

2 The Site

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This chapter describes the Site, its location and its context as well as providing an overview of the existing land uses and features. It also identifies the key receptors which are considered potentially sensitive to the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. A more detailed description and analysis is available (in the form of the individual baseline assessments) within the technical assessments of the ES (**ES Vol 2, Chapters 6 to 12**).

2.2 Site Context

2.2.1 The Site is located towards the south of Barrow Green Road and adjacent to the railway line that services Southern Rail and the Thameslink. The location of the Site in its wider geographical context is presented in **Figure 2.1**.

2.2.2 Oxted Station is located approximately 385 m to the southeast of the Site. This station is serviced by Southern Rail and the Thameslink which provides services to East Grinstead, Uckfield and London Victoria.

2.2.3 There are seven bus stops within a 500 m radius of the Site, all located east and southeast of the Site, with the closest stop being Barrow Green Road 300 m east of the Site. The surrounding stops provide services primarily for bus routes 594 and 595, which connect the nearby area of Chalkpit Wood to Oxted Station.

2.2.4 The Site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The nearest AQMA is located approximately 4.3 km from the east of the Site (Sevenoaks District Council AQMA), which has been designated for exceedances in nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).

2.2.5 There are seven listed buildings and structures within a 500 m radius of the Site, the closest of which is the Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade I) located approximately 80 m to the southeast, and Blunt House (Grade II) located approximately 200 m to the west.

2.2.6 There is one Scheduled Monument within 1 km of the Site, The Mount Barrow Green is located approximately 950 m to the southwest.

2.2.7 There are no Registered Battlefields or Registered Parks and Gardens within 1 km of the Site.

2.2.8 The Site is not located within an Archaeological Priority Area.

2.2.9 There are 10 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) located within 10 km of the Site, with the closest being the Hill Park, Tatsfield, located approximately 3.9 km to the

northeast of the Site. South London Downs National Nature Reserve is located approximately 7.25 km to the northwest of the Site.

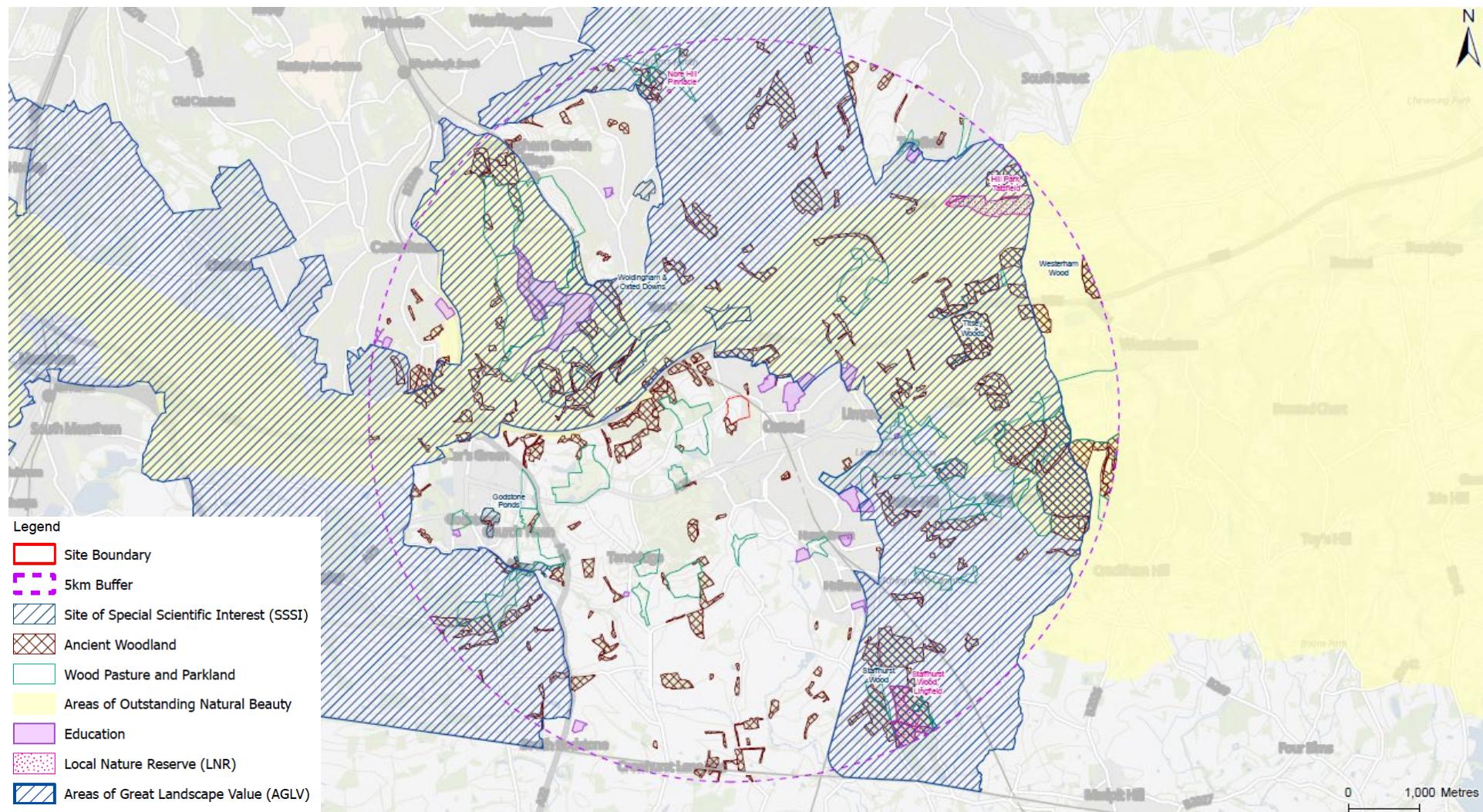
- 2.2.10 There are 13 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) located within 10 km of the Site, with the closest being the Woldingham and Oxted Downs SSSI located approximately 500 m north and northeast of the Site.
- 2.2.11 There are no Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas within 10 km of the Site.
- 2.2.12 The entirety of the Site is located within Flood Zone 1 (areas with a low probability of flooding) and Source Protection Zone (SPZ) III - Total Catchment (area around a supply source within which all the groundwater ends up at the abstraction point). The EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map indicates that the site is predominantly located in the 'very low' surface water flood risk category (less than 1 in 1000 chance of flooding each year).
- 2.2.13 However, it is important to note that there is a low, medium and high risk surface water flood flow path through part of the Site (i.e. between 1 in 1000 and 1 in 100, between 1 in 100 and 1 in 30 and more than 1 in 30 chance of flooding each year respectively). Further detail is provided below and surface water modelling has been undertaken to inform the drainage strategy.
- 2.2.14 The Surrey Hills National Landscape is located approximately 500 m to the north of the Site. The Kent Downs National Landscape is located beyond the Surrey Hills National Landscape to the east, approximately 4.25 km away from the Site. The Site is also located within the Green Belt.

2.3 Site Description

- 2.3.1 The Site area is approximately 9.69 ha in size and it is located at OS NGR TQ388531. The Site is and has remained as undeveloped agricultural land throughout its history.
- 2.3.2 The Site is dominated by a single greenfield space, bisected by a public bridleway/footpath. Historic mapping dating from 1840 indicates that this field was previously sub-divided into three smaller fields, with the public footpath shown running through the Site.
- 2.3.3 The Site is underlain by superficial deposits of Alluvium (Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel) in the far western section of the Site and solid geology comprising Folkestone Formation (Sandstone) across the majority of the Site with the Gault Formation (Mudstone) in the far north of the Site.
- 2.3.4 Where present along the western boundary the superficial Alluvium is classified as Secondary A aquifer which would constitute a sensitive receptor.

2.3.5 The Site currently comprises of greenfield land and vehicular access to the Site is from Barrow Green Road, located to the north of the Site.

Figure 2.1: Site Context



2.4 Site Context

2.4.1 The sections below provide a brief description of the baseline conditions at the Site and their context. A more detailed description and analysis is available (in the form of individual baseline assessments) within the technical chapters scoped into the ES (**ES Vol 2, Chapters 6 to 12**).

Socio-Economics

2.4.2 The Site is located within the Oxted North ward, within Surrey County and is part of Tandridge District.

2.4.3 According to the most recent population statistics, the population of Oxted North Middle layer Super Output Area (MSOA) was around 9,491 in 2021¹. In terms of age groups, the highest proportion of the population were aged 14 years and under (17.7%) followed by 45-54 years old (14.2%). Furthermore, the proportion of the population aged 15-24 was around 8.9%.

2.4.4 There are fifty Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within the Tandridge District. According to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), the Site is situated between two LSOAs ranked amongst the 10% least deprived areas in England². Out of the fifty LSOAs, five LSOAs are amongst the top 40% most deprived areas in England, with seven LSOAs being amongst the top 10% least deprived. In 2019, 6.3% of the Tandridge population was income-deprived.

2.4.5 The need for affordable housing within Tandridge is particularly acute. The 2023 median affordability ratio (average house prices to average earnings) for Tandridge was 12.38% compared against an average of 8.26% in the rest of England and 10.39% in the South East. As of July 2024 there were 1,841 households registered on the waiting list for TDC. Of this requirement 39 households were registered as being in the most urgent need (Band A) and a further 381 in high housing need (Band B). More locally there are 208 households on the waiting list for homes in Oxted alone.

Air Quality

2.4.6 The Site is located within the jurisdiction of the Tandridge District Council (TDC), Surrey. The nearest AQMA to the Site is located approximately 5.8 km toward the west (Sevenoaks District Council AQMA), which has been designated for

¹ Office of National Statistics (2021)

² Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2019) English indices of deprivation 2019

exceedances in nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). These Air Quality Objectives (AQOs) are derived from the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000, as amended.

2.4.7 According to the Air Quality Annual Status Reports for TDC (2024), there were four Sites measuring for annual mean NO₂ concentrations within 1.5 km of the Site during 2023, the latest year for which monitoring data are available. The results of the monitoring data collected from 2019 to 2023 at the TDC monitoring locations are shown in **Table 2.1**, below. **Figure 2.2** presents the monitoring locations. **Table 2.2** shows that annual mean NO₂ concentrations were below the AQO at Site from 2019-2023.

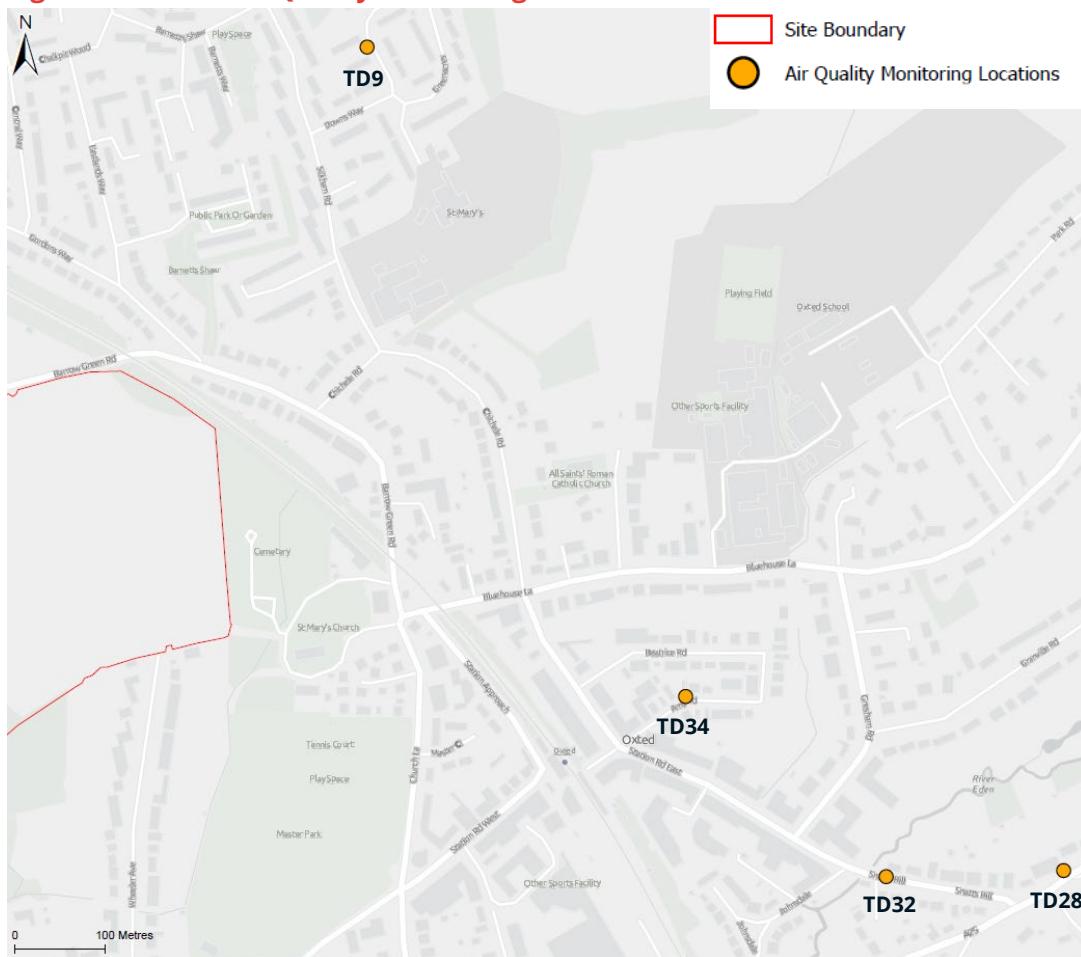
Table 2.1: Annual mean NO₂ concentrations (µg/m³)

Site ID	Site Type	Distance from Site (km)	Annual mean NO ₂ concentrations (µg/m ³)				
			2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
TD9 (Greenacres Oxted)	Urban Background	0.65km	17.8	12.5	13.2	15	-
TD28 (Westerham Road Oxted)	Roadside	1.08 km	28.1	22.2	22.3	22.6	19.3
TD32 (Snatts Hill Oxted)	Roadside	0.93 km	21.9	17.1	17.3	18.4	16.6
TD34 (Amy Road Oxted)	Urban Background	0.66 km	21.2	16.2	16.5	17.6	17.6

- Monitoring ceased

2.4.8 TDC does not undertake hourly monitoring for NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} concentrations within its jurisdiction.

Figure 2.2: TDC's Air Quality Monitoring Locations Near the Site



2.4.9 Estimated background data are available from the United Kingdom Air Information Resource website³ operated by the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (Defra). The website provides estimated annual average background concentrations of NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} on a 1 km² grid basis.

2.4.10 **Table 2.2** presents estimated annual average background NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} concentrations for the grid square containing the Site (X538797, Y153140), for 2022, 2023 and 2024. The estimated background concentrations are well below the relevant UK Air Quality Strategy Objectives for NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}. As background concentrations are predicted to fall with time, background concentrations in future years would not be expected to exceed their respective annual mean standards.

³ Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), 2020. *United Kingdom Air Information Resource (UK-AIR): Background Mapping data for local authorities – 2018*.

Table 2.2: Estimated Background Annual Average NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} Concentrations at the Site

Assessment Year	Estimated Annual Average Pollutant Concentrations Derived from the UK-AIR Website		
	Annual Average NO ₂ (µg/m ³)	Annual Average PM ₁₀ (µg/m ³)	Annual Average PM _{2.5} (µg/m ³)
2022	13.11	15.58	10.12
2023	12.60	15.39	9.96
2024	11.96	15.21	9.82
Air Quality Objective	40	40	20

2.4.11 Based on the monitored and estimated background data presented above, it is considered that the Site is located in an area where each of the AQOs will be complied with. As background air quality is projected to improve with time, as newer, cleaner vehicles are introduced into the vehicle fleet, breaches of AQOs are not expected in future years.

Noise and Vibration

2.4.12 An environmental noise survey was undertaken in September 2024 to quantify the environmental noise levels impacting the Site, arising from key environmental noise sources.

2.4.13 Noise from the railway line to the east of the Site and road traffic noise arising from Barrow Green Road and the M25 were the dominant environmental noise sources impacting the Site.

2.4.14 There may also be environmental noise contributions from the adjacent facilities such as St Mary's Church and Oxted Community Hall to the southeast of the Site as well as from aircraft, especially those taking off and landing at Gatwick Airport, approximately 15 km to the south-east.

2.4.15 Noise sensitive receptors will be the residential dwellings along Barrow Green Road to the west and east of the Site, along with the residential dwellings along Wheeler Avenue to the south of the Site. Further residential dwellings along Gordons Way to the northeast of the Site have the potential to experience impacts from noise.

Traffic and Transport

2.4.16 The existing access to the Site is from Barrow Green Road to the north and no established currently available access from Wheeler Avenue to the south. Barrow Green Road extends around the northern perimeter of the Site and leads to the Oxted Town Centre via Church Lane. It also provides a direct link to the wider highway network (A25, A22 and M25). Wheeler Avenue currently

serves as a residential road providing access to the dwellings along Wheeler and Peter Avenue. It is understood that both roads currently have capacity available to support additional traffic.

- 2.4.17 The Site is bisected by a Public Right of Way (Bridleway 97) which connects Court Farm Lane towards the south to Barrow Green Road towards the north. The nearest train and bus services are as stated in Section 2.2.
- 2.4.18 Sensitive receptors in the study area include people at home or work, vulnerable groups, retail/ high street areas with high concentration of people on Station Road, junctions/ highway links at or over capacity.

Ecology

- 2.4.19 The Site is largely arable, however, it is bordered by areas of native hedgerow along the eastern and western boundaries with a priority deciduous woodland partially extending onto the Site in the south western corner. Ancient woodland is also contained within the identified priority woodland, although this is adjacent to the site and does not extend onto it. A mature oak of moderate potential to support roosting bats is located in the south-west of the Site. An ephemeral stream forms part of the south-western boundary and drains into the ancient and wet woodland to the south. Bat activity on site was relatively low and considered of value only up to local level. Good population of slow worm recorded along field margins. The land within the ancient woodland to the south west is listed as 'The Bogs', a Potential Local Wildlife Site, (pLWS) however, has not been formally designated. Woldingham & Oxted Downs SSSI is located 1 km to the north.

Heritage

- 2.4.20 Two heritage assets have been identified as being within the vicinity of the Site, namely:
 - Church of St Mary the Virgin, Grade I (NHLE 1189608), located 80 m west of the Site; and
 - Blunt House, Grade II (NHLE 1377646), located 200 m west of the Site.
- 2.4.21 The Site lies to the north-west of the Church of St Mary and forms part of the setting of this heritage asset. The church is a multi-phased building set on elevated ground to the west of the current, commercial core of Oxted. The church has a broad, 12th century tower which forms a local landmark in close and longer distance views, and exhibits a range of built fabric, including flint, rubblestone and some rendered finishes.
- 2.4.22 The church historically had a relatively isolated setting, forming part of a small cluster of buildings west of "New Oxted" near to Court Farm. The setting has

changed through the 19th and 20th centuries to provide additional surrounding development. The church was historically bound by orchards to the west, which were associated with the neighbouring farm, and which would have provided a degree of visual enclosure from the surrounding rural land.

- 2.4.23 The Site lies to the north-west of the church and is linked to the church by a bridleway. This right of way is marked on 19th century ordnance survey mapping and appears to be a well-established, historic route. It would have provided a link to the church for parishioners within the wider, rural parish. The church is still experienced, in glimpsed views, from this footpath although the intervening planting reduces views, even in winter months. The wider site provides similar, glimpsed and heavily filtered views of the church beyond the planting. The church is also visible from the low-lying land to the south where it is seen set beyond the mature trees and existing residential development.
- 2.4.24 Blunt House is located south of Barrow Green Road, in an elevated position relative to the Site. It is a late 19th century house, constructed in a neo-Georgian style and modelled on the original Blunt House in Croydon. The building contains some interior features that were salvaged from the earlier Blunt House.
- 2.4.25 The building is located within a relatively secluded location, elevated above the level of the Site. It is set within enclosed, well-vegetated grounds which heavily restrict views to the south-east, towards the Site.
- 2.4.26 Despite the planting, some filtered views of the listed building are permitted from within the Site in summer and winter months, with the Site forming part of its wider setting. However, they are limited and well-screened by the existing vegetation.
- 2.4.27 There are no designated archaeological assets within, or within the near surroundings of, the Site.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 2.4.28 The landscape value of the Site is medium, reflecting its location within the setting of the Surrey Hills National Landscape, which is located approximately 500 m to the north of the Site.
- 2.4.29 The landscape features which could experience direct effects from the Proposed Development comprise the trees within the Site and on its boundaries, which are of medium-high value.
- 2.4.30 The landscape value of the wider area is assessed as medium and of the Surrey Hills National Landscape, high.
- 2.4.31 Development proposals consider sensitive views from within the National Landscape to the north, ensure that any development can be assimilated into

the landscape and settlement of Oxted, and maintain views from within the Site towards the church and towards the scarp as positive features.

2.4.32 Views from within the cemetery on the Site's eastern boundary have also been considered.

Archaeology

2.4.33 The Site is not within any County Sites of Archaeological Importance (CASI) or areas of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP). The nearest AHAPs are designated for bronze age and Roman cremation burials, 130 m to the south of the Site, and a possible bronze age or Saxon barrow 260 m to the west of the Site. The nearest Scheduled Monument is 450 m to the south-east of the Site, the Mount at Barrow Green, comprising earthworks associated with a (11th -13th century) medieval motte castle.

2.4.34 A moderate to high archaeological potential is expected at the Site for evidence of Medieval and Post Medieval land division, land management and agricultural activity, associated with the nearby Old Manor House, later known as Court Farm. A tentative low to moderate archaeological potential is considered for evidence of funerary activity of the Bronze Age and Roman period. A low potential is anticipated for all other periods of human activity, although presence of isolated, redeposited Mesolithic/Neolithic artefacts cannot be completely excluded.

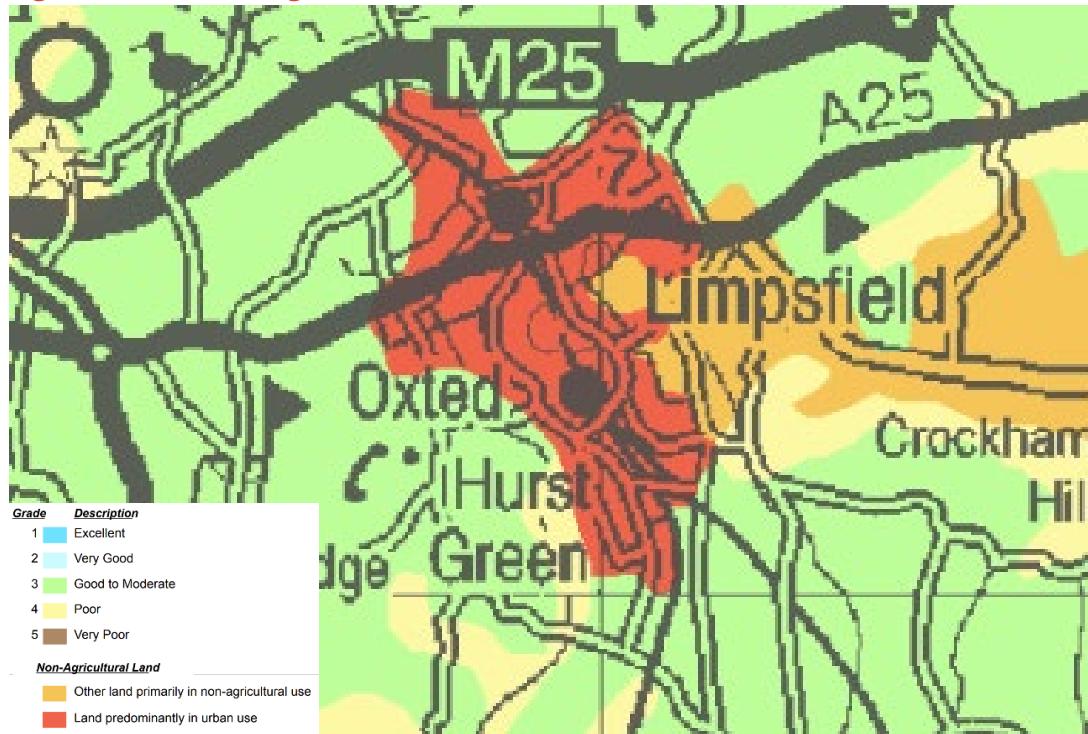
2.4.35 Archaeological investigations recently undertaken within 1 km of the study site have observed no evidence of archaeological remains of any periods - (including no further evidence of Bronze Age and Roman cremations or other activities) - and those known archaeological findings contained in the Surrey HER are largely based on late 19th century – early 20th century records or findspots. The only exposed remains in proximity of the study site were burials found within the grounds of the nearby St Mary's churchyard, prior to development of the new Community Hall. The study site, however, does not extend into the boundaries of the known Medieval – Post Medieval burial ground.

Agriculture and Soils

2.4.36 With reference to the Natural England Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land Assessment (see **Figure 2.3**) the Site is located in an area where land is predominantly in urban use. This classification is also used in the Tandridge Landscape Capacity and Sensitivity Study, 2016 (OXT007). Extrapolating the assessment to remove the urban classification and relating it to surrounding assessments suggests the Site would fall into the Grade 3 (Good to Moderate) category. The Site has not been classified under the Post 1988 Agricultural Land

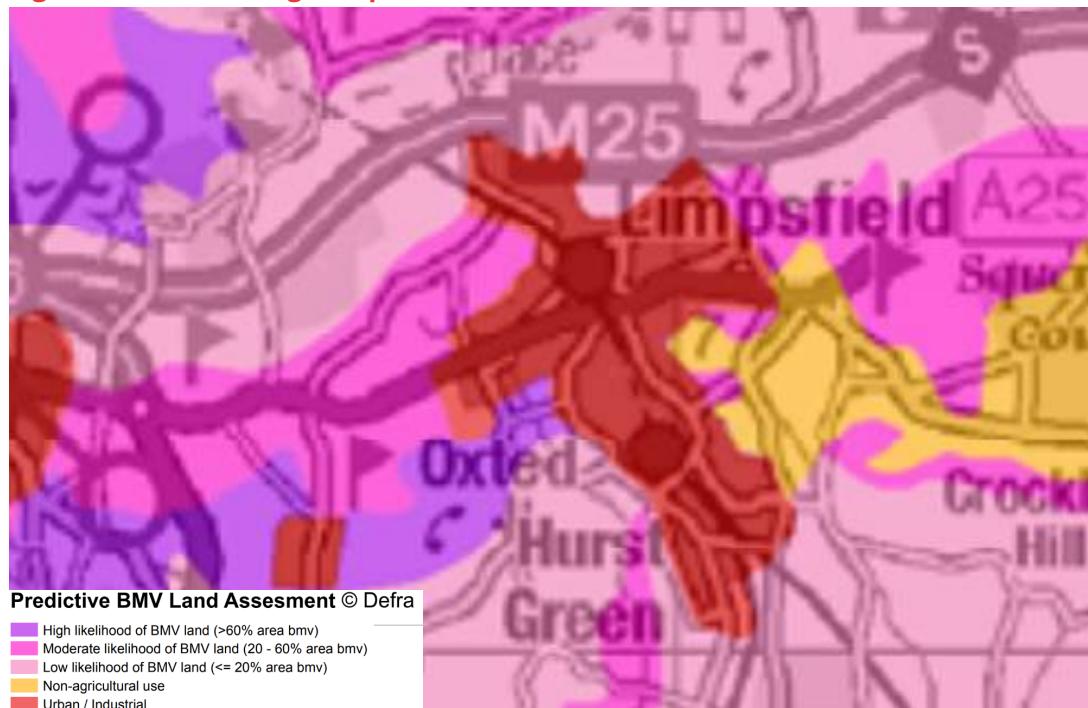
Classification and therefore it has not been classified in terms of categories 3a and 3b.

Figure 2.3 Natural England BMV Land Assessment



2.4.37 In addition to the above, the Natural England maps (see **Figure 2.4**) indicates the Site is partially classified as land predominantly in urban use (approx. 50%) with the remaining 50% in the north having a predicted moderate likelihood of BMV land (20% to 60% probability of including BMV soils).

Figure 2.4 Natural England predictive BMV Land Assessment



- 2.4.38 No Grade 1 or 2 agricultural soils are predicted to be present on Site or within close proximity.
- 2.4.39 Therefore, the only potential for BMV land is where they may be classified as Grade 3a.
- 2.4.40 Given the limited size (below 10ha), isolated nature of the field and current urban ALC classification which reflects the immediate surrounding uses in the wider village of Oxted, it is considered that the land is of limited benefit for agricultural purposes.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

- 2.4.41 A Phase 1 Land Quality Desk Study has been undertaken, including a Site walkover.
- 2.4.42 The Site currently comprises agricultural land consisting of ploughed fields with a public footpath running NNW to SSE across the central area. It is noted that whilst the Site is currently an arable agricultural field, it is within a wider urban environment. Surrounding land includes a graveyard, parkland, commercial and residential.
- 2.4.43 According to British Geological Survey (BGS) 1:50,000 scale mapping, the general geological sequence (see Figure 2-2) underlying the Site is as follows:
 - Superficial deposits: Mostly absent with Alluvium (Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel) in the far western section of Site associated with the unnamed tributary of the River Eden; and
 - Solid geology: Folkestone Formation (Sandstone) across the majority of the Site with the Gault Formation (Mudstone) in the far north of the Site.
- 2.4.44 5 No. historic sand pits are located within 500m of Site (between 165 m and 451 m), all of which comprised surface mineral workings. In accordance with Surrey County Council's mineral and waste policies and plans, the Site does not fall within a minerals safeguarding or strategy area.
- 2.4.45 Soilscapes records the majority of soil on Site (Folkestone Formation) as Soilscape 6, freely draining slightly acid loamy soils with low fertility. There is a small parcel of land in the north-east (Gault Clay) classified as Soilscape 18, slowly seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils of moderate fertility.
- 2.4.46 Where present along the western boundary, the superficial Alluvium is classified by the Environment Agency (EA) as a Secondary A Aquifer. A Secondary A Aquifer is described by the EA as 'comprising permeable layers that can support local water supplies, and may form an important source of base flow to rivers.'

2.4.47 The Folkestone Formation bedrock below the majority of the Site is classified by the EA as a Principal Aquifer. A Principal Aquifer is described as 'rocks that provide significant quantities of water and can support water supply and/or baseflow to rivers, lakes and wetlands on a strategic scale. They typically have a high intergranular and/or fracture permeability, meaning they usually provide a high level of water storage.' Where present in the far north of the Site, the Gault Formation is classified as unproductive strata.

2.4.48 According to the British Geological Survey (BGS), groundwater vulnerability across the Site is classified as high with bedrock permeability estimated by the BGS to be high and intergranular.

2.4.49 The Site falls into Zone III (total catchment) of a Source Protection Zone (SPZ). However, there are no licenced abstractions noted within 500 m of Site.

2.4.50 Earliest Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping from 1888 shows the Site and surrounding area to consist of ploughed agricultural land which has remained to the present day. Whilst the Site has remained in agricultural (arable) use, the surrounding area has become increasingly urban leading it to become an isolated field.

2.4.51 Natural England mapping and previous assessments by Tandridge District Council (OXT007) note that the Site is classified as land which is predominantly in urban use.

Major Accidents and/or Natural Disasters

2.4.52 No structural, geomorphological or geochemical features are recorded on or near the Site by BGS mapping. There are no Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) sites in close proximity to the Site. There are furthermore no intersections with pipelines or hazard zones as reported by HSE's Planning Advice Web App.

2.4.53 The zetica bomb map shows the Site to be in a low risk area for unexploded ordnance (UXO).

Water Resources and Flood Risk

2.4.54 The Site lies in Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency (EA) Flood Map for Planning. This means that in any year the majority of the site has a less than 1 in 1000 chance of flooding. A review of the EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map indicates that the site is predominantly located in the 'very low' surface water flood risk category (less than 1 in 1000 chance of flooding each year). However, there is a low, medium and high risk surface water flood flow path through the western half of the Site (i.e. between 1 in 1000 and 1 in 100, between 1 in 100 and 1 in 30 and more than 1 in 30 chance of flooding

each year respectively). Surface water modelling has been undertaken to inform the planning application and the drainage strategy.

- 2.4.55 Ordinary watercourses flow south along the eastern boundary of the Site and close to the western boundary of the Site that meet approximately 175m downstream of the Site.
- 2.4.56 The Site is located in the Medway Management Catchment; the bedrock geology is designated a Principal aquifer; and the Groundwater Vulnerability Map (England) classification is High.
- 2.4.57 The Site is located in a drinking water safeguard zone (surface water) and a groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ) 3, but is not located in a drinking water protected area.

2.5 Potential Key Sensitive Receptors

- 2.5.1 The key receptors which are considered potentially sensitive to the construction and operation of the Proposed Development have been identified and are summarised in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2: Potential Key Sensitive Receptors

Category	Potential Sensitive Receptor / Land Use
Residential	Current residents within surrounding buildings including those along Barrow Green Road to the west, north and northeast, Wheeler Ave to the South, Court Farm Lane to the Southeast, and future residents of the Proposed Development.
Commercial	Local economy.
Community	Users of current public open spaces and future public open spaces / realm. Users of current public footpaths and future public footpaths. Users of current social infrastructure such as schools, GP surgeries and NHS dentists.
Heritage	The Grade I Listed Church of St Mary The Grade II Listed Blunt House
Global climate system	Global climate system.
Landscape and views	Landscape Character Areas. Pedestrians. Vehicular users. Residential receptors.

Category	Potential Sensitive Receptor / Land Use
Ecological	Ancient woodland. Hill Park LNR. Woldingham and Oxted Downs SSSI. Slow Worms. Bats.