

OAKLANDS STUD FARM, FOREST GRANGE, WEST SUSSEX, RH13 6HX

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) hla 678 R01

For Andrea Starns

By N Harper BA DipLA CMLI
June 2026



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* See internet link in Bibliography (last page of this LVIA)

Introduction

This Report was commissioned by Andrea Starns, 15th May 2026 and has been prepared by Nick Harper CMLI, Chartered Landscape Architect and Partner of Harper Landscape Architecture LLP.

This report is a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which is put forward to describe the Landscape Character and Visual Impacts in relation to the proposals for the removal of a pole barn and the conversion of stables located at Oaklands Stud, Forest Grange, Horsham RH13 6HX.

The LVIA has been prepared in accordance with: *the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, 2013, by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the Landscape Institute (GLVIA 3)*; and *Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note, Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations (TGN 02-21)*.

I.0 Executive Summary

- I.1 Harper Landscape Architecture LLP was commissioned to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) in support of a planning application for the conversion of an existing stable building to a two-bedroom dwelling at Oaklands Stud, Forest Road, Colgate, Horsham.
- I.2 The Site is located within the High Weald National Landscape and forms part of an established equestrian holding associated with Forest Grange. The surrounding landscape is characterised by extensive woodland, Ancient Woodland, mature trees, enclosed pasture and dispersed rural development typical of St Leonard's Forest and the wider High Weald landscape. The Site itself comprises an existing stable building, pole barn, sand school, paddocks and associated equestrian infrastructure contained within a strongly wooded setting.
- I.3 The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the principles of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3), Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value and other relevant guidance. Landscape character has been assessed at local, district, county, regional and national scales, together with visual effects arising from publicly accessible viewpoints.
- I.4 The Site occupies a discrete and visually contained location enclosed by woodland, mature trees and boundary vegetation. The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) demonstrates that visibility is highly restricted and largely confined to accessible land immediately north of the Site. The viewpoint assessment confirms that Viewpoints 2, 4 and 5 have no views of the Site, whilst only limited and filtered views are available from Viewpoints 1 and 3 located within accessible woodland north of the Site.
- I.5 The proposed development would not increase the footprint, height or massing of the existing stable building. Importantly, the proposals include the removal of the existing pole barn, resulting in a reduction in built form within the Site. Additional landscape measures include supplementary native woodland-edge and hedgerow planting, incorporating a substantial evergreen component, together with the progressive replacement of existing conifer planting surrounding the sand school with dense native species planting more characteristic of the High Weald landscape.
- I.6 The assessment concludes that the Area of Local Landscape Character (ALLC) possesses Medium-High Landscape Value but Low Landscape Susceptibility due to the existing equestrian use, built form and enclosed nature of the Site. The resulting Landscape Sensitivity is therefore judged to be Low to Medium. The proposed development would give rise to a Low Beneficial Landscape Impact and a resulting Negligible to Minor Beneficial Landscape Effect on the ALLC through the removal of the existing pole barn, reduction in built form and implementation of supplementary native planting and woodland-edge enhancement planting.
- I.7 At the wider landscape scales of National Character Area 122 High Weald, the High Weald National Landscape, the West Sussex Landscape Strategy HW2 High Weald Forests and the Horsham Landscape Assessment LI St Leonard's Forest, the proposals would conserve the key characteristics and special qualities identified within the published landscape assessments. Effects at these scales are assessed as Neutral and Not Significant.
- I.8 In visual terms, effects are highly localised. No visual effects would occur at Viewpoints 2, 4 and 5 where the Site is not visible. At Viewpoints 1 and 3, the only publicly accessible locations from which the Site can be seen, effects at completion would be beneficial due to the removal of the pole barn and introduction of supplementary planting. Following establishment of planting after approximately 15 years, including during winter conditions due to the evergreen component of the planting, visual effects would remain beneficial through strengthened woodland-edge screening and improved integration of the Site within its landscape setting. No significant adverse visual effects are identified.
- I.9 No significant cumulative effects, lighting effects, glint and glare effects or other indirect effects have been identified.
- I.10 Overall, the assessment concludes that the proposed development would conserve the character and appearance of the High Weald National Landscape and the wider St Leonard's Forest landscape. The proposal represents the sensitive re-use of an existing rural building without increasing its footprint, height or massing and includes the removal of the existing pole barn together with supplementary native landscape planting.
- I.11 The proposal would not result in any significant adverse landscape character or visual effects and would provide localised landscape and visual benefits through the removal of the existing pole barn and the implementation of supplementary native planting. Importantly, the proposals would not introduce harmful domestication or suburbanising influences into the landscape. The restrained architectural approach, retention of the existing agricultural form and materials, avoidance of overtly domestic features, reduction in the amount of built development and strengthening of the woodland-edge planting would ensure that the Site continues to read as a modest rural component of the existing equestrian holding, well integrated within its wooded High Weald setting. Accordingly, the development is considered acceptable in landscape and visual terms and accords with relevant landscape planning policy, published landscape character assessments and High Weald National Landscape guidance.

2.0 Qualifications and experience

2.1 Qualifications

- 2.1.1 Nick Harper is a chartered landscape architect with a degree in landscape design, a postgraduate diploma in landscape architecture and he is a full chartered landscape architect member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) since 1995.

2.2 Experience

- 2.2.1 Nick is a partner of the business of hla which has operated as a landscape architecture consultancy since 2008. hla is a limited liability partnership (LLP) and a registered practice of the Landscape Institute (LI). Nick has also been an invited and regular member on a number of design review panels.
- 2.2.2 Nick has good experience of LVIA in relation to residential development and in the High Weald National Landscape. He has been a team leader on a number of award (RIBA, LI, RTPI and ICE) \ winning projects and he has given expert landscape evidence at many Public Inquiries and Planning Hearings.
- 2.2.3 Nick has 37 years professional experience and prior to setting up hla had positions as, a principal at Hyder Consulting, an associate at Chris Blandford Associates and a senior landscape architect with Battle McCarthy and also the London Borough of Enfield. He was also a senior lecturer for the BA and MA Landscape Architecture courses at Greenwich University for 6 years.

3.0 Description of the Site and the proposal

3.1 The existing site (see Figures 1 to 4b)

3.1.1 Jurisdiction

The Site lies within the administrative area of Horsham District Council, West Sussex and within Colgate Parish. The Site is located within the High Weald National Landscape.

3.1.2 Location and Access

The Site is located at Oaklands Stud, Forest Road, Colgate, approximately 1km east of the eastern edge of Horsham. The Site forms part of a small cluster of rural properties associated with Forest Grange and is accessed directly from Forest Road via an existing private driveway.

The Site occupies an established equestrian holding within a predominantly rural setting characterised by woodland, pasture, paddocks and scattered residential properties. The wider area is strongly influenced by the extensive woodland complex of St Leonard's Forest which surrounds much of the locality.

3.1.3 Designations

The Site lies within the High Weald National Landscape. The Site itself contains no statutory ecological, heritage or landscape designations.

St Leonard's Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies approximately 660m from the Site and St Leonard's Park Ponds SSSI approximately 1.4km away. Ancient Woodland and publicly accessible land associated with St Leonard's Forest are located approximately 120m north of the Site. The Site lies within the wider setting of the Grade II Listed Forest Grange located south of Forest Road. The Site is not located within a Conservation Area and contains no designated heritage assets.

3.1.4 Land Use

The Site currently comprises an established equestrian facility including a timber stable block, attached pole barn, sand school, paddocks, grazing land and associated hardstanding. The existing stable building forms the principal built structure within the Site and is located centrally within the equestrian complex.

The surrounding land uses comprise woodland, pasture, equestrian land, rural residential properties and agricultural fields. Forest Grange Manor and associated grounds lie immediately south of Forest Road, whilst extensive woodland associated with St Leonard's Forest extends northwards beyond the Site.

3.1.5 Topography

The Site occupies relatively level ground within a localised clearing enclosed by woodland and mature tree belts. The surrounding topography is gently undulating and typical of the wider High Weald landscape. Levels across the Site itself are modest, with the stable complex positioned on generally level land associated with the existing equestrian use.

A waterbody occurs within approximately 250m of the Site and wider drainage patterns are influenced by the surrounding woodland and rural land uses. The Site falls within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone where water neutrality considerations apply.

3.1.6 Heritage and landscape

Historic mapping indicates that the Site originally formed part of the wider woodland landscape of St Leonard's Forest before being cleared during the twentieth century and subsequently used for equestrian and recreational purposes. The existing stable block and pole barn are modern structures and do not possess heritage significance in their own right.

The principal heritage consideration relates to the setting of the Grade II Listed Forest Grange, a substantial Jacobean-style country house constructed in 1913. Whilst the Site falls within its wider setting, mature woodland, trees and intervening vegetation substantially limit direct intervisibility between the Site and the listed building. The contribution of the Site to the significance of Forest Grange is therefore principally derived from its contribution to the surrounding rural and wooded landscape setting.

3.1.7 Biodiversity and Landscape

The Sylvatica Ecology Ltd Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) 22nd January 2025 identifies the Site as comprising predominantly managed grassland, paddocks, hardstanding and existing equestrian buildings within a strongly wooded landscape setting. Mature woodland and tree belts surrounding the Site provide ecological connectivity with the wider St Leonard's Forest woodland complex.

The habitats present within the Site are of relatively limited ecological value and no evidence of protected species was recorded during the survey. The stable block was assessed as having negligible bat roosting potential. However, surrounding woodland, trees and vegetation provide suitable habitat for commuting and foraging bats, nesting birds and other common wildlife species. Biodiversity enhancement measures including native planting, bat boxes and bird boxes are recommended.

3.1.8 Trees

The Arbtech Arboricultural Survey, 12th September 2025 identifies the Site as being enclosed by a mature framework of trees and woodland which forms part of the wider St Leonard’s Forest landscape and the grounds of Forest Grange. An arboricultural survey identified eleven individual trees and six groups of trees within or adjacent to the Site. Trees are concentrated principally along the northern and southern boundaries, with paddocks extending to the east and west.

The existing tree resource provides enclosure, containment and separation between the Site and the surrounding landscape. Priority Habitat vegetation occurs along the southern boundary and Ancient Woodland lies immediately north of the Site. Collectively, the trees and woodland contribute to ecological connectivity, landscape structure and the setting of Forest Grange. Root Protection Areas and tree constraints associated with retained trees represent important considerations for future development proposals.

3.1.9 The boundary treatments are described as follows:

Boundary A

Ranch style fencing with stock proof fencing. Some coppiced semi-mature trees (Hazel and Birch) with a more managed lower hedge to the west (Blackthorn, Bramble, Hawthorn and Wild Rose).

Boundary B

Ranch style fencing with stock proof fencing. Tall shrubs and mature trees offer dense planting and a visual screen to the west. Species include Bamboo, Bramble, Cherry Laurel, Dogwood and Oak.

Boundary C

Ranch style fencing with stock proof fencing. Native species hedge 1m in height. Species include Blackthorn, Dog Rose, Hawthorn, Field Maple and Hazel.

Boundary D

Ranch style fencing with stock proof fencing. Gappy domestic planting with views through to the east. Species include Blackthorn, Dog Rose, Hawthorn, Field Maple and Hazel.

Boundary E

Timber post and wire fencing. Gappy, open views through planting. Species include Buddleia, Bramble and other domestic garden species.

Figure 1 Aerial photograph



Figure 2 OS Map extract NTS



d

Figure 3 Existing Site plan and Site wide photographs a. to e.



Figure 4a Existing Site plan and Site wide photographs a. to c.



Viewpoint a looking north from the field located to the south west of the farm buildings



Viewpoint b looking north from the field located to the south west of the farm buildings



Viewpoint c looking north from the field located to the south west of the farm buildings

Figure 4b Existing Site plan and Site wide photographs d. to f.



Viewpoint d looking north from the field located to the south west of the farm buildings

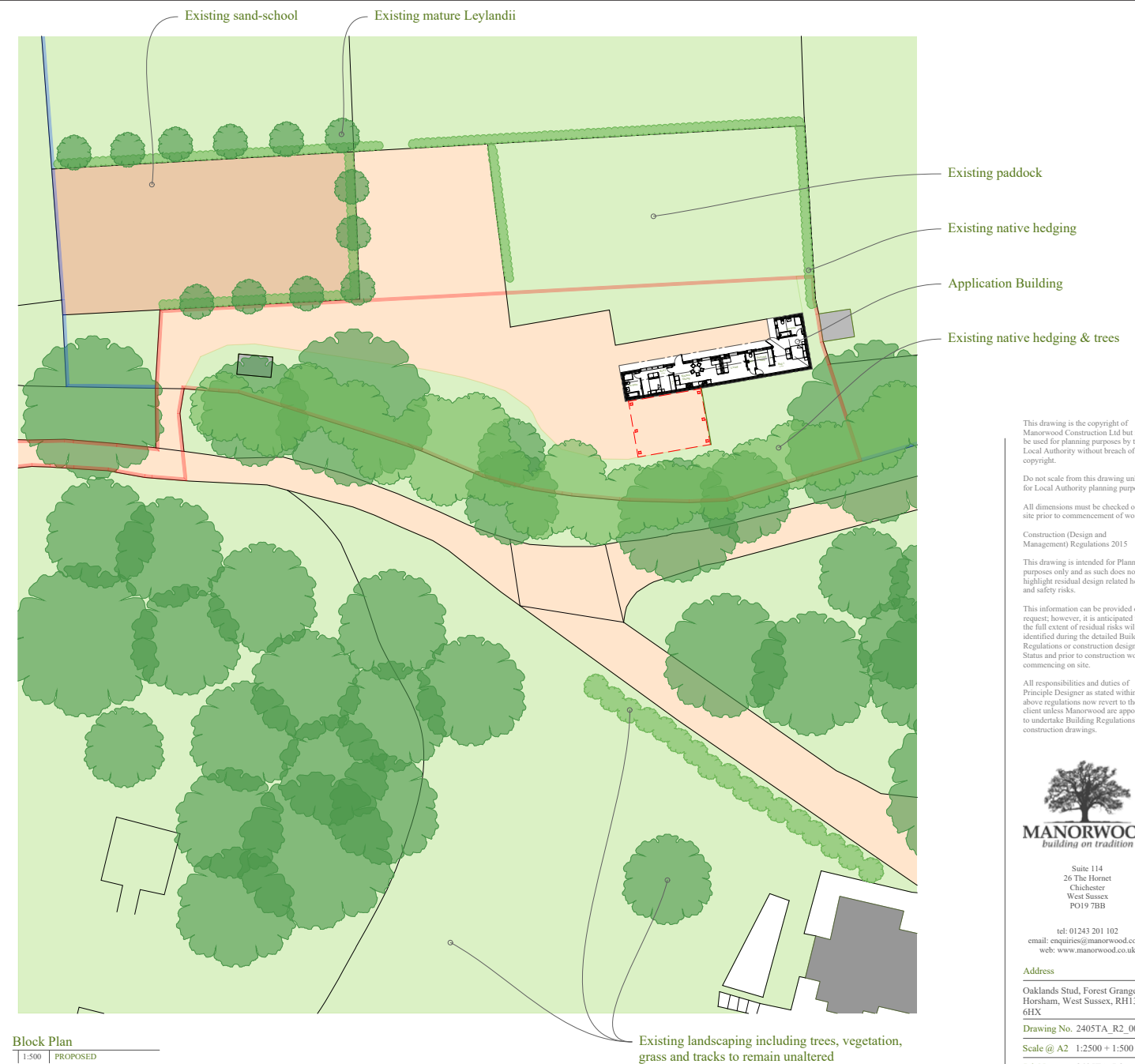
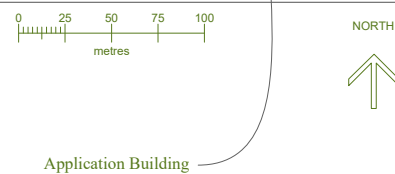


Viewpoint e looking north from the field located to the south west of the farm buildings

- 3.2 The proposal (see Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8)
- 3.2.1 The proposals comprise the conversion of the existing stable block to a modest two-bedroom dwelling together with the removal of the existing pole barn. The design approach has been informed by the Site's rural character, its relationship with the surrounding woodland landscape and the need to preserve the setting of the Grade II Listed Forest Grange. The proposals seek to work within the existing built form rather than introduce substantial new development, thereby minimising physical and visual change within the landscape.
- 3.2.2 A key design principle has been the retention and reuse of the existing stable building. No increase in footprint, height or massing is proposed, ensuring that the development remains contained within the established envelope of the Site. This approach significantly reduces the potential for visual intrusion and avoids the introduction of additional built form into the rural landscape. The removal of the existing pole barn further reduces the overall amount of development on the Site and improves the openness of the immediate setting.
- 3.2.3 The architectural treatment seeks to retain the agricultural appearance of the existing building. Existing dark stained timber cladding and corrugated roof materials are retained, reflecting the utilitarian character of traditional rural outbuildings. The proposals deliberately avoid the introduction of overtly domestic materials or contemporary architectural detailing that could appear incongruous within the surrounding countryside.
- 3.2.4 Existing openings are largely retained and adapted to accommodate residential use whilst maintaining the established pattern of fenestration. Stable doors are retained and modified with simple timber-framed glazing above, while new windows and doors are designed to reflect the appearance of traditional agricultural structures. This restrained approach assists in preserving the building's simple rural character and avoids creating a suburban appearance.
- 3.2.5 Particular attention has been given to the elevation facing Forest Road and the Listed Building beyond. This elevation remains largely unaltered and devoid of significant domestic features, thereby avoiding the creation of a prominent residential frontage. The design minimises opportunities for light spill and domestic activity to be perceived from the wider landscape or from the setting of Forest Grange.
- 3.2.6 Overall, the design adopts a restrained design approach which preserves the rural character of the Site and ensures that the converted building continues to read as a modest agricultural structure within the landscape. By retaining existing materials and form, reducing the overall amount of built development through the removal of the pole barn, and avoiding visually intrusive domestic features, the proposals seek to conserve the setting of Forest Grange whilst achieving an appropriate and sustainable re-use of an existing building.

- 3.2.7 The layout and design are put forward to accord with: landscape planning policy; the published landscape assessments at national, county and district scales; the regional High Weald Unit guidance including: High Weald Housing Design Guide November 2019; the High Weald Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development September 2017; the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (MP) 2024-2029, and the); High Weald Planting Technical Advice Note: and the Soft Landscaping and Planting Plans in Development Proposals November 2025.

Location Plan	
1:2500	EXISTING



500 

1250

Figure 6 Existing and Proposed Elevations - North Drawing No. 2405TA_R2_I01, by Manorwood

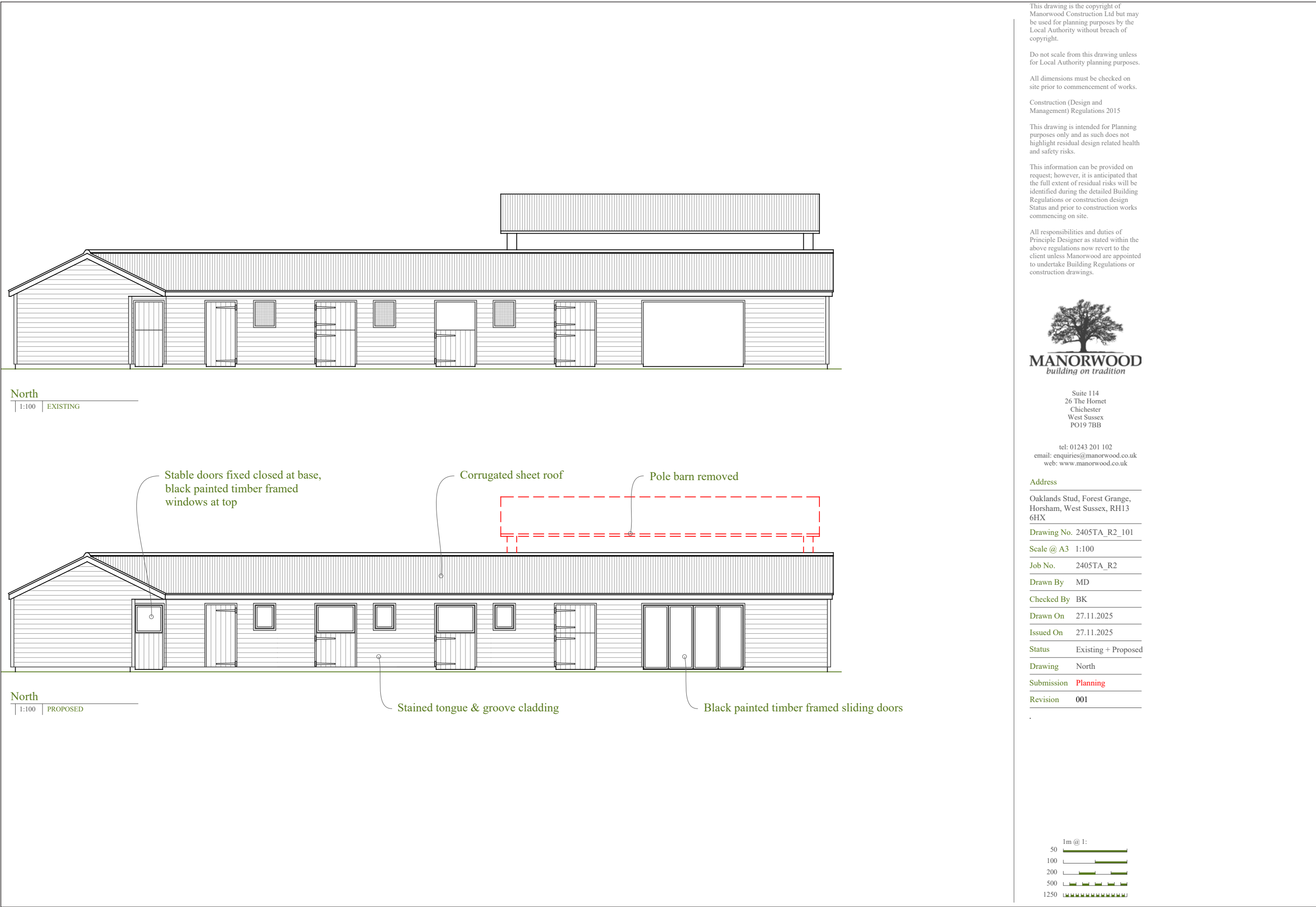


Figure 7 Existing and Proposed Elevations - South, Drawing No. 2405TA_R2_I02, by Manorwood

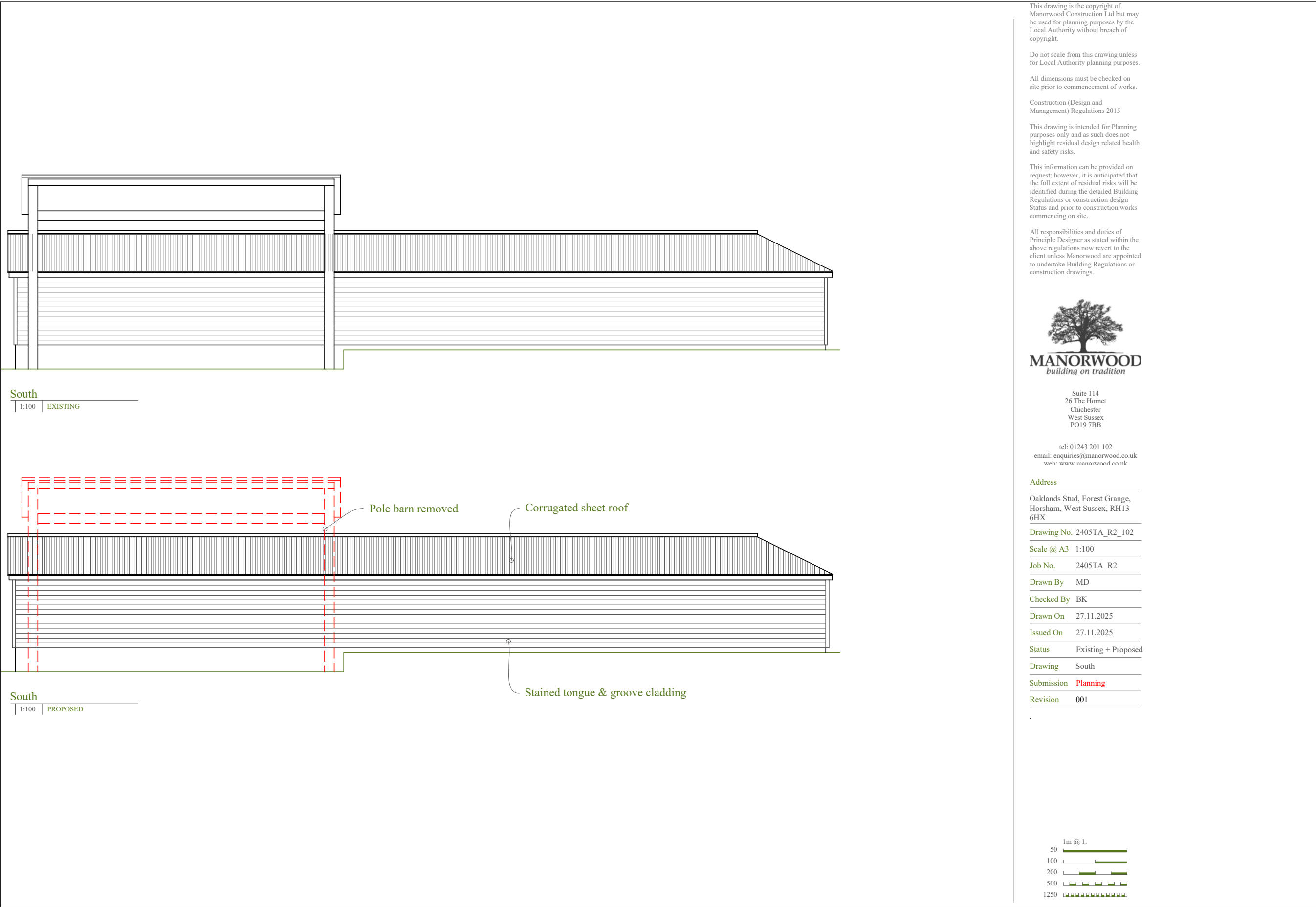
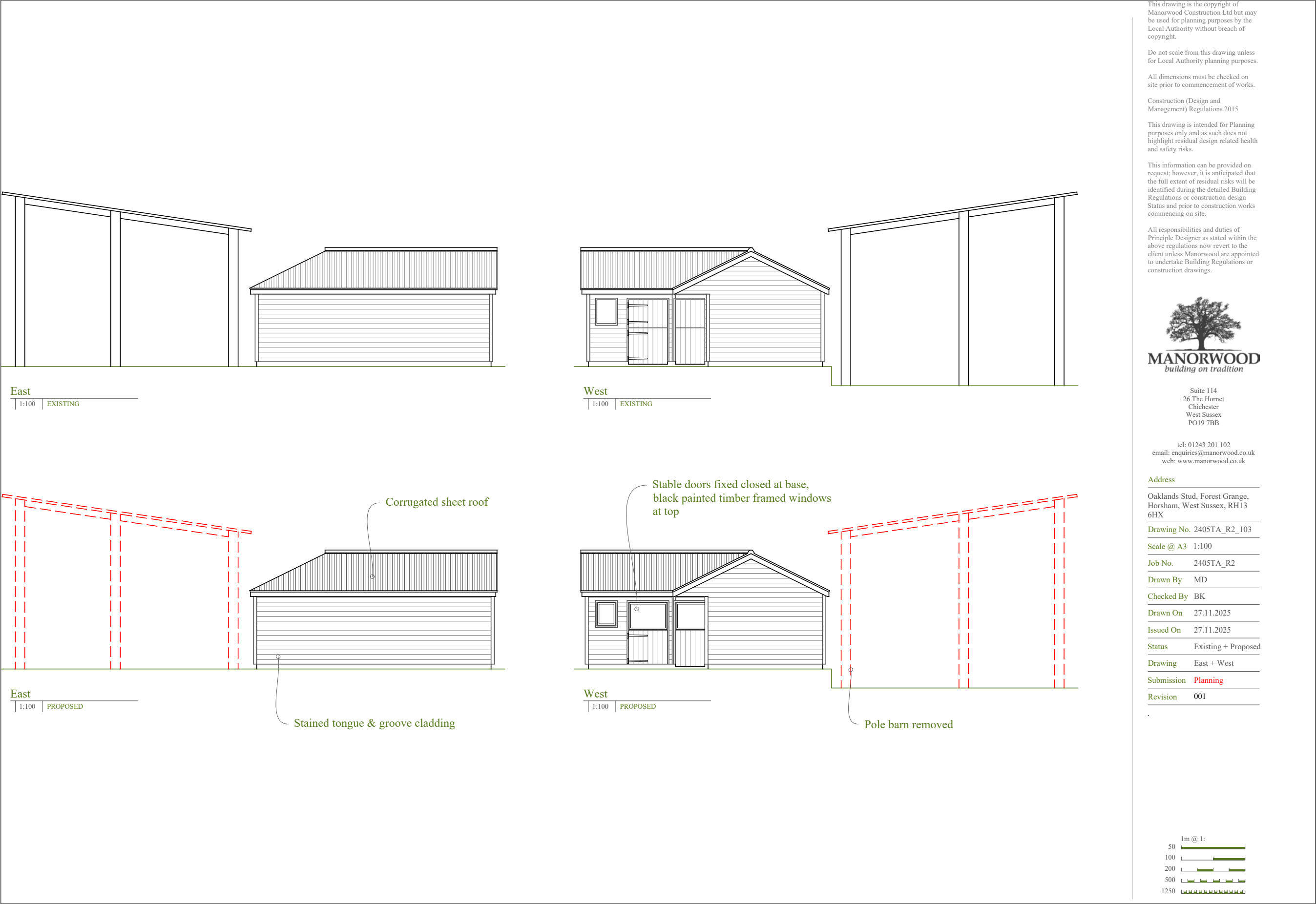


Figure 8 Existing and Proposed Elevations - East and West Drawing No. 2405TA_R2_I03, by Manorwood



4.0 Scope and structure of report

4.1 Scope of the report

- 4.1.1 This report assesses the Landscape Character and Visual impacts and Effects that are likely to occur as a result of the proposed development enhancements.

4.2 Structure of the report

- 4.2.1 The upcoming sections of the report are structured as follows, Section 5.0 describes the landscape planning policy, Section 6.0 the Landscape and Visual baseline, Section 7.0 the Landscape Character and Visual Impacts and Effects, and Section 8.0 is the Conclusion.

5.0 Landscape planning policy

5.1 Landscape planning policy

5.1.1 The key landscape planning policies are listed as follows.

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework December, 2024 (NPPF)

5.2.1 It is noted that the NPPF should be read in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Environment Act 1995, and the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended by the Environment Act 1995).

5.2.2 The relevant landscape related policies of the NPPF December 2024 are listed as follows.

5.2.2.1 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development; which should be seen as a golden thread running through plan-making and decision-taking (Paragraph 14). This presumption means that where any adverse impacts as a result of development should not outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

5.2.2.2 The relevant landscape related policies of the NPPF, are listed with a brief summarised description under the following headings.

Chapter 2. Achieving sustainable development

- Paragraph 8 (page 5) item c. an environmental objective.
- Paragraphs 10 and 11 (pages 5 and 6) presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Chapter 3. Plan making, sub section strategic policies

- Paragraph 20 (page 9) item d. conservation and enhancement of natural built and historic environment including landscapes and green infrastructure.

Chapter 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities

- Paragraph 99 (page 29) environmental benefits of estate regeneration.

Chapter 11. Making effective use of land

- Paragraph 124 (page 36) consideration of various environmental issues with any development.
- Paragraph 135 (pages 39 and 40) policies and decisions should ensure that developments are as relevant to landscape issues, quoted as follows:
 - a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping,
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or hange (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, s paces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space and support local facilities and transport networks.”

- Paragraph 136 (page 40), trees should be incorporated in to development where possible.
- Paragraph 139 (page 41), Development that is not well designed should be refused.

Chapter 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

- Paragraph 162 (page 45) Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes.
- Paragraph 166 (page 49) item b. take account of landform, layout, building, orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

Chapter 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- Paragraph 187 (page 54) Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.
- Paragraph 188 (page 54) Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites.
- Paragraph 189 (pages 54 and 55) Conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

5.3.3 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) as relevant to the existing and proposed Landscape and the development is described as follows.

- PPG climate change, 2014, updated 2019. Advises how to identify suitable mitigation and adaptation measures in the planning process to address the impacts of climate change.

- PPG Design: process and tools, 2014, updated 2019. Well-designed places can be achieved by taking a proactive and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process, from policy and plan formulation through to the determination of planning applications and the post approval stage.
- PPG Light pollution, 2014, updated 2019. Advises on how to consider light within the planning system.
- PPG Natural environment, 2016, updated 2019. Explains key issues in implementing policy to protect and enhance the natural environment, including local requirements. The section titled Landscape, Paragraph 1, describes the use of landscape character assessment for appraising the character and local distinctiveness and to identify the elements that influence the sense of place. The section titled 'Biodiversity,' Paragraph 15, ecosystems and green infrastructure, Paragraph 15, describes multi-functional green space, which deliver benefits for local communities through Green Infrastructure (GI).
- PPG Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space, 2016, updated 2019. Gives key advice on open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and the new Local Green Space designation.

5.4 Regional Landscape planning policy (see Appendix 2)

5.4.1 At a regional scale the *High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2024-2029* (MP) is key. The MP states its overall purpose, (page 10) as follows,

"to achieve the legal purpose of 'conserving and enhancing natural beauty' for the benefit of current and future generations."

5.4.2 The following MP's Objectives (as relevant to the Site) are set out.

- *"Objective G2: To protect landform and geological features including sandstone outcrops."* (page 22),
- *"Objective G3: To pursue net zero across the High Weald without compromising its characteristic landscape beauty."* (page 22),
- *"Objective S1: To protect the historic pattern and character of settlements."* (page 26),
- *Objective S3: To conserve the distinct built heritage of the High Weald."* (page 26),
- *"Objective R1: To maintain the historic pattern, morphology and features of routeways."* (page 30),
- *"Objective R2: To protect and enhance the ecological function of routeways."* (page 30),
- *"Objective W1: To maintain and restore the existing extent and pattern of woodland cover and particularly ancient woodland,"* (page 34).

- *"Objective W2: To protect and restore the ecological quality and functioning of woodland at a landscape scale,"* (page 34).
- *"Objective W3: To protect the archaeology and historic assets of AONB woodlands,"* (page 34).
- *Objective FH2: To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodlands,"* (page 38).
- *"Objective FH3: To protect and enhance the ecological function of field and heath as part of the complex mosaic of High Weald habitats,"* (page 38).

5.4.3 The other important documents at a regional scale are: *High Weald Design Guide* November 2019 and the *High Weald Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development*, September 2017, the relevant sections are quoted as follows.

5.4.4 *High Weald Housing Design Guide*, November 2019, includes the following chapters, relevant to landscape.

- *DG1: Responding to Site and Landscape Context* (page 9).
- *DG 3: Layout and Structuring the Site* (page 9).
- *DG5: The Right Built Form* (page 26).
- *DG 7: Building appearance, Local Details & Sustainable Design* (page 32).
- *DG 10: Reinforcing Local Planting Character & Habitats* (page 38).

5.4.5 *High Weald Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development*, September 2017, poses a number of important questions, those that are relevant for development are as follows.

- *Is the development 'background architecture' or 'signature architecture'?* (page 6).
- *Where are the key views to the development?* (page 6).
- *From what distance will the development be seen?* (page 6).
- *Is light reflectivity an issue?* (page 7).
- *What is the key landscape context within the visual frame of the development?* (page 7).
- *Does the building form require articulation to aid legibility or to influence scale?* (page 7).
- *Does the development address textures occurring within its landscape?* (page 7).
- *Are materials colourfast/how will they weather?* (page 7).

- *What is the effect of distance on colour? (page 8).*
- *Is simultaneous contrast an issue? (page 9).*
- *Use of White and Black (page 9).*

5.5 County, West Sussex, Landscape planning policy

5.5.1 There are no specific landscape planning policy documents at a county scale.

5.6 District, Horsham District Council (see Figure 7)

5.6.1 The Site is with in the jurisdiction of Horsham District Council, and the Horsham District Planning Framework and the Horsham District Planning Framework November which was adopted 2015.

- *Policy 24: Environmental Protection (page 98),*
- *Policy 25: District Character and Natural Environment (page 100),*
- *Policy 26: Countryside Protection (page 101),*
- *Policy 28: Replacement Dwellings and House Extensions in the Countryside (page 104),*
- *Policy 30: Protected Landscapes (page 106),*
- *Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity (page 108),*
- *Policy 32: The Quality of New development (page 111),*
- *Policy 33: Development Principles (page 111),*
- *Policy 34: Heritage Assets and Managing Change within the Historic Environment (page 113),*
- *Policy 35: Climate Change (page 115),*
- *Policy 37: Sustainable Design and Construction (page 121).*

5.6 Parish, Colgate Parish Council (see Figure 7)

5.6.1 The Site is with in the jurisdiction of Colgate Parish Council which does not have a Neighbourhood Plan.

Figure 9 Extract from Magic Map

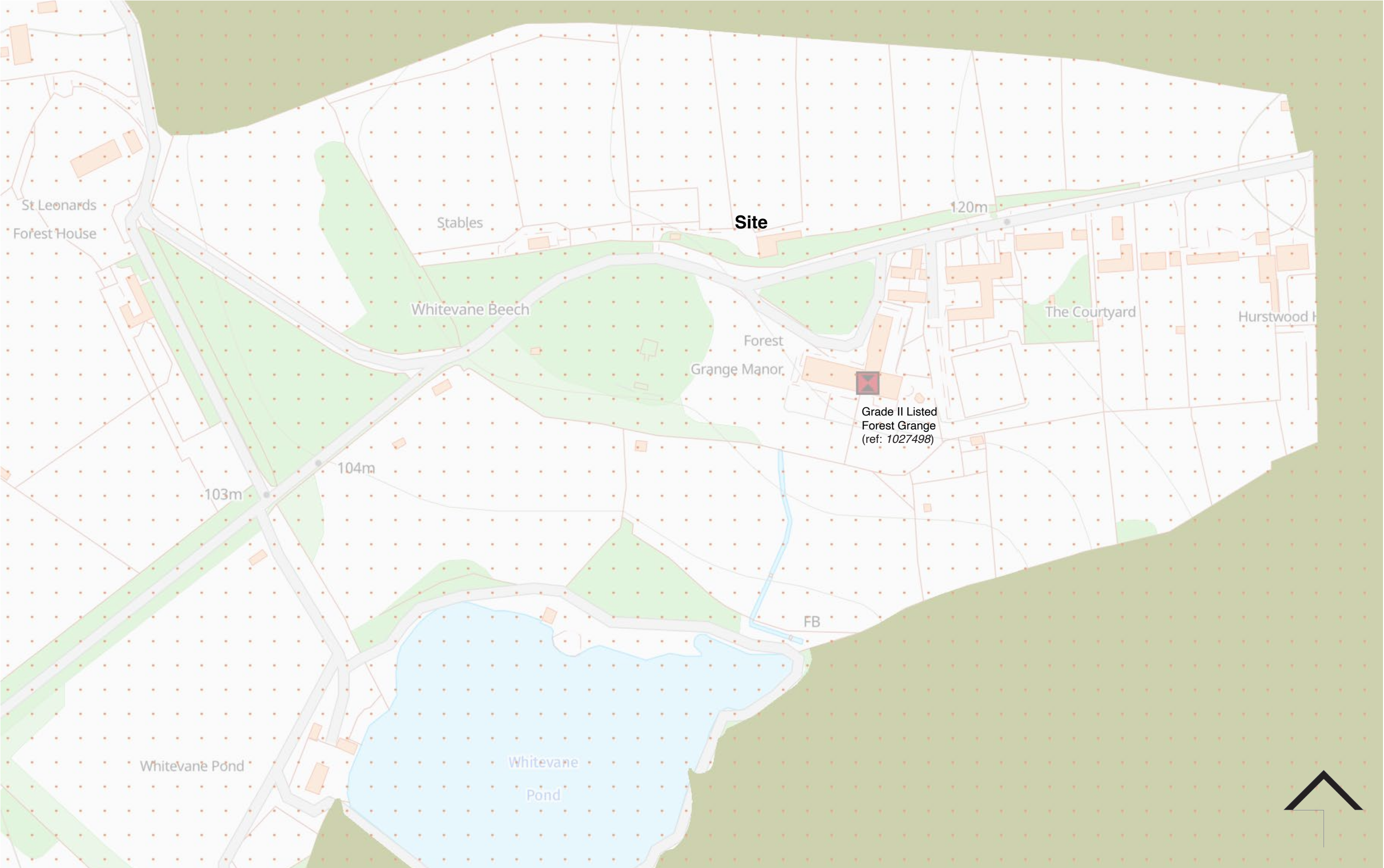


Figure 10 Magic map- (CROW) Access Layer



Figure 11 WSCC PRoW Map



6.0 Landscape Character and Visual baseline

6.1 Landscape Character (see Figures 9, 10 and 11)

6.1.1 Landscape Character is described at different scales: Local Landscape Character Area (ALLC); and the published Landscape Assessments: national, county, and district scales, as follows.

6.2 Local Landscape Character Area (ALLC) or Study Area (GLVIA 3) (see Figure 13)

6.2.1 GLVIA 3 states that a ‘Study Area’ (see page 70, 5.2) can be defined to determine the Area Local Landscape Character (ALLC). The ALLC is the area that influences or is influenced by the Site (and its development) ie the Site and its context. It follows the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and beyond, where perceptual qualities are likely to change. The ALLC (or Study Area) is described in its own right for the purposes of this LVIA and also where it manifests ‘Key Characteristics’ and ‘Key Positive Landscape Attributes,’ stated in the published Landscape Assessments. The ALLC is delineated on Figure 10 and described as follows.

6.2.2 The Area of Local Landscape Character (ALLC) comprises the Site and its immediate landscape context associated with Forest Grange and the wider wooded landscape of St Leonard’s Forest. The ALLC lies within the High Weald National Landscape and is characterised by a mosaic of woodland, paddocks, equestrian land uses, scattered rural properties and areas of pasture enclosed by mature trees and woodland belts. The Site occupies a relatively level clearing within this landscape and forms part of a small cluster of rural development associated with Forest Grange. The ALLC is strongly influenced by the extensive woodland complex of St Leonard’s Forest, including Ancient Woodland and publicly accessible land located approximately 120m north of the Site.

The landscape structure of the ALLC is defined principally by mature woodland, tree belts and hedgerows which provide enclosure, containment and a strong sense of separation between individual land uses. Ancient Woodland to the north and mature woodland associated with Forest Grange to the south create a substantial wooded framework that limits intervisibility and provides a strong landscape backdrop. These features contribute positively to the character of the ALLC and are key components of the wider High Weald landscape pattern. The Site itself is visually contained within this wooded framework and is perceived as a discrete and enclosed parcel of land rather than an exposed element within the wider landscape.

The Site currently accommodates an established equestrian use comprising a stable block, pole barn, sand school, paddocks, hardstanding areas, fencing and associated infrastructure. These features, together with parked vehicles, lighting, gates and access tracks, introduce a number of urbanising and suburbanising influences into the local landscape. Additional detracting elements include telegraph poles, overhead power lines and areas of non-native planting. Whilst these features are not uncharacteristic within a rural equestrian setting, they reduce the scenic quality, naturalness and perceived tranquillity of the immediate Site compared with the surrounding woodland landscape.

Despite these influences, the ALLC retains a moderate perception of tranquillity and remoteness, derived principally from the extensive woodland cover, limited settlement presence and the containment afforded by mature vegetation. Birdsong and the enclosed wooded setting contribute positively to the experiential qualities of the area. However, tranquillity is moderated locally by activity associated with the equestrian use, vehicle movements along the private access road and activity associated with nearby rural properties. Consequently, tranquillity and remoteness are considered moderate across the ALLC, reducing to low to moderate within the Site itself.

The principal positive landscape receptors within the ALLC comprise its location within the High Weald National Landscape, the extensive Ancient Woodland and mature tree cover associated with St Leonard’s Forest, the enclosed and discrete nature of the Site, the strong wooded backdrop surrounding the Site and the moderate levels of tranquillity and remoteness that remain evident within the wider landscape. These features contribute positively to local landscape character and are consistent with the key characteristics identified in published landscape assessments.

6.2.3 Landscape Resources or Receptors

- Topography

Flat landscape with slight fall from east to west.
- Landform

The land is flat with no remarkable landform.
- Land Use

Equestrian use with stables, sand school, paddocks and hardstanding areas.
- Ancient Woodland with accessible land, permissive paths and Public Rights of Way.
- Land Cover

Equestrian Yard

Buildings and hardstandings.

Paddocks

Grass with approximately 1.2m high post-and-rail fencing (2 rails).

Stock-proof fencing.

2m high stock-proof fencing to Ancient Woodland.

Electric fencing.

- Vegetation

Some young native hedge planting within paddocks, to the north.

Mature trees and understorey to south.

Paddock grass.
- Water

None.
- Settlement / Local Roads

Local houses are discrete with limited visual intervisibility. The site is located at the south end of the private road.
- Openness

Site is open to near-distance views to the north, with some oblique views from the private road to the north-west and north-east.
- Lighting

In the sand school, cars and local houses.
- Tranquillity

Moderate tranquillity – birdsong.
- Remoteness

Moderate perception despite equestrian uses and their influence.

6.2.4 Positive Landscape Receptors

- High Weald location.
- Enclosed and discrete Site formed by significant wooded planting in all directions.
- Ancient Woodland backdrop with accessible land, permissive paths and Public Rights of Way.
- Significant planted backdrop (mature trees and dense understorey) to south.
- Moderate perception of remoteness and tranquillity.

6.2.5 Landscape Detractors

- Equestrian uses (hardstandings, fencing, vehicles, plant and machinery).
- Car parking and vehicle access audible on south side of Site.
- Non native mono-species Cypress planting.
- Telegraph and power lines
- Urbanising elements (drive in, gates, hardstanding, lighting and parking).

6.2.6 ALLC as manifest at national scale: National Character Area (NCA) Assessment, NCA 122 High Weald

6.2.6.1 The ALLC manifests the following ‘Key Characteristics,’ page 8 of NCA 122 High Weald.

- *“A faulted landform of clays, sand and soft sandstones with outcrops of fissured sandrock and ridges running east–west, deeply incised and intersected with numerous gill streams forming the headwaters of a number of the major rivers – the Rother, Brede, Ouse and Medway – which flow in broad valleys.*
- *A dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads and medieval ridgetop villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries, with a dominance of timber- framed buildings with steep roofs often hipped or half-hipped, and an extremely high survival rate of farm buildings dating from the 17th century or earlier.*
- *Ancient routeways in the form of ridgetop roads and a dense system of radiating droveways, often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with trees and wild flower-rich verges and boundary banks. Church towers and spires on the ridges are an important local landmark. There is a dense network of small, narrow and winding lanes, often sunken and enclosed by high hedgerows or woodland strips. The area includes several large towns such as Tunbridge Wells, Crowborough, Battle and Heathfield and is closely bordered by others such as Crawley, East Grinstead, Hastings and Horsham.*
- *An intimate, hidden and small-scale landscape with glimpses of far reaching views, giving a sense of remoteness and tranquillity yet concealing the highest density of timber-framed buildings any where in Europe amidst lanes and paths.*
- *Strong feeling of remoteness due to very rural, wooded character. A great extent of interconnected ancient woods, steep-sided gill woodlands, wooded heaths and shaws in generally small holdings with extensive archaeology and evidence of long-term management.*
- *Extensive broadleaved woodland cover with a very high proportion of ancient woodland with high forest, small woods and shaws, plus steep valleys with gill woodland.*

- An essentially medieval landscape reflected in the patterns of settlement, fields and woodland.
- High-quality vernacular architecture with distinct local variation using local materials. Horsham Slate is used on mainly timber structures and timber-framed barns are a particularly notable Wealden characteristic feature of the High Weald.”

6.2.7 ALLC as manifest at regional scale: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (MP) 2024-2029

6.2.7.1 The ‘Key Characteristics,’ as manifest by the ALLC and described in the Management Plan are quoted as follows.

Natural Characteristics (page 21)

- “A principal ridge (Forest Ridge) running east – west from Horsham to Cranbrook with an attached ridge (Battle Ridge) extending to the sea at Fairlight.
- A pattern of faults and folds that distinguishes the High Weald from the rest of the south and east of England, with a high concentration of springs associated with fault lines.
- Locally-distinctive geological materials – sandstone, clay bricks and tiles, and Horsham stone – contributing to high-quality vernacular architecture.
- Carbon-rich soils, often undisturbed, that are distinguished by their variability over short distances – characterised as slowly permeable, seasonally wet, slightly acidic clayey soils, with pockets of sandy acidic soils.
- An oceanic climate featuring cool temperatures relative to the latitude, a narrow annual temperature range with few extremes, and rain throughout the year.”

Settlement (page 25)

- “High density of historic farmsteads surrounded by their own fields, with a long continuity of settlement in the same place; their position strongly influenced by topography and routeways.
- Villages and towns mostly of medieval origin located at historic focal points or along ridge top roads, typically centred around open areas used for meeting places and trade, with markets’ charters granted in the 13th and 14th centuries.
- Frequent interconnected green spaces within villages linking to the countryside and offering glimpse views to countryside beyond.
- Verdant character of settlements, with substantial soft landscaping: grass verges, lush hedgerows edging front curtilages, and full tree canopies breaking up the built form.

- A limited palette of local materials intrinsically linked to geology and landscape character, reinforcing local distinctiveness: clay as tiles and brick, timber as weatherboard and framing, and some localised instances of stone.”

Routeways (page 29)

- “A dense, radiating network with a variety of origins including:
- Ridgeways on high ground and often running east-west, closely associated with pre-historic sites and medieval trading settlements.
- Species-rich verges as well-preserved relics of their woodland or grassland habitat.
- Small-scale variations in habitat associated with a complex mixture of substrates, aspects and moisture levels supporting a rich biodiversity, especially invertebrates.
- Linear nature facilitating foraging and dispersal and contributing significantly to the ecological interconnectedness of the High Weald.”

Woodland (page 33)

- “Highly interconnected and structurally varied mosaic of many small woods, larger forests and numerous linear gill woodlands, shaws, wooded routeways and outgrown hedges, and isolated trees.
- High proportion of woodland is categorised as ancient woodland (46%), typically broadleaved coppice with a rich ground flora, with many more woodlands equivalent in conservation interest. A further fifth of woodland is protected ‘plantations on ancient woodlands’ (PAWS), much of which is under restoration.
- Many irregularly shaped small woodlands interlinked with shaws, isolated trees, thick hedges and wooded sunken lanes, forming an intimate part of the farmed landscape.
- Large numbers of isolated trees (often remnants from lost woodlands or hedges), such as in-field trees that provide additional connectivity to the wider landscape, as well as shelter and food source to a wide range of species.

Fieldscape and Heath (page 37)

- “Fields, mostly permanent pasture, used for grazing livestock with some small-scale horticulture and cropping.
- Medieval fieldscape character dominant, with a high proportion of field systems created by assarting (woodland clearance) with sinuous mixed woody boundaries and shaws, and thick hedges common.

- *A rich, extensive network of ancient mixed species hedgerows of high ecological and landscape character value.*
- *Unmanaged fields quickly succeed back towards woodland because of abundant tree seeds from the pattern of small woodlands bounding many fields.”*

Dark Skies (page 41)

- *“Many rural villages with few street lamps or no street lighting.”*

Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities (page 45)

- *“History-related qualities such as ...*
 - a. *a sense of history and timelessness arising from an ancient countryside with a human-scale agricultural tapestry; veteran and ancient trees; medieval forests, heaths and commons; churches, historic buildings.”*

Qualities associated with emotion and imagination such as ...

- c. *a sense of intimacy, enclosure and remoteness owing to the heavily treed landscape.*
- d. *a sense of wonder, renewal and connection with the natural world arising from the proximity of wildlife and opportunities for immersion in nature.*
- e. *a sense of freedom arising from access to a dense network of public rights of way and quiet roads suitable for walking, cycling and horse riding, and opportunities to discover many accessible green spaces (including sandrock areas and rivers, reservoirs and coast) and unexpected features such as the ‘mini-landscapes’ of gill streams.*

Character and gestalt qualities such as ...

- g. *the homely, pastoral feel to the whole landscape arising from its human-scale pattern and productivity.*
- h. *colour palette of greens (vegetation) and browns (clay, timber and iron) representing the materials from which the landscape is constructed.*
- i. *a rich and varied biodiversity.*
- j. *a recognisable and unifying mosaic of open field and wooded habitats.*

Sensory qualities such as ...

- m. *natural soundscapes including the ability to enjoy varied birdsong.*
- n. *exposure to seasonal sensations such as wind and warmth, and diurnal fluctuations in light and dark.*
- o. *Vivid seasonal changes including the whites and blues of ancient woodland ground flora in the spring and the oranges and browns of autumnal trees and woodlands.*

Symbolic and inspiration qualities such as ...

- p. *the idea of the High Weald as a ‘quintessential English pastoral landscape’*
- q. *the association of dark autumnal nights and local tradition of High Weald village bonfire societies.”*

Land-based Economy and Rural Living (page 49)

- *“Land-based workers at a proportion higher than the rural average.*
- *Tendency for greater self-sufficiency in smaller communities to the east of the area, away from major population centres.*
- *A landscape that suits traditional management owing to its small-scale nature and hedged bank and ditch boundaries.*
- *Strong rural community life based around small towns and villages supported by a network of valued and accessible local services and amenities, such as village halls, shops and post offices, clubs and societies, and infrastructure including bus services.*
- *Predominantly pastoral mixed farming with an absence of industrial scale farming.*
- q. *the association of dark autumnal nights and local tradition of High Weald village bonfire societies.”*

Land-based Economy and Rural Living (page 49)

- *“Land-based workers at a proportion higher than the rural average.*
- *A landscape that suits traditional management owing to its small-scale nature and hedged bank and ditch boundaries.*
- *Strong rural community life based around small towns and villages supported by a network of valued and accessible local services and amenities, such as village halls, shops and post offices, clubs and societies, and infrastructure including bus services.*

- *Predominantly pastoral mixed farming with an absence of industrial scale farming.”*

6.2.8 ALLC as manifest at County scale: a Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape October 2005, Land Management Guidelines, Sheet HW2 High Weald Forests

6.2.8.1 The ‘Key Characteristics’ as manifest by the ALLC and described in *HWI* are quoted as follows.

- *“Densely wooded, confined, dissected plateau landscape with extensive coniferous and mixed afforestation within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).*
- *Drained by the River Arun, St Leonards Forest is a unique High Wealden wooded and pastoral landscape of long, parallel ridges and steep-sided narrow valleys.*
- *Large, regularly-enclosed and some smaller, irregular, assart fields within a woodland setting comprising an arable and pastoral landscape enclosed by shaws, hedgerows (including tall hedges) and fencing.*
- *Despite the closeness of large towns and roads, a secluded, tranquil nature exists in many parts of the forests.*
- *Heathland remnants and significant areas of rich woodland biodiversity.*
- *Network of ridge-top roads and lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.*
- *Sparse, dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets, farmsteads and ridgetop development, mainly in St Leonards Forest.*
- *Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.”*

6.2.9 The ALLC as manifest at District scale: Horsham Landscape Assessment October 2003 Landscape Character Area (LCA) LI St Leonards Forest

6.2.9.1 The ‘Key Characteristics,’ as manifest by the ALLC and described in the *Horsham Landscape Assessment 2003 LCA LI St Leonards Forest* are quoted as follows.

- *“Narrow flat topped ridges and steep sided ghylls*
- *Heathland concentrated along woodland rides (open avenues through woodland areas)*
- *Regular pasture and arable fields*
- *Confined views*
- *Ridgetop roads*
- *A few isolated farmsteads*

- *Traditional local building materials of sandstone, tile hanging and brick.*
- *Dense network of twisting, deep lanes, droveways, tracks and footpaths.*
- *Varied traditional rural buildings built with diverse materials including timber-framing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tilehanging.”*

6.3 Site and ALLC Summary

In summary, the ALLC forms part of the wider High Weald landscape and derives much of its character from the extensive woodland framework, mature trees, enclosed pasture, hedgerows and dispersed settlement pattern that characterise this part of St Leonard’s Forest. The ALLC clearly manifests many of the key characteristics identified within National Character Area 122 High Weald, the High Weald National Landscape Management Plan, the West Sussex Landscape Strategy HW2 High Weald Forests and the Horsham Landscape Assessment LI St Leonard’s Forest.

In particular, the ALLC exhibits the intimate, enclosed and relatively small-scale character associated with the High Weald, comprising extensive woodland cover, Ancient Woodland, pastoral land uses, scattered rural properties, narrow rural roads and tracks, and a strongly wooded landscape structure. The mature woodland framework surrounding the Site contributes to a perception of enclosure, remoteness and tranquillity and reflects the interconnected woodland mosaic, wooded routeways and pastoral field pattern identified as defining characteristics within the published landscape assessments.

The ALLC also demonstrates many of the aesthetic and perceptual qualities associated with the High Weald National Landscape, including a strong sense of intimacy and enclosure, a recognisable mosaic of woodland and pasture, seasonal variation, birdsong and a generally pastoral character. Ancient Woodland associated with St Leonard’s Forest, mature boundary trees and woodland belts, together with the dispersed pattern of development, contribute positively to landscape character and reinforce the area’s relationship with the wider High Weald landscape. These characteristics are particularly evident beyond the Site where woodland and pasture dominate and where the landscape retains a strong degree of continuity with the historic forest landscape.

The Site itself differs from the wider woodland landscape in that it has been subject to modern equestrian development and contains a number of urbanising influences including stables, a pole barn, a sand school, hardstandings, fencing, lighting, parked vehicles and associated infrastructure. Additional detracting features include overhead utility lines, access gates and areas of non-native planting. Whilst these features reduce the scenic quality, naturalness and tranquillity of the Site itself, they are largely contained within the established equestrian holding and do not materially alter the wider character of the ALLC.

Overall, the ALLC exhibits many of the defining characteristics and special qualities of the High Weald National Landscape and derives value from its wooded setting, Ancient Woodland associations, pastoral land uses and moderate levels of tranquillity. However, the Site itself is a discrete and enclosed parcel of land influenced by existing equestrian development and associated built form, resulting in a landscape that combines valued High Weald characteristics with localised urbanising influences.

6.4 Landscape Value

The above descriptions inform the judgement of Landscape Value having regard to *GLVIA3 Table 5.1* and *Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value*.

- **Landscape Quality (Condition):** The ALLC lies within the High Weald National Landscape and retains many of the *Key Characteristics* associated with the High Weald. Ancient Woodland, mature trees and woodland belts are generally intact and in good condition. However, equestrian development and associated infrastructure reduce the quality of parts of the Site. Overall, landscape quality is considered Moderate.
- **Scenic Quality:** The ALLC contains a strongly wooded and pastoral character with an enclosed and intimate sense of place. Views are generally filtered or contained by woodland and vegetation. Whilst scenic quality is reduced locally by equestrian development, fencing and associated structures, the wider ALLC retains a Moderate level of scenic quality.
- **Rarity:** The High Weald landscape is nationally distinctive and relatively uncommon. However, the ALLC itself is representative of the local landscape character and is not considered rare at a local scale.
- **Representativeness:** The ALLC is representative of the wooded pastoral landscape, dispersed settlement pattern and equestrian land uses that characterise this part of the High Weald.
- **Conservation Interests:** The ALLC contains Ancient Woodland and forms part of the historic High Weald landscape. These features contribute positively to landscape value.
- **Recreation Value:** Public Rights of Way and areas of publicly accessible land associated with St Leonard's Forest provide recreational opportunities within the ALLC.
- **Perceptual Qualities:** The ALLC exhibits moderate levels of tranquillity, enclosure and remoteness, although these qualities are reduced locally by equestrian activity and associated infrastructure.
- **Associations:** The ALLC forms part of the nationally designated High Weald National Landscape and is associated with the historic landscape character of St Leonard's Forest.
- **Function:** The Site forms part of an established equestrian holding, whilst the wider ALLC performs important landscape, ecological and recreational functions associated with the woodland framework and Ancient Woodland landscape.

Taking all factors into account, the ALLC is judged to have **Medium to High Landscape Value**.

6.5 Landscape Susceptibility

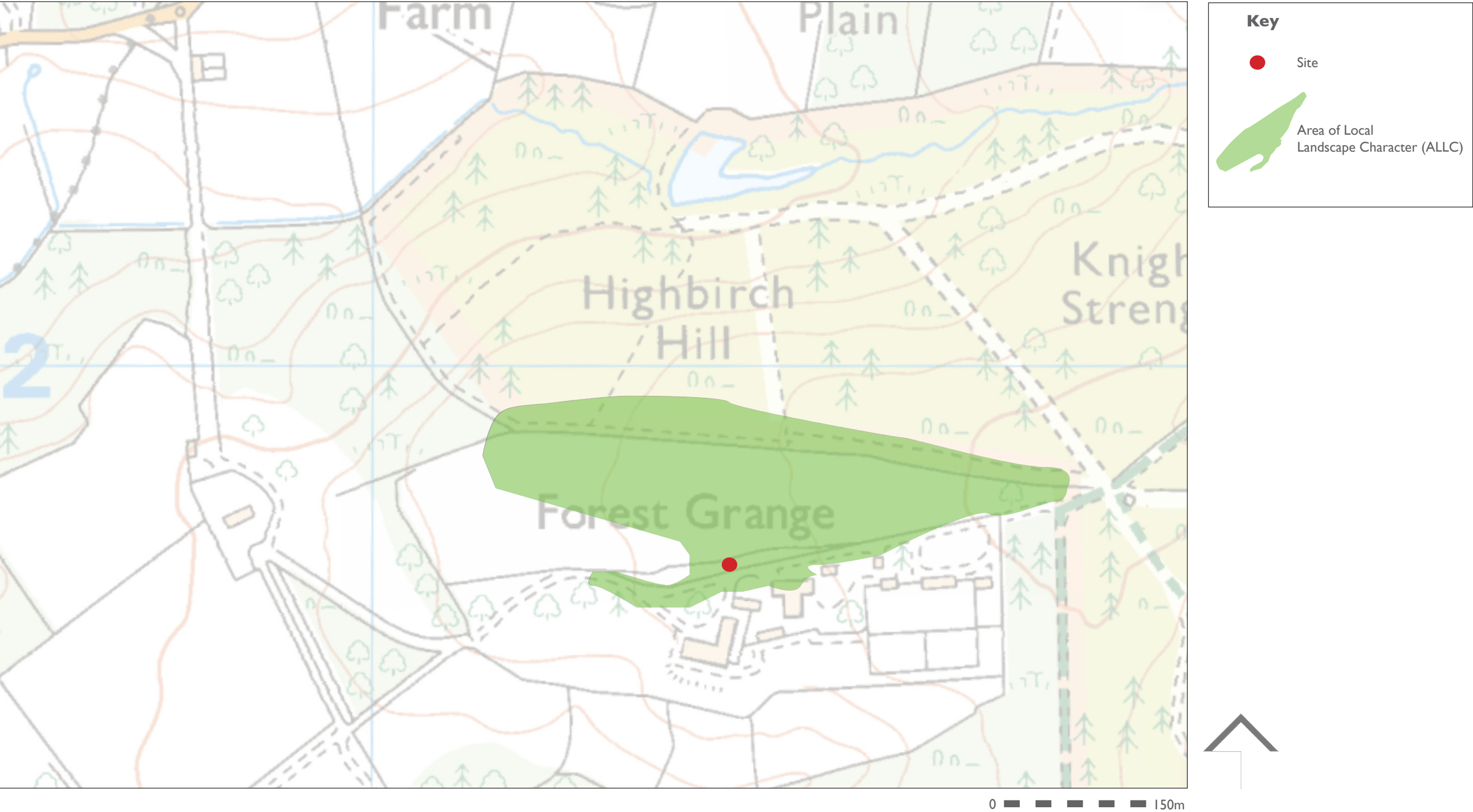
Landscape Susceptibility reflects the ability of the landscape to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for its key characteristics and valued attributes.

The Site comprises an established equestrian holding containing existing buildings, hardstandings, fencing, lighting and associated infrastructure. The Site is visually contained by surrounding woodland, mature trees and vegetation and exhibits limited intervisibility with the wider landscape. The proposed development would occur within an existing developed context and would not materially alter the defining characteristics of the wider ALLC, including its woodland framework, Ancient Woodland associations, pastoral landscape pattern or dispersed settlement character. For these reasons, the ALLC is considered to have a high capacity to accommodate the type and scale of development proposed and is therefore judged to have Low Landscape Susceptibility. For all these reasons the judgement is to be **Low Landscape Susceptibility**.

6.6 Landscape Sensitivity

By cross referencing Medium to High Landscape Value with Low Landscape Susceptibility the judgement is to be **Low to Medium Landscape Sensitivity**.

Figure 12 Area of Local Landscape Character (ALLC) Plan



6.3 National Character Assessment NCA I22 High Weald (see Appendix 3)

6.3.1 The Site is located in *Natural England, National Character Area (NCA) I22 High Weald* which is described as follows.

6.3.2 The NCA summarises it's character on page 3, quoted as follows.

"The High Weald National Character Area (NCA) 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) 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 fields enclosed by thick hedgerows and shaws (narrow woodlands) remain fundamental to the character of the landscape."

6.3.3 The NCA lists four 'Statements of Environmental Opportunity' (SEO), three are relevant to the development area, SEO1, SEO3 and SEO4 (pages 17, 19 and 20) and quoted as follows.

- *"SEO 1: Maintain and enhance the existing woodland and pasture components of the landscape, including the historic field pattern bounded by shaws, hedgerows and farm woods, to improve ecological function at a landscape scale for the benefit of biodiversity, soils and water, sense of place and climate regulation, safeguard ancient woodlands and encourage sustainably produced timber to support local markets and contribute to biomass production."*
- *SEO 3: Maintain and enhance the distinctive dispersed settlement pattern, parkland and historic pattern and features of the routeways of the High Weald, encouraging the use of locally characteristic materials and Wealden practices to ensure that any development recognises and retains the distinctiveness, biodiversity, geodiversity and heritage assets present, reaffirm sense of place and enhance the ecological function of routeways to improve the connectivity of habitats and provide wildlife corridors."*
- *SEO 4: Manage and enhance recreational opportunities, public understanding and enjoyment integrated with the conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, a productive landscape and tranquillity, in accordance with the purpose of the High Weald AONB designation."*

6.3.4 The NCA High Weald landscape is judged to be **High** Landscape Value (78% of the NCA is in the National Landscape), **Low** Landscape Susceptibility (the development would be indiscernible at this national scale) and as such the **Landscape Sensitivity** is **Medium**.

6.4 Regional, High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (MP) 2024-2029 (see Appendix 2)

6.4.1 The High Weald's landscape is described in detail above (see landscape planning policy and the ALLC description), it is summarised on page 12, quoted as follows.

- *"The High Weald occupies the ridged and faulted sandstone core of an area known from Saxon times as the Weald. It is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in Northern Europe. The mosaic of small mixed farms and woodlands is considered to represent a quintessentially English landscape."*

6.4.2 The regional High Weald landscape is judged to be **Very High** Landscape Value (it is entirely in the National Landscape), **Low** Landscape Susceptibility (the development would be indiscernible at this regional scale) and as such the **Landscape Sensitivity** is **Medium**.

6.5 County Landscape Character Assessment West Sussex Landscape October 2005, LCA HW2, High Weald. (see Appendix 6)

6.5.1 The Site is located in a *Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape October 2005, LCA HW2, High Weald*. Forests describes the 'Current Condition,' on page 6, quoted as follows.

"Heavily-afforested, dissected plateau landscape enclosing a post-medieval rural landscape cut from the forest. Includes the western end of the High Weald Forest Ridge within West Sussex and the ridge and valley landscape of St Leonards Forest. Adjoins Crawley, Horsham and the M23 Motorway."

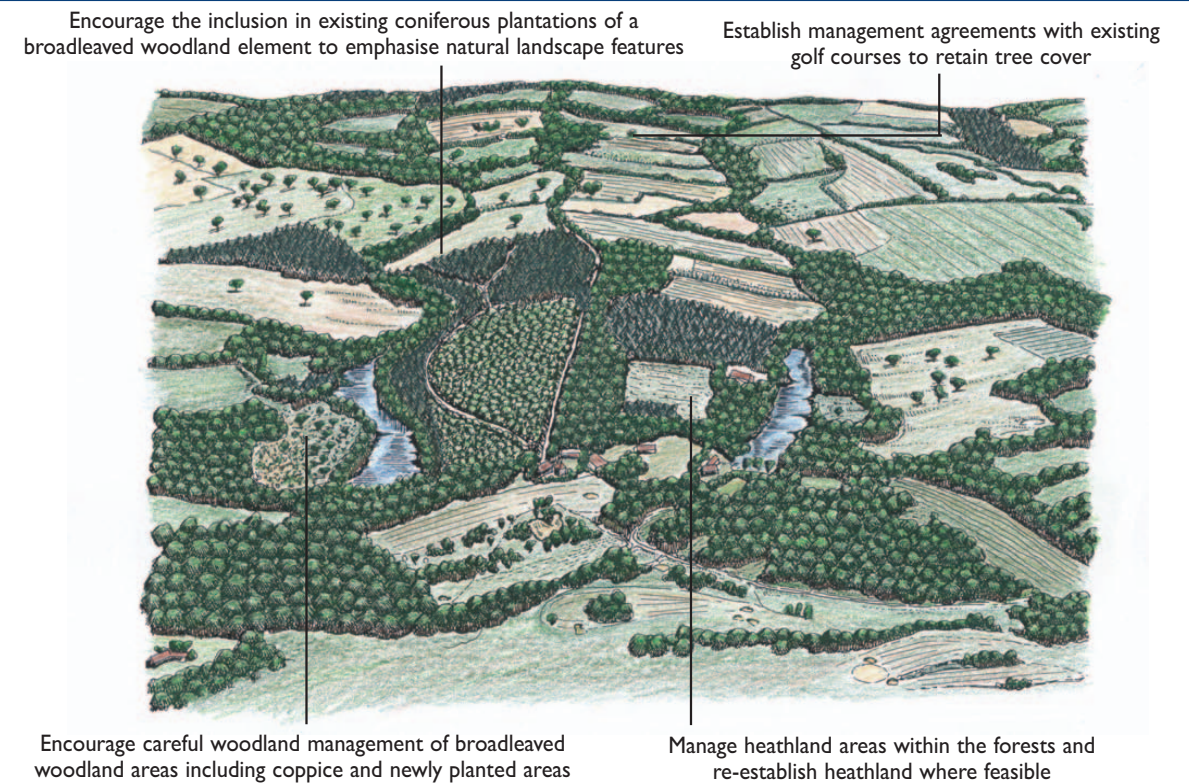
The Land Management Guidelines are shown on Figure 13 opposite.

"Conserve and enhance the secluded, tranquil nature of the forests and the agricultural landscape, and the unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout the area."

- *Conserve the forests and their seclusion for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes, plan for long-term woodland regeneration, and promote a diverse mosaic of woodland types.*
- *Reduce the impact of forestry where possible by encouraging sensitive forestry practice including small-scale felling rotation, and incorporating mixed species.*
- *Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the agricultural landscape.*
- *Protect existing views and resist further infill within, and extension of, roadside development patterns, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.*
- *Increase tree cover around agricultural, ridgetop and other development and maintain and extend woodland cover on the rural urban fringe including within the Horsham-Crawley corridor.*
- *Conserve and replant single oaks in fields and hedgerows to maintain succession.*

Figure 13 Strategy for West Sussex Landscape Oct 2005, LCA HW2, High Weald Forests

Land Management Guidelines



Conserve and enhance the secluded, tranquil nature of the forests and the agricultural landscape, and the unobtrusive settlement pattern throughout the area.

- Conserve the forests and their seclusion for scenic, nature conservation and recreational purposes, plan for long-term woodland regeneration, and promote a diverse mosaic of woodland types.
- Reduce the impact of forestry where possible by encouraging sensitive forestry practice including small-scale felling rotation, and incorporating mixed species.
- Maintain and restore the historic pattern and fabric of the agricultural landscape.
- Protect existing views and resist further infill within, and extension of, roadside development patterns, paying particular attention to the siting of telecommunications masts.
- Increase tree cover around agricultural, ridgetop and other development and maintain and extend woodland cover on the rural urban fringe including within the Horsham-Crawley corridor.
- Conserve and replant single oaks in fields and hedgerows to maintain succession.
- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows (including tall hedges) and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Conserve woodland biodiversity and the landscape of the gills including wet woodland, protecting rare and uncommon woodland plant communities associated with them.
- Enhance the biodiversity of woodland rides and glades and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover.
- Conserve and manage remnant open heathland by preventing the encroachment of scrub and create new, interconnected heathlands.
- Maintain and manage all lakes and ponds and their margins for their landscape diversity and nature conservation value.
- Protect the tranquil and historic character of rural lanes and manage road verges to enhance their nature conservation value.
- Reduce the visual impact of golf courses, and 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.

The guidelines should be read in conjunction with:

- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.
- Objectives and actions contained in the *High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004* (Adopted March 2004) published by the High Weald AONB Joint Management Committee.

- Conserve, strengthen and manage existing hedgerows (including tall hedges) and hedgerow trees and replant hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Conserve woodland biodiversity and the landscape of the gills including wet woodland, protecting rare and uncommon woodland plant communities associated with them.
- Enhance the biodiversity of woodland rides and glades and reduce rhododendron invasion and bracken cover.
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- County-wide Landscape Guidelines set out in *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape* (November 2005) published by West Sussex County Council.
- Objectives and actions contained in the *High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004* (Adopted March 2004) published by the High Weald AONB Joint Management Committee."

6.5.2 HW2 High Weald Forests. landscape is judged to be **Very High** Landscape Value (most of the LCA is in the High Weald National Landscape), **Low** Landscape Susceptibility (the development would be indiscernible at this county scale) and as such the **Landscape Sensitivity** is **Medium**.

6.6 District Landscape Character Assessments Horsham Landscape Assessment 2003 LCA LI St Leonards Forest (see Appendix 7)

6.6.1 The ‘Overall Character,’ of the Horsham Landscape Assessment 2003 LCA LI St Leonards Forest is quoted as follows.

“A very densely wooded area, with a landform of flat top ridges and steep sided ghylls, which cuts into the underlying Tunbridge Wells Sand The combination of forest cover and ghylls creates a strongly enclosed landscape with confined views However, a medium scale field pattern of regular arable fields divides the woodlands Much suburban modern development has spread along the ridgetop roads However, a sense of isolation and remoteness prevails in much of the area.”

6.6.2 LCA LI 6 goes on to describe the ‘Sensitivity to Change,’ and ‘Planning and Land Management Guidelines,’ on page 124 as follows..

“Sensitivity to Change

Overall sensitivity to change is high Key sensitivities are to:

- *Suburbanisation/urban edge development;*
- *Small scale incremental changes to roads;*
- *Changes in farmland management, expansion of horse paddocks;*

Planning and Land Management Guidelines;

- *Conserve the traditional dispersed settlement pattern Any further infill and extension of ribbon development along roads, or building of new large dwellings on existing plots, would further erode this pattern and therefore damage character.;*
- *Screen visually intrusive urban fringe development along ridgetop roads with selective tree planting;*
- *Conserve the strongly wooded character of the area;*
- *Conserve and manage ancient semi-natural woodland and pollarded trees;*
- *Take opportunities to restore heathland;*
- *Restructure conifer plantations where possible to include a higher native deciduous element; and*
- *Conserve existing native tall hedgerows and plant new ones around paddock boundaries”*

6.6.3 The Horsham District Landscape Capacity Study April 2014 doesn’t offer any further information for the location of the Site and as such it is not considered in this LVIA

6.6.4 At a district scale the landscape is judged to be **Very High** Landscape Value (the LCA is in the High Weald National Landscape), **Low** Landscape Susceptibility (the development would be indiscernible at this district scale) and as such the **Landscape Sensitivity** is **Medium**.

6.7 Parish, Colgate Parish Council (see Figure 7)

6.7.1 Colgate Parish Council has not produced a Landscape Character Assessment.

6.8 Views (see Figure 15 and Appendix 1)

6.8.1 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) demonstrates that potential visibility of the Site is highly constrained by the extensive woodland framework surrounding the equestrian holding. Visibility is largely limited to a small area immediately north of the Site, principally within accessible woodland associated with Highbitch Hill. Beyond this area, mature woodland, tree belts, hedgerows and intervening vegetation substantially restrict outward visibility. The Site therefore exhibits a contained visual envelope and has very limited visual interaction with the wider landscape. Figure 14 shows that theoretical visibility extends only over a relatively small area surrounding the Site, with the majority of publicly accessible locations screened by existing vegetation and landform. The following Viewpoints were selected to demonstrate the most likely locations where they may be views of the Site and the new development, these are described as follows

6.8.2 Viewpoints 2, 4 and 5 – No Views

Viewpoints 2, 4 and 5 confirm the limited visual influence of the Site and demonstrate the effectiveness of the surrounding woodland and vegetation in restricting visibility. Viewpoint 2, located on PRow (Bridleway) COL-2822 approximately 350m north-east of the Site, is an enclosed woodland view where the stable block and pole barn are entirely screened by intervening trees and vegetation. Similarly, Viewpoint 4, located on the private access road immediately opposite the entrance gates to Oaklands Stud, is dominated by the access road, entrance gates and surrounding planting, with the development area screened by vegetation. Viewpoint 5, located on Forest Road approximately 800m north-west of the Site, is likewise enclosed by woodland and influenced by the highway corridor, with the development area entirely screened from view. Collectively these Viewpoints demonstrate that there are no publicly available views of the Site from surrounding roads, rights of way or other accessible locations beyond the immediate woodland edge to the north.

6.8.3 Viewpoints 1 and 3 – Accessible Land North of the Site

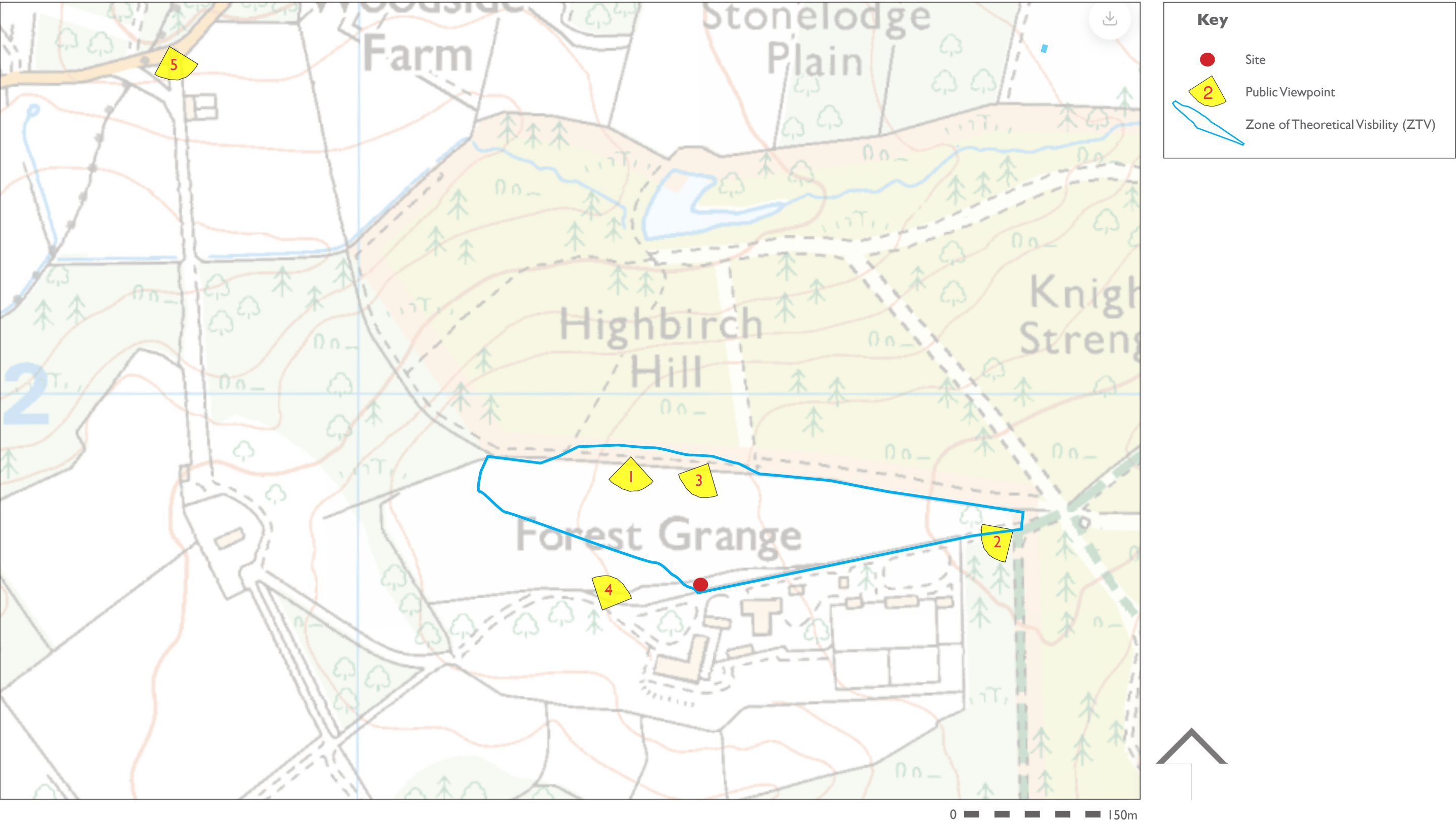
The only views of the Site are obtained from accessible land located within woodland immediately north of the Site. Viewpoint 1, approximately 110m north-west of the stables, provides a heavily filtered and framed view through woodland vegetation. The stable block, parked vehicles and sections of post-and-wire fencing are only partially visible and the pole barn is entirely screened. The view is experienced within a wooded context where vegetation and enclosure are the dominant characteristics. Viewpoint 3, approximately 100m north of the stables, provides the clearest

available view of the Site. Even here, visibility remains filtered and partially obscured by foreground trees and vegetation. The stable block, sections of fencing, parked vehicles and a portion of the pole barn roof are visible within a contained equestrian setting. The view is experienced from within woodland on accessible land and is characterised by a strong relationship between the Site and the surrounding woodland edge. Whilst this viewpoint represents the most open available view towards the Site, the visual context is already influenced by existing equestrian development and associated built form.

6.8.4 Overall,

The visual baseline demonstrates that visibility of the Site is highly localised and largely confined to accessible woodland immediately north of the Site. Elsewhere, mature woodland, trees and vegetation provide effective screening such that the Site has little or no visual influence on surrounding roads, rights of way or the wider landscape. It is possible that the Site would be more visible when there are no leaves on the trees and the baseline judgements although not enough to alter the visual baseline judgements given.

Figure 14 Viewpoints 1 to 5 Plan



7.0 Landscape Character and Visual Impacts/Effects

7.1 Overview of change

7.1.1 The proposals comprise the conversion of an existing stable block to a modest two-bedroom dwelling together with the removal of the existing pole barn. The development does not increase the footprint, height or massing of the existing built form and is contained entirely within the established equestrian complex. Existing woodland, mature trees, paddocks, boundary vegetation and the wider landscape framework are retained.

The principal change arises from the introduction of a residential use within the existing building. However, the architectural approach retains the existing agricultural character through the retention of dark stained timber cladding, corrugated roofing materials and a restrained approach to fenestration and detailing. The removal of the existing pole barn results in a reduction in built form and a corresponding increase in perceived openness within the Site.

The Site occupies a visually contained location enclosed by woodland and mature tree belts. Consequently, landscape and visual effects are highly localised and limited principally to the immediate Site and a small area of accessible woodland north of the Site. No significant adverse landscape or visual effects are identified.

7.2 ALLC (Study Area) Impacts/Effect (see Figure 9)

The Site forms part of a local landscape characterised by woodland enclosure, paddocks, equestrian land uses and scattered rural properties associated with the wider St Leonard's Forest landscape. The existing stable complex already forms an established component of this landscape and contributes to its contemporary rural character.

The proposals retain the existing building envelope and landscape structure. No significant alteration to landform, vegetation pattern, woodland cover, field structure or settlement pattern would occur. The removal of the existing pole barn would slightly reduce the extent of built development visible within the Site.

Upon completion, the removal of the existing pole barn, reduction in built form and implementation of supplementary native planting would result in a beneficial effect on the character of the ALLC. The proposals would strengthen the woodland framework and reduce the influence of existing equestrian structures within the landscape.

The magnitude of landscape impact on the ALLC is assessed as Low during construction. On completion, the magnitude of landscape impact would be Low Beneficial. Taking account of the Medium to High landscape value and Low susceptibility identified within the assessment, the resulting landscape effect would be beneficial. Following establishment of planting, the beneficial influence of the strengthened woodland edge would become more apparent and the beneficial effect would remain beneficial.

ALLC Summary:

Magnitude of Impact (Construction): Low Adverse;

Magnitude of Impact (Completion): Low Beneficial;

Landscape Effect: Negligible to Minor Beneficial; and

Significance: Not Significant

7.3 National Character Area Impacts/Effects

The Site lies within National Character Area 122: High Weald. Key characteristics include extensive woodland cover, small irregular fields, dispersed settlement patterns and a strong sense of enclosure.

The proposals would not alter any of the defining characteristics of the National Character Area. Woodland cover would be retained, field patterns would remain unchanged and no new built form would be introduced into the wider landscape. The conversion of an existing building represents a minor change within an already developed equestrian holding.

The magnitude of landscape impact upon the National Character Area is assessed as Low during construction and on completion. Despite the High value of the National Character Area, the limited extent and localised nature of change results in a Minor Adverse landscape effect which is Not Significant.

National Summary:

Magnitude of Impact: Low;

Landscape Effect: Minor Adverse; and

Significance: Not Significant.

7.4 Regional Impacts/Effects

The Site lies within the High Weald National Landscape and is subject to the objectives of the High Weald National Landscape Management Plan.

The proposals have been informed by the landscape character guidance for the High Weald and seek to conserve the essential characteristics of the landscape through the re-use of an existing building, retention of woodland and avoidance of suburbanising features. The proposals do not introduce prominent new built form, alter the wooded character of the area or affect the pattern of dispersed settlement.

Whilst the High Weald National Landscape is of Very High value, the development would result in only a Low magnitude of impact. The resulting landscape effect is therefore assessed as Minor Adverse and Not Significant.

Regional Summary:

Magnitude of Impact: Low;

Landscape Effect: Minor Adverse; and

Significance: Not Significant.

7.5 County Character Area Impacts/Effects

The Site lies within the West Sussex Landscape Character Area HW2 High Weald Forests. This landscape is characterised by extensive woodland cover, intimate enclosed landscapes and a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity.

The proposals would not affect the woodland framework, field pattern or settlement structure which underpin the character of the landscape. Existing buildings would remain the dominant built elements within the Site and the removal of the pole barn would slightly reduce the overall quantity of built development.

The magnitude of impact is assessed as Low. Consequently, despite the Very High value attached to the character area, the resulting landscape effect would be Minor Adverse and Not Significant.

County Summary:

Magnitude of Impact: Low;

Landscape Effect: Minor Adverse; and

Significance: Not Significant.

7.6 District Character Area Impacts/Effects

The Site lies within Landscape Character Area LI St Leonard’s Forest as identified within the Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment. The character area is distinguished by extensive woodland, limited settlement, enclosed views and a strong rural character.

The proposals would preserve the established woodland enclosure and would not alter the characteristics that define the landscape character area. The conversion of the existing stable block would be experienced as a very limited change within an established equestrian complex. The removal of the pole barn would provide a small beneficial reduction in built form.

The magnitude of impact is assessed as Low. The resulting landscape effect is Minor Adverse and Not Significant.

District Summary:

Magnitude of Impact: Low;

Landscape Effect: Minor Adverse; and

Significance: Not Significant.

7.7 Visual impacts/Effects (see Figure 15, and Appendix 1)

7.7.1 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) demonstrates that visibility of the Site is highly restricted by the surrounding woodland framework and mature vegetation. Potential visibility is confined principally to accessible woodland immediately north of the Site and does not extend substantially into the wider landscape.

The contained nature of the visual envelope reflects the enclosed character of St Leonard's Forest and confirms that opportunities for views of the Site are extremely limited. In practice, vegetation and woodland screening further reduce visibility below that shown by the theoretical analysis.

Visual Summary

The ZTV confirms that visual effects are highly localised and limited to a small area immediately surrounding the Site. The wider landscape experiences no material visual change.

7.7.2 Viewpoints 2, 4 and 5 – No Views

Viewpoints 2, 4 and 5 demonstrate the effectiveness of the existing woodland and vegetation in screening the Site from surrounding receptors.

Viewpoint 2, located on Public Bridleway COL-2822 approximately 350m north-east of the Site, provides no view of either the stable block or the pole barn due to intervening woodland vegetation. Consequently, no change would occur during construction or following completion.

Viewpoint 4, located on the private access road opposite the Site entrance, is strongly influenced by existing vegetation, entrance features and surrounding built form. The proposed development would not be discernible and no visual change would occur.

Viewpoint 5, located on Forest Road, similarly provides no view of the Site. The development would not be visible and no change would occur.

Viewpoint 2, 4 and 5, Summary

Viewpoint 2: No Change;

Viewpoint 4: No Change;

Viewpoint 5: No Change; and

All effects are Not Significant.

7.7.3 Viewpoints 1 and 3 – Accessible Land North of the Site

Viewpoints 1 and 3 represent the only locations from which the Site is visible and therefore represent the highest potential visual effects associated with the proposals.

Viewpoint 1 comprises a filtered and partially screened view from accessible woodland approximately 110m north-west of the Site. Existing views include glimpses of the stable block, vehicles and fencing whilst the pole barn is screened. The conversion of the stable block would result in only a barely discernible change because the existing form, scale, materials and appearance would remain largely unchanged. The magnitude of visual impact would therefore be Negligible Adverse and the resulting visual effect Negligible Adverse and Not Significant. Following establishment of planting and the continued maturation of woodland vegetation, effects would become Negligible Beneficial and Not Significant due to the strengthening of the woodland edge and the reduced prominence of built form.

Viewpoint 3 provides the clearest available view of the Site from accessible woodland approximately 100m north of the Site. Existing views include the stable block, sections of fencing, vehicles and glimpses of the pole barn. During construction a Negligible Adverse visual impact would arise due to temporary activity associated with the conversion works. However, on completion the removal of the pole barn would reduce the amount of built form visible within the Site and increase the visibility of woodland beyond. Consequently, the completed development would result in a Negligible Beneficial visual impact and a Negligible Beneficial visual effect which would be Not Significant. Following establishment of planting, effects would remain Negligible Beneficial and Not Significant.

Viewpoints 1 and 3 Summary

Viewpoint 1:

Magnitude of Impact: Negligible Adverse;

Visual Effect: Negligible Adverse; and

Significance: Not Significant.

Viewpoint 3:

Construction Impact: Negligible Adverse;

Completion Impact: Negligible Beneficial;

Visual Effect: Negligible Beneficial; and

Significance: Not Significant

7.8 Landscape Strategy (see Figure 15)

- 7.8.1 The proposed development seeks to conserve (and enhance where possible) the character and appearance of the High Weald National Landscape through the conversion of an existing stable building, the removal of the existing pole barn and the introduction of landscape enhancement measures. The proposals do not increase the footprint, height or massing of the existing built form and retain the established woodland framework, mature trees and boundary vegetation that define the Site and its setting.
- 7.8.2 The principal landscape enhancement arises from the removal of the existing pole barn, resulting in a reduction in the amount of built form within the Site and a corresponding increase in the visibility and influence of the surrounding woodland framework. The retention and conversion of the existing stable building avoids the introduction of additional development into the landscape and limits change to an already established equestrian holding.
- 7.8.3 Additional landscape measures include the retention of the existing woodland framework, mature trees and boundary vegetation together with supplementary native mixed-species planting. The supplementary planting would provide landscape enhancement through strengthening the woodland edge and reinforcing existing boundary vegetation.”. Whilst the retention of existing landscape features would conserve the existing landscape structure, enhancement would arise through the introduction of new planting and the replacement of less characteristic vegetation. New tree, shrub and hedge planting would be focused on strengthening the woodland edge and reinforcing existing boundary vegetation, particularly along the northern paddock boundary and other visually open sections of the Site. The planting would comprise species characteristic of the High Weald landscape and include a high proportion of evergreen species to provide year-round screening, enclosure and landscape integration, whilst also contributing to biodiversity enhancement and ecological connectivity.
- 7.8.4 Over the longer term, the existing conifer planting surrounding the sand school would be progressively replaced with dense native species planting comprising a high proportion of evergreen species. This would improve the landscape integration of the Site, strengthen local character, increase biodiversity value and replace a relatively incongruous landscape element with vegetation more typical of the High Weald woodland mosaic.
- 7.8.5 Supplementary native woodland-edge planting would be provided along the northern paddock boundary to supplement the existing woodland edge, strengthen landscape enclosure and further filter views from accessible land north of the Site, including Viewpoints 1 and 3. Upon completion, this planting would provide an immediate softening effect through the introduction of additional vegetation and would assist in integrating the Site into its woodland setting. During winter months, when deciduous vegetation is not in leaf, the evergreen component would continue to provide screening and filtering of views.
- 7.8.6 Following establishment of planting (approximately 15 years), the woodland-edge planting would form a dense and robust landscape buffer between the Site and accessible land to the north. The planting would substantially strengthen the woodland edge, increase enclosure and further reduce the visibility of the remaining built form within the Site. In both summer and winter conditions, the mature planting would reinforce the wooded character of the ALLC and contribute to the beneficial visual effects identified at Viewpoints 1 and 3.

- 7.8.7 The development would utilise materials that reflect the existing rural and equestrian character of the Site, including timber cladding, recessive colours and a restrained architectural approach. Hard landscape materials, boundary treatments and any external lighting would be selected to minimise visual intrusion and conserve the dark skies, tranquillity and rural character associated with this part of St Leonard’s Forest.
- 7.8.8 The layout, design, materials and planting proposals have been developed having regard to relevant landscape planning policy, published landscape assessments and High Weald National Landscape guidance. This includes National Character Area 122 High Weald, the High Weald National Landscape Management Plan 2024–2029, the West Sussex Landscape Strategy HW2 High Weald Forests, the Horsham Landscape Assessment LI St Leonard’s Forest, the High Weald Housing Design Guide 2019, the High Weald Guidance on the Selection and Use of Colour in Development 2017 and the High Weald Planting Technical Advice Note: Soft Landscaping and Planting Plans in Development Proposals 2025.
- 7.8.9 Collectively, these measures would conserve the existing woodland framework and landscape structure, whilst enhancing the Site through the removal of the pole barn, the introduction of supplementary native planting and the gradual replacement of existing conifer planting with vegetation more characteristic of the High Weald landscape. These measures would reduce the influence of existing equestrian structures within the landscape and ensure that the development responds positively to the character and special qualities of the High Weald National Landscape.

Figure 15 Landscape Strategy Plan



Key

- Existing woodland retained.
- Existing trees retained and protected.
- Existing hedgerows retained.
- Existing stable building retained and converted.
- Existing pole barn removed.
- New native mixed-species woodland-edge planting.
- New native mixed-species hedge planting.
- New planting to comprise native mixed species with approximately 30–40% evergreen species to provide year-round filtering and screening.
- Replace existing conifers (located around sand school) with dense native species (high percentage of evergreens) over long term.
- Biodiversity enhancement planting.
- Dark skies compliant lighting.
- Existing paddocks retained.
- Existing access retained.
- Biodiversity enhancement measures including native planting, bird boxes and bat boxes.
- Ensure all work complies with: the published Landscape Assessments (NCA 122 High Weald, WSCC Landscape Management Guidelines LCA HW2 High Weald Forests); Landscape planning policy (NPPF Dec 24, Horsham District Planning Framework and associated planning policy guidance; High Weald AONB documents (Management Plan, Design Guide and Colour Study)

Table 6a, Landscape Character and Visual Summary Table - Landscape Character

	Landscape Value	Landscape Susceptibility	Landscape Sensitivity	During construction: Magnitude of Landscape Impact	At completion: Magnitude of Landscape Impact	At completion: Landscape Character Effect/ Significance	Mitigation	After planting establishment (15 years): Landscape Impact/ Landscape Effect/Significance/ Duration/Reversibility
Landscape Character Impact								
Landscape Character Area Descriptions								
Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA)	Medium to High	Low	Low to Medium	Low Adverse	Low Beneficial	Negligible to Minor Beneficial Landscape Effect	Mitigation is not required	Low Beneficial Magnitude of Impact/ Negligible to Minor Beneficial Landscape Effect
National: National Character Area 122 High Weald	High	Low	Medium	Low Adverse	Low Adverse	Minor Adverse Landscape Effect/ Not Significant	Mitigation is not required	Low Adverse Magnitude of Impact/ Minor Adverse Landscape Effect/Not Significant
Regional: High Weald Management Plan 2024-2029	Very High	Low	Medium	Low Adverse	Low Adverse	Minor Adverse Landscape Effect/ Not Significant	Mitigation is not required	Low Adverse Magnitude of Impact/ Minor Adverse Landscape Effect/Not Significant
County: West Sussex Landscape Assessment 2005, Landscape Character Area HW2 High Weald Forests	Very High	Low	Medium	Low Adverse	Low Adverse	Minor Adverse Landscape Effect/ Not Significant	Mitigation is not required	Low Adverse Magnitude of Impact/ Minor Adverse Landscape Effect/Not Significant
District: Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment October 2003, Landscape Character Area (LCA) L1 St Leonards Forest	Very High	Low	Medium	Low Adverse	Low Adverse	Minor Adverse Landscape Effect/ Not Significant	Mitigation is not required	Low Adverse Magnitude of Impact/ Minor Adverse Landscape Effect/Not Significant
Viewpoints Impact								
	Visual Value	Visual Susceptibility	Visual Sensitivity	During construction: Magnitude of Visual Impact	At completion: Magnitude of Visual Impact	At completion: Visual Effect/ Significance	Mitigation	After planting establishment (15 years): Visual Impact/Visual Effect/ Significance/Duration/Reversibility
Viewpoint 1 From a managed path on accessible land located within a private area of woodland approximately 110m north west of the stables. GPS ref: 50.07398 N, 0.27095 W. Photographic Height: 120m AOD	Medium (This is a moderate quality wooded view from accessible land which sees some built form and fencing to lessen scenic quality)	Low (The development would be experienced by visual receptors on private land with permissive access in the High Weald National Landscape and would result in barely discernible change within a context of built forms and parked vehicles (including horse boxes)	Low	Negligible Adverse (The construction would be a barely discernible change)	Negligible Adverse (The development would be a barely discernible change)	Negligible Adverse/Not Significant.	Mitigation is not required although nting on the paddock side of the woodland would strengthen the woodland edge and screen views in long term.	Negligible Beneficial Magnitude of Visual Impact/Negligible Beneficial Visual Effect/Not Significant.
Viewpoint 2: From PRoW COL-2822 (Bridleway), approximately 350m north east of the stables. GPS ref: 50.07327 N, 0.26947 W. Photographic Height: 126m AOD	Medium (This is a moderate quality wooded view)	Low (The view would be experienced by PRoW users. The development would not be discernible).	Low	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change
Viewpoint 3: From path in accessible land within wooded private land approximately 100m north of the stables. GPS ref: 50.07399 N, 0.26989 W. Photographic Height: 123m AOD	Medium (This is a moderate quality wooded view from accessible land which sees some built form and fencing to lessen scenic quality)	Low (The development would be experienced by visual receptors on private land with permissive access in the High Weald National Landscape and would result in some discernible change within a context of built forms and parked vehicles (including horse boxes)	Low	Slight Adverse (The construction would be a perceptible change).	Negligible Beneficial (The removal of the pole barn would be a beneficial discernible change with less built form and more woodland to be seen)	Negligible Beneficial/Not Significant	Mitigation is not required although planting on the paddock side of the woodland would strengthen the woodland edge and screen views in long term	Negligible Beneficial Magnitude of Visual Impact/Negligible Beneficial Visual Effect/Not Significant
Viewpoint 4: From private road that gives access to the Site and directly opposite the entrance gates, located approximately 100m south west of the stables. GPS ref: 51.07409 N, 0.27111 W Photographic Height: 115m AOD	Low to Medium (This is a low to moderate quality view strongly influenced by built forms)	Low (The view would be experienced by private residents and their visitors as they fleetingly pass by the entrance on arriving by car. The development would not be discernible and it is unlikely that there would be an increase in vehicle movements)	Low	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change
Viewpoint 5: From the grass verge on the north side of Forest Road and looking down the private road that gives access to the Site, located approximately 600m north west of the stables. GPS ref: 50.07779 N, 0.27668 W Photographic Height: 102m AO	Low to Medium (This is a low to moderate quality view strongly influenced by the road and its steady vehicular traffic)	Low (The view would be experienced by visual receptors in vehicles as they fleetingly pass by the entrance to the private drive. The development would not be discernible and it is unlikely that there would be an increase in vehicle movements)	Low	Not applicable as already constructed	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The Site forms part of an established equestrian holding located within the High Weald National Landscape and the wider St Leonard's Forest landscape. The surrounding landscape is characterised by extensive woodland, Ancient Woodland, mature trees, enclosed pasture, paddocks and dispersed rural development. The Site occupies a relatively level clearing enclosed by woodland and mature vegetation and is visually contained within a strong wooded framework. The visual baseline demonstrates that views of the Site are highly restricted, with minimal public visibility confined to accessible land immediately north of the Site. Elsewhere, woodland, mature trees and intervening vegetation substantially limit intervisibility such that the Site has little influence on the wider landscape or visual environment.
- 8.2 The proposed development comprises the conversion of an existing stable building to a two-bed room dwelling together with the removal of the existing pole barn and the implementation of landscape enhancement measures. The proposals do not increase the footprint, height or massing of the existing built form and retain the established woodland framework, mature trees and boundary vegetation. Additional landscape measures include supplementary native woodland-edge and hedgerow planting, including a substantial evergreen component, together with the progressive replacement of existing conifer planting around the sand school with dense native species planting more characteristic of the High Weald landscape. The resulting development represents a modest and localised change within an existing equestrian holding and has been designed to conserve the character and appearance of the High Weald National Landscape whilst providing opportunities for landscape and biodiversity enhancement. The assessment also concludes that the proposals would not introduce harmful domestication or suburbanising influences into the Site or its wider landscape setting. This reflects the fact that the proposal involves the sensitive conversion of an existing rural building without increasing its footprint, height or massing, whilst retaining its agricultural character, removing the existing pole barn and reinforcing the surrounding woodland structure through supplementary native planting. Consequently, the Site would continue to read as a modest component of an established equestrian holding rather than as a suburban residential enclave.

8.3 Landscape Character

8.3.1 Area of Local Landscape Character (ALLC) Baseline

The Site lies within the High Weald National Landscape and forms part of a wider landscape characterised by extensive woodland, mature trees, enclosed pasture, hedgerows and dispersed rural development associated with St Leonard's Forest. At the local scale, the Site forms part of an Area of Local Landscape Character (ALLC) that exhibits many of the key characteristics identified within the published landscape assessments including National Character Area 122 High Weald, the High Weald National Landscape Management Plan, the West Sussex Landscape Strategy HW2 High Weald Forests and the Horsham Landscape Assessment LI St Leonard's Forest.

Whilst the wider landscape possesses a strong wooded character and moderate to high landscape value, the Site itself differs from the surrounding countryside through its established equestrian use and associated development including stables, a pole barn, hardstandings, fencing, lighting and parked vehicles. These existing features reduce the susceptibility of the Site to the type of change proposed.

8.3.2 ALLC Impact and Effect

At completion, the proposed conversion of the existing stable building would result in only limited physical change to the Site. The principal landscape change would arise from the removal of the existing pole barn together with the implementation of supplementary native planting. The

existing woodland framework, mature trees, paddocks and hedgerows would be retained. Consequently, the character of the ALLC would remain largely unchanged whilst the reduction in built form would result in a modest improvement in landscape character. The resulting landscape effect upon the ALLC is judged to be Negligible to Minor Beneficial.

Following establishment of mitigation planting after approximately 15 years, the beneficial landscape effects would increase. Native woodland-edge planting and hedgerow reinforcement would become fully integrated into the existing landscape framework and would contribute to improved landscape integration, biodiversity value and ecological connectivity. The progressive replacement of existing conifer planting with dense native species planting containing a high proportion of evergreen species would further strengthen local landscape character. During summer months the planting would provide substantial enclosure and screening, whilst during winter months the dense planting and evergreen component would continue to provide effective structure and filtering of the minimal public views in. The resulting long-term effect on the ALLC would remain Negligible to Minor Beneficial.

8.3.3 Published Landscape Character Assessments

The proposed development is limited in scale and confined to an existing equestrian holding within a wider landscape that extends well beyond the Site. As a consequence, there would be no material alteration to the key characteristics, landscape patterns, special qualities or perceptual attributes identified within the published landscape assessments at national, regional, county or district scales.

At completion, the proposals would conserve the characteristics of National Character Area 122 High Weald, the High Weald National Landscape, the West Sussex Landscape Strategy HW2 High Weald Forests and the Horsham Landscape Assessment LI St Leonard's Forest. The resulting effect is judged to be Neutral and Not Significant.

Following establishment of planting after 15 years, the mitigation planting would provide localised benefits within and immediately adjacent to the Site. However, these changes would not materially influence landscape character at the broader published landscape assessment scales. The resulting effect would therefore remain Neutral and Not Significant.

8.2 Visual Amenity

8.2.1 Visual Baseline

The visual baseline demonstrates that the Site is strongly enclosed by existing woodland, mature trees and boundary vegetation. The ZTV indicates that visibility is highly restricted and largely confined to limited areas of accessible land north of the Site. The majority of the surrounding landscape has no intervisibility with the Site.

The Viewpoint assessment (Appendix 1) confirms that Viewpoints 2, 4 and 5 have no views of the Site due to the intervening woodland framework. The only publicly accessible views of the Site are from accessible land north of the Site represented by Viewpoints 1 and 3.

8.2.2 ZTV

The ZTV demonstrates a highly contained development with very limited visibility beyond the immediate Site context. The removal of the existing pole barn would marginally reduce the amount of visible built form where views occur. Consequently, there would be no material change to the overall visual envelope of the Site either at completion or following establishment of planting.

The resulting visual effect identified through the ZTV analysis is therefore Neutral and Not Significant.

8.2.3 Viewpoints 2, 4 and 5 – No Views

At Viewpoints 2, 4 and 5 the Site is fully screened by existing woodland, mature trees and intervening vegetation. No views of the existing Site are available and consequently no views of the proposed development would occur.

At completion and after 15 years establishment of mitigation planting, including during winter conditions, the Site would remain screened from these locations.

The resulting visual effect is Neutral and Not Significant.

8.2.4 Viewpoints 1 and 3 – Accessible Land North of the Site

Viewpoints 1 and 3 represent the only publicly accessible locations from which limited views of the Site are available. Existing views are filtered through woodland-edge vegetation and are experienced within the context of an established equestrian holding.

At completion, the removal of the existing pole barn would reduce the amount of visible built form and supplementary native woodland-edge planting would begin to soften and filter views. Although newly planted vegetation would not yet be fully established, the introduction of additional planting together with the reduction in built development would result in a beneficial visual effect.

Following establishment of planting after approximately 15 years, the native woodland-edge planting would form a dense and robust landscape buffer between the Site and accessible land to the north. The planting would comprise native species with a substantial evergreen component, ensuring that visual screening and filtering would remain effective throughout the year. During summer conditions the Site would become increasingly assimilated within the woodland edge, whilst winter views would continue to be filtered by evergreen vegetation. The removal of the pole barn would remain a permanent beneficial change.

The resulting long-term visual effect at Viewpoints 1 and 3 would continue to be increasingly beneficial.

8.3 Other Considerations

8.3.1 Cumulative Change

No known committed developments were identified that would combine with the proposed development to give rise to cumulative landscape or visual effects. The cumulative effect is therefore Neutral and Not Significant.

8.3.2 Lighting

The proposals would not introduce significant additional external lighting and would be capable of complying with dark skies principles appropriate to the High Weald National Landscape. Consequently, there would be no material lighting effects. The resulting effect is Neutral and Not Significant.

8.3.3 Glint and Glare

The nature of the development is such that no glint and glare effects would arise. The resulting effect is Neutral and Not Significant.

8.4 Landscape Strategy and Beneficial Change

The Landscape Strategy has been developed to conserve (and enhance where possible) the character of the High Weald National Landscape whilst reducing the visual influence of existing equestrian development. The principal enhancement measure is the removal of the existing pole barn which permanently reduces the amount of built form within the Site.

Additional measures include the retention and protection of existing woodland, mature trees and hedgerows; supplementary native woodland-edge and hedgerow planting; biodiversity enhancement planting; and the progressive replacement of existing conifer planting with native species planting containing a high proportion of evergreen species.

At completion these measures would provide immediate softening and integration benefits. Following establishment after approximately 15 years, the planting would become fully integrated into the woodland framework, provide year-round screening and reinforce the wooded character associated with St Leonard’s Forest. Collectively these measures give rise to the beneficial landscape and visual effects identified within this assessment.

8.5 Final Statement

The assessment demonstrates that the Site occupies an established equestrian holding located within the High Weald National Landscape where sensitivity to landscape character, visual amenity and local distinctiveness is an important consideration. The proposals have been developed having regard to the existing woodland framework, the character of St Leonard's Forest and the relevant landscape planning policy and guidance.

The development would conserve the *Key Characteristics* and *Special Qualities* identified within National Character Area 122 High Weald, the High Weald National Landscape Management Plan 2024–2029, the West Sussex Landscape Strategy HW2 High Weald Forests, the Horsham Landscape Assessment L1 St Leonard's Forest, the High Weald Housing Design Guide 2019, the High Weald Guidance on the Selection and Use of Colour in Development 2017 and the High Weald Planting Technical Advice Note 2025.

The proposed conversion of the existing stable building would avoid the introduction of significant new built form into the landscape. The removal of the existing pole barn together with the implementation of native mitigation planting would result in beneficial change to the local landscape character and visual amenity, whilst effects on the wider published landscape character areas would remain neutral. Furthermore, the restrained conversion of the existing stable building, retention of its agricultural form and materials, absence of any increase in footprint, height or massing, and the removal of the existing pole barn would ensure that the proposals would not introduce harmful domestication or suburbanising influences into the Site or the wider High Weald landscape.

No significant adverse landscape or visual effects have been identified. The proposals would conserve the character and appearance of the High Weald National Landscape and, in certain respects, would provide modest landscape and visual benefits through the reduction of existing built form and the implementation of landscape enhancement measures.

Accordingly, the development is considered acceptable in landscape character and visual terms and accords with relevant landscape planning policy, published landscape character assessments and High Weald National Landscape guidance.

I.0 INTRODUCTION

I.0.1 This section addresses Landscape Character and Visual impacts. It explains how baseline conditions relating to Landscape Character and Visual matters are assessed and judged to be affected by development.

I.1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology, general

I.1.1 The Landscape and Visual impact judgements presented in this report are based upon professional experience and the principles set out in *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition, 2013*, published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, and with reference to the *Technical Guidance Note Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations (TGN 02-21)*, (Appendix 9)

I.1.2 Landscape Character Impacts relate to the Effects of the proposals on the physical resources and other characteristics of the landscape, and the resulting character and quality. Landscape resources and character are considered to be of importance in their own right and valued for their intrinsic qualities, regardless of visibility. Landscape receptors are defined as aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.

I.1.3 There is no single standard methodology for quantifying the scale or magnitude of relative Effects on Landscape Character, although guidance exists in *GLVIA 3* and *TGN 02-20*. The following definitions are therefore proposed to support judgement of Landscape Character Effects. Landscape Character is assessed by considering the Effects of the development at a range of scales. The term “*Local*” is used to define the area within, or influenced by, the Appeal Site and is likely to approximate to the extent of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) (referenced in the Visual section) as well as other perceptual changes such as noise and smell. *Local* is defined as the *Local Landscape Character Area (ALLC)*

I.1.4 The methodology sets out how to make Landscape Character impact judgements. Sensitivity is determined by cross-referencing Value with Susceptibility (see Tables 1 and 3). The Magnitude of Impact is then judged at scales ranging from the ALLC to those defined in the cascading scales of published Landscape Assessments. The Significance of Landscape Effect is determined by cross-referencing the Sensitivity of the Landscape Receptor with the Magnitude of Change (see Tables 2 and 5).

2.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

2.1 Landscape Value

2.1.1 Landscape Value refers to the relative value or importance that society attaches to different landscapes on account of their landscape qualities. It is inherent and independent of the proposed development. Landscape qualities are characteristics or features of a landscape that are valued, sometimes referred to as “*special qualities*” in relation to nationally designated landscapes. Landscape characteristics are elements that make a particular contribution to landscape character. Landscape Value is assessed using the following range of factors (adapted from *GLVIA 3*, paragraph 5.28, Box 5.1, with minor revisions following the introduction of *TGN 02-21*):

- *Landscape condition (revision from quality TGN 2/21).*

“A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.”
- *Scenic quality.*

“The term is used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses).”
- *Distinctiveness (combines Rarity and Representativeness).*

“Rarity is the presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type.”

“Representativeness is whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.”
- *Conservation (natural heritage factors (TGN 2/21) interests.*

“The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.”
- *Recreation value.*

“Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.”
- *Perceptual aspects.*

“A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness, remoteness and/or tranquillity.”
- *Associations.*

“Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.”
- *Function (TGN 2/221).*

“The value attached to landscapes which perform a clearly identifiable and valuable function.”

2.1.2 Landscape Value judgements are made using the following (linked to the GLVIA 3 categorisations on page 39 and Appendix 6).

• **Very Low**

Typically characterised by a landscape significantly influenced by a dominant landscape detractor.

• **Low**

A landscape which may be considered of Local Community value, is not designated or protected, does not make a positive contribution, is in poor condition, and/or has been substantially altered by detrimental man-made activity, possibly at a small scale.

• **Medium**

A landscape which may be considered Regional or Local Authority (GLVIA 3), or an undesignated landscape judged to have a higher value than Low following assessment undertaken in accordance with TGN 02-21; or a landscape that may form part of a local designation or other recognised value, makes a moderately positive contribution, is in moderate condition, and/or may exhibit some detrimental activity resulting from man-made intrusion. These may include Local Plan landscape designations or other undesignated landscapes that have some degree of medium landscape value.

• **High**

A landscape which may be classed as regional, international, or national: it is covered by an international or national designation or, occasionally, is of regional interest or other important value, making an important and positive contribution to its wider context. These may include World Heritage Sites, National Parks, AONBs, Heritage Coasts, and Registered Parks and Gardens (including their settings).

• **Very High**

A landscape which is covered by an international or national designation and makes a highly important and significantly positive contribution to its wider context. These may include World Heritage Sites, National Parks, AONBs, or Heritage Coasts.

2.1.3 In respect of a test for judging a “valued landscape” (outside national designations), as referred to in NPPF Paragraph 187(a), the following definition is given on page 42 of LI TGN 02/21, Appendix 9, titled “The valued landscape policy test in England,” item A4.2.11:

“A ‘valued landscape’ is an area identified as having sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes.”

The TGN (also page 42) notes that “everyday” landscapes may nevertheless have value to people. GLVIA 3, item 5.28, Box 5.1, TGN 02/21 is also relevant, as noted for Photographic Methodology below.

2.2 Landscape Susceptibility

2.2.1 Landscape Susceptibility judgements are based on the physical state of the landscape and influential elements (Landscape Receptors) within it. It is development-specific. It relates to the intactness of the landscape from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the condition of individual features and elements that contribute to landscape character in any given location.

Judgements are made to assess the ability of Landscape Receptors to accommodate change resulting from the proposed development relative to the baseline. Landscape Receptors may include overall character, key characteristics, individual elements or features, and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects.

Landscape Susceptibility judgements are made using the following:

Low

A landscape where receptors are likely to make a minimal positive contribution and could therefore accommodate the type of development proposed without causing a detrimental change to the base line condition.

Medium

A landscape where receptors are likely to make a moderately positive contribution and could therefore accommodate partial development, or where there is potential for effective mitigation to offset detrimental change to the baseline condition.

High

A landscape where receptors are likely to make a highly positive contribution such that it is unlikely to accommodate the type of development proposed (even with mitigation), and development would cause a detrimental and residual change to the baseline condition.

2.3 Landscape Sensitivity (See Table 1)

2.3.1 Landscape Sensitivity is the degree to which the landscape can accommodate change without adverse impact on its character. It is judged by cross-referencing landscape value with susceptibility.

Table 1 Determining Landscape Sensitivity

		Value				
		Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Susceptibility	Low	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	Very High

2.3.2 Landscape Sensitivity is described as follows.

- **Very Low**

Defined as a landscape that has very low value (likely to be significantly influenced by a dominant landscape detractor) with low susceptibility, such that it would be tolerant of the type of change envisaged.

- **Low**

Defined as a landscape that is unlikely to include Local Plan landscape designations and is likely to have poor or damaged landscape characteristics. It is likely to be tolerant of the type of change envisaged.

- **Medium**

Defined as a landscape that is likely to include Local Plan landscape designations or other undesignated landscape characteristics and to be of local or district (borough) scale or capacity to accommodate a degree (potentially with mitigation) of the type of change envisaged.

- **High**

Defined as a landscape likely to be protected by a regional, national, or international designation and/or widely acknowledged for its medium to very high value and/or its medium to high susceptibility. It is a landscape with distinctive character that would be residually altered by the type of change envisaged, irrespective of mitigation.

- **Very High**

Defined as a landscape protected by a national or international designation and/or widely acknowledged for its very high value and high susceptibility. It is a landscape with significantly distinctive character that would be residually altered by the type of change envisaged, irrespective of mitigation.

2.4 Magnitude of Landscape Character Impact

2.4.1 Magnitude of Landscape Character Impact refers to the extent to which proposed development would alter the existing characteristics of a landscape and combines judgements on; size or scale of effect, geographical extent influenced; the duration; and the reversibility.

2.4.2 Magnitude of Landscape Impact is described using the following terms.

- **Low**

Defined as just-perceptible, long-term change in components of a landscape, or more noticeable temporary and reversible changes.

- **Medium**

Defined as clearly perceptible, long-term changes or loss of important features in a Character Area, but which result in only relatively subtle changes in character; or changes in a small part of a Character Area that will have a clear effect on the immediate locality. Also includes clearly perceptible change in the setting of a neighbouring Character Area that is sufficient to influence its own character.

- **High**

Defined as clearly perceptible changes, for example the loss of features that make an essential contribution to a Character Area, the introduction of new large-scale features into a Character Area where these are not typical, or change exerted by an overriding influence on a neighbouring Character Area.

2.5 Significance of Landscape Effect (see Table 2)

2.5.1 The Significance of Landscape Effect determines how important the changes might be for the landscape in terms of mitigation and the long term residual effects. It is judged using Table 2.

2.5.2 The Duration of Landscape Character Change

Duration judgements are made using the following criteria.

- **Short term or reversible**

Effects that have no lasting influence and where the existing baseline landscape would be restored.

- **Medium term or partially reversible**

Effects that would last until planting establishment becomes effective (approximately 10–25 years).

- **Long term or not reversible**

Permanent effects (perceived as over 25 years).

Table 2 Determining Significance of Landscape Effects				
		Magnitude of change		
		Low	Medium	High
	Very Low	Negligible Landscape Effect	Negligible Landscape Effect	Minor/Landscape Effect
Sensitivity of receptor	Low	Negligible Landscape Effect	Minor Landscape Effect	Minor/Landscape Effect
	Medium	Minor Landscape Effect	Moderate Landscape Effect	ModerateLandscape Effect
	High	Minor Landscape Effect	Moderate Landscape Effect	Major Landscape Effect
	Very High	Minor Landscape Effect	Moderate Landscape Effect	Major Landscape Effect

Key to Table 2

Negligible Not significant

Minor Mitigation should be explored but the effect would be a consideration of only limited Significance in the judgement

Moderate Every effort should be made to mitigate the impact and if moderate residual effects remain these would be Significant

Major Every effort should be made to mitigate the impacts/effects and if residual major effects remain these would be Significant

3.0 VIEWS

3.1 Visual Impact and Effects Methodology

- 3.1.1 Visual impacts relate to the effects on existing visual amenity and on Visual Receptors. Visual Receptors are people with views that may be altered by new development. Effects on visual amenity, as perceived by Landscape Receptors, are therefore clearly distinguished from, although linked to, effects on Landscape Character.
- 3.1.2 Viewpoints 1 to 5 and the associated visual impacts are described in Appendix I (HLA 678 R02). Near-distance views are defined as within 200 m of the site; medium-distance views as between 200m and 1 km; and long-distance views as beyond 1 km

3.2 Photographic Methodology (see Appendix 8)

- 3.2.1 In demonstrating photographic evidence to support viewpoint descriptions and impact judgements, it is important to adopt a photographic methodology that can be replicated by any other party. Accordingly, this LVIA follows the *Landscape Institute Advice Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals* (17-09-19) (Appendix 8) as the basis for viewpoint photography.
- 3.2.2 Photographic viewpoints are selected to give typical or representative views from a variety of locations and from near, middle and long distance locations. All Viewpoints are publicly accessible locations in the landscape.
- 3.2.3 Each photograph is taken from a height approximately 1.5m (eye level) above ground level.
- 3.2.4 The camera used for the viewpoints was a Canon EOS R7 digital mirrorless camera with a 50mm lens. Suppliers of cameras of this type prescribe this as the set-up which most closely resembles the image as seen by the human eye.
- 3.2.5 All photographs were taken at a time when views were clear and during the day. These photographs can be used for photomontage presentations although this is not the case with this LVIA.

3.3 Visual Baseline

- 3.3.1 Views to the Site were selected through desktop review and on-Site assessment as the most likely public locations from which the proposed development might be visible. As such, they demonstrate highest-impact or worst-case-scenario views, as recorded on 12th June 2026.
- 3.3.2 Visual Impact Assessment structure
- 3.3.3 The methodology sets out how to make visual impact judgements. Sensitivity is determined by assessing, and then cross-referencing, Visual Value with Visual Susceptibility using Table 3. The Magnitude of Impact for each viewpoint is determined using Table 4. The Significance of Visual Effect arising from the development is determined using Table 5, which cross-references the judgements for Visual Sensitivity and Magnitude of Change. The judgements also consider seasonal variations (e.g. when trees are in or out of leaf) and night-time conditions.



3.4 Visual Value

3.4.1 Visual Value judgements relate to the value attached to the view (not the visual receptor). The value judgements are made using the following criteria.

• **Very Low**

Views that are undocumented, not protected by any designation, and dominated by a significant landscape-detracting element or substantial detrimental man-made intrusion.

• **Low**

Views that are not documented or protected by any designation and do not have notable cultural, historic, or ecological associations, or that exhibit some detrimental man-made intrusion.

• **Medium**

Views that have a moderate level of visual interest and where the elements within the view are relatively intact, for example, local open spaces and local footpaths. These may also include views protected by County, District (or Borough), or Parish designations, or where there is a moderate level of cultural, historic, ecological, or other moderately important influences.

• **High**

High-quality views where attention or interest is prolonged and focused on the visual surroundings, where there is a high level of scenic visual interest, or where the composition includes significant cultural, historic, ecological, or other important influences, and where man-made intervention is limited or positive (unless of cultural value).

• **Very High:** Proprietary views where the attention or interest is prolonged and focused on the visual surroundings at an: international (World Heritage Sites); national (National Parks, AONBs and Heritage Coasts); county; regional or district scale, where there is a high level of scenic visual interest or the composition includes significant cultural, historic, ecological or other important influences and which is likely to have extremely limited or positive man-made intervention (unless of cultural value).

3.5 Visual Susceptibility

3.5.1 Visual Susceptibility is the ability of a view to accommodate the type of development being proposed without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. Judgements are made using the following criteria.

• **Low**

Views where the Visual Receptor’s attention is not focused on their surroundings and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life. Receptors may include drivers, people engaged in work tasks, or people participating in sports where the view is not an integral part of the experience.

• **Medium**

Views where Visual Receptors may have a moderate level of interest, for example, local open-space users, local people walking in community areas, or those engaged in activities where the view is not an integral part of the experience (e.g. cycling, walking, jogging), as well as passengers in vehicles.

• **High**

Views where Visual Receptors have a high level of interest, or where views are recorded in management plans or guidebooks, or are associated with nationally designated landscapes. This may include notable views from a National Trail or promoted route, or designed views (vistas) recorded in citations for historic parks and gardens or scheduled monuments. It may also include local residents who experience high-quality views, particularly where they have limited access to the wider countryside.

3.6 Visual Sensitivity

3.6.1 Visual Sensitivity is the degree to which the landscape can accommodate change without adverse impact on its composition and the ability to enjoy the view. It is determined by cross-referencing Visual Value with Visual Susceptibility.

Table 3 Determining Visual Sensitivity						
		Value				
		Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Susceptibility	Low	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium	High
	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	Very High

3.7 Magnitude of Visual Impact (see Table 4)

3.7.1 Magnitude of Visual Impact refers to the extent to which the proposed development would alter the existing characteristics of a visual composition and the ability to enjoy the view. Judgements combine the size or scale of change, the geographical extent, and the duration and reversibility.

Consideration is given to the loss, gain, deterioration, or enhancement of existing landscape and visual elements, as well as the scale, materiality, and design style of the development; the completeness of a view (e.g., open, enclosed, framed, partial, momentary, zoetropic, etc.); and the extent (see also the Zone of Theoretical Visibility), including the area affected and the number and types of Visual Receptors.

Table 4 Determining Magnitude of Visual Impact	
Visual impact magnitude	Description
Major visual impact or benefit	The proposals would cause a dominant or complete change to change to the landscape character and the visual composition
Moderate visual impact or benefit	The proposals would cause a clearly noticeable change to the landscape character and the visual composition
Slight visual impact or benefit	The proposals would cause a perceptible change to the landscape character and the visual composition
Negligible visual impact or benefit	The proposals would cause a barely perceptible change to the landscape character and the visual composition
No change	The proposals would cause no change to the view
Neutral	There would be a change to the view but it is not possible to judge whether this change is an adverse or beneficial impact

3.8 Visual Effect and Significance (see Table 5)

3.8.1 Views and the appreciation of the view are considered in terms of the requirements for mitigation and the long-term residual effects. These are judged using Table 5.

3.9 Duration of Visual Change

Duration judgements are made using the following criteria.

- **Short term or reversible**

Impacts have no influence and the visual baseline would be returned.
- **Medium term or partially reversible**

Effects that would last until planting establishment is becomes effective (10 to 25 years).
- **Long term or not reversible:**

Permanent effects (perceived as over 25 years).

Table 5 Determining Significance of Visual Effect

				Magnitude of Impact		
		Major impact or benefit	Moderate impact or benefit	Slight impact or benefit	Negligible impact or benefit	Neutral impact
	Very High	Major Visual Effect	Major Visual Effect	Moderate Visual Effect	Minor Visual Effect	Minor Visual Effect
	High	Major Visual Effect	Moderate Visual Effect	Moderate Visual Effect	Minor Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect
Sensitivity of receptor	Medium	Moderate Visual Effect	Moderate Visual Effect	Minor Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect
	Low	Moderate Visual Effect	Minor Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect
	Very Low	Minor Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect

Key to Table 5

Visual effect (VE)

- Negligible** The proposals would result in a change to the view that may be barely discernible and/or it would not be possible to make a beneficial or adverse judgement irrespective of the Sensitivity. The Effects are likely to be short-term or reversible and/or would be very small and lead to a Not Significant judgement.
- Minor** The proposals would result in a change to the view that would be barely discernible to clearly noticeable and would be dependent on the scale of judgement for Sensitivity. The Effects may be short-term or reversible and/or would be minimal and lead to a Not Significant judgement.
- Moderate** The proposals would result in a change to the view that would be perceptible to clearly noticeable and would be dependent on the scale of judgement for Sensitivity. The Effects may be long-term and irreversible and/or would be Significant in all cases.
- Major** he proposals would result in a change to the view that would be dominant or amount to a complete change where the impact is major and the sensitivity is high. The Effects would be long-term, irreversible, and Significant in all cases.

Significance

- Not Significant** Mitigation should be explored but the judgement should be a consideration of only limited weight
- Significant** Every effort should be made to mitigate the Effect and if residual Effects remain these should feature in the balance of considerations.

Bibliography

- Appendix 2 Natural England National Character Area (NCA) 122, High Weald
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- Appendix 3 High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (MP) 2024-2029
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- Appendix 4 *High Weald Housing Design Guide*, November 2019
<https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/0sxklfsy/high-weald-housing-design-guide.pdf>
- Appendix 5 *High Weald Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development*, September 2017
<https://highweald.org/~documents/publications/legislation-and-planning/high-weald-aonb-colour-study/?layout=default>
- Appendix 6 *A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape October 2005, Landscape Character Area (LCA) HW2 High Weald Forests*
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- Appendix 7 *Horsham District Landscape Character Assessment October 2003, Landscape Character Area (LCA) LI St Leonards Forest*
https://www.horsham.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/66546/Landscape-Character-Assessment-2003.pdf