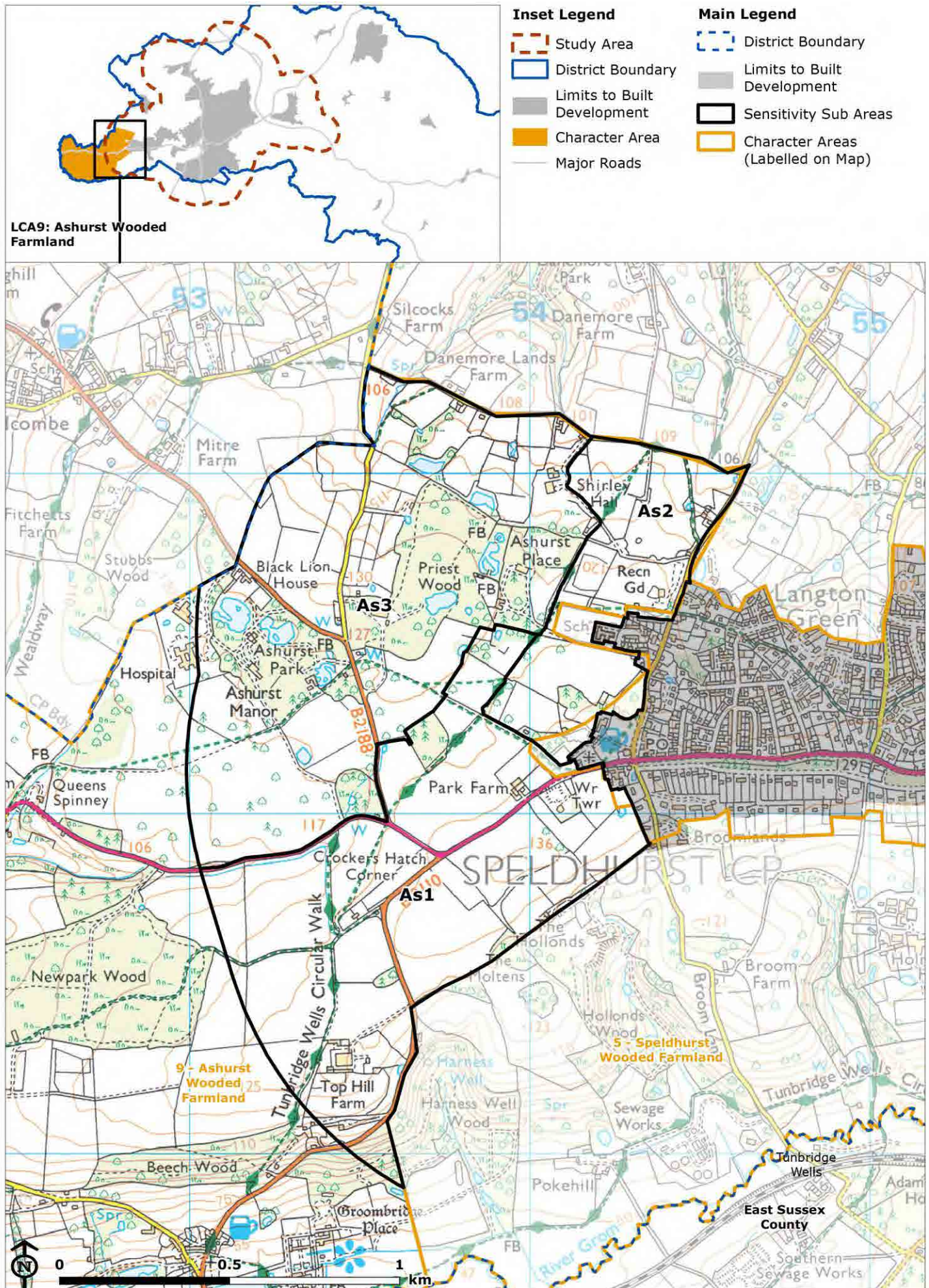
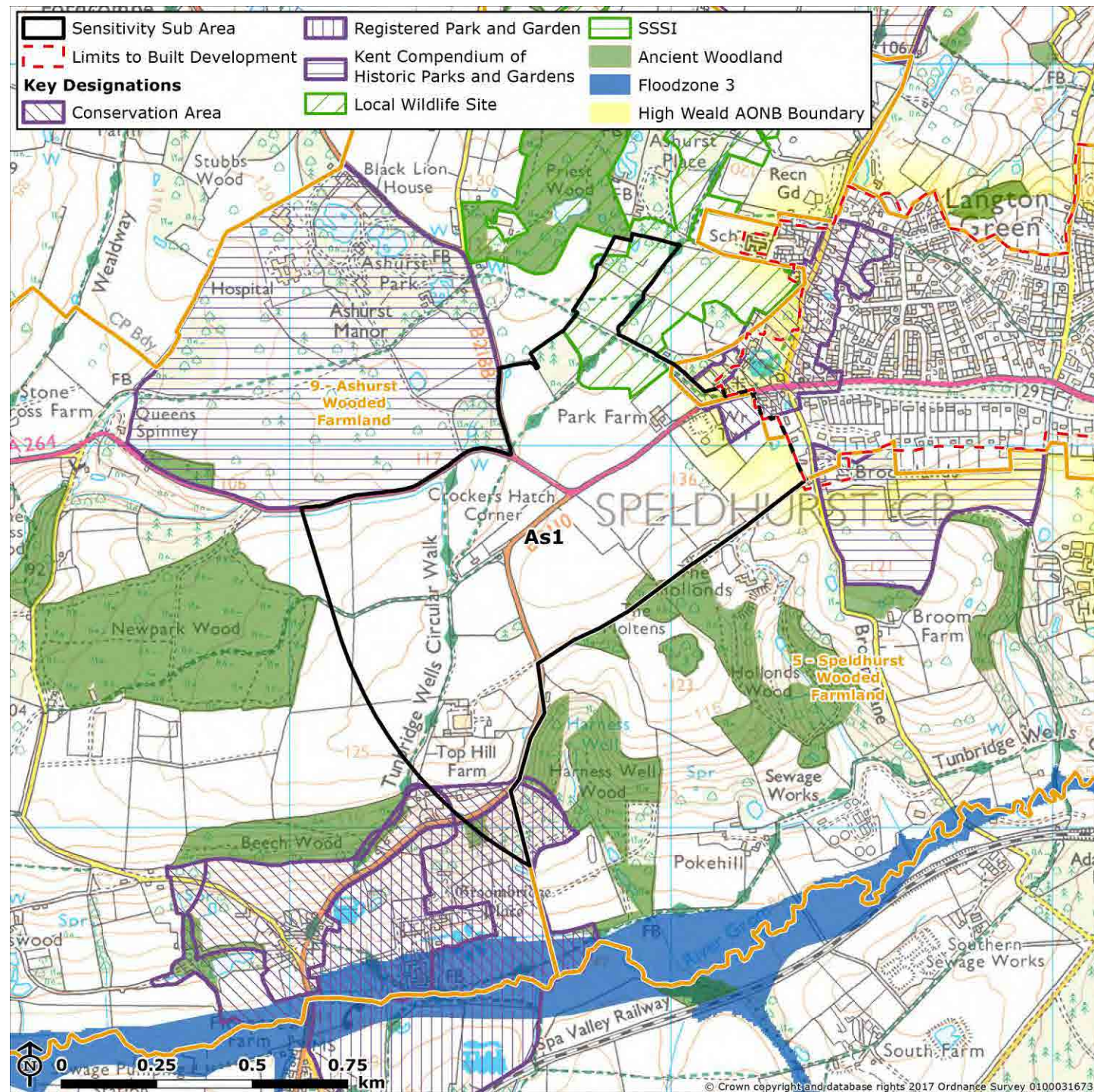


5 Sub-area Assessments

Ashurst Wooded Farmland








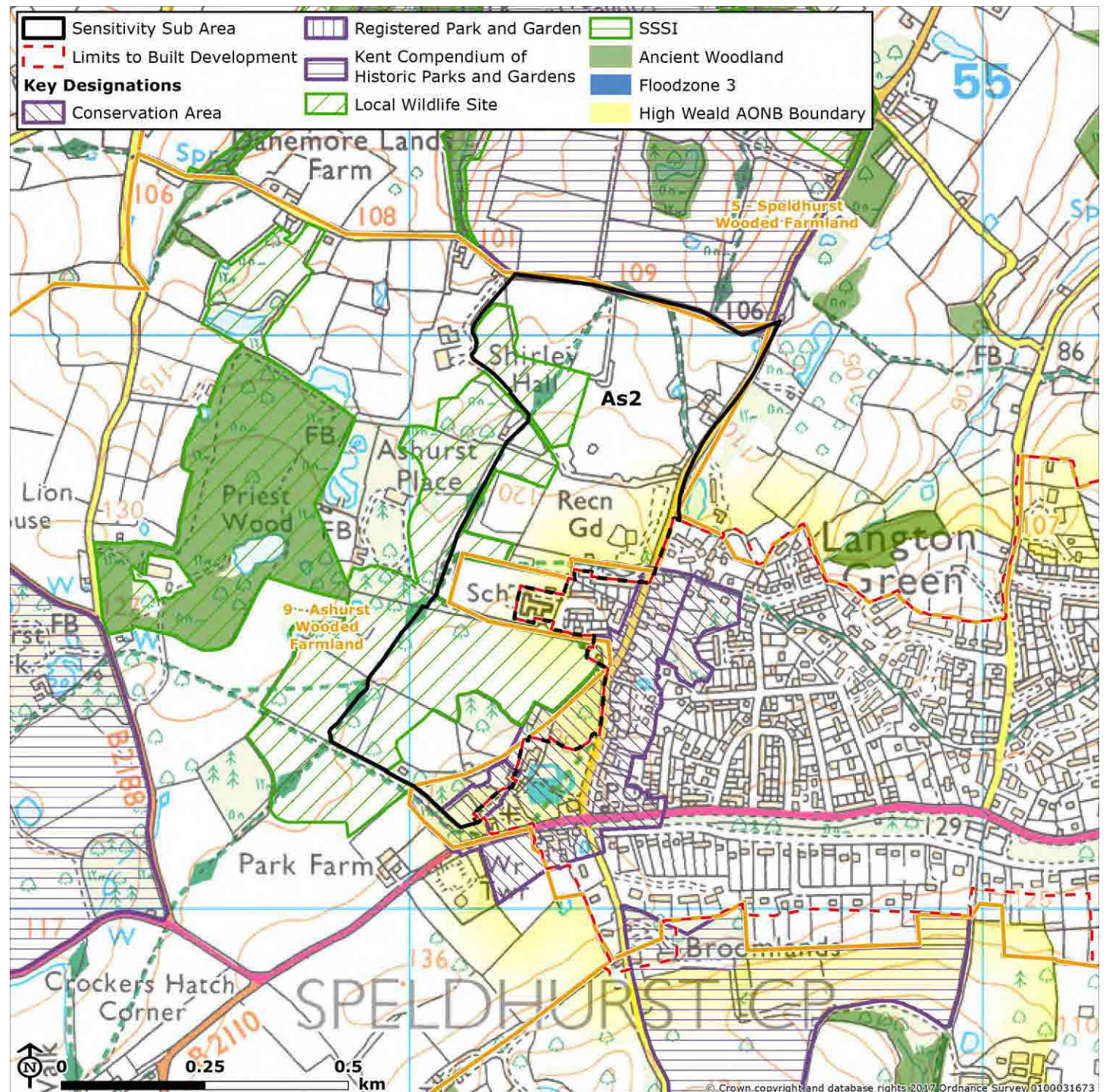
Representative views



Looking south-east, adjacent to the settlement edge, towards Park Farm and the water tower.

| Character Area 9 - Ashurst Wooded Farmland | | Sub-Area As1 |
|--|--|------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 86.7 |
| <p>The sub area comprises land to the south-west of Langton Green on the flat ridge-top to either side of the A264 Langton Road. A distinct change in topography at the crest of the River Grom valley marks the southern edge of the sub-area, whilst a transition to an area with a stronger parkland character and greater wooded enclosure defines the northern edge. To the west the study area extends almost to Newpark Wood. There are several isolated farmsteads and houses within the sub-area, and a prominent water tower close to the settlement edge on the main road. All of the sub-area aside from the field immediately adjacent to the Limits to Built Development on the edge of Langton Green, lies within the High Weald AONB.</p> | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | The landform in this area is relatively flat, consistent with the adjacent urban area of Langton Green. There are no strong sensitivities associated with landscape elements, but the well-treed hedgerows that divide the fields have landscape value and the isolated field trees and small woodland blocks on the northern edge of the sub-area hint at the parkland character which is more evident to the north in sub-area As3. | |
| Settlement form and edge | Land to the west of Langton Green is topographically similar, occupying the ridge top, but the settlement edge is well contained by tree cover in the vicinity of the old quarry and alongside the water tower. The fields between the water tower and the urban edge therefore have a stronger relationship with the settlement. | |
| Settlement setting | The absence of modern housing development to the west of Langton Green is important in the perception of village character on approaching along the A264 Langton Road, although the water tower has a detracting influence. Woodlands on the northern edge of the sub-area provide a rural backdrop. | |
| Visual character | This is a relatively open landscape, with views through to the areas which have a stronger parkland character, around the margins of Ashurst Park. Within the wider landscape context only the southern fringe of the sub-area is visually prominent, with views across the Grom valley. | |
| Perceptual qualities | The busy A264 has an intrusive impact but this is nonetheless clearly perceived as a working, rural landscape. The church, the Hare public house and the buildings of Hollonds Farm help to give the settlement edge a rural, village character. | |
| Historic character | Langton Green was historically a nucleated village, centred on The Green, which has expanded eastwards towards Tunbridge Wells but has retained its historic edge to the west. This is reflected in the location of its Conservation Area, which extends beyond the Limits to Built Development to include the gardens of dwellings to the west of The Green, a wooded former quarry and, to the south of Langton Road, the field to the west of Hollonds Farm. The view south from Langton Road is considered in the Langton Green Conservation Area Appraisal to be important for the preservation of rural character, although the ridge crest precludes any long view across the Grom valley from the settlement edge. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| <p>Topographically the area relates well to the adjacent settlement, and there aren’t strong sensitivities in terms of landscape elements, but the general absence of modern development on the western side of Langton Green is the key sensitivity to built development, reflected in the inclusion of open land adjacent to the urban edge within the village Conservation Area. There are also sensitivities associated with the settlement’s strong wooded edge, particularly to the north of Langton Road, and to the absence of a strong outer edge feature that would limit impact on the parkland character of the area to the north. Sensitivity to residential development is <i>medium-high</i>, and larger scale development would have greater impact on the village’s rural setting.</p> | | |

| Character Area 9 - Ashurst Wooded Farmland | | | Sub-Area As1 | | |
|---|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| Development in the area between the water tower and the settlement edge would have the least impact on wider landscape character, but any development would need to respect the character of the Conservation Area and retain some degree of visual openness from it, looking southwards. | | | | | |






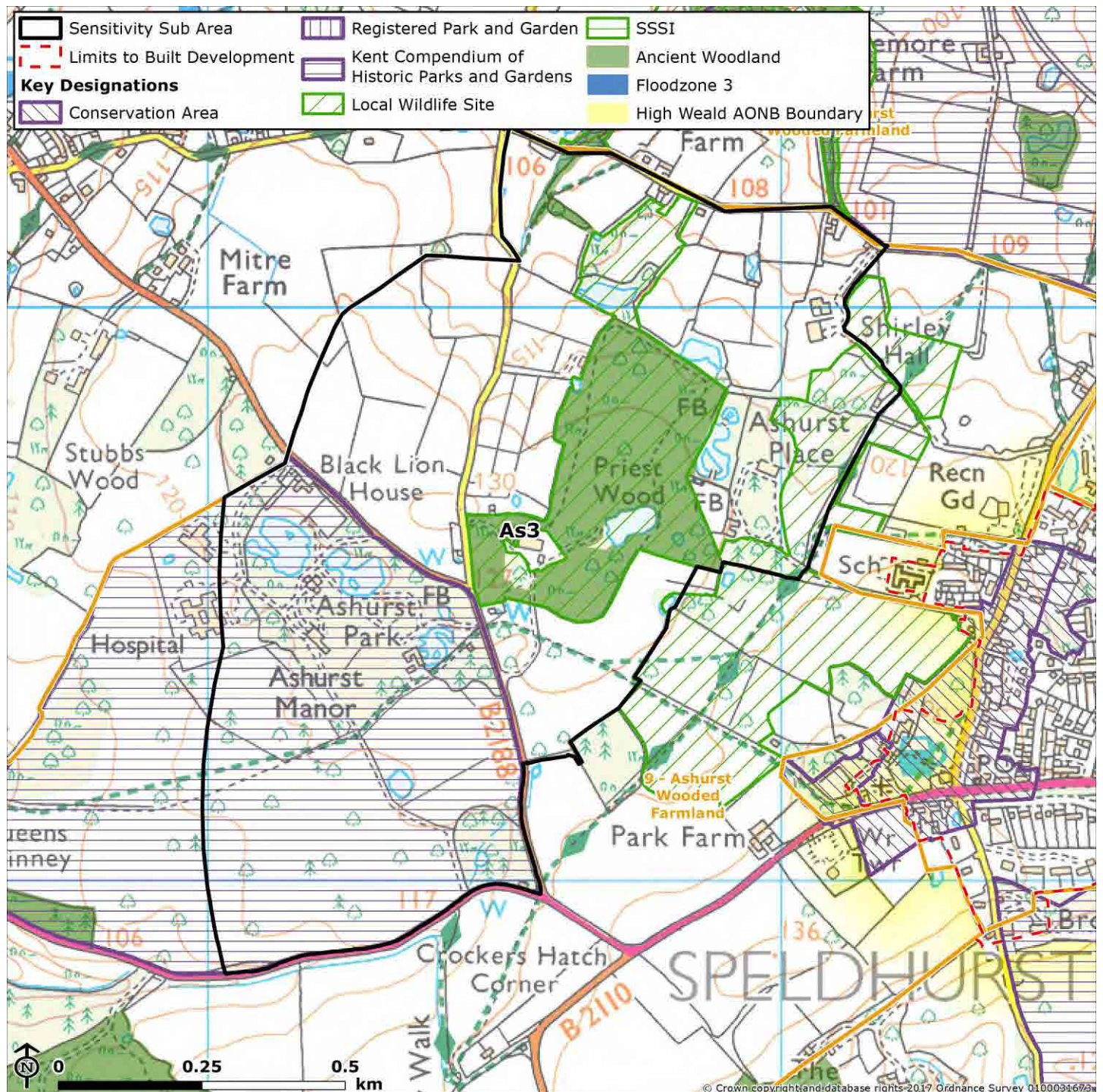
Representative views



Looking east from the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk towards isolated houses on Speldhurst Road.

| Character Area 9 - Ashurst Wooded Farmland | | Sub-Area As2 |
|---|--|------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 31.7 |
| <p>The sub area comprises land adjacent to the western edge of Langton Green to either side of the primary school. It includes a patchwork of small fields, including a recreation ground, with well-treed boundaries, lying between the settlement edge and several large houses in parkland surrounds (Ashurst Place, Shirley Hall and, slightly further west, Ashurst Park). A few residential dwellings and the village hall and parish council offices lie within the sub-area, to the west of Speldhurst Road outside of the Limits to Built Development.</p> <p>All of the sub-area lies within the High Weald AONB.</p> | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | <p>The landform generally slopes only very gently northwards, although there are some moderately steeper slopes in the north-eastern corner of the sub-area, and the fields are all pasture or amenity grassland. There is however some sensitivity associated with the mature trees which form a strong and small-scale field pattern.</p> <p>Some of the boundaries, particularly on the outer edges of the sub-area, have post and wire fences and lines of trees rather than dense hedgerows, and in places there are individual field trees. These elements combine to give a formal, parkland character to the area, but less so than in the fields to the west. Estates and parklands are a distinctive and valued characteristic of the Ashurst Wooded Farmland LCA.</p> | |
| Settlement form and edge | <p>The settlement of Langton Green is mostly located to the east of Speldhurst Road, along which tree cover creates fairly strong separation from the sub-area, but there is 1960's urban development to the west of the road - houses on Lampington Row and Winstone Scott Avenue and the primary school - which reduces sensitivity in terms of settlement form.</p> | |
| Settlement setting | <p>Visual separation from the settlement edge limits contribution to setting but these contained fields provide a transition to the more open, parkland landscape further west. There are sensitivities associated with the undeveloped, parkland character of the landscape as experienced from the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk, which passes north-south through the western edge of the sub-area, but the school and recreation ground, and coniferous garden boundaries in the southern part of the sub-area, already give some urban-edge character. The southern part of the sub-area borders the Langton Green Conservation Area but is quite strongly separated from it and doesn't play a visual role in its setting.</p> | |
| Visual character | <p>This is largely an enclosed landscape but there are occasional views west into adjacent parkland areas, and a greater sense of openness on the northern edge near Leggs' Lane, where the landform falls away northwards.</p> | |
| Perceptual qualities | <p>This is a quiet area, separated from major roads. It generally has more of an ornamental, parkland character than a rural and natural character, but rural character is stronger in the fields adjacent to Leggs' Lane on the northern edge of the sub-area.</p> | |
| Historic character | <p>Mature trees, absence of traffic intrusion and in places a visual relationship with landscape gardens and houses to the west, contribute some historic, parkland character to this sub-area, which helps to preserve, and is part of the setting of, the stronger parkland character of the landscape to the west and north. There are, however, urban fringe characteristics associated with modern development to the west of Speldhurst Road.</p> | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| <p>The key sensitivities in this sub-area relate to separation from the main settlement edge by tree cover along Speldhurst Road, and the potential impact of development on the quiet, parkland character of land to the west and north and on recreational use of the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk. However the presence of existing development to the east of the road and the extent of visual containment in the landscape limit these sensitivities.</p> <p>Some distinctions in overall sensitivity can be made within the sub-area. Fields on the outer edges of the sub-area which have a stronger parkland character and are adjacent to the circular walk, and fields adjacent to Leggs' Lane which have a more rural character, are considered to have <i>medium-high</i> sensitivity to small-scale residential development. The recreation ground and more contained fields to the south of the primary school are considered to have <i>medium</i> sensitivity to small-scale development. There would be greater sensitivity to larger-scale development in this village-edge location.</p> | | |

| Character Area 9 - Ashurst Wooded Farmland | | | Sub-Area As2 | | |
|---|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| Any development should be limited to the more physically and visually contained fields adjacent to existing development (the school, Lampington Row and Winstone Scott Avenue). Field boundaries should be strengthened to minimise the visual impact of any development on the parkland character of land to the west. | | | | | |






Representative views



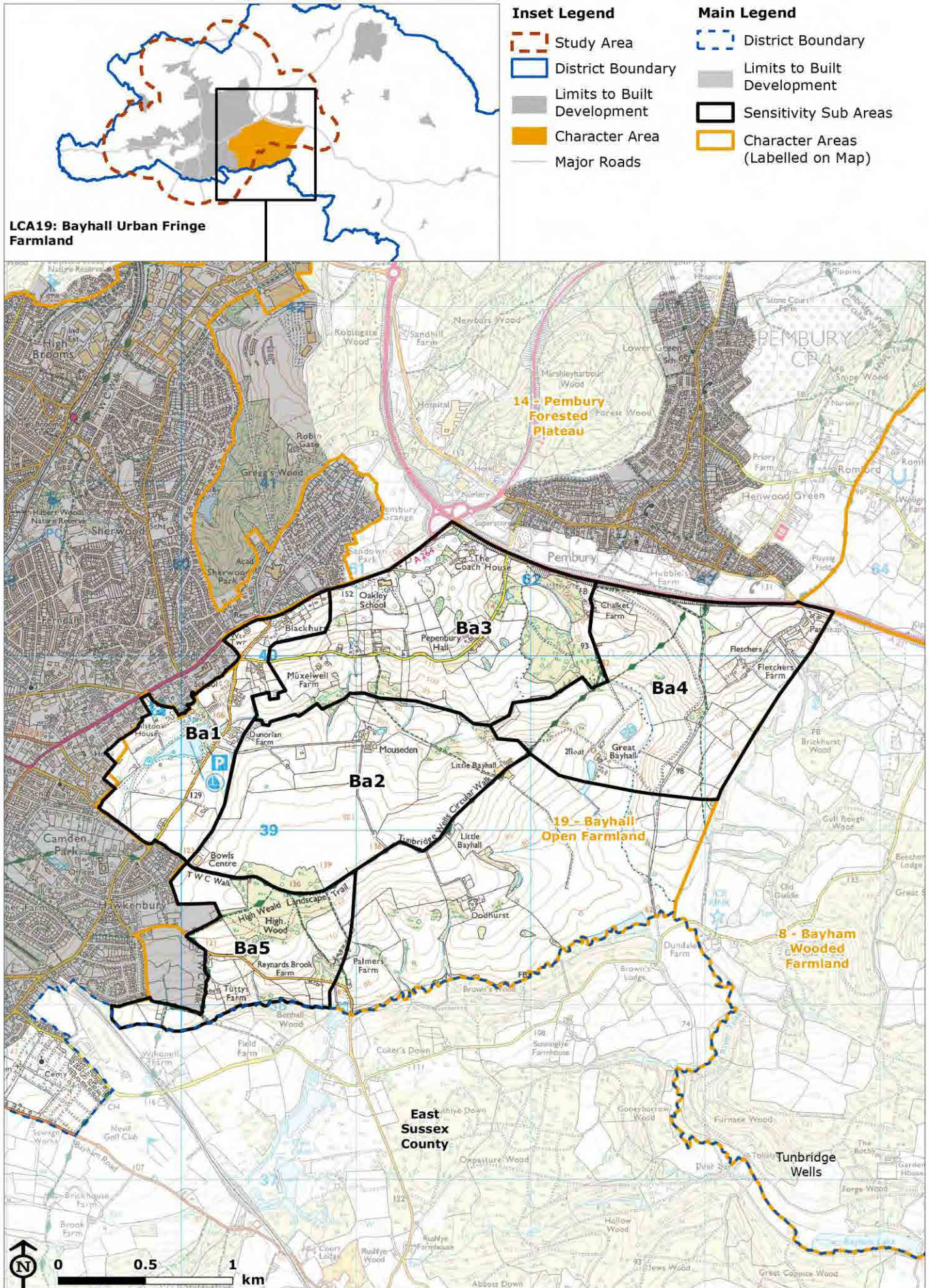
Looking north from Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk towards woodland at Ashurst Park.

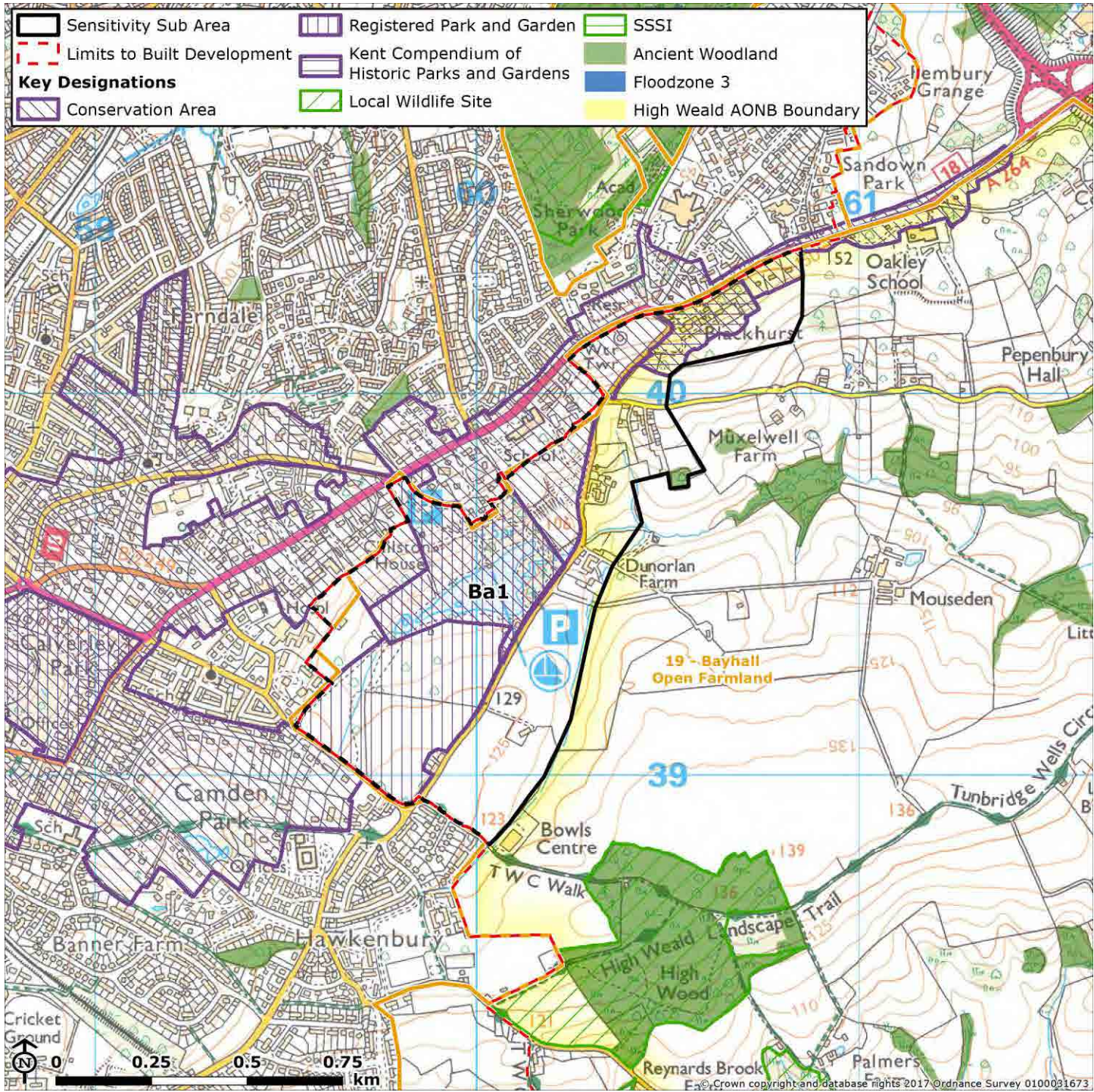
| Character Area 9 - Ashurst Wooded Farmland | | Sub-Area As3 |
|---|---|-----------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 103 |
| <p>This sub-area consists of parklands, woodland and agricultural land to the west of Langton Green, beyond the smaller settlement-edge fields of As2. It is contained by the A264 Ashurst Road to the south and by Leggs’ Lane (the edge of the Ashurst Wooded Farmland LCA) to the north, and is bisected by the B2188 Fordcombe Road. There are several large houses in this sub-area, principally Ashurst Manor, Ashurst Place and Shirley Hall, a private hospital close to Ashurst Manor and some scattered farmsteads and other dwellings.</p> <p>All of the sub-area lies within the High Weald AONB.</p> | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | This is a gently undulating plateau centred on, and sloping down from, Priest Wood and Ashurst Park. The land between the A264 and the B2188 is all part of Ashurst Park, which is listed in the Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens and includes woodland blocks, lakes, and specimen trees located in open grassland. The Borough Landscape Character Assessment identifies parklands as a characteristic and valued element of the Ashurst Wooded Farmland LCA. Priest Wood is an ancient woodland, and land to the east and north of it, although less open and expansive than Ashurst Park, has a more contained parkland character, much of it associated with two 19th century houses: Ashurst Place and Shirley Hall. | |
| Settlement form and edge | The sub-area does not adjoin the urban edge at Langton Green, being separated from it by a series of fairly small fields enclosed by strong tree cover (see sub-area As2). The area to the east of Priest Wood has a stronger relationship with the settlement than land to the west, but still constitutes a distinctly separate landscape, dominated by woodland and parkland trees. | |
| Settlement setting | The area forms part of the wider rural setting of Langton Green, and combines with parkland at Danemore, on the north-facing slopes beyond Leggs’ Lane, to give a strong wooded parkland character to the land between Speldhurst and Langton Green. | |
| Visual character | There are variations in visual character, with openness on the western side of the sub-area and greater enclosure in the woodlands at the centre and the small, strongly-bounded fields to the east and north. | |
| Perceptual qualities | There is some intrusion associated with the A264 and, to a lesser extent, the B2188, but in general the area has an isolated and scenic rural character resulting from it strong woodland framework, parkland trees and absence of urban influence. | |
| Historic character | Parkland trees and woods and the houses associated with them contribute historic character to the landscape, and Priest Wood and the assarted fields to the north of it are medieval in origin. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| This area lacks relationship with the settlement edge at Langton Green. Woodland and parkland dominate, and whilst there are variations in openness and in extent of intrusion from main roads all of the area retains a rural, historic character, valued as part of the High Weald AONB. Sensitivity to all scales of development is <i>high</i>. | | |

| Character Area 9 - Ashurst Wooded Farmland | | | Sub-Area As3 | | |
|---|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. | | | | | |

Bayhall Open Farmland

Landscape Character Area 19 - Bayhall Open Farmland








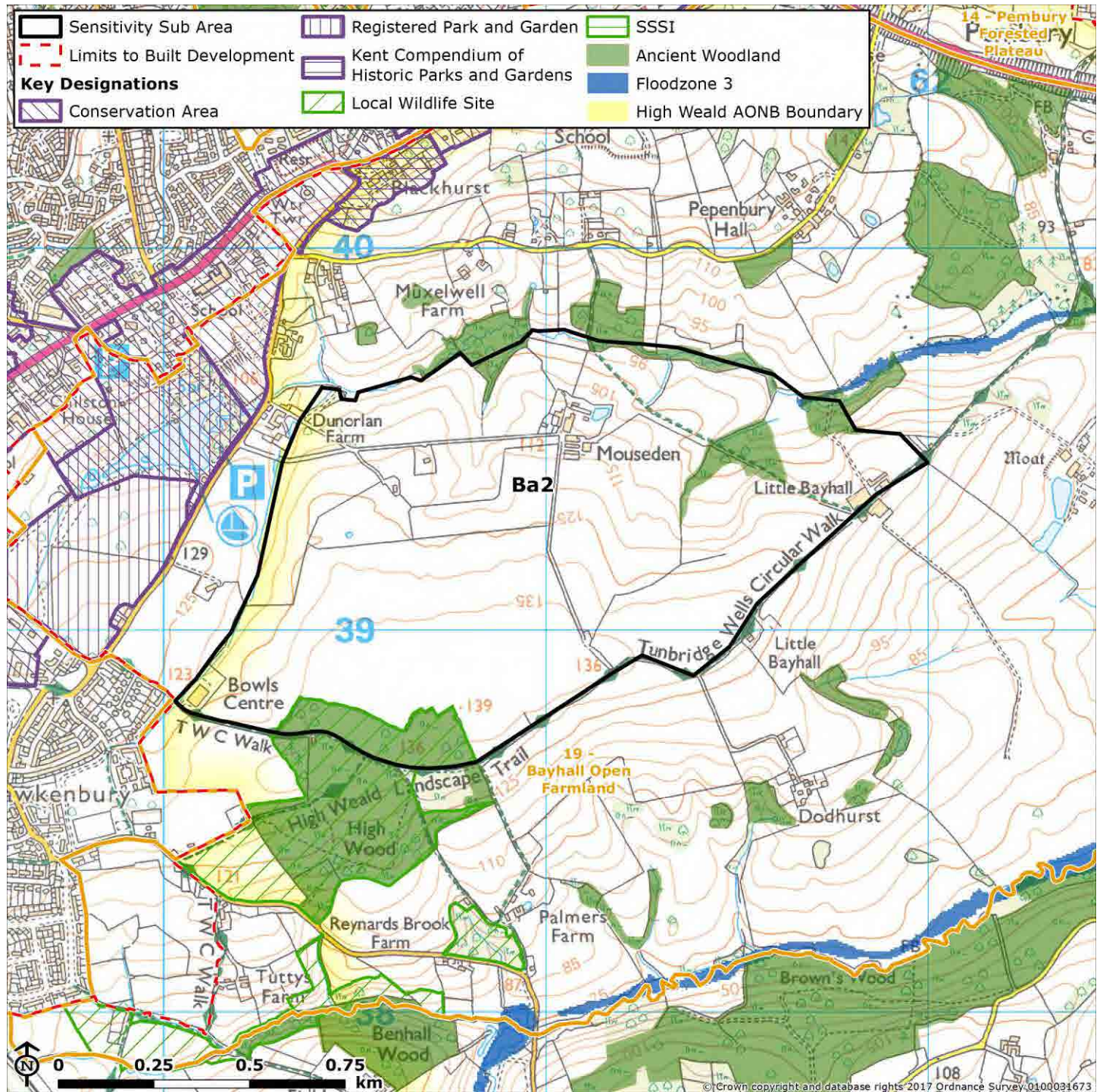
Representative views



Dunorlan Park, looking south-east towards High Wood.

| Character Area 19 - Bayhall Open Farmland | | Sub-Area Ba1 |
|---|---|------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 71.8 |
| Sub area Ba1 is located adjacent to the settlement edge east of Tunbridge Wells. It consists of Dunorlan Park, allotments, open fields, Dunorlan Farm, school and residential properties east of Hall’s Hole Road. The north-eastern part of the sub-area east of Hall’s Hole Road and north of Dunorlan Farm lies within the AONB. | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | The sub-area comprises a distinctive smoothly undulating open ridge with north-east/south-west orientated valleys either side. There are a number of landscape features of importance to local character including woodland (with some small blocks of ancient woodland), mature trees and the Registered parkland of Dunorlan Park which is key to the character of the area. | |
| Settlement form and edge | Dunorlan Park provides a distinct edge to the settlement of Tunbridge Wells and the park provides a transition between the settlement and countryside, indicating higher sensitivity. Beyond the park the sub-area adjoins the settlement edge at Hawkenbury where the edge is formed by a road and hedgerow, and allotments within the sub-area which creates a link with existing settlement form. There is not a distinct separating feature here and therefore development within this area would not represent a step change in settlement form. | |
| Settlement setting | The sub-area provides an important part of the landscape setting to Tunbridge Wells, providing a transition between the settlement and wider countryside. Dunorlan Park is an important feature to the identity of Tunbridge Wells and the Pembury Road Conservation Area, with wide views across the parkland and to the wider landscape further south from Dunorlan Park and the Conservation Area. The park provides recreation value where experience of the landscape is important. | |
| Visual character | There is strong intervisibility between the sub-area and the surrounding High Weald AONB landscape. There are broad 'borrowed' views of the landscape to the south (the ridge) which are important to the character of Dunorlan Park (highly valued views within the popular visitor attraction), towards the ridge and High Wood. In reverse there are views back to the buildings on the edge of Tunbridge Wells. There is more visual enclosure close to the A264 as a result of dense trees and woodland. | |
| Perceptual qualities | There are modern human influences in the sub-area including allotments, residential properties, the busy A264 and the managed public park. Dunorlan Park provides aesthetic value with sweeping views across the ornamental parkland. | |
| Historic character | Dunorlan Park (Grade II Registered Park and Garden) contains many surviving 19th century (listed) features/ buildings and original design and is important to local character. Hall’s Hole Lane is an ancient routeway typical of the AONB landscape and has a strong character, particularly in the sunken section close to Pembury Road. Blackhurst listed building is also of historic interest to character. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| The key sensitivities of the sub-area are the historic parkland of Dunorlan Park and the views within, from and towards it, and intervisibility with the AONB to the south, as well as the role the area plays in the setting of the AONB and the setting of Tunbridge Wells. The sub-area is therefore considered to have a <i>high</i> sensitivity to any scale of development. | | |

| Character Area 19 - Bayhall Open Farmland | | | Sub-Area Ba1 | | |
|---|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. | | | | | |






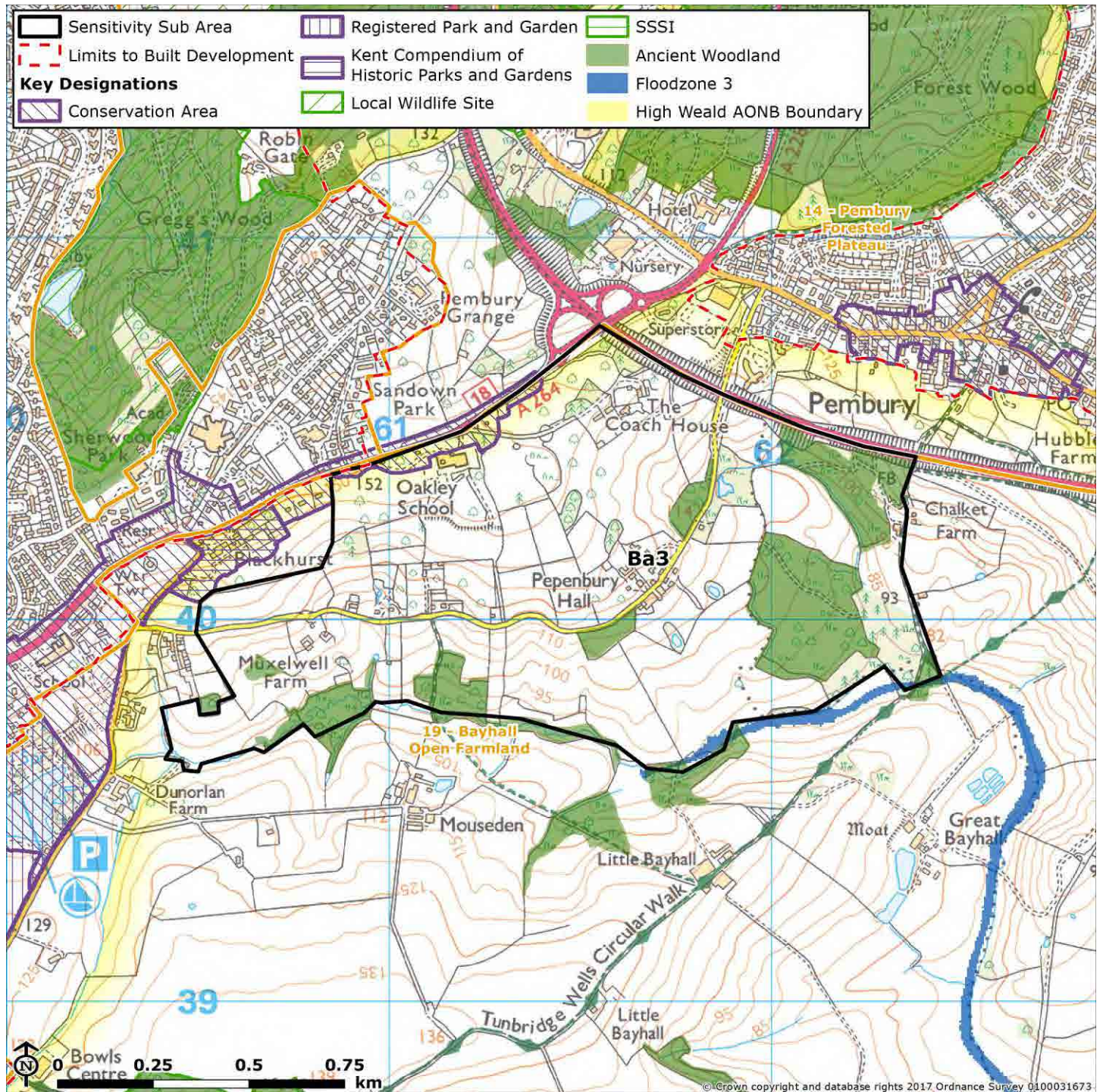
Representative views



Arable field west of High Wood, looking south towards Royal Tunbridge Wells.

| Character Area 19 - Bayhall Open Farmland | | Sub-Area Ba2 |
|--|---|-------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 146.3 |
| Sub area Ba2 is located south-east of Royal Tunbridge Wells. It only touches the settlement edge at its south-western corner, alongside a bowls club on the edge of Hawkenbury. The remainder of the area comprises arable and pasture fields on the Bayhall ridge with occasional isolated, dispersed farms, and the northern part of High Wood. The sub-area lies within the AONB. | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | This is a broad, smooth and distinctive ridge and one of the highest ridges in the borough. The scale of the landform and landscape pattern is relatively large. Towards the north of the sub-area is a ghyll valley with extensive areas of ancient woodland, important to local character and typical of the High Weald AONB. | |
| Settlement form and edge | The area is distinctly separated from Tunbridge Wells by the valley which extends into Dunorlan Park and the distinctiveness of the high ridgeline. | |
| Settlement setting | The ridge line provides an important part of the landscape setting containing Tunbridge Wells and Dunorlan Park. The sub-area contributes to the wider landscape setting and separation between Tunbridge Wells and Pembury. The Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk/ High Weald Landscape Trail is a valued recreation route through the sub-area. | |
| Visual character | The open arable fields and prominent landform result in a strong intervisibility between the sub-area and the surrounding landscape. Views of High Wood and the ridge add to the value and setting of Dunorlan Park (highly valued views within the popular visitor attraction) and the character of the wider landscape. The Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk is a valued recreation route with extensive views to the sub-area and across the successive wooded ridges of the High Weald Landscape. There are localised areas which are more visually enclosed, including the valley bottom. | |
| Perceptual qualities | This is a strongly rural landscape with a sense of relative remoteness as a result of the lack of development in the area and views to the surrounding wooded ridges of the wider AONB. | |
| Historic character | The Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk follows an ancient routeway which is important to local character and typical of the High Weald AONB. Occasional small areas of medieval assart fields and woodland are present but overall the area does not have strong historic qualities. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| The key sensitivities of the sub-area are its physical and visual sensitivity as a result of the distinctive ridge topography and intervisibility with the surrounding landscape – including in views from the High Weald AONB (of which it is part) and from Dunorlan Park. It also provides a wider setting and separation between Tunbridge Wells and Pembury. | | |

| Character Area 19 - Bayhall Open Farmland | | | Sub-Area Ba2 | | |
|---|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| There are opportunities to restore landscape structure such as boundary hedges and small woodland copses, although it will be important to ensure that tree planting does not obscure extensive views from the ridgeline. | | | | | |






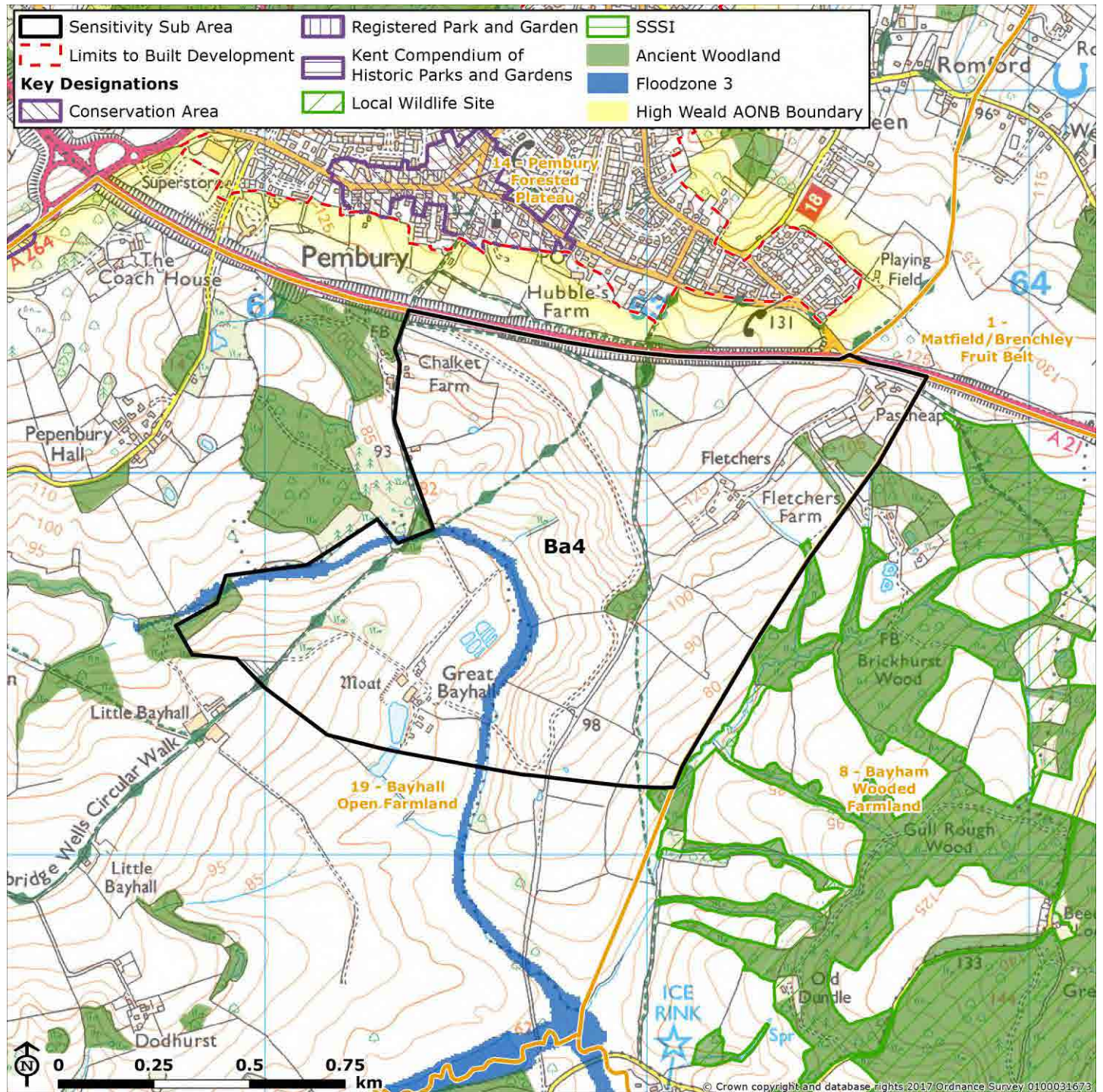
Representative views



Cornford Lane – looking south towards Mouseden Farm.

| Character Area 19 - Bayhall Open Farmland | | Sub-Area Ba3 |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 139.8 |
| Sub area Ba3 is located south of the A264 between Tunbridge Wells and Pembury. It comprises a broad, high ridge which falls down to a valley and consists of woodland, open fields and scattered properties along Cornford Lane and south of the A264. The sub-area lies within the AONB. | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | The landform comprises a broad, smooth ridge and steeply sloping valley side which drops down to a wooded valley. The landform and landscape pattern are medium-large in scale, with a framework of fields, hedgerows and shaw woodland creating an intricate landscape pattern in contrast to the more open ridges in the wider character area, and are of relatively high sensitivity. The wooded valley contains extensive areas of ancient woodland and wooded blocks and shaws, as well as mature trees associated with former parkland around Oakleigh. | |
| Settlement form and edge | Pembury Road and the A21 contain the adjacent settlements to the north (Sandown Park) and north-east (Pembury). The sub-area overall has a dispersed settlement pattern but with some linear settlement along Cornford Lane although this is distinct from both Tunbridge Wells and Pembury settlements. Therefore any development within the area would be inconsistent with existing settlement form. | |
| Settlement setting | The sub-area contributes to the rural setting and gap between Tunbridge Wells and Pembury. | |
| Visual character | The sloping topography allows glimpsed views across the successive wooded ridges of the High Weald, although overall the strong wooded framework provides visual containment. The ridge contributes towards screening and containment of the settlements of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury in views from the south. | |
| Perceptual qualities | The rural Cornford lane, dispersed settlement pattern and views to the surrounding wooded ridges of the AONB give the area a strong rural character. Modern development around Pepenbury Hall detracts from the scenic character of the area but overall it is typical of the AONB landscape which creates a rural character despite the area's proximity to settlement and major roads. | |
| Historic character | The sub-area has a relatively intact medieval landscape pattern, particularly in the valley to the south of Cornford Lane. Irregular assart fields with wooded shaw boundaries are important to the character of the area and the AONB, and Cornford Lane is an ancient routeway with strong historic character. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| The role the area plays in the landscape setting/ gap between Tunbridge Wells and Pembury and the sense of rurality means that the area is considered to have a <i>high</i> sensitivity to all types of development. | | |




| Character Area 19 - Bayhall Open Farmland | | | Sub-Area Ba3 | | |
|--|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics | | | | | |

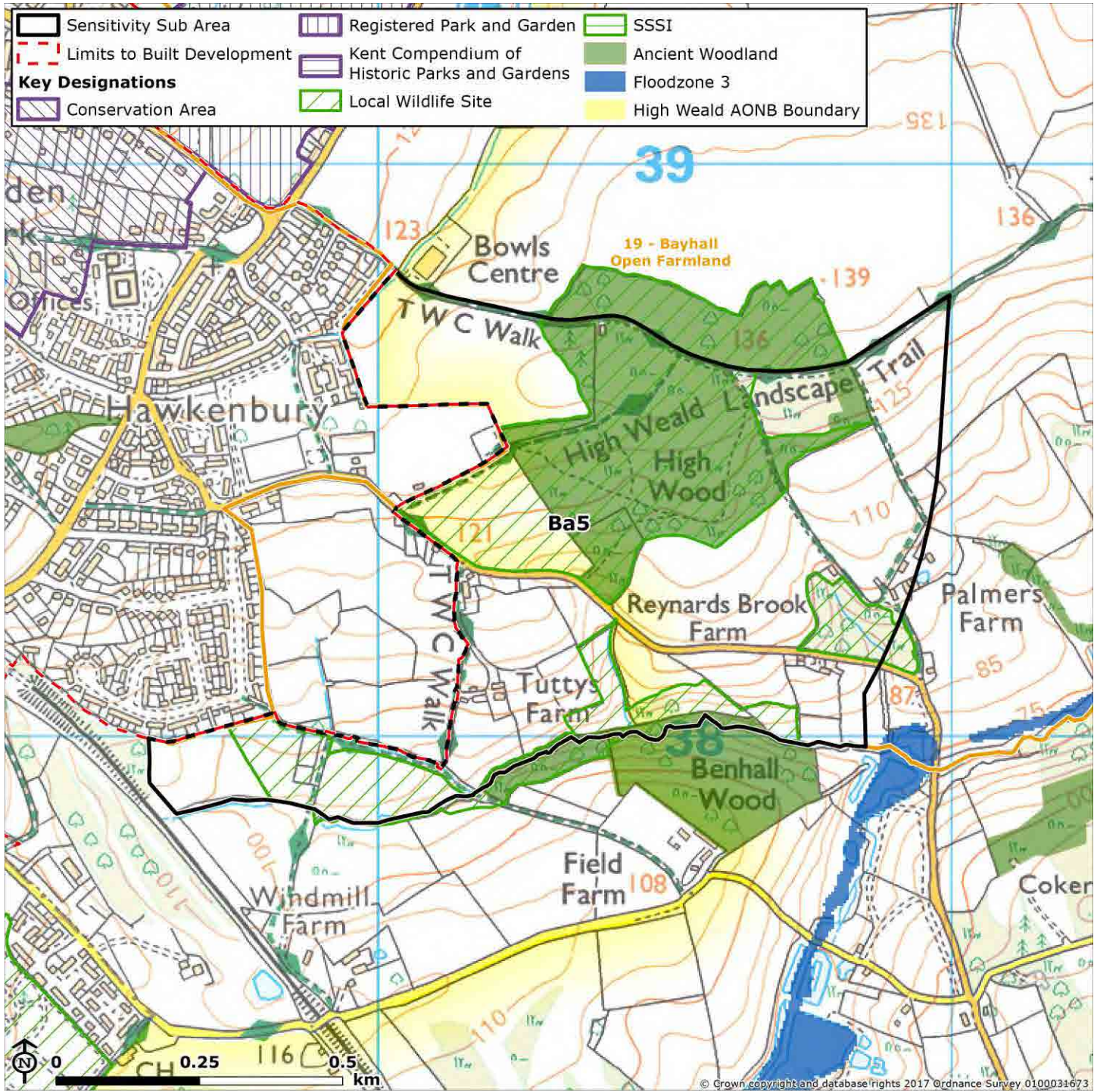


Representative views

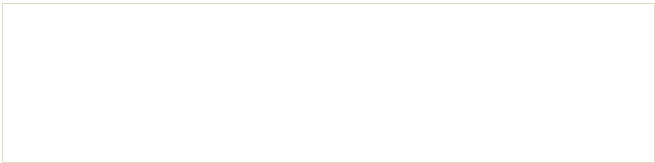


Looking east towards the area from the High Weald Landscape Trail.




| Character Area 19 - Bayhall Open Farmland | | Sub-Area Ba4 | | | |
|---|---|--|-------------------|----|---|
| Description | | | Area (Ha) - 139.4 | | |
| Sub area Ba4 is located south of the A21 to the south of Pembury. It does not adjoin the settlement edge and there is no development in the area except for isolated dispersed farmsteads. The area contains agricultural fields, woodland on the high ridgetop, defined by two valleys either side. The sub-area lies within the AONB. | | | | | |
| Assessment criterion | | Sensitivity description | | | |
| Physical character | | There is complex topography comprising a series of elevated undulating smooth ridges, divided by valleys, with some steep valley sides. The small blocks of ancient woodland are important landscape elements. | | | |
| Settlement form and edge | | The settlement of Pembury is contained north of the A21 and the sub-area is distinctly separate from the settlement, with no areas adjoining the existing settlement edge. | | | |
| Settlement setting | | The Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk crosses through the area, providing important recreation landscape value for local communities in Tunbridge Wells and Pembury. The area also provides a wider rural setting to Pembury and Tunbridge Wells, for example along the A21. | | | |
| Visual character | | The sub-area is open and elevated, with little woodland overall, creating an exposed landscape which is intervisible with the surrounding AONB landscape. | | | |
| Perceptual qualities | | The area has a strong rural character with strong scenic qualities and a dispersed settlement pattern and views to the surrounding wooded ridges of the wider AONB. The pattern of irregular fields creates visual interest and the lack of development in the area results in relatively dark skies (particularly in the south of the sub-area), strong rural character and a sense of relative remoteness. | | | |
| Historic character | | The pattern of irregular assart fields and the ancient routeway on the ridge, as well as dispersed historic farmsteads (including Great Bayhall and surrounding ponds), are highly sensitive features. | | | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | | | | |
| The key sensitivities of the sub-area are its undeveloped, rural historic character, distinct landform and separation from the existing settlement edges. For these reasons, it is considered to have a <i>high</i> sensitivity to any type of development. The undulating landscape and valleys although provide a rural setting to Pembury and Tunbridge Wells as well being a feature of the AONB. | | | | | |
| Development scenario | | Sensitivity assessment | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. | | | | | |



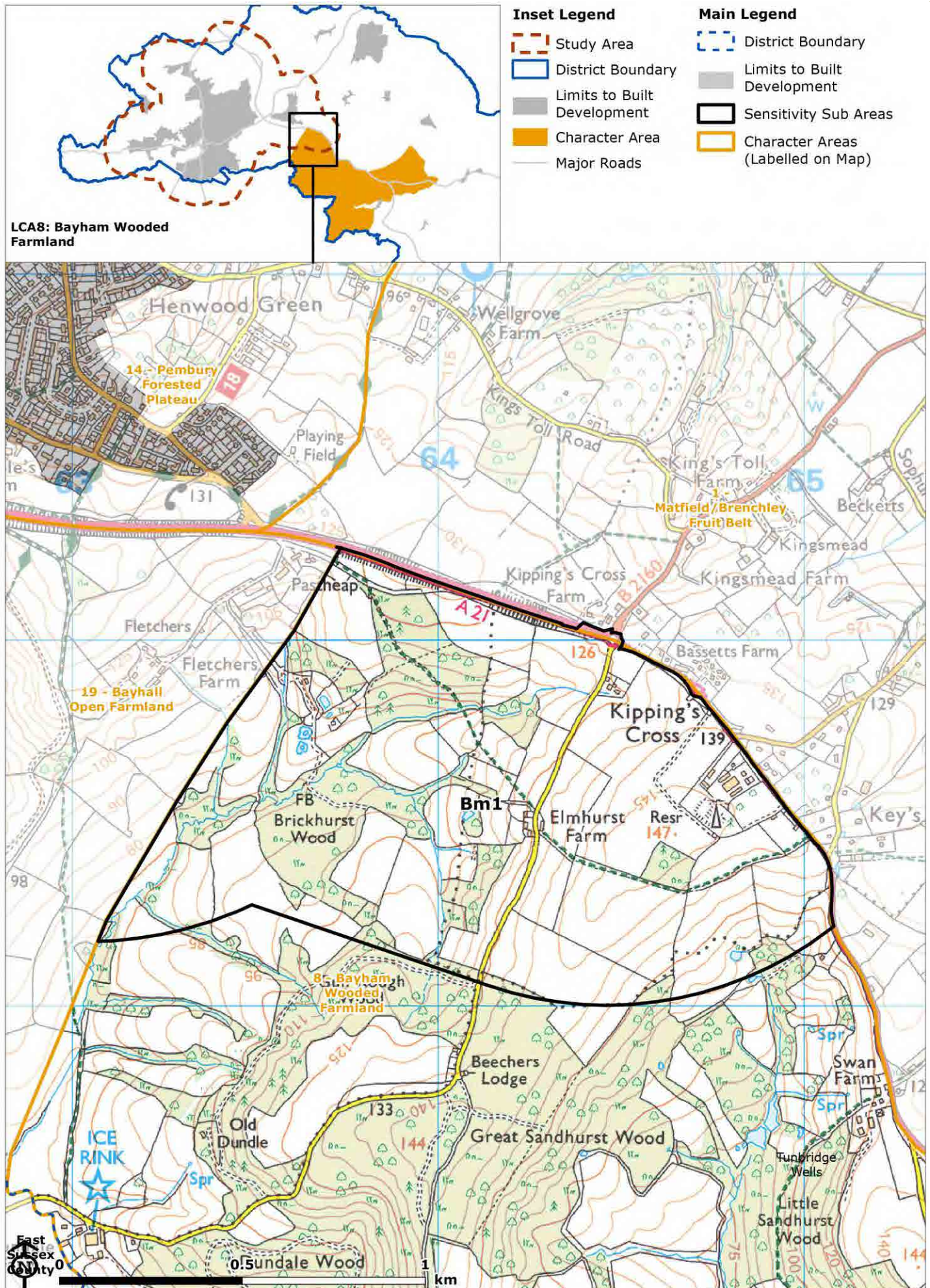
Representative views

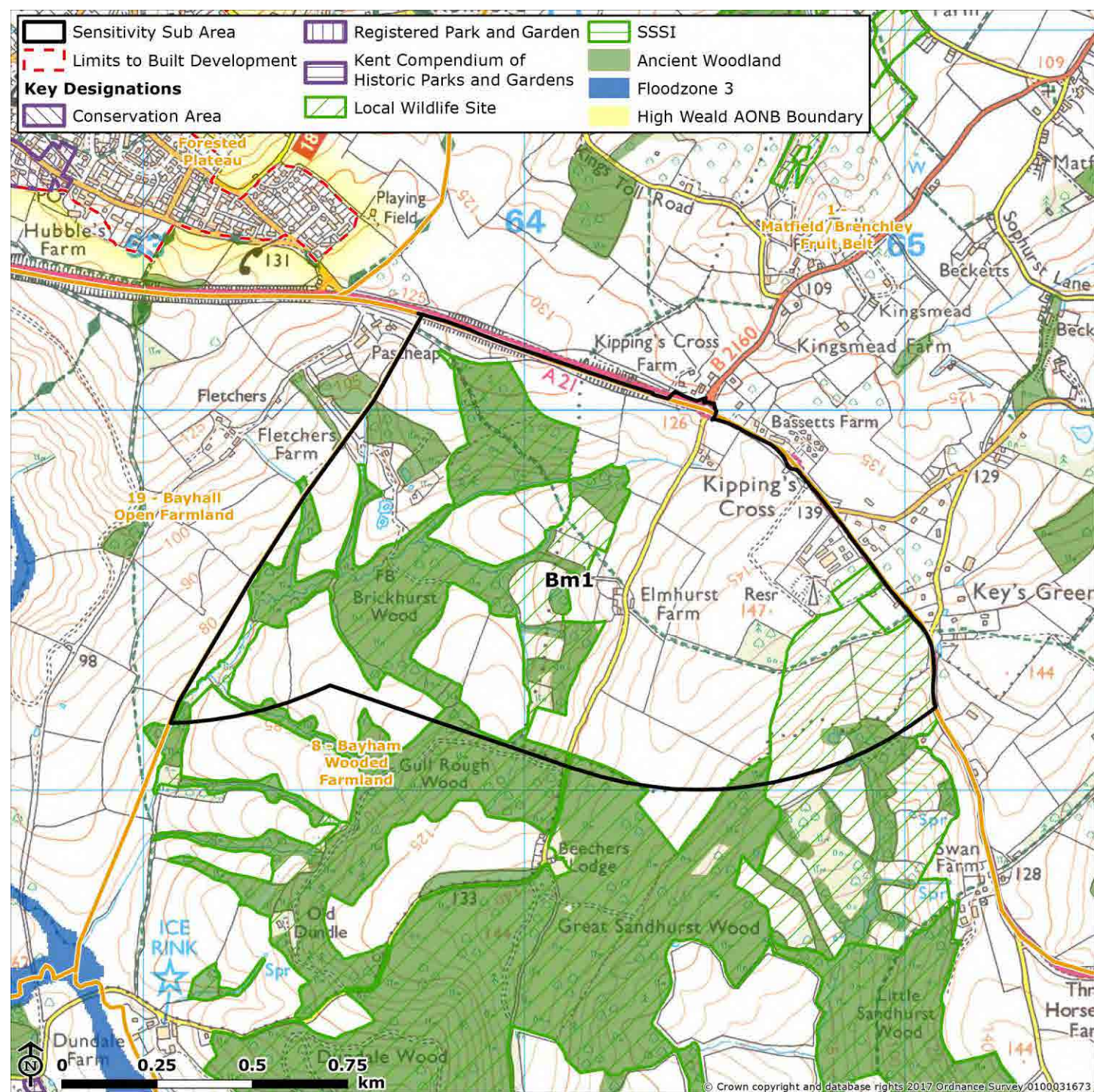


| Character Area 19 - Bayhall Open Farmland | | Sub-Area Ba5 |
|--|--|------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 46.4 |
| Sub-area Ba5 is land to either side of Hawkenbury Road, between High Wood to the north and the district boundary to the south. The 1km study area extends out to the upper valley of the River Teise, where two farmsteads and several other dwellings are located around the edges of a small woodland block. The sub-area abuts the current urban edge of Tunbridge Wells at its northern and southern ends, adjacent to Cleeve Avenue and Chieveley Drive respectively, and shares a frontage with land to the east of Maryland Road which has been allocated for development in the Local Plan. The northern and western parts of the sub-area lie within the High Weald AONB. | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | High Wood is situated on the southern face of a prominent hilltop, beneath which the land slopes fairly steeply down into the Teise valley. The valley here is narrow and relatively steep-sided, with the confluence of two valleys adding landform complexity. Strong hedgerows and woodland blocks on the valley edges and floor combine with landform to create an intimate, small-scale landscape, characteristic of the High Weald AONB. To the south-west, towards the head of the valley, the slope is more moderate and consistent with the topography over which the adjacent settlement extends, but watercourses and associated tree cover add sensitivity, and the field pattern is small-scale and on the lower slopes generally well-hedged. Most of the wooded streamside area and several low-lying fields are also a Local Wildlife Site. | |
| Settlement form and edge | The field adjacent to Cleeve Avenue, contained to the south by Hawkenbury Recreation Ground and to the east by High Wood, has a stronger association with the settlement than the narrow, woodland-framed valley to the east of Tuttys Farm, there is a stronger sense of isolation from the urban edge. To the south of Hawkenbury existing development has extended the urban area down from the ridge crest on Forest Road to within a short distance of the valley floor, and the strong field boundaries and watercourses along the valley floor represent a strong edge. | |
| Settlement setting | High Wood is prominent in the setting of this edge of Tunbridge Wells, so there is sensitivity to any development which would intrude views towards it from the settlement edge, or which would bring development into view approaching the town from the more isolated valley to the east. A number of public rights of way traverse the northern slopes of the valley up to High Wood, adding to the informal recreational value of the area. The valley side to the south of Chieveley Drive is fairly contained, with strong tree cover around its margins, so its contribution to settlement setting is limited. However the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk / High Weald Landscape Trail passes through the sub-area, and tree cover between the settlement edge and the valley floor limits visibility of newer housing from the path, so that there is a perception of a transition from countryside to town rather than a hard edge. | |
| Visual character | Woodland provides containment within the valley, and between the settlement edge and High Wood, but there are strong, scenic views across the wooded Wealden landscape from the slopes to the south-west of High Wood in which tree cover restricts visibility of the urban area. The ridge crest along the northern side of the sub-area forms an attractive, undeveloped skyline. | |
| Perceptual qualities | Openness and elevation combined with the rural character of views and the absence of intrusive landscape elements to give a tranquil, rural character to high ground on the northern edge of the valley. The valley to the south has a more intimate but equally strong character, with a sense of rural remoteness, but there is sufficient visibility of housing at the western end of the valley for this to be clearly perceived as an urban fringe location. There are no major roads in this area, which limits intrusion. | |
| Historic character | The farmsteads towards the outer edge of the sub-area are both historic (19th century), and most of the fields reflect medieval or early post-medieval enclosure. High Wood and Benhall Wood are both ancient woodland. The smaller, well-hedged fields adjacent to the settlement edge at the western end of the valley are similar in character to those within the AONB. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| This eastern half of this area has a strong rural character, with characteristic High Weald AONB landscape elements. The strong landforms of the Teise valley and their containing woodlands and field boundaries mask visual relationships with the future settlement edge, and views from the higher ground create a strong relationship with the wider rural landscape, so sensitivity to all scales of development is <i>high</i>. The western half has a stronger association with the urban edge, but proximity to High Wood adds | | |

| Character Area 19 - Bayhall Open Farmland | | | Sub-Area Ba5 | | |
|---|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| visual/setting sensitivity to the land adjacent to Cleeve Avenue, the Tutty's Farm area is also visually sensitive, and the well-treed valley floor area to the south of Hawkenbury has sensitive landscape elements. Sensitivity to small-scale development in these areas is <i>medium-high</i> . | | | | | |
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. | | | | | |

Bayham Wooded Farmland








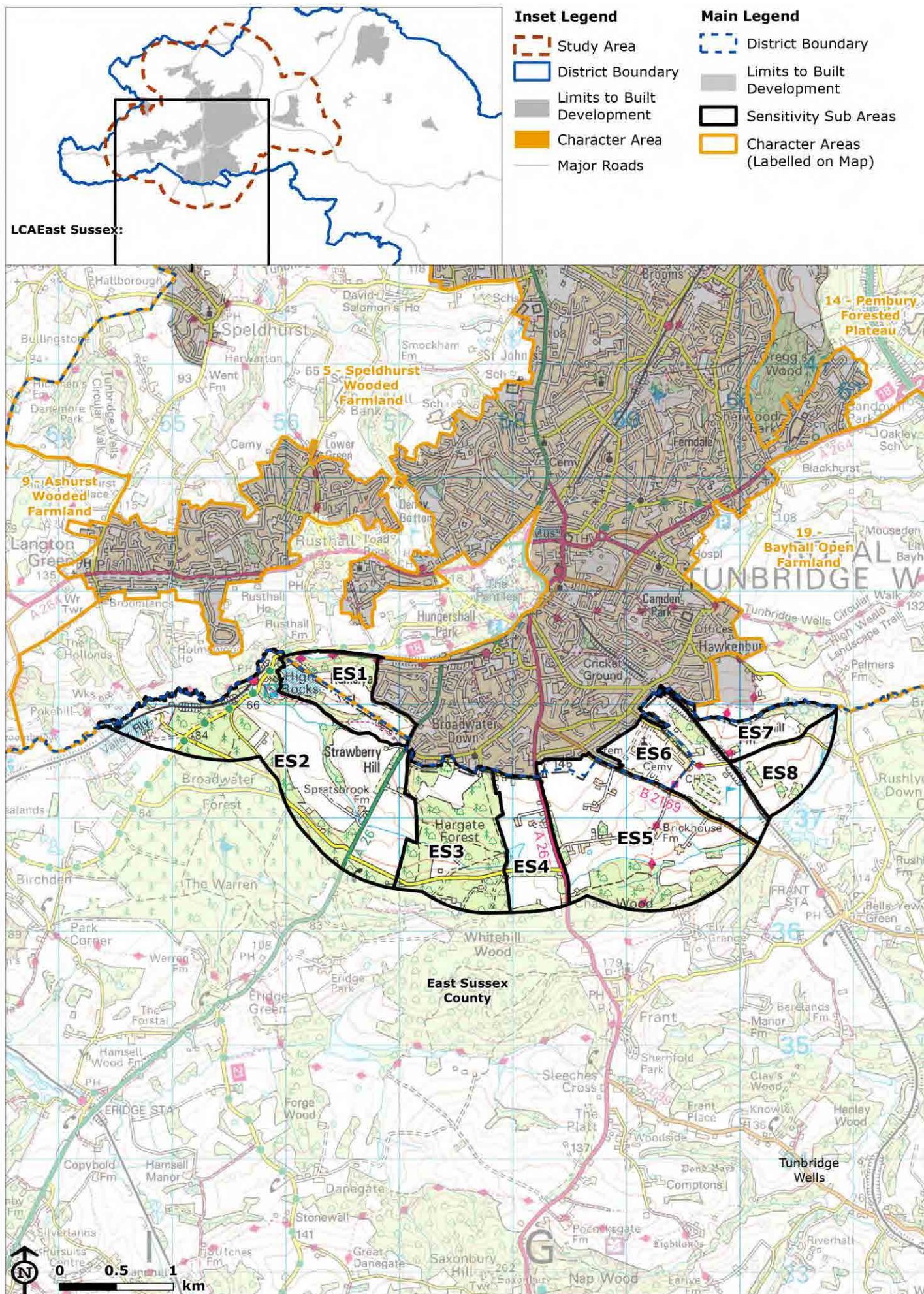
Representative views

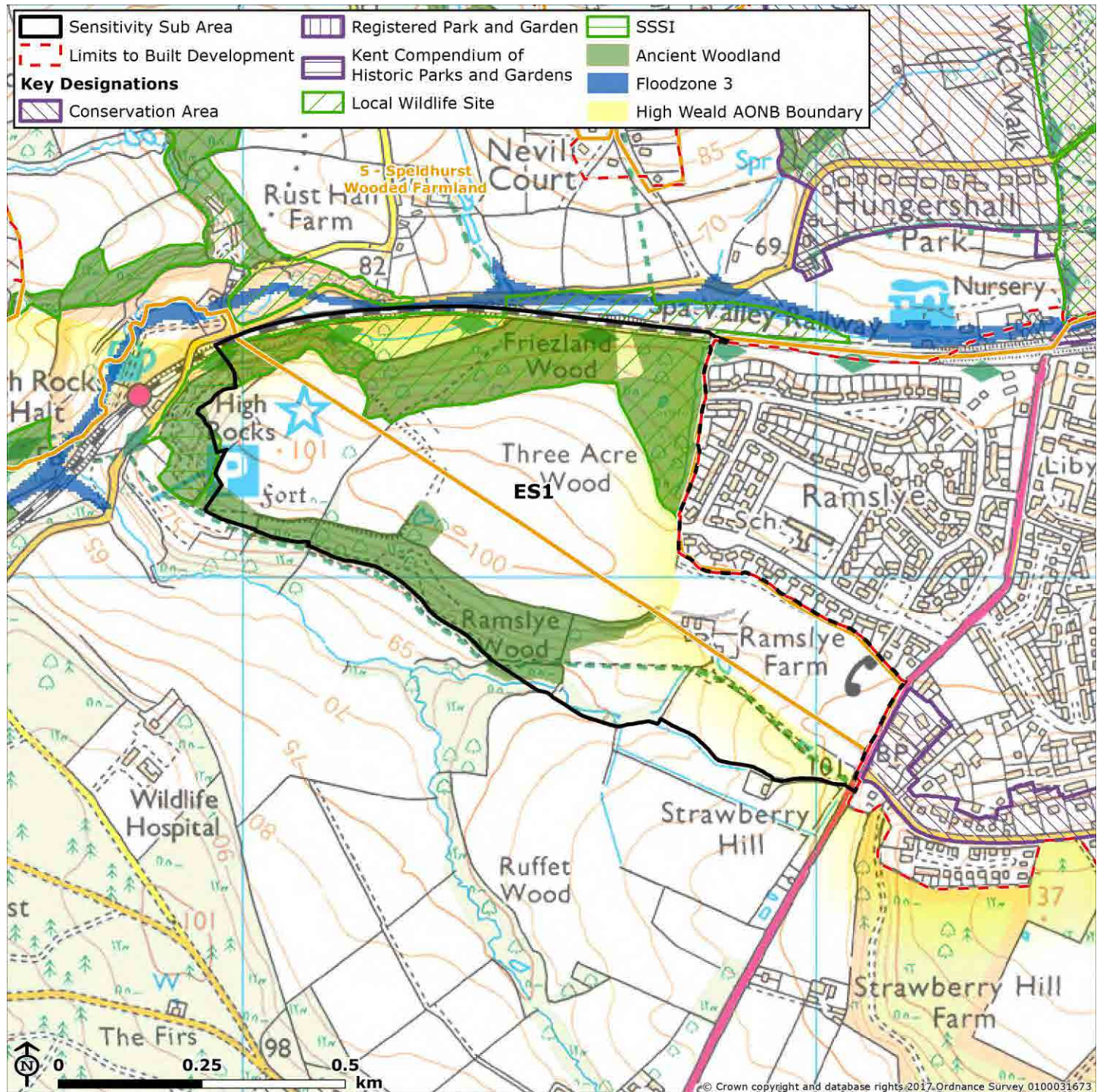


Looking east from Dundale Road across woodlands in the Bayham Wooded Farmland LCA. The hill in the centre-background is in the north-eastern corner of the Bayhall Open Farmland LCA.

| Character Area 8 - Bayham Wooded Farmland | | Sub-Area Bm1 |
|--|---|-------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 151.9 |
| The 1km study area extends south-east from the urban edge at Pembury, and south from the A21, to include the Bayham Open Farmland LCA as far east as Key’s Green and south to the edges of Great Sandhurst Wood and Gull Rough Wood. A change from mostly wooded terrain to mostly open farmland marks the western boundary of the sub-area with the Bayhall Open Farmland LCA. Three isolated farmsteads, and a storage depot on the A21, are the only built development in the sub-area. The north-western corner of the sub-area is c.300m from the urban edge of Pembury. All of the sub-area lies within the High Weald AONB. | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | This is for the most part a complex, undulating landscape of ancient woodland and small pastures with wavy boundaries, very characteristic of this LCA and the High Weald AONB in general. | |
| Settlement form and edge | There is no relationship between this sub-area and the urban edge at Pembury. The A21 runs along a well-treed ridge to the south of Pembury, creating a strong separation from the Bayhall Open Farmland LCA, and a prominent rounded hill just to the west of Pastheap creates an even stronger separation from the Bayham Wooded Farmland LCA. Any new development south of the A21, whether associated with Pembury or with the expansion of small settlements which are almost entirely to the north of the road – i.e. Kipping’s Cross or Key’s Green – would represent a significant change in the form of those settlements. | |
| Settlement setting | The wooded hills in this sub-area form part of the wider rural landscape to the south-east of Pembury but lack any direct relationship with it. | |
| Visual character | The landscape is largely enclosed by woodland, but also has some prominent open high ground, e.g. the reservoir and mast-topped hill to the east of Elmhurst Farm, from/to which there are expansive views across an undeveloped landscape. | |
| Perceptual qualities | This area has a homogeneous, tranquil rural character with high scenic value. | |
| Historic character | A large proportion of the landscape is ancient woodland and medieval assart fields, and historic farmsteads represent the only built development in the sub-area, aside from the storage depot on the A21 at Key’s Green. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| This is characteristic High Weald AONB countryside, sensitive because of its physical form, historic land cover and pattern, lack of intrusive human activity and lack of relationship with urban areas. There would be <i>high</i> sensitivity to any scale of development, whether associated with the A21 or expansion of Pembury. | | |

| Character Area 8 - Bayham Wooded Farmland | | | Sub-Area Bm1 | | |
|---|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. | | | | | |








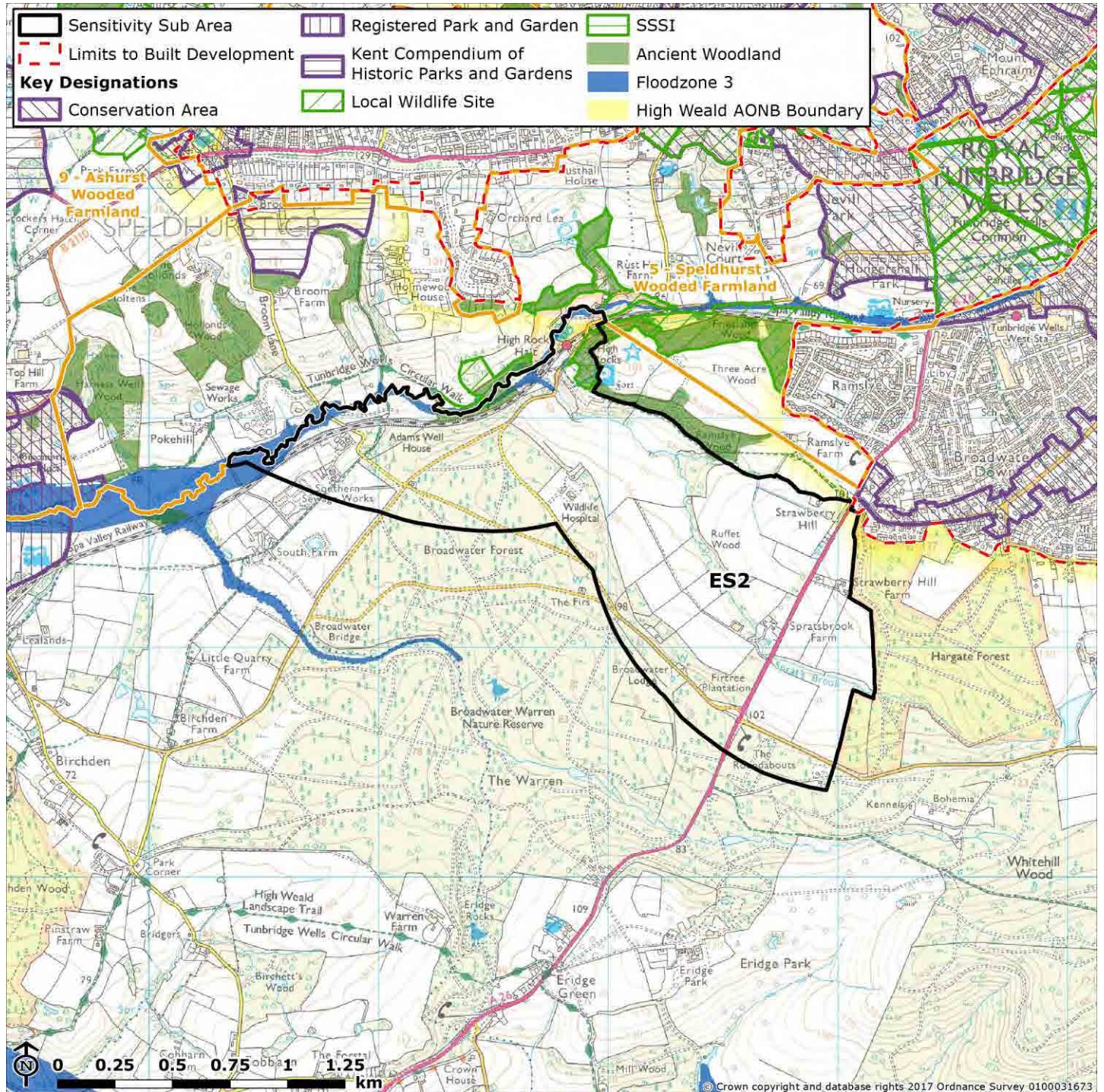
Representative views



Looking north-west from the access road to Ramslye Farm (also a public footpath).

| East Sussex | | Sub-Area ES1 |
|--|--|------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 55.3 |
| <p>Land to the south and west of Ramslye, defined by steep slopes on the edge of the Grom valley, including the High Rocks sandstone outcrops, to the north and west, by Sprat’s Brook to the south-west, by a smaller tree-lined watercourse to the south and by the A26 Eridge Road to the east. This is arable farmland, with woodland on the steeper slopes and a Scheduled Monument, High Rocks Hillfort, at the western end of the sub-area. The urban edge at Ramslye only abuts the eastern end of the sub-area.</p> <p>The sub-area spans both sides of the County boundary – which is not represented by any defined physical feature – and so includes land within the Speldhurst Wooded Farmland LCA and also land within East Sussex that is characterised within the County Landscape Character Assessment as part of the ‘Central High Weald’.</p> <p>All of the sub-area, aside from the eastern end to the north of the access road to Ramslye Farm, lies within the High Weald AONB.</p> | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | The eastern end of the sub-area rises up to a hilltop, the north-facing slopes of which are consistent with those in the adjacent Ramslye suburb. Sensitivity increases along the southern side of the hill crest, where the landform slopes down into a ghyll valley with ancient woodland on the steeper slopes, a characteristic High Weald AONB landscape element, but slopes at the eastern end of the sub-area are shallower. | |
| Settlement form and edge | Woodland creates strong separation between most of the sub-area and the urban edge at Ramslye. At the eastern end of the sub-area there is sensitivity associated with the change in topography that distinguishes the ridge-crest settlement edge from the valley below, becoming more marked where the west-facing slope relates strongly to the wooded valley below. | |
| Settlement setting | The western and central parts of the sub-area are important as part of the setting of those parts of the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Conservation Area that occupy the Grom valley and the ridge to the north of it, marking the southern edge of the town. Sensitivity is increased by proximity to the High Rocks, a distinctive landscape element and longstanding tourist attraction. There is less sensitivity associated with the eastern end of the sub-area, which is screened in these views by existing development at Ramslye. Roadside tree cover limits perception of the area on approach along the A26 Eridge Road, but open land here does form part of the setting of the Broadwater Down section of the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Conservation Area. | |
| Visual character | Much of the sub-area is visually contained by woodland in its immediate local context, but there is some intervisibility with more distant high ground to the north and north-west. | |
| Perceptual qualities | Woodland containment around the majority of the sub-area combines with visual openness associated with elevation to create a sense of rural isolation from the nearby urban edge. This is weaker at the eastern end of the sub-area, where the urban edge is not screened and the busy A26 has some intrusive influence. | |
| Historic character | In terms of historic character, the hill fort that forms the western half of the area has high sensitivity, and its presence adds to the sensitivity of adjacent land which contributes to its isolated setting. The containing woodlands are ancient, and the fields are of medieval origin, which also increases sensitivity; this is to a degree offset by proximity to the settlement edge at Ramslye. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| <p>The sub-area’s historic value and role as part of the historic and rural setting of the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Conservation Area are key sensitivities, and separation from the urban edge by woodland is a strong sensitivity for the western and central parts of the sub-area . Overall sensitivity is <i>high</i> in the western and central parts of the sub-area. The eastern end of the sub-area has <i>medium</i> sensitivity adjacent to the exposed edge of Ramslye, but sensitivity increases with distance from the settlement edge, as the landform become more related to the Ramslye Wood ghyll, more exposed to views from the north-west and more intrusive in views out from the edge of Broadwater Down.</p> | | |

| East Sussex | | | Sub-Area ES1 | | |
|---|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| Development in the northern-eastern part of the sub-area will need to be designed so as to maintain open views from the junction of Broadwater Down and Eridge Road, to minimise impact on the Conservation Area setting. | | | | | |






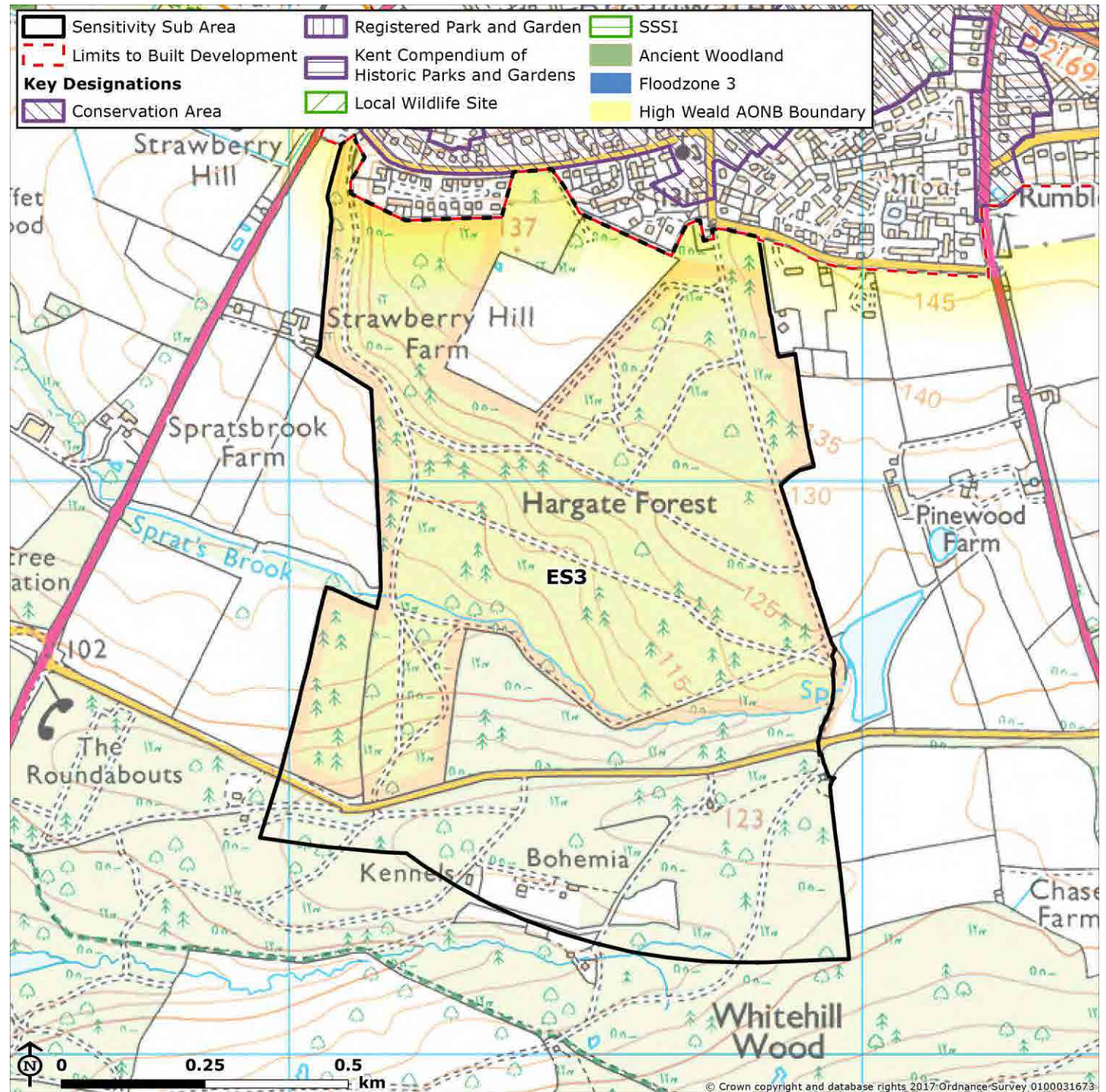
Representative views



Looking north-east from the A26 Eridge Road. Hargate Forest (sub-area ES3) forms the backdrop.

| East Sussex | | Sub-Area ES2 |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 218.2 |
| <p>The valley along which Sprat’s Brook flows, defined by the steep slopes of Ramslye Wood to the north, Hargate Forest to the east and Broadwater Forest to the south and west. The sub-area does not abut the urban edge of Tunbridge Wells, and development within it is limited to several isolated farmsteads and other buildings.</p> <p>All of the sub-area lies within East Sussex, characterised within the County Landscape Character Assessment as part of the ‘Central High Weald’, and is in the High Weald AONB.</p> | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | A relatively broad valley in comparison to many in the High Weald, with shallow slopes for the most part. Strawberry Hill, forming an area of higher ground between Sprat’s Brook and a smaller tributary along the northern edge of the sub-area, adds some complexity, and therefore sensitivity, to the landform. There are localised steeper slopes at Ramslye Wood, and both this and Ruffet Wood, further east along Sprat’s Brook, are ancient woodland. Stream valleys with ancient woodland are a characteristic of the High Weald AONB. | |
| Settlement form and edge | There is a strong distinction between the sub-area and the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells, which is confined to the ridge crest and separated by tree cover. There is no significant visual relationship between the two. | |
| Settlement setting | Containment by tree cover limits the extent to which development in this area would be perceived in the wider landscape, so its role as a setting for Tunbridge Wells is limited to the local context. | |
| Visual character | Woodland provides visual containment in the wider context, but these relatively large, arable fields have a visually open, rural character. There is only limited passing visibility from Eridge Road to the east, Fairview Lane to the west and the public footpath that runs along the southern edge of Ramslye Wood. | |
| Perceptual qualities | The valley has a dominant rural, agricultural character, although the A26 reduces tranquillity locally. | |
| Historic character | There is historic sensitivity associated with the presence of ancient woodland in this sub-area. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| <p>The key sensitivities in this sub-area relate to its physical separation from the settlement edge of Tunbridge Wells. Containment by tree cover limits the extent to which development in this area would be perceived in the wider landscape but as a distinct valley landscape, with ancient woodland belts characteristic of the High Weald and a dominant agricultural, rural character, it has landscape value and therefore a generally <i>high</i> sensitivity to any scale of development. There may however be pockets of land associated with the existing development alongside Eridge Road where sensitivity to limited small-scale development which could be relatively contained in the wider landscape would be <i>medium-high</i>.</p> | | |

| East Sussex | | | Sub-Area ES2 | | |
|---|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. | | | | | |






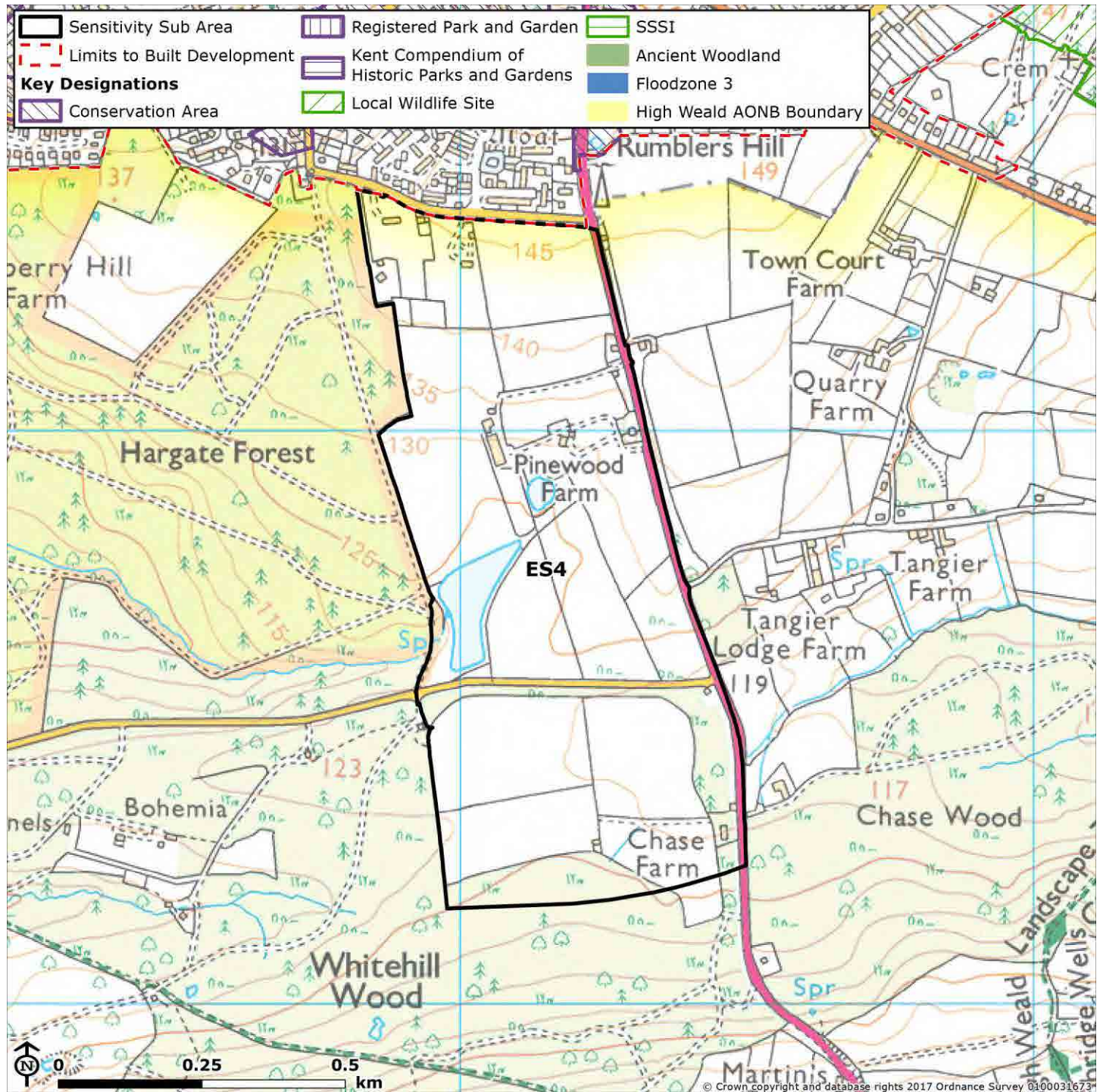
Representative views



Looking north-east across open ground on Nod Hill towards the edge of Tunbridge Wells (the spire of St Marks church is visible in the background).

| East Sussex | | Sub-Area ES3 |
|---|--|-------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 103.2 |
| Sub-area ES3 is Hargate Forest, which is mostly wooded but includes several more open areas, notably the area known as Nod Hill. Hargate Forest abuts the Broadwater Down area of Tunbridge Wells to the north, and all of the sub-area lies within the High Weald AONB. | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | Although not ancient woodland, Hargate Forest’s tree cover makes it a distinctive and therefore sensitive physical landscape. It has heathland elements which are of greater scarcity value. The northern half of the forest is relatively flat, but there are steeper slopes running north-west to south-east through it, forming the head of the Sprat’s Brook valley, that would be more sensitive to built development regardless of the tree cover. | |
| Settlement form and edge | Tree cover forms a strong edge to the built-up area on Broadwater Down, which occupies north-facing slopes oriented towards the centre of Tunbridge Wells. | |
| Settlement setting | Hargate Forest is publically accessible space (managed by the Woodland Trust), immediately adjacent to the settlement edge, and as such provides a valued setting to this edge of the town, part of which lies within the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Conservation Area. | |
| Visual character | Woodland creates a visually contained landscape, but there are some longer southward views across the valley to extensive woodlands (Whitehall Wood and Broadwater Forest) which give the sub-area a relationship with this wider wooded landscape. Hargate Forest is important as a skyline landscape element, screening views of the edge of Tunbridge Wells on approach from the south. | |
| Perceptual qualities | Visual separation from the urban area, and occasional long views, give this sub-area a sense of rurality. Coniferous woodland elements do not have high scenic value, but heathland restoration and gradual replacement of conifers with broadleaf trees is taking place. | |
| Historic character | The sub-area was not historically wooded but was largely open heathland/scrub within Waterdown Forest until coniferous planting in the late 19th century. It doesn’t have a strong historic character, but as mature woodland it reflects a degree of landscape continuity. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| The sensitivity of Hargate Forest relates principally to its land use and to the public recreational access which makes it an important part of the setting of the southern edge of TW. The sharp north-west to south-east break in slope within the Forest marks a distinction between land more related to the settlement edge and land that forms part of the Sprat’s Brook valley, but both sides are of similar sensitivity, with the former more sensitive visually and the latter more isolated from the urban edge. | | |

| East Sussex | | | Sub-Area ES3 | | |
|---|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. | | | | | |






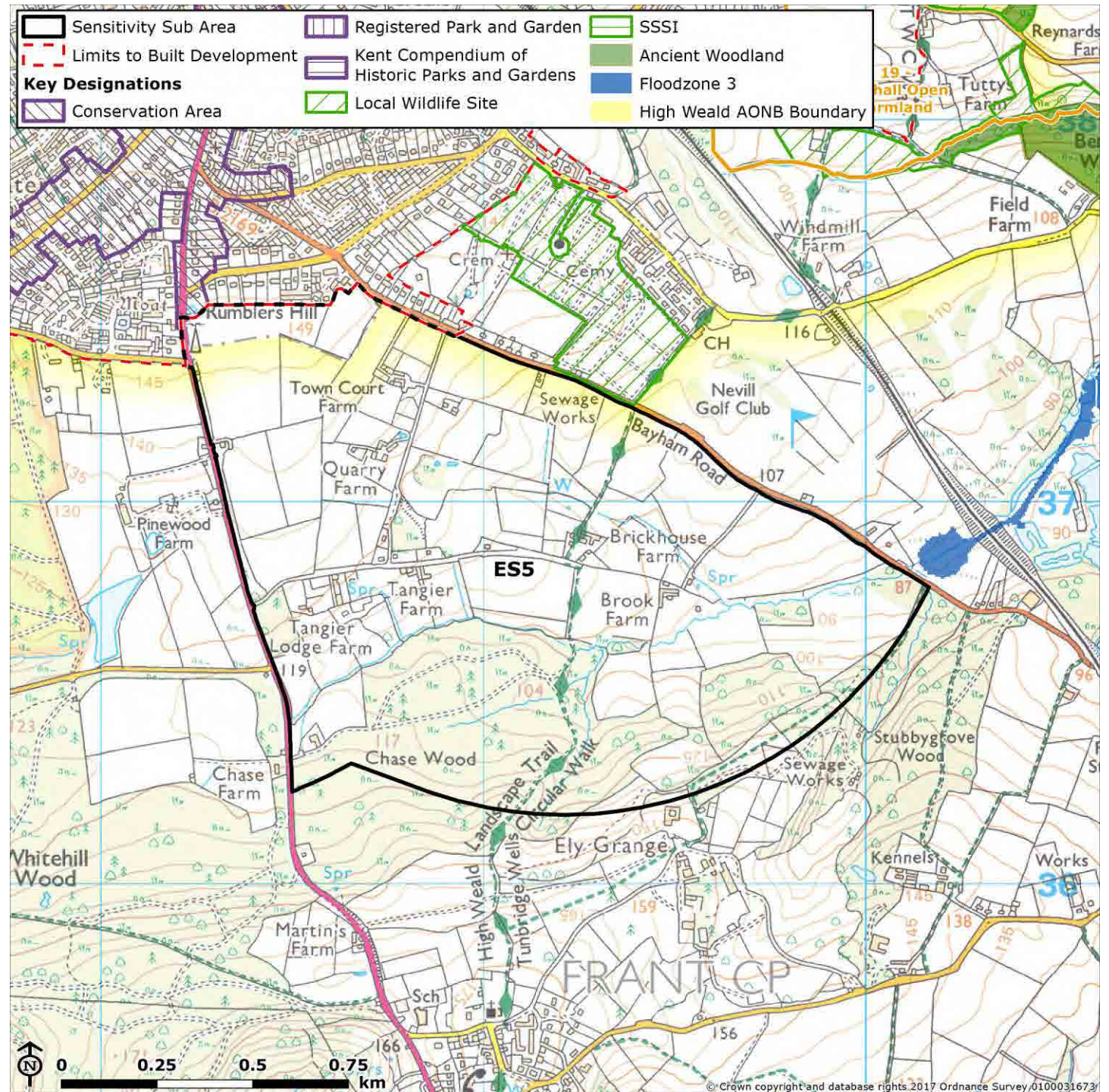
Representative views



Looking south from St Mark's Road, with Whitehill Wood in the distance.

| East Sussex | | Sub-Area ES4 |
|--|---|------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 55.7 |
| Sub-area ES4 consists of south-facing farmland to the south of St Mark’s Road, Tunbridge Wells, contained between Hargate Forest to the west, the A267 Frant Road to the east and Whitehall Wood to the south. There are several large, well-spaced residential properties in the north-western corner of the sub-area, a cluster of cottages and a small plant nursery along Frant Road, a farm located centrally within the area and another at the southern end. The sub-area lies within the High Weald AONB. | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | There are no particular sensitivities associated with landform or landscape elements in this area. Slopes are relatively gentle. There is a large pond just to the north of Bunny Lane but this is modern in origin. The field to the south of Bunny Lane is strongly enclosed by woodland and tree belts. | |
| Settlement form and edge | The defined urban edge on St Mark’s Road follows the ridge crest, and as such is consistent with the general settlement edge along the southern side of Tunbridge Wells, so there is sensitivity to southward settlement expansion. However the shallowness of the slope and the presence of several residential properties to the south of the road – albeit distinctly different in form to those within the Limits to Built Development – reduce this sensitivity on the upper hillside. | |
| Settlement setting | As a whole the valley to the south of Tunbridge Wells provides an open, rural setting to the town. Visually this sub-area’s containment between Hargate Forest and the largely tree-lined Frant Road limits its role in this respect, but there is sensitivity in terms of rural character associated with the retention of separation between the settlement edge and Pinewood Farm. | |
| Visual character | There are glimpsed views across parts of the sub-area from St Mark’s Road, Frant Road and Bunny Lane, and from the open access Hargate Forest edge, but it is not a distinctive landscape. There is some limited visibility into the area from the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk / High Weald Landscape Trail just to the north of the church in Frant. | |
| Perceptual qualities | Built development within the sub-area is not urban in character, and there is no significant intervisibility with the settlement edge, but the adjacent main road has some impact on perceived naturalness. | |
| Historic character | There are no significant historic landscape elements within the sub-area. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| There is sensitivity in terms of the settlement form of Tunbridge Wells to any expansion beyond the ridge crest along the southern side of the town; however the gentle upper slopes in this area combined with the strength of screening of views from the wider landscape and the absence of significant historic sensitivities limit the potential impact of settlement expansion in this sub-area. The lower slopes of the valley are sufficiently remote from the edge of Tunbridge Wells to preserve a rural character despite the volume of traffic on the main road, and sensitivity with regard to settlement form increases with distance from the ridge. Sensitivity to small-scale development on the upper slopes is therefore <i>medium</i>, whilst for development in the vicinity of Pinewood Farm it is <i>medium-high</i>, increasing to <i>high</i> to the south of Bunny Lane. Medium or large-scale development would be more intrusive on the rural character of the valley, but there may be pockets of land on the upper slopes where sensitivity to limited medium-scale development which could be relatively contained in the wider landscape would be <i>medium-high</i>. | | |

| East Sussex | | | Sub-Area ES4 | | |
|--|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| Restricting development to the flatter, upper slopes of the sub-area would limit adverse landscape impact. Planting should be used to screen views of development from Bunny Lane, but not to lose the sense of openness of the valley. Visibility of development in the expansive and primarily rural views from the edge of Frant should be minimised. | | | | | |






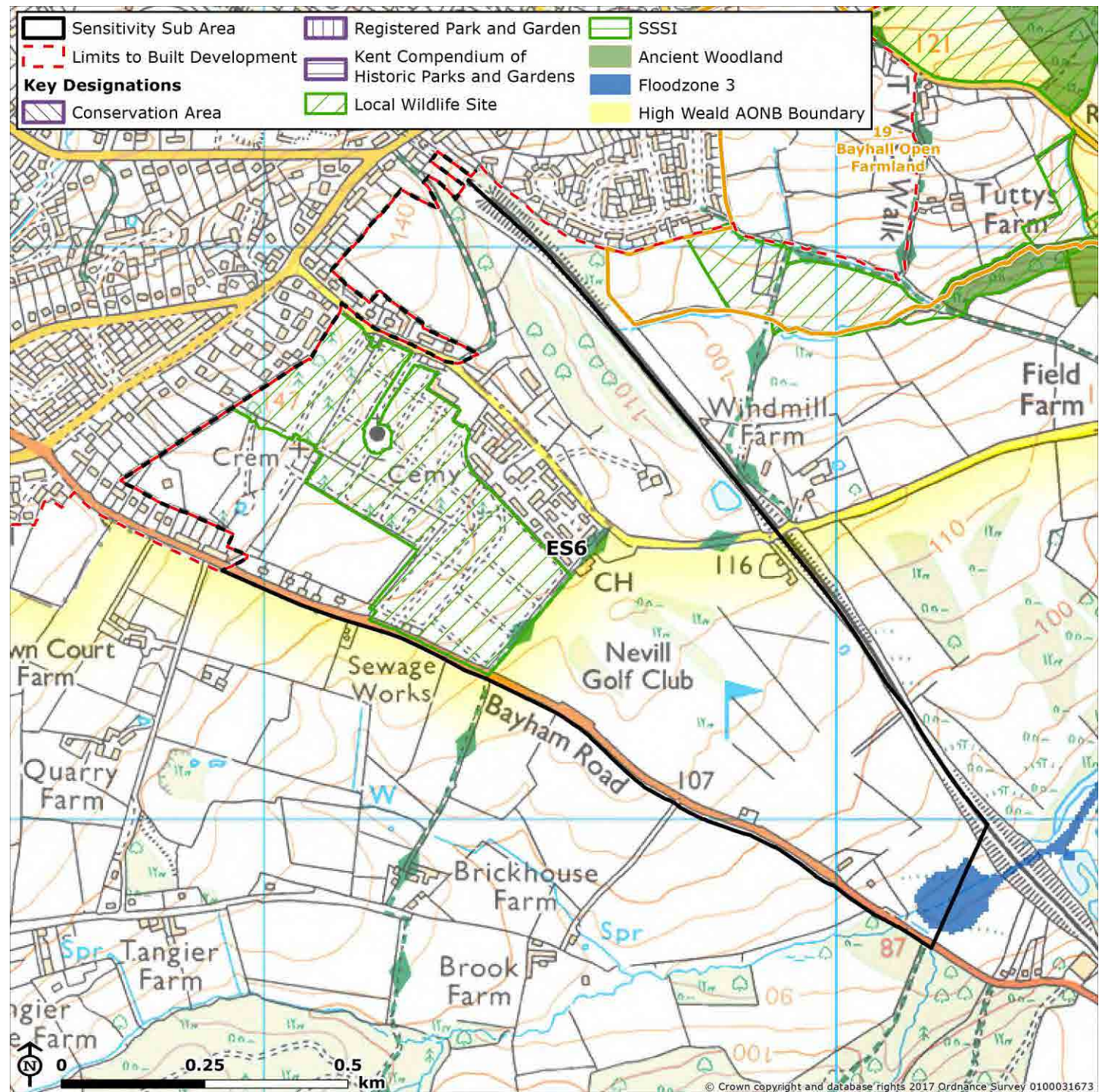
Representative views



Looking north from public footpath between Frant and Ely Grange.

| East Sussex | | Sub-Area ES5 |
|--|---|-------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 172.1 |
| <p>Sub-area ES5 comprises land to the south of Tunbridge Wells, between the A26 Frant Road and the B2169 Bayham Road, sloping down from the settlement edge at Rumblers Hill to a wooded valley. There are six farmsteads on the mid and lower slopes of the valley.</p> <p>The majority of the sub-area lies within East Sussex (characterised within the County Landscape Character Assessment as part of the 'Central High Weald') but an area of about 5ha along the settlement edge lies within Tunbridge Wells Borough and is characterised as 'Bayhall Open Farmland'.</p> <p>The sub-area lies within the High Weald AONB.</p> | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | Slopes at the higher, northern end of the sub-area are very gentle, and the landscape is open, but in the vicinity of the farmsteads there are some stronger slopes, particularly where there is a narrow valley landform to the north of Brickhouse Farm, and a well treed character associated with small woodland blocks and strong field boundaries. Woodland, a watercourse (one of the tributaries of the River Teise) and steeper slopes make the valley bottom at the southern end a typical and valued element the High Weald AONB landscape. Sensitivity therefore increases with distance from the settlement edge. | |
| Settlement form and edge | <p>The current built edge of Tunbridge Wells within the sub-area approximates to the crest of the ridge, which is consistent with the settlement edge along all of the southern edge of the town. Any significant expansion southwards would therefore affect the north-facing form of the southern part of Tunbridge Wells, but the shallowness of slope does reduce sensitivity on the higher slopes. Also there are variations at a localised scale which further reduce sensitivity close to the urban edge: to the west (in sub-area ES4) the settlement edge extends slightly further south, and the new Duke's Grange residential development takes the urban edge on the south side of Bayham Road out to the county boundary.</p> <p>Housing already extends downhill along the north side of Bayham Road, past the crematorium and sports ground entrance, but most of this single line of housing is Victorian or pre-WW2, does not relate strongly to the main settlement form and does not have an urbanising influence that would reduce sensitivity to more expansive development across the road in the sub-area.</p> | |
| Settlement setting | The open slopes below the settlement edge contribute to the rural setting of this side of Tunbridge Wells, but strong tree cover is the dominant element in the town's setting, combining with trees along and within the settlement fringes to visually limit the massing impact of housing. The land adjacent to the settlement edge is St Mark's Playing Fields, the home of Tunbridge Wells RFC, which provide expansive rural views but do not have an informal recreational function or any public right of way. The Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk / High Weald Landscape Trail passes through the central and southern parts of the sub-area, adding to the sensitivity of these areas. | |
| Visual character | The higher slopes are visually very open, and there is intervisibility with wooded high ground to the south. Public rights of way just to the north of Frant provide very expansive views towards the edge of Tunbridge Wells in which the urban edge is very fragmented and contained by tree cover, thus preserving a strong rural character. St Mark's Playing Fields and the farmland along the southern side of Bayhall Road are prominent open landscape elements within these views. | |
| Perceptual qualities | The formal sports pitches detract slightly from rural character, and the proximity of two busy roads has some impact on tranquillity, but the elevated location of the land adjacent to the settlement edge gives it a strong sense of openness, and relationship with the surrounding rural landscape. Further south in the sub-area there is greater wooded containment, and the presence of numerous farmsteads gives a strong sense of rurality. | |
| Historic character | There is no strong sense of historic landscape character in this area. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| <p>Key sensitivities relate to the well-wooded, rural character of the landscape, and the impact this has on masking the density of development on the settlement fringe, with particular reference to strong AONB views from close to Frant. The flatter ground at St Mark's Playing Fields is slightly less sensitive in this respect than the mid and lower slopes, so overall sensitivity here to small-scale development is <i>medium</i> close to the settlement edge, increasing to <i>medium-high</i> in the southern half of the playing fields. Visual openness is such that there would be <i>high</i> sensitivity to larger scale development.</p> <p>The lower slopes of the valley, framed by significant tree cover, are sufficiently remote from the edge of</p> | | |

| East Sussex | | | Sub-Area ES5 | | |
|--|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Tunbridge Wells to preserve a strong rural character despite the volume of traffic on Frant Road, and are important in the perception of the town’s rural setting on approach, particularly along Bayham Road. Sensitivity here to any scale of development is <i>high</i> . | | | | | |
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| Any development should be limited to the shallow upper slopes of the sub-area. It should be small-scale, Using planting and relatively low housing densities to minimise the massing of development, particularly with regard to views from the Frant area. | | | | | |






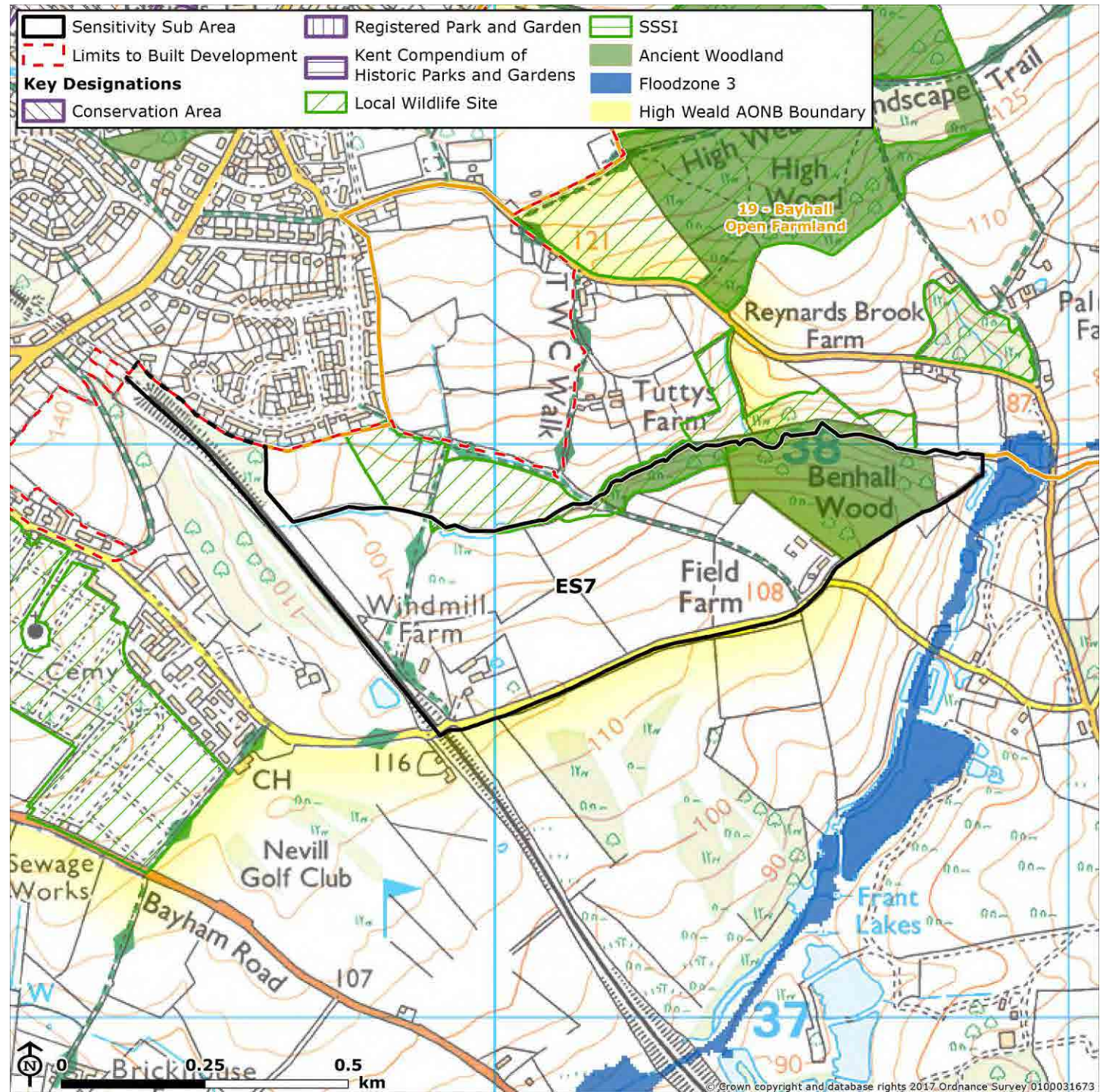
Representative views



Looking north-east from the public footpath between Frant and Ely Grange. The coniferous trees beyond the open fields indicate the location of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery, and the block of trees to the right of this masks the Nevill Golf Club.

| East Sussex | | Sub-Area ES6 | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 79.1 | |
| <p>Sub-area ES6 is on the south-eastern edge of Tunbridge Wells between Bayham Road and the railway line. Tunbridge Wells Cemetery, with a sports ground set within it, occupies the area between Bayham Road, Benhall Mill Road, abutting the backs of houses within the Limits to Built Development on Forest Road. Housing continues eastwards along Bayham Road as far as the sports ground, and there is housing along much of Benhall Mill Road. To the east of the cemetery the Nevill Golf Club forms the outer part of the sub-area, and to the north the area contained between Benhall Road and the railway line is a mixture of scrubby open space and plantation woodland, separated by mature tree cover alongside a public right of way.</p> <p>The cemetery lies within Tunbridge Wells Borough, part of the Bayhall Open Farmland LCA; its function is considered to preclude development so it is excluded from this assessment. The remainder of the sub-area is in East Sussex and is characterised within the County Landscape Character Assessment as part of the 'Central High Weald'.</p> <p>The golf course forms part of the High Weald AONB.</p> | | | |
| Assessment criterion | | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | | <p>The sub-area has a moderate slope down from the edge of Tunbridge Wells. The area between the railway and Benhall Mill Road forms the head of a stream valley that runs eastward down to Frant Lakes, but sensitivity is reduced by the railway line and its associated tree cover which truncate the landform. The woodland in the area between the public footpath and the railway line was planted post-2000, on a former landfill site, and so has little sensitivity in landscape terms.</p> <p>On the golf course there is a more consistent south-eastward slope down to the valley containing Frant Lakes. The course is dominated by tree cover, giving it a very contained character that is not out of character with the extensive AONB woodlands in the vicinity.</p> | |
| Settlement form and edge | | <p>The principal urban edge of Tunbridge Wells runs along the ridgeline to the west of the sub-area, so there is some sensitivity to any development that extends the urban form further down slope, however the degree of sensitivity is reduced by development that has already taken place. Late 19th and early 20th century housing runs out along either side of the cemetery, on Benhall Mill Road and Bayham Road, and there is a modern housing development on Benhall Mill Road to the west of the Nevill Golf Club clubhouse. The cemetery, although largely open, has a formal character, with hard landscape elements and non-native conifer planting, that relates it to the urban edge more than to the surrounding countryside.</p> | |
| Settlement setting | | <p>The sub-area has extensive tree cover which contributes to the natural setting of this side of Tunbridge Wells, but the open spaces within it are visually very contained and for the most part lack rural land uses.</p> <p>There are two public rights of way crossing through the sub-area. One is a connecting route between two areas of housing that lacks any significant intervisibility with the surrounding landscape. The other is the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk / High Weald Landscape Trail, which also lacks views and rural character as it crosses the golf course alongside the clubhouse and cemetery wall.</p> | |
| Visual character | | <p>The area is visually enclosed, other than in the vicinity of the cemetery and sports ground which are exposed to views from public rights of way on higher ground to the south, close to Frant.</p> | |
| Perceptual qualities | | <p>The amount of built development within the sub-area, lack of agricultural land use and containment by road and rail diminish rural character. The well-wooded golf course has a greater sense of remoteness from the urban edge.</p> | |
| Historic character | | <p>There are no particular historic sensitivities in this area, but Benham Mill Road has an enclosed, wooded character, typical of rural lanes in the High Weald AONB, where it passes alongside the golf course. There are Victorian dwellings and a Victorian cemetery, but locations in which new development could potentially take place would not affect these. There is no ancient woodland in the sub-area.</p> | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | | |
| <p>The cemetery’s use represents a constraint to built development, but there is a sports field on the western edge of the sub-area, contained between the cemetery and houses of Forest Road and Bayham Road, that is less sensitive. The wooded character of the golf course, its distance from the main urban edge and its lower setting in the landscape relate it more strongly to the heavily wooded, characteristic High Weald AONB landscape to the east, so sensitivity to small-scale development in this area is <i>medium-high</i>. The contained area between the railway line and Benhall Mill Road relates more strongly to the urban edge and makes less contribution to landscape character and settlement setting, so sensitivity here is <i>medium-low</i>. Medium or large-scale development in this area would be more sensitive in terms of visibility within the wider landscape, and impact on the character of the older dwellings along Benhall Mill Road.</p> | | | |

| East Sussex | | | Sub-Area ES6 | | |
|--|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| Any development should be limited to the area contained between Benhall Mill Road and the railway line, and should have regard to potential visibility in panoramic views from the Frant area. | | | | | |






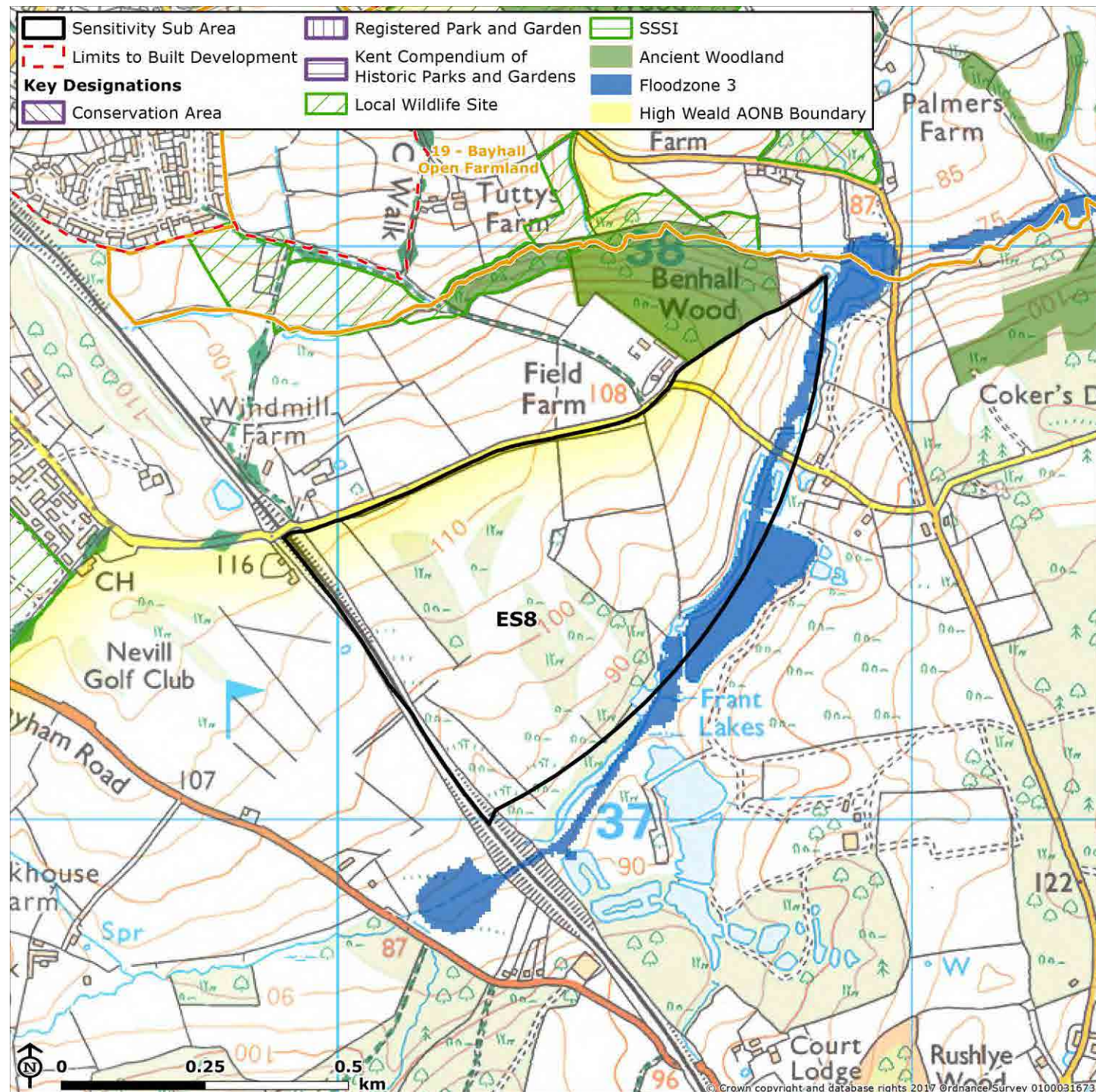
Representative views



Looking north from the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk near Windmill Farm towards Hawkenbury.

| East Sussex | | Sub-Area ES7 | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 42.9 | |
| <p>Sub-area ES7 is the southern side of a valley to the south and east of Hawkenbury, feeding into a deeper tributary of the River Teise. The area is bounded by the railway line to the south-west, the ridge-top Benhall Mill Lane to the south and Benhall Wood to the east. The valley floor stream, which forms the northern edge of the sub-area and is also the district boundary, is separated from the existing settlement edge at Cheiveley Drive, and land allocated for development to the east of this, by several small, well-hedged fields. There are several isolated farmsteads and houses on the southern edge of the sub-area.</p> <p>The sub-area is in Wealden District, where it is characterised in the East Sussex County Landscape Character Assessment as part of the 'Central High Weald', and is outside of the High Weald AONB.</p> | | | |
| Assessment criterion | | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | | The valley sides are moderately sloping, but this is consistent with the topography over which the adjacent settlement extends. One of the fields at Windmill Farm, on the southern side of the valley, is identified as unimproved wildflower grassland, which is a valued High Weald AONB characteristic, although it doesn't actually fall within the designated landscape. | |
| Settlement form and edge | | Existing development at Hawkenbury has extended the urban area down from the ridge crest on Forest Road to within a short distance of the valley floor, and forthcoming development of the allocated land to the east will expand this edge out further; however the strong field boundaries and watercourses along the valley floor represent a strong edge between the urban fringe and the sub-area. | |
| Settlement setting | | This is a fairly contained valley, with strong tree cover around its margins, so its contribution to settlement setting is limited. However the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk / High Weald Landscape Trail passes through the sub-area, and tree cover between the settlement edge and the valley floor limits visibility of newer housing from the path, so that there is a perception of a transition from countryside to town rather than a hard edge. | |
| Visual character | | This is a visually contained landscape. | |
| Perceptual qualities | | The current and future (i.e. allocated) development edge is fairly well contained, so the sub-area's wooded enclosure means that it retains some rural separation, but there is sufficient visibility of housing for this to be clearly perceived as an urban fringe location. There are no major roads in this area, which limits intrusion. | |
| Historic character | | The smaller, well-hedged fields are similar in character to those within the AONB, but only those adjacent to the ancient Benhall Wood are likely to be medieval assarts. None of the farmsteads in the sub-area are recorded as historic. The the road bordering the sub-area, Benhall Mill Road, is a narrow, well-treed, rural lane typical of the High Weald AONB. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | | |
| <p>Sensitivity associated with development on these slopes is reduced by development that has already taken place at Hawkenbury or, it can be assumed, is to take place on land allocated for housing in the Local Plan, and also by visual containment. The well-treed valley floor area has sensitive landscape elements which function as a strong barrier to development, but although development would be separated from the main settlement edge by the valley landscape it would have limited impact on the wider landscape and settlement setting. Sensitivity to small-scale development is therefore <i>medium</i>. Larger scales of development would have greater impact on the pattern of this valley landscape.</p> | | | |




| East Sussex | | | Sub-Area ES7 | | |
|---|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| Any development should minimise intrusion on the lower slopes of the valley, visual impact on the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk / High Weald Landscape Trail, and impact on the rural character of Benhall Mill Road. | | | | | |



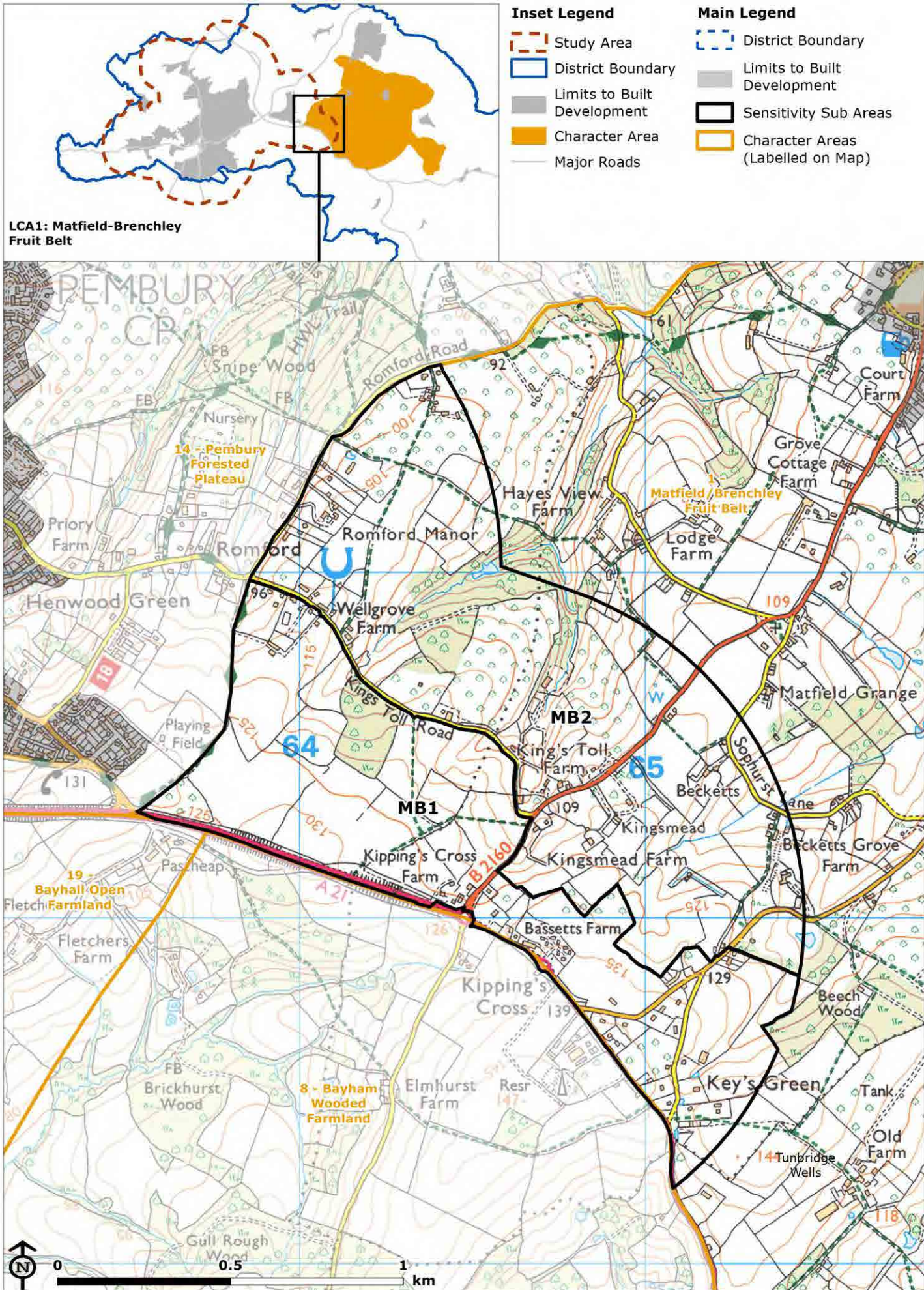
Representative views

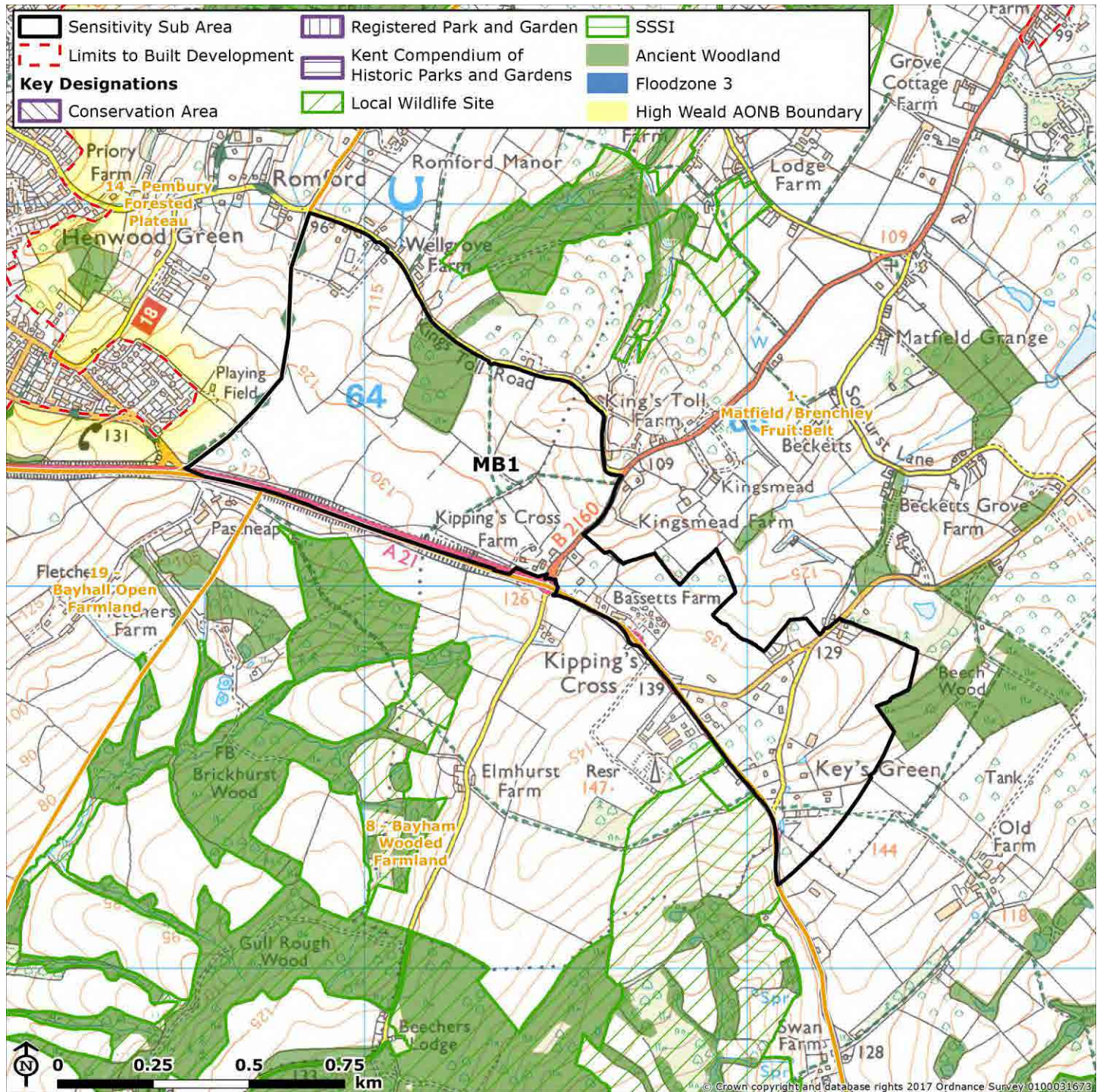


Looking south-east from Benhall Mill Road over the golf course towards woodland beyond Frant Lakes.

| East Sussex | | Sub-Area ES8 | | | |
|---|---|---|------------------|----|---|
| Description | | | Area (Ha) - 39.7 | | |
| Sub-area ES8 comprises part of Nevill Golf Club, situated to the east of the railway line between Benhall Mill Road and Frant Lakes, and to the north-west of this, fields occupying the steeper slopes adjacent to Benhall Wood and the northernmost of the Frant Lakes. There is no built development. The sub-area lies within the High Weald AONB. | | | | | |
| Assessment criterion | | Sensitivity description | | | |
| Physical character | | Slope angles are moderate on the golf course, but steeper slopes towards the northern end of the sub-area are more sensitive. There is extensive tree cover on the golf course, and the adjoining fields are strongly hedged, adding to sensitivity. | | | |
| Settlement form and edge | | The sub-area forms the western side of the wide valley in which Frant Lakes, a chain of modern fishing lakes, are located. This has no relationship with the urban edge, which is separated from it by the Benhall Mill Road ridge and another valley to the north-west (sub-area ES7). | | | |
| Settlement setting | | The sub-area forms part of the wider rural setting of Tunbridge Wells, but lacks any direct relationship with the settlement. The valley forms a strong rural gap between Tunbridge Wells and the village of Bells Yew Green to the south of Frant Lakes. | | | |
| Visual character | | Woodland provides containment within the sub-area but there are open views over the valley towards extensive woodlands on Coker's Down, Rushlye Down and Abbots Down. | | | |
| Perceptual qualities | | The absence of built development and major roads, and the views across the open valley to woodlands to the east, give the area an isolated, rural character. | | | |
| Historic character | | There are no particular sensitivities associated with historic landscape character. | | | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | | | | |
| Separation from the urban area and the undeveloped character of the valley around Frant Lakes are the key sensitivities. At its northern end the narrower, steeper valley, narrow, enclosed lane (Benhall Mill Road) and surrounding ancient woodlands give the area characteristic valued AONB qualities. Any development encroaching on this landscape would represent a significant expansion of Tunbridge Wells, so sensitivity to all scales of development is <i>high</i> . | | | | | |
| Development scenario | | Sensitivity assessment | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. | | | | | |

Matfield/Brenchley Fruit Belt





Representative views



Looking east from the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk on the western edge of the sub-area.

| Character Area 1 - Matfield/Brenchley Fruit Belt | | Sub-Area MB1 |
|---|---|------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 57.8 |
| <p>Land occupying the upper north side of the ridge adjacent to the A21 that extends out to the east of Pembury. Kings Toll Road and, further east, field boundaries marking a change from the flatter ridge crest to steeper side slopes, define the northern edge of the sub-area. All of the sub-area lies within the High Weald AONB.</p> <p>The hamlet of Key's Green marks the eastern end of the study area, and the area also includes development alongside the A21 at Kipping's Cross and few houses on Kings Toll Road, marking the south-eastern edge of the hamlet of Romford. Key's Green is a low-density settlement which is mostly located within hedgerow boundaries around the triangle of Cryals Road, Beech Lane and the A21 but has some dwellings on the outer edges of these roads. Romford is a rural hamlet. Kipping's Cross is a small hamlet facing onto the A21: it has several historic farmsteads and a former pub, but a service station, with associated parking and roundabout access from the A21, is a dominating feature. There is a short (just over 100m at the nearest point) gap between the settlement edge at Bo-Peep Corner, Pembury, and the sub-area, with land to the west forming part of sub-area PE7 within the Pembury Woodlands and Heathland LCA. This assessment considers sensitivity in relation to potential expansion up to 1km out from Pembury – i.e. as far as Kipping's Cross, and also development beyond the 1km zone that is focused on the A21.</p> | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | <p>The landform in this area is for the most part relatively flat; slopes are stronger towards Kings Toll Road, but this is consistent with the topography of the nearby urban edge of Pembury. The fields are mostly pasture, along with a recreation ground on the edge of Henwood Green and a large arable field between Kipping's Cross and Key's Green. Internal hedgerow boundaries on the higher ground are typically weaker than those around smaller fields on lower slopes towards Kings Toll Road.</p> | |
| Settlement form and edge | <p>The Henwood Green area on the south-eastern edge of Pembury occupies a fairly narrow belt of land on the north-facing upper slopes of the ridge, so eastward development of this edge would be consistent with existing settlement but would represent a narrow linear extension of the settlement form.</p> <p>The dispersal of the various built landscape elements at Kipping's Cross means that the settlement lacks a cohesive form, and is dominated by the A21 and two roundabouts. Kipping's Cross Farm gives an historic character to the western edge of the settlement, and to the north the B2160 Maidstone Road drops down into a valley, but the eastern edge is flatter and there is no sensitivity associated with existing settlement edge character, where the service station dominates.</p> <p>Key's Green has a contained, wooded character, but lacks any core built area. Any strategic new development with a denser form than the existing settlement would not relate well to it.</p> | |
| Settlement setting | <p>An absence of any sizeable areas of built development on approaching along the A21 contributes to the perception of Pembury as being contained within a strong rural setting. The Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk runs along the western edge of the sub-area, but proximity to the settlement edge and the A21 reduce sensitivity to views from it.</p> <p>The sub-area contributes to the rural settings of Kipping's Cross and Key's Green.</p> | |
| Visual character | <p>This is an elevated landscape, but well-treed boundaries to the north and south, including woodland to the south of the A21, generally limit intervisibility with the wider landscape. The A21 is largely in cut between Pembury and Kipping's Cross, so adjacent vegetation generally contains views, but the field in the south-western corner of the sub-area slopes slightly southward and so is visible. Any significant change in visibility of development from the A21 would have an impact on perceptions of the rural character of the AONB, although existing modern development at Kipping's Cross slightly reduces sensitivity in this respect. There would be high sensitivity associated with any development that affects unspoilt views from the Bayham LCA to the south of the A21. The Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk runs along the western edge of the sub-area, providing long views northward over the wooded valleys from the higher, north-facing slopes, which adds to sensitivity.</p> | |
| Perceptual qualities | <p>The A21 and Kipping's Cross service station have an intrusive impact of landscape character, in particular in terms of road noise, but the sub-area lacks relationship with the urban edge and retains a rural character.</p> | |
| Historic character | <p>There is sensitivity associated with the historic Kipping's Cross Farm with its listed farmhouse and oasts, a characteristic, valued High Weald AONB feature. This is to an extent reduced by proximity to the A21, which already detracts from the rural setting, but the oasts are visible in a more rural context as a skyline feature – e.g. from Kings Toll Road to the north.</p> <p>Most houses at Key's Green date to the 1960's or 1970's, with Beech Farm the only pre-20th century element.</p> | |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Character Area 1 - Matfield/Brenchley Fruit Belt | Sub-Area MB1 |
|--|--------------|




Sensitivity conclusions

There is sensitivity associated with extending out from Pembury into this rural landscape, increasingly so with distance eastwards in terms of its impact on settlement form. Proximity to the A21 reduces sensitivity in terms of its impact on existing landscape character, but it heightens visual sensitivities, and there is also some sensitivity associated with views northward from the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk. In association with development in the Pembury Woodlands and Heathland LCA to fill the gap between the existing settlement edge and this sub-area, there would be *medium-high* sensitivity to small-scale built development which excludes the field that is visible from the A21, increasing to *high* beyond the midway point to Kipping's Cross.

There would be *medium-high* sensitivity to the strategic expansion of Kipping's Cross, with visibility of development from the A21, impact on rural character and impact on the setting of Kipping's Cross Farm being the principal landscape sensitivities. Sensitivity to more limited development in close proximity to existing buildings would be *medium*, given the extent of existing development influence on the character of the settlement.

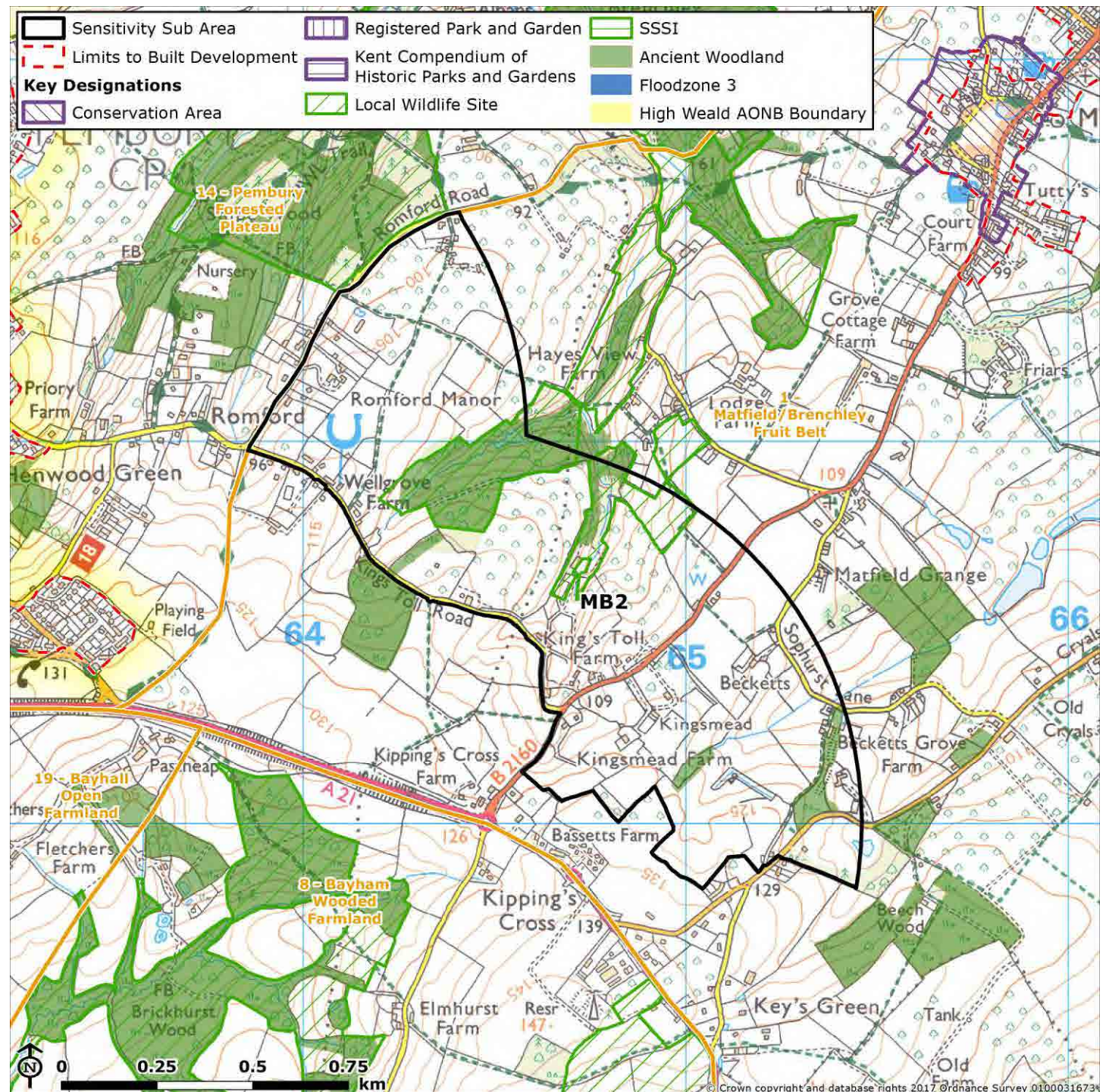
There would also be *medium-high* sensitivity to expansion out from Key's Green, with impact on the existing settlement form, rural character and views being the key concerns.

Sensitivity to taller buildings would be *high*, due to potential skyline visual impact on the wider landscape, although in the context of existing development at Kipping's Cross there would be moderate sensitivity to low, medium-scale buildings.

| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|---|------------------------|----|---|----|---|
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |

Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures

Any development would need to be integrated with existing settlement and landscape to avoid significant adverse landscape impact. Preserving a rural, visual gap between Pembury and Kipping's Cross, and avoiding any significant changes in the extent of development visible from the wider landscape would be important considerations. Keeping development away from the highest ground would help in this respect. There are opportunities to enhance the character of Kipping's Cross.






Representative views

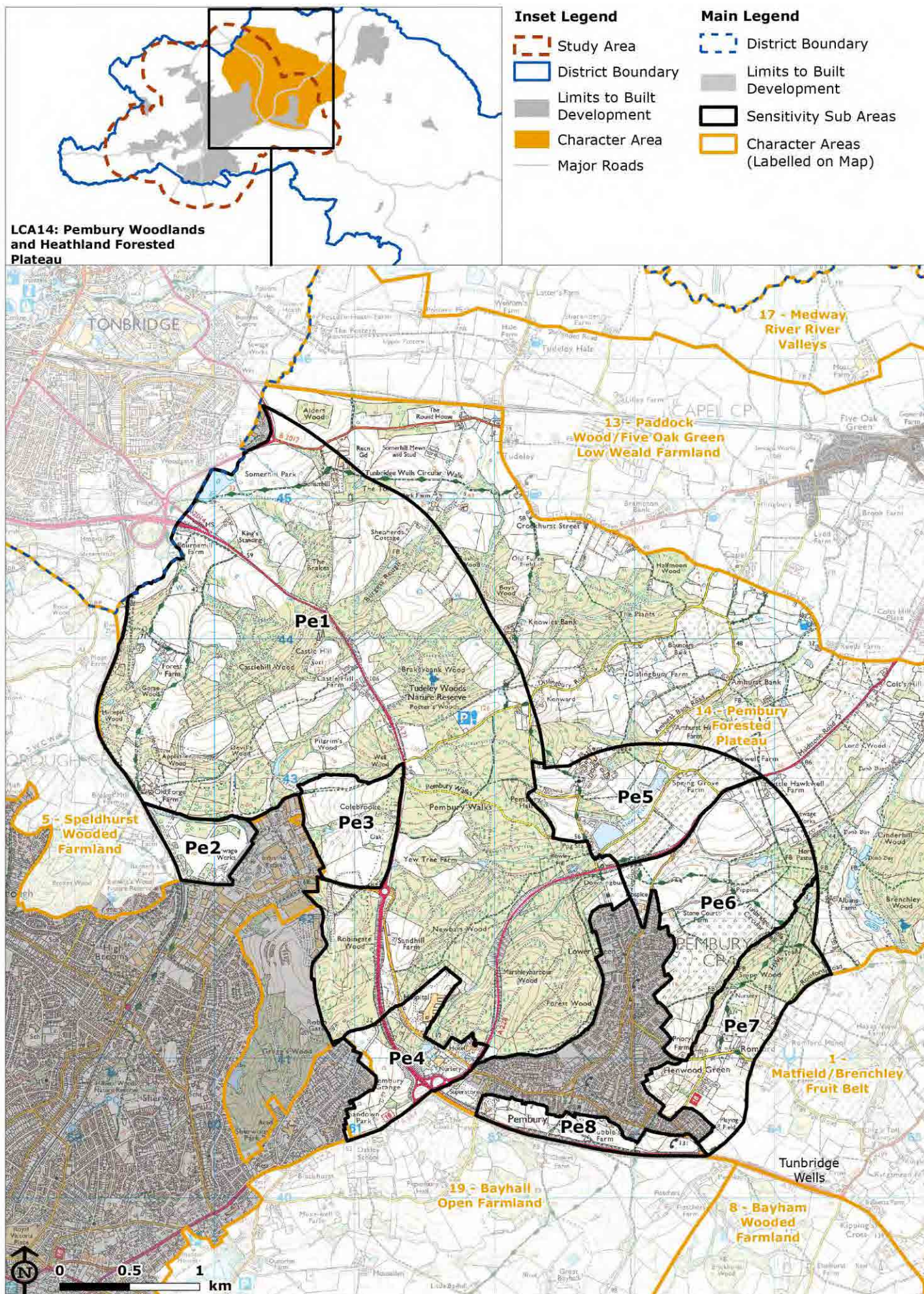


Looking north-west across farmland from Cryals Road on the edge of Key's Green.

| Character Area 1 - Matfield/Brenchley Fruit Belt | | Sub-Area MB2 |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 146.4 |
| <p>Land to the east of Pembury, on north-facing slopes to the north of Kings Toll Road. The study area extends eastwards as far as Cryals Road, to the north of the hamlet of Key’s Green. The sub-area includes parts of the hamlet of Romford, along Romford Road and Kings Toll Road, and a number of dispersed farmsteads.</p> <p>There is a gap of c.250m between the settlement edge at Henwood Green, Pembury, and the south-western corner of the sub-area, with land to the west forming part of sub-area PE7 within the Pembury Woodlands and Heathland LCA. All of the sub-area lies within the High Weald AONB.</p> | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | The landform is varied, with steep, narrow ghyll valleys to the north of Kings Toll Road but more moderate slopes at the head of a shallower valley to the east of the B2160 Maidstone Road. Fruit-growing is the dominant land use to the north of Kings Toll Road, and ancient woodland occupies some of the steep, lower slopes. To the east of Maidstone Road the landscape has more of a parkland character in places. The landform, land use and much of the field pattern are typical and valued High Weald AONB features. | |
| Settlement form and edge | The sub-area lies on lower ground than the defined urban edge on the eastern side of Henwood Green - although there is a short line of houses on Woodside Close, separated by a field from the rest of the settlement. A wooded ghyll valley to the west of this creates separation between Henwood Green and Romford. There is a strong pattern of dispersed settlement in this sub-area, an important characteristic of the High Weald AONB. | |
| Settlement setting | The sub-area contributes rural character to Pembury’s setting, on approach along Kings Toll Road or Romford Road, but most of the area is remote from Pembury and forms a rural setting to the dispersed settlement within it. | |
| Visual character | The smaller fields and lower slopes are typically relatively enclosed, by roadside hedges and woodlands, but there are also some open views across the valleys from higher ground. | |
| Perceptual qualities | This is a varied rural landscape, with scenic qualities characteristic of the AONB and no significant intrusive or urbanising influences. | |
| Historic character | The area doesn’t have a particularly strong historic landscape character, with many modern houses as well as historic farmsteads making up the dispersed settlement pattern, but ancient woodland, adjacent medieval assarts and winding rural lands add to historic character in the more enclosed lower valley areas. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| Key sensitivities are the sub-area’s valued AONB landscape elements, dispersed, rural settlement character and lack of relationship with the urban settlement edge at Pembury. Sensitivity to all scales of development is <i>high</i>. | | |

| Character Area 1 - Matfield/Brenchley Fruit Belt | | | Sub-Area MB2 | | |
|---|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. | | | | | |

Pembury Forested Plateau








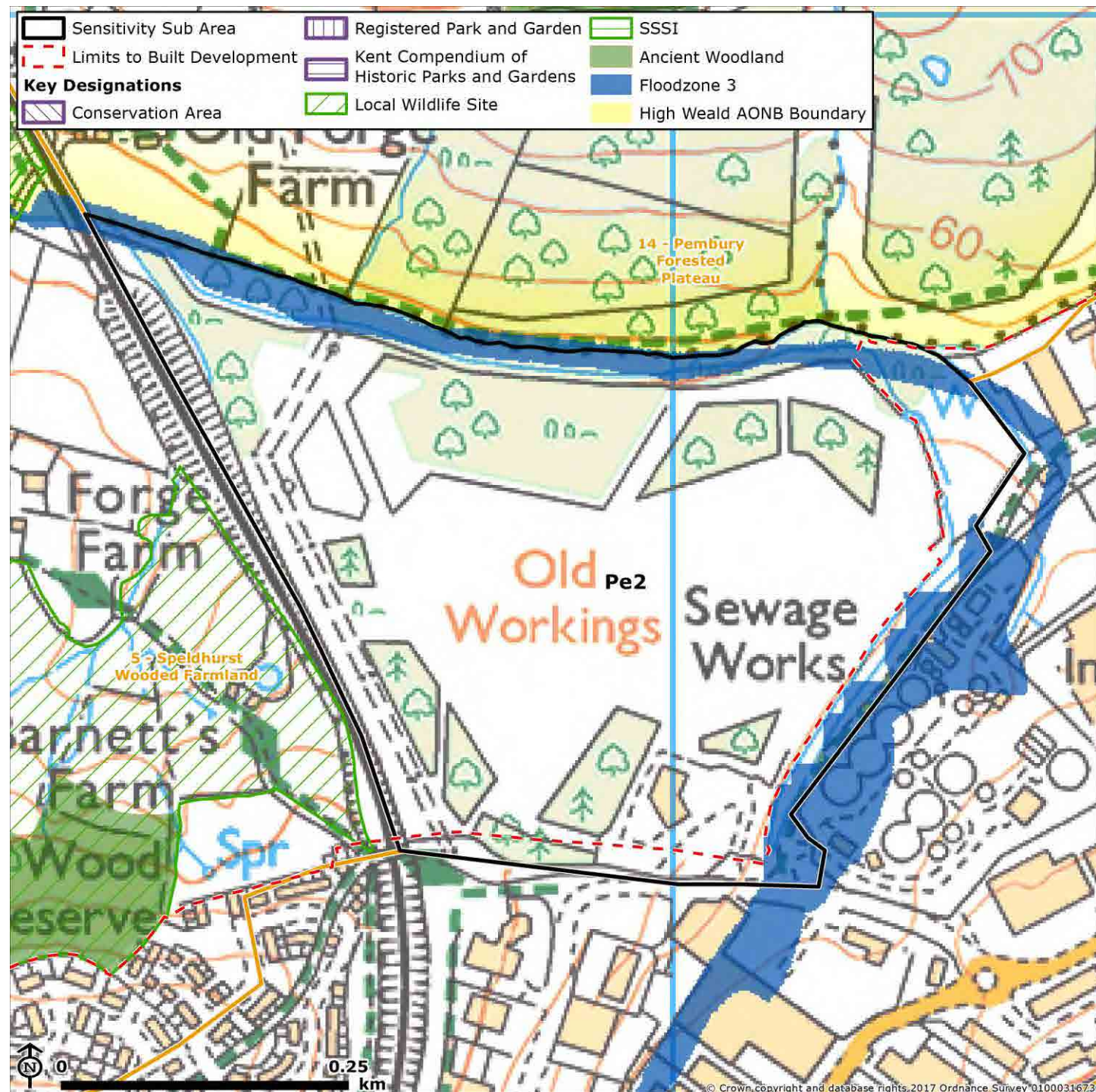
Representative views



Looking north-east from the A26 London Road near Bidborough Corner. The transmitters on the left edge of the view are on the top of Castle Hill, whilst large-scale commercial development on the northern edge of Tunbridge Wells is visible centre-

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | Sub-Area Pe1 |
|--|---|-------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 899.8 |
| <p>A largely wooded landscape, with undulating high ground and incised valley. Built development within the sub-area is limited to a few isolated, ridge-crest and valley-side farmsteads. The area is bisected north-south by the A21, which is currently undergoing major dualling works, and by the A228 towards the edge of Pembury.</p> <p>The borough boundary stops short of the developed edge of Tonbridge, other than where a small area of commercial development lies to the west of the junction of the A26 and the B2017. The land between the borough boundary and the A21, which marks a limit to the southern extent of Tonbridge, does not have a published landscape character assessment but shares the characteristics of the Pembury Woodlands and Heathland character area.</p> <p>All of the sub-area, aside from the western fringes of Robingate Wood and the north-western corner close to the railway line and the A21, lies within the High Weald AONB.</p> | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | <p>The landform and land cover are for the most part typical of the Character Area, and the High Weald in general, with steep-sided ghylls, undulating slopes and prominent ridges and hilltops, such as Castle Hill. There is extensive woodland cover most of which is ancient in origin, particularly along the ghylls but also on some of the higher slopes, and there are heathlands, a scarce landscape type, between the A21 and Pembury. Within the wooded areas lie a number of sloping pasture fields, many of which represent medieval woodland clearance. In terms of physical character this landscape is therefore sensitive.</p> | |
| Settlement form and edge | <p>The urban edge to the west of the A21 is confined to the lower slopes of the valley. Buildings are typically large, warehouse-type structures, surrounded by extensive car parking areas. There is a clear distinction between large-scale commercial premises on lower ground and residential development on the higher slopes to the west and to the south. The principal valley in the southern part of the sub-area to the west of the A21, Prowles Gill, separates the restored North Farm Tip (see sub-area P2) from rising wooded slopes to the north, and also marks the northern edge of commercial/industrial development on North Farm Lane and Kingstanding Way.</p> <p>On the eastern side of Tunbridge Wells and to the north-west of Pembury, woodland runs up to the edge of the urban area, and there is also extensive tree cover, much of which forms part of Somerhill Park, close to the A21 and the A26 on the northern edge of the LCA.</p> | |
| Settlement setting | <p>The tree cover in this sub-area forms the principal landscape element in the setting of Tunbridge Wells, Pembury and the southern side of Tonbridge, both from settlement edges and where roads within elevated residential areas are orientated towards the urban edge –e.g. along Birken Road and Liptraps Lane in the northern part of Tunbridge Wells, where much of the industrial and commercial development on the valley floor is hidden from view. The sub-area as a whole forms strong separation between Royal Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge.</p> <p>The area is accessible as part of the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk. Woodland containment typically limits views of settlements from publically accessible areas, but the routing of the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk through Somerhill Park adds to the sensitivity of that area in relation to the setting of Tonbridge.</p> | |
| Visual character | <p>High ground within the sub-area is visible in many views forming a rural backdrop, but views that show parts of the sub-area in the context of the urban edge are more limited; therefore there is high visual sensitivity to development in this area.</p> <p>The extent of woodland cover means that views from within the sub-area, including the main routes (the A21 and A228) are typically very contained (although clearance to facilitate the A21 improvement works has temporarily opened up views in places).</p> | |
| Perceptual qualities | <p>Tree cover and landform limit visibility and so create a strong sense of rural separation from urban areas, although the major routeways limit tranquillity in parts of the sub-area. The large-scale development on the edge of Tunbridge Wells is, as noted above, very visible, but there is still a sense of distinction between the sloping, open ground down to the well-treed urban edge and the development beyond.</p> | |
| Historic character | <p>Much of the sub-area is occupied by ancient woodlands, which have cultural and historical value and are a key characteristic of the High Weald AONB. Most of the built development within the area is historic farmsteads and many of the fields (although none adjacent to urban edges) are historic assarts. There are several ancient routeways passing through the area which lack any associated modern development. The association of all these elements with distinctive topography adds to the combined value of these features as a characteristic High Weald AONB landscape.</p> | |

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | | Sub-Area Pe1 | | |
|--|---|----|--------------|----|---|
| Historic character | Somerhill Park is a Grade II listed Park and Garden set around a Grade I listed house. The park occupies a sizeable area between the A21 and A26 on the edge of Tonbridge. The Iron Age fort on Castle Hill, just to the north of Castle Hill Farm, is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. | | | | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | | | | |
| In terms of its physical and historic character this area is a characteristic High Weald AONB landscape. Landform and land cover increase sensitivity by creating distinct separation from the urban edge, a distinction emphasised by the large scale industrial and commercial buildings that form the settlement edge to the west of the A21, The area’s woodlands and topography are important to the landscape setting of Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Pembury and Tonbridge, and they are visually important as part of an AONB landscape. At a localised scale, landscape containment offers scope to limit the impact of built development, but it also helps to preserve strong perceptual qualities over large parts of the sub-area, limiting the visual impact of built development and major transport routes. Sub-area PE1 is therefore considered to have a generally <i>high</i> sensitivity to any scale of development; however there may be pockets of land associated with the A21 or existing development where sensitivity to limited small-scale development which could be relatively contained in the wider landscape would be <i>medium-high</i> . | | | | | |
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. | | | | | |






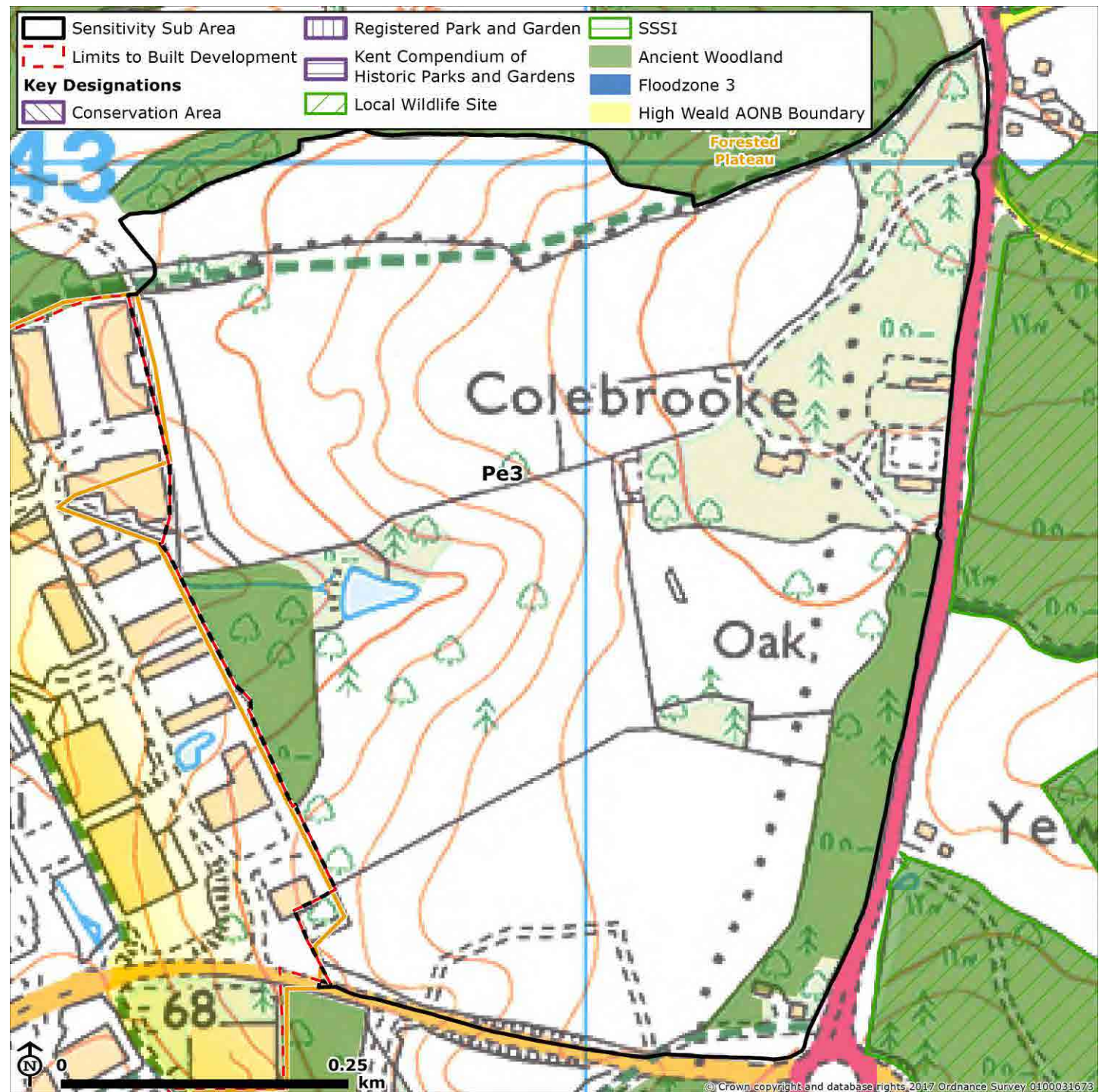
Representative views



Looking south-west from footpath WT190, near Old Forge Farm. The rounded hill is the restored North Farm Tip, screening a large part of the industrial area of Tunbridge Wells (part of which can be seen to the left of the view).

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | Sub-Area Pe2 |
|--|---|------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 26.9 |
| Sub-area PE2 is a restored former landfill site, North Farm Tip. Built development within the sub-area is limited to a recycling centre on the north side of North Farm Lane; all other built development lies to the south and east of the road. The sub-area lies outside of the High Weald AONB. | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | North Farm Tip is incongruous in its landform setting, having been restored as a rounded hill rising 15-30m above the adjacent urban edge. It is used for rough grazing and fringed with trees and shrubs. A narrow valley, Prowles Gill, marks the northern edge of the sub-area, beyond which the landscape rises up to wooded high ground at Castle Hill. These variations in topography mark the sub-area out as distinct from the areas around it, increasing sensitivity, although there is no particular value associated with this man-made landform. | |
| Settlement form and edge | The sub-area abuts the industrial/commercial northern edge of Tunbridge Wells, an area containing large retail units, industrial premises and a sewage works. Trees and shrubs planted on the edges of North Farm Tip create a well-treed settlement fringe and the domed landform of the sub-area forms a strong settlement edge. | |
| Settlement setting | The hill is locally prominent, from locations close to the urban edge, but less significant than the higher wooded ground to the north, west and east that forms a more characteristic setting to the urban area. | |
| Visual character | The open hilltop is prominent in views from higher ground to the north (footpath WT190), within the AONB, screening much of the industrial/ commercial edge of Tunbridge Wells from view (see photo) but leaving an extensive area of development on Kingstanding Way visible. The sub-area is less prominent in the wider landscape, but forms part of the view from the A26 near Bidborough Corner (see sub-area P1 photo), where it is viewed in the context of an AONB landscape. | |
| Perceptual qualities | The hill is incongruous in the local landscape and generally only viewed (the valley floor footpath along its northern edge is an exception) in the context of the developed edge of Tunbridge Wells. The rough grazing it accommodates has an urban fringe character. | |
| Historic character | There are no historic sensitivities associated with this reshaped landform. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| The sub-area is more influenced by urban development, and has much less time-depth / cultural heritage interest, weaker perceptual qualities and poorer representation of local landscape characteristics than the more typical High Weald landscape to the north. However the restored tip, although incongruous in the local landscape, forms a strong physical settlement edge and visual screen and would, if developed, appear more incongruous with both existing development and the AONB countryside than it does at present. Sub-area PE2 is therefore considered to have <i>medium-high</i> sensitivity to any scale of development. | | |

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | | Sub-Area Pe2 | | |
|--|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| Development on the southern side of the hill would have more limited adverse impact if it were visually screened from the north and west, by the hilltop and potentially by additional planting on it. | | | | | |






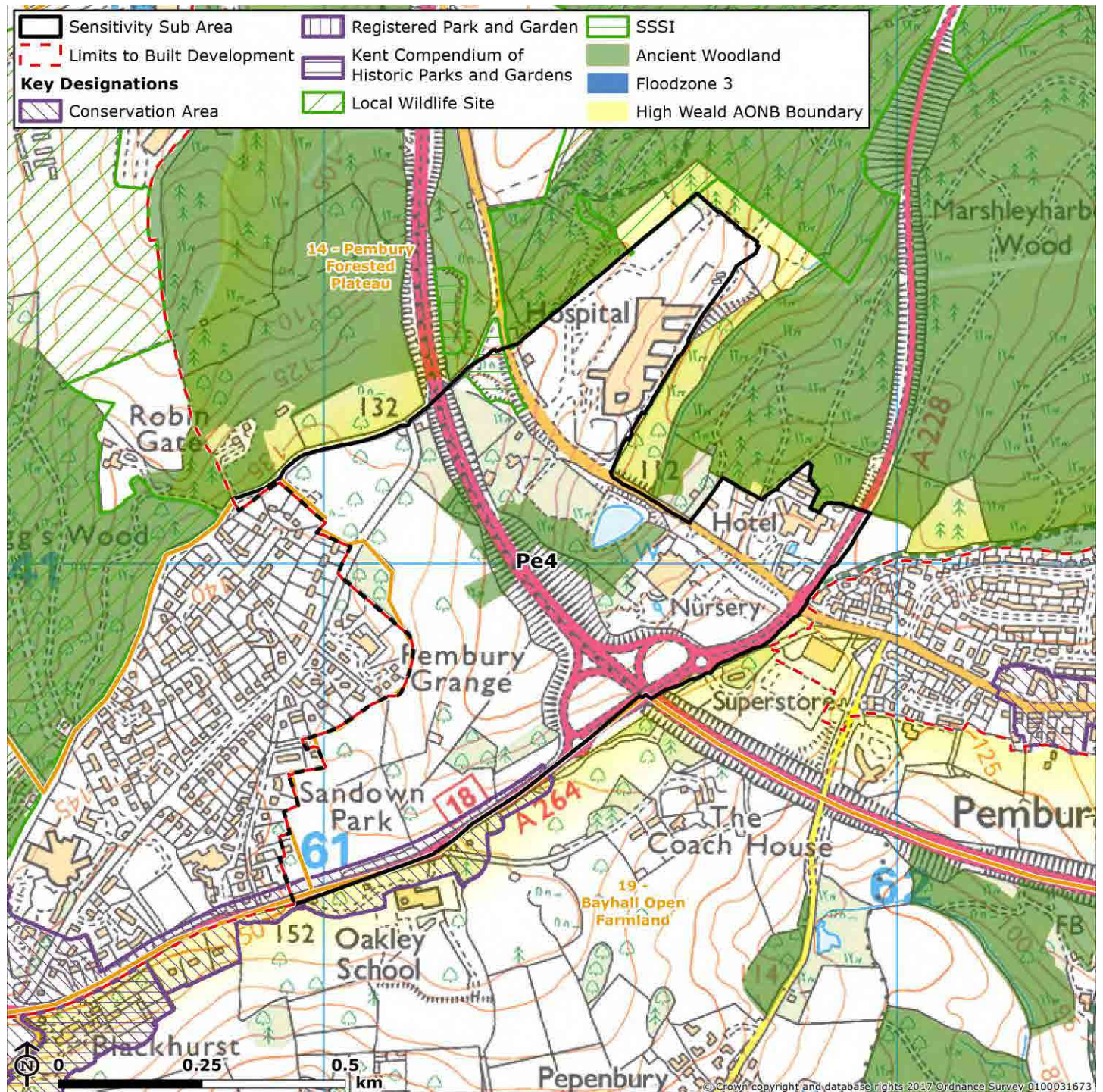
Representative views



Looking south-east from footpath WT190. The sub-area is the open space beyond the foreground woodland.

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | Sub-Area Pe3 |
|--|--|------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 47.4 |
| <p>Sub-area PE3 is mostly open grassland, formerly parkland associated with the Colebrooke Park estate, located immediately to the east of the large-scale commercial buildings on Kingstanding Way. It includes a small block of ancient woodland on the western edge and tree belts enclosing several houses on the eastern edge. Colebrook Park is used as an events space.</p> <p>Works to widen the A21 along the eastern edge of the sub-area are in progress. This will reduce the undeveloped land area, in particular in the south-eastern part of the sub-area, where the realigned route runs further to the west and there will be slip roads at the junction with Longfield Road. Ancient woodland in the path of the widened road was cleared, but new woodland is to be created to border the new road and junctions, using topsoil translocated from the former ancient woodland.</p> <p>The sub-area lies within the High Weald AONB.</p> | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | The grassland area to the east of Kingstanding Way has some sensitivity in terms of landform and land cover, with a shallow valley and small ancient woodland block on the urban edge, but Well Wood creates a strong separation from the more physically sensitive landscape to the north (sub-area P1), which has a more intact landscape of ghylls, ridges and ancient woodland. | |
| Settlement form and edge | The ancient woodland block in the valley-head on the western side of the sub-area combines with another to the north of Kingstanding Way and trees along Longfield Road to create a well-treed settlement fringe which is strengthened by the rising terrain along all of this urban edge, but this doesn't disguise the prominence of the large industrial estate buildings. Tree cover on higher ground alongside the A21 and at Well Wood, to the north of the sub-area, provide physical containment around the sub-area, and development on sloping, higher ground is not inconsistent with development elsewhere in Royal Tunbridge Wells. | |
| Settlement setting | Tree cover around the built edge combines with views to wooded higher ground to form part of the rural setting to this industrial edge of Tunbridge Wells, but the higher wooded landscapes to the north, and to the east of the A21, are more important in this respect. | |
| Visual character | Tall buildings could potentially have skyline impact on long views from Southborough and Bidborough Corner, but visibility into the sub-area from beyond its boundaries is principally from higher ground to the north. This contained area does not make a strong contribution to views; it is viewed in the context of the prominent large-scale commercial buildings on Kingstanding Way and residential development at Knights Park, set into woodland on high ground to the south. There is no public access. | |
| Perceptual qualities | The adjacent commercial development and busy roads (the A21 and Longfield Road) have a significant influence on rural character, increasing the relationship with the urban fringe. | |
| Historic character | The site of Colebrook Park House is now within the urban area, and the parkland remnants are not significant enough to warrant entry in the Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens, but there is some historic value associated with the remnant ancient woodland. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| <p>There is some sensitivity associated with the undulating slopes of this sub-area, rising up above existing development immediately to the west, but there is no inconsistency with settlement form in the broader Tunbridge Wells context, in which 'inward-facing' development typically occupies sloping higher ground, including the new development at Knights Wood to the south of Longfield Road. The sub-area's location between commercial development on Kingstanding Way, Longfield Road and the A21 means that it is relatively well contained visually, and already significantly influenced by built development and traffic movement. Overall sensitivity to small scale development is considered to be <i>medium-low</i>. It is important to retain a wooded settlement setting, particularly to residential areas, so there would be greater sensitivity to development which had a skyline impact. Large scale development on this rising ground would have a greater impact on landscape character than the adjacent commercial development on lower ground to the west, which although prominent locally has a sense of being contained within the landscape rather than dominating it, so there is a <i>medium</i> sensitivity to medium-scale development and <i>medium-high</i> to large-scale development.</p> | | |

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | | Sub-Area Pe3 | | |
|--|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| Planting/landscaping should be used to maintain separation between commercial and residential development. Woodland planting should be used to restore screening from A21 where this has been lost to road widening, but consideration should also be given to the 'gateway' location of the A21/Longfield Road junction, and any opportunities to enhance the relationship between this area and the surrounding landscape. | | | | | |






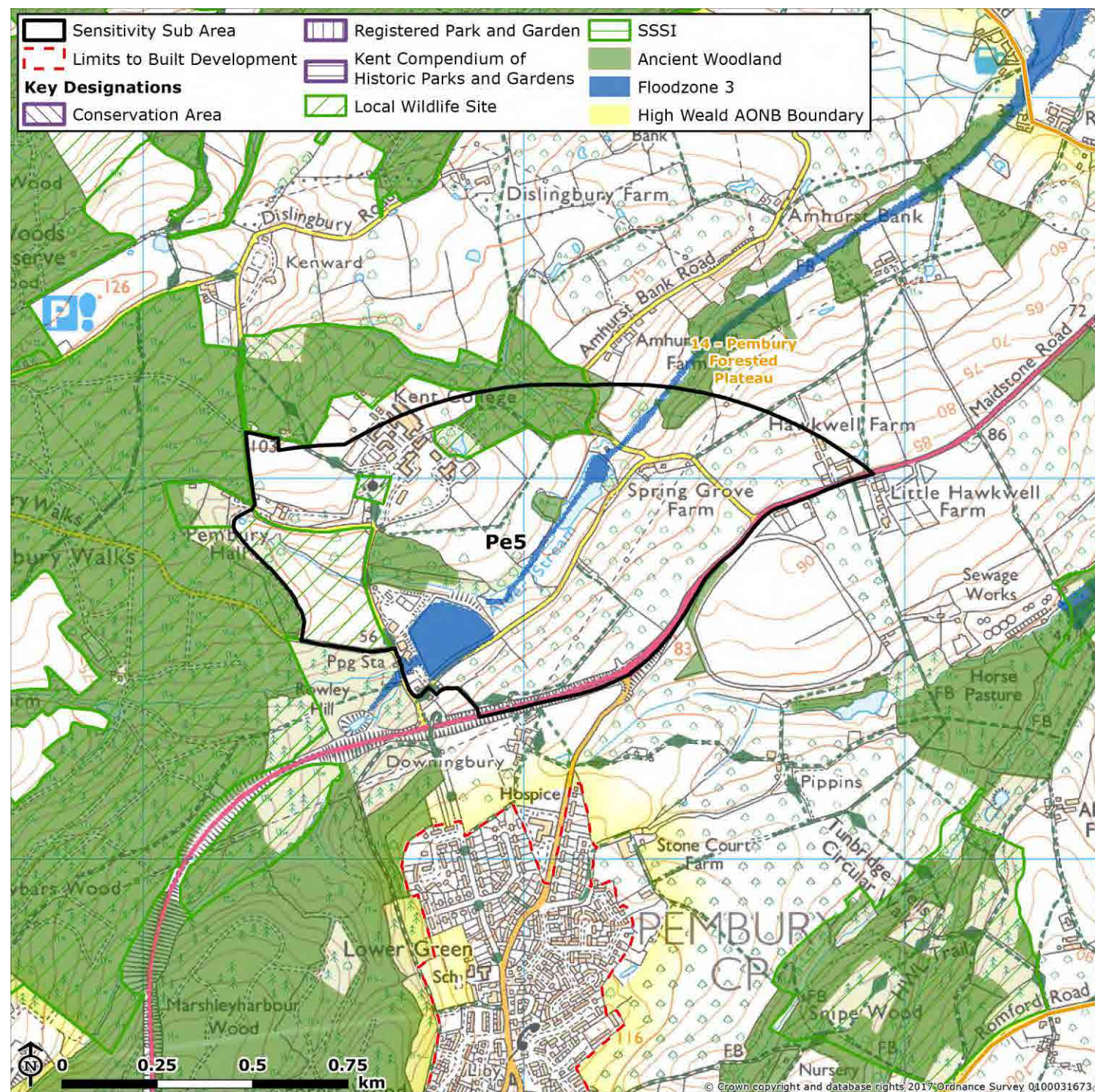
Representative views



Looking south from avenue of trees beyond eastern end of Sandown Park.

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | Sub-Area Pe4 |
|--|---|------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 55.5 |
| Sub-area PE4 consists of land to the north of the A264 between Tunbridge Wells and Pembury. It is bisected by the A21. West of the A21 small fields are defined by lines of mature trees, with tree cover more dominant to the east of the A21, occupying most of the space between the A21 and Tonbridge Road. Several large developments are set within the eastern half of the sub-area: Tunbridge Wells Hospital, Notcutts Garden Centre and the Mercure Tunbridge Wells Hotel. There are also several residential dwellings set within the woodland. The sub-area lies outside of the High Weald AONB. | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | The sub-area forms the head of a valley, in which slopes are generally moderate but shallower in the north-western area and steeper to the south, but sensitivity associated with landform is reduced by the amount of tree cover in and around the area, and by the A21 corridor which bisects it. Land to the west of the A21 has a parkland character, with a strong structure of mature tree lines and individual specimens, but its physical containment by major roads and strong tree cover reduces its contribution to landscape character. | |
| Settlement form and edge | Existing development in the adjacent Sandown Park estate occupies flat, high ground, so there is a topographical distinction between this and the western part of the sub-area, and tree cover also creates some separation. However this part of the sub-area is turn contained from the wider countryside by main roads and trees, which serves to strengthen its relationship with the settlement edge, so sensitivity in this respect is limited. There is significant development to east of A21, outside of the Limits to Built Development, but woodland containment means that there is still a clear distinction between this and the main urban area of Pembury to the east of the A264. | |
| Settlement setting | The sub-area forms a narrow gap between Tunbridge Wells and Pembury, and there is some perception from the A264, a major approach into Tunbridge Wells, of the parkland character of the area to the west of the A21. The A21 and its containing tree cover, which prevents any intervisibility between the two settlements, is a key element in settlement separation, but the small size of the gap and the connection provided by the A264 mean that the open space within the western half of the parcel also makes an important contribution to the settlement gap. Woodland to the east of the A21 is important to the setting of Pembury. | |
| Visual character | There is strong visual containment, so the sub-area doesn't contribute to wider landscape character other than through the screening impact of its tree cover, but views from the A264 contribute to the perception of a gap between Tunbridge Wells and Pembury, and the role of this route as one of the principal approaches into Tunbridge Wells heightens sensitivity in this respect. Tree cover prevents any visibility into the area from the A21. | |
| Perceptual qualities | Containment by major roads and trees limits perception of this area as relating to the wider countryside and limits the sense of rural tranquillity that might otherwise be associated with the sub-area's woodland and parkland. | |
| Historic character | The fact that the area to the west of the A21 was formerly parkland associated with Pembury Grange, a Grade II listed mid-19th century house on the edge of what is now the Sandown Park estate, adds some historic sensitivity. There is historic value associated with the remnants of the ancient Owlsnest Wood, mostly between the A21 and Tonbridge Road, but its contribution to wider landscape character is diminished by its relationship with the A21. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| <p>This is not a strongly rural setting, given its containment by urban edge development and major roads, but retention of the sub-area's wooded character is important in terms of screening the A21, maintaining settlement separation and contributing to the wooded settings of Pembury and Sandown Park, and the fields to the west of the A21 retain a landscape character that is important in the retention of an open approach to Tunbridge Wells. Any new access or visibility of urbanising built landscape elements from the A264 would be likely to increase landscape impacts through reduction of perceived separation from Pembury.</p> <p>Assuming that sufficient tree cover is retained to prevent development from significantly reducing the current extent of wooded containment, there is <i>medium</i> sensitivity to small-scale development, or <i>medium-high</i> sensitivity to medium-scale development, in the area to the east of the A21. There is <i>medium-high</i> sensitivity to small-scale development, and <i>high</i> sensitivity to medium-scale development, to the west of the A21. There is little scope for more large scale development without significant impact on this containment and wooded setting.</p> | | |

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | | Sub-Area Pe4 | | |
|--|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| Retention of some depth of view across open parkland from the A264 would help to preserve perception of a small gap between Tunbridge Wells and Pembury, and for the same reason new access from the A264 should be avoided. Parkland landscape elements, such as the avenue of trees extending along the track from the eastern end of Sandown Park, and individual specimen trees, should be retained. | | | | | |






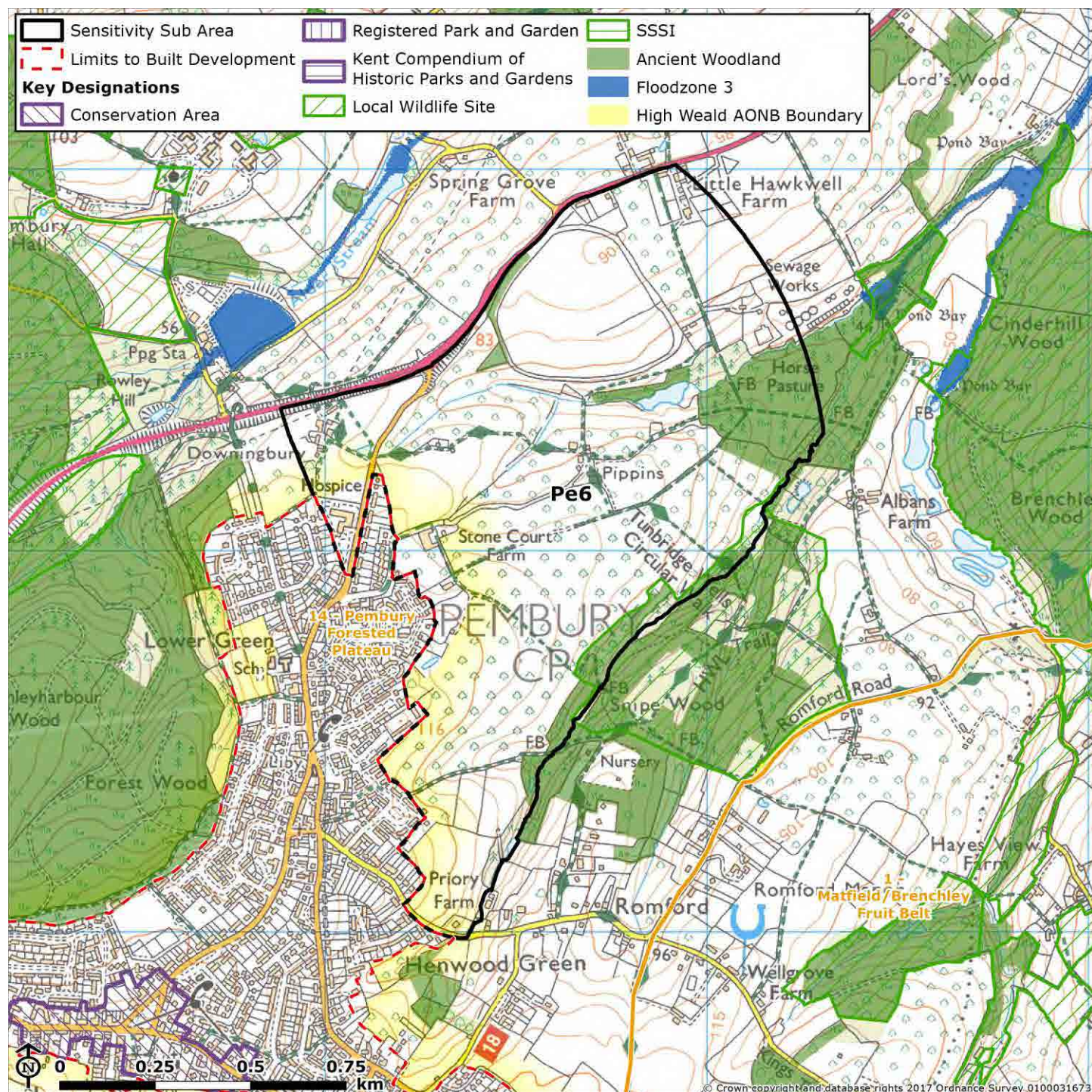
Representative views



Looking east from footpath WT204a, near Kent College.

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | Sub-Area Pe5 |
|---|---|------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 90.5 |
| Sub-area PE5 comprises land north of the A228 to either side of the Alder Stream valley, bounded to the west and north by woodlands. There are a few dwellings and the reservoir pumping station on Old Church Road, but the principal built elements in the landscape are the various buildings making up Kent College, and the adjacent Church of St Peter (Pembury 'Old Church') on higher ground to the north of the stream valley. The sub-area lies within the High Weald AONB. | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | The Alder Stream runs along a strong valley landform, fed by a tributary valley running down from Pembury Hall. There is a block of ancient woodland on slopes just to the north of Pembury Reservoir, which is located in the valley towards the western edge of the sub-area, and ancient woodland frames the sub-area to the north and west. Much of the Alder Stream valley floor is wooded. These are characteristic High Weald landscape features which add to sensitivity. The pastures which lie on the slopes below Kent College retain a parkland character, with a number of individual specimen trees adding further to landscape sensitivity. The slopes on the northern edge of the sub-area are dominated by fruit trees: some close-planted modern rootstocks but also some older, larger trees, although the latter are in decline. | |
| Settlement form and edge | The sub-area is separated from Pembury by the A228 and its associated tree cover, following the ridge along the southern edge of the Alder Stream valley, so there is no visual relationship with the urban area. There is a strong sense that the A228 marks the outer extent of the modern settlement. Although there are a number of modern buildings at Kent College, the clustering of development within a strong rural setting, with historic characteristics (see below) does not represent urbanising development. | |
| Settlement setting | The landscape here does not contribute to the immediate setting of Pembury, lacking any visual relationship, but contributes to its wider rural setting. | |
| Visual character | The sub-area is fairly well contained in the wider landscape context, by higher, wooded ground, but the open, higher slopes around Kent College have greater visual exposure within the sub-area itself. The Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk passes through the area. | |
| Perceptual qualities | Wooded containment separates the sub-area from intrusive urban influences, and a degree of openness within the sub-area itself provides some scenic, rural views over parkland and orchards. This is therefore perceived as a rural landscape. | |
| Historic character | Many of Kent College’s buildings are modern, but together with the Victorian manor house and the Grade 1 – listed church they form a cohesive group that retains a rural parkland and ancient woodland setting. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| The wooded Alder Stream valley and parkland slopes around Kent College are a rural landscape that lacks any sense of relationship with the urban edge to the south at Pembury. The A228 and associated hedge/tree cover following a ridge crest creates strong separation. College buildings, church and parkland, in wooded surrounds, add historic character from which the more modern college buildings do not significantly detract. Therefore the sub-area is considered to have a generally <i>high</i> sensitivity to any scale of development; however there may be pockets of land associated with existing development where sensitivity to limited small-scale development which could be relatively contained in the wider landscape would be <i>medium-high</i> . | | |

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | | Sub-Area Pe5 | | |
|---|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| There is little scope for mitigation as any strategic development is considered likely to result in change that significantly detracts from valued landscape characteristics. | | | | | |






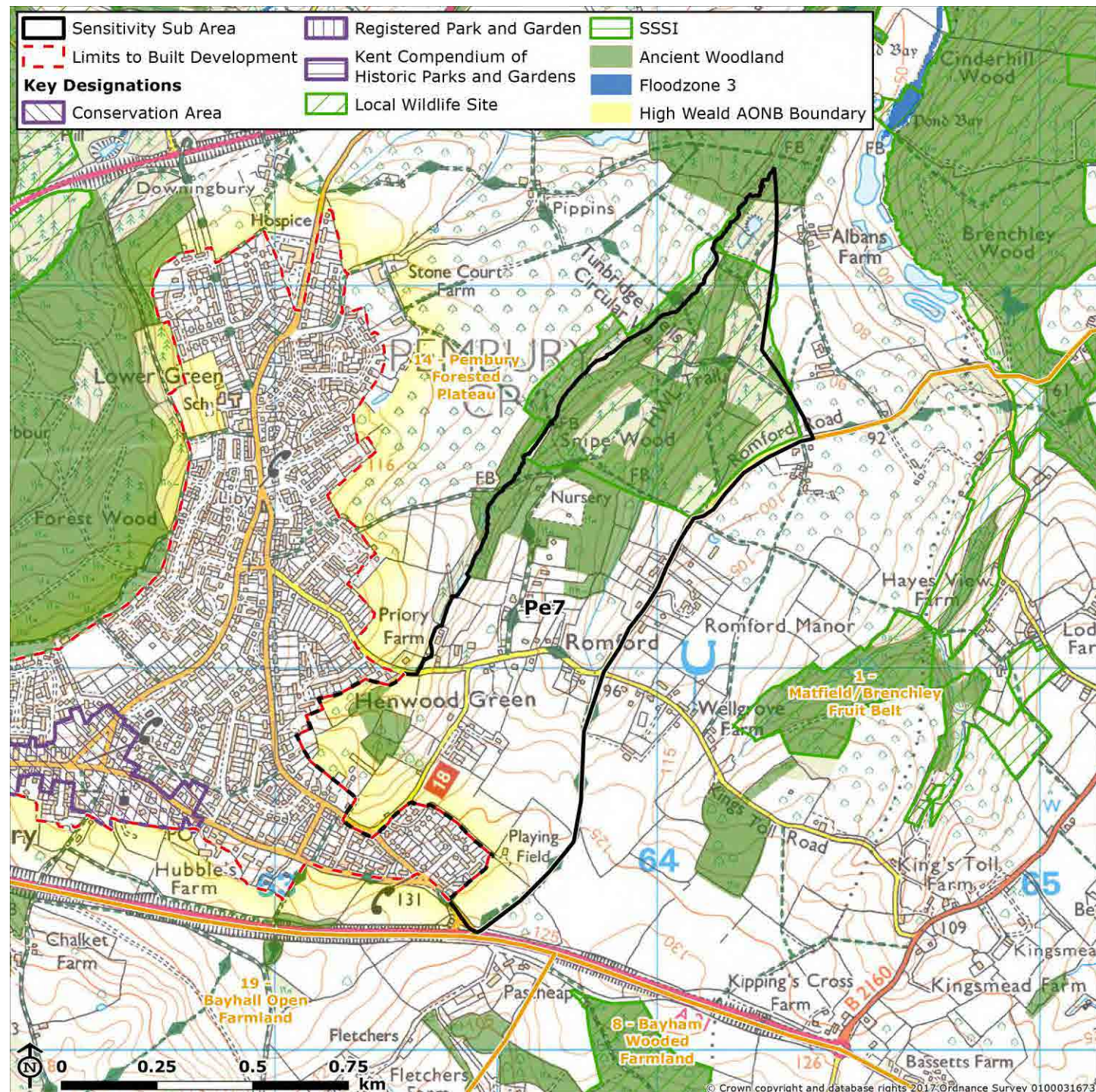
Representative views



Looking north-west from public footpath WT218, between Downingbury and the northern edge of Pembury (Lower Green).

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | Sub-Area Pe6 |
|--|---|-------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 135.3 |
| <p>Sub-area Pe6 consists of land to the north and east of Pembury, contained by the A228 to the north and Snipe Wood to the east. The 1km area of search extends out to the north-east almost as far as Little Hawkwell Farm. The area is farmland, much of which is under orchard cultivation, and has several farmsteads: Downingbury and Pippins to the north and Stone Court to the east.</p> <p>With the exception of c.4ha of land on the urban edge in the vicinity of Stone Court Farm, the sub-area lies within the High Weald AONB.</p> | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | <p>Land close to the settlement edge to the north and north-east of Pembury is only gently sloping, but there is greater sensitivity associated with the steeper slopes of valleys to the north of Pippins and east of Beagles Wood Road that feed into the more prominent valley occupied by Snipe Wood. The valley north of Pippins isolates the gently rounded hill top to the west of Little Hawkwell Farm from the rest of the sub-area.</p> <p>Much of the land in this sub-area is used for fruit growing, which isn't typical of the Pembury Woodlands and Heathlands character area as a whole but represents a transition towards the area to the east, centred on Brenchley and Matfield, in which fruit cultivation is more dominant. Orchards are recognised as a locally distinctive component of landscape character in the High Weald AONB.</p> | |
| Settlement form and edge | <p>Settlement in the northern part of Pembury (Lower Green) lies along the crest and upper slopes of a north-south ridge. The valleys noted above are distinct from the settlement, and encroachment here would represent a change in settlement form, but in the wider landscape context containment provided by the A228 to north, and the woodlands to the east, serves to reduce sensitivity to some extent. A woodland belt along part of eastern settlement edge, between Herons Way and Brickfields, helps to strengthen the settlement edge definition, increasing sensitivity to development beyond it.</p> | |
| Settlement setting | <p>Fruit-growing creates a distinctive rural setting, but does not provide a strong visual backdrop as the settlement lies on higher ground. The gently rounded hilltop west of Little Hawkwell Farm, open grassland backed by trees alongside the A228, has some skyline prominence in the village's wider setting and is clearly remote from the urban edge.</p> <p>The farmsteads to the north of Pembury, Downingbury and Pippins, are attractive building groups, with characteristic oast houses, and their presence and separation from the urban edge is important to the preservation of rural setting. The Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk passes through this area, providing rural views. Existing housing development has encroached on the setting of Stone Court Farm.</p> | |
| Visual character | <p>The higher slopes have quite strong visual openness, but woodlands to the north and east limit intervisibility with the more immediate surrounding area, so the sub-area is a more distant element in vistas from most viewpoints.</p> | |
| Perceptual qualities | <p>Fruit-growing, woodlands and historic building groups contribute to a relatively strong sense of rurality. Occasional long views over a well wooded landscape add a degree of remoteness, although traffic noise from the A228 has some local adverse impact on tranquillity.</p> | |
| Historic character | <p>Downingbury, Pippins and Stone Court are historic farmsteads, and orchard land use also contributes to historic character, but the sub-area lacks any surviving medieval field pattern. There are no remaining historic buildings at Stone Court.</p> | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| <p>Valleys and woodland provide containment, but there is sensitivity in terms of rural character, and the historic farmsteads to the north of the village add to this sensitivity. High ground to the north-east, close to Little Hawkwell Farm is clearly isolated from Pembury. The majority of the sub-area therefore has <i>medium-high</i> sensitivity to small-scale built development, but the valley at the southern end of the sub-area that is more contained between the settlement edge and nearby valley woodland, and has a weaker historic character, is considered to have <i>medium</i> sensitivity. The flatter, more contained fields adjacent to the settlement edge in the vicinity of Stone Court Farm, which lie outside of the AONB, have <i>medium-low</i> sensitivity.</p> <p>Visual openness and inconsistency with existing development means that sensitivity to larger scale development will generally be <i>high</i>, but there may be pockets of land associated with existing development where sensitivity to limited medium-scale development which could be relatively contained in the wider landscape would be <i>medium-high</i>.</p> | | |

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | | Sub-Area Pe6 | | |
|--|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| Areas to the east of Pembury that are more closely related to the settlement edge, or contained by woodland, have the lowest sensitivity. The rural setting of the farmsteads to the north of Pembury – Downingbury and Pippins – should be preserved, and any loss of apple orchards minimised. | | | | | |






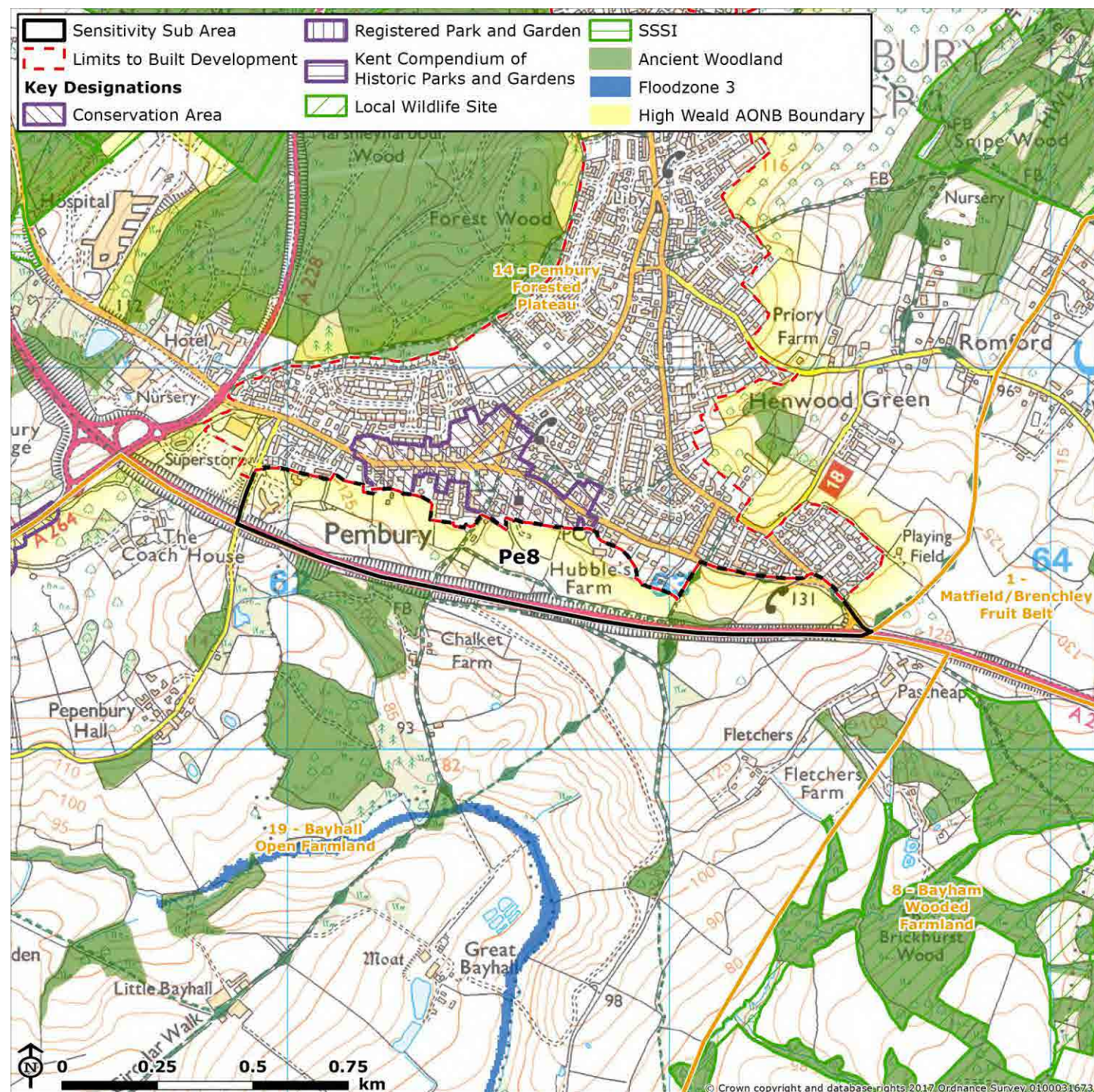
Representative views



Looking west from Woodside Road across allotments to the urban edge at Henwood Green.

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | Sub-Area Pe7 |
|---|---|------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 85.7 |
| Sub-area PE7 is a steep-sided, well-wooded ghyll valley; a tributary of Tudeley Brook running northwards from Henwood Green, together with adjacent higher slopes at the south-eastern corner of Pembury. The sub-area includes part of the settlement of Romford, towards the head of the valley. All of the sub-area other than a small field with storage uses adjacent to Henwood Green lies within the High Weald AONB. | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | The northern half of the valley is clothed in ancient woodland, a valued and characteristic High Weald AONB landscape type, and an ancient woodland block also dominates the valley close to the edge of Henwood Green. There is less sensitivity associated with fields on the shallower slopes at the valley head adjacent to the urban edge, but these still have a degree of sensitivity as a relatively small-scale landscape. | |
| Settlement form and edge | The urban edge of Pembury / Henwood Green occupies the higher slopes of the valley head. There is built development outside of the LBD, crossing through the sub-area along Romford Road, but the steep valley landform and dispersed, rural character of the buildings in it creates a distinction from the urban area. Houses in Romford occupy a narrow spur of high ground between two stream channels, but this is all very low in density and set in well-treed surrounds. 1960’s development at Woodside Close on the eastern side of the valley, outside of the LBD, weakens the distinction between settlement and countryside in this area, but heading northwards the wooded valley becomes more distinctly separate from the settlement edge. | |
| Settlement setting | The open fields and allotments on the slopes to the north of Henwood Green Road, backed by woodland, provide an attractive localised setting to Henwood Green. The woodland along the valley floor and sides is important in providing containment to the wider setting of Pembury, and also the hamlet of Romford. The High Weald Landscape Trail and Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk pass through the area, making it an accessible landscape. | |
| Visual character | This is a visually contained landscape other than on the higher ground on the eastern side of valley head, where the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk adds to the sensitivity of the north-facing slopes with long views over the valley woodland. | |
| Perceptual qualities | The sub-area retains a rural character, with isolation from urban influences where woodland provides containment. Settlement has a stronger influence at the southern end, but woodland still provides a rural setting. | |
| Historic character | Ancient woodland adds historic character, and Henwood Green has medieval origins and retains a few older buildings, including an oast house. Romford has a number of historic farmsteads and listed buildings, which help to distinguish the character of built development here from that of the adjoining urban area, and Romford Road is a narrow, enclosed rural lane, typical of the High Weald AONB. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| <p>The valley woodlands are clearly distinct from the urban area in terms of landform, land use and perceptual qualities, so sensitivity to any scale of strategic development is <i>high</i>. Romford has a rural, historic character and wooded setting that also make it highly sensitive to strategic development.</p> <p>Higher ground is less sensitive in terms of its relationship with the existing urban edge, but where there is greater openness on the north-facing slopes to the east of the valley head there is greater visual sensitivity. Only in fields adjacent to the south-eastern edge of Pembury, where there is a closer relationship to existing development, is sensitivity to small-scale development reduced to <i>medium</i>.</p> <p>There would be a <i>high</i> sensitivity to larger-scale development across all of the sub-area.</p> | | |

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | | | Sub-Area Pe7 | |
|---|------------------------|----|---|--------------|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| Development in fields immediately adjacent to the Henwood Green settlement edge, on Henwoods Mount and Sandhurst Avenue, would have the least impact on landscape character. Locations where development would appear isolated, with a consequently greater adverse impact in terms of settlement setting, should be avoided. | | | | | |






Representative views



Looking north across the south-eastern edge of Pembury.

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | Sub-Area Pe8 |
|--|--|------------------|
| Description | | Area (Ha) - 29.4 |
| <p>Sub-area PE8 consists of land between the southern edge of Pembury and the A21, bounded by Cornford Lane to the west and Henwood Green Road to the east. Land is mostly pasture (largely horse-grazed), and there is a cricket ground off Chalket Lane, a track providing access across the A21 to several isolated properties. There is a nursing home, Cornford House, at the western end of the sub-area, and residential development has been approved on 0.5ha of land within the sub-area to the south of Penns Yard.</p> <p>Land immediately to the west of Cornford Lane, adjacent to the Tesco superstore, has been allocated for a park and ride development in the 2016 Site Allocations Local Plan (policy AL/VRA2).</p> <p>The sub-area lies within the High Weald AONB.</p> | | |
| Assessment criterion | Sensitivity description | |
| Physical character | The landform varies – forming a north-facing slope at the eastern end, a south-facing slope at western end and a flatter plateau at the centre – but is not particularly complex or steep. There are several small woodland blocks, and modern screening planting alongside the A21, but no significant sensitivities. The area does not exhibit any of the key valued characteristics identified in the Landscape Character Assessment. | |
| Settlement form and edge | The southern end of Pembury occupies high ground along a north-facing slope, so the eastern end of the sub-area is consistent with this but the western end is not. However the strong barrier role of the A21 serves to weaken the sub-area’s relationship with the open countryside to the south, and therefore to strengthen its relationship with the settlement even where, at the western end, it has a different landform orientation. The settlement edge is fairly consistent in terms of its distance from the A21, and is not blurred by the few isolated buildings within the sub-area. | |
| Settlement setting | Open high ground above the south-eastern edge of Pembury contributes to the settlement’s rural setting, as a backdrop. It is not widely visible across the settlement as a whole but does provide public access to expansive views northward over the settlement to the wooded Wealden ridges. The centre of the sub-area abuts Pembury Conservation Area, but the Conservation Area Appraisal comments on the area’s “generally introverted character”, and doesn’t identify any sensitivities associated with the land within the sub-area. The area provides access to the wider landscape via several rights of way that cross the A21. | |
| Visual character | As high ground the sub-area forms part of the skyline. In southward views from within Pembury and from further north, where the settlement is visible, the skyline is not a strong landscape element; however in northward views from south of the A21 tree cover along the southern edge forms a largely undeveloped skyline that contributes to the rural character of the Bayhall and Bayham LCA’s. There is currently no perception of Pembury from the A21, so there would be sensitivity to the appearance of new development. | |
| Perceptual qualities | The proximity of the A21 has an intrusive influence on the rural character of the landscape, particularly where tree cover and landform create a contained landscape that doesn’t benefit from the sense of openness provided by long views to the north. Land uses add to urban edge character across most of the area. | |
| Historic character | There are no particular sensitivities associated with historic landscape character. | |
| Sensitivity conclusions | | |
| <p>Potential impact on the largely undeveloped skyline as viewed from the south, and from the A21, is the principal consideration in this area, so sensitivity to tall buildings would be high, and the elevated location of much of the sub-area in relation to the rest of Pembury means that large buildings would also be likely to detract from the setting of the settlement, particularly in the vicinity of the conservation area. There would be lower sensitivity associated with medium-scale development that has no significant impact on views from the south, as is the case with Cornford Court.</p> <p>Assuming that tree cover along the southern edges of the sub-area is retained/enhanced, so there is no significant change in the extent of visibility of built development in views from the A21 or further south, overall sensitivity to small-scale development is <i>medium</i> where the landform rises above Pembury, and therefore makes a stronger contribution to settlement setting and views from further north, and <i>medium-low</i> at the western end of the sub-area.</p> | | |

| Character Area 14 - Pembury Forested Plateau | | | Sub-Area Pe8 | | |
|--|------------------------|----|--------------|----|---|
| Development scenario | Sensitivity assessment | | | | |
|  Small | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Medium | H | MH | M | ML | L |
|  Large | H | MH | M | ML | L |
| Guidance on potential mitigation/enhancement measures | | | | | |
| Visibility of development from the A21 and land to the south is a key concern, so tree cover along the southern edge of the sub-area should be retained and enhanced. The massing of any development should be minimised, to limit impact on the setting of Pembury, and rights of way access from the southern edge of Pembury, with connections to the wider rural landscape across the A21, should be retained. | | | | | |