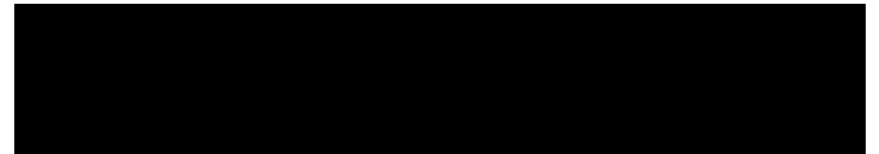


Cobham House Vineyard,
Sole Street, Cobham, Kent, DA12 3AA
Site Options for Proposed Winery Building

August 2024



On 26th December 2023 a new statutory duty came into force in all National Landscapes. The new duty requires all relevant authorities to **'seek to further'** the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty of any landscape with AONB designation such as the Kent Downs

(Source: Section 245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023)

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Report reference & issue

430 - doc- 01 SO Site Options issued 19 August 2024

Front cover: application site from Batt's Road

Frontspiece: application site from Batt's Road

Back cover: narrow lane near the site

Contents

1	Introduction	page 5
2	Site Options	page 6
3	Conclusions	page 13

Window to the National Landscape

Sole Street Site Options August 2024

Figures and Tables

1 Introduction page 5

Figure 1 Site location

Figure 2 Site

2 Site Options page 6

Figure 3 Site options A to E

Figure 4 Site option A

Figure 5 Site option B

Figure 6 Site option C

Figure 7 Site option D

Figure 8 Site option E

Figure 8 Evaluation of options

3 Conclusions page 13



UK Landscape
Architects Declare
Climate & Biodiversity
Emergency

█ have confirmed their commitment to addressing the climate and biodiversity emergencies by signing this declaration. Soils, water, ecology and biodiversity are part of our vital natural capital and ecosystem services; as a profession, landscape architects have the skills to plan, design and manage resilient spaces.



1 Introduction

1.1 Background

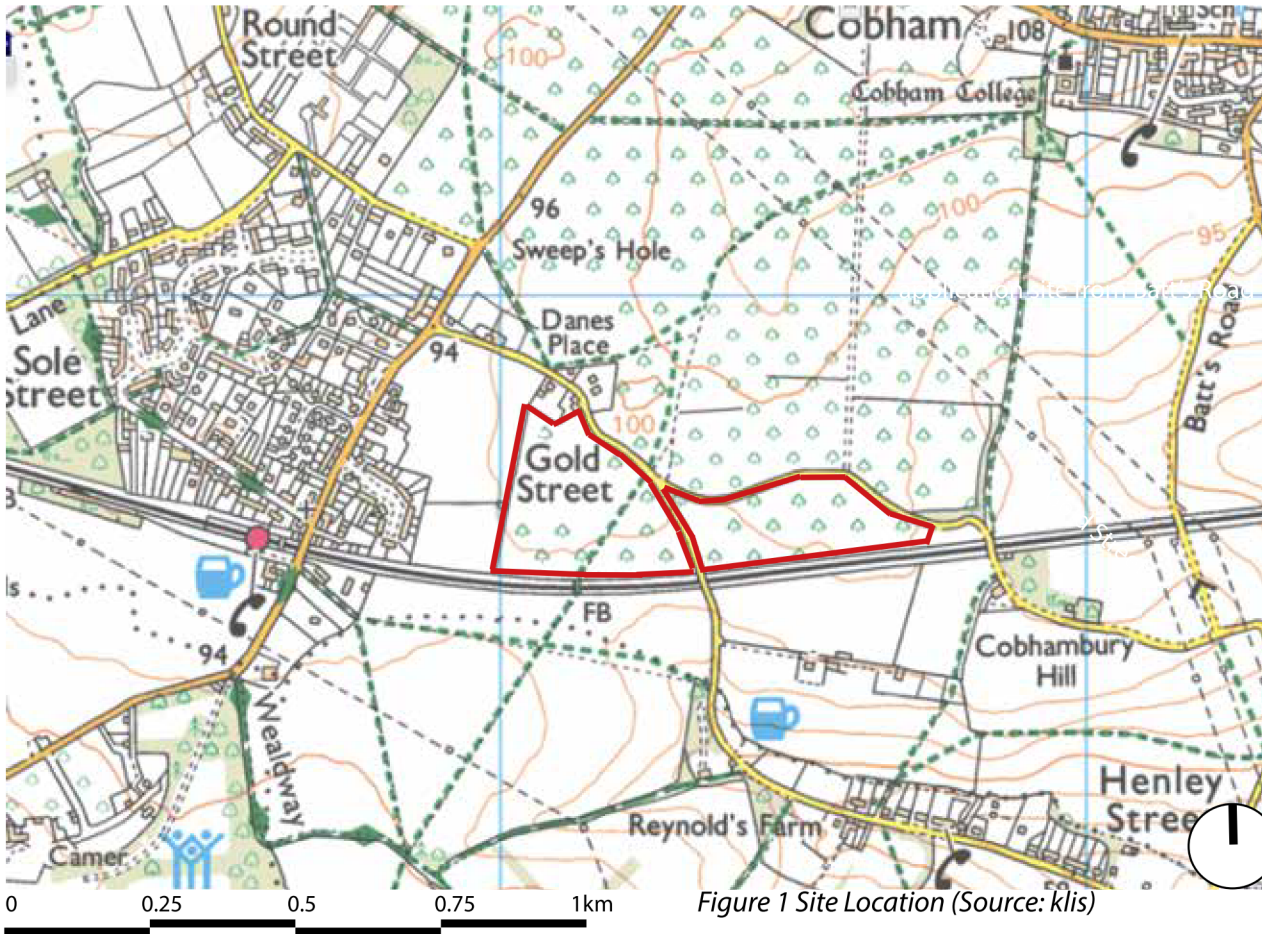


Figure 1 Site Location (Source: klis)

This Site Options Study has been prepared by [REDACTED] to consider and assess different options for the siting of a proposed winery building at Cobham House Vineyard, Sole Street, Cobham, Kent (Planning application 20240544).

[REDACTED] has previously prepared a Landscape Statement covering the local landscape character, landscape fabric, landscape context and an assessment of the likely landscape and visual impacts of the proposed winery building.

1.2 The Site

Gold Street is a rural lane and small hamlet connecting the two villages of Sole Street and Henley Street.

The application site covers 11.51 hectares of former orchard and lies to the south of Gold Street and to the north of the Southeastern Railways London to Rochester line. The site slopes from a high point of +/- 98m aod on the Gold Street boundary next to Hevers Cottage to a low point of +/- 92m aod close to the railway crossing at Henley Street.

To the north is a group of residential properties: Hevers Cottage, Mulberry House, the Briars and Danes Place and to the west is the village of Sole Street with several properties looking east towards the application site.

The vineyard lies within the North Downs National Landscape and the Green Belt. Some of the land has been planted with vines, the remainder is still to be planted.



Figure 2 Site (Source: GoogleEarth Pro)

2 Site Options

2.1 Options A to E

Five site options for the winery building are proposed:

- Site A as in current planning application 20240544
- Site B is close to the Gold Street/Batts Road junction
- Site C is on Gold Street close to the railway
- Site D is on the east side of Gold Street close to the railway
- Site E is on Batts Road close to the railway

The proposed winery building is 40.48m long, 15.71m wide and 9.3m to ridge height. There are no comparable farm buildings of this size within the vicinity, so this building would be an isolated feature.

Issues to consider when assessing different options for siting the winery building include:

access - for construction, winery workers, deliveries and future public access for vineyard tours & wine tasting

visual impact - as a large isolated building sited in the relatively open countryside it would be visible over a wide area and from different directions

elevation - the site slopes from +/-99m in the north to +/-92m in the south; siting the building at a higher elevation would make it more visible and easier to see from surrounding public rights of way

topography - the site is sloping; a large building of this size would require significant earthworks to construct a level building platform resulting in soil displacement and carbon loss

tree-cover - existing small shaws (woodlands) at the Batts Road/Gold Street junction and to the north of Batts Shaw offer some potential for establishing contextual woodland to provide a setting rather than screening for the proposed

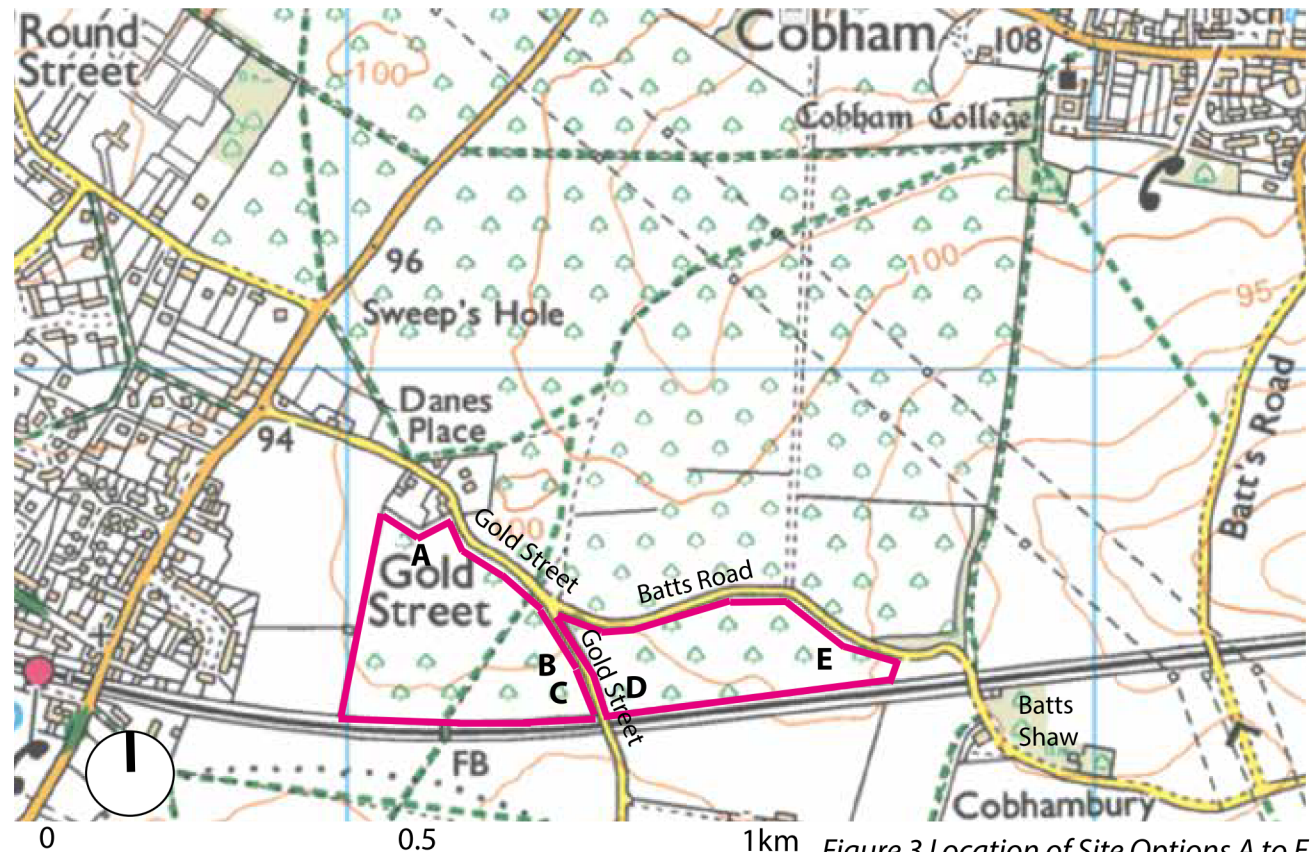


Figure 3 Location of Site Options A to E

winery building.

impact on close neighbours - close proximity to existing residents would raise issues of noise and light pollution and visual amenity

landscape impact - impact on the local landscape character, local landscape pattern and on the Kent Downs National Landscape;

2 Site Options

2.2 Option A

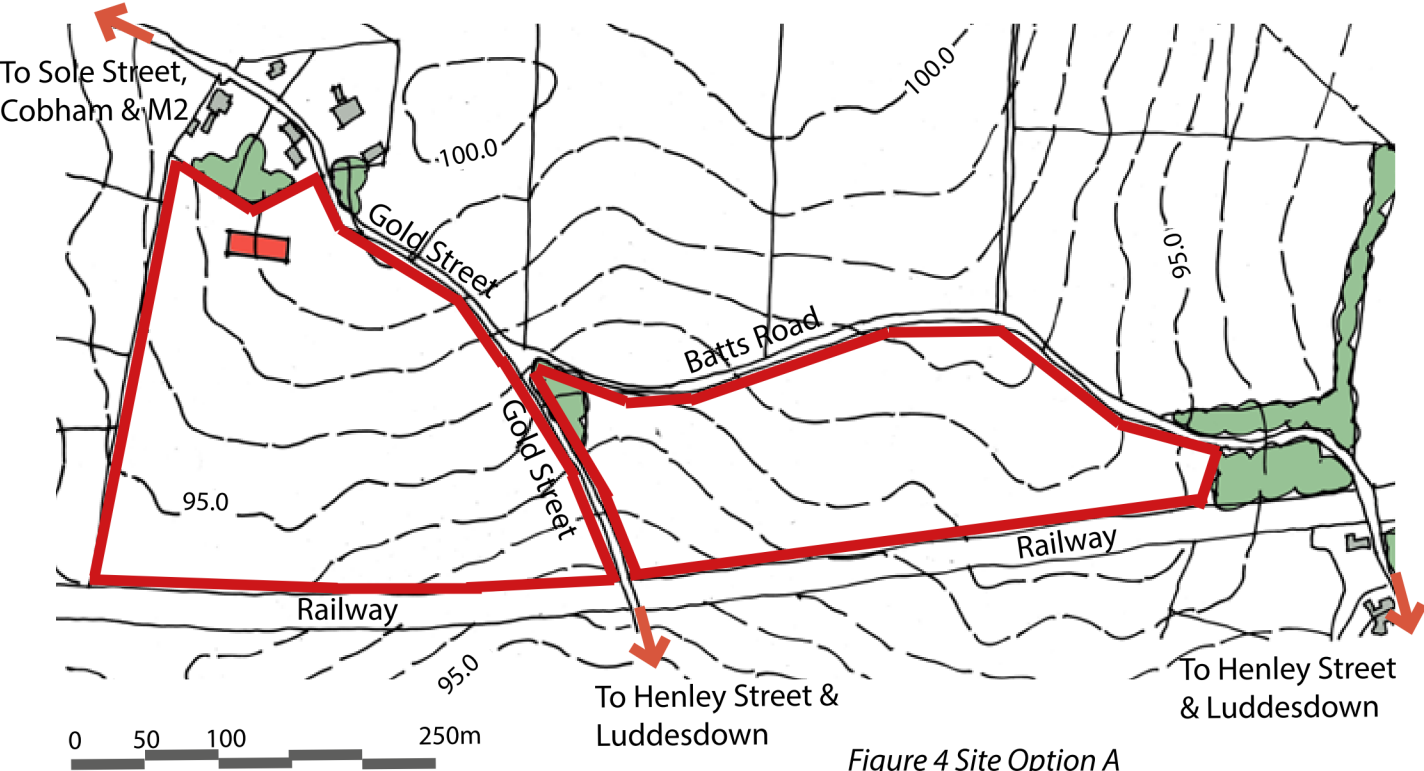


Figure 4 Site Option A

This is the location of the proposed winery building in planning application ref 20240544

Access	Closest to Cobham and A2/M2. Use of existing field access would require crossing public footpath NS190 with a resultant impact on walkers. New widened access would require Kent Highways consultation. Access from the east would be restricted by very narrow lanes with infrequent passing places.
Visual impact	Highly visible from window to the National Landscape, from Sole Street, from close neighbours and from public footpath NS190, especially from footbridge over railway.
Elevation	+/-98m aod so at highest and most visible part of site
Topography	Gradient of +/-1 in 50
Tree-cover	Some mature trees in private gardens to north, could be supplemented
Impact on Close Neighbours	Very close to four neighbours
Landscape Impact	The building would be out of scale with nearby residential buildings and local landscape pattern, it would impact on the local landscape character and on the Kent Downs National Landscape

2 Site Options

2.3 Option B

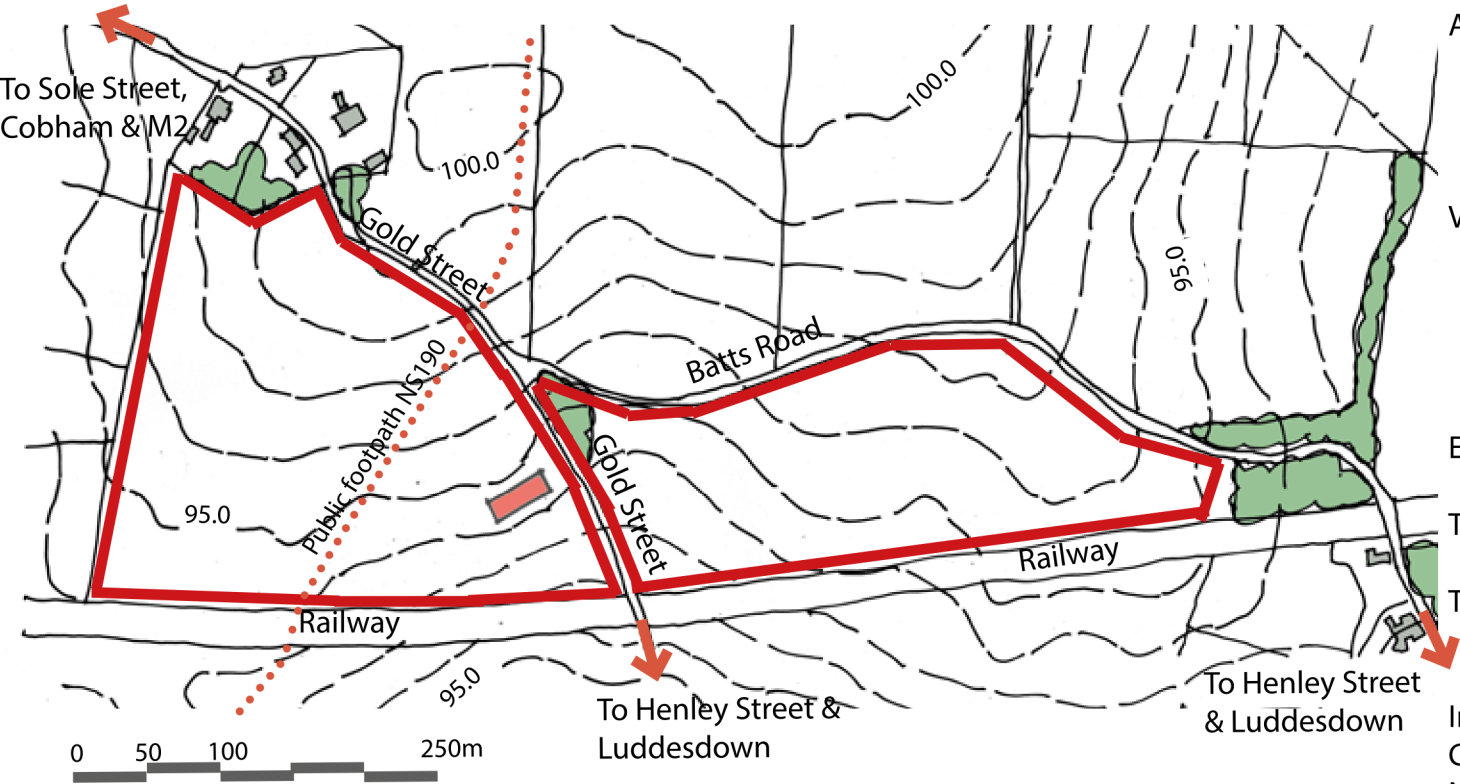


Figure 5 Site Option B

Located on Gold Street, to south of junction with Batts Road. Nearby tree cover could be supplemented to offer some contextual woodland. Proximity of road junction likely to raise Kent Highways concerns.

- Access Existing field gate close to existing junction of Batts Road and Gold Street, widened access would require Kent Highways consultation.
- Visual impact No significant impact on window to National Landscape, on views from Sole Street or on close residents. Some impact on walkers using public footpath NS190
- Elevation +/-94.5m aod
- Topography Gradient of +/-1 in 35
- Tree-cover Some mature trees at road junction to the east, could be supplemented
- Impact on Close Neighbours Over 200m from closest neighbours
- Landscape Impact Out of scale with the local landform and landscape pattern, would impact local landscape character and Kent Downs National Landscape

2 Site Options

2.4 Option C

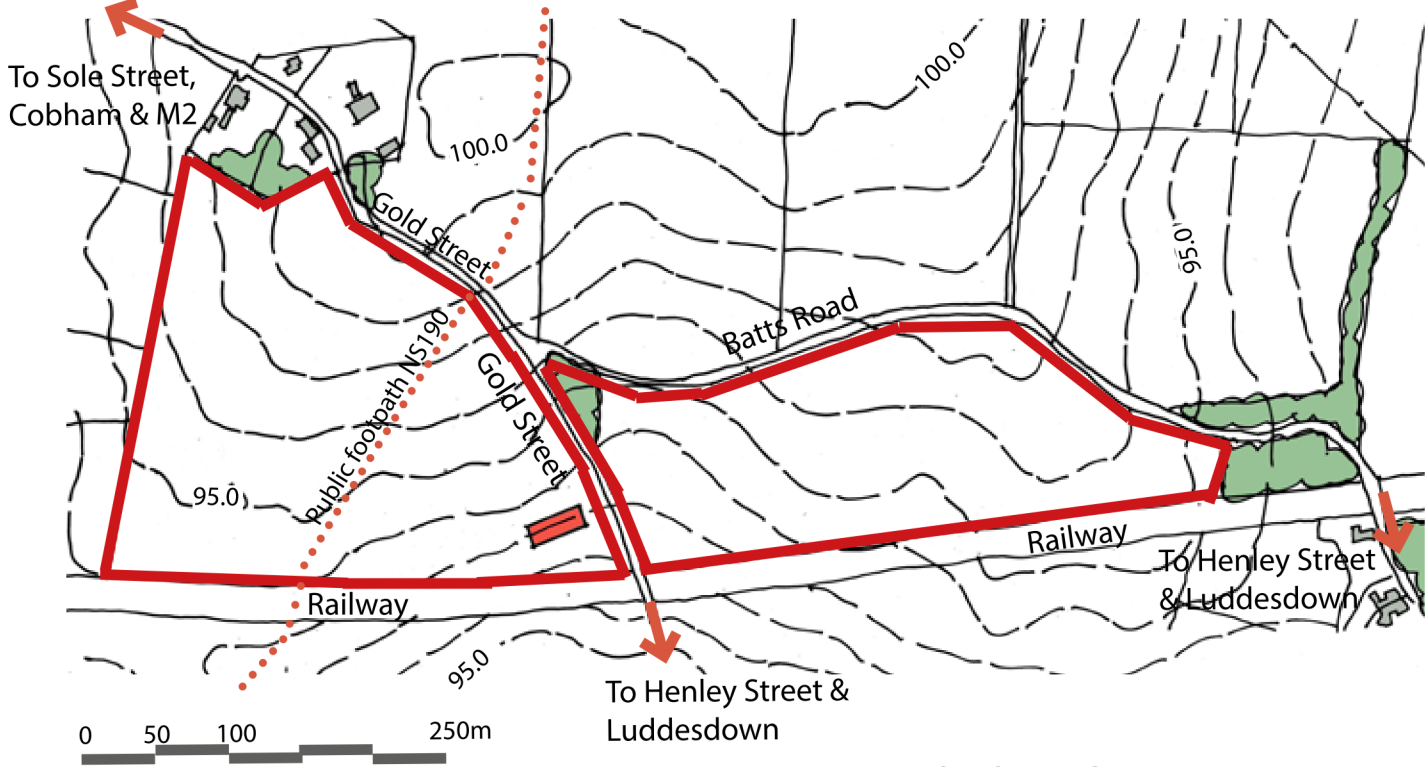


Figure 6 Site Option C

Located close to Gold Street railway crossing near the lowest point of the site

Access	Very narrow rural lane with passing places, would use existing access on junction with Batts Road and Gold Street, a widened access would require Kent Highways consultation.
Visual impact	Unlikely to be visible from Sole Street or from close neighbours, would be visible but distant from public footpath NS190
Elevation	+/-93m aod so at lowest and least visible part of site
Topography	Gradient of +/-1 in 25
Tree-cover	Existing tree cover to north at Batts Road junction could be extended to provide some contextual woodland and biodiversity net gain.
Impact on Close Neighbours	Over 300m from closest neighbours
Landscape Impact	Out of scale with the local landform and landscape pattern, would impact local landscape character and Kent Downs National Landscape

2 Site Options

2.5 Option D

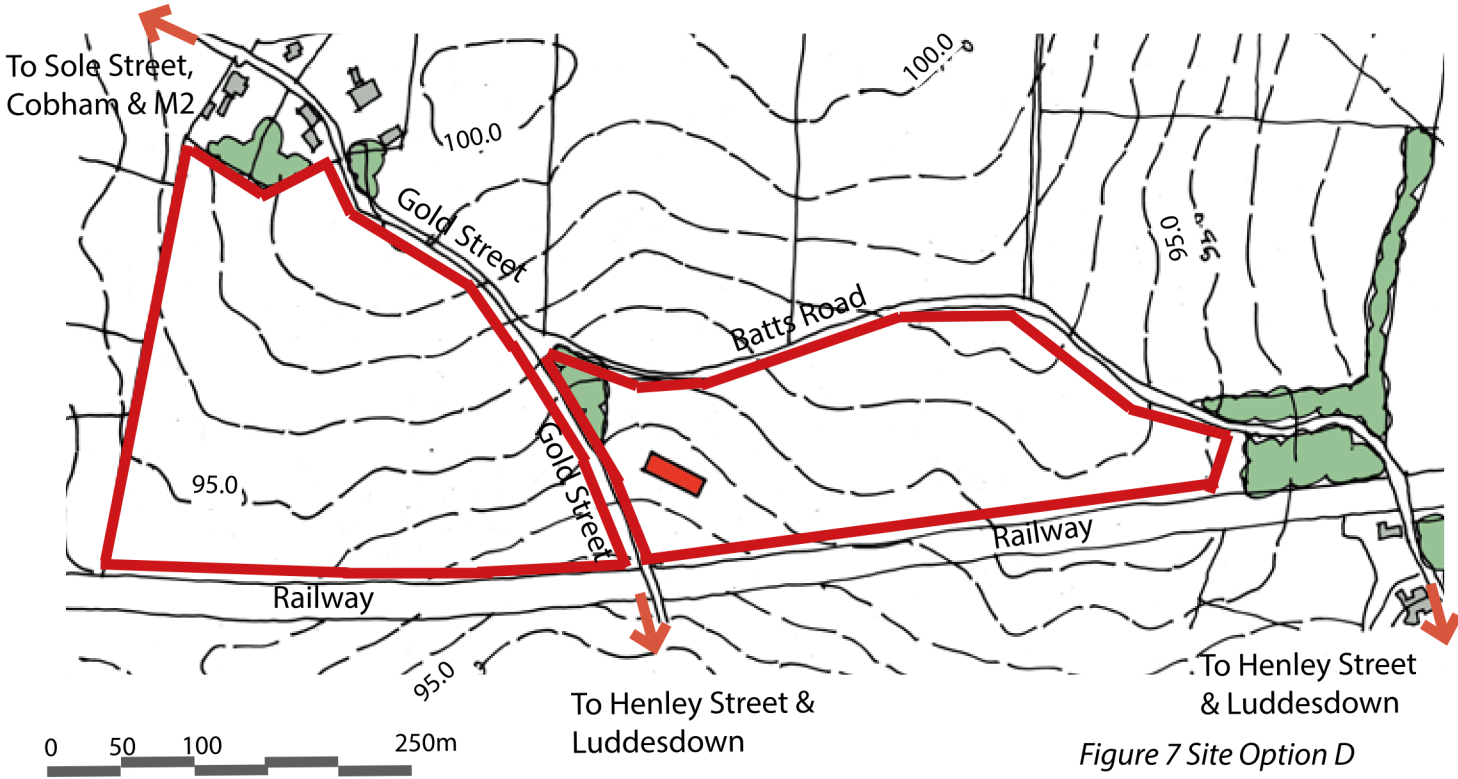


Figure 7 Site Option D

Located on the east side of Gold Street, to south of junction with Batts Road. Nearby tree cover could be supplemented to offer some contextual woodland.

Access	Very narrow rural lane with passing places, a new entrance for farm vehicles and deliveries would require Kent Highways consultation and additional passing places in Batts Road
Visual impact	Small copse at junction of Gold Street and Batts Road would screen views from Sole Street and from close neighbours, minimal impact on walkers on NS190
Elevation	+/-93.5m aod so at lowest and least visible part of site
Topography	Gradient of +/-1 in 50
Tree-cover	Nearby tree cover at junction of Gold Street and Batts Road
Impact on Close Neighbours	Over 500m from closest neighbours at Batt's Cottage to the south east
Landscape Impact	Out of scale with the local landform and landscape pattern, would impact local landscape character and



2 Site Options

2.6 Option E

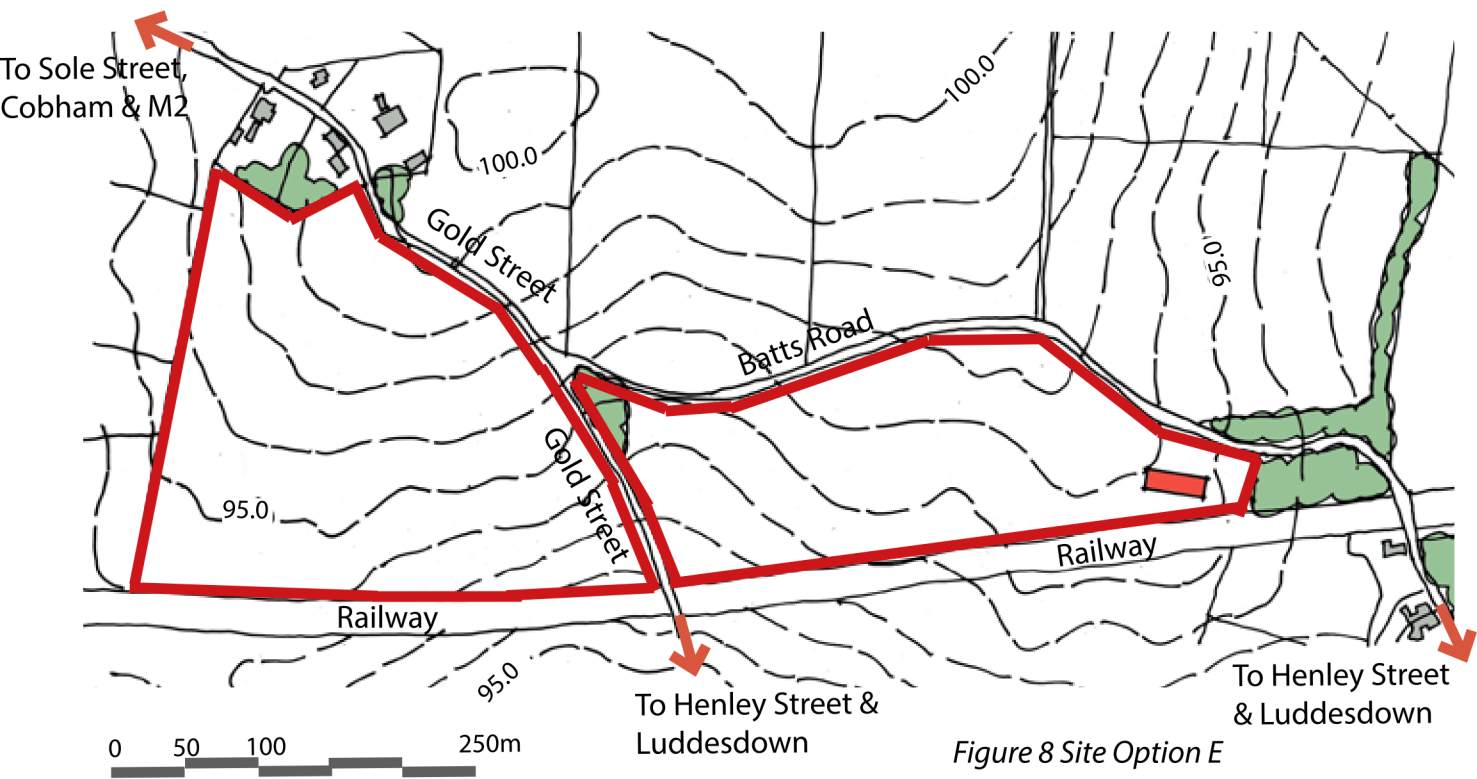
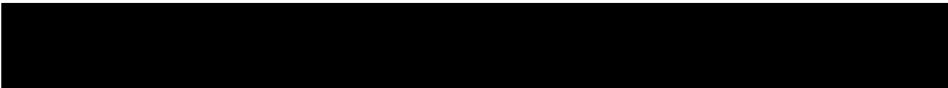


Figure 8 Site Option E

At far eastern corner of application site, close to railway crossing and Batts Cottage, a very narrow rural lane with infrequent passing places

Access	Very narrow rural lane with passing places, a new wide entrance would be required for farm vehicles and deliveries and additional passing places in Batts Road
Visual impact	In eastern corner of plot
Elevation	+/-95.5m aod so close to lowest part of site
Topography	Gradient of +/-1 in 50
Tree-cover	Some mature tree cover in woodland to east
Impact on Close Neighbours	Close to neighbours to south east (+/- 120m) but unlikely to be visible
Landscape Impact	Out of scale with the local landform and landscape pattern, would impact local landscape character and Kent Downs National Landscape



2 Site Options

2.7 Evaluation of site options

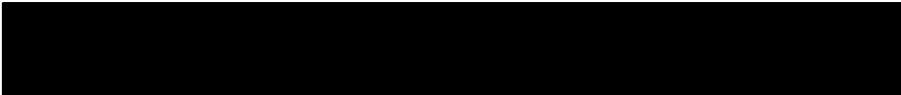
	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
Access					
Visual Impact					
Elevation*					
Tree cover**					
Impact on close neighbours					
Landscape Impact					

*evaluation of elevation considers a lower elevation to be preferable to a higher elevation

** evaluation of tree cover considers nearby tree-cover to be a benefit as it could be supplemented to provide contextual woodland cover to strengthen the setting of the winery building and provide additional biodiversity net gain

Explanation of evaluation
Major adverse impact
Minor/moderate adverse impact, could be partially mitigated
Some adverse impact, could be mitigated
No significant adverse impact

Figure 9 Evaluation of Options



3 Conclusions

This study considers options for the siting of a new winery building at Cobham House Vineyard.

A planning application (ref 20240544) has been made for a winery building at the northern end of the new vineyard.

- In July 2024 [REDACTED] prepared a Landscape Statement for this application which identified a range of adverse landscape and visual effects, and concluded that the proposals would be in serious conflict with the policies for the protection of the Kent Downs National Landscape.

The applicant has not submitted any details of a site options study to consider the optimum location for a large agricultural building on the site.

This study considers five options for the siting of such a building as submitted in the current application. Each site lies within +/-20m of an adopted road and within the submitted ownership boundary of the applicant.

Key factors that have been considered are:

- **Access** - the vineyard is bordered by narrow rural lanes with infrequent passing places to the north (Gold Street and Batts Road) and subdivided by Gold Street. None of these

lanes is suitable for construction traffic, bulky deliveries or public access to wine tastings without road improvements and a resulting loss of local character.

- **Visual impact** - the local landscape is open, gently undulating and exposed, with a few remnant shelter belts but little tree-cover. As a result the visibility is high. Siting a new building of this size in such a landscape is challenging; siting it at a lower elevation would reduce its visibility; siting it close to existing tree-cover could provide contextual woodland setting to offset the massing of the proposed winery building.
- **Impact on close neighbours** - there are four properties immediately to the north of the site, overlooking it, on Gold Street and there are two cottages on the south side of the railway on Batts Road. There are likely to be issues of noise and light pollution and loss of visual amenity
- **Landscape impact** - the likely landscape effects of siting this scale of building in an open rural landscape have been discussed in the LHLA Landscape Statement. The impact on the Kent Downs National Landscape and on the local landscape character would be adverse; the tranquility of the local landscape would be affected.

Option A	Least preferred option
Option B	Less preferred option
Option C	Preferred option but still with significant issues
Option D	Most preferred option
Option E	Less preferred option



Option D *Most preferred option*

