

3. Land Uses & Sensitive Receptors

Introduction

- 3.1. This chapter describes the Application Site and its surrounds, and includes a summary of designations and environmental conditions, thereby enabling potentially sensitive receptors that could be affected by the Development to be identified. Future potentially sensitive receptors in the surrounding area are also identified.
- 3.2. A full description of the baseline conditions relevant to each technical assessment is provided in the respective technical chapters of this ES (**Chapters 6 to 11 inclusive and ES Volume 3**).
- 3.3. This chapter should be read in conjunction with **Figures 3.1 to 3.4**.

Application Site Location and Setting

- 3.4. The Application Site is centred on National Grid Reference TR 03976 40758 and is located within the administrative boundary of Ashford Borough Council (ABC) and Kent County Council (KCC). As illustrated in **Figure 3.1**, the Application Site is located in Sevington, south-east of Ashford in Kent, Postcode: TN25 6GE. This is a semi-rural area on the outskirts of Ashford, with a mixture of residential and commercial land uses located to the north and west of the Application Site but with agricultural land use to the south and east. The location of the Application Site is shown within the Application Site Location Plan, **Figure 3.1**.
- 3.5. The Application Site occupies an area of approximately 48 hectares (ha) and is bound by:
- The A2070 Link Road and M20 motorway (M20 Junction 10a), to the north.
 - Highfield Lane and Kingsford Street to the east and north-east respectively.
 - Highfield Lane and Church Road, to the south.
 - Church Road, St Marys Church and A2070 (Bad Munstereifel Road), to the west.
- 3.6. The Application Site lies within the National Character Area of Wealden Greensand, characterised by mixed farming, open areas of heath on acidic soils and extensive belts of woodland including ancient mixed woodland and more recent conifer plantations.
- 3.7. Statutory sites such as Ashford Green Corridors Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lie 50m to the West of the Application Site. Hatch Park Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies approximately 500m to the east of the Application Site and Hatch Park Grade II Listed Registered Park and Garden is situated approximately 500m north-east of the Application Site. Two non-statutory sites, Willesborough Lees and Flowergarden Wood Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and South Willesborough Dyke LWS, are located 900m to the north and 1km to the south-west of the Application Site respectively.
- 3.8. The Planning Application Site Boundary is shown on **Figure 3.2**.
- 3.9. Site photographs showing the current status of the Application Site are provided in **Figure 3.3**.

Topography

- 3.10. According to the Ordnance Survey, the topography across the Application Site is at an approximate level of 50– 60m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) and slopes uphill from the north-west and to the south-east, with an area of higher ground situated in centre of the Application Site.

- 3.11. A topographic survey by Plowman Craven (November 2024) shows that the levels within the Application Site range 47.43m AOD in the south-west to 61.31m AOD in the south.

Historical Land Uses

- 3.12. An examination of historical data pertaining to the Application Site reveals that the historic land use has remained largely as undeveloped agricultural land (arable farmland). Church Road and Highfield Lane are historic routes, which are partially within the Application Site.
- 3.13. Within the surrounding area, there is evidence of past limestone extraction and related industries, with quarries shown on historic mapping in locations 35m and 93m (Sevington Quarry) and 178m (Mersham Quarry) north-east of the Application Site. These historic uses have now ceased, with evidence of historic infilling of quarries at locations to the north-east of the Application Site.
- 3.14. A detailed description of the historical development of the Application Site and its surrounding area is included in **Chapter 10: Cultural Heritage**.

Land Uses

Land Uses Within the Application Site (Present Day, 2024-2025)

- 3.15. As indicated in **Chapter 2**, the Application Site is currently in use for the operational IBF under temporary consent. The Application Site is a secure facility bound by fencing around the perimeter along with landscape bunds which are present at select locations to provide visual and acoustic screening of the IBF and its operations. The Application Site comprises a mix of landscaped areas and bunds, featuring tree planting, drainage ponds and ditches, together with hardstanding, notably internal estate roads and areas for vehicle parking for staff and HGVs (at ground level). The staff car park is located to the west of the Application Site and is accessed off Church Road. HGV and Goods vehicle access is located to the north via the A2070 Link Road. Buildings within the Application Site are predominantly located in the north-western central (HMRC sheds) and the central south-eastern (Defra Border Control Post) parts of the Application Site. Ancillary buildings utilised for security, storage and utilities can be found throughout the wider Application Site.
- 3.16. As the application is seeking permission for the continued use of the current IBF, the description of both the existing uses within the Application Site and the Development is the same. Further details are provided in **Chapter 4: The Development**.

Land Uses Within the Application Site (Pre-Development Baseline)

- 3.17. As set out in **Chapter 2**, a 'pre-development' baseline has been identified as comprising the Application Site with the implementation of Phase 1A of the Reserved Matters Application (Ref. 19/00579/AS), i.e. those site conditions in the absence of the IBF. This is considered to present a reasonable worst-case baseline for the purpose of the assessment. Each technical chapter sets out the relevant baseline conditions.
- 3.18. On the basis of the Phase 1A works being implemented, the Application Site (pre-development) would comprise:
- a mostly vegetated boundary, comprising trees and tree belts, hedgerows and shrubs, together with areas of grassland;
 - areas of hardstanding, limited to the access road, internal estate / circulation roads and pathways;

- areas of open space and landscaping, comprising grassland and wildflower meadow, areas of ornamental planting;
 - drainage features, in the form of ponds, wetland margins and drainage ditches, interspersed within the areas of open space and landscaping;
 - provision for seven development plots, which are clear of any vegetation;
 - additional ecological features are present in the form of bird and bat boxes, together with reptile and invertebrate hibernacula and logpiles;
- 3.19. A section of the Old Mill Stream is conveyed through the north-east part of the Application Site via ditches and culverts.
- 3.20. A high-pressure gas main runs north to south through the centre of the Application Site; this includes a 9m easement on either side of the pipeline.
- 3.21. There are several access points along the boundary of the Application Site, which connect to the surrounding highway network. However, the primary access is from the east, via A2070 Bad Munstereifel Road and Church Road.
- two points are located along the A2070 Link Road to the north, one of these points is the primary site access and the other is for emergency use; and
 - one point, located from Church Road is used by staff (to access the staff carparking area).
- 3.22. Within the Application Site there was a public right of way (PRoW); Bridleway AE672 provides a connection between A2070 Bad Munstereifel Road and the former Highfield Lane via a route which takes users along the southern boundary.

Existing Land Uses Surrounding the Application Site

- 3.23. The area surrounding the Application Site to the north consists of the A2070, a patch of arable land containing Old Mill Stream, the M20 motorway (and Junction 10a), which runs south-east to north-west leading to areas of open space, agricultural land and residential properties beyond, including the William Harvey Hospital.
- 3.24. The existing land use to the east is semi-rural dominated by arable farmland. Highfield Lane, which connects to Kingsford Street and Blind Lane (Mersham) connects to residential dwellings (some of which are Listed) and includes several agricultural holdings (the nearest of which is Hillcrest Farm).
- 3.25. To the south, Church Road and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) form the southern extent of the Application Site. There are isolated residential properties along Church Road (some of which are Listed). Beyond the railway lines, the existing land use is predominantly agricultural land. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) connect the land surrounding the Application Site with Bridleway AE673 connecting Highfield Lane to Blind Lane to the southeast of the Application Site while footpath AE344 connects Blind Lane to Church Road on the north side of the railway lines to the southwest. Restricted Byway AE350 connects Church Lane and Waterbrook Avenue, to the south, via a railway bridge (Cheeseman's Green Lane). To the southwest of the Application Site, a Network Rail (works Delivery) site and the Ashford International Truck Stop is located. Further southwest are residential properties (Finberry), and isolated properties along Cheeseman's Green Lane (some of which are Listed).

- 3.26. The existing land use and character of the area to the west is a mixture of commercial and light industrial leading to areas of residential and commercial land uses further north and west. The west of the Application Site contains the Church of St Mary, a Grade I Listed Building, and an agricultural holding (Court Lodge, a Grade II Listed Building), together with a small number of residential properties along Church Lane. Beyond the A2070 (Bad Munstereifel Road) is Willersborough which includes a mix of residential, commercial and light industrial uses (Ashford Retail / Business Park and Orbital Park). A Scheduled Monument (Boys Hall) is located to the south of Ashford Business Park, on the south side of the railway.
- 3.27. The existing land uses surrounding the Application Site are presented in **Figure 3.4**.

Future Land Uses

Future Land Uses Within the Application Site

- 3.28. The Applicant proposes the continued use of the existing IBF operations within the Application Site. Refer to **Chapter 4: The Development** for further information.

Future Land Uses Surrounding the Application Site

- 3.29. The area surrounding the Application Site has the potential to change as a result of the implementation of other schemes unconnected with the Development. This includes the consented schemes identified for the purposes of the cumulative assessment and set out in **Chapter 2: EIA Methodology** (refer to **Table 2.3**).
- 3.30. Future land uses surrounding the Application Site would comprise predominantly residential schemes and mixed residential and commercial schemes which are illustrated by the cumulative schemes **Figure 2.1**.
- 3.31. The likely changes in the surrounding area irrespective of the Development are referred to in this ES as the 'Future Baseline'.

Sensitive Receptors

- 3.32. A sensitive receptor is an existing (or under some circumstances, future) feature which has the potential to be impacted by a proposed development. Such impacts could be either adverse or beneficial, and sensitive receptors have the potential to be affected by more than one impact. Receptors can be human (e.g. local residents, or users of schools and hospitals), economic (e.g. the local labour market or local economy) or environmental (such as protected habitats / species, nearby watercourses, or designated sites).
- 3.33. The impact(s) of the Development on sensitive receptors within the surrounding area forms the primary basis of the EIA reported within this ES, and as such, the definition of sensitive receptors is an important aspect of the assessment process.
- 3.34. An appraisal has been undertaken to identify those receptors that should be considered as being sensitive to the continued operation of the Proposed Development. These were identified by studies undertaken to support the SDO applications and verified through desk studies and site visits conducted by technical specialists, and consultations with statutory and non-statutory bodies. Potential effects on these receptors have been considered as part of the EIA.

- 3.35. Key sensitive existing receptors within 1km of the boundary of the Application Site are listed, by proximity, in **Table 3.1**. Please refer to **Chapters 6 to 11** and **ES Volume 3** for a full list of receptors relevant to each technical topic.

Table 3.1: Key Existing Receptors Within the Vicinity of the Application Site

Receptor Name	Receptor Type	Distance from Site Boundary	Direction
Mersham Farmlands Landscape Character Area (LCA)	Landscape	On-site	On-site and south-east.
Residential Properties on Church Road	Residential	<5m	West & south
Viewing Corridor (between St Mary and St John Mersham)	Viewing Corridor	<5m	North-west & south-east
The A2070 (link road)	Transportation	<5m	North
Church Road	Transportation	<5m	West & south
Residential Properties on Highfield Lane	Residential	10m	South-east
AE673 (Highfield Lane to Blind Lane)	PRoW	10m	South-east
AE672 PRoW users on the footbridge over A2070	PRoW	10m	North-west
Highfield Lane	Transportation	10m	South-east
Kingsford Street	Transportation	15m	East
AE344 (Blind Lane to Church Road)	PRoW	20m	South
Unnamed (Church Rd)	Noise	20m	South-west
Ashdown	Noise	22m	West
Sunnybank	Noise	25m	West
St Mary's Church	Noise	30m	North-west
The Paddocks	Noise	30m	West
Orchard Cottage	Noise	30m	West
Bridge Cottage	Noise	30m	South-west
Church of St Mary Grade I Listed Building	Heritage	30m	North-west
Ashdown Cottage Grade II Listed Building	Heritage	30m	West
Maytree Cottages Grade II Listed Building	Heritage	30m	South-west
Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL)	Transportation	30m	South
The Old Rectory	Noise	40m	West
Orchard Cottage Grade II Listed Building	Heritage	40m	West
Bridge Cottage Grade II Listed Building	Heritage	40m	South
Barn associated with Court Lodge Grade II Listed	Heritage	50m	North-west
Ashford Green Corridors (LNR)	Ecological	50m	West
Barn About 20 Metres South East of Court Lodge (Grade II listed)	Heritage	60m	North-west
Court Lodge Grade II Listed Building	Heritage	80m	North-west

Receptor Name	Receptor Type	Distance from Site Boundary	Direction
M20 Junction 10a	Transportation	80m	North-east
Aylesford stream	Ecological	80m	North
Court Lodge Farm	Noise	80m	West
Finberry Farm	Air Quality	80m	West
Imber	Noise	90m	South
Lagonda Lodge	Noise	100m	East
Kenistone	Noise	180m	East
AE350 (Church Lane and Waterbrook Avenue)	PRoW	100m	West
Upper Stour Valley LCA	Landscape	130m	South
Cheeseman's Green Lane	Transportation	130m	South
Ashford Urban Centre LCA	Landscape	130m	North
The A2070 (Bad Munstereifel Road)	Transportation	150m	North-west
Residential Properties on Cheeseman's Green Lane	Residential	150m	South
17 Nightingale Close	Noise	200m	North
16 Nightingale Close	Noise	200m	North
15 Nightingale Close	Noise	200m	North
14 Nightingale Close	Noise	200m	North
13 Nightingale Close	Noise	200m	North
12 Nightingale Close	Noise	200m	North
11 Nightingale Close	Noise	200m	North
7 Nightingale Close	Air Quality	200m	North
Network Rail Delivery Depot	Commercial	200m	South-west
Caloundra	Noise	210m	East
M20 motorway	Transportation	230m	North
Brabourne Lees Mixed Farmlands LCA	Landscape	230m	North & East
Residents of Hythe Road	Residential	300m	North
Downsview	Noise	300m	East
Ransley Cottage Grade II Listed Building	Heritage	300m	East
The Pilgrims Hospice	Care Home	350m	North
Ashford Retail / Business Park	Commercial	350m	West
66 Drake Road	Air Quality	450m	North
M20 Junction 10 (Hythe Road)	Transportation	480m	North
Hatch Park (SSSI)	Ecological	500m	East
Hatch Park Grade II Listed Registered Park and Garden	Ecological	500m	East

Receptor Name	Receptor Type	Distance from Site Boundary	Direction
Ashford International Truck Stop	Commercial	500m	South-west
Scheduled Monument 1009006	Heritage	500m	North-west
PRoW AE401	Visual, PRoW	600m	South-west
Residential Properties on Blind Lane	Residential	640m	South-east
View from PRoW AE639	Visual, PRoW	640m	South-east
Blind Lane	Transportation	640m	South-east
Mersham Village LCA	Landscape	640m	South-east
Orbital Park	Commercial	700m	West
21 Lacton Way	Air Quality	780m	North
Little Oaks Primary School	Educational	800m	North
24 Wellingtonia Close	Air Quality	830m	North
William Harvey Hospital	Hospital	850m	North
Willesborough Infant & Junior School	Educational	900m	North-west
AS44 Willesborough Lees and Flowergarden Wood LWS	Ecological	900m	North
73 Kennington Road	Air Quality	1km	North
AS19 South Willesborough Dyke LWS	Ecological	1km	South-west
View from Collier Hill, PRoW AE138,	Visual, PRoW	>1km	South-west
Visitors of Kent Downs National Landscape	Visual	>1km	North-east

- 3.36. Further details on sensitive receptors are provided in the baseline conditions section of **Chapters 6 to 11** and **ES Volume 3** inclusive.

References

There are no corresponding references within this chapter.