural living – with roots extending deep into history, and which has visibly and culturally shaped the landscape.	This character component of natural beauty is not expressed within the site.

Baseline Summary

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

The Assessment Unit

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

The 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 is an assart enclosed by woodland (including priority habitat deciduous woodland) and shaws, and forms part of a historic field pattern, and so the site demonstrates a number of characteristics that increase sensitivity across the assessment unit. However, the site is relatively flat, is visually enclosed and the internal field scale is subdivided by wooden fencing for horse paddocks, which decreases sensitivity (compared to the wider assessment unit).

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:

- It forms part of the principal Forest Ridge, although the site itself is relatively flat and so its contribution the pattern of faults and folds is not strongly expressed;
- Dovedale Farm (adjacent to the site) contributes to the high density of historic farmsteads with the site contributing towards its setting;
- The mature woodland, trees, shaws and hedgerows contribute to the highly interconnected woodland habitats, linking areas of ancient woodland, as well as providing a sense of intimacy and enclosure;
- The site forms part of a wider assart field pattern, which contributes to the medieval character of the AONB;
- The public right of way along the northern boundary contributes to the radiating network of historic routeways and the sense of freedom for walkers;
- A sense of history and timelessness is provided by Dovedale Farm, the assarted field and surrounding ancient woodland; 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 deciduous woodland, trees and shaws, affecting the role they play in defining and partially screening the settlement edge, and contributions to the interconnectivity of habitats.	Woodland	■ <i>Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods....shaws...and outgrown hedges...</i> ■ <i>Many irregularly shaped small woodlands interlinked with shaws...forming an intimate part of the farmed landscape.</i>	■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation surrounding the site where possible, especially the mature woodlands, shaws and trees (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives W1 and PQ2). ■ Improve the connectivity of woodlands and shaws (including the nearby ancient woodland) through new tree planting that is in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable (in accordance with the AONB's Objective W2). ■ Take up biodiversity opportunities associated with the adjacent Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest 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 of the assart which contributes to the medieval character and time depth.	Fieldsapes and heath	■ Medieval fieldscape character dominant, with a high proportion of field systems created by assarting (woodland clearance) with sinuous mixed woody boundaries and shaws, and thick hedges common.	■ Field boundaries should be retained and enhanced where possible to avoid complete loss of field pattern, strengthening the enclosure pattern and maintaining landscape structure (in accordance with the AONB's Objective FH2).

Deterioration of the historic routeway and public right of way that runs along the northern boundary of the site, which provides a connection to another historic routeway (London Road).	Routeways	<i>A dense radiating network with a variety of origins...</i>	■ Retain, protect and enhance existing recreational access via the public right of way which runs along the edge of the site and the rural character of the historic route (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives R1 and PQ3).
Modifications to the B2188 Londo Road (recorded as a historic lane) to facilitate site access (e.g. road widening, creation of junction)			■ 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.	Dark skies	■ Intrinsically dark landscapes with a sense of naturalness. ■ Many rural villages with few street lamps or no street lighting. ■ Numerous unlit roads...	■ 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 guidance 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 robust boundary provided by woodland between the site and the residential properties along London Road/ Hoadleys Lane.	N/A	N/A	■ Maintain the existing settlement pattern and its character by following the scale and built form of the existing development to the south and by interspersing new development with new tree planting that over time will form an extension to the existing wooded settlement edge (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives S1 and S2). ■ Design of new buildings to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of the surroundings by using high quality materials in keeping with the local vernacular (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'²⁷, 'Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development'²⁸ and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan²⁹ (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S2).
Reduction in the separation between the settlement of Crowborough and the Dovedale Farm historic farmstead, and impingement on the setting of Dovedale Farm.	Settlement	<i>High density of historic farmsteads surrounded by their own fields...</i>	■ Locate development in the south of the site to relate better to the existing settlement pattern and to minimise encroachment towards the boundary of Dovedale Farm historic farmstead (in accordance with the AONB's Objective S3). Further assessment relating to the setting of heritage assets is advised.
	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	■ A sense of history and timelessness...	
Visual amenity			
Visibility of development seen by: ■ walkers on the public footpath that runs along the northern boundary of the site; ■ visitors to the Summersales Burial Ground to the east of the site; ■ motorists/cyclists along London Road (which is recorded as a historic lane).	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities	■ A sense of history and timelessness arising from an ancient countryside with a human-scale agricultural tapestry; veteran and ancient trees...historic buildings. ■ A recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats.	■ Retain, protect and enhance all existing vegetation including the wooded boundaries that enclose the site (in accordance with the AONB's Objectives W1 and PQ2). ■ Screen new development with additional planting, using local native species where possible / suitable to maintain the rural character of the wider area (in accordance with the AONB's Objective PQ2). ■ Reduce the density of buildings 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).

²⁷ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/design-guide.html>

²⁸ <https://www.highweald.org/look-after/planning/colour-study.html>

²⁹ <https://www.highweald.org/high-weald-aonb-management-plan.html>

■ residents of Dovedale Farm; and ■ residents of properties along London Road/ Hoadleys Lane.			■ Consider views of development from the Dovedale Farm historic farmstead at the northern corner of the site, retaining and enhancing trees/ woodland to screen views into the site (in accordance with the AONB's Objective PQ2). ■ Enhance public access and provide opportunities to experience the surrounding woodlands (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, with a moderate level of expression. This is due to the presence of mature woodland, shaws, trees and hedgerows; the site forming part of an assart field pattern (contributing to the medieval character); Dovedale Farm historic farmstead (adjacent to the site); a historic routeway (PRoW) running along the edge of the site; 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 assart which would be lost. <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 the mature woodlands, shaws and trees that surround the site.
- Improve the connectivity of woodlands and shaws (including the nearby ancient woodland) through new tree planting that is in character with the locality, using native species where possible / suitable.
- Take up biodiversity opportunities associated with the adjacent Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA where possible.
- Maintain the existing settlement pattern and its character by following the scale and built form of the existing development to the south and by interspersing new development with new tree planting that over time will form an extension to the existing wooded settlement edge.
- Locate development in the south to better relate to the existing settlement and minimise encroachment towards the historic farmstead at Dovedale Farm.
- Retain and enhance public access, providing opportunities to experience the surrounding woodlands.

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

Seven sites have been assessed within the Crowborough North 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 Hodes, Steel Cross Road (110/1110)	Low impact	No variation
Group comprising Land at junction of Eridge Road and A26, Steel Cross (158/1110) and Spring Cottage, Eridge Road (298/1110)	Moderate impact	Development on the northern half of site 158/1110 is considered to have a greater impact on the core character components than the southern half and on site 298/1110 given the existing residential development within these parts; although not to the extent that there would be a change to the moderate impact.
Land at Byeways, Palesgate Lane (698/1110)	Moderate impact	No variation
Land to the rear of Cooks Corner Farm and to the north of London Road (576/1110)	Moderate impact	No variation
Land at Beechenwood Farm (1026/1110)	Moderate impact	Development within the western half of the site is considered to have a slightly greater impact on the core character components than the eastern half due to the historic field pattern being more intact than the eastern half, and proximity to Cooks Corner Farm historic farmstead; although not to the extent that there would be a change to the moderate impact.
Adds Farm, Hoadleys Lane (222/1110)	Moderate impact	No variation

If all seven sites were brought forward for development to the extent as assessed, it would result in a potential of up to 207 dwellings being built.

In the north-east of Crowborough, sites **110/1110**, **298/1110** and **158/1110** adjoin one another with **698/1110** approximately 0.4km to the south. The development of these sites may lead to the perception of the north-eastern settlement edge extending into the countryside and woodland, which forms a soft settlement boundary feature. However, there is an existing presence of settlement expansion and ribbon development near the sites, including recent development to the north-west and north-east of site **698/1110**, which has resulted in a relatively dispersed settlement edge. All of these sites are well contained by mature vegetation including woodland and if largely retained, will limit visibility of development. There would likely be cumulative impacts on a few components of character of the High Weald AONB, with small areas of wood pasture and parkland character, grazing pastures and dark skies affected.

Sites **576/1110** and **1026/1110** adjoin one another to the north of Crowborough. If both sites were brought forward, the cumulative effect would see the settlement edge in the north extended resulting in encroachment to Beechen Wood. This would reduce the gap between the settlement edge of Crowborough and the ancient woodland of Beechen Wood, and would result in

the loss of undeveloped land and grazed pastures, thus reducing rurality in this area. A key component of character that would also likely be affected would be the expression of the principal Forest Ridge, and how the landforms of the sites contribute towards the pattern of faults and folds. This would be the case if development was to extend beyond the ridge crest or to spill down the valleys which should be avoided to minimise the potential for cumulative effects. Potential development on both sites could also affect the setting of Cooks Corner Farm historic farmstead.

Site **222/1110** is located approximately 0.6km to the north-west of Sites **576/1110** and **1026/1110**. Given the intervening distance and screening by intervening vegetation between the sites, cumulative landscape and visual effects are considered unlikely.

Overall, it is considered that the cumulative impact of developing the seven 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.

It is understood that sites **298/1110**, **698/1110**, **576/1110** and **1026/1110** have been identified as allocations/options in the Focused Wealden Local Plan (2026). If only these sites were brought forwards for development the cumulative implications discussed above would still apply, although with less grazed pastures lost in the north-east.