

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT APPRAISAL

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS OF A PROPOSED CREMATORIUM AT TURNERS HILL, WEST SUSSEX

for
HARTMIRES INVESTMENTS LTD.

August 2020

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This LVA has been read and approved for submission to
MSDC by Andrew Tabachnik QC of 39 Essex Chambers.

In the interest of sustainability, this document is intended to be printed double sided on A3 paper.

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I INTRODUCTION

I.1. Reason for assessment

- I.1.1. This document addresses the likely Landscape and Visual effects of a proposed crematorium development at Turners Hill in West Sussex.
- I.1.2. It forms part of the documentation associated with an Outline Planning Application and has been prepared by Indigo Landscape Architects Ltd.

I.2. Site location (refer to Figure 1)

- I.2.1. The Site is located in open countryside to the north of Turners Hill Road, a classified C road which joins the village of Turners Hill (some 500m to the east of the Site) to Crawley (some 3km to the west).
- I.2.2. It lies well outside the Metropolitan Green Belt, but just outside the High Weald AONB (which lies immediately to the south of Turners Hill Road), and is bounded by an area of Ancient Woodland (Butcher's Wood) to the east.
- I.2.3. The area under consideration (the 'Site') has extant permission for as a natural burial site including a chapel, reception building, a barn / workshop and associated car parking (see paragraphs I.4.3 and I.4.4 below).

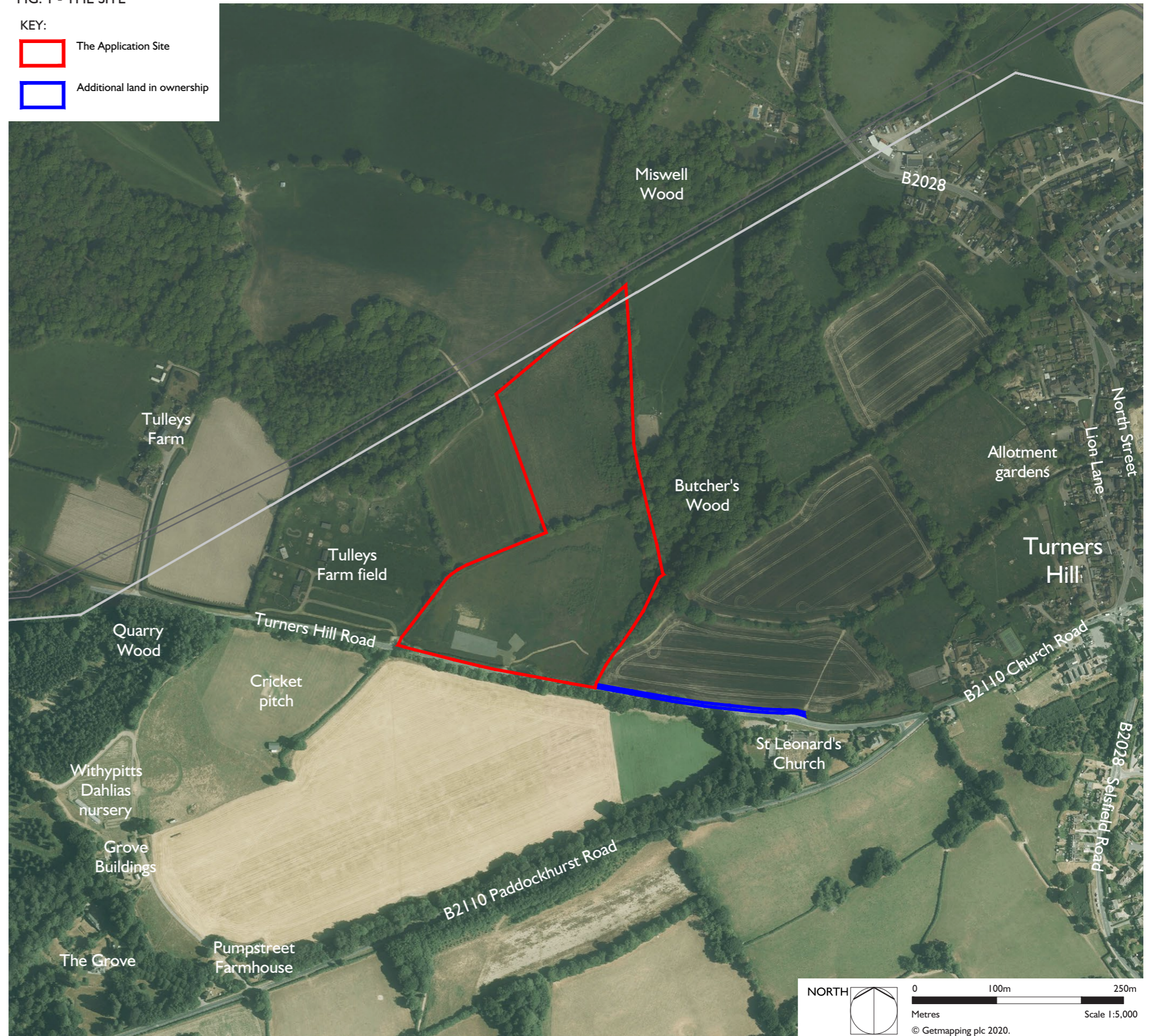
I.3. Aim and approach

- I.3.1. The assessment itself has the following objectives:
 - To identify the existing significant landscape features and the landscape quality both of the Application Site and the surrounding Study Area.
 - To assess the likely Landscape and Visual effects of the proposals taking account of any mitigation proposed.
- I.3.2. The approach to the assessment has therefore involved:
 - Recording and analysis of the key components of the Landscape which contribute to overall Landscape Character, and of the Visual baseline associated with the Site and surrounding area through desk-based study and field appraisal;
 - An evaluation of the sensitivity of the existing landscape, and of Visual receptors likely to be affected by the Proposed Development;
 - Appreciation of the nature, form, scale and materials associated with the development, including mitigation measures proposed; and,
 - An assessment of the magnitude of effect and its potential for significance as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Development.

FIG. 1 - THE SITE

KEY:

- The Application Site
- Additional land in ownership



1.4. Basis of assessment

- 1.4.1. This planning application is not the subject of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (refer to Appendix H for screening opinion letter).
- 1.4.2. It is instead, an outline application for a crematorium and natural burial development where overall effects are likely to be restricted to a limited area of the surrounding landscape. The report therefore recognizes the need for proportionality,¹ and this has guided the scope of the Appraisal.
- 1.4.3. As set out above, however, the Site currently has extant planning permission for use as a natural burial site and has a series of permissions for a chapel, reception building, barn / workshop and associated parking, some of which are part implemented (refer to Planning Statement for full details).² At the time of the Site visit, an orange hoarding had been erected around the site of the approved chapel, a gap in the roadside hedgerow had been created (and hedgerows translocated) at the site access point, an area of hardstanding had been laid in the area of the approved car park, and some planting had been undertaken. All other works have yet to be implemented.
- 1.4.4. In considering this document, however, it is important to understand that the assessments made are relative to the existing baseline (excluding the orange hoardings), rather than the extant approvals. Comment on the effects of the crematorium proposals compared to the cumulative effects of the approved facilities is included as a separate section at the end of this assessment.
- 1.4.5. It is also essential to understand that the assessments made are based on the principles contained within the description of development (Section 6), and that with the exception of the access point off Turners Hill Road (Arden Consulting Engineers drawing I90561-001), this description is not of fixed elements.
- 1.4.6. The description of the development does, however, include the range of uses and elements of the proposed scheme and key parameters on the scale of the build development. Taking this approach provides an assessment of the essential basis of the scheme, rather than details which may or may not be built in the future, and means the assessment remains relevant at a future point as long as these principles are adhered to. With respect to the fixed parameters, it also means that the worst case scenario has been assessed (for example the height of the crematorium building assumes the worst case, whereas at the detailed planning stage elements of the building (such as the chimney) may be reduced in height to provide architectural and visual interest within the scheme or assist in the reduction of effects).
- 1.4.7. It is also important to understand that both the Landscape and Visual assessments undertaken have been prepared using a methodology which (partially as a consequence of the limited parameters provided) deliberately avoids forming a significant opinion on the merits of the architecture proposed. The assessment methodology is designed to make the assessment process as objective as possible. The impacts of built form (size, shape, broad materials etc.) are considered, but a judgement of design quality does not form part of this assessment.
- 1.4.8. Finally, it is important to bear in mind that some Landscape and Visual effects are an almost inevitable consequence of development. It is up to the decision makers (in this case Mid Sussex District Council's Planning Department) to consider any adverse effects identified in the context of beneficial effects that may also exist in other areas (in this case the provision of needed crematoria facilities) and to strike a balance in making a decision on the application.

1.5. Identification of the preliminary Study Area

- 1.5.1. The preliminary (desk top) study area for this assessment was centred on the Site and included all areas within a 5km radius where the Proposed Development could potentially have an effect on Landscape Character and Visual amenity, taking into account topography and significant areas of built form and vegetation.

- 1.5.2. Whilst some long distance views exist from rising ground to the north of the Site (including within the Surrey Hills AONB some 17km to the north), by the time the ground reaches sufficient elevation for potential views, the Site is between 9 and 10km away (on the gentle ridge around Outwood) and the proposals would not be discernible in the wider landscape.

1.6. Site survey work

- 1.6.1. The identification of the preliminary study area was followed up with detailed field survey work undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute on the 19th May and the 10th June 2020 (trees in leaf). Weather conditions were sunny and dry with good visibility in May, but more mixed at the time of the June visit.
- 1.6.2. Representative photographs were taken at viewpoints chosen to demonstrate the visibility of the Site in the surrounding landscape. Where many similar viewpoints were available, photos were taken at the location where the Site is most visible.
- 1.6.3. Photographs were taken with a Nikon D3400 digital SLR camera with a fixed 35mm focal length lens and presented using a 1.5x multiplication factor to give the equivalent of 52.5mm on a 35mm film SLR. They are intended to be viewed **digitally** and replicate a normal eye level view at 1.6 metres above ground level.³
- 1.6.4. The fieldwork undertaken has enabled the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) to be established (refer to Section 4.2 and Figure 4 on page 12); and this in turn has guided the detailed Study Area for the Landscape Baseline study.

1.7. Scope of the Appraisal

- 1.7.1. As set out above, the scope of this Appraisal has been guided by the nature of the proposals and the landscape in which it is located. In this case, given the nature of the proposals, the Site, and the surrounding landscape context, the assessments undertaken within this document have been limited to the following:
- The Visual assessment has been undertaken during daylight hours, and in order to take account of the effect of time has been considered in the short (year 1), medium (year 7), and longer term (year 15).
 - 18 viewpoints have been chosen to represent the visibility of the Site from the public domain surrounding the Site. Viewpoints are representative, and therefore illustrate the nature of views experienced around each location.
 - The photographs presented in Section 8 and Appendix D have been undertaken in summer, however, the assessments consider the likely effects in both summer and winter (based on professional experience), and separate assessments have been made.
 - Although planning is principally concerned with views from the public domain, effects on receptors in private residences have also been considered.
 - In undertaking the Landscape Assessment an overall assessment of the effects of the development on Landscape Character has been made. Detailed assessments of the effects on individual elements that contribute to Landscape Character have not been assessed individually - Instead 20 individual elements that contribute to Landscape Character have been considered within the environmental baseline under three broad headings 'Physical Influences', 'Influences of Human Activity' and 'Aesthetic and Perceptual Factors' and the effects on them considered collectively in coming to a conclusion on the effects on overall Landscape Character.

¹ GLVIA 3 - Paragraphs 3.16 and 6.2.

² Refer to drawings in Appendix G for details.

³ Note: Refer to Appendix C for technical details.

2 METHODOLOGY, ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE ASSESSMENT

2.1. Introduction

- 2.1.1. This section sets out the methodology used in the preparation of this document. It sets out guidance referenced, terminology used, the concept behind the process of Landscape and Visual assessment, and the methodology which has been applied.
- 2.1.2. It also sets out both assumptions made and limitations acknowledged, and is supported by a glossary which defines terms used throughout.

2.2. Guidance and terminology

- 2.2.1. The methodology, guidelines and terminology used in the preparation of this Appraisal have been developed from the following:
- 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition' (GLVIA3) published by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and which came into force on the 17th April 2013, and
 - 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', Natural England, 2014.
- 2.2.2. The generic title of the process followed is Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. The term 'impact' in this context is often seen as interchangeable with the term 'effect' (and there may be circumstances in which the terms 'impact and effect' are interchangeable), however, GLVIA 3 defines impact as the 'action being taken', and effect as 'the change resulting from that action', and these definitions have been followed throughout this assessment.
- 2.2.3. For the avoidance of doubt:
- 'Km' means kilometre/s; 'm' means metre/s.
 - All distances are approximate.
 - All references to points of the compass are generalised and are used for descriptive purposes only.
 - 'Site' refers to the Application Site within the boundary shown on Figure 1.

2.3. Process of assessment

- 2.3.1. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is a process where the features and qualities of views and of the Application Site and surrounding Landscape are examined, the Proposed Development is set out, and assessments are undertaken in accordance with the approach set out in GLVIA3.
- 2.3.2. The process considers the **susceptibility** to change of the "receptor" and the **value** attached to the view / landscape element to determine **sensitivity**; and weighs this against the **magnitude of effect** to determine the **Significance** (or level) **of effect**.

$$\text{Sensitivity} \times \text{magnitude} = \text{Significance of effect}$$

- 2.3.3. Although interrelated, Landscape assessment is distinctly separate from the process of Visual assessment:
- **Landscape** effects are concerned with changes to the landscape, including the effect on its character as a whole and on the individual elements contributing to this character. "Receptors" can therefore include physical influences (for example vegetation or water bodies); influences of human activity (for example access / movement or the character of buildings / built form); or aesthetic and perceptual factors (for example tranquillity or wildness); all of which contribute to overall Landscape Character.
 - **Visual** effects are the effects on "receptors" of changes (resulting from development) in the character of available views. In this case the "receptors" are people experiencing the view such as users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) or occupants of residential properties.

- 2.3.4. Detailed Methodologies are set out within Appendices A (Landscape) and B (Visual).

2.4. Assumptions made

- 2.4.1. In undertaking both the Landscape and Visual assessments, certain assumptions are made regarding the development. In this case these have included building heights, finished floor levels, and plant growth rates. These are set out below, and should be read in conjunction with the description of the development in Section 6 below.
- 2.4.2. In the case of building heights, it has been assumed that the crematorium building would have a Finished Floor Level (FFL) of 164m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and that:
- The crematorium building would be no more than 4.5m in height (168.5m AOD), with a flat roof and with a sloping feature skylight above the chapel measuring no more than 7m above FFL (171m AOD).
 - The cremator flues would be housed within an enclosing chimney and would be no higher than 7m above FFL (max 171m AOD).
 - The (approved) barn / workshop would be 3m high to the eaves, and 4.95m to the ridge, with a finished floor level of 163m AOD.⁴
- 2.4.3. With respect to proposed planting, it has been assumed that plant growth and maintenance heights will be as follows:⁵
- a) Mixed native hedgerow planting around the Site boundaries would be:
 - I. Planted with native species as transplants at 6 per linear metre in triple staggered rows, guide height 1m at year 1.
 - II. Well established as a fairly solid hedge in year 7 – maintained at 2m height unless detailed otherwise.
 - III. Fully established as a solid hedge in year 15 – maintained at 2.5 - 3.0m in height.
 - b) Single species native hedgerow planting within the car park and around the Garden of Remembrance would be:
 - I. Planted with native species as semi-instant hedgerows, minimum 1m high in year 1.
 - II. Fully established as a solid hedge in years 7 and 15 – maintained at 1.2m height within the car park, and 2m height to the west of the crematorium building and around the Garden of Remembrance.
 - c) Native woodland mix planting would be:
 - I. Planted as whips 0.5 - 1.0m tall in year 1, with 30% feathered trees planted as 1.75 – 2.5m height within the mix to provide varied age and height structure. Overall density 1 per square metre.
 - II. Well established as woodland in year 7, forming a solid visual barrier at ground level in summer and good filtering to full screening of views in winter (depending on the depth of planting) – heights likely to vary between 2 and 5m. Plants to be allowed to grow to natural shape.
 - III. Fully established as woodland in year 15, forming a solid visual barrier at ground level in summer and good filtering to full screening of views in winter (depending on the depth of planting) – heights likely to vary between 4 and 8m. Plants to be allowed to grow to natural shape.
 - d) Tree planting within the crematorium car park would be:
 - I. Planted as Advanced Nursery Stock (18-20 cm girth) and Semi-Mature specimens (20-25 cm girth) - 4.5 – 6m tall in year 1.
 - II. 5.5 – 7.5m tall in year 7.
 - III. 6.5 - 9m tall in year 15.

⁴ Building heights are given on the approved drawings but the Finished Floor Level is not stated.

⁵ For further details of planting refer to Section 6 below.

e) Specimen tree planting within the parkland area northeast of the crematorium building would be:

- I. Planted as Advanced Nursery Stock (16-18 and 18-20 cm girth) - 4.5 – 6m tall in year 1.
- II. 5.5 – 7m tall in year 7.
- III. 6.5 - 8m tall in year 15.

2.4.4. It should be noted, however, that tree heights will vary with species and are made on the assumption that planting and maintenance (watering etc) is to a high specification and that shocks to plant physiology (drought etc) are avoided. For example, in these conditions a semi-mature oak tree planted at 5m in height is likely to reach over 6m by year 7, and around 7.5m by year 15, whilst the equivalent aged ash or sweet chestnut planted at 6.5m in height may reach 8m by year 7 and up to 10m by year 15.

2.4.5. Finally, it should also be noted that for the assessments made in years 7 and 15 it has been assumed that there would be no significant change (growth or loss) in offsite / foreground vegetation.

2.5. Limitations of assessment

2.5.1. The assessments undertaken are based on certain assumptions and therefore have certain limitations. Whilst the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) calls for assessments to be appropriate and proportionate to the nature of the development proposed, these limitations should be recorded. For this study these have been identified as follows:

- The assessment only assesses effects on Visual receptors on publicly accessible land and from private residences (estimated) – Whilst this is entirely normal it should be noted that Visual effects from locations on surrounding fields are not covered.
- Sections have been used (refer to drawing 917-MP-05) but no photomontages or other forms of visualisation have been used in the assessments undertaken.
- As set out in Appendix B, the visibility of the Site from private viewpoints has been estimated both by looking towards the Site from public areas, and by standing on Site and looking outwards. No attempt has been made to access private property for more detailed assessment.
- Night time; demolition; detailed construction; and decommissioning phase assessments have not been undertaken. Where particularly relevant to the overall assessment of effects, however, this report does make reference to the construction phase.
- This is an Outline Application. The proposals for the development therefore show the intention regarding the design of the Site, including landscape, however, proposals are not absolute and will be subject to further detailed design. For example, although generic materials are given in Section 6 below, exact details of the proposed materials / colours were not known at the time of undertaking the assessments and no detailed planting proposals are included within the information on which this assessment is based. Assessments have therefore been based on the information available (as set out in Section 6 of this document).
- As set out above, for the visual assessments made in the medium to longer term (years 7 and 15) it has been assumed that there will be no significant change (growth or loss) in offsite / foreground vegetation.
- Finally, whilst the estimated Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) is mapped to a good degree of accuracy and takes into consideration the screening effects of topography, built form and significant areas of vegetation as noted from site work, it should be understood that there will still be locations within the mapped ZVI where the complexity of landscape (such as intervening vegetation / buildings) or lack of public access makes it impossible to reasonably determine the exact visibility of the Proposed Development. In reality there will be some areas within the mapped ZVI where the proposed development will not be visible, and there may also be some un-mapped areas where glimpses of the proposed development would exist.

3 BASELINE STUDY - PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT AND DESIGNATIONS

3.1. Introduction

- 3.1.1. This section sets out the planning policy applicable to the Site at the local and national level, in particular policies relating to Landscape and Visual amenity contained in the current development plan.
- 3.1.2. It also sets out landscape, heritage, tree and habitat designations that fall within the Study Area.

3.2. National planning context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.2.1. National planning policy contains guidance on planning and related issues on a national basis. From the 19th February 2019 this has primarily been set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) document, superseding the previous 2012 and 2018 versions. Other national planning policy that remains current is identified in the introduction to the NPPF (associated with nationally significant infrastructure projects / traveller sites and waste policies); however, these have no relevance to these proposals.
- 3.2.2. The NPPF is a wide-ranging document comprising of 17 chapters which sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.
- 3.2.3. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced; it must be taken into account in preparing the development plan; and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 3.2.4. The framework proposes that development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved and any Proposed Development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.⁶
- 3.2.5. The natural environment (including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) is considered in Section 15, where paragraph 172 places 'great weight' on , 'conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty' [emphasis added], however no specific reference is made to development within their settings.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 3.2.6. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a web-based resource, provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place. It adds further context to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and it is intended that the two documents should be read together.
- 3.2.7. The NPPG replaces over 7,000 pages of planning guidance that was previously published in separate documents. It is now available entirely in one place, online and not in hard copy.
- 3.2.8. Plan makers (mainly Local Authorities who are responsible for a Local Plan but also community groups who may be working on a neighbourhood plan) must have regard to national policies and advice contained in the guidance when developing their plans. The guidance is also a 'material consideration' when taking decisions on planning applications. This means that if a local policy is deemed out of date, local authorities may be directed by the National Planning Practice Guidance's requirements.
- 3.2.9. The Planning Practice Guidance helpfully includes landscapes, environmental gain, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and their settings in the Natural Environment section (most recently updated on the 21st July 2019). In particular, paragraph 041 is clear that the scale and extent of development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty should be limited, in view of the importance of conserving and enhancing their landscapes and scenic beauty, and that any development in these areas will need to be located and designed in a way that reflects its status as a landscape of the highest quality. [emphasis added].

- 3.2.10. Paragraph 042 then highlights the importance of the settings of National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It notes the harm that can be done by poorly located or designed development (especially where long views from or to the AONB are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary); and it notes that development within the settings of these areas will need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account. [emphasis added].

3.3. Local planning context

- 3.3.1. Mid Sussex District Council's Development Plan consists of the Mid Sussex District Plan (MSDP) 2014 - 2031 (adopted on the 28th March 2018); the Small Scale Housing Allocations DPD (adopted April 2008); saved policies from the previous Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004; and the Turners Hill Neighbourhood Development Plan 2016 (THNP). In addition there are three Supplementary Planning Documents which relate to developer obligations (associated with development infrastructure, viability and affordable housing).⁷
- 3.3.2. Whilst the MSDP is a recent plan, it is post-dated by revised policies in both the July 2018 and February 2019 NPPF. The policies in the MSDP are therefore only considered up to date to the extent that they are consistent with the revised NPPF. Those policies that are inconsistent with the NPPF should be given less weight in the planning balance.
- 3.3.3. In addition the Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan (which was "made" on the 24th March 2016) predates both the MSDP and the current NPPF (2019).⁸ As above, the Neighbourhood Plan lacks of consistency with the NPPF, and this reduces the weight that can be given to the policies of this plan.⁹
- 3.3.4. With the exception of a few 'saved' policies, the previous Local Plan (the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004) was superseded by the current MSDP; however, the 'saved' policies of this plan are all site specific policies, and none has any relevance to the determination of this application.
- 3.3.5. Policies within these documents form the basis of adopted policy against which the development proposals will be assessed, and are considered in detail within the Planning Statement which accompanies this application.
- 3.3.6. The following policies are of particular relevance to these proposals in landscape terms:

Mid Sussex District Plan

- MSDP Policy DPI 2: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside;
- MSDP Policy DPI 3: Preventing Coalescence;
- MSDP Policy DPI 6: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- MSDP Policy DPI 7: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC);
- MSDP Policy DP22: Rights of Way and other Recreational Routes;
- MSDP Policy DP26: Character and Design;
- MSDP Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows; and
- MSDP Policy DP38: Biodiversity.

⁷ There are also several draft documents in process, including the Mid Sussex Design Guide and the Site Allocations DPD (which is yet to be subject to consultation (delayed by Covid-19)).

⁸ The THNP is tied to the expired 2004 Local Plan.

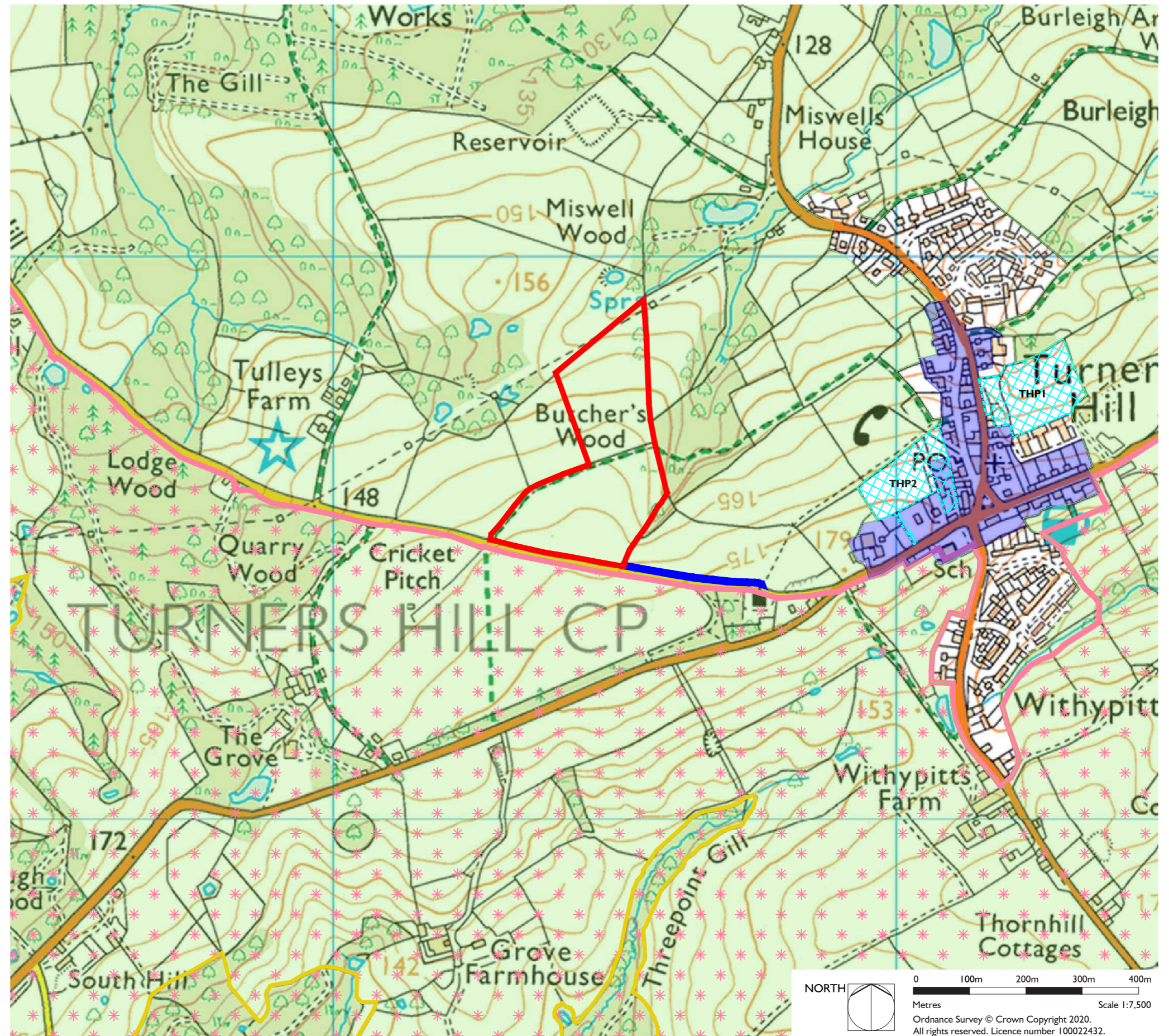
⁹ The Turners Hill Village Design Statement 2011 also exists and is referenced in the Neighbourhood Plan, but does not appear to be on the Council's planning website.

⁶ NPPF - The presumption in favour of sustainable development – paragraphs 11 and 12, page 6.

FIG. 2 - PLANNING

- KEY:
- The Application Site
 - Additional land in ownership
 - * High Weald AONB (Policy DP16)
 - Conservation Area
 - Protection and Enhancement of Countryside (Policy DP12)
 - Housing Allocation (Policy THP1/2)
 - SNCI - Site of Nature Conservation Importance (Policy DP38)

Sources: MAGIC, Mid Sussex District Council and Turners Hill Parish Council



Turners Hill Neighbourhood Plan

- THNP Policy THP8: Countryside Protection;
- THNP Policy THP16: Footpath Improvements; and
- THNP Policy THP17: Rights of Way.

3.3.7. The district plan Adopted Policies Maps show the Site as being within an area covered by MSDP Policy DP12 (Protection and Enhancement of Countryside) and THNP Policy THP8 (Countryside Protection), and within a 'Strategic Gap' which appears to have been carried forward into the Neighbourhood Plan from the previous (now expired) Local Plan; however, the strategic gap has no up-to-date policy basis and therefore no longer applies.

High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024

- 3.3.8. The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019 - 2024 is also relevant to the Study Area given the proximity of the AONB to the Site.
- 3.3.9. The Site is located just outside of the High Weald AONB boundary, however, it falls within the 'setting' of the AONB which is defined by the Management Plan as '*areas outside the AONB where development and other activities may affect land within an AONB*'. In particular, the document mentions that the impact of development on views into and out of the AONB must be considered.

3.4. Landscape, heritage and tree designations

- 3.4.1. There are no international landscape or heritage designations (e.g. World Heritage Sites) or national landscape designations (e.g. National Parks / The Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)) covering the Application Site. However, as mentioned above, land on the southern side of Turners Hill Road forms part of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 3.4.2. There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) on Site or within its immediate vicinity (although several exist within Turners Hill to the east of the Site); but the landscape around the Site is characterised by large areas of mostly deciduous woodland including a number of areas of Ancient Woodland, most notably Butcher's Wood which abuts the Site's eastern edge and Miswell Wood which just touches its northern most corner (refer to Figure 3).
- 3.4.3. In terms of heritage assets, there are no designated or un-designated heritage assets on Site,¹⁰ however, within the Study Area the Turners Hill Conservation Area lies some 360m to the east of the Site (outside of the Zone of Visual Influence of the development); and a number of Listed Buildings are found within Turners Hill, the nearest of which is St Leonard's Church which lies just 230m to the southeast of the Site (and with the exception of the top of its tower which is glimpsed from Site, is also outside of the Zone of Visual Influence of the development).

3.5. Habitat designations¹¹

- 3.5.1. There are no statutory habitat designations such as Ramsar Sites, SPA, SAC, or National Nature Reserves within the Study Area; however, the Site falls (just) within the Ashdown Forest¹² 7km 'zone of influence' (but well outside the Zone of Visual Influence of the proposals); Turners Hill SSSI (an old quarry which is designated for its geological interest - in 'Unfavourable - Declining' condition) is found 280m to the east of the Site adjacent to Turners Hill Road (also outside the Zone of Visual Influence of the proposals); and there are also

several SNCI areas in the surrounding landscape all of which also fall well outside the Zone of Visual Influence of the proposals (refer to figure 3 overleaf).

- 3.5.2. In terms of other key habitats, large areas of the surrounding woodlands (including Butcher's Wood and Miswell Wood) are recorded as Deciduous Woodland within Natural England's Priority Habitat Inventory, (largely following the surrounding pattern of Ancient Woodland).

¹⁰ Designated heritage assets include World Heritage Sites, Designated Sites of Archaeological Importance, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, registered Battlefields and Registered Parks and Gardens.

¹¹ The assessment of effects on habitats and species falls outside the scope of this assessment. Details of habitat designations are referred to here for contextual purposes only.

¹² Designated as an SPA, SAC and SSSI.

FIG. 3 - DESIGNATIONS

KEY:

- The Application Site
- Additional land in ownership
- Estimated Zone of Visual Influence - summer
- Estimated Zone of Visual Influence - winter

Heritage

- Conservation Area
- Listed building
- Ancient Woodland

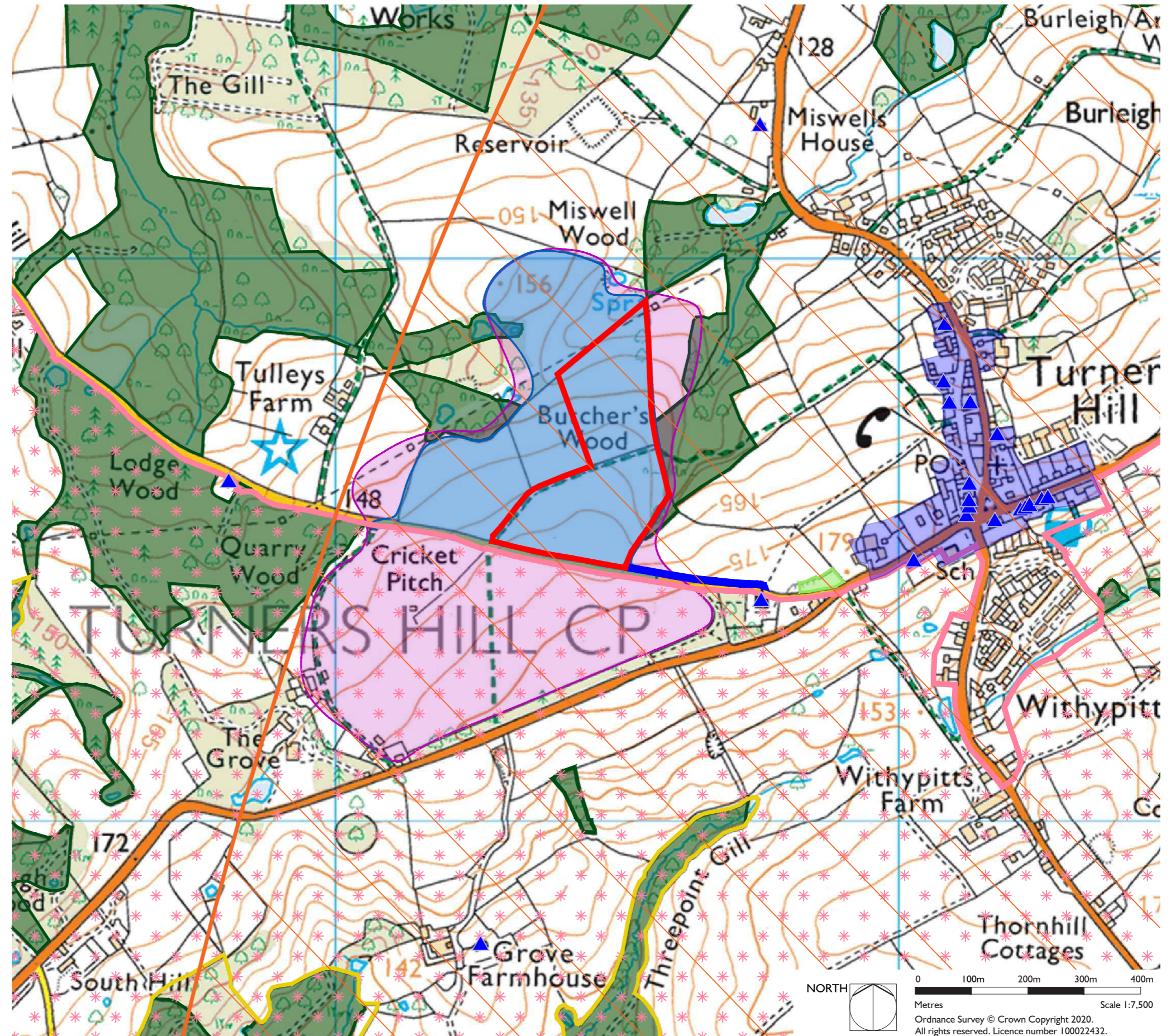
Planning

- High Weald AONB
- Ashdown Forest 7km zone of influence

Habitat

- SSSI - Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- SNCI - Site of Nature Conservation Importance

Sources: MAGIC, Historic England and Mid Sussex District Council



NORTH

0 100m 200m 300m 400m

Metres Scale 1:7,500

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4 BASELINE STUDY - THE VISUAL BASELINE

4.1. Introduction

4.1.1. The Visual baseline sets out all areas of the surrounding countryside from where the Proposed Development may be seen and establishes the types of receptor found in each location.

4.1.2. As set out in the Methodology in Appendix B, it is established through desk top study and extensive fieldwork and determines the estimated Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) presented on Figure 4 overleaf.¹³ Within the area identified it is estimated that views of the Proposed Development may be possible from ground level or within buildings. Outside this line it is not believed that there will be any discernible views of the proposals.

4.2. The estimated Zone of Visual Influence

4.2.1. In the case of this development, due largely to the nature of surrounding topography and vegetation, the primary Zone of Visual Influence of the Development Proposals is contained within an area of the surrounding countryside located within approximately 0.6km of the centre of the Site (refer to Figure 4):

- To the north the ZVI is limited by the undulating topography and surrounding clumps of woodland. The topography drops through the Site towards the spring within 'Miswell Wood' to the north-northeast, before rising again to a tump (rounded hill) at 156m AOD to the north-northwest of the Site. This tump, alongside the two woodland blocks found to the north of the Site, restricts any views (other than on private farmland) from the landscape beyond in both summer and winter.
- To the east the ZVI is limited by a tree line along the northern part of the Site boundary, and by trees within 'Butcher's Wood' (Ancient Woodland), which lies immediately to the east of the central and southern part of the Site. In summer this vegetation forms the edge of the ZVI. In winter the ZVI will extend a small distance into Butcher's Wood and glimpsed views of the Site are also likely to be seen through the trees on the northeastern and southeastern-most boundaries from the adjacent fields.¹⁴
- To the south the ZVI is constrained by the topography of the Site (which falls away to the north), and vegetation both along Turners Hill Road and along the north side of Paddockhurst Road. In summer the ZVI is entirely contained by the hedgerow and tree line which bounds Turners Hill Road to north and south respectively. In winter as this vegetation defoliates some glimpses through the canopies of the tree line are likely to be possible, allowing potential views over the Site (although ground level would not be seen) and extending the ZVI into the field to the south.
- To the west the ZVI is limited by the layers of vegetation found along field boundaries in combination with the falling topography. In summer the ZVI includes the Tulleys Farm events fields found immediately to the west of the Site, and extends west along Turners Hill Road as far as the northern end of Footpath 70W. In winter views may extend a few metres further along the road (before the change in topography and a bend in the road serves to contain views), and glimpsed views are likely to be possible from the field to the west (seen through the hedge to the west of the events field), but the ZVI would not extend as far as Footpath 71W. To the northwest, the ZVI is limited in both seasons by an area of (Ancient) woodland to the east of Tulleys Farm.

4.2.2. St Leonard's Church lies 230m to the southeast of the Site, and with the exception of the top of the tower which can be glimpsed from some parts of the Site, falls outside of the Zone of Visual Influence of the proposals.

4.2.3. Mid-distance views (beyond approximately 0.6km) are largely prevented by a combination of topography and vegetation. As set out in paragraph 1.5.2, however, some long distance views exist from rising ground to the north of the Site (including within the Surrey Hills AONB some 17km to the north of the Site), but by the time the ground reaches sufficient elevation for potential views, the Site is between 9 and 10km away (on the gentle ridge around Outwood) and the proposals would not be discernible in the wider landscape.

4.3. Visual receptors

4.3.1. Bearing in mind the extent of the Zone of Visual Influence around the Site, potential visual receptors within the public domain are limited to people found in the following locations:

- Users of Turners Hill Road.
- Users of Footpath 68W which runs through the Site.
- Users of Footpath 69W which crosses the field to the south of the Site.
- Users of Footpath 70W to the southwest of the Site.

4.3.2. From the private domain, potential receptors include:

- People at Tulleys Farm to the west.
- People within Grove Buildings and Pumpstreet Farmhouse to the southwest.

4.3.3. The majority of the ZVI consists of agricultural fields where there is no public access.

4.4. Visual relationship with the High Weald AONB

4.4.1. As set out in paragraph 1.2.2 above and as shown on Figures 2 and 3, in the area of the Site the High Weald AONB lies immediately to the south of Turners Hill Road. The Site is therefore considered to be within the 'setting' of the AONB as defined in the AONB Management plan (paragraph 3.3.6 above) and as referenced in NPPG paragraph 042 (paragraph 3.2.10 above).

4.4.2. Based on the site work undertaken, however, and as a consequence of both the existing topography and vegetation (and the design of the crematorium proposals), the edge of the Zone of Visual Influence of the development is largely defined by the tree line along the south side of the Turners Hill Road:

- In summer the proposals would not be visible from within the AONB.
- In winter there may be glimpses of the development from within the AONB on the public Footpaths that cross the field immediately to the south of Turners Hill Road.

The extent of this visibility, and effects on receptors is considered further in Section 8 below.

4.5. Visual relationship with the Surrey Hills AONB

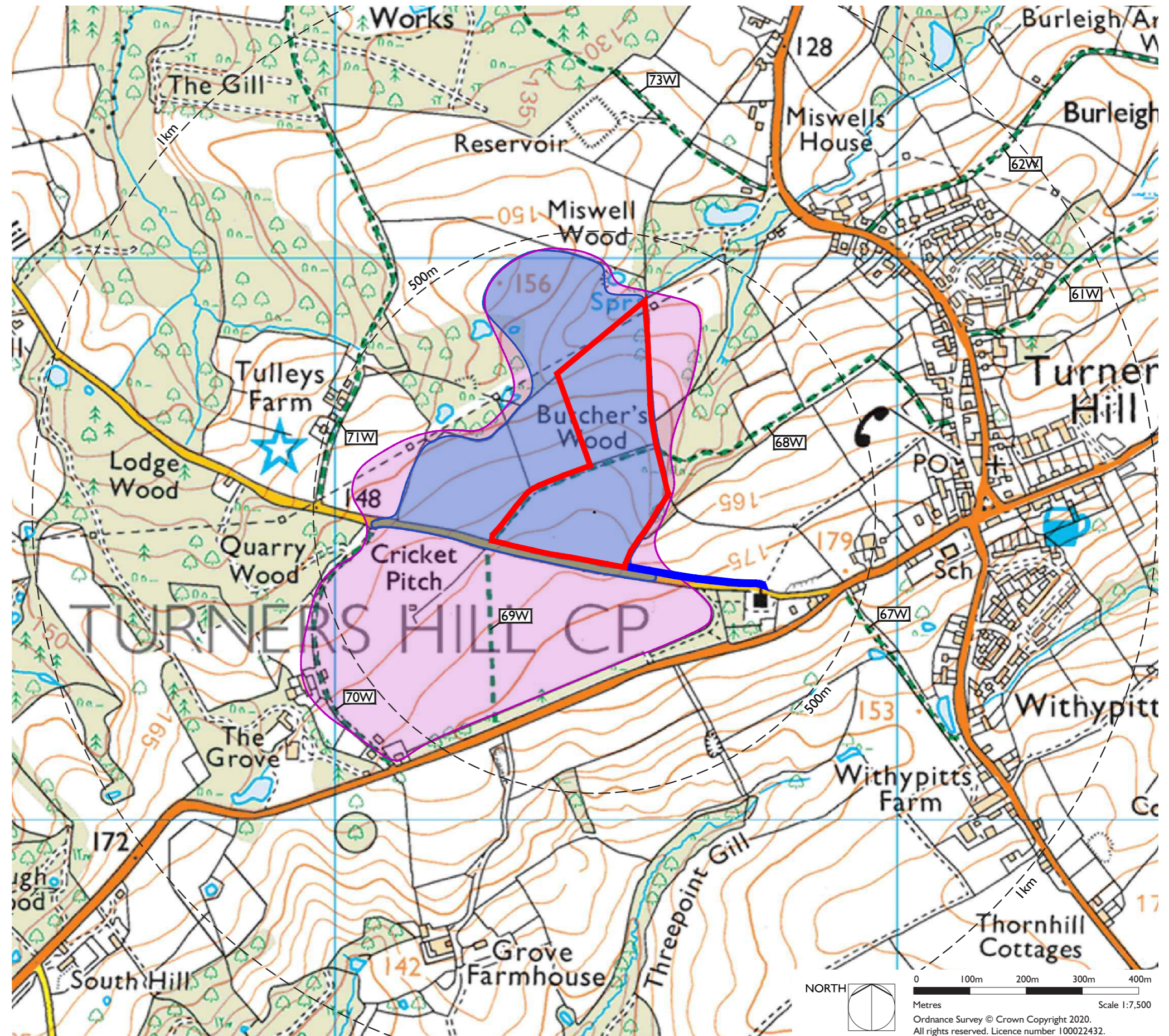
4.5.1. In terms of the Surrey Hills AONB, whilst there are 'long views' towards the Site from the scarp slope approximately 17km to the north, as set out above (paragraph 4.2.3), from this distance the proposals would not be discernible in the wider landscape.

¹³ Which in turn guides the detailed Study Area upon which the rest of the assessment is based.

¹⁴ A glimpse of the Site is also possible from the top of the tower on St Leonards Church (which lies approximately 230m to the southeast of the Site), but from ground level the church falls outside of the Zone of Visual Influence of the proposals.

FIG. 4 - THE ZONE OF VISUAL INFLUENCE

- KEY:
- The Application Site
 - Additional land in ownership
 - Estimated Zone of Visual Influence - summer
 - Estimated Zone of Visual Influence - winter
 - Public Right of Way reference number



5 BASELINE STUDY - THE ENVIRONMENTAL BASELINE

5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. The environmental baseline is a record of the state of key constituent elements of the Landscape within the Study Area. It includes a brief description of the Site and records the existing landscape condition within the Study Area, considering some 20 key characteristics under three broad headings; 'Physical Influences', 'Influences of Human Activity', and 'Aesthetic and Perceptual Factors'.
- 5.1.2. The environmental baseline has been based on both desktop research and field survey work, and includes reference to the following published Landscape Character Assessments, from which key characteristics of the landscape relevant to the Study Area have been drawn out:
- National Character Area Profile 122. High Weald (an extract of the area's key characteristics are contained within Appendix F);
 - Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment 2005 - Area 6 - High Weald (an extract of this document is contained within Appendix F);
 - Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study 2007 - LCA 04 - Major's Hill High Weald and LCA 07 - Turners Hill High Weald; and
 - The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024.

5.2. Site description

- 5.2.1. The Site consists of one and a half fields of rough grassland and self-seeded native shrubs measuring some 7.2ha in size. The southern field is approximately 4ha in area and is completely contained, whereas the northern field consists of some 3.2ha of a larger field which is split into two parts (the remainder being in agricultural use which appears to have been associated with the Tulleys Farm events field (e.g. pumpkins) although it was unplanted at the time of the site visits). Turner's Hill Road runs along the southern boundary of the southern field.
- 5.2.2. Topography across the Site slopes generally from south to north, falling away from the road and the edge of the High Weald AONB. The highest part of the Site in the southeastern corner lies at approximately 170m AOD, falling to the northernmost corner of the Site, which lies at approximately 135m AOD. There is a moderately steep drop along the eastern boundary of the southern field, caused by a localised stream valley which cuts through the centre of the adjacent 'Butcher's Wood'.
- 5.2.3. A Footpath (68W) runs along the northwestern boundary of the southern field before passing between the two parts of the site and into 'Butcher's Wood'. A new permissive footpath has also been demarcated along the southern edge of the field to the east-southeast of the Site, to allow access from the Site to St Leonard's Church and beyond into Turners Hill.
- 5.2.4. The Site's main access is from Turners Hill Road approximately half way along the southern boundary (where there is currently a gap in the hedgerow and an access consisting of scalping and blocked with concrete monoliths); however, there is a second access gateway in the westernmost corner of the Site, alongside a gateway into the adjacent Tulleys Farm events field.
- 5.2.5. There are no buildings on the Site, however, there is an area of hard-standing laid for a car park associated with the existing planning permissions, and a section of gravel pathway extends to the east; and at the time of the Site visit orange construction hoardings had been erected around the site of the approved chapel adjacent to the car park. To the north of the Site, high-voltage overhead electricity wires also cross the northernmost corner of the Site in a southwest - northeast direction (the pylons for these are off site); and a double line of timber electricity poles (each with 3 cables) runs in parallel, just to the north of the pylons.

- 5.2.6. Boundaries around the Site are characterised by large mature trees within Butcher's Wood and along the adjacent boundaries to the east, and trees spaced intermittently along hedgerows to the north, west and south. In some areas the boundary vegetation is reduced to low growing scrub, and the western boundary of the northern field is devoid of any vegetation. A shallow ditch with intermittent hedgerow and a number of mature Oak and Sycamore trees runs along the boundary between the Site's northern and southern fields.
- 5.2.7. The immediate surrounding area is characterised by open land used largely for agricultural purposes, with substantial blocks of woodland (many designated Ancient Woodland) and tree and shrub belts particularly to field boundaries. Immediately to the west of the Site the fields are used for seasonal recreational activities (associated with the Tulleys Farm shop and entertainment venue, the main part of which is located approximately 1km to the west of the Site), with an array of small buildings and open parking areas visible from the Site and Turners Hill Road. On the opposite side of Turners Hill Road (to the southwest of the Site) is the Turners Hill cricket ground and pavilion.

5.3. Existing Landscape Condition

- 5.3.1. In terms of **physical influences** the High Weald is a complex landscape of plateau, ridges and deep secluded valleys cut by numerous gill (narrow valley) streams, based on an underlying geology of sandstone and clay with resulting clay loam based soils and characteristic impeded drainage. Four main rivers drain the High Weald, running roughly east to west, with those locally to the Site (the closest of which emanates from a spring close to the northern tip of the Site) largely draining eastwards to the River Medway.
- 5.3.2. Turners Hill is located on a prominent ridgeline through the High Weald known as the 'Forest Ridge', which runs broadly from Ashdown Forest via West Hoathly (to the southeast), and onto Horsham via Peas Pottage (to the southwest). The village runs roughly perpendicularly across the ridgeline along the main north-south road (the B2028), with the highest point of the village just west of its centre approaching the Church (179m AOD). Elsewhere the landform undulates, and occasional long distance views are afforded (where vegetation permits) over the Low Weald and to the downs beyond.
- 5.3.3. In terms of **influences of human activity** Land use is predominantly agricultural, with a patchwork of arable and pastoral fields grazed mainly with sheep and cattle. There is significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of which is ancient. The overriding character of the woodland is broadleaved, with a few large blocks and many smaller woodlands interconnected by hedgerows and woodland shaws. Field pattern consists of small and medium sized irregularly shaped fields created from cleared woodland, enclosed by surrounding vegetation.
- 5.3.4. There is a dispersed, historic settlement pattern which is concentrated on ridges and high ground, with scattered groups of traditional farm and agricultural buildings. Turners Hill takes the form of a linear village, originally centred on a small village green which is at the junction of two historically important routes (now the B2110 running east to west, and the B2028 running north to south). The settlement has slowly expanded mainly along the north-south road, with some new house 'clusters' being built in the post-war period. The older part of the village is now a Conservation Area, with buildings dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries, a number of which are Listed. The southern end of the village also falls within the High Weald AONB, which wraps around the village to the south of the east to west running ridgeline (refer to Figure 3).
- 5.3.5. Buildings are largely two storey, and feature an *'eclectic mix of properties representing various stages of the village's evolution'*. There is a mix of house types and styles within the Conservation Area influenced by the variation of building materials locally available; however, *'the essential character of Turners Hill was created in Victorian and early Edwardian times'*, where the predominant style is the vernacular 'Sussex Farmhouse' - brick built with tiled roofs and tile-hung exterior walls. There are also a number of Victorian-built Tudor style homes most notably in East Street.¹⁵ In the wider area, there is an abundance of timber framing and Wealden stone buildings, with weatherboard, brick, and distinctive red tile or plaster buildings. Numerous oast houses add to the local distinctiveness with stone church towers and spires located on ridges standing as local landmarks.

¹⁵ Italicised references are to the Turners Hill Village Design Statement 2011.

- 5.3.6. Heritage assets include a high incidence of Ancient Woodland (valued as ‘the core of the historic High Weald landscape’¹⁶); buildings within the Turners Hill Conservation Area, and occasional Listed Buildings in the wider landscape¹⁷ (although none of these fall within the Zone of Visual Influence of the development - refer to Figure 4 above).
- 5.3.7. Access is characterised by the two main roads which cross through the centre of Turners Hill, and by Turners Hill Road which passes the site frontage. There is no particular sense of there being a ‘dense network of twisting, deep lanes and droveways’¹⁶ within the Study Area around the Site (this is more evident in the landscape to the south, further from Crawley); but in terms of Public Rights of Way the landscape is easily accessible with a good number of Footpaths and permissive paths in the area (although Bridleways are generally limited, with none being found in the landscape around the Site). The ‘Worth Way’ is a popular shared-use route which runs from Crawley to East Grinstead along the line of a former railway (and connects to several other Long Distance Paths). This passes just over a kilometre to the north of the Site and is also the route of National Cycle Network Route 21.
- 5.3.8. In terms of cultural references, several writers (such as Rudyard Kipling and A.A Milne) and ‘plein air’ artists have been inspired by the heavily wooded, ‘wilderness’ quality of the AONB landscape,¹⁸ however, there are no known references (in significant art or literature) specifically to the landscape within the Study Area or to the Application Site.
- 5.3.9. Community facilities in the Study Area include the Cricket Pitch to the south of Turners Hill Road, and several facilities with the main village, such as the recreation ground, allotment gardens and ‘The Ark’ village hall. Given the extant consents partly implemented use of the Site for natural burial, this Site is also considered a community use (as acknowledged by the Council). With the exception of the Site itself and the cricket pitch in winter, however, all fall outside the Zone of Visual Influence of the proposals.
- 5.3.10. In terms of aesthetic and perceptual factors, the landscape is largely enclosed by woodland and other vegetation, however, due to the undulating nature of the landform, areas of high ground which have been cleared of woodland often afford far reaching views. This applies to the Site (from where there are views to the ridgeline of the Sussex Downs some 17km to the north), and to Paddockhurst Road on approaching Turners Hill (from where there are views across the AONB to the south).
- 5.3.11. Generally, the High Weald is an intimate rural landscape based upon complex geology with a small/ medium scale field pattern interconnected by woodland blocks, shaws and hedgerows. Within the Study Area the landscape is of low to moderate complexity, being largely rural but influenced by urbanising elements including the roads, recreational facilities (Tulleys Farm), power infrastructure, and built form (Turners Hill). These urbanising elements also effect the tranquillity of the area, with both visual and aural¹⁹ intrusions being present. Tranquillity on site is moderate, but increases heading south into the AONB, away from the urban areas.
- 5.3.12. Although some areas of the High Weald have a sense of relative ‘wilderness’¹⁸ and remoteness, the Site itself is not in a truly wild or a remote landscape.²⁰ It is located close to Turners Hill and Crawley, and even away from urban areas, the landscape is dominated by agriculture and has formed as a result of centuries of human intervention.
- 5.3.13. Overall, this is an undulating rural landscape with a strong wooded character. Sense of place is moderate on Site where there are detracting features present (such as the traffic on Turners Hill Road, and urbanising influences such as the surrounding recreational facilities and power infrastructure), increasing to strong when travelling south, away from urban areas and into more heavily wooded rural High Weald.

¹⁶ Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex 2005, Landscape Character Area 6 - High Weald.

¹⁷ Refer to Section 3.4 above.

¹⁸ The High Weald AONB Management Plan, page 59.

¹⁹ As potentially will planes approaching and leaving Gatwick Airport which lies just 7km to the northwest (although these were not evident during the Site visits due to the current effects of the Covid 19 pandemic).

²⁰ Refer to glossary for definitions.


5.4. Overall landscape sensitivity


- 5.4.1. Bearing in mind all of the above, in accordance with the methodology in Appendix A, the Site and Study Area are judged to be in a landscape of high **value** with a moderate **susceptibility** to change of the nature proposed, resulting in **HIGH SENSITIVITY**. Although the landscape to the north of Turners Hill Road is not part of the High Weald AONB and there is minimal intervisibility between the Site and the AONB, the Site is classed as within its ‘setting’ (as defined in paragraph 042 of the NPPG) as the character of the two are considered to be complementary. The predicted levels of effect described later in this report are therefore based on this level of sensitivity.

Value: High **Susceptibility to change:** Moderate = **SENSITIVITY OF RECEPTOR:** High


FIG. 5 - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

KEY:


 The Application Site

 Additional land in ownership

Landscape Character Areas

 National Character Area Profile: 122. High Weald


Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment 2005


 Area 6 - High Weald


Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study 2007

 Built up areas

 LCA 04 - Crawley Down Southern Fringe

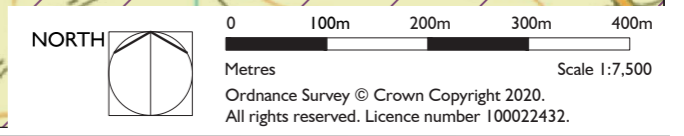
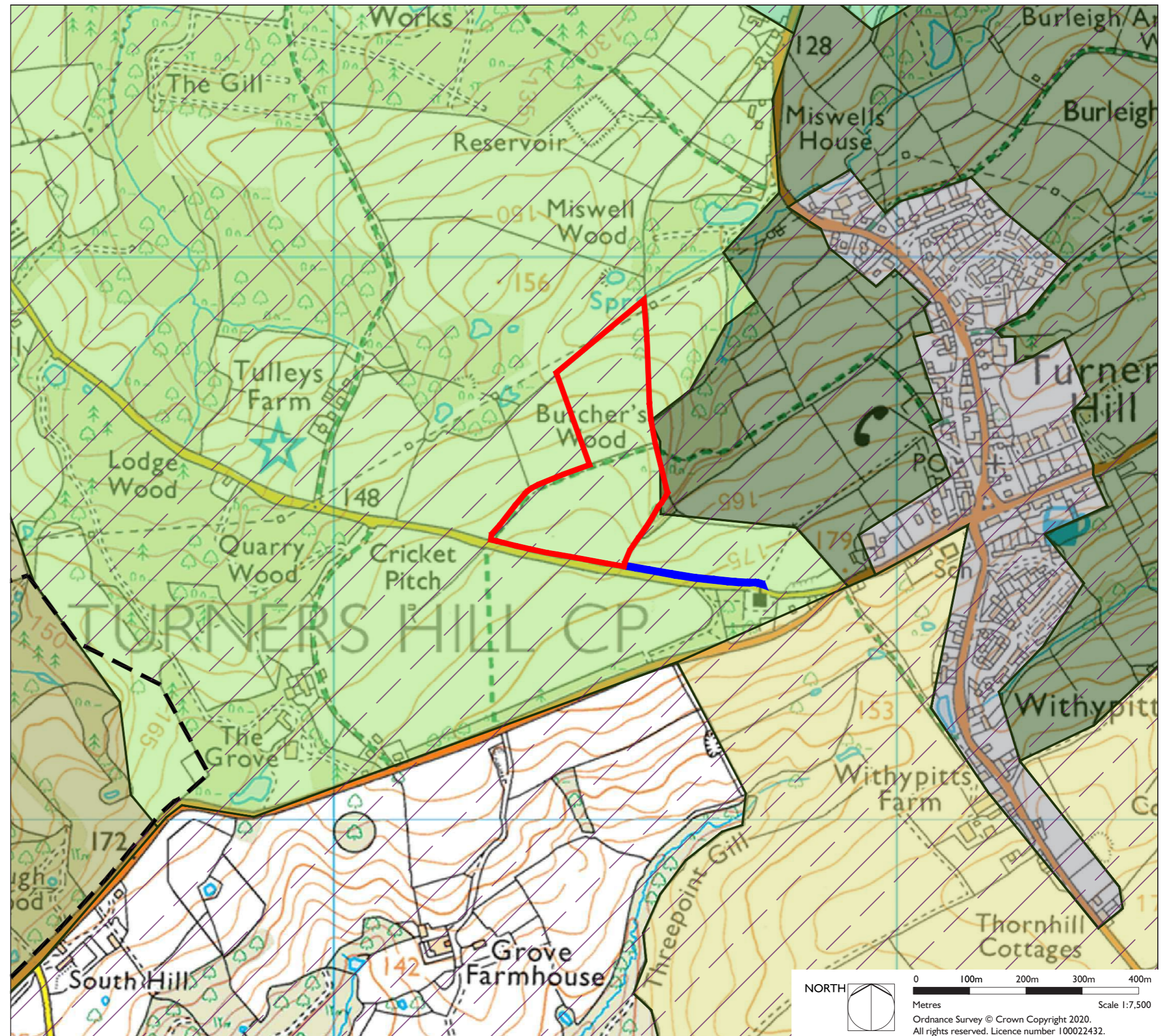
 LCA 05 - Major's Hill High Weald

 LCA 06 - Selsfield High Weald

 LCA 07 - Turners Hill High Weald

 LCA 23 - Worth Forest High Weald

Sources: Mid Sussex District Council and Natural England



6 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1. As set out in paragraph 1.1.2 above, this document is submitted in support of an Outline Planning Application. All matters are reserved with the exception of the site access.²¹
- 6.1.2. Information submitted with this application includes the indicative Landscape Masterplans (Figure 6 overleaf)²² and the Design and Access Statement, however, detailed designs have not been fixed and the assessments contained within this document are therefore based purely on the information contained within the description of the development below.
- 6.1.3. It should be noted, however, that whilst this is not a detailed scheme, the masterplans include all elements required for a modern crematorium, including some elements that may not be required (such as LPG tanks should mains gas be unavailable). Furthermore, it should be understood that the design has evolved through an iterative process in which decisions on size / form, materials and the surrounding planting proposals have all responded to the initial site analysis (and the existing planning approvals). “Mitigation” is therefore an integral part of the design and is not identified separately below.

6.2 Description of development

- 6.2.1. The overall concept of the scheme is one of a crematorium and natural burial site set within a wooded setting on the edge of the High Weald, with views overlooking an on-site wildflower meadow and adjacent ancient woodland, and distant views across the Low Weald towards the Surrey Hills and Kent Downs.
- 6.2.2. The design intention is that the building is located in a position where it is screened from the High Weald AONB and Turners Hill Road to the south (by the tree line along the south side of Turners Hill Road and by the combination of proposed levels, planting and the existing hedgerow along the north side of the road); and is screened from the east by Butcher’s Wood; from the landscape immediately to the north by Miswell Wood and the adjacent hillside; and from the northwest and west by a combination of planting, topography and the woodlands surrounding Tulleys Farm.
- 6.2.3. Buildings proposed include a new crematorium building, and a barn / workshop which already has planning permission and is intended to service the natural burial aspect of the site (and whose construction is due to take place in late Summer 2020).²³

General layout

- 6.2.4. The scheme would be accessed off Turners Hill Road, with the crematorium site restricted to the south of the public footpath that crosses the centre of the Site (Footpath 68W), and the natural burial area located to the north.
- 6.2.5. The crematorium building would be located to the northeast of the Site access point, some 85m from Turners Hill Road (at its closest point), and is set at a level of approximately 164m AOD (approximately 3m below the site access point).
- 6.2.6. The parameters tested for the crematorium are for a single storey building covering a maximum of 40 x 40m on plan (including oversailing roof, covered porte-cochère, screening walls etc.), with a roof approximately 4.5m above FFL (maximum 168.5m AOD) and the chimney and raised skylight reaching a maximum of 7m above FFL (171m AOD).²⁴

- 6.2.7. The chapel (and associated floral tribute area) would be located and orientated to take advantage of views over an area of existing wildflower meadow in the northeastern corner of the southern part of the Site, with views of Butcher’s Wood beyond.
- 6.2.8. The service yard would be located to the west of the building where it is screened from the chapel entrance and the rest of the Site by the building itself and surrounding woodland planting.
- 6.2.9. No bunding would be used on site but the building would be located on a level platform, graded gently into the surrounding contours, with car parking located to the south of the crematorium building where it would be cut gently into the hillside to ensure the appropriate gradients are achieved.
- 6.2.10. In addition, an overflow (reinforced grass) car park is proposed to the west of the Site access drive to provide additional parking during large services, and parking for visitors to the Garden of Remembrance and to the woodlands for those visiting natural burial memorials. This car park would also provide access to the approved barn / workshop.
- 6.2.11. Vehicular circulation would be clockwise, allowing the funeral cortège to separate from the main car park access drive before stopping under the covered porte-cochère; and lay-bys would be provided either side of the chapel to enable waiting before, and collections of the funeral party after services as required.
- 6.2.12. A reinforced grass track would lead from the barn / workshop to the natural burial area to allow access in all weather conditions, and a small bridge would be constructed over the ditch in the centre of the Site to link the natural burial area to the main crematorium site.

Access

- 6.2.13. Vehicular access would be from Turners Hill Road at the location of the existing Site access, and separate pedestrian access would be created from Footpath 68W at the southwestern corner of the Site; in the centre of the Site (where the Footpath passes between the proposed crematorium and the natural burial area); and at its southeastern corner where an existing permissive path has already been created between the Site and the Church.
- 6.2.14. A new permissive footpath will also be constructed across the entire frontage of the Site (behind the roadside hedgerow) linking Footpath 68W directly to the Church along this length of the road.

Building heights

- 6.2.15. The scale and massing of the crematorium building has been designed to respect the surrounding landscape context. As set out in paragraph 6.2.6 above Finished Floor Level (FFL) is proposed at 164m AOD and the building would be low lying, with a flat roof no more than 4.5m in height above the FFL (168.5m AOD), and with a sloping feature skylight above the chapel reaching to a maximum of 7m (171m AOD) at its highest point.
- 6.2.16. The cremator flues would be housed within an enclosing chimney and would also reach no higher than 7m above finished floor level (max 171m AOD).
- 6.2.17. The separate barn / workshop already has permission and is to be 3m to the eaves, and 4.95m to the ridge with a finished floor level proposed at 163m AOD. It is anticipated that construction will take place during the processing of the planning application.

Building materials

- 6.2.18. Materials on the crematorium building would be of soft hues, using natural materials and would be chosen to respect the local character and blend with the surrounding landscape. The roof would be of sheet roofing materials. Light coloured renders (or similar) would be avoided.

²¹ As detailed by Ardent Consulting engineers on drawing 190561-001.

²² See also Drawing 917-MP-01.

²³ Pre-commencement conditions 3 & 4 have been discharged. Condition 1 (Landscaping) is under consideration - Planning permission reference number DM/19/5100. Contract for works have been let subject to Condition 1 approval.

²⁴ Refer to drawing 917-GA-02.

6.2.19. The barn / workshop is to be of plain treated Canadian pine under a goosewing grey steel sheet roof.²⁵

Drainage

6.2.20. Sustainable Drainage Systems would also be built into the scheme. All parking spaces would be permeable, and attenuation would also be provided in the form of rain gardens and an attenuation basin located within / to the north of the crematorium car park (to take drainage from both the car park and the roof of the building). These features would be designed to have a permanently damp / wet bases and would be planted with native marginal and wildflower species as appropriate to create attractive features and for maximum ecological benefit.

Planting

6.2.21. The scheme does not secure planting details but it is anticipated that high quality landscaping would be a feature of the scheme. This has been the basis of testing.

6.2.22. All surrounding vegetation would be retained and root protection areas respected without incursion; and the existing mature trees found along the Site frontage and next to the footpath that passes between the two parts of the Site would be retained, providing a sense of maturity and enclosure to the Site.

6.2.23. All soil would be retained and re-used on Site, and new planting and management would be designed to enhance wildlife and green infrastructure connectivity and to reflect the countryside location and the existing landscape pattern / character.

6.2.24. The existing wildflower meadow area found in the northeastern corner of the southern part of the Site would be maintained as 'parkland' for maximum ecological benefit, with invasive willow removed to preserve and enhance this resource.

6.2.25. The existing meadow grass areas on the natural burial part of the site would also be maintained in the period before this area is used for burials (and consequently planted), and invasive weeds would also be removed as required in order to maintain this area for maximum ecological benefit. This area would also contain some mown grass paths to allow for access through the space.

6.2.26. Significant structural woodland planting would be undertaken on the crematorium site (south of Footpath 68W) as part of the establishment phase of the scheme. Structural woodland planting would also be undertaken on the natural burial area as part of the establishment phase of the scheme, however the majority of 'memorial' planting would be undertaken in a phased approach over a number of years.²⁶

6.2.27. New structural planting on the crematorium part of the Site would involve:

- Mixed native hedge planting along the north side of the proposed permissive footpath along Turners Hill Road, and along the entire south side of Footpath 68W where it runs through the Site (planted as 0.8 – 1m high transplants at 6 per linear metre in three staggered rows).
- Mixed native hedge planting to reinforce the existing hedge along the north side of Footpath 68W where it passes between the burial ground and the crematorium site (planted as 0.8 – 1m high transplants as required to 'beat up' gaps in the hedge).
- Single species native hedge planting around the garden of remembrance and within and around the crematorium car park (planted 1m high).
- Woodland planting along the Turners Hill Road frontage (between the proposed hedge and the crematorium and overflow car parks), around the western side of the crematorium site, and surrounding the crematorium service yard (planted as entirely native species 0.5 - 1m tall transplants with 30%

feathered trees up to about 2.5m in height to give age variety and to assist with screening in the early years. Overall density = 1 per square metre).

- Woodland edge / understorey planting along the eastern edge of the crematorium site against Butcher's Wood (planted as entirely native species 0.5 - 1m tall transplants with 10% feathered trees up to about 2.5m in height to give age variety in the early years. Overall density = 1 per square metre).
- Tree planting around the crematorium car park. Trees would be focused on native species and would be planted at between 4.5 and 6m in height (depending on species) as Extra Heavy Standards (14-16cm, 16-18cm and 18-20cm girth). Trees located 15m or more from the building would be planted using large scale species such as Oak or Sweet Chestnut to reflect those found locally to the Site.
- Specimen trees in the parkland area to the northeast of the crematorium. These would include Oak and Sweet Chestnut to reflect those found locally to the Site, and would be planted at between 4.5 and 6m in height as Extra Heavy Standards (14-16cm and 16-18cm girth) specimens.
- Amenity grass areas around the crematorium car park and within the garden of remembrance.
- Native wildflower and native marginal plants within the permanent wet areas at the bottom of the attenuation area and car park 'rain gardens'.

6.2.28. New planting on the natural burial area would involve:

- Mixed native hedge planting to form a boundary along the west side the burial ground (planted as 0.8 – 1m high transplants at 6 per linear metre in three staggered rows).
- Structural tree planting around the natural burial site (refer to drawing 917-MP-01). Trees would be native species planted at between 4.5 and 6m in height (depending on species) as Extra Heavy Standards (14-16cm, 16-18cm and 18-20cm girth) specimens.
- Woodland (memorial) planting within the burial ground, undertaken in a phased approach (refer to drawings 917-MP-02 and 917-MP-03). Trees would be planted as entirely native species at between 3.5 and 6m in height (depending on species), as Select Standard (10-12cm girth), Heavy Standards (12-14cm girth), and Extra Heavy Standard (14-16cm, 16-18cm and 18-20cm girth) specimens.
- Native woodland bulb planting undertaken below the trees as burials progress across the Site.
- Native wildflower areas within the woodland glades.

²⁵ Subject to reserved matters discharge. Refer to application reference DM/20/1648.

²⁶ For indicative phasing refer to drawings 917-MP-01, 917-MP-02 and 917-MP-03.

FIG. 6 - LANDSCAPE MASTERPLANS

Structural Planting (extract of drawing 917-MP-01)



Phase I - Natural Burials (extract of drawing 917-MP-02)



7 LIKELY LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

7.1. Introduction

- 7.1.1. This section describes and evaluates the effects of the proposed scheme on the Landscape resource on and around the Site.
- 7.1.2. It considers the likely effect on 20 key constituent elements of the Landscape and concludes with an assessment of the likely effects on Overall Landscape Character.

7.2. Elements assessed

- 7.2.1. Constituent elements which make up the Landscape are set out in the attached glossary. They include Physical Influences (geology, soils, vegetation, landform / topography and drainage / water bodies); Influences of Human Activity (heritage assets, land use / management, settlement pattern / character of settlement, character of buildings / built form, access / movement, landscape pattern, cultural elements and community spaces); and Aesthetic and Perceptual Factors (scale, complexity, degree of enclosure / openness, tranquillity, wildness, remoteness and sense of place). These are individually referred to as Landscape receptors, and combined contribute to Overall Landscape Character.

7.3. Likely Landscape effects

- 7.3.1. In considering the broad location of the Site it is clear that there are some highly valued Landscape assets within the wider area (with much of the High Weald being designated as AONB and the presence of the Turners Hill Conservation Area); however, the Site itself sits outside these designated areas; the Zone of Visual Influence identified above contains only a small part of the AONB (to the south of Turners Hill Road and only in winter); and the majority of landscape receptors are either unaffected, or affected only to a minimal effect:

- I. **In terms of physical influences**, there are no geological features that are likely to be affected by development of the nature proposed; soils would be retained on Site for re-use;²⁷ and there would be minimal effects on the drainage ditch that passes between the two parts of the Site (and no potential for harm (in Landscape Character terms) to the nearby offsite water bodies).
- II. Whilst some gentle ground reprofiling would take place, levels would be formed to blend with the existing topography, and any changes would be imperceptible from outside the Site boundaries.
- III. In terms of vegetation, whilst an access would be created between the two parts of the Site, no trees would be affected, all of the existing planting elsewhere along the Site boundaries would be retained, and there would be substantial medium to long enhancements to vegetative cover on Site due to the additional planting proposed.²⁸
- IV. **In terms of the influences of human activity**, whilst land use / management would inevitably change on Site, this is an inevitable consequence of development and given the fairly restricted extent of the Zone of Visual Influence, not one that would have significant effects on the wider landscape.²⁹
- V. Equally, whilst built form associated with the crematorium proposals would be different to that seen in the immediately surrounding landscape, the effects on the wider landscape would be similarly limited. Furthermore, the crematorium building would be of a bold but simple modern design reflecting its use, made of materials chosen to respect the local character and to assimilate it into the rural setting, and there is no reason to doubt that the crematorium would be anything other than the high standard of design. On this basis whilst the building would represent a change to the character of buildings / built form in the area, it would not necessarily be an adverse one.

²⁷ Meaning there would be no change (as a result of soils) to characteristics of the landscape such as drainage or vegetation.

²⁸ All proposed planting is to be using native species chosen to blend into the character of the surrounding landscape.

²⁹ In addition it is worth noting the "fallback" position here, as the Site already has permission for a chapel, reception building, barn / workshop and associated parking etc. Refer to Section 10 at the end of this Appraisal.

- VI. In terms of heritage assets there are no designated or undesignated heritage assets on Site, and no Listed Buildings,³⁰ Registered Parks and Gardens, or Scheduled Ancient Monuments fall within the Zone of Visual Influence of the proposals.
- VII. Regarding landscape and settlement pattern there would be no effect on the largely linear pattern or village character of Turners Hill; and whilst the landscape pattern (pattern of boundary features) would change in the medium to long term to include a hedgerow along the western boundary of the northern part of the Site (and more woodland planting on the Site as a whole), there would be no loss of vegetation along the field boundaries, and in the wider context these changes would not be out of character with the surrounding landscape.
- VIII. In terms of access / movement, existing roads / footpaths etc. would not be adversely affected by the proposals; and whilst additional public access would be created within the Application Site itself (crossing the site frontage and linking Footpath 68W to the west to the Church to the east), this would only be slightly positive in landscape character terms given the extensive countryside access in the area.
- IX. Finally, the proposals would not impact upon any known cultural elements (references in art and Literature); and the proposals would have no effect on the nearby community spaces, or affect the acknowledged community use associated with the Site itself.
- X. **In terms aesthetic and perceptual factors**, whilst the nature of the development would result in new built form (including car parking) on the Site, adding complexity to the landscape immediately around the Site, this would be very localised. Any perception of this from the nearby AONB would be negligible;³¹ locally to the Site the short term sense of increased complexity would largely be hidden from the surrounding Public Rights of Way;³² and in the medium to longer term this effect would be dissipated as the proposed planting matures.
- XI. The proposals would have minimal effect on the overall scale of the landscape. Field boundaries would be retained, the woodland planting on the crematorium site and ultimately created on the natural burial area would be in keeping with the scale of woodlands found throughout this landscape, and the proposed crematorium building and car park would be low lying, largely screened from the surrounding landscape, and would not be out of scale in comparison with built form found in the wider area.³³
- XII. In terms of openness / enclosure whilst this would change on the Site itself, the intimate character of the landscape would be maintained and enhanced by the proposed woodland planting, and whilst the long view that has recently been created at the entrance to the Site would ultimately be screened, those from the north side of Footpath 68W to the west of the natural burial site would remain. Effects on openness / enclosure would be very localised and not out of keeping with the wider landscape character.
- XIII. Similarly, in terms of tranquillity, whilst there would be a limited increase in traffic to the Site,³⁴ noise levels on the crematorium site are likely to be very low (aural tranquillity); and whilst there would be some short term and very localised effects associated with the views of the chapel and parking area from Footpath 68W (visual tranquillity), the landscape around the site is already affected by the presence of traffic on Turners Hill Road; the array of small buildings, seasonal parking areas and activities associated with Tulleys Farm (on the fields immediately to the west); and by the presence of the power lines and pylons which traverse the landscape to the north of the Site; and in the medium to longer term the effect on (visual) tranquillity would again be largely dissipated by the woodland planting which would

³⁰ The closest Listed Building is St Leonard's Church - Grade II Listed (Historic England list entry number: 1354925). This lies 230m to the southeast of the Site and with the exception of the top of the tower which can be glimpsed from some parts of the Site, falls outside of the Zone of Visual Influence of the proposals.

³¹ Given the lack of intervisibility between the Site and the AONB (refer to visual assessment in Section 8 below).

³² The exception being views from 68W where it passes through the Site.

³³ For example the buildings in the Rowfant Business Centre to the north; and buildings within the grounds of Worth School and Abbey to the southwest and the extensive car parking at Worth Hall Farm (the location of the Tulleys Farm escape rooms, tea room and event venue) to the west, (both of which are located within the High Weald AONB).

³⁴ A 5% increase is predicted (on weekdays only) - Refer to Ardent Consulting Engineers transport Assessment.

screen / filter views of the development from the surrounding landscape.

XIV. Finally, the Site is not wild or remote; and the sense of place associated with this being an undulating rural landscape with a strong wooded character would not be affected by the proposals to any significant degree. There would be no affect on the stronger sense of place experienced when travelling south, away from urban areas and into more heavily wooded AONB.

7.4. Effect on Overall Landscape Character

7.4.1. In light of the above, it is judged that the proposals would cause some short term damage to overall landscape character, but in the medium to longer term damage would be minimal, in that the proposals would incorporate measures for mitigation that largely balance any adverse effects, and therefore create a landscape whose character:

- Largely matches the layout, mix scale and appearance of the existing landscape;
- Introduces components not considered uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape;
- Largely maintains existing landscape quality and character; and
- Largely maintains existing sense of place.³⁵

7.4.2. The majority of the key components of the receiving landscape would experience neutral effects, and although there would be a change to complexity, a small effect on topography and tranquillity, and a change to the land use on the Site itself, long term beneficial effects would be created by the proposed footpath across the Site frontage and enhancements to vegetative cover.

7.4.3. Due to the high sensitivity (refer to Section 5.4 above), the **SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT ON OVERALL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER** is therefore judged to be a **MODERATE ADVERSE EFFECT IN THE SHORT TERM FALLING TO A SLIGHT ADVERSE EFFECT THE MEDIUM TO LONGER TERM.**

SENSITIVITY OF RECEPTORS: High

MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT:

Short term magnitude: Medium-low adverse **Medium to Long term magnitude:** Low adverse

OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE (LEVEL) OF EFFECT:

SHORT TERM: Moderate adverse effect. **MEDIUM TO LONG TERM:** Slight adverse effect.

7.5. Effects on the setting of the High Weald AONB

7.5.1. In terms of the effects on the High Weald AONB there would be no effects on the AONB itself and minimal, (largely short term) effects on its setting. The development would not be seen from the AONB other than from within the field immediately to the south of Turners Hill Road (when only winter glimpses of the skylight and chimney on the proposed crematorium building may be seen),³⁶ and in the longer term any glimpses of the building effects would be dissipated by the proposed woodland planting.

7.5.2. In the long term only the limited increase in traffic caused by the proposals would have any potential for effects on the setting of the AONB.³⁷

³⁵ Refer to Table Y in Appendix A.

³⁶ Refer to Visual assessment in Section 8 below.

³⁷ It should be noted here, however, that diversion of trips currently heading to other crematoria may occur, potentially reducing trips elsewhere in the AONB (a factor not considered in the Traffic Statement).

8 LIKELY VISUAL EFFECTS

8.1. Introduction

8.1.1. This section describes and evaluates the likely Visual effects that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

8.1.2. It makes reference to the estimated Zone of Visual Influence of the Proposed Development (described in Section 4.2 on page 11 above), and assesses the likely Visual effects for 18 representative viewpoints taken at locations in the public domain around the Site.

8.2. Viewpoint assessments

8.2.1. The viewpoints are shown on Figure 7 opposite with photographs and assessment tables presented on the following pages (higher quality photographs are also presented separately in Appendix D to allow easy digital scaling and viewing of the photographs). The following tables contain a description of the existing view and an assessment of the likely Visual effects in the short, medium and longer term (years 1, 7 and 15) following completion of the development.

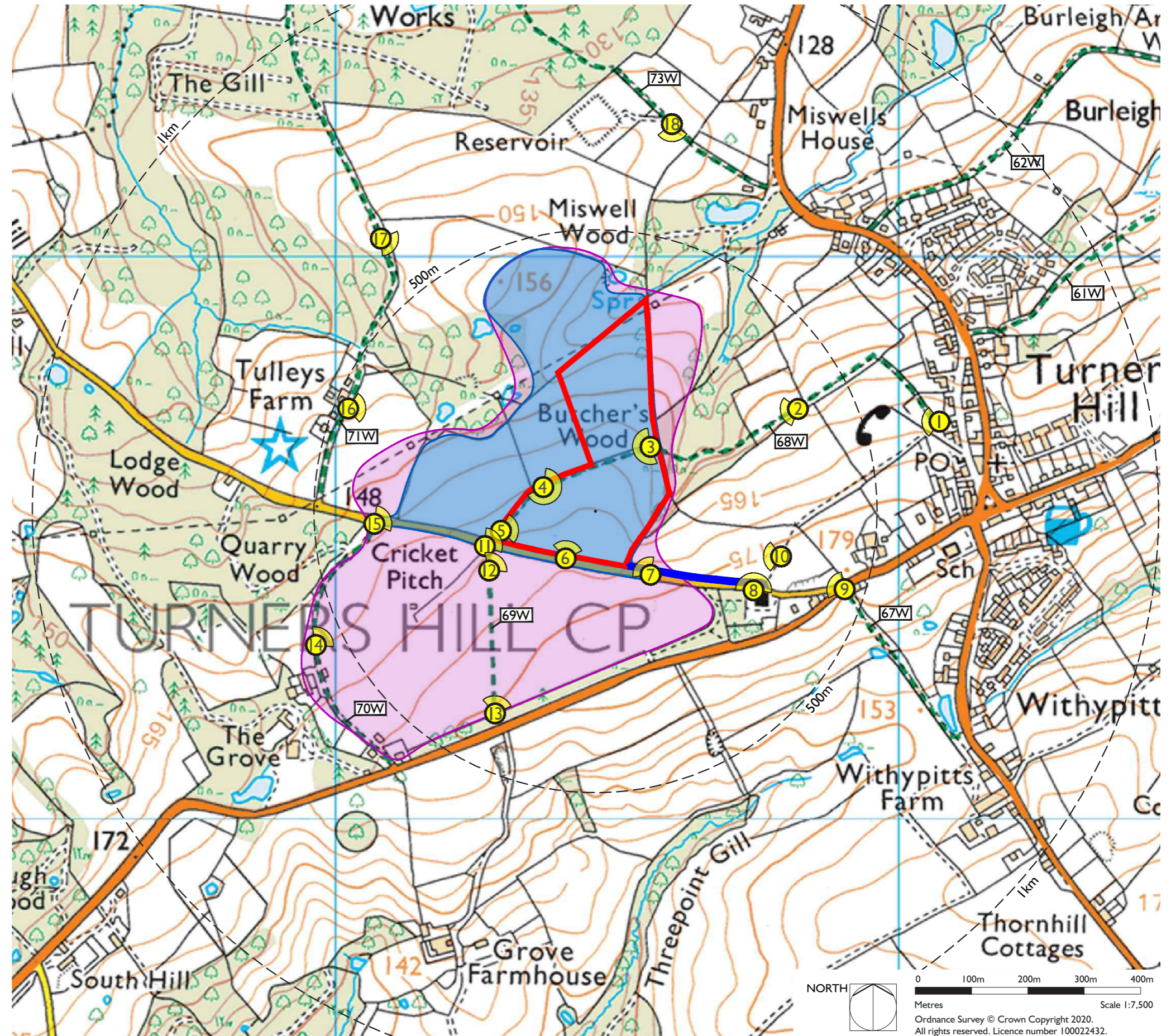
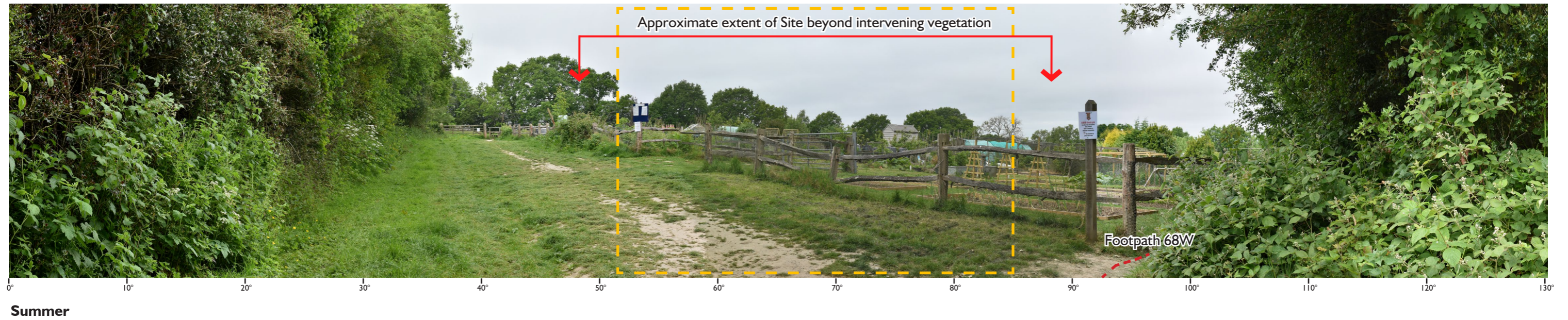


FIG. 7 - ZONE OF VISUAL INFLUENCE AND PUBLIC VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS

- KEY:
- The Application Site
 - Additional land in ownership
 - Estimated Zone of Visual Influence - summer
 - Estimated Zone of Visual Influence - winter
 - Public Viewpoint Location
 - Public Right of Way reference number

To be viewed digitally at 125% enlargement - see notes below.



Panoramic view looking west from Footpath 68W, adjacent to the allotment gardens off Lion Lane.

Notes: Cylindrical panoramic image - **to be viewed digitally** (see instructions for viewing below). If printed on A3 paper this image is for context only. An additional set of higher quality photographs is provided in Appendix D to allow easy digital scaling and viewing of the photographs; and a reference image of the indicated insert on the photograph is also provided in Appendix E.

Instructions for viewing digitally: All images must be viewed with the horizontal markings ascending the left page border 100mm apart (achieved by adjusting PDF zoom level). This represents a 125% enlargement (refer to Technical Methodology in Appendix C). The images should then be viewed at comfortable arm's length (exact mathematical reference point = 542mm from eye to image) by maintaining the head in a constant position (without turning) and panning the image from side to side - this maintains a constant viewing distance across the panorama and provides the best recommended representation of the view found on site.

Photographs taken with a Nikon D3500 digital SLR camera (cropped frame sensor) with a fixed focal length Nikon 35mm lens (refer to Technical Methodology in Appendix C). Photographs stitched together using Photomerge ('reposition only' layout) in Adobe Photoshop.

Viewpoint location

Panoramic view looking west from Footpath 68W, adjacent to the allotment gardens off Lion Lane.

Latitude / Longitude 51.104997, -0.086342

Approximate elevation 163.5m AOD.

Approximate distance to closest edge of Site 500m to the eastern boundary of the Site.

Landscape Designations at viewpoint None.

Comments Just outside the boundary of the Turners Hill Conservation Area.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

The primary activity of receptors in this location would be people using the Footpath for the experience and enjoyment of the landscape, and people accessing their allotment gardens. Focus would generally be on the path and on the views of the surrounding landscape, and will be transient, with a low number of receptors experiencing the viewpoint.

With reference to the methodology in Appendix B, as the receptor’s focus will be primarily on the landscape setting, their **Susceptibility** to change would be HIGH; and as they are within landscapes judged to be of good strength of character the **Value** of the view would be MEDIUM.

The overall **Sensitivity of Visual Receptors** is therefore **HIGH**.

Description of Existing View

View from the track into the allotment gardens off Lion Lane, which also forms part of Footpath 68W. The Footpath curves around the foreground vegetation to the right of the view, heading northwest along the edge of the field. The allotment gardens dominate the view, however upper canopies of trees in the distance are seen beyond. To the left of the view, a dense hedgerow/ tree line completely screens any views to the south. A permissive path / track runs straight ahead (southwest) towards a gateway and stile into the wider field, where further views are contained by the boundary trees.

The Site is located beyond the allotment gardens and several layers of intervening vegetation, and is some 500m distant. It is completely screened from this location in both summer and winter.

Nature / Magnitude of Visual Effects at Year 1, Year 7 and Year 15

The development would not be visible from this location in either summer or winter.

The **Magnitude of Visual Effects** would be **NEUTRAL in all periods**.

Significance of Visual Effects

	Year 1	Year 7	Year 15
Summer	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Winter	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL

To be viewed digitally at 125% enlargement - see notes below.



Panoramic view looking west-southwest from Footpath 68W, at a point approximately 90m before the path enters 'Butcher's Wood'.

Notes: Cylindrical panoramic image - **to be viewed digitally** (see instructions for viewing below). If printed on A3 paper this image is for context only. An additional set of higher quality photographs is provided in Appendix D to allow easy digital scaling and viewing of the photographs; and a reference image of the indicated insert on the photograph is also provided in Appendix E.

Instructions for viewing digitally: All images must be viewed with the horizontal markings ascending the left page border 100mm apart (achieved by adjusting PDF zoom level). This represents a 125% enlargement (refer to Technical Methodology in Appendix C). The images should then be viewed at comfortable arm's length (exact mathematical reference point = 542mm from eye to image) by maintaining the head in a constant position (without turning) and panning the image from side to side - this maintains a constant viewing distance across the panorama and provides the best recommended representation of the view found on site.

Photographs taken with a Nikon D3500 digital SLR camera (cropped frame sensor) with a fixed focal length Nikon 35mm lens (refer to Technical Methodology in Appendix C). Photographs stitched together using Photomerge ('reposition only' layout) in Adobe Photoshop.

Viewpoint location

Panoramic view looking west-southwest from Footpath 68W, at a point approximately 90m before the path enters 'Butcher's Wood'.

Latitude / Longitude 51.105294, -0.089896

Approximate elevation 153.5m AOD.

Approximate distance to closest edge of Site 265m to the eastern boundary of the Site.

Landscape Designations at viewpoint None.

Comments Ancient Woodland is seen ahead and to the right of the view.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

The primary activity of receptors in this location would be people using the Footpath for the experience and enjoyment of the landscape. Focus would generally be on the path and on the views of the surrounding landscape, and will be transient, with a low number of receptors experiencing the viewpoint.

With reference to the methodology in Appendix B, as the receptor's focus will be primarily on the landscape setting, their **Susceptibility** to Change would be HIGH; and as they are within landscapes judged to be of good strength of character the **Value** of the view would be MEDIUM.

The overall **Sensitivity of Visual Receptors** is therefore **HIGH**.

Description of Existing View

View towards 'Butcher's Wood' from Footpath 68W. The viewpoint is surrounded by vegetation on all sides: to the south (left of the view), a tree line / hedgerow which divides the foreground and neighbouring fields; and 'Butcher's Wood' Ancient Woodland wraps around the viewpoint to the west and north. Footpath 68W continues into the woodland, eventually meeting the Site.

The Site lies beyond 'Butcher's Wood' and is not visible from this location in either summer or winter.

Nature / Magnitude of Visual Effects at Year 1, Year 7 and Year 15

The development would not be visible from this location in either summer or winter.

The **Magnitude of Visual Effects** would be **NEUTRAL in all periods**.

Significance of Visual Effects

	Year 1	Year 7	Year 15
Summer	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Winter	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL