

FIGURE 3.2 – PLAN SHOWING PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY, OPEN ACCESS LAND AND REGISTERED COMMON LAND (FABRIK, 2025)

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- 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.”

### DP38: Biodiversity

“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.”

### DP41: Flood Risk and Drainage

“... Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be implemented in all new developments of 10 dwellings or more, or equivalent non-residential or mixed development unless demonstrated to be inappropriate, to avoid any increase in flood risk and protect surface and ground water quality. Arrangements for the long term maintenance and management of SuDS should also be identified.

For the redevelopment of brownfield sites, any surface water draining to the foul sewer must be disconnected and managed through SuDS following the remediation of any previously contaminated land.

SuDS should be sensitively designed and located to promote improved biodiversity, an enhanced landscape and good quality spaces that improve public amenities in the area, where possible. The preferred hierarchy of managing surface water drainage from any development is:

1. Infiltration Measures
2. Attenuation and discharge to watercourses; and if these cannot be met,
3. Discharge to surface water only sewers.

Land that is considered to be required for current and future flood management will be safeguarded from development and proposals will have regard to relevant flood risk plans and strategies.”

### Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039 Regulation 19

The following draft policies are pertinent to the Site.

### DPS4: Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage

“Surface water drainage schemes must be implemented in all new development, including replacement structures and brownfield development unless demonstrated to be inappropriate, to avoid any increase in flood risk and protect surface and ground water quality. Wherever possible,

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be utilised within these surface water systems. SuDS must be incorporated into major development surface water drainage

schemes.”

### DPN3: Green and Blue Infrastructure

“The protection of existing and provision of new green and blue infrastructure will be supported because it delivers a range of environmental, social and economic benefits including resilience to the effects of climate change, positive health and wellbeing effects, active travel opportunities, nature-based solutions and supporting nature recovery.

Green and blue infrastructure assets, links and the overall multi-functional network will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

1. Responds to and incorporates existing on-site and off-site green and blue infrastructure into the development design and layout.
2. Provides new green and blue infrastructure integrated into the development design.
3. Contributes to the wider green and blue infrastructure network by taking opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore green and blue infrastructure, and providing and reinforcing links to existing green and blue infrastructure including outside the development's boundaries to develop a connected network of multifunctional greenspace, including incorporating opportunities to contribute to strategic green and blue infrastructure.

Applicants will need to consider from the outset the landscape assets of the site and how they may be used to create part of a coherent landscape structure that links to existing and proposed landscapes to form open space networks whenever possible, revealing existing landscape features.

Green and blue infrastructure design will be expected to demonstrate through a green and blue infrastructure masterplan and statement that opportunities have been taken to:

4. Strengthen connectivity and resilience of ecological networks.
5. Improve resilience to the effects of climate change.
6. Support health and wellbeing by providing access to green space, nature and rights of way.
7. Foster and improve understanding of green and blue infrastructure including natural greenspace and nature conservation features.”

Green and blue infrastructure design will need to be informed by and respond to existing evidence and guidance on the multi-functional green and blue infrastructure network including Biodiversity Opportunity Area statements, priority and irreplaceable habitats, green infrastructure mapping, ecological surveys, landscape character assessments, local nature recovery networks and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Appropriate arrangements and funding for the future longterm management, maintenance and stewardship of green and blue infrastructure should be identified, implemented and delivered. Where appropriate, the Council will seek to secure this via planning conditions and/or planning obligations.

Green and blue infrastructure assets and links:  
To help deliver a multi-functional green and blue infrastructure network and to protect

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existing green and blue infrastructure assets and links, the Council has identified land to be safeguarded from development as shown on the Policies Map.

Land which will be required to create and deliver a multifunctional 'GreenCircle' around Burgess Hill will be safeguarded from development and the 'Green Circle' will be allocated for informal open space as shown on the Policies Map.

Important green and blue infrastructure assets and links will be safeguarded and allocated as green and blue infrastructure as shown on the Policies Maps. In some cases, these areas are used for informal open space or linear open space and so the requirements of Policy DPI5: Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities may be relevant.

### DPN4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

"Trees, woodland and hedgerows will be protected because they are valuable natural capital assets including for biodiversity, nature recovery, green infrastructure, health and wellbeing, and increasing resilience to the effects of climate change.

Protection of trees, woodland and hedgerows The District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. As an irreplaceable habitat, ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees and their soils will be protected. Where ancient wood pasture and historic parkland are identified, these areas will have the same consideration as other forms of ancient woodland.

Development (including construction and operational activities) that is adjacent to irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees must incorporate appropriate buffers and/or root protection areas.

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.

Development (including construction and operational activities) resulting in the direct or indirect deterioration, damage or loss of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees will not be permitted unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and in such circumstances, a suitable compensation strategy will be provided, including measures that respect the features and characteristics of the ancient woodland and ancient, aged or veteran trees.

The value of trees, woodland and hedgerows individually and cumulatively in providing connectivity and continuity across the landscape and a network for nature recovery will be taken into account so that habitat fragmentation, particularly of large and extensive woodland areas, is minimised.

#### New trees, woodland and hedgerows

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

Proposals for new woodland creation will need to follow best practice guidance and take into account a range of considerations including all of the following:

- The biodiversity and amenity value of the existing habitat
- The landscape and its character
- Soil conditions
- Heritage and archaeology features
- Protected species
- Opportunities for natural regeneration
- Opportunities to connect to and extend existing woodland
- The long-term management arrangements for new woodland planting
- Resilience to the effects of pests, disease and climate change.

#### Development and trees, woodland and hedgerows

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

1. Retains and incorporates existing trees, woodland and hedgerows, including along the boundaries, into the design of new development and its landscape scheme.
2. Is orientated to have a positive edge to these features and the wider countryside.
3. Is designed to avoid the overshadowing of residential gardens which can lead to pressure for the removal of trees.
4. Prevents damage to root systems and takes account of expected future growth through respecting the root protection area.
5. Has appropriate protection measures throughout the development and construction process.
6. Secures appropriate long-term management and stewardship arrangements.
7. Where possible, incorporates retained trees, woodland and hedgerows within public open space rather than private space to safeguard their long-term management and stewardship.
8. 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.
9. Does not sever ecological corridors created by these assets and makes a positive contribution to the local nature recovery network and green infrastructure network.

Developments should integrate street trees and other urban greening measures into new streets and open spaces, and tree-lined streets will be encouraged. Appropriate species must be selected ensuring tree roots have sufficient space to support healthy, long-lived trees. Appropriate long-term management and stewardship arrangements will need to be in place and secured by planning conditions and/or planning obligations".

### DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside

"The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty, and for the benefits it has for agriculture, natural capital, ecosystem services, health and wellbeing, delivering a nature recovery network and resilience to the effects of climate change.

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 including not

adversely affecting the environmental and social benefits that the countryside delivers, and:

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

Development proposals will need to demonstrate they are informed by landscape character. 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 specific to the High Weald AONB and that gathered to support Neighbourhood Plans) will be used to assess the impact of development proposals on the rural and landscape character.

Major applications must be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or Appraisal (LVIA) for proposed development on greenfield, rural and edge of settlement sites. The LVIA will need to inform the site design, layout, capacity and any mitigation requirements. In the High Weald AONB, the LVIA will utilise the AONB Management Plan components as landscape receptors. For major applications, a Landscape Strategy will need to be provided to identify how the natural features and characteristics of a site have been retained and incorporated into the landscape structure and design of the site and how they have informed the landscaping proposals for the site. "

### DPC3: New Homes in the Countryside

"New homes in the countryside

New homes in the countryside, defined as areas outside the built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, will be permitted in specific circumstances, as set out below:

1. Accommodation is essential to enable the operation of an agricultural, forestry or similar rural enterprises requiring full time rural workers to live at, or near, their place of work;
2. In the case of new isolated homes in the countryside, where the design of the dwelling is of exceptional quality, is truly outstanding and would significantly enhance its immediate setting and is sensitive to the character of the local area;
3. Development would involve the subdivision of an existing residential building;
4. The proposed development meets the requirements of Policy DPH2: Sustainable Development – Outside the Built-Up Area;
5. The proposed development is not in conflict with Policy DPC1: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside; or
6. Affordable housing in accordance with Policy DPH10: Rural Exception Sites. New 'granny annexes' that are physically separate to the dwelling are defined as a new home and are subject to the same requirements as above."

### DPC4: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now National Landscape)

"Setting of the High Weald AONB: Development within land that contributes to the setting of the AONB will only be permitted where it does not adversely affect the identified components of natural beauty of the AONB. Development proposals in the

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setting of the AONB should be sensitively located and designed, be consistent with AONB purposes, and should not adversely affect transitional landscape character in the setting of the AONB and views, outlook and aspect, into and out of the AONB by virtue of its location, scale, form or design.

Assessment of such development proposals will have regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan and other adopted planning documents and strategies such as the High Weald Housing Design Guide and High Weald Colour Study.”

### DPC6: Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC

“In order to prevent adverse effects on the integrity of the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, new development likely to have an adverse effect, either alone or in combination with other development, will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects.”

### DPB1: Character and Design

“All new development must be designed in accordance with the Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

All new development must be of high quality and must respond appropriately to its context, be inclusive and prioritise sustainability. This includes the design and layout of new buildings and streets, alterations to existing buildings and the design of surrounding spaces.

All development proposals will be required to demonstrate all of the following, to ensure that development: Understanding the Context

1. Reflects the distinctive character of the towns and villages and protects their separate identity, heritage assets and valued townscapes.
2. Is sensitive to the countryside including the topography. Layout, Streets and Spaces
3. Includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace, providing a main area of open space where it is most accessible and central to the scheme where relevant;
4. Contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance.
5. Incorporates a green infrastructure plan that maximises opportunities to retain existing trees and incorporate new trees (i.e. in parks and community orchards), including delivering tree-lined streets and protects open spaces and gardens that contribute to the character of the area.
6. Incorporates well integrated parking and servicing areas that do not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed.

### Establishing the Structure

7. Is organised around sustainable transport principles and creates a pedestrian and cyclist - friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible.
8. Optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development especially on brownfield sites and in locations close to facilities or with good public transport links.
9. Takes the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (500+ dwellings) schemes will also

normally be expected to incorporate a mixed-use element.

### High Quality Building Design

10. Creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape through the consideration of the scheme's design, layout, size, scale, height, massing, spacing, orientation, views, materials and relationship with the public realm.
11. Incorporates sustainable construction principles and is designed for adaptation and future weather events.

### Residential Amenity

12. 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 Policies DPN6, DPN7, DPN8 and DPN9).

### 20-minute neighbourhoods

13. Major residential and mixed-use proposals must demonstrate how they will deliver a scheme which embeds the 20-minute neighbourhood principles<sup>20</sup> and local living, taking account of the existing settlement pattern services, creating high quality active/ sustainable travel connections to existing services and where appropriate making provision of new. Proposals must address all of the following:

- a. Deliver diverse and affordable homes and design a development for all ages, supporting a diverse community.
- b. Provide a layout which prioritises active and sustainable travel, delivering high-quality, well-connected paths, streets and spaces.
- c. Provide good quality green spaces and green infrastructure in the right places and connect to existing provision.
- d. Provide food growing opportunities.
- e. Exploit opportunities to improve access to local employment, community health and wellbeing facilities, either by connecting to existing facilities or providing new.
- f. Support home working through measures including advanced digital infrastructure.”

### DPB2: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

“Development will be required to preserve or enhance listed buildings and the contribution made by their settings. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

1. A thorough understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting, and the potential to better reveal it, has been demonstrated. This will be proportionate to the importance of the building and potential impact of the proposal.
2. Alterations or extensions to a listed building respect its historic form, scale, setting, significance and fabric. Proposals for the conversion or change of use of a listed building retain its significance and character whilst ensuring that the building remains in a viable use.
3. Traditional building materials and construction techniques are normally used. The installation of uPVC windows and doors will not be acceptable.
4. Satellite antennae, solar panels or other renewable energy installations are not sited in a prominent location, and where possible within the curtilage rather than on the building itself.
5. Special regard is given to protecting the contribution made by the setting of a listed building.
6. Where the historic fabric of a building may be affected by alterations or other

proposals, the applicant is expected to fund the recording or exploratory opening up of historic fabric.”

### DPB3: Conservation Areas

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

1. New buildings and extensions are sensitively designed to reflect the special characteristics and appearance of the area in terms of their scale, density, design and through the use of complementary materials.
2. Open spaces, gardens, trees and landscaping and boundary features that contribute to the special character and appearance of the area are protected, and any new landscaping or boundary features are designed to reflect that character.
3. 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.
4. Existing buildings that contribute to the character of the conservation area are protected. Where demolition is permitted, the replacement buildings must be of a design that reflects the special characteristics and appearance of the area.
5. Activities such as markets, crafts or other activities which contribute to the special character and appearance of the conservation area are supported.
6. 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.”

### 3.1.7 PARISH LEVEL BACKGROUND

Part of the Site is located within the two adjoining housing allocation sites of Old Vicarage Field & the Old Estate Yard, in Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031 (March 2016). The following policies of Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan 2 are pertinent to the proposed development and to this LVAIO.

### THP1 Housing Site Allocations

“Development of Old Vicarage Field and the Old Estate Yard will be permitted providing they meet the site specific conditions listed in THP2 below.”

### THP2 Development of Old Vicarage Field and the Old Estate Yard

“Development of the two adjoining sites of Old Vicarage Field & the Old Estate Yard must deliver the following:

A mix of dwellings, which will address the priorities of the parish including 30% affordable homes. The mix will consist mainly of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom homes which

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would include 2 bungalows for the elderly and/or disabled as identified in the village survey.

The development will provide 44 new homes.

A Village Car Park must be incorporated within The Old Estate Yard with pedestrian access via The Bank and the Fire Station.

The entrance road to this new Estate and Village car park is to be sited to the western side of The Old Vicarage. This position will ensure additional congestion is not created within the Primary School area which, together with the proposed 20mph zone, will not have a detrimental effect on traffic and pedestrian safety.

The entrance road is to be a minimum 5.5m to incorporate pedestrian footpath and accommodate free flowing traffic to and from the Village car park. The existing entrance to The Old Vicarage and School View properties must be closed and replaced with a continuous footpath from the new entrance road to the Fire Station. These existing properties will have rear access provision from the new entrance road. The entrance road will serve the new properties and the Village Car Park.

New pedestrian footpaths adjacent to roads must provide protection for pedestrians, for instance by way of kerbing.

Internal Estate roads must meet the needs of Emergency & utility vehicles as a minimum. New homes must as a minimum comply with nationally described space standards for internal floor space and storage.

Where provided, garages should have an internal measurement of 7m x 3m as a minimum in order to accommodate a modern family sized car and some storage space.

The development will need to provide a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network, in collaboration with the service provider.

S106 / CIL funds from this development will provide a financial contribution to the Village Enhancement Scheme.

Development should be designed to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Turners Hill Conservation Area and its setting. Proposals should take into account the guidance of the adopted Village Design Statement and any Conservation Area appraisal which may be adopted by the Council."

## THP4 New Homes

"The Design of new homes must take into account the character and style of buildings in the Parish. Applications for new development must demonstrate how they have incorporated the guidance of the adopted Village Design Statement."

## THP5 Provision of Public car park

"Applications for a centrally-placed, accessible community car park on the Old Estate Yard will be actively supported. Incorporating a small well designed office unit with

undercroft parking in order to help maximise the number of new spaces will also be actively supported."

## THP8 Countryside Protection

"Outside the Built up Area Boundary (which is shown on the proposals map on page 24), priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the countryside from inappropriate development. A proposal for development will only be permitted where:

- a. It is allocated for development in Policy THP1 or would be in accordance with Policies THP7 and THP14 of this Plan or other relevant planning policies applying to the area; and:
- b. It must not have a detrimental impact on, and would enhance, areas of substantial landscape value or sensitivity, and
- c. It must not have an adverse impact on the landscape setting of Turners Hill and
- d. It must maintain the distinctive views of the surrounding countryside from public vantage points within, and adjacent to, the built up area; and
- e. Within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty it must conserve and enhance the natural beauty and would have regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan.
- f. it is essential to meet specific necessary utility infrastructure needs and no alternative feasible site is available."

## THP10 Brownfield Sites

"Subject to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) in order to protect the outstanding landscape setting of the parish the reuse of any previously developed land and buildings will be permitted only where the use, scale and design does not result in material harm to the character of the parish and its surrounds."

## THP16 Footpath Improvements

"Proposals which will extend and enhance village footpaths, in particular on Selsfield Road, to provide protection and improved visibility for residents walking to and from the village centre, in keeping with our Walk & Drive In Safety document, will be supported."

## THP17 Rights of Way

"Every opportunity to improve and protect existing Public Rights of Way will be explored. Opportunities to provide extended Public Rights of Way including provision of new Bridleways will be sought via S106 / CIL especially where they can provide direct links to the Worth Way."

## 3.1.8 GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS / INFORMATIVES

### Mid Sussex District SHLAA: Review of Landscape and Visual Aspects of Site Suitability (2015)

Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) commissioned LUC to review selected site appraisals undertaken for the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The purpose was to provide a detailed and robust assessment of the potential for development, with a focus on landscape and visual impact considerations.

The Site lies within SHLAA Site 492: Old Vicarage Field, Church Road, Turners Hill.

The overall landscape sensitivity is scored as 3 - **Medium sensitivity** with "Relatively well enclosed site but impact on the character of the village should be considered."

The overall Landscape Value is scored as 4 - **Medium- High sensitivity** with ". Impact on the Conservation Area should be considered".

The Site Landscape Suitability is outlined as "The site is considered to have a **MEDIUM landscape suitability** for development. Impacts on the Conservation Area, character of Turners Hill village and on the AONB should be carefully considered; this is likely to mean that the height, layout, grain and character of any development should be sensitive to its surroundings, and its appearance in views from the north should be assessed. The size of the site means that it has the potential to accommodate a **MEDIUM development yield**. Existing vegetated boundaries should be retained where possible."

### Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD

The Mid Sussex Design Guide was adopted in November 2020 in order to provide clear design principles that aim to deliver high quality new development across Mid Sussex, that is "**inclusive and responds appropriately to its context while prioritising sustainability in the design process**. The Design Guide provides further detail to District Plan Policy DP26: Character and Design."

"The Guide puts forward principles and standards for new development that aim to create safe and attractive places that are sensitive to Mid Sussex's special character while also allowing creative and innovative design solutions."

The following principles set out within the Design Guide are pertinent to this LVA:

#### Principle DG3: Work with the site's natural features and resources.

"The landscape characteristics should be considered from the outset of the design process. The existing natural landscape informs the existing character of most sites. It should be retained as much as possible so that it shapes the form of new development and is incorporated to enhance its setting while reducing its impact on the wider landscape. This includes the consideration of the topography, trees and vegetation, orientation, landform, geology, watercourses / drainage, field patterns, boundaries and ecology.

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The integration of the natural features provides the basis for a green infrastructure network that should underlie new schemes and enable them to contribute positively to the sustainability agenda and give them a sense of place, while also reducing the impact of the built form on the wider landscape. The provision of green infrastructure is increasingly important in addressing the effects of climate change as it can help mitigate flooding, maintain biodiversity and play a role in reducing urban air temperatures. Green infrastructure also encourages healthy lifestyles by enabling outdoor activities.”

#### Principle DG4: Establish a landscape and green infrastructure network

“The shape and form of open space should be positively planned at the outset and inform the layout of new development.

Open space should normally be provided as:

- An integral part of new development and should be located where it is safe, most accessible and central to a scheme rather than isolated towards the edge; and
- Part of a coherent landscape structure and linked to existing and proposed landscapes to form open space networks whenever possible, revealing existing landscape features.

New open spaces should maximise the opportunity to accommodate landscape features such as mature trees and water courses / ponds, while fulfilling drainage requirements (refer also to chapter 4 section 4.9 for guidance on the design of open spaces).”

#### Principle DG5: Water features and sustainable drainage systems

“Applicants should consider how to manage surface water to minimise flood risk and flows to watercourses. Development proposals should normally incorporate sustainable urban drainage (SuDs) as an integral part of the landscape structure. SuDs should be positively designed into schemes from the outset as public realm features. These features can include ponds, infiltration basins, swales/rain gardens and wetlands as they:

- Help manage the risk of flooding and climate change;
- Reduce demand on the sewer network;
- Manage some pollutants and improve the quality of water going back into the environment; and
- Can make a positive contribution to the biodiversity, character, appearance and sustainable performance of development.

Swales and attenuation ponds should be designed so that water features and plants are visible from the surrounding area and should avoid unattractive boundary treatments or engineered surrounds. Attenuation ponds on slopes should be avoided if they need deep embankments or bunding.”

#### Principle DG6: Design to enhance biodiversity

“New development should establish ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. Landscape features that have high biodiversity/

ecological value should normally be retained and incorporated within proposals and consideration given to the creation of new habitats. Hedges, wildflower meadows, wild corners, old trees, ponds, hard landscaping features such as dry stone walls and rock piles and nest boxes installed in the eaves of buildings can all make a significant contribution to species diversity. New planting and landscapes should respond to the wider landscape through use of native species that support greater biodiversity and provision of areas of wildflower meadows.”

#### Principle DG7: Respond to topography and strategic views

“Development proposals should soften their appearance within the landscape by minimising their visual impact through integrating them within the existing landform and with the careful siting of buildings and landscape.”

#### Principle DG8: Establish a clear movement network that connects with the surrounding area

“The layout of new development should therefore:

- Link with existing routes and access points;
- Create direct, attractive and safe connections through the site for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicular modes which follow natural desire lines, connect to existing streets, open spaces, local facilities or destinations, and coordinate with open spaces and green links;
- Avoid turning heads by creating continuous vehicular routes around perimeter blocks;
- Carefully integrate public rights of way; and
- Sensitively accommodate the existing topography while avoiding steep gradients.

The network should provide a choice of routes for all modes and follow a spatial and visual hierarchy. The character of a street should reflect its position in this hierarchy and respond to local characteristics (refer to DG1).”

#### Principle DG11: Respond to the existing townscape, heritage assets and historic landscapes

“Heritage assets and historic landscapes should be celebrated, enhanced and preserved where appropriate, for the enjoyment of existing and future residents. Where appropriate and providing it does not cause harm to the heritage assets or their setting, they should be carefully integrated into development proposals as they help to reinforce a sense of place and local identity. Elsewhere new development should generally reflect the scale of adjacent areas and the settlement context within which it is located to deliver a coherent and consistent urban fabric.”

#### Principle DG16: Create a positive development edge

“Properties should not back onto the settlement edge and the edge should not be defined by rear garden fences. This can create security problems and over time the quality of the environment can become degraded as fences are replaced or fall into disrepair. When viewed from the countryside this creates an unresolved and untidy edge that diminishes the quality of the environment.

Developments should therefore normally be designed with building frontages facing site boundaries served by new access roads that run adjacent to the site edge. This arrangement also enables existing tree-lined boundaries and hedgerows to be:

- Revealed to the public realm; and
- Safeguarded by incorporating them outside the private realm and avoiding potential overshadowing of rear gardens.

Development should nevertheless be sensitively designed so that it avoids imposing upon the rural edge and existing roads that are characterised by their hedgerows and tree belt. This may require additional boundary planting. At the rural edge lower density development will also normally be necessary.”

#### Principle DG16: Enhance the environment and sense of place through open spaces

“Open space should be provided as an integral part of a development and designed with a specific role or function as part of the wider open space network (refer also to DG4). They should take the opportunity to create environments and facilities that provide for and encourage inclusive activity for all age groups and abilities.

- Open spaces should be designed according to the following principles:
- To optimise their recreational potential by providing multi-functional all year-round activity including both hard and soft surfaced areas;

To be safe places defined by building frontages providing appropriate enclosure and overlooking;

- To positively respond to potential desire lines that cross the space (including public rights of way)”

#### Principle DG16: Integrate tree planting and soft landscape

“From the outset, there should be a clear landscape strategy that is an integral part of the design of new development covering all streets and public spaces while accounting for the growing process. Consideration must also be given to the future maintenance of trees and plants in the design. Native trees and shrubs and longer-lived species should be selected where possible and appropriate as they support a greater variety of wildlife, are often more suited to local conditions and better reflect the character of the wider countryside.”

#### Mid Sussex Development Infrastructure and Contributions SPD (Adopted July 2018)

This SPD provides an overview of the full range of the District Council's requirements relating to planning obligations to offset the likely impact of development. This SPD specifically relates to District Plan Policy DP20, (the main policy for securing the delivery of new or improved infrastructure and the main context for the guidance in this SPD) and other Policies pertinent to this LVAIO, including; DP17 – Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), DP22 – Rights of Way and other Recreational Routes, DP38 - Biodiversity, and DP41 Flood Risk and Drainage.

## 4.0

# BASELINE CONDITIONS

## 4.1 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER CONTEXT

### 4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The term 'landscape' commonly refers to the view or appearance of the land as perceived by people. Landscape applies to any natural, rural, urban, peri-urban areas, in land water and seascape areas.

Landscape character is the combination of both natural / physical, cultural / social and perceptual / aesthetic influences, which give rise to a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse and which define the 'sense of place'. The landscape is not therefore simply a visual phenomenon.

The following sections set out the landscape character framework of the study area from the national and regional level through to county and district scale based upon existing character assessments undertaken by Natural England and Mid Sussex District Council.

Refer to Figure 4.1 for the National and District Landscape Character areas within the study area.

### 4.1.2 NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

The general character of the English countryside has been described at a national level by Natural England. The Site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 122 'High Weald'. The High Weald National Landscape covers 78 per cent of the NCA and where: "The High Weald consists of a mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads connected by historic routeways, tracks and paths. Wild flower meadows are now rare but prominent medieval patterns of small pasture fields enclosed by thick hedgerows and shaws (narrow woodlands) remain fundamental to the character of the landscape. Some 26 per cent of the NCA is covered by woodland, comprising wooded shaws, pits and gills, farm woods and larger woods; of this 26 per cent, 17 per cent is ancient semi-natural woodland and 5 per cent is ancient replanted woodland."

This area covers the three counties of Sussex (East Sussex and West Sussex), Surrey and Kent. The key characteristics pertinent to the study area are described as:

- "A faulted landform of clays, sand and soft sandstones with outcrops of fissured sandrock and ridges running east-west, deeply incised and intersected with numerous gill streams forming the headwaters of a number of the major rivers – the Rother... – which flow in broad valleys.
- A dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads and medieval ridgeway villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries, with a dominance of timber-framed buildings with steep roofs often hipped or half-hipped, and an extremely high survival rate of farm buildings dating from the 17th century or earlier.
- Ancient routeways in the form of ridgeway roads and a dense system of radiating droveways, often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees and wild flower-rich verges and boundary banks. Church towers and spires on the ridges are an important local landmark. There is a dense network of small, narrow and winding

*lanes, often sunken and enclosed by high hedgerows or woodland strips...*

- An intimate, hidden and small-scale landscape with glimpses of far reaching views, giving a sense of remoteness and tranquillity yet concealing the highest density of timber-framed buildings anywhere in Europe amidst lanes and paths.
- Strong feeling of remoteness due to very rural, wooded character. A great extent of interconnected ancient woods, steep-sided gill woodlands, wooded heaths and shaws in generally small holdings with extensive archaeology and evidence of longterm management.
- Extensive broadleaved woodland cover with a very high proportion of ancient woodland with high forest, small woods and shaws, plus steep valleys with gill woodland.
- Small and medium-sized irregularly shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded shaws, predominantly of medieval origin and managed historically as a mosaic of small agricultural holdings typically used for livestock grazing.
- A predominantly grassland agricultural landscape grazed mainly with sheep and some cattle.
- There is a strong influence of the Wealden iron industry which started in Roman times, until coke fuel replaced wood and charcoal...
- An essentially medieval landscape reflected in the patterns of settlement, fields and woodland.
- High-quality vernacular architecture with distinct local variation using local materials. Horsham Slate is used on mainly timber structures and timber-framed barns are a particularly notable Wealden characteristic feature of the High Weald."

The Statements of Environmental Opportunity are set out below:

**"SEO 1: Maintain and enhance the existing woodland and pasture components of the landscape, including the historic field pattern bounded by shaws, hedgerows and farm woods, to improve ecological function at a landscape scale for the benefit of biodiversity, soils and water, sense of place and climate regulation, safeguard ancient woodlands and encourage sustainably produced timber to support local markets and contribute to biomass production."**

**SEO 2: Maintain and restore the natural function of river catchments at a landscape scale, promoting benefits for water quality and water flow within all Wealden river streams and flood plains by encouraging sustainable land management and best agricultural practices to maintain good soil quality, reduce soil erosion, increase biodiversity and enhance sense of place. Maintain and enhance the geodiversity and especially the exposed sandrock.**

**SEO 3: Maintain and enhance the distinctive dispersed settlement pattern, parkland and historic pattern and features of the routeways of the High Weald, encouraging the use of locally characteristic materials and Wealden practices to ensure that any development recognises and retains the distinctiveness, biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage assets present, reaffirm sense of place and enhance the ecological function of routeways to improve the connectivity of habitats and provide wildlife corridors.**

**SEO 4: Manage and enhance recreational opportunities, public understanding and enjoyment integrated with the conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, a productive landscape and tranquillity, in accordance with the purpose of the High"**

Whilst this forms important context for the Site, the regional character assessments are

considered to provide descriptions of the Site's character at a more appropriate scale for this LVAIO.

Value: Medium

### 4.1.3 DISTRICT CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

#### West Sussex Land Management Guidelines (2003)

In 2003, West Sussex county council carried out an assessment of the landscape character of West Sussex. This resulted in the identification of 42 unique areas and the production of land management guidelines for each character area.

The Site falls within HW1 High Weald, an area which covers Landscape Character Areas (LCA); The High Weald (area 6) and The High Weald Plateau (area 7). The Site lies within LCA 6 - The High Weald.

Key characteristics of HW1 High Weald pertinent to the Site and study area are outlined below.

- "Wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- Plateau, ridges and deep, secluded valleys cut by gill streams.
- Long views over the Low Weald to the downs, particularly from the high Forest Ridge.
- Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws,
- Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields, some larger fields and small pockets of remnant heathland.
- Pockets of rich biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.
- Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hilltops and high ground, the principal settlements East Grinstead and some expanded and smaller villages.
- Designed landscapes and exotic trees associated with large country houses.
- Some busy lanes and roads including along the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor."

Land management guidelines pertinent to this LVAIO are as follows:

"Conserve the rich mosaic of woodland and other habitats and the intimate nature of the agricultural landscape, the high level of perceived naturalness of the area including its rural, tranquil qualities, and the unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area.

- Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the woodland and agricultural landscape for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes.
- Avoid skyline development and ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on long and other views and is integrated within the landscape, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new broad-leaved



FIGURE 4.1 – EXTRACT FROM THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTING THE WIDER LANDSCAPE CLASSIFICATION TYPE FOR THE STUDY AREA (NATIONAL ENGLAND, 2010)

## 4.0

# BASELINE CONDITIONS

woodlands, the appropriate management of existing woodland, and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover in woodlands and on heathland.

- Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns.
- Plant trees in drifts and avoid straight lines running across the grain of the land.
- Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe, along the approach roads to settlements, and along busy urban routes including within the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor.
- Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession and replant parkland trees.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Conserve the landscape of the gills and sandrock crags, including wet woodland, and protect the nationally-rare sandrock plant and other communities associated with them.
- Conserve species-rich meadows.
- Seek to protect the tranquil and historic character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Continue to maintain the natural setting of the Worth Way.
- Reduce the visual impact of horse stabling and grazing.
- 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 above key characteristics and management guidelines are also highlighted in the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex (2005) document for LCA 6 - The High Weald. This document also includes a characterisation summary of LCA 6, which states “The High Weald Forest Ridge. Numerous gill streams have carved out a landscape of twisting ridges and secluded valleys. The ancient, densely-wooded landscape of the High Weald is seen to perfection in the area. Includes the township of East Grinstead”

## Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (July 2007)

This district level landscape capacity study was prepared for Mid Sussex District Council by Hankinson Duckett to consider the landscape capacity for development in Mid Sussex District. Within this study the assessment of capacity has been based on a series of judgements on landscape sensitivity and landscape value and mapped on a landscape character area basis.

The Site lies within Zone 2 - land between Crawley and East Grinstead, including Copthorne, Crawley Down, Turners Hill, West Hoathly and Sharphorne.

Paragraph 4.3.4 outlines “Turners Hill is located on a prominent ridgeline which runs broadly northeast-southwest through the High Weald, south of Crawley Down. The majority of the settlement follows the main north-south road running roughly perpendicularly across the ridgeline. The highest point of the village is its centre. The northern part of the village slopes down from the ridge on north facing slopes, while the southern part of the village is on the south facing slopes within the AONB. The settlement is surrounded on most sides by small scale pastoral fields, but to the south larger arable fields are prominent.

Southeast of Turners Hill, lying within the AONB are the closely related villages of

West Hoathy and Sharphorne. The villages sit on a high point within the High Weald where a number of ridges and spurs meet. The settlements are surrounded by steep slopes on most sides, however there is an area of more gradual sloping topography to the west of West Hoathy. This flatter, western area allows for arable fields. The rest of the surrounding land is a mixture of pasture and woodland. A claypit and brickworks is located to the northeast of Sharphorne.”

Within Zone two, the Site lies within LCA 07 Turners Hill High Weald.

The Landscape Sensitivity and landscape value for LCA 07 is identified as substantial, with landscape capacity as negligible/ low.

Value: High - Low

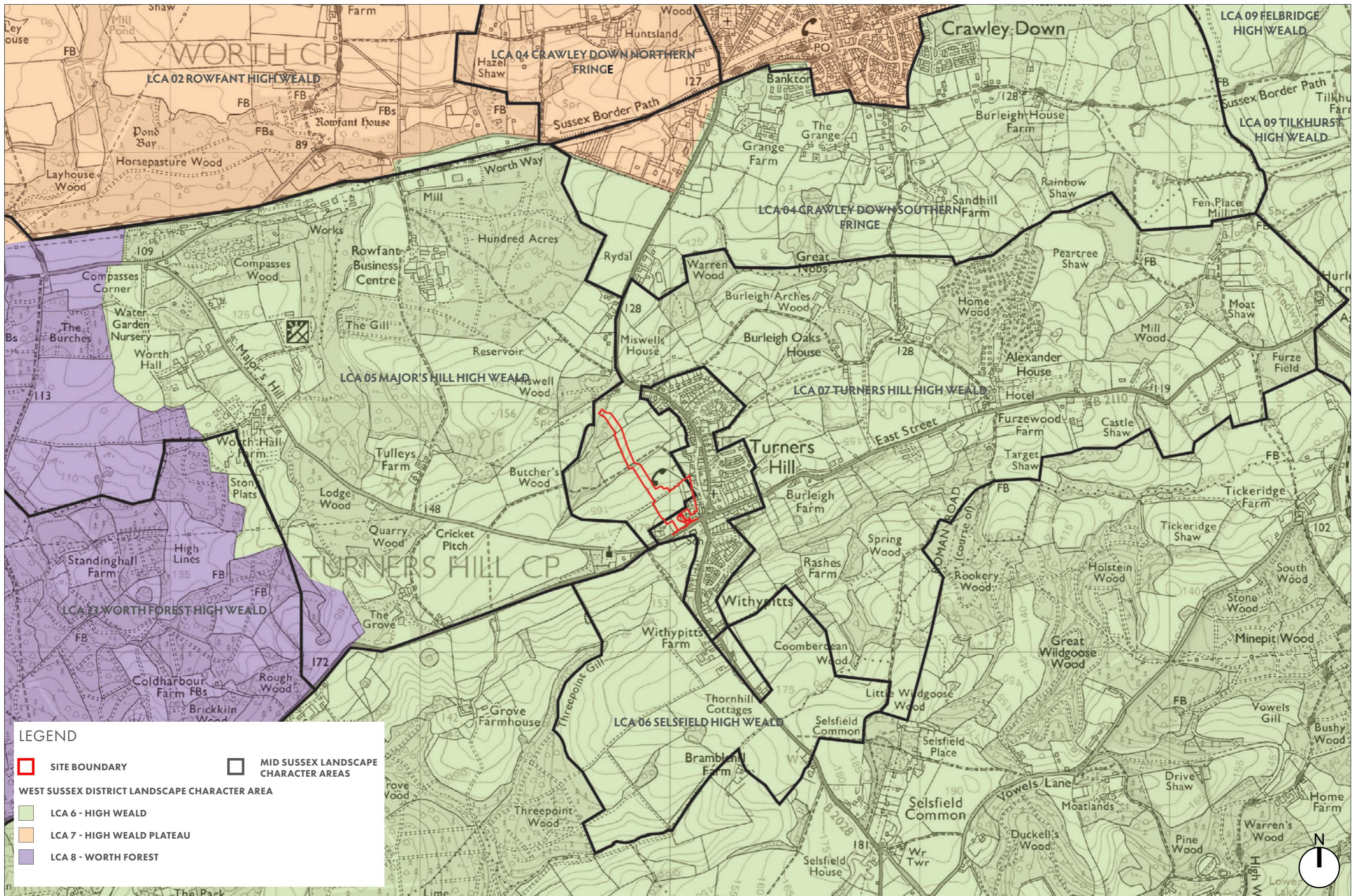


FIGURE 4.2 – LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS (FABRIK, 2025)

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# BASELINE CONDITIONS

## 4.2 CONTEXTUAL LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

This section describes the landscape elements beyond the Site boundary and therefore the landscape setting to the Site.

### 4.2.1 NATURAL

#### Geology and Soils

The geology and soil of the contextual area is complex and locally very variable, based on an alternating pattern of heavily faulted and slightly inclined thin sandstone and clay beds which are found in the deeper valleys. There are few areas which contain local outcrops of sandrock. These areas form dramatic and low crags, with rock exposures in the deeper lanes and edging the valley sides.

The underlying rocks contain geological sequence of the High Weald Hastings Beds. With the majority of the area comprising of an alternating sequence of Upper and Lower Tunbridge Wells Sandstone and clays and Grinstead Clays. In addition, there are localised beds of Ardingly Sandstone within the valley systems and to the south and east of Turners Hill. Wadhurst Clay also is located within the easterly valley bottoms and comprises isolated, faulted out portions south of Turners Hill and forms a thick belt running south, outside the contextual area, from Sharphorne nearly to Horsted Keynes.

Value: Medium

#### Landform and drainage

A ridgeline known as Forest Ridge (the backbone of the High Weald) runs northwestwards through Mid Sussex, from along a high, distinct ridgeline through West Hoathly (beyond Study area to the Southeast) and Selsfield Common to Turners Hill. Numerous streams flow from this ridgeline and have defined the landform by deeply dissecting the landscape, carving it into an array of twisting ridges and steep-sided narrow valleys. Within the northeastern corner of the study area, the River Medway flows on a north-south orientation. Numerous streams within the study area drain from Forest Ridge into the River Medway.

The topography of the study area ranges from approximately 80m AOD to 190m AOD. The highest area is located to the southeast of the study area by Sleaford Common. The lowest area of land within the Study area is located to the northwest, around Mill Pond and Pond Bay. The Site lies on a gently sloping undulating plateau, following the valley down from Turners Hill Ridgeline, ranging from approximately 177m AOD within the southern section of the Site to 145m AOD within the far northern area of the Site. Refer to Figure 4.4 for the Topography and Drainage within the study area

Value: High

#### Vegetation Cover

The contextual area encompasses a densely wooded landscape, with a significant number of woodland designated as Ancient Woodland, highlighting the historic core of

the High Weald landscape. Numerous woods range from small to medium-size, and dominate the deep gills and valley sides. This can especially be seen to the southeast of the study area, where a network of woodland, including Duckell's Wood and the Great Wildgoose Wood, follows the valleys/gills. To the west, the woodland pattern shifts towards large woodlands and plantations, located within ridges and valleys, for example the Hundred Acres, Compasses Wood and Horsepasture Wood.

Other vegetation cover within the study area, includes small areas of heathland, pastureland and fields intermixed with the wooded landscape, forming small and irregular-shaped field parcels, characterised by historic pastureland and predominantly used for livestock grazing. Mature hedgerow, treebelts and woodland bound field parcels, and transient corridors (including the road network and PRoW) creating a connective vegetated network within the local landscape and beyond

Value: Medium - High

### 4.2.2 CULTURAL / SOCIAL

#### Broad Land Use

The Site sits predominantly within a wooded, agricultural and riverine landscape (associated with the River Medway) which is a mix of both arable and pastureland of varying sizes and shapes, broken up by settlements and transport corridors. A number of farmsteads are therefore scattered throughout the local landscape, beyond the settlements.

The Site lies on the western edge of Turners Hill settlement, accessed via Church Road. Turners Hill lies on a high lying ground, along a major ridge-line and predominately comprises of a mixture of residential and commercial premises. The settlement additionally includes Turners Hill Recreation Ground, which provides a well-equipped playground, football pitch, and a multi-purpose court for five-a-side football or tennis.

The settlement of Turners Hill connects to Selsford Common to the south, Crawley Down to the north, the nearby larger settlement Crawley to the west and East Grinstead to the east (both Crawley and East Grinstead are located outside the study area).

The local landscape is well connected and bisected by a number of transport corridors including; the B2028, which runs through the study area, to the north-south; the B2110 and Turners Hill Road, which runs on a east- west alignment and connects the Site to Crawley and Gatwick airport. The local transport corridors additionally connect the M23, which lies beyond the study area, to the immediate west, and connects the Site to London and Brighton. A series of local unclassified roads, some narrow and deep in places, cross the landscape on a distorted grid pattern, connecting farmsteads, hamlets and villages to these main transport corridors.

Refer to Figure 4.3 for the Land cover within the study area

Value: Low - Medium

#### Settlement Pattern / Setting / Building Heights / Urban Grain:

Settlement within the study area is dispersed and based on an historic pattern of numerous small scale farmsteads set on high ridges, hilltops and the high ground. Two nucleated villages, Turners Hill and Crawley Down are additionally located within the contextual landscape. Turners Hill is located on a principal Ridgeline within the centre of the study area. The Village extends northwards from the original heart of the village, located by the small village green and main crossroads, where important historical routes; Turners Hill Road(B2110) and the B2028 meet. Overtime, the village has expanded from its core with the introduction of residential dwellings and commercial premises. Smaller settlements located within the wider study area are nuclear and linear in form.

Building heights vary across the study area, from dwellings of a domestic scale and mass within the villages, to larger scale buildings evident in the local landscape, including farm buildings, schools and large rural properties / country houses. Most buildings are modest in size and domestic in scale, with 3-2 storeys being typical.

Value: Low - High

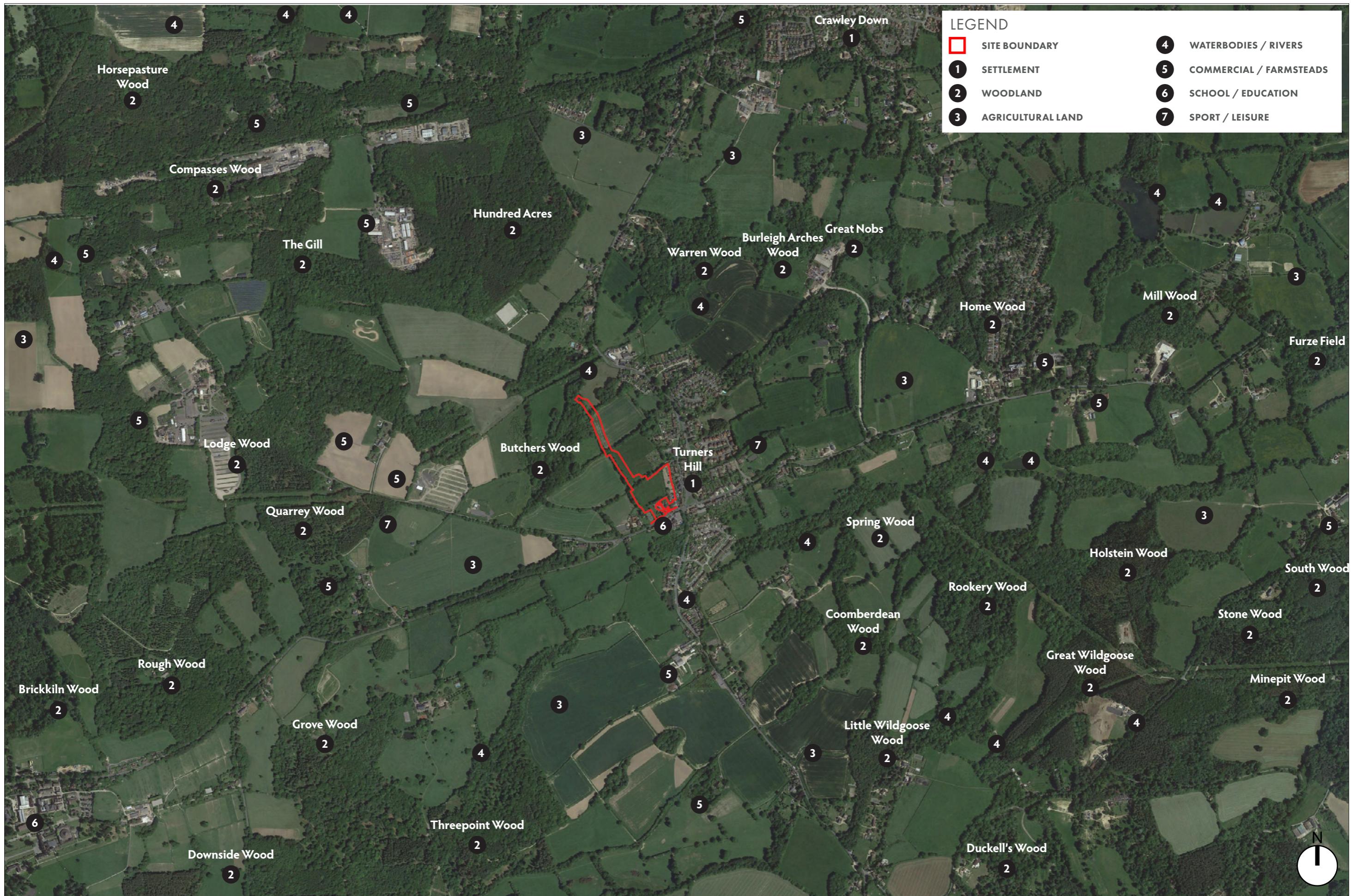
### 4.2.3 PERCEPTUAL AND AESTHETIC

The distinctive undulating topography of the area, with major primary ridge lines, steep-sided narrow valleys and gills within the immediate surrounds, creates a dramatic and striking landform. The pattern of woodland, hedgerow farmland and ridgeline settlements provides an attractive and scenic context which can be perceived from the Site and other high points within the local landscape. As such, key landscape features locally are the woodland/ Ancient Woodland network; the Forest Ridgeline, in the form of twisting ridges with steep-sided narrow valleys; small and irregular-shaped field parcels; and the River Medway.

Value: Medium - High

### 4.2.4 SETTING TO THE HIGH WEALD NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

The southern edge of Turners Hill forms the local setting to the National Landscape, which lies to the south of the Site and B2110. The boundary of the National Landscape also wraps around Turners Hill settlement boundary to the south.



#### FIGURE 4.3– LAND COVER (FABRIK, 2025)

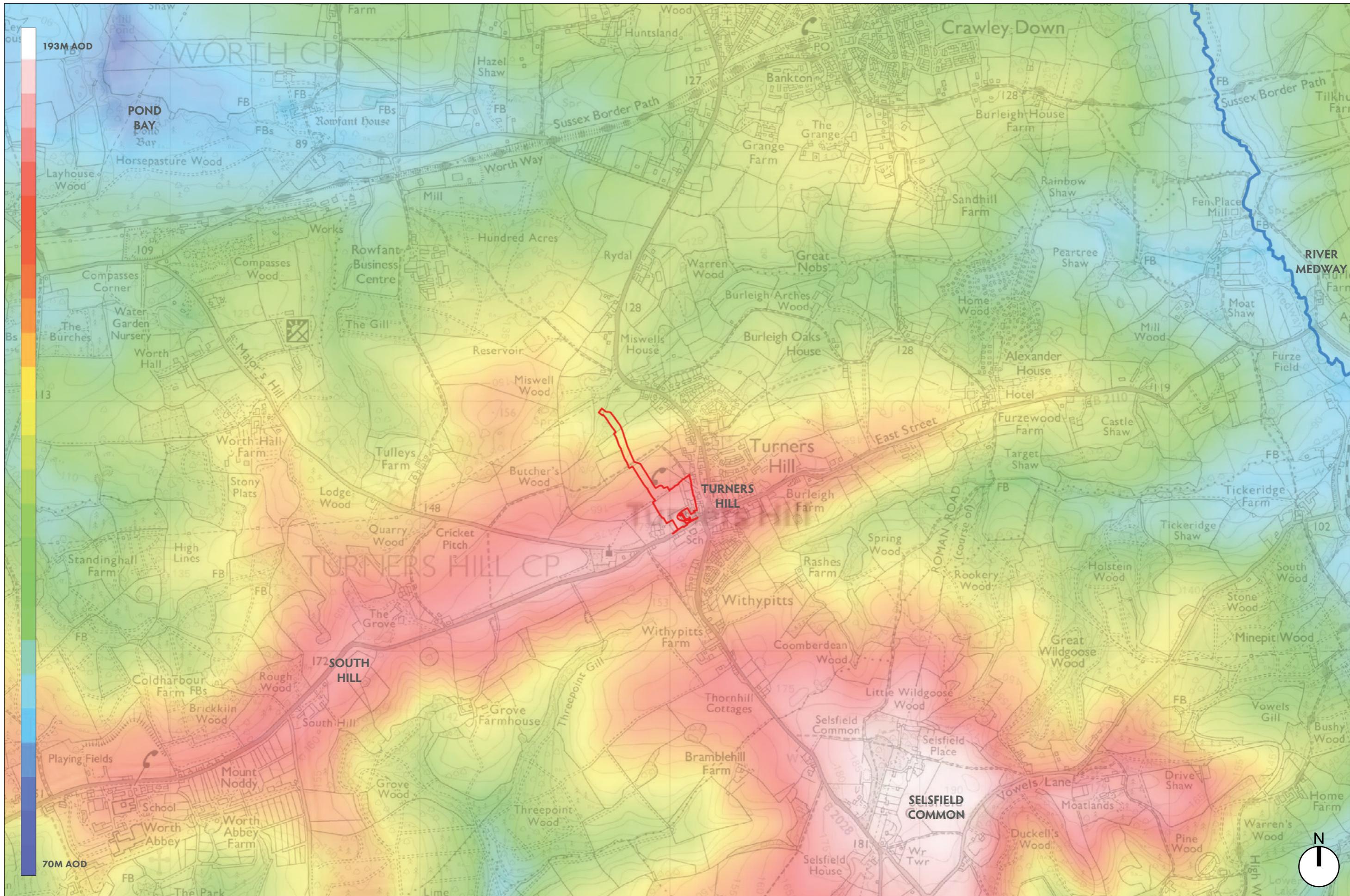


FIGURE 4.4 – PLAN ILLUSTRATING TOPOGRAPHY AND DRAINAGE (FABRIK, 2025)

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# BASELINE CONDITIONS

## 4.3 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 4.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Site is bound by Church Road (B2110) and the Old Vicarage to the south; dwellings, Ryders and The Races with associated gardens to the southwest; pastureland and ancient woodland to the west and northwest; Ancient Woodland to the north; Ancient Woodland, pastureland and allotments to the northeast; and dwellings along Lion Lane to the east and southeast. Surrounding the Site boundary, mature tree belts and hedgerows enclose the Site, with an exception to part of the southern boundary located within the existing garden of the old vicarage, and the eastern/south eastern boundary, which is bound by brick wall or open to the adjacent properties. In addition, the eastern Site boundary of the thin section to the north is open to pastureland.

Figure 4.5 shows the existing characteristics of the Site.

### 4.3.2 NATURAL

#### Geology and Soils

The Geology of the area is classified as slightly acid loamy and clayey soils (Wadhurst Clay) with impeded drainage. This bedrock geology is typical of higher land located on Turners Hill and within the contextual area.

Value: Low

#### Landform and drainage

The Site lies on a sloping undulating plateau, following the valley down from Turners Hill Ridgeline, ranging from approximately 177m AOD within the southern section of the Site to 145m AOD within the far northern area of the Site. Drainage within the Site and local area flows from the top of the ridgeline down the slopes, generally along the field boundaries. This in turn can be visible within the northern section of the Site, where a small drainage channel (area of slight depression) follows the hedgerow treebelt along the western Site boundary.

The Old Vicarage and associated garden located within the southern section of the Site lies on the Turner Hill ridgeline and between approximately 3m - 5m above Church Road, with the greatest difference in landform rising steeply from 172m AOD to 177m AOD by the southwestern Site boundary. At approximately 177m AOD, the landform within the Old vicarage garden falls to approximately 175m AOD to the northwestern corner of the garden, and approximately 173m AOD to the northeastern corner of the garden. The built form is cut into the garden landform, with a steep slope rising from a brick edging around the southwestern side of the house at approximately 175m AOD to 176m AOD.

Within the central area of the Site, which includes field parcels, grassland, and brownfield (far eastern area of the Site) sections of the Site, the landform falls from the far southwestern corner of the central field at approximately 176m AOD to 162m AOD by the eastern entrance of the Site. Beyond the central section of the Site, the landform follows down from the primary ridgeline to the far northern point of the Site at approximately 169m AOD to approximately 145m AOD.

Value: Medium - High

#### Vegetation Cover

A well-maintained mature hedgerow follows the southern Site boundary (average 3m high) and the Old Vicarage and associated garden boundary to the west and east. To the north of the garden boundary a mature hedgerow and treebelt separates the private garden to the central field parcel. A distinctive 1.5m holly hedge with mature conifer trees characterises this vegetated boundary. Additional vegetation within the garden includes Short cut lawn, shrubs, perennials, bulbs and individual specimen trees ranging in age and height.

The vegetation within the central section of the Site comprises mainly of unmanaged grassland with mature hedgerow/treeline framing the field to east, south and north. A smaller rectangular field (originally allotment area), to the east of the main central field comprises taller grassland and scrub. A 2m hedgerow follows along the western boundary of this smaller field parcel. Within the eastern section of the central area, the vegetation comprises of short cut grass and individual specimen trees including Holly, Apple, ash and Silver Birch.

Within the northern section of the Site, grassland and hedgerow/tree lines follow field boundaries located along the Western Site boundary. In addition, Ancient Woodland is located within the north-western most tip of the Site.

The trees present within the Site boundary include: Beech, Yew, Holly, Eucalyptus, Birch, Cherry, Hawthorn, Hazel, Apple, Rhododendron, Cypress, Sweet chestnut, Pine, Western red cedar, Laurel, Norway Maple, Larch, Oak, Spruce and Lonicera.

In regards to the central and southern section of the Site, the majority of category A trees (High quality) are located along the western Site boundary within the central section of the Site. Category B trees (moderate quality) are scattered throughout the Site and are mainly located along the northern Site boundary within the central section of the Site. Category C trees (low quality) are mainly located within the Old Vicarage garden and along the southern boundary.

Value: Medium

### 4.3.3 CULTURAL / SOCIAL

#### Land Use Built form / Scale / Mass / Height / Grain

The Site predominantly comprises grassland with a combination of woodland, hedgerow, shrub, individual trees/tree belts within the field parcel sections of the Site (Central and northern area), with an area to the east comprising gravelled parking areas and disused built form in the form of Barns and Garages. To the South of the Site, the land use predominately comprises the Old Vicarage's garden, with lawn, herbaceous perennials, grasses individual specimen trees, hedgerow and treebelts. A single story outbuilding lies within the garden/drive area (north of the Old Vicarage dwelling), and a gravel/tarmaced driveway lies to the east of the dwelling and follows down to the entrance of the Site by Church Road.

The Built form within the Site comprises of a combination of disused one - two storey barns, sheds and garages, located within the south eastern corner of the Site. Single story outbuildings/sheds are also located to the north/northwest of the Old Vicarage. A stone wall with gates associated with dwellings along Lion Lane follows

the eastern Site boundary, separating the Site with the adjacent dwellings to the east. An undesignated footpath and Public footpath 68W additionally passes through the northern section of the Site on a east-west orientation.

Value: Medium

### 4.3.4 CHARACTER, PERCEPTUAL AND AESTHETIC

The above elements combine to inform the landscape character. The key characteristics of the Site are as follows:

- Generally the Site lies on a sloping undulating plateau, following the valley down from Turners Hill Ridgeline, ranging from approximately 177m AOD within the southern section of the Site to 145m AOD within the far northern area of the Site;
- The Site comprises a diverse range of vegetation, including mowed lawn, woodland, hedgerow, shrub, herbaceous perennials, grasses individual trees/tree belts and grassland field parcels.
- Mature hedgerow/tree lines frame field parcels and boundaries of the Site, creating a sense of enclosure and restricting views of the Site from immediate/local receptors.
- A combination of built form associated with the western edge of Turners Hill and well treed, woodland/ treebelts make up the skyline.
- Long distance views of the wider landscape to the east is experienced beyond Turners Hill, from the western section of the central grassland field.

#### Views and Skyline

The Site contributes towards a well treed skyline with intercepting built form from located within the southeastern section of the Site. There are open views of Turners Hill settlement edge to the immediate east of the Site, including built form within the Conservation Area and listed buildings.

Long distance views of the wider landscape to the east is experienced beyond Turners Hill, from the western section of the central grassland field. Views to the north, south and west are generally limited by the hedgerow and tree belts following the Site boundary.

Value: Medium - High

### 4.3.5 THE ROLE OF THE SITE IN THE WIDER LANDSCAPE

The Site reflects the edge of settlement character with various disused buildings to the southeast and a large dwelling, with associated garden backing onto a grassland field parcel with mature vegetated field boundaries and footpaths connecting Turners Hill to the wider landscape. The southern and central area of the Site is located within an allocated Site in Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan and the Strategic Gap. Part of the southern and southeastern section of the Site is located within Turners Hill Conservation Area. The existing built form and fields also separates the site from the High Weald National Landscape.

Value: Medium - High