

Shoreham Cement Works



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INTRODUCTION

8.16 Shoreham Cement Works is a 44 hectare site that includes an inactive chalk quarry and semi-derelict works. It is the most prominent site within the National Park in a key location where it is at its narrowest. Despite being an important part of the social and industrial heritage of the area, the site has a significant negative visual impact on the National Park, particularly from public rights of way and wider viewpoints, including the South Downs Way and the Downs Link cycle route.

8.17 The National Park Authority's main objective for the site is to restore it in a way that is compatible with the special qualities and statutory purposes of the National Park. Major development may provide an opportunity for the site to be restored by enabling the demolition or renovation of unsightly buildings, suitable treatment of prominent quarry faces and other landscaping improvements.

8.18 The site is located about 5km to the north of Shoreham and 2km south of Upper Beeding village, on each side of the A283. It is bounded to the west by the River Adur and farmland in the floodplain, to the north by chalk grassland, and to the south and east by farmland. Immediately to the north on the A283 are 40 Edwardian terraced houses (Dacre Gardens) which were built to house workers at the cement works, together with an infill development of 10 flats.

8.19 The site can be divided into 4 main sub-areas (see Figure 8.1):

- Area A – west of the A283, containing the former offices for the cement works and now occupied by a variety of temporary industrial and storage uses. These uses are unsightly although largely screened by trees. The area has a frontage onto the River Adur and is linked by a tunnel under the A283 to Area B

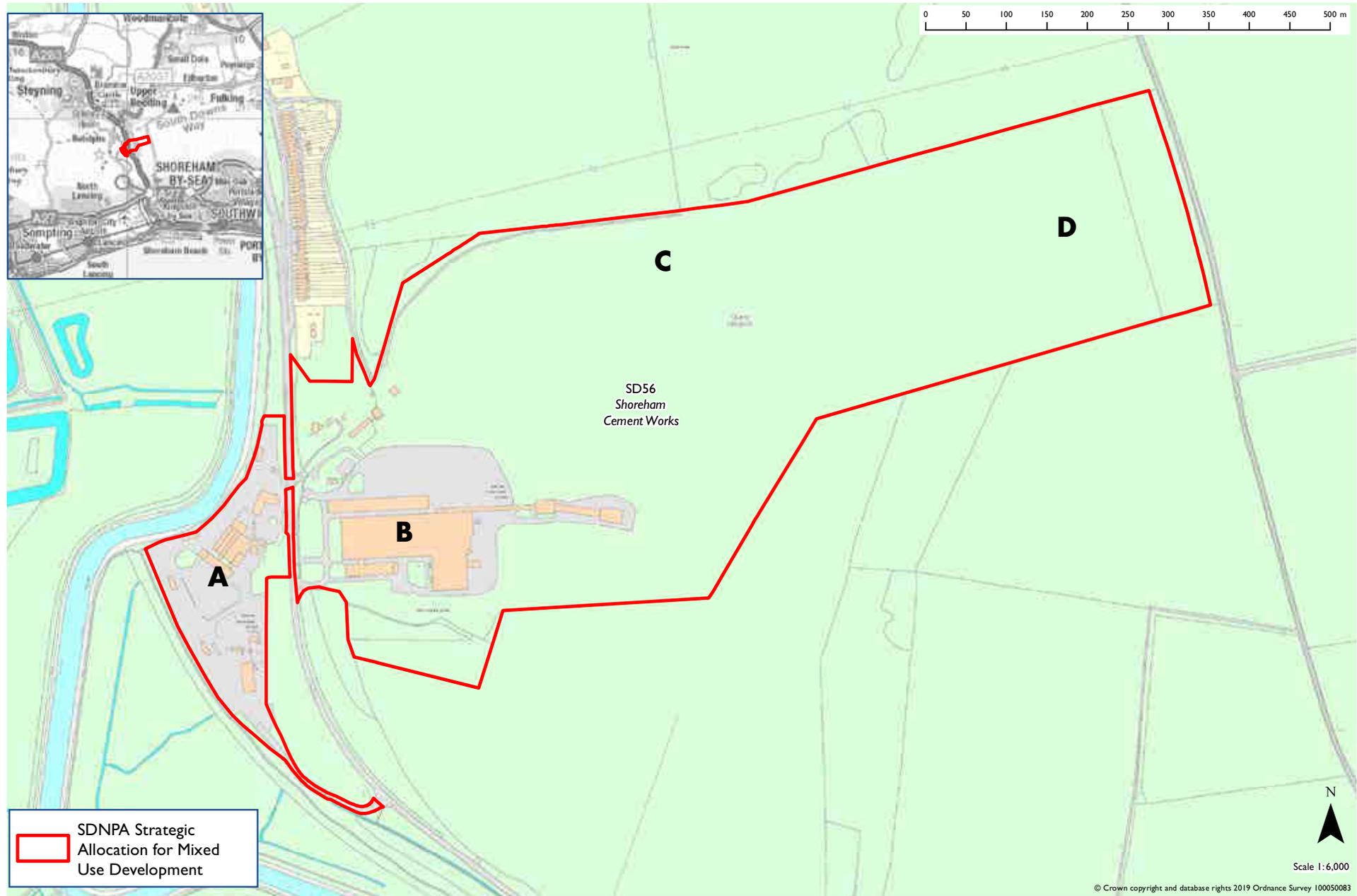
- Area B – immediately east of the A283, containing the former cement works buildings. These are very large unsightly structures, highly prominent from close viewpoints, including the main road, the towpaths on both sides of the river, the South Downs Way, the Downs Link and the road to Coombes and Botolphs
- Area C – the exhausted chalk quarry area which is partly used for the importation, storage and treatment of inert material to produce recycled/secondary aggregates and this use is currently under review. Much of the area is screened from views by the cliff faces of the original quarry
- Area D – the rear, elevated portion of chalk available for extraction. It has been described as 'a substantial scar' and a 'large gash in the rolling landscape of the Downs', visible over a wide area and from a large number of viewpoints, including much of the South Downs Way to the west. The area has biodiversity and geodiversity interest and immediately adjoins a SSSI and a Scheduled Monument

8.20 Large-scale cement production began on the site at the end of the 19th century. The buildings were completed in 1948 – 50, permission having first been granted for chalk extraction in 1946, and extended in 1950 and 1969. Chalk extraction and cement production ceased in 1991, but the permissions have been kept alive by an application for registration of the old mining permission in 1992. These extant permissions for the extraction of chalk run to 2042, when a basic restoration scheme would have to be implemented.

8.21 Existing use rights exist for B2 industry within existing buildings and for associated uses (such as storage) taking place in the open air.

8.22 Areas A and B can be classed as brownfield land, but not Areas C and D, since the *NPPF* excludes minerals sites from the definition of previously developed land.

FIGURE 8.1: SHOREHAM CEMENT WORKS



CONSTRAINTS

8.23 Constraints affecting the site include:

- Cost of extensive restoration needed to deal with both the short- and long-distance views
- Cost of demolition or renovation of the cement works buildings
- Uncertainty with regard to the significance of the heritage asset represented by the buildings and plant and the measures required to either retain or record this
- Protected bird species nesting within Area D
- Regionally Important Geological Site at Area D
- Ecological designations near the site – surrounding area is rich in unimproved chalk grassland, a unique habitat for a number of notable flora and fauna species
- Scheduled Monument (prehistoric cross-ridge dyke) outside the site but near the northern edge of Area D
- A principal aquifer below the site. There is also potential fluvial/flooding and surface water flooding at the lowermost part of the site and access tracks.
- Parts of the site are likely to be contaminated – ground remediation works required and need to ensure protection of water quality (particularly given close proximity of the River Adur)
- Proximity to Shoreham Airport, including the potential of any new development involving tall structures or telecommunications interference
- Improvements needed to the two site accesses but without an increase in the visual impact of highway infrastructure, including hard-surfacing, signage and traffic signals
- Unsustainable location with poor access to shops, schools and other services and facilities

OPPORTUNITIES

8.24 The site offers the following opportunities:

- Enhance the landscape and scenic beauty, restoring the site to an appearance which is acceptable within a national park. This involves:
 - Removal of the unsightly uses and buildings on Area A which impinge on the largely undeveloped river corridor and replacement by development which takes advantage of the river frontage
 - Demolition or renovation of the existing cement works buildings on Area B
 - Creation of a landscaped bund or alternative enhancement of the road frontage as a gateway to Areas B and C
 - Re-modelling of the most prominent quarry faces and planting of Area D
 - Accepting enabling development to secure the satisfactory restoration of the site
- Create an exemplar of sustainable development with the following development principles:
 - Enhance the site’s contribution to ecosystem services
 - Contribute towards the GI network
 - Develop previously developed land in Areas A and B
 - Maximise and enhance levels of biodiversity on the site in order to support the adjacent Anchor Bottom SSSI, while preserving the Scheduled Monument
 - Explore the potential for biodiversity off-setting
 - Enable geo-conservation, given the scientific and educational value of the strata
 - Develop renewable energy generation, such as solar panels and small scale combined heat and power plant and explore hydro-electricity generation
 - Reduce waste including re-using and recycling waste on site

- Explore a wider environmental enhancement programme to address issues such as the removal of overhead power lines nearby
- Deliver SuDS and minimising the amount of impermeable surfaces
- Explore an integrated sustainable transport solution, including innovative and alternative modes of transport to the private car, promoting demand management measures, and increasing road safety for the benefit of all users
- Improve cycle and walking routes in the vicinity, enhancing the Downs Link recreational route between Upper Beeding and Shoreham, including a southern loop from the South Downs Way
- Develop sustainable visitor and tourism opportunities appropriate to a national park, including promoting the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities

8.25 The site has many challenges but it also represents a great opportunity to deliver an innovative, exciting and imaginative solution which treats the site as an asset to the National Park rather than a problem. To enable a comprehensive, appropriate and viable scheme to be delivered, the National Park Authority will prepare an *Area Action Plan (AAP)*.

8.26 The *AAP* will facilitate the formulation of a bespoke approach for the environmentally-led restoration of the site, with significant landscape improvements, that can deliver a viable scheme with multiple benefits for the National Park and may attract external funding.

Strategic Site Policy SD56: Shoreham Cement Works

1. Shoreham Cement Works, as identified on the Policies Map, is an area of significant opportunity for an exemplar sustainable mixed use development, which delivers a substantially enhanced landscape and uses that are compatible with the purposes of the National Park. To help achieve this the National Park Authority will prepare an *AAP* with the overall aims of:
 - a) Enhancing the visual impact of the site from both the nearby and distant public viewpoints;
 - b) Conserving, enhancing and providing opportunities for understanding the biodiversity, geodiversity, historic significance and cultural heritage of the site;
 - c) Ensuring the delivery of ecosystems services; and
 - d) Ensuring that the design of any development is of the highest quality and appropriate to its setting within a national park.
2. The National Park Authority would support development proposals for the following land uses where it is demonstrated they deliver the environmentally-led restoration of the site:
 - a) Sustainable tourism/visitor based recreation activities and leisure development directly related to the understanding and enjoyment of the National Park;
 - b) B2 and B8 business uses to support the local economy, with a focus on environmentally sustainable activities, supporting local communities and providing opportunities for entrepreneurship; and
 - c) Further types of development, including new homes, including affordable homes and/or Class B1 office development, where necessary to enable redevelopment of the allocation site as whole. Such types of development should be subordinate to the overall mix of uses proposed.

provided that the proposals can clearly demonstrate how they would deliver the key considerations set out in Part 1 of this policy; and

- d) Improve accessibility and help to create sustainable patterns of travel;
 - e) Provide renewable energy generation to serve any development on the site;
 - f) Provide realistic proposals for the relocation of existing employment and storage uses that are not appropriate to a National Park setting; and
 - g) Ensure that any adverse impacts (either alone or in combination) are avoided, or, if unavoidable, minimised through mitigation with any residual impacts being compensated for.
3. The National Park Authority will resist more development than is necessary to secure and deliver the environmentally-led restoration of the site.
 4. The National Park Authority wants to see a comprehensive redevelopment of the whole site consistent with the AAP. However, if any planning applications come forward separately and prior to the adoption of the AAP, then they would have to clearly demonstrate how the proposals would accord with the key considerations set out above.

AREA ACTION PLAN

8.27 The AAP will address in more detail the constraints and opportunities including land restoration, environmental impacts, transport, flood risk, cultural and heritage, design considerations, viability (including identifying possible partnership funding to enable delivery of a scheme) and phasing of delivery over a number of years.

DEVELOPING PROPOSALS IN PARTNERSHIP

8.28 Over recent years a number of proposals to redevelop the site have emerged from different interested parties, including a scheme dismissed at appeal in 2003 and a visitor accommodation/recreational uses based scheme put forward by the Upper Beeding Neighbourhood Plan Group.

8.29 Through the AAP process, the National Park Authority will work in partnership with landowners, developers, relevant public bodies and the local community to demonstrate the delivery of a viable scheme which is truly exceptional in terms of concept, quality and sustainability.

8.30 The site has the potential to provide sustainable tourism/visitor based recreational and business uses to support the local economy provided that they are compatible with its sensitive location and the proposed uses meet the purposes of the National Park.

ENHANCING LANDSCAPE

8.31 The National Park Authority's main objective for this site is to secure a significantly enhanced landscape. It accepts that major development provides the opportunity to achieve this and that any scheme has to be viable to ensure delivery. However, the scale of any major development has to be consistent with the National Park Authority's main objective for the site and meets the National Park's purposes. Therefore, the AAP and subsequent planning application will have to have a particular focus on viability and a clear delivery process.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS PRIOR TO AAP ADOPTION

8.32 The National Park Authority wishes to see a comprehensive and clear planning approach to this important site and believes the AAP is the right way to achieve this. However, it accepts that planning applications may come forward prior to the adoption of the AAP. If this were to be the case, then consideration will be given to whether the development proposals adequately address the key considerations set out in Policy SD56, and other relevant policies in this Local Plan, and the emerging AAP.