

fabrik

Land north of Balcombe Road, Haywards Heath

Updated Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment
April 2026

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01	03.12.25	For Planning	EF	AS	CM
02	15.01.26	Update to impact assessment to reflect tweak to masterplan to include supplementary planting at southern boundary.	CM	CM	CM
03	09.03.26	Updates in response to Place Services LVIA consultation response	EF	LS	LS
04	13.04.26	Updates following layout change	EF	LS	LS

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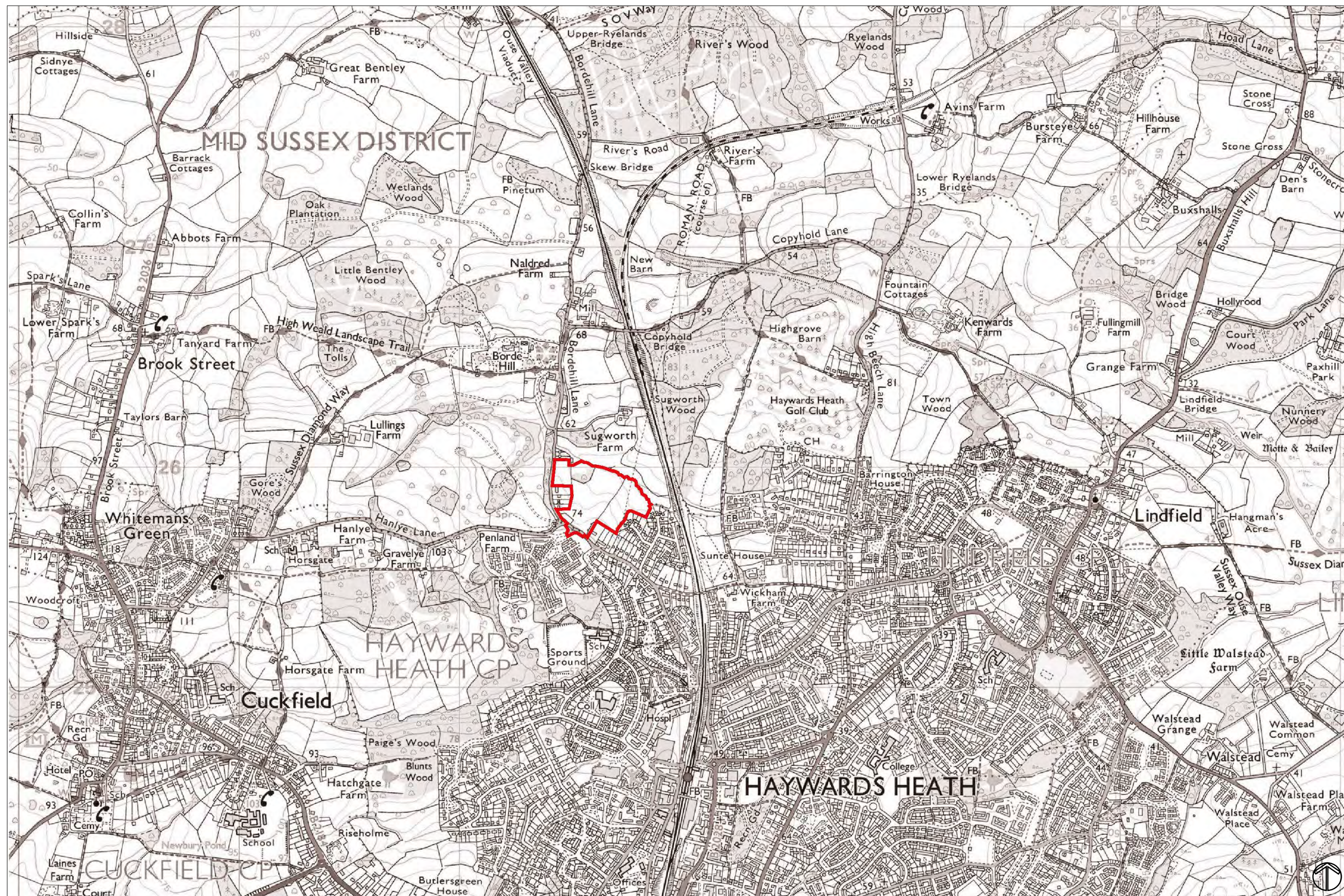


Figure 1.1 – Site location and extent of study area (fabrik, 2025)

 Site boundary

1.0

Introduction

fabrik Chartered Landscape Architects have been appointed by Fairfax Acquisitions to carry out this **updated** report, in order to consider the likely physical and visual impacts arising as a result of the proposed development of the Site, **where the scheme proposals have been amended to address comments received through the determination period.**

The outline planning application is for the residential development of up to ~~125~~ **117** dwellings up to two storeys in height with associated public open space, green infrastructure, and access from Borde Hill Lane via an enlarged roundabout. All matters are reserved except for access.

This report sets out landscape policy (together with any related policy on ecological and heritage assets) and any supporting guidance documents / informatives and then goes on to describe the constituent baseline landscape elements (the existing geology, soils, landform, drainage, vegetation cover, land use, settlement, the history of the landscape and the way that landscape is experienced) which together inform landscape character, landscape condition and value. The LVIA then describes the baseline character and amenity of the identified visual receptors (considering the visual envelope, the different groups of people, places affected, the nature of the view and the visual amenity).

The landscape constraints and opportunities are then set out to inform the proposed development. Any mitigation measures and assumptions which have informed the assessment of effects are set out after the description of the proposed development. The effects of the proposed development are then considered against each of the landscape and visual receptors relative to the particular stages of the project. The penultimate section of this report comprises a landscape policy assessment.

The location of the Site is shown at Figure 1.1.

The methodology for the LVIA is based on the ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ (third edition) by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (Routledge, 2013). A full methodology is set out at Appendix 1.

1.1 Desktop Research

The desktop survey carried out as part of the LVIA included the review of Ordnance Survey maps, interactive maps, aerial photography, published landscape character assessment documents, planning policy and the emerging development proposals.

1.2 Field Work

The field work was carried out on 26th June 2025 and recorded the existing landscape elements within the Site; the contextual landscape elements; and identified a series of key visual receptors. The visual assessment element includes a photographic survey of the Site taken from a series of representative key views, chosen to represent a range of locations including both public and private views, distances and directions around the Site.

1.3 Consultation

A pre-application meeting was held with Mid Sussex District Council on 25 June 2025. The Council provided a series of comments relating to landscape and visual matters that should be considered within the LVIA. These are quoted directly below, followed by the LVIA’s response to each point.

“We note the inclusion of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) within the LVIA Representative Views and Methodology report. Viewpoints and viewpoint justification should be overlayed onto the ZTV.”

Response: A ZTV has not been produced for this Site. During the five years of assessment work for this site, extensive field surveys have consistently demonstrated exceptionally strong visual containment, with the Site visually enclosed by landform, woodland blocks, hedgerows and settlement-edge vegetation.

“Considering the sloping site levels and the impact this will have on the visual envelope of the development; a topographical plan should be included within the LVIA.”

Response: A topographical plan has been included within the LVIA to illustrate the Site’s landform and demonstrate how levels have been considered within the assessment.

“In accordance with best practice the LVIA field work should be undertaken in the winter months, where trees and hedgerows are out of leaf.”

“Site photography should be provided in accordance with Technical Guidance Note 06/19 and should include winter month photography again where trees and hedgerows are out of leaf.”

Response: Winter photography has not been obtained. Across the projects time period, visibility has consistently demonstrated to be highly limited due to the robustness of vegetation structure and landform. While winter photography would typically be preferred, the available baseline evidence provides a sound and reliable basis for assessing views.

“Reference needs to be made to the impact the proposals may have on the High Weald National Landscape, which the site abuts to the western boundary.”
“Reference should also be made to the impact in the Registered Park and Garden, again to the western boundary of the site.”

Response: These receptors are fully assessed within the LVIA. The assessment demonstrates that intervening woodland, landform and mature tree belts prevent any intervisibility between the Site and both the High Weald National Landscape and Borde Hill Registered Park and Garden.

The significance of effect is assessed as Negligible.

“The illustrative masterplan needs to demonstrate how it has been shaped and informed by the LVIA (including the site levels, layout, building heights and wider Green Infrastructure).”

Response: The LVIA and Illustrative Masterplan have been closely coordinated. The layout, development extents, building heights and open space structure have been shaped directly by landscape character, visual containment, topography, vegetation retention and key view considerations. These principles are clearly set out in the LVIA’s description of the landscape-led design.

“Viewpoints are generally located close to the site however we acknowledge the constraints of surrounding vegetation. We are satisfied with the included receptors however advise that a few other longer distance views are included:
· Borde Hill RPG
· Borde Hill
· Gore’s Wood”

Response: These longer-distance receptors have not been included, for the following reason:

- Extensive fieldwork undertaken has confirmed that none of these locations have any visibility of the Site, due to a combination of landform, woodland blocks, mature tree belts and settlement-edge vegetation.
- This conclusion is consistent with the Council’s own recognition of “constraints of surrounding vegetation”.
- The LVIA provides a clear demonstration of this strong visual containment, and therefore the omission of these viewpoints is justified.

“The following landscape receptors should be included:
· The Site and Immediate Context
· The Wider Context
· HW4 High Weald Fringes – West Sussex LCA
· High Weald National Landscape”

Response: All of the above landscape receptors have been included and assessed in the LVIA, with each addressed in accordance with GLVIA3 and local policy requirements.

1.4 Post Submission Consultation

Following submission of the application, further consultation was undertaken with Place Services, with a formal response received on 10 February 2026. A separate Response Note has been prepared in response to these comments in detail (see Appendix 2). Where appropriate, the LVIA has been reviewed and updated to reflect this feedback, including refinements to certain assessment judgements and clarifications to the methodology and findings.

In addition, following ongoing consultation with the Local Planning Authority, the proposed layout has been amended, including the removal of development from the western parcel adjacent to Borde Hill Lane and a reduction in the size of the roundabout. The LVIA has been updated accordingly to reflect these design changes. For clarity, amendments within this document are presented as tracked changes, with deletions shown as ~~striketrough text~~ and additions **shown in pink**.

2.0 Landscape Planning Context

2.1 Designations and Policy

Designations

The Site is not subject to a landscape designation at the national, regional or local level and does not lie within a viewing corridor protected by policy. However, to the north, west and southwest of the Site lies the High Weald National Landscape - formerly known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Also to the west and southwest lies Borde Hill Gardens, a Registered Park and Gardens (RPG).

Within the local landscape to the north, west and east of the Site are areas of Ancient Woodland.

Refer to Figure 2.1.

Historic and Cultural Landscape

Conservation Areas are located within the study area at Cuckfield to the west and Haywards Heath to south. There are a number of Listed Buildings within the local landscape including:

- Grade II Listed Borde Hill Place, approximately 430m to the northwest of the Site.
- Grade II Listed South Lodge to Borde Hill, approximately 35m to the southwest of the Site.
- Grade II Listed Sugworth Farmhouse, approximately 220m to the north of the Site.

Public Rights of Way

As illustrated in Figure 2.2, there is a limited network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within and around the northern settlement edge of Haywards Heath, providing some connectivity between the Site and the rural landscape (and National Landscape beyond to the north and west). Those PRoW within proximity to the Site include:

- The High Weald Sussex Way, to the northwest and north of the Site.
- The Sussex Diamond Way, to the west of the Site.
- Public footpath the east of the railway line and Sugworth Wood, connecting Haywards Heath Golf Club to the town centre in the south.

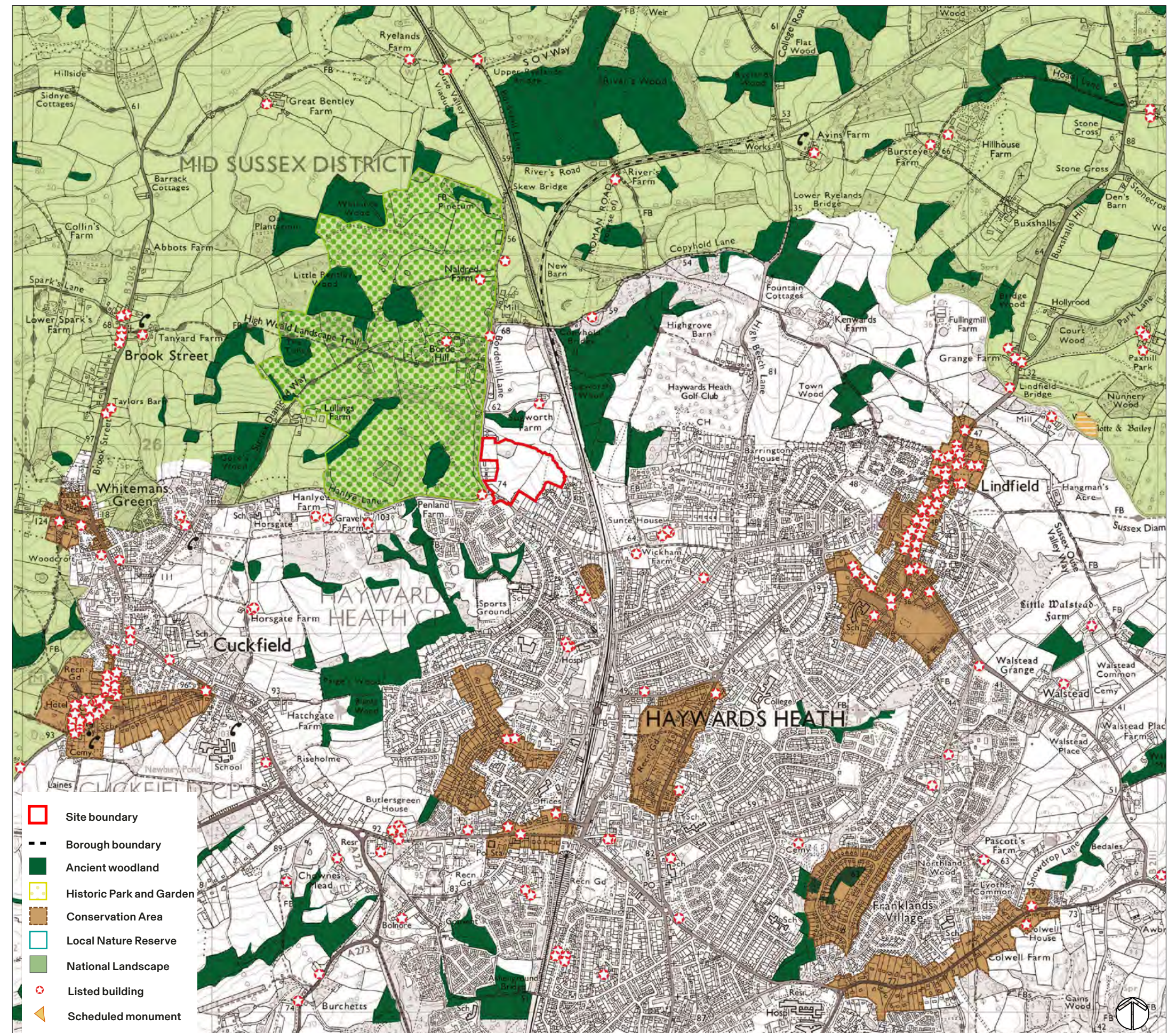


Figure 2.1 – Local designations (fabrik, 2025)



Figure 2.2 – public rights of way, open access land and Registered Common Land (fabrik, 2025)

2.1.1 National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The December 2024 NPPF seeks the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The following issues and policies of the NPPF are pertinent to the proposed development and this assessment.

Section 2 - achieving sustainable development, para 8, subsection c relating to an environmental objective, states:

“to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change...”

Section 8 - promoting healthy and safe communities, para 103 under the open space and recreation sub-heading states:

“Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support effects to address climate change...”

Para 105 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.”

Para 106 on Local Green Space states:

“The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them...”

Para 108 goes on to state: “Policies and decisions for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with national policy for Green Belts set out in chapter 13 of this Framework.”

Section 12 - achieving well-designed places. Para 131:

“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities...”

Para 132:

“... Design policies should be developed with local communities so that they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics...”

Para 135:

“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a. will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b. are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c. are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d. establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e. optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f. create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

Para 136 relates to trees and states:

“Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.”

Para 137:

“Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals...”

Para 139:

“Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

a. development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes; and/or

b. outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.”

Section 14 - meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change. The elements relevant to landscape matters include para 164 states: “New development should be planned for in ways that:

a. avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable urban drainage systems;...

Under the sub section on planning and flood ris, Para 172, subsection c goes on to state with regard to 'all plans' that: “c. using opportunities provided by new development and improvements in green and other infrastructure to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding, (making as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques as part of an integrated approach to flood risk management).”

Section 15 - conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Para 187:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a. protecting and enhancing valued landscapes... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b. recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the nest and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.

c. maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it...”

Para 189:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”

Para 190:

“When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

a. the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;

b. the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and

c. any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.”

Section 16 - conserving and enhancing the historic environment, para 202 states:

“Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations”

Under the subsection on considering potential impacts, para 213:

“Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

a. grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks and gardens, should be exceptional;

b. assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and grade II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.”

Planning Practice Guidance

The NPPF is supported by the on-line resource Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) There are a number of sections of relevance, as set out below. Climate change is considered in para 001 (ID 6-001-20140306) states: "... local planning authorities should ensure that protecting the local environment is properly considered alongside the broader issues of protecting the global environment. Planning can also help increase resilience to climate change impact through the location, mix and design of development.

Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles which the National Planning Policy Framework expects to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking..."

Planning for well-designed places and the sub-section on 'How are well-designed places achieved through the planning system?' are set out at para 001 (ID: 26-001-20191001) which states: "Well-designed places can be achieved by taking a proactive and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process, from policy and plan formulation through to the determination of planning applications and the post approval stage... To be read alongside this guidance, the National Design Guide sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice.

... significant weight should be given to: a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

Good design is set out in the National Design Guide under the

following 10 characteristics:

- context
- identity
- built form
- movement
- nature
- public spaces
- uses
- homes and buildings
- resources
- lifespan

The National Design Guide can be used by all those involved in shaping places including in plan-making and decision making."

With regards to the factors to be taken into account when considering the potential impact of development on the openness of the Green Belt, para 001 (ID: 64-001-20190722) states that: "... where it is relevant to do so, requires a judgment based on the circumstances of the case. By way of example, the courts have identified a number of matters which may need to be taken into account in making this assessment. These include, but are not limited to:

- openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;
- the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and
- the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation."

With regard to development on brownfield land in the Green Belt, para 004 (ID: 64-004-20231219) states that: "The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the policy on proposals affecting the Green Belt. Where previously developed land is located within the Green Belt, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out the circumstances in which development may not be inappropriate. This includes limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, subject to conditions relating to the potential impact of development on the openness of the Green Belt.

The Framework indicates that certain other forms of development are also ‘not inappropriate’ in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. This includes the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction."

The setting to a heritage asset is described at para 013 (ID: 18a-013-20190723) as follows: "All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent.

The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and

the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights of way or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting. The contribution may vary over time.

When assessing any application which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation."

Green infrastructure is the topic of para 004 (ID: 8-004-20190721) and states: "Green infrastructure can embrace a range of spaces and assets that provide environmental and wider benefits. It can, for example, include parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees and 'blue infrastructure' such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies. References to green infrastructure in this guidance also apply to different types of blue infrastructure where appropriate."

Para 006 (ID: 8-006-20190721) then sets out that green infrastructure can help in:

- "Building a strong, competitive economy: Green infrastructure can drive economic growth and regeneration, helping to create high quality environments which are attractive to businesses and investors.
- Achieving well-designed places: The built environment can be enhanced by features such as green roofs, street trees, proximity to woodland, public gardens and recreational and open spaces. More broadly, green infrastructure exists within a wider landscape context and can reinforce and enhance local landscape character, contributing to a sense of place and natural beaut.
- Promoting healthy and safe communities: Green infrastructure can improve the wellbeing of a neighbourhood with opportunities for recreation, exercise, social interaction, experiencing and caring for nature, community food-growing and gardening, all of which can bring mental and physical health benefits. Outdoor Recreation Value (ORVal) is a useful online tool that can be used to quantify the recreational values provided by greenspace. Green infrastructure can help to reduce health inequalities in areas of socio-economic deprivation and meet the needs of families and an ageing population. It can also help to reduce air pollution and noise.
- Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change: Green infrastructure can contribute to carbon storage, cooling and shading, opportunities for species migration to more suitable habitats and the protection of water quality

and other natural resources. It can also be an integral part of multifunctional sustainable drainage and natural flood risk management.

- Conserving and enhancing the natural environment: High-quality networks of multifunctional green infrastructure contribute a range of benefits, including ecological connectivity, facilitating biodiversity net gain and nature recovery networks and opportunities for communities to undertake conservation work.'

Guidance on trees and woodland is set out under the natural environment is set out within para 029 (ID 8-20190721) and states: 'Well-placed and well-chosen trees on streets and in urban spaces can provide a range of benefits: encouraging walking and enhanced physical and mental health; contributing to local environmental character and distinctiveness; providing habitats for wildlife; reducing noise and excessive heat; and supporting sustainable drainage. Changing climate, in particular hotter summers and more frequent periods of dry weather, and unknown pests and diseases, will place new pressures on green infrastructure in the long-term, so trees of the right species and age profile are essential'.

Para 036 (ID: 8-036-20190721) considers landscape and sets out that: 'The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally designated landscapes but also the wider countryside. Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence... The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully.'

Open space, sports and recreation facilities are considered under para 001 (ID: 37-001-20140306) which states: 'Open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect existing open space (see National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 96). Open space, which includes all open space of public value, can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby; have an ecological value and contribute to green infrastructure (see National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 171, as well as being an important part of the landscape and setting of built development, and an important component in the achievement of sustainable development (see National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 7-9).'

National Design Guide

The National Design Guide (30 January 2021) illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. Paragraph 20 sets out the components of good design, including layout, form and scale, appearance, landscape, materials and detailing. The 10 characteristics of a well designed place are described in paragraph 36 as follows:

- ‘Context - enhances the surroundings.
- Identity - attractive and distinctive.
- Built form - a coherent pattern of development.

- Movement - accessible and easy to move around.
- Nature - enhanced and optimised.
- Public spaces - safe, social and inclusive.
- Uses - mixed and integrated.
- Homes and buildings - functional, healthy and sustainable.
- Resources - efficient and resilient.
- Lifespan - made to last'.

National Model Design Code

The National Model Design Code forms part of the Planning Practice Guidance expanding on the characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide.

2.1.2 Development Plan

Mid Sussex District Council's relevant development plan policy is set out below.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 - 2031 (adopted March 2018)

The Plan sets out a vision for how Mid Sussex wants to evolve and a delivery strategy for how that will be achieved. It supports the National Planning Policy Framework’s ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. As such, it sets out broad guidance on the distribution and quality of development in the form of 'higher level' strategic policies. The following policies are of relevance to the Site and surrounding area:

Policy DP12 aims to deliver on the following 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". |

The policy states: “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 aims to deliver on 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."

The policy states: "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 DP16 aims to deliver on the following strategic objectives:

- 3

"To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities; and
- 11

To support and enhance the attractiveness of Mid Sussex as a visitor destination";

The policy states: "Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Maps, will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular;

- the identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting;
- the traditional interaction of people with nature, and appropriate land management;
- character and local distinctiveness, settlement pattern, sense of place and setting of the AONB; and
- the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage.

Small scale proposals which support the economy and social well-being of the AONB that are compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty will be supported.

Development on land that contributes to the setting of the AONB will only be permitted where it does not detract from the visual qualities and essential characteristics of the AONB, and in particular should not adversely affect the views into and out of the AONB by virtue of its location or design."

Policy DP22 aims to deliver on the following Strategic Objectives:

- 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; 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."

The policy states:"Rights of way, Sustrans national cycle routes and recreational routes will be protected by ensuring development does not result in the loss of or does not adversely affect a right of way or other recreational routes unless a new route is provided which is of at least an equivalent value and which does not sever important routes.

Access to the countryside will be encouraged by:

Ensuring that (where appropriate) development provides safe and convenient links to rights of way and other recreational routes;

Supporting the provision of additional routes within and between settlements that contribute to providing a joined up network of routes where possible;

Where appropriate, encouraging making new or existing rights of way multi-functional to allow for benefits for a range of users. (Note: 'multi-functional will generally mean able to be used by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders)."

Policy DP37 aims to deliver on the following 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."

The policy states: "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 aims to deliver on the following 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."

The policy states: "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."

Policy DP26 states: "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."

Other policies pertinent to landscape and visual matters are listed below:

DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets; and

DP36: Historic Parks and Gardens.

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021 - 2039 Consultation Draft (Regulation 19)

Draft policies of the draft new Local Plan that are pertinent to this LVIA are included below.

The Site is proposed as a site allocation and is therefore subject to Policy DPA7: Land east of Borde Hill Lane, Haywards Heath

- “1. Contain development to central and eastern parts of site to reduce potential impacts on the setting of High Weald AONB (to be informed by an LVIA).*
- 2. Follow a sequential approach by directing development away from areas of flood risk and mitigate impacts through integration of SUDS to deliver biodiversity/environmental improvements and flood resilience.*
- 3. Provide suitable vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access from Borde Hill Lane via a fourth arm from the roundabout, south west of the site.*
- 4. Roundabout to be enlarged and positioned to allow safe movement of road users and provision of new dropped kerbs and tactile paving on southern approach, in agreement with the Highway Authority.*
- 5. Informed by a Heritage Statement, provide appropriate layout and design which preserves the setting of nearby Grade II listed*

building ‘South Lodge’.

- 6. Submit a Statement of Significance on Borde Hill Gardens together with an assessment of the impact of the proposal on that significance.*
- 7. Provide good acoustic design to address noise impacts associated with the railway.*
- 8. Investigate, assess and address any land contamination issues arising from former uses of the site or from uses, or former uses, of land in proximity to the site.*
- 9. Address any impacts associated with the building stone (Cuckfield) Minerals Safeguarding Area, the building stone (Ardingly) Minerals Consultation Area and the brick clay (Wadhurst) Minerals Safeguarding Area.*
- 10. Meet the requirements of other relevant development plan policies.”*

DPN5: Historic Parks and Gardens:

“The character, appearance and setting of a registered park or garden, or park or garden of special local historic interest will be protected. This will be achieved by ensuring that any development within or adjacent to a registered park or garden, or park or garden of special local historic interest will only be permitted where it protects and enhances its special features, setting and views into and out of the park or garden.”

DPN8: Light Impacts and Dark Skies:

“The natural environment and people’s health and quality of life will be protected from unacceptable levels of light pollution.

Development proposals must demonstrate that all opportunities to reduce light pollution (including sky glow, glare and light spillage) have been taken including minimising impacts on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes including protected landscapes and areas important for nature conservation and nature recovery.

Artificial lighting proposals (including outdoor lighting, floodlighting and new street lighting) should be minimised in terms of intensity and number of fittings. The applicant should demonstrate that:

- the minimum amount of lighting necessary to achieve its purpose is specified or otherwise justified on safety or security grounds; and
- the design and specification of the lighting would minimise sky glow, glare and light spillage in relation to the visibility of the night sky, local amenity and local character; and
- the means of lighting would be unobtrusively sited and well-screened by landscaping; and
- low energy lighting is used; and
- there would not be an adverse impact on wildlife such as through consideration of the appropriate colour and temperature of lighting.

Development proposals must carefully consider the design and layout of parking arrangements to avoid headlight nuisance.

Where lighting of a landmark or heritage feature is proposed,

the level and type of illumination used would enhance the feature itself.

Development proposals will need to take into account the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance and other relevant guidance.”

DPC4: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty:

“... 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 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.”

2.1.3 Guidance Documents

High Weald National Landscape / AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024

The High Weald National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - AONB) is described as: “An outstandingly beautiful landscape cherished by people and celebrated for its scenery, tranquillity and wildlife. Its ridges and valleys are clothed with an intricate mosaic of small fields interspersed with farmsteads and surrounded by hedges and abundant woods, all arranged around a network of historic routeways. One of the best surviving Medieval landscapes in North West Europe, the High Weald has remained a unique and recognisable area for at least the last 700 years. Covering 1500 km2 and close to London, this extensive area offers millions of people opportunity to experience the beauty of nature within a working countryside. It was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1983.”

The Management Plan coordinates policy and action, in order to: “Achieve the legal purpose of ‘conserving and enhancing natural beauty’ for the benefit of current and future generations.”

The plan describes the High Weald’s five defining components of character as:

- 1 “Geology, landform and water systems - a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams;
- 2 Settlement - dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries;
- 3 Routeways - a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths);
- 4 Woodland - abundance of ancient woodland, highly

interconnected and in smallholdings;

- 5 *Field and Heath - small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys.”*

The Management Plan defines ‘Setting’ as: “The surroundings in which the AONB is experienced by people” and states: “The term ‘setting’ is used to refer to areas outside the AONB where development and other activities may affect land within an AONB. Its extent will vary depending upon the issues considered but some can be mapped, for example, the impact of development on views into and out of the AONB. Section 85 of the CROW Act 2000 requires public bodies to consider whether any activities outside the AONB may affect land in an AONB, and Planning Practice Guidance (Natural Environment: 003) emphasises that this duty is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside the AONB boundary.”

High Weald Statement of Significance

Five defining components of character that have made the High Weald a recognisably distinct and homogenous area for at least the last 700 years:

“Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams.

Settlement– dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.

Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).

Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in small holdings.

Field and Heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys.”

High Weald Housing Design Guide (November 2019)

As the Site lies adjacent to the High Weald National Landscape, the above document is also pertinent. It notes that “*delivering appropriate new housing development within the AONB, and on land that affects its setting, is a key part of local planning policy for the local authorities covering the High Weald and for qualifying bodies producing neighbourhood plans.*”

The aim of the guide is to “*ensure higher quality and landscape-led design that reflects intrinsic High Weald character, and is embedded with a true sense of place, without stifling innovation and creativity.*”

Additional pertinent paragraphs are included below:

DG1 Responding to Site and Landscape Context:

“For development to reflect and enhance the character of the High Weald it must be designed to integrate into its setting. This means more than reflecting merely the visual appearance of the current setting, but includes understanding how the landscape and its settlements have evolved and why the area is the way it is today.”

“Rather than being a constraint, context offers opportunities to retain and embed the character of the High Weald into a genuinely landscape-led design. This will include landscape features such as field patterns and boundaries, ponds, gill streams and ditches, and on-site mature trees, and embracing the ‘natural capital’ assets of the area, in particular the rich and diverse ecology of the High Weald, which are key elements of the components of natural beauty set out in the Management Plan, and which should inform site selection and layout. Seeking to avoid harm to existing biodiversity assets in the earliest site layout decisions will help meet the ‘mitigation hierarchy’ set out in the NPPF. Meanwhile, how the scheme design manages topography and watercourses will be important to how successful the development is at mitigating and dealing with the effects of climate change.”

“Landscape-led design means using landscape as a framework to understand the site and formulate a design response. Applying a landscape-led design approach requires analysing the context, character, qualities and socio-ecological functioning of the proposed site within its wider landscape setting, and using this understanding to inform site layout, design, and capacity”

Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD (November 2020)

The Mid Sussex Design Guide has been produced 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. These principles are based on the policy framework provided by District Plan Policy DP26: Character and Design.” Landscape and green infrastructure provision are a key part of the Design Guide’s sustainability objectives:

- *“Planning schemes around Green Infrastructure provision that is underpinned by: (a) healthy living and well-being principles; (b) helping to deliver a net gain in bio-diversity; (c) responding to the beauty of the natural landscape and ensuring that natural features are retained and enhanced; and*
- *Designing for adaptation and resilience to future weather events (drier/hotter summers and wetter/warmer winters).”*

The Design Guide sets out a model design process, including information on landscape and settlement character and landscape designations within the District. It also sets out the expectations around how proposals should consider their landscape context in order to establish the structure of a proposed development.

Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan (Made 2017)

The Site falls within the administrative area of the Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan (2017). However, it is located at the southern edge of the neighbourhood plan area, adjacent to the settlement edge of Haywards Heath, and is physically and functionally separated from the villages of Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street to the north. As such, the Site does not form part of the immediate landscape setting of these villages, and many of the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan are primarily directed towards managing development within or directly related to these settlements.

Notwithstanding this, the most relevant policies to landscape and visual matters include:

POLICY AS3: HIGH WEALD AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

"Development proposals within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the neighbourhood plan area (as shown on the Proposals Map) must demonstrate how they address the requirements of the NPPF, policies of the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004 or the District Plan once it is adopted;

- *conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB area; and*
- *demonstrate how they meet the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan; and*
- *for major development, proposals must include an assessment of:*
 - a *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
 - b *the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
 - c *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated"*

3.0

Landscape Character

3.1

Published Landscape Character

The term 'landscape' commonly refers to the view or appearance of the land as perceived by people. Landscape applies to any natural, rural, urban or urban edge 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 published landscape character framework of the study area based upon existing character assessments undertaken by West Sussex County Council and Mid Sussex District Council.

3.1.1

County Character Assessment

Within the West Sussex county level landscape character assessment, the Site lies within the landscape character area identified as HW4: High Weald Fringes as shown on Figure 4.1. The key characteristics pertinent to the study area are described as:

- “Wooded, often confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity partly within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- South and east-draining gills and broad ridges sweeping gently down to the Low Weald.
- Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields and larger fields, and small pockets of remnant heathland.
- Biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.
- Network of lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.
- Dispersed historic settlement pattern... the principal settlements Cuckfield, Haywards Heath and Lindfield and a few villages and hamlets.
- Some busy lanes and roads including A and B roads bounding the area to the west, and other roads crossing north to south, including the A23 Trunk Road.

- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses.”

The key issues pertinent to the Site include the following:

- “Continuing amalgamation of small fields with orchard, hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development...
- Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement throughout much of the area, especially in the vicinity of Haywards Heath.
- Increasing pressures for a wide variety of recreational activities.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species”.

Landscape and visual sensitivities are described as:

- “Woodland cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity.
- Unobtrusive settlement pattern in many parts.
- Older, small assart pastures contribute to the intimacy of the landscape.
- Important pockets of rich biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Network of lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths provides a rich terrain for horse-riding, cycling and walking and for the appreciation of nature.
- Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures...
- Legacy of designed landscapes and treescapes.”

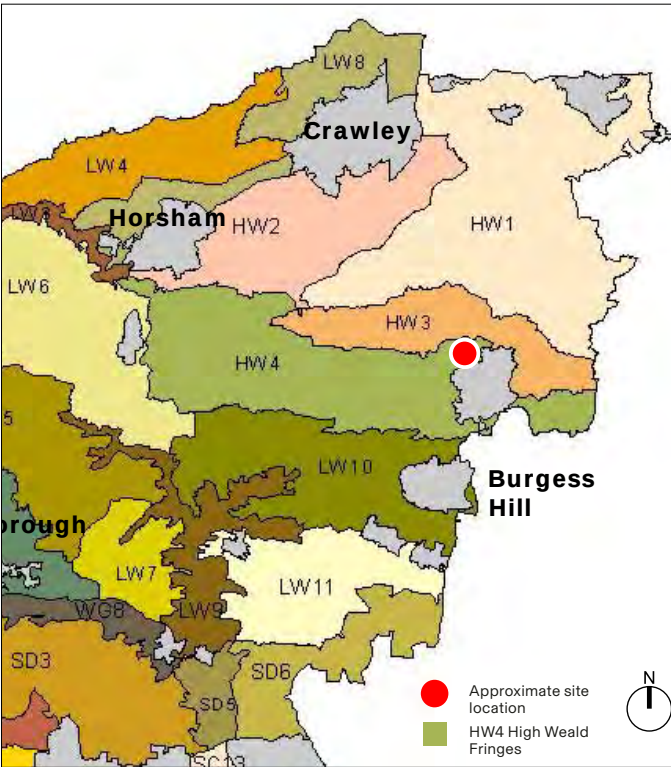


Figure 3.1 – Extract from the West Sussex Landscape Character Area Map (2003)

3.1.2

District Character Assessment

A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex was prepared and published in 2005. The Site lies within the landscape character area identified as LCA 10: High Weald Fringes.

The LCA is summarised as: “densely-wooded southern flanks of the High Weald Forest Ridge, dissected gentle gill streams draining west to the River Adur and east to the River Ouse. Includes the settlements of Cuckfield, Haywards Heath and Lindfield”. The key characteristics are described and are consistent with those described within the county level landscape character assessment.

In addition to the key characteristics, the settlement of Haywards Heath is described as:

“... a pleasant Victorian suburban town and quite leafy, the residential developments of varying ages deriving amenity from the built quality of many of the residential estates and from the remnant oaks and pines at home on the heathy land upon which the town was built. The topography of the town is complex, the

main portion lying on high ground fringed by the Ouse Valley and, in the east, tilted into it at the broad embayment of the valley at Walstead. All but the western side of the town rises to higher ground. On the whole, the wooded setting screens the town well, particularly along the edges of the Ouse Valley. Only to the south are new housing and the hospitals on the high ridge at Rocky Lane and below Hurstwood Lane highly visible in the landscape, easily seen from the downs at Clayton. Haywards Heath was first joined to the medieval market town of Lindfield by inter-war suburban development, a link that is now solid and complete.”

Land management guidelines pertinent to tthe Site and development proposals include:

- “Protect existing views from the area and avoid skyline development....
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new small broadleaved farm woodlands, and appropriate management of existing woodlands, 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.
- Conserve woodland biodiversity and the landscape of the gills, protecting rare and uncommon woodland plant communities associated with them.
- 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 re-plant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Conserve and manage remnant open heathland by preventing the encroachment of scrub and create new, interconnected heathlands.
- Conserve species-rich meadows and road verges.
- Protect the tranquil and historic character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their 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.”
Published Landscape Capacity Assessment

In 2007 HDA prepared the Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study. This defined 75 Landscape Character Areas (LCA) around a number of settlements and villages within the District and assessed the landscape value, sensitivity and capacity of each. Of the character areas assessed within this study, the Site lies within Zone 4 “Haywards Heath, Linfield, Cuckfield and Surrounding Areas”, of which pertinent descriptions include:

“A ridgeline to the north of Haywards Heath contains the town from the wider landscape with the existing settlement situated on the lower south-facing slopes of this ridgeline... To the west of the railway the ridgeline continues west to Cuckfield. Here there is a mixture of arable fields, woodland, pasture and recreation adjacent to the settlement, with a significant area of intact parkland, to the northwest of the town. along with an area of undeveloped land on similar topography.”

Within Zone 4, the Site is situated in “LCA 46 Horsgate High Weald”, as shown on Figure 4.3 and which is described as:

- “Mixture of small-medium size fields, wooded setting to north-west of Haywards Heath.”
- A judgement of moderate sensitivity is assigned to LCA 46, due to:
- “Significant boundary loss.
- Wooded contribution to the northern setting of Haywards Heath.
- Open topography sloping towards Haywards Heath to the east.
- Woodland counters effect of settlement upon perception of rurality.
- Limited separation function.”

A judgement of substantial landscape value is assigned to LCA 46 due to:

- “Small part in the AONB.
- Contains some listed buildings, some Ancient Woodland, RSI and SNCI.
- Forms the setting to the AONB and Borde Hill to the north and west.
- Has moderate scenic beauty.”

As such a judgement of Low capacity is made in the 2007 HDA study, described as:

“A Low or Negligible rating for landscape capacity indicates that development would have a significant and detrimental effect on the character of the landscape as a whole, and, or, on the setting to existing settlement or outstanding assets in the District. Development in these character areas should only be small scale and proposals would need to demonstrate no adverse impacts on the setting to settlement or wider landscape.”

In 2014, LUC prepared an updated Capacity Assessment, which covered the remaining areas of the District that were not assessed in the 2007 study only. This led to the definition of five new Landscape Character Areas. Judgements for capacity were made for all previous LCA’s as well as those additional. Within the 2014 study a judgement of Low/Medium is made for

LCA 46.

The description of the low/medium landscape capacity rating within the 2014 study states:

“A Low/medium capacity rating indicates that development is likely to have an adverse effect on most of the character area and while smaller development may be possible in a very few locations within the character area, it will not be suitable for strategic scale development.”

Primary and secondary constraints

In addition to the landscape capacity assessment, a range of primary and secondary constraints have been mapped relating to environmental designations by LUC. However, and as shown in Figure 3.5, the Site lies outside of the areas where there are primary constraints. Primary constraints are identified as the AONB and National Park.

Furthermore, the Site lies within an area where there are secondary constraints - these include a buffer of 1km around the AONB and National Park. It is noted that the buffer zone is described as indicative only - paragraph 4.3 clarifies that: *“It should be noted that the buffer zones developed for the secondary constraints are indicative of the area where development may cause the most negative impacts, or where mitigation is most likely to be needed. In practice, each location for development would need to be assessed individually for potential effects on the environment and mitigation needed. For example, the effects on the setting of the AONB or on a listed building can vary markedly depending upon their context, from very localised (e.g. a few hundred metres in locations that are well screened; to many kilometres where vistas and views are important).”*

Paragraph 6.11 goes on to state that: *“... Although these secondary constraints do not necessarily represent areas that cannot be developed, some are afforded protection under national policy, and often they represent areas where significant environmental impacts could occur, and where mitigation measures are likely to be required to avoid or reduce the significance of the impacts.”*

Paragraph 6.25 sets outs a series of mitigation measures that are likely to be needed for development to occur in areas which still have secondary constraints. Those relevant to the Site are:

- *“A detailed ecological assessment would be required to determine the existing biodiversity within potential development locations, its status and condition, and its potential in order to inform what mitigation measures would be required to safeguard and enhance the District's biodiversity interest (such as areas of ancient woodland).*
- *Development would need to be designed to maintain or where possible enhance the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District.*
- *Development in the areas around some of the main settlements may need to avoid small areas of flood risk zone 2 and 3, and incorporate SuDS into new development to ensure that run-off is managed so that the risk of flooding is not exacerbated elsewhere.*
- *Development would need to protect and incorporate the National Cycle Routes and PRowWs, as well as existing open space, sport and recreation areas.”*

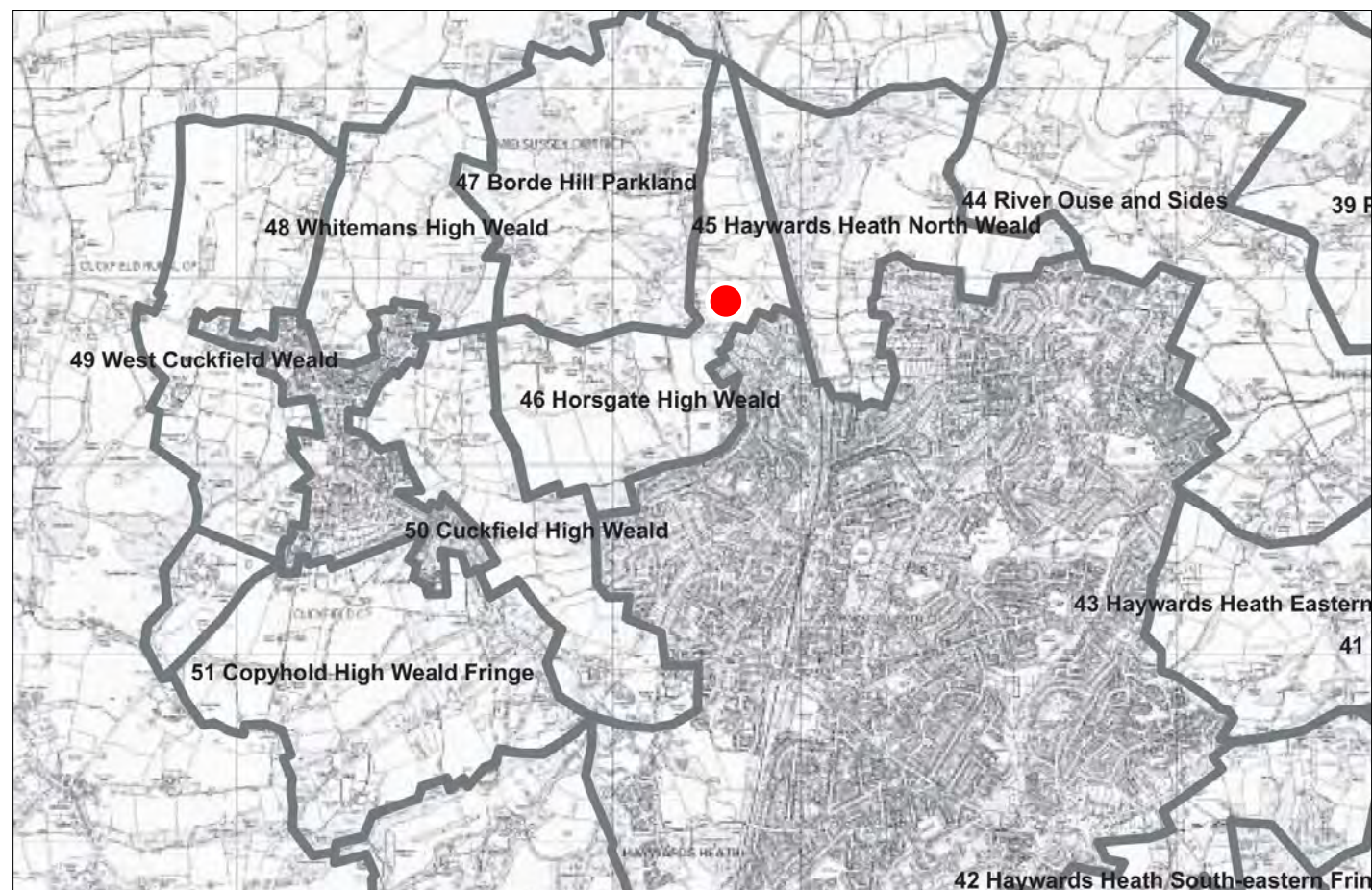


Figure 3.2 – Extract from Landscape Character Areas Map - Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (HDA, 2007)

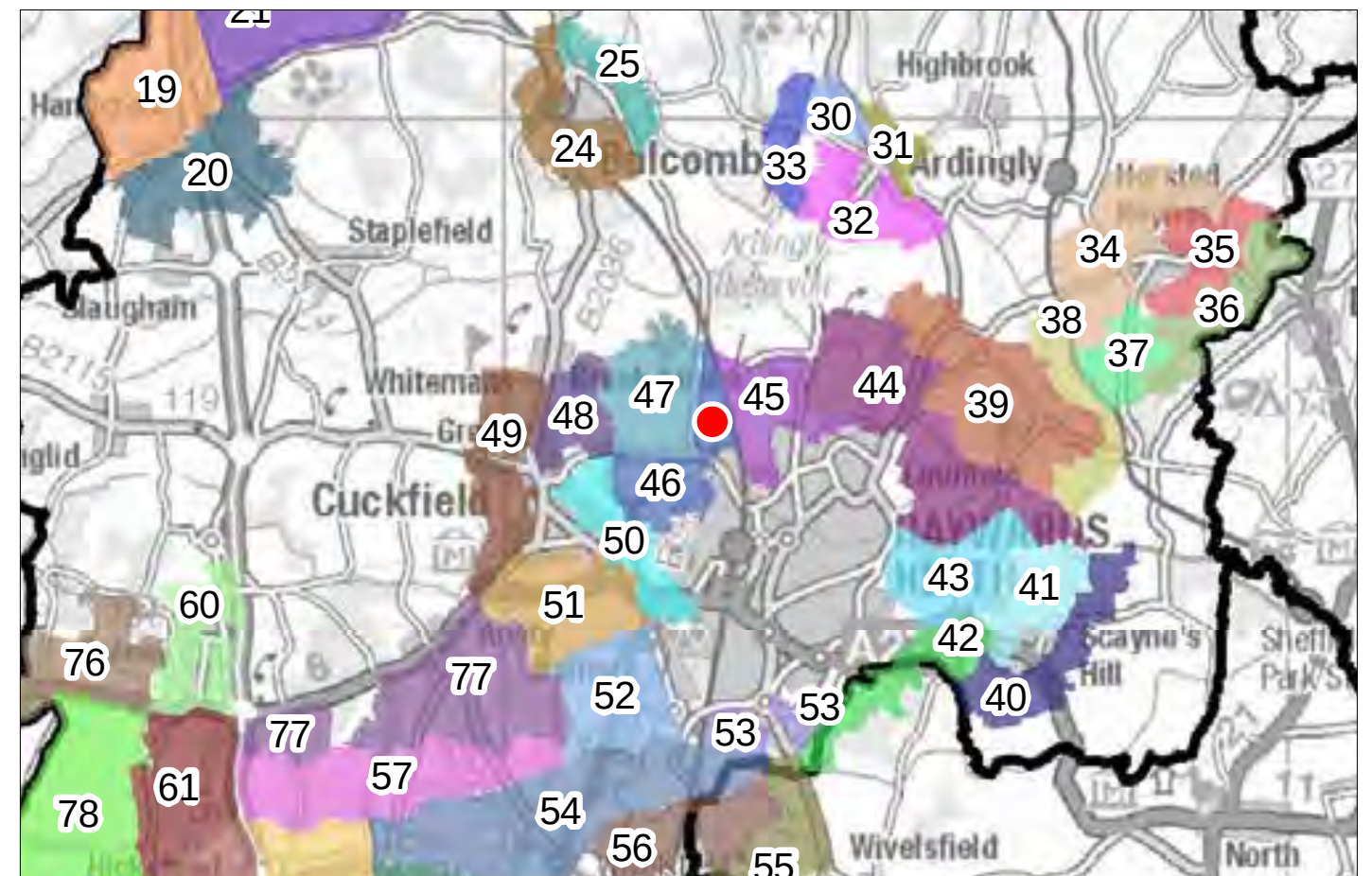


Figure 3.3 – Extract from district Landscape Character Area Map figure 3.1 - Mid Sussex Capacity Study (LUC, 2014)

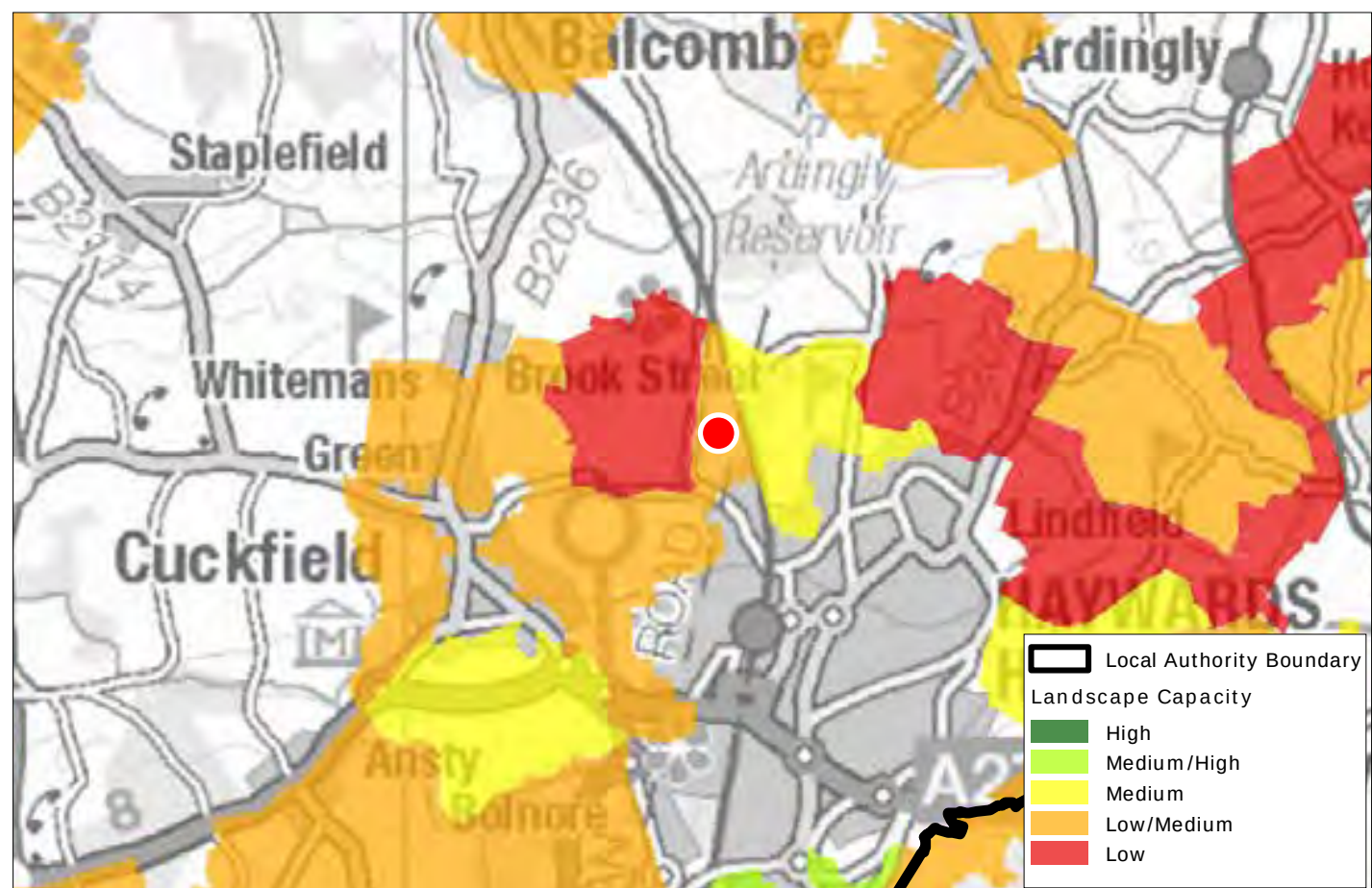


Figure 3.4 – Extract of Landscape Capacity Plan figure 4.7 - Mid Sussex Capacity Study (LUC, 2014)

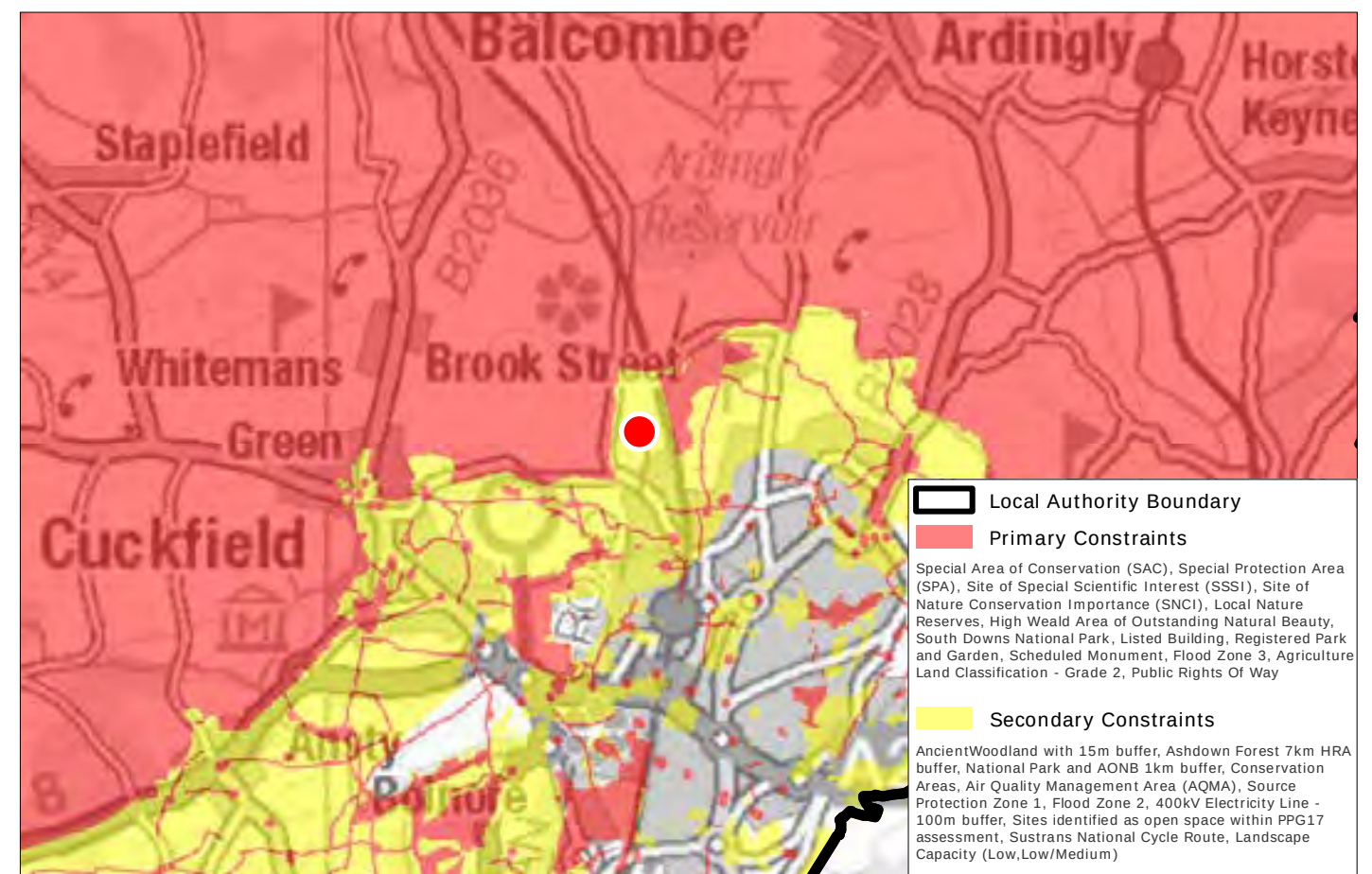


Figure 3.5 – Extract of constraints to development plan figure 4.2 - Mid Sussex Capacity Study (LUC, 2014)

3.2 Contextual Landscape Appraisal

This section describes the landscape elements beyond the Site boundary and therefore the landscape setting to the Site. Figure 3.6 illustrates the various land uses and land cover within the study area.

Geology and Soils

As set out in the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex: “the geology of the area is an extension of the Hastings Beds, lying south of the Weald Clay inlier along the Ouse Valley. The majority of the area comprises mainly Upper and Lower Tunbridge Wells Sandstone and clays and Grinstead Clay in alternating sequences. More localised beds include Cuckfield Stone and Ardingly Sandstone. There are limited deposits of Wadhurst Clay at Cuckfield Park and small areas of inlaid Weald Clay and Horsham Stone south of Warninglid and north of Bolney.”

Landform and drainage

The topography of the study area is heavily influenced by the network of ridgelines and valleys. These include the ridge line north of and outside the Site (and within the National Landscape) at approximately 80-90m AOD and the valley bottoms, with the Site’s northern boundary (again, outside of the National Landscape), which continues eastwards through the north of Haywards Heath.

The settlement of Haywards Heath is located on undulating landform, with the valley sides and bottoms creating a sense of enclosure within the central and northern parts of the town, whilst to the south, the landform is less undulating.

Refer to Figure 3.6 overleaf.

Vegetation Cover

The landscape of the study area is well treed with significant woodland blocks (including numerous Ancient Woodlands). There is no overriding pattern to the areas of woodland which follow both the valley floor and valley slopes. Woodlands often are a mix of areas of plantation woodland and mixed broadleaf. These significant woodlands and associated treebelts provide a sense of enclosure to the landscape and create a verdant horizon, with built form generally set below. Individual mature trees within open fields are associated with the parkland landscape at Borde Hill.

Field boundaries are marked either by clipped hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees; intermittent clipped hedgerows; mature, tall overgrown hedgerows; treebelts; or stock proof fencing.

Land Use

Beyond the settlement edges, the land use is predominantly farmland, comprising both arable and pasture, interspersed with large woodland blocks (some of which are classified as Ancient Woodland), farmsteads, and parkland estates, containing significant historic buildings such as Borde Hill Park (Grade II Listed and a RRG). The field sizes locally vary, however, there is no unifying pattern to the field sizes in terms of location or use.

Closer to the settlement edges other greenfield uses include horticulture and recreation grounds with associated pavilions. The land uses are identified on Figure 3.6

Settlement Pattern / Setting / Building Heights / Urban Grain

Haywards Heath originated as a railway town, on the London to Brighton Railway. The historic core and centre of the town has evolved as ribbon development along the B2272 and B2112 road corridors.

Residential building heights within Haywards Heath are predominantly 2 storey, with occasional 1 and 3 storey, with the more recent developments being predominantly 2 storey, with pitched roofs. Commercial and community premises are predominantly single storey with either flat or pitched roofs.

The predominantly fine / domestic urban grain of the settlement reflects its expansion along the undulating valleys and is therefore typically suburban in nature, with cul-de-sac developments off the movement corridors. Built form beyond the settlement edge is generally intermittent and linear - associated with road corridors.

The physical setting to the northern edge of Haywards Heath comprises fields, parkland and golf courses with woodland blocks set on the valley sides which limit views and provide a sense of intimacy.

Enclosure

The study area has a rural character beyond the settlement and consists of areas of ancient and planned field enclosure, which give time depth to the area. The undulating topography and well wooded landscape create another sense of enclosure in combination with the vegetated field boundaries.

Time Depth

According to the National Historic Landscape Characterisation, the study area predominantly consists of enclosed agriculture, typically of ancient and pre-modern form and field types predominantly considered to be Assart or planned. Borde Hill Park is a Grade II Listed house and associated RPG within the centre of the study area, northwest of Haywards Heath and the Site. Borde Hill is a late 19th to mid 20th Century plantsman’s and collector’s garden with wooded parkland plus ornamental gardens close to the house. Today it is a visitor attraction in the District. Pockets of Ancient Woodland and settlement are scattered throughout the rural landscape, beyond the fringes of Haywards Heath, to the west, north and east.

A number of Listed Buildings are present both within the settlements and scattered through the landscape. Those closest to the Site include:

- Grade II Listed Borde Hill Place, approximately 430m to the northwest of the Site.
- Grade II Listed South Lodge to Borde Hill, approximately 35m to the southwest of the Site.
- Grade II Listed Sugworth Farmhouse, approximately 220m to the north of the Site.

Perceptual and aesthetic

The distinctive topography of the area, with the settlements set on ridgelines between well wooded slopes and valleys, creates a dramatic and striking character with areas of both openness and enclosure.

Settlement is generally perceived below the tree line, with the exception of some large buildings in Haywards Heath such as the new apartment blocks (three storeys)at the junction of Bordehill Lane, Hanlye Lane and Balcombe Road which are visually prominent from the surrounding landscape.

The railway line cuts through the study area and is a source of noise, reducing the sense of tranquillity within its immediate surrounds.

Summary of contextual landscape character

The landscape character of the study area is defined by its landform, vegetation, land use and time depth. These factors have all informed the historic settlement pattern and growth. The rural character, field patterns and valleys are characteristic of the local area and contribute to the landscape quality and scenic quality of the study area. The study area is broadly representative of the district level character area within which it sits. It has high recreation value and conservation value with a number of areas designated for their ecological and heritage importance. Considering the above factors, the overall value of the contextual landscape character is considered to be High.

- Site boundary
- Settlement 1
- Woodland 2
- Agricultural land 3
- Gold course 4
- School 5
- Railway line 6



Figure 3.6 – Land Cover (fabrik, 2025)

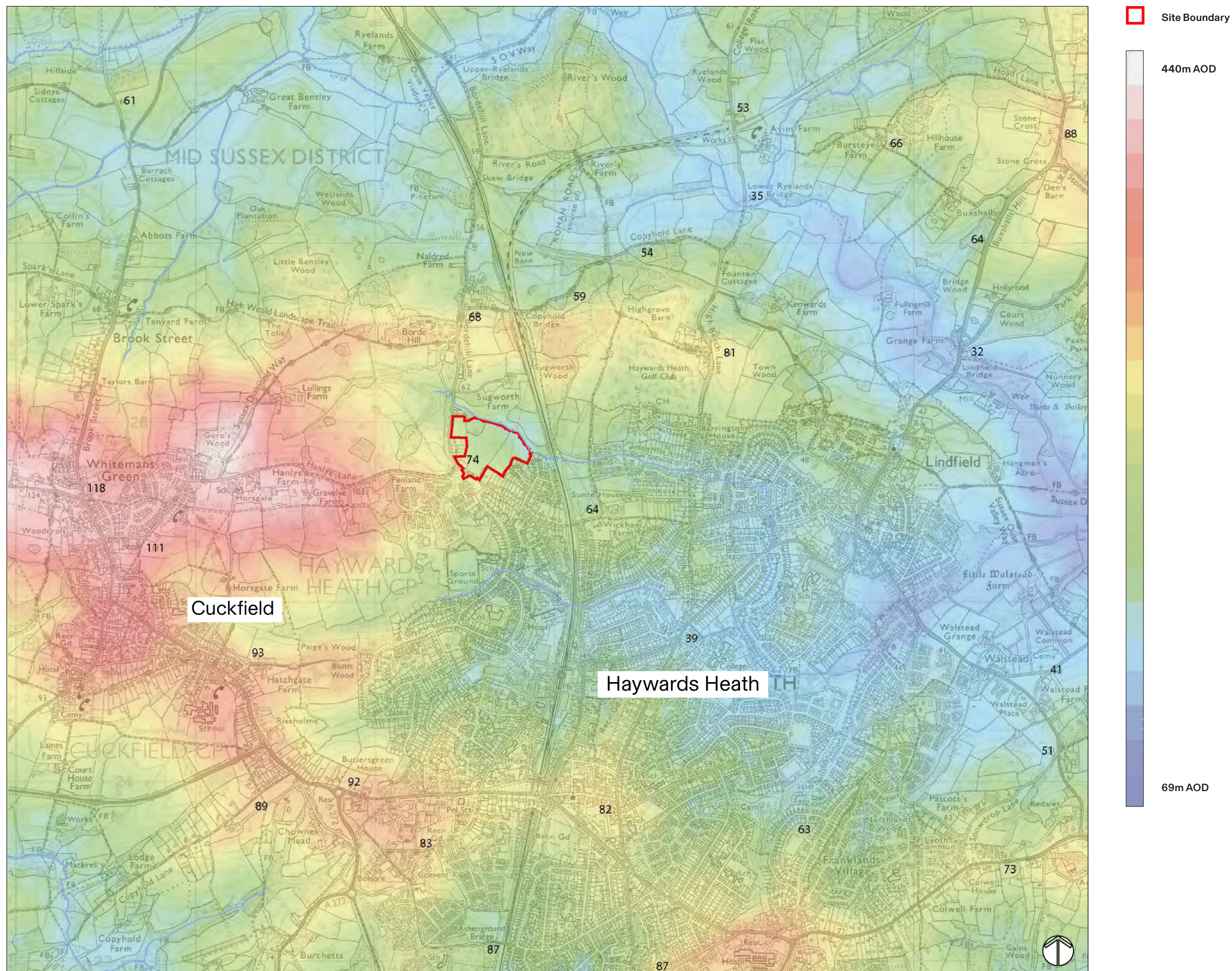


Figure 3.7 – Topography and Drainage (fabrik, 2025)

3.3 Site and Immediate Context Appraisal

The Site is bound by the existing suburban townscape to the southeast and south, and is situated adjacent to the recently completed residential development at Penlands Farm to the southwest. The Site is bound by a line of dwellings along it's western edge, accessed from Borde Hill Lane. Borde Hill Grade II Listed country house and Registered Park and Garden (RPG) is situated beyond Borde Hill Lane to the west.

The boundary of the Registered Park and Garden with Borde Hill Lane additionally forms the edge of the High Weald National Landscape.

Geology and Soils

The UK Soil Observatory mapping identifies the soils of the Site as “slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage”.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Site was utilised for its clayey soils - brick fields situated within the northwest and south. Evidence of localised earthworks are still apparent in these locations today.

Landform and drainage

The Site comprises of a north facing hillside, sloping from approximately 75m AOD at the south western boundary close to Balcombe Road, to approximately 50m AOD at the north eastern boundary, where a small stream forms a definitive edge to the Site.

Vegetation Cover

The Site is in agricultural use with fields set to pasture. Within the northwest of the Site a small area of woodland is associated with the former brick field and mature trees line the northern boundary, forming a continuous green corridor which connects with the woodland block in the northwest of the Site and beyond to the Ancient Woodland west of the Site at Borde Hill Gardens. Mature trees additionally frame the railway line at the northeastern edge of the Site.

Mature intact hedgerows in a good condition frame the westernmost field parcel where it joins Borde Hill Lane and form internal field boundaries. Hedgerow trees are sizeable and distinct - contributing positively to the Site's green infrastructure network.

At the Site's southern and southeastern boundaries, vegetation comprises of tree groups with some mature specimens, plus

hedgerows, shrubs and ornamental species associated with garden boundaries.

Key natural elements, features and characteristics

The Site is characterised by its landform and vegetation, which creates areas of both enclosure and openness. The landscape features are generally in good condition and contribute to the scenic quality of the local area. The fields are in agricultural use and form part of a wider rural landscape. The undulating landform generally funnels water into the watercourse at the northern boundary.

Land Use

The Site comprises three fields of varying shapes and sizes used for pastoral practices. Land uses within immediate proximity of the Site include dwellings to the south, east and west, agricultural land to the north and parkland to the west (beyond Borde Hill Lane).

Built form

Buildings within the Site include the small and storage sheds within the northwestern section, to the immediate east of those dwellings at Borde Hill Lane.

Whilst outside the Site, in terms of immediate context, the Grade II listed building - the South Lodge to the west of the Site at Borde Hill Lane is 1 - 1/2 storeys in height. Those other residential dwellings within proximity - to the immediate west, south and east are typically 2 storeys, some with rooms in attics and are mostly detached and semi-detached. A newly constructed apartment block, at the roundabout junction to the immediate south of the Site is 3 storeys in height, which together with its elevated topographical position results in prominence in local views.

Time Depth

As previously discussed, brick fields were located within the northwest and south of the Site during the 1800s and early 1900s. Remnants of the earthworks from this time are still apparent in these locations today. As such, the Site's field shapes are still as they were from this time. Adjacent fields to the south and east, which once contained woodland and orchards, have been replaced with residential development. This is consistent with Hayward Heath's pattern of development over the past 200 years.

The alignment of Hanlye Lane, to the immediate south of the Site was amended in recent years, moving eastwards, away from the Borde Hill Lodge House (Grade II Listed building)

and incorporating a roundabout junction to accommodate the development at the new Coniston Avenue.

Perceptual and aesthetic

The Site is perceived as a relatively enclosed landscape due to the steeply incised hillside in which it forms part, and due to the south facing hillside to the north, which is framed by trees and woodland. Built form is prevalent within the Site's setting, with residential dwellings and their gardens to the immediate east - at Orchard Way and Fairfield Way. Dwellings frame the Site to the south - at Balcombe Road and to the west and Borde Hill Lane. When viewed from the Site, dwellings in the immediate vicinity are set on sloping hillsides and with the backdrop of mature trees and woodland.

Recent residential development at Coniston Avenue to the south of the Site and Balcombe Road is additionally apparent from the Site and within local views. Given that these dwellings are situated on the upper slopes of the hillsides associated with the Site and include 3 storey apartment buildings at the southern fringe, they contribute to the perception of settlement edge.

There is limited perception of the adjacent Borde Hill RPG from the Site. The mature tree belt to the immediate west of Borde Hill Lane limits views into the parkland. The entrance to the gardens is from a newly created junction at Borde Hill Lane, to the northwest of the Site. The access drive continues northwards, away from the Site, up the hillside and towards the house on top of the hill. As such, there are limited views into the RPG from Borde Hill Lane. In addition, the new road alignment with roundabout to the immediate south of the Site has further altered the setting to the Lodge House (Grade II Listed) associated with RPG. The gateposts and building indicate that a formal landscape is situated beyond these features to the north, but as this driveway (at one time the main access to the house and gardens) is no longer in use, and given the sloping landform and prevalence of woodland, the historic landscape is not perceived.

The Site is not remote or tranquil, due to the adjacent settlement and surrounding road network. In views north from the Site, the Grade II Listed Sugworth Farmhouse is visible on the south facing hillside. The farmhouse and the associated agrarian fields provide the rural fringe context and reinforce the perception on travelling northwards, of leaving the settlement of Haywards Heath.

Function

The Site is representative of the character of the LCA within which it sits. Its topographical profile and its well treed fringes are in keeping with the surrounding landscape, which limit its perceptual relationship with the wider area.

The Site contributes to a relatively unified character of agricultural landscape set within a well vegetated framework adjacent to the existing settlement of Haywards Heath. Built form within Haywards on rising ground to the south is apparent within the local area.

The Site has a limited role to the setting of both Borde Hill RPG and the High Weald National Landscape. The mature tree belts to the immediate west of the Site and that woodland within the local landscape to the north, form definitive edges, treed skylines and a woodland character. As such, the prominence of trees limits intervisibilty between the RPG, National Landscape and the Site from public vantage points. The Site therefore forms a discrete parcel of land, and has a minor function in the rural - settlement fringe at this northern edge of Haywards Heath.

Overall Landscape Character

The Site's landscape character is informed by the following features:

- pastoral land use;
- mature woodland within the northwest of the Site;
- mature trees along field boundaries and the water course;
- woodland and trees within the immediate local landscape providing physical and visual enclosure;
- the mature hedgerow which divides the field parcels;
- sloping landform which falls north-eastwards from approximately 75m AOD in the southern corner of the Site to approximately 50m AOD in the northeastern corner;
- the contextual adjacent undulating landform;
- adjacent built form at Borde Hill Lane to the west, Orchard Way and Fairfield Way to the southeast and the recently completed development at Penland Farm to the southwest, the latter of which is prominent on the skyline due to it's elevated position;
- adjacent built form at Sugworth Farm to the north.

The farming features of the Site are typical and the landscape features are characteristic of the local setting. There is no sense of remoteness, given that the adjacent residential dwellings are apparent in views to the west, south and east.



- Site Boundary
- Public Right Of Way
- Listed Buildings
- Borde Hill Rpg, Plus High Weald National Landscape
- Existing Trees And Woodland
- Existing Pasture
- Existing Scrub Vegetation
- Existing Built Form
- Existing Hedgerows
- Existing Water Courses
- Viewpoint Location
- Contour

Internal Visual Survey

A visual inspection of the Site was conducted on 26th June 2025. Photos A - N on the following pages illustrate the existing Site conditions and characteristics. The viewpoint locations are illustrated on Figure 3.8.

The photographs demonstrate that, with the exception of the vegetated edge, there are no views into the National Landscape from the Site due to the well vegetated nature of the field boundaries, woodland blocks and undulating topography. There are views of a small section of the National Landscape boundary, which in turn forms the boundary of the RPG at Borde Hill Lane. This is comprised of mature woodland vegetation, which truncates wider views.

From the south, north and centre of the Site, the recently completed residential development at Coniston Avenue is apparent, including the 3 storey apartment block, close to the roundabout junction. Built form to the immediate west, south and east informs the character and amenity of views out from the Site, and to the north, the agricultural fields and Sugworth farmhouse (Grade II Listed) inform the rural nature of the Site's fringe character. Vegetation on the upper valley slopes creates a backdrop of woodland truncates views to the wider landscape beyond.

Figure 3.8 – Site landscape appraisal with photograph locations (fabrik, 2025)



Photograph A
View looking east into the woodland within the Site, associated with the former brick field. Trees are apparent in locations where landform has been manipulated historically, providing topographical variety in a location which is low lying.



Photograph B
View looking southwest across the field in the west of the Site. The mature tree belt is apparent beyond Borde Hill lane, west of this Site. This forms the definitive boundary of the national landscape and Borde Hill Park (RPG), and is prominent on the skyline. From this location there are glimpsed views of the detached dwellings to the southwest, at Borde Hill Lane.

-  Site boundary
-  Photo location





Photograph C
View looking northwest across the field parcel in the west of the Site. The trees at the edge of Borde Hill Park RPG are visible from this location, as are those semi-detached dwellings at Borde Hill Lane to the northwest. The treed skyline continues beyond those dwellings, limiting views out of the Site to the immediate locality.



Photograph D
View looking southeast of the Site from the edge of the woodland block within the Site. The sloping landform is apparent and the internal field boundary is visible, with its standard trees and treed horizon beyond.





Photograph E
View looking west from the northeastern corner of the central field parcel on Site. The treed skyline is prominent, with dwellings at Balcombe Road and Borde Hill Lane visible amongst the trees.



Photograph F
View looking south towards the existing settlement edge from the northern boundary, within the easternmost field parcel. Dwellings at Orchard Way and Fairfield Way are visible, set behind hedgerows and trees. The Site's sloping landform is clear.

-  Site boundary
-  Photo location





Photograph G
View looking west from the Site's eastern boundary. The internal field boundary and trees is visible, together with the sloping landform and treed horizon beyond.



Photograph H
View looking north towards Sugworth Farm. Whilst the farmhouse is not apparent from this location, the south facing sloping fields beyond the Site are apparent, together with the treed horizon beyond. The Site's sloping landform and mature oak trees are visible.

-  Site boundary
-  Photo location





Photograph I
View looking east towards the existing settlement edge. The rear elevations of dwellings are apparent, set behind hedgerows and vegetation and below a treed skyline. The sloping landform is visible as is the treed skyline beyond.



Photograph J
View looking northeast from the southwest of the internal field boundary hedgerow. The Site's sloping landform is apparent, as is the tree skyline, dwelling at Borde Hill Lane and the Grade II Listed Sugworth Farmhouse, set amongst fields and trees on the south facing hillside north of the Site.



Photograph K
View looking south towards Balcombe Road. The recently completed apartment blocks (three storeys in height) are prominent on the rising ground south of the Site, set behind mature trees at the Site's boundary.

 Site boundary
 Photo location





Photograph I
View looking north from the south of the Site. The Site's sloping landform is apparent, as is the tree skyline, dwelling at Borde Hill lane and the Grade II Listed Sugworth Farmhouse, set amongst fields and trees on the south facing hillside north of the Site.

-  Site boundary
-  Photo location



3.4 Landscape Receptors

Based on the detailed site-specific character area analysis, a number of key landscape receptors have been identified as being representative of the Site's character and are taken forward for assessment. These receptors reflect the physical, perceptual, and experiential attributes of the Site, including vegetation cover, landform, natural features, land use, built form, visual enclosure,and perceptual qualities. Each receptor is accompanied by a professional judgement of landscape value, informed by factors such as scenic quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, perceptual qualities, and cultural or historical associations.

3.4.1 Published Landscape Receptors

LCAs GW4 and 10, High Weald Fringes: High

The HW4: High Weald Fringes Landscape Character Area is considered to be of **High** value. This reflects its predominantly rural character, pattern of woodland, shaws, hedgerows and assart fields, and its cultural and historic associations with the wider High Weald landscape. Importantly, a substantial proportion of this LCA lies within the High Weald National Landscape, a nationally designated landscape that elevates the overall value of the character area. The presence of ancient woodland, traditional rural buildings, designed landscapes, and a coherent, well-preserved landscape structure further reinforce its high landscape value.

3.4.2 Contextural Landscape Receptors

Setting of the High Weald National Landscape and Borde Hill RPG: High

The receptor is considered to be of **High** value. Both designations are recognised for their scenic, historic, and cultural importance, with the National Landscape valued for its distinctive medieval landscape pattern, woodland cover, and settlement form, and the RPG valued for its designed landscape, heritage significance, and contribution to local character. Although the Site does not make a strong contribution to the immediate setting of either designation due to intervening landform and vegetation, the receptor itself is inherently of high value.

3.4.3 Site Landscape Receptors

Landform and Drainage: Medium

The Site comprises of a north facing hillside, sloping from approximately 75m AOD at the south western boundary close to Balcombe Road, to approximately 50m AOD at the northern boundary, where a small stream forms a definitive edge to the Site. A value of **Medium** is assigned as the landform is typical of the local landscape.

Vegetation Cover: Medium

The on-site vegetation has a **Medium** value as it contributes positively to the Site's landscape character and green infrastructure. Key features include a small woodland in the northwest, mature trees along the northern and northeastern boundaries forming a green corridor linking to Ancient Woodland at Borde Hill Gardens, and intact hedgerows with notable hedgerow trees, particularly in the west. Tree groups, mature specimens, and ornamental planting along the southern and southeastern boundaries further enhance the Site's visual and ecological value.

Landuse: Medium

The Site's agricultural fields are not designated and are common features in the immediate and wider landscape context. They are in a relatively good condition, being in pastoral use. The tranquillity of the fields and their immediate surroundings are however degraded by the presence of surrounding built form and the adjacent road corridors. On this basis, the value of the feature is considered to be **Medium**.

Perceptual / Aesthetic Qualities: Medium

The Site has a semi-rural, enclosed character shaped by its sloping landform and surrounding tree cover. While influenced by adjacent residential development and road infrastructure, it retains perceptual value through its landscape structure and views north toward the Grade II Listed Sugworth Farmhouse and its agrarian setting, which reinforce the rural fringe context. Importantly, the Site is not visible from the adjacent National Landscape, limiting its contribution to the wider scenic quality. On this basis, the perceptual and aesthetic elements are considered to be of **Medium** value.

Site and Immediate Context: Medium

The Site forms part of the landscape on the northern settled edge of Haywards Heath, where the urban fringe meets a more rural setting. Its character is shaped by the steep landform, mature vegetation, and enclosed visual quality, while also being influenced by surrounding residential development and road infrastructure. Although adjacent to the Borde Hil RPG and High Weald National Landscape, the Site is visually and physically separated from it by mature tree belts and topography, limiting its contribution to the setting of this designated asset. The wider character is already eroded by modern built form, but the Site still offers a degree of separation between the settlement and the open countryside to the north, including views toward the Grade II listed Sugworth Farmhouse. On this basis, the Site's setting and overall character are considered to be of **Medium** value.

3.1 Summary of Landscape Receptors	
Landscape Receptors	Value
Landscape Character Areas GW4 and 10: High Weald Fringes	High
Setting of the High Weald National Landscape and Borde Hill RPG	High
Site Landform and Drainage	Medium
Site Vegetation	Medium
Site Land Use	Medium
Site Perceptual / Aesthetic Qualities	Medium
Site and Immediate Context	Medium

4.0

Visual Assessment

4.1 Visual Appraisal

The extent to which the Site is visible from the surrounding landscape is based on grading of degrees of visibility. It is determined from a visual inspection of the Site and its context from roads, public rights of way and properties.

Seasonal change in existing evergreen and deciduous plant material will affect the available views. Typically views will be different through the seasons with a greater sense of enclosure in the summer months when deciduous trees are in leaf.

Figure 4.1 illustrates the locations of key representative views selected to demonstrate the limited visibility of the Site from the immediate environs and local landscape, as taken on 13th September 2023 (reflecting late summer / early autumn views, with most deciduous trees in leaf). The photographs 1-10 are presented on the following pages with a description of the views.

Views of the Site are experienced by receptors in the immediate local environs, where the Site is visible in the context of the existing vegetation and topography. Beyond this, due to the combination of topography and vegetation, the Site is not readily discernible.

Open views of part of the Site, filtered between intervening trees occur from the road corridor of Borde Hill Lane and Balcombe Road and its associated dwellings, to the immediate west and southwest of the Site.

Furthermore, there are open and partial views of the Site from the dwellings at Orchard Way and Fairfield Way which are situated adjacent to the Site's southeastern boundary. The character and amenity of these views are informed by the tree and hedgerow planting along the Site's boundary with the rear gardens. This allows for filtered views through to the arable field within the north of the Site and across to the trees and arable fields beyond the Site to the north.

Trees and vegetation filter views of the Site from the northeastern extent of the newly constructed residential development at Penland Farm. From here, the character and amenity of the view is informed by the sloping landform, some intervening vegetation and the highway and dwellings at Balcombe Road.

Within the wider landscape, views of the Site are truncated due to the intervening woodland, trees and topography. As such, there is no inter visibility between the Site and the adjacent RPG at Borde Hill to the west, and the National Landscape in the summer months.

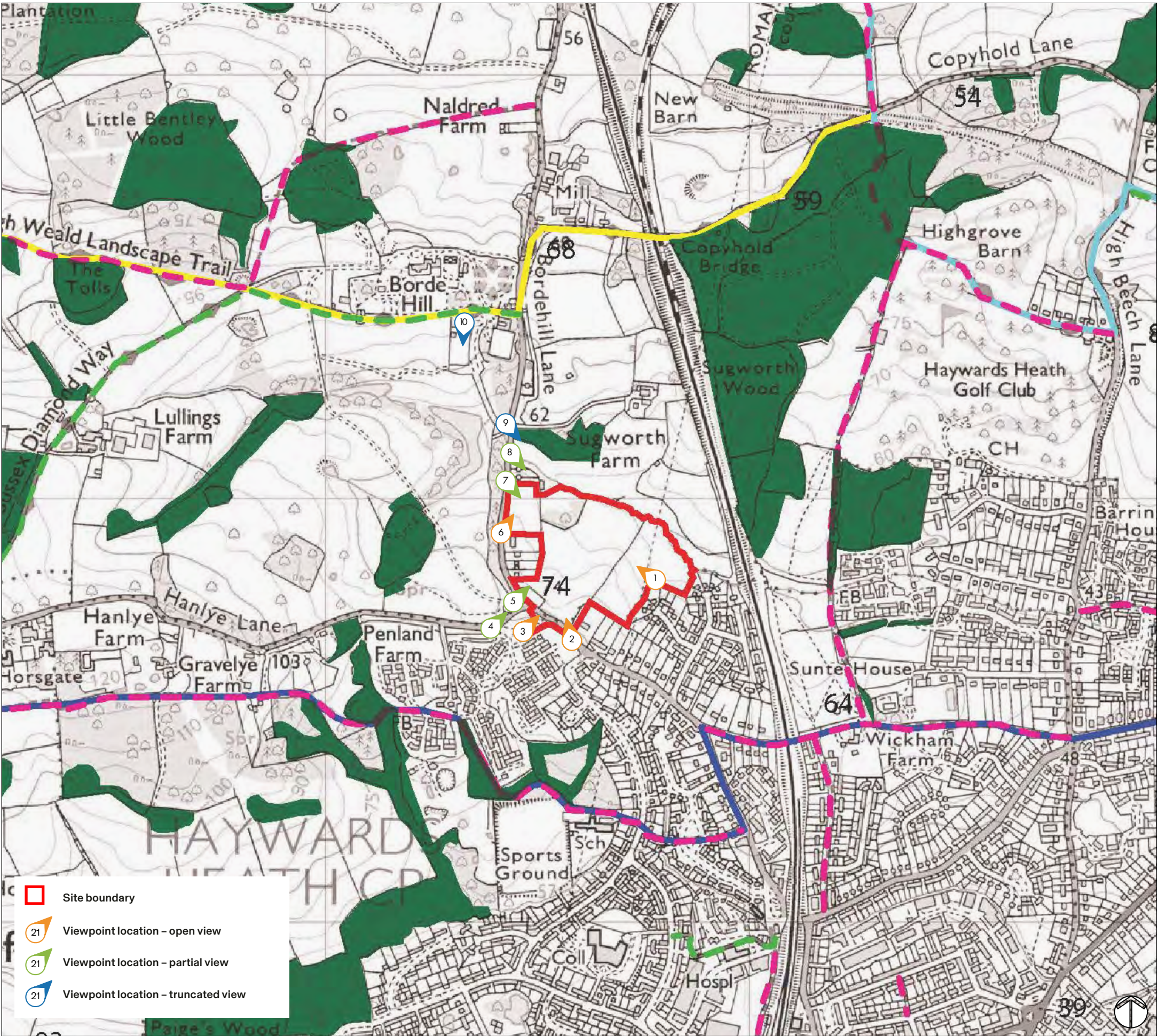


Figure 4.1 – Visual summary from local area (fabrik, 2025)

4.2 Visual Assessment from Local Receptors

A visual summary from key receptor types are set out below, whilst the character and amenity of views are described in the captions below photographs 1-10.

Fieldwork established that the Site has a limited visual envelope. Public views of the Site are experienced from the immediate setting only. These include views from:

- Borde Hill Lane, to the immediate west and southwest.
- Balcombe Road to the immediate south.
- Hanlye Lane to the immediate southwest.

Those residential receptors that experience views of the Site are located at:

- Orchard Way and Fairfield Way to the immediate east.
- Balcombe Road to the immediate south.
- Borde Hill Lane to the immediate west.
- Aster Way to the immediate southwest.

Views of the Site diminish and become difficult to distinguish further away from the local environment due to a combination of intervening vegetation and undulating topography.

Views of the Site are wholly truncated from viewpoints 9 and 10

Public Rights of Way, visitor attractions and scenic viewpoints

Viewpoint 1- is representative of those using the Sussex Diamond Way / High Weald Landscape Trail and arriving at Borde Hill Gardens. From this location, within the High Weald National Landscape, views of the Site are wholly truncated due to the sloping landform and intervening trees. There are additionally no views of the Site from the PRoW to the west with views continuing to be obscured up and at The Tolls Woodland. In addition, there are no views of the Site from the Borde Hill Gardens, to the immediate north of the PRoW within the formal gardens - atop of the 'haha' boundary feature.

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Residential

Viewpoint 1 is representative of views of the Site from residential properties at the existing settlement edge of Haywards Heath - from the rear of dwellings (that back on to the Site) at Orchard Way and Fairfield Way to the immediate east.

From the immediate south, there are views of the Site from those recently completed residential dwellings at Coniston Avenue, with oblique views from houses (viewpoint 4) and direct views from the 3 storey apartment block close to the roundabout junction with Balcombe Road (viewpoint 3).

The Grade II Listed South Lodge at Borde Hill Lane (which is also just within the High Weald National Landscape and the Borde Hill Registered Park and Gardens) faces the mature trees at the southern boundary of the Site, which truncate wider views of the Site during the summer months (refer to viewpoint 5).

Additional dwellings are situated along Borde Hill Lane to the immediate southwest and west of the Site. These dwellings back on to the Site and as such, experience open and partial views of the western and central field parcels from the rear elevations and back gardens, where vegetation and trees at garden boundaries filter some views (refer to viewpoint 6).

Open views across the Site are afforded from the southern (side) elevation of the Grade II listed Sugworth Farmhouse, located to the north of the Site on the opposing valley side (seen in viewpoint 2). From this slightly elevated position, residents experience broad, largely uninterrupted views across the Site, which are understood in the context of nearby settlement-edge development to the south and east, as well as the pastoral land and tree-lined boundaries that contribute to the farmhouse's rural setting.

Transport Corridors

Receptors using transport corridors are limited to those within immediate proximity at Borde Hill Lane, Balcombe Road and Hanlye Lane. Views are open and partial from these locations, with the boundary vegetation and some of the field parcels apparent (refer to viewpoints 2 - 8). Of these representative views, those between 4 - 8 are located at the boundary to the High Weald AONB and the Borde Hill Registered Park and Gardens.

Views from viewpoint 9 at the junction to Borde Hill Gardens from Borde Hill Road, northwest of the Site are truncated due to the intervening vegetation.



Viewpoint 1			
Receptors	Elevation	Distance from site	Description of view
Residents at the rear of the dwellings / in back gardens	60m AOD	Immediate proximity	View looking west from the Site's eastern boundary, representative of the views from the adjacent dwellings. From this location, there are open views across the easternmost field parcel, with views of the hedgerows, trees and the treed horizon beyond.



-  Site boundary
-  Viewpoint location – open view
-  Viewpoint location – partial view
-  Viewpoint location – truncated view





Viewpoint 2			
Receptors	Elevation	Distance from site	Description of view
Residents and transient users of Balcombe Road	75m AOD	Immediate proximity	View looking north towards the Site from Balcombe Road. From this location there are views of the Site's southern boundary trees and views through the trees to the fields beyond. The Grade II Listed Sugworth House is visible to the north, on the south facing hillside. The character amenity of views along road are informed by the trees and agricultural fields, but also informed by the road junction and newly constructed dwellings to the south. Views of the Site become filtered and truncated travelling eastwards along Balcombe Road away from the Site.



- Site boundary
- 21 Viewpoint location – open view
- 21 Viewpoint location – partial view
- 21 Viewpoint location – truncated view





Viewpoint 3			
Receptors	Elevation	Distance from site	Description of view
Residents and transient users of Balcombe Road and Hanlye Lane	75m AOD	50m	View looking north from the roundabout at Balcombe Road, immediately south of the Site. From this location the Site's southern boundary is apparent. The Site's sloping landform is apparent, as is that of the local landscape - with the Grade II Listed Sugworth farmhouse visible on the south facing hillside to the north of the Site. From this location, the roundabout is prominent in the foreground.



- Site boundary
- 21 Viewpoint location – open view
- 21 Viewpoint location – partial view
- 21 Viewpoint location – truncated view

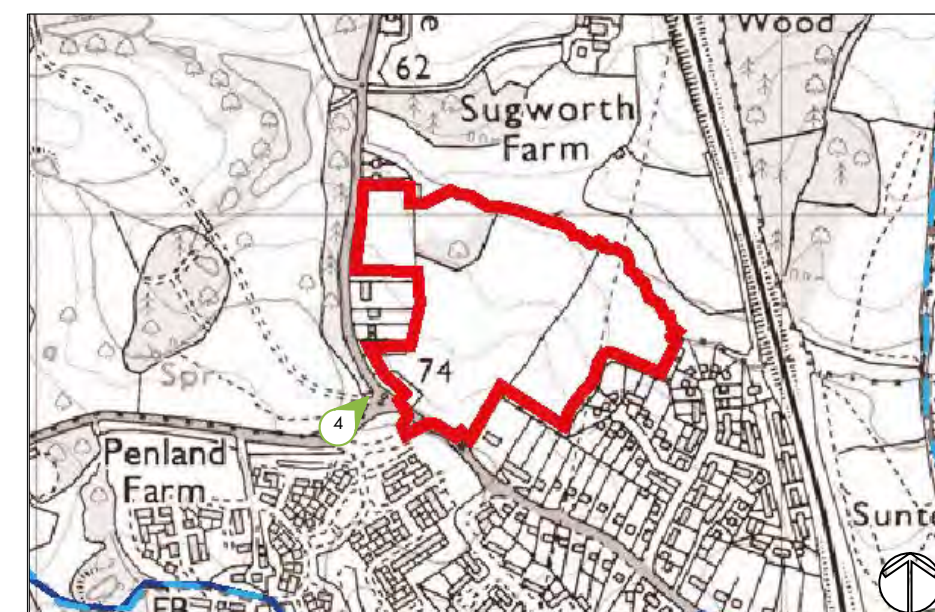




Viewpoint 4			
Receptors	Elevation	Distance from site	Description of view
Residents and transient users of Balcombe Road and Hanlye Lane	75m AOD	90m	View looking north from the entrance to Coniston Avenue. From this location, some of the boundary vegetation is apparent, with the gap in the trees allowing views through to the treed horizon beyond the Site to the northeast.



- Site boundary
- 21 Viewpoint location – open view
- 21 Viewpoint location – partial view
- 21 Viewpoint location – truncated view





Viewpoint 5			
Receptors	Elevation	Distance from site	Description of view
Residents at the Grade II Listed South Lodge and transient users of Borde Hill Lane	75m AOD	75m	View looking north from Borde Hill Lane, adjacent to the Grade II Listed South Lodge. From this location, the vegetation at the southern boundary is apparent, which in turn truncates wider views of the Site.



- Site boundary
- 21 Viewpoint location – open view
- 21 Viewpoint location – partial view
- 21 Viewpoint location – truncated view

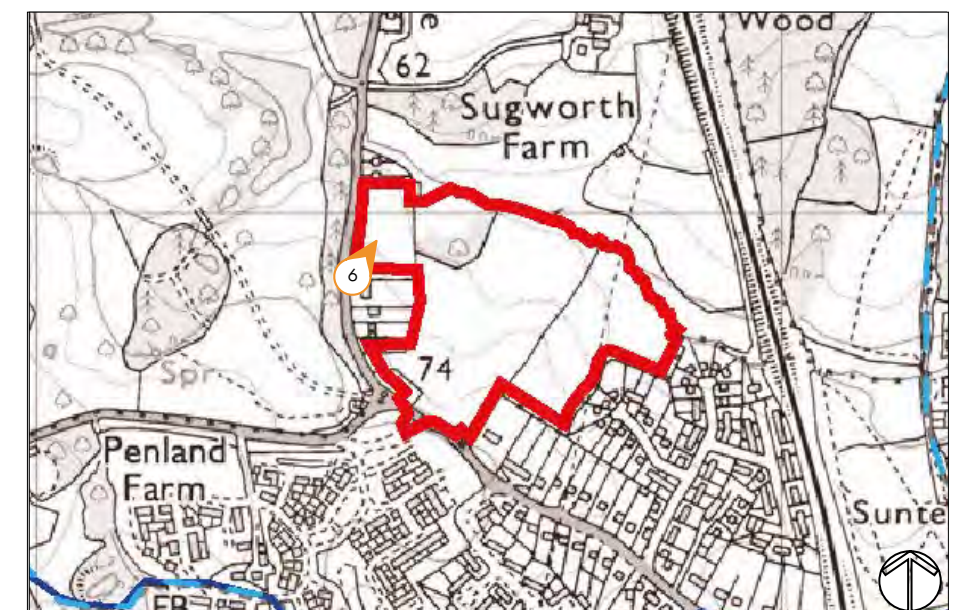




Viewpoint 6			
Receptors	Elevation	Distance from site	Description of view
Residents and transient users of Borde Hill Lane	70m AOD	Immediate proximity	View looking north across the western parcel of the Site from Borde Hill Lane. From this location there are open views of the field parcel , whilst views of the wider Site are truncated. The character and amenity of the view is informed by the treed skyline, including the mature tree belt to the west of Borde Hill Lane, which forms a robust boundary to the RPG and National Landscape. On travelling north along the road, the mature vegetation and 'sunken' nature of the lane truncate views into the field parcel.



- Site boundary
- 21 Viewpoint location – open view
- 21 Viewpoint location – partial view
- 21 Viewpoint location – truncated view





Viewpoint 7			
Receptors	Elevation	Distance from site	Description of view
Transient users of the Borde Hill Lane	65m AOD	Immediate proximity	View looking east from Borde Hill Lane. From this location, the vegetation along the road corridor and which forms the western boundary, is apparent. This, in turn truncates wider views of the Site. Also apparent is the mature woodland that frames the RPG and national landscape to the west of Borde Hill Lane.

-  Site boundary
-  Viewpoint location – open view
-  Viewpoint location – partial view
-  Viewpoint location – truncated view





Viewpoint 8			
Receptors	Elevation	Distance from site	Description of view
Transient users of the Borde Hill Lane	65m AOD	80m	View looking southeast towards the Site from Borde Hill Road, to the north of the adjacent dwellings. From this location, the mature trees at the Site's northern boundary are apparent, which truncate wider views of the Site.

-  Site boundary
-  Viewpoint location – open view
-  Viewpoint location – partial view
-  Viewpoint location – truncated view





Viewpoint 9			
Receptors	Elevation	Distance from site	Description of view
Transient users of the Borde Hill Lane	65m AOD	100m	View looking southeast towards the site from Borde Hill Road and the entrance to the RPG. From this location, also on the boundary of the National Landscape, intervening layers of vegetation screen views of the Site.

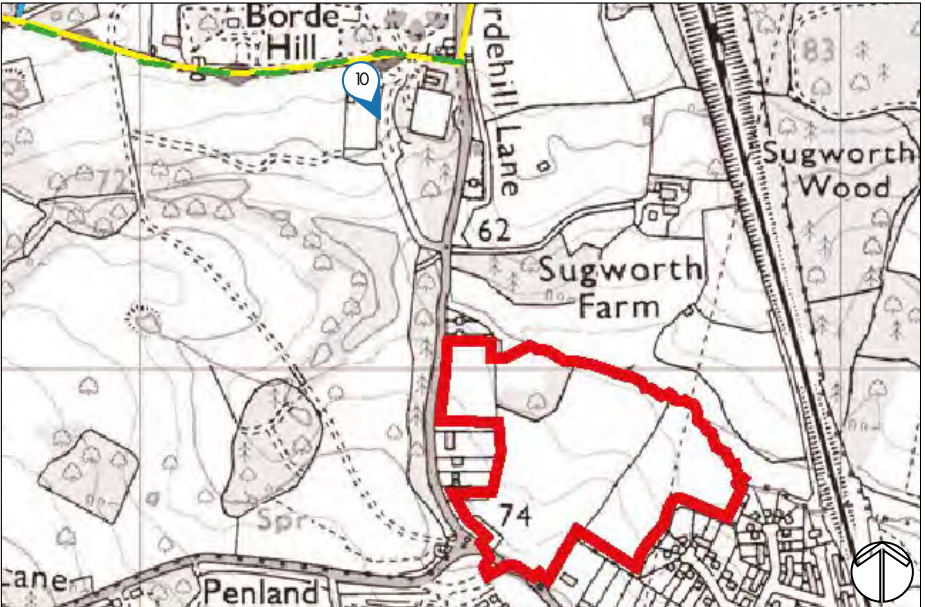
-  Site boundary
-  Viewpoint location – open view
-  Viewpoint location – partial view
-  Viewpoint location – truncated view





Viewpoint 10			
Receptors	Elevation	Distance from site	Description of view
Visitors of Borde Hill Park and Gardens and users of the High Weald Landscape Trail	85m AOD	450m	View looking southeast towards the Site from the car park arrival space at Borde Hill Gardens, within the National Landscape, where the PRoW crosses through. From this location, views of the Site are wholly truncated by vegetation.

-  Site boundary
-  Viewpoint location – open view
-  Viewpoint location – partial view
-  Viewpoint location – truncated view



4.3 Visual Receptors

Based on the detailed site survey and analysis, a number of representative visual receptors have been identified and taken forward for assessment. These receptors encompass a range of publicly accessible viewpoints and private locations from which the Site may be experienced, and include users of local rights of way, nearby residential properties, and roads. Each receptor has been selected to reflect the range of visibility, distance, and viewer sensitivity associated with the Site. A professional judgement of value is provided for each. Receptors where predicted visual effects are negligible, or where no meaningful views of the Site are available, have been omitted from detailed assessment in order to focus on those locations where a change is likely to be perceived.

Residents of properties directly adjacent to the Site to the south - Low

Views are from a location with no designation and there are no cultural associations. Also, the properties' primary elevations are not orientated towards the Site, meaning the receptor has a Low value.

Residents of Aster Way fronting onto Balcombe Road - Medium

Views are from a location with no designation and there are no cultural associations. However, the primary elevation of the building is orientated towards the Site, affording the receptor a Medium value.

Residents of the Grade II Listed Sugworth Farmhouse - Medium

Views are from Sugworth Farmhouse, which is Grade II Listed. The primary elevation of the building does not face towards the Site. The value of the receptor is therefore Medium.

Residents of Borde Hill Lane - High

Views are from the edge of the High Weald National Landscape, affording the receptor a High value.

Transient users of Borde Hill Lane - High

Views are from the edge of the High Weald National Landscape, affording the receptor a High value.

5.1 Summary of Visual Receptors		
Visual Receptor Type / Group	Representative Viewpoints	Value
Residents of properties directly adjacent to the Site to the south (those along Balcombe Road, Orchard Way and Fairfield Close)	1 & 6	Low
Residents of Aster Way fronting onto Balcombe Road	2 & 3	Medium
Residents of the Grade II Listed Sugworth Farmhouse	5	Medium
Transient users of Borde Hill Lane	2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9	High

5.0

Summary of Baseline Assessment

5.1

Landscape and Visual Considerations

The landscape development parameters illustrated at Figure 5.1 have been prepared considering the existing landscape related designations; the existing settlement edge framework; and the landscape and visual constraints / opportunities associated with the Site.

The Site lies on the edge of the High Weald National Landscape and immediately adjacent the Borde Hill RPG, with a sloping landform which connects to an associated valley bottom and undulating landform beyond.

The eastern setting to the RPG and National Landscape comprises an intermittent line of houses.

There is a sense of openness along the western edge of the Site perceived from Bordehill Lane, between the existing dwellings.

The treed skyline with built form in an elevated position at Penland Farm, Balcombe Road, Orchard Way and Fairfield Way are prominent skyline features in views from the Grade II Listed farmhouse at Sugworth Farm to the north.

The Site is well contained visually from the west, due to the wooded and treed character of Borde Hill Registered Park and Garden and the National Landscape, with localised views from the immediate landscape to the northwest, west, south and east.

Landscape and Visual Recommendations:

- Proposed development parcels are to be situated adjacent to existing adjacent built form.
- Linear hedgerow features with associated trees to be retained and supplemented, with access between the development parcels to be sensitively located within the lowest slopes of the Site.
- There are opportunities to utilise the new roundabout junction, associated with the recently completed Penland Farm development. The proposed access solution is to be sensitive to the evolving character of Balcombe Road, create a wooded 'arboreal' approach and be a high quality arrival space to the Site.
- The proposed development parcels are to be responsive to the character of the adjacent ribbon development along Borde Hill Lane.
- Development parcels are to form a positive interface

between the new settlement edge and the proposed open space, with built form fronting on to the open space, and responsive to Sugworth Farmhouse to the north - retaining view corridors from gaps in vegetation at Balcombe Road.

- Development parcels are to be set away from the National Landscape and RPG edge to maintain the existing landscape setting in a manner consistent with the adjacent dwellings.

Open Space and Green Infrastructure Strategy:

- Retention of existing hedgerows, trees and woodland.
- Introduction of linear tree belts along the alignment of existing hedgerows, creating open space corridors through the development, connecting with the larger area of public open space existing trees and woodland within the north of the Site and existing trees off-site, creating arboreal wildlife corridors.
- Open space to retain the perceived sense of openness within the north of the Site and to have a 'Country Park' character to complement the adjacent Borde Hill Registered Park and Garden.
- New pedestrian footpaths to connect with existing road and footpath network off site and within the adjacent Penland Farm development and beyond to the wider Public Rights of Way.

Open Space Provision:

The Mid Sussex District Plan (2018) provides guidelines on open space provision.

Policy DP24: Leisure and Cultural Facilities and Activities, states:

"...The on-site provision of... play areas and equipment will be required for all new residential developments, where appropriate in scale and impact, including making land available for this purpose. Planning conditions and/or planning obligations will be used to secure such facilities.."

The supplementary planning document 'Development, Infrastructure and Contributions' (adopted 2018) describes open space and formal sports provision contributions (within Appendix 2).

It states: *"The District Council uses the guidelines set out within the Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play of the National Playing Fields Association (2015) as the benchmark standards when assessing playing space requirements for new residential*

development. These should not be interpreted as a maximum standard and there may be circumstances where provision in excess of these standards will be required...

The overall guideline is for 1.2ha of playing pitches; 1.6ha for 'all outdoor sports'; 0.25ha for equipped designated play areas and 0.30ha for other outdoor provision per 1,000 population."



Figure 5.1 – Landscape Considerations Plan (fabrik, 2025)

6.0

Development Proposals

Description of the Proposed Development

The outline planning application is for the residential development of up to ~~125~~ **117 dwellings**, up to two storeys in height with associated public open space, green infrastructure, and access from Borde Hill Lane via an enlarged roundabout. All matters are reserved except for access.

An Illustrative Masterplan and supporting Design and Access Statement (DAS) accompany the application and have informed this LVIA. These documents set out the design rationale, character areas, and key landscape and visual considerations that have guided a landscape-led approach to the scheme.

Land Use and Layout

The proposed layout comprises a permeable network of predominantly detached and semi-detached dwellings, integrated with a multifunctional green infrastructure framework. **The field parcel in the north-western part of the Site will be retained as an area of open space, maintaining a green setting to the RPG and creating an informal parkland setting with play provision, recreational footpaths, and SuDS features.** New homes are set back from Borde Hill Lane behind proposed open space and green infrastructure, helping to safeguard a sense of openness along Borde Hill Lane.

Dwellings are set back from key boundaries and arranged to respond sensitively to views, existing vegetation, and the Site's setting within the rural fringe of Haywards Heath. A green gateway will be established at the Site entrance, enhancing legibility and contributing to the development's sense of arrival.

Vegetation and Green Infrastructure

The scheme seeks to retain and strengthen existing field boundaries, including both perimeter and internal hedgerows, where possible. These will be enhanced through native hedgerow infill and complementary planting, creating ecological corridors and visual buffers throughout the development. Whilst some tree removals are necessary to facilitate the roundabout access, supplementary buffer planting is proposed at the southern boundary to retain the treed skyline.

The woodland block in the Site's northwest corner will be retained and protected, contributing to habitat continuity, biodiversity enhancement, and visual containment from Borde Hill Lane. This is complemented by new native planting along the Site's southern and western edges.

Street tree planting is incorporated throughout the proposed layout to enhance the character of streetscapes, provide shade, and visually soften the built form. In addition, planting around SuDS features, open space areas, and footpaths will contribute to the character, biodiversity, and permeability of the Site.

Topography and Drainage

The development responds appropriately to the Site's topography, with dwellings and streets designed to work with the natural landform. A sustainable drainage strategy will manage surface water through the use of swales, basins, and attenuation features integrated into the wider open space network, particularly in the Site's northern areas.

These features are designed not only for function, but to contribute to visual interest, biodiversity, and legibility across the landscape framework.

Perceptual and Aesthetic Qualities

The Proposed Development will retain a rural edge character by limiting building heights to two storeys, using a sympathetic materials palette, and maintaining key views, including those towards Sugworth Farmhouse to the north. The highest slopes of the Site are proposed as open space, with dwellings set down the hillside, allowing for views across the valley, with the Grade II Listed Borde Hill Farmhouse likely visible above rooftops of proposed homes.

The retained field boundaries, reinforced planting, and green spaces ensure that development edges are well contained and filtered. Open space and footpath networks provide opportunities for informal recreation and promote permeability across the Site. The design intention is to integrate the new neighbourhood into its setting while respecting views, topography, and the surrounding settlement pattern.

Access and Movement

Access is proposed via a new enlarged roundabout on Borde Hill Lane. The internal layout supports pedestrian and cycle movement, with connections to existing local networks. The public open space will include new recreational footpaths.

The landscape strategy ensures the development is visually, functionally, and ecologically well integrated into its setting.



Figure 5.2 – Illustrative Masterplan (Paul Hewett R.I.B.A, 2026)

7.0

Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects

7.1

Approach

The criteria for the significance of landscape and visual effects is set out in the LVIA methodology at Appendix 1. The landscape and visual receptors and their values are categorised into receptor types and are assessed alongside the receptor susceptibility to the specific proposed change in order to identify the receptors sensitivity.

The sensitivity of the landscape and visual receptor is combined with the magnitude of change to determine the significance of effect. Magnitude is determined relative to the size, scale, geographic extent, duration, permanence and reversibility of the individual project through the application of professional judgement and opinion.

The landscape and visual effects of the proposed development are set out in a series of impact tables as follows:

- Effects on contextual landscape receptors (i.e. effects on landscape receptors beyond the Site boundary, for example, indirect effects on landscape character).
- Site landscape receptors (i.e. direct effects on landscape receptors within the Site boundary only).
- Visual receptors (i.e. effects arising from the changes to the landscape which are perceived by both static and transient receptors).

The significance of effects are considered for the proposed development - at Year 1 post construction and at Year 15. Construction effects have been scoped out from the assessment as effects are anticipated to be temporary, small scale and as such are not deemed significant.

Included overleaf is the assessment of landscape and visual effects resulting from the proposed development. The judgements and associated process, is presented in a tabulated format for ease of reading and includes commentary regarding susceptibility, sensitivity, magnitude of change and professional judgement for the level of effect plus the nature of effect, for identified receptors as set out at tables 7.1 and 7.2.

7.2

Limitations and Assumptions

The following assumptions will be made in relation to the assessment of effects:

- The assessment baseline year is 2025.
- Existing vegetation will continue to grow at rates typical of its location, species and maturity.
- For the visual assessment from residential properties, transport corridors and public rights of way, the receptor is a standing adult with an eye height of 1.65m.
- Visual effects are based on good visibility. Visual effects can be expected to vary, with poor visibility at times of low cloud, rainfall and at dusk. At these times a reduction in visual clarity, colour and contrast will be experienced. Reduced visibility will limit the extent of views, particularly long distance views. Therefore, the assessment of effects will present a worst case scenario, when the proposed development will be most visible.
- The assessment is based on publicly accessible locations. Professional judgement is used to determine the likely effects from private properties.

Table 7.1 Landscape Impacts table

Receptor	Sensitivity			Magnitude of Effect				Significance	Nature of Effect
	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity Judgement	Stage	Scale	Duration / Reversibility	Magnitude Judgement		
Published Landscape Receptors									
LCAs GW4 and 10: High Weald Fringes	High	Low	Medium	Year 1	Compact	Long	Negligible	Negligible	Adverse
				Year 15	Compact	Long	Negligible	Negligible	Adverse
	Description of Sensitivity: As assessed in section 3 of this report, the LCAs are judged to have an overall High value, reflecting the large portion of the LCAs being designated as National Landscape. Susceptibility is Low as the development proposed is unlikely to alter the overall integrity of the character area as a whole and recognises and retains those features that contribute to the LCA's intrinsic character.			Description of Magnitude: Although the development introduces permanent residential use in place of agricultural land, it is located at the periphery of the LCAs and is closely associated with the existing settlement edge of Haywards Heath. The development footprint is contained, and key landscape elements such as the woodland and boundary vegetation are retained. In addition, the scheme includes the introduction of open space and new planting, which will maintain the local landscape patterns. As such, there will be a Negligible magnitude of effect.				Significance of Effect: The significance of effect at Year 1 and 15 will be Negligible Adverse due to the change from agricultural land to new homes and open space, but the key landscape assets characteristic of the area will be retained and supplemented.	
Contextual Landscape Receptors									
Setting of the High Weald National Landscape and Borde Hill RPG	High	Medium	Medium - High	Year 1	Compact	Long	Negligible	Negligible to Minor	Adverse
				Year 15	Compact	Long	Negligible	Negligible to Minor	Adverse
	Description of Sensitivity: As assessed in section 4 of this report, the receptor is judged to have a High value, recognising the designated status of the National Landscape and Registered Park and Garden. Susceptibility is Low , as the Site has no meaningful visual or experiential relationship with the designations, with intervisibility prevented by landform and vegetation.			Description of Magnitude: The Proposed Development will not materially alter the setting of either the High Weald National Landscape or the Borde Hill RPG. Intervening woodland and landform prevent any intervisibility between the Site and the designated landscapes themselves, meaning the Proposed Development will not influence their character, tranquillity, or the way they are perceived and experienced from within the designations. The only visual relationship occurs at the edge of the National Landscape and RPG along Borde Hill Lane, where transient users experience partial views toward the Site through gaps in boundary vegetation. However, these views are limited in extent, and are experienced in the context of existing settlement edge development and the road corridor. As such, the magnitude of effect will be Negligible at Year 1 and 15. Glimpsed views will retain an open and vegetated foreground. The magnitude of effect is therefore Negligible at Year 1 and Year 15.				Significance of Effect: The setting of the High Weald National Landscape and Borde Hill Registered Park and Garden will remain largely unaffected, with intervening landform and vegetation preventing any meaningful visual or experiential influence from within the designated landscapes themselves. While limited effects may occur along Borde Hill Lane, where the Site forms part of the transitional experience approaching the National Landscape, these effects are localised and moderated by retained vegetation and the settlement edge context. a predominantly open and vegetated foreground is retained. As such, the overall significance of effect is assessed as Negligible to Minor in both the short and long term.	

Site Specific Receptors									
Vegetation Cover	Medium	Medium	Medium	Year 1	Modest	Long	Small	Minor	Neutral
				Year 15	Modest	Long	Medium	Minor	Beneficial
	Description of Sensitivity: As assessed in section 4 of this report, the receptor is judged to have a Medium value, with key features including a small woodland block in the northwest, mature trees along the northern and northeastern boundaries forming a green corridor linking to Ancient Woodland at Borde Hill Gardens, and intact hedgerows with notable hedgerow trees, particularly in the west. Susceptibility is Medium as the vegetation has some links to the landscape beyond. The development proposed can incorporate recommendations as set out in published guidelines.			Description of Magnitude: Key vegetative features, including the woodland in the northwest, mature trees along the northern and northeastern boundaries, and intact hedgerows will be retained and enhanced through new planting, strengthening the Site's green infrastructure. A small section of vegetation at the proposed access point from the Balcombe Road roundabout will be removed to accommodate the development, with supplementary planting proposed in this location. This represents a permanent yet limited and localised change, resulting in a Small magnitude of effect at Year 1, and Medium magnitude of effect at Year 15 once the landscape strategy matures.				Significance of Effect: At Year 1, newly introduced planting will begin to establish but will not yet deliver the full functional or visual benefits of mature vegetation, resulting in a Minor Neutral significance of effect. By Year 15, as vegetation matures, the enhanced structure and connectivity of the landscape framework, particularly the strengthened hedgerows and woodland edges, will improve the quality and robustness of the receptor. As such, the overall significance of effect will be Minor Beneficial .	
Landform and Drainage	Medium	Medium	Medium	Year 1	Compact	Long	Small	Minor	Adverse
				Year 15	Compact	Long	Small	Minor	Adverse
	Description of Sensitivity: As assessed in section 4 of this report, the current land use is judged to have a Medium value, as the landform is typical of the local landscape. Susceptibility is Medium as the landform has a varied composition and the proposed development may potentially alter the overall integrity of the receptor.			Description of Magnitude: A detailed levels strategy is not known at this outline stage, however the existing topographic profile will be retained, with built form docking into the landform, consistent with the neighbouring dwellings and the prevailing landform. Drainage will continue to flow from south to north. Integrated into the landscape structure are a combination of attenuation basins, swales, tree pits, and wetlands to ensure the management of water across the Site, whilst also contributing to the character, sense of place, ecology and biodiversity. On this basis, there will be a Small magnitude of effect at both Year 1 and 15.				Significance of Effect: Overall, the Proposed Development will result in a degree of modification to the existing landform through earthworks associated with the creation of residential plots and associated infrastructure. However, this change is considered to be limited, leading to a Minor Adverse significance of effect at both Year 1 and 15.	
Landuse	Medium	High	Medium - High	Year 1	Sizeable	Long	Large	Major	Adverse
				Year 15	Sizeable	Long	Large	Major	Adverse
	Description of Sensitivity: As assessed in section 4 of this report, the receptor has an Medium value as it is typical of the surroundings with some links to the wider landscape. Susceptibility is High , as the proposed development is likely to alter the integrity of the receptor in it's entirety.			Description of Magnitude: The Proposed Development will result in a permanent change from agricultural to residential land use, leading to the loss of pastoral fields. However, the fields are already influenced by nearby built form and road corridors. Importantly, the existing woodland and its surroundings in the northwest will be retained, and the proposals will incorporate new footpaths, enhancing public access and recreational value. Nonetheless, the wholesale change to the Site's landuse will result in a High magnitude of effect.				Significance of Effect: At Year 1, the shift in land use will be clearly perceptible, though softened by the retention of key landscape features and the introduction of accessible green space. The overall significance of effect is considered to be Major Adverse . By Year 15, the development will be established and integrated into its setting. Mature landscape planting and the incorporation of footpaths and retained woodland will contribute to a more structured and accessible environment. Nonetheless, due to the shift from pastoral to predominantly residential land use, the overall significance of effect will remain Major Adverse .	

Table 7.1 Landscape Impacts table (cont.)

Receptor	Sensitivity			Magnitude of Effect				Significance	Nature of Effect
	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity Judgement	Stage	Scale	Duration / Reversibility	Magnitude Judgement		
Site Specific Receptors									
Perceptual and Aesthetic elements	Medium	Medium	Medium	Year 1	Modest	Long	Medium	Moderete	Adverse
				Year 15	Modest	Long	Small	Minor	Adverse
	Description of Sensitivity: As assessed in section 4 of this report, the receptor is judged to have a Medium value, as it has a semi-rural, enclosed character shaped by its sloping landform and surrounding tree cover. It also retains perceptual value through its landscape structure and views north toward the Grade II Listed Sugworth Farmhouse and its agrarian setting. The susceptibility to change is Medium , as these qualities could be affected by development, though containment by landform and vegetation offers some capacity to accommodate change.			Description of Magnitude: The Proposed Development will introduce built form into a semi-rural and enclosed landscape. While this will alter the perceptual character, key features such as mature trees, hedgerows, and woodland will be retained and enhanced. The Site is already influenced by surrounding development and roads, and its contribution to wider landscape character is limited due to the lack of visibility from the nearby nationally designated landscape. The sense of openness along Borde Hill Lane is retained. In addition, the declining topography from Borde Hill Lane and the use of limited building heights (up to two storeys) will ensure that views of the Grade II Listed Sugworth Farmhouse are preserved, albeit it will be experienced in a more residential edge context. Given these factors, the magnitude of effect is considered Medium at Year 1, and Small at Year 15 when the landscape strategy matures and development integrates with the landscape.				Significance of Effect: At Year 1, the introduction of development will be clearly perceptible, altering the semi-rural character of the Site. However, retained and enhanced vegetation will help soften the visual impact, resulting in a Moderate Adverse significance of effect. By Year 15, as new planting matures and the development becomes more integrated within the landscape, the perceptual qualities of the Site will be partially restored, reducing the overall significance of effect to Minor Adverse .	
Site and Immediate Context	Medium	Medium	Medium	Year 1	Sizeable	Long	Large	Moderate	Adverse
				Year 15	Sizeable	Long	Large	Moderate	Adverse
	Description of Sensitivity: As assessed in section 4 of this report, the receptor has a Medium value, owing to its character being shaped by the steep landform, mature vegetation, and enclosed visual quality, while also being influenced by surrounding residential development and road infrastructure. The Site is not located within the High Weald National Landscape, although it is adjacent. The susceptibility to change is judged to be Medium , as the Site retains some rural qualities and provides a transition between settlement and countryside, but the existing influence of built form and landscape containment provides capacity to accommodate sensitively designed development.			Description of Magnitude: The Proposed Development will introduce a fundamental change to the Site's existing landscape character through the permanent loss of pastoral fields and the introduction of residential development, internal streets, access infrastructure, and associated public open space. Although key vegetation, woodland, and hedgerow structure will be retained and enhanced, and areas of retained green space will be maintained along the western edge of the Site, the overall land use and character of the Site will shift from a semi-rural agricultural landscape to a residential neighbourhood. Given the scale, permanence, and nature of this transformation, the magnitude of effect is assessed as Large .				Significance of Effect: At Year 1, the change in landscape character will be immediate and clearly perceptible, with new built form, access arrangements, and infrastructure evident across the Site despite the mitigation offered by retained vegetation and early-stage planting. Accordingly, the overall significance of effect at Year 1 is assessed as Moderate Adverse . By Year 15, structural and boundary planting will have matured, and the open space network, street trees, and enhanced landscape framework will soften the appearance of built form and help integrate the development into the wider settlement edge. However, the underlying change in land use and character remains substantial and irreversible. As such, while the degree of visual integration improves over time, the overall significance of effect at Year 15 remains Moderate Adverse , albeit with a reduced level of perceptibility due to the maturing landscape mitigation.	

Table 7.2 Visual Impacts table

Receptor	Sensitivity			Magnitude of Effect				Significance	Nature of Effect
	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity Judgement	Stage	Scale	Duration / Reversibility	Magnitude Judgement		
Residential Receptors									
Residents of properties directly adjacent to the Site to the south (Viewpoint 1)	Low	High	Medium	Year 1	Sizeable	Long	Large	Moderate	Adverse
				Year 15	Modest	Long	Medium	Moderate	Adverse
	Description of Sensitivity: Views are from a location with no designation and there are no cultural associations. Also, the properties' primary elevations are not orientated towards the Site, meaning the receptor has a Low value. Susceptibility is High as the view contributes to the amenity experience from dwellings.			Description of Magnitude: From the rear elevations and gardens of properties backing onto the Site along Orchard Way, Fairfield Close, and Balcombe Road, residents currently experience open or filtered views across the Site's pastoral fields and towards gently rising landform and woodland. The Proposed Development will result in a noticeable and permanent change in these views, introducing new residential built form into the immediate foreground. New dwellings will be set back from the boundary and limited to two storeys in height, with structural planting introduced along the Site's edges that interface with the adjacent gardens. On this basis, the magnitude of effect is judged as Large at Year 1. By Year 15, the magnitude will reduce to Medium as boundary planting will have matured, helping to filter and reduce the prominence of the development in the views.				Significance of Effect: At Year 1, the Proposed Development will introduce clearly perceptible built form into views from the rear of properties along Orchard Way, Fairfield Close, and Balcombe Road, resulting in a Moderate Adverse significance of effect. Although development will be set back from the boundary, early-stage planting will provide limited visual mitigation at this point. By Year 15, boundary and structural planting will have matured, helping to filter views and soften the appearance of the new dwellings. While the residential development will remain visible, the extent and prominence of built form will be reduced. With the magnitude of effect decreasing to Medium, the overall significance of effect will remain Moderate Adverse , though to a lesser extent, moderated by the maturing landscape framework and the improved visual integration of the scheme.	
Residents of Aster Way fronting onto Balcombe Road (Viewpoint 2 and 3)	Medium	High	Medium - High	Year 1	Modest	Long	Medium	Moderate	Adverse
				Year 15	Modest	Long	Medium	Moderate	Adverse
	Description of Sensitivity: Medium value is assessed as views are from dwellings that overlook the Site. Susceptibility is High as the view contributes to the amenity experience from dwellings.			Description of Magnitude: Residents of the recently constructed three-storey apartment building on Aster Way, which fronts onto Balcombe Road and sits opposite the Site access and roundabout, currently experience partial views of the Site. These include filtered views through southern boundary trees to the pastoral fields beyond and toward the Grade II listed Sugworth Farmhouse on the south-facing hillside. From the facade of the apartment building that fronts onto Balcombe Road, there will be a perceptable and permanent change to the view. The Proposed Development will introduce the roofline of two-storey dwellings into these views, replacing part of the open pastoral character of the Site. However, these dwellings will be positioned lower down the slope and set back behind retained and enhanced vegetation, preserving views of Sugworth Farmhouse. A large area in the southwest portion of the Site, adjacent to the access point, will remain as open space. In addition, residents will experience views of the proposed roundabout, forming part of the Site's new access arrangement. On this basis, there will be a Medium magnitude of effect at Year 1 and 15.				Significance of Effect: At Year 1, the introduction of new two-storey dwellings and together with associated infrastructure will lead to a noticeable change in views from the front-facing apartments on Aster Way. Although these changes will be partly softened by retained vegetation and the set-back of built form, the modification of the existing semi-open pastoral view will be apparent. The overall significance of effect at Year 1 is therefore assessed as Moderate Adverse . By Year 15, boundary planting and structural vegetation will have matured, providing a greater degree of filtering and contributing to the visual integration of the development within the local landscape. View of the Grade II listed Sugworth Farmhouse will remain, and the perceived prominence of the new development will be reduced. With the magnitude remaining Medium, but with mitigation better established, the overall significance of effect at Year 15 remains Moderate Adverse , albeit to a lesser extent due to the maturing landscape framework.	
Residents of the Grade II Listed Sugworth Farmhouse (seen in Viewpoint 2)	Medium	High	Medium - High	Year 1	Sizeable	Long	Medium - Large	Moderate - Major	Adverse
				Year 15	Sizeable	Long	Medium	Moderate	Adverse
	Description of Sensitivity: Views are from Sugworth Farmhouse, which is Grade II Listed. The primary elevation of the building does not face towards the Site. The value of the receptor is therefore Medium . Susceptibility is High as the view contributes to the amenity experience from dwellings.			Description of Magnitude: Residents of the Grade II listed Sugworth Farmhouse experience largely open, elevated views across the Site, owing to the property's position on the opposing south-facing valley side. These views extend across the pastoral fields within the northern and central parts of the Site, framed by boundary trees and woodland. The visual context also includes elements of existing settlement-edge development to the south and east of the Site. The Proposed Development will introduce residential built form into these open views, replacing the agricultural character of the Site. However, the development will be arranged so that the northwestern portion of the Site is retained as open space, with strengthened woodland edges and parkland-style planting that help maintain a sense of separation between the farmhouse and the built form. At Year 1, built form will be clearly perceptible from the farmhouse due to the open nature of the view and proximity of the receptor. On this basis, the magnitude of effect is assessed as Medium-Large . By Year 15, boundary and structural planting will have matured, providing greater filtering of built form. While the development will remain a clearly visible component in the middle ground, its prominence will be reduced. Accordingly, the magnitude of effect at Year 15 is assessed as Medium .				Significance of Effect: Given the high sensitivity of residential receptors, combined with the elevated and open nature of views from the Grade II listed farmhouse, the Year 1 significance of effect is assessed as Moderate-Major Adverse . This reflects the noticeable introduction of built form into views that currently overlook predominantly pastoral land. At Year 15, although the development remains within the view, the maturing structural planting and the retention of open space closest to the receptor will noticeably soften and moderate the level of change. As such, the significance of effect reduces to Moderate Adverse , owing to improved integration and reduced visual prominence of the built form within the landscape.	
Residents along Borde Hill Lane (seen in Photograph E)	High	High	Medium - High	Year 1	Modest	Long	Medium	Moderate	Adverse
				Year 15	Compact	Long	Small	Minor	Adverse
	Description of Sensitivity: Views are from the edge of the High Weald National Landscape, meaning the receptor has a High value. Susceptibility is High as the view contributes to the amenity experience from dwellings.			Description of Magnitude: Residents along Borde Hill Lane currently experience filtered views toward the Site through a combination of garden vegetation, boundary hedgerows and trees, which collectively limit the extent of visibility. The Proposed Development will replace the existing pastoral fields with residential built form, but the dwellings will be offset from the boundary, and the existing vegetation will be retained and strengthened with additional native buffer planting. As a result, only glimpsed views of the new dwellings will be perceptible, particularly in winter months, with the development remaining largely contained within the vegetated framework. The magnitude of effect at Year 1 is therefore assessed as Medium , reducing to Small by Year 15 as the new planting matures and further filters views.				Significance of Effect: At Year 1, the change in view will be noticeable but heavily filtered, resulting in an overall significance of Moderate Adverse . By Year 15, maturing buffer planting will further soften and limit visibility of built form, reducing the prominence of the change. The overall significance of effect at Year 15 is therefore assessed as Minor Adverse .	

Table 7.2 Visual Impacts table (cont.)

Receptor	Sensitivity			Magnitude of Effect				Significance	Nature of Effect		
	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity Judgement	Stage	Scale	Duration / Reversibility	Magnitude Judgement				
Road Users											
Transient users of Borde Hill Lane (Viewpoint 2-9)	High	Low	Medium	Year 1	Compact	Medium	Small	Minor	Adverse		
				Year 15	Compact	Medium	Negligible	Negligible	Neutral		
	Description of Sensitivity: Views are from the edge of the High Weald National Landscape, therefore assigning the receptor a High value. The susceptibility of the receptor is Low , as users of the road are focused on the direction of travel as opposed to towards the Site.				Description of Magnitude: The visual experience for users of Borde Hill Lane varies along its length. As discussed above for the receptor 'Residents of Aster Way fronting onto Balcombe Road', at the southern extent near the roundabout and Site entrance, views toward the Site are largely screened by existing boundary vegetation, with occasional glimpses through gaps in the trees. As users travel northward, views are increasingly filtered or screened by roadside hedgerows and the frontage of detached dwellings that line the lane. As seen in Viewpoint 6, the most notable visibility of the Site occurs at the westernmost field parcel, particularly during the winter months when vegetation is sparser. From this stretch of the road, transient users will experience clear views of the Proposed Development within this part of the Site. However, the layout has been designed to retain a generous area of open space adjacent to the road, creating a visual buffer between built form and the lane. This open landscape edge helps to preserve the semi-rural character of the lane and maintain a sense of openness between the existing properties for passing road users. Given the varying degree of visibility and the presence of retained and enhanced vegetation, the magnitude of effect at Year 1 is assessed as Medium . By Year 15, maturing planting and the established open space buffer will further soften views of built form, reducing the magnitude of effect to Small . Views from a short stretch of the Road will retain a predominantly open and vegetated foreground, and built form will be set further back within the Site and will be filtered by intervening vegetation. At the southern extent, users will experience a modification and slight enlargement of the existing roundabout; however, this will be seen in the context of existing highway infrastructure and the settlement edge. Overall, the retention of open space along the western edge, combined with existing and enhanced vegetation, will preserve the semi-rural character of the lane, in the context of the existing dwellings adjacent to the Site and maintain a sense of openness for passing road users. On this basis, the magnitude of effect at Year 1 is assessed as Small , reducing to Negligible at Year 15 as planting matures and the development integrates with the surrounding landscape.				Significance of Effect: At Year 1, transient users of Borde Hill Lane will experience a noticeable change in views where the Site is most visible, particularly along the westernmost field parcel and at the roundabout. Although much of the route is screened or filtered by hedgerows and existing development, the introduction of built form within the currently open field will be perceptible for road users passing these section of the road. The significance of effect at Year 1 is assessed as Moderate Adverse. By Year 15, the maturing of structural and boundary planting, combined with the retained open space adjacent to the lane, will further soften the appearance of built form and strengthen the semi-rural character along the road. While the development will still be visible in places, its prominence will be reduced. With the magnitude decreasing to Small, the overall significance of effect at Year 15 is assessed as Minor Adverse . At Year 1, transient users of Borde Hill Lane will experience a limited change in views, primarily associated with the modification of the existing roundabout and occasional glimpsed views of development set away from the western boundary. The most open views will retain a predominantly open and vegetated foreground, and built form beyond will be largely filtered by intervening vegetation in the context of the existing dwellings along this route. As such, the overall significance of effect at Year 1 is assessed as Minor Adverse . By Year 15, the maturing of structural and boundary planting, combined with the retention of field as open space along the western edge, will further reduce the visibility and influence of the development. The semi-rural character of the lane will be maintained, and the overall significance of effect at Year 15 is assessed as Negligible .		

8.0

Assessment Against Landscape Policy and Landscape Character

The National Planning Policy Framework, guidance, plus district and neighbourhood plans alongside supplementary guidance have been key considerations in the preparation of the development proposals, and are summarised below.

8.1

NPPF

A network of high quality open space is proposed as recommended at Para 102, in order to provide opportunities for physical activity, health and wellbeing of communities and to deliver benefits for nature and support effects to address climate change.

High quality design is proposed in accordance with recommendations set out at Para's 131, 132 and 135, in that the scheme:

- has been developed through consultation with the local community and LPA.
- is evidenced by the local areas defining characteristics.
- adds to the overall quality of the area.
- is visually attractive with good architecture, layout and landscaping.
- is sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.
- establishes a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials.

Design quality is considered, and takes into consideration local design guidance and supplementary planning documents, as recommended at Paras 137 and 139.

Proposals conserve and enhance the natural environment as per Para 180 and as recommended at Para 182, the development is sensitively located and designed to avoid adverse effects on the setting to any designated area.

The Proposed Development will not conflict with the aims of Paragraph 189 of the NPPF. The Site does not form part of the setting of the High Wealds National Landscape due to the absence of intervisibility, resulting from intervening topography and established woodland. As such, there will be no adverse impact on the character, setting, or special qualities of the High Wealds National Landscape.

8.2

Local Policy

Landscape Character

The proposals have been shaped around the retention, reinforcement and celebration of the Site's landscape structure. Key field boundaries, internal hedgerows, mature trees and the woodland block in the northwest are retained wherever possible, with additional native planting introduced to reinforce the rural fringe character. The development parcels are limited to the central and eastern parts of the Site in order to maintain openness along Borde Hill Lane and protect the landscape setting of both the High Weald National Landscape and Borde Hill RPG.

Through this landscape-led structure, the proposals respond positively to the aims of DP12, DP13 and DP16 by:

- retaining the key elements that define the character of the High Weald Fringe LCA;
- maintaining a clear transition between settlement and countryside;
- avoiding coalescence with surrounding settlements; and
- ensuring development integrates sensitively with existing landform, woodland and hedgerow patterns.

The rural edge character is preserved through limited building heights, large open spaces, woodland enhancement, and the protection of key views towards Sugworth Farmhouse.

Setting of the High Weald National Landscape and Borde Hill RPG

The Site lies adjacent to, but not within, the High Weald National Landscape or the Borde Hill RPG where it plays a limited role in it setting. Importantly, the proposal protects their setting by:

- locating built form away from the Grade II Listed South Lodge and retaining the vegetated buffer that separates Borde Hill Lane from the RPG;
- reinforcing the treed character of Borde Hill Lane through new native tree planting and boundary enhancement;
- retaining green space in the north-western part of the Site creating parkland-style open space maintain the green rural interface;
- retaining and enhancing woodland, hedgerows, shaws, and routeway character which are core components of High Weald natural beauty; and
- ensuring no significant alteration to views into or out of the

National Landscape.

This approach accords fully with DP16, DPC4 and the High Weald Management Plan, which all require development to conserve and enhance natural beauty and respect landscape setting, perceptual qualities and historic routeways.

Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

The scheme incorporates a comprehensive green infrastructure network which:

- utilises retained field boundaries and woodland as ecological corridors;
- provides new native planting, wildflower meadows and SuDS wetlands;
- enhances habitat connectivity within and beyond the Site; and
- delivers publicly accessible open space and leisure routes.

These measures respond directly to the requirements of DP22, DP37 and DP38 by protecting and enhancing existing landscape assets, promoting net biodiversity gain, and strengthening green infrastructure across the Site.

SuDs

SuDS features including swales, basins, wetlands and tree pits, are integrated into the landscape structure rather than added as engineering features. They work with the Site's natural topography, reinforce the rural character, and create ecological and visual interest.

This approach aligns with DP12, DP38 and the High Weald Housing Design Guide, which emphasise the need for water management systems that respond to landform, enhance biodiversity and reflect natural processes.

Settlement Edge Response

The design of the proposal responds sensitively to its position on the settlement edge of Haywards Heath by:

- limiting building heights to two storeys;
- using materials and forms consistent with local vernacular;
- ensuring development is set back behind vegetated buffers;
- retaining the green character of the Borde Hill Lane frontage; and
- creating a clear sense of arrival through a landscaped gateway.

These elements are central to compliance with DP26 and the Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD, which require development to reflect local distinctiveness, protect settlement identity, and create high quality, legible neighbourhoods.

9.0

Summary and Conclusions

9.1 Landscape and Visual Baseline

The Site lies at the northern edge of Haywards Heath, forming part of the landscape between the established settlement to the south and the more wooded and agricultural countryside to the north. Its current land use comprises pastoral fields framed by intact hedgerows, mature trees, and a small woodland block in the northwest. This well-defined vegetative framework provides a strong sense of containment and contributes positively to local landscape character. Boundary vegetation also integrates the Site into the wider treed backdrop associated with Borde Hill Lane and the woodland structure characteristic of the adjacent rural landscape.

The surrounding context displays a clear contrast in character. To the south and east, the settlement edge of Haywards Heath is evident through residential development and associated garden vegetation. To the north and west, the landscape becomes more rural, with open fields and woodland associated with the High Weald National Landscape. To the west of the Site within its immediate vicinity also lies the Borde Hill Registered Park and Garden.

In visual terms, the Site is generally well contained by its boundary trees, hedgerows, and sloping landform. Views typically occur at short range in the Site's immediacy, and are filtered or intermittent, particularly from Borde Hill Lane and the adjacent residential areas at Orchard Way, Fairfield Close and Balcombe Road. Wider visibility is very limited due to the strong vegetative structure of the surrounding landscape framework, with no intervisibility between the Site and the High Weald National Landscape or the RPG at Borde Hill. The only experiential link to these designations is along Borde Hill Lane, where filtered glimpses occur but do not materially contribute to the appreciation of their special qualities.

Responding to these baseline conditions, a landscape-led approach has shaped the development. The scheme maximises the retention and enhancement of existing landscape features, including all boundary vegetation, the internal hedgerow network, mature trees, and the woodland block in the northwest. Supplementary planting is proposed along Borde Hill Lane to the west of the Site, enhancing the well vegetated character of this route and providing a soft transition to development. New planting, including native hedgerows, structural woodland belts and street trees, reinforces habitat connectivity and strengthens the Site's green infrastructure.

Built form is sensitively positioned within the central and eastern areas of the Site, set back from key boundaries and limited to two storeys. The layout integrates SuDS features, such as swales and attenuation basins within the green framework,

ensuring that landform and drainage patterns remain legible and contribute positively to character, biodiversity and sense of place. Footpath links and open space create opportunities for informal recreation, play and movement, supporting access to the countryside and aligning with local green infrastructure objectives.

Overall, the proposals respond positively to the Site's transitional context, the character of the High Weald Fringe, and the visual sensitivities of nearby receptors. Embedded mitigation and a robust landscape strategy ensure that the development integrates comfortably within its setting, maintains views of key features such as Sugworth Farmhouse to the north, and enhances the landscape structure of the settlement edge, while safeguarding the perceived setting of the High Weald National Landscape and Borde Hill RPG.

9.2 Summary of Landscape Effects

The Proposed Development will introduce a noticeable change to the Site's character, particularly at Year 1, as pastoral land gives way to new homes and a network of public open spaces. This results in Major Adverse effects on the Site's landuse, and Moderate Adverse effects on overall Site character and perceptual qualities during the early stages. However, the defining landscape features of the Site, including the woodland block, mature trees, and perimeter and internal hedgerows, will be retained and strengthened. At the wider landscape scale (LCA HW4 and HW10: High Weald Fringes), the change is limited in extent, resulting in Negligible Adverse effects at both Year 1 and Year 15.

The setting of the High Weald National Landscape and Borde Hill Registered Park and Garden will remain largely unaffected, with intervening landform and vegetation preventing any meaningful visual or experiential influence from within the designated landscapes themselves. ~~While limited effects may occur along Borde Hill Lane, where the Site forms part of the transitional experience approaching the National Landscape, these effects are localised and moderated by retained vegetation and the settlement edge context. As such, the overall significance of effect is assessed as Negligible to Minor in both the short and long term.~~ **The retention of the north-western area as green space ensures that the Site retains a predominantly open and vegetated foreground along Borde Hill Lane, reducing the extent of change at this interface. As such, the overall significance of effect is assessed as Negligible in both the short and long term.** Vegetation cover will experience a Minor Neutral effect at Year 1, improving to Minor Beneficial by Year 15 as new native planting matures and enhances structural

connectivity and biodiversity.

Effects on landform and drainage are limited, with SuDS integrated sensitively into the landscape strategy, resulting in Minor Adverse effects at both time periods. The shift in land use from pastoral fields to predominantly residential use remains perceptible in the long term, with Moderate Adverse effects identified at both Year 1 and 15 despite the benefits of extensive public open space.

By Year 15, the establishment of new planting, strengthened boundaries, street trees and multifunctional open space will soften built form and improve integration with the settlement edge. Perceptual and aesthetic qualities improve over time, reducing effects from Moderate Adverse at Year 1 to Minor Adverse at Year 15. Overall Site landscape character correspondingly improves but remains assessed as Moderate Adverse, reflecting the permanent nature of the change while acknowledging the benefits of a maturing, landscape-led framework.

9.3 Summary of Visual Effects

The Proposed Development will lead to a range of localised visual changes, reflecting the Site's position at the settlement edge and the strong vegetative structure that already limits outward visibility. In the early years, the introduction of new dwellings, streets and associated infrastructure will be clearly perceptible from properties and roads immediately adjacent to the Site, where existing boundary vegetation allows for filtered or intermittent views. The most notable effects occur for those residents whose gardens back directly onto the Site, and from nearby dwellings around the Balcombe Road and Aster Way junction, where elements of the new built form will be readily visible above or through existing vegetation. Views from the Grade II listed Sugworth Farmhouse will also experience a noticeable change, owing to its open aspect across the valley toward the Site. Collectively, these receptors experience Moderate Adverse to Moderate-Major Adverse effects at Year 1, depending on orientation and viewing distance.

Along Borde Hill Lane, views of the Site are typically filtered through roadside and garden vegetation, with only short stretches allowing glimpsed or partial visibility. ~~Here, the change is noticeable but contained, particularly where the westernmost field parcel is visible in winter. Transient users travelling along this lane will experience a similar pattern of filtered views, with the development appearing intermittently in gaps in hedgerows and at the approach to the roundabout. These roadside views generate Moderate Adverse effects at Year 1, though much of~~

~~the new built form will remain obscured or softened by retained planting and the Site's set-back layout.~~ **The retention of the north-westernmost field parcel, the most open views along this stretch will retain a predominantly open and vegetated foreground. Transient users will therefore experience only limited change, primarily associated with the modification of the existing roundabout and glimpsed views of development set further back within the Site. These roadside views generate Minor Adverse effects at Year 1, with much of the built form remaining filtered by retained and enhanced vegetation.**

By Year 15, the strengthened landscape framework which includes enhanced boundary vegetation, new structural planting, and extensive tree and hedgerow reinforcement, will substantially reduce the prominence of the development across all viewpoints. From adjacent residential properties, views of built form will remain but will be softened by maturing planting, reducing the visual impact while maintaining filtered outward views. Along Borde Hill Lane, ~~the establishment of the open space buffer and maturing vegetation will reinforce the semi-rural roadside character and limit the visibility of built form.~~ **the retention of green space and maturing vegetation along the western edge is consistent with the semi-rural roadside character and further limit the visibility of built form.** Views from Sugworth Farmhouse will continue to register the presence of the development, but the integration of planting and the retention of open space in the northwest of the Site will moderate its influence.

Overall, long-term visual effects reduce to Moderate Adverse or Minor Adverse, depending on proximity and elevation. ~~No significant visual effects arise at a wider landscape scale.~~ **Effects for transient users of Borde Hill Lane reduce to Negligible by Year 15,** with containment by landform and extensive tree cover ensuring that views beyond the immediate environs are extremely limited.

Appendix 1

LVIA Methodology

1.0

LVIA Methodology

Introduction

The methodology employed in carrying out an LVIA is drawn from the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment's 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA3) Third Edition (Routledge 2013). The method adopted follows a structured and transparent process, and is proportionate to the proposals.

The term landscape is defined as an area perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of nature and / or human factors. It results from the way that different components of our environment – both natural and cultural / historical interact together and are perceived by us. The term does not mean just special, valued or designated landscapes and it does not only apply to the countryside. The definition of landscape can be classified as:

- All types of rural landscape, from high mountains and wild countryside to urban fringe farmland (rural landscapes);
- Marine and coastal landscapes (seascapes); and
- The landscape of villages, towns and cities (townscapes).

An LVIA provides a description of the baseline conditions and sets out how the study area and site appears, or would appear, prior to the Proposed Development. The baseline assessment is then used to predict the landscape and visual impacts arising from the Proposed Development. The assessment of impact is carried out as part of the iterative design process in order to build in mitigation measures to reduce the impacts as much as possible. The impact assessment will identify and assess effects during the stages of the Proposed Development (and in the case of this site the initial site enabling and construction stages and then at the operational phases).

The photography will be prepared in accordance with Technical Guidance Note 06/19 on Visual Representation of Development Proposals (Landscape Institute, 17 September 2019).

Summary Overview of LVIA Methodology

Landscape and visual assessments are separate, although linked, procedures. For example, often the assemblage of landscape elements contributes to informing the Zone of Theoretical Visibility and the degree of visibility from the range of visual receptors.

The baseline assessment describes:

- Each of the landscape elements which then collectively inform landscape character for the Site and its context;
- The character, amenity and degree of openness of the view from a range of visual receptors (either transient, serial or static views);
- The current and future baseline scenarios; and
- The value of each of the landscape and visual receptors.

Landscape effects derive from either direct or in-direct changes to the physical landscape which may give rise to changes to the individual landscape components. This in turn effects the landscape character and potentially changes how the landscape is experienced and valued.

Visual effects relate to the changes that arise in the composition, character and amenity of the view as a result of changes to the landscape elements.

The assessment of effects therefore systematically:

- Combines the value of the receptor with the susceptibility to the proposed change to determine the sensitivity of the receptor;
- Combines the size, scale, geographic extent, duration of the proposals and its reversibility in order to understand the magnitude of the proposal;
- Combines the sensitivity of the each of the receptors and the magnitude of effect to determine the significance of the effect;
- Presents the landscape and visual effects in a factual logical, well-reasoned and objective fashion;
- Indicates the measures proposed over and above those designed into the scheme to prevent/avoid, reduce, offset, remedy, compensate for the effects (mitigation measures) or which provide an overall landscape and visual enhancement;
- Sets out any assumptions considered throughout the assessment of effects; and

- Sets out residual effects.

Effects may be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) direct or indirect, residual, permanent or temporary short, medium or long term. They can also arise at different scales (national, regional, local or site level) and have different levels of significance (major, moderate, low, negligible or no change). Residual effects are those at year 15 considering any additional mitigation measures in place over and above those designed in to the scheme.

The combination of the above factors influences the professional judgement and opinion on the significance of the landscape and visual effects.

The emphasis is placed on the narrative text describing the landscape and visual effects, and the judgements made about their significance, with tables and matrices used to support and summarise the descriptive text. The criteria and thresholds set out in the methodology are used to inform the assessment of effects. Ranges of criteria and thresholds are used in the assessment where appropriate. Whilst every possible range is not defined in the methodology, each of the thresholds and criteria are clearly explained, and therefore the logic to each range can be traced.

Cumulative effects of all other known development will also be considered (following agreement with the LPA of those developments to be considered).

The following sections set out in more detail the assessment process employed.

Establishing the Landscape Baseline

Desk and Field Studies

The initial step is to identify the existing landscape and visual resource in the vicinity of the Proposed Development – the baseline landscape and visual conditions. The purpose of baseline study is to record and analyse the existing landscape, in terms of its constituent elements, features, characteristics, geographic extent, historical and cultural associations, condition, the way the landscape is experienced and the value / importance of that particular landscape. The baseline assessment will also identify any potential changes likely to occur in the local landscape or townscape which will change the characteristics of either the Site or its setting.

A desk study is carried out to establish the physical components of the local landscape and to broadly identify the boundaries of the study area. Ordnance survey (OS) maps and digital data are used to identify local features relating to geology, soils, landform, drainage, vegetation cover, land use, settlement, the history of the landscape and the way that landscape is experienced, which together combine to create a series of key characteristics and character areas. Vertical aerial photography and Google streetview will be used to supplement OS information. At this stage, any special designated landscapes (such as National Landscapes, National Parks, Green Belt, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Areas of Special Character); heritage or ecological assets are identified. A review of information available in terms of any published historic landscape characterisation together with any other landscape / capacity / urban fringe and visual related studies is carried out at this stage. In addition, a desk study of any unbuilt commitments will be incorporated.

Landscape character assessment is the tool for classifying the landscape into distinct character areas or types, which share common features and characteristics. There is a well established methodology developed in the UK by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage in 2002, which has been superseded in England by guidance published by Natural England in 2014. The national and regional level character assessments are often available in published documents. However the local / district or site levels may need to be set out based on a combination of desk studies and field survey work. The character assessment will also identify environmental and landscape opportunities, recent changes, future trends and forces for change where they may be important in relation to the proposal, especially considering how the landscape appears, or would appear prior to the commencement of development. The condition of the landscape, i.e. the physical state of an individual area of landscape, will be described as factually as possible. The assessment of landscape importance includes reference to policy or designations as an indicator of recognised value, including specific features or characteristics that justify the designation of the area. The value of that landscape by different stakeholders or user groups may also influence the baseline assessment.

These desk based studies are then used as a basis for verification in the field. The field based assessment also considers the perceptual qualities of the landscape, including tranquillity.

Judgements on the value of both the landscape and visual receptor are made at the baseline stage.

Landscape Value

Value is concerned with the relative value or importance that is attached to different landscapes. Landscape value is inherent, considered independently of the development proposals. The baseline assessment considers any natural and cultural heritage, landscape condition, associations with notable people, events and the arts, distinctiveness, recreational opportunities, and perceptual qualities (including scenic quality, wilderness, tranquillity and / or dark skies). These environmental, historical and cultural aspects, physical and visual components are considered together with any statutory and non-statutory designations, taking into account other values to society, which may be expressed by the local community or consultees. Wherever possible information and opinions on landscape value is to be sought through discussions with consultees, stakeholders and user groups.

Landscape value is not always signified by designation. When considering a non-designated area, landscape value will be determined through a review of existing assessments, policies, strategies and guidelines. Where appropriate, new survey and analysis will inform judgements about landscape value. Any landscape designation will be considered in terms of their 'meaning' to today's context.

The tables relating to landscape value and the value attached to views are a starting point for consideration in the field. The following table sets out the criteria and definitions used in the baseline assessment to determine landscape value (in addition to condition / quality). Figure 5.1 set out within 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA3) Third Edition (Routledge 2013), along with Technical Guidance Note 02/21 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations' (Landscape Institute, May 2021) have been used to inform these criteria.

Not all of the criteria within Table A1.1 need to be met for a landscape to be assigned a value of High, Medium or Low.

A1.1 Landscape Value Criteria		
High	Medium	Low
Natural Heritage Unique components relating to ecology, geology, topography, soils and water. Components may be nationally / internationally designated, including: · Sites of Important Nature Conservation · Heritage Coasts · Special Protection Areas · Ancient Woodland	Natural Heritage Common components relating to ecology, geology, topography, soils and water. Components may be designated at the local or borough level, including: · TPO's · Nature Reserve's	Natural Heritage Inconsequential components relating to ecology, geology, topography, soils and water. Generally non-designated.
Cultural Heritage Rare or distinct components relating to built history that positively contribute to landscape character including: · drove roads / salt ways / packhorse trails · sunken lanes · ridge and furrow fields · relic farmsteads Nationally / internationally designated component/s including: · UNESCO World Heritage Sites · Listed buildings / structures and their associated setting. · Historic Parks ad Gardens (included within the Register by Historic England) · Registered Battlefield · Scheduled Ancient Monuments	Cultural Heritage Common components relating to built history that positively contribute to landscape character such as vernacular architecture typical of the locality. Locally designated component/s including: · Conservation Areas · Scenic Trails / Scenic Routes · Locally listed buildings and monuments Non-designated components but acknowledge locally for their heritage importance or expressed through non-statutory designations.	Cultural Heritage Few or no components relating to built history that positively contribute to landscape character. Generally non-designated.
Landscape Condition Landscape area or components in a very good physical condition / intact, with appropriate management. Absence of detracting/ incongruous features (or features are present but are not prominent).	Landscape Condition Landscape area or components in a good - ordinary condition, with scope to improve. Some detracting / incongruous features.	Landscape Condition Landscape area or components in a poor condition, with scope to improve. Many detracting / incongruous features. Disturbed or derelict land.
Associations Many or significant connections with well-known events, people, works of art, science or technical achievements that positively contribute to perceptions of the landscape.	Associations Some connections with well-known events, people, works of art, science or technical achievements that positively contribute to perceptions of the landscape.	Associations Few or no connections with well-known events, people, works of art, science or technical achievements that positively contribute to perceptions of the landscape.
Distinctiveness Unique components that make a strong and multifaceted positive contribution to landscape character e.g. the whalebone arch in Whitby. Landscape area that is recognised nationally / internationally for its scenic beauty, including areas within: · National Parks · National Landscapes Landscape areas that have a strong visual or functional link with adjacent designated landscapes and their special qualities.	Distinctiveness Some components that are unique and contribute positively to landscape character. Recognised locally, including designations such as Special Landscape Areas, Areas of Great Landscape Value, Strategic or Local Gaps.	Distinctiveness Few landscape areas that are unique and contribute positively to landscape character. Certain individual components identified in landscape character assessments may be worthy of conservation. Frequent dominant detracting features.
Recreational Prominence of open access land, common land and public rights of way (particularly National Trails, long distance trails, Coastal Paths and Core Paths), plus high quality public open space. Areas with very good or good accessibility with opportunities for the enjoyment of the outdoors.	Recreational Some open access land, common land and public rights of way. Areas with good or ordinary accessibility with opportunities for the enjoyment of the outdoors.	Recreational A limited quantum of open access land, common land and public rights of way. Poor accessibility with opportunities for the enjoyment of the outdoors.
Perceptual Unique landscape areas or components, particularly regarding scale, form, colour, texture, diversity or contrasts that positively contribute to landscape character. High levels of tranquillity and relative wildness, including sense of remoteness, dark skies, presence of wildlife / bird song and relative peace and quiet.	Perceptual Demonstrates some wildness and tranquillity. Some detracting features.	Perceptual Limited or no sense of wildness and tranquillity. Frequent / multiple detracting features.
Functional Unique landscape areas or components that contribute to the healthy functioning of the landscape and make a strong and multi-facated positive contribution to landscape character e.g. areas that form carbon sinks such as peat bogs; landscapes / elements that have a strong physical or functional links with an adjacent national landscape designation, or are important to the appreciation of its special qualities	Functional Landscape areas or components which make some contribution to the healthy functioning of the landscape; landscapes / elements that have some physical or functional links with an adjacent national landscape designation, or provide some role to the appreciation of its special qualities.	Functional Limited or no contribution to the healthy functioning of the landscape or adjacent national landscape designations.

Establishing in the Visual Baseline Desk & Field Studies

The visual baseline will establish the area in which the Site and the Proposed Development may be visible, the different groups of people who may experience the views, the places where they will be affected and the nature, character and amenity of those views.

The area of study for the visual assessment is determined through identifying the area from which the existing site and proposal may be visible (the Zone of Theoretical Visibility or ZTV). The baseline ZTV of the Site is determined through either manual topographical analysis (a combination of desk and field based analysis which are considered appropriate for Landscape and Visual Appraisals and projects below the EIA threshold) or digital mapping based on bare earth modelling, (which do not take account of features such as vegetation or built form) constructing a map showing the area where the proposal may theoretically be visible. The extent of the mapping will depend on the type of proposal. The actual extent of visibility is checked in the field (both in the summer and winter months if the project timescales allow) to record the screening effect of buildings, walls, fences, trees, hedgerows and banks not identified in the initial bare ground mapping stage and to provide an accurate baseline assessment of visibility. Viewpoints within the ZTV should also be identified during the desk assessment, and the viewpoints used for photographs selected to demonstrate the relative visibility of the Site (and any existing development on it and its relationship with the surrounding landscape and built forms). The selection of a range of key viewpoints will be based on the following criteria for determination in the field:

- The requirement to provide an even spread of representative, specific, illustrative or static / kinetic / sequential / transient viewpoints within the ZTV and around all sides of the Site;
- From locations which represent a range of near, middle and long distance views (although the most distant views may be discounted in the impact assessment if it is judged that visibility will be extremely limited);
- Views from sensitive receptors within designated, historic or cultural landscapes or heritage assets (such as adjacent to Listed Buildings - and co-ordinated with the heritage consultant - key tourist locations and public vantage points such as viewpoints identified on OS maps);
- The inclusion of strategic / important / designed views and vistas identified in published documents;

Views from the following are to be included in the visual assessment:

- Individual private dwellings. These are to be collated as representative viewpoints as it may not be practical to visit all properties that might be affected;
- Key public buildings, where relevant (i.e. libraries, hospitals, churches, community halls etc);
- Transient or static views from public viewpoints (i.e. from roads, railway lines and Public Rights of Way - including tourist or scenic routes and associated viewpoints);
- Areas of publicly accessible green space (i.e. public open space, open access land, recreation grounds, country parks, visitor attractions, tourist destinations or scenic viewpoints); and

- Places of employment, where relevant.

The final selection of the key viewpoints for inclusion in the LVIA will be based proportionately in relation to the scale and nature of the development proposals and likely significant effects and in agreement with the LPA.

The visual assessment records:

- The character and amenity of the view, including topographic, geological and drainage features, woodland, tree and hedgerow cover, land use, field boundaries, artefacts, access and rights of way, direction of view and potential seasonal screening effects and any skyline elements or features.
- The type of view, whether oblique or direct; panoramic or vistas.
- The extent of visibility of the range of receptors is based on a grading of degrees of visibility, from a visual inspection of the Site and surrounding area. There will be a continuity of degree of visibility ranging from no view of the Site (truncated) to fully open views. Views are recorded, even if views are truncated of the existing site, as the Proposed Development may be visible in these views. To indicate the degree of visibility of the Site from any location, three categories are used:
 - a **Open View:**
An open view of the whole site / where much of the Site is visible, or where the Site forms much of the view.
 - b **Partial View:**
Some of the Site is visible, or where the Site forms a small part of the wider view;
 - c **Truncated View:**
No view of the Site or the Site is difficult to perceive.

Following the field survey (which should cover ideally both winter and summer views) the extent to which the Site is visible from the surrounding area will be mapped. A Photographic Viewpoint Plan will be prepared to illustrate the representative, specific and illustrative views into / towards and within the Site (if publicly accessible) and the degree of visibility of the Site noted. This Plan will be included in a Representative Views document for agreement with the Local Planning Authority and any other statutory consultees as part of the consultation process. The visual assessment will include a series of annotated photographs, the location and extent of the Site within the view together with identifying the character and amenity of the view, alongside any specific elements or important component features such as landform, buildings or vegetation or detracting features which interrupt, filter or otherwise influence views. The photograph will also be annotated with the Value attributed to the receptor or group of receptors.

By the end of this stage of the combined landscape and visual site study, it will be possible to advise, in landscape and visual terms, on any specific mitigation measures required in terms of the developments preferred siting, layout and design.

Value of Visual Receptors

Judgements on the value attached to the views experienced are based on the following criteria set out in Table A1.2.

A1.2 – Value Attached to Views	
Value	Criteria
High	Views from and to landscapes / viewpoints of national importance, or highly popular visitor attractions where the view forms a significant role in the visual experience, and / or has nationally recognised cultural associations. This may include residential receptors in Listed Buildings where the primary elevation of the dwelling is orientated to take advantage of a particular view (for example across a Registered Park and Garden or National Park or National Landscape).
Medium	Views from and to landscapes / viewpoints of regional / district importance or moderately popular visitor attractions where the view forms part of the experience, and / or has local cultural associations. This may include residential receptors where the primary elevation of the dwelling is orientated to take advantage of a particular view.
Low	Views from and to landscapes / viewpoints with no designation, not particularly important and with minimal or no cultural associations. This may include views from the rear elevation of residential properties.

Assessment of Landscape and Visual Susceptibility and Magnitude of Effect

The assessment of landscape and visual effects is obtained through assessing the susceptibility to the proposed change, combining this with the judgement on value, to form the sensitivity of receptors. Sensitivity is then linked with a judgement of magnitude of effect experienced to form the assessment of the overall significance of the effect. Susceptibility, sensitivity and magnitude of effect are explained further within this section.

Landscape Susceptibility

The susceptibility of the landscape is a measure of its vulnerability to the type of development proposed, without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.

The overall susceptibility for each landscape receptor is categorised as High, Medium or Low as set out in Table A1.3.

A1.3 – Landscape Susceptibility Criteria	
Susceptibility	Criteria
High	The receptor has a well-defined composition with a direct relationship to adjacent key characteristics. The development proposed is likely to alter the overall integrity of the receptor and is very unlikely to be able to accommodate recommendations as set out in published guidelines.
Medium	The receptor has a varied composition with some links to adjacent key characteristics. The development proposed may potentially alter the overall integrity of the receptor and could incorporate recommendations as set out in published guidelines.
Low	The receptor has a disjointed composition with little - no links to adjacent key characteristics. The development proposed is unlikely to alter the overall integrity of the receptor and is capable of incorporating recommendations as set out in published guidelines.

Visual Susceptibility

The assessment of visual susceptibility is a product of the occupation or activity of the person experiencing the view and the extent to which their attention is focussed upon the views.

The overall susceptibility for each visual receptor is categorised as High, Medium or Low as set out in Table A1.4.

A1.4 Visual Susceptibility Criteria	
Susceptibility	Criteria
High	People engaged in an activity and/or at a location where they are focused on the landscape; where the view contributes to the amenity experience; and where there is opportunity to appreciate the view.
Medium	People engaged in an activity and/or at a location where they are not especially focused on the landscape; where the view contributes in part to the amenity experience; and where there is some opportunity to appreciate the view.
Low	People engaged in an activity and/or at a location where they are not focused on the landscape; where the view does not contribute to the amenity experience; and where there is little - no opportunity to appreciate the view.

Sensitivity Judgements

The assessment of landscape / visual sensitivity is then combined through a judgement on the value attributed to that receptor (at the baseline stage) and the susceptibility of the receptor to the proposed change using the criteria as set out in Table A1.3 and A1.4.

Table A1.5 below sets out the sensitivity matrix, with criteria set out as High, Medium and Low.

A1.5 Landscape and Visual Sensitivity Matrix				
		Landscape / Visual Receptor Susceptibility		
		High	Medium	Low
Landscape / Visual Value	High	High	High	Medium
	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
	Low	Medium	Medium	Low

Landscape Magnitude of Effects

Size and Scale

Factors contributing to the size and scale of the change to be experienced by the landscape receptor (as set out in Table A1.6) include the extent of the receptor that will be altered (with reference to their wider contribution to the landscape); the degree to which aesthetic of perceptual aspects will be altered; and the geographical area that will be directly and indirectly altered.

A1.6 Landscape Scale Criteria	
Extent	Description
Substantial	Likely be a whole scale change to the landscape receptor, which will result in change in the integrity of the receptor of a wide geographic area.
Sizeable	Likely be change to a high proportion of the landscape receptor, which will result in a noticeable change in the integrity of the receptor of an extended geographic area.
Modest	Likely be change to a moderate proportion of the landscape receptor, which will be perceptible and have some effect on the integrity of the receptor within a localised geographic area.
Compact	Likely be change to a limited proportion of the landscape receptor, which will not be discernible or have no - limited effect on the integrity of the receptor within its immediate setting (very localised geographic area).

Duration and Reversibility

Factors contributing to the duration of the change to be experienced by the landscape receptor (as set out in Table A1.7) include whether the change is wholly reversible, permanent or temporary. Construction impacts are likely to be short term and temporary, but see the start of a permanent change. Operational effects are likely to be long term, permanent and either irreversible or reversible, depending on the nature of the project.

A1.7 Landscape Duration and Reversibility Criteria	
Extent	Description
Long	Likely to be of permanence (10 - 25 years +) with limited prospect of being reinstated and is deemed irreversible.
Medium	Likely to be of permanence (between 5-10 years) and is potentially, or theoretically reversible.
Short	Likely to be up to 5 years and is wholly or partially reversible / receptors can be reinstated.
Very Short	Likely to be temporary (up to 2 years) and readily reinstated / reversed. Includes construction effects (unless these are for an extended period).

Visual Magnitude of Effects

Scale

Factors contributing to the scale of the change to be experienced by the visual receptor (as set out in Table A1.8) include the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor; the distance of the viewer from the Proposed Development; the extent of the area over which the changes will be visible; and the degree of visual intrusion of the Proposed Development in the view.

A1.8 Visual Scale Criteria	
Extent	Description
Substantial	Likely be a distinct change in the composition of the view, close to the viewer and occupying a wide extent of the view.
Sizeable	Likely be a noticeable change in the composition of the view, which may be close to the viewer and / or occupying a sizeable extent of the view.
Modest	Likely be a perceptible change in the composition of the view, which may be at some distance from the viewer, or nearby but only glimpsed and/or occupying a discrete extent of the view.
Compact	Likely be a barely perceptible change in the composition of the view, which is likely to be at a considerable distance from the viewer and only glimpsed and / or occupying a limited extent of the view.

Duration and Reversibility

Factors contributing to the duration of the change to be experienced by the visual receptor (as set out in Table A1.9) include whether the view is experienced in fixed or transient views; and the nature of transient views - being intermittent, glimpsed or continuous.

A1.9 Visual Duration and Reversibility Criteria	
Extent	Description
Long	Likely to be of permanence and visible for a continuous period.
Medium	Likely to be of permanence and intermittently visible.
Short	Likely to be temporary and visible for a continuous period.
Very Short	Likely to be temporary and intermittently visible.

Magnitude of Effect Judgements

The assessment of size / scale / geographic extent plus duration and reversibility is then combined based on the matrix as set out in Table A1.10 below, with criteria set out as High, Medium, Low and Negligible.

A1.10 Magnitude Matrix					
		Duration and Reversibility			
		Long	Medium	Short	Very Short
S c a l e	Substantial	High	High - Medium	Medium	Low - Negligible
	Sizeable	High - Medium	Medium	Medium	Low - Negligible
	Modest	Medium	Medium	Low	Negligible
	Compact	Low - Negligible	Low - Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Significance of Effects

Sensitivity and magnitude of effect are considered alongside one another for each receptor, in line with Table A1.11 below, to draw conclusions on the significance of landscape and visual effects. Depending on the nature of the Proposed Development, the significance of effects may be considered at different stages of the project life cycle (e.g. during construction; at Year 1 of operation; at Year 15 of operation; and/or on decommission).

The assessment of significance is subject to professional judgement and is rated on a scale of Negligible through to Major. Table A1.11 sets out a starting point for the assessment, it is important that a balanced and well reasoned professional judgement of these two criteria is provided with an explanation.

A1.11 Significance Matrix				
		Landscape and Visual Receptor Sensitivity		
		High	Medium	Low
Magnitude	High	Major	Major	Moderate
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Moderate
	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Minor
	Negligible	Minor	Negligible	Negligible

The judgement of significance indicates how important the effect is likely to be from a landscape and visual perspective. For schemes subject to Environmental Impact Assessment, effects of Major or Moderate significance are deemed 'significant' as governed by the EIA Directive (2014/52/EU).

A1.12 Significance Description	
Significance	Description
Major	An effect that is likely to be very important from a landscape and visual perspective.
Moderate	An effect that is potentially important from a landscape and visual perspective.
Minor	An effect that is unlikely to be important from a landscape and visual perspective.
Negligible	An effect that has minimal importance from a landscape and visual perspective.
No change	No effect and therefore of no importance from a landscape and visual perspective.

Nature of Effects

Effects are defined as beneficial, adverse, or neutral, as defined in Table A1.13. This consideration is termed the 'balance of effects', factoring in both the potentially beneficial and adverse aspects associated with a given change and its resultant effect. Where landscape effects are judged to be adverse, additional mitigation or compensatory measures are to be considered. The significant landscape effects remaining after mitigation are then to be summarised as the residual effects.

Effects will be described clearly and objectively, and the extent and duration of any negative / positive effects quantified, using four categories of effects, indicating a gradation from high to low.

A1.13 Nature of Effects Criteria	
Nature	Description
Beneficial	An effect that will on balance result in an improvement to the condition, integrity or key characteristics/ composition of the landscape receptor or viewing experience.
Adverse	An effect that will on balance result in damage to the condition, integrity or key characteristics/composition of the landscape receptor or viewing experience.
Neutral	An effect that will on balance maintain the condition, integrity or key characteristics / composition of the landscape receptor or viewing experience and may incorporate a combination of positive and negative aspects.

Effects During Site Enabling & Construction

- It is recognised that project characteristics and hence sources of effects, will vary through time. The initial effects arise from the Site enabling and construction works. Sources of landscape and visual effects may include:
 - The location of the Site access and haulage routes;
 - The origin and nature of materials stockpiles, stripping of material and cut and fill operations / disposal and construction compounds;
 - The construction equipment and plant (and colour);
 - The provision of utilities, including lighting and any temporary facilities;
 - The scale, location and nature of any temporary parking areas and on-site accommodation;
 - The removal of vegetation to facilitate site access and establish the development platforms;
 - The measures for the temporary protection of existing features (such as vegetation, trees, ponds, etc) and any temporary screening (such as hoarding lines); and
- The programme of work and phasing of construction.

Effects During Operation (at Year 1 and Year 15)

- At the operational stage, the sources of landscape and visual effects may include:
- The location, scale, height, mass and design of buildings in terms of elevation treatments; structures and processes, including any other features;
 - Access arrangements and traffic movements;
 - The operational landscape, including landform, structure planting, green infrastructure and hard landscape features.

Mitigation and Compensatory Measures

- The purpose of mitigation is to avoid, reduce and where possible, remedy or offset, any significant (major to moderate) negative (adverse) effects on the landscape and visual receptors arising from the Proposed Development. Mitigation is thus not solely concerned with 'damage limitation', but may also consider measures that could compensate for unavoidable residual effects. Mitigation measures may be considered under three categories:
- Primary measures that intrinsically comprise part of the development design through an iterative process;

- Standard construction and operational management practices for avoiding and reducing environmental effects (tertiary mitigation); and
- Secondary (or residual) measures designed to specifically address the remaining effects after the primary and standard construction practices have been incorporated.

Residual Effects

The residual effects of the Proposed Development are to be assessed. Residual effects consider any additional mitigation measures required to address specific landscape and visual sensitivities in place over and above the primary mitigation measures proposed and those already included and designed in to the scheme. The process of assessing residual effects is the same as assessing the primary effects.

Land at Bordehill Lane, Haywards Heath

Summary of Response to Place Services' LVIA Comments

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Place Services have carried out a review of the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and associated landscape material prepared by fabrik for the outline planning application (ref DM/25/3129) relating to Land east of Borde Hill Lane, Haywards Heath. Their response has been prepared on behalf of Mid Sussex District Council and provides a consultation response on the landscape and visual effects of the application and how the proposals relate and respond to the landscape setting and context of the Site. Their review document considers the standalone LVIA and the landscape design material submitted as part of the application.
- 1.2 Table 1.1 below addresses each of the points raised in the Place Services review in turn, setting out fabrik's response and clarification to each comment with reference to the submitted LVIA assessment associated methodology and supporting design material where relevant. This response note should be read in conjunction with the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), the Landscape Design Statement, and associated parameter plans, illustrative masterplan and cross-sections which informed the assessment.

Table 1.1: fabrik response to Place Services Landscape and Visual Impact Summary

Place Services comment		fabrik response
1.0. Planning Policy Context		
1.1	<u>Mid Sussex District Plan (Adopted 2018)</u> <i>The following policies are considered relevant from a landscape perspective:</i> • <i>Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside</i> • <i>Policy DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</i> • <i>Policy DP26: Character and Design</i> • <i>Policy DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets</i> • <i>Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows</i> • <i>Policy DP38: Biodiversity</i>	Contextual statement. At Section 8.2, the LVIA provides an assessment as to how the development proposals adhere to these policies.

1.2	<u>Submission Draft Mid Sussex District Plan (Regulation 19)</u> <i>Within the Draft District Plan, the site is identified as 'DPA7: Land east of Borde Hill Lane, Haywards Heath' for 60no. dwellings. Policy requirements include [inter alia]:</i> <i>"1. Contain development to central and eastern parts of site to reduce potential impacts on the setting of High Weald AONB (to be informed by an LVIA).</i> <i>2. Follow a sequential approach by directing development away from areas of flood risk and mitigate impacts through integration of SUDS to deliver biodiversity/environmental improvements and flood resilience.</i> <i>3. Provide suitable vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access from Borde Hill Lane via a fourth arm from the roundabout, south west of the site.</i> <i>4. Roundabout to be enlarged and positioned to allow safe movement of road users and provision of new dropped kerbs and tactile paving on southern approach, in agreement with the Highway Authority.</i> <i>7. Provide good acoustic design to address noise impacts associated with the railway."</i>	Contextual statement. No response required.
1.3	<u>Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan (Made 2017)</u> <i>Policy AS1 New Housing Development and Policy AS3 High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are considered relevant to this application.</i>	Contextual statement. Relevant policies from the Neighborhood Plan have been added to the LVIA.
1.4	<u>Mid Sussex Capacity Assessment (2007/2014)</u> <i>The Site is located within Area 46 Horsgate High Weald. The assessment judges that this area has moderate sensitivity and substantial value, forming an overall low/medium capacity.</i> <i>A low/medium capacity indicates that "development is likely to have an adverse effect on most of the character area and while smaller development may be possible in a very few locations within the character area, it will not be suitable for strategic scale development".</i>	Contextual statement. The capacity assessment has been considered within the LVIA.

2.0. Review of LVIA: Landscape Character		
2.1	<i>Paragraph 5.47 of GLVIA3 states; "If the area affected by the proposal is on the margin of or adjacent to such a designated area, thought may be given to the extent to which it demonstrates the characteristics and qualities that led to the designation of the area. Boundaries are very important in defining the extent of designated areas, but they often follow convenient physical features and as a result there may be land outside the boundary that meets the designation criteria and land inside that does not".</i>	It is agreed that GLVIA3 paragraph 5.47 appropriately highlights that land outside a designated boundary may exhibit characteristics associated with a designation, and that development proposals should consider effects on the setting of designated landscapes. The LVIA explicitly recognises this principle and therefore assesses the setting of the High Weald National Landscape as a distinct receptor, rather than limiting consideration solely to effects within the designated boundary.
2.2	<i>As per Policy DP16 High Weald AONB of the MSDP (2014), proposals must have regard to "the identified landscape features or components of natural beauty and to their setting". The effects are not only limited to within the boundary itself, but also to the setting of the National Landscape. This is pertinent considering that the Site itself possesses many features which are characteristic of the High Weald National Landscape, including woodlands, interconnected with shaws and hedgerows, small irregular productive fields bound by hedgerows and woods, intimacy of scale, a sense of history and timelessness, rurality and long views (High Weald AONB Management Plan, 2023).</i>	The LVIA recognises this requirement. The Site's woodland, hedgerows and field pattern are identified as characteristic elements associated with the High Weald, and the proposals respond through extensive retention, proposals to bolster and the creation of an open-space buffer along Borde Hill Lane. On review, and with reference to the LVIA susceptibility criteria, the susceptibility of the setting of the High Weald National Landscape will be updated from Low to Medium to reflect these partial links.
2.3	<i>Table 7.1 of the LVIA assesses the Setting of the High Weald National Landscape and Borde Hill RPG as high value and low susceptibility, resulting in medium sensitivity. Based on the submitted LVIA methodology in Appendix 1, we judge that the site expresses many key characteristics of the adjacent landscape designation, and therefore we do not agree with the low susceptibility judgement.</i>	The LVIA will be revisited and susceptibility re-evaluated to Medium for the setting of the High Weald National Landscape and Borde Hill RPG. This refinement reflects the Site's role within the rural fringe and acknowledges the transitional experience along Borde Hill Lane, while remaining consistent with the LVIA methodology. While the magnitude of change remains limited, the overall significance of effect will be updated to Negligible to Minor, which remains not significant.
2.4	<i>Whilst there is limited direct intervisibility between the National Landscape and the site, it forms part of the transitional experience when moving from the settlement into the National Landscape. The site also contains a number of the valued characteristics associated with the National Landscape and therefore we judge the susceptibility judgement is too low. We</i>	As above, the susceptibility judgement will be updated in the LVIA to Medium. With regard to the small magnitude of change, the transitional experience is acknowledged within the LVIA. However, it is not considered that this necessarily leads to a magnitude of effect greater than Small. While the change from pastoral fields to

	<i>therefore judge that replacement of the open views of characteristic countryside could constitute more than a small magnitude of change (Table 7.1) and therefore we judge that the overall negligible significance of effect is too low.</i>	residential development represents a perceptible change within the immediate roadside setting, the extent of this change remains localised and visually contained, and is moderated by the retention and enhancement of boundary vegetation and the provision of open space along the western edge of the Site and in the context of the existing dwellings along Borde Hill Lane. Notwithstanding the above, and recognising the transitional experience described, the LVIA will be updated to express the significance of effect as Negligible to Minor, reflecting the limited but perceptible change experienced locally at certain but limited locations along Borde Hill Lane.
2.5	<i>The Land-use (in Table 7.1) is assessed as medium-high sensitivity and high magnitude effect, resulting in a moderate significance of effect. Based on submitted Table A1.11 Significance Matrix in Appendix 1, the overall effect should have been major adverse.</i>	As with the development of any green field site, the Proposed Development would represent a clear and permanent change in land use from pastoral agricultural fields to predominantly residential development, albeit with the retention of key landscape features and the provision of publicly accessible open space, effectively in places replacing one green field use for another. While the landscape-led design moderates the way this change is experienced, it does not alter the fact that the underlying land use of the Site will change substantially. However, the comment is acknowledged and the LVIA will be updated to record a Major Adverse significance of effect for the land-use receptor, recognising the extent of the land-use transition across the Site.
2.6	<i>The Site and Immediate Context is assessed as medium sensitivity, however we judge that the sensitivity would be increased by the presence of the adjacent National Landscape, the undeveloped characteristic undulating landform and irregular field pattern with strong boundaries, and limited influence from surrounding development from within the site. The proposed development would have significant effects on most of these features. Therefore, we judge that the development effects would exceed moderate adverse.</i>	This point has been reviewed; however, the assessment of Medium sensitivity for the receptor is an 'on balance' judgement whereby the '<i>Site and Immediate Context</i>' remains appropriate when considered against the LVIA methodology. While the Site exhibits rural characteristics such as undulating landform and intact field boundaries, it is not designated and forms part of the settlement edge of Haywards Heath, where the landscape is influenced by surrounding development. In particular, residential properties to the east (Orchard Way and Fairfield Way), along with development along Balcombe Road and Borde Hill Lane, contribute to the perception of a rural-urban fringe landscape.

		In terms of the Proposed Development having “<i>significant effects on most of these features</i>”, the proposals have been developed through a landscape-led approach that retains the key landscape structure, including the woodland block to the northwest, boundary vegetation and existing field boundaries. The layout also works with the existing landform, with built form and drainage features responding to the Site’s topography. On this basis, the judgement of Medium sensitivity and the resulting Moderate Adverse effect remains appropriate and consistent with the LVIA methodology.
2.7	<i>Overall, we judge that the effects on a number of landscape receptors have been underassessed within the submitted LVIA.</i>	As above, the LVIA will be updated considering the comments received, including revisions to the susceptibility and resulting significance of effect for the setting of the High Weald National Landscape and Borde Hill Registered Park and Garden, and to the significance of effect for the land-use receptor, recognising the extent of the change in land use across the Site.
3.0. Review of LVIA: Visual Effects		
3.1	<i>Viewpoint photography was undertaken in June 2025. We would have preferred winter photography to be presented to represent the worst-case scenario, however this constraint is acknowledged throughout the assessment.</i>	The assessment clearly recognises this limitation and explains that seasonal variation has been taken into account in the evaluation of visibility. The photography nevertheless provides an accurate representation of the Site and its context, and the conclusions of the assessment have been informed by professional judgement regarding the potential for slightly more open views during winter months.
3.2	<i>Table 7.2 ‘Visual Impacts Table’ (Page 54) states that Transient Users of Borde Hill Lane (Viewpoints 2-9) are judged to have a medium sensitivity, medium magnitude of change and an overall moderate adverse effect at Year 1, reduced to minor adverse at Year 15. Justification states “the layout has been designed to retain a generous area of open space adjacent to the road, creating a visual buffer between built form and the lane”.</i> <i>The LVIA acknowledges that this is one of the more sensitive receptors, owed to the views into the site and the location on the edge of the High Weald National Landscape. However, we</i>	The LVIA recognises that transient users of Borde Hill Lane, where views are fleeting, represent one of the more sensitive visual receptors, and accordingly assesses Moderate Adverse effects at Year 1, reducing to Minor Adverse at Year 15 as mitigation planting matures. The LVIA also explains that the visual experience along Borde Hill Lane varies along its length. The most noticeable visibility of the Site occurs at the southern end near the roundabout and Site access, where views, due to proximity, are more open. However, this location is characterised by the presence of the roundabout, associated highway infrastructure and adjacent residential development,

	<i>judge that the proposed development alongside Borde Hill Lane will completely change the character of this countryside lane. The buffer provided between the lane and the built frontage is not sufficient to justify the moderate adverse effects, reducing to minor adverse effects.</i>	meaning it does not represent a typical “countryside lane” experience. Moving northwards along Borde Hill Lane where the road does develop into a countryside lane, views toward the Site become increasingly screened by roadside hedgerows beyond the Site, existing boundary vegetation and the frontage of detached dwellings that line the road. Clearer views occur only at limited points along the western field parcel, where the Site boundary is more open. These boundaries are proposed to be retained and enhanced, and development is set back from the road behind an area of open space that will accommodate additional structural planting, helping to filter views of built form over time. In addition, the receptors experiencing these views are transient road users, where visibility occurs only in passing. Taking these factors into account, the LVIA’s judgement that effects would be Moderate Adverse at Year 1, reducing to Minor Adverse at Year 15, remains appropriate and proportionate.
4.0. Review of the Proposals		
4.1	<i>Area 46 Horsgate High Weald of the Mid Sussex Capacity Assessment describes this area as low/medium capacity for development... indicating that development would have an adverse effect on the landscape character.</i>	This point is acknowledged and is consistent with the conclusions of the LVIA through the identification of Moderate Adverse effects on the Site and Immediate Context. The introduction of residential development on a greenfield site will inevitably result in adverse effects on landscape character, with the most significant effects occurring particularly in the short term.
4.2	<i>In Section 5.1 of the LVIA, it states “Development parcels are to be set away from the National Landscape and RPG edge to maintain the existing landscape setting in a manner consistent with the adjacent dwellings”. Page 49 of the LVIA also states “New homes are set back from Borde Hill Lane behind proposed open space and green infrastructure, helping to safeguard a sense of openness along Borde Hill Lane”.</i> <i>As per the Illustrative Masterplan (Dwg no. D2935-FAB-00-XX-DR-L-1000, Rev. P01), the frontages of dwellings follow the alignment of surrounding properties on Borde Hill Lane. The proposed frontage onto Borde Hill Lane is</i>	This point is noted; however, it is maintained that the design approach reflects the existing pattern of development along Borde Hill Lane, where detached residential properties are already present along the road frontage both to the north and south of the Site’s western boundary. The proposed dwellings broadly follow this established alignment, ensuring the development reads as a continuation of the existing settlement edge rather than an isolated encroachment into the wider countryside. Importantly, the proposed layout incorporates a landscape buffer between Borde Hill Lane and built form, comprising publicly accessible open space, retained and enhanced boundary vegetation, and additional structural planting. While the offset from

	<i>approximately set-back by 20m, which is not considered an appropriate mitigation given the sensitivity of this edge to the National Landscape. The proximity does not reflect the principles of maintaining the existing landscape setting and erodes the transition between the settlement and the sensitive National Landscape edge.</i>	the road is approximately 20m in places, this space is designed to accommodate planting and maintain a green frontage, helping to filter views of development and preserve a green frame along the lane. The LVIA therefore considers that the proposals respond appropriately to the existing settlement pattern and landscape structure, maintaining a landscaped transition.
4.3	<i>Justification also states that this setback retains a sense of openness along Borde Hill Lane (Table 7.2) with “a parkland-style setting that complements the adjacent RPG” (Para 9.1) and a “retained open space” (Table 7.2), which we do not agree with. The submitted layout does not represent a parkland-style setting with sufficient offset from the adjacent sensitive landscapes and does not retain the current open views across the undulating countryside landscape. An approximate 20m set back, which contains the hard surfaced road access to the dwellings, does not constitute an ‘open space’ which complements the RPG.</i> <i>We judge that whilst the LVIA acknowledges the impacts of developing close to the National Landscape and RPG, this does not translate into the design proposals as presented. The proposed development provides limited separation, visible encroachment onto the edge of the National Landscape and RPG, and an inadequate buffer.</i> <i>The western-most parcel of the site should therefore be wholly omitted from any proposed development. All development should be contained to the eastern edge of the site which abuts the existing settlement edge and is set away from the National Landscape. Replicating the parkland character of the adjacent Borde Hill RPG would be a more appropriate use of this parcel, allowing the open character of Borde Hill Lane to be retained, as a softer transition into the National Landscape.</i>	The wording of Paragraph 9.1 of the LVIA will be reviewed. The design intent is not to replicate the parkland character of the adjacent Borde Hill Registered Park and Garden, but rather to provide a landscape buffer and softened the proposed development edge along Borde Hill Lane. The proposed open space along the western boundary is intended to provide separation between the road corridor and built form, incorporating retained boundary vegetation, additional structural planting and publicly accessible green space. This approach reflects the existing character of Borde Hill Lane, where residential properties are already present along the frontage but are typically filtered by vegetation and set within a landscaped context. The LVIA demonstrates that views into the Site from Borde Hill Lane are limited and intermittent, with more open views occurring only at specific locations where boundary vegetation is sparse. The proposed landscape buffer and planting strategy will help maintain a green frontage and filter views of built form, rather than creating an open parkland landscape. For clarity, the LVIA will be updated to remove references to a ‘parkland-style setting’, replacing this with a description of the landscape buffer and structural planting proposed along Borde Hill Lane. The proposed layout reflects the existing ribbon pattern of development along Borde Hill Lane, while retaining a landscaped edge and incorporating open space that moderates the transition between the settlement and the wider countryside.

4.4	<i>Page 49 of the LVIA also states “The highest slopes of the Site are proposed as open space, with dwellings set down the hillside, allowing for views across the valley, with the Grade II Listed Borde Hill Farmhouse likely visible above rooftops of proposed homes”. The LVIA also makes reference to views across the valley of Grade II listed Sugworth Farmhouse which is prominent in views from the roundabout between Borde Hill Lane and Balcombe Road.</i> <i>Whilst views may be available over the top of development, we judge that any development within the central parcel will have an adverse impact on the notable views across the valley from Haywards Heath towards the listed buildings on the other side of the valley. This is represented by Viewpoint 2 which provides views across the valley of the undulating countryside character which is representative of the neighbouring National Landscape. Whilst the listed buildings may be visually perceptible above development rooflines, the proposals would still adversely affect the countryside setting in which they are viewed.</i>	The LVIA acknowledges that development will alter the pastoral foreground currently visible in views across the valley. This change is reflected in the assessment of land use, perceptual qualities and overall Site landscape character, where adverse effects are identified. However, the Site occupies the lower slopes of the valley, with the Grade II listed Sugworth Farmhouse and Borde Hill Farmhouse located on higher ground on the opposing valley side. With building heights limited predominantly to two storeys, these buildings are expected to remain visible above the rooflines of development, maintaining their legibility within the wider valley landscape. It is also relevant that these views occur primarily near the roundabout at Borde Hill Lane / Balcombe Road, where the foreground context already includes highway infrastructure and surrounding residential development, and are experienced mainly by transient road users. While development will introduce built form into the foreground, the wider valley form and the presence of and landscape setting to the listed buildings will remain evident.
4.5	<i>We have concerns regarding the use of ‘likely’ visible (Page 49, LVIA) and advise that evidence is provided on the anticipated views available of the Grade II Listed Borde Hill Farmhouse and Sugworth Farmhouse across the valley. Based on the Illustrative Masterplan, we question the ability to view these listed buildings over the top of proposed development.</i> <i>Type 4 Visualisations should be submitted to demonstrate the views from the southern areas of the site (close to the roundabout) and how views of these features will be retained in the proposals.</i>	The use of the term “likely visible” reflects the outline nature of the application, where final building positions, finished floor levels and architectural details will be determined at Reserved Matters stage. The assessment has therefore relied on the illustrative masterplan, development parameters and known site topography to inform a professional judgement on anticipated visibility. In addition, the Landscape Design Statement submitted with the application includes a cross-section from the roundabout to Sugworth Farmhouse, illustrating the Site’s landform and proposed building height parameters. This section demonstrates that the Site occupies the lower slopes of the valley, while Sugworth Farmhouse is located on higher ground on the opposing valley side, indicating that the building is expected to remain visible above the rooflines of the proposed development. The request for Type 4 visualisations is noted, however these were not requested during the pre-app stage. The LVIA has instead relied on site

		photography, verified viewpoints, and supporting cross-sections within the Landscape Design Statement to illustrate the relationship between the Site, the valley landform and the listed buildings on the opposing valley side. Given that the views in question are primarily experienced by transient road users along Borde Hill Lane and the roundabout, rather than by static or highly sensitive receptors, additional Type 4 visualisations are not considered necessary or proportionate to inform the assessment.
4.6	<i>The policy requirements (DPA7) also states; “Contain development to central and eastern parts of site to reduce potential impacts on the setting of High Weald AONB (to be informed by an LVIA)”. The proposed development extends into the western-most parcel which abuts the National Landscape, and therefore we judge that the proposed development has not been informed by the LVIA and the sensitive areas identified.</i>	The LVIA was commissioned at the outset of the project to inform the principles of development, not only through the promotion of the Site through the local plan process, but in the evolution of the parameters and masterplan proposals, responding to the Site’s sensitivities and its relationship with the adjacent National Landscape. In particular, the proposals incorporate a number of landscape-led design responses, including the retention and bolstering of existing boundary vegetation, the preservation of the woodland block to the northwest, the provision of open space and green infrastructure along the western edge of the Site, and the positioning of development parcels to respond to the Site’s topography and surrounding landscape structure. While development is proposed within the western portion of the Site, it is set back from Borde Hill Lane behind retained and enhanced vegetation and areas of open space, helping to maintain a landscaped edge along the road corridor in a way that reflects the character of this route and it’s RPG setting. The LVIA therefore demonstrates that the proposals have been informed by the landscape and visual assessment, with mitigation and layout principles incorporated to reduce potential effects on the setting of the National Landscape and adjacent RPG.
4.7	<i>Para 4.1.3 of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) states that “The loss of tree 50, a moderate quality mature English oak (Quercus robur), is regrettable but unavoidable”. We concur that the loss of this mature feature on the edge of the site would be a disappointing loss from a landscape perspective.</i>	The loss of Tree 50, a mature English oak, is recognised; however, it is required to facilitate the proposed access arrangement. The proposals seek to retain the majority of existing trees and boundary vegetation across the Site, including the woodland block and key hedgerow

		features which contribute to the Site's landscape structure. The landscape strategy also incorporates extensive new tree planting and bolstering of boundary vegetation, which will help strengthen the Site's green infrastructure and provide long-term landscape benefits.
4.8	<i>'Cross Sections along across road' (Dwg no. SDP-XX-XX-DR-D-311 Rev. P1) indicate that the access road from the roundabout requires the levels to be increased by approximately 5m on the site edge. We consider these to be significant level changes requiring a large amount of earth to facilitate the roadway. Earth would preferably be sourced from onsite.</i>	Detailed engineering design and levels strategy will be progressed as part of the Reserved Matters stage. Opportunities to source material from within the Site will be explored as part of this stage to minimise the need for off-site import or export.
5.0. Summary		
5.1	<i>We have concerns regarding the judgements provided within the LVIA, and judge that the effects have been underassessed for landscape character and visual effects.</i>	As demonstrated above, the comments provided by Place Services have been carefully reviewed. The LVIA will be updated including revisions to certain sensitivity and significance judgements. Where the sensitivity of the receptor is increased, the magnitude of change remains limited, and therefore the overall significance of effect is updated to Negligible to Minor, which remains not significant. However, the rest of the landscape and visual assessments remain considered, robust, and proportionate, having been undertaken in accordance with GLVIA3 and the project methodology, and informed by a detailed understanding of the Site and its context. The LVIA also recognises that the Proposed Development will introduce adverse effects in several areas, particularly in the short term, reflecting the change from pastoral agricultural land to residential development.
5.2	<i>The sensitivities identified within the LVIA have not been reflected in the development proposals, and therefore we judge that the parameters have not been informed by the LVIA.</i>	The LVIA has informed from the outset the illustrative masterplan and landscape strategy, with key sensitivities reflected in the design. This includes the retention of the woodland block to the northwest, the preservation and enhancement of boundary vegetation and field boundaries, the provision of open space and planting along the western edge, and development responding to the Site's topography with building heights limited predominantly to two storeys. The proposals

		therefore incorporate a landscape-led framework that responds to the Site's context and identified sensitivities.
5.3	<i>The western most parcel should be omitted from the development proposals to retain the open character along Borde Hill Lane and also provide a setback from the National Landscape and the Registered Park and Garden.</i>	The LVIA demonstrates that development in this location can be accommodated while retaining a landscaped edge along Borde Hill Lane, through the provision of open space, retained boundary vegetation and additional structural planting. The proposals also reflect the existing pattern of development along Borde Hill Lane, where residential properties occur to both the north and south of the Site. While development will introduce change to the current pastoral foreground, the LVIA concludes that effects are localised to select openings along the road and moderated through landscape mitigation, and that the wider character of the lane and the setting of the National Landscape will remain evident.
5.4	<i>Views across the valley from the south of the site are notable, with views available of two listed buildings which appear prominent. Retention of these views is an important consideration, and we would therefore advise that development parcels are amended to allow open views across the valley. Type 4 Visualisations are required to demonstrate retention of these views.</i>	The proposals have been designed to respond to the Site's topography, with development positioned on the lower slopes and building heights limited predominantly to two storeys, allowing the listed buildings to remain visible above rooflines in wider valley views. While development will alter the pastoral foreground in some locations, these views are localised and primarily experienced by transient road users. The Landscape Design Statement also includes a cross-section from the roundabout to Sugworth Farmhouse, which illustrates the landform relationship and demonstrates that views of the building are expected to remain visible above the proposed development. The request for Type 4 visualisations is noted, however these were not requested during the pre-app stage. The LVIA has instead relied on site photography, verified viewpoints, and supporting cross-sections within the Landscape Design Statement to illustrate the relationship between the Site, the valley landform and the listed buildings on the opposing valley side. Given that the views in question are primarily experienced by transient road users along Borde Hill Lane and the roundabout, rather than by static or highly sensitive receptors, additional Type 4 visualisations are not considered

		necessary or proportionate to inform the assessment.
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