

18 L15/E12 (Site 41) – Ovingdean: Landscape and Ecology Assessment

Background

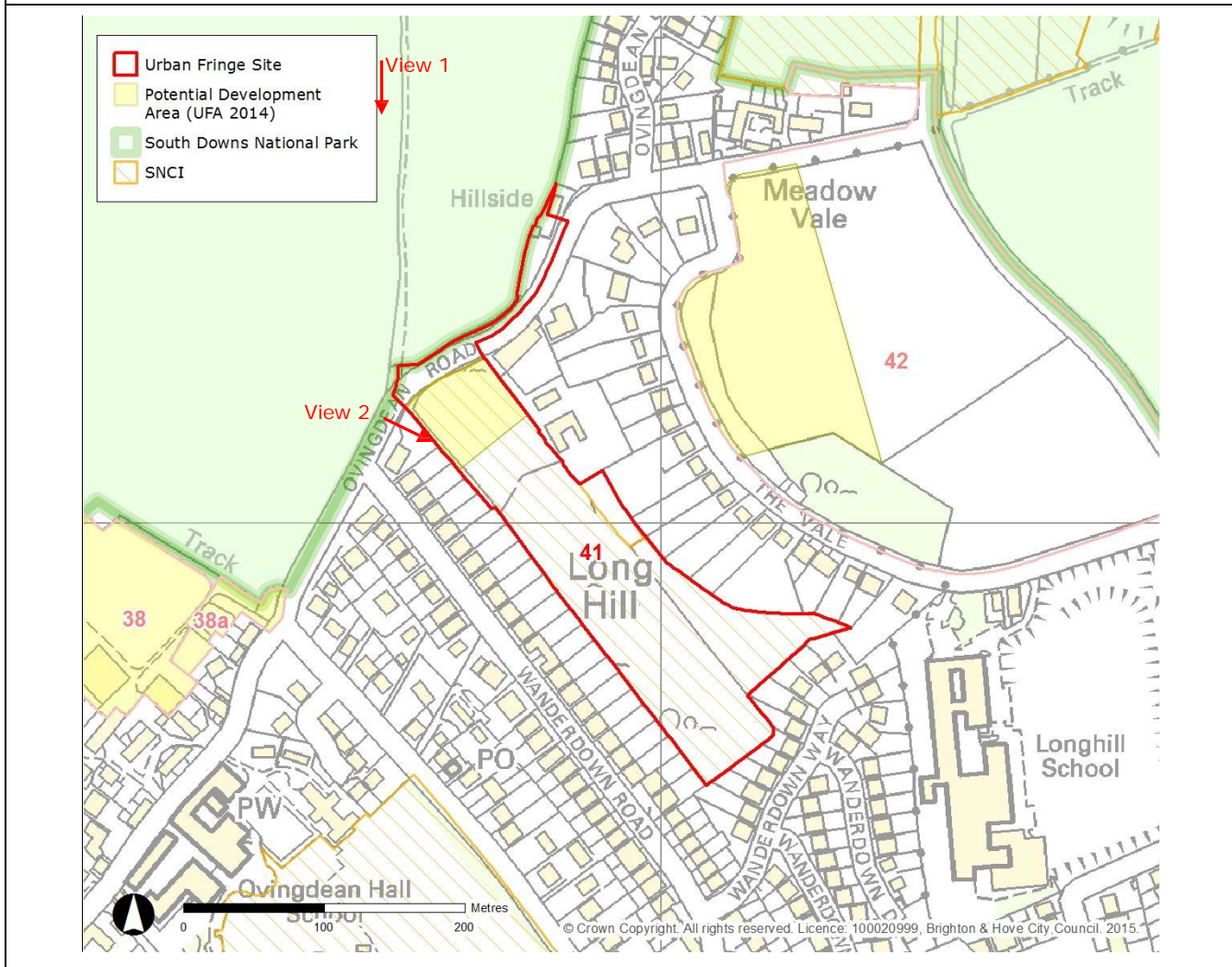
Study Area	L15/E12	Location	Ovingdean
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Site	41 – Land at Wanderdown Road
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Study Area Overview

A band of tree-flanked grassland to the north, fronting onto Ovingdean Road, and woodland to the south. This Study Area occupies a ridge of high ground and backs onto houses along Wanderdown Road, The Vale and Wanderdown Way.

The area suggested in the 2014 UFA as having potential for housing development was limited to the northern end of the Study Area, adjacent to Ovingdean Road.



Representative Views - local



View 1: looking south-east from public bridleway on southern slope of Mount Pleasant (in SDNP)



View 2: looking south-east from access point on Ovingdean Road across grassland within potential development area at northern end of Site (both sides of the fenceline are within the Site area)

Overall Conclusions of the 2014 Assessment

"The site is considered suitable for a small amount of low density residential development at the northern tip of the site.

The site occupies the crest of a ridge which runs down from Mount Pleasant, separating the built area of northern Ovingdean into two. The northern end is largely open greenspace and the remainder is wooded. Both areas are prominent in SDNP views descending from Mount Pleasant, in which the village appears as houses surrounding a wooded ridge and development on the hill top would be uncharacteristic, detracting from the historic valley settlement form. However, a few new houses within the pony paddocks at the northern end of the site would retain the woodland on the hill top and have the least adverse impact on landscape character. Any impacts on archaeology and heritage would need to be satisfactorily addressed.

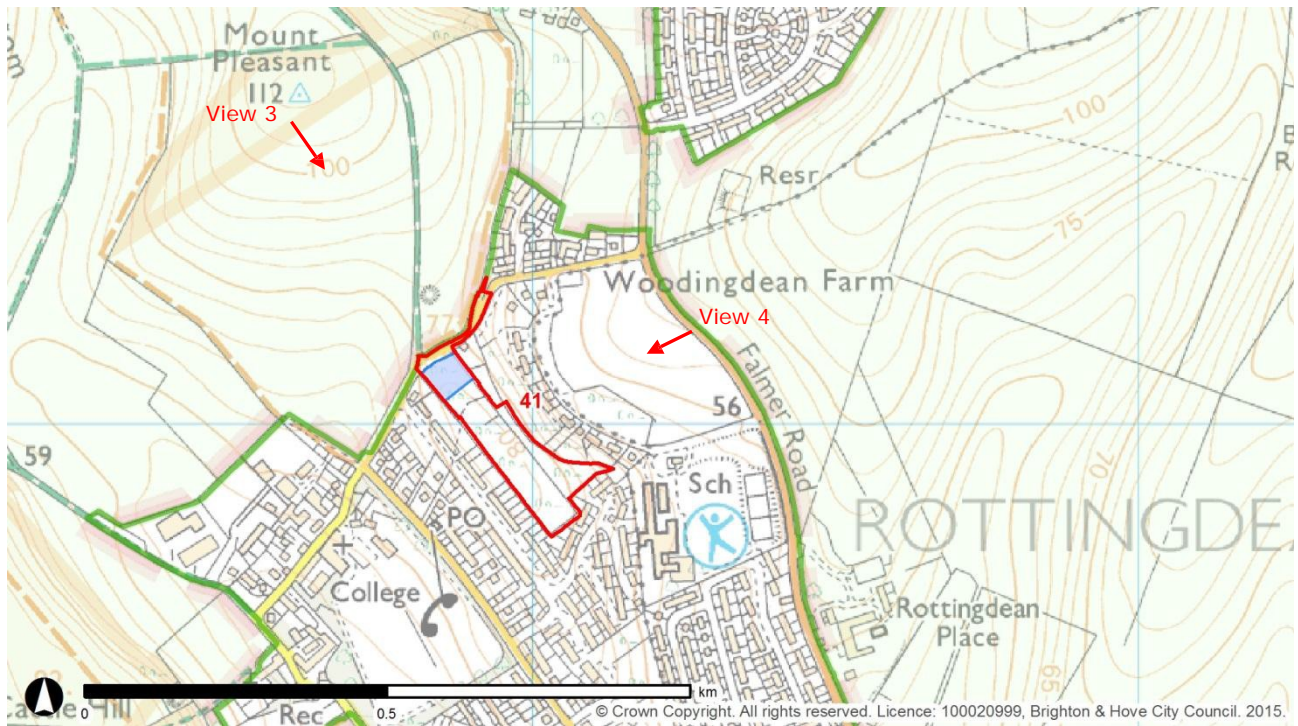
95% of the site is recognised as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance. Although the value of the site has been challenged by the landowner, the 2013 Review of SNCIs concluded that the designation should remain pending further independent survey work to verify objections from the landowner.

Overall Site Area	2.9ha	Area with development potential	0.3ha	Suitable dwelling density	Low: 25 per ha	Potential number of dwellings	5
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Landscape Assessment

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment	
Physical character	The Study Area consists of chalk grassland and woodland occupying the crest of the northern end of Long Hill, although the identified potential development area is limited to the slightly lower and less treed northern end of the Study Area. In landform terms ridgelines are relatively sensitive, although landscape sensitivity would be greater if the area were wooded and formed part of a continuous belt of trees on the Long Hill ridge.
Settlement form	Housing within Ovingdean surrounds the Study Area on three sides, so it clearly lies within the settlement area, but with the notable exception of Wanderdown Way, Drive and Close the ridge crest is free from development and mostly wooded, creating a distinct separation between housing on the east and west sides of Long Hill.
Settlement setting	The wooded central ridge of Longhill plays an important role as a backdrop to views from much of Ovingdean, including the historic core (designated as a conservation area) to the west, and from Rottingdean to the east, contributing to a rural character despite the suburbanising nature of much modern development. The absence of extensive tree cover from the potential development area at the northern end of the Study Area does reduce its role to a degree, but development on this high ground could appear above tree tops in views from the east (View 4). This would have an adverse effect on the character of the settlement, although the extent of this is partially offset by the existing skyline impact of Wanderdown Way and its subsidiary closes.
SDNP setting	Ovingdean together with the modern, northern part of Rottingdean are surrounded by the SDNP, other than a narrow strip of development along one side of Falmer Road that links to the centre of Rottingdean. The nature of the boundary between the SDNP and this and other settlements on the east side of Brighton means that it is usual for views to include urban elements, typically focused on coombes, but settlement on higher ground can appear more incongruous. The vegetation on Long Hill is distinct from that within the surrounding SDNP, but it is still widely visible and contributes to the rural character of the area, although this is to a degree compromised by the Wanderdown development.
Visual receptors	The physical location of the potential development area is significant in terms of views from the SDNP, in particular in views from Mount Pleasant (View 3) and to a lesser extent from the downs to the north of Rottingdean, in the vicinity of Balsdean Farm. Its elevated location is such that development could also appear above the tree line that lies to the east of the Study Area (below the ridgeline), in passing views from Falmer Road, increasing the sense of Ovingdean spreading out from lower ground and detracting from rural character.
Perceptual qualities	Tree cover, elevation and downland views to the north contribute to a degree of separation from the surrounding settlement and rural character, despite the proximity of houses.
Cultural & historic value	There are no known cultural or historic associations with the Study Area.

Representative Views – wider area



View 3: looking south-east from open access area around summit of Mount Pleasant (in SDNP)



View 4: looking west from Falmer Road – The Site lies beyond the top of the tree line but there is a glimpse of one of the dwellings just to the east of the site boundary on lower ground

Potential Level of Landscape Effect

The principal concern with development in this Study Area would relate to its elevated, ridge-crest location, and consequent impact on settlement form, settlement and SDNP setting and views. The fact that ridge-top development has already occurred to the south does reduce sensitivity a little, but in views from the north, within the SDNP, Long Hill still appears largely undeveloped. Therefore only a very modest amount of development, carefully located to avoid creating an impression of joining up the housing to the east and west of the ridge, could potentially be achieved without significant adverse landscape impact. The yield of 5 dwellings indicated in the 2014 UFA could therefore be difficult to achieve without having this effect.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement Options

Careful consideration of density of housing to reduce landscape impacts.

The height of development in relation to the tree belts to either side is a key consideration: any buildings would need to avoid appearing above the tree line in views to minimise the likelihood of significant landscape impact. This is likely to mean restricting built development to the northern edge of the potential development area.

Planting along the site's northern boundary to filter views of new houses, and additional tree planting within the open grassland, would help to strengthen the wooded character of Long Hill (see View 3) would be beneficial in landscape terms.

Ecology Assessment

Ecological Baseline

Biological Records

There are no nationally or internationally designated sites within or adjacent to the Study Area.

The majority of the Study Area comprises part of the **Wanderdown Road Open Space SNCI**. This SNCI has been designated for its chalk grassland and chalk scrub, which support a number of notable species, including Yellow Rattle, Round-headed Rampion, Autumn Gentian, Kidney Vetch and Marbled White butterfly. The site's potential for future designation as a Local Wildlife Site was called into question by the landowner through the 2013 review of SNCI sites for future designation as a Local Wildlife Site. The selection panel concluded that the designation should remain and that an independent survey would be required to substantiate the landowner's view.

Records of the following protected and/or notable species were identified within the Study Area:

- Round-headed rampion

Habitat Description (see Figure 18.1)

Semi-improved Calcareous Grassland

The Study Area was dominated by a linear strip of semi-improved calcareous grassland. The grassland in the north was mown to a short sward height. Species recorded included dominant red fescue with abundant cock's-foot and birds foot trefoil. Frequent field scabious were also recorded, and occasional autumn hawkbit and selfheal. Common knapweed and round-headed rampion were also present but rare. The grassland immediately adjacent to Ovingdean Road was less species rich and rough in structure.

The grassland to the south of the Study Area was less species rich, and included scattered scrub. Species included dominant perennial rye grass with abundant red fescue, frequent creeping thistle, cock's-foot and Yorkshire fog.

Semi-improved Neutral Grassland

Semi-improved neutral grassland was recorded in the north of the Study Area, on the north verge of Ovingdean Road. Species included dominant perennial rye grass with abundant bramble, red clover and

yarrow.

Semi-natural Broadleaved Woodland

Semi-natural broadleaved woodland was recorded north of Ovingdean Road and to the south of a horse ménage. In the north, species included dominant sycamore, abundant Traveller's joy, elder and occasional bindweed and wild privet.

The semi-natural broadleaved woodland to the south was dominated by semi-mature sycamore in the canopy layer, whilst the shrub layer supported abundant hawthorn. The ground flora layer was species poor and included dominant ivy and hedge bindweed.

Scrub

Scattered scrub was recorded in the southern part of the Study Area, with sycamore and hawthorn.

Dense scrub was noted on the north-eastern boundary of the Study Area, north of the horse ménage. Species included dominant field maple and hawthorn, abundant dog rose, occasional apple, bramble and hedge bindweed.

Tall Ruderal Vegetation

Tall ruderal vegetation was present along the margins of the semi-improved grassland in the south of the Study Area. Species included common nettle, spear thistle, teasel, fennel, common ragwort, bittersweet and purple toadflax.

Bare Ground

A horse ménage dominated by bare ground was noted in the centre of the Study Area. Ephemeral species included occasional false-oat grass, willowherb *Epilobium sp* and common ragwort.

Buildings

A stable was present in the centre of the Study Area, east of the horse ménage.

Fauna

Potential was noted for the following protected or notable species to be present within the Study Area:

- Nesting birds – the woodland and hedgerow provide opportunities for nesting common garden and woodland bird species.
- Reptiles – Grassland habitats were in part suitable to support reptiles, and would develop further suitability if left unmanaged, although at the time of the survey was relatively closely mown. Areas in the south of the Study Area including scattered scrub and tall Ruderal habitats may have higher potential to support reptiles, whilst woodland provided potential overwintering habitat.
- Badgers – potential foraging habitat was provided throughout the Study Area, with woodland and scrub providing potential opportunities for sett building (no setts were recorded although access was restricted due to fencing/dense scrub).
- Invertebrates – the chalk grassland habitats in particular, given floristic diversity, may be of value for invertebrates, in particular given the presence of woodland/scrub edge habitats.
- Bats – The mosaic of open grassland and woodland provides optimal bat foraging habitat, with the Study Area contributing to ecological connectivity through urban areas to other open habitats including to the north and south. The woodland did not appear to support trees of sufficient maturity to support roosting bats.

Great crested newts are unlikely to be present within the Study Area due to the lack of water bodies within 500m of the Study Area (as identified from OS base mapping; further investigation would be required). Dormice are also unlikely to be present within the Study Area given the isolation of the woodland and hedgerows from larger areas of suitable habitat.

Ecological Appraisal	
Designated Sites	<p>The majority of the site is identified as the Wanderdown Road Open Space SNCI. The 2015 survey identifies the site as of value for calcareous grassland. In particular the protected species round headed rampion was recorded during the survey.</p> <p>The potential development area itself lies to the north of the grassland of greatest value, and includes areas of relatively low species diversity although round-headed rampion was recorded within the south of the potential development area. Loss of habitats in this area may not therefore significantly reduce the value of the wider site, although there would be potential for direct impacts on round-headed rampion and indirect disturbance and contamination impacts.</p>
Habitats	<p>Habitats within the potential development area consist of semi-improved calcareous grassland and hedgerows. Semi-improved calcareous grassland is recognised as a priority habitat in the The Brighton & Hove LBAP, and as a habitat of principal importance (NERC Act 2006).</p> <p>Potential impacts on grassland habitats are discussed above. Woodland and scrub habitats were also located within the potential development area.</p>
Species	<p>It is not possible to confirm the value of the Study Area for notable and protected species in the absence of detailed surveys, although there is potential for such species to be present throughout the majority of the Study Area, given the mosaic of grassland, scrub and woodland habitats.</p> <p>The potential development area itself is likely to support certain notable and/or protected species, with scrub and woodland habitats likely to support nesting garden and woodland birds, and may also provide opportunities for badger to establish setts. Loss of these habitats could therefore affect these species.</p> <p>In addition, there is the potential for the calcareous grassland to support notable invertebrate species given species-richness, whilst notable plant species could also be located within the potential development area, or those outside of the potential development area could be affected by disturbance or contamination during any works.</p> <p>There is also potential for reptile species to be present within the potential development area. In addition, it is likely that the Study Area provides high quality bat foraging habitat, and development within the potential development area could impact on bat commuting routes to the north either as a result of habitat loss and/or lighting disturbance.</p>
Ecological Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement Options	
<p>Further surveys</p> <p>Detailed development proposals must be informed by an updated Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and species surveys to ensure that potential impacts are identified and appropriate mitigation developed. This may require in particular detailed searches for notable plant species, and surveys for badger, bats, reptiles and potentially invertebrates (subject to a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and development proposals).</p> <p>Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement Options</p> <p>Loss of habitats, and particular calcareous grassland, within the Study Area will require mitigation. It is recommended that the potential development area is reduced slightly in size to reduce loss of calcareous grassland and also to avoid the recorded location of round-headed rampion. Further mitigation would be required to address habitat loss, and this could be achieved through the improved management of the remainder of the Study Area, in particular with the implementation of grassland management regimes to enhance the species diversity, whilst maintaining the habitat diversity provided by woodland and scrub habitats.</p> <p>During construction best construction practice will need to be assured, as detailed within a Construction</p>	

and Environmental Management Plan or similar, to avoid contamination and disturbance impacts.

If notable or protected species are confirmed as present, mitigation requirements may include:

- Timing of works to avoid impacts on nesting birds
- Measures to prevent impacts on badger including sensitive timing of works in the vicinity of setts (and potentially under NE licence) and best practice construction measures

Enhancement of habitat outside the potential development area to provide additional opportunities for species impacted by the proposals, such as invertebrates and reptiles. Potential impacts on bat foraging and commuting habitats (subject to detailed surveys) would require careful consideration to ensure mitigation is built in to any design proposals. This may include ensuring habitat is maintained as flightlines, and external lightspill strictly controlled, to enable bats to continue to use the site as a movement corridor to habitats to the north. This may reduce the number of units which can be accommodated.

Other mitigation or enhancement opportunities may include the incorporation of green infrastructure within the development to provide opportunities for wildlife, such as green roofs or walls, wildlife-friendly planting (native species or those providing known benefits to wildlife, such as species of benefit for pollinators), and incorporation of nesting/roosting opportunities for birds and bats.

Conclusion

Overall Conclusion

In conclusion, it is considered that development across the potential development area identified in the 2014 UFA would be likely to result in significant adverse landscape and ecological effects. There is, however, some potential to deliver development within Study Area L15/E12 without significant impacts on landscape and ecology, on the assumption that:

- The yield and density of development are reduced, and restricted to the lower, northern fringe of the Study Area, with a slight reduction in the potential development area indicated on the below figure.
- Planting is located on the northern boundary, to filter/reduce views from the SDNP.
- Incorporation of robust mitigation measures to address any impacts on protected species.
- Long-term enhancement of adjacent habitats within the SNCI is provided, in particular retention and management of calcareous grassland (including avoidance of screening planting in these areas).

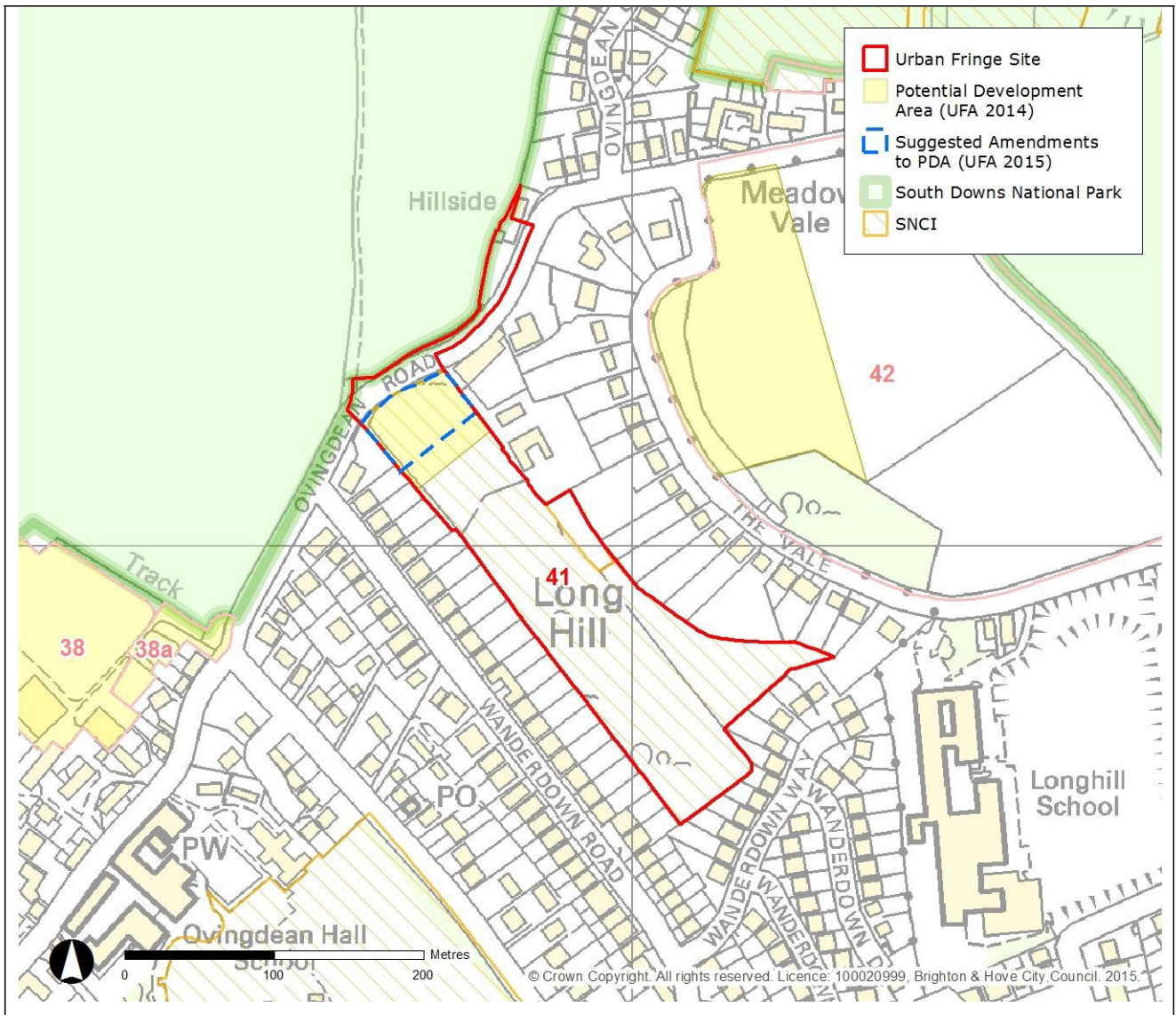
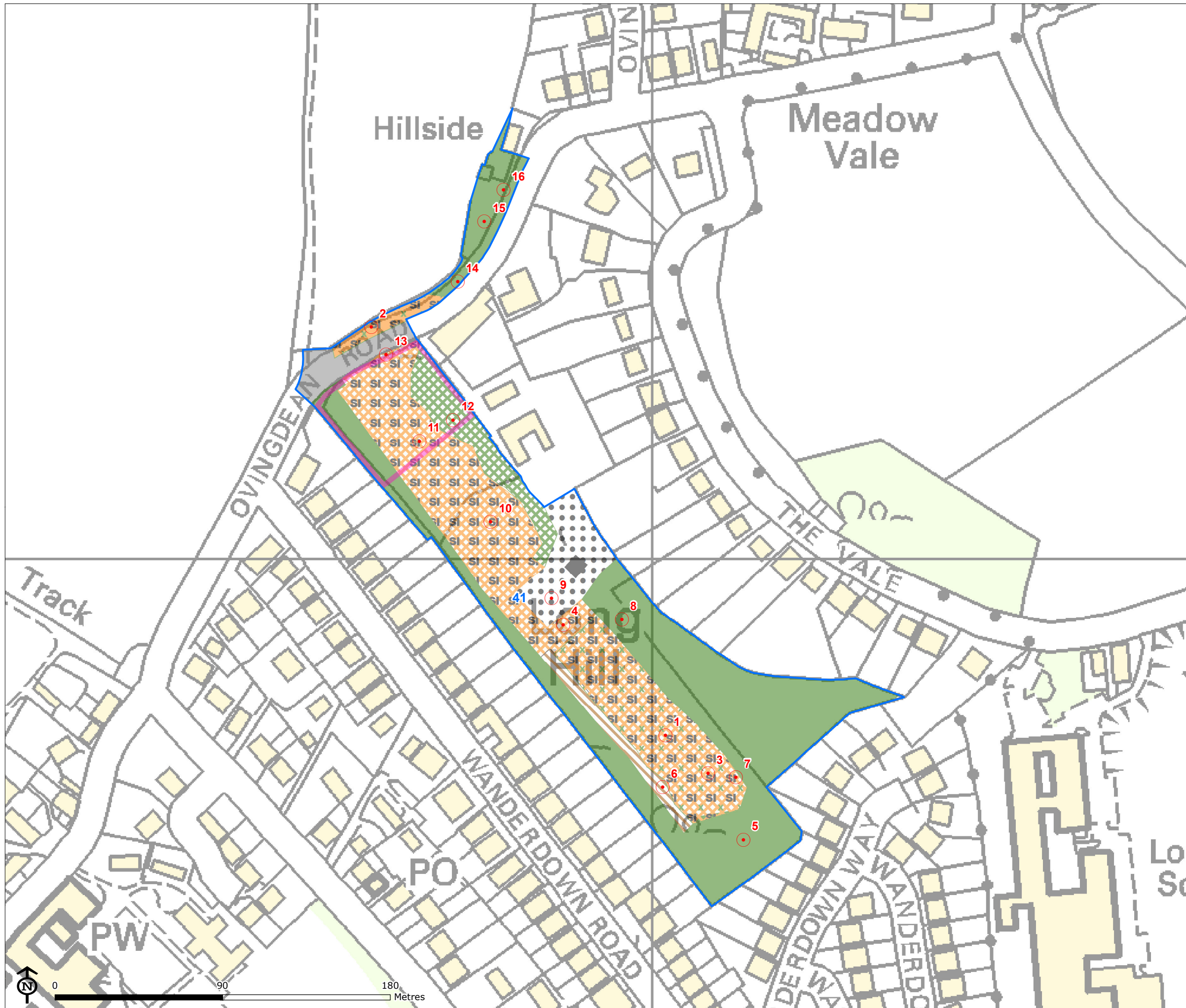


Figure 18.1 Phase 1 Habitat Survey Map
Study Area L15/E12

-  Urban Fringe Site
-  Potential Development Area
-  Target note
-  Broadleaved woodland - semi-natural
-  Scrub - dense/continuous
-  Neutral grassland - semi-improved with scattered scrub
-  Calcareous grassland - semi-improved with scattered scrub
-  Calcareous grassland - semi-improved
-  Other tall herb and fern - ruderal
-  Buildings
-  Bare ground
-  Hard standing



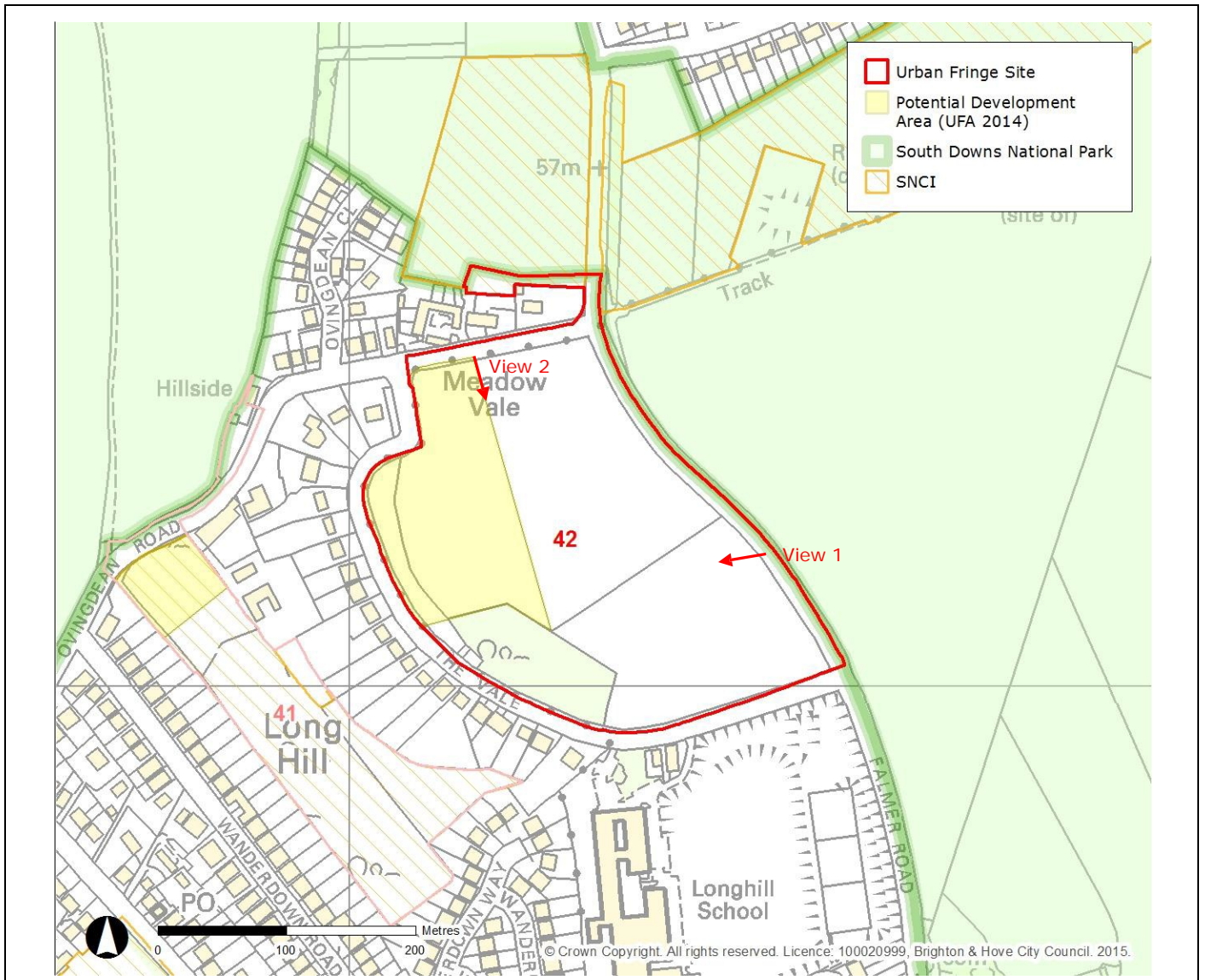
Map Scale @ A3: 1:2,000



19 L16/E13 (Site 42) – Ovingdean: Landscape and Ecology Assessment

Background

Study Area	L16/E13	Location	Ovingdean
Site	42 – Land adjacent to Ovingdean and Falmer Road, Ovingdean		
Study Area Overview			
<p>Sports pitches associated with Longhill High School occupy the southern part of this east to west sloping Study Area, whilst the larger part to the north is grazed paddock land. The Study Area is bounded by Ovingdean Road to the north, Falmer Road to the east and The Vale to the west and south. A woodland block and hedgerow separate the sports pitches from the paddocks.</p> <p>The area suggested in the 2014 UFA as having potential for housing development was the lower, western half of the paddocks.</p>			



Representative Views - local





View 2: looking south across potential development area (The Vale is beyond the lower line of trees to the right of the view)

Overall Conclusions of the 2014 Assessment

“The site is considered suitable for low density residential development in the north western part of the site. The northern part of the site is inaccessible natural/semi-natural greenspace which is privately owned. Development here could create new publically accessible open space in an area of under provision for allotments and urban farms, amenity greenspace and children and young people spaces.

The gently sloping ground in a valley location is very visible from higher SDNP ground to the north and east but is not in a location that would appear uncharacteristic for housing development. There is housing along Ovingdean Road to the north and extensive built development along the valley to the south of Longdean School. There could be a concern, despite the existing presence of houses on Ovingdean Road, that extensive development in this area would leave very little space between Ovingdean and Woodingdean. However, development on the lower, western side of the site, to the north of the woodland within the site, would have minimal adverse impact on wider landscape character and would not significantly affect views from the SDNP.

While the site is not subject to any formal ecological designations the Sussex Wildlife Trust /Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (managed by the Wildlife Trust) recognise the site as an SNCI (SNCI BH 44) containing Red Star Thistle, an internationally threatened plant. Any development would need to incorporate mitigation for this and any other notable / protected species present on site.

There are no heritage designations within the site.

Finally, there is some risk of surface water flooding along the curved western edge of the site and also some risk of ground water flooding, although both of these risks could be managed in the design of any new residential through the incorporation of appropriate sustainable urban drainage.”

Overall Site Area	7.4ha	Area with development potential	1.75ha	Suitable dwelling density	Low: 25 per ha	Potential number of dwellings	45
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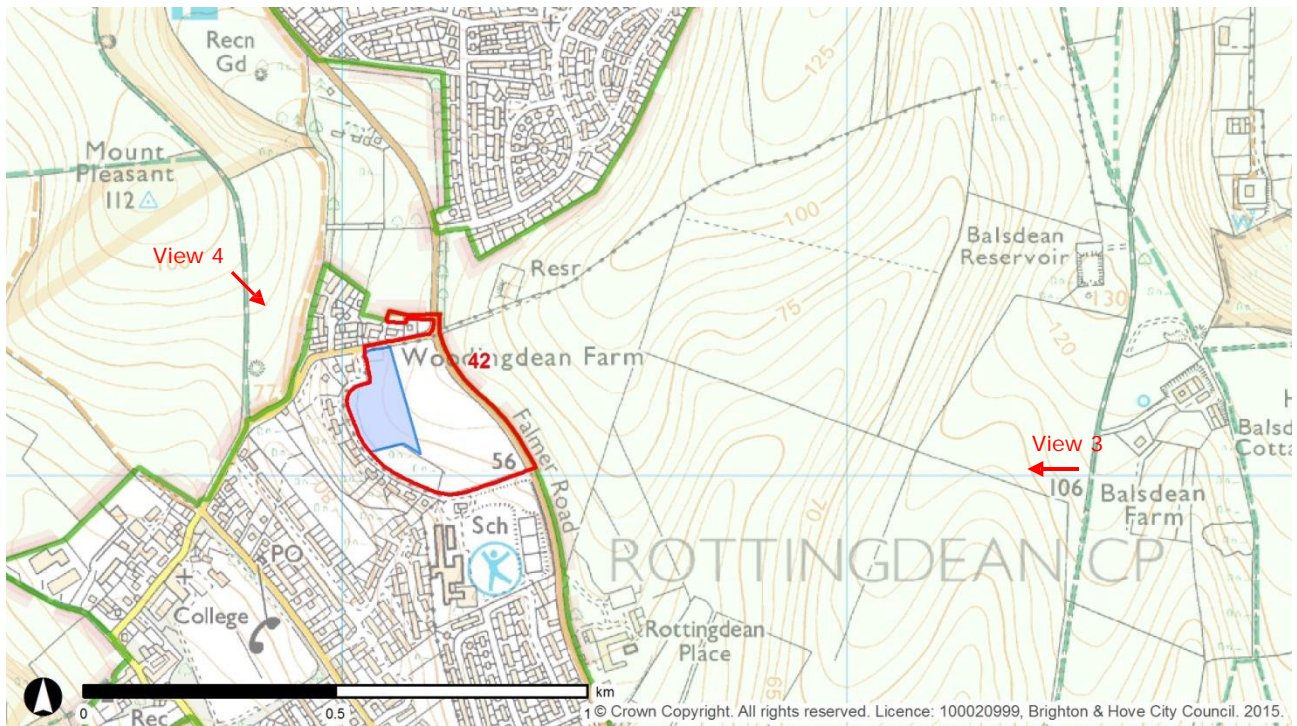
Landscape Assessment

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Physical character	The Study Area is located near the foot of a landform which slopes down from High Hill to the east and from Woodingdean and Mount Pleasant to the north, before rising sharply up to Long Hill. The land is grazed by horses and contained by roads on three sides. There is no particular sensitivity associated with the physical character of the potential development area, other than the mature trees which run along its
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	western edge. Within the rest of the Study Area the copse and strong hedgerows to the south are more sensitive.
Settlement form	Modern expansion of Rottingdean is contained between Long Hill and Falmer Road, with Longhill School marking the northern end of development, and there is housing on and beyond Ovingdean Road to the north, so development within this Study Area would not expand the overall form of settlement in the area and would be considered infilling of a gap.
Settlement setting	Although the Study Area lies within what can be considered a settled area, the location is sensitive in terms of settlement separation. Rottingdean has expanded northward, and Ovingdean eastward, to the extent that there is little clear physical distinction between the two settlements, with the Study Area falling within the Civil Parish of Rottingdean but adjacent housing on Ovingdean Road and The Vale classified as part of Ovingdean. In addition there is only a small gap north along Falmer Road to Woodingdean. The wooded ridge of Long Hill marks a natural, historic distinction between Ovingdean and Rottingdean, so development that reduced the perception of a gap between Rottingdean and the Ovingdean Road houses to the north of the Study Area would have limited impact on the character of most of Ovingdean; however it would contribute to loss of separation between Rottingdean and Woodingdean. The potential development area, located on the lower, western side of the Study Area, can be considered less sensitive in this respect than land closer to Falmer Road.
SDNP setting	The location of the Study Area between existing developed areas reduces its sensitivity in relation to the SDNP, but it is noted that there is only a very narrow band of National Park land between the back of houses on Ovingdean Road and the edge of Woodingdean, about 150m at its narrowest point. The designated land that forms this gap is not a distinctive South Downs landscape but it has a role in providing continuity between the broader downland to the east and the Mount Pleasant area to the west, so any further loss of rural character in the vicinity could contribute to a sense of fragmentation of the National Park in this area.
Visual receptors	There are views down into the Study Area from Mount Pleasant, within the SDNP, but the potential development area is largely screened by trees on Long Hill. Terrain hides the Study Area in longer views from the public right of way between Bazehill Road and Balsdean Farm, where only the upper slopes of Long Hill are visible. The Study Area is exposed to passing traffic on Falmer Road and Ovingdean Road, but the potential development area, on lower ground and set against the backdrop of trees on Long Hill, is less exposed than the higher ground closer to Falmer Road.
Perceptual qualities	Falmer Road is a fairly busy route, so this combined with the presence of housing to the north and west limits any sense of isolation or tranquillity in the Study Area, but tree cover and views of downland to the east and north-west mean that it retains a wider rural setting.
Cultural & historic value	There are no known historical or cultural heritage values associated with the Study Area.

Representative Views – wider area



View 3: looking west from brideway between Bazehill Road and Balsdean Farm (in SDNP)



View 4: looking south-east from brideway on southern side of Mount Pleasant (in SDNP); potential development area is to west of dashed line (behind trees)

Potential Level of Landscape Effect

Development in this area would constitute an adverse landscape impact in terms of National Park and settlement settings. However, given the extent of existing neighbouring development the landscape impact of housing contained in the potential development area within the lower part of the Study Area, as indicated in the 2014 UFA, would potentially not be significant.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement Options

New landscaping – e.g. hedging with trees – on the edge of the potential development area would help to limit views from the adjacent roads, but reducing the openness of views from Falmer Road, in particular towards Mount Pleasant, would not be desirable. The creation of public facilities (suggested in the 2014 UFA) on the higher ground, more visible ground within the Study Area would need to be considered carefully, so as to avoid introducing further urbanising elements to the landscape.

Ecology Assessment

Ecological Baseline

Biological Records There are no nationally or internationally designated sites within or adjacent to the Study Area.

A small part of the Study Area sits within the **Ovingdean Road Horse Paddocks SNCI** which is designated as it supports red star thistle. This section is located across the Ovingdean Road to the north and is separated from the rest of the Study Area by the existing road.

Biological records identify calcareous grassland habitats as forming the northern part of the Study Area.

Records of protected and/or notable species identified within the Study Area included:

- Slow worm
- Red star thistle
- Hornet robberfly
- Small heath butterfly
- The leaf beetle *Cryptocephalus bilineatus*
- Harlequin ladybird
- White dapperling mushroom
- The mirid bug *Lygus pratensis*
- The beetle *Malthinus balteatus*
- The bee *Melitta tricincta*
- Roesel's bush cricket
- Corn parsley
- The leaf beetle *Podagrica fuscipes*
- The weevil *Protapion difforme*
- Cut-leaf self-heal
- Poppy root weevil
- The weevil *Trachyphloeus alternans*
- The beetle *Trichosirocalus rufulus*
- Cinnabar moth
- The hoverfly *Volucella inanis*
- Bloody cranesbill weevil
- Common lizard

Habitat Description (see Figure 19.1)

Semi-improved Calcareous Grassland

Horse paddocks in the north of the Study Area were comprised of closely grazed semi-improved grassland. Species included dominant perennial ryegrass and red fescue, abundant white clover, ribwort plantain and greater plantain. There was also frequent common nettle, yarrow, smaller cat's tail and creeping buttercup with occasional scarlet pimpernel and selfheal. Red star thistle was also found to be locally abundant within the potential development area and wider Study Area. These fields are identified as supporting calcareous grassland within biological records, however calcareous indicator species were not identified during the 2015 survey, possibly given the high level nature of the survey and the short grazed nature of the grassland which hindered species identification.

Improved Grassland

Improved grassland was present to the west, adjacent to The Vale. Species included dominant perennial ryegrass with abundant common bent, common daisy, frequent ribwort plantain and greater plantain. This was potentially used by adjacent residences for recreation.

Amenity Grassland

The sport pitches in the south, adjacent to The Vale and Falmer Road, comprised species poor, regularly managed amenity grassland. Species included perennial ryegrass, *Agrostis sp*, common daisy, ribwort plantain, red fescue and selfheal. A small area adjacent to the hedgerow in the north was left unmanaged.

Semi-natural Broadleaved Woodland

Semi-natural broadleaved woodland was noted in the west of the Study Area next to The Vale. Species noted included dominant semi-mature sycamore and abundant ash in the canopy layer; abundant hawthorn and elder in the shrub layer; and dominant nettle, abundant ivy and occasional hedge bindweed in the ground layer.

Hedgerows and Treelines

Hedgerows were noted along the boundary of the Study Area, and between the paddocks and sports pitches. Species included dominant sycamore with abundant hawthorn and bramble. There was also frequent ash and elder with occasional blackthorn and rowan.

A treeline was present in the west within the improved grassland. Species included dominant sycamore and abundant ash.

Fauna

Potential was noted for the following protected or notable species to be present within the Study Area:

- Nesting birds – woodland and hedgerows provided suitable habitat for nesting common garden and woodland birds.
- Badgers – foraging and sett building opportunities were particularly associated with the semi-natural broadleaved woodland with foraging opportunities through the Study Area, but with limited opportunities for sett building within the potential development area.
- Invertebrates – the grassland habitats present may provide ecological value for invertebrates. Biological records include the presence of the hornet robberfly, a Brighton and Hove LBAP priority species and Species of Principle Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act. This species is associated with grazed fields.
- Bats – the habitat mosaic may provide a valuable foraging resource for bats. The woodland did not appear to support mature trees that were suitable for bats to use as roosts.
- Reptiles – the site is not considered to be optimal for reptiles, with relatively few areas of longer grassland/ruderal habitat which could shelter such species. However slow worm and common

lizard have been recorded on the site previously.

Great crested newts are unlikely to be present within the Study Area due to the lack of waterbodies within 500m of the Study Area (as identified from OS base mapping; further investigation would be required). Dormice are also unlikely to be present within the Study Area given the isolation of the woodland and hedgerows from larger areas of suitable habitat.

Ecological Appraisal

Designated Sites

A small part of the study area is designated at the local level as Ovingdean Road Horse Paddocks SNCI. This area has been designated, due to the presence of red star thistle.

The potential development area is not situated within the SNCI. However, the SNCI could be impacted by contamination during construction, and recreational pressure as a result of the increased local residential population.

Habitats

The habitats recorded within the Study Area during the study comprised mostly common and widespread habitats, subject to disturbance as a result of horse grazing and recreational access. However, biological records identify the northern part of the site as calcareous grassland (recognised as a priority habitat in the The Brighton & Hove LBAP, and as a Habitat of Principal Importance under the NERC Act) given the presence of indicator species. Such species were not identified during the 2015 survey potentially given the high level nature of the survey and heavily grazed nature of the grassland.

Hedgerows are recognised as a priority habitat in the The Brighton & Hove LBAP, and as a Habitats of Principal Importance (NERC Act, 2006), although those present on Study Area were identified as species-poor and of relatively low value, and were also located outside the potential development area.

The habitats within the potential development area itself comprised of semi-improved grassland (as above identified as calcareous grassland within biological records), improved grassland, hedgerows and scattered trees.

Species

It is not possible to confirm the value of the Study Area for notable and protected species in the absence of detailed surveys, although there is potential for such species to be present throughout the majority of the Study Area, given the mosaic of grassland and woodland habitats of value to a wide range of species.

The potential development areas themselves are likely to be of relatively low value to the majority of notable and/or protected species. Key constraints include the presence of notable plant species, including red star thistle and hornet robberfly within the horse grazed paddocks, both priority species within the Brighton and Hove LBAP and species of principal importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act. Nesting birds may also be associated with hedgerows and trees. Reptiles may also be affected should habitat conditions become more favourable, whilst badger would be unlikely to be significantly affected if present given the low suitability of the potential development area for sett building.

Ecological Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement Options

Further surveys

Detailed development proposals must be informed by an updated Phase 1 Habitat Survey and species surveys to ensure that potential impacts are identified and appropriate mitigation developed. This would require in particular detailed National Vegetation classification surveys to allow classification and valuation of grassland habitats (given the identification of part of the potential development area as calcareous grassland within biological records) as well as detailed searches for notable plant species. Survey may also be required for reptiles should habitat conditions change.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement Options

Habitat loss within the potential development area would require mitigation, particularly given loss of grassland habitats which have been identified previously as calcareous grassland. Mitigation may include the retention and enhancement of sufficient areas of grassland to compensate for the areas lost. This would also require incorporation of measures to ensure retention of notable species, including red star thistle (see below) and hornet robberfly. This is likely to require the maintenance of grazing given the requirements of these species. The enhancement of habitats within the SNCI to the north of the site may also be required to increase robustness to any increase in recreational pressure, and potentially to compensate for habitat loss and impacts on species within the Study Area.

Other habitat enhancement measures may include strengthening the north-south hedgerow along the west of the study area to provide habitat for species and improve connectivity, although any planting must ensure impacts on open grassland, and particularly calcareous grassland, habitats are avoided.

During construction best construction practice will need to be assured, as detailed within a Construction and Environmental Management Plan or similar, to avoid contamination and disturbance impacts.

If notable or protected species are confirmed as present, mitigation requirements may include:

- If red star thistle plants are to be affected, suitable mitigation measures may include seed collection, translocation of plants and enhancement/management of retained habitats for this species.
- Enhancement of retained habitats to compensate for loss of invertebrate habitat.
- Measures to address impacts on reptiles, for example translocation or habitat manipulation.
- Timing of works to avoid impacts on nesting birds.
- Sensitive design of any external lighting to minimise lightspill to adjacent habitats.

Other mitigation or enhancement opportunities may include:

- Incorporation of green infrastructure within the development to provide opportunities for wildlife, such as green roofs or walls, wildlife-friendly planting (native species or those providing known benefits to wildlife, such as species of benefit for pollinators), and incorporation of nesting/roosting opportunities for birds and bats.

Conclusion

Overall Conclusion

In conclusion, it is considered that although it would be challenging to avoid significant landscape and ecological impacts at the potential development area within Study Area L16/E13, housing could be delivered with reduced impacts assuming careful design and that robust mitigation measures are developed and implemented. This may include:

- Carefully located screening planting is provided, which does not itself impact on the openness of views from Falmer Road, in particular towards Mount Pleasant, or on the ecological value of any notable grassland habitats.
- Detailed ecological surveys are undertaken including to confirm grassland habitat types present and their value.
- Measures will need to be implemented to minimise loss of higher value areas of grassland habitat, including areas identified as calcareous grassland by the above surveys, whilst ensuring sufficient areas remain in the wider Study Area which can be enhanced as compensation for areas lost.
- This would also need to include implementation of measures to ensure retention of notable species, such as red star thistle and hornet robberfly, within the remainder of the Study Area.
- Incorporation of robust mitigation measures to address any impacts on protected species.
- Incorporation of opportunities for wildlife and green infrastructure with the development itself.

Figure 19.1: Phase 1 Habitat Survey Map - Study Area L16/E13



- Urban Fringe Site
- Potential Development Area (UFA 2014)
- Target note
- Intact hedge - species-poor
- Broadleaved woodland - semi-natural
- SI SI Neutral grassland - semi-improved
- I I I Improved grassland
- A A Cultivated/disturbed land - amenity grassland
- Hedge with trees - native species-rich
- Hard standing

Map Scale @ A3: 1:1,700



20 L17 (Site 43) – Ovingdean: Landscape Assessment Only

Background

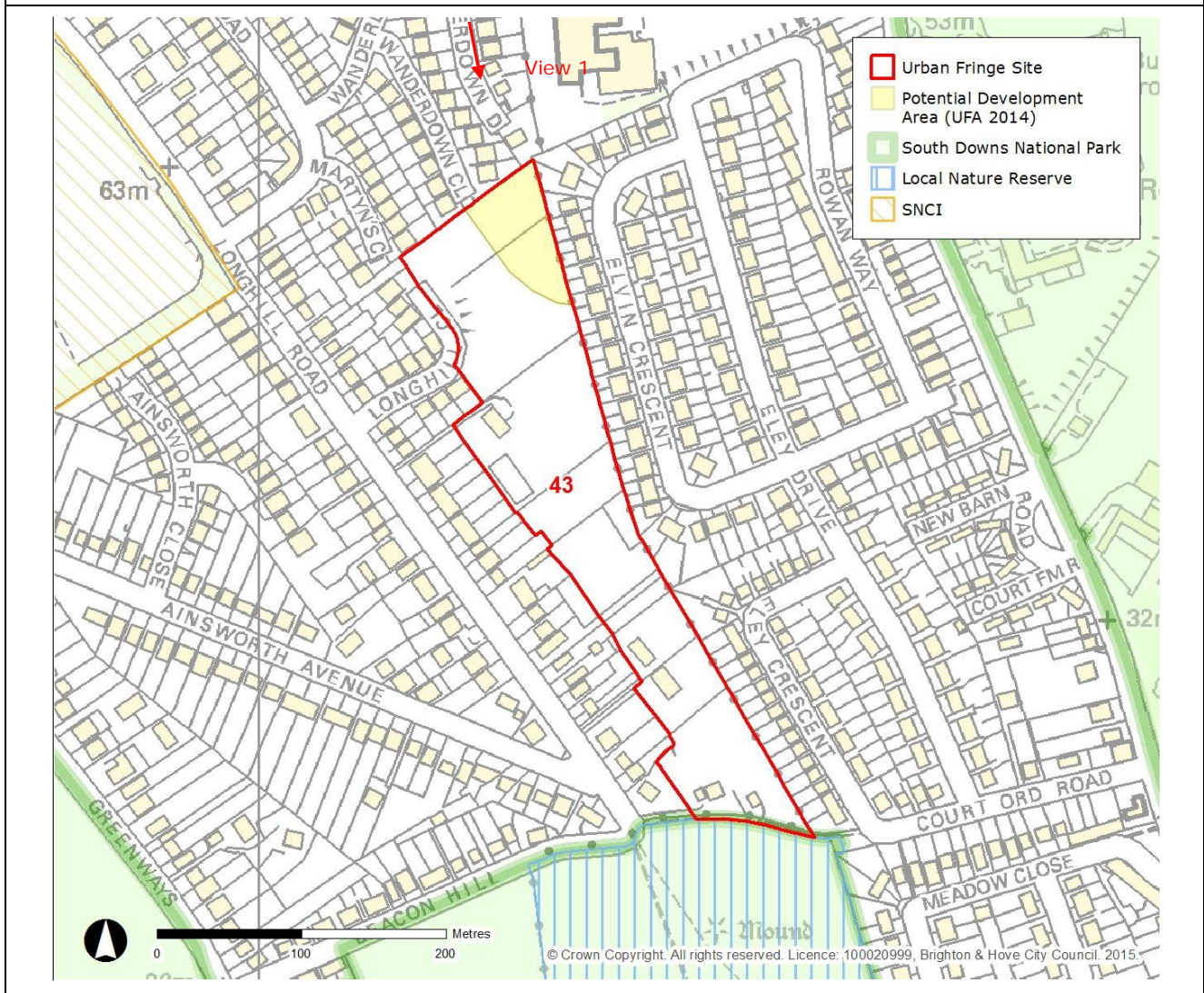
Study Area	L17	Location	Ovingdean
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Site	43 – Land to rear of Longhill Road, Ovingdean
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Study Area Overview

A linear area of land occupying the upper eastern slopes of Long Hill. Almost entirely contained by existing residential development and largely tree covered, with a wider block of woodland at the northern end and a narrower belt further south. There are a number of dwellings, accessed from Longhill Road, and garden structures in the strip of land to the west of the trees.

The area suggested in the 2014 UFA as having potential for housing development was a small area in the north-eastern corner of the Study Area, continuing south from Wanderdown Close.



Representative Views - local



View 1: looking south along Wanderdown Drive towards the potential development area at the northern end of the Site

Overall Conclusions of the 2014 Assessment

“Much of the site is steeply sloped and heavily wooded. Access to the site is very difficult in parts. However, there is potential for a few houses in the northern tip of the site through the extension of Wanderdown Close southwards. Although the land is sloping, the slope within the site’s northern tip is of a similar gradient to that in Wanderdown Close. The trees higher up the slope should be preserved to retain a wooded backdrop.

The extension would likely result in some significant tree loss, the ecological effects of which would have to be mitigated within the surrounding woodland.

The northern half of the site is recognised as natural/semi-natural greenspace; however the land is privately owned and inaccessible.

Creating access may result in the loss of an existing property on the road to the north of the site.

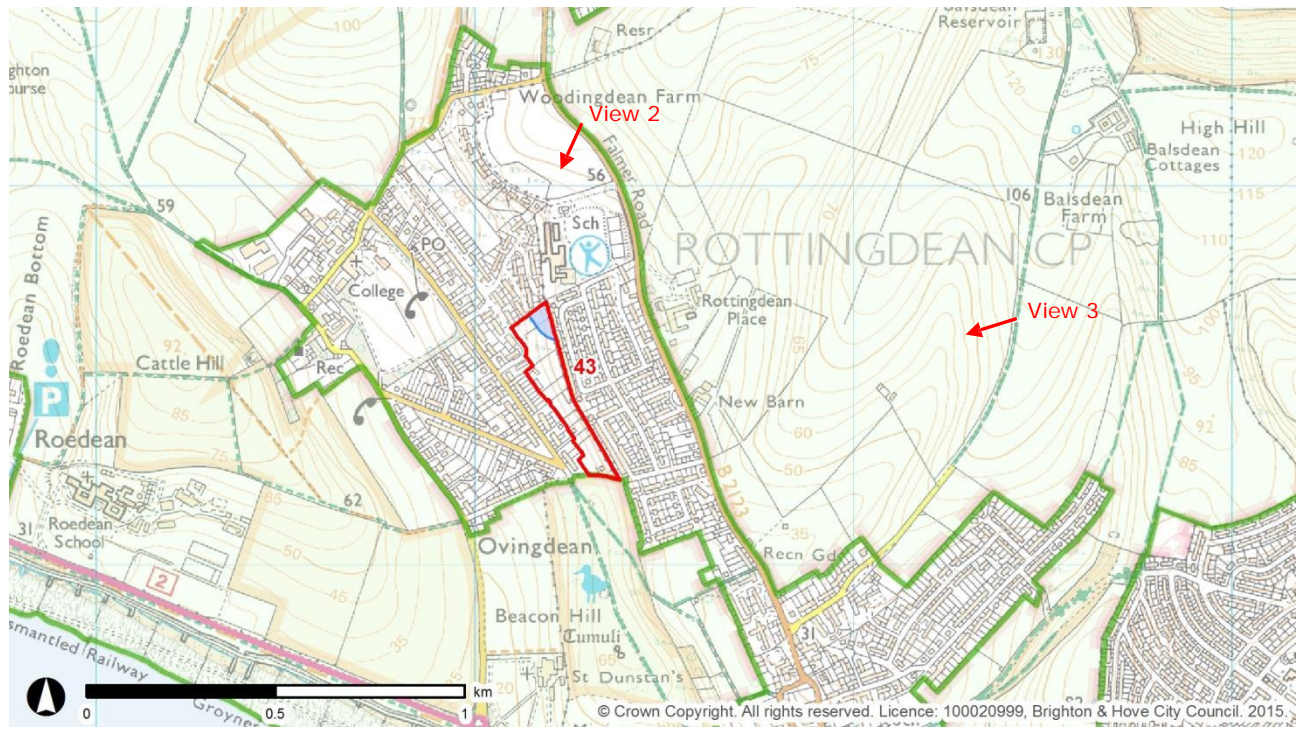
Finally, there is a risk of groundwater flooding, although this could be managed through sustainable urban drainage systems.”

Overall Site Area	3.4ha	Area with development potential	0.25ha	Suitable dwelling density	Low: 25 per ha	Potential number of dwellings	6
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Landscape Assessment

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment	
Physical character	The elevated location and wooded nature of most of the Study Area make this a sensitive location for housing.
Settlement form	A strip of land which is almost entirely surrounded by residential development, including some within the Study Area, but the hilltop location nonetheless makes it sensitive. The Wanderdown development to the north has almost broken through the tree line to join Ovingdean and Rottingdean, and whilst in some ways this decreases the visual impact of further such development it can also be seen to make what remains of the gap a scarcer resource.
Settlement setting	The wooded Long Hill ridge contributes a backdrop to the settings of both Ovingdean and Rottingdean, but the potential development area lies some way below the top of the tree line and so would only have an impact on views from the east.
SDNP setting	Ovingdean together with the modern, northern part of Rottingdean are surrounded by the SDNP, other than a narrow strip of development along one side of Falmer Road that links to the centre of Rottingdean. The nature of the boundary between the SDNP and this and other settlements on the east side of Brighton means that it is usual for views to include urban elements, typically focused on coombes, but settlement on higher ground can appear more incongruous. The vegetation on Long Hill is distinct from that within the surrounding SDNP, but it is still widely visible and contributes to the rural character of the area, although this is to a degree compromised by the Wanderdown development.
Visual receptors	Principal SDNP views are from the public right of way between Baze Hill Road, Rottingdean, and Balsdean Farm on the western side of High Hill. Existing adjacent development is evident but there is still an impression of Long Hill as a largely undeveloped wooded ridge. Housing with skyline impact would have the most evident effect on views, but the potential development area is far enough down the slope for this so be avoided, both from the SDNP and locally from Falmer Road, as long as trees to the west are retained.
Perceptual qualities	The proximity of existing development limits any sense of the Study Area being outside of the settlement. The degree of enclosure and elevation still give it a degree of separation from housing, but this is less marked on the fringes of the area.
Cultural & historic value	There are no known historic or cultural associations with this Study Area.

Representative Views – wider area



View 2: looking south from Falmer Road, over buildings of Longhill High School



View 3: looking west from brideway between Baze Hill Road and Balsdean Farm (in SDNP)

Potential Level of Landscape Effect

Development on Wanderdown Way, Wanderdown Drive and Wanderdown Close has had a marked impact on the character of Long Hill and its role as part of the setting for Rottingdean, Ovingdean and the SDNP. Development as indicated in the 2014 UFA would represent further encroachment on the wooded ridge but is not of a scale that would represent a step change in effects on landscape above that which has already occurred.

The potential yield of 6 dwellings may be difficult to achieve within the indicated area given the likely need for an extension of Wanderdown Close to provide access.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement Options

The preservation of some of the trees near the eastern edge of the potential development area would help to retain woodland character.

Any development higher up the slope that resulted in skyline impact on views, especially views from the SDNP or from the west side of Long Hill, would be likely to constitute a significant adverse landscape impact. Development further south along the ridge would result in a progressive increase in adverse impact.

Conclusion

Overall Conclusion

In conclusion, it is considered that housing can be delivered across the potential development area within Study Area L17 without significant impacts on landscape and ecology, on the assumption that:

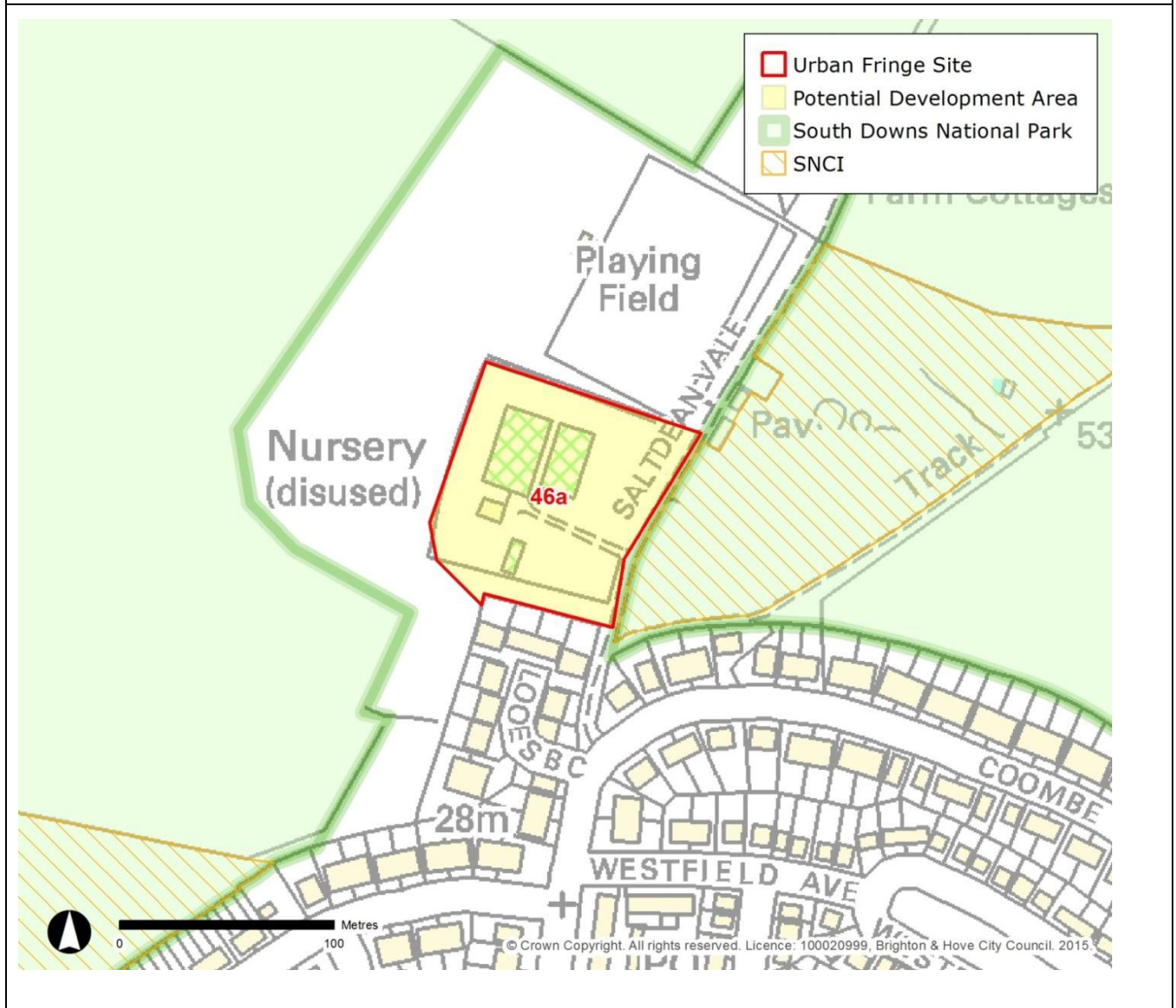
- Additional development avoids skyline impact
- Some trees on the eastern edge of the potential development area are retained to soften the massing of new houses.

The suggested potential yield may need to be reduced given the need to accommodate an access road.

21 E14 (Site 46a) – Saltdean Vale: Ecology Assessment Only

Background

Study Area	E14	Location	Former Nursery West of Saltdean Vale
Site	46a – Land at former nursery site, west of Saltdean vale, Saltdean		
Study Area Overview			
<p>The Study Area lies to the north-west of the District of Saltdean. The Study Area is currently used as a caravan storage facility, although it was previously a garden nursery.</p> <p>The potential development area suggested in 2014 comprised the Study Area in its entirety.</p>			



Overall Conclusions of the 2014 Assessment							
<p><i>“Apart from a high risk of surface water flooding on the Study Area, there are no significant ecological, heritage, or landscape constraints to residential development. In addition, there are no recognised open spaces within the Study Area that would be lost if it were developed for housing. On the assumption that appropriate sustainable urban drainage systems will be incorporated in to the development, residential development is deemed appropriate on the entire Study Area.</i></p> <p><i>Retention of the vegetated boundaries of the field would help to soften views from the SDNP”.</i></p>							
Overall Study Area Area	0.75ha	Area with development potential	0.75ha	Suitable dwelling density	Low: 25 per ha.	Potential number of dwellings	18

Ecological Assessment

Ecological Baseline
<p>Biological Records</p> <p>There are no designations or records of protected and notable species from within the Study Area.</p> <p>Looes Barn Woodland SNCI, designated for it’s importance to local birds and for the presence of a specially protected species is located some 100m to the south-east of the Study Area.</p> <p>Wivelsfield Road grassland is also located some 160m to the south-west of the Study Area, designated for the presence of species rich calcareous grassland.</p>
<p>Habitat Description (see Figure 21.1)</p> <p><i>Dense Scrub</i></p> <p>The majority of the Study Area comprised dense scrub dominated by bramble, with locally dominant hawthorn, frequent to occasional elder and locally frequent bindweed. Two large derelict greenhouses within the central part of the Study Area had also been overgrown with scrub.</p> <p><i>Amenity Grassland</i></p> <p>Regularly mown amenity grassland was noted in the east of the Study Area and was dominated by perennial rye-grass with abundant yarrow, white clover and ground ivy.</p> <p><i>Buildings and Bare Ground</i></p> <p>Bare ground was noted in the form of an access track in the south-east of the Study Area. Two derelict greenhouses were noted in the centre of the Study Area, however these were overgrown with scrub at the time of survey. A small pre-fab cottage with a tiled roof was also noted south of the greenhouses.</p> <p><i>Tall Ruderal</i></p> <p>Tall ruderal vegetation was noted in the south and east of the Study Area. In the east, it was dominated by common nettle and bramble with frequent field bindweed. In the south it was dominated by common ragwort with abundant false oat-grass and cow parsley. Bramble and common nettle were frequent, with common agrimony, spreading hedge parsley and hogweed occasional. Common knapweed, common vetch, teasel and hawthorn were also present but rare.</p> <p><i>Hedge with trees</i></p> <p>An outgrown Leyland cypress hedge was noted forming the southern Study Area boundary. At the base of the hedge, tall ruderal vegetation including common nettle, mugwort, marsh mallow, burdock and bindweed was noted.</p>

Fauna

Potential was noted for the following protected or notable species to be present within the Study Area:

- Nesting birds – associated with scrub and hedgerows within the Study Area.
- Reptiles – associated with areas of ruderal vegetation in the east and south of the Study Area.
- Badger – the entire Study Area is suitable for foraging badger, while the dense scrub may provide sheltered opportunities for sett building (although no signs of badger were found at the time of survey).
- Bats – the cottage may provide roosting opportunities for bats, however given the pre-fab construction of the building temperature regimes are likely to fluctuate highly and therefore the risk that bats may be present is considered low.

Great crested newts are unlikely to be present given the absence of suitable waterbodies in the vicinity (as identified from OS base mapping, further investigation would be required). Similarly Dormice are unlikely to be present within the Study Area given the lack of suitable habitat within the Study Area.

Ecological Appraisal

Designated Sites	There are no statutory or non-statutory designated sites within the Study Area boundary. Looes Barn Woodland SNCI, designated for its importance to local birds and for the presence of a specially protected species is located some 100m to the south-east of the Study Area. Wivelsfield Road grassland is also located some 160m to the south-west of the Study Area, designated for the presence of species rich calcareous grassland. Potential impacts on these sites could include increase in recreation pressure from an increase in local population or contamination effects during construction.
Habitats	The Study Area supports largely scrub and tall ruderal habitats which are common and widespread habitats of relatively low ecological value.
Species	Without detailed ecological surveys, it is not possible to confirm the value of the Study Area for notable and protected species. However the Study Area does have the potential to support nesting birds and badger which could be affected by any removal of scrub or hedgerows, and reptiles which could be affected by removal of tall ruderal vegetation. There is also the potential for the cottage to support bat roosts, although this risk is considered extremely low (further survey would be required to rule this out).

Ecological Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement Options

Further surveys

Detailed development proposals must be informed by an updated Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and species surveys to ensure that potential impacts are identified and appropriate mitigation developed. This would likely include (but not necessarily be restricted to) reptile, badger and bat surveys.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement Options

Given the low ecological value of the potential development area, minimal mitigation would be required. Enhancement opportunities would include the incorporation of green infrastructure within the development to provide opportunities for wildlife, such as green roofs or walls, and wildlife-friendly planting (native species or those providing known benefits to wildlife, such as species of benefit for pollinators).

If notable or protected species are confirmed as present, mitigation requirements may include:

- Timing of works to avoid impacts on nesting birds
- Measures to prevent harm to reptiles, such as translocation from the potential development area to a receptor Study Area which has been suitably enhanced to support the translocated population

- Sensitive design of any external lighting to minimise lightspill to adjacent habitats
- Measures to prevent harm to bats and badger, such as sensitive timing of works and carrying out works under a Natural England Licence, and provision of replacement roosting features for bats.

Conclusion

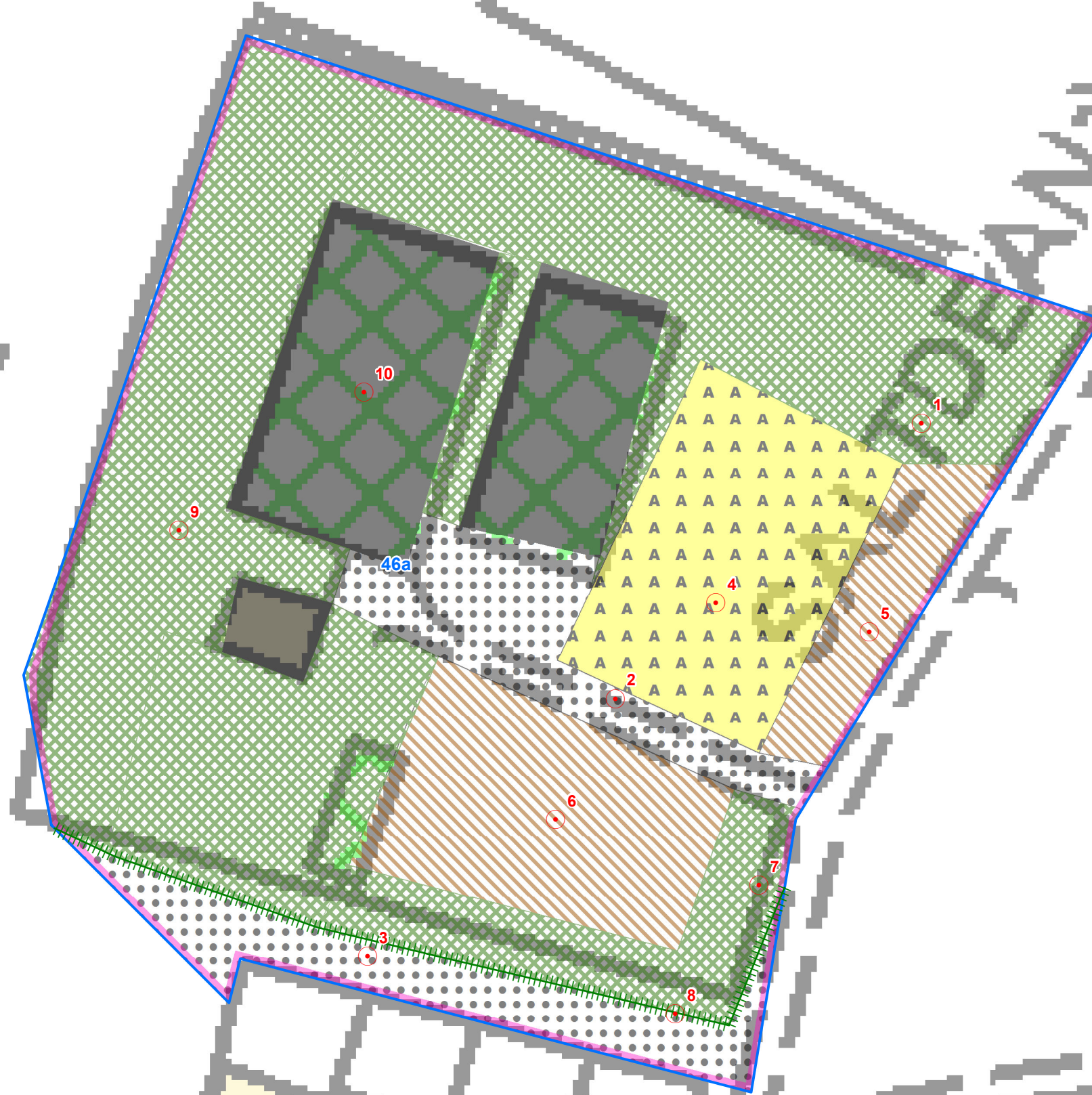
Overall Conclusions

In conclusion, it is considered that housing can be delivered within Study Area E14 without significant impacts on ecology, and may deliver ecological enhancement assuming:

- Incorporation of robust mitigation measures to address any impacts on protected species.
- Incorporation of wildlife habitats and green infrastructure.

Figure 21.1 Phase 1 Habitat Survey Map Study Area E14

-  Urban Fringe Site
-  Potential Development Area
-  Target note
-  Hedge with trees - species-poor
-  Scrub - dense/continuous
-  Other tall herb and fern - ruderal
-  Cultivated/disturbed land - amenity grassland
-  Buildings
-  Bare ground



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sed)



Map Scale @ A3: 1:600



22 L18/E15 (Site 48, 48a, 48b and 48c) – Saltdean: Landscape and Ecology Assessment

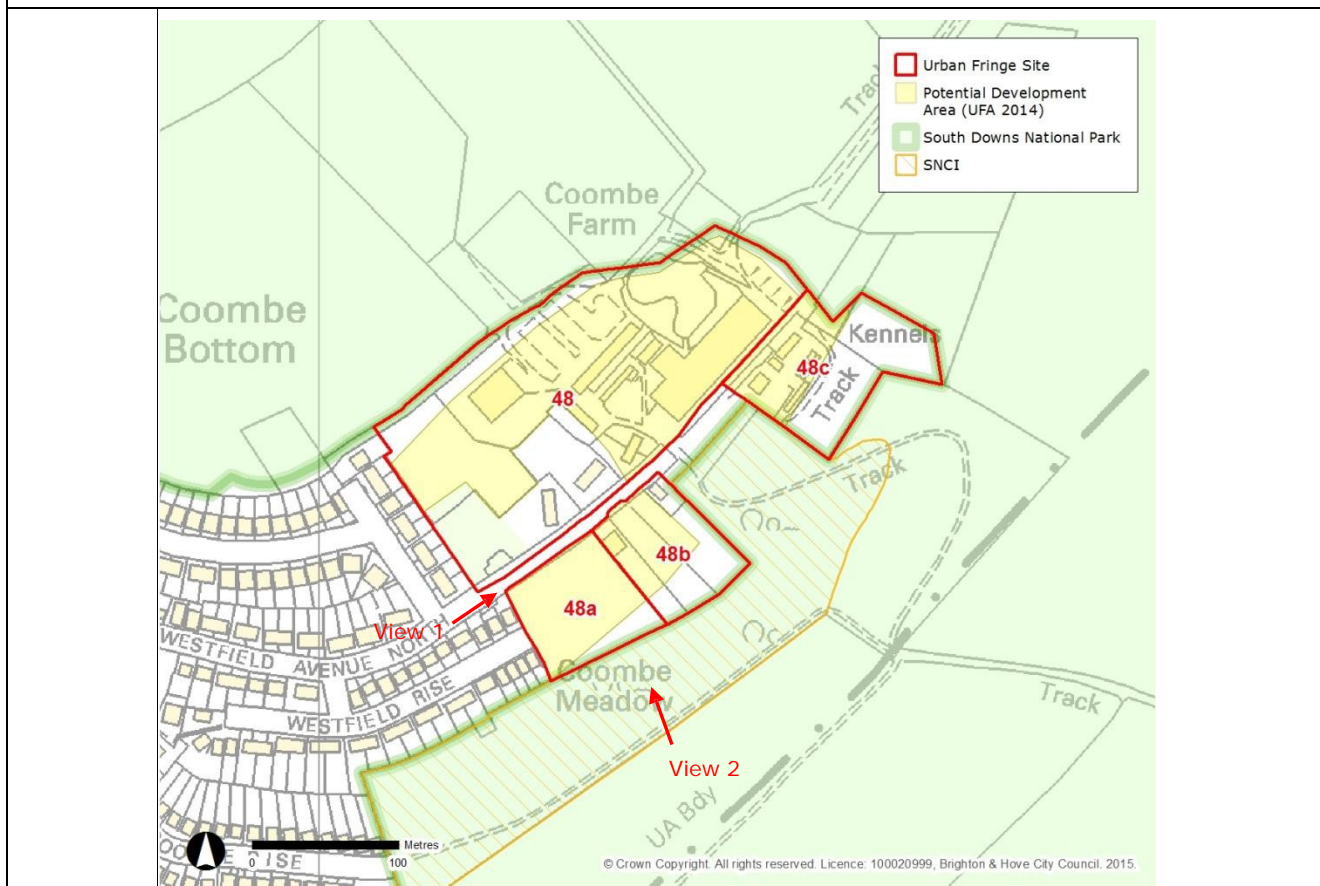
Background

Study Area	L18/E15	Location	Saltdean
Sites	48 – Land at Coombe Farm, Western Avenue, Saltdean		
	48a – Land north of Westfield Rise, Saltdean		
	48b – Land at Westfield Avenue North, Saltdean		
	48c – Land at Saltdean Boarding Kennels		

Study Area Overview

A mixture of commercial uses together with a few residential properties on and around a former farm complex located in Coombe Bottom at the northern end of Saltdean, bounded on three sides by the SDNP but adjacent to residential development to the south (Coombe Vale and Westfield Avenue North).

The 2014 UFA identifies most of the Study Area as having potential for housing development, avoiding only the more elevated fringes of the area and an area already occupied by dwellings and a woodland block.



Representative Views - local



View 1: looking north-west from the Study Area edge on Westfield Avenue North (the sloping field to the right is Site 48a)



View 2: looking north-east down over the Study Area from public bridleway on Tenant Hill (SDNP)

Overall Conclusions of the 2014 Assessment

Site 48: "Apart from a high risk of surface water flooding on the site, there are no significant ecological, heritage, open space or landscape constraints to residential development. The whole site is potentially developable apart from the wooded area and two dwellings with gardens in the south east corner and the north west edge, where the land rises and buildings would start to dominate the surrounding landscape. On the assumption that appropriate sustainable urban drainage systems will be incorporated in any development, low density residential development is considered appropriate on the site."

Site 48a: "There are no significant ecological, heritage, open space or other environmental constraints to residential development. Therefore, low density residential development is deemed appropriate on the site. The medium density residential development along Coombe Meadow could be continued north. Continuing on the same alignment as the existing houses would mean an increase in elevation, which would make the houses more visible in the wider landscape, so significant adverse landscape effects could be avoided by bending the road so that new buildings aligned with the house to the north (Jesmond). The slopes above could be managed to blend with the scrub higher up the hill."

Site 48b: "There are no significant ecological, heritage, open space, landscape or other environmental constraints to residential development. Therefore, low density residential development is deemed appropriate on the site. Any new built development should maintain the existing building line and not go

higher up the slope.”

Site 48c: “There are no significant ecological, heritage, open space or other environmental constraints to residential development. Therefore, low density residential development is deemed appropriate on the site.

There is potential for enhancement through sensitive development on the lower, western half of the site, but if site 48 were also developed then there would potentially be mitigation gains from minimising new building on this site and improving the interface with the SDNP.”

All Sites: “Taken as a whole, sites 48, 48a, 48b and 48c represent a cluster of sites all of which have potential for development. However, in order to develop dwellings in some sites, mitigation and enhancement measures are required in others. If all the sites were developed there would be a significant net loss of trees, and greenspace with significant adverse ecological effects.

Therefore, the number of dwellings that could be developed across the cluster has been limited to 75% of the sum total of all the developable sites so that the necessary mitigation and enhancement measures required to develop dwellings within this area of the urban fringe can be accommodated. This limited total provides a more accurate estimate of the total capacity of this area of the urban fringe.”

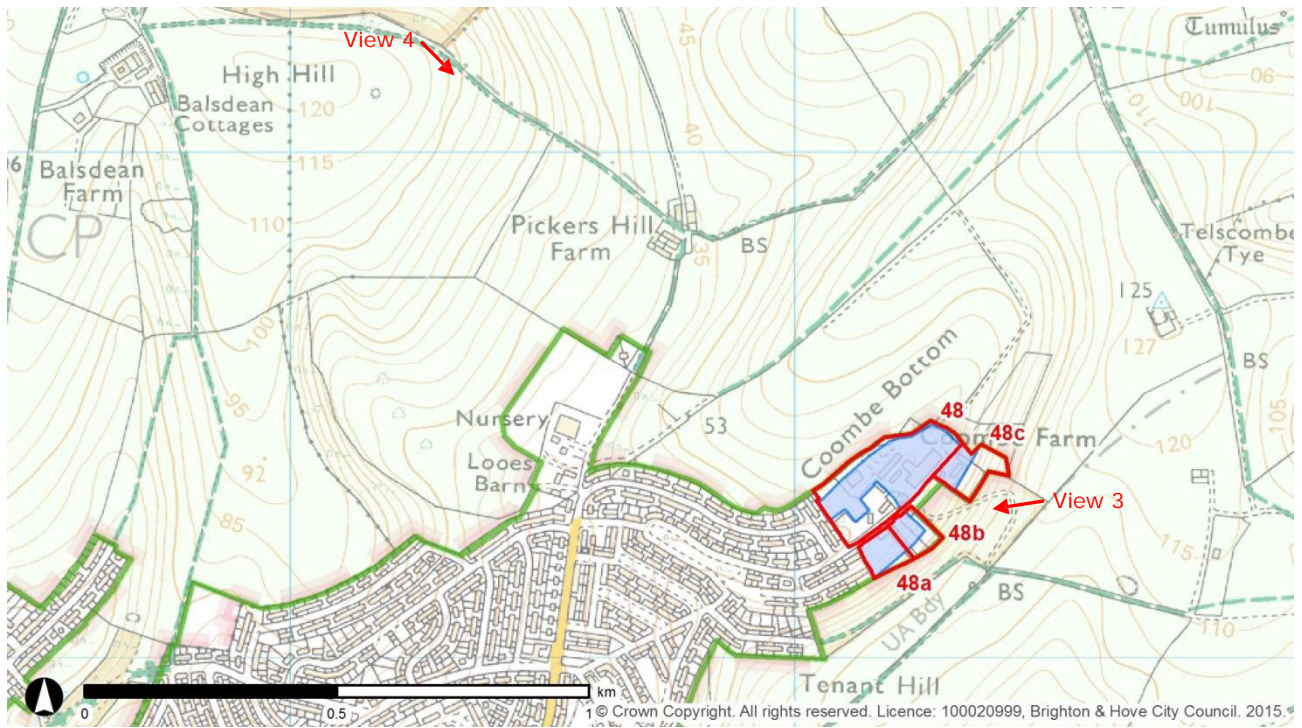
Overall Site Area	5.2ha	Area with development potential	2.1ha	Suitable dwelling density	Low: 25 per ha (Sites 48, 48b, 48c – 4.9ha) Medium: 50 per ha (Site 48a – 0.3ha)	Potential number of dwellings	55
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Landscape Assessment

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment	
Physical character	The Study Area is contained within a steep sided (especially to the east) but fairly flat-bottomed coombe. Coombes are a characteristic location for development in and around Brighton, and much of Saltdean to the south lies within the wider bottom and slopes of the same landform. Sites 48a, 48b and 48c are on the side rather than the floor of the coombe, but the identified potential development areas are still comparable in elevation and position with existing development to the south, on Westfield Rise. There are no landscape sensitivities associated with the assortment of modern buildings and uses that make up Coombe Farm.
Settlement form	The settlement form of Saltdean, as with its neighbour Rottingdean, reflects development extending out along coombes from core areas close to the coast. Three roads – Coombe Vale, Westfield Avenue North and Westfield Rise, take residential development up to the edge of the Study Area, so replacement of farm buildings with housing would have little impact on settlement form.
Settlement setting	Open, farmed downland slopes and ridgelines are important in the setting of Saltdean, but development which remains below the skyline would not be expected to have much impact on this relationship. On Tenant Hill to the south-east a belt of scrub vegetation marks the boundary between the settlement and open downland; the potential development areas lie on the settlement side of this feature.
SDNP setting	The National Park boundary is drawn tightly around Saltdean, and to the north of Coombe Bottom lies an extensive area of classic, undulating, open chalk downland hills and coombes. Existing development and the proposed development areas in the coombe are screened by topography from long range views, and where the Study Area does form part of the SDNP's setting it is seen in the context of

	existing adjacent development and the more visually intrusive development on higher ground on the north-western side of Saltdean.
Visual receptors	There are public rights of way and an open access area on Tenant Hill (to the south-east – View 4) with clear views down into the Study Area, but potentially more sensitive are the views from bridleways on the southern side of Highdole Hill (to the north), and on the eastern side of High Hill (to the west – View 4), in which the existing buildings at Coombe Bottom are screened from view.
Perceptual qualities	Whilst its immediate context is developed, the Study Area has a rural backdrop to three sides, and its cul de sac location means that it has no through traffic.
Cultural & historic value	There are no known cultural or historic associations with the Study Area. The Coombe Farm buildings all date to the second half of the 20 th century.

Representative Views – wider area



View 3: looking west from open access area on Tenant Hill (in SDNP)



View 4: looking south-east from bridleway on High Hill (in SDNP)

Potential Level of Landscape Effect

Development within the constraints indicated in the 2014 UFA would be in keeping with the pattern of existing development in Saltdean and would not introduce significant additional visibility of residential development where none currently exists. There are therefore unlikely to be significant adverse landscape effects.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement Options

The appearance of new buildings above the lip of Coombe Bottom in SDNP views from the north and east would, where they might appear isolated from the existing development, would be a greater adverse impact so, as suggested in the 2014 conclusions, new development on the coombe-side sites (48a, 48b and 48c) should not be located on higher ground than existing houses.

Ecology Assessment

Ecological Baseline

Biological Records

There are no national or international designations located within or adjacent to the Study Area.

The **Coombe Farm SNCI** is located adjacent to site 48a and between sites 48b and 48c, including calcareous grassland habitats.

Protected and/or notable species records located within the Study Area included:

- Silver spotted skipper
- Wall brown
- Large-leaved lime

Habitat Description (see Figure 22.1)

Semi-improved Neutral Grassland

Land south of Westfield Avenue North (Site 48a) was recorded as semi-improved neutral grassland. Species included dominant perennial rye grass with abundant red fescue, ribwort plantain, selfheal, red clover and rough hawkbit. There was also occasional meadow buttercup, bird's foot trefoil and rare heath bedstraw.

Semi-improved neutral grassland was noted at Saltdean Kennels to the east (Site 48c). Species present included dominant red fescue with abundant cock's-foot, common knapweed, bird's foot trefoil and hawkbit. There was also frequent creeping thistle, field scabious, common ragwort and common nettle and occasional red clover, smaller cat's-tail, ragged robin and selfheal.

Poor Semi-improved Grassland

Poor semi-improved grassland was recorded in the horse paddock to the west of Coombe Farm (Site 48). Species included dominant perennial rye grass with abundant cock's foot, ribwort plantain, greater plantain, white clover, and common daisy. The paddock was partially grazed, resulting in a short sward height to the north and a relatively long sward height in the south.

Poor semi-improved neutral grassland was also noted in the south at Saltdean Kennels (Site 48c). The horse paddock was heavily grazed with areas of bare ground. Species included abundant yarrow and dock. There were also occasional red clover, ox-eye daisy, common ragwort and common nettle.

Semi-natural Broadleaved Woodland

Semi-natural broadleaved woodland was present in the south-west (Site 48). The woodland comprised of semi-mature sycamore, ash, elm and elder. The ground flora supported dominant ivy and occasional

wood-avens.

Scrub

A small area situated between buildings of Coombe Farm (Site 48) comprised of scattered scrub. Species recorded included dominant brambles. Scattered scrub was also recorded in the north-east and included dominant bramble.

Dense scrub was recorded in a large portion of Site 48b at Westfield Avenue North was also noted. Species included dominant abundant hawthorn and bramble. Access was restricted by the density of the scrub.

Dense scrub was also recorded to north of Saltdean Kennels (Site 48c). Species noted included dominant elder and abundant bramble. Scattered scrub was present in the east of Saltdean Kennels (Site 48c). Species included frequent bramble, elder and hawthorn.

Tall Ruderal

Tall ruderal vegetation was present in several areas along the margins of the farm track within Coombe Farm. Tall ruderal vegetation recorded in the north-west (Site 48) adjacent to the horse paddock. Species included dominant common nettle, abundant bristly ox-tongue, ribwort plantain and white clover with occasional teasel and common ragwort. A small area between the buildings in the centre (Site 48) comprised of tall ruderal vegetation. Species noted included abundant bristly ox-tongue and common mallow. Tall ruderal vegetation was also noted in the north-east (Site 48). Species included dominant fat hen, abundant bristly ox-tongue, false-oat grass, common nettle and occasional brome *sp.*

Tall ruderal vegetation was recorded in the horse paddocks to the east of the Saltdean Kennels (Site 48c). Species included abundant common ragwort and common nettle with occasional creeping thistle.

Hedges and Treelines

Hedgerows were noted along the roadside adjacent to the Coombe Farm and surrounding private dwellings (Site 48). The hedgerows largely consisted of broadleaved ornamental garden species and conifer species.

Buildings

There were a number of buildings situated within the Study Area, including farm buildings used as stables for a riding school, some for storage purposes (caravans and mobile homes) and a vehicle repair workshop (Site 48), private dwellings (Site 48b) and private housing and kennels at Saltdean Kennels (Site 48c).

Other Habitats

A pond was noted within the woodland in the south-west (Site 48). Due to access constraints during the survey, the pond could not be observed.

Fauna

Potential was noted for the following protected or notable species to be present within the Study Area:

- Nesting birds – a mixture of scattered and dense scrub provides potentially suitable habitat for nesting birds.
- Reptiles – rough grassland with scattered scrub and edge habitats could provide suitable habitat for reptiles.
- Badgers – potential foraging habitat provided throughout the Study Area, with woodland and dense scrub providing optimal opportunities for sett building. The Study Area is well connected to the South Downs, which is known to have optimal foraging and sett building resources.

- Invertebrates – the grassland habitats in the west and south of the Study Area has potential valuable habitat for invertebrates.
- Bats – the habitat mosaic may provide a valuable foraging resource for bats, whilst mature trees may provide opportunities for bats to roost.
- Great crested newts – the presence of woodland and scrub habitat within 500m of a pond provides suitable terrestrial and breeding habitats.

Dormice are unlikely to be present within the Study Area given the isolation of the woodland and hedgerows from larger areas of suitable habitat.

Ecological Appraisal

<p>Designated Sites</p>	<p>There are no nationally or internationally designated sites within the Study Area.</p> <p>The Coombe Farm SNCI is adjacent to site 48a and between sites 48b and 48c. This could be impacted indirectly by development, for example through contamination or increased recreational pressure.</p>
<p>Habitats</p>	<p>The Study Area supported mostly common and widespread habitats, subject to disturbance as a result of horse grazing, private gardens and commercial businesses. These were mostly of relatively low value in their own right, although the habitat mosaic across the Study Area is likely to be of some value at the local level for wildlife.</p> <p>The habitats within the potential development area itself comprised of semi-improved grassland, species-poor semi-improved grassland, scrub, tall ruderal vegetation and hedgerows. Areas of these habitats are also located in the Study Area which would not be directly affected .</p>
<p>Species</p>	<p>It is not possible to confirm the value of the Study Area for notable and protected species in the absence of detailed surveys, although there is potential for such species to be present throughout the majority of the Study Area, given the mosaic of grassland and scrub habitats of value to a wide range of species.</p> <p>The potential development areas themselves are likely to be of relatively low value to the majority of notable and/or protected species. Key constraints include the presence of nesting birds within the hedgerow and scrub, reptiles in the rough grassland and scrub, bats within buildings and invertebrates. Badgers are also likely to use the site for foraging and may have established setts within scrub/woodland/hedgerows; whilst GCN could breed within the woodland pond and utilise terrestrial habitats for foraging and shelter.</p>

Ecological Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement Options

Further surveys

Detailed development proposals must be informed by an updated Phase 1 Habitat Survey and species surveys to ensure that potential impacts are identified and appropriate mitigation developed. This may require in particular detailed searches for notable plant species, and surveys for birds, reptiles, bats and (subject to a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and development proposals).

Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement Options

Given the low ecological value of the potential development area, there is the opportunity for development to deliver ecological enhancement within the study area. Incorporation of green infrastructure within the development would aim to provide opportunities for wildlife, such as wildlife-friendly planting (native species or those providing known benefits to wildlife, such as species of benefit for pollinators), and incorporation of nesting/roosting opportunities for birds and bats.

During construction best construction practice will need to be assured, as detailed within a Construction and Environmental Management Plan or similar, to avoid contamination and disturbance impacts, particularly of the adjacent Coombe Farm SNCI and retained woodland habitats. Measures may also need to be implemented to reduce the potential for impacts on the SNCI as a result of increased recreational

pressure, such as habitat enhancements within the SNCI to increase robustness or measures to restrict access.

If notable or protected species are confirmed as present, mitigation requirements may include:

- Timing of works to avoid impacts on nesting birds
- Measures to prevent harm to reptiles, such as translocation from the potential development area to a receptor site which has been suitably enhanced to support the translocated population (ideally within the Study Area or near vicinity). Similar may be required for GCN.
- If bat roosts are found and cannot be retained a suitable suite of suitable mitigation measures including potentially provision of replacement roosts and proceeding with works under a NE licence
- Measures to prevent impacts on badger including sensitive timing of works in the vicinity of setts (and potentially under NE licence) and best practice construction measures
- Enhancement of habitat outside the potential development area to provide additional opportunities for species impacted by the proposals, such as invertebrates
- Sensitive design of any external lighting to minimise lightspill to adjacent habitats

Other mitigation or enhancement opportunities may include:

- Incorporation of green infrastructure within the development to provide opportunities for wildlife, such as green roofs or walls, wildlife-friendly planting (native species or those providing known benefits to wildlife, such as species of benefit for pollinators), and incorporation of nesting/roosting opportunities for birds and bats.

Conclusion



















Overall Conclusion

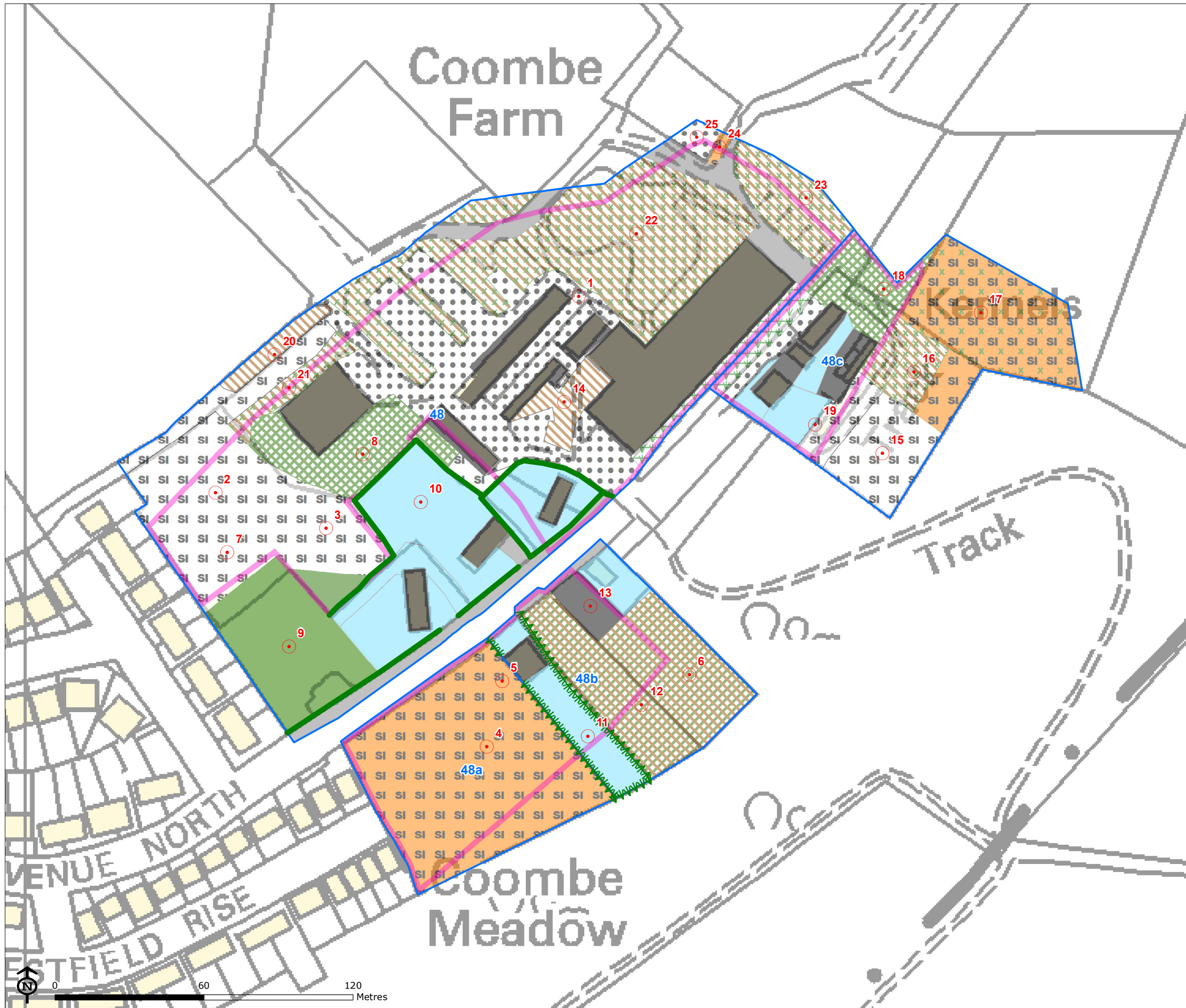
In conclusion, it is considered that housing can be delivered at certain parts of the potential development areas within Study Area L18/E15 without significant impacts on landscape and ecology, on the assumption that

- New development is sensitively located, to avoid upper slopes of Sites 48a, 48b and 48c.
- Avoidance of impacts on retained habitats within the Study Area and the adjacent SNCI including implementation of best construction practice and measures to address potential increases in recreational pressure.
- Implementation of mitigation measures to address potential impacts on protected species.

Given the existing nature of the study area, it may be possible to enhance the site for ecology through the incorporation of green infrastructure and wildlife habitat within proposals.

**Figure 22.1 Phase 1 Habitat Survey Map
Study Area L18/E15**

-  Urban Fringe Site
-  Potential Development Area
-  Target note
-  Intact hedge - species-poor
-  Hedge with trees - native species-rich
-  Broadleaved woodland - semi-natural
-  Scrub - dense/continuous
-  Dense scrub with tall ruderal
-  Neutral grassland - semi-improved with scattered scrub
-  Tall ruderal with scattered scrub
-  Neutral grassland - semi-improved
-  Poor semi-improved grassland
-  Other tall herb and fern - ruderal
-  Hedge with trees - native species-rich
-  Buildings
-  Residential housing
-  Bare ground
-  Hard standing



Map Scale @ A3: 1:1,500



23 L19 (Site 50) – Saltdean: Landscape Assessment Only

Background

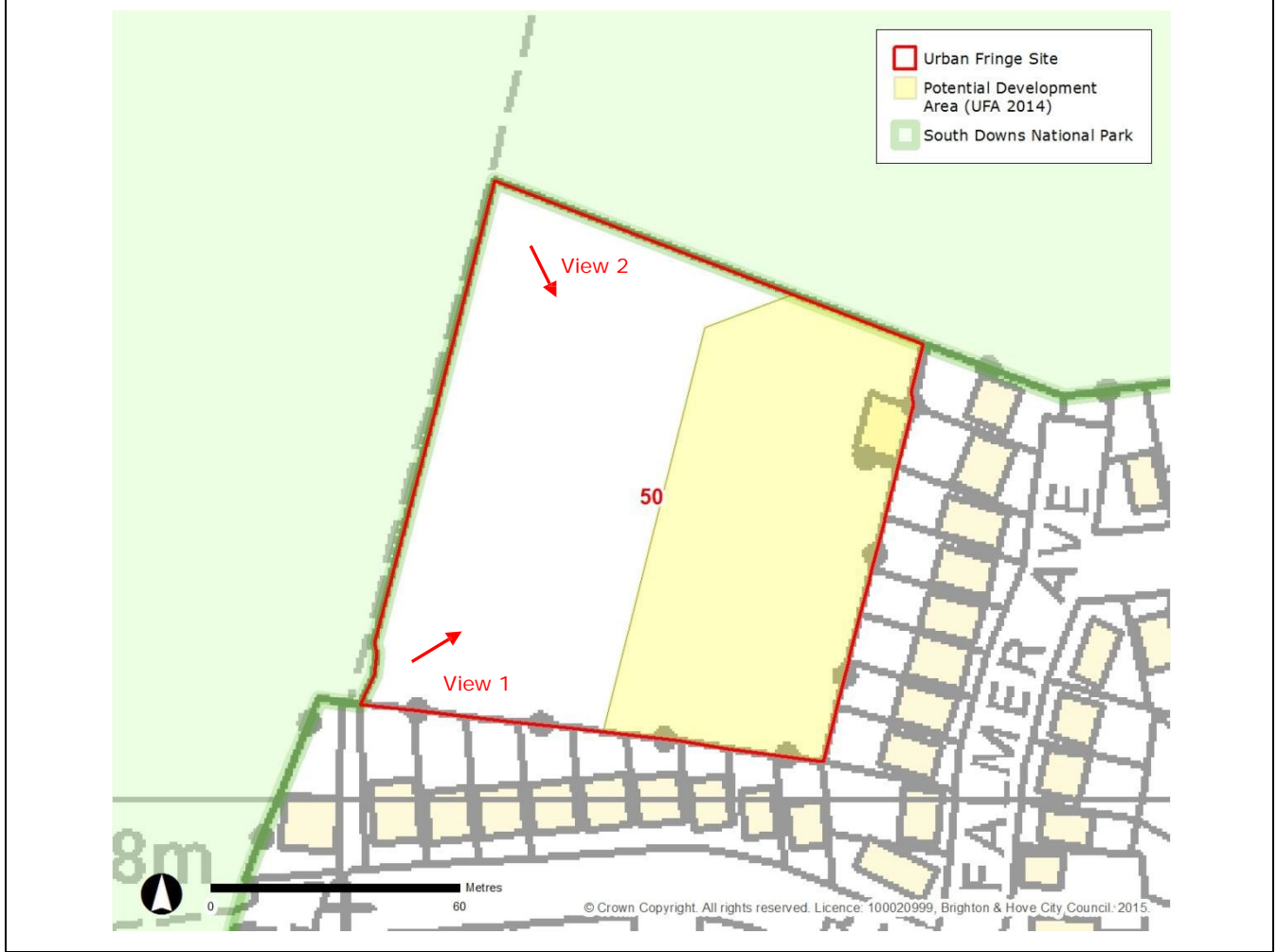
Study Area	L19	Location	Saltdean
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Site	50 – Land west of Falmer Avenue, Saltdean
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Study Area Overview

A field of managed grassland – excluding the north-western corner – sloping down from west to east on the high, north-western edge of Saltdean, facing onto houses on Bishopstone Drive to the south and Falmer Avenue to the east, and onto SDNP farmland to the north and west.

The lower, eastern half of the Study Area was suggested in the 2014 UFA as having potential for housing development.



Representative Views - local



View 1: looking north-east across the Site from bridleway at the end of Westmeston Avenue (Falmer Avenue is to the right)



View 2: looking south-east towards Saltdean Park from bridleway at the north-western corner of the Site

Overall Conclusions of the 2014 Assessment

“There are no significant ecological, heritage, open space or other environmental constraints to residential development. Therefore, low density residential development is deemed appropriate on the site.

Although the field that makes up Site 50 is edged on two sides by housing, and has an urban edge character (there is some sort of functional building on the site), in topographical terms it is more sensitive, being located at the base of the ridge which is visible as a small window of open downland between skyline urban development when viewed from the centre of Saltdean. Any development within the site could diminish this window.

At the National Park Inquiry the City Council supported the inclusion of this land in the National Park and the inspector supported this. However, the land was the subject of a High Court challenge and excluded because of a procedural irregularity. Limiting housing to the lower (eastern) half of the site would have less impact on the topographical character of the site and its impact on downland views of the surrounding National Park from further south in Saltdean.”

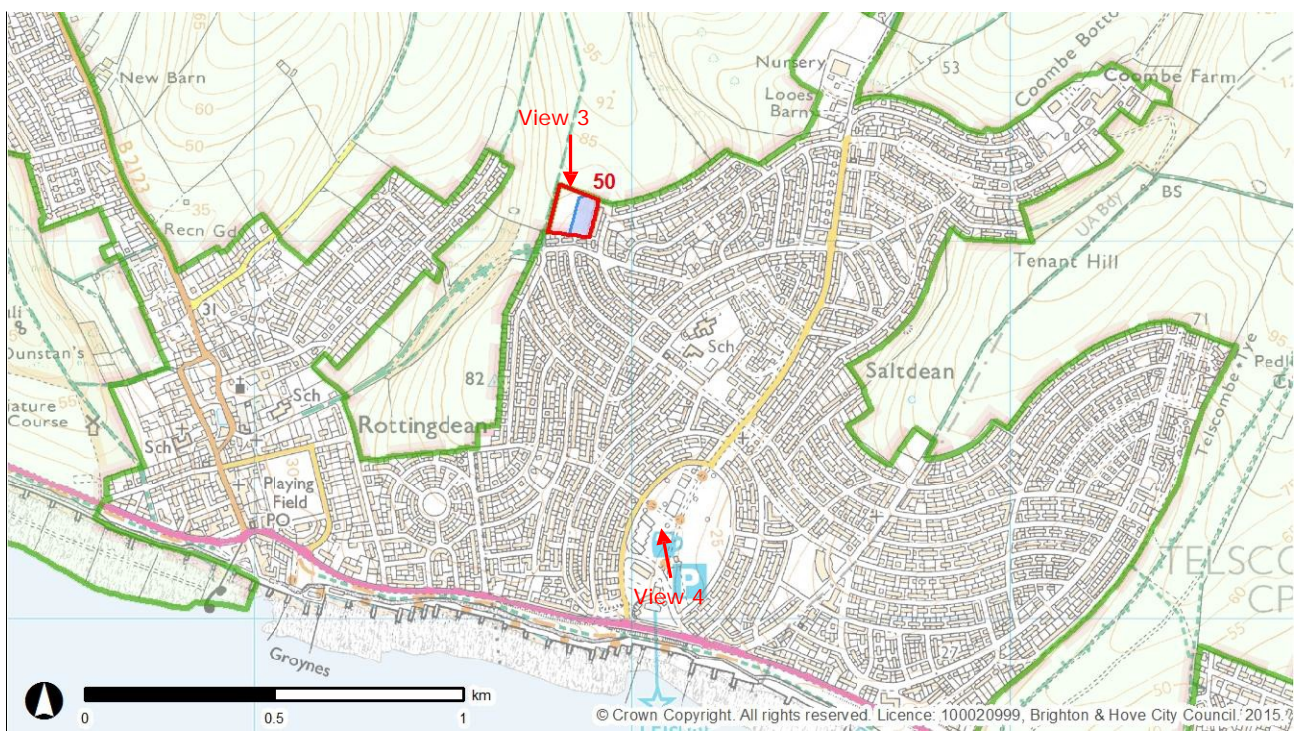
Overall Site Area	1.3ha	Area with development potential	0.5ha	Suitable dwelling density	Low: 25 per ha	Potential number of dwellings	12
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Landscape Assessment

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment	
Physical character	A field of mown grassland with no trees or hedging and one structure (some form of storage building). The terrain dips at the centre of the Site to form the head of a shallow valley which forms part of the western side of main Saltdean Valley. Some artificial levelling appears to have been carried out to accommodate the building, and there is also a drainage swale and outlet. The uneven ground creates some sensitivity, and this is also an elevated location on a southern spur of High Hill, making it potentially more sensitive than lower-lying terrain. The absence of any strong boundary features to the north gives the Study Area terrain a visual link to SDNP arable farmland which forms the skyline to the north (View 1).
Settlement form	Saltdean has an irregular settlement edge reflecting the terrain in which it is located, with development extending out along coombes and being to an extent contained by hills, but in a number of places housing has encroached a considerable distance uphill, in linear forms which do not reflect the underlying terrain. This is the case on the southern side of High Hill, causing the Study Area to be enclosed by housing on two sides (Falmer Avenue to the east and Bishopstone Drive to the south), so further development would have little additional impact on settlement form. It is noted, however, that adjacent dwellings on Falmer Avenue are mostly bungalows, so there would be a greater sensitivity associated with introducing taller buildings alongside these.
Settlement setting	The rural, downland setting of Saltdean has been adversely affected by development that extends far enough upslope to have a skyline impact on views from within much of the settled area. Westmeston Avenue masks the ridge that separates Saltdean from Rottingdean (a ridge which is scrub covered on its western side, and which contributes to giving Rottingdean a more rural setting than Saltdean), and Falmer Avenue and Wivelsfield Road form the skyline to the north in views from southern Saltdean. In this context the Study Area preserves a section of downland ridge in views from central Saltdean (see View 4), but the extent of change that has already occurred to the settlement setting means that loss of this remaining view would have limited additional impact. A broader open downland view remains to the north.
SDNP setting	Whilst the setting of Saltdean has been affected by the extent of development the impact on the wider SDNP is more limited due to containment of the settlement by hills and ridges. However, there is some potential for development within the Study Area to be visible in views from a short section of the public right of way descending from Balsdean Farm towards Westmeston Avenue. Currently the lack of development within the Study Area enhances this view out to sea.
Visual receptors	In a localised context the public right of way alongside the Study Area provides strong views down over Saltdean to the sea (Views 2 and 3). Leaving the western half of the Study Area undeveloped, as suggested in the 2014 UFA, would retain a view, but new housing would still potentially detract from its quality. As noted above the Study Area is also visible as a sliver of open ground in views from central Saltdean (View 4).
Perceptual qualities	Openness of the Study Area boundary gives a degree of connection to the SDNP downland to the north, but the proximity of housing and sharp settlement edge limits any sense of separation from the urban area.
Cultural & historic value	There are no known historic or cultural heritage sensitivities associated

with this Study Area.

Representative Views – wider area



View 3: looking south from Westmeston Avenue bridleway (in SDNP)



View 4: looking north from Saltdean Park car park

Potential Level of Landscape Effect

In the broader context of Saltdean development in this location would not be likely to have a significant impact in terms of settlement form and setting. In a local context this elevated location provides good views over Saltdean which would be likely to be adversely affected, even with development limited to the eastern half of the Study Area, but the localised nature of these views limits their importance. Adverse impacts are likely to result from development, increasingly so with the height of new buildings and the extent to which they are visible in views from further north away from the immediate settlement edge, although on balance these impacts are unlikely to be significant in magnitude. There would also be concerns about the impact of any new access road.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement Options

The southern end of the potential development area is lower than the northern end but also more centrally located in seaward views from the Study Area edge, so maintaining openness in this area would be likely to reduce adverse impact. Some limited landscaping works could help to soften views of new development, particularly given that the Study Area's southern boundary runs through an open field, but extensive screening planting would be likely to have an adverse impact on the openness of views. Limiting the height of built development, given that the adjacent bungalows on Falmer Avenue are low enough to allow views down over Saltdean, would also help to minimise adverse effects.

Conclusion

Overall Conclusion

In conclusion, it is considered that housing can be delivered across the potential development area within Study Area L19 without significant impacts on landscape and ecology, on the assumption that:

- Development proposals reflect consideration the form and scale of any new buildings in relation to the adjacent bungalows on Falmer Avenue, and subsequent impact on views from the SDNP
- Landscaping is introduced to create a southern boundary which filters views of development but which does not have a significant effect on openness of seaward views from the SDNP.