



**Proof of Evidence of Paul Warren
BA (Hons) DIPLA CMLI**

Landscape Matters

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

Appendix E

Extracts from WDC South Wealden
Growth Area Landscape and
Ecological Assessment Study 2017
The Landscape Partnership (CD 9.13)

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

**South Wealden Growth Area
Landscape and Ecological Assessment Study**

the**landscape**partnership

780/3100 Land East of A22 and south of A271, Lower Horsebridge

Landscape and Visual Assessment

Location and description

The site is located on the southern edge of Lower Horsebridge adjacent to the roundabout junction between the A22 and A267 and close to the north-western edge of Hailsham. The river Cuckmere forms the southern boundary of the site and the B2104/A271 forms the eastern boundary. A PRoW extends along the northern edge of the site and crosses through the middle of the eastern side of the site. The site forms part of the wider River Cuckmere corridor which continues to the north towards Hellingly and to the south towards Upper Dicker. This corridor is an important swathe of undeveloped land which separates the village of Lower Horsebridge from the urban area of Upper Horsebridge and Hailsham. It is a low-lying area and most of the site is within flood zones 2 or 3 and therefore at risk from flooding.

To the north-west of the site beyond the roundabout junction is an extensive area of open countryside which rises up to form the High Weald AONB. To the north-east of the site is the village of Lower Horsebridge which includes the village recreation ground which abuts the site. To the south of the site is an area of informal public open space which extends between the edge of an area of residential development and the river Cuckmere.

Figure reference: 780/3100/L01 – Site location

Landscape character context

County Landscape Character Area: Eastern Low Weald

Local Landscape Character Type and sensitivity: Open Clay Vales (High sensitivity)

Local Landscape Character Area: E6 Hellingly

Landscape setting area: Hailsham 9

Distinctive characteristics - Hailsham 9

- Gently meandering corridor of the River Cuckmere, which is lined with a patchwork of predominantly pastoral ancient fields;
- A22 road corridor crosses the northern part of the area, introducing a source of noise and movement

(Source: Wealden Landscape Character and Settlement Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates, 2014)

Figure reference 780/3100/L02 – Landscape and Visual Context

Site character areas and key features

1. River pasture

The site comprises an open area of pasture which is currently grazed by cattle. The meandering course of the River Cuckmere along the southern boundary forms a strong landscape feature which is defined by a line of vegetation. Around the edges of the site, traffic noise is audible (particularly adjacent to the A22) but this diminishes in the centre of the site. Vegetation around the site boundaries and along the River Cuckmere provide some enclosure to the site but there are glimpsed views of the urban area to the south. Beyond this there are glimpsed long distance views to the South Downs. Lombardy Poplars line the boundary with the recreation ground to the north and form a prominent line in the landscape. Other key vegetation includes a small copse of trees on the western side of the site and occasional scattered mature trees. A large sub-station adjacent to the north-eastern edge of the site is visually intrusive in the landscape.

Overall, despite the proximity of the urban area the site has a strong pastoral character and creates an effective sense of separation between Lower Horsebridge and Upper Horsebridge.

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Key features include:

- Meandering River Cuckmere and associated riverine vegetation
- Tributary stream/ditch
- PRoW along northern edge
- WW2 Pill box (concrete fort)
- Small copse centred around a shallow depression
- Mobile phone mast

Figure reference: 780/3100/L03 - Site Analysis

Visual analysis

Visual context

The site is relatively enclosed by vegetation which borders the adjacent roads and boundaries around the perimeter of the site. However, there are views into the site through gaps in this vegetation (e.g. where the A22 crosses the River Cuckmere and from the B2104/A271), from the public open space which extends along the southern side of the River Cuckmere and from properties which are adjacent or close to the site (particularly on Solent Crescent). There are also glimpsed views into the site from Lower Horsebridge Recreation Ground.

Figure reference 780/3100/L02 – Landscape and Visual Context

Zone of visual influence (ZVI)

The principal ZVI of the site extends to the A22 in the west, the southern edge of Lower Horsebridge to the north, along the Cuckmere valley to the east and to the northern built edge of Hailsham/Upper Horsebridge to the south.

Refer to Figure 780/3100/L02 for approximate ZVI

Key views and principal visual receptors

Principal visual receptors likely to be affected by the site are:

- Residential properties (High sensitivity)
- PRoW (High sensitivity)
- B2104/A271 (Low sensitivity)

Refer to Figure 780/3100/L03 key local views into site

Landscape sensitivity and capacity

Sensitivity, Value and Capacity of Landscape setting area: Hailsham Area 9

Area is considered to have **Low Landscape Capacity** as a result of its High Landscape Sensitivity and High Landscape Value. This area has a strong landscape structure of mature hedgerows and trees and strong historic continuity, resulting from the ancient field pattern. Valuable landscape features include mature hedgerows and trees. The gently meandering corridor of the River Cuckmere, which is lined with a patchwork of predominantly pastoral, ancient fields is considered to have High Landscape Sensitivity.

(Source: Wealden Landscape Character and Settlement Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates, 2014)

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Site sensitivity and capacity assessment

Criteria	Assessment
Distinctiveness	Distinct
Continuity	Ancient and Recent
Strength of Place	Moderate
Landform	Insignificant
Tree Cover	Intermittent
Visibility	Low
Landscape Sensitivity	Low
Landscape Value	High
Landscape Capacity	Moderate-Low

The site has a Moderate-Low Landscape Capacity due to its value as a strategic landscape area providing separation between Lower Horsebridge and Upper Horsebridge/Hailsham and the landscape setting for the northern edge of Hailsham. The River Cuckmere is a landscape feature with high sensitivity, however, the relatively low visibility of the site from the surrounding area reduces the general sensitivity of the site as a whole.

Significant variations in sensitivity within the site - The river and adjacent areas of pasture on the southern and eastern side of the site have the highest landscape sensitivity and are within flood zones 2/3. The western corner of the site adjacent to the A267/A22 roundabout junction is less sensitive and is not in flood zones 2/3.

Key landscape opportunities and constraints

Landscape Target Notes

Landscape qualities/features to be safeguarded

1. River Cuckmere together with associated riverine vegetation and adjacent meadow area
Reason – River and associated meadow is a key landscape feature and the area forms of the functional floodplain for the River Cuckmere. The river corridor also forms an important landscape zone which separates Lower Horsebridge from Upper Horsebridge/Hailsham.
2. Tributary stream
Reason – Stream forms part of the local drainage system and is a valuable landscape and ecological feature
3. Public Right of Way
Reason – PRoW provides a recreational route for local residents of both Lower Horsebridge and Upper Horsebridge/Hailsham
4. WW2 Pill box (concrete fort)
Reason – Pillbox is a local landscape feature of cultural heritage value
5. Roadside vegetation (hedgerows and tree/shrub belt)
Reason – Vegetation provides valuable enclosure to the site and screens site from the surrounding areas of open countryside

Opportunities for landscape enhancement

6. River corridor would benefit from long term management plan and programme of regular management works to preserve and enhance the character of the corridor

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7. Introduce screen planting around sub-station

Refer to Figure 780/3100/L04 – Landscape Opportunities and Constraints Plan

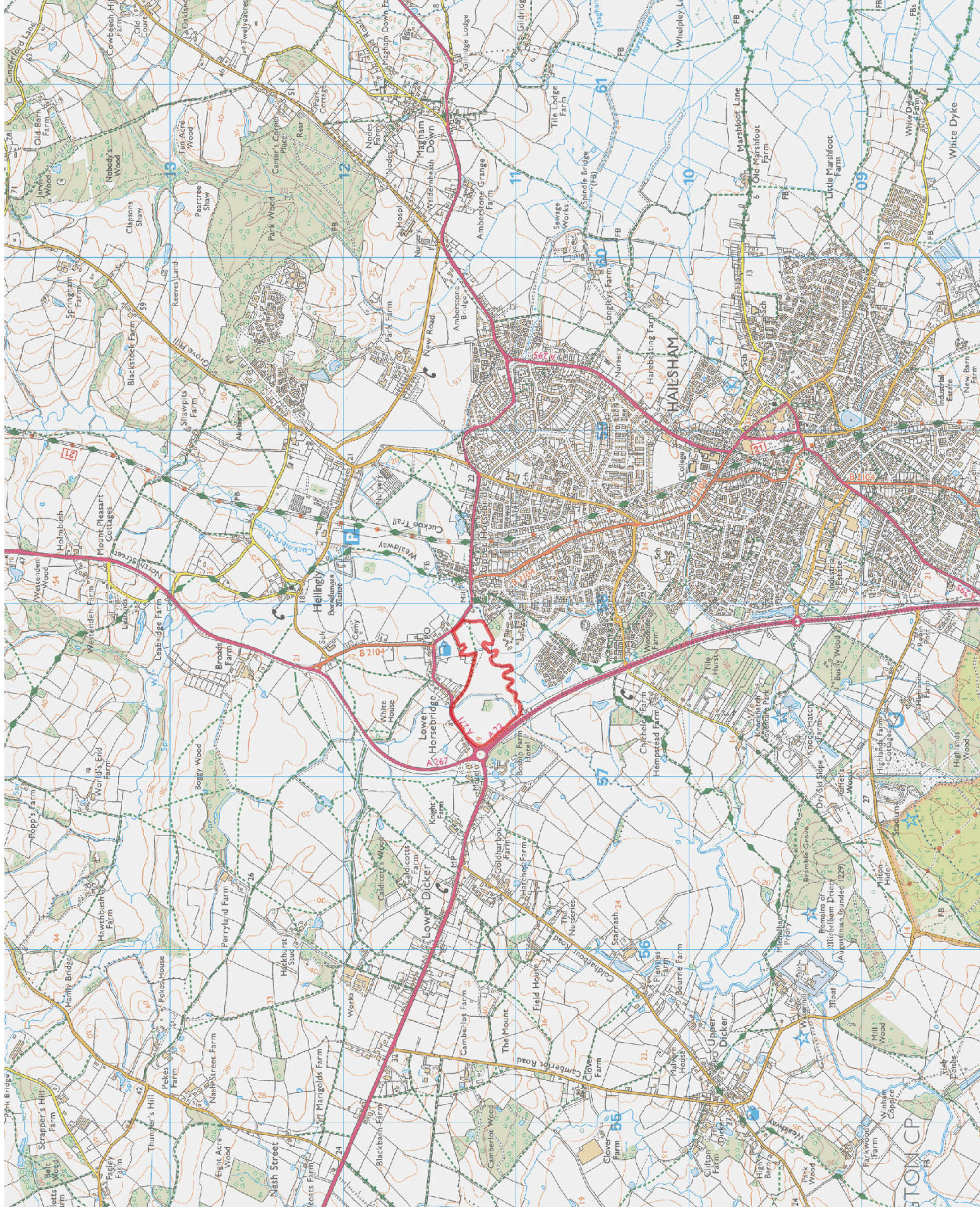
Potential landscape and visual impacts if site is developed

Key landscape effects

- The introduction of development across the whole of the site would erode the strategic gap between Lower Horsebridge and Upper Horsebridge/Hailsham and harm the pastoral character of the river Cuckmere corridor and landscape setting of Lower Horsebridge. However, most of the site is within flood zones 2 and 3, making development more problematic. If a smaller scale development were accommodated in the western corner of the site (in the area outside flood zones 2 and 3), landscape effects would be more limited. Development in this area could still diminish the pastoral character of the site to some extent and affect the character of the PRoW by increasing the extent of built edge along the river corridor. However, it is likely that the strategic gap between Lower Horsebridge and Upper Horsebridge/Hailsham could be maintained intact. In addition, development in this area could form a continuation to the settlement pattern of Lower Dicker along the A271 and relate to the existing concentration of development around the A22/A271 roundabout junction
- Potential landscape effects arising from development of the site could be mitigated to some extent through: location of development on the western side of the site outside floodzone 2/3; retention of the river corridor as a pastoral landscape; creation of a landscape buffer between the development edge and the PRoW which passes along the northern edge of the site; retention of existing boundary vegetation around the perimeter of the site; and designing development with a scale and character appropriate to the landscape character and context of the site

Key visual effects

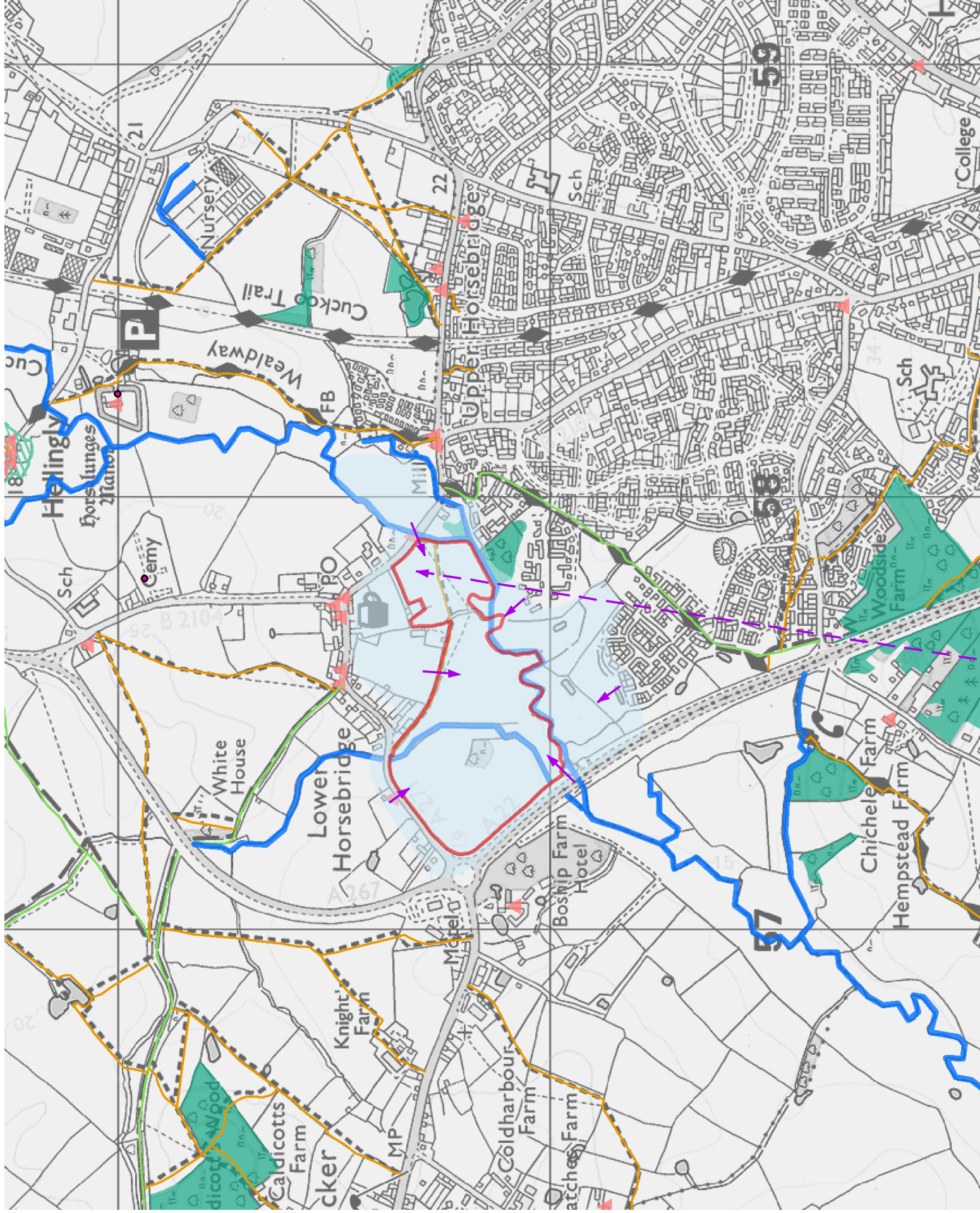
- Without appropriate mitigation measures there is the potential for the character and quality of views from the properties which overlook the site including those along the A271 and on the north side of Upper Horsebridge/ Hailsham to be affected. Views across the developed site would replace existing open views across the Cuckmere Valley. Views from the PRoW which passes along the northern edge of the site could also be similarly affected (particularly the western end).
- Potential visual effects arising from development of the site could be mitigated to some extent through: location of development on the western side of the site; retention of the river corridor as a pastoral landscape; creation of a landscape buffer between the development edge and the PRoW which passes along the northern edge of the site; retention of existing boundary vegetation around the perimeter of the site; and designing development with a scale and character appropriate to the landscape character and context of the site



L16418 Hailsham Are.
Lower Horsebridge
780/3100 Land east of

Site Location

Figure 780/3100/L01
1:25 000@A3

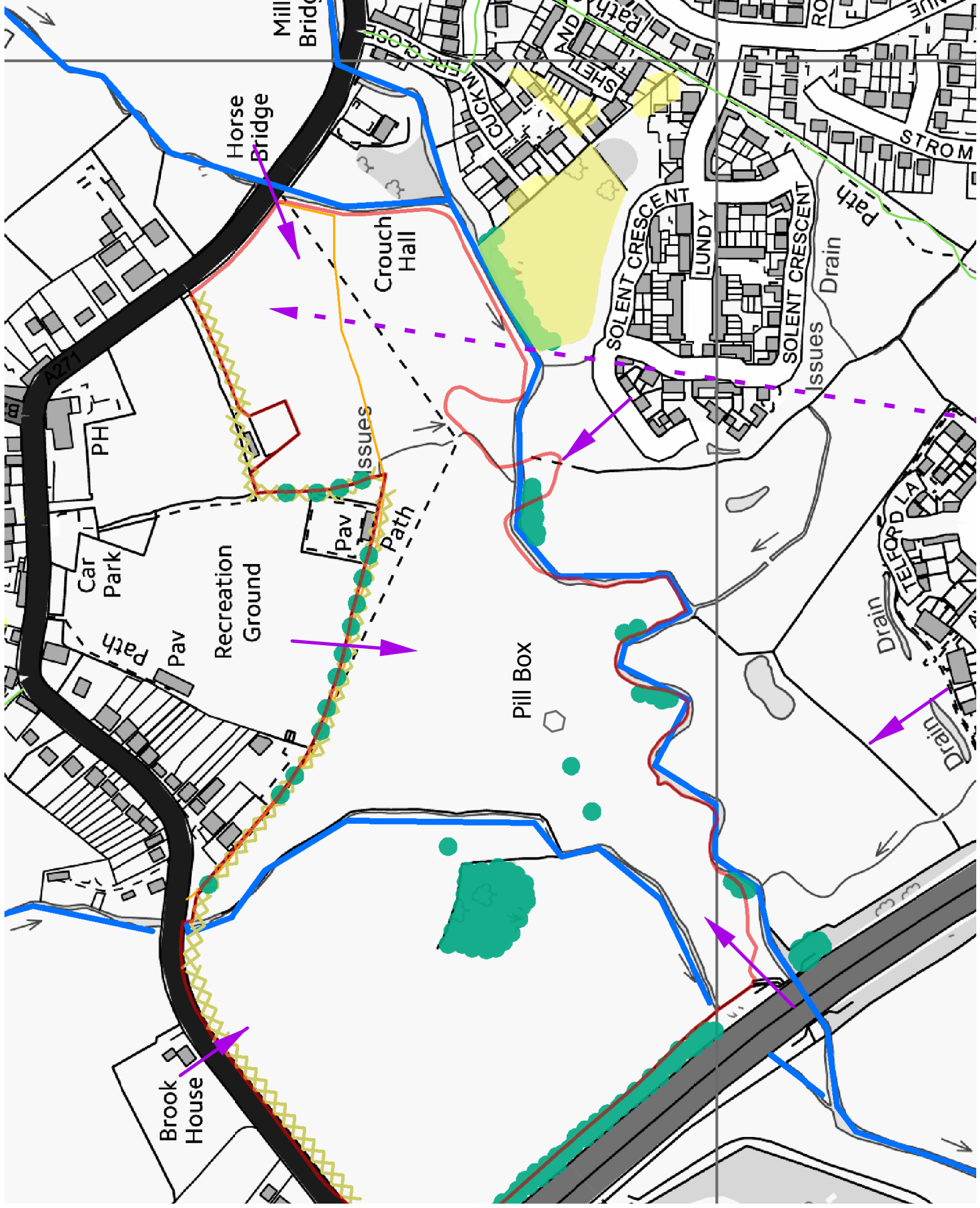


L16418 Hailsham Area
Lower Horsebridge
780/3100 Land east of

Landscape and Visu

Figure 780/3100/L02
1:10 000@A3

Oct 2016



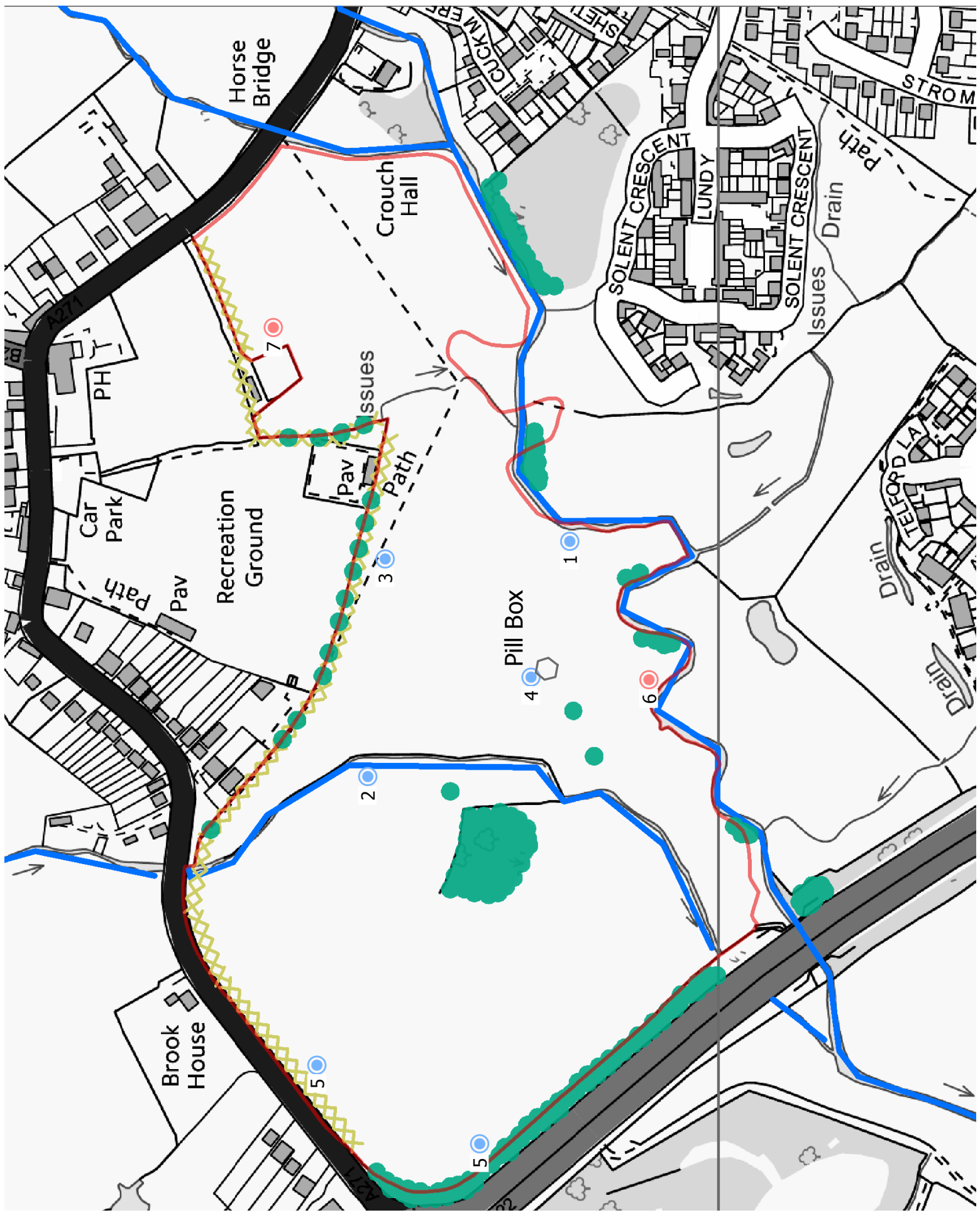
L16418 Hallsam Are.
Lower Horsebridge
780/3100 Land east of

Site Analysis

Figure 780/3100/L03
1:3 000@A3

Oct 2016

Landscape Features
safeguarded/r
Landscape Opportunity



L16418 Halls Green Area
Lower Horsebridge
780/3100 Land east of

Landscape Opportunity

Figure 780/3100/L04
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