

East Devon Local Plan 2020-2042



Site Selection report

Exton



February 2025

East Devon – an outstanding place

Contact details

Planning Policy
East Devon District Council
Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, HONITON,
EX14 1EJ

Phone: 01404 515616

Email: planningpolicy@eastdevon.gov.uk

www.eastdevon.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/
[@eastdevon](https://www.instagram.com/eastdevon)

To request this information in an
alternative format or language
please phone 01404 515616 or
email csc@eastdevon.gov.uk

Contents

1	Introduction.....	4
2	Site Reference Wood_01	6
3	Site Reference Wood_28.....	15
4	Site Reference Wood_41	24

1 Introduction

- 1.1 East Devon District Council is preparing a Local Plan covering the period 2020 to 2042 that will allocate sites for development. The Site Selection methodology explains the process of how sites are identified, assessed, and selected for allocation, or not.¹ The selection process is a judgement that balances top-down strategic issues relating to the Local Plan district-wide housing and employment requirements and the spatial strategy for the distribution of development, with the specific factors in the site assessments.
- 1.2 For each settlement, a Site Selection report contains the assessment of sites and identifies those which will be allocated, alongside those that will not, with reasons why. It collates evidence from numerous other sources in assessing whether to allocate sites.²
- 1.3 For each site, the report contains identifying details, a map and photos, followed by a summary of the site assessment and conclusion on whether to allocate the site. This is followed by a more detailed assessment of the landscape, historic environment, and ecological impacts of each site.
- 1.4 This report contains the assessment and selection of sites at Exton. A map of all the sites which have been assessed is below, followed by a table which highlights the site selection findings.
- 1.5 In addition to the sites which have been subject to assessment, other sites were not assessed because they did not pass 'site sifting'. This stage of the process rules out sites that are not 'reasonable alternatives' and therefore not considered as potential allocations in the Local Plan. In summary, to pass site sifting and therefore be considered as a potential allocation, the site should be identified as suitable, available, achievable in the HELAA; in a suitable location; not already allocated in a 'made' Neighbourhood Plan; and not already have planning permission. For obvious reasons, overlapping sites will only be assessed once. Further detail is contained in the Site Selection methodology.
- 1.6 The following site did not pass site sifting at Exton:
 - Wood_27 is below site size threshold so not suitable in the HELAA.

¹ Site Selection Methodology (2024): [sal-001-site-selection-methodology_v2-2020-2042.pdf](#); Landscape Assessment: [sal-002-landscape-sensitivity-assessment-methodology.pdf](#) ; HESA Methodology: [sal-003-historic-environment-site-assessment-methodology.pdf](#); Ecology Guidelines: [sal-004-ecology-guidelines-for-housing-allocation.pdf](#)

² Following the approach advocated by the Planning Advisory Service – see Topic 5 – Site Selection Process: [Future Proofing the Plan Making Process | Local Government Association](#)

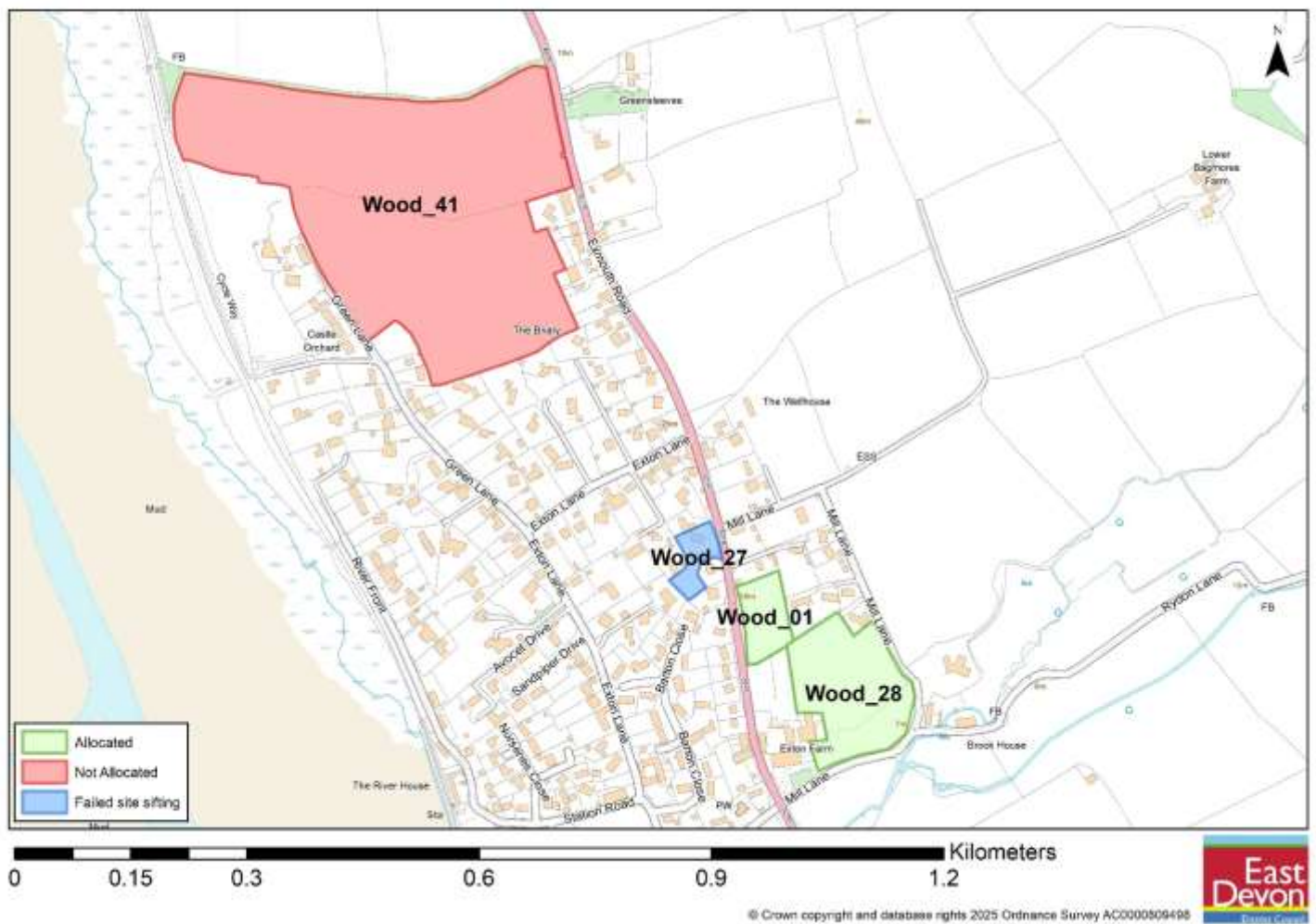


Figure 1.1: Overview of Site Selection findings at Exton

Site reference	Number of dwellings / hectares of employment land	Allocate?
Wood_01	14 dwellings	Yes
Wood_28	39 dwellings	Yes
Wood_41	225 dwellings	No

2 Site Reference Wood_01

Site details

Settlement: Exton

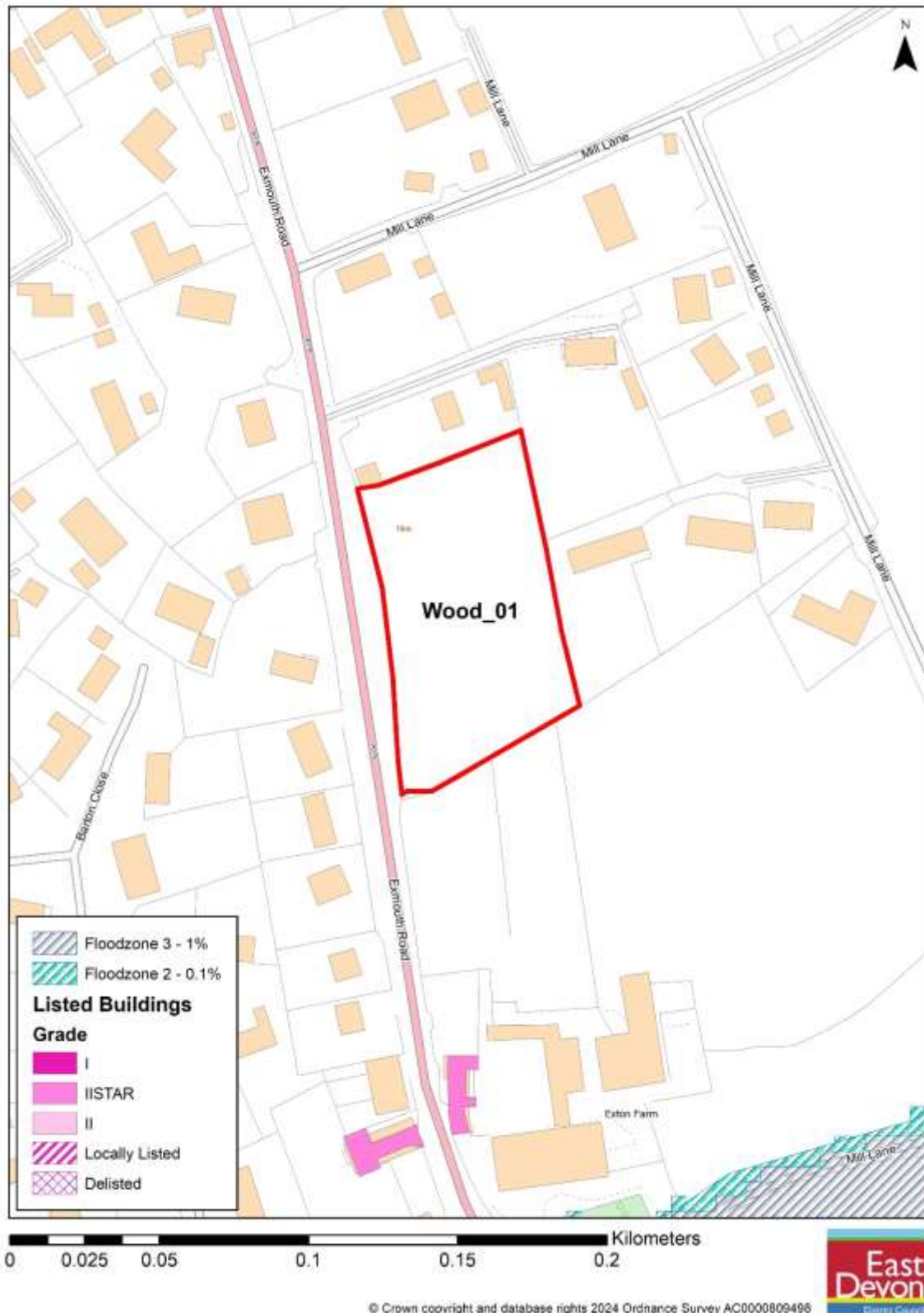
Reference number: Wood_01

Site area (ha): 0.58

Address: Field 4583, Exmouth Road, Exton, EX3 0PZ

Proposed use: Residential

Site map



© Crown copyright and database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey AC0000809496



Photos



Looking south east from the A376 – the site is located beyond the entrance of the existing dwelling



Overhead photo of the site

Site Assessment Summary and Conclusion

Infrastructure

DCC Education: Lady Swards primary has some capacity to support development - but need to assess in conjunction with proposed sites nearby and in west end. Secondary capacity required.

Transport costs would apply for both primary and secondary. DCC Highways: No objection subject to adequate visibility.

Landscape

Gently rolling, single field that is adjacent to the A376 to the west, low density dwellings to north and east, and a field to the south. The noisy, busy A376 means a high level of human disturbance on the site. Limited public views into site due to tall mature hedgerow along western and southern boundary and residential development to west, north and east. Overall, medium-low sensitivity.

Historic environment

Grade II* listed Exton Farm 87m to south has windows on its northern side that offer views of the site, but separated by hedgerow and field, limiting the affect on the asset. Grade II* listed Exton House 110m to south/south west but adjoined by dwellings to north and there is thick hedgerow (along eastern side of A376) - this means that views to the heritage asset are limited. Overall, low: no concerns identified on current evidence, although archaeological mitigation measures may be required.

Ecology

Single field of agriculturally improved grassland. Exe Estuary SPA and Ramsar 426m to west. Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)

Accessibility

7 out of 12 facilities within 1,600m of site. These include Exton train station approx 400m to the west and the convenience store at the petrol station 500m to the north. Employment opportunities at industrial estate 1400m to the north, and Darts Farm slightly further. These can be accessed by pavement, although it is narrow. 20 minute bus frequency to Exeter/Exmouth from stop on A376 adjacent to the site. Close to Exe Estuary Trail which offers convenient walking/cycling access to other settlements nearby.

Other constraints

Grade 3 agricultural land. Low surface water flood risk (1/100 year) along A376 just beyond the western boundary. High cumulative flood risk in Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Within Green Wedge in adopted Local Plan 2013-31 or made Neighbourhood Plan?

No

Opportunities

Provide pedestrian crossing from site across the A376 to enable easy access to facilities. Also provide pedestrian/cycle links to Wood_28 adjacent to south east.

Yield (number of dwellings or hectares of employment land)

14

Contribution to spatial strategy

Consistent with the spatial strategy for Exton as a Service Village to allow limited development to meet local needs.

Should the site be allocated?

Yes

Reasons for allocating or not allocating

The scale of development on this site would help deliver the district-wide housing requirement in a manner that is consistent with the spatial strategy. Good access to several facilities, excellent sustainable travel links. Relatively low landscape sensitivity.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Context

Landscape designation context

Outside of National Landscape

Other relevant biodiversity, historic environment and/or geological designations

Grade II* listed Exton Farm 87m to south has windows that offer views of the site, albeit separated by hedgerow and field.

Landscape Character Type and relevant key characteristics

LCT 3E: Lowland Plains: • Level to gently sloping or rolling plain between the valley floors and the start of steeper valley sides. • Regular medium field pattern. • Semi-natural habitats include roadside hedges and hedgerow trees - particularly oaks. • Settled, with a mixed pattern of villages, hamlets and isolated farms. Great variety of building materials and styles, even within single settlements. • Variable highway network, from sparse rural lanes to motorway and A-roads. Relatively few public rights of way.

Local landscape character of site and immediate surrounds

Gently sloping, single field that is adjacent to the A376 to the west, low density dwellings to north and east, and a field to the south. The noisy, busy A376 means a high level of human disturbance on the site. Limited public views into site due to tall mature hedgerow along western and southern boundary and residential development to north and east (nb. Officer not able to obtain unobstructed view into site on site visit). Presence of noisy, busy A376 along western

boundary means the following the key characteristic does not apply "Surprising feeling of remoteness in some parts. Despite local impacts of development and infrastructure, much of the area retains a pleasant, rural feel." Also as site is well contained by existing residential development, the following the key characteristic has limited relevance "Surrounding LCTs (for example Estuary and Pebble Bed Heaths) contribute to views and influence character."

Does the local landscape character of the site and immediate surrounds conform to published assessments?

Yes

General and site-specific affects that could arise from development

- Introduction of built form and associated infrastructure
- Site access requirements - potential access from A376 will require hedgerow loss. Already a busy 'A' road, so existing urban 'feel'.

Analysis

Physical and natural characteristics	
Low-medium	Gently sloping field, north east to south west. Simple landcover, appears to be improved pasture from satellite photo . Western and southern hedgerow boundaries present on 1888-90 OS map, but other boundaries are more modern.
Cultural and historic associations	
Low-medium	Western and southern hedgerow boundaries present on 1888-90 OS map, but other boundaries are more modern. Grade II* Exton Farm 87m to south but intervening mature hedgerow limits association.
Relationship to existing settlement edge	
Low-medium	Low lying settlement setting. Site is located amongst modern, low density 20th century dwellings to west, north and east, so development could integrate well.
Experiential landscape character	
Low-medium	High level of human disturbance from noisy, busy A376 along western boundary of site, although mature high trees/hedgerow lessen the visual influence. Street lighting along A376. Modern dwellings in relatively large plots around three sides of site.
Views	
Low-medium	Limited short distance public views into site due to presence of existing dwellings, thick hedgerow/trees along A376. Local topography also means a low degree of visibility from surrounding landscapes. Intervisibility with Wood 28 adjoining south east edge.
Overall landscape susceptibility	
Low-medium	Western and southern hedgerow boundaries present on 1888-90 OS map lend some historic landscape character, but presence of noisy, busy A376 and dwellings around west, north and east boundaries provide a high degree of humna disturbance..
Within nationally designated landscape?	
Site is not within a designated landscape.	
Degree of intervisibility with nationally designated landscape	

None
If outside designated landscape, factors which may raise or lower value from moderate
Level to gently sloping or rolling plain between the valley floors and the start of steeper valley sides, typical of the LCT, with historic hedgerow along western and southern boundaries.
Landscape value
Medium – An ordinary landscape which is appreciated by the community but has little or no wider recognition of its value
Overall landscape sensitivity
Medium / Low
Landscape guidance: opportunities in relation to development
Retain historic hedgerow as far as possible, present on western and southern boundary. Relatively low density housing to reflect the existing settlement character.

Historic Environment Site Assessment

Notes on history of area

The location of Exton on the banks of the River Exe meant it was established to provide homes for mariners and other coastal occupations. The area has a history of large and fertile farms, adapted for market gardening in the mid-19th century. The introduction of the railway in the 1860s cut off the shoreline from the village. As farmland was developed for housing, Exton has become home to commuters and retired people, with most properties being large individual homes with their own grounds. There are several listed properties in the south east part of the village, include two Grade II*, but apart that there few heritage assets in the village.

Overall conclusion

Low: no concerns identified on current evidence, although archaeological mitigation measures may be required. No impact upon an asset is predicted or, if an impact is predicted, the cultural heritage value of the asset(s) would be unaffected.

Step 1. Identify any heritage assets potentially affected	
Is the site within 100 metres of a designated heritage asset?	Yes Grade II* listed Exton Farmhouse 87m to south. Grade II* listed Exton House 110m to south/south west.
Could development of the site affect any heritage asset (designated or non-designated) or its setting?	No Exton Farmhouse has windows on north gable end that offer views of the site, but distance, trees and hedgerow mean limited/nil obstruct views and mean limited/nil affect on the asset. Exton House is adjoined by dwellings to north and there is thick hedgerow (along eastern side of A376) - this means that views of the site from the heritage asset are very limited.

List any heritage assets potentially affected.	None.
--	-------

Ecological assessment

Context – Sites and features (desk study)

Site / feature name	Geographic value	Distance from site / feature (metres)	Predicted impact
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	International	4300	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Special Protection Area (SPA)	International	426	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Ramsar site	International	426	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)	National	9441	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	National	426	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	National	4300	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Regional	3476	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Ancient Woodland Inventory Site (AWSI)	Regional	1330	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
County Wildlife Site (CWS)	County	302	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Unconfirmed Wildlife Site (UWS)	County	1200	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Draft Nature Recovery Network areas (NRN)	County	300	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Section 41 Habitat of Principle Importance (including rivers and streams, excluding hedgerow)	County	450	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)

Comments

Exe Estuary SPA and Ramsar 426m to west. The Brake UWS 1.2km to south west.

Within River Axe SAC Nutrient catchment zone? No

Within Beer Quarry and Caves SAC bat consultation zone? No

Within East Devon Pebblebed Heaths SAC HRA mitigation zone? Yes

Within Exe Estuary SPA HRA mitigation zone? Yes

Within East Devon Pebblebed Heaths 400m exclusion zone? No

Number of European sites potentially impacted by site: 2

On site assessment

Does the site consist of any habitats other than agriculturally improved grassland or arable (excluding small/negligible areas of habitat)?

No. Single field of agriculturally improved grassland.

Presence of veteran or ancient trees

No.

Large numbers of mature trees within hedgerows or otherwise

No.

Presence of ponds not identified on aerial imagery

No.

Networks of small field parcel and hedgerows (any areas where allocation is likely to require removal of substantial areas of hedgerow to facilitate a suitable development footprint)

No.

Any other incidental features of ecological interest (protected/notable species incidentally recorded)

No.

Is there any evidence which contradicts the desk study results?

No.

Conclusion

Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)

3 Site Reference Wood_28

Site details

Settlement: Exton

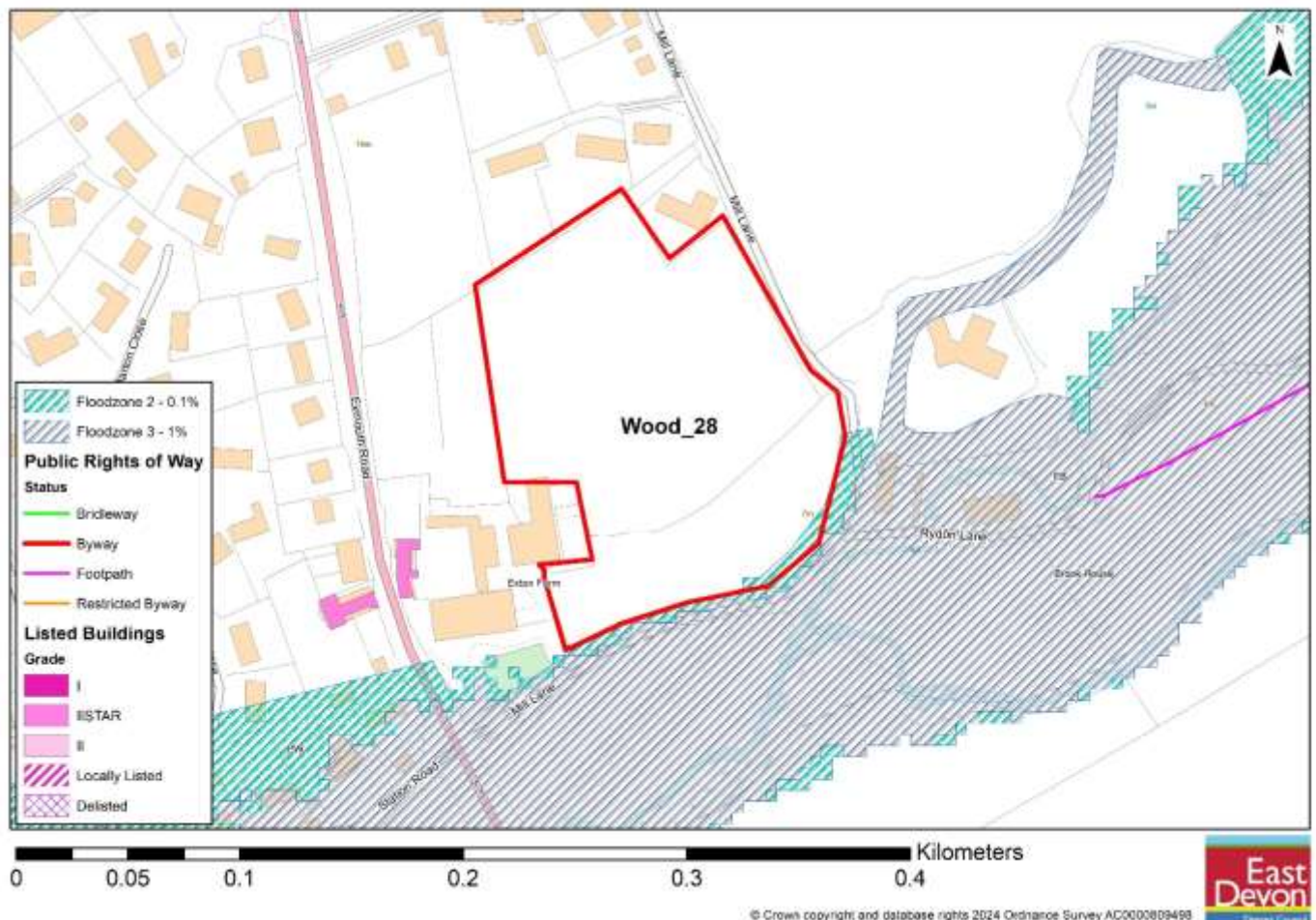
Reference number: Wood_28

Site area (ha): 2.2

Address: Land to the north and east of Exton Farm, Exton,

Proposed use: Residential

Site map



Photos



View from eastern edge of site, looking across the northern field



View from south east corner, on Mill Lane, towards the southern field (photo from Google Streetview)



Overhead photo of site

Site Assessment Summary and Conclusion

Infrastructure

DCC Education: Lady Swards primary has some capacity to support development - but need to assess in conjunction with proposed sites nearby and in west end. Secondary capacity required. Transport costs would apply for both primary and secondary. DCC Highways: A3052/A376 Sites - The highway network already has capacity issues, there are limited public transport options and distance from the main attractors is beyond most walking and cycling distance. There are numerous sites in the vicinity and they need to be considered in a comprehensive masterplan and access strategy. Also, the junction with the A376 is unsuitable for significant development.

Landscape

Two fields, gently sloping to the south. Tall, thick hedgerow along A376 to west limits views from this direction, but views from A376 and its footpath to south west (in vicinity of Grade II listed Hillside Cottage) albeit partially obscured by trees/hedgerow. Bounded by single track lane (Mill Lane) along east and south, with countryside beyond. Existing, large dwellings to north and west of site. Views into site from Mill Lane to east, from which the existing village provides some context of built form,

but rural landscape in other directions with just 2-3 large detached dwellings on south eastern edge. Noise from busy A376 is audible from the site. Southern field is within Coastal Preservation Area in adopted LP. Overall, medium landscape sensitivity to development.

Historic environment

Intervening farm buildings mean only the north west tip of the site is visible from Grade II* listed Exton Farm, 46m away. Two Grade II listed dwellings to south/south west have glimpsed views of site, but intervening trees and hedgerow limit these views. Overall, low impact.

Ecology

2x fields of agriculturally improved grassland. Exe Estuary SPA and Ramsar 463m to west. Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)

Accessibility

7 out of 12 facilities within 1,600m of site. These include Exton train station approx 450m to the west and the convenience store at the petrol station 600m to the north. Employment opportunities at industrial estate 1500m to the north, with Darts Farm slightly further. These can be accessed by pavement, although it is narrow. 20 minute bus frequency to Exeter/Exmouth from stop on A376 adjacent to the site. Close to Exe Estuary Trail which offers convenient walking/cycling access to other settlements nearby.

Other constraints

Grade 3 agricultural land. Flood zone 3 and high surface water flood risk adjoins the southern boundary of site. High cumulative flood risk in Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Within Green Wedge in adopted Local Plan 2013-31 or made Neighbourhood Plan?

No

Opportunities

Provide footpath along Mill Lane south to the existing pedestrian crossing at the A376/Station Road junction, to enable easy access to facilities. Upgrade this crossing to accommodate cyclists, who can then access the Exe Estuary Trail via Station Road. Also provide pedestrian/cycle links to Wood_01 adjacent to north west.

Yield (number of dwellings or hectares of employment land)

39

Contribution to spatial strategy

Consistent with the spatial strategy for Exton as a Service Village to allow limited development to meet local needs.

Should the site be allocated?

Yes

Reasons for allocating or not allocating

The scale of development on this site would help deliver the district-wide housing requirement in a manner that is consistent with the spatial strategy. Access to several facilities, with excellent sustainable travel links.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Context

Landscape designation context

Outside of National Landscape

Other relevant biodiversity, historic environment and/or geological designations

Grade II* listed Exton Farm, 46m away.

Landscape Character Type and relevant key characteristics

LCT 3E: Lowland Plains • Level to gently sloping or rolling plain between the valley floors and the start of steeper valley sides. • Mixed farmland, often in arable cultivation. Regular medium to large field pattern with local variation, particularly around settlements. Contains some of the most fertile farmland in the study area. • Semi-natural habitats include roadside hedges and hedgerow trees - particularly oaks – streams and pockets of grassland. • Historic villages, farms and lanes, but some features lost due to ploughing. Notable concentration of historic parklands including veteran trees. Maritime influences on estuary villages. • Settled, with a mixed pattern of villages, hamlets and isolated farms. Great variety of building materials and styles, even within single settlements. • Variable highway network, from sparse rural lanes to motorway and A-roads. Relatively few public rights of way. • Surprising feeling of remoteness in some parts. Despite local impacts of development and infrastructure, much of the area retains a pleasant, rural feel. • Long views over low hedges. Some views marred by pylons and other infrastructure. • Surrounding LCTs (for example Estuary and Pebble Bed Heaths) contribute to views and influence character. Lowland Plains visible from surrounding higher LCTs.

Local landscape character of site and immediate surrounds

Two fields, gently sloping to the south. Bounded by single track lane (Mill Lane) along east and south, with countryside beyond. Existing, large dwellings to north and west of site. Open views into site from Mill Lane to east, from which the existing village provides some context of built form, but rural landscape in other directions with just 2-3 large detached dwellings on south

eastern edge. Noise from busy A376 is audible from the site. Southern field is within Coastal Preservation Area in adopted LP.

Does the local landscape character of the site and immediate surrounds conform to published assessments?

Yes

General and site-specific affects that could arise from development

- Introduction of built form and associated infrastructure.
- Impact on tranquility through increased levels of site activity and increased traffic movement on surrounding roads, specifically Mill Lane
- Site access requirements - potential access from Mill Lane will require hedgeow removal and highway infrastructure.
- Offsite access to services - need to extend footway along Mill Lane.
- Construction phase impacts arising from construction plant access narrow Mill Lane.

Analysis

Physical and natural characteristics	
Medium	Gently sloping north to south, comprised of two fields separated by hedgerow. Hedgerow with trees on site boundary, all of which are present on the 1888-90 OS map. Simple landcover of improved pasture. Site has most characteristics of the LCT.
Cultural and historic associations	
Medium	1888-90 OS map shows woodland on southern field, now lost. Historic hedgerow on site boundary also on 1888-90 map. Grade II* listed Exton Farm to west - although there are intervening farm buildings, the site is likely to have historical associations with this asset.
Relationship to existing settlement edge	
Medium	Indented settlement edge with existing dwellings to north and to west. Site is slightly detached from low lying core settlement form, which lies west of A376.
Experiential landscape character	
Medium	Generally peaceful site surrounded by countryside to east and south, dwellings to north, scattered dwellings to south east. Background noise from A376 to west. Simple, managed condition, telegraph wires around perimeter
Views	
Medium	Tall, thick hedgerow along A376 to west limits views from this direction, but views from A376 and its footpath to south west (in vicinity of Grade II listed Hillside Cottage) albeit partially obscured by trees/hedgerow. Southern field is within Coastal Preservation Area in adopted LP, defined on the basis of visual openness and views to and from the sea/estuary. Intervisibility with landscape to east and south, but limited visual receptors. Intervisibility with Wood_01 adjacent to north west edge.
Overall landscape susceptibility	
Medium	Evidence of historical landscape interest as trees cover the southern field on 1888-90 OS map. Fields boundaries also present on 1888-90 OS map.
Within nationally designated landscape?	

Site is not within a designated landscape.
Degree of intervisibility with nationally designated landscape
None
If outside designated landscape, factors which may raise or lower value from moderate
Gently sloping or rolling plain between the valley floors and the start of steeper valley sides, typical of the LCT, with historic hedgerow on boundaries and historic tree cover on south field. Smaller, southern field is designated as Coastal Preservation Area in adopted Local Plan defined on the basis of visual openness and views to and from the sea/estuary.
Landscape value
Medium – An ordinary landscape which is appreciated by the community but has little or no wider recognition of its value
Overall landscape sensitivity
Medium
Landscape guidance: opportunities in relation to development
Tree planting on southern field to reflect their historic presence, and obscure views of development from visual receptors and countryside to south. Retain historic hedgerow as far as possible, present on all boundaries and separating the two fields. Develop at relatively low housing density to reflect the existing settlement character.

Historic Environment Site Assessment

Notes on history of area

See Wood_01.

Overall conclusion

Low: no concerns identified on current evidence, although archaeological mitigation measures may be required. No impact upon an asset is predicted or, if an impact is predicted, the cultural heritage value of the asset(s) would be unaffected.

Step 1. Identify any heritage assets potentially affected	
Is the site within 100 metres of a designated heritage asset?	Yes Grade II* listed Exton Farm 46m to west. Two Grade II listed dwellings 120m to south/south west
Could development of the site affect any heritage asset (designated or non-designated) or its setting?	No Intervening farm buildings mean only the north west tip of the site is visible from Grade II* listed Exton Farm. Both of the Grade II listed dwellings to south/south/west have glimpsed views of site, but intervening trees and hedgerow limit these views.
List any heritage assets potentially affected.	None.

Ecological assessment

Context – Sites and features (desk study)

Site / feature name	Geographic value	Distance from site / feature (metres)	Predicted impact
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	International	4100	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Special Protection Area (SPA)	International	463	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Ramsar site	International	463	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)	National	9440	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	National	463	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	National	4100	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Regional	3329	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Ancient Woodland Inventory Site (AWSI)	Regional	1168	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
County Wildlife Site (CWS)	County	313	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Unconfirmed Wildlife Site (UWS)	County	1000	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Draft Nature Recovery Network areas (NRN)	County	300	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Section 41 Habitat of Principle Importance (including rivers and streams, excluding hedgerow)	County	480	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)

Comments

Exe Estuary SPA and Ramsar 463m to west. The Brake UWS to south west.

Within River Axe SAC Nutrient catchment zone? No

Within Beer Quarry and Caves SAC bat consultation zone? No

Within East Devon Pebblebed Heaths SAC HRA mitigation zone? Yes

Within Exe Estuary SPA HRA mitigation zone? Yes

Within East Devon Pebblebed Heaths 400m exclusion zone? No

Number of European sites potentially impacted by site: 2

On site assessment

Does the site consist of any habitats other than agriculturally improved grassland or arable (excluding small/negligible areas of habitat)?

No. 2x fields of agriculturally improved grassland.

Presence of veteran or ancient trees

No.

Large numbers of mature trees within hedgerows or otherwise

No.

Presence of ponds not identified on aerial imagery

No.

Networks of small field parcel and hedgerows (any areas where allocation is likely to require removal of substantial areas of hedgerow to facilitate a suitable development footprint)

No.

Any other incidental features of ecological interest (protected/notable species incidentally recorded)

No.

Is there any evidence which contradicts the desk study results?

No.

Conclusion

Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)

4 Site Reference Wood_41

Site details

Settlement: Exton

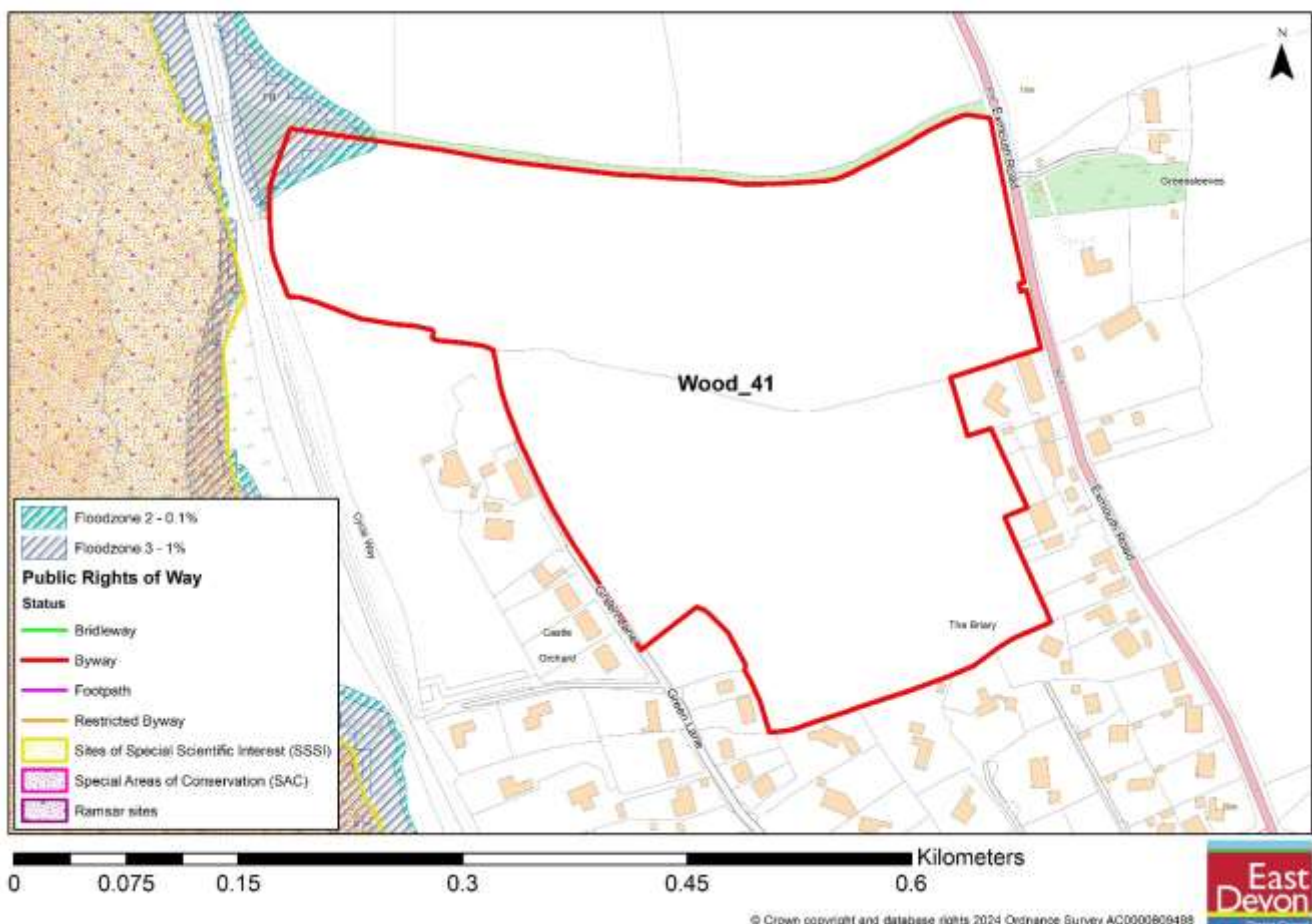
Reference number: Wood_41

Site area (ha): 12.6

Address: Land adjacent A376 Exeter Road, Exton, EX3 0PQ

Proposed use: Residential

Site map



Photos



View from north east edge of site, with the A376 beyond the hedgerow on the left



Looking west from the A376, across the northern field



Looking west across the southern field, from the A376



South western edge of site, take from the Exe Estuary Trail

Site Assessment Summary and Conclusion

Infrastructure

DCC Education: Lady Swards primary has some capacity to support development - but need to assess in conjunction with proposed sites nearby and in west end. Secondary capacity required. Transport costs would apply for both primary and secondary. DCC Highways: More than one access onto highway, reasonable road collision history in vicinity, known traffic capacity issues on Exmouth Road.

Landscape

Two large fields bounded by A376 to east, existing low density housing to south/south west, small area of woodland to north, and the Exe Estuary to the west. Undulating site, subject to substantial hedgerow removal when compared with the 1888-90 map. Open views from the noisy A376 which provides a high level of human disturbance. Site is prominent in short and long distance views with little context of existing built form. Site rises up from the Exe Estuary making it prominent in long distance views as well. Overall, high-medium sensitivity to development.

Historic environment

2x Roman finds identified on the HER but overall Low: no concerns identified on current evidence, although archaeological mitigation measures may be required.

Ecology

2x large arable fields. Northern boundary comprises a belt of mature trees. Other mature trees along western boundary. Exe Estuary Ramsar, SPA, and SSSI located 30m to west of site at closest point. S.41 habitat 30m to west associated with Exe Estuary. Close proximity of these international and national designations mean a significant moderate adverse effect predicted.

Accessibility

7 out of 12 facilities within 1,600m of site. These include Exton train station approx 550m to the south and the convenience store at the petrol station adjacent to the north. Employment opportunities at industrial estate 700m to the north, with Darts Farm slightly further. These can be accessed by pavement, although it is narrow. 20 minute bus frequency to Exeter/Exmouth from stop on A376. South west part of site is adjacent to Exe Estuary Trail.

Other constraints

Mostly Grade 1 agricultural land, covering north west portion of site; remainder is Grade 3. High cumulative flood risk in Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Within Green Wedge in adopted Local Plan 2013-31 or made Neighbourhood Plan?

Yes

Opportunities

Provide direct access to Exe Estuary Trail. Create bus stop on A376 adjoining the site.

Yield (number of dwellings or hectares of employment land)

225

Contribution to spatial strategy

Would not be consistent with the spatial strategy at Exton for limited development to meet local needs.

Should the site be allocated?

No

Reasons for allocating or not allocating

Would not be consistent with the spatial strategy at Exton for limited development to meet local needs. Would result in the a loss of Grade 1 agricultural land. High-medium landscape sensitivity to development.

If whole site is not suitable for allocation, could a smaller part be allocated?

No

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Context

Landscape designation context

Outside of National Landscape

Other relevant biodiversity, historic environment and/or geological designations

Exe Estuary Ramsar, SPA, and SSSI located 30m to west of site at closest point.

Landscape Character Type and relevant key characteristics

LCT 3E: Lowland Plains • Level to gently sloping or rolling plain between the valley floors and the start of steeper valley sides. • Small discrete woodland blocks - along northern edge of site. • Mixed farmland, often in arable cultivation. Regular medium to large field pattern. Contains some of the most fertile farmland in the study area. • Semi-natural habitats include roadside hedges and hedgerow trees - particularly oaks. • Maritime influences on estuary villages. • Variable highway network, from sparse rural lanes to motorway and A-roads. Relatively few public rights of way. • Long views over low hedges. Some views marred by pylons and other infrastructure. • Surrounding LCTs (for example Estuary and Pebble Bed Heaths) contribute to views and influence character. Lowland Plains visible from surrounding higher LCTs.

Local landscape character of site and immediate surrounds

Gently undulating site, comprising two large fields with hedgerow boundaries. Adjacent to the northern edge of Exton, with countryside to north and east of site, Exe Estuary to west. Within Coastal Preservation Area in adopted LP, defined on the basis of visual openness and views to and from the sea/estuary. Does not have "Surprising feeling of remoteness in some parts. Despite local impacts of development and infrastructure, much of the area retains a pleasant, rural feel" due to open nature of site and presence of noisy, busy A376 adjoining to east.

Does the local landscape character of the site and immediate surrounds conform to published assessments?

Yes

General and site-specific affects that could arise from development

• Introduction of built form and associated infrastructure. • Impact on tranquillity through increased levels of site activity and increased traffic movement on surrounding roads. • Site access requirements- access via A376, will require hedgerow removal and highway infrastructure given A376 has capacity issues.

Analysis

Physical and natural characteristics	
Low-medium	Two large, regular shaped, arable fields. Gently rolling topography, simple landcover complexity. Northern boundary of hedgerow with trees, low clipped hedgerow along eastern boundary with A376.
Cultural and historic associations	
Low-medium	Historic field pattern has largely been lost - on the 1888-90 OS map the northern field is comprised of five smaller fields; with three smaller fields in the south. Nonetheless, the row of trees along the northern boundary is present on 1888-90 OS map, offering some historical character.
Relationship to existing settlement edge	
Medium-high	Southern field is indented into settlement edge, with existing dwellings on its eastern and western boundaries. Although the location west of the A376 is consistent with the existing settlement pattern, there is little presence of built form and the large scale of the site in comparison to the existing settlement means development would not integrate with the general settlement form.
Experiential landscape character	
Medium	Open, simple and exposed site, with a high level of human disturbance from the noise and street lighting from the A376 along the eastern boundary. Intensively managed fields as arable farmland, with telegraph wires and masts run broadly north east to south west.
Views	
High	Open site with a wooded skyline along its northern boundary. Short distance, open views of site from the A376 and the footpath along north east boundary. Long distance views of site from across the Exe Estuary, including from the Exe Valley Way 1.4km to the west.
Overall landscape susceptibility	
Medium-high	The open nature of the site, with both short and long distance views across the landscape. Cluster of trees along northern boundary. Limited context of built form. Intensively managed arable field, with human disturbance particularly from the A376 on north east boundary.
Within nationally designated landscape?	
Site is not within a designated landscape.	
Degree of intervisibility with nationally designated landscape	
None	
If outside designated landscape, factors which may raise or lower value from moderate	
Large, open nature of site provides both short and long distance views. Designated as Coastal Preservation Area in adopted Local Plan defined on the basis of visual openness and views to and from the sea/estuary.	
Landscape value	
High – Locally or regionally designated landscape. Also areas which documentary evidence and /or site observations indicate as being more valued than surrounding areas.	
Overall landscape sensitivity	
High / Medium	
Landscape guidance: opportunities in relation to development	
Enhance cluster of trees along northern boundary through additional tree planting in this area. Add green infrastructure link with Exe Estuary Trail on western boundary of site.	

Historic Environment Site Assessment

Notes on history of area

See Wood_01.

Overall conclusion

Low: no concerns identified on current evidence, although archaeological mitigation measures may be required. No impact upon an asset is predicted or, if an impact is predicted, the cultural heritage value of the asset(s) would be unaffected.

Step 1. Identify any heritage assets potentially affected	
Is the site within 100 metres of a designated heritage asset?	No
Could development of the site affect any heritage asset (designated or non-designated) or its setting?	No. HER states Roman coins found in southern field, Roman fibula found in northern field.
List any heritage assets potentially affected.	None.

Ecological assessment

Context – Sites and features (desk study)

Site / feature name	Geographic value	Distance from site / feature (metres)	Predicted impact
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	International	4600	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Special Protection Area (SPA)	International	30	Significant major adverse effect predicted
Ramsar site	International	30	Significant major adverse effect predicted
Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)	National	10400	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	National	30	Significant major adverse effect predicted
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	National	4600	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Regional	2800	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Ancient Woodland Inventory Site (AWSI)	Regional	3800	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)

County Wildlife Site (CWS)	County	580	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Unconfirmed Wildlife Site (UWS)	County	1600	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Draft Nature Recovery Network areas (NRN)	County	200	Minor adverse effect predicted (not significant)
Section 41 Habitat of Principle Importance (including rivers and streams, excluding hedgerow)	County	30	Significant moderate adverse effect predicted

Comments

Exe Estuary Ramsar, SPA, and SSSI located 30m to west of site at closest point. S.41 habitat 30m to west associated with Exe Estuary.

Within River Axe SAC Nutrient catchment zone? No

Within Beer Quarry and Caves SAC bat consultation zone? No

Within East Devon Pebblebed Heaths SAC HRA mitigation zone? Yes

Within Exe Estuary SPA HRA mitigation zone? Yes

Within East Devon Pebblebed Heaths 400m exclusion zone? No

Number of European sites potentially impacted by site: 2

On site assessment

Does the site consist of any habitats other than agriculturally improved grassland or arable (excluding small/negligible areas of habitat)?

No. 2x large, arable fields.

Presence of veteran or ancient trees

No.

Large numbers of mature trees within hedgerows or otherwise

Yes. Northern boundary comprises a belt of mature trees. Other mature trees along western boundary.

Presence of ponds not identified on aerial imagery

No.

Networks of small field parcel and hedgerows (any areas where allocation is likely to require removal of substantial areas of hedgerow to facilitate a suitable development footprint)

No.

Any other incidental features of ecological interest (protected/notable species incidentally recorded)

No.

Is there any evidence which contradicts the desk study results?

No.

Conclusion

Significant moderate adverse effect predicted.
