

LAND AT NORTH
COLWELL FARM,
HAYWARDS HEATH

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Ecology
Archaeology
Arboriculture
Landscape Architecture

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Date:	December 2024
Document File Ref:	MILL24496Ivia
Revision:	Dr_B

Contents

1.0	Non-Technical Summary	3
2.0	Introduction, Purpose, and Methodology	6
3.0	Policy	11
4.0	Baseline Information: Character	14
5.0	Baseline Conditions: Visual	30
6.0	Proposals and Mitigation	35
7.0	Assessment of Effects	38
8.0	Conclusions and Discussions	48
9.0	Appendices	51

1.0 Non-Technical Summary

- 1.1. ACD Environmental has been commissioned to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the planning proposals and accompany a planning application for a residential development off Lewes Road, Haywards Heath.
- 1.2. The proposals are for up to 80 residential dwellings and a new access road off Lewes Road on three small fields which are remnants of the former North Colwell Farm but are no longer used for agricultural purposes. The site sits behind existing residential properties close to the Lewes Road Conservation Area and the site access will pass through the Conservation Area.
- 1.3. In compiling this baseline information for this report, ACD has undertaken a desktop study including reviews of aerial photography, web searches, Local Planning Authority (LPA) publications, local landscape character assessments, and National Character Assessment (NCA) information. ACD then undertook a field assessment which includes a photographic survey of the landscape, using photography from several representative viewpoints and to illustrate the local landscape character.
- 1.4. The site is comprised of three small fields which slope to the south and are framed on the south and east sides by woodland. There are numerous trees around the boundary and the fields are divided by overgrown boundary hedges. Neighbouring properties are typically large and detached, with hedges to the road boundary and a variety of native and non-native trees within extensive gardens. In addition to the houses on Lewes Road there are further detached properties on the linear residential street Birch Close to the west and more recent developments to the north at The Rushes and Oldfield Close.
- 1.5. In terms of designations, the site is approximately 2.2km from the southern boundary of the High Weald National Landscape and there are two listed buildings nearby including the parish church of St. Mary. There are 5 conservation areas within the study area, the closest of which is Lewes Road Conservation

Area which borders the site, and through which the access road will pass. A small sliver of land on the north-western edge is also in the Conservation Area. Within the 2.5km radius study area there are several Local Nature Reserves and numerous parcels of ancient and semi-natural or replanted woodland. There are also several routes used by receptors that have a degree of focus on the landscape, including two long distance walking paths.

- 1.6. The wider landscape to the west is dominated by the urban fabric of Haywards Heath. To the south is a large estate known as Abbots Leigh and numerous parcels of ancient and semi natural woodland. The transition from town to countryside continues north of Lewes Road; Snowdrop Lane is a relatively quiet rural lane with a popular public house sitting at an elevated position but without ground level views of the site.
- 1.7. A total of nine viewpoints were selected to represent the surrounding receptors and observers. Several are located on public rights of way in elevated positions which, based on the Zone of Theoretical Visibility, could have views into the site. In practice, eight of the nine viewpoints had no views of the site due to intervening buildings and trees. Views into the site from all directions are limited to residential properties which back onto the site; it cannot be seen from the roads or public rights of way within the study area.
- 1.8. The proposals would have an overall visual effect of **major** only at Viewpoint 4, on the opposite side of Lewes Road, looking directly at the point where an entrance to the site would be formed. This effect is unavoidable due to the close range of the view and would rapidly reduce as one moved along Lewes Road beyond the new visibility splay necessary to ensure safety. The initial impact of opening up a view into the neighbouring garden could be mitigated prior to the construction phase by early planting of an evergreen hedge.
- 1.9. It is possible that the roofs of the development could be barely visible from the top of Slugwash Lane (Viewpoint 3) in winter, but the impact is considered **minor** and would reduce over time to **negligible** as the proposed additional buffer planting grows to maturity.

- 1.10. The landscape of the site and its immediate surroundings, i.e. the land within 500m of the site, has been assessed as having a **high** landscape quality and a **high** landscape value. The susceptibility to change and the visual sensitivity have been assessed as **low** and the overall weighted assessment of landscape sensitivity is therefore **medium**. The magnitude of landscape impact has been assessed as **medium** as there will be a partial alteration to the site's baseline characteristics due to the introduction of residential properties into the small fields, and a loss of roadside vegetation at the point where the access road will meet Lewes Road.
- 1.11. The layout has been designed to avoid impact to the Conservation Area by locating the new dwellings on the central and eastern parts of the site. Impacts to the ancient woodland are avoided by imposing a 15 metre buffer around its boundary clear of roads and buildings. A significant volume of new native whip planting is indicated around the north, west and east sides of the site to strengthen the boundaries and reduce intervisibility with neighbouring properties and with the Conservation Area. Several new trees will be introduced within the open space and around the houses and roads to benefit wildlife and to soften the appearance of the development and connect it to the existing landscape.
- 1.12. The impact will be most noticeable on receptors at the site entrance onto Lewes Road, and here planting will be carefully positioned so that it enhances the approach and blends with existing vegetation without reducing visibility to cars entering and leaving. The privacy of the neighbouring garden would be opened up somewhat by the removal of trees to create the access road, until replacement planting has established.
- 1.13. Following the establishment of the new planting the visual impacts of the development will be reduced and it will sit comfortably within its setting, without detracting from the Conservation Area or compromising the value of the land in maintaining the separate identities of individual settlements outside the built-up area of Haywards Heath.

2.0 Introduction, Purpose, and Methodology

Introduction

- 2.1. ACD Environmental has been commissioned by Miller Homes Ltd to undertake a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the outline application for a development of up to 80 residential dwellings with open space, a play area, extensive landscaping and a new access road on a parcel of land off Lewes Road on the eastern side of Haywards Heath. The proposed layout of the site is illustrated in the **Figure 7** Landscape Masterplan.
- 2.2. The site is on the south side of the A272 Lewes Road behind existing housing along the road, within a larger tract of land enclosed by Slugwash Lane to the east and Colwell Lane to the west. The site boundary is not co-incident with any of these roads, however; the boundaries are defined by hedgerows and woodland. A public footpath passes north to south 50 metres to the west of the site boundary. An ordnance survey plan showing the site location is included in the appendices of this report and is shown in **Figure 1**.
- 2.3. The site comprises three small fields on a south-facing slope, which falls from approximately 71m above ordnance datum (AOD) at Lewes Road down to 54m AOD at the southern boundary. The site will require a new access road to be built since the existing access is via a gate within the grounds of an existing residential property, North Colwell Farm. The access will be provided within the garden of North Colwell Farm, along the boundary with no. 90 Lewes Road and will require the removal of several mature trees which currently mark that boundary. There is an overgrown farm track along the northern edge of the western field, and generally the site is covered with emergent vegetation and areas of scrub, with wide field boundaries between the three fields, comprising overgrown hedges. The site has the appearance of having been unmanaged for several years.
- 2.4. Some of the houses which sit between the site and Lewes Road can be seen from the site but generally the gardens of these properties are long and include

a quantity of vegetation which offers visual barriers. To the south is a broad band of woodland which visually encloses the site.

- 2.5. Immediately to the north of the site are the gardens and houses on Lewes Road, which are large and detached. Beyond Lewes Road there are further residential areas of varying ages, including recent developments at Oldfield Drive and The Rushes. A primary school is located approximately 250m as the crow flies from the proposed site access, between the residential areas of Lyoth Common and Franklands Village. Also to the north is Snowdrop Lane, leading to the Snowdrop Inn, a large public house with a restaurant, car park and pub garden.
- 2.6. South of the site is dense woodland, beyond which is Abbots Leigh, a large property set within its own grounds. Slugwash Lane is a narrow sunken lane leading south to Wivelsfield and linking up farms and isolated properties within the rural area south-east of Haywards Heath.
- 2.7. To the west is North Colwell Barn, a Grade II listed building, and its associated land. The aforementioned public footpath is tightly enclosed between closeboard fences marking the boundaries of North Colwell Barn and no. 76 Lewes Road. Further south the path crosses grassy open space and the approach road to Abbots Leigh. The path is approximately 1200m long and joins Slugwash Lane at its southern end.
- 2.8. Immediately east of the site are further small fields and paddocks, Slugwash Lane, and farms. The village of Scaynes Hill is one to one-and-a-half kilometres to the east, and has local facilities including a church, school, public house, petrol station and recreation ground. There is no continuous pavement along the A272 between the site and Scaynes Hill.
- 2.9. Haywards Heath developed following the arrival of the London to Brighton railway, with extensive construction during the Victorian and Edwardian eras, initially around the town centre and at Snowdrop Lane; in the interwar years development pushed the town out to the east, north and south, although there was very little development west of the railway line. The Royal Princess Hospital

occupies an elevated position to the south of Haywards Heath on the site of the former St. Francis mental health institution.

2.10. The London to Brighton railway crosses the character area on the west side of Haywards Heath, close to The Heath Conservation Area. There are no motorways within the study area, and the only A road is the A272 itself, which follows a winding route across the study area.

2.11. An aerial photograph of the site is included in the appendices of this report and is shown in **Figure 2**.

2.12. There are several ecological, architectural and landscape-themed designations within the study area, which extends to 2.5km from the site. Four Conservation Areas sit entirely within the study area, and a further one is located 2.5km away. There are two listed buildings within 500m of the site. The High Weald National Landscape overlaps the north-west edge of the study area, and there are parcels of Registered Common Land. Three Local Nature Reserves, one Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and several patches of Ancient Woodland and Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland are also present nearby. A Landscape Designations Plan is included in the appendices of this report and is shown in **Figure 5**.

2.13. The proposed development has considered the relevant policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Mid Sussex District Plan, covering the period from 2018 to 2031, which was adopted in March 2018. A new Local Plan covering 2021 to 2039 is currently being prepared and was formally submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in July 2024. Relevant policies from the current Local Plan and the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan can be found in **Appendix G**.

Purpose

2.14. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is a review of the landscape surrounding a proposed site in order to understand the capacity of the landscape to accommodate development. This report aims to provide a full assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposed development upon the receiving landscape, in line with current guidance and legislation.

2.15. In compiling this baseline information for this report, ACD has undertaken the following:

- A desktop study of relevant background documents, maps, and databases. The desktop study included reviews of aerial photography, web searches, Local Planning Authority (LPA) publications, and landscape character assessments, and National Character Assessment (NCA) information.
- A field assessment includes a photographic survey of the landscape, using photography from several representative viewpoints. The field assessment was undertaken by a qualified landscape architect; and
- Providing the baseline conditions concerning landscape character and receptors visual amenity.

Methodology

2.16. This proposal is not subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). However, this LVIA has been undertaken following 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (Third Edition), published by the Landscape Institute and the IEMA (2013) (GLVIA) as this document is relevant to non-EIA schemes. Reference was also made to 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (Second Edition), published by Natural England (2018) and photography has been undertaken in line with 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals, TDN06/19', published by The Landscape Institute (2019).

- 2.17. Reference is made to the Landscape Institute's Technical guidance Note TGN 02/21 "Assessing Landscape Value outside National Designations", which provides an approach to making judgements about the heritage, distinctiveness, perceptual and recreational and functional value of landscapes.
- 2.18. Potential receptors were identified within the study area and the assessment identifies the sensitivity of receptors, the magnitude of change, and the level of effect. The methodology of assessment is included in **Appendix A**.

Study Area

- 2.19. The study area was set to a radius of approximately 2.5km from the centre of the site (N50°59'36", W00°04'24") on the basis that, at this distance, this form of development, when seen by the human eye, would be hardly discernible or not legible. The 2.5km study area is shown on the designations plan and is included in the appendices of this report and is shown in **Figure 5**.
- 2.20. The baseline information focuses on identifying national and local landscape and other associated designations within 2.5km of the site and providing a general understanding of the site, its location within the landscape, and context.

3.0 Policy

Landscape Planning Policies

- 3.1. Guidelines, legislation, and planning policy documents provide the framework for the protection and conservation of landscape within the study area, the most relevant of which are outlined below.
- 3.2. Of these, statutes exist to ensure both direct and indirect protection of our most valued and important landscapes, their intrinsic visual qualities, and the individual elements and components that constitute their appeal. Those with direct relevance to the assessment comprise the following:
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
 - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
 - Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
 - Hedgerow Regulations 1997.
 - Environment Act 2021.
 - Countryside Act 1968; and
 - The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

National Planning Policy

- 3.3. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For landscape, this means recognising the intrinsic beauty of the countryside and balancing any harm to the land resource with the benefits of the scheme in other respects. This balance is to be undertaken by the decision-makers and falls outside the remit of this report. The benefits of the scheme are to be weighed against the effects on the landscape character and visual amenity as set out in this report. The policy framework is supported by the National Planning Guidance (NPPG) where relevant.
- 3.4. The most recent NPPF (issued December 2024) states that new developments should be designed to be resilient to the effects of climate change, such as

flooding and overheating, and should help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to an enhance the natural and local environment, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Local Planning Policy

3.5. A summary of the relevant policies within the Mid Sussex District Plan is outlined below:

- DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside
- DP35: Conservation Areas
- DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- DP38: Biodiversity

3.6. The emerging Local Plan was in Regulation 19 consultation until the end of February 2024, which led to a number of proposed modifications. and was submitted for examination in July 2024. Public hearings took place in October 2024; at this time the emerging plan attracts minimal weight given that it is still subject to outstanding objections. There is a library of Evidence Base documents including several which are relevant to the landscape and visual impact assessment. No proposed adoption date has yet been published on the council's website. A list of relevant policies within the Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan are outlined below:

- DPN1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery
- DPN2: Biodiversity Net Gain.
- DPN3: Green and Blue Infrastructure
- DPN4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside

- DPB3: Conservation Areas

3.7. The Evidence Base includes:

- Strategic Site Selection Maps, Haywards Heath (site is number 844)
- Green and Blue Infrastructure, July 2024
- Landscape Character Assessment 2005 by Mid Sussex District Council

3.8. A Neighbourhood Plan was compiled in 2016 and includes the following policies:

- Policy E5: To maintain the character and ecological connectivity of the land between Haywards Heath and neighbouring towns and parishes.
- Policy E6: To promote Green Infrastructure opportunities
- Policy E7: To incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems in new major development
- Policy E8: Requirements for developments of over 10 dwellings.

4.0 Baseline Information: Landscape Receptors

- 4.1. This section identifies potential receptors within the study area and describes the site, study area, and landscape context. Desktop and field analysis has been used to scope out sensitive receptors within the 2.5km study area. The Zone of Theoretical Visibility is constrained in the study area by the topography, and the site is not visible from large areas. Where viewpoints have been selected to represent views from public rights of way and designated sites, this is described below.
- 4.2. Landscape-related designations are shown in the appendices of this report and are shown in **Figure 5**.

National Landscapes – High Weald

- 4.3. The boundary of the High Weald National Landscape is approximately 2.2km to the north-east of the site. It has been designated for its natural beauty and evidence of historic agricultural and economic activity, within a landscape of wooded rolling hills and ancient routeways. Viewpoint 7 is located on the edge of the High Weald National Landscape.

Conservation Areas

- 4.4. The site borders the Lewes Road Conservation Area, which extends linearly from the Birch Hotel at the western end of Lewes Road to part of Oldfield Drive. It is considered important for the variety of age and style of the buildings, most of which are large properties set well back from the road within spacious grounds; the presence of trees and hedges around and between the buildings; the presence of grass verges, hedges and fingers of agricultural land between dwellings which contribute to the rural character of the land, and the low density of development which creates a gradual transition from the countryside to the urban area. (from “Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex”, by Mid Sussex District Council, August 2018). Viewpoints 4 and 6 are within the Conservation Area.

- 4.5. Franklands Village Conservation Area includes a model village established in the 1930s to house young people. It includes a village pond, a timber church and has a spacious layout with wide grass verges, mature trees and hedges and areas of open space.
- 4.6. The Heath Conservation Area is close to the railway station and includes a cricket pitch and an area of woodland in the heart of the town. Mill Hill Close Conservation Area was designed by a locally renowned architect to house needy members of the Institute of Civil Engineers and their dependents in the 1930s. It is a private estate of high quality, laid out around communal gardens. Lindfield Conservation Area covers the High Street of Lindfield and the area around the Common. It has a strong village identity with a pond and a medieval church, a busy high street and many trees which contribute to the character of the area.

Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings (within 500m)

- 4.7. A Scheduled Monument lies on the periphery of the study area. A Motte and Bailey Castle near Dean's Mill dates from the Norman period and would have had a moat connected to the River Ouse. Viewpoint 5 is located approximately 500m to the south and gives a representative view from the direction of this Scheduled Monument.
- 4.8. There are two listed buildings within 500m of the site. Colwell House is Grade II listed and dates from the 1840s, it is built in a Neo-Classical style with Doric columns supporting a central porch. This property is immediately north of the site and has extensive gardens with a parterre and tennis court. To the north side of the A272 is Oldfield, a Grade II listed eighteenth century cottage with later extensions. Both of these properties are well screened from the main road. The Mid Sussex Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (October 2023) concluded that the proposed development would not affect these listed buildings. The site is identified in the SHLAA as number 844. Colwell Barn is located to the east of North Colwell Farm and has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset.

Registered Common Land

- 4.9. The closest is Scaynes Hill Common, lying 1.7km to the east. This is a triangular parcel of 2.2 hectares. Lindfield Common is larger at 8.8 hectares, and is located 1.7km to the north.

Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest

- 4.10. Several Local Nature Reserves are included within the study area. Chailey Common LNR is to the southeast and is also designated as an SSSI, “a good example of the sub-atlantic English heath habitat”. It comprises acidic grassland, wet and dry heath and contains two ponds with marginal plant communities, and heathland birds and butterflies occur there. Scrase Valley LNR is just over 8 hectares in size and comprises marshland, woodland and grassland. Locally and nationally rare plants grow within the reserve. Ashenground and Bolnore Woods LNR is 14.4 hectares of woodland and sits on the far line of the railway line just within the study area. Eastern Road Nature Reserve is 3.5 hectares and provides a mosaic of woodland and wetland habitats which support healthy populations of amphibians and aquatic insects such as dragonflies.

Ancient Woodland and Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland

- 4.11. There are many tracts of ancient woodland in the study area and they are indicated on Figure 5. The nearest is Cains Wood, designated as Ancient Replanted Woodland, this is 16.9 hectares in area and encloses the southern portions of the site. The largest tract of important woodland in the study area includes Costells Wood and Henfields Wood which adjoin each other and provide a high level of connected habitat for birds and insects. Costells Wood is owned by the Woodland Trust and is accessible by the public.

Long Distance Walking Routes

- 4.12. Two long distance paths thread through the landscape of the study area: the Sussex Diamond Way which runs 60 miles from Midhurst to Heathfield in an east to west direction, and the Sussex Ouse Valley Way, which starts at Seaford Bay near Newhaven on the south coast, and finishes in Lower Beeding, 42 miles later.

Viewpoint 5 is situated on the crossroads of the two routes, 2.2km directly north of the site.

Public Rights of Way

- 4.13. There are many Public Rights of Way (PRoW) which transect the landscape and are shown on the Ordnance Survey Plan which is included in the appendices of this report. PRoWs to the south are within East Sussex.
- 4.14. The closest PRoW is to the west of the site and crosses the county boundary. In West Sussex it is numbered 29CU and in East Sussex as WIV/28/1. The footpath is enclosed within the fences of adjoining properties along the northern section, but further south it passes through woodland and then opens out to grassland, the location of Viewpoint 2. It then crosses the approach road to Abbots Leigh and eventually joins Slugwash Lane from the west.
- 4.15. Viewpoint 8 is situated on the Sussex Border Path, section 19LR (West Sussex) east of the site. The path continues into East Sussex as WIV/13/2 and links up with Slugwash Lane from an easterly direction.
- 4.16. Viewpoint 9 is located on the edge of the ZTV near Walstead, on the path identified as 8LR which links the Sussex Ouse Valley Path with the B2111 Scaynes Hill Road.
- 4.17. In addition to the effects on designated landscapes, buildings and rights of way, this assessment seeks to determine the effects of the proposals on the integrity of the various landscape elements within the site, i.e. the trees, hedges, grassland etc, and potential impacts on the visual amenity provided by these features.
- 4.18. The hedges dividing the parcels have spread sideways and become overgrown, leaving the centre of the hedge relatively open and den-like. These spaces are not easily accessed as there is a water-filled ditch running through the floor of the hedge, and crossing branches limit movement. It is not clear if the hedge plants

could be regenerated through hedge-laying or coppicing. The tree survey has identified good quality trees around the site boundaries and within the hedgelines.

5.0 Baseline Information: Landscape Character

- 5.1. A review of the site and local landscape character has been undertaken as part of this report and includes a review of the National Character Assessment, Landscape Character Assessments, and site assessment.

National Character Assessment

- 5.2. Natural England has published a study entitled 'Countryside Character Initiative'. This initiative is concerned with the management of England's countryside through an understanding of its character. It aims to guide policy developments, national decision making, and give a context to local planning, action, and development.
- 5.3. The site falls just within the High Weald National Character Area 122 and is close to the boundary of the Low Weald National Character Area 121.
- 5.4. The High Weald NCA consists of a mosaic of farmsteads, woodlands and fields connected by historic trackways and paths. There is a high proportion of ancient woodland, which has remained partly due to the steep topography and resulting inaccessibility of hills and valleys to machinery. Much of the woodland remains interconnected, giving a highly enclosed character to the landscape. Many of the woods were managed in the past as coppice with standard trees.
- 5.5. Small and irregularly shaped fields, such as those which comprise the site, are frequent in the NCA, often bounded by dense hedgerows and wooded shaws. These fields were managed historically as a mosaic of small agricultural holdings typically used for livestock grazing, and the pattern has survived partly due to the reduced suitability of the soils for arable farming. The soils tend to be slightly acid, loam and clay based soils with impeded drainage.
- 5.6. The settlement pattern is dispersed with many residents living in villages and hamlets. Vernacular building styles favour timber framing with steep roofs, often hipped or half-hipped. A high proportion of farm buildings dating from the 17th

century have survived, possibly due to the influence of wealth from London and the desire for homes in the countryside.

- 5.7. Hammer ponds are found within the countryside, these are lakes and ponds which were formed by damming streams to create a head of water at a water mill to power the iron industry in Tudor times. They typically have a branched or winding shape as a result of their creation from a small river valley.
- 5.8. The High Weald National Landscape covers 78% of the NCA, reflecting the natural and scenic beauty of the landscape.
- 5.9. The southern part of the study area falls within the Low Weald National Character Area (NCA 121). The Low Weald is a broad, low-lying clay vale which wraps around the edges of the High Weald. It is predominantly agricultural with horticulture and some arable on the lighter soils to the east. There are many densely wooded areas and hedgerows which follow the pattern of medieval banks or ditches. Oak is the principal tree and, despite centuries of clearance, significant areas of ancient woodland survive.
- 5.10. The area is generally wet and woody. It is dissected by flood plains and its impermeable clay soil and low-lying nature make many areas prone to flooding. Ponds are common. Gill woodland is a feature and a valuable habitat, scarce elsewhere in south east England. Gills are defined as deeply incised wooded ravines that have been eroded by the streams flowing along their base. Small towns and villages are scattered among areas of woodland, permanent grassland and hedgerows on the heavy clay soils. Larger 20th century villages have grown around major transport routes.
- 5.11. The Low Weald boasts an intricate mix of woodlands, much of it ancient, including extensive broadleaved oak over hazel and hornbeam coppice, shaws, small field copses and tree groups, and lines of riparian trees along watercourses. Veteran trees are a feature of hedgerows and in fields (see Image D below). During the Iron Age and Roman period several roads linking the coast to London were created through this area. From Saxon times livestock were driven along tracks

between the forests of the Weald and the pastures of the South Downs, and the numerous north-south roads are a legacy of this activity.

- 5.12. Historically, the Low Weald provided natural resources for pottery, brick-making and iron-making, including stone and brick for the construction of furnaces, sands and clays for iron ore and plentiful woodland for fuel. Timber was also vital for the ship-building industry. Since the decline of these industries secondary woodland has developed in some areas; others have been converted to pasture.
- 5.13. Land use is now primarily agricultural but with urban influences particularly around Gatwick, Horley and Crawley.

Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment

- 5.14. The Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex was published out in 2005, almost 20 years ago. This raised concerns about its currency during the development of the latest local plan, however the inspector has confirmed that it still stands as a legitimate document within the Mid Sussex District Plan Evidence Base for the emerging local plan.
- 5.15. The Mid Sussex landscape is defined by the underlying geology; the various landform types run in broadly parallel bands across the district, mirroring the boundaries of the ten landscape character areas. Within the portion of the study area in West Sussex there are two landscape character areas: HW4 High Weald Fringes (also referred to as area 10) and HW3 Ouse Valley (area 9). The southern part of the study area is within East Sussex and includes a further two, C3 Ditchling common Low Weald and C1 Wivelsfield, Newick and Chailey Western Low Weald,

The High Weald Fringes

- 5.16. The site is located on the southern edge of landscape character area 10/HW4, High Weald Fringes, which forms a broad band from south of Horsham to east of Haywards Heath. It includes the towns of Haywards Heath and Cuckfield but most of the character area is rural with small villages and hamlets.

- 5.17. According to the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment “the landscape shares many of the characteristics of the High Weald, but is generally lower and gentler, the gill streams less incised.”
- 5.18. The area features a significant amount of woodland cover, “a substantial portion of which is ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees”. This is certainly evident in the landscape surrounding the site, with the ancient woodland at Cains Wood forming a distinctive element.
- 5.19. Many of the heaths have disappeared due to a loss of grazing, and the heaths are being increasingly colonised by scrub and naturally regenerating woodland. There are some remnant pockets of heathland within the study area, for example at Chailey Common LNR, which are vital to support heathland biodiversity.
- 5.20. In relation to vernacular buildings, the landscape character assessment identifies “Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber framing, Horsham stone roofing, Wealden Stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.” These are not particularly evident in the Lewes Road area since it is close to the built up area of Haywards Heath, but there are many examples within the farmsteads and hamlets surrounding the town.
- 5.21. The roads within Character Area HW4 are described as a “network of lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths” which is borne out by the site survey which found the roads in the area such as Slugwash Lane and Snowdrop Lane comply with this description. There is a good network of public footpaths, bridleways and tracks to the east of the site which would have provided routes between workers cottages and the numerous small farms and tracts of woodland in which they worked. Some of these routes would have been droveways, used for driving cattle to the London markets and across shorter distances to access grazing.



Above, left: Bluebells in the copse through which footpath 29CU passes, west of the site.

Above, right: Lewes Road, looking west

Below: Birch Close, off Lewes Road

5.22. The Landscape Assessment identifies several guidelines for landscape management. The following could be incorporated into the design of the development under consideration here:

- Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing distinctive landscape patterns.
- Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development including along the approach roads to settlements and along busy urban routes.
- Conserve and re-plant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

The Ouse Valley Landscape Character Area

5.23. This character area occupies the north west quadrant of the study area, and is defined by the sloping sides of the Ouse Valley, those to the south being steeper including the slopes on which Henfield Wood sits. Within the valley the topography becomes flatter and fields and water meadows are medium to large sized, with some fields having been amalgamated to facilitate modern agricultural methods. The geology is primarily comprised of the fine to medium sandstones and siltstones of the Tunbridge Wells Sand Formation.

5.24. The River Ouse runs through the centre of the valley from west to east and is joined by streams and tributaries such as the Cockhaise Brook and the Scrase

Bridge Stream. The Ouse continues through Lewes and the South Downs to the sea at Newhaven. The landscape within the study area includes old mills such as Dean's Watermill close to the motte and bailey scheduled monument described in chapter 2, weirs and bridges.

- 5.25. The woodland cover is less extensive than that of the High Weald Fringes although there are still strong hedgerows and patches of woodland along the riversides, and it includes Henfield Wood, a large tract of ancient and semi-natural woodland near Scaynes Hill. The golf course at Lindfield Golf Club and the Christmas tree farm at Little Walstead Farm form highly visible elements on the aerial photograph.
- 5.26. No roads run along the valley, but several cross it, linking the settlements to either side. The settlement pattern is sparse and scattered, consisting of isolated farms and houses; the only built up area within this LCA in the study area is at Walstead where there is a large housing estate formed of several discreet parcels which started to be built out in the 2010s and is continuing at the present time. In the eastern part of the valley there are two historic properties, Paxhill Park and East Mascalls.
- 5.27. The landscape and visual sensitivities of the Ouse Valley described within the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment include:
- A high level of perceived naturalness in the landscape and drainage pattern and a rural quality.
 - The pattern of medium to large sized fields and water meadows intermixed with woodlands and hedges imparts a scenic quality to the landscape.
 - A legacy of designed landscapes and treescapes.
 - The settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.

East Sussex Landscape Character Areas

- 5.28. The complimentary study of Landscape Character Areas within the Lewes District in East Sussex provides more information about the landscape to the south and east of the site. The study is recent, having been published in May 2023, prepared for Lewes District Council by AECOM. The two character areas within the study area are C1 Wivelsfield, Newick and Chailey Western Low Weald and C3 Ditchling Common Western Low Weald, and they share a number of key characteristics.
- 5.29. Both these areas share a geology of sandstone, siltstone and mudstone, and the landform is described as undulating, with lower-lying topography associated with the River Ouse and its tributaries. Soils are slightly acidic and loamy, with impeded drainage.
- 5.30. Medium to large blocks of woodland including ancient woodland are present across the two character areas, although within the study area there is more woodland in the Ditchling Common Western Low Weald LCA, including Dobsons Wood, Bankey Wood and the southern part of Cains Wood close to the site. Scattered tree features including distinctive mature oaks, tree belts, woods, parkland and hedgerow trees give an impression that the area is well wooded. Oak and ash are the predominant mature tree species in woods and hedges with field maple, wild cherry and hornbeam (coppice) also frequent; there are a few remnant mature elm trees. Alder and willow are common in the river valleys. Lime trees and horse chestnut are frequent in designed landscapes and along roadsides.
- 5.31. Fields are small to medium in size and highly variable in shape, having been formed from woodland clearance, or constrained by streams and water bodies. Fields resulting from woodland clearance are often bounded by remnant strips of woodland known as shaws. Land use includes a mixture of arable and pasture.

- 5.32. Within the study area part of both of these LCA are many wells, streams, and ponds and the influence of streams and tributaries of the River Ouse is apparent.
- 5.33. The settlement pattern is dispersed and most dwellings are scattered farmsteads and houses typically off ancient droveways and surrounded by mature woodland vegetation. The vernacular building material for the area is timber frame and principally oak. Typical building materials since the late 18 century include local brick, white weatherboarding, clay tiles and Horsham slabs on the roofs of larger buildings.
- 5.34. There is an extensive network of public rights of way including the Sussex Border Path, and a distinctive pattern of north south orientated route ways and lanes which are considered to be drove roads along which farmers traditionally took their stock to the Downs.

Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.35. This document focuses on the townscape character of Haywards Heath and is relevant to this study since the site falls within the transition zone between the urban and rural landscapes. Green buffers are considered very important to maintain the distinctiveness of the different settlements within the vicinity of the town, and to enhance biodiversity. There are extensive views of the surrounding countryside from within the town which make a substantial contribution to its character.
- 5.36. Car parking is considered a serious detractor from the character and quality of the townscape, and should be designed to eliminate on-street parking.
- 5.37. Trees, frontage hedgerows and walls contribute to the character and appearance of the area.

Site Assessment

5.38. **Figure 1:** Ordnance Survey Plan within the appendices of this report shows the topographical information of the site and study area.

5.39. The site is comprised of three fields which sit behind properties along the south side of the A272 Lewes Road, and is currently accessed from a farm gate to the side of North Colwell Farmhouse. A remnant farm track runs east from the access gate along the top of the westernmost field. The three fields are divided by boundary hedges which have become very overgrown so that the original hedge plants have grown into weak trees. The boundaries act as water channels carrying water downhill from north to south.



Photographs of the site in April 2024.

Top: View from the north looking downhill.

Bottom left: View within one of the overgrown field boundaries.

Bottom right: Bracken patches within the site.

- 5.40. The site is covered with tussocky grass and bracken. Patches of bramble and self-seeded shrubs are becoming established. The Ecological Impact Assessment identified neutral grassland which is heavily grazed by deer, with forbs and rushes which favour damp and slightly acidic soils. Several species of bat use the site and there are several badger sett entrances at the southern end of the western parcel. Reptiles including grass snake, slow worm and common lizards were found on site in low numbers, and four dormouse nests were found within the dormouse tubes placed in trees.
- 5.41. The southern end of the site is enclosed by the woodland at Cains Wood, which obscures views in and out of the site. Along the northern edge the site borders the gardens of North Colwell Barn, North Colwell Farmhouse, numbers 90, 92 and 94 Lewes Road and Colwell House. Further east there is a paddock between the site boundary and the gardens of a further six dwellings along the south side of Lewes Road.
- 5.42. A tree survey by FLAC has identified many trees of Category A and B around the boundaries of the three parcels; the majority of the significant trees are pedunculate oak with some ash. The field boundaries consist of groups of previously coppiced native trees including ash, oak, hazel, blackthorn, field maple, silver birch, yew and gean. At the time of the survey trees were coming into leaf and starting to provide a stronger visual barrier. The roof and dormer windows of 94 Lewes Road can be seen from the site as shown in the photograph below. The sides of a white building, probably the orangery at Colwell House can just be discerned through the trees on the right-hand side of the photograph.



Above: View looking north from within the central parcel.

Baseline Conditions: Visual

Introduction

- 5.43. From the results of the initial desk study and site appraisal, it is clear that the proposed development will be visible from a limited number of locations, at varying distances, and from both public and private areas.
- 5.44. A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) was prepared and included in the appendices of this report and is shown in **Figure 3**. Viewpoints are included within **Appendix D** of this report and locations are shown in **Figure 4**, within the report appendices.
- 5.45. This section identifies those visual receptors that have the potential to view the site, their distribution, character, and sensitivity to change.
- 5.46. The photographic study to support the assessment was undertaken in April 2024, as leaves were emerging on the trees. Viewpoints at varying close distances from the site were selected to represent the typical views of the site. **Figure 4** shows the location of these viewpoints. In determining the viewpoints, whether in the immediate locality or further away, the main public highways, sections of public footpaths, and some of the publicly available spaces within the study area were visited. It is acknowledged that from public places, more viewers are likely to be affected thereby adding to the overall impact upon receptors in those locations.
- 5.47. The following viewpoints in **Table 1** were selected as being representative of the potential visual issues associated with the proposed development. Nine viewpoints were suggested during scoping, however during fieldwork and site observations some locations were changed to allow the best views and to show the worst-case scenario.

Table 1: Viewpoint Details

No	Location	Distance (km) and direction of view	Northing	Westing	Rationale for selection
1	Lewes Road	0.30km SW	50°59'44"	00°04'14"	To illustrate views close to the site along Lewes Road
2	Public Footpath 29CU	0.43km, NE	50°59'26"	00°04'38"	Public footpath close to site
3	Slugwash Lane	0.24km, SW	50°59'43"	00°04'02"	Elevated viewpoint
4	Lewes Road	0.23km, E	50°59'38"	00°04'35"	Point opposite proposed site entrance
5	Footpath 40aCU	2.30km, S	51°00'51"	00°04'17"	Located on Sussex Diamond Way and Sussex Ouse Valley Way Long Distance Trails
6	The Rushes	0.37km, S	50°59'44"	00°04'27"	Residential close with potential views
7	Footpath 1LR near East Mascalls Farm	2.4km, SSW	51°00'44"	00°03'21"	Located on Sussex Diamond Way Long Distance Trail
8	Footpath 19LR / Ham Lane, Scaynes Kill	1.08km, WNW	50°59'27"	00°03'31"	Located on Sussex Border Path Long Distance Trail
9	PRoW Footpath 8LR	1.11km, SW	51°00'05"	00°03'50"	Footpath adjacent to Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland

5.48. The findings of the site appraisal show that there are no direct and open close-range views into the site from any direction. To the south and south-east, the site is enclosed by dense woodland, and there are no public rights of way or dwellings in this direction apart from Abbots Leigh, with which there is no intervisibility.

5.49. From the road the site is screened by the existing houses and the mature trees and other vegetation around these properties. The proposals include an access road into the site between no. 90 and North Colwell Farmhouse, and this would provide views into the western parcel, which will not be developed under the proposals and will become public open space to be enjoyed by the residents, with a meadow, new trees and a small play area. Viewpoint 4 is located at the point opposite to where the access road would join Lewes Road and illustrates the level of screening currently experienced.

- 5.50. There are no views of the site from the public footpath to the west of the site; the photograph below shows the condition of the path as it passes between the houses on Lewes Road.



Above: View looking from north to south along footpath 29CU.

Public Rights of Way Users

- 5.51. Users of PRowS, bridleways and National Trails are considered to have a high sensitivity and so the visual assessment included a comprehensive analysis of the visual effects of this user group.

Residential Properties and Users

- 5.52. Views from private residential properties, although likely to have a high sensitivity to any changes in a view, are not protected by planning regulations, policies, or guidance. There are several residential properties located close to the site, most prominently North Colwell Farmhouse, 90, 92 and 94 Lewes Road and Colwell House which overlook the site.

Road Users

- 5.53. Road users are less sensitive than residential receptors or users of PRow due to the speed at which they experience and perceive the landscape, however,

road users are notable receptors. Users of Lewes Road, Slugwash Lane and Colwell Lane are the main receptors of this type. The speed limit on this section of Lewes Road is currently 40 mph; the proposals may result in a reduction to 30 mph.

People at Work

- 5.54. People at work are considered to have a low sensitivity to changes to their visual environment. Receptors of this type are likely to be working in the houses along Lewes Road and could be disturbed by construction noise during the building phase.

6.0 Proposals and Mitigation

The Proposed Development

6.1. The development proposals are laid out in full in **The Design and Access Statement** in support of this application. The illustrative sketch layout is shown in **Figure 7 Landscape Masterplan**.

6.2. The outline proposals include the following:

- Up to 80 residential properties with garages, parking, and private gardens.
- Removal of several trees to create a new access road with turnings to clustered groups of dwellings.
- New tree and shrub plantings and hedges and associated landscaping works
- A large open space on the western side incorporating a play area
- A large SUDS basin on the south east corner to provide sustainable drainage for the site.

Landscape Mitigation

6.3. The conclusions of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will influence the illustrative sketch layout through an iterative process. Landscape related constraints were prepared and have informed the design, as shown on **Figure 7**. The proposals therefore include a degree of mitigation already as to avoid or reduce the potential effects. The proposals are in outline, with landscape, layout and design as reserved matters. Potential mitigation measures include:

- Ensuring a 15 metre wide buffer is enforced around the boundary of the ancient woodland without incursions by roads, buildings or gardens.
- Retaining the western part of the site as open space to protect the setting of the Conservation Area.
- Retaining the existing site boundary vegetation (other than to form the site entrance and visibility splays) and including additional native species which

are prevalent in the local area to provide dense vegetative features along all the site boundaries.

- Setting the residential properties away from all the site boundaries to provide enough space for mitigation planting to establish and be maintained.
- Introducing additional buffer planting to the northern and eastern site boundaries to reduce intervisibility with existing properties along the south side of Lewes Road.
- Proposed strategic planting between existing residential properties and the proposed play area.
- Additional tree planting within the residential parcel to soften the impact of the built form and to replicate the planting arrangements found within the surrounding residential areas.
- Incorporating materials which reflect the surrounding site context, both within the soft and hard landscape design.
- Using an arrangement of dwellings in clusters within roads, which has a precedent at the Lindfield Meadows development off Gravelly Lane.
- Locating development away from the edge of the Conservation Area and retaining the westernmost part of the site as open space.
- Using materials forming the external envelope and roofs of the proposed buildings to match the surrounding existing palette, for example, brick and brown roof tiles. These colours will also have a more subtle impact on the landscape; and
- Utilising a native species palette throughout to visually blend with the surrounding landscape. Ornamental planting should include wildlife friendly planting species to add additional biodiversity to the site and used within residential curtilages only, with native species used along boundaries and within public open spaces.

6.4. In adopting the above measures, the proposals will reduce the magnitude of potential landscape and visual effects on the identified receptors.

- 6.5. The visual assessment has been undertaken to assess the illustrative sketch layout, as shown in **Figure 7**.
- 6.6. After 10-15 years the above mitigation measures will have weathered, and planting will have become established to further reduce the visual impact.

7.0 Assessment of Effects

Introduction

- 7.1. Predicted effects on receptors are assessed at operation. The assessment of landscape and visual effects considers the site in its current baseline condition and judges the type and level of effects of the proposals. The site layout is shown in **Figure 7**.
- 7.2. The landscape strategy is to provide a high-quality residential development set within a site that has a strong, mature landscape framework. This includes the retention of the existing vegetation to maintain a similar visual baseline, and strengthening the vegetation around the boundaries to create landscape buffers to benefit wildlife and to reduce the intervisibility of the site with the existing properties to the north. The landscape strategy is illustrated within the landscape proposals which will accompany the planning application. The strategy would help to visually blend the proposals into the receiving landscape and soften the look of the built form over time. The assessment of effects is outlined in **Appendix C** (character) and **Appendix D** (visual).
- 7.3. It is considered that there is the potential for effects on the following receptors:

Landscape

- Landscape elements such as the trees, hedgerows, and agricultural landscape; and
- The landscape character of the site and the local area surrounding the site

Visual

- Public Rights of Way and users of recreational facilities in the local area.
- Roads adjacent to and surrounding the site; and
- Residential receptors adjacent to site boundaries.

- 7.4. The sensitivity of the visual receptors in the viewpoints is outlined in **Table G** within **Appendix A** of this report.

Effects upon the Receiving Landscape

7.5. Effects on the landscape are considered as a multi-stage process:

- Effects on the character of the site, that includes the direct effects on the different elements that make up the site character.
- The receiving landscape character, as defined in the Landscape Character Assessments; and
- Effects on the local landscape context including the indirect effects on the defined landscape character that surrounds the site.

The site and the immediate surrounding landscape

7.6. The immediate landscape is defined as the area within approximately 500m of the centre of the site, taking in Lewes Road between Birch Close and the driveway to Bedales, the residential development at Oldfield Drive, the land between Slugwash Lane and the access roads to Abbots Leigh.

7.7. The landscape of the site and the immediate surrounding landscape, has been assessed as having a **high** landscape quality. This assessment has been reached as the houses and trees and hedges along the roadsides and within private gardens are well maintained. Signage on the road is minimal and there are few detracting elements. Parked cars are infrequent on the roads since there is space on most private driveways and cars are parked behind boundary hedges. A high proportion of the area immediately surrounding the site is natural woodland. This assessment is defined by **Table A** in **Appendix A** of this report.

7.8. Landscape value is defined as the importance attached to different landscapes by society on account of their landscape qualities. The Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note "Assessing Landscape Value outside National Designations" has been used to explore the various expressions of value which could apply to the landscape within the study area. This is defined in **Table B** in **Appendix A** of this report. The value of the existing landscape of the site and its immediate surroundings has been assessed as **high**, since the designation of

Conservation Area which applies within a short distance of the site is a statutory one. The hedgerows, trees and rough grassland within the site, which have not been well maintained for the past few years, have ecological value and are inhabited by a wide range of species as noted in the ecological report. They are small and irregularly shaped, which matches the recognised field pattern in the landscape character assessments. The Lewes Road Conservation Area has been recognised as having a high value in providing an attractive approach into the town, with buildings set back from the road and substantial hedges along the roadside. The site also has value as part of the open space surrounding Haywards Heath.

7.9. The landscape's susceptibility to change has been defined as **low**, as this is an area where development has steadily been taking place over time as Haywards Heath has expanded in an easterly direction. Many of the fields seen on the map of 1879 are now built over, and recent residential developments nearby include those at Oldfield Drive and The Rushes. The presence of the A272 which is fundamental to the character of this area, introduces traffic noise characteristic of trunk roads and reduces the level of tranquillity. This is outlined in **Table C** in **Appendix A** of this report.

7.10. As defined in **Table D** the landscape visual sensitivity of the site has been defined as **low** due to the strong elements of enclosure around the site and along Lewes Road. The larger properties are all well-screened by extensive plantings of trees and shrubs and high hedges introduced for privacy, which combined with the woodland to the south, and the lack of public rights of way through the site and along its boundaries, makes it very difficult to see into the site from publicly accessible viewpoints. In addition, the ground falls away from the road so that the site is lower which makes it less visible to the residents of houses immediately north than it would be if the site were flat.

7.11. The overall weighted assessment of landscape sensitivity of the site and immediate surrounding landscape has been assessed as **medium**.

7.12. Due to the change in baseline characteristics, a change in the landscape character will be appreciated. The introduction of residential properties into the three small fields will result in a change to the landscape character but will be strongly enclosed within a framework of existing vegetation. Minimal sections of the overgrown field boundaries will be removed to create a road between the parcels.

7.13. During the construction phase, several of the existing trees and some of the boundary vegetation between North Colwell Farmhouse and 90 Lewes Road will be removed to create the tarmac access road off Lewes Road. A new evergreen hedge is proposed to be planted within the garden of number 90 to reduce the visual impact of the access road. Within the site, cabins, hoardings, building materials and buildings under construction will form part of a perceived loss of localised landscape elements. These construction elements and activities are considered temporary and will occur over a relatively short period of time.

7.14. The magnitude of landscape impacts on the site and its immediate surroundings, as outlined in **Table E** in **Appendix A**, has been assessed as **medium** as there will be a loss of some species-rich grassland and a small amount of native hedgerow within the site and several trees along the route of the proposed access road. The site will contribute to the expansion of the built-up area of Haywards Heath into the countryside along the A272, however the introduction of new residential development is not considered to be substantially uncharacteristic when compared with other developments off Lewes Road such as Oldfield Drive and The Rushes.

Effects on the Wider Landscape within the Study Area

7.15. For the purposes of this assessment, the wider landscape within the study area includes three landscape character areas, the Ouse Valley Landscape, the High Weald and the Low Weald within East Sussex.

7.16. The quality of the landscape within the wider study area has been assessed as having a **high** landscape quality. This assessment has been reached as there

are many buildings of vernacular style in the outlying villages and hamlets which are well cared for and are set in attractive gardens. Lindfield has many listed buildings along its High Street. The northern part of the study area is dotted with watercourses and ponds and includes a golf course and a Grade II* listed property at East Mascalls. One detracting element visible on the aerial photograph is East Mascalls Farm which appears to be covered with tightly packed sheds and shipping containers.

- 7.17. The value of the wider landscape within the study area has been assessed as **high**. The landscape is not within the High Weald National Landscape which would allow it to be valued as very high but is close to its boundary and valued by residents who enjoy recreational activities including playing golf and walking the public footpaths through the area. The historic pattern of small fields, rights of way and the high number of listed buildings in the area provide a sense of cultural time depth which contributes positively to the landscape value. The nature reserves and parcels of ancient and semi-natural woodland have a high value for wildlife.
- 7.18. The wider landscape's susceptibility to change has been defined as **medium** as there are some important landscape elements of moderate susceptibility to change. The Conservation Areas are protected by planning law, however the area is attractive to people wishing to live close to London and the surrounding roads are subject to the presence of increasing numbers of cars. The landform is rolling and coupled with the high proportion of woodland cover, this creates a sense of enclosure, with views often limited by topography, buildings and trees. The area is subject to some human activity and development, and in terms of tranquillity, it is subject to some noise and movement. This is outlined in **Table C** in **Appendix A** of this report.
- 7.19. The landscape visual sensitivity of the wider area has been defined as **medium** as the landscape has a gently rolling topography with frequent vegetative features including sunken lanes lined with trees which restrict views across the landscape. There are several public rights of way bringing people into the countryside.

- 7.1. The overall weighted assessment of landscape sensitivity of the wider landscape has been assessed as **medium-high**.
- 7.2. The magnitude of landscape impacts on the wider area within the study area, as outlined in **Table E** in **Appendix A**, has been assessed as **low** as the rolling topography and the location of the site at a relatively low point in the landscape reduces its visibility. Additionally the high volume of trees in the wider landscape around Haywards Heath offer visual barriers to views from most directions.

Visual Impacts

- 7.3. Visual impact assessment considers the sensitivity to change of visual receptors within the study area, and the magnitude of change associated with the introduction of the proposed development into the existing visual context.
- 7.4. A summary of the visual effects at each viewpoint location is shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Summary and comparison of Overall Residual Visual Effects

	Viewpoints	Receptor Type	Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Overall Visual Effects	Magnitude of Change	Overall Visual Effects
				Operational Stage		Residual Stage	
1	Lewes Road	Road users	Medium	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
2	Public Footpath 29CU	Users of PRow	High	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
3	Slugwash Lane	Road Users	Medium	Very small	Minor	Negligible	Negligible
4	Lewes Road opp. Site entrance	Road Users	Medium	Large	Major / moderate	Large	Major / moderate
5	Footpath 40aCU	Users of PRow	High	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
6	The Rushes	Residents	High	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
7	Footpath 1LR near East Mascalls Farm	Users of PRow	High	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
8	Footpath 19LR / Ham Lane, Scaynes Kill	Users of PRow	High	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
9	PRow Footpath 8LR	Users of PRow	High	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Residential Receptors

- 7.5. Residential receptors are considered high, even though in planning terms there is no right to view from a residential property. This report does not specifically assess any viewpoints from within private residential ownership as access to private property could not be ascertained during the fieldwork. During the fieldwork, the publicly accessible spaces within residential areas (public highway and open spaces) within the ZTV were visited, but due to a combination of existing vegetation, topography, and existing built form, it is likely views from the existing properties will be limited to those in proximity to the site and that are located adjacent to natural gaps within the vegetation structure.

Users of Public Rights of Way

- 7.6. Users of Public Rights of Way are considered to have a high sensitivity to change, since their attention is often focused on the landscape through which they are travelling. These receptors often use Public Rights of Way for recreational purposes and the landscape is considered an important component of their overall experience. The following PRowWs have been assessed as follows:
- 7.7. Viewpoint 2, to the west of the site, was chosen to explore the views from footpath 29CU. The path is within the Zone of Theoretical Visibility, suggesting views might be possible, however the northernmost section runs between properties with opaque boundaries to provide privacy to their gardens. The next section is through woodland as seen on the OS map, and the section on which VP2 is located passes across open grass and the track to Abbots Leigh. Although there are views to the south, the woodland obscures views towards the site, and the development would not be visible.
- 7.8. Viewpoints 5 and 7 are along the Sussex Diamond Way within the ZTV and were chosen to confirm whether the development would be visible from this long distance footpath. Viewpoint 5 gives a perspective across an open field immediately north of the site, close to the rural edge of Lindfield. The woodland beyond the field obscures views and the development would not be visible from this location. Viewpoint 7

commands medium distance view across the damp meadows between two watercourses in the Ouse valley but trees, field hedges and buildings prevent more distant views of the site.

7.9. Viewpoint 8 is situated on footpath 19LR to the east of the site; again trees intervene in the view towards the site.

7.10. Viewpoint 9 is taken from a PRow to the north-east of the site on the edge of the ZTV. The proposals would not be visible from here due to the dense tree cover beyond the buildings of Walstead Stud farm.

Road Users

7.11. Road users are typically less sensitive than users of Public Rights of Way or residential receptors due to the speed through which they travel through the landscape. Road users' attention may also not be focused on the landscape.

7.12. Viewpoint 1 is located on Lewes Road approximately 0.6km northeast of the proposed entrance. The site is located behind private dwellings on the south side of the road and is not visible, due partly to the houses and garden vegetation which provides privacy to their rear gardens, and partly due to the drop in ground level to the site.

7.13. Viewpoint 3 is at the north end of Slugwash Lane, and is the only point where views are possible towards the site due to a break in the hedgerow. At this location however, a line of conifers screening a tennis court also prevents views of the western part of the site. Trees in the middle distance are dense but it is possible that some roofs within the development could be possible in mid-winter. Even if this were possible, the visual impact would be minimal due to the overall quantity of vegetation in the scene.

7.14. Viewpoint 4 represents the baseline view at the point on Lewes Road where the site entrance would be formed. Inevitably at this close range, views would be affected.

Instead of a view of roadside vegetation and a line of trees extending away from the viewer, it would be possible to see along the access road into the site. Due to the layout of the development however the housing would be out of sight to the left of the view, with open space visible along the road. Once construction is completed, additional planting will take place at the junction with Lewes Road (avoiding the visibility splays) and a new evergreen hedge planted along the left hand side of the access road to reduce intervisibility with the neighbouring property.

7.15. Viewpoint 6, within The Rushes off Snowdrop Lane, was visited to identify whether views are possible from this location on the opposite side of Lewes Road to the site. No views are possible from the publicly accessible road at the centre of The Rushes, but some of the houses may have rear views of the site from upper floor windows.

8.0 Conclusions and Discussions

- 8.1. In compiling the baseline information for this report, ACD has undertaken a desktop study including reviews of aerial photography, web searches, Local Planning Authority (LPA) publications, landscape character assessments, and National Character Assessment (NCA) information. ACD then undertook field assessments which include a photographic survey of the landscape and using photography from several representative viewpoints.
- 8.2. A total of nine viewpoints were selected to represent surrounding receptors and observers. These are all within the ZTV and due to topography alone, would have potential views into the site. In practice, eight of the nine viewpoints had no views of the site due to intervening buildings and trees. The proposals would have an overall visual effect of **major to moderate** only at Viewpoint 4, directly opposite the proposed site entrance, due to the removal of trees and shrubs and the creation of the access road. The impact of the access road could be softened over time as new trees and the proposed hedge grow to maturity, but the effect would remain at major to moderate at this exact viewpoint, reducing rapidly with distance along Lewes Road.
- 8.3. There could be barely perceptible views of roofs of the proposed development visible from Viewpoint 3 on Slugwash Lane in winter, but the visual impact is considered to be **minor** and likely to only be experienced by road users with an elevated view (e.g. lorries, top deck of a double-decker bus) enabling views over the roadside hedge. The view would be mitigated with landscape planting, however, and the effect is likely to reduce to **negligible** with carefully positioned mitigation planting.
- 8.4. Views of the houses will be softened through the strategic placement of native trees and shrubs around the site boundary. A belt of buffer planting is proposed along the northern edge to protect the privacy of the existing houses along Lewes Road which back onto the site.

- 8.5. A large open space will be retained on the western parcel, and the new housing will be located east of the access road to provide a significant buffer around the boundary of the Conservation Area.
- 8.6. The buffers will create space for wildlife and will be planted mostly with native species. A few selected ornamental trees will be included in the planting schedule to provide long-term resilience against climate change and plant diseases.
- 8.7. The proposals will not affect the High Weald National Landscape since it is over 2km away and set lower in the landscape with a large volume of intervening tree cover. The site cannot be seen for these reasons from any of the viewpoints on public rights of way visited in the course of the appraisal.
- 8.8. The Lewes Road Conservation Area encompasses several properties along Lewes Road and borders the north-west boundary of the site. The proposed access road is within the Conservation Area. The proposals have been designed to minimise impacts on the Conservation Area by leaving the closest part of the site undeveloped apart from a small play area, and by introducing a significant amount of buffer planting around the shared boundary.
- 8.9. Policy DP13 of the District Plan and Policy E5 of the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan relate to the function of the land outside the built-up area in creating a landscape buffer that will support and enhance ecological connectivity and maintain the landscape character of the areas and individual settlements. Due to the dense visual barriers supplied by the existing woodland, the drop in ground level and the high level of enclosure of the site, it is considered that the development of the site would have minimal impact on the separate identities of the surrounding settlements and would continue to provide ecological connectivity.
- 8.10. In terms of landscape character, the site falls within the character area HW4 High Weald Fringes, as described in the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment. The site falls on the edge of the built-up urban area of Haywards Heath where the landscape character assessment is not appropriate. To the east, however, defining

characteristics are apparent, including a significant amount of woodland cover including ancient woodland, small to medium irregularly shaped fields, a dispersed settlement pattern, and traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber framing, Horsham stone roofing, Wealden Stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.

- 8.11. The landscape of the site and its immediate surroundings, i.e. the land within 500m of the site, has been assessed as having a **high** landscape quality and a **high** landscape value. The susceptibility to change and the visual sensitivity have been assessed as **low** and the overall weighted assessment of landscape sensitivity is therefore **medium**. The magnitude of landscape impact has been assessed as **medium** as there will be a partial alteration to the site's baseline characteristics due to the introduction of residential properties into the small fields, and a loss of roadside vegetation at the point where the access road will meet Lewes Road. Views into the site from all directions are limited to residential properties which back onto the site; it cannot be seen from the roads or public rights of way within 500m.
- 8.12. The quality of the wider landscape, which includes the more distant parts of the study area, has been assessed as **high** and the value as **high**. The susceptibility to change and the visual sensitivity are assessed as **medium**, and again the overall weighted assessment of landscape sensitivity is **medium-high**. The magnitude of the impact of the proposals on the wider landscape is expected to be **low**. Although there is negligible visual connection with the site, it is acknowledged that there will be an adverse impact from the additional cars and traffic movements generated by the development, leading to a slight erosion of tranquillity in the wider landscape.
- 8.13. It is proposed to limit the impacts of the development on residential receptors through the introduction of buffer planting around the periphery, a dense evergreen hedge alongside the access road and trees and shrubs within the residential parcels. Following the implementation of the mitigation strategy, the residual overall visual effects of the proposed development will only remain at the site entrance on Lewes Road.

9.0 Appendices

Appendix A – Methodology

Appendix B- Zone of Theoretical Visibility Methodology

Appendix C- Landscape Effects

Appendix D- Visual Effects

Appendix E- Glossary of Terms

Appendix F - Sources of information

Appendix G - Policy

Appendix H - Published Landscape Character Areas

Figure 1- Ordnance Survey Map

Figure 2- Aerial Photography

Figure 3- Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Figure 4- Viewpoint Locations

Figure 5- Statutory Designation Plan

Figure 6- Landscape Character Plan

Figure 7- Site Layout

Appendix A- Methodology

Quality

- 9.1. Quality or condition relates to the physical state of the landscape and its intactness from the visual, functional, and ecological perspectives, together with the state of repair of its constituent features or elements (e.g., hedgerows, woodlands, field patterns, etc.). Local landscape quality within the study area has been considered based on the criteria described in the following table.

Table A. Landscape Quality (or Condition)

Landscape Quality (or Condition)	Typical Indicators
Very High	All landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Buildings are in local vernacular and materials. No detracting elements are evident
High	Most landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Most buildings are in local vernacular and materials. Few detracting elements are evident
Medium	Some landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Some buildings are in local vernacular and materials and some detracting elements are evident
Low	Few landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Few buildings are in local vernacular and materials. Many detracting or incongruous elements are evident
Very Low	No landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Buildings are not in local vernacular and materials. Detracting or incongruous elements are much in evidence

Value

- 9.2. The value attributed to an area of the landscape reflects communal perception at a local, regional, national, or, occasionally, international scale. It is informed by several factors including scenic beauty, wildness, tranquillity, and particular cultural associations. Cultural associations may be widely held at a national scale or more local. Landscapes considered to be of the highest value would generally be formally designated at the national level, whereas those considered of lowest value would generally be undesignated, degraded landscapes, perhaps identified as being in poor condition and requiring either restoration or re-creation. Although value is largely determined by reference to statutory and planning policy designations, an absence of such designation does not necessarily imply the absence of value, as other factors such as scarcity or cultural associations can

establish an area of otherwise unremarkable landscape as a valued local resource. The value of landscape character areas and designations has been determined using the criteria described in the following table.

Table B. Landscape Value

Landscape Value	Typical Indicators
Very High	Areas comprising a clear composition of valued landscape components in robust form and health, free of disruptive visual detractors and with a strong sense of place. Areas containing a strong, balanced structure with distinct features worthy of conservation. Such areas would generally be internationally or nationally recognised designations, e.g., National Parks
High	Areas primarily containing valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition and lacking prominent disruptive visual detractors. Areas containing a strong structure with noteworthy features or elements, exhibiting a sense of place. Such areas would generally be national statutorily designated areas, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Such areas may also relate to the setting of internationally or nationally statutory designated areas, e.g., National Parks.
Medium	Areas primarily of valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition with low levels of disruptive visual detractors, exhibiting a recognisable landscape structure. Such areas would generally be non-statutory locally designated areas such as Areas of Great Landscape Value. Such areas may also relate to the setting of national statutorily designated areas, such as AONB.
Low	Areas containing some features of landscape value but lacking a coherent and aesthetically pleasing composition with frequent detracting visual elements, exhibiting a distinguishable structure often concealed by mixed land use or development. Such areas would be commonplace at the local level and would generally be undesignated, offering scope for improvement.
Very Low	Areas lacking valued landscape components or comprising degraded, disturbed, or derelict features, lacking any aesthetically pleasing composition with a dominance of visually detracting elements, exhibiting mixed land uses which conceal the baseline structure. Such areas would generally be restricted to the local level and identified as requiring recovery.

Susceptibility to Change

- 9.3. Each landscape character area or designation is assessed for the sensitivity of its character to the introduction of the proposed development, considering its key characteristics, landscape elements, composition, and cultural associations. Certain aspects of landscape character are particularly important indicators of the degree to which a landscape is likely to be able to successfully accommodate development. These include the general scale and complexity of its landforms and elements; the degree of enclosure or openness; the degree and nature of manmade influences upon it; and whether it offers experiences such as remoteness or tranquillity. The criteria used to determine the susceptibility to change are set out in the following table.

Table C. Susceptibility to Change

Susceptibility to Change	Typical Indicators
Very High	Landscape elements: Important elements of the landscape susceptible to change and of high quality and condition. Scale and Enclosure: Small-scale landform/land cover/ development, human-scale indicators, fine-grained, enclosed with narrow views, sheltered. Manmade influence: Absence of manmade elements, traditional or historic settlements, natural features, and 'natural' forms of amenity parkland, perceived as natural 'wild land' lacking in man-made features, land use elements, and detractors Remoteness and Tranquillity: Sense of peace, isolation, or wildness, remote and empty, no evident movement.
High	Where, overall, indicators do not meet the Very High criteria but exceed those for Medium
Medium	Landscape elements: Important elements of the landscape of moderate susceptibility to change and of medium quality and condition. Scale and Enclosure: Medium-scale landform/land cover/ development, textured, semi-enclosed with middle distance views. Manmade influence: Some presence of man-made elements, which may be partially out of scale with the landscape and be only partially consistent with vernacular styles. Remoteness and Tranquillity: some noise, evident, but not dominant human activity and development, noticeable movement.
Low	Where, overall, indicators do not meet the medium criteria but exceed those for Very Low.
Very Low	Landscape elements: Important elements of the landscape insusceptible to change and of low quality and condition. Scale and Enclosure: Large-scale landform/land cover/ development, Featureless, coarse-grained, open with broad views. Manmade influence: Frequent presence of utility, infrastructure, or industrial elements, contemporary structures e.g., masts, pylons, cranes, silos, industrial sheds with a vertical emphasis, functional man-made land-use patterns, and engineered aspects. Remoteness and Tranquillity: Busy and noisy, human activity and development, prominent movement.

Visual Sensitivity of Landscape Areas:

- 9.4. The visual sensitivity of an area of landscape relates to its general level of openness, the nature and number of visual receptors present within a landscape, and the probability of change in visual amenity due to the development being visible. It should be noted that landscape visual sensitivity refers to the visual sensitivity of the entire landscape that is being assessed, rather than an assessment of the visual effects of a specific, individual development.
- 9.5. The following table provides an overview of the typical indicators of visual sensitivity, which can be used to give a transparent, reasoned judgement regarding landscape visual sensitivity.

Table D. Landscape Visual Sensitivity

Landscape Sensitivity	Visual	Typical Indicators
Very High		Visual interruption: Flat or gently undulating topography, few if any vegetative or built features. Nature of views: Densely populated, a dispersed pattern of small settlements, outward-looking settlements, landscape-focused recreation routes and/or visitor facilities, distinctive settings, gateways, or public viewpoints.
High		Where, overall, indicators do not meet the Very High criteria but exceed those for Medium.
Medium		Visual interruption: Undulating or gently rolling topography, some vegetative and built features. Nature of views: Moderate density of population, settlements of moderate size with some view's outwards, routes with some degree of focus on the landscape.
Low		Where, overall, indicators do not meet the medium criteria but exceed those for Very Low.
Very Low		Visual interruption: Rolling topography, frequent vegetative or built features. Nature of views: Unpopulated or sparsely populated, a concentrated pattern of large settlements, introspective settlement, inaccessible, indistinctive, or industrial settings.

- 9.6. The overall landscape sensitivity is derived by combining the assessed values attributed to landscape condition, landscape value, character sensitivity, and effects on landscape elements and landscape visual sensitivity, to define an overall value within the range of Very High, High, Medium, and Low.
- 9.7. Since each criterion has a varying weight in its contribution to sensitivity the overall value is determined by professional judgement.

- 9.8. For this assessment greater weight is attributed to Landscape Value and Susceptibility to Change since these factors have greater defining criteria in the description of the landscape characterisation.

Magnitude of Change

- 9.9. The magnitude of change has been predicted by considering the anticipated loss or disruption to character-forming landscape elements (e.g., tree planting, landform, buildings, and watercourses, etc.), which would arise through the introduction of the proposed scheme.

Table E: Definition of Magnitude of Landscape Impacts

Magnitude	Description
Large	Total loss of or major alteration to key valued elements, features, and characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements considered being prominent and uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Would be at considerable variance with the landform, scale, and pattern of the landscape. This would cause a high-quality landscape to be permanently changed and its quality diminished.
Medium	Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key elements, features, characteristics of the baseline, or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not be substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Would be out of scale with the landscape, and at odds with the local pattern and landform. Will leave an adverse impact on a landscape of recognised quality.
Small	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features, characteristics of the baseline, or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not be uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. May not quite fit into the landform and scale of the landscape. Affect an area of recognised landscape character
Negligible	Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements, features, and characteristics of the baseline or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape. Maintain existing landscape quality, and maybe slightly at odds with the scale, landform, and pattern of the landscape.

Overall Landscape Character Effect

9.10. The overall landscape character effect is determined by the assessment of landscape sensitivity set against the magnitude of change as indicated by the matrix in the table below.

Table F: Overall Landscape Character Effects

Magnitude	Sensitivity			
	Very High	High	Medium	Low
Large	Major	Major	Major/moderate	Moderate
Medium	Major	Major/moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ minor
Small	Moderate	Moderate/minor	Minor	Negligible
Negligible	Minor/moderate	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	Negligible

9.11. The prediction and extent of effect cannot always be absolute. It is for each assessment to determine the assessment criteria and the thresholds, using informed and well-reasoned professional judgement supported by thorough justification for their selection, and explanation as to how the conclusions for each effect assessed have been derived, as noted in GLVIA 3rd edition para 2.23-2.26 and 3.32-36.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

9.12. The locations from which the proposed development will be visible are known as visual receptors. The assessment of visual sensitivity considers both the category of visual receptor and the nature of their existing view. It takes account of the location of the receptor or viewpoint; the expectations, occupation, or activity of the people present; the quality of the existing visual context; and the importance or value likely to be attributed by them to the available view. It is therefore the case that not all receptors within a given category are deemed to display equal sensitivity.

9.13. Following the GLVIA, for the visual assessment, the visual receptors have been graded according to their sensitivity to change against criteria set out in the table below.

Table G: Visual Receptor sensitivity

Receptor Sensitivity	Description
High	Occupiers of residential properties. Users of outdoor recreational facilities, including public rights of way, whose attention or interest may be focused on the landscape Communities where the development results in changes in the landscape setting or valued views enjoyed by the community.
Medium	People travelling through or past the affected landscape in cars, on trains, or other transport routes where higher speeds are involved and view sporadic and short-lived. People engaged in outdoor recreation where enjoyment of the landscape is incidental rather than the main interest.
Low	People at their place of work, Industrial facilities.

9.14. The number of people likely to be present and the duration of time that a view is likely to be experienced may also influence the visual sensitivity of a particular location.

9.15. It is sometimes the case that different categories of visual receptors might be present at a selected representative viewpoint (e.g., a selected location may include both residential properties and workplaces suggesting different levels of sensitivity). In such cases, the primary receptor category is identified (usually the more sensitive).

Visual Magnitude of Change

- 9.16. The visibility of the proposals and the magnitude of their change upon a view and the effect of visual effect are dependent on the range of factors already outlined, together with, the angle of the sun, the time of year, and weather conditions. Of equal importance will be whether the site is seen completely, or in part; whether the site appears on the skyline; whether it is viewed with a backcloth of land or vegetation; or with a complex foreground; and whether the site forms part of an expansive landscape or is visible within a restricted view. The aspect of dwellings and whether the view is from the main window or a secondary window, which may be used less frequently, is also a consideration. From highways, the direction and speed of travel are also a consideration. In the assessment magnitude of change is ranked as per the following table.

Table H: Definition of Magnitude of Visual Impact

Magnitude	Examples
Very Large	The development would result in a dramatic change in the existing view and/or would cause a dramatic change in the quality and/or character of the view. The development would appear large scale and/or form the dominant elements within the overall view and/or maybe in full view the observer or receptor. Commanding, controlling the view.
Large	The development would result in a prominent change in the existing view and/or would cause a prominent change in the quality and /or character of the view. The development would form prominent elements within the overall view and/or maybe easily noticed by the observer or receptor. Standing out, striking, sharp, unmistakable, easily seen.
Medium	The development would result in a noticeable change in the existing view and/or would cause a noticeable change in the quality and/or character of the view. The development would form a conspicuous element within the overall view and/or maybe readily noticed by the observer or receptor. Noticeable, distinct, catching the eye or attention, clearly visible, well defined.
Small	The development would result in a perceptible change in the existing view, and/or without affecting the overall quality and/or character of the view. The development would form an apparent small element in the wider landscape that may be missed by the observer or receptor. Visible, evident, obvious.
Very Small	The development would result in a barely perceptible change in the existing view, and/or without affecting the overall quality and/or would form an inconspicuous minor element in the wider landscape that may be missed by the observer or receptor. Lacking sharpness of definition, not obvious, indistinct, not clear, obscure, blurred, and indefinite.
Negligible	Only a small part of the development would be discernible and/or it is at such a distance that no change to the existing view can be appreciated. Weak, not legible, near the limit of acuity of the human eye.

Overall Visual Effect

9.17. The overall visual effects are determined by the assessment of receptor sensitivity set against the magnitude of change, as indicated by the matrix in Table I.

Table I: Overall Visual Effects

Magnitude	Sensitivity		
	High	Medium	Low
Very large	Major	Major	Major/moderate
Large	Major	Major/moderate	Moderate
Medium	Major/moderate	Moderate	Moderate/minor
Small	Moderate	Moderate/minor	Minor
Very Small	Minor	Minor	Negligible
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Visual Assessment Parameters

9.18. To evaluate what the visual impact of the development will be and, if appropriate, what can be done, to ameliorate the impact, it is necessary to describe the existing situation to provide a basis against which any change can be assessed. The assessment of visual impact from any one location considers the:

- Sensitivity of the views and viewers (visual receptor) affected.
- Nature, scale or magnitude, and duration of the change.
- The extent of the proposed development that will be visible.
- Degree of visual intrusion or obstruction that will occur.
- Distance of the view; and
- Change in character or quality of the view compared to the existing.

9.19. A range of fixed visual receptors was initially considered, with emphasis placed on the identification and selection of locations with a clear relationship to the proposed scheme where potential visual implications were deemed to be greatest. The key visual receptors normally include statutory and non-statutory designated or protected areas, cultural heritage resources, residential properties and farmsteads, recreational/tourist resources, panoramic hilltop views, focused or directed views, and cumulative views. Viewpoints were selected to be representative of these visual receptor types.

9.20. These preliminary viewpoint's locations were assessed in terms of visibility during field investigation resulting in some preliminary viewpoints either being repositioned to locations offering improved visual representation or discounted as not offering any views. Also, field investigation identified several other closer viewpoints.

9.21. For the field assessment, a Canon EOS 600D camera with an 18-55mm lens was used, set at 35mm focal length. This is in line with best practice as shown in the 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals- Technical Guidance Note 06/19' issued by the Landscape Institute (2019).

9.22. Field investigation from the preliminary viewpoints was used to assess the actual visibility of the proposed development within the study area, considering the visual barrier effect of vegetation and buildings.

Site Appraisal/ Photographic Studies

9.23. The photographic study was undertaken in February 2024. Viewpoints at varying close distances from the site were selected to represent the typical views of the site. **Figure 4** shows the location of these viewpoints. In determining the viewpoints, whether in the immediate locality or further away, the main public highways, sections of public footpaths, and some of the publicly available spaces within the study area were visited. It is acknowledged that from public places, more viewers are likely to be affected thereby adding to the overall impact upon receptors in those locations.

9.24. The locations from which the proposed development will be visible are known as visual receptors. Following the "Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition", for the visual assessment, the visual receptors have been graded according to their sensitivity to change.

9.25. From the results of the initial desk study, site appraisal, and fieldwork the proposed development will be visible from a limited number of locations, at varying but close distances, and from both public and private areas.

9.26. To evaluate what the visual impact of the development will be and, if appropriate, what can be done to ameliorate the impact, it is necessary to describe the existing situation to provide a basis against which any change can be assessed. Each assessment of visual impact has therefore been made taking into consideration the character and quality of the existing view.

Limitations of Assessment

- 9.27. The fieldwork and photographic appraisal were undertaken during April 2024 at a time when trees are starting to come into leaf. In the summer months, the existing vegetation will form stronger visual barriers. Photographs at the end of each viewpoint indicate the general outlook for receptors.
- 9.28. In determining the viewpoints, whether in the immediate locality or further away, the main public highways, sections of public footpaths, and some of the publicly available spaces within the study area were visited. It is acknowledged that from public places, more viewers are likely to be affected, thereby adding to the overall impact upon receptors in those locations.
- 9.29. For this report, the assessment has been based on development proposals illustrated in the planning application. The proposals include a plan of the site showing the positioning of houses, garages, parking areas and roads, and new trees, hedges and shrub plantings.

APPENDIX B – Zone of Theoretical Visibility Methodology

9.30. Following an initial desk-based assessment of aerial photography, Ordnance Survey mapping a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) was prepared.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

9.31. To assist in the assessment of the potential visual effects of any development, a computer-generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) is normally modelled. The computer ZTV is used as a working tool to inform the assessment team of the extent of the zone within which the proposed development may have an influence or effect on landscape character and visual amenity and the areas within which the study area together with site survey work should be concentrated. It should be noted that this is a topographical information-based exercise with no account being taken of the visual barrier effects of vegetation or buildings.

9.32. A computer-generated ZTV was established and a study area together with several representative viewpoints determined. All these viewpoints are at various distances from the scheme and cover all main points of the compass.

9.33. The extent of the study area and viewpoints were selected as being representative and having the potential to offer a degree of landscape and visual effects.

APPENDIX C- Landscape Assessment

LOCAL CHARACTER AREA

The site is comprised of three unused fields on a south-facing slope with emergent vegetation and areas of scrub. Overgrown field boundaries run broadly north to south dividing the fields. The site is bound on the south sides with ancient, replanted woodland and light woodland through which a public footpath passes. Away from the residential parts of Haywards Heath the locality typifies some of characteristics of the local character area, including a rolling landscape with a high proportion of woodland, trees and hedges. Oak is very common in the character area. Small irregularly shaped fields resulting from the felling of woodland, leaving shaws, or remnant patches of woodland are frequent. Small settlements are dispersed and connected by narrow lanes with trees to either side adding to the sense of enclosure.

Towards Haywards Heath the Lewes Road Conservation Area is a distinctive feature, with large, detached houses set back from the road and high hedges often marking the front boundaries.

Assessed Landscape Sensitivity of Local Character Area (Site and Immediate Surroundings)		
Criteria	Indicator Description	Assessed Result
Quality	The houses and trees and hedges along the roadsides and within private gardens are well maintained. Signage on the road is minimal and there are few detracting elements. Parked cars are infrequent on the roads since there is space on most private driveways and cars are parked behind boundary hedges. A high proportion of the area immediately surrounding the site is natural woodland including ancient woodland.	High
Value	The immediate area includes a Conservation Area which has been recognised as having a high value in providing an attractive approach into the town, with buildings set back from the road and substantial hedges along the roadside. The site also has value as part of the open space surrounding Haywards Heath. The hedgerows, trees and rough grassland within the site, which have not been well maintained for the past few years, have ecological value and are inhabited by a wide range of species as noted in the ecological report. They are small and irregularly shaped, which matches the recognised field pattern in the landscape character assessments.	High
Landscape susceptibility to change	Development has steadily been taking place over time as Haywards Heath has expanded in an easterly direction. Many of the fields seen on the map of 1879 are now built over, and recent residential developments nearby include those at Oldfield Drive and The Rushes. The presence of the A272 which is fundamental to the character of this area, introduces traffic noise characteristic of trunk roads and reduces the level of tranquillity.	Low
Landscape visual sensitivity	There are strong elements of enclosure around the site and along Lewes Road. The larger properties are all well-screened by extensive plantings of trees and shrubs and high hedges introduced for privacy, which combined with the woodland to the south, and the lack of public rights of way through the site and along its boundaries, makes it very difficult to see into the site from publicly accessible viewpoints. In addition, the ground falls away from the road so that the site is lower which makes it less visible to the residents of houses immediately north than it would be if the site were flat.	Low
	Overall, Weighted Landscape Sensitivity.	Medium

APPENDIX D- Visual Assessment

Viewpoint 1: View from Lewes Road



Vp1	Close-range panoramic view (Distance 300m to centre of site, looking south west)	
Baseline Description	This viewpoint lies on the north side of the A272 Lewes Road just east of the turning into Oldfield Drive, and close to the point on the road where the speed limit reduces to 40mph on the approach to Haywards Heath. The road is lined with detached properties set back from the road in large gardens, with extensive planting along the roadside boundary. The photograph illustrates the character of the road beyond the boundary of the Lewes Road Conservation Area. The site is located behind the group of houses which includes the house with the orange roof in the centre of the image which was built during 2022/23 on the garden of the adjacent house. Several trees and evergreen hedges are planted on the roadside and there is a pavement on the south side of the road, which runs out a short distance further east.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, the closest houses on the proposed development would be approximately 200m away, beyond the trees visible in the middle distance on the left of the photograph, and approximately 8 metres below the level of the A272 (i.e. the roof line would be effectively at the same level as the road at this point). The development would not be visible.	
Type of effect	None.	
Magnitude of Change	Negligible	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	Road users - Medium Negligible
Overall Visual Effects		Negligible

Viewpoint 2: View from Public Footpath 29CU



Vp2	Close-range view (panorama) (Distance 430m to centre of site, looking north-east)	
Baseline Description	This is a view from the public footpath which runs south from the A272 at a point approximately 100m from the western site boundary. Initially the path is tightly enclosed between a close board fence and a row of trees and visibility is extremely restricted (see the photograph on page 31). It continues through woodland before emerging into this open landscape of mown grass and young trees which flanks the access road to the Abbots Leigh estate. To the east of the path, and visible in the distance are the blocks of woodland surrounding the site.	
Predicted change	The proposals will be set beyond the woodland in the distance and would not be visible.	
Type of effect	None.	
Magnitude of Change	The development would not result in a change to the existing view.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	PRoW users - High Negligible
Overall Visual Effects		Negligible

Viewpoint 3: View from the top of Slugwash Lane



Vp3	Close-range view (Distance 470m looking south-west)	
Baseline Description	This is a view from Slugwash Lane, about 70m from the northern end where there is a field gate allowing a view across the landscape towards the site. Further south along the lane there is thick roadside vegetation, or there are properties or the woodland of Cains Wood which all obscure views towards the site. The site is beyond the tall hedge in the centre right of the photograph which screens a tennis court.	
Predicted change	The proposals will be set beyond the woodland and approximately 10 metres lower in the landscape and should not be visible from this viewpoint. It is possible that in winter some of the roofs could be visible through bare trees.	
Type of effect	The introduction of the proposed building types would be comparable to the type of development that already exists in the local landscape.	
Magnitude of Change	The development may result in a barely perceptible change in the existing view during the winter months.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	Road users - Medium Very small
Overall Visual Effects		Minor

Viewpoint 4: View from Lewes Road towards Proposed Site Entrance



Vp4	Middle-distance, elevated panoramic view (Distance 10m to proposed site entrance, looking south)	
Baseline Description	This is a view from the north side of Lewes Road towards the point where the site entrance would be located. The garden to the left is that of no. 90 Lewes Road, and to the right, the garden of North Colwell Farmhouse.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, the access road and bellmouth would be highly visible, leading into the site.	
Type of effect	Instead of a close view of dense trees and bushes, the view would extend into the site along a tarmac road with a new evergreen hedge planted to the left hand side	
Magnitude of Change	The development would result in an obvious change to the existing view, however this would only be experienced by passers by for a brief length of time, and is to be expected for a close range view immediately outside the entrance to a development.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	Road users - Medium Large
Overall Visual Effects		Major/moderate

Viewpoint 5: View from Public Right of Way 40ACU



Vp5	Long distance elevated panoramic view (Distance 2.31km looking south)	
Baseline Description	This is a view from the long-distance path called the Sussex Diamond Way, looking across open land to the east of Lindfield. The arable field shows signs of the previous year's crop, and beyond it is mixed woodland. A low voltage power line crosses the far side of the field, carried on poles. The land is gently undulating and rises in the distance; the low hill on the left hand side is likely to be the rise on the east side of Slugwash Lane, which is higher than the site at 83m AOD.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, the proposals will be set beyond the woodland, and beyond other fields and areas of existing vegetation. No change in the view is likely.	
Type of effect	None.	
Magnitude of Change	The development would result in no change in the existing view.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	PRoW users - High Negligible
Overall Visual Effects		Negligible

Viewpoint 6: View from The Rushes



Vp6	Middle-distance panoramic view (Distance 370m looking south)	
Baseline Description	The Rushes is a residential street off Snowdrop Lane to the north of the site, located on a rise in ground level. This place was investigated as a potential viewpoint, however views are not possible as the houses and boundary fences cut off any views beyond the frontages.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, the proposals will be set beyond the houses and fences on the left side of the photograph and would not be visible.	
Type of effect	The introduction of the proposed building types would be comparable to the type of development that already exists in the local landscape.	
Magnitude of Change	The development would result in no change in the existing view and would not be legible to the observer.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	Road users - Medium Negligible
Overall Visual Effects		Negligible

Viewpoint 7: View from Public Footpath 1LR near East Mascalls Farm.



Vp7	Middle-distance panoramic view (Distance 2.24km looking south-south-west)	
Baseline Description	This is a view from a second point on the Sussex Diamond Way, south of East Mascalls Farm and the Lindfield Golf Club. The path here follows the Ouse and the bridge carrying the road over it can be seen on the left of the image. The Scrase stream is a second watercourse visible along the line of the two similar trees to the centre right. This viewpoint lies within the HW3 Ouse Valley landscape character area, as identified in the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment. One of the key characteristics illustrated here is a pattern of medium to large sized fields and water meadows intermixed with woodlands and hedges which imparts a scenic quality to the landscape. The settlement pattern is of small historic villages with houses built of sandstone and/or timber framed. Farmsteads and small cottages are scattered throughout the area, mainly along lanes. Although there are several manmade elements present, they do not dominate the view due to the scale of the view and the mixed fabric of the landscape.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, the proposals will be set beyond the trees and the large building to the right of the electricity poles carrying the transformer and would not be visible.	
Type of effect	None	
Magnitude of Change	The development would result in an imperceptible change in the existing view.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	PRoW users - High Negligible
Overall Visual Effects		Negligible

Viewpoint 8: View from 19LR / Ham Lane, Scaynes Hill



Vp8	Middle-distance panoramic view (Distance 1.08km looking west-north-west)	
Baseline Description	This viewpoint is located to the west of Scaynes Hill a short distance along Ham lane, which is a farm track leading to Awbrook Old Farm. The belt of trees on the right of the image screens views of buildings at Eastland Wood, beyond which lies the site. A group of trees coming into leaf provides an attractive vertical grouping in the view. The distant dark green conifers are located to the south of the site, within Cains Wood.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, the proposals will be set beyond the trees on the right hand side of the image, and will not be visible. Extensive woodland surrounds the site from this direction.	
Type of effect	None	
Magnitude of Change	The development would not be visible from this location.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	Residents and PRow users - High Negligible
Overall Visual Effects		Negligible

Viewpoint 9: View from PRow Footpath 8LR



Vp 9	Long-range panoramic view (Distance 1.11km looking south-west)	
Baseline Description	This is a view from a public right of way close to the junction between Snowdrop Lane and Bedales Hill. The footpath runs to the south of woodland surrounding land at Walstead Stud. There is a view across fields subdivided by post and rail fencing, to a line of trees. A house and various modern farm buildings occupy the right-hand side of the image; a group of horse trailers is parked centrally in the view. The land in the foreground is poached reflecting its use as a feeding area for the animals. The site is located beyond the house and the trees behind the house and is not visible.	
Predicted change	From this viewpoint, the proposals will not be visible.	
Type of effect	None	
Magnitude of Change	Negligible.	
Assessment	Sensitivity Magnitude	Workers and PRow users – Low and High Negligible
Overall Visual Effects		Negligible

APPENDIX E - Glossary of terms

Analysis (landscape)	The process of breaking the landscape down into its component parts to understand how it is made up.
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Assessment (landscape)	An umbrella term for description, classification, and analysis of the landscape.
Biodiversity	The concept of variety in all species of plants and animals through which nature finds its balance.
Classification	A process of sorting the landscape into different types using selected criteria, but without attaching relative values to the different kinds of landscape.
Compensation	The measures taken to offset or compensate for residual adverse effects that cannot be mitigated, or for which mitigation cannot eliminate adverse effects.
Constraints map	Map showing the location of important resources and receptors that may form constraints to development.
Countryside	The rural environment and its associated communities (including the coast)
Cumulative Effects	The summation of effects that result from changes caused by development in conjunctions with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions.
Diversity	Where a variety of qualities or characteristics occurs.
Element	A component part of the landscape (for example, roads, hedges, woods)
Enhancement	Landscape improvement through restoration, reconstruction, or creation.
Environment	Our physical surroundings including air, water, and land.

Environmental appraisal	A generic term for the evaluation of the environmental implications of proposals (used by the UK Government in respect of policies and plans).
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	The evaluation of the effects on the environment of particular development proposals
Field pattern	The pattern of hedges and walls that define fields in farmed landscapes.
Geographical Information System (GIS)	Computerised database of geographical information that can easily be updated and manipulated.
Heritage	Historical or cultural associations.
Indirect impacts	Impacts on the environment, which are not a direct result of the development but are often produced away from it or as a result of a complex pathway. Sometimes referred to as secondary impacts.
Landcover	Combinations of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.
Landform	Combinations of slope and elevation of the land conditioned by knowledge and identity with a place.
Landscape capacity	The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area can accommodate change without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of the change being proposed.
Landscape character	The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how this is perceived by people. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, and human settlement. It creates a particular sense of place in different areas of the landscape.
Landscape character type	A landscape type will have broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement, and field pattern discernible in maps and field survey records.

Landscape effects	Change in the elements, characteristics, character, and qualities of the landscape as a result of development. These effects can be positive or negative.
Landscape evaluation	The process of attaching value (non-monetary) to a particular landscape, usually by the application of previously agreed criteria, including consultation and third party documents, for a particular purpose (for example, designation or in the context of the assessment)
Landscape factor	A circumstance or influence contributing to the impression of a landscape (for example, scale, enclosure, elevation)
Landscape feature	A prominent eye-catching element, for example, a wooded hilltop or church spire.
Landscape quality (or condition)	is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.
Landscape resource	The combination of elements that contribute to landscape context, character, and value.
Landscape sensitivity	The extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects its character.
Land use	The primary use of the land, including both rural and urban activities.
Landscape value	The relative value or importance attached to a landscape (often as a basis for designation or recognition), which expresses national or local consensus, because of its quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness, cultural associations, or other conservation issues.
LCA	Landscape Character Area
Magnitud	A combination of the scale, extent, and duration of an effect.
Methodology	The specific approach and techniques used for a given study.

Mitigation	Measures, including any process, activity, or design to avoid, reduce, remedy, or compensate for adverse landscape and visual effects of a development project.
NCA	National Character Assessment
Perception (of landscape)	The psychology of seeing and possibly attaching value and/or meaning to landscape.
Precautionary principle	Principle applied to err on the side of caution where significant environmental damage may occur, but where knowledge on the matter is incomplete, or when the prediction of environmental effects is uncertain.
Preference	The liking by people for one particular landscape element, characteristic, or feature over another.
PRoW	Public Right of Way
Quality	See Landscape quality
Receptor	Physical landscape resource, special interest, or viewer group that will experience an effect.
Scenario	A picture of a possible future.
Scoping	The process of identifying the likely significant effects of the development of the environment.
Sense of place (genius loci)	The essential character and spirit of an area; <i>genius loci</i> literally means 'spirit of the place'.
Sensitive/sensitivity	See landscape sensitivity
Sieve mapping	Technique for mapping environmental constraints, working from a series of overlays, sieving out less important factors.
Sustainability	The principle that the environment should be protected in such a condition and to such a degree that ensures new development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Technique	Specific working process

Threshold	A specified level in grading effects, for example, of magnitude, sensitivity, or significance.
Visual amenity	The value of a particular area or view in terms of what is seen.
Visual effect	Change in the appearance of the landscape as a result of development. This can be positive (i.e. beneficial or an improvement) or negative (i.e. adverse or a detraction)
Visual envelope	Extent of potential visibility to or from a specific area or feature.
Visualisation	Computer simulation, photomontage, or other techniques to illustrate the appearance of the development.
Worst-case situation	Principle applied where the environmental effects may vary, for example, seasonally to ensure the most severe potential effect is assessed.
Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)	Area within which a proposed development may have an influence or effect on visual amenity.

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APPENDIX F - Sources of Information

9.34. The following sources of information were obtained or consulted during the assessment:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Landscape Institute (2013).
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England (2018).
- National Planning Policy Framework (2023).
- Consultations with the client regarding the development proposals.
- Natural England's published national landscape character assessment.
- Aerial photography.
- Ordnance Survey Mapping at 1:10,000, 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 scale.
- Site visits and fieldwork to confirm data derived from available mapping and to identify and assess potential impacts.
- Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 - 2031, adopted March 2018
- Mid Sussex District Council Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2023.
- Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan Our Bright Future, December 2016, Haywards Heath Town Council.
- Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, 2005.
- West Sussex Public Rights of Way Interactive Online map
- East Sussex Public Rights of Way Interactive Online map

APPENDIX G – Policy

Planning policy is outlined in the Mid Sussex District Plan. The relevant landscape policies which have been considered during the design development and assessment of the scheme include:

Policy DP12: Protections and Enhancement of the Countryside

Strategic Objectives: 3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities; 11) To support and enhance the attractiveness of Mid Sussex as a visitor destination; and 15) To create places that encourage a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle by the provision of first class cultural and sporting facilities, informal leisure space and the opportunity to walk, cycle or ride to common destinations.

Evidence Base: A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex, A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape, Capacity of Mid Sussex District to Accommodate Development Study.

The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:

- it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or*
- it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.*

Agricultural land of Grade 3a and above will be protected from non-agricultural development proposals. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, detailed field surveys should be undertaken and proposals should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality.

The Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, the West Sussex County Council Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape, the Capacity of Mid Sussex District to Accommodate Development Study and other available landscape evidence (including that gathered to support Neighbourhood Plans) will be used to assess the impact of development proposals on the quality of rural and landscape character.

Built-up area boundaries are subject to review by Neighbourhood Plans or through a Site Allocations Development Plan Document, produced by the District Council.

Economically viable mineral reserves within the district will be safeguarded.

Policy DP13: Preventing Coalescence

Strategic Objective: 2) To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District's distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence.

Evidence Base: Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment; Capacity of Mid Sussex District to Accommodate Development Study.

The individual towns and villages in the District each have their own unique characteristics. It is important that their separate identity is maintained. When travelling between settlements people should have a sense that they have left one before arriving at the next.

Provided it is not in conflict with Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside, development will be permitted if it does not result in the coalescence of settlements which harms the separate identity and amenity of settlements, and would not have an unacceptably urbanising effect on the area between settlements.

Local Gaps can be identified in Neighbourhood Plans or a Site Allocations Development Plan Document, produced by the District Council, where there is robust evidence that development within the Gap would individually or cumulatively result in coalescence and the loss of the separate identity and

amenity of nearby settlements. Evidence must demonstrate that existing local and national policies cannot provide the necessary protection.

Policy DP26: Character and Design

Strategic Objectives: 2) To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District's distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence; 4) To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities; 12) To support sustainable communities which are safe, healthy and inclusive; and 14) To create environments that are accessible to all members of the community.

Evidence Base: CABE Good Practice Guidance.

All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*

- *does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29);*
- *creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- *incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- *positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- *take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- *optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.*

Policy DP35: Conservation Areas

Strategic Objectives: 2) To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District's distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence; 4) To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities; and 11) To support and enhance the attractiveness of Mid Sussex as a visitor destination.

Evidence Base: Mid Sussex Conservation Area Appraisals; Sussex Extensive Urban Surveys; West Sussex Historic Environment Record.

Development in a conservation area will be required to conserve or enhance its special character, appearance and the range of activities which contribute to it. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- *New buildings and extensions are sensitively designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area in terms of their scale, density, design and through the use of complementary materials;*

- *Open spaces, gardens, landscaping and boundary features that contribute to the special character of the area are protected. Any new landscaping or boundary features are designed to reflect that character;*
- *Traditional shop fronts that are a key feature of the conservation area are protected. Any alterations to shopfronts in a conservation area will only be permitted where they do not result in the loss of a traditional shopfront and the new design is sympathetic to the character of the existing building and street scene in which it is located;*
- *Existing buildings that contribute to the character of the conservation area are protected. Where demolition is permitted, the replacement buildings are of a design that reflects the special characteristics of the area;*
- *Activities such as markets, crafts or other activities which contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area are supported;*
- *New pavements, roads and other surfaces reflect the materials and scale of the existing streets and surfaces in the conservation area.*

Development will also protect the setting of the conservation area and in particular views into and out of the area.

New buildings of outstanding or innovative design may be acceptable in conservation areas provided that their impact would not cause material harm to the area.

Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

Strategic Objectives: 3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities; 4) To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities; and 5) To create and maintain easily accessible green infrastructure, green corridors and spaces around and within the towns and villages to act as wildlife corridors, sustainable transport links and leisure and recreational routes.

Evidence Base: Green Infrastructure mapping; Mid Sussex Ancient Woodland Survey, Tree and Woodland Management Guidelines, Tree Preservation Order records.

The District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. In particular, ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees will be protected.

Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.

Proposals for new trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of suitable species, usually native, and where required for visual, noise or light screening purposes, trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of a size and species that will achieve this purpose.

Trees, woodland and hedgerows will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

- incorporates existing important trees, woodland and hedgerows into the design of new development and its landscape scheme; and*
- prevents damage to root systems and takes account of expected future growth; and*
- where possible, incorporates retained trees, woodland and hedgerows within public open space rather than private space to safeguard their long-term management; and*
- has appropriate protection measures throughout the development process; and*
- takes opportunities to plant new trees, woodland and hedgerows within the new development to enhance on-site green infrastructure and increase resilience to the effects of climate change; and*

- *does not sever ecological corridors created by these assets. Proposals for works to trees will be considered taking into account:*

- *the condition and health of the trees; and*

- *the contribution of the trees to the character and visual amenity of the local area; and*

- *the amenity and nature conservation value of the trees; and*

- *the extent and impact of the works; and*

- *any replanting proposals.*

The felling of protected trees will only be permitted if there is no appropriate alternative. Where a protected tree or group of trees is felled, a replacement tree or group of trees, on a minimum of a 1:1 basis and of an appropriate size and type, will normally be required. The replanting should take place as close to the felled tree or trees as possible having regard to the proximity of adjacent properties. Development should be positioned as far as possible from ancient woodland with a minimum buffer of 15 metres maintained between ancient woodland and the development boundary.

Policy DP38: Biodiversity

Strategic Objectives: 3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities; and 5) To create and maintain easily accessible green infrastructure, green corridors and spaces around and within the towns and villages to act as wildlife corridors, sustainable transport links and leisure and recreational routes.

Evidence Base: Biodiversity 2020; Biodiversity Action Plan; Biodiversity Opportunity Areas; Green Infrastructure mapping; Habitats and Species Records; Mid Sussex Ancient Woodland Survey; Mid Sussex Infrastructure Delivery Plan; The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature; West Sussex SNCI Register.

Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

- *Contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments; and*
- *Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances); and*
- *Minimises habitat and species fragmentation and maximises opportunities to enhance and restore ecological corridors to connect natural habitats and increase coherence and resilience; and*
- *Promotes the restoration, management and expansion of priority habitats in the District; and*
- *Avoids damage to, protects and enhances the special characteristics of internationally designated Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation; nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and locally designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves and Ancient Woodland or to other areas identified as being of nature conservation or geological interest, including wildlife corridors, aged or veteran trees, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, and Nature Improvement Areas.*

Designated sites will be given protection and appropriate weight according to their importance and the contribution they make to wider ecological networks.

Valued soils will be protected and enhanced, including the best and most versatile agricultural land, and development should not contribute to unacceptable levels of soil pollution.

Geodiversity will be protected by ensuring development prevents harm to geological conservation interests, and where possible, enhances such

interests. Geological conservation interests include Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites.

Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan “Our Bright Future”

The neighbourhood plan was produced in December 2016 and covers the period up to 2031. Relevant policies are listed below.

- Policy E5: The land outside the proposed built up area is designated as a local gap between Haywards Heath and neighbouring Town/Parishes, see figure 4, to create a landscape buffer that will support and enhance ecological connectivity, maintain the landscape character of the areas and individual settlements. New development outside the built up area will only be permitted if it:
 - would not unduly erode the landscape character of the area or its ecology
 - would not harm the setting of the town and
 - would retain and enhance the separate identity of communities.
- Policy E6: New major development will be required to promote Green Infrastructure opportunities within the site and establish and / or enhance links between this and existing Green Infrastructure in the immediate vicinity of the site.
- Policy E7: New development proposals will be required to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems, where practical, as part of the design of new housing and commercial development and indicate how such schemes will be managed and maintained.
- Policy E8: New major development proposals, defined as 10 or more dwellings, 1000sqm floorspace or more, or application sites over 1 hectare, will be required to be designed to support making the town more sustainable by having regard to the following matters when designing the scheme;

- provision of recycling, including commercial waste within the scheme
 - submission of details of how the scheme will promote walking, cycling, public transport use and promotion of car sharing
 - submission of details on how the scheme will manage energy and water use
 - demonstrate how the scheme would contribute to the improvement of the health and wellbeing of the community.
- Policy E9: Developers must demonstrate how their proposal will protect and reinforce the local character within the locality of the site. This will include having regard to the following design elements:
 - height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design and materials of buildings,
 - the scale, design and materials of the development (highways, footways, open space and landscape), and is sympathetic to the setting of any heritage asset,
 - respects the natural contours of a site and protects and sensitively incorporates natural features such as trees, hedges and ponds within the site,
 - creates safe, accessible and well-connected environments that meet the needs of users,
 - Will not result in unacceptable levels of light, noise, air or water pollution,
 - Makes best use of the site to accommodate development,
 - Car parking is designed and located so that it fits in with the character of the proposed development.

Proposals affecting a listed building, conservation area, building of local interest or public park of historic interest or their setting should preserve or enhance their special interest and/or distinctive character.

- Policy E11: Major Development proposals sited on the edge of Haywards Heath or in a visually prominent location will be required to be supported by an assessment of the views to and from the proposed development. Any identified visual impact must be addressed through the design of the buildings, site layout, and the landscaping of the site. Where relevant the developers should have regard to the High Weald Management Plan as land to the northwest of the Town lies within the High Weald AONB.

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LEGEND



Site boundary



For ordnance survey map legend, refer to:
<https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/docs/legends/25k-raster-legend.pdf>

Client: Miller Homes Ltd		
Scheme: Land at North Colwell Farm, Haywards Heath		
Drawing: Ordnance Survey Plan		Figure No: 1
ACD Ref: MILL24496		
Scale: NTS@A3	Drawn: ACG	Checked: RH





LEGEND



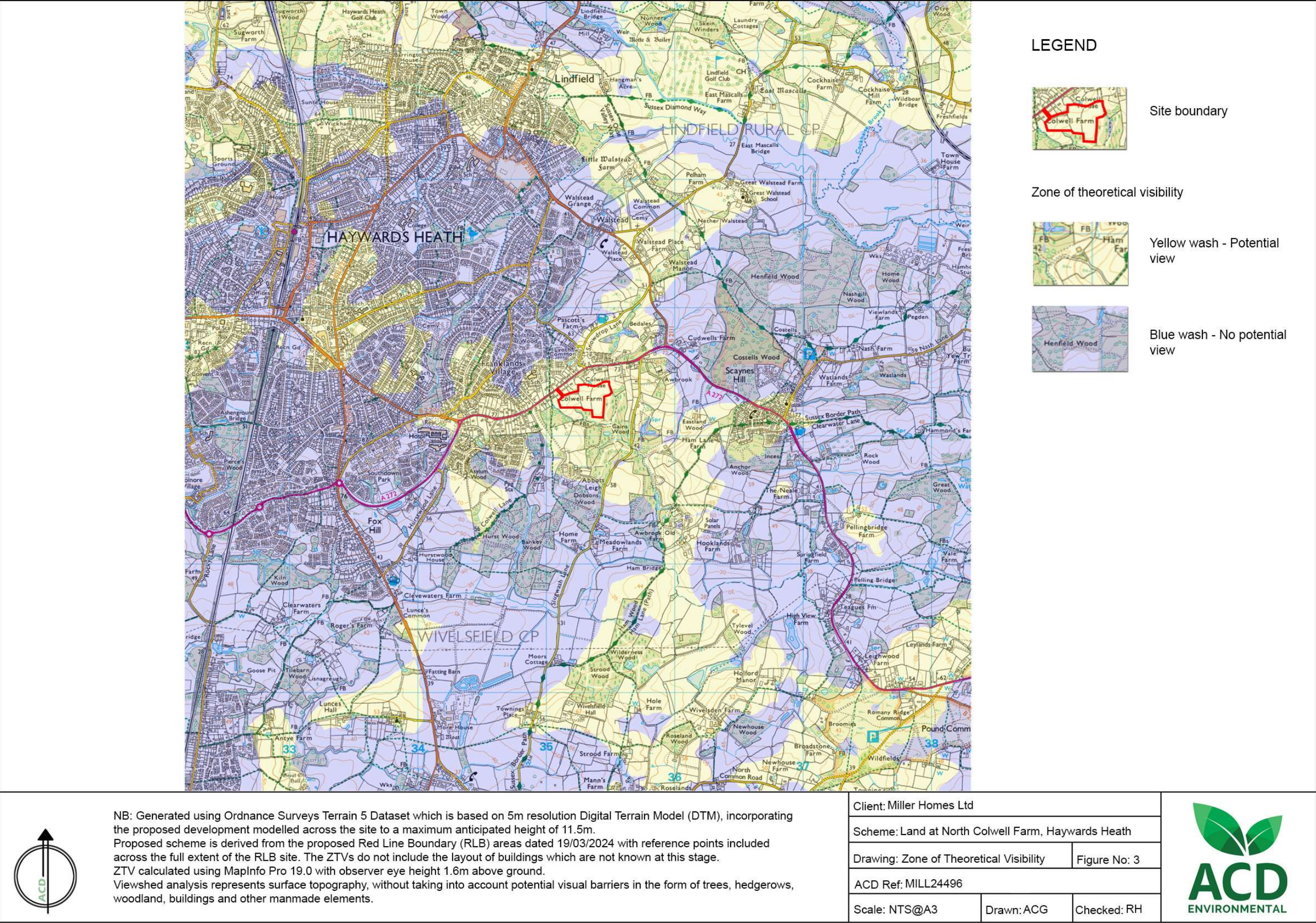
Site boundary

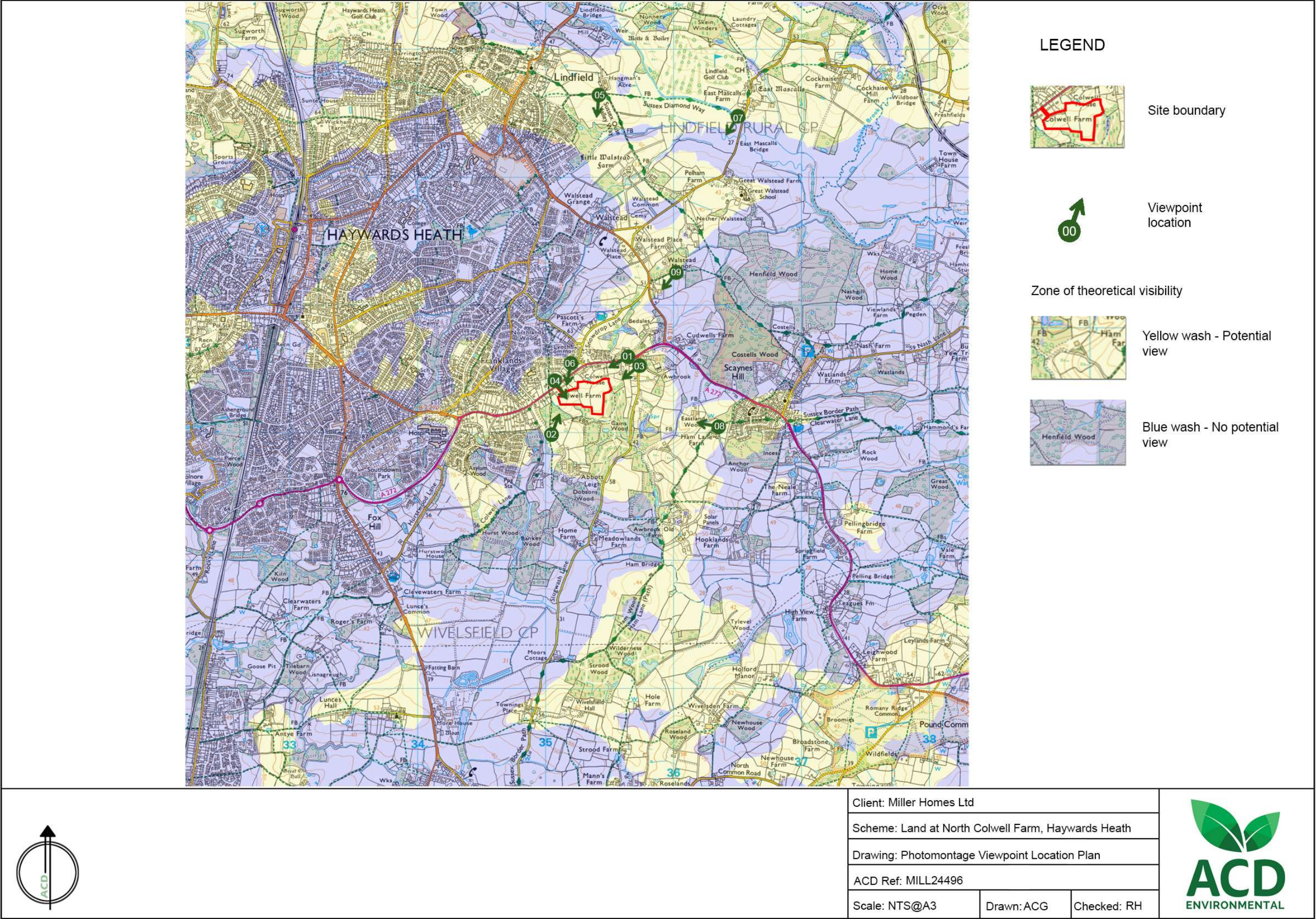


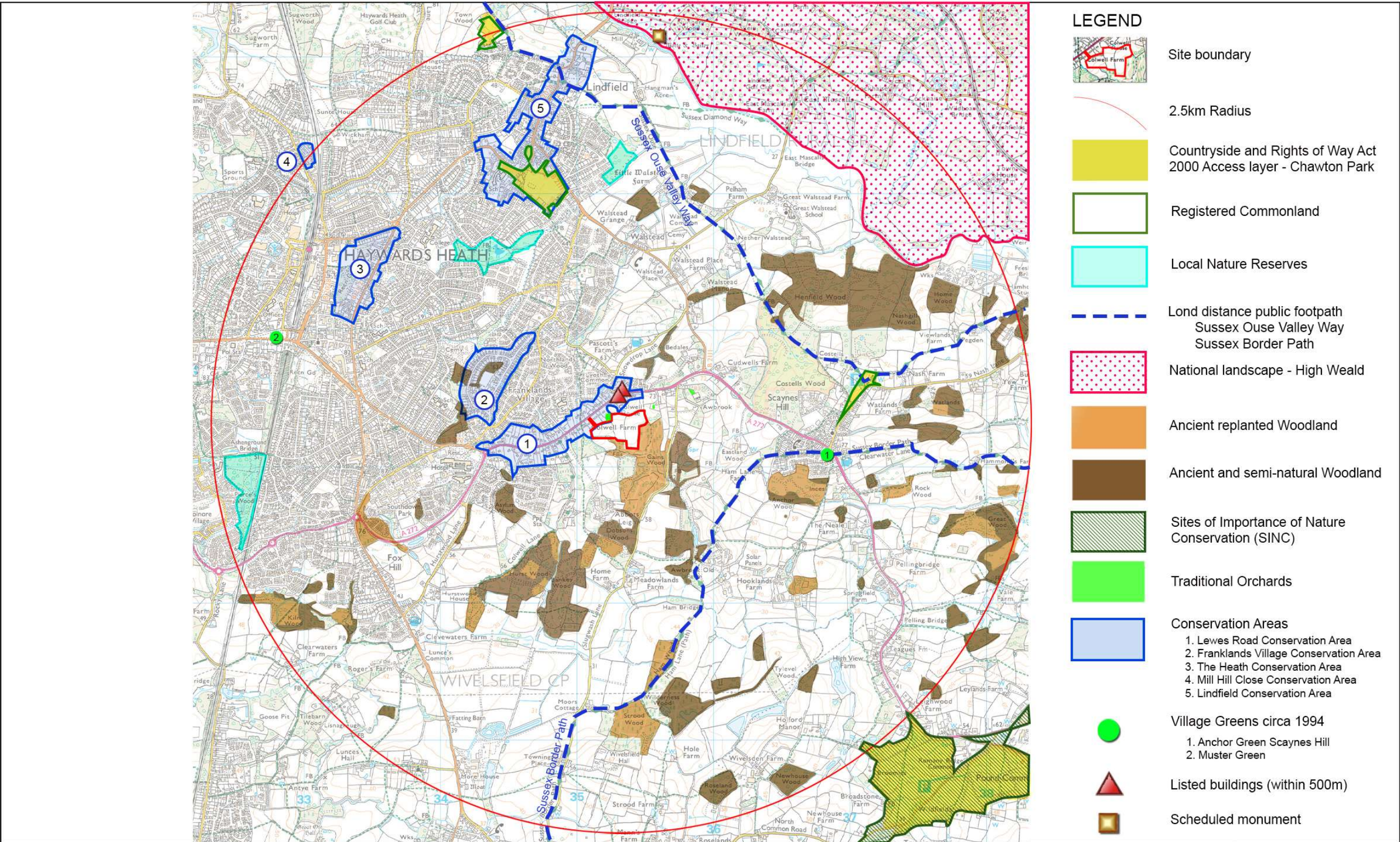
Image supplied by Google Maps
<https://maps.google.co.uk/>
Accessed 19st March 2024

Client: Miller Homes Ltd		
Scheme: Land at North Colwell Farm, Haywards Heath		
Drawing: Aerial Photograph		Figure No: 2
ACD Ref: MILL24496		
Scale: NTS@A3	Drawn: ACG	Checked: RH









LEGEND

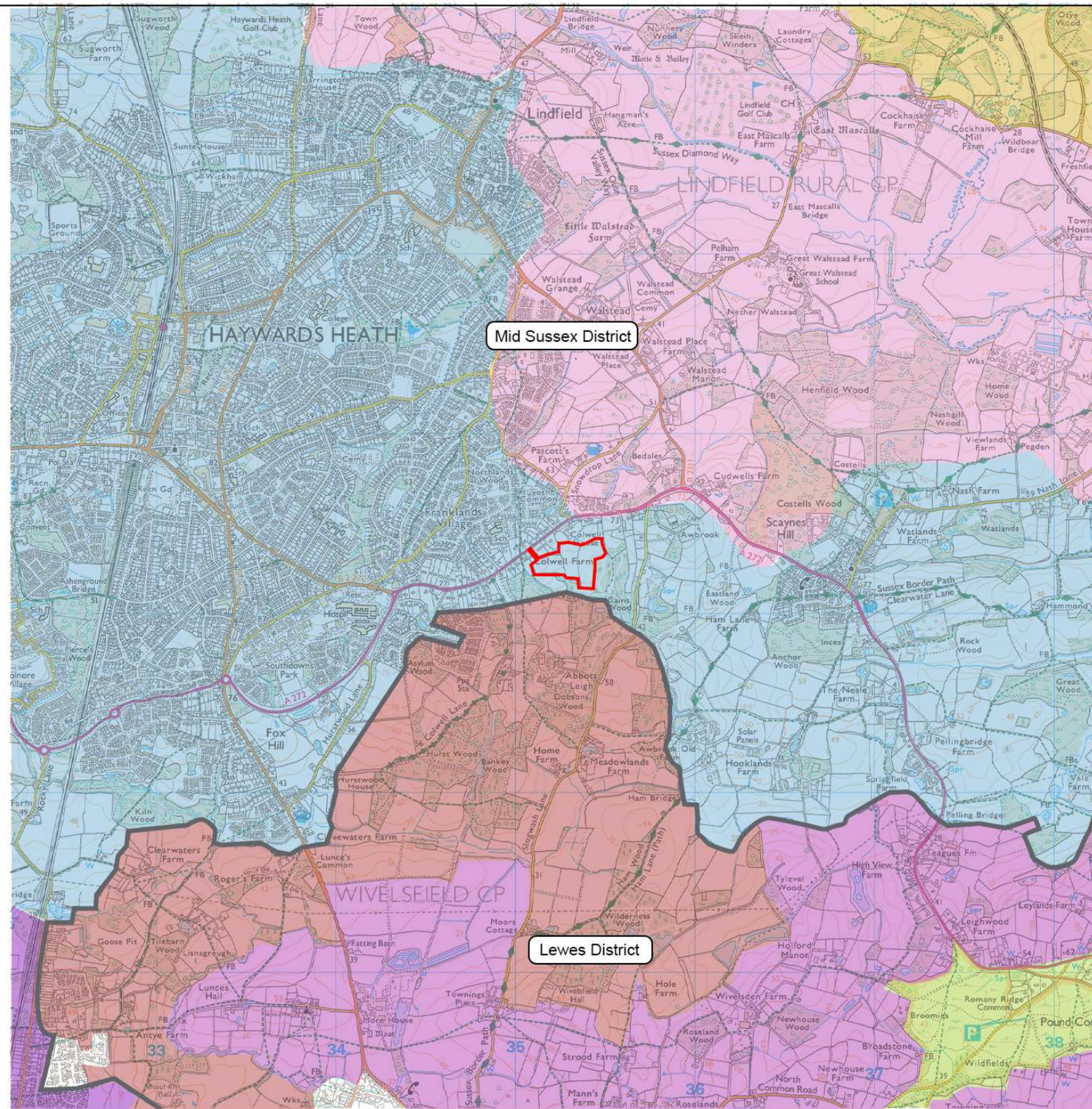
- Site boundary
- 2.5km Radius
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 Access layer - Chawton Park
- Registered Commonland
- Local Nature Reserves
- Long distance public footpath
Sussex Ouse Valley Way
Sussex Border Path
- National landscape - High Weald
- Ancient replanted Woodland
- Ancient and semi-natural Woodland
- Sites of Importance of Nature Conservation (SINC)
- Traditional Orchards
- Conservation Areas
 - 1. Lewes Road Conservation Area
 - 2. Franklands Village Conservation Area
 - 3. The Heath Conservation Area
 - 4. Mill Hill Close Conservation Area
 - 5. Lindfield Conservation Area
- Village Greens circa 1994
 - 1. Anchor Green Scaynes Hill
 - 2. Muster Green
- Listed buildings (within 500m)
- Scheduled monument



For ordnance survey map legend, refer to:
<https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/docs/legends/25k-raster-legend.pdf>

Client: Miller Homes Ltd		
Scheme: Land at North Colwell Farm, Haywards Heath		
Drawing: Designations Plan		Figure No: 5
ACD Ref: MILL24496		
Scale: NTS@A3	Drawn: ACG	Checked: RH





LEGEND



Site boundary

Landscape Character Areas Mid Sussex District



HW4 High Weald Fringes



HW3 Ouse Valley



HW1 High Weald



LW10 Eastern Low Weald

Landscape Character Areas Lewes District



C3 Ditchling Common Western
Low Weald



C1 Wivelsfield, Newick and Chailey
Western Low Weald



G1 Chailey Common Heathland



Client: Miller Homes Ltd

Scheme: Land at North Colwell Farm, Haywards Heath

Drawing: Landscape Character Areas

Figure No: 6

ACD Ref: MILL24496

Scale: NTS@A3

Drawn: ACG

Checked: PD

