



TOLLGATE GROVE

**A VISION FOR THE LAND
AT ALMONRY FARM
BATTLE, EAST SUSSEX**

**Reimagining places
for people to thrive.**





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Vision Document has been prepared by Re-Format and the wider consultant team on behalf of Wates Developments Ltd (Wates) to support the proposals for land at Almonry Farm, Battle which can deliver much needed new family and affordable homes as part of the sustainable growth of Battle.

Forming part of Almonry Farm, the site presents a unique opportunity to support the housing needs of Rother District Council. The proposed development 'Tollgate Grove' includes new housing in a highly sustainable location, close to the centre of Battle, together with the substantive provision of open space for the benefit of both new and existing residents. This document demonstrates that this new site is technically viable, deliverable and in a sustainably located for new development. Additionally, this document presents a Vision for the site and sets out parameters for how a future development could come forward.



Planning Context

Rother Council is seeking to update its Local Plan and has commenced a Regulation 18 Consultation on the future of growth in the District. One of the key issues that the Plan needs to address is housing growth and the constraints that exist within the District. Rother currently do not seek to meet the housing requirement as required by Government due to these constraints. However, housing affordability as well as affordable housing delivery have all suffered recently due to lack of housing delivery. In addition, a further key consideration in considering growth is sustainable development. Battle, as a settlement, is highly sustainable and should accommodate growth, notwithstanding its location within the High

Weald National Landscape. Development should be accommodated in locations where wider effects should be more limited and reflect the pattern of development already existing in the wider area.

The Council has identified the site as being suitable for 100 homes and this document sets out why we consider that a figure closer to 150 homes should be supported. Sites should seek to maximise development (within the limitation of constraints) without causing significant harm to the wider landscape. The site can accommodate up to 150 homes at an average density of approx. 27 dwellings per hectare.

This document demonstrates that key aspects of the landscape and other elements such as ecology and trees would not be significantly harmed by developing at a suitable density. Indeed, the development takes its cues from existing development in terms location and wider effects. Unjustifiably limiting development on the site would not assist the Council in meeting wider housing needs and increasing affordable housing delivery. Development of the site can contribute to both these aspects, whilst also adhering to the main principles underpinning the Local Plan of 'Green to the core' and 'Live well locally'.

WATES DEVELOPMENTS

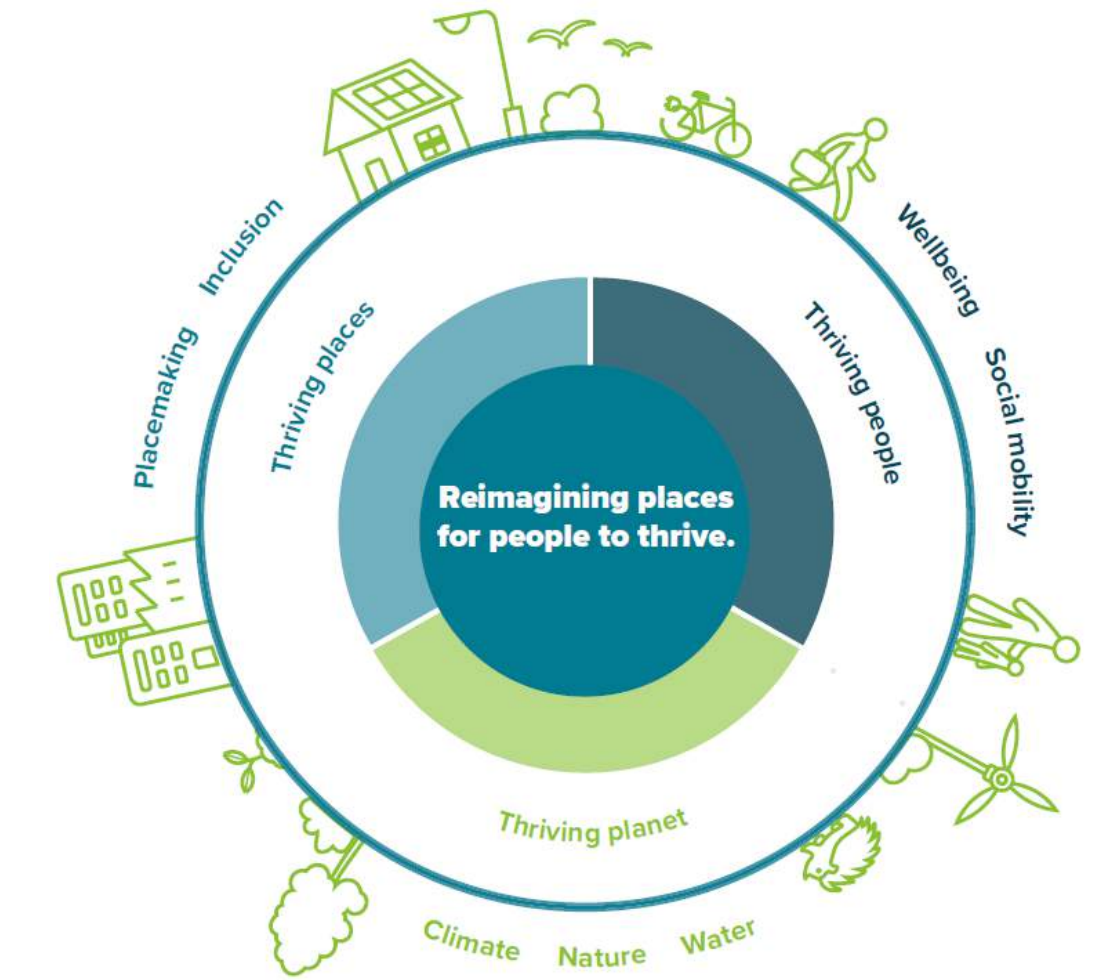
Wates Developments is an expert in land, planning and residential development throughout England. Wates Developments is the primary investment arm of the Wates Group, which was founded in 1897 and still privately owned today, Wates is now one of the largest construction and development companies in the UK.

Our purpose is our north star: reimagining places for people to thrive. This is underpinned by three enduring promises that help us to live our purpose every day.

- Thriving Places
- Thriving People
- Thriving Planet

Wates is committed to reducing the building industry's environmental impact. Their five-year strategy sets out this commitment and how they can be better custodians of the environment and protect the Earth's precious resources and habitats for future generations.

As a family owned business, now in its 4th generation, Wates shares a deep sense of responsibility to provide outstanding projects for customers which make a long-lasting difference to the communities in which it works. From delivering affordable housing, new schools, through to retail and commercial interiors, heritage sites and residential development jointly with partners, it is in a unique position to make a positive impact for the long term.



Professional Team

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SUMMARY OF BENEFITS



 **Meeting Housing Need**
(up to 150 homes, Inc. 60 affordable)

The site can deliver up to 150 much needed new homes of which 60 (40%) would be affordable. The proposals make provision for a range of house types, sizes and tenures in line with local housing need. Furthermore, the land is both available and deliverable now.



 **New Public Open Space**
(Approx. 17.5 acres)

The site can provide approximately 17.5 acres (7.1 ha) of public open space, including 4.7 acres (1.9 ha) of new native woodland. Existing green infrastructure will be retained wherever possible and enhanced through additional landscaping to help create an attractive environment for new and existing residents.



 **Net Zero Carbon Ready**

The development will be Net Zero Carbon Ready and can help Rother Council to meet its Climate Action Plan target for new buildings being net zero.



 **Sustainable Location**

The site is ideally located near to the local services and facilities of Battle. New footpaths on site connect to the surrounding pedestrian network.



 **High Quality Homes**

The site will deliver new homes that are high quality and well-designed with distinctive character that reflects their location.



 **Sustainable Technology**

The proposed development will incorporate a range of sustainable technologies, such as PV panels, rainwater harvesting and EV charging points, that will be sensitively integrated into the design to respond to the current climate emergency.



 **Biodiversity Net Gain**

The proposal presents an opportunity to provide significant biodiversity net gain through the creation of new green infrastructure.



 **Landscape led**

The development will be sensitive and complementary to the context of the AONB and promote outdoor use through a landscape led design which will enhance views.



 **Community Contributions**

To support this new development and integrate with part of the wider Battle community, we will be investing in much needed infrastructure through significant Section 106 and CIL payments.

SITE CONTEXT

Battle is a small town and civil parish in the district of Rother in East Sussex. It is located 9km north of Hastings and Bexhill, 45km east of Brighton, and 80km south of London.

The site is directly adjacent to the existing settlement edge to the southeast of Battle. Immediately to the sites western edge is the Tollgates, Field Way development of 63 homes, built after 2018. Further housing is also visible to the north of the site.”

Public footpaths run along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site providing access to Battle High Street and numerous other facilities such as Battle & Langton C of E Primary School and Battle recreation ground. Battle Abbey is located 1 km to the east of the site.

The site comprises 46 acres of greenfield land which is technically unconstrained to provide housing, it is within a sustainable location and deliverable. The site provides an outstanding opportunity as it is deliverable, available now and offers a suitable and sustainable location for new development, complimenting the emerging Battle community.

There is a realistic and achievable prospect that new homes will be delivered on the Land at Almonry Farm site within the next five years.



Rural lane runs to the west of the site



View from north of site looking south



Aerial view



02. THE SITE

A SUSTAINABLE LOCATION

The site is located within an easy walking distance of the good range of facilities and services in Battle. Pedestrian journeys are well provided for, with a network of footways, public rights of way (PROW) and crossing provision on the main pedestrian desire lines. There are also frequent public transport services available nearby for journeys further afield.

The suitability of Battle to accommodate additional housing, and as an in-principle sustainable location for development, is established by local planning policy.

The site is therefore well located in transport accessibility terms such that residents will readily be able to take up the opportunities for sustainable travel.

The adjacent image shows the provision of facilities and services in the local area. Notably, a sports centre a few minutes' walk to the west and Battle Recreation Ground close to the north.

The High Street is also within walking and cycling distance of the site and provides access to a range of local facilities and services including a supermarket.

Battle Rail Station is located approximately 2.3km to the east of the site and can be accessed via the local walking and cycling network.

Tollgate Grove is adjacent to Battle Pre-School Playgroup and Battle & Langton C of E Primary school as well as being a short 5 minute walk to Claverham Community College therefore offering an excellent location for families.



Key to Symbols

Leisure	Healthcare	
Sports & Recreation	Surgery / Medical Centre	
Museum / Place of Historical Interest	Pharmacy	
Retail	Transport	
Supermarket / Convenience Store	Railway Station	
Employment	Public Right of Way	
Town Centre	1.6km walking catchment	
Education	3.2km walking catchment	
Pre-school / Primary Education	Note: Numbers refer to table on opposite page	
Secondary / Higher Education		

Amenities Plan

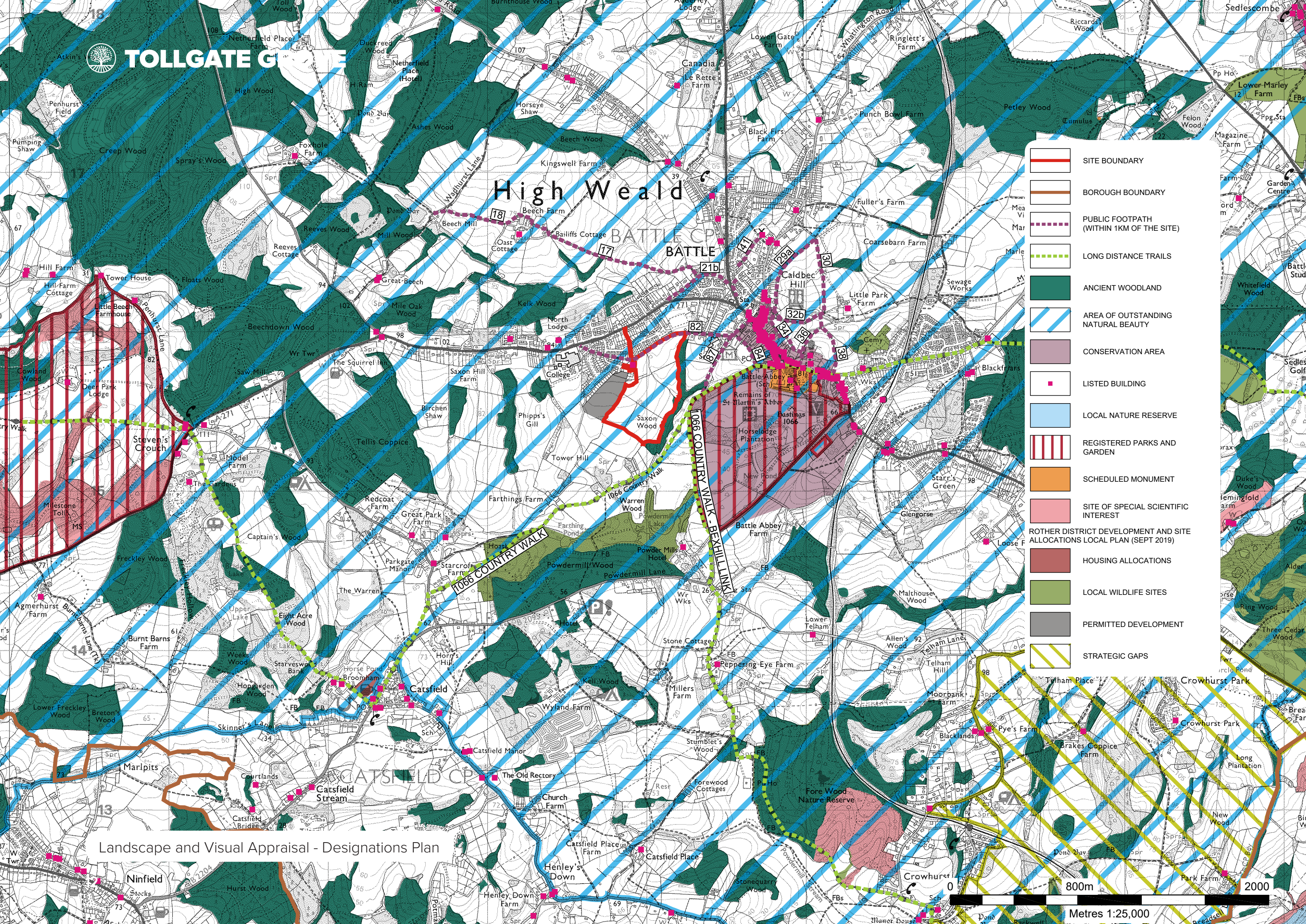
Facility	Destination	Distance (m)	Walking (mins)	Cycling (mins)
Employment	01. Battle High Street	1,000	12	4
	02. Jempson's Local	1,075	13	4
Retail	03. Battle Village Centre & Market Square	1,000	12	4
	04. Tesco Esso Express	2,400	29	10
Education	05. Claverham Community College	600	7	2
	06. Battle & Langton C of E Primary School	1,150	14	4
	07. Caterpillar Pre-school	1,250	15	5
Leisure	08. Battle Abbey School	1,500	18	6
	09. Battle Sports Centre	450	5	2
	10. Battle Recreation Ground	750	9	3
Healthcare	11. Battle Abbey	1,600	19	6
	12. Hastings Battlefield	1,500	18	6
	13. Martins Oak Surgery	1,250	15	5
	14. Boots Pharmacy	1,350	16	5
	15. Battle Health Centre	2,300	27	9

Distances and travel time to key local destinations

Source: Consultant

Key:

- Within 20 minutes
- Within 30 minutes



SITE CONSIDERATIONS

Landscape Character and Views

Landscape and Landscape-Related Designations

The site at Almonry Farm is located within the High Weald National Landscape (formerly AONB), as is the whole settlement of Battle and its setting. Indeed, 82% of Rother District is within this designation.

Approximately 40 metres to the east of the site, beyond a belt of ancient woodland, us the Registered Battlefield of the Battle of Hastings, which also forms part of the grade II registered Park and Garden of Battle Abbey. The Registered Park and garden also forms part of Battle Conservation Area. The site therefore forms part of a highly valued landscape.

Landscape Character

In terms of landscape character, the site is classified at a regional scale as being part of National Character Area (NCA) 122, the High Weald. Characteristics of this character area which are of particular relevance to the site and its context include:

- “a dispersed settlement pattern of hamlets and scattered farmsteads and medieval ridgetop villages”;
- “extensive broadleaved woodland cover with a very high proportion of ancient woodland”;
- Small and medium sized irregularly shaped fields enclosed by a network of hedgerows and wooded shaws, predominantly of medieval origin”.

At a county scale the site is classified within the East Sussex landscape character assessment (2016) as being within LCA 10, Combe Haven Valley (see Plate I, overleaf). Key characteristics of this area which are particularly notable on site include the following:

- Series of small, winding, High Wealden valleys;
- Intricate terrain of small winding valleys and ridges;
- Area enclosed by Battle ridge;
- Abundant woods and gills, extensive areas of Ancient Woodland;
- Heritage England registered 1066 battlefield and parkland on the northern edge;
- A sense of tranquillity away from the main settlements and roads.

As these character assessments indicate, the settlement of Battle is located on a marked ridge, and the site slopes southwards towards a wooded gill that extends along the southern and eastern edges of the site. The field comprises pasture fields, contained by well-established hedgerows often with some mature trees (see for example Plate II, overleaf). There is some influence from the settlement edge, both to the north (for example housing at Asten Fields) and to the west (new housing at Field Way), (see Plate III, overleaf).

Landscape and Visual Appraisal - Designations Plan

Landscape Character and Views (continued)

Visibility and Views

The site is visually contained by woodland to the east and south, and by Battle Ridge and existing housing to the west and north. Views towards the site therefore tend to be largely localised.

People that would have potential to gain views of new homes include walkers on the footpath which passes along the northern edge of the site, as well as walkers on the 1066 Country Walk to the south of the site and also walkers within Manser's Shaw, to the east.

There is potential for glimpsed views by residents to the north and west of the south.

Responding to the Landscape

The illustrative masterplan focuses new homes in the upper parts of the site, above 60m AOD, so that settlement pattern can continue to be closely associated with Battle Ridge. This also allows for new areas of public open space on steeper ground further from the new settlement edge, as well as the creation of new areas of native broadleaved woodland adjacent to the existing ancient woodland to the east and south of the site.

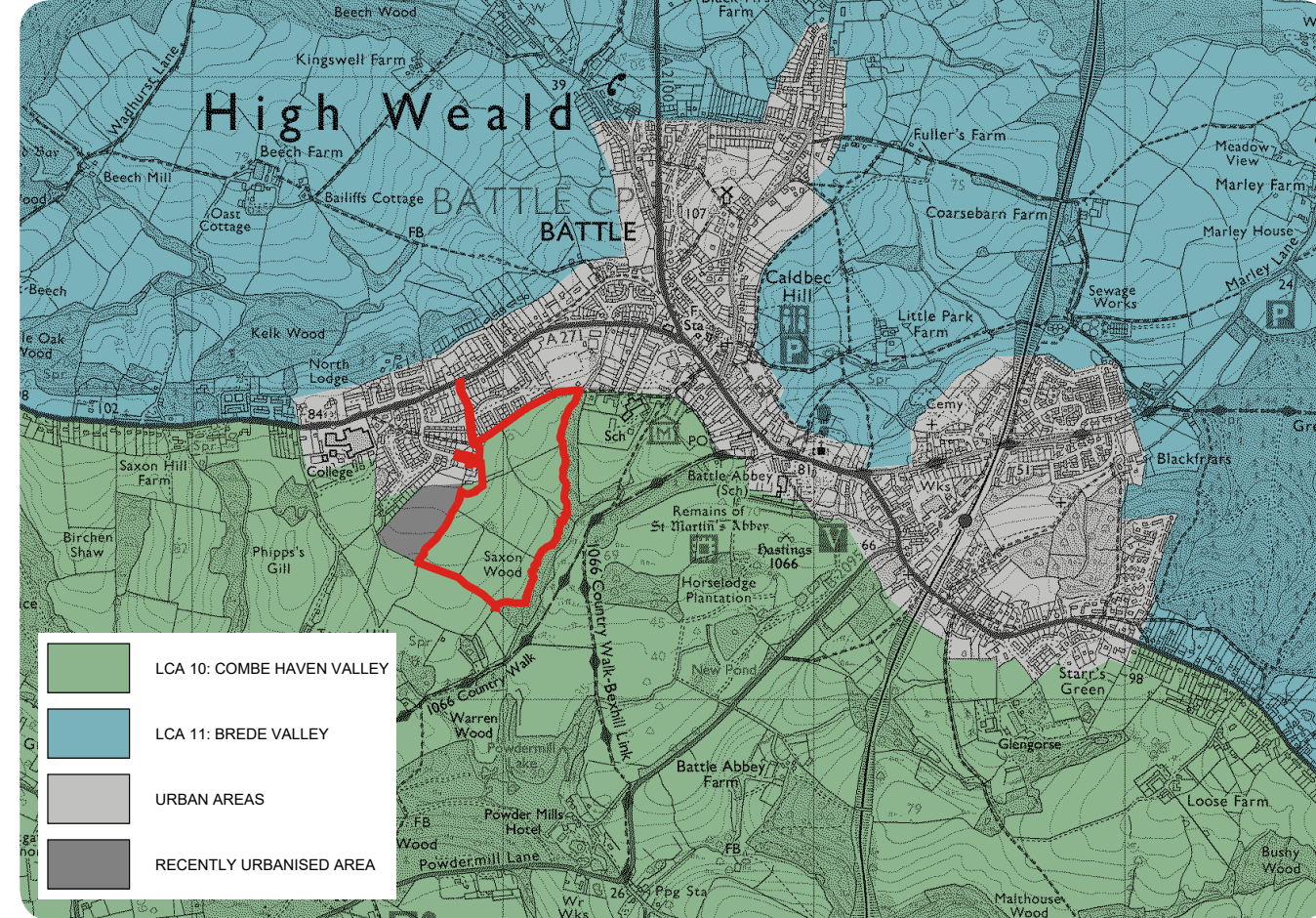


Plate I: Landscape Character areas defined within the East Sussex Landscape Character assessment (2016)



Plate II: View southwards from the footpath crossing the northern edge of the site: the site comprises sloping pasture fields enclosed by well-established hedgerows

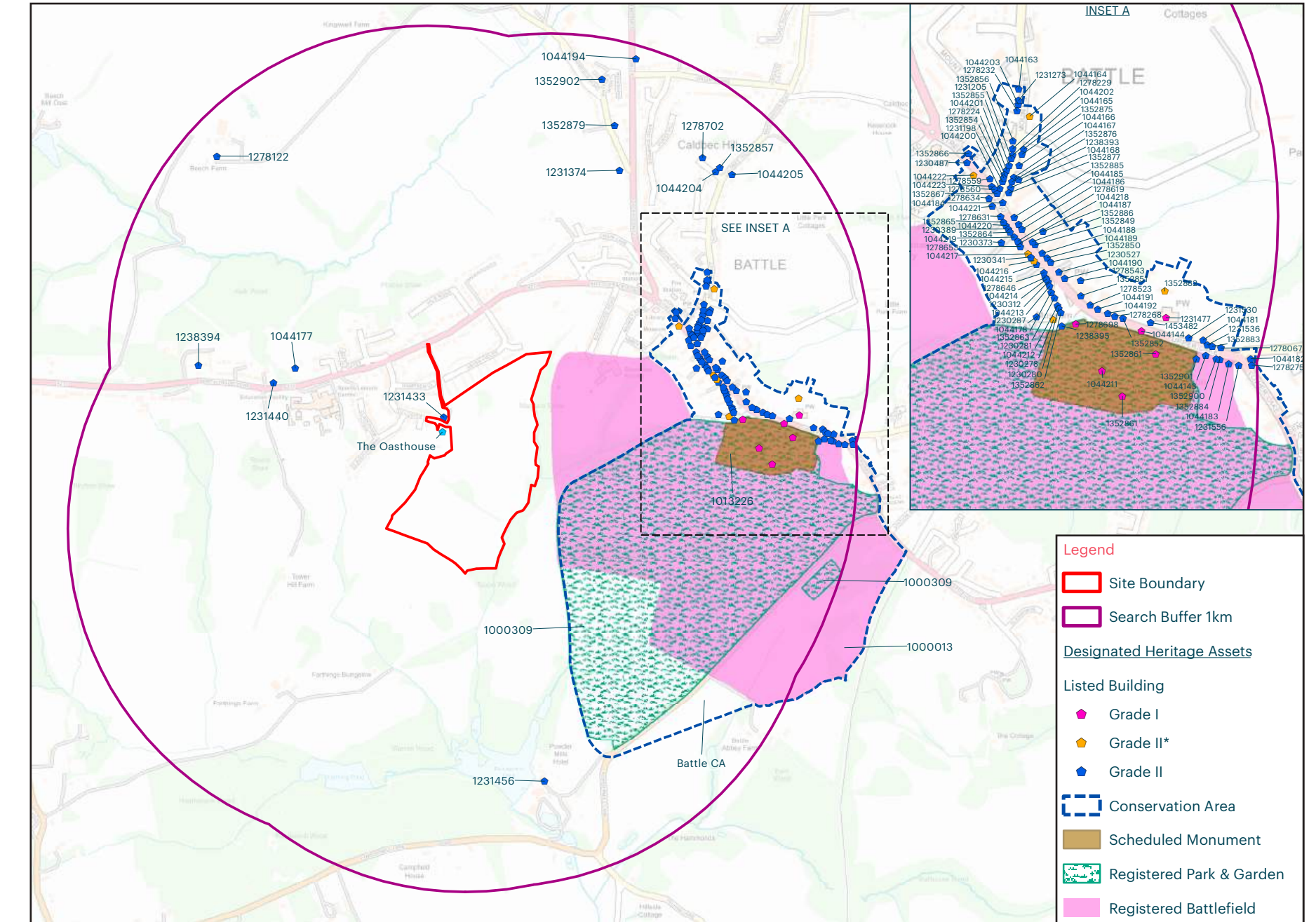


Plate III: New homes to the west of the site are visible through intervening hedgerows.

Heritage

This historic environment desk-based assessment considers land at Almonry Farm, Battle which is proposed for residential development. A review of the available evidence has confirmed that the study site has a low potential to contain finds and features from all periods.

The proposed development is located immediately adjacent to Lower Almonry Farm (grade II) and an Oasthouse which is non-designated heritage asset. The design of the proposed development has taken the potential impacts of the development on these two assets into account. The layout of the scheme utilises the topography and layout of the existing fields so as to enable the built form of the development to almost entirely hidden from the farmhouse and oasthouse.



Designated Heritage Assets & Conservation Areas

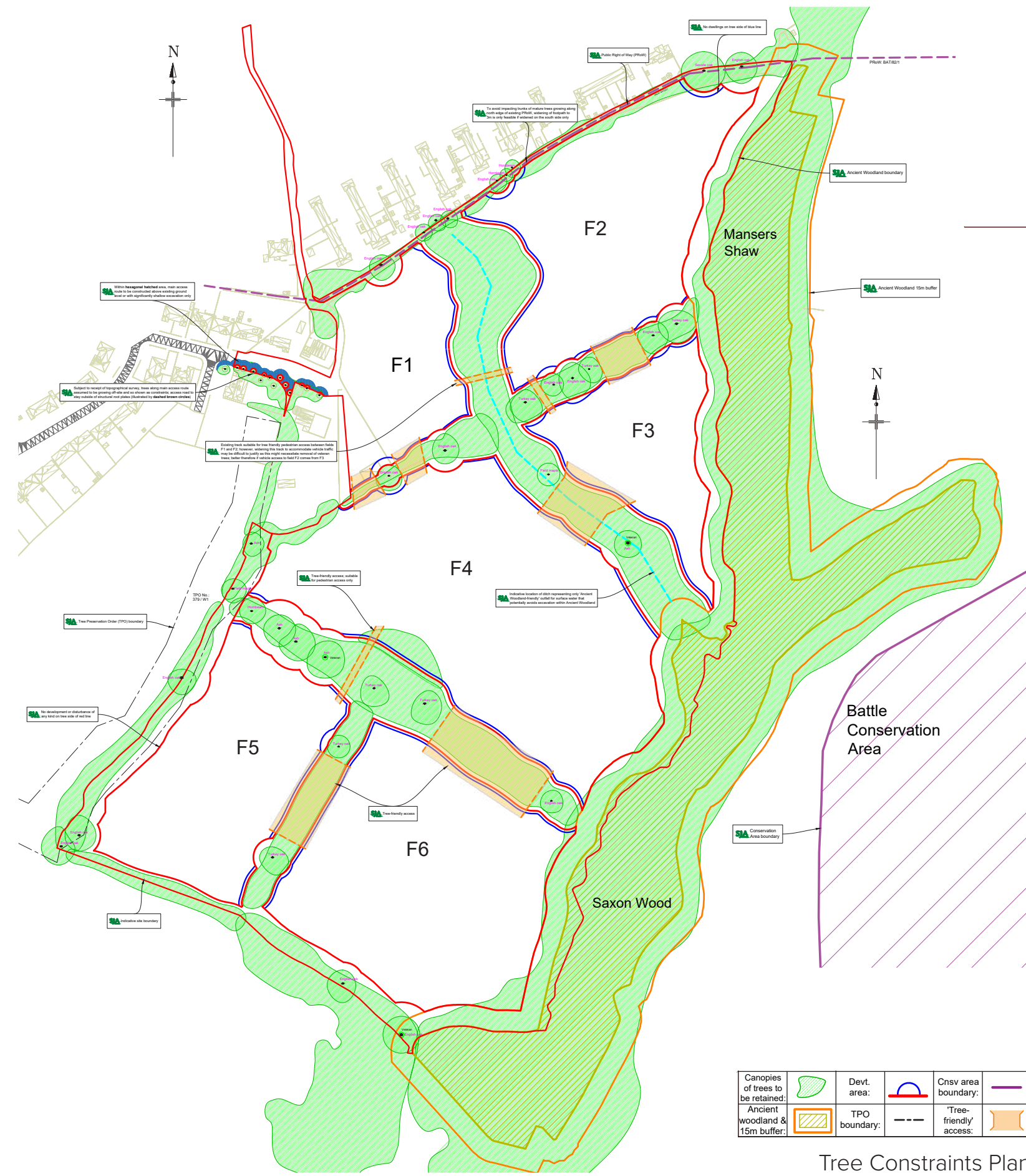
Ecology and Arboriculture

The potential of the site to support protected or notable species has been assessed through a site walkover and desk-top study. There are no statutory (international or national level) or non- statutory (county level) designated sites within the site itself. Along the eastern and south-eastern edge of the site runs a strip of woodland that is listed as Ancient Semi-Natural woodland. This woodland is a UK and local Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat that is considered to be of up to district level value.

Development will be designed to safeguard adjacent woodland habitats through the provision of appropriate stand-offs and carefully considered landscaping that provides a protective buffer that also extends the habitat resource. Habitats within the site are common and widespread and they are ubiquitous in the locality

Though some protected and notable species may utilise some of the features within the site it is considered unlikely that the site would be critical or important for the local populations due to the extent of other suitable habitats locally.

The presence of veteran and mature trees on or immediately adjacent to the site, and of trees that make significant contributions to landscape character, has been established through a walkover survey. Development will be designed to avoid the removal of such specimens, to ensure that important trees and current arboricultural character are maintained. Where access roads need to cross field boundaries, locations have been identified where no harm will be caused to veteran trees; and where the removal of only short sections of immature trees, trees of short-term potential, or small under-storey trees and scrub of small ultimate size is necessary.



Transport

There are frequent public transport services available nearby for sustainable travel. The suitability of Battle to accommodate additional housing and as an in-principle sustainable location for development, is established by local planning policy.

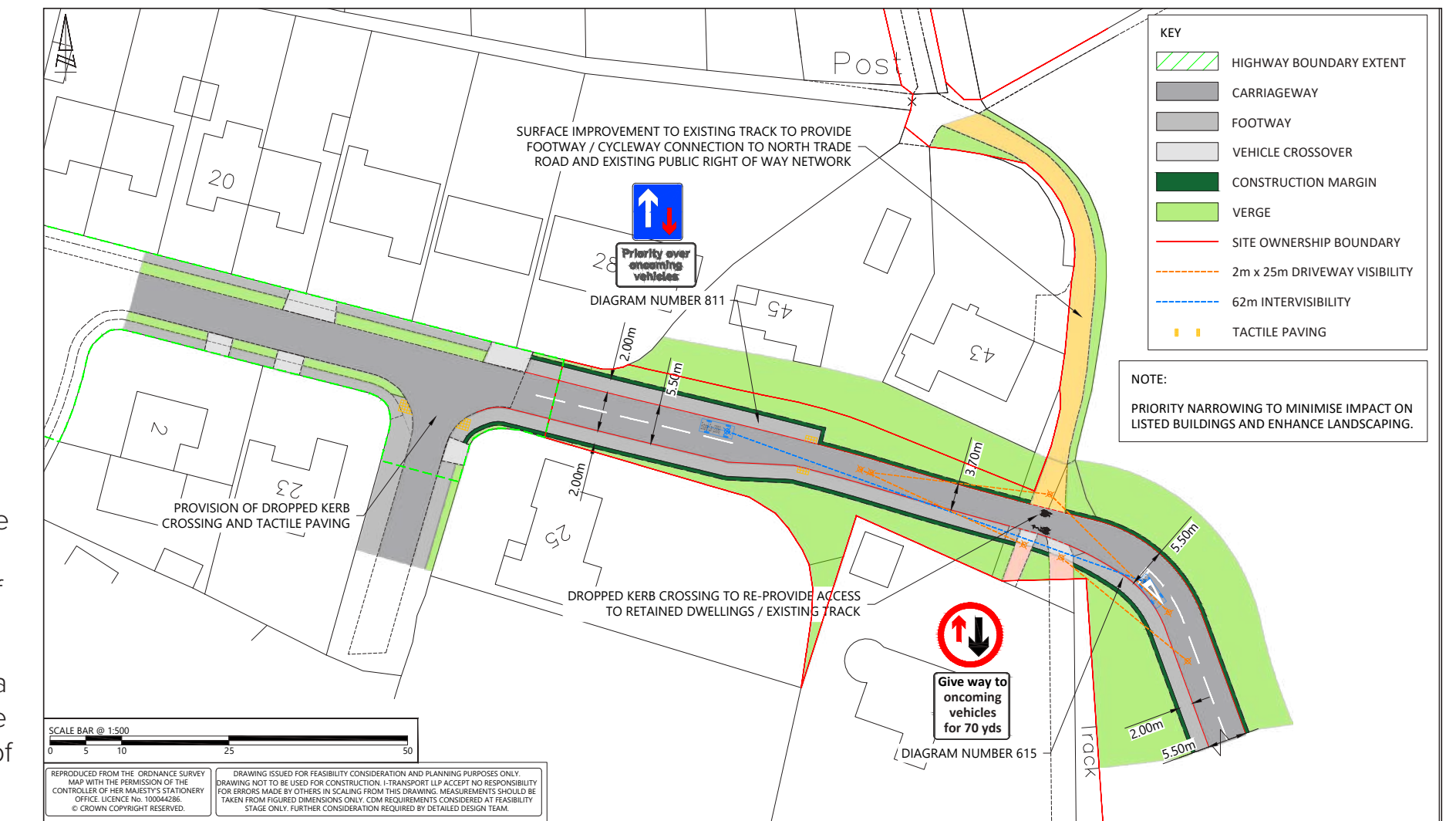
The site is well located to enable residents to live well locally with all essential amenities and facilities within walking and cycling distance due to the close proximity of Battle town centre. The public transport network can also be reached within walking distance with bus stops on North Trade Road and Battle train station a short distance away, enabling longer journeys to also be undertaken sustainably.

A suitable vehicular access to the site is readily available via Tollgates. The proposed access arrangements complies with design guidance and takes full account of existing highway conditions.

A Transport Assessment will need to be prepared with a planning application. This will be based on a sustainable transport strategy encouraging local journeys and use of active travel modes.

The traffic generation of the proposed development will be less two vehicles per minute in the peak hours, which is a modest level of movement. Detailed traffic modelling of key local junctions has been undertaken, which shows that the traffic impact of the development will not noticeably impact the operation of the highway network. Traffic impacts will be acceptable.

The development of the site presents a key opportunity to improve local walking and cycling connections within Battle, particularly the delivery of RDC's LCWIP walking and cycling route aspirations.



Potential site access plan

Drainage

All potential sources of flood risk at the development site have been assessed based on the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning and Long Term Flood Risk information and Rother District Council's Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Based on the available sources of flood risk information, the proposed development is entirely at (very) low risk of flooding from all potential sources (i.e., the sea, rivers, surface water, groundwater, sewers, canals/reservoirs, etc.).

Runoff generated within the development site shall be managed by the proposed surface water drainage strategy, preliminarily designed in compliance with national and local planning policies, requirements, and current best practices, to collect, convey and attenuate runoff before controlled discharge to nearby ditches/watercourses.

Given the likely unfeasibility of infiltration drainage, the volume of runoff leaving the proposed development cannot be reduced to greenfield values and the excess volume must be discharge at a low rate that will not pose a flood risk downstream of the site. The proposed drainage strategy has been preliminarily designed to limit discharges from the proposed development to the QBAR greenfield runoff rate. The proposed surface water drainage strategy has been preliminarily designed to manage surface water flood risk at the development site without increasing flood risk elsewhere for all storm events up to 1.0% AEP + 45% climate change allowance.

The proposed drainage strategy shall include a range of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) such as rain gardens, pervious pavements, swales and detention basins that, in addition to water quantity control, provide water quality and amenity/biodiversity benefits (i.e., multifunctional approach).



Examples of SuDS features

Constraints & Opportunities

The adjacent Site Constraints Plan provides a visual representation of the some of the aforementioned factors that might impact development to help inform where housing parcels and access roads can be located.



CONCEPT & MASTERPLAN



- 1. Development parcels
- 2. New POS / meadowland
- 3. Arrival POS / buffer to grade-II listed farmhouse
- 4. New native woodland planting
- 5. SuDS basins (shown indicatively)
- 6. Existing PRoW
- 7. Catesby Estates development
- 8. Site access via Tollgates

The concept for the proposals has been developed with careful understanding of the landscape and wider site context. The key features of the design are as follows:



1. The proposed development loosely follows the existing 60m AOD contour line, in keeping with the pattern of surrounding existing built form.
2. Development parcels are positioned within existing, retained field boundaries. This provides shelter to each parcel, allowing the potential to develop individual character areas.
3. New native woodland planting is proposed along the south-eastern boundary to enhance the existing tree buffer and provide a soft landscaped edge to the development.
4. A new parkland POS has been established at the site entrance to create a welcome arrival sequence, provide an appropriate setting for the listed buildings, as well as leaving open green space that seeks to protect and enhance the long views to and from the wider vicinity.
5. A principal access road connects the development parcels / character areas with discrete connections through the field boundaries. These locations have been chosen to avoid any removal of, or damage to, existing veteran trees; and will necessitate the removal of only short sections of immature trees, trees of short-term potential, or small under-storey trees and scrub of small ultimate size.






Design Concept Diagram

HELAA RESPONSE

The following table outlines how the proposed development responds to the constraints identified by Rother District Council in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) BAT0014:

Constraints Identified by Rother District Council in the HELAA (BAT0014)	Discipline and relevant consultant acting for Wates Developments	Consultant Response (Summary)
Location within the High Weald National Landscape, an AONB. Development here has the potential to harm the landscape and character of the National Landscape.	Landscape SLR Consulting	 82% of Rother District is within the High Weald National Landscape AONB. The site is visually contained by woodland to the east and south, and by Battle Ridge and existing housing to the west and north. Views towards the site therefore tend to be largely localised. The illustrative masterplan focuses new homes in the upper parts of the sit, above 60m AOD, so that settlement pattern can continue to be closely associated with Battle Ridge. This also allows for new areas of public open space on steeper ground further from the new settlement edge, as well as the creation of new areas of native broadleaved woodland adjacent to the existing ancient woodland to the east and south of the site.
Proximity to heritage assets including the Battle Conservation Area and Registered Battlefield and a Listed Building. A vehicular access could however impact on the setting of the adjoining Grade II listed building and on residential amenity.	Heritage Orion	 The design of the proposed development has taken the potential impacts of the development on these assets into account. The layout of the scheme utilises open space, the topography and layout of the existing fields so as to provide a suitable heritage informed buffer to Lower Almonry Farm and oasthouse. The design also ensures that the Battle Abbey and its associated designated assets is avoided or minimal.

Constraints Identified by Rother District Council in the HELAA (BAT0014)	Discipline and relevant consultant acting for Wates Developments	Consultant Response (Summary)
Areas at risk of surface water flooding in its northern section and on its boundaries.	Drainage JNP	 The proposed development is entirely at (very) low risk of flooding from all potential sources. The proposed drainage strategy has been preliminarily designed to limit discharges from the proposed development to the QBAR greenfield runoff rate. The proposed surface water drainage strategy has been preliminarily designed to manage surface water flood risk at the development site without increasing flood risk elsewhere for all storm events up to 1.0% AEP + 45% climate change allowance.
An area of ancient woodland adjacent to its entire eastern boundary, intact historic field boundaries within the site defined by mature trees and hedges.	Arboriculture SJA Trees	 Development will be designed to safeguard adjacent woodland habitats through the provision of appropriate stand-offs and carefully considered landscaping that provides a protective buffer that also extends the habitat resource. The presence of veteran and mature trees on or immediately adjacent to the site, and of trees that make significant contributions to landscape character, has been established through a walkover survey. Development will be designed to avoid the removal of such specimens, to ensure that important trees and current arboricultural character are maintained. Where access roads need to cross field boundaries, locations have been identified where no harm will be caused to veteran trees; and where the removal of only short sections of immature trees, trees of short-term potential, or small under-storey trees and scrub of small ultimate size is necessary.
Access via an existing residential area. Initial Highway Authority comments suggest that a vehicular access via Tollgates appears achievable, although further assessments of junction capacity on North Trade Road and the A2100 roundabout would be required.	Highways i-Transport	 A suitable vehicular access to the site is readily available via Tollgates. The proposed access arrangements complies with design guidance and takes full account of existing highway conditions. Traffic surveys have been undertaken to understand the existing operation of the local highway network and to inform an assessment of development impacts. A trip generation assessment has also been undertaken to estimate the movement generation of the development proposal. Capacity testing of key local junctions has been undertaken and demonstrates that the development proposal will not have a noticeable impact on the local highway network. These junctions will continue to operate well within capacity

CONCLUSION

This document addresses the constraints identified by Rother District Council and demonstrates that the site is deliverable, technically unconstrained and is an inherently sustainable location for new development.

This document has also set out our overall vision for the site and development capacity options.

Overall, this provides an excellent opportunity to deliver new housing close to local supporting facilities within Battle. In addition to providing much needed new housing in a suitable location, the site offers the opportunity to respond to deliver a private and affordable housing scheme in a sustainable location, alongside the creation of a very significant area of new public open space, whilst simultaneously increasing biodiversity and improving the health and wellbeing of its residents.



A VISION FOR THE LAND AT ALMONRY FARM, BATTLE, EAST SUSSEX

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