



**L I Z A R D**  
Landscape Design and Ecology

## LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

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**LAND EAST OF MOUSDELL CLOSE, ASHINGTON  
WEST SUSSEX**

**Rocco Homes**

Project Reference	LLD3503-LPL-REP-001
Approved:	JP
Date:	31/07/2025
Revision	04

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### i Introduction

Lizard has been commissioned by Rocco Homes to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal for land East of Mousdell Close, Ashington, West Sussex, (NGR TQ 12501 16366).

### ii The Site

The Site is 2.19 hectares of former pasture land, recently ploughed, located to the south of Rectory Lane and between existing housing development to east and west.

The northern boundary is defined with an overgrown hawthorn hedgerow, topped to some 6m in elevation, above which a telegraph line extends between poles. There is a mature oak and willow to the centre of the northern boundary. The southern boundary is defined by a dispersed oak tree line and a drainage ditch. The area to the south has also been proposed for housing development, currently open for consultation pending a decision.

The eastern and western boundaries are substantially defined by the various residential curtilages off Penn Gardens to west and Rectory Lane to east. The northern part of the western boundary extends along a hedgerow along Penn Gardens, whilst the southern part of the eastern boundary comprises the south-western edge of a former nursery site recently consented for housing development.

### iii The Scheme

The Scheme comprises a full planning application for erection of 74no. dwellings with associated landscaping, open space, parking and creation of new vehicular access from Rectory Lane.

### iv Summary Appraisal

#### *Landscape Character*

There would be an overall **Minor adverse effect** on rural character within the local area, with a **Moderate adverse effect** at the Site level from the replacement of the field with residential built form. The effect would be limited by the association with settlement pattern to east and west.

Regarding strength of character defined within the associated published landscape characterisations at District and County levels, there is a limited contribution from the modified field, the northern boundary hedgerow and sense of place from the glimpsed view towards the South Downs from a part of the northern area of the Site. The separation of the Site from surrounding field pattern and closer association with settlement pattern, results in the Site having as much in keeping with the surrounding settlement pattern and character as with rural character within the Study Area. A **Negligible effect** is recorded from the localised scale of impact upon the County level, Southern Low Weald LCA and District level, Ashurst and Wiston Wooded Farmlands LCA.

#### *Visual Amenity*

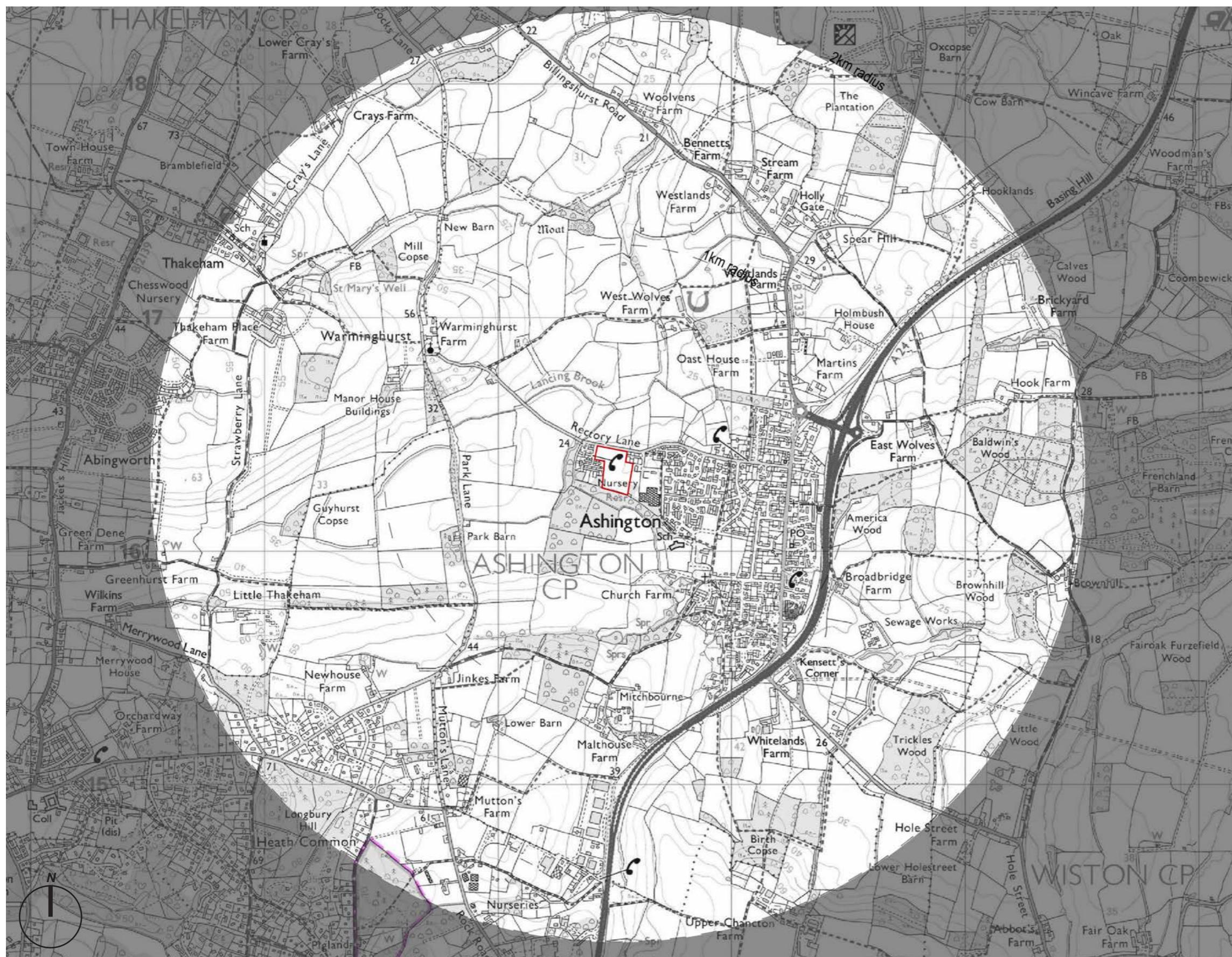
Regarding visual amenity, where adjacent to the northern boundary of the Site, there would be an overall **Minor adverse effect** on the visual appearance of the narrow, winding and attractive hedgerowed Rectory Lane for vehicular users and local users of the roadside pavement, taking into account the residual short - mid term reduction of effect as hedgerow reinforcement matured and the permanent visual effect from the proposed access roads and visibility of built form through this.

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### Legend

Development Site Boundary

Figure 1.1. Development Site Location



Figure 1.2. Site and Surrounds



**Site Photograph A.** South-easterly view from the centre of the northern boundary within the Site, showing a glimpse towards the South Downs scarp and Chanctonbury Ring.



**Site Photograph B1.** South-easterly view from a central point within the Site, showing the enclosure with vegetation, including the tree belt to the south and about residential curtilages to the east, (to left of view). The scarp can just be glimpsed.



**Site Photograph B2.** North-westerly view from a central point within the Site, showing the hawthorn hedgerow to the northern boundary, beyond which mature oak trees rise on the far side of Rectory Lane.



**Site Photograph C.** North-easterly view from the south-western corner of the Site, showing the rising ground and various boundary trees along the curtilages to the eastern boundary.



**Site Photograph D.** Tree line atop a mound and ditch to the southern boundary.



**Context Photograph A.** Built form with half hipped rooflines, various timber cladding, knapped flint and brick and white render facades to Mousdell Close.



**Context Photograph B.** Three storey, red brick development to Meiros Way.



**Context Photograph C.** Knapped flint with red brick off Coopers Cott.



**Context Photograph D.** Varied knapped and whole flint facades to housing off Rectory Lane.



**Context Photograph E.** Pond to the west of St Peter and St Paul's Church.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### General

1.1 Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology, (Lizard) has been commissioned by Rocco Homes to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal, (LVA) for land East of Mousdell Close, Ashington, West Sussex, (NGR TQ 12501 16366), (see **Figure 1.1**).

1.2 The LVA has been undertaken by Josh Peacock, Technical Lead of Landscape Planning and Strategic Design at Lizard and a Chartered Landscape Architect with over 20 years professional experience in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

### Report Structure

1.3 The LVA presents an understanding of the Site and its context, published landscape characterisation, relevant planning policy and designations. The field survey and review then enables an analysis of the physical and experiential aspects of the landscape and visual amenity against which the Scenario can be appraised. This is further informed by a review of time depth within the landscape through a historic map regression.

1.4 The subsequent appraisal takes into account the approach which the Scheme has taken to avoid and reduce impacts, whilst introducing enhancement measures where considered viable. An overall understanding of effect is provided, supported by a tabulated assessment informed by the LVA methodology.

1.5 The structure and approach taken by Lizard enables the LVA to be used as a Strategic Design Tool, which is outcome focused.

### Potential for Cumulative Effects

1.6 The potential for cumulative effects from the adjacent mixed use strategic development allocation under Policy ASD10 and ASH 11 is considered within **Section 5.0** through reference to the extracts within **Appendix G**.

## The Site

1.7 The proposed development site, (the Site) is 2.19 hectares of former pasture land, recently ploughed, located to the south of Rectory Lane and between existing housing development to east and west, (see **Site Photographs A - I**).

1.8 The northern boundary is defined with an overgrown hawthorn hedgerow, topped to some 6m in elevation, above which a telegraph line extends between poles. There is a mature oak and willow to the centre of the northern boundary. The southern boundary is defined by a dispersed oak tree line and a drainage ditch. The area to the south has also been proposed for housing development, currently open for consultation pending a decision.

1.9 The eastern and western boundaries are substantially defined by the various residential curtilages off Penn Gardens to west and Rectory Lane to east. The northern part of the western boundary extends along a hedgerow along Penn Gardens, whilst the southern part of the eastern boundary comprises the south-western edge of a former nursery site recently consented for housing development.

## Surrounds

1.10 Agricultural land extends north of Rectory Lane and offset to the west. The South Downs National Park boundary is located some 1km to the south, with the elevated scarp about Chanctonbury Hill some 3km distant to the south.

## The Scheme

1.11 Through reference to the ECE Architecture produced Site Layout, (see **Extract A**) the Scheme comprises a full planning application for erection of 74no. dwellings with associated landscaping, open space, parking and creation of new vehicular access from Rectory Lane.

## Potential for Cumulative Effects

1.12 Policy ASH10: Chanctonbury Nursery is located adjacent to the south-eastern edge of the Site off Rectory Lane. This allocated site was consented under Planning Application reference: DC/22/0372, for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of 74 dwellings with associated parking and landscaping (see relevant extract within **Appendix G**).

1.13 Policy ASH11: Land West of Ashington School, which is located off the southern edge of the Site and generally west of Ashington, identifies that:

*'Land west of Ashington School (approximately 18.5 hectares as identified on the Policies Map and in Figure 8.2) is allocated for approximately 150 dwellings and development proposals will be supported subject to the following criteria: [...]*

*Housing and Design: [...] iv. the design of the dwellings reflects the character of the surrounding area. [...]*

*Layout: [...] v. built development is confined to the central part of the site as shown on Figure 8.2; vi. open space in the west and south of the site is available for public access, accompanied by a suitable management plan to be agreed by the local planning authority. [...]*

*Other principles: xxiv. mature trees are retained on the site; xxv. enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park, including through the provision of an appropriate landscape buffer in line with the requirements of Policy ASH5 (Landscaping and Countryside Access); [...] (ibid, p42-43)*

1.14 This allocated site was submitted under Planning Application reference: DC/23/0406, for the demolition of existing buildings and erection of 152 dwellings, all-weather sport pitch, sports pavilion and allotments; with associated access, landscaping, open space and infrastructure (amended plans including reduced housing numbers and modified access off Church Lane), (see relevant extract within **Appendix G**). The application remains open for consultation, which commenced on the 22 April 2025. Through reference to the masterplan within Appendix G the tree belt to the southern edge of the Site would be maintained within the layout.



Extract A. ECE Architecture - Proposed Site Layout

## 2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

### General

2.1 The following relevant policy has been taken into account by the assessment:

- *National Planning Policy Framework, (December 2024);*
- *Horsham District Planning Framework, (November 2015);*
- *Draft Horsham District Local Plan 2019-2036, (March 2020);*
- *Ashington Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2031, (March 2021).*

2.2 The Statutory development plan for the Site area includes the relevant policies from the Horsham District Planning Framework, (2015) supported by the Ashington Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2031, (March 2021). The Draft Horsham District Local Plan 2019-2036, (March 2020) is at a very early consultation stage.

2.3 The key planning policies considered relevant to the Scheme's landscape and visual considerations are summarised below:

#### National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

2.4 The Government's current planning policies on land use planning in England are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, (NPPF).

2.5 Regarding achieving well-designed places, Paragraph 131 within Chapter 12 identifies that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.

2.6 Paragraph 135 identifies that planning decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Albeit, not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change, (such as increased densities).

2.7 Regarding the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, Paragraph 187 within Chapter 15 identifies that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

#### Horsham District Planning Framework (2015)

2.8 Strategic Policy 25: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character, states that:

*'The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development'. Development proposals will be supported, which:*

- *1. Protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation;*
- *2. Maintain and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network and addresses any identified deficiencies in the District;*
- *3. Maintains and enhances the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and species, and ensures no net loss of wider biodiversity and provides net gains in biodiversity where possible;*
- *4. Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park.'*

2.9 Strategic Policy 26: Countryside Protection, states that:

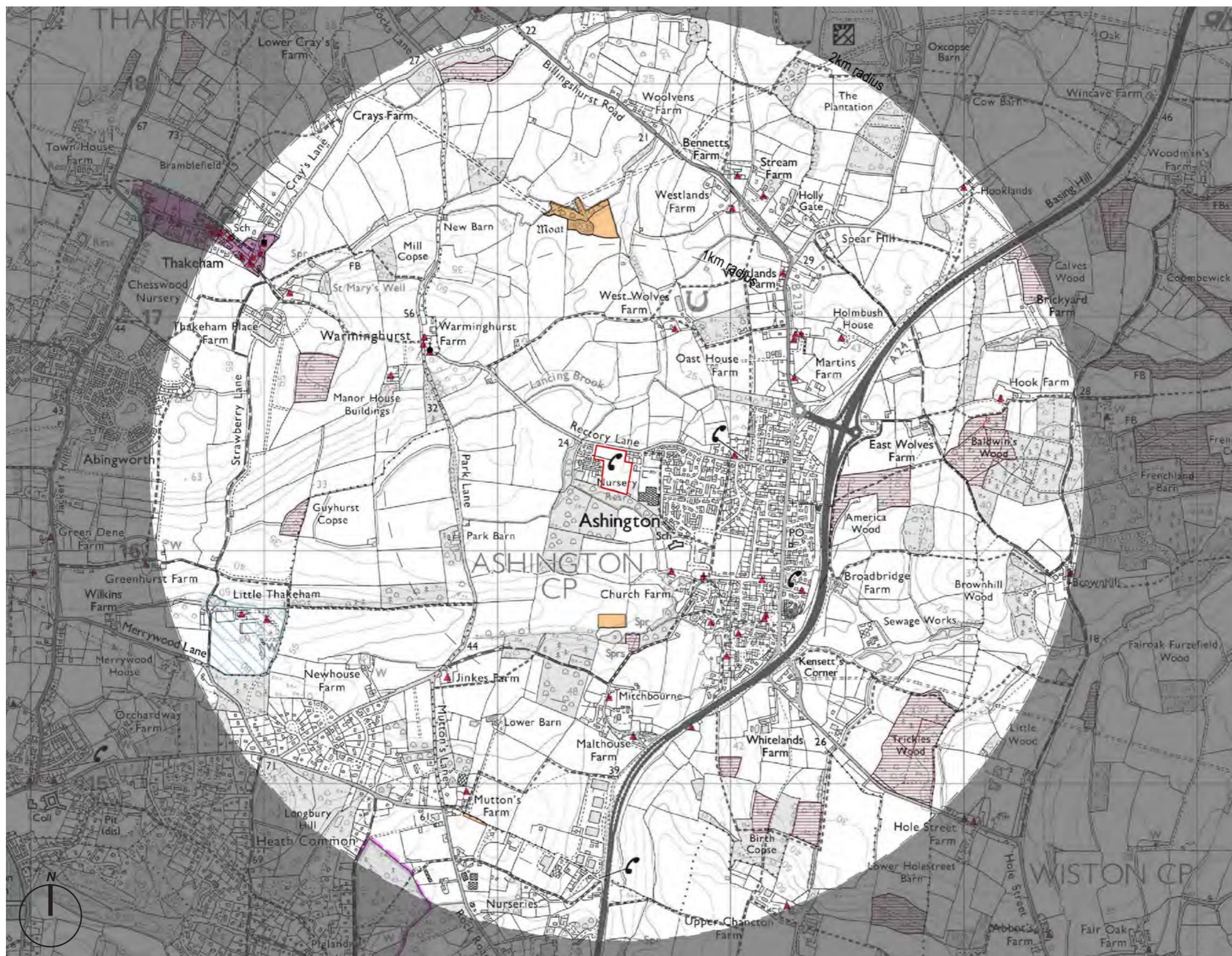
*'Outside built-up area boundaries, the rural character and undeveloped nature of the countryside will be protected against inappropriate development. [...] Additionally, 'proposals must be of a scale appropriate to its countryside character and location.*

*Development will be considered acceptable where it does not lead, either individually or cumulatively, to a significant increase in the overall level of activity in the countryside, and protects, and/or conserves, and/or enhances, the key features and characteristics of the landscape character area in which it is located, including;*

- *1. The development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, tranquillity and sensitivity to change;*
- *2. The pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies and other features; and*
- *3. The landform of the area.'*

2.10 Strategic Policy 33: Development Principles, states that: *'In order to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment developments shall be required to:*

- *[...] 3. Ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development is of a high standard of design and layout and where relevant relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views;*
- *4. Are locally distinctive in character, respect the character of the surrounding area (including its overall setting, townscape features, views and green corridors) and, where available and applicable, take account of the recommendations/policies of the relevant Design Statements and Character Assessments;*
- *5. Use high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping; and includes the provision of street furniture and public art where appropriate;*
- *6. Presume in favour of the retention of existing important landscape and natural features, for example trees, hedges, banks and watercourses. Development must relate sympathetically to the local landscape and justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development;*
- *7. Ensure buildings and spaces are orientated to gain maximum benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy, unless this conflicts with the character of the surrounding townscape, landscape or topography where it is of good quality.'*



### Legend

- Development Site Boundary
- Designations
- South Downs National Park
- Scheduled Monument
- Listed Buildings
- Conservation Area
- Ancient Woodland

Figure 2.1. Planning Designations

**Draft Horsham District Local Plan 2019-2036, (March 2020)**

2.11 The Draft Horsham District Local Plan 2019-2036, (March 2020) is at a very early consultation stage and of very limited weight as a result. The key policy numbers are considered to be: Strategic Policy 27: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character; Strategic Policy 28: Countryside Protection.

**Ashington Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2031, (March 2021)**

2.12 The Ashington Neighbourhood Plan was formally made on 23 June 2021.

2.13 Policy ASH5: Landscaping and Countryside Access, identifies that:

*'A. Development which abuts open countryside must not create a hard edge and should provide an appropriate landscape buffer. This could include the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), formal open space or play space;*

*'B. Proposals must demonstrate how the visual impact of buildings on the site has been minimised through their layout, heights and landscaping. In particular, the retention and planting of trees, hedges and vegetation is encouraged to soften the impact to development, retain and improve the street scene, keep the rural village feel of Ashington and, where possible, enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park. Proposals must demonstrate how the development is sympathetic to the landscape setting and the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; [...]' (ibid, p26)*

**Landscape Planning Designations**

2.14 Landscape planning designations within the Study Area are described below and their location shown on **Figure 2.1**, where appropriate.

**National Park**

2.15 National Parks are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, amended in the Environment Act 1995. The purpose of National Parks is to conserve and enhance landscapes within the countryside whilst promoting public enjoyment of them and having regard for the social and economic well being of those living within them.

2.16 The South Downs National Park boundary is located some 1km to the south, with the elevated scarp about Chanctonbury Hill some 3km to the south. The copse of trees at Chanctonbury Ring are visible from within a central part of the Site off the northern boundary. The Special Qualities (SQ) of the South Downs National Park include: SQ1 - *'Diverse, inspirational landscapes and breathtaking views'*.

**Tree Preservation Orders**

2.17 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) are made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012 by a local planning authority to protect trees which bring significant amenity benefit to the local area.

2.18 Through reference to the Horsham District Tree Preservation Order Mapping there are no TPOs within or adjacent to the Site. However, a block of trees are protected from some 130m east of the Site extending eastwards into Ashington.

**Ancient Woodland**

2.19 Ancient Woodland is recognised as a material consideration in the planning process by the National Planning Policy Framework, but do not have statutory protection.

2.20 There are patches of Ancient Woodland within the Study Area, with the closest some 650m south of the Site.

**Cultural Heritage Designations**

2.21 Scheduled Monuments have statutory protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as amended. Listed buildings and Conservation Areas have statutory protection under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

**Scheduled Monuments**

2.22 A Moated site and associated earthworks located some 1km north of the Site is scheduled, as is below-ground archaeological remains associated with a Roman building some 560m south of the Site.

**Listed Buildings**

2.23 There are a number of Listed Buildings within the Study Area, from some 600m offset of the Site, within Ashington to the south-east. The Grade I Listed C13 Church of the Holy Sepulchre is located on elevated ground at Warminghurst some 900m north-west of the Site.

**Conservation Areas**

2.24 The Thakeham Conservation Area is located some 2km to the north-west.

### 3.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS - PUBLISHED EVIDENCE

- *National Character Areas (Natural England, June 2022);*
- *Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (WSCC, November 2003);*
- *Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (CBA, October 2003);*
- *Horsham District Landscape Capacity Assessment (HDC, May 2021).*

#### **National Character Areas (Natural England, June 2022)**

3.1 England's 159 National Character Areas (NCAs) represent areas of distinct and recognisable character at the national scale. Their boundaries are defined by natural boundaries within the landscape, not county or district boundaries.

3.2 The Study Area is situated within the Low Weald National Character Area, (NCA 121) which is described as: '[...] a broad, low-lying clay vale which largely wraps around the northern, western and southern edges of the High Weald. It is predominantly agricultural, supporting mainly pastoral farming owing to heavy clay soils, with horticulture and some arable on lighter soils in the east, and has many densely wooded areas with a high proportion of ancient woodland. [...].'

3.3 Landscape attributes, (and their justification) are identified including:

- 'An intricate mix of woodlands including extensive broadleaved oak over hazel or hornbeam coppice, shaws, small field copses and tree groups, and lines of riparian trees along watercourses. (Justification: The Low Weald's woodlands, shaws and hedgerows with standard trees combine to create a densely wooded feel, giving the area its character and linking it with neighbouring High Weald);
- An abundance of ponds and small stream valleys. (Justification: A network of small, narrow and commonly sunken streams cut into the heavy clays, often lined with vegetation, adds to the wet and woody character);

#### **Landscape Character Assessment of West Sussex (WSCC, November, 2003)**

3.4 The 2003 Study identified 42 landscape character areas of West Sussex with subsequent land management guidelines for each character area. The Study Area is located within the Low Weald Landscape Character Type (LCT).

3.5 Through reference to **Figure 3.1**, the Site is situated within the Southern Low Weald, (LCA LW5) with the Wiston Low Weald (LCA LW7) and Storrington Woods and Heaths (LCA WG7) respectively offset to east and south within the Study Area.

3.6 The overall character description for LCA LW5 is provided as follows: *'It is a relatively low-lying, gently undulating clay landscape, drained by shallow stream valleys. Occasional outcrops of sandstone create low ridges. An intricate pattern of small pastures, enclosed by hedgerows and shaws, contrasts in places with a broader, open, homogenous arable landscape with some large fields. Suburban elements and associated roads dominate larger settlements. Immediately outside the main settlements, landscape is rural and peaceful.'*

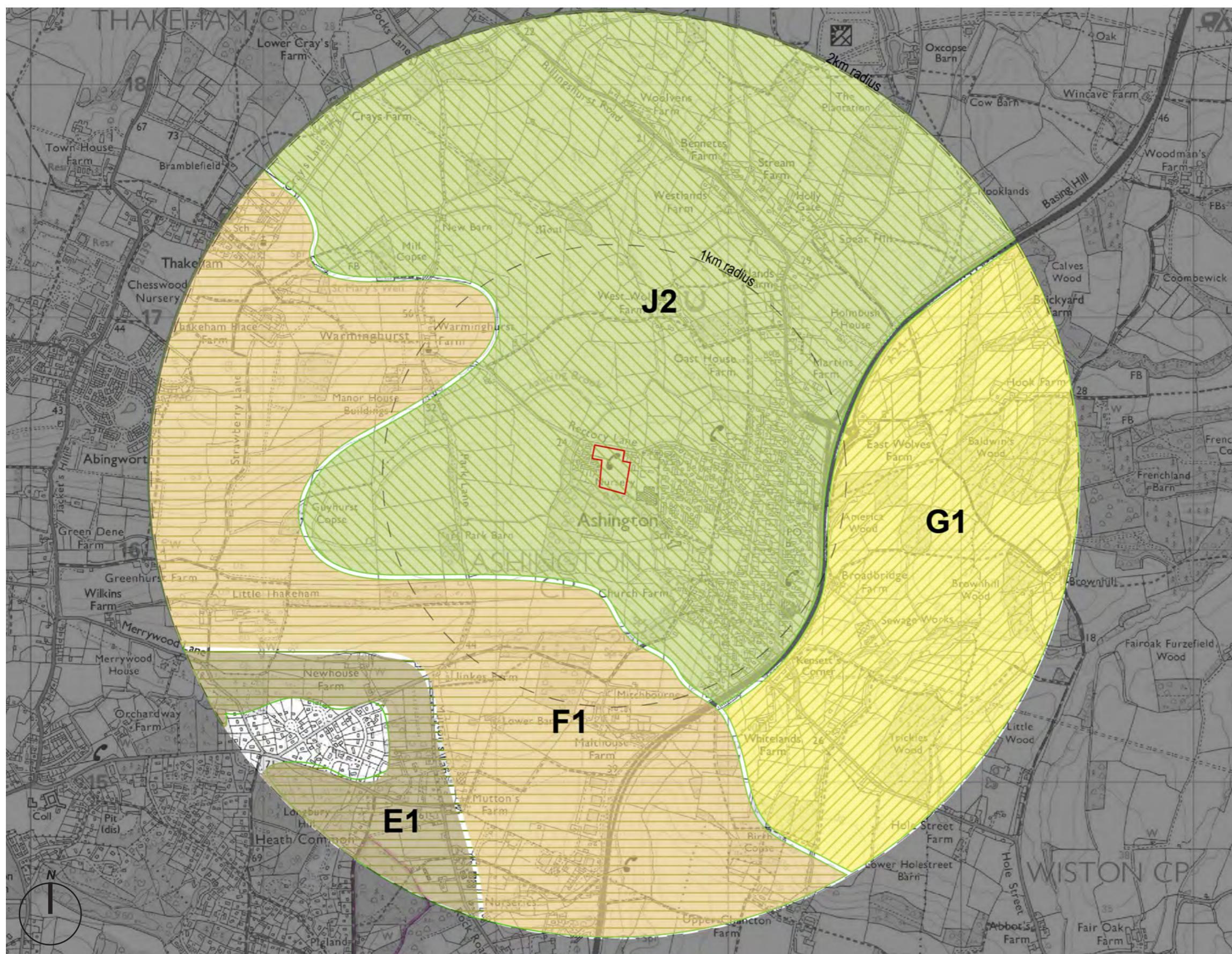
3.7 Key characteristics identified for LCA LW5 comprise:

- 'Mostly low-lying, flat to gently undulating landscape;
- Occasional low wooded ridges in the east of the area;
- Intricate patterns of small pastures and large arable fields;
- Where field sizes have been enlarged by removal of hedgerows, remnants of irregular ancient field patterns are still visible;
- Variable hedgerow network, fragmented and depleted in places;
- Old hedgerow alignments are indicated by isolated oak trees standing in broken lines;

3.8 Key Landscape and Visual Sensitivities for LCA LW5 are identified including: *'Removal of hedgerows; Loss of individual specimen trees in hedgerows and fields; Unsympathetic riverside development or drainage of water meadows; Intrusion of urban development around the major settlement of Billingshurst, and extensions to smaller settlements such as Southwater and Coolham; Road improvements.'*

3.9 Land Management Guidelines for LCA LW5 are identified including:

- 'Conserve and manage existing tree and woodland pattern, especially coppice and streamside woodlands and ponds, copses, tree lines and mature hedgerow trees;
- Promote the replacement of hedgerow trees by replanting or selection of regenerated trees to perpetuate features;
- Maintain and strengthen existing hedgerows and shaws. Conserve hedgerows by careful management and infill planting;
- [...] Ensure any new development is well integrated into the wider landscape. Use new woodland, shaw and hedgerow planting as appropriate. Encourage new tree planting within settlements where appropriate.'



### Legend

Development Site Boundary

#### Horsham District Landscape Character Areas (CBA, October 2003)

**J2** Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands (LCA J2)

**G1** Ashurst & Wiston Wooded Farmlands (LCA G1)

**F1** Pulborough, Chiltington & Thakeham Farmlands (LCA F1)

**E1** Parham & Storrington Wooded Farmlands & Heaths (LCA E1)

#### Landscape Character Areas of West Sussex (WSCC, 2003)

**LW5** Southern Low Weald (LCA LW5)

**LW7** Wiston Low Weald (LCA LW7)

**WG7** Storrington Woods and Heaths (LCA WG7)

**Figure 3.1.** Horsham District Landscape Character Areas (CBA, 2003 / WSCC, 2003)

**Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment (CBA, October 2003)**

3.10 The 2003 CBA Study identified 16 District Landscape Character Types (LCT), with subsequent Landscape Character Areas (LCA) defined at a scale of 1:25000. Through reference to **Figure 3.1**, the Site is situated within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2) with the Ashurst & Wiston Wooded Farmlands (LCA G1) and Pulborough, Chiltington & Thakeham Farmlands (LCA F1) respectively offset to east and south within the Study Area. A small part of the Parham & Storrington Wooded Farmlands & Heaths (LCA E1) extends into the south-western edge of the Study Area.

[Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, \(LCA J2\)](#)

3.11 Overall character is described as follows:

*'This large character area has a low lying and relatively flat landscape becoming more gently undulating towards the southern and northern boundaries. Scattered small woods and copses, shaws and hedgerows enclose an intricate pattern of small pastures, although some central and western parts of the area are dominated by larger arable fields where hedgerows have been lost. Individual specimen oak trees are a feature throughout the area. The area has a predominantly rural character except for some suburban influences extending into the countryside near Ashington and around Coolham.' (Ibid, p108)*

3.12 Key characteristics identified by CBA comprising LCA J2 comprise:

- *'Flat to gently undulating landscape drained by small tributary streams of the Adur and Arun;*
- *Many scattered woods and copses;*
- *Mostly small scale patterns of fields with a strong sense of enclosure, larger arable fields in parts;*
- *Mostly strong network of hedgerows/shaws with mature oak standards although there has been some loss of these trees;*
- *Narrow lanes;*
- *Field ponds;*
- *Small historic farms and some small scale ribbon development along lanes;*
- *Local mix of traditional building materials, including some sandstone and Horsham stone roofing, brick and tile, and weatherboarding.'* (Ibid, p107)

3.13 Landscape condition for LCA J2 is described as declining. Overall sensitivity to change is described as moderate due to moderate intervisibility and moderate intrinsic landscape qualities. Planning and Landscape Management Guidelines are identified including:

- *Conserve the mostly rural character of the area;*
- *Ensure any appropriate new development responds to the historic settlement pattern and local design and materials. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape by setting it within the existing pattern of small native woodlands, hedgerows and shaws;*
- *Encourage landscape improvements along the A24;*
- *Encourage new tree planting in Ashington where appropriate;*
- *Conserve existing woodlands, shaws and mature hedgerow trees;*
- *Restore hedgerows, especially in areas of substantial depletion, e.g. south of Coolham;*
- *Encourage planting of small woods, respecting existing field patterns;*
- *Restore hedgerows;*
- *Promote the replacement of hedgerow trees by replanting, or by natural regeneration;*
- *Manage field ponds as wildlife and landscape features;*
- *Conserve and manage streamside vegetation;*
- *Establish grassland margins to streams in areas of arable farmland.'*

**Horsham District Landscape Capacity Assessment (HDC, April 2014)**

3.14 The 2014 Study undertook a landscape characterisation to identify Horsham District Landscape Study Areas (LSA) about settlements, including Ashington.

3.15 The 2014 study LSA are considered to have precedence over the LCA provided in the 2003 study, due to the larger scale identification of areas within the 2014 study. The 2014 study states that: *'it was considered necessary to provide a finer grain of assessment of landscape capacity than the areas identified [in the 2003 study]. Without this greater level of detail it was considered that there was a risk that important local variations in landscape sensitivity and capacity would be missed.'*

3.16 The 2014 study identifies Combined Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Value for each LSA to arrive at an overall landscape Capacity rating. The respective sensitivity and capacity considerations are defined specifically for differing types and scale of development. Small scale development is defined as up to 100 dwellings.

3.17 The 2014 Study identifies the area within which the Site is located as LSA AS2. Overall Landscape Capacity for Small Scale Housing is identified as 'Low/Moderate'. This capacity type is generically described as follows: *'...The area only has potential to be able to accommodate development in limited locations without unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts or compromising the values attached to it, taking account of any appropriate mitigation'.*

3.18 The reasoning for this capacity is provided as follows:

*'Many of the landscape features and qualities of the area are sensitive to housing development. The small scale hedgerowed field pattern and the attractive rural qualities of Rectory Lane are key factors that mean there is only very limited potential, even for small scale development, and unacceptable impacts on these landscape features and qualities could easily arise. It would also be essential to ensure that there is not visual intrusion into unspoilt rural countryside to the north of Rectory Lane.' (Ibid, p97)*

3.19 Landscape Character Sensitivity is described as follows:

- *'A low ridge runs through the centre of the area;*
- *There is a small scale field pattern of regular and irregular shaped fields;*
- *Pasture fields are bounded by hedgerows, with frequent hedgerow trees and some modern small scale housing development;*
- *Large nursery glasshouse building and car park, and small scale housing development have a localised urbanising influence, but the area retains a predominantly rural character;*
- *Rectory lane on the northern boundary is a narrow, winding and attractive hedgerowed country lane'.*



### Legend



Development Site Boundary

**Figure 3.2. Sussex Historic Landscape Character Types (2010)**

3.20 Landscape Value is described as follows:

- 'Moderate tranquillity due to lack of major roads nearby, but the area lacks strong semi natural qualities;
- Limited amenity value as only one footpath skirts the edge of the area;
- Ecological interest of thick well treed species rich hedgerows.'

3.21 Visual Sensitivity is described as follows: 'Existing hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees would help to some extent to provide some screening of new small scale housing development. Nonetheless there is a risk of development being more visually prominent on the low ridgeline as seen from the wider landscape.'

3.22 The 2014 Study identifies the area offset to the south as LSA AS1, with Overall Landscape Capacity for Small Scale Housing identified as 'Low/No'. The reasoning for this capacity within LSA AS1 is provided as follows:

*'Some of the landscape features and qualities in this area are sensitive to housing development. The area also has a high visual sensitivity, which is the primary factor that there is low/no capacity to absorb small scale housing development. There is a risk that any development around the edge of the settlement in this area would create the impression of incursion into open countryside.' (Ibid, p96)*

***Horsham District Landscape Capacity Assessment (HDC, May 2021)***

3.23 The 2021 Study undertook a landscape characterisation to update the earlier 2014 capacity decisions within Horsham District LSA about settlements, including Ashington as part of the evidence base that supports the Local Plan 2023 - 40.

3.24 The same LSA were used but renamed as Local Landscape Character Areas, (LLCA) with the same landscape and visual sensitivity, value components and Landscape Capacity descriptions identified and described, as in 2014.

3.25 For Small scale housing the following were identified - LLCA AS2: Moderate capacity, and LLCA AS1: Low-Moderate capacity, (see extract within **Appendix F**) (in place of that identified within the 2014 Study respectively of: Low/Moderate and Low/No capacity).

3.26 Moderate capacity is defined as:

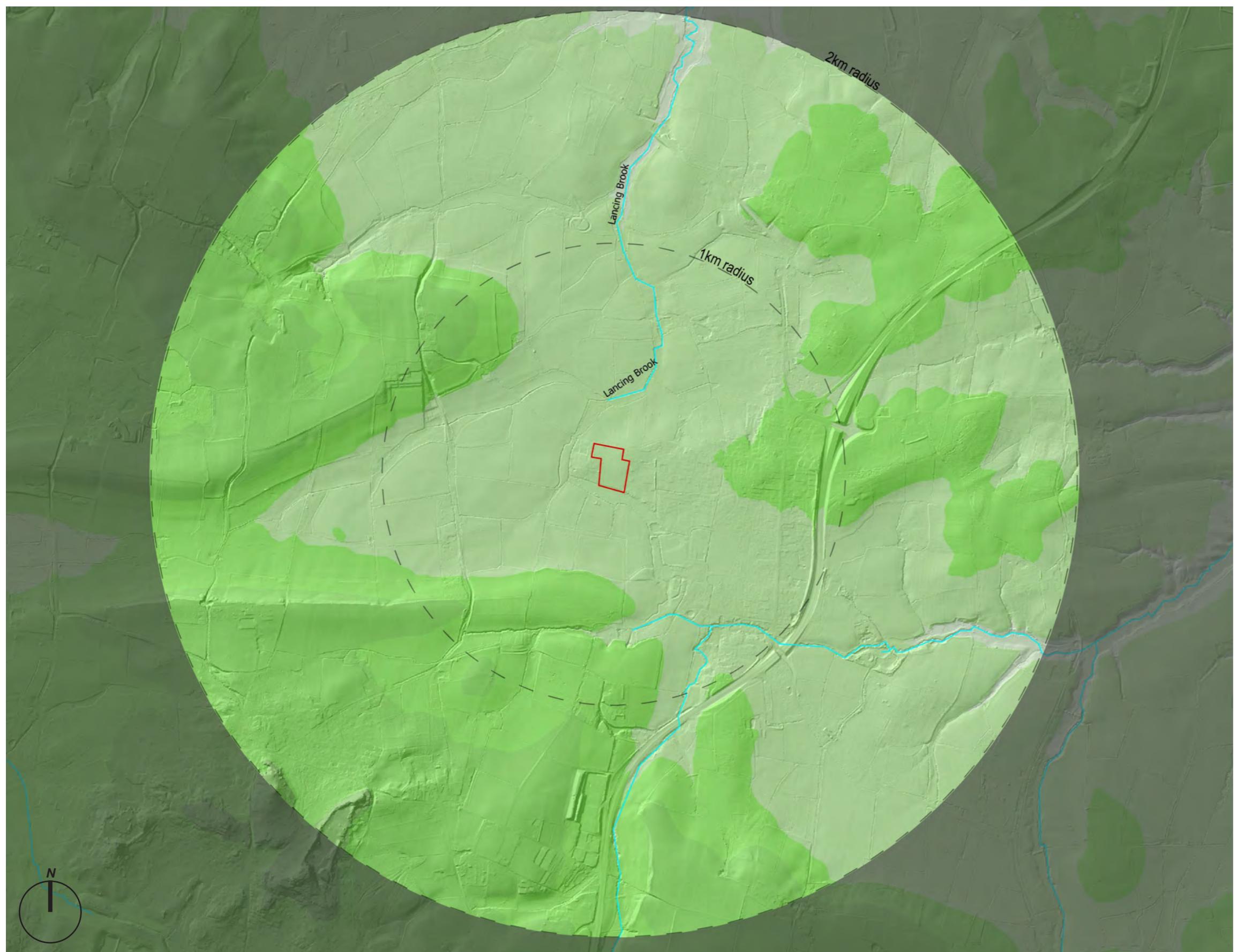
*This area has an ability to accommodate development in some parts without unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts or compromising the values attached to it, taking account of any appropriate mitigation. There is a need for each proposal to be considered on its individual merits to ensure there are no unacceptable adverse impacts.' (Ibid, p19)*

***Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation (Bannister, August 2010)***

3.27 The Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation, (2010) comprises a GIS data set together with a set of supporting reports and technical guides. The data provides a broad-brush approach to interpreting the historic time-depth of areas, which was based on a desk-based exercise with no checking in the field. Historic Landscape Character Types (HLCT) identified across the Study Area are shown within **Figure 3.2**.

3.28 This shows that the Site area falls within the Broad Historic Landscape Type of: '*Fieldscapes*' and HLC Type of: '*Formal enclosure*'. A summary description is provided of '*planned / private*'. This HLC is the main type within the Study Area, varying only to some 1km to the north and west, where '*Informal Fieldscapes*' extend, with a belt of this type extending outside of the southern boundary of the Site about to the north-west.

3.29 To the east and west of the Site area areas historically characterised as settlement expansion, resulting from suburbs and general settlement expansion. Offset to the south-west beyond the belt of informal fieldscape is the historic core of the settlement.



### Legend

- Development Site Boundary
- Watercourse, (Source: OS Open Rivers)
- Level above Ordnance Datum, (aOD)
  - 50-55m aOD
  - 35-50m aOD
  - 20-35m aOD
  - 15-20m aOD

Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) is an airborne mapping technique, which uses a laser to measure the distance between the aircraft and the ground. Up to 100,000 measurements per second are made of the ground, allowing highly detailed terrain models to be generated.

The content of this LiDAR plan is sourced from the Environment Agency as digital elevation data supplied as a Digital Terrain Model to 1m, (2024) through QGIS.

**Figure 4.1. Landform**

## 4.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS - FIELD SURVEY AND REVIEW

### Landscape Character

4.1 The landscape around the village of Ashington lies within the County level, Southern Low Weald LCA and District level, Ashurst and Wiston Wooded Farmlands LCA. The landscape of this area is very rural, and is characterised by gently undulating wooded farmland with fields separated by a network of hedgerows.

### Landform, Soils and Hydrology

4.2 Through reference to **Figure 4.1**, landform across the Study Area rises from about the upper catchment of the River Adur, with the Lancing Brook arising offset to the north and an unnamed tributary watercourse offset to the south-east. Landform rises from some 15m aOD to 35m aOD, which occur under 1km to the north-west, south-west and east, with the westerly landform then rising to some 50-55m aOD.

4.3 Landform within the Site rises from the informal field landscape which borders to the south of the Site at 27m aOD to some 29m aOD west of the centre of the Site and 31m aOD to the east of the centre of the Site and north-eastern corner. Landform then falls away along the northern edge of the Site to some 27m aOD to the north-western corner.

4.4 Soil type across the Study Area is understood through reference to the Soilscapes Map, (produced by Cranfield University, with support from Defra) to comprise: '*Slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils*'. A general indication of the plant communities and habitats with which this soil type is associated with include: '*Seasonally wet pastures and woodlands*'. Through reference to the Provisional Agricultural Land Classification, the land within the Site and surrounds is provisionally classified as Grade 4.

4.5 A series of springs arise from south-west of Ashington collecting within a ponded area west of St Peter and St Paul's Church and draining towards an offset south of the Site, where this joins with others off to the west before draining north towards the Lancing Brook.

### Field Pattern

4.6 Through reference to the Ordnance Survey Maps provided within **Appendix A**, the boundaries of the field to north and south are defined with time depth to at least 1879, with that to the north defined by the alignment of Rectory Lane and to the south by the boundary of the belt historically characterised as an informal field, but now well tree'd. The eastern and western boundaries are defined by the garden curtilages of suburban housing in place by 1952, with that to the west off Penn Gardens and that to the north off Rectory Lane and associated with the former Chanctonbury Nursery. The resulting field shape has been modified from the original field shape which formerly extended to west, with the north-western corner encroached upon. The residential use to east and west, wide tree belt to the south and hedgerow and tree lined Rectory Lane to the north separate the Site from the surrounding field pattern and rural character offset to the north, west and south.

### Landscape Receptors

4.7 Existing character assessments are reviewed and interpreted for the Site. This review informs the identification of key characteristics associated with the character area that are most relevant to an appraisal of the proposal, as recommended within GLVIA3, (p79, Para 5.15). In identifying components reference is made to the LI Technical Guidance Note 02-21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations, where relevant.

4.8 The application Site is not a valued landscape in relation to Paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework as informed by LI Technical Guidance Note 02-21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations.

4.9 The Horsham District Landscape Capacity Assessment (HDC, May 2021) and Capacity descriptions identified and described within 2014 are subject to a shifting baseline, with the suggested allocation of a Moderate capacity for the relevant area indicative of an ability to: '*accommodate development in some parts without unacceptable adverse landscape and visual impacts or compromising the values attached to it, taking account of any appropriate mitigation.*'

4.10 The existing enclosure of the Site with residential development to east and west, soon to be reinforced with the consented surrounding land to the east through Policy ASH10: Chanctonbury Nursery and that offset to the south through Policy ASH11: Land West of Ashington School, results in a location with as much in keeping with the residential areas surrounding as the field pattern and rural character offset to the north and west.

4.11 The description of relevant components of landscape enables an understanding of their value, including what the contribution of the Site is to that. Within the subsequent appraisal this enables a consideration of the susceptibility of these receptors against the type and magnitude of change proposed. Components, which may include elements, features and areas where appropriate are defined to provide an understanding of the landscape both within the site and placed within a wider context where relevant, as follows:

#### Landscape Areas, Features and Aspects within the Site

- Landform - *The contribution of the rising landform across the Site to a gently undulating landscape, rising to a localised minor ridge to the north along Rectory Lane;*
- Naturalistic qualities - Field - *The local contribution of the modified field to rural character;*
- Naturalistic qualities - Vegetation - *The local contribution of the tree line to the southern boundary, forming the edge of a tree belt to a mostly strong network of hedgerows/shaws with mature oak standards within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003);*
- Naturalistic qualities - Vegetation - *The local contribution of the overgrown hawthorn hedgerow to the northern boundary to a mostly strong network of hedgerows/shaws within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003), albeit with no mature oak standards;*
- Naturalistic qualities - Country Lane - *The local contribution to rural character from the hedgerowed country lane of Rectory Lane, forming part of that defined within the Landscape Character Sensitivity for LLCA AS2, (HDC, 2021) as a narrow, winding and attractive hedgerowed country lane;*



### Legend

- Development Site Boundary
- X Site Location - From which viewshed derived at a height of 8m above Site level of 30m aOD.
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility from high ground within the Site. (Produced through Google Earth Viewshed Tool).

**Figure 4.2. Zone of Theoretical Visibility**



- Perceptual aspects - Sense of Place - Contribution to sense of place within the Site from a glimpsed long distance view of the sculptural landform of the South Downs some 4.5km to the south-west, generically identified as characteristic within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003).

#### Landscape Character and Wider Context

- County Landscape Character - Distinctiveness - The flat to gently undulating landscape, with an intricate patterns of small pastures and large arable fields, variable hedgerow network with many hedgerow oak trees, some stag-headed, occasional long views to the South Downs and winding lanes, some narrow, some with wide verges, which link scattered hamlets and farms, characterised at the County level as the Southern Low Weald LCA, (LCA LW5, WSCC 2003);
- District Landscape Character - Distinctiveness - The flat to gently undulating landscape, with mostly small scale patterns of fields with a strong sense of enclosure, larger arable fields in parts; Mostly strong network of hedgerows/shaws with mature oak standards; Field ponds drained by small tributary streams, many scattered woods and copses; and small historic farms and some small scale ribbon development along lanes characterised at the District level as the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003);
- Field pattern - The local contribution of the modified field to the small scale patterns of fields with a strong sense of enclosure within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003);
- Settlement Pattern - The local contribution of the field to rural character and setting to the existing built form to east and west of the Site resulting from suburbs and general settlement expansion, aligned square to the falling landform, off the local low ridge about Rectory Lane;
- Built Form and Character - The local mix of traditional building materials, including some sandstone and Horsham stone roofing, brick and tile, and weatherboarding noted within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003).

#### **Visual Amenity**

4.12 Viewpoint locations referred to below are shown through reference to **Figure 4.3**. Viewpoint Photographs are provided within **Appendix B**. Receptors are identified as the persons experiencing the view, their occupation and any values associated with the view.

**Nature of Visual Receptors**

4.13 For west bound vehicular users and users of the roadside pavement along Rectory Lane offset east off the north-eastern corner of the Site, visual amenity is represented by Viewpoint No. 01 from where the road curves about from the north-east and otherwise illustrated at the north-eastern corner of the Site where there is a field gate by **Viewpoint No. 02**.

4.14 East bound users along the northern edge of the Site are represented from offset east of the junction with Penn Gardens by **Viewpoint No. 03**. Those further offset to the west are respectively variously represented from off the north-western corner of the Site at the junction with Penn Gardens, along the northern edge of gardens of houses off Mousdell Close and then before visibility is lost as the road curves about further to the west by **Viewpoints No. 04, 05 and 06**.

4.15 Residents and their visitors on Mousdell Close are represented from the western end of Mousdell Close by **Viewpoint No. 07**, whilst those on Penn Gardens are represented from a central point on the road by **Viewpoint No. 08**.

4.16 Offset to the east, beyond an intervening consented development site, recreational users of Public Footpath 2607/1, are represented from a southerly point where visibility towards part of the eastern Site boundary can be gained, by **Viewpoint No. 09**.

4.17 At long distance atop the South Downs scarp, some 4.6km to the south-east, recreational users enjoying the panoramic view from Public Bridleway No. 2705 atop Chanctonbury Hill, are specifically illustrated by **Viewpoint No. 10**.

4.18 These users are considered to be moderately susceptible to the nature of the proposed type of change, primarily associated with the natural character of the surrounding hedgerow and trees, with glimpses of fields about. But this is limited by the presence of the existing built form and access roads, which introduce a more suburban character to the appearance of the area. Recreational users atop the scarp with scenic views have low susceptibility to the nature of development proposed, due to the small scale at long distance.

**Zone of Visual Influence**

4.19 The Zones of Visual Influence, (ZVI) for the Site was derived from a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) (see **Figure 4.2**) determined as part of the field appraisal and desktop analysis of Ordnance Survey mapping, through reference to the Viewpoint photographs.

4.20 The ZVI is indicative of the area from which built development on the Site is likely to be visible from the public realm, taking account of landform, built form, vegetation and distance.

4.21 Respective ZVI thresholds are described within the key for **Figure 4.3**, as follows:

- *The zone defined in orange represents areas of road, pavement or path from which visibility / filtered visibility into the Site through intervening vegetation can be gained, (particularly when out of leaf);*
- *The zone defined in yellow represents areas of road or pavement from which visibility of part of the area above the Site is possible.*

4.22 Visibility towards the Site area is substantially limited to the hedgerow, viewed along Rectory Lane, through which there is filtered visibility into the Site area including through the existing field gate to the north-eastern corner of the Site.

**Legend**

Development Site Boundary

**Designations**

ASH11 - Allocated Land - Land West of Ashington School

ASH10 - Chanctonbury Nursery

Public Footpath

**Landscape Analysis**

Localised minor ridge to the north along Rectory Lane;

Reinforce the mature native hedge along Rectory Lane, with oak trees planted alongside to reinforce the rural character of the Lane, and reinforce boundaries with mixed species hedgerows more generally;

Maintain a buffer about the lower lying part of Site adjacent to the woodland belt beyond;

Sense of place from the view towards the South Downs scarp offset some 4.5km to the south, punctuated by the tree copse at Chanctonbury Ring to the south-east, (see **Site Photograph A**);

Built form would be aligned square to the falling landform, so consistent in alignment with that of existing built form to east and west, resulting in a cohesive association with surrounding settlement pattern.

**Figure 5.1.** Landscape Analysis and Approach - Schematic Diagram

## 5.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

### General

5.1 This section appraises the landscape and visual impacts which would result from the Scheme described in **Section 1.0**.

5.2 The appraisal considers the likely effects using the criteria provided within **Appendix C**, taking-into-account the value of the receptor and susceptibility to the magnitude of impact anticipated. The appraisal is undertaken descriptively to maintain the narrative and present the logic as clearly as possible, supported by a tabulated assessment of effect for landscape character within **Table 5.1**, and visual amenity within **Table 5.2**.

5.3 The potential for cumulative effects from the surrounding consented and allocated housing areas, as defined within **Section 1.0** is considered within this section.

### Landscape Approach

5.4 The following measures present the contextual analysis and distinctive approach taken as part of the Scheme, defined through reference to **Figure 5.1**. This section highlights primary measures undertaken to avoid and reduce potential adverse effects from the Scheme and makes recommendations to both further mitigate and enhance the approach taken, where viable. The residual effects from both time dependent primary mitigation, and secondary mitigation (including enhancement measures) are considered within the appraisal of landscape and visual effects, as applicable.

#### Primary Mitigation and Enhancement Measures:

- Avoid - A buffer about the lower lying part of Site adjacent to the woodland belt beyond would be maintained for surface water attenuation and to preserve the woodland belt;
- Reduce - The hedgerow with dispersed trees to the northern boundary would be maintained, with impact for the access road and visibility splay limited;
- Reduce - Built form would be aligned square to the falling landform, so consistent in alignment with that of existing built form to east and west, resulting in a cohesive association with surrounding settlement pattern;

### Secondary Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

#### recommended by Lizard:

- **Reduce / Enhance** - Reinforce the mature native hedgerow along Rectory Lane, with oak trees planted alongside to reinforce the rural character of the Lane, and reinforce boundaries with mixed species hedgerows more generally.

### Landscape Character Appraisal

5.5 The landscape around the village of Ashington lies within the County level, Southern Low Weald LCA and District level, Ashurst and Wiston Wooded Farmlands LCA. The landscape of this area is very rural, and is characterised by gently undulating wooded farmland with fields separated by a network of hedgerows.

5.6 The landform within the Site contributes to the surrounding gently undulating landscape, rising to a localised minor ridge to the north along Rectory Lane. There is a local contribution from the field to the small scale patterns of fields with a strong sense of enclosure within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003).

5.7 The proposed housing development would work with the landform, with built form aligned square to this, so consistent in alignment with that of existing built form to east and west. This would result in a cohesive association with surrounding settlement pattern. This would be reinforced with the delivery of the consented residential development to the east.

5.8 A buffer about the lower lying part of Site adjacent to the woodland belt beyond would be maintained for surface water attenuation and to preserve the woodland belt. This would limit the impact from the anticipated land forming for roads and units to a **Minor adverse effect** on landform.

5.9 This cohesive approach to landform and surrounding settlement pattern would not allow orientation of layout which might make the most of the existing sense of place contributed from the long distance view of the sculptural landform of the South Downs some 4.5km to the south-west. A **Minor adverse effect** is recorded as a result on this existing contribution.

5.10 The field has been modified from the original field shape which formerly extended to west. At a Site level, there would be a **Moderate adverse effect** to localised rural character from the replacement of the field with residential built form.

5.11 The residential use to east and west, wide tree belt to the south and hedgerow and tree lined Rectory Lane to the north separate the Site from the surrounding field pattern and rural character offset to the north, west and south. There would be a **Negligible effect** on the local contribution of the modified field to the small scale patterns of fields with a strong sense of enclosure within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003).

5.12 Regarding the naturalistic qualities contributed from vegetation, the local contribution of the overgrown hawthorn hedgerow to the northern boundary to a mostly strong network of hedgerows/shaws within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003), would be substantially maintained, with reinforcement with mixed native species and offset oak standards recommended. A **Minor adverse effect** would result from the introduction of the vehicular access road, which would reduce to a **residual short to mid term Neutral effect**, further to the enhancement resulting from the maturing of hedgerow reinforcement and oak trees.

5.13 There would be a comparable magnitude of change and effect on the local contribution to rural character from the hedgerowed country lane of Rectory Lane, forming part of that defined within the Landscape Character Sensitivity for LLCA AS2, (HDC, 2021) as a narrow, winding and attractive hedgerowed country lane.

5.14 There is a limited contribution from the modified field, the northern boundary hedgerow and sense of place from the view towards the South Downs to strength of character defined within the associated published landscape characterisations at District and County levels. The separation of the Site from surrounding field pattern and closer association with settlement pattern, results in the Site having as much in keeping with the surrounding settlement pattern and character as with rural character within the Study Area. A **Negligible effect** is recorded from the localised scale of impact for the respective character areas.

TABLE 6.1 - ASSESSMENT SUMMARY TABLE - LANDSCAPE CHARACTER COMPONENTS

RECEPTOR	ASSESSMENT				
	VALUE	SUSCEPTIBILITY	SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE	POTENTIAL EFFECTS / RESIDUAL EFFECTS
<b>LANDSCAPE AREAS, FEATURES AND ASPECTS WITHIN THE SITE</b>					
<u>Landform</u> - The contribution of the rising landform across the Site to a gently undulating landscape, rising to a localised minor ridge to the north along Rectory Lane;	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	MINOR ADVERSE
<u>Naturalistic qualities - Field</u> - The local contribution of the modified field to rural character;	LOW	HIGH	MEDIUM	HIGH	MODERATE ADVERSE
<u>'Naturalistic qualities - Vegetation</u> - The local contribution of the tree line to the southern boundary, forming the edge of a tree belt to a mostly strong network of hedgerows/shaws with mature oak standards within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003);	LOW	HIGH	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
<u>Naturalistic qualities - Vegetation</u> - The local contribution of the overgrown hawthorn hedgerow to the northern boundary to a mostly strong network of hedgerows/shaws within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003), albeit with no mature oak standards;	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	MINOR ADVERSE / NEUTRAL
<u>Naturalistic qualities - Country Lane</u> - The local contribution to rural character from the hedgerowed country lane of Rectory Lane, forming part of that defined within the Landscape Character Sensitivity for LLCA AS2, (HDC, 2021) as a narrow, winding and attractive hedgerowed country lane;	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	MINOR ADVERSE / NEUTRAL
<u>Perceptual aspects - Sense of Place</u> - Contribution to sense of place within the Site from a glimpsed long distance view of the sculptural landform of the South Downs some 4.5km to the south-west, generically identified as characteristic within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003).	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH	MINOR ADVERSE
<b>LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND WIDER CONTEXT OF THE SITE</b>					
<u>County Landscape Character</u> - Distinctiveness - The flat to gently undulating landscape, with an intricate patterns of small pastures and large arable fields, variable hedgerow network with many hedgerow oak trees, some stag-headed, occasional long views to the South Downs and winding lanes, some narrow, some with wide verges, which link scattered hamlets and farms, characterised at the County level as the Southern Low Weald, (LCA LW5, WSCC 2003);	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
<u>District Landscape Character</u> - Distinctiveness - The flat to gently undulating landscape, with mostly small scale patterns of fields with a strong sense of enclosure, larger arable fields in parts; Mostly strong network of hedgerows/shaws with mature oak standards; Field ponds drained by small tributary streams, many scattered woods and copses; and small historic farms and some small scale ribbon development along lanes characterised at the District level as the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003);	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
<u>Field pattern</u> - The local contribution of the modified field to the small scale patterns of fields with a strong sense of enclosure within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003);	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
<u>Settlement Pattern</u> - The local contribution of the field to rural character and setting to the existing built form to east and west of the Site resulting from suburbs and general settlement expansion, aligned square to the falling landform, off the local low ridge about Rectory Lane;	LOW	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	MINOR BENEFICIAL
<u>Built Form and Character</u> - The local mix of traditional building materials, including some sandstone and Horsham stone roofing, brick and tile, and weatherboarding noted within the Broadford Bridge to Ashington Farmlands, (LCA J2, CBA 2003).	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	LOW	MINOR BENEFICIAL

**Visual Amenity**

5.15 The assessment is undertaken through reference to the Viewpoint Photographs within **Appendix B** and the Zones of Visual Influence and Viewpoint Photograph Locations, provided on **Figure 4.3**.

5.16 Visibility towards the Site area is substantially limited to the hedgerow, viewed along Rectory Lane, through which there is filtered visibility into the Site area including through the existing field gate to the north-eastern corner of the Site.

5.17 For both vehicular users and users of the roadside pavement offset east and west of the Site along Rectory Lane, (see **Viewpoints No. 01, 05 and 06**) the introduction of the vehicular access and offset built form would not be perceptible with a **Negligible effect**.

5.18 Where adjacent to the Site along the northern boundary there would be glimpsed visibility through the hedgerow of built form and rooflines replacing the present field. This would result in a **short term Minor adverse effect** for visual receptors, with the magnitude greater adjacent to where the proposed access is to be located, where a **Moderate adverse effect** would locally result.

5.19 The Minor adverse effect would reduce as proposed hedgerow reinforcement and tree planting matured to a **short to mid term Negligible effect**. Where there is presently a field gate in the north-eastern corner of the Site, the gap in the hedgerow would be maintained for the adjacent residents access, with built form replacing the existing field within the view. A **Moderate adverse effect** is recorded in the assessment table for **Viewpoint No. 02**.

5.20 For residents and their visitors on Mousdell Close or Penn Gardens, respectively represented by **Viewpoint's No. 07 and 08** there would be glimpses of rooflines between existing built form and intervening vegetation, which would not be out of keeping with the suburban residential character within the view. A **Negligible effect** would result on the pleasantness of the view.

5.21 For recreational users of Public Footpath 2607/1 offset to the east beyond the intervening consented development site, (represented by **Viewpoint No. 09**) would not have visibility towards proposed development within the Site due to the intervening built form which would result.

5.22 At long distance atop the South Downs scarp, some 4.6km to the south-east, recreational users enjoying the panoramic view from Public Bridleway No. 2705 atop Chanctonbury Hill, are specifically illustrated by **Viewpoint No. 10**. Rooflines within the northern top of the Site would form part of the overall visual texture contributed by the red/brown colour of built form at Ashington, which would not be perceptible as a change to the naked eye.

**Conclusion**

5.23 There would be an overall **Minor adverse effect** on rural character within the local area, with a **Moderate adverse effect** at the Site level from the replacement of the field with residential built form. The effect would be limited by the association with settlement pattern to east and west.

5.24 Regarding strength of character defined within the associated published landscape characterisations at District and County levels, there is a limited contribution from the modified field, the northern boundary hedgerow and sense of place from the glimpsed view towards the South Downs from a part of the northern area of the Site. The separation of the Site from surrounding field pattern and closer association with settlement pattern, results in the Site having as much in keeping with the surrounding settlement pattern and character as with rural character within the Study Area. A **Negligible effect** is recorded from the localised scale of impact upon the County level, Southern Low Weald LCA and District level, Ashurst and Wiston Wooded Farmlands LCA.

TABLE 6.2 - ASSESSMENT SUMMARY TABLE - VISUAL AMENITY

RECEPTOR	ASSESSMENT				
	VALUE	SUSCEPTIBILITY	SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE	POTENTIAL EFFECTS / RESIDUAL EFFECTS
<b>VISUAL AMENITY</b>					
West bound vehicular users and local residential users of the roadside pavement along Rectory Lane offset east off the north-eastern corner of the Site are represented from where the road curves about from the north-east by <b>Viewpoint No. 01</b> ;	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
West bound vehicular users and local residential users of the roadside pavement at the north-eastern corner of the Site where there is a field gate, are illustrated by <b>Viewpoint No. 02</b> ;	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MODERATE ADVERSE
East bound vehicular users and local residential users of the pavement along Rectory Lane along the northern edge of the Site are represented from offset east of the junction with Penn Gardens by <b>Viewpoint No. 03</b> ;	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW	MODERATE - MINOR ADVERSE / NEGLIGIBLE
East bound vehicular users and local residential users of the pavement along Rectory Lane off the north-western corner of the Site at the junction with Penn Gardens are illustrated by <b>Viewpoint No. 04</b> ;	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
East bound vehicular users and local residential users of the pavement along Rectory Lane along the northern edge of gardens of houses off Mousdell Close offset west of the junction with Penn Gardens is represented by <b>Viewpoint No. 05</b> ;	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
East bound vehicular users along Rectory Lane before visibility is lost as the road curves about further to the west are represented west of the junction of Mousdell Close by <b>Viewpoint No. 06</b> ;	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
Residents and their visitors on Mousdell Close are represented from the western end of Mousdell Close by <b>Viewpoint No. 07</b> ;	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
Residents and their visitors on Penn Gardens are represented from a central point on the road by <b>Viewpoint No. 08</b> ;	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
Recreational users along Public Footpath 2607/1, are represented from a southerly point where visibility towards part of the eastern Site boundary can be gained, by <b>Viewpoint No. 09</b> ;	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE
Recreational users enjoying the panoramic view from Public Bridleway No. 2705 atop Chanctonbury Hill, are specifically illustrated by <b>Viewpoint No. 10</b> .	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE