



**Proof of Evidence of Paul Warren
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Landscape Matters

LAND SOUTH OF THE A271 AND
EAST OF THE A22, LOWER
HORSEBRIDGE, HAILSHAM

Appendix A

Extracts from Appendices pages A-97
to A-104 of Wealden Landscape
Sensitivity Assessment to Residential
and Employment Development 2023
(Full document available CD 9.2)

Appellant: Hertfordshire Holdings
Ltd.

Planning Inspectorate No. Appeal:
APP/C1435/W/23/3335625

Wealden District Council

Application No. WD/2022/3222/

MAO

March 2024

Wealden District Council

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Residential and Employment Development

Final report
Prepared by LUC
November 2023



Hailsham West

Assessment unit	Hailsham West
Landscape Character Area	LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale
Settlement description Hailsham is the largest settlement in the south of Wealden district, located between the River Cuckmere to the west and the Pevensey Levels to the east. Hailsham is mentioned in the Domesday Book, and was granted a market charter in 1252. The medieval town developed around Market Street, High Street, George Street and Vicarage Road, as shown by the extent of the Conservation Area. Further development was limited until the opening of the railway between Hailsham and Polegate in 1849, which was later extended north to Eridge. The town expanded to the south and west of the railway station. Despite the closure of the railway line in 1968, substantial growth occurred after the Second World War. From this period through to the early 21st century, the town has greatly expanded, predominantly to the north and west. This has resulted in its coalescence with the formerly separate hamlets of Lower and Upper Horsebridge and Amberstone to the north.	
Absolute constraints Land along the River Cuckmere and its tributary have been scoped out of the assessment due to flood risk (Environment Agency Flood Zone 3).	

Figure A.62: Location of Hailsham West assessment unit

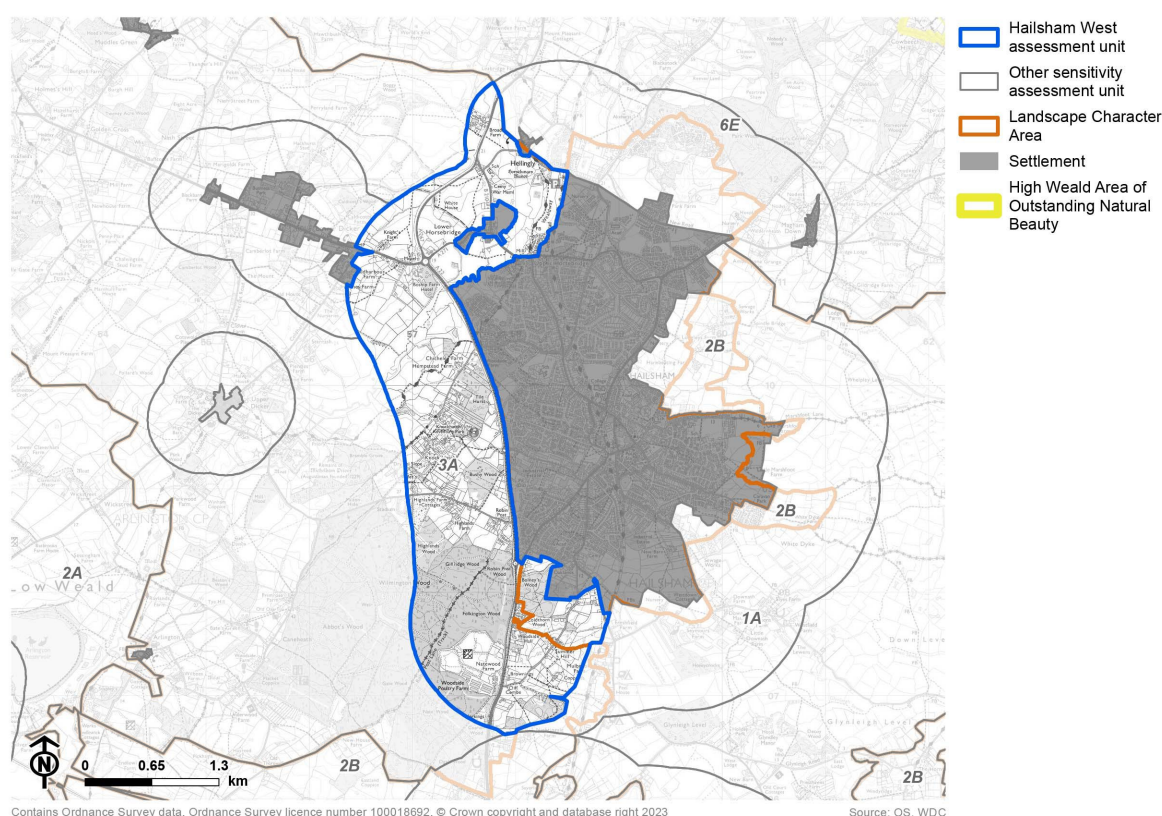


Figure A.63: Absolute constraints in Hailsham West assessment unit

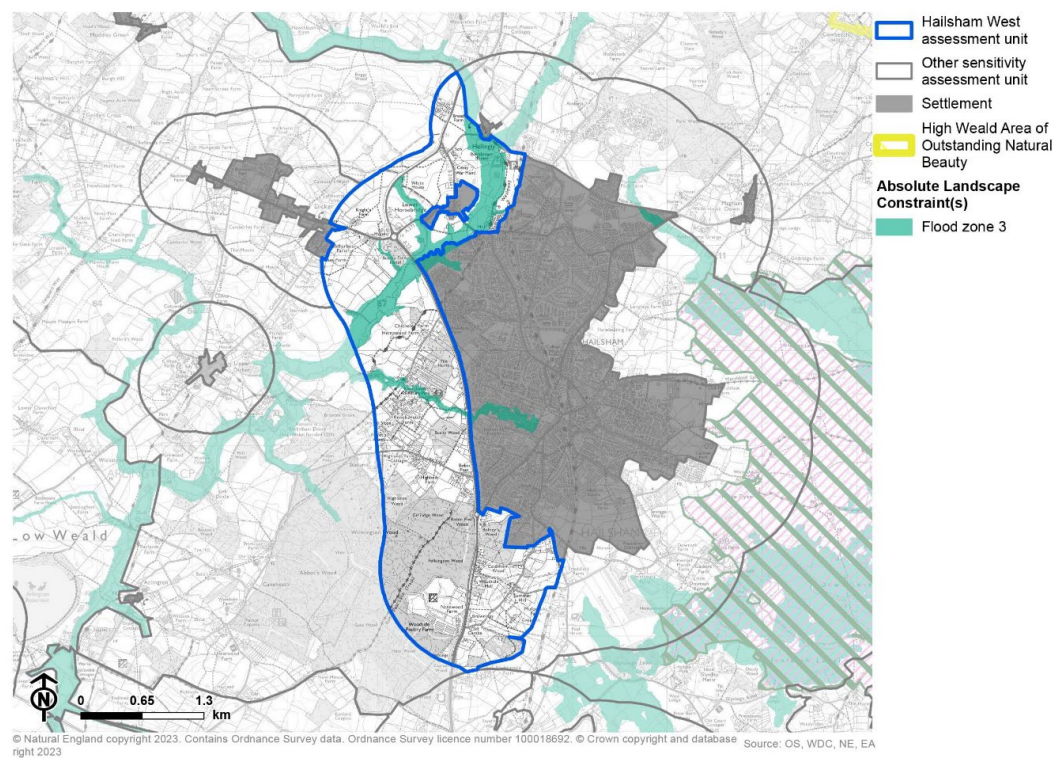


Figure A.64: Environmental designations in Hailsham West assessment unit

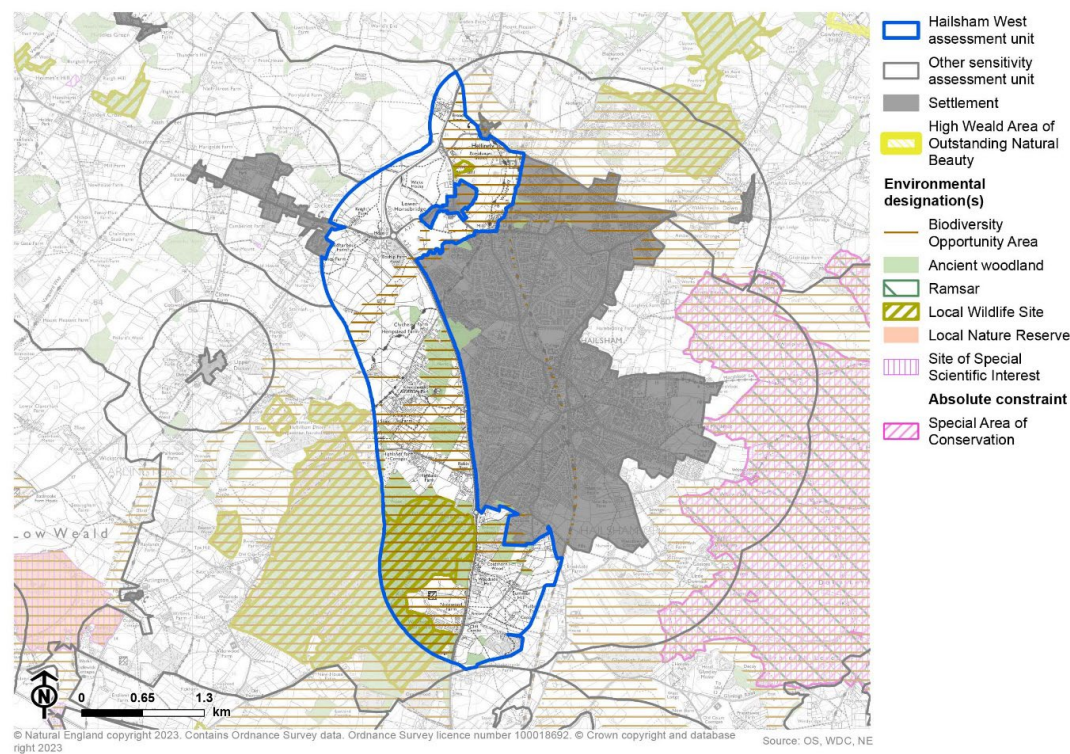
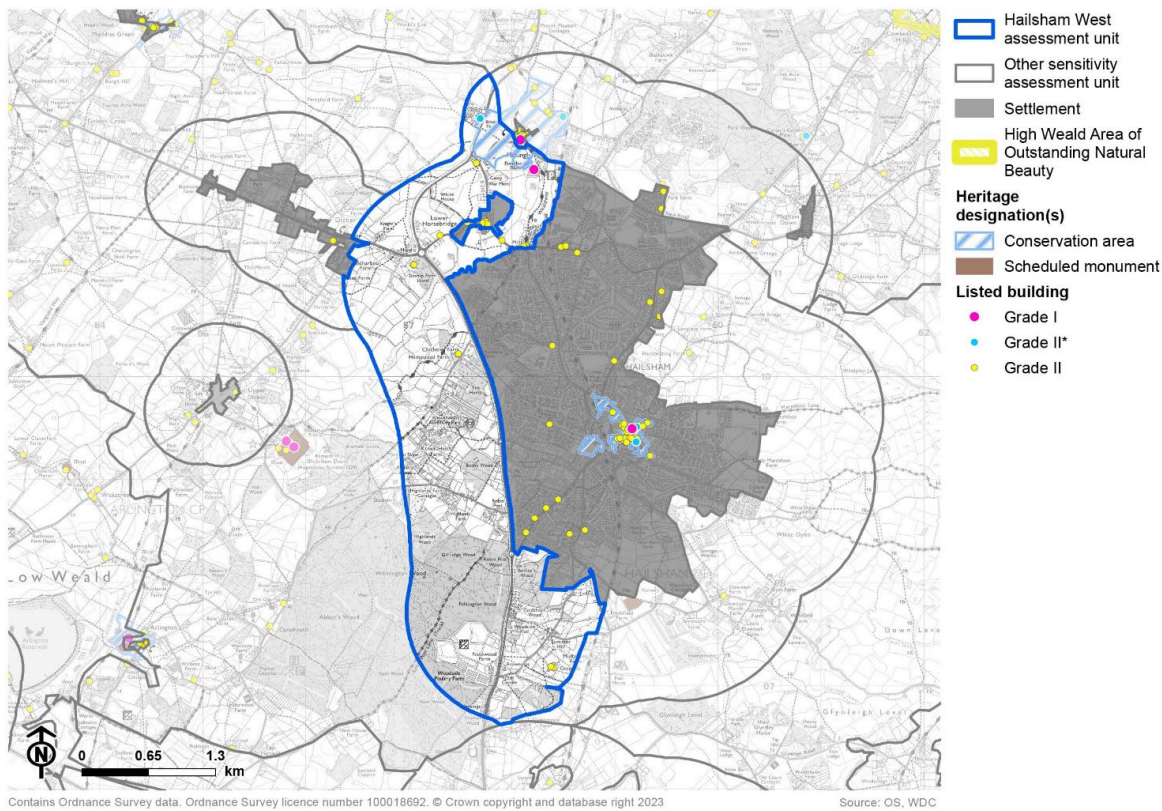


Figure A.65: Heritage designations in Hailsham West assessment unit



Representative photos



Subdivided horse grazing fields near Knockhatch in the west, with wooded backdrop



Small river valley landform south of Hailsham, with wooded backdrop provided by Coldthorn Wood

Appendix A

Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessments: Key Settlements

Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
November 2023

Assessment unit	Hailsham West	
Commentary against landscape sensitivity indicators		
Assessment Criteria	Commentary	Sensitivity
Landform	A gently rolling landscape, incised by the river valleys of the Cuckmere and its tributaries, rising to a high point in Wilmington Wood.	Lower sensitivity
'Natural' character	Predominantly pastoral land use with fields bound by mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees, with frequent in-field trees, although horse grazing has increased the use of post and wire fencing. Large arable fields lie west of the B2104. Small areas of priority habitat traditional orchard are recorded around Summerhill Lane.	Moderate sensitivity
	Considerable deciduous woodland coverage, concentrated in the south at Wilmington Wood/Abbot's Wood and Tile Hurst, much of ancient origin. River corridors are lined by woodland and form part of the Pevensey and Cuckmere Valley Link, River Cuckmere Habitat Link and Wilmington Woodlands and Watershed BOAs.	Areas of higher sensitivity
Landscape pattern and time depth	A varied field pattern, with a mix of medieval assarts on the edges of existing woodland in the west and south, early medieval to early modern planned private enclosure at Knockhatch, and late medieval or Tudor regular piecemeal enclosure. Extensive ancient woodlands add time-depth to the assessment unit.	Moderate sensitivity
	Modern field amalgamation is predominant in the north and north-west.	Areas of lower sensitivity
Historic features	Historic features are clustered in the north, including Grade II listed buildings within Lower Horsebridge. The Hellingly Conservation Area extends into the north-east, covering the Grade II* listed Broad Farmhouse. Grade I listed Horselunges Manor lies within Flood Zone 3 and contributes to the character of the immediate landscape.	Areas of higher sensitivity
	Historic features are rarer in the west and south.	Lower sensitivity
Settlement form and edge	The existing southern settlement edge of Hailsham is integrated into the landscape by mature vegetation and woodlands and development could adversely affect this. However, extensive planned development at Oaklands and east of Ersham Road will alter the settlement edge.	Higher sensitivity
	The western settlement edge of Hailsham is defined by the well-wooded and strong boundary feature of the A22 Hailsham Bypass.	Moderate sensitivity
	The northern settlement edge of Hailsham is relatively well integrated with the fringing landscape by hedgerows and trees. The River Cuckmere provides a strong boundary feature.	Moderate sensitivity
	Lower Horsebridge has a linear settlement form along the A271, although this will be considerably altered in the west and east by planned development. The exposed settlement edge is formed of two storey detached and semi-detached	Lower sensitivity

Appendix A

Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessments: Key Settlements

Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
November 2023

	houses, with no landscape features to integrate it with the surrounding rural fringe.	
Settlement setting and coalescence	■ Trees along the A22 Hailsham Bypass and Abbot's Wood in the south-west provides a wooded backdrop to the west of Hailsham. Bolney's Wood and Coldthorn Wood in the south make a positive contribution to the wooded character of Hailsham.	Moderate sensitivity
	■ In the north, the landscape provides a scenic backdrop to Lower Horsebridge, and is designated as part of the Hellingly Conservation Area for the rural setting it provides.	Higher sensitivity
	■ In the north, the landscape currently provides separation between Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge and between Lower Horsebridge and Hellingly.	Higher sensitivity
	■ In the south, the landscape contributes to the separation of Hailsham and Polegate, although development in the south of this sub-area would not close the gap between the settlements.	Moderate sensitivity
Recreational value	■ A strong network of public rights of way including sections of the Wealdway and Cuckoo Trail. Wilmington Wood/Abbot's Wood provides informal recreational opportunities.	Moderate sensitivity
Perceptual aspects	■ The landscape has a rural character with areas of tranquillity and dark skies within Wilmington Wood/Abbot's Wood and along the Cuckmere valley. Small lanes including Summerhill Lane and Church Lane retain a rural character.	Areas of higher sensitivity
	■ However, perceptual qualities are affected by proximity to Hailsham, busy trunk roads including the A22, and recreational land uses at Knockhatch. Modern development includes solar farms, electricity pylons and small business parks in the north and south.	Moderate sensitivity
Visual prominence	■ A generally enclosed landscape, particularly to the south and west with woodland and hedgerows providing screening. Trees along the A22 restrict views in from the east.	Lower sensitivity
	■ In the north, there are views across farmland to the riparian woodland along the River Cuckmere. Views to the Hellingly church tower and across the wider countryside are highlighted in the Hellingly Conservation Area Appraisal.	Areas of higher sensitivity
	■ Wilmington Wood and woodland at Tile Hurst form a wooded skyline to some views from the east and south, both within in and outside the assessment unit. Long distance views to the South Downs National Park are possible where there are gaps in tree cover and hedgerows.	Moderate sensitivity
Key landscape sensitivities		
■ The narrow river valleys of the Cuckmere and tributaries. ■ Extensive mature deciduous woodlands, particularly in the south (many of which are ancient in origin). ■ The network of thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees. ■ Intact historic field patterns, particularly assarts in the west of the assessment unit. ■ Historic character of Horselunges Manor, and the historic character and form of Hellingly, as shown by its Conservation Area.		

Appendix A

Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessments: Key Settlements

Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
November 2023

- The rural setting the assessment unit provides to Hailsham. - The rural setting and sense of separation provided in the north to Hailsham and Lower Horsebridge, and in the south to Hailsham and Polegate. - Strong recreational opportunities. - Rural character, with areas of tranquillity and dark skies within Wilmington Wood / Abbot's Wood. - Occasional long-distance views to the South Downs National Park from higher ground. - The wooded skyline Wilmington Wood / Abbot's Wood provides in views from the east and south of the assessment unit and outside it.						
Overall sensitivity assessment						
Small scale residential 2-2.5 storey housing				M		
Medium scale residential 3-4 storey flats/ care homes					MH	
Commercial/ industrial e.g. industrial units or hotels					MH	
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity						
This assessment unit is of moderate sensitivity to small-scale residential development, as some landscape and visual characteristics/ values are susceptible to change. Sensitivity to medium-scale residential and commercial/industrial development is moderate-high, as these types of development would be out of character with the low-rise residential character of the assessment unit. The narrow river valleys of the Cuckmere and its tributaries; ecological values; particularly extensive broadleaved woodland; historic features; and rural character of much of this assessment unit increase sensitivity. The strong settlement boundary of the A22 to the west of Hailsham; rural setting to the historic village of Hellingly and the good public access also increase sensitivity. However, the low-lying topography; amalgamated modern field patterns to the north and north west and semi-enclosed character; disturbance by the busy trunk roads; modern development and proximity to Hailsham particularly where there are no strong landscape features defining the settlement edge (in the north and south) decrease sensitivity. Land along the River Cuckmere and its tributary have been scoped out of the assessment due to flood risk (Environment Agency Flood Zone 3). Variations in landscape sensitivity The extensive woodlands, particularly Wilmington Wood / Abbot's Wood are highly sensitive to all development types. Ancient woodlands are a particularly sensitive feature of this assessment unit. The River Cuckmere valley is an important landscape feature, and has a high degree of remoteness and tranquillity, and therefore a higher sensitivity to development. The land between Lower Horsebridge and Hailsham in the north is more sensitive to development, as development here could cause coalescence of the two settlements. Land around existing non-rural land uses e.g. Knockhatch adventure park, dry ski slope and Arlington stadium, may have a slightly lower sensitivity to development, including to medium-scale residential development. Land in the south adjacent to the A22 and industrial area between the A22 and Summerhill Lane may have a lower sensitivity to medium-scale residential and commercial/industrial development due to the existing industrial units in situ.						

Strategic landscape guidance

Any development that comes forward in this assessment unit should:

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