



Landscape and Visual Appraisal

Land south of St
Stephen's Church,
Horsted Keynes.

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1.0

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared by Landscape Collective on behalf of the land agent/promoter, namely Rydon Homes. The person undertaking the LVA is a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute.
- 1.2** The LVA considers the potential effects of residential development on:
- Landscape elements and features such as vegetation and topography.
 - Landscape character and Landscape Quality
 - Visual amenity
- 1.3** This visual and character appraisal was undertaken in January 2020, in respect of a greenfield/pasture site of 1.13 ha (gross site area) which has been identified as suitable for an allocation of 30 dwellings in the Mid Sussex District Council Draft Site Allocations DPD (October 2019), referenced in that DPD document as site SA29 Land south of St Stephen's Church, Horsted Keynes. The location of the proposed allocation is shown on the Site Locations and Viewpoint Location Plan at Appendix 1 and herein after called in this LVA appraisal document **The Site**.
- 1.4** The objectives of the LVA are as follows:
- To identify, describe and evaluate the current landscape character of The Site and its surrounding area.
 - To identify, describe and evaluate any notable individual landscape elements and/or features within The Site.
 - To determine the sensitivity of the landscape to the envisaged residential development.
 - To identify potential visual receptors (i.e. people who would be able to view the potential residential development) and to evaluate their sensitivity to the type of changes proposed.
 - To identify and describe any likely effects of the potential residential development on landscape character and visual amenity, particularly in so far as they affect the landscape and/or views of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and to evaluate the potential magnitude of change and scale of effects resulting.
 - To predict if any cumulative landscape and visual effects could arise on landscape and visual amenity as a result of the additional allocation of the nearby site of SA28- Land south of the Old Police House, at Horsted Keynes (See the Site locations and Viewpoint Location plan at Appendix 1)

- 1.5** The visual assessment was undertaken in early January with a leaf cover largely absent from the existing deciduous vegetation.

2.0

2. Methodology

- 2.1** This LVA has been undertaken with regard to the following best practice guidance:
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) – Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA);
- 2.2** As recommended within the published guidance, landscape (elements and character) and visual effects are assessed separately. A detailed methodology is provided at Appendix 2.
- 2.3** For the purposes of this assessment, unless otherwise stated, changes to landscape and visual amenity as a result of the potential development are considered to be permanent and non-reversible.
- 2.4** The nature of any effect can be adverse i.e. negative, beneficial i.e. positive or neutral i.e. neither wholly adverse nor wholly beneficial. Unless otherwise stated, all effects are considered to be adverse in nature.

3.0

3. Baseline Conditions

Site Description

- 3.1** The site is oblong in shape, but also includes a thin strip that extends towards Hamsland where there is a field access gate. The field appears to be semi - improved pasture, which is occasionally mown, rather than currently in agricultural use for grazing.
- 3.2** The nature of the site and its boundaries are illustrated in a series of site context views (See Appendix 3). The eastern boundary comprises existing hedgerow shrubs with groups of mature oak and ash trees, together with a few conifers growing close by in adjoining large gardens. The southern and western boundary is a tall, unmanaged hawthorn and holly hedgerow with groups of mostly oak trees. The northern boundary is in poor condition comprising a variety of tumbledown post and rail and wire garden fences, and intermittent groups of hedges and shrubs.
- 3.3** Topographically the site itself generally slopes down from north west to south east, from an approx high point of 92.23m (AOD) Above Ordnance Datum to a low point of approximately 84.23m (AOD)
- 3.4** A series of site context views are also provided at Appendix 3 to illustrate the Land South of the Old Police House site(SA28) to aid understanding for the assessment of any cumulative effects that might arise from its additional potential allocation for residential development, but provision of a detailed site description is outside the scope of this LVA.

Description of the Surrounding Area close to the Site

- 3.5** The site is bounded to the north by the gardens of semi -detached and detached properties, of Hamsland, as well as the Catholic Church of St Stephens. On the other side of Hamsland terraced 2 storey houses also partially overlook the site. To the east and south east there are some larger gardens with a parkland character. To the west The Site is bounded by a few additional residential properties on Hamsland and a fairly large field which has been designated as public open space.

Published Landscape Character Assessments

- 3.6** A hierarchy of national/regional, county and district published landscape character assessments are available. These respective documents describe the host landscape of the site at an increasingly refined level. The published landscape

assessments are intended to provide a foundation for understanding the key component elements and features that characterise the host landscape and potential the site itself.

National Landscape Character

3.7 Natural England divides England in to 159 National [Landscape] Character Areas (NCAs). The Site is located within the High Weald NCA 122 (refer to Appendix 6). Key characteristics of this NCA identified by Natural England that are of some relevance to either the site or its surrounds include:

- A faulted landform of clay, sand and soft sandstones... deeply incised...with numerous gill streams forming the headwaters of a number of major rivers....
- An intimate hidden and small-scale landscape with glimpses of far reaching views giving a sense of remoteness and tranquillity....
- Ancient routeways in the form of ridgetop roads and a system of radiating droveways often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees and wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks. Church towers and spires on the ridges are an important local landmark. There is a dense network of small, narrow and winding lanes often enclosed by high hedgerows and steep banks.
- Strong feeling of remoteness due to rural wooded character....
- Extensive broadleaved woodland with a high proportion of ancient woodland...small woods and shaws....
- Rural settlement pattern is a mix of dispersed farmsteads and hamlets
- Small, medium and irregular shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded areas.
- A dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and smaller farmsteads with medieval ridgetop villages.

3.8 As part of a national landscape character assessment, this inescapably is a high-level document. However, it does provide some helpful background information that enables one to gain a further understanding of the host landscape.

County Landscape Character

3.9 In the West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, the Site is located within the HW1 Landscape Character Area (see Appendix 6). Key characteristics that are of some relevance to the Site and/or its surrounds include: -

- Wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

- Plateau, ridges and deep secluded valleys, cut by gill streams.
- Significant wooded cover, a substantial portion of it ancient and a very dense network of shaws, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Pattern of small irregular shaped assart fields and some larger fields.
- Dense network of twisting, deep lanes. droveways, tracks and footpaths.
- Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hill tops and ...and some expanded villages
- Varied traditional rural buildings with diverse materials including timber framing, wealden stone, and varieties of local brick and tile hanging.

3.10 At the county landscape character level of assessment, it is considered that the proposed allocation of The Site for residential development would not bring about any material change to the key characteristics of the LCA within the local landscape, as identified above, nor is any cumulative effect on the key landscape characteristics predicted to be perceptible, as a result of the allocation of both The Site and site SA28.

District Landscape Character

3.11 In the Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, the Site lies within Landscape Character Area 6. The Key Characteristics listed for this LCA are the same as those identified above for the HW1 West Sussex County landscape character area, but under the paragraphs relating to description and experience and to settlement form and distinctiveness the following are noted of relevance to the Horsted Keynes surrounds :-

-Incised streams define landform, dissecting the landscape deeply, carving it into an interlocking array of twisting ridges and secluded, steep-sided narrow valleys.

-The southern slopes of the Forest Ridge are much longer, stretching over a few miles to the River Ouse.

-Many of the streams contain hammer, ornamental or fishponds, the last notably in the valleys flanking Birchgrove north east of Horsted Keynes.

-A densely wooded landscape clothes this intricate terrain. The woodlands are predominantly deciduous but contain much mixed woodland and coniferous planting (as well as exotic tree species associated with designed landscapes). Many woods are small to medium sized.

-A landscape of small, irregular-shaped fields predominantly used for livestock grazing. These are the characteristic groups of historic assart pastures.

-Settlement in the High Weald is typically dispersed, based on an historic pattern of numerous farmsteads within discrete or enclosed small-scale holdings, often set on high ridges, hilltops and high ground. By the 14th century, nucleated villages had emerged, their dominance as settlements progressively emerging in the modern era. Settlement in the area was therefore unobtrusive and scanty until the 19th Century, when the High Weald became a favourite area for the extension in the Victorian and Edwardian eras of 'London into Sussex', characterised by widespread, often lavish, house development, the hilly woodland settings highly prized developed as a setting for these houses have bequeathed a legacy of exotic trees and shrubs which are today locally dominant in the landscape

-The style of rural historic building in the area is diverse. There are good examples of timber-framed buildings including "Wealden" houses ...The so-called Wealden stone from the Ardingly Sandstone and Cuckfield Stone are members of the Hastings Beds...The stone is very variable in colour depending on its origin, weathering and lichen cover....It tends to be used as ashlar (cut and dressed stone) for more substantial and expensive buildings, rarely used as rough or random stone. Notable concentrations of the use of this stone include at Horsted Keynes... Apart from some timber-framed house...more characteristic of the area is the predominance of locally diverse reddish brick and patterned, hung tiles, and some weather boarding typical.

Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation

- 3.12** The technique of Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is to identify historic landscape types associated with units/areas of land, based upon their historic attributes.
- 3.13** A radial search area of 500 m distance was adopted from both the Site and site SA28. Examination of the desk based Sussex HLC mapping and its associated database showed that both The Site and site SA28 are classified as having a landscape type of informal fieldscapes, which are of probable medieval origin and have both straight (adjoining more modern settlement) and older, more sinuous field boundaries To the north both sites are mainly adjoined by areas classified as modern settlement. Immediately to the south of the sites there are some relatively extensive areas of assarts (of medieval date) ie small/medium size fields cut out of woodland/cleared for agricultural use, as well as remaining strips/areas of ancient semi natural woodland.
- 3.14** The informal fieldscapes are a relatively common historic landscape type in the immediate vicinity of Horsted Keynes and associated with former piecemeal enclosure. Also the south eastern boundary of the site adjoins/lies close to some small areas of designed informal parkland.

An Assessment of the Existing Landscape Character up to 1km from the Application Site by the Report's Author

3.15 The author's assessment forms a baseline of the site and its host landscape character up to a distance of approximately 500m from the site boundary and is a further refinement of the published assessments. The following criteria will be used:

- Landscape scale
- Landform and enclosure
- Landscape pattern and complexity
- Settlement pattern and human influence
- Skylines
- Intervisibility

Landscape Scale

3.16 The scale of the landscape within approx 500m of the boundary of The Site and site SA 28 is generally small to medium with fields of irregular shape and size.

Landform and Enclosure

3.17 The sites are both situated on gentle to moderately sloping land which falls away from the ridgeline/hilltop location on which the historic village core sits and are both relatively enclosed, either by existing buildings or vegetation. Some glimpsed, distant views are available from the sites to the low weald and the distant South Downs.

Landscape pattern and complexity

3.18 The pattern of the local landscape south of the sites is a relatively complex one comprising small pockets of settlement, historic farmsteads, as well as few larger estate houses, small agricultural fields, and woodland.

Settlement pattern and human influence

3.19 The village of Horsted Keynes has both a historic linear and a more nucleated pattern associated with later infill and suburban estate expansion. The central green associated with historic core is elongated and provides an attractive setting.

Skylines

- 3.20** Skylines usually contain a mixture of elements and features including built form and vegetation. In the context of the sites, the existing residential development to the west, east and north of the site and its associated tree cover partially occupies the skyline.

Intervisibility

- 3.21** Owing to a combination of some intervening vegetation and built form, as well as local variations in the landform, the level of intervisibility within the landscape surrounding the site can in places be somewhat limited and restricted.

Designations

- 3.22** The Site and site SA28 and their wider surrounds are both located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. (See discussion in Section 5.0 below)
- 3.23** There is a Grade II listed building-Wyatts lying approximately 300m to the south east of the site and the Horsted Keynes Conservation Area is relatively close to the north east Site boundary, although assessment of any potential effects from development on their heritage -settings is outside the scope of this LVA.

Baseline Visual Receptors

- 3.24** Having initially considered a 2-3 km area, following investigations, it is apparent that any potential effect on visual amenity would mostly be limited to within 1km-1.5km distance of the sites. Beyond this distance potential small-scale residential development is very unlikely to be discernible as a result of local variations in intervening landform and/or the layering effect of woodlands, as well as a dense network of hedgerow trees. Also, even close to the Site and site SA28 the extent of visibility will often be limited by similar factors mentioned in paragraph 3.21, or as a result of the presence of groups of evergreen trees and shrubs providing localised screening.

Residential Properties

- 3.25** Partial views of proposed residential development are likely to be available with some intervisibility from a relatively small number of residential properties located close to The Site or site SA 28.

- 3.26** Owing to the presence of existing vegetation around The Site and/or vegetation within the curtilages of the residential properties that will provide screening and filtering, views of the proposals will typically be from generally less sensitive upper floors, rather than more sensitive ground floor areas.
- 3.27** Further afield, the potential for any intervisibility between existing residential properties and the proposed development would be extremely restricted. Existing vegetation or other features in the intervening landscape between the potential development site and the visual receptor, i.e. occupiers of the property, would typically restrict views from residential properties.

Roads and Public Rights of Way

- 3.28** There are likely to be very few, limited views of the proposed development from lanes/streets close to the sites. In general, these would be restricted by the presence of intervening existing built form and/or vegetation in the landscape between the visual receptor (person using the highway) and the location of the proposed development.
- 3.29** The public rights of way network surrounding the sites would have some available views. However, those users of footpaths lying closest to The Site are likely to have views of the proposals restricted by the orientation of the particular rights of way, and/or existing buildings and/or the layering effect of existing vegetation close to the site.

Selection of Representative Views

- 3.30** A comprehensive visual assessment has been undertaken of the study area. However, in line with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition), a number of representative viewpoints (10 in total) have been selected to form the basis of a detailed visual assessment.
- 3.31** The chosen viewpoints are regarded as being representative of the range of potential views and receptors e.g. users of the public highway or PRoW networks, etc. from various distances and directions around the sites. A desk top study and field surveys has refined the number and exact location of the representative viewpoints and their locations are ones from which there is anticipated to be an effect. The representative viewpoints are not intended to be exhaustive. A greater number of locations would have demonstrated no visual effect. The locations of the representative viewpoints are shown on the Viewpoint Location Plan at Appendix 1.
- 3.32** The following table summarises the overall sensitivity of the representative viewpoints. Viewpoints 1-5 have available views of The Site. Three potential

cumulative assessment viewpoints 2, 3 and 4 are noted as having potential views of site SA28 as well. Viewpoints 6-10 are views of site SA 28 alone.

Table 1 – Summary of Viewpoint Susceptibility, Value and Overall Sensitivity

Viewpoint				
	Type of Visual receptor	Susceptibility	Value	Overall Sensitivity
Viewpoint 1 – View from Hamsland looking south	(a) Users of the public highway	(a)Medium	Medium	Medium
	(b) Occupiers of residential properties	(b)High	Medium	High
Viewpoint 2 – Glimpsed View from the public bridleway looking north - north east. <i>Potential Cumulative Assessment Viewpoint</i>	Users of the public bridleway	Medium	High	Medium/high
Viewpoint 3 - View from public footpath looking east	Users of the public footpath	Medium	Medium	Medium

Viewpoint				
	Type of Visual receptor	Susceptibility	Value	Overall Sensitivity
<i>Potential cumulative assessment viewpoint</i>				
Viewpoint 4 – View from the public footpath looking north-north east <i>Potential cumulative assessment viewpoint</i>	Users of the public right of way footpath	Medium	Medium	Medium
Viewpoint 5 – View from public open space	Users of the public open space	Medium	High	Medium/High
Viewpoint 6 – View from public footpath looking north west of SA28 only	Users of the public footpath	Medium/High	Medium	Medium

Viewpoint				
	Type of Visual receptor	Susceptibility	Value	Overall Sensitivity
Viewpoint 7– View from Birchgrove Road <i>of SA28 only</i>	Users of the public highway	Medium	Medium	Medium
	Occupiers of residential properties	Medium/High	Medium	Medium
Viewpoint 8– View from Birchgrove Road <i>Of SA28 only</i>	Users of the public footpath	Medium/High	Medium	Medium
Viewpoint 9– View from Danehill Road <i>Of SA28 only</i>	Users of the public highway	Medium	Medium	Medium
Viewpoint 10– View from Danehill Road <i>Of SA28 only</i>	Users of the public highway	Medium	Medium	Medium

4.0

4. Description of the scheme

- 4.1** The Site allocation for residential development would allow for the construction of up to 30 residential units. A proposed illustrative site layout is included at Appendix 6. The vehicular access could be provided from Hamsland.
- 4.2** The development would be of low- medium density (35-40dph). It is envisaged the properties would be 2 stories in height. Varied setbacks will provide opportunities for internal planting and there is also the opportunity to reference local detailing in the architectural design of the properties
- 4.3** The layout illustrates how the majority of the existing trees could be retained in potential communal open space, or in larger garden plots.. In addition, reinforcement tree and hedgerow planting could be provided where there are some gaps along the south east boundary.
- 4.4** There would also be scope for (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) SuDS provision for example a small attenuation pond/rain garden also associated with communal greenspace, which could also allow for planting of a group of trees of a larger size species to be planted.

Conserving settlement character

- 4.5** The variety of property sizes/houses envisaged gives scope to respond to the existing rural settlement edge.

Protecting and enhancing the landscape

- 4.6** To reinforce and enhance the retained landscape resource on the site, a comprehensive soft landscape scheme would be provided across the site and throughout the scheme. New tree, shrub and hedgerow planting will be introduced that will be functional and aesthetic.
- 4.7** In terms of maintaining a few glimpsed views of the wider landscape the Illustrative Site Layout proposals would allow this. with a few properties facing outwards along with the potential public open space near the eastern boundary.

5.0

5. Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.1 The revised NPPF was published in February 2019. The NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10). Specifically, paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that:

"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For plan-making this means that:

a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;

b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas⁵, unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area⁶; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”

5.2 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF defines the three dimensions to sustainable development. These dimensions are economic, social and environmental. In detail the environmental dimension is explained in the following terms:

“...an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

5.3 Section 12 of the NPPF is entitled ‘Achieving well-designed places’. The opening line of paragraph 125 states:

“Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable...”

5.4 Paragraph 127 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

5.5

Section 15 of the NPPF refers to ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’. Paragraph 170 states:

"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”

5.6 Paragraph 171 of the NPPF states:

“Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.”

5.7 The first line of paragraph 172 expands on the requirements of paragraph 171 by saying:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues...”

Local Planning Policy

5.8 Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) adopted the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 in March 2018. Relevant policies to design and landscape issues include DP16-High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, DP36- Character and Design, DP37- Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows as well as DP38- Biodiversity.

5.9 In addition, the Draft Mid Sussex Allocations DPD, published October 2019, includes Site Allocation policy SA29 Land South of St Stephen’s Church, Hamsland, Horsted

Keynes (The Site) is of relevance to this Landscape and Visual Appraisal. The policy for The Site sets out the following AONB/Landscape requirements: -

- Undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to inform the site layout, capacity and mitigation requirements, in order to conserve and enhance the landscape of the High Weald AONB, and minimise impacts on its special qualities as set out in the High Weald AONB Management Plan.
- Identify and protect important views into and out of the site with proposals laid out so that views are retained and, where possible enhanced to both improve legibility and the setting of development.
- Retain and enhance important landscape features, mature trees and hedgerows and incorporate these into the landscape structure and Green Infrastructure proposals for the development to limit impacts on the wider countryside. Open space is to be provided as an integral part of this landscape structure and should be prominent and accessible within the scheme.

5.10 Site Allocation Policy SA28- Land South of the Old Policy House, Birchgrove Road, Horsted Keynes is also of relevance in so far as this Landscape and Visual Appraisal also includes an assessment of cumulative landscape character and visual effects.

5.11 The Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (Hankisson Duckett July 2007) forms part of the evidence base for the current Local Plan. With respect to this capacity study the draft Allocation Site SA29 is located within an identified Local Character Area 36- Horsted Keynes High Weald, which is an area of approximately 1km depth, lying south of the existing settlement edge. This area is assessed as having a moderate landscape sensitivity to residential development and a low landscape capacity for residential development. However, it should be noted this is not a site-based Landscape Capacity Study.

5.12 It is considered that if the relevant sensitivity and capacity criteria were to be applied to The Site (SA29) alone , and taking account of the relatively small scale of development envisaged, which would be sited in the context of existing modern residential development, and enclosed by existing vegetation, it is likely that it would be assessed as of low sensitivity, with a moderate capacity for residential development.

Response to Local Plan Landscape/ Character and Design Policies

5.13 In terms of assessing the suitability of the proposed draft allocation of the site for up to 30 residential units the requirements of the policies of the Mid Sussex District Local Plan as they relate to landscape, design and character matters have been taken account of. In addition, as this LVA sets out, we have sought to demonstrate

how any likely adverse effects resulting from development on landscape features, character and visual amenity might be avoided, reduced or otherwise mitigated against.

- 5.14** As the Illustrative Site Layout, included in Appendix 6, demonstrates there would be the opportunity to create a locally distinctive and well landscaped development with appropriate references to local vernacular and materials.

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

- 5.15** This primary purpose of the designated High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is to conserve and enhance that the natural beauty of the landscape. The High Weald Management Plan 2019-2024 sets out the recognised and special characteristics and qualities of the area that contribute to its natural beauty in a Statement of Significance. This is recorded as comprising five defining character components: -

- **“Geology, landform and water systems** – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams.
- **Settlement** – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.
- **Routeways** – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).
- **Woodland** – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings.
- **Field and Heath** – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys.”

as well as: -

- “Land-based economy and related rural life bound up with, and underpinning, the observable character of the landscape with roots extending deep into history. An increasingly broad-based economy but with a significant land-based sector and related community life focused on mixed farming (particularly family farms and smallholdings), woodland management and rural crafts.”

and Other qualities and features such as :-

- “historic parks and gardens, orchards, hop gardens, veteran trees etc
- a wide range of locally distinctive historic buildings including oast houses, farm buildings, wealden hall houses and their associated features such as clay-tile catslide roofs

- wonderful views and scenic beauty of the High Weald
- relative tranquillity.
- the area's ancientness and sense of history
- intrinsically dark landscape,
- opportunity to get close to nature along public rights of way."

5.16 The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 includes management objectives. These management objectives relate to each component of the natural beauty of the High Weald AONB above, as set out above in the Statement of Significance for the AONB.

5.17 The management objectives are outlined in Appendix 5 in a template form, along with responses, demonstrating how an allocation of The Site for residential development of 30 dwellings could be considered to conform these objectives, where these are of relevance.

6.0

6. Effect on Landscape Elements and Features

- 6.1** Except for the provision of utilities to The Site, which would primarily be underground, there would unlikely to be works that would take place outside the Site boundary. Therefore, this section assesses the effect of the proposals on those elements and features that currently characterise The Site.
- 6.2** There are no obvious water courses on The site and no public rights of way cross it. The features that might be classed as key characteristics of the site are its gently to moderately sloping topography and the hedgerows and trees along The site boundaries. As such the site elements and features are assessed overall as of moderate value.
- 6.3** As stated in paragraph 5.40 of GLIVA3, the susceptibility of the elements and features is their particular ability to be able to accommodate the proposed development without experiencing;

"...undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape policies and strategies."

Topography

- 6.4** No substantial changes to the topography of the Site would be anticipated were it to be developed. It is anticipated that only very limited earthworks would be required on the site so to accommodate residential development, for example Suds works. Any such changes would be relatively localised ones and would relate mainly to the setting of levels necessary to allow the construction of buildings, roads, and other associated infrastructure.
- 6.5** The susceptibility of the site's topography to the type of development being proposed is assessed as moderate. The value of the topography is assessed as medium. As a result, the overall sensitivity of the site topography is assessed as medium.
- 6.6** The appearance of the site's topography would continue to prevail with a residential development in place. The magnitude of change at year 1 is therefore assessed as low. With a medium sensitivity and a low magnitude of change, the scale of effect

of a residential development on the topography of the site would be likely to be minor.

Trees and hedgerows

6.7 The illustrative site layout shows how the existing trees and hedgerows could be retained along the site boundaries. Therefore, subject to tree survey it is likely that the majority will be capable of retention. There is also scope for enhancement by additional tree planting.

6.8 The susceptibility of the existing tree resource on the site to the type of development envisaged is assessed as medium. With a medium value and medium susceptibility, the overall sensitivity is medium. Combining a medium sensitivity with a likely low magnitude of change, the scale of effect is likely to be minor. However, with the implementation and establishment of new tree and shrub planting as part of any development, it is anticipated by year 10 the scale of effect could become minor beneficial in nature.

Land Use

6.9 With a potential development in place, there would be an inevitable loss of a greenfield site and its replacement with residential and amenity uses. However, the overall value of the land use of the site, is assessed as low. This bears in mind the susceptibility of the current land use to the type of development being proposed is assessed as low. With an assessed magnitude of change as low, combined with low sensitivity, the scale of effect is likely to be minor.

Summary of Effects on Landscape Elements and Features of the site.

- 6.10** It is concluded that:
- There would be no requirement for any substantial alteration to the existing landform of The site to accommodate a residential development. The underlining topography of the site would be likely to largely remain unaffected.
 - There is scope for retention of tree resource and enhancement through additional tree and hedgerow planting.
 - No physical works would be required beyond the site boundary. The physical fabric of the landscape surrounding the off-site would remain physically unaffected with the proposals in place.

- There is likely to be a minor effect on land use.

Cumulative Effects

6.11 It is anticipated cumulative effects on landscape elements and features from the additional allocation of Site SA28 would be no greater than moderate adverse. Although no illustrative site layout is available to assess for SA28, it is considered that site SA 28 shares similar existing elements and features with those of the Site and therefore should be capable of accommodating a relatively small scale development in a sensitive manner, bearing in mind any topographical and vegetation changes in the case of both sites are likely to be minor adverse.

7.0

7. Effects on Landscape Character

National Landscape Character

- 7.1** At this high level the overall characteristics of the High Weald National Character Area 122 indicate a settled, farmed landscape with frequent references to settlement, built form and the extent of woodland cover. It is not considered that at this higher level, the proposed allocation for a relatively small- scale residential development would bring about any material change to the key characteristics of the NCA within the wider landscape, as set out above in Section 3.0. Nor is any cumulative effect on these characteristics predicted to be experienced, as a result of the allocation of both The Site and site SA28, both comprising relatively small-scale developments.

West Sussex County and Mid Sussex District Landscape Character

- 7.2** At the district and county landscape character level of assessment it is considered that the proposed allocation of The Site for a relatively small scale residential development would result in a low/negligible change to the key characteristics of these High Weald Landscape Character Areas, as described above in Section 3.0. Nor is any cumulative effect on these characteristics predicted to be experienced, as a result of the allocation of both The Site and site SA28.

Local High Weald AONB Landscape Character Character

- 7.3** At this local level of assessment, the proposed allocation of the site would be generally consistent with the desire to conserve and enhance the essentially rural character of this area, with any development likely to be small scale and partly contained by existing development.
- 7.4** Therefore, any indirect changes to the character of the landscape of the AONB within approximately 500m of the site are assessed as of low magnitude. Combining low magnitude with a medium sensitivity it is considered that the scale of any indirect local character effect would be minor. Indeed after 10 years planting mitigation establishment, it is likely that the scale of effect would diminish to negligible.
- 7.5** Nor is any cumulative effect on local landscape character predicted to be experienced, as a result of the allocation of both The Site and site SA28, taking

account of the fact that indirect changes to character of the landscape close to both sites is unlikely to be experienced sequentially along particular routes,

Site Landscape Character

7.6 The site currently comprises a field which appears to have ceased for agricultural use and which is also overlooked by existing modern residential development. The susceptibility of the site to the type of development being proposed is therefore assessed as low. With a medium value and a low susceptibility, the overall sensitivity of the site is assessed as low.

7.7 The proposals associated with a residential allocation of up to 30 residential units would have a similar form/type to other existing residential properties present. In addition, the proposals would be contained within the site boundary and would only result in partial changes to the scale, topography landcover, pattern of the site. With the potential residential development in place, it is anticipated the overall magnitude of change would be low. Combining a low sensitivity and a low magnitude of change, it is assessed that the residential proposals are likely to have a minor adverse scale of effect on the character of the site at year 1.

7.8 This is likely to diminish to neutral by year 10 of planting establishment of new tree, hedgerow and shrub planting as it becomes more mature. In terms of any cumulative site character effects these are unlikely to be no greater than minor adverse as a result of the additional residential allocation of site SA 28.

Historic Landscape Character

7.9 Given informal fieldscapes are a relatively common historic landscape type in the immediate vicinity of Horsted Keynes, and bearing in mind that in respect of both The Site and Site SA28 it should be possible to retain their partially sinuous historic landscape boundaries as part of any development proposals, it is considered that any cumulative adverse historic character effects are unlikely to arise, from allocation of both sites for residential development, and if so are predicted to be no greater than minor adverse.

7.10 In respect of the small areas of informal designed parkland (of approx victorian date) that adjoin/ are located close to the south west boundary of The Site and the larger areas of medieval assarts to the south of both sites it is not considered these would be physically affected.

8.0

8. Effect on Visual Amenity

Detailed Assessment and Summary of Effects on Viewpoints

- 8.1** A detailed visual assessment has been undertaken from ten representative viewpoints to determine how any proposed development might affect the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape. The assessment was undertaken as part of the site survey, with the photographic assessment recording the nature of the view and the existing visibility of the application site (see appendix 1)
- 8.2** The following table summarises the detailed assessment for the Site, or Site Sa28 assessing the potential for any in combination, cumulative visual effect from the same viewpoint.

Table 1 – Summary of Detailed Visual Assessment

Viewpoint	Visual Effect			
	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
Viewpoint 1			√	
(a) Users of the lane				
(b) Occupiers of Residential properties			√ diminishing over time from moderate to minor	

Viewpoint	Visual Effect			
	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
Viewpoint 2 – Users of the bridleway		√ (diminishing over time from minor to negligible)		
Cumulative effect in combination with Site SA 28		None predicted- <i>the view looks north east-east in the direction of both sites, but Site SA 28 is screened from view by existing vegetation</i>		
Viewpoint 3 – From the public footpath		√ (diminishing over time from minor to negligible)		
Cumulative Effect in combination with site SA28		None predicted- <i>the view looking east</i>		

Viewpoint	Visual Effect				
	Negligible	Minor		Moderate	Major
		<i>is in the direction of both sites, but Site SA 28 is screened from view by existing evergreen vegetation</i>			
Viewpoint 4 – Users of the public footpath <i>Cumulative Effect in combination with site SA28</i>		✓ Diminishing over time to Negligible None predicted- <i>the view looks north east/east in the direction of both sites, but Site SA 28 is screened from view by</i>			

Viewpoint	Visual Effect			
	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
		<i>existing evergreen vegetation</i>		
Viewpoint 5 – Users of the public open space		✓ Diminishing over time to negligible		
Viewpoint 6 – Users of the public footpath		✓ Diminishing over time to negligible		
Viewpoint 7 – Users of the lane Occupiers of Residential properties			✓ ✓ Diminishing over time to minor	

Viewpoint	Visual Effect			
	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
Viewpoint 8 – Users of the Lane		✓ Diminishing over time to Negligible		
Viewpoint 9 – Users of the lane	✓			
Viewpoint 10 – View of the lane		✓ Diminishing over time to Negligible		

Summary

- 8.3** The selection of representative viewpoints indicate that moderate and minor scale of visual effects would be experienced from viewpoints relatively close to the site, as might reasonably be expected, but these are likely to diminish over time to minor/negligible, taking account of mitigation planting.
- 8.4** Where evident residential development would often be seen only as a discrete and rather than seen in its entirety resulting often in a low magnitude of effect. In addition, looking towards the settlement edge development proposals would not be seen in isolation, but rather viewed in the context of existing residential development. Existing vegetation on and off the site could act to filter or partially filter many views of the proposed development.
- 8.5** While some views looking towards the Site and SA29 in theory might be possible, in the case of three of the representative viewpoints, it is not predicted that cumulative effects are likely to arise given screening provided by groups of evergreen/conifer trees within the intervening vegetation or localised variations in topography.

8.6

Overall it is considered that the proposed development would have a limited effect that would not be unacceptable on the visual amenity of users of the wider AONB landscape beyond the site boundary. Any adverse visual effects would also diminish over time due to integration of the proposed development, resulting from replacement planting.

9.0

9. Summary and Conclusions

- 9.1** This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared by Landscape Collective on behalf of Rydon Homes by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute. The appraisal was undertaken in January 2020 to consider the potential landscape and visual effects of a site allocation for residential development included in the Draft Mid Sussex Site Allocations DPD- Land south of St Stephens Church. The Site is located towards the south eastern edge of the large village of Horsted Keynes which has an attractive historic core but which has over time been subject to incremental infill and expansion.
- 9.2** The visual assessment demonstrates the existing visual envelope of The Site/ of the proposed development would be restricted to views from within approx 1-1.5km distance of the site through a combination of buildings and existing vegetation and topographic variations in the intervening landscape between the visual receptor (person/people) and the potential allocation site. A selection of representative viewpoints indicate that any moderate level of visual effects would likely to be experienced either from close to The Site boundary, as might reasonably be expected.
- 9.3** The design and layout of residential development envisaged would be able to meet the requirements of the adopted Mid Sussex Local plan policies and the draft Mid Sussex Allocations DPD as they relate to landscape and visual matters. As this LVA demonstrates, the removal or reduction of the potential effects of residential development on landscape features, character and visual amenity would be feasible.
- 9.4** The proposals recognise the fact that in respect of the NPPF, the site and its surrounds the High Weald AONB has a status of protection in relation to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty.
- 9.5** In assessing residential development, of the type/small scale envisaged against the High Weald Management Plan objectives and recognised special characteristics/qualities, in so far as they are relevant to The Site, it is not considered that the proposed relatively small scale residential allocation would conflict with these. The Site is relatively well contained by existing built development to the east and north, as well as by existing vegetation to the west and the proposed development could be integrated to complement the conservation and enhancement of AONB character and qualities.
- 9.6** In respect of the existing elements and features on the Site that contribute to its character and to the character of the wider area, with the proposed development in

place the following conclusions can be drawn. There would be no requirement for any substantial alteration to the existing landform of the site to accommodate the proposed development. The underlining topography of The Site would remain essentially unaltered.

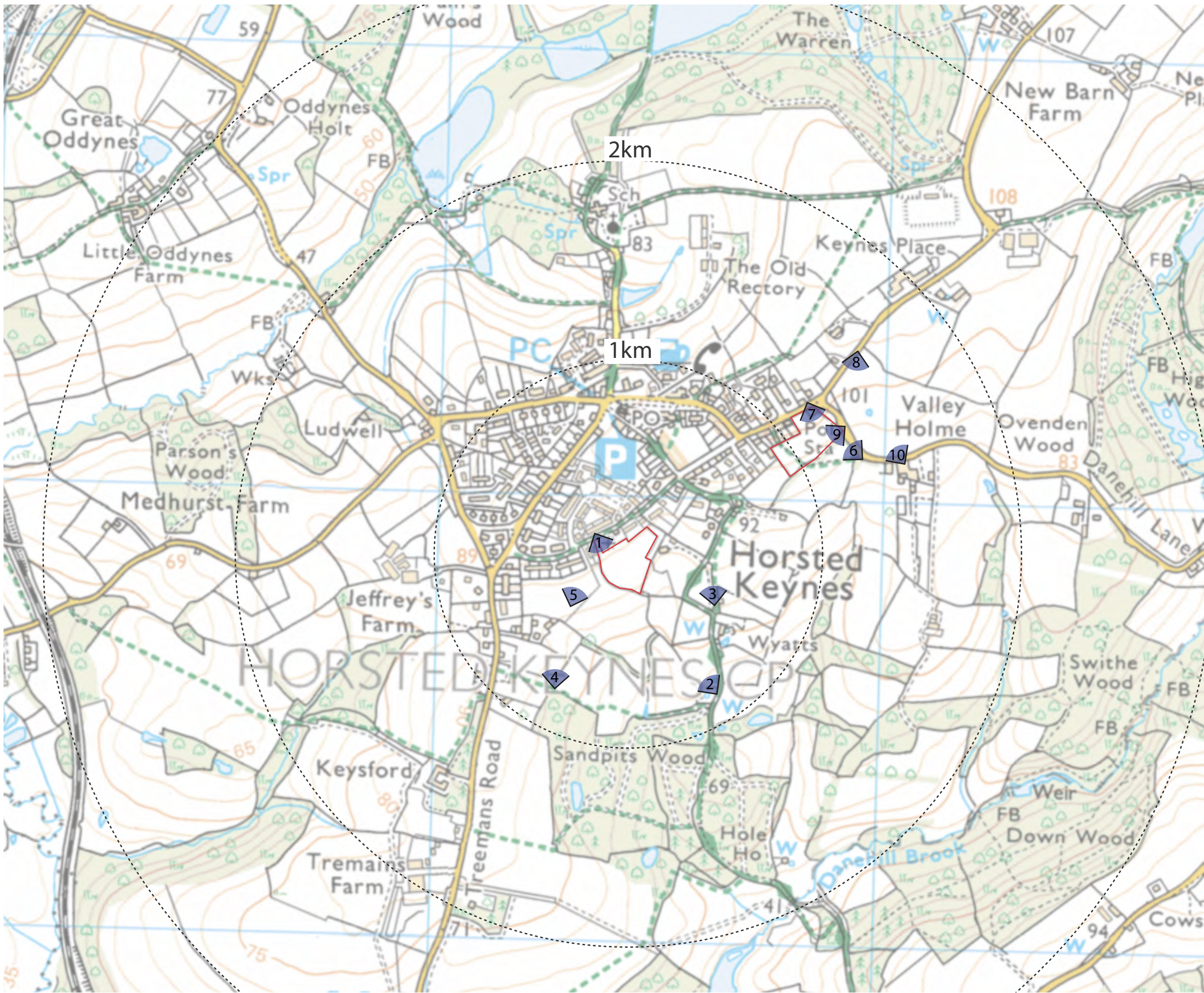
- 9.7** The construction of up to 30 residential units on The Site as part of the envisaged development would lead to an inevitable moderate magnitude change to the site's present land use of pasture.
- 9.8** Retention of the existing tree resource on the site could be achieved as an integral part of the proposed residential development (subject to tree survey). It could also be reinforced and enhanced through additional tree, hedgerow and shrub planting. Once established and beginning to mature this planting could lead to a net beneficial effect upon the site's existing tree and hedgerow resource.
- 9.9** The proposed residential development would not materially change the key landscape characteristics or elements and features of the wider environment, identified in the published landscape character assessments, including those recorded in the High Weald AONB Management Plan, or the author's own assessment.
- 9.10** The proposed development would be mostly seen against the backdrop of/or contained within the existing settlement pattern of small- scale settlement and small fields and the existing landscape pattern could continue to prevail with proposals in place. The design, form and materials of the proposed development also could also pick up on and respond to the local vernacular of the area, including those described in the High Weald AONB Management Plan.
- 9.11** Except potentially utilities, which would be underground, no physical works are likely to be necessary beyond the site boundary. The physical fabric of the landscape surrounding The site would remain physically unaffected with the proposals in place.
- 9.12** In terms of any potential cumulative adverse character effects that might arise from the two proposed development allocations at the edge of Horsted Keynes it is not considered that for those in respect of local and site character, the effects will be any greater than minor adverse, whereas key characteristics at the National, County and District scales of assessment are not predicted to be experienced.
- 9.13** The visual assessment that has been undertaken, demonstrates that views of the proposed development from within the wider landscape would typically be restricted through a combination of topography, buildings and existing vegetation in the intervening landscape between the visual receptor (person/people) and the application site boundary.

- 9.14** A selection of representative viewpoints indicates that the development proposals, where visible, could result in moderate/minor scale of visual effects from some views close to the site boundary, as might reasonably be expected. However, in both cases there would be potential to reduce any such visual effects to minor/negligible over a period of 5-10 years through mitigation planting as an integral part of development. No major effects are expected, especially bearing in mind often only smaller portions of the Site are visible.
- 9.15** Whilst the combination of the two proposed residential allocations in Horsted Keynes has been assessed for the potential to cause any cumulative adverse visual effects, as seen in some views from shared viewpoints looking towards the Site and site SA 28, it is not predicted that any will arise.
- 9.16** By way of conclusion, it is considered that a potential residential development allocation for up to 30 residential units on the Land St Stephens Church Site would be acceptable, without resulting in any substantial landscape character or visual effects that could otherwise be contrary to the special characteristics and qualities of the AONB and enjoyment of its natural beauty.

10.0

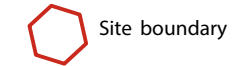
10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Site Locations and Viewpoint Location Plan



Map data © 2019 Bing

KEY



Site boundary



Viewpoint

Revision	Description	Date
-	First issue	11/12/19



Landscape Collective Ltd
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2 Riding House Street
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Client:

Project:

Description:
Viewpoint Location Plan

Status:
Planning

Scale:
N/A @A3

Drawn | Checked
KI MB

Date:
23/01/2020

Job Number:
LC 00000

Drawing Number:

Revision:
-

Appendix 2 – Detailed Methodology

Detailed methodology

INTRODUCTION

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been undertaken with reference to best practice, as outlined in the following published guidance:

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) - Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013)

GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13

Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland - (2002)
Countryside Agency / Scottish Natural Heritage

The proposed scheme was assessed for the purposes of the landscape and visual analysis.

The study area for the LVA was taken to be a 5km radius from the site. However, the main focus of the assessment was taken as a radius of 2km from the site as it is considered that beyond this distance, even with good visibility, the proposed development would not be perceptible in the composite landscape.

The effects on settings of heritage assets or ecological/environmental assets are not considered within this LVA.

NATURE OF EFFECTS

The nature of any effect will be adverse i.e. negative, beneficial i.e. positive or neutral i.e. neither completely adverse or beneficial. Unless expressly noted, effects are deemed to be adverse in nature.

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS AND CHARACTER ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A baseline landscape assessment was carried out to determine the current elements and character of the landscape within and surrounding the site. This involved an initial desktop study of but not necessarily limited to:

Ordnance survey maps at 1:50,000, 1:25,000 scales

Aerial photographs of the site and surrounding area

Datasets for rural designations from the MAGIC website (Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside)

Relevant planning policy

National and local scale landscape character assessments

VISUAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The assessment of visual effects was undertaken on the basis of viewpoint analysis as recommended in best practice guidelines. The viewpoints which are in different

directions from the site and are at varying distances and locations were selected to represent a range of views and visual receptor types.

The viewpoints are representational and not exhaustive. They are taken from publicly accessible land and not from any third party, private, land.

The viewpoints were used as the basis for determining the effects of visual receptors within the entire study area. The viewpoints were photographed at 1.6 metres above ground level.

Sensitivity of Landscape Elements and Features

The sensitivity attributed to a landscape element or feature is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a particular landscape element feature and the susceptibility of the landscape element/feature to changes that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development as outlined in pages 88-90 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

Table 1: Value of Landscape Elements and Features

Low	<p>Ones that:</p> <p>have no or little rarity and/or,</p> <p>make no and/or make only a limited contribution to the character and local visual and amenity value and/or</p> <p>are of such poor condition that the element/feature has lost its ability to contribute effectively to the character of the landscape</p>
Medium	<p>Ones that:</p> <p>are notable in the landscape, with some visual and/or amenity interest but that do not make a particularly strong or important contribution to the character of the landscape and/or,</p> <p>ones that are an intrinsic element of landscape but in poor condition</p>
High	<p>Ones that:</p> <p>make an important contribution to the character of the landscape and/or,</p> <p>have particular historical or cultural reference and/or,</p> <p>are distinctive or rare and typically of good condition</p>

Table 2: Sensitivity of Landscape Elements and Features

	VALUE
--	--------------

SUSCEPTIBILITY		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
	HIGH	High	High	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Low
	LOW	Medium	Low	Low

Magnitude of Change on Landscape Elements and Features

Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude of direct physical impacts on individual existing landscape elements and features as follows:

Table 3: Criteria for magnitude of change for landscape elements and features

Negligible	No loss or very minor alteration to part of an existing landscape element and/or feature
Low	Minor loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape element and or feature
Medium	Some loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape element and/or feature
High	Total or major loss of an existing landscape element and/or feature

Sensitivity of Landscape Character

Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a landscape and the susceptibility of the landscape to changes that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development as outlined in pages 88-90 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

Table 4: Value of Landscape Character

Low	An area that is in a recognisably poor condition and/or with a weak strength of character that typically has a clear indication of being damaged and/or contains a high number of detractors, and/or is of limited visual cohesion
-----	--

Medium	An area is recognisable as being in reasonable condition and/or with a strength of character including some individual elements or features of local rarity or value but likely to exhibit some damage or deterioration.
High	Areas with international or national landscape designations, i.e. National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or occasionally landscapes non-designated landscape in particularly good condition and/or strong strength of character or of particular local value

Table 5: Sensitivity of Landscape Character

	VALUE			
SUSCEPTIBILITY		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
	HIGH	High	High	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Low
	LOW	Medium	Low	Low

Magnitude of Change on Landscape Character

Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude change on landscape character as follows:

Table 6: Criteria for magnitude of change for landscape character

Negligible	No notable introduction of new elements into the landscape or change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
Low	Introduction of minor new elements into the landscape or some minor change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
Medium	Introduction of some notable elements into the landscape or some notable change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
High	Introduction of major elements into the landscape or some major change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a view and the susceptibility of the receptor to changes in that view that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development as outlined in pages 113-114 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

GLVIA3 says a judgement should be made as to the value of a particular view being experienced. In making a professional judgement as to the value attached to a view, the following criteria have helped guide the process. Not all the criteria have to apply to a particular view and the criteria are not in a hierarchy.

Table 7: Criteria for judging levels of visual value

Low	<p>Views from within or towards undesignated landscapes and/or features of either importance to the site only or of no importance</p> <p>View has little aesthetic merit e.g. has numerous visual detractors, is badly degraded etc.</p> <p>View makes a limited contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the landscape</p> <p>Views with no known social, cultural or historic associations</p> <p>Views from locations that are not necessarily destination points or that are infrequently visited</p>
Medium	<p>Views from within or towards undesignated landscapes and/or features of local importance</p> <p>View with some limited aesthetic appeal</p> <p>View makes a reasonable contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the landscape</p> <p>Views with some known local social, cultural or historic associations</p> <p>Views from locations that are locally popular destination points or that are frequently visited by locals but not necessarily by visitors from further afield</p>
High	<p>Views from within or towards designated landscapes and/or features of importance at district level and above</p> <p>View with great aesthetic appeal</p> <p>View makes an important contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the landscape</p>

	Views with some known national or international social, cultural or historic associations especially to art and literature
	Views from locations that are popular regional, national or international destination points or that are frequently visited by large numbers of visitors from further afield

Table 8: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

	VALUE			
SUSCEPTIBILITY		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
	HIGH	High	High	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Low
	LOW	Medium	Low	Low

Magnitude of Change on Visual Amenity

Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude change on landscape character as follows:

Table 9: Criteria for magnitude of change for visual receptors

Negligible	No notable change in the view
Low	Some change in the view that is not prominent / few visual receptors affected
Medium	Some change in the view that is clearly visible and forms an important but not defining element in the view
High	Major change in the view that has a defining influence on the overall view / many visual receptors affected

Scale of Effects

The scale of the landscape and visual effects is determined by cross referencing the sensitivity of the landscape feature, landscape character or view with the magnitude of change. The scale of effects is described as major, moderate, minor or negligible.

Table 10: Scale of effect thresholds for landscape character, landscape elements/features and visual receptors

		Magnitude of Change			
Sensitivity		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible

Appendix 3 – Context views



Context View 1a - Western site boundary



Context View 1b - Western site boundary



Context View 2a - South-eastern site boundary



Context View 2b - South-eastern site boundary



Context View 3a - Northern site boundary



Context View 3b - Northern site boundary



View 1a - Northern Site boundary



View 1b - Northern Site boundary



View 2a- Eastern site boundary



View 2b- Eastern site boundary



View 2c - Southern site boundary



View 3a - Western site boundary



View 3b - Western site boundary



View 4 - North-eastern site boundary

Appendix 4 – Site Features Plan

Appendix 5 – Assessment against AONB Management Plan objectives

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives (as related the identified components of the AONB's natural beauty)	Response
Geology, landform, water systems and climate	
G1 - To restore the natural function of river catchments	The Site location and the nature of the proposals precludes any meaningful restoration of the wider river catchment area. The proposals would allow for provision of an attenuation pond that will help positively manage runoff from the development and which will ultimately ensure a controlled rate of surface water disbursement from the site into the river catchment.
G2 – To protect the sandstone outcrops and other important geological features	Neither the site nor its immediate vicinity contain any sandstone outcrops or other important geological features.
G3 – Climatic conditions and rates of change which support continued conservation and enhancement of the High Weald's valued landscape and habitats.	The proposed residential units will be built in accordance with the most up to date Building Regulations. Sustainable construction methods and materials will be used where possible.
Settlement	
S1 – To reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside	The proposed development and the building of new homes will provide a local economic boost during both the construction and operational phases.
S2 – To protect the historic pattern of development	The layout and density of the proposals would respond to the existing historic settlement/townscape pattern of Horsted and the reduction in density towards the southern site boundary will allow retention and reinforcement of existing

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives (as related the identified components of the AONB's natural beauty)	Response
	<p>boundary trees and hedgerows, as appropriate to a new countryside edge. The proposals will be contained by existing development, roads and housing and as such the physical pattern of development outside the site will be unchanged with the proposals in place.</p> <p>It should be noted that the relatively small scale of development envisaged would be appropriate and that it would lie adjacent to existing C20th century housing on the northern, eastern and western boundaries, associated with previous village expansion.</p>
S3 – To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald	The architectural quality of the proposals would be sufficiently high to ensure that the proposed development will have its own sense of place and that the wider settlement will retain its own distinctiveness. Reference will be made in the detailing of the proposed buildings to those associated with the village/local vernacular, as well as in the use of materials, while remaining contemporary and avoiding pastiche and using appropriate colour.
Routeways	
R1 – To protect the historic pattern and features of routeways	The site is not physically crossed by or bounded by any historic routes and is currently private with no public access. The proposals would make provision for a small area of public open would be a positive aspect of the potential development.
R2 – To enhance the ecological function of routeways	As none would be affected this objective is not applicable to the Site location.
Woodlands	

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives (as related the identified components of the AONB's natural beauty)	Response
W1 – To maintain existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland	<p>The proposals will not result in the loss of or bring about any adverse effect on ancient woodland given there are none on the Site.</p> <p>The retention of the existing boundary trees and hedgerows, together with new tree planting, as part of the proposals, will both maintain and enhance the perception of a wooded appearance to the Site as perceived from the wider landscape to the south of the Site.</p>
W2 – To enhance the ecological functioning of woodland at a landscape scale	<p>Given the existing southern and eastern boundary hedgerows and trees will be retained, connectivity will be maintained with the dense network of hedgerows and woodlands in the wider landscape. There may also be an opportunity for a new copse to be planted on the site.</p>
W3 – To protect the archaeology and historic assets of AONB woodland	No woodland archaeology is expected to be affected directly or indirectly by the proposals
W4 – To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets	This is not considered to be relevant to the proposed development, which would have no influence on commercial timber production within the AONB
Field and Heath	
FH1 – To secure agricultural productive use for fields of the High Weald especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management	<p>The proposed development will inevitably result in the loss of a pasture field, as might be the case for any small- scale development on similar agricultural land elsewhere in the AONB. Given it partly adjoins an existing settlement edge and there is no evidence to suggest it is currently in use for grazing purposes, its loss is not considered to be significant. This matter is expanded upon within the main text of the LVA .</p>

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives (as related the identified components of the AONB's natural beauty)	Response
FH2 – To maintain the pattern of small irregular shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodland.	The field pattern of the wider landscape surrounding the site would be unaltered with the proposed development in place. The existing field boundaries to the site would be substantially unaltered too except necessary fencing would be improved to provide secure garden boundaries in places. This existing tree and hedgerow resource would be reinforced and enhanced with new tree and shrub planting as part of the proposed development.
FH3 – To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats	The site currently appears to be improved/semi improved pasture. Any future planning application could be accompanied by an ecological assessment should this be deemed necessary. The illustrative layout demonstrates here would be sufficient space for the reinforcement and enhancement of the existing habitats on the site through more wildlife conservation focused management and through new tree and shrub planting together with the creation of new grassland habitat.
FH4 – To protect the archaeology and historic assets of field and heath	The site could be subject to an archaeological assessment and any potential for archaeological assets reflected in the scheme layout's evolution if necessary.

Appendix 6 – Illustrative Site Layout



Site
**HAMSLAND, HORSTED
KEYNES**

Drawing
Site layout plan

Scale
1:500@A2

Date
18.12.19

Drawing ref 1263.**02**

KEY

- Site boundary
- Existing tree
- Proposed tree
- Affordable dwelling

Appendix 7 – NCA 122 High Weald



Introduction

As part of Natural England's responsibilities as set out in the Natural Environment White Paper¹, Biodiversity 2020² and the European Landscape Convention³, we are revising profiles for England's 159 National Character Areas (NCAs). These are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment.

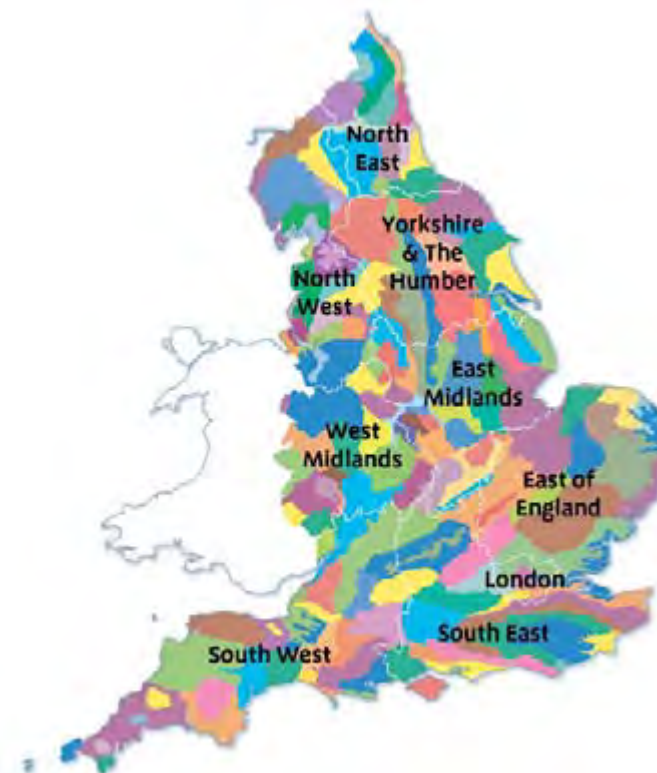
NCA profiles are guidance documents which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for. The information they contain will support the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale, inform the delivery of Nature Improvement Areas and encourage broader partnership working through Local Nature Partnerships. The profiles will also help to inform choices about how land is managed and can change.

Each profile includes a description of the natural and cultural features that shape our landscapes, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics and ecosystem services. Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) are suggested, which draw on this integrated information. The SEOs offer guidance on the critical issues, which could help to achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future.

NCA profiles are working documents which draw on current evidence and knowledge. We will aim to refresh and update them periodically as new information becomes available to us.

We would like to hear how useful the NCA profiles are to you. You can contact the NCA team by emailing ncaprofiles@naturalengland.org.uk

National Character Areas map



¹ The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature, Defra (2011; URL: www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf)

² Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services, Defra (2011; URL: www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf)

³ European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe (2000; URL: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm>)

Summary

The High Weald National Character Area (NCA) encompasses the ridged and faulted sandstone core of the Kent and Sussex Weald. It is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers 78 per cent of the NCA. The High Weald consists of a mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads connected by historic routeways, tracks and paths. Wild flower meadows are now rare but prominent medieval patterns of small pasture fields enclosed by thick hedgerows and shaws (narrow woodlands) remain fundamental to the character of the landscape.

Some 26 per cent of the NCA is covered by woodland, comprising wooded shaws, pits and gills, farm woods and larger woods; of this 26 per cent, 17 per cent is ancient semi-natural woodland and 5 per cent is ancient replanted woodland. The majority of the woodland cover is ancient, managed in the past as coppice with standards surrounded with native woodland flora such as bluebells and wood anemones in the Spring. Evidence of the area's industrial past is prominent, from the large iron-master houses to iron industry charcoal hearths, pits and hammer ponds found throughout the ancient woodlands.

The small scale and historical patterning of the landscape, interwoven woodland, wetland and open habitats, with many hedgerows and historic routeways supporting semi-natural vegetation, provide a flourishing, accessible landscape for wildlife. Exposed sandstone outcrops along the wooded gills provide nationally rare habitat and support an array of ferns, bryophytes and lichens. The Weald meets the sea at Hastings Cliffs which are a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and an area of undeveloped coastline consisting of actively

eroding soft cliffs of sands and clays. A small section (35 ha) of the Pevensey Levels Ramsar site also falls within the NCA. The numerous gill streams of the High Weald give rise to the headwaters and upper reaches of rivers which were previously important trade routes for timber, iron and wool out to the coastal ports around Walland Marsh.

Today the High Weald, and particularly Ashdown Forest, is internationally known as the home of the character Winnie-the-Pooh. Ashdown Forest is both a Special Protection Area (SPA) due to its populations of Dartford warbler and nightjar and an SAC as it is one of the largest single continuous blocks of lowland heath in England. The forest also inspired William Robinson who pioneered the English natural garden movement and writers such as Rudyard Kipling. The NCA is also home to 56 historic parks and gardens covering 4,599 ha. The High Weald provides an example of one of the best preserved medieval landscapes in north-west Europe and

[Click map to enlarge](#); [click again to reduce](#).

has a strong sense of history. This is enhanced by many features such as Battle Abbey, numerous churches and chapels and an abundance of locally distinctive traditional buildings. The eroding sea cliffs at Hastings provide one of the finest exposures of Lower Cretaceous, Wealden sediments in Britain, containing a range of internationally important fossil plant material and non-marine animal fossils.

The High Weald provides many services to communities living within the area's towns and villages and adjacent urban populations through the supply of drinking water, flood mitigation and carbon storage and a range of open-air recreational activities based around its distinctive character, from walking its ancient routeways to off-road cycling in Bedgebury Forest, water sports at Bewl Water and soft rock climbing at Harrison's Rocks. Future challenges include continuing high demands for housing in south-east England, and rural areas in particular, resulting in strong pressure for development within the NCA, and pressure to bring forward land for housing in and around larger villages, threatening the dispersed settlement character of the landscape and the sustainable development of smaller settlements.



Ashdown Forest consists of open rolling heathland and birch woodland on the sandstone ridge of the High Weald. The forest forms the literary landscape of the children's classic, 'Winnie the Pooh'.

Statements of Environmental Opportunity

SEO 1: Maintain and enhance the existing woodland and pasture components of the landscape, including the historic field pattern bounded by shaws, hedgerows and farm woods, to improve ecological function at a landscape scale for the benefit of biodiversity, soils and water, sense of place and climate regulation, safeguard ancient woodlands and encourage sustainably produced timber to support local markets and contribute to biomass production.

SEO 2: Maintain and restore the natural function of river catchments at a landscape scale, promoting benefits for water quality and water flow within all Wealden rivers, streams and flood plains by encouraging sustainable land management and best agricultural practices to maintain good soil quality, reduce soil erosion, increase biodiversity and enhance sense of place. Maintain and enhance the geodiversity and especially the exposed sandrock.

SEO 3: Maintain and enhance the distinctive dispersed settlement pattern, parkland and historic pattern and features of the routeways of the High Weald, encouraging the use of locally characteristic materials and Wealden practices to ensure that any development recognises and retains the distinctiveness, biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage assets present, reaffirm sense of place and enhance the ecological function of routeways to improve the connectivity of habitats and provide wildlife corridors.

SEO 4: Manage and enhance recreational opportunities, public understanding and enjoyment integrated with the conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, a productive landscape and tranquillity, in accordance with the purpose of the High Weald AONB designation.



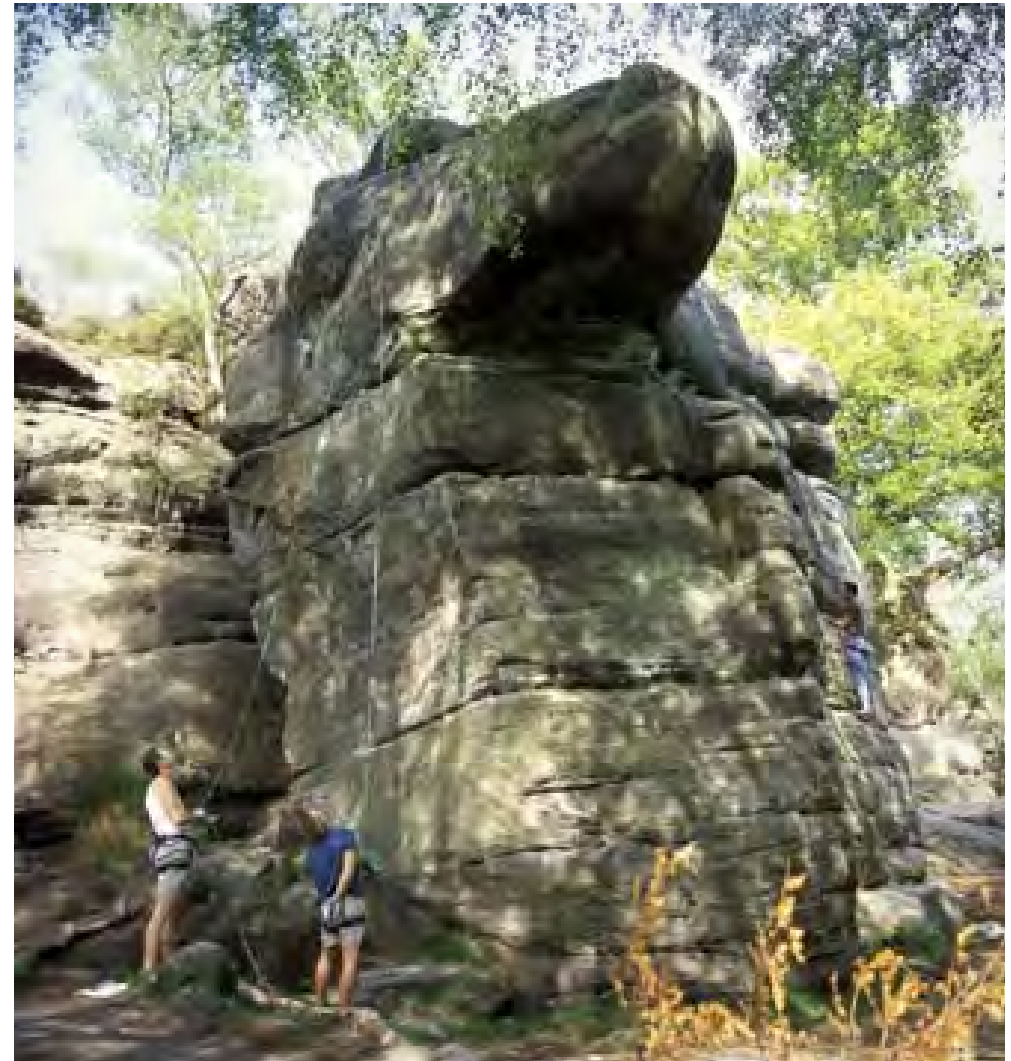
Small and medium-sized irregularly shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded shaws, predominantly of medieval origin.

Description

Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

The High and Low Weald National Character Areas (NCAs) together form an area known from Saxon times as the Weald whose landscape is the product of transhumance (the seasonal movement of people and animals between the settlements on the borders of the Weald and its interior) and a traditional system of integrated farming and forestry. Early in its history the Weald was linked economically and socially with its more habitable fringes where farming was easier. A dense network of droveways connects the Downs and the Weald, a visible legacy of the seasonal movement of people and animals into the woodland to take advantage of acorns and mast (fruit of forest trees). Today these routes can still be travelled as roads and public rights of way. The wooded nature of these linear routes together with the wooded gills provides a high degree of interconnectivity to ancient woodland habitats across the High and Low Weald.

From vantage points in the surrounding North and South Downs NCAs sweeping views extend across the densely wooded countryside of the Weald, an area of heavy soils and the natural habitat of the oak. Views from vantage points within the High Weald extend along the low-lying clay vale of the Low Weald NCA which largely wraps around the northern, western and southern edges of the High Weald NCA in a rough horseshoe shape. To the south-west pocket of the NCA, there are views towards the low-lying wetlands of the Pevensey Levels, and to the south-east corner there are long ranging views across the flat topography of the Romney Marshes NCA.



Rock climbing at Harrison's Rocks is managed carefully to protect the friable sandstone rocks from erosion.

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, with those to the east of the area also providing historical trade routes for timber, iron and wool out to the coastal ports on Romney Marsh.

In the High Weald, where the rivers Rother, Brede and Tillingham originate, the impermeable clay and silt layers of the Hastings Beds give rise to rapid run-off and quickly responding watercourses following heavy rainfall. Maintaining flows in the Rother catchment is important due to the dependency of the Walland Marsh on water transferred into the Royal Military Canal from the Rother, and hence the High Weald and Romney Marsh are inextricably linked in terms of water resources.

The catchments of the rivers Cuckmere, Ouse, Adur and Arun drain south through deep valleys in the eastern chalk ridge from the High Weald via the Low Weald NCA, and the later via the Wealden Greensand NCA, 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-air recreational activities based around its distinctive character. Activities including walking the ancient routeways, off-road cycling in Bedgebury Forest and soft rock climbing at Harrison's Rocks provide benefits to the various towns that straddle the border between the High and Low Wealds, namely Crawley, East Grinstead, Horsham, Haywards Heath and Uckfield.



The High Weald has a wealth of ancient woodland.

Key characteristics

- A faulted landform of clays, sand and soft sandstones with outcrops of fissured sandrock and ridges running east-west, deeply incised and intersected with numerous gill streams forming the headwaters of a number of the major rivers – the Rother, Brede, Ouse and Medway – which flow in broad valleys.
- High density of extraction pits, quarries and ponds, in part a consequence of diverse geology and highly variable soils over short distances.
- A dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads and medieval ridgetop villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries, with a dominance of timber-framed buildings with steep roofs often hipped or half-hipped, and an extremely high survival rate of farm buildings dating from the 17th century or earlier.
- Ancient routeways in the form of ridgetop roads and a dense system of radiating droveways, often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees and wild flower-rich verges and boundary banks. Church towers and spires on the ridges are an important local landmark. There is a dense network of small, narrow and winding lanes, often sunken and enclosed by high hedgerows or woodland strips. The area includes several large towns such as Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough, Battle and Heathfield and is closely bordered by others such as Crawley, East Grinstead, Hastings and Horsham.
- An intimate, hidden and small-scale landscape with glimpses of far-reaching views, giving a sense of remoteness and tranquillity yet concealing the highest density of timber-framed buildings anywhere in Europe amidst lanes and paths.
- Strong feeling of remoteness due to very rural, wooded character. A great extent of interconnected ancient woods, steep-sided gill woodlands, wooded heaths and shaws in generally small holdings with extensive archaeology and evidence of long-term management.
- Extensive broadleaved woodland cover with a very high proportion of ancient woodland with high forest, small woods and shaws, plus steep valleys with gill woodland.
- Small and medium-sized irregularly shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded shaws, predominantly of medieval origin and managed historically as a mosaic of small agricultural holdings typically used for livestock grazing.
- A predominantly grassland agricultural landscape grazed mainly with sheep and some cattle.
- There is a strong influence of the Wealden iron industry which started in Roman times, until coke fuel replaced wood and charcoal. There are features such as a notably high number of small hammer ponds surviving today.
- Ashdown Forest, in contrast to the more intimate green woods and pastures elsewhere, is a high, rolling and open heathland lying on the sandstone ridges to the west of the area.
- An essentially medieval landscape reflected in the patterns of settlement, fields and woodland.
- High-quality vernacular architecture with distinct local variation using local materials. Horsham Slate is used on mainly timber structures and timber-framed barns are a particularly notable Wealden characteristic feature of the High Weald.

The High Weald today

The High Weald is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers 78 per cent 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 a densely wooded landscape, although closer inspection reveals a patchwork of irregularly shaped fields and woods forming both open and enclosed landscapes along rolling ridges and within valleys. Along the ridgetop roads briefly glimpsed extensive views open up, stretching away over rolling ridges, punctuated by church spires far into the horizon, providing a contrast to the intimacy of the lush green valleys. Everything in the High Weald landscape is of human scale and its rich detail is best explored on foot, cycle or horseback along the myriad interconnecting paths and tracks.

Along the English Channel coast the High Weald gives way to eroded sandstone and clay sea cliffs around Fairlight and disappears under the urban areas of Bexhill and Hastings to the south-east. The eastern end of the High Weald is characterised by a series of broad, often flat-bottomed river valleys opening out towards the coastal levels of Romney Marsh between Tenterden and Fairlight.

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 in these sites is vulnerable to climate change. Potential physical damage comes from the popularity of rock climbing although this is mitigated by guidance and support from the climbing community.



Traditional farmsteads are often glimpsed through a densely-wooded landscape.

The drained landscape of the eastern High Weald river valleys is the result of a thousand years of modifications and exhibits few of the features associated with healthy natural river valleys. It is grazed by high numbers of sheep. Upriver the gill streams and upper reaches function better but remain vulnerable to pollution from agriculture and domestic waste treatment.

The ancient routeway network in the High Weald is substantially intact but the archaeology associated with it, such as multiple ditches and banks, is vulnerable to physical damage and the ancient, laid coppice stools edging many sunken routeways present a challenge for highway maintenance.

Flower-rich grassland persists along road verges and what was common land represents a substantial refuge for populations of rare species, but both are vulnerable to insensitive management.

Loosely arranged traditional farm buildings are extremely prominent in the NCA with their distinctive steep, clay-tiled hipped roofs. The numerous footpaths, as they have done for centuries, take walkers straight through the middle of historic farmsteads with the characteristic timber-framed and weatherboard buildings either side.



Ancient woodland gill with carpets of bluebells and wood anemones in Spring.

The distinctive pattern of dispersed historic settlement survives although the character of farmsteads has changed with the widespread conversion of traditional farm buildings to dwellings and the associated disappearance of agriculture and industry from farmsteads. The changing character of the farmsteads and surrounding landscape through gentrification ultimately also leads to a changing character of wildlife in terms of the assemblage of species present.

Typically, towns such as Tunbridge Wells and villages such as Goudhurst are sited on the ridges, with a dispersed pattern of historic farmsteads and hamlets covering the wooded valleys and field systems. Vernacular buildings have a strong local character influenced by a variation in locally available building materials, resulting in an abundance of weatherboard, brick, tile, and stone or rendered buildings. Local distinctiveness is marked by traditional vernacular building enhanced by stone church towers and spires located on ridges standing as major local landmarks. Within the forested ridges and ancient countryside, remnant hammer ponds constitute significant local features. These reservoirs have a distinctive branching or winding character as a result of their creation from small Wealden river valleys.

Woodland is extensive, covering 26 per cent of the area in a wide range of small wooded pits, linear gill woodland, farm woods and much larger wooded estates. Most of the woodland is ancient with carpets of bluebells and wood anemone in spring. Many of the woods were managed in the past as coppice with standard trees. The drier sandy soils were found suitable for pine plantations which persist within a patchwork of lowland heath and birch woodland. Wild flower meadows are now rare but the medieval pattern of small fields with sinuous edges surrounded by thick hedgerows and shaws (the narrow remains of woodlands cleared to form fields) survives and many fields

retain some permanent or semi-improved grassland, which in turn supports common invertebrates and small mammals. Local initiatives have increased the area of restored and created species-rich grassland but the decline of grazing threatens their long-term management. Buzzards and sparrow hawks are sighted frequently, but the loss of field barns and conversion of farmstead buildings have led to a decline in once-common barn owls.

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 landscapes. Despite it being relatively tranquil today, indications of the area's busy industrial past are everywhere, from the abundant timber-framed traditional buildings to the wharfs and harbours along the now-straightened rivers, and the charcoal hearths, pits and ponds of the iron industry are still visible in almost every ancient woodland. The High Weald is well known internationally as the location of the Winnie-the-Pooh stories set in Ashdown Forest, but many other artists and writers have been inspired by the landscape, including Rudyard Kipling and the Cranbrook Colony of painters. Visitors come from across the country and from abroad to experience the Battle of Hastings site, visit beautiful historic houses and gardens, and experience a unique mix of local cultural celebrations ranging from Sussex bonfire processions to Kent apple fairs.



River Brede flood plain.

The landscape through time

The High Weald forms the central part of a unique geological landform of sedimentary rocks, the Wealden anticline, which underpins the Greensand, Chalk and Wealden Clay to the north, south and west which surround the sandstones and clays which underlie the forested ridges of the High Weald. The Purbeck Beds which lie along the Battle Ridge form the oldest sediments, laid down in shallow lagoons at the end of the Jurassic Period (142 million years ago). Iron-rich clays and sandstones followed as the landscape changed to one of flood plains and rivers. The area gradually sank below the sea and around 75 million years ago the great uplift began, followed by compression which folded and faulted the strata. Subsequent weathering has cut through the strata, exposing the layers as sandstone ridges and clay valleys. The array of soils arising has shaped the Weald's social and economic history.

The central sandstone core is strongly dissected by many major rivers, the headwaters of which have cut numerous steep-sided valleys or gills, several of which are heavily wooded. The High Weald is underlain by the Hastings Beds which comprise interbedded sands, soft sandstones and clays which give rise to the high, broken ground. Although not exceeding 240 m above ordnance datum, the High Weald is a hilly country of ridges and valleys. Numerous major ridges run mainly east to west, for example the Ashdown Forest Ridge and the Battle Ridge. North-west of Battle, Jurassic Purbeck Limestone contains gypsum beds which continue to be mined.

With the rise in temperatures at the beginning of the post-glacial period, arboreal species expanded their range across the continuous land link to Europe, with birch and Scots pine being followed by oak, elm, alder, ash and lime.



Outflow from a hammer pond originating from the iron-age industry.

By the Anglo-Saxon period the natural woodland which had developed in the warmer post-glacial period had already been modified by the hunter-gatherers of the Mesolithic people. Some woodland clearance was under way in the Neolithic Period with bronze-age barrows indicating active communities in Ashdown Forest and the Roman interest in iron smelting which is suggested led to woodland clearance, which regenerated after their departure. However, it was the medieval practice of transhumance, coupled with the exploitation of the valuable resources of the forest, which substantially transformed the largely uninhabited Weald into the settled landscape seen today.

Clearance of the Wealden forest on a significant scale did not begin until the 9th century, reaching a peak in the 13th and 14th centuries. From the mid-14th century until the First World War, the High Weald was relatively unchanged and even today many of the traditional field patterns and woodlands associated with the essentially medieval landscape still remain.

The High Weald lies within one of the largest tracts of woodland in early medieval England. Linked place names such as -den, -fold and -ing as; distinctive curved boundaries aligned in a similar direction to roads and tracks; and the relationship between manors and their Wealden outliers provide us with tantalising clues to the process of early settlement in the area. By the 15th century the High Weald's characteristic dispersed settlement pattern based on small-scale family holdings was well established. Few farmsteads worked the land from villages, which mostly developed later as service centres founded on trade and craft.

Medieval farmers shaped the present-day landscape of small fields and scattered farmsteads, with woodland and shaws left among them. Gill woodlands on steep valleys were left unfelled due to the difficulty in extracting timber gill woodland, which made them more ecologically significant as a result. The river valleys and the higher, drier ridgetops were important lines of communication on which early settlements were located. The medieval pattern of dispersed farms, small hamlets and villages is associated with the practice of cultivating small parcels of land known as 'assarting' – which gave rise to the pattern of ad hoc rural settlement. These early, isolated agricultural settlements later evolved into the characteristic High Weald ridgetop villages such as Mayfield, Wadhurst and Hawkhurst.

The Weald was the premier iron-producing district during the Roman occupation and again in the 16th century, based on the blast furnace to make castings

of cannon and facilitated by the expertise of immigrant French workers. Interconnecting chains of leats, dams and hammer ponds were constructed to provide a sufficient head of water for the forges. These consisted of a stairway of ponds created by damming a gill and produced a head of water which worked the bellows for smelting and the forges' tilt hammers.

From the 15th to the 17th century, the High Weald was the foundry of England. Extensive woodland management in the form of coppicing (for charcoal for the forges) accompanied the industry and little clearance was undertaken. The wealth generated by the iron industry funded grand houses and parklands, many of which still stand today, such as Gravetye and Great Shoesmiths.

Heathland was historically more widespread in the High Weald than it is today. Cessation of grazing together with new conifer planting has led to the loss of open heathland, the only sizeable heathland remaining in the High Weald being Ashdown Forest, a former Royal Hunting Forest. Open heathland was at least partly the result of unsustainable management, effectively where poorer populations in society would make use of a range of heathland products. This included using the heathland turf as fuel due to more expensive woodland being used by the iron industry. Since then the heaths and woods have been relatively fluid on those acid soils.

The small size of Wealden holdings, the importance of crafts to supplement the income from agriculture on poor soils, and the high economic value of timber for boats and buildings and in the iron, glass and cloth industries explain the continuing survival of more woodland in the High Weald than anywhere else in the country. Woods were enclosed and managed as coppice with standards producing wood fuel and construction timber. Large, widely spaced trees in hedgerows and parklands produced the curved and crooked boughs required for ship-building.

In the 17th and 18th centuries hop growing expanded, as did the extent of chestnut coppice for hop poles. For 500 years the rivers of the eastern High Weald were an important link for trade and war between the wooded interior and the seaports of Winchelsea and Rye. Wooden barges were still moving timber and goods from the interior of the High Weald until the end of the 19th century when the last barge, Primrose, was built.

As early as 1825 William Cobbett commented on the artificial landscapes of the new gentry spreading out of London, and the arrival of the railways in the mid-19th century brought further building and the growth of country houses and estates. The railways also made a significant impact on agriculture, opening up the London market for hops, fruit and poultry.

Until the 1950s the Weald was one of the slowest-changing regions in Britain. For 700 years prior to this time agriculture, the field shapes and sizes and the pattern of surrounding woodland and hedgerows hardly changed. Since then farming and forestry, always difficult on the poor soils, have been pushed further to the economic margins by soaring land values with significant areas of land now devoid of productive agriculture. The majority of farmsteads are now residential hamlets and the decline in grazing animals and the industry associated with them is a major threat to the long-term management of species-rich grassland and heathland. Commercial coppicing has declined drastically although the Weald's woodmanship has been kept alive and may enjoy a period of revival with the increasing demand for wood fuel and renewable timber supplies.



View of traditional oast houses in Roberts Bridge.

Ecosystem services

The High Weald NCA provides a wide range of benefits to society. Each is derived from the attributes and processes (both natural and cultural features) within the area. These benefits are known collectively as 'ecosystem services'. The predominant services are summarised below. Further information on ecosystem services provided in the High Weald NCA is contained in the 'Analysis' section of this document.

Provisioning services (food, fibre and water supply)

- **Food provision:** This NCA produces some cereals, vegetables, soft fruit, lamb, game and some beef for local consumption. Despite growing interest in specialist and local breeds, numbers of livestock continue to decline.
- **Timber provision:** Despite the High Weald's long history of woodmanship, most timber is considered to be of low quality and only 15 per cent of the area of woodland is actively managed. . The area continues to provide oak for local construction, chestnut for fencing and other species such as ash and hornbeam for wood fuel.
- **Water availability:** The largest reservoir in south-east England, Bewl Water, is situated in this NCA, providing drinking water to Maidstone and the Medway Towns. Local villages and Hastings are supplied from Darwell Reservoir. Water is also supplied from aquifers in the Ashdown Beds.

Regulating services (water purification, air quality maintenance and climate regulation)

- **Climate regulation:** The high level of woodland cover and large extent of undisturbed soils under ancient woodlands and permanent grassland mean that the High Weald NCA has a significant role to play in carbon storage and

sequestration and subsequently climate regulation, which could be further enhanced by using more timber than other materials in construction.

- **Regulating soil erosion:** More than two-thirds of the NCA is susceptible to some form of soil erosion. The main soil type (loamy/clayey soils with impeded drainage, covering 62 per cent of the NCA) is prone to compaction and capping and slaking, leading to increased risk of soil erosion by surface water run-off, especially on steeper slopes. The freely draining, slightly acid loamy soils (4 per cent of the area) are at enhanced risk of soil erosion on moderately or steeply sloping ground exacerbated where organic matter levels are low and where soils are compacted.



Cattle grazing on parkland.

- **Regulating soil quality:** Soils of the High Weald are highly variable over short distances, making it easy to locally overdose with inorganic fertiliser and leading to damage through poaching or using heavy machinery at inappropriate times.
- **Regulating water flow:** There is a risk of fluvial flooding along the lower reaches of the rivers, but important for the High Weald NCA is appropriate management of the numerous gill streams and upper and middle reaches of rivers to mitigate flooding further downstream in adjacent NCAs. There are further opportunities in the valley bottoms to look at pushing flood flows out of eroded water courses onto grassland and woodland to help slow flood flows.

Cultural services (inspiration, education and wellbeing)

- **Sense of place/inspiration:** The harmonious mosaic of small mixed farms and woodland that makes up the High Weald is now considered to be a quintessentially English landscape, yet for many years, until the advent of turnpikes, it was better known for the poor state of its roads and less advanced agriculture. Its mix of wilder elements, reminiscent of the former forest, surviving amid a beautiful, small-scale landscape shaped by man has inspired many people such as the architect Norman Shaw, the artist William Hunt, William Robinson, who pioneered the English natural garden style, and writers such as Rudyard Kipling and AA Milne.
- **Sense of history:** As one of the best preserved medieval landscapes in north-west Europe, the High Weald has a strong sense of history, and this is enhanced by the many individual features such as Battle Abbey, numerous churches and chapels, an abundance of traditional buildings and the remains of the former iron industry. The High Weald is extraordinarily well documented through old maps but these and the great extent of undisturbed ancient

woodland which has preserved features from many different time periods still remain relatively unstudied.

- **Tranquillity:** Buildings, tracks and the remains of industrial activities concealed by the High Weald's extensive woodland cover and overgrown hedgerows make the experience of this landscape today feel relatively tranquil, especially due to the close proximity of London and the busy coastal towns.
- **Recreation:** There is a dense network of public rights of way supplemented by many areas of accessible natural greenspace, mostly provided by the Forestry Commission and bodies such as the National Trust and the Woodland Trust. Ashdown Forest provides an extensive area of open access at the heart of the High Weald. Outdoor sports are well catered for with off-road cycling at Bedgebury Forest, watersports at Bewl Water and soft rock climbing around Tunbridge Wells.
- **Biodiversity:** The human scale of the High Weald's landscape allows everyone to experience a variety of habitats and wildlife at first hand. The sheer quantity of semi-natural habitat such as ancient woodland is not adequately represented in the extent of Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Although the High Weald's cold soils may not support the biodiversity hotspots found on the nearby Downs, its ancient countryside and small, mixed farms continue to be home to resilient populations and a high biomass of typical lowland species.
- **Geodiversity:** The High Weald's sandrock outcrops are important geological features and support nationally rare ferns, mosses, liverworts and lichens, a living legacy from the climate most of Britain experienced around 4000 bc. The 6-kilometre section of eroding sea cliffs at Hastings provides one of the finest exposures of Lower Cretaceous, Wealden sediments in Britain. Their fossil plant material and non-marine animal fossils are some of the best examples of their type worldwide.

Appendix 8 – West Sussex Landscape Character Assessment HW1

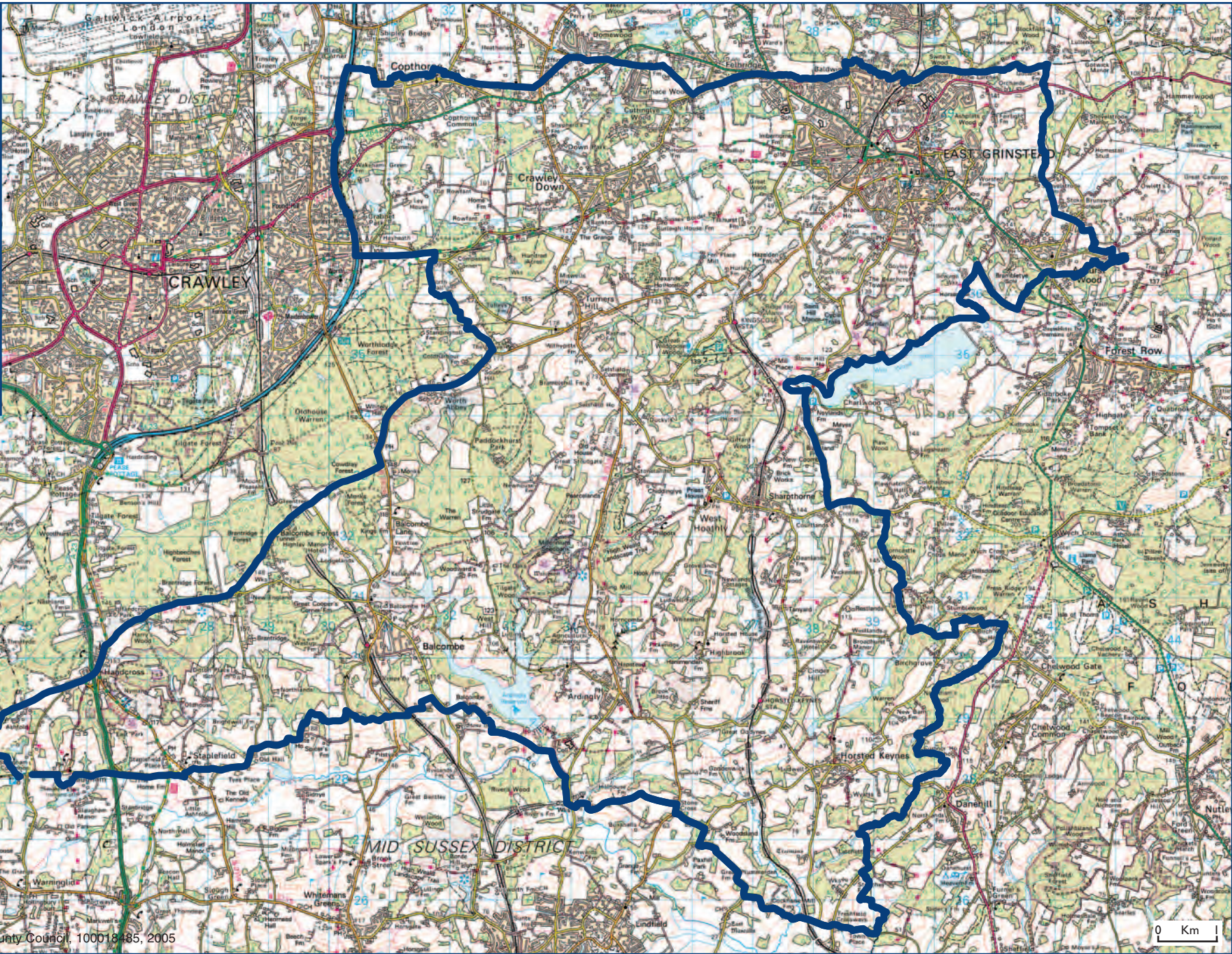
Overall Character

The High Weald Forest Ridge within West Sussex. Numerous gill streams have carved out a landscape of twisting ridges and secluded valleys. The ancient, densely wooded landscape of the High Weald is seen to perfection in the area. Includes the township of East Grinstead.

Key Characteristics

- 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 Rivers Eden, Medway, Ouse and Mole.
- Long views over the Low Weald to the downs, particularly from the high Forest Ridge.
- Includes major reservoir at Ardingly and adjoins Weir Wood Reservoir.
- Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields, some larger fields and small pockets of remnant heathland.

- Pockets of rich biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.
- Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.
- Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hilltops and high ground, the principal settlements East Grinstead and 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.
- Mill sites, hammer ponds and numerous fish and ornamental lakes and ponds.
- 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.
- Visitor attractions include Wakehurst Place, Nymans Gardens, the South of England Showground and the Bluebell Line Steam Railway.



Sheet HWI

High Weald

High Weald

The area covered by the Sheet includes:
The High Weald (Area 6) and High Weald Plateau (Area 7)
Landscape Character Areas in Mid Sussex District.



Historic Features

- Landscape essentially medieval in origin.
- Persistence of ancient woodland.
- Philpots Camp Iron Age hillfort.
- Line of Roman road.
- Ancient routeways and droves.
- Medieval moats.
- Historic farmsteads and parkscapes.
- Wealden iron hammerponds, pond bays, furnace and mill sites.

Biodiversity

- Diverse natural history.
- Species-rich gill and semi-natural woodlands.
- Geologically important rock exposures.
- Nationally-rare sandrock plant communities in gills.
- Remnant and dormant wet and dry acid heathland.
- Species-rich meadows and hedgerows.
- Reservoirs, hammerponds, field, fish and ornamental ponds.

Change - Key Issues

- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Continuing extensive planting of conifers in some areas.
- Spread of invasive introduced species, particularly rhododendron and neglect of some parkland landscapes.
- Reduction of heathland to a few pockets due to cessation of grazing management and subsequent woodland invasion and woodland re-planting.
- 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 pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise in parts of the area, especially along the Crawley–East Grinstead 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.

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, droveways, 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.



Parkscape, Staplefield



High Weald, Rowhill, Balcombe

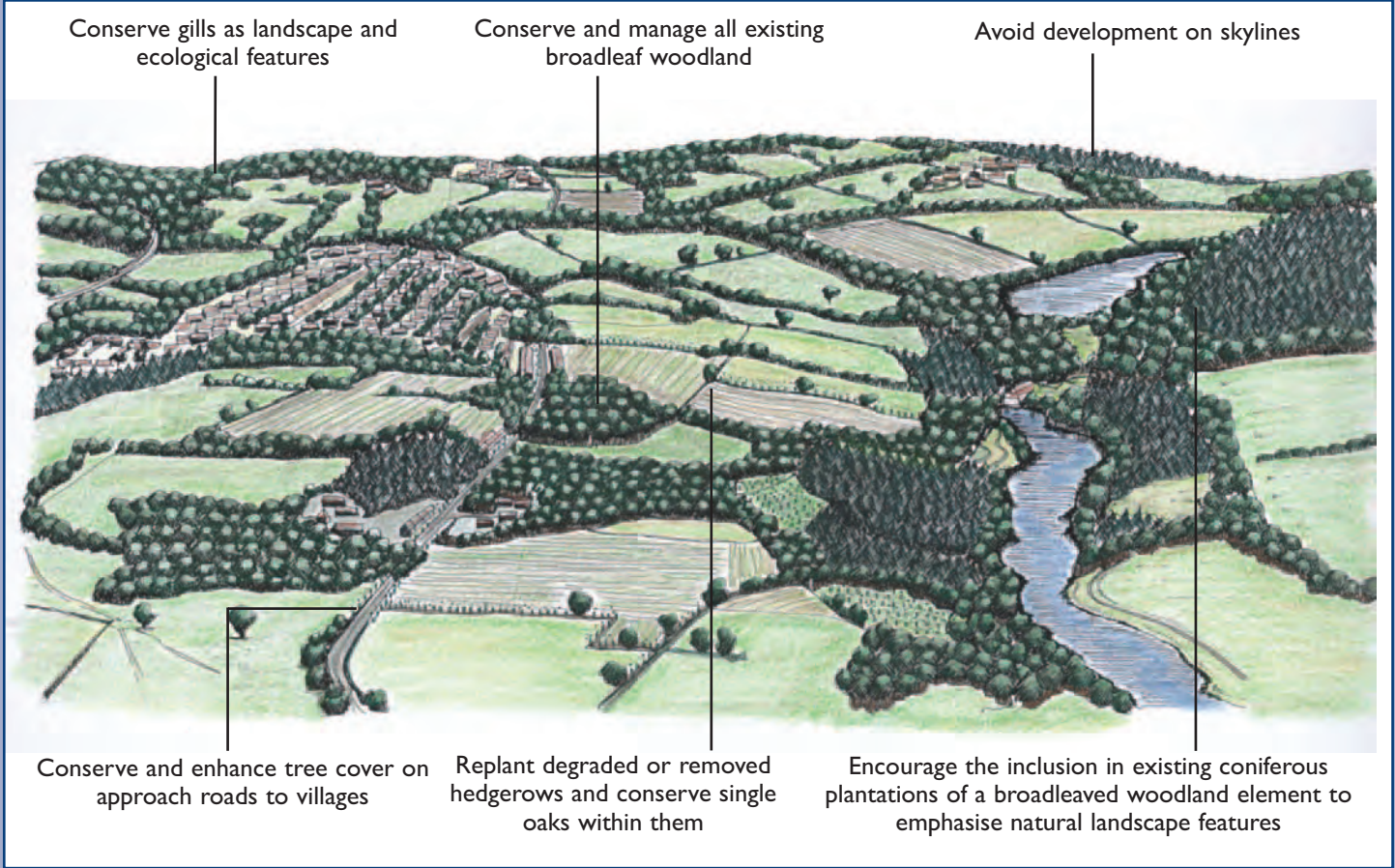


Pasture, Paddockhurst



High Weald at Turners Hill

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 particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new broad-leaved woodlands, the appropriate management of existing woodland, and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover in woodlands and on heathland.
- Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns.
- Reduce the impact of forestry where possible by encouraging sensitive forestry practice including small-scale felling rotation, and incorporating mixed species.
- Plant trees in drifts and avoid straight lines running across the grain of the land.
- Increase 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 sandrock crags, including wet woodland, and protect the nationally-rare sandrock plant and other communities associated with them.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Conserve and manage remnant open heathland by preventing the encroachment of scrub and create new, interconnected heathlands.
- Conserve species-rich meadows.
- Seek to protect the tranquil and historic character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Continue to maintain the natural setting of the Worth Way.
- 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.

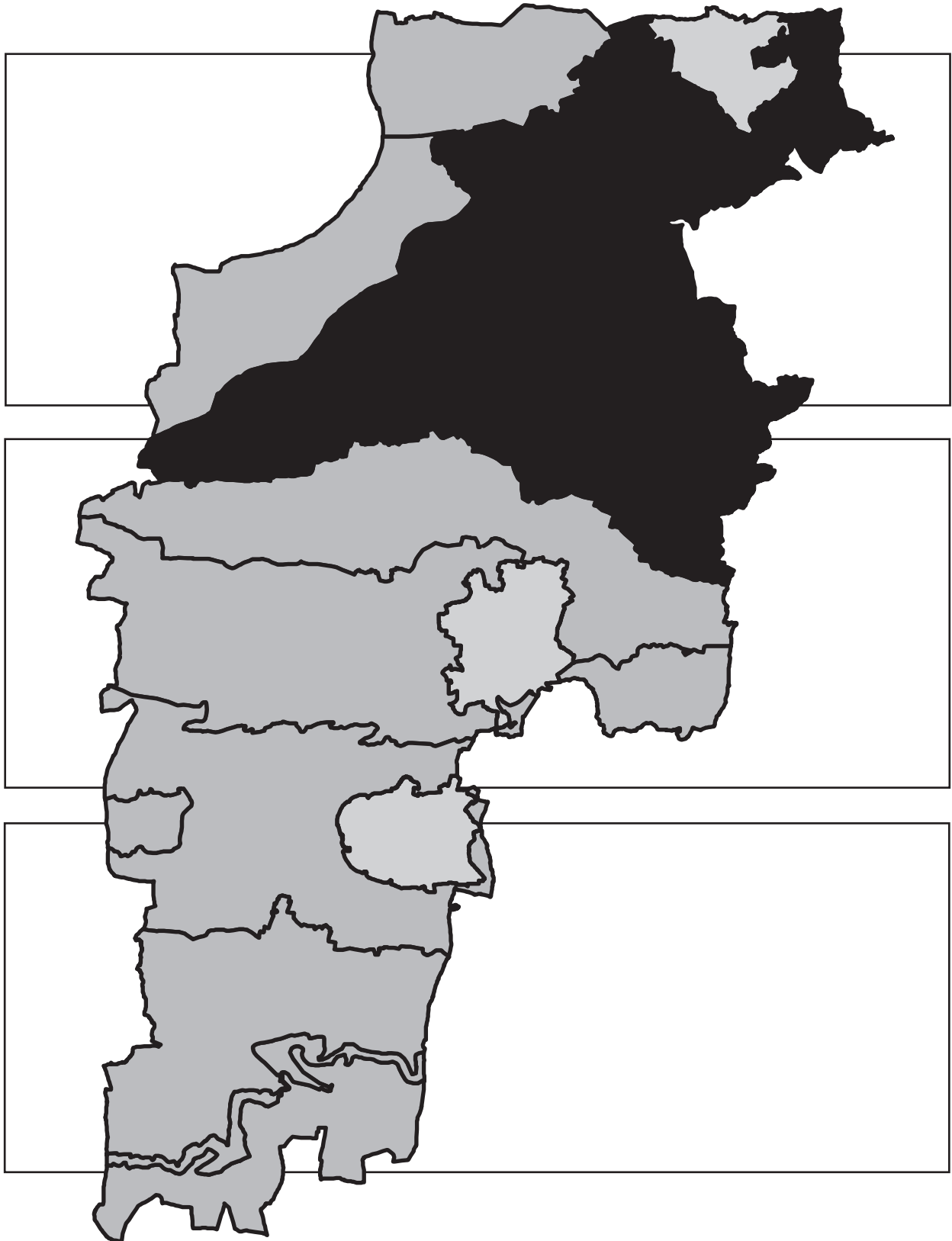
The guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

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

Appendix 9 – Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment- Landscape Character Area 6- High Weald Appendix

Landscape Character Area 6

High Weald



High Weald

CHARACTERISATION

Summary and key characteristics

The High Weald Forest Ridge. Numerous gill streams have carved out a landscape of twisting ridges and secluded valleys. The ancient, densely-wooded landscape of the High Weald is seen to perfection in the area. Includes the township of East Grinstead.

- Wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity, perceived as attractive, locally secluded and tranquil.
- Complex sandstone and clay hilly landscape of ridges and secluded valleys centred on the western end of Forest Ridge of the High Weald plateau deeply cut by numerous gill streams and with sandrock crags.
- Headwater drainage of the River Medway originates here, the southern part of the area drained by the deep, sinuous gill streams running to the River Ouse.
- Long views over the Low Weald to the downs, particularly from the high Forest Ridge.
- Includes major reservoir at Ardingly and adjoins Weir Wood Reservoir.
- Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, including some larger woods and a dense network of hedgerows and shaws, creates a sense of enclosure, the valleys damp, deep and secluded.
- Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields, some larger fields and small pockets of remnant heathland.
- Pockets of rich biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.
- Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.
- Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hilltops and high ground, the principal settlements East Grinstead and 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.
- Mill sites, hammer ponds and numerous fish and ornamental lakes and ponds.
- 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.
- Visitor attractions include Wakehurst Place, Nymans Gardens, the South of England Showground and the Bluebell Line Steam Railway.

Description and experience of the landscape

9.1 This, the largest Landscape Character Area in Mid Sussex, contains the highest ground in the High Weald within West Sussex and lies wholly within the District and the *High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* (AONB). It borders on Surrey to the north at East Grinstead and East Sussex to the east. To the north-west lie the

afforested ridges and plateaux of the Worth forests. The area is bounded strongly to the south by the broad, west-east trending line of the Ouse Valley.

9.2 The geology of the area is complex and locally very variable. It is based on an alternating pattern of heavily faulted, slightly inclined thin sandstone and clay beds which are exposed successively in the deeper valleys. In a few places, local outcrops of sandrock form low, dramatic crags, with many continuous rock exposures edging the valley sides and in the deeper lanes. The underlying rocks contain the entire geological sequence of the High Weald Hastings Beds. The majority of the area comprises mainly Upper and Lower Tunbridge Wells Sandstone and clays and Grinstead Clay in alternating sequences. More localised beds include Cuckfield Stone on higher ground to the south and west and Ardingly Sandstone within the valley systems and to the south and east of Turners Hill.

9.3 Containing ironstone, the Wadhurst Clay underlying these deposits outcrops in the easterly valley bottoms, making the going on trackways very difficult in places, for the clay can be thick, wet and clinging. The Wadhurst Clay comprises isolated, faulted out portions south of Turners Hill and forms a thick belt running south from Sharpthorne nearly to Horsted Keynes. To the east of this belt lie the sandy Ashdown Beds, so-called because of their dominance as an infertile, heathy rock within the Forest. Finally, there are some scattered deposits of head.

9.4 The backbone of the High Weald is known as the Forest Ridge, a crest of uniformly high ground running roughly east to west, from Cranbrook in Kent to Horsham, its highest point at Crowborough Beacon in East Sussex (nearly 250 metres above sea level). The Forest Ridge in Mid Sussex runs north westwards from along a high if indistinct ridge line (in places over 170 metres above sea level) through West Hoathly and Selsfield Common to Turners Hill.

9.5 From this central ridge spring numerous gill (ghyll) streams. These incised streams are the defining landform, dissecting the landscape deeply, carving it into an interlocking array of twisting ridges and secluded, steep-sided narrow valleys. Whilst the pattern of drainage is complex, there are some main pointers to follow. To the north of the Forest Ridge, centred on the boundary with East Sussex, a group of short streams falls to the Medway and Weir Wood Reservoir. To the north lies East Grinstead, the numerous streams draining the southern flanks of the town also emptying into the Medway and the reservoir. The southern slopes of the Forest Ridge are much longer, stretching over a few miles to the River Ouse, which drains them. The biggest, deepest streams include Cockhaise Brook and its tributary streams including the Chiddingly valley; the two valleys flanking Horsted Keynes; the deep valley system below Balcombe containing Ardingly Reservoir; and the western streams draining the southern flanks of the High Weald forests. Many of the streams contain hammer, ornamental or fishponds, the last notably in the valleys flanking Birchgrove north east of Horsted Keynes.

9.6 A densely wooded landscape clothes this intricate terrain. The woodlands are predominantly deciduous but contain much mixed woodland and coniferous planting (as well as exotic tree species associated with designed landscapes). There is a high incidence of ancient woodland, the core of the historic High Weald landscape. Many woods are small to medium-sized and dominate the deep gills, notably in the Ardingly, Chiddingly and Birchgrove valleys. There is a particular concentration of valley woodlands centred on Gravetye Manor and a network of woods throughout the gills flanking East Grinstead. To the west, the pattern shifts towards large woodlands and plantations more akin to the Worth forests, draped over ridge and valley, for instance at Paddockhurst Park. Between Balcombe and Handcross is a large network of woodlands based on the upper Ouse streams.

9.7 Once closely associated with the woodland pattern, most of the formerly grazed heathland in the area has disappeared, much of it covered by scrub and

new or naturally regenerating woodland. The small pockets of heathland that remain are a valuable wildlife and landscape resource.

9.8 Regular fields extend north into the High Weald but become far more intermixed with a landscape of small, irregular-shaped fields predominantly used for livestock grazing. These are the characteristic groups of historic assart pastures, often associated with pockets of ancient semi-natural woodland. Between Crawley Down and East Grinstead and in some places elsewhere there has been extensive boundary removal and field reorganisation due to agricultural intensification.

9.8 Other than at Handcross and around East Grinstead, there are no major roads in the area although the B roads and some of the lanes are busy with traffic. The area contains a dense network of twisting lanes, droveways and tracks following the sinuous terrain. The lanes are generally narrow, deep in places, some in substantial cuttings with exposed rock faces where centuries of use have progressively cut down into the soft clays and sandstones. The *High Weald Landscape Trail* in Mid Sussex follows many of these routes.

9.9 On the northern border of the County, the area encompasses the large township of East Grinstead and a portion of the A22 Trunk Road with associated ribbon development. As in the Copthorne and Crawley Down area to the east, the perceived naturalness of the rural landscape is coming under increasing pressure from development and traffic movement along the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor. Elsewhere in the area, there has been significant suburban development at Balcombe and Ashurst Wood and continuing pressures for development in the countryside.

9.10 The area is crossed north to south in the extreme west by the A23 Trunk Road and by the London to Brighton Railway Line. In the east, the Bluebell Line Steam Railway crosses the area north to south, from Kingscote to Sheffield Park in East Sussex. Part of the former Culver Junction (Lewes) to East Grinstead Railway Line given Royal Approval in 1877, the railway was known originally as the 'Sheffield Park Line'. References to it as 'The Bluebell Line' first appeared in 1958 when the railway preservation group was being formed, doubtless a reference to the bluebell woods along the route.

9.11 Parkscapes associated with large houses are characteristic. The area contains two large reservoirs, at Ardingly and Weir Wood, popular for sailing, angling and wildlife. The permanent South of England Show Ground is located at Ardingly, which includes a large area of fenced paddock grassland.

Biodiversity

9.12 Based on the alternation of sandy and clay soils and the particular conditions in the deep gills, the natural history of the area is diverse. The richer sites (albeit restricted in extent) are centred on the strong pattern of gills and woodlands, a few unimproved pastures and freshwater marshes, the reservoirs, and numerous valley ponds including field ponds and their margins.

9.13 The character of the woodlands is varied and includes a range of semi-natural woodland types, many formerly managed as 'coppice-with-standards' (. Dominant forms include oak-ash and hornbeam woodlands with understorey species such as hazel, as well as stands of beech, sweet chestnut coppices and broadleaved, mixed and coniferous plantation. The reduction of acid heathland to a few pockets scattered through the area is due to the cessation of grazing management, subsequent scrub and woodland invasion and woodland re-planting.

9.14 The area contains eight Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), well over half those in the District. These include important geological deposits, water areas,

sandrock crags, and wet woodlands and sandrock communities in the wooded gills. These last are particularly important, containing a warm, moist micro-climate which allows plants to flourish (notably ferns, mosses and liverworts) which are more typically restricted to the west of the country, as well as supporting a diverse breeding community of breeding birds.

9.15 The area also contains over 20 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance - by far the largest number for any Landscape Character Area in the District. These illustrate the great variety of habitats in the area, ranging from woodland and reservoir sites to smaller areas centred on mill and fish ponds (marginal plants, and birds), sandrock crags, freshwater marsh and unimproved meadows. The District Council manages the SNCI at *Ashplats Wood* (East Grinstead) as a nature reserve.

Historic character

9.16 The Forest Ridge in the area forms part of the route of an ancient, pre-Roman ridgeway. It follows the high point of the ridge westwards from Ashdown Forest, through West Hoathly to Turners Hill and then via Peas Pottage to Horsham. Associated with the routeways, the ancient sites in the Low and High Weald are far fewer than on the downs, although the Iron Age hillfort at Philpots Camp near West Hoathly is an important example of a Wealden hillfort. There is limited evidence of Roman settlement in the area, although the line of the London to Brighton Roman Road crosses the area from north to south, just to the east of Ardingly.

9.17 The colonizing of the High Weald through transhumance (the seasonal movement of stock between woodland and downland) and later, assarting, created a pattern of small-scale holdings, with an absence of communal farming of large open fields. The generally low fertility of the Hastings Beds and the poverty of its soils contributed to this pattern. In addition, the intractable nature of the steep gills for any other use than woodland meant that woodland persisted as a resource through succeeding economies. Within the woodlands, although sweet chestnut appears to have expanded later with the hop industry, the dominance of oak with hornbeam, other species such as ash, and understorey tree species (species below the main woodland canopy) such as hazel, were established through ironworking and pannage (the right of pasturing pigs and other stock in woodlands).

9.18 Given that the area was enclosed before the post-medieval period of enclosure, we have therefore inherited a quantity, holding size and structure of woodlands in characteristic locations derived essentially from the medieval woodland pattern of the early 14th Century. Elements of the post-medieval landscape have survived also, centred on formal enclosures of woodlands, commons and possibly the re-organisation of assart fields.

9.19 The dense pattern of narrow lanes and tracks in the area is also typical of the High Weald, representing a visible survival of ancient routes (*droves* or *droveways*) used for transhumance. Together with the prehistoric ridge-top routes, the droves were one of the most characteristic features of the High Weald in the 14th Century and remain so to this day. The landscape also reveals a legacy of slag heaps, hammer and furnace ponds, some furnace remains and roads associated with the Wealden iron industry as well as the numerous mills which were once common throughout the country.

Historic parks and gardens

9.20 Seven of the nine Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in the District lie within the area including a further 22 non-registered mainly post-medieval parkscapes identified by the local authorities.

9.21 *Brockhurst* lies to the east of East Grinstead. By 1875, Ashurst Lodge was situated within substantial pleasure grounds, the name of the house changing to Brockhurst by 1899. The garden comprises a rock garden, gardens and pleasure grounds laid out by Frederick J. Hanbury between 1908 and 1935 and for which the site was famous. The gardens sit in the remnants of a park developed between 1875 and 1899 incorporating the easternmost of the string of four ponds to the west of the house.

9.22 *Gravetye Manor* to the north of West Hoathly comprises fine formal and informal gardens, set within a landscape of woodlands and lakes, which were laid out between 1885 and 1935 by the horticultural writer and gardener William Robinson and which survive largely intact. The manor house at Gravetye was built in 1598 by a local iron-master, Richard Infield (see para 9.34 below). William Robinson purchased it in 1884, restoring the house and laying out the present gardens. Today, the woodland is held in trust and managed on behalf of the Forestry Commission. The house and grounds are run as a country house hotel.

9.23 *High Beeches* near Handcross on the edge of the Worth forests originated as an early 19th Century villa when, in 1849, the estate was purchased by Sir Robert Loder. He enlarged the house and laid out extensive formal gardens immediately around it. The present 20th Century plantsman's and collector's garden was designed and planted by Colonel James Loder between 1906 and 1966 (the mansion was destroyed by fire in 1942). The gardens are open to the public.

9.24 *Nymans* adjoins the south-eastern edge of Handcross. It probably took its name from the family of Robert le Nynweman or Nyman in the early 14th Century. It is today a splendid garden with associated striking parkland, the downland views magnificent. Moreover, it is centred on a remarkably romantic modern ruin (see para 9.32 below). Owned by the National Trust, Nymans is a principal visitor attraction in the District.

9.25 *Stonehurst*, a 'new' country house and gardens near West Hoathly and directly east of Wakehurst Place, was laid out on the site of an earlier farmhouse, Stone Farm. Part of this earlier estate included two mills, Corn Mill and Stone Mill which were retained, together with the Mill Cottages set next to the mill ponds. Built around 1910, the brick and weather-tiled house is substantial. Stonehurst sits on the edge of the deep Cob Brook valley, the pleasure grounds (including ornamental ponds, pools and waterfalls) and estate extending over 80 hectares of farmland and deep gill woodland centred on Chiddinglye Woods. The valleys contain extensive sandrock crags including the famous 'Great-on-Little' Stone remarked on by Cobbett (1835) (see para A5.11 in **Appendix 5**). Much of the valley is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (see para 9.14 above).

9.25 *Wakehurst Place* today is an eminent National Trust property comprising gardens, extensive grounds and a substantial visitor centre. It is the home of Kew Gardens in Sussex and houses the Millennium Seed Bank. The manor of Wakehurst probably dates from the mid-13th Century, when its connection with the Wakehurst family was established. It passed by marriage to the Culpepers in 1454 with whom it remained for 200 years, Sir Edward Culpeper building the present house in 1590 (see para 9.34 below). In 1903 the estate was sold to Gerald Loder, younger brother of Sir Edmund Loder of Leonardslee and later created first Lord Wakehurst, who established many of the plant collections, particularly those from eastern Asia and the southern continents. The estate was eventually bequeathed to the National Trust. In 1984, management passed to the Board of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew which, in conjunction with the Trust, manages the gardens and estate.

9.26 The house lies on the eastern edge of the deep Ardingly Brook gill woodland valleys and sandrock crags, above a long, narrow reach of Ardingly Reservoir. It comprises 40 hectares of ornamental gardens, parkland, and mixed native and

ornamental woodland with adjacent fenced farmland. The parkland lies east of the mansion and gardens. It is open in character with an intermittent scatter of trees of varying ages surviving from the pattern of clumps shown on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1874 and 1909.

Settlement form and local distinctiveness

9.27 Settlement in the High Weald is typically dispersed, based on an historic pattern of numerous farmsteads within discrete or enclosed small-scale holdings, often set on high ridges, hilltops and high ground. By the 14th century, nucleated villages had emerged, their dominance as settlements progressively emerging in the modern era. Sometimes, development has resulted from local industries such as clay winning and quarrying. The principal villages are Ardingly, Ashurst Wood, Balcombe, Handcross, Horsted Keynes, Sharpthorne, Turners Hill, and West Hoathly. Slaugham and Staplefield lie on the edge of the Ouse Valley. Since the turn of the century, and particularly after the Second World War, all of the villages have been expanded to some degree by suburban development, notably at Balcombe and Ashurst Wood.

9.28 Settlement in the area was therefore unobtrusive and scanty until the 19th Century, when the High Weald became a favourite area for the extension in the Victorian and Edwardian eras of 'London into Sussex', characterised by widespread, often lavish, house development, the hilly woodland settings highly prized. The new parkscapes developed as a setting for these houses have bequeathed a legacy of exotic trees and shrubs which are today locally dominant in the landscape. Indeed, the spread of exotic species originally introduced into these parkscapes, particularly rhododendron, have invaded many woodlands, where the 'new' species have supplanted the old. High, clipped roadside rhododendron 'hedgerows' are locally characteristic in parts of the area, for instance, on the road between Turners Hill and Handcross.

9.29 The style of rural historic building in the area is diverse. There are good examples of timber-framed buildings including "Wealden" houses (variants of the medieval hall house), many formerly owned by ironmasters, most examples of which lie in East Sussex and Kent (it will be remembered that the area of Mid Sussex District was included in East Sussex before 1975). However, whilst timber-framed properties are highly characteristic of the High Weald, they are not visible enough in the area to constitute a dominant visual style, especially as so many of the original frames have been covered by later facades.

9.30 The so-called Wealden stone from the Ardingly Sandstone and Cuckfield Stone members of the Hastings Beds is an important and substantial fine-grained building stone, especially the deposits won in the East Grinstead area. The stone is very variable in colour depending on its origin, weathering and lichen cover. The stone is markedly grey in some buildings, biscuit-coloured or fawn in others, sometimes iron-caked or rust-stained from iron deposits. However, although locally very distinctive, the use of the stone is not dominant in the area. It tends to be used as ashlar (cut and dressed stone) for more substantial and expensive buildings, rarely used as rough or random stone. Notable concentrations of the use of this stone include at Horsted Keynes and, in delightful profusion, at Slaugham, the various buildings in the village illustrating well the subtlety and variability of colour and texture of the weathered stone. The stone is rarely quarried now.

9.31 The other local stone used occasionally in the area is Horsham Stone, a flaggy, fine-grained sandstone from the Weald Clay, so-called because the beds occur principally around Horsham. The massive sandstone slabs, often marked with wave formations, are used mainly for roofing and sometimes for paving, and attract a rich patina of mosses and lichens. Apart from some timber-framed houses, more characteristic of the area is the predominance of locally diverse reddish brick and

patterned, hung tiles, and some weather boarding typical of the more easterly parts of the High Weald, notably in East Sussex and Kent.

9.32 The development of numerous large houses and grounds in the area is a testament to the discovery of the High Weald as a dramatic setting for fine properties. Of the many modern houses, perhaps the finest is *Standen* (National Trust) south of East Grinstead, one of Philip Webb's best houses, built 1891-94. The most remarkable must be the ruined *Nymans*, a convincing evocation of an ancient major manor house, although actually built 1925-30 in Somerset stone in the Cotswold Manor House style. Much of the house was destroyed by fire in 1947. A fine example of an earlier 19th century house, *Saint Hill*, lies close to Standen. The High Weald (as with many other areas in West Sussex) was also a popular location for schools. A notable example in the area is *Ardingly College*, a large independent school building in brick, founded in 1858 by Nathaniel Woodward, who also established Lancing and Hurstpierpoint Colleges. *Ditton Place* – a large house of 1904 with stone and brick dressings – is also a school.

9.33 *Worth Priory of our Lady Help of Christians* lies in a fine position in the Worth forests, on the Forest ridge, looking down on Paddockhurst Park. The principal building is *Paddockhurst*, a vast imitation Tudor mansion of 1869-72 designed by the architect Salvin. Other houses of interest from the Victorian era include the stone-built *Chiddinglye* (1866) and the Tudor-style *Stonelands* (1887).

9.34 Important historic houses and grounds include *Wakehurst Place* at Ardingly, originally an ironmaster's house, with original parts dating from 1590. *Gravetye Manor* is a late Elizabethan iron-master's house near West Hoathly and *Gullege*, a fine Jacobean house, lies in open country close to the western edge of East Grinstead.

9.35 Other houses of interest include *Selsfield House* with an early Georgian stone front and *Battens* at Highbrook, a house with two medieval wings, the earliest parts dating from the late 13th Century or early 14th Century. Near Horsted Keynes, *Treemans* has much Tudor brickwork and some timber framing, with later additions in Wealden stone. The village streetscape of West Hoathly is small and compact with varied materials including Wealden stone, brick, ruddy tile hanging and weatherboarding. The stone front of the *Manor House* faces the church and to the south lies *Priest's House*, timber-framed, of the 15th Century.

9.36 The eight older churches in the area are generally typical of the High Weald including four with shingled spires and four with towers:

- *St Peter* at Ardingly, outside the village-, low tower, in Wealden stone with a 14th Century doorway.
- *St Mary* at Balcombe, much added to in 1847-50, with a shingled spire.
- *All Saints* (1884) at Highbrook, at the end of a long ridge, quite large with a shingled spire.
- *St Giles* at Horsted Keynes, mainly Norman, again, with a shingled spire.
- *St Mary* at Slaugham, Norman, 13th Century and later with a pyramidal-roofed tower, in Wealden stone.
- *St Mark* (1847) at Staplefield with a bellcote (belfry).
- *St Leonard* (1895-7) at Turners Hill with a tower, in Wealden stone.
- *St Margaret* at West Hoathly in the centre of the village, Norman, 13th Century and later with the usual shingled spire, in Wealden stone.

East Grinstead

9.37 Within the area lies East Grinstead, a town with a population of 23,942. It lies on high, ridge-like ground on the County boundary, the northern flanks of the town falling to Dormans Park in Surrey. To the east, the town embraces the Ashplats Wood valley, older ribbon development flanking the A22 which connects the town with suburban development at Ashurst Wood. To the west, the town adjoins more gentle, open farmland and some woodland stretching towards Crawley Down. To the south, the slopes within and below the town are dissected by a series of streams flowing to the infant Medway, complex ridges in between.

9.38 East Grinstead is an attractive market town of medieval origin which has been greatly expanded in the 20th century. In the 19th Century, four railway lines converged on the town (the first railway station in the town was opened in 1855), and by 1900 the town had significantly increased in size. Edwardian development was of a piecemeal nature, often in isolated blocks along the roads entering the town, notably at Sunnyside and along the main road to North End. Interwar development was more significant, comprising ribbon development at Felbridge, North End and along the Holtie Road and a number of estates (Sackfield Gardens, Halsford Green and Brooklands Park).

9.39 It was in the post-war period that development was greatly expanded and the urban pattern of the town consolidated. Before 1970, large housing developments were built to the west and a number of consolidating developments on most of the land north of the town centred on Blackwell. Substantial expansion and consolidation of the urban area also occurred at Sunnyside to the south, with new building in Ashurst Wood. Since 1970, there have been smaller, consolidating developments on the edges of various parts of the town. However, the largest development in this period was to the south of the Ashplats Wood, straddling the A22, representing a major eastward extension of the town. These changes have resulted in a compact town form, integrated well with the existing landscape, with relatively few problems associated with the rural urban fringe.

9.40 The historic town centre of East Grinstead is intimate in scale, revealing its medieval origins, the High Street punctuated by an island, the large 18th Century parish church of *St Swithun* with its tower lying behind it, built by James Wyatt using variably coloured Wealden sandstone. The High Street contains many fine buildings, some timber-framed, others elegant examples from the 18th Century. *Sackville College* is the pre-eminent building, founded in 1617, a long, stone built façade. Other houses of note include *Clarendon House*, late 16th Century, timber-framed, of three stories with much adornment, and the gabled *Stone House* of about 1600. Further out, *St Mary's Convent* on Moat Road is an ambitious range of buildings, begun 1865. The chapel was built in 1879-83, very tall with a high tower.

9.41 The *West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-2016* allocates land to the west and south west of East Grinstead for a strategic mixed-use development of 2,500 homes with an associated relief road. The District Council is preparing an Action Area Plan for Strategic Development at East Grinstead. It will provide detailed guidance on the form of development and the alignment of the relief road.

Strategic gaps

9.42 The County Council, Mid Sussex District Council and Crawley Borough Council have long recognised pressures for development on the open land between Crawley, East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood and have designated this land as strategic gaps.

EVALUATION

Change – key issues

- Decline in traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing.
- Continuing extensive planting of conifers, particularly to the west on the fringes of Worth Forest.
- Spread of invasive introduced species, particularly rhododendron and neglect of some parkland landscapes.
- Reduction of heathland to a few pockets due to cessation of grazing management and subsequent woodland invasion and woodland re-planting.
- 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 pervasiveness of traffic movement and noise in parts of the area, especially along the Crawley–East Grinstead 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.

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, droveways, 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.

MANAGEMENT

Management Objective

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.

Land Management Guidelines

- 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 particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new small broad-leaved farm woodlands, and appropriate management of existing woodlands, and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover in woodlands and on heathland.
- Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns.
- Reduce the impact of forestry where possible by encouraging sensitive forestry practice including small-scale felling rotation, and incorporating mixed species.
- Plant trees in drifts and avoid straight lines running across the grain of the land.
- Increase 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 re-plant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Conserve the landscape of the gills including wet woodland and sandrock crags, and protect the nationally-rare sandrock plant and other communities associated with them.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Conserve and manage remnant open heathland by preventing the encroachment of scrub and create new, interconnected heathlands.
- Conserve species-rich meadows.
- Seek to protect the tranquil and historic character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Continue to maintain the natural setting of the Worth Way.
- Reduce the visual impact of stabling and grazing for horses.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

The area lies wholly within Mid Sussex District. See ***Planning and Land Management Guidelines Sheet HW1 (High Weald)*** in Part Three. The area covered by the Sheet includes:

The *High Weald (Area 6)* and *High Weald Plateau (Area 7)* Landscape Character Areas in Mid Sussex District.

Appendix 10- Detailed Visual Assessment



Viewpoint 1 - View from Hamsland looking south towards The Site (SA29) and the likely site access location



Viewpoint 2 - View from the pubic bridleway looking north/northeast towards The Site (SA29) and towards Land South of the Old Police Station (SA28)

Land south of St Stephen's Church, Horsted Keynes



Viewpoint 3a - View from the public footpath looking north-east towards The Site (SA29) and towards Land south of the Old Police House (SA28)



Viewpoint 3b- View from public footpath looking east towards The Site (A28) and towards Land south of the Old Police House (SA28)

Land south of St Stephen's Church, Horsted Keynes



Viewpoint 4 - View from the public footpath looking east towards The Site (SA29) and towards Land South of the Old Police House (SA28)



Viewpoint 5 - View from the public open space looking east towards The Site (SA29) and in the direction of Site SA28

Land south of St Stephen's Church, Horsted Keynes



Viewpoint 6 - View from public footpath looking north-west towards Site SA28 and towards Land South of the Old Police House (SA28)



Viewpoint 7 - View from Birchgrove Road looking south towards Site SA28, at the approximate likely access location, and towards Land South of the Old Police House (SA28)



Viewpoint 8 - View from Birchgrove Road looking south-west towards Land south of Old Police House (SA28)



Viewpoint 9 - View from Danehill Lane looking west towards Land south of Old Police House (SA28) (alongside the eastern site boundary of SA28)

Land south of St Stephen's Church, Horsted Keynes



Viewpoint 10 - View from Danehill Lane looking north-west towards Land south of the Old Police House (SA28)

