

Adur Local Plan Area

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# Landscape sensitivity assessment of key greenfield sites

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# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Study scope and objectives

The Adur Local Plan<sup>1</sup> (ALP) was adopted in 2017 and sets out policies, proposals and allocations for that area of Adur outside of the South Downs National Park (SDNPA) for the period 2011- 2039. Adur District Council is preparing a new updated Local Plan which will look to at least 2038 and will include allocations for housing and employment uses in addition to those allocated in the ALP 2017.

An extensive area of land within the north of Adur District falls within the South Downs National Park (SDNP) and is outside the Adur Local Plan Area. The area available for new built development is therefore severely constrained and the requirement to allocate new built development must be balanced by the need to conserve the distinctive character and intrinsic value of the remaining areas of countryside that lie between the urban areas. The landscape setting of the SDNP is also an important consideration. In Adur, the two principal undeveloped areas are between the settlements of Worthing and Sompting/Lancing in the west of the district and Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea in the east.

Given the constraints of available land and therefore development capacity, Adur's development allocations are not anticipated to be significant in scale (in terms of numbers of dwellings/amount of floorspace). This landscape sensitivity assessment provides evidence to inform the process of assessing the suitability of potential development sites. Based on guidance prepared by Natural England<sup>2</sup>, it considers the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand change arising from a specified type of development without undue negative effects on landscape character and the visual resource. It takes account of valued aspects of baseline landscape character and is underpinned by the Adur Landscape Character Assessment<sup>3</sup> which describes the distinctive landscape character and sensitivity of the countryside and open spaces within the Adur Local Plan area.

The landscape sensitivity assessment is applied to five key greenfield development sites and considers alternative development scenarios for residential and commercial development. It provides a high level assessment of the relative landscape sensitivities of these potential development sites without knowing the exact location, layout, design or mitigation proposed. Its purpose is to contribute to the overall site assessment process and to identify opportunities and constraints for development, but it does not provide a direct judgement of suitability for development. This is because there are many other factors to consider including socio-economic benefits, vehicular access, drainage and flood risk, provision of utilities (electricity, water, gas, sewerage), ecological and arboricultural constraints and archaeological or heritage constraints.

## 1.2 Approach to judging landscape sensitivity

Landscapes can be described and understood in terms of their physical characteristics, their land uses, their ecological habitats, their heritage and also by the way they make us feel. The combinations of these different landscape characteristics and qualities contribute to our perceptions of local identity and sense of place. An assessment of landscape sensitivity seeks to identify the aspects of landscape character that we value so that we can measure their resilience to change. It is typically undertaken when there is a

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1 Adur Local Plan, 2017

2 An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment - to inform spatial planning and land management, Christine Tudor, Natural England, June 2019

3 Adur Landscape Character Assessment, Sheils Flynn, 2022

need to judge the potential effects that could result from a defined type of change and this study has been commissioned to consider the landscape sensitivity of six specific sites in relation to two alternative scales/densities of residential development and, for only one of the sites, in relation to commercial development.

The relevant development scenarios assessed are:

- Residential scenario 1 - 2-3 storey development at a density of approximately 35 units per hectare (all six sites)
- Residential scenario 2 - higher density residential development to include 3-4 storey development (all six sites).
- Commercial scenario - 10,000 sqm retail/business park, garden centre, distribution centre (for the Shoreham Gateway site only).

The process of sensitivity assessment<sup>4</sup> involves a two-step process:

**Step 1 - Identify the sensitivity assessment criteria** that are relevant for the development scenarios to be assessed (residential and commercial development). This requires consideration of indicators that demonstrate:

- **susceptibility** to the changes associated with development – e.g. topography/skylines; landcover; sense of openness/enclosure; scale, and landscape pattern; sense of tranquillity, remoteness and rurality; time depth and historic continuity); and
- **value** – e.g. landscape designations and extent to which defined special qualities could be affected (ie SDNP); other indicators of value such as scenic quality, rarity, intactness, representativeness, nature conservation, cultural heritage, recreational value<sup>5</sup>.

The assessment provides a consistent, systematic score for the landscape and visual sensitivity of each of the assessed potential development sites. The criteria selected for judging landscape sensitivity are based on the attributes of landscape that are most likely to be affected by the type/scale of residential or commercial development under consideration. They take account of both 'landscape' and 'visual' characteristics and the aspects of landscape value listed above that are relevant for each site. Judgements about landscape value are based on consensus about importance, which can be recognised through designation, through the descriptions of landscape sensitivity that are set out within the Adur Landscape Character Assessment and through reference to publications such as conservation area appraisals and citations for listed buildings, the Priority Habitat Inventory and designated nature conservation sites. In the context of the Adur Local Plan Area, the landscape setting of the SDNP is a significant consideration<sup>6</sup> and the landscape settings of the urban areas that border the remaining gaps of undeveloped land (Worthing, Sompting, Lancing and Shoreham-by-Sea) are also relevant.

The six landscape sensitivity criteria are:

- **Physical character** - landform, landscape scale and pattern
- **Natural character** - extent of tree and woodland cover; presence of semi-natural habitats and assets; and valued natural features. Excludes specific ecological issues relating to species or habitats
- **Cultural and historical associations** - sense of time depth, presence of heritage features and assets. Excludes specific cultural heritage/archaeological issues associated with individual designated heritage assets and their settings)
- **Settlement form and setting** - overall settlement form, character of the built-up edge and landscape setting of settlement, including impact on the remaining undeveloped gaps between urban areas
- **Visual character** - visibility, impact on key views, character of skylines, inter-visibility with surrounding areas and views, particularly from publicly accessible land and the setting of the SDNP. Excludes visual amenity issues associated with private views from residential properties)
- **Perceptual character** - scenic qualities, recreational value, sense of remoteness and tranquillity.

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4 Refer to footnote 1

5 The assessment of landscape value is informed by guidance in the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note - Assessing landscape value outside national designations, Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21. Refer to para 2.4.4, page 7

6 The requirement to avoid or minimise adverse impacts of development on the setting of nationally protected landscapes is set out in National Planning Policy Framework, 20 July 2021, Paragraph 176

Table 2 (pages 6-7) provides guidance for judging the landscape sensitivity of built development in relation to each of the above criteria. It includes examples of higher and lower sensitivity and describes how each criterion may be affected to a greater or lesser extent by the key attributes of residential and commercial development.

**Step 2 - Assess sensitivity of each site** – Using the criteria in Table 2 as a constant reference, the landscape sensitivity of each potential development site was assessed against each criterion on a five point scale (high – moderate – low). The sensitivity scores reflect the degree to which the landscape of each site would be susceptible to the change associated with residential development that is 2-3 storeys high and at a density of approximately 35 units per hectare (scenario 1). A comparative assessment for higher density 3-4 storey development (scenario 2) is incorporated in the final part of the assessment, which considers the overall landscape sensitivity and notes relevant differences in sensitivity associated with the different development scenarios. A separate sensitivity assessment is provided for the commercial development scenario relevant to the Shoreham Gateway site.

The narrative highlights any variations in sensitivity across the site and any key issues to be addressed for integrating future development. The five point sensitivity scale is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 – Five point landscape sensitivity scale**

Sensitivity	Definition
High	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly sensitive to change. It is unlikely to be able to accommodate residential development without significant character change/adverse effects
Moderate-high	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change. There may be very limited situations/locations where residential development can be accommodated.
Moderate	Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change. It may have some potential to accommodate residential development in defined locations.
Low-moderate	Few of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are sensitive to change. They are resilient and have some potential to accommodate residential development.
Low	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are robust and are either unlikely to be subject to change or are not sensitive to the changes that would result from residential development.

The judgement is based on transparent professional analysis rather than a mechanical process of addition. This enables the assessment to highlight any particularly sensitive landscape features or qualities and factors that would need to be taken into account should the site be developed. The overall sensitivity judgement recognises that some attributes or elements of the landscape may be more important in defining character than others and may be more sensitive.

The overall landscape sensitivity scores apply to the whole of the site that has been submitted for assessment. However, they do take some account of the scope to mitigate potential adverse landscape and visual impacts of development, as follows:

- Where relevant, the narrative within the assessment tables incorporates advice on how the design and/or layout of development schemes could mitigate potential adverse landscape and visual impacts and the sensitivity scores take account of this mitigation potential
- The overall landscape sensitivity scores for some sites are marked with an asterisk\* to indicate that a carefully designed layout that focuses built development on those parts of the site that are less sensitive would reduce the risk of adverse landscape and visual effects.

The assessment was initiated as a desk study, based on overlaying multiple spatial data sets using ArcGIS to determine the potential sensitivities of each site. Sites that are allocated for built development in the Adur Local Plan (2017) were taken into account and aerial photograph and maps of each potential development site incorporates the boundaries of the sites that have planning approval for development. Spatial data from the national Priority Habitat Inventory is mapped separately to ensure clarity.

The preliminary desk study assessment was then tested, refined and verified through a process of field survey, undertaken from roads, public rights of way and open access land.

**Table 2 - Landscape sensitivity criteria**

<p><b>Physical character</b></p> <p>This criterion considers the shape and scale of landform, landscape pattern and landscape elements in relation to the potential development types. It considers possible impacts of development on the scale, coherence, condition and intactness of the physical landscape, as well as the extent to which the area is representative of distinctive landscape character.</p> <p>Areas with a smooth or relatively flat topography are likely to be less sensitive to large development than areas with small scale, enclosed landform and/or more distinct landform features, which could appear dominated by large buildings. Conversely, small developments may be integrated and partially screened by a relatively small-scale rolling or undulating landform which offers a degree of enclosure. In addition, areas with a relatively uniform landscape pattern and few elements (eg. trees and buildings) will be less sensitive to development than areas with a more complex and/or small scale landscape pattern with a higher density of landscape elements which could be vulnerable to loss from development.</p>					
Lower sensitivity		→			Higher sensitivity
Landscape has a smooth, gently undulating or featureless landform with uniform large-scale landscape pattern and low density of overlying landscape features.		Landscape has an undulating landform and some distinct landform features; it is overlain by a mixture of small-scale and larger scale field patterns and a moderate density of small-scale landscape features.		Landscape has distinctive and strong landform features such as slopes, scarps and valleys which contribute positively to landscape character. It has a high density of landscape features and is overlain by a small-scale field pattern	
<p><b>Natural character</b></p> <p>This criterion considers natural qualities of the landscape in terms of landcover, presence of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features, including hedgerows, trees and other features of interest, such as ponds or watercourses which could be damaged by development.</p> <p>Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of nationally or internationally designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity from development, while landscapes with limited natural features (including intensively farmed areas or areas with high levels of existing development) will be less sensitive. The role of the landscape as part of a wider network of natural features (green infrastructure and/or Nature Recovery Networks) is also considered.</p>					
Lower sensitivity		→			Higher sensitivity
Landscape is intensively farmed or developed; land cover has been largely lost and any landscape features are fragmented and/or in poor condition and would not be degraded by development.		There are areas of valued semi-natural habitats and features in parts of the site. Other areas are intensively farmed or developed.		Large areas of the landscape are nationally or internationally designated for their nature conservation interest; there is frequent occurrence of valued natural features across the landscape.	
<p><b>Cultural and historical associations</b></p> <p>This considers the extent to which the landscape has 'time-depth' – a sense of being a historic landscape, with reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to distinctive landscape character, including scheduled monuments, listed buildings, veteran trees, historic field patterns and tracks and conservation areas which define historic settlements with distinctive traditional architecture. This part of the assessment considers historical associations in relation to landscape character and is not a heritage assessment.</p> <p>Landscapes with strong and visible historic and cultural heritage, including small-scale, more irregular field patterns of historic origin are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscapes with large, regular scale parliamentary field patterns.</p>					
Lower sensitivity		→			Higher sensitivity
Site landscape has limited cultural or historical influence or associations and little time depth. It does not contribute to landscape patterns or features that have historic value.		Site landscape with some visible historic elements or cultural associations which contribute to distinctive landscape character and a variety of time depths		Site landscape with a strong, intrinsic historic character and/or a high density of historic features which contribute to its distinctive character	

### Settlement form and setting

This considers the extent to which development would contribute to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement, in terms of the important landscape elements and features that structure the way it is perceived – e.g. gateway views; views to distinctive local features and landmarks; and longer contextual views which express the specific relationship between settlement and its surrounding landscape. It also considers the character of settlement edges, the presence and role of boundary features and the extent to which development on the site would relate to settlement form and pattern, including possible contribution to a perceived gap between settlements (the loss of which would increase coalescence).

Lower sensitivity

Higher sensitivity

Site landscape does little to contribute positively to settlement identity and distinctiveness. Development in the site area would have a good relationship with the existing settlement form/ pattern and could provide the opportunity to improve an existing settlement edge.

Site landscape makes a limited positive contribution to settlement form, identity and/or setting and does not have a strong influence on the perception of separate settlements. Development in the site area may be slightly at odds with the settlement form/ pattern and may adversely affect the existing edge to some extent.

Site landscape contributes positively to settlement, form, identity and setting and/or has important role in the perception of a gap between settlements. Development would have a poor relationship with the existing settlement form/ pattern and would adversely affect an existing distinctive settlement edge

Lower sensitivity

Higher sensitivity

### Visual character

This takes into consideration the visual character of the site and the extent to which development would be visible, including the extent of openness or enclosure, skyline character, the degree to which the landscape contributes to views from sensitive viewpoint locations and/or whether development would intrude on sensitive views. Locations such as tourist attractions, promoted viewpoints and national trails will be more sensitive to development than local footpaths. Locations used for recreation, such as country parks or local public green space, are more sensitive than passing views from rights of way, and private views have less sensitivity than public viewpoints. Visually prominent landscapes which are inter-visible with adjacent landscapes are likely to be more sensitive to development than areas that are visually contained and less widely visible. Distinctive and/or undeveloped skylines, or skylines with landmark features are likely to be more sensitive to development.

Lower sensitivity

Higher sensitivity

Site landscape is enclosed and well screened from public or private view, is not visually prominent in the landscape and does not form a visually distinctive or important undeveloped skyline.

Site landscape is semi-enclosed and likely to have some inter-visibility with surrounding areas. There may be some visually distinctive or important undeveloped skylines. It makes some positive contribution to local views from public rights of way, but little intrusion on public views from wider landscape.

Site landscape is open, visually prominent in the wider landscape and/or forms a visually distinctive skyline or an important undeveloped skyline. There is clear visibility from sensitive receptor locations where the undeveloped character of the landscape contributes to the quality of the view.

### Perceptual qualities

This considers perceptual qualities, including scenic value, intact rural character, sense of remoteness and tranquillity and the extent of public access for recreation. Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil (landscapes with a lack of human activity or disturbance, or landscapes with perceived naturalness and traditional rural feel) tend to have higher levels of sensitivity to development compared to landscapes that contain signs of modern development or those with a high level of human disturbance/activity. High scenic value and dark night skies also increase sensitivity in relation to this criterion because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity, dark skies and or remoteness/naturalness.

Lower sensitivity

Higher sensitivity

Site landscape has a disturbed landscape, strongly influenced by development/activity/intrusion, where new development would not be uncharacteristic. Low or no public access.

Site landscape has scenic qualities and/or some rural character, separation or isolation, but with some distinct intrusive elements – e.g. road noise or an abandoned character. Some public access.

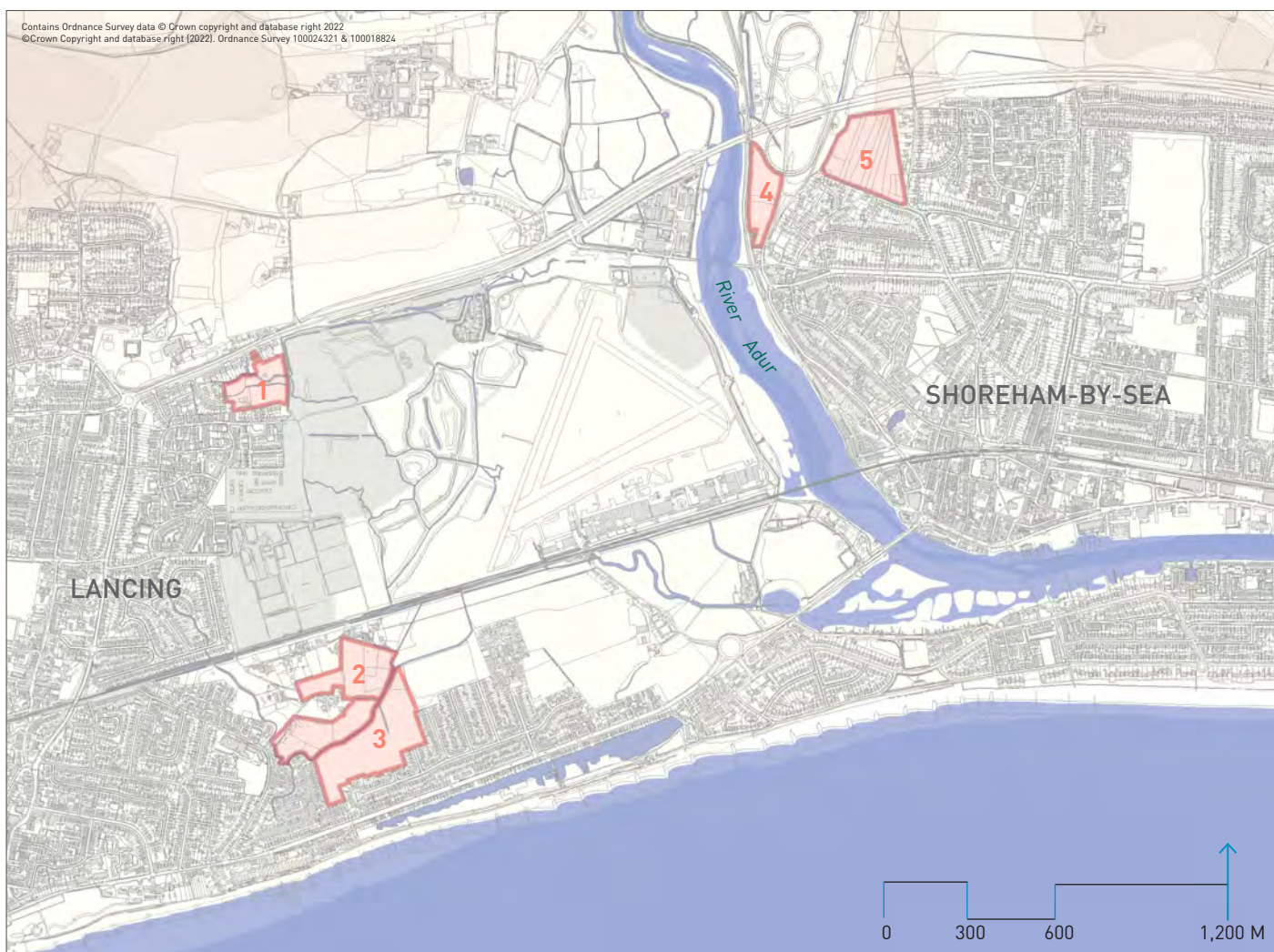
A highly tranquil, rural and/or scenic site landscape with relatively dark skies and a natural and/or traditional rural character which lacks intrusive elements. Extensive public access

### 1.3 Key greenfield sites

The five key greenfield sites are shown on Figure 1. They are:

1. Land off Manor Close, Lancing
2. Land off Old Salts Farm Road, South Lancing
3. Land north of the West Beach Estate. South Lancing
4. Shoreham Gateway, Old Shoreham
5. Mill Hill, Old Shoreham

Figure 1  
Location of the five key greenfield sites





## 2 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

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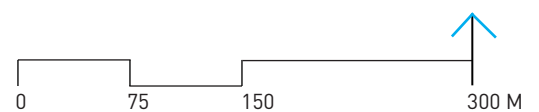
## 2.1 Land off Manor Close, Lancing

A 2.74 ha site on the north east fringe of Lancing, immediately to the west of the site for the New Monks Farm primary school (under construction).

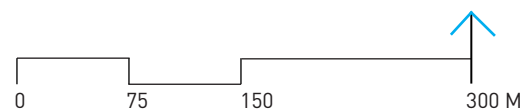
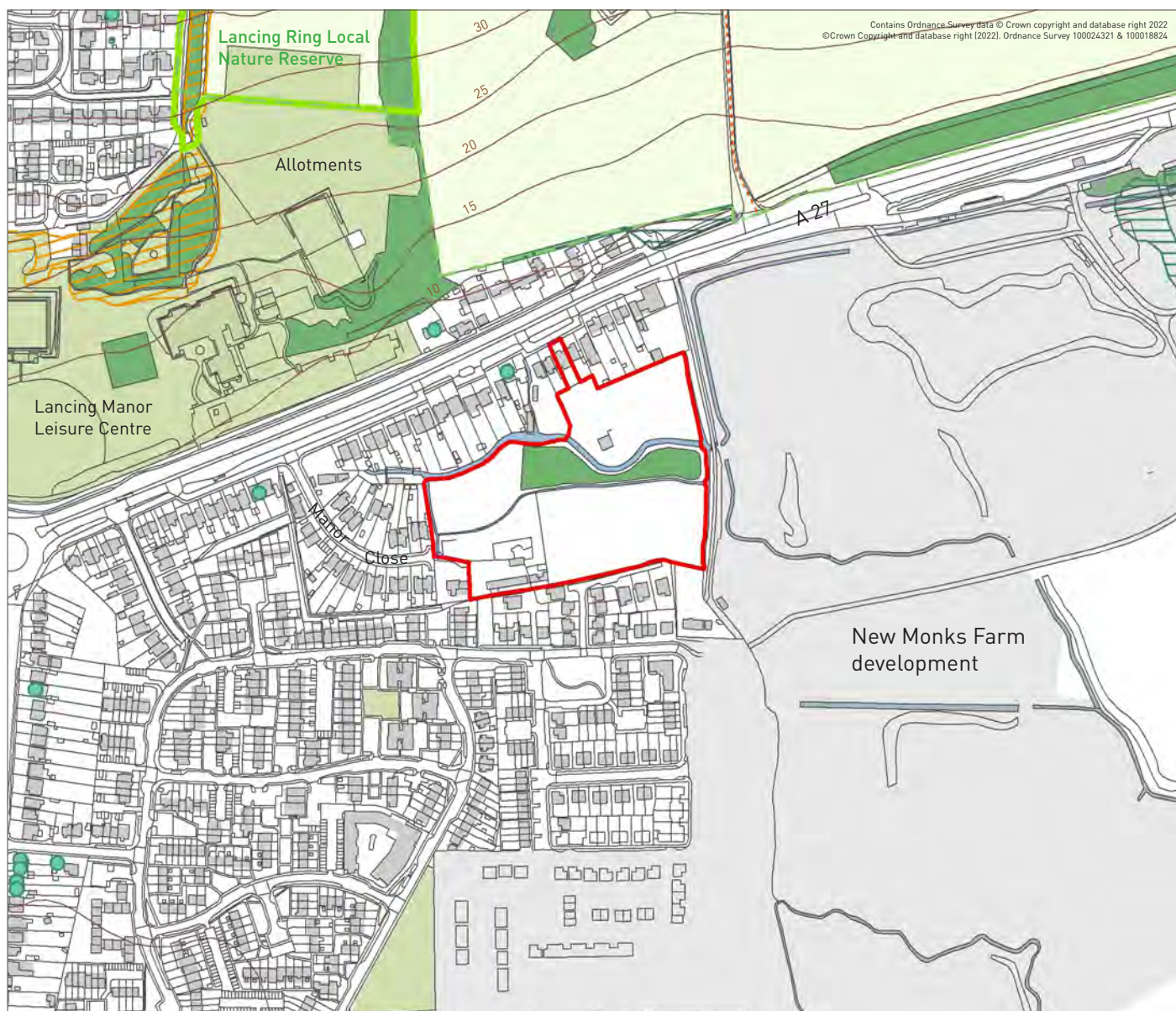
The site is bordered by existing residential properties and comprises a group of small pastures and a linear woodland within a shallow valley. The linear woodland flanks a central stream, which arises from springs to the north and west of the site and flows eastwards.

Figure 2a

Land off Manor Close, Lancing - aerial view

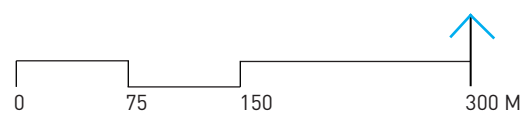
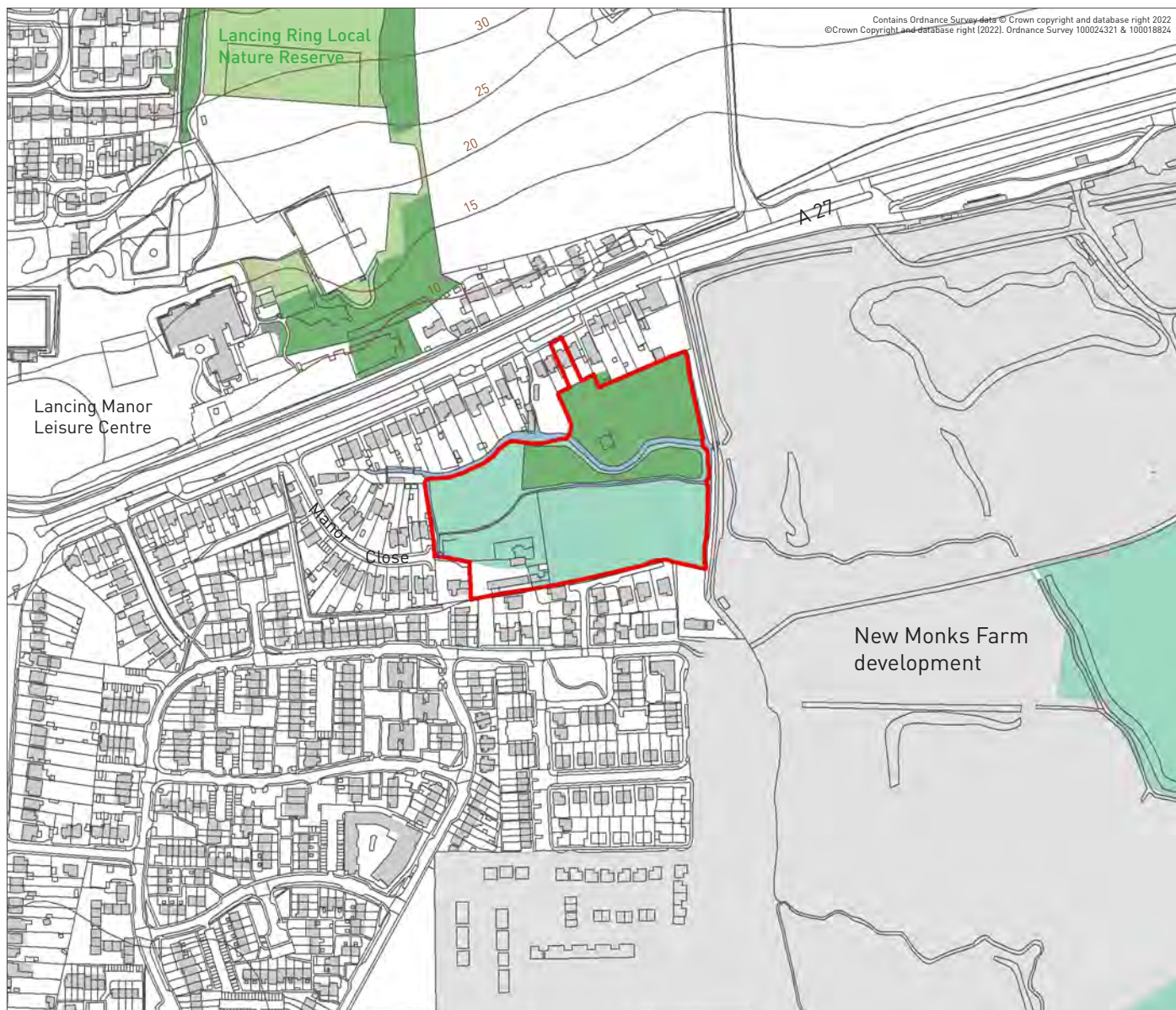


Land off Manor Close, Lancing - policy context



- Key greenfield site (Land off Manor Close)
- South Downs National Park (SDNP)
- Area of permission for New Monks Farm development
- Public open space (OS OpenMap Local)
- Woodland (OS OpenMap Local)
- ~ Surface water (streams, ditches and water bodies)
- Local Nature Reserve
- North Lancing Conservation Area
- Tree Preservation Order (group of trees)
- Tree Preservation Order (individual trees)
- Public right of way

### Land off Manor Close, Lancing - Priority Habitat Inventory



- Key greenfield site (Land off Manor Close)
- Area of permission for New Monks Farm development
- ~ Surface water (streams, ditches and water bodies)

#### Priority Habitat Inventory

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance. (www.environment.gov.data.uk) (NERC S41)

- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi improved grassland

**Land off Manor Close, Lancing - site photographs (October 2022)**



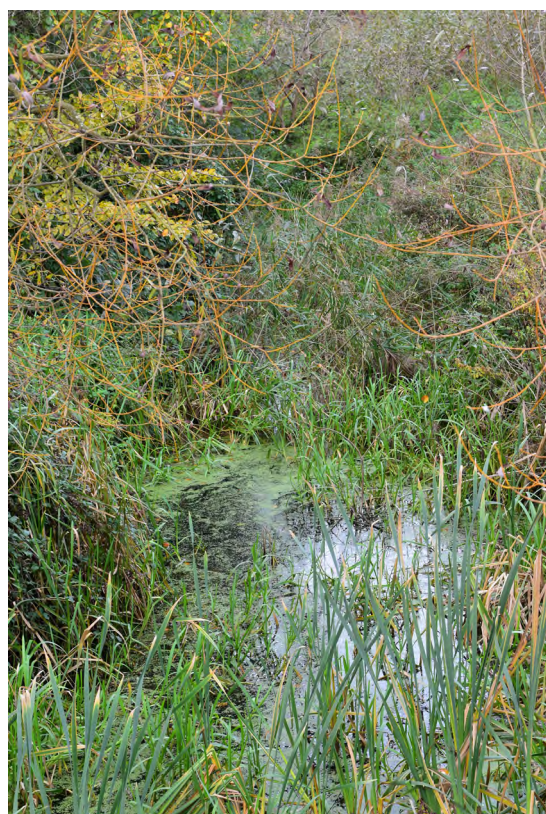
Damp meadows, partially enclosed by woodland and hedgerows. View north east from the end of Manor Close



View south west from Mash Barn Lane



Views north west from Mash Barn Lane to the enclosed wetlands in the centre of the site



## Land off Manor Close, Lancing

<b>Physical character</b>	Moderate-high
<p>The site is part of the shallow tributary valley formed by a network of minor streams on the outer western margins of the River Adur floodplain and at the foot of the West Sussex Chalk Downs. It has a very gently sloping landform, which is barely perceptible on the ground. This is relatively enclosed and intimate landscape with a small scale landscape pattern that has been shaped by the presence of the minor stream which flows within a wooded corridor across the centre of the site. It is one of few remnants of the former floodplain edge landscape. The whole area is relatively low lying and is susceptible to flooding; the boundaries of the small pastures are defined by ditches, which are water-filled in wet weather. Parts of the woodland are overgrown, with a dense understorey layer of vegetation. The subtle landform and relatively small-scale landscape pattern of floodplain pastures defined by broadleaf woodland and a network of minor streams and ditches would be damaged by residential development; substantial modification to the local drainage pattern would be required in order to mitigate the significant risk of flooding.</p>	
<b>Natural character</b>	Moderate-high
<p>The site is surrounded on three sides by existing residential properties and is bordered to the east by the site of the primary school that will be part of the New Monks Farm development. It is set to be completely enclosed by built development. Nevertheless the site has a strong natural character, which stems from the winding stream and corridor of floodplain meadows and woodland in the centre of the area. The streams and ditches that form a concentrated network in this area are designated chalk streams (low certainty) and merit conservation as a priority habitat. The two pastures in the south of the site are classified as Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat (NERC S41) and the north eastern part of the site, including the riparian woodland, is classified as Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat. The network of streams and ditches, and their associated floodplain and riparian habitat is therefore of considerable ecological value and this small-scale spring-fed wetland landscape has a strong natural character. It makes an important contribution to the wider green infrastructure network on the north-west fringes of the Adur floodplain. Residential development would damage this valuable ecological habitat and remnant existing natural landscape character, which contrasts with the surrounding suburban landscapes.</p>	
<b>Cultural and historical associations</b>	Moderate
<p>Reference to the historic (1879) Ordnance Survey map indicates that the curve of the stream and field pattern immediately surrounding the wetland corridor is unchanged since the late nineteenth century, although development along the A27 has imposed. The irregular, relatively small-scale network of fields and woodlands provides a perceptible connection with the past. However, the site is enclosed by modern development which dates from c. 1950s and does not contribute to the landscape setting of designated heritage assets. Development would result in some damage to local perceptions of time depth.</p>	
<b>Settlement form and setting</b>	Low-moderate
<p>The site is on the edge of Lancing and in a relatively urban context. It does not contribute to the distinctive identity of Lancing and does not form part of the gateway or contextual views. Residential development would have an adverse impact on the relatively low density existing residential areas immediately to the west of the site and the indented, sheltered, 'floodplain-edge' character of this part of Lancing's townscape. However, in practice such impacts are limited as the site will be surrounded by extensive urban development, including potentially a large commercial building, when the adjacent New Monks Farm development is complete.</p>	
<b>Views character</b>	Low-moderate
<p>Development on this site would not be visible in views from the elevated public rights of way and open access land on the SDNP as the site is tucked against the foot of the Downs and is screened by existing houses along the A27. It does not have public access and is only partially visible from the edges of private gardens and from the (cul-de-sac) end of Manor Close.</p> <p>The existing residential areas immediately to the west of the site comprise low (often single storey) houses and a residential development which is composed of three or four storey houses (scenario 2) could therefore be intrusive. However, the presence of the planned New Monks Farm development to the east will change this context and, given the relatively elevated baseline floor level and overall scale/height of buildings within the planned New Monks Farm development, residential development up to 4 storeys on the Manor Close site would not be visually intrusive.</p>	

<b>Perceptual qualities</b>	Moderate
<p>This pastoral, partially wooded landscape is perceived as a remnant of the former 'edge-of-floodplain' landscape that would have bordered the coastal plain before Lancing developed. The contrast between the organic, scrubby 'rural' character of this landscape and the neat suburbia surrounding it is striking and residential development would result in the loss of this distinctive local quality. However, the site is relatively small and its rural character and relative tranquillity is already compromised by proximity to the A27, extensive residential development and the Brighton and Hove Albion Football Academy to the south. There is no public access for recreation. The potential impacts of development are therefore finely balanced.</p>	

<b>Overall landscape sensitivity to the change associated with residential development</b>
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This site is a remnant of the former small scale mosaic of floodplain pastures and wetlands that bordered the extensive Adur floodplain before the local topography in the New Monks Farm and Shoreham Airport areas was modified by drainage and artificial tipping.

Residential development on this site would result in damage to a concentrated network of wetland and woodland priority habitats within a small area that are of national importance. It would also result in the loss of the site's strong and distinctive natural character, not least because there would be a need for significant modification of the natural pattern of drainage. The significant risk of flooding suggests that built development would only be feasible on the drier land towards the perimeter of the site, conserving the mosaic of wetland landscapes in the centre, although such a development strategy would still lead to the loss of part of the area's mosaic of Priority Habitat.

A detailed ecological assessment would be required to inform judgements about the ecological value of habitats, including wetland and deciduous woodland habitats.

The sensitivity assessment demonstrates that residential development here would be consistent with the pattern of settlement growth in this part of north east Lancing and would not impinge on the distinctive setting of the settlement. Development that is 1-2 storeys would not be visually prominent, nor would it degrade distinctive views or skylines. Large scale or relatively dense residential development which rises to 3 or 4 storeys may seem out of place in this context, although the planned New Monks Farm development to the east will change this context.

Overall, the area is considered to have moderate-high sensitivity to any potential future change from residential development (for both scenarios). These relatively high sensitivity scores reflect the inevitable loss of the area's small-scale landscape pattern, natural character and valuable ecological habitat and, given the high proportion of the site area that is classified as Priority Habitat, the lack space to mitigate such loss.

<b>Overall landscape sensitivity - residential development Scenario 1:</b> 2-3 storey development at a density of approximately 35 units per hectare	Moderate-high
<b>Overall landscape sensitivity - residential development Scenario 2:</b> higher density residential development to include 3-4 storey development	Moderate-high

## 2.2 Land off Old Salts Farm Road, South Lancing

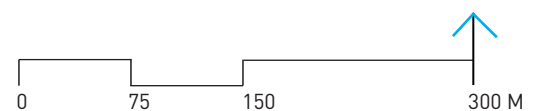
This 7.6 ha site comprises a cluster of fields off Old Salts Farm Road which surround the historic farmstead of Old Salts Farm. The fields are predominantly used for horse grazing and are divided by a mix of hedgerows and fences. There is an assortment of outbuildings, as well as a caravan park and single storey dwelling alongside the lane in the south west part of the area.

The site is to the north and west of a tributary stream which flows along its south eastern boundary, and much of the land is part of the floodplain of this watercourse.

This area is part of the Old Salts Farm Landscape Character Area (LCA 12) in the Adur Landscape Character Assessment.

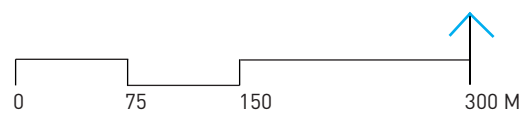
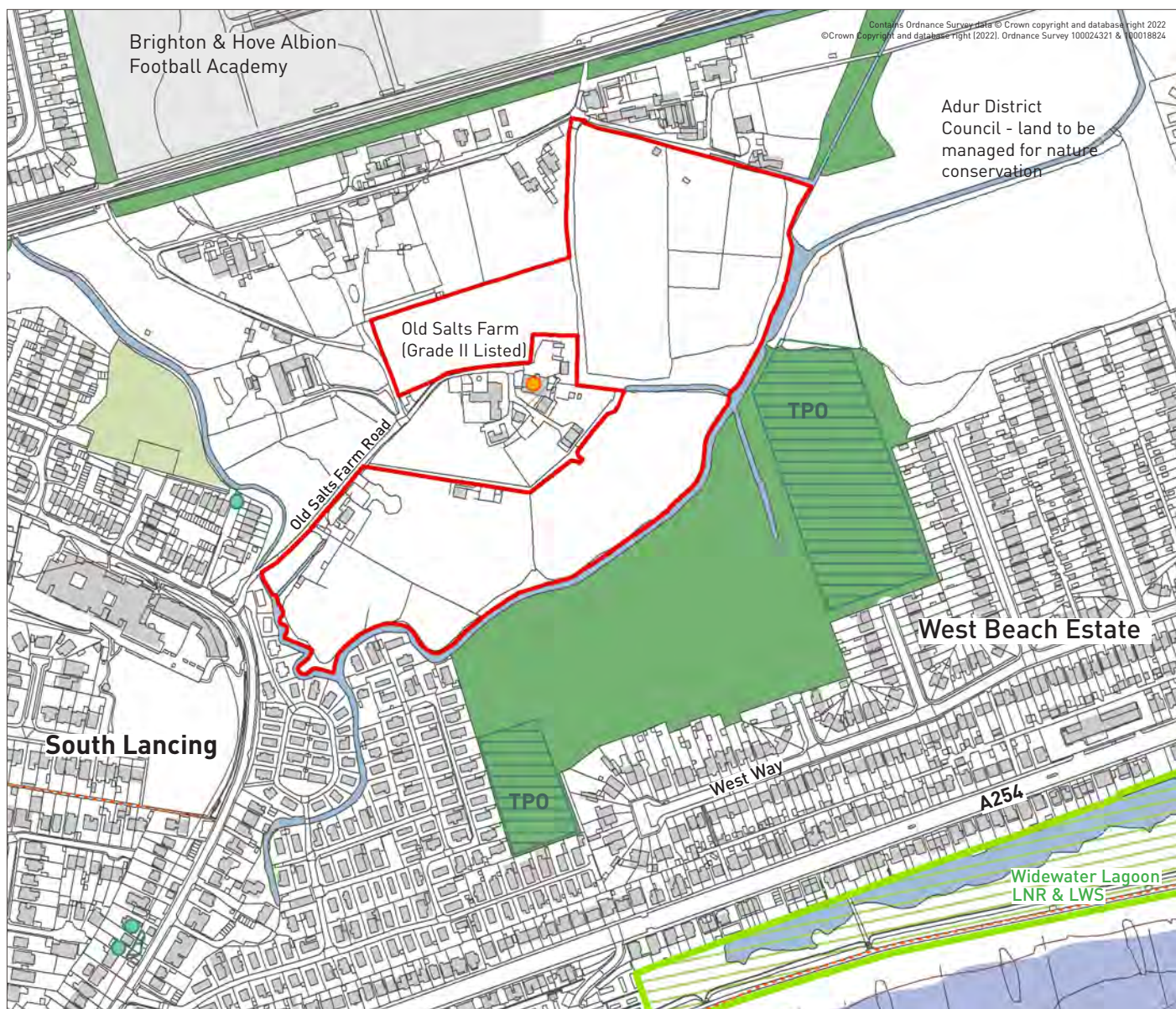
Figure 3a

Land off Old Salts Farm Road, South Lancing - aerial view



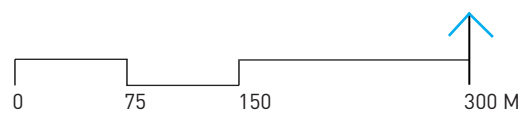


### Land off Old Salts Farm Road, South Lancing - policy context



- Key greenfield site (Land off Old Salts Farm Road)
- Public open space (OS OpenMap Local)
- Woodland (OS OpenMap Local)
- Surface water (streams, ditches and water bodies)
- Tidal water (foreshore and deep water)
- Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Local Wildlife Site (LWS)
- Listed Building
- Tree Preservation Order (TPO group of trees)
- Tree Preservation Order (TPO individual trees)
- Public right of way

**Land off Old Salts Farm Road, South Lancing - Priority Habitat Inventory**



- Key greenfield site (Land off Old Salts Farm Road)
- ~ Surface water (streams, ditches and water bodies)

**Priority Habitat Inventory**

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance. ([www.environment.gov.data.uk](http://www.environment.gov.data.uk)) (NERC S41)

- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi improved grassland
- Traditional orchard
- Saline lagoon
- Coastal vegetated shingle

Land off Old Salts Farm Road, South Lancing - site photographs (October 2022)



Pastures to the north of the stream and south east of Old Salts Farmhouse.

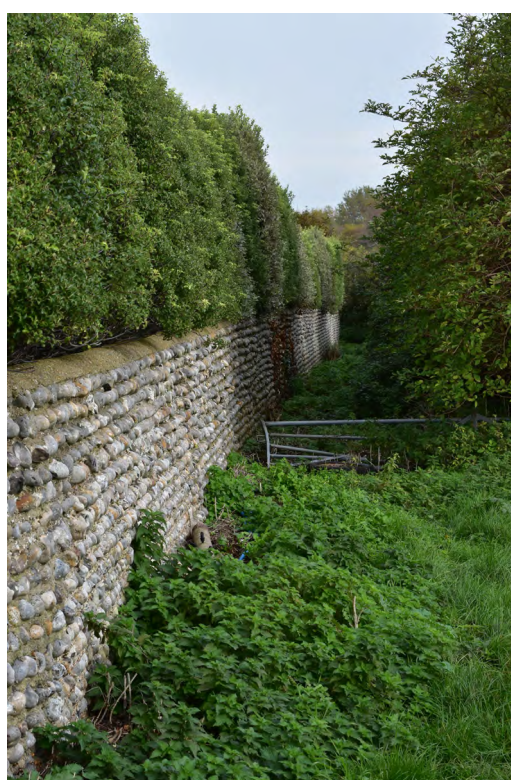
The woodland that forms a backdrop to this view is to the north of the West Beach Estate



View east from Old Salts Farm Road towards New Salts Farm

New Salts Farm

Old Salts Farm



Flint cobblestone boundary wall to Old Salts Farmhouse (grade II listed)

## Land off Old Salts Farm Road, South, Lancing

<b>Physical character</b>	Moderate
<p>An irregular pattern of small pastures and horse paddocks, with groups of buildings strung out along a winding lane - Old Salts Farm Road. The area is bordered to the south and east by a tributary stream that flows north eastwards to connect with the network of ditches and minor waterways along the south side of the railway line and the River Adur to the east. The topography in this area is completely flat and much of the area is inherently damp and susceptible to flooding. It is former estuarine brackish marshland that was drained in the 16th century. The principal constraint is flood risk and residential development would therefore require substantial modification to existing patterns of drainage, with extensive areas reserved for water attenuation. The relatively small scale, irregular landscape pattern is inherently sensitive to large scale development, although the existing mature hedgerows and trees provide a degree of enclosure which, if conserved and reinforced with new planting, would help to integrate groups of buildings.</p>	
<b>Natural character</b>	Moderate
<p>This area has an urban fringe character. It is bounded by a winding, narrow lane and a natural tributary stream and the irregular character of these elements, along with some mature hedgerows and groups of trees, contributes to a distinctive sense of place which is based, in part, on natural features. However, these qualities are countered and degraded by urban fringe elements that include a variety of outbuildings, fencing, driveways, overhead power lines and ornamental planting. The corridor of riparian habitat along the stream corridor which includes, mature trees and an area that is classified as Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat (NERC S41). This wetland corridor provides a valuable green infrastructure function and allows the movement of wildlife species from the urban fringe to the open countryside and the River Adur corridor. The remainder of the site is classified as Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland Priority Habitat, reflecting its relatively important species diversity. Residential development across all of this site would damage valuable ecological habitats and networks and would reduce the influence of the streams, hedgerows and belts of trees that reflect the irregular historic field pattern and evoke a degree of perceived 'natural' character. However, the sensitivity of this landscape is limited by its urban fringe qualities and the relatively poor condition of key landscape elements.</p>	
<b>Cultural and historical associations</b>	Moderate
<p>Reference to historic Ordnance Survey maps shows that this land was open (probably damp) and mostly undivided pasture in the 19th century; the meandering stream along the south/eastern border of the site then flowed southwards to the sea, but was also part of an inter-connected network of waterways that meandered across the former Adur Estuary marshlands to the east. The 1912 OS Map shows that an extensive area to the west of the site was named 'Salt Lake'. During the post war period, the land to the north and west of the site was used for market gardening and orchards, with small gravel pits and brick pits. The most important historic asset is Old Salts Farmhouse, a Grade II Listed Building in the centre of the area (but excluded from the site). Old Salts Farmhouse existed by 1698 and was developed on slightly elevated shelf of land overlooking the Adur Marshes. The historic landscape setting of this listed building seems well contained, but there is a historic relationship with the drainage of the marshes, the alignment of flood defence embankments and with the prominent New Salts Farm complex (Grade II listed) to the east. An assessment of the historic landscape setting of New Salts Farm would be required as a prerequisite for development and may result in an increased sensitivity score for this criterion.</p>	
<b>Settlement form and setting</b>	Low-moderate
<p>The existing pattern of settlement in this part of Lancing is dispersed, piecemeal and rather fragmented. It has resulted in a degraded urban fringe landscape, with a variety of types and scales of building, which would not be damaged by new residential development. The site is in a relatively enclosed and 'tucked away' part of Lancing's landscape setting, in an area where the circulation pattern (narrow lanes) is truncated by both the railway line and streams and where the landscape is partially enclosed by mature trees. The blocks of woodland to the north of the West Beach Estate and to the north east of the site make an important contribution to this enclosed landscape character, which contrasts with other more open landscapes (the airfield to the north east and pastures to the east) creating a natural backdrop to views and integrating the existing buildings. The scattered groups of trees, hedgerows and buildings within the site seem to coalesce with the larger woodland blocks beyond the site boundary when seen in long views from the north and east (including from Mill Hill (see below) and the railway line to the north. The site itself makes a relatively low contribution to the landscape setting of Lancing, but this judgement assumes the conservation of the existing mature trees and hedgerows on the site and (critically) the conservation of the existing mature groups of trees and woodlands that are outside the site boundary.</p>	

<b>Visual character</b>	Low-moderate
<p>The site's relatively small scale landscape pattern and well treed character ensures that it is semi-enclosed; most of the site has limited inter-visibility with the surrounding areas although there will be seasonal variations in visibility. The northern part of the site may be visible in views from the train and the site is generally visible in some sensitive distant long views from the SDNP e.g. Mill Hill Nature Reserve. In such views, the site is seen as a distant, well wooded area on the fringes of South Lancing. Built development would be partially screened by the existing mature trees on the site and (more significantly) to the south and east of the site. Buildings may be glimpsed, but in these distant views would be well integrated with the existing wooded urban edge and would not be visually intrusive.</p>	
<b>Perceptual qualities</b>	Low-moderate
<p>There is no official public access to the site and it therefore has limited value as a recreational resource. The area does not have a distinctive sense of place and has a fragmented and rather chaotic character, with a mix of land uses and ownerships. Property and field boundaries include mature hedgerows, belts of Leylandii, post-and-wire fencing and close board fencing and there is a diverse range of building materials and styles. In places the landscape is in poor condition, with broken fences and tipping; in others it has a neat 'suburban' character. Large blocks of residential development would seem odd in this dispersed urban fringe landscape, but groups of buildings could be successfully integrated within the existing landscape pattern without damaging the mature trees and hedgerows and/or the valuable riparian and wetland habitats along the stream.</p>	

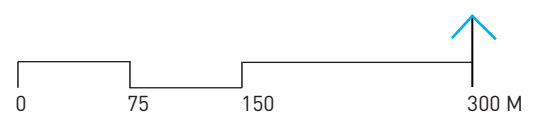
<b>Overall landscape sensitivity to the change associated with residential development</b>	
<p>This site is part of a backland area, that has been cut off by the railway to the north and a tributary stream to the south and east. The landscape elements which are most sensitive to the type of change associated with residential development are the historic (grade II listed) Old Salts Farmhouse in the centre of the area (but outside the site boundary), the wetland habitats along the stream corridor, the irregular, relatively small scale landscape pattern and the mature hedgerows, tree groups and individual trees which are concentrated in hedgerows and along the stream.</p> <p>Detailed assessments would be required to inform judgements about the historic landscape setting of the listed Old Salts Farmhouse and the ecological value of habitats, including wetland and semi-improved grassland habitats.</p> <p>The sensitivity assessment demonstrates that residential development (scenarios 1 and 2) could be integrated on this site, provided the broad corridor of wetland habitat and existing mature trees and hedgerows (both within and to the south and east of the site) and are conserved. However, the risk of flooding is a significant constraint, which may result in extensive modification to natural drainage and require that an extensive area of land is reserved for flood water attenuation.</p> <p>The asterisk (*) indicates that only a proportion of the land within the site could be developed without damage to its key characteristic and sensitive landscape elements and features.</p>	
<b>Overall landscape sensitivity - residential development Scenario 1: 2-3 storey development at a density of approximately 35 units per hectare</b>	Moderate*
<b>Overall landscape sensitivity - residential development Scenario 2: higher density residential development to include 3-4 storey development</b>	Moderate*

## 2.3 Land north of West Beach Estate, South Lancing

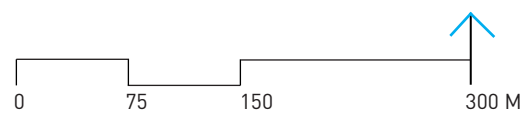
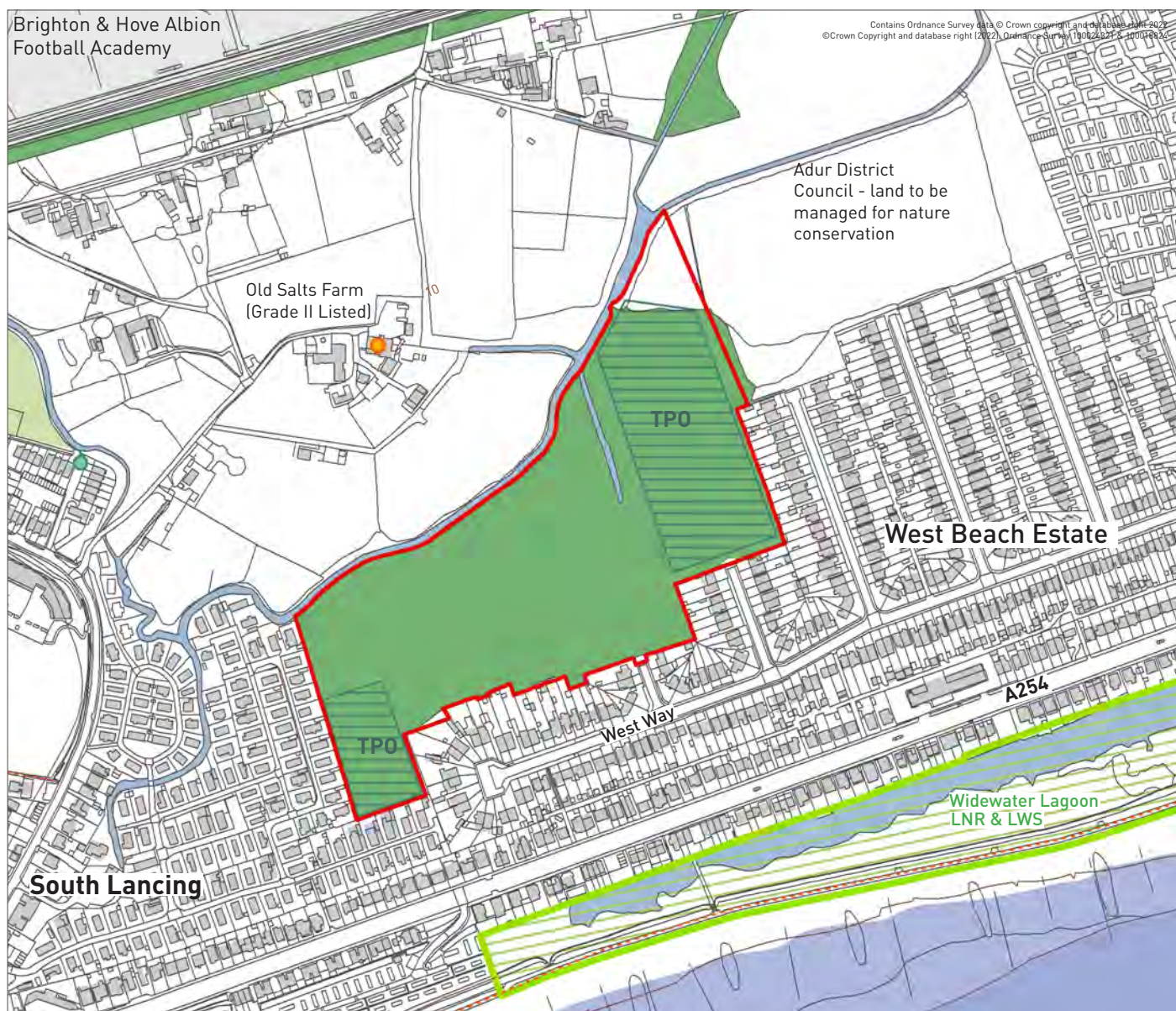
A 7.1 ha area of scrub, regenerating broadleaf woodland and pasture between the Brighton to Worthing railway line and the West Beach Estate in South Lancing. The site is to the south of a small tributary stream, which flows along the northern boundary of the area, and forms part of the floodplain of this watercourse. This area is part of the West Beach Fringe Landscape Character Area (LCA 11) in the Adur Landscape Character Assessment.

Figure 4a

Land north of West Beach Estate, South Lancing - aerial view

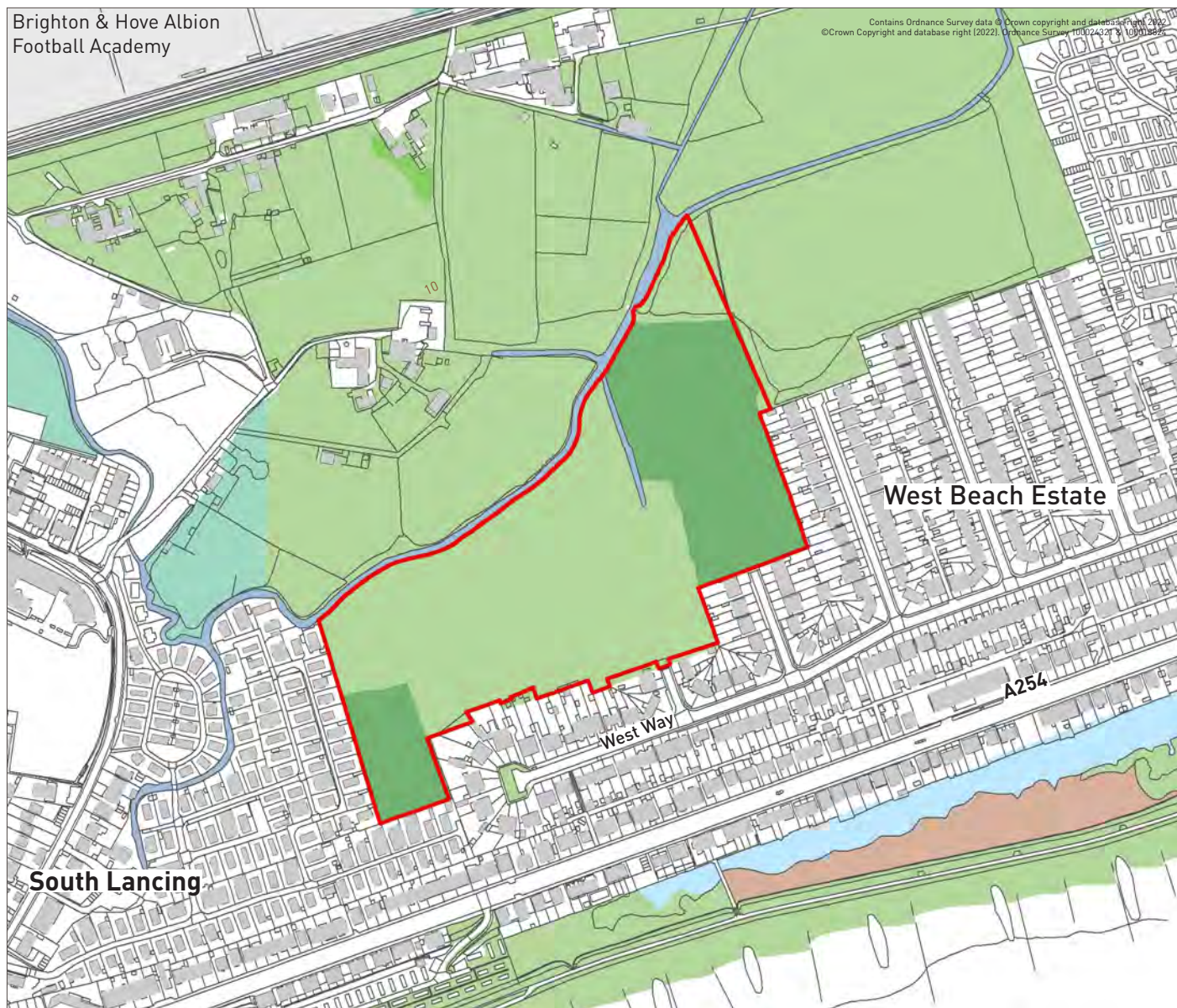


Land north of West Beach Estate, South Lancing - policy context



- Key greenfield site (Land north of West Beach Estate)
- Public open space (OS OpenMap Local)
- Woodland (OS OpenMap Local)
- ~ Surface water (streams, ditches and water bodies)
- Tidal water (foreshore and deep water)
- Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Local Wildlife Site (LWS)
- Listed Building
- Tree Preservation Order (TPO group of trees)
- Tree Preservation Order (TPO individual trees)
- Public right of way

**Land north of West Beach Estate, South Lancing - Priority Habitat Inventory**



- Key greenfield site (Land north of West Beach Estate)
- ~ Surface water (streams, ditches and water bodies)

**Priority Habitat Inventory**

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance. ([www.environment.gov.data.uk](http://www.environment.gov.data.uk)) (NERC S41)

- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi improved grassland
- Traditional orchard
- Saline lagoon
- Coastal vegetated shingle



Land north of West Beach Estate, South Lancing - site photographs (October 2022)



Natural mosaic of grassland, scrub and woodland to the north of West Avenue



One of the two woodlands covered by a Tree Preservation Order on the site. This view is to the north of Prince Avenue

The site is enclosed by security fencing, including a locked gate



## Land north of West Beach Estate, South Lancing

<b>Physical character</b>	Moderate
<p>A mosaic of rough pasture, scrub and regenerating woodland, with extensive blocks of mature woodland. The area is bordered to the north by a tributary stream that flows north eastwards to connect with the network of ditches and minor waterways along the south side of the railway line and the River Adur to the east. The topography in this area is completely flat and much of the area is inherently damp and susceptible to flooding. It is former estuarine brackish marshland that was drained in the 16th century. The principal constraint is flood risk and residential development would therefore require substantial modification to existing patterns of drainage, with extensive areas reserved for water attenuation. However, the extensive existing mature woodland, trees and scrub offer a strong degree of enclosure and would help to integrate built development.</p>	
<b>Natural character</b>	Moderate-high
<p>This area has a striking natural character, which results from the regeneration of scrub and woodland on former pasture. The organic, natural mosaic of patchy scrub, reedy wetland scrapes, woodland and groups of trees contrasts with the more ordered pattern of farmland to the east and the mown turf and runways of Shoreham Airport to the north east. This mosaic of woodland, pasture and wetland habitat is of considerable ecological value, particularly in the north of the area, where there is a broad band of riparian habitat along the stream corridor which includes areas of damp woodland. This wetland corridor provides a valuable green infrastructure function and allows the movement of wildlife species from the urban fringe to the open countryside and the River Adur corridor. The two blocks of mature woodland to the south west and east of the site are classified as Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat (NERC S41). They are also protected by Tree Preservation Orders. The remainder of the site, between the two woodlands, is classified as Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland Priority Habitat, reflecting its relatively important species diversity (although it is noted that tree/scrub regeneration may have reduced the ecological value of this grassland since the survey and classification took place). Residential development across all of this site would damage valuable ecological habitats and networks and would change its natural character. The sensitivity score would be reduced if residential development was limited to the southern fringes of the area, bordering the West Beach Estate, and integrated by extensive retained natural scrub, woodland and wetland habitat.</p>	
<b>Cultural and historical associations</b>	Low-moderate
<p>Reference to the historic (1879) Ordnance Survey map shows that this land was open (probably damp) and mostly undivided pasture in the 19th century; the meandering stream along the northern border of the site then flowed southwards to the sea, but was also part of an inter-connected network of waterways that meandered across the former Adur Estuary marshlands to the east. The 1931-67 OS Map shows the eastern part of the West Beach Estate (built in the 1930s); the properties to the south of the site date from the 1970s. There are no strong cultural and historical associations, although the mature trees and meandering waterways contribute a degree of perceived time depth.</p>	
<b>Settlement form and setting</b>	Low-moderate
<p>This area is on the northern fringes of the West Beach Estate. The existing interface between houses on the edge of the West Beach Estate and the land (within the site) to the north seems 'odd', with streets dead-ending onto the scrub/woodland and fields to the north. New residential development in this area would continue the existing pattern of settlement form in a logical manner.</p> <p>There are some views from the ends of streets dead-ending onto the fields across the greenspaces to the wider landscape context of the Downs to the north, but this backland area makes minimal contribution to the amenity of the West Beach Estate and is currently fenced to prevent access. Its well treed character, and its contrast with the open farmland and airfield landscapes to the east, contributes to the distinctive landscape setting of Lancing, particularly in the broad context of elevated views from the SDNP across the landscape between Lancing and Shoreham (see below). However, the area does not contribute to the perceived gap between the settlements of Lancing and Shoreham and development here would not increase the risk of perceived coalescence of settlements.</p>	

<b>Visual character</b>	Low-moderate
Local views northwards from the West Beach Estate are generally contained by the extensive woodland and tree cover on the site, but there are some attractive framed longer views northwards to the Downs. The area is visible (as a wooded zone) in the sensitive elevated views southwards from public rights of way and open access land on the slopes of the Downs (eg views from Mill Hill). This wooded character is also a component of views southwards from the railway to the north. Development (up to 3 storeys) would potentially be partially visible in these distant views, but would appear integrated with the existing settlement edge and partially screened by existing trees (assuming the principal woodland blocks are conserved).	
<b>Perceptual qualities</b>	Moderate
There is no public access to this land, which is bordered by security fencing. This backland area has a scruffy, unkempt urban fringe quality, but it also has an appealing wildness and its well treed character contrasts with both the extensive urban conurbation to the south and west and the open farmland and airfield landscapes to the north and east. Residential development would diminish this distinctive untamed natural character, but could be integrated if it is structured and contained by the existing blocks of mature woodland and if the natural character of the wetlands along the northern boundary of the area are also conserved.	

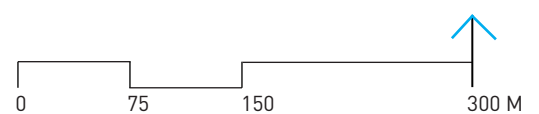
<b>Overall landscape sensitivity to the change associated with residential development</b>	
Residential development across all of this site would damage valuable ecological habitats and networks. It would also change its distinctive natural character and its sense of wildness, which is particularly attractive in the context of a highly urbanised coastal plain landscape. However, flood risk management requirements are likely to ensure that extensive areas of land alongside the wetland corridor in the northern part of the site would need to remain undeveloped to allow adequate flood water attenuation; the large blocks of woodland that are protected by TPOs and areas of species-rich grassland that are identified in ecological surveys, should also be conserved.	
Residential development that is limited to the central part of the site, at a distance from the wetlands and with the principal blocks of woodland retained, would be well integrated with the existing settlement pattern. The assessment demonstrates that residential development would have limited adverse impacts on valued cultural/historical associations; the extensive tree and woodland cover ensures that it would be relatively well screened in long views, including those from elevated and highly sensitive SDNP viewpoints, and it would not harm Lancing's landscape setting. It would be important to prioritise conservation of mature trees when designing SuDS schemes so that there is sufficient tree cover to conserve the area's distinctive 'wooded' character and to integrate new residential areas.	
The adjacent South Lancing/West Beach urban areas comprise 1-2 storey dwellings. This area has a strong association with the shoreline and forms part of a rapid transition from housing estates, to residential coastal road to the shingle beaches, houseboats and saline lagoons to the south. A high density 3-4 storey residential development would be inappropriate and potentially intrusive in this context. The asterisk (*) indicates that only a proportion of the land within the site could be developed without damage to its key characteristic and sensitive landscape elements and features. For the Scenario 1 scale of residential development, built development would be confined to the drier, southern part of the site, conserving the mature woodlands and an extensive area of flood attenuation and nature conservation habitat alongside the stream. This site is unlikely to accommodate the Scenario 2) high density residential development (Scenario 2) without significant adverse effects on its distinctive landscape (and adjacent townscape) character.	
<b>Overall landscape sensitivity - residential development Scenario 1: 2-3 storey development at a density of approximately 35 units per hectare</b>	Moderate*
<b>Overall landscape sensitivity - residential development Scenario 2: higher density residential development to include 3-4 storey development</b>	High

## 2.4 Shoreham Gateway, Old Shoreham

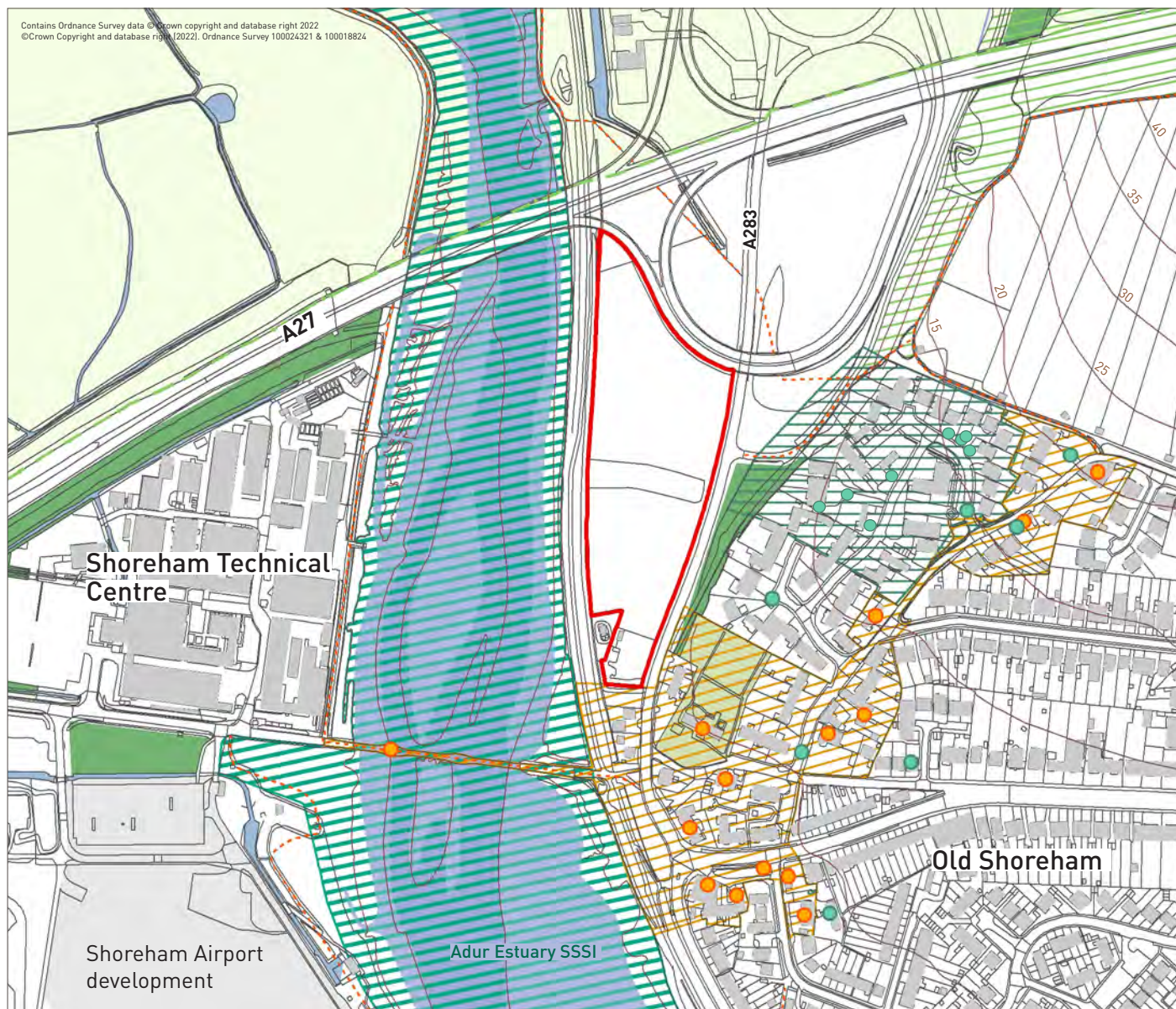
A 2.5 ha site on the east bank of the River Adur and at the foot of the South Downs. The site is a flat area of floodplain land which is subdivided by the Adur Tidal Walls flood embankment; the southern part of the site is protected by this 4m high embankment and the northern part is protected by the lower flood embankment which predates the Adur Tidal Walls. It is pasture land, currently used for horse grazing. The Shoreham Gateway site is assessed for both residential and commercial types of development. This site falls within the Adur Gateway Landscape Character Area (LCA 6) in the Adur Landscape Character Assessment.

Figure 5a

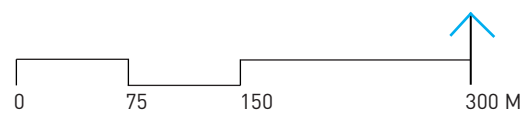
Shoreham Gateway, Old Shoreham - aerial view



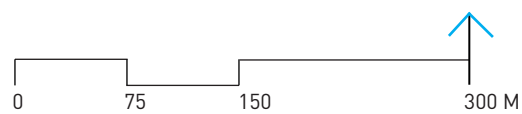
Shoreham Gateway, Old Shoreham - policy context



- Key greenfield site (Shoreham Gateway)
- South Downs National Park (SDNP)
- Strategic allocation (Adur Local Plan, 2017)
- Public open space (OS OpenMap Local)
- Woodland (OS OpenMap Local)
- Surface water (streams, ditches and water bodies)
- Tidal water (foreshore and deep water)
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Local Wildlife Site (LWS)
- Old Shoreham Conservation Area
- Listed building
- Tree Preservation Order (TPO group of trees)
- Tree Preservation Order (TPO individual trees)
- Public right of way



### Shoreham Gateway, Old Shoreham - Priority Habitat Inventory



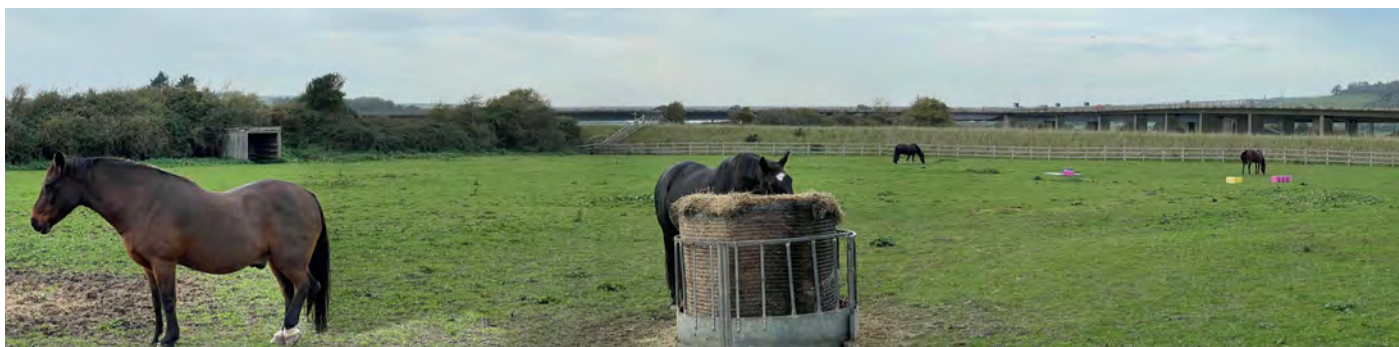
- Key greenfield site (Shoreham Gateway)
- Surface water (streams, ditches and water bodies)

#### Priority Habitat Inventory

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance. ([www.environment.gov.data.uk](http://www.environment.gov.data.uk)) (NERC S41)

- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi improved grassland
- Coastal saltmarsh
- Mudflats

**Shoreham Gateway, Old Shoreham - site photographs (October 2022)**



View west from the A283. The Adur Tidal Wall Embankment, which subdivides the site, and the A27/A283 junction form the backdrop to the view



View north to the northern part of the site from the A283.

View east from the Downs Link path to the site. The pasture and woodland on the southern slopes of Mill Hill form the backdrop to this view









Ropetackle North

View east to Mill Hill, Old Shoreham and Shoreham-by-Sea from the west bank of the River Adur just north of the Shoreham Airport Terminal building. The view shows the transition from the 'urban' scale and type of the riverside development at North Ropetackle (Shoreham-by-Sea) to the relatively 'rural' landscape setting of Old Shoreham on the fringes of the SDNP



Church of St Nicolas

View north east to Mill Hill, Old Shoreham and the Tollbridge from the west bank of the River Adur near the pumping station. Riverside buildings on the site would be seen against the backdrop of Mill Hill and the SDNP in this view

## Shoreham Gateway - sensitivity assessment (residential development)

<b>Physical character</b>	Moderate
<p>The site comprises two pastures, used for grazing horses, which are subdivided by the Adur Tidal Walls flood embankment. The site is completely flat and is part of the floodplain of the River Adur, although it is protected from flooding by flood embankments. This is a relatively narrow part of the floodplain, where the River Adur cuts through the southern ridge of the chalk downs, and the site is at the foot of the steep, wooded slopes of Mill Hill. This part of the River Adur corridor (including the site) contributes to the landscape setting of the SDNP. It is also an important bridging point for roads crossing the River Adur and the site is overlooked to the north by the A27 bridge over the River Adur and the split level gyratory junction between the A27 and the A283, which is a local landmark. It is on the north western fringes of the historic part of Shoreham. Despite the large scale of the landscapes which form its immediate context - the chalk downs to the north and Adur Estuary to the west - the site has a relatively enclosed and small scale landscape pattern. Its flat landform, narrow shape and pastoral use reflects its floodplain meadow character, although this has been compromised by the artificial flood embankments that separate it from the River Adur. A large scale residential development here would dominate the tight, relatively small scale landscape pattern at the edge of the Adur, 'squeezing' the urban edge up against the edge of the River Adur and the chalk downs and degrading the landscape setting of the SDNP and the Adur Estuary. The northern part of the site would be at risk of flooding from the River Adur. However, buildings would be sheltered by the wooded and built up slopes to the east and partially screened by the trees and scrub along the Adur flood embankments. The alignment of the Adur Tidal Walls, which wrap around the southern part of the site, define an area where residential development would sit comfortably with the scale of the surrounding landscape pattern; development outside this area, in the northern part of the site, would degrade the sensitive landscape settings of the Adur Estuary and the SDNP.</p>	
<b>Natural character</b>	Moderate-high
<p>This site has a sensitive landscape context with a stunning natural character. It is at the point where the River Adur cuts through a steep part of the chalk downs at Mill Hill and is therefore at the juxtaposition between two exceptionally beautiful and contrasting natural landscapes - the steep, rounded chalk hills of the South Downs and the meandering waterways and shifting intertidal mudflats of the River Adur. This striking natural character is eroded by the presence of the large scale road infrastructure, but it remains the dominant influence. The Mill Hill site is within the area designated by Unesco as the Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere, so it is a component of an internationally recognised world class landscape. The River Adur wetlands are designated as SSSI (national importance) and are highly vulnerable to change. The intertidal mudflats and saltmarshes that fringe the water channels are important nursery sites for several fish species and provide valuable refuge, feeding and breeding grounds for wading birds and wildfowl. The SSSI is classified as 'unfavourable-declining' condition (2021) as a result of fragmentation and degradation of saltmarsh habitat and lack of inter-tidal habitat transition zones. The birds that use the mud and sandflats for feeding and roosting are vulnerable to human disturbance. The pastures throughout the site are classified as Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh Priority Habitat (NERC S41) and are a component of the corridor of river and tidal wetland habitats that provide a valuable green infrastructure function by enabling the movement of wildlife species between the chalk downlands and the coastal plain. The site's natural character is slightly compromised by the artificial embankments of the enclosing flood defences. However, the distinctive natural character of the floodplain-downland edge landscape remains strong and highly sensitive to change. It would be permanently damaged by built development.</p>	
<b>Cultural and historical associations</b>	High
<p>Reference to the historic (1879) Ordnance Survey map shows that the pattern of open floodplain meadow (the site) between low embankments protecting the road at the footslope to the east and the narrow Shoreham and Horsham Railway alongside the river has persisted for at least a century. Its curved, narrow shape reflects the lie of the land and accentuates the prominent site of the Church of St Nicolas and the Shoreham Tollbridge at the core of the historic village of Old Shoreham. This area has long been an important river crossing, initially via risky ford or ferry and, after 1781, via the Tollbridge. The site is part of the landscape setting for the resulting complex of historic riverside buildings - the Church of St Nicolas (a grade 1 listed building) and the Shoreham Tollbridge (a grade II* listed building) and for the designated Old Shoreham Conservation Area. It is noted as 'an open space important to the setting of the conservation area in the Old Shoreham Conservation Area Appraisal. The open pastures of the site contribute to the foreground setting of this group of historic buildings and built development on this land would diminish the prominence of the historic church and tollbridge complex in local riverside views in which the tower of this small church remains a distinctive landmark. Such a change would dominate local roof lines, reducing the evocative sense of time depth and causing permanent damage to the riverside setting of a group of nationally important buildings.</p>	

<b>Settlement form and setting</b>	Moderate-high
<p>The settlement of Old Shoreham has developed on the higher land to the east of the tidal River Adur at a natural landscape 'edge between the coastal plain and the chalk downs. Despite the development of transport infrastructure (still concentrated at this natural landscape edge) and the growth of Shoreham-by-Sea, the low tower of the historic Church of St Nicolas and the Old Shoreham Tollbridge together form a local landmark that reflects the riverside setting of Old Shoreham. This historic riverside complex has a distinctive sense of place. Residential development across this site would continue the existing pattern of settlement growth but would partially screen the church tower and its surrounding historic buildings of the village core in the views from the A27 and A27/A283 junction to the north and the Old Shoreham Tollbridge and Adur riverside paths to the west. As open pasture, the site forms the foreground to these gateway views. A small development of 2-3 storey houses alongside the A283 (ie not visible from the sensitive River Adur river bank views) could be integrated, but a larger development would damage and dominate the relatively small scale riverside landscape setting of Old Shoreham and could reduce the characteristic sense of a transition in landscape character from the rural river floodplain to urban valley slopes. The 'urban' character of the Ropetackle North riverside development in Shoreham-by-Sea town centre strengthens the strong urban (south) to rural (north) transition that is perceived in westward and north westward views from the west bank of the River Adur.</p>	
<b>Visual character</b>	High
<p>The site is highly visible to recreational walkers and cyclists who use the promoted route (The Downs Link) and Adur riverside paths as a connection between the urban areas on the coast and the SDNP. It also contributes to the landscape setting of the SDNP in panoramas (looking south and south east) from popular scenic elevated viewpoints at Mill Hill, Lancing College and Lancing Ring. A 2-3 storey residential development across this site would transform the character of the riverside landscape in the sequential views from the riverside paths, screening or partially screening views to St Nicolas Church and to the Downs. Tree planting would soften the built edge, but the adverse impact of the visual screen (a combination of buildings and vegetation) would remain. Views from the Old Shoreham Tollbridge are of particular significance because this historic bridge is a key connection in the network of public rights of way. Development of 2-3 storey buildings on the site would be dominant in this view, extending the 'urban' edge of the settlement northwards into a landscape which appears 'rural' and partially screening the backdrop of Mill Hill. The new buildings would form the skyline in this sensitive view.</p> <p>Of the views from the SDNP, it is the view southwards from the Mill Hill Nature Reserve that would be most adversely affected. Development (2-3 storeys high) would 'fill in' the green gap between the A27 and the River Adur, extending urban development right up to the A27, so that the A27/A283 road infrastructure becomes the edge of the SDNP. It would therefore cause damage to the landscape setting of the SDNP, a nationally important protected landscape and specifically would degrade one of the views southwards from the high downs across the coastal plain and out to the sea that is noted as a view type that expresses the special qualities of the SDNP in its View Characterisation and Analysis report (2015). The sensitivity of the panorama looking southwest from Mill Hill across the coastal plain is also noted in the SDNP Landscape Character Assessment for LCA G3.</p>	
<b>Perceptual qualities</b>	Moderate-high
<p>The site is at an exceptionally visible and accessible part of the Adur Valley as it is the point where the valley narrows and cuts through the Downs. The riverside pastures on the site contribute to the perceived 'green river valley link' between the Downs and coastal plain. Although the elevated section of the A27 and the A27/A283 gyratory junction are intrusive elements within this narrow river valley landscape, this built infrastructure seems to be 'contained' by the surrounding strong landscape features (the sweeping curves of the chalkland topography and the winding river corridor). The visual continuity provided by the river channel and the pastures alongside as the river passes beneath the bridge structures contributes to the distinctive and dynamic qualities of this landscape.</p> <p>A 2-3 storey residential development on the Shoreham Gateway site would compromise the characteristic urban to rural sequence and the gradually unfolding 'sense of openness' of the Downs Link by extending the built environment along the east riverbank. There is a risk that the height and character of a dense riverside built frontage would echo that of the Ropetackle North development in Shoreham-by-Sea, creating a secondary, relatively 'urban' zone alongside the Downs Link which would seem at odds with the transition to the rural Downs landscape. Given the significant recreational value of the Adur riverside paths, these perceptual qualities are particularly important.</p>	

## Overall landscape sensitivity to the change associated with residential development

Residential development across all of this site would:

- result in the river being enclosed by built edges on both east and west banks, restricting the perceived 'green' visual link of the river valley floor landscape, which continues under the bridges, and causing the existing transport infrastructure to appear more dominant and visually intrusive
- dominate the eastern riverside in this gateway zone, extending the built environment northwards to the A27, making the road bridge and gyratory A27/A283 junction an inappropriate 'hard' boundary to the national park and degrading the quality and character of the setting of the SDNP
- have a detrimental effect on the character and setting of the cluster of heritage assets in the riverside part of Old Shoreham.
- change the gateway to Shoreham from the north, partially screening the ('important') view to the Downs from Steyning Road and compromising the perceived relationship between town and river in the gateway from the north.

A small residential development which is set back from the riverbank and limited to the southern part of the site, within the area defined and protected by the Adur Tidal Walls, could be integrated if it is a relatively low density small development consisting of dwellings with gardens, sited informally (not in a row). This type and scale of development would reflect the scale and density of the existing development on the northern side of Shoreham.

A high density 3-4 storey residential development could not be integrated in this sensitive landscape context as it would create an urbanised and dominant riverside built edge which would cause significant damage to the landscape settings of the SDNP, the River Adur and the settlement of Old Shoreham.

The asterisk (\*) indicates that only a proportion of the land within the site could be developed without damage to its key characteristic and sensitive landscape elements and features. For the Scenario 1 scale of residential development, built development would be confined to the south eastern part of the site, alongside the A283. This site is unlikely to accommodate the Scenario 2) high density residential development (Scenario 2) without significant adverse effects on its distinctive landscape (and adjacent townscape) character.

<p><b>Overall landscape sensitivity - residential development Scenario 1:</b> 2-3 storey development at a density of approximately 35 units per hectare</p>	<p>Moderate-high*</p>
<p><b>Overall landscape sensitivity - residential development Scenario 2:</b> higher density residential development to include 3-4 storey development</p>	<p>High</p>

## Shoreham Gateway - sensitivity assessment (commercial development)

The sensitivity assessment below does not repeat the baseline information that has already been set out in the equivalent assessment for residential development.

<b>Physical character</b>	Moderate
<p>The large buildings and car parks associated with a commercial development would dominate the tight, relatively small scale landscape pattern at the edge of the Adur, 'squeezing' the urban edge up against the edge of the River Adur and the chalk downs and degrading the landscape setting of the SDNP and the Adur Estuary. The northern part of the site would be at risk of flooding from the River Adur. However, buildings would be sheltered by the wooded and built up slopes to the east and, depending on their height, partially screened by the trees and scrub along the Adur flood embankments. The relatively small scale of the southern part of the site that is protected and defined by the Adur Tidal Walls, means that only a small commercial development could be accommodated here; development outside this area, in the northern part of the site, would extend the urban area up to the A27/A283 gyratory, degrading the sensitive landscape settings of the Adur Estuary and the SDNP.</p>	
<b>Natural character</b>	Moderate-high
<p>The distinctive natural character of this floodplain-downland edge landscape would be damaged by a commercial scale of built development.</p>	
<b>Cultural and historical associations</b>	High
<p>Large scale commercial development on this site could cause permanent damage to the riverside setting of a group of nationally important buildings. The level of damage would depend on the scale and height of the buildings and the degree to which they intrude on the sensitive riverside views. The score assumes 12m high buildings, which would diminish the prominence of the historic church and tollbridge in local riverside views, dominating local roof lines, screening some views to the tower of the Church of St Nicolas and reducing the evocative sense of time depth of the complex of historic riverside buildings. Lower, small buildings would reduce such impacts, but the extensive car parking, security lighting, fencing and signage associated with commercial development would nevertheless cause severe damage in this context.</p>	
<b>Settlement form and setting</b>	High
<p>There is no existing commercial development on the east bank of the river and its implementation would extend the large scale commercial building 'blocks' across both sides of the river. This would have a significant and damaging urbanising effect because it would also connect the urban area visually with the existing road infrastructure. Commercial development across this site would dominate the relatively small scale riverside landscape setting of Old Shoreham and would damage the characteristic sense of a transition in landscape character from the rural river floodplain to urban valley slopes.</p>	
<b>Visual character</b>	High
<p>Large commercial buildings (assumed 12m high) with extensive car parking would transform the character of the riverside landscape in the sequential views from the riverside paths, screening or partially screening views southwards to St Nicolas Church and north eastwards to the Downs. Tree planting would soften the built edges, but the adverse impact of the visual screen would remain. For example, a development of 12m high large commercial buildings would dominate the sensitive view north eastwards from the Old Shoreham Tollbridge, extending the 'urban' edge of the settlement northwards into a landscape which appears 'rural', forming the skyline and partially screening the backdrop of Mill Hill. It would also have an adverse visual impact on the view northwards from Old Shoreham along Steyning Road towards the A27 and the Downs (one of the specified 'important views' in the Old Shoreham Conservation Area Report (1993), partially screening the view to the Downs. Of the views from the SDNP, it is the view southwards from the Mill Hill Nature Reserve that would be most adversely affected. Commercial development would 'fill in' the green gap between the A27 and the River Adur, extending urban development right up to the A27, so that the A27/A283 road infrastructure becomes the edge of the SDNP. A development of lower/small commercial buildings would potentially have less severe visual impacts, but the judgement should take account of the extent of car parking, lighting, signage and fencing, as well as the massing and scale of buildings.</p>	

<b>Perceptual qualities</b>	<b>High</b>
<p>Commercial development would compromise the distinctive and dynamic qualities of this landscape. Commercial buildings would have a significant urbanising effect and would be perceived as part of the Shoreham Technical Centre and A27 infrastructure, creating an abrupt, hard edge at the boundary of the SDNP, which jars against the rolling, concave-convex profiles of the chalk downland slopes. It would interrupt and damage the visual continuity provided by the river channel and the pastures alongside as the river passes beneath the bridge structures. Given the significant recreational value of the Adur riverside paths, these perceptual qualities are particularly important.</p>	

<b>Overall landscape sensitivity to the change associated with commercial development</b>	
<p>There is already an extensive block of commercial development on the west bank of the River Adur, at the Shoreham Technical Centre, which will be extended southwards along the eastern edge of Shoreham Airport when the strategic allocation for commercial development is implemented. The cumulative impact of a potential commercial development on this site should be considered in conjunction with the planned allocated Shoreham Airport development to the south of Shoreham Technical Centre.</p> <p>It is likely that a commercial development would form solid building blocks that are set back from the riverside. Such buildings could be integrated by tree planting, but the large mass of the commercial blocks and the extensive hard standing and nondescript character of the associated car parking, access roads, boundaries and signage would have a strong urbanising influence. Commercial development across all of this site would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• result in the river being enclosed by large buildings on both east and west banks, restricting the perceived 'green' visual link of the river valley floor landscape, which continues under the bridges, and causing the existing Shoreham Technical Centre, Shoreham Airport and A27 transport infrastructure to appear more dominant and visually intrusive</li> <li>• dominate the eastern riverside in this gateway zone, extending the built environment northwards to the A27, making the road bridge and gyratory A27/A283 junction an inappropriate 'hard' boundary to the national park and significantly degrading the quality and character of the setting of the SDNP</li> <li>• have a strongly detrimental effect on the character and setting of the cluster of heritage assets in the riverside part of Old Shoreham - large commercial buildings would not sit comfortably alongside this small-scale, historic townscape.</li> <li>• change the gateway to Shoreham from the north, partially screening the ('important') view to the Downs from Steyning Road and compromising the perceived relationship between town and river in the gateway from the north.</li> </ul> <p>This site is unlikely to accommodate commercial development without significant adverse effects on its distinctive landscape (and adjacent townscape) character.</p>	
<b>Overall landscape sensitivity - commercial development</b>	<b>High</b>

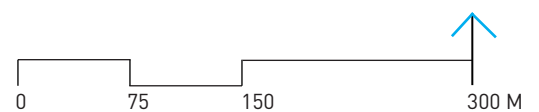
## 2.5 Mill Hill, Old Shoreham

A 5.8 ha site of open pasture on the open south west facing slopes of Mill Hill, to the south of the A27. It is subdivided by temporary fencing into smaller linear paddocks, which are used for horse grazing. It is bordered by residential development to the east and south and by broad belts of native woodland and scrub to the north (alongside the A27) and on the steep chalk slopes to the west. The latter are part of the Mill Hill Local Wildlife Site.

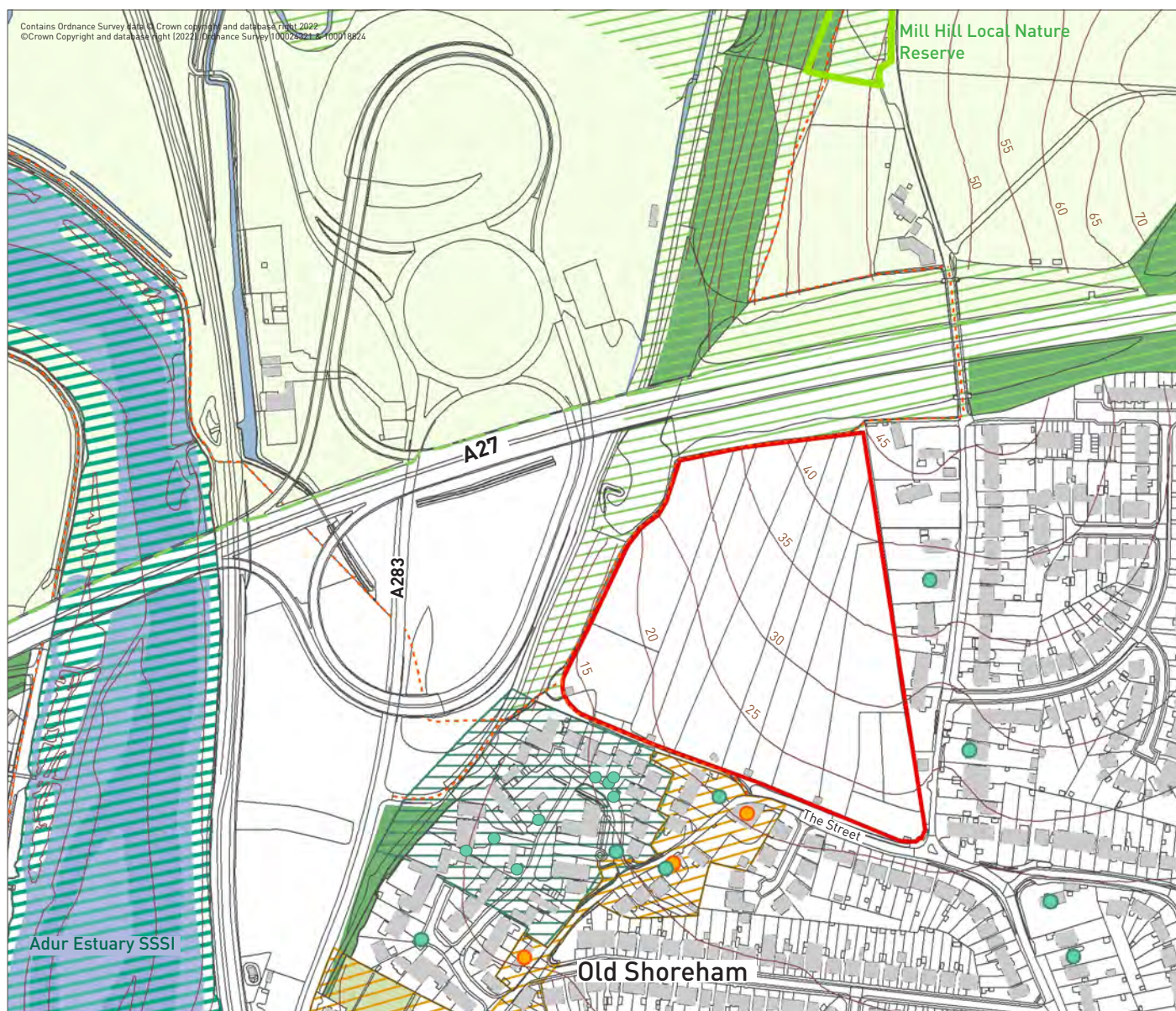
This site is within the Mill Hill Slopes Landscape Character Area (LCA 8) in the Adur Landscape Character Assessment.

Figure 6a

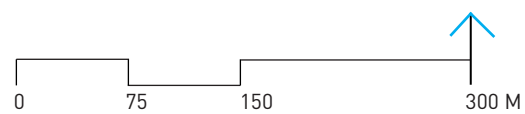
**Mill Hill, Old Shoreham - aerial view**



Mill Hill, Old Shoreham - policy context

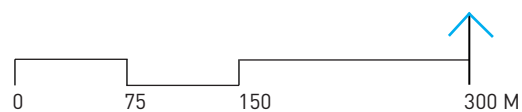
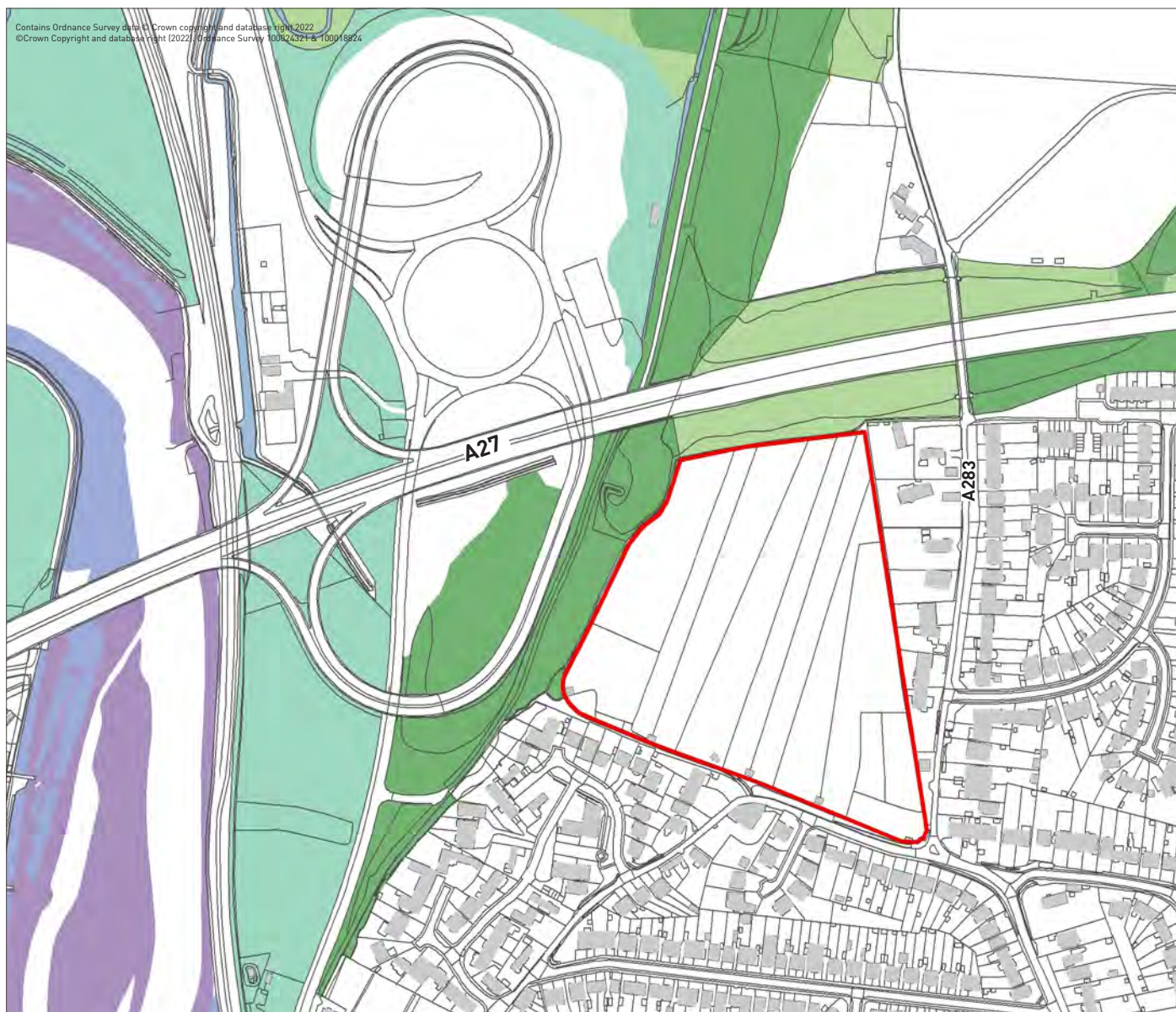


- Key greenfield site (Mill Hill)
- South Downs National Park (SDNP)
- Public open space (OS OpenMap Local)
- Woodland (OS OpenMap Local)
- Surface water (streams, ditches and water bodies)
- Tidal water (foreshore and deep water)
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Local Wildlife Site (LWS)
- Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Old Shoreham Conservation Area
- Listed building
- Tree Preservation Order (TPO group of trees)
- Tree Preservation Order (TPO individual trees)
- Public right of way





**Mill Hill, Old Shoreham - Priority Habitat Inventory**



- Key greenfield site (Mill Hill)
- Surface water (streams, ditches and water bodies)

**Priority Habitat Inventory**

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance. ([www.environment.gov.data.uk](http://www.environment.gov.data.uk)) (NERC S41)

- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi improved grassland
- Coastal saltmarsh
- Mudflats

**Mill Hill, Old Shoreham - site photographs (October 2022)**



Open pasture subdivided into horse paddocks by temporary fencing on the Mill Hill site. The houses on the skyline are off Mill Hill Lane and on the eastern boundary of the site,



Refer also to the photographs showing the landscape context for the Shoreham Gateway site on pages 32-33, which show that the Mill Hill site forms the backdrop to views from the public rights of way along the River Adur

## Mill Hill, Old Shoreham

<b>Physical character</b>	Moderate-high
<p>This elevated site comprises a large, open pasture on the south west facing chalkland slopes of Mill Hill, which rises to 104m some 1.4km to the north. The summit is prominent on the eastern slopes of the River Adur Valley at the point where the river has cut down through the chalk downs as it flows southwards onto the coastal plain, where it becomes tidal. The Mill Hill site is a component of the rolling chalk downlands to the north of the A27 and shares the distinctive rounded chalk slope profile of the chalklands within the SDNP. Indeed, the site is part of a sweeping, large scale landscape pattern which extends south from the chalk downs across the A27. This continuity of landscape pattern is accentuated by the extensive woodland that cloaks the steep chalk slopes to the west (on both sides of the A27) and by the large scale, open character of the pastureland across the site. However, the sweeping landscape pattern is disrupted by the urban conurbation which extends across the lower slopes of the Downs and the coastal plain to the south of the SDNP. The site is on the northern fringes of the urban area of Old Shoreham and Shoreham-by-Sea and is bordered to the east and south by detached residential properties with large gardens. The Mill Hill site is within the area designated by Unesco as the Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere, so it is a component of an internationally recognised world class landscape. Residential development across this site would erode the distinctive physical characteristics of this landscape by damaging its open pastoral character and the inherent continuity of chalkland landscape pattern, scale and landform that this reveals.</p>	
<b>Natural character</b>	Moderate-high
<p>The Mill Hill site comprises open pasture that is subdivided into small horse paddocks by temporary wire-and-tape fencing. The site itself is not designated for its nature conservation value and its natural character has been degraded by over grazing and the paraphernalia associated with horsiculture. However, it is bordered to the north and west by broadleaf woodland and scrub that is designated as part of the Mill Hill Local Wildlife Site which is noted for its chalk grassland and scrub habitat, as well as for broadleaf woodland. These areas are also classified in the national Priority Habitat Inventory as deciduous woodland and high quality semi-improved grassland. The site is part of an area identified by Natural England as Network Enhancement Zone 1 in the National Habitat Network Map. This means that it is considered suitable for habitat re-creation and has potential to connect existing Priority Habitats such as woodland and chalk grassland to provide effective habitat networks.</p>	
<b>Cultural and historical associations</b>	Moderate
<p>Reference to historic maps suggests that, prior to the construction of the A27 (in 1968-70), this site was part of the open chalk downland of Mill Hill and that the houses along its eastern boundary date from the 1940s. The open pasture has a strong landscape contextual connection to Mill Hill and the Downs to the north. The site is bordered to the south by the northern part of the Old Shoreham Conservation Area and the 18th century Adur Lodge with its exceptionally high roadside flint wall, which is a grade II listed building. This part of the conservation area comprises buildings along The Street, a road leading northwards upslope which in the mid-late 19th century was characterised by a scattering of cottages. The road turns sharply east to run along the southern boundary of the site. The mature trees along this road and to the south and west of the site contribute a sense of time depth. However, this is countered by the influence of the A27, which has severed the connection with the Downs to the north, the suburban quality of the detached houses and gardens that border the site to the east and south west and the mix of sheds and temporary fencing that subdivide and degrade its former open downland character.</p>	

<b>Settlement form and setting</b>	Moderate-high
<p>The site is on the northern fringe of Old Shoreham and makes a critically important contribution to the landscape setting of Shoreham: it is visible in views north eastwards from the Adur west bank riverside paths and the coastal plain in the New Salts Farm area, from the Old Shoreham Tollbridge and in panoramic views eastwards from Lancing Ring and the public right of way near Hoe Court Farm. In each of these views it forms a backdrop to the urban development on the coastal plain, 'anchoring' the settlement within its wider landscape setting and reinforcing a strong visual connection between the town and the chalk downland to the north. Within this context, the views north eastwards from the west bank of the River Adur (and the Old Shoreham Tollbridge) are particularly important because the open 'green' flank of the Mill Hill site makes a significant contribution to the distinctive riverside landscape setting of Old Shoreham. This open grassy slope is perceived as the lower flank of Mill Hill at the only point where an undeveloped part of the Sussex Downs extends across the A27 and down into the settlement of Old Shoreham. Development across this site would form an abrupt, hard interface between the settlement and the chalklands, interrupting the sweep of the green slopes and accentuating the alignment of the A27, which is hidden within a cutting in many of the longer views.</p>	
<b>Visual character</b>	Moderate-high
<p>The Mill Hill site is prominent in views south eastwards from Lancing Ring, eastwards from the public right of way near Hoe Court Farm and in views north eastwards from the riverside paths along the River Adur and the historic Shoreham Tollbridge. It is also visible as part of the 'green South Downs' backdrop to Shoreham in views from the undeveloped landscape between Lancing and Shoreham, including from Shoreham Airport and New Salts Farm Road. It contributes to the landscape setting of the River Adur, which is a particularly distinctive and attractive landscape feature on the southern margins of the SDNP and the coastal plain. If the urban area were to extend across the Mill Hill Slopes, the A27 would mark the interface between urban development and countryside in longer views from the Downs. In such circumstances, the A27 would be perceived as a poor quality, abrupt visual boundary to the SDNP.</p>	
<b>Perceptual qualities</b>	Moderate-high
<p>This site, on the slopes of Mill Hill, is highlighted as one of the 'prominent open spaces' in the analysis of the landscape between Lancing and Shoreham in Annex B of the Adur Landscape Character Assessment. This analysis describes how we perceive and value the remaining undeveloped landscapes that separate these settlements and their distinctive landscape settings. Such 'prominent open spaces' are described as being important because they enhance our appreciation of the physical, natural landscape elements that structure this landscape. The site is perceived as part of the Downs: its distinctive chalk slope profile and the sweeping green sward of its open pasture forges a strong visual and perceptual connection to the chalklands to the north. This is particularly apparent in long distance views. However, in close views, the site is perceived as an intensively used and over-grazed horse paddock, marred by the paraphernalia of horseculture. There are public rights of way along three of its borders, which connect extensive urban areas with the open access land on Mill Hill. The southern part of the site would be less sensitive to residential development than the north, but any development would detract from the evocative chalkland qualities of this area, which stem from its openness and sweeping slope profile on a prominent, south facing flank of the Downs which abuts and contributes to the setting of an extensive urban area.</p>	

## Overall landscape sensitivity to the change associated with residential development

Residential development across all of this site would:

- be prominent in views from multiple locations and would significantly reduce the scale of the 'green' swathe of the Downs which currently extends across the A27 to the fringes of Shoreham in views from the SDNP (including from public rights of way in the Lancing Ring and Hoe Court Farm areas), the Adur riverside public footpath, Shoreham Tollbridge and New Salts Farm Road
- degrade the evocative chalkland qualities of one of the only remaining open, upland flanks of chalk downland that extends across the A27 to abut the urban conurbation on the coastal plain and so reduce opportunities to appreciate the physical, natural landscape elements that structure this landscape
- have an adverse impact on the landscape setting of the River Adur at an exceptionally distinctive part of this river valley, where the river cuts through the chalk downs to its tidal estuarine reach on the coastal plain
- detract from the existing relatively rural character of this northern part of Shoreham's distinctive landscape setting; and
- damage the landscape setting of the SDNP because the A27 would define the interface between urban development and countryside in longer views from the Downs and would be perceived as a poor quality, abrupt visual boundary to the SDNP.

A relatively small residential development which is confined to the lower, southern part of the slope and contained by native woodland could potentially be integrated without damaging the distinctive and sensitive landscape character and qualities of the Mill Hill site. However the scale and extent of both built development and woodland planting should be carefully tested to ensure that there are no adverse landscape and visual impacts. The proportion of open grassland to woodland and built development is critical in this respect: there should be a higher proportion of open grassland so as to conserve the perception of an open flank of chalkland landscape sweeping down to the semi-wooded urban edge. It is important that this conserved grassland area is extensive enough to 'read' as part of the open countryside of the chalklands to the north, rather than as a piece of urban fringe landscape.

A high density 3-4 storey residential development could not be integrated here because it would create an urbanised and dominant built edge at one of the most sensitive and prominent urban-rural interfaces in the area and would damage the landscape setting of the SDNP.

The asterisk (\*) indicates that only a proportion of the land within part of the site could be developed without damage to its key characteristic and sensitive landscape elements and features. For the Scenario 1 scale of residential development, built development would be confined to the southern part of the site. This site is unlikely to accommodate the Scenario 2) high density residential development (Scenario 2) without significant adverse effects on its distinctive landscape character.

<p><b>Overall landscape sensitivity - residential development Scenario 1:</b> 2-3 storey development at a density of approximately 35 units per hectare</p>	<p>Moderate-high*</p>
<p><b>Overall landscape sensitivity - residential development Scenario 2:</b> higher density residential development to include 3-4 storey development</p>	<p>High</p>

## References

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South Downs National Park: View Characterisation and Analysis, Land Use Consultants, 2015

### **Spatial data**

OS Mastermap provided under licence - ©Crown Copyright and database right (2022). Ordnance Survey 100024321 & 100018824

OS OpenMap Local

Open Government Data

Adur District Council - spatial data for the Adur Local Plan, Conservation Areas, Local Wildlife Sites, Tree Preservation Orders, and Public Rights of Way

National Heritage List (Historic England) - Listed buildings, scheduled monuments

National Habitat Network All Habitats Combined (England)

Priority Habitat Inventory - Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance ([www.environment.gov.uk](http://www.environment.gov.uk)) (NERC S41)

