



LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

MILLWOOD DESIGNER HOMES
ST. MARTIN CLOSE WEST, HANDCROSS
WEST SUSSEX

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document has been produced on behalf of Millwood Designer Homes Ltd to support the continued allocation of the site at St. Martin Close West within the Mid-Sussex District Council draft Site Allocations DPD.
- 1.2 Lloyd Bore were instructed to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of the initial development proposals for the site.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to undertake an impartial landscape and visual appraisal (LVA) of the proposed development. It will:
- Describe the existing baseline conditions with regard to key landscape components and identify the unique landscape character areas (LCAs) that result from the combination of these components for an appropriately sized study area.
 - Appraise the existing landscape in terms of character and views, and establish its ability to accommodate change in relation to the proposed development.
 - Describe the anticipated changes resulting from the proposed development and assess the 'nature of change' upon landscape character and views.
 - Determine the nature of effect of identified impacts with regards to scale, duration, permanence and value.

ASSESSMENT MATERIAL / MITIGATION

- 1.4 An indicative development layout was supplied by Millwood Designer Homes with a view to Lloyd Bore undertaking the baseline studies and identification of effects sections of the report described above.
- 1.5 Following a preliminary review of the development proposals and completion of the desktop studies, mitigation proposals were identified designed to avoid, reduce and minimise potential adverse landscape / visual effects.
- 1.6 The appraisal of the proposed development included in this report assumes that all recommendations for mitigation set out in Section 4 of this report (Project Description) will be delivered through normal planning mechanisms.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- 1.7 This report has been compiled by Stuart Hubert on behalf of Lloyd Bore Ltd.
- 1.8 Stuart is a Principal Landscape Architect at Lloyd Bore Ltd (established 1996), which is a specialist practice offering consultancy services in Landscape Architecture, Ecology and Arboriculture, based in Canterbury, Kent.
- 1.9 Stuart is a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute with 18 years post qualification experience in landscape architecture and landscape assessment work, including many years involvement in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment projects.

GUIDANCE

- 1.10 The approach adopted for this report has been informed and guided by the following key sources:
- The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Third Edition, 2013. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.*
 - The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002.*
 - Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland.*
 - Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11. Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment;*
 - Scottish Natural Heritage, Visual Representation of Wind Farms, Version 2, 2014.*

Note. The latter document is relevant to photographic methodology in general.

ASSESSMENT APPROACH

- 1.11 The detailed methodology used in compiling this assessment is described in **Appendix 1** of this report.
- 1.12 The Landscape Institute have published a 'GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13 June 2013' to provide clarification of the effect of the latest LVIA guidance upon the recommended approach for undertaking landscape and visual impact assessments.
- 1.13 With specific reference to 'Non EIA Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisals' this states;
- 'In carrying out appraisals, the same principles and process as LVIA may be applied but, in so doing, it is not required to establish whether the effects arising are, or are not significant given that the exercise is not being undertaken for EIA purposes.*
- The reason is that should a landscape professional apply LVIA principles and processes in carrying out an appraisal and then go on to determine that certain effects would be likely be significant, given the term 'significant' is enshrined in EIA Regulations, such a judgement could trigger the requirement for a formal EIA.*
- The emphasis on likely 'significant effects' in formal LVIA stresses the need for an approach that is proportional to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of its likely effects. The same principle - focussing on a proportional approach – also applies to appraisals of landscape and visual impacts outside the formal requirements of EIA'.*
- 1.14 Assessment reports relating to landscape and visual impact can therefore be divided into two categories, as described below:

LVIA (EIA):

- 1.15 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment produced as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, to inform an Environmental Statement.
- 1.16 It will assess the "Significance" of all potential landscape and visual effects (construction, operational, residual and cumulative), normally using a scale of significance such as; Major, Moderate or Minor.

LVA:

- 1.17 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal produced as part of a non EIA development.
- 1.18 It is not required to assessment of the “Significance” of landscape and visual effects and will consider only the nature of the potential effects in terms of whether they are considered beneficial, adverse, or neutral.
- 1.19 However, the following issues may be discussed, as appropriate to the project:

Susceptibility

- 1.20 If appropriate, the appraisal will discuss the susceptibility of the landscape and visual resource to the particular type of development proposed and will consider the following:
- What characteristics of the landscape and visual baseline (positive or negative) would be shared by the proposed development?
 - How appropriate would the proposed development be within the landscape and visual context of the proposal site and surrounding study area, in terms of the intended land use, scale, massing and location?

Nature of Change

- 1.21 The appraisal will clearly describe the physical nature of changes which are anticipated as a result of the proposed development and whether, on balance, these changes will be beneficial, adverse or neutral.

Mitigation

- 1.22 The appraisal will describe the nature of any mitigation measures which have been recommended or incorporated into the scheme during the design process in order to avoid, minimise or reduce potential impacts upon landscape and visual amenity, arising from the proposed development.
- 1.23 Where appropriate, the appraisal will discuss any residual effects (i.e. the nature of post-mitigation effects) over an appropriate timescale, however, an LVA Report will not seek to measure these on a scale of significance (Major, Moderate, Minor, for instance).
- 1.24 Both reports may also make further recommendations for additional mitigation measures which could further help to avoid, minimise or reduce identified impacts.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

- 1.25 In relation to the above, this report will be based on the general principles set out for a *Landscape and Visual Appraisal* (LVA) and will adopt the following structure:

Section 1: Introduction

- 1.26 This section introduces the type and structure of the report.
- 1.27 It includes relevant information about the author, their qualifications, professional experience and involvement in the design and / or assessment process.

Section 2: Planning Policies

- 1.28 This section will identify and summarise the key relevant planning policies that apply to the site and its surrounds at the National, Regional and Local Scales and will consider the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Local Planning Authority local plans.

Section 3: Scoping

- 1.29 This section establishes the study area and scope of the appraisal.
- 1.30 It identifies the relevant issues which need to be included in the assessment and those which can be appropriately ‘scoped out’.

Section 4: Baseline Studies

- 1.31 This section describes the existing landscape and visual environment. It identifies appropriate landscape receptors and character areas. It describes the visual context and accessibility of the site, the likely visual receptors and representative viewpoints.

Section 5: Project Description

- 1.32 This section describes the key features and components of the proposed development which relate to landscape and visual amenity, including details of potential impacts and effects and any primary mitigation measures which have been included within the design.

Section 6: Identification Of Effects

- 1.33 This section summarises the anticipated impacts and resulting effects that would arise from the operational phase of the proposed development, upon landscape character and visual amenity.
- 1.34 It identifies the nature of these effects in terms of whether they will be direct / indirect / secondary, short / medium / long-term, permanent / temporary, beneficial / adverse or neutral.

- 1.35 These are determined by consideration of the size / scale, geographic extent, duration and reversibility of the impact. For visual impacts the issues of viewing distance and elevation, exposure, prominence, atmospheric and seasonal conditions are also considered.

Section 7: Cumulative Assessment

- 1.36 The purpose of this section of the report is to consider how the identified impacts / effects of the proposed development may combine with those from other schemes that are consented, for which planning permissions are currently applied for, or allocated sites. It provides a judgement as to the combined resulting effects that may arise.

Section 8: Conclusion

- 1.37 This section provides a non-technical summary of the main conclusions resulting from the appraisal.

Appendix 1: Methodology

- 1.38 This section comprises a technical summary of the methodology used in the production of the assessment.

2. PLANNING POLICY

SLAUGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2014-2031

2.1 The Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan (SNP) allocates two sites within Handcross for further housing growth:

Policy 9: St Martin Close (East)

Development proposals for up to 30 residential units on land at St. Martin Close (east) will be supported where:

1. *Proposals provide a suitable mix of dwelling type and size to meet the needs of current and future households;*
2. *The design positively responds to the prevailing character of the surrounding area;*
3. *Proposals allow for the retention of existing mature trees and hedgerows on the western and southern boundaries;*
4. *The development provides open space at least to the standards set out in the MSDC Development Infrastructure and Contributions Supplementary Planning Document;*
5. *Proposals provide suitable access via St. Martin Close and adequate parking arrangements;*
6. *Proposals enable future vehicular and pedestrian access to St. Martin Close (west);*
7. *Ensure layout is planned to ensure future access to the existing sewerage infrastructure maintenance and upsizing purposes; and*
8. *Provide an adequate gap between the pumping station and development to help prevent any unacceptable impact from noise and/or vibration.*

2.2 The SNP also allocates the site, referred to as 'St. Martin Close (west)' as "a reserve site to come forward later within the Plan period following the delivery of St. Martin Close (east) if required, to ensure the long-term housing need of the Parish is positively met."

Policy 10: St Martin Close (West)

Land at St. Martin Close (west), Handcross is identified at the relevant trigger point in Paragraph 6.29 of this Plan, development proposals for up to 35 houses will be supported subject to the following criteria:

1. *Proposals provide a suitable mix of dwelling type and size to meet the needs of current and future households;*

2. *The design positively responds to the prevailing character of the adjacent residential development;*
3. *The development provides open space at least to the standards set out in the MSDC Development Infrastructure and Contributions Supplementary Planning Document;*
4. *Proposals allow for the retention of existing mature trees and hedgerows on the northern, southern and western boundaries;*
5. *Proposals provide access via St.Martin Close (east); and*
6. *Proposals provide suitable parking arrangements.*

*MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD:
REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION DRAFT OCTOBER 2019*

- 2.3 This Development Plan Document (DPD) aims to "allocate sufficient housing sites to address the residual necessary to meet the identified housing requirement for the district up to 2031 in accordance with the Spatial Strategy set out in the District Plan"
- 2.4 The DPD allocations include the site - 'SA27 Land at St. Martin Close' and identifies a number of urban design principles and landscape and ecology considerations for proposed development on the site.
- 2.5 Relevant extracts from the DPD are included on the following pages.

Fig. 1: Extract from Mid Sussex DC Site Allocations DPD Consultation Draft

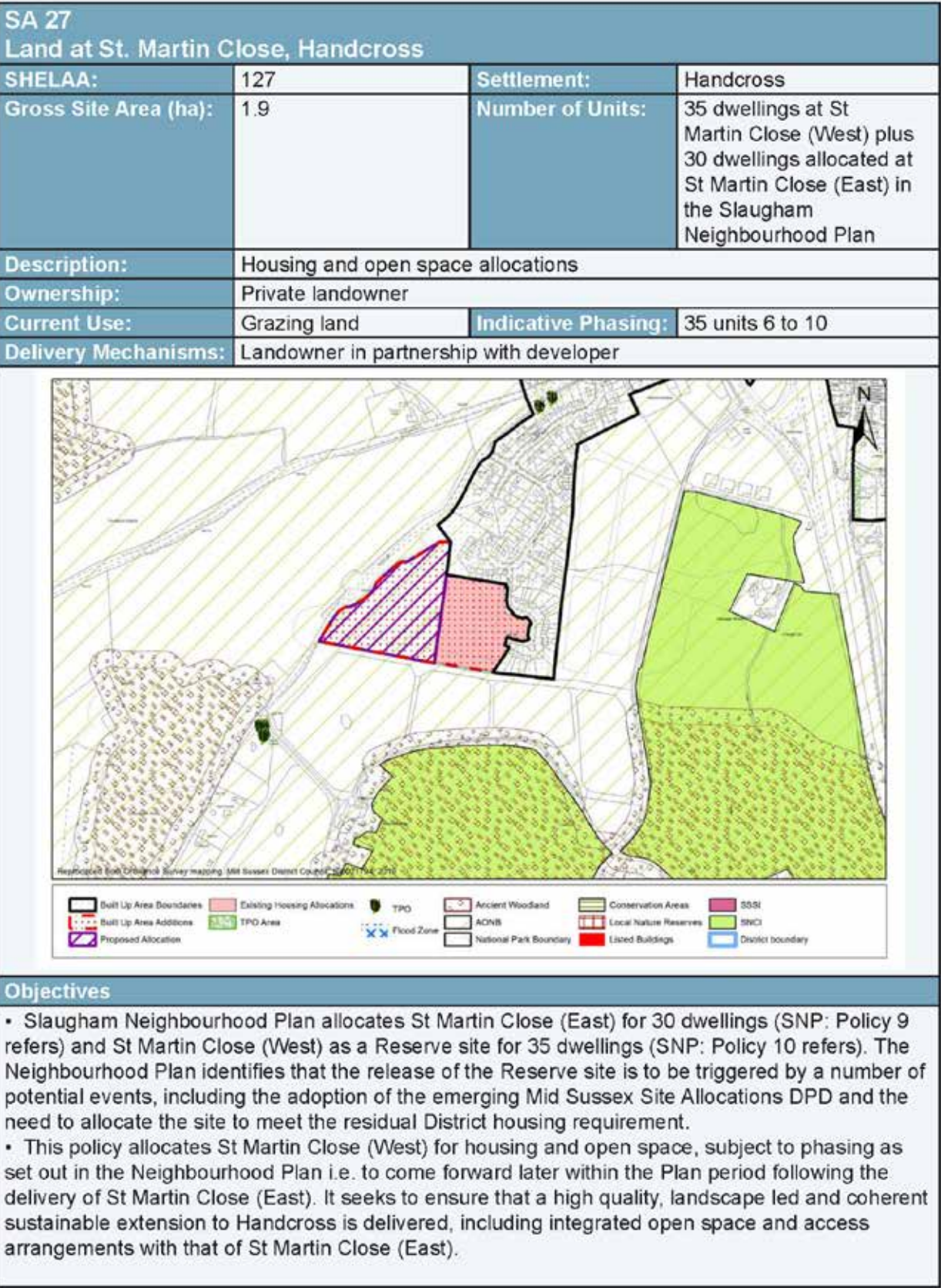


Fig. 2: Extract from Mid Sussex DC Site Allocations DPD Consultation Draft

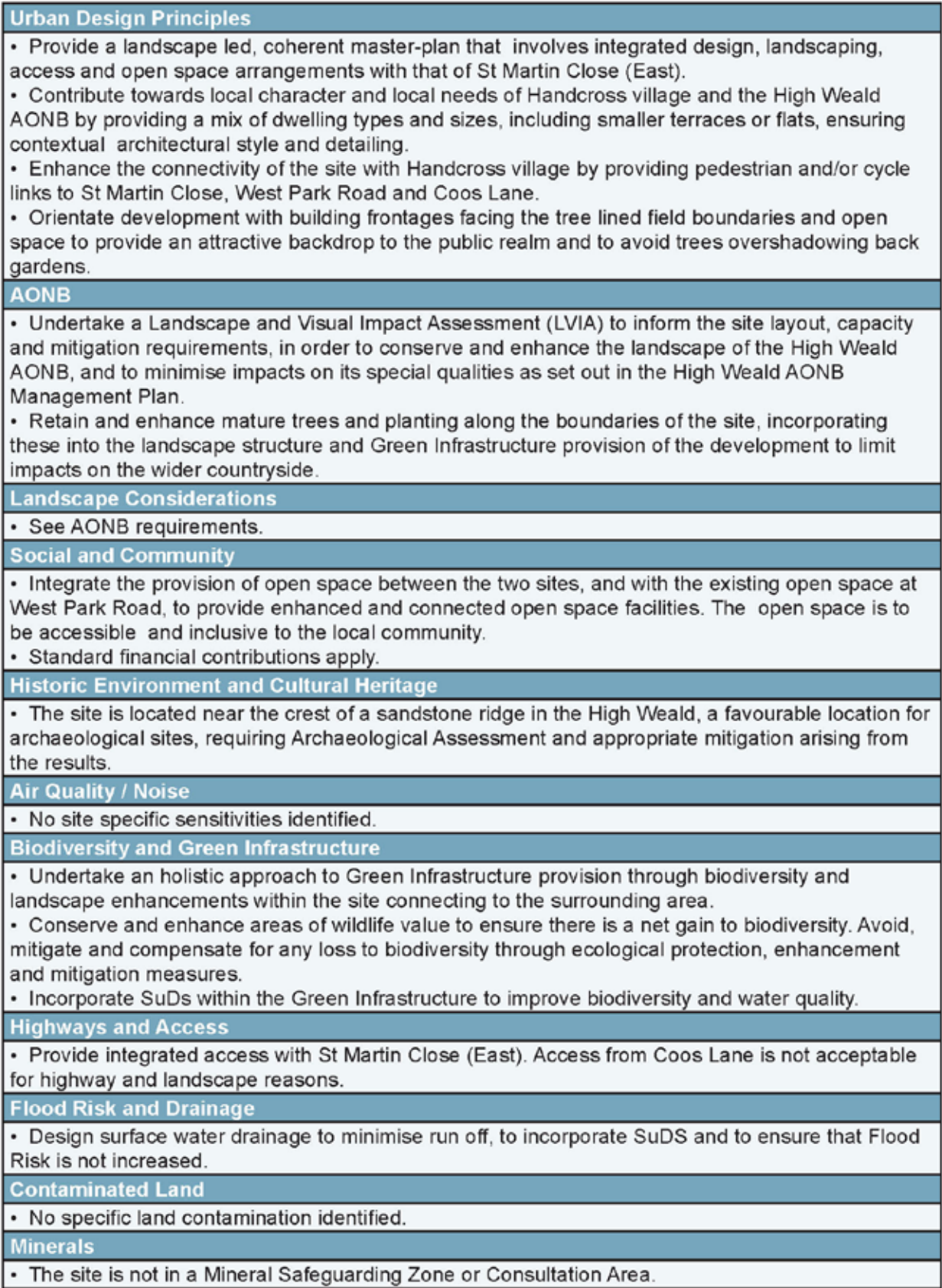


Fig. 3: Extract from Mid Sussex DC Site Allocations DPD Consultation Draft

Utilities
• Standard utility requirements apply.

3. SCOPING

- 3.1 The purpose of the preliminary scoping exercise is to:
- Define the extent of the study area.
 - Identify the relevant sources of landscape and visual information.
 - Identify the nature of possible impacts, in particular those which are considered likely to occur and to be relevant to this assessment.
 - Identify the main receptors of the potential landscape and visual effects.
 - Establish the extent and appropriate level of detail required for the baseline studies, including identifying those issues which can be 'scoped out' from further assessment.

ESTABLISHING THE STUDY AREA

- 3.2 The defined study area for this assessment is shown in **Figure 4**.

Extent of the physical and visual landscape

- 3.3 Having considered the preliminary development proposals and site context, it has been judged that a study area with a radius of 2.5km centred on the proposal site is sufficient to assess potential impacts upon landscape and visual character.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- 3.4 Preliminary desktop investigations have identified the following sources of key information to be relevant to this assessment:
- OS digital mapping data.
 - MAGIC online mapping data.
 - Historic England National Heritage List for England.
 - Mid Sussex District Council District Plan & Policy Maps.
 - Mid Sussex District Council Site Allocations DPD.
 - Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031.
 - High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2019-2024.
 - Legislation and Planning Policy in the High Weald AONB Advice Note (Feb 2019).
 - Mid Sussex District Council Landscape Character Assessment (Nov 2005)
 - Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (Jul 2007)

- Capacity of Mid Sussex District to accommodate development (Jun 2014)

NATURE OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

Landscape Effects

- 3.5 The anticipated effects of the proposed development upon landscape resources are assessed to be:

- Potential change to the character of the site and its immediate surroundings as a result of:
 - Introduction of new built form on a previously undeveloped site and an alteration to the existing rural grain.
 - Change in vegetation cover and character of the site.
 - Change in the settlement envelope of Handcross.

Visual Effects

- 3.6 The anticipated effects of the proposed development upon visual resources are assessed to be:

- A change in the nature and composition of the visual landscape resulting from changes to the character and appearance of the site. This could potentially affect the amenity value associated with existing views from;
 - Adjoining residential properties.
 - Adjoining open spaces.
 - Nearby Public Rights of Way.
 - Nearby roads.
 - The High Weald AONB.

RECEPTORS

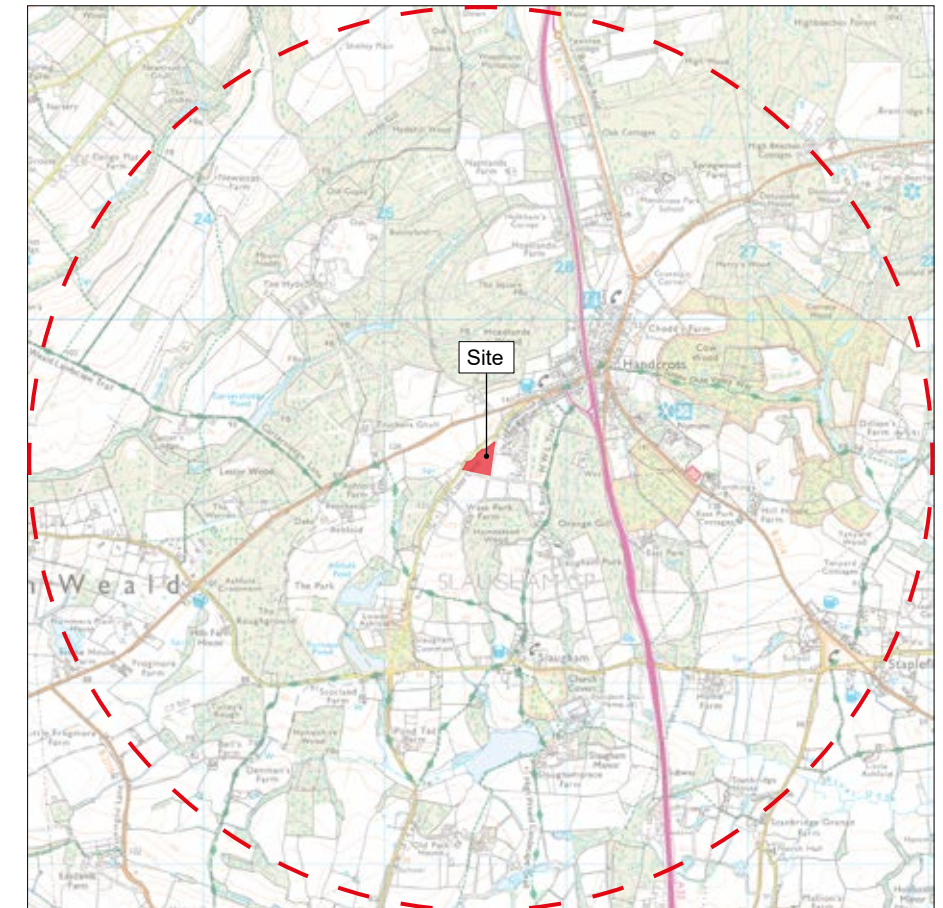
Relevant Topics

- 3.7 On completion of a preliminary desktop review of the study area, the following topics are considered relevant for inclusion within the detailed assessment, as impacts may potentially occur as a result of the proposed development.

Landscape Receptors

- 3.8 Potential landscape receptors of impacts and resulting effects of the proposed development are assessed to be:

Fig. 4: Study Area (not to scale).



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- Landscape Designations:
 - The High Weald AONB.
- Local Landscape Character Areas
- Historic Designations (Landscape Setting):
 - Conservation Areas.
 - Listed Buildings.
 - Scheduled Monuments.
 - Registered Parks and Gardens.
- Access:
 - Public Rights of Way (footpaths, bridleways, byways).
 - National / Heritage Trails / Long Distance Footpaths.
 - National Cycle Routes.
- Other Landscape Baseline Topics:
 - Topography.
 - Vegetation.
 - Land Use / Land Cover.
 - Ancient Woodland.
- Settlement Character:
 - Settlement Pattern / Grain of Development.
 - Historic Development Mapping.

Visual Receptors

3.9 Potential visual receptors of impacts and resulting effects of the proposed development are assessed to be:

- Local Residents, principally in Covert Mead, West Park Road and St Martin Close.
- Users of the local PRow network.
- Users of the local road network, for example Coos Lane, Horsham Road and St Martin Close.

Non Relevant Topics

3.10 All other landscape related topics not listed above are excluded from further detailed assessment on the following grounds:

- The topic or issue is not present within the study area, or is at a sufficient distance from the proposal site that it can be readily accepted that there would be no potential for any impact or change to occur.

- Although the proposal would result in an impact or change upon a topic or issue, the change is considered to be of an insignificant scale compared to the size and scale of the topic being affected.

3.11 The following topics, although present within the study area, have been assessed as unlikely to experience any actual or noticeable impacts:

- Conservation Areas.
- Listed Buildings.
- Scheduled Monuments.
- Registered Parks and Gardens.
- Ancient Woodland.

Conservation Areas

- 3.12 There are three designated conservation areas within the study area as shown in **Figure 5**;
- Staplefield (located approximately 1.8km south-east of the site)
 - Slaugham (located approximately 830m south of the site)
 - Handcross (located approximately 680m north-east of the site)
- 3.13 These Conservation Areas are separated from the site by farmland, woodland, built development and the A23. Due to the physical separation of the site from these Conservation Areas, it is assessed that the proposal site makes no direct or indirect contribution to their landscape and visual character, or their immediate setting.

Fig. 5: Conservation Areas (not to scale).

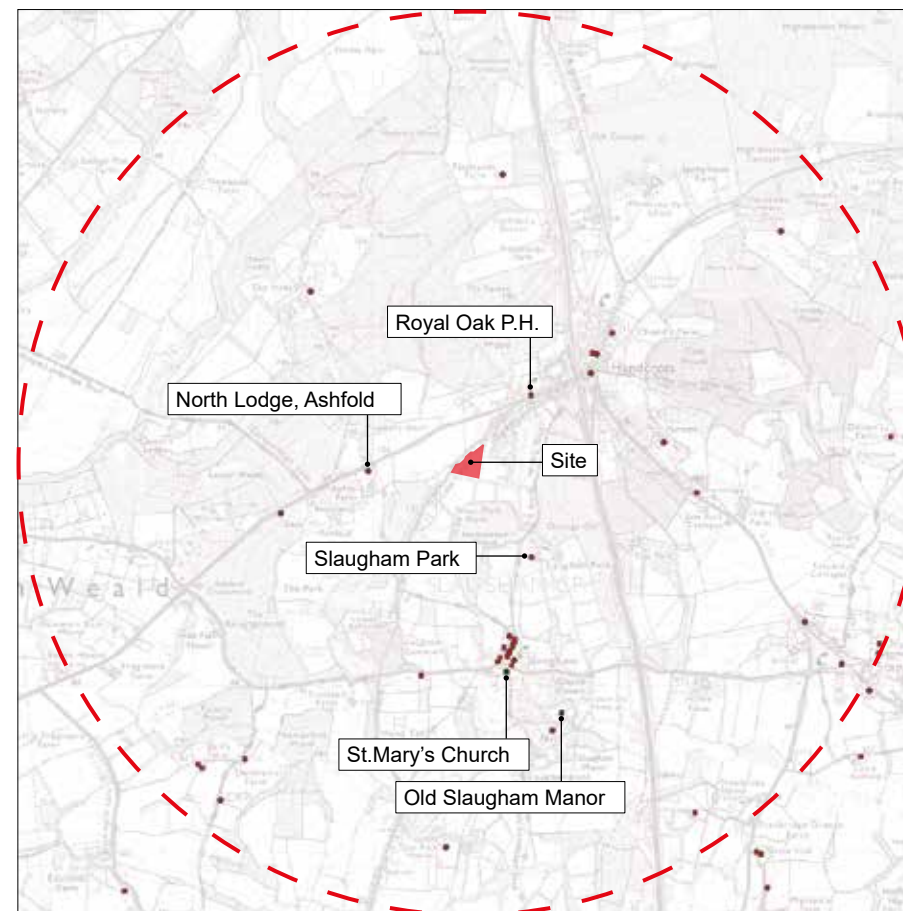


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Listed Buildings

- 3.14 There are a number of listed buildings located within the study area, as shown in **Figure 6**, the majority being Grade II and located within Conservation Areas.
- 3.15 There are two Grade II* listed buildings within the study area:
- The ruins of Old Slaugham Manor are located approximately 1.36km south of the site, separated by farmland, woodland and Slaugham village.
 - The Parish Church of St. Mary is located approximately 1.07km south of the site, separated by farmland, woodland and Slaugham village.
- 3.16 The closest of the listed buildings to the site are:
- North Lodge, Ashfold (1875 lodge to now demolished Ashfold mansion, located approximately 450m west of the site and separated from it by farmland and dense roadside vegetation along Coos Lane).

Fig. 6: Listed Buildings (not to scale).



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- Royal Oak P.H. (C17 timber-framed public house, located approximately 385m north-east of the site and separated from it by residential properties in Horsham Road, West Park Road and Covert Mead).
- Slaugham Park (Early C19 house, located approximately 495m south-east of the site and separated from it by farmland and woodland).

- 3.17 Due to the physical separation it is assessed that the proposal site makes no direct or indirect contribution to the landscape or visual character of these listed buildings, or their immediate setting.

Scheduled Monuments

- 3.18 There is one Scheduled Monument within the study area, as shown in **Figure 7**:
- The remains of Slaugham Place.
- 3.19 This is located approximately 1.3km south of the proposal site and separated from it by farmland, woodland and Slaugham village.
- 3.20 Due to the physical separation it is assessed that the proposal site makes no direct or indirect contribution to the landscape or visual character of this scheduled monument, or its immediate setting.

Historic Parks & Gardens

- 3.21 There are three Registered Parks and Gardens within the study area, as shown in **Figure 8**:
- Slaugham Place.
 - Nymans.
 - The High Beeches.
- 3.22 Slaugham Place is Grade II listed, and described by Historic England as “A late C16 to early C17 walled enclosure, with minor late C19 or early C20 additions, which forms the site of a former garden which surrounded a C16 house demolished in the mid C18, the ruins of which now form part of the garden landscape.” It is located approximately 1.3km south of the proposal site and separated from it by farmland, woodland and Slaugham village.

- 3.23 Nymans is Grade II* listed, and described by Historic England as “A late C19 and early to mid C20 informal and ornamental plantsman’s garden.” It is located approximately 0.7km east of the proposal site and separated from it by woodland, the A23 and adjacent residential development to the south of Horsham Road.
- 3.24 The High Beeches is Grade II* listed, and described by Historic England as “A C20 plantsman’s and collector’s garden.” It is located approximately 2.16km north-east of the proposal site and separated from it by woodland, the A23 and Handcross village.
- 3.25 Due to the physical separation it is assessed that the proposal site makes no direct or indirect contribution to the landscape or visual character of these parks and gardens, or their immediate settings.

Fig. 7: Scheduled Monuments (not to scale).

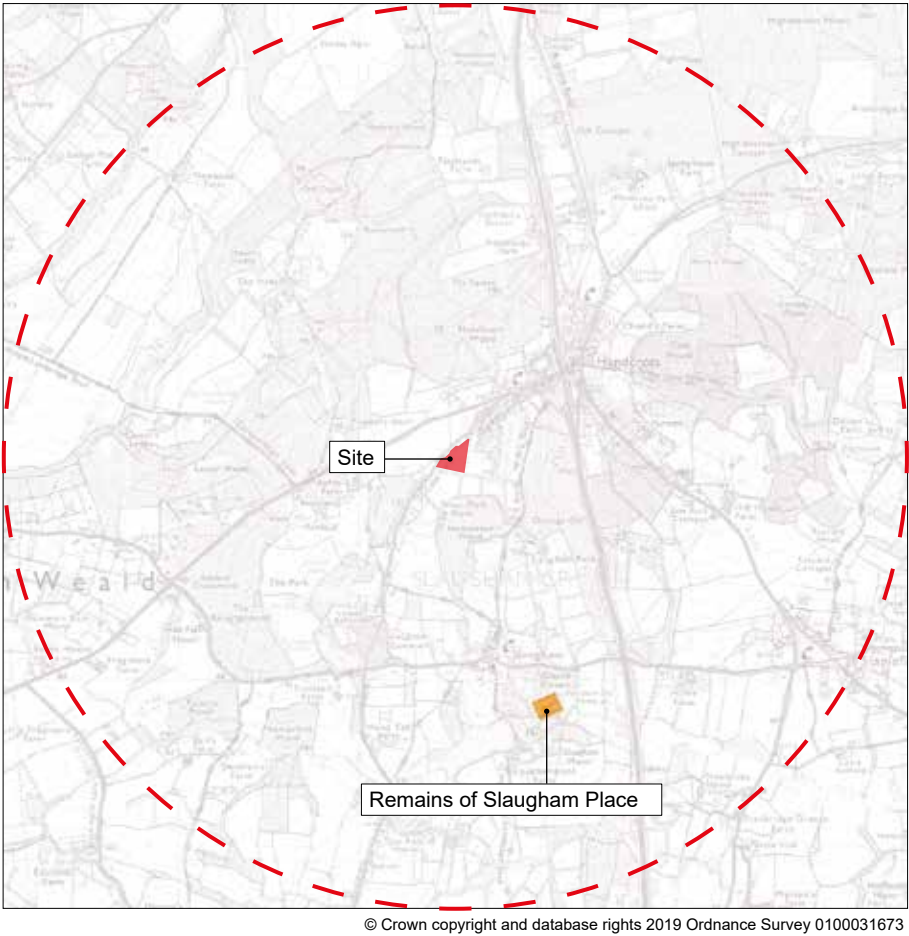
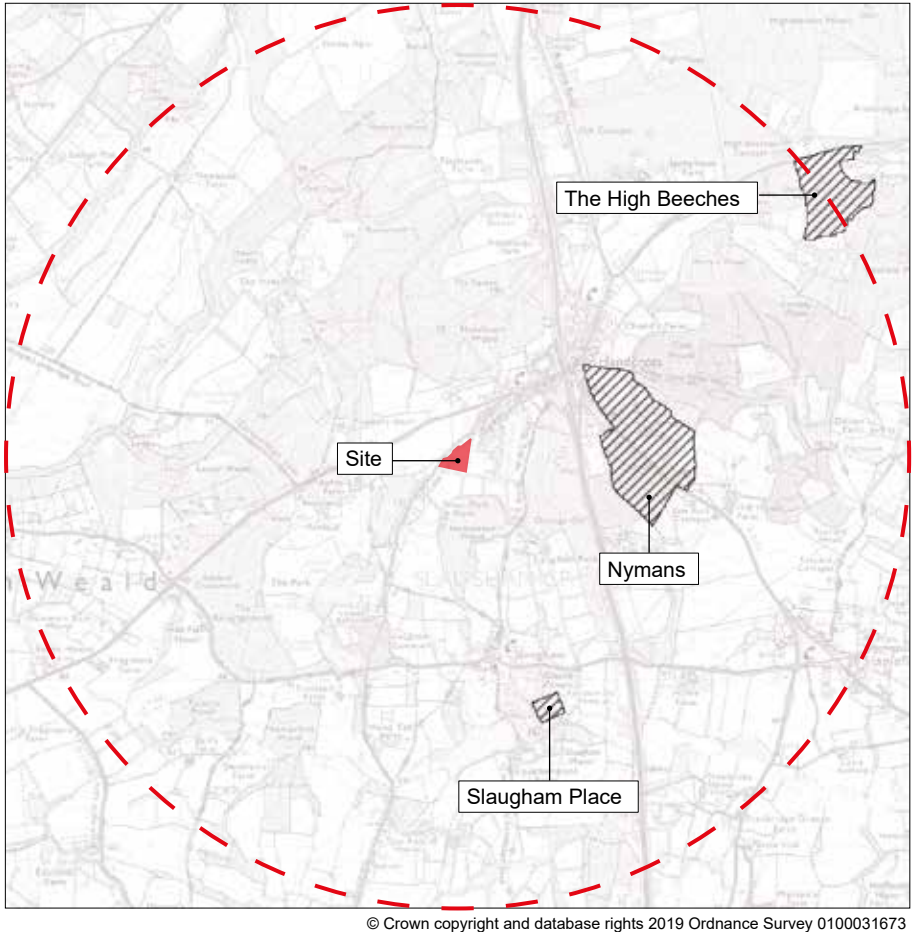


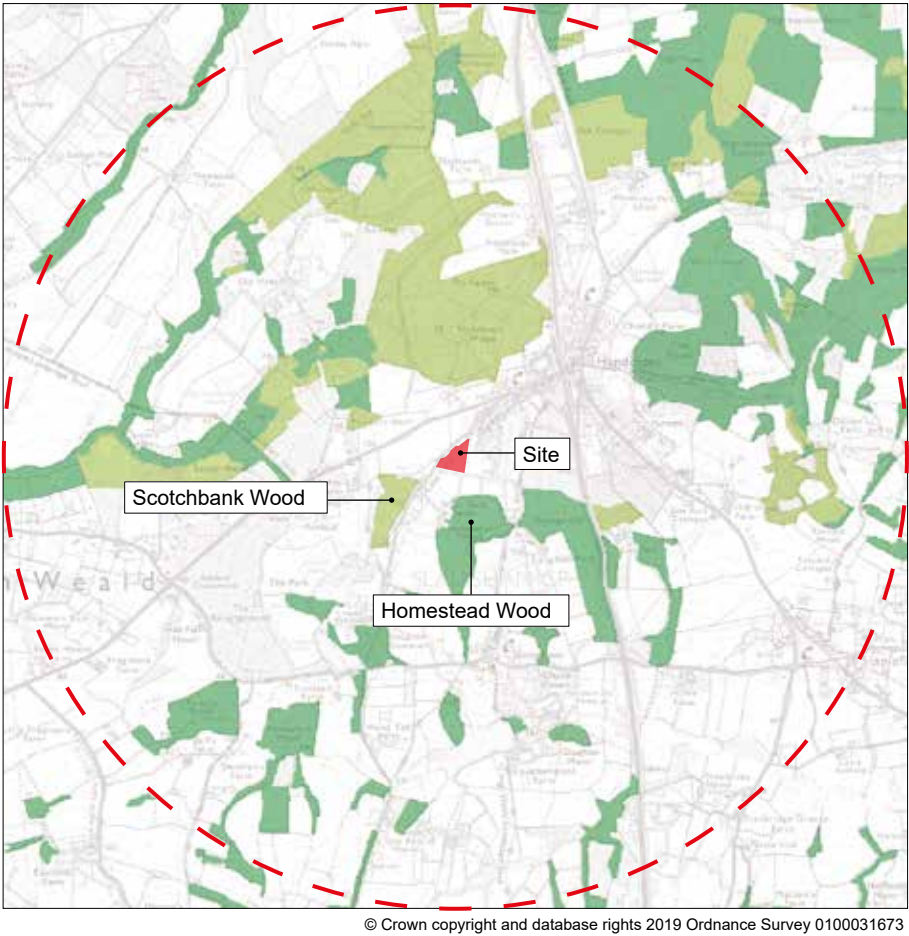
Fig. 8: Historic Parks & Gardens (not to scale).



Ancient Woodland

- 3.26 There are numerous areas of ancient woodland within the study area, as shown in **Figure 9**.
- 3.27 The closest of these to the site are Homestead Wood, located approximately 125m south of the proposal site and separated from it by farmland, and Scotchbank wood, located approximately 125m south-west of the proposal site and separated from it by Coos Lane and Nostra Cottage.
- 3.28 There are no areas of ancient woodland within or immediately adjacent to the site. Due to the physical separation it is assessed that the proposed development would have no impact on any areas of ancient woodland.

Fig. 9: Ancient Woodland (not to scale).



4. BASELINE STUDIES

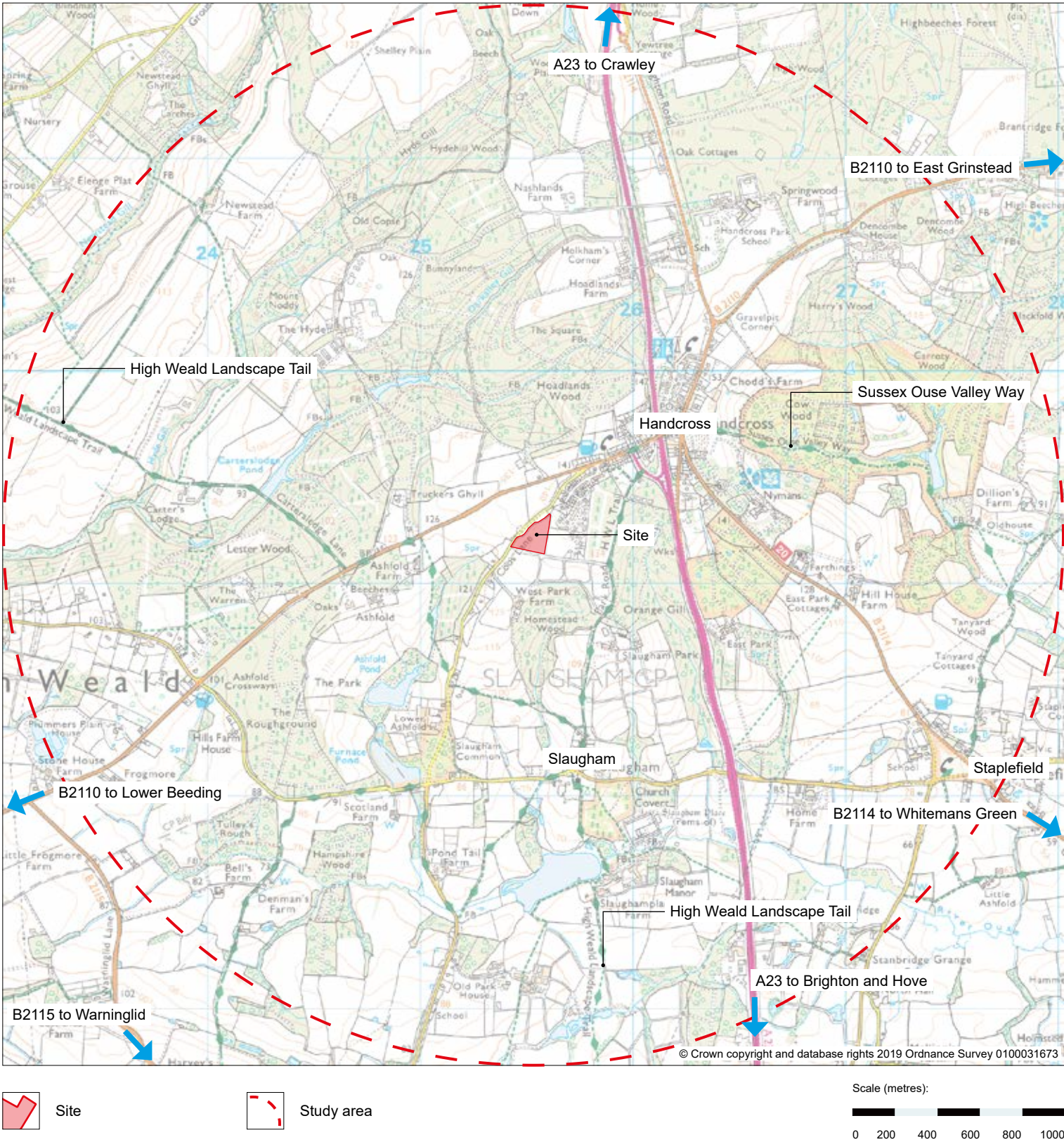
THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 4.1 The location and extent of the development site is shown in **Figures 10 and 11**.
- 4.2 The Ordnance Survey map illustrates the rural landscape of the study area, comprising fields and woodland with three villages (Handcross being the largest) and a large number of scattered farmsteads. The modern A23 is a dominant feature, almost a straight-line bisecting Handcross, and contrasting with the more organic network of historic roads, tracks and paths.
- 4.3 The site is located alongside Coos Lane at the south-western edge of the village of Handcross, adjacent to an area of residential development to the north and east. Immediately to the north-east of the site is a small play area associated with the West Park Road development. To the east is an area of scrub (predominantly oak and bramble), with amenity grassland at the eastern edge adjacent to the housing development. To the south and west of the site are fields and woodland.
- 4.4 The site is roughly triangular in shape, covers an area of approximately 1.9ha and comprises a single field used for grazing.

Photo 1: View of the site from the south-east corner



Fig. 10: Ordnance Survey map indicating site location and surrounding features.



ACCESS

- 4.5 The site is currently accessed via a field gate from Coos Lane. There is no authorised public access, although the site is occasionally used informally by dog walkers.

LAND COVER / VEGETATION

- 4.6 The site is predominantly grazed pasture, with trees and hedgerows to the site boundaries as shown on **Figure 11**.
- 4.7 The eastern boundary (A) consists of mature oak with silver birch towards the south (height approximately 12-15m) with an intermittent understorey of native shrubs, predominantly holly with some hawthorn, elder and bramble.
- 4.8 The southern boundary (B) is a plantation tree belt, consisting mainly of birch (height approximately 10-12m), with some cherry and ash, and an understorey of holly, elder and bramble.
- 4.9 The north-western boundary alongside Coos Lane (C) is formed by a belt of vegetation consisting of mature oak and beech trees (height approximately 12-15m), with some cherry and birch, and a dense understorey of holly. Coos Lane is at a lower level than the site and this vegetation covers the change in level.

Fig. 11: Aerial photograph (Date of photograph: 19 Apr 2014).

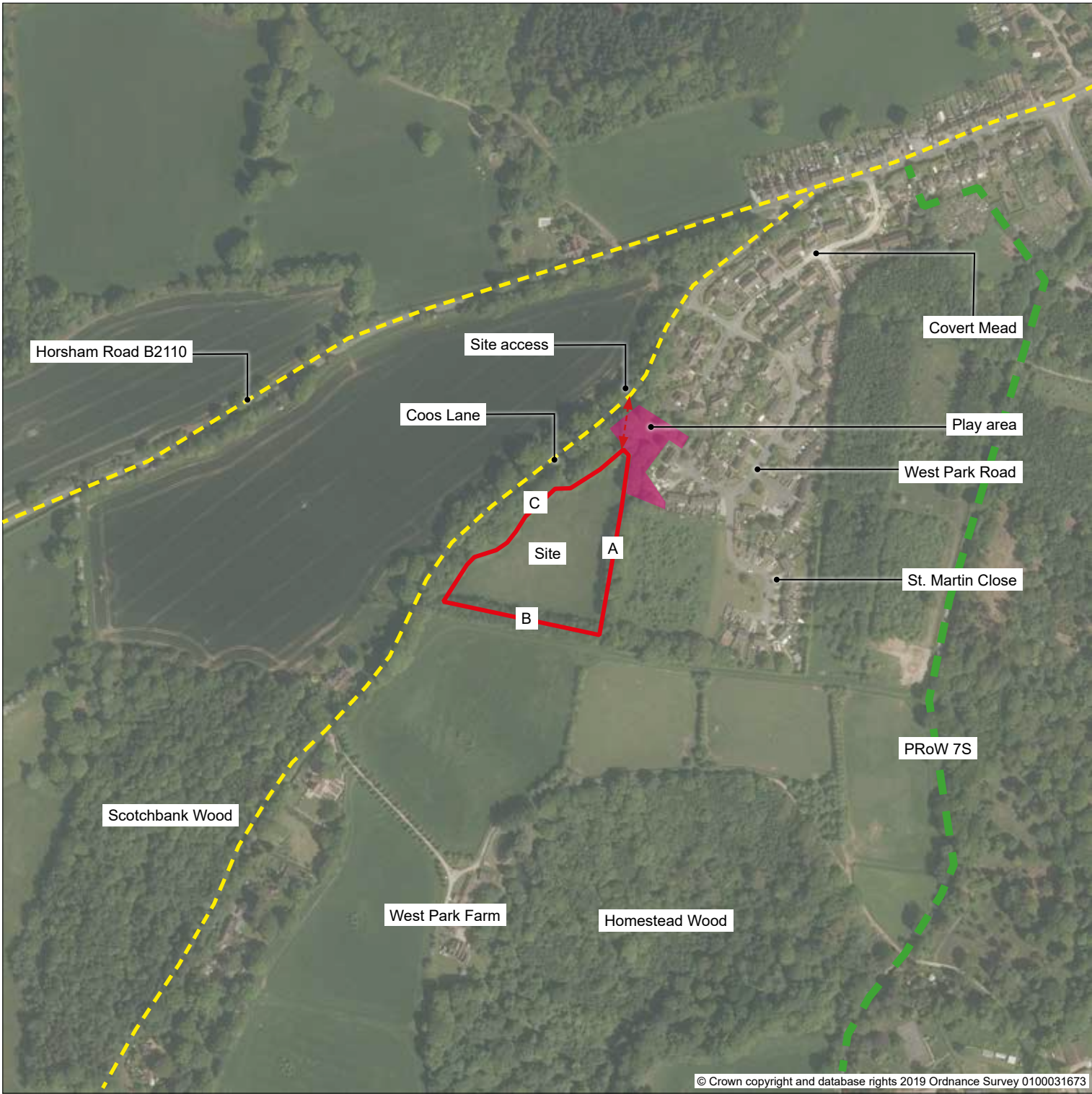


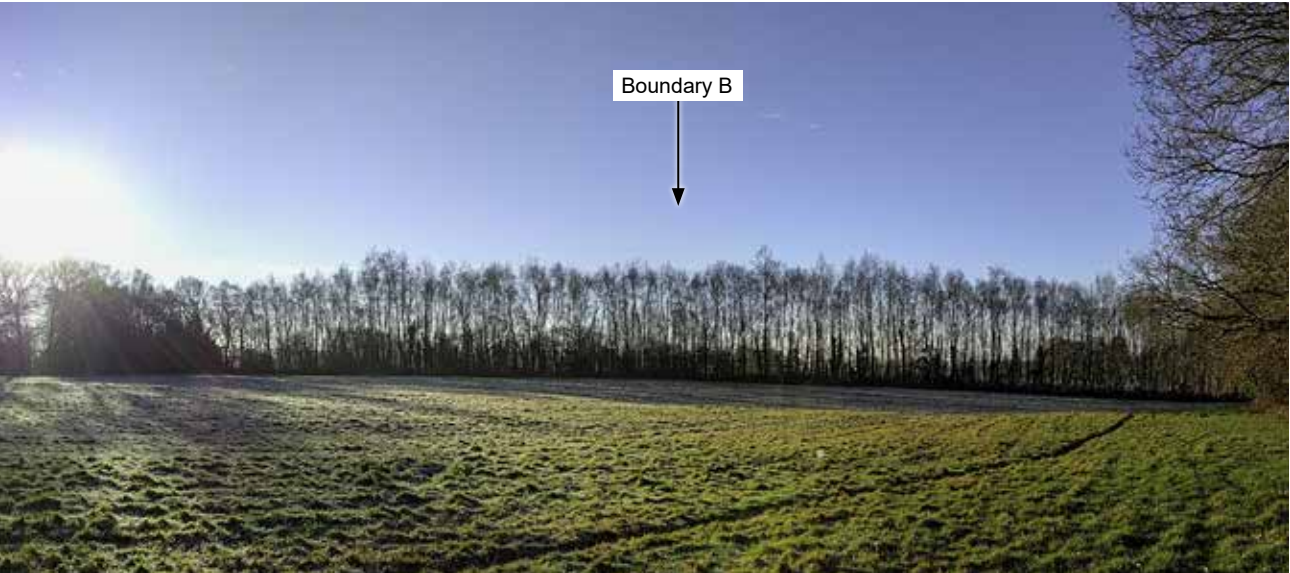
Photo 2: View of the site from the south-west corner



Photo 3: View of the site from the south-east corner



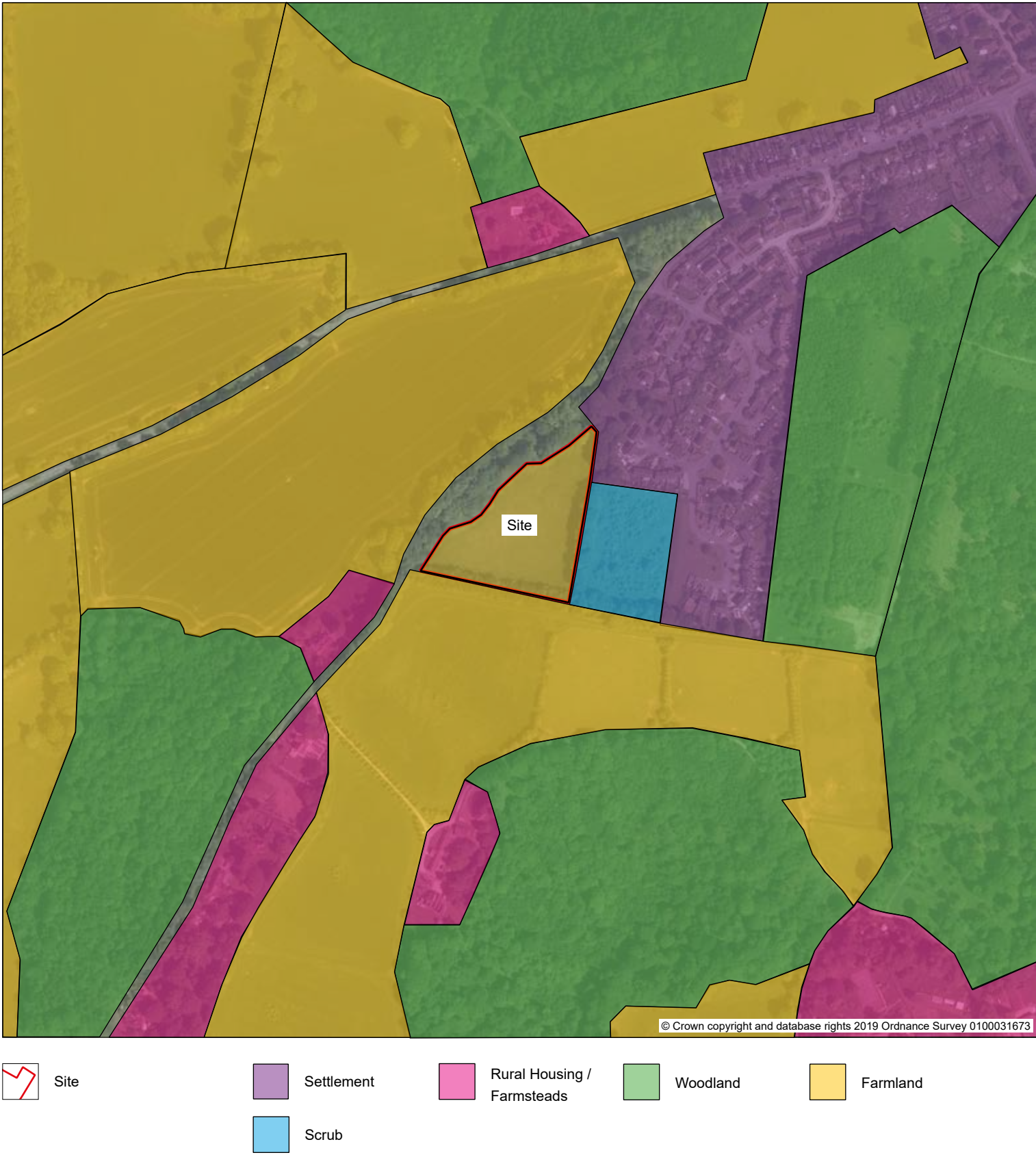
Photo 4: View of the site from the north-east corner



LAND USE

- 4.10 The key land use characteristics of the study area can be seen on the OS map (**Figure 10**).
- 4.11 There are a small number of land cover types present within the study area. The landscape is dominated by the large extent of woodland and areas of open farmland, comprising a mix of arable and grazing pastures, punctuated with rural settlements, ribbon development along roads and farmsteads.
- 4.12 **Figure 12** shows the area in the immediate vicinity of the site, consisting of the following principal land uses:
- Woodland
 - Farmland (mixed arable and pastoral)
 - Urban residential development on the south-western edge of Handcross
 - Roadside residential development and farmsteads
- 4.13 The area to the east of the site is unmanaged scrub.

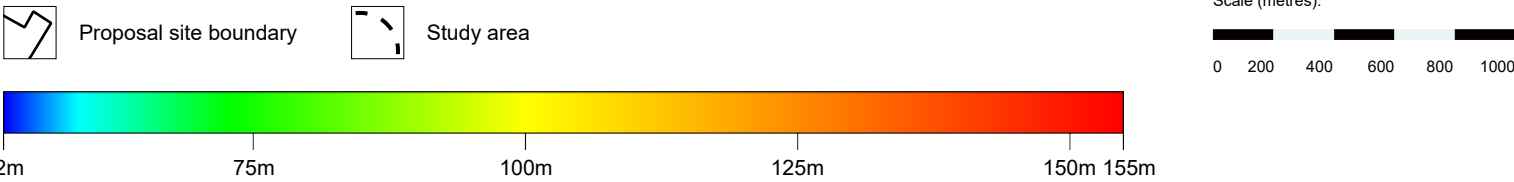
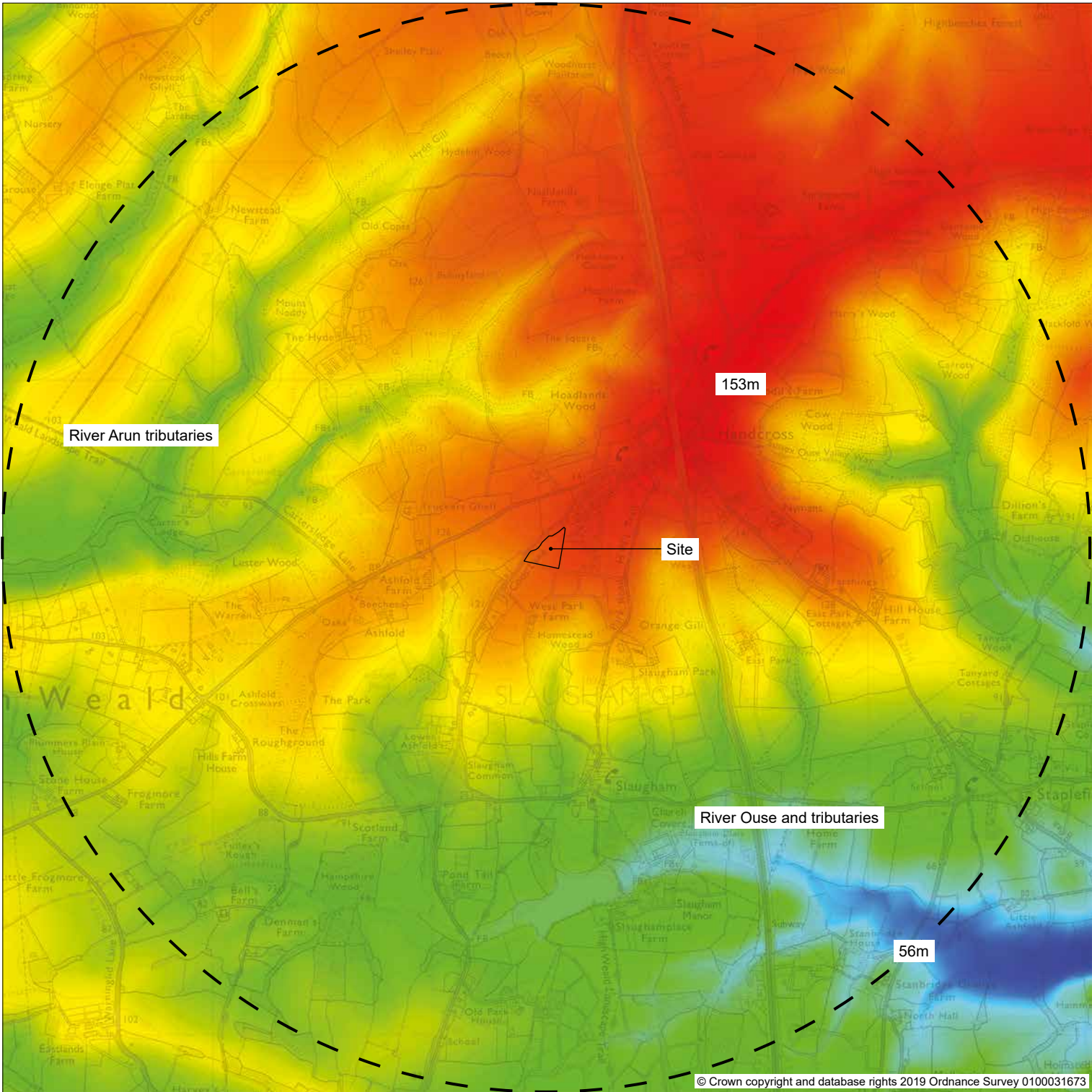
Fig. 12: Aerial photograph showing land use (Date of photograph: 19 Apr 2014).



TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.14 The general topography of the site and study area, based upon OS 10m contour data and standard 5m OS Terrain Data is shown in **Figure 13**.
- 4.15 On a broad scale, there is a ridge of high ground that runs north-east to south-west in the northern part of the study area (part of the High Weald Forest Ridge), with the topography generally falling toward the Ouse valley in the south of the study area. The ridge is incised by numerous gill streams creating a small-scale undulating landscape. In the southern and eastern parts of the study area these streams form tributaries of the River Ouse, in the western part of the study area they form tributaries of the River Arun.
- 4.16 Within the study area the topography varies from a low point of 56m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the Ouse Valley south-east of Slaugham, to a high point of 153m AOD just north-east of Handcross.
- 4.17 The site itself sits on the edge of the ridge and falls gently from a high point in the north-east corner to a low point in the south-west corner.

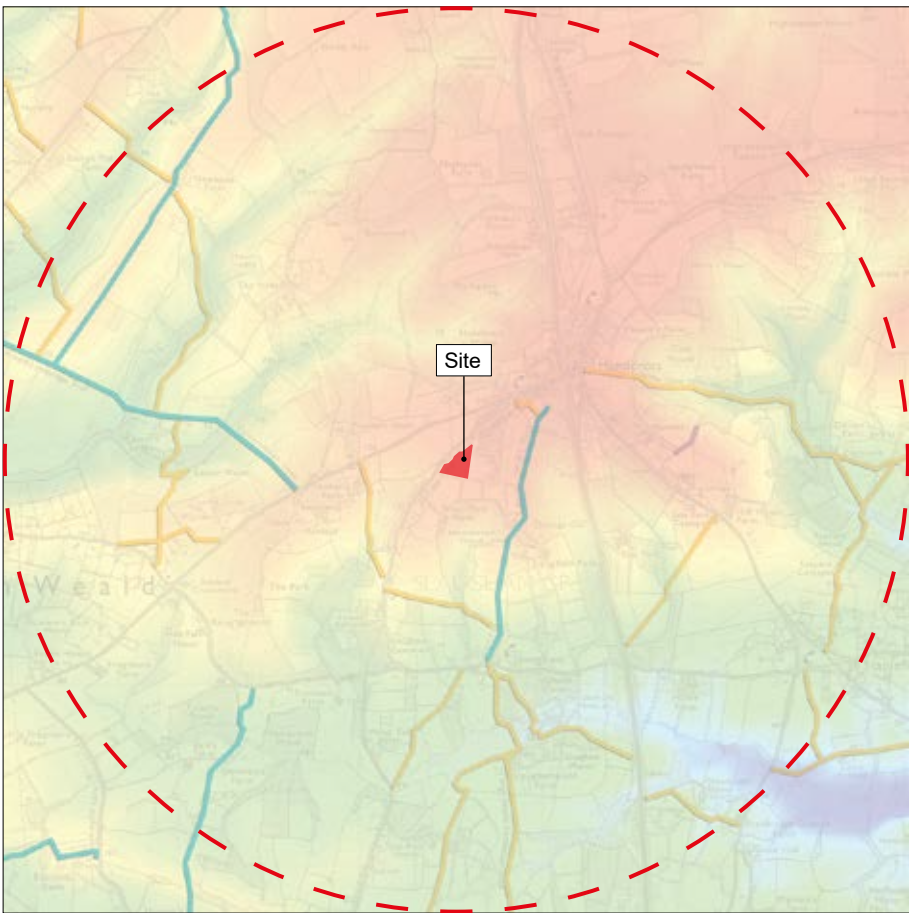
Fig. 13: Ordnance Survey map indicating topographical features.



PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

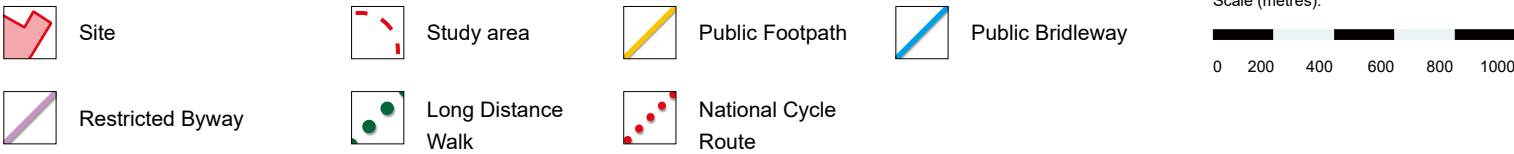
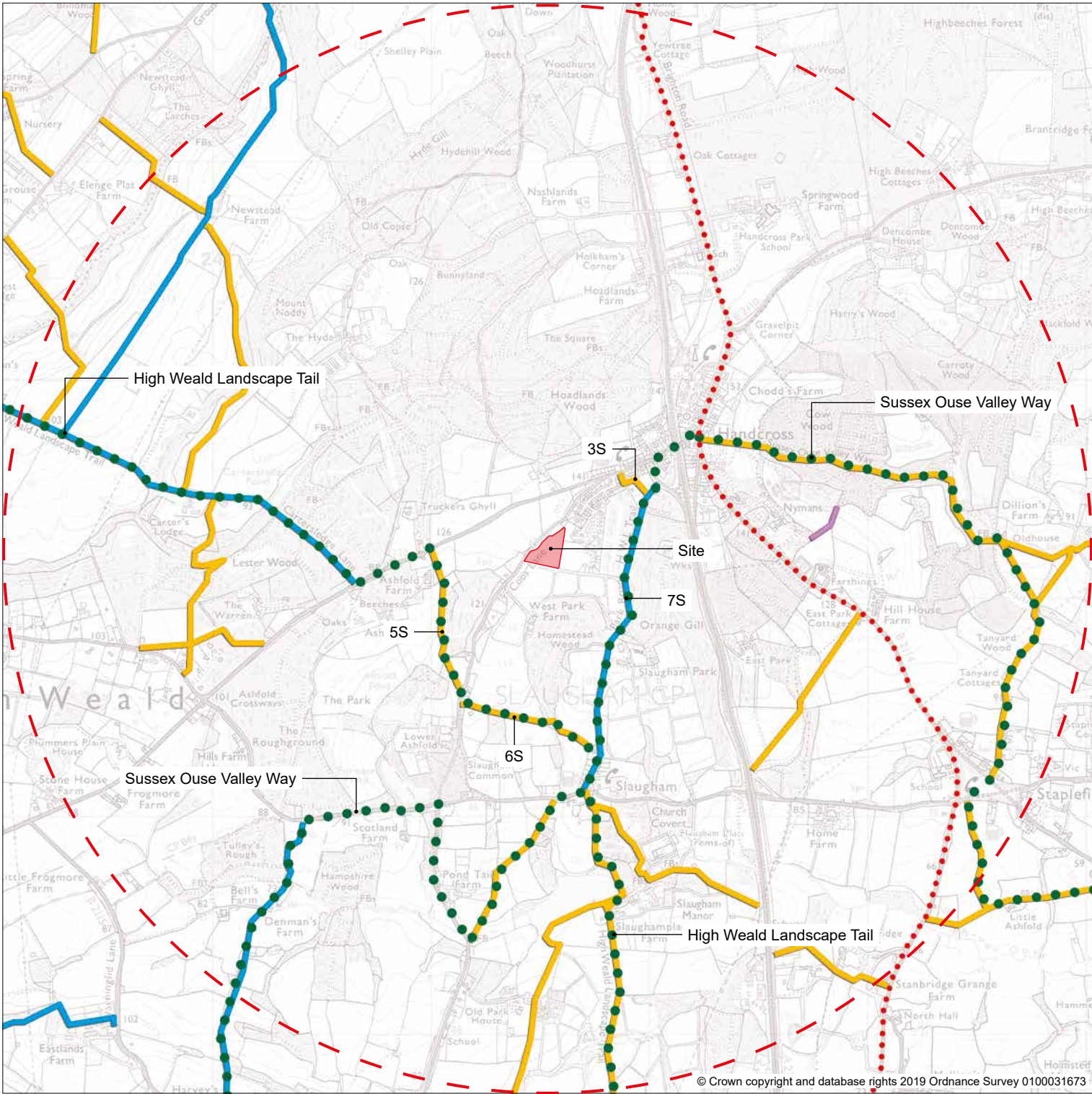
- 4.18 Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the study area are shown in **Figure 14**.
- 4.19 There are no PRoW within or immediately adjacent to the proposal site.
- 4.20 Within the southern part of the study area the PROW network is evenly distributed and provides good access and permeability. This contrasts with large parts of the northern section of the study area which have little or no public access.
- 4.21 There is a strong correlation between PRoW and topography as shown in **Figure 15**. This illustrates the concentration of public footpaths in the lower part of the study area (the Ouse Valley), with very few footpaths on the higher ground of the ridge.

Fig. 15: Ordnance Survey map indicating topography and PRoW.



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Fig. 14: Ordnance Survey map indicating surrounding public rights of way



- 4.22 The landscape within the study area is generally an attractive, pleasant and interesting rural landscape, and the public rights of way generally provide a high level of amenity and recreational value.
- 4.23 The closest PRow to the proposed site are:
- Public footpath 3S - a short path connecting Horsham Road with Public bridleway 7S, located approximately 340m north-east of the site.
 - Public bridleway 7S - runs north-south connecting Handcross with Slaugham, following the route of Park Road, located approximately 300m east of the site at its closest point.
 - Public footpath 6S - runs east-west connecting bridleway 7S and Park Road in Slaugham with Coos Lane, located approximately 700m south of the site.
 - Public footpath 5S - runs north-south connecting Horsham Road with Coos Lane and footpath 6S, located approximately 380m west of the site at its closest point.
- 4.24 There are two long distance walks within the study area:
- The High Weald Landscape Trail is a 94 mile walking route from Horsham to Rye that explores the High Weald AONB and links the ridge-top villages. The route follows PRow 5S and 6S at its closest point to the site.
 - The Sussex Ouse Valley Way is a 42 mile walking route that broadly follows the course of the River Ouse from Lower Beeding near Horsham to Seaford Bay near Newhaven. The route follows PRow 7S at its closest point to the site.
- 4.25 National Cycle Route 20 which connects Crawley to Brighton also passes through the study area running north to south, located approximately 700m east of the site at its closest point.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.26 The study area is covered by two district-scale landscape character assessments:

- A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex (November 2005)
- Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (October 2003)

A Landscape Character Assessment For Mid Sussex (November 2005)

4.27 The site is located within the High Weald Landscape Character Area as shown in **Figure 16**, with the Worth Forest Character Area to the north.

4.28 Character area boundaries are often fairly arbitrary and in reality character areas often overlap at their edges, so that sites located close to these boundaries can often be influenced by or exhibit characteristics of more than one character area.

Landscape Character Area 6: High Weald

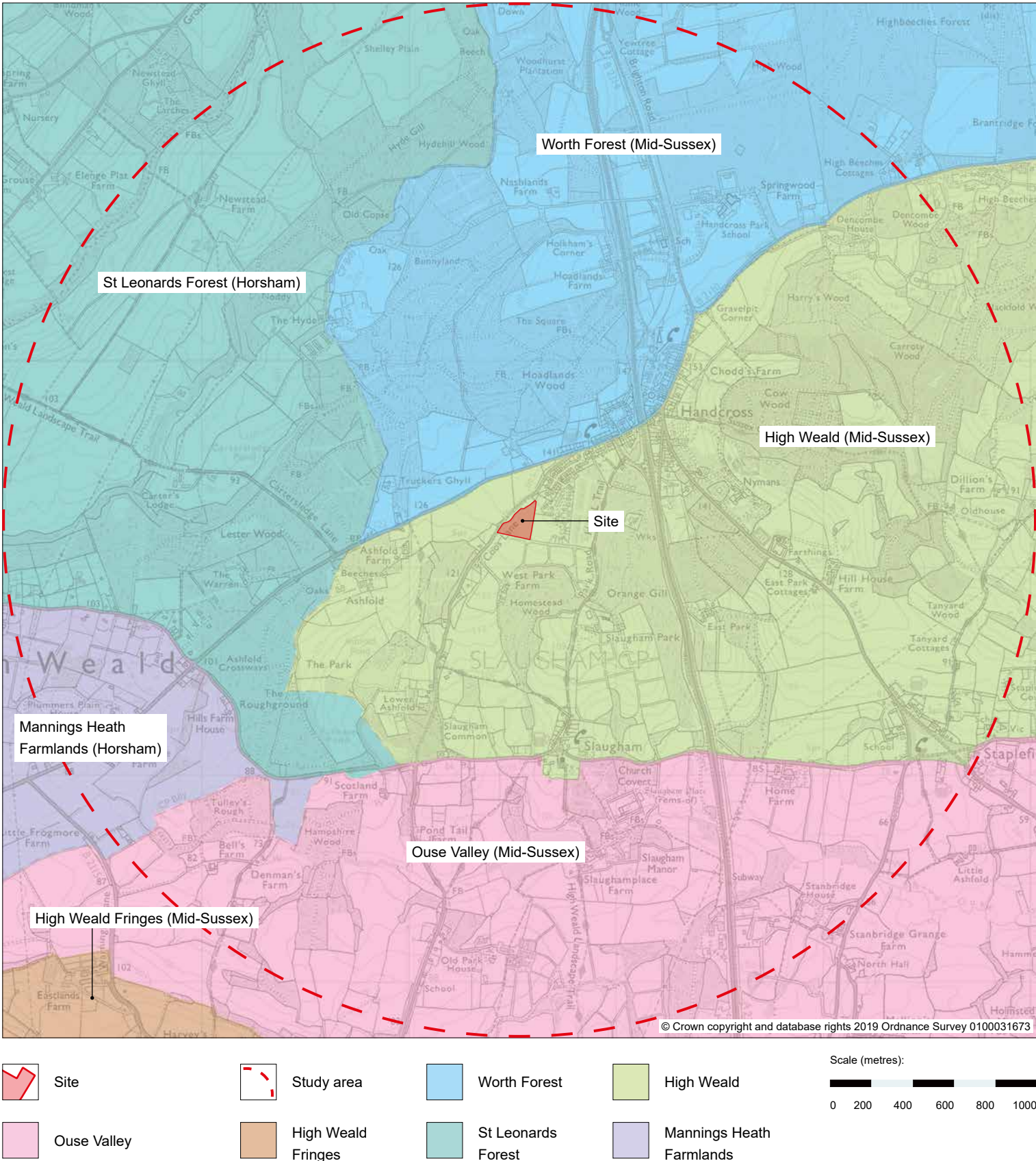
4.29 This character area is described as:

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.

4.30 The key characteristics of the area are described as follows:

- 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, driveways, 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.

Fig. 16: Ordnance Survey map indicating Landscape Character Areas



- 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.

4.31 The landscape and visual sensitivities are described as follows:

- 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.

Landscape Character Area 8: Worth Forest

4.32 This character area is described as:

Heavily-afforested, dissected plateau landscape enclosing a post-medieval rural landscape cut from the forest. Includes the western end of the High Weald Forest Ridge. Adjoins Crawley and the M23 Motorway.

4.33 The key characteristics of the area are described as follows:

- Densely wooded, confined, dissected plateau landscape with extensive coniferous and mixed afforestation.
- The Worth forests mark the plateau-like western end of the High Weald Forest Ridge, drained by the Rivers Mole and Ouse.

- Long views over the Low Weald to the downs but fewer long views north.
- Large, regularly-enclosed and some smaller, irregular, assart fields within a woodland setting comprising an arable and pastoral landscape enclosed by shaws, hedgerows and fencing.
- Despite the closeness of Crawley to the north, a secluded, tranquil nature exists in many parts of the forests.
- Clearance and re-planting of large tracts of ancient woodland.
- Heathland remnants and significant areas of rich woodland biodiversity.
- Spares network of ridge-top roads and lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.
- Sparse, dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads.
- Bounded to the west and north by the M23 Motorway and to the south east by the B2110.
- The London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area via the Balcombe Tunnel.
- Sizeable hammerponds, lakes and ponds.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timberframing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Exotic treescapes in places including rhododendron hedgerows.

4.34 The landscape and visual sensitivities are described as follows:

- Woodland and forest cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity.
- Large blocks of assart pastures impart breadth and depth to the scenic quality to the landscape.
- Heathland remnants and significant areas of rich woodland biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
- Network of lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths provides a rich terrain for horse-riding, cycling and walking and for the appreciation of nature.
- Sparse settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.