

Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

New Settlements and Large Urban Extensions

Final report

Prepared by LUC

July 2026



Wealden District Council

Landscape and Visual Appraisal New Settlements and Large Urban Extensions

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London SE1 8RD

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 LUC was commissioned by Wealden District Council in 2025 to prepare an addendum to the 2023 Landscape and Visual Appraisal: New Settlements and Large Urban Extensions¹.

1.2 The addendum includes assessments of eight potential development sites located on the fringes of five settlements, and includes:

- East Hoathly – Land at Laughton Park Farm
- Horam – a group of sites to the south of Horam around Coxlow Farm.
- Maresfield – Ashdown Business Park Extension
- Polegate – two sites at Polegate West.
- Uckfield – two sites on the edge of Uckfield at Hempstead Farm, Land at High Cross Farm, and Land at White House Farm

1.3 The Coxlow Farm, Horam site was updated from the 2023 report to update references to views to the South Downs National Park, and now supersedes that original assessment.

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

1.5 This also includes specific guidance for each site with measures to avoid/minimise any potential landscape and visual effects that could arise from the introduction of development, as well as potential landscape enhancement measures.

1.6 As an addendum to the 2023 report the Landscape and Visual Appraisal follows the same methodology as the original report. Any updates to the 2023 report are noted below.

¹ Wealden District Council, Landscape and Visual Appraisal: New Settlements and Urban Extensions (2023),

<https://www.wealden.gov.uk/UploadedFiles/3.-Landscape-Visual-Appraisal-New-Settlements-and-Large-Urban-Extensions.pdf>

Policy context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

1.7 In December 2025 a consultation draft of the revised NPPF was published. This has removed reference to valued landscapes. The objective stated in Chapter 19 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment is to “influence the design and location of new development to help drive nature’s recovery and contribute to wider environmental outcomes, safeguarding our most important habitats, species and landscapes and recognising the centrality of natural capital to delivering sustainable growth.”

1.8 Paragraph N1 states that development plans should safeguard and enhance the natural environment:

- A) Set out the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and areas of importance for their landscape, geological (including soil) or biodiversity value in the plan area, and identify other features which require particular consideration in managing development due to their environmental value such as chalk streams...
- B) Identify opportunities for the conservation, enhancement and recovery of landscapes, sensitive waterbodies, habitats and species of principal importance ...
- C) Steer the location of development, including through site allocations, in ways which utilise land of least

environmental value where that would be consistent with other policies in this Framework. This should include limiting the scale and extent of development within protected landscapes, avoiding the use of higher quality agricultural land where land of poorer quality is available and avoiding and minimising harm to designated sites of importance for nature ...

Units for appraisal

1.9 As in the previous 2023 report, this report assesses the landscape and visual sensitivity of sites identified by Wealden District Council as potential large strategic growth areas. These potential development sites are mapped on Figure 1.1.

1.10 Each potential development site is assessed in relation to the type of development (housing or employment) proposed within the Wealden Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). These sites are intended to incorporate between 90-4,0000 residential dwellings and other associated land uses, including employment, open space, community uses and infrastructure.

1.11 The list of sites assessed is shown in Table 1.1 below

Table 1.1: Potential development sites

Potential Development Site	Site reference	Development type and potential yield
Nearest settlement: East Hoathly		
Land at Laughton Park Farm, Halland/East Hoathly	1235/1950	Residential – 4,000 dwellings Employment – 30,000 sqm
Nearest settlement: Horam		
Land adjoining Coxlow House, A267	123/3030	Assessed as a group. Mixed Use – 750 dwellings, primary school and employment uses NB this is an update to the 2023 assessment.
Coxlow Farm	875/3030	
Oakhurst House/Studio, A267	1054/3030	
Land adjacent Burlow Cottage, A267	1059/3030	
Land east of Horam Road	1171/3030	
Land at Chestnuts Farm, Horebeech Lane	1172/3030	
Land at Burlow, Horam	1173/3030	

Potential Development Site	Site reference	Development type and potential yield
Nearest settlement: Maresfield		
Ashdown Business Park Extension	980/3120	Employment – 45,000 sqm
Nearest settlement: Polegate		
Polegate West	1069/1510	Mixed Use – 1,500 dwellings, green and social infrastructure network, publicly accessibly park land, recreation, open space and up to 0.35ha of small-scale employment.
Polegate West	204/1510	Mixed Use – 230 dwellings, green and social infrastructure network, publicly accessibly park land, recreation, open space and up to 0.35ha of small-scale employment.
Nearest settlement: Uckfield		
Hempstead Farm, Uckfield	1232/1410	Residential – 200 dwellings
Land at Hempstead Lane, Uckfield	725/1410	Residential – 320 dwellings Assessed as a group. NB 725/1410 was assessed as part of the East of Uckfield group in 2023
Land at White House Farm, London Road, Uckfield	1007/1410	Residential – 240 dwellings
Land at High Cross Farm, Eastbourne Road, Uckfield	400/1410	Residential – 90 dwellings

Assessment Profiles

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

Landscape Context

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

- Site details;
- Settlement context; and
- Landscape character (as described in the Wealden Landscape Character Assessment, 2022).

Landscape Sensitivity Context

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

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

Site Baseline

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

- Key landscape features and qualities of the site and how these relate to the character of the wider LCA.
- Designations which may inform development, including:
 - Absolute Constraints to development – Flood Zone 3 and statutory international ecological designations including Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC);
 - Landscape designations – South Downs National Park and High Weald AONB;
 - National and local ecological designations – National Nature Reserves (NNR), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ancient woodland, Biological Opportunity Areas (BOA), and Priority Habitats; and

- Heritage designations – Scheduled monuments, Listed buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered battlefields, and Conservation Areas.
- Relation of the site to the existing settlement form and edge.
- Baseline visual character identifying potential visual receptors, including potential inter-visibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park.

Maps including:

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

Site Analysis

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

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

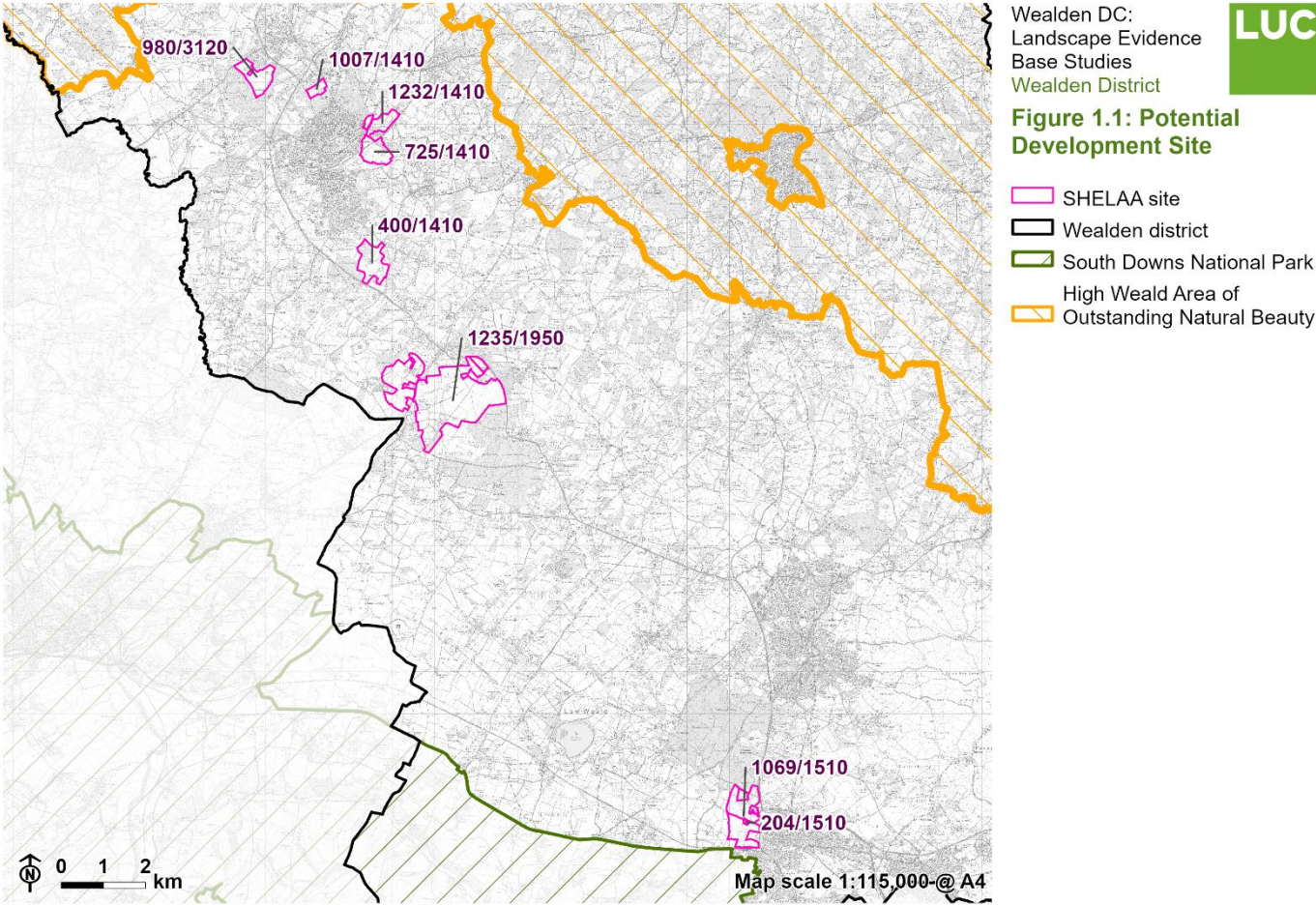
1.17 Cumulative effects of other strategic new settlements and large urban extensions are also considered.

Constraints and Opportunities

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

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

Figure 1.1: Potential development sites



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Chapter 1

Introduction

Landscape and Visual Appraisal Addendum

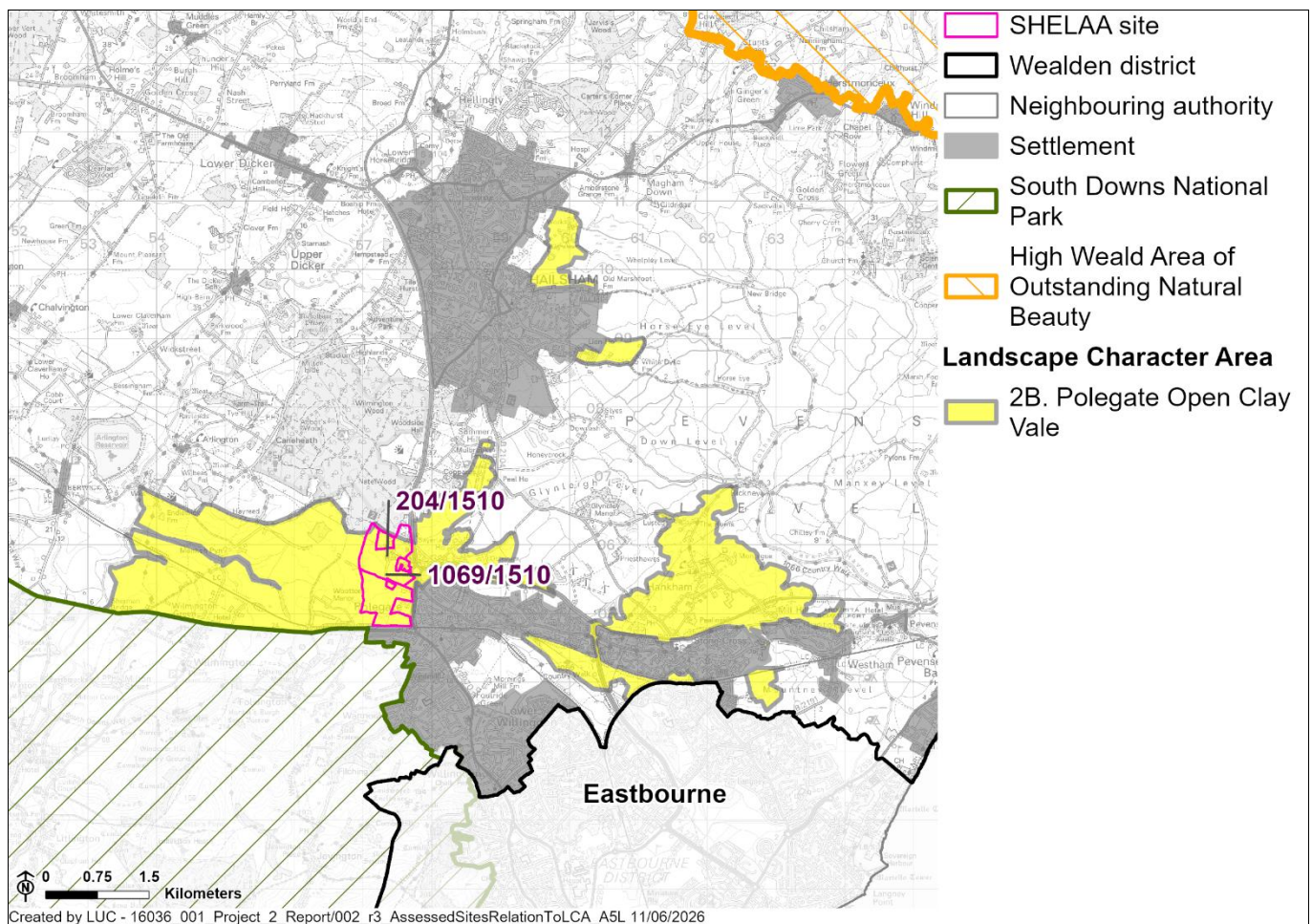
July 2026

Appendix A

Assessment Profiles

LCA 2B Polegate Open Clay Vale

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



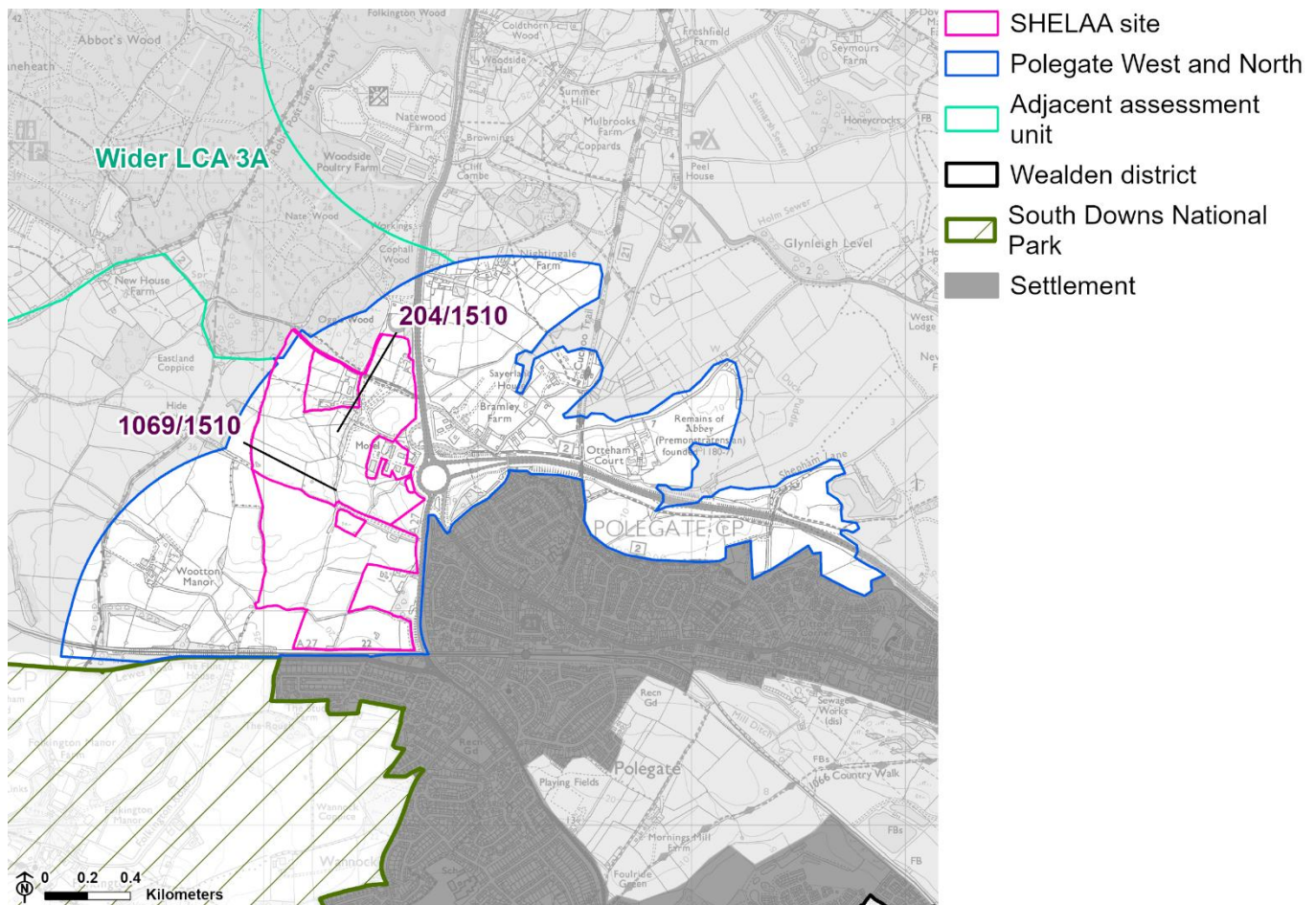
Landscape Character Assessment baseline (2022)	
Landscape Character Type (LCT) and Area (LCA)	LCT 2 Open Clay Vale (Low Weald) LCA 2B Polegate Open Clay Vale
LCA description	LCA 2B Polegate Open Clay Vale is a low-lying landscape of mixed arable and pasture farmland, with a small-scale settlement pattern linked by a network of enclosed rural road corridors. The landscape comprises small-medium fields with a strong hedgerow network. Limited tree cover leads to open views south towards the South Downs National Park. The rural character of the landscape is compromised by its proximity to Hailsham and Polegate and the busy A27 and A22 (that are duelled carriageways in part), which cross the landscape.
Valued features and key qualities of the LCA	■ The small streams and drainage ditches that cross the LCA. ■ The scattered woodlands and hedgerow boundaries with mature hedgerow trees. ■ Soils that are under permanent pasture and woodland. ■ The pattern of woodlands, some ancient, traditional orchards and hedgerow network with mature hedgerow trees. ■ The floodplain grazing marsh and lowland fen associated with the Pevensey Levels. ■ The mixed agricultural character. ■ The historic features of the landscape (historic field patterns, historic buildings and designed landscape at Wootton Manor). ■ The vernacular of flint and brick. ■ The public rights of way and promoted routes such as the 1066 Country Walk. ■ Open views from the LCA to the South Downs, Abbot's Wood and over the Pevensey Levels.

Landscape sensitivity context: Polegate West and North

Two potential development sites are considered within the Polegate West and North **Assessment Unit**:

- 1069/1510 Polegate West
- 204/1510 Polegate West

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



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project 2_Report/003_r6_AssessedSitesRelationToAssessmentUnit_A5L 29/07/2026

Settlement context (adapted from Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2023))

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

Settlement pattern and
edge character

The west of Polegate is contained by the A27 Polegate Bypass, which forms a strong settlement boundary. Woodland along the A27 means there is no relationship between land to the west of the road and the existing western settlement edge of Polegate. The western settlement boundary consists of 20th century bungalows and two storey detached and semi-detached houses, with no particular local vernacular present.

Development west of the A27 is limited. Cophall services to the west of the Cophall roundabout includes a petrol station, cafes, motel and ambulance station, and there is a collection of residential and agricultural buildings at Cophall Farm to the north-west. Allotments lie south of Cophall roundabout, with a commercial waste facility / truck parking further south.

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

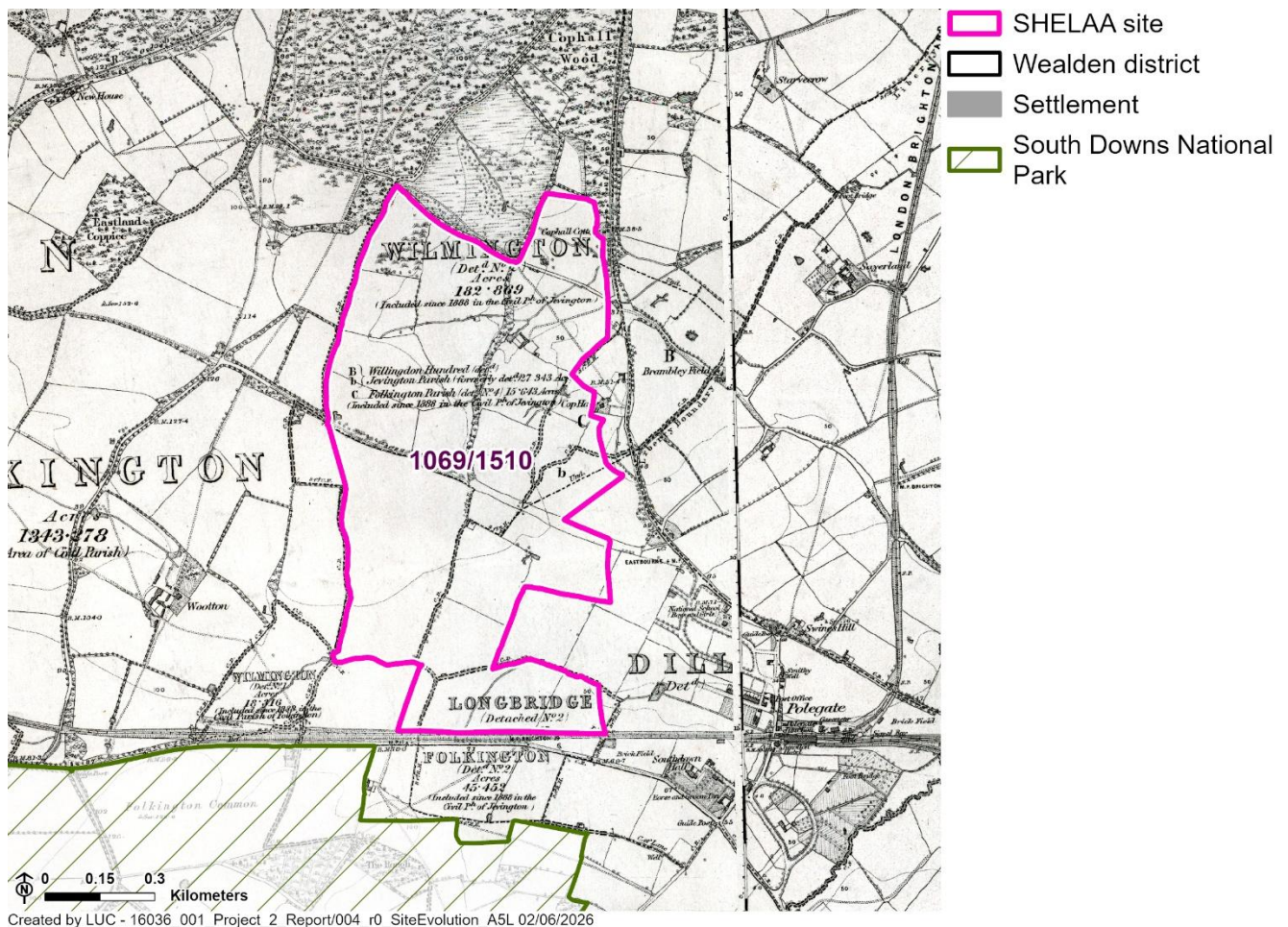
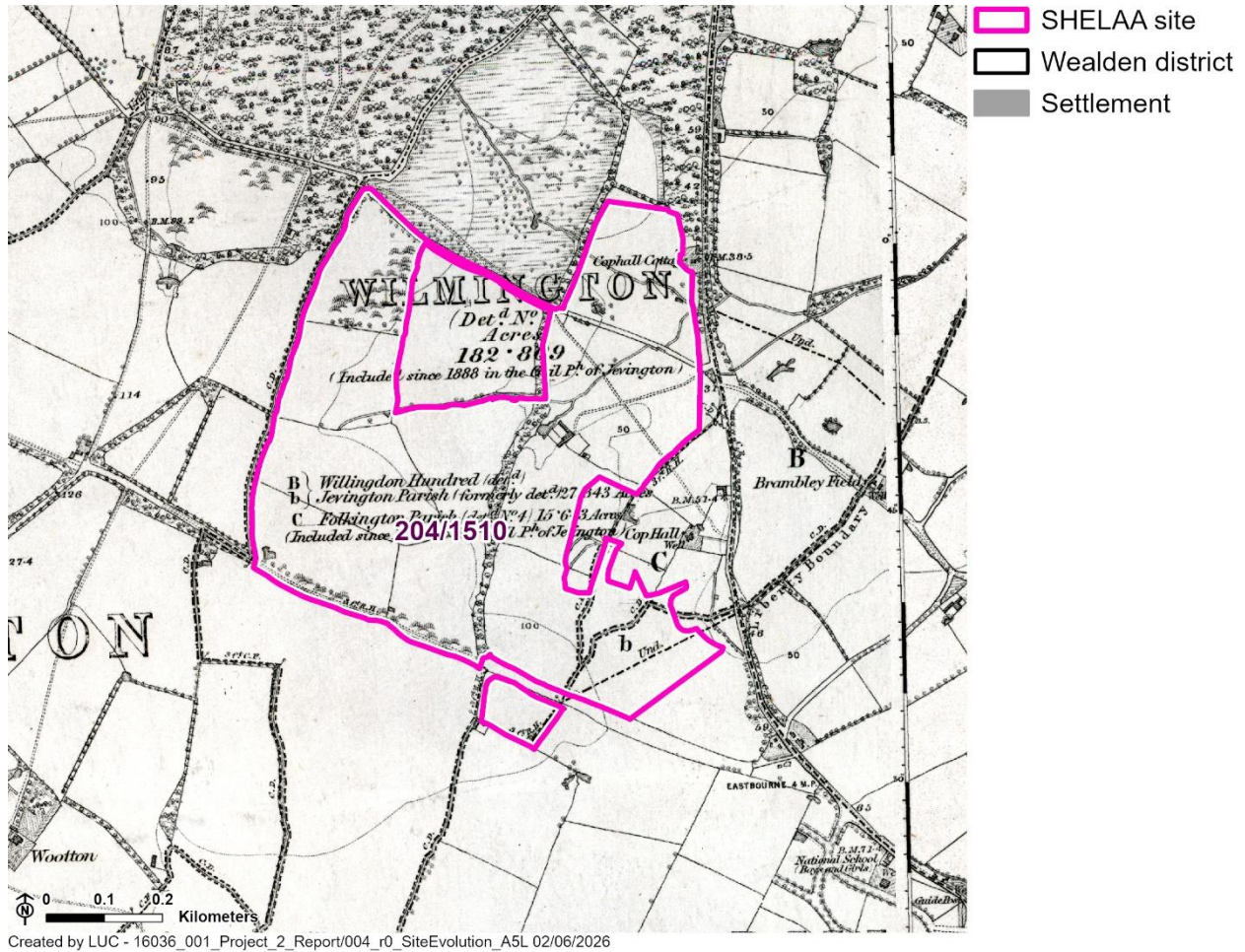


Figure A.4: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_2_Report/004_r0_SiteEvolution_A5L 02/06/2026

The Landscape Sensitivity of the Polegate West and North assessment unit described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA assessment unit	Polegate West and North		
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA assessment unit	Small scale residential 2-2.5 storey housing	Medium scale residential 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	Commercial/ industrial e.g. industrial units or hotels
	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High
Noted variations in landscape sensitivity	- Areas of ecologically valued broadleaved woodland, including ancient woodland, are of higher sensitivity. The designated parkland at Wootton Manor and historic features around Otham Court are also of higher sensitivity. - Areas immediately adjacent to the Cophall roundabout are likely to have a slightly lower sensitivity to commercial / industrial development as larger-scale buildings are already present in these locations. - Areas south of the A27 may have a lower sensitivity to small-scale residential development as they would relate to the existing settlement form and would be contained by the strong boundary feature of the A27.		
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	- Mature deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin). - The strong network of thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees. - Small-scale intact historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts. - Historic features at Otham Court and the designed landscape at Wootton Manor. - The limited settlement within the landscape. - The strong settlement boundaries of Polegate provided by the A27 and A22. - Contribution to the sense of separation between Polegate and Hailsham. - The wooded horizons provided by Ogg's Wood. - Occasional views to the South Downs National Park.		
LSA Guidance	- Locate development adjacent to the existing Polegate settlement edge, south of the A27, using existing vegetation to integrate development into the landscape. - Retain and protect broadleaved woodland. Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow an appropriate buffer around them to protect from root damage. - Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Wilmington Woodlands and Watershed, Cuckoo Trail Habitat Link and Wootton Manor Grasslands Link BOA, where possible, including the management, creation and extension of woodland and wetland habitats. - Retain hedgerow or in-field trees, including tree clumps, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. - Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of, or damage to, hedgerows,		

	mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities around Wootton Manor and Otham Court. ■ Ensure development north of the A27 does not lead to a perception of coalescence with Hailsham. ■ Consider views from public rights of way, including the Cuckoo Trail when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape.
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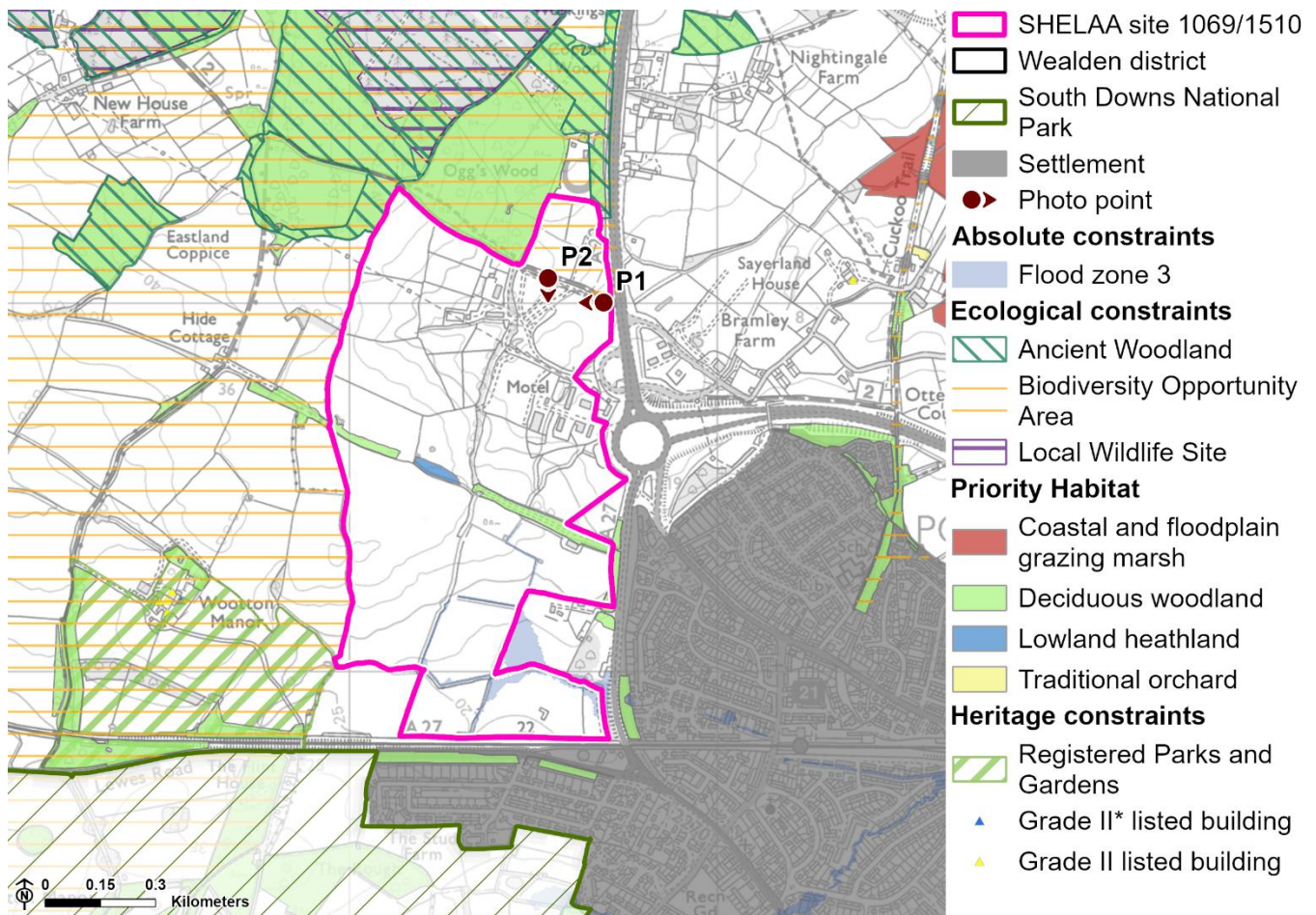
Site Assessment: Polegate West

Site details

SHELAA site name / reference	1069/1510
Potential development	Mixed land use including up to 1,500 dwellings and additional community focussed mixed use of small-scale employment adjacent to Polegate services.
Site location	The site lies to the west of the A27 Polegate Bypass. It stretches from Ogg's Wood in the north to the A27 Lewes Road in the south.

Site baseline

Figure A.5: Site location and constraints



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Wooded boundaries along the public right of way through the north of the site, with the pylon route visible above the treeline



Viewpoint 2: Undulating farmland with modern development at Cophall services visible. The South Downs National Park is seen in the background.

Baseline landscape character in relation to the wider assessment unit

Key features and qualities of the site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	Landform The site is typical of the undulating landscape of the assessment unit. It rises to the north-east from 20m AOD in the south along the railway line and A27 to 40m at Ogg's Wood adjacent to the north of the site. Natural character As is typical of the wider assessment unit, landcover includes mixed farmland of pasture and arable fields bounded by strong hedgerow boundaries. The hedgerow which runs across the centre of the site is recorded as priority habitat deciduous woodland. Cophall Wood to the north-east of the site and Abbott's Wood / Wilmington Wood to the north-west of the site are both recorded as ancient woodland. As set out in the wider assessment unit, the north of the site lies within the Wilmington Woodlands and Watershed BOA. Small watercourses cross the north-east and south of the site. Land lying within Flood Zone 3 is located to the south-east adjacent to the railway line and A27 Polegate Bypass. There are a number of small scattered field ponds to the east of Cophall Farm and in the centre west. Landscape pattern and time depth The site's historic field pattern is typical of the wider assessment unit, including medieval cohesive assarts in the north and regular piecemeal enclosure in the south. Like the wider assessment unit, there are no recorded historic features within the site. Wootton Manor Registered Park and Garden lies to the south-west of the site. Recreational value Like the wider assessment unit there is limited public access within the site. Two public rights of way cross the north of the site, connecting Polegate with Wilmington Woods (open access land) to the west. Perceptual aspects Like the wider assessment unit, proximity to Polegate reduces tranquillity and dark skies, especially in the north of the site around the Cophall roundabout and services. An electricity pylon route crosses the north of the site. Other signs of
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	human activity include truck parking / waste management services located off the A27, which lie adjacent to the site.
Designations which are constraints to development	An area located along a small watercourse in the south of the site lies within Flood Zone 3. Cophall Wood to the north of the north-east of the site and Abbott's Wood / Wilmington Wood to the north-west of the site are both recorded as ancient woodland. Wootton Manor Grade II Registered Park and Garden lies adjacent to the south-west of the site.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The western settlement edge of Polegate is contained by the A27 Polegate Bypass, which forms a strong boundary feature. Woodland along the A27 means there is no relationship between land within the site, to the west of the road, and the existing settlement edge. The settlement edge consists of 20th century bungalows and two storey detached and semi-detached houses, with no local vernacular present. Development west of the A27 is limited. Cophall services to the west of the Cophall roundabout includes a petrol station, cafes, motel and ambulance station, and there is a collection of residential and agricultural buildings at Cophall Farm to the north-west. Outside of the site, allotments lie immediately south of Cophall roundabout, with a commercial waste facility / truck parking further south.

Baseline visual character

Baseline visual character	The site has a relatively enclosed character, typical of the wider assessment unit, due to hedgerows, roadside vegetation along the A27 to the east and south, and woodland to the north and north-west of the site. More open views to the west are backdropped by Wilmington Wood / Abbots Wood. Views into the site from the public rights of way which run through the north are restricted by the mature hedgerows. There are glimpsed views into the northern fields, and towards the Cophall services and buildings at Cophall Farm. Views west from Cophall services are terminated by the mature woodland field boundaries. Electricity pylons can be seen above the treeline. Views are also available from Cophall Farm, although views south are generally restricted by intervening vegetation and mature hedgerows. There are no views into the site from the A27 to the south, and glimpsed views into the south of the site from the A27 to the east. Views into the site from Wootton Manor to the south-west are also restricted by riparian vegetation and mature hedgerows.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB / South Downs National Park	There is some intervisibility with the upper slopes of the South Downs National Park from the higher ground in the north and centre of the site. The High Weald AONB forms a wooded backdrop to occasional long-distance views from the centre of the site.

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

The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development assesses the Polegate West and North assessment unit to have **moderate** sensitivity to small-scale and medium-scale residential development and **moderate-high** sensitivity to commercial / industrial development. The assessment unit indicates that the priority habitat deciduous woodlands, some of ancient origin, and floodplain grazing marsh, together with the strong hedgerow network, small-scale intact historic field patterns, occasional views to the South Downs National Park and

physical separation from Polegate due to the A22 and A27 increase sensitivity. Sensitivity is reduced by the assessment unit's flat landform, its limited historic features, its enclosed character and presence of the service station at Cophall roundabout. The sensitivity analysis notes that areas of ecologically valued broadleaved woodland, including ancient woodland, are of higher sensitivity than the wider assessment unit. The analysis also notes that areas immediately adjacent to the Cophall roundabout may have a slightly lower sensitivity to medium-scale and large-scale development as larger-scale buildings are already present in these locations.

The Site

The south of the site has a similar sensitivity to the wider assessment unit as it has an enclosed character, no public rights of way or historic features and limited natural heritage features. The north of the site has a higher sensitivity than the wider assessment unit due to proximity to ancient woodland at Cophall Wood to the north-east and Abbott's Wood / Wilmington Wood to the north-west, and open south-facing rising slopes which lead to visual connectivity with both the South Downs National Park to the south and High Weald AONB to the north. The public access through the north of the site also increases sensitivity compared to the wider assessment unit. The site is physically and visually screened from the western edge of Polegate due to the woodland along the A27. The south of the site is also separated from the existing settlement edge of Polegate by the A27 and the railway line.

Features which reduce sensitivity are proximity to the busy A27/A22 to the east and south which reduces tranquillity and remoteness, and the presence of the Cophall services in the north. As stated in the wider assessment unit, the areas immediately adjacent to the Cophall roundabout may have a slightly lower sensitivity to medium-scale and large-scale development as larger-scale buildings are already present in these locations.

Overall, it is considered that the site as a whole has a slightly higher sensitivity to larger-scale development than the wider assessment unit, with a **moderate sensitivity** to small-scale residential development and **moderate-high** sensitivity to medium-scale residential and commercial / industrial development.

Variations in sensitivity

The north of the site has a higher sensitivity due to proximity to Cophall Wood and Abbott's Wood / Wilmington Wood ancient woodlands, views into the site from public rights of way, and intervisibility with the South Downs National Park and High Weald AONB.

Land around the Cophall services may have a lower sensitivity to medium-scale residential and commercial / industrial development due to existing commercial development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	
Landscape character and features	Development on the site could affect: ■ Areas of intact historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the north. ■ The setting of the Wootton Manor Registered Park and Garden to the south-west. ■ The mature hedgerow and hedgerow trees, including the priority habitat deciduous woodland in the centre of the site. ■ Roadside trees including the wooded corridor of the A27, which forms a strong settlement boundary to Polegate. ■ Glimpsed views of the South Downs National Park from elevated land in the north and centre of the site, and towards the wooded backdrop of the High Weald AONB in the centre of the site.
Designated landscapes	The site lies in close proximity to the South Downs National Park. There is no intervisibility from the closest point in the south of the site due to the intervening settlement edge of Polegate. Wilmington Hill, Folkington Hill and Willingdon Hill form a distinctive backdrop to views from the centre and north of the site, and there is intervisibility between these elevated landforms and the site. The elevated land is over 2 km from the site, and although

	development on the site has the potential to alter this intervisibility, it is likely to be read as part of the wider Polegate conurbation. There are some long-distance views towards the wooded backdrop of the High Weald AONB from the centre of the site. As the High Weald AONB is over 8km away, any development on the site is unlikely to affect the special qualities of the AONB.
Settlement form, edge and setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The rural character of the site, with only limited development to the west of the A27. ■ The strong settlement edge formed by the A27 to the west and north of Polegate.
Visual amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Users of the public rights of way in the north of the site. ■ Residents at Cophall Farm. ■ Visitors to the Cophall services. ■ Users of the allotments to the east of the site. ■ Visitors to Wootton Manor to the south-west of the site. ■ Visitors to the higher elevations of the South Downs National Park.
Cumulative issues	
Potential for cumulative effects with other large strategic sites	SHELAA Site 204/1510 overlaps the north of this site and therefore would not be brought forward together. A large employment allocation (SHELAA Site 896/1510) lies to the east of the A22. Vegetation along the A22 restricts intervisibility between the sites. If both sites are brought forward the northern edge of Polegate would extend into the undeveloped rural landscape, and there would be an increase in commercial / industrial development on the northern edge of Polegate.
Potential for mitigation and enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Set development back from ancient woodland at Cophall Wood to the north-east and Abbott's Wood / Wilmington to the north-west and provide an appropriate buffer to protect the ancient woodland. ■ Set development back from Flood Zone 3 in the south-east. ■ Retain, protect and enhance the priority habitat deciduous woodland and the mature hedgerow belt through the centre of the site. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the north of the site. ■ Locate development away from the south-west of the site to ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities around Wootton Manor Registered Park and Garden. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced along the public rights of way within the north of the site. Ensure the current semi-rural experience of people using the allotments to the east of the site is preserved. ■ Locate development on lower elevations in the south of the site, utilising existing vegetation and new planting to integrate development into the existing landscape. Design the location of buildings and planting to minimise views from the South Downs National Park, considering scale, design, materials, choice and location of planting.	

- Concentrate any industrial / commercial development around the Cophall services, while ensuring that any views to the South Downs National Park to the south are retained.
- Take opportunities to reduce the visual impact of the railway, A27 and A22, and existing development at Cophall services in any development, through planting and careful design.

Summary

The site has a slightly higher sensitivity to larger-scale development than the wider assessment unit, with a moderate sensitivity to small-scale residential development and moderate-high sensitivity to medium-scale residential and commercial / industrial development.

Development of the site would introduce development to the west of Polegate, in an area which has limited development in-situ. If the site is considered for development, any proposed development would need to be planned with great care, especially in relation to the key sensitive features within and adjacent to the site. This would include setting development back from the floodplain of the small watercourse in the south-east of the site, and from the ancient woodland to the north-west and north-east. Development should be predominately located in the south of the site to avoid areas of remnant ancient woodland and to minimise intervisibility with the South Downs National Park. Commercial / industrial development should be set around the existing Cophall services development. Development in the south should also be mindful of the setting of the Wootton Manor Registered Park and Garden which lies to the south-west.

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

Figure A.6: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



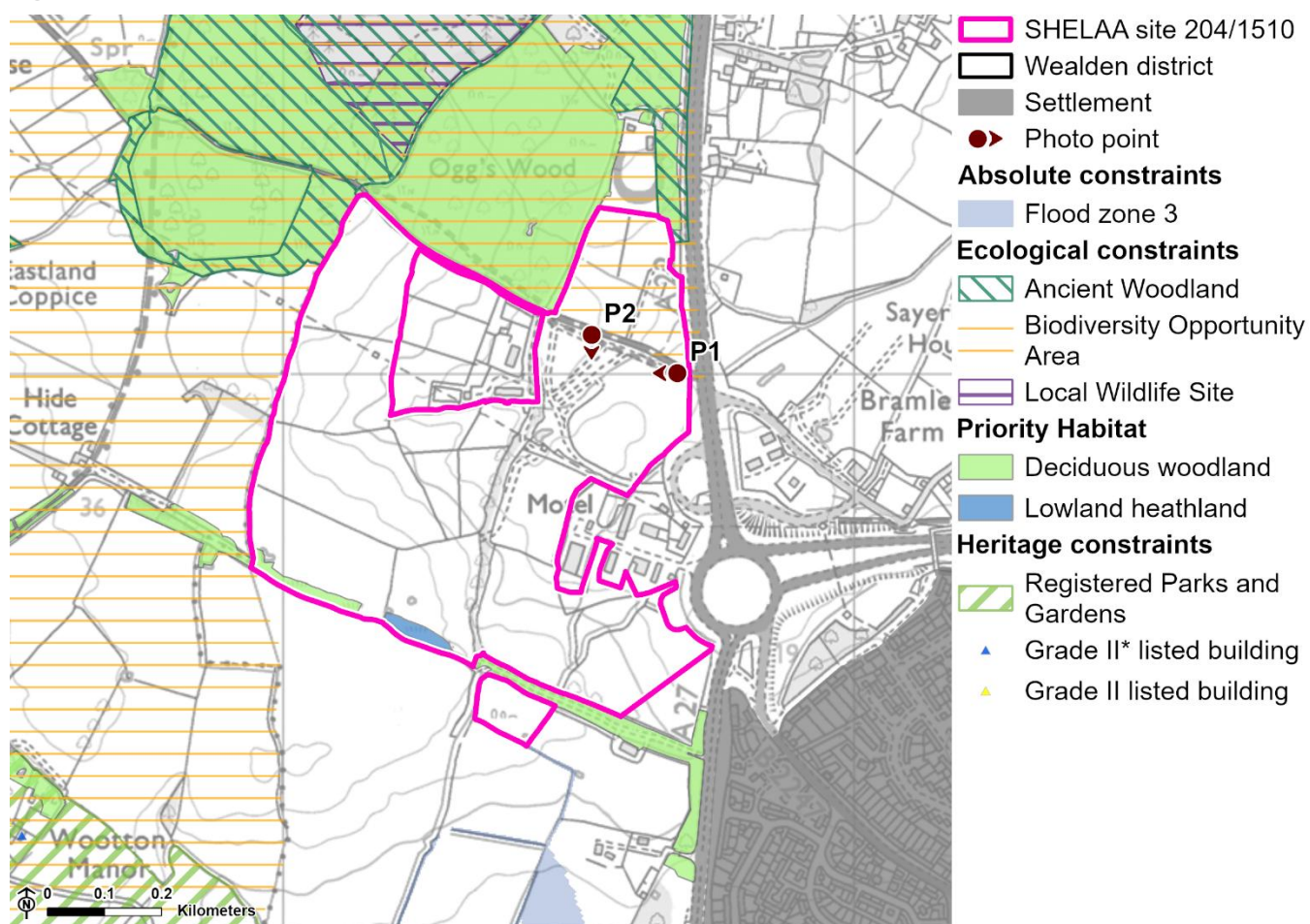
Site Assessment: Polegate West

Site details

SHELAA site name / reference	204/1510
Potential development	Mixed land use including up to 230 dwellings and additional community focussed mixed use of small scale employment adjacent to Polegate services.
Site location	The site lies to the west of the A27 Polegate Bypass. It stretches from Ogg's Wood in the north to the mature hedgerow south of Cophall services.

Site baseline

Figure A.7: Site location and constraints



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_2_Report/005_r5_LocationConstraints_A5L 06/07/2026

Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Wooded boundaries along the public right of way through the north of the site, with the pylon route visible above the treeline



Viewpoint 2: Undulating farmland with modern development at Cophall services visible. The South Downs National Park is seen in the background.

Baseline landscape character in relation to the wider assessment unit

Key features and qualities of the site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	Landform The site is typical of the undulating landscape of the assessment unit. It rises to the north-east from 20m AOD in the south-east along the A27 to 40m in the centre of the south and at Ogg's Wood in the north-west. Natural character As is typical of the wider assessment unit, the site has a mixed farming character of pasture and arable fields bounded by strong hedgerow boundaries. The hedgerow, which runs across the southern boundary is recorded as priority habitat deciduous woodland. Cophall Wood to the north of the north-east of the site and Abbott's Wood / Wilmington Wood to the north-west of the site are both recorded as ancient woodland. As set out in the wider assessment unit, the north-east of the site lies within the Wilmington Woodlands and Watershed BOA. Small watercourses cross the east of the site. There are a number of small, scattered field ponds to the east of Cophall Farm and in the south-west. Landscape pattern and time depth The site's historic field pattern of medieval cohesive assarts is typical of the wider assessment unit. Like the wider assessment, there are no recorded historic features within the site. Recreational value Like the wider assessment unit there is limited public access within the site. Two public rights of way cross the north of the site, connecting Polegate with the wider Wilmington Woods (open access land) to the west. Perceptual aspects Like the wider assessment unit, proximity to Polegate reduces tranquillity and dark skies, especially in the north of the site around the Cophall roundabout and services. An electricity pylon route crosses the north of the site.
Designations which are constraints to development	Cophall Wood to the north-east of the site and Abbott's Wood / Wilmington Wood to the north-west of the site are both recorded as ancient woodland.

Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The west of Polegate is contained by the A27 Polegate Bypass, which forms a strong settlement boundary. Woodland along the A27 means there is no relationship between land to the west of the road and the existing western settlement edge of Polegate. The western settlement boundary consists of 20th century bungalows and two-storey detached and semi-detached houses, with no particular local vernacular present. Development west of the A27 is limited. Cophall services to the west of the Cophall roundabout includes a petrol station, cafes, motel and ambulance station, and there is a collection of residential and agricultural buildings at Cophall Farm to the north-west. Outside of the site, allotments lie south of Cophall roundabout, with a commercial waste facility / truck parking further south.
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Baseline visual character

Baseline visual character	The site has a relatively enclosed character, typical of the wider assessment unit, due to hedgerows, roadside vegetation along the A27 to the east and south, and woodland to the north and north-west of the site. More open views to the west are backdropped by Wilmington Wood / Abbots Wood. Views into the site from the public rights of way which run through the north are restricted by the mature hedgerows. There are glimpsed views into the northern fields, and towards the Cophall services and buildings at Cophall Farm. Views west from Cophall services are terminated by the mature woodland field boundaries. Electricity pylons can be seen above the treeline. Views are also available from Cophall Farm, although views south are generally restricted by intervening vegetation and mature hedgerows. There are no views into the site from the A27.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB / South Downs National Park	There is intervisibility with the upper slopes of the South Downs National Park from the higher ground in the north and centre-south of the site. The High Weald AONB forms a wooded backdrop to occasional long-distance views from the centre-south of the site.

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

The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment to Residential and Employment Development assesses the Polegate West and North assessment unit to have **moderate** sensitivity to small-scale and medium-scale residential development and **moderate-high** sensitivity to commercial / industrial development. The assessment unit indicates that the priority habitat deciduous woodlands, some of ancient origin, and floodplain grazing marsh, together with the strong hedgerow network, small-scale intact historic field patterns, occasional views to the South Downs National Park and physical separation from Polegate due to the A22 and A27, increase sensitivity. Sensitivity is reduced by the assessment unit's flat landform, its limited historic features, its enclosed character and presence of the service station at Cophall roundabout. The sensitivity analysis notes that areas of ecologically valued broadleaved woodland, including ancient woodland, are of higher sensitivity than the wider assessment unit. The analysis also notes that areas immediately adjacent to the Cophall roundabout may have a slightly lower sensitivity to medium-scale and large-scale development as larger-scale buildings are already present in these locations.

The Site

The site has a higher sensitivity than the wider assessment unit due to proximity to ancient woodland at Cophall Wood to the north-east and Abbott's Wood / Wilmington Wood to the north-west, and open south-facing rising slopes which lead to visual connectivity with both the South Downs National Park to the south and High Weald AONB to the north. The public access through the north of the site also increases sensitivity compared to the wider assessment unit. The site is physically and visually screened from the western edge of Polegate due to the woodland along the A27.

Features which reduce sensitivity are proximity to the busy A27 to the east, which reduces tranquillity and remoteness, and the presence of the Cophall services in the north. As stated in the wider assessment unit, the areas immediately adjacent to the Cophall roundabout may have a slightly lower sensitivity to medium-scale and large-scale development as larger-scale buildings are already present in these locations.

Overall, it is considered that the site as a whole has a higher sensitivity to residential development than the wider assessment unit, with a **moderate-high sensitivity** to all scales of residential and commercial/industrial development.

Variations in sensitivity

Areas of higher sensitivity include land close to Cophall Wood and Abbott's Wood / Wilmington Wood ancient woodlands, and elevated land in the centre-south and north-west with intervisibility to the South Downs National park and High Weald AONB.

Land around the Cophall services may have a lower sensitivity to medium-scale residential and commercial / industrial development due to the existing commercial development.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	
Landscape character and features	Development on the site could affect: ■ The intact historic assart field pattern. ■ The mature hedgerow and hedgerow trees, including the priority habitat deciduous woodland along the southern boundary. ■ Roadside trees including the wooded corridor of the A27, which forms a strong settlement boundary to Polegate. ■ Glimpsed views of the South Downs National Park from elevated land in the north of the site, and towards the wooded backdrop of the High Weald.
Designated landscapes	Wilmington Hill, Folkington Hill and Willingdon Hill within the South Downs National Park form a distinctive backdrop to views from the north of the site, and there is intervisibility between these elevated landforms and the site. The elevated landforms within the national park are over 2 km from the site, and although development on the site has the potential to alter this intervisibility, it is likely to be read as part of the wider Polegate conurbation. There are some long-distance views towards the wooded backdrop of the High Weald AONB from the centre of the site. As the High Weald AONB is over 8km away, any development on the site is unlikely to affect the special qualities of the AONB.
Settlement form, edge and setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The limited residential development within land to the west of the A27, and commercial development restricted to the Cophall services. ■ The strong settlement edge formed by the A27 to the west of Polegate.
Visual amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Users of the public rights of way in the north of the site. ■ Residents at Cophall Farm. ■ Visitors to the Cophall services. ■ Users of the allotments to the east of the site. ■ Visitors to the higher elevations of the South Downs National Park.

Cumulative issues	
Potential for cumulative effects with other large strategic sites	SHELAA Site 1069/1510 overlaps this site (and extends further south). The sites would not be brought forward together, and there is no potential for cumulative effects. A large employment allocation (SHELAA Site 896/1510) lies to the east of the A22. Vegetation along the A22 restricts intervisibility between the sites. If both sites are brought forward the northern edge of Polegate would extend into the undeveloped rural landscape, and there would be an increase in commercial / industrial development on the northern edge of Polegate.
Potential for mitigation and enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Set development back from ancient woodland at Cophall Wood to the north-east and Abbott's Wood / Wilmington to the north-west and provide an appropriate buffer to protect the ancient woodland. ■ Retain the priority habitat deciduous woodland mature hedgerow belt on the southern boundary, to form a strong edge to development on the site. ■ Where possible preserve the historic assart field patterns, acknowledging this may not be possible across the entire site. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced along the public rights of way within the north of the site. Ensure the current semi-rural experience of people using the allotments to the east of the site is preserved. ■ Design the location of buildings and planting to minimise views from the South Downs National Park, considering scale, design, materials, choice and location of planting. ■ Concentrate any industrial / commercial development around the Cophall services, while ensuring that any views to the South Downs National Park to the south are retained. Take opportunities to reduce the visual impact of the A27/A22, and existing development at Cophall services in any development, through planting and careful design.	

Summary

The site has a higher sensitivity to residential development than the wider assessment unit, having a moderate-high sensitivity to all development types. This is due to the presence of ancient woodland, historic assart field patterns and views to both the South Downs and High Weald.

Development of the site would introduce development to the west of Polegate and the A27, in an area where current development is limited to the Cophall services and Cophall Farm. If the site is considered for development, any proposed development would need to be planned with great care, especially in relation to the key sensitive features within and adjacent to the site.

This would include setting development back from the ancient woodland to the north-west and north-east. Development should be designed to minimise intervisibility with the South Downs National Park. Commercial / industrial development should be set around the existing Cophall services development.

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

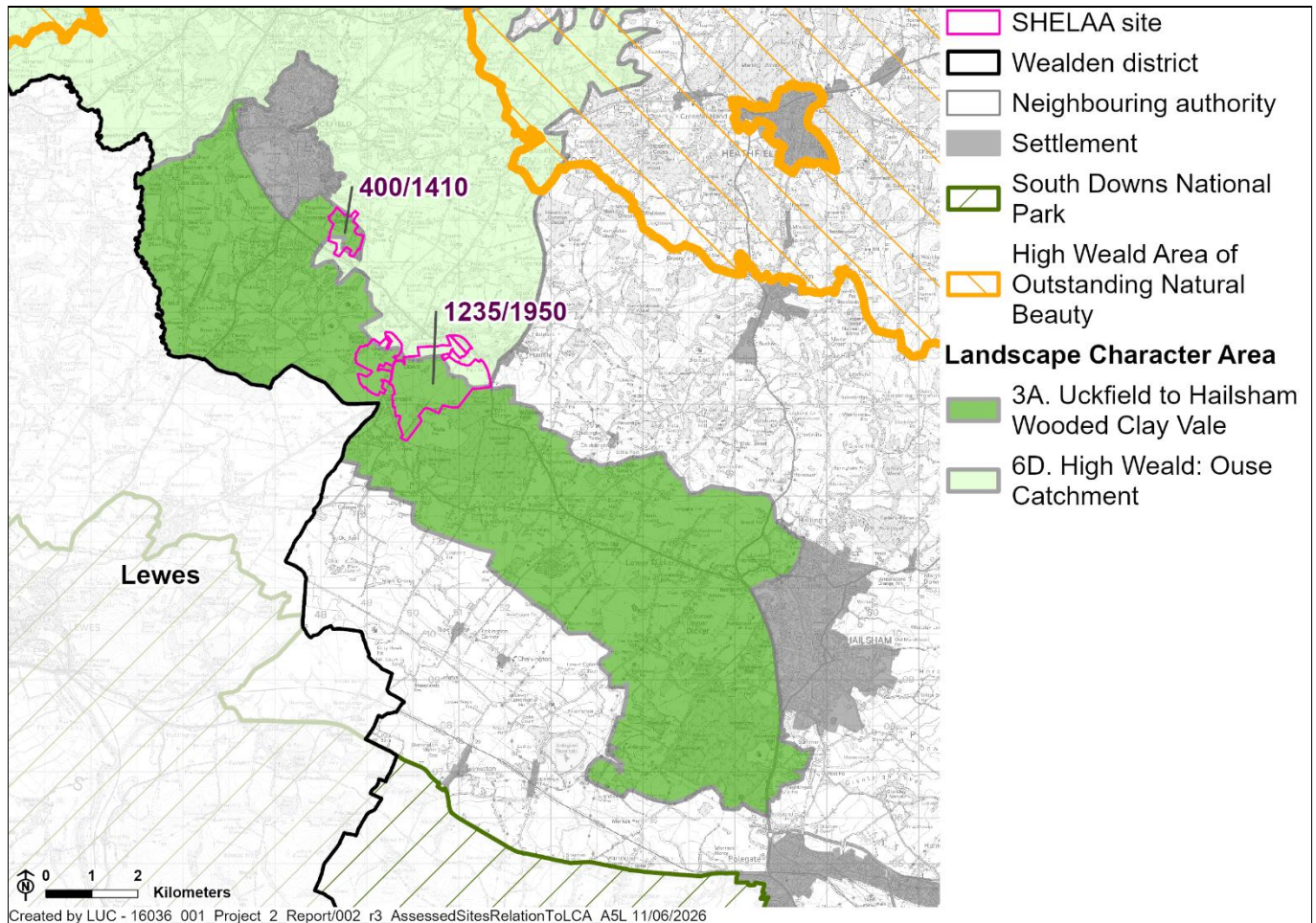
Figure A.8: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_2_Report/006_r3_AerialAbsoluteConstraints_A5L 11/05/2026

LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale

Figure A.9: Site locations in relation to the Landscape Character Area



Landscape Character Assessment baseline (2022)	
Landscape Character Type (LCT) and Area (LCA)	LCT 3 Wooded Clay Vale (Low Weald) LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale LCT 6 Wooded Slopes (High Weald) LCA 6D High Weald: Ouse Catchment
LCA description	LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale is a low-lying landscape crossed by the narrow river valleys of the Uck and its tributaries in the west and the Cuckmere in the east. The landscape supports a patchwork of arable and pastoral fields, interspersed with areas of woodland, much of ancient origin, and more extensive mixed plantations. Scattered linear settlements and farmsteads are strung along the rural road network. The edge of the LCA is strongly influenced by its proximity to Hailsham and Uckfield. LCA 6D: High Weald: Ouse Catchment is a rolling landscape of ridges and valleys containing the River Ouse and its tributaries that drain south-westwards from Ashdown Forest and the Central High Weald into Lewes District. A wooded landscape with an intricate pattern of small irregular fields, streams and small, historic ridge-top settlements. The High Weald AONB extends into the north of this LCA, west of Fletching and to the east of Blackboys and Buxted.
Valued features and key qualities of the LCA	LCA 3A ■ The river valleys of the Cuckmere, Ouse and Uck catchments. ■ The extensive woodlands, including deciduous woodlands, copses, mixed plantations and hedgerow boundaries. ■ The semi-natural habitats, including deciduous woodland, heathland and grasslands, some designated as SSSI. ■ Historic field patterns, rural hamlets and villages, country houses and parkland estates. ■ Public rights of way and open access woodlands. ■ The rural landscape, with a traditional small-scale pattern of small villages and scattered farms enclosed by woodlands. ■ Visual contrasts between an enclosed character from woodland and hedgerows and long views to the South Downs. LCA 6D ■ The distinctive landform of ridges and valleys associated with the River Ouse. ■ Hammer ponds and ghyll streams that support wetland habitats. ■ The woodland, riparian vegetation and wetland habitats of the Ouse and Uck catchments. ■ The mixed and deciduous plantations and coppiced woodland, ancient woodland, shaws, trees and hedgerows. ■ The wet meadows, unimproved and acid grassland, heathland and broadleaved woodland (including Buxted Park and Stockland Farm Meadows Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)). ■ The small-scale medieval field patterns, with sinuous hedgerow boundaries.

	■ Hammer ponds, coppiced woodlands and remnants of forges provide a link to the Wealden iron industry. ■ The dispersed pattern of ridge-top villages (whose value is recognised through designation as Conservation Areas), with landmark church spires and towers, and linked by winding rural lanes. ■ The vernacular architecture of brick, oak, sandstone and flint, which reflects the locally available materials. ■ Designated parklands at Sheffield Park, Buxted Park and Framfield Place. ■ The public rights of way provide recreational opportunities, with contrasting long views to the south, including the South Downs and enclosed views within the landscape. ■ Rural roads resulting from transhumance patterns of movement are part of the medieval landscape of the High Weald AONB. ■ The harmonious small-scale landscape pattern of mixed farms, dense woodland and open views across the wooded ridges and valleys contribute to the strong scenic quality of the area, reflected in its designation as an AONB. ■ The sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies in some areas, particularly away from the larger settlements in the south of the LCA, such as Uckfield.
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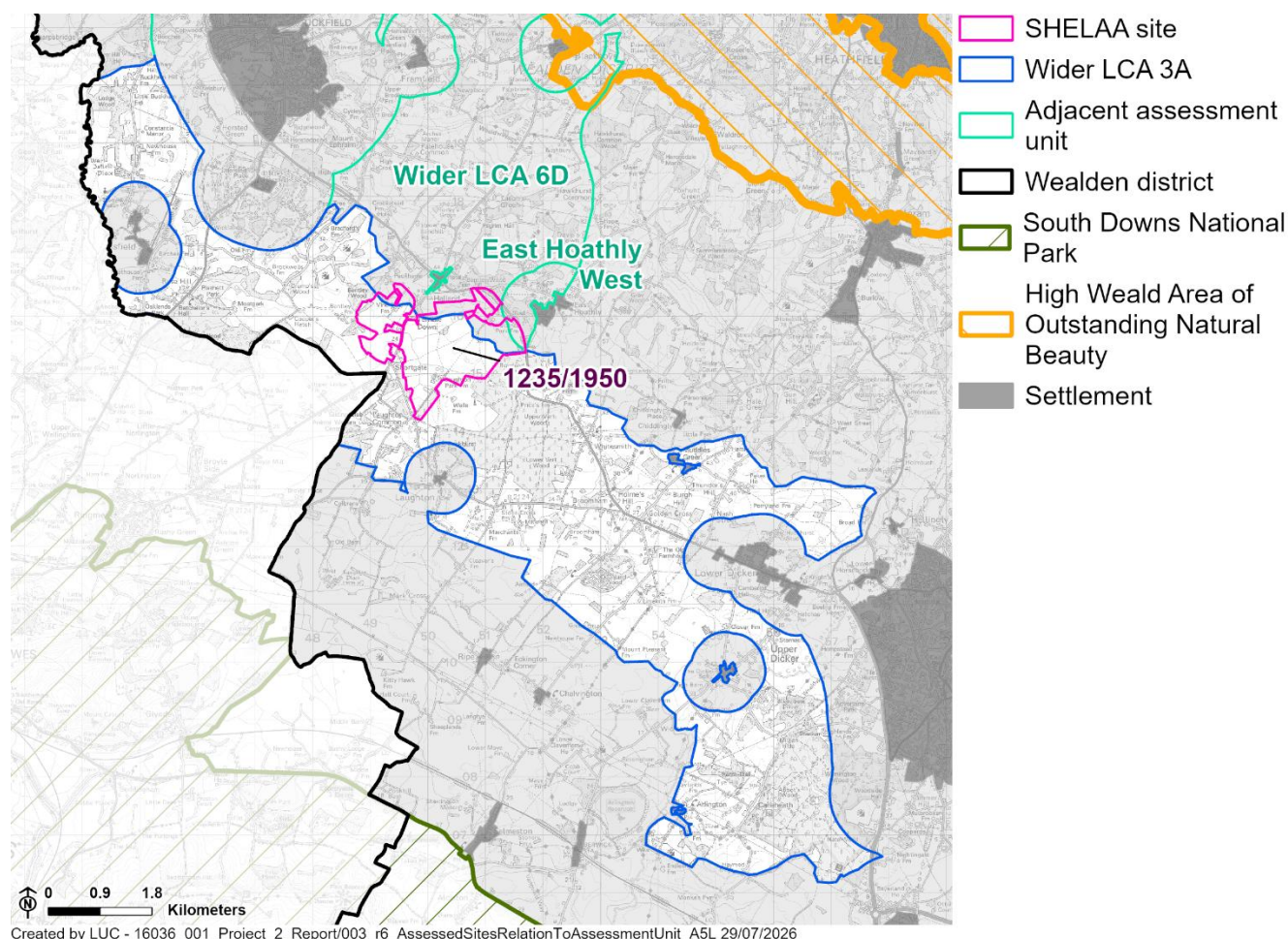
Landscape sensitivity context: Wider LCA for 3A Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale

One potential strategic development site is considered within the **Wider 3A Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale** assessment unit:

- 1235/1950 Land at Laughton Park Farm, Halland / East Hoathly

NB the north of the site lies within the Wider LCA for 6D High Weald: Ouse Catchment assessment unit. Where appropriate, similarities with the Wider LCA for 6D High Weald: Ouse Catchment assessment unit are noted.

Figure A.10: Site locations in relation to the assessment unit

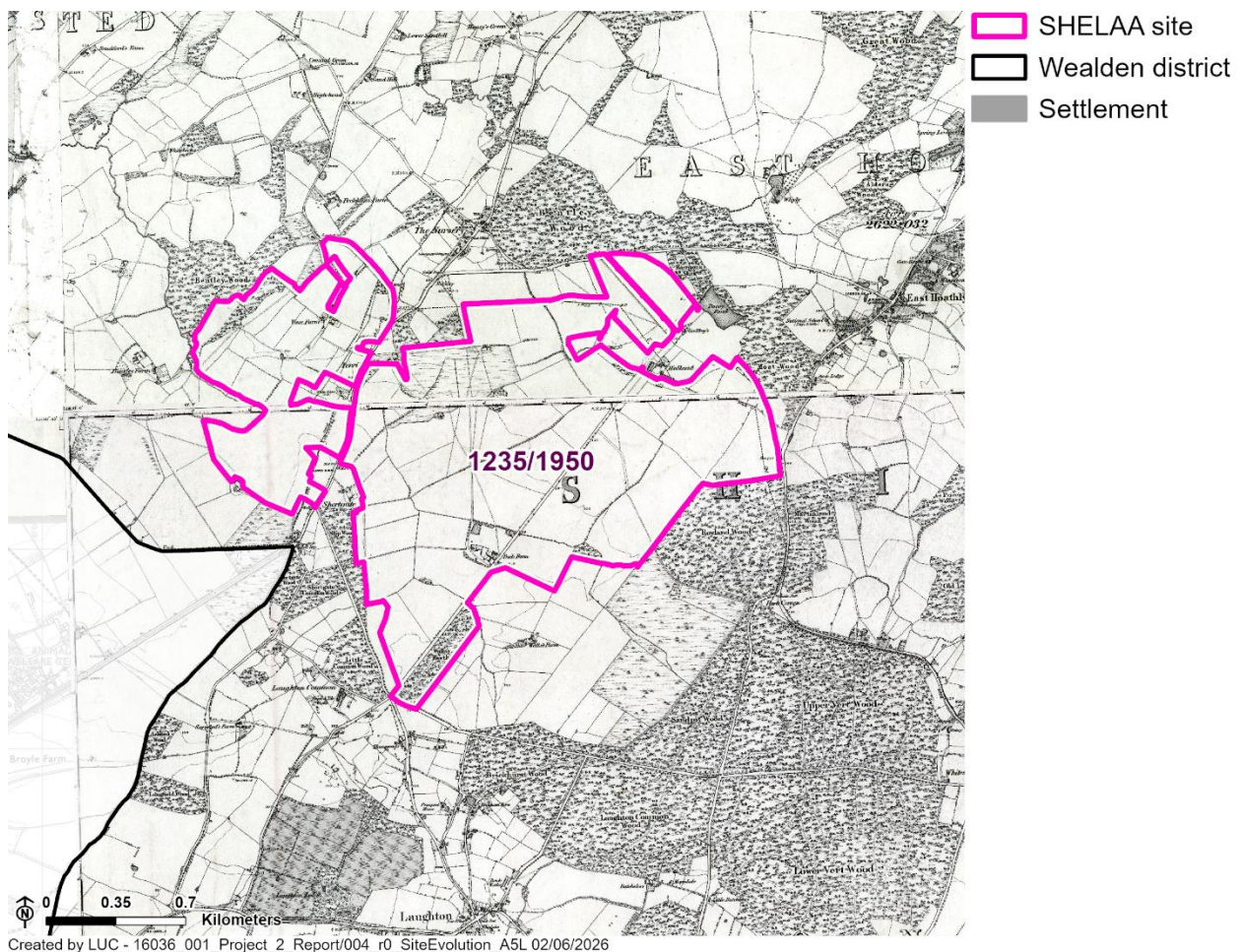


Settlement context (adapted from Landscape Character Assessment (2022) and Landscape Sensitivity Assessments (2023))

Settlement location and context	East Hoathly is a village in the centre west of Wealden district, surrounded by woodland. The west of the village lies within LCA 6D High Weald: Ouse Catchment, which transitions to the south of the village into LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale.
Settlement evolution	East Hoathly has medieval origins, and numerous prominent families from the landed gentry were historically linked to the area, including the Pelham, Gage, Lunsford and Nevill families. The village grew in the late 16th and early 17th century as a result of iron works in the locality. Other industries rose to prominence from the 18th century, including trug making and brick making. Further expansion of the village occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries, including a number of 20th century cul-de-sacs located to the west and east of the main road (South

	Street/High Street) that runs through the settlement. The historic core of the village is linear in form and located along Waldron Road, High Street and South Street. The village largely retains this linear character; however 20th century development has extended east and west, most recently west along East Hoathly (road). A number of listed buildings are located within the settlement, and the historic significance of the settlement is recognised through its designation as a Conservation Area, which extends across the settlement core and to the north towards Belmont.
Settlement pattern and edge character	The south-western settlement edge of East Hoathly is well-defined by ancient woodland at Moat Wood, beyond which lies the strong boundary feature of the A22.

Figure A.11: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



The Landscape Sensitivity of the Wider LCA 3A assessment unit described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA assessment unit	LCA 3A wider area Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale		
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA assessment unit	Small scale residential 2-2.5 storey housing	Medium scale residential 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	Commercial/ industrial e.g. industrial units or hotels
	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Noted variations in landscape sensitivity	- Existing commercial development around Golden Cross results in a lower sensitivity to development, in particular commercial / industrial development, as this would fit with the existing development pattern. - Ancient woodlands, including around Plashett Park Wood SSSI, are of higher sensitivity. - The landscape which provides a rural backdrop to Scheduled Monuments at Isfield and Michelham Priory, and Conservation Areas at Muddles Green and Arlington is of higher sensitivity.		
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	- Gently rolling landscape, bisected by river and stream corridors. - Ecologically valued woodlands and grassland, including ancient woodland and Plashett Park Wood SSSI. - Intact historic field pattern, including assarts around Halland, Whitesmith and the Dickers and co-axial fields east of Chalvington Road. - Pasture and arable fields bound by hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees. - Dispersed, rural settlement pattern. - Historic features including with historic farmsteads and houses, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas at Muddles Green and Arlington. - Good access on public rights of way through the landscape. - Rural character with good experience of tranquillity and dark night skies, away from modern development along the A22. - Occasional views to South Downs National Park and High Weald AONB.		
LSA Guidance	- Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands, and allow a buffer around them to avoid root damage. - Retain broadleaved woodland. 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, or damage to, hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. - Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest, River Uck and its Headwaters, River Cuckmere Habitat Link and Wilmington Woodlands and Watershed BOAs where possible, including woodland and wetland creation. - Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns.		

	■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities of Scheduled Monuments at Isfield, Michelham Priory, the setting to rural hamlets, including those with Conservation Areas, or appreciation of historic features including listed buildings. ■ Be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, and / or using species that are in character with the wider landscape. ■ Consider opportunities to better integrate existing commercial development at Golden Cross into the rural landscape, and ways to mitigate the noise and light pollution from the A22. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Consider views from popular public rights of way, particularly the Vanguard Way, when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape. ■ Retain occasional views to the South Downs National Park and High Weald AONB. ■ Minimise the influence of development on the rural character, dark night skies or tranquillity of the landscape.
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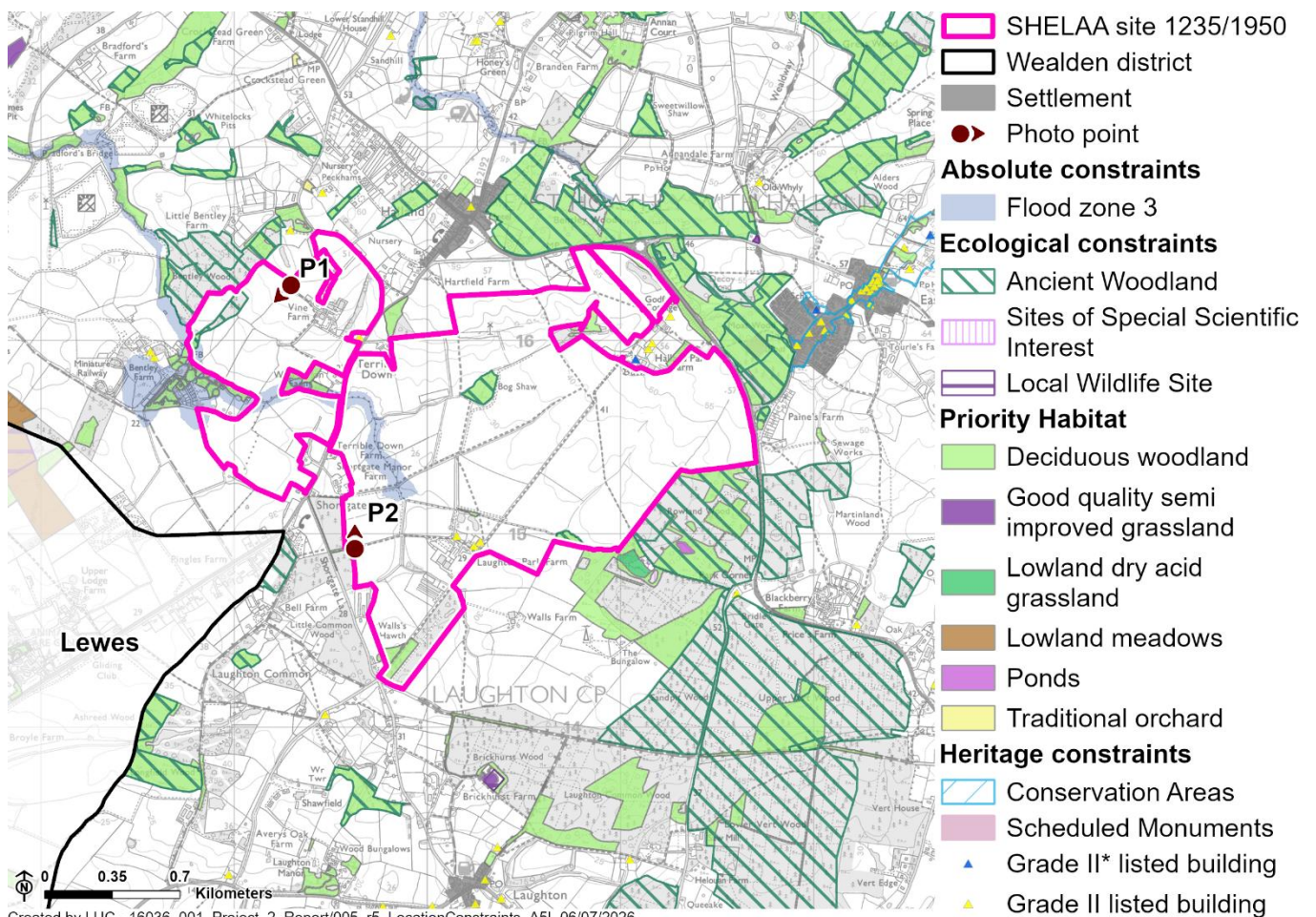
Site Assessment: Land at Laughton Park Farm, Halland / East Hoathly

Site details

SHELAA site name / reference	1235/1350
Potential development	Residential: 4,000 dwellings (925 during Plan period) Employment: 30,000 sqm The site is considered an Option (OEH1) for 4,000 dwellings and Option (OEMP2) for 30,000 sqm of employment development, together with substantial amounts of green space.
Site location	The site is located to the south-west of East Hoathly, between the A22 and Bentley Wood in the west and Shortgate in the south-west.

Site baseline

Figure A.12: Site location and constraints



Representative site photos



Long distance views south-west from the public right of way near Vine Farm



Views north towards East Hoathly from the public right of way crossing the site from Shortgate.

Baseline landscape character in relation to the wider assessment unit

Key features and qualities of the site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	Landform The site is typical of the gently rolling landscape of the assessment unit and consists of arable and pastoral farmland, between 25m to 40m AOD. In the north-east the topography rises more steeply towards the A22, rising to 57m AOD. Natural character Hedgerows across the site area vary, with some well-established and featuring mature hedgerow trees (which are typical of the wider assessment unit). This includes the hedgerows along the B2192 Lewes Road and farm tracks connecting Vine Farm and White Lion Farm. In the south-west hedgerows are clipped, while in the east some are fragmented. As is typical of the wider assessment unit, the site contains small deciduous woodland blocks. These include an area of ancient woodland at Bentley Wood in the north-west and at Bog Shaw in the centre. A mixed plantation is found in the south of the site, and the south-eastern boundary of the site is formed by mixed plantation woodland at Rowland Wood (which also contains a small area of ancient woodland). There are small ponds at Laughton Park Farm, and small watercourses cross the site. Landscape pattern and time depth The varied field pattern of the site is typical of the assessment unit, with assarts forming a key sensitivity for the wider assessment unit. Smaller scale fields in the north-west of the site around Vine Farm are remnants of historic field patterns, formed by assarts, with some surviving areas of piecemeal enclosure in the south of the site. Larger arable fields in the centre and east are the result of modern field amalgamation. Laughton Park Farm has a group of Grade II listed buildings (Park Farmhouse, Barn at Park Farm and Park Farm Cottages), and there are further listed buildings just outside the site boundary at Vine Cottage, Bentley Farm, Godfreys Cottage and Halland Park Farm. There are no other recorded historic features
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	within the site. This pattern of scattered farmhouses and cottages is typical of the assessment unit. Recreational value Public rights of way cross the site, connecting the farmsteads to nearby villages. These include a footpath running north to south through the centre of the site connecting Shortgate to East Hoathly, and a further route running east to west in the north of the site from Vine Farm towards the B2192. A footpath also links the site to Rowland Wood to the south-east. These routes contribute to the wider network of public rights of way which is typical of the assessment unit. Perceptual aspects The east and north of the site is influenced by its proximity to the A22 and the settlements of Halland and East Hoathly, which disrupts the tranquillity and the experience of dark skies typical of the wider assessment unit. However, land in the south and west of the site has a stronger rural character and sense of tranquillity, which is typical of the assessment unit.
Designations which are constraints to development	Flood Zones 2 and 3 are located along the watercourse which runs from the north-west to the south, from Bentley Wood to Shortgate Manor Farm and Laughton Park Farm. A group of Grade II listed buildings (Park Farmhouse, Barn at Park Farm and Park Farm Cottages) at Laughton Park Farm are located in the south of the site. There is a small pocket of ancient woodland in the north-west at Bentley Wood and at Bog Shaw in the centre. The wider Bentley Wood ancient woodland is located on the north-western site edge and Rowland Wood ancient woodland lies to the east.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The A22 forms a boundary feature to the south-west of East Hoathly. The wooded nature of the A22 and Moat Wood limits views into the site from the settlement edge. Halland lies to the north of the site, and woodland on the village boundary and Back Lane to the south of the village limits views towards the site. The site contains small-scale farmsteads at Laughton Park Farm and Vine Farm. These are a mix of historic farmhouses, cottages and barns with more modern agricultural barns. The site is also bordered by existing areas of settlement, largely comprising farmsteads and small areas of holiday accommodation. There are also some small areas of industrial / employment development along Shortgate Lane and B2192.

Baseline visual character

Baseline visual character	The site has a partially enclosed character, typical of the wider assessment unit, with views into and across the site restricted by woodlands within and on the edges of the site and mature internal roadside and field boundary hedgerows, particularly along the River Cuckmere corridor. Glimpsed, close- and middle-distance views across the site are available from the network of footpaths crossing the site and along the B2192 Lewes Road which crosses the site. Views from the A22 along the eastern site boundary are largely restricted by mature roadside vegetation, with glimpsed views into the site through gaps in vegetation. Views into the site from Knowle Lane on the north-western boundary are more open, with some long-distance views to the south towards the South Downs National Park. Views from Shortgate Lane to the south-west of the site are screened by woodland and mature roadside vegetation. Views are also available from the farmsteads and cottages of Vine Farm, White Lion Farm, Shortgate Manor Farm, Laughton Park Farm and Halland Park Farm
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	which lie within or just outside of the site. This includes views from listed buildings within the farmsteads. More distant views looking into and out from the site are generally restricted by intervening topography and vegetation.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB / South Downs National Park	Firle Beacon within the South Downs National Park can be seen on the horizon in views from Knowle Lane on the north-west boundary of the site. There is some intervisibility with elevated areas of the South Downs National Park. However, the site is seen in relatively distant views from these locations (approximately 8-10 km).

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

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assesses the Wider LCA 3A assessment unit to have a **moderate-high sensitivity** to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), medium scale residential development (3-4 storey flats/ care homes) and commercial/industrial development. The LSA indicates that the considerable deciduous woodland coverage, much of ancient origin, the varied field pattern, including medieval assarts, dispersed historic settlement character, rural character, strong network of public rights of way and occasional intervisibility with the South Downs National Park increase sensitivity. The areas of modern field amalgamation, impact on perceptual character due to the A22, and the visually enclosed character of much of the area reduces sensitivity.

The Site

The site demonstrates many of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit, including a gently rolling topography and mature small deciduous woodlands (including part of the ancient woodland at Bentley Wood in the north-west and Bog Shaw in the centre). Also similar to the wider assessment unit, the site has a mixed field pattern including remnants of historic assarts in the north-west and piecemeal enclosure in the north-west and south. The settlement pattern of scattered historic farmhouses and cottages is also similar to the wider assessment unit. The site is also characterised by a strong network of public rights of way, remoteness and tranquillity, and occasional glimpsed views to the South Downs National Park from the north-west.

The proximity to the A22 (particularly in the north and east of the site), modern field amalgamation (in the centre and east), limited natural heritage outside of the woodlands, and visually enclosed character, all decrease sensitivity.

Overall, it is considered that the site conforms to the sensitivity of the assessment unit for land within the Wider LCA 3A and has a **moderate-high sensitivity** to small-scale and medium-scale residential and industrial/commercial development.

Variations in sensitivity

Areas in the north and east of the site are influenced by the proximity of the A22 corridor and the settlement edge of Halland to the north, with some modern field amalgamation which reduces the perception of remoteness, reducing sensitivity.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	
Landscape character and features	Development on the site could affect: ■ Some areas of intact historic field patterns, particularly assarts in the north-west and piecemeal enclosure in the south. ■ The network of mature small deciduous woodlands, mature hedgerow, hedgerow trees and roadside trees, including the wooded corridor of the A22, which forms a strong settlement boundary to East Hoathly.

	■ The rural character of the landscape with areas of remoteness and tranquillity, particularly in the south and east away from the settlement edge and A22. ■ The network of interconnected public rights of way. ■ Glimpsed views of the South Downs National Park from Knowle Lane in the north-west.
Designated landscapes	Though distant views towards the site may be afforded from elevated areas within the South Downs National Park, at distances exceeding 7km, views of the development will be seen in the context of existing developments within Wealden and are unlikely to adversely affect the special qualities of the National Park. The well-wooded character of the intervening landscape, combined with the rising landform to the north-east, limits intervisibility with the High Weald.
Settlement form, edge and setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The settlement pattern of scattered historic farmsteads and cottages. ■ The wider rural setting of East Hoathly (however, views into the site are generally limited by woodland along the A22 as noted above). ■ The wider rural setting of Halland and the perception of coalescence between Halland and the small farmsteads within the site.
Visual amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Pedestrians, residents and road users along the A22, B2192 Lewes Road, Knowle Lane and Shortgate Lane. However, views are generally glimpsed due to the presence of intervening vegetation. ■ Residents and road users within Halland, although views are generally screened by intervening hedgerow vegetation and woodlands. ■ Residents within the site and immediately adjacent to the site at the Vine Farm, Hartfield Farm, Godfreys Cottage, Halland Park Farm, White Lion Farm, Terrible Down Farm, Shortgate Manor Farm and Laughton Park Farm farmsteads. ■ Users of public rights of way within the site. ■ Visitors to the South Downs National Park, although views of development would be at distance, appearing in the context of existing development and partially screened by intervening woodland located to the south-east and south of the site.
Cumulative issues	
Potential for cumulative effects with other large strategic sites	There are no other large strategic sites in close proximity to cause the potential for cumulative effects. A smaller proposed residential allocation (SHELAA Site 1202/1950) lies to the north-east of East Hoathly. The sites are separated by the A22 and woodland, and therefore cumulative effects are unlikely to occur if both sites come forward.
Potential for mitigation and enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands, trees, and hedgerows. Development should avoid and be set back from the ancient woodlands at Bentley Wood, Bog Shaw and Rowland Wood with a buffer zone of at least 25 metres to avoid root damage². The buffer zone could provide a	

² See Natural England and Forestry Commission guidance for further information: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions>

valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity).

- Woodland and mature vegetation along the A22, B2192 Lewes Road, Knowle Lane and Shortgate Lane should be retained and enhanced so as to limit views into the site from existing residential properties and from the road.
- Set development back from Flood Zone 3 which crosses the west of the site between Bentley Farm and Laughton Park Farm. Lower ground outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3, including ponds at Laughton Park Farm, could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features, incorporating habitat creation.
- Conserve and manage the small watercourses which cross the site, increasing riverside vegetation and wetland habitats where possible to 'slow the flow' and assist in reducing flood risk as well as increase biodiversity.
- Retain and protect the historic field pattern where practicable, but particularly the historic assarts in the north-west of the site.
- Development should be set back from the listed farmsteads at Laughton Park Farm, Halland Park Farm and Vine Cottage to help retain their rural character.
- Retain the glimpsed long-distance intervisibility with the South Downs National Park from Knowle Lane in the north-west. Intervisibility with the National Park should be considered in the siting and design of any development.
- Any employment development should be concentrated in the north-east closest to the A22 and existing commercial uses at Shortgate Lane and B2192.
- The north-west of the site should be retained predominantly as open space, habitat management and accessible landscape, helping to maintain the rural character and tranquillity that are key qualities of the wider assessment unit.
- Retain the public rights of way within the site, and where possible retain the rural experience of walking the routes, minimising visibility of any proposed development from the public rights of way within the site. Where possible enhance public access, providing opportunities to experience the longer views across the wider landscape and towards the South Downs National Park from higher ground in the north of the site.
- The rural context and intervisibility between the site, scattered farmsteads and the small settlement of Halland should be considered in the siting and design of development, so as to minimise the perception of coalescence between these settlements.
- Additional planting should be used to screen new development and maintain the rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built form, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built form within the landscape. Planting should be in character with the locality and use native species where possible.
- Introduced built forms to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of their surroundings by using high quality materials suggestive of the local vernacular.
- The height of development should integrate with the adjacent settlements and should not break the treeline of the adjacent woodlands at Rowland Wood and Bentley Wood.

Summary

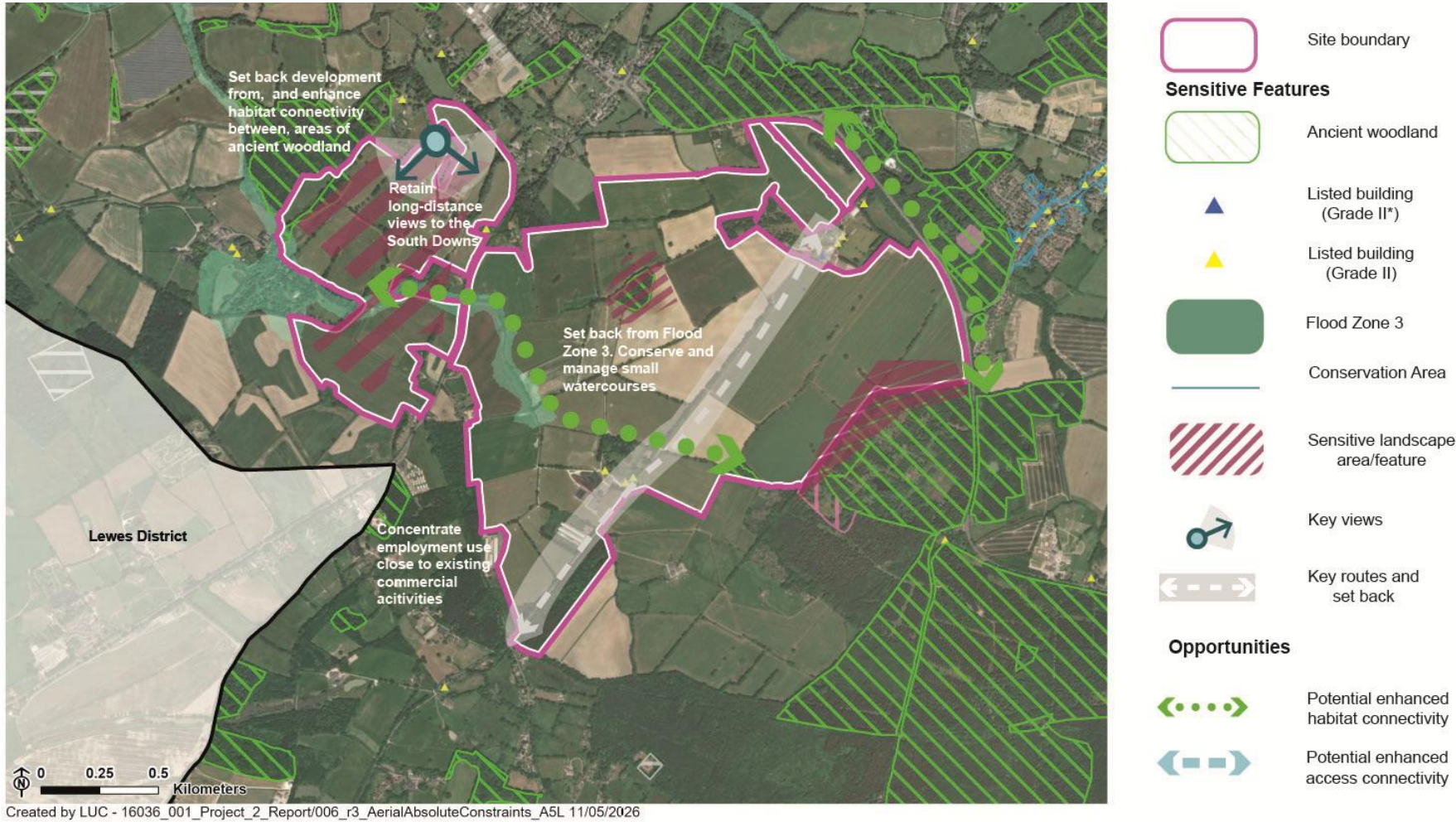
The site conforms to the sensitivity of the wider assessment unit, having a moderate-high sensitivity to all development types.

Development of the site would introduce development within the wooded landscape between Halland and East Hoathly. If the site is considered for development, any proposed development would need to be planned with great care, especially in relation to the key sensitive features within and adjacent to the site, including setting development back from the floodplain of small watercourses through the site. Development should also be set back from ancient woodlands on the site and adjacent to it, with appropriate buffers provided to protect the woodlands. Development should be predominantly located in the east and south-west so as to avoid areas of remnant ancient woodland and areas of historic assart field pattern, and to

utilise the screening of the existing woodlands. Development should also be carefully sited to protect the rural character of historic buildings both within and adjacent to the site.

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

Figure A.13: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



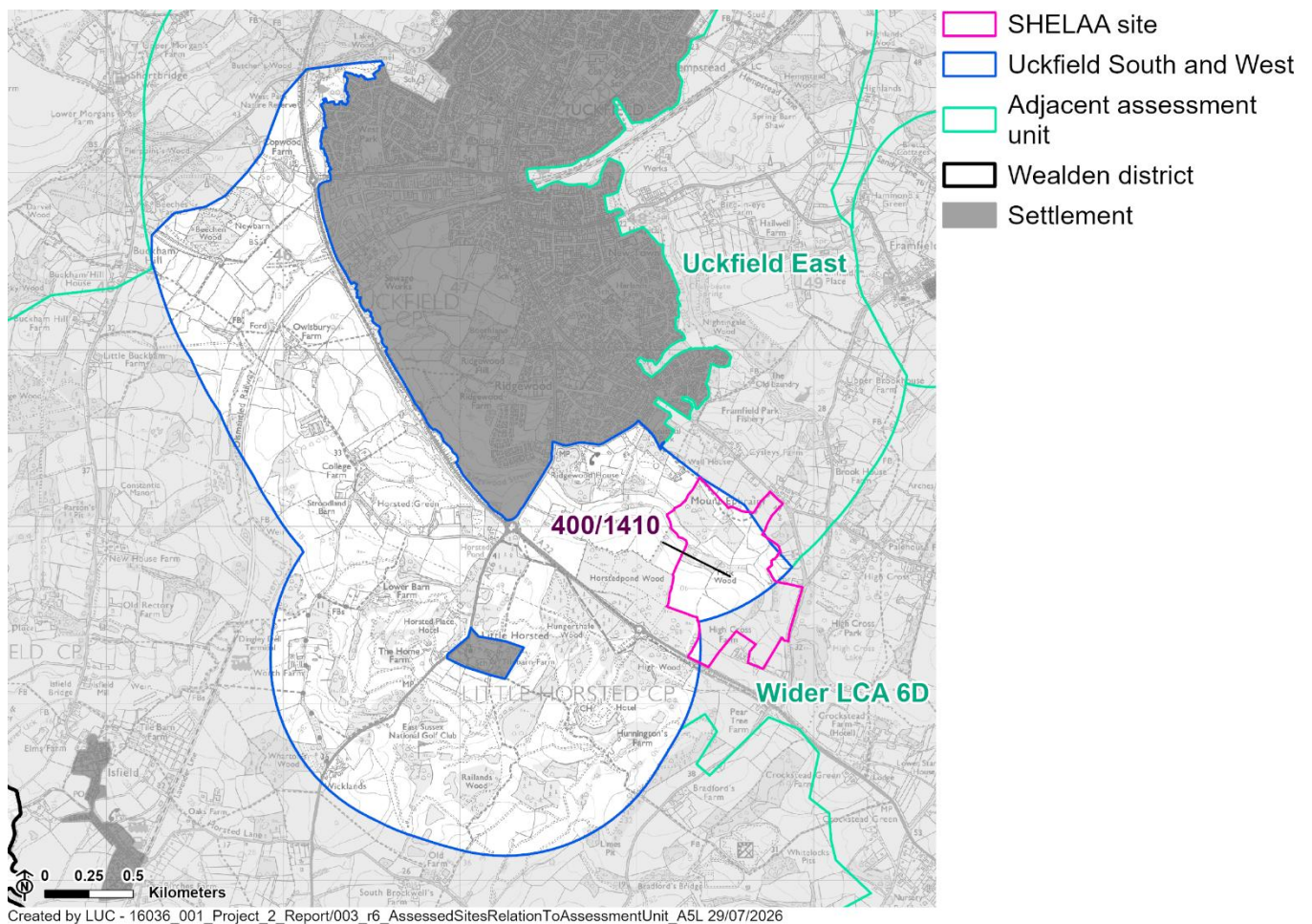
Landscape sensitivity context: Uckfield South and West Assessment Unit

One potential strategic development site is considered within the **Uckfield South and West** assessment unit:

- 400/1410 Land at High Cross Farm, Eastbourne Road, Uckfield

NB the south of the site lies within the Wider LCA for 6D High Weald: Ouse Catchment assessment unit. Where appropriate, similarities with the Wider LCA for 6D High Weald: Ouse Catchment assessment unit are noted.

Figure A.14: Site locations in relation to the assessment unit

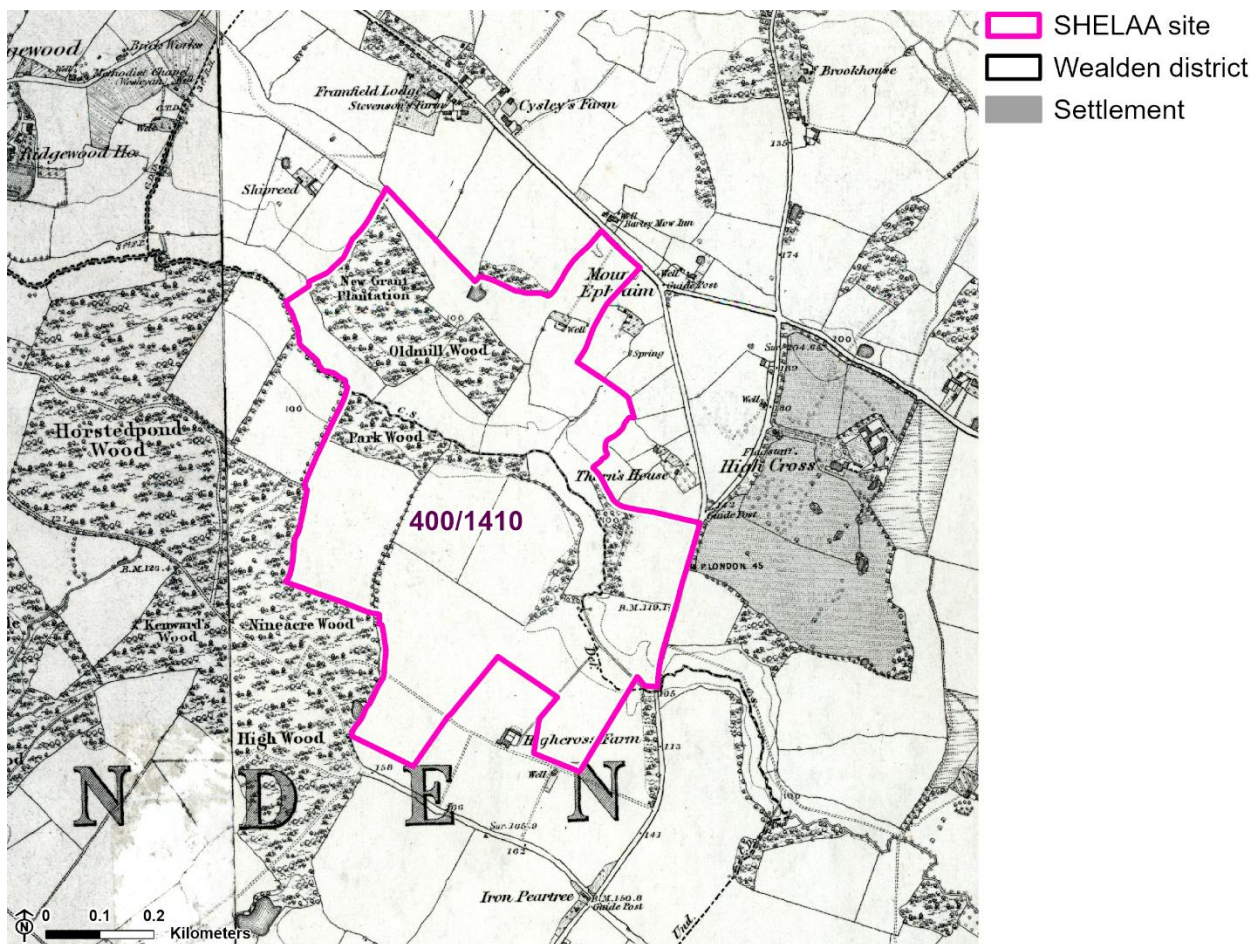


Settlement context (adapted from Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Assessments, 2023)

Settlement location and context	Uckfield is a market town located in the west of the district, with direct train connections to London. It developed as a crossing point of the River Uck and as a road hub between Canterbury, Chichester and Lewes. It is located at the transition between the Wooded Clay Vales of the Low Weald (LCT 3) and the Wooded Slopes of the High Weald (LCT 6).
Settlement evolution	The town developed where the road linking Canterbury, Chichester and Lewes crossed the River Uck. The original settlement was focused primarily along Church Street (around the medieval chapel) and High Street, an area designated as the Uckfield Conservation Area. Later development extended further north and south along the High Street and along Framfield Road (the New Town area) to the south-east, resulting in a linear north-south settlement pattern. The arrival of the railway in the 19th century stimulated further growth and by the early and mid-20th century, development greatly increased the size of the town. This later expansion

Settlement context (adapted from Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Assessments, 2023)	
	has resulted in the town's merging with the formerly separate hamlets of Ringles Cross and Ridgewood to the north and south respectively.
Settlement pattern and edge character	Uckfield still retains its linear north-south form, although recent and contested development is beginning to alter this character along several edges of the town. The consented Ridgewood Farm Urban Extension for 1,000 homes will extend the settlement westwards as far as the A22 Uckfield Bypass, further consolidating the urban edge in that direction. The south-western settlement edge is currently well defined by the A22 and marks a clear the transition between the settlement and the surrounding countryside. To the south, new residential development at Beauchamp Gate has extended the built edge of Uckfield south along Eastbourne Road. To the east of Eastbourne Road, Little Horsted substation introduces industrial infrastructure into an otherwise rural landscape setting north of the A22, reducing the perception of the surrounding area as rural in character.

Figure A.15: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_2_Report/004_r0_SiteEvolution_A5L 02/06/2026

The Landscape Sensitivity of the Uckfield South and West assessment unit described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA assessment unit	Uckfield South and West		
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA assessment unit	Small scale residential 2-2.5 storey housing	Medium scale residential 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	Commercial/ industrial e.g. industrial units or hotels
	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
Noted variations in landscape sensitivity	- Areas to the far west and south-west of the assessment unit have higher sensitivity due to their distance from the settlement edge of Uckfield, with qualities of tranquillity and dark skies. - The far north, south and south-east of the assessment unit have areas of more complex topography, and the areas south of the A26 and east of the A22 contain larger areas of ancient woodland and historic field patterns and thus have higher sensitivity. - Areas in proximity to the A22, industrial units along Bell Lane and new modern development edges, particularly along the western settlement edge and along Lewes Road have a lower sensitivity to small and medium-scale residential development. - The area in close proximity to the East Sussex National Golf Club may have lower sensitivity to small and medium-scale residential development, due to existing large-scale development, and human influence on the landscape.		
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	- Areas to the far west and south-west of the assessment unit have higher sensitivity due to their distance from the settlement edge of Uckfield, with qualities of tranquillity and dark skies. The far north, south and south-east of the assessment unit have areas of more complex topography, and the areas south of the A26 and east of the A22 contain larger areas of ancient woodland and historic field patterns and thus have higher sensitivity. - Areas in proximity to the A22, industrial units along Bell Lane and new modern development edges, particularly along the western settlement edge and along Lewes Road have a lower sensitivity to small and medium-scale residential development. - The area in close proximity to the East Sussex National Golf Club may have lower sensitivity to small and medium-scale residential development, due to existing large-scale development, and human influence on the landscape.		
LSA Guidance	- The River Uck and Ridgewood stream corridors and associated riparian woodlands and priority habitats, which form part of the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA. - Numerous semi-natural ancient woodlands in the north and south / south-east. - Strong network of mature, intact hedgerow boundaries. - Intact historic field patterns and assarts in the north and east of the area. - Historic features at Buckham Hill in the north and Horsted Place in the south, including a Scheduled Monument, Registered Garden, and Grade II listed buildings. - The rural setting and sense of separation provided to Uckfield and Little Horsted. - The network of public rights of way. - Rural character with areas of tranquillity and dark skies along the Uck Valley and among the numerous woodlands to the north.		

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

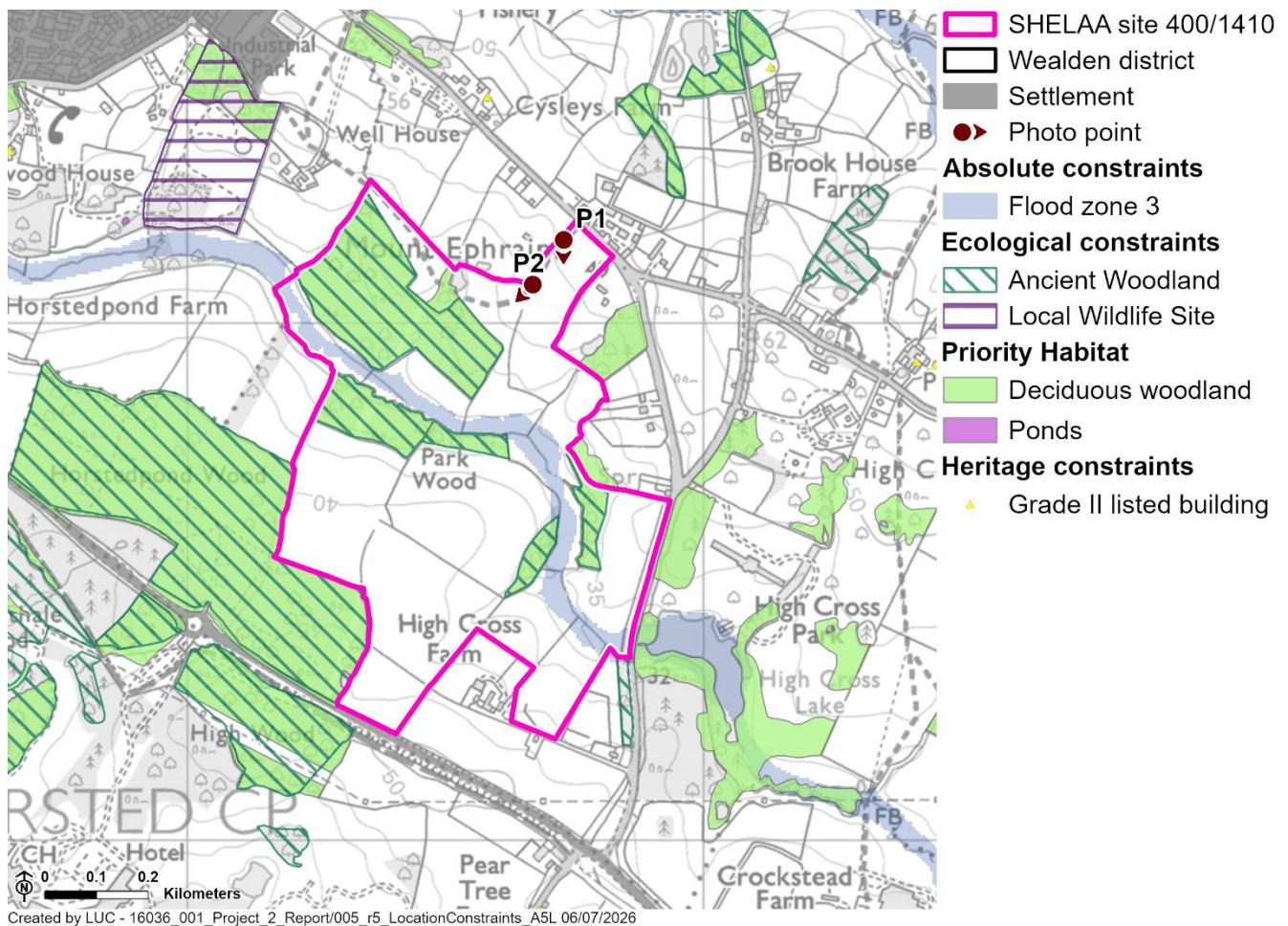
Site Assessment: Land at High Cross Farm, Eastbourne Road, Uckfield

Site details

SHELAA site name / reference	400/1410
Potential development	Residential: 90 dwellings The site was considered an Option (OFF1) for 90 dwellings in the draft Focused Wealden Local Plan.
Site location	The site is located to the south-east of Uckfield, east of the A22 and south of Eastbourne Road.

Site baseline

Figure A.16: Site location and constraints



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Views across the site boundaries showing the enclosed character resulting from mature woodland screening



Viewpoint 2: Larger scale pastoral fields contained by woodland and tree belts.

Baseline landscape character in relation to the wider assessment unit

Key features and qualities of the site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	Landform The site is broadly typical of the gently undulating landform of the Uckfield South and West assessment unit. The site consists of undulating arable and pastoral fields and pockets of woodland. The landform rises from the Ridgewood Stream corridor in the centre of the site at 35m AOD, to 45m in the north towards Eastbourne Road, and to the south towards High Wood adjacent to the A22. This ridge and valley character is typical of the wider assessment unit. Natural character The site consists of pasture and arable fields with pockets of woodland and mature hedgerows defining the field boundaries. This irregular internal structure is characteristic of the strong network of mature, intact hedgerow boundaries noted in the wider assessment unit. The site contains several notable areas of ancient woodland. New Grant Plantation/Oldmill Wood, an ancient broadleaved woodland, forms the north-west of the site. Small pockets of ancient woodland, including Jubilee Cottage Wood and Park Wood, are also located along the Ridgewood Stream corridor in the centre of the site. Horstedpond Wood is immediately adjacent to the west of the site. These ancient woodlands are of high ecological value and make a strong contribution to both landscape character and the biodiversity network of the area. Ridgewood Stream intersects the site from west to south-east, with associated riparian woodlands, including deciduous woodland priority habitats, which are characteristic of the wider assessment unit. High Cross Lake lies adjacent to the site to the east, where Ridgewood Stream continues its course southwards. A small pond is located within the north of the site. Landscape pattern and time depth The historic field pattern of the site is typical of the wider assessment unit - medium-scale modern field amalgamation is recorded in the south, with irregular piecemeal enclosure in the centre and assarts in the north and east. No recorded historic features are present within the site itself. Recreational value
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	A public footpath lies along the northern boundary of the site, connecting the site to Uckfield. This route contributes to the wider network of public rights of way, which is typical of the wider assessment unit, providing opportunities for local recreation and access to the surrounding woodland landscape Perceptual aspects The north of the site is influenced by its proximity to the settlement edge of Uckfield, which reduces tranquillity in that area. However, the woodlands and surrounding rural landscape increase the tranquillity, particularly towards the centre and south-west of the site. The south of the site is influenced by its proximity to the A22, although the mature vegetation along this corridor effectively screens the site from views. Woodland pockets and the surrounding arable and pastoral fields introduce a strong rural character, typical of the wider assessment unit, retaining a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity, with the enclosing woodland limiting the perception of the nearby settlement edge.
Designations which are constraints to development	New Grant Plantation/Oldmill Wood lies within the north-west of the site and is designated as ancient woodland. Small pockets of ancient woodland at Park Wood and Jubilee Cottage Wood are also located within the site along the Ridgewood Stream corridor. Horstedpond Wood, also ancient woodland, is located immediately to the west. The centre of the site is intersected by Flood Zones 2 and 3 along the Ridgewood Stream corridor.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site is separated from Uckfield by agricultural land and woodland vegetation, which form a strong natural boundary to the current settlement edge. The A22 Uckfield Bypass forms a boundary feature to the south of the site, and the wooded character of the road corridor limits views into the site from the south. The woodland within the site limits views from the settlement edge, providing effective screening. The site forms part of the open, rural countryside to the south-east of the current settlement edge. Recent residential development at Beauchamp Gate has extended the built-up edge of Uckfield southwards along Eastbourne Road, bringing the settlement edge into closer proximity to the northern boundary of the site. Little Horsted substation, located to the east of Eastbourne Road and north of the A22, introduces an element of industrial character into an otherwise rural landscape setting, reducing the perception of the surrounding landscape as entirely rural in character. The woodlands to the west provide the rural setting and sense of separation between Uckfield and Little Horsted, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. There is no development present within the site. Houses and farmsteads along Eastbourne Road to the east and north of the site are typical of the isolated farms and residences strung along rural lanes noted within the wider assessment unit.

Baseline visual character

Baseline visual character	The site is predominantly enclosed in character, typical of the wider assessment unit. Views into and across the site are restricted by the woodland within and on the edges of the site, the mature boundary hedgerows along the watercourse corridors, and the ancient woodlands within the site. The network of irregular internal tree belts and hedgerow corridors further limits views within the site, creating a compartmentalised character with limited internal intervisibility between the different field parcels. Adjacent pockets of woodland to the east additionally screen the site from potential views in that direction. Glimpsed middle-distance views into the site are available from road users along Eastbourne Road to the north, due to the rising landform and gaps in hedgerow
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	vegetation. Views from the A22 are largely screened by mature roadside vegetation, with only glimpsed views possible in gaps. From the public footpath along the northern boundary, middle- to long-distance views are available southwards across the site, owing to the sloping landform, although these are interrupted by the internal woodland vegetation forming the field boundaries.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB / South Downs National Park	The site has no intervisibility with the High Weald AONB. Views towards the South Downs National Park are not available from the site due to the enclosed, wooded character of the surrounding landscape and intervening topography.

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

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assesses the Uckfield South and West assessment unit to have a **moderate sensitivity** to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), **moderate-high sensitivity** to medium scale residential development (3-4 storey flats/ care homes) and **high sensitivity** to commercial/industrial development. The ridge and valley landform; ecologically valued woodlands; historic field patterns with hedgerows and hedgerow trees; scenic rural character; location within the High Weald AONB; and dispersed settlement character increase sensitivity. However, the enclosed character of the assessment unit reduces its sensitivity to development. The sensitivity of the assessment unit increases to high sensitivity to medium scale residential and commercial / industrial development as these would be out of character with the rural character, complex ridge and valley landforms, and limited settlement pattern of the wider LCA.

The Site

The site demonstrates many of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit, including the undulating ridge and valley landform, the patchwork of arable and pastoral fields enclosed by mature hedgerows, and the strong network of ancient and semi-natural woodland, including New Grant Plantation / Oldmill Wood, Park Wood, Jubilee Cottage Wood and the adjacent Horstedpond Wood. The Ridgewood Stream corridor, with its associated riparian habitats, and the remnant assart field pattern in the north and east of the site, are consistent with the key sensitivities identified for the wider assessment unit. The site's public right of way providing recreational links to the wider countryside further contribute to its sensitivity.

The enclosed, wooded character of the site, together with the screening provided by intervening vegetation, reduces the degree of wider visual exposure, and modern field amalgamation in parts of the site represents a reduction in landscape time-depth relative to areas with intact historic field patterns. In addition, Little Horsted Substation to the east of the site introduces industrial character into an otherwise rural landscape surrounding the site. These factors partially reduce sensitivity.

Overall, it is considered that the site has a higher sensitivity to small-scale residential development than the wider assessment unit and has a **moderate-high sensitivity** to all scales of residential development and a **high sensitivity** to commercial/industrial development.

Variations in sensitivity

Areas of higher sensitivity are associated with the Ridgewood Stream corridor, ancient woodland in the north-west of the site and adjacent to the western boundary.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	
Landscape character and features	Development on the site could affect:

	■ The ancient woodland at New Grant Plantation / Oldmill Wood, Park Wood and Jubilee Cottage Wood within the site and at Horstedpond Wood immediately to the west, where development could cause direct harm to these designated habitats ■ The Ridgewood Stream corridor, Flood Zones 2 and 3, and the associated riparian woodland and priority habitats. ■ The remnant historic assart field pattern in the north and east, which represents an important element of the historic landscape and are a key sensitivity of the wider assessment unit. ■ The network of mature irregular tree belts, hedgerows and hedgerow trees within and around the site, which together create the distinctive enclosed and compartmentalised rural character of the site. ■ Rural experience of people using the public right of way in the north. ■ The rural character and strong sense of tranquillity of the site, which would be fundamentally altered by the introduction of built form in what is currently perceived as open countryside. ■ The perception of separation between Uckfield and Little Horsted, which could be diminished by the introduction of development in this rural gap.
Designated landscapes	There is no intervisibility between the site and the High Weald AONB or South Downs National Park.
Settlement form, edge and setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The character and function of the site as open countryside that provides a rural gap between Uckfield and Little Horsted. ■ The wider rural setting to the south of Uckfield, where development would extend the perceived urban influence further into the open countryside. In the context of recent residential development at Beauchamp Gate and the consented Ridgewood Farm Urban Extension, development here would contribute to a substantial southern expansion of Uckfield.
Visual amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Road users and pedestrians along Eastbourne Road to the north of the site, from where the rising landform and gaps in hedgerow vegetation allow glimpsed views into the site ■ Users of the public right of way along the northern boundary of the site. ■ Visitors to Horstedpond Wood, who may experience occasional glimpsed views through gaps in the vegetation ■ Residents within the properties along Eastbourne Road to the east of the site and High Cross Farm to the south-east of the site.
Cumulative issues	
Potential for cumulative effects with other large strategic sites	There would be no intervisibility between this site and strategic residential site (SHELAA reference 1222/2020) to the north and employment site (SHELAA reference 1243/2020) to the east due to intervening development, woodland at High Cross Park along Eastbourne Road to the east and intervening rising landform.
Potential for mitigation and enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below:	

- Retain, protect and enhance all ancient woodland within and adjacent to the site, including New Grant Plantation / Oldmill Wood, Park Wood, Jubilee Cottage Wood and Horstedpond Wood. Development should avoid and be set back from the ancient woodlands, with a buffer zone of at least 25 metres to avoid root damage, and to align with the emerging Wealden Local Plan. 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).
- Set development back from the Flood zone 2 and 3 within the centre. Conserve and enhance Ridgewood Stream crossing the site, increasing riverside vegetation and wetland habitats and where possible, assist in reducing flood risk and increase biodiversity.
- Preserve the historic assart field pattern in the north and east of the site, locating development away from these areas of higher landscape time-depth and sensitivity.
- Retain and strengthen the network of mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees within and surrounding the site, through reinforcement planting using native species, to maintain the enclosed rural character typical of the assessment unit and limit the visual exposure of any development.
- Maintain the perception of separation between Uckfield and Little Horsted, which is a key sensitivity of the wider assessment unit. Development should avoid eroding the rural gap between these settlements, and green buffers and open space should be incorporated to preserve a sense of distance and separation.
- Contain development within the south of the site to preserve the historic character of the assart field to the north, minimise potential visibility from the surrounding landscape, and limit the eastward spread of Uckfield's urban edge along Eastbourne Road
- Retain the public right of way along the northern boundary, ensuring that the rural character of this route is maintained. Views of development from this path, particularly the southward views afforded by the sloping landform, should be minimised through careful layout and additional planting.
- The height and massing of any development should be designed to integrate with the surrounding wooded sloping landscape, without breaking the treeline of the adjacent and internal woodland blocks. A landscape-led approach to design and layout would be essential to ensure that any development responds appropriately to the significant natural and historic sensitivities of this site.

Summary

The site has a higher sensitivity to small-scale residential development than the wider assessment unit, due to the areas of ancient woodland and Flood Zone 3 along the Ringwood Stream, and highly rural character. This results in a moderate-high sensitivity to all scales of residential development and a high sensitivity to commercial/industrial development.

Development of the site would introduce residential built form within a predominantly rural agricultural and wooded landscape to the south-east of Uckfield. The site's landscape character is defined by a distinctive network of irregular internal tree belts, hedgerow corridors and ancient woodland blocks that create a strongly enclosed, compartmentalised rural character, which is characteristic of the wider Uckfield South and West assessment unit. Recent residential development at Beauchamp Gate and the consented Ridgewood Farm Urban Extension are extending the built-up edge of Uckfield southwards and south-westwards. In this context, development at High Cross Farm would add to the expansion of the built-up edge of Uckfield southwards.

If the site is considered for development, any proposals would need to be planned with great care, particularly in relation to the significant concentration of ancient woodland within and immediately adjacent to the site. Development must be set back from all ancient woodland with appropriate buffer zones, and the Ridgewood Stream corridor and associated Flood Zones must be kept free of development. Development should be contained within the lower-lying landform towards the south of the site, utilising the screening of existing woodland blocks, and avoiding the more elevated and visually exposed areas of assart fields to the north adjacent to Eastbourne Road.

The height and massing of any development should be designed to integrate with the surrounding wooded landscape without breaking the treeline of the adjacent and internal woodland blocks. A landscape-led approach to design and layout

would be essential to ensure that any development responds appropriately to the significant natural, historic and cumulative sensitivities of this site.

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

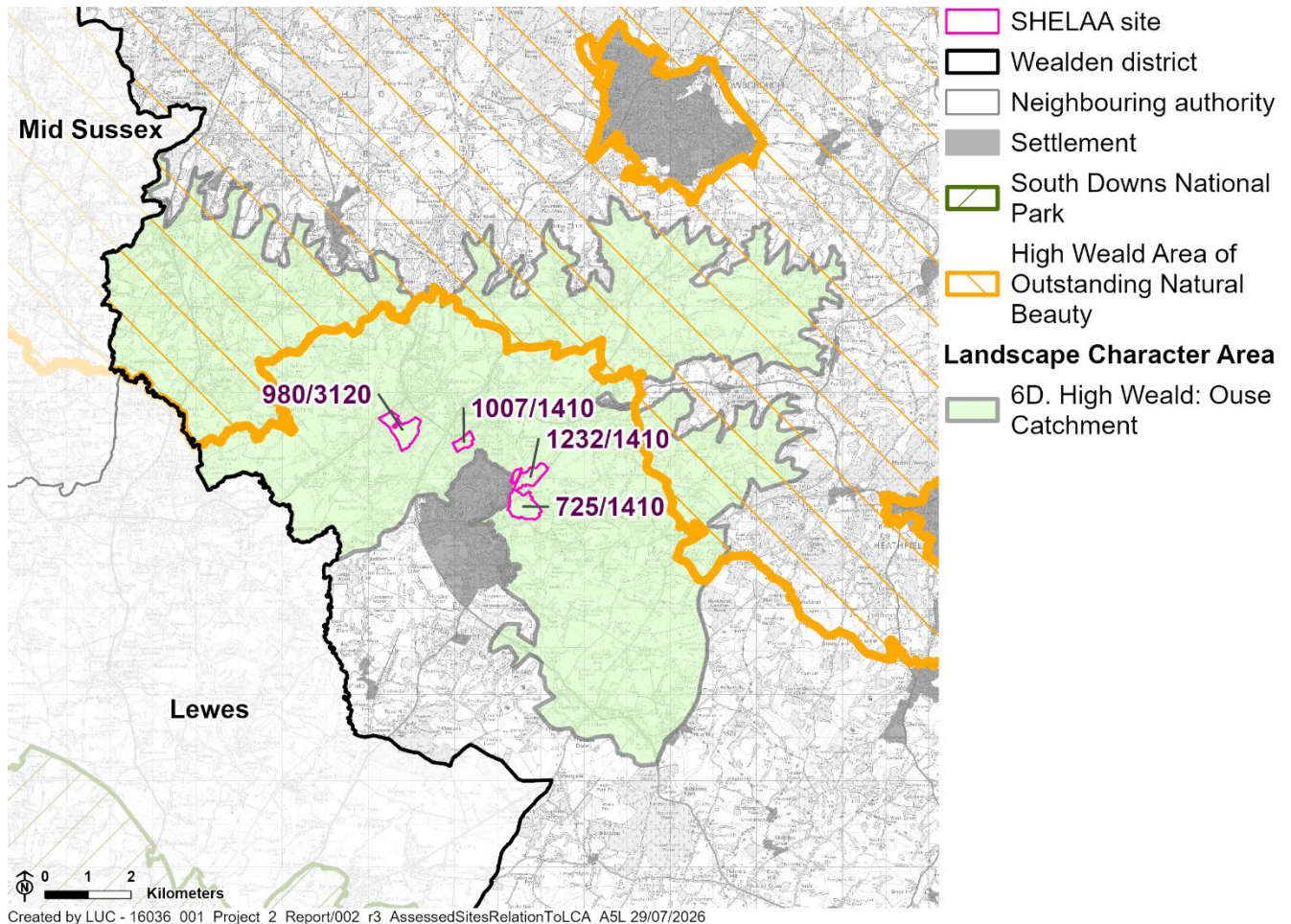
Figure A.17: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_2_Report/006_r3_AerialAbsoluteConstraints_A5L 11/05/2026

LCA 6D: High Weald: Ouse Catchment

Figure A.18: Site locations in relation to the Landscape Character Area



Landscape Character Assessment baseline (2022)	
Landscape Character Type (LCT) and Area (LCA)	LCT 6 Wooded Slopes (High Weald) LCA 6D High Weald: Ouse Catchment
LCA description	The High Weald: Ouse Catchment is a rolling landscape of ridges and valleys containing the River Ouse and its tributaries that drain south-westwards from Ashdown Forest and the Central High Weald into Lewes District. A wooded landscape with an intricate pattern of small irregular fields, streams and small, historic ridge-top settlements. The High Weald AONB extends into the north of this LCA, west of Fletching and to the east of Blackboys and Buxted.
Valued features and key qualities of the LCA	■ The distinctive landform of ridges and valleys associated with the River Ouse. ■ Hammer ponds and ghyll streams that support wetland habitats. ■ The woodland, riparian vegetation and wetland habitats of the Ouse and Uck catchments. ■ The mixed and deciduous plantations and coppiced woodland, ancient woodland, shaws, trees and hedgerows. ■ The wet meadows, unimproved and acid grassland, heathland and broadleaved woodland (including Buxted Park and Stockland Farm Meadows Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)). ■ The small-scale medieval field patterns, with sinuous hedgerow boundaries. ■ Hammer ponds, coppiced woodlands and remnants of forges provide a link to the Wealden iron industry. ■ The dispersed pattern of ridge-top villages (whose value is recognised through designation as Conservation Areas), with landmark church spires and towers, and linked by winding rural lanes. ■ The vernacular architecture of brick, oak, sandstone and flint, which reflects the locally available materials. ■ Designated parklands at Sheffield Park, Buxted Park and Framfield Place. ■ The public rights of way provide recreational opportunities, with contrasting long views to the south, including the South Downs and enclosed views within the landscape. ■ Rural roads resulting from transhumance patterns of movement are part of the medieval landscape of the High Weald AONB. ■ The harmonious small-scale landscape pattern of mixed farms, dense woodland and open views across the wooded ridges and valleys contribute to the strong scenic quality of the area, reflected in its designation as an AONB. ■ The sense of tranquillity and experience of dark skies in some areas, particularly away from the larger settlements in the south of the LCA, such as Uckfield.

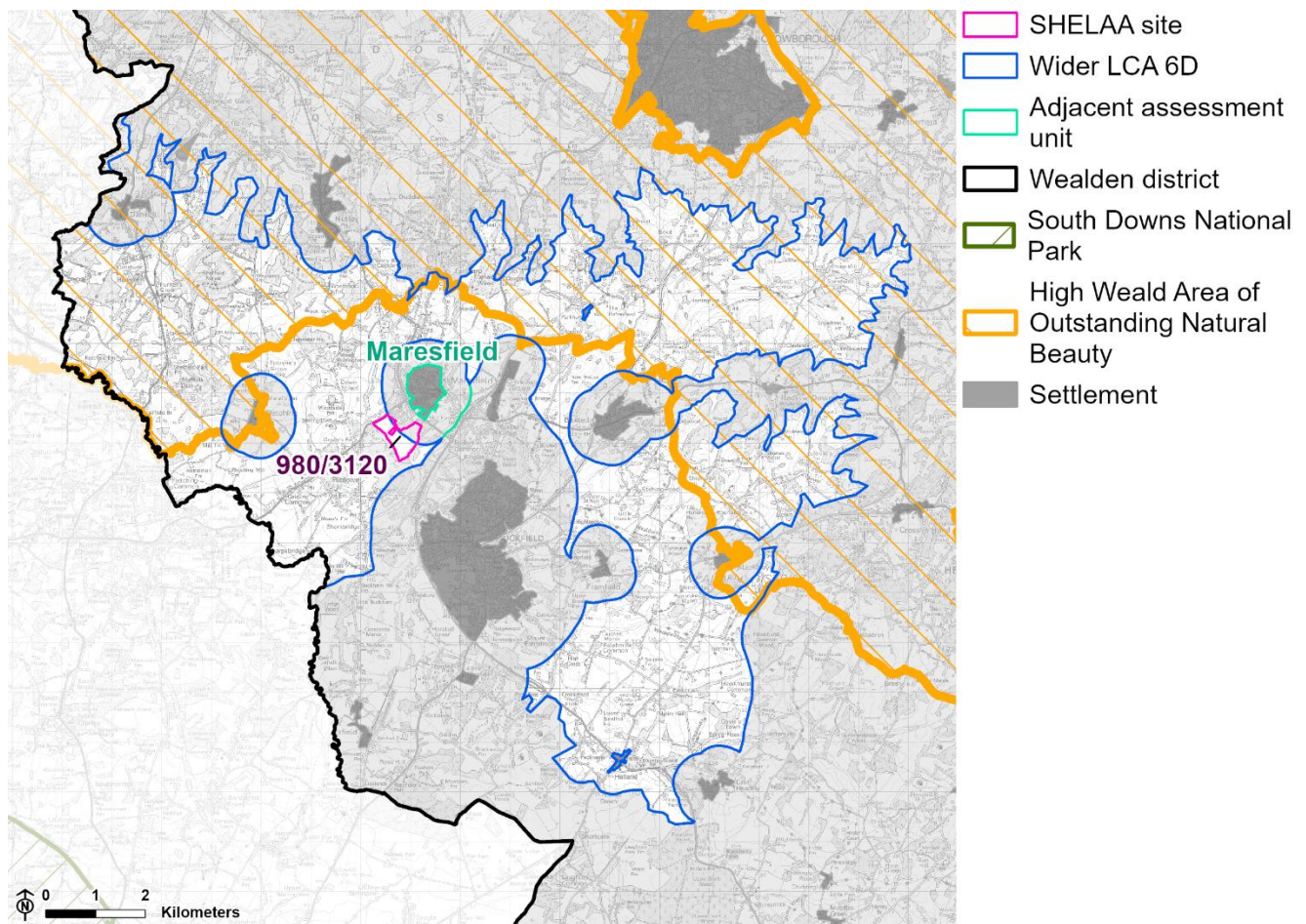
Landscape sensitivity context: Wider LCA for 6D The High Weald Ouse Catchment

One potential strategic development site is considered within the **Wider 6D High Weald – Ouse Catchment** assessment unit:

- 980/3120 Ashdown Business Park Extension, Maresfield

NB the east of the site lies within the Maresfield assessment unit. Where appropriate, similarities with the Maresfield assessment unit are noted.

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

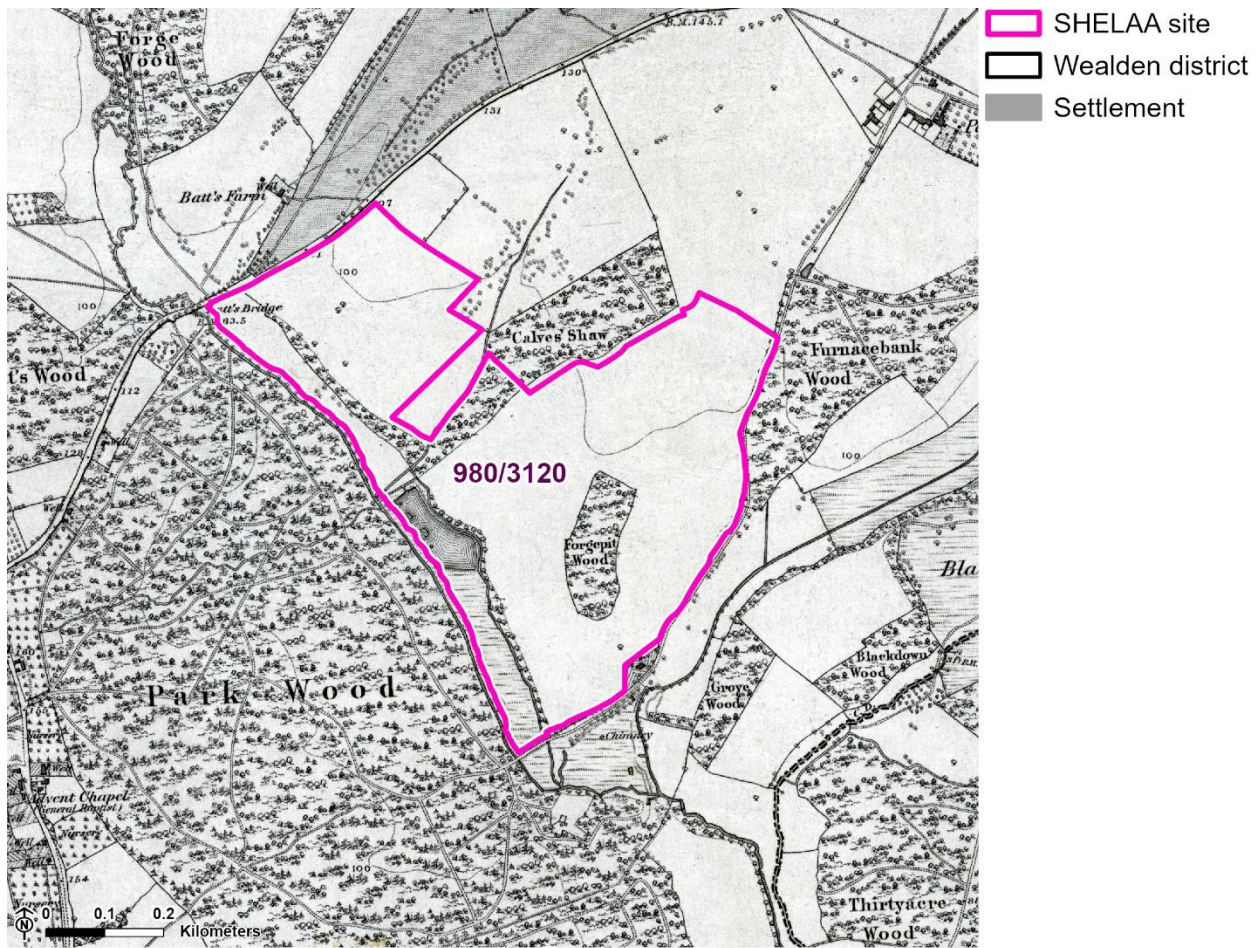


Settlement context (adapted from Landscape Character Assessment (2022) and Landscape Sensitivity Assessments (2023))

Settlement location and context	Maresfield is a medium sized village located in the west of Wealden district, approximately 2.4km north of Uckfield. The village lies within LCA 6D High Weald: Ouse Catchment.
Settlement evolution	The village has been the site of Roman and Norman settlements, and played an important role in Wealden's iron industry, operating multiple forges and bloomeries through the 16th and 17th centuries. The village has since developed along the A22 roadway, expanding north and west of the historic centre. This expansion generally consists of modern developments, comprising of one and two storey 20th and 21st century detached houses. The historic core of the village is nucleated around the convergence of Batts Bridge Road, Straight Half Mile, and High Street. Although the current settlement retains a roughly nucleated form, large modern developments

	have expanded the historic settlement pattern west of Straight Half Mile and north of Batts Bridge Road. The historic core and Maresfield Conservation Area are located in the south-east of the village, and contain multiple listed buildings, including the Grade I listed, 13th century St Bartholomew's Church.
Settlement pattern and edge character	The southern settlement edge of Maresfield is defined by the A272, which forms a clear boundary between the village and the wider rural landscape to the south. The existing Ashdown Business Park, located immediately south of the A272, forms the current built edge at this part of the settlement. Beyond the business park, the landscape opens into the agricultural fields of the site, bounded by the woodland blocks of Park Wood to the south-west and Furnacebank Wood to the south-east. The wooded character of the A22 corridor limits views into the agricultural land from the settlement edge, and the screening provided by Calves Shaw maintains a degree of visual separation between the existing business park and the open farmland to the south.

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



The Landscape Sensitivity of the Wider LCA 6D assessment unit described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA assessment unit	LCA 6D wider area High Weald: Ouse Catchment		
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA assessment unit	Small scale residential 2-2.5 storey housing	Medium scale residential 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	Commercial/ industrial e.g. industrial units or hotels
	Moderate-High	High	High
Noted variations in landscape sensitivity	Areas of intact, historic and intricate field patterns to the north and east of the assessment unit (within the High Weald AONB) are more sensitive to development.		
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	- Gently rolling landscape, bisected by river and stream corridors, with elevated ridgelines to the north and east. - Ecologically valued woodlands, including ancient woodland throughout the assessment unit. - Intact historic field pattern, including assarts and co-axial fields, mostly concentrated within the High Weald AONB. - Pasture and arable fields bound by hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees. - Dispersed, rural settlement pattern. - Role the landscape plays in the separation between settlements. - Historic features including the historic farmsteads and houses, Scheduled Monuments and the Grade I listed Sheffield Park. - Good access on public rights of way through the landscape, including the promoted Vanguard Way and Wealdway. - Rural character with limited modern intrusions. - Views to the High Weald AONB in the north and South Downs National Park (in the south-east of the LCA).		
LSA Guidance	- Avoid development on elevated landforms and ridges, particularly those with intervisibility with the High Weald AONB. - Retain broadleaved woodland. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands, and allow an appropriate buffer around them (for root protection). - Retain in-field trees, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. - Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. - Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of, or damage to, hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. - Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest, River Uck and its Headwaters BOAs, where possible, including wetland management. - Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns. - Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities of Sheffield Park, or appreciation of historic features including listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments.		

	■ Integrate any development carefully into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or species that are in character with the wider landscape and native where possible. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Consider views from public rights of way, such as the Vanguard Way and Wealdway, when siting and designing development in the landscape. ■ Retain views to the High Weald AONB and occasional views to the South Downs. ■ Ensure development does not affect the rural character, dark night skies or tranquillity of the landscape. ■ Ensure new building reinforces and responds to local character in its scale, layout and design, reflecting the local vernacular in use of materials. Developments should draw on the principles contained within the '<u>Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development</u>' and <u>objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan</u>'³. ■ Ensure development does not affect the scenic rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity, particularly in the east and south where these are defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB.
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³ <https://highweald.org/~documents/publications/legislation-and-planning/high-weald-design-guide-final/?layout=default>

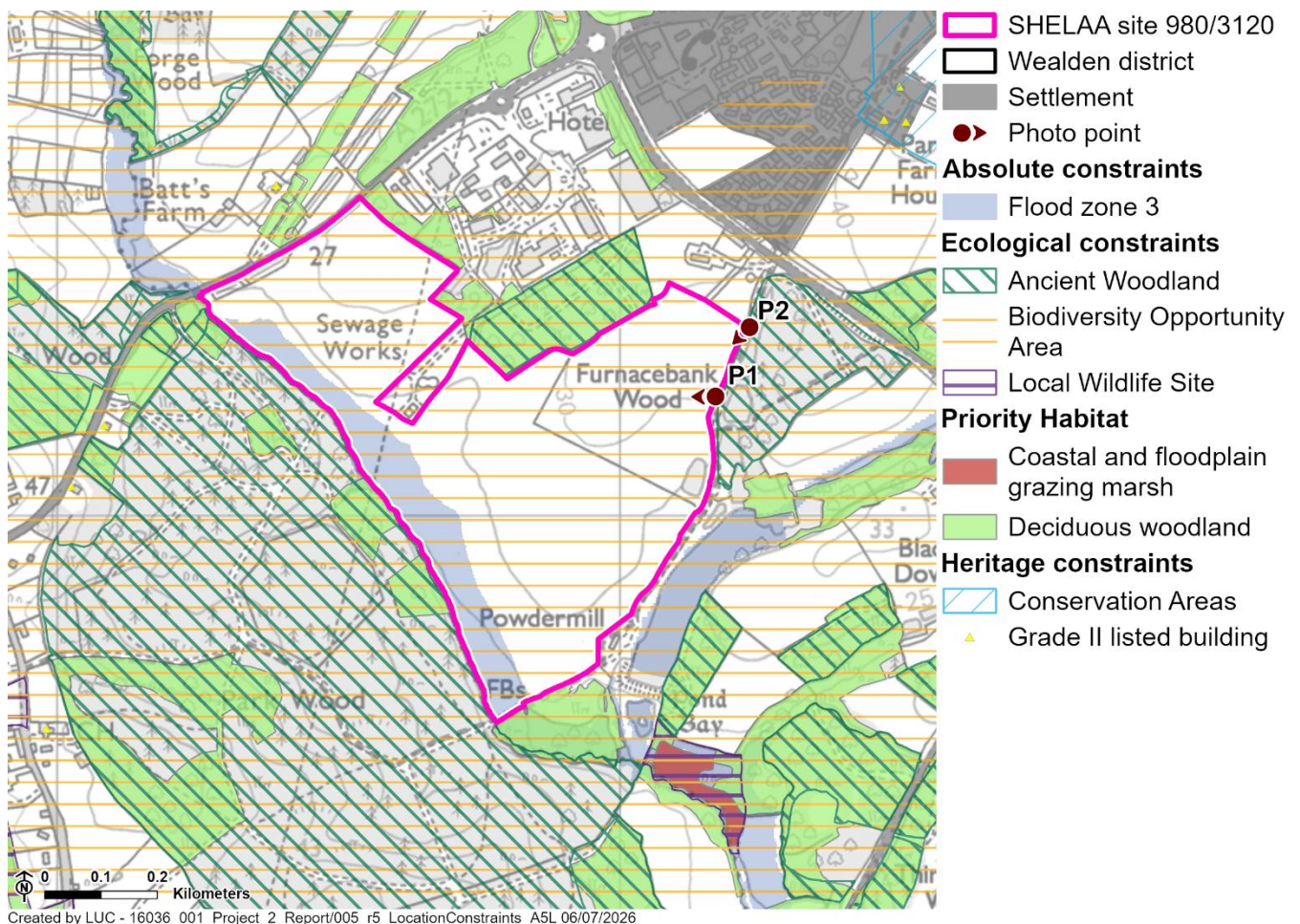
Site Assessment: Ashdown Business Park Extension

Site details

SHELAA site name / reference	980/3120
Potential development	Employment: 45,000 sqm The site was considered as an Option (OEMP4) for 60,000 sqm of employment development in the draft 'Focused' Wealden Local Plan. This has since be reduced to 45,000 sqm.
Site location	The site is located to the south of Maresfield, south of A22, between the A272 in the west and A26 in the east. The site lies across two LSA assessment units – the east within Maresfield and the west within the Wider LCA for 6D High Weald: Ouse Catchment. The majority of the site lies within the Wider LCA for 6D High Weald: Ouse Stream Catchment, which has been used for the below assessment. Where the site has more in common with the Maresfield assessment unit, this has been noted.

Site baseline

Figure A.21: Site location and constraints



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Glimpsed views across large fields through a gap in vegetation site from the public footpath along Furnacebank Wood



Viewpoint 2: Glimpsed views into the site from the public footpath along Furnacebank Wood are largely screened by vegetation.

Baseline landscape character in relation to the wider assessment unit

Key features and qualities of the site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	Landform The site is typical of the gently rolling landscape of the assessment unit, where stream corridors define its eastern and south-western boundaries. The site consists of gently undulating arable and pastoral farmland, rising from 20m AOD at Batt's Bridge Stream along the western boundary to 30m AOD in the east adjacent to Furnacebank Wood.
	Natural character The site is in agricultural use and consists of pasture and arable fields bounded by woodland and mature hedgerow trees, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. The site is bounded by ecologically valued woodlands, including Calves Shaw and Furnacebank Wood ancient woodland to the north and north-east and replanted ancient woodland in Park Wood to the south-west. These provide a strong sense of enclosure along the site edges, which is characteristic of the wider landscape.
	 There is a small pond located to the east of the site, and small watercourses (Batt's Bridge Stream and Shortbridge Stream) that run parallel to the site's western and eastern boundaries.
	Landscape pattern and time depth The Historic Landscape Characterisation classifies the fields within the site as informal enclosure of regular piecemeal fields, reflecting medium-scale modern field amalgamation. The site contributes somewhat to the separation of the settlements of Maresfield and Uckfield, which is typical of the wider assessment unit.
	 No recorded historic features are present within the site. Batts Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building, lies to the north of the site, with some visibility into the site across the A272. The pattern of scattered farmhouses and cottages is typical of the assessment unit.
	Recreational value There are no public rights of way directly crossing the site. A public footpath lies adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site, providing continuity of access from Maresfield to Park Wood to the south. This route contributes to the wider

	network of public rights of way which is typical of the wider assessment unit. In addition, a number of footpaths and permissive routes are present within Park Wood immediately south of the site, providing opportunities for local recreation and access to the surrounding woodland landscape. Perceptual aspects The north of the site is influenced by its proximity to the A272, the existing Ashdown Business Park, and the settlement of Maresfield, which disrupts the tranquillity and the experience of dark skies typical of the wider assessment unit. However, the woodland to the south and east, adjacent to the agricultural fields, introduces a stronger rural character and sense of tranquillity, which is typical of the wider assessment unit.
Designations which are constraints to development	Calves Shaw and Furnacebank Wood ancient woodlands lie adjacent to the north-east of the site. The wider Park Wood replanted ancient woodland (PAWS) is located to the west of the site. The west of the site is covered by Flood Zones 2 and 3 along the watercourse which runs along the edge of Park Wood. A Grade II listed building at Batts Farmhouse is located within approximately 100m to the north of the site.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site is separated from Maresfield by the A22 and A272, which form strong boundary features to the settlement. The wooded character of the A22 corridor limits views into the site from the settlement edge to the north. The site lies adjacent to the existing Ashdown Business Park to the north-east and forms the interface between the settlement of Maresfield and the wider rural landscape. A gypsy and traveller site is adjacent to the north-west of the site along the A272. The site is effectively screened from the existing Ashdown Business Park by Calves Shaw ancient woodland. Oakwood Park Polo Club lies to the north of the site, and Maresfield wastewater treatment plant is excluded from the site but surrounded by the site.

Baseline visual character

Baseline visual character	The site is predominantly enclosed in character, typical of the wider assessment unit, with views into and across the site restricted by woodland within and on the edges of the site, mature boundary hedgerows along the watercourse corridors, and the ancient woodland to the west and east. Glimpsed middle-distance views into the site are available from road users along the A272 and visitors to Oakwood Park Polo Club to the north. Views from the A22 are largely restricted by mature roadside vegetation, with only glimpsed views possible in gaps in vegetation. Views into the site from the public footpath adjacent to the eastern boundary are largely restricted by intervening vegetation. More distant views into and out from the site are generally restricted by intervening topography and vegetation.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB / South Downs National Park	The site has no significant intervisibility with the High Weald AONB. Views towards the South Downs National Park are not available from the site due to the enclosed, wooded character of the surrounding landscape and intervening topography.

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

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assesses the Wider LCA 6D assessment unit to have a **moderate-high sensitivity** to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), and **high sensitivity** to medium

scale residential development (3-4 storey flats/ care homes) and commercial/industrial development. The ridge and valley landform; ecologically valued woodlands; historic field patterns with hedgerows and hedgerow trees; scenic rural character; location within the High Weald AONB; and dispersed settlement character increase sensitivity. However, the enclosed character of the assessment unit reduces its sensitivity to development. The sensitivity of the assessment unit increases to high sensitivity to medium scale residential and commercial / industrial development as these development types would not assimilate with the wider rural character, complex ridge and valley landforms, and limited settlement pattern of the wider LCA.

The Site

The site demonstrates many of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit, including a gently rolling topography, adjacent deciduous woodland (including ancient woodland at Park Wood to the west and Furnacebank Wood and Calve's Shaw to the east), the presence of stream corridors, and the role the landscape plays in the separation between the settlements of Maresfield and Uckfield. These characteristics increase sensitivity.

However, the proximity to the A272 corridor and the existing Ashdown Business Park, modern field amalgamation, and the predominantly enclosed character of the site reduce sensitivity. A public right of way runs along the eastern boundary, however there are limited views into the site and no public access within the site. Combined with the lack of intervisibility with the High Weald AONB or South Downs National Park, these further reduce sensitivity relative to the wider assessment unit.

Overall, it is considered that the site has a lower sensitivity than the wider assessment unit and has a **moderate-high sensitivity** to commercial/industrial development.

Variations in sensitivity

Higher sensitivity is generally associated with the west and east of the site where there is closer proximity to ancient woodland and areas affected by Flood Zones.

Areas of lower sensitivity are generally found towards the more developed edges, including the A272/A22 corridors and land influenced by the existing Ashdown Business Park.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	
Landscape character and features	Development on the site could affect: ■ The integrity and condition of the adjacent ancient woodlands at Calves Shaw to the north-west, Park Wood to the south-west and Furnacebank Wood to the east. ■ The network of mature deciduous woodlands, hedgerow trees and roadside trees, including the wooded corridors of the A22 and A272. ■ The rural character of the public right of way along the eastern edge and rural experience from public rights of way and permissive paths within Park Wood. ■ The rural character of the landscape with areas of remoteness and tranquillity, particularly in the south where the site is adjacent to the ancient woodland. ■ Permanent loss of productive farmland.
Designated landscapes	There is no intervisibility between the site and the High Weald AONB or South Downs National Park.
Settlement form, edge and setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The wider rural setting of Maresfield. However, views into the area are generally limited by woodland along the A22. ■ The separation of the settlements of Maresfield and Uckfield.

	■ The settlement edge along the A22 and A272, where development would extend the perceived urban edge into the surrounding rural landscape. ■ The rural setting and visual amenity of the Grade II listed Batts Farmhouse to the north-east.
Visual amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Pedestrians, residents and road users along the A22 and A272. However, views are generally glimpsed due to the presence of intervening vegetation. ■ Residents of the gypsy and traveller site located to the north-west of the site. ■ Visitors and workers at the Ashdown Business Park. ■ Users of the public footpath adjacent to the east of the site, and visitors to Park Wood to the west. ■ Visitors to the Oakwood Park Polo Club located to the north of the site.
Cumulative issues	
Potential for cumulative effects with other large strategic sites	A potential Gypsy and Traveller site covers the north of this site. There would be no intervisibility between this site and strategic residential site at SHELAA 1007/1410 north of Uckfield due to intervening development, woodland along the A26, woodland at Furnacebank and Budlett's Wood, and riparian vegetation along the stream corridor between the sites.
Potential for mitigation and enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Set development back from Flood zones 2 and 3 on the western edge of the site. Conserve and manage the small watercourses adjacent to the site (Batt's Bridge Stream and Shortbridge Stream), increasing riverside vegetation and wetland habitats and where possible, assist in reducing flood risk and increase biodiversity. ■ Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially mature woodlands, trees and hedgerows. Development should avoid and be set back from the ancient woodlands at Park Wood, Furnacebank Wood and Calves Shaw, with a buffer zone of at least 25 metres to avoid root damage and align with the emerging Wealden Local Plan policies. The buffer zone could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and semi-improved grassland to provide structural complexity and species diversity). ■ Woodland and mature vegetation along the A22 and A272 should be retained and enhanced so as to limit views into the site from existing residential properties and from the roads. ■ The connectivity of the woodlands should be retained and enhanced through tree planting and hedgerow corridors, particularly along the watercourse corridors to the west and east of the site. ■ Lower ground outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3 could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) features, incorporating habitat creation. ■ The public footpath adjacent to the eastern boundary should be retained and enhanced, ensuring the route retains its rural character and continues to provide access to Park Wood to the south. ■ The rural context and intervisibility between the site, and the settlements of Maresfield and Uckfield should be considered in the siting and design of development, with particular care to avoid development within the south of the site, which contributes most strongly to the perceived separation between settlements. Development should be located along the existing road corridor and more developed edge in the north and north-east, where it would be less likely to increase the perception of coalescence, in order to help maintain settlement separation.	

- Development should be carefully sited and designed to protect the rural character and the setting of the Grade II listed Batts Farmhouse to the north-east. Additional structural and native planting should be incorporated to help screen new development and reduce visual intrusion, reinforcing the rural character of the area.
- Additional planting should be used to screen new development and maintain the rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built form, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built form within the landscape. Planting should be in character with the locality and use native species where possible.
- Introduced built forms to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of their surroundings by using high-quality materials suggestive of the local vernacular.
- The height of development should integrate with the surrounding landscape and adjacent settlement and should not break the treeline of the adjacent woodland blocks at Park Wood, Furnacebank Wood and Calves Shaw.

Summary

The site has a moderate-high sensitivity to commercial/industrial development, which is lower than the wider assessment unit due to the enclosed nature of the site and proximity to the A22, A272 and existing commercial/industrial development.

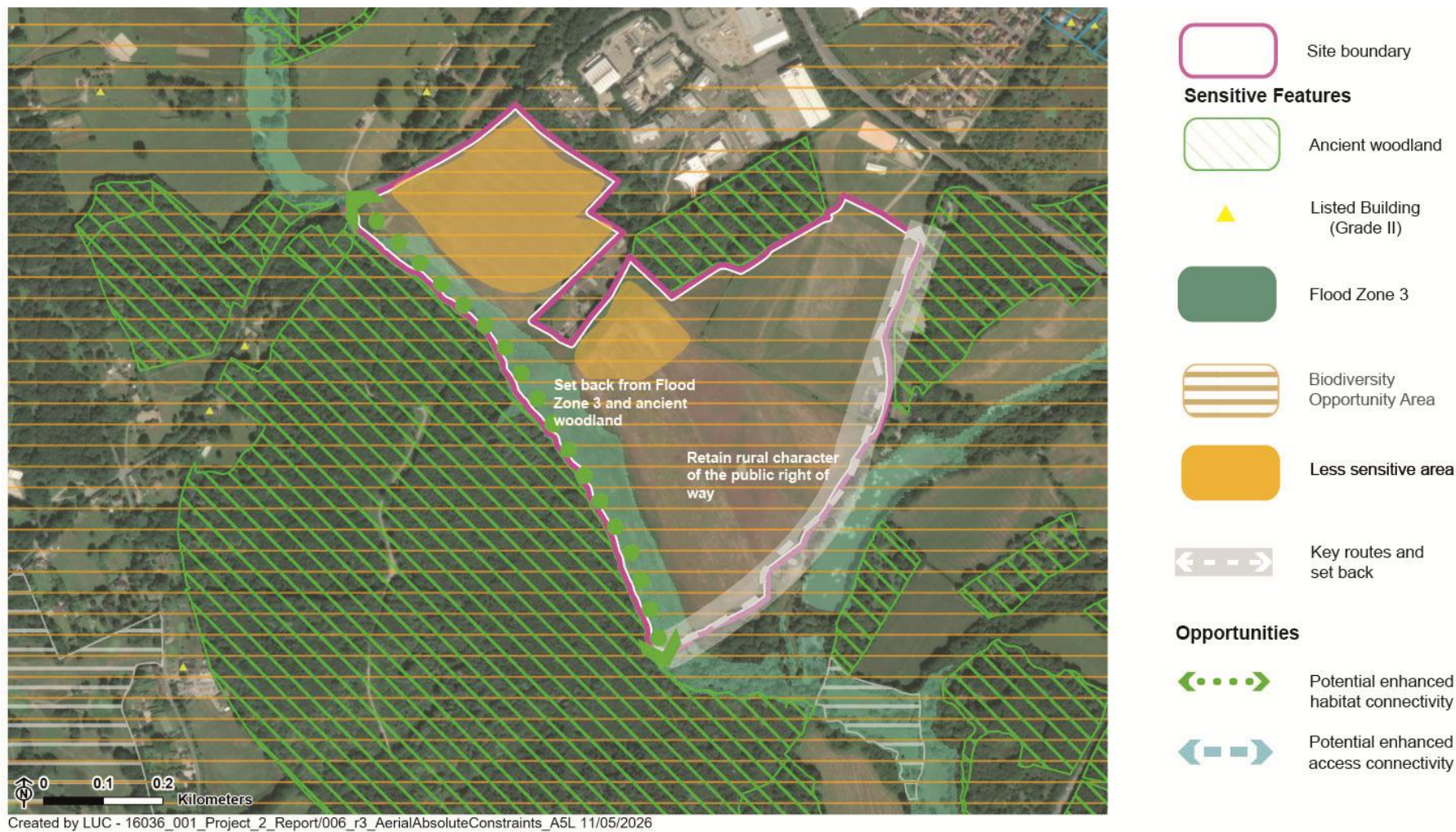
Development of the site would introduce employment development within the wooded agricultural landscape between Maresfield and Uckfield, in a location already influenced by the existing Ashdown Business Park to the north. The site's proximity to the A272 and the existing business park, together with the enclosed character of the agricultural land and modern field amalgamation, reduce its sensitivity. However, the site retains a number of important landscape features, including stream corridors and productive farmland, it is adjacent to ancient woodland, and also contributes to the separation of the settlements of Maresfield and Uckfield.

Development should respond particularly in relation to the ancient woodlands that bound the site to the south-west, south and east, and the stream corridors to the west and east of the site. Development should be set back from all ancient woodland with the appropriate buffer zones and should predominantly be located in the northern part of the site, to utilise the degree of screening afforded by the existing woodland blocks and the established Ashdown Business Park to the north. Development should also be carefully sited and designed to protect the rural character and setting of the Grade II listed Batts Farmhouse to the north-east.

The role the site plays in maintaining the separation between Maresfield and Uckfield should be a primary consideration in any development proposals. The height and massing of any development should be designed to integrate with the surrounding wooded landscape, without breaking the treeline of the adjacent woodland blocks.

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

Figure A.22: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



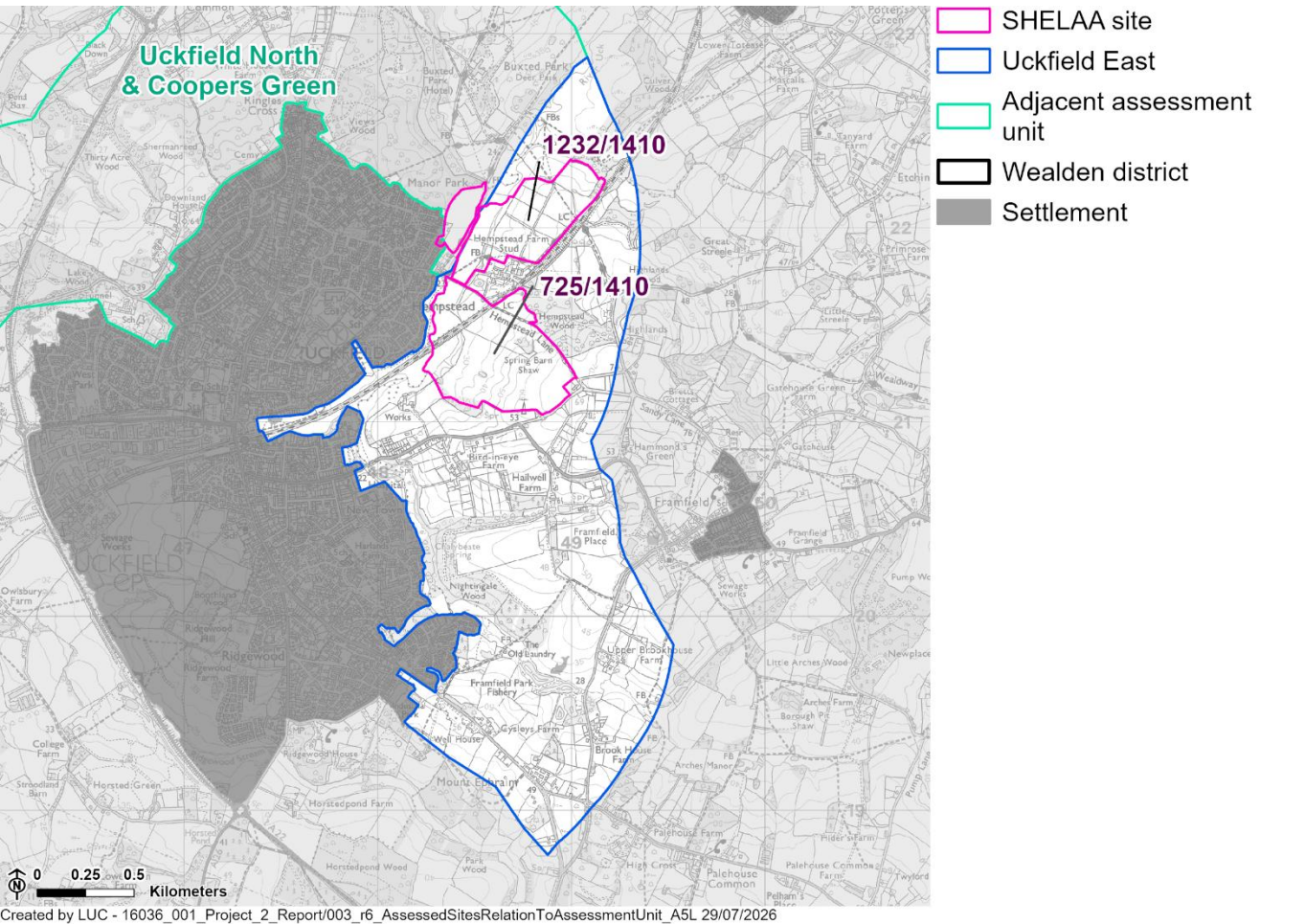
Landscape sensitivity context: Uckfield East

One potential strategic development site is considered within **Uckfield East** assessment unit:

- 1232/1410 Hempstead Farm, Uckfield
- 725/1410 Land at Hempstead Lane

NB the north-west of site 1232/1410 extends into the Uckfield North and Coopers Green assessment unit. Where appropriate, similarities with the Uckfield North and Coopers Green assessment unit are noted.

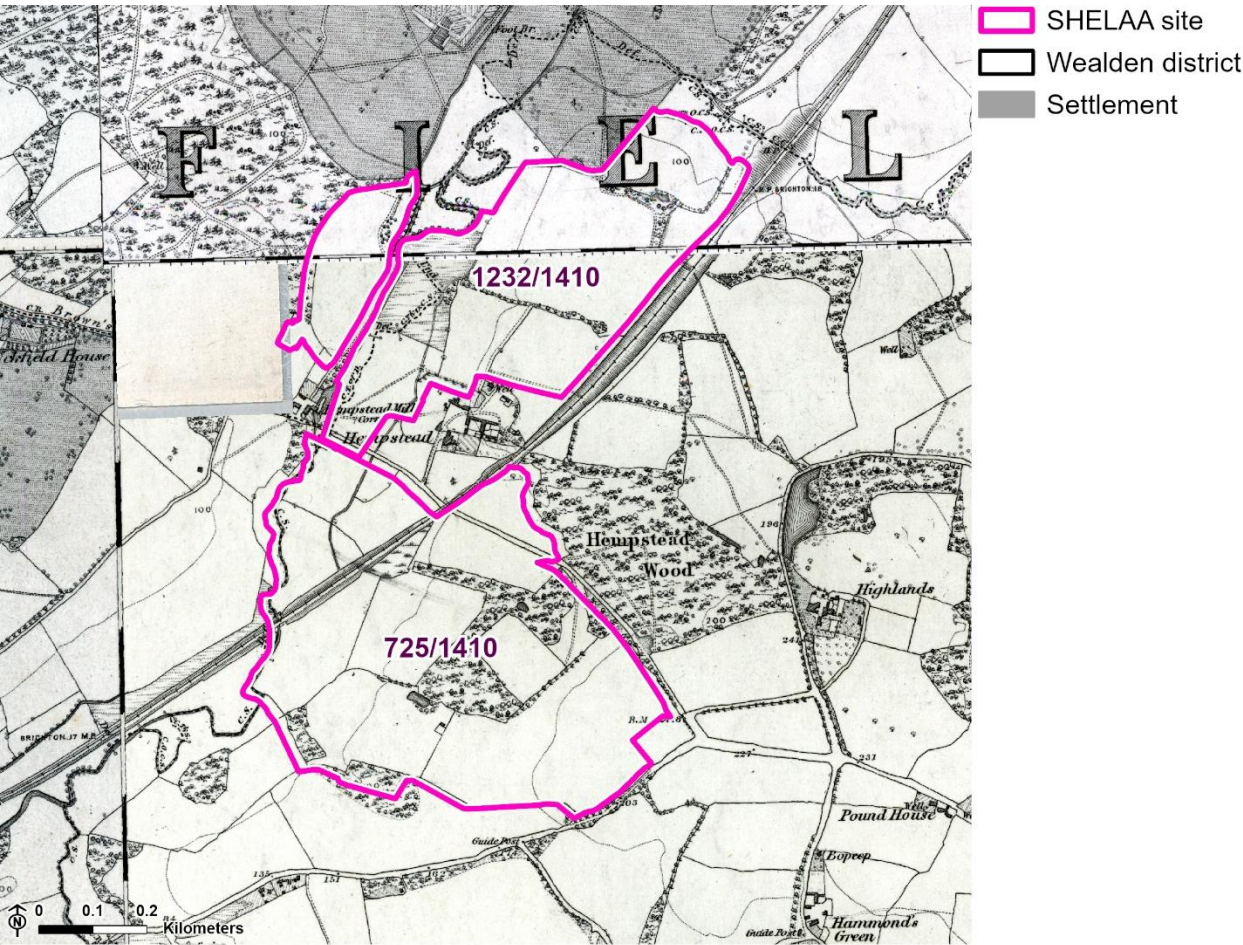
Figure A.23: Site locations in relation to the assessment unit



Settlement context (adapted from Landscape Character Assessment (2022) and Landscape Sensitivity Assessments (2023))	
Settlement location and context	Uckfield is a market town located in the west of the district. To the west and north it lies within LCA 6D: High Weald: Ouse Catchment, which transitions into LCA 3A: Uckfield to Hailsham Wooded Clay Vale to the east and south.
Settlement evolution	The settlement originally developed as a strategic crossing point of the River Uck and as a historic road hub connecting Canterbury, Chichester, and Lewes. Church Street formed the heart of the original settlement, with subsequent town development expanding from the 15th century onwards along the High Street and into the New Town areas to the south of the historic town

	centre. Uckfield greatly increased in size following the Second World War, expanding substantially northward to merge with the former hamlet of Ringles Cross.
Settlement pattern and edge character	The settlement edges of Uckfield are distinct and heavily influenced by natural infrastructure. The eastern boundary is well-defined by a network of established woodlands, including Manor Park and Nightingale Woods, and is firmly contained by the River Uck corridor and its associated riparian vegetation, creating a strong natural boundary that separates the current urban settlement edge from the surrounding rural landscape. The northward expansion is strongly contained by Views Wood, an area of ancient woodland that functions as a resilient boundary feature preventing further development sprawl into the wider countryside.

Figure A.24: OS map (1885-1903) illustrating the evolution of the site and settlement edge



Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_2_Report/004_r0_SiteEvolution_A5L_Hempstead Farm 29/07/2026

The Landscape Sensitivity of the Uckfield East assessment unit described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA assessment unit	Uckfield East		
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA assessment unit	Small scale residential 2-2.5 storey housing	Medium scale residential 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	Commercial/ industrial e.g. industrial units or hotels
	Moderate	High	High
Noted variations in landscape sensitivity	- Open slopes at higher elevations, would have a higher sensitivity to any scale of development. This is due to their visual prominence and function as part of the rural setting to the lower lying urban areas. - Extensive deciduous woodland, particularly in the north of the assessment unit, and the open parkland at Buxted Park would be of high sensitivity to development. Ancient woodlands are a particularly sensitive feature of this unit.		
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	- The undulating valley landform - Mature deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin). - The strong network of thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees. - Intact historic field patterns, particularly assarts to the south and north-east of the assessment unit. - Historic features throughout the assessment unit including scattered oast houses and Framfield Park in the south. - Riparian woodland and other wetland habitats along the River Uck and its tributaries. - Prominent open valley sides in the south of the assessment unit, which provide a rural setting to the settlement. - The open character of the floodplain meadows along the River Uck. - Strong settlement boundaries, including extensive woodland to the north and wooded river/stream valleys elsewhere. - The network of public rights of way. - Areas of tranquillity and dark skies along the Uck Valley and within the large woodlands to the north.		
LSA Guidance	- Avoid development on the steep open valley sides in the south of the unit, due to their visual prominence and the rural setting they provide to the wider settlement. - Avoid development on the open floodplain meadows along the River Uck. - Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the River Uck and its Headwaters BOA where possible, including wetland habitat creation. - Locate development on low lying flat fields, or lower slopes in close proximity to the settlement, well enclosed by landform and vegetation where development would be less visible and have less influence on landscape character. - Retain broadleaved woodland, including linear riparian woodland along watercourses. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow a suitable and appropriate buffer around them to avoid root damage.		

	■ Avoid development in areas of habitat interest, notably semi-natural woodlands, grassland habitats in Buxted Park or riparian habitats along the River Uck and its tributaries. ■ Retain in-field or roadside trees, including tree clumps, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of, or damage to, hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought, using native species where possible. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts in the south of this assessment unit. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the appreciation of historic features, such as riverside mills, or listed buildings. ■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using species that are in character with the wider landscape. ■ Take opportunities to reduce the visual impact of the railway and roads, and existing urban edge development. ■ Consider views from popular public rights of way, such as the Wealdway, when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Ensure development does not affect the open character of the river valley, and areas of relative tranquillity in the larger woodlands.
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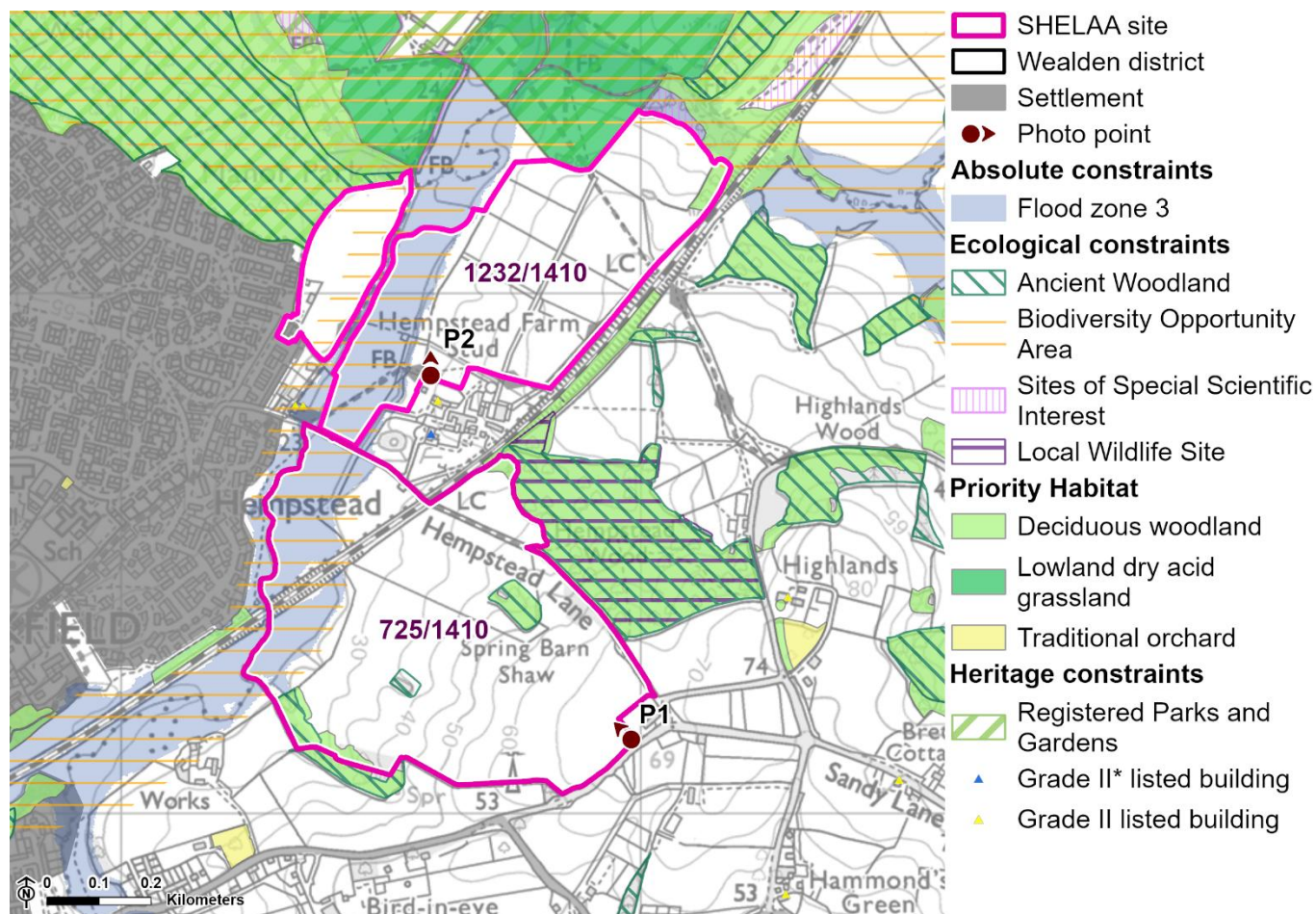
Site Assessment: Hempstead Farm and Land at Hempstead Lane, Uckfield

Site details

SHELAA site name / reference	SHELAA Site 1232/1410 SHELAA Site 725/1410
Potential development	SHELAA Site 1232/1410: 200 residential dwellings. The site was considered an Option (OFF8) for 200 dwellings in the draft 'Focused' Wealden Local Plan. SHELAA Site 725/1410: 320 residential dwellings.
Site location	The sites are located to the east and north-east of Uckfield. The majority of the site areas lie to the east of the River Uck. The sites are bounded by the Uckfield settlement edge to the west. Site 1232/1410 is bounded by Manor Park woodland to the north-west and the railway line to the east. Site 725/1410 is bounded by Hempstead Wood to the east and Sandy Lane to the south.

Site baseline

Figure A.25: Site location and constraints



Representative site photos



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



SHELAA Site 1232/1410: Long views across the agricultural fields north from the Wealdway.

Baseline landscape character in relation to the wider assessment unit

Key features and qualities of the site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	Landform The sites are typical of the undulating valley landform of the assessment unit, associated with the winding course of the River Uck. Topography rises from 25m AOD at the River Uck corridor to 45m AOD in the east of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 and to 65m AOD in the south-east of SHELAA Site 725/1410 (near Hempstead Lane and Sandy Lane). Natural character The sites are bounded by mature hedgerow and hedgerow trees, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. There are surviving pockets of Spring Barn Shaw ancient woodland in SHELAA Site 725/1410. The separate parcel of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 to the north-west is adjacent to Views Wood ancient woodland and Hempstead Wood ancient woodland lies adjacent to the east of SHELAA Site 725/1410. Buxted Park SSSI, a nationally designated site supporting wet meadows, unimproved grassland and broadleaved woodland, lies immediately north of SHELAA Site 1232/1410. Ancient woodlands are typical of the wider assessment unit. The River Uck intersects SHELAA Site 1232/1410 from north to south and forms the north-western boundary of SHELAA Site 725/1410. The riparian woodland and associated wetland habitats along this corridor are typical the wider assessment unit. There are small ponds in the north-east of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 and in the centre and east of SHELAA Site 725/1410. Landscape pattern and time depth The west of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 and north-west of SHELAA Site 725/1410 reflects the historic field pattern of irregular piecemeal enclosure, as classified by the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC). Historic assarts are noted adjacent to Culver Wood in SHELAA Site 1232/1410. The smaller eastern fields associated with Hempstead Farm in SHELAA Site 1323/1410 and the majority of SHELAA Site 725/1410 reflect modern field amalgamation. This varied field pattern is characteristic of the wider assessment unit. Buxted Park Registered Park and Garden (II*) lies to the north of SHELAA Site 1232/1410. The Oast House (Grade II listed), Hempstead Manor Farmhouse
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	and Hempstead Mill (Former Mill House) (Grade II* listed) lie between the two sites and reflect the scattered pattern of historic farmhouses and oast houses that is typical of the wider assessment unit. Recreational value Uckfield Rugby Football Club occupies part of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 to the west of the River Uck. Public rights of way, including the long-distance Wealdway, cross the south, north-west and north-east of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 and connect Uckfield to Buxted and Buxted Park. The public right of way along Hempstead Lane forms the north-eastern boundary of SHELAA Site 725/1410. These routes contribute to the wider network of public rights of way that is typical of the assessment unit. Manor Park / Views Wood to the north-west of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 is an area of open access land. Perceptual aspects The south and west of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 and north of SHELAA Site 725/1410 are influenced by their proximity to the settlement edge of Uckfield and the adjacent rugby club, which reduce the sense of tranquillity and dark skies that are characteristic of the wider assessment unit. The railway corridor also affects the sites' perceptual qualities, although it provides a degree of containment along the south-eastern boundary of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 and the north-west of SHELAA Site 725/1410, limiting intervisibility with the wider rural landscape. The north-east of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 is enclosed by the woodland blocks of Manor Park/Views Wood and the boundary of Buxted Park SSSI. The east of SHELAA Site 725/1410 is enclosed by Hempstead Wood. These enclosing woodlands are characteristic of the assessment unit and contribute to a stronger sense of rural character in the north-east of the sites. The sites provide some contribution to the separation of Uckfield and Framfield, which is typical of the wider assessment unit.
Designations which are constraints to development	Buxted Park SSSI and Registered Park and Garden (II*) lies immediately to the north of SHELAA Site 1232/1410. Spring Barn Shaw within SHELAA Site 725/1410 is an area of ancient woodland. Views Wood, an area of ancient woodland forming part of Manor Park, lies to the north-west of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 and Hempstead Wood ancient woodland lies to the east of SHELAA Site 725/1410. Three listed buildings lie between the two sites: the Oast House (Grade II listed), Hempstead Manor Farmhouse (Grade II* listed) and Hempstead Mill (Former Mill House) (Grade II*). Flood Zones 2 and 3 are located along the River Uck corridor, which runs along the north-western edge of SHELAA Site 725/1410 and separates the north-west parcel of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 from the rest of the site.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The north-west of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 is adjacent to the south-east residential edge of Uckfield and incorporates the Uckfield Rugby Football Club. Hempstead Farm lies between the two sites. The farm is currently separated from the edge of Uckfield by the grassland fields of the south of the site. The River Uck and associated riparian woodland provide a strong boundary feature between the sites and the south-eastern settlement edge, which is typical of the wider assessment unit. The railway line also forms a strong boundary feature. There is no development within SHELAA Site 725/1410 and the only development within SHELAA Site 1232/1410 is the club house of the rugby club in the north-west. The enclosing woodlands to the north of SHELAA Site 1232/1410, forms a strong boundary to the north-west of Uckfield, limiting northward views.

Baseline visual character

Baseline visual character	The sites have a partially enclosed character, typical of the wider assessment unit, with views into and across the site restricted by the woodland blocks of Manor Park and Buxted Park to the north and Hempstead Wood to the east, mature boundary hedgerows and riparian vegetation along the River Uck corridor, and the railway embankment. The open elevated slopes in the east of both sites afford some open elevated views west across the River Uck towards Uckfield, including from the public rights of way on Hempstead Lane in SHELAA Site 725/1410 and the Wealdway in SHELAA Site 1232/1410. The open slopes are also visible in glimpsed outward views from parts of the settlement edge, including from Hempstead Road, from which slightly elevated views across the river valley are afforded. Views of the rising slopes in the south-west of the site are glimpsed beyond woodland and the allotments near Uckfield Hospital, with the buildings at Bird in Eye Farm (some of which are historic listed buildings) seen beyond. Glimpsed, close- and middle-distance views across the sites are available from the network of footpaths crossing the sites, including the Wealdway which runs along the eastern and southern boundaries of SHELAA Site 1232/1410, and runs along the River Uck through the west of the site. There are also clear views into the site from Hempstead Lane along the southern boundary of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 and the east of SHELAA Site 725/1410. As is typical of the wider assessment unit, the lower slopes and river floodplain are largely screened by the corridor of riparian vegetation along the River Uck. Views into the north of site 725/1410 and the west of site 1232/1410 from the settlement edge of Uckfield are therefore limited. Views into the sites from Hempstead Mill and Hempstead Manor are largely screened by vegetation. From the Oast House intermittent vegetation and the surrounding flatter landform allows views north into SHELAA Site 1232/1410. There are views from dispersed residential properties along Sandy Lane into SHELAA Site 725/1410. Longer distance views east from SHELAA Site 1232/1410 are limited by the trackside vegetation associated with the railway corridor, which provides effective screening and restricts views into the site from the railway line, and views out from the site to the east.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB / South Downs National Park	The High Weald AONB lies to the north-east of the sites. However, intervisibility is limited by the trackside vegetation along the railway corridor, together with the intervening woodland blocks of Buxted Park and Highland Wood. There are no views towards the South Downs National Park due to the enclosed, wooded character of the surrounding landscape and intervening topography.

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

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assesses the LCA 6D assessment unit to have a **moderate sensitivity** to small scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), and **high sensitivity** to medium scale residential development (3-4 storey flats/ care homes) and commercial/industrial development. The LSA indicates that the deciduous woodland coverage along watercourses, much of ancient origin, the varied field pattern, dispersed historic settlement character, rural character, strong network of public rights of way and the role ins separation between Uckfield and Framfield to the east increase sensitivity. The areas of modern field amalgamation, and the visually enclosed character of much of the area reduces sensitivity.

The Sites

The sites demonstrate many of the characteristics of the wider assessment unit, including an undulating valley landform, mature deciduous woodland associated with watercourses (including ancient woodlands at Spring Barn Shaw in SHELAA Site 725/1410, and the adjacent ancient woodland at Views Wood, Hempstead Wood and Buxted Park SSSI to the north of SHELAA Site 1232/1410). They also have a mixed field pattern incorporating remnants of irregular piecemeal enclosure in the west and assarts to the east, a settlement pattern of scattered historic farmhouses and cottages, long-distance views from elevated ground and the strong network of public rights of way, and a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.

The proximity to the settlement edge of Uckfield and containment by the railway corridor, together with areas of modern field amalgamation in the east of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 and the majority of SHELAA Site 725/1410, and the sites' generally enclosed character, reduce sensitivity.

Overall, it is considered that both of the sites have a higher sensitivity to small-scale residential development than the wider assessment unit, having a **moderate-high sensitivity** to small-scale, and a **high sensitivity** to medium-scale residential development.

Variations in sensitivity

For both sites, the prominent open upper slopes to the east of the River Uck, which rise away from the floodplain and are more open in character, have a higher sensitivity, due to the visual exposure from Hempstead Lane and their contribution to the setting of the River Uck corridor.

SHELAA Site 1232/1410: The separate parcel to the north-west, comprising the rugby club and land immediately adjacent to the existing settlement edge, has a lower sensitivity, given its proximity to built development and the good screening provided by the riparian vegetation along the River Uck and boundary vegetation along the settlement edge.

Potential effects of developing the sites and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	
Landscape character and features	Development on the sites could affect: ■ The riparian woodland, wetland habitats and small-scale character of the River Uck corridor. ■ The network of mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees within and around the site. ■ The integrity and condition of the Spring Barn Shaw within SHELAA Site 725/1410 and the adjacent ancient woodland at Hempstead Wood, Views Wood (within Manor Park) to the north-west, and Buxted Park SSSI to the north. ■ The setting of the adjacent Grade II* Buxted Park Registered Park and Garden to the north SHELAA Site 1232/1410 and Hempstead Farm between the sites. ■ The historic irregular piecemeal field pattern in the west and assarts in the north-east of SHELAA Site 1232/1410. ■ The network of public rights of way, including the Wealdway which crosses the south and west of SHELAA Site 1232/1410. ■ The rural character of the landscape immediately adjacent to the SSSI and the River Uck corridor, and of the open slopes of the more elevated valley sides. ■ Relative rural tranquillity away from the settlement edge. ■ Permanent loss of productive agricultural land.
Designated landscapes	The High Weald AONB lies to the north-east, and any elevated development in the east SHELAA Site 132/1410 could result in glimpsed views from the AONB. However, the intervening woodland and topography are likely to limit such intervisibility, and the development would be seen, if at all, in the context of the existing settlement of Uckfield. There is no intervisibility with the South Downs National Park.

Settlement form, edge and setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The robust boundary provided by the wooded course of the River Uck and the railway line. ■ The character and legibility of the north-eastern settlement edge of Uckfield, extending built development into land currently defined by the River Uck corridor and the containing woodland boundaries. Expansion of development would have an impact on the perceived openness of the Uck Valley ■ SHELAA Site 1232/1410: The wider rural setting of Buxted Park SSSI, which currently benefits from a degree of separation from the settlement edge. ■ The setting of the grade II* listed Hempstead Manor Farmhouse and Hempstead Mill (Former Mill House), and grade II listed Oast House which lie between the sites.-west, which lies on the current settlement edge.
Visual amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Users of public rights of way within the site, including Hempstead Lane and the Wealdway. ■ Recreational users of the open access land at Views Wood / Manor Park to the north-west of the site. ■ Residents within the existing settlement edge of Uckfield on Oakwood Drive, Cuckmere Path, Michelham Road and Hempstead Lane, who may experience views across the site towards the woodland backdrop of Manor Park. ■ Residents and visitors to Hempstead Farm. ■ Recreational visitors to Buxted Park and its hotel. ■ Users of the railway line to the east, for whom the sites currently form part of the rural fringe landscape.
Cumulative issues	
Potential for cumulative effects with other large strategic sites	A group of strategic sites lie to the west and south of this site - 002/1410 – Bird in Eye Farm (South), Bird in Eye Hill, Uckfield; and 127/1410 – Bird in Eye Farm (North). Site 127/1410 has planning permission for 190 homes under reference WD/2024/1799/MAO. If all these sites come forward there would be a general expansion of Uckfield to into the surrounding rural landscape to the east. The wooded character of the landscape would reduce intervisibility between the sites, however if the sites were all brought forward for development there would be a degree perceived coalescence between the sites. This could result in cumulative visual impacts for people travelling along the railway line.
Potential for mitigation and enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Development should be set back from Flood Zones 2 and 3 which run along the River Uck corridor in the north of SHELAA Site 725/1410 and the west of SHELAA Site 725/1410. ■ Lower ground outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3 along the River Uck corridor could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features, incorporating habitat creation. ■ Development should avoid and be set back from the ancient woodland at Spring Barn Shaw, Views Wood within Manor Park and Hempstead Wood, with a buffer zone of at least 25 metres to avoid root damage, aligning within the emerging	

Local Plan policies⁴. 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).

- Development should be predominantly located in the west of SHELAA Site 1232/1410, on land currently occupied by the rugby club and adjacent fields immediately adjoining the existing settlement edge of Uckfield.
- Development in the higher elevations in the east of the sites would extend the built development of Uckfield across the River Uck, extending built development beyond the natural boundary formed by the river and its associated riparian vegetation. Development on the steep open valley sides would be visually prominent and effect the rural setting the valley provides to the wider settlement.
- The rural character of Hempstead Lane between the sites should be protected. Development should not encroach upon the open, low-lying land to the south of the site associated with the River Uck floodplain, which is visually exposed from Hempstead Lane and contributes to the rural setting of the lane and the wider farmstead landscape to the south.
- Retain, protect and enhance all mature vegetation within and surrounding the site, especially the riparian woodland along the River Uck corridor, mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and the woodland blocks of Manor Park. Aim to strengthen the ecological network across the site, enhancing connectivity between riparian woodland and the woodland blocks within and adjacent to the site.
- Development within SHELAA Site 1232/1410 should avoid and be set back from the boundary of Buxted Park SSSI, with an appropriate buffer to protect the ecological integrity of the designated site and the habitats within it.
- Conserve and manage the small watercourses which cross the sites, increasing riverside vegetation and wetland habitats where possible to 'slow the flow' and assist in reducing flood risk as well as increase biodiversity.
- Development should be carefully sited and designed to protect the rural character and setting of the Grade II* Buxted Park Registered Park and Garden to the north of SHELAA Site 1232/1410.
- The rural setting for the grade II* listed Hempstead Manor Farmhouse and Hempstead Mill and grade II listed Oast House between the sites should also be carefully sited and designed to ensure that new built form does not intrude upon the immediate setting of these heritage assets.
- Retain the public rights of way within the site, including the Wealdway, and where possible retain the semi-rural experience of walking these routes, minimising the visibility of any proposed development from the paths within the site. Recreational links between any new development, the River Uck corridor, and the open access land at Views Wood and Manor Park to the north-west should be provided and enhanced, improving connectivity between the settlement and the wider landscape and providing residents with access to the woodland and open space to the north.
- Enhance public access, providing opportunities to experience the river/stream valleys and longer views out from the upper slopes across the wider landscape.
- The height and massing of any development should be designed to integrate with the surrounding wooded landscape and should not break the treeline of the adjacent woodland blocks at Hempstead Wood, Manor Park, or be visually prominent above the treeline of Buxted Park to the north of SHELAA Site 1232/1410.
- Green open space and tree planting should be interspersed within any development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built form, strengthen green infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built form within the landscape. Planting should be in character with the locality and use native species where possible.
- Introduced built forms should be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of their surroundings, using high quality materials suggestive of the local vernacular.

⁴ See Natural England and Forestry Commission guidance for further information: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions>

Summary

The sites have a higher sensitivity to small-scale residential development than the wider assessment unit due to the prominent elevated slopes and ancient woodlands within and adjacent to the sites. The sites have a moderate-high sensitivity to small-scale residential development and high sensitivity to medium-scale residential development and commercial/industrial development.

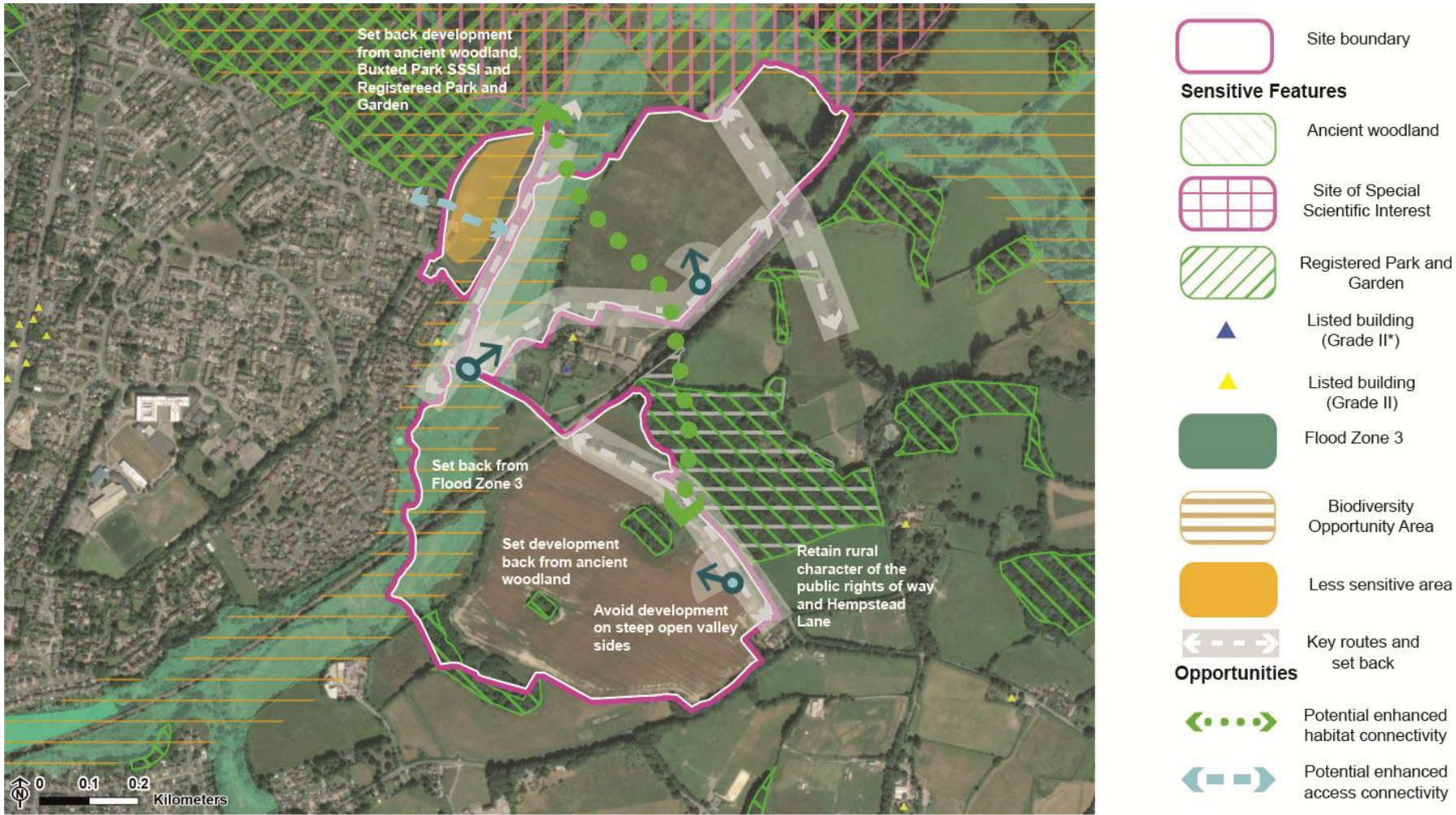
Development of these sites would potentially extend development onto the open and steep valley sides of the River Uck, and beyond the distinctive boundary formed by the river. They would introduce residential development within the semi-rural fringe landscape to the north-east of Uckfield, in a location strongly influenced by the River Uck corridor, the ancient woodland of Spring Barn Shaws, Hempstead Wood and Views Wood within Manor Park, and the nationally designated Buxted Park SSSI and Registered Park and Garden. Whilst the sites' proximity to the existing settlement edge, the influence of the railway corridor to the east, the presence of the rugby club in the west of SHELAA Site 1232/1410, and the enclosed character of the north-west parcel of SHELAA Site 1232/1410 reduce sensitivity, the sites retain a number of important and sensitive landscape features. These include the River Uck riparian corridor, a strong network of public rights of way including the Wealdway and Hempstead Lane, and historic field patterns within the south-west and north-east of SHELAA Site 1232/1410. Features immediately adjacent to the site which increase sensitivity include Hempstead Wood and Views Wood ancient woodland, Buxted Park SSSI and Registered Park and Garden and a cluster of listed buildings at Hempstead Farm between the sites.

If the sites are considered for development, any proposed development would need to be planned with great care, particularly in relation to the River Uck floodplain and riparian habitats, Spring Barn Shaw ancient woodland and the adjacent ecological designations at Hempstead Wood, Views Wood and Buxted Park SSSI. Development should be set back from the floodplain and open pastures of the valley floor and avoiding the more elevated valley sides which provide a rural backdrop to the settlement. Development should be set back from ancient woodlands within and adjacent to the sites, with a suitable and appropriate buffer provided to protect the woodlands from the impacts of development. Development should be carefully sited and designed to protect the setting of the listed farmstead buildings between the sites, and to retain the semi-rural character experienced along the Wealdway and Hempstead Lane crossing and adjacent to the sites.

Within SHELAA Site 1232/1410 development should be predominantly located in the west of the site, to the west of the River Uck, in closest proximity to the existing settlement edge, to utilise the containment afforded by the surrounding woodland, SSSI and railway boundaries.

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

Figure A.26: Summary map of constraints and opportunities

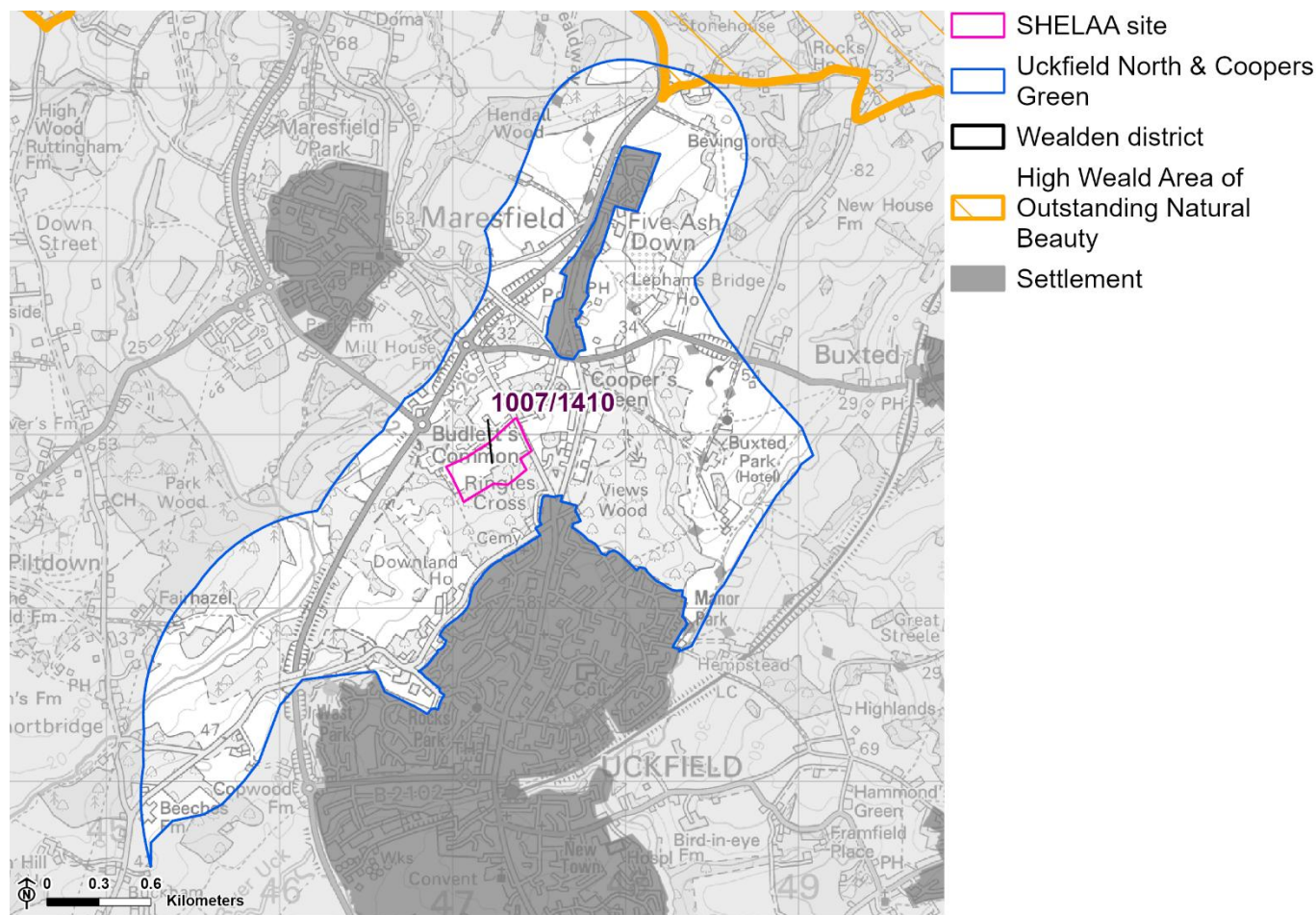


Landscape sensitivity context: Uckfield North and Coopers Green Assessment Unit

One potential development site is considered within the **Uckfield North and Coopers Green** assessment unit:

- 1007/1410 Land at White House Farm, London Road, Uckfield

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



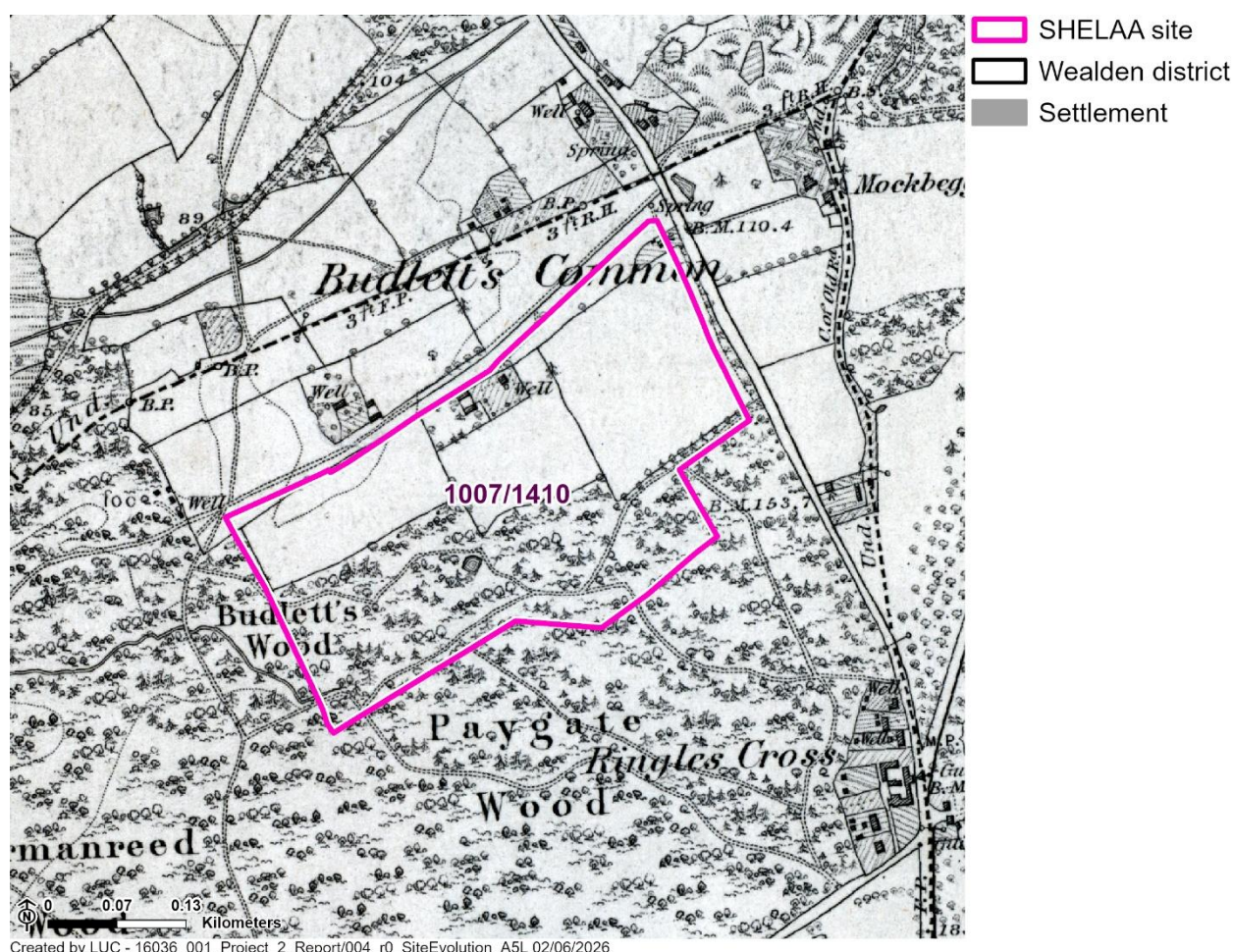
Created by LUC - 16036_001_Project_2_Report/003_r5_AssessedSitesRelationToAssessmentUnit_A5L 22/07/2026

Settlement context (adapted from Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2023))

Settlement location and context	Uckfield is a market town located in the west of the district, at the transition between the Wooded Clay Vales of the Low Weald (LCT 3) and the Wooded Slopes of the High Weald (LCT 6). with transport connections to larger settlements, including London. It developed at a crossing point of the River Uck and functions as a road hub, connecting key routes between Canterbury, Chichester and Lewes.
Settlement evolution	The town developed where the road linking Canterbury, Chichester and Lewes crossed the River Uck. The original settlement was focussed primarily along Church Street (around the medieval chapel) and High Street, an area designated as the Uckfield Conservation Area. Later development extended further north and south along the High Street and along Framfield Road (the New Town area) to the south-east, resulting in a linear north-south settlement pattern. The arrival of the railway in the 19th century stimulated further growth and by the early and mid-20th century, development greatly increased the size of the town. This later expansion has resulted in

	the town's merging with the formerly separate hamlets of Ringles Cross and Ridgewood to the north and south respectively.
Settlement pattern and edge character	Uckfield still retains its linear north-south form, although more recently industrial and residential development has extended the settlement to the north-west as far as the Uckfield Bypass (A22) and to the north-east as far as Views Wood (ancient woodland) and the River Uck. The northern settlement edge of Uckfield and Ringles Cross is well integrated into the landscape, with mature hedgerows and trees softening the transition between the built form and the surrounding countryside. Dense woodland areas further contribute to containment and limit outward views, reinforcing the rural setting. The houses are typically 2-storey detached and semi-detached houses with brick and tile common materials. Outside of Uckfield, the settlement is linear and focussed on key routes including London Road and Five Ash Down. Houses are predominately one- or two-storey detached properties.

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



The Landscape Sensitivity of the Uckfield North and Coopers Green assessment unit described in the Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LSA assessment unit	Uckfield North and Coopers Green		
Landscape sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA assessment unit	Small scale residential 2-2.5 storey housing	Medium scale residential 3-4 storey flats/ care homes	Commercial/ industrial e.g. industrial units or hotels
	Moderate	High	High
Noted variations in landscape sensitivity	- The deciduous woodlands, many of ancient origin are highly sensitive to all development types. - Areas of lower sensitivity include those close to the major road network and existing modern development on the edge of Uckfield and Maresfield.		
Key sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to development identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	- Undulating ridge and valley landform, particularly in northern areas - Numerous areas of ancient and priority habitat deciduous woodlands to the south and west of the assessment unit, and priority habitat acid grassland to the east. - Extensive network of mature, intact hedgerows. - Intact historic field patterns, particularly assarts to the south and east of the assessment unit. - Historic parkland at Buxted Park, and listed buildings at Cooper's Green. - The Wealdway long distance footpath and open access at Manor Park. - The rural character with areas of tranquillity and dark skies within Shermangreen Wood and Thirty Acres Wood, at Manor Park, and along the River Uck valley.		
LSA Guidance	- Locate development on low lying flat fields in close proximity to the settlement, where well enclosed by landform and vegetation, where development would be less visible and have less influence on landscape character. - Retain riparian habitats along the River Uck and its tributaries. - Retain broadleaved woodland. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow an appropriate buffer around them. - Take up biodiversity opportunities listed in the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA, including restoration of floodplain woodland and increased woody cover along streams. - Retain the strong woodland corridor along the A22/A26. Replace any unavoidable losses with native species, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. - Retain in-field trees, including tree clumps, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Replace any unavoidable losses with native species, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. - Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network, as identified in the Western Ouse Streams and Ashdown Forest BOA. Where there is unavoidable loss of hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible.		

	■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities of Buxted Park, or appreciation of historic features, including listed buildings at Coopers Green. ■ Consider views from public rights of way, such as the Wealdway, when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape. ■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using species that are in character with the wider landscape. ■ Ensure opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape are preserved and enhanced. ■ Ensure development does not affect the rural character of the landscape, and areas of relative tranquillity. Preserve the clear separation between Maresfield, Coopers Green, and Uckfield when considering the siting and design of development in the landscape.
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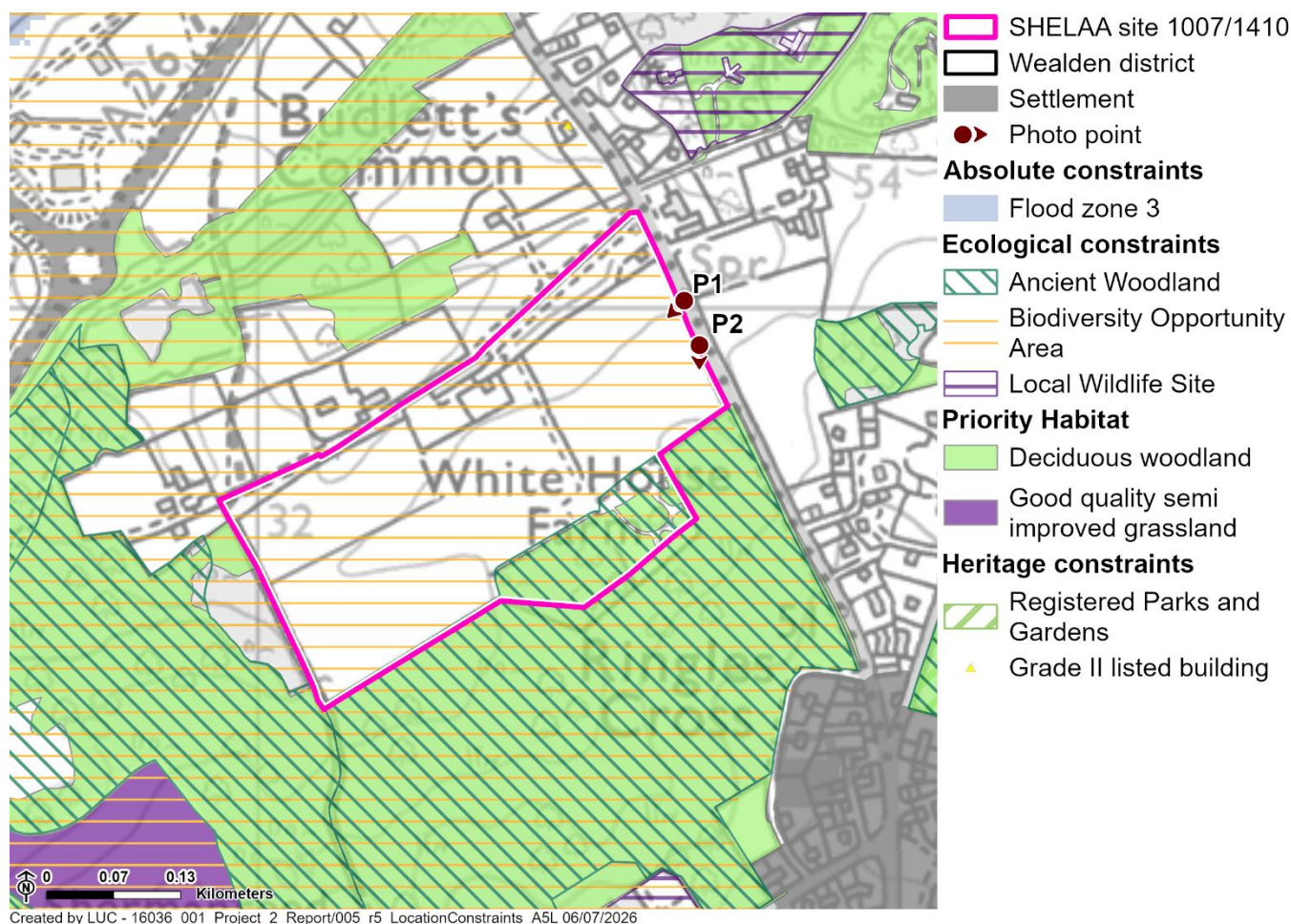
Site Assessment: Land at White House Farm, London Road, Uckfield

Site details

SHELAA site name / reference	1007/1410
Potential development	Residential: 240 dwellings The site is considered as a potential Allocation (UCK11) for 240 dwellings.
Site location	The site is located to the north-west of Uckfield, north of Paygate Wood and west of London Road.

Site baseline

Figure A.29: Site location and constraints



Representative site photos



Viewpoint 1: Wide verge and hedgerow along eastern boundary, with new development outside of the site visible to the south-east.



Viewpoint 2: Larger scale arable fields contained by woodland edges.

Baseline landscape character in relation to the wider assessment unit

Key features and qualities of the site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	Landform The site is typical of the gently undulating landform of the wider assessment unit, comprising a pastoral landscape which gently falls from approximately 40m AOD in the south-east to 30m AOD in the north. The landform is relatively simple and open, with a consistent gentle fall across the site, reflecting the broader shallow valley character associated with the wider assessment unit. Natural character Hedgerows across the site are generally low and intermittent, particularly along London Road on the eastern boundary and White House Farm track along the northern boundary. There are occasional mature hedgerow trees along the northern boundary. There are no internal hedgerow boundaries within the site, although a few individual mature hedgerow trees remain. This contrasts with the stronger hedgerow structure typical of the wider assessment unit. The site is strongly influenced by adjacent areas of woodland, including Budlett's Wood to the west and Paygate Wood to the south, both of which are identified as ancient woodland. Part of Paygate Wood ancient woodland extends into the south-eastern corner of the site. Tree cover extends into the north-west, adjacent to Budlett's Wood, although it is not recorded as priority habitat deciduous woodland. Two minor springs associated with Shortbridge Stream which runs to the north lie within the site. One watercourse runs through Budlett's Wood and enters the site in the south-west, whilst the second lies in the north-east of the site. Landscape pattern and time depth The site comprises regular medium-scale pastoral fields, which contrasts with the more varied field pattern of the wider assessment unit. Like the wider assessment unit, the historic field pattern is of informal piecemeal enclosure, although the loss of internal field boundaries dilutes this pattern. The site contains White House Farm and associated agricultural buildings in the north, with caravans / structures in the south of the site, similar to the linear development and isolated farmhouses typical of the wider assessment unit.
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	Recreational value A public right of way runs along the western edge of the site, connecting the edge of Uckfield, Paygate Wood and Budlett's Common. These routes contribute to the wider network of public rights of way, which is characteristic of the assessment unit and facilitates recreational access to the surrounding countryside. Perceptual aspects The site retains a generally rural and tranquil character, particularly in the centre and west, which are positively influenced by the adjacent woodland edges. The woodlands provide a strong sense of enclosure along the site edges, which is characteristic of the wider landscape. However, perceptual qualities are influenced by surrounding infrastructure and settlement. The proximity of the A22/A26 junction approximately 250m to the north, along with London Road to the east, introduces traffic movement and associated noise, although the extent of this influence is partially moderated by woodland and intervening vegetation. Residential development at Ringles Cross along London Road and at Budlett's Common to the north also influences the perceptual character, reducing the strength of tranquillity and dark night skies in these areas. Overall, the site exhibits a moderate level of tranquillity and dark skies, which varies across the site, with more rural qualities evident away from road corridors.
Designations which are constraints to development	Paygate Wood ancient woodland extends into the south-east of the site, and the woodland is located immediately adjacent to the south. Budlett's Wood ancient woodland lies to the west of the site. These areas are of high ecological value and contribute significantly to landscape character. A Grade II listed building at Budlett's Common is located approximately 100 metres to the north of the site, and therefore development may affect its setting. Although these designations are not within the site itself, they contribute to the wider historic landscape context and may be sensitive to change in their setting.
Settlement form and edge character and extent of built development	The site lies to the north-west of Uckfield. Paygate Wood forms a strong visual and physical settlement edge to Uckfield and separates the site from the settlement edge. The woodland limits connectivity and views between the site and the settlement. To the north-east, the settlement of Five Ash Down lies approximately 450m away, whilst Maresfield lies approximately 950m to the north-west. The site forms part of a transitional landscape between these settlements, although separation is maintained by intervening woodland and agricultural land. Development along London Road to the east comprises residential dwellings at Ringles Cross, which form a more urban edge. The northern boundary, adjacent to an unnamed road, also includes residential properties, with relatively open views into the site due to limited vegetation. Within the site, development is limited to Spring Cottage in the north-east and comprising a farmstead with associated agricultural buildings at White House Farm, in the centre-north of the site. These are consistent with the dispersed settlement pattern of the wider assessment unit.

Baseline visual character

Baseline visual character	The eastern boundary of the site, along London Road, is more open, with low hedgerows allowing views into the site. The site has a partially enclosed visual character, which is influenced by the presence of strong woodland edges of Paygate Wood to the south and Budlett's Wood to the west. These woodlands
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	provide containment and limit intervisibility from these directions, which is characteristic of the wider assessment unit. In contrast, the site is more visually open along its eastern boundary along London Road where low hedgerows allow relatively open views into the site from London Road. The northern boundary is also open due to the limited boundary vegetation along the unnamed road. These open boundaries allow views from residential properties located along London Road at Ringles Cross and along the northern boundary. Glimpsed views from the public right of way along the western edge are filtered by the dense woodland vegetation associated with Budlett's Wood. Long-distance views into and out of the site are generally limited, due to the combination of enclosing vegetation and woodland cover to the south and west, and gently undulating topography, which restricts wider intervisibility and reinforces the contained nature of the landscape, consistent with the wider assessment unit.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB / South Downs National Park	There is limited intervisibility with the wider landscape, with the site appearing relatively enclosed. Views are generally contained, although there is some visual relationship with the surrounding wooded landscape, including Budlett's Common.

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

The Assessment Unit

The *Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment* assesses the Uckfield North assessment unit as having **moderate sensitivity** to small-scale residential development and **high sensitivity** to medium-scale residential and commercial/industrial development.

This sensitivity is primarily driven by the strong natural character of the landscape, including extensive areas of ancient and priority habitat woodland, intact hedgerow networks and a well-defined rural character. The presence of historic field patterns, including assarts and piecemeal enclosure, and the contribution of features such as Buxted Park and scattered listed buildings, increase the time-depth and sensitivity of the landscape.

The assessment unit also plays an important role in maintaining the separation between Uckfield, Coopers Green and Maresfield, and contributes to a rural setting with areas of tranquillity and dark skies.

Sensitivity is reduced in parts of the assessment unit where the landscape is influenced by proximity to major road corridors such as the A22 and A26, as well as areas of modern development and visually enclosed landscapes, which limit wider visibility.

The Site

The site demonstrates a number of characteristics of the wider assessment unit, including a gently undulating landform, pastoral land use, and a dispersed settlement pattern, reflecting the wider rural context. The presence of adjacent ancient woodland at Budlett's Wood and Paygate Wood contributes strongly to landscape structure and reinforces the wooded character typical of the assessment unit.

The hedgerow structure is weaker than the wider assessment unit, particularly along the northern and eastern boundaries, resulting in a more open character and reduced sense of enclosure.

The east and north of the site are influenced by adjacent development and infrastructure, including London Road, residential properties at Ringles Cross and the unnamed road, and the nearby A22/A26 junction. These influences reduce the perception of tranquillity and contribute to a more urbanising character, reducing sensitivity in these areas.

In contrast, the south and west of the site, adjacent to Paygate Wood and Budlett's Wood, are more enclosed and retain a stronger rural character, with the woodland providing containment and reinforcing landscape structure. These areas are less influenced by surrounding development and therefore exhibit a relatively higher sensitivity.

Overall, the site is considered to conform to the **moderate sensitivity** to accommodating new small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing). The presence of existing urban influences, the more regular field pattern and visual containment result in a **moderate-high-sensitivity** to medium-scale residential housing, lower than that of the wider assessment unit.

Variations in sensitivity

As noted above, there is locally reduced sensitivity in the more open and development-influenced eastern and northern areas, and relatively higher sensitivity in the south and west where woodland and rural characteristics are stronger.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential effects as a result of development	
Landscape character and features	Development on the site could affect: ■ The medium-scale arable fields, which contribute to the rural character of the landscape and would be altered through the introduction of built form. ■ The ancient woodland at Budlett's Wood and Paygate Wood (which extends into the south-east of the site), where development could affect their setting and role in providing landscape structure, enclosure, and continuity with the wider wooded character of the assessment unit. ■ The low hedgerows along the eastern boundary and remaining hedgerow trees along the northern boundary, where further loss or weakening of boundary features could reduce landscape structure. ■ The Shortbridge Stream watercourses within and adjacent to the site, where development may affect their natural character and associated riparian features. ■ The rural character and sense of tranquillity, particularly in the centre and west of the site where the influence of existing infrastructure is currently more limited.
Designated landscapes	Development of the site is unlikely to result in direct effects on the High Weald AONB or South Downs National Park as the enclosed nature of the site results in no intervisibility.
Settlement form, edge and setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The role of the site providing the perception of separation between Uckfield, Ringles Cross and surrounding settlements. ■ The settlement edge along London Road and the unnamed northern road, where development may extend the perceived urban edge into the surrounding rural landscape. ■ The soft, semi-rural edge character, which is currently defined by low-density development and vegetation, and could become more urbanised if development is not carefully integrated. ■ The setting of White House Farm and Spring Cottage, where the introduction of surrounding development could alter the current rural context. ■ The historic backdrop provided to Grade II listed Former Budlett's House to the north of the site.
Visual amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Road users and pedestrians along London Road and the unnamed northern road, where currently open views into the site may result in increased visibility of development.

	■ Users of the public right of way along the western boundary, where views are currently filtered by woodland but may still be affected by new development where built form is of sufficient height or massing to become visible above or through the existing woodland edge. ■ Residents along London Road at Ringles Cross and along the northern boundary, where development may alter the existing outlook and introduce new built form into views.
Cumulative issues	
Potential for cumulative effects with other large strategic sites	Development of the site could contribute to the incremental urbanisation of the settlement edge, particularly along London Road, when considered alongside existing and potential future development. There would be no intervisibility between this site and strategic residential site SHELAA 1232/1410 to the north-east of Uckfield or the strategic employment site SHELAA 980/3120 to the north-west of the site at Maresfield. There are no other proposed allocations near the site which could cause cumulative effects.
Potential for mitigation and enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Retain, protect and enhance the adjacent ancient woodland at Budlett's Wood and Paygate Wood to the west and south, ensuring development is set back from these areas with an appropriate buffer to prevent root damage and to maintain their ecological and landscape function. The buffer zones should incorporate semi-natural habitat to strengthen biodiversity and woodland edge structure. ■ Retain and strengthen hedgerows along the eastern boundary along London Road, through reinforcement planting and the introduction of native species, to improve landscape structure and reduce visual openness. ■ Incorporate additional tree and woodland planting within and around the site, particularly along the open northern edge, to enhance enclosure, integrate built form into the landscape and reinforce the wooded character typical of the wider assessment unit. ■ Protect and enhance the Shortbridge Stream watercourses and associated riparian corridors, maintaining natural drainage patterns, increasing vegetation cover and incorporating opportunities for wetland habitat creation and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). ■ If existing properties within the site at Spring Cottage to the north-east and White House Farm in the north are retained, development across the site should ensure the existing rural backdrop the site provides to these properties is retained. ■ Respond sensitively to nearby heritage assets, including the Grade II listed Former Budlett's House to the north, through careful siting, scale and design of development. ■ Maintain the perception of separation between Uckfield, Ringles Cross and surrounding settlements, by avoiding continuous built form along London Road and incorporating green buffers to preserve gaps between settlements. ■ Retain and enhance the public right of way along the western edge, ensuring that the rural experience of this route is maintained, and that views of development are minimised through careful layout and additional planting. ■ Minimise visual impacts from key receptors, including London Road and the unnamed northern road, by reinforcing boundary vegetation and ensuring development is set back from exposed edges. ■ Integrate development carefully into the landscape, using green infrastructure, open space and tree planting to break up the mass of built form and reduce its visual prominence within the landscape. ■ Ensure that built form responds to the local landscape character, including the use of appropriate materials, scale and layout, so that development reflects the vernacular character of the wider area.	

- Control the height and scale of development, ensuring that it does not exceed the height of surrounding vegetation or break the established tree line, particularly in relation to Paygate Wood and Budlett's Wood.
- Minimise impacts on tranquillity and dark skies, through careful lighting design and layout, reducing light spill and maintaining the rural character of the site, particularly in areas away from road corridors.

Summary

The site conforms to the moderate sensitivity to small-scale residential development of the wider assessment unit, and has a slightly lower sensitivity to medium-scale residential development than the wider assessment unit due to proximity to the presence of existing urban influences, the more regular field pattern and visual containment to the south and west.

Development of the site would introduce built form within an arable landscape on the north-western edge of Uckfield. If the site is considered for development, careful design would be required, particularly in relation to the adjacent ancient woodland at Budlett's Wood and Paygate Wood, with appropriate buffers required to protect these features.

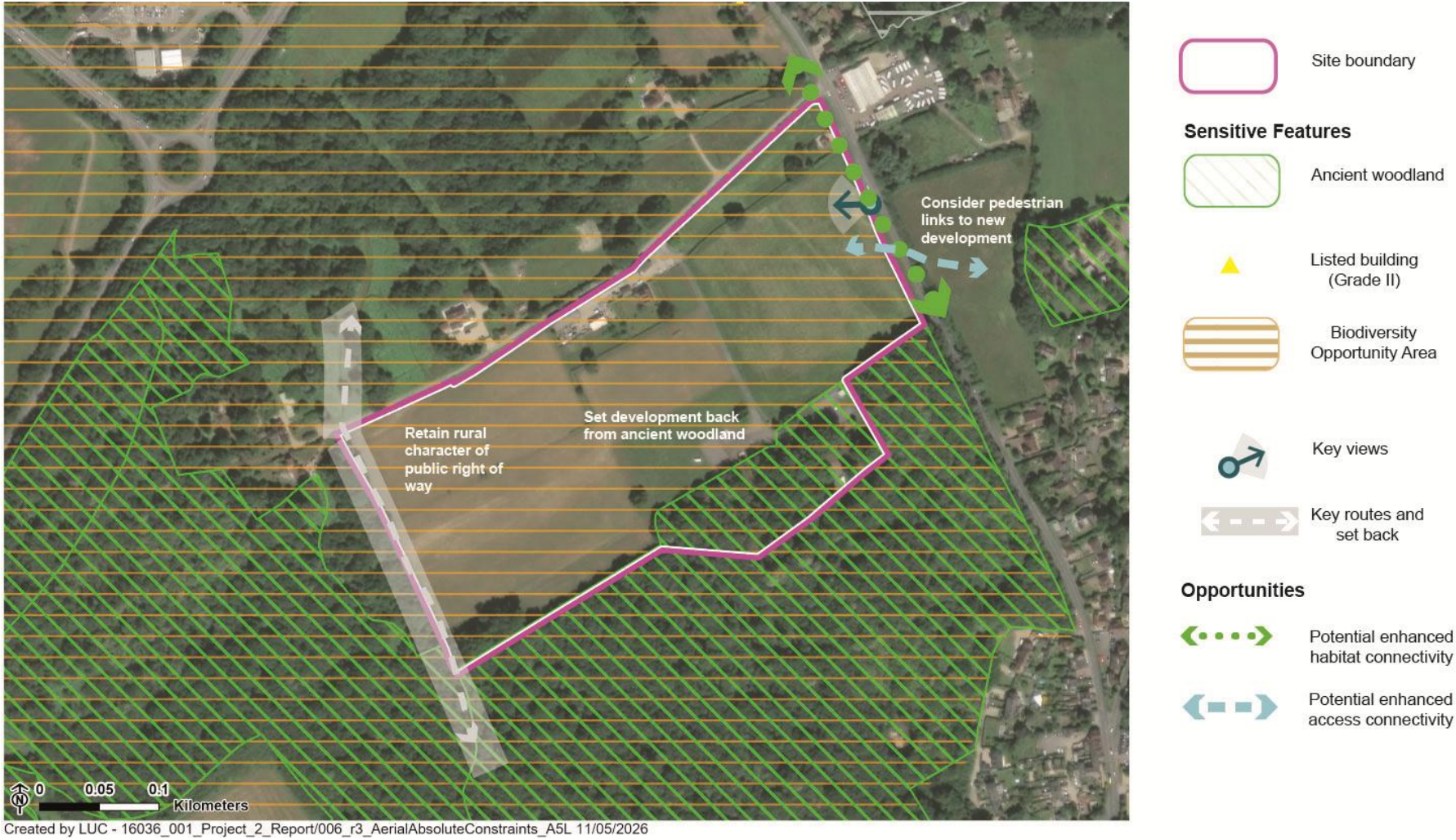
Development should respond to the more open eastern and northern boundaries, where additional planting would be required to enhance enclosure and limit views from London Road and the unnamed northern road. Opportunities should be taken to strengthen existing hedgerows and landscape structure.

The rural setting of White House Farm and the role of the site in maintaining separation between Uckfield, Ringles Cross and surrounding settlements should be considered, ensuring development does not contribute to the perception of coalescence.

Development should utilise existing woodland for screening and avoid more visually exposed areas to the north and east. Overall, development could be accommodated in the south and centre of the site, provided it is carefully sited and landscape-led, responding to key constraints and characteristics of the site.

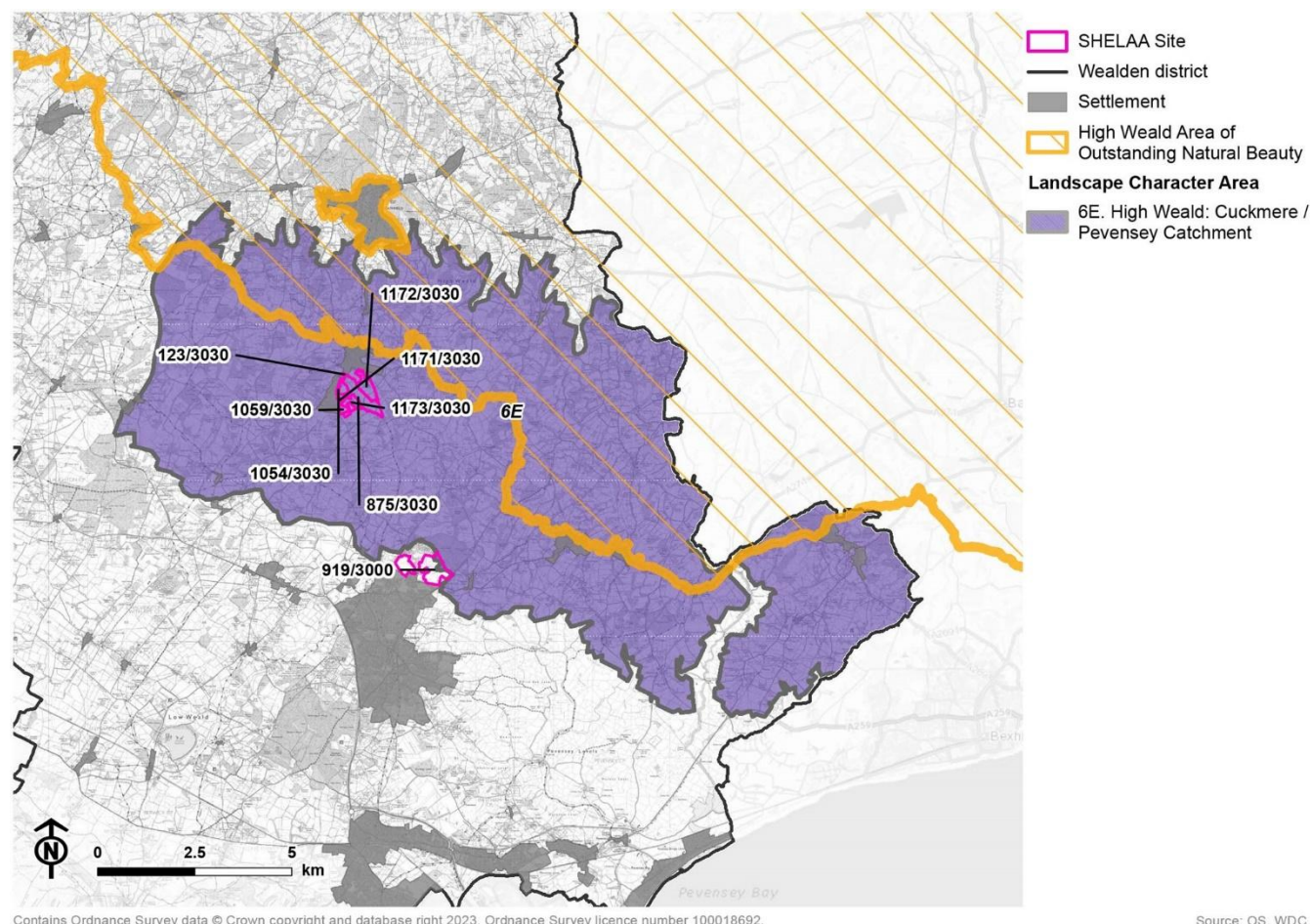
A summary map indicating the key constraints and opportunities, including areas more sensitive to development are shown on Figure **A.21** below.

Figure A.30: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



LCA 6E: High Weald – Cuckmere/Pevensey Catchment

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



Landscape Character Assessment baseline (2022)	
Landscape Character Type (LCT) and Area (LCA)	LCT 6: Wooded Slopes (High Weald) LCA 6E: High Weald – Cuckmere/Pevensey Catchments
LCA Description	The High Weald – Cuckmere / Pevensey Catchments LCA is a rolling landscape of ridges and valleys containing the River Cuckmere and its tributaries that drain south from the Central High Weald into the Low Weald, and the tributaries of Waller's Haven that drain east into the Pevensey Levels. A wooded landscape with a pattern of small-scale irregular fields, streams and historic ridge-top villages. The LCA is separated into two sections by LCA 1A Pevensey Levels at Waller's Haven (and the District boundary). The north of the LCA, north of Horam, Windmill Hill and Ninfield, lies within the High Weald AONB.
Valued Features and Key Qualities of the LCA	- The landform of ridges and valleys associated with the River Cuckmere and Waller's Haven. - Hammer ponds and gill streams, and associated wetland habitats.

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

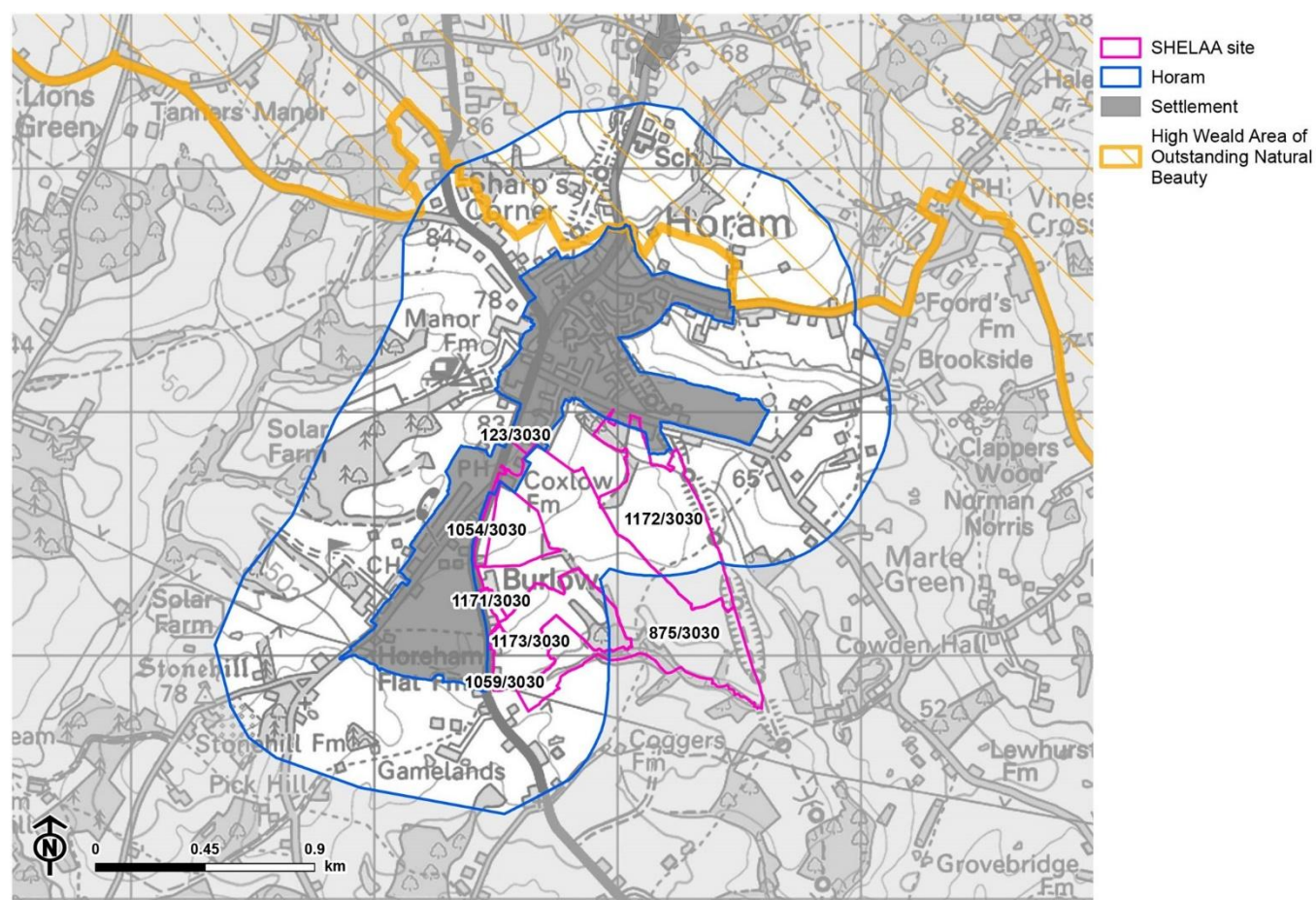
Landscape Sensitivity Context: Horam Assessment Unit

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

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

NB the south-east of 1172/3030 and 875/3030 lie within the Wider LCA for 6E High Weald: Cuckmere and Pevensey Catchment assessment unit. Where appropriate, similarities with the Wider LCA for 6E High Weald: Cuckmere and Pevensey Catchment assessment unit are noted.

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



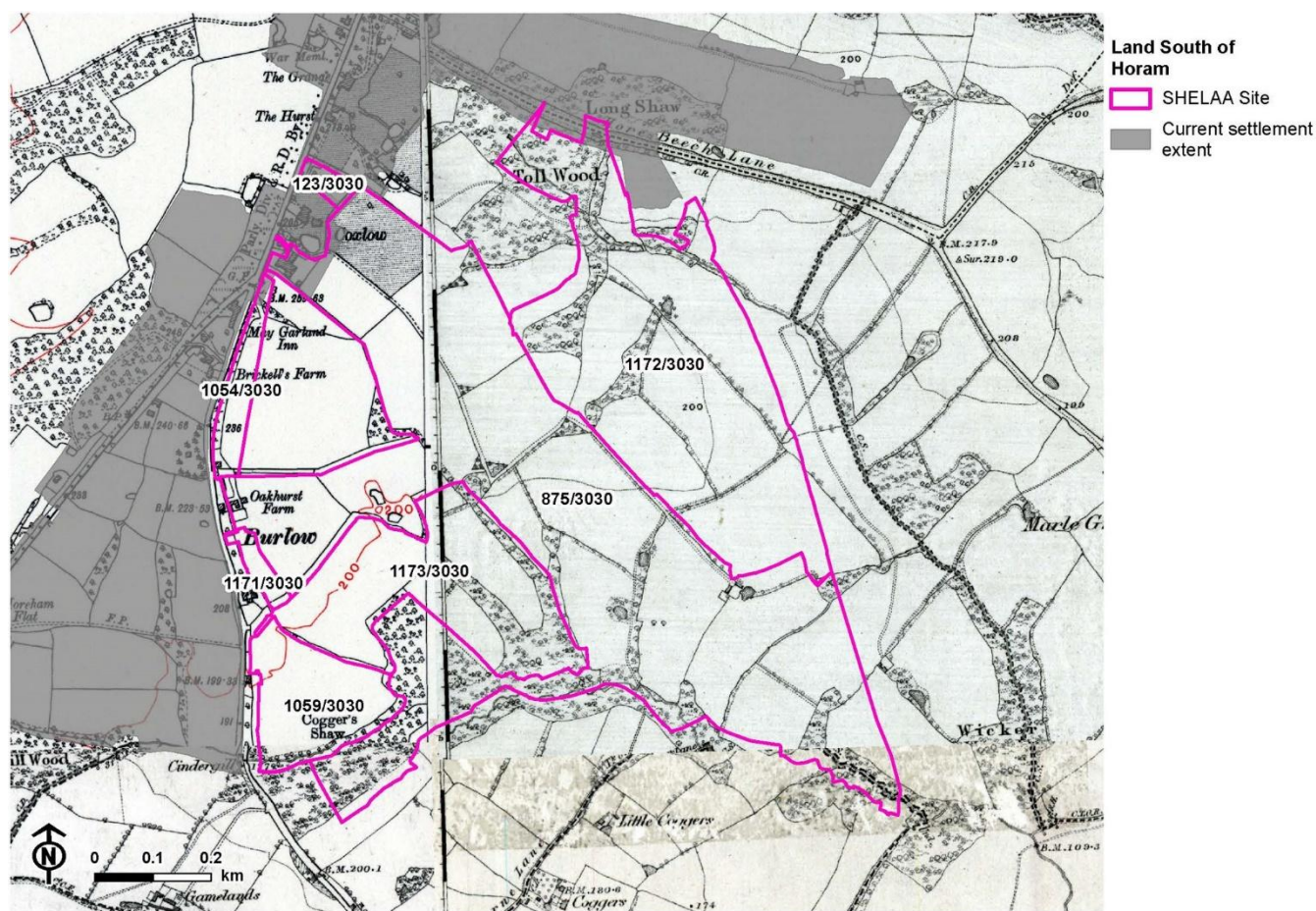
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Source: OS, WDC

Settlement context (adapted from 2023 Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment)	
Settlement Location and Context	Horam is a large village located centrally within Wealden District, within LCA 6E 'High Weald - Cuckmere / Pevensey Catchments'.
Settlement Evolution	The original settlement at Horam comprised dispersed development in the vicinity of Horam Manor. The settlement developed into a larger village with the arrival of the railway line between Hailsham and Eridge in 1880, which subsequently closed to passengers in 1965. The former railway line is now used as the Cuckoo Trail recreational path which forms a wooded linear feature passing through the village. Development was focussed around the station along the High Street (B2203) and Little London Road (A267), the area which forms the centre of the village today. In the second half of the 20th century further expansion occurred, notably to the

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

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



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

LSA Assessment Unit	Horam		
Landscape Sensitivity The rating that applies to the relevant LSA assessment unit	Small scale residential 2-2.5 storey housing	Medium scale residential 3-4 storey flats/care homes	Commercial/Industrial e.g. industrial units or hotels
	Moderate	Moderate-High	High

Noted variations in landscape sensitivity	■ The north of the assessment unit, particularly those areas within the High Weald AONB, with its extensive deciduous woodland, complex topography and visual relationship to the wooded ridges of the High Weald AONB would be of high sensitivity to development. Ancient woodlands located throughout the assessment unit are particularly sensitive features. ■ Small areas nearest to the western settlement edge would be of moderate sensitivity to medium scale residential development due to the existing presence of similar scale development and partial containment by landform, which slopes away from the settlement edge in this area.
Key Sensitivities The key landscape sensitivities to develop identified for the relevant LSA assessment unit	■ The complex ridge and valley landform, particularly in the north. ■ Interconnecting mature deciduous woodlands (many of which are ancient in origin). ■ The strong network of thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees. ■ Intact historic field patterns, particularly assarts most strongly expressed in the south-east of the area, which provide a strong rural setting to the settlement. ■ The rural character of the landscape with areas of remoteness, tranquillity and dark skies, particularly in the north and east, away from busy roads, the settlement edge and electricity infrastructure. ■ Occasional intervisibility with the High Weald AONB.
LSA Guidance	■ Locate development on low lying flat fields, or lower slopes in close proximity to the western settlement edge, well enclosed by landform and vegetation where development would be less visible and have less influence on landscape character. ■ Avoid development in the incised stream valleys and heavily wooded valley slopes to the north of the assessment unit. ■ Retain broadleaved woodland, including linear riparian woodland along watercourses. Avoid loss of, harm, or deterioration to the interconnecting ancient semi-natural woodlands and allow a buffer zone around them (to avoid root damage). Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Avoid, where possible, development on sites in areas of habitat interest, notably deciduous woodlands, grassland habitats and riparian habitats along the Waldron Gill and other tributaries of the of the River Cuckmere. ■ Retain or replace hedgerow or roadside trees along the road network, protecting mature specimen trees from the impacts of development. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. Replace any unavoidable losses, with native species where possible, ensuring an appropriate maintenance schedule is prepared and implemented for remedial planting. ■ Retain and where possible enhance hedgerows and take opportunities to strengthen the local habitat network. Where there is unavoidable loss of hedgerows, mitigation / compensation in the form of suitable hedgerow replacement should be sought. ■ Preserve historic field patterns, locating development away from intricate small-scale historic field patterns, particularly medieval assarts which are concentrated in the south-east of this assessment unit. ■ Ensure development does not adversely affect the historic qualities or appreciation of historic features, such as the listed farmhouse buildings on the edge of the settlement.

	■ Any development should be carefully integrated into the landscape, utilising existing woodland, or using species that are in character with the wider landscape. ■ Consider views from public rights of way, such as the Cuckoo Trail, when siting and designing development in the landscape. ■ Preserve and enhance opportunities to access and enjoy the landscape. ■ Minimise the influence of development on the strong rural character of the landscape, areas of relative tranquillity and the experience of dark night skies and the defining components of character relating to the High Weald AONB, applying suitable mitigation.
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Site Assessment: South of Horam

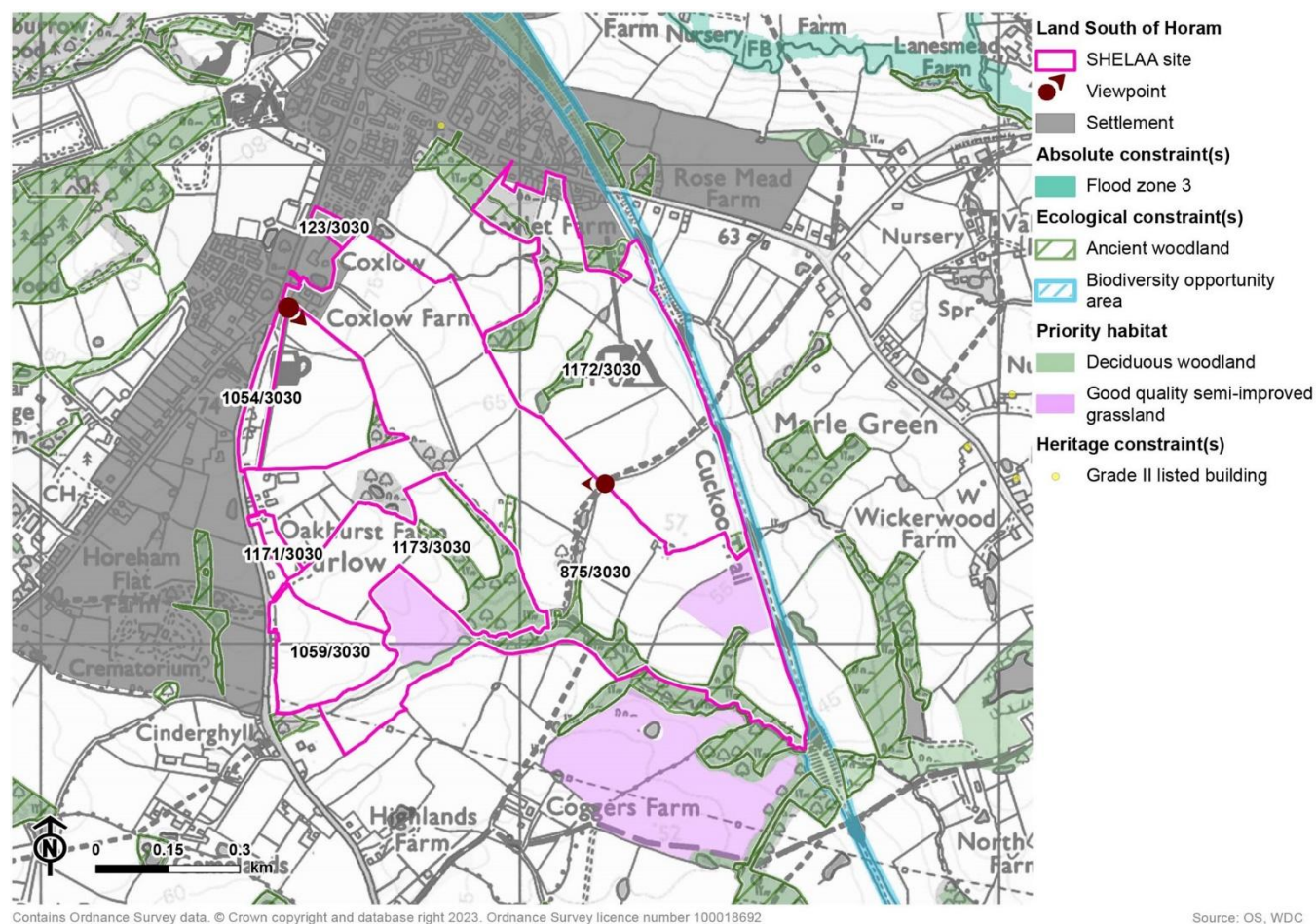
The following potential development sites are assessed as one, with individual elements highlighted where appropriate.

Site details

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

Site baseline

Figure A.34: Site location and constraints



Representative site photos



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



Viewpoint 2: View east from A267 near Coxlow Farm, with some existing influence of electricity infrastructure. The South Downs scarp is visible on the horizon.

Baseline landscape character in relation to the wider assessment unit

Key Features and Qualities of the Site Landform, natural character, landscape pattern and time depth, historic character and perceptual aspects	Landform The site consists of a gently undulating wooded pastoral landscape, between approximately 40m to 80m AOD, becoming more complex along the wooded stream corridor in the south of the site (along the southern edge of SHELAA Sites 1059/3030, 1173/3030 and 875/3030). The gently undulating ridge and valley landscape is typical of both the Horam and Wider LCA 6E assessment units. Natural character Pastoral land use is typical of the wider assessment unit, and the site forms the rural context to the settlement edge of Horam. Small scale areas of deciduous and ancient woodland are a key characteristic of the Horam assessment unit, though woodland to the north of the settlement is more extensive. Small pockets of priority habitat deciduous woodland, some of which are ancient in origin, are located across the site. Cogger's Shaw and Ten Acre Wood form a wooded boundary in the south of the site (south of SHELAA Sites 1173/3030 and 875/3030) and are recorded as gill woodland of ancient origin, a key sensitivity of the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit. There are smaller pockets of ancient woodland located across the site at Coxlow Farm Shaw (on the western edge of SHELAA Site 875/3030), Marle Green Shaw and the Coylet Farm Shaws (SHELAA Site 1172/3030) and Toll Wood (partly within SHELAA Site 1172/3030). There are several wooded ponds associated with the stream corridor in the south of the site (SHELAA Sites 1173/3030 and 875/3030) and smaller watercourses and ponds in the north of the site near Toll Wood and Coylet Farm Shaw (SHELAA Site 1172/3030). There are two small areas of priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland located in the south of the site (SHELAA 875/3030), typical of the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit. Landscape pattern and time depth The field pattern is relatively irregular and medium in scale and is defined generally by assarts with thick hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees, which is typical of the assessment unit. Areas of ancient woodland at Coxlow Farm Shaw, Cogger's Shaw, Ten Acre Wood, Coylet Farm Shaw, Marle Green Shaw and Toll Wood, are located across the site and add to time depth. There are no recorded historic features within the site. The Grade II listed Horam War Memorial is located to the north of the site; however, buildings and intervening woodland to the south of the memorial limit intervisibility. Recreational value One public right of way passes through the south-east part of the site (SHELAA Site 1172/3030) and connects to the Cuckoo Trail, which passes along the eastern boundary of the site. These routes contribute towards the wider network of public rights of way within the assessment unit. Perceptual aspects As is typical of the assessment unit, proximity to Horam and the A267 influences dark skies. However, woodland minimises this influence and areas in the south-east of the site have relatively dark skies, typical of the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit. Proximity to Horam, the busy A267, the Wealden Crematorium, and overhead electricity infrastructure also influences the sense of rural tranquillity, particularly in the north and west of the site.
Designations which are Constraints to Development	Ancient woodland at Coxlow Farm Shaw, Cogger's Shaw, Coylet Farm Shaw, Marle Green Shaw and Toll Wood.
Settlement Form and Edge Character and Extent of Built Development	To the west of the site, adjacent development consists of detached two-storey housing and dispersed farmsteads (some of which have been converted to residential use and/or have modern agricultural buildings). Recent settlement expansion to the west of the A267 (on Autumn Drive, opposite the site and The Hedgerows between Chiddingly Road and the A267) has increased the density of development along the southern extent of Horam. However, development is set back and relatively well screened from the road. To the north-west and west of the site, the settlement pattern is denser and consists of 20th century detached and semi-detached one and two storey residential housing. As noted for the assessment unit, the pastoral landscape and woodland within the site provide a rural setting to the east of the settlement.

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

Baseline Visual Character	One public right of way passes through the south-east part of the site, connecting the Cuckoo Trail to the north-east with Cogger's Cross on the A267 (via Cogger's Shaw) to the south-west. Whilst views south from the footpath are partially screened by woodland, more open views are afforded north and north-west across the site. Views from the Cuckoo Trail (including National Cycle Route 21), which passes approximately 50m to the east of the site at its nearest point, are largely screened by tree cover and linear woodland along the route. Residential properties located at Grange Close to the north-west have views into the north of the site; however, wooded field boundaries limit more distant views across the site from this location. The South Downs scarp forms a distinctive backdrop to views from this residential edge, as noted in the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit. Residential properties located to east of the A267, have relatively open views east across the site, however views of the site from the road are screened and filtered by vegetation. From elsewhere, the site is relatively enclosed by woodland, resulting in limited views into the site. This includes from residential properties located along Chiddingly Road to the west and along Horebeech Lane to the north-east.
Intervisibility with the High Weald AONB/South Downs National Park	There are limited glimpsed views of the distant wooded ridges of the High Weald AONB to the north and north-east. Views back towards the site from within the AONB are also generally limited by the high proportion of woodland cover. The distinctive scarp of the South Downs National Park forms a backdrop to views across the site from the south-western edge of Horam. There is some intervisibility between the South Downs National Park and the site, however the National Park is approximately 11km from the site. Any development of the site is unlikely to be distinguishable from the existing settlement edge of Horam.

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

The Assessment Unit

The Wealden Strategic Landscape Sensitivity Assessment assesses the Horam assessment unit to have **moderate sensitivity** to small-scale residential development (2-2.5 storey housing), **moderate-high sensitivity** to medium-scale residential development (3-4 storey flats/ care homes) and **high sensitivity** to commercial/ industrial development. The sensitivity analysis indicates that areas of undulating landform, areas of dense woodland and mature hedgerows and areas of intact historic field pattern of this assessment unit increase sensitivity. However, the presence of urban edge development, including electricity infrastructure, areas of simpler landform to the south, limited historic features and the contained nature of views decrease sensitivity.

The Site

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

However, proximity to the A267 and edge of Horam to the west and north-west reduces influences the sense of rural tranquillity, the semi-enclosed character of the site, and some deterioration of the historic field pattern and field boundaries on the existing settlement edge of Horam in the north-west decreases sensitivity.

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

Variations in sensitivity

The south-east of the site also demonstrates many of the characteristics of the Wider LCA 6E assessment unit, which increases sensitivity, particularly the ancient woodlands and interconnecting shaws and hedgerows, areas of priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland, the wooded and rural backdrop provided to Horam, rural character with areas of remoteness and tranquillity. The north-west of the site has intervisibility with the South Downs National Park. Although this is at a distance, the South Downs provides a backdrop to views from the settlement edge of Horam, which increases sensitivity.

Potential effects of developing the site and mitigation/enhancement opportunities

Potential Effects as a Result of Development	
Landscape Character and Features	Development on the site could affect: ■ Mature deciduous woodlands within and adjacent to the site, many of which are ancient in origin, most notably at Cogger's Shaw, Ten Acre Wood and Coxlow Farm Shaw. ■ The network of thick hedgerows with hedgerow trees, particularly in the south-west of the site. ■ Areas of priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland in the south of the site. ■ Some areas of intact historic field patterns, particularly small scale assarts in the south-west of the site, which provide a strong rural setting to the existing settlement of Horam. ■ The rural character of the landscape with areas of remoteness, tranquillity and dark skies away from the busy A267, particularly to the south-east. ■ Views to the South Downs National Park from the south-west settlement edge of Horam, seen across the site.
Designated Landscapes	Though glimpsed views are afforded towards the wooded ridges of the High Weald AONB, intervisibility is limited. Development on the site is therefore unlikely to adversely affect the defining components of character of the High Weald AONB. Distant views towards the site may be afforded from elevated areas within the South Downs National Park. However, at distances exceeding 11km, views of any new development will be seen in the context of existing development around Horam and within Wealden, and are unlikely to adversely affect the special qualities of the National Park.
Settlement Form, Edge and Setting	Development on the site could affect: ■ The wider rural setting of Horam through advancement into the countryside to the south-east. ■ The strong boundary feature provided by woodland cover to the south of Horebeech Lane, although development within the site would not cross a defined boundary feature from the west along the A267. However, the woodland boundary has already been breached by the development along Grange Close to the north-west of the site.
Visual Amenity	Development on the site could affect the visual amenity of: ■ Local residents along the settlement edge of Horam, mostly limited to properties at Grange Close to the north-west and dispersed farmsteads along the A267 to the west. ■ Users of the public right of way extending across the south-east of the site.

	■ Users of the A267 to the west. ■ Views to the South Downs National Park, although views of development would be at distances of over 11km, appearing in the context of existing development.
Cumulative Issues	
Potential for Cumulative Effects with Other Large Strategic Site	The site is not in proximity to any other sites considered in this strategic assessment.
Potential for Mitigation and Enhancement	
Landscape and visual effects could be avoided/minimised by following the guidance below: ■ Development should avoid and be set back from the ancient woodland at Cogger's Shaw, Ten Acre Wood, Coxlow Farm Shaw and along the northern site boundary at Toll Wood and Coylet Farm Shaw. Set development back from the edge of ancient woodland to create a buffer zone of at least 15 metres to avoid root damage⁵. The buffer zone could provide a valuable habitat for woodland wildlife and should consist of semi-natural habitat (e.g. a mix of woodland edge and grassland). ■ Areas of woodland along the settlement edge (including ancient woodland at Toll Wood noted above) and along the A267 should be retained, protected and enhanced so as to limit views into the site from existing residential properties and from the road. ■ Development should avoid areas of priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland. Retain habitat connectivity of the wider area of semi-improved grassland by enhancing and maintaining the structural complexity and species diversity of planting along the southern site boundary. ■ Development should be set back from the public right of way which crosses the south-east of the site, to retain the rural and partially wooded character of this route. ■ Avoid development, and seek to minimise future urban influences / effects, in the incised wooded stream valleys in the south of the site and where wooded ponds are present. ■ Lower ground could incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) features incorporating habitat creation, and connectivity with the incised stream corridor habitat in the south of the site. ■ Enhance and retain the historic field pattern, particularly where the small scale assart fieldscape is strongly expressed in the south-east of the site. ■ Hedgerows should be retained, protected and enhanced/strengthened, protecting mature specimen trees. Any new planting should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. ■ Views into the site from residential properties at Grange Close and within the west of the site should be considered in the siting and design of development. ■ Minimise visibility of development from the public rights of way within the site and adjacent to the site, including the Cuckoo Trail. ■ Enhance public access, particularly in the north and south-west of the site, providing additional opportunities to experience the surrounding pastoral landscape, and improve connectivity with the Cuckoo Trail. ■ Additional planting should be used to screen new development and maintain the rural character of the wider area. Green open space and tree planting should also be interspersed within any development to help soften and break up the perceived mass of built form, strengthen green / blue infrastructure, and enhance the integration of built form within the landscape. Planting species should be in character with the locality, using native species where possible. ■ Introduced built form to be designed to respond appropriately to the character and appearance of its surroundings by using high quality materials suggestive of the local vernacular. ■ The height of development should integrate with the adjacent surrounding settlement edges, both existing and consented. ■ Retain the long-distance intervisibility with the South Downs National Park from Grange Close and any other locations in the north-west of the site. Intervisibility with the National Park should be considered in the siting and design of any development.	

⁵ See [Natural England and Forestry Commission Guidance](#) for further information

- Protect the rural character and sense of remoteness, tranquillity and dark skies away from the settlement edge and A267 to the south-east.
- Minimise the influence of lighting associated with new development and only install outdoor lighting where necessary. Follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance⁶ and use dark sky-friendly lighting.

Summary

The site is located to the south and east of the built-up settlement core of Horam. The site conforms to the moderate sensitivity to small-scale residential development of the wider assessment unit, with features in the south and south-east of the site having a higher sensitivity.

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

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

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

⁶ See the [Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance](#) for further information

Figure A.35: Summary map of constraints and opportunities



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Appendix B

Map copyright information

Landscape character context and location

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Landscape sensitivity assessment context

B.2 © Natural England copyright 2026. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2026. Ordnance Survey AC0000805134.

Historic context

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Site location and constraints

B.4 © Natural England copyright 2026. © Historic England 2026. © Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre 2026. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2026. Ordnance Survey AC0000805134.

Aerial opportunities and constraints

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