

LCCA 5 - THE SANDROCK AREA

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i Location and Landscape Character Summary

There are two Units within LCCA5, located to either side of The Ridge (B2093). That to the north comprises Sandhurst Recreation Park, whilst that to the south an enclosed area, in former use as part of the recreational grounds offer.

The High Weald NL extends across Sandhurst Recreation Park, with the southern boundary of this defined by the northern edge of The Ridge (B2093) along which a gappy, mixed species native hedgerow extends.

The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029 describes how natural beauty is articulated through eight core character components, rooted in the historic characterisation of the High Weald landscape as a whole: Natural systems (geology, soils, water and climate); Settlement; Routeways; Woodland; Fieldscapes and heath; Dark night skies; Aesthetic and perceptual qualities and Land-based economy and rural living.

The landscape within LCCA5 is characterised within the East Sussex County Landscape Character Assessment, (2016), with the Brede Valley, (LCA11) extending from an offset north of Sandhurst Recreation Park and the Urban Area of Hastings, (LCA 31) south of this across the Units.

Hastings (LCA 31, 2016)

Hastings extends across the urbanised area of Hastings Town. It is described with characteristics including that: *'The town sits on sandstone, which is eroded into ridges and wooded ghylls, giving a series of parks, open spaces Urban Areas and sheltered woodland within the town; The medieval Old Town is overlooked by the cliff-top castle ruins.'*

The vision for Hastings is identified including: *'A town of strong, highly distinctive character with equally strong and distinctive local communities. A town with good links to the countryside via a network of ghylls, linear open spaces and well designed transport networks worthy of the town.'*

The Brede Valley (LCA 11)

Key positive landscape attributes of LCA11 present within the northern part of LCCA3 include: *'A sense of tranquillity away from the main settlements and roads;'*

The current condition of LCA11 is identified as including: *'a largely unspoilt and tranquil rural landscape with few intrusive features. The landscape is in generally good condition and well managed as farmland with a strong historic structure.'*

The vision for LCA11 is defined, including: *'A tranquil landscape centred on the unspoilt river valley. Long open views from the surrounding ridges across the valley. The river winding through remote levels and set within a rolling and spacious countryside of extensive woodlands, farms and traditional orchards. The distinctive historic character of this High Wealden landscape conserved and enhanced.'*

Landscape change and adaptation to meet the vision for LCA11 is identified as requiring the following:

- *'1. Planning for the enhancement of the Romney Marsh Area Biodiversity Opportunity Area, which encompasses the Brede Valley, improving habitat continuity;*
- *2. Protect and manage existing habitats and plan for restoration of ditches and riverside vegetation to restore habitat linkages and continuity;*
- *3. Plan for the creation of multifunctional green infrastructure to maximise the opportunities for biodiversity and recreation offered by the river corridor and extensive woodland;*
- *4. Consider the potential to plan for recreational access in this character area identifying areas where public access can be encouraged whilst protecting other areas where wildlife conservation is the priority;*
- *5. Maximise opportunities for water based activities where this does not conflict with wild life interests, water quality or tranquillity;*
- *6. Integrate proposed and existing development into the landscape through planting of tree features and woodland to define the village boundaries with the countryside;*

- *7. Ensure that the design and layout of new developments respect the character and form of the landscape and existing settlements;*
- *8. Control the spread of suburbanisation by minimising clutter of signage and other urban features in lanes and villages;*
- *9. Conserve the setting of historic buildings and landscape features;*
- *10. Consider appropriate species for new plantings to maintain landscape character and biodiversity but also adaptation to climate change influences.'*

Guidelines for managing change within LCA11 are identified including the following: *'Pressures for expansion of Battle and Hastings may impact on the parts of the character area which border the towns. A priority should be to identify opportunities to enhance the degraded and poorly managed parts of the character area on the Hastings urban fringes; Any new development should respect the key positive attributes in the landscape; Proposed development should consider opportunities for proactively meeting the Landscape Change Strategy aims for this Landscape Character Area as set out in 1-10 above.'*

ii Settlement Pattern

There are areas of settlement within the surrounding area, including planned estates and ribbon development to the west and larger detached dwellings, modern planned estates to the east.

Along The Ridge to the east areas historically characterised as Informal parkland, have been developed with The Conquerors March, Marstons Pub, (to the junction with Stonestile Lane, and the four storey Hastings Court Care Home south of this.

A housing area named Sandrock Park is located to the south west off a Private Road, whilst the Sandrock Hall (Apartments) are located south of this, off the southern edge of Unit 5-2. East of the Sandrock Hall Apartments is the Coopers Vets Surgery and parking area.

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LCCA5 - Context Photograph 5A. East of the Sandrock Hall Apartments is the Coopers Vets Surgery and parking area off the southern edge of Unit 2-2.



LCCA5 - Context Photograph 5B. Four storey Hastings Court Care Home off The Ridge (B2093) beyond St Helen's Church.

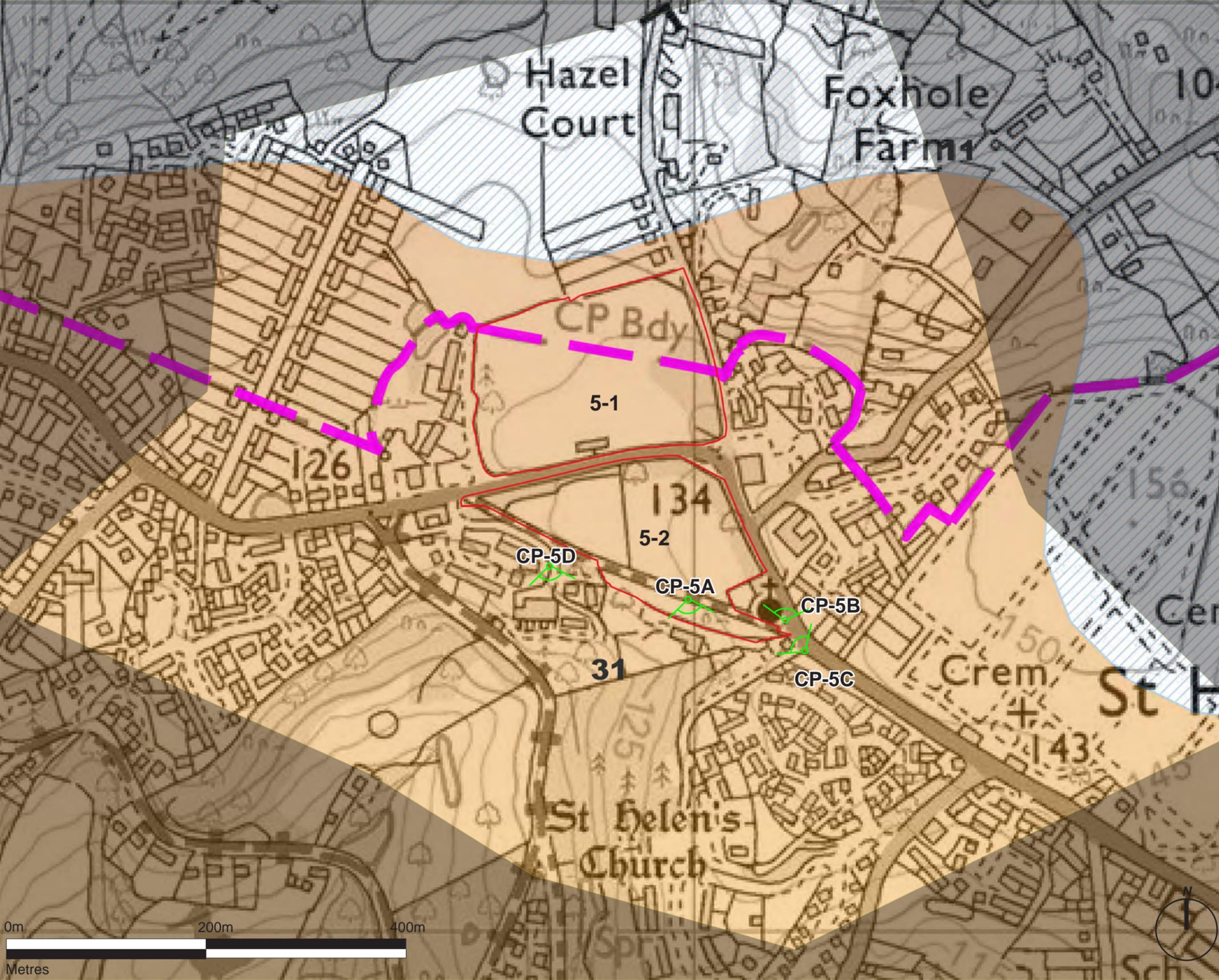


LCCA5 - Context Photograph 5C. St Helen's Church, outside of the south eastern corner of Unit 5-2.



LCCA5 - Context Photograph 5D. Sandrock Hall (Apartments) off the southern edge of Unit 5-2.

LCCA 5 - THE SANDROCK AREA



Legend

Hastings Borough Boundary

LCCA5 Landscape Assessment Unit

5-1 Sandrock Playing Fields - North

5-2 Sandrock Playing Fields - South

East Sussex Landscape Character Areas (2016)

31 Urban Area of Hastings (LCA 31)

11 Brede Valley (LCA 11)

Context Photograph Locations

CA Context Photographs (CA)

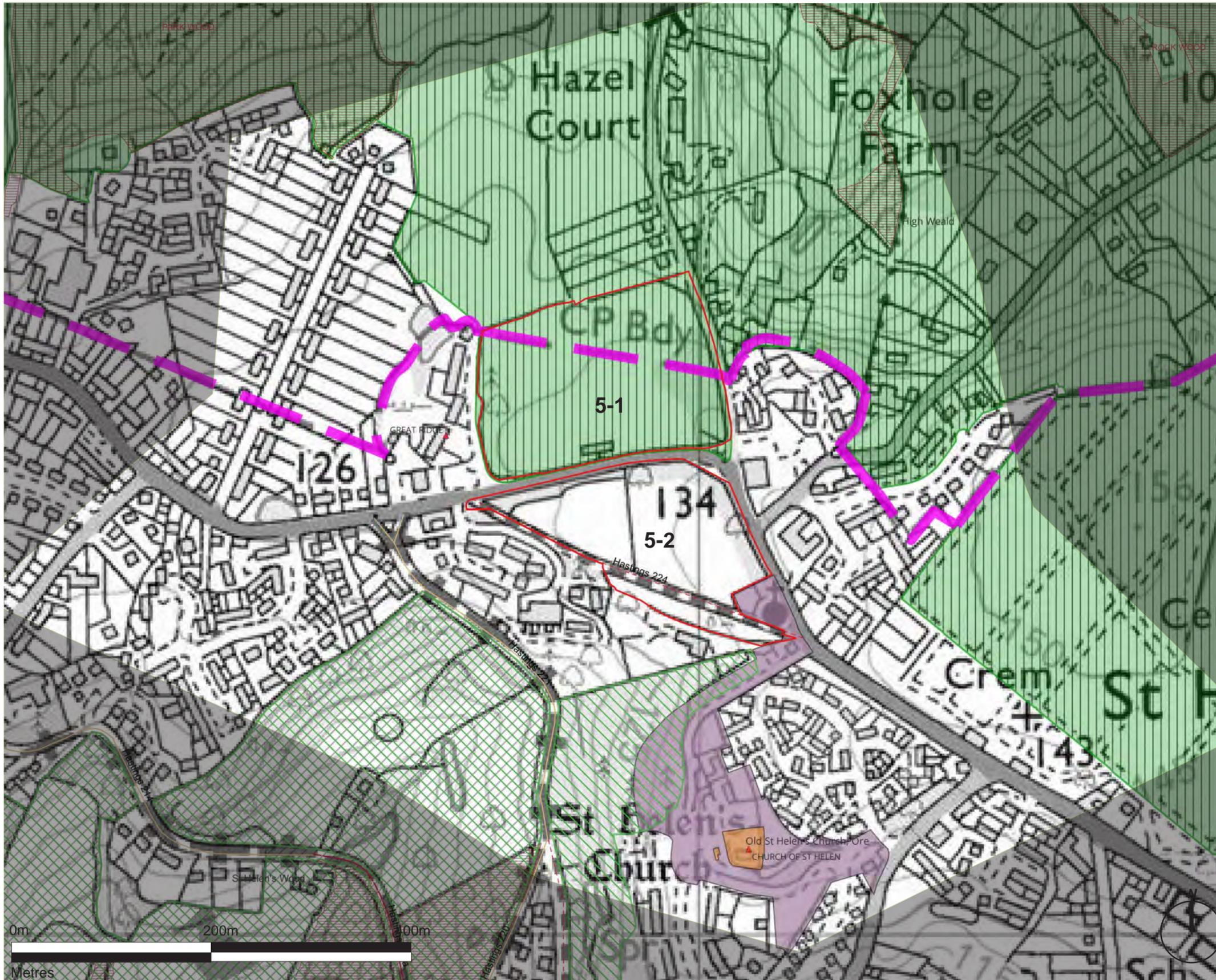
Figure A5.1. LCCA5 - East Sussex Landscape Character Areas

0m 200m 400m

Metres

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LCCA 5 - THE SANDROCK AREA



Legend

-  Hastings Borough Boundary

LCCA5 Landscape Assessment Unit

-  5-1 Sandrock Playing Fields - North
-  5-2 Sandrock Playing Fields - South

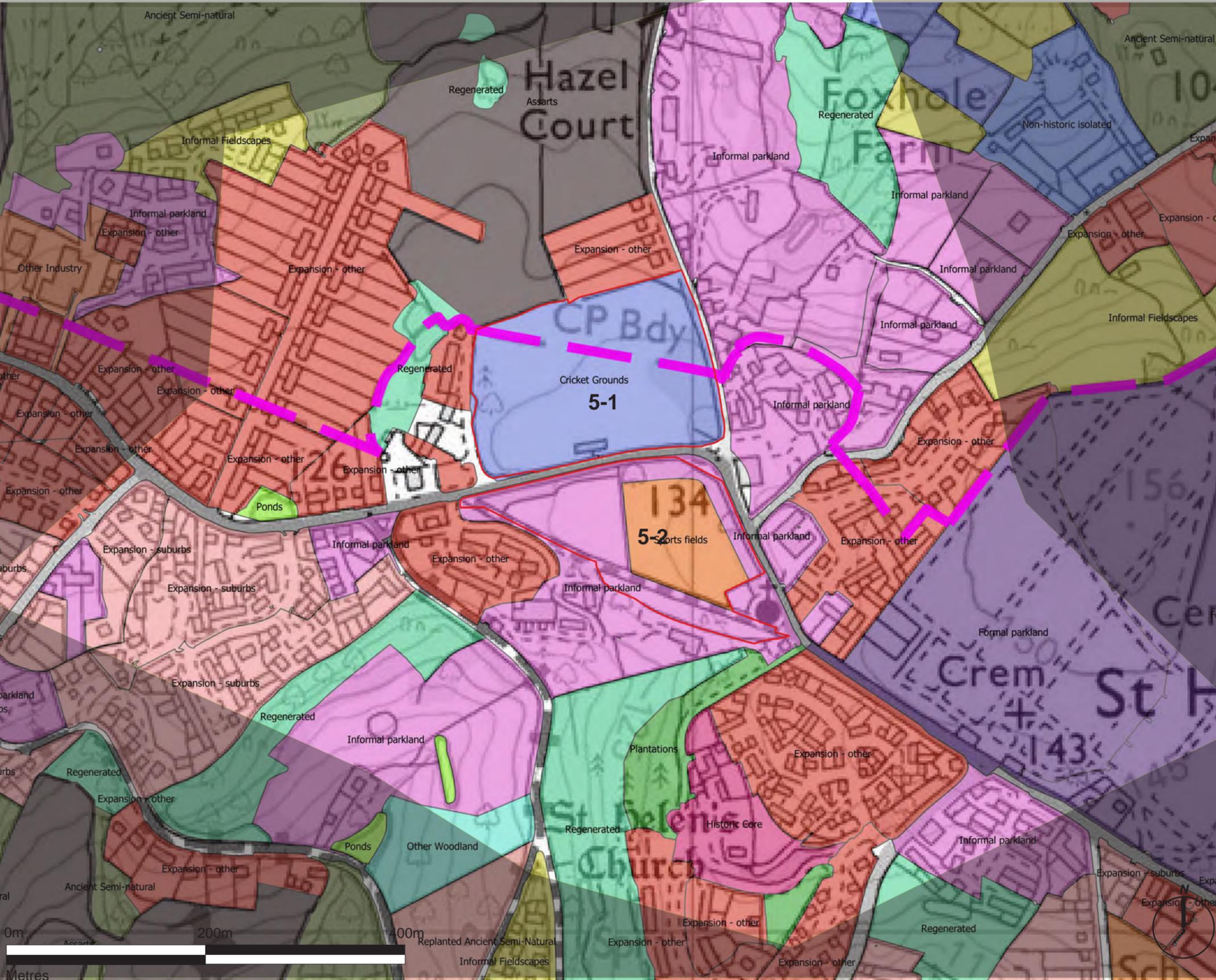
Designations

-  High Weald National Landscape
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Listed Buildings
-  Local Nature Reserve
-  Local Wildlife Site
-  Conservation Area
-  Tree Preservation Order
-  Public Footpath

Figure A5.2. LCCA5 - Relevant Designations

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LCCA 5 - THE SANDROCK AREA



Legend

Hastings Borough Boundary

LCCA5 Landscape Assessment Unit

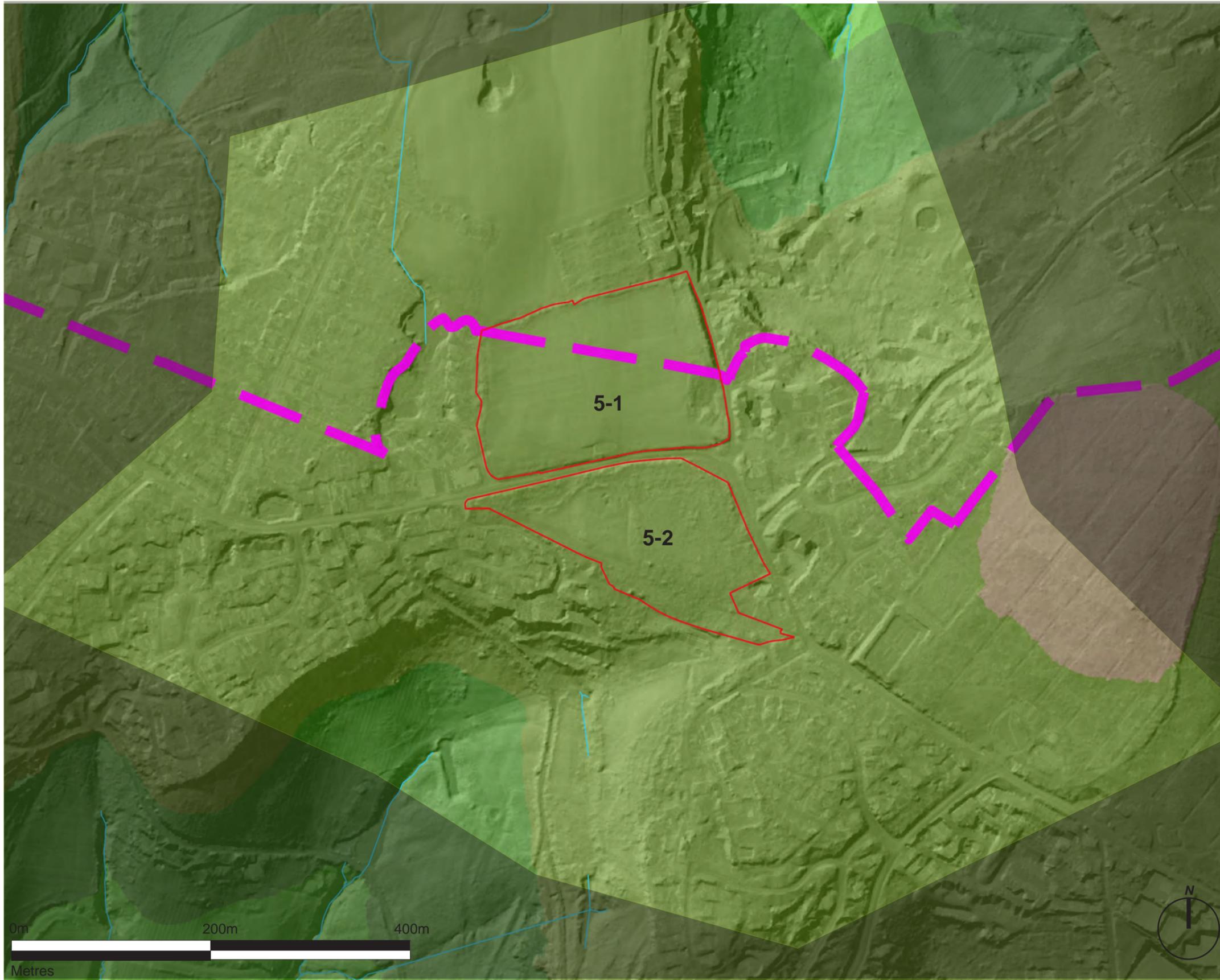
Sandrock Playing Fields - North

Sandrock Playing Fields - South

Figure A5.3. LCCA5 - Sussex Historic Landscape Character Types (2010)

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HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION GIS DATASET: DATA COPYRIGHT © EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL, HISTORIC ENGLAND

LCCA 5 - THE SANDROCK AREA



Legend

-  Hastings Borough Boundary
-  Watercourse, (Source: OS Open Rivers)

LCCA5 Landscape Assessment Unit

-  5-1 Sandrock Playing Fields - North
-  5-2 Sandrock Playing Fields - South

Level above Ordnance Datum, (aOD)

-  150-155m aOD
-  100-150m aOD
-  80-100m aOD

Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) is an airborne mapping technique, which uses a laser to measure the distance between the aircraft and the ground. Up to 100,000 measurements per second are made of the ground, allowing highly detailed terrain models to be generated.

The content of this LiDAR plan is sourced from the Environment Agency as digital elevation data supplied as a Digital Terrain Model to 1m, (2024) through QGIS.

Figure A5.4. LCCA5 - Landform

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LCCA 5 - THE SANDROCK AREA

Unit 5-1 Sandrock Playing Fields - North - Unit Assessment

Location and Landscape Character Summary	Sandhurst Recreation Ground, a gently domed playing field surrounded by trees. Well used for dog walking and quiet recreation on the urban edge and within the High Weald NL. When out of leaf, a vista towards the opposing valley ridgeline about Westfield draws the eye within north-westerly views, (see Photograph 5-1B). Whilst the playing field is laid out for team sports, with a cricket pitch mown to centre, the domed shape of the landform, and irregular outline of field and tree belts reduces the formality of the layout. The hedgerow to the south along The Ridge, (B2093) is gappy in places and road noise is constant, albeit the sunken profile of the road and tree belt beyond along the edge of Unit 2-2 functions to remove vehicular traffic from view and provide a naturalistic visual character. There is glimpses visibility of dwellings within the treeline to the east of the Unit in particular from along the southern extent of Stonestile Lane.
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Commentary against susceptibility evaluation criteria, informed by the field survey and desktop review.

1. Landform (< >)	<i>Undulating landform / Some distinct landform features</i> - Landform steadily falls some 10m in elevation from about the 135m contour to the south-eastern edge of the Unit to the 125m contour about the north-eastern corner, as part of the upper valley edge, which gently turns about to the north before falling more steeply outside of the Unit into an undulating tributary towards the River Brede. The 130m contour turns across the Unit from the centre of the eastern boundary to the south-western corner of the Unit, with a more gradual gradient north-west of this. A sunken lane extends to the eastern edge of the Unit.
2. Landscape pattern and time depth (< >)	<i>Mixture of simple and complex landscape field patterns</i> - Through reference to the Sussex Historic Characterisation, (Bannister, 2010) the Unit forms an area characterised as a Cricket Ground. Stonestile Lane extends as a sunken lane with native scrub and trees along the bankside to the eastern edge of the Unit. Twentieth Century Settlement expansion occurs off the northern, eastern and western edges of the Unit, with that offset to the east forming part of an area historically characterised as Informal parkland. Regarding the historic field boundary dataset from the High Weald AONB, the field within the Unit is defined as partly maintaining its historic boundary. The AONB Storymap (hosted online) identifies that the field is not a Medieval field.
3. 'Natural' character (< >)	<i>Some occurrence of valued semi-natural habitats and features (such as trees, hedgerows, woodland)</i> - The cricket field is enclosed within dense tree belts, with further tree belts offset to the south, east and west beyond the Unit protected with TPO's. The High Weald NL extends northwards off the southern boundary of the Unit as a corridor between the areas of housing to east and west.
4. Historic features (< >)	<i>Adjacent presence of historic features that contribute to landscape character</i> - The sunken Stonestile Lane is identified on the AONB Storymap (hosted online) as a Roman Road, Historic Route within the High Weald NL, with the Ridge to the south forming a Ridgeway. A Grade II LB is located offset to the south west of the Unit off Sandhurst Gardens named Great Ridge, Located at an offset to the south east, the Ore Place Conservation Area extends to include St Helen's Church.
5. Recreational use (< >)	<i>Landscapes with green spaces or recreation areas valued in the local context</i> - The Sandhurst Recreation Ground is well used for dog walking and quiet recreation on the urban edge. The playing field is laid out for team sports, with a cricket pitch mown to centre. A car parking area is located off the south western corner of the Unit.
6. Perceptual aspects (< >)	<i>Close to visible or audible signs of human activity and modern development</i> - The Unit is well enclosed from surrounding views by the woodland belt about the perimeter, and hedgerow with woodland belt beyond to the south. The road noise from The Ridge, (B2093) can be heard at all times, with glimpses of development to the east.
7. Settlement pattern and setting (< >)	<i>The area has some association with surrounding settlement pattern / contributes to views that are important to the character of a settlement</i> - When out of leaf, a glimpse through the trees to the northern boundary towards the opposing valley ridgeline about Westfield draws the eye within north-westerly views, (see Photograph 5-1B). The tree belt to the perimeter of the Unit contributes to the setting of the settlement to either side, and as part of a green corridor leading towards the countryside to north. The area provides some contribution as a setting to existing settlement. There are areas of settlement within the surrounding area, including planned estates and ribbon development to the west and larger detached dwellings, modern planned estates to the east.
8. Visual prominence (< >)	<i>Semi-enclosed or has some enclosed and some open areas</i> - The Unit is well visually enclosed by the surrounding belt of trees and scrub about the perimeter. The trees about form part of the distant skyline upon the ridge in southerly views from within the High Weald NL, about Westfield some 3km to the north west.
9. Landscape Character strength of expression (< >)	<i>'Fairly frequent' landscape, perhaps with some key positive landscape attributes</i> - Landscape attributes of the Hastings Landscape Character Area, (LCA31) within the Unit are limited to the grassed area and tree belt to the perimeter of the Unit as part of a green corridor leading towards the countryside to north, albeit Stonestile Lane provides this outside of the eastern boundary. Regarding strength of expression associated with the offset Brede Valley, (LCA11) there is some contribution to a tranquil landscape from the trees and scrub about the perimeter, limited by the road noise from the B2093. These aspects are heightened due to their contribution to special qualities of the High Weald NL.
10. Coalescence (< >)	<i>The area plays some role in separation of settlements although development could be designed so as to retain separation between settlements</i> - The enclosure within vegetation, with settlement to either side limits contribution.

Sensitivity Analysis

Sensitivity Analysis Commentary	The Sandhurst Recreation Ground, set within mature trees and with a glimpse towards the opposing valley ridgeline about Westfield contribute to the rural qualities and perceptual aspects within the southern edge of the High Weald NL, which is very susceptible to change without adverse change and significant effects. It may be able to accommodate the relevant type of development if sited and designed sensitively, subject to the recommended landscape guidelines.
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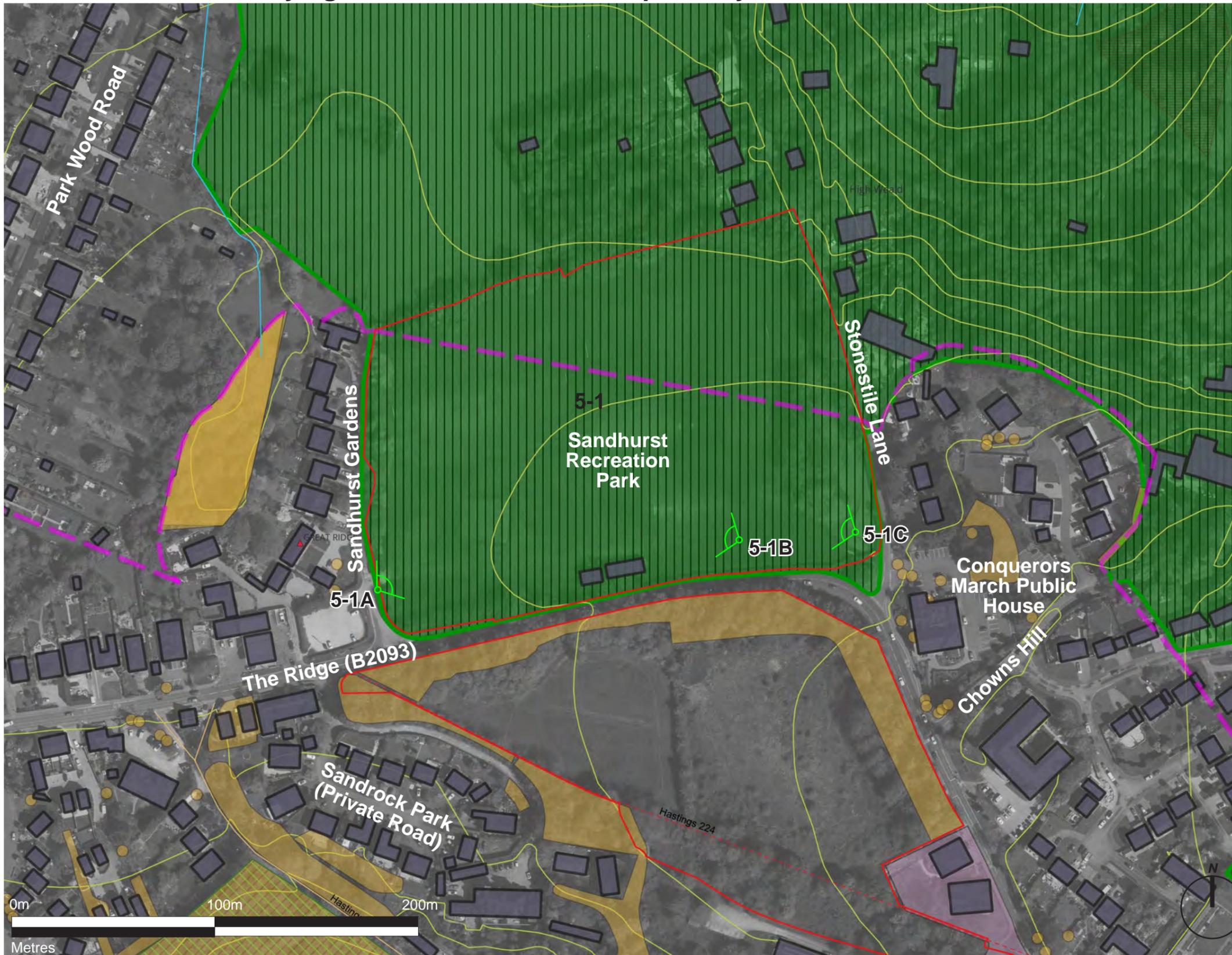
Landscape Guidelines	A vista should be retained which should maintain the sense of place from glimpsed visibility to the opposing valley ridgeline about Westfield, which draws the eye from within the south eastern part of the Unit, (see Photograph 5-1B). The strong framework of mature trees about the perimeter of the Unit should be retained. Development should be in association with surrounding settlement pattern, of high quality and landscape-led, being guided by the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-2029, (see Generic Guidance provided within the Report).
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Sensitivity Judgement

Landscape Sensitivity Rating	Development Scenario			
	Residential - Low scale	Residential - Medium scale	Commercial / Industrial - Low-Medium scale	Solar
	Moderate	High	High	Moderate

LCCA 5 - THE SANDROCK AREA

Unit 5-1 Sandrock Playing Fields - North - Landscape Analysis



Legend

- 5-1 Sandrock Playing Fields - North
- Hastings Borough Boundary, (Rother District to north of line)

Designations

- High Weald National Landscape
- Ancient Woodland
- ▲ Listed Buildings
- Conservation Area
- Tree Preservation Order
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site
- Public Footpath

Landscape Analysis

- Built form
- Contour lines (5m increments)
- A Unit Photographs

Figure A5.5. Landscape Analysis for Unit 5-1.

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Unit 5-1 Sandrock Playing Fields - North - Photographs



Photograph 5-1A. Easterly view from the south-western corner of the Unit, with the skyline defined by the surrounding mature trees, with the club huts and facilities to the upper side of the field, (and bins to the left).



Photograph 5-1B. North-westerly view inset from the south-western corner of the Unit, showing the tree lined boundaries, with a glimpse through to the distant landform within the High Weald.



Photograph 5-1C. North-westerly view from the south-western corner of the Unit, showing the tree lined boundaries, and extension of these into the eastern edge of the Unit to right of view.

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Unit 5-2 Sandrock Playing Fields - South - Unit Assessment				
Location and Landscape Character Summary	Unit 5-2 comprises two fields across a triangular shaped area, with that to the west in recreational use and that to the east within which scrub is regenerating. The boundaries are defined by dense tree belts, protected with TPO's, beyond which The Ridge, (B2093) extends to north and east. The southern boundary to the High Weald NL extends off the northern boundary of the Unit along the northern edge of The Ridge. Public Footpath 224 extends along the southern edge of the Unit. The Unit forms part of that allocated for residential within the Hastings Development Management Plan (2015) Section Three, Policy SH1, albeit the Policy Area extends further east and south than the Assessment Unit, whilst highlighting the significance and setting of the Ore Place Conservation Area which extends outside of the Unit. Potential access points are shown on the Figure 101: Design Brief (2015) at an inset from the western corner and opposite Chowns Hill junction to the north-east.			
Commentary against susceptibility evaluation criteria, informed by the field survey and desktop review.				
1. Landform (<)	<i>Absence of strong topographical variety / very gently undulating</i> - Landform steadily falls some 10m in elevation from about the 140m contour to the eastern edge of the Unit to the 130m contour about the western corner, as part of the upper valley edge to an incised landform which falls away to the south west about St Helen's Wood. However, the wider associations are not apparent across the Unit.			
2. Landscape pattern and time depth (< >)	<i>Designed landscape</i> - Through reference to the Sussex Historic Characterisation, (Bannister, 2010) the Unit forms part of an area characterised as a designed landscape of informal parkland, resulting from post-medieval gentrification, with isolated tree clumps, which extends away to the south west of the Unit. The field within which scrub is regenerating to the east is defined as a Sports Field. A stone wall extends outside of the eastern Unit boundary. Solid steel parkland railing extends along Public Footpath 224 towards St Helen's Church, albeit in a poor state.			
3. 'Natural' character (< >)	<i>Some occurrence of valued semi-natural habitats and features (such as trees, hedgerows, woodland)</i> - The two fields are enclosed within dense tree belts, protected with TPO's, other than to the eastern part of the southern boundary, where there remains a wooded character, but which is not subject to a TPO. The western field is tussocky grassland, whilst the eastern field is colonising to scrub. The St Helen's Wood LNR is located offset to the south, enclosed within built form, described as a network of ancient semi-natural woodland surrounding large and small glades of lowland meadow habitat, with a series of ponds. The southern boundary to the High Weald NL extends off the northern boundary of the Unit along the northern edge of The Ridge.			
4. Historic features (< >)	<i>Adjacent presence of historic features that contribute to landscape character</i> - The historically characterised designed landscape is apparent from the stone wall about the perimeter of the north eastern edge of the Unit and the parkland railings to the southern boundary along the Public Footpath. The Ore Place Conservation Area extends to outside the eastern corner of the Unit, where St Helen's Church is located, along side of "The Lodge" (Lodge Cottage) a building, historically associated with a former entrance to the manor Ore Place. Located at an offset to the south east, upon a ridge within an enclosed woodland setting is The Old St Helen's Church, Ore, Scheduled Monument and Grade II LB with a 12th Century tower towards which the Conservation Area extends.			
5. Recreational use (< >)	<i>Landscapes with green spaces or recreation areas valued in the local context / Some Public Rights of Way</i> - Public Footpath 224 extends along the southern edge of the Unit. The western field within the Unit is maintained as a recreational area for informal recreation.			
6. Perceptual aspects (<)	<i>Close to visible or audible signs of human activity and modern development</i> - The Unit is well enclosed from surrounding views by the TPO woodland belt about the perimeter, and woodland belt to the south. The road noise from The Ridge, (B2093) can be heard at all times, with glimpses of development to the south.			
7. Settlement pattern and setting (< >)	<i>The area has some association with surrounding settlement pattern / provides some contribution as a backdrop</i> - The tree belt to the perimeter of the Unit contributes to the setting of the settlement to either side. East of The Ridge areas historically characterised as Informal parkland have been developed with The Conquerors March, Marstons Pub, (to the junction with Stonestile Lane, and the four storey Hastings Court Care Home south of this. A housing area named Sandrock Park is located to the south west off a Private Road, whilst the Sandrock Hall (Apartments) are located south of this, off the southern edge of Unit 5-2. East of the Sandrock Hall Apartments is the Coopers Vets Surgery and parking area.			
8. Visual prominence (<)	<i>Visually enclosed landscape screened by landform or land cover</i> - The two fields across the Unit are well visually enclosed by the surrounding belt of trees and scrub about the perimeter, whilst not forming a visually distinctive or prominent skyline.			
9. Landscape Character strength of expression (<)	<i>'Fairly frequent' landscape, perhaps with some key positive landscape attributes</i> - Landscape attributes of the Hastings Landscape Character Area, (LCA31) within the Unit are limited to the grassed area and tree belt to the perimeter of the Unit as part of a green corridor leading towards the countryside to north. Regarding strength of expression associated with the offset Brede Valley, (LCA11) there is some contribution to a tranquil landscape from the trees and scrub about the perimeter, limited by the road noise from the B2093.			
10. Coalescence (<)	<i>The area does not play a particularly important role in settlement separation</i> - The well enclosed Unit does not contribute to separation of settlements.			
Sensitivity Analysis				
Sensitivity Analysis Commentary	The two fields within the old Sandrock Playing Fields enclosed within dense TPO tree belts and bordered to the east with The Ore Place Conservation Area contribute to rural qualities and perceptual aspects within the setting of the High Weald NL, which is very susceptible to change without adverse change and significant effects. It may have some potential to accommodate the relevant type of development if sited and designed sensitively, subject to the recommended landscape guidelines.			
Landscape Guidelines	The surrounding tree belts should be maintained and reinforced, with removal of trees for access limited. Public Footpath 224 along the southern edge of the Unit should be maintained as part of a reinforced green corridor for recreational amenity and ecological connectivity. A natural buffer should be maintained to the east adjacent to The Ore Place Conservation Area and St Helen's Church. The parkland railing type might be reinstated in places where appropriate, particularly leading up to St Helen's Church to the east. Development should be in association with surrounding settlement pattern.			
Sensitivity Judgement				
	Development Scenario			
	Residential - Low scale	Residential - Medium scale	Commercial / Industrial - Low-Medium scale	Solar
Landscape Sensitivity Rating	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate

LCCA 5 - THE SANDROCK AREA

Unit 5-2 Sandrock Playing Fields - South - Landscape Analysis



Legend

- 5-2 Sandrock Playing Fields North
- Hastings Borough Boundary, (Rother District to north of line)

Designations

- High Weald National Landscape
- Listed Buildings
- Conservation Area
- Tree Preservation Order
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site
- Public Footpath

Landscape Analysis

- Built form
- Contour lines (5m increments)
- Unit Photographs

Figure A5.6. Landscape Analysis for Unit 5-2.

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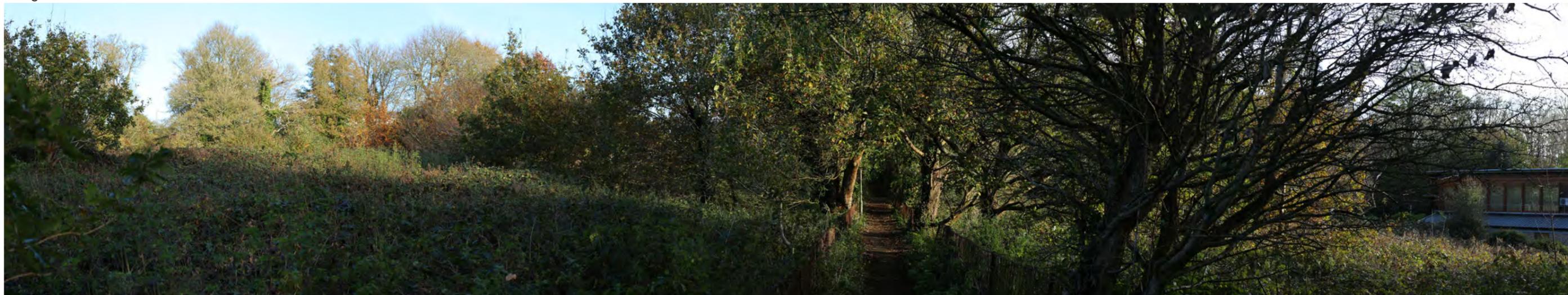
Unit 5-2 Sandrock Playing Fields - South - Photographs



Photograph 5-2A. Easterly view of the tree belt about the western corner of the Unit from adjacent to the Shell Petrol Station, opposite the access road to Sandrock Park, (private road). The Public Footpath sign and access into the Unit can be seen.



Photograph 5-2B. North-westerly view from within the eastern corner of the western field, showing tussocky grassland, with a glimpse through the tree belt to the left towards the roofline of the lower situated Sandrock Hall. Public Footpath 224 extends along the treeline to left.



Photograph 5-2C. South-easterly view along Public Footpath 22, enclosed within a treeline and surrounded with scrub. The Coopers Vets building can be seen across the south eastern Unit which extends towards this building.