

Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd

Land West of Gatesmead

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Issue: Wednesday, 15 April 2026

CLIENT NAME: Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd

SITE NAME: Land West of Gatesmead

REPORT TITLE: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

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1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Competency

- 1.1 David Jarvis Associates Limited (DJA) has been commissioned by Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd (the 'Applicant') to prepare this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform and assess proposals on Land West of Gatesmead, ('the Site'). The Site location is shown on drawing no. **LV-0001**.
- 1.2 DJA is an environmental, planning and design consultancy experienced in the design and assessment of development across the planning spectrum. DJA is a Registered Practice of the Landscape Institute.

Scope

- 1.3 A typical LVIA considers landscape and visual matters as separate issues. Visual impacts relate to changes in views and visual amenity, whereas landscape impacts relate to physical changes to the defining characteristics of the landscape within an identified study area.
- 1.4 This LVIA concerns the predicted landscape and visual effects arising from the development comprising of 49 new homes together with open space and associated infrastructure ('the Proposed Development'). Relevant details of the Proposed Development are provided in the Design and Access Statement and drawings accompanying the application.
- 1.5 For LVIA, the impacts arising from the Proposed Development are conveyed as effects (refer to Methodology para. 1.2). Typically, the assessment is undertaken for the construction stage, then short term effects at completion/operation ('Year 1') and long term, 'residual' effects ('Year 15'), accounting for mitigation as required. For this assessment the construction stage and the short term effects at completion/operation ('Year 1') have been combined as the effects are predicted to remain the same for construction and operation.

Methodology

- 1.6 This report has been prepared in accordance with a bespoke methodology that adheres to best practice guidelines, which includes the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment¹ (also referred to as 'GLVIA3'). The full methodology used for this assessment is provided in **Appendix 1** of this report. Considerations that are specific to this assessment are recorded below.

LPA Consultation

- 1.7 A pre-app with Mid Sussex District Council (the 'LPA') was submitted in December 2025. Proposed viewpoints were included in this submission, no response had been received at the time of writing.

Assessment Limitations

- 1.8 Specific limitations pertinent to the site and time of visit are described below.
- 1.9 An initial site survey was undertaken on the 5th September 2025. During this time trees, hedgerows and other vegetation were in full leaf. Intervisibility between the Site and the surrounding landscape would be expected to increase during the winter season when vegetation is absent of leaf. A winter survey was later undertaken on the 19th December 2025. This was based on the intervisibility determined during the initial site survey in September but at a time when representative views

¹ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the Landscape Institute – 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Third Edition 2013.

included trees, hedgerows and other vegetation generally absent of leaf, ensuring that a worst case scenario would be assessed.

- 1.10 Although every effort has been made to include viewpoints in sensitive locations and from those locations from where the proposed development may be most visible, only those locations with public access could be included in the assessment. No private residences or land has been accessed during the assessment.
- 1.11 It should be noted that the assessment provided is based on the maximum building envelope based on the submitted proposed Site Layout plan. In reality the scheme will provide a more articulated development. The assessment is therefore robust.

Study Area

- 1.12 The study area has been determined through a combination of desk-studies and actual intervisibility experienced during the site visit. The Zone of Theoretical visibility (ZTV, drawing **LV-0006**), combined with the baseline findings have informed an understanding of the extent of the surroundings and their influence on the Site, where a Significant effect is predicted to occur.

Background Information

- 1.13 The Site has not been subject to previous planning applications for residential development.

2. PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 2.1 A full review of the Site in relation to national and local planning is contained within the Planning Statement accompanying this application. This section provides a review of policy and supporting guidance pertinent to the consideration of landscape and visual matters.
- 2.2 The following policy documents are relevant to this assessment:
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024)²;
 - Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (March 2018)³;
 - Mid Sussex District Plan Draft 2021-2039 (December 2023)⁴;
- 2.3 Mid Sussex District Council adopted its District Plan 2014-2031 on 28th March 2018. The District Council is in the process of reviewing and updating the District Plan where necessary. The new District Plan 2021 – 2039 will replace the current adopted District Plan. The new District Plan 2021 – 2039 was submitted for Examination on 8th July 2024.

Landscape Designations and Considerations

- 2.4 Designations are an indication of landscape value and may be associated with relevant policies, drawing **LV-0003** shows that the landscape designations within the Site and its vicinity. The only statutory landscape designation within the Site is the Birchen Wood Ancient Woodland, located to the north east of the Site only the southern tip of the Ancient Woodland encroaches the Site boundary. There are no heritage designations within the Site.
- 2.5 Heritage designations within the vicinity of the Site include the Grade II* listed Wickham Farmhouse, to the south, and the Grade II* Sunte House to the east. Sunte House also has the Grade II listed Walled Garden and Wall to the North East. There are also a number of conservation areas to the south and east of the Site, these are all located within Haywards Heath and do not encroach the Site. The Borde Hill Registered Park and Garden located to the north west, beyond the railway line. Other heritage assets within the area are either located within the Haywards Heath or are separated from the Site by roads and/or the railway line.
- 2.6 Nature designations within the vicinity of the Site include areas of Ancient Woodland and Ancient Replanted Woodland to the north of the Site, including Birchen Wood, Staves Copse and Sugworth Wood, of these only Birchen Wood encroaches the Site. Staves Copse and Sugworth Wood, are also designated as a Local Wildlife Site. Trees and vegetation at the north western and south eastern Site boundaries are considered Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland while a number of trees to the south of the Site, along Old Wickham Lane, are have Tree preservation Orders (TPO). Further north of the Site is the southern edge of the High Weald National Landscape. Other Nature designations within the area are either located within the Haywards Heath or are separated from the Site by roads and/or the railway line.
- 2.7 The heritage assets and areas of nature conservation within the Site elevates the value of the landscape and are assessed as landscape features. An assessment of the effects on ecology and heritage setting are carried out as part of separate assessments by the ecology and heritage consultants. Heritage assets and areas of nature conservation located outside the Site elevate the value of the wider study area but have no direct association with the Site.

² National Planning Policy Framework. December 2024; updated February 2025. Department for Communities and Local Government.

³ Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031, March 2018, Mid Sussex District Council.

⁴ Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039 Submission Draft Regulation 19, December 2023, Mid Sussex District Council.

- 2.8 There are a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the Study Area, as shown in drawing **LV-0004**. Footpath HAH/47BCU/1 lies to the east of the Site. Running north to south along the eastern boundary providing connections to the PRoWs to the south of the Site, including footpath HAH/46ACU/1, the Sussex Diamond Way, and to the north of the Site joining footpath LIR/24LR/2 and leading up to the High Weald Landscape Trail and the wider PRoW network.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.9 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, described as being the 'golden thread' that should run throughout local plan and decision making. The NPPF encourages developments to function well, add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive and are sympathetic to local character; should be sympathetic to landscape setting and should not discourage innovation or change (para. 139)
- 2.10 An objective of the planning system is that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by protecting and enhancing 'valued' landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (Para 187).

Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031

- 2.11 Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside is of particular relevance:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Economically viable mineral reserves within the district will be safeguarded."

Mid Sussex District Emerging Plan Draft 2021-2039

- 2.12 Mid Sussex District Council submitted the new District Plan 2021 – 2039 for examination in July 2024, in December 2024 changes were made to national planning policy. The new District Plan is currently going through the examination process. Once adopted it will set the strategy for the future development of the District until 2039.
- 2.13 The new Local Plan will set out the Council's strategic vision, policies and land allocations, where necessary, for meeting future needs (including housing, employment, community facilities, transport and other infrastructure needed to support development). It will also identify areas for protection, such as sites that are important for wildlife and open space.

3. LANDSCAPE BASELINE

General

Site Description

- 3.1 The Site is split into three areas, north, south and central. These areas are separated by mature tree lines and mixed vegetation. The Site is only publicly accessible via PRoW footpath HAH/47BCU/1 which runs along the eastern boundary. There are a number of informal tracks that have been forged through the Site with unofficial pedestrian access points located on the southern boundary where Wickham Way and Old Wickham Lane meet, along the eastern boundary off footpath HAH/47BCU/1, and at the north west corner where a timber footbridge allows access over the watercourse to the north of the Site. The Site is bounded along the southern boundary by PRoW footpath HAH/46ACU/1, Old Wickham Lane which forms part of the Sussex Diamond Way long distance footpath. PRoW footpath HAH/47BCU/1 runs along the eastern boundary with Gatesmead to the north east. Along the western boundary is the railway line. To the north are areas of open grassland and woodland that lead up to Haywards Heath golf Course.
- 3.2 The location of the site is shown on drawing **LV-0001**.
- 3.3 The Site is located on the northern edge of Haywards Heath located between the railway line to the west and Gatesmead to the east. The Site falls within the Mid Sussex District Council authority..
- 3.4 Along the north, east and western boundaries are also mature trees and vegetation providing a substantial screening effect from the surrounding areas. Along the southern boundary, Old Wickham Lane, the vegetation consists of a tall mature beech hedgerow and a number of mixed species trees, these trees fall outside the Site boundary but are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).
- 3.5 The topography of the Site is relatively flat with a gentle fall from the north, at approximately 60m AOD, to the south, at approximately 50m AOD.
- 3.6 The Site is in the vicinity of OS grid reference 533150, 125620.
- 3.7 The Site contains no statutory or non-statutory cultural heritage assets. The only nature conservation or landscape designations within the Site is the Birchen Wood Ancient Woodland, of which the southern tip encroaches the Site boundary.

Published Landscape Character

- 3.8 The boundaries of published landscape character assessments are shown on drawing **LV-0002**. The landscape of Great Britain has been classified into a series of character areas at varying scales including national regional and local. These reflect broad recognisable characteristics such as geology, soils, vegetation, land use and settlement pattern. The following character assessments exist within the study area;
- National Character Area - NCA122; High Weald ⁵;
 - West Sussex Landscape Character Areas – HW4 High Weald Fringes ⁶;
- 3.9 To maintain a proportional assessment, relative to the size and scale of the site and/or Proposed Development, the local landscape character assessment adopted by the LPA will be evaluated in this

⁵ National Character Area profile, 122: High Weald, Natural England 2013.

⁶ Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex, West Sussex County Council, 2003.

assessment, in this case the Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex. These are more detailed and more recent studies of the landscape character of the site and surrounding landscape.

- 3.10 The Site and wider study area fall wholly within the West Sussex Landscape Character Area “HW4 High Weald Fringes”. To the north of this is the West Sussex Landscape Character Area “HW3 Ouse Valley”.

Local Character Assessment

- 3.11 The key characteristics of LCA HW4 High Weald Fringes, described in the West Sussex Landscape Character Areas, are set out below, full details for which are included in **Appendix 3**. Those characteristics relevant to the Site and study area are shown underlined below;

“Key Characteristics

- 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.
- Western part drained by the headwaters of the River Arun, eastern part around Scaynes Hill by the River Ouse.
- Long views over the Low Weald to the downs.
- 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.
- Orchards and horticulture on lower slopes, particularly to the west.
- Biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.
- Network of lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.
- Dispersed historic settlement pattern, close to Horsham, 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.
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area at Haywards Heath.
- Mill sites, hammerponds and ornamental lakes and ponds.
- 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.
- Major gill woodland garden and visitor attraction at Leonardslee.”

- 3.12 The Site and study area are, in part, typical of the published landscape character assessment for of LCA HW4 High Weald Fringes with woodland cover limiting the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity. The Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex doesn’t offer an assessment of sensitivity for LCA HW4 High Weald Fringes. While the Site is, in part, in keeping with the key characteristics it forms only a small part of the landscape character area.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 3.13 Landscape sensitivity is derived from combining the judgements on landscape value and landscape susceptibility together. Photo viewpoints are used interchangeably to assist with the landscape appraisal, as well as consider visual amenity. These are provided in **Appendix 2**. Judgements in relation to susceptibility are provided with reference to the assessment methodology.

Landscape Susceptibility – Study Area

- 3.14 Landscape susceptibility is the ability of an identified landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences on its baseline conditions or character. Characteristics are represented to varying extents across the landscape, and therefore it is important to contextualise these, in order to understand how they relate to the site and its immediate surroundings within the study area. In doing so, a better understanding is gained for where landscape character is weaker or stronger i.e. where the differences and similarities exist. The following evaluation is supported by the illustrative landscape analysis shown on drawing **LV-0003**.
- 3.15 The study area includes areas to the north, including areas of grassland and woodland, the railway line to the west, the western edge of Gatesmead to the east, and Old Wickham Lane to the south. Within this study area are a number of a designated assets including cultural heritage and nature conservation.

Cultural Heritage

- 3.16 Within the study area are a number of heritage assets including the Grade II* listed Wickham Farmhouse, to the south, and the Grade II* Sunte House to the east. Sunte House also has the Grade II listed Walled Garden and Wall to the North East. A large band of landscaped space immediately north of Wickham Farmhouse and west of Sunte House is retained by the proposed development, and so it is not considered likely that there will be an overbearing or substantial intrusion of modern built form to the experience of these listed buildings within their highly enclosed, private, close settings. No opportunities to appreciate the significance of these buildings would be lost as a result of the proposed development and no alteration would occur to their intrinsic architectural or historic interest, as derived from their built fabric and relationship with their enclosed grounds.
- 3.17 North west of the study area is the Borde Hill Registered Park and Garden. This is separated from the Study area by existing woodland, trees and vegetation, the railway line, as well as intervening buildings, topography and landform and therefore falls outside the Study area.
- 3.18 Other Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Scheduled Monuments are separated from the Site and study area by built development and intervening landscape and are therefore fall outside the study area, as shown in drawing **LV-0003**.

Nature Conservation

- 3.19 Within the study area, to the north of the Site, are areas of Ancient Woodland and Ancient Replanted Woodland including Birchen Wood, Staves Copse and Sugworth Wood. Staves Copse and Sugworth Wood, are also designated as a Local Wildlife Site. Recent tree planting to the north of the Site is apparent increasing the tree cover in this area. Areas of Ancient Woodland and Ancient Replanted Woodland are required to have a 15m buffer free of built development. Those areas of Ancient Woodland and Ancient Replanted Woodland, and the Local Wildlife Site, that are outside the Site but fall within the study area would have no direct effect from the proposed development. Where the 15m Ancient Woodland buffer encroaches the north east corner of the Site, the proposed built development would be minimised in this area.
- 3.20 As well as areas of Ancient Woodland there are also a number of areas of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland in the area, see Figure LV-0003. These areas are proposed to be retained and enhanced where possible.
- 3.21 To the south of the Site are a number of TPO trees and a TPO tree group. These trees are all outside the Site boundary and fall within the Wickham Farmhouse buffer. Therefore there would be no direct effect on the TPO trees.

- 3.22 North of the study area, beyond the areas of Ancient Woodland is the High Weald National Landscape. This is separated from the Study area by existing woodland, trees and vegetation, the railway line and the Haywards Heath Golf Course, as well as intervening buildings, topography and landform and therefore falls outside the Study area.
- 3.23 Other areas of nature interest, including Local Nature Reserve to the south west and further areas of woodland, are separated from the Site and study area by built development and intervening landscape and are therefore fall outside the study area, as shown in drawing **LV-0003**.

Landscape Condition

- 3.24 Landscape Condition of the study area is generally good. As well as the PRoW along the eastern edge of the Site, informal access through the Site has also been created via a series of desire line creating tracks through the Site from Old Wickham Lane to the south into the landscape areas to the north. A number of large mature trees and perimeter vegetation creates an enclosed and intimate rural aspect within the Site and areas to the north. The railway line does interrupt the study area somewhat, running along the western boundary. Trains run past the Site regularly with noise from the railway line apparent within the study area.
- 3.25 Along the northern boundary of the Site runs a small stream visible where PRoW footpath HAH/47BCU/1 crosses and at the north west corner of the Site.
- 3.26 Beyond the study area, to the south, east and west areas become significantly built up with the northern edge of Haywards Heath surrounding the study area to the south and west and Gatesmead to the east. North of the study area the golf course dominates the landscape with areas of woodland continuing up northwards.
- 3.27 There are no significant associations or particular distinctive features within the study area.

Recreational

- 3.28 Within the study area a network of PRoWs provide routes through the landscape, as shown in drawing **LV-0004**. The PRoW network includes footpath HAH/47BCU/1 along the eastern boundary of the Site which provides a connection to the north joining footpath LIR/24LR/2. Along the southern boundary of the Site footpaths HAH/46ACU/1 and HAH/46CCU/1 provide connection running east to west along Old Wickham Lane, also forming part of the Sussex Diamon Way.
- 3.29 Footpath HAH/47ACU/1 leads south from Old Wickham Lane along Wickham Way. This footpath leads into the built up areas of Haywards Heath and is screened from the study area by existing build development and mature trees, it therefore predominantly sits outside the study area.
- 3.30 The network of PRoWs continues beyond the study area providing connections into Haywards Heath to the south and the High Weald National Landscape to the north, including the High Weald Landscape Trail. These routes are separated from the Site and study area by built development and intervening landscape and are therefore fall outside the study area.

Perceptual

- 3.31 The scenic quality and tranquillity within the study area is generally good, with interruption by the railway line along the western boundary. The study is relatively enclosed by existing vegetation with built up areas to the south, east and west. Further to the north the landscape becomes more tranquil as it leads further from the built up areas of Haywards Heath and closer to the High Weald National Landscape.

- 3.32 Due to the built up influences of the edge of Haywards Heath and Gatesmead, together with the proximity of the railway line, the susceptibility of the study area in relation to the proposed development is considered to be **Medium**.

Landscape Susceptibility – Site

- 3.33 Characteristics are represented to varying extents across the landscape, and therefore it is important to contextualise these, in order to understand how they relate to the site and its immediate surroundings within the study area. In doing so, a better understanding is gained for where landscape character is weaker or stronger i.e. where the differences and similarities exist. The following evaluation is supported by the illustrative landscape analysis shown on **drawing LV-0003**.

Cultural Heritage

- 3.34 There are no heritage assets located within the Site.

Nature Conservation

- 3.35 The only statutory nature conservation asset within the Site is the southern tip of the 15m buffer to Birchen Wood Ancient Woodland.
- 3.36 There are also a number of areas of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland including areas at the south east and north west Site boundary. These areas are proposed to be retained and enhanced where possible.
- 3.37 There are no TPO trees within the Site.

Landscape Condition

- 3.38 Landscape Condition of the Site is generally good. Walking tracks have been forged through the Site, although unofficial and unauthorised they provide access into the Site where an enclosed and intimate rural aspect can be found. These, together with PRow footpath HAH/47BCU/1 along the eastern boundary of the Site provide a network of pedestrian routes from Old Wickham Lane to the south up to the open landscape and wooded areas to the north.
- 3.39 Along the northern boundary of the Site runs a small stream visible where the PRow and the unofficial tracks cross and the vegetation thins out.
- 3.40 There are no significant associations within the Site.

Recreational

- 3.41 Within the Site PRow footpath HAH/47BCU/1 runs along the eastern boundary. Within the Site a network of unofficial pedestrian routes provides links from Old Wickham Lane to the south up to the open landscape and wooded areas to the north.

Perceptual

- 3.42 Scenic quality within the Site is generally good. Mature trees within the site and mature trees and vegetation along the perimeter creates a relatively intimate and rural aspect within the Site. The stream along the northern boundary provides an additional rural feature adding to the scenic quality. To the south and west is the built up edge of Haywards Heath with Gatesmead to the east, these are well screened from the Site by mature trees and vegetation along the Site perimeter.

3.43 Tranquillity within the Site varies. The noise generated from the railway does effect on existing levels of tranquillity within the Site albeit periodically, although the mature trees and vegetation along the western boundary do provide some buffer to this. The stream along the northern boundary adds to the tranquillity of the Site..

3.44 Sited between the railway line, Gatesmead and Old Wickham Lane, and enclosed with mature tree planting and vegetation along all boundaries the susceptibility of the Site is considered to be **Medium to Low**.

Landscape Value

3.45 Landscape value relates to the value or importance society attaches to a landscape or view, which expresses national or local consensus and because of various factors that are an influence on value. This may be assigned through a relevant designation. Where no designation exists, then LI guidance identifies a number of reasons why a landscape may be valued, which is determined with regard to the assessment methodology provided in **Appendix 1**.

3.46 Where the Site is in a landscape designation, the following over-arching values are given:

- High: International or Nationally designated landscapes;
- High-Medium: Regional or locally designated landscapes.

3.47 Drawing **LV-0003** illustrates that the only designations within the Site is the southern tip of the Birchen Wood Ancient Woodland and areas of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland at the south east and north west corners of the Site.

3.48 Whilst taking into account the existing designations within the Site the value of the landscape is also determined with regard to the criteria listed in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Landscape value for non-designated Site

Factor	Evaluation	Contribution (High/Medium/Low/None)	
		Study Area	Site
Cultural heritage	The wider study area: • Grade II* listed Wickham Farmhouse. • Grade II* Sunte House. • Grade II listed Walled Garden at Sunte House. • Grade II listed Wall to the North East of Sunte House. The Site: • There are no heritage assets located with the Site.	Medium	None
Nature Conservation	The wider study area: • Ancient Woodland and Ancient Replanted Woodland. • Local Wildlife Site • Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland • TPO trees The Site: • Ancient Woodland. • Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland	Medium/High	Medium
Landscape Condition	The wider study area: • Ancient Woodland and Ancient Replanted Woodland. • The railway line. • Open landscape to the north. • Limited views of the small watercourse along the northern boundary. • The built up edge of Haywards Heath to the south and west, and Gatesmead to the east.	Medium	Medium

	• Official and unofficial pedestrian tracks. The Site: • Existing mature trees within the central part of the Site. • Existing mature trees and vegetation along the perimeter. • Views of the small watercourse along the northern boundary.		
Associations	There are no cultural associations to the Site or wider study area.	None	None
Distinctiveness	The wider study area: • Ancient Woodland and Ancient Replanted Woodland. The Site: • Existing mature trees within the central part of the Site.	Low	Low
Recreational	The wider study area: • PROW footpath HAH/47BCU/1 along the eastern boundary. • PROW footpath LIR/24LR/2 to the north. • PROW footpath HAH/46ACU/1 and HAH/46CCU/1 running east to west along Old Wickham Lane, also forming part of the Sussex Diamon Way. • Unofficial pedestrian tracks. The Site: • PROW HAH/47BCU/1 along the eastern boundary. • Unofficial pedestrian tracks.	Medium	Medium
Perceptual (Scenic and Tranquillity)	The wider study area: • Ancient Woodland and Ancient Replanted Woodland. • The railway line. • Open landscape to the north. • Limited views of the small watercourse along the northern boundary. • The built up edge of Haywards Heath to the south and west, and Gatesmead to the east. The Site: • Existing mature trees within the central part of the Site. • Existing mature trees and vegetation along the perimeter. • Views of the small watercourse along the northern boundary.	Medium	Medium

- 3.49 On balance, it is concluded that the landscape value of the study area is **Medium** and the landscape value of the Site is also considered to be **Medium**.

Overall Landscape Sensitivity

- 3.50 Having developed a deeper understanding of the landscape value and susceptibility, the judgement of overall landscape sensitivity is provided in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Overall Sensitivity

	Susceptibility	Value	Overall Sensitivity
Study Area	Medium	Medium	Medium
Site	Medium/Low	Medium	Medium/Low

4. VISUAL BASELINE

General

- 4.1 In order to assess the impact the Proposed Development may have on visual amenity, it is necessary to understand who will be subject to a change in visual circumstances and the extent to which those persons – the visual receptor - will be affected. The starting point is thus to establish the sensitivity of the viewing public to visual change.
- 4.2 The visual baseline provides a record of the views available to visual receptors and their visual amenity, in order to determine, through the process of design and mitigation, how their views are changed by the Proposed Development. The degree by which a visual receptor is judged to be sensitive, however, also depends on the actual quality of the existing view at the point at which it is considered representative of the 'worse case', this being typically where the greatest intervisibility occurs. Accordingly, when the sensitivity to the change being proposed is assessed, matters such as the context and extent of the existing view as well as the proximity of the receptor to the proposed development need to be considered.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 4.3 The ZTV (refer to drawing **LV-0006**) illustrates that the development would be theoretically visible from areas to the north, where the ground levels rise. Views from the south and west were generally screened by existing built development within Haywards Heath, while views from the east were screened by existing built development within Gatesmead. Views from the north are generally associated with Sugworth Wood, while views from the north east and north west are associated with and Haywards Heath Golf Course and Borde Hill respectively. The ZTV, in combination with review of other mapping and desktop studies, informed identification of representative viewpoints for further consideration during the field survey.

Visual Receptors

- 4.4 An initial site visit was undertaken on 5th September 2025 to visit the viewpoints identified from analysis of the ZTV. Occasionally, where actual views differ from those identified through analysis of the ZTV, the next nearest and/or appropriate location is selected.
- 4.5 Locations of identified receptor viewpoints are shown on drawing **LV-0007**. These represent where effects are predicted to occur where access is available. A winter survey was undertaken on 19th December 2025 based on the intervisibility determined during the initial site survey but at a time when trees, hedgerows and other vegetation were generally absent of leaf, ensuring the a worst case scenario would be assessed. A photographic record of the broad extents of visibility is provided at **Appendix 2**.

Residential and Community Facilities

- 4.6 Representative viewpoint 1 demonstrates views towards the Site from the residential areas on Gatesmead, located immediately east of the Site. Access to PRow footpath HAH/47BCU/1 is also visible. The view from Gatesmead into the Site is currently well screened by existing trees and vegetation.

Public Rights of Way ('PROW')

- 4.7 Representative viewpoints 2 to 5 illustrate views from the PRow footpath HAH/47BCU/1 which runs alongside the eastern boundary of the Site. Existing trees and vegetation partially screen the Site limiting views to those areas immediately adjacent with glimpsed views into the Site itself. Views are predominantly directed along the PRow in the direction of travel with views to the east and west

limited. In the northern section of the PRoW, VP2 and VP3, the existing watercourse is apparent with a footbridge allowing the PRoW to cross. Midway along the PRoW, VP4, the ground drops to a lower level than the Site, further limiting views. At the southern end of the PRoW, VP 5, the beech hedge and exotic tree species located along PRoW footpath HAH/46ACU/1 Old Wickham Lane are apparent.

- 4.8 Representative viewpoints 6 to 9 illustrate views from PRoW footpaths HAH/46ACU/1 Old Wickham Lane. Views into the Site are generally limited by the mature beech hedge that runs along the southern boundary and large trees located alongside this. Views are predominantly directed along the PRoW in the direction of travel with views to the north and south limited. Longer distance views to the north, across the Site, are available where there are gaps in the hedge, including at VP6 and VP8. VP9 is located by the bridge over the railway which further screens views towards the Site, signage in this location also detracts from the value of this view. While this PRoW also forms part of the Sussex Diamond Way is a very minor part of this long distance trail.
- 4.9 Representative viewpoint 10 illustrate views from the unofficial pedestrian tracks that lead from the Site into the landscape areas to the north. Here the Site is relatively visible from the watercourse that runs along the northern boundary of the Site with some screening provided by the existing trees along the Site perimeter. This access point is not part of a Public Right of Way but part of a desire line.
- 4.10 Representative viewpoints 12 to 14 illustrate views from open areas to the north of the site with VP12 and VP13 located on informal tracks and VP14 captured along PRoW footpath LIR/24LR/2. Existing trees and vegetation to the north of the Site and along the PRoW limit views into the Site and ensure long distance views from these locations are not available. The development would not be visible from these locations therefore they have been discounted from further assessment.
- 4.11 Representative viewpoint 15 illustrate views towards the site from PRoW footpaths LIR/25LR/1 within the Haywards Heath Golf Course. Whilst this also forms a short section of the High Weald Landscape Trail the activity within the landscape during the Golf Club operating times does somewhat detract from the rural aspect of the PRoW. Existing trees within the Golf Course screen views towards the Site where the proposed development would not be visible, this area has therefore been discounted from further assessment.
- 4.12 Representative viewpoint 16 has been captured from the Hickmans Lane Recreation Ground where PRoW footpath middle section of PRoW LIF/58CU/1 runs from Hickmans Lane east across the recreation ground. This PRoW forms a short section of the Sussex Diamond Way. Hickmans Lane Recreation Ground forms an area of open space surrounded by built development in the north eastern part of Haywards Heath. Views towards the Site from this area are screened by existing residential units and mature trees and vegetation, the proposed development would not be visible, this area has therefore been discounted from further assessment.
- 4.13 Representative viewpoints 17 and 18 illustrate views from Haywards Heath Country Park with VP16 also located on PRoW footpath HAH/19DCU/2 which forms part of the Sussex Diamond Way. This area is located to the north west of Haywards Heath and includes areas of publicly accessible routes. VP 17 and VP18 are over 1km to the west of the Site and are separated by the railway line, the northern edge of Haywards Heath and some significant areas of mature woodland and vegetation. The proposed development would not be visible from this area, these viewpoints have therefore been discounted from further assessment.
- 4.14 Representative viewpoint 20 illustrates views from PRoW footpath ANS/57CR/1, located to the north west of the Site this PRoW joins to the High Weald Landscape Trail and falls within the Borde Hill Registered Park and Garden and the High Weald National Landscape. This areas is approximately 1.5km from the Site which is screened by existing trees, vegetation, woodland areas and intervening

landscape. The proposed development would not be visible from this area, therefore VP20 has been discounted from further assessment.

Roads

- 4.15 Representative viewpoint 11 illustrate views from Gatesmead across an area of open grassland to the north of Sunt House. The Site is well screened by existing trees and vegetation which prevent any longer distance views. To the north the development of Gatesmead is visible and further screens the Site from view. The development would not be visible from this area therefore VP11 has been discounted from further assessment.
- 4.16 Representative viewpoint 19 illustrates views from Sugworth Farm, part of the Borde Hill Estate. This road access is situated to the east of the Borde Hill Registered Park and Garden and to the south of the High Weald National Landscape. Existing mature trees, areas of woodland and vegetation screen the Site from view from this areas. The development would not be visible from this area therefore VP19 has been discounted from further assessment.

Zone of Visual Influence

- 4.17 The analysis of the visual baseline has found that the actual Zone of Visual Influence ('ZVI') differs from the ZTV. With reference to the visual analysis presented on drawing **LV-0006**.
- 4.18 The Site is generally well screened by existing trees, hedgerows and vegetation. Long distance views towards the Site are limited by the perimeter trees and vegetation along the Site boundaries. Those areas to the north and north west, where ground levels rise, are associated with Haywards Heath Country Park, the Borde Hill Estate and Haywards Heath Gold Course, these areas are screened by mature trees and woodland and/or are at such a distance from the Site that views are not available. Viewpoints towards the Site from the east and south are generally screened by the built up areas of Haywards Heath.
- 4.19 Close views of the Site are also partially screened by existing perimeter trees, vegetation and hedgerows with glimpsed views available through the trees and where breaks in the hedges are located. Open views across the Site are limited to those locations where there are gaps in the perimeter trees and vegetation.

Visual Receptors

- 4.20 This baseline appraisal has determined that there are 3 categories of Visual Receptor have been identified within the ZVI. These are:
1. Occupiers of Residential and Community properties.
 2. Users of Public Rights of Way.
 3. Users of roads.
- 4.21 People occupied at their place of work are considered to be least likely to be affected by development and have not been included.
- 4.22 Receptor sensitivity is described in Table 4.1. The sensitivity of visual receptors varies according to category and the context of the view as described above. These findings are used to inform the iterative process of design and mitigation.

Table 4.1: Selected Representative Visual Receptors

Reference	Receptor description and location	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Visibility of Site
Residential Areas and Community					
VP 1	View west from Gatesmead	Medium/High	High	High	Access will be clearly visible.
Users of Public Rights of Way					
VP 2	View south west from PRoW HAH/47BCU/1	Medium/High	Medium/High	Medium/High	Site partially visible beyond tree line.
VP 3	View west from PRoW HAH/47BCU/1	Medium/High	Medium/High	Medium/High	Site partially visible beyond tree line.
VP 4	View west from PRoW HAH/47BCU/1	Medium/High	Medium/High	Medium/High	Site barely visible beyond tree line.
VP 5	View west from PRoW HAH/47BCU/1	Medium/High	Medium/High	Medium/High	Site partially visible beyond tree line.
VP 6	View north west from junction of PRoWs HAH/47BCU/1 and HAH/46CCU/1, Sussex Diamond Way, along Old Wickham Lane	High	High	High	Site partially visible beyond tree line and hedge.
VP 7	View north from of PRoW HAH/46CCU/1, Sussex Diamond Way, along Old Wickham Lane	High	High	High	Site partially visible beyond tree line and hedge.
VP 8	View north from of PRoW HAH/46CCU/1, Sussex Diamond Way, along Old Wickham Lane	High	High	High	Site partially visible beyond tree line and hedge.
VP 9	View north east from PRoW HAH/46ACU/1, Sussex Diamond Way, along Old Wickham Lane at railway bridge.	Medium/High	Medium/High	Medium/High	Site partially visible beyond tree line and fence.
VP 10	View south into site from private access over adjacent water course.	Medium	Medium/High	Medium	Site clearly visible beyond tree line.
VP 12	View south from track north of the Site leading to PRoW LIR/24LR/2	Medium	Medium/High	Medium	Site not visible beyond trees and vegetation.
VP 13	View south from track north of the Site adjoining PRoW LIR/24LR/2	Medium	Medium/High	Medium	Site not visible beyond trees and vegetation.
VP 14	View south from PRoW LIR/24LR/2	Medium/High	Medium/High	Medium/High	Site not visible beyond trees and vegetation.
VP 15	View south west from PRoW LIR/25LR/1, Haywards Heath Golf Course.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Site not visible beyond the golf course and the associated trees and vegetation.
VP 16	View west from PRoW LIF/58CU/1, Sussex Diamond Way, Hickmans Lane Recreation Ground	Medium	Medium/Low	Medium/Low	Site not visible beyond the recreation ground, neighbouring properties, trees and vegetation.

Reference	Receptor description and location	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Visibility of Site
VP 17	View east from PRow CUU/19DCU/1, Sussex Diamond Way, Haywards Heath Country Park	High	High	High	Site not visible beyond trees and vegetation.
VP 18	View east from Haywards Heath Country Park	High	High	High	Site not visible beyond trees and vegetation.
VP 20	View south east from PRow AND/58CR/1, adjoining High Weald Landscape Trail	High	High	High	Site not visible beyond trees and vegetation.
Users of Local Roads and Commercial Areas					
VP 11	View south west from Gatesmead	Medium	Medium/Low	Medium/Low	Site not visible beyond tree line, discounted from further assessment.
VP 19	View south east from Sugworth Farm track	Medium	High	Medium/High	Site not visible beyond trees and vegetation.

- 4.23 Of the 20 viewpoints recorded in the field survey 10 would have no view of the Site (VP11 to VP20) and have been discounted from further assessment. The remaining 10 viewpoints were considered to have potential views of the development Site and have been assessed for visual impact.

5. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND MITIGATION MEASURES

General

- 5.1 The Proposed Development comprises a residential scheme of 49 dwellings together with open space and associated infrastructure. No demolition is anticipated. Full details are provided in the Design and Access Statement and drawings submitted as part of the application, with a summary of the main components described below.
- 5.2 The Proposed Development consists of:
- 49 dwellings, up to 2.5 storeys;
 - Public open space comprising;
 - Central open space with retained mature trees
 - Equipped play area (LAP)
 - Informal play
 - Southern open space
 - Natural and semi-natural open spaces.
 - Retention, where possible, of key landscape features including perimeter trees and hedgerows within the Site;
 - Proposed trees, hedges and planting;
 - SUDS basins;
 - Retained and translocated areas of rush pasture;
 - Access and infrastructure;

Landscape Strategy

- 5.3 The baseline review has provided an understanding of the representation of defined landscape character. The landscape characteristic associated with the host landscape have been reviewed. Those considered relevant to the evaluated local landscape character are listed below:
- Wooded, confined landscape of intimacy and complexity.
 - Woodland cover, a portion of it ancient, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
 - Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields.
 - Network of lanes, tracks and footpaths.
 - London to Brighton Railway Line.
 - Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses.
- 5.4 In conjunction with site-specific opportunities and locally valued characteristics, the following recommendations are proposed.

Table 5.1: Landscape Mitigation

Mitigation	Purpose
Primary Mitigation (Inherent)	
Ancient Woodland 15m buffer.	A 15m development buffer from the edge of the Ancient Woodland along the northern boundary to protect the nature woodland asset.
Open space provision to the south of the site forming heritage buffer	The development of the southern part of the Site to be limited to open space, soft landscape and pedestrian access.

Mitigation	Purpose
Large mature trees and veteran trees within the Site to be retained.	Large mature trees and veteran trees to provide a focal point within the central open space which the development would be designed around.
Mature trees and vegetation along the perimeter of the Site to be retained where possible.	Perimeter trees and vegetation provide a visual screen around the Site that should be retained.
Secondary Mitigation (Foreseeable)	
Additional trees and hedge planting to be incorporated to the south of the development parcels.	Trees and hedge would further screen views of the new residential parcels from the south leaving the southern open space visible.
Additional tree planting along primary streets.	To reinforce the network of green infrastructure through the site.
Replacement and compensatory hedge planting.	To compensate for the loss of hedge and scrub habitat associated with the proposed development.
Attenuation basins and SuDS features to be integrated into the open space.	To manage surface water run off as well as provides a diversity of habitat areas that would soften the built form of the development and increase biodiversity.
The use of a consistent palette of street trees and hedgerows within the development.	To help soften the appearance of the development, provide a high-quality environment for residents and enhance biodiversity.
Mature trees and vegetation along the perimeter of the Site to be enhanced where possible.	Enhancement of the perimeter vegetation would further screen the proposed development from adjacent Public Rights of Way.
Enhancements	
Integrated internal tree planting, additional shrub and hedge planting and soft landscaping.	To contribute to the assimilation of the proposed development into the landscape and provide ecological enhancement and visual interest.

6. PREDICTED EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

- 6.1 Timescales for assessment apply for completion at Year 1 and for the residual stage at 15 years post-completion. The longer term assessment allows for consideration of maturation of landscape features and integration with the wider landscape.

Effects on West Sussex Landscape Character Area HW4 High Weald Fringes – Study Area

Completion / Operation – Assessment of Effects (Year 1)

- 6.2 The Site falls wholly within the West Sussex LCA HW4 High Weald Fringes, shown in drawing **LV-0002**. The change in land use would be perceived at a localised scale with development arranged around the existing mature trees in the centre of the Site and to the north of the open space buffer in the south of the Site. Perimeter trees and vegetation would be retained and enhanced where possible to ensure the tree line remains in place screening the development. Access into the Site from Gatesmead would be apparent in the from Gatesmead and the PRoW along the north eastern boundary. The conversion of the Site would be discernible beyond the boundaries of the Application Site with views of the development apparent from the Public Rights of Way immediately to the east and south. Views from further away are generally well screened with limited or not intervisibility. The magnitude of effect on the study area at completion (year 1) would be **medium - low**.
- 6.3 Accounting for the baseline sensitivity of **medium**, the level of effect at Year 1 will be **minor - moderate, adverse and permanent**.

Residual – Assessment of Effects (Year 15)

- 6.4 Proposed mitigation planting to the south of the proposed residential parcels would increase screening of the proposed development parcels from the south of the Site along and Old Wickham Lane and Wickham Way. Enhanced planting along the perimeter of the Site would further screen views of the development from adjacent areas once established. There would also be a benefit arising from the maturing of the plating and increased tree cover within the site. The nature of change would therefore reduce as proposed planting matures with the residual (year 15) magnitude of effect on the study considered to be **low**.
- 6.5 Accounting for the baseline sensitivity of **medium**, the level of effect at Year 1 will be **minor, adverse and permanent**.

Effects on West Sussex Landscape Character Area HW4 High Weald Fringes – Site

Completion / Operation – Assessment of Effects (Year 1)

- 6.6 The character of the Site would be fundamentally altered by the proposed development with the introduction of built development into a currently undeveloped site. The retention of large mature trees within the Site and the perimeter planting would provide a focal point and woodland character within the development. Access into the Site from Gatesmead would alter the character of the Site in the north eastern corner of the Site. There would be a slight benefit arising from the implementation of the mitigation strategy and the resulting increase in tree cover within the site. Accordingly, the magnitude of effect on the Site at completion (year 1) would will be **high**.
- 6.7 Giving consideration to the sensitivity of **medium - low** of the Site, the overall level of effect at year 1, will be **major - moderate, adverse and permanent**.

Residual – Assessment of Effects (Year 15)

- 6.8 Whilst the mitigation strategy would have some effect in softening the appearance of the proposed development and a slight benefit arising from the maturing of the mitigation strategy and the

resulting increase in tree cover within the site, the nature of the residual (year 15) changes would remain largely as assessed at Year 1, considered to be **high**.

- 6.9 Giving consideration to the sensitivity of **medium - low** of the Site, the overall level of effect at year 1, will be **major - moderate, adverse** and **permanent**.

Table 6.1: Summary of Predicted Landscape Effects (Residual)

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Level of Effect	Nature (Positive/Adverse/Neutral)
West Sussex Landscape Character Area HW4 High Weald Fringes – study area				
Year 1	Medium	Medium/Low	Minor/Moderate	Adverse
Year 15	Medium	Low	Minor	Adverse
West Sussex Landscape Character Area HW4 High Weald Fringes – site				
Year 1	Medium/Low	High	Major/Moderate	Adverse
Year 15	Medium/Low	High	Major/Moderate	Adverse

Duration and Reversibility

- 6.10 The proposed development would be a permanent and irreversible change in the landscape.

Cumulative Landscape Effects

- 6.11 A cumulative effect is the additional changes by the Proposed Development in conjunction with other similar developments, or as a combined effect of a set of developments, taken together.
- 6.12 Within the vicinity of the Site there are a number of development proposals currently under review. Of these most are of a domestic nature and located within Haywards Heath, or are part of Network Rail development. Only application reference DM/25/3129; Land At Borde Hill Lane Haywards Heath is of a similar nature to the proposed development within the Land West of Gatesmead with an application of up to 125 dwellings. These proposals are located to the north west of the Site and are separated from the Site by the railway as well as areas of woodland. It is therefore considered there would be no cumulative effects.

7. PREDICTED EFFECTS ON VISUAL AMENITY

- 7.1 A Photographic Record of the field survey visit, which illustrates the representative viewpoints, is included at **Appendix 2**. Of the 20 viewpoints recorded in the field survey 10 would have no view of the Site and have been discounted from assessment, including viewpoints 11-20. The remaining 10 viewpoints were considered to have potential views of the development Site and have been assessed for visual impact. A detailed assessment of the predicted magnitude and effect of visual change from these 10 viewpoints is set out below, and summarised in Table 7.1.
- 7.2 A series of illustrative photomontages from viewpoints 8, 11 and 12 can be found at **AP-0004**. These demonstrate the predicted visual effects from three representative viewpoints.
- 7.3 The majority of construction activities would occur within the Site with some works needed to form the access from Gatesmead, resulting in the removal of a section of existing boundary vegetation and one existing tree. The proposed dwellings would likely require construction vehicles and machinery during their construction which would inevitably result in additional visual impact from the viewpoints immediately adjacent to the Site. The construction vehicles and machinery would then be removed following construction.

Residential and Community Facilities

- 7.4 Of the viewpoints representing residential and community receptors only viewpoint 1 was considered to have any views of the development site. Located at the western end of Gatesmead the proposed access into the development would be clearly apparent with some loss of perimeter vegetation in this location.
- 7.5 At Completion (Year 1) the view from **Viewpoint 1** at Gatesmead would be altered by the presence of the development access which would be clearly visible at the north eastern corner of the Site. Some new properties around the entrance of the site may also be visible. Additional tree and shrub planting would be introduced along the eastern boundary and within the entrance areas of the development in order to enhance the existing vegetation. It is predicted that the magnitude of effect would be high for this receptor, with high sensitivity, the overall level of effect would be **major, adverse and permanent**.
- 7.6 At Year 15 proposed additional tree and shrub planting would be more established and would provide some addition filtering of views of the proposed development, however, this would not significantly reduce the magnitude of effect at this location as the access would still be clearly visible. Therefore the residual (year 15) magnitude of effect would remain **high** for this receptor. With **high** sensitivity, the long term effects would therefore remain to **major, adverse and permanent**.

Public Rights of Way ('PROW')

- 7.7 These receptors lie predominantly around the Site with some informal footpaths also within the open landscape areas to the north.
- 7.8 PROW footpath HAH/47BCU/1 runs alongside the eastern boundary of the Site in an north south direction with intermittent views into the Site through the existing perimeter trees and vegetation. **Viewpoints 2 to 5** illustrate views from the footpath. Viewpoints 2 and 3 would also have clear views of the access into the development. At Completion (Year 1) it is expected that the landscape proposed development would be partially visible through the tree line, with change from open landscape to a built environment. It is predicted that the magnitude of effect would be medium for this receptor, with medium to high sensitivity, the overall level of effect would be **moderate, adverse and permanent**.

- 7.9 At Year 15 new planting within the development would be more established, including planting along the eastern boundary proposed to enhance the existing tree line and vegetation, providing additional filtering of views of the proposed development. It is therefore considered the residual (year 15) magnitude of effect would reduce to medium to low, with medium to high sensitivity, the overall level of effect would be **moderate, adverse and permanent**.
- 7.10 PROW footpaths HAH/47BCU/1 and HAH/46CCU/1, along Old Wickham Lane, form part of the Sussex Diamond Way and run along the southern Site boundary. **Viewpoints 6 to 9** illustrate views from these footpaths. Views into the Site are screened by an existing mature beech hedge a line of mature trees of exotic species that run alongside the southern boundary. Glimpsed views into the Site through the trees and hedge are apparent, clear views into the Site are limited to those locations where there are gaps in the hedge. It is proposed that the southern part of the development would be retained as open space in order to ensure the Wickham House 61m (200ft) buffer is achieved. Additional tree and hedge planting to the south of the proposed residential parcels is also proposed to further screen views from the south. At Completion (Year 1) it is expected that the residential development of the Site would be partially visible and create a change from open landscape to a built environment, albeit set back from the southern boundary. It is therefore predicted the magnitude of effect would be low for this receptor, with high sensitivity, the overall level of effect would be **moderate, adverse and permanent**.
- 7.11 At Year 15 the new planting within the development, and in particular to the south of the development area, would be more established and provide further screening of views of the proposed development from the south, reducing the magnitude of effect to negligible. The long term effects would therefore to reduce to **-minor, adverse and permanent**.
- 7.12 A stream runs along the northern Site boundary of the Site over which an unofficial and unauthorised pedestrian desire line continues into the Site. **Viewpoint 10** illustrates the view from this private access over the adjacent watercourse. Development of residential properties in the northern part of the Site would be set back from the existing water course in order to ensure properties are outside any flood areas. The ground level here drops below that of the main Site limiting views, the existing perimeter trees and vegetation further limit views into the Site. At Completion (Year 1) it is expected that the residential development would be partially visible and create a change from open landscape to a built environment. It is predicted the magnitude of effect would be medium and for this receptor, with medium sensitivity, the overall level of effect would be **moderate, adverse and permanent**.
- 7.13 At Year 15 new planting within the development would be more established and provide some filtering of views of the proposed development reducing the magnitude of effect to medium to low. The residual (year 15) effects would therefore to reduce to **moderate - minor, adverse and permanent**.

Summary of Visual Assessment

- 7.14 The assessment of visual impact has identified that visual effects are limited to those areas immediately adjacent to the Site, including views along the eastern boundary and from Gatesmead, along the southern boundary Old Wickham Lane, and from areas immediately north of the Site. The key factor which affects the change to the view is the screening effect provided by the existing perimeter trees and vegetation which runs along the boundary of the Site. The only clear views into the Site are located where gaps are found within the trees and vegetation. Where losses are proposed to enable the access into the development the visual impact would be at it's greatest.
- 7.15 Viewpoints from further away were all screened by a combination existing trees, woodland, and vegetation, built development and intervening landscape, these were located in areas that would not be affected by the removal of vegetation for the implementation of the Site access.

- 7.16 The effects on visual amenity of the proposed development are expected to be of significance from those receptors immediately adjacent to the Site, particularly where the Site access is proposed off Gatesmead. Of these receptors the residual effects reduced for all areas where the Site access is not visible. Table 7.1 presents a summary of the predicted effects on visual amenity.

Table 7.1: Summary of Predicted Effects on Visual Amenity (Residual)

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Level of Effect	Nature (Positive/ Adverse/Neutral)	EIA Threshold (Significant / Not Significant)
Residential Areas (Community) and/or Specific Dwellings					
View west from Gatesmead (VP1 east of the Site)					
Year 1 (Completion)	High	High	Major	Adverse	Significant
Year 15 (Residual)	High	High	Major	Adverse	Significant
B. Users of Public Rights of Way					
PRoW HAH/47BCU/1 (VP2 to 5 along the eastern Site boundary)					
Year 1 (Completion)	Medium/High	Medium	Moderate	Adverse	Significant
Year 15 / Residual	Medium/High	Medium/Low	Moderate	Adverse	Significant
PRoWs HAH/47BCU/1 and HAH/46CCU/1, Sussex Diamond Way, along Old Wickham Lane (VP6 to 9 south of the Site)					
Year 1 (Completion)	High	Low	Moderate	Adverse	Significant
Year 15 / Residual	High	Negligible	Minor	Adverse	Not Significant
Private access over adjacent water course (VP10 north of the Site)					
Year 1 (Completion)	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Adverse	Significant
Year 15 / Residual	Medium	Medium/Low	Moderate/ Minor	Adverse	Not Significant

Duration and Reversibility

- 7.17 The proposed development would be a permanent and irreversible change in the landscape.

Predicted Potential Cumulative Effects

- 7.18 A cumulative effect is the additional changes by the Proposed Development in conjunction with other similar developments, or as a combined effect of a set of developments, taken together.
- 7.19 Within the vicinity of the Site there are a number of development proposals currently under review. Of these most are of a domestic nature and located within Haywards Heath, or are part of Network Rail development. Only application reference DM/25/3129; Land At Borde Hill Lane Haywards Heath is of a similar nature to the proposed development within the Land West of Gatesmead with an application of up to 125 dwellings. These proposals are located to the north west of the Site and are separated from the Site by the railway as well as areas of woodland. It is therefore considered there would be no cumulative effects.

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 David Jarvis Associates has been commissioned to inform the design process for the Proposed Development. Recommendations arising from the detailed evaluation of landscape character and visual amenity has been directly addressed, in order to minimise, limit and avoid harm to identified receptors.
- 8.2 Having gained an understanding of the range of effects that are predicted to occur for the Proposed Development, the relevant policy tests are examined and the findings used to inform decision making.

Landscape Character Baseline

- 8.3 The Site sits on the northern edge of Haywards Heath, with Gatesmead to the east, the railway line to the west and areas of open landscape to the north, to the north east is Haywards Heath Golf Course. The Site falls within the West Sussex Landscape Character Area “HW4 High Weald Fringes”. There are no heritage assets located with the Site. Within the Site the only statutory nature conservation asset is the Birchen Wood Ancient Woodland, of which the southern tip encroaches the north east corner of the Site, all built development would be kept outside the 15m Ancient Woodland buffer. The study area is generally in keeping with the key characteristics for the character area including the railway line that runs along the western boundary. It is concluded that the landscape sensitivity of the study area is **medium to low** and the Site is **medium to low**.

Visual Amenity Baseline

- 8.4 The Site is situated on the northern edge of Haywards Heath with mature trees and vegetation along the Site perimeter providing an existing visual screen. Views immediately adjacent to the boundaries afford glimpsed views into the Site, only those locations where gaps occur in the existing perimeter vegetation were clear views into the Site available. Views from receptors located further away were all screened by a combination of existing trees, woodland and vegetation, built development and intervening landform.

Development Mitigation

- 8.5 The mature tree and hedgerow along the perimeter of the Site would be retained where possible and RPAs observed. Some tree and vegetation removals would be required to facilitate access into the Site, these would be limited to only where necessary. Additional planting to the south of the residential parcels, enhanced planting along the eastern boundary as well as open space in the southern part of the Site, where the Wickham Farmhouse buffer is required, would provide screening from Public Rights of Way along the southern and eastern boundaries and from Old Wickham Lane and Wickham Way. Large mature trees in the centre of the Site would be retained to provide a focal point and retain some of the woodland character of the Site.

Effects on Landscape Character

- 8.6 Accounting for the baseline sensitivity of medium – low, the level of effect on the study area, for the West Sussex Landscape Character Area “HW4 High Weald Fringes” at Year 1 will be **minor, adverse and permanent**. Giving consideration to the medium – low sensitivity of the Site, the overall level of effect on the Site at year 1, will be **major / moderate, adverse and permanent**. Whilst the mitigation strategy would have some effect in softening the appearance of the proposed development and a slight benefit arising from the maturing of the mitigation strategy and the resulting increase in tree cover within the site, the nature of the changes would remain largely as assessed at Year 1.

Effects on Visual Amenity

- 8.7 The most significant visual effects would be experienced at those locations immediately adjacent to the Site access, off Gatesmead to the east, with the receptor immediately adjacent to the proposed Site access experiencing **major** effects. The Significance of effect reduces where perimeter trees and vegetation is proposed to be retained and enhanced with receptors along the eastern boundary, southern boundary and at the north west pedestrian access experiencing **moderate** effects. Effects on those receptors where the Site access is visible, along the eastern boundary, would remain as per the effects at Completion (Year 1).
- 8.8 For receptors located further from the proposed development would be screened by a combination of existing mature trees, woodland and vegetation, built development and intervening landform with no views of the Site.
- 8.9 Proposed mitigation, including additional planting to the south of the residential parcels, enhanced planting along the eastern boundary perimeter and the Wickham Farmhouse landscape buffer in the southern part of the Site, would further screen views into the Site. As the planting establishes the Residual (Year 15) levels of effect on views from the north and south and east would reduce.

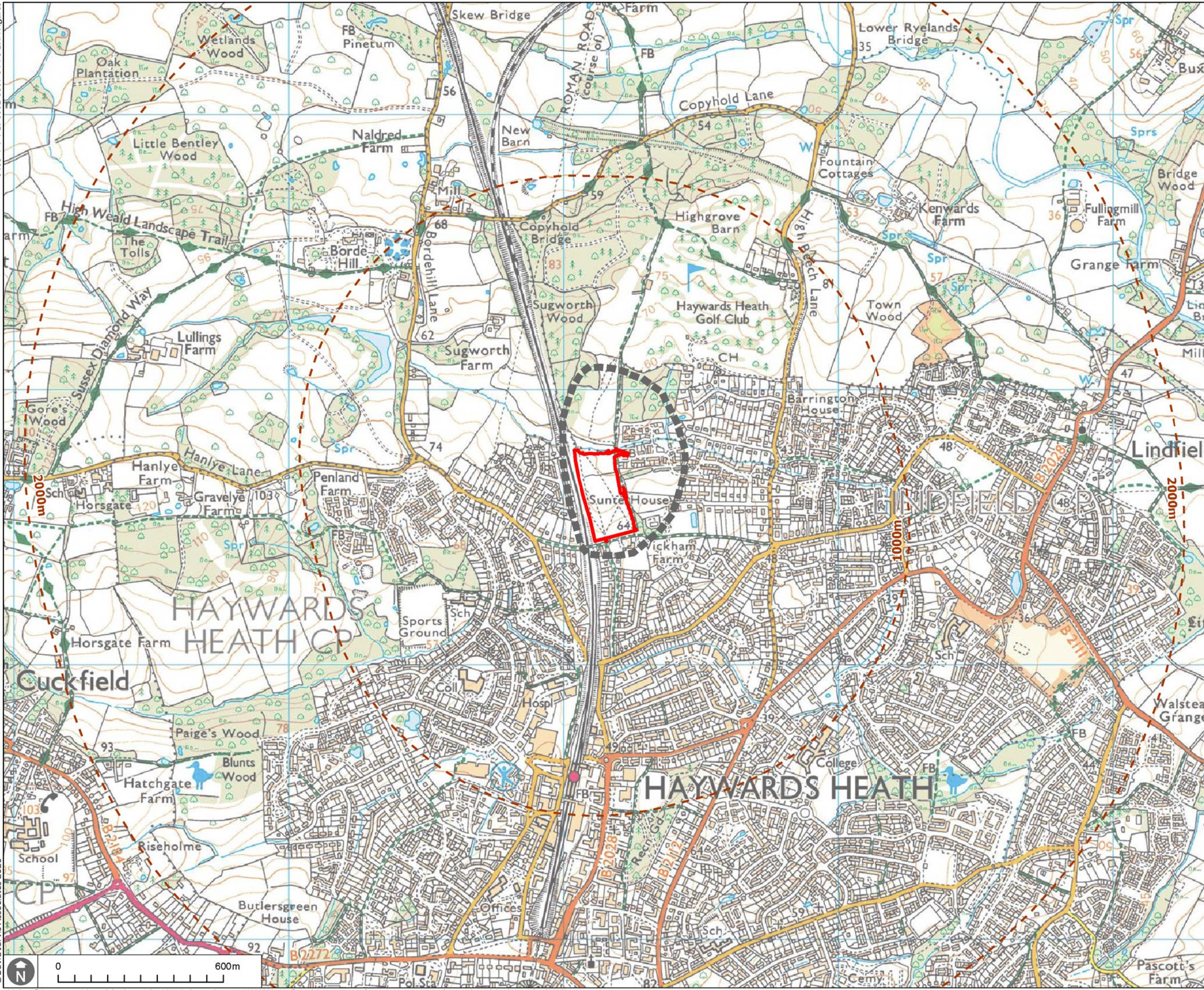
Conclusions

- 8.10 The Proposed Development has been designed to minimise harm to landscape character and visual harm, using a best practice approach that responds to a recorded baseline within a defined study area. The Proposed Development will protect high quality features at the outset, be sympathetic to visual receptors including those along the Public Rights of Way along the eastern and southern boundaries. Any predicted landscape and visual effects would be limited to the Site itself and the immediate environs. There would be no effects on the wider landscape.

DRAWINGS

3403-4-4-4-LV-0001-0007-S4-P3 LVIA Figures

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KEY

Application Boundary

Study Area

Status

PLANNING

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Client

CREST NICHOLSON OPERATIONS LIMITED

Project

LAND WEST OF GATESMEAD

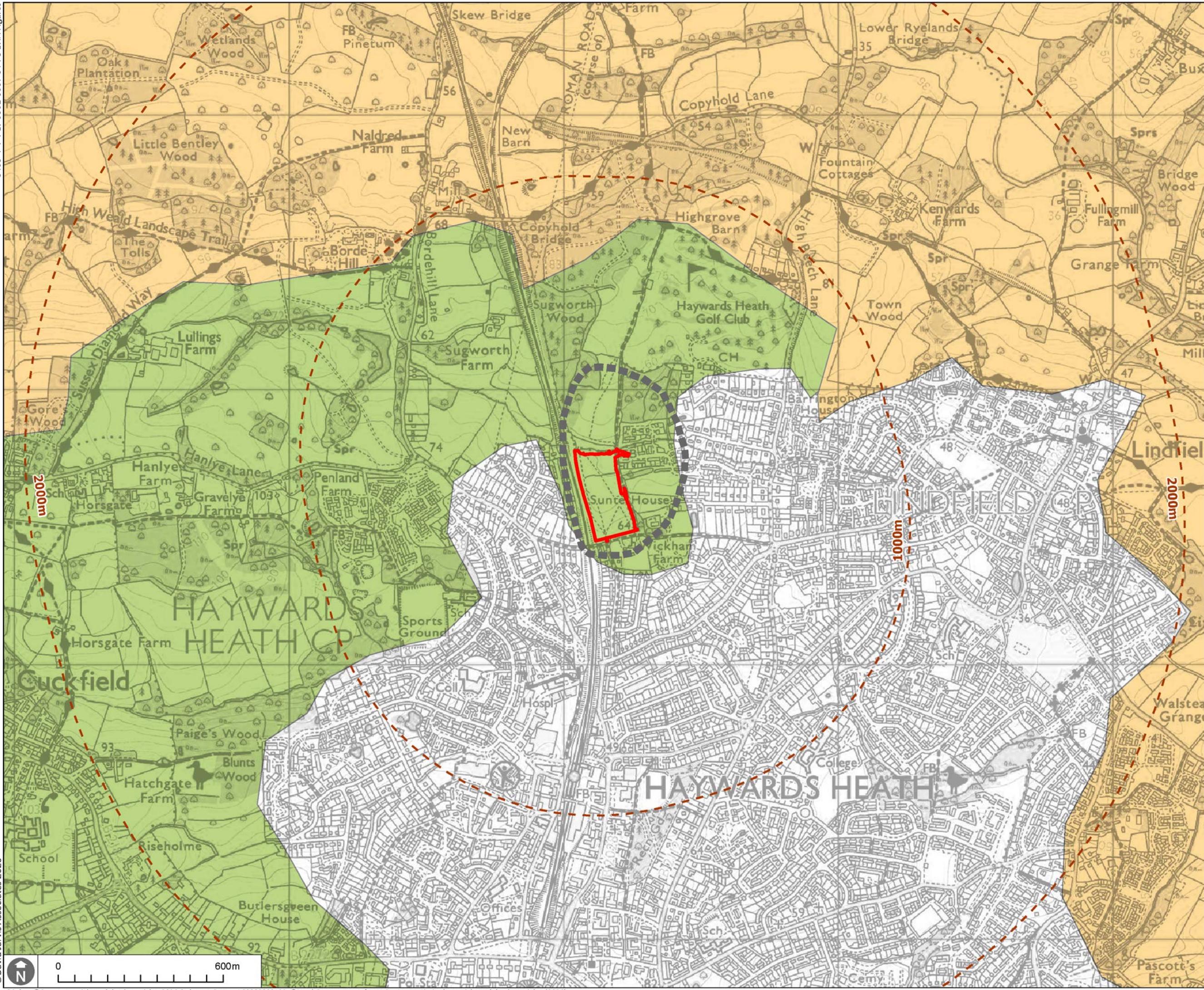
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SITE LOCATION

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Client Ref.	Drawing Ref.	Drawing No.
-	3403-4-4-4	LV-0001
		S4-P1

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KEY

Application Boundary

Study Area

Landscape Character

National Character Areas

122: High Weald (NE508)
Encompasses entire map extents

West Sussex LCA (2007)

Character Areas

HW3: Ouse Valley

HW4: High Weald Fringes

Status

PLANNING

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LAND WEST OF GATESMEAD

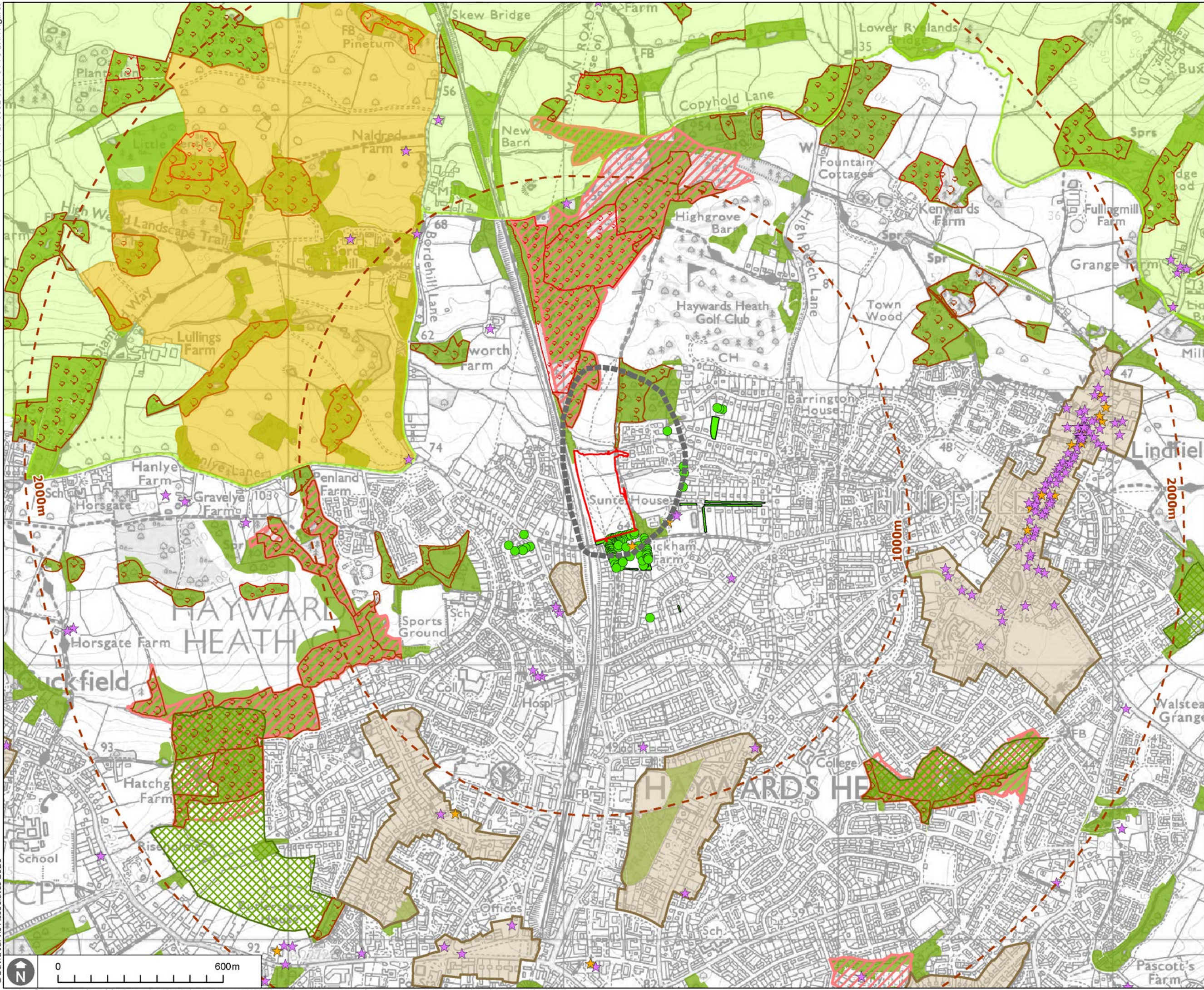
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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

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-	3403-4-4-4	LV-0002
		S4-P1

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KEY

Application Boundary

Study Area

National Heritage List for England

Listed Building

- II
- II*

Registered Parks and Gardens

Conservation Areas

Natural England

- Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
- Ancient Replanted Woodland
- Local Nature Reserves
- National Landscapes

Tree Preservation Orders within a 0.5km Radius

- TPO Single Tree
- TPO Tree Group

County/Local Designations

- Local Wildlife Site

Priority Habitat Inventory

- Deciduous Woodland

Status

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LAND WEST OF GATESMEAD

Drawing Title

LANDSCAPE VALUE

Scale	Sheet Size	Date
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Client Ref.	Drawing Ref.	Drawing No.
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		Version
		S4-P1

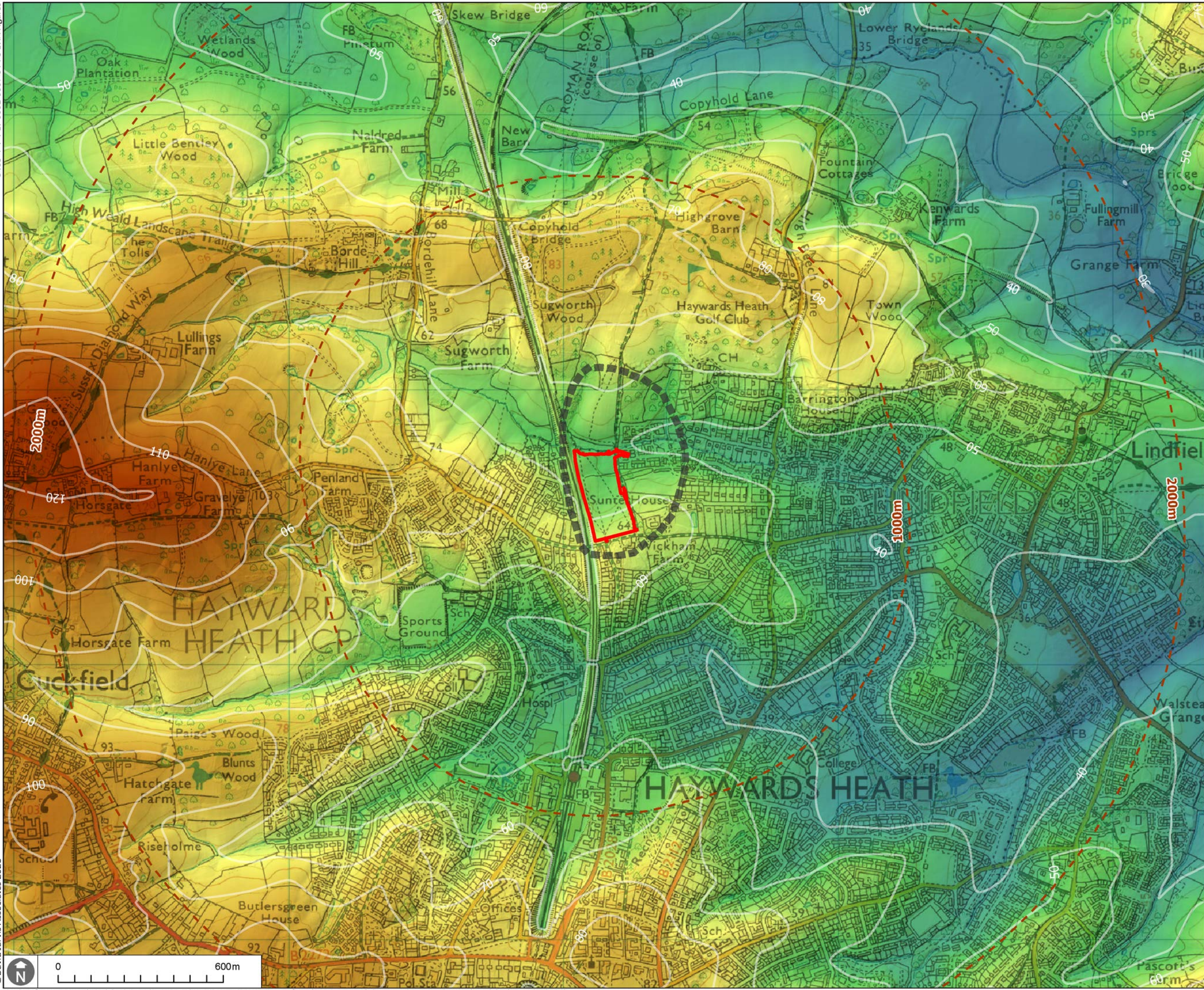


CRoW/ Access Land

Client Ref.	Drawing Ref.	Drawing No.	Version
-	3403-4-4-4	LV-0004	S4-P1

3403-4-4-LV-0001-0007-S4-P3 LVIA Figures

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KEY

Application Boundary

Study Area

Topography Height Banding (mAOD)

131.090

28.478

Status

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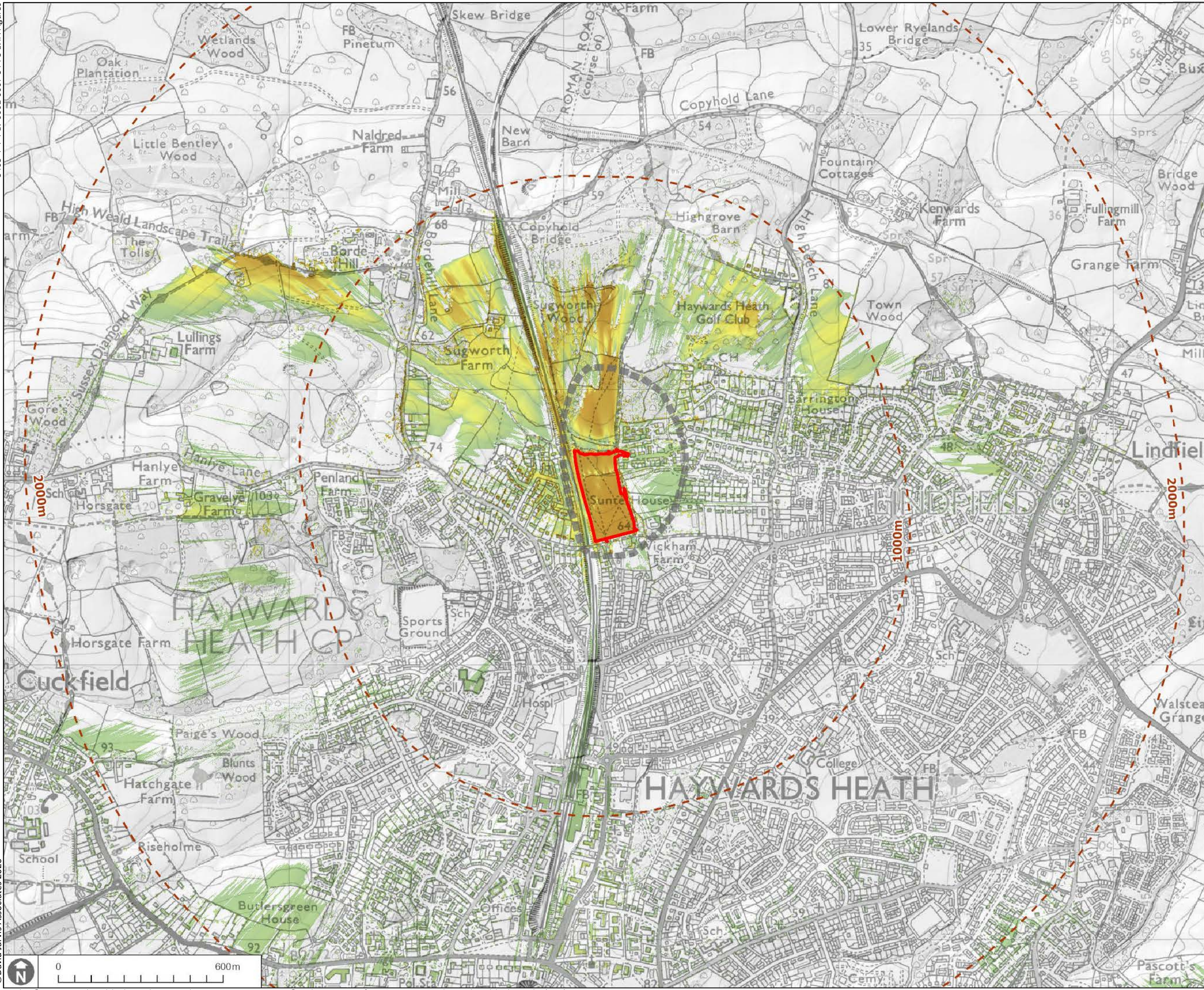
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TOPOGRAPHICAL RELIEF

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Client Ref.	Drawing Ref.	Drawing No.	Version
-	3403-4-4-4	LV-0005	S4-P1

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KEY

Application Boundary

Study Area

Zones of Theoretical Visibility

High Visibility

Low Visibility

The zones of theoretical visibility (ZTV) are shown for the proposed test with the following parameters:

- Digital Elevation Model (DEM): Environment Agency 2022 Composite LIDAR First Return Digital Surface Model (DSM) and Digital Terrain Model (DTM), 2m resolution
- Observers: 1.6m above DSM, horizontal resolution as per DEM
- Targets: 10m square grid of target points within the developable area, 12m above the DTM
- Adjustments: Atmospheric refraction and Earth's curvature

The model considers the screening effect of vegetation and built form as provided by the DEM. This gives an indication of probable screening effects. The Zone of Visual Significance is defined during field survey and takes into account those aspects missing from the ZTV and may therefore differ from the ZTV. The ZTV is therefore considered to represent a probable scenario to inform field surveys only.

Status

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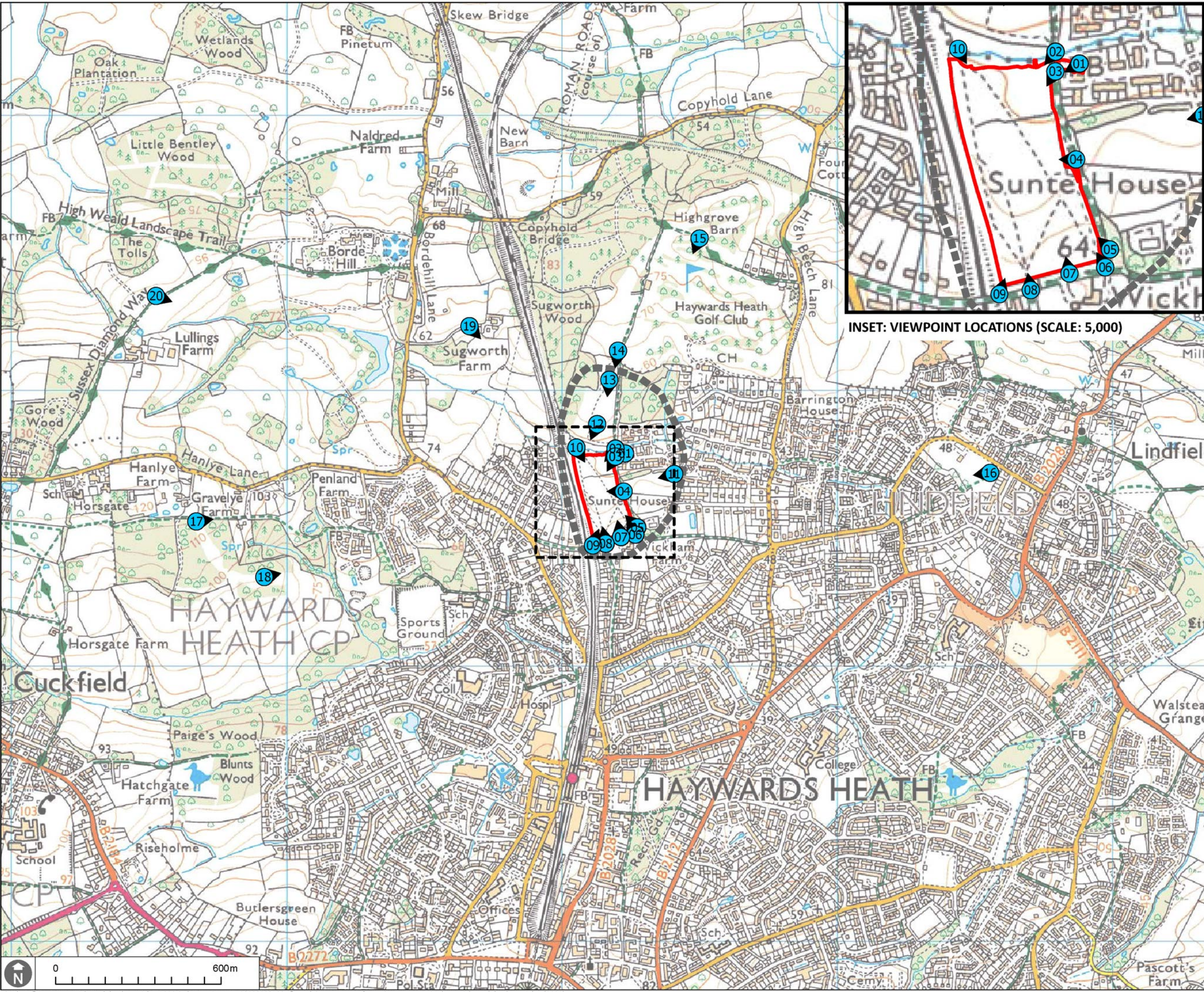
Project

LAND WEST OF GATESMEAD

Drawing Title

ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV)

Scale	Sheet Size	Date	
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Client Ref.	Drawing Ref.	Drawing No.	Version
-	3403-4-4-4	LV-0006	S4-P1



KEY

- Application Boundary
- Field Survey Viewpoint Locations
- Study Area

Status

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Project

LAND WEST OF GATESMEAD

Drawing Title

WINTER SURVEY - REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINT LOCATION PLAN

Scale	Sheet Size	Date
1:12,500	A3	MAR 2026

Client Ref.	Drawing Ref.	Drawing No.	Version
-	3403-4-4-4	LV-0007	S4-P1

APPENDIX 1

LVIA ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND GLOSSARY

1.1 The following section provides a description of the field survey and assessment methods.

Assessment Terminology

1.2 Whilst the process of assessment is referred to as landscape and visual impact it is important to note the difference between ‘impact’ and ‘effect’. The impact is what will happen i.e. the permanent loss of trees and hedgerows. The effect is the result of the impact i.e. opening of new views or a change in the perception of the local landscape character. A full glossary of the terms used in this assessment is appended or provided on request.

Guidance and Approach

1.3 Guidance emphasises the responsibility of the landscape professional carrying out the assessment to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted is appropriate for the particular development to be assessed. This assessment has been prepared in accordance with the following:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition)⁷;
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (October 2014, Natural England);

1.4 Other technical guidance notes (TGN) published by the Landscape Institute (LI), are also used where relevant, including:

- TGN 06/19: Visual Representation of Development Proposals (17 September 2019);
- TGN 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations (26 May 2021).

Overview of the Assessment Process

1.5 Professional judgement is a very important part of the LVIA process at every stage of assessment. That said, it is also important that professional judgement is exercised within an overall assessment framework which transparently sets out the steps in the assessment process which have resulted in the final assessment of the level of effects.

1.6 In accordance with the above guidance, the preparation of this assessment involved the following key stages:

- **Establishment of the landscape baseline** - through identification and understanding of the representation of the defining landscape characteristics within the site and surrounding Study Area (in the form of landscape character assessment), and the relative value that is attached to the landscape by way of detailed desk-based study (including to identify relevant landscape designations and related planning policy) and site field work.
- **Establishment of the visual baseline** – through identification and analysis of the existing visual resource that may be affected, including the extent and nature of principle views to the proposed development from visual receptors in the Study Area.

⁷ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the Landscape Institute – ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ Third Edition 2013.

- **Identification of Potential effects** - The broad design parameters of the project that have been established and fixed at the time of commission in terms of the nature of the proposed development, having been informed by the LVIA findings and other recommendations. This provides sufficient information to identify the likely scale and nature of the changes to landscape characteristics as well as changes affecting visual amenity.
- **Identification of landscape and visual receptors** – These are assessed and assigned their sensitivity to change. The sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors is determined by a combination of their value, and their susceptibility to change. (i.e. their ability to accommodate the proposed change without resulting in overly negative effects).
- **Identification of mitigating measures** – Iterative development of the Proposed Development and/ or mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or offset identified adverse effects. Mitigation measures have been considered in relation to ‘Primary’ measures (inherent) which form part of the design process and ‘Secondary’ measures (foreseeable) designed to address any residual adverse effects of development.
- **Assessment of the final scheme design** – Assessment of the magnitude of change to determine the level of effect, and where relevant, to identify effects that are Significant or Not Significant, in EIA terms during the construction stage, during operations and completion (restoration).
- Depending on the nature of the development, the stages may be assessed individually or in combination, and may include an assessment of cumulative effects. Where relevant, the assessment will also account for the mitigation at various stage e.g. the maturation of new planting which may differ between the point of completion (Year 1) and at the residual stage of post-completion (Year 15), unless otherwise stated.

Extent of Study Area

- 1.7 The term ‘Study Area’ relates to the area of land that has been described and assessed as part of this assessment. The definition of a Study Area is an important part of a landscape and visual impact assessment as it describes the predicted maximum geographical extents within which potential Significant environmental effects may occur.
- 1.8 The Study Area is determined by a two-stage process: a desk study to identify any relevant landscape designations and sensitive receptors in the landscape surrounding the Application Site and a field survey to assess the limits of potential significant visibility. The latter is informed by a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) study.

Consultation

- 1.9 Where appropriate, consultation is undertaken with the local planning authority to agree viewpoints and other matters relating to the assessment. The outcome of the consultation will be detailed in the assessment.

Assumptions and Limitations

- 1.10 The assessment is subject to the following limitations and assumptions:
- The prominence of the Proposed Development in the landscape and views will vary according to prevailing weather conditions. Professional judgement will take into consideration circumstances where the weather does not conform with ‘worst case scenario’, being a clear, bright day in winter, when vegetation foliage is at lowest and visibility is at its clearest;

- The assessment of operational effects assumes that all other aspects of the Proposed Development outside of the scope of the assessment, have been implemented;
- ZTV studies are only used to inform the selection of viewpoints. The limitations and technical specifications are provided in supporting text to these studies;
- Field assessment of visual effects is taken from publicly accessible routes and locations. For residential receptors, assumptions are made about the types of rooms in buildings and importance of views from these rooms and outdoor areas within the domestic curtilage. Domestic curtilage is determined by identifiable boundaries such as hedgerows or fencing.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

Landscape Baseline

- 1.11 The landscape baseline is the description of the existing environmental qualities of the landscape receptors and the landscape as a whole against which any future changes can be measured or landscape effects predicted and assessed.
- 1.12 The landscape baseline is established by considering both a desk study of existing sources and field work to identify and record the character of the landscape and the existing elements and features as well as the perceptual and aesthetic factors which contribute to it.
- 1.13 Landscape character and value are separately identified. This is done in order to distinguish between the ability of a landscape to physically accommodate a development in terms of landform, landcover and land use, as opposed to consideration of effects on valued aspects of the landscape which are more subjective in nature.

Landscape Character

- 1.14 Existing Landscape Character Assessments are critically reviewed to identify the key or defining characteristics that are represented in the Application Site and Study Area. Fieldwork will also determine local and/or site-specific variations.
- 1.15 Typically, the landscape baseline will identify and describe the elements that make up the landscape in the Study Area, namely:
- **Physical Influences:** Geology, Landform/ Topography, Soils, Drainage;
 - **Land Cover:** Vegetation, Tree Cover, Built Form;
 - **Human Influences:** Land use and Management, Field Pattern, Method of Enclosure, Settlement Character, Building Character; Access.
- 1.16 The outcome of the review and fieldwork will present the extent to which the site and Study Area conform or differ from the wider landscape character assessments and to identify other specific characteristics that are relevant.

Landscape Susceptibility

- 1.17 Landscape susceptibility is the ability of an identified landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences on its baseline conditions or character. Susceptibility of a landscape receptor to change is specific to the type of development being proposed in Study Area to ensure relevancy to the assessment. Where noted, the definition for the grades of susceptibility is described in Table APP 1.1 below.

Table APP 1.1 Landscape Receptor Susceptibility

Grade	Description
High	• Little or no ability to accommodate the proposed development without adverse consequences on the retention of the existing landscape baseline; • No or few references or influences within the landscape to the type of development proposed.
Medium	• Some ability to accommodate the proposed development without adverse consequences on the retention of the existing landscape baseline; • Landscapes with some noticeable existing influence or context associated with the type of development proposed.
Low	• An ability to accommodate the proposed development without adverse consequences on the retention of the existing landscape baseline; • Landscapes with a strong reference or influence to the type of development proposed.

- 1.18 The relationship between susceptibility to change and value can be complex and is not linear. For example, a highly valued landscape (such as a National Landscape) may have a low susceptibility to change due to both the characteristics of the landscape and/or the nature of the proposed change.

Landscape Value

- 1.19 As part of describing the landscape baseline the value of the potentially affected landscape is established. Value can apply to an area such as a relevant designation or an individual element such as a landscape feature or building which contributes to the character of the landscape. Where the Application Site is covered by a designation, the following over-arching values are given:
- High: International or Nationally designated landscapes;
 - High-Medium: Regional or locally designated landscapes.
- 1.20 In cases where the Application Site is not designated, it does not follow that it is not valued. In these instances, the site and Study Area are considered with regard to the extent of the factors listed in TGN 02/21, this being an evolution in the process previously set by GLVIA Box 5.1.
- 1.21 These factors are not fixed, but instead considered on a case-by-case basis and evaluated with regard to Table APP1.2 below. They are evaluated as High (notable contribution/influence), Medium (some contribution/influence) or Low (limited or no contribution/influence). Split grades may be possible where resulting value falls between two grade levels, such as where circumstances vary across a site or Study Area.

Table APP 1.2 Factors for determining value for non-designated landscapes

Natural heritage	Definition: Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape
Cultural heritage	Definition: Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape
Landscape Condition	Definition: Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure.
Associations	Definition: landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts.
Distinctiveness	Definition: Landscape that has a strong sense of identity.
Recreational	Definition: Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important.
Perceptual (Scenic)	Definition: Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense.
Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity)	Definition: Landscape with a strong perceptual value; notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies.
Functional	Definition: Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape

Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.22 Landscape sensitivity is determined by drawing together the judgements on landscape value and landscape susceptibility. It is itself then carried forward to determine the significance of effect. The assessment provides a clear rationale for both the landscape receptor's existing value and its susceptibility to change arising from the type of development proposed. The rationale is the record of why a receptor's sensitivity has been graded in a particular way.
- 1.23 The determination of sensitivity is based on professional judgement, however, high value/ high susceptibility receptors are likely to be highly sensitive to change, with lower value and/or low susceptibility receptors being likely to be of low sensitivity to change. Split grades are used when resulting sensitivity falls between two grades where variability in susceptibility and/or value has been a consideration.
- 1.24 To allow easier inspection and review of the assessment process Table APP 1.3 below is used to aid consistency in the definition of sensitivity.

Table APP 1.3 Sensitivity Matrix

Category		Susceptibility				
		High	Medium High	Medium	Medium /Low	Low
Value	High	High	High	Medium/High	Medium	Medium
	Medium/High	High	Medium/High	Medium	Medium	Medium/Low
	Medium	Medium/High	Medium	Medium	Medium/Low	Medium/Low
	Medium/Low	Medium	Medium	Medium/Low	Medium/Low	Low
	Low	Medium	Medium/Low	Medium/Low	Low	Low

Magnitude of Landscape Effects

- 1.25 The effect on landscape receptors is assessed in terms of the following factors:
- **Size and scale of the change** – considering the loss or addition of features;
 - **Geographical extent of the effect** – being Wide/Medium/Local/Site e.g. within the Application Site; immediate setting (local); a larger proportion of the landscape type or character area (wider);
 - **Duration of effects** - short term; medium term; long term as defined within the assessment;
 - **Reversibility** - Reversible; partially reversible; permanent.
- 1.26 The above factors are considered together to derive an overall magnitude of effect for each identified receptor or group of receptors, which is determined by the use of professional judgement. The magnitude of effect is presented on a three-point scale of High, Medium and Low. Split grades may be possible where resulting magnitude falls between two grade levels.

Table APP 1.4 Magnitude of Effect for Landscape Receptors

Grade	Description
High	The development would result in a substantial alteration to the key landscape character or characteristics of the receptors.
Medium	The development would result in a partial alteration of or alteration to key landscape character or characteristics of the receptor
Low	The development would result in a small alteration to landscape character or characteristics of the receptor.
Negligible	The development would result in a slight alteration to landscape character or characteristics of the receptor.
None	The development would not result in an alternation to landscape character or characteristics of the receptor.

Assessment of Visual Effects

Visual Baseline

- 1.27 The visual baseline is the description of the existing qualities of views and visual amenity for the individual visual receptors against which any future changes can be assessed or visual effects predicted and assessed.
- 1.28 The visual baseline is established by considering both a desk study of existing sources such as landscape character assessments and OS mapping to identify prominent or promoted views and field work to identify and record the character and extent of the views and the features and aesthetic and perceptual factors which contribute to the general visual amenity.

Viewpoint Selection

- 1.29 Viewpoints are selected to illustrate the views and visual amenity experienced by the different visual receptors. This may be informed by the ZTV. In selecting the viewpoints, the following factors are taken into account:
- Viewing distance and direction – short, medium, long distance or oblique;
 - The nature of the viewing experience – static views, views along a route;
 - The type of view - glimpsed, panorama, screened, partial; and

- The potential for cumulative views in conjunction or in close sequence with other existing and proposed development of a similar nature (typically agreed with the LPA).

Visual Presentation Methods

- 1.30 Presentation methods for the visual impact assessment comprise panoramic photography consisting of a series of stitched single shot photographs. Field survey photographic record are prepared and presented in accordance with the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/2019, 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals' (17th September 2019).

Value attached to views and visual amenity

- 1.31 The assessment considers the interest or reason a receptor has in experiencing a view and the value that they can reasonably attach to it.
- 1.32 The value attached to views is described as either High, Medium, or Low. Split grades may be possible where resulting value falls between two grade levels. Table APP 1.5 below gives an indication of the value assigned to views and visual amenity.

Table APP 1.5 Visual Receptor Value

Grade	Description
High	Views from and/or visual amenity associated with viewpoints of international or national importance, popular well-known visitor attractions / routes where views and visual amenity form an identified part of the attraction or route. Inclusion within widely publicised guidebooks or cultural references; residential receptors
Medium	Views from and/or the visual amenity associated with viewpoints of identified district or local importance; local well-known visitor attractions or public open spaces and routes where views and visual amenity form an integral part of the attraction; local public rights of way.
Low	Views from and/or visual amenity associated with every day locations or routes that do not benefit from any designation or cultural associations. Locations where the view of the landscape is not the primary reason for being in attendance, such as places of employment.

Susceptibility of visual receptor to change

- 1.33 Susceptibility of visual receptors to change in views and visual amenity is derived from the consideration of:
1. The occupation or reason why one is experiencing the view or area; and
 2. The amount of interest or attention one may have in the view and appearance of the area.
- 1.34 Judgements on visual susceptibility are presented on a three-step scale of Low, Medium or High. Split grades may be possible where resulting value falls between two grade levels. A description and indication of typical receptors associated with the grades of visual susceptibility are described in Table APP 1.6 below.

Table APP 1.6 Visual Receptor Susceptibility

Scale	Description of susceptibility
High	Little or no ability to accommodate change caused by the proposed development without adverse consequences for the visual receptor group experiencing the view/ and or general visual amenity.
Medium	Some ability to accommodate change caused by the proposed development without adverse consequences for the visual receptor group experiencing the view/ and or general visual amenity.
Low	An ability to accommodate change caused by the proposed development without adverse consequences for the visual receptor group experiencing the view/ and or general visual amenity

Visual Sensitivity

- 1.35 Visual Sensitivity is derived from the judgements of value of a view or visual amenity and susceptibility of the visual receptor.
- 1.36 The assessment provides a clear rationale for both the existing value of the view or visual amenity and its susceptibility to change arising from the type of development proposed. The rationale is the record of why a visual receptor's sensitivity has been graded in a particular way.
- 1.37 Determination of sensitivity is based on professional judgement, however, high value/high susceptibility receptors are likely to be highly sensitive to change, with lower value and/or low susceptibility receptors being likely to be of low sensitivity to change. A three-point scale is used to define visual receptor sensitivity. Split grades are used when resulting sensitivity falls between two grades. As with the determination of landscape sensitivity, to allow easier inspection and review of the assessment process, the sensitivity matrix is used to aid consistency in the definition of visual sensitivity.

Table APP 1.7 Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Category		Susceptibility				
		High	Medium / High	Medium	Medium / Low	Low
Value	High	High	High	Medium/High	Medium	Medium
	Medium/High	High	Medium/High	Medium	Medium	Medium/Low
	Medium	Medium/High	Medium	Medium	Medium/Low	Medium/Low
	Medium/Low	Medium	Medium	Medium/Low	Medium/Low	Low
	Low	Medium	Medium/Low	Medium/Low	Low	Low

Magnitude of Visual Effects

- 1.38 The level of effect on a visual receptor is derived from an assessment of the magnitude of effect and the sensitivity of the receptor. This is informed by various factors, such as:
- **Size and scale of the change in view** – considering the loss or addition of features, changes in composition and consideration of the proportion of view occupied by the proposed development
 - **Geographical extent of the effect**- angle of view, distance of the receptor to the development and the extent over which the changes would be visible.

- **Contrast or integration with the existing visual character** – possible areas of consideration include form, scale and mass, skyline effects, height, colour and texture.
- **Duration of visual effects** - short term; medium term; long term as defined within the assessment;
- **Reversibility** - Reversible; partially reversible; permanent.

1.39 The above factors are considered together to derive an overall magnitude of effect for each receptor, which is determined by the use of professional judgement. The magnitude of visual effect is categorised as either High, Medium or Low. Split grades between these categories can be used where the magnitude fits neither category. A description of the visual magnitude categories is shown in Table APP 1.8.

Table APP 1.8 Magnitude of Effect for Visual Receptors

Grade	Description
High	The proposed development would result in a substantial change to the identified view or visual amenity
Medium	The proposed development would result in a partial alteration to the identified view or visual amenity
Low	The proposed development would result in a small alteration to the identified view or visual amenity
Negligible	The proposed development would result in a barely discernible alteration to the identified view or visual amenity
None	The proposed development would not alter the identified view or visual amenity

Significance and Nature of Effect on Landscape and Visual Receptors

1.40 The assessment of the significance of effect is derived by combining the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude of effect for each landscape and visual receptor along with a clear narrative of the reasoning behind the assessment. The significance of an effect can be beneficial, adverse or neutral, permanent or temporary:

- **Adverse effects** are those that would be damaging to the key characteristics arising from either their loss, reduction or introduction of uncharacteristic elements so as to degrade the quality and integrity of the landscape and or visual resource.
- **Beneficial effects** are those that would result in an improvement in the key characteristics arising from improvement or introduction of new positive elements or removal of existing incongruous elements so as to improve the quality and integrity of the landscape and/or visual resource;
- **Neutral effects** are those effects that would maintain, on balance, the key characteristics and existing levels of the quality and integrity of the landscape and/or visual resource.

1.41 To aid consistency and allow easier inspection and review of results checklists, tables and matrices are used as a guide, alongside professional judgement. These include the use of matrices for the determination of significance thresholds, whereby the predicted magnitude of an effect is assessed against the sensitivity of a given receptor. This provides an indication of the level or significance of an effect (see Table APP 1.9 below). For the purposes of the assessment and unless stated otherwise in the EIA methodology or report, the threshold for significant effects is moderate or greater, shaded blue in Table 1.9 below.

Table APP 1.9 Significance of Effects Matrix

Category		Receptor Sensitivity		
		High	Medium	Low
Magnitude of Effect	High	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate
	Medium	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Minor
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor/Negligible
	Negligible	Minor	Minor/Negligible	Negligible
	None	None	None	None

- 1.42 Definitions are provided below. Where necessary, the intermediary categories between Major, Moderate and Low will be explained within the main body of the assessment.

Table APP 1.10 Significance of Effect Definitions

Significance of effect	Landscape	Visual
Major	The proposals will result in a substantial change in the key characteristics of the receptor or alterations to the quality and integrity of the landscape receptor such that the proposals are one of the principal elements altering the baseline landscape context.	The proposals will result in a substantial in view or introduce/ alter elements, features or characteristics where the baseline visual context alters with the proposals being one of the principal visual elements.
Moderate	The proposals will result in a partial change in the key characteristics of the receptor or partial alterations to the quality and integrity of the landscape receptor but where the baseline landscape context remains.	The proposals will result in a partial change in view or introduce/ alter elements, features or characteristics but where the baseline visual context remains.
Minor	The proposals will result in a small change in character of the receptor that is discernible but does not alter its key characteristics or will alter the quality and integrity of the landscape receptor in a small way.	The proposals will result in a small change in view/ areas of visual amenity or introduce/ alter elements, features or characteristics but where the change is not prominent.
Negligible	Slight change in the key characteristics of the landscape or alterations to the legibility of the landscape receptor.	The proposals will result in a barely discernible change in view/ areas visual amenity.
None	No change to the key characteristics of the landscape or alterations to the legibility of the landscape receptor.	No change to the view / visual amenity.

Glossary of Terms

(Derived from current IEMA/LI Guidelines with additional glossary)

Access land	Land where the public have access either by legal right or by informal agreement.
Baseline studies	Work done to determine and describe the environmental conditions against which any future changes can be measured or predicted and assessed.
Characterisation	The process of identifying areas of similar landscape character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character.
Characteristics	Elements, or combinations of elements, which make a contribution to distinctive landscape character.
Compensation	Measures devised to offset or compensate for residual adverse effects which cannot be prevented/avoided or further reduced.
Competent authority	The authority which determines the application for consent, permission, licence or other authorisation to proceed with a proposal. It is the authority that must consider the environmental information before granting any kind of authorisation.
Consultation bodies	Any body specified in the relevant EIA Regulations which the competent authority must consult in respect of an EIA, and which also has a duty to provide a scoping opinion and information.
Designated landscape	Areas of landscape identified as being of importance at international, national or local levels, either defined by statute or identified in development plans or other documents.
Development	Any proposal that results in a change to the landscape and/or visual environment.
Direct effect	An effect that is directly attributable to the proposed development.
‘Do nothing’ situation	Continued change or evolution in the landscape in the absence of the proposed development.
Ecosystem services	The benefits provided by ecosystems that contribute to making human life both possible and worth living. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (www.unep.org/maweb/en/index.aspx) grouped ecosystem services into four broad categories: 1. supporting services, such as nutrient cycling, oxygen production and soil formation – these underpin the provision of the other ‘service’ categories; 2. provisioning services, such as food, fibre, fuel and water; 3. regulating services, such as climate regulation, water purification and flood protection; 4. cultural services, such as education, recreation and aesthetic value.
Elements	Individual parts which make up the landscape, such as, for example, trees, hedges and buildings.
Enhancement	Proposals that seek to improve the landscape resource and the visual amenity of the proposed development site and its wider setting, over and above its baseline condition.
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	The process of gathering environmental information; describing a development; identifying and describing the likely significant environmental effects of the project; defining ways of preventing/avoiding, reducing, or offsetting or compensating for any adverse effects; consulting the general public and specific bodies with responsibilities for the environment; and presenting the results to the competent authority to inform the decision on whether the project should proceed.
Environmental Statement	A statement that includes the information that is reasonably required to assess the environmental effects of the development and which the applicant can, having regard in particular to current knowledge and methods of assessment, reasonably be required to compile, but that includes at least the information referred to in the EIA Regulations.
Feature	Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements in the landscape, such as tree clumps, church

towers or wooded skylines OR a particular aspect of the project proposals.

Geographical Information System (GIS)

A system that captures, stores, analyses, manages and presents data linked to location. It links spatial information to a digital database.

Green Infrastructure (GI)

Networks of green spaces and watercourses and water bodies that connect rural areas, villages, towns and cities.

Heritage

The historic environment and especially valued assets and qualities such as historic buildings and cultural traditions.

Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC and Historic Land-use Assessment (HLA))

Historic characterisation is the identification and interpretation of the historic dimension of the present-day landscape or townscape within a given area. HLC is the term used in England and Wales, HLA is the term used in Scotland.

Indirect effects

Effects that result indirectly from the proposed project as a consequence of the direct effects, often occurring away from the site, or as a result of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway. They may be separated by distance or in time from the source of the effects.

Iterative design process

The process by which project design is amended and improved by successive stages of refinement which respond to growing understanding of environmental issues.

Key characteristics

Those combinations of elements which are particularly important to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place.

Land cover

The surface cover of the land, usually expressed in terms of vegetation cover or lack of it. Related to but not the same as land use.

Land use

What land is used for, based on broad categories of functional land cover, such as urban and industrial use and the different types of agriculture and forestry.

Landform

The shape and form of the land surface which has resulted from combinations of geology, geomorphology, slope, elevation and physical processes.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

A tool used to identify and assess the likely significance of the effects of change resulting from development both on the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity.

Landscape capacity

The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed.

Landscape character

A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)

These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type.

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)

The process of identifying and describing variation of the character of the landscape and using this information to assist in managing change in the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive. The process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment.

Landscape Character Types (LCTs)

These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern, and perceptual and aesthetic

	attributes.
Landscape classification	A process of sorting the landscape into different types using selected criteria but without attaching relative values to different sorts of landscape.
Landscape effects	Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right.
Landscape features	A prominent eye-catching element, e.g. wooded hill top and church spire.
Landscape quality (condition)	A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
Landscape receptors	Defined aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.
Landscape strategy	The overall vision and objectives for what the landscape should be like in the future, and what is thought to be desirable for a particular landscape type or area as a whole, usually expressed in formally adopted plans and programmes or related documents.
Landscape value	The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons.
Magnitude (of effect)	A term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration.
Parameters	A limit or boundary which defines the scope of a particular process or activity.
Perception	Combines the sensory (that we receive through our senses) with the cognitive (our knowledge and understanding gained from many sources and experiences).
Photomontage	A visualisation which superimposes an image of a proposed development upon a photograph or series of photographs.
Receptors	See Landscape receptors and Visual receptors.
Scoping	The process of identifying the issues to be addressed by an EIA. It is a method of ensuring that an EIA focuses on the important issues and avoids those that are considered to be less significant.
Seascape	Landscapes with views of the coast or seas, and coasts and adjacent marine environments with cultural, historical and archaeological links with each other.
Sensitivity	A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor.
Significance	A measure of the importance or gravity of the environmental effect, defined by significance criteria specific to the environmental topic.
Stakeholders	The whole constituency of individuals and groups who have an interest in a subject or place.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	The process of considering the environmental effects of certain public plans, programmes or strategies at a strategic level.
Susceptibility	The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences.
Time depth	Historical layering – the idea of landscape as a ‘palimpsest’, a much written-over manuscript.
Townscape	The character and composition of the built environment including the buildings and the relationships between them, the different types of urban open space, including green spaces, and the relationship between buildings and open spaces.
Tranquillity	A state of calm and quietude associated with peace, considered to be a significant asset of

landscape.

Visual amenity	The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through an area.
Visual effects	Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.
Visual receptors	Individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal.
Visualisation	A computer simulation, photomontage or other technique illustrating the predicted appearance of the development.
Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)	A map, usually digitally produced, showing areas of land within which a development is theoretically visible.
Zone of Significant Visibility (ZSV)	Area within a ZTV from which a proposed development is likely to draw the eye of a casual observer, based on field observations.