

Inert Recycling Operation, associated Landscape Strategy (earthworks and native planting), Bolney  
Park Farm, London Road, Bolney RH17 5QF

## Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

hla 394 R01 rev A (NH 20-8-24)

*For PJB Construction Ltd*

By N Harper BA DipLA CMLI  
15-8-24



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Partnership no OC392053





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\* See weblink in Bibliography

## Introduction

This report has been prepared by Nick Harper CMLI of Harper Landscape Architecture LLP (hla), September 2020 and an updated rev A version was prepared August 2024. The 2020 report was commissioned by PJ Brown (Construction) Ltd (the Appellants) on the 24th August 2020 and again on the 25th July 2024. The report is a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which is put forward to describe the Landscape Character and Visual Impacts and Effects as a result of the Inert Recycling Operation at Bolney Park Farm, London Road, Bolney RH17 5QF (referred to as the Recycling Operation or the Site, for this LVIA) that has been in place since 2005.

The LVIA has been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, 2013, (GLVIA 3) by the Landscape Institute (LI) and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.

The original 2020 LVIA was used iteratively to inform the design and it put forward a Landscape Strategy to lessen the Landscape Character and Visual Impacts and Effects. The (2020 and 2024) reports offer Landscape Character and Visual Assessment to be used in support of the Appellant's case for the Appeal made by PJ Brown (*PINS ref: APP/C3620/C/21/3269098*) against the Enforcement Notice (*LPA ref: AP/23/0042*) relating to the Recycling Operation.

The LVIA describes the pre-2005 baseline conditions of the Site prior to its use as the Recycling Operation (which was implemented in accordance with Environment Agency Permit (*ref: EPR/JB3502UD*) in 2005. The LVIA has been put forward by reviewing the historic aerial photography (prior to 2005) and from visiting the Site in 2020 and 2024.

Revision A, supersedes the previous LVIA submission from 2020, this revision supersedes the 2020 LVIA, by including updated judgements to reflect the latest Landscape Planning Policy, the published Landscape Assessments and the LI guidance on Landscape Assessment.

## 1.0 Qualifications and Experience

### 1.1 Qualifications

- 1.1.1 Nick Harper is a Chartered Landscape Architect with a degree in landscape design, a post graduate diploma in landscape architecture and he is a full chartered (Landscape Architect) member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) since 1995.

### 1.2 Experience

- 1.2.1 Nick is a partner of the business of hla which has operated as a landscape architecture consultancy since 2008. hla is a limited liability partnership (LLP) and a registered practice of the Landscape Institute (LI).
- 1.2.2 Nick has good experience of carrying Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) in accordance with the Landscape Institute's (LI) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3) generally and has carried out LVIA specifically in relation to development in sensitive locations including the High Weald AONB. He has been a team leader on a number of award winning projects (from RIBA, LI, TCPI and ICE) and he has given expert landscape evidence at numerous of Public Inquiries and Planning Hearings.
- 1.2.3 Nick has 35 years professional experience and prior to setting up HLA had positions as, a Principal at Hyder Consulting, an Associate at Chris Blandford Associates and a Senior Landscape Architect with Battle McCarthy and also the London Borough of Enfield.

## 2.0 Existing Site

### 2.1 The existing site (see Figures 1 and 2)

- 2.1.1 This Recycling Operation is located in the National Landscape, High Weald AONB, 2.1km north of Bolney and the A272. The Site has been in operation since 2005 (see Figure 1) and it is accessed via the Dan Tree Farm junction from the A23, the 6 lane carriageway that is 200m west of the Site. The A23 road corridor is a landscape detractor that splits the AONB landscape and has a significant influence on the local Landscape Character.
- 2.1.2 Prior to 2005 (as seen on Figure 1 aerial photograph 2001) and when the current operations were not in place the Site was part of the existing agricultural field located directly east of the operation. There was an access from the A23 but this appears to have been to Dan Tree Cottage only with agricultural tracks extending to the perimeter of the field that the Site is located within.
- 2.1.3 The Site is located on elevated ground at approximately 104m AOD. To the east there is an undulating rural and predominantly agricultural landscape typical of high quality High Weald AONB landscape which is seen in this part of the designation. The local landscape is made up of organically shaped fields defined by hedgerow planting and significant blocks of woodland with occasional rural dwellings. To the west, the A23 is a very busy and noisy road with a high flow of traffic that can be heard for long distances, across the Site and beyond. Also directly to the west is mature tree planting which screens intervisibility of the Recycling Operation in that direction. To the north of the Site is Ancient Semi-natural Woodland (The Hanger) which screens views in from that direction. The Recycling Operation is outside the 15m protective buffer of the Ancient Semi-natural Woodland. To the south is Park Farm (mainly residential buildings) which may have had some obscured and partial views to the field (where the Recycling Operation now exists) prior to 2005. These properties may have views of the Recycling Operation from windows orientated towards the Site although the intervening topography and vegetation are likely to mean these are also partial and obscured.
- 2.1.4 Other influences on the Site's local landscape context include landscape detracting land uses, the A23 road corridor includes bridges, access roads, lighting and signage as well as a scaffolding company, a petrol station and large-scale storage buildings located along its west side. The spire of the Holy Trinity Church in Cuckfield is a visual landmark approximately 4.5km to the east. There are long distance views to the South Downs to the south and to High Weald ridge-lines to the east.
- 2.1.5 In heritage terms the Site: is in the High Weald; in close proximity but outside the Semi-Natural Ancient Woodland (the Hanger) and its 15m protective buffer zone, to the north; and there are no Listed Buildings with views of the Site prior to 2005 nor of the current Recycling Operation.
- 2.1.6 Ecological interest is likely to be located along the wooded and tree lined margins of the operation to the north and east.



Figure 1 Location Plan and Aerial Photograph

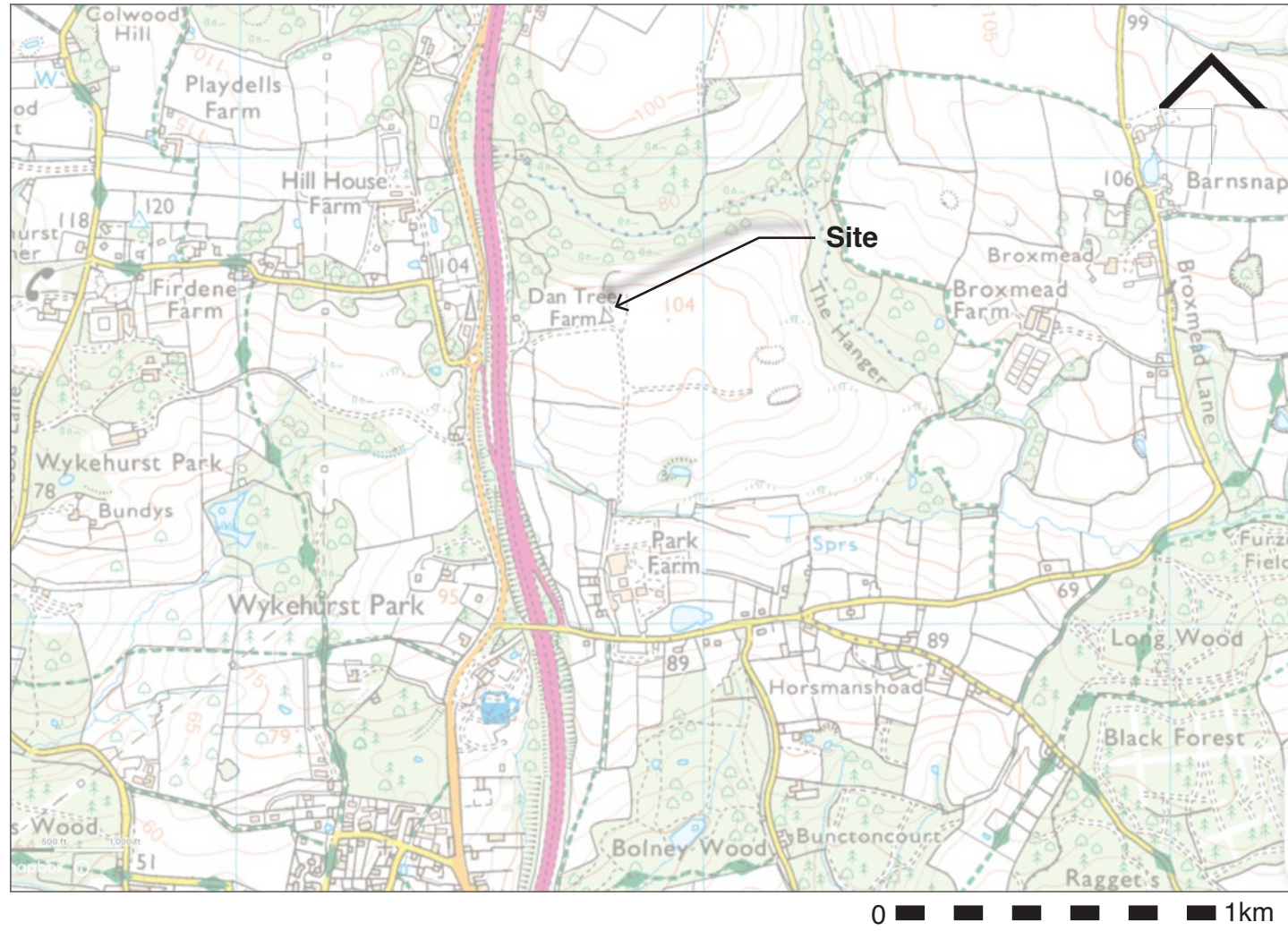




Figure 2 Site evolution since 2001 as seen on aerial photographs



Aerial photograph 2001 - pre-operation



Aerial photograph 2005 - in operation



Aerial photograph 2012 - in operation



Aerial photograph 2018 - in operation



### 3.0 Site as Recycling Operation (see Figures 3, 4 and 5)

#### 3.1 Description of the Site in operation as an Inert Recycling Operation.

3.1.1 PJ Brown (Construction) Ltd (the Appellants) commenced the Inert Recycling Operation 01-05-2007 (although the Site had been being altered for the Recycling Operation since 2005). The Application describes the operational activities as follows.

*“Operation is for the importation, deposit, re-use and recycling of waste material and use of land for storage purposes.”*

3.1.2 PJ Brown took over the land in 2006 from South East Tipping who operated the Site from at least 2004. The activities described in the application have been undertaken from that time to varying degrees. A planning application was submitted in 2015 by a former agent but, not progressed as it was not validated. The 2007 aerial photograph (on the Planning Portal) shows activities on the site including container, general storage and material piles. The 2012 aerial photograph again shows material storage as does the 2018 aerial photograph.

3.1.3 The Operation as seen on Site 09-09-20 is described as follows. A lockable gate gives access from the A23 to a tar and chip haul road that runs for approximately 150-200m to the recycling operation. The road is used by the vehicles of the handful of operators running the Site and by the lorries (25-30 per day between 7am and 5pm) which transport the recyclable materials. In the recycling area there is plant and machinery to break up the hard materials for recycling (including brick, concrete, road planings etc) with heaps of material located along the northern southern and eastern edges of the operation. These heaps screen views in from the east although the diggers located on top of the heaps can be seen during the operational hours.

3.1.4 The 2020 LVIA made some planting recommendations for softening the Recycling Operation. The work remains a proposal although it is understood that the planting marked as '577m2 New Indigenous mix planting,' located to the south of the access road is likely to be removed from the proposals.

Figure 3 Site-wide photographs taken in 2020



View looking north



View looking across Operation



View looking south



View east from Site



View of recycling heap

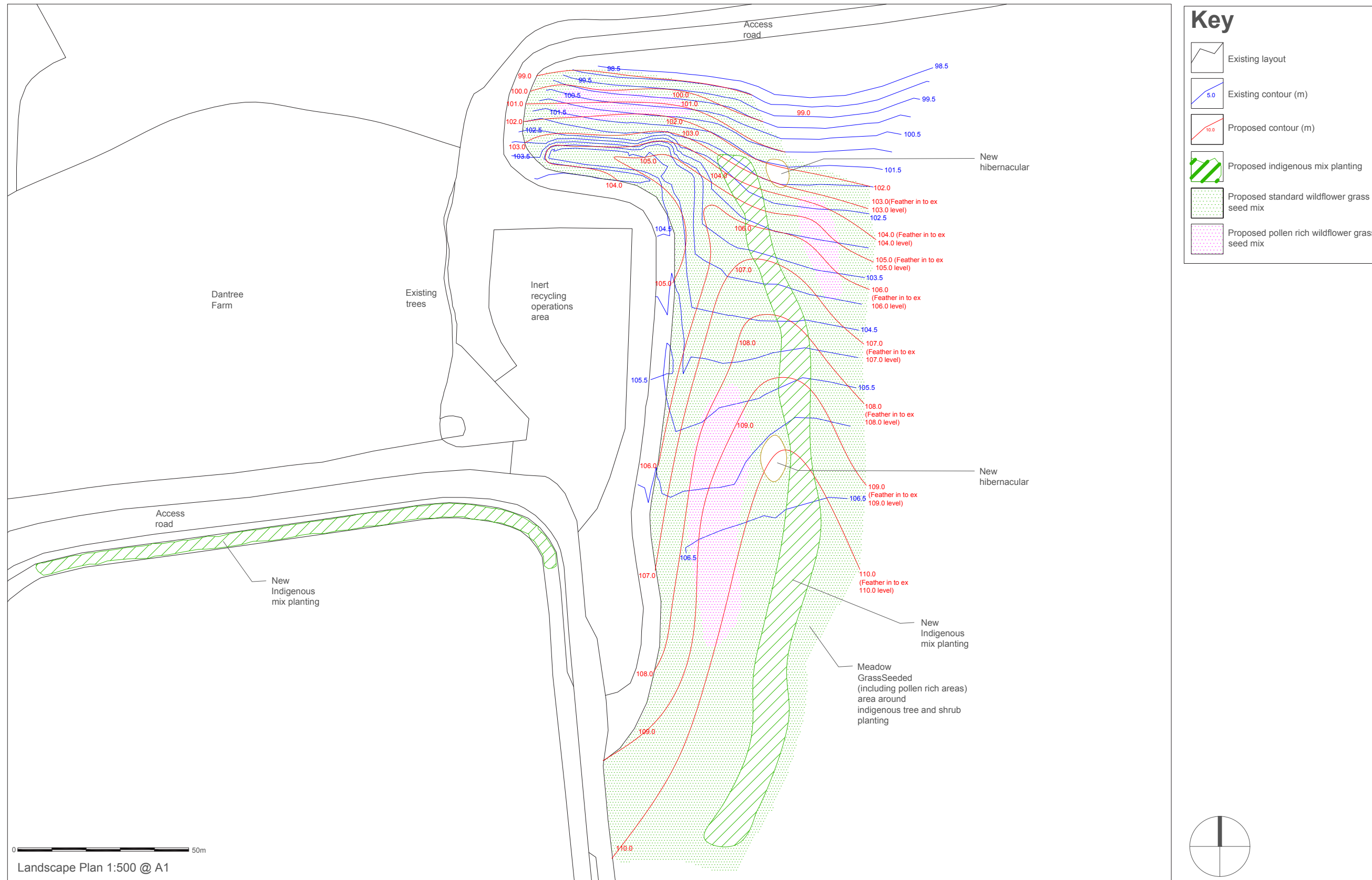


View looking west

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Figure 4 hla drawing (ref: hla 394 02), Existing and proposed contours Plan



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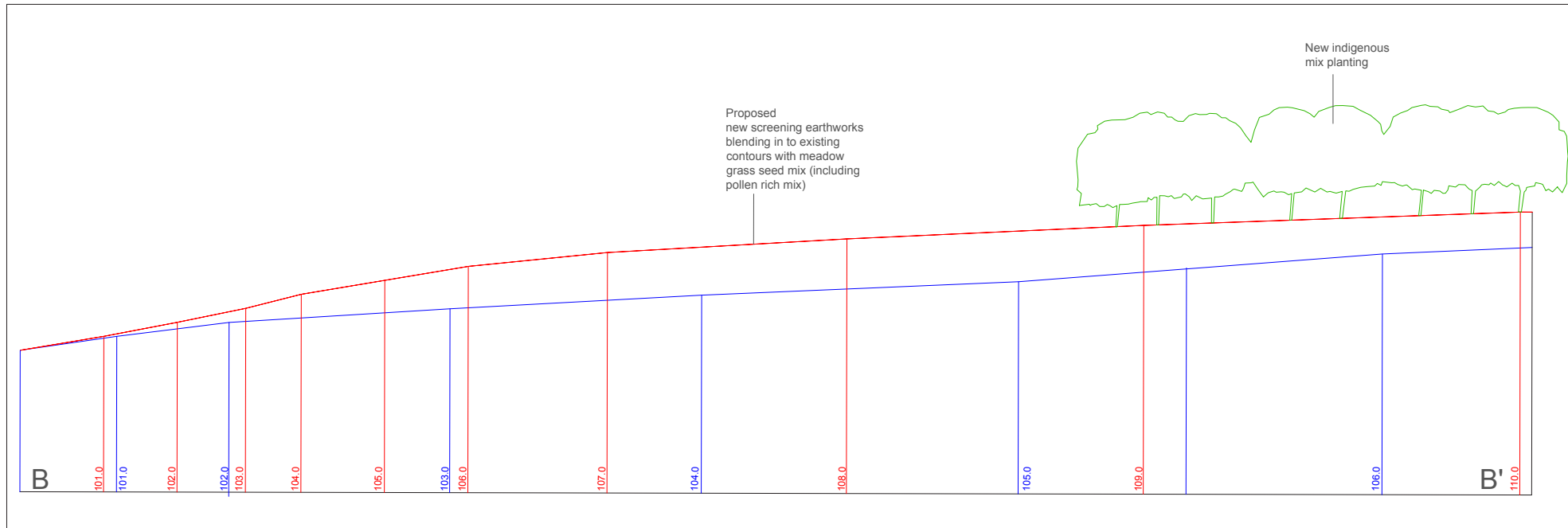
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Project/Client Bolney Park Farm P.J. Brown (Construction) Ltd		Scale 1:500@A1
394	Drawing Number hla 394 02	Revision Purpose Planning



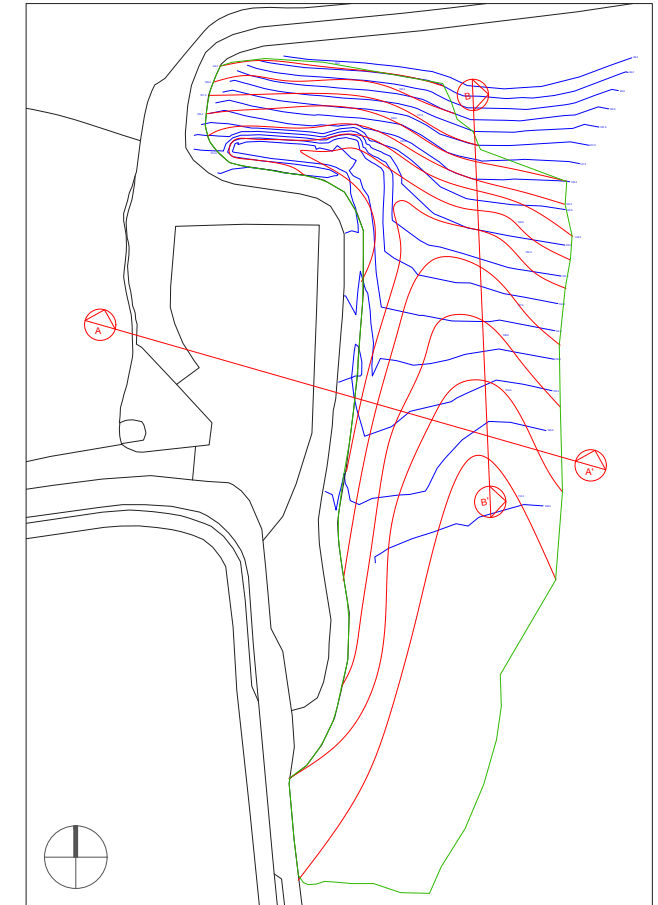


Figure 5 hla drawing (ref: 394 03) Sections A - A' and B - B'

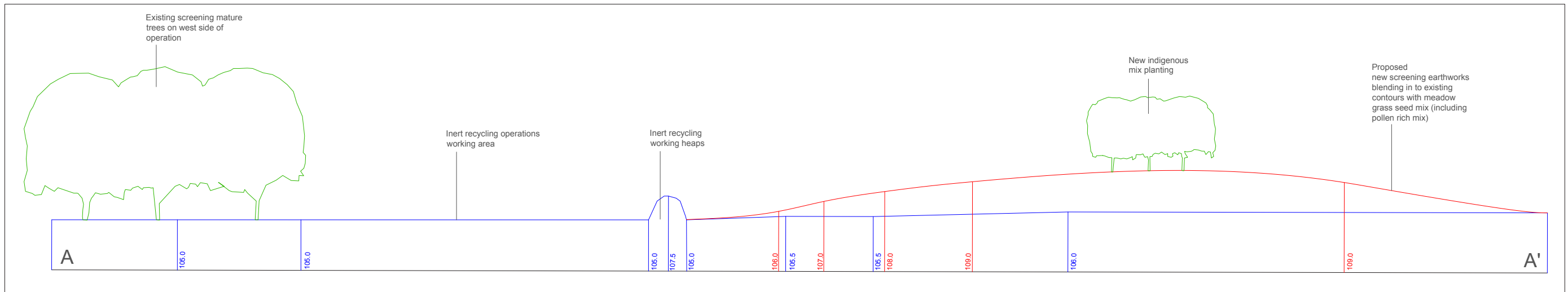
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Section B - B' 1:200 @ A1 and 1:400 at A3



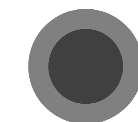
Location Plan 1:1000 at A1



Section A - A' 1:200 @ A1 and 1:400 at A3

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## 4.0 Landscape Planning Policy (see Figures 6 and 7)

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The key landscape related planning policy is listed as follows.

### 4.2 National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF)

4.2.1 It is noted that the NPPF should be read in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Environment Act 1995, and the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended by the Environment Act 1995).

4.2.2 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development; which should be seen as a golden thread running through plan-making and decision-taking (Paragraph 11, page 6). This presumption means that where any adverse impacts as a result of development should not outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

4.2.3 The relevant landscape related policies of the NPPF are listed as follows.

#### *Chapter 2. Achieving sustainable development*

- Paragraph 8 (page 5) item c. an environmental objective.
- Paragraphs 10 and 11 (pages 5 and 6) presumption in favour of sustainable development.

#### *Chapter 3. Plan making, sub section strategic policies*

- Paragraph 20 (page 9) item d. conservation and enhancement of natural built and historic environment.

#### *Chapter 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities*

- Paragraph 98 (page 28) environmental benefits of estate regeneration.

#### *Chapter 11. Making effective use of land*

- Paragraph 124 (page 36) consideration of various environmental issues with any development.

#### *Chapter 12. Achieving well-designed places*

- Paragraph 135 (pages 39 and 40) Sustain a strong sense of place.
- Paragraph 137 (page 39) Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.

#### *Chapter 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change*

- Paragraph 158 (page 46) Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes.

- Paragraph 162 (page 47) item b. take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

#### *Chapter 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*

- Paragraph 180 (page 51) Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment:
- Paragraph 181 (page 52) Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites.
- Paragraph 182 (page 52) Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4.2.4 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) as relevant to the existing and proposed landscape and the Development is described as follows.

- PPG Natural environment 2019. This aims to protect landscape, ecology, green infrastructure, brownfield land, soils and agricultural land. It specifically refers to the need for Landscape Character Assessments and the need to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

### 4.4 Regional Planning Policy

4.4.1 At a regional level the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2024-2029 (see Appendix 3) is key, the Plan states its overall intention (page 10) as,

*"the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty for the benefit of current and future generations."*

4.4.2 The character of the High Weald is defined on page 20 under the heading 'Character Component' as follows.

*"The High Weald AONB is characterized by a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone. The ridges tend east-west, and from them spring numerous gill streams that form the headwaters of rivers. Wide river valleys dominate the eastern part of the AONB. The landform and water systems are subject to, and influence, a local variant of the British suboceanic climate."*

4.4.3 On pages 22 to 34 a number of Objectives are set out and those which are relevant to landscape in respect of the development are listed as follows,

- "Objective G2: "To protect landform and geological features including sandstone outcrops." (page 22).
- Objective G3: "To pursue net zero across the High Weald without compromising its characteristic landscape beauty." (page 22).
- Objective S1: "To protect the historic pattern of settlement." (page 26).



- Objective W1: *“To maintain and restore the existing extent and pattern of woodland cover and particularly ancient woodland.”* (page 34).
- Objective W2: *“To protect and restore the ecological quality and functioning of woodland at a landscape scale.”* (page 33),
- Objective FH2: *“To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands.”* (page 38).”
- Objective FH3: *“To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats.”* (page 38).

#### 4.5 County planning policy

##### 4.5.1 West Sussex County Council (WSCC)

There are no specific policies at County level beyond those described at a local and regional level.

#### 4.6 District planning policy

4.6.1 Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) have an emerging Local Plan 2021 to 2039 that is in consultation although this is not yet adopted. As such the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 was adopted on the 28th March 2018 and this is the current development plan. This replaced the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004 which has relevant saved Local Plan policies). Policies are described as follows.

4.6.2 The District Plan policies as relevant to landscape are listed as follows.

- Policy DP1: Sustainable Economic Development (page 24), as follows  
*“Provision for new employment land and premises will be made by allowing new small-scale economic development, in the countryside.”*
- Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside (page 56), as follows.  
*“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”.*
- Policy DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (page 62), as follows.  
*“Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown on the Policies Maps, will only be permitted where it conserves or enhances natural beauty and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan, in particular;*

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

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

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

- Policy DP22: Rights of Way and other Recreational Routes (page 70), as follows.

*“Rights of way, Sustrans national cycle routes and recreational routes will be protected by ensuring development does not result in the loss of or does not adversely affect a right of way.”*

- Policy DP26: Character and Design (page 75), as follows

*“All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development (only relevant points listed):*

- *is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*
- *protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- *does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution*
- *positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- *optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.”*



- Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows 90 (page 90), as follows.

*“The District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. In particular, ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees will be protected.”*

- Policy DP38: Biodiversity 92 (page 92), as follows.

“Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced.”

#### 4.7 Parish policy

4.7.1 The Site is in the jurisdiction of the Bolney Parish which has a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) 2015 to 2031, made September 2016. The LLCA described below in Chapter 5 is outside and to the west of the Ansty, Staplefield and Brook Street Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031 which includes Policy AS3 erroneously referred to in the Enforcement Notice. The landscape planning policies in the Bolney Parish NP are as follows.

- BOLE1: “Protect and Enhance Biodiversity.” (page 30).
- BOLE2: “Protect and Enhance Countryside.” (page 31).

#### 4.8 Public Rights of Way (PRoW) (Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the NPPF Paragraph 75)

4.8.1 Viewpoints 1 and 2 (both from PRoW 16CR) demonstrate the only two views from High Weald PRoWs. Both were seen as rare partial and obscured views in 2020 (offering an insight in to what might be seen in winter when there are no leaves on the trees) and there were no views when seen in 2024. These Viewpoints are close together and from locations over 900m away. The Recycling Operation has no influence on the visual composition or enjoyment of these views. As such Visual Impacts and Effects experienced by Visual Receptors using High Weald PRoWs are judged as *Not Significant*.

#### 4.9 Cumulative Impact

4.9.1 There are no planning applications in the local area that if considered with this operation would lead to significant cumulative impacts.

#### 4.10 Seasonal change

4.10.1 The judgements put forward would not be altered at night as there would be no night time operations. The judgements have been made when most impacted and as experienced in the winter when there are no leaves on trees.

#### 4.11 Certificate of Lawful development WSCC/070/019

4.11.1 On the 10th January 2020 the Certificate of Lawful development WSCC/070/019 was refused with the following landscape relevant reasons.

*“The development is unacceptable with regard to its impact upon the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; the adjacent Ancient Woodland and the habitat and species therein; the amenity of residents of the surrounding countryside; the risk to the water environment; the character of the local countryside; and because it is contrary to the policies of the Development Plan, as follows:*

*Mid Sussex District Plan 2014- 2031:*

*Policies DP12 (Protection and Enhancement of Countryside); DP16 (High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty); DP26 (Character and Design); DP37 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows); DP38 (Biodiversity).”*

#### 4.12 Planning policy conclusions

4.12.1 For the reason given at 4.8 opposite it is judged that the Recycling Operation has no influence on the enjoyment and appreciation of views from the National Landscape, High Weald AONB nor its setting. The ZTV shows an open area to the east but the views are from the privately owned agricultural fields only. Whilst the South Downs escarpment and the High Weald ridge-lines are visible to the south and east respectively there is no intervisibility between these and the Site. The Landscape Character Impacts and Effects of the Recycling Operation is judged at national, regional, county and district scales as *Not Significant* (see Chapter 6.0 below).

4.12.2 Whilst the Recycling Operation has altered the Landscape Character it is a necessary sustainable business located in close proximity to the significantly landscape detracting A23 which lessens sensitivity and it is located in a discreet position. It is also noted that the Ancient Semi-natural Woodland (the Hanger) and its 15m protective buffer, the trees, and the biodiversity are outside the working area of the Recycling Operation. As such the Recycling Operation is not contrary to the Landscape Planning Policy.

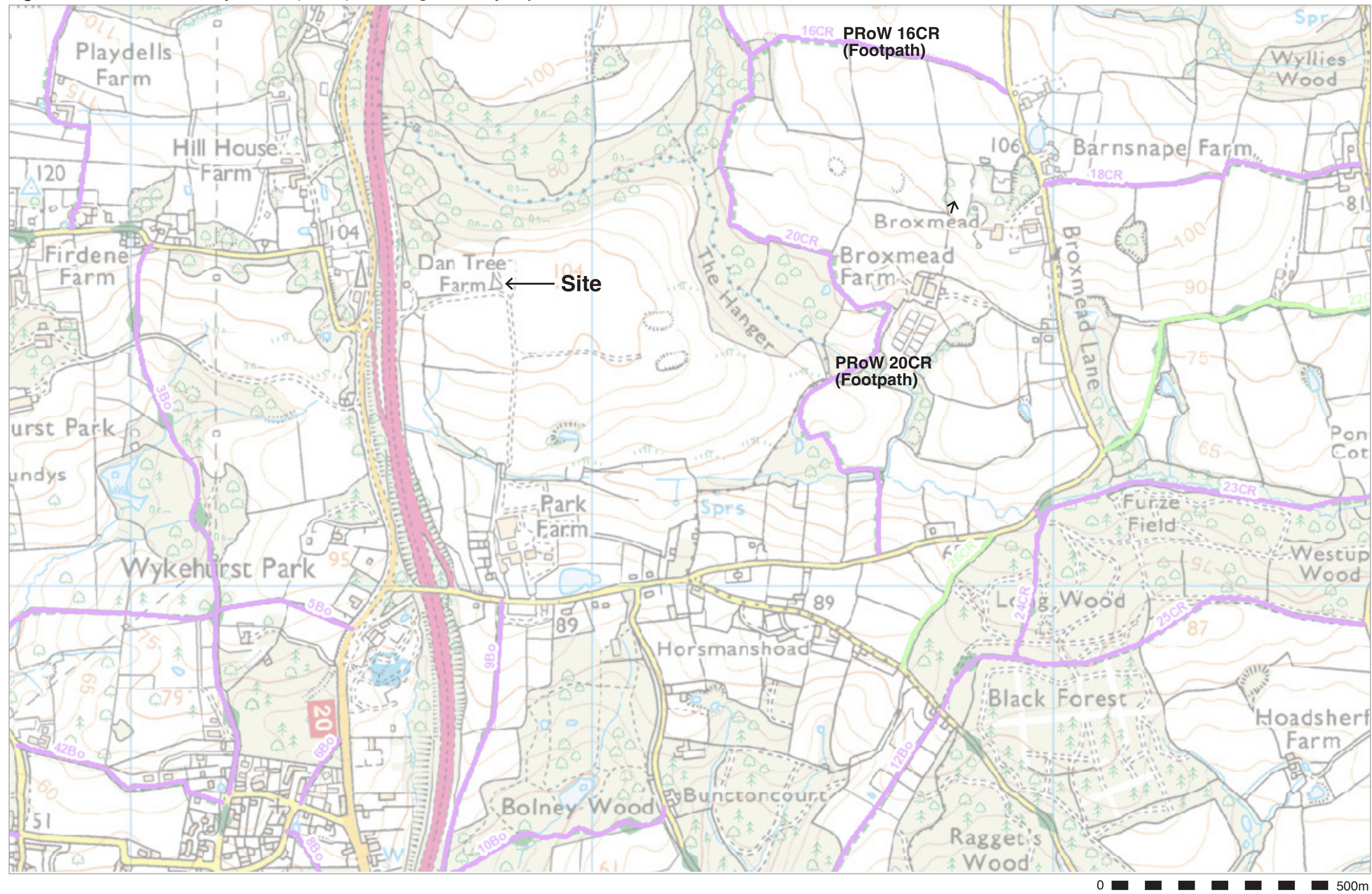


Figure 6 Landscape Designations Plan (as extracted from Magic Maps)





Figure 7 West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Public Rights of Way Map, extract





## 5.0 Landscape Character and Visual Baseline Description

### 5.1 Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA) baseline description (see Figures 8 and 9)

5.1.1 The LLCA is defined by the Site and the local landscape context that is influenced by the Site. The full area of the LLCA is shown in green on Figure 8.

5.1.2 The local landscape is influenced by the high quality undulating, rural, High Weald landscape to the east and south, the wooded areas to the north and the low quality A23 road corridor located approximately 200m to the west. The Recycling Operation is discreetly located for public views in all directions. The South Downs escarpment is located 12km to the south and the High Weald ridge-lines are located at long distance to the east, both create a high quality scenic backdrop in these directions although there is no discernible intervisibility between these locations and the Site.

5.1.3 The Site has been in operation since 2005 (see Figure 1) and is accessed via the Dan Tree Farm junction off the A23 which is approximately 200m west of the Recycling Operation. The A23 road corridor includes the 6 lane carriageway, bridges, signage, lighting and landscape detracting land uses to its west side. It is screened from the Site by bunding and vegetation that was implemented at the outset of the Recycling Operation set up. Prior to 2005 the Site was a small part of the existing agricultural field and it was accessed from the A23 junction. At this time the local landscape was rural agricultural countryside in the AONB. It is noted that the tranquillity and remoteness of the local landscape was (prior to 2005) and is heavily influenced by the landscape detracting A23 which has an adverse perceptual effect.

5.1.4 The Site is located on elevated ground at approximately 104m AOD and slopes down towards the Hanger, wooded valley floor to the east and north, down to the residential area of Park Farm to the south and slightly down towards the A23 to the west. The local landscape to the east is made up of organically shaped fields defined by hedgerow planting and significant blocks of woodland with occasional rural dwellings. The operational part of the Site is located in an elbow of the Hanger, Semi-natural Ancient Woodland, mature tree planting which screens views in from the west and north. To the south is Park Farm (and associated buildings) which may have some partial obscured intervisibility with the Recycling Operation. The spire of the Holy Trinity Church in Cuckfield is a long distance visual landmark to the east that can be seen from the LLCA.

### 5.2 LLCA Positive Landscape Receptors

5.2.1 The following Positive Landscape Receptors in the LLCA, exist.

- *Trees, woodland and hedgerows.*
  - The wooded boundaries to the north and west.
  - The native tree and hedge lines to the east.
- *Topography*
  - Undulating topography which slopes in all directions from the Site.
  - Wooded streams at valley bottom to north and east.

- Long distance views to the ridges of the South Downs (south) and the High Weald (east).
- *Land use and landcover*
  - Local farmland.
  - Low density houses and residential enclaves.
  - Tree and hedge-lined rural lanes.
- *Historic and cultural landscape*
  - Bolney, located 2.1km to the south is an Anglo Saxon village.
- *Landscape Character*
  - Perception of remoteness and tranquillity increases the further from the A23 a receptor is located.
  - Views across the rural High Weald and South Downs landscape.
  - Agricultural field pattern.
- *Settlement pattern*
  - Scattered, low density houses to the east of the A23.
- *Local materials*
  - Some high quality use of natural stone and timber to older buildings.

### 5.3 LLCA Landscape Detractors

5.3.1 The following Landscape Detractors in the LLCA, exist.

- A23 is a significant detractor that divides the AONB landscape to its east and west. It is a very busy, fast moving and noisy six lane road as it passes the Site access.
- A23 associated highways elements, concrete bridges, embankments, access roads, lighting, signage etc.
- Commercial buildings along the west side of the A23 (specifically the large-scale storage, the Esso petrol station and the scaffolding operation).
- Telegraph lines.
- Suburban elements and car parking at the Park Farm residential area.

5.4 The LLCA manifests national ‘Key Characteristics,’ National Character Area (NCA) 122 South Downs (pages 7 and 8).

- “A faulted landform of clays, sand and soft sandstones with outcrops of fissured sandrock and ridges running east–west, deeply incised and intersected with numerous gill streams forming the headwaters of a number of the major rivers – the Rother, Brede, Ouse and Medway – which flow in broad valleys.
- A dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads and medieval ridgetop villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries, with a dominance of timber- framed buildings with steep roofs often hipped or half-hipped, and an extremely high survival rate of farm buildings dating from the 17th century or earlier.
- Ancient routeways in the form of ridgetop roads and a dense system of radiating droveways, often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees and wild flower-rich verges and boundary banks. Church towers and spires on the ridges are an important local landmark. There is a dense network of small, narrow and winding lanes, often sunken and enclosed by high hedgerows or woodland strips. The area includes several large towns such as Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough, Battle and Heathfield and is closely bordered by others such as Crawley, East Grinstead, Hastings and Horsham.
- Extensive broadleaved woodland cover with a very high proportion of ancient woodland with high forest, small woods and shaws, plus steep valleys with gill woodland.
- Small and medium-sized irregularly shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded shaws, predominantly of medieval origin and managed historically as a mosaic of small agricultural holdings typically used for livestock grazing.
- A predominantly grassland agricultural landscape grazed mainly with sheep and some cattle.”

5.5 The LLCA manifests regional ‘Key Characteristics,’ High Weald Management Plan 2024 - 2029

‘Character Component, Natural Systems’ (page 21).

- “A pattern of faults and folds that distinguishes the High Weald from the rest of the south and east of England, with a high concentration of springs associated with fault lines.
- Numerous small streams descending the main ridges in narrow steep-sided valleys (gills), historically often dammed to power industry with many ‘pond bays’ and ‘hammer ponds’ surviving.”

‘Character Component, Woodland’ (page 32).

- “Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods, larger forests and numerous linear gill woodlands, shaws, wooded routeways and outgrown hedges, and isolated trees.

- High proportion of woodland is categorised as ancient woodland (46%), typically broadleaved coppice with a rich ground flora, with many more woodlands equivalent in conservation interest. A further fifth of woodland is protected ‘plantations on ancient woodlands’ (PAWS), much of which is under restoration.
- Many irregularly shaped small woodlands interlinked with shaws, isolated trees, thick hedges and wooded sunken lanes, forming an intimate part of the farmed landscape.”

‘Character Component, Fieldscape and Heath’ (page 36).

- A generally irregular field pattern with individual fields relatively small (less than three hectares).
- Strong influence exerted by topography with many field systems aligned to or ‘hanging’ from (at right angles to) linear features such as watercourses or ridge-top roads.
- Predominantly pastoral mixed farming with an absence of industrial scale livestock farming, and undisturbed soils contributing to carbon sequestration.
- Fields, mostly permanent pasture, used for grazing livestock with some small-scale horticulture and cropping.
- Wide, verdant historic hedgerows traditionally managed by laying.”

‘Character Component, Aesthetic and perceptual qualities’ (page 44).

“History-related qualities such as ...

- a. a sense of history and timelessness arising from an ancient countryside with a human-scale agricultural tapestry; veteran and ancient trees; medieval forests, heaths and commons; churches, historic buildings.

Character and gestalt qualities such as ...

- h. colour palette of greens (vegetation) and browns (clay, timber and iron) representing the materials from which the landscape is constructed.
- j. a recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats.

Sensory qualities such as ...

- k. unexpected panoramic and long views, often uninterrupted, extending out along the valleys beyond the High Weald with natural skylines and forested ridges occasionally punctuated by church spires, and often framed by field gates and wooded holloways.
- o. Vivid seasonal changes including the whites and blues of ancient woodland ground flora in the spring and the oranges and browns of autumnal trees and woodlands.



5.6 The LLCA manifests regional ‘Key Characteristics,’ of the West Sussex Landscape Assessment 2003, Landscape Character Area (LCA) High Weald Fringes and the Key Characteristics,’ Mid Sussex Landscape Assessment 2005, Landscape Character Area (LCA) 10, High Weald Fringes. (page 106), which both share the same list of ‘Key Characteristics,’ quoted as follows.

- “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.
- 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.
- Biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.
- Network of lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.
- 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.”

## 5.7 LLCA Landscape Value, Susceptibility and Sensitivity

5.7.1 LLCA Landscape Value is judged using the following criteria.

- *Landscape condition (also referred to as Special Qualities or Landscape Qualities):* The LLCA manifests some of the ‘Key Characteristics’ of the published Landscape Character Assessments, it is in the High Weald National Landscape and there are views to the South Downs national Park however the A23 (an associated other landscape detractors) significantly lessens the LLCA’s intactness, reducing remoteness and tranquillity and dividing the local character either side of the road.
- *Scenic quality:* The LLCA has high quality scenic views of the High Weald and South Downs countryside although the perceptual landscape detracting influence of the A23 significantly lessens this
- *Distinctiveness (Rarity and representativeness):* The local agricultural High Weald has some distinctive interest at a national scale (less so locally) in the field pattern (defined by wooded areas and hedgerows) but the A23 and the local housing are not rare elements in the local landscape.
- *Conservation (natural and cultural heritage) interests:* The local High Weald has some heritage interest.
- *Recreation value:* There are very few views from PRowWs or other publicly accessible areas, that see the Site, within the LLCA.
- *Perceptual aspects:* The perceptual qualities of the local landscape are significantly and adversely affected by the noise of the A23 although this decreases the further away receptors are located from the A23.

- *Function:* Prior to the Recycling Operation the land was used for agriculture.

### 5.7.2 LLCA Landscape Susceptibility

5.7.2.1 Despite being in the High Weald National Landscape the Site and the LLCA’s close proximity to the A23 reduces the intactness, the physical state and quality of the landscape in terms of views, function and biodiversity. The Site is also visually discreet for public views. As such the landscape has the capacity to accommodate the scale and type of landscape change that the recycling operations have introduced and the Landscape Susceptibility is judged to be *Low*.

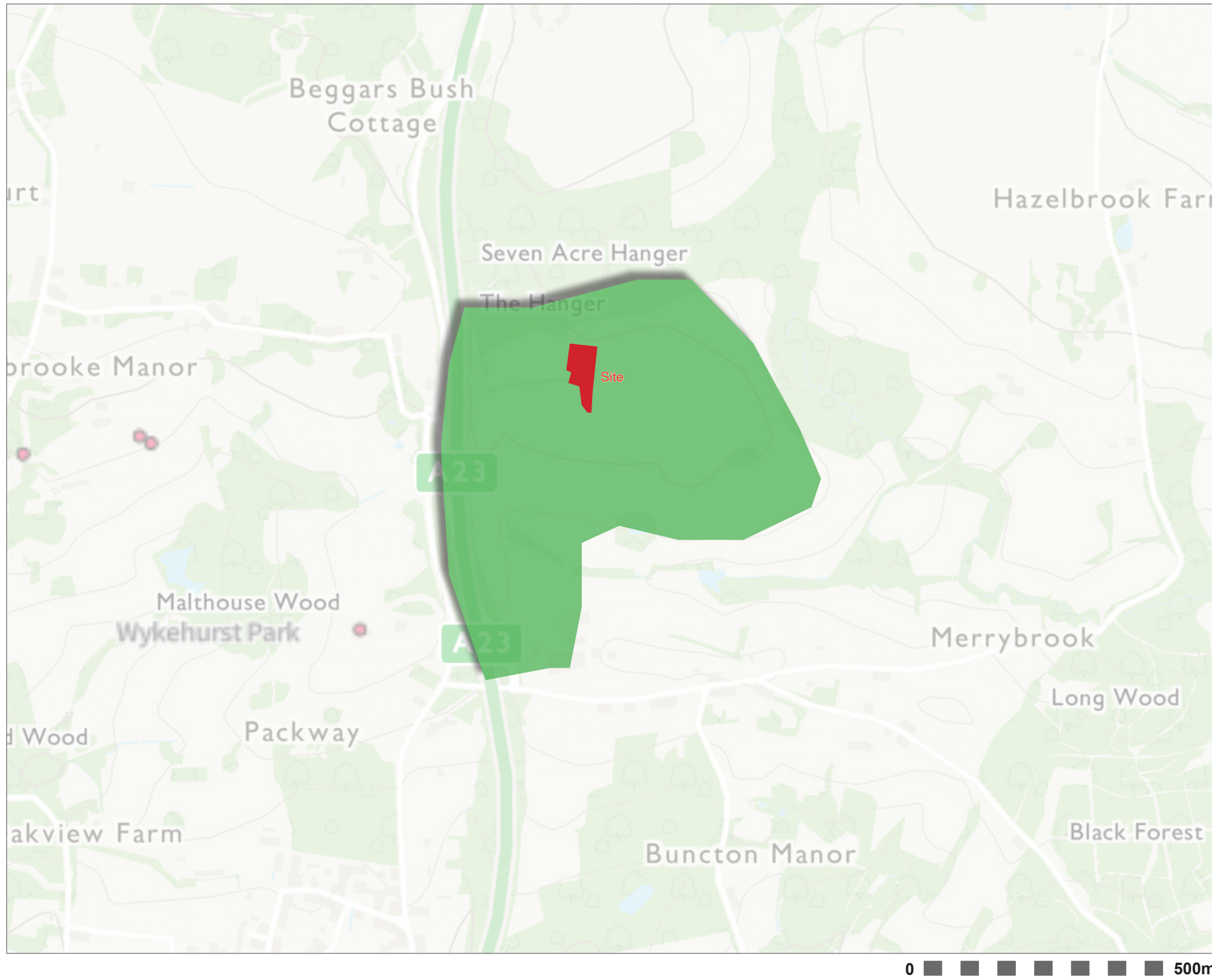
### 5.7.3 LLCA Sensitivity

5.7.3.1 In summary whilst the Site is in the National Landscape, High Weald AONB the LLCA is heavily detracted by the A23 road corridor located in close proximity and it has been in operation for 19 years becoming an accepted element within the landscape baseline condition. By cross referencing the High Landscape Value with the Low Landscape Susceptibility the Landscape Sensitivity, at the LLCA scale is judged to be *Medium Sensitivity*.

5.7.3.2 In Summary the Local Landscape Character Area Assessment (LLCA) judgements are as follows.

- *High Landscape Value.*
- *Low Landscape Susceptibility.*
- *Medium Landscape Sensitivity.*

Figure 8 Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA) Plan



**Key**

- Site
- Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA)





## 5.8 National Character Areas (NCA) (see Appendix 2)

5.8.1 Natural England, NCA 122, the High Weald (see Appendix 2) gives a broad scale description (although it is noted that only 78% of the NCA is AONB landscape) of which the Recycling Operation is only a small component. The profile summarises the character on page 3, as follows,

*“The High Weald National Character Area (NCA) encompasses the ridged and faulted sandstone core of the Kent and Sussex Weald. It is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in Northern Europe.”*

5.8.2 The NCA lists a number of *Statements of Opportunity* (SEO). SEO1 (page 17) and SEO3 (page 19) are specifically relevant to the site and the landscape and are quoted as follows,

- *“SEO 1: Maintain and enhance the existing woodland and pasture components of the landscape, including the historic field pattern bounded by shaws, hedgerows and farm woods, to improve ecological function at a landscape scale for the benefit of biodiversity, soils and water, sense of place and climate regulation, safeguard ancient woodlands and encourage sustainably produced timber to support local markets and contribute to biomass production, and*
- *SEO 3: Maintain and enhance the distinctive dispersed settlement pattern, parkland and historic pattern and features of the routeways of the High Weald, encouraging the use of locally characteristic materials and Wealden practices to ensure that any development recognises and retains the distinctiveness, biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage assets present, reaffirm sense of place and enhance the ecological function of routeways to improve the connectivity of habitats and provide wildlife corridors.”*

5.8.3 It goes on to list a number of *Landscape Opportunities* (page 42 and 43) and those relevant to the Site and the landscape are listed as follows,

- *“Maintain and enhance the complex mosaic and pattern of High Weald habitats and the distinctive pastoral fields and areas of heath. Improve the condition and connectivity of fields and heaths and their associated and interrelated habitats, including hedgerows, woodlands, ditches, and ponds and plan for the extension and or linking of existing habitats in order to strengthen landscape character and increase climate change resilience,*
- *maintain and enhance the distinctive pattern of dispersed settlement of historic farmsteads, hamlets and villages, to promote sustainable development in rural locations and meet local needs for affordable and where possible land based workers, and enhance the design and quality of new development in the landscape meeting local distinctiveness and design guidance, and*
- *manage existing and future developments to ensure that sense of place is maintained by making reference to local vernacular building styles and materials, and settlement patterns and distributions. Ensure that proposed growth is sustainable and protects and enhances the character of the area with new building sympathetic to local styles. Where development is permitted, ensure good green infrastructure is included to bring about multiple benefits for people and the environment.”*

5.8.4 For these reasons at a national scale the following Landscape judgements are given.

- *High Landscape Value.*
- *Low Landscape Susceptibility.*
- *Medium Landscape Sensitivity.*

## 5.9 Regional Character

5.9.1 The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2024-2029 (see Appendix 3) summarises the High Weald on page 12, as follows.

*“The High Weald occupies the ridged and faulted sandstone core of an area known from Saxon times as the Weald. It is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in Northern Europe. The mosaic of small mixed farms and woodlands is considered to represent a quintessentially English landscape.”*

On page 16 it goes on to define the High Weald’s natural beauty, as follows

*“The natural beauty of the High Weald AONB is derived from the essentially rural and small-scale landscape character, rich in wildlife and cultural features.”*

The MP describes the following eight Character Components of the High Weald, as follows (those that are relevant to and manifest by the Site and the Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA) are listed above).

- *‘Character Component, Natural Systems,’ (page 20).*
- *‘Character Component, Settlement,’ (page 24).*
- *‘Character Component, Routeways,’ (page 28).*
- *‘Character Component, Woodland,’ (page 32).*
- *‘Character Component, Fieldscape and Heath,’ (page 36).*
- *‘Character Component, Dark Skies,’ (page 40).*
- *‘Character Component, Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities,’ (page 44).*
- *‘Character Component, Land-based Economy and Rural Living,’ (page 48).*

5.9.2 The Management Plan gives a broad scale description for the entire High Weald of which the Recycling Operation is perceived as a small component only. As such at a regional scale the following judgements are made.

- *Very High Landscape Value.*
- *Low Landscape Susceptibility.*
- *Medium Landscape Sensitivity.*

## 5.10 County Landscape Character Areas (LCA) (see Appendix 4 and Figure 10)

5.10.1 The Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex, Land Management Guidelines, HW4 High Weald Fringes October 2003. LCA HW4 makes a statement of 'Overall Character,' on its first page, quoted as follows

*"The densely-wooded southern flanks of the High Weald Forest Ridge within West Sussex, dissected by gentle gill streams draining west to the River Adur and east to the River Ouse."*

5.10.2 On its second page it lists Land management Guidelines (see Figure 10) as relevant to the Site, these are listed as follows and further assessed in the next chapter.

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

- *Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the woodland and agricultural landscape for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes.*
- *Protect existing views from the area and avoid skyline development, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.*
- *Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new broad-leaved woodlands, appropriate management of existing woodlands, and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover in woodlands and on heathland.*
- *Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns.*
- *Conserve woodland biodiversity and the landscape of the gills, including wet woodland, protecting rare and uncommon woodland plant communities associated with them.*
- *Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development including along the approach roads to settlements and along busy urban routes.*
- *Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession and replant parkland trees.*
- *Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost."*

5.10.3 The LCA is also broad scale and the Recycling Operation is only a small component. As such at a county scale the following judgements are made.

- *High Landscape Value.*
- *Low Landscape Susceptibility.*
- *Medium Landscape Sensitivity.*

## 5.11 District Landscape Character Assessment (see Figure 9 and Appendix 5)

5.11.1 The Mid Sussex District Council Landscape Character Assessment November 2005, Landscape Character Area (LCA) 10 High Weald Fringes (see Appendix 5). This offers a 'Summary,' on page 106, quoted as follows.

*"Densely-wooded southern flanks of the High Weald Forest Ridge, dissected gentle gill streams draining west to the River Adur and east to the River Ouse. Includes the settlements of Cuckfield, Haywards Heath and Lindfield."*

5.11.2 At a district scale the Site is also located in the Mid Sussex District Council Landscape Capacity Study July 2007, Zone 8 Bolney and land between Bolney and Sayers Common. However the description at this scale does not offer more information and the Site is outside and to the north east of the more detailed descriptions given for the nearest LCA 60 Bolney Sloping High Weald.

5.11.3 At a district scale the following judgements are made

- *High Landscape Value.*
- *Low Landscape Susceptibility.*
- *Medium Landscape Sensitivity.*

## 5.12 Parish Council Character Assessment

5.12.1 Bolney Parish Council have not produced a Landscape Character Assessment.



### 5.13 Visual Baseline (see Figure 9 and Appendix 1)

5.13.1 The Site was visited 9th September 2020 (date of Appendix 1 Viewpoints 1 to 6 photographs) and 1st August 2024 (Viewpoints were all screened in 2024 and as such the 2020 photographs have been retained so as to assist in offering what might be seen in winter when there are no leaves on trees). On both occasions the photographs were taken when the weather allowed clear views and trees were in leaf. Viewpoints were selected to represent the most likely and most sensitive places where the recycling operation might be seen so as to demonstrate typical and worst case scenario public views.

5.13.2 The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), see Figure 9, shows that there are very few public views and that these are almost entirely indiscernible (they were entirely screened when seen in 2024) from medium to long distances, which have no influence on the visual composition and enjoyment of the High Weald. There are no views in from the west or north as the woodland planting screens views in from those directions. The ZTV shows that there are near and medium distance views from the privately owned agricultural fields to the east. Whilst the South Downs escarpment and the High Weald ridge-lines are visible to the south and east, respectively, there is no intervisibility with the Site.

5.13.3 The 6 Viewpoints are divided up as follows.

- High Weald PRoWs (Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3)

Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3 are all from PRoWs located in the High Weald (AONB) National Landscape. When there are leaves on trees there are no views. When there are no leaves on trees we believe the views would be similar to those seen in 2020 with the Site barely discernible so that the visual composition could accommodate the scale of change that has occurred with the Recycling Operation. As such these are judged as, *High Visual Value, Low Visual Susceptibility and Medium Visual Sensitivity*.

- View from A23 vicinity (Viewpoint 4)

Viewpoint 4 is from the access road off the A23 which is a poor quality view for commercial drivers accessing the Site with significant landscape detracting visual and perceptual detracting influences. As such this is judged as, *Low Visual Value, Low Visual Susceptibility and Low Visual Sensitivity*.

- View from Park Farm residential area (Viewpoint 5)

Viewpoint 5 is from the residential area located to the south of the Site, it is a view dominated by residential development and suburban features including car parking, seen in the foreground. The Site is screened by intervening planting, it would be experienced by the local residents and their visitors and the view has been able to accommodate the size and scale of change introduced by the Recycling Operation. As such this is judged as, *medium Visual Value, Low Visual Susceptibility and Low Visual Sensitivity*.

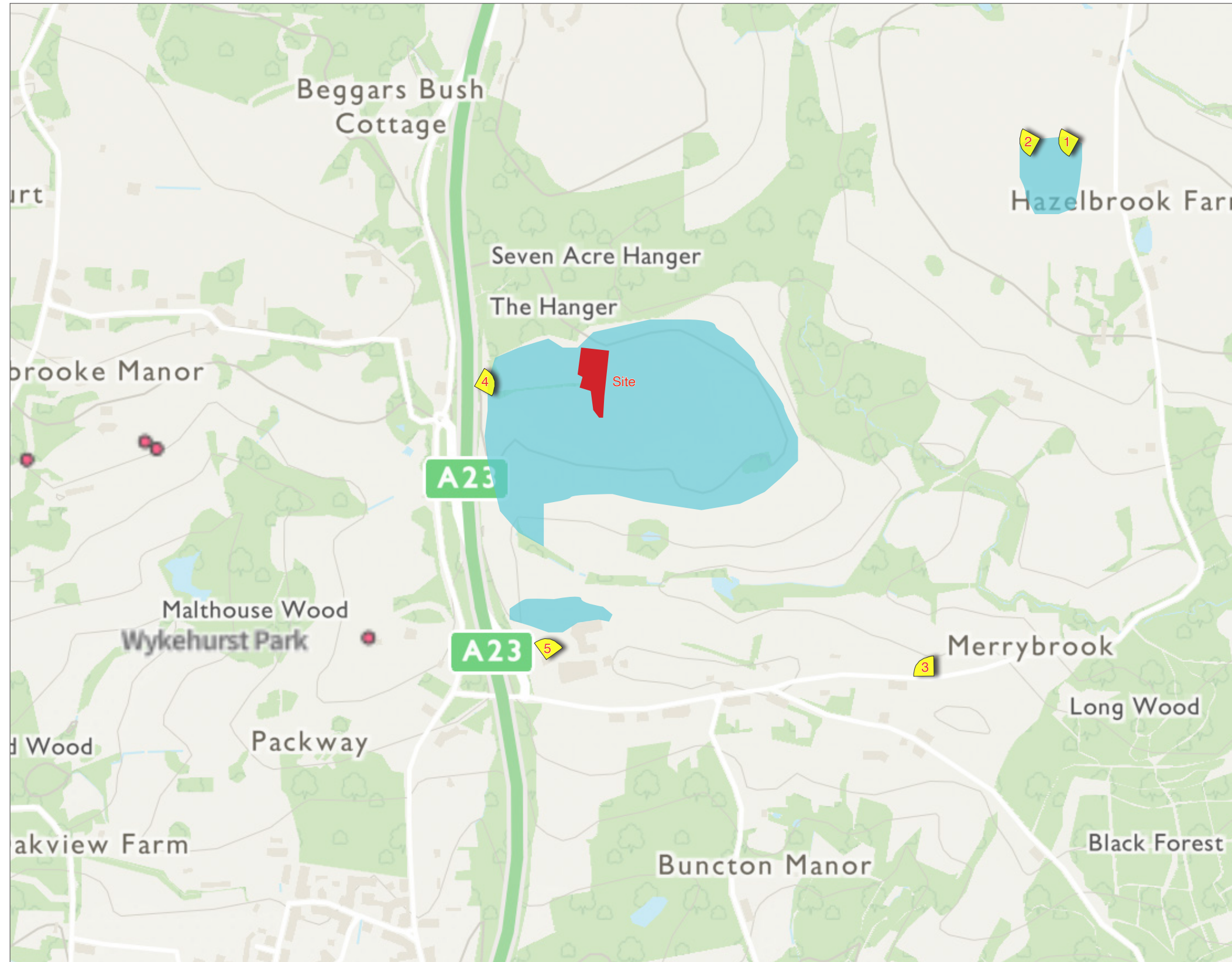
- View from South Downs National Park (Devil's Dyke), (Viewpoint 6)

Viewpoint 6 is from an elevated landmark in the South Downs, it is approximately 12km from the Site. At this long distance the Recycling Operation is entirely indiscernible and as such the view from this location could accommodate the size and scale of change introduced by. As such this is judged as, *Very High Visual Value, Low Visual Susceptibility and Low Visual Sensitivity*.




### 5.14 Other potential Viewpoint Receptors

5.14.1 There are unlikely to be residential dwellings visually impacted by the Operations on Site although those on the northern side of Park Farm may have obscured partial views from windows orientated towards the Site.

Figure 9 Viewpoints 1 to 6 Plan



**Key**

-  Site location
-  Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) 09-09-20. When re-visited 1-8-24 there were no views from Viewpoints 1 and 2
-  Viewpoint (see hla 394 R01 for full Viewpoint descriptions)



 From Devil's Dyke 12km south

0  500m



## 6.0 Landscape Character and Visual Impacts/Effects

### 6.1 General development and design issues causing Landscape and Visual Impacts/Effects

- 6.1.1 The Impacts/Effects judgements are based upon the change to the baseline description as judged to exist pre-2005 and based upon an understanding from visiting the LLCA and studying the aerial photograph from 2001 (Figure 1). Judgements are put forward which have assessed the change to the 2001 baseline landscape as a result of the implementation of the Recycling Operation introduced in 2005 and which has been sustained since then. The Assessment has identified how the rural, agricultural countryside (heavily influenced by the landscape detracting A23 road corridor) in this part of the AONB has been changed.
- 6.1.2 At all scales (local, district, county, regional and national) the Landscape Character is judged to be *Medium Sensitivity*. At a local scale this is because it is in the National Landscape, High Weald AONB but it is significantly detracted by the A23 road corridor located in close proximity. At the other scales the change would be perceived as incremental and virtually indiscernible. It is also noted that the Recycling Operation has been running for 19 years and has become an accommodated receptor within the local landscape.
- 6.1.3 The Recycling Operation has resulted in a small and discreet area of the existing agricultural field becoming the Recycling Operation. Owing to the location of the Operation the existing wooded areas that abut the northern and western boundaries screen all views in from those directions. To the east and the south the Site's mounded heaps (of recycling material) are indiscernible from public locations as the proposed (Landscape Strategy) earthworks would feather in to the local existing topography especially with the proposed native planting. This would ensure that all views from public Viewpoints would be screened all year round whilst also offering Landscape and biodiversity benefits.
- 6.1.5 With these points in mind the following Impacts/Effects judgements are put forward (summarised on Table 6 below).

### 6.2 Landscape Character

#### 6.2.1 Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA) as assessed for this LVIA

- 6.2.1.1 The development would result in the following change for the Positive Landscape Receptors (noted at 5.3 above) as existing within the LLCA.
- *Trees, woodland and hedgerows*: The proposed planting would blend the scheme in to the local countryside offering a larger area of woodland and enhanced biodiversity
  - *Topography*: There has been some adverse change to the topography in the vicinity of the compound although this is a small area only and not perceptible from public Viewpoints.
  - *Land use and landcover*: A small part of the agricultural field only has become the Recycling Operation.
  - *Landscape Character*: The perception of remoteness and tranquillity, and the views towards the High Weald and the South Downs have not been altered for any public visual receptors.

- *Historic and cultural landscape*: The historic High Weald field pattern has been indiscernibly and incrementally altered by the Recycling Operation.
- *There would no change to*: Settlement pattern; and Local materials.

- 6.2.1.2 The change has not altered any of the 'Key Characteristics' manifest by the Site and LLCA as described in the published Landscape Assessments at national, regional, county and district scales
- 6.2.1.3 Overall the change (loss of a small area of agricultural field) that was initiated in 2005 is judged to be perceptible within its AONB context but lessened by the close proximity of the landscape detracting A23 road corridor. Therefore the Magnitude of Landscape Impact is judged to be *Low to Medium Adverse Impact* and the Landscape Effect of the operation as seen prior 2005 is judged to be *Minor to Moderate/Cusp of Significant* and *Not Significant*. Once the planting would have established (15 years) the change would lessen to *Low Adverse Impact/Minor Landscape Effect/Not Significant/Long Term*.

#### 6.2.2 National Character Area (see Appendix 2)

- 6.2.2.1 NCA 122 is broad in scale and the impact of the development is judged by assessing Landscape Character in relation to the Statements of Opportunity (SEOs) 1 and 3, as described above. At this scale the operations are an almost indiscernible new element. The Landscape Sensitivity is judged as *Medium*. At completion and when the (Landscape Strategy) planting would have established (15 years) the change as result of the Recycling Operation is judged to be *Low Adverse Landscape Impact/Minor Adverse Landscape Effect/Not Significant*.

### 6.3 Regional Character published Management Plan (see Appendix 3)

- 6.3.1 At the regional scale, High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (MP) 2024-2029 the operations are an almost indiscernible new element. The Landscape Sensitivity is judged as *Medium*. At completion and when the (Landscape Strategy) planting would have established (15 years) the change as result of the Recycling Operation is judged to be *Low Adverse Landscape Impact/Minor Adverse Landscape Effect/Not Significant*.

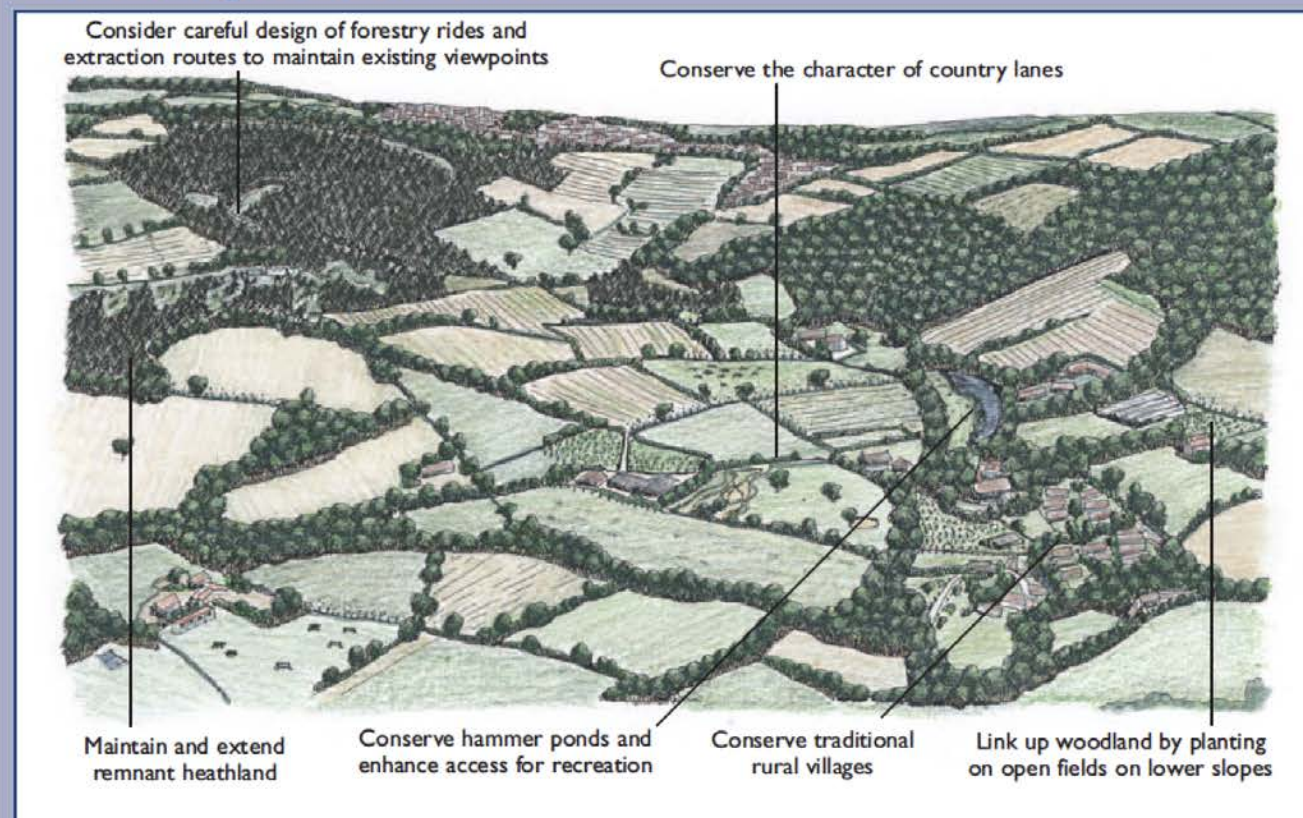
### 6.4 County and District published Landscape Character Assessments (see Appendices 4 and 5, and Figure 10)

- 6.4.1 At the county scale, Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex, Land Management Guidelines, HW4 High Weald Fringes October 2003 (see Appendix 4) and district scale, Mid Sussex District Council Landscape Character Assessment November 2005, LCA 10 High Weald Fringes (see Appendix 4), the operations are an almost indiscernible new element and the LCA descriptions are broad in scale. The operations are not contrary to the Land Management Guidelines (see Figure 10) described in the county LCA and overall they are perceived as an indiscernible new element that has caused an incremental change only. At completion and when the (Landscape Strategy) planting would have established (15 years) the change as result of the Recycling Operation is judged to be *Low Adverse Landscape Impact/Minor Adverse Landscape Effect/Not Significant*.



Figure 10 WSCC Landscape, Land Management Guidelines, HW4 High Weald Fringes October 2003

## Land Management Guidelines



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

- Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the woodland and agricultural landscape for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes.
- Protect existing views from the area and avoid skyline development, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new broad-leaved woodlands, appropriate management of existing woodlands, and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover in woodlands and on heathland.
- Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns.
- Conserve woodland biodiversity and the landscape of the gills, including wet woodland, protecting rare and uncommon woodland plant communities associated with them.
- Reduce the impact of forestry where possible by encouraging sensitive forestry practice including small-scale felling rotation, and incorporating mixed species.
- Increase tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development including along the approach roads to settlements and along busy urban routes.
- Increase screening of prominent parts of new development on the southern fringes of Haywards Heath.
- Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession and replant parkland trees.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Conserve and manage remnant open heathland by preventing the encroachment of scrub and create new, interconnected heathlands.
- Conserve species-rich meadows and road verges.
- Seek to protect the tranquil and historic character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Reduce the visual impact of stabling and grazing for horses.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

The guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.
- Objectives and actions contained in the *High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004* (Adopted March 2004) published by the High Weald AONB Joint Management Committee.

## 6.5 Visual impacts (see Figure 9, Table 5 and Appendix 1)

6.5.1 The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), see Figure 9, shows that there are very few public views and that these are almost entirely indiscernible (completely screened when seen in August 2024), medium to long distance views where the Recycling Operation has no influence on the visual composition and enjoyment of the High Weald nor the South Downs. There are no views in from the west or north as the woodland planting screens views these. The ZTV shows a more open area to the east across the sloping agricultural field although the topography and intervening vegetation limit views from the agricultural private land and allows for near to medium distance views only. To the south there are also limited views back towards the Recycling Operation from Park Farm residential houses, that may have obscured and partial views although these are limited by the intervening planting and topography. Whilst the South Downs escarpment and the High Weald ridge-lines are visible to the south and east respectively there is no intervisibility with the Recycling Operation.

6.5.2 Of the six Viewpoints it is noted that five Viewpoints (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) have almost entirely indiscernible views (no views of the Recycling Operation when seen in August 2024) as described above and Viewpoint 6 from the South Downs (Devils Dyke) had no view in 2020 owing to its long distance (approximately 12km) from the Site .

6.5.3 As with the baseline judgments above, the six Viewpoints are divided up as follows.

- High Weald PRowS (Viewpoints 1, 2 and 3)

Viewpoints (1, 2 and 3) are all from PRowS located in the High Weald (AONB) National Landscape which may have some winter views when there are no leaves on trees (as indicated by the 2020 Viewpoints) and there are no views when in leaf. As such these are judged as *Negligible Adverse Magnitude of Impact/Negligible Visual Effect/Not Significant* at completion and *No Change* after (Landscape Strategy) planting establishment (15 years).

- View from A23 vicinity (Viewpoint 4)

Viewpoint 4 is from the access road off the A23 which sees the large solid access gate (with occasional lorries) and not the Recycling Operation. It is assumed that this current view replaces a more open agricultural field gate that may have been there prior to 2005. This view is very limited and from the Low Visual Sensitivity of the A23, as such the change is judged as *Negligible Adverse Magnitude of Impact/Negligible Visual Effect/Not Significant* at completion and after (Landscape Strategy) planting establishment (15 years).

- View from Park Farm residential area (Viewpoint 5)

Viewpoint 5 is from the Park Farm residential area located 550m south of the Site. It may have some winter views when there are no leaves on trees (as indicated by the 2020 Viewpoint) and there are no views when in leaf. As such the Viewpoint is judged as *Negligible Adverse Magnitude of Impact/Negligible Visual Effect/Not Significant* at completion and *No Change* after (Landscape Strategy) planting establishment (15 years).

- View from South Downs National Park (Devil's Dyke), (Viewpoint 6)

Viewpoint 6 is from an elevated landmark in the South Downs, 12km from the Site. There are no discernible views of the Site and the Viewpoint would experience *No Change*.



## 6.6 Other potential Viewpoint Receptors

6.6.1 There are unlikely to be residential dwellings that will have been visually impacted by the Recycling Operation although those on the northern side of Park Farm may have obscured partial views from windows orientated towards the Site and in the winter when there are no leaves on trees.

## 6.7 Other considerations

6.7.1 There has been no increase in lighting and no impact on Dark Skies as a result of the recycling operations.

## 6.8 Cumulative Impact

6.8.1 There are no known Applications that would result in Cumulative Landscape Character nor Visual change.

## 6.9 Landscape Strategy (see Table 5 and Appendix 1)

6.9.1 Landscape Strategy proposals include the following.

- New raised earthworks shaped to feather in to and echo the existing (and pre-2005) contours and field pattern to predominantly obscure and screen views of the Recycling Operation (including the recycling heaps and associated machinery) for the rare, partial and obscured winter views in from the south and east.
- New native species mix planting to strengthen and blend with the new earthworks to: blend the Recycling Operation in to the landscape; to strengthen biodiversity; and to screen the lorries and other traffic accessing the Site. The new planting (see Figure would include the following species, *Acer campestre* (Field Maple), *Alnus glutinosa* (Alder), *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam), *Cornus sanguinea* (Dogwood), *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn), *Fagus sylvatica* (Beech), *Ilex aquifolium* (Holly), *Ligustrum Vulgare* (Wild Privet), *Prunus spinosa* (Blackthorn), *Quercus robur* (Oak), *Rosa canina* (Dog Rose), *Sorbus aucuparia* (Rowan), and *Viburnum opulus* (Guelder Rose).
- New meadow grass seed meadow mixes including a standard general purpose meadow mixture, (Emorsgate EM2 or similar) and a pollen rich grass seed mix (Emorsgate ER1F or similar).

**Table 6 Landscape Character and Visual Impacts Summary Table**

	Landscape Value	Landscape Susceptibility	Landscape Sensitivity	During Operation Magnitude of Landscape Impact	During Operation Landscape Character Effect/Significance	Mitigation	After planting establishment (15 years): Landscape Character Impact/Landscape Character Effect/Significance
<b>Landscape Character Impact</b>							
<b>Landscape Character Area Descriptions</b>							
Local landscape character	High	Low	Medium	Low to Medium Adverse	Minor to Moderate Adverse/Cusp of Significant and Not Significant	<i>Landscape strategy:</i> New raised earthworks with native planting to blend and further screen the Recycling Operations with enhanced biodiversity.	Low Adverse Impact/Minor Landscape Effect/Not Significant/Long Term
Natural England, National Character Area (NCA) 122, the High Weald 2013	High	Low	Medium	Low Adverse	Minor Adverse/Not Significant	Not required	Minor Adverse/Not Significant/Long Term
High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024	Very High	Low	Medium	Low Adverse	Minor Adverse/Not Significant	Not required	Minor Adverse/Not Significant/Long Term
West Sussex County Council (WSCC) Landscape, Land Management Guidelines, Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex, Landscape Character Area HW4 High Weald Fringes 2003	High	Low	Medium	Low Adverse	Minor Adverse/Not Significant	Not required	Minor Adverse/Not Significant/Long Term
Mid Sussex District Council Landscape Character Area 10 High Weald Fringes 2005	High	Low	Medium	Low Adverse	Minor Adverse/Not Significant	Not required	Minor Adverse/Not Significant/Long Term
	Visual Value	Visual Susceptibility	Visual Sensitivity	During Operation Magnitude of Visual Impact visual	Visual Character Effect/Significance	Mitigation	After planting establishment (15 years): Landscape Character Impact/Visual Effect/Significance
<b>Viewpoints Impact</b>							
<b>Viewpoint 1:</b> From PRoW 16CR (Footpath) 1km north east of the Site. GPS ref: Lat 51.011063, Long -0.179872. Photographic Height: 101m AOD.	High	Low	Medium	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse/Not Significant	Not required	No Change
<b>Viewpoint 2:</b> From PRoW 16CR (Footpath) 900m north west of the Site. GPS ref: Lat 51.11063, Long -0.181377. Photographic Height: 100m AOD.	High	Low	Medium	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse/Not Significant	Not required	No Change
<b>Viewpoint 3:</b> From Broxmead Lane 990m south east of the Site. GPS ref: Lat 50.001803, Long -0.182722. Photographic Height: 90m AOD.	High	Low	Medium	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse/Not Significant	Not required	No Change
<b>Viewpoint 4:</b> From A23 access looking east towards Site located 180m east. GPS ref: Lat 51.006768, Long -0.196991. Photographic Height: 98m AOD.	Low	Low	Low	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse/Not Significant	Not required	Negligible Adverse Visual Effect/Not Significant/Long Term.
<b>Viewpoint 5:</b> From Park Farm Cottages housing estate 550m south of the Site. GPS ref: Lat 51.001980, Long -0.194436. Photographic Height: 85m AOD	Medium	Low	Low	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse/Not Significant	Not required	No Change
<b>Viewpoint 6:</b> From the car park at Devils Dyke approximately 12km south of the Site. GPS ref: Lat 50.885833, Long -0.212159. Photographic Height: 215m AOD	Very High	Low	High	No Change	No Change	Not required	No Change



## 7.0 Conclusions

### 7.1 General

- 7.1.1 This LVIA has assessed Landscape Character and Visual Impacts and Effects and put forward a Landscape Strategy to soften the Recycling Operation that has been running since 2005. The Landscape Strategy includes new raised earthworks to echo the existing local topography and field shape with an aim to blend sympathetically with the local High Weald character. The native species planting proposals would further obscure and screen the Recycling Operation and enhance local habitat biodiversity.

### 7.2 Landscape Character Impact

- 7.2.1 In conclusion at national, regional, county and district scales it is judged that the Recycling Operation has had a **Low Adverse Impact/Minor Adverse Effect/Not Significant** since 2006 and after planting would be established. At a local scale it is judged that the Recycling Operation have had a **Low to Medium Adverse Impact/Minor to Moderate Adverse Effect/ Cusp of Significant and Not Significant** since 2005 and a **Low Adverse Impact/Minor Adverse Effect/Not Significant** after planting would have established. The sensitively designed new landform and the new native planting proposals would incrementally enhance the existing local High Weald character, further obscure and screen the Recycling Operation and enhance the biodiversity.

### 7.3 Visual Impact

- 7.3.1 The ZTV shows that there are very few public views and that these are almost entirely indiscernible medium to long distance winter views only (the Recycling Operation were entirely screened in August 2024). The Recycling Operation has no influence on the visual composition and enjoyment of the High Weald (nor South Downs) as demonstrated by the Viewpoints assessed in the Appendix 1. There are no views in from the west or north as the woodland planting screens views in. The ZTV shows an open area to the east but this is for near and middle distance views from the private agricultural fields only. Whilst the South Downs escarpment and the High Weald ridge-lines are visible from the Recycling Operation there is no intervisibility between them.
- 7.3.2 It is judged that the Recycling Operation has had a **Negligible Adverse Impact** on five Viewpoints and resulted in **No Change** (Viewpoint 6 from Devils Dyke in the South Downs has no discernible view). As such it is judged that the Recycling Operation has resulted in **Not Significant** change for all Viewpoints since 2005 and that the situation would be enhanced after the proposed earthworks would be implemented and the proposed (Landscape Strategy) native planting would have established (15 years).

### 7.4 Other potential Viewpoint Receptors

- 7.4.1 There are unlikely to be private residential visual receptors who have experienced significant visual change as a result of the Recycling Operation although the few properties located on the north side of Park Farm may have some winter views although these unlikely views from windows orientated towards the Recycling Operation would most likely be partial, obscured and medium distance (over 500m away).

### 7.5 Other considerations

- 7.5.1 There would be no change in judgements with regard to night time lighting.

### 7.6 Cumulative Impact

- 7.6.1 There are no known Applications that would result in Cumulative Landscape Character nor Visual change.

### 7.7 Planning policy

- 7.7.1 For the reasons given above the Recycling Operation and the proposed Landscape Strategy would not be contrary with the Landscape Planning Policy.

## 8.0 Final Statement

- 8.1 The Recycling Operation has become an established Landscape Receptor with an incremental influence on the Landscape Character since its inception in 2005. The Landscape Strategy proposals for the new earthworks and native planting would incrementally enhance this local area of the National Landscape, High Weald AONB in terms of Landscape Character, Views (it would further obscure and screen the few, rare, partial medium to long distance obscured views (seen in winter only)) and it would enhance biodiversity.
- 8.2 At national, regional, county and district scales it is judged that the Recycling Operation has had *Minor Adverse Landscape Effect/Not Significant* since its inception in 2005 with the same judgement when new earthworks would be implemented and the new native planting would be established (15 years). At a local scale it is judged that the Recycling Operation has had *Minor to Moderate Adverse Effect/Cusp of Significant and Not Significant* since 2006 and that this would reduce to a *Minor Landscape Effect/Not Significant* after the proposed Landscape Strategy would be initiated and the native planting established (15 years).
- 8.3 Whilst the operations have incrementally altered the Landscape Character at a local scale they are a necessary sustainable, recycling business located in a visually discreet location and in close proximity to the significant landscape detracting A23 road corridor. Further the Recycling Operation has had a Not Significant Visual Effect for all public views. It is also noted that the Ancient Semi-natural Woodland (and its 15m protective buffer zone), the trees, and the associated biodiversity are located outside of the working Site area. As such the Recycling Operation and the proposed Landscape Strategy would not be contrary to the Landscape Planning Policy.
- 8.4 Therefore there are good grounds with regard Landscape Character and Views for the Operation to be allowed to continue, the Enforcement Notice to be removed.



# Appendix A Landscape Character and Visual Impacts/Effects Methodologies

## 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This section addresses the Landscape Character and Visual impacts. This section addresses how Landscape Character and Visual, baseline conditions are judged to be impacted by development.

## 1.2 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology, general

1.2.1 Landscape and Visual impact judgements proposed in this report, are based upon professional experience and by utilising the principles as set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition, 2013, by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and by reference to the Technical Guidance Note, Assessing Landscape Value outside National Designations (TGN 02-21).

## 1.3 Landscape Character Impact Methodology

### 1.3.1 General

1.3.1.1 Landscape Character impacts relate to the effects of the proposals on the physical resources and other characteristics of the landscape and its resulting character and quality. Landscape resources and character are considered to be of importance in their own right and valued for their intrinsic qualities regardless of whether they are seen. Landscape receptors are defined as aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.

1.3.1.2 There is no standard methodology for the quantification of the scale or magnitude of relative effects for Landscape Character although there is guidance in GLVIA 3 and TGN 02-20. As such the following definitions are proposed so that Landscape Character judgements can be made. Landscape Character is assessed by assessing the effects of the development at different scales. The term 'Local' is used to define the area within or influenced by the Appeal Site and is likely to closely follow the extent of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (used in the Visual section).

1.3.1.3 The methodology sets out how to make Landscape Character impact judgements. Sensitivity is determined by cross referencing Landscape Value with Landscape Susceptibility (see Table 1). The Magnitude of Impact of the development is then judged at local to national scales. The Significance of Landscape Effect is determined by cross referencing the judgements made for, the Sensitivity of the Landscape Receptor and the Magnitude of Change (see Table 2).

### 1.3.2 Landscape Value

1.3.2.1 Landscape Value is the relative value or importance attached to different landscapes by society on account of their landscape qualities. It is inherent and independent of the proposed development. Landscape qualities are characteristics or features of a landscape that are valued, usually referred to as special qualities in relation to nationally designated landscape. Landscape characteristics are elements which make a particular contribution to landscape character. Landscape Value is assessed using the following range of factors (in oblique, referenced from GLVIA 3, item 5.28, Box 5.1 with some minor changes with the issue of TGN 2/21, as noted).

- *Scenic quality.* 'The term is used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses).'
- *Distinctiveness (combines Rarity and Representativeness).* *Rarity* is 'The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type.' *Representativeness* is whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.'
- *Conservation* (natural heritage factors (TGN 2/21) interests. 'The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.'
- *Recreation value.* 'Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.'
- *Perceptual aspects.* 'A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness, remoteness and/or tranquillity.'
- *Associations.* 'Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.'
- *Function (TGN 2/221).* 'The value attached to landscapes which perform a clearly identifiable and valuable function.'

1.3.2.2 Landscape Value judgements are made using the following (linked to the GLVIA 3 categorisations on page 39).

- **Very Low** (which could be categorised as a landscape significantly influenced by a dominant landscape detractor).
- **Low** (which could be categorised as Local Community or a landscape which is not designated or protected, which does not make a positive contribution, which is in poor condition, and/or which has been residually altered by detrimental man-made activity, possibly at a small scale)
- **Medium** (which could be categorised as Regional or Local Authority (GLVIA ) or an undesignated landscape judged to have a higher (than the Low) value as a result of assessment carried out in accordance with TGN 02-21) or a landscape which may be part of a local designation or other value, that makes a moderately positive contribution, which is in moderate condition, and/or which may have some detrimental activity as a result of man-made intrusion. These may include Local Plan Landscape designations or other undesignated landscapes that have some other medium landscape value.
- **High** (which could be classed as regional, international or national): a landscape which is covered by an international, national designation or in some cases is of regional interest or other important value, that makes an important and positive contribution to its wider context. These may include World Heritage Sites, National Parks, AONBs, Heritage Coasts, Registered Parks and Gardens, including the setting of these.
- **Very High** (which could be classed as international or national): a landscape which is covered by an international or national designation that makes an highly important and significantly positive contribution to its wider context. These may include World Heritage Sites, National Parks, AONBs, or Heritage Coasts.

1.3.2.3 In respect of a test for judging a ‘valued landscape,’ (outside national designations), as referred to in NPPF, Paragraph 174 part a) the following definition is given on page 42 of LI TGN 02/21, Appendix 2, titled ‘The valued landscape policy test’ in England,’ item A4.2.11.

“A ‘valued landscape’ is an area identified as having sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes.”

The TGN (also page 42) notes that ‘Everyday’ landscapes may nevertheless have value to people. GLVIA 3, item 5.28, Box 5.1 TGN 2/21, is also relevant, as noted at 1.4.2.1, below.

### 1.3.3 Landscape Susceptibility

1.3.3.1 Landscape Susceptibility judgements are based on the physical state of the landscape and influential elements (Landscape Receptors) within it. It is development. specific It is about its intactness from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place. Judgements are made to assess the ability of Landscape Receptors to accommodate change as a result of proposed development in relation to the baseline. Landscape Receptors can include overall character, key characteristics, individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects. Landscape Susceptibility judgements are made using the following.

- **Low:** a landscape where Receptors are likely to make a minimal positive contribution so that it could accommodate the type of development being proposed without causing a detrimental change to the baseline condition.
- **Medium:** a landscape where Receptors are likely to make a moderately positive contribution so that it could accommodate partial development or there is potential for effective mitigation to offset detrimental change to the baseline condition.
- **High:** a landscape where Receptors are likely to make a highly positive contribution so that it is unlikely that it could accommodate the type of development being proposed (even with mitigation) and would cause a detrimental and residual change to the baseline condition.

### 1.3.4 Landscape Sensitivity (see Table 1.)

1.3.4.1 Landscape Sensitivity is the degree to which the Landscape can accommodate change without adverse impact on its character and is judged by cross referencing value with susceptibility.

**Table 1 Determining Landscape Sensitivity**

		Value				
		Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Susceptibility	Low	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	Very High

1.3.4.2 Landscape Sensitivity is described as follows.

- **Very Low** is defined as a Landscape that has Very Low Value (likely to be significantly influenced by a dominant landscape detractor) with Low Susceptibility so that it would be tolerant of the type of change envisaged.

- **Low** is defined as a Landscape which is unlikely to include Local Plan landscape designations and which is likely to be a landscape that has poor or damaged landscape characteristics. It is likely to be tolerant of the type of change envisaged.
- **Medium** is defined as a landscape which is likely to include Local Plan Landscape designations or other undesignated Landscape characteristics and to be of local or district (borough) scale or community importance. It is likely to be a landscape that contributes positively to the character of an area, and it may have capacity to accommodate a degree (potentially with mitigation) of the type of change envisaged and
- **High** is defined as a Landscape likely to protected by a regional, national or international designation and/or widely acknowledged for its Medium to Very High value and/or its Medium to High Susceptibility. It is a Landscape with distinctive character that would be residually altered by the type of change envisaged irrespective of mitigation.
- **Very High** is defined as a Landscape protected by a national or international designation and/or widely acknowledged for its Very High value and High Susceptibility. It is a Landscape with a significantly distinctive character that would be residually altered by the type of change envisaged irrespective of mitigation..

### 1.3.5 Magnitude of Landscape Effect

1.3.5.1 Magnitude of Landscape Effect refers to the extent to which proposed development would alter the existing characteristics of a landscape and combines judgements on; size or scale of effect, geographical extent influenced; the duration; and the reversibility.

1.3.5.2 Magnitude of Landscape change is described using the following terms,

- **Low** is defined as just perceptible, long term change in components of a landscape or more noticeable temporary and reversible changes.
- **Medium** is defined as clearly perceptible, long term changes or loss of important features in a Character Area but which result in only relatively subtle changes in Character; or changes in a small part of a Character Area which will have a clear effect on the immediate locality. Clearly perceptible change in setting to a neighbouring Character Area which is sufficient to influence its own character, and
- **High** is defined as clearly perceptible changes, for example the loss of features which make an essential contribution to a character area, or the introduction of new large-scale features in to a character area where these are not typical, or change exerted by an overriding influence on a neighbouring character

1.3.5.3 Duration of Landscape Effect is judged as follows.

- **Short term or reversible:** (effects have no influence and the existing baseline Landscape would be returned).
- **Medium term or partially reversible:** (effects that would last until planting establishment becomes effective (15 years).
- **Long term or not reversible:** (permanent effects).



1.3.6 Significance of Landscape Effect (see Table 2)

1.3.6.1 The Significance of Landscape Effect determines how important the changes might be for the landscape in terms of mitigation and the long term residual effects. It is judged using Table 2.

**Table 2 Determining Significance of Landscape Effects**

		Magnitude of change (Adverse or Beneficial)		
		Low	Medium	High
<b>Sensitivity of receptor</b>	<b>Very Low</b>	<i>Negligible/Not Significant</i>	<i>Negligible/Not Significant</i>	<i>Minor/Not Significant</i>
	<b>Low</b>	<i>Negligible/Not Significant</i>	<i>Minor/Not Significant</i>	<i>Minor/Not Significant</i>
	<b>Medium</b>	<i>Minor/Not Significant</i>	<i>Moderate/Significant</i>	<i>Moderate/Significant</i>
	<b>High</b>	<i>Minor/Not Significant</i>	<i>Moderate/Significant</i>	<i>Major/Significant</i>
	<b>Very High</b>	<i>Minor/Not Significant</i>	<i>Moderate/Significant</i>	<i>Major/Significant</i>

*Key to Table 2*

**Negligible** Not significant

**Minor** Mitigation should be explored but the effect would be a consideration of only limited Significance in the judgement

**Moderate** Every effort should be made to mitigate the impact and if moderate residual effects remain these would be Significant

**Major** Every effort should be made to mitigate the impacts/effects and if residual major effects remain these would be Significant

**1.4 Visual Impact Methodology**

1.4.1 General

1.4.1.1 Visual impacts relate to the effects on the existing visual amenity and the impact on Visual Receptors. Visual Receptors are people with views that may be altered by new development. Effects on visual amenity, as perceived by Landscape Receptors, are therefore clearly distinguished from, although they can be linked to Landscape effects.

1.4.1.2 Viewpoints 1 to 6 and visual impacts are described in Appendix 1 hla 394 R02 rev A. Near distance views are defined as being under 200m from the site, medium distance, 200m to 1km, and long distance, as over 1km.

1.4.2 Photographic Methodology (see Appendix 3)

1.4.2.1 In demonstrating photographic evidence to support Viewpoint descriptions and impact judgements it is important to have a photographic methodology that can be repeated by any other party. As such this LVIA uses the Landscape Institute Advice Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals 17-09-19 as the basis for Viewpoint Photography.

1.4.2.2 Photographic viewpoints are selected to give typical or representative views from a variety of locations and from near, middle and long distance locations. All Viewpoints are publicly accessible locations in the landscape.

1.4.2.3 Each photograph is taken from a height approximately 1.5m (eye level) above ground level.

1.4.2.4 The camera used for the viewpoints was a Canon EOS 70D digital single lens reflex camera with a 18-55mm lens on a focal distance of 50. Suppliers of cameras of this type prescribe this as the set-up which most closely resembles the image as seen by the human eye.

1.4.2.5 All photographs were taken at a time when views were clear and during the day. These photographs can be used for photomontage presentations although this is not the case with this LVIA.

1.4.3 Visual Baseline

1.4.3.1 Views to the Appeal Site were selected by desktop and on Site assessment as the most likely public locations that views of the development might experience a change. As such they demonstrate highest impact or worst case scenario views, as seen on the 9-9-20 and 1-8-24.

1.4.4 Visual Impact Assessment structure

1.4.4.1 The methodology sets out how to make Visual impact judgements. Sensitivity is determined by judging and then cross referencing Visual Value with Visual Susceptibility using Table 3. The Magnitude of Impact for each Viewpoint is determined using Table 4 and the Significance of Visual Effect as a consequence of the development is put forward using Table 5 which cross references the judgements for Visual Sensitivity and Magnitude of Change. The judgements also consider seasonal variations (when there are no leaves on the trees) and at night time.

1.4.5 Visual Value

1.4.5.1 Visual Value judgements relate to the value attached to the view (not the visual receptor). The Value judgements are made using the following criteria.

- **Very Low:** Views which are undocumented, not protected by any designation and dominated by a significant landscape detracting element or significant detrimental man-made intrusion.
- **Low:** Views which are not documented or protected by any designation or do not have any other cultural, historic, ecological or that have some detrimental man-made intrusion.
- **Medium:** Views which have a moderate level of visual interest and where the elements within the view are relatively intact for example local open space and local footpaths or which might be protected by: County; District (or Borough) and Parish designations; or where there is a moderate level of interest for cultural, historic, ecological, or other moderately important reasons, that may influence the view.
- **High:** High quality views where the attention or interest is prolonged and focused on the visual surroundings, where there is a high level of scenic visual interest or the composition includes significant cultural, historic, ecological or other important influences and which is likely to have limited or positive man-made intervention (unless of cultural value).

- **Very High:** Proprietary views where the attention or interest is prolonged and focused on the visual surroundings at an: international (World Heritage Sites); national (National Parks, AONBs and Heritage Coasts); county; regional or district scale, where there is a high level of scenic visual interest or the composition includes significant cultural, historic, ecological or other important influences and which is likely to have extremely limited or positive man-made intervention (unless of cultural value).

1.4.6 Visual Susceptibility

1.4.6.1 Visual Susceptibility is the ability of a view to accommodate the type of development being proposed without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and judgements are made using the listed criteria as follows.

- **Low:** Views where the Visual Receptor’s attention is not on their surroundings and where setting is not important to the quality of working life. Receptors might include drivers, people who are engaged in work tasks or people engaged in sport where the view is not an integral part of the experience.
- **Medium:** Views where the Visual Receptors may have a moderate level of interest for example local open space users, local people walking in community areas or engaged in sport where the view is not an integral part of the experience (cycling, walking, jogging etc) and passengers in vehicles.
- **High:** Views where the Visual Receptors have a high level of interest or where views are recorded in Management Plans or guide books or Views associated with nationally designated landscapes: notable views from a National Trail or promoted route; or designed views (vistas) recorded in citations for historic parks and gardens/scheduled monuments etc. Local residents who have high quality views where they may have limited access to the wider countryside.

1.4.7 Visual Sensitivity (see Table 3)

1.4.7.1 Visual Sensitivity determined by cross referencing Visual Value with Visual Susceptibility.

		Value				
		Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Susceptibility	Low	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium	High
	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	Very High

1.4.8 Magnitude of Visual change (see Table 4)

1.4.8.1 Magnitude of Visual Effect refers to the extent to which proposed development would alter the existing characteristics of a visual composition and the ability to enjoy the view. Judgements combine the size or scale of effect, the geographical extent and the duration and reversibility. Consideration is given to the loss, gain, deterioration or enhancement of existing landscape visual elements as well as the scale, materiality and design style, and the completeness of a view (open, enclosed, framed, partial, momentary, zoetropic etc), and the extent (see also the Zone of Theoretical Visibility) which includes the area impacted and the numbers and types of Visual Receptors.

1.4.8.2 Duration of Visual Effect is judged as follows.

- **Short term or reversible:** (effects have no influence and the visual baseline would be returned).
- **Medium term or partially reversible:** (effects that would last until planting establishment is becomes effective (10 to 25 years)).
- **Long term or not reversible:** (permanent effects).

Visual Impact magnitude	Description
<b>Major Visual Impact (Adverse or Beneficial)</b>	<i>The proposals would cause a dominant or complete change to character and the visual composition</i>
<b>Moderate Visual Impact (Adverse or Beneficial)</b>	<i>The proposals would cause a clearly noticeable change to the landscape and the visual composition</i>
<b>Slight Visual Impact (Adverse or Beneficial)</b>	<i>The proposals would cause a perceptible change to the landscape and the visual composition</i>
<b>Negligible Visual Impact (Adverse or Beneficial)</b>	<i>The proposals would cause a barely perceptible change to the landscape and the visual composition</i>
<b>No change</b>	<i>The proposals would cause no change to the view</i>
<b>Neutral</b>	<i>There would be a change to the view but it is not possible to judge whether it is an adverse or beneficial impact</i>



1.4.9 Significance of Visual Effect (see Table 5)

1.4.9.1 The Significance of Visual Effect determines how important the changes might be for the View and the appreciation of the View, in terms of the requirements for mitigation and the long term residual effects. It is judged using Table 5.

**Table 5 Determining Significance of Visual Effect**

				Magnitude of Impact		
		Major Visual Impact (Adverse or Beneficial)	Moderate Visual Impact (Adverse or Beneficial)	Slight Visual Impact (Adverse or Beneficial)	Negligible Visual Impact (Adverse or Beneficial)	Neutral impact
	<b>Very High</b>	Major Visual Effect/ Significant	Major Visual Effect/ Significant	Moderate Visual Effect/ Significant	Minor Visual Effect/ Not Significant	Minor Visual Effect/ Not Significant
	<b>High</b>	Major Visual Effect/ Significant	Moderate Visual Effect/ Significant	Moderate Visual Effect/ Significant	Minor Visual Effect/ Not Significant	Negligible Visual Effect/ Not Significant
<b>Sensitivity of receptor</b>	<b>Medium</b>	Moderate Visual Effect/ Significant	Moderate Visual Effect/ Significant	Minor Visual Effect/ Not Significant	Negligible Visual Effect/ Not Significant	Negligible Visual Effect/ Not Significant
	<b>Low</b>	Moderate Visual Effect/ Significant	Minor Visual Effect/ Not Significant	Negligible Visual Effect/ Not Significant	Negligible Visual Effect/ Not Significant	Negligible Visual Effect/ Not Significant
	<b>Very Low</b>	Minor Visual Effect/ Not Significant	Negligible Visual Effect/ Not Significant	Negligible Visual Effect/ Not Significant	Negligible Visual Effect/ Not Significant	Negligible Visual Effect/ Not Significant

Key to Table 5

**Visual effect (VE)**

**Negligible** The proposals would result in a change to the view that may be barely discernible and/or it would not be possible to make beneficial or adverse judgement irrespective of the Sensitivity. The effects are likely to be short term or reversible and/or they would be very small and lead to Not Significant judgement.

**Minor** The proposals would result in a change to the view that would be barely discernible to clearly noticeable and would be dependent upon the scale of judgement for Sensitivity. The effects may be short term or reversible and/or would be minimal and lead to Not Significant judgement.

**Moderate** The proposals would result in a change to the view that would be perceptible to clearly noticeable and would be dependent upon the scale of judgement for Sensitivity. The effects may be long term and irreversible and/or would be Significant in all cases.

**Major** The proposals would result in a change to the view that would be a dominant or complete change where the impact is Major and the Sensitivity is High. The effects would be Long Term, irreversible and Significant in all cases.

**Significance**

**Not Significant** Mitigation should be explored but the impact should be a consideration of only limited weight

**Significant** Every effort should be made to mitigate the impact and if residual impacts remain these should feature in the balance of considerations.

## Bibliography

Appendix 2 Natural England, National Character Area (NCA) 122, the High Weald

<https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4706903212949504>

Appendix 3 High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2024-2029

<https://highweald.org/document-library/aonb-management-plan/high-weald-aonb-management-plan-2024-2029/?layout=default>

Appendix 4 West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) Landscape, Land Management Guidelines, Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex, Landscape Character Area HW4 High Weald Fringes 2003

[http://www2.westsussex.gov.uk/environment/wscp/HW4\\_High\\_Weald\\_Fringes.pdf](http://www2.westsussex.gov.uk/environment/wscp/HW4_High_Weald_Fringes.pdf)

Appendix 5 Mid Sussex District Council Landscape Character Area 10 High Weald Fringes 2005

<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/1769/lca-part-three-landscape-character-areas-high-weald-fringes.pdf>