

Lydhurst Estate

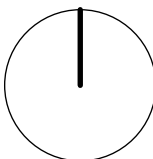
landscape design strategy

ndLd

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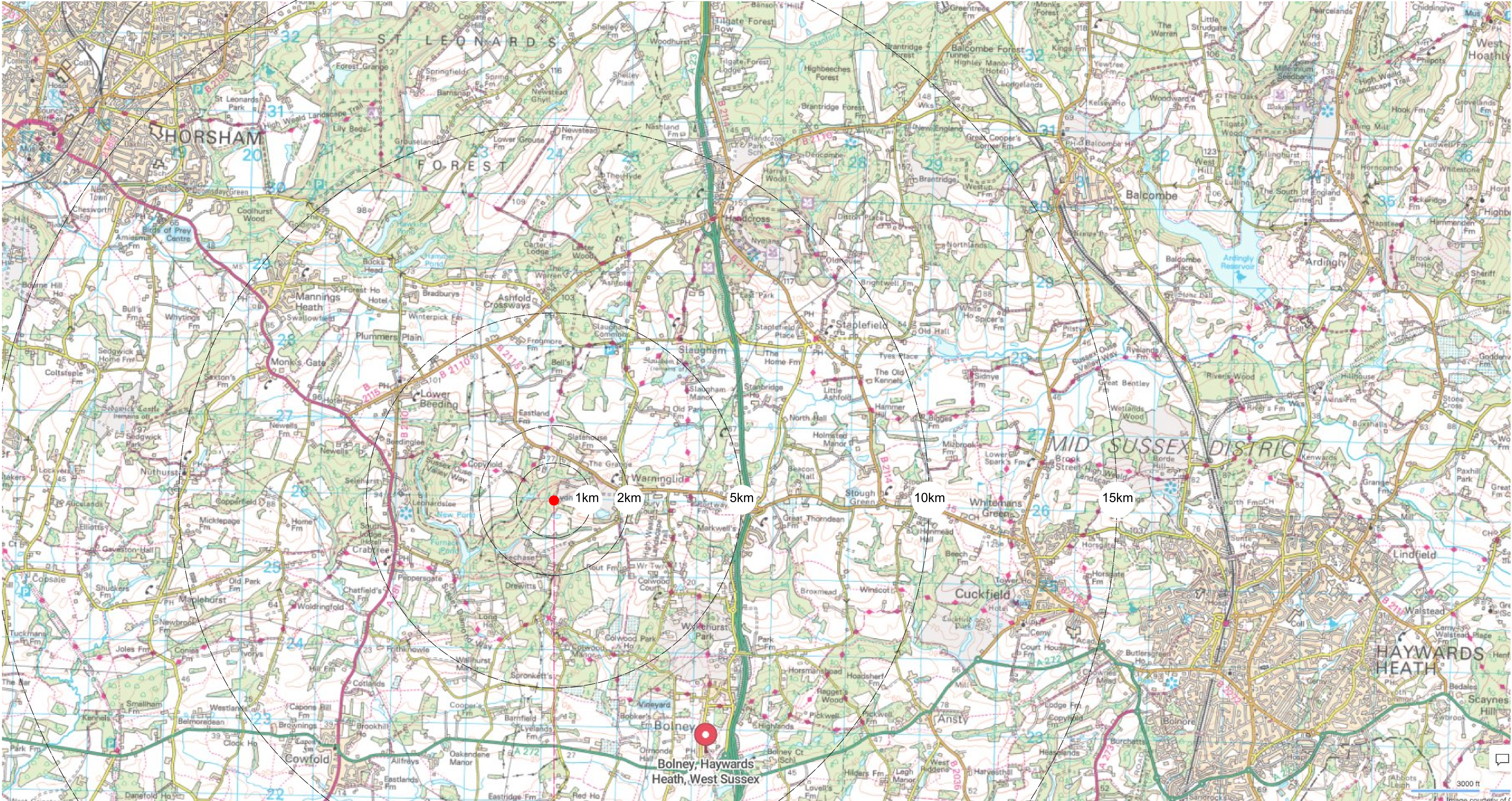
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Location

Context Map



Horsham
15km North West of Site

Site Location

Bolney
7km South East of Site

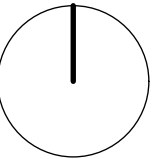
Haywards Heath
14km East of Site

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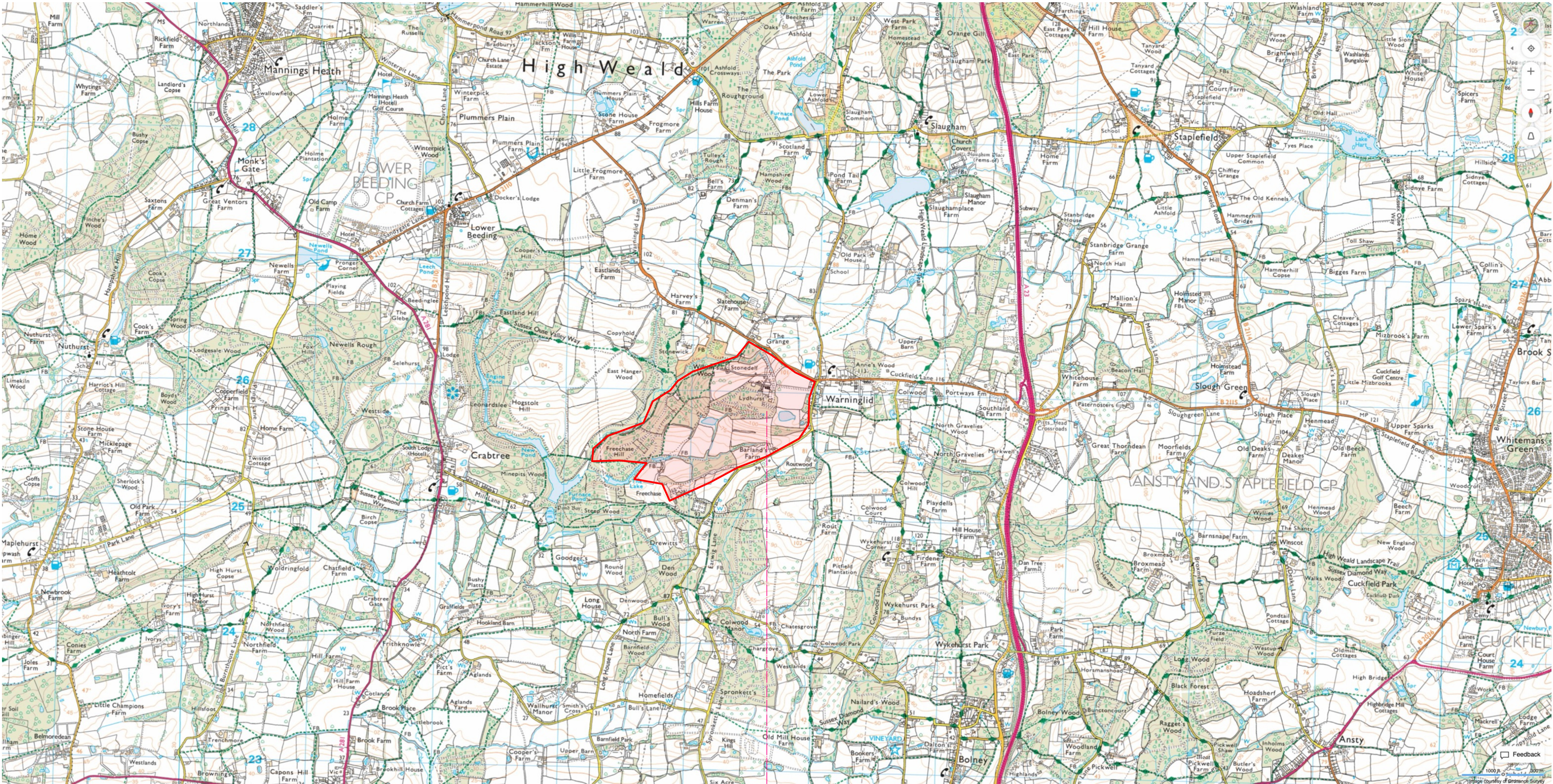
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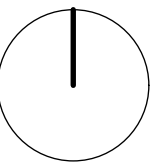
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Estate Plan

Lydhurst Estate is one of the largest private estates in Sussex, extending across 292.78 acres, with 110.95 acres of pasture and 155.18 acres of woodland.

The estate has a long and layered history, with a house in continuous use on this site for over 225 years. The grounds include ancient woodland, 19th-century gardens, and Arts & Crafts features linked to Harold Peto and the planting legacy of William Robinson. Many of these structures and spaces remain, though the site as a whole has fallen into disrepair in recent decades.

The current owners aim to restore and renew Lydhurst as a sustainable working estate. The long-term vision is to re-establish productive gardens, orchards and pasture, and to supply high-quality, home-grown food with local traceability to specialist and artisan markets. This revival will be informed by the estate’s horticultural heritage while reflecting modern principles of ecological land management.

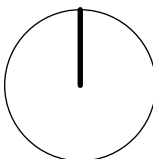


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Site Analysis

The Weald Landscape

In November 2024, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) published a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) to define and record the distinctive features of the local landscape. The assessment draws on fieldwork and existing studies to provide a detailed understanding of the area's natural and built environment.



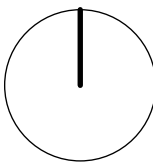
Lydhurst Estate lies within the **HW4 High Weald Forest Ridge** character area.

Protect, conserve and enhance:

- Long views over the Low Weald to the Downs.
- Significant woodland cover, including ancient woodland and dense shaws, hedgerows, and trees.
- Small, irregular assart fields, larger fields, and remnant heathland.
- Orchards and horticulture on lower slopes, especially to the west.
- Biodiversity in valleys, heathland, and woodland.
- Extensive network of lanes, tracks, and footpaths.
- Historic settlement pattern near Horsham and key settlements (Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, Lindfield).
- Busy roads and lanes, including A and B roads and the A23.
- London to Brighton Railway Line at Haywards Heath.
- Historic mill sites, hammerponds, ornamental lakes, and ponds.
- Traditional rural buildings with timber-framing, Horsham stone, Wealden stone, and local brick and tile-hanging.
- Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes near large country houses.
- Notable gill woodland garden and attraction at Leonardslee.



Lydhurst forms part of this distinctive High Weald setting and shares many of its characteristic features, including long-range views, wooded shaws, ponds, and historic boundaries shaped over centuries of estate management.



Surrounding Landscape

The High Weald is known for its rich tradition of landscape gardens, shaped by centuries of horticultural innovation and ecological awareness. Many of the best-known gardens in the region blend formal and informal design, often combining exotic planting with woodland, water, and local topography.

These gardens form part of an evolving tradition that continues to shift, moving away from display horticulture and towards approaches grounded in sustainability, biodiversity, and long-term stewardship.

Notable gardens in the High Weald:

1. Nymans Garden
A National Trust garden featuring formal areas, woodland walks, and rare plants set around a romantic ruin.

2. Wakehurst Place
Managed by Kew, Wakehurst spans over 500 acres of woodlands and meadows, and houses the Millennium Seed Bank.

3. Leonardslee Lakes & Gardens
A Grade I listed site with lakes, exotic trees, rhododendrons, and a unique population of wallabies, set in a steep-sided valley.

4. Borde Hill Garden
A large horticultural garden featuring themed areas, exotic plantings, and views over the surrounding landscape.

5. Standen House and Garden
A hillside garden influenced by the Arts & Crafts movement, designed by Margaret Beale and owned by the National Trust.

Lydhurst sits quietly among this group of sites—less well-known, but part of the same historic fabric. Its landscape includes Arts & Crafts-era features such as rockwork, terraces and woodland walks, and it was shaped by ideas that echo the work of Harold Peto and William Robinson.

Looking forward, the intention is not to replicate these gardens, but to take cues from their layered histories while responding to contemporary priorities: habitat creation, sustainable food production, and a more resilient, regenerative form of land management.



Above: Leonardslee Lakes & Gardens is a Grade I listed estate in West Sussex, established in the early 19th century by Sir Edmund Loder. Set within a picturesque valley, the gardens feature man-made lakes, rock gardens, and a renowned collection of rhododendrons, camellias, azaleas, and rare trees.

Transformed into a celebrated Victorian garden by the late 1800s, Leonardslee was later restored and reopened to the public in 2019. Today, it is known for its tranquil setting, seasonal displays, and diverse planting, alongside woodland walks and historic garden structures.

Historical Maps

The 1874 Ordnance Survey map shows the Lydhurst Estate within its historic rural context—set on the High Weald ridge, with woodland, pasture and tracks shaping the surrounding landscape.

Across the wider area, gravel pits, quarries and ponds mark the remains of early industrial activity. Larger ponds were often constructed to power hammers and bellows for the iron industry, while smaller mill ponds supported local water mills. These features have left a lasting ecological footprint, now supporting varied habitats and contributing to the region’s biodiversity.

Below: Hammer Pond St.Leonards Forest



Extract from OS survey 1874



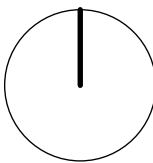
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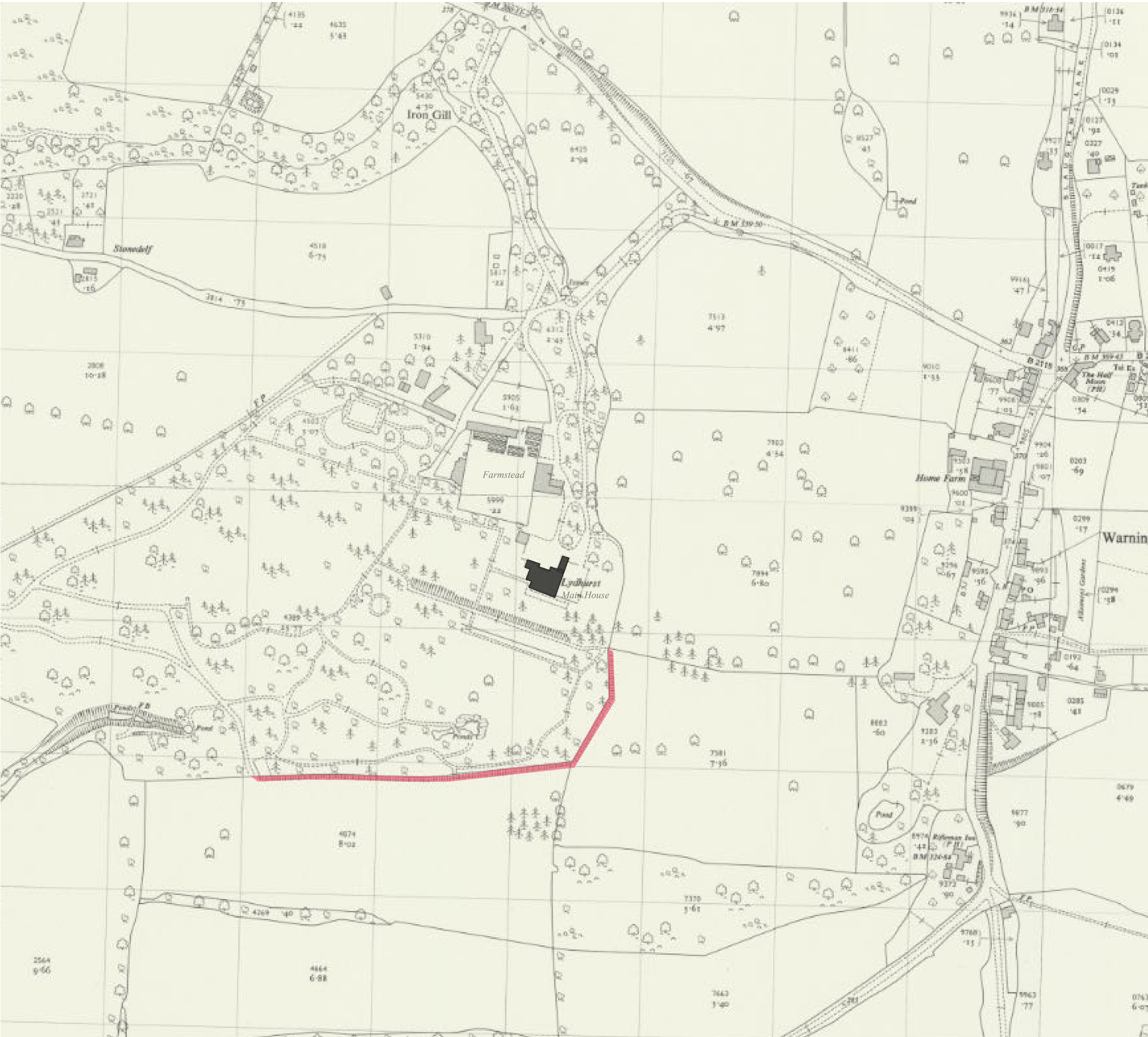
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Historical Maps

By 1956, the estate layout remains broadly unchanged, with a mix of parkland, woodland and formal elements still clearly visible. The map highlights the main house, associated outbuildings, and the walled garden enclosure.

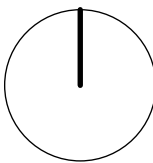


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