

Background Document BD13 Site Policies for WYE1, WYE2 and Naccolt Brickworks

The WYE 1 site, land off Churchfield Way

The TRSDPD identified WYE1 as a site for development of up to 25 houses. The map shown in Figure 1 shows that WYE1 lies to the north west of the village with access onto Churchfield Way. The site is strategically important at the boundary of the built up area of Wye and straddles the historic trackway between the bridge and Court Lodge.

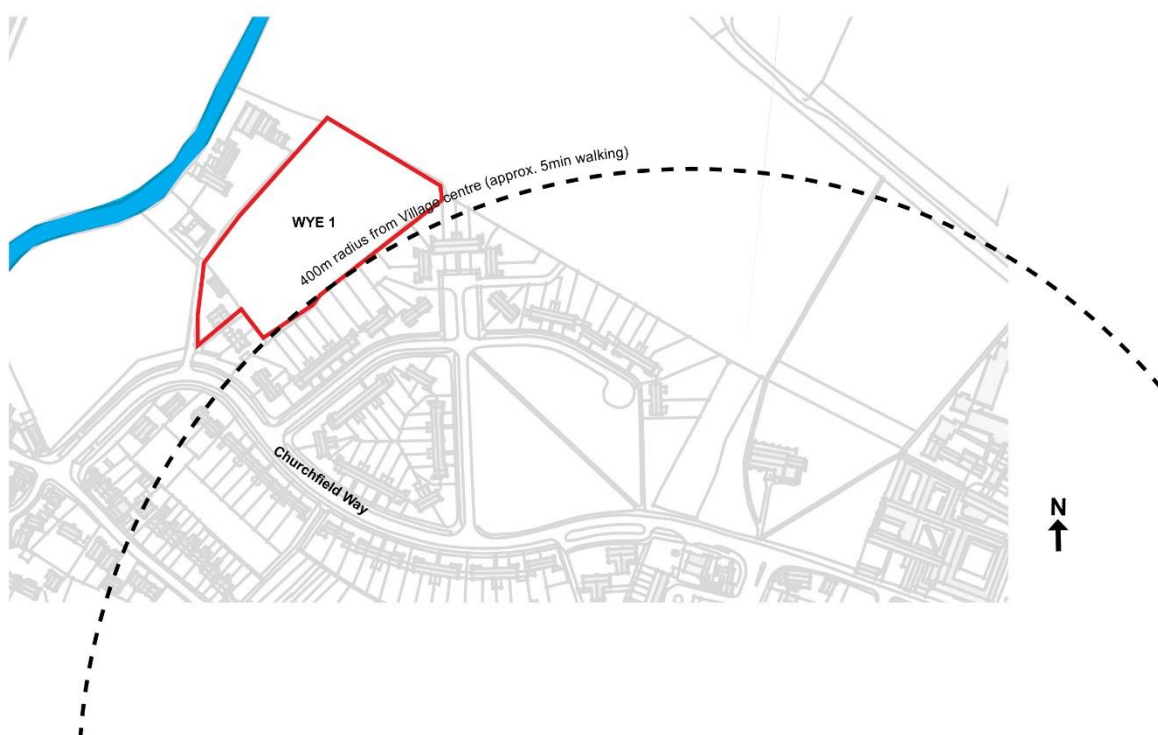


Fig WYE1.1 Location of WYE1 off Churchfield Way, within the designated village envelope but on the edge of the 400m zone .

The NP supports the TRSDPD that includes the following policy for WYE1

P.45 Development proposals for this site shall:-

- create a strongly defined village boundary to the north of the site;
- provide a strong landscaped boundary along the northern edge of the site and retain the existing trees along the western boundary of the site;
- provide vehicular access onto Churchfield Way;
- provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes as required by policy CS13 of the Core Strategy;
- provide affordable housing as required by policy CS12 of the Core Strategy;

- provide play equipment on the recreation ground in accordance with 'saved' policy LE7 of the Borough Local Plan 2000 or, any subsequent SPD superseding that policy; and,
- provide a financial contribution towards the maintenance of public open space in the village and the play equipment provided under (f) above, in accordance with 'saved' policy LE9 of the Borough Local Plan 2000, or any subsequent SPD superseding that policy.

The NP Policies below provide additional guidance.

Policy WYE1.1 - the historical context of the site

The NP examined the historical context of WYE1 in terms of its preserved and hidden or lost elements, and it identified that WYE1 lies across the site of a tree-lined lane (see Figure WYE1.2). Kent County Council has identified WYE1 as a site with high archaeological potential for Roman, early medieval and medieval remains, associated with the royal palace complex around Wye Court.

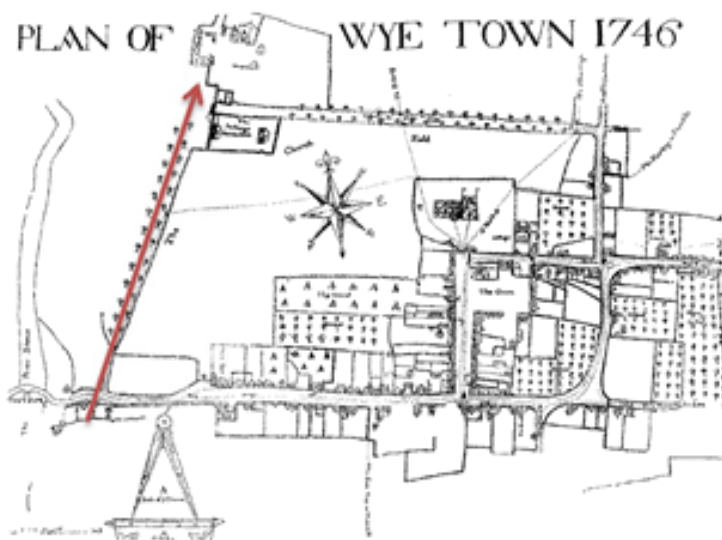


Figure WYE1.2 Location of the tree lined lane to Wye Court, (possibly Roman in origin) Michael Moon 1746

The NP values the contribution such a feature would make to any development on WYE1 and provide it with clear 'historical continuity of place' and strong local character. We highlight Para 126 of the NPPF that states:

- *Local Authoritiesshould take into account: opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place'*
- Similarly, The North Downs AONB Design Guide states: *'Conserve and enhance other historic landscape features such as old lanes and tracks.'* (p23)

Policy WYE1.1 is that the development should

- use the historical tree-lined lane as the primary layout generator;
- retain key historical views to Wye Court and the Stour valley;

Policy WYE1.2 – current context of the site

WYE1 is adjacent to the Churchfield Way Estate. The defining character of this area is that of a post-war garden village. A good example of its time Churchfield Way and Abbots Walk were built as social housing to a high standard, with large residential blocks, wide green tree-lined streets and housing set back behind deep front gardens. The houses on Churchfield Way are all 1.5 to 2 storeys high. They have a benign and understated appearance that does not compete with the village centre. This helps to reinforce the estate's position in the hierarchy of the village structure as a residential area. Churchfield Green is a large open space on the edge of the conservation area, which has panoramic views of the North Downs above the roofline.

The Kent Design Guide states (p20):

- *'Context is of major importance, emphasising the need for the layout and appearance of buildings to be based on an appraisal of the character of the site and the adjoining land and buildings.'*
- *'To achieve a well-integrated design, the established character of existing ... villages and countryside must be respected.'*
- *'This means: 'Respecting the scale, street patterns, ...'and '...forming a harmonious composition with surrounding buildings or landscape features'.*

The adjacent character area to the west of WYE1 is the Stour Valley River Corridor. The river banks are designated as a linear Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and this runs from Ashford for the length of the parish.

The NPPF para. 113 states that protection should be *"commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks."*

Policy WYE1.2 is that the development should

- **promote a character that responds strongly to Churchfield Way on one side and the Stour Valley River Corridor on the other. This requires a graduated solution from a semi-formal arrangement to a looser more open pattern along the river corridor;**
- **avoid an incongruous layout of dispersed housing that gives little regard to the site's landscape setting, views and distinctive history;**
- **conserve and enhance the Stour Valley as a wildlife habitat and corridor that sustains and enhances the resilience of other designated wildlife areas in the parish (SAC, Wye National Nature Reserve, SSSI and ancient woodlands).**

Policy WYE1.3 - landscape

We know that the relationship between Wye and its landscape is important and that poorly designed edge development can have an adverse impact on the AONB. Views to, and the approach to the village along roads and footpaths gives the outside world the first impressions of Wye and is therefore important for its appearance to welcome visitors. Along roads and streets houses face the road and give a positive outlook, unfortunately the first impression people approaching the village along country footpaths (including designated long distance footpaths such as the Stour Valley Walk and the North Downs Way), many of these edges are backs of houses and rear garden fences, and contain assorted garden clutter. These fail to contribute to Wye's character, and are often detrimental to its appearance.

The Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook states:

- 'Avoid the introduction of features such as close boarded fencing...on boundaries with rural lanes or the wider landscape' (p8)

Policy WYE1.3 requires

- an outward looking green edge frontage should be located along the northern boundary of WYE1;
- passive surveillance from houses that front onto public spaces;
- a semi-permeable landscape buffer between houses and the surrounding landscape so that the built form is softened and well integrated when viewed from outside the village with infrastructure planting native to the area.



Figure WYE1.3 How the northern boundary of the site might look if sensitively treated.

Policy WYE1.4 Junction with Churchfield Way

Any new development on WYE1 would require sympathetic enhancements of the Churchfield Way junction.

Policy WYE1.4 states,

- junction restructuring should be based on high quality public realm proposals that enhance the main road access to the centre of Wye;
- junction works must address road safety issues and provide safe crossing points on Churchfield Way.

Policy WYE1.5 Walkability and cycle route

One of the NP's greatest aspirations is a walkable village that promotes walking and cycling as the preferred method of transport around the village, and out to the wider public right of way network. This idea stems from central government objectives in residential design and is a consistent thread in the NPPF. The NP seeks to build on this objective and have a cycleway around the perimeter of the village which ties in with the National Cycle Route 18 (NCR18) through route to Ashford in the South and Canterbury in the north. Kent County Council has a strategy in place for taking more of this route off-road along the Stour Valley. It is critical that future development in Wye supports the NPs aspirations for delivery of these elements (see Appendix B).

Currently there is a narrow strip of land to the north of the WYE1 site that is fenced off from the remaining agricultural land and is owned by the same landowner of WYE1. This strip could easily accommodate a cycle way and associated landscaping and be the first phase of a cycleway around the northern boundary of Wye. It could link WYE1 to the PROW footpath connection through Abbots Walk, with a future extension to the Church and around the graveyard linking to Olantigh Road. This would certainly provide a safe way for school children living in the west of the village to walk and cycle to the new Free School and avoid the traffic congestion in the village centre.

Policy WYE1.5 requires that developers

- **contribute to the creation of a cycleway around the village in the areas adjacent to their sites;**
- **facilitate the infrastructure needed to create a healthier, more sociable and more accessible village.**

Policy WYE1.6 housing densities

Having a mix of housing tenures and sizes is important to ensure a sustainable and appropriate mix of residents in terms of demographics so that it helps create a diverse population needed for an active and energetic community. Densities are important so that new developments sit comfortably within their surroundings. The recently constructed Havilland's estate illustrates clearly, how high densities can be overpowering in a rural edge of village setting, and create places that jar with their immediate surroundings and wider village structure.

Policy WYE1.6 sets out the following criteria for the site

- **densities should be in line with the surrounding urban grain, which is 20-25 dwellings per hectare;**
- **densities should be graduated from higher densities adjacent to Abbots Walk and Churchfield Way to lower densities along the river corridors to the west and north;**
- **housing numbers should be up to 25 units in line with the Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD Policy WYE1;**

- provide a mix of 2, 3, and 4 bed houses.
- Support is given for the ideas of self-build or community build schemes that offer ways for local residents to own houses where they could not otherwise afford to own a property in the village.

Policy WYE1.7 Materials and details

Materials and details are important for informing the 'local identity' and 'character' of a place. Wye's character is defined by somewhat of a mixed palette of materials, but the two dominant materials are brick and clay hung tiles, baked from local soils. The Kent Downs Landscape Design Handbook reinforces this by stating:

'Clay bricks and tiles are the traditional building materials of the Kent Downs' (p65)

It is also important to promote the use of modern sustainable materials. However this should be balanced against the requirement for contextual design i.e. one that fits in with its surroundings. The Kent Downs Landscape Design Handbook identifies how locally sourced materials can address both local character and sustainability:

'..where possible sustainable materials should be used. In essence this means locally available and where possible renewable' ...'it is important to consider the characteristics of the local character area.' (p64)

Policy WYE1.7 seeks to

- promote sustainable materials that are sympathetic and in keeping with the surrounding dominant vernacular of brick, clay roof tiles and clay hung tiles;
- restrict the use of white weatherboarding that is incongruous to the area.

Outline plan for the WYE1 site

The application of our Policies, coupled with the principles of the VDS allows the proposal of the layout of the site as shown in Figure WYE1.4a and b.

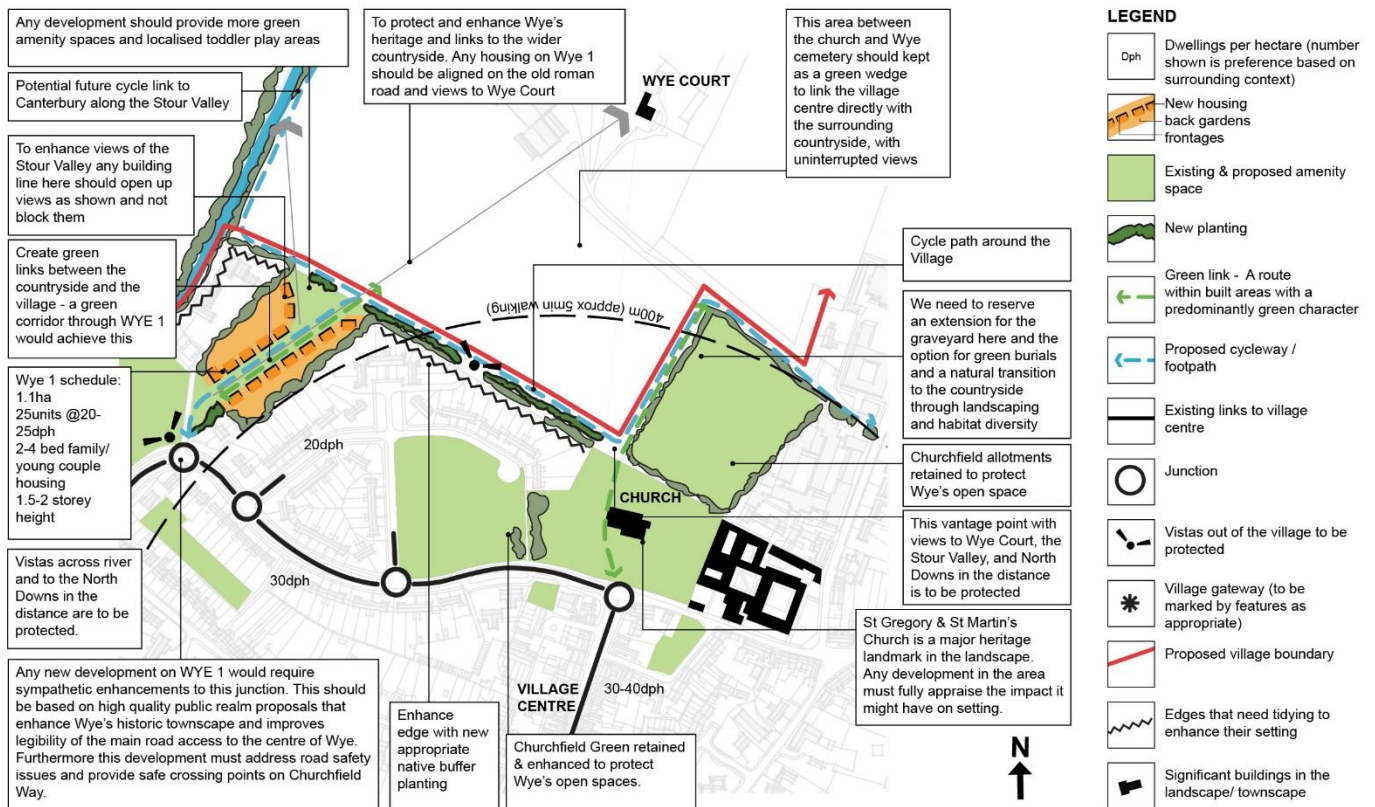


Fig. WYE1.4a The WYE1 site in context with comments from workshops.

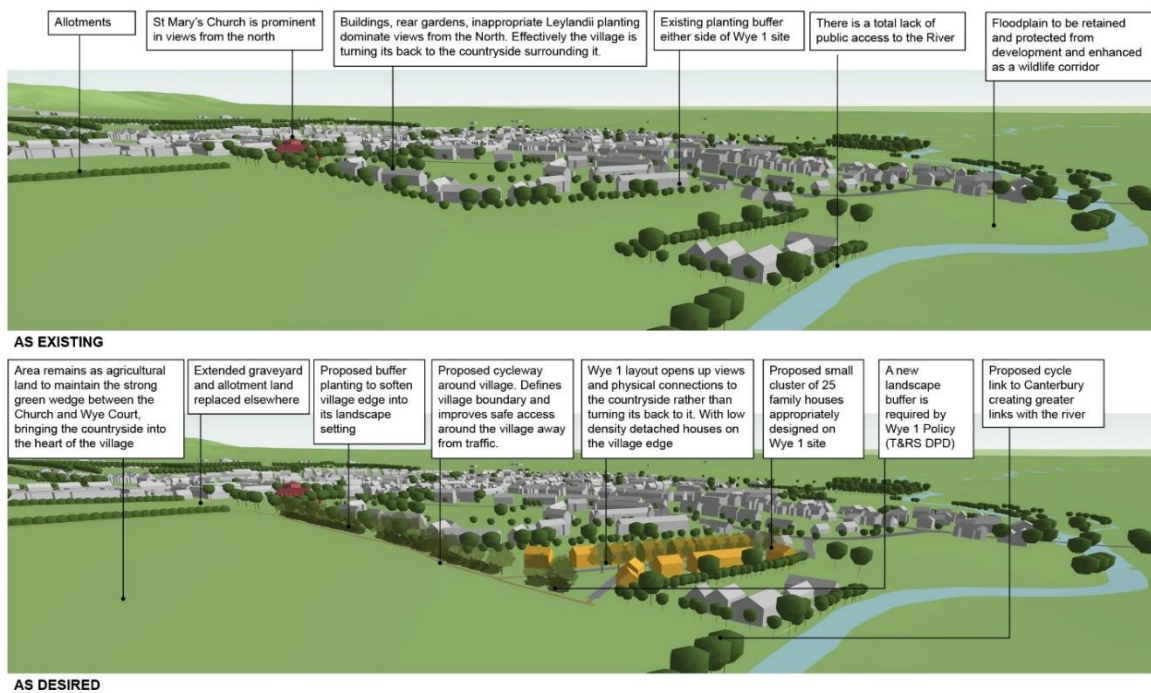


Figure 1.4b Overviews of the site as existing and as planned

WYE2 site – land at Luckley Field

The TRSDPD identified WYE2 as a site for development of up to 20 houses. The map shown in Figure 1 shows that WYE2 lies to the south of the village with access through Little Chequers. The site is strategically important at the boundary of the built up area of Wye and is at the entry of the Stour Valley Way from the surrounding AONB into the village.



Figure 1 Location of the WYE2 site

The NP supports the TRSDPD that includes the following policies for WYE2

P.45 Development proposals for this site shall:-

- *provide a landscaped boundary along the southern edge of the site;*
- *provide vehicular access via Little Chequers and / or Long's Acre;*
- *provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes as required by policy CS13 of the Core Strategy;*
- *provide a financial contribution towards the maintenance of public open space in the village and the play equipment provided in accordance with 'saved' policy LE9 of the Borough Local Plan 2000, or any subsequent SPD superseding that policy.*

The NP Policies below provide additional guidance.

Policy WYE2.1 – access

The junction between Little Chequers and Bridge Street involves very narrow roads and poor sight lines. Increasing the number of residents using this junction as the sole means of entry or exit will exacerbate current traffic flow problems and raise safety concerns. The scale of development of WYE2 will impact directly on the already problematic Bridge St route. There are also potential problems if WYE2 has a single access through Little Chequers. The NP traffic assessment includes modelling of future scenarios dependent

upon the scale of developments in the village. That work provides the background to the following policy.

Our policy WYE2.1 is for improved access to WYE2

- The link from WYE2 to the Little Chequers development should be critically assessed.
- Connectivity will be improved by introduction of a second link to Long's Acre

Policy WYE2.2 -housing density

Densities are important so that new developments sit comfortably within their surroundings. 'Havilland's' illustrates clearly, how high densities can be overpowering in a rural edge of village setting, and create places that jar with their immediate surroundings and wider village structure. The density of housing and numbers of dwellings also has critical impact on traffic flow into and out of any development. Issues of access limit the scale of development appropriate for WYE2.

Our policy WYE2.2 is that

- Housing numbers should be 14- 15 units in line with TRSDPD Policy WYE2.
- The development should include a mix of 2, 3, and 4 bed houses.
- Density should be no more than 15 dph on this edge of village site.
- Support is given for the ideas of self-build or community build schemes that offer ways for local residents to own houses where they could not otherwise afford to own a property in the village.

Policy WYE2.3 –Materials and design

Materials and details are important for informing the 'local identity' and 'character' of a place. Wye's character is defined by somewhat of a mixed palette of materials, but the two dominant materials are brick and clay hung tiles, baked from local soils. In an edge of village site buildings should not be more than two storeys high.

Our Policy WYE2.3 - materials and design, is to

- promote sustainable materials that are sympathetic and in keeping with the surrounding dominant vernacular of brick, clay roof tiles and clay hung tiles;
- restrict the use of painted weatherboarding which is incongruous to the area;
- restrict heights to two storeys;
- reinforce the design principles highlighted in the VDS.

Policy WYE2.4 - layout and the southern boundary

The TRSDPD points out that the WYE2 site, “... presents an excellent opportunity to improve the southern side of the village”, and the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook states:

“The presumption should be against AONB edge developments where they impact upon views into and out of the AONB landscape.”

Boundaries between Wye and its landscape are important, and it is clear that poorly designed edge development can have an adverse impact on the AONB. Our environmental assessment (Appendix C) highlights three significant views that relate to the WYE2 site and enhance the relationship with Wye and the AONB:

- The view to the south east of the Downs
- The view south and south -west across the Stour Valley
- Views into the village from the Stour Valley walk and Naccolt Road

Our Policy WYE2.4 - is that development should;

- **promote a defined boundary to residential development, an outward looking green edge frontage located along the southern boundary, facing the surrounding landscape context, but screened by a strong landscaped boundary along the southern edge.**
- **avoid an incongruous layout of randomly scattered “pattern book” housing and instead create passive surveillance from houses that front onto public spaces.**
- **generate a semi-permeable landscape buffer between houses and the surrounding landscape so that the built form is softened and well integrated when viewed from outside the village.**
- **include a detailed landscape strategy plan in any all planning applications;**
- **include native infrastructure planting that is indicative to the area and enhances the AONB character, in line with the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook.**

The existing and NP proposed boundary views of the WYE2 site are illustrated below



Existing



Proposed with the WYE2 development in gold. Note that the southern boundary is adjacent to the orbital cycle path.

Policy WYE2.5 A walkable village and the 'Cycleway'

One of the NP's greatest aspirations is a walkable village that promotes walking and cycling as the preferred method of transport around the village, and out to the wider public right of way network. This idea stems from central government objectives in residential design and is a consistent thread in the NPPF. The NP seeks to build on this objective and have a cycleway around the perimeter of the village which ties in with National Cycle Route 18 (NCR18) to Ashford in the South and Canterbury in the north. Kent County Council has a strategy in place for taking more of this route off-road along the Stour Valley. It is critical therefore that WYE2 and other developments in Wye, support the NPs aspirations for delivery of these elements.

Currently there is a strip of land to the south of WYE2 that could easily accommodate a cycle way and associated landscaping and be the first phase of a cycleway around the southern boundary of Wye. It could link WYE2 to the Conningbrook Lakes Route 18 cycle route with a future extension to Oxenturn Rd.

Our Policy WYE2.5 sets out the following principles :-

- **WYE2 should support the aspirations of a walkable village.**
- **It is a development at the edge of the walkable limit and should not expand to unbalance the concentric village concept.**
- **WYE 2 is in a key location and development should help to deliver the cycleway around the village.**
- **The development should add to the infrastructure needed to create a healthier, more sociable and more accessible village that is less car-dependent.**

The Old Naccolt Brickworks Site

The site in Naccolt, the hamlet to the south of Wye, has remained partly derelict since the closure of the brickworks. Part of the site, to the west of Oxenturn Rd, was used by Wyecycle the pioneering recycling initiative, but this activity has now stopped. The site is shown in Figure 5.6.



Figure 5.6 Location of the Naccolt Brickworks site on Oxenturn Rd.

Local residents would welcome appropriate development of the site for residential use rather than a continuation of general industrial activity. Such a development would not impact significantly on local traffic, but would go against ABC guidance for growth in unsustainable areas requiring car trips to all facilities. The eastern part of the site is within the AONB and the western part must be considered similarly, in view of its impact on the setting of the AONB itself. Despite the inherent problems, some housing seems the most realistic option and an approach that would improve the site for nearby residents. If sensitively designed, development would enhance the current state of this area of the AONB. However, sewage and drainage need to be critically assessed in the context of the protected environment. In principle the community supports some residential development, with up to eight dwellings to the west and renovation of the cottage to the east of Oxenturn Rd. The surrounding woodland needs to be carefully managed and maintained as an important wildlife habitat. Transfer to Kent Wildlife Trust or the Parish Council are options to be explored.

Policy WNP8 Naccolt Brickworks site

The re-development of the former Naccolt Brickworks for residential use with up to 8 dwellings to the west and the renovation of the cottage to the east of Oxenturn Rd will be supported. Any development here must be well screened from the AONB, the road and nearby dwellings. The surrounding wooded areas should be retained and a management strategy determined before planning permission is granted.

*This policy for Naccolt Brickworks is supported by the **NPPF** Core principle, Using brownfield land; Sustainability Policy 11, conserving the natural environment by re-using and remediating brownfield land. **Core Strategy 2008** guiding principle F, the best use of previously developed land.*