



Leonardslee Estate
Leonardslee Lake
and Gardens
Landscape and
Visual Appraisal
(LVA)

Final report
Prepared by LUC
July 2025

LUC

Leonardslee Estate

Leonardslee Lake and Gardens Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)

| Version | Status | Prepared | Checked | Approved | Date |
|---------|--------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|
| 1. | Draft | K. Milner | K.Milner | R Knight | 24.06.2025 |
| 2. | Final | K.Milner | K.Milner | R.Knight | 03.07.2025 |

Bristol
Cardiff
Edinburgh
Glasgow
London
Manchester
Sheffield

landuse.co.uk

Land Use Consultants Ltd
Registered in England
Registered number 2549296
Registered office:
250 Waterloo Road
London SE1 8RD

100% recycled paper

Landscape Design
Strategic Planning & Assessment
Development Planning
Urban Design & Masterplanning
Environmental Impact Assessment
Landscape Planning & Assessment
Landscape Management
Ecology
Historic Environment
GIS & Visualisation
Transport & Movement Planning
Arboriculture



Contents

Chapter 1 **Introduction** 2

| | |
|--|---|
| Site context and development proposals | 2 |
| The landscape and visual appraisal and scope | 3 |
| Methodology | 4 |

Chapter 2 **Landscape and visual baseline** 7

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Landscape receptors | 7 |
| Visual receptors | 12 |

Chapter 3 **Assessment of effects** 13

| | |
|--|----|
| Designed in mitigation | 13 |
| Effects of the proposals on landscape and visual receptors | 13 |

Chapter 4 **Summary conclusion** 20

Chapter 1

Introduction

Site context and development proposals

1.1 LUC was commissioned in May 2025 to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA), on behalf of Leonardslee Estate, for development proposals at Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens, Lower Beeding, Horsham. The location and boundary of the application site (the Site) is shown on **Figure 1**.

1.2 The development proposals are to improve the facilities and functions of the Estate's buildings with associated improvements to visitor experience. The changes are described as "*proposed extension of the visitor entrance building, courtyard winter garden extension and western terrace to the stable block with internal reconfiguration, proposed roof to the former generator block courtyard with internal reconfiguration, re-roofing the alpine house, single storey extension to the engine house to provide an accessible WC, single storey wedding pavilion, landscaping proposals to the main house forecourt and partial change of use of the red house from office to residential staff accommodation, the stable block from office to residential guest accommodation*"¹. The proposals are mapped and described in detail in the Design and Access Statement (DAS)² and include an outline strategy of lighting as part of the landscaping proposals.

1.3 Leonardslee Lake and Gardens (86ha) is a Grade I Registered Park and Garden located on the western edge of the High Weald National Landscape (refer to **Figure 2**). It is located to the south of the village of Lower Beeding and it bordered to the west by the A281. The estate comprises ornamental gardens, parkland and woodland. Set within a deep sheltered valley to a chain of ponds, the western valley side slopes steeply up to more level ground alongside the A281. The east side slopes more gently to the top of Hogstolt Hill (outside the estate). The visitor car park, principal Leonardslee House and ancillary buildings are located on the highest

¹ Purcell Architects 2025

² Purcell, April 2025. Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens Design and Access Statement

ground in the west of the estate, the land falling away to the east to form the gill woodland gardens.

The landscape and visual appraisal and scope

1.4 In their pre-application response, Horsham District Council confirmed that a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) was a submission requirement with regard to Policy 25 District Character and the Natural Environment and Policy 30 Protected Landscapes of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

1.5 This LVA has been undertaken in accordance with the principles set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3)³, noting that an LVA does not report on the significance of effects as would be required in a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The LVA is proportionate to the scale of the proposals and their likely effects.

1.6 Landscape and visual appraisals are separate but linked processes, and consider the potential effects of development proposals on:

- the **character** of the landscape including landscape features e.g. trees and vegetation.
- **views as experienced by people, especially focussing on views from publicly accessible areas** e.g. footpaths, roads and local communities. Note: the effects of the proposals on the designed views within the private historic landscape are considered in detail within the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA)⁴ which includes mapping of key views in Appendix B. The HIA is cross referenced to, where relevant, within the LVA.

1.7 This appraisal also considers any implications for the special qualities of the nationally designated landscape of the High Weald National Landscape as a result of the proposals.

1.8 Implications for the Grade I Registered Park and Garden are provided within the HIA (which considers the impact of the proposals on the significance of the heritage assets) and cross referenced within the LVA.

³ Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition.

⁴ Purcell, June 2025. Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens Heritage Impact Assessment

1.9 Arboricultural Impact Assessments (AIAs)⁵ have been produced to accompany development proposals. The LVA cross refers to the AIAs to understand implications for landscape features as a result of the proposals listed below.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

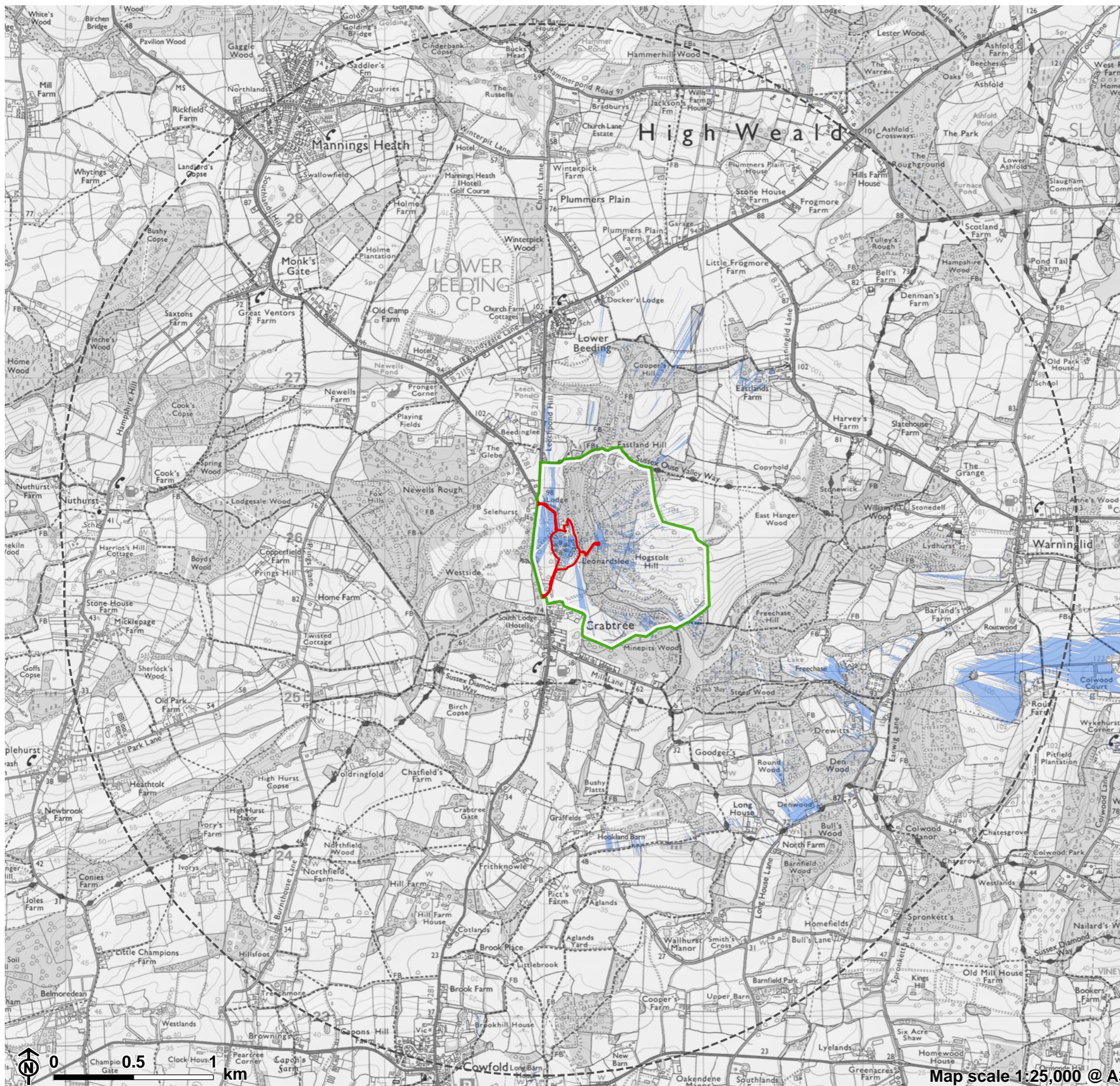
1.10 A ZTV (refer to **Figure 1**) has been produced to understand the extent of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposals thus defining the LVA study area.

1.11 The ZTV illustrates the visibility of proposed site modifications based on their maximum heights (supplied by Purcell Architects). The ZTV uses digital surface model data which includes the elevation of the terrain as well as above-ground features such as building and vegetation cover.

1.12 The following proposals were included in the ZTV:

- Changes and additions to the collection of buildings located on higher ground in the west of the estate in proximity to Leonardslee House:
 - Extension to the south elevation of the existing visitor/ ticket entrance building (This will create a new area to accommodate a ticket desk and café (see reference 1 Proposed Site Plan pg. 31 DAS).
 - A new winter garden extension to the Stable block and terrace to the east (see reference 3 Proposed Site Plan pg. 31 DAS).
 - A new roof over the generator block courtyard resulting in a slight increase in height of the structure and refurbishment of the Alpine House (see reference 4 Proposed Site Plan pg. 31 DAS).
 - A new wedding pavilion on the lawn to the south of Leonardslee House (see reference 7 Proposed Site Plan pg. 31 DAS).
- Changes/ additions to buildings within the steep valley of the woodland garden:

⁵ Temple 2025 Leonardslee Park and Gardens Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statements (Generator block and visitor entrance building extension)



Leonardslee LVA



Figure 1: Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of proposed structure

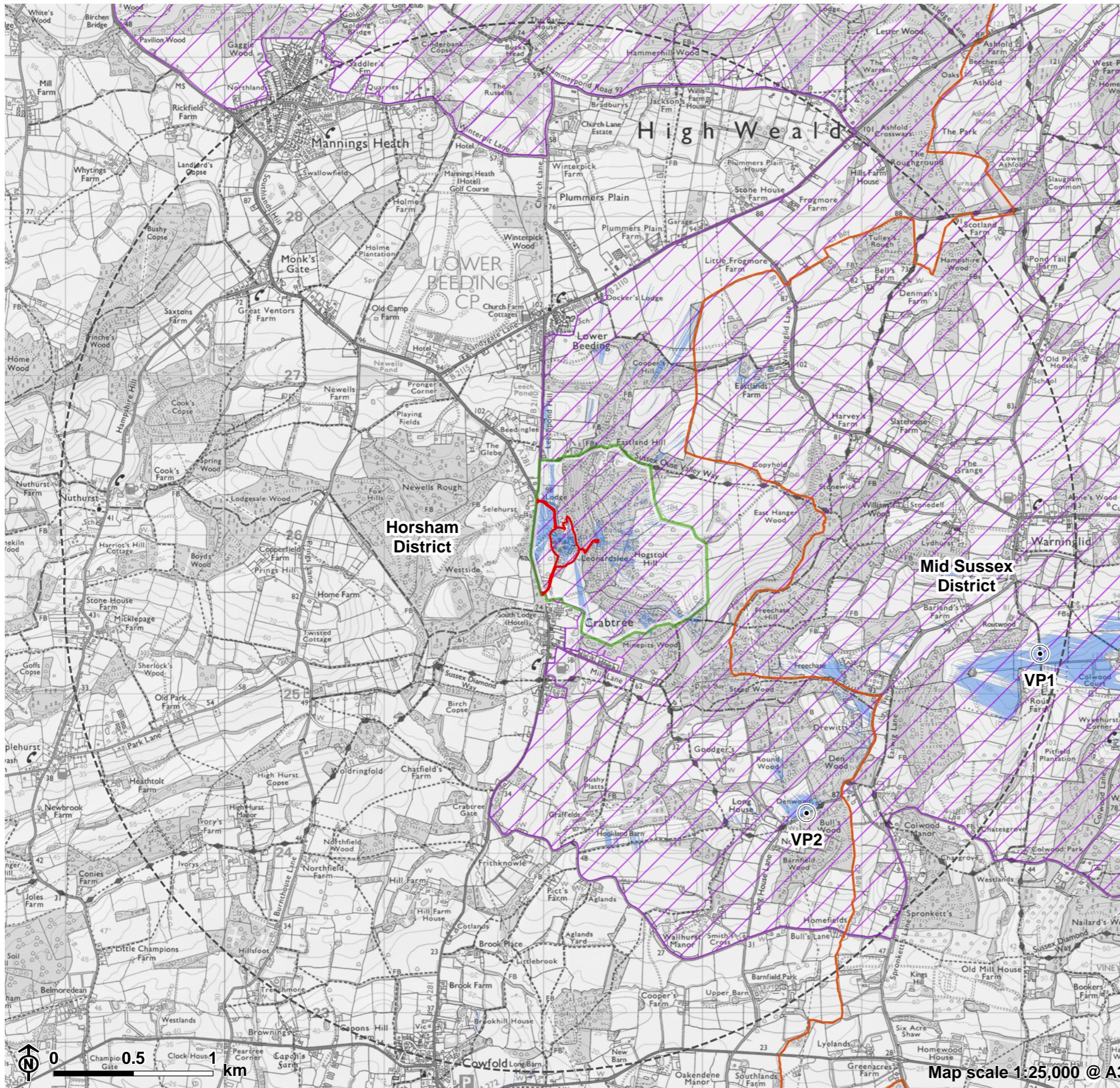
- Site boundary
- 3 km from site boundary
- Leonardslee Registered Parks and Gardens
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility**
- Proposed structure visible

Notes:

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) illustrates the visibility of proposed site modifications based on their given maximum heights, from a viewing height of 2 m above ground level.

The terrain model takes into consideration screening features and is derived from 1 m DEFRA LiDAR Digital Surface Model (DSM) 2022 data (obtained from DEFRA, May 2025).

Earth curvature and atmospheric refraction have been taken into account. The ZTV was calculated using ArcGIS Pro 3.4.0.



Leonardslee LVA



Figure 2: Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of proposed structure construction with visual receptors, National Landscape, and district LCA information

- Site boundary
- 3 km from site boundary
- ▨ High Weald National Landscape
- Leonardslee Registered Parks and Gardens
- ▬ District boundary line
- Viewpoint
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility**
- Proposed structure visible

Notes:

Areas of theoretical visibility, within Horsham District, lie within Horsham LCA M1 and Mid Sussex LCA HW4 (which extends across the district boundary). Areas of theoretical visibility within Mid Sussex District lie within Mid Sussex LCA HW4.

Information regarding the LCAs can be found via the respective council websites.

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) illustrates the visibility of proposed site modifications based on their given maximum heights, from a viewing height of 2 m above ground level. Please see the Design and Access statement for height details.

The terrain model takes into consideration screening features and is derived from 1 m DEFRA LiDAR Digital Surface Model (DSM) 2022 data (obtained from DEFRA, May 2025).

Earth curvature and atmospheric refraction have been taken into account. The ZTV was calculated using ArcGIS Pro 3.4.0.

- A new accessible WC accommodated in a new, small extension at the Engine House. Located on the valley bottom of the woodland gardens adjacent to Waterfall Pond (see reference 6 Proposed Site Plan pg. 31 DAS).

1.13 Note: Assessment of proposals relating to Reference 5 and Reference 2 on the Proposed Site Plan (pg. 31 DAS) are not included in the LVA as they refer to changes to internal uses of buildings and landscaping of the main house forecourt (refer to para 2.14).

LVA Study area

1.14 The study area includes all areas from which likely landscape or visual effects will be experienced. The ZTV (**Figure 1**) confirms that the areas from which likely landscape and visual effects will be experienced will be largely confined to the Registered Park and Garden itself, within close proximity to the proposed building alterations/ additions. However, there is some theoretical visibility shown up to 3km southeast of the RPG which the LVA considers.

Methodology

1.15 This appraisal of landscape and visual effects has been undertaken in accordance with the principles set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3)⁶. An appraisal of landscape and visual effects requires consideration of the nature of the receptor (sensitivity of receptor) and the nature of the effect on the receptor (magnitude of change). This information is set out in the proceeding chapters for each identified receptor.

landscape/ visual effect = sensitivity of receptor + magnitude of change

1.16 Landscape sensitivity combines professional judgements on susceptibility and value, using the principles set out in the table below:

Table 1.1: The principles of judging landscape sensitivity

| | Higher | ↔ | Lower |
|----------------|---|---|--|
| Susceptibility | The landscape and its features are less able to accommodate change to buildings without undue negative consequences to the baseline situation. Characteristics of the landscape offer very limited opportunities for the accommodation of change without key characteristics being fundamentally altered. | ↔ | The landscape and its features are more able to accommodate change to buildings without undue negative consequences to the baseline situation. Characteristics of the landscape are more resilient to being changed. |
| Value | Landscapes with higher scenic quality, conservation interests, recreational value, cultural associations or rarity or uniqueness. Areas designated at a national level or with national policy level protection. | ↔ | Landscapes of limited aesthetic qualities, low conservation interest, little recreational value, few cultural associations or of character that is frequent/widespread. Areas or features that are not formally designated. |

⁶ Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition.

1.17 Visual sensitivity combines professional judgements on susceptibility and value using the principles set out in the table below:

Table 1.2: The principles of judging visual sensitivity

| | Higher | ↔ | Lower |
|----------------|---|---|---|
| Susceptibility | Viewers whose attention or interest is focused on their surroundings including communities/individual residential receptors/people engaged in outdoor recreation/visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where views of the surrounding area are an important contributor to experience. | ↔ | People whose attention is not on their surroundings (and where setting is not important to the quality of working life) such as commuters/people engaged in outdoor sports/people at their place of work. |
| Value | Views recorded in management plans or guide books. | ↔ | Views which are not documented or protected. |

1.18 Magnitude of change is influenced mostly by the size/ scale of the change although duration, reversibility and geographical extent are also considered. Some definitions are provided below.

Table 1.3: Definitions of magnitude of landscape change

| Magnitude of Landscape Change | Definition |
|-------------------------------|---|
| High | An obvious (large scale) change in landscape features, characteristics and character potentially resulting in the creation of a new landscape character type. |

| Magnitude of Landscape Change | Definition |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Medium | Discernible (medium scale) changes to landscape features, characteristics and character. |
| Low | A perceptible but small change to landscape features, characteristics and character. |
| Barely Perceptible | An imperceptible/barely perceptible change to landscape features, characteristics and character. |

Table 1.4: Definitions of magnitude of visual change

| Magnitude of Visual Change | Definition |
|----------------------------|---|
| High | A large change in available views, perhaps where the development is in close proximity in a direct line of vision, or affecting a substantial part of the view, or providing contrast with the existing view. |
| Medium | A clearly perceptible change in view, perhaps where the development is relatively close but at an oblique angle or further away in the direct line of vision, creating a distinct new element in the view. |
| Low | A small change in view, perhaps where the development is at a distance or oblique angle, or where the scale of the landscape absorbs the development well. |

| Magnitude of Visual Change | Definition |
|----------------------------|---|
| Barely Perceptible | A change in view which is barely perceptible or may go unnoticed. |

1.19 The overall level of effect is determined by correlating the magnitude of change with the sensitivity of the receptor. Judgements are made on a case-by-case basis. The direction of effect is independent of the level of effect and is reported as beneficial, adverse or neutral (negligible effects are not given a direction). The direction of effect is determined in relation to the degree to which the proposal fits with the landscape character or view, and the contribution to the landscape or view that the development makes.

1.20 The effects on heritage receptors (including key historic views within the RPG, the setting of buildings and the RPG itself) are considered in the HIA which should be read alongside this report (noting the HIA has a different methodology to the LVA).

1.21 The assessor visited Leonardslee Estate in September 2024 which helped inform this appraisal. Impacts beyond the estate, within the wider landscape are so limited that desk study and use of Google Earth was sufficient to understand the effect on landscape and visual receptors.

Chapter 2

Landscape and visual baseline

2.1 This chapter sets out the baseline landscape and visual situation and identifies key landscape and visual receptors

Landscape receptors

Landscape Character Areas

2.2 Landscape character is the “*distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another*” (Landscape Institute, 2013). There are published assessments at both national and local levels that classify, describe and evaluate the landscape study area in which the Site lies.

2.3 This LVA focuses on landscape character areas within the 3km study area and which fall within the ZTV (refer to **Figure 2**). While the assessment focuses on local (district) landscape character areas, as they are at the most appropriate scale for assessment, the National Landscape Character Area description is included to provide context of the study area.

National Landscape Character (produced by Natural England⁷):

2.4 The Site lies within National Character Area 122 High Weald (refer to [Context Map - National Character Area Profiles](#) for mapping) which ‘*encompasses the ridged and faulted sandstone core of the Kent and Sussex Weald. It is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)⁸ covers 78 per cent of the NCA. The High Weald consists of a mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads connected by historic routeways, tracks and paths. Wild flower meadows are now rare but prominent medieval patterns of small pasture*

⁷ <https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/high-weald/>

⁸ The name ‘Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’ (AONB) was changed to ‘National Landscape’ in England and Wales in November 2023, with the legal designation remaining as AONB.

fields enclosed by thick hedgerows and shaws (narrow woodlands) remain fundamental to the character of the landscape'.

Local Landscape Character

Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment⁹

2.5 The estate lies within Landscape Character Area M1 Crabtree and Nuthurst Ridges Ghylls (LCA M1). Refer to [Figure 2](#) and [Horsham District Council Landscape Char M1 sn acter Types and Landscape Character Areas](#) for mapping.

2.6 The key characteristic of this LCA M1 as set out in the Horsham LCA are:

- Steep wooded ridges and ghylls.
- Strong pattern of woodlands, shaws and hedgerows. Ancient hedgerow oaks.
- Small to medium size irregular and regular shaped pasture fields.
- Field ponds and small lakes.
- Numerous historic parks and gardens, e.g. Leonardslee, Sedgwick Park, Denne Park.
- Dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads, and small hamlets.
- Confined views - Views are generally very confined (because of the strong treescape network), although there are occasional long views over the undulating ridges.
- Traditional local building materials of sandstone, brick and tile hanging.

2.7 Relevant planning and land management guidelines for LCA M1 are:

- Conserve the strongly rural unspoilt character.
- Ensure any new development responds to the historic dispersed settlement pattern and local building design and materials.

- Conserve the strong pattern of woodland, shaws and hedgerows through coppice management, planting and natural regeneration.
- Maintain and manage small field ponds and lakes.
- Conserve and restore historic parklands as appropriate.

Mid Sussex District LCA HW4 High Weald Fringes¹⁰

2.8 The estate also lies within the Mid Sussex District LCA HW4 High Weald Fringes which extends across the district boundary from Mid Sussex. This LCA includes the higher land to the southeast of the Site within Mid Sussex District (refer to [Figure 2](#)). Refer to [A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex - Part Four: High Weald Fringes](#) for mapping. The areas covered by LCA M1 and HW4 overlap and key characteristics are similar.

2.9 The key characteristics of LCA HW4 as set out in the Mid Sussex LCA are

- Wooded, often confined rural landscape of intimacy and complexity partly within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
- South and east-draining gills and broad ridges sweeping gently down to the Low Weald.
- Western part drained by the headwaters of the River Arun, eastern part around Scaynes Hill by the River Ouse.
- Long views over the Low Weald to the downs.
- Significant woodland cover, a substantial portion of it ancient, and a dense network of shaws, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Pattern of small, irregular-shaped assart fields and larger fields, and small pockets of remnant heathland.
- Biodiversity concentrated in the valleys, heathland, and woodland.
- Network of lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.

⁹CBA, 2023 Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment

¹⁰ Mid Sussex District Council 2025, A Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex. Available at [Background Studies - Mid Sussex District Council](#)

- Dispersed historic settlement pattern, close to Horsham, the principal settlements Cuckfield, Haywards Heath and Lindfield and a few villages and hamlets.
- Some busy lanes and roads including A and B roads bounding the area to the west, and other roads crossing north to south, including the A23 Trunk Road.
- Mill sites, hammerponds and ornamental lakes and ponds.
- Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.
- Designed landscapes and exotic treescapes associated with large country houses.
- Major gill woodland garden and visitor attraction at Leonardslee

2.10 Relevant land management guidelines for LCA HW4 include:

- Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the woodland and agricultural landscape for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes.
- Protect existing views from the area and avoid skyline development, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Plan for long-term woodland regeneration, the planting of new broad-leaved woodlands, appropriate management of existing woodlands, and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover in woodlands and on heathland.
- Extend existing woodland areas rather than creating new woodland features, reinforcing existing, distinctive landscape patterns.
- Conserve woodland biodiversity and the landscape of the gills, including wet woodland, protecting rare and uncommon woodland plant communities associated with them.
- Conserve and replant single oaks in hedgerows to maintain succession and replant parkland trees.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.

- Conserve and manage remnant open heathland by preventing the encroachment of scrub and create new, interconnected heathlands.
- Conserve species-rich meadows and road verges.
- Reduce the visual impact of stabling and grazing for horses.
- Minimise the effects of adverse incremental change by seeking new development of high quality that sits well within the landscape and reflects local distinctiveness.

Landscape Sensitivity

2.11 The landscape within the study area (LCA M1 and LCA HW4) is of **high** sensitivity. It is a high quality and intact landscape with distinctive elements and features making a positive contribution to character and sense of place. The landscape is designated at a national level for its outstanding natural beauty. High sensitivity landscapes, by nature of their character are less able to accommodate development without change in character.

Landscape Features

2.12 The AIA describes the trees in and adjacent to the proposed development area. A qualitative assessment of each tree is carried out according to British Standard BS 5837:2012, Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations, focusing on arboricultural values, landscape values, and cultural values. Category A trees being of highest quality and Category C of lower quality, (refer to AIAs for more information on definitions of tree quality).

2.13 The following summarises baseline survey findings in the AIAs for the following proposals relevant to the LVA:

- Visitor entrance building extension - 8 individual trees and 2 groups in and adjacent to the proposed development. Of the trees surveyed, 1 individual was attributed category A status (highest value), 3 individuals, and 1 group were attributed category B status and 4 individuals, and 1 group were category C status. Refer to AIA for more detail.
- Former Generator: 26 individual trees and 4 groups in and adjacent to the proposed development. Of the trees surveyed, 3 individuals were attributed Category A status (highest quality), 13 individuals and 1 group were attributed Category B status and 10

individuals, and 3 groups were attributed Category C status. One tree, T86 was attributed Veteran status. Refer to AIA for more detail.

2.14 Note: Trees in relation to landscaping of the main house forecourt are not considered in detail in the LVA which focuses on proposed alterations to buildings (refer to para 1.12 -1.13 above). Refer to AIA for implications of forecourt landscaping proposals on trees and the HIA for implications for heritage assets including the RPG.

2.15 Trees within the site are landscape features of high sensitivity. Located in a Registered Park and Garden and National Landscape, they contribute to a landscape which is of high scenic quality, conservation interest, recreational value and cultural association and less able to accommodate change.

Landscape and Heritage Designations

The High Weald National Landscape

2.16 The Site (within Leonardslee Registered Park and Gardens) lies on the western edge of the High Weald National Landscape which is **nationally designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty defined by character components that make it recognisably distinct**.

2.17 The High Weald National Landscape AONB Management Plan (2024-2029¹¹) sets out the core character components of the High Weald's natural beauty (its special qualities) and the strategy for conservation and enhancement. The core character components are included in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Core character components of the High Weald's natural beauty

| Core character components of the High Weald's natural beauty | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1 | Natural systems (geology, soils, water and climate) | A deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with highly variable, relatively undisturbed soils and numerous headwaters (gill streams) functioning under an oceanic climate. |
| 2 | Settlement | Dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads, hamlets and late-medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries. |
| 3 | Routeways | A dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths). |
| 4 | Woodland | An abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws |
| 5 | Fieldscapes and heath | Small, irregular and productive fields, bound by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive |

| Core character components of the High Weald's natural beauty | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| | | zones of lowland heaths and inned river valleys (reclaimed marshland). |
| 6 | Dark night skies | Intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible. |
| 7 | Aesthetic and perceptual qualities | Arising from the interaction of people with the landscape, including the notion of a quintessential English pastoral landscape, intimacy of scale, a sense of history and timelessness; rurality and tranquillity; glimpsed long views; freedom to explore and make connections with the natural world, and a rich legacy of features and ideas left by writers, poets and gardeners inspired by the landscape. |
| 8 | Land-based economy and rural living | With roots extending deep into history, and which has visibly and culturally shaped the landscape. |

2.18 A number of the National Landscape's special qualities are represented at Leonardslee including deeply incised landform; ancient woodland; heath and species rich grassland; and a legacy of gardeners inspired by the landscape.

Grade I Registered Park and Garden

2.19 Leonardslee Park and Gardens is included at Grade I on Historic England's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. Three grade bands provide guidance on significance, with Grade I (the highest) meaning of **exceptional historic interest**. Leonardslee was given this status in 1984, when the register was first established due to the plant breeding and resulting plant collection, particularly rhododendron that the Loder family, predominantly Sir Edmund, put together from 1889 onwards.

2.20 More detail on the Registered Park and Garden designation, its overall significance and significance by character area is provided in the HIA.

¹¹ highweald.org/document-library/aonb-management-plan/high-weald-aonb-management-plan-2024-2029/?layout=default

Visual receptors

2.21 Visual receptors are defined as “the different groups of people who may experience views of the development” (GLVIA 3, para 6.3). A digitally generated ZTV shown in **Figure 1**, has been used to identify visual receptors for the purpose of the LVA.

Analysis of visibility of the proposals and visual receptors

2.22 The ZTV shows that visibility of the proposals is largely confined to the Registered Park and Garden, occurring within and in close proximity to the application site.

2.23 The ZTV indicates that, beyond the private Registered Park and Garden, within the wider landscape of the study area, the proposals will be screened from view due to the ridged landform and dense woodland coverage, which is characteristic of this landscape.

2.24 The ZTV indicates some visibility at 2-3km southeast of the RPG on higher, open farmland. These areas of theoretical visibility comprise farmed fields on private land. However, there is public access across and adjacent to these areas.

2.25 Visual receptors are therefore identified as:

- Recreational users of the bridleway (public right of way) between Warninglid and Rout Farm 2.86km southeast of the RPG boundary (refer to VP1 on **Figure 2**).
- Recreational users of the Sussex Diamond Way Long Distance Path and motorists along Long House Lane 2.15km southeast of the RPG boundary (refer to VP2 **Figure 2**).

Visual sensitivity of receptors

2.26 Receptors which are users of Public Rights of Way or other recreational trails where attention is particularly focused on their surroundings are considered to have high sensitivity to change. Visual receptors at VP1 and VP2, as set out above, are therefore considered to have high sensitivity to change.

Key designed heritage views within the Registered Park and Garden

2.27 The HIA considers the garden’s key views and vistas – *“These views were created through the artistry of careful planting and management of trees and plants in accordance with the site’s natural landscape. The views and vistas focus on the woodland garden and lakeside*

walks and include views from key landscape features, such as bridges, unenclosed sections of paths, and elevated points on the valley slopes. The views also include select views from the main house and the Red House, although there is generally very little visibility between the house and the lakes and woodland gardens below owing to the topography and dense nature of the planting. A number of views have been lost over the years owing to vegetation and tree canopies growing up. The views from the western slopes of the valley up towards the house were previously much more open as shown in historic photographs, whereas today, the house is very rarely visible from these walks.”

2.28 A view analysis is included within the HIA to help determine the effect of development proposals on heritage assets.

Chapter 3

Assessment of effects

Designed in mitigation

3.1 Proposals have been designed to improve legibility and visitor experience; and to help disperse visitor pressure from the historic core of the estate. As set out in the DAS and HIA, proposals have been sensitively designed with, heritage, landscape and views actively taken into consideration in a mitigation through design approach.

3.2 More detail is provided in the DAS, AIAs and HIA with some of the key landscape and visual considerations highlighted below:

- Use of materials which complement, do not compete with and reflect the materiality of existing buildings.
- Design approach which ensures effective integration with existing buildings and sensitive integration with surroundings.
- Attention to scale of extensions and additions which are subservient to existing historic buildings.
- Consideration of existing planting to reduce/prevent visibility and integrate proposals.
- Protection of trees through implementation of a robust tree protection strategy.
- New planting proposals to contribute to landscape enhancement and compensate for trees removed as part of the building alterations/ extensions.

Effects of the proposals on landscape and visual receptors

3.3 This section sets out an assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposals.

3.4 As set out in Chapter 1, the overall effect is determined by combining the sensitivity of receptors (described in Chapter 2) with the magnitude of change experienced as a result of the proposals.

Table 3.1 Landscape and Visual Effects

| Receptor and Sensitivity | Sensitivity | Magnitude of Change | Effect |
|---|-------------|---|---|
| Landscape Receptors | | | |
| Horsham District LCA M1 Crabtree and Nuthurst Ridges and Ghylls | High | There will be no perceptible change to the character of LCA M1, and its key characteristics, as a result of the proposals. The proposals are visually contained by woodland and the steep valley landform of the Leonardslee Estate in which they are located. The steep wooded ridges and strong pattern of woodland across the wider landscape of LCA M1 also prevent views to the proposals. The proposals contribute to the conservation and restoration of a historic park responding to local building design and materials which are key planning/ land management guidelines for this LCA. | No effect |
| Mid Sussex District LCA HW4 High Weald Fringes | High | There will be no perceptible change to the character of LCA HW4 or its key characteristics as a result of the proposals. The proposals are visually contained by the woodland and steep valley landform of the Leonardslee Estate in which they are located. The broad ridged landform and significant woodland cover across the wider landscape of LCA HW4 also restrict views. Any changes to the long, distant view north westwards towards the estate (VP1) will be barely perceptible and will not alter the character of LCA HW4. The proposals are of high quality, designed to integrate with the historic landscape of the estate and reflecting the distinctiveness of existing estate buildings responding to land management guidelines for this LCA. | No effect |
| Landscape features - Trees | High | Based on information in the AIAs, it is judged there will be a small change to trees within localised areas of the application site as a result of the proposals (relating to the visitor entrance extension and generator block). For the estate as a whole, which has extensive tree and woodland cover, the change will be imperceptible . As stated in the AIAs the following tree removals will be necessary to accommodate building alterations/extensions within localised areas of the application site: Visitor entrance extension: removal of 1 category B tree (T45 Goat Willow) and 4 category C trees (T46, T47, T48, T49 Cotoneasters). Former Generator: Removal of 1 category B tree (T164, Paulownia). There are no removals of Category A trees (highest quality) as part of proposals. Removal of 2 category B trees (medium quality) and 4 category C trees (low quality) will be in the context of the woodland garden and the extensive and varied canopy cover it already provides which would moderate the impact of the loss of these six trees. The tree removals will be compensated for by planting as part of the proposals for landscape enhancement (refer to DAS and planting plans). New planting will be delivered to a high standard and maintained appropriately with the aim of enhancing the gardens. Implementation of a robust tree protection strategy will ensure all other identified trees are protected on site during construction of proposals. | Minor adverse effect for trees within localised areas of the application site. Negligible for the estate's trees as a whole |

| Receptor and Sensitivity | Sensitivity | Magnitude of Change | Effect |
|--|-------------|--|-------------------|
| Visual Receptors | | | |
| Recreational users of the bridleway (public right of way) between Warninglid and Rout Farm 2.86km southeast of the application (VP1) | High | At this distance (2.86km from the Site) there will be a barely perceptible change to the visual amenity of users of the bridleway. Any changes (primarily addition of the lightweight wedding pavilion; generator block alterations and visitor entrance extension) will form a barely noticeable element of the view seen at long distance and in the context of (and not exceeding height/ changing massing of) the existing cluster of estate buildings. | Negligible effect |
| Recreational users of the Sussex Diamond Way Long Distance Path and motorists using Long House Lane 2.15km southeast of the RPG boundary (VP2) | High | There will be no perceptible change to the visual amenity of users of the Sussex Diamond Way Long Distance Path and motorists using Long House Lane. The lane is sunken, flanked by grass banks planted with tall hedgerow and hedgerow trees. Any changes would not be perceptible due to the lower level of the path/ road; the vegetated boundaries which heavily filter views and intervening woodland beyond. | No effect |

Implications for the special qualities (core character components) of the High Weald National Landscape Designation

3.5 Table 3.2 below considers how proposals will affect the special qualities (core character components) of the High Weald National Landscape.

Table 3.2 Review of core character components

| Core character components of the High Weald's natural beauty | Effect of the proposals |
|---|---|
| A deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with highly variable, relatively undisturbed soils and numerous headwaters (gill streams) functioning under an oceanic climate. | No change. Proposals do not alter the 'landform and natural systems' character component of the High Weald's natural beauty |
| Dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads, hamlets and late-medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries. | No change. Proposals do not alter the 'settlement' character component of the High Weald's natural beauty |
| A dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths). | No change. Proposals do not alter the 'routeway' character component of the High Weald's natural beauty |
| An abundance of ancient woodland mostly in small holdings, highly interconnected with hedges and shaws | No change. Proposals do not alter the 'woodland' character component of the High Weald's natural beauty |
| Small, irregular and productive fields, bound by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths and inned river valleys (reclaimed marshland). | No change. Proposals do not alter the 'fieldscape and heath' character component of the High Weald's natural beauty |
| Intrinsically dark at night with our own galaxy (the Milky Way) visible. | <p>At this stage, no detailed analysis of lighting or specification of exact light fittings is provided. It is stated in the DAS that the '<i>lighting proposal has been designed in line with the High Weald AONB Management Plan Character Component - Dark Skies - in line with its objectives</i>'. Proposals to fulfil objectives (as stated in the DAS) include '<i>avoiding prolonged illumination of Leonardslee House, its outbuildings and adjacent habitats; maintaining the brightness as low as possible; and minimising upward lighting to avoid light pollution (BCT and ILP, 2018)</i>'</p> <p>It is assumed with careful design measures in place and in line with the AONB Management Plan, the 'dark night skies' character component of the High Weald's natural beauty will not be altered by the proposals. Therefore, no change.</p> |
| Arising from the interaction of people with the landscape, including the notion of a quintessential English pastoral landscape, intimacy of scale, a sense of history and timelessness; rurality and tranquillity; glimpsed long views; | No change. Proposals do not alter the 'aesthetic and perceptual qualities' of the High Weald's natural beauty. As described in Table 3.1, any change to glimpsed long views will be barely perceptible. |

| Core character components of the High Weald's natural beauty | Effect of the proposals |
|---|--|
| freedom to explore and make connections with the natural world, and a rich legacy of features and ideas left by writers, poets and gardeners inspired by the landscape. | The proposals contribute to conserving and enhancing Leonardslee Estate, part of a rich legacy of features left by gardeners inspired by the landscape |
| Roots extending deep into history, and which has visibly and culturally shaped the landscape | No change. Proposals do not alter the 'land- based economy and rural living' character component of the High Weald's natural beauty |

3.6 The proposals do not change any of the National Landscape's special qualities represented at Leonardslee including deeply incised landform, ancient woodland, heath and species rich grassland and a legacy of gardeners inspired by the landscape.

Implications for the Leonardslee Grade I Registered Park and Garden and designed views with the RPG.

3.7 The HIA incorporates views analysis into the impact assessments to help test and assess the impact of the proposals on the surrounding heritage assets including the RPG itself. The following Table 3.3 summaries the findings as reported in the HIA.

Table 3.3 Summary of impact on the Grade I Registered Park and Garden (including view analysis) as reported in the HIA

Note this text is replicated and extracted from a more detailed analysis in the Heritage Impact Assessment. It is included as a useful accompaniment to the LVA.

| Proposal | Extracts from the HIA relating to view analysis | Impact on RPG (extracted from HIA – refer to HIA for methodology) |
|---|--|--|
| Garden Shop Building (Extension to the south elevation of the existing visitor/ticket entrance building) | <i>"The scale of the extension will be subservient to the main garden shop building featuring a low flat roof, meaning it will sit discreetly within its landscape and will not be visible from the historic gardens."</i> | No impact (no specific view analysis) |
| Stables (A new winter garden extension to the Stable block and terrace to the east) | <i>"The external terrace to the east of the Stables will also be screened from the majority of views in the gardens owing to the density of vegetation and topography of the valley slopes. View 13, showing the location of the new terrace intervention in red, clearly illustrates that the new terrace to the east Stables range and the associated doors opened into the east elevation will not be visible from this area of exceptional significance within the gardens</i> | Neutral impact (including analysis of View 7a, 7b and 13 – refer to mapping and images within the HIA) |
| Generator Block and Alpine House (A new roof over the generator block courtyard resulting in a slight increase in height of the structure. Refurbishment of the Alpine House) | <i>"The interventions to the Generator Block that will be discernible from the Registered Park and Garden are the re-roofing of the courtyard space to the south and the introduction of window openings in the east elevation; the recladding and re-roofing of the Alpine House; and the alteration of the southern doors to the current courtyard café to windows</i> <i>The pared back aesthetic of the recladding is shown in View 2b, which demonstrates the enhancement of the proposals on the existing Alpine House and its contribution to the historic core of the RPG."</i> | Low beneficial impact |

| Proposal | Extracts from the HIA relating to view analysis | Impact on RPG (extracted from HIA – refer to HIA for methodology) |
|---|--|--|
| Wedding Pavilion (new wedding pavilion on the lawn to the south of Leonardslee House) | <p><i>"highly significant areas are located in the valley to the east and visually and physically distanced from the application site owing to the topography and intervening trees and vegetation."</i></p> <p><i>"The replacement of the larger, less sympathetically designed marquee with this pavilion is constituted to be an improvement and as such it is considered that the impact is within the realms of low beneficial in relation to the Registered Park and Garden"</i></p> | Medium beneficial impact |
| Engine House (A new accessible WC accommodated in a new, small extension at the Engine House. Located on the valley bottom of the woodland gardens adjacent to Waterfall Pond | <p><i>"The terrace extension will be visible from views to the east of the lakes; however, its lightweight form and materiality ensures that it will not form a prominent feature in these views. Whilst there is already a terrace in situ, the modest extension to this terrace is not considered oversized relative to the building and will not encroach disproportionately on the surrounding gardens. The use of brown brickwork and stone paving to match the existing terrace, the new brown railings and new planting to the south of the extension will ensure the extension blends and recedes discreetly into its surrounding scenery as indicated by Key Views 12 & 13. The increased outdoor seating, alongside the new accessible WC, will encourage more visitors to dwell in this part of the gardens, which will help disperse visitors beyond the historic core of the estate.</i></p> <p><i>In other Key Views around the lakes within the Registered Park and Garden, the extension will largely not be legible, ensuring the unique picturesque character and appearance of the heritage asset is preserved. In views to the north-east of the lakes, owing to the positioning of the terrace and the distance from the Engine House, the terrace will not be visible, as indicated by Key View 14. Owing to its position and intervening vegetation, the terrace will not be legible in views to the north or the west of the Engine House. In views to the south, from the lakeside walk, it will generally not be perceptible owing to the gradient of the land, as shown by Key View 10a, except for views in close range such as Key View 10b, albeit barely legible owing to the lightweight form of the railings and the hedge screening. "</i></p> | No impact (including analysis of View 10a, 10b, 12, 13 and 14 - refer to mapping and images within the HIA) |

Chapter 4

Summary conclusion

4.1 This landscape and visual appraisal (LVA) considers the impact of development proposals, at Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens, on the landscape character and on the (public) views experienced by people within the surrounding landscape.

4.2 A summary of the landscape and visual effects is provided in Table 3.1 above. Effects on landscape character and visual receptors are judged to be of 'no effect' or 'negligible effect'. This is due to the small scale, and appropriately integrated nature of the proposals in a wooded, ridged landscape which provides visual containment and prevents views.

4.3 Based on information in the Aborticultural Impact Assessments (AIAs), effects on landscape features as part of building alterations are within localised areas of the application site and judged to be minor adverse due to the loss of six trees within a well-treed and wooded landscape context. For the estate as a whole, the effect of these loses would be negligible due to the extensive woodland and tree cover. New planting as part of the wider proposals will contribute to overall landscape enhancements.

4.4 There is judged to be no implications for the special qualities of the High Weald National Landscape as a result of the proposals (refer to Table 3.2).

4.5 As confirmed by the ZTV, visibility of the proposals is largely confined to the Registered Park and Garden, occurring within and in close proximity to the application site. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) considers impacts on heritage designations including the Grade I Registered Park and Garden and its key designed (private) views and should be read in conjunction with the LVA. A summary of impacts on the RPG (taking into consideration historic view analysis) identified by the HIA is provided in Table 3.3 above, noting that no adverse impacts on the RPG itself are recorded.