

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL APPRAISAL | JULY 2020

LAND WEST OF
IMBERHORNE LANE
COMMUNITY • SUSTAINABILITY • LEGACY



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1. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL BASELINE

1.1. APPOINTMENT, PROPOSAL, SCOPE AND LEVEL OF STUDY

Landscape Architects at Barton Willmore were appointed in June 2020 to update the initial Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) for the site currently known as 'Imberhorne Farm, Imberhorne Lane, East Grinstead', previously prepared in late 2015. (Red highlight in Fig. 1).

The site is located within the Mid Sussex District Council's administrative area and is being promoted through the planning process for residential-led mixed use development. This LVA is a report of field and desk-based work that through a process of evaluation and analysis has contributed to the refined master planning process. The work has been carried out to support the promotion through the planning process in a manner that establishes the principle of development but not the detail.

This LVA, in terms of its references and focus of study, examines the composition of the landscape and visual baselines of the site and its setting. The landscape baseline comprises the physical components of the landscape including: its form; use; and character. The visual baseline in this study is defined in extent by use of specialist mapping tools that predict areas or 'Zones of Theoretical Visibility' (ZTV) that through analysis enable the extent of the predicted maximum 'Visual Envelope' (VE) to be identified (Section 1.10). The work is at a high level of study but it allows consideration of considerable areas to be evaluated and sieved down to a finer grain of study on the ground. The visual baseline analysis contains informed judgements about who is likely to see the site, their location, their likely activity and some level of prediction about their expectation of the view: i.e. is the view of the site the reason for their enjoyment of the experience: a national or local area of scenic beauty, or is it incidental to a journey or a backdrop to their garden.

This LVA has been prepared to inform a development proposal and to ensure that the promotion of the 'Vision Plan' (Fig. 30) through Representations to Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) have a robust evidence base. Even at this stage it has been possible to identify or predict the components in the landscape baseline that may experience a change as a consequence of development of the site. These components are called 'Landscape Receptors' (Section 1.12). Similarly, those people that may experience a change in their view of the site, from identified viewpoints, have also been identified and been described as 'Visual Receptors' (Section 1.13). They commonly fit within broad groups sharing a similarity of some regard: near neighbours; commuters; amenity walkers etc.

This stepped approach to the analysis of the landscape and visual baseline of the Site and its setting, from a wide base of data searching down to a Site based description and analysis, enables the identification and recording of a thorough knowledge of the key components that form the character and composition of the Site and its setting. In this LVA the proposed change of use of the Site land, from farmland to settlement, has been tested and modified and iterated through application and testing, building on the earlier analysis and more recent analysis of receptors in the landscape and visual baseline.

At this preliminary stage of study the landscape architects have looked at the relationship between the Site and the settlements of East Grinstead, Felbridge and Crawley Down; at the role the Site plays as a setting for these settlements; and at its relationship within the landscape of the host countryside. The Site is outside a settlement and is within the countryside and the development of the Site would change this categorisation: the Site would become part of the settlement of East Grinstead and would form the edge of the town and the countryside. This important matter is central to the considerations within this LVA.

The desk and field work recorded in this LVA study has been used by the development team specialists that has already contributed to the drafting of early concepts for the development proposal. The LVA work has been applied at these early stages within a strategy that looks to limit effects and to make a development proposal that finds a sympathetic and successful fit in the landscape of its setting.

At this stage the development proposal is for a change of use from farming to a residential-led mixed use development of new homes and public amenity open space. The concepts used for early testing in this LVA are described as the 'Vision Plan'.

The LVA sets out the consideration that has been given to achieving an informed and accurate understanding of the relationship that the site has with its setting. The study has the intended change of use to a residential-led mixed use development that will change the status of the land from countryside to settlement as a clear point of reference for the research work. The containment of the new extent of the settlement and the protection of the countryside are important considerations. This LVA study has HDA the task of formulating advice, drawn from an appropriate knowledge of the landscape and visual baseline, that can provide robust guidance on a sympathetic and successful landscape led development proposal.

The site sits at the northern edge of the High Weald National Character Area. It is not in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but is less than 2Km from the AONB at its closest point. Nor is the Site within the Green Belt. Although the Green Belt is not a landscape designation three of the five objectives of the statute involve consideration of landscape matters (Section 1.7). The Metropolitan Green Belt extends as far south as Crawley Down Road but does not wash over any part of the Site.

The subtleties and complexities of landscape and settlement and countryside character, of field pattern, the patterns and form of the built environment, and the lines and engineering works of the network of transportation routes have all made marks in this settled and changing High Weald landscape. They all contribute to the consideration of the setting for the development proposal. The judgement of the success or failure of the proposal for change of use that lies behind this LVA work also has to consider how people regard the landscape of the site. The analysis of these and other elements in the landscape and visual baseline of the site and its setting are set out in this LVA.

An important output of this LVA has been the preparation of the Landscape and Visual Key Constraints and Opportunities Plan (Fig. 28). The plan is a graphic map that records some of the main landscape and visual assets, detractors, constraints and opportunities. Analysis of these landscape and visual issues, considered in combination with the information documented in this study, has been applied to the drafting of the Vision Plan (Fig. 30). The Vision Plan shows an indication of an initial outline concept for the development proposal. It has flowed from this landscape led approach. Consideration of the existing heritage assets: the listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments at Imberhorne Farm, at Gulledege and the moat west of Avenue Wood, in Felbridge, has been given at a high level with further work to be undertaken by appropriately qualified experts. The process of mitigation that designs out harmful impacts through knowledge of the baseline and the sensitivities of its constituent elements, has therefore, been an integral process within the evolution of the initial development concept.

- In summary, the key landscape and visual issues, in consideration of the potential development of the site, that are examined in Part 2 of this LVA, include:
- The site's physical containment at the countryside edge;
- The site's visual containment at the countryside edge;
- The site's effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area
- The site's relationship with the settlement edges of East Grinstead, Felbridge, and Crawley Down, and
- The capacity of the Site to accommodate development without harm to the landscape of the setting.

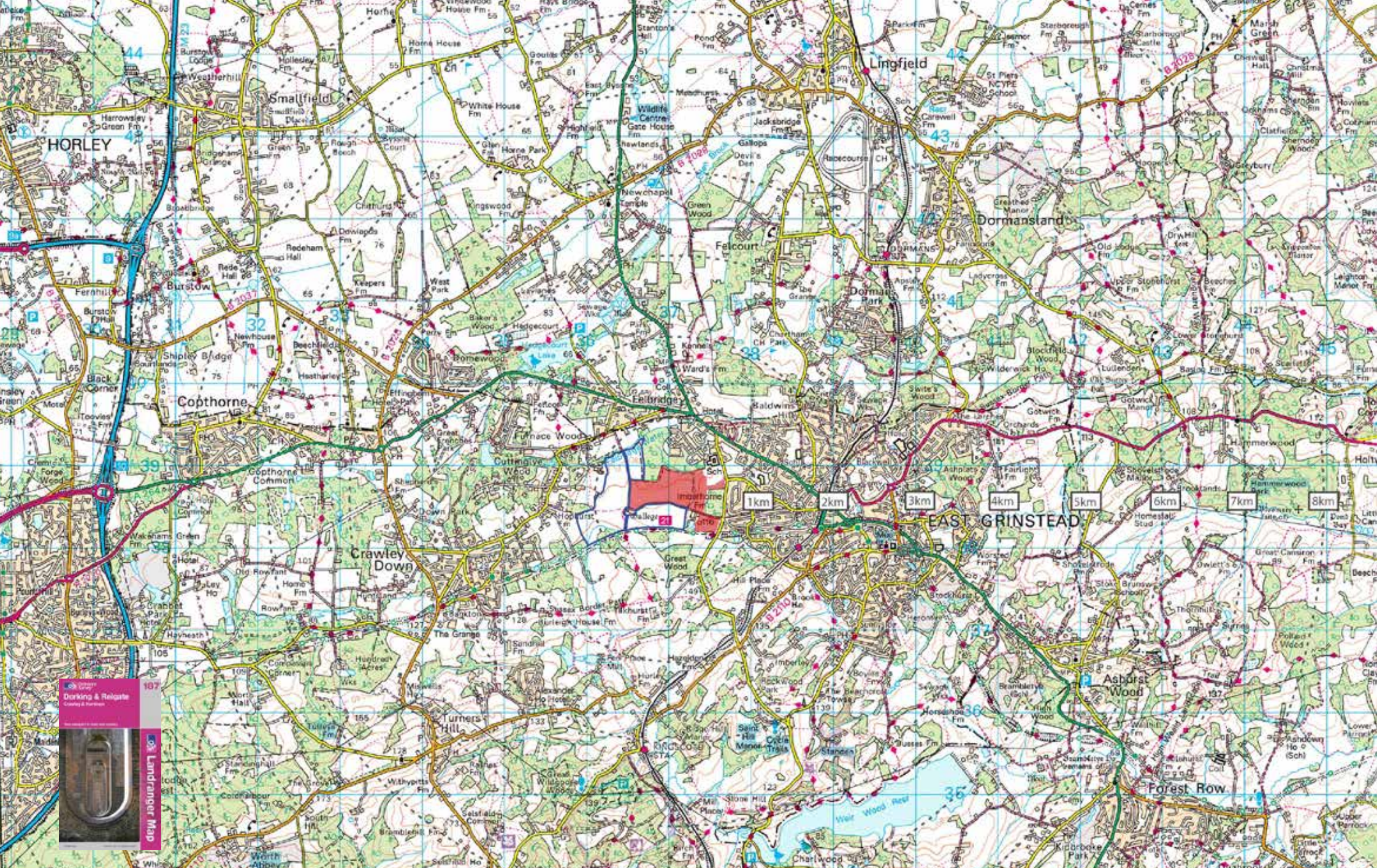


FIGURE 1. OS 1:50,000 LANDRANGER MAP 187: SEPTEMBER 2015. SITE LOCATION PLAN



On PRoW (East Grinstead 44bEG-1) looking north-east to Imberhorne Farm



1.2. LVA METHODOLOGY

The structure of this study follows the current best practice approach set out in the principal publication for LVA work: 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third edition (GLVIA. [Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. 2013]). The Institute gives guidelines for the process of Landscape and Visual Assessment.

The Third edition of the GLVIA set out a differential between Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) studies. The LVIA study sits within the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process and the assessment of specific effects that may cause impacts on components and receptors in the landscape and visual baseline. The LVIA centres on assessment of effects. The preparation of Landscape and Visual Appraisal studies – such as this study for the site at Imberhorne Farm, has the rigour of the EIA process but has looked to identify issues of possible harm that might arise from the development proposal and offset them through change and modification of the proposals before a fix of the proposal – this LVA has been devised as tool or body of information that will inform an evolving proposal rather than an assessment of a finalised proposal. This LVA study is not however part of a formal Environmental Statement and it is therefore described as an appraisal.

The LVA process is non-prescriptive, and experienced practitioners are required to make informed objective, and subjective judgments in the process of assessment of environmental effects. In this study a structured approach consistent with good practice has been followed (Fig. 2). In overview this document is a report of research undertaken, recorded and set out with a sub-division into three main parts:

- Part 1: Baseline studies

Part 1 sets out the landscape and visual baselines and is a record of the field based study of the site and its setting. It includes a record of the desk based data trawl of published landscape character studies; identifies landscape and visual receptor groups.

- Part 2: Analysis, Development proposal, and Capacity

Part 2 defines the main landscape and visual issues concerning the character of the site and its setting and the relationship with the development proposal, a key output is the baseline-led analysis contained in the Landscape and Visual Key Constraints and Opportunities Plan;

- Contains a description of the substance of the development proposal as a response to the potential interactions that may be caused to the landscape and visual receptors. It looks at the analysis-led development concept as a Vision Plan, suggesting mitigation as an inclusive process within the iteration of the development proposals;
- Records and gives commentary on the published landscape capacity studies for the Site and the setting.

- Part 3: Summary and Conclusions

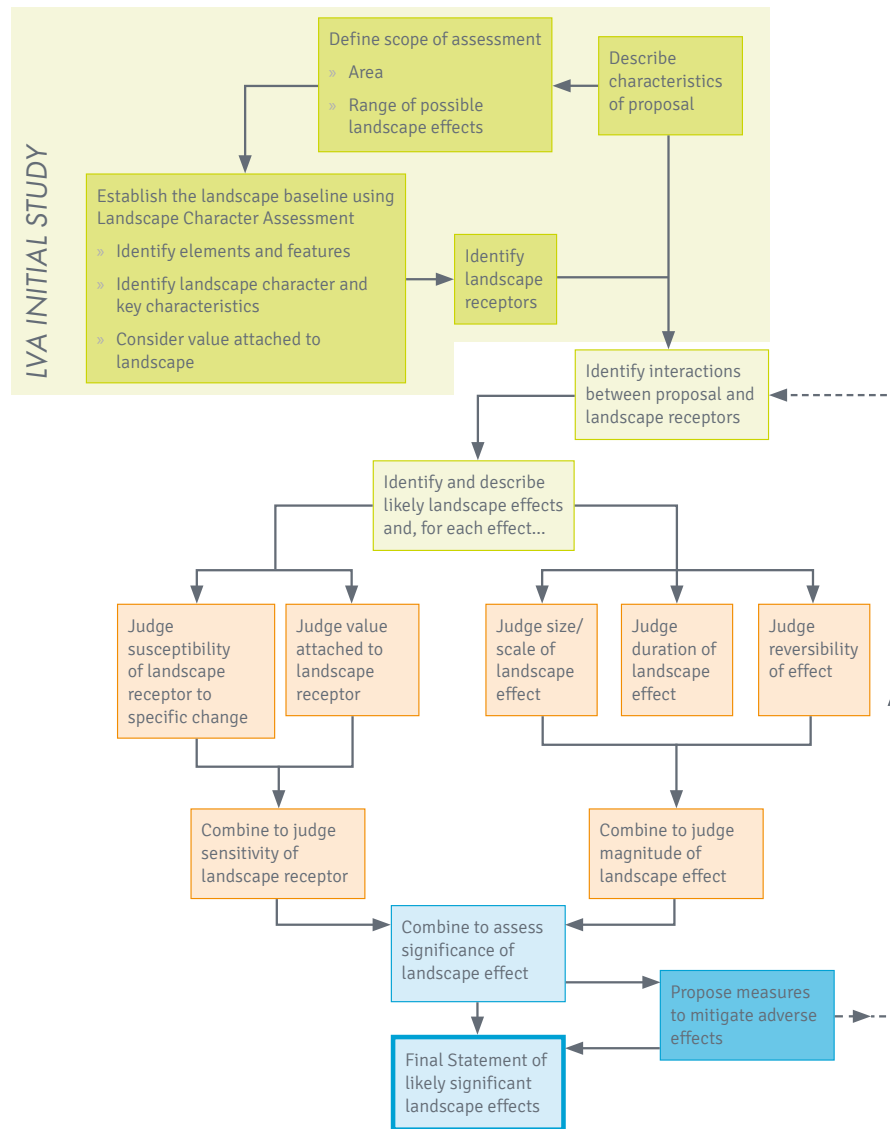


FIGURE 2. GLVIA STEPS IN ASSESSING LANDSCAPE EFFECTS (GLVA FIGURE 5.1)

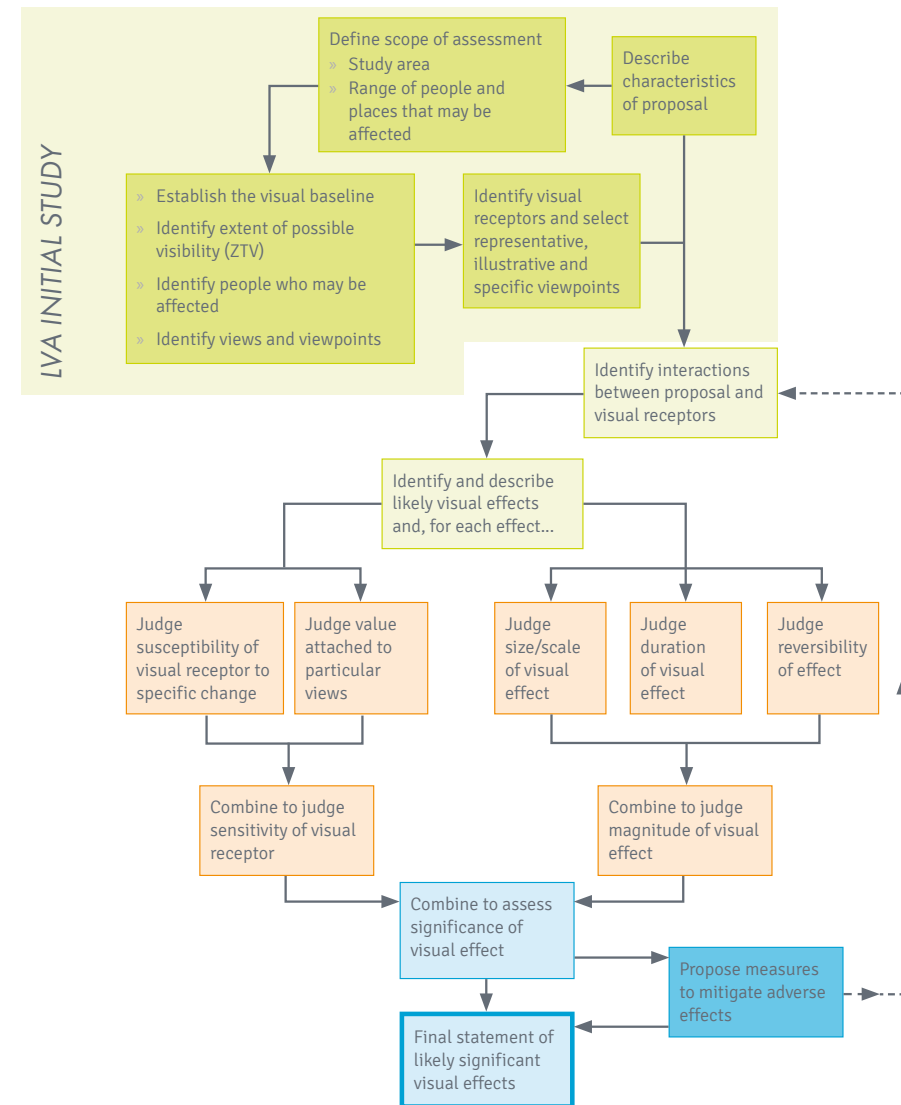


FIGURE 3. GLVIA STEPS IN ASSESSING VISUAL EFFECTS (GLVA FIGURE 6.1)

1.3. THE LANDSCAPE BASELINE OF THE SETTING IN OVERVIEW

The Site is located on the western edge of East Grinstead, in the district of Mid Sussex (Fig. 4). In general terms the edge of East Grinstead is characterised by modern, late 20th century housing and large scale industrial buildings (Photos: 2, 4, 11 + Aerial photo).

The landscape is crossed by rivers, streams and numerous watercourse which have influenced its landform, resulting in a series of ridges and valleys. The land to the south of the Site gently rises to form a ridge, the landform to the north of the Site slopes gently to form a wide river valley. Further to the north beyond the valley, the landform rises, and a ridge runs in a broadly east west orientation (Figs. 11, 12). The settlements of Reigate, Redhill, Godstone, Oxted and Limpsfield are located along this ridge line.

It is a well wooded landscape, with multiple blocks and belts of mature woodland scattered across the landscape. There is a substantial amount of woodland located around the settlement of Crawley to the west of the Site. Ashdown Forest, an area of Ancient woodland which occupies a ridge top within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), is located approximately 6km to the south east of the Site.

The settlements of East Grinstead and Crawley are connected by the A264 which runs to the north of the Site (Fig. 1). In the wider setting, a network of roads cut across the area. The M23 motorway runs in a broadly north south orientation around the outskirts of Crawley, and it confluences with the M25 motorway at Junction 8 just north of Redhill.

Around the Site there is a network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), the bridleway (44bEG) which crosses the Site emerges from the centre of East Grinstead through the Site and on towards Gulledge Farm. At this location it splits, a spur travels west towards the settlement of Crawley Down, another travels north towards Felbridge and the final spur travels south where it joins the Worth Way Long Distance Route (Fig 4).



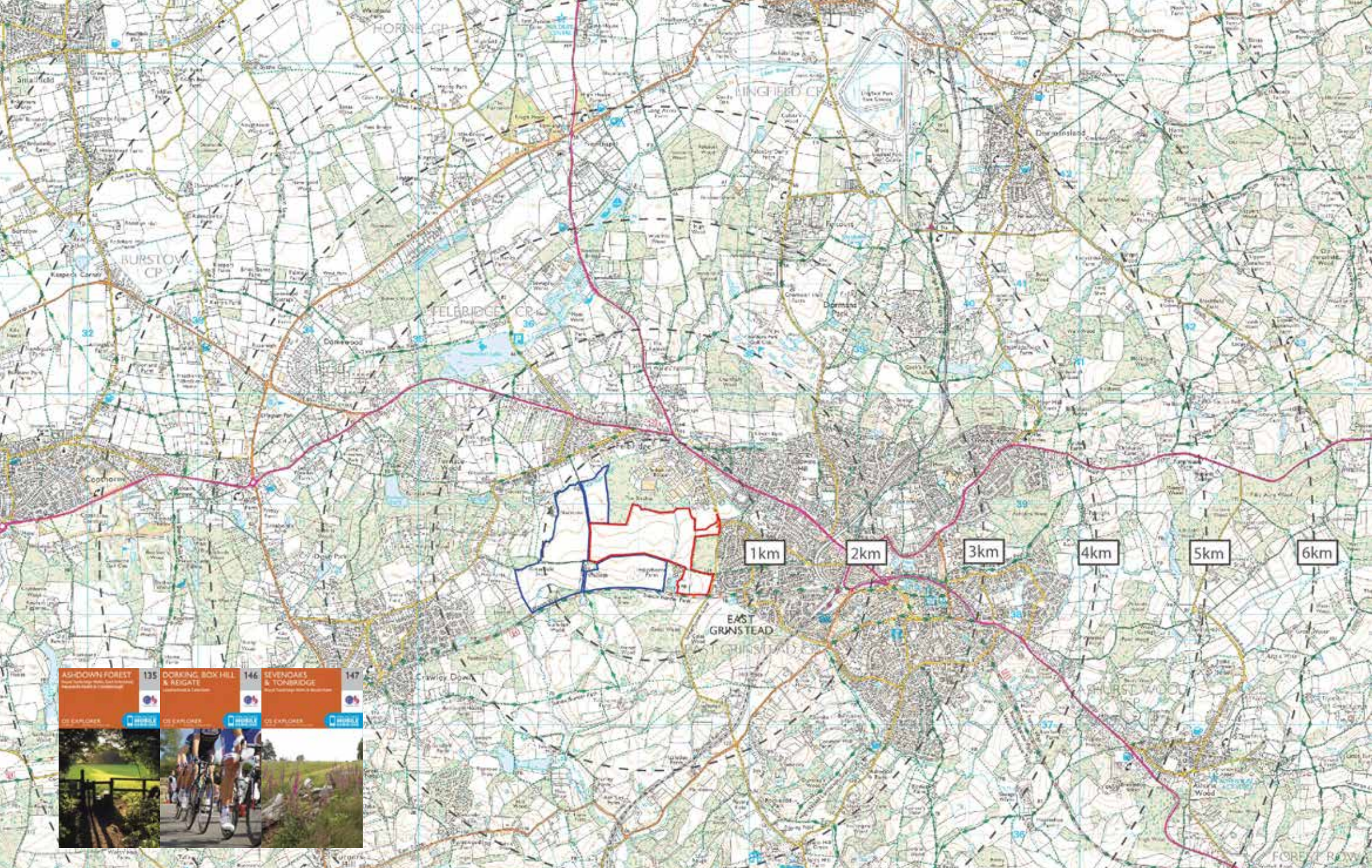


FIGURE 4. OS 125,000 EXPLORER MAPS 135, 146,147: SEPTEMBER 2015. SITE LOCATION PLAN

1.4. THE LANDSCAPE BASELINE OF THE SITE IN OVERVIEW

The Site is comprised of a series of large scale geometric fields divided by hedgerows, many of which contain hedgerow trees. Imberhorne Farm is located in the southern portion of the Site, but is not within the Site. The Site boundary runs round the farm complex, its associated outbuildings and private grounds, to exclude it from the Site.

Within the Site the landform falls from a high point in the southeast corner of the Site at 130m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), to a low point of approximately 90m AOD along the northern boundary of the Site (Fig. 12). Across the length of the Site the land undulates gently influenced by a small tributary watercourse which runs from Imberhorne Farm towards the northern boundary of the Site.

The Birches Ancient Woodland lines the northern boundary of the Site (Fig. 5 + Photo 2). The eastern boundary of the Site is lined by dense hedgerow vegetation, a permissive path runs alongside a portion of this boundary of the Site. The southern end of the eastern boundary is adjacent to Imberhorne Lane (Photo 10). The southern boundary runs along the route of A Public Bridgeway (44bEG) which is lined on both sides, in part, by hedgerow vegetation (Photo 5). A large open elevated field is located to the immediate south, with the Worth Way/Sussex Border Long Distance Route (Photo 9) running east-west to the south of the field, set within well-established vegetation. The western boundary of the Site extends to the bridleway that runs north from the Worth Way/Sussex Border Long Distance Route (Photo 7).

A Public Right of Way bridleway (44bEG) crosses through the central portion of the Site. It is occasionally very open but also has places where it is lined on both sides by vegetation, which includes hedgerow trees. The path also serves as the drive to Gulleage and as a farm access as well as a PRoW; and runs in a broadly east west orientation (Photos 2, 3, 5).



FIGURE 5. LANDSCAPE BASELINE

1.5. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER: KEY RELEVANT CHARACTERISTICS AT NATIONAL, COUNTY, AND DISTRICT SCALES

National level Landscape Character Assessment

As part of Natural England's responsibilities in delivering the Natural Environment White Paper, Biodiversity 2020 and the European Landscape Convention, Natural England has developed a series of National Character Area (NCA) profiles.

The Site and surrounding landscape is situated within NCA Profile 122: High Weald (Fig.6).

The key characteristics of the High Weald NCA are outlined as follows:

- "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;
- An intimate, hidden and small-scale landscape with glimpses of far-reaching views, giving
- a sense of remoteness and tranquillity yet concealing the highest density of timber-framed buildings anywhere in Europe amidst lanes and paths;
- Strong feeling of remoteness due to very rural, wooded character. A great extent of interconnected ancient woods, steep-sided gill woodlands, wooded heaths and shaws in generally small holdings with extensive archaeology and evidence of long-term management;
- 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; and
- An essentially medieval landscape reflected in the patterns of settlement, fields and woodland"

County level Landscape Character Assessment

The Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex was published in 2003. The Site is located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) HW1: The High Weald (Fig. 7).

Key Characteristics of the LCA relevant to the Site are:

- "Wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity;
- Plateau, ridges and deep, secluded valleys cut by gill streams;
- Long views over the Low Weald to the downs, particularly from the high Forest Ridge;
- Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees;
- Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields, some larger fields and small pockets of remnant heathland;
- Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths;
- Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hilltops and high ground, the principal settlements East Grinstead; and
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile hanging."



FIGURE 6. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER: NATIONAL CHARACTER AREA (NCA) 122



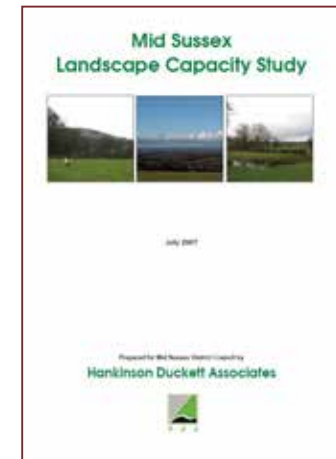
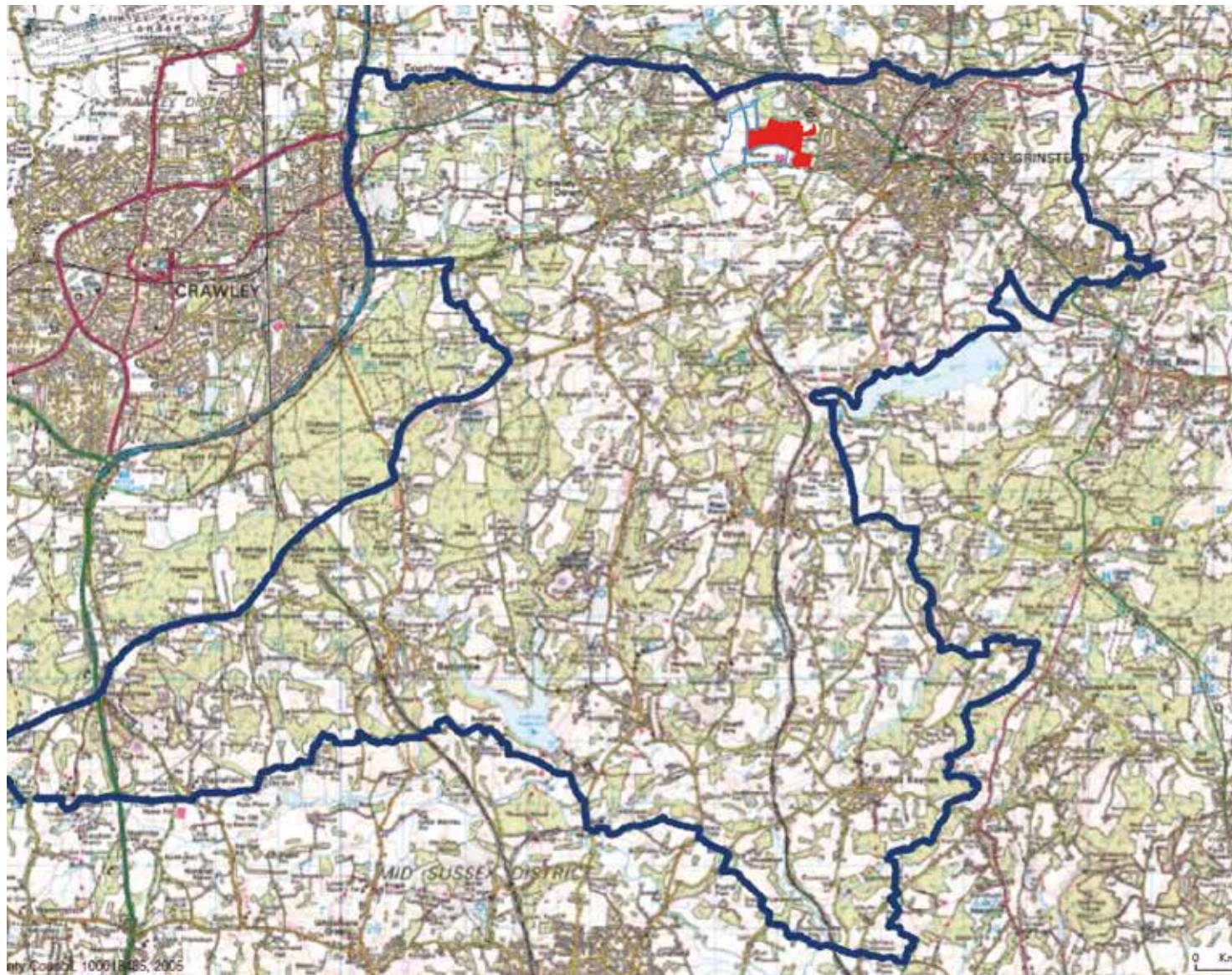


FIGURE 7. CHARACTER: COUNTY CHARACTER AREA: HW1 HIGH WEALD

District level Landscape Character Assessment

A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex published in November 2005 identifies the Site as being located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 6: High Weald (Fig. 8).

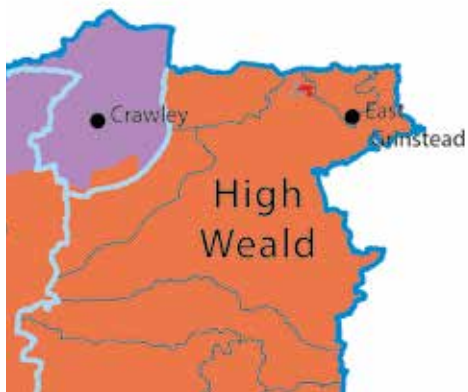


FIGURE 8. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER:
DISTRICT CHARACTER AREA: LANDSCAPE
CHARACTER AREA 6 HIGH WEALD



Key Characteristics of the LCA relevant to the Site are:

- "Wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity, perceived as attractive, locally secluded and tranquil;
- Complex sandstone and clay hilly landscape of ridges and secluded valleys;
- Long views over the Low Weald to the downs, particularly from the high Forest Ridge;
- Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, including some larger woods and a dense network of hedgerows and shaws, creates a sense of enclosure, the valleys damp, deep and secluded;
- Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths;
- Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hilltops and high ground, the principal settlements East Grinstead;
- Some busy lanes and roads including along the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor; and
- London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area."





GULLEDGE BRIDLEWAY LOOKING NORTH

1.6. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF THE SITE

The Site was covered in the Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study, 2007, the initial stages of which involved the undertaking of field surveys across the district; this then led to the identification of the land within the Site as;

Weald enclosed, large-scale arable

Landscape Character Types and in some locations sub-types (Fig. 9 + extract Fig. 10).

- *"Intensive arable farmland;*
- *Fields, often large, across relatively flat or gently undulating landform; and*
- *Well developed structure of hedges, shaws, copses and woodland which break up views across it and give a sense of large-scale enclosure."*

Weald open, large scale arable

- *"Intensive arable farmland;*
- *Relatively large fields across relatively flat or very gently undulating landform;*
- *Breaks in boundaries allow views of wider landscape;*
- *Weak/ remnant hedgerow structure in places, with few mature trees; and*
- *Some long views to the downs to the south and High Weald to the north."*

Weald enclosed pasture

- *"Pasture bounded by hedgerows, shaws and/ or copses;*
- *Flat or gently undulating land; and*
- *Field sizes vary."*

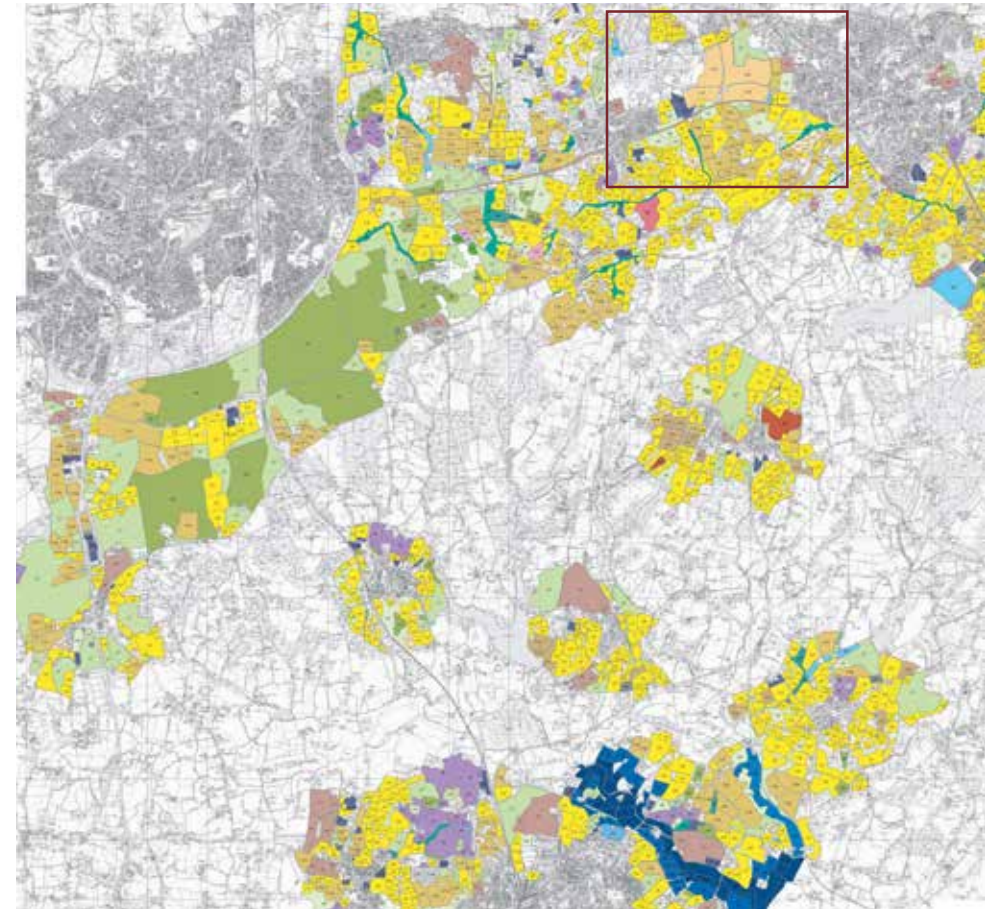
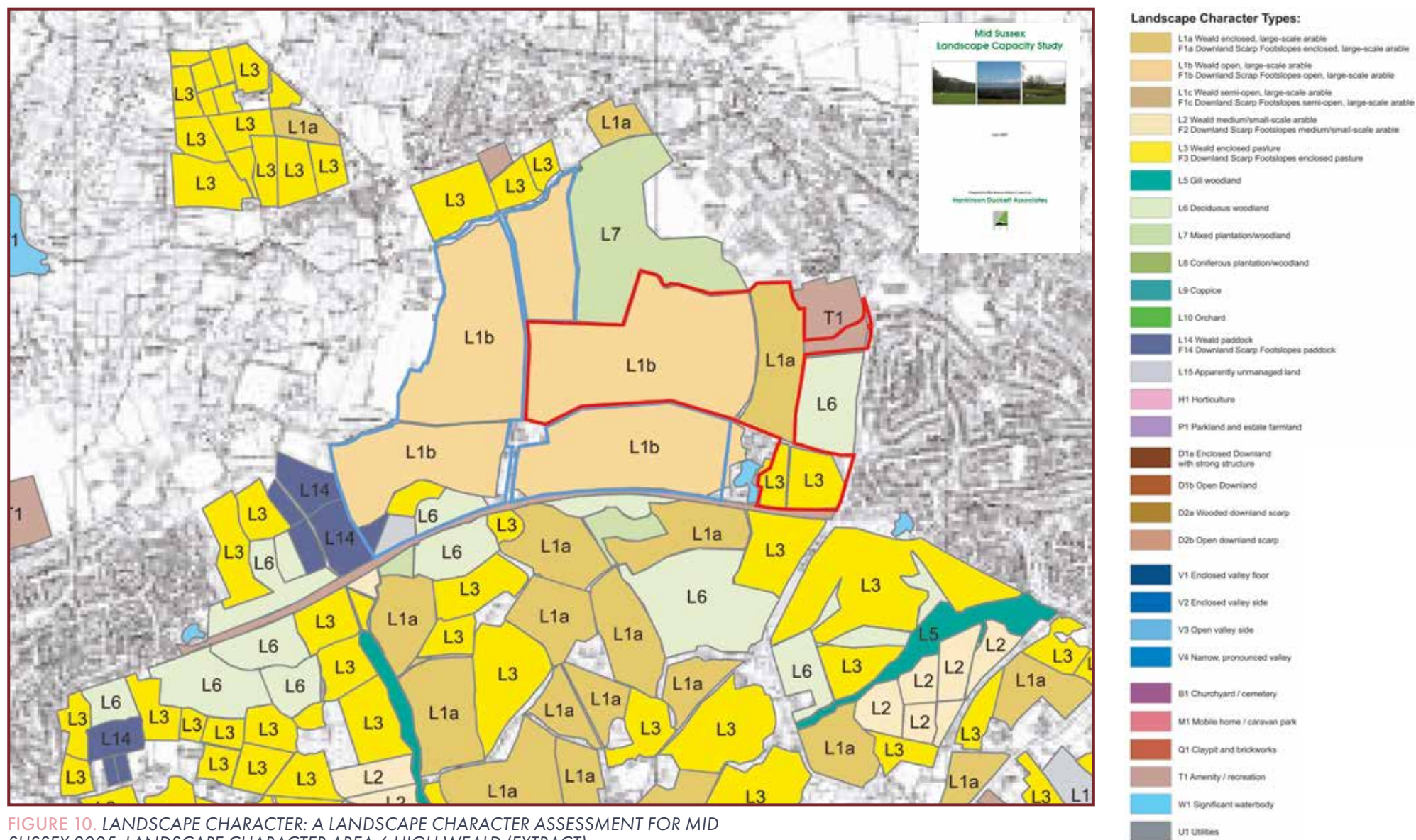


FIGURE 9. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER: A LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT FOR MID SUSSEX 2005: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 6 HIGH WEALD



1.7. LANDSCAPE PLANNING POLICY: NATIONAL AND DISTRICT, AND LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

The revised 2019 NPPF aims to provide one concise document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England, refining the 2012 NPPF. It aims to provide a planning framework within which the local community and local authorities can produce distinctive local plans which respond to local needs and priorities.

The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as ***"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*** (paragraph 7), and providing it is in accordance with the relevant up-to-date Local Plan, and policies set out in the NPPF including those identifying restrictions with regard to designated areas. The NPPF states that ***"the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development"*** and that there are three overarching objectives, that is economic, social and environmental, that should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of policies in the NPPF. The role of the environment is described as ***"to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making efficient use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change"*** (paragraph 8).

Chapter 12 of the NPPF provides guidance on ensuring the delivery of good design, with paragraphs 124-132 focusing on achieving well-designed spaces and seeking to promote good design of the built environment. The NPPF requires development proposals to respond to local character and be visually attractive, as well as emphasising the need to integrate development proposals into the natural environment. Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- *"will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;.."*

Paragraph 130 states that development should be refused if it fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Chapter 15 refers to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and states, at Paragraph 170, that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) *"protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;"*

Planning Practice Guidance

To support the policies of the NPPF, the Government has produced Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) covering a number of topics, including the Natural Environment and Lighting.

PPG on the Natural Environment, under heading Green Infrastructure acknowledges that Green and Blue Infrastructure can contribute to enhanced wellbeing, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, food and energy production, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk, and identifies that Green and Blue Infrastructure supports the following benefits: Building a strong, competitive economy; Achieving well-designed places; Promoting healthy and safe communities; Mitigating climate change, flooding and coastal change; and Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Under heading Biodiversity, the PPG supports the conservation and enhancement biodiversity and geodiversity; and recognises that proposals for development can contribute positively to this and contribute to habitat connectivity in the wider area.

Under sub-heading Landscape, PPG supports the use of landscape character assessment as a tool for understanding local distinctiveness and Natural England's guidance on landscape character assessment.

PPG on Light Pollution refers to the risk of artificial lighting undermining the enjoyment of the countryside and night sky and provides guidance for mitigation-by-design of artificial lighting.



WORTH WAY LONG DISTANCE ROUTE

District Planning Policy

Mid Sussex Local Plan (March 2018)

The Mid Sussex Local Plan was adopted on 28th March 2018 and is part of the development plan for Mid Sussex. The Plan sets out policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land to guide planning decisions, along with supporting Supplementary Planning Documents.

- Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside

The Strategic Objective relevant to Policy DP12 are:

“3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities;

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

15) To create places that encourage a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle by the provision of first class cultural and sporting facilities, informal leisure space and the opportunity to walk, cycle or ride to common destinations.”

Policy DP12 states that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- DP13: Preventing Coalescence

The Strategic Objectives relevant to Policy DP13 are:

“2) To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District’s distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence.”

Policy DP13 states that:

“The individual towns and villages in the District each have their own unique characteristics. It is important that their separate identity is maintained. When travelling between settlements people should have a sense that they have left one before arriving at the next.

Provided it is not in conflict with Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside, development will be permitted if it does not result in the coalescence of settlements which harms the separate identity and amenity of settlements, and would not have an unacceptably urbanising effect on the area between settlements.”

The Site is situated on the western edge of East Grinstead, with the settlements of Crawley Down, Turners Hill, Copthorne and Crawley located to the west of East Grinstead. The setting of towns and villages are as important as the buildings and spaces within them to their overall character. A clear visual break between settlements gives them a recognisable structure. If development was to occur in such areas it could lead to the coalescence of settlements and the loss of their individual identity and amenity.

- DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The Strategic Objectives relevant to Policy DP16 are:

“3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities; and

11) To support and enhance the attractiveness of Mid Sussex as a visitor destination.”

Policy DP16 states that:

“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.***

....

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.”

- DP17: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

The Habitats Regulations Assessment for the District Plan identifies that proposed new housing in areas close to Ashdown Forest is likely to increase the number of visitors, with associated impacts on bird populations. This ‘zone of influence’ is within a 7km straight-line distance from the boundary of the Ashdown Forest identified from the ‘Visitor Access Patterns on Ashdown Forest’ survey published in October 2009. For this reason, it will be important to counter any adverse effects from new residential

development in this zone, and to put in place appropriate measures which reduce visitor pressure. The Site falls within the 7km zone of influence surrounding Ashdown Forest.

The Strategic Objectives relevant to Policy DP17 are:

“3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities.”

Policy DP17 states that:

“In order to prevent adverse effects on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, new development likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination with other development, will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. ...

Within a 7km zone of influence around the Ashdown Forest SPA, residential development leading to a net increase in dwellings will be required to contribute to mitigation through:

- 1) The provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to the minimum level of 8Ha per 1,000 net increase in population; or a financial contribution to SANGs elsewhere; or the provision of bespoke mitigation; and*
- 2) A financial contribution to the Ashdown Forest Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy.*

Large schemes proposed adjacent or close to the boundary of the 7km zone of influence may require mitigation for the SPA. Such proposals for development will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Where bespoke mitigation is provided, these measures will need to be in place before occupation of development and must be managed and maintained in perpetuity. The effectiveness of such mitigation will need to be demonstrated prior to approval of the development. Bespoke mitigation will need to be discussed and agreed by the District Council as the competent authority following advice from Natural England.”

- DP22: Rights of Way and other Recreational Routes

The Strategic Objectives relevant to Policy DP22 are:

“5) To create and maintain easily accessible green infrastructure, green corridors and spaces around and within the towns and villages to act as wildlife corridors, sustainable transport links and leisure and recreational routes; and

15) To create places that encourage a healthy and enjoyable lifestyle by the provision of first class cultural and sporting facilities, informal leisure space and the opportunity to walk, cycle or ride to common destinations.”

Policy DP22 states that:

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

Access to the countryside will be encouraged by:

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

- *Supporting the provision of additional routes within and between settlements that contribute to providing a joined up network of routes where possible;*
- *Where appropriate, encouraging making new or existing rights of way multi-functional to allow for benefits for a range of users. (Note: ‘multi-functional will generally mean able to be used by walkers, cyclists and horse-riders’).“*

- DP26: Character and Design

The Strategic Objectives relevant to Policy DP26 are:

“2) To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District’s distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence;

4) To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities;

12) To support sustainable communities which are safe, healthy and inclusive; and

14) To create environments that are accessible to all members of the community.”

Policy DP26 states that:

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

- *is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;*

- *contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;*
- *creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;*
- *protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;*
- *protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;*
- *does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29);*
- *creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;*
- *incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;*
- *positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;*
- *take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element;*
- *optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.”*

- DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets

The Strategic Objectives relevant to Policy DP34 are:

“2) To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District’s distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence;

4) To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities; and

11) To support and enhance the attractiveness of Mid Sussex as a visitor destination.”

With regard to Listed Buildings, Policy DP34 states that:

“Development will be required to protect listed buildings and their settings. This will be achieved by ensuring that:

- *A thorough understanding of the significance of the listed building and its setting has been demonstrated. This will be proportionate to the importance of the building and potential impact of the proposal; ...*
- *Special regard is given to protecting the setting of a listed building; ...”*

- DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

The Strategic Objectives relevant to Policy DP27 are:

“3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities;

4) To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities; and

5) To create and maintain easily accessible green infrastructure, green corridors and spaces around and within the towns and villages to act as wildlife corridors, sustainable transport links and leisure and recreational routes.”

Policy DP37 states that:

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

Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.

Proposals for new trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of suitable species, usually native, and where required for visual, noise or light screening purposes, trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of a size and species that will achieve this purpose.

Trees, woodland and hedgerows will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

- *incorporates existing important trees, woodland and hedgerows into the design of new development and its landscape scheme; and*
- *prevents damage to root systems and takes account of expected future growth; and*

- *where possible, incorporates retained trees, woodland and hedgerows within public open space rather than private space to safeguard their long-term management; and*
- *has appropriate protection measures throughout the development process; and*
- *takes opportunities to plant new trees, woodland and hedgerows within the new development to enhance on-site green infrastructure and increase resilience to the effects of climate change; and*
- *does not sever ecological corridors created by these assets.*

Proposals for works to trees will be considered taking into account:

- *the contribution of the trees to the character and visual amenity of the local area; and*
- *the amenity and nature conservation value of the trees; and*
- *the extent and impact of the works; and*
- *any replanting proposals.*

The felling of protected trees will only be permitted if there is no appropriate alternative. Where a protected tree or group of trees is felled, a replacement tree or group of trees, on a minimum of a 1:1 basis and of an appropriate size and type, will normally be required. The replanting should take place as close to the felled tree or trees as possible having regard to the proximity of adjacent properties. ...”

East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan (Made Plan, November 2016)

The Vision for East Grinstead as set out in the Made Neighbourhood Plan is defined as:

“To provide for a positive future for East Grinstead that is socially inclusive for all, vibrant, economically robust and will allow residents to live with a high degree of self-sufficiency in a town with a first rate natural, built and historic environment”.

The core objectives set out in the Neighbourhood Plan are to:

- *“Improve the town’s urban, rural and historic environment and protect it from harmful development;*
- *Make prudent use of natural resources by promoting development on previously developed sites within the built up area boundary;*
- *Improve highway and infrastructure conditions, reduce the reliance on car use and provide attractive alternative means of travel;*
- *Provide quality new homes for existing and future residents within existing environmental and infrastructure constraints;*
- *Promote development that will provide sustainable economic growth, including business and tourism related development and maintain a prosperous town centre; and*
- *Protect the countryside and urban open spaces for their landscape, wildlife, agricultural, recreational and natural resource value, specifically including Ashdown Forest and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.*

Policy EG1 relates to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and states that:

“The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that the scheme would not negatively impact on the existing quality of the protected landscape and its setting taking account of locally important features. Proposals that have not fully considered and addressed the impact on the AONB will normally be refused.”

Policy EG2 relates to Areas of Development Constraint, and Policy EG2a- Coalescence states that:

“Planning permission will not normally be granted for development which:

- 1) Results in the coalescence of East Grinstead with Crawley Down or Ashurst Wood;*
- 2) Results in the perception of openness being unacceptably eroded within this area; or*
- 3) Contributes towards the ad hoc or isolated development of dwellings outside the built up area, including infilling of built up frontages or linear development along roads.*

Policy EG3 relates to Promoting Good Design, and states that:

“Planning permission will normally be granted where development proposals meet the following criteria:

- a) The form of the proposed development is proportionate and in keeping with the scale, height, materials and site coverage of the surrounding area;*
- b) The layout of the proposed development respects the topography and character of the site, protects important landscape features and does not harm adjoining amenity;*
- c) The proposal does not result in the loss of buildings or spaces that would have an unacceptable impact on the character of the area; ...*
- e) The design of new buildings and the layout of spaces, including footways, car and cycle parking areas, should be permeable and provide connectivity with neighbouring areas; ...*
- h) Proposals make provision for green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement. ...”*

Policy EG16 relates to Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area, and states that:

“Within a 7km zone of influence around the Ashdown Forest SPA, all residential development leading to a net increase in dwellings will be required to:

- contribute towards the enhancement and improvement of the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs); and*
- contribute towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy.”*

Policy SS8 relates to the Land South of Birches Industrial Estate and West of Imberhorne Lane, in which the Site is located, states that:

“Planning permission for modest development in the form of public open space, including SANGS (suitable alternative natural green space), which is subject to meeting the relevant criteria for their provision and to the approval of MSDC, playing fields, allotments, cemetery uses and ancillary support buildings such as small pavilions, kiosks or sheds will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the open character of the area will be retained.”

1.8. LANDFORM

The desk study of the landform of the setting is recorded in Fig. 11, and the landform of the site is recorded in Fig. 12. At its broadest level landform forms the wider setting for the site – it creates, through natural processes, modified to a degree by the intervention of man, the form of the land of the site and the setting. It is also a major determinant in the significance of the visual qualities of the site in terms of prominence or concealment.

The Site is located on the side of a wide ridgeline that crosses the landscape in a broadly east west orientation, the ridgeline rises to sits on land which rises to high point south of the Site. The Site low point is along the northern edge, and a high point of approximately 130m AOD can be identified in the far southeast corner of the Site adjacent to Imberhorne Lane.

The wider landscape has also been influenced by the watercourses that cross the area which has resulted in a series of ridges and valleys. A predominant ridgeline runs from Crowborough, which is located to the southeast of the Site, across towards the southern extent of Crawley. This ridgeline broadly defines the northern extent of the High Weald AONB. At its highest point, on the western edge of Crowborough the height of the land sits at around 240m AOD, over 110 metres above the high point of the site.

To the north of the Site the landform slopes and undulates down to a low point of 50m AOD. A wide valley meanders through the landscape within which are located the settlements of Horley, Lingfield and Edenbridge. Further to the north beyond the valley the land rises to form a ridgeline which is between approximately 230m-245m AOD.

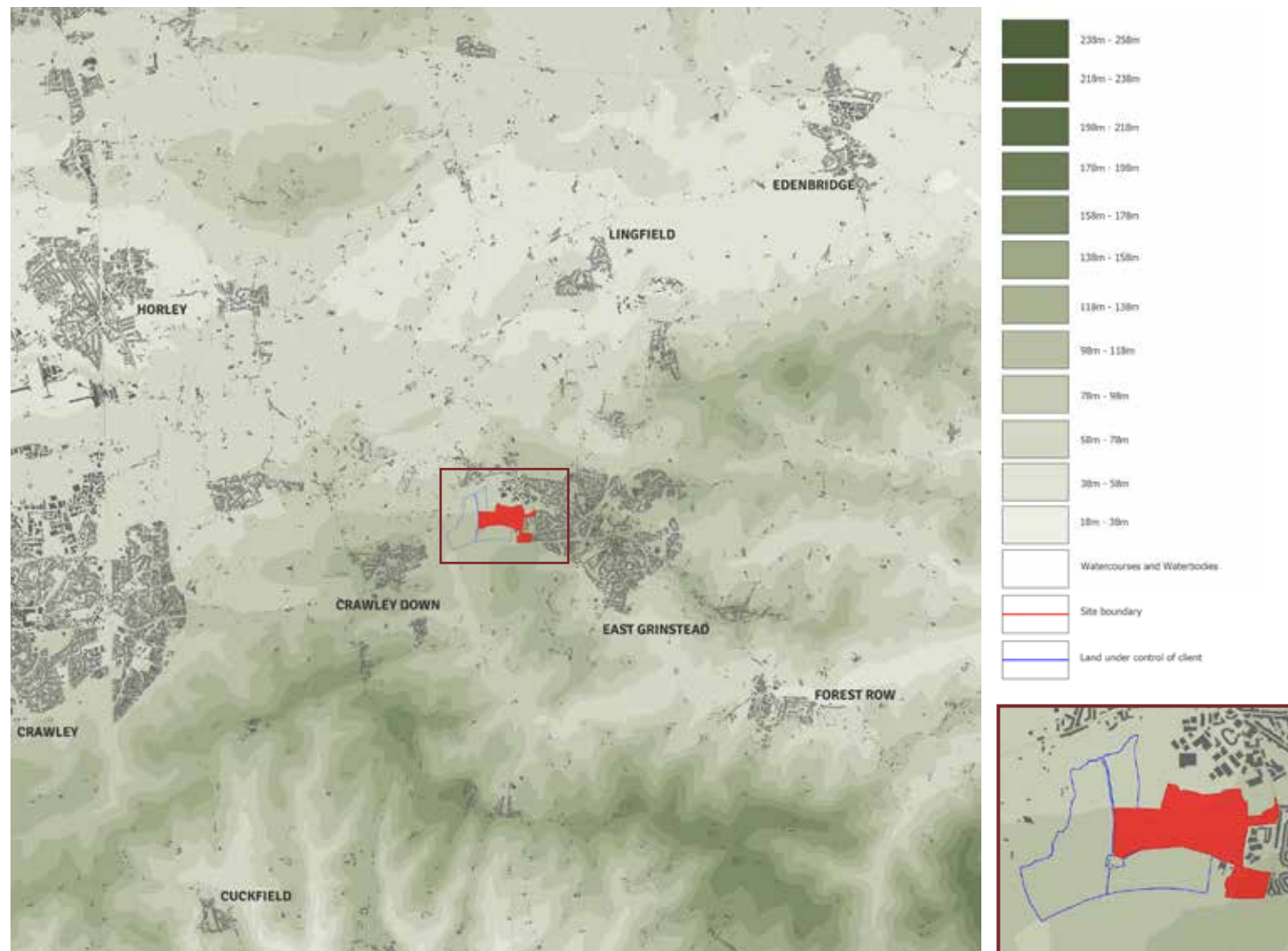


FIGURE 11. SETTING LANDFORM

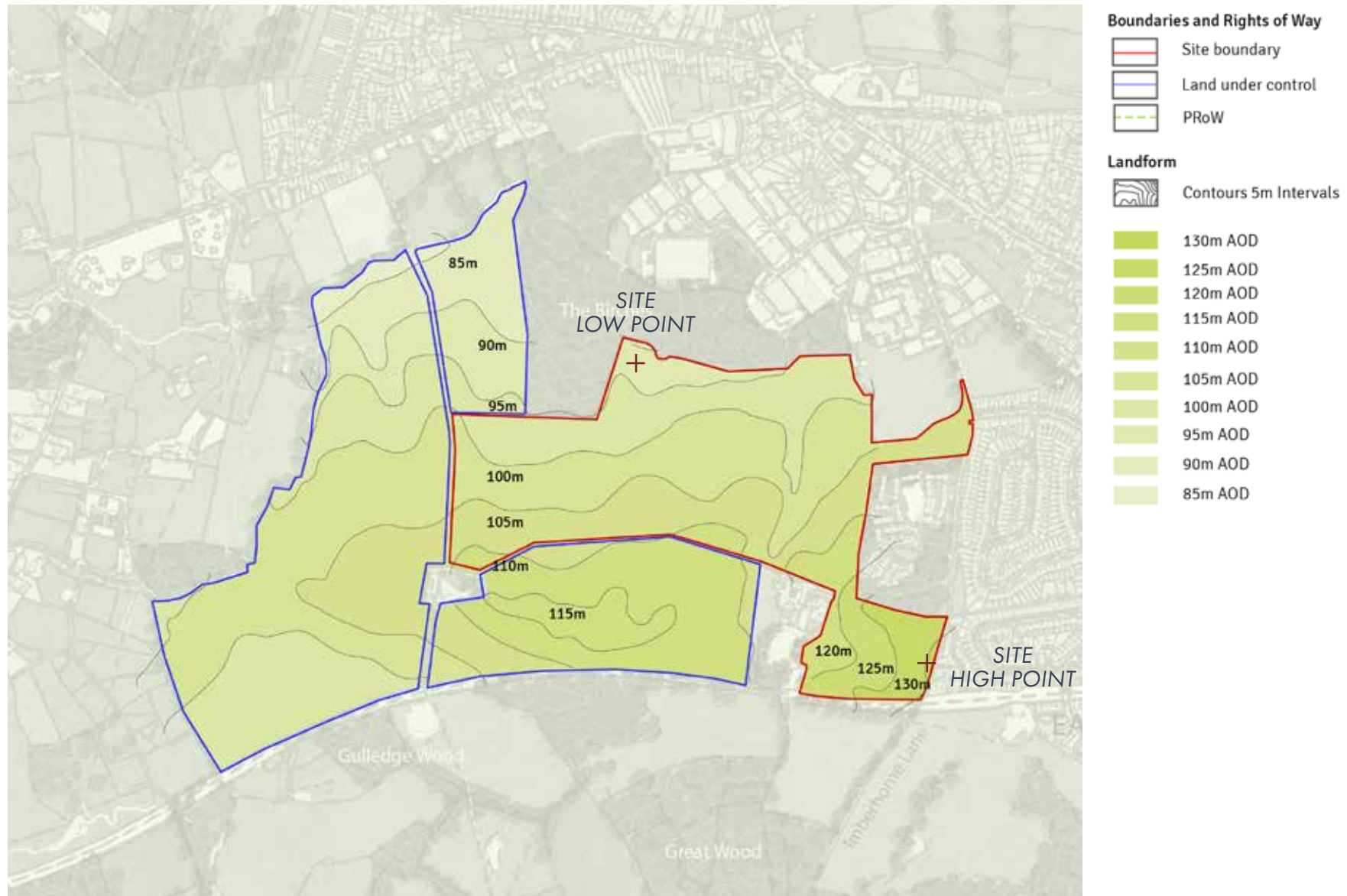


FIGURE 12. SITE LANDFORM

1.9. CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Cultural sensitivity rests, to no small degree, in the 'deep time' of man's activity on the land. The nature and content of the activity, and its products, is of course also central to the perception and definition of a 'sense of place'. Landscape and settlement character is shaped over time and an appreciation of the stages and activities that have happened in farming practices, in settlement and transport, as well as commerce, can all leave markers in the landscape that contribute to the 'local distinctiveness' (the phrase first invented by Common Ground in 1983) of a place. For a new development to have a successful relationship, and achieve a positive interaction with its human context as well as its landscape setting, a clear understanding of the history of the place can provide invaluable parameters and prompts.

The history of the land has relevance as many of the manmade elements in the settlement and the countryside can be better understood through some reference to the chronology of their mapped history. This LVA is not a Historic Landscape Character study but through simple evaluation of recorded elements on historic maps some measure of the changing patterns and uses of the site land can be usefully deduced.

Change in the landscape has been recorded on Ordnance Survey maps for over 100 years and these maps give snap-shots of the Site and its setting since the 1880's. They are reproduced in Figs. 13-16 with a series of landscape based observations. This LVA study leaves the detailed interpretation of the historic and cultural heritage significance to the Conservation Area Appraisal that considers the potential effects of the development proposal has been undertaken.



OS 125,000 EXPLORER MAP (2015) -
COMPARISON MAP



FIGURE 13. HISTORIC MAP 1856

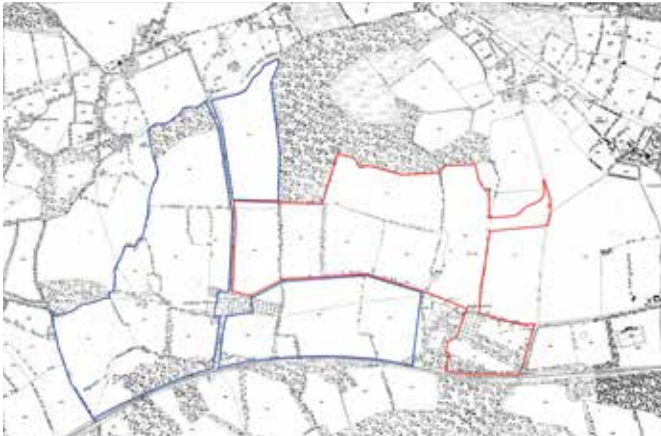


FIGURE 14. HISTORIC MAP 1870

- Substantial blocks and belts of woodland
- Field patterns are predominantly geometric, with fields varying in size
- Scattered Farmsteads with little other built form
- The London Brighton and South Coast Railway runs to the south of the Site.
- Areas of orchard around Gullede Farm and Imberhorne Farm
- Tree lined tracks lead from Gullede Farm in a northerly direction
- Predominance of trees within field boundaries
- Imberhorne Lane, Crawley Lane and Felbridge Road can be identified

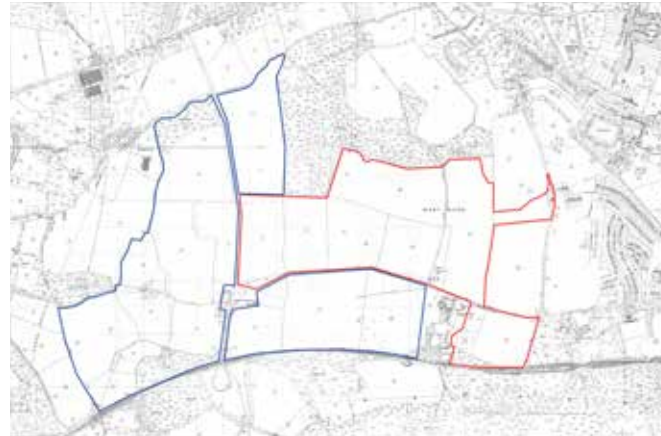


FIGURE 15. HISTORIC MAP 1950

- Substantial blocks and belts of woodland plantations
- Field patterns are generally unchanged
- Areas of built form have started to cluster around existing farmsteads and along main routeways
- The London Brighton and South Coast Railway is shown as still in use
- Imberhorne Manor is shown Is the last mapping in which Imberhorne Manor is shown
- Field boundaries remain generally unchanged
- The settlement of East Grinstead has expanded

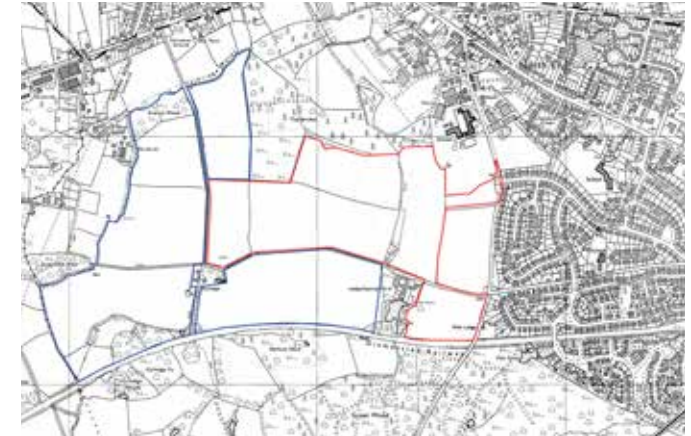


FIGURE 16. HISTORIC MAP 1990

- Field boundaries have been removed creating a larger field pattern
- Loss of orchard around Imberhorne Farm
- The settlements of East Grinstead and Crawley Down have expanded in size
- Dismantled railway line
- Imberhorne Manor no longer exists
- A school and various large scale industrial are situated on the western edge of East Grinstead





GULLEDGE FARMHOUSE: SOUTH EAST ELEVATION