



LIZARD

Landscape Design and Ecology

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STRATEGY

Worth Abbey
Paddockhurst Rd, Crawley

Worth School

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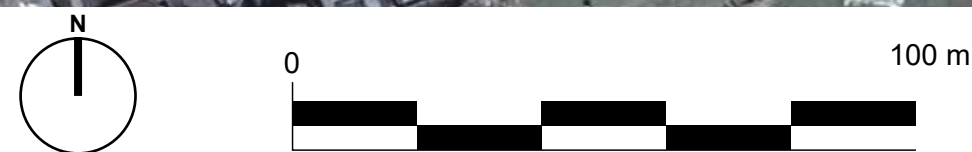
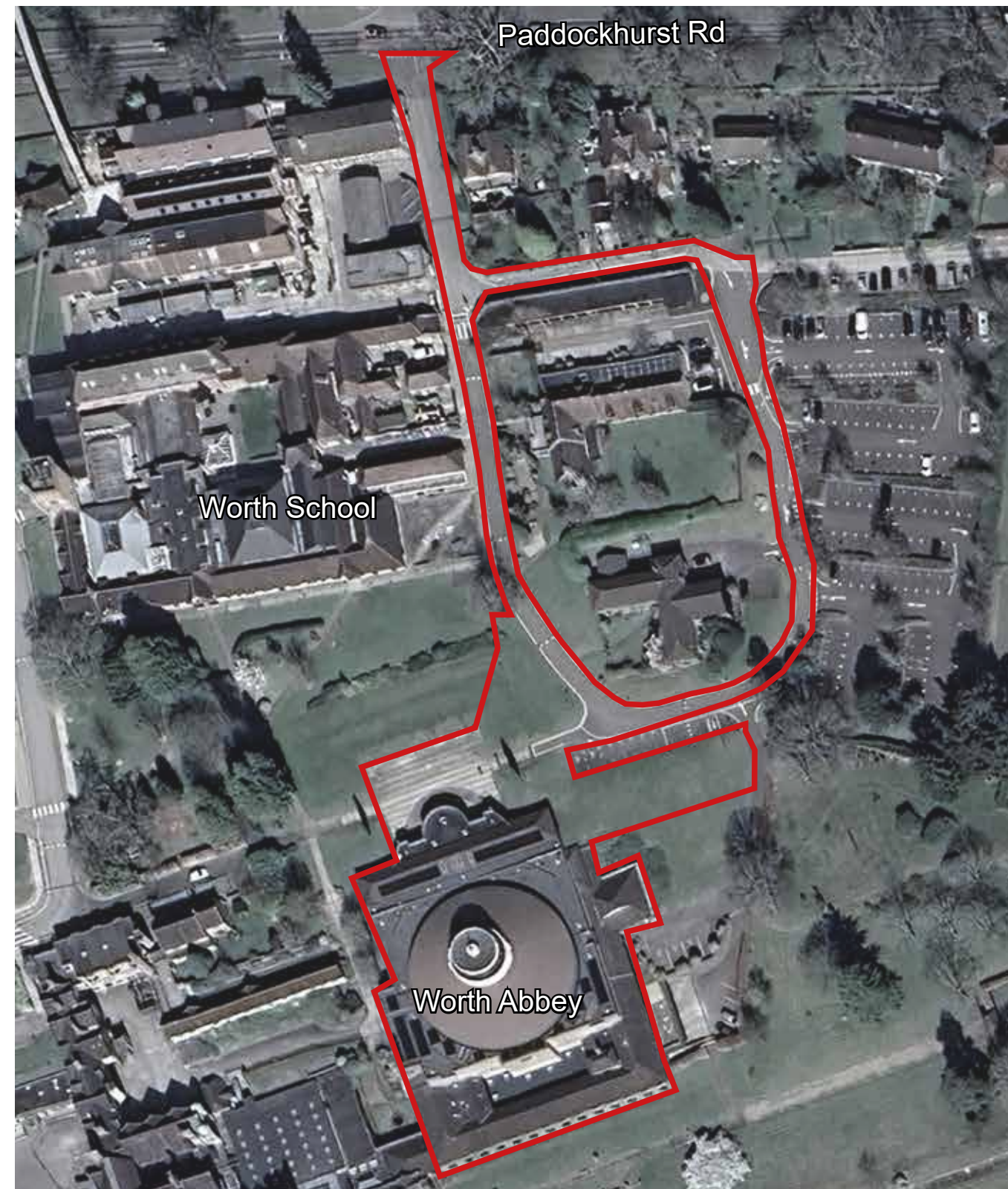
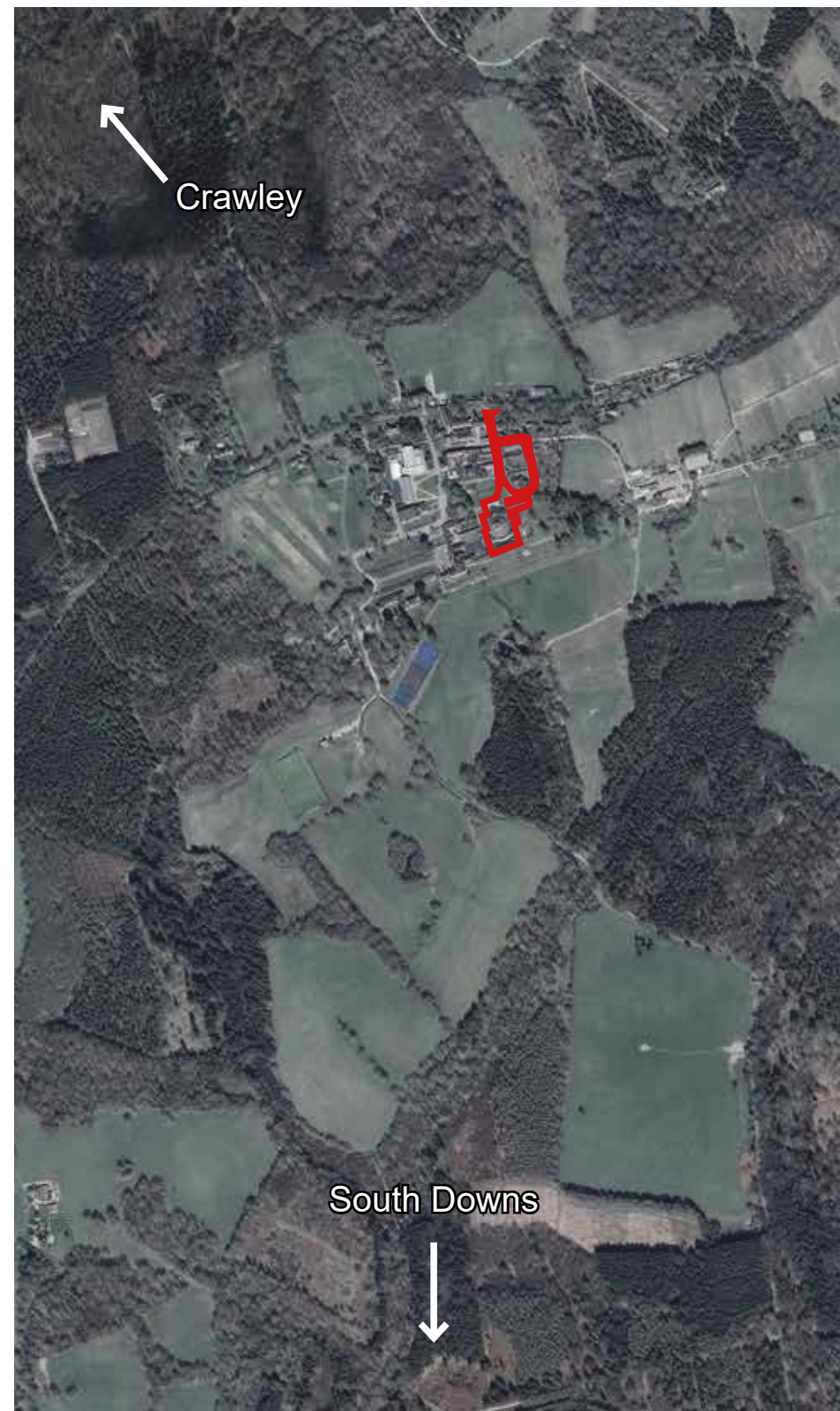
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

General

- 1.1 Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by Worth School to develop a Landscape Design Strategy for the development at Worth Abbey, Paddockhurst Rd, Crawley.
- 1.2 The Landscape Design Strategy explains the design intent and objectives of the proposed landscape scheme as well as provides the outline planting palette and nursery stock specification considered appropriate and beneficial for the proposed scheme.
- 1.3 The design strategy was informed by desk study and a site visit undertaken on the 3rd July 2025 to appraise existing features on Site and the surrounding area.



Legend



Figure 1. Landscape Context



Photograph A - View of Worth Abbey from the south-eastern extent of the Site, looking south-west, demonstrating a localised open character with views of the High Weald National Landscape.



Photograph B - View of the northern extent of Worth Abbey and wider lawns, taken from the south-eastern extent of the Site, looking north-west.



Photograph C - View from the north-eastern corner of the Abbey, looking north.



Photograph D - View from north of the Abbey looking south.

2.0 EXISTING SITE INFORMATION

The site

- 2.1 The proposed development site (referred to as the Site, Grid Reference: TQ 31886 34330) is located within the High Weald National Landscape, 2.25km to the south-east of Crawley. Worth Abbey itself is situated within Worth Forest, a significant area within the High Weald. The abbey's grounds and surrounding area are part of this protected landscape.
- 2.2 The Site is 0.77 hectares of: paved roads, the building footprint of Worth Abbey itself, and two areas of modified grassland directly connected to the Abbey (see **Photographs A to D**). To the south, are impressive views of the High Weald (see **Photograph A**). Worth Abbey is located near Turners Hill in West Sussex, which sits on the High Weald. While the South Downs themselves are further south (towards places like Ditchling, Devil's Dyke, and the coast), on clear days there are long views toward the South Downs National Park ridgeline.
- 2.3 Soil type across the Site is understood through reference to the Soils Map (produced by Cranfield University, with support from Defra) to comprise: '*Slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils*'.
- 2.4 The Site slopes from the northern entrance to the northern extent of the southern grassed areas from 161 m aOD - 159 m aOD, from which point the Site slope increases to the southern extent of the Site at approx. 153 m aOD.



Photograph E - View of the eastern vehicular access and tree'd carpark beyond, looking east.



Photograph F - View from the elevated vehicular exit / pedestrian access, north of the abbey, looking south.



Photograph G - View of the northern cobbled vehicular access, with one way circular link branching off to the east.



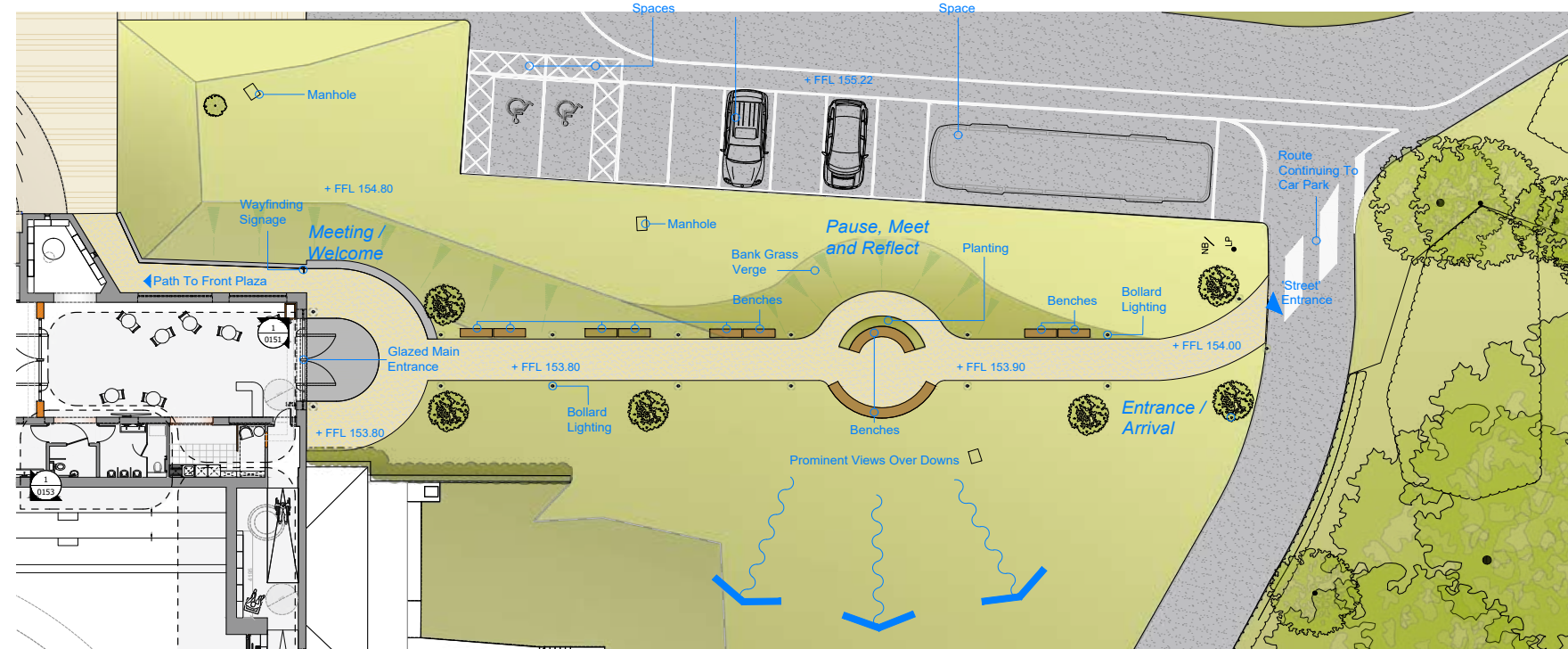
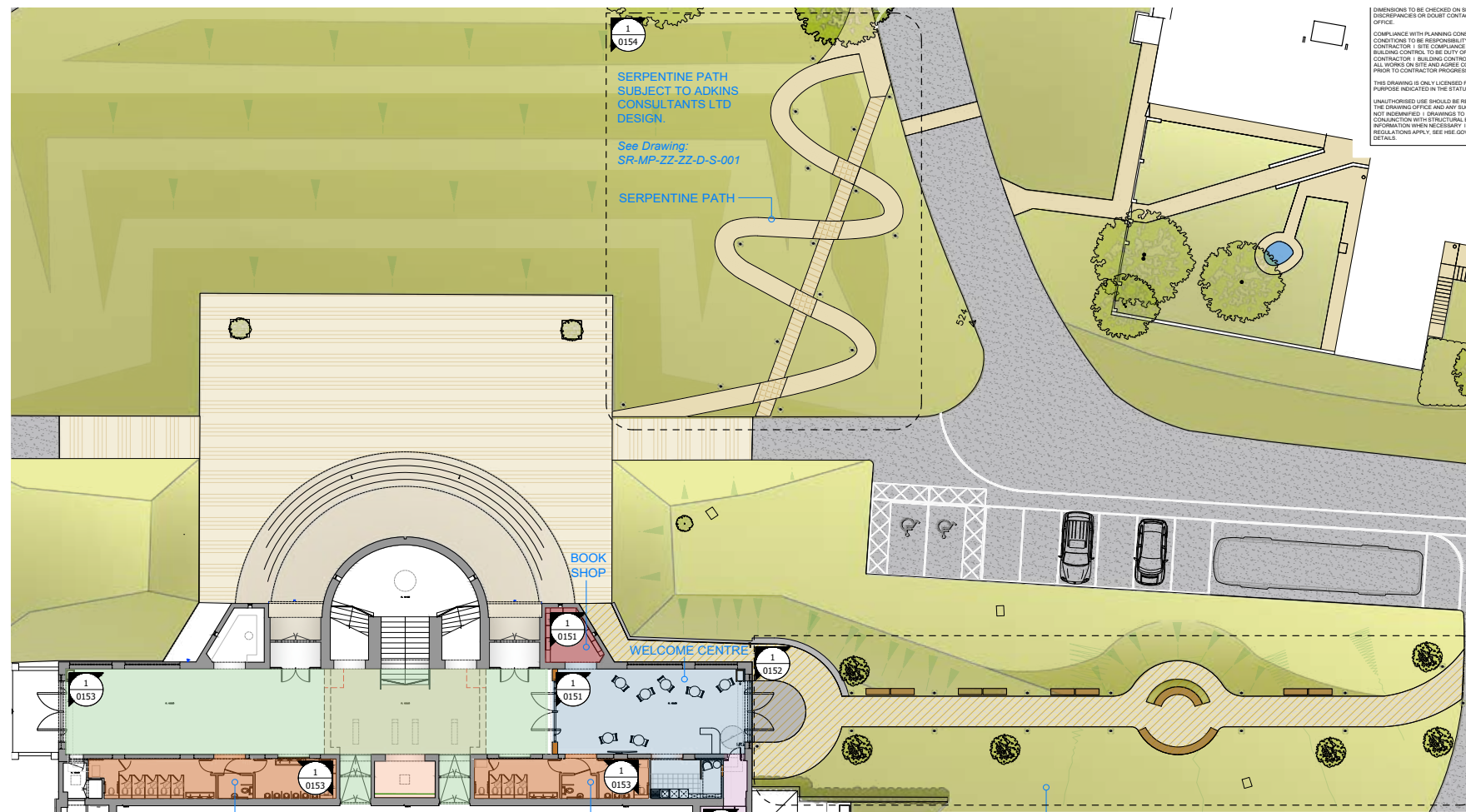
Photograph I - View of the vehicular exit link.

Existing Vegetation

- 2.5 The main Site area is broadly open in character, formed mainly of well maintained modified grassland, with three existing trees within, or within proximity to, the southern extents red line boundary.
- 2.6 Adjacent to the Site, opposite the northern Abbey entrance is a line of ornamental planting running west to east, where it ends is a prominent mature *Liquidambar sp.* (sweetgum). In addition a tree'd carpark is situated adjacent to the north eastern vehicular link.
- 2.7 Planted at the four corners of the Abbey courtyard are two *Ginkgo sp.* (ginkgo) and two *Cupressus sempervirens* (Mediterranean cypress), another *Ginkgo sp.* specimen is located to the eastern end of the southern grassed extent of the Site.

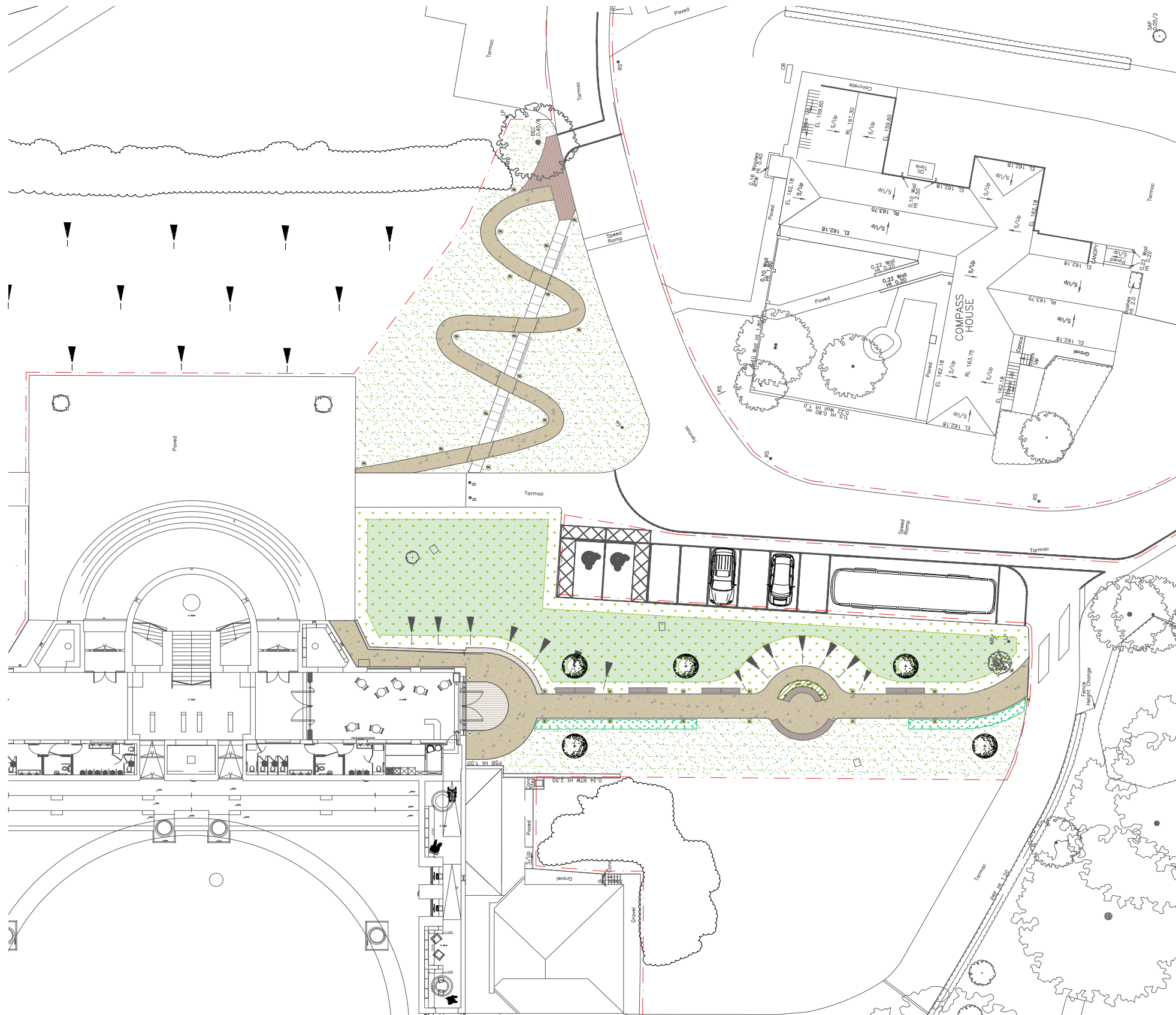
Surrounding Landscape

- 2.8 The Site forms part of the wider Worth Abbey and Worth School estate, a substantial and largely self-contained landholding set within the High Weald National Landscape. The broader estate landscape is characterised by a mosaic of woodland, grassland, and formal open space, interspersed with school buildings, playing fields, and internal estate roads.
- 2.9 To the south and west, the land transitions into pasture and mixed woodland forming part of Worth Forest, while the east is defined by more enclosed woodland blocks and areas of ecological and spiritual retreat.



3.0 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The proposals would involve the construction of two new pedestrian access routes within the grounds of Worth Abbey.
- 3.2 *The Street* would be a level visitor pathway linking the car park to the north-east of the Abbey with a newly glazed archway and associated patio area forming part of a new welcome centre and social space.
- 3.3 Seating would be provided at intervals along the path, including a circular seating area midway and south-facing benches positioned to take advantage of long views across the rural landscape. The cut in the slope created for the provision of the circular seating area would create the opportunity for an additional informal amphitheatre, maintained as a mown lawn slope.
- 3.4 A winding sloped pathway would be located to the north-east of the Abbey, providing stepped and ramped pedestrian access from the monks' dormitory area down to the Abbey courtyard. Linear steps would intersect the path at several points, offering a more direct descent.
- 3.5 The development boundary includes the internal one-way road system, extending from the site entrance, past the car park and the north-east of the Abbey, before looping back to Paddockhurst Road.
- 3.6 The proposals would be developed with consideration for existing trees, topography, underground services, and other site constraints.



4.0 PROPOSED LANDSCAPE SCHEME

Strategic Objectives

- 4.1 The proposed Landscape Design Strategy has been informed by specialist reports informing the development proposals as well as by the Site visit carried out in July 2025.
- 4.2 The primary objective of the proposed Landscape Design Strategy is to support the intended arrival function of *The Street* and the sloped path through a planting scheme that is appropriate to the site's character, sensitive to key views, and contributes toward Biodiversity Net Gain.

Landscape Layout

- 4.3 The landscape layout has been informed by ecological requirements, visual sensitivity, and the site's open, monastic character. The proposals have also evolved in response to Biodiversity Net Gain targets.
- 4.4 In recognition of the importance of preserving long views toward the southern horizon, a central gap in tree planting has been maintained to provide a clear visual corridor through the landscape.
- 4.5 Species-rich wildflower grassland would be introduced along The Street, providing ecological enhancement while retaining the open and informal character of the setting.
- 4.6 Low-maintenance ornamental hedging and shrub planting would be incorporated along the path edges and around the circular seating area. These elements would contribute to enclosure, structure, directional movement and year-round interest.
- 4.7 The final layout balances functional access, long views, biodiversity enhancement, and minimal visual impact, in keeping with the Abbey setting and the site's broader landscape context.

*Betula pendula**Euonymus fortunei* 'Green Spire'*Lavandula* 'Hidcote'*Santolina chamaecyparissus**Salvia rosmarinus* 'Prostratus'

Flowering Lawn Mixture

*Santolina rosmarinifolia* 'Lemon Fizz'*Thymus vulgaris*

Soft Landscape

- 4.8 The soft landscape scheme has been developed to reflect the distinct functions and characters of the two primary access routes, while contributing to Biodiversity Net Gain and reinforcing the site's rural and monastic setting.
- 4.9 Wildflower grassland would be established along the northern aspect of *The Street*, seeded with a species-rich meadow mix of native grasses and wildflowers appropriate to the local character and soil type. The grassland would support pollinators and local invertebrate populations, enhancing ecological value whilst complimenting the open visual character of the site. The grassland would be managed in line with ecological requirements, to contribute to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), and would be delineated with mowing strips to discourage footfall. It is proposed that a flowering lawn mix would be chosen to create a species-rich grassland with a restrained, formal character.
- 4.10 Ornamental shrubs and hedging would define key locations along *The Street*, framing the approach and enhancing seating areas. Low evergreen hedging would be formed using planting such as *Euonymus fortunei* 'Green Spire', chosen for its tidy form, year-round structure, and resilience in exposed conditions. This would be complemented by two lines of ornamental planting framing the southern edge of the pathway. The planting palette would consist of compact sun-loving species such as *Lavandula* 'Hidcote', *Santolina chamaecyparissus*, *Santolina rosmarinifolia* 'Lemon Fizz', *Salvia rosmarinus* 'Prostratus', *Teucrium chamaedrys* and *Thymus vulgaris*. These would provide low-maintenance, seasonal interest in keeping with native planting on site through an elegant and restrained colour palette that sits comfortably alongside the adjacent birch planting and flowering lawn areas, creating a cohesive and harmonious planting scheme.

Group	Species Name	Origins	Container	Density	Specification
Trees	<i>Betula pendula</i>	N	BR / RB	Specimen	Heavy Standard, 3.5 - 4.0 m height
Hedgerows and Ornamental Shrubs	<i>Euonymus fortunei</i> 'Green Spire'		C 3L	Single row, 30 cm centres	40 - 60 cm Height
	<i>Lavandula</i> 'Hidcote'		C 3L	Specimen	20 - 30 cm Height
	<i>Santolina chamaecyparissus</i>		C 3L	Specimen	20 - 30 cm Height
	<i>Salvia rosmarinus</i> 'Prostratus'		C 3L	Specimen	15 - 25 cm Height / 30 - 40 cm Spread
	<i>Teucrium chamaedrys</i>		C 3L	Specimen	25 - 25 cm Height
	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>		C 3L	7/m²	20 - 30 cm height
Wildflower Mix	EL1 Flowering Lawn Mixture	N	N/A	4g/m²	Emorsgate or equal and approved
Amenity Lawn Mix	A3 Embankments & Drought Mix		N/A	20 g/m²	Germinal Amenity or equal and approved

KEY:

- BR / RB
- Bare Rooted / Root Balled Stock
- C2/3/5
- 2/3/5 I Container Grown Stock

- 4.11
- Tree planting along *The Street* would include five no. standard form *Betula pendula* (silver birch), selected for their upright habit, light canopy, contribution to biodiversity and tolerance of exposed conditions. Tree positions would be arranged to preserve key views across the southern horizon, with a central gap maintained as a visual corridor. The majority of trees would be planted within wildflower grassland, with a localised mulched base to aid establishment and reduce competition during early growth.
- 4.12
- The same flowering lawn mix as used to create wildflower grassland elsewhere would be applied where mown lawns would be reinstated to areas to be maintained as mown lawn about the wildflower grassland area, such as the informal amphitheatre, and to mowing strips to wildflower edges. This would provide simplified implementation and maintenance regimes while also improving biodiversity. This seed mix would also be used to help tie these areas in with the surrounding retained and protected modified grassland, creating a consistent and well-integrated landscape.
- 4.13
- A lawn mix suitable to the site conditions, would otherwise be specified for areas of reinstatement to the areas about the sloped path to the north and to the south of *The Street*.

Outline Plant Schedule and Specification

- 4.14
- The soft landscape design proposals have been informed by Biodiversity Net Gain targets generated from BNG Metric and assessment processes undertaken by Bakerwell Ltd and feature species recommended in RHS '*Plants for Pollinators*'.
- 4.15
- Species selection is set out to suit the local soil type which is '*Slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils*' through reference to the Soilscales Map (produced by Cranfield University).
- 4.16
- The palette also reflects other key considerations, including low maintenance requirements, suitability to the exposed, south-facing site conditions, and visual coherence with the surrounding character and context.
- 4.17
- For details of the proposed soft landscape layout refer to *LLD3566-LAN-DWG-010-Illustrative Landscape Masterplan*.



Pathing Surface Treatment: Aztec Gold - Resin Bound Gravel by;
Retained by: Aluminum Edging.



Hardwood decking with anti-slip strips - to platform access.



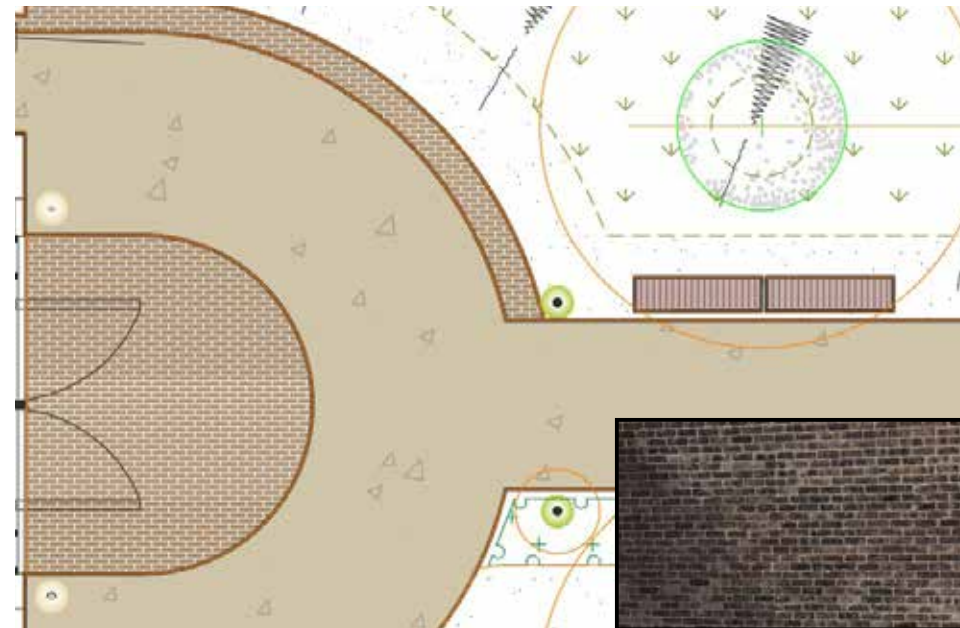
Pathway lighting: Contemporary
aluminum pillar lamp - Colour: rust.



Brushed concrete steps to slope, to be
specified by engineer.



Contemporary but contextual range with powder-coated steel supports and timber
slats - in keeping with Abbey materiality.



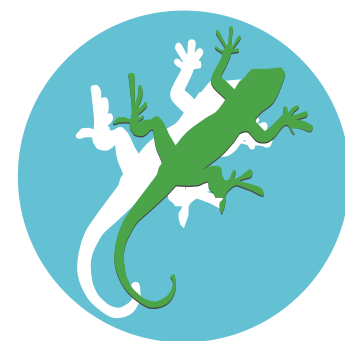
Abbey threshold paving and retaining wall to match materiality of Abbey facade.



Powder coated ballustrades to concrete
steps, to be specified by engineer.

Hard Landscape

- 4.18 A muted-tone resin bound gravel surface is proposed for both the *The Street*, and the path to the north. This material was selected for its clean, natural finish, permeability, and warm inviting tone. Flush aluminum edging would be used to retain the surface neatly while allowing adjacent planting to soften the path edges over time. The edging and surface work together to create a tidy yet informal interface between hard and soft landscape elements.
- 4.19 Seating would consist of timber benches with powder-coated steel supports, complementing the Abbey's metal roof.
- 4.20 Low-level lighting is proposed in the form of sculptural bollard-style luminaires with a weathered finish. These would provide subtle, downward-directed illumination to guide movement without introducing glare or light spill. Their understated form, warm lighting tone, and materiality would be consistent with the proposed hard landscape palette, aligning with the character of the Abbey landscape and supporting ecological considerations.
- 4.21 The raised platform access to the northern pathway would be constructed in FSC-certified timber decking with a non-slip surface treatment. This protects the rooting area of the retained tree while ensuring accessible circulation and a visual connection to the surrounding path materials.
- 4.22 The steps leading down from the platform would be finished in a robust, slip-resistant surface such as brushed concrete.
- 4.23 Powder-coated steel handrails would accompany the stair sets, designed to blend with the surrounding materiality and visually complement concrete aesthetic.
- 4.24 The threshold space immediately outside the Welcome Centre, along with the curved retaining edge to the north, would be of a brick materiality matching that of the Abbey façade. This provides a clear point of arrival and a sense of formality, contrasting with the muted resin bound gravel surfacing of the surrounding pedestrian routes.



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