

Tunbridge Wells - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of Proposed Allocation Sites within the High Weald AONB



6.3: Royal Tunbridge Wells

Revision B

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6.3 Royal Tunbridge Wells

Royal Tunbridge Wells sites considered:

RTW 12 - Land adjacent to Longfield Road

RTW 13 - Land at Colebrook House

RTW 18 - Land to the west of Eridge Road at Spratsbrook Farm

RTW 23 - Land to the north of Hawkenbury Recreation Ground

See Figures R1 and R2 for site locations. The High Weald AONB is shown as a green wash.

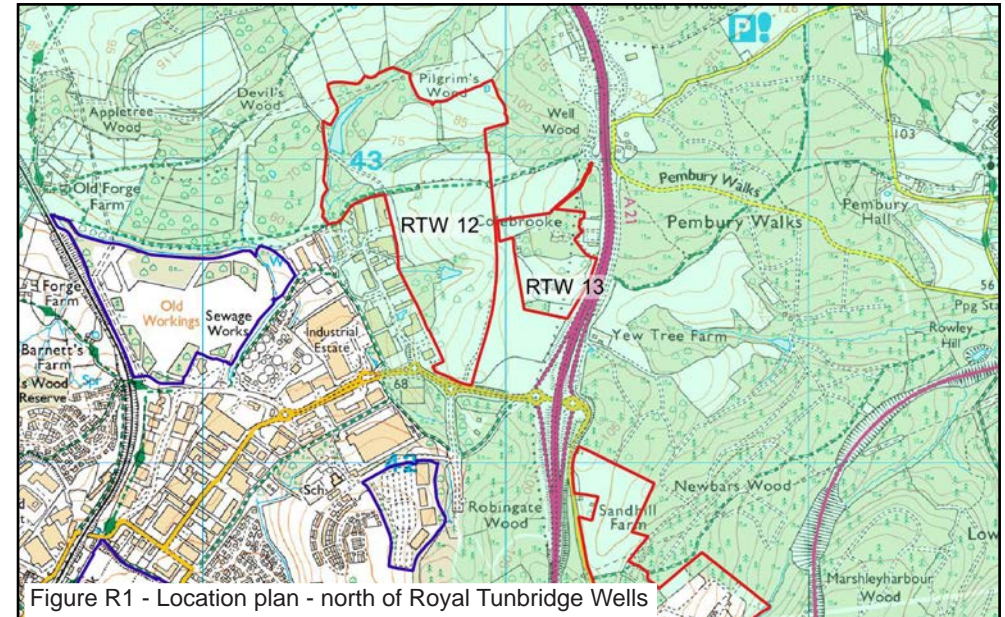


Figure R1 - Location plan - north of Royal Tunbridge Wells

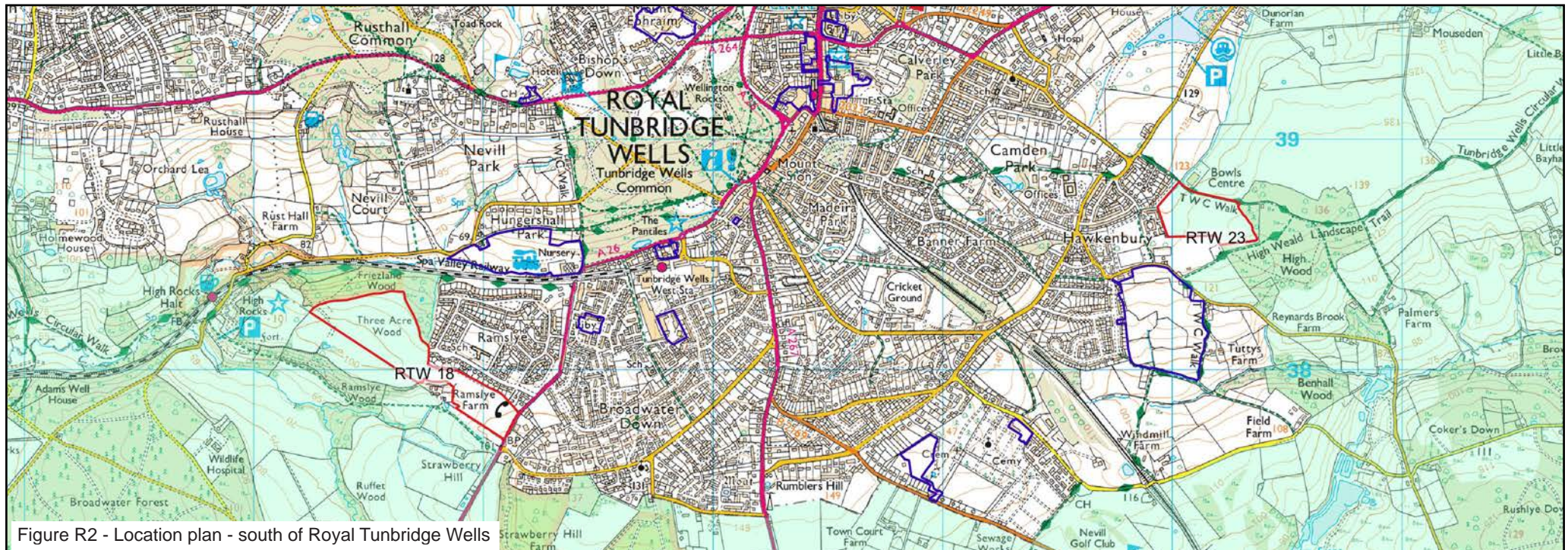


Figure R2 - Location plan - south of Royal Tunbridge Wells

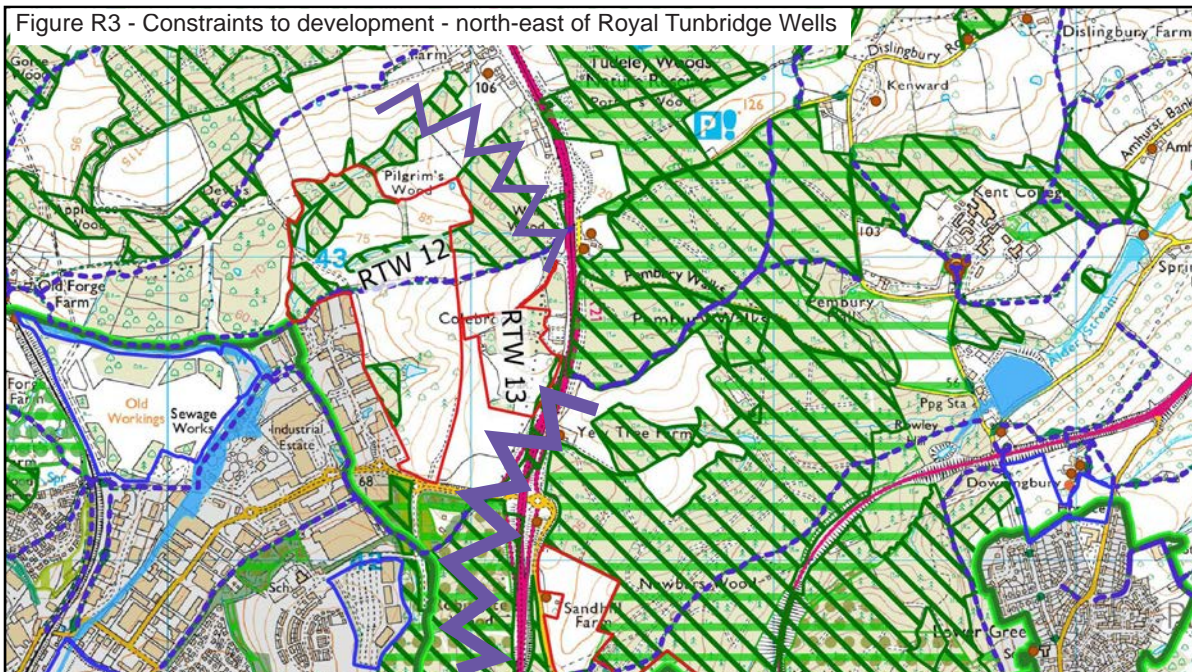
6.3.1 Settlement Context

- 6.3.1.1 Royal Tunbridge Wells is the main settlement within Tunbridge Wells Borough, located approximately 50km south-east of central London. The A21 dual carriageway lies to the east and north of the town, connecting to the M25 approximately 17km to the north-east of the town. The settlement of Tonbridge lies beyond the A21 to the north and the village of Pembury lies beyond the A21 to the north-east. East Grinstead lies approximately 17.5km to the west. The boundary line to Wealden District, within East Sussex, abuts the southern edge of the town and bisects Site RTW 18.
- 6.3.1.2 Royal Tunbridge Wells has a nucleated historic core, which has expanded along transportation routes, primarily the A26, with clusters of settlement forming and expanding as landform allows. Steep valleys remain unsettled and create green wedges into the town, some of which are now protected by designation. The settlement is bisected by main roads including the A26 (north - south-west), A264 (east - west) and the A267 (south). A railway line runs through the town from north-east to south-east. A secondary, scenic railway line, the Spa Valley Railway, runs west out of the town.
- 6.3.1.3 The town originated as a spa town and has expanded over time. It now provides a range of facilities, employment opportunities and places to live. Facilities include theatres, music venues, shops, schools, a museum and art gallery, eating and drinking establishments and sports and leisure facilities. Tunbridge Wells Common is located to the west of the town centre, in the heart of the settlement. A large industrial and commercial estate is located to the north-east of the town.
- 6.3.1.4 Royal Tunbridge Wells is located on the band of sandstone associated with the High Weald. The landscape is undulating and much of the town is located on the high ground of localised ridges. Areas of the town contain exposed sandstone outcrops, including Wellington Rocks and Toad Rock. Springs, ponds and streams are common features of the landscape within the town. The River Grom flows west out of the town within a steep-sided valley.
- 6.3.1.5 The town is surrounded by, but is itself excluded from, the High Weald AONB and the Green Belt. A large area of the town centre is covered by Conservation Areas, which include numerous listed buildings. The sites analysed within this study area are located around different parts of the town and are influenced by different development constraints.
- 6.3.1.6 Sites RTW 12 and 13 are located to the north-east of the town, between an industrial estate and the A21. This area is located within the AONB and contains blocks of Ancient Woodland. Robingate Wood is located to the south of the sites and is designated Ancient Woodland and a Local Wildlife Site. A Scheduled Monument is located to the north of the sites at Castle Hill. Scattered listed buildings are located to either side of the A21, to the north-east of the town. The other key consideration within this area is maintaining the separate identities of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury, an adjacent village. The A21 is a strong separating feature, however the

settlements lie in close proximity. See Figure R3 for mapped constraints.

- 6.3.1.7 Site RTW 18 lies to the south-west of the town, with the southern edge defined by the borough boundary. Designations that are likely to affect the development potential of the site (in addition to the AONB and Green Belt) include:
- Ancient Woodland;
 - A Scheduled Monument at High Rocks;
 - Conservation Areas; and
 - The Local Wildlife Site at Friezeland Wood.
- See Figure R4 for mapped constraints.
- 6.3.1.8 Site RTW 23 lies to the south-east of the town. Designations that are likely to affect the development potential of the site (in addition to the AONB and Green Belt) include:
- Ancient Woodland;
 - The Local Wildlife Site at High Wood;
 - The Registered Park and Garden at Dunorlan Park; and
 - Conservation Areas to the north and west.
- Land to the south and north-west of the site are protected 'Local greenspace'. These include a recreation ground and allotments respectively. See Figure R4 for mapped constraints.
- 6.3.1.9 A small part of both of these southern sites lie outside the AONB.
- 6.3.1.10 The edges of Royal Tunbridge Wells are well served by public rights of way. Each of the sites within the study area have a public right of way either within or in close proximity to the site.

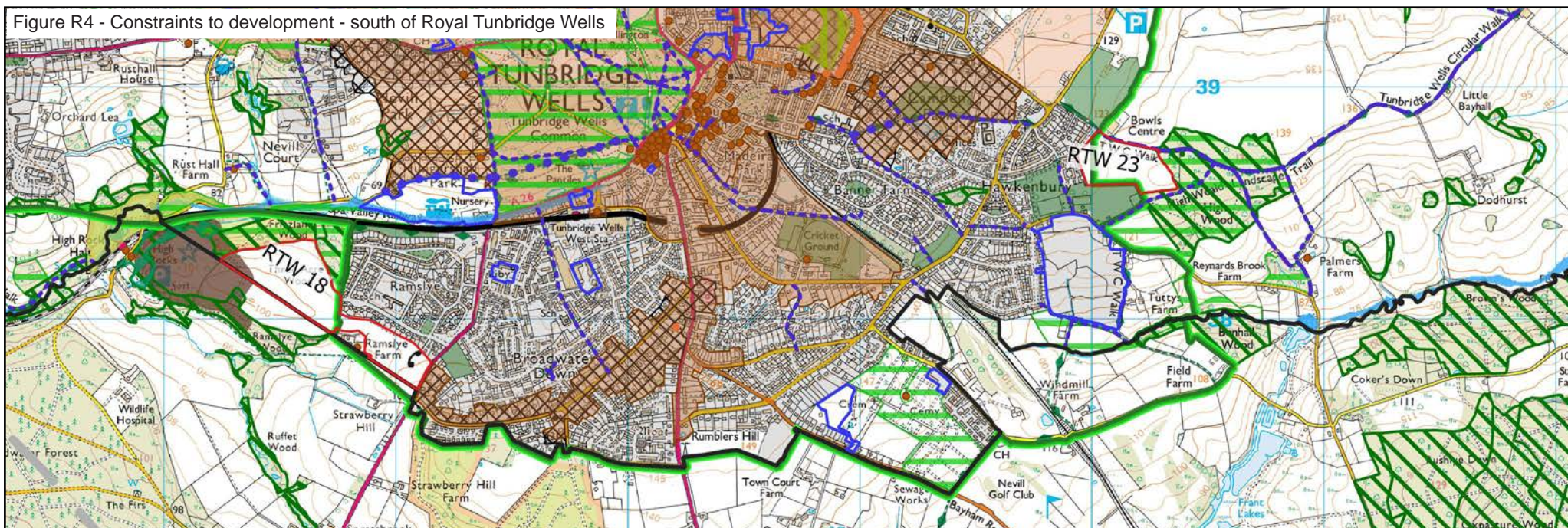
Figure R3 - Constraints to development - north-east of Royal Tunbridge Wells



KEY

- Study Sites
- Other draft allocation
- Borough boundary
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Ashdown Forest 7km Buffer (EN13)
- SSSI
- Ancient woodlands
- Local Wildlife Site
- Sites of Nature Conservation Value
- Local Nature Reserve
- Candidate Local Nature Reserve
- Conservation areas (EN7)
- Grade I Listed Building
- Grade II* Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Building
- Scheduled monuments
- Registered Historic Parks and Gardens
- Byway Open to All Traffic
- Public Bridleway
- Public Footpath
- Restricted Byway
- Country parks
- Open Access Land
- Local greenspace (EN17)
- Flood zone 3b
- Flood zone 3a
- Flood zone 2
- Safeguarded railways
- Arcadian areas (EN19)
- Existing limits to built development (STR1)
- Essential separation to settlement

Figure R4 - Constraints to development - south of Royal Tunbridge Wells



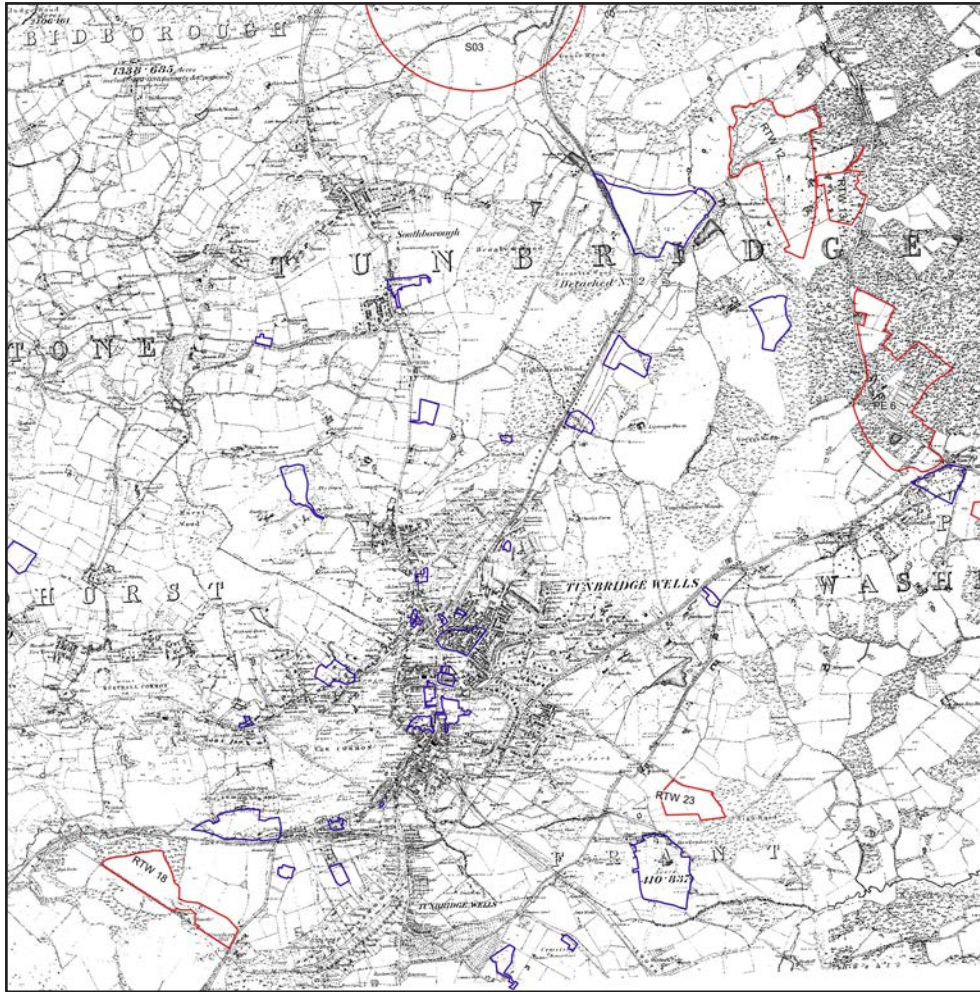


Figure R5 - OS Map 1871-1878

6.3.2 Settlement Evolution

- 6.3.2.1 Royal Tunbridge Wells originated as a spa retreat and has expanded dramatically over the last 100 years, incorporating adjacent farms and the village of Hawkenbury. Figures R5 - R7 illustrate the historic evolution of the town.
- 6.3.2.2 Sites RTW 12 and 13 are located to the north-east of the town and are removed from the historic core of the town. In the 1871-1878 map (figure R5), both of these sites appear to be associated with Colebrook Park, which was then located to the west of site RTW 12. The two sites were linked, with the south-eastern area of site RTW 12 located within the same field boundary as the western side of site RTW 13. The western side of RTW 13 was woodland. The northern part of site RTW 12 is consistent in land use and field pattern between these historic maps and the current situation.
- 6.3.2.3 Figure R6 shows the original Colebrook Park replaced with a farmstead and Colebrook House shown in its current location. The western paddock and southern parkland were still part of the wider landscape shared with the RTW12 site. The layout and content of site RTW 13 has changed little since the 1900's. The southern part of site RTW 12 has changed more, with the removal of historic field boundaries and trees. The pond and woodland areas remain.
- 6.3.2.4 Site RTW 18 is very similar in field pattern and land use to the historic maps (Figures R5-7), however the western field includes the amalgamation of a number of smaller scale historic field boundaries.
- 6.3.2.5 The field pattern of Site RTW 23 is consistent with the historic field pattern from the 1900's. The earlier map (Figure R5) shows that the field is an amalgamation of two smaller fields.

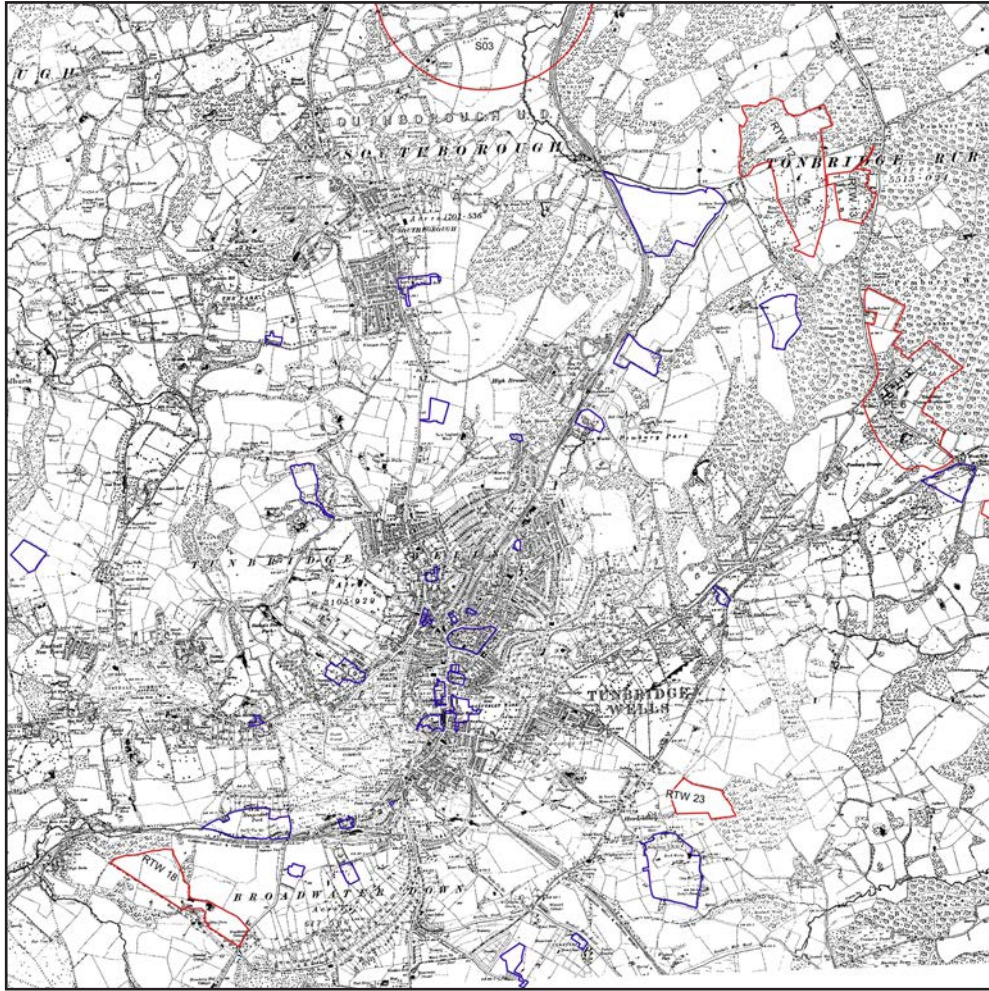


Figure R6 - OS Map 1897-1900

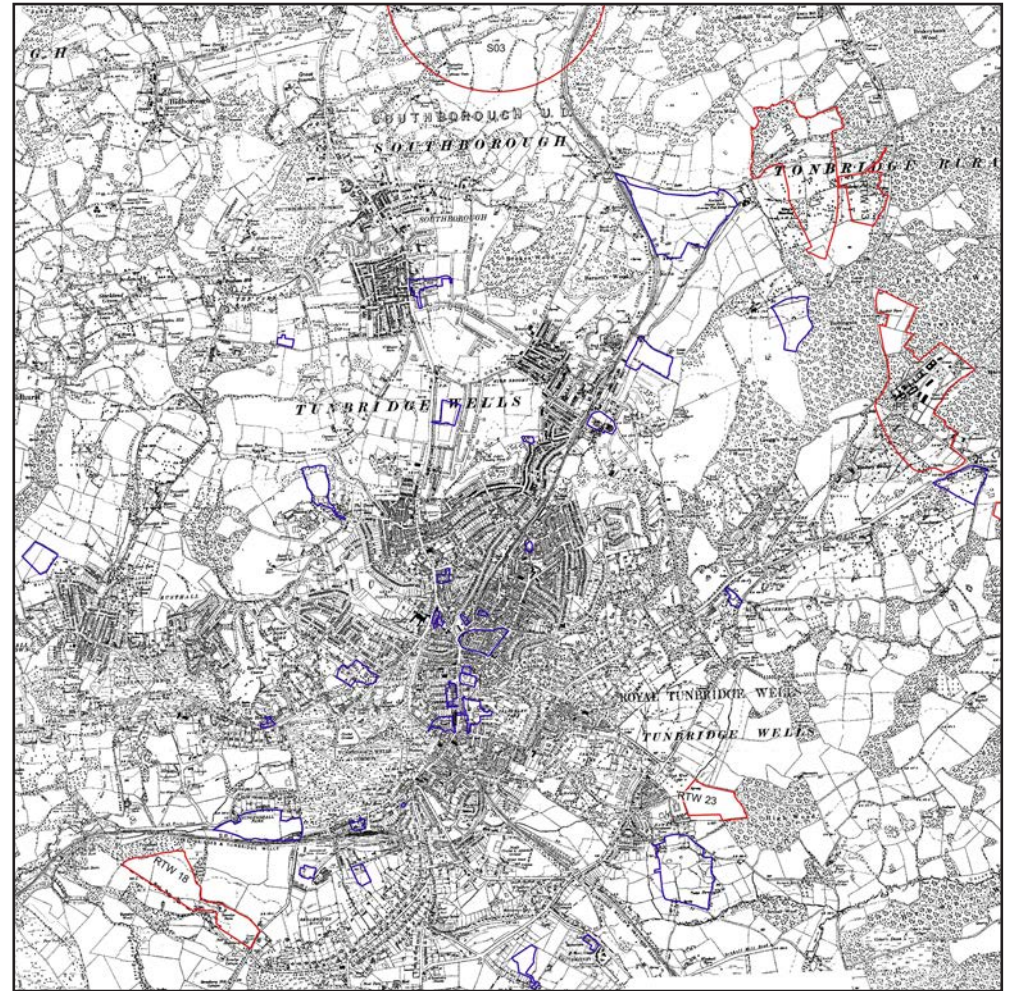
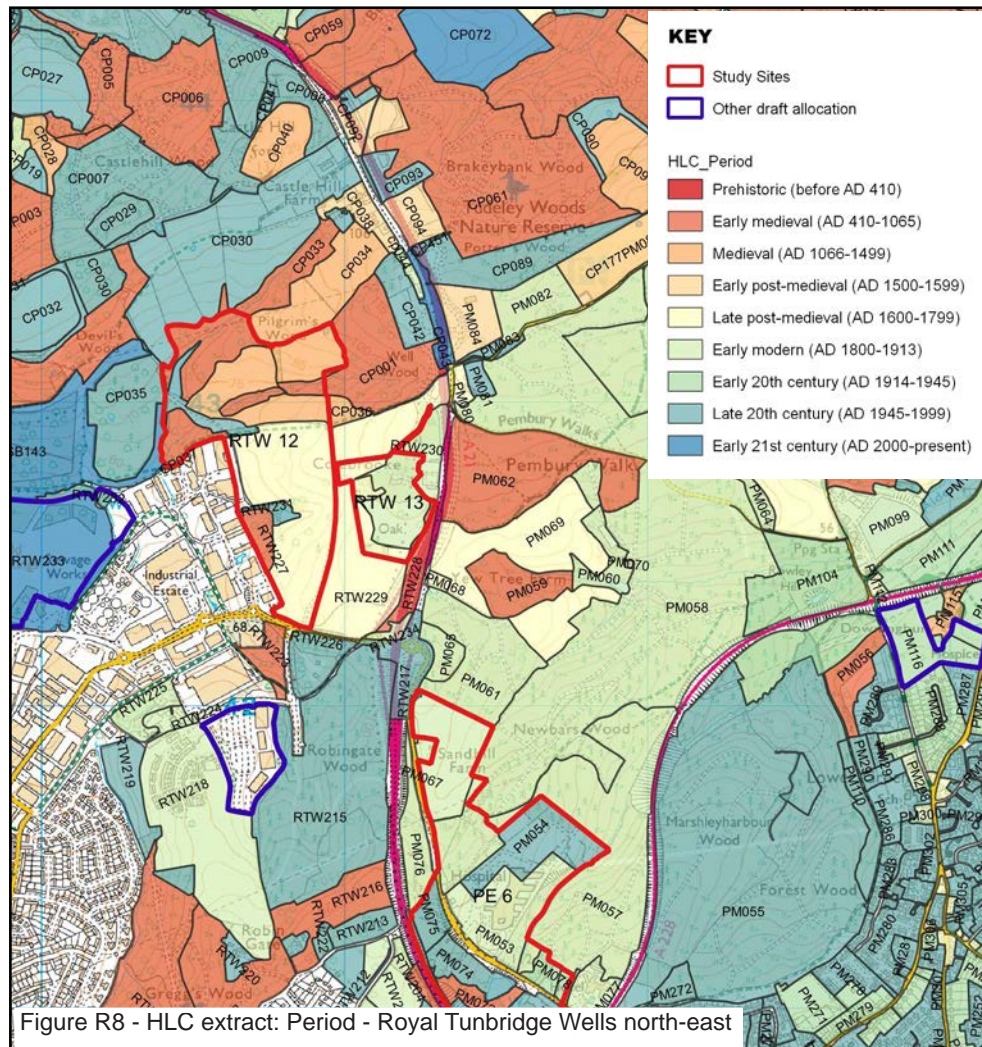


Figure R7 - OS Map 1929-1951

6.3.3 Historic Landscape Character

6.3.3.1 The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation for Tunbridge Wells Borough was updated in 2017. Extracts from the study, relevant to the Royal Tunbridge Wells sites, are shown on the table opposite. This data has been used to gauge the historic context of the town and surrounding landscape, which has then been tested through fieldwork in order to analyse which elements are reflected in the current landscape and settlement setting.



Site	HLC ID	Type	Period	Additional information
RTW12	CP001	Gill	Early medieval	Pre-1801 replanted other woodland
	CP033	Shaws	Late 20th century	Regular assarts with straight boundaries
	CP033	Gill	Early medieval	Medium irregular assarts and copses with wavy boundaries
	CP034	Cohesive assart fields	Medieval	Medium irregular assarts and copses with wavy boundaries
	CP035	Regenerated secondary woodland	Late 20th century	Medium irregular assarts and copses with wavy boundaries
	CP036	Cohesive assart fields	Medieval	Medium irregular assarts and copses with wavy boundaries
	CP037	Gill	Early medieval	Pre-1801 scarp and steep valley woodland
	RTW227	Coppices	Early medieval	'Large irregular assarts with wavy or mixed boundaries
	RTW231	Regenerated secondary woodland	Late 20th century	'Large irregular assarts with wavy or mixed boundaries
	RTW229	Parkland	Late post-medieval	'Large irregular assarts with wavy or mixed boundaries
RTW13	RTW229	Parkland	Late post-medieval	'Large irregular assarts with wavy or mixed boundaries
	RTW230	Large landscaped gardens	Early modern	'Large irregular assarts with wavy or mixed boundaries

Site	HLC ID	Type	Period	Additional information
RTW18	RTW057	Aggregate assart fields	Medieval	'Small regular fields with wavy boundaries
	RTW058	Large farmstead	Medieval	'Small regular fields with wavy boundaries

Site	HLC ID	Type	Period	Additional information
RTW23	RTW099	Aggregate assart fields	Early modern	'Small regular fields with wavy boundaries

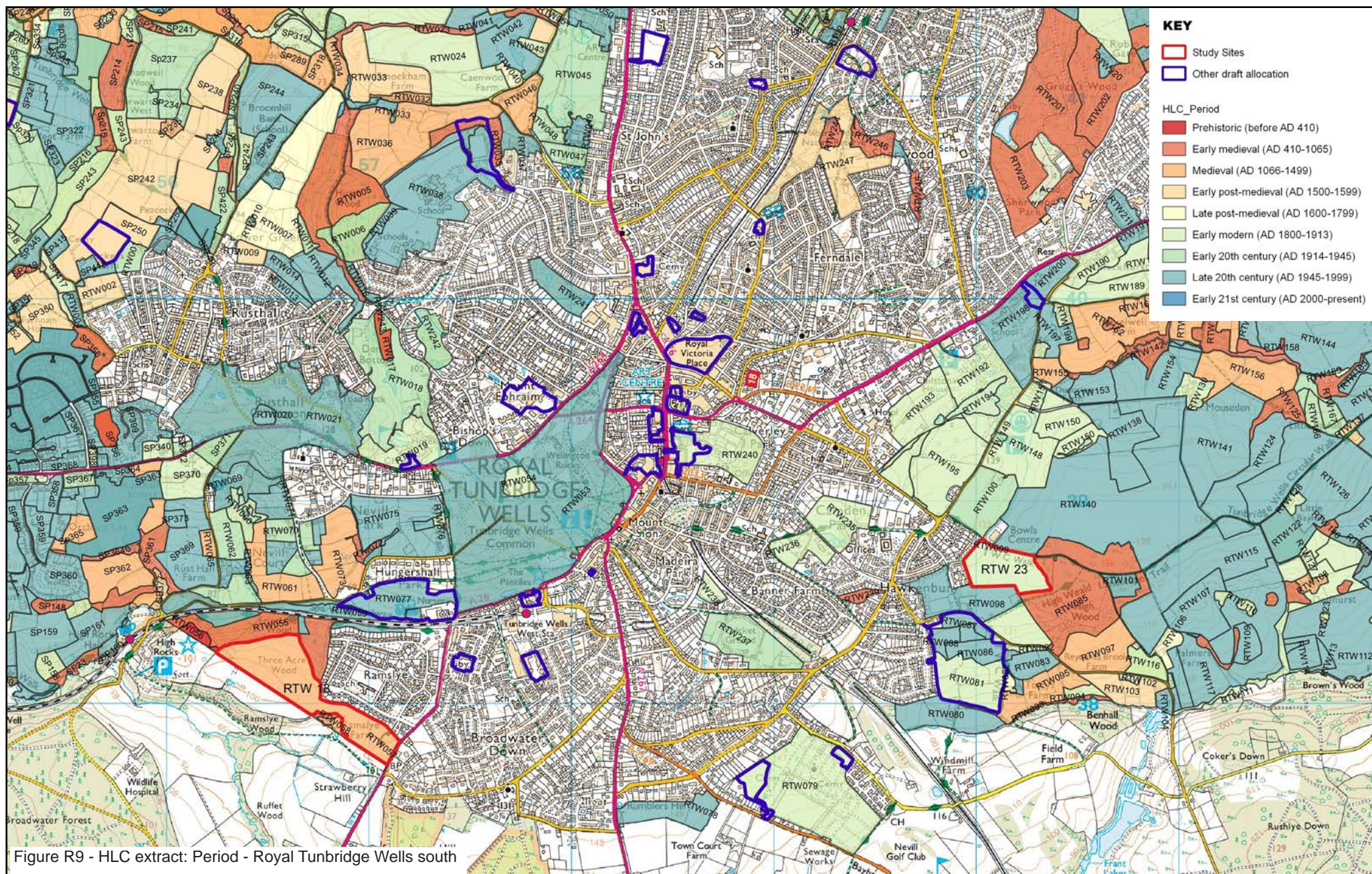


Figure R9 - HLC extract: Period - Royal Tunbridge Wells south

6.3.4 Landscape Character

6.3.4.1 The Tunbridge Wells Borough Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) SPD (LUC December 2017) has subdivided the borough into a number of Character Types, which are then broken down into Landscape Character Areas. The landscape surrounding Royal Tunbridge Wells falls within three character types: Wooded Farmland, Forested Plateau and Open Farmland.

6.3.4.2 Two of the Royal Tunbridge Wells sites (RTW 12 & 13) are located within the Forested Plateau landscape type, within the 'Pembury / Capel Forested Plateau' character area. The type is described as:

'Comprehensive forest cover comprising a mosaic of semi-natural woodlands, coniferous plantation and managed coppice and heath.'

6.3.4.3 Key characteristics of the 'Pembury / Capel Forested Plateau' Character Area include:

- 1) *'Sandstone forming a high plateau rising to rounded hill tops in the centre of the forest, cut by long valleys of streams flowing northwards to the Medway, creating the locally characteristic topography of deep valleys and ghylls.'*
- 2) *Extensive woodland and forest cover dominates and tends to conceal local topographic variations and limits views both within the area and beyond.*
- 3) *Wooded slopes form a backdrop to views from the surrounding areas including from Royal Tunbridge Wells.*
- 4) *Within the woodland, grassland pastures bounded by thick shaws and sweeps of parkland provide an important contrast.*
- 5) *Areas of relict heathland on the light soils of the sandstone ridges with two extensive areas of heathland restoration at Pembury Heath and Brenchley/ Cinderhill Wood.*
- 6) *A relative sense of remoteness despite its proximity to Royal Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and two main roads slicing through the area. Well served with recreational routes allowing good access on foot.*
- 7) *A self-contained landscape with a 'remote' secretive character with comparatively little settlement apart from Pembury village.*
- 8) *Occasional rural lanes, vernacular buildings and small scale irregular fields provide an intricate pattern and human scale as well as a sense of history.'*

6.3.4.4 'Valued features and qualities' that are unique to the character area, relevant to the study sites and sit outside of the special qualities noted within the AONB Management Plan include:

'7) The woodlands, wooded ghylls and mosaic of pasture, heathland, wildflower meadows provide a rich perceptual experience for the local population to experience wildlife from footpaths and recreational routes.

9) The sense of history provided by features including estates, parklands, historic farmsteads, the historic medieval landscape pattern of assarts and fields, wooded ghylls, ancient woodland and rural lanes.'

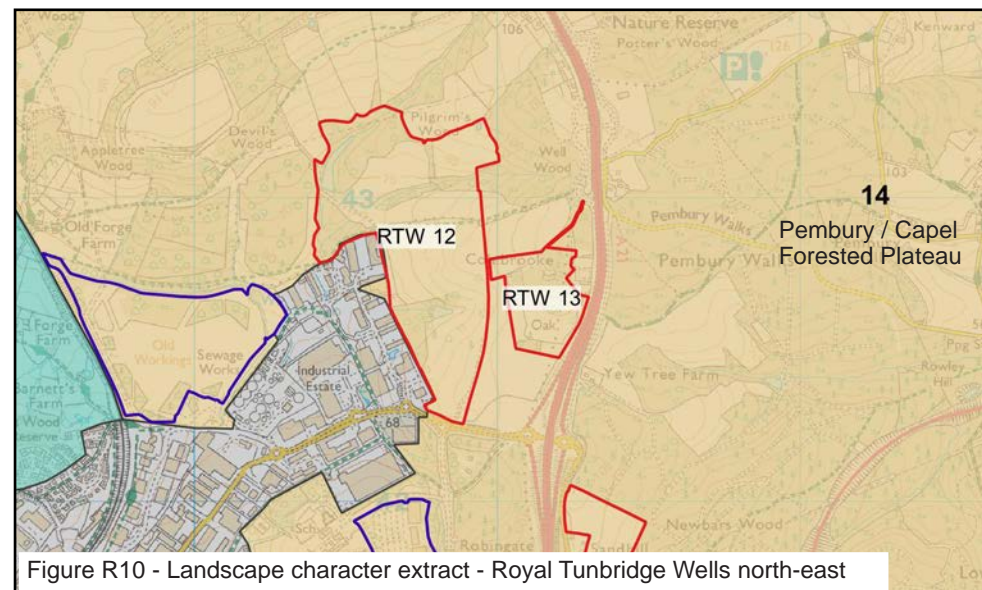


Figure R10 - Landscape character extract - Royal Tunbridge Wells north-east

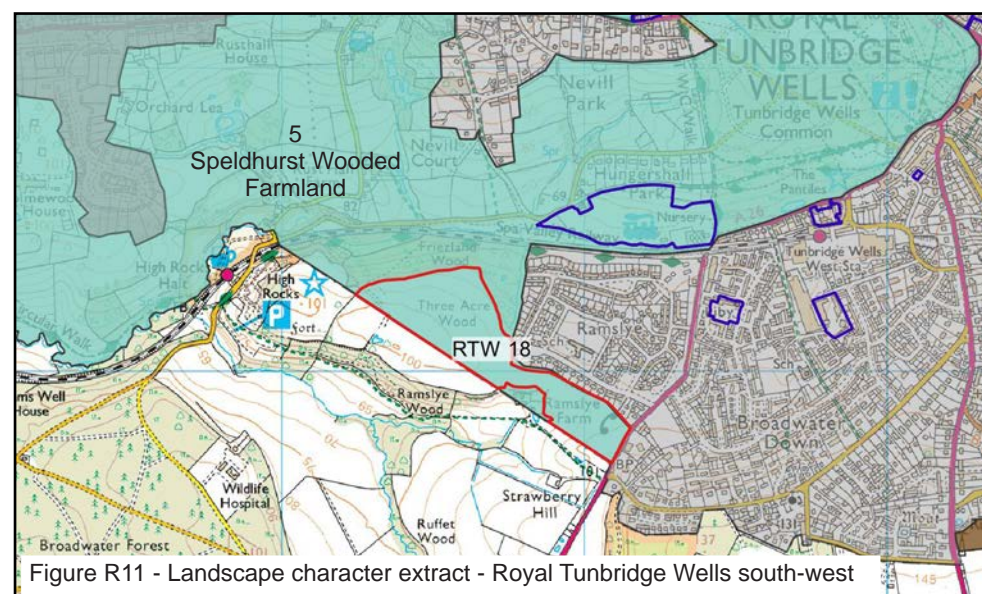


Figure R11 - Landscape character extract - Royal Tunbridge Wells south-west

6.3.4.5 Site RTW 18 is located within the 'Wooded Farmland' Character Type, to the north and west of Royal Tunbridge Wells, which is described as:

'Extremely varied and complex landscape. Distinct , high ridges with weathered sandstone outcrops intersected by ravine woodland, beech and holly hedges and sunken lanes. These contrast with unimproved pasture and common land. Other characteristics include rolling upland areas, incised by valleys, with small settlements and pastures hidden within a framework of deciduous, ghyll and shaw woodlands.'

6.3.4.6 The site falls within the 'Speldhurst Wooded Farmland' Character Area, which has the following key characteristics:

- 1) 'Complex topography with open, smooth ridges of sandstone radiating out from Royal Tunbridge Wells, cut by deep tributary valleys.
- 2) Conspicuous outcrops and crags of sandstone which have been weathered into unusual, distinctive forms.
- 3) Hedgerows dominated by holly and beech with areas of gorse common in boundaries and verges.
- 4) Varying field sizes from large-scale open pasture and arable on the ridge tops to small, irregular fields within the valleys.
- 5) Small villages on the ridge tops, with church spires and towers at Bidborough, Southborough, Speldhurst and Rusthall, are prominent skyline features.
- 6) Ornamental designed parklands and country estates on the ridge tops.
- 7) Extensive, panoramic views available out across surrounding countryside and open hill tops.
- 8) Long, narrow ghyll woodlands, hidden within deep clefts of the valleys, support a particularly rich, lush vegetation cover.
- 9) Commons, permeating the built up areas of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough, retain remnants of their former heathland character.
- 10) Networks of narrow lanes following ancient routeways, descend and climb the valleys and ridges. Dark tunnels of holly and steep banks of sandstone are distinctive features.
- 11) Broad swathes of permanent and semi-improved pasture on the hill slopes represent an internationally important reserve of acidic and neutral grassland.
- 12) Haysden surrounded by open, pasture valley.
- 13) A relative rural character despite its proximity to Royal Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge. Well served by recreational routes allowing good access to nature.'

6.3.4.7 Key 'valued features and qualities' relating to the 'Speldhurst Wooded Farmland' Character Area and relevant to the site include:

'7) The role of the landscape, particularly the Commons, in providing a setting to the town of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The landscape contributes a distinctive identity to the town – historically, visually and providing balance between developed and undeveloped areas and an unequivocal boundary between town and countryside right to the town centre...'

6.3.4.8 Site RTW 23 is located within the 'Open Farmland' character Type, to the south-east of Royal Tunbridge Wells, which is described as:

'An open, arable landscape along a high, broad ridge extending from the eastern edge of Royal Tunbridge Wells, forming a stark contrast with the surrounding areas which are characterised by pasture surrounded with wooded shaws and ghylls. The edges of the area are smaller in scale and contain landscape parkland and medieval fields.'

6.3.4.9 The site falls within the 'Bayhall Open Farmland' Character Area, which has the following key characteristics:

1. 'Distinctive topography with a high sandstone ridge providing extensive, panoramic views out across the successive wooded ridges of the High Weald.
2. An open arable ridgetop with local contours and undulations infilled and smoothed out creating a bland, expansive character lacking local landscape detail.
3. Intersecting valleys to the north and south provide areas of diversity with permanent pasture and ghyll woodlands.
4. Blocks of woodland and individual mature trees on the ridgetop are a very important landscape feature and ecological resource.
5. Large 'historic' farm complexes dispersed across the area on the upper slopes.
6. At the northern and western edges of the area, an ornamental/ parkland character providing a transition between Royal Tunbridge Wells town and the wider countryside.
7. Ancient routeways running along the ridgelines, now forming rural lanes, tracks and recreational footpaths, particularly the High Weald Landscape Trail.
8. The remnant historic landscape of medieval assart fields, wooded shaw boundaries and ancient routeways which retains a rural character despite the area's proximity to Royal Tunbridge Wells.'

6.3.4.10 'Valued features and qualities' that are unique to the character area and relevant to the site includes:

'8) The rural character of the area despite its proximity to Royal Tunbridge Wells, created by the character of rural lanes, individual mature trees and local vernacular materials.'

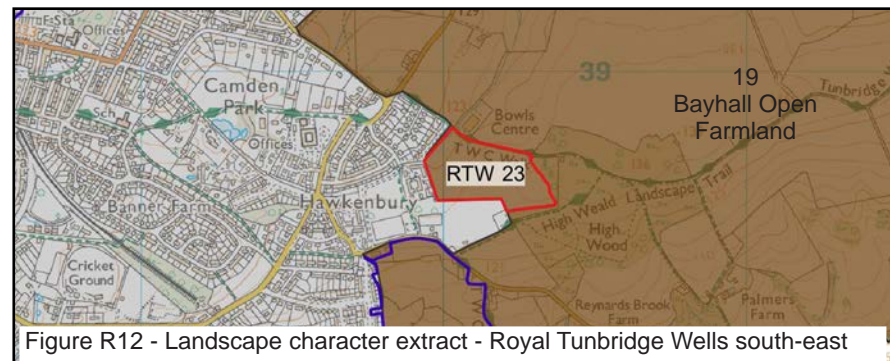


Figure R12 - Landscape character extract - Royal Tunbridge Wells south-east

6.3.5 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

- 6.3.5.1 In February 2017 the council published the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment of Countryside around Tunbridge Wells, produced by LUC. The tables and figures below provide extracts from the assessment, which have been collated into table format for ease of reference.
- 6.3.5.2 Draft Allocation sites RTW 12 and 13 are located within areas that have been assessed as having a lower landscape sensitivity (particularly Pe3), than much of the rest of the landscape surrounding the town. Both sites RTW 18 and RTW 23 have been assessed as having a higher sensitivity to development.

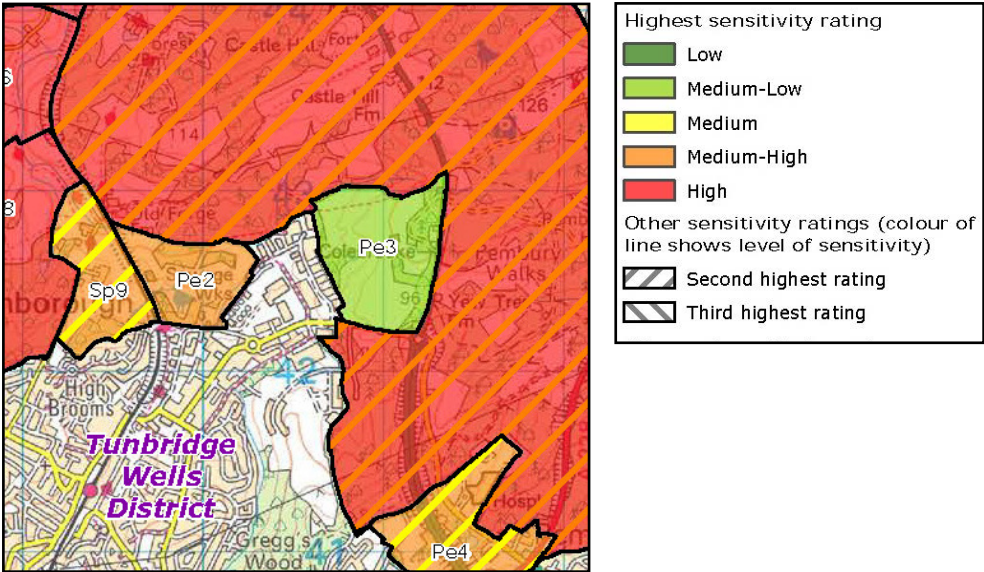
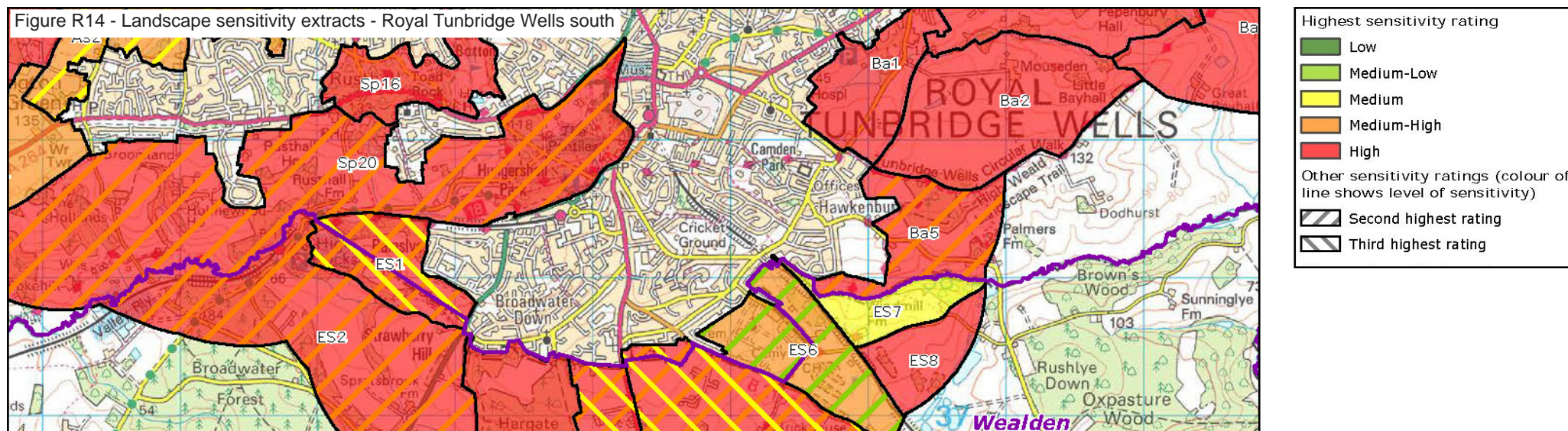


Figure R13 - Landscape sensitivity extracts - Royal Tunbridge Wells north-east

Study Site (s)	Sensitivity Sub-Area	Sensitivity rating	Sensitivity text - conclusions
RTW 12 (most) RTW 13	Pe3	Medium (medium development)	There is some sensitivity associated with the undulating slopes of this sub-area, rising up above existing development immediately to the west, but there is no inconsistency with settlement form in the broader Tunbridge Wells context, in which 'inward-facing' development typically occupies sloping higher ground, including the new development at Knights Wood to the south of Longfield Road. The sub-area's location between commercial development on Kingstanding Way, Longfield Road and the A21 means that it is relatively well contained visually, and already significantly influenced by built development and traffic movement. Overall sensitivity to small scale development is considered to be medium-low. It is important to retain a wooded settlement setting, particularly to residential areas, so there would be greater sensitivity to development which had a skyline impact. Large scale development on this rising ground would have a greater impact on landscape character than the adjacent commercial development on lower ground to the west, which although prominent locally has a sense of being contained within the landscape rather than dominating it, so there is a medium sensitivity to medium-scale development and medium-high to large-scale development.
RTW 12 (part)	Pe1 (remainder of the site)	High (medium development)	In terms of its physical and historic character this area is a characteristic High Weald AONB landscape. Landform and land cover increase sensitivity by creating distinct separation from the urban edge, a distinction emphasised by the large scale industrial and commercial buildings that form the settlement edge to the west of the A21, The area's woodlands and topography are important to the landscape setting of Tunbridge Wells, Southborough, Pembury and Tonbridge, and they are visually important as part of an AONB landscape. At a localised scale, landscape containment offers scope to limit the impact of built development, but it also helps to preserve strong perceptual qualities over large parts of the sub-area, limiting the visual impact of built development and major transport routes. Sub-area PE1 is therefore considered to have a generally high sensitivity to any scale of development; however there may be pockets of land associated with the A21 or existing development where sensitivity to limited small-scale development which could be relatively contained in the wider landscape would be medium-high.

Study Site (s)	Sensitivity Sub-Area	Sensitivity rating	Sensitivity text - conclusions
RTW 18	ES1	High / Medium-High / Medium (small development)	The sub-area's historic value and role as part of the historic and rural setting of the Royal Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Conservation Area are key sensitivities, and separation from the urban edge by woodland is a strong sensitivity for the western and central parts of the sub-area. Overall sensitivity is high in the western and central parts of the sub-area. The eastern end of the sub-area has medium sensitivity adjacent to the exposed edge of Ramslye, but sensitivity increases with distance from the settlement edge, as the landform become more related to the Ramslye Wood ghyll, more exposed to views from the north-west and more intrusive in views out from the edge of Broadwater Down.



Study Site (s)	Sensitivity Sub-Area	Sensitivity rating	Sensitivity text - conclusions
RTW 23	Ba5	High / Medium-High (small development)	This eastern half of this area has a strong rural character, with characteristic High Weald AONB landscape elements. The strong landforms of the Teise valley and their containing woodlands and field boundaries mask visual relationships with the future settlement edge, and views from the higher ground create a strong relationship with the wider rural landscape, so sensitivity to all scales of development is high. The western half has a stronger association with the urban edge, but proximity to High Wood adds

6.3.6 AONB Landscape Character Plans

6.3.6.1 The High Weald AONB Management Plan contains a 'Statement of Significance' which defines the qualities that make the High Weald special at a national level. This statement sets out 5 key 'character components' that contribute to the unique natural beauty of the area and make the High Weald distinctive. For each of these components the High Weald Management Plan lists out key characteristics, issues and objectives. This information has been used within this report to analyse the potential effects of development on the High Weald AONB.

6.3.6.2 The five defining components of character defined for the High Weald include:

1. Geology, landform and water systems – a deeply incised, ridged and faulted landform of clays and sandstone with numerous gill streams.
2. Settlement – dispersed historic settlement including high densities of isolated farmsteads and late Medieval villages founded on trade and non-agricultural rural industries.
3. Routeways – a dense network of historic routeways (now roads, tracks and paths).
4. Woodland – abundance of ancient woodland, highly interconnected and in smallholdings.
5. Field and Heath – small, irregular and productive fields, bounded by hedgerows and woods, and typically used for livestock grazing; with distinctive zones of lowland heaths, and inned river valleys.

6.3.6.3 These characteristic components have been mapped within figures R15 and R16. The Ancient woodland has not been included as this information has been identified and discussed within section 6.3.1.

Figure R15 - AONB character components - Royal Tunbridge Wells north-east

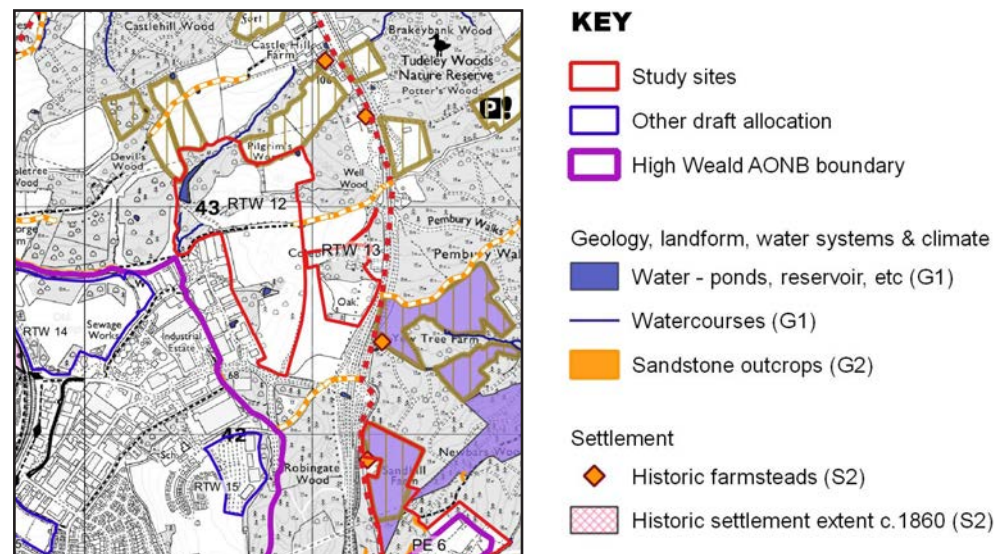
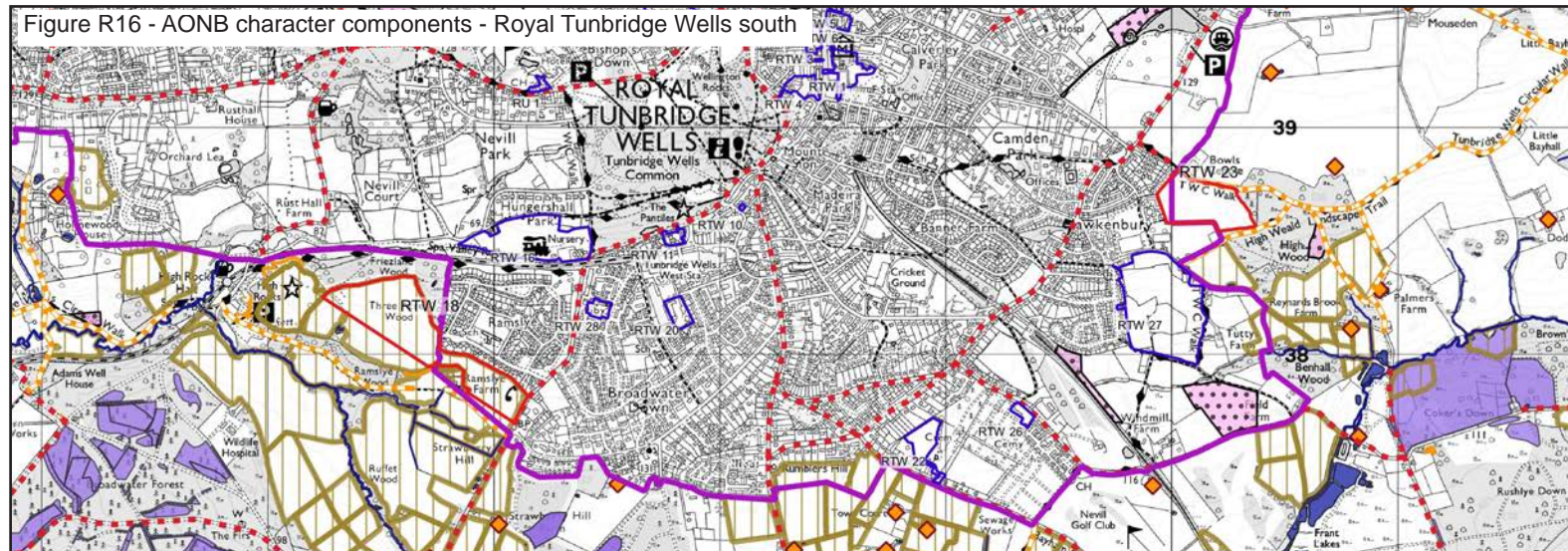


Figure R16 - AONB character components - Royal Tunbridge Wells south



Site : RTW 12 - Land adjacent to Longfield Road;

Site : RTW 12 - Land adjacent to Longfield Road;

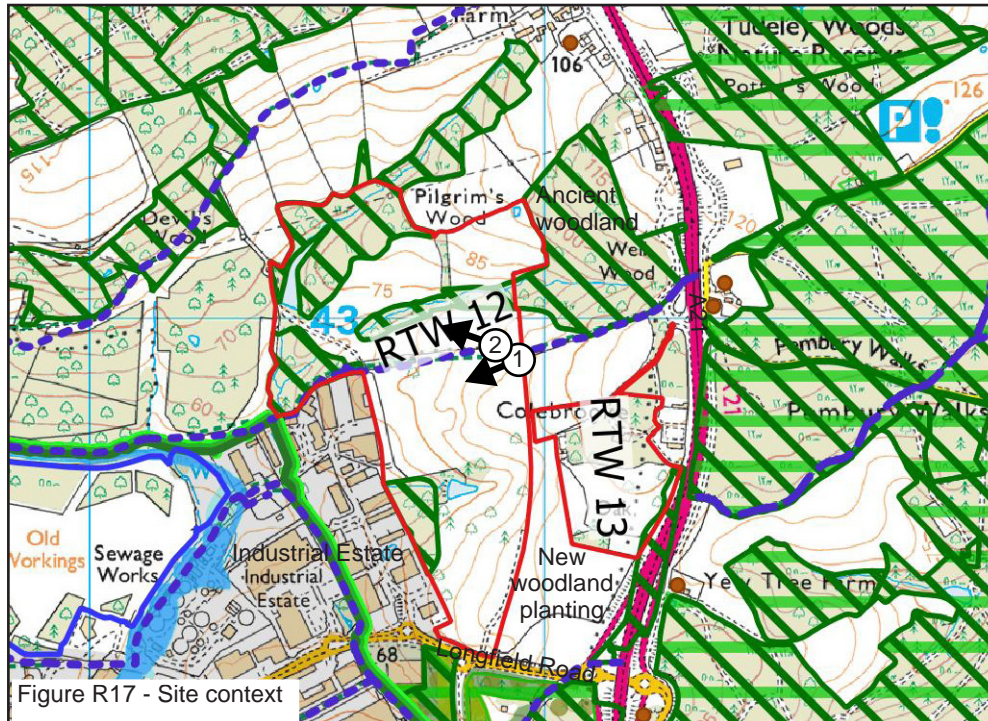


Figure R17 - Site context

Site location and context:

The site is located to the north-east of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The site is bound to the west by a large commercial / industrial estate and to the south by Longfield Road. The A21 dual carriageway lies approximately 275m to the east of the eastern site boundary. Much of the land between the A21 and the site consists of woodland (both new and translocated ancient woodland) and hedgerows created as part of the A21 landscape and ecological mitigation works, with the established Pilgrims wood and Well Wood located to the north and north-west of the site respectively. Part of Pilgrims Wood falls within the site. The properties at Colebrooke are located to the east of the site, west of the A21.

The site consists of one large and two smaller fields in pasture. The larger field is mown rather than grazed. The northern part of the site contains blocks of woodland that are associated with Pilgrim's wood and Well Wood. Streams are located within the woodland. A large pond is located to the north-west of the site within an area of woodland. A second pond is located near the centre of the site, with a small block of woodland to the west. The land within the site is undulating but is generally located on west facing slopes.

Designations and development considerations:

The site lies within the AONB, Green Belt and a biodiversity opportunity area. The majority of the woodland within the site is designated Ancient Woodland. A public right of way runs east-west across the site, within the northern section of the site.

Development of the site has the potential to affect woodland and public rights of way, which were recorded as valued elements of the landscape within the Tunbridge Wells Landscape Character Assessment.



Photograph 1: View south-west across the site towards Royal Tunbridge Wells.



Photograph 2: Looking north-west across the site from the eastern section of the footpath that crosses the site.

Landscape baseline and key features	Visual baseline and key viewpoints	Perceptual and experiential qualities	Representativeness of AONB Qualities (with reference to the relevant character components and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan)
<p>The site can be split into two distinct areas of landscape character. The two northern fields and associated areas of woodland are essentially rural, have intrinsic landscape value and have a tangible contribution to the character and scenic beauty AONB.</p> <p>The southern field is influenced by the industrial estate to the west and the noise from the A21, to the east. The site is contained from the wider landscape to the east by landform and woodland. The immature woodland planting contributes to this enclosure and it's contribution will increase as the trees establish.</p> <p>The northern part of the southern field is separated slightly by the footpath and associated trees that cross the site. This area forms a transition between the remainder of the southern field and the rural landscape to the north of the site.</p> <p>A public footpath crosses the site and appears well used. There is evidence that the site is used for private recreation including, bicycle tracks, off -road tracks, clay pigeon shooting and paintball. It is unknown how frequently these activities take place, and none were in progress at the time of the site visit. It is understood that the site is regularly used for boot fairs and travelling fairgrounds.</p> <p>The AONB landscape has a high landscape value, however susceptibility to the type of change proposed varies across the site, with the northern fields having a higher susceptibility to change than the southern field.</p> <p>Key landscape features within the site (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copses of Ancient Woodland; • Other undesignated copses and shaws; • Mature individual trees within the site; • Ponds and streams; • Small fields in pasture to the north of the site; and • The large field that forms the majority of the site. 	<p>The site is generally well contained from viewpoint locations outside of the site boundary.</p> <p>There are open views of the site from the public footpath which runs through the site. Views consist of a rural landscape to the north and south, heavily influenced by the industrial estate to the west. There are long views available from the eastern end of the footpath, which is located on higher ground. Once beyond the site boundary, views are screened by existing trees, emerging woodland and the buildings of the industrial estate.</p> <p>Partial and glimpsed views of the site can be seen from the footpath near Castle Hill Farm, located to the north of the site and Devil's Wood, to the north-west. The existing industrial estate is visible from this location.</p> <p>There are partial and views of the site from within the industrial estate to the west, however views from surrounding properties are limited. Partial views of the site can be seen from the access on Longfield Road to the south. Views of the site from the A21 dual carriageway to the east are limited to the slip road adjacent to the site. In time the establishing planting at the edge of the road is likely to obscure these views.</p> <p>There are some distant views from the high ground to the west of the site, at the railway viaduct and on paths near Alder Shaw and Nightingale Farm.</p> <p>Visual receptors (public views) to be considered (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkers on the public footpaths within the site; • Walkers using the public footpath between Castle Hill Farm and Devil's Wood; • Motorists on Longfield Road; and • People within the industrial estate, including visitors and staff. 	<p>The site is formed of irregular fields enclosed by woodland. The two northern fields are assarts with considerable time depth. The southern field shares some of the same characteristics but has been subject to more recent change and is much larger in scale. The condition of landscape features is generally good.</p> <p>The landform within the site is complex and provides visual interest. There are long views from the high ground to the east, which are framed by trees and woodland, but extend out to surrounding hills to the west. The lower ground to the west of the site is more enclosed and is more intimate.</p> <p>The site is generally attractive and rural in character, however there are a number of detractors, which change the perception of the site. The industrial estate to the west of the site is a highly visible detracting feature, which is discordant with the surrounding rural landscape and influences much of the southern field. The noise from the A21 dual carriageway is apparent and prevents any notion of tranquillity.</p> <p>The use of the site is also at odds with the surrounding agricultural landscape, with tracks looping around the site, detritus from clay pigeon and paint-ball activity and, at the west of the site, a container surrounded by seemingly disused furniture and equipment, which is clearly visible from the western section of the public right of way. This area of the site appears neglected.</p> <p>There are no known associations with people, places, events, art or literature.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: The site has a complex topography and contains characteristic water features and ghylls. The low-lying land to the north-west of the site was contributing to flood alleviation at the time of the survey. No rock formations were seen during the field survey.</p> <p>Settlement: The site has a strong relationship to the industrial estate on the edge of Royal Tunbridge Wells and development of the site would be consistent with this pattern of development. The current edge to settlement is harsh and could be improved through sensitive development. The footpath through the site provides a connection to the wider countryside and there is the potential that this could be improved upon.</p> <p>Routeways: There are no historic routeways mapped within the site, however the footpath that runs through the site connects to a mapped routeway to the east. Part of the footpath to the north of the site is also mapped as a historic routeway.</p> <p>Woodland: The site contains areas of woodland, particularly to the north and the majority of which is designated Ancient Woodland. The additional tree belts within the northern part of the site and the recently planted woodland to the east of the site contribute to woodland connectivity. The site does not currently contribute to woodland accessibility.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The land within the site is formed of grassland and woodland. The fields within the site are part of a medieval field system, however there are no known archaeological or historic assets associated with the fields themselves. The site contains priority woodland habitat.</p> <p>Other qualities: The noise of the A21 adversely affects tranquillity and the associated lighting affects the darkness of the landscape. The existing industrial estate influences the character of the site to the west.</p> <p>Summary: The northern fields and woodland display many of the AONB qualities. The southern field is more contained from the wider landscape and has more influence from the adjacent industrial estate, particularly on the lower ground to the west.</p>

Proposals:

Site : RTW 12

Figure R18: Allocation proposal (From policy)

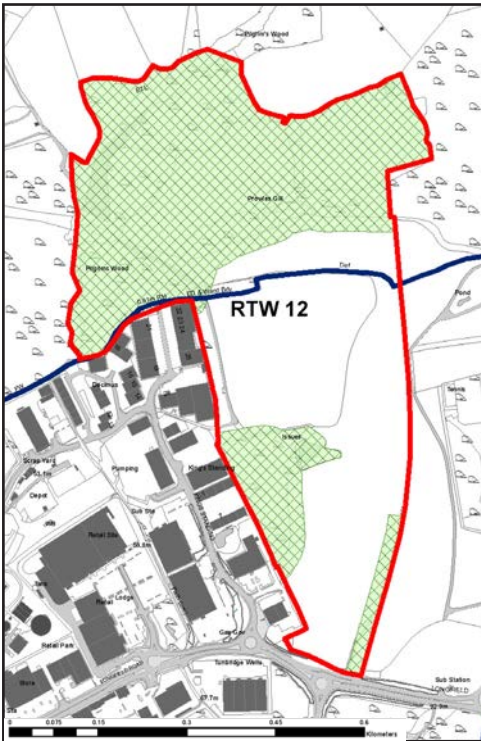
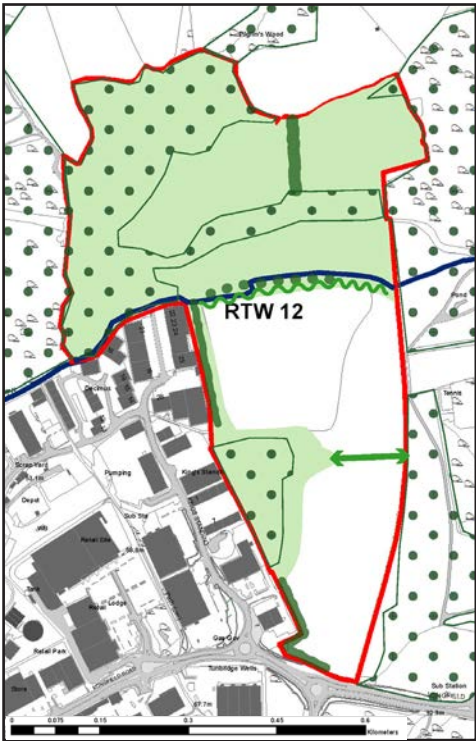


Figure R19: Strategic Green Infrastructure



- KEY
- Existing GI retained
 - Proposed public open space
 - Proposed landscape buffer
 - Existing / proposed parkland / woodland
 - Proposed landscape feature / connection

Description of proposed development:

A business park allocated for employment uses including ‘approximately 80,000sqm (net) business (B1), general industrial (B2), and storage and distribution (B8) floorspace’.

Proposed mitigation measures:

Mitigation relating to reg 18 Allocation policy AL/RTW 12 and associated proposal plan	Additional mitigation measures proposed within this study
Retention and enhancement of the Ancient Woodland and two northern fields (Allocation Plan). Retained open space to form part of a strategic landscaping scheme (Policy)	Retention of the land to the north of the public right of way within public open space.
Provision of increased accessibility and links to the wider public right of way network (Policy).	Retain the individual mature trees lining the existing footpath.
Improvements to environmental quality, to include net gains in biodiversity across the site (Policy).	Provide a new east-west corridor, to link existing areas of habitat.
Provision of appropriate surface water drainage (Policy).	Retain the existing tree belts along the western site boundary.
Requirement for an arboricultural survey and LVIA to inform the site layout (Policy).	Establishing height parameters for the proposed development and testing visual effects through the production of wireframe images from a number of agreed viewpoints.

Landscape and recreational opportunities:

Approximately 50% of the site is proposed for retention as open space which would retain all Ancient Woodland, the two northern assart fields and additional areas of woodland / tree belts. Within this space there is opportunity for improved woodland management, enhancement for biodiversity and opportunities for informal recreation. The additional measures outlined within the proposed Strategic Green Infrastructure plan would allow further tree retention and would protect the amenity of the public right of way that crosses the site.

There is the opportunity to provide pedestrian and cycle connections through the site to the public rights of way located to the east and south of the site. New informal footpaths and routes could also be created within the proposed open space to the north of the site. These could include naturalistic play or fitness elements. There may also be the opportunity to provide a small number of visitor parking spaces, which would allow increased access to the northern open space.

Potential Landscape effects (Assuming no mitigation)	Potential effects on Visibility (Assuming no mitigation)	Assessment of effects against the landscape character components of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (assuming no mitigation)	Potential to avoid or reduce adverse effects (draft policy AL/RTW 12, the proposed GI plan for the site and the text on mitigation measures opposite, set out the proposed mitigation for the site)
<p>The retention of the characteristic woodland and northern fields protects the areas of the site with the highest contribution to landscape character.</p> <p>Development on the lower slopes of the potential allocation would have limited effects on the character of the wider landscape, however tall / large buildings on the higher ground to the east could have more wide ranging effects. The magnitude and subsequent significance of these effects would be subject to detailed design.</p> <p>There would be measurable adverse effects within the proposed development area, however these effects have the potential to be balanced by the retention of key landscape features within the site and enhancements within the retained open space (approximately 50% of the site).</p> <p>Predicted effects on landscape features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Woodland - retained and protected; • Other copses and shaws - majority retained within open space; • Mature individual trees - potential for loss; • Ponds and streams - retained; • Northern fields - retained; and • Southern field - lost to the development. <p>The effects on recreation could be negative as the existing footpath runs through the proposed development area. The character of the footpath is likely to be adversely affected. There is potential to improve recreational opportunities within the retained open space to the north of the site.</p>	<p>The site is contained by woodland and this containment would increase when the immature woodland to the east of the site establishes.</p> <p>There would be open views of the proposed development from the public footpath that runs through the site. There is the potential for significant adverse change to the character of the baseline view, particularly when looking north. The views from the sections of the footpath beyond the site boundary are unlikely to change, due to their existing containments by existing trees, emerging woodland and the buildings of the industrial estate.</p> <p>There would be partial and glimpsed views of the proposed development from the footpath near Castle Hill Farm, located to the north of the site. The proposed development would be seen in the background to the view and would be seen in the context of existing development. The existing industrial estate is visible from this location.</p> <p>The proposed development would be visible from within the industrial estate to the west and from the access on Longfield Road to the south, however these views would not be a significant departure from existing views.</p> <p>The proposals are unlikely to be visible from surrounding properties or from the majority of the A21, however this will depend on the height and scale of the proposed built form.</p> <p>Development on the high ground to the east of the potential development area, is likely to be visible in distant views from the high ground to the north and west of the site, however the development would be seen in the context of the existing industrial estate. The proposals would have a higher magnitude of effect if they were to skyline within these views.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: No water features, or sandstone outcrops would be adversely affected by the proposed development. Potential for improvements to waterbodies. Proposals within the development area are likely to affect existing landform. The effects on climate conditions fall outside the scope of this assessment.</p> <p>Settlement: The retention of half of the site as open space provides opportunities to enhance connections to the countryside in an area of the AONB, where historic connectivity has been affected by the construction of the A21. The existing footpath connection is likely to be adversely affected as a result of the proposed allocation. The proposed location of development is in keeping with the existing pattern of development in this area.</p> <p>Routeways: Development adjacent to the routeway to the east of the site is likely to introduce urbanising features to the routeway. The routeway to the north of the site is unlikely to be adversely affected by the proposed development.</p> <p>Woodland: The proposed allocation would not result in the loss of Ancient Woodland or mapped woodland, however the mature individual trees within the site are likely to be affected. There is the potential for access to and the sustainable management of woodland to be improved.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The proposals involve the loss of agricultural land.</p> <p>Other qualities: The proposed development has the potential to open up access to new areas of the High Weald and improve opportunities for recreation. The site is already affected by light pollution and noise, which are local detractors.</p>	<p>Retention of the existing intact landscape to the north of the site would maintain an attractive and characteristic part of the site and would provide considerable opportunity for enhancement in terms of biodiversity and informal recreation.</p> <p>The Ancient Woodland could come under an improved management regime and the pasture could be managed / re-seeded to create species rich grassland or meadow. This could either be through a hay cut - or low density grazing.</p> <p>There is the opportunity to enhance public access as part of public open space provision, providing new informal routes around the proposed open space.</p> <p>The retention of the existing tree belts on the southern boundary would maintain habitat connectivity and break up the visual massing of the proposed development. Further east-west links would enhance the connectivity between the existing tree belts to the west and the young, emerging woodland to the east.</p> <p>The existing woodland would continue to enclose the site to the east, and this enclosure would increase when the young woodland planting establishes. The introduction of height parameters within the proposed development area would ensure that the proposals would not break the skyline in distant views and would instead maintain a wooded backdrop.</p> <p>These measures would protect the areas which contribute most to the character and appearance of the AONB and would provide scope for significant landscape enhancements within the northern part of the site. The additional measures would reduce feature loss within the site and protect the visual amenity of the existing public right of way. Carefully planned and designed development would reduce the potential adverse effects on the character of the southern part of the site.</p>

Conclusions:

The site is divided into two areas of different character. The land to the north of the site is rural in character and is highly representative of the High Weald. The southern part of the site has fewer of the defining characteristics of the AONB and is influenced by the existing industrial estate to the west and noise from the roads to the south and east. The southern part of the site has been assessed as having a lower sensitivity to the type of development proposed. This analysis is supported by the preceding sensitivity study carried out by LUC, which assessed the southern parcel as having a Medium sensitivity to Medium development and a Medium-Low sensitivity to small development. This contrasts with the northern part of the site, which was assessed as having a High sensitivity to all forms of development.

There is the potential for sensitive development within the site, following the principles set out within the allocation policy. The development should be focussed within the southern part of the site, as shown in the allocation proposal, where the sensitivity to new development is lowest. The proposed open space would allow the retention, protection and enhancement of the areas of the site which have the highest contribution to the character and appearance of the AONB. The key components of character outlined for the High Weald would be protected, where present. There is scope within the proposals for considerable enhancement to the AONB landscape within the northern part of the site, along with new recreational opportunities.

The additional mitigation measures outlined within the Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan, build upon those already proposed within the allocation policy and plan, in order to minimise the potential adverse effects of the proposed allocation. The proposals include the extension of the open space to the south of the existing public right of way, which would maintain the visual amenity and rural outlook to the north of the path. This extension of open space would need to be balanced against the viability of the site.

Additional controls are recommended to ensure that the proposed development does not break the skyline in long distance views from the west and north. Maintaining a wooded backdrop to these views would preserve the existing perceived transition to the rural landscape, east of the site.

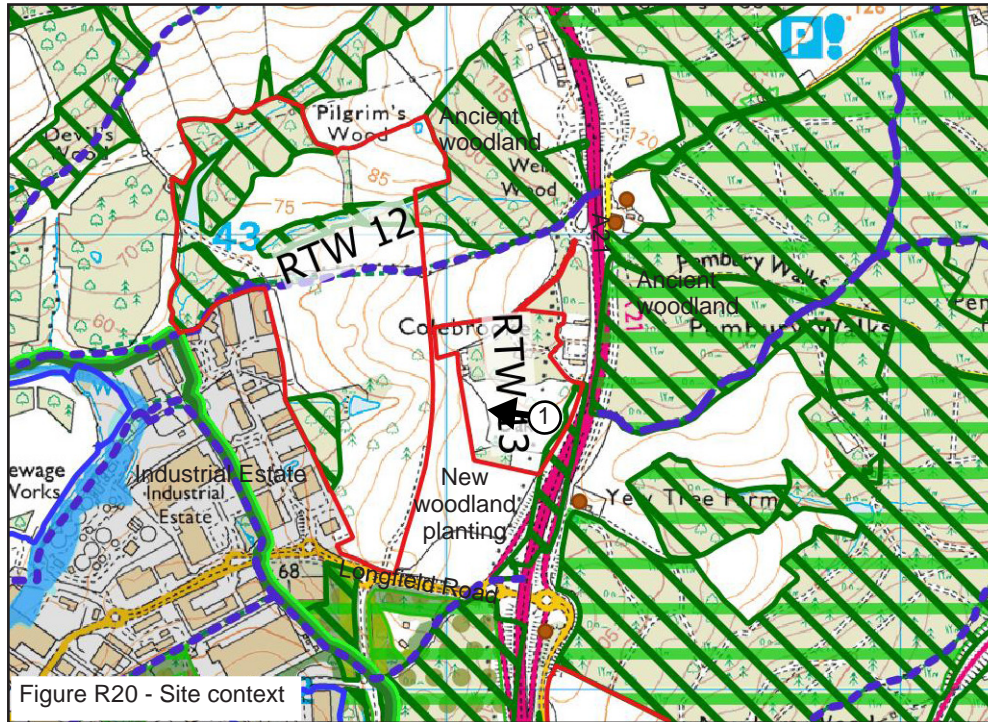
The development of the site in conjunction with the with the proposed mitigation (including restrictions on building heights) could be achieved without residual significant landscape or visual effects (from publicly accessible viewpoints). There is considerable potential for the open space proposals within the allocated site to enhance the landscape of the AONB.

Policy recommendations for the Regulation 19 version of the Draft Local Plan include:

- Include wording requiring heights parameters for the proposed development, with lower development proposed on the high ground to the east of the site.
- Provision of a long-term maintenance plan for the open space within the site.

Site : RTW 13 - Land at Colebrook House;

Site : RTW 13 - Land at Colebrook House;



Site location and context:

The site is located to the west of the A21, beyond the north-eastern edge of Royal Tunbridge Wells. It is bound to the north, west and south by newly planted woodland, with some mature woodland to the north-east. The site is contained to the east by the earthworks and planting associated with the A21 dual carriageway. To the west lies allocation site RTW 12, beyond which is an existing industrial estate.

The site consists of Colebrook House, a country house, with associated gardens, tennis court, parkland and paddock. The site is well contained by boundary tree belts and internal tree planting.

Designations and development considerations:

The site lies within the AONB and Green Belt and small area of Ancient Woodland is located at the south-eastern corner of the site. Colebrook House is a non-designated heritage asset. There is no public access.

Other constraints to development include the separation between Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury and the presence of high quality individual trees within the site, some of which may be veteran.

Development of within the site has the potential to affect existing woodland and parkland, which are locally valued elements within the landscape. Maintaining the separate settlement identities of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury is also valued by local residents.



Photograph 1: View west across the site from the east of the existing house

Landscape baseline and key features	Visual baseline and key viewpoints	Perceptual and experiential qualities	Representativeness of AONB Qualities (with reference to the relevant character components and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan)
<p>The site comprises the gardens, parkland and paddock associated with Colebrook House. The character of the site fits in with, but is separate from the agricultural landscape to the west and the woodlands to the north, east and south. The condition of the site is generally good, however it is deteriorating and some elements are degraded - for example the tennis courts.</p> <p>There is a strong influence from the A21 dual carriageway, which is audible and physically separates the site from its woodland setting to the east. There is some intervisibility with the industrial estate to the west.</p> <p>There is no public access or recreational provision within the site. Existing built form includes Colebrook House and the stables. There is a disused tennis court and a formal pond. The gardens are ornamental, but are dominated by laurel and are not linked to a particular landscape designer.</p> <p>The parkland to the south of the site contains mature specimen trees, some of which may be veteran.</p> <p>The site is generally flat.</p> <p>Key landscape features (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small copse of Ancient Woodland to the south-east of the site; • Specimen parkland trees; • Tree belts and woodland at the edges of the site; • Formal gardens surrounding the house; • A small pony paddock; • Formal pond; • Leylandii hedge; and • A dilapidated tennis court. 	<p>The site is extremely well contained from its surroundings, with only boundary trees and fencing visible from publicly accessible viewpoints.</p> <p>There are glimpses of the paddock and boundary trees from the industrial estate located to the west of the site.</p> <p>There are currently no views of the site from the footpath located to the north. There are no views from the A21 dual carriageway or associated footpath / cycleway.</p> <p>Private views are limited to occasional glimpses from the adjacent dwellings to the north-east.</p> <p>Visual receptors (public views) to be considered (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkers on the footpath to the north of the site; • Walkers and cyclists using the footpath / cycleway to the west of the A21; • Motorists travelling north on the A21; and • Visitors and staff within the industrial estate to the west. 	<p>The site is generally flat and self-contained. The experience of the site varies with location.</p> <p>The house is attractive and forms a focal point. The approach to the house is along a narrow and wooded drive, with high enclosure, which opens out into an area of parkland in front of the house.</p> <p>The paddock is rectangular and contains some non-descript stable buildings. There is a mixture of boundary treatments and some visibility out to the west, within which the industrial estate can be seen.</p> <p>The land to the south of the house contains formal gardens, parkland and woodland. There is a disused tennis court, which is in a state of disrepair and a pond within the formal gardens.</p> <p>The site is attractive but is in a state of decline. It is small scale and often intimate, with areas compartmentalised by woodland, tree belts or ornamental shrub planting. The house and surroundings feel out of context with the more urban surroundings.</p> <p>The noise from the A21 to the east is a detracting feature which precludes any sense of tranquility or remoteness within the site.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: The site is flat and is located on a plateau of high ground. There was no evidence of rock outcrops at the time of the field survey. There are no natural water features associated with the site, however there is a formal pond.</p> <p>Settlement: The site is divorced from residential settlement and the wider landscape, however there are good transport connections and pedestrian links to the woodland to the north. Development within the site would not follow the existing settlement pattern, however the site already contains development.</p> <p>Routeways: There are no mapped routeways within or adjacent to the site boundary. There are routeways beyond the site to the north and south, which are separated from the site by immature woodland. A further routeway lies to the east of the site beyond the A21.</p> <p>Woodland: There are small blocks of woodland and tree belts within the site, along with a small copse of Ancient Woodland located to the south-east of the site. The woodland at the site boundaries is mapped as priority habitat: deciduous woodland.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The site contains one small pony paddock, but no productive agricultural land.</p> <p>Other qualities: The noise of the A21 adversely affects tranquility and the associated lighting affects the darkness of the landscape. There are opportunities to improve access to the AONB through the development of the site.</p> <p>Summary: The Colebrook House and associated landscape have some contribution to the qualities of the AONB. This is generally attributed to the attractive built form of the house and the woodland and parkland areas within the wider site. The enclosure of the site means that with the exception of the boundary woodland, the site has a limited contribution to the character and appearance of the wider landscape.</p>

Proposals:

Site : RTW 13

Figure R21: Allocation proposal (From policy)

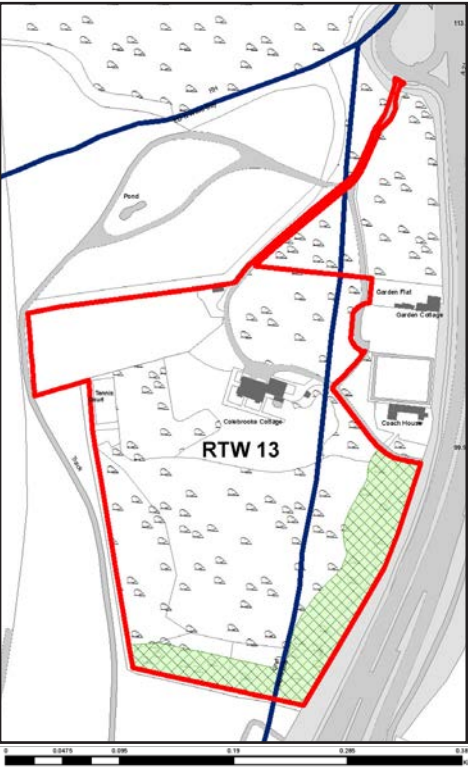
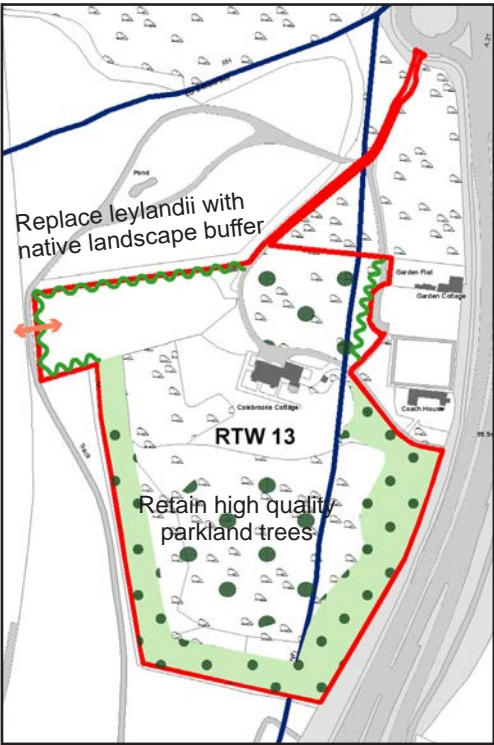


Figure R22: Strategic Green Infrastructure



- KEY
- Existing GI retained
 - Proposed public open space
 - Proposed landscape buffer
 - Existing / proposed parkland / woodland
 - Proposed landscape feature / connection

Description of proposed development:

A modern business park with a campus setting. The site is allocated for employment uses including business (B1), general industry (B2), and storage and distribution (B8) along with accommodation and ancillary facilities. To be delivered through the conversion of Colebrook House.

Proposed mitigation measures:

Mitigation relating to reg 18 Allocation policy AL/ RTW 13 and associated proposal plan	Additional mitigation measures proposed within this study
Retention of the eastern and southern boundary woodland belts, including the Ancient Woodland to the south-east of the site (Allocation Plan).	Retain existing boundary woodland and replace the Leylandii on the northern boundary with a landscape buffer that is more reflective of the AONB. The Leylandii could be left in situ until the woodland to the north establishes further.
Retention of Colebrook House. The design is to be informed by a heritage assessment in order to protect the significance of the non designated heritage asset.	
Provision of increased accessibility and links to the wider public right of way network (Policy).	Provide new structural planting along areas of the western boundary that are currently open.
Improvements to environmental quality, to include net gains in biodiversity across the site (Policy).	
The design should be informed by a LVIA in order to protect the character of and landscape features within the site (Policy). To include the preservation of the visible elements of designed landscape including the formal gardens and parkland.	Provide additional structural planting at the north-eastern boundary to protect the amenity of neighbouring properties.
Requirement for an arboricultural survey to inform the site layout, with particular reference to the protection of veteran and mature trees (Policy).	Include heights parameters to ensure that proposed buildings remain screened.

Landscape and recreational opportunities:

There is the opportunity to provide pedestrian and cycle connections through the site to the public rights of way located to the north and west of the site. There may also be the opportunity to allow public access to some of the facilities within the proposed business park.

Potential Landscape effects (Assuming no mitigation)	Potential effects on Visibility (Assuming no mitigation)	Assessment of effects against the landscape character components of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (assuming no mitigation)	Potential to avoid or reduce adverse effects (draft policy AL/RTW 13, the proposed GI plan for the site and the text on mitigation measures opposite, set out the proposed mitigation for the site)
<p>Development within the proposed allocation would have limited effects on the 'Pembury / Capel Forested Plateau' Character Area, due to the physical and visual separation between the site and the wider rural AONB landscape.</p> <p>If it is assumed that the existing boundary trees are removed and no mitigation planting is implemented, development on the western side of the site is most likely to influence adjacent landscape character. The influence of any proposed development would be dependent on detailed design.</p> <p>Within the site the change in character would be more pronounced; with the existing paddock, parkland and gardens being replaced with a business park.</p> <p>Predicted effects on landscape features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small copse of Ancient Woodland to the south-east of the site - retained within open space. • Specimen parkland trees - potential for loss; • Tree belts and woodland at the edges of the site - retained to the south and east, but the remainder has the potential to be lost; • Formal gardens surrounding the house - potential for loss; • A small pony paddock - potential for loss; • Formal pond - potential for loss; • Leylandii hedge - potential for loss; and • A dilapidated tennis court - potential for loss. <p>The effects on recreation within the site are likely to be positive as there is no current provision for the public within the site.</p>	<p>The visibility of any development within the proposed allocation site would vary with design and is difficult to predict without more detailed proposals.</p> <p>The proposals would only be visible if they skyline above the existing tree canopy. In this scenario, the proposals would be visible from the footpath to the north and from distant viewpoints located on high ground to the north and west. It remains unlikely that the proposals would be seen from the east of south, due to the contained nature of the landscape.</p> <p>Providing that the proposals are lower than the existing tree canopy, public views of the proposals would be limited to glimpses of development on the western edge of the site.</p> <p>There may be partial and glimpsed views of the allocation development from the properties to the north-east of the site (private views).</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: No natural water features, or sandstone outcrops would be affected by the proposed development. The effects on climate conditions fall outside the scope of this assessment.</p> <p>Settlement: The proposals would not be in keeping with the existing settlement pattern unless allocation site RTW 12 is also developed. However the site does already contain development and the proposals could fit in with the existing landscape within the site. This would depend upon the detailed design of the proposals.</p> <p>Routeways: The routeways nearest to the site are contained within woodland (or in the case of the northern routeway: newly planted woodland). Changes within the site are unlikely to affect the character or ecological value of these routeways.</p> <p>Woodland: The proposed allocation would not result in the loss of Ancient Woodland, however there is the potential for woodland and tree loss within the site.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The proposals would not remove land from agricultural use and would not affect any existing field pattern.</p> <p>Other qualities: The proposed development has the potential to provide improved access to the High Weald and new facilities, which may be open to the public. The site is already affected by noise from the A21, which is a local detractor.</p>	<p>In the case of this site, the detailed design proposals will be key in judging whether the proposals would result in adverse effects on the AONB. There is the potential for both harm and enhancement and these will need to be carefully balanced.</p> <p>Policy controls on existing features, character, building heights and design would be critical in protecting the existing character of the site, including characteristic features. It will also help to ensure that the proposals sit comfortably with Colebrook House - an undesignated heritage asset.</p> <p>The retention of boundary woodland, high quality parkland trees, Colebrook house and element of the designed landscape will help to ensure that adverse effects are minimised and that development within the site would not affect the character of the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>With a positive and landscape-led approach to design, there is the opportunity to improve the management of features within the site, create new habitats and provide an attractive new campus style business park. This would allow a new evolution of the site as the proximity to the A21 means that it's current use may be unsustainable in the long term. There are opportunities to benefit the local community through the development of the business park.</p>

Conclusions:

The site is well contained from the surrounding landscape with very few locations where the site is visible beyond boundary fences and woodland. The site contains many significant features and is generally attractive, but its condition is in decline. There are also features within the site, for example the disused tennis court, leylandii hedges and the western paddock, which have little contribution towards the High Weald AONB and in some cases are atypical of the AONB landscape. The noise from the A21 is a detractor across the site.

The site as a whole has been considered to have a Medium sensitivity to Medium development within the sensitivity study carried out by LUC.

The scale and nature of the proposed design will be critical for the acceptability of development within the proposed allocation site. The proposed mitigation measures set out, provide sufficient control that some development could be sensitively located within the site, without significant harm to the landscape within the site or to the character and appearance of the wider AONB. Furthermore there are opportunities to enhance some of the features within the site, or to maintain the current ethos of a designed landscape under a different land use.

Key landscape features within the site would need to be retained in order to minimise adverse effects on the landscape within the site. Retention and enhancement of the wooded site boundaries would maintain the containment of the site and prevent any adverse effects on the landscape outside the site as a result of the proposed development. Providing that it is carefully designed, the proposed buildings within the business park could be complementary to the existing Colebrook House.

Policy recommendations for the Regulation 19 version of the Draft Local Plan include:

- Include a requirement for heights parameters as part of any planning application.

Site : RTW 18 - Land to the west of Eridge Road at Spratsbrook Farm;

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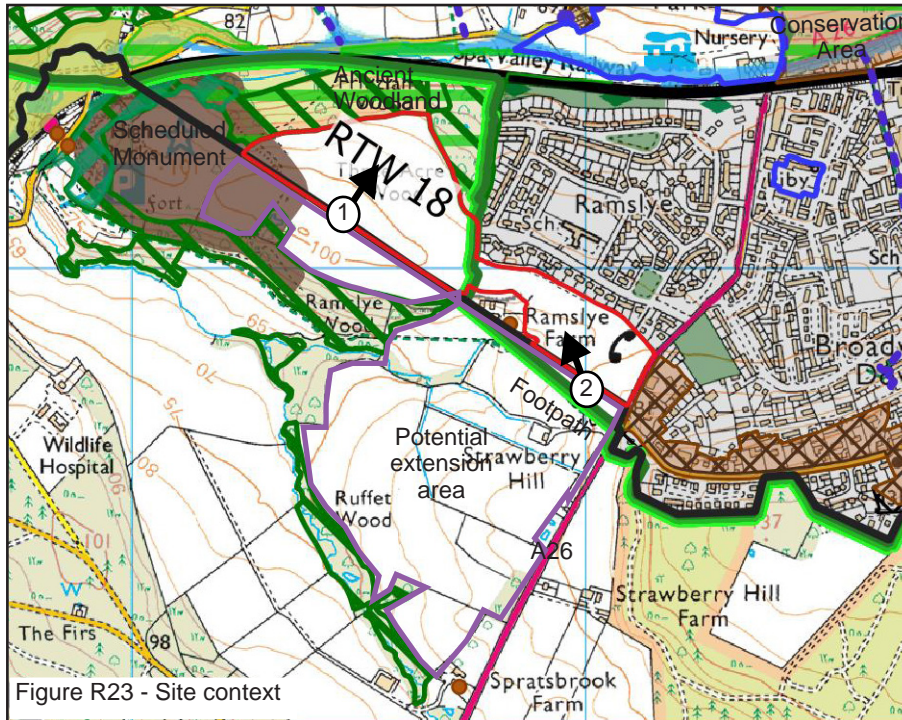
Site location and context:

The site is located to the south-west of Royal Tunbridge Wells, south of Ramslye. The southern boundary of the potential allocation site is formed by the borough boundary, however this report explores the potential for a wider allocation (shown in purple on figure R23), with the adjacent district (Wealden). The eastern site boundary runs alongside the A26 Eridge Road and the northern and north-western boundary is contained by woodland (Frieze Land Wood). Ramslye Wood lies to the south, within Wealden District. The site consists of two arable fields, however the borough boundary cuts through the western field, with the site located on the northern half of the fields. The north-eastern boundary is formed by the southern edge of Ramslye.

Designations and development considerations:

The western field of the site lies within the AONB, however the eastern field does not. The site is washed over by Green Belt, which extends up to the borough boundary to the south, with no Green Belt in the adjacent Wealden District. Ancient Woodland lies to the north and south of the western field, the northern woodland is also a Local Wildlife Site. A Conservation Area lies to the east of the site, beyond the A26 and there are listed buildings at Ramslye Farm and Spratsbrook Farm. The north-western corner of the site overlaps a Scheduled Monument (and geological SSSI), which extends to High Rocks, to the north-west of the site. A footpath follows the southern edge of the eastern field, before entering Ramslye Wood to the south of the western field. This path is mapped as a historic routeway.

Development within the site has the potential to affect the landscape setting of Royal Tunbridge Wells and recreational routes (including public rights of way and informal routes, which are recorded as valued features and qualities within the Tunbridge Wells Borough Landscape Character Assessment.



Photograph 1: View east across the site from the high ground on the footpath at the north-western edge of the site.



Photograph 2: Looking north-west across the site from the footpath and track leading to Ramslye Farm.

Landscape baseline and key features	Visual baseline and key viewpoints	Perceptual and experiential qualities	Representativeness of AONB Qualities (with reference to the relevant character components and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan)
<p>Generally the site and its immediate surroundings are representative of the Speldhurst Wooded Farmland Character Area.</p> <p>The site is part of a medieval field system, with both fields comprising assarts, a characteristic component of the AONB. It has an undulating topography, which is also typical of the High Weald. The lower ground is contained by woodland to the west, however the higher ground and the eastern field have a visual connection to the wider landscape.</p> <p>The western field has a limited connection to existing settlement, which has a soft edge to the east of the field. Attractive views are available from a number of locations within the field. There is currently no public access, however there is evidence that the field is widely used for informal recreation.</p> <p>The eastern field lies outside of the AONB and has a stronger connection to the existing settlement edge, located to the north and east. There is some noise from the A26.</p> <p>Landscape features are associated with field boundaries, and are generally intact and in good condition. The tree belt lining the A26 to the west would benefit from improved management and infilling of gaps in the understorey.</p> <p>Key landscape features (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Woodland to the north of the site. • Tree belts surrounding Ramslye Farm to the south of the site; and • Tree belt lining the A26 Eridge Road; 	<p>The site is generally well contained from publicly accessible viewpoints, however it does form part of the rural setting to views out from the high ground at Neville Park, Rusthall and Langton Green within Royal Tunbridge Wells.</p> <p>There are open views of the eastern field within the site from the eastern section of the public right of way located to the south of the site (photograph 2). Views diminish to the west, until the footpath enters Ramslye Wood, where landform and tree cover screen all views of the site. Friezeland Wood is managed by the Woodland Trust and contains informal routes. One route enters the wood at the north-western corner of the site. There are glimpsed views of the site from the southern edge of this path.</p> <p>There are intermittent winter views of the eastern field within the site from the A26 Eridge Road, through the eastern boundary trees and understorey vegetation. These views will reduce in summer when vegetation is in leaf. Views from Broadwater Forest Lane to the south, are screened by woodland lining the road, however there are rare winter glimpses of the site through gaps in the tree cover and understorey vegetation.</p> <p>Private views: There are open (first floor), partial and glimpsed views of the site from the adjacent dwellings with Ramslye, to the north of the site. There are partial and glimpsed views of the eastern field from the properties lining the A26, to the east. There are also distant views of the site from properties located on the high ground to the north and east of the site. Within these distant views, the site is seen in the context of existing settlement at Royal Tunbridge Wells.</p> <p>Visual receptors (public views) to be considered (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkers on the footpath to the south of the site; • Walkers within Friezeland Wood; • Walkers and Motorists using the A26 Eridge Road; and • Walkers and motorists viewing the site from the high ground to the north. 	<p>The site has a strong rural character despite it's location adjacent to the settlement edge of Royal Tunbridge Wells.</p> <p>The undulating topography creates visual interest and affords some long, panoramic views from within the site, framed by woodland. These views include the settlement and spires of Royal Tunbridge Wells to the north and east, set within a wooded landscape. Views to the south are rural in character.</p> <p>The historic field pattern remains visible within the landscape and there is contrast between the open fields and the enclosure of the adjacent woodland.</p> <p>The perception of the site varies between the eastern and western fields. The western field is semi-enclosed, textured and peaceful, with a high aesthetic quality.</p> <p>The eastern field is more active, with noise from the A26, activity within the adjacent properties and from informal recreation. The harder edges to the north and east have a stronger influence on this part of the site, particularly to the north. The southern part of the field is more open to the landscape to the south. The scenic quality remains pleasant, however it is not as attractive as the western field.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: The has an undulating topography. There were no exposed rock formations within the site, however there are formations on or close to the boundaries and within the immediate wider landscape, for example within Ramslye Wood to the south. There are no water features associated with the site, however these are present within the wider potential site to the south (located in a different district) and also in Friezeland Wood, to the north.</p> <p>Settlement: The eastern field is contained by settlement and roads on two sides and development within this field would be consistent with the existing settlement pattern. The western link has a limited relationship with existing settlement and would only be partly consistent with the existing settlement pattern. Existing connections to the countryside could be improved.</p> <p>Routeways: The footpath to the south of the site is mapped as a historic routeway. This has a strong relationship with the southern edge of the eastern field within the site. The eastern section of the routeway is devoid of features and has a limited ecological function.</p> <p>Woodland: The western field is contained to the north by Ancient woodland and there is a further Ancient Woodland copse to the south of the site at Ramslye Wood.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The site consists of two assart fields in arable production. There are opportunities for diversification and enhancement of ecological function.</p> <p>Other qualities: The site contains many aspects of the AONB that are valued by the local community. There is no formal access to the site and the site currently provides little in the way of community facilities or educational opportunity.</p> <p>Summary: The site contributes positively to the AONB designation. The eastern part of the site lies outside the AONB and has fewer characteristic qualities than the western field. It therefore has a lower contribution towards the AONB.</p>

Proposals:

Site : RTW 18

Figure R24: Allocation proposal (From policy)

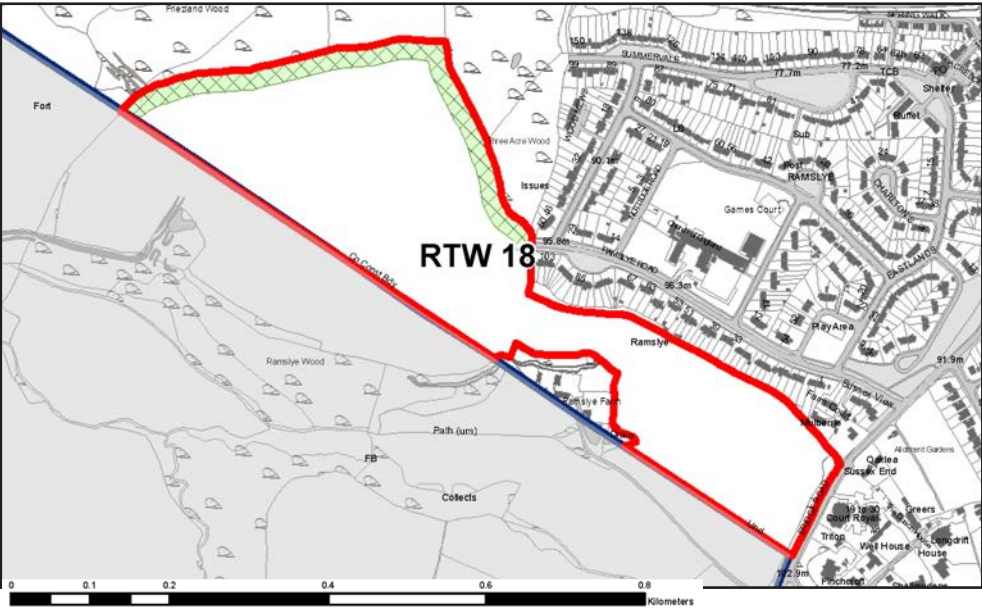
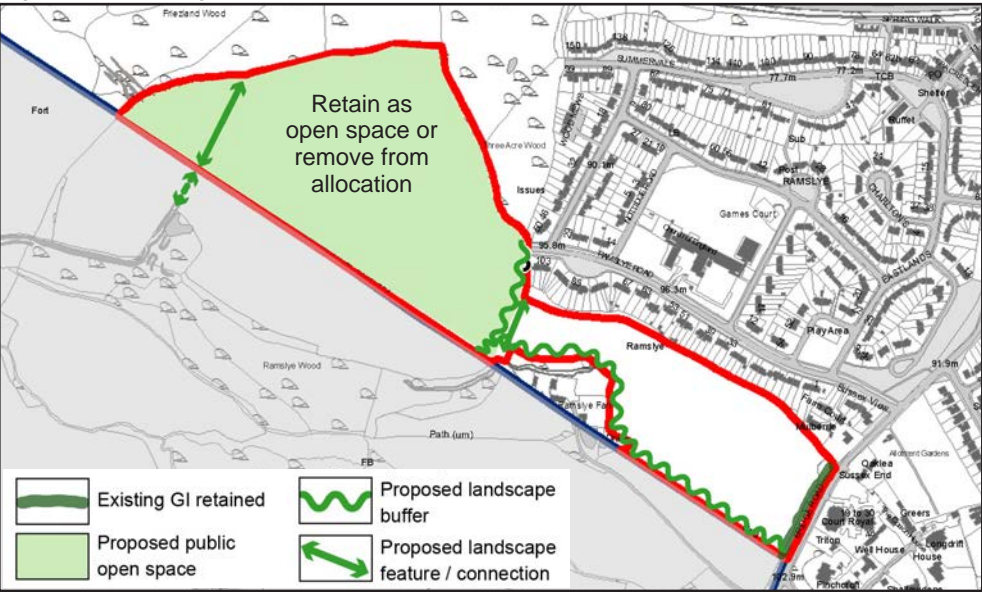


Figure R25: Strategic Green Infrastructure



Description of proposed development:

A residential development of 270 units and a seven form entry secondary school.

Proposed mitigation measures:

Mitigation relating to reg 18 Allocation policy AL/RTW 18 and associated proposal plan	Additional mitigation measures proposed within this study
Historic and archaeological assessment required in addition to a buffer between the development and the Scheduled Monument to the north-west (Policy).	Retain the western field (the land within the AONB) - either to be used as open space, retained in existing agricultural use, or a combination of both.
The design of the development should have regard for existing features and Ancient Woodland Buffers (Policy).	Retain as far as possible the trees lining the A26 Eridge Road. Where tree loss is required, ensure that the highest quality trees are retained and replace any losses to maintain the treed frontage to the road.
Provision of new links, connecting to existing rights of way (Policy).	Introduce a landscape buffer along the south-eastern site boundary in order to retain the visual amenity and rural character of the footpath to the south.
The design of the development should have regard for the potential landscape and visual effects of the development (Policy).	
Provision of appropriate surface water drainage (Policy).	
Provision of on-site amenity / natural green space, allotments and parks and recreation, including children's play space (Policy).	
Regard to be given to existing hedgerows.	

Landscape and recreational opportunities:

Creation of a large area of open space to the west of the site, which would maintain and improve accessibility and recreational opportunities across the site. New tree planting could be implemented on the southern site boundary, which would provide improved woodland connectivity across the site and with associated biodiversity enhancements and would provide additional screening of the development from the south. The remainder of the open space could provide complementary habitats and features.

The proposed open space provides the opportunity to maintain attractive views out to the north. There is the opportunity to provide pedestrian and cycle connections through the site, from Ramslye to the public right of way located to the south and to the open access land within Friezeland Wood to the north-west of the site.

Potential Landscape effects (Assuming no mitigation)	Potential effects on Visibility (Assuming no mitigation)	Assessment of effects against the landscape character components of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (assuming no mitigation)	Potential to avoid or reduce adverse effects (draft policy AL/RTW 18, the proposed GI plan for the site and the text on mitigation measures opposite, set out the proposed mitigation for the site)
<p>The site is representative of the local landscape Character Area, and the western field within the site is a representative part of the High Weald AONB and has intrinsic value in it's own right.</p> <p>Development within the western field is highly likely to have adverse effects on the AONB landscape within the site and has the potential to adversely affect the character of the wider landscape. Without careful mitigation these effects are likely to be significant.</p> <p>The eastern field sits outside the AONB and has a stronger relationship to existing settlement. Development within this field is likely to have lower landscape effects and would have no direct effects on the AONB. It may have indirect effects on the setting to the AONB, however the assessment of this would be subject to detailed design.</p> <p>The predicted effects on landscape features are unlikely to be significant and are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Woodland to the north of the site - adjacent to open space. Potential for no adverse effects. • Tree belts surrounding Ramslye Farm to the south of the site - outside the site. Potential for no adverse effects; and • Tree belt lining the A26 Eridge Road- loss associated with creation of vehicular access; <p>The effects on recreation within the site have the potential to be positive, with the protection and formalisation of existing informal walking routes and new recreational opportunities.</p>	<p>There would be open views of the proposed development from the stretch of footpath located to the south of the eastern field, which has the potential to fundamentally change the experience of the path. The extent to which this happens would be subject to detailed design. Existing views from the path contain settlement, so the content of the view would not change entirely. If the site comes forward in isolation (with no development in the adjacent District), the views to the south from this path would remain unchanged.</p> <p>Views from the western section of the footpath (within Ramslye Wood) are unlikely to change, as the site would remain screened by landform and woodland.</p> <p>There would be glimpsed views of the proposed development from the permissive paths within Friezeland Wood, however these views could be mitigated through additional planting within the safeguarded open space..</p> <p>There would be views of the proposed development from the A26 Eridge Road. It is likely that the site access will require some tree removal which alter the character of the road. Views are likely to remain transient in nature and would not be a significant departure from the street scene to the north-east of the site.</p> <p>Views from Broadwater Forest Lane are unlikely to change significantly.</p> <p>Private views: There would be open, partial and glimpsed views of the allocation development from the properties at the northern and eastern site boundaries .</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: No water features, or sandstone outcrops would be directly affected by the proposed development. There is the potential to affect the outcrops within Ramslye Wood, either positively by defining more formalised routes, or negatively by increasing visitor pressure.</p> <p>Settlement: Development within the field to the east would be in keeping with the existing settlement pattern and sensitive development within the western field could be consistent with settlement pattern, however this would depend on design and the treatment of the southern boundary, which currently cuts across the wider field. There are opportunities to improve the connection to the countryside.</p> <p>Routeways: The routeway associated with the footpath to the south-east of the site has the potential to be adversely affected by the proposals with the setting changing from a field to housing.</p> <p>Woodland: The proposed allocation would not result in the loss of Ancient Woodland or mapped woodland. There is the potential for tree loss on the eastern boundary in conjunction with the construction of the site access.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The site forms part of a historic field system, which would be affected by development within the allocation. The arable fields would be lost to the development.</p> <p>Other qualities: The proposed development has the potential to improve public access to the High Weald. There are opportunities to improve recreation and community involvement within the AONB.</p>	<p>The removal of development from the AONB land (the western field) would dramatically reduce the predicted landscape and visual effects of development within the site. It would be possible to maintain and enhance the distinctive AONB characteristics present within this parcel of land.</p> <p>Conversion of some or all of this land to public open space, would enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved recreational provision, including formalisation of • Better connectivity to the countryside for existing and future residents • Biodiversity enhancements, including improved links between areas of designated woodland. • Public appreciation of the attractive views and scenic quality of this part of the site. <p>The introduction of a landscape buffer along the south-eastern boundary would protect the landscape and visual amenity of the footpath (routeway) to the south of the site. The introduction of a landscape buffer would change the character of the routeway, however the new character would be consistent with the western section of the path. The buffer would also maintain a soft and natural edge to the development.</p> <p>Development would be limited to the land outside the AONB, which would be consistent with the existing settlement pattern.</p> <p>The mitigation proposals enable the retention of the tree-lined edge to the A26, with replacement of any lost trees. This will maintain the existing sylvan approach into Royal Tunbridge Wells.</p>

Conclusions:

The site is an attractive and characteristic part of the Speldhurst Wooded Farmland Character Area. Both parts of the site have evidence of considerable time-depth. Under closer analysis there are some characteristics that distinguish the western field within the site, from the eastern field. The western field lies entirely within the AONB, has a high contribution to local distinctiveness and has intrinsic value. The eastern field lies outside the AONB, is influenced by adjacent housing to the north and east and subsequently has a substantially lower sensitivity to development than the western part of the site. Development within the eastern field is more consistent with the existing settlement pattern. The central area of the site is a transitional space, which lies outside the AONB.

This study generally agrees with the judgements set out within the sensitivity study carried out by LUC, which states that:

'Overall sensitivity is high in the western and central parts of the sub-area. The eastern end of the sub-area has medium sensitivity adjacent to the exposed edge of Ramslye, but sensitivity increases with distance from the settlement edge, as the landform become more related to the Ramslye Wood ghyll, more exposed to views from the north-west and more intrusive in views out from the edge of Broadwater Down'.

Any development within the western field is likely to harm the appearance and characteristics of the High Weald AONB. This harm is likely to be significant and would be difficult to justify or mitigate in landscape terms. It is recommended that the western field should not be developed and that the allocation within the overall site is reduced. There is the potential for the western field to be allocated as open space, as there are several open space land-uses that would retain and enhance the character of the AONB.

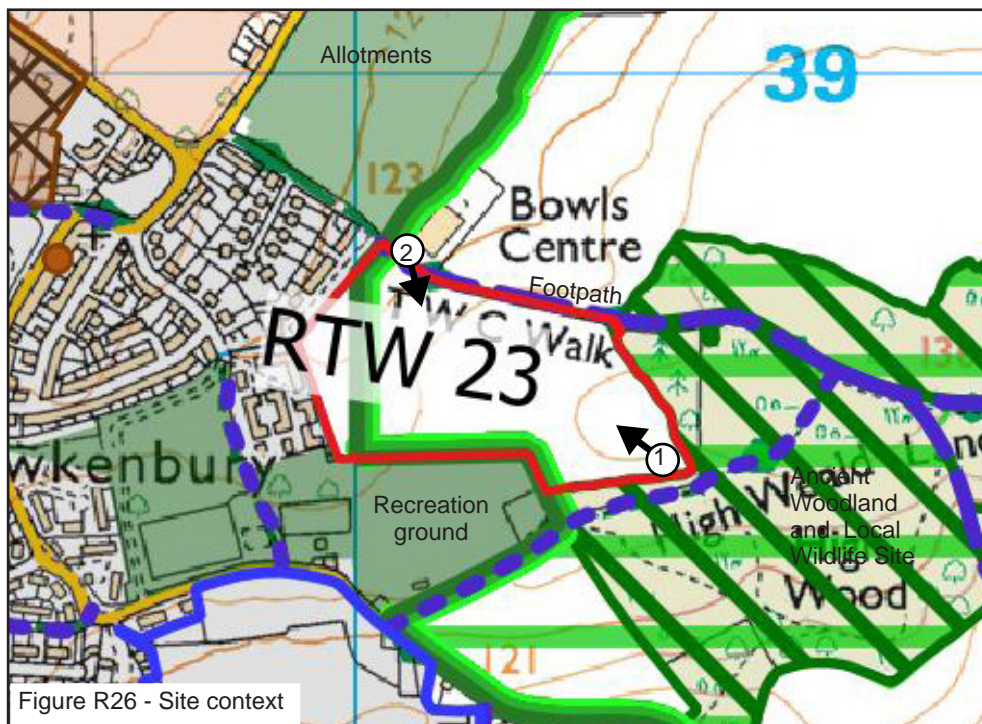
The eastern field (and central area of the site) has the potential for some development. The potential landscape and visual effects for development have the potential to be mitigated by additional structural planting to the south of the site and through enhancements to the western field. The overall effects of development within this part of the site would be subject to detailed design, however if carried out sensitively in line with policy guidance, could have no residual significant effects.

Policy recommendations for the Regulation 19 version of the Draft Local Plan include:

- Re-evaluate the wording of the policy on the basis of a revised allocation, with open space land-uses within the western field.

Site : RTW 23 - Land to the north of Hawkenbury Recreation Ground;

Site : RTW 23 - Land to the north of Hawkenbury Recreation Ground;



Site location and context:

The site is located to the south-east of Royal Tunbridge Wells and east of Hawkenbury. A bowls centre is located to the north-west and houses lining Cleeve Avenue, are located beyond the site to the west. A recreation ground lies to the south and High Wood contains the site to the east.

The site consists of an irregular field in pasture located on a west facing slope. The site is bound by hedgerows to the north, west and south and by woodland to the east. The site has an extant permission for the type of development proposed.

Designations and development considerations:

The site is washed over by Green Belt and the majority of the site lie within the AONB. The woodland to the east is designated Ancient Woodland and is also a Local Wildlife Site. Both the recreation ground to the south and allotments to the north are designated as Local Green Space within the emerging Local Plan. A Conservation Area lies to the north and north-west, and there is a Registered Park and Garden at Dunorlan Park, tot he north-west beyond Hall's Hole Road. The Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk follows High Woods Lane, adjacent to the northern site boundary. Further footpaths are locate to the east and south of the site, however none run through the site.

Development within the site is unlikely to affect the valued elements listed within the borough character assessment, for the 'Bayhall Open Farmland' Character Area, that the site lies within.



Photograph 1: Looking north-west across the site, towards Royal Tunbridge Wells. Taken from the south-eastern corner of the site.



Photograph 2: View south-east, from the north-western corner of the site, on High Woods Lane.

Landscape baseline and key features	Visual baseline and key viewpoints	Perceptual and experiential qualities	Representativeness of AONB Qualities (with reference to the relevant character components and objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan)
<p>The site is a transitional landscape between the settlement edge and the countryside to the east. There is a hard edge to settlement, which influences the western part of the site.</p> <p>There are urban edge influences to the north (bowling club and allotments) and south (recreation ground) which, combined with the enclosure of the woodland to the east, contain the site from much of the wider landscape.</p> <p>The site shares some of the characteristics of the 'Bayhall Open Farmland' Character Area including the distinctive topography, the woodland to the east and the transitional character of the landscape adjacent to the edge of settlement. The public rights of way to the north and south are also mapped as ancient routeways.</p> <p>The site itself is relatively simple in character. Landscape features are associated with field boundaries, and are generally intact and in good condition.</p> <p>Key landscape features (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Woodland at the eastern boundary; • Boundary hedgerows; and • The site (field in pasture). 	<p>The high ground to the east of the site is more widely visible than the lower lying ground to the west.</p> <p>The Tunbridge Wells circular walk is located to the north of the site and follows the routeway on High Woods Lane. The northern boundary hedgerow separates the path from the site (photograph 2), which limits views into the site, particularly in summer. There are open and partial views into the site from the two access points into the site at the north-western and north-eastern corners. Views are of the site boundary hedgerow, with the site visible beyond and existing settlement visible to the west.</p> <p>There are glimpses into the site from the recreation ground to the south over or through the intervening boundary hedgerow and occasional glimpses from the footpath within High Wood, to the south-east of the site. There are also glimpses and partial views of the site seen through the trees and vegetation on the western site boundary, from Cleeve Avenue.</p> <p>Views from private dwellings: There are open views of the site from properties on Sherbourne Close and partial and glimpsed views from the housing on Cleeve Avenue. There are distant views of the high ground to the east of the site from properties located on the ridge-top to the north-west.</p> <p>Visual receptors (public views) to be considered (ordered from higher to lower sensitivity) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkers on the Tunbridge Wells circular walk; • Footpath users within High Wood; • People within the recreation ground; and • Pedestrians and motorists on Cleeve Avenue. 	<p>The perceptual and experiential qualities vary across the site. Urban influence is stronger to the west, than to the east, where the high ground within the site affords long views over the surrounding area (photograph 1).</p> <p>The lower-lying western part of the site has a strong relationship with the housing to the west and south-west. This part of the site feels relatively enclosed, with outward views screened by rising landform, boundary hedges and trees.</p> <p>In contrast, the eastern part of the site is more rural in character and has associations with the woodland to the east and south-east. The higher elevation to the east affords views across Royal Tunbridge Wells, to the wooded hills, located to the north-west of the site. The housing to the immediate west of the site is hidden by landform and it's influence is much lower.</p> <p>There are no public rights of way within the site, however the eastern edge of the site is frequently used by dog-walkers who use the site to get between the recreation ground and High Wood.</p> <p>Both part of the site feel relatively active, either by association with settlement, or due to recreational use adjacent to and within the eastern end of the site.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: The site is located on the west-facing slope of a plateau of higher ground. No sandstone outcrops were recorded within site during the field survey and there are no watercourses associated with the site.</p> <p>Settlement: The western part of the site has close links to the settlement edge and other recreational uses. The type of development proposed within the site would be consistent with this pattern. The site has an indirect contribution to resident's connection to the surrounding countryside. The eastern part of the site has a higher contribution than the western part, however the northern hedgerow introduces a perception of rurality along the northern footpath.</p> <p>Routeways: Both High Woods Lane (to the north) and the footpath within High Wood and along the southern edge of the recreation ground (to the south) are mapped as historic routeways within the AONB database. Both routeways have urban influences to the west and a much more rural character and outlook to the east. The northern and eastern edges of the site have the highest influence on the character and setting of these routeways.</p> <p>Woodland: High Wood is located to the east of the site and is designated Ancient Woodland. There is no woodland within the site.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The site has limited time-depth, but does contain characteristic boundary features. It is currently in agricultural use as improved pasture.</p> <p>Other qualities: The site contributes to some of the perceptual qualities that people value. There are opportunities to improve opportunities within the site to enjoy and appreciate the AONB.</p> <p>Summary: There is a gradation in sensitivity across the site. The western part of the site lies outside of the AONB and contributes less to the appreciation of the AONB than the high ground to the east. Boundary features including the woodland and the northern hedgerow have an influence on the appreciation and enjoyment of the wider AONB.</p>

Proposals:

Site : RTW 23

Figure R27: Allocation proposal (From policy)



Figure R28: Strategic Green Infrastructure



Description of proposed development:

A new sports hub to include standing or seating for supporters and other ancillary structures.

Proposed mitigation measures:

Mitigation relating to reg 18 Allocation policy AL/ RTW 23 and associated proposal plan	Additional mitigation measures proposed within this study
Retain and protect Ancient Woodland (Allocation Plan).	Create a larger area of informal open space to the east of the site, which would provide opportunities for habitat enhancement and formalise links for dog walkers. There should be no earthworks within this area, which would further protect the Ancient Woodland.
Protection of existing trees and hedgerows with the highest amenity value (Policy).	
The design of the development should have regard for the potential landscape and visual effects of the development (Policy).	
Provision of new pedestrian / cycle links, connecting to existing rights of way (Policy).	Constrain built development and lighting to the lower slopes (below the 30m contour) on the western part of the site.
Provision of improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the site (Policy).	Create a new landscape buffer to the south-west of the site.
Provide net gains to biodiversity (Policy).	Ensure that any hedgerow loss is replaced with new planting, particularly on the northern boundary.
Provide a scheme for lighting that is in accordance with Policy EN 10: Outdoor Lighting and Dark Skies (Policy).	

Landscape and recreational opportunities:

The proposals within the site are to provide a new sports hub, which would significantly increase the recreational opportunities within the site. In addition, there are opportunities for improved links across the site to connect existing residents to the wider rural landscape. This could include links from the existing recreation ground, to the woodland located to the east of the site.

Providing that boundary features are retained, or replaced if removed, the characteristic field pattern of the site will be maintained. Locating any development towards the low-lying land to the west of the site (part of which lies outside of the AONB) could be balanced by enhancements within the more sensitive, eastern part of the site.

Potential Landscape effects (Assuming no mitigation)	Potential effects on Visibility (Assuming no mitigation)	Assessment of effects against the landscape character components of the High Weald AONB Management Plan (assuming no mitigation)	Potential to avoid or reduce adverse effects (draft policy AL/RTW 23, the proposed GI plan for the site and the text on mitigation measures opposite, set out the proposed mitigation for the site)
<p>The scale of effect will be intrinsically linked to the proposals within the site. Conversion of the site from an intensive grassland to grass pitches would be consistent with existing character and would have a very limited effect on the site or surrounding landscape.</p> <p>In contrast, the introduction of a large all weather pitch with associated seating and hardstanding, located on the high ground to the east of the site, could have wide-ranging effects on character and dark night skies.</p> <p>This type of development would have much lower effects if they are located on the low-lying land to the west of the site and if the site is regraded, in order that any proposals are at a lower level than the rest of the site.</p> <p>Another key issue that requires careful consideration at a detailed design stage is the location and design of the site access. The northern hedgerow is a key feature for the site and also contributes to the character of the routeway: High Woods Lane, to the north.</p> <p>Predicted effects on landscape features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancient Woodland - potential for no adverse effects; • Boundary hedgerows - potential for loss of part of the northern hedgerow; and • The site (field in pasture) - the majority is likely to be lost to the development. <p>The effects on recreation within the site are would be positive.</p>	<p>The visibility of any development within the proposed allocation site would vary with design and location of built form and is difficult to predict without more detailed proposals.</p> <p>The visual effects of the proposals on people on the Tunbridge Wells circular walk to the north of the site, would be dependent on the scale of hedgerow loss at the northern boundary, and the nature and scape of the proposed sports facilities. This could range from high - with open views of a car park or formal sports facility, to negligible - if the hedge remains intact and the proposals are low-level.</p> <p>There would be glimpses of the proposals from the recreation ground to the south, however the changes to the site are likely to be consistent with the character of the recreation ground. There would also be glimpses and partial views of the proposals, seen through the boundary trees and vegetation, from Cleeve Avenue.</p> <p>There would continue to be occasional glimpses from the footpath within High Wood, seen in the context of Royal Tunbridge Wells. to the south-east of the site.</p> <p>Views from private dwellings: There would be open, partial and glimpsed views of the proposals from properties on Sherbourne Close and partial and Cleeve Avenue. The scale of change would be dependent on the location of built form, car parking and lighting.</p> <p>There would be distant views of the proposals from properties located on the ridge-top to the north-west of the site. These would only be adversely effected if built form and lighting was located on the high ground to the east of the site.</p>	<p>Geology, landform, water systems and climate: There would be no adverse effects on watercourses of rock outcrops however there are likely to be changes to the existing landform.</p> <p>Settlement: The proposals could provide a transitional landscape between existing settlement and the countryside, which would contain future settlement and protect the settlement pattern. There are opportunities to improve the connection to the countryside. In order for the proposals to maintain local distinctiveness, built form should be located to the west of the site.</p> <p>Routeways: The proposals set out within the allocation have the potential to adversely affect the routeway associated with High Woods Lane. The routeway within the woodland to the south of the site is unlikely to be affected.</p> <p>Woodland: The proposed allocation would not result in the loss of Ancient Woodland.</p> <p>Field and Heath: The proposals will re-purpose productive land for recreational use. There are opportunities for ecological enhancement within the protected open space to the east.</p> <p>Other qualities: The scale and nature of the proposals will determine the wider effects on the qualities of the High Weald. If the proposals are proportionate to the development to the north (bowls club) west (housing) and south (recreation), the adverse effects are likely to be limited. The proposed development has the potential to improve access to the High Weald.</p>	<p>Restricting built development and lighting to the lower slopes to the west of the site, would reduce the potential adverse landscape and visual effects of the proposals.</p> <p>Increasing the quantity of informal open space to the east of the site, would maintain the rural character of this part of the site and would maintain the existing views out from Royal Tunbridge Wells. There would be opportunities to enhance the biodiversity and character of the AONB within this area.</p> <p>The retention of the majority of the northern hedgerow and replacement planting of any sections that are lost would maintain the long-term integrity of the routeway on High Woods Lane and would also protect the visual amenity of walkers using the Tunbridge Wells circular walk.</p> <p>The controls proposed for external lighting within the allocation policy would minimise the effects of the proposals on the dark night skies of the AONB.</p>

Conclusions:

There is a gradation in sensitivity across the site, with more development potential on the lower ground to the west of the site, which currently has a hard edge to settlement. The higher ground to the east of the site has attractive long views to the west, an intrinsic sensitivity associated with the adjacent Ancient Woodland and forms part of the wider rural setting to Royal Tunbridge Wells.

This is reflected in the judgements of the Sensitivity Study produced by LUC on the council's behalf, which concludes that the site has a medium-high sensitivity to small scale development.

There is scope to take forward the proposals set out within the draft allocation, provided that the stipulations of the policy are taken into consideration within the detailed design. The additional recommendations set out within this study would reduce the potential for significant adverse effects and would provide increased scope for enhancement to the AONB.

Policy recommendations for the Regulation 19 version of the Draft Local Plan include:

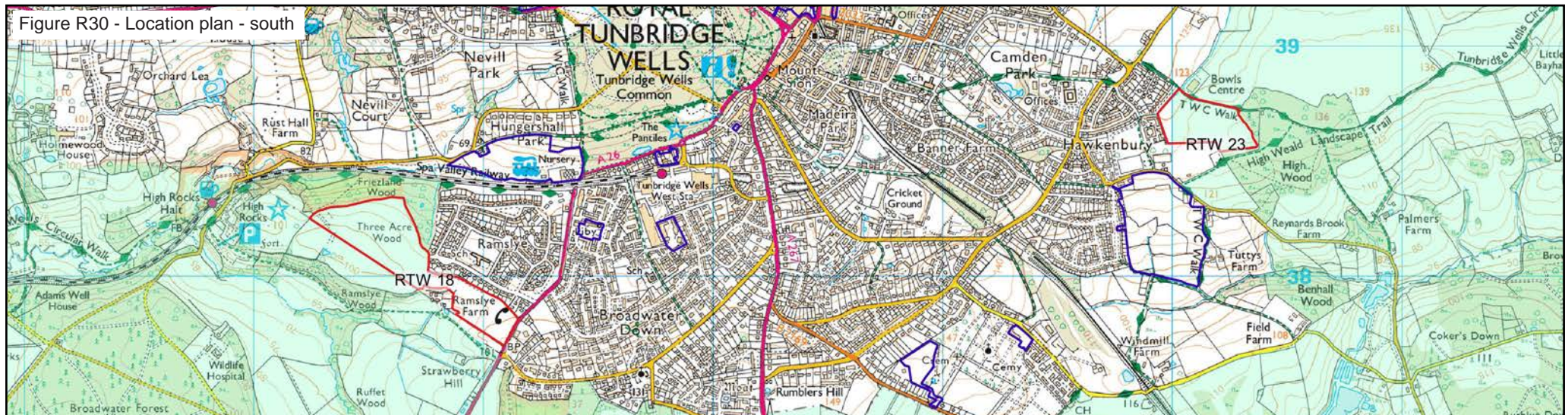
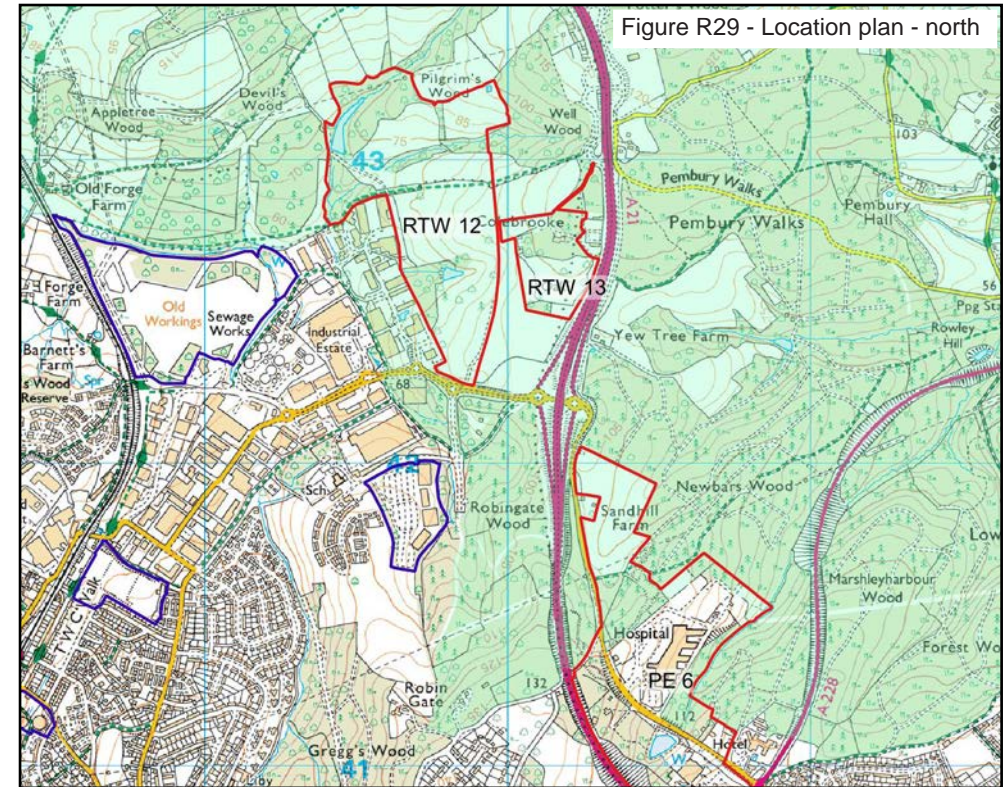
- Retain and protect existing boundary hedges, in particular the northern boundary hedge and replace any removed stretches of hedgerow, with new, species rich hedgerow planting.
- Contain all built development and external lighting to the west of the site, below the 130m contour.

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6.3.7 Cumulative effects of development proposed at Royal Tunbridge Wells

Tunbridge Wells

- 6.3.7.1 The proposed allocations to the south of Royal Tunbridge Wells are both physically and visually divorced from other proposed development sites, such that they are unlikely to lead to cumulative landscape or visual effects. The development within the western part of site RTW 18 has the potential for significant adverse effects in its own right, however this would remain unaffected by the inclusion or removal of any other proposed allocations. There is an allocation to the south of site RTW 23, however this lies on the far side of a local ridge and is unlikely to be experienced in conjunction with the proposals within the site.
- 6.3.7.2 Development within allocation sites PE 1- PE 3 would only give rise to cumulative visual effects if the heights of proposed buildings skyline over the tree belts lining the A21. In this scenario there would be adverse cumulative visual effects on people using the public rights of way to the south of the A21, in particular the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk.
- 6.3.7.3 There are the potential for cumulative effects as a result of the proposed allocations within sites RTW12, 13 and PE 6. The development of all three sites in combination could have adverse effects on the AONB, both in terms of landscape character and by reducing the sense of separate identity between Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury. Site PE 6 has the highest contribution to these potential effects. Retaining existing woodland cover and leaving the northern part of the PE 6 site undeveloped would reduce the extent of these expected effects. The mitigation proposals for



sites RTW 12 and 13 would also assist in reducing potential effects and have the potential to provide enhancement within these sites. There are opportunities for these enhancements to be linked across both sites, for example in terms of recreational and habitat connectivity, which would result in cumulative beneficial effects.

- 6.3.7.4 Providing that the mitigation proposals outlined within each site analysis page are adhered to, it is unlikely that development within the sites would lead to cumulative effects on the wider rural landscape of the High Weald AONB.

6.3.8 Summary and conclusions

- 6.3.8.1 Sites RTW 12 and RTW 13 are located to the north-east of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The development of these allocations would extend the employment offer from the existing industrial estate, up to the edge of the A21. Approximately 50% of site RTW 12 is allocated as open space, within which the site could be enhanced. The proposed development area is located to the east of the existing industrial estate, with an access from Longfield Road to the south. The site is enclosed by woodland to the north and new woodland planting to the east, which could create a robust buffer to the proposals. The measures stipulated within this report, including control of building heights, protection of characteristic landscape features and enhancement of the landscape within areas proposed as open space, would be sufficient to moderate the potential effects of development (in accordance with para 172 of the NPPF, section c).
- 6.3.8.2 The adjacent site RTW 13 is highly enclosed, however the development potential of the draft allocation site is dependent on the proposal put forward, both in terms of design and location. There are areas within this site suitable for sensitive development and other areas which could give rise to harmful landscape and visual effects if careful mitigation is not provided.
- 6.3.8.3 The development potential of allocation site RTW 18 changes across the site. The eastern part of the site lies outside the AONB and could accommodate sensitive development. In contrast the western part of the site has a particularly high landscape sensitivity and is not suitable for development in landscape terms. The retention of the western part of the site as open space could provide opportunities for enhancement within the AONB that would offset the potential effects of development located to the east.
- 6.3.8.4 Draft allocation site RTW 23 has an extant permission for the type of development proposed. The sports facilities defined within the draft policy could be implemented without long term harm to the AONB, however the final judgements will depend upon detailed design. This document has put forward recommendations that would ensure that appropriate mitigation is in place and that potential enhancements are also considered.