

LANDSCAPE CAPACITY	
<i>Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study (July 2007)</i>	
4.35	This study was commissioned “to assess the physical and environmental constraints on development in the District with a view to identifying the capacity of the Mid Sussex District landscape to accommodate future development.”
4.36	<p>The site is within Landscape Character Area 20: Handcross Southern High Weald which is described as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mixture of medium size pasture and woodland with occasional arable fields.• Fairly steep south facing slopes.• Large areas of early modern period.• A23 runs N-S through area.• Low boundary loss. <p>Landscape Sensitivity: Moderate</p> <p>Landscape Value: Substantial</p> <p>Landscape Capacity: Low</p>
4.37	The study states that an area with a low rating for landscape capacity “indicates that development would have a significant and detrimental effect on the character of the landscape as a whole and, or, on the setting to existing settlement or outstanding assets within the District.” but does go on to state that “Development in these character areas should only be small scale and proposals would need to demonstrate no adverse impacts on the setting to settlement or wider landscape.”
4.38	<p>The study also acknowledges that landscape capacity can vary across a character area and states that “proposals would need to respond to site-specific constraints, inherent landscape sensitivity and take account of its setting and potential impacts on the surrounding landscape.”</p> <p><i>Capacity of Mid Sussex District to accommodate development (June 2014)</i></p>
4.39	The overall aim of the study was “to provide a detailed and robust assessment of the constraints to development in Mid Sussex District, in order to understand the capacity of the District to accommodate development and identify the most sustainable areas for development.”

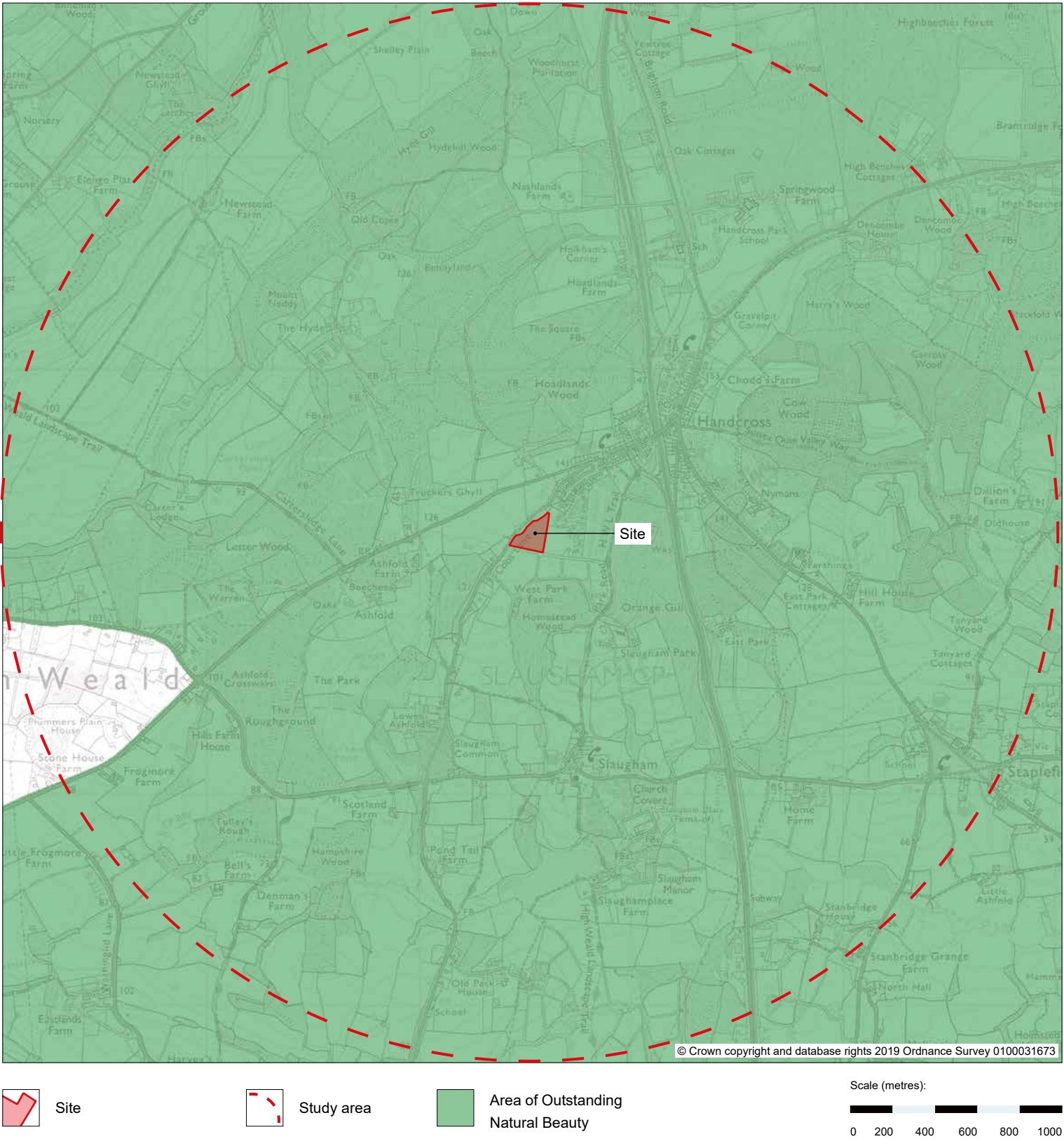
4.40	The study looked at four main areas - environmental designations, environmental issue and infrastructure, landscape capacity and sustainability.
4.41	The 2014 study identified additional character areas for assessment, and also redefined the criteria for assessing landscape sensitivity and landscape value.
4.42	<p>The redefined values for Area 20: Handcross Southern High Weald are as follows:</p> <p>Landscape Sensitivity: Moderate (taken from 2007 study)</p> <p>Landscape Value: Substantial (renamed Moderate/High) (taken from 2007 study)</p> <p>Landscape Capacity: Low/Medium (seven point scale from 2007 study simplified to five point scale)</p>
4.43	The study states that “It is important to note that these scores are only indicative of potential capacity and would need to be tested through more detailed assessment at the site-specific level when proposals for specific development locations are known.”
4.44	A Low/medium capacity rating indicates that “development is likely to have an adverse effect on most of the character area and while smaller development may be possible in a very few locations within the character area, it will not be suitable for strategic scale development.”

AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

High Weald

- 4.45 The site (and the whole of the village of Handcross) is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as shown in **Figure 17**.
- 4.46 AONBs are outstanding landscapes with distinctive character and natural beauty, designated in recognition of their national importance.
- 4.47 The High Weald AONB is a medieval landscape of wooded, rolling hills studded with sandstone outcrops; small, irregular-shaped fields; scattered farmsteads; and ancient routeways.
- The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024*
- 4.48 This Plan has been formally adopted by all 15 local authorities covering the High Weald AONB as their policy for management of the AONB. The Plan takes a character-led approach in setting out the long term policy objectives and short term targets for conserving and enhancing natural beauty.
- 4.49 The Plan identifies five key components of character that combine in a distinctive pattern to define the natural beauty of the High Weald landscape:
- Field and heath
 - Woodlands
 - Geology, landform, water systems and climate
 - Routeways
 - Settlement
- 4.50 The Plan provides a set of objectives for each of these components of natural beauty, which can be used as criteria against which to judge the predicted landscape impact of proposed development. The High Weald AONB Partnership have also produced maps for each parish within the AONB, which show different aspects of landscape character, and map features relevant to the five components listed above. The maps for Slaugham parish are shown on the following pages.

Fig. 17: Ordnance Survey map indicating the High Weald AONB.

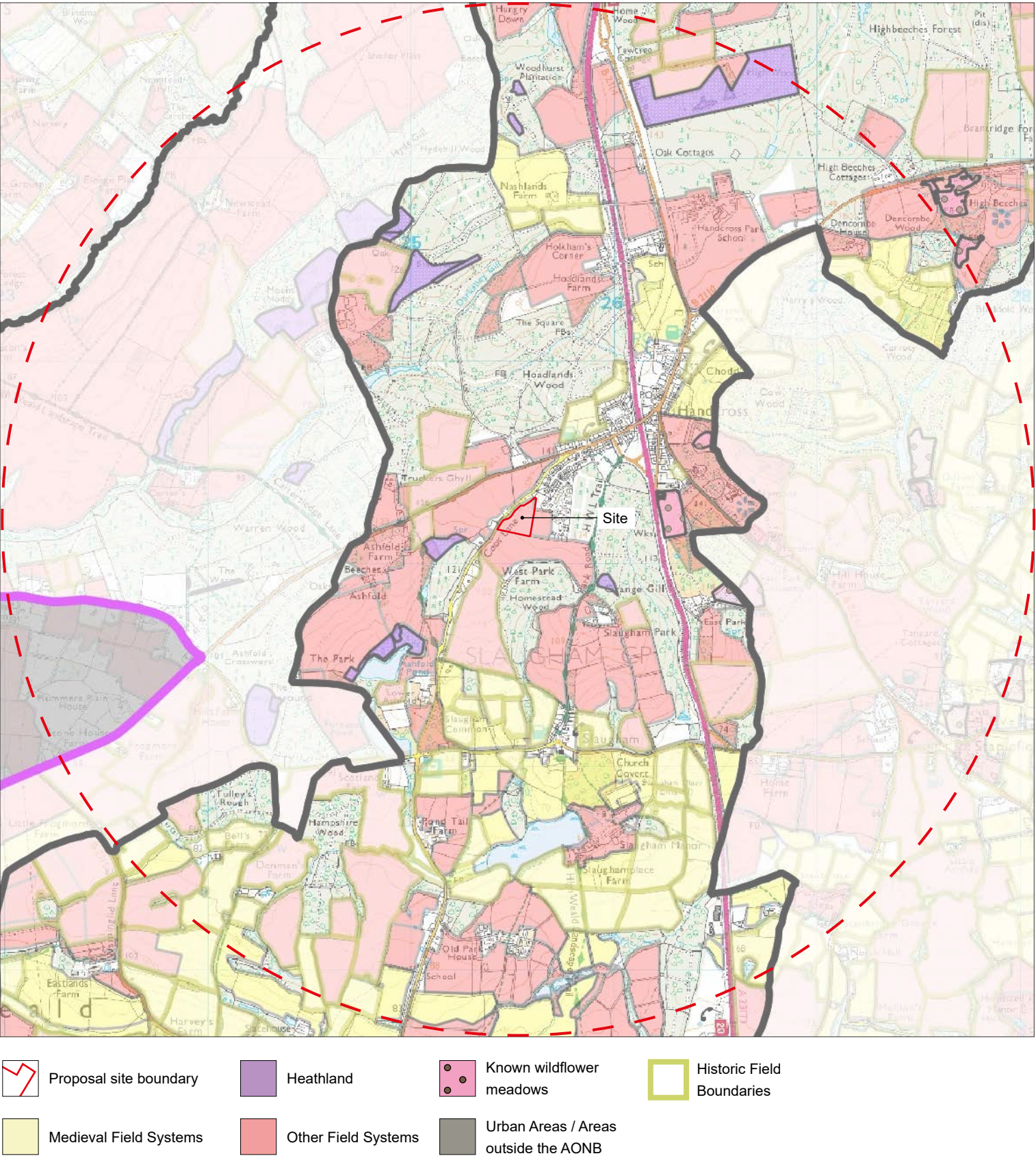


Field and Heath

‘The High Weald AONB is characterized by small, irregularly shaped and productive fields often bounded by (and forming a mosaic with) hedgerows and small woodlands, and typically used for livestock grazing; small holdings; and a nondominant agriculture; within which can be found distinctive zones of heaths and inned river valleys.’

- 4.51 The High Weald AONB Landscape Character Maps for Slaugham Parish identify historic field boundaries and field systems, heathland and wildflower meadows as shown in the map extract in **Figure 18**.
- 4.52 ‘Other Field Systems’ is the predominant field system across the study area. Areas of medieval field system are mainly located on the valley floor in the southern part of the study area apart from some small areas to the north of Handcross village.
- 4.53 There are numerous historic field boundaries across the study area, but there is a greater abundance on the valley floor in the southern part of the study area.
- 4.54 There are small pockets of heathland and wildflower meadows scattered throughout the study area.
- 4.55 The site itself is classified as ‘Other Field Systems’ and the north-west boundary of the site adjacent to Coos Lane is identified as an historic field boundary.

Fig. 18: Extract from High Weald AONB landscape character map indicating areas of Field and Heath.



Ancient Woodland

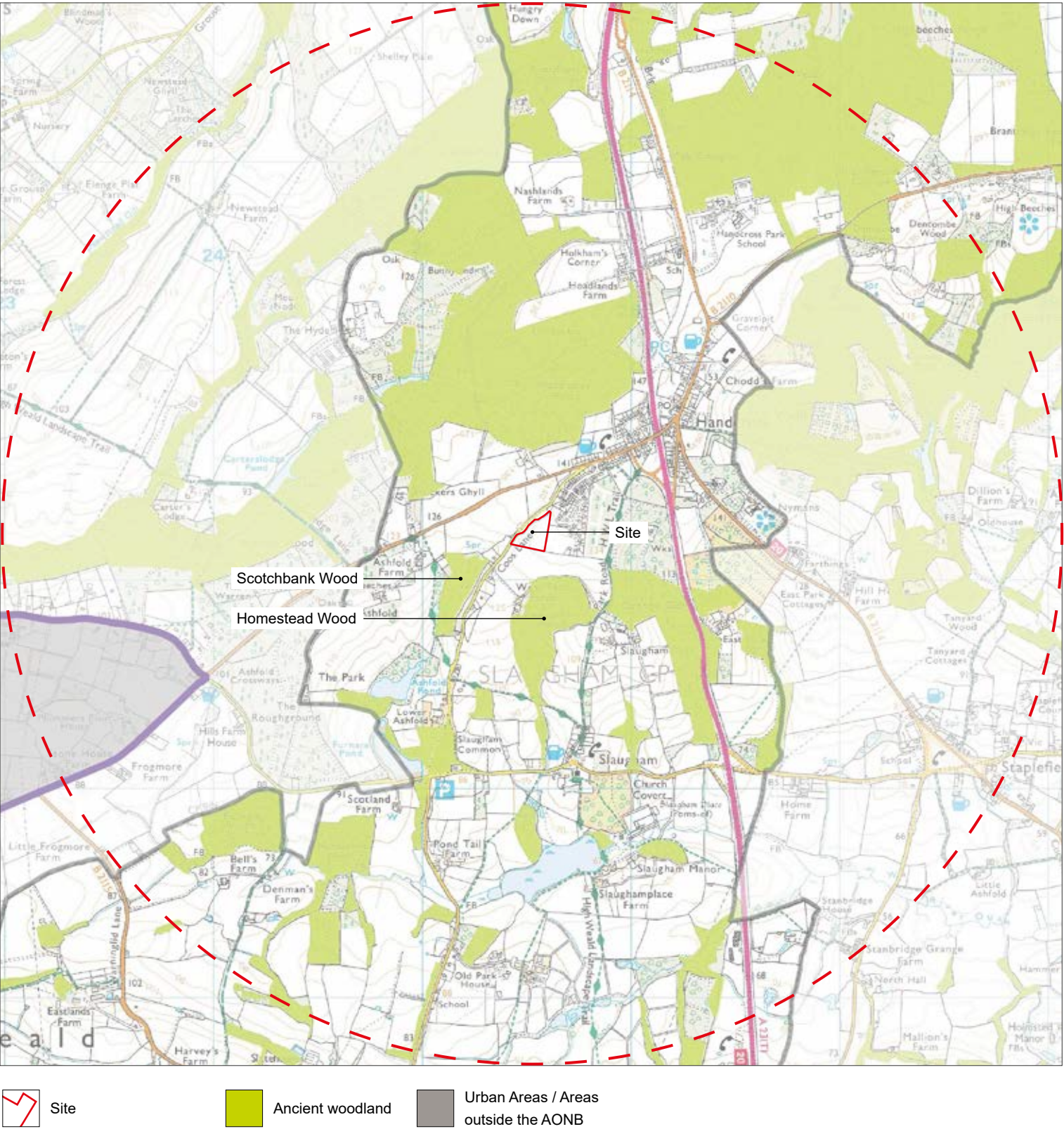
‘The High Weald AONB is characterized by the great extent of ancient woods, gills, and shaws in small holdings, the value of which is inextricably linked to long-term management.’

4.56 The High Weald AONB Landscape Character Maps for Slaugham Parish indicate that there are no areas of ancient woodland within or immediately adjacent to the site, as shown in **Figure 19**.

4.57 The closest areas of ancient woodland to the site are:

- Homestead Wood, located approximately 125m south of the proposal site and separated from it by farmland.
- Scotchbank Wood, located approximately 125m south-west of the proposal site and separated from it by Coos Lane and Nostra Cottage.

Fig. 19: Extract from High Weald AONB landscape character map indicating areas of Ancient Woodland.

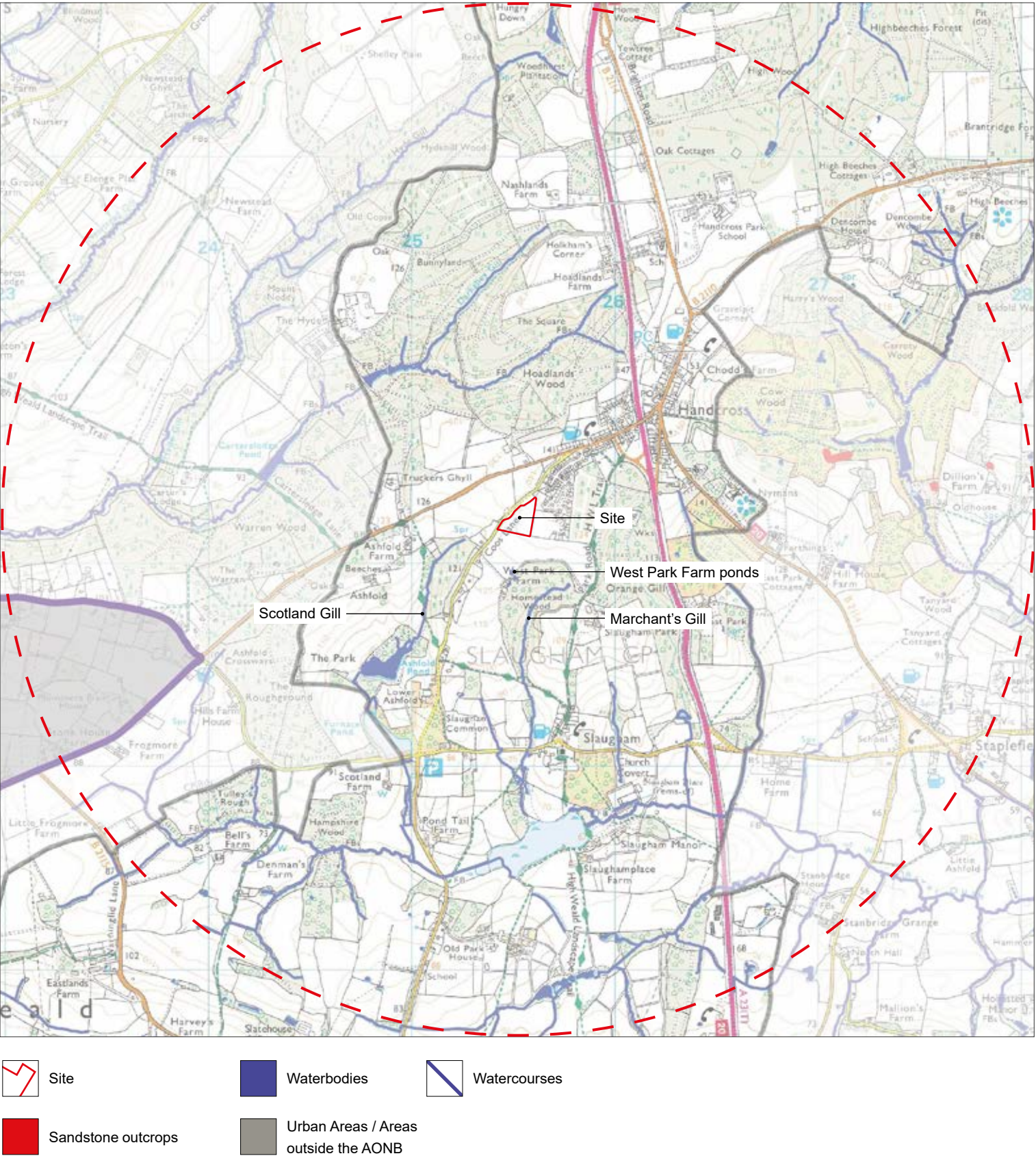


Geology, Landform, Water Systems and Climate

‘The High Weald AONB is characterized by a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone. The ridges tend east-west, and from them spring numerous gill streams that form the headwaters of rivers. Wide river valleys dominate the eastern part of the AONB.’

- 4.58 The High Weald AONB Landscape Character Maps for Slaugham Parish identify water bodies, watercourses and sandstone outcrops as shown on the map extract in **Figure 20**.
- 4.59 There are a network of watercourses throughout the study area, principally to the south of the site, where numerous ghyll tributaries form the upper catchment of the River Ouse. To the north of the site ghyll streams form the upper catchment of the River Arun.
- 4.60 The closest watercourses to the site are:
- Scotland Gill, located approximately 175m west of the site at its closest point.
 - Marchant's Gill, located approximately 300m south-east of the site at its closest point.
- 4.61 The closest water bodies to the site are a cluster of ponds associated with West Park Farm, located approximately 180m south of the site.
- 4.62 There are a small number of sandstone outcrops within the study area, all to the east of the site. The closest is located in Pookchurch Wood, approximately 1.5km from the site.

Fig. 20: Extract from High Weald AONB landscape character map indicating Geology, Landform, Water Systems.

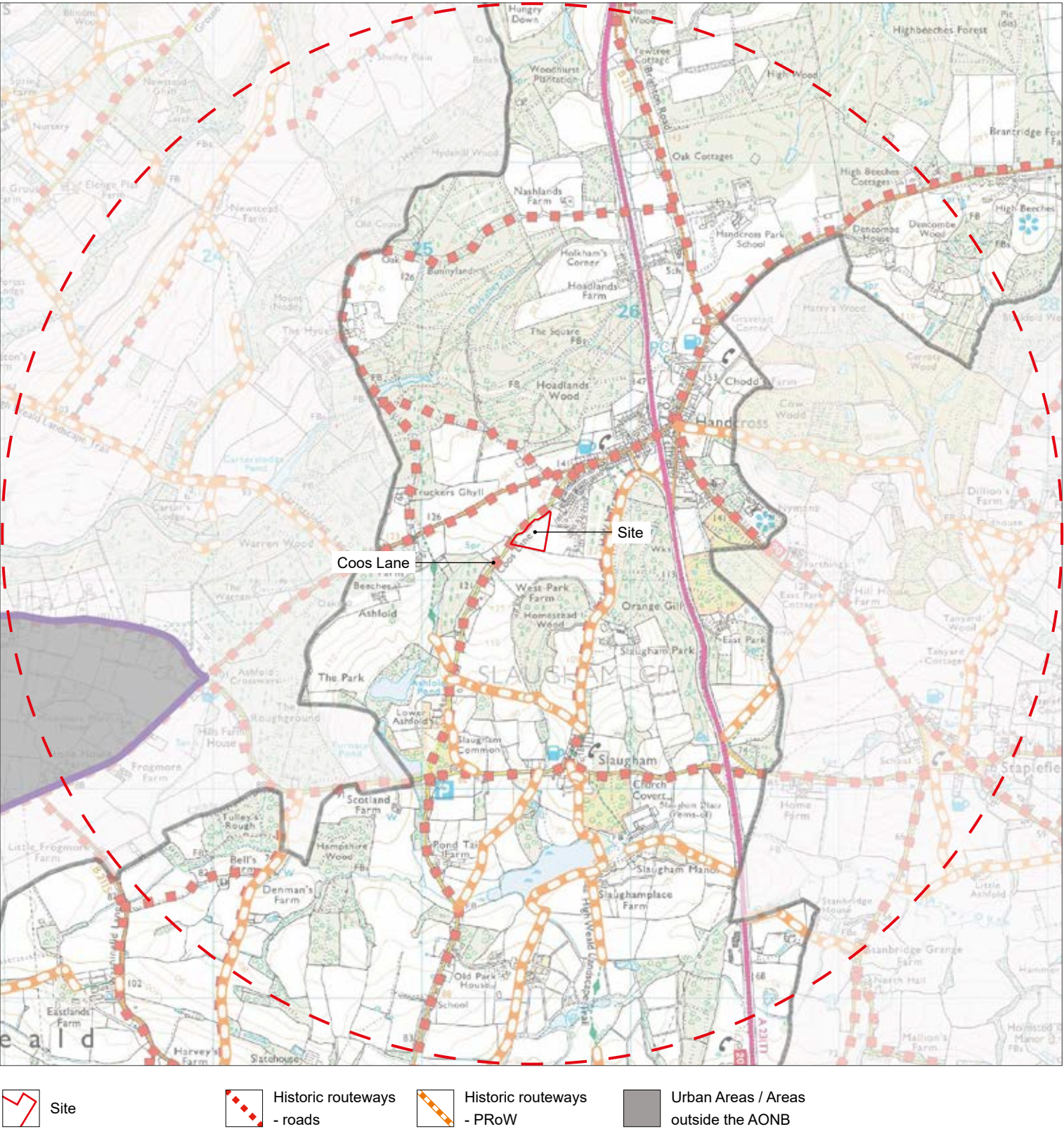


Routeways

‘The High Weald AONB is characterized by ancient routeways (now roads, tracks and paths) in the form of ridge-top roads and a dense system of radiating droveways. Ancient routeways are often narrow, deeply sunken, and edged with trees, hedges, wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks.’

- 4.63 The High Weald AONB Landscape Character Maps for Slaugham Parish identify historic routeways as shown in the map extract in **Figure 21**.
- 4.64 There is a network of historic routeways within the study area, converging on the villages of Handcross, Slaugham and Staplefield, the closest to the site is an historic routeway (road) along Coos Lane, immediately to the west of the site.

Fig. 21: Extract from High Weald AONB landscape character map indicating Historic Routeways.

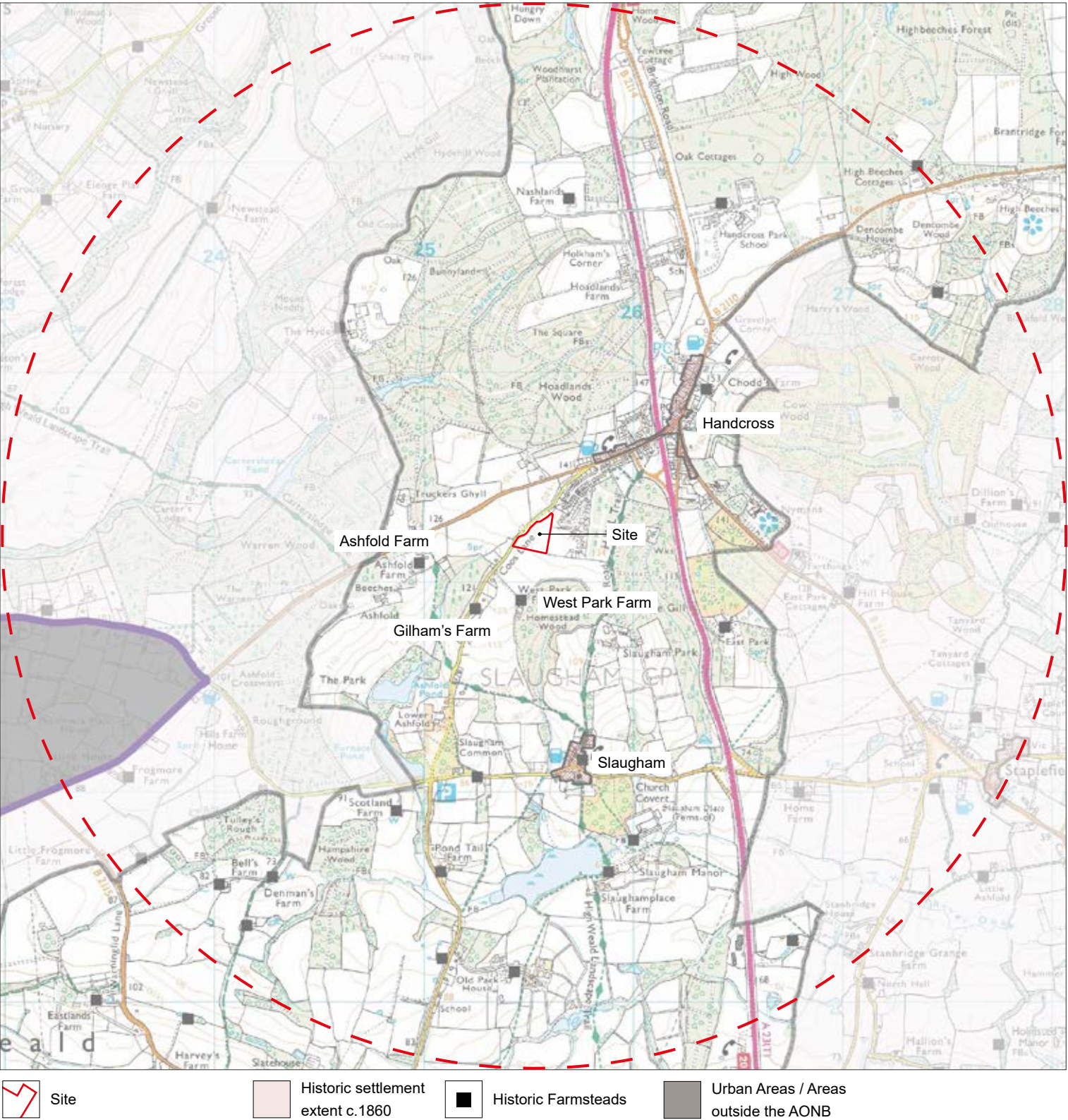


Settlement

‘The High Weald AONB is characterized by dispersed historic settlements of farmsteads and hamlets, and late medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.’

- 4.65 The High Weald AONB Landscape Character Maps for Slaugham Parish identify historic settlements and historic farmsteads as shown in the map extract **Figure 22**.
- 4.66 There are a number of historic farmsteads within the study area, mainly to the south of the site, the closest being:
- West Park Farm, located approximately 230m south of the site, separated from it by farmland and dense field boundary vegetation.
 - Gilham’s Farm, located approximately 330m south-west of the site, separated from it by farmland and residential properties and roadside vegetation along Coos Lane.
 - Ashfold Farm, located approximately 450m west of the site, separated from it by farmland and roadside vegetation along Coos Lane.
- 4.67 There are two historic settlements within the study area:
- Handcross, located approximately 350m north-east of the site, separated from it by the modern residential development on Covert Mead and West Park Road.
 - Slaugham, located approximately 850m south of the site, separated from it by farmland and woodland.

Fig. 22: Extract from High Weald AONB landscape character map indicating Historic Settlement.

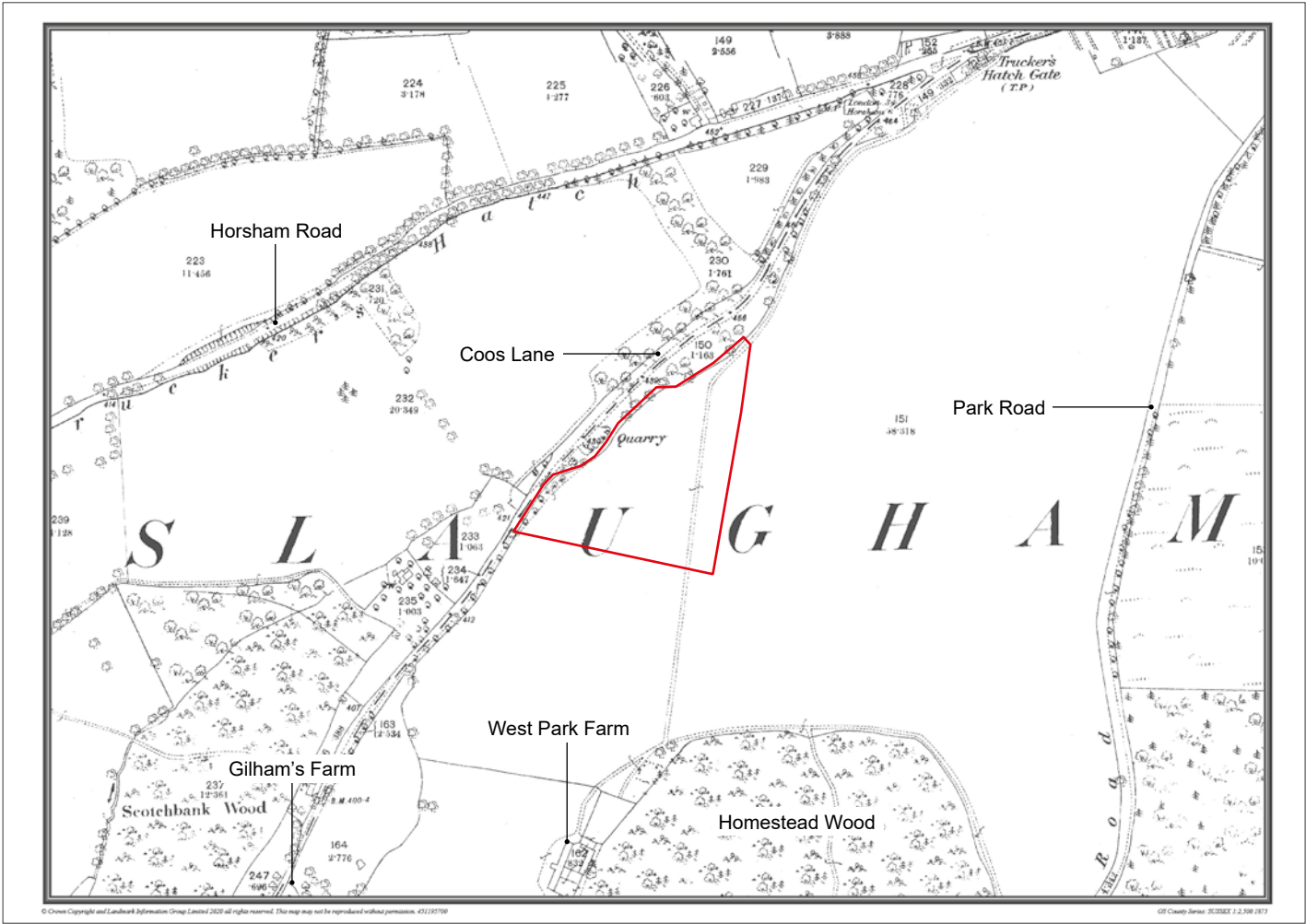


HISTORIC ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPPING

- 4.68 The historic Ordnance Survey maps (Figures 23-26) show the proposal site and its surroundings between 1875 and 1957 and are included for context in this baseline study.
- 4.69 The 1875 map (Figure 23) shows a predominantly rural, agricultural landscape of varying sized, irregular fields, and areas of woodland. There is a field of rough pasture east of Park Road.
- 4.70 A number of features are still present today including the modern road network of the B2110 Horsham Road, Coos Lane, and Park Road, together with Scotchbank Wood, Homestead Wood and West Park Farm. The edge of Gilham's Farm is also just visible.
- 4.71 Coos Lane appears as a heavily treed track with a small quarry adjacent.
- 4.72 The site is shown as part of a large, open field with a path running north-south across it.

- 4.73 The 1897 map (Figure 24) shows little change to the landscape pattern of the area with the predominantly agricultural and wooded landscape still clear.
- 4.74 Highbury Cottages are shown at the northern edge of the map, and a glasshouse structure is present on the opposite side of the road - these represent the southern extremity of Handcross village. Nostra Cottage now appears on Coos Lane.
- 4.75 There are some minor changes to the field pattern in the northern part of the map, and the area of rough pasture now appears as wood pasture and has expanded to the occupy the next field to the north.
- 4.76 The site shows no change since the previous map, but there is an additional small quarry adjacent to the site on Coos Lane.

Fig. 23: OS Map 1875.




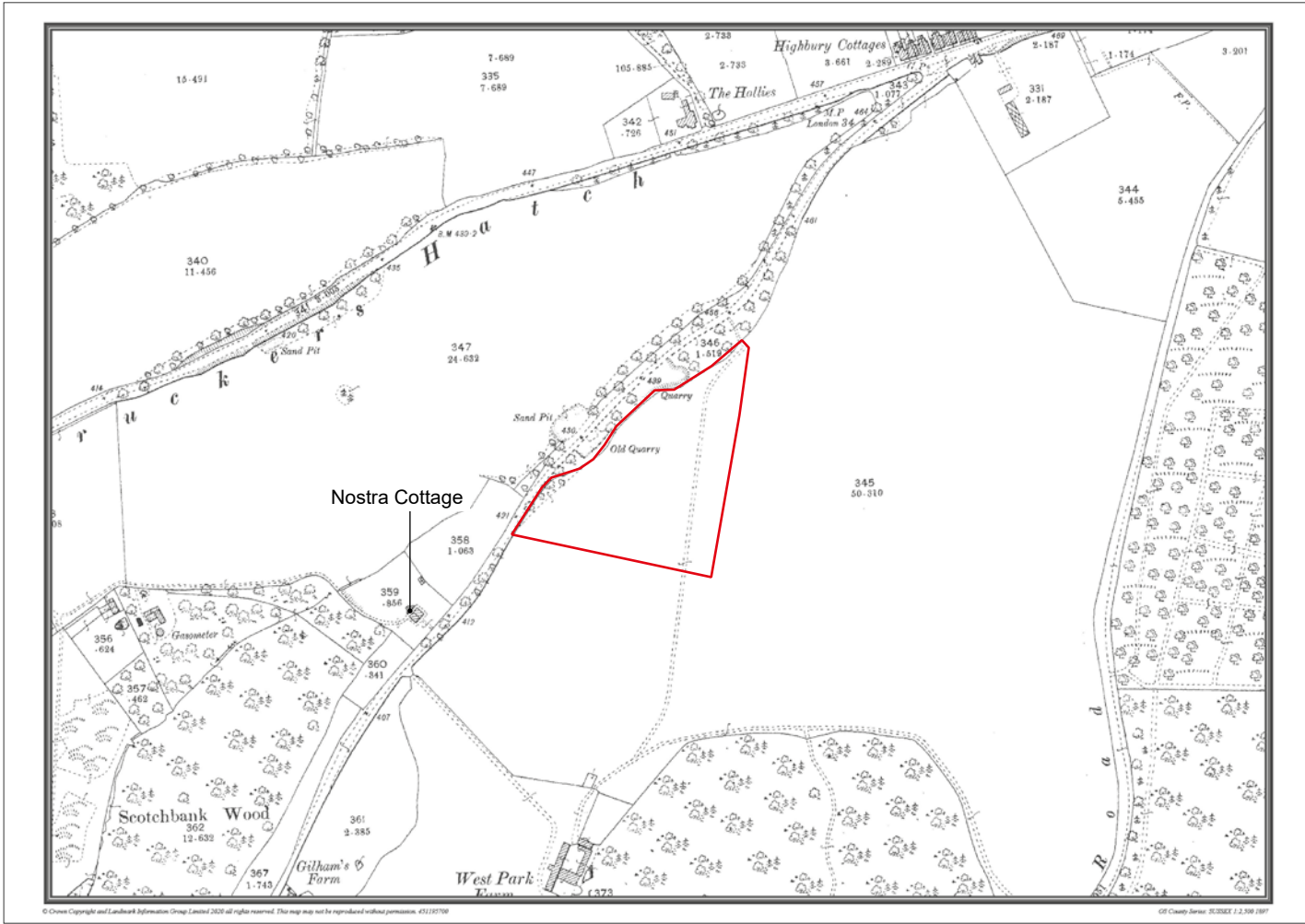

 Proposal site boundary

Fig. 24: OS Map 1897.



 Proposal site boundary

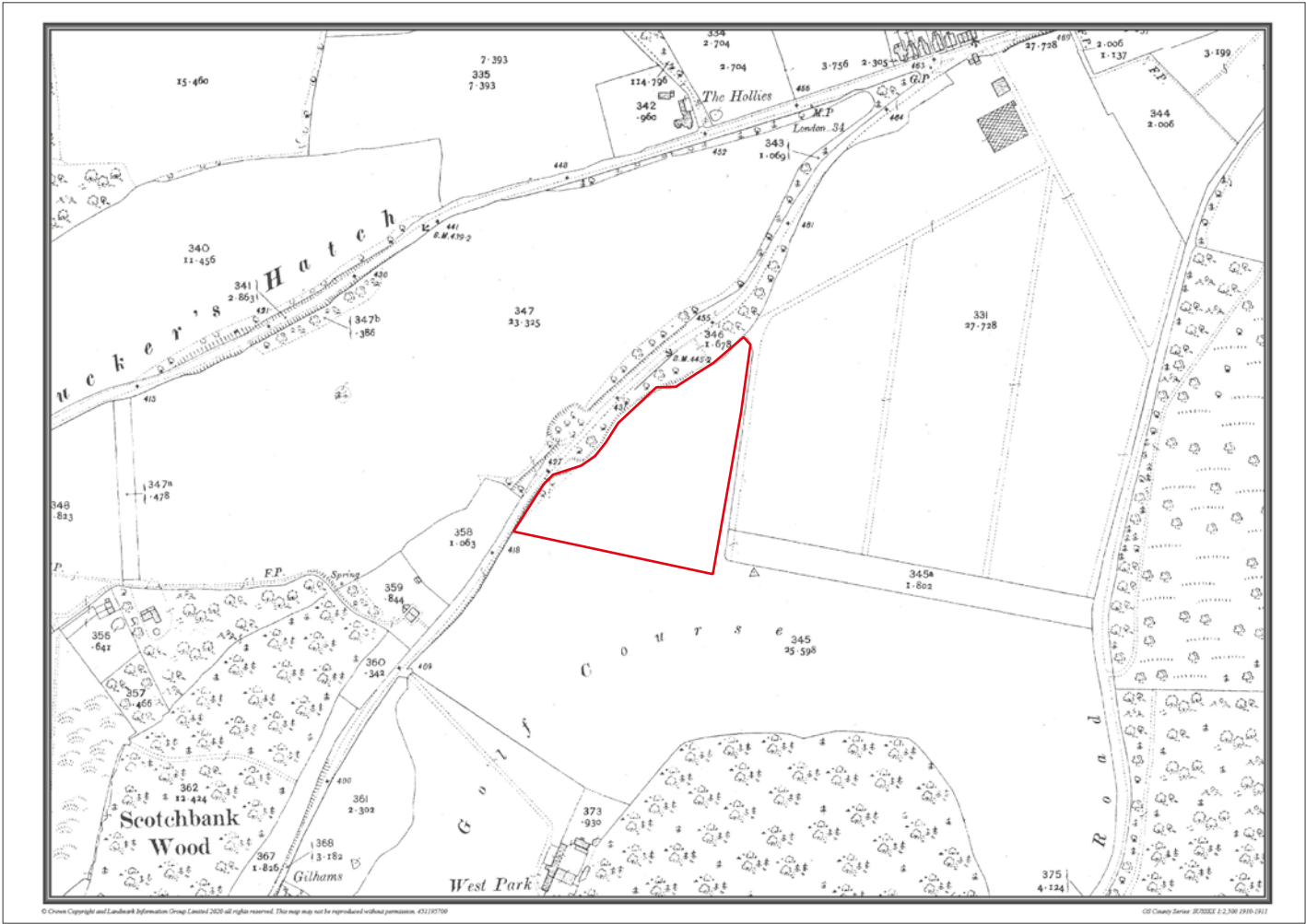
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ST. MARTIN CLOSE WEST, HANDCROSS, WEST SUSSEX

PLANNING

- 4.77 The 1910 map (**Figure 25**) shows some erosion of the agricultural landscape between Coos Lane and Park Road but the wider landscape pattern of fields, woodland and historic routes remains.
- 4.78 On land to the north and east of the site the glasshouse is now a much larger structure and the adjacent land shows a number of connected tracks indicating a change of use. To the south of the site, the field is now shown as a golf course - West Park Golf Club founded in 1896.
- 4.79 The site shows no change since the previous map, although it may have been part of the golf course as there is no boundary indicated..

- 4.80 The 1957 map (**Figure 26**) shows the most significant changes, again centred on the land between Coos Lane and Park Road. The post-WW2 expansion of Handcross village is evident with residential development shown on the south side of Horsham Road and Covert Mead together with the formation of allotment gardens and the setting out of West Park Road.
- 4.81 Further east is a conifer plantation with a network of regular tracks
- 4.82 The golf course is no longer shown (the golf club was wound up before the start of WW2 and land returned to agriculture) and there are additional field boundaries to the south-east of the site. There are also a small number of new buildings shown on Coos Lane.
- 4.83 Away from these changes, the wider landscape pattern of fields, woodland and historic routes remains.
- 4.84 The site shows new trees along the Coos Lane boundary since the previous map.

Fig. 25: OS Map 1910.




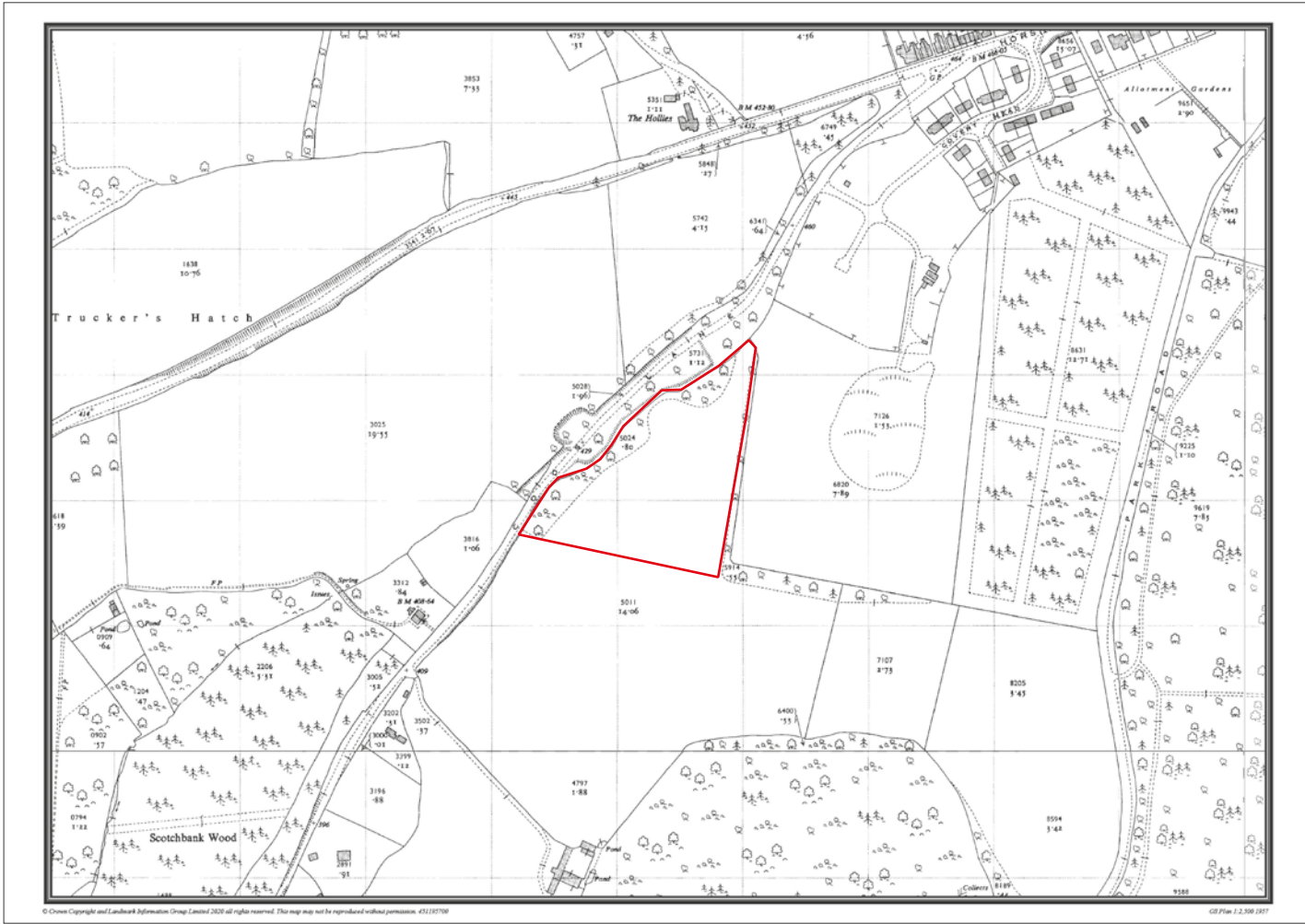

 Proposal site boundary

Fig. 26: OS Map 1957.



 Proposal site boundary

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION

- 4.85 The following information is based on a search of the Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) provided by West Sussex County Council Historic Environment Record (WSCC HER Reference Number: 2019-125)
- 4.86 The HLC identifies units of land based on their historic landscape attributes. These units are assigned character types, and it is the combination of these types that identifies the general historic character of an area.
- 4.87 The HLC describes the landscape initially using Broad Character Types (the least detailed level of characterisation typology), Sub-Types and finally an 'interpretation of character'.
- 4.88 The HLC of Sussex describes the rural landscape as:
- "a landscape dominated by fields created by either the enclosure of parcels of land or by clearance of woodland and waste (assarts). This landscape is called 'Fieldsapes' in the Sussex HLC. In close association with groups of fields are settlements interlinked by routeways. Fields of all types make up over half the land use cover across Sussex covering 21,7670 ha (58% of the total digitised area). Sussex is also a well wooded landscape comprising 62,629 ha or 17% of the total digitised area. Large areas of woodland are especially dominant in the High Weald to the east of the historic county, around Crawley in the areas of former historic 'Forests' and across the tops of the western South Downs. However across the High Weald the woodland is dense but fragmented."*
- 4.89 The HLC highlights a strong division in the historic landscape character between the High and Low Weald and the rest of Sussex:
- "the Weald is less diverse but with a finer grained composition of the landscape. Fields, woods and settlement are generally intimately inter-mixed – linked by a network of narrow roads, lanes, and paths. By contrast the rest of Sussex has a much more coarse-grained and diverse character with generally larger blocks of fields, woods and more nucleated settlement. Large designed parkscapes are frequent and much of the landscape has a more open and expansive feel about it, particularly in West Sussex along the Downs. Historically the Weald was systematically settled much later than the Downs and the Coastal Plain, the consequence of several geological and topographical factors and has subsequently undergone less change than those areas of Sussex which have a long history of settlement going back to the earliest farmers."*

4.90 Regarding settlement, the HLC states that:

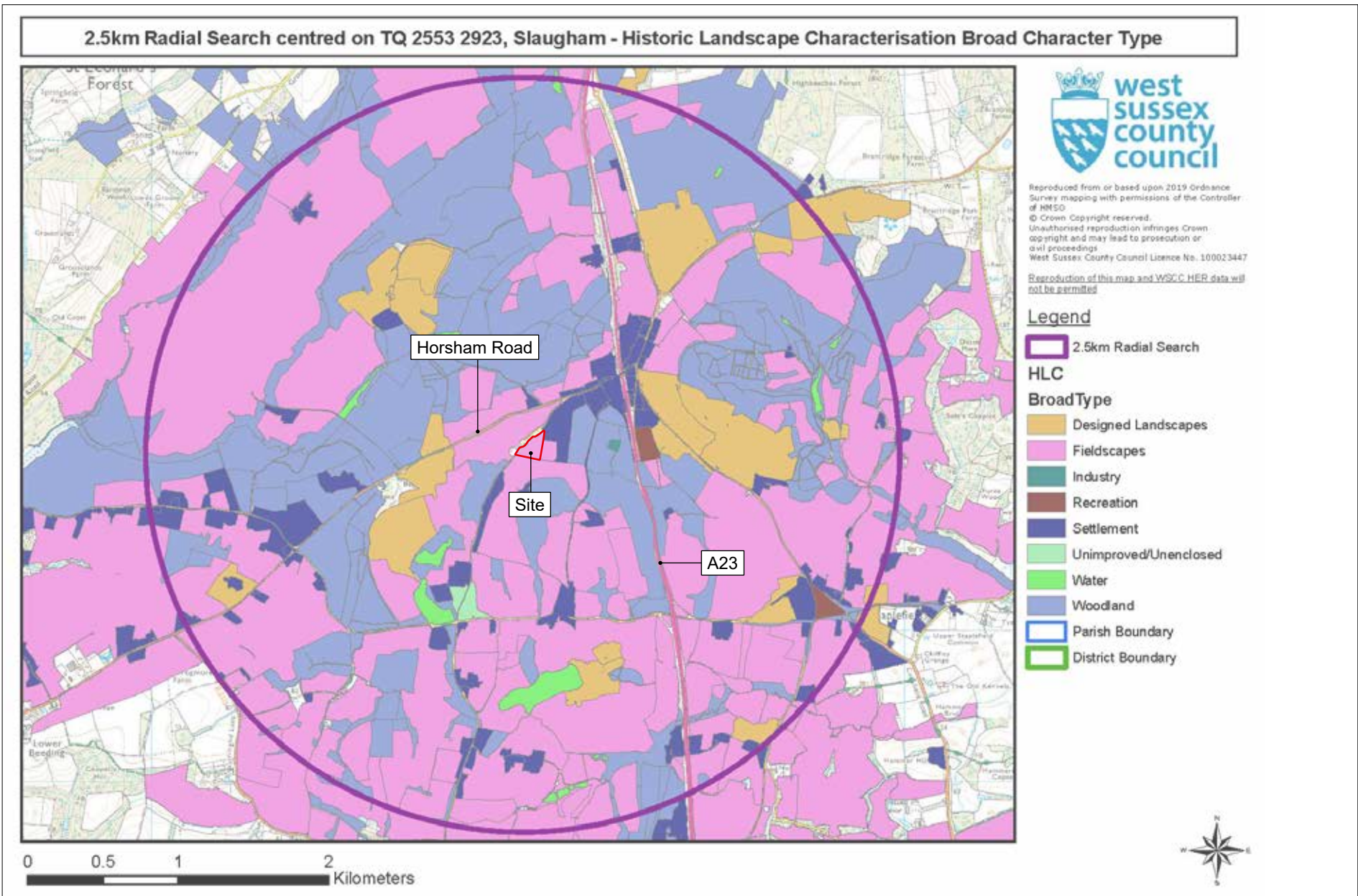
"over 10% of Sussex can be defined as settlement and this includes not only towns and villages but also farmsteads and dispersed settlement. The main areas of urban and suburban settlement now are concentrated along the Coastal Plain, from Rye to Bognor. The Roman city of Chichester lies further inland on the Coastal Plain on Stane Street. Smaller historic towns occur inland along the scarp foot of the South Downs. With the development of the railway network from London dating from the 1840s, towns like Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath and East Grinstead expanded from small rural villages and hamlets. The large conurbation of Crawley is a 20th century "new town" developed from a small village spreading on to former farmland, "forest" and common land. However across the Low and High Weald the historic character of dispersed farmsteads and small hamlets dominate the settlement pattern."

4.91 **Figure 27** shows the broad character types within the study area, and highlights the following:

- 'Fieldsapes' and 'Woodland' are the dominant broad character types.
- A number of 'Designed Landscapes' also occupy a large proportion of the area.
- Scattered 'Settlement', Handcross being the largest.

4.92 The site is identified as 'Fieldsapes' and is part of the area between Horsham Road and the A23 that is dominated by 'Fieldsapes' and 'Woodland'. The 'Settlement' character type covering Handcross immediately adjoins the site to the north east.

Fig. 27: Sussex HLC - Broad Character Type.

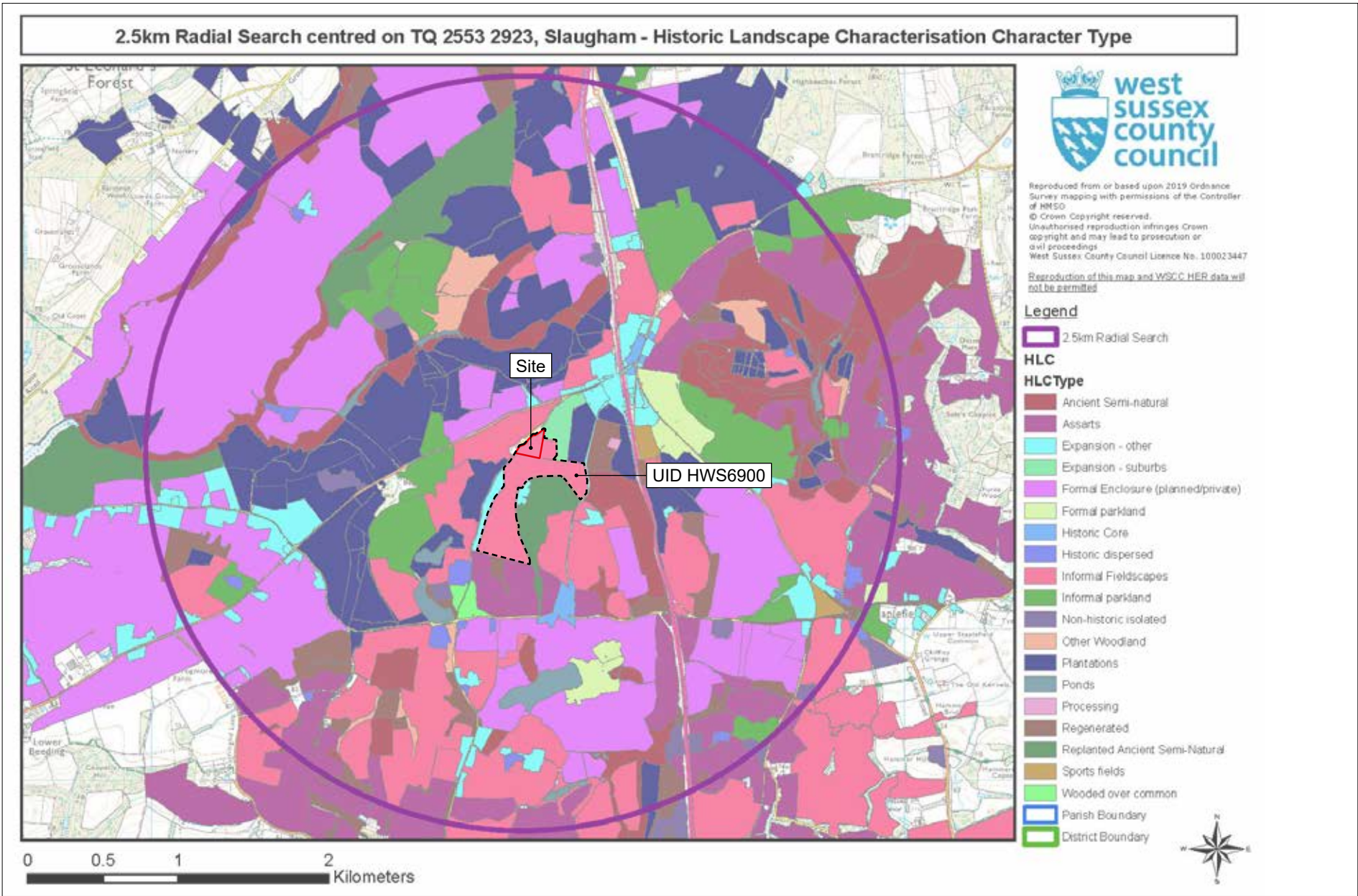


- 4.93 **Figure 28** shows the more fine-grained Character Sub-Types for the study area.
- 4.94 The 'Fieldsapes' Broad Character Type is sub-divided into Assarts, Formal Enclosure and Informal Fieldsapes, all of which are present within the study area. 'Informal Fieldsapes' covers the site and adjoining fields, and represent 51% of the 'Fieldsapes' Broad Character Type or 29% of the total HLC area.
- 4.95 The Historic Landscape Characterisation report provides an additional 'Interpretation of Character' for the area covering the site (UID HWS6900). This is described as 'Regular piecemeal enclosure', which is a 'Common' type within the Broad Character Type (14.8%) and 'Occasional' within the total HLC area.

"Regular piecemeal enclosure is identified by regular or semi-regular shaped fields with wavy and or straight boundaries, creating a regular field pattern, but not obviously planned or formal. The boundaries are generally formed of hedgerows rather than woody shaws."

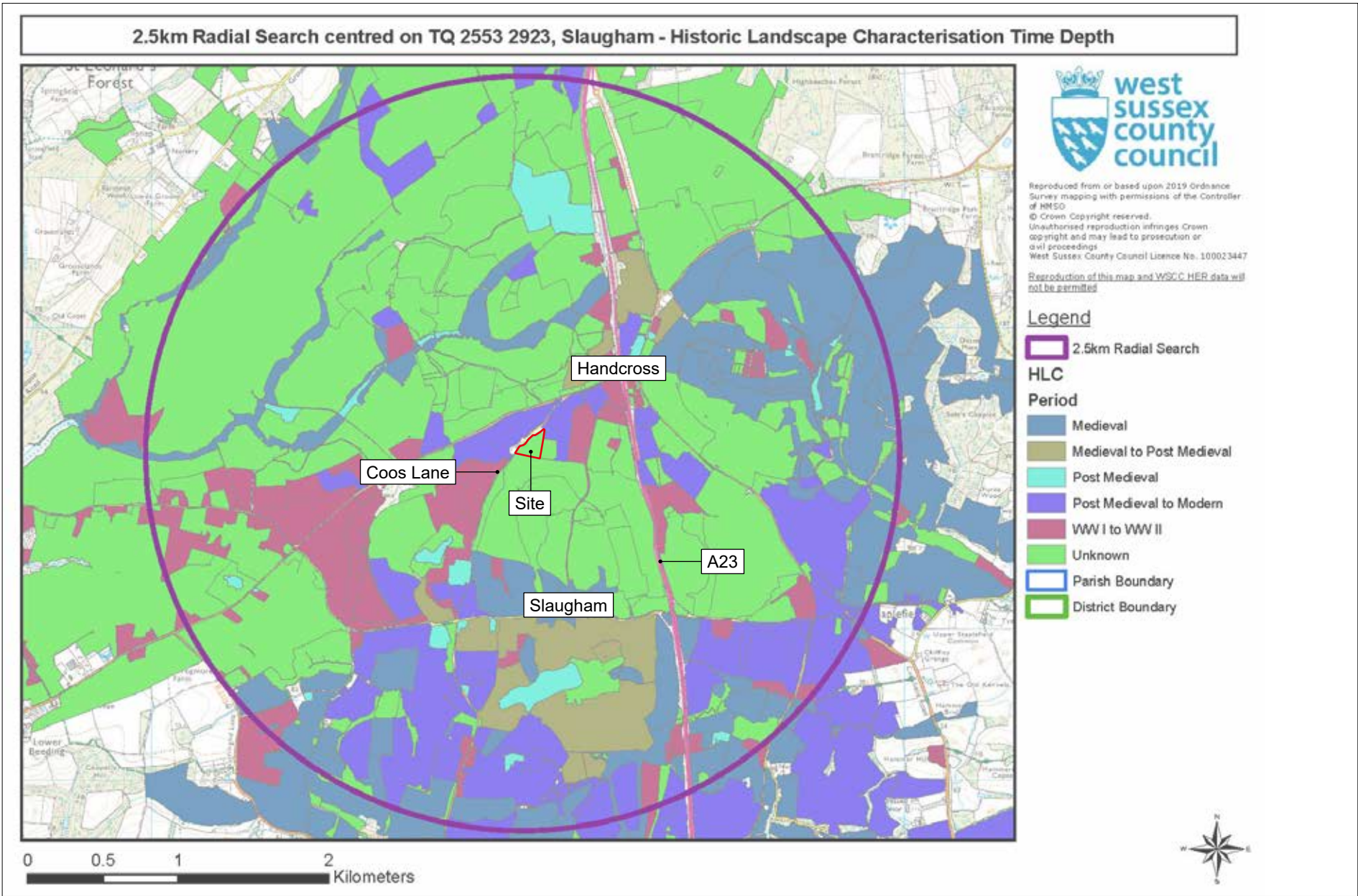
- 4.96 The external boundary character for the area is defined by road and settlement edge.
- 4.97 The previous types associated with this UID are "Designed Landscapes" broad character type and "Informal parkland" sub-type, which relates to the historical location within Slaugham New Park (part of St. Leonards Forest).
- 4.98 The 'Settlement' Broad Character Type covering Handcross is sub-divided into the 'Historic Core' of the village, and 'Expansion - Other' covering regular planned housing on the edges of the historic core and on routeways away from the historic core.
- 4.99 Immediately adjoining the site to the north-east is an area of 'Expansion - Suburbs' covering the modern development at Covert Mead, West Park Road and St Martin Close.

Fig. 28: Sussex HLC - Character Sub-Type.



- 4.100 **Figure 29** shows the time-depth of the present landscape (the projected period of origin for each historic character type) and highlights the following:
- 4.101 The site is indicated as being on the northern edge of a large swathe of 'Unknown' time-depth stretching from Coos Lane eastwards to the A23. To the north and east of the site, the existing residential development of Covert Mead / West Park Road / St Martin Close is shown as 'Post-Medieval to Modern'.
- 4.102 The majority of the search area is shown as 'Unknown' with some large areas of 'WWI - WWII'. 'Medieval' and 'Medieval to Post-Medieval' areas are concentrated to the east of Handcross and south of Slaugham.

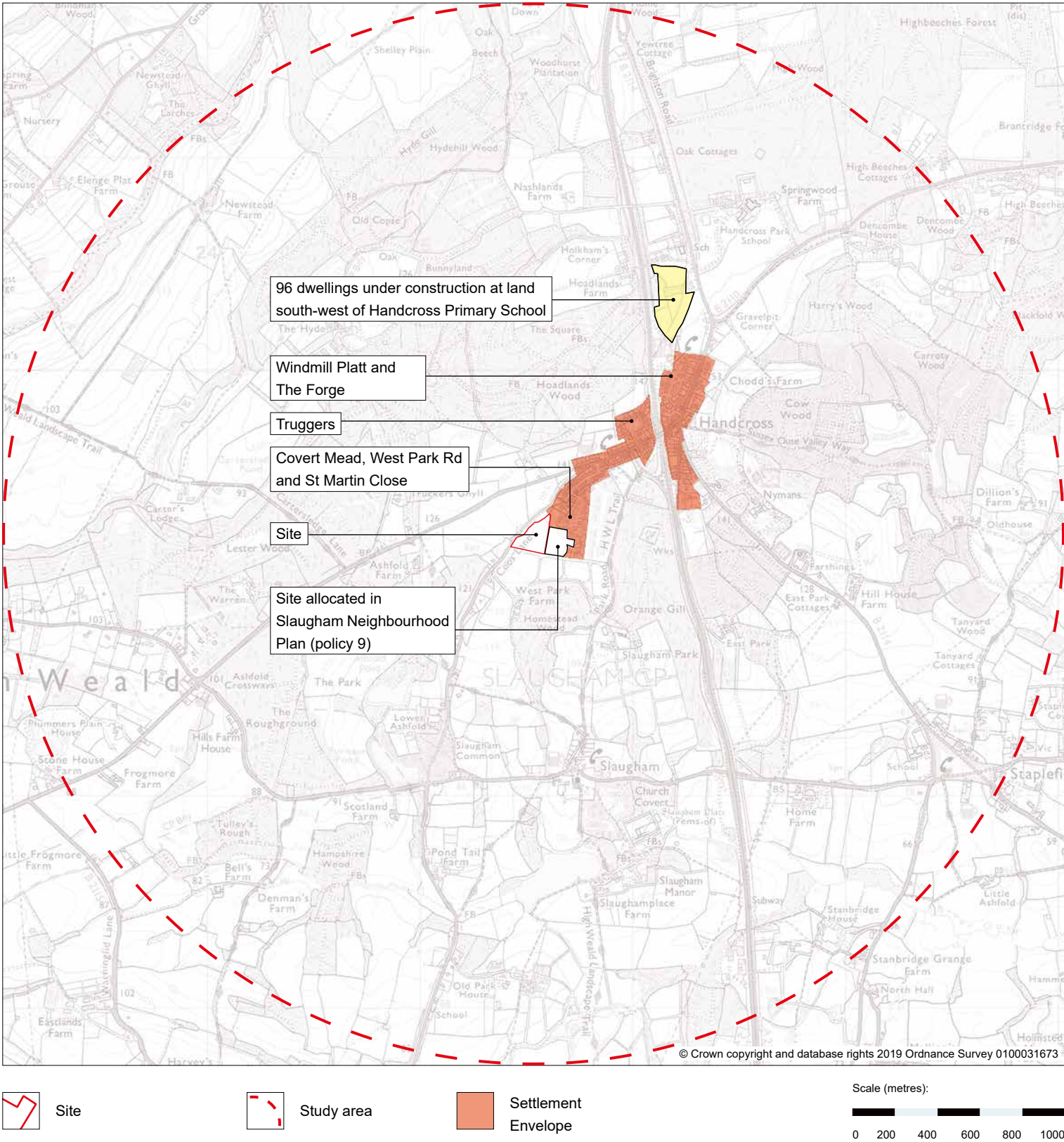
Fig. 29: Sussex HLC - Time Depth.



SETTLEMENT ENVELOPE

- 4.103 The defined settlement envelopes of existing built up areas within the study area are shown on **Figure 30**. This is taken from the built-up area boundaries shown on the Mid Sussex District Plan Policies Maps.
- 4.104 There is only one defined ‘built-up area’ located within the study area:
- Handcross.
- 4.105 The settlement envelope of Handcross encompasses the historic core of the village which is linear in nature, along the High Street and Horsham Road. It also includes the post-WW2 residential developments at Truggers, Windmill Platt / The Forge and Covert Mead / West Park Road / St Martin Close which have extended the envelope out from the historic linear core. However, it does not include the residential development under construction on land to the south-west of the primary school, which extends the settlement envelope much further to the north.
- 4.106 The proposal site (in conjunction with the adjacent site also allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan) is located immediately adjacent to the south-western corner of Handcross.

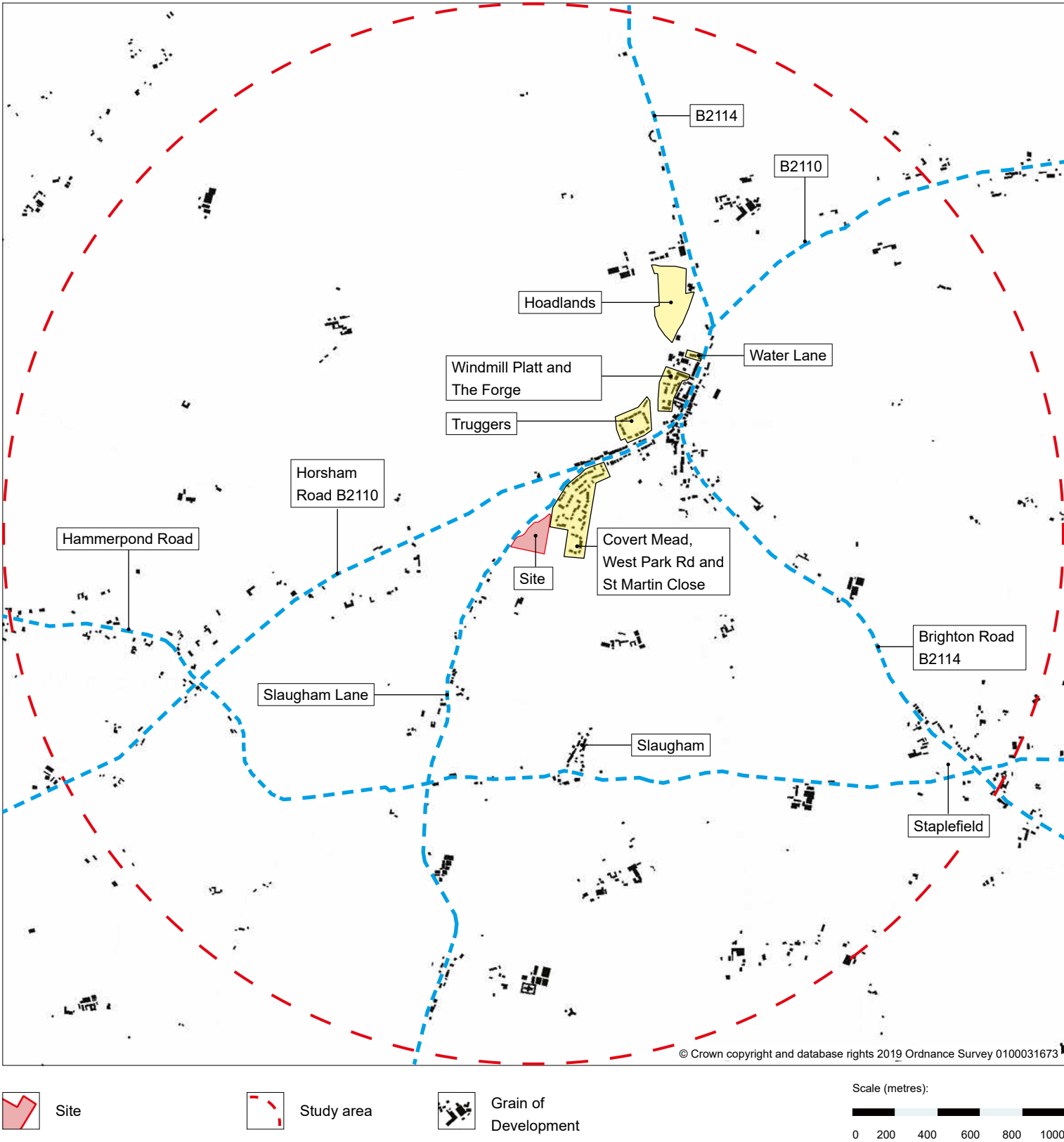
Fig. 30: Ordnance Survey map indicating extent of settlement envelope



URBAN GRAIN

- 4.107 The urban grain of the study area is shown on **Figure 31**.
- 4.108 The diagram clearly shows the largely rural character of the study area with no large settlements. Handcross village is discernible, being the largest area of built development in the study area.
- 4.109 The historic core of the village is evident in the tight grain of properties on the High Street and Horsham Road with little or no set-back from the road.
- 4.110 Larger scale forms are introduced into the development pattern of the village in the form of commercial buildings at the junction of Horsham Road and Brighton Road, and a mixture of commercial and community buildings set back from the High Street near Water Lane.
- 4.111 Truggers housing development built in 1947 introduced a new building pattern into the village in the form of semi-detached houses around a large central green.
- 4.112 Additional areas of modern development introduced new building pattern in the form of residential culs-de-sac off the historic road network:
- Covert Mead, West Park Road and St Martin Close.
 - Windmill Platt and The Forge.
 - Water Lane.
- 4.113 The Hoadlands residential development (96 dwellings) is under construction and not currently shown on the OS OpenMap Local data used to generate this diagram, but the site is highlighted to show where new built form is being added to the village.
- 4.114 Outside of Handcross the urban grain shows a pattern of scattered farmsteads and country houses, ribbon development alongside highlighted roads and two small villages.
- 4.115 Staplefield appears as a dispersed cluster of buildings around the village green. Slaugham village is a denser pattern over a smaller area, but appears lost amongst the wider pattern of large farmsteads.

Fig. 31: Ordnance Survey map indicating urban grain



VISUAL CONTEXT AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 4.116 Potential views of the site have been considered with reference to baseline mapping, in combination with Google Streetview. Due to the combination of landform, existing development and significant tree cover, the site is assessed to have a very limited visual envelope.
- 4.117 To the north, the topography rises to the plateau of the Forest Ridge, which in combination with the extensive woodland cover and built-form of Handcross village prevents views of the site.
- 4.118 To the east views of the site are prevented by dense woodland cover either side of the A23 and existing residential development on West Park Road and St. Martin Close.
- 4.119 To the west, views are prevented by extensive woodland to the north and west of Horsham Road, as well as dense roadside vegetation along Horsham Road and Coos Lane.
- 4.120 The topography generally falling to the Ouse Valley suggests potential views from the south but these are again restricted by woodland cover, field boundary hedges with trees, and dense roadside vegetation. Additionally the undulations in topography created by ghyll streams restricts views.
- 4.121 It is therefore considered that potential views will generally be gained from very close proximity, close to the site boundaries.

Visual Receptors

- 4.122 Potential views towards the site from private residential vantage points have been identified as being primarily from:
- Adjoining residential properties, in particular:
 - Properties located at the south-western edge of Covert Mead.
 - Properties located at the south-western edge of West Park Road.
 - Properties located east of the site along St. Martin Close.
- 4.123 Potential views towards the site from public vantage points have been identified as being primarily from:
- The play area at the end of West Park Road.
 - The surrounding PROW network in particular:
 - PROW 5S, 6S and 7S.
 - Horsham Road and Coos Lane - pedestrians, and drivers and passengers of vehicles travelling along these roads.

- 4.124 The type and locations of visual receptors likely to be affected by views of the proposed development are identified below, and classified according to their sensitivity into *Primary*, *Secondary* and *Tertiary* views, depending upon the sensitivity of the location, the nature of the activity being undertaken and the existing visual amenity associated with the view.

Primary Receptors

- 4.125 Primary receptor locations have been identified as:
- Residents of nearby residential properties in Covert Mead, West Park Road and St. Martin Close.
 - Users of the West Park Road play area.
 - Users of PROW close to the site - 5S, 6S and 7S.
 - Pedestrians walking along Coos Lane.
 - Drivers and passengers of vehicles travelling along Coos Lane for the section immediately adjacent to the site.

Secondary Receptors

- 4.126 Secondary receptor locations have been identified as:
- Views generally from Horsham Road.
 - Users of the surrounding PROW network, further away from the site.

Tertiary Receptors

- 4.127 Tertiary receptor locations have been identified as:
- Farm operatives carrying out general agricultural activities within the surrounding farmland areas to the west.
- 4.128 Tertiary receptors are the least sensitive and are identified here for information, but will be scoped-out of further assessment.

Representative Viewpoint Locations

- 4.129 Representative viewpoint locations for identified key visual receptors / locations are shown in **Figure 32 & 33**. These are considered to be representative of the nature of available views from all identified receptor sites and sufficient for assessment of the potential visual effects of the proposed development.
- 4.130 The selected representative viewpoint locations are:
- **View 1. Coos Lane (North)**
 - **View 2. West Park Road play area / Covert Mead**
 - **View 3. West Park Road**
 - **View 4. St. Martin Close**
 - **View 5. Public Right of Way 7S**
 - **View 6. Public Right of Way 6S**
 - **View 7. Coos Lane (South)**
 - **View 8. Coos Lane (Centre)**
 - **View 9. Horsham Road**
 - **View 10. Public Right of Way 5S**
 - **View 11. Public Right of Way 1704**
- 4.131 The baseline photography was taken during a site visit on 21 January 2020.

Fig. 32: Local Viewpoint Origins (not to scale).

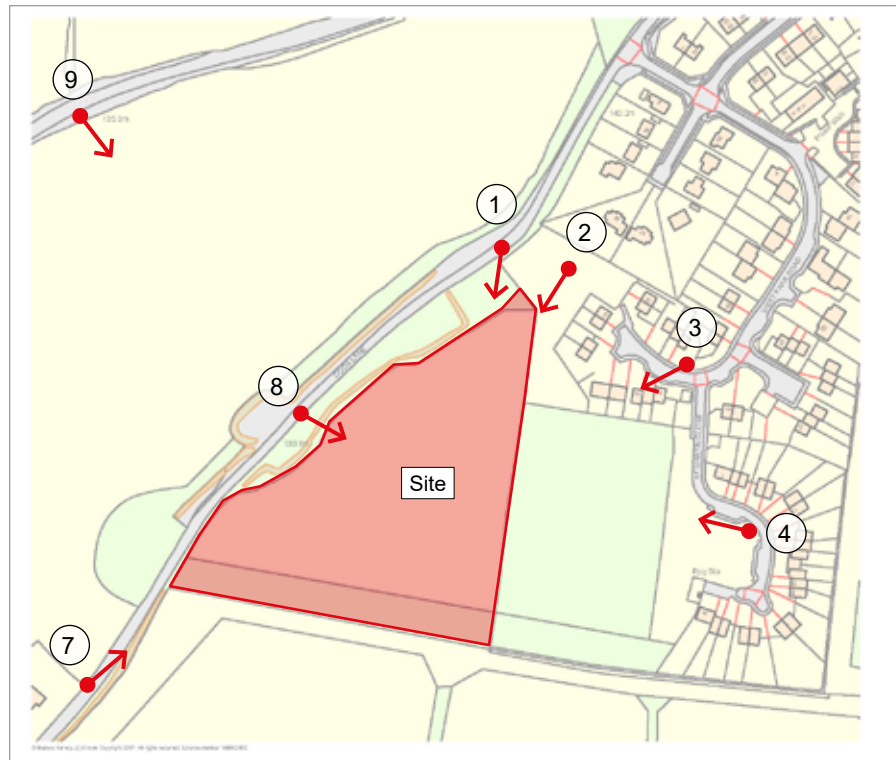
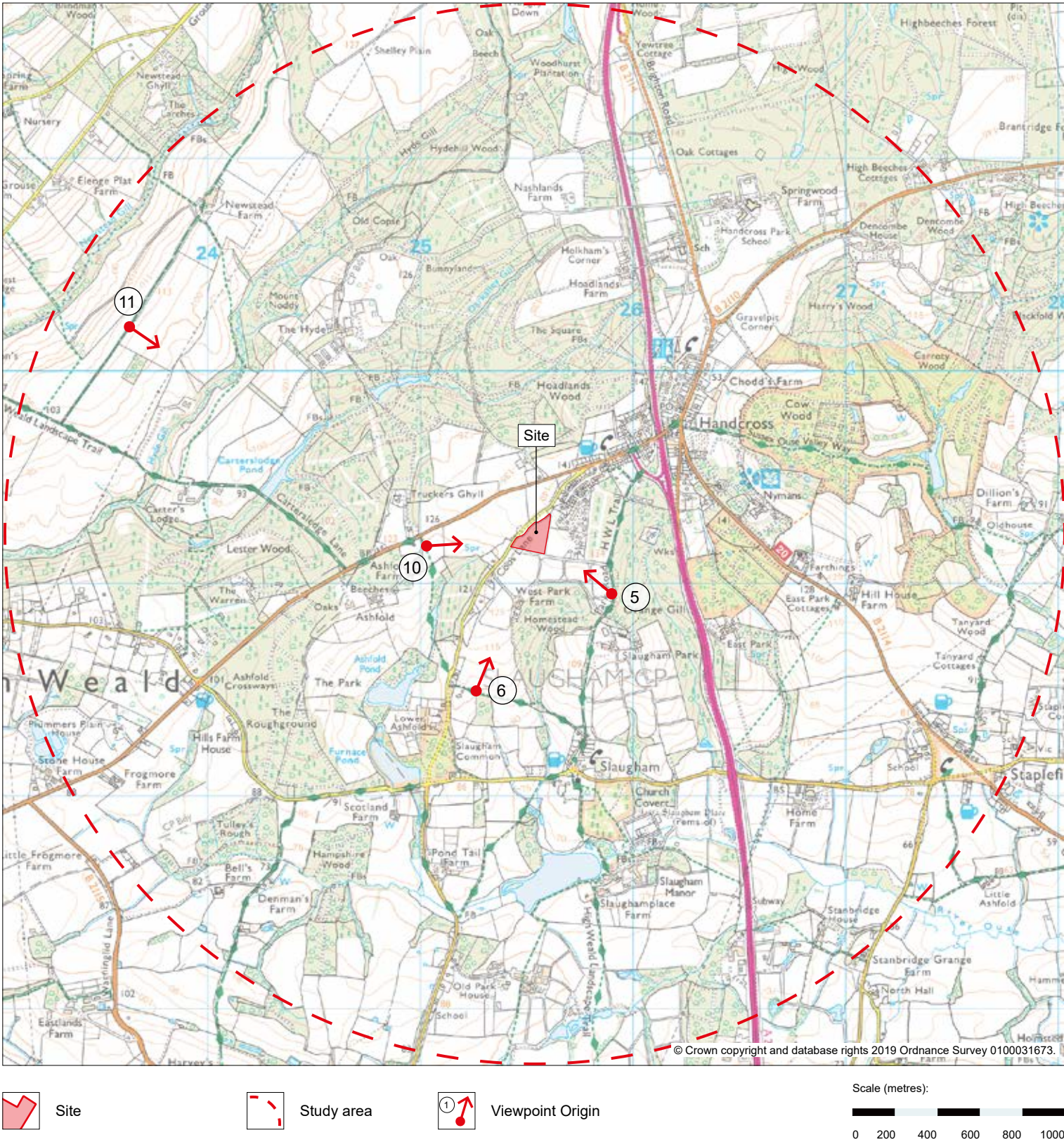


Fig. 33: Ordnance Survey map indicating photographic viewpoint origins.



5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

5.1 The following project description is based upon the 'Illustrative Site Layout', provided by Millwood Designer Homes (**Figure 34**). This layout is a preliminary design to illustrate how the site could be developed. The layout will be progressed and guided by forthcoming technical reports including this LVA.

KEY FEATURES AND COMPONENTS

5.2 The main scheme components are summarised below:

- Construction of 28 no. new residential properties with associated driveways, parking and garages.
- Landscape treatment of tree, hedge and shrub planting to streets, front gardens and amenity spaces.
- Public open space connecting to existing play area off West Park Road.
- New access connections via the site to the east.
- Swales and attenuation pond forming part of the surface water drainage strategy for the development.

Architectural Style, Materials and Appearance

5.3 The Illustrative Site Layout (**Figure 34**) shows the preliminary approach towards architectural layout and the size, scale and massing of development.

5.4 The proposal will be designed as a high quality, landscape-led development that responds to the local context and site constraints such as field boundaries and topography, and integrates well with the existing settlement.

5.5 The proposed development will use a limited palette of materials, to reflect those of the existing dwellings within Handcross, and will be designed with reference to the High Weald AONB Design Guide.

5.6 The proposed dwellings would be 2 storeys in height, in keeping with the surrounding existing dwellings.

Landscape Mitigation

5.7 The landscape proposals for the development will be designed to help integrate the proposed development into the local landscape, minimise the visual impact of the development, create an attractive setting to the proposed dwellings and enhance biodiversity.

Fig. 34: Proposed site layout plan (not to scale).



- 5.8 The layout will allow for the retention of all of the existing mature vegetation to the boundaries of the site apart from some hedgerow to be removed to facilitate the proposed access from the site to the east. Existing hedgerows / tree belts are to be retained and enhanced where required with new native tree and shrub planting.

ASSUMPTIONS / EXCLUSIONS

- 5.9 The assessment has been based in full on the project details set out in this section of the report, apart from the following assumptions:

Lighting

- 5.10 The night-time effects of lighting at are not assessed in this report. It is assumed that, as part of the detailed design phase for the proposed development, best practice principles would be adopted in relation to minimising or eliminating adverse impacts of lighting and light spillage from the proposed development.

The Construction Phase

- 5.11 The assessment is based on the assumption that the construction phase of the project would be typical for this kind of development and would be completed in a single operation, without any complex phasing or stages of construction.
- 5.12 This assessment therefore focuses on post construction (or operational) impacts, on the basis that construction phase impacts would be short-term and temporary. They could be reasonably mitigated by means of a suitable planning condition in tandem with an appropriate 'considerate construction scheme' (or similar), in the event that planning permission for the scheme is granted.

6. IDENTIFICATION OF EFFECTS

6.1 The purpose of this section of the report is to identify and describe the potential impacts and effects that may result from the proposed development upon landscape and visual resources.

VISUAL AMENITY

6.2 The proposed development would introduce new residential dwellings in a currently undeveloped location on the urban fringe of Handcross. This would impact upon the visual amenity of the following locations:

- A small number of residential properties to the north / east of the site in Covert Mead, West Park Road and St Martin Close.
- A short section of Coos Lane, immediately adjacent to the site.
- A short section of Horsham Road, to the north-west of the site.
- The West Park Road play area.

6.3 Of the eleven selected representative viewpoints, the proposed development would have no visual impact from the following locations. This is due to the absence of clear views towards the site and the presence of intervening landform and vegetation:

- View 5: PRoW 7S.
- View 6: PRoW 6S.
- View 7: Coos Lane (South)
- View 10: PRoW 5S.
- View 11: PRoW 1704.

6.4 View 5 (**Photo 5**) is representative of views from a short section of public right of way 7S across open fields. Further north views are restricted by plantation woodland and existing houses in St Martin Close are not visible. Further south views are restricted by Homestead Wood. The photo illustrates how the sunken character of the track and the intervening vegetation restricts views towards the site.

6.5 View 6 (**Photo 6**) demonstrates the intervening vegetation that prevents views of the site from the south. Views from the footpath are constrained by roadside trees along Coos Lane to the west and Homestead Wood to the east creating a narrow view corridor towards the site. An avenue of trees lining the approach to West Park Farm, and the dense tree belt outside the southern boundary of the site prevent views of the site. New planting alongside the public footpath will further prevent views as it matures.

Photo 5: View 5: Looking north-west towards site from PRoW 7S.

Approximate horizontal extent of proposal site within the view



Photo 6: View 6: Looking north towards site from PRoW 6S.

Approximate horizontal extent of proposal site within the view



- 6.6 View 7 (**Photo 7**) shows the intervening vegetation that prevents views of the site from Coos Lane south-west of the site. Views from the road are restricted by dense vegetation along Coos Lane. This view is also representative of that from Nostra Cottage on Coos Lane.
- 6.7 View 10 (**Photo 8**) shows the intervening vegetation that prevents views of the site from the west on PRoW 5S. Views from the footpath are constrained by roadside trees along Horsham Road to the north and Scotchbank Wood to the south creating a narrow view corridor towards the site. Hedgerow trees just to the east of the viewpoint, combined with the dense roadside trees either side of Coos Lane prevent views of the site.
- 6.8 View 11 (**Photo 9**) shows the extensive intervening vegetation in the form of woodland, tree belts and roadside trees, preventing views of the site from PRoW 1704. .
- 6.9 Overall the site and proposed development is considered to have a very small, contained visual envelope. As a result, it would affect only a small number of individuals on a local scale from locations to the west, north and east, in close proximity to the site.
- 6.10 An assessment of impacts upon the remaining representative viewpoints is set out in the following section of this report.

Photo 7: View 7: Looking north-east towards site from Coos Lane south-west of the site.



Photo 8: View 10: Looking east towards site from PRoW 5S.

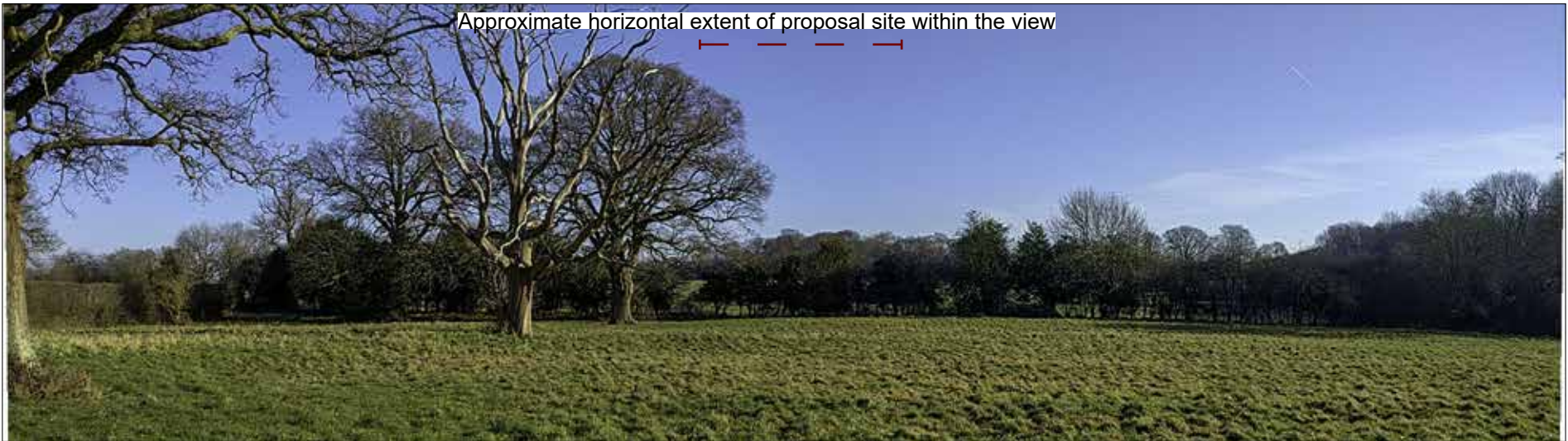


Photo 9: View 11: Looking south-east towards site from PRoW 1704.



Photo 10: View south towards site from Coos Lane.



View 1: Coos Lane (North)		Assessed Effect	
Visual Receptors			
6.11	This view is representative of those gained from a short section of Coos Lane (travelling south-west) near the field gate entrance to the site.	6.19	The scale of the visual impact demonstrated by this view is therefore assessed to be Negligible .
6.12	This view would be experienced predominantly by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drivers and passengers of motor vehicles travelling south-west.• Pedestrians, including residents walking along Coos Lane.	6.20	The geographic extent of the visual impact demonstrated by this view is assessed as Local . This is a close-range view that is considered representative of the viewing experience from only a very short section of road.
Nature of existing view, visual components & detractors		6.21	The duration of the impact is assessed to be Long Term , and the reversibility of the impact is considered to be Permanent . This proposal is for a permanent development where there is no intention to return it to its current state at a future date.
6.13	This is a short range, contained view towards the site and along Coos Lane, dominated by the public road and roadside trees, with a partial and fragmented view of the West Park Road play area, houses on West Park Road. The access to the site can just be seen through the trees.	6.22	The assessed visual impact demonstrated by this view is therefore assessed as Direct, Negligible in scale, of a Local level of influence, Long term, and Permanent in nature .
6.14	The viewing location is generally quiet with only occasional vehicles using the lane, but background traffic noise from the A23 is constant.	6.23	In line with Table A the 'Magnitude of Change' upon this view is assessed to be Low.
6.15	Existing components of the view include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coos Lane.• West Park Road houses and play area.• Roadside trees and shrubs.	6.24	Overall it is concluded that the changes in this existing view would have a Neutral Effect .
6.16	There are no significant visual detractors within the view although there is fly-tipping further along the lane.		
Nature of Change			
6.17	From this location the proposed development would introduce the following new visual components: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New residential properties proposed in the northern part of the site would be glimpsed through the trees at the field gate entrance to the site and viewed in the context of existing residential properties on West Park Road.• When trees are in leaf it is anticipated that visibility would be significantly reduced.		
6.18	The development would not result in the loss of any components from the existing view.		

Photo 11: View south-west towards site from play area

Approximate horizontal extent of proposal site within the view



View 2: West Park Road play area

Visual Receptors

- 6.25 This view is representative of those gained from the play area and from the rear of residential properties at the end of Covert Mead. The houses to the left of the view are in West Park Road and do not have any windows that face the site.
- 6.26 This view would be experienced predominantly by:
- Users of the park, mainly local residents.
 - Residents of two properties (nos. 42 and 67) at the end of Covert Mead located adjacent to the park, from rear first floor windows.

Nature of existing view, visual components & detractors

- 6.27 This is a short range, contained view towards the site, dominated by the play area with trees, houses in West Park Road and the dense site boundary trees.
- 6.28 The viewing location is generally calm and quiet with typical background residential noise and occasional vehicular traffic on Coos Lane. Background traffic noise from the A23 is, however, constant.

6.29 Existing components of the view include:

- Play area with equipment.
- West Park Road houses.
- Site boundary vegetation.

6.30 There are no significant visual detractors within the view.

Nature of Change

- 6.31 From this location the proposed development would introduce the following new visual components:
- New residential properties proposed in the northern part of the site would be partially visible, fragmented by the existing site boundary vegetation and trees within the play area. These would be seen in the context of existing properties in West Park Road.
 - When trees are in leaf it is anticipated that visibility would be significantly reduced.
- 6.32 The development would not result in the loss of any components from the existing view.

Assessed Effect

- 6.33 The scale of the visual impact demonstrated by this view is therefore assessed to be **Negligible**.
- 6.34 The geographic extent of the visual impact demonstrated by this view is assessed as **Local**. This is a close-range view that is considered representative of the viewing experience from only the play area and two residential properties.
- 6.35 The duration of the impact is assessed to be **Long Term**, and the reversibility of the impact is considered to be **Permanent**. This proposal is for a permanent development where there is no intention to return it to its current state at a future date.
- 6.36 The assessed visual impact demonstrated by this view is therefore assessed as **Direct, Negligible in scale, of a Local level of influence, Long term, and Permanent in nature**.
- 6.37 In line with Table A the 'Magnitude of Change' upon this view is assessed to be **Low**.
- 6.38 Overall it is concluded that the changes in this existing view would have a **Neutral Effect**.

Photo 12: View south-west towards site from West Park Road

Approximate horizontal extent of proposal site within the view



View 3: West Park Road

Visual Receptors

- 6.39 This view is representative of those gained from a short section at the end of West Park Road and from a small number of residential properties located in this cul-de-sac end of the road.
- 6.40 This view would be experienced predominantly by:
- Drivers and passengers of motor vehicles travelling on West Park Road (as this is a cul-de-sac, these would predominantly be local residents).
 - Pedestrians, (predominantly local residents) walking along West Park Road.
 - Residents of properties located at the end of West Park Road with west / south-west facing views. Due to the orientation of these houses in relation to the proposed development layout, these would predominantly be oblique views.

Nature of existing view, visual components & detractors

- 6.41 This is a short range, contained view along West Park Road towards the site, dominated by the public road and adjacent residential properties, with a partial and fragmented view of site boundary trees.

- 6.42 The viewing location is generally calm and quiet with typical background residential noise and occasional vehicular traffic on West Park Road. Background traffic noise from the A23 is, however, constant.

- 6.43 Existing components of the view include:

- West Park Road with on and off-street parked cars.
- Semi-detached residential properties.
- Site boundary trees in the background.

- 6.44 There are no significant visual detractors within the view.

Nature of Change

- 6.45 From this location the proposed development would introduce the following new visual components:

- The rooftops of a small number of proposed properties in the northern and eastern parts of the site would just be glimpsed between existing houses, and filtered by existing site boundary trees. From the properties in this view, proposed dwellings on the site would be viewed in the context of those on the St.Martin Close (east) site (in the left hand part of the view).
- When trees are in leaf it is anticipated that visibility would be significantly reduced.

- 6.46 The development would not result in the loss of any components from the existing view.

Assessed Effect

- 6.47 The scale of the visual impact demonstrated by this view is therefore assessed to be **Negligible**.
- 6.48 The geographic extent of the visual impact demonstrated by this view is assessed as **Local**. This is a close-range view that is considered representative of the viewing experience from only a short section of road and a small number of residential properties.
- 6.49 The duration of the impact is assessed to be **Long Term**, and the reversibility of the impact is considered to be **Permanent**. This proposal is for a permanent development where there is no intention to return it to its current state at a future date.
- 6.50 The assessed visual impact demonstrated by this view is therefore assessed as **Direct, Negligible in scale, of a Local level of influence, Long term, and Permanent in nature**.
- 6.51 In line with Table A the 'Magnitude of Change' upon this view is assessed to be **Low**.
- 6.52 Overall it is concluded that the changes in this existing view would have a **Neutral Effect**.

Photo 13: View west towards site from St Martin Close

Approximate horizontal extent of proposal site within the view



View 4: St Martin Close

Visual Receptors

- 6.53 This view is representative of those gained from St Martin Close and from a small number of residential properties located on St Martin Close with west facing views.
- 6.54 This view would be experienced predominantly by:
- Drivers and passengers of motor vehicles travelling on St Martin Close (as this is a cul-de-sac, these would mainly be local residents).
 - Pedestrians, (mainly local residents) walking along St Martin Close or on the grass amenity area between the road and the site.
 - Residents of properties located on St Martin Close with west facing views.

Nature of existing view, visual components & detractors

- 6.55 This is a medium range view towards the site, across the St.Martin Close (east) allocated site, dominated by the grassland and scrub of the allocated site, public road and adjacent residential properties, with trees on the eastern site boundary in the background.

- 6.56 The viewing location is generally calm and quiet with typical background residential noise and occasional vehicular traffic on St Martin Close. Background traffic noise from the A23 is, however, constant.

- 6.57 Existing components of the view include:
- St Martin Close.
 - Residential properties.
 - Grassland and scrub on the allocated site.
 - Trees on the eastern site boundary.

- 6.58 There are no significant visual detractors within the view.

Nature of Change

- 6.59 From this location the proposed development would introduce the following new visual components:
- The rooftops of proposed properties in the eastern part of the site would be partially visible through the trees along the eastern boundary of the site.
 - When trees are in leaf it is anticipated that visibility would be significantly reduced.
 - Residential development on the allocated St.Martin Close (east) site in the foreground would significantly restrict views of the site.

- 6.60 The proposed development would not result in the loss of any components from the existing view.
- Assessed Effect*
- 6.61 The scale of the visual impact demonstrated by this view is therefore assessed to be **Negligible**.
- 6.62 The geographic extent of the visual impact demonstrated by this view is assessed as **Local**. This is a mid-range view that is considered representative of the viewing experience generally from only a short section of the road and a small number of residential properties.
- 6.63 The duration of the impact is assessed to be **Long Term**, and the reversibility of the impact is considered to be **Permanent**. This proposal is for a permanent development where there is no intention to return it to its current state at a future date.
- 6.64 The assessed visual impact demonstrated by this view is therefore assessed as **Direct, Negligible in scale, of a Local level of influence, Long term, and Permanent in nature**.
- 6.65 In line with Table A the 'Magnitude of Change' upon this view is assessed to be **Low**.
- 6.66 Overall it is concluded that the changes in this existing view would have a **Neutral Effect**.

Photo 14: View east to the site from Coos Lane

Approximate horizontal extent of proposal site within the view



View 8: Coos Lane (Centre)

Visual Receptors

- 6.67 This view is representative of those gained from a short section (approximately 250m) of Coos Lane where it is directly adjacent to the proposal site.
- 6.68 This view would be experienced only by:
- Drivers and passengers of motor vehicles travelling along Coos Lane.
 - Pedestrians, including residents walking along Coos Lane.

Nature of existing view, visual components & detractors

- 6.69 This is a short range, contained view towards the site and along Coos Lane, dominated by the public road and dense roadside vegetation, which creates a secluded, sunken character. There is a fragmented view to the western edge of the site which is elevated in relation to Coos Lane.
- 6.70 The viewing location is generally quiet with only occasional vehicles using the lane, but background traffic noise from the A23 is constant.
- 6.71 Existing components of the view include:
- Coos Lane.
 - Dense roadside vegetation.

- 6.72 There are no significant visual detractors within the view although there is fly-tipping further along the lane.

Nature of Change

- 6.73 From this location the proposed development would introduce the following new visual components:
- Proposed residential properties, together with garages and garden fences along the western boundary of the site would be seen through the boundary vegetation.
 - Proposed mitigation in the form of additional hedge planting along the western boundary would also be visible and would provide screening, particularly to garages and garden fencing beyond.
 - When trees are in leaf it is anticipated that visibility would be significantly reduced.

- 6.74 The development would not result in the loss of any components from the existing view.

Assessed Effect

- 6.75 The scale of the visual impact demonstrated by this view is therefore assessed to be **Moderate**.
- 6.76 The geographic extent of the visual impact demonstrated by this view is assessed as **Local**. This is a close-range view that is considered representative of the viewing experience from only a short section of road directly adjacent to the site.

- 6.77 The duration of the impact is assessed to be **Long Term**, and the reversibility of the impact is considered to be **Permanent**. This proposal is for a permanent development where there is no intention to return it to its current state at a future date.
- 6.78 The assessed visual impact demonstrated by this view is therefore assessed as **Direct, Moderate in scale, of a Local level of influence, Long term, and Permanent in nature**.
- 6.79 In line with Table A the 'Magnitude of Change' upon this view is assessed to be **Medium**.
- 6.80 Overall it is concluded that the changes in this existing view would have an **Adverse Effect**.

Photo 15: View south-east towards site from Horsham Road



View 9: Horsham Road

Visual Receptors

- 6.81 This view is representative of those gained from a short section (approximately 140m) of Horsham Road.
- 6.82 This view would be experienced only by:
- Drivers and passengers of motor vehicles travelling along Horsham Road.
- 6.83 Pedestrians are unlikely to be walking along this section of the road as there is no footway and the road is busy.

Nature of existing view, visual components & detractors

- 6.84 This is a medium-range, partially framed view to the site across Horsham Road, dominated by the public road and adjacent open field, with dense roadside vegetation along Coos Lane in the background. The view towards the site is only gained from a short section of the highway due to a break in the roadside tree cover.
- 6.85 The viewing location is generally quite busy and noisy, with regular vehicular traffic using Horsham Road. During occasional breaks in traffic, the background noise from the A23 can be heard. As there is no footway, the viewing location feels uncomfortable.

- 6.86 Existing components of the view include:
- Horsham Road with signage and roadside hedge, trees.
 - The residential property Trucker's Hatch.
 - Open field.
 - Dense tree cover along Coos Lane.
- 6.87 When the road is busy vehicular traffic is a significant visual detractor.
- Nature of Change*
- 6.88 From this location the proposed development would introduce the following new visual components:
- The rooftops of proposed properties in the western part of the site would be glimpsed through the trees alongside Coos Lane.
 - When trees are in leaf it is anticipated that visibility would be significantly reduced.
- 6.89 The development would not result in the loss of any components from the existing view.

Assessed Effect

- 6.90 The scale of the visual impact demonstrated by this view is therefore assessed to be **Negligible**.

- 6.91 The geographic extent of the visual impact demonstrated by this view is assessed as **Local**. This is a mid-range view that is considered representative of the viewing experience from only a short section of road.
- 6.92 The duration of the impact is assessed to be **Long Term**, and the reversibility of the impact is considered to be **Permanent**. This proposal is for a permanent development where there is no intention to return it to its current state at a future date.
- 6.93 The assessed visual impact demonstrated by this view is therefore assessed as **Direct, Negligible in scale, of a Local level of influence, Long term, and Permanent in nature**.
- 6.94 In line with Table A the 'Magnitude of Change' upon this view is assessed to be **Low**.
- 6.95 Overall it is concluded that the changes in this existing view would have a **Neutral Effect**.

SUMMARY OF EFFECTS UPON VISUAL AMENITY

6.96 The following table summarises the assessed effects of the proposed development upon visual resources:

Table 1: Summary of effects upon visual amenity from representative viewpoints.

View No.	Description	Nature of Effect
View 1	Coos Lane (North)	Neutral
View 2	West Park Road play area	Neutral
View 3	West Park Road	Neutral
View 4	St Martin Close	Neutral
View 5	PRoW 7S	Nil
View 6	PRoW 6S	Nil
View 7	Coos Lane (South)	Nil
View 8	Coos Lane (Centre)	Adverse
View 9	Horsham Road	Neutral
View 10	PRoW 5S	Nil
View 11	PRoW 1704	Nil

LANDSCAPE RESOURCES / CHARACTER*Topography*

- 6.97 There is no detailed design at this stage, but it is assumed that the proposed development would aim to work with the existing topography as much as possible.
- 6.98 The proposed development will require localised alterations to ground levels within the confines of the site, associated with the construction of foundations and creation of development platforms for the new buildings.
- 6.99 The general topographic characteristics of the site would remain unaltered by the development and the topographic relationship of the site and surrounding landscape would also remain unaffected.
- 6.100 The effect upon topography within the study area would therefore be **Direct, Long term, Permanent and Neutral**.

Land Cover

- 6.101 The proposed development would result in a noticeable change in the vegetation cover characteristics of the site, with the removal of a small number of trees on the eastern boundary to facilitate access, and the replacement of a large proportion of the site grassland with housing, roads, pavements and gardens.
- 6.102 Changes would be adverse in nature at a site scale, but in the context of the wider area, and given the proposed tree and hedge planting, effects upon the vegetation cover within the study area are assessed to be **Direct, Long term, Permanent and Neutral**.

Land Use

- 6.103 The proposed development would also change the land use of the site from former agricultural land to an area of residential development.
- 6.104 Built development in Handcross directly adjoins the proposal site. The introduction of new built form would therefore not be uncharacteristic, and the effect upon the land use within the study area is therefore assessed to be **Direct, Long term, Permanent and Neutral**.

Public Rights of Way

- 6.105 The proposed development would not result in any effects upon public rights of way. Potential changes in the visual amenity of views gained from PRoW are addressed under the wider topic of visual amenity.

- 6.106 In this context the effect upon PROW within the study area would be **Nil**.

Settlement Envelope

- 6.107 The proposed development would result in a direct change to the settlement envelope of Handcross, extending it to the south-west of the existing extent of development in the village. However, settlement would not extend further south than it already does on St Martin Close.
- 6.108 The increase in the settlement envelope would not result in any coalescence between towns or villages, and the general relationship between the existing settlement of Handcross and the surrounding rural landscape would not be fundamentally altered.
- 6.109 In this context the effect upon the settlement envelope would be **Direct, Long term, Permanent and Neutral**.

Urban Grain

- 6.110 The urban grain of Handcross comprises of significant areas of post-WW2 residential development infilling gaps along roads, and creating new streets and culs-de-sac on former agricultural fields.
- 6.111 The proposal introduces a development pattern that would echo that already established in Handcross. It would therefore not be uncharacteristic or out of keeping with the urban grain of the village.
- 6.112 In this context the effect upon urban grain would be **Direct, Long term, Permanent and Neutral**.

High Weald AONB

- 6.113 In assessing the impact of the proposed development on the High Weald AONB, this appraisal uses the assessment template contained in the Legislation & Planning Policy in the High Weald AONB Advice Note (Revised Feb 2019), whereby impacts are assessed against the objectives for 'Conserving & Enhancing the High Weald AONB'.
- 6.114 The assessment template is set out in the following pages.

The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives	Assessment of Impact	Mitigation and Enhancement
Geology, landform, water systems and climate.		
Objective G1: To restore the natural function of rivers, water courses and water bodies.	<p>There are no waterbodies or watercourses within the site.</p> <p>It is proposed to maintain or reduce the natural rate of surface water runoff from the site using a SUDS system of swales and an attenuation pond.</p> <p>There is no anticipated impact on floodplains.</p>	<p>SUDS features will offer treatment of surface water whilst also releasing water to downstream areas in a controlled manner. Open SUDS features will be sown with a native wildflower and grass seed mix to create seasonally wet habitat.</p>
Objective G2: To protect and enhance soils, sandstone outcrops and other important geological features of the AONB.	<p>There are no sandstone outcrops/cuttings or associated habitat on site.</p> <p>A large part of the site will become built development and hard surfacing, but significant areas will be an area of open space in the northern part of the site will be retained as green space.</p> <p>It is anticipated that there will be minor alterations to the natural landform on developed parts of the site through the creation of building platforms and roads, but the topographical relationship between the site and surrounding landscape will be unaltered.</p>	<p>Retained trees and hedges and the area of open space will be protected during construction and subject to a management plan to protect soils and reduce soil erosion.</p> <p>The detailed design will take account of the site landform, working with the topography to minimise alterations in levels.</p>
Objective G3: To help secure climatic conditions and rates of change which support continued conservation and enhancement of the High Weald's valued landscapes and habitats.	<p>Construction methods, materials, energy and water use will be considered as part of the detailed design and specification process.</p> <p>A Transport Statement will be prepared to support a planning application for the site which will discuss anticipated impacts in relation to additional traffic movements.</p>	<p>Electric vehicle charging points will be provided in accordance with Mid Sussex District Plan policies.</p> <p>The inclusion of photovoltaic panels will be considered during the design process.</p> <p>The proposal will also consider the use of locally sourced / sustainable materials and will be built in compliance with Building Regulations. A 'fabric first' approach ensures minimal possible use of energy to heat dwellings in perpetuity.</p> <p>Construction waste will be minimised under the Considerate Contractors Scheme.</p> <p>Safe and convenient pedestrian access to the village centre will be provided through the adjacent St. Martin Close (east) site. A Travel Plan will be prepared to support the planning application, which will discuss potential transport measures to reduce air pollution.</p>
Settlement		
Objective S1: To reconnect settlements, residents and their supporting economic activity with the surrounding countryside.	<p>The site is private property, is not accessible to the public and is visually well-contained by the dense tree cover to the site boundaries.</p> <p>The proposed development will have no impact on views to the surrounding countryside. There are no public rights of way within or adjacent to the site, so it will also not affect access to the countryside.</p> <p>The proposal will therefore have no effect on any sense of connection with the countryside.</p>	<p>The proposal will consider the use of local timber products in the scheme, to support sustainable management of AONB woodland.</p> <p>The inclusion of wood-burning stoves within properties will be considered.</p> <p>The proposal retains significant habitat and corridors for wildlife in the form of boundary hedges / tree belts.</p>

The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives	Assessment of Impact	Mitigation and Enhancement
Objective S2: To protect the historic pattern and character of settlement.	Residential development will result in a small increase in the settlement envelope of Handcross but will abut an existing area of post-WW2 residential properties, away from the historic settlement core of Handcross. Separation between Handcross and surrounding settlements and farmsteads will not be affected. The proposed development will have no impact on the identified historic settlements and farmsteads, or the ability to appreciate their significance or scenic beauty.	The proposal site is on the south-west boundary of the settlement envelope of Handcross adjacent to existing residential development on West Park Road. The detailed design will be informed by this report and the High Weald AONB Design Guide to ensure a layout that respects the historic settlement whilst reflecting the existing scale and form of urban grain found in nearby residential areas.
Objective S3: To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald and ensure development reflects the character of the High Weald in its scale, layout and design.	The proposed development will be designed in a vernacular form utilising traditional local materials and would be integrated into the existing landscape by retaining boundary trees. There is the potential for the new development both to maintain and enhance the local distinctiveness and built environment character when compared with existing development in the local area.	The proposals will be informed by a study of local vernacular, the AONB Design Guide and Colour Guide, to define a simple palette of local materials, traditional features and detailing. The proposals will aim to utilise high standard, innovative designs reflecting local vernacular in sympathetic and imaginative ways. The detailed planting scheme will include locally grown/provenanced native planting appropriate to the site. Millwood Designer Homes have historically used local tradespersons and contractors in support of the local community.
Routeways		
Objective R1: To maintain the historic pattern and features of routeways.	There will be no impact on historic routeways. The proposal site will be accessed via St. Martin Close and the St. Martin Close (East) allocated site. This avoids any works to the historic routeway Coos Lane and the historic field boundary that follows it, retaining the sunken, green character of the lane.	The retention and reinforcement of existing vegetation along the western boundary of the site will ensure that the green, leafy character of Coos Lane is retained and enhanced.
Objective R2: To enhance the ecological function of routeways.	The proposal will not result in the loss of any trees or hedgerows along routeways. New planting will be used to strengthen the Coos Lane boundary using only native species. The detailed design will be informed by ecology reports.	Proposed open spaces and boundary hedges will be managed to maximise wildlife benefits.
Woodland		
Objective W1: To maintain the existing extent of woodland and particularly ancient woodland.	The proposed development will not result in the loss or degradation of any woodland, and will not impact on any areas of wood pasture or historic parkland.	N/A.
Objective W2: To enhance the ecological quality and functioning of woodland at a landscape scale.	The proposed development will be informed by an ecological report, and will have no impact on the ecological quality or functioning of woodland.	Retained hedgerows will be reinforced with native species planting to enhance biodiversity and ensure continued ecological links with adjacent land. The production and implementation of a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) will ensure that the ecological importance of on-site habitats is managed in the long-term. New planting will include native species of local provenance.
Objective W3: To protect the archaeology and historic assets of AONB woodlands.	The proposed development will have no impact on the archaeology or historic assets of woodland.	N/A

The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives	Assessment of Impact	Mitigation and Enhancement
Objective W4: To increase the output of sustainably produced high-quality timber and underwood for local markets.	N/A	The proposal will strive to use local timber products in the scheme, to support sustainable management of AONB woodland.
Field and Heath		
Objective FH1: To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald, especially for local markets, as part of sustainable land management.	The proposal will result in the loss of a small grazed field.	The sale of the land and subsequent residential development will allow the landowner farmer to invest in his other landholdings. Opportunities for community growing facilities will be considered during the design process.
Objective FH2: To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands.	The AONB parish maps, historic OS maps and Historic Landscape Characterisation maps are included in the baseline section of this report. The field forming the site is not identified as medieval. The proposed development will be designed with respect for field size and pattern, with the layout and scale of buildings still allowing an appreciation of the field pattern. The field boundary adjacent to Coos Lane is identified as an historic field boundary on the AONB Parish maps. The proposed development will be designed to retain and strengthen all site boundary hedges except where two sections are required to be removed to create the access from St.Martin Close on the eastern boundary, which is not an historic field boundary.	The proposed development will be designed around the retention of existing field boundary trees and hedgerows. The access points from St. Martin Close can be designed to avoid impact on any of the large trees on the eastern boundary. Hedgerows will be reinforced where necessary and managed to ensure long-term health and viability.
Objective FH3: To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats.	An ecological report will inform the proposed development. No areas of species-rich grassland or heathland will be affected.	The proposed development would protect and enhance the ecological value of the site, including retention and reinforcement of existing field boundary vegetation to ensure habitat connectivity. The proposed development will be designed to provide net gain in biodiversity in accordance with Mid Sussex District Plan policy DP38: Biodiversity. Locally provenanced native species will be included in the detailed planting design.
Objective FH4: To protect the archaeology and historic assets of field and heath.	An archaeological desktop report will be produced to accompany a planning application for the site.	Any archaeological mitigation measures required by the archaeological report could be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.
Land-based Economy and Related Rural Life		
Objective LBE1: To improve returns from, and thereby increase entry and retention in, farming, forestry, horticulture and other land management activities that conserve and enhance natural beauty.	The proposed development will result in the replacement of a grazed field with residential development, however, the sale of the land and subsequent residential development will allow the landowner farmer to invest in his other landholdings.	Opportunities for community growing facilities will be considered during the design process.
Objective LBE2: To improve amenities, infrastructure (including the provision of appropriate affordable housing), and skills development for rural communities and related sectors that contribute positively to conserving and enhancing natural beauty.	N/A No impact on existing rural community amenities or infrastructure.	The proposed development will include affordable properties to meet local housing needs, in accordance with Mid Sussex District Plan policies.

The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 Objectives	Assessment of Impact	Mitigation and Enhancement
Other Qualities		
Objective OQ1: To increase opportunities for learning about and celebrating the character of the High Weald.	N/A	There would be opportunities for learning about and celebrating the character of the High Weald by means of an information pack for new residents.
Objective OQ2: To increase the contribution of individuals and communities to the conservation and enhancement of the AONB.	N/A	Included in the information pack will be details of how new residents can contribute to the AONB for example volunteering opportunities.
Objective OQ3: To develop and manage access to maximise opportunities for everyone to enjoy, appreciate and understand the character of the AONB while conserving its natural beauty.	<p>Handcross village centre and its local facilities and amenities are within a short walking distance of the site. There will be no impact on the public rights of way network.</p> <p>Access to public transport will be discussed in a Transport Statement to accompany a planning application for development on the site.</p> <p>The proposed development will incorporate an amenity space connected to the existing open space and play area at West Park Road.</p>	<p>Pedestrian access will be provided through the site and the St. Martin Close (east) site, connecting to existing infrastructure on St. Martin Close.</p> <p>Access to Coos Lane will also be provided, creating good links to the countryside and wider rights of way network.</p>
Objective OQ4: To protect and promote the perceptual qualities that people value.	<p>As the proposed development site abuts the existing settlement with residential properties to the north and east, and is close to the very busy A23, the site is not considered to be in a tranquil area. There will be no impact on tranquillity of the AONB.</p> <p>The proposed development will have no impact on valued viewpoints, or historic / cultural features.</p>	<p>Community consultation will be facilitated as part of the planning and design of the proposal, and comments from local residents will be take into account wherever possible.</p> <p>Lighting design for the proposed development will be kept to a minimum and designed to minimise light pollution.</p>

- 6.115 In relation to features that have been identified as part of the components of the character of the AONB on the Parish maps, the proposed development will have no direct impact on:
- Geology, landform, water systems and climate
 - Settlement
 - Ancient Woodland
- 6.116 The proposal will also have no impact on the ability to appreciate the significance or scenic beauty of these components.
- 6.117 With regard to the Field & Heath component, although the proposal will result in the loss of a small former agricultural field and the introduction of built form, the field is located on the urban fringe, directly adjacent to existing residential development.
- 6.118 The Historic Landscape Characterisation report identifies the site as 'Regular piecemeal enclosure' which is a common character sub-type within the 'Fieldsapes' broad character type. It is also identified as being part of a large area of 'Unknown' time-depth.
- 6.119 Existing site boundary hedges / tree belts will be retained and strengthened where required, with the exception of two short sections of hedge on the eastern boundary to allow the creation of the new access from the St Martin Close (East) site. The proposed development will have no impact on the identified historic field boundary along Coos Lane.
- 6.120 With regard to the Routeways component, Coos Lane will be unaffected by the proposed development as access to the site will be taken from the east. Existing vegetation along Coos Lane will be retained and strengthened to maintain the green character of the road.
- 6.121 The proposed development would inevitably change the character of the development site, representing an adverse impact at the site level. At the scale of study area, the character of the rural landscape would remain largely unaffected. At the same time the existing contextual relationship between the site and existing residential development in Handcross would restrict the impact of the new development.
- 6.122 The impact of the proposed development on the High Weald AONB is assessed as **Direct, Minor in scale and at a Local level of influence, Long term, and Permanent in nature.**
- 6.123 In line with Table A the 'Magnitude of Change' is assessed to be **Low.**

- 6.124 It is concluded that the change in character brought about by the proposed development would have a limited impact on the overall character of The High Weald AONB, and in this context is assessed to have a **Low Adverse** effect.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

- 6.125 From the above assessment it has been identified that potential impacts upon Landscape Character would arise from changes in:
- Topography
 - Land use and land cover
 - Urban grain
 - Settlement envelope
 - Visual amenity
- 6.126 The above assessment have concluded that the proposed development would have:
- A neutral effect upon topography, land use, settlement envelope and urban grain.
 - A neutral effect overall on visual amenity, with Adverse effects upon only 1 of the 11 assessed viewpoints.
- 6.127 The potential for the proposed development to influence the landscape beyond its own boundaries is assessed to be highly restricted, and would result in predominantly Neutral effects. It is also concluded that the ability of the proposed development to influence or alter the wider landscape character is equally limited.

Local Landscape Character

High Weald Character Area

- 6.128 At a local scale the Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex identifies the site as being within the High Weald Character Area.
- 6.129 The effect of the proposed development on the key characteristics of the area are as follows:
- *Wooded, confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity, perceived as attractive, locally secluded and tranquil.*
 - The proposed development will have no impact on the wooded, confined rural landscape or the perceived qualities.
 - *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.*

- The proposed development will have no impact on topographical character of the landscape.
- *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.*
 - The proposed development will have no impact on water courses or drainage.
- *Long views over the Low Weald to the downs, particularly from the high Forest Ridge.*
 - The proposed development will have no impact on long views.
- *Includes major reservoir at Ardingly and adjoins Weir Wood Reservoir.*
 - No impact on these features.
- *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.*
 - The proposed development will have no impact on woodland cover or the network of hedgerows and shaws. Although two new access points are proposed through the eastern boundary hedge, these can be located to avoid existing trees.
- *Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields, some larger fields and small pockets of remnant heathland.*
 - Although the proposed development will result in the loss of a former agricultural field, it is adjacent to residential development and exhibits urban fringe characteristics.
- *Pockets of rich biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.*
 - The proposed development will have no impact on the biodiversity of valleys, heathland and woodland.
- *Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.*
 - The proposed development will have no impact on the existing character of Coos Lane.
- *Dispersed historic settlement pattern on high ridges, hilltops and high ground, the principal settlements East Grinstead and some expanded and smaller villages.*
 - The proposed development will have no impact on the historic settlement pattern or the ridgetop character of the village.

- *Some busy lanes and roads including along the Crawley–East Grinstead corridor.*
 - No impact on these features.
 - *London to Brighton Railway Line crosses the area.*
 - No impact on these features.
 - *Mill sites, hammer ponds and numerous fish and ornamental lakes and ponds.*
 - No impact on these features.
 - *Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber framing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile hanging.*
 - It is anticipated that the proposed development would be designed with respect for local vernacular materials and detailing and would have no impact on existing traditional rural buildings.
 - *Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses.*
 - No impact on designed landscapes.
 - *Visitor attractions include Wakehurst Place, Nymans Gardens, the South of England Showground and the Bluebell Line Steam Railway.*
 - No impact on visitor attractions.
- 6.130 The effect of the proposed development on the identified landscape and visual sensitivities are as follows:
- Woodland cover limits the visual sensitivity of the landscape and confers a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity.
 - No impact on these features.
 - Unobtrusive settlement pattern in many parts.
 - No impact on these features.
 - Older, small assart pastures contribute to the intimacy of the landscape.
 - No impact on these features.
 - Important pockets of rich biodiversity are vulnerable to loss and change.
 - No impact on these features.
 - 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.
 - No impact on these features.

- 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.
 - No impact on these features.
- Settlement pattern currently sits well within the rural landscape although there is a danger of the cumulative visual impact of buildings and other structures.
 - No impact on these features.
- Legacy of designed landscapes and treescapes.
 - No impact on these features.

- 6.131 The proposed introduction of residential development on the site which would be similar to existing development nearby, would not be uncharacteristic or out of keeping with the character of the site and its immediate surroundings, or its location within the urban / rural fringe.
- 6.132 Although there would be a change in the settlement envelope and an increase in the settlement area, this would occupy a contained peripheral area to the existing settlement envelope.
- 6.133 The scale of the impact upon landscape character is assessed to be **Minor** at worst. Changes resulting from the development would be restricted to a limited geographical area and would not be experienced across the wider character area as a whole.
- 6.134 The duration of the impact is assessed to be **Long Term**, and the reversibility of the impact is considered to be **Permanent**.
- 6.135 The assessed impact upon local landscape character is therefore considered to be **Direct, Minor in scale, of a Local level of influence, Long term, and Permanent in nature**.
- 6.136 In line with Table A the 'Magnitude of Change' upon landscape character is assessed to be **Low**.
- 6.137 Overall it is concluded that the changes to landscape character would have a **Neutral Effect** in the long term.

Summary of effects upon Landscape Resources / Character

- 6.138 The following table summarises the assessed effect of the proposed development upon landscape resources:

Table 2: Summary of effects upon landscape resources / character.

Landscape Resource	Nature of Effect
Topography	Neutral
Land use	Neutral
Land cover	Neutral
Public Rights of Way	Nil
Settlement Envelope	Neutral
Urban Grain	Neutral
High Weald LCA	Neutral
High Weald AONB	Adverse

- 6.139 Overall it is concluded that the proposed development would, at worst have a **'Neutral'** impact upon landscape character.

7. CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 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 have planning consent, for which planning permissions are currently applied for, or allocated sites. It provides a judgement as to the combined resulting effects that may arise.
- 7.2 Of particular relevance to the proposed development site, is the adjoining site known as St. Martin Close (east), which is allocated in the Slaugham Neighbourhood Plan (Policy 9) for up to 30 residential units.

VISUAL AMENITY

- 7.3 Similar to the St. Martin Close (west) site, the St. Martin Close (east) site is well contained visually, and development on the site has very limited scope to cause changes to general public visual amenity. The development would be generally only be visible from a highly restricted, localised area and typically only from locations where residential development is already an existing feature of the view, or is within the immediate vicinity of the view origin.
- 7.4 The only additional adverse visual impacts are anticipated to be on views from existing residential properties in West Park Road and St. Martin Close directly adjacent to the site. These adverse impacts would not be due to the design of the development proposals themselves, but rather the proximity of the development to the receptor and the resulting loss of views currently experienced from them. The development itself would not be uncharacteristic of the surrounding residential character of the site and would not be unpleasant in terms of appearance.
- 7.5 These adverse impacts should be considered temporary in nature, being experienced only by current occupiers. Future occupiers with no prior knowledge of existing views would not consider the proposed development unpleasant or uncharacteristic of the site or its setting.

LANDSCAPE RESOURCES / CHARACTER

Topography

- 7.6 There is no detailed design at this stage for the St. Martin Close (East) site, but as the site is relatively flat it is assumed that development will require only localised alterations to ground levels within the confines of the site, associated with the construction of foundations and creation of development platforms for the new buildings. In combination with the St. Martin Close (west) site, the general topographic characteristics of the sites would remain unaltered by the development and the topographic relationship of the sites and surrounding landscape would also remain unaffected.
- 7.7 The effect upon topography within the study area would therefore be **Direct, Long term, Permanent and Neutral.**

Fig. 35: Cumulative assessment sites (Date of photograph: 19 Apr 2014).



Land Cover

- 7.8 Residential development on the St. Martin Close (east) site would require the removal of the scrub that occupies a large part of the site and replacement with housing, roads, pavements and gardens. Some vegetation on the western boundary would be removed to facilitate the access through to the St. Martin Close (west) site, but could be designed to avoid mature trees. The tree belt along the southern boundary would be retained.
- 7.9 In combination with the St. Martin Close (west) site, changes would remain adverse in nature at a site scale, but in the context of the wider area, and given the proposed tree and hedge planting, effects upon the vegetation cover within the study area are assessed to be **Direct, Long term, Permanent and Neutral.**

Land Use

- 7.10 Built development in Handcross directly adjoins the northern and eastern boundaries of the St. Martin Close (east) site. The introduction of new built form across the two adjoining sites would not be uncharacteristic, and the effect upon the land use within the study area is therefore assessed to be **Direct, Long term, Permanent and Neutral.**

Public Rights of Way

- 7.11 Residential development across the two adjoining sites would not result in any effects upon public rights of way.
- 7.12 In this context the effect upon PROW within the study area would be **Nil.**

Settlement Envelope

- 7.13 Residential development across the two adjoining sites would result in a direct change to the settlement envelope of Handcross, extending it to the south-west of the existing extent of development in the village. However, settlement would not extend further south than it already does on St Martin Close, and would represent a logical “rounding-off” of the settlement envelope at the south-west edge.
- 7.14 The increase in the settlement envelope would not result in any coalescence between towns or villages, and the general relationship between the existing settlement of Handcross and the surrounding rural landscape would not be fundamentally altered.
- 7.15 In this context the effect upon the settlement envelope would be **Direct, Long term, Permanent and Neutral.**

Urban Grain

- 7.16 Based on the assumption that development on the St. Martin Close (east) site would be designed sympathetically, and responding to existing adjacent development, it is anticipated that residential development across the two adjoining sites would echo the development pattern already established in Handcross. It would therefore not be uncharacteristic or out of keeping with the urban grain of the village.

- 7.17 In this context the effect upon urban grain would be **Direct, Long term, Permanent and Neutral.**

High Weald AONB

- 7.18 Residential development across the two adjoining sites would still have no direct impact on features identified as part of the following components of the character of the AONB on the Parish maps:
- Geology, landform, water systems and climate
 - Settlement
 - Ancient Woodland
- 7.19 With regard to the Field & Heath component, development across the two sites will result in the loss of a small former agricultural field and an area of scrub, located on the urban fringe, directly adjacent to existing residential development.
- 7.20 Within the Historic Landscape Characterisation, the St. Martin Close (east) site is covered by the same ‘Interpretation of Character’ as St. Martin Close (west) - UID HWS6900 ‘Regular piecemeal enclosure’, which is a ‘Common’ type within the Broad Character Type (14.8%) and ‘Occasional’ within the total HLC area.
- 7.21 Both sites are also part of a large area of ‘Unknown’ time-depth.
- 7.22 Existing site boundary hedges / tree belts will be retained and strengthened where required, with the exception of two short sections of hedge to allow the creation of the new access linking the two sites. Development on the St. Martin Close (east) site will have no additional impact on identified historic field boundaries.
- 7.23 Development on the St. Martin Close (east) site will also have no additional impact on identified historic routeways.

- 7.24 Residential development across the two sites would inevitably change the character of the sites, representing an adverse impact at the site level. At the scale of study area, the character of the rural landscape would remain largely unaffected. At the same time the existing contextual relationship between the sites and existing residential development in Handcross would restrict the impact of the new development.

- 7.25 The impact of the proposed development on the High Weald AONB is assessed as **Direct, Minor in scale and at a Local level of influence, Long term, and Permanent in nature.**

- 7.26 In line with Table A the ‘Magnitude of Change’ is assessed to be **Low.**

- 7.27 It is concluded that the change in character brought about by the development of the two sites would have a limited impact on the overall character of The High Weald AONB, and in this context is assessed to have a **Low Adverse** effect.

High Weald Landscape Character Area

- 7.28 The potential for the development across the two sites to influence the landscape beyond their own boundaries is assessed to be highly restricted, and would result in predominantly Neutral effects. It is also concluded that the ability of the proposed development to influence or alter the wider landscape character is equally limited.
- 7.29 No additional impacts on the identified key characteristics or landscape and visual sensitivities of the character area are anticipated when taking into account development on the St. Martin Close (east) site.
- 7.30 Residential development across the two sites which would be similar to existing development nearby, would not be uncharacteristic or out of keeping with the character of the sites and their immediate surroundings, or their location within the urban / rural fringe.
- 7.31 Although there would be a change in the settlement envelope and an increase in the settlement area, this would occupy a contained peripheral area to the existing settlement envelope.
- 7.32 The scale of the impact upon landscape character is assessed to be **Minor** at worst. Changes resulting from the development would be restricted to a limited geographical area and would not be experienced across the wider character area as a whole.
- 7.33 The duration of the impact is assessed to be **Long Term**, and the reversibility of the impact is considered to be **Permanent.**

- 7.34 The assessed impact upon local landscape character is therefore considered to be **Direct, Minor in scale, of a Local level of influence, Long term, and Permanent in nature.**
- 7.35 In line with Table A the ‘Magnitude of Change’ upon landscape character is assessed to be **Low.**
- 7.36 Overall it is concluded that the changes to landscape character would have a **Neutral Effect** in the long term.

8. SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

NATURE OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

Visual Resource

- 8.1 This assessment concludes that the site has very limited scope to cause changes to general public visual amenity, as the site is well contained visually.
- 8.2 The development would be generally only be visible from a highly restricted, localised area and typically only from locations where residential development is already an existing feature of the view, or is within the immediate vicinity of the view origin. The nature of the proposed development is assessed as characteristic of nearby residential development.
- 8.3 The proposed development has the potential to cause local scale adverse effects upon a small number of views directly adjacent to the site. These adverse impacts would not be due to the design of the development proposals themselves, but rather the proximity of the development to the receptor and the resulting loss of views currently experienced from them. The development itself would not be uncharacteristic of the surrounding residential character of the site and would not be unpleasant in terms of appearance.
- 8.4 These adverse impacts should be considered temporary in nature, being experienced only by current occupiers. Future occupiers with no prior knowledge of existing views would not consider the proposed development unpleasant or uncharacteristic of the site or its setting.

Landscape Resource

- 8.5 The likely impacts and effects that may arise from the proposed development are limited and relate almost exclusively to the resulting effect of a change in land use and land cover, and a change in the shape of the settlement envelope of Handcross.
- 8.6 The proposed development is not uncharacteristic of its setting, and it is not of a scale, massing, location or nature that would result in any notable impacts upon the landscape resources that combine to create the prevailing landscape character at a local, regional or national scale.

- 8.7 Although the development would fundamentally change the appearance and nature of the site itself, this would not cause a measurable change in wider landscape character. This is in large part due to the fact that the site is located immediately adjacent to the defined settlement envelope of Handcross. Its proximity to the urban fringe and existing settlement means that it is equally influenced by the adjacent developed landscape as the undeveloped rural landscape.

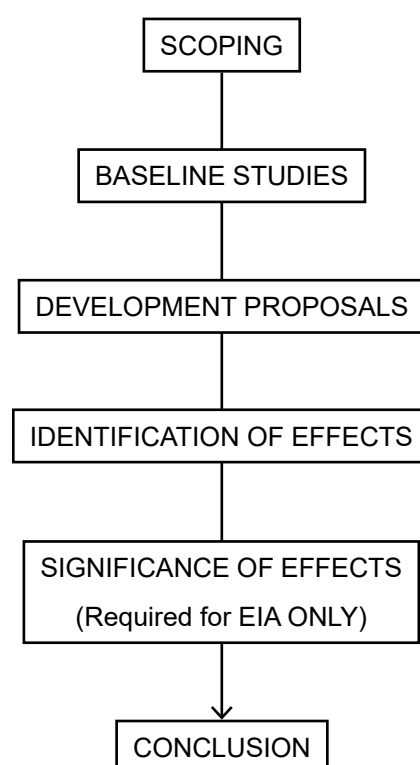
OVERALL CONCLUSION

- 8.8 This assessment concludes that the proposed site has a high capacity to accommodate the proposed development. It is concluded that proposed development is of an appropriate scale, massing and appearance for its setting, and would not cause an adverse change in the prevailing landscape and visual character of the area.

9. APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

- 9.1 The diagram below indicates the process that has been followed in undertaking this assessment. The 'Significance of Effects' section is only undertaken for assessments requiring a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the purposes of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).



ASSESSMENT TABLES & MATRICES

- 9.2 To assist with the assessment process a number of standard tables and matrices are provided in **Tables A to I** within this methodology.
- 9.3 These tables are intended as an initial guide to enable the assessor to consistently identify a common starting point or value against which to assess individual aspects of a specific project. They contain generic classifications relating primarily to landscape character and views, upon which site specific judgements and descriptions can be formulated.
- 9.4 There are often instances where dynamic values can fall between categories set out in the tables / matrices, requiring the assessor to use professional judgement in reaching a conclusion, supported by explanatory text.

SCOPING

- 9.5 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.
- 9.6 The scoping exercise is completed by undertaking a preliminary desktop study of the site, its immediate surroundings and the proposed scheme, to identify possible impacts and effects.

Establishing the Study Area

- 9.7 In determining an appropriate study area for assessment, it is important to distinguish between the study of the physical landscape and the study of visual amenity. The study area required for analysis of the physical landscape is focused on the immediate locality of the identified site, but must include sufficient area to place the site into its wider landscape context.
- 9.8 The study area for the visual assessment extends to the whole of the area from which the site is visible and/or the proposed development would be visible.

Scoping Out

- 9.9 Directive 2014/52/EU states that the emphasis of LVIA should be on identification of the likely "Significant" environmental effects and the need for an approach that is appropriate and proportional to the scale of the project being assessed.
- 9.10 Only topics and issues which are relevant should be included within the LVIA. This approach is also considered to remain appropriate for non EIA projects.
- 9.11 It may therefore be appropriate to 'scope out' certain topics and effects from the outset, on the grounds that they are not significant or are disproportionate for the following reasons:

- The topic or issue is not present within the defined study area or is at a sufficient distance away from the site of the proposal, 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. An example would be the effect that a small domestic development might have on a National Character Area.

ESTABLISHING BASELINE STUDIES

- 9.12 The purpose of baseline studies is to establish the existing landscape and visual conditions against which the proposal will be assessed.
- 9.13 In terms of landscape this process will identify the constituent elements, features and characteristics of the landscape, and the way these interact and vary spatially. It will establish the condition of these components, the way that the landscape is experienced, and the value or importance attached to them.
- 9.14 In terms of visual amenity, the baseline study will establish the area from which the development may be visible, the different groups of people (receptors) who may experience views, the location and nature of existing views and the visual amenity at these points.

Desktop Study

- 9.15 The first stage of the baseline work is a desktop study of relevant available background information relating to the site and its surroundings.
- 9.16 Principal sources of such information include:
- The local planning authority.
 - Existing National, Regional, District and Local Landscape Character Area Assessments.
 - Statutory consultants including Historic England and the Environment Agency.
 - Online national and regional mapping resources.

9.17 Typical baseline information may include:

- Aerial imagery.
- Topography.
- Soils and geology.
- Land cover.
- Protective designations.
- Historic context and features.
- Land use.
- Public rights of way.
- Existing evaluation and assessment studies.

Field Study

9.18 Information collated in the desktop study is then checked and confirmed by direct field observations, particularly in urban and urban fringe areas where maps and aerial data can be out of date, or difficult to interpret.

Landscape Character Area Assessment

9.19 Analysis of baseline landscape conditions provides a concise description of the existing elements, features, characteristics, character, quality and extent of the site and its surroundings.

Landscape Character Assessment

9.20 Landscape assessment encompasses the appraisal of physical, aesthetic and intangible attributes including sense of place, rarity or uniformity, and unspoilt appearance.

9.21 A distinction is made between:

- The elements that make up the landscape, including;
 - Physical components, such as geology, soils, landform and drainage.
 - Land cover.
 - Influence of human activity, current and past, including land use and management, settlement and development patterns.
- Aesthetic and perceptual aspects, such as scale, complexity, openness and tranquillity.
- Analysis of the way in which these components interact to create the distinctive characteristics of the landscape.

9.22 The combination of the above components creates areas with a unique sense of place or 'character', which can be mapped and defined as Landscape Character Areas (LCAs).

Townscape Character Assessment

9.23 Certain projects require an assessment of townscape character. The nature of townscapes requires particular understanding of a range of different factors that together, distinguish different parts of built up areas, including:

- The context or setting of the urban area and its relationship with the wider landscape.
- Topography and its relationship with urban form.
- The grain of the built form and its relationship with historic patterns.
- The layout, scale and density of built form and building types, including architectural style, period and materials.
- Patterns of land use, past and present.
- The distribution and role of open green space and urban vegetation.
- The type, character and quality of open space and public realm.
- Access and connectivity.

The role of existing Character Area Assessments

9.24 Landscape character assessments have been carried out by a number of authorities at a range of scales, from National and Regional, down to District and Local levels.

9.25 Existing assessments are reviewed critically before use, to ensure that they are accurate, current and relevant to the assessment process in hand. They are checked to establish their current status (adopted, unadopted, advisory or superseded). They are also reviewed to determine the scale and level of detail of the assessment, and how this relates to the proposed development.

9.26 Many national and regional landscape character assessments are based on too large a scale to be of real benefit in assessing local or district scale development projects, and require sub-division into local sub-character areas. These are more specific to the study area and allow a more thorough assessment of the potential impacts of a development upon sub-components that combine to create the larger 'Character Area Classifications'.

9.27 Urban areas are often omitted from national and regional landscape assessments due to the complex nature of the urban fabric, preventing the definition of broad character types. For this reason, a separate project-specific 'Townscape Character Assessment' may be necessary to identify different townscape character zones and components within the urban fabric, and within the local study area.

9.28 It may sometimes be necessary to rule out or otherwise interpret the content of existing landscape character assessments and their findings, especially if baseline conditions at the site-specific level are at variance with the broader landscape character classification.

9.29 Within the local study area, a number of distinct character areas are identified or defined. Each area has its own distinctive character defined by a Landscape Character Area (LCA) or Townscape Character Area (TCA).

Visual Amenity Assessment

9.30 Baseline analysis of visual conditions provides a concise description of the prevailing visual characteristics and visual amenity of the study area landscape, in terms of pattern, scale, texture, complexity, unity, form and enclosure.

9.31 The visual baseline also identifies the different groups and numbers of people who may experience views of the development, the locations where these views will be experienced, and the nature of the existing view at these points.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

9.32 For some projects, visual baseline conditions can be established by identifying the area from which a proposal is, theoretically, likely to be visible. This can be established by producing a 'Zone of Theoretical Visibility' (ZTV) using specialist software packages and survey data, or through traditional manual mapping.

9.33 In many situations, however, it can be extremely difficult to establish a reliable ZTV on these methods alone, due to anomalies caused by the presence of existing built development and vegetation cover within the study area. In these circumstances manual study of mapping is recommended to establish an initial ZTV, which can then be checked on site by direct field observation to establish the primary locations from where the site, and the future development, would be visible.

Height of the Observer

- 9.34 For the purposes of the production of ZTVs, site surveys and baseline photography, it has been assumed that (unless stated otherwise) the observer eye height is between 1.5 to 1.7m above ground level, based upon the mid-point of average heights for men and women.

Identifying Potential Visual Receptors

- 9.35 Once the physical nature, dimensions and precise location of the proposed development has been established, it is possible to identify the type of visual receptor(s) who would be affected. This could be a wide range of people including those living in the area, those who work there and those who are passing through en route to a different destination. There may also be people visiting specific attractions and locations, or those engaged in a recreational activity.
- 9.36 These receptors will experience the landscape setting in different ways, depending on the context (location, time of day, season, degree of exposure), and the purpose of the activity they are undertaking (recreation, residence, employment or journey).
- 9.37 Visual receptors can be divided into three categories which reflect their relative sensitivity to changes in the view, derived from the context and purpose of their viewing experience:
- Primary.
 - Secondary.
 - Tertiary.

Primary Receptors

- 9.38 These are views from / by the most sensitive locations and / or receptors, and include locations with high visual amenity due to their historic or cultural significance (such as designated landscapes or tourist attractions), or high quality or importance (such as views from public rights of way, areas of passive recreation or residential properties).
- 9.39 These also include views from locations in close proximity to the site from where the greatest magnitude of change may be experienced.

Secondary Receptors

- 9.40 These are views from locations and / or by receptors where the visual amenity value of the available view is considered to be low. This might be due to the nature of activity being undertaken at the location, or by the receptor (such as views from, or in close proximity to, areas of active recreation, major transport interchanges, major

roads and railway lines and places of work or employment). This may also be due to the nature or quality of the available view and its setting (such as views from locations in close proximity to major detracting visual features, such as damaged or derelict land or buildings).

- 9.41 These also include views from locations where the number of receptors is likely to be low, or the nature of the view is glimpsed, fragmented or gained from within a moving vehicle.

Tertiary Receptors

- 9.42 These are views from the least sensitive locations and / or receptors, who will in fact, be 'scoped-out' of further assessment.
- 9.43 Tertiary receptors are locations with very low, or no existing visual amenity, due to lack of available publicly accessible views, or where the setting or view is damaged or adversely affected by existing detracting visual features within the landscape.
- 9.44 These also include long distance views where the introduction of new development into the view is unlikely to alter its overall nature, character or emphasis.

Selecting Key Viewpoint Locations

- 9.45 From the preliminary desktop studies it is possible to identify key locations within the study area, which have the potential to provide views of the proposed development.
- 9.46 Following verification on site, viewpoints that characterise the views of the proposed development and those which are of particular relevance in terms of their location or with particular features of importance or sensitivity, are then selected.
- 9.47 These viewpoints can be divided into the following three groups:
- **Representative Viewpoints.** Views which represent the experience of different types of receptor and / or of views, from a number of similar locations, where the effect is unlikely to differ.
 - **Specific Viewpoints.** Views from specific locations where the value of the view is acknowledged, such as views from visitor attractions, or designated historic or cultural viewpoints and landmarks.
 - **Illustrative viewpoints.** Chosen to demonstrate a particular effect or issue.

Representative views

- 9.48 The approach to visual assessment requires that assessed views are representative of the wider general viewing experience. Selected viewpoints should be unbiased and should aim to represent the full range of viewing experiences available within the study area.
- 9.49 In selecting the final representative viewpoints consideration has therefore been given to:
- Public accessibility.
 - Number and sensitivity of viewers.
 - Viewing direction, distance and elevation.
 - Nature of the viewing experience (static, moving).
 - Type of view (panoramic, vista, glimpsed).
- 9.50 Selected viewpoints should include locations from all geographic directions, at a range of distances. They should not focus just on locations where the development might be visible or equally not visible. They should represent the full range of views to ensure that the visual effect of a development is not over, or under-represented.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- 9.51 The purpose of this section of the report is to:
- Identify the key features and components of the proposed development, upon which the assessment will be based. This includes where appropriate; location; function; layout; scale; massing; architectural style; materials; textures; colour; phasing and life span.
 - Identify the essential aspects of the scheme that will potentially give rise to effects on landscape and visual amenity.
 - Set out any assumptions that have been made regarding the nature of the proposed development in the absence of firm or clear details at the time of assessment.
 - Describe any preliminary mitigation measures which have been built into the finalised scheme as part of the iterative design process to help avoid, minimise or compensate for anticipated impacts.

IDENTIFICATION OF EFFECTS

9.52 The purpose of this section of the report is to identify and describe the potential impacts and effects that may result from the proposed development upon landscape and visual resources, and to establish which of these are considered to be 'significant', thereby requiring further assessment.

9.53 There is no prescribed formula to establish the likely significant effects that may result from a proposed development. This process takes systematic analysis of the range of possible interactions between components of the proposed development throughout its lifecycle, and the baseline landscape and visual resource.

Nature of Change (Magnitude of Impact)

9.54 Potential impacts are identified by describing the change to the baseline situation of individual landscape or visual receptors resulting from the different components of the development. These can include the following:

- A change in and / or partial, or complete loss of elements, features or aesthetic aspects that contribute to the landscape or visual character.
- The addition of new elements or features that will influence character.
- The combined effects of the above on overall character.

9.55 The nature of any identified impact is considered in terms of whether it is:

- Direct / Indirect or Secondary.
- Cumulative.
- Short / Medium or Long-term in duration.
- Permanent or Temporary.
- Beneficial / Adverse, or Neutral.

Establishing Magnitude

9.56 The consideration of the 'magnitude' of each identified impact will include:

- Size / scale.
- Geographic extent.
- Duration / reversibility.

Size / Scale

9.57 A judgement is made on the size or scale of the change that will occur. It is expressed on a four-point scale of Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible, and takes into account:

- The extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost, the proportion of the total extent that these represent and the contribution this makes to the character of the landscape or view.
- The extent of the view that would be occupied by the proposed development (glimpsed, partial or full) and the proportion of the proposed development that would be visible.
- The degree to which the aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape or view are altered by the removal, or addition of certain features. A judgement is also made as to whether the proposed development contrasts in form or character with its surroundings, and / or whether the development appears as an extension or addition to the original context of the view.
- Whether or not the impact changes the key characteristics of the receiving landscape.
- The rapidity of the process of change in the landscape or view.

Geographic Extent

9.58 The area over which the effect will be felt is identified on a four point scale of:

- **Site.** Within the development itself.
- **Local.** Within the immediate setting of the site.
- **District.** Within the landscape type / character area in which the proposal lies.
- **Regional.** Within the immediate landscape type / character area in which the proposal lies, and those immediately adjoining it.

Duration & Reversibility

9.59 The duration of the period over which the effect will occur is defined using a three point scale of:

- **Short-term** (0-5yrs).
- **Medium-term** (6-10yrs).
- **Long-term** (11+ years).

9.60 The reversibility is defined on a two point scale:

- **Permanent** (change cannot be reversed, or there is no intention that it will be reversed).
- **Temporary** (change has a defined life span and will, or can be reversed on cessation).

Other factors which influence Visual Magnitude

9.61 In relation to visual amenity and when determining size / scale, geographic extent and duration, it is also necessary to consider the following variables, which can influence how a change to a view can be perceived or observed:

- **Elevation and distance.** The distance and angle of view of the viewpoint from the proposed development, and how this may affect a receptor's ability to identify the development within the view.
- **Exposure.** The duration and nature of the view (fragmented, glimpsed, intermittent or continuous).
- **Prominence.** Whether or not the view would focus on the proposed development. For example, where a building would effectively create a landmark, or the view is directed towards a building by the landscape framework, or the development forms one element in a panoramic view.
- **Weather conditions / aspect.** The effect of the prevailing weather conditions at a given location, the clarity of the atmosphere or the angle and direction of the sun and how this impacts upon visibility.
- **Seasonal variation.** Changes in seasonal weather conditions and vegetation cover will alter the extent of visibility of a development within a given view. This will in turn, influence factors such as the perceived size, scale, exposure and prominence.

Magnitude of Change

9.62 The above factors are then combined to define the nature, or ‘magnitude’ of change, using a three point scale of High, Medium or Low, as set out in **Table A**.

Table A: Magnitude of Change.

Value	Classification Criteria
High	A change of high magnitude will be generally consistent with the following criteria for a given development proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- It would be of a major size / scale,- It would be prominent / dominant,- It would be of a District to Regional extent,- It would be of a long-term duration,- It would be permanent in nature,- It would be continuous in occurrence.
Medium	A change of medium magnitude will be generally consistent with the following criteria for a given development proposal; <ul style="list-style-type: none">- It would be of a moderate size / scale,- It would be noticeable / recognisable- It would be of a Local to District extent,- It would be of a medium-term duration,- It would be either permanent or temporary in nature,- It would be intermittent in occurrence.
Low	A change of low magnitude will generally consistent with the following criteria for a given development proposal; <ul style="list-style-type: none">- It would be of a minor size / scale,- It would be obscure / inconspicuous,- It would be of a Site to Local extent,- It would be of a short-term duration,- It would be temporary in nature,- It would be occasional in occurrence.

Beneficial, Adverse or Neutral

- 9.63 The LVIA Guidelines require attributes of ‘Beneficial’, ‘Adverse’ or ‘Neutral’ to be assigned to an assessed effect.
- 9.64 Definitions of these are included in the ‘definitions and terminology’ section of the methodology and will be based largely upon an individual’s perception and experience and is a challenging exercise, because what one person considers to be beneficial, another may consider adverse.
- 9.65 This process is based upon an informed professional judgement, which considers a range of criteria that may include:
- The degree to which the proposed development is considered to be characteristic, or uncharacteristic of the receiving landscape or view.
 - The contribution that the development itself may make to the quality, condition and character of the landscape or visual resource.

DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

- 9.66 The following section establishes the key definitions and terminology used throughout this document and the supporting methodology. Quotes in italic are our para-phrasing from GLVIA 3.

Impact & Effect

- 9.67 GLVIA 3 refers to the distinction made generally under European Union Directive between the term ‘impact’, defined as *‘the action being taken’* and the ‘effect’, defined as *‘the change resulting from that action’*.

Landscape

- 9.68 The term ‘landscape’ within this report is taken to mean *‘an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural, cultural and/or human factors... It does not just mean special or designated landscapes nor only the rural countryside, but covers all natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas including land, inland water and marine areas, and includes areas which are considered outstanding, everyday and degraded in condition’*.

Townscape

- 9.69 The definition of the term ‘townscape’ within this report is taken to mean *‘an area where the built environment is dominant, areas within the built up area, including buildings, the relationship between them as well as the urban open spaces between them’*.

Landscape Resource & Visual Amenity

- 9.70 Landscape and visual assessments are independent but related issues;
- Landscape assessment analyses the effect on the landscape as a resource.
 - Visual assessment analyses the effect on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.

Landscape Resource (Character)

- 9.71 Landscape character results from the *‘interplay of the physical, natural and cultural components of our surroundings. Different combinations of these elements and their spatial distribution create the distinctive character of landscape in different places, allowing different landscapes to be mapped analysed and described’*. This process enables the establishment of discrete ‘Landscape Character Areas’.

Visual Amenity

- 9.72 Refers to the overall pleasantness (or otherwise) of views experienced by people, providing a visual setting for a range of activities being undertaken.

Landscape Value

- 9.73 Refers to the relative value placed upon a resource by society. It is arrived at by combining judgements on the importance of the resource with its condition and quality.
- 9.74 ‘Landscape quality (condition)’ is defined as *‘a measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements’*.

Landscape Effects

- 9.75 Landscape effects derive from changes to the physical components of the landscape, which may lead to changes in its character and how it is experienced (and hence may in turn, affect its perceived value). Due to the inherently dynamic nature of the landscape, physical changes may not necessarily be significant.

Visual Effects

- 9.76 Visual effects relate to changes that arise in the composition of available views from visual receptors, to people’s response to these changes, and to overall effects with respect to visual amenity.

Receptors	Adverse (Negative) Effect	Compensation
<p>9.77 'Landscape Receptors' are <i>'defined aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal'</i>.</p> <p>9.78 'Visual Receptors' are <i>'individuals and / or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal'</i>,</p>	<p>9.84 This refers to an identified effect which results in the loss or degradation of the baseline condition of a landscape resource or view, which might derive from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removal of a beneficial feature, component or view.• Expansion or enlargement of an existing adverse feature, component or view.• The introduction of a new, uncharacteristic and adverse feature or component which weakens, damages or changes the existing valued landscape character or visual amenity.	<p>9.91 Refers to <i>'measures devised to offset or compensate for residual adverse effects which cannot be prevented / avoided or further reduced'</i>.</p>
<p>Susceptibility</p> <p>9.79 Refers to the ability of a landscape or visual receptor to accommodate change without undue consequences (which are defined in the supporting methodology). The term is the product of not only intrinsic sensitivity (informed by value, importance and condition), but also the specific characteristics of the development to be assessed.</p>	<p>Neutral Effect</p> <p>9.85 Some impacts may result in a combination of positive and negative effects, resulting on balance, in a 'neutral' effect overall.</p> <p>9.86 A neutral effect may also refer to an identified effect which would be of a magnitude and / or nature that would be negligible, or of an in scale / magnitude in relation to the baseline condition of a landscape resource or view being assessed that it would not be significant. It would represent neither a beneficial, nor an adverse outcome.</p>	
<p>Sensitivity (Nature of Receptor)</p> <p>9.80 'Sensitivity' is defined as <i>'a term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor'</i>.</p>	<p>Direct Effect</p> <p>9.87 A direct effect is <i>'an effect that is directly attributable to the proposed development'</i>.</p>	
<p>Magnitude of Effect (Nature of Change)</p> <p>9.81 Refers to the combined judgement about the size and scale of an effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and its duration.</p>	<p>Indirect Effect</p> <p>9.88 Indirect effects are effects that <i>'result indirectly from the proposed project as a consequence of the direct effects, often occurring away from the site, or as a result of a sequence of inter-relationships or a complex pathway. They may be separated by distance or in time from the sources of the effects'</i>.</p>	
<p>Degree of Effect</p> <p>9.82 Is a measure of the overall 'scale of change' resulting from the environmental effect, defined by criteria relating to the interaction of magnitude and sensitivity.</p>	<p>Mitigation</p> <p>9.89 Refers to features or components of a proposal which have been specifically added to address an identified impact, in order to either avoid, minimise or compensate for its effect(s).</p>	
<p>Beneficial (Positive) Effect</p> <p>9.83 This refers to an identified effect which results in an improvement or enhancement in the baseline condition of a landscape resource or view, which might derive from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removal of a detracting feature, component or view.• Reinstatement or improvement of a key existing beneficial feature, component or view.• The introduction of a new, characteristic and beneficial feature or component which reinforces, protects or promotes the existing valued landscape character or visual amenity.	<p>Enhancement</p> <p>9.90 <i>'Proposals that seek to improve the landscape resource and the visual; amenity of the proposed development site and its wider setting, over and above its baseline condition'</i>.</p>	