

Legend

- Ashford Study Area
- Ashford Borough Boundary
- Non Study and Urban Areas
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Special Landscape Area (Deleted on publication of the South East Plan)
- Site Location

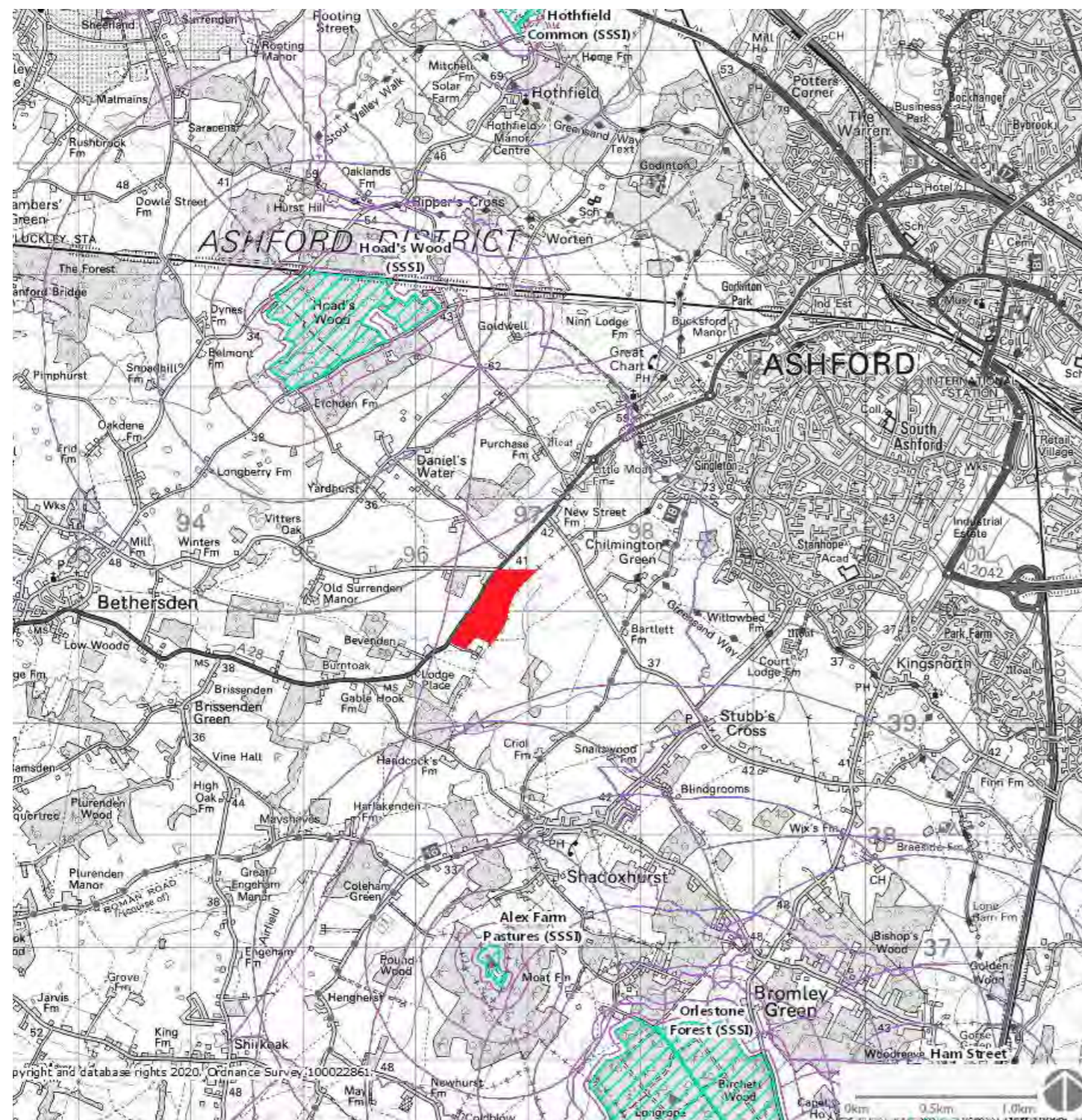
FIGURE APP 6. Ashford Landscape Character Areas, , Source: ashford.gov.uk



FIGURE APP 7. Location of AONBs in Kent, Source: ashford.gov.uk

Legend

- Site Location





 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)
 SSSI Impact Risk Zones - to assess planning applications for likely impacts on SSSIs/SACs/SPAs & Ramsar sites (England)

FIGURE 8. SSSI location, Source: DEFRA/Magic.

3.3 LANDSCAPE BASELINE

LANDSCAPE STRUCTURE AND TOPOGRAPHY

The Ashford Local Development Framework, Landscape Character study, (Studio Engleback, November 2005) notes the condition of the landscape as being of a “unified pattern of elements of vast open fields with ditches – an intensively farmed landscape which has undergone substantial hedgerow loss and removal of wildlife habitats and corridors”

The site topography is generally flat or lightly rolling with drainage ditches and associated hedgerows to some boundaries and traversing the site in two locations.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE

A full summary of the relevant landscape character area/types can be found in APPENDIX 1:

National Level

NE NCA Profile 120. Wealden Greensand

(The site is set within Ashford’s emerging urban fringe)

Local Landscape Level

The site is identified in the Ashford Landscape Character SPD (adopted April 2011) as lying within the Bethersden Farmlands Landscape Character Area in the District Landscape Type BF5 “Chilmington Open Arable”, compartment E32, (reference: Ashford Local Development Framework, Landscape Character study, Studio Engleback (November 2005): Bethersden, Farmlands, p28), and exhibits the following key characteristics:

- Large open prairie style arable fields with gentle slopes rising to Coleman’s Kitchen Wood
- Extensive loss of hedgerows, particularly between Chilmington Green and Long Length leaving remnant hedgerow trees isolated in the middle of vast fields. In other places there are continuous ancient laid hedges with oak, however this is rare.
- Pollarded willows along the B-road near Great Chilmington. Willow Wood is a remnant hornbeam coppice isolated within the large fields.

- The area is crisscrossed by a network of footpaths – the Greensand Way and two byways.

- Expansive views, especially around Coleman’s Kitchen Wood but these are contained in proximity to Long Length.

The Engleback study notes the condition of the landscape as being of a “unified pattern of elements of vast open fields with ditches – an intensively farmed landscape which has undergone substantial hedgerow loss and removal of wildlife habitats and corridors”.

At a more detailed scale, certain District Landscape Types were considered in the study to be sufficiently distinctive in character to be separately described and assessed. These New District Landscape Types categorise the site as lying within ‘BF5a Chilmington Open Arable with Remnants’:

- Relatively flat large open prairie style arable fields;
- Excessive loss of hedgerows and fragmentation of woodlands, particularly towards Chilmington Green Road, leaving fragments of hedgerows and trees isolated in vast fields;
- Pollarded willows along Chilmington Green Road;
- Willow Wood is remnant hornbeam coppice isolated within large fields;
- Area is crisscrossed by a network of footpaths, including a byway;
- Area has a distinctive character, but weak sense of place and continuity;
- Remnants of historic landscape character, but degraded / disturbed: sinuous drainage, woodland, hedgerows / historic boundaries.

Quality: Ordinary

Sensitivity: Medium - low

In greater detail, the study concludes the “area has a distinctive character in terms of the level of wide-open fields devoid of hedgerows with expansive views but has a weak sense of place and continuity. It is highly visible with long distance views especially on the gentle slopes towards Coleman’s Kitchen Wood”.

The 2005 policy recommendations for the

area (including the main part of Chilmington Green which has subsequently been extensively developed as a major urban extension to Ashford), suggests restoration and create of landscape components, including restoration of hedgerows, extension and creation of new woodlands to link to Old Saxon Shoreline and to create a green grid, incorporating gently sloping visible land towards Coleman's Kitchen Wood.

Opportunities

The relatively impoverished condition of the agricultural landscape provides many opportunities for enhancement, both visually and in terms of biodiversity. The flat and open landscape character has permitted the architects to design a rich and varied urban layout, intersected by greenways and surrounded by proposed and enhanced existing landscape features. A range of new habitat types will be created, ranging from wetlands associated with the SuDS network to wide expanses of wildflower meadows throughout the interconnected green structure. The proposed landscape themes are examined in more detail in the following Landscape Design Statement.

LANDSCAPE CONDITION

The site comprises a series of expansive agricultural fields bounded by hedgerows of varying quality and density, with some outgrown hedgerow trees. Internal hedge partitions are degraded and patchy, following drainage ditches, broadly running east-west across the site and dividing the area into three fields.

Trees and Hedgerows

Hedgerows and associated outgrown individual trees along the northern and eastern boundaries (following closed up PRow AW292 to the north and AW245 to the east) and mostly dense and well developed, albeit somewhat outgrown and in need of management. Within the site and along the A28, hedgerows are generally spaced with isolated trees. To the south, relatively dense vegetation associated with Possingham Farm provides good screening and visual protection of the farm environs.

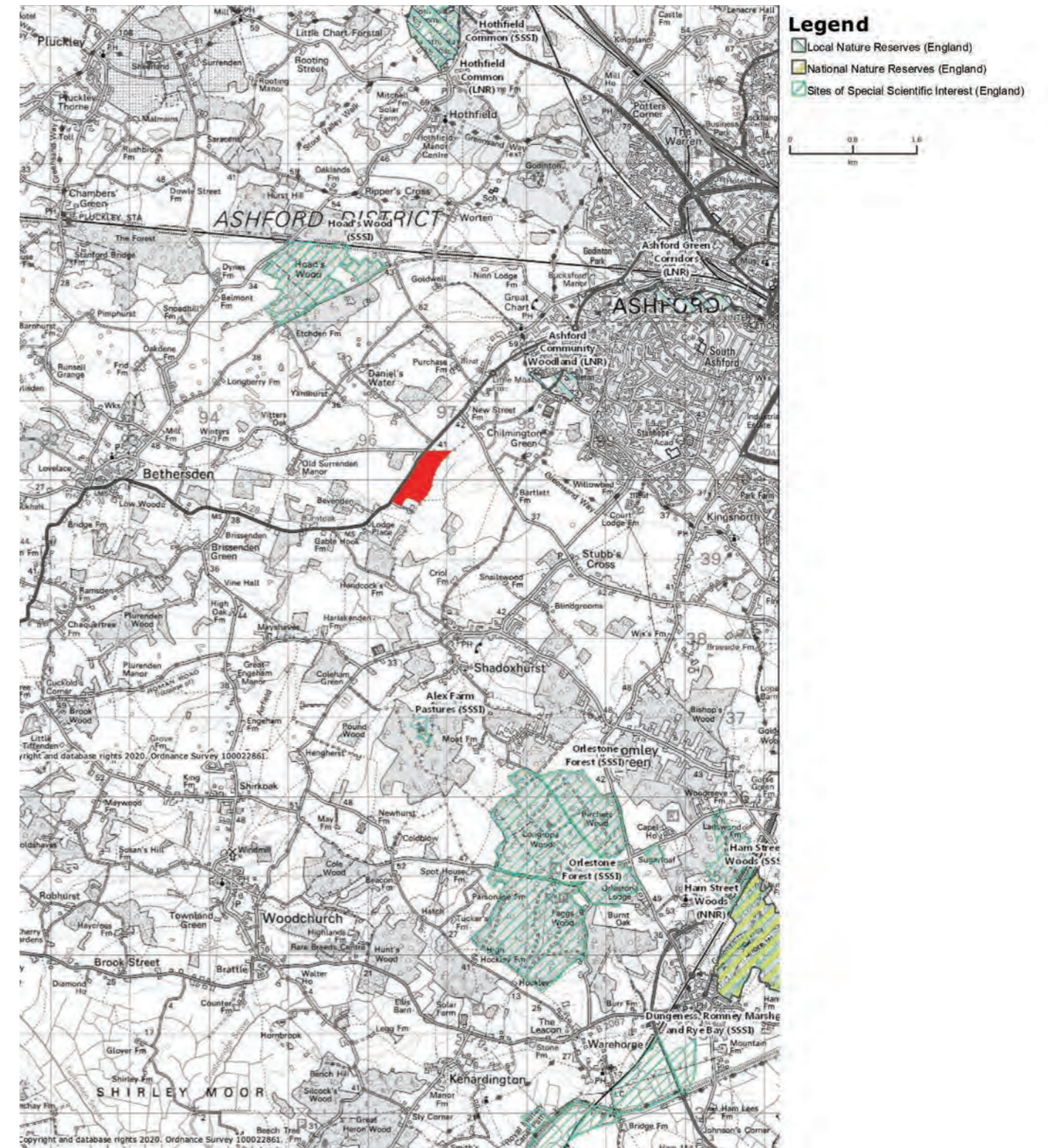


FIGURE 9. National & Local Nature reserves & Site of Specific Scientific Importance (SSSI) location, Source: DEFRA/Magic.

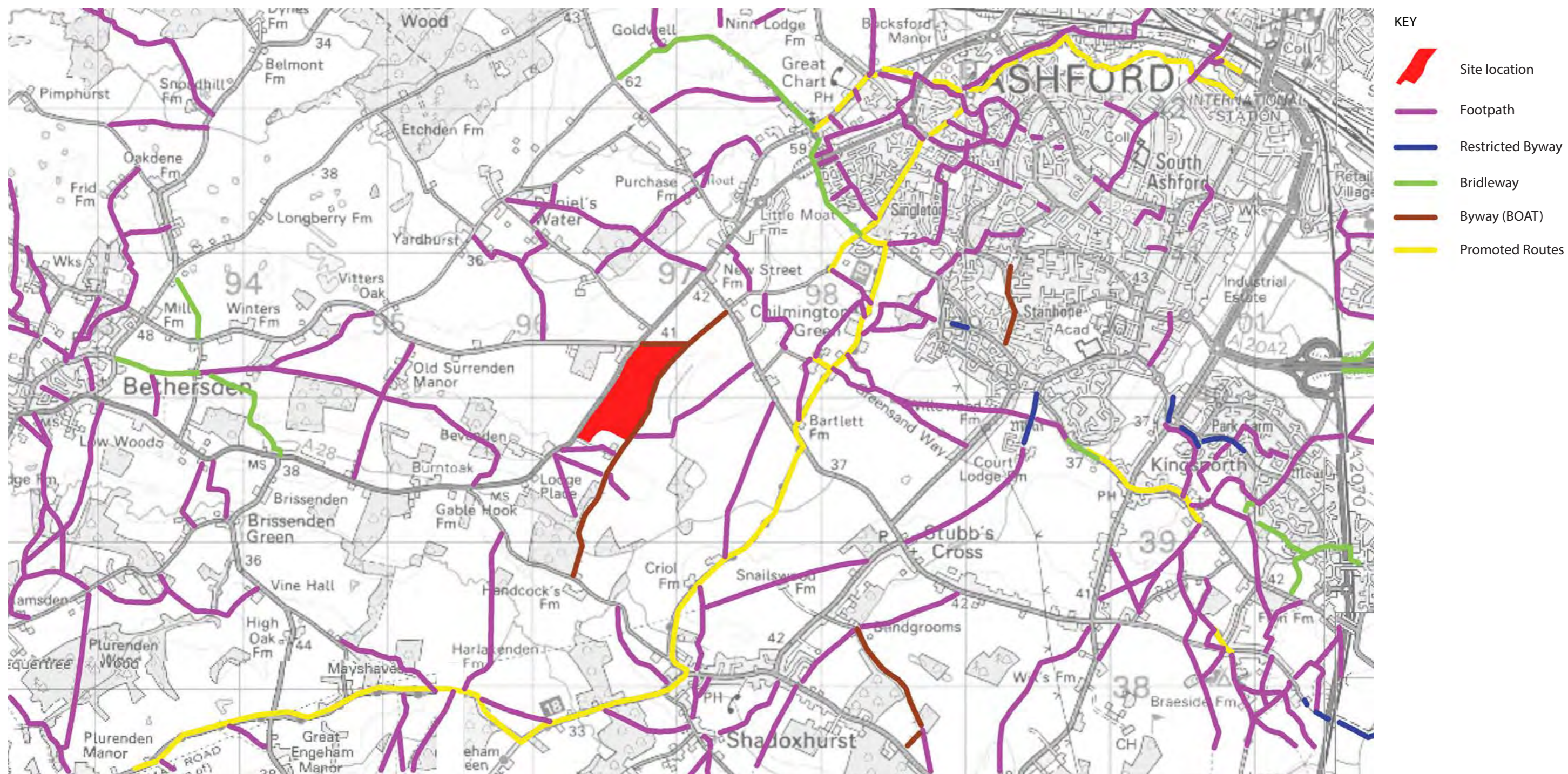
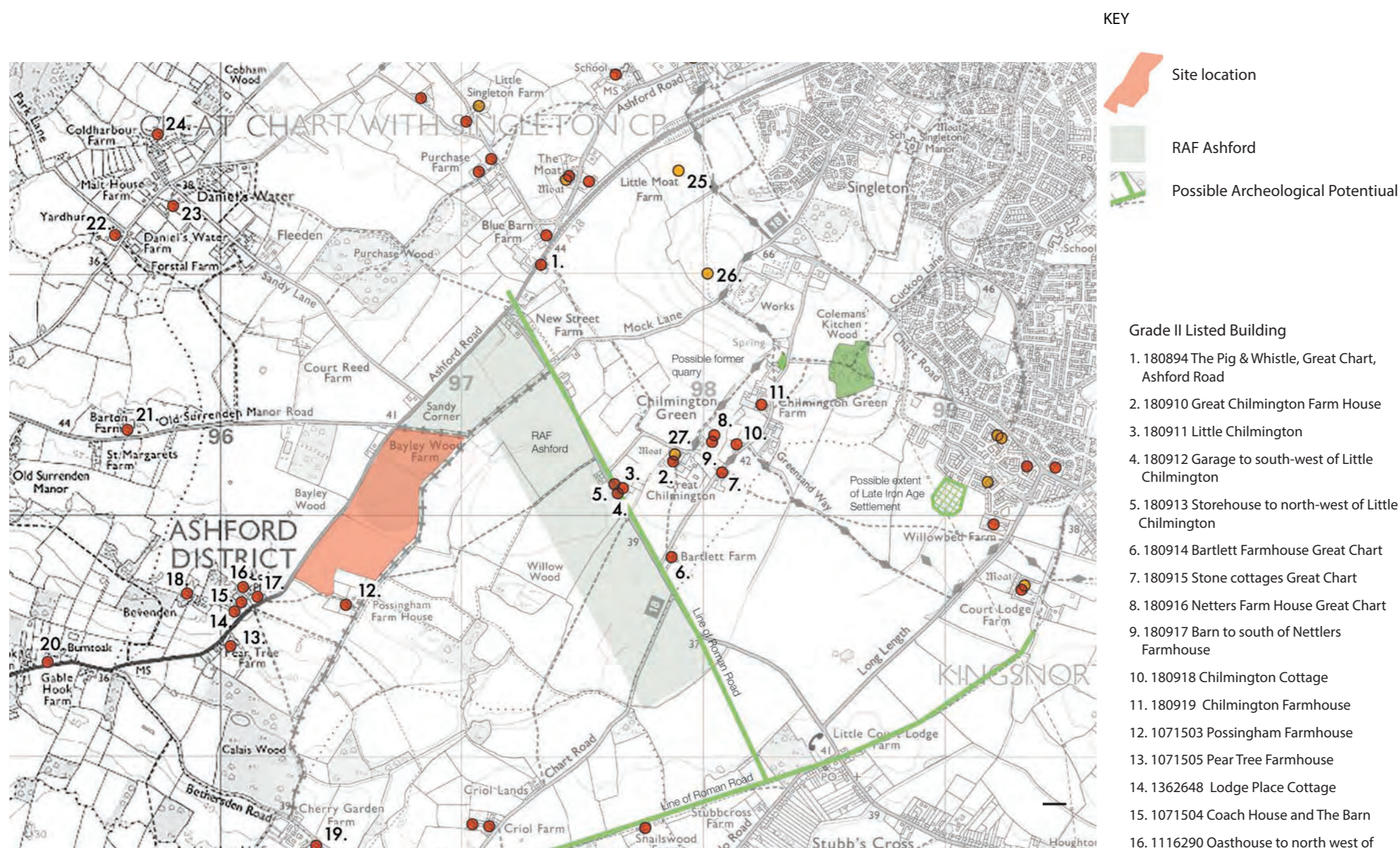





FIGURE 10. Public Rights of Way Source: Kent County Council



KEY

-  Site location
-  RAF Ashford
-  Possible Archeological Potential

Heritage

The significance of impact of the proposed development on nearby heritage assets has been fully assessed by RPS in their April 2021 Built Heritage Statement which concludes:

“Potential Impacts on Significance of Grade II Possingham Farmhouse:

The proposals are considered to be proportionate and appropriate to the Site and respond effectively to the proximity of Possingham Farmhouse.

The proposed development would not alter the intrinsic architectural or historic interest of the listed building’s built fabric, or the extent of that fabric. The proposals also would not form an element of how the farmhouse is experienced within its enclosed grounds, where its significance is most readily appreciated and understood.

It is considered that the proposed development, in causing an erosion of the general rural-agricultural character of the area, represents a very low degree of harm, at the lowest end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm, to the significance of this listed building.”

and;

The proposed development is considered to represent a proportionate and appropriate development that suitably responds to the Site’s proximity to relevant built heritage assets. The proposed development is considered to incur only a very low degree of harm, at the lowest end of the spectrum of less than substantial harm, to the significance of Possingham Farmhouse through the general erosion of its wider agricultural landscape setting. No potential adverse impacts have been identified in relation to the Lodge Place group of listed buildings.”

Grade II Listed Building

1. 180894 The Pig & Whistle, Great Chart, Ashford Road
2. 180910 Great Chilmington Farm House
3. 180911 Little Chilmington
4. 180912 Garage to south-west of Little Chilmington
5. 180913 Storehouse to north-west of Little Chilmington
6. 180914 Bartlett Farmhouse Great Chart
7. 180915 Stone cottages Great Chart
8. 180916 Netters Farm House Great Chart
9. 180917 Barn to south of Nettlers Farmhouse
10. 180918 Chilmington Cottage
11. 180919 Chilmington Farmhouse
12. 1071503 Possingham Farmhouse
13. 1071505 Pear Tree Farmhouse
14. 1362648 Lodge Place Cottage
15. 1071504 Coach House and The Barn
16. 1116290 Oasthouse to north west of Lodge Place
17. 1116283 Lodge Place
18. 1320009 Bevenden Farmhouse
19. 1071394 Handcock’s Farmhouse
20. 1070814 Burnt Oak
21. 1070783 Great Barton Farmhouse
22. 1362634 Weatherboarded Barn about 10 metres to east of Yardhurst
23. 1071479 Tilmans
24. 1320086 Coldharbour Farmhouse


-  Kent Historic Environment Record Data Points
- 25. TQ94 SE32 Possible location of the Old Bakehouse
- 26. TQ94 SE25 Old Chilmington & Twysden
- 27. TQ94 SE11 Great Chilmington Green Manor House and Moat

FIGURE 11. Heritage opportunities and constraints



FIGURE 12. Photographic Viewpoint Locations - Distance Views

3.4 VISUAL BASELINE

A visual appraisal has been undertaken for the proposed development. The baseline appraisal seeks to explore the nature of the existing visual amenity of the area and to establish the approximate visibility of the site from any surrounding receptors. This section provides a baseline analysis of the available views and amenity and is supported by a series of photographic viewpoints (FIGURES 13-77). An overview of wider viewpoint locations can be found in FIGURE 12 (left) and adjacent FIGURE 35 (page 26). An appraisal of the visual effects of the proposed development upon the receptors is summarised in the subsequent effects section.

SETTLEMENTS/SURROUNDING URBAN FORM

The site is readily visible from the A28 (west and south) and Byway AW245 (east), but is largely obscured from the current phases of Chilmington Green to the north. Long views of the site are available from higher ground at Great Chart Ridge

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND OTHER FOOTPATHS

Existing PRoW AW245 runs along the eastern site boundary, AW292 runs along the northern boundary but is subject to a stopping up order, AW239 runs in a south westerly direction from Possingham Farm, with AW220 joining AW245 to the north of

3.5 VIEWS

A series of representative views were assessed for this appraisal. The location of these viewpoints can be seen in FIGURES 12 and 35. In the remainder of this section, the viewpoints are described with regards to their location, main user group(s), and sensitivity. Predicted impact and resulting significance are summarised in the following SECTION 4.

VIEWPOINT 1

LOCATION: Taken from the entrance to the PRoW, AW220, off Chilmington Green Road

DESCRIPTION: Located on Chilmington Green Road looking towards the Application Site in a south westerly direction.

SENSITIVITY TO CHANGE: This PRoW was closed to access at the time of survey but when accessible main user groups experiencing this view are vehicular traffic and users of the PRoW. The sensitivity of these two view groups is regarded to be LOW (VEHICLES) or HIGH (users of the PRoW) with the landscape effected of MEDIUM sensitivity.

PREDICTED IMPACT: The Proposed Development will be largely screened by development of the intervening fields in accordance with the approved Chilmington Green masterplan. Glimpse views, if available, will be softened and screened by proposed structural planting belts along the northern and eastern boundaries which will reinforce existing established hedgerow vegetation. Accordingly, MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT will be LOW or NEGLIGIBLE.

SIGNIFICANCE: With the intervening Chilmington Green development in place the resulting significance of change will be SLIGHT and NEUTRAL from this viewpoint assuming glimpse views of the Proposed Development are available.

MITIGATION: Once fully matured (15-20 years) the proposed structural tree, shrub and enhanced hedge planting will soften and screen any visual impact of the Proposed Development from this viewpoint.

RESIDUAL EFFECTS: Any glimpsed and filtered views of the development, particularly in winter, will continue to remain after the implementation of mitigation measures.



FIGURE 13. Photographic Viewpoint Locations -
Local View1



FIGURE 13. View 1

VIEWPOINT 2

LOCATION: Taken from byway, AW245, near to the field boundary to intersecting the Chilmington Green secondary school site.

DESCRIPTION: Looking towards the Application Site in a south westerly direction with the A28 evident in the background.

SENSITIVITY: Main user groups are users of the byway. The sensitivity of this view group is regarded to be HIGH with MEDIUM landscape sensitivity.

PREDICTED IMPACT: As for View 1, the Proposed Development will be largely screened by development of the intervening fields in accordance with the approved Chilmington Green masterplan, (including development of the site of the new secondary school). Glimpse views, if available, will be softened and screened by proposed structural planting belts along the northern and eastern boundaries which will reinforce existing established hedgerow vegetation. Accordingly, Magnitude of Impact will be LOW or NEGLIGIBLE.

SIGNIFICANCE: With the intervening Chilmington Green development in place the resulting significance of change will be SLIGHT-MODERATE and NEUTRAL from this viewpoint assuming glimpse views of the Proposed Development are available.



FIGURE 16. Photographic Viewpoint Locations -
Local Views 2



FIGURE 15. View 2

VIEWPOINT 3

LOCATION: Taken from byway, AW245, approaching the northern site boundary.

DESCRIPTION: Looking towards the Application Site in a southerly direction with the established boundary vegetation evident along PRoW AW292 (Stopped up).

SENSITIVITY: Main user groups are users of the byway. The sensitivity of this view group is regarded to be HIGH with MEDIUM landscape sensitivity.

PREDICTED IMPACT: With the approved development of Chilmington Green framing the view to the left of the byway, it is likely that the higher elements of the Proposed Development will be visible above retained and enhanced boundary vegetation to the south and east of the site (left in the view). Accordingly, Magnitude of Impact will be MEDIUM to LOW.

SIGNIFICANCE: With the intervening Chilmington Green development in place the resulting significance of change in the short term will be MODERATE and ADVERSE from this viewpoint prior to the implementation of mitigation measures.

MITIGATION: Once fully matured (15-20 years) the proposed structural tree, shrub and enhanced hedge planting will soften and screen any visual impact of the Proposed Development from this viewpoint with significance remaining MODERATE but of NEUTRAL impact.

RESIDUAL EFFECTS: Any filtered views of the development, particularly in winter, will continue to remain after the implementation of mitigation measures.

There is likely to be a direct, permanent effect on the visual amenity of View 3 of MODERATE and MINOR ADVERSE significance following the implementation of mitigation measures.



FIGURE 18. Photographic Viewpoint Locations -
Local View 3



FIGURE 17. View 3

VIEWPOINT 4

LOCATION: Taken from byway, AW245, on the edge of the Application Site boundary.

DESCRIPTION: Looking northwards towards Chilmington Green development zone this view illustrates the current landscape condition to the immediate north of the Application Site. Whilst currently greened fields and hedgerows, this view will be subject to significant and irreversible change upon the implementation of the approved Chilmington Green masterplan.



FIGURE 20. Photographic Viewpoint Locations -
Local Views 4



FIGURE 19. View 4

VIEWPOINT 5

LOCATION: Taken from byway, AW245, on the eastern edge of the Application Site boundary.

DESCRIPTION: Looking westwards towards the core areas of the Application Site in a location where the intervening hedgerow is relatively short and sparse, allowing open views across the site.

SENSITIVITY: Main user groups are users of the byway. The sensitivity of this view group is regarded to be HIGH with MEDIUM landscape sensitivity.

PREDICTED IMPACT: Built development will be visible in the foreground and middle distance, with the building line set back to the west of the proposed SuDS lagoons and structural planting areas. Mitigation measures will include substantial reinforcement of the existing hedgerow boundary, provision of structural woodland belts and riverine type vegetation associated with the lagoon margins. Magnitude of Impact will be MEDIUM to HIGH.

SIGNIFICANCE: There will be a direct, permanent effect on the visual amenity of this view of MAJOR NEGATIVE significance prior to the implementation of mitigation measures.

MITIGATION: Advance tree, hedgerow and marginal planting along the eastern edge of the Proposed Development area once established, will soften the visual impact of the Proposed Development.

RESIDUAL EFFECTS: Any filtered views of the development, particularly in winter, will continue to remain after the implementation of mitigation measures.



FIGURE 22. Photographic Viewpoint Locations -
Local View 5



FIGURE 21. View 5

VIEWPOINT 6

LOCATION: Taken from byway, AW245, on the edge of the Application Site boundary.

DESCRIPTION: Looking northwards towards Chilmington Green development zone this view illustrates the current landscape condition to the east of the Application Site. Whilst currently greened fields and hedgerows, this view will be subject to significant and irreversible change upon the implementation of the approved Chilmington Green masterplan. However, in contrast to View 4, the Application site will be separated from the adjacent Chilmington Green development areas by a wide swath of retained natural landscape, preserved to enhance local biodiversity and to provide amenity space for the southern areas of approved development. This “green lung” is well placed to serve the Possingham Farm proposals and aids in the long-term greening of the byway.



FIGURE 23. View 6



FIGURE 24. Photographic Viewpoint Locations -
Local Views 6