



Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for SA26 Land south of Hammerwood Road, Ashurst Wood, West Sussex RH19 3RX

Date: February 2020
Report Number: 2020/SA26/LSHWR/AW/010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This LVIA is to assist with the Regulation 19 Submission for Site SA26, Land south of Hammerwood Road, Ashurst Wood.
- The Methodology follows the Guidelines for Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition, 2013, by The Landscape Institute & The Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment. The findings of High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Assessment Template are used in this LVIA. They demonstrate how the proposals meet the objectives of the High Weald Management Plan. Local landscape character and the wider High Weald Landscape character has been examined and key features identified.
- Definitions of LVIA report terminology are provided in the main document.
- Judgements and reasoning from the LVIA are discussed in the main text of the report.
- The site forms part of the well wooded, rural landscape of the High Weald Forest Ridge, in High Weald, HW1. The historic landscape characterisation for this site is for land which is post medieval, a modified landscape of Parkland style planting.
- The site was part of the landscaped grounds of a country house, and previously part of Abbey school. Due to the nature of the views within a densely wooded setting to the south and west, this produces few views into or out from the site from publicly accessible places, of the site on the High Weald Forest ridge in LCA High Weald HW1.
- The site forms part of the evergreen backdrop to Ashurst Wood's southern edge, south of Hammerwood road. The wooded parts of the site are well linked to and well enclosed in the views, by the neighbouring small woodlands to west and south. The evergreen, mature wooded nature of the Parkland style planting, some of it over mature and senescent, in lapsed management.
- This means that there is a narrow visual envelope, of confined views restricted to close range views only. There are no significant long views from publicly accessible land such as the Bridleway to east.
- Moreover, the wooded character of the site contributes to the local landscape character area and to creation of perceptual qualities in LCA HW1, including a certain sense of tranquillity in the nature of the views. The landscape character findings are that the Parkland style planting is part of the landscape character area HW1's key features and the designed landscape does contribute towards the strong sense of place on this site.
- The site has dominant senescent and over mature blocks of invasive exotic species, Rhododendron and Laure, which have become over stood and have shaded out native species. These pest species will need to be removed and replaced with mixed native planting to enhance biodiversity.
- The proposals will aim to conserve and enhance all good quality mature Parkland trees on site, and the overriding sylvan landscape character of the former Parkland. They will seek to conserve and enhance the scenic beauty of the wooded nature of the views in and out of the site; particularly from the views from north from Hammerwood road pavement and views from the west. Summary Tables, Viewpoint Photographs and Viewpoint Map illustrating the nature of these views are in Appendix.



- The findings of this LVIA support this application which includes protection and retention of all good quality mature Parkland style trees, as well as conservation of the sylvan nature of the local landscape character area, and the landscape setting of the land south of Hammerwood Road.
- All the woodland buffers to site, to north, west and east will therefore be protected and retained, and the mature trees on site will be integrated into the layout of the proposed dwellings. They will effectively be set in a wooded landscape setting as shown on the proposals Master plan drawings by Cowan Architects. The site forms part of the densely wooded forest Ridge and adjoins woodland to south and west. Threats to the native woodland include the lapsed management with some dead or dying species, these lower the overall landscape quality on the site.
- Overall, the LVIA findings are for slight positive landscape effects; through conserving and enhancing the local landscape character key features of the former Parkland style designed landscape.
- Cumulative impacts of other strategic sites for Reg 19 have been examined. Due to the size of the settlement and the location of Ashurst Wood towards the very north-east of the district, there are no other strategic developments proposed within the settlement, nor within a 500-metre radius. The closest other strategic developments currently proposed are at East Grinstead approximately 2.2 km north-west. Of these East Grinstead sites, most are focused towards the north-west of the town. The other sites would not have a cumulative impact with the site SA26, which is on Ashurst Wood's southern edge, as they are too distant to SA26.
- The site is located approximately 2.8 Km north of the SPA Ashdown Forest; there will be a need for a SANG arrangement to compensate for increased use of the SPA, Ashdown Forest from SA26 residents.
- The LVIA identifies management proposals outlined in this LVIA which will seek to conserve the sense of place and the scenic beauty of the key characteristics of SA26. The proposals are for 12 new dwellings, and to seek to conserve and enhance the site local landscape character. In particular, the sylvan nature of the close-range views along Hammerwood road, in the local landscape character area, in HW1, High Weald, in the southern part of the village setting in this part of the north of the AONB of the High Weald. This is to comply with the NPPF, and District Plan Policies for landscape. Protection and conservation of the key features of the LCA HW1, for woodland, soils and mature Parkland trees, will be in line with the West Sussex AONB protection and the NCA 122 High Weald, the West Sussex Landscape Strategy and protection of key landscape features in LCA, HW1. The High Weald Management Plan (HWMP) 2019-2024 Assessment Template has been followed and demonstrates how the proposals have been tested against the objectives of the Management Plan.
- These proposals meet the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024, summarised in the Assessment template, conserving visual and scenic aspects of landscape. GLVIA 3rd Edition methodology LVIA findings for the proposals, are positive and this will be in accordance with Mid Sussex District Council, District Plan 2014-2034, adopted in March 2018, District Plan Policies DP12, Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside, DP15 New Homes in the Countryside, DP16 High Weald AONB, DP17 Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, DP29 Noise and Air and Light Pollution, DP34 Listed Buildings and Heritage Assets, DP35 Conservation Areas, DP38 Biodiversity and Saved Policies; C5 Areas of Importance for Nature Conservation and C6 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands.



1. INTRODUCTION

Landvision South East Limited has been commissioned by the client, to undertake an LVIA report for SA 26 Land south of Hammerwood Road, Ashurst Wood, West Sussex. This LVIA is to assist the Regulation 19 submission for SA 26 Land south of Hammerwood Road.

1.2 STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

Landvision South East Limited is an environmental consultancy specialising in landscape visual impact assessment and environmental assessment. Landvision South East Limited is based in the south-east of England. The valuation of landscape effects and visual impacts is a key aspect of many environmental impact statements, planning studies and feasibility studies that Landvision South East Limited personnel have completed in the past, including LVIA and EIAs for road schemes and mineral developments in Kent and Sussex, as well as for residential developments in Sussex, Kent, Hampshire, Wiltshire and Surrey.

1.3 THE PROPOSALS

The purpose of this LVIA is to assess potential landscape effects and visual impacts of proposals for 12 dwellings on Land at SA 26 Land South of Hammerwood Road, Ashurst Wood, West Sussex. The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Assessment Template The site is located at National Grid Reference, TQ 423 366 in a village location within a rural area, in the High Weald AONB (HW1) south of Hammerwood Road.

The site is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; the High Weald AONB. It lies in the High Weald NCA 122 and is in the High Weald Forest Ridge, within West Sussex, Local landscape Character Area, HW1 (West Sussex County Council Landscape Character Assessment 2007).

The site is in Ashurst Wood and is approximately 2 Km southeast of East Grinstead and 1.8 Km north of Forest Row. The site is approximately 3 Km north of the northern edge of the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC and is in the High Weald Forest Ridge. The site lies due north of the County Boundary and previously was part of the Forest Row Parish, in East Sussex. The County boundary lies close to the south and east of the site.

Access to the site will be from Yewhurst Close which is to east of the site.

The land at SA26, land south of Hammerwood Road was landscaped and planted in recent times, producing the earth banks and remnant planting of the former parkland, including overgrown thickets of Rhododendron and Laurel which have become invasive. The land was formerly owned by the Abbey school and the landscaped grounds date back to recent times. West Sussex Historic Landscape Classification (2010): the historic landscape classification is of “post medieval gentrification, with isolated tree clumps.” The site is part of a designed parkland landscape which was also formerly associated with the large country house of the landowner known locally as the “Coco plantation millionaire”.



The site lies south of Hammerwood road, and the new dwellings would be separated from the road by a 5 m wide tree belt. There is mature woodland on the southern part of the site as well as some good quality specimen tree planting in the form of evergreen Parkland planting of trees. The existing buffer of mature evergreen planting and woodland and mature trees will be protected and retained as far as possible. This buffer is on all the site boundaries, most notably there is a mature woodland along the south eastern site boundary, but there is also mature woodland cover and Parkland style planting on the other, northern, eastern and western site boundaries.

There will be a pathway link to Green Space to the west of the site, beyond the proposed dwellings.

The site area is 0.58 hectare. The land is located on Wadhurst clay. The field of the site partly former parkland and landscaped grounds, now overgrown and partly in poor condition, in the northern part, whilst the southern part comprises good quality mature woodland.

The site is located high up on the plateau above the Medway valley.

The site lies at a height of approximately 128 m Above Ordnance Datum. The land on the ridge to west and east includes the land of the former school grounds, and further east beyond Yewhurst Close, are the house and grounds of a large estate and former school buildings and school grounds. Further to the east are an eclectic mixture of bungalows and houses located along Cansiron Lane, which is an old routeway. The geology is derived from Wadhurst clay formation, with ironstone deposits, and to the south, mudstone occurs.

This geology contributes to the complex landscape to south of the site, which has an intricate topography of a succession of rolling ridges and valleys. This local landscape is highly characteristic of the local landscape character area, High Weald, HW1, within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

To the south of the site is a hanger woodland, on the steep slopes which fall leading to Home Wood at 137m AOD beyond the site. The mosaic of woodlands and small fields of pasture is characteristically small scale and highly typical of this local landscape character area HW1. The site forms part of the ridgeline landscape, flatter on top, before descending rapidly with distance southwards, to Home Wood, are to south of the site forming the intervening characteristic high-quality High Weald HW1 landscape of wooded ridges and sheltered valleys between Ashurst Wood village in the north and Forest Row to the south.

To the east of the site, south of Hammerwood road and Cansiron Lane, there are a series of sunken footpaths and bridleway running north- south along the valleys, within this corrugated, rural High Weald landscape.

The intersection between the permeable sandstone and the impermeable Wadhurst clay is further, marked by a series of Springs along the northern edge of Home Wood. These springs along the southern edge of Cansiron lane, which links with Hammerwood road. There are



further springs located on the northern edge of Higham Wood, to southeast of the site. Where Wadhurst clay occurs; this clay causes areas of impeded drainage causing muddy footpaths, for instance, the Bridleway is muddy at time of site survey (December 2019), due to the underlying clay and high levels of use, by riders and walkers.

Further to the south of the site, the land falls to 59 m AOD at the pumping station on the north edge of Forest Row. To the east the head waters of the river Medway flow eastwards in a small valley depositing alluvium on the Ashdown formation of sandstone and silt stone interbedded. The river Medway runs west- east to south of the site and of the east Sussex boundary. The site falls just within the West Sussex County boundary, whilst which is located Forest Row to the south lies in East Sussex, which borders the site to south and east.

The NPPF revised Framework (July 2018), paragraphs 11, para 170, para 175 and para 177 on sustainable development, landscape and ecology are relevant; impacts on biodiversity should be minimised and there should be net gains for biodiversity, establishing coherent and resilient ecological networks. Any harm should be mitigated for or compensated for in the design of planting and other landscape enhancements.

The proposals for the 12 new dwellings with a ridge height of 8.1 m above ground, and 5.6 m to the eaves, above the existing ground level is at approximately 137 m AOD.

The site layout proposals are shown on the following drawings by Cowan Architects, East Grinstead.

Masterplan (showing site layout of the 12 proposed dwellings) drawing number 2226 – CAL – XX – XX – DR – a – 101 – S4 revision P2, size A3, Preliminary drawing dated 19/11/19. Scale 1 to 500, revision be dates 21/01/20 amended layout.

The perspective drawings are as follows; Also, Land south of Hammerwood Road Q2226-CAL-XX-XX-DR-A-SK01-S3-P1. Also, Land south of Hammerwood Rd, Indicative 3D Perspective -0 View travelling East on Hammerwood Road Q2226-CAL-XX-XX-DR-A-SK02-S3-P1, dated 29/01/20. Also, Q2226 – Land South of Hammerwood Road. Indicative 3D Perspective- View travelling West on Hammerwood Road Q2226-CAL-XX-XX-DR-A-SK03-S3-P1. There will be a woodland block to south of site, and woodland to west of site with pedestrian access via a path.

The Strategic site allocation, SA26 is located to the south of Ashurst Wood and is for 12 residential units. Due to the size of the settlement and the location of Ashurst Wood towards the very north-east of the district, there are no other strategic developments proposed within the settlement, nor within a 500-metre radius. The closest other strategic developments currently proposed are at East Grinstead approximately 2.2 km north-west. Of these East Grinstead sites, most are focused towards the north-west of the town. The other sites would not have a cumulative impact with the site SA26, which is on Ashurst Wood's southern edge, as they are too distant to SA26.

The site is located approximately 2 Km north of the SPA Ashdown Forest and there will be a need for a SANG arrangement to compensate for increased use of the SPA, Ashdown Forest.



1.4 SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

This LVIA assessment provides information for landscape input into the proposed development of the 12 new dwellings on land south of Hammerwood Road, SA26, at Ashurst Wood. This LVIA and detailed analysis assess key viewpoints and photomontages which illustrate the screening effect of existing topography, woodland, mature hedgerows and trees as well as existing shaws on and off site, including boundary treatments such as raised hedge banks with mature mixed native hedges and built features off site such as neighbouring sheds and farm buildings. This report assesses the landscape effects and the visual impacts of the proposed development from key viewpoints and determines mitigation and enhancement measures for the landscape character of the site within the High Weald Forest Ridge, in High Weald LCA, HW1.

This LVIA establishes baseline conditions, analyses the baseline conditions and describes the proposed development, plus the ability of the landscape to absorb change. It assesses significance of its landscape effects, its visual impact and proposed mitigation, with enhancements.

This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, LVIA report describes findings and seeks to help to inform site landscape design and landscape management for mitigation and enhancement of the setting of the proposed 12 new houses on SA26, land south of Hammerwood Road, at Ashurst Wood, West Sussex.

In particular, the LVIA assessment of landscape effects deals with effects of change and development on the landscape character as a resource. The proposals may affect various aspects of landscape character key elements, as well as some aesthetic, perceptual aspects of landscape character.

The landscape impact at an AONB scale is distinguished from the landscape impact on the local landscape character.

Not only the visual and scenic aspects, but also the landscape character is examined as well as “key components which contribute towards sense of place, distinctiveness, heritage and tranquillity. “

(Source; Assessing proposals against the AONB Management Plan in Legislation and Planning Policy in the High Weald AONB.)

These landscape effects and impacts on landscape character will be analysed. Field notes from the assessment are included in the Appendix to assist with this assessment.

Scoping is used to identify the area of landscape that will need to be covered in assessing landscape effects. Cumulative impacts of other strategic sites have been assessed and the results are included in the tables in the Appendix.



The study area encompasses the site itself and the full extent of the wider landscape upon which the proposed development might have significant effects.

The study area has been influenced by the desk study of Landscape Character Areas; both National, High Weald NCA 122 and local, HW1 High Weald. The site is thus located in a rural wooded part of the AONB HW1. The LCA is High Weald within the High Weald Forest Ridge, in the AONB, in a rural area on the southern edge of Ashurst Wood, to north of the village of Forest Row.

The site forms part of a modified landscape. It is part of an area of post-medieval former parkland, which has been landscaped from Victorian times, and has mature conifers, as well as mixed deciduous woodland on its southern flank. There are areas of mature overgrown Parkland species. The site mainly comprises these overgrown thickets of over mature, largely unmanaged leggy non-native species of *Rhododendron ponticum* and *Laurus nobilis*. The site retains a sylvan character, as it mainly comprises mature evergreen Parkland style planting, including mature Conifers such as Pines and Cupressus species, with broadleaved woodland to south.

The site is set to the north of the wider High Weald HW1 LCA, a wooded, confined rural landscape which is within an intimate and complex part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB. The site is mainly flat but slopes steeply along its southern margin, where the woodland of the northern edge of Home Wood, meets the southern edge of the site.

The site is largely hidden by the woodland of Home Wood and the woodland along its southern margin, so that there are few views towards the eastern and southern edges of the site. The land of the site is set in the south of the village within a patchwork landscape of small-scale fields of pasture and woodland. The fields are undulated and tend to be enclosed by hedgerows and shaws in the High Weald Forest Ridge within East Sussex. There is significant woodland cover, and the hedgerows and hedgerow trees adjoining the site link to a dense network of hedgerows, Shaws and hedgerow trees beyond the site.

The nearest Public right of way (PROW) is the Bridleway from Ashurst wood to forest Row runs north-south in a valley to the east of the site. The bridleway and the footpaths are sunken, with raised mature hedge banks, and there is equally woodland to west of these, so that most views from the Bridleway are screened by intervening woodland. The footpaths to east of the bridleway are equally well screened by intervening topography and vegetation including by mature woodland. Footpaths details are included in the Maps in the Appendix.

The study area has also been influenced by the field survey work findings regarding the extent of the area from which the development is likely to be visible. It takes the historic landscape character into account as well as key features of the local landscape character.

The location of other strategic sites for regulation 19 has also been assessed and any cumulative impact noted and discussed. (NB. There will be no cumulative visual impact as the other SA sites are located distant from this site.)



2. METHOD STATEMENT

2.1 GUIDANCE

The LVIA of the proposed scheme will be undertaken by a Landscape Architect with experience of similar types of development. The assessment will be undertaken in accordance with best practice outlined in published guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (2013) Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment.
- Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002); The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage; and
- Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment (2004); Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment.
- West Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)- historic landscape character assessment.
- High Weald Management Plan 2014-2019, Assessment template has been used in this assessment.
- Objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan, as informed by the evidence available on High Weald AONB website. (www.highweald.org). These have been tested against the proposals in this assessment.
- Maps of key characteristics of the High Weald, as identified in the HWMP (2014-2019)- including ancient routeways.
- Landscape management advice for key features- modified landscape of former parkland style planting, and management of invasive species on site with relevance to adjacent mixed native deciduous woodland.
- Detailed reports on aspects of the High Weald- dark skies and ancient routeways, ancient woodland.

2.2 APPROACH TO THE LVIA

The LVIA will be broadly undertaken in the following stages.

- Baseline data collection via desk-top, consultation and fieldwork.



- Description of the baseline landscape character and visual amenity of the site and surrounding area, which identify the relevant landscape and visual receptors (including key viewpoints) and determine their sensitivity to change.

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will consider the potential effects of the development upon.

- Individual landscape features and elements.
- Landscape character and quality (condition.)
- Visual amenity and the people who view the landscape.

2.3 DISTINCTION BETWEEN LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

Landscape and visual effects are two distinct but related areas, which will be assessed separately in accordance with the approach outlined below. Landscape and visual impacts do not necessarily coincide and can be beneficial or adverse. A clear distinction will be drawn between landscape effects and visual impacts as follows.

Landscape effects relate to the effects of the proposals on the physical and other characteristics of the landscape and its resulting character and quality. The findings will be summarised in table form in the Appendix.

Visual impacts relate to the effects on views experienced by visual receptors (e.g. residents, footpath users, tourist's etc.) and on the visual amenity experienced by those people. The findings will be summarised in table form in the Appendix.

The following are assessed in this LVIA report.

- Description of the magnitude of change in the landscape and visual amenity because of the proposals.
- Description of the potential landscape and visual effects arising from the proposals.
- Development of strategic mitigation proposals to assist in reducing adverse landscape and visual effects or provide compensation where unavoidable, and where possible enhance and safeguard beneficial effects.

2.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Section 2.0 of the report describes the method statement and approach taken to the LVIA assessment. The use of detailed assessment criteria is contained in this section, with Summary Tables shown in the Appendix.



Section 3.0 considers the Baseline Assessment of the landscape planning context, including all planning policy and designations that are relevant to the site.

Section 3.8 describes the existing baseline landscape features, current landscape character, plus the visual amenity and views of the study area which comprise the baseline situation.

Section 4.0 describes the development proposals and landscape strategy. Management Opportunities are discussed.

Section 5.0 describes the assessment of impacts, that is, potential landscape and visual impacts with landscape effects of the proposals. This is supported by detailed description of the impacts on the existing landscape; summary findings of landscape and visual impact assessment tables are contained in Appendix 4 and 5.

Section 6.0 describes the landscape effects as well as the visual impacts and their mitigation for the site. Enhancements are also discussed.

2.5 BASELINE INFORMATION

Baseline information regarding landscape features and sensitive visual receptors, and the likely change in the landscape character and visual amenity of the site and its surroundings, will be used to identify potential effects and inform the final scheme as appropriate.

Strategic mitigation measures will be developed in tandem with the proposals to minimize adverse effects as part of an iterative design process.

Options for merging the scheme into its setting will be investigated and adopted as mitigation measures where appropriate.

Criteria thresholds for assessing the degree of change as a result of the scheme will be established and the final layout of the scheme will be reviewed to ascertain the magnitude of change in the landscape and in views.

Visual effects on historic features of interest may also need to be assessed.

Cumulative effects of other strategic sites in West Sussex will be assessed in terms of any impacts on the landscape character and visual quality.

Landscape Visual Impact Assessment, with Landscape Character Assessment, is key in developing an understanding of how to conserve, to protect and to enhance the landscape.

Each specific development should be looked at on a case by case basis and its landscape impact assessed.

Assessment of the landscape effects on local landscape character are a key part of this LVIA assessment.



2.6 SENSITIVITY OF RECEPTORS, MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS

The significance of effects of the proposals on both the landscape and visual receptors within the study area are ascertained, by cross-referencing the sensitivity of the baseline landscape or visual receptor and the magnitude of change as a result of the development.

The sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors is judged as high, medium or low. The magnitude of change is also judged to be high, medium, low or negligible. Significance of effects is expressed as either slight, moderate or substantial, which may be either beneficial or adverse, or neutral.

2.7 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT TERMINOLOGY

A field assessment was made of landscape visual sensitivity and the potential site for the proposed development SA26 was assessed in terms of value, quality, and sensitivity to change of the type proposed by this development. (See Viewpoints and Photographs in Appendix 1.) In this section, the key criteria for the landscape assessment are described.

2.8 LANDSCAPE TERMS

Landscape resource. This is a combination of the elements that contribute towards landscape context, character and value.

Landscape value. The relative importance of value attached to the landscape which expresses national and local consensus because of the intrinsic characteristics of the landscape itself.

Landscape character. This is the distinct and homogeneous pattern that occurs in the landscape reflecting geology, landform, soils, vegetation and man's impact.

2.9 LANDSCAPE QUALITY

For the purpose of this assessment, landscape quality is categorized as:

Exceptional quality: these are areas of especially high-quality, acknowledged through designation as AONBs or other landscape-based sensitive areas, such as SLAs or Conservation areas; they are thus recognized as being of landscape significance within the wider region or nationally.

High-quality: these are areas which have a very strong positive character containing valued and consistent distinctive features they give the landscape unity, richness and harmony. They are areas which are of landscape significance within the district.

Medium quality: these are areas that exhibit a positive character, but which may have evidence of alteration or degradation or erosion of features resulting in a less distinctive



landscape. They may be of some local landscape significance with some positive recognizable structure.

Low quality: these are generally negative in character, degraded and in a poor condition. No positive distinctive features or characteristics and with little or no structure, scope for positive enhancement.

2.10 LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

Landscape sensitivity to the type of development proposed is defined as follows:

High sensitivity. High visual quality landscape with highly valued or unique characteristics susceptible to relatively small changes.

Medium sensitivity. Medium visual quality landscape with moderately valued characteristics reasonably tolerant of changes.

Low sensitivity. Low visual quality landscape with common characteristics capable of absorbing substantial change.

2.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

The level of significance of the effect on the landscape of the new development is a product of landscape sensitivity and the magnitude of change in the landscape visual resource brought about by the new development. Overall, visual impact is determined by combining the sensitivity of the receptor with the magnitude of visual change. Professional judgment is used to determine the overall significance of impact based on these two elements. Overall significance is classified as Substantial, Moderate, Minor or Negligible and the effects can be adverse or beneficial.

2.12 VISUAL ASSESSMENT TERMINOLOGY

The following describes the criteria used in the visual assessment.

2.13 VISUAL ASSESSMENT DEFINITIONS

Visual quality: although the interpretation of different viewers' experience can have preferential or subjective components, there is generally clear public agreement that the visual resources of certain landscapes have high visual quality. The visual quality of the landscape will reflect the physical state of repair of individual features or elements as well as its current management.



Due to the subjective view of the evaluation there is no comprehensive official process of identifying visual quality. The visual quality of this evaluation has been carried out by one landscape architect.

Visual character: when a viewer experiences the visual environment, it is not observed as one aspect at a time, but rather as an integrated whole. The viewer's visual understanding of an area is based upon the visual character of visible features and aspects and the relationships between them. The visual character is descriptive and not evaluative.

Visual resources: the visual resources of the landscape are the stimuli upon which actual visual experiences based. They are a combination of visual character and visual quality.

2.14 VIEWER SENSITIVITY

Viewer sensitivity is a combination of the sensitivity of the human receptor (for example a local resident, a tourist, a walker, a commuter, a recreationist or a worker) and the viewpoint type, location or activity of the viewer (for example the leisure venue, houses, workplace, local beauty spot, scenic viewpoint, commuter route, tourist route, or walker's route.) Consideration is given to the importance of the view that may be determined with respect to its popularity, designation/protection and by the numbers of people affected. Sensitivity can be defined as follows:

High sensitivity: for example, users of an outdoor recreation feature which focuses on the landscape, or activities such as walking or cycling which involve valued views enjoyed by the community; tourist visitors to scenic viewpoints.

Medium sensitivity: for example, uses of outdoor sport or recreation which does not offer or focus attention on the landscape; tourist traveller.

Low sensitivity; example regular commuters, people at a place of work such as farm workers (excluding outdoor recreation.)

2.15 VISUAL MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE

Magnitude of change in the visual resource will result from the scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of new features in the view and changes in the view composition itself. Important factors to be considered include the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development; also, distance and duration of the view.

The angle of the view in relation to the main activity of the receptor is of relevance to developments such as structures. Other vertical or built features in the landscape and the backdrop to the developments will influence resource change. Visual Magnitude of Change can be defined as follows:

High magnitude: where changes to the view significantly alter (negative or beneficial) the overall scene or indeed cause some alteration to the view and/or a significant length of time.



Medium magnitude: where some changes occur (negative or beneficial) in a view, but not for a substantial part of the view and/or for a medium length of time.

Low magnitude: where only a minor alteration to the view occurs (negative or beneficial) and/or not for a significant length of time.

No change: where there is no discernible deterioration or improvement in the existing view.

2.16 SIGNIFICANCE OF VISUAL IMPACT

The significance of the visual impact can only be defined on a project by project basis. The principal criteria for determining significance are magnitude and sensitivity of the receptor. A higher level of significance is generally attached to large-scale or substantial effects on sensitive receptors.

2.17 THEORETICAL ZONE OF VISUAL INFLUENCE OR ZVI

The theoretical zone of visual influence is the area within which the use of the site and/or the development can be theoretically obtained. The extent of the ZVI is determined firstly by the topography of the area. The ZVI is then refined by field studies to indicate where relevant forestry, woodlands, hedges or other local features obscure visibility from the main roads, local viewpoints or landmarks and/or significant settlements.

Field survey beyond 1 km is used to establish that no wider landscape or visual impacts will occur due to proposed development. In the case of this proposed development, the ZVI is semi enclosed and confined to parts of the north, north west and north east, and east, because of topography, site levels, existing boundary vegetation and intervening vegetation.

2.18 PHOTOGRAPHS

Several representative viewpoints have been selected around the site as illustrated. Please see Appendix 1, Viewpoints Photographs and Appendix 2, Photographs.

The purpose of this material is to help to assess the proposed development's visual impacts and landscape effects.

2.19 STUDY AREA

For the purposes of this LVIA, a 1 Km study area from the centre of the site has been used as a boundary to assess the effects of the proposals. 1 Km has been considered in acknowledgment of the scale of the proposals, the topography of the site and the landscape around the site, the combined effects of intervening topography and mature hedgerows and small woods and shaws in the views. Intervening residential buildings and other forms such as banks with hedges and the nature of vegetation cover also affects visibility of the site. It is



thus considered that more distant views are likely to be very limited and none could be found during the LVIA site survey visits in December 2019.

2.20 VISUAL ENVELOPE

The visual envelope of a scheme defines the broad area from within which it may be possible to see the whole or part of the proposed development and helps to establish the potential for sensitive visual receptors. The development is not considered to be visible outside this area or would be very difficult to perceive; no other viewpoints were obvious during field work in December 2019.

There will be a large area beyond the visual envelope from which there are no views of the study area. This is due to the local screening effects of vegetation, and the intervening topography and screening by residential buildings. Landscape features, which form visual barriers and restrict views towards parts of the study area, such as farm and residential buildings and woodland, will be evaluated and significant barriers identified to refine the baseline visibility of the proposals.

2.21 REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINTS

Within the extent of the visual envelope, it would not be practical to illustrate the visual impact on every individual visual receptor affected by a scheme. Therefore, representative viewpoints will be used to assess the impacts on the different range of views towards the site. The representative Viewpoints will be illustrated photographically using a digital camera which is a Pentax K311. The site location and relevant significant features will be identified together with landmarks and features in the surrounding area. All photography carried out as part of this assessment is in accordance with LI Advice Note 01/11 (March 2011). Also, Landscape Technical Guidance Note 02/17 931 March 2017). Visual Representation of Development proposals. These are Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Notes.

2.22 TEMPORAL SCOPE

2019 has been taken as the baseline year for defining the existing landscape.

The relevant impacts of the development will be assessed at the following times:

- Year 1: - one year after opening (Opening Year) to assess the impacts once the major construction is complete; and
- Year 15: - fifteen years after opening (Design Year) to allow for any mitigation planting and other landscape schemes to mature to give the intended enhancement effects.



2.23 LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES

Desk Studies

The baseline landscape and visual assessment comprised a desktop study of the following data sources:

- The Google Earth website at www.earth.google.com;
- The Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside website at www.magic.gov.uk;
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); Department for Communities and Local Government (2012.)
- Mid Sussex District Plan, 2014-2019. Adopted March 2018.
- National Character Area Profile 122: The High Weald, Natural England, Countryside Commission and English Heritage.
- Landscape recommendations for County Council Landscape Character Assessment, LCA -Landscape Type HW1, High Weald.
- Objectives and actions contained in the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 (4th edition), published by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee.
- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.
- Appendix 1- High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Assessment Template. "Assessing the proposals against the AONB Management Plan.
- These are the chief sources of desk top baseline information.

Field Studies.

The site was visited on 29th – 30th December 2019 to obtain the following data:

- Photographs from proposed Representative Viewpoints.
- A corroboration of the findings of the desktop review.
- To obtain additional information on landscape features, views and localised screening effects of mature vegetation.
- Site surveys were undertaken during periods of clement weather from public highways, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and publicly accessible areas, including from Bridleway,



footpaths, Cansiron lane, the Recreation ground, Forest Row village, as well as from Hammerwood road.

2.24 CONSULTATIONS

The representative viewpoints are to be agreed with Mid Sussex Council Planning Department.

3. BASELINE ASSESSMENT

3.1 RELEVANT LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

3.2 INTRODUCTION

The planning policy for the study area is covered in greater detail in the Planning Statement by Planit Consulting. However, in this section we identify policy and designations of direct relevance to the landscape.

3.3 EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION, COUNCIL OF EUROPE, 2000

The context of landscape policy in the UK can be placed within the broad framework provided by the European Landscape Convention (ELC). The ELC was signed by the Government in February 2006 and signals a commitment to support the aims of the Convention which include promoting landscape protection, management and planning. It suggests that “Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factor” and covers semi-rural landscapes.

3.4 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The relevant parts of the NPPF are;

NPPF Section Habitats and Biodiversity, Paragraph 174 annex a and annex b will apply, as habitats have been noted and the enhancements will link to these habitats.

a) is to “identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks...including locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones”. This includes the “stepping stones that connect them”; and local partnerships identified ...” for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation.”

b) Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.”



The woodland to be protected, retained and managed is in the south of the site. The green buffers to the site are along the site boundaries. The removal of the exotic invasive species will mean that replanting with native species will be required to retain the green buffer to the site. Where possible woodland shaws and hedgerows to be planted will be enhancements satisfying NPPF paragraph 174 annexes (a and b).

Paragraph 175 annex c and annex d, will apply and will be satisfied as ancient woodland adjacent to site will be fully protected, with a 15 metre buffer zone, and the new shaw- style mixed native planting will be planted and new hedgerow planted will enhance the ancient woodland network.

Thus, this paragraph 175, annex c and annex d, will be adhered to by proposals in this application which are to protect and enhance natural habitats, especially ancient woodland, mixed deciduous woodland hedgerows and shaws, good quality mature Parkland trees, at SA26, Land south of Hammerwood Road.

This LVIA will seek to test that the above NPPF clauses for respecting, conserving and enhancing the landscape character are satisfied and will recommend additional appropriate mitigation and enhancements where these are deemed to be necessary.

The site is located within the High Weald AONB which confers a high level of protection of the landscape character of the site and a high level of protection of the key characteristics of the wider AONB landscape in which it is situated.

3.5 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The main receptors of visual impacts have been identified. The main landscape effects have also been defined.

- Sense of place, local distinctiveness, scenic beauty, views, sense of history and dark landscape are examined as part of this LVIA.
- Site SA26 is located within HW1, High Weald, within the High Weald AONB.
- This LVIA will thus be distinguishing between impact on the AONB and impact on the local landscape character, including sense of place, distinctiveness, heritage and tranquillity.
- This is in accordance with Assessing proposals against the AONB Management Plan objectives.
- The site is an area of modified landscape, former Parkland and has become overgrown with invasive species including Rhododendron and laurel due to lapsed management. To the south of the site there is a mixed deciduous woodland, and to the west there is a mixed copse. To the immediate south of the site southern boundary is a block of hanger



woodland which straddles the flanks of the valley, and where the levels drop dramatically. This mixed deciduous woodland is important in creating a sense of place.

The parkland style mature tree planting contributes towards local distinctiveness in views from the wider AONB.

The landscape is wooded and the woodland on south and west of the site has more varied native planting and habitat value.

The woodland screens the interior of the site and enables it to merge with the wider landscape character area, which is High Weald, and is densely wooded with distance south and southeast from the site.

The green buffer of mixed parkland style planting along the north of the site is important in creating a sense of place of SA26 within the southern edge of the village, and this should be conserved through long term management.

The visual quality of the edges of the north of some parts of the site along Hammerwood road, are of lower quality due to lapsed management. These buffer zone areas will require sensitive management in order to conserve the sylvan nature of the views along Hammerwood road for the long term, by replanting of gaps with native trees.

At present the visual quality of parts of the site is low due to poor management, with some dead, dying and dangerous trees and leggy over mature thickets of invasive species of Rhododendron and Laurel- these areas will require grubbing out and new mixed native planting, including specimen tree planting will be required, to retain the sense of place, and to conserve and enhance the biodiversity which is parkland style planting in High Weald.

Hammerwood road, and the west and east site boundaries, will need to be managed, protected and retained, with a proposed minimum width of 5 metre buffer zone of green planting and mature hedgerow and trees, including new planting of evergreen species.

It is important to retain the sylvan nature of the views along Hammerwood road and to discourage any new access points along the northern site boundary. This is to conserve the sense of place and to retain the key features of the landscape character of the site within HW1.

Equally important is to conserve the woodland along the southern part of the site boundary. This is a key feature of the local landscape character and will help to integrate the site proposals into the wider AONB landscape.

At present the visual quality of parts of the site is low due to poor management, with some dead, dying and dangerous trees and leggy over mature thickets of invasive species of Rhododendron and Laurel- these areas will require grubbing out and new mixed native planting, including specimen tree planting will be required, to retain the sense of place, and to conserve and enhance the biodiversity which is parkland style planting in High Weald.



To the north of the site are existing houses of Hammerwood Road and to east of the site is new social housing of Yewhurst Close. To the east of this modern housing development is Cansiron lane, which has an eclectic mixture of housing styles, from arts and crafts to modern 1970s bungalows, to larger country houses, mostly detached. To the south and south east is the rural High Weald, with isolated larger houses set within large farm steads and country houses set in large plots. Design considerations will therefore take account of this context.

There are needs to focus on the key components of the landscape which contribute to the sense of place, distinctiveness and tranquillity. These are the woodland to south of the site, and the Parkland style planting on the site, which gives SA26 and the land south of Hammerwood road a sylvan character.

As such, the design approach is site-based and results in a form that reflects the landscape character of the area, a modified landscape of Parkland style planting, with woodland to south, as well as requirements of the residential site shape and any constraints of access to the 12 new dwellings, on the edge of a village within a High Weald setting.

The site has a series of small earth banks, recent in origin which originated during the modification of this part of the landscape, during Victorian times, to produce landscaped grounds for a large estate.

LVIA landscape effects; to conserve and enhance the Parkland landscape character, by retaining all good quality Parkland trees, including Pines and Cypress species.

To conserve and enhance the deciduous woodland on the southern and western edges of the site; this is to retain key landscape features which contribute to the strong sense of place of this part of the LCA HW1, High Weald.

To manage and remove the overgrown thickets of Rhododendron and Laurel, replacing these where possible, with more varied mixed deciduous copse style planting, to include some evergreen native species.

The proposed landscape enhancements will be to strengthen the sense of place and local distinctiveness, to conserve the green buffer of the site, particularly along the site boundaries, and to link these green areas to the wider hedgerow networks and thence to woodland beyond the site. This is to conserve and enhance habitats for butterflies and birds to protect these BAP species. There will be mitigation and enhancements for bats, which are likely to be present in the LCA.

There is scope to improve the landscape and visual quality of the site, through judicious management of the good quality mature Parkland trees, and through protection and retention of the woodland in the south of the site. This will help to conserve a strong sense of place and local distinctiveness of the site within the landscape character area HW1, to conserve and enhance the site, SA26, within its High Weald Forest Ridge landscape setting.



3.6 LOCAL LANDSCAPE POLICY

- The site falls within the boundary of Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 - 2031, adopted March 2018.
- The most relevant source of local landscape policy guidance is Development in the countryside DP 12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside.
- “The countryside is an asset that is highly valued by the Council and residents and is recognised as having social value in enhancing the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors. The countryside is a working environment that needs to be managed in a way that enhances the attractiveness of the rural environment whilst enabling traditional rural activities to continue.”
- Relevant Policies are; District Plan Policies DP12, Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside, DP15 New Homes in the Countryside, DP16 High Weald AONB, DP17 Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, DP26 Character and Design, DP29 Noise and Air and Light Pollution, DP34 Listed Buildings and Heritage Assets, DP35 Conservation Areas, DP38 Biodiversity. Saved Policies C5 Areas of Importance for Nature Conservation and C6 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands.
- The main policies of relevance to landscape character are DP12, DP15, DP16, DP26 and C5 and C6.

3.6.1 DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside.

The rural economy will be supported by other policies within this Plan that permit small-scale development and changes of use that will further economic activities that are compatible with the District’s rural character. Its environmental worth will be protected and enhanced by the policies in this Plan, the Natural Resources policies (DP37 – DP42).

The District Plan aims to “secure its protection by minimising the amount of land taken for development and preventing development that does not need to be there. At the same time, it seeks to enhance the countryside, support the rural economy by accommodating well-designed, appropriate new forms of development and changes in land use where a countryside location is required and where it does not adversely affect the rural environment. New development to meet local needs can be proposed through Neighbourhood Plans where this will support local services and is otherwise compatible with District Plan policies.”

The Council has worked with West Sussex County Council to produce evidence, guidance and landscape strategy documents that will be referred to when implementing this policy. The Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex (2005) provides a comprehensive account of the landscape character of Mid Sussex. The Assessment states that change needs to be managed so that important landscape characteristics are not lost and that opportunities to create new landscapes are maximised (paragraph 2.81). Historic Landscape Character Information (data held by West Sussex County Council) has been prepared for the District, which identifies important historic landscape features such as farmsteads and ancient field patterns.

The Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (2005, paragraph 2.5) identifies the settlement pattern of the County – a network of small to medium-sized towns, villages and hamlets – as a strong defining characteristic. Built-up area boundaries, which set the boundaries between



the built-up areas and the wider countryside, have been established for many years within the District and continue to be defined on the Policies Map.”

The Countryside will be protected “in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty”. Development will be permitted in the countryside, 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.”

“The Capacity of Mid Sussex District to Accommodate Development Study (June 2014) summarises the relevant findings of the Landscape Capacity Study undertaken for the District in 2007 and includes an assessment of areas that were not included in the previous study.

In addition to the significant proportion of the District under a national landscape designation (60%), the Capacity Study (paragraph 3.22) found that “even outside of the AONB and National Park, there are no areas assessed as having high landscape capacity (i.e. likely to be able to accommodate significant allocations of housing development)”.

It is therefore necessary that all development in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built up area boundaries, must seek to maintain or enhance the intrinsic beauty and tranquillity of the countryside.”

DP 12 also states that;

“In the interests of historic and nature conservation any development proposals in the countryside must be in accordance with policies DP29: Noise, Air and Light Pollution, DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets, DP35: Conservation Areas, DP36: Historic Parks and Gardens and DP38: Biodiversity. “

DP12: Strategic Objectives:

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

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

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.

3.6.2 *DP 15 New Homes in the Countryside.*

LDP 15: New Homes in the Countryside

Strategic Objectives: 3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities;

and 13) To provide the amount and type of housing that meets the needs of all sectors of the community.

Evidence Base: A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex; Town and Parish Council submissions.

Provided that they would not be in conflict with Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside, new homes in the countryside will be permitted where special justification exists.

Special justification is defined as:

- Affordable housing in accordance with Policy DP32: Rural Exception Sites; or
- The proposed development meets the requirements of Policy DP6: Settlement Hierarchy.

3.6.3 *DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.*

DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Strategic Objectives: 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.

Evidence Base: The High Weald AONB Management Plan.

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.”



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

This policy sets out an avoidance and mitigation strategy to reduce the impact of recreational disturbance.

Within the 7 Km zone of influence, all development will need to contribute to an appropriate level of mitigation detailed in the Habitats Regulations Assessment, in the form of providing a SANG, either on the development site itself or through a financial contribution to a strategic SANG elsewhere, and a separate financial contribution towards a SAMM Strategy. Further guidance on the type of development covered by this policy can be found in the SANG Strategy.

A strategy will be developed which will provide guidance on how developer contributions towards the implementation of the Ashdown Forest SAMM Strategy will be calculated and delivered. The District Council is currently implementing an interim SAMM Strategy which has been approved by Natural England.

In terms of atmospheric pollution, the Habitats Regulations Assessment concludes that adverse effects on the Ashdown Forest SAC are unlikely and no further measures are necessary at this stage. However, in order to promote good practice, the District Plan in Policy DP21: Transport contains measures to encourage sustainable transport. In addition, if appropriate, other measures to assess and manage atmospheric pollution impacts on Ashdown Forest will also be reviewed and implemented, particularly if new evidence becomes available.

The District Council will monitor the effectiveness of this policy for the impacts on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC and review/amend the approach, including any mitigation requirements, set out in this policy as necessary.

Strategic Objectives: 3) To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities.

Evidence Base: Ashdown Forest Visitor Survey Data Analysis, Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Mid Sussex District Plan, Visitor Access Patterns on Ashdown Forest.

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.”

3.6.5 DP 26 Character and Design

- Mid Sussex has a high quality built and natural environment and this requires the design of new development to respect the character of towns and villages as well as the character of the buildings. The policy requires high quality in design with new development that contributes positively to the private and public realm (including streets and open spaces), protects valued townscapes, and creates accessible environments.

DP26: Character and Design

Strategic Objectives:

- 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. Evidence Base: CABE Good Practice Guidance.
- 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.”

3.6.6 Mitigation and enhancements for the site in High Weald AONB, HW1 Landscape Character Area.

- District Plan Policy, DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- The National Planning Policy Framework gives great weight to the need to conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.
- Primary aims of the AONB are to conserve and enhance the natural landscape beauty of areas.
- That the proposed development is not intrusive in landscape nor will it detract from landscape character.
- Ensure that there are no views from the wider AONB which means that proposals do not adversely impact on landscape character and the wider rural open landscape.
- Substantial enhancements proposed will be to respect and enhance the landscape character in accordance with DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside.
- Views from PROW, namely from footpath HK11, footpath HK 12, and footpath HK5 from adjacent Waterbury Hill road will be enhanced in accordance with DP 16 High Weald and DP 12 Protection and Enhancement of the Countryside.
- Tree protection policies DP 37 Tree, Woods and hedgerows apply. This Local Plan Policy on trees is to conserve trees, woodland and hedgerows.



- The application will resist loss of trees, keep woodlands and hedgerows which make a significant contribution to the appearance of the landscape, which are of wildlife interest, historic significance and are significant for recreation. Adjoining mature ancient woodland, trees and hedgerows will be highly protected as key features of the LCA HW1 High Weald within the AONB.
- DP 16 High Weald, to respect and enhance the distinctive character of the landscape will be by;
- Replacement of any shrubs/hedgerows removed by native hedgerows of local species suited to soils and locality, in accordance with landscape character, NCA High Weald 122; LCA HW1 High Weald, in the High Weald Forest Ridge of West Sussex.
- Ancient Woodlands are adjacent to the site, to west and along Waterbury Hill road to east.
- “Ancient Woodlands are defined as areas which have been continuously wooded since before 1600AD in England.
- These are areas of ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW), which retains a native tree and shrub cover that has not been planted, although it may have been managed by coppicing or felling and allowed to regenerate naturally.
- Ancient woods also include ‘Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites’ (PAWS) where the original tree cover has been felled and replaced by planting, often with conifers, and usually over the last century.
- Areas of ancient woodland, particularly those under 2 hectares and not afforded statutory protection by designations such as SSSIs, but they remain of high ecological importance.
- Rare and threatened species are associated with ancient woodland. They are vital for their biodiversity, as habitats and to form links to green corridors.
- “The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are also identified as important considerations. National policy also states that planning permission should be refused for major developments in these areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest.
The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers most of the northern part of the District. The High Weald AONB Management Plan identifies the distinctive features of the landscape and how these can be conserved and enhanced. Significant consideration should be given to the conservation and enhancement of the locally distinctive features of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as defined by the High Weald AONB Management Plan.”



- “The setting of the High Weald AONB is also important as landscapes connect ecologically, economically and socially. In particular, the views into and out of the AONB may be affected by activities outside of the designated area.”
- The National Planning Practice Guidance “explains that the duty to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of AONBs” is relevant when considering development proposals situated outside of an AONB, but which might have an impact on its setting. In addition, the land at Little Oddyness Farm is adjacent to the River Ouse headwaters, including tributaries.
- The following priority habitats are found near to the site:
- Mixed deciduous woodland, Wet woodland, Standing open water-bodies, Ponds, Hedgerows, Arable field margins.”

3.6.7 *Wooded landscape Character.*

- Hedgerows and woodlands provide habitats with connections for wildlife between these sites of biodiversity importance.
- Protecting and retaining ancient and veteran trees are important for conserving biodiversity, as cultural connections to the past and as significant markers of our landscape heritage.
- Ancient and veteran trees, and ancient hedgerows outside areas of ancient woodland, wood pasture and parkland will require special protection and management.

3.6.8 *Policy DP 38: Biodiversity.*

- Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, protecting existing biodiversity so that there is no loss and biodiversity on site, minimising habitats and species fragmentation and taking opportunities to enhance and to restore ecological corridors, promoting the restoration, management and expansion of priority habitats of the district.
- This policy also undertakes to avoid damage to protect and enhance the special characteristics of designated Special Protection areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and of ancient woodlands and other areas of conservation value including wildlife corridors, as well as aged or veteran trees biodiversity operation opportunity areas and nature improvement areas.
- *Saved Policy C5: Areas of Importance for Nature Conservation.*



- Proposals affecting SSSI, LNR, ancient woodlands or other sites of nature conservation interest will only be allowed where the proposal minimises the impact on features of nature conservation importance. Opportunities for habitat creation should be taken where possible. The weight attached to nature conservation interest will reflect the relative significance of the nature conservation designations.
- *Saved Policy C6: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands.*
- Development that results in the loss of woodlands, hedgerows and trees which are important in the landscape, always natural habitats, or historically will be resisted.

3.7 LVIA ASSESSMENT

The LVIA enhancement recommendations of this LVIA report are based on the up to date findings of this LVIA landscape assessment conducted in December 2019 and January 2020.

- The site forms the southern edge of the village south of Hammerwood road. The wider landscape beyond the site, particularly to the south, and to the north of the village edge to far north, is a high quality, intimate complex and inward-looking part of the High Weald AONB landscape.
- The site itself is assessed in the West Sussex Historic landscape character study as being a modified landscape, post medieval Parkland style landscape located on a plateau, on the ridge within the edge of the village of Ashurst Wood, within the LCA HW1, High Weald.
- The nature of the landscape setting is a well wooded landscape to south, typical of LCA HW1, within the wider High Weald AONB setting. The village of Ashurst Wood is a ridge line settlement. The village evolved from the junction of old trackways and the modern-day houses straddle the ridge, stretching along the main roads which evolved from historic routes, including the settlement along Hammerwood road to north of the site, and the settlement along Cansiron Lane to the east.
- The houses are of mixed style and age, some older large detached houses to east, including the former Abbey school buildings, once part of a large country estate. There are smaller dwellings to north of the Hammerwood road, part of the village modern ribbon development and with recent social housing to the east of the site at Yewhurst Close, presenting an eclectic housing mix.
- The Parkland style planting of the site formed part of a wider country estate, latterly part of the school grounds of Abbey school. The sense of place created by the evergreen buffer to the site, is strong and locally distinctive. This is due to the mature nature of the planting, its dark evergreen appearance and the solid block of planting, which covers the whole of the site, although the condition of the parkland style planting is poor, due to lapsed management, and this lowers the landscape quality of the site. This offers considerable scope to manage the green space of the site, retaining the buffer of the site, in order to conserve the overall wooded appearance and sylvan landscape character along the south of Hammerwood road.
- The site has a woodland buffer, of former Parkland style planting on all four boundaries and to south and west the site has deciduous woodland which means that the site is well enclosed. These woodlands to south and west of the site link via green links of mature hedgerows and woodlands, including to the larger woodland of Home Wood. The woodland on the south and west site boundaries mean that there are few views into or out from the south, the site being set in a confined,



enclosed rural landscape. The principal views are short range views in from the pavement north of Hammerwood Road and through the proposed access from the east from Yewhurst Close. There are no significant views from The Bridleway to the east of the site, nor from the numerous footpaths to north east of the site; this is due to intervening mature woodland and the intervening land cover, as well as to the sunken nature of these paths, with hedge banks, and to the orientation of the Bridleway and other footpaths to east which run north - south.

- The existing woodland, trees and hedgerows on site will be protected and retained (other than for the accesses where loss is anticipated). Due to the invasive nature and over mature condition of the exotic planting of Rhododendron and Laurel, these two species will be removed, and replacement planting of mixed native hedgerows and trees, copses style be added along Hammerwood Road and Yewhurst Close.
- Due to the complex topography east of the site, the intervening topography to east of the site and due to dwellings located to north of site, there will be no other significant views from north and east. The proposals will be to conserve the woodland in the south of the site and the west of the site, creating a woodland buffer which links to woods beyond the site. These will help to conserve the landscape character of the site within HW1, High Weald.
- As long as the proposals to maintain a woodland buffer to the northern edge of the site are followed, then there will be negligible impact on views from the north, from northern pavement along the northern edge of Hammerwood Road, due to the screening by existing dwellings along the northern edge of Hammerwood Road. There will be no significant views from the north from the wider AONB due to the screening effect by existing dwellings along Hammerwood Road.
- There will be minimal effects on views from the west, this is as the proposed new houses will be set within the Parkland setting and a wooded buffer will be retained. The site lies within the wider wooded landscape, of the Forest Ridge which has largely enclosed views, which are inward looking along the Upper Medway valley which Ashurst Wood lies above, to north of the upper valley of river Medway, and Forest Row, below, to south. The site has few long views, due to the woodland on site, to south of the proposed houses.
- The main long views are beyond the site edges, from house to west of the site, and are views within the Upper Medway valley, towards Forest Row, mainly these views are truncated by combined effects of intervening land cover of topography and woodland. The views are not beyond the valley sides, which are edged by mature woodland. The site's key characteristics are its former landscaped Parkland and it is well enclosed by evergreen over mature exotic planting of Rhododendron and Laurel.
- There are no significant views from the Bridleway to east of the site, nor from the footpaths to east of the Bridleway. These footpaths include the High Weald Landscape Trail and Vanguard Way.
- There are no significant views from footpaths to north of the site; these include no significant views from footpaths 15 EG and footpath 16aEG.
- There are no significant views from the public open space of the Ashurst wood recreation ground, to south west of the site.
- The nature of the well enclosed views on SA26 is due to the site being on a plateau with intervening land cover of woodland and village settlement and set within a wider rural well wooded, complex and



inward looking landscape setting, with levels which fall dramatically to Home Wood and thence to the upper Medway tributary valley and Forest Row.

3.8 LAND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES, SHEET HW1, THE WEST SUSSEX LANDSCAPE

The site is in within the local landscape character area of the High Weald, High Weald 1.

The landscape strategy is to “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 unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area. “

The landscape strategy aim is to “Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the woodland and the agricultural landscape for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes.”

Also, the landscape strategy is to “Avoid skyline development and ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on long and other views and is integrated within the landscape paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.”

Strategy is to “Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns. “

When planting the strategy is to “Plant trees in drifts and avoid straight lines running across the grain of the land. “

Aim is to “increase tree cover in the and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe, along the approach roads to settlements, and along busy urban routes including within the Crawley East Grinstead corridor.”

There is a need to “conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession and replant parkland trees.”

The landscape strategy for HW1 is to “Conserve strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost or stop seek to protect the tranquil and historic nature of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.”

There is also a landscape strategy to “minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development is of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.”

(Source: The West Sussex landscape land Management guidelines, Sheet HW1 High Weald.)



3.9 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL SENSITIVITIES

The site is a modified landscape, and this lowers its landscape sensitivity. It has a series of earth banks from former landscaped grounds and it contains exotic planting, including Rhododendron and Laurel- both are deemed to be pest species due to their invasive nature. On this site these exotic species of Rhododendron and Laurel have both outcompeted the more varied native ground flora, whilst the pines and other non-native evergreen trees have left a thick dense leaf litter meaning there is low biodiversity. The landscape condition of the site is low, due to the lapsed management and the poor specimens on site. Parkland planting of designed landscapes is a feature of the local landscape character area, HW1.

The site is well enclosed by woodland cover, which lowers the visual sensitivity of the site within the wider landscape as it creates a sense of seclusion and intimacy. This is in line with the findings of local landscape character area; the High Weald within High Weald AONB, HW1, the West Sussex Landscape Land Management guidelines;

“Woodland cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity.”

There are no views of the site from the Bridleway, though the buildings of the Abbey school can be spotted. There is also a strong network of hedgerows and small woodlands to south and east of the site, and these link to larger woodland blocks (Home Wood) further south of the site.

The proposed conservation of the green buffer to the site and new planting would enable linking from the edges of the site through tree planting, and hedgerow planting to extend existing woodland areas, thus reinforcing existing distinctive landscape patterns. Hence the woodland cover will allow mitigation to reflect the historic pattern and fabric of the woodland and agricultural landscape, to minimise effects on scenic, nature conservation and recreational land uses.

The landscape character of the site is essentially post mediaeval in origin. The site is a modified landscape which has been planted using Parkland style planting. It has a buffer of mixed deciduous woodland, and its wider landscape setting is generally well preserved, classic High Weald AONB landscape, in the landscape to north of the village recreation ground and to north of Forest Row.

Yewhurst Close is social housing located to east of the eastern boundary of the site. There is little associated landscaping and there is scope to improve the visual amenity of the landscape character area east of the site. The amenity grassland is low in species diversity and there is little tree planting on the site at Yewhurst close. This lowers the landscape quality in this part of the LCA HW1, with fly tipping in the east of the site, which gives the site a lower landscape condition.

The landscape mitigation will need to reflect the High Weald NCA 122, local landscape character area HW1, The High Weald, and will be based on conserving and enhancing- the local vernacular style and linking new planting to existing wooded areas with retention of all



good quality mature trees on site. Sections on landscape character and biodiversity of the NPPF focus on conserving and enhancing the natural environment will be adhered to; this is by proposals to protect and enhance woodland and shaws and hedgerows, natural habitats, especially those for grassland, woodland and hedgerow butterflies and birds on land surrounding the site at Ashurst Wood.

New planting and management will need to enhance the Hammerwood road in keeping with the local LCA and the NCA which has a wooded landscape character. Local vernacular styles of architecture associated with the post medieval landscape history of Ashurst Wood, if used in the proposals would help to enhance the LCA HW1, in this part of the High Weald AONB, reinforcing local distinctiveness.

This approach will be to protect and retain all good quality mature trees, associated on site and adjacent woodland within site ownership and links to offsite hedgerows with additional planting to soften views of the proposed 12 new dwellings from Yew Hurst Close and Hammerwood road. From Yewhurst Close and Hammerwood road, these are lower level, close range views but they will be restricted to glimpses of the north and eastern elevations in gaps between trees from Hammerwood road and in through the proposed access from Yewhurst Close.

Further enhancements will include the drawing up of management for the woodland and grassland on site and on adjacent road verges as on those in Yewhurst Close, to bring long term biodiversity and ecological benefits to this part of the High Weald, NCA 122.

The land of HW1, to south of the site, falls away towards Forest Row, steeply to meet the upper Medway valley, in which Forest Row is located. The geology and drainage confer a highly characteristic well wooded character to this local High Weald character area, HW1 in the landscape between the site's southern margin and Forest Row.

The planted areas will link to woodland beyond the site, with GI Green infrastructure benefits, significant enhancements for biodiversity, including for local woodland birds and hedgerow and grassland butterflies, to benefit the landscape character of High Weald NCA 122.

The enclosed nature of the rural views looking northwest towards the site, from the Bridleway, which is the nearest publicly accessible view, means that with careful design the enclosed views can be maintained. This lowers the visual sensitivity of the site.

The southern and western views of the site will be densely screened by existing woodland, whilst the additional enhancement planting with hedgerow and woodland management to thicken planting and add structural diversity, will enable low level screening.

3.10 LANDSCAPE BASELINE.

- The site lies within the National Landscape Character Area of the High Weald, NCA 122. It is within The High Weald LCA, HW1 of the West Sussex AONB, which is referred to in the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2014-2019. (See maps in Appendix 3.)



- The West Sussex Landscape Strategy will be adhered to. The High Weald AONB Management Plan Assessment Template has been completed (see Appendix).
- The site lies approximately 1.8 Km northeast of Forest Row on the southern edge of the village development boundary and is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The landscape is rural fringe, with some detractors in the form of gardenesque planting of the site itself, being exotic pest species of Rhododendron and Laurel, considered highly invasive and a threat to biodiversity in the wider wooded landscape setting of the High Weald, HW1, High Weald LCA.
- The close board fencing of the west edge of Yewhurst close and fly tipping along the east site boundaries are detractors from landscape quality on the site. The rear gardens backing onto the east of the site are unplanted and hence the properties to east of the site have open views into the east margin of the site. The buffer planting will need to be consolidated and enhanced on this site boundary.
- These residential garden plots of neighbouring properties including commercial uses to west of the site (adventure playground activities,) with associated sheds and machinery, exert suburban influences on east and west of the site respectively.
- The housing along the north of Hammerwood road exerts a further urbanising effect, with built elements such as driveways, parking, fencing along the northern edge of the pavement of Hammerwood road. These are suburbanising influences in the landscape.
- The site also lies in the High Weald and so the site is protected by AONB status, as well as by the Local Plan landscape protection policies, and the LVIA has followed the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Assessment Template as well as GLVIA 3rd Edition Methodology.

3.11 NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA; HIGH WEALD, NCA 122.

3.11.1 National context of NCA 122 High Weald.

The High Weald is “the ridged and faulted sandstone core of the Kent and Sussex Weald.”

“An area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving mediaeval landscapes in northern Europe. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers 78% of the NCA. ...A mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads connected by historic route ways, tracks and paths.”

The High Weald, has “prominent mediaeval patterns (of) small pasture fields enclosed by thick hedgerows and Shaws (narrow woodlands) (which) remain fundamental to the character of the landscape.”



“20% of the NCA is covered by woodland, comprising wooded shores pits and gills farm woods and larger woods.”

“17% is ancient semi-natural woodland and 5% is ancient replanted woodland.”

“The landscape is small-scale with historic patterning, interwoven woodland, web content open habitats, with many hedgerows and historic route ways supporting seminatural vegetation, which provide a flourishing accessible landscape for wildlife. “

(Source: Natural Character Area Profile 122: High Weald.)

semi enclosed, well secluded valley within the wider High Weald Forest Ridge of West Sussex.

3.11.2 *Statements of environmental opportunity - NCA 122: High Weald.*

- SE01: “Maintain and enhance the existing woodland and pasture components of the landscape, including the historic field pattern bounded by Shaws, hedgerows and from woods, to improve ecological function at landscape scale for the benefit 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.”
- SE02: “Maintain and restore the natural function of river catchments of the landscape scale, promoting benefits for water quality and water flow within all Wealden rivers, streams and floodplains by encouraging sustainable land management and best agricultural practices to maintain good call soil quality, reduce automation, increase biodiversity and enhance sense of place. Maintain and enhance the geo-diversity and especially the exposed Sandrock.”
- SE03: “Maintain and enhance the distinctive dispersed settlement pattern, parkland and historic pattern and features of the route ways the High Weald, encouraging the use of locally characteristic materials and Wealden practices to ensure that any development recognises and retains distinctiveness, biodiversity, geo-diversity and heritage assets present, we affirm sense of place and enhance the ecological function of route ways to improve the connectivity of habitats and provide wildlife corridors.”
- SE04; “manage and enhance recreational opportunities, public understanding and enjoyment integrated with the conservation and enhancement the natural and historic environment, productive landscape and tranquillity, in accordance with the purpose of the High Weald AONB designation.”
- (Extracts from NCA 122, High Weald.)



3.11.3 Description of High Weald.

- “The Sandrock geology of the High Weald, notably on the ridge top settlements, is shared with only the northern part of the Isle of Wight NCA and parts of Boulonnais and Pays de Bray in France. “
- “It comprises fissured Sandrock and ridges running East – West, deeply incised and intersected with numerous Gill streams which give rise to the headwaters and upper reaches of rivers ...”
- “In the High Weald, where the rivers Rother, Brede, and Tillingham (and Medway) originate, the impermeable clay and silt layers of the Hastings beds give rise to rapid run-off and quickly responding watercourses following heavy rainfall. “
- “The catchments of rivers Cuckmere, Ouse, Adur and Arun drain south through deep valleys...into the sea along the south coast, passing through major coastal settlements.”
- “The High Weald provides many services to adjacent populations, not only through the supply of drinking water, flood mitigation and carbon storage but also through extensive opportunities for a range of open and recreational activities based around its distinctive character.”
- “Activities include walking the ancient route ways(this) provides benefits to the various towns that straddle the border between the High and Low Weald, namely Crawley, East Grinstead, Horsham, Haywards Heath and Uckfield.”

3.11.4 The High Weald Today

- The High Weald AONB “covers 78% of the NCA, reflecting the outstanding natural and scenic beauty of the landscape.
- “From a distance the appearance of the High Weald is one of the densely wooded landscape, although close inspection reveals a patchwork of irregularly shaped fields and woods forming both open and enclosed landscapes along rolling ridges and with valleys. “
- “Everything in the High Weald landscape is of a human scale and its which detail is best explored on foot, cycle or horseback along the myriad interconnecting paths and tracks. “
- (Source: National Character Area Profile:122 High Weald, pages 8-9.)

3.11.5 NCA 122 High Weald.

- “Sandstone exposed as outcrops or along the wooded gills provides a nationally rare habitat and supports a rich community of ferns, bryophytes and lichens. “
- “The moist microclimate on the sites is vulnerable to climate change.”



- The ancient route way network and the High Weald is substantially intact, but the (features) associated with it, such as multiple ditches and banks, (are) vulnerable to physical damage and the ancient, laid coppice stools edging many sunken routeway is present a challenge for highway maintenance.”

- (Source: National Character Area Profile:122 High Weald, page 9.)

3.11.6 Description of High Weald.

- ” Densely arranged traditional farm buildings are extremely prominent in the NCA with their distinctive steep, clay-tiled hipped roofs.”
- “Numerous foot paths, take walkers straight through the middle of historic farmsteads with the characteristic timber framed and weatherboard buildings either side.”
- “The distinctive pattern of dispersed historic settlement survives although the character farmsteads have changed with the widespread conversion of traditional farm buildings to dwellings and the associated disputes of agriculture and industry from farmsteads.”
- “Vernacular buildings have a strong local character influenced by a variation locally available building materials, resulting in an abundance of weatherboard, brick, tile and stone or rented buildings. Local distinctiveness is marked by traditional vernacular building...”
- “Within the forested ridges and ancient countryside, remnant hammer ponds constituent to significant local features. These reservoirs have a distinctive branching or winding character is the result of their creation from small Weald and river valleys.”
- “Woodland is extensive covering 26% of the area in a wide range of small wooded pits, linear Gill woodland, farm woods and much larger wooded estates. “
- “The mosaic of small hedged fields and sunken lanes, together with the wooded relief and comparative inaccessibility, provides a sense of remoteness which is rare within lowland English landscape. Despite it being relatively tranquil today indications of the area’s busy industrial past, from the abundant timber frame traditional building... To the charcoal hearths, pits and ponds are behind industry which are still visible in almost every ancient woodland.”
- (Extracts from the NCA 122, High Weald, pages 10 and 11.)

3.11.7 Analysis.

- Landscape attribute: “dispersed historic settlement pattern, farmsteads and hamlets with late mediaeval villages. Strong vernacular architecture characterises the NCA. Justification for selection: dominance of traditional timber frame buildings with steep



roofs often hipped or half hipped and an extraordinarily high survival rate of farm buildings dating from 17th century or earlier.”

- “Timber, tile, brick, Kentish Ragstone and sandstone are traditional building materials.
- The High Weald has one of the highest concentrations of surviving early farmsteads anywhere in Europe. The rich and varied colours of locally derived building materials reflect the diversity of geology underpinning the area and without significant interest in the landscape generally.”
- (Source: National Character Area Profile: 122 High Weald, page 38.)
- Landscape attribute: “ancient route ways in the form of ridge-top roads and a dense system of radiating droveways often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees and wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks.”
- “The soft, sinuous forms of field boundaries add texture and variety to the landscape and make a significant contribution to the overall arboreal character of the landscape.”
- (Source: National Character Area Profile: 122 High Weald, page 38.)
- Landscape attribute: Woodlands – ancient woods, Gill woodlands and Shaws.
- Justification selection: the area remains one of the most densely wooded areas in England with abundant seminatural ancient woodland...
- (Source: National Character Area Profile: 122 High Weald, page 40.)

3.11.8 *Landscape opportunities.*

“Maintain the existing extensive woodland and particularly ancient woodland, maintaining and enhancing the landscape character, ecological functioning and connectivity of woodlands of the landscape scale, protecting the historic environment and historic assets and woodlands.”

- “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.”
- (Source: National Character Area Profile: 122 High Weald, page 42.)

3.12 **LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA; HW1 HIGH WEALD.**

- The site lies in Local landscape Character Area, HW1, which is located on the High Weald Forest Ridge within West Sussex and includes the town of East Grinstead.
- Located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).



- This LCA is an “ancient, densely wooded landscape of the High Weald.”
- The LCA HW1 is located to the east of Crawley.

3.12.1 *Key characteristics.*

- A “wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity.”
- This LCA HW1, is defined by its “significant woodland cover, with many ancient woodlands and a dense network of Shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.”
- “Headwater drainage of the Rivers Eden, Medway, Ouse and Mole.
- “Long views over the Low Weald to the downs, particularly from (parts of) the High Forest Ridge.” (NB. There are no long views to the downs from the site.)
- “Pattern of small, irregular and shaped assart fields, some larger fields and small pockets of remnant heathland.”

The desk top LCA assessment reflects the findings of the NCA 122 High Weald and LCA HW1 High Weald, key characteristics.

3.12.2 *Description for HW1.*

- “Pockets of rich biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland and woodland.”
- Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, drove ways, tracks and footpaths.
- Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hilltops and high ground, the principal settlements East Grinstead and some expanded and smaller villages.”
- Some busy lanes and roads including along the Crawley - East Grinstead corridor.
- London to Brighton Railway line crosses the area.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber- framing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses. (*This is a characteristic of the site, which is a designed, modified landscape with former parkland style planting.)

Historic features.

- HW1 is “landscape essentially mediaeval in origin.” (NB. *The site is classed as a post medieval landscape, modified landscape.)
- Persistence of ancient woodland.
- Ancient route ways and droves.
- Medieval moats.



- Historic farmsteads and Parksapes. (*The site forms part of a former Parksape associated with a large country estate and school.)

3.12.3 *Biodiversity.*

- Diverse natural history.
- Species-rich gill and semi-natural woodlands.
- Geologically important rock exposures.
- Nationally rare Sandrock plant communities in gills.
- Species-rich meadows and hedgerows.
- Reservoirs, hammer ponds, field, fish and ornamental ponds.

3.12.4 *Change - Key issues.*

- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques, such as coppicing.
- Continued extensive planting of conifers in some areas.
- Spread of invasive introduced species, particularly rhododendron and neglect of some parkland landscapes.
- Continuing amalgamation of small fields with hedgerow loss and the ageing and loss of hedgerow and field trees.
- Visual impact of new urban and rural development including village expansion, modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks.
- Proposals for new development and a relief road on the edge of East Grinstead.
- Introduction of telecommunications masts on ridges.
- Expansion of Crawley and East Grinstead and influence of the M23 corridor.
- Increasing pressures for a wide variety of recreational activities.
- Perceived increased traffic levels on small rural lanes with consequent demands for road improvements.
- Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials.
- Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species.

3.12.5 *Landscape and Visual Sensitivities.*

- Woodland cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity.
- Unobtrusive settlement pattern in many parts.
- Older, small assart pastures contribute to the intimacy of the landscape.
- Important pockets of rich biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.



- Dense network of twisting deep lanes drove ways tracks and footpaths provides a rich terrain for horse-riding, cycling and walking and for the appreciation of nature.
- Long views along valleys and ridges have a high sensitivity to the impact of new urban development, modern farm buildings, masts and pylons and new roads.
- Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.
- Legacy of designed landscapes and treescapes.

3.12.6 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 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.
- Avoid skyline development and ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on long and other views and is integrated within the landscape, paying attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new broadleaved woodlands, the appropriate management of existing woodland, and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover in woodlands and on heathland. (* Remove Rhododendron on this site.)
- Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape features. (* The green planting in the buffer surrounding the proposed houses will be kept on this site, including green linking woodland to south and west of site.)
- Plant trees in drifts and avoid straight lines running across the grain of the land. (* New planting to be in drifts and with random spacing.)
- Increased tree cover in and around villages, agricultural and other development and on the rural urban fringe, along the approach roads to settlements, and along busy urban routes including within the Crawley – East Grinstead corridor.
- 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.
- Conserve the landscape of the gills and sandstone crags, including wet woodland...
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- 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 horse stabling and grazing.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness."



- 3.12.7 The above Guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the Countywide Landscape guidelines are set out in A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape (November 2005,) published by West Sussex County Council.
- 3.12.8 The High Weald Management Plan (2014-2019) also details important landscape management guidelines for design and management of landscape and any new development within the High Weald AONB.

3.13 LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS.

The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a Nationally designated area; the site lies within this AONB.

This designation offers a high level of development constraint in the High Weald AONB.

Ancient woodland: further, the ancient woodland to south of site, includes likely gill woodland. (SSSIs)- There are is one SSSI- gill woodland to northwest of Ashurst wood.

The deciduous woodland habitat BAP priority habitat, in the south of the site, and in the west of the site. Whilst the ancient woodland in the vicinity is protected for a variety of flora and fauna including special gill woodland species. See habitat maps in Appendix for details. No development permitted within 15 m of the edge of an ancient woodland. Deciduous woodland is a BAP habitat and should be conserved and managed for biodiversity and to conserve the landscape setting.

Land management policies for the conservation, management and enhancement of this landscape are set out in the West Sussex Landscape Strategy (2005.)

Other guidance documents to be considered within the High Weald HW1 include.

Design guidance based on the HW1 landscape character area in the West Sussex High Weald.

Guidance on colour of buildings, hedges, planting, roadside landscape enhancements, to help in the conservation and enhancement of the edges of village settlement boundaries, including mitigation and enhancement measures for edges of development, construction of sensitively designed new buildings and associated landscape mitigation measures, including planting.

3.14 WEST SUSSEX LANDSCAPE STRATEGY (2005).

- Vision for the whole of the West Sussex landscape and for the 5 National Character Areas within the county.
- Guidelines for dealing with likely changes impacting on the landscape of West Sussex.



3.14.1 Assessment

- Forces for change/history
- Character types and area descriptions and analysis
- Stakeholder views
- Other assessments in the county.

3.14.2 Implementation

- Action by the key audiences using the guidelines and detailed guidance the individual landscape character areas.
- Appendix 3 of the West Sussex Landscape Strategy (2005).
- “The strategy takes the National Character Areas (NCAs) as a starting point for local visions, and to underpin the overall vision for the county.”

3.14.3 Developing a landscape vision for the County.

- “West Sussex is notable not so much for the number of nationally characteristic areas within it... but for their intimate alignment and association in a series of parallel zones; the bold relationship between geology, landform and vegetation; and the sheer variation in contrast within the landscape, mile for mile.” (West Sussex Landscape Strategy, 2.2, p11.)
- The settlement pattern of the county is also a strongly defining characteristic (with most of the population living in towns and villages). It is a network of small to medium-sized towns, villages and hamlets. This pattern varies significantly only around Crawley... and along the coast. The local authorities have sought for decades to preserve the character of the settlement pattern by applying strong strategic policies. (West Sussex Landscape Strategy, 2.5, p11).
- “Building on the diverse character qualities of the landscape that are widely cherished today, a long-term vision for the future of the West Sussex landscape is proposed.” (West Sussex landscape strategy, 2.7p 11.)

3.14.4 A vision for the landscape of West Sussex.

- Throughout the county, character and local distinctiveness are recognised, valued and celebrated by those who live and work in (and visit) West Sussex.
- The diverse character of the landscapes of the county is nurtured, conserved and enhanced as part of a thriving economy. The strong sense of place is evident.



- Change is accommodated in ways which reinforce and restore character – and facilitate the creation of appropriate new and valued landscapes – in the county, and in each Landscape Character Area.
- The characteristic settlement pattern of small to medium-sized towns, villages and hamlets persists through careful measures to protect it.
- All new development is of good quality, well-designed, and at varying densities which fit sympathetically with the differing character of localities.
- In urban fringe areas, the landscape is a valued and positive zone which combines a distinctive landscape character with well-managed land uses for the benefit of residents and visitors.
- Landowners and managers are working with others to achieve continuous landscape renewal and re-creation as part and parcel of their land use activities.
- The rich diversity of wildlife habitats in the national heritage of woodlands, trees and hedges which make the county so special are to be conserved, extended and enhanced.
- The protection and conservation of historic landscape features and archaeological sites continues. Well-managed historic landscapes provide continuity with the past.
- There is a high degree of accessibility to the countryside which is enjoyed by all social groups.”

(Extract from West Sussex Landscape Strategy, 2005. P 12).

3.14.5 Strategy objectives.

Objective one: ensure high-quality new development which contributes to and reinforces landscape character.

The siting scale and design of much new development is tending to reduce or even destroy variety and distinctiveness in the landscape. Much modern development, including new housing estates and areas for business and industry, tend to be built to standardised designs.

They have a weak “sense of place” prompting the speculation that we could be “anywhere” when we are in them.

The strategy is based on the principle espoused by the countryside agency of development good enough to approve.

The design and setting of new development must recognise, reflect and reinforce existing landscape features and the key characteristics which make each Landscape Character Area unique and distinctive.

Objective 2: conserve and enhance historic landscape character.



In many of the landscape character areas, historic landscapes and features make a vital contribution to distinctiveness and character, imparting a strong sense of place.

However, as a result of changes in agricultural practice, lack of management, loss from development, and damage to the settings of ancient monuments and other features, this rich historic character is being eroded.

Appropriate conservation and management measures based on sustainable farming practices and appropriate development standards are therefore essential.

Objective 3: ensure the maintenance and renewal of the agricultural landscape.

Farmland makes up well over half of the West Sussex landscape embodying the landscape character of the county. However, it is essential that (planning permission) be used to manage (the landscape) sustainably if the desired environmental outcomes are to be achieved and if the character of the landscape is not to change drastically. The spread of intensive arable farming methods and the abandonment of pasture since the Second World War have eroded local character and distinctiveness in many areas.

Environmental stewardship and the new types of agri— environment scheme presents significant landscape enhancement opportunities. The government’s report strategy for sustainable farming and food published in 2003 encourages farming practices which favour efforts to conserve, enhance and extend local distinctiveness and biodiversity, including recreating diminishing habitats such as unimproved grassland. “

****Objective 4: conserve and enhance semi-natural habitats including securing the future of woodlands, hedgerows and trees as distinctive landscape features.***

Semi-natural habitats such as wetlands... (are amongst) ... Vital features of the West Sussex landscape including highly characteristic woodlands, hedges, and trees.

The conservation and enhancement of these habitats and features, including creating new ones, is fundamental to the strategy.

Many habitats are protected for their nature conservation importance through international, national and local designations. However, management of these often-vulnerable habitats is essential if they are to continue to retain their nature conservation value and contribute to landscape character.

Major habitat creation schemes will complement these efforts.”

Objective 5: promote and celebrate the value and variety of the West Sussex landscape.

As well as celebrating the variety and beauty of the landscape and history at bodies, such countryside also has other riches to offer related to health, education and quality of life. The importance of the countryside access and recreation is part and parcel of healthy living including the appreciation of landscape and what it has to offer.

Extract from West Sussex Landscape Strategy, 2005. (Section 2. p 25- 26).



3.14.1 4: County-wide Landscape Guidelines.**3.14.2 Landscape guidelines for General development and land use change**

The first strategy objective aims to secure high quality new development which contributes to and reinforces landscape character. These guidelines will be used to influence and inform development planning policy and development control process:

- Locate and design development to maintain a sense of the identity of settlements and ensure their separateness. Protects the setting of areas valued for their natural beauty.
- Minimise the visual prominence of outdoor storage and parking areas.
- Encourage the planting of mainly native tree and shrub species in association with new development. Use native plant species of local provenance specific to the National Character Areas.
- Ensure where possible that both landscape and planting schemes are carried out in advance of development.
- Minimise the impact of lighting in the landscape.
- Protect areas of tranquil character from visually intrusive or noisy development.
- Incorporate where possible existing biodiversity, heritage and landscape features into new development schemes.
- Secure where appropriate landscape and habitat enhancement both on and off site (informal open space, tree planting, habitat creation including grassland, heath and wetland features etc) as a requirement of new development.
- Encourage the use of available locally distinctive building materials in new development.”

3.15 HIGH WEALD MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014-2019.**3.15.1 Objectives and actions contained in the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004 (adopted March 2004) published by the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee.**

Landscape Designations protect the landscape of the High Weald; the site is beyond the northern edge of the Low Weald and is in the High Weald AONB on the eastern edge of West Sussex.

3.15.2 Natural Beauty.

Natural beauty of the High Weald comprises five defining components of character and these include the following.



- “locally distinctive features,
- views,
- scenic beauty,
- relative tranquillity,
- ancientness,
- sense of history
- dark landscape.”

These defining components of character will be examined with reference to the site.

The findings on the impact that the proposals will have on the landscape character of the AONB scale, will be separated from the findings that the proposals will have on the local landscape character, at a local scale through impact on landscape setting and other features which contribute towards landscape character including natural beauty. The findings have been summarised in the tables in the Appendix.

In particular, the High Weald management plan requires attention to focus not just on visual and scenic aspects but also on the landscape character, as some LVIA's tend to focus “on visual and scenic aspects more than character, at the expense of the key components which contributes a sense of place, distinctiveness, heritage and tranquillity.)

This LVIA will therefore look at impacts on the local landscape character of HW1, and this will be separate from impact on the wider landscape character of the High Weald AONB. (See summary tables in appendix for details of the assessment findings as well as, High Weald AONB management plan 2019 2024 assessment template which has been completed and is included in the Appendix.)

There is a duty to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape of the High Weald, through conservation not only of the visual impacts of the development but also the scenic qualities which are intrinsic to those part of the landscape of local landscape character area High Weald, HW1.

Natural beauty is defined as follows in the High Weald management plan,

“Natural beauty, is not just the look of the landscape at includes landform and geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the rich history of human settlement over the centuries.”

(Extract from P22, High Weald Management Plan 2019-2024, thereafter referred to as HWMP).

High Weald Management Plan objectives need to be adhered to.



- Objective G2.
- Objective G3.
- Objective S1.
- Objective S2.
- Objective S3.
- Objective R1.
- Objective R2.
- Objective W1.
- Objective W2.
- Objective W4.
- Objective FH2.
- Objective FH3.

Objective LBE2.

- Page 59 HWMP.
- Other perceived qualities, to conserve and enhance.
- “scenic beauty and glimpsed long views.”
- Unspoiled rural landscape with a sense of naturalness unusual in south-east England.
- Intrinsically dark landscape with a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.
- Human scale landscape with sense of intimacy
- cultural associations.
- Writers Rudyard Kipling, AA Milne and plein air artists inspired by the wilderness quality of the landscape.
- Objective OQ3.
- Objective OQ4.
- Follow the High Weald Charter.

- By local products and services from farmers and woodland managers who actively manage the land to benefit the environment.
- Money invested in products and services that help support this management is money invested in conserving the AONB and its local economy.
- Manage your land for wildlife and maintain the rural nature of your property; fields, woodlands, paddocks and gardens to support valuable and threatened wildlife.
- Avoid the use of inappropriate materials and features often associated with urban areas, these lead to the gradual loss of the AONB's valued rural feel.
- Help to prevent the spread of invasive and harmful plant and animal species. Avoid introduced plant and animal and fish species which spread rapidly... Out competing with our native wildlife and leading to its loss.
- Local landscape character area HW1.
- Conserve and enhance the local landscape character.
- Key characteristics include" wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)."
- "Plateau, ridges and deep, secluded valleys cut by Gill streams."
- Headwater drainage of the River... Medway.)"
- Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of Shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses."

4. THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND MITIGATION

4.1 THE PROPOSALS

The proposals are shown on the site layout drawings and elevations and perspective drawings by Cowan Architects.

The proposals are for SA26 land south of Hammerwood Road to have 12 new dwellings with a ridge height of 8.1 m above ground, and 5.6 m to the eaves, above the existing ground level, which is at approximately 137 m AOD. There will be conservation of the wooded setting and of all good quality mature Parkland trees, aswell as woodland blocks to south and west of the site. The proposals will be integrated with the woodland setting. The mitigation will be linked to the woodland areas, as copse planting and native hedgerow planting. This is to integrate the site into the local landscape character.



The site layout proposals are shown on the drawings by Cowan Architects, East Grinstead.

Masterplan (showing site layout of the 12 proposed dwellings) drawing number 2226 – CAL – XX – XX – DR – a – 101 – S4 revision P2, size A3, Preliminary drawing dated 19/11/19. Scale 1 to 500, revision be dates 21/01/20 amended layout.

The perspective drawings are as follows; Also, Land south of Hammerwood Road Q2226-CAL-XX-XX-DR-A-SK01-S3-P1. Also, Land south of Hammerwood Rd, Indicative 3D Perspective -0 View travelling East on Hammerwood Road Q2226-CAL-XX-XX-DR-A-SK02-S3-P1, dated 29/01/20. Also, Q2226 – Land South of Hammerwood Road. Indicative 3D Perspective- View travelling West on Hammerwood Road Q2226-CAL-XX-XX-DR-A-SK03-S3-P1.

The village of Ashurst Wood is located on the ridgeline, with ribbon development along Hammerwood road to the north of the site. This development continues along Cansiron Lane, to the east of the site.

The development proposals are thus to build 12 new houses on SA26 land south of Hammerwood road but with integration of the site into the local landscape with conservation of key landscape features which contribute towards creation of the sense of place and its local distinctiveness. There will be associated management of the parkland style planting to remove pest species of invasive nature and to replant those areas with a native copse and native hedgerow mix as landscape mitigation.

The new houses will be sensitive in design to the local landscape character area of this part of the High Weald, HW1, and to the immediate setting, which will be enhanced by the varied landscape proposals which will accompany the proposed buildings, post Regulation 19 submission stage.

Substantial landscape enhancements which are planned to enhance the woodland setting in the High Weald HW1, will be commensurate with the substantial enhancements required to ensure that the proposals conserve, enhance, and merge with their landscape setting, in the High Weald AONB, according to the HWMP objectives.

These drawings are figurative only and serve to illustrate views of the buildings. Cross sections have been prepared showing proposed line of sight elevations

For details of proposed houses see those drawings.

The Design and Access statement by Cowan architects will set out the pre-application design ethos and proposals for the design of 12 dwellings sensitive to the mature mixed broadleaved woodland and native hedgerows, with Parkland style elements in the specimen tree planting, to compliment the landscape as part of the small scale, rural setting of Ashurst Wood.

Following Regulation 19 submission, a Tree report and plans will have recommendations for protection and management of trees on site. Ecology reports will give details of the level of protection for tree cover and other habitats and species on site; any planting should be native species where feasible. This is will be to maximise benefits for biodiversity and landscape.



Their recommendations will be required, this is to be in accordance with landscape, countryside and wildlife legislation, to protect and conserve species and habitats, to avoid any adverse landscape effects and for long term enhancement of the natural environment and landscape setting.

The Landscape Design and Access Statement by Architects and the Landscape Plan will set out how the proposals will be enhanced by removal of pest species (Rhododendron and Laurel) and by the planting of the boundaries of the site and by sensitive landscape design.

Planting and management of native species such as Oak, Field Maple, Blackthorn will enhance the landscape setting for butterfly conservation for butterflies like Gatekeeper and Brown Hairstreak butterfly as well as for woodland and hedgerow birds.

The findings of these reports give recommendations so that the site will be enhanced by the proposals for 12 new dwellings which will be sensitive to their landscape setting and to the landscape character of the site and the wider landscape of the High Weald Forest Ridge.

4.2 DEVELOPMENT/LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

4.2.1 Landscape Baseline.

- The landscape baseline has been established by desk study and updated by Landvision S.E. Ltd.'s fieldwork in December 2019 and January 2020. The NCA 122 High Weald; LCA HW1 High Weald, and Magic web site extracts have been used in desk study to determine the underlying landscape character of the area.
- The landscape baseline study results are included in this section of the LVIA report and are discussed with reference to the application on this site.
- These give the key characteristics of the landscape baseline, which were also recorded in the LVIA fieldwork of 2019, and 2020, by Landvision South East Limited and fieldwork data collected in 2019 and 2020.
- Positive effects upon receptors may also result from a change to the view. These may be through the removal of negative features or visual detractors, or through the addition of well-designed elements, which enhance landscape experience in a complimentary, stimulating and positive manner.
- (See Summary Tables of Findings in Appendix and Photos in Appendix.)
- Positive effects through the re instatement of management of the site, including of its hedgerows and landscaped areas and mature specimen trees, will have long term beneficial effects for the local landscape character area.
- The design of the 12 new houses and all proposed enhancements will need to be sensitive to the landscape designations and High Weald landscape character, on the High Weald Forest Ridge, as well as to the immediate setting of ancient



woodland and hedgerows in rural setting, in HW1, on a plateau, within a confined, enclosed well wooded small scale landscape in the upper Medway valley, in West Sussex. The wider landscape is a well wooded part of the High Weald, with a series of small valleys running north- south, along which the public rights of way run, across the northern part of the High Weald ridge. Forest Row is located to south and south of this the SPA, Ashdown Forest.

- The vanguard way and the High Weald landscape trail run north- south to far east of the site, but this is a landscape with significant woodland cover. Much of the woodland is ancient, and with Parkland planting of large country estates a feature in this part of the LCA HW1, High Weald, on the High Weald Forest Ridge.
- The dense network of ancient copses, ancient hedgerows and mature Oaks as hedgerow trees combine with evergreen trees of the Parkland style planting era.
- Vernacular design includes traditional timber rural buildings built using timber framing, Wealden sandstone, ragstone, and local Horsham brick and tile hanging, as seen in listed buildings located to east and west of the site and to south in Forest Row.

4.3 SITE AND STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION.

The results of the Landvision 2019 and 2020 LVIA findings are as follows.

- The site forms the southern edge of the ridge top village of Ashurst Wood. Beyond the site's southern boundary extends a high quality, small scale, enclosed rural landscape which has key features of High Weald HW1 including significant woodland cover, linked to site via a dense network of shaws, hedgerows, with hedgerow trees. To south of the site there are numerous springs and streams.
- To north of the site is the main village settlement of Ashurst Wood, which is mainly ribbon development along the northern edge of Hammerwood Road, to east and west of the site and this settlement is of modern semi-detached houses as well as detached older houses, as well as bungalows. Beyond the village development zone there are isolated farmhouses and cottages set in the wider rural AONB landscape of LCA HW1, on the High Weald Forest ridge.
- To the south of the site is rural, small scale, high quality AONB landscape, with a network of mature woodlands, including mature woodland south of the site which links to the woodland of Home Wood. There is some hedgerow edged strongly rolling fields of pasture. Some are irregularly shaped, edged by woods, with numerous Springs and small streams, and shaws. The streams drain southwards into the upper river Medway headwaters and upper Medway river valley to south of the site. There is a pumping station to north of Forest Row and Weir Wood reservoir is located to west of the A22.
- There are needs to focus on conservation of key components of the landscape, as some of these may contribute to the local landscape character, sense of place, distinctiveness, dark skies and tranquillity.



- These are the woodland blocks to south of the site, to west of site, the sylvan nature of the north of site and the Parkland style planting on the site, which gives SA26 and the land south of Hammerwood road local distinctiveness in the LCA HW1. The presence of adventure quad biking to west of the site is a suburbanising influence on the land to west of the site. It is a detractor from tranquillity in the rural part of the landscape. The associated sheds and machinery, and views of the activities are additional visual detractors.
- The landscape character and key features of the landscape setting of the site are characteristic of the LCA High Weald, HW1, comprising.
- Enclosed views on the plateau, with wooded land cover, linking with small to medium woods and hedgerows to south and west.
- Parkland style planting of mature Pines and other evergreen trees.
- These key features of the local landscape character area contribute to the stronger sense of place in this part of the LCA HW1.
- The wooded nature of the site contributes towards the dark landscape and has considerable scope to be improved in diversity and as a habitat linking to woods to south, such as Home Wood.
- These key features of the site in LCA HW1 will need to be conserved as they combine with the complex, confined views within the strongly rolling, rising topography to further enclose the views from most publicly accessible views to south and southeast.

4.4 SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER.

Settlement pattern comprises high density settlement within the village of Ashurst Wood, to north, and east of the site. There are houses on the ridge line to east of the site, some of these houses are visible in views from the Bridleway looking northwest towards the site, including the large white house formerly a part of the Abbey school buildings.

The village is not mentioned in the Domesday book, but grew up at the junction between old routeways from Shovelstrode Farm and leading to Brambletye manor now a school.

In the wider rural landscape to north of the ridge and plateau, to the north of the site, the landscape is less densely settled and clusters of houses tend to be on the ridge line, in groups on farm steads as seen along the track way leading to Little Oddyness .

Landscape character is evident with key features of the small ancient woodlands, ancient shaws and mixed native hedgerows on the south, and west of the site.

The hedgerows along old sunken routeways now public rights of way (Vanguard way, High Weald Landscape trail) form an important part of the dense network of footpaths which cross the landscape south of Cansiron lane, to east of the site. The land cover and sunken nature of these footpaths and rights of way seclude the site within the complex topography and land cover, giving very enclosed views from most directions. The wooded nature of the site and hedgerows on the neighbouring sites and adjoining woodland are part of a dense mature network which extends to west, south and south east of the site.



Intermixed in the High Weald Forest Ridge, wooded character the Parkland style planting is a local landscape feature and key element. The good quality specimen Parkland trees are a positive feature, but the invasive nature of Rhododendron and laurel has lowered the overall landscape quality if the site which has been poorly managed.

The poor condition of the former Parkland planting lowers landscape quality on parts of the site. Fly tipping further on the east of the site also lowers landscape condition. The edges of the site have been flailed with broken branches and poorer condition, some trees are over stood, others dead dying or dangerous left in situ. The overall landscape quality is moderate as a result.

To east is Yewhurst Close, social housing with a distinct lack of landscaping, and few trees, leading to a lower visual amenity as a result. To east therefore are the unscreened and hence unsoftened views of properties backing on to the east of the site, forming part of the built landscape character.

There is ribbon development Hammerwood road continuing eastwards along Cansiron Lane, and westwards with mixed building styles and houses with gardenesque design, and hard landscape boundaries at properties north of the site along Hammerwood road. To west of the site and its woodland buffer there is a field which is currently in commercial recreational use in the form of an adventure activities site, with various suburbanising elements of associated paraphernalia, including sheds and traffic cones, machinery and close board fencing. West of this site are detached bungalows at the south of a private road. Some of these dwellings are on the ridgeline overlooking the upper Medway valley to the south of the plateau.

Road signs and numerous hard paved driveways and walls, garages, ornamental planting including Laurel bordering on the roads, within a short distance of the site give a suburban feel to the LCA HW1 in this part of the local landscape character area adjacent to the site.

Overall, the general landscape character in the wider study area is rural, but with some suburban and urbanising elements, on the land adjacent to the site, notably that to north and east of the site. There is lower density development to west, but gardens on land adjacent to the land, to far west of the site, with traffic noise from the A22 to south, and other suburban sounds including the engine noise of quad bikes on the land to west of the site, aircraft noise and some traffic on Hammerwood road are some of the detractors from tranquillity.

The settlement to south of the site is very dispersed. This is due to the complex topography and well wooded nature of this rural part of the High Weald, HW1, with Waltham farm being the main settlement to far south of the site, adjacent to the pumping station.

4.5 KEY LANDSCAPE FEATURES OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA.

Landscape features which influence the Local Landscape Character of the site and its surrounding landscape include.

- Parkland style designed modified landscapes associated with large country estates.



- Significant woodland cover, much ancient, and a dense network of ancient shaws, hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees, such as Oak.
- Wooded, confined, intimate rural landscape, with channelled enclosed views along sunken lanes. A mixed farming landscape of complexity in the historic High Weald.
- Bridleway, with hedgerows on hedge banks, running north-south along the valleys, making these parts of the landscape intimate and immersive in nature. Peaceful footpaths in ancient woodland, with gill streams, as along Vanguard Way and the Bridleway to east of the site.
- Built features increase to east and north of site, with built boundary features and enclosed views due to the land cover including residential buildings of Yewhurst Close in Ashurst wood.
- There are some suburbanising elements within the landscape west of the site, which forms the northern edge of the post Domesday village of Ashurst Wood.
- The site is post medieval, part of former landscaped grounds and has exotic species including gardenesque planting of Laurel and Rhododendron which detract from landscape quality and are regarded as pest species in nature conservation terms.
- There are a few listed houses and more modern development within this LCA HW1.
- This is a well wooded landscape, in this part of the north of the High Weald in West Sussex at approximately 130 m AOD, with the land on the south of the site's southern boundary falling southwards towards the valley below at 105 m AOD.
- To the south east, the spring line and streams draining south, become tributaries of the upper reaches of the river Medway headwaters. Beyond the village boundary, the farm steads, clusters of houses and barns, farm cottages and single detached houses dotted at intervals along lanes and farm track ways, make this a settled rural landscape.
- The site is a combination of a rural, natural landscape in the south, with some detracting built features in the west and east.
- Non-native planting of exotic hedgerows along some sections of private road verges and on gardens adjacent to open space of land to west, is a detractor, in the west.
- Overall, the landscape character has a rural feel in this part of the NCA High Weald, in this plateau above the upper river Medway and adjoining valley of a tributary of the river Medway, forming part of the Medway's headwaters. The High Weald key landscape elements are strong as there are numerous gill streams in a series of secluded valleys to south east of the site. These produce well enclosed views along the footpaths which follow these valleys in this part of the LCA HW1 High Weald, in the High Weald Forest Ridge.



- The parkland planting of exotics mean that invasive Laurel and Rhododendron are dominant on the site and are threats to biodiversity of adjacent native broadleaved mixed woodland, to west and south of the site. Otherwise links are good to woodland beyond the site via these small woodlands and thence to home wood, to the south.
- The site is otherwise set amidst a well wooded valley landscape, within the High Weald ridge, with some large country houses dotted amongst smaller scale development, mainly ribbon development along the ridge top in the village. Beyond the village there are more dispersed farms and old manor houses, some are now converted to schools at Brambleye school to west of the A22, and Stoke Brunswick School to west of Homestall road, to north west of Ashurst Wood.

4.6 MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENTS.

Landscape effects have been assessed using both desk study and field work, to identify the key landscape features and local landscape character.

Description of the magnitude of change in the landscape and visual amenity is given because of the proposals.

Description of the potential landscape and visual effects arising from the proposals. The current baseline local landscape character of the area has been taken into account, location in the High Weald Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty, protected landscape status; so that the development will not appear to be more intrusive in the landscape nor detract from the rural landscape character of the area.

Landscape strategy for the development will be designed to conserve and enhance the existing densely wooded character of the setting. Mitigation planting and other landscape enhancement measures will include control of invasive plant species (such as Laurel, Rhododendron) to remove this threat to woodland biodiversity and to increase resilience of the landscape to accommodate change in this part of the AONB landscape.

Sensitivity to the landscape history of the High Weald, in this part of the LCA the site is a post-medieval modified landscape, of mixed mainly moderate quality, located north of high quality rural AONB countryside.

The site drains into the headwater drainage of the river Medway and surrounding local landscape, and site proposals will need SUDs and rainwater harvesting and control of water quality of the runoff, so that the conservation of the landscape character will be in keeping with High Weald AONB Management Plan objectives.

Landscape design and management will be sensitive to; Local Plan Policy, for the High Weald AONB, and for HW1 LCA.

Development appropriate to the West Sussex AONB will be expected to respect and enhance the landscape character by appropriate design.



The design will thus reflect the landscape character of the site set high up on the plateau in the well wooded Forest Ridge of HW1. The site is located above secluded wooded and pastoral Upper Medway tributary river valley, north of Home wood, in the High Weald Forest Ridge, HW1 LCA, of the West Sussex, High Weald NCA 122.

The design will not appear more intrusive in the landscape nor otherwise detract from the landscape character of the area. The new dwellings will be located sensitively within the site, furthest from the woodland which forms the western, northern and southern site boundary and thus reducing any possible landscape effects and any potential visual impacts.

Cross sections have been prepared showing proposed line of sight elevations on Drawings by the architects.

Local Plan policies resist development which might be harmful to local distinctiveness; by enhancing the site through mitigation planting and management, and renewing management of the planting on site, including the control of invasive plant species (Laurel, Rhododendron) the setting of the dwelling will be enhanced.

The development and the landscape strategies are to accommodate the proposals within its Wealden Woodland and hedgerow network, a well-vegetated wooded rural, village fringe setting; this will include findings on landscape effects and the visual impact of the new buildings in the landscape.

The West Sussex High Weald AONB is a designated landscape with high sensitivity and level of protection. Within the AONB there are few significant views of the site as it is set within a well wooded landscape of HW1 and is well ensconced within wooded and hedgerow lined site boundaries. To east hedgerows and woodland intervene in views from the nearest Bridleway, with vegetated banks raised above the Bridleway, views are thus minimal lowering visual sensitivity to medium to low.

In addition, on the sandstone valley location, the western plateau, this part of the ridge line is well wooded. It thus a higher landscape capacity to accommodate change. To the east there is an urbanised landscape, with new development adjoining the east site boundary. There is landscape capacity to accommodate some change and to totally screen the site from most views from the Bridleway and footpaths to the southeast.

This was confirmed by Landvision field survey work as a landscape with a higher landscape capacity to accommodate change than some parts of the wider High Weald AONB, from which the site is not visible, where the geological changes produce long views from the High Weald AONB across West Sussex to the South Downs National Park. However, there are no significant views from the site to the South Downs national park, nor are there views from the wider AONB to this part of the AONB. The nature of these views is due to the well wooded nature of the landscape in HW1 and to topographic variation, the land falling southwards to an unsettled part of the landscape. To north, east and west, the landcover of houses and woodland planting screen the views.



In the part of the NCA where the site is located, the restricted views are due to the more densely wooded nature of the High Weald LCA HW1 within this part of the High Weald NCA 122, and the nature of these views lower visual sensitivity and increase landscape capacity to accommodate change.

These findings on landscape character broadly accord with those of the LCA, for the High Weald Forest Ridge and therefore with the findings in High Weald AONB Management Plan.

The setting of the new dwellings is to be enhanced with substantial enhancements in the form of new native shaw and double row hedgerow planting to the west, east and north of the site, to gap up where Laurel and Rhododendron are to be removed.

The Land Management Guidelines for this part of the High Weald Forest Ridge are to conserve and enhance the wooded, confined rural landscape, of “intimacy and complexity” north of Forest Row and further north of the Ashdown forest SPA, keeping the well enclosed views on the High Weald Forest Ridge above the upper Medway river valley.

These enclosed views lend themselves to woodland edge planting with management and restocking of existing woodland. For the woodland edges on the north, west, and south of the site, to link to adjacent BAP woodland, there will be mixed native planting to create and enhance habitats on the site.

The site and LCA would benefit from enhancement measures, including removal of invasive pest species (laurel, Rhododendron), conservation of any good quality mature Pine or evergreen parkland style trees, and planting of gaps with native species such as Holly, Field Maple, Hazel and Oak, which will bring significant beneficial effects and enable the site to be sensitive to its landscape setting and to enhance its landscape character. (See Summary Tables in Appendix 4 and 5.)

These landscape strategies are in keeping with the action points of the AONB on the West Sussex High Weald Forest Ridge in the High Weald NCA 122 and HW1 High Weald LCA.

4.7 LAND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR THE HIGH WEALD, HW1.

The Land Management Guidelines for the High Weald, HW1 High Weald LCA; are to “conserve and enhance the AONB Landscape, by the following.

“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 unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout much of the area.”

The land management guidelines are to “maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the woodland and agricultural landscape for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes.”



The guidelines also indicate that “skyline development should be avoided and to ensure that any new development has a minimum impact on long and other views and is integrated within the landscape, paying particular attention to the sighting of telecommunications masts. “

The land management guidelines are to enhance woodland and landscape character in the site in the West Sussex AONB.

Opportunities for enhancements will include the following for the High Weald, HW1 LCA.

- "Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns."
- Conserve and replant single Oaks in hedgerows and Maintain succession and replant parkland trees.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and re plant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Seek to protect the tranquil and historic character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness."
- Mitigation of landscape effects Will be by producing a landscape plan to incorporate the following.
- Conserving, strengthening and managing existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and re planting hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Plant trees in drifts, avoiding straight lines running across the grain of the land. This will be in accordance with land management guidelines for HW1 LCA.
- Landscape mitigation will be by recreation of new mixed native hedgerow and native shaw planting to enhance habitats including woodland edges.
- Re managing of the existing woodland on site and replanting of boundary with native hedgerows and trees where gaps occur due to removal of laurel, will form a part of the landscape strategy.

The landscape mitigation will enhance the setting of the proposed 12 new dwellings so that in time it will have a beneficial impact on the landscape character of the area.

The tree and ecology reports and Landscape Plan recommendations to support a detailed application following Regulation 19 submission, will be to demonstrate a commitment to managing the landscape in a long-term beneficial way; this is to conserve and enhance the



landscape character of the small sandstone valley within the High Weald Forest Ridge, AONB, whilst also in line with NPPF para 174 on conserving the natural environment.

4.8 MITIGATION- PLANT SPECIES.

Plant species used in mitigation will reflect the species found locally in this part of the High Weald, HW1, LCA in the High Weald AONB, NCA 122, and this will include some species beneficial for butterflies and moths such as Hawthorn and Blackthorn.

- Hazel.
- Blackthorn.
- English Oak.
- Holly.
- Hawthorn
- Field Maple.
- Spindle
- Wild Privet.
- Dog Rose.
- Elder
- Birch
- Scots Pine
- Honeysuckle
- NB Due to Chalara Ash dieback disease planting of Ash is to be avoided.
- Food plants of butterflies will be included in hedgerow and shaw planting and woodland edge shrub layer species mixes.
- Shrub layer species such as Elder, Hazel and Holly, with Honeysuckle and dog Rose, will produce new habitats for butterflies.

4.9 LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS FOR THE SITE.

Mitigation and enhancement of woodland edge biodiversity by adding new shrub layer species and by creation of new thickets of native trees and shrubs such as Hazel, including standards



and including double row, hedgerows of mixed native species, such as Hawthorn and a High Weald mix of 12+ species, along the boundaries of the site.

Re stocking of adjacent hedgerows, where gaps occur in the hedgerows, to be with native, non-invasive wildlife friendly berry bearing shrubs such as Holly and seed-bearing shrubs and trees such as Alder and Hazel.

Protection and retention of all mature native trees and hedgerows on site. These will link to the new planting areas to strengthen the woodland, hedgerow and tree network. Managing the landscape in a sensitive way to incorporate the 12 new dwellings into their woodland setting to minimise any adverse effects on landscape. This is to conserve and enhance the local landscape character, to strengthen its rural feel by conserving the nature of the close-range views along Hammerwood Road towards the site.

The landscape design ethos is one of co coordinating the new dwellings within the plateau on the rural, High Weald Forest Ridge, and in the wooded village fringe setting in a sensitive way. This is to enhance the landscape. It will respect and complement the wooded, confined, intimate rural High Weald AONB setting. The proposed dwellings will reflect the muted colours of nature and use local materials.

The landscape planting will maintain the key features in the landscape setting, the woodlands, the mature trees and hedgerow network of native trees and shrubs.

The landscape plan at detailed planning stage, following the Regulation 19 submission, will enhance views from, to and across the 12 new dwellings to the surrounding woodland.

The retention of all trees and hedgerows on the site periphery, including woodland blocks to south and west of site, and the additional creation of new and diverse habitats will help to screen the site from the pavement of the adjacent roads to north and east.

The landscape will retain its wooded setting and its network of ancient woodland and hedgerows and shaws, which form an intrinsic part of the landscape setting in this part of the High Weald Forest Ridge. This woodland will provide a natural backdrop with seasonal variations introducing autumn colour and Spring to Summer changes, to enhance the rural setting for the 12 new dwellings.

There will be evergreen species, such as Holly, and species which retain their leaves such as Hornbeam, to create a subtle, natural green fringe for the outdoor living areas.

The aims of the landscape Design & Access Statement report and plans are to incorporate the 12 new dwellings sympathetically into their landscape setting in accordance with the NPPF. Special measures to enhance the setting for birds and butterfly conservation will be incorporated.



5. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

5.1 LANDSCAPE EFFECTS AND VISUAL IMPACTS

Each effect will be considered in terms of its **Sensitivity**.

- The susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change arising from the specific proposal.
- The value attached to the receptors.

Secondly, its **Magnitude**.

- The size and scale of the effect- loss of an element or a minor change.
- The geographical extent of the area that will be affected.
- The duration of the effect and its reversibility.
- Consideration of these criteria will feed into a comprehensive assessment of significance.
- Significance of landscape effects can then be judged.

Combining judgements by assessing;

- Susceptibility to change and value together contribute to the sensitivity of the receptors.
- Scale, extent and duration contribute to the magnitude of the effects.
- Sensitivity and magnitude will then be combined to inform judgements about the overall significance of the effects.

5.2 OVERALL PROFILE

Judgements against individual criteria will be arranged in a table to provide an overall profile of each identified effect.

An overview can then be used to make an informed judgement about the likely significance of the effect, expressed in text with a table.

Terms used for Levels of Significance; major/moderate/minor/negligible. See Table of Assessment of Levels of Significance in Appendix.



Descriptions will be provided for each of the categories which are significant and for those which are not.

Effects not considered to be significant will not be completely disregarded as these are part of the LVIA assessment findings.

The key issues and significance of the effects and the scope for reducing any negative/adverse effects will be described and summarised in table form.

The most significant effects will be highlighted; the lesser effects will be described as such.

Enhancements will be recommended in keeping with the NPPF.

Elevation drawings have been prepared showing proposed line of sight elevations on Drawings by Cowan Architects. For full site details of proposed houses see Drawings in Cowan Architects.

The landscape effects and visual impacts will assess individual landscape features and elements as follows;

- Landscape character and quality (condition.)
- Visual amenity and the people who view the landscape.
- The LVIA will distinguish between;

Landscape effects; relating to the effects of the proposals on the physical and other characteristics of the landscape and its resulting character and quality.

Visual impacts; relating to the effects on views experienced by visual receptors (for example, residents, footpath users) and on the visual amenity experienced by those people.

The landscape character of the site has key characteristics of NCA 122 High Weald; the existing landform is gently rolling, to strongly rolling, due to the underlying geology, which has been eroded to form a corrugated series of ridges and valleys, running north-south across the rural landscape to south of the site. Many of these are well wooded, with well vegetated hedge banks to either side of the sunken footpaths and bridleways. This is an immersive landscape character.

Beyond Ashurst Wood to north, the landscape has key features of ancient routeways, streams, interconnecting with small lakes and ponds, and a network of hedgerows on banks, interspersed with small woodlands, including ancient woodlands to south and south east of the site. These are characteristic landscape features of a transition from sandstone to mudstone, with woodlands and pasture, including grazing on the wetter soils above mudstone. A mixture of ancient broadleaved deciduous and ancient hedgerows and scrub woodland enclose the site on the southern part of the AONB on the well wooded forest ridge.



Numerous track ways are a landscape feature, whilst frequent raised hedgerows on banks and woods on higher ground to southeast of site, contribute to form some well enclosed views in this part of the densely wooded High Weald Forest Ridge.

The NCA describes the broad characteristics of the High Weald NCA. (Also see NCA and LCA map extracts in Appendix.) The High Weald: HW1 High Weald, LCA is described. (See sections on Landscape character.)

The existing levels will be retained as they are at present; see proposals drawn up by the architects.

5.3 LANDSCAPE QUALITY.

The landscape is densely wooded with no long views north, west, east to wider parts of the West AONB nor further south to the AONB, and SPA. There are only close-range views to the northeast and northwest in the village envelope (see aerial photograph in Appendix 3 for details.) This high degree of enclosure of views lowers landscape sensitivity.

The ancient woodland, hedgerows and stream side native shaws; all these key landscape features are intact and highly protected. The small woodlands and interlocking valleys, with sunken footpaths, running north-south and enclosed by hedge banks. This mature vegetation edges irregularly shaped fields of pasture, which are a landscape feature in LCA HW1 High Weald to south of the site, contribute to the high quality of this part of the AONB.

There are some detractors though; non-native planting on the site itself with invasive species which dominate the site vegetation. Poor condition of some of the Parkland trees on site. Lack of management of the site over the years has lowered landscape quality. Poorly managed site boundaries have broken limbs of trees and hedgerows flailed and with gaps. Trees need thinning and some dead, dying or dangerous, giving a lower landscape quality. Fly tipping in east of site has been left in situ.

Traffic noise from the A22 is audible, as are aircraft overhead. These are all suburbanising and fragmenting influences which tend to lower landscape quality.

Landscape condition has been eroded through recent insensitive management such as wooded close board fencing, non-native evergreen planting on boundaries, including the new boundary with Yewhurst Close which has wooded close board fencing rather than native hedgerow boundary treatments.

In place of rural boundary treatments, such as native hedgerows, the suburbanising influence of driveways and walls with non-native boundary planting and wooden fences, combine with traffic noise, and these give the landscape a lower landscape quality as they give it a poorer condition.

For instance, west of the site, quad bikes and laurel hedges, sheds and wooden closeboard fencing all lower the landscape quality and make the land more suburban. These suburban effects tend to detract from landscape quality in this part of the LCA of the High Weald HW1.



The aim should be for native boundary planting of mixed native hedgerows to replace areas of where the hedgerow has been lost (north of the site and east of the site) which will enhance (rather than lower) landscape quality by adding to biodiversity and rural landscape character.

The rather urban feel of some views along the north of Hammerwood road and east to Yewhurst close, are changes to the rural landscape, tend to lower landscape quality in the High Weald, within the High Weald Forest Ridge.

Driveways and entrances to dwellings tend to fragment the local Landscape Character Area.

When the more densely wooded landscape of ancient woodland contains some non-native species, as seen on this site (laurel and Rhododendron dominate parts of the site) this tends to lower landscape quality. (See Landscape Character section.)

Today, landscape quality in some parts of the landscape, has been lowered slightly by native tree and hedgerow loss, and some insensitive management of property boundaries where these border on the rural parts of the LCA HW1.

In some woodlands, there is a lack of management.

- "decline in woodland management techniques such as coppicing."
- "Visual impact of new and rural development including village expansion, modern farm buildings, horse riding centres and paddocks."
- "Increasing pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise in parts of the area, especially along the Crawley - East Grinstead corridor."
- "Increasing pressures for a variety of recreational activities."
- "Gradual loss of locally distinctive building styles and materials."
- "Gradual suburbanisation of the landscape including the widespread use of exotic tree and shrub species."
- The landscape quality is medium overall. There is a more suburban landscape character to the west and east of the site, due to development at Yewhurst Close to east and to commercial land use, such as quad biking activities on land to west of the site.

To the south of the site, the NCA has a higher landscape quality where the feeling of remoteness and seclusion increases, due to the complex topography of corrugated landscape with well wooded ridges and streams in the valleys. Whilst there are some gill woodlands to northwest of the village. The secluded peaceful tranquil rural views to south of the site have few detracting features.

To the south and north of the village, the landscape quality rises, due to farming and the rural landscape character which is fully intact with few detracting influences. Further west from the



site there is lower tranquillity, due to the influence of traffic noise from the busy A22 which runs south-eastwards past the western edge of Ashurst wood village.

The suburban and built landscape features of dwellings and their gardens, tend to lower landscape quality and hence landscape sensitivity to change is medium in the landscape immediately adjacent to the site.

The footpaths, and access tracks are generally well maintained, but there are detractors in the form of residential driveways and ornamental shrubs (Laurel) on front gardens facing Hammerwood road and Cansiron lane.

The lowering of landscape quality in parts of the Study area is closely related to landscape condition and in some areas to a lack of sensitive management, including the lack of management of the site itself. (See Summary Tables.)

The overall feel is of a wooded, rural sylvan landscape which has threats introduced by planting of invasive exotic species (Laurel, Rhododendron) and poor insensitive management and boundary treatments, (closeboard wooden boundary fencing is popular) which tend to fragment the rural landscape character along Hammerwood road and Cansiron Lane, as well as along adjacent side roads. The landscape character could be enhanced by judicious tree planting of native species, native hedgerow replanting and sensitive woodland management and long-term enhancement measures; to strengthen landscape character, through improving landscape condition and thus the landscape quality will be greatly improved over time.

5.4 SENSITIVITY OF LANDSCAPE

The landscape exhibits distinctive characteristics of West Sussex High Weald, being a strongly rolling, and complex sandstone topography, with moderately sloping valley sides (the site and the Valley side north of the site), interspersed with deeply incised gill woodlands, and with the lower lying more gentle valley sides and Valley bottoms, laid to pasture. This landscape is characterised by the frequent streams and lakes, with tree belts and numerous small woodlands and shaws providing enclosure and confined rural views. The land of the site lies to the north of such a landscape, on the plateau, of the High Weald forest ridge.

The predominance of the dense woodlands produces an intimate landscape which has a lower visual sensitivity as a result. It is a “wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)”.

This is a well wooded, rural landscape of “plateau, ridges and deep. Secluded valleys cut by gill streams” on the High Weald Forest Ridge, in the AONB.

This is a well wooded landscape within the High Weald Forest Ridge; the site located on a well wooded part of the plateau, north of wider small woodlands, which intervene in the long views and produce enclosed views along sunken footpaths to south east of the site.

This is a landscape with a lower visual sensitivity due to the enclosed confined nature of the longer views from publicly accessible footpaths and bridleways to south east of the site.



The site is located on the plateau of the Forest ridge, in the High Weald at approximately 135 m AOD, above and to north of an inward-looking upper river valley, with hedgerows and undulating topography with woodlands south and all the site margins too, which enclose the views in and out of the site.

There is thus enclosure of the site on four sides, by mature woodland to the south and west and by Parkland style planting on other boundaries.

The high degree of enclosure lowers sensitivity of landscape in this part of the AONB, the site thus being well screened from wider views of the AONB to the north, south, west and east.

There are no significant from the wider AONB to the site. Mature woodland and hedgerows tend to screen publicly accessible views of the site.

Insensitive boundary treatments (brick walls, brick paviour driveways, wooden close board fencing, laurel hedging), traffic noise, on A22, these are detractors from the landscape quality and they produce a medium quality and the landscape thus has a lower sensitivity to change as there is a need for enhancement and mitigation. Overall, sensitivity of the landscape is medium.

This is judged to be the case despite AONB status due to a very small visual envelope with some mainly close range and very enclosed views on the plateau, due to the existing mature vegetation cover on all site boundaries and due to topography and landcover to south and north.

Landscape quality is medium and the landscape condition of the land cover in and around the site in 2019 is generally low to medium, due to lapsed management of the planting on the site, resulting in lower landscape condition. The woodland to west and south of the site has a high landscape condition and needs to be protected and retained.

With good hedgerow, and woodland management on areas previously of low quality, on and adjacent to site, the landscape quality could be improved from medium to high.

There is lower sensitivity to change on the site, due to some diversity loss through invasive species (Laurel), and lack of sensitive landscape management plus visual detractors, including dead/ dying exotic species and fly tipping. (Also, see Tables in Appendix 4 and 5.)

5.4.1 Cumulative impacts of strategic sites with SA26.

SA26 is located to the south of Ashurst Wood and proposes 12 residential units. Due to the size of the settlement and the location of Ashurst Wood towards the very north-east of the district, there are no other strategic developments proposed within the settlement, nor within a 500-metre radius. The closest other strategic developments currently proposed are at East Grinstead approximately 2.2 km north-west. Of these East Grinstead sites, most are focused towards the north-west of the town. The other strategic sites would not be considered to have a cumulative impact with the site SA26 as they are too distant to SA26 which is on Ashurst Wood southeast fringe.



The proposals for the 12 new dwellings with a ridge height of 8.1 m above ground, and 5.6 m to the eaves, above the existing ground level is at approximately 137 m AOD.

The site layout proposals are shown on the following drawings by Cowan Architects, East Grinstead.

Masterplan (showing site layout of the 12 proposed dwellings) drawing number 2226 – CAL – XX – XX – DR – a – 101 – S4 revision P2, size A3, Preliminary drawing dated 19/11/19. Scale 1 to 500, revision be dates 21/01/20 amended layout.

The perspective drawings are as follows; Also, Land south of Hammerwood Road Q2226-CAL-XX-XX-DR-A-SK01-S3-P1. Also, Land south of Hammerwood Rd, Indicative 3D Perspective -0 View travelling East on Hammerwood Road Q2226-CAL-XX-XX-DR-A-SK02-S3-P1, dated 29/01/20. Also, Q2226 – Land South of Hammerwood Road. Indicative 3D Perspective- View travelling West on Hammerwood Road Q2226-CAL-XX-XX-DR-A-SK03-S3-P1.

5.4.2 *Magnitude of change*

- The site thus has a narrow visual envelope which is mainly to north, with some close-range views in from Hammerwood Road and Yewhurst Close through the proposed access.
- There are no significant views from the Bridleway to east of the site, in the rural AONB, due to intervening woodland.
- The main views which will be affected are thus close-range views from Hammerwood road, and from the junction of Yewhurst Close, as well as some from the west. The nature of these Viewpoints gives a few close range publicly accessible views of the site.
- They are from urban and suburban areas within the LCA and are views of the well vegetated and partly wooded edges of the site or are glimpses between between gaps in the northern boundary planting from the north from the pavement on the northern edge of Hammerwood Road.
- These are sequential views, but these will be mitigated for by conserving the northern boundary evergreen Parkland planting. Where laurel and Rhododendron are removed and replanted with native species, this may increase MOC into the site for those views.
- There will be views into site from the proposed eastern access into the site from Yewhurst Close.

Magnitude of change varies with each Viewpoint, depending on the amount of change; for some Viewpoints it will be low or negligible as there will be no change. (See Tables in Appendix for details.)

There are few significant views into the site, with sequential views from Yewhurst Close and Hammerwood road. These will be of the northern elevation of upper storeys of houses and the proposed access into the east of the site.

There are no publicly accessible views from the wider AONB to south of the site.



Views from the west are restricted to those of the boundary woodland, which is to be kept as a green buffer and link to habitats beyond the site.

Views along Hammerwood road are thus channelled east-west, with few views out to south.

The main close-range views will be being through the proposed site access, in the eastern site boundary, and through the new proposed pedestrian access to the west through woodland in through the western boundary, from the land to the west of the site.

There will be medium magnitude of change for close-range views, looking west from Yewhurst Close through the proposed access towards the new dwellings' north/eastern elevations, in the east and north of the site. There will be a medium magnitude of change for views south from Hammerwood road through the gaps in the boundary planting and views of parts of the northern elevations of the proposed new dwellings, which will be at a ridge height of approximately 8.1 m. The proposals will be of a similar height to the ridge heights of Yewhurst Close to east of the site. The proposals will also be softened by existing mature tree cover and the green buffer along the northern part of the site.

There will be a negligible magnitude of change for views from the wider High Weald AONB to the far south, west and east. This is as the visual envelope of views is very confined, to the streetscape of Hammerwood road and Yewhurst Close, which are the closest roads to which the site is located, and it is thus a narrow visual envelope with a set of views to north, to east and some to west. These views are then enclosed by the buildings on Hammerwood road and Yewhurst Close and will also be mitigated by woodland and mature shrub and tree planting, to west and east and are inward-looking views contained within the street scene of Ashurst Wood. Magnitudes of changes in most publicly accessible viewpoints within the wider AONB landscape beyond the valley in which the site is located were thus deemed to be negligible.

Hence there will be generally a negligible change in the wider views from the West Sussex AONB as a result of this application. The High Weald Forest Ridge is characterised by wooded, confined, intimate views, and in this case, this produces a lower visual sensitivity and negligible impact on wider AONB views.

The current baseline sounds on site include traffic sounds on site (from the A22 to the south), aircraft noise overhead and intermittent sounds of quad bikes and mowers. These sounds are typical of the local landscape character area, HW1, which is a well settled landscape.

The woodland and hedgerows which enclose the site and the fields in the wider landscape are a major contributing factor to the intimate, small scale pastoral landscape quality of this landscape. The mature Parkland trees and woodland on site, to south and west, also contribute to the quality of the landscape. This will be enhanced by renewed management of the buffer of trees and native shrubs, with hedgerow and the enhancement of road verges of Yewhurst Close, and the adjoining green spaces between the two sites, with tree planting along the eastern side of the site, adjacent to the new houses in Yewhurst Close, to soften views from these houses which overlook the site.



The designed parkland style planting will be replaced by dwellings and their gardens, paths and accesses, bringing a change in lighting and other landscape effects such as sounds of people and activities. However, the baseline landscape already includes these sounds and uses to the north, west and east on the southern edge of Ashurst Wood. This is as the Parkland trees will be conserved where they are of good quality and contribute to the visual amenity. Also, the other Parkland planting will be conserved, especially where it is native broadleaved planting, as in the woodland block to south and the smaller native copse to west of the site. These wooded areas will provide an important buffer to soften views of the proposed 12 dwellings in the local landscape character area. They will be retained and managed to integrate the proposals into the local landscape setting.

The planting will be enhanced along the northern, western and eastern, as well as protection of the woodland on the southern site boundary. These mature woodland, single Parkland trees and hedgerows and trees will be retained, and their positive landscape amenity effects enhanced, along all the boundaries, except where accesses are to be made into the site.

Rhododendron and Laurel (which is over mature, leggy and senescent) should be removed from site. Due to the invasive nature of these exotic species they are a threat to adjacent woodland biodiversity and are over mature. New planting is required for gaps that removal of these species will cause. This should be shown on a Landscape Plan and be native planting where feasible. Due to lack of sensitive management the site has become dominated by these pest species, so this should be redressed by the proposals and planting.

Lighting is to be baffled and sensitively designed so that magnitude of change with the new planting along the northern site boundary, to north of the houses, and east of the houses, will lower over time and be low, as planting softening and management of the invasive species on site and their replacement with mixed native planting of hedgerows, copse style planting and specimen trees takes effect.

There will be a low magnitude of change due to some increases in lighting at dusk. Users of the Bridleway and footpaths will be unlikely to witness these changes after dark and would have a negligible change in views due to intervening woodland cover and oblique angle of views.

Other views are of the upper elevations of the houses from the pavement on Hammerwood road, which already is a suburban area. Similarly, the views from the new housing at Yewhurst Close have views in to the site, but these are not lower storey views, but upper storey, and they are also from an urban area looking into the proposed access which is at present close board wooden fencing and exotic planting of Laurel with gaps. These features are detractors and are existing suburbanising elements and hence they lower the landscape sensitivity of this part of the local landscape character area, LCA HW1. Magnitude of change is lower as a result.

The mature dense woodland to south and west of the site means that these parts of the view will be screened. Also, the parkland style planting along all the site boundaries is to be retained where feasible and this softens the views and lowers the landscape sensitivity.

There will be no glimpses from the Bridleway to southeast of the site, nor from the other footpaths further to east of the Bridleway, (Vanguard way, High Weald Landscape Trail) with



the woodland intervening in the views and the combined effects of topography and vegetation mean that this will be a negligible magnitude of change, in winter.

The foliage of the intervening hedgerows and woodland on the north and east of the site will screen the views of the northern house elevations, from the northern pavement on Hammerwood road. Where gaps occur, these will be gapped up using mixed native planting to be shown on a Landscape plan to be drawn up by a landscape consultant, at the detailed planning stage.

Oblique glimpses of the dwellings in their sylvan rural setting will enhance rather than detract from the landscape character. Glimpses of the houses from Yewhurst Close, to the east will add a sense of drama and suspense, with some glimpsed views through mature Parkland trees (to be retained) and through the mature woodland buffer of the site.

There will be views from west through the proposed pedestrian path access in the west boundary. This land is an adventure pursuits area, where commercial recreational activities take place, but these will only have a low sensitivity to change as the site users will be preoccupied with the sports activities such as quad biking. Magnitude of change is negligible too low for some of these views. (See Summary Table of Visual impacts in Appendix.)

The new dwellings would replace the poor condition former parkland planting and hence will enhance rather than detract from the landscape setting. This will bring long-term slight beneficial visual impacts, in the oblique views from the adjoining land, to north of the site and to east. The associated positive change will also be due to the conservation of key features of the two woodland blocks (in south and west of site) and of key features, specimen trees; there will also be additional planting of the new woodland shaw and double staggered hedgerows along the west and east as well as the north site boundaries to enhance the landscape setting.

The addition of 12 dwellings will bring changes, but the plot size and the land in the client's ownership allow for some mitigation and enhancement measures. These will allow for these new dwellings to be accommodated comfortably within their semi woodland setting. The existing mature woodland to south and west of the site will enable the landscape to accommodate this change so that the magnitude of landscape change will be lowered as a result; without detriment to the wider landscape character of the High Weald HW1, nor to that of the wider High Weald AONB.

Due to a lower landscape condition of some parts of the site, such as gaps caused by plant death and dying or over mature leggy exotics such as Laurel, which have invaded the whole site, there is considerable scope to introduce new key landscape enhancements as landscape features, such as mixed, double staggered row mixed native hedgerows, shaws, woodland edge habitats, and native planting.

Therefore, as part of the proposals, there will be substantial new habitats, to enhance the rural landscape character of the site, particularly to the north, west and east as well as the south of the site.



The protection and retention of all mature trees except for where new accesses go, will accord with the NPPF on landscape and biodiversity. These proposals for the 12 new houses will bring a moderate magnitude of change with slight beneficial effects in the long term. (See Summary Tables in Appendix 4 and 5.)

5.5 VISUAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

5.5.1 Visual Envelope

The Visual Envelope of the development on the site is shown for each of the representative viewpoints, where there is a view of the site. (See Appendix under the respective viewpoints.)

Features that will restrict the extent of the Visual Envelope include:

- Intervening topography combined with hedgerows.
- Hedgerows on banks adjacent to Bridleway and other sunken footpaths.
- Residential buildings; out buildings and sheds.
- Other intervening vegetation including woodland.

Views are confined to those for residents and walkers along the pavement on the north side of Hammerwood road, looking obliquely south to site. Also, there will be glimpsed oblique views of the site for motorists travelling along Hammerwood road driving east to west. They will have oblique views southwards of the site. Both sets of views will be glimpsed views and they will be sequential.

There are no significant views from the Bridleway or footpaths looking north-westwards towards site.

As the land is on a plateau which has well wooded margins and adjacent woodland to southeast and west, the effect of vegetation screening, by mature trees on the site (which will be protected and retained) will be to screen the site from views.

The houses along the northern side of Hammerwood road effectively screen the new houses from any views from the rest of HW1, which are blocked by the combined effects with the buildings, walls and other site boundaries, hedgerows and woodland to the north of the site. In the west, views are enclosed by intervening woodland and shrubs/hedgerows.

The effects of topography; to the south of the site, there are no significant views from the wider AONB, with no footpaths to south and complex well wooded intervening topography.



There are no views of the site from the footpaths (Vanguard Way, High Weald Landscape trail) further to east of bridleway, as these footpaths are well screened by intervening topography and woodland with hedgerows.

5.6 VISUAL ASSESSMENT

5.6.1 Visual Receptors

The principal groups of visual receptors identified within the study area are summarised as follows:

- Residential receptors, including towns, villages and isolated properties.
- Public rights of way, including footpaths; local roads.
- Recreational areas.
- Listed buildings.

5.6.2 Representative Viewpoints.

A set of key viewpoints, not previously agreed with Mid Sussex District Planning Department, represents the views experienced by surrounding receptors and these are shown in the Appendices 1 and 2.

Mature shrubs trees and hedgerows along the site periphery mean that the houses will not be visible from some viewpoints on the pavement of Hammerwood road. Equally, mature hedgerows along the Bridleway, its sunken nature and orientation, plus intervening woodland mean that this Bridleway will be screened from view.

Glimpses will be possible of the upper parts of the new houses, northern and eastern elevations from viewpoints on the pavement of Hammerwood road, and eastern elevations visible from Yewhurst Close.

(See Summary Tables in Appendix.) These will decrease with time due to planting on the northern and eastern site boundary along Hammerwood road and along the boundary between the site and Yewhurst Close and are deemed to be beneficial in the short and long term.

5.7 VISUAL SENSITIVITY

The visual sensitivity of the visual receptors depends on.

- Location and context of the viewpoints.
- Occupation of the visual receptor.



- Number of receptors being represented by the viewpoint and the distance from the scheme.
- The extent of the visual intrusion by any existing development can also affect the sensitivity of visual receptors in the vicinity.

Sensitivity of visual receptors is deemed to vary from medium to low.

The receptors will be residents and walkers on the pavement of Hammerwood road and the residents in Yewhurst Close. This gives them a high to medium to low sensitivity. Due to the narrow visual envelope(s) and restricted views as well as to orientation and nature of the pavement and proposed access there will be a moderate to low level of visual impact on these visual receptors.

The level of use of footpaths was moderate, with a lower number of walkers on the nearest bridleway, but there are no views of the site. This leads to the lower overall sensitivity of receptors, of moderate to low in terms of LVIA.

Residential change in views- Views from upper storeys (Yewhurst Close) are not deemed to be significant in terms of LVIA, as only ground storeys are deemed to be significant. Some ground storeys of houses in Yewhurst Close will be affected but the visual impact caused by the development will be slight beneficial. Closeboard fencing will be removed and an access will be added from Yewhurst Close, which will be planted to soften the access.

Views are towards the new access from Yewhurst Close of the new house eastern elevations, though these are oblique views which will be softened by the proposed double staggered mixed native hedgerow and tree planting to the east of the site. Also, with protection and retention of all mature hedgerow and trees along the eastern boundary where possible, that is where accesses and visibility splays allow; this approach will help to mitigate any adverse effects.

5.8 MAGNITUDE OF VISUAL CHANGE AND LANDSCAPE CAPACITY

5.8.1 Key Viewpoints and other views

The Key Viewpoints have been selected on the edges of the site. See Appendix 1 for details of the locations.

It is acknowledged that, due to the nature of restricted views into site, the magnitude of change will be low for most views.

Evaluation of the Landscape Effects and Visual Impact Significance

Landscape setting and landscape quality are relevant in assessing the Landscape Effects and Visual Impact Significance.



This is as the site is well enclosed by its densely wooded boundaries on the plateau and by the well wooded landcover combined with the corrugated, complex topography to south of the site.

With time, mitigation planting and enhancements will improve the landscape setting and will enhance this to give slight beneficial landscape effects and visual impacts. (See Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 for Summary of Landscape Effects and Summary of Visual Impacts respectively.)

5.9 CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

5.9.1 *Landscape Impact during Construction*

During construction, the significance of effects upon the landscape would be like those in Year 1 (opening year). Any changes to the landscape of the site made during the construction phase would be permanent, and would therefore be in evident in Year 1, following opening of the development.

Wider awareness of construction activity is likely to be limited to the visibility of the construction equipment, such as cranes, and the movement of construction vehicles. The construction works are only temporary and the landscape of the site and immediate surrounding area does include existing residential land uses to north and east, and further west which reduce the sensitivity of the landscape and as such landscape impacts during construction are considered to be moderate adverse.

5.9.2 *Visual Impact during Construction*

The significance of visual effects during construction would also be limited by the factors outlined previously. The predominant visual effect during construction is also likely to be associated with the visibility of construction equipment and the other machinery and materials. It is advised that the present evergreen buffer be maintained until construction works have been completed before removal of the pest species of Rhododendron and Laurel as these provide a dense screen and would minimise the dust from the site during construction phase. This will lower the visual impact during construction.

5.10 LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

The identification of key landscape effects will be considered at Year 1 (Opening Year.) The key effects are likely to be lighting and changes in traffic movement due to use of the site for residential use.



5.10.1 *Landscape Features and vegetation.*

It is recommended that some non-invasive exotic Parkland species be included in the planting at details planning stage- this is to conserve the parkland style local landscape character of the site, as well as including a wider range of native tree and shrub planting to enhance biodiversity on this site.

In the time after construction removal of Rhododendron and Laurel would be desirable as they are over mature and highly invasive pest species in neighbouring woodland. They are a threat to the wildlife and biodiversity on neighbouring woodland sites and should be managed for their long-term removal and more varied more desirable species planted in their place, to keep a green buffer to the site. The removal of these species would represent a moderate to highly beneficial landscape effect over time, by helping to conserve the biodiversity of adjacent woodland in the High Weald Forest Ridge, HW1.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 LANDSCAPE EFFECTS AND VISUAL IMPACTS

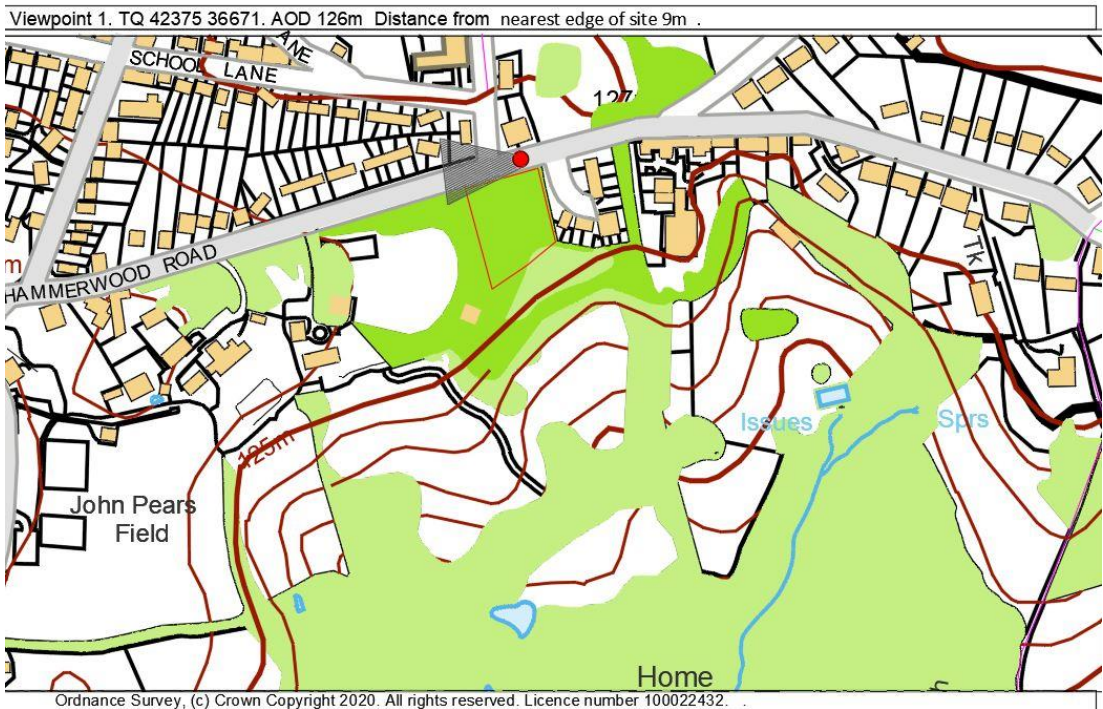
- The site has been assessed using the GLVIA 3rd Edition Guidelines for LVIA and uses the High Weald AONB Management Plan Template 2019-2024; this is to conserve and enhance local landscape character of High Weald, HW1, within its landscape setting of the wider AONB landscape.
- The site is a modified former Parkland style landscaped area which has been in lapsed management. This lack of management has produced the current over mature exotic planting which has some poor condition trees, dead and dying specimens as well as good quality exotic planting on the plateau.
- The nature of the views is of well enclosed views due to woodland planting on and near to site. In addition, good quality mature parkland specimen tree planting and some blocks of native woodland to south and west of the site will be conserved and managed. The proposed dwellings will thus be located within the wooded setting which will be conserved and enhanced.
- LVIA recommendations are to protect and retain all good quality specimen trees on site, where feasible including some good quality parkland style planting, of mature exotic trees, and shrubs, where these are non-invasive. The landscape proposals will help to integrate the 12 new dwellings into their landscape setting which has Parkland historic landscape features which contribute to the sense of place and time depth on site. The planting proposals are to maintain the site green buffer and to plant to strengthen green links, this is to conserve and enhance the rural nature of the wider AONB, HW1; especially to conserve the rural nature of the well wooded landscape to the south of the site, on the ridgeline. The proposals are to keep all the wooded margins of all edges of the site and specially to protect, strengthen and maintain, the woodland buffer strip along the southern edge of the site.
- The proposals will need to meet the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan; this will be by protecting and retaining the woodland on the south of the site, protecting and retaining all mature, good quality Parkland trees on site, including non-native Pines and other mature Coniferous trees, and incorporating all these mature trees into the new publicly accessible green spaces.



- There are no other strategic developments proposed within the settlement, nor within a 500-metre radius. The closest other strategic developments currently proposed are at East Grinstead approximately 2.2 km north-west. Of these East Grinstead sites, most are focused towards the north-west of the town. The other sites would not have a cumulative impact with the site SA26, which is on Ashurst Wood's southern edge, as they are too distant to SA26.
- These present opportunities and scope for green links to and from the site's margins. To the east Yewhurst Close has little tree planting and lack of landscaping weakens the otherwise strong sense of place. Poor condition of the site's planting and trees confers a lower landscape quality, and the adjacent sites to west and east exert suburbanising influences on this part of the local landscape character area, in HW1. Nonetheless, the site also has some of the key features of the local landscape character, LCA HW1, in the woodland and parkland planting. These contribute towards creating a strong sense of place in parts of the LCA HW1, in High Weald, as well as to local distinctiveness, and a sense of tranquillity in the nature of the views of natural beauty, in views toward the wooded edges.
- The site is in a water protection area, with a need to conserve water quality and Sustainable drainage. This will need to be reflected in the design of the site layout of the communal areas, in the surroundings of the proposed dwellings, as well as in rain gardens and SUDs design.
- Planting will be to link to the existing mature planting and to the hedgerows and woodland beyond the site. This planting will be to strengthen the network of hedgerows and increase the landscape capacity to accommodate change, by enhancing landscape structure over time, with beneficial landscape character conservation as well as some beneficial visual impacts. By respecting the key features of the landscape, adding to these with new copse style mixed native woodland planting and management, to replace the invasive pest species, with more desirable more varied broadleaved species, the proposals will contribute towards meeting some of the objectives of the High Weald Management Plan 2019-2024, to retain a strong sense of place and locally distinctive nature of views.
- The proposals for 12 new dwellings within its sylvan village setting, conserving former Parkland mature specimen trees where feasible, adding new copse planting and mature native specimen trees on site, with additional sensitive landscape mitigation and enhancements; these actions will bring beneficial landscape effects. Findings of this LVIA are that these proposals will comply with the NPPF. That is, the proposed development will in the long term bring beneficial landscape effects and visual impacts, through the proposed landscape protection with enhancements including those for creation of new habitats; this is to enhance biodiversity and for nature conservation.
- The LVIA findings are for slight beneficial visual impacts in year 1, on a limited number of views within the enclosed views, with slight beneficial landscape effects and visual impacts 15 years after construction due to the proposed application. (See Summary Tables in Appendix 4 and 5.) Management of the site's parkland style planting and specimen trees to conserve these and the green links to woodland beyond, will enhance the landscape in HW1, High Weald Forest Ridge, NCA 122, High Weald, AONB. This would thus satisfy the landscape and biodiversity sections of the NPPF.



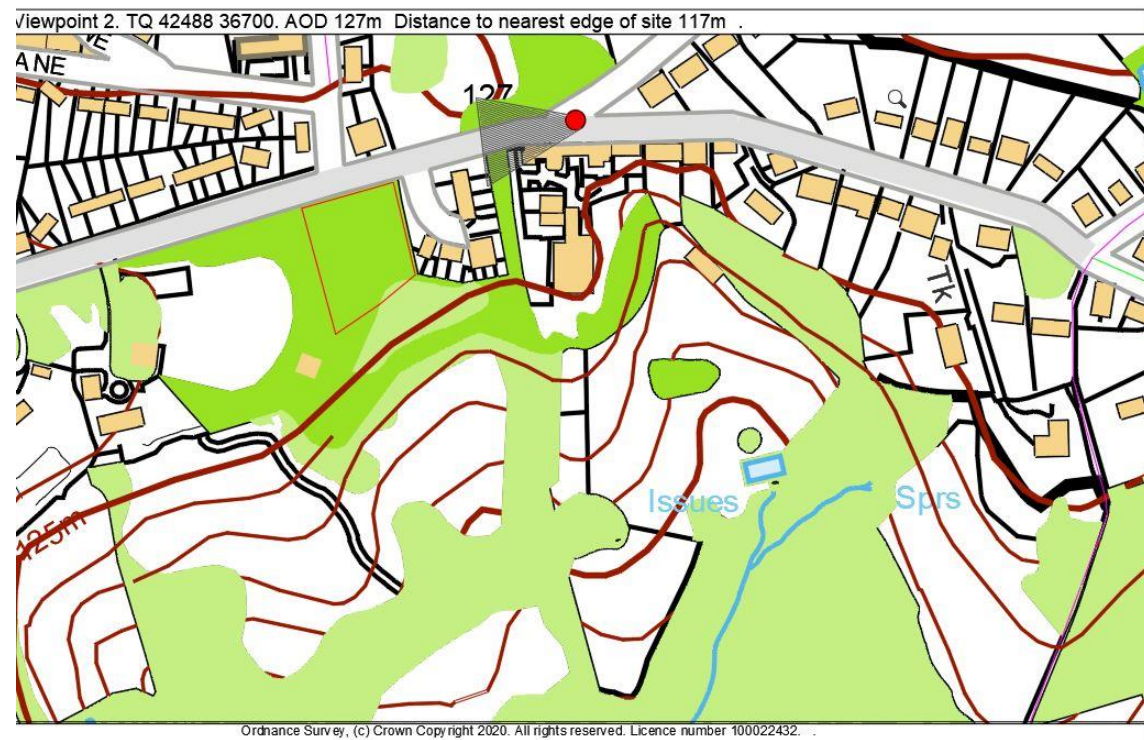
APPENDIX 1 Representative Viewpoints and Photographs



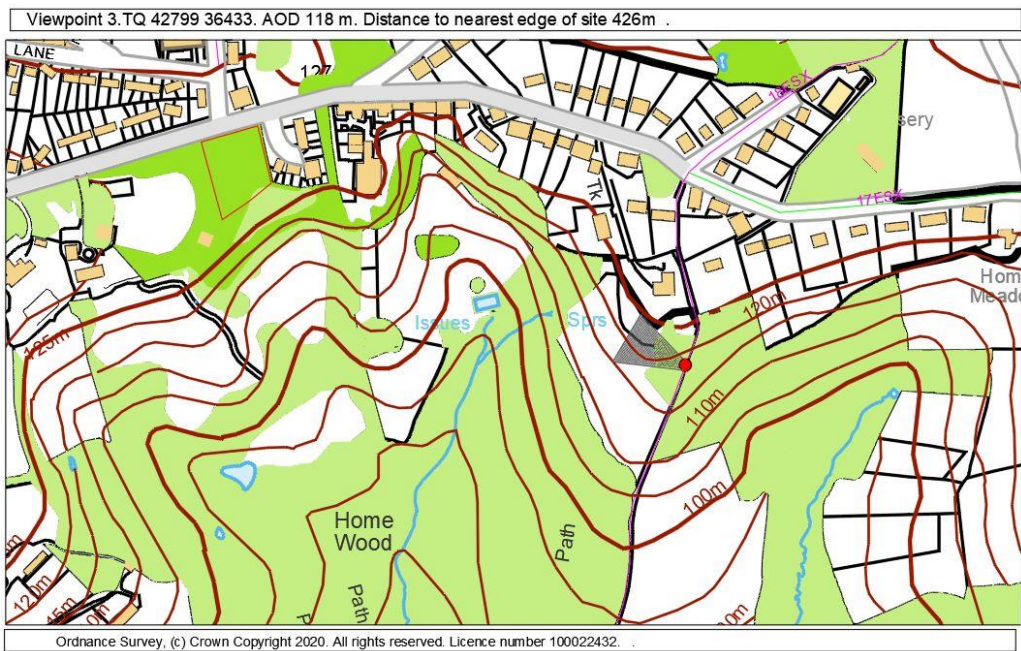
Viewpoint 1.
View looking westwards along Hammerwood road.

The northern boundary of the site produces a green buffer to the southern edge of Hammerwood road.

The site is a modified landscape, previously designed landscaped and planted as parkland associated with a large country house and estate, latterly a school. The site retains the original rhododendron and laurel species which have become overgrown, but which produce a sylvan appearance, giving a dense green backdrop to Hammerwood road. This buffer zone includes native vegetation, and could be managed to improve its Biodiversity. It contributes towards the sense of place. The planting will need to be protected and retained as a green buffer; this is to conserve and enhance the site within the High Weald AONB, and to conserve the sense of place and the locally distinctive features within this local landscape character, in HW1 High Weald.



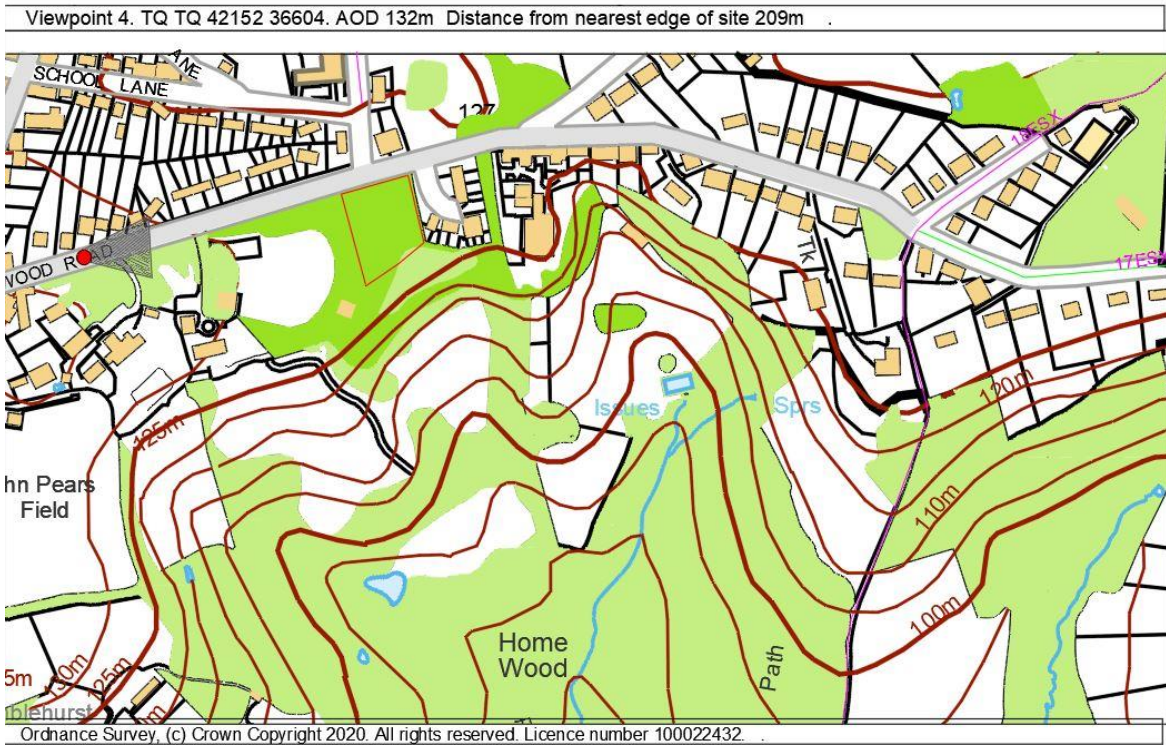
Viewpoint 2. View looking westwards along Hammerwood road towards the north-eastern boundary of the site. The site provides a designed landscape of evergreen mature exotic trees, which form part of the modified landscape of the site, and contribute to the local landscape character, with mature pines and Cupressus species as well as more invasive species such as Rhododendron and Laurel. Magnitude of change will be low due to proportion of view to be occupied by the change, due to the intervening landcover of buildings and mature trees and due to the orientation of the view.



Viewpoint 3. View looking North westwards towards site from Bridleway. Woodland cover limits the visual sensitivity of the site, so that there is a lack of significant views from the Bridleway, the nearest publicly accessible right of way in the rural AONB to south of the site. View looking northwestwards towards site from Bridleway, is representative of other views from the Bridleway.

The site is well enclosed by woodland and this surrounding woodland means that views of the proposals would be well screened, even in winter by intervening woodland.

There are thus no significant views of the site from this nearest Bridleway to south east of site, nor from more distant PROW further east which are similarly screened.



Viewpoint 4.

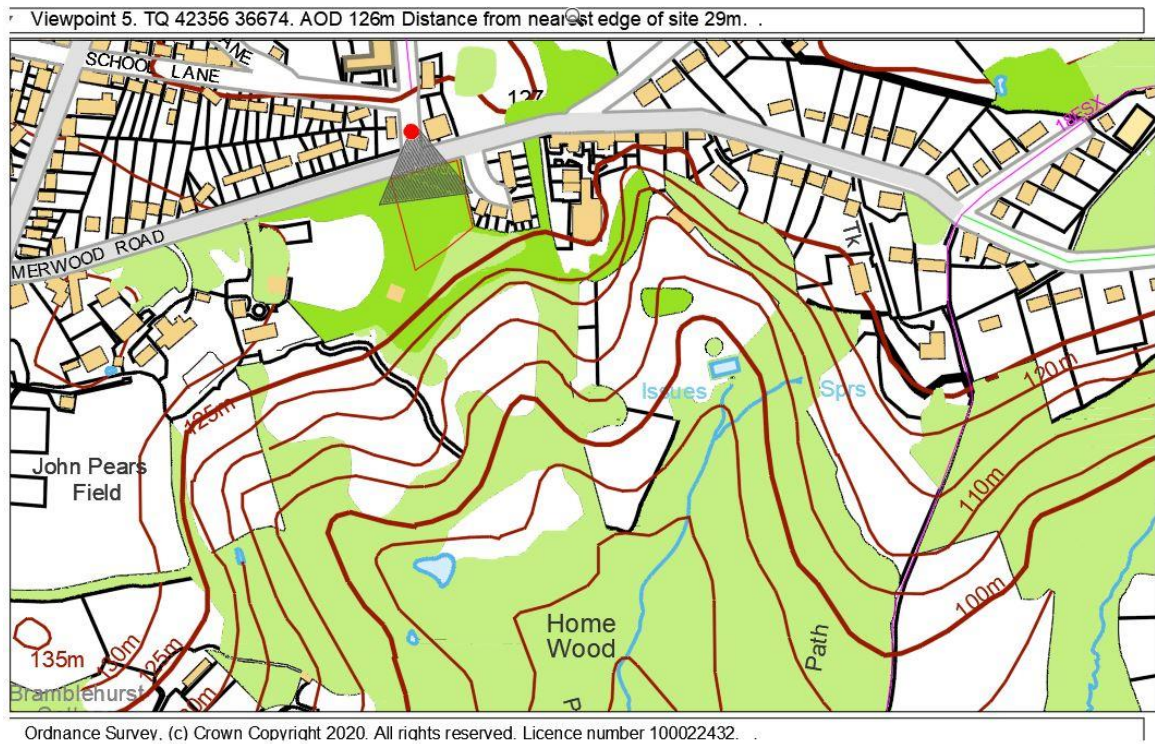
View looking eastwards from Hammerwood road towards the north-west corner of the site. The designed landscape and exotic treescape associated with the site, contributes to a sylvan appearance to Hammerwood road. Parkland planting is a key landscape characteristic in this part of the local landscape character area of HW1, High Weald. The woodland buffer will need to be managed to remove Laurel and Rgiododendron, replanting with native species. This will protect the local woodland from these pest species and will enhance the local landscape character area within the High Weald AONB.



Viewpoint 5.

View of the northern boundary of the site looking southwards from the pavement on the northern edge of Hammerwood road.

The site is a modified landscape which has been in lapsed management, and some planting is in poor condition, so there will be a need to replant gaps when the invasive exotic species are removed, and to replant the gaps and control the spread of rhododendron and laurel by removing these pest species. The aim should be to conserve and enhance the sylvan nature of the wooded boundaries of the site, to maintain the screening of the interior of the site. This is so that the local landscape character key features of wooded margins of the site from the former parkland, and the green space is maintained. This will conserve and enhance the visual amenity of the locally distinctive site within the local landscape character area, HW1.



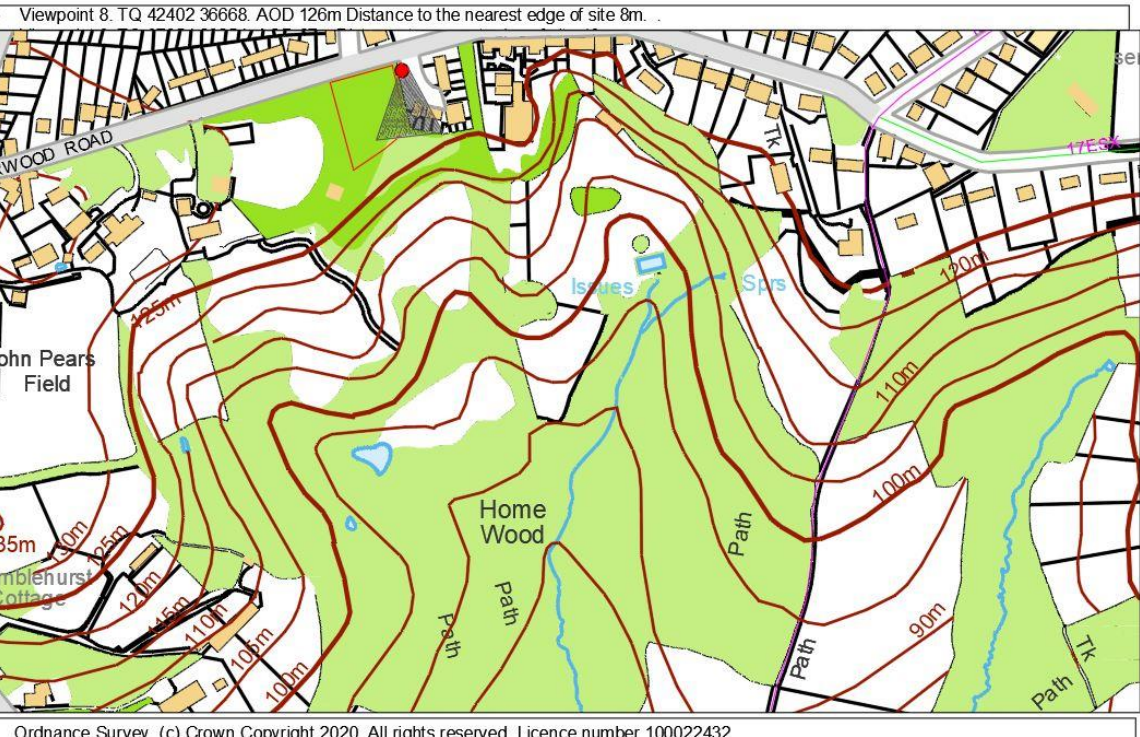


Viewpoint 6.
View looking towards the West of the site which has mature mixed deciduous woodland, copse regeneration, mixed with the exotic evergreen parkland planting. The mature planting on the Western site boundary should be conserved and enhanced. This is to conserve the nature of the views of the local landscape character area, HW1 High Weald. Conserving the buffer zone around the site will help to conserve natural beauty, and to conserve and enhance the local landscape character area through these proposals.

Note car parking and use of adjacent site to West of site, as recreational site.

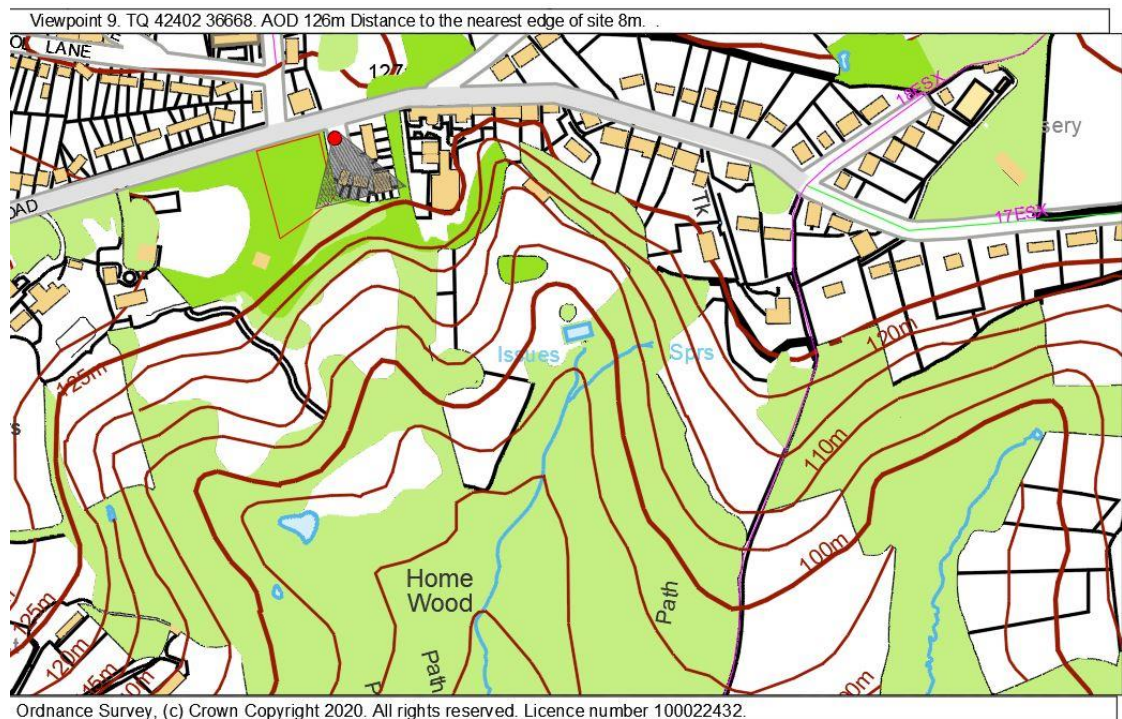


Viewpoint 7. View looking towards western boundary of the site, from land to west. The landscape character in west of site is well wooded. There are some suburban influences on west of site. New planting of Laurel, an invasive non-native species which spreads to woodlands and is a pest species, weakens sense of place and fragments the rural nature of this part of the LCA HW1. Laurel is thus a visual detractor in the view towards the West of the site. The proposed planting on site should avoid planting of invasive non-native species Laurel and Rhododendron which tend to outcompete more desirable native species which support local wildlife. The wooded landscape character of the site’s margins derives from the mixed native copse on the Western boundary of the site. This woodland should be protected and retained, as a green buffer, this is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the local landscape character area, as well as the semi rural nature of the views looking east from adjoining properties within the High Weald AONB. The wooden close board fencing and sheds are a visual detractor on this landscape (centre photo).



Viewpoint 8. View looking South towards site from Yewhurst Close. The proposed access to the site would be mid photo. Current detractors in this view are the wooden close board fencing, and the car parking on paviers, these built elements and other influences have a suburbanising effect on the land to east of the site. This weakens the sense of place of the former parkland set within the LCA HW1, on a plateau.

There will be a need to avoid use of closeboard fencing where possible and to plant native hedgerows on site boundaries. The fencing should have a native hedge planted on the west and east side to soften the fencing between the sites. There is some scope to further enhance the area's local landscape character, by diversifying the grassland areas of the road verges in the photo, and to add native hedgerow and tree planting, instead of exotic planting of invasive species such as Laurel and Rhododendron (photo right) which will be removed where possible. This will be to conserve and enhance the local landscape character area, HW1, in the High Weald AONB.



Viewpoint 9. Land adjoining the east of the site; the urban nature of the views on Yewhurst Close, which is a modern housing development adjoining the western site boundary with many built features and little soft landscaping weakening the sense of place in this part of the LCA HW1 to east of the site. Note, trees and woodland have been kept to south (rear of houses) which enable site to merge with views from south.

Lack of native planting and dominance of hard surfacing lowers landscape quality in this part of the LCA HW1. Native planting and increased species diversity will be used in the proposals. This planting will help to conserve and enhance the local landscape character of this part of the sub urban/ urban fringe landscape character HW1, High Weald in the High Weald AONB.

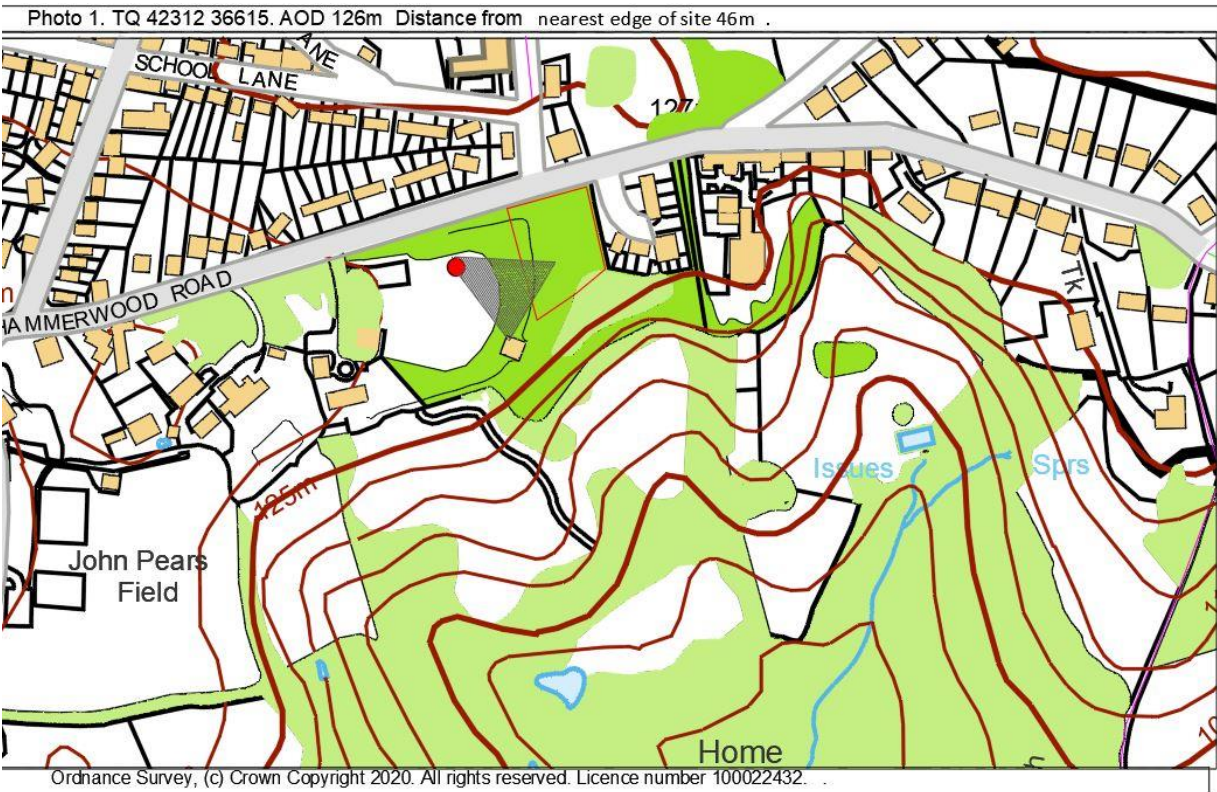


Photo 1. To illustrate local landscape character to west of site. The adjacent site, to west of the site, has mature trees and planting, but various containers and materials are visual detractors from the rural nature of the views in this part of the local landscape character area, HW1, High Weald. There is a diminished sense of place as a result of the activities on the land, which lead to the paraphernalia associated with this recreational land use (adventure activities).

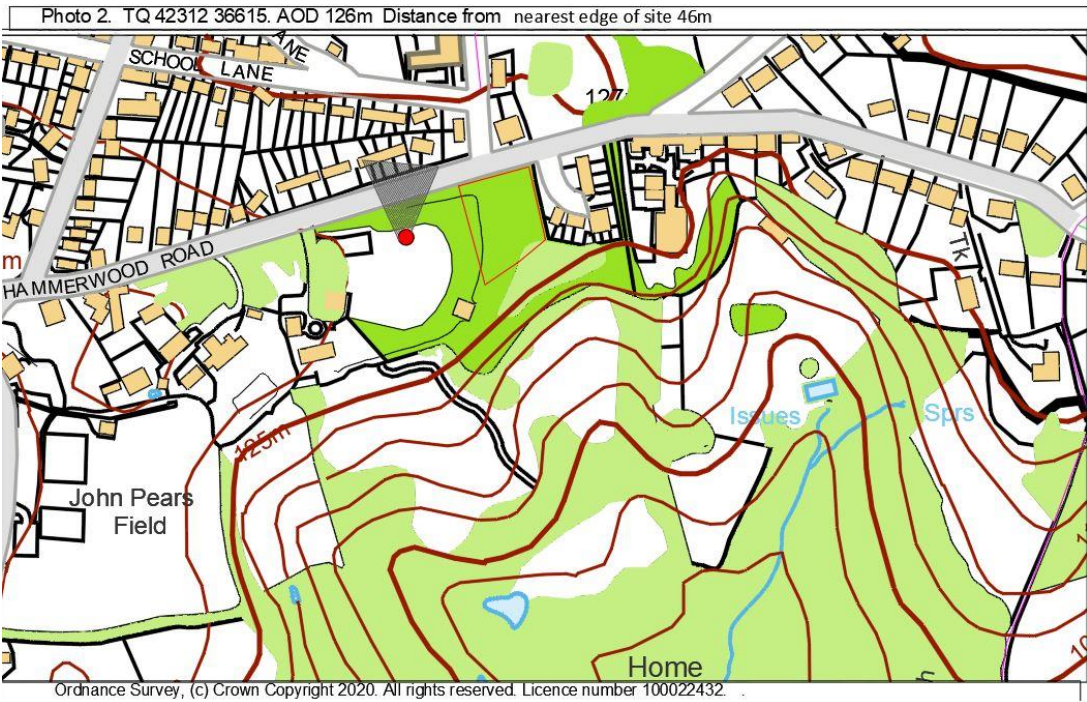


Photo 2. To illustrate the local landscape character of the site.
The site is a modified landscape, of former parkland planting, now senescent in places. This gives a lower landscape quality and is in poor condition in parts. These areas will require management and replanting to maintain the green buffer on the site boundaries.



Photo 3. To illustrate the low quality of landscape, which lowers the landscape sensitivity to change. Poor condition of some of the former parkland planting (Rhododendron, Laurel, specimen trees including conifers) lowers the landscape quality of parts of the site to low, within the site, in this part of HW1. Good quality Specimen trees will need to be protected and retained where possible, though few remain.

These areas of dead and dying planting will need to be replaced by mixed native broadleaved planting- this is to conserve and enhance the landscape character and to enhance the sense of place, which has been undermined by the lapsed management of the site's parkland planting. This is to conserve and enhance the site within the LCA HW1, conserving and enhancing the landscape character of the site and its margins, including the mature buffer of planting.

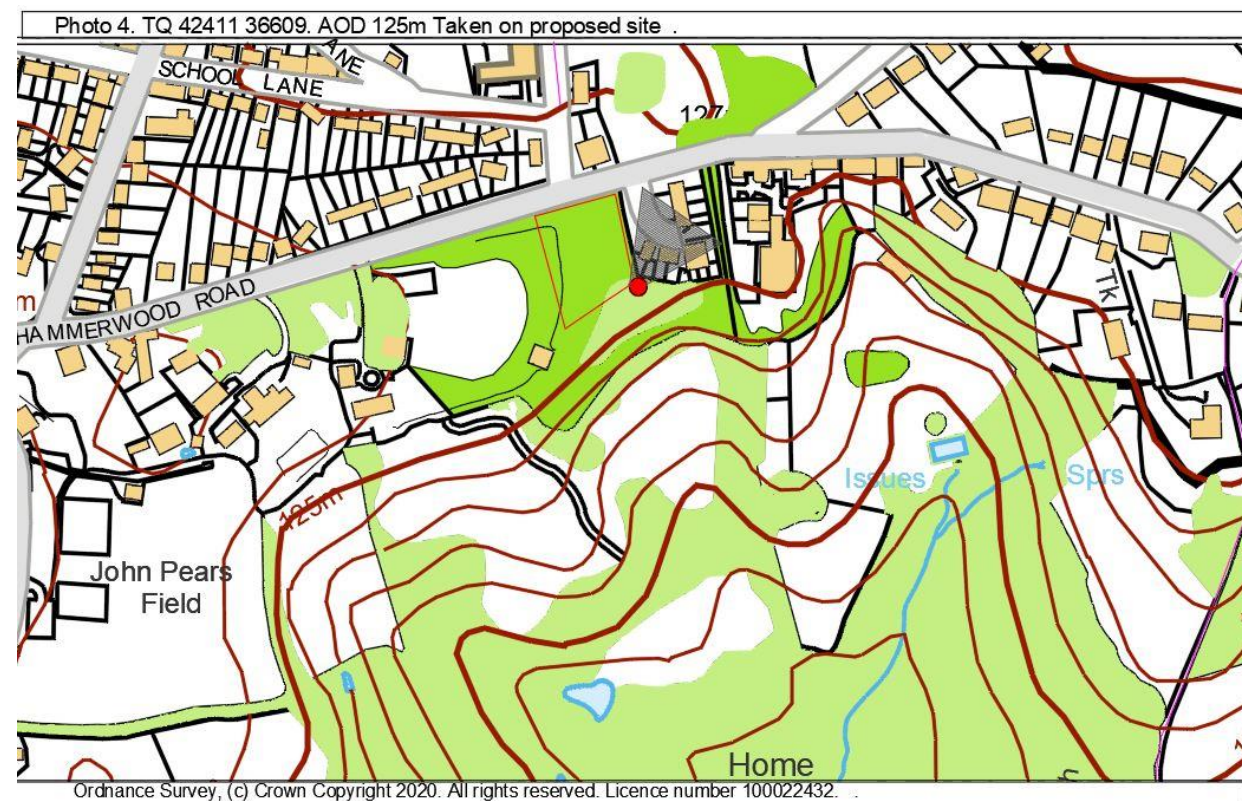


Photo 4. View from east of the site looking towards the adjoining site, the west end of Yewhurst Close. Visual detractors in the local

landscape character area, HW1.

Close board fencing and lack of management mean that there is no softening planting; the eastern edge of the site has an inadequate buffer, which will require dense planting- to maintain privacy and conserve and enhance the landscape setting of the proposed development for the site users and residents.

A dense planting of native tree and shrubs in a copse style buffer is recommended for this boundary.

Laurel, Rhododendron and close board wooden fencing are detractors, as are unscreened views of these house of the west part of Yewhurst Close.





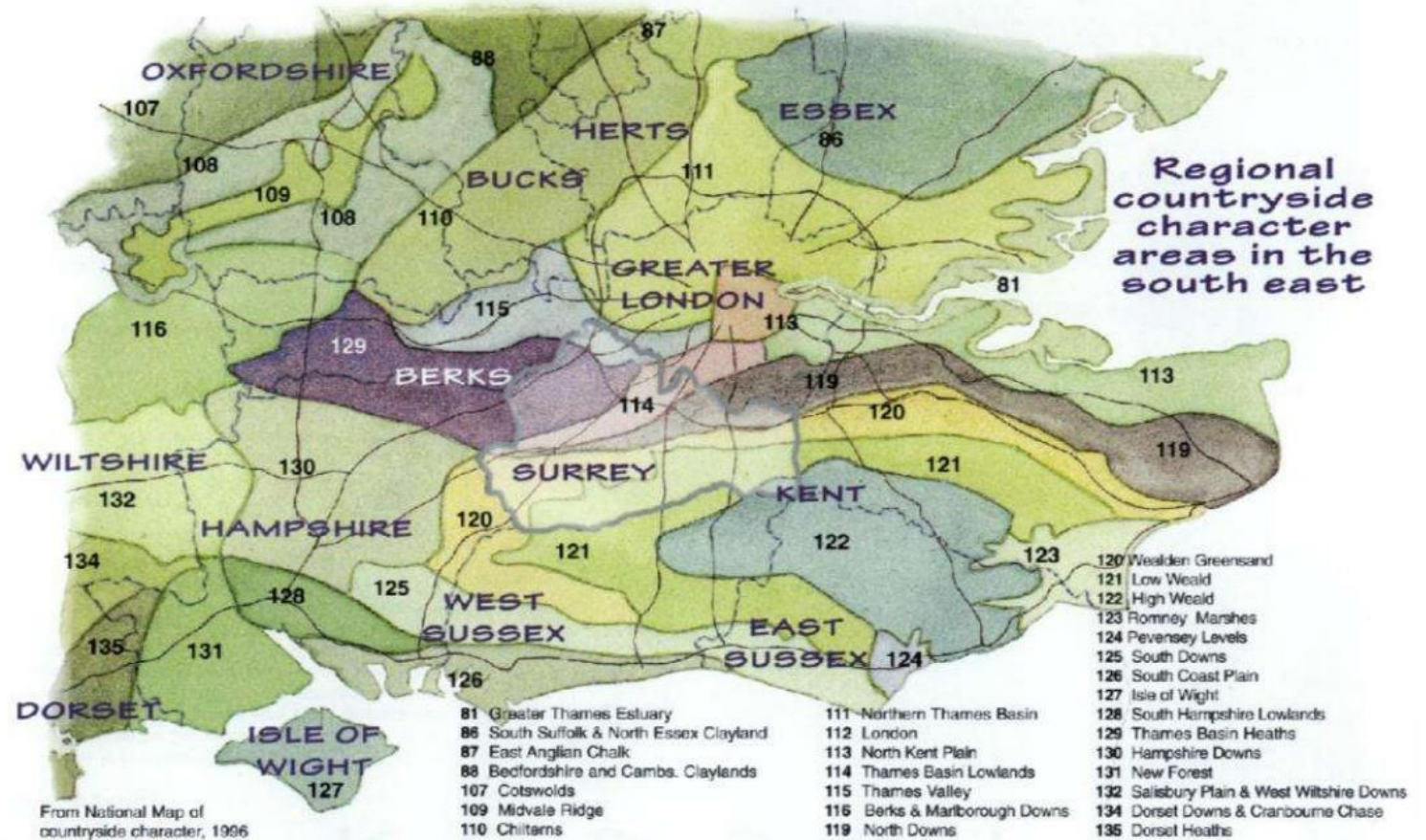
Figure 1. Aerial photo with Viewpoints and Photos locations. This is a well wooded landscape in the High Weald Forest ridge, HW1. There is woodland to south, and west of site. The parkland style planting on site reinforces this well enclosed landscape character on the plateau. Woodland cover to south, southeast means there is no view from the Bridleway (VP3).





2.1

APPENDIX 3 Maps



MAGiC

Historic Map



Map extract of Listed Buildings. There are 2 Grade 1 listed buildings, one is to west of the site and the other to the east at Grove Farm. There are some isolated listed buildings to north east of the site. There is a high concentration of listed buildings in Forest Row to south of the site.

MAGiC

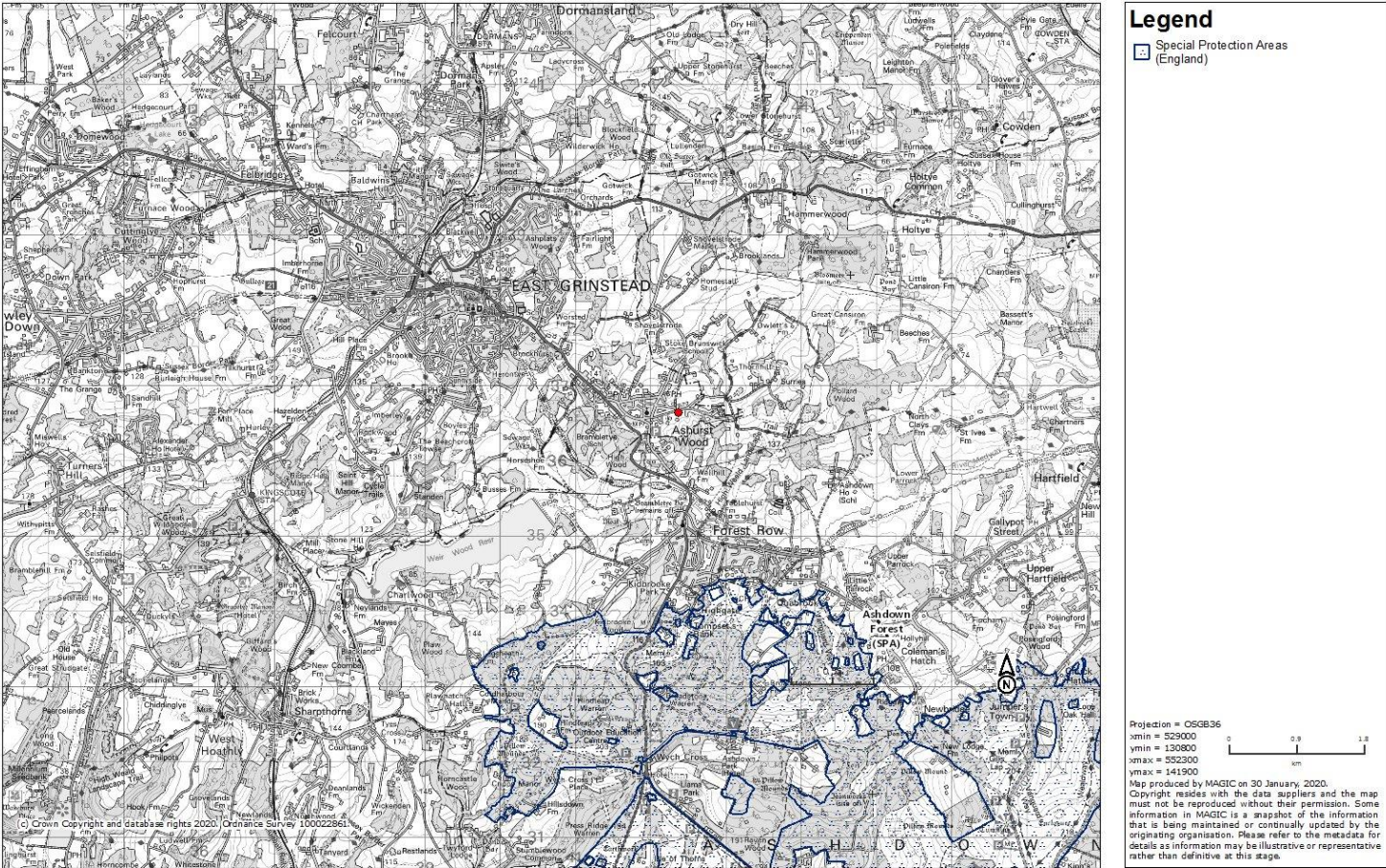
Habitats



Habitat Map for Study Area (from Magic Website) site classed as “no main habitat but additional habitat exists”, woodland blocks south, woodland to far north of the site. Woodlands are a key feature of the landscape character giving enclosed views on the High Weald Forest Ridge and AONB landscape.

MAGiC

Special Protection Areas

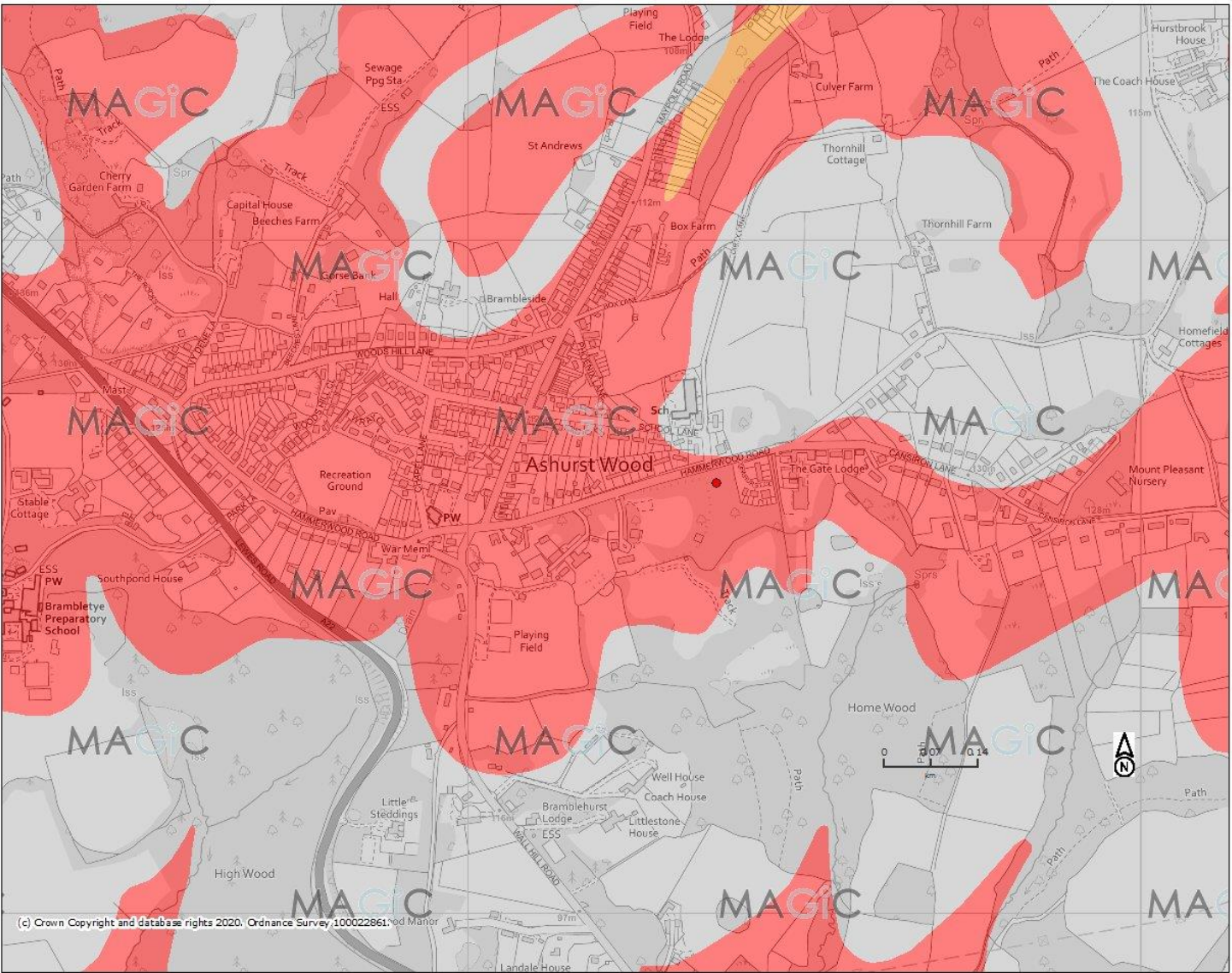


There is a nearby SPA the Ashdown Forest. This is located to south of the site, south of Forest Row village.



MAGiC

Groundwater Vulnerability Map



Legend

Groundwater Vulnerability Map (England)

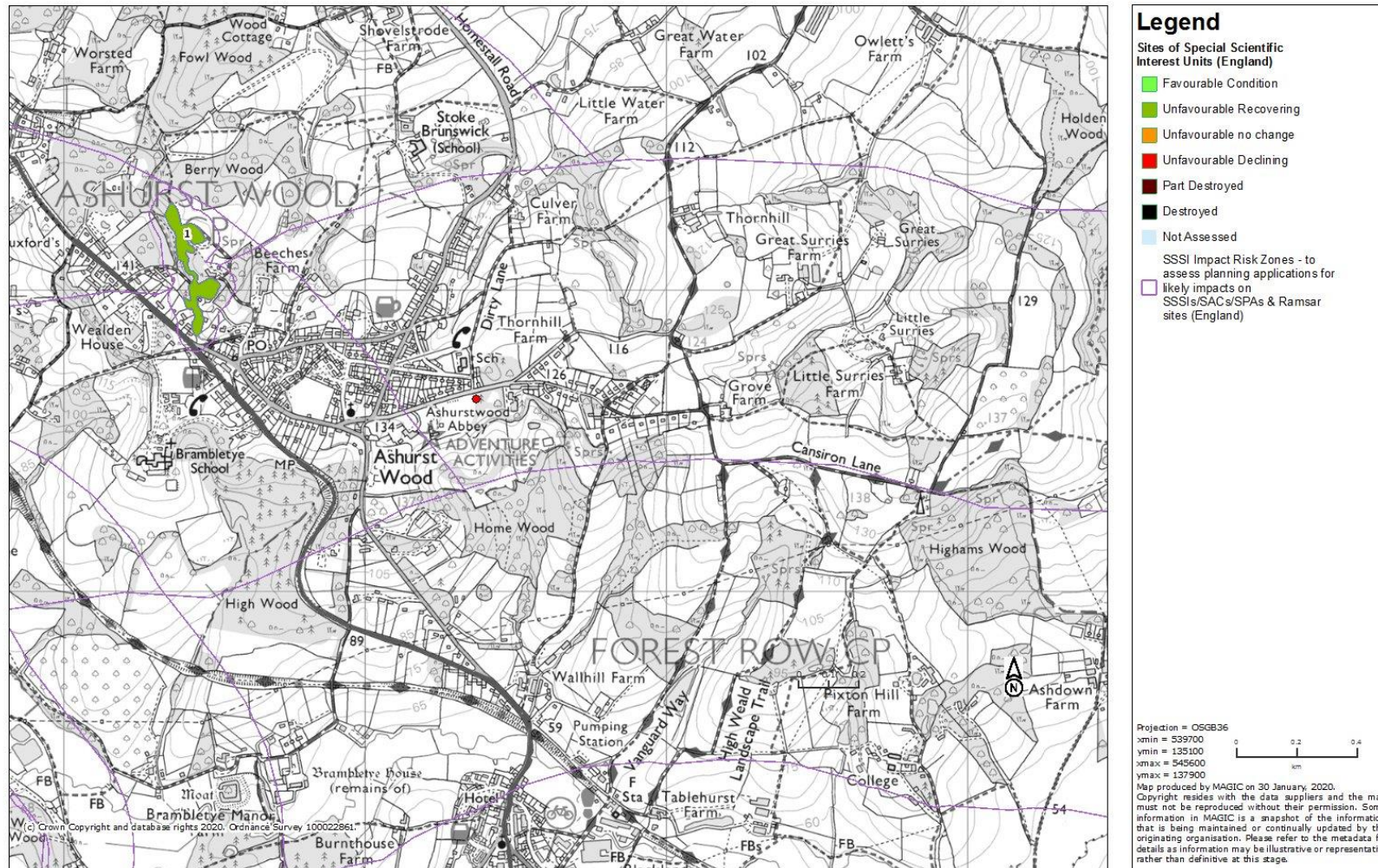
- Local Information
- Soluble Rock Risk
- High
- Medium - High
- Medium
- Medium - Low
- Low
- Unproductive

Projection = OSGB36
xmin = 540800
ymin = 135900
xmax = 543700
ymax = 137300
Map produced by MAGiC on 30 January, 2020.
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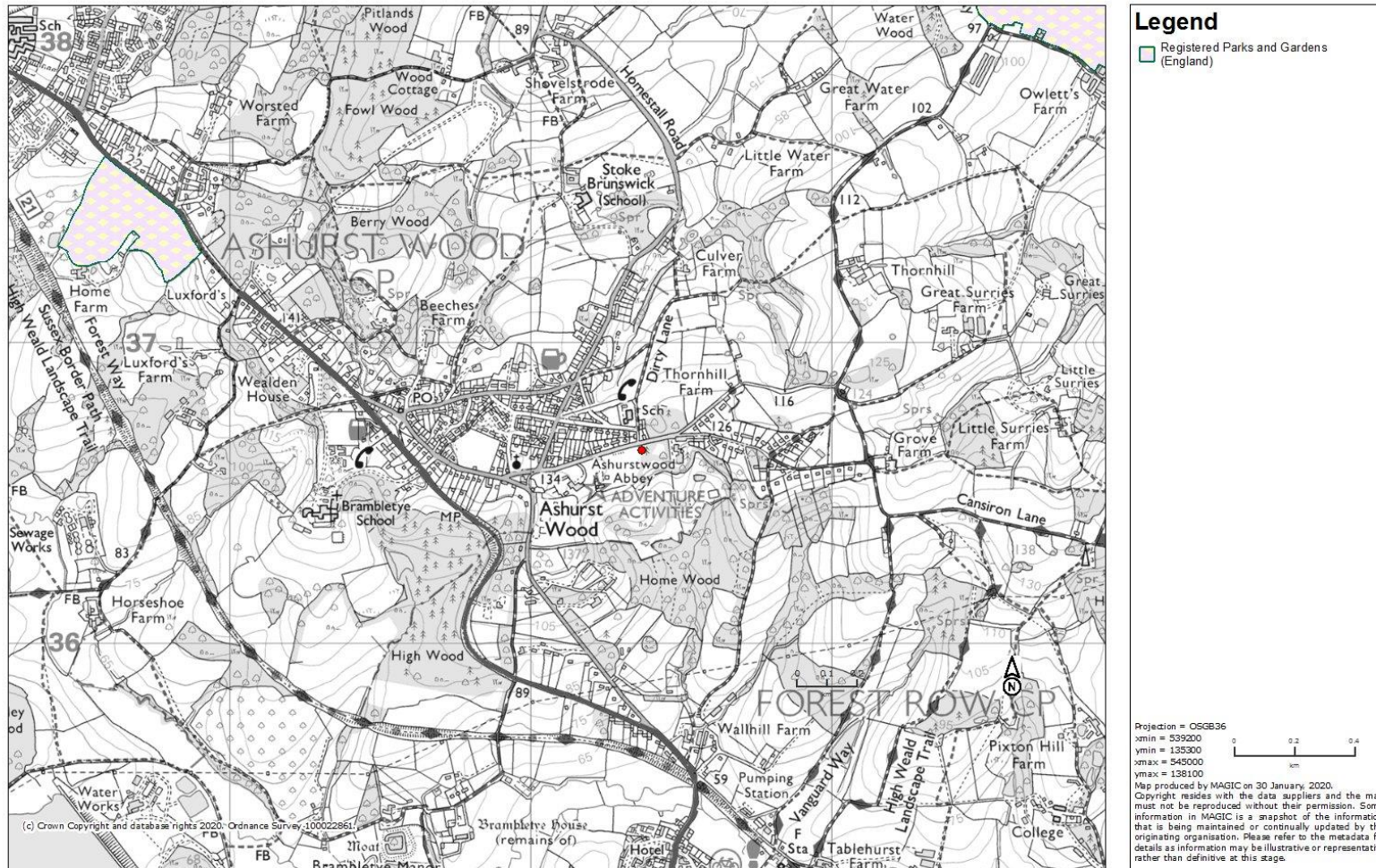
MAGiC

Sites of Special Scientific Interest



MAGiC

Registered Parks and Gardens



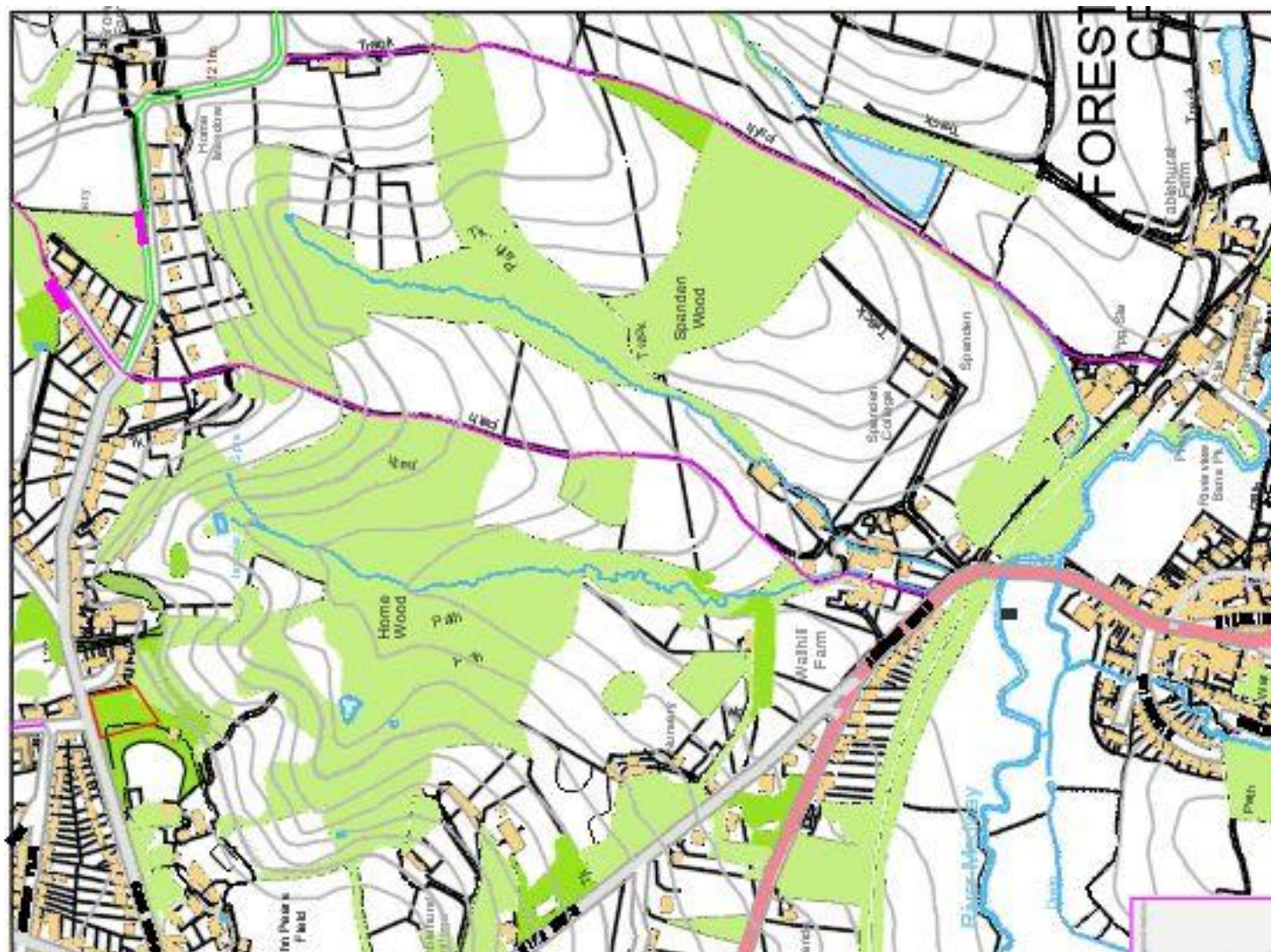


Figure 2 Footpaths map showing Bridleway to southeast of site. (See also Viewpoint 3). There are no significant views from footpaths in the wider AONB landscape.



APPENDIX 4 Summary of Landscape Effects

	Overall significance of impact at:			Nature of impact	Visual magnitude of change	Landscape Sensitivity	Local Character Area reference
	Year 1	15 years after completion	Completion				
	Substantial / Moderate / Slight / Negligible (Beneficial or adverse)	Temporary/ short-term Permanent/ long-term					
<p>Landscape effects on the wider LCA of HW1 High Weald are low to negligible. The site is located within an inward-looking valley. The landscape effects are thus contained to the narrow visual envelope; north of Hammerwood Road and Yew Hurst Close, to east of the site.</p> <p>There would be possible landscape effects of lighting visible from the Bridleway. Though this would be at dusk when riders/walkers are unlikely to be on the Bridleway.</p> <p>Effects on footpaths will be slight adverse due to the diluting effects of distance.</p> <p>Closer lighting effects from the proposed houses will be experienced after dusk, when walkers are on the north pavement of Hammerwood road.</p> <p>Habitat creation for conservation of butterflies, with berry bearing wildlife food plants in copse and hedgerows adding young growth food plants for larvae of butterflies, and habitats for woodland birds, will have beneficial effects.</p>	Slight adverse.	Negligible/ Slight beneficial.	Permanent	Direct	Low	High/Medium	High Weald NCA 122; site is in HW1 High Weald in AONB, on plateau above and north of well wooded High Weald complex topography which forms part of the headwaters of the Upper Medway, with tributary streams and footpaths flowing the valleys which run north south.



	Overall significance of impact at:			Nature of impact	Visual magnitude of change	Landscape Sensitivity	Local Character Area reference
	Year 1	15 years after completion	Completion				
	Substantial / Moderate / Slight / Negligible (Beneficial or adverse)		Temporary/ short-term Permanent/ long-term				
Management of the pest species of Rhododendron and Laurel- which lowers the landscape quality by presence and poor condition, will be carried out. There will be long term benefits of the planting is managed to remove these pest species from the landscape setting. These are suburbanizing elements and hence their removal and replacement with more desirable native mixed deciduous trees, and some native evergreen species, would be beneficial.	Slight beneficial.	Negligible/ Slight Beneficial.	Permanent	Direct	Low	Medium	High Weald NCA 122; site is in HW1, in AONB on the wooded forest ridge, adjacent to Hammerwood road, west of Yewhurst Close and north of a hanger woodland which forms part of south of the site.

	Overall significance of impact at:			Nature of impact	Visual magnitude of change	Landscape Sensitivity	Local Character Area reference
	Year 1	15 years after completion	Completion				
	<i>Substantial / Moderate / Slight / Negligible (Beneficial or adverse)</i>		<i>Temporary/ short-term Permanent/ long-term</i>		<i>Low Medium High Negligible</i>		
<p>Cumulative visual impact of SA26 with the other strategic sites for Regulation 19 allocation.</p> <p>The nearest of these sites is approximately 2.2Km to the northwest at East Grinstead.</p> <p>Impacts on the SPA Ashdown Forest will require a SANG agreement to combat effects of the new residents' from SA26 recreational pressures and traffic impacts on the SPA.</p>	Negligible.	Negligible.	Permanent.	Direct	Negligible	Medium	High Weald NCA 122; site is in HW1, in AONB on the wooded forest ridge, on the southern edge of the village of Ashurst Wood.

<p>At 1km from the site, the site's boundaries are not visible from the wider AONB to west, to south or to the north or east. From these parts of the AONB, the site is totally hidden, due to combined effects of complex changes in levels, woods and shaws, intervening hedgerows and undulating topography. There are no views of the site from the High Weald Listed buildings because of the topography and levels. The northern part of the site is at approx. 137 m AOD, and is a plateau with Parkland trees and shrubs, ensconced in the well wooded wider landscape. The upper part of the land drops to 135m- and falls dramatically to the valley to south of the site, from the southern of the site.</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity is thus deemed to be lower in this part of the AONB because of the modified landscape and its parkland style planting, combined with the effects of topography and woodland, with mature hedgerows along the edges of the sunken Bridleway, screening the site and preventing any views, which are well enclosed to south and to west. The views to the north and east contained within an urban landscape which gives a narrow visual envelope. Therefore, landscape effects on the wider AONB listed houses and Parks and gardens will be negligible.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Permanent	Direct	Negligible	Medium	High Weald NCA 122; site is in HW1, in AONB on the wooded forest ridge, adjacent to Hammerwood road, on the plateau. A modified, post medieval landscape with parkland style planting and part of the landscaped grounds of a country estate, and of Abbey school.
The site Parkland style planting totally encloses the site. Much of the exotic planting has a poor condition. This lowers landscape quality to low in	Slight beneficial	Slight beneficial.	Permanent	Direct	Low	Medium	High Weald NCA 122; site is in HW1, in AONB on the wooded forest



	Overall significance of impact at:			Nature of impact	Visual magnitude of change	Landscape Sensitivity	Local Character Area reference
	Year 1	15 years after completion	Completion				
	Substantial / Moderate / Slight / Negligible (Beneficial or adverse)		Temporary/ short-term Permanent/ long-term				
parts of the site. Due to combined effect of topography and mature vegetation, this part of HW1 can absorb some change into this part of the local landscape character area, HW1. Topography and mature trees and woods, onsite (south and west) and offsite to south provide further effective screening. There will be slight beneficial effects on High Weald LCA HW1, in the north and east, as well as to west of the site. The impacts will be beneficial due to much needed tree and parkland style management of the site, to include removal of invasive species (Rhododendron and Laurel) and replacement planting which will be required to add screening, from hedgerow and shaw planting to gap up the boundary and to mitigate for any landscape effects and views from north and east.							ridge, adjacent to Hammerwood road and north of Home Wood, and north of the woodland on the south of the site.

	Overall significance of impact at:			Nature of impact	Visual magnitude of change	Landscape Sensitivity	Local Character Area reference
	Year 1	15 years after completion	Completion				
	Substantial / Moderate / Slight / Negligible (Beneficial or adverse)		Temporary/ short-term Permanent/ long-term				
<p>Design of the proposed new dwellings, in muted colours and with upper storeys at a comparable level to the present housing located at Yewhurst Close of Ashurst Wood, will replace the former parkland planting, mostly now defunct and in need of management and replanting.</p> <p>The improvement of the buffer of the site, with retention of mature parkland trees.</p> <p>Removal of invasive species of Rhododendron and Laurel are positive mitigation factors which will reduce effects on landscape setting over time. (Planting enhancements can be prepared on a Landscape Plan.) The proposed planting areas and management will be beneficial to include shaw, and enhanced hedgerows and hedgerow creation for long term bird and butterfly conservation.</p>	Slight beneficial.	Slight beneficial	Permanent	Indirect	Low	Medium.	High Weald NCA 122; site is in HW1, in AONB on the wooded High Weald Forest Ridge, adjacent to Hammerwood road. The site is north of Home wood which together with network of small woodlands, including some on the edges of the site, to west and south, with hedgerow screen the site from wider views.

APPENDIX 5 Summary of Visual Impacts

	Overall significance of impact at:			Nature of impact	Visual magnitude of change	Landscape Sensitivity	Local Character Area reference
	Year 1	15 years after completion	Completion				
	Substantial / Moderate / Slight / Negligible (Beneficial or adverse)		Temporary/ short-term Permanent/ long-term				
				Direct or indirect	Low Medium High Negligible		
Viewpoint 1. View looking westwards along Hammerwood road. There will be oblique close-range sequential views of the site. The northern boundary of the site produces a green buffer to the southern edge of Hammerwood road.	Slight beneficial	Slight beneficial	Permanent	Direct	Medium	Medium	High Weald NCA 122 and LCA HW1. View 1; receptors will be motorists on Hammerwood road, and walkers and residents on pavement, travelling east-west looking obliquely southwards towards site. Approx. 9m to nearest edge of site.

	Overall significance of impact at:			Nature of impact	Visual magnitude of change	Landscape Sensitivity	Local Character Area reference
	Year 1	15 years after completion	Completion				
	<i>Substantial / Moderate / Slight / Negligible (Beneficial or adverse)</i>		<i>Temporary/ short-term Permanent/ long-term</i>				
				<i>Direct or indirect</i>	<i>Low Medium High Negligible</i>		
Viewpoint 2. Sequential view looking westwards along Hammerwood road towards the north-eastern boundary of the site. The site provides a designed landscape of evergreen mature exotic trees, which form part of the modified landscape of the site, and contribute to the local landscape character, with mature pines and Cupressus species. Magnitude of change will be low due to low proportion of view to be occupied by the change, due to the intervening landcover of buildings and mature trees and orientation of view.	Slight beneficial	Slight beneficial	Permanent	Direct	Low	Medium	High Weald NCA 122 and LCA HW1. View 2; receptors will be motorists on Hammerwood road, and walkers and residents on pavement, travelling east-west looking obliquely southwards towards site. Approx. 117m to nearest edge of site SA26.

	Overall significance of impact at:			Nature of impact	Visual magnitude of change	Landscape Sensitivity	Local Character Area reference
	Year 1	15 years after completion	Completion				
	<i>Substantial / Moderate / Slight / Negligible (Beneficial or adverse)</i>		<i>Temporary/ short-term Permanent/ long-term</i>				
				<i>Direct or indirect</i>	<i>Low Medium High Negligible</i>		
Viewpoint 3; Woodland cover limits the visual sensitivity of the site, so that there is a lack of significant views from the Bridleway, the nearest publicly accessible right of way in the rural AONB to south of the site. View looking northwestwards towards site from Bridleway, is representative of other views from the Bridleway. The site is well enclosed by woodland and this surrounding woodland means that views of the proposals would be well screened, even in winter by intervening woodland. There are thus no significant views of the site from this nearest Bridleway to south east of site, nor from more distant PROW further east which are similarly screened.	Negligible	Negligible	Permanent	Direct	Negligible	Medium/ High	High Weald NCA 122 and LCA HW1. View 3. Approx. 426m to nearest edge of site SA26.

<p>Viewpoint 4.</p> <p>View looking eastwards from Hammerwood road towards the north-west corner of the site. The designed landscape and exotic treescape associated with the site, is a key landscape feature contributes to the sylvan appearance of the southern side of Hammerwood road. Parkland planting is a key landscape characteristic in this part of the local landscape character area of HW1, High Weald. The woodland buffer will need to be managed to conserve the green backdrop for the proposed dwellings in HW1.</p> <p>Viewpoint 5.</p> <p>View of the northern boundary of the site looking southwards from the pavement on the northern edge of Hammerwood road.</p> <p>The site is a modified landscape which has been in lapsed management, and some planting is in poor condition, so there will be a need to replant gaps when the invasive exotic, and to replant the gaps and control the spread of rhododendron and laurel by removing these pest species. The aim should be to conserve and enhance the sylvan nature of the wooded boundaries of the site, to maintain the screening of the interior of the site. This is so that the local landscape character key features of wooded margins of the site from the former parkland, and the green</p>	Slight beneficial	Slight beneficial	Permanent	Direct	Moderate	Medium	View 4; receptors on Hammerwood road and pavement, distance approx. 209m to new houses on site SA26.
	Slight beneficial	Slight beneficial	Permanent	Direct	Moderate	Medium/High	View 5: receptors on Hammerwood road and pavement, distance approx. 29m to new houses on site SA26.



space is maintained. This will conserve and enhance the visual amenity of the locally distinctive site within the local landscape character area, HW1.							
<p>Viewpoint 6.</p> <p>View looking towards the West of the site which has mature mixed deciduous woodland, copse regeneration, mixed with the exotic evergreen parkland planting. The mature planting on the Western site boundary should be conserved and enhanced. This is to conserve the nature of the views of the local landscape character area, HW1 High Weald. Conserving the buffer zone around the site will help to conserve natural beauty, and to conserve and enhance the local landscape character area through these proposals.</p> <p>Note car parking and use of adjacent site to West of site, as commercial recreational site.</p> <p>Viewpoint 7.</p> <p>View looking towards western boundary of the site, from land to west. The landscape character is well wooded, with some suburban influences on land to the west of site's west boundary. NB. New planting of Laurel along edge of private road (foreground of photo); this is an invasive non-native species which spreads to woodlands and regarded as a pest species, gives a suburban feel and weakens sense of place in this part of</p>	Negligible	Slight beneficial	Permanent	Direct	Negligible	Medium	View 6: receptors on private road looking east to site's west boundary, distance approx. 114m to new houses on site SA26.
	Negligible	Negligible	Permanent	Direct	Negligible	Medium	View 7; receptors on private road looking east to site's west boundary, distance approx. 151m to



<p>the LCA HW1. Laurel is a visual detractor in the views towards the West of the site. The proposed planting on site should avoid planting of invasive non-native species Laurel and Rhododendron which tend to outcompete more desirable native species which support local wildlife. The wooded landscape character of the site's margins derives from the mixed native copse on the Western boundary of the site. This woodland should be protected and retained, as a green buffer, this is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the local landscape character area, as well as the semi rural nature of the views looking east from adjoining properties within the High Weald AONB. The wooden close board fencing and sheds are a visual detractor on this landscape (centre photo).</p> <p>Viewpoint 8.</p> <p>View looking South towards site from Hammerwood road junction with Yewhurst Close. The proposed access to the site would be mid photo. Current detractors in this view are the wooden close board fencing, and the car parking on paviers, these built elements and other influences have a suburbanising effect on the land to east of the site. This weakens the sense of place of the former parkland set within the LCA HW1, on a plateau.</p> <p>There will be a need to retain the parkland style planting of mature trees (including Pines, Cupressus spp.) and to avoid the detractors of closeboard fencing where possible and to</p>	Slight beneficial	Slight beneficial	Permanent	Direct	Moderate/Low	Medium/Low	<p>new houses on site SA26.</p> <p>View 8; receptors on junction between Hammerwood road and Yewhurst Close, distance is approx.</p>
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<p>instead plant mixed native hedgerows and nectar rich beds on site boundaries. The fencing should have a native hedge planted on the west and east side to soften the fencing between the sites. There is some scope to further enhance the area's local landscape character, by diversifying the grassland areas of the road verges in the photo, and to add native hedgerow and tree planting, instead of exotic planting of invasive species such as Laurel and Rhododendron (photo right) which will be removed where possible. This will be to conserve and enhance the local landscape character area, HW1, in the High Weald AONB.</p> <p>Viewpoint 9.</p> <p>Land adjoining the east of the site; the urban nature of the views on Yewhurst Close, which is a modern housing development adjoining the western site boundary with many built features and little soft landscaping weakening the sense of place in this part of the LCA HW1 to east of the site. Note, trees and woodland have been kept to south (rear of houses) which enable site to merge with views from south.</p> <p>Lack of native planting and dominance of hard surfacing lowers landscape quality in this part of the LCA HW1. Native planting and increased species diversity will be used in the proposals. This planting will help to conserve and enhance the local landscape character of this part of the</p>							8m to nearest edge of site SA26.
	Slight beneficial/ Negligible	Slight beneficial/ Negligible	Permanent	Direct	Low/ Negligible	Medium/ Low	View 9; receptors on Hammerwood road/ Yewhurst Close junction, distance approx. 8m to edge of site of new houses on site SA26.



<p>sub urban/ urban fringe landscape character HW1, High Weald in the High Weald AONB.</p> <p>Illustrative photos, 1-4.</p> <p>Photo 1. To illustrate local landscape character to west of site.</p> <p>The adjacent site, to west of the site, has mature trees and planting, but various containers and materials are visual detractors from the rural nature of the views in this part of the local landscape character area, HW1, High Weald. There is a diminished sense of place as a result of the activities on the land, which lead to the paraphernalia associated with this recreational land use (adventure activities). Landscape sensitivity is lowered by this lower landscape condition. (46m to edge of site)</p> <p>Photo 2. Taken near west of site SA26 looking towards Hammerwood road.</p> <p>To illustrate the local landscape character of the site.</p> <p>The site is a modified landscape, of former parkland planting, now senescent in places. This gives a lower landscape quality and is in poor condition in parts. These areas will require management and replanting to maintain the green buffer on the site boundaries. Landscape</p>						<p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	
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<p>sensitivity is lower as a result of low landscape quality in these parts of the site.</p> <p>Photo 3. Taken on site SA26.</p> <p>To illustrate the low quality of landscape, which lowers the landscape sensitivity to change. Poor condition of some of the former parkland planting (Rhododendron, Laurel, specimen trees including conifers) lowers the landscape quality of parts of the site to low, within the site, in this part of HW1. Good quality Specimen trees will need to be protected and retained where possible, though few remain.</p> <p>These areas of dead and dying planting will need to be replaced by mixed native broadleaved planting- this is to conserve and enhance the landscape character and to enhance the sense of place, which has been undermined by the lapsed management of the site's parkland planting. This is to conserve and enhance the site within the LCA HW1, conserving and enhancing the landscape character of the site and its margins, including the mature buffer of planting.</p>						Medium	
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The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives	Assessment of Impact	Enhancement Answers in red.
Geology, landform, water systems and climate		
Objective G1: To restore the natural function of rivers, water courses and water bodies	<p>Question G1. Surface water run-off quality and impacts on local watercourses</p> <p>a) Will the natural functioning of a floodplain be hindered (such as through built development, drainage or culverts)?</p> <p>B) How have results from archaeological surveys being used to assess the impacts on historic remains in the floodplain?</p> <p>c) Have surface drainage methods (such as ponds, ditches and swales) being used rather than underground storage methods?</p> <p>d) Are there opportunities to restore natural meanders and channels?</p> <p>e) Are there opportunities to restore or create wetland habitats?</p> <p>f) Can the proposal contribute to any local water catchment strategies or provide a demonstration project the natural flood management?</p> <p>g) Are there any invasive non-native species on site that could be removed?</p>	<p>Answers</p> <p>a) no, development not near floodplain.</p> <p>b) no archaeological surveys have been undertaken.</p> <p>c) surface drainage methods could possibly be used, but care must be taken not to damage root protection areas of trees.</p> <p>d) No</p> <p>e) Possibly but care must be taken not to damage root protection areas of trees.</p> <p>f) yes possibly</p> <p>g) rhododendron and Laurel can be removed. They would be replaced with native species and renewal of woodland management to conserve and enhance biodiversity on green space including woodland edges of the site.</p>
Objective G2: to protect and enhance soils, sandstone outcrops, and other important landform and geological features of the AONB,	<p>Question G2. Soils.</p> <p>a) will an expose sandstone outcrop/cutting, and any associated habitat be affected?</p> <p>b) will the proposal affect soils on the site through compaction, erosion or pollution by sterilising soil through hard surfacing or built development?</p> <p>c) will the proposal impact on the natural landform of the site through cut and fill operations?</p>	<p>a) no</p> <p>b) yes, there is hard surfacing and built development proposed.</p> <p>c) no; site is on plateau.</p>



	<p>d) if a sandstone outcrop is affected to the proposals include a management plan protect the rock and any plants and ferns associated with it?</p> <p>e) does the proposal include grass, hedges and trees with ongoing management to protect soil's and reduce soil erosion?</p> <p>f) has the design taken account of landform and avoided substantial alterations in levels?</p>	<p>d) no sandstone outcrops on site.</p> <p>The proposals could include a landscape plan showing grass hedges trees with ongoing management and protection of existing features.</p> <p>Yes, the site is located on Wadhurst clay plateau.</p>
Objective G3: To help secure climatic conditions and rates of change which support continued conservation and enhancement of the High Weald is valued landscapes and habitats.	<p>Question 3G, Climate.</p> <p>a) what impact will the proposal have on climatic conditions through construction methods, materials, energy and water use and air pollution from associated traffic?</p> <p>b) can impacts on climate conditions be viewed and used through sustainable design?</p> <p>c) can a travel plan and other transport measures have reduced air pollution impacts?</p> <p>d) has the use of local materials such as timber been maximised?</p> <p>e) does the proposal include landscape sensitive, small-scale renewable energy generation?</p> <p>f) has construction waste been minimised?</p>	<p>a) impact on SPA to be assessed. No report available at the time of writing.</p> <p>b) sustainable design possible at the detail design phase of development.</p> <p>c) A travel plan could be prepared at the detail design phase of the development.</p> <p>d) this can be detailed at the design phase of the proposed development or through planning conditions.</p> <p>e) this is possible as site is south's facing with few views out to publicly accessible areas.</p> <p>f) good construction practice will reduce waste produced. Topsoil stripped should be conserved in an area on construction to be re-spread to form landscape areas.</p>

The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives	Assessment of Impact	Enhancement Answers in red.
Settlement		
Objective S1: 2 reconnects settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside.	<p>Question S1. Reconnection with nature.</p> <p>a) will a sense of connection with the countryside be affected through reduced views, reduced or more unattractive access or significant change to “sense of place”?</p> <p>b) does the proposal take account of all impact on natural capital and ecosystem services of the High Weald?</p> <p>c) does the proposal use locally sourced materials which support ANOB conservation such as timber.?</p> <p>d) does the proposal conserve and enhance views in and out of the site?</p> <p>e) does the proposal support local services and rural businesses?</p> <p>f) does the proposal support community agriculture or small-scale horticulture?</p> <p>g) does the proposal accommodate the need of land-based key workers and include the necessary infrastructure to support their occupation such as additional storage and parking space?</p> <p>h) does the proposal allow installation of (or make provision for) would fuel heating systems and adequate firewood storage facilities in the design and layout of the development?</p> <p>i) does the proposal make space for wildlife to thrive around buildings, garden and open spaces?</p>	<p>a) No. There are few views out to publicly accessible areas. A sense of Place can be conserved through conserving green buffer around site edges and protecting and retaining some mature trees which contribute to a sense of place and form part of the landscape character area key features, on the former school site (Abbey School).</p> <p>b) Yes,</p> <p>c) Yes, this can be specified.</p> <p>d) Yes, the LVIA has recommendations to conserve the woodland to the south of the site, and to the north-west of the site, as well as areas of mature trees and native scrub on the edges of the site.</p> <p>e) Yes, this can be specified.</p> <p>f) yes, the allotments required by Ashurst Wood residents can be provided on land to the west of the site which is under the same management as the site's ownership. This is the intent; to lease the land to the parish council for use by residents for allotments.</p> <p>g) No</p> <p>i) this is possible to include in the house design</p> <p>j) Yes, this can be addressed via a landscape plan.</p>
Objective S2: to protect the historic pattern and character of settlement.	<p>Question S2. Historic settlement.</p> <p>a) does analysis of historic pattern and character of the settlement inform the proposals?</p>	<p>a) yes</p>



The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives	Assessment of Impact	Enhancement Answers in red.
	<p>b) does it erode the historic settlement pattern?</p> <p>c) is the proposal informed by specialist reports on heritage and archaeology including information from the historic landscape characterisation?</p> <p>d) has available guidance being used to inform the proposals such as the Farmstead Assessment guidance and the High Weald AONB design guide?</p> <p>e) are there opportunities to reinstate historic features such as field boundaries and routeways?</p> <p>f) Are there opportunities to support the historic settlement pattern?</p>	<p><i>b) no</i></p> <p><i>c) the LVIA does look at the historic Landscape characterisation for the site.</i></p> <p><i>d) yes, the High Weald AONB design guide is referred to in the LVIA.</i></p> <p><i>e) No, the site is a modified landscape and was landscaped in the 20th century and planted with mixed species including rhododendron and Portuguese Laurel along with exotic tree planting.</i></p> <p><i>f) Yes, Hammer Wood Road is an ancient route leading to Cansiron Lane and the green buffer will be kept along the northern and eastern edges of the site. The proposals will thus support the historic settlement pattern by keeping the green buffer along hammer Wood Road. The density of the development will be like that of Yewhurst Close to the East.</i></p>
Objective S3: to enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald and ensure development reflects the character of the High Weald in its scale, layout and design.	<p>Question S3. Architecture</p> <p>a) does the proposal maintain and enhance the local distinctiveness and the built environment character and the “sense of place “of the High Weald?</p> <p>b) has available guidance being used to inform the proposals such as the High Weald ANOB be design guide and the High Weald colour study?</p> <p>c) Does the proposal reflect landscape character and include locally sourced/grown or locally Providence native planting?</p> <p>d) does the proposal set high design standards that reflect traditional features that are innovative and of their time rather than pastiche?</p>	<p><i>a) Yes</i></p> <p><i>b) Yes</i></p> <p><i>c) Yes, this can be specified in the landscape plan.</i></p> <p><i>d) Yes</i></p>

The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives	Assessment of Impact	Enhancement Answers in red.
	<p>e) does the proposal use of local materials, such as timber, that enhance local distinctiveness and support the sustainable management of the High Weald resources?</p> <p>f) does the proposal include detailing which is locally distinctive and supports a sustained named of local crafts and trades?</p>	<p>e) Yes, this can be specified</p> <p>f) Yes, this can be specified</p>
Routeways		
ObjectiveR1: to maintain the historic pattern features of routeways	<p>Question R1 historic routeways – pattern.</p> <p>a) will the proposal impact on public rights of way or rural lanes? Will it remove historic features such as banks and hedges or introducing urbanising features such as wide splays kerbing and signage?</p> <p>b) is the proposal informed by specialist reports on heritage and archaeology associated with the routeways?</p> <p>c) are there opportunities to reinstate historic lost routeways?</p> <p>d) can new access and routes be designed to reflect High Weald character of historic routeways?</p> <p>e) are historic routeways reinstated and connections between routeways conserved and enhance?</p>	<p>a) no, the proposals are to keep the green buffer along Hammerwood Road and to protect and retain the specimen exotic trees whilst removing the Laurel and rhododendron. Access will be from the east boundary, west from Yewhurst Close.</p> <p>b) LVIA research did include looking at the High Weald routeway map for the area.</p> <p>C No</p> <p>d) No,</p> <p>e) the green buffer along Hammerwood Road to be conserved and enhance.</p>
Objective r2: to enhance the ecological function of route ways	<p>Question R2. Historic routeways function.</p> <p>a) will the proposal impact on verges or result in the removal of trees or hedges along routeways.</p> <p>b) does the proposal include non-native planting along routeways (such as Laurel).</p> <p>c) is the proposal informed by an ecological report.</p>	<p>a) Yes, there will be removal of Laurel and rhododendron along Hammerwood Road. It is recommended there is new planting of native species in these areas.</p> <p>b) no, there should be no new non-native planting along Hammerwood Road.</p> <p>c) Not at present</p>



The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives	Assessment of Impact	Enhancement Answers in red.
Woodland		
Objective W1: To maintain the existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland	<p>Question W1. Ancient woodland and woodland</p> <p>a) will the proposal result in a loss of woodland or the degradation of woodland such as through increased visitor pressure, predation by pets or garden waste disposal?</p> <p>b) does the proposal impact on woodland pasture or historic Parkland?</p> <p>c) are there opportunities for woodland expansion, particularly wet woodland, on land that is appropriate to use and not ecological the or culturally valuable as open field or Parkland?</p> <p>d) are the management opportunities to improve woodland condition and management</p>	<p>a) yes, there will be a loss of a proportion of Parkland woodland, but this is non-native and with invasive species of rhododendron and laurel.</p> <p>b) yes, the site is historic Parkland, but it was developed as Parkland in the 20th century.</p> <p>c) There is next native woodland to the south the site which will be managed and conserved.</p> <p>d) Yes, the proposals will include management of the woodland on site.</p>
Objective W2: to enhance the ecological quality and functioning of woodland at a landscape scale.	<p>Question W-2. Ecology</p> <p>a) is the proposal informed by and ecological report</p> <p>b) will the proposal result in the loss or degradation of the existing ecological quality of woodland?</p> <p>c) will the proposal reduce the connectedness of woodland on the site to adjacent habitats?</p> <p>d) are there opportunities to improve the management of woodland and hedges to support native species of flora and fauna and to provide connections between woodlands?</p> <p>e) can non-native species such as rhododendron and conifers, be removed to enable improved ecological functioning?</p> <p>f) Can woodland be connected, and suitable buffers provided?</p>	<p>a) no, not at this stage.</p> <p>b) no, the woodland on site is of poor ecological quality due to non-native pines rhododendron and laurel.</p> <p>c) no, a landscape plan and ecological survey will be required these can have recommendations and actions to connect to adjacent habitats.</p> <p>d) Yes, there are opportunities to enhance the site are biodiversity. The removal of non-native species will create room for replanting using native species.</p> <p>e) yes, the proposals are to remove these non-native species and replant these areas, where landscaping can be linked to the green buffer</p> <p>f) yes, or planting can be connected by a verge and prove from planting areas.</p>



The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives	Assessment of Impact	Enhancement Answers in red.
	Can any new planting be carried out with locally sourced/grown or locally provenanced native species?	<i>g) yes, this can be specified on the landscape plan.</i>
Objective W3: to protect the archaeology and historic assets of AONB woodlands.	<p>Question W3. Archaeology.</p> <p>a) is the proposal informed by specialist reports on heritage archaeology associated with the woodland?</p> <p>b) Will the proposal have an impact on any historic archaeological features in the woodland including the woodland boundary?</p> <p>c) are there opportunities to carry out surveys within the woodland to inform the historic environment record?</p> <p>d) are there opportunities for interpretation of archaeological features?</p>	<p><i>a) no, not at present stage</i></p> <p><i>No, the woodland to the south is beyond the site and proposals are to conserve this woodland. The site itself is 20 century Parkland.</i></p> <p><i>c) No</i></p> <p><i>d) No</i></p>
Objective W4: to increase the output of sustainably produced high quality timber and Underwood the local markets.	<p>Objective W4. Woodland management.</p> <p>a) does the proposal encourage the sustainable management of woodland?</p> <p>b) will access to the woodland to enable management to be made more difficult/prevent, for example by the correction of fences?</p> <p>c) Can the proposal use local timber products to support the sustainable management of woodland in the AONB?</p> <p>d) can the proposal make provision for wood burners and space for wood storage into the developments to encourage use of local timber as fuel?</p>	<p><i>a) non-native species are to be removed</i></p> <p><i>b) No. Hedges will be used where possible and tracks provided to allow access to woodland beyond the southern and western site margins.</i></p> <p><i>Yes, these can be specified</i></p> <p><i>Yes, these can be specified</i></p>

The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives	Assessment of Impact	Enhancement Answers in red.
Field and Heath		
Objective FH 1: to secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald, especially for local markets, as part of the sustainable land management.	<p>Question FH1. Agricultural land use</p> <p>a) does the proposal sustain or reintroduce land management practices which support the High Weald landscape character such as livestock farming and small-scale horticulture?</p> <p>b) does the proposal prevent the agriculturally productive use of fields through loss of work yards, storage barns?</p> <p>c) does the proposal remove land from agricultural use?</p> <p>d) are there opportunities provide community growing facilities such as allotments or arches as part of the proposal?</p> <p>e) can any open space have been managed in an agriculturally productive way such as for hay or silage or grazed by livestock?</p> <p>f) can the proposal include infrastructure that enables the future management of open land such as tracks barns and storage areas?</p> <p>g) where a proposal involves part of a wider landholding? Can the future management of that landholding be considered holistically as a “whole farm plan “or similar to produce overall benefits for the ANOB?</p>	<p>a) yes, the proposal will allow for small scale horticulture in the form of allotments.</p> <p>b) No</p> <p>c) No</p> <p>d) Yes, the proposal is to provide allotments on the land west of the site</p> <p>e) No</p> <p>f) No</p> <p>g) Yes, land to south is woodland which could be managed for conserving and enhancing the High Weald landscape. Land to west could be used for allotments for the village food supply, lowering use of cars.</p>
Objective FH 2: to maintain the pattern of small irregular shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands	<p>Question FH2. Historic landscape features.</p> <p>a) has information about and the surviving features of fields and boundaries (such as from the historic landscape characterisation) informed the proposal the proposal?</p> <p>b) does the proposal avoid the loss of impact mediaeval features including fields?</p>	<p>a) Yes, the LVIA has looked a historic landscape characterisation,</p> <p>b) No</p>



The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives	Assessment of Impact	Enhancement Answers in red.
	<p>c) is the scale and design of the proposal reflected of the areas field and size pattern?</p> <p>d) can loss historic field boundaries (hedges, ditches etc) be reinstated?</p> <p>e) can existing boundaries be managed and better protected?</p>	<p>c) No</p> <p>d) No</p> <p>e) yes, the proposals will be to conserve the green buffer along Hama Wood Road along the northern edge of the site and to remove non-planting and replace with native hedgerows and trees throughout the site. This can be addressed in a landscape plan.</p>
Objective FH3. To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as a part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats	<p>Objective FH3 mosaic of habitats.</p> <p>a) is the proposal informed by and ecological report?</p> <p>b) Does the proposal avoid loss of species rich grassland or heathland?</p> <p>c) Does the proposal prevent the future enhancement of semi-improved grassland through good management produce species rich grassland as part of a nature recovery network for the High Weald?</p> <p>d) can the existing ecology of field and heath on the site be enhanced, such as managing semi-improved grassland to increase its species diversity?</p> <p>e) can grass verges along routeways be managed to increase species diversity?</p> <p>f) can locally source/grown timber of locally provenanced native trees and shrubs be planted and invasive non-native species be removed</p> <p>Question F4.</p>	<p>a) no not at this stage.</p> <p>b) Yes</p> <p>c) yes</p> <p>d) no, but newer areas of grassland can be incorporated into the landscape plan which can have species diversity.</p> <p>e) Yes, as part of the landscape plan species diversity along grass verges can be detailed.</p> <p>f) Yes, proposals are to remove invasive species and replant green space with native species. This can be specified and shown on the landscape plan.</p>



The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives	Assessment of Impact	Enhancement Answers in red.
Objective FH4. To protect the archaeology and historic assets of field and heath	<p>a) is the proposal informed by specialist reports on heritage and archaeology associated with the field or heathland?</p> <p>b) will the proposal have an impact on any historic archaeological features in the field or heathland?</p> <p>c) are there opportunities to carry out surveys within the field or heathland to inform the historic environment record?</p>	<p><i>No not at this stage</i></p> <p><i>b) no</i></p> <p><i>No, the site forms part of a 20th century estate.</i></p>
Land based economy and related rural life		
Objective LB E1: to improve returns from, and thereby increase entry and, forestry, horticulture and other land management activities that conserve and enhance natural beauty.	<p>Question LBE1. Conserve and enhance natural beauty.</p> <p>a) does the proposal support farming, forestry or small-scale horticulture?</p> <p>b) does the proposal prevent the productive use of fields all woodlands through their loss to development, their isolation from the wider holding or the loss of ancillary infrastructure such as barns?</p> <p>c) does the proposal include community growing facilities such as allotments or orchards as part of the proposal?</p> <p>d) can any open space be managed in an agricultural productive way such as for hay or silage or grazed by livestock?</p> <p>e) can the proposal include infrastructure that enables the future management of open land such as tracks, barns and storage areas?</p> <p>f) where a proposal involves part of a wider landholding can the future management of that landholding be considered holistically as a "whole farm plan" or similar to produce overall benefits for the AONB?</p> <p>Question LBE2. Infrastructure and affordable housing.</p>	<p><i>a) yes, allotments</i></p> <p><i>b) no, woodland to the south can still be managed. Woodland to North West of the site can be retained and managed.</i></p> <p><i>c) Yes, allotments are proposed on the land to the west of the site.</i></p> <p><i>d) No</i></p> <p><i>e) Yes, this can be included if necessary</i></p> <p><i>f) Yes, this can be included if necessary</i></p>



The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives	Assessment of Impact	Enhancement Answers in red.
Objective LBE2: to improve amenities infrastructure (including the provision of appropriate affordable housing), and skills, development for room rural communities and related sectors that contribute positively to conserving and enhancing natural beauty.	<p>a) Does the proposal impact on existing rural community amenities or infrastructure that support the AONB such as village shops and facilities used for land-based skills and rural crafts?</p> <p>Does the proposal include affordable housing to meet local housing needs, including those of land-based key workers, and include the necessary infrastructure to support that occupation such as additional storage and parking space?</p> <p>c) are there opportunities to create additional rural community facilities?</p>	<p>a) no</p> <p>b) possibly</p> <p>c) yes allotments</p>
Other qualities		
Objective 0Q1: to increase opportunity for learning and celebrating the character of the High Weald.	<p>Question 0Q1. Increased access and learning.</p> <p>a) does the proposal open up access to areas of the High Weald previously inaccessible to the public.</p> <p>b) are there opportunities to provide interpretation material/information pack explaining the AONB character of the site and how the development conserves and enhances the areas natural beauty?</p>	<p>Yes, track to west of site, access into site from east. Woodland to south of site access included. Woodland to west of site. Communal green space on site.</p>
Objective 0Q2: to increase the contribution of individuals and communities to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB.	Question 0Q2. Contribution of individuals.	Nneighbourhood Plan requests allotments. SPA to south (Ashdown Forest) within approx. 2 Km of site. The SPA agreement will require a SANG agreement or other agreement to compensate for increased use of SPA by users of SA26.

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