



LAND TO THE NORTH OF THE DROVE WAY, ISTEAD RISE, GRAVESHAM

Design and Access Statement

June 2026

Issue date	09/06/2026
Document status	Draft
Revision	V1
Author	TB/MR
Checked by	SR

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Ptarmigan Land A Ltd regarding the proposed development of Land to the north of The Drove Way, Istead Rise (“the site”).

Description of development

Development of up to 100 residential dwellings (class C3), including the formation of new accesses from The Drove Way, the provision of new areas of public open space and all other associated infrastructure and ancillary works (all detailed matters reserved other than means of access)

Future Reserved Matters Applications

Matters relating to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping will be the subject of future Reserved Matters Applications.

Parameter Plan

This Outline Planning Application is based on a development parameter plan rather than a fixed masterplan. The accompanying illustrative material serves as one example of how the development could be implemented, but it is not the only way, in accordance with the development parameters. This document is accompanied by a single Parameter Plan (1509_004D_ Parameter Plan).

Role of the design & access statement

A Design and Access Statement is a report accompanying certain applications for planning permission and applications for listed building consent. They provide a framework for applicants to explain how the proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting and demonstrate that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users. Design and Access Statements can aid decision-making by enabling local planning authorities and third parties to better understand the analysis that has underpinned the design of a development proposal.

The level of detail in a Design and Access Statement should be proportionate to the complexity of the application.

A Design and Access Statement must:

- explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development; and
- demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development, and how the design of the development takes that context into account.

A development’s context refers to the particular characteristics of the application site and its wider setting. These will be specific to the circumstances of an individual application and a Design and Access Statement should be tailored accordingly.

Design and Access Statements must also explain the applicant’s approach to access and how relevant Local Plan policies have been taken into account. They must detail any consultation undertaken in relation to access issues and how the outcome of this consultation has informed the proposed development. Applicants must also explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the proposed development have been addressed.

The sections of this document follow the Design Council CABE guidance ‘Design & Access Statements: How to write, read and use them’:

- Assessment
- Involvement
- Evaluation
- Design



Land at South Way Artist Illustration



Land South-East of Birchington Artist Illustration

Applicant: Ptarmigan Land A Ltd

Ptarmigan Land is one of the UK's leading strategic land companies with over 18,000 homes at various stages of the planning process. Adopting a collaborative approach, Ptarmigan work hard to deliver high quality developments with a true vision of the long-term legacy for existing and new communities that everyone can be proud of.

Ptarmigan has extensive experience of working on sites that require an innovative and sensitive approach to their local context.

Site Context

The site lies on the northern edge of Istead Rise, a large village within the administrative boundary of Gravesham Borough Council. Istead Rise occupies a semi-rural location within the wider rural area of the borough, with established residential neighbourhoods to the south and west of the site and open countryside to the north.

The site is well related to the existing settlement and sits immediately north of residential properties along The Drove Way and Flowerhill Way. Local services and community facilities are located within the wider village, including Istead Rise Village Centre, Istead Rise Community Centre, Downs Way Medical Practice, St Barnabas Church, Istead Rise Primary School and nearby recreation facilities.

The site also benefits from a relationship with the local footpath network. Public right of way NU27 runs along the north-eastern edge of the site, connecting Istead Rise with the wider countryside to the north, including routes crossing the A2 and HS1 rail corridor towards Wrotham Road.

Although the site lies within the Green Belt and forms part of the wider Istead Arable Farmlands landscape character area, it is visually and physically influenced by the existing settlement edge. Mature hedgerows, tree belts and woodland provide a strong landscape framework to the north, east and west, while the rear gardens and dwellings along The Drove Way define the southern edge. As a result, the site is experienced as a contained edge-of-settlement landscape with a close relationship to Istead Rise, rather than as an open and exposed part of the wider countryside.



Strategic location plan. Not to scale

Application Area

The site extends to approximately 5.7 hectares and comprises an arable field, together with marginal grassland, trees, hedgerows and woodland. The site is bound to the:

- North by field boundaries, mature hedgerows, tree planting and open countryside beyond;
- East by woodland, including areas of mature deciduous woodland and remnant orchard, with public right of way NU27 running along the north-eastern edge and Istead Rise Community Centre Field beyond;
- South by the rear gardens and residential properties along The Drove Way and Flowerhill Way;
- West by mature hedgerows, tree planting, open land and the established residential area around Fairview Road and The Knole.

The site rises gently from approximately 58m AOD in the western and north-western areas to approximately 63m AOD towards the south and south-east. There are no built structures within the site. Its character is defined by its enclosed arable field pattern, mature vegetated boundaries and proximity to the northern residential edge of Istead Rise.

The site is subject to several important design considerations. Existing woodland, trees and hedgerows provide visual containment and contribute to the rural edge character of the site. Electricity transmission towers, overhead lines and a major gas pipeline influence the north-eastern part of the site and create areas better suited to green infrastructure, open space, biodiversity enhancement and informal recreation rather than built development.

The proposed development parameters respond to these conditions by locating residential development within a contained part of the site and setting it within a wider green and blue infrastructure framework. This framework includes retained and enhanced vegetation, strategic public open space, native woodland, orchard planting, grassland areas, pedestrian and cycle routes, SuDS and children's play provision. The illustrative masterplan shows how this could be delivered through a neighbourhood green, parkland, meadow planting, edible landscapes, informal footpaths, green corridors, retained vegetation and woodland walking routes.



Site location plan. Not to scale. Aerial photograph © Google Earth

Site Photographs



Site view S1 - Taken from south west corner of the site



Site view S2 - Taken from north west corner of the site



Site view S3 - View south west taken from north eastern boundary across the site



Site view S4 - View west into the site taken from eastern edge of the site



Views location plan. Not to scale







CONTEXTUAL ASSESSMENT

Chapter 2

PLANNING AND DESIGN POLICY CONTEXT

The following policies and guidance are relevant in shaping this Design and Access Statement and the vision for Land to the north of The Drove Way.

Planning Policy

The proposals have been prepared within a comprehensive policy and guidance framework which is discussed in full within the Planning Statement submitted as part of this application.

The planning policy case for development is set out in full within the accompanying Planning Statement. The application supports the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of new homes in Gravesham, helping to address a housing land supply shortfall.

The Council can only demonstrate a 3-year supply of housing, and the housing delivery test score fell below 75% in the most recent calculation (2023 measurement). This represents a serious shortfall, which triggers the NPPF presumption in favour of granting planning permission, as explained in the Planning Statement.

The site offers a key opportunity to deliver sustainable development in a sustainable location. The site can be classified as Green Belt and as such the proposal is "not

inappropriate" in Green Belt terms. It will meet the Golden Rules (NPPF paragraph 156) in terms of affordable housing, provision of new and improved green space and necessary improvements to local infrastructure.

There are no technical constraints to development and the site is available, suitable and capable of delivering market and affordable housing to meet local needs. Given the significant public benefits, and applying the tilted balance, planning permission should be granted.

This section of the DAS does not seek to repeat the policy review contained within the Planning Statement but identifies those local policies and guidance specifically relevant to inform the design approach.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration for the determination of the application and emphasises the importance of achieving high quality buildings and places. The National Design Guide and National Model Design Code provide practical guidance on delivering well designed places and form part of national planning practice guidance, and are therefore also material considerations.

Local Planning Context

At a local level, the scheme has been guided by the policies set out in the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted 2014), and Local Plan First Review (1994) Saved Policies. These documents have informed key aspects of the design, particularly in relation to design quality, housing delivery and the protection of local character.

The following policies are considered particularly relevant to design and access matters, although this list is not exhaustive:

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- Policy CS11: Transport
- Policy CS12: Green Infrastructure
- Policy CS13: Green Space, Sport and Recreation
- Policy CS14: Housing Type and Size
- Policy CS15: Housing Density
- Policy CS16: Affordable Housing
- Policy CS18: Climate Change
- Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) Saved Policies

- Policy T4: Development outside the Built-Up Area
- Policy T5: New Accesses onto Highway Network
- Policy T9: Housing Estate Layouts
- Policy P3: Vehicle Parking Standards

The development has been shaped to respond positively to these policies, ensuring it integrates well with the surrounding area and addresses identified local needs.

In addition, the proposal takes into account relevant material considerations, including Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):

- SPG2 – Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020
- Technical Housing Standards – National Described Space Standard (2015)
- SPG4 – KCC Parking Standards (2006)
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code SPD (2024)
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009)

Emerging Local Plan

Gravesham Borough Council published the Proposed Submission Draft (Regulation 19) on 17 April 2026. Whilst the emerging Local Plan carries limited weight at this stage, future policy directions have been reviewed and considered where relevant. The draft policies of relevance to the application site include:

- Policy LP8: Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery
- Policy LP9: Climate Change
- Policy LP10: Water Resources and Flood Risk
- Policy LP11: Achieving High Quality Design, Sustainability & Place Making
- Policy LP12: Housing Delivery, Mix and Affordability
- Policy LP15: Conserving & Enhancing Gravesham's Historic Environment
- Policy LP18: Supporting Sustainable Communities
- Policy LP19: Sustainable Transport and Decarbonisation
- Policy LP20: Open Space, Sports and Leisure



National Design Guide

The National Design Guide (NDG) sets out the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of 10 characteristics. The ten characteristics are based upon Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places of the NPPF. They are as follows: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan.

Well-designed places have individual characteristics that work together to create their physical character. The 10 characteristics help to nurture and sustain a sense of community. They work to positively address environmental issues affecting climate. They all contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The chart shown below illustrates how the principles of the NDG have been embedded in the vision for Land to the north of The Drove Way from the outset.



National Model Design Code

The purpose of the National Model Design Code is to provide detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on the 10 characteristics of good design set out in the NDG which reflects the Government's priorities and provides a common overarching framework for design.

- **Context** – enhances the surroundings.
- **Identity** – attractive and distinctive.
- **Built form** – a coherent pattern of development.
- **Movement** – accessible and easy to move around.
- **Nature** – enhanced and optimised.
- **Public spaces** – safe, social and inclusive.
- **Uses** – mixed and integrated.
- **Homes and buildings** – functional, healthy and sustainable.
- **Resources** – efficient and resilient.
- **Lifespan** – made to last.

A well designed place	How the principles have been embedded in the vision for Land to the north of The Drove Way
CONTEXT	Refer to pages 14-37 for an understanding of the site and its immediate surrounding.
IDENTITY	Refer to pages 24-31 for an overview of local identity and how the proposals respond to character.
BUILT FORM	Refer to pages 50-63 to understand how the proposals have a coherent pattern of development.
MOVEMENT	Refer to movement strategy on pages 62-63.
NATURE	Refer to landscape strategy on pages 56-59.
PUBLIC SPACES	Refer to landscape strategy on pages 56-59.
USES	Refer to the parameters plan on pages 54-55.
HOMES & BUILDINGS	The application is seeking an Outline Planning Permission with appearance and detailed architecture being part of a future reserved matter. Therefore the application is based on parameters which are described on pages 54-55 and within the parameters plan drawings that support this application.
LIFESPAN	Management and stewardship strategies are being prepared at later reserved matters stages.

Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission

The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission (BBBBC) is an independent body that advises government on how to promote and increase the use of high-quality design for new build homes and neighbourhoods.

The Commission recommends practical measures to help ensure new housing developments meet the needs and expectations of communities, making them more likely to be welcomed, rather than resisted, by existing communities.

The Commission published its final report, 'Living with beauty', on 30 January 2020.

In this report, they propose a new development and planning framework that will:

- Ask for Beauty
- Refuse Ugliness
- Promote Stewardship

Those three aims must be embedded in the planning system and in the culture of development in such a way as to incentivise beauty and deter ugliness at every point where the choice arises.

In particular, the BBBBC promotes the following two principles that are especially relevant to the placemaking principles of Land to the north of The Drove Way:

- **Neighbourhoods:** create places not just houses. Develop homes within mixed-use real places at 'gentle density', thereby creating streets, squares and blocks with clear backs and fronts.
- **Nature:** re-green our towns and cities. Urban development should be part of the wider ecology. Green spaces, waterways and wildlife habitats should be seen as integral to the urban fabric. Create new community orchards. This is both right and aligned with the Government's aim to eradicate the UK's net carbon contribution by 2050. Green spaces should be enclosed and either safely private or clearly public.

There should be a greater focus on access to nature and green spaces – both existing and new – for all new and remodelled developments.

Local Design Guidance

Design for Gravesham Design Code

The Design for Gravesham Design Code SPD is the principal local design guidance for the borough. It sets out Gravesham Borough Council's expectations for high quality place-making and early engagement when preparing development proposals. The document is clear that new development should respond to Gravesham's unique towns, villages, neighbourhoods and landscapes, and should deliver sustainable, place-led development with people at its heart.

The Design Code is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and establishes a borough-wide framework for design quality, local identity, community engagement, movement, green infrastructure and long-term stewardship. It is structured around the following themes:

- Working with the Council
- Past, Present, Future
- Community First
- Quality and Place
- Connectivity and Infrastructure
- Future for Gravesham

For Land to the north of The Drove Way, the Design Code is particularly relevant to the site's Green Belt edge-of-settlement context, its relationship with the northern edge of Istead Rise, the need to protect and enhance existing green infrastructure, and the opportunity to create a walkable, landscape-led neighbourhood.

The design approach responds to these principles by retaining and enhancing the existing landscape framework, providing new public open space, integrating SuDS and biodiversity enhancement, connecting to the public right of way network and nearby community facilities, and creating a softened northern edge to Istead Rise.



Design for Gravesham Design Code

Gravesham Design Code Process

The application has been prepared with reference to the process set out in the Design for Gravesham Design Code. The Code promotes a structured approach to design, including understanding the site, identifying local character, developing design principles and demonstrating how proposals respond to the borough's design expectations.

At this outline stage, the Parameter Plan submitted as part of the application establishes the key development principles, including the extent of residential development, building height parameters, access points, green infrastructure, retained and enhanced vegetation, potential pedestrian connections and the relationship with the public right of way.

The Illustrative Masterplan contained within this Design & Access Statement demonstrates one way in which those parameters could be delivered through a landscape-led residential layout with public open space, SuDS, informal footpaths, natural play, orchard planting, meadow planting, retained vegetation and woodland edge walks.

A detailed response to the Design for Gravesham checklist can be found in the appendix of this document.

Kent Design Guide

The Kent Design Guide provides wider county-level guidance on good design, local character, movement, landscape and open space. It explains that good design should create attractive and successful places that work well, and that urban design applies not only to towns and cities, but also to villages and rural settlements.

The guide identifies that good design should enrich existing character, create variety, provide understandable places, achieve a pride of place, support easy movement and create enduring and flexible places. These principles are particularly relevant to Land to the north of The Drove Way because of the site's edge-of-settlement location, mature landscape framework and relationship with the existing residential area of Istead Rise.

The design approach therefore seeks to:

- reinforce the existing landscape structure of hedgerows, trees and woodland;
- create a clear and legible layout set within a strong green and blue infrastructure framework;
- provide attractive public open space and informal recreation routes;
- support pedestrian connections to the public right of way network and nearby village facilities;
- ensure that future detailed design can respond to the local character of Istead Rise and Gravesham.

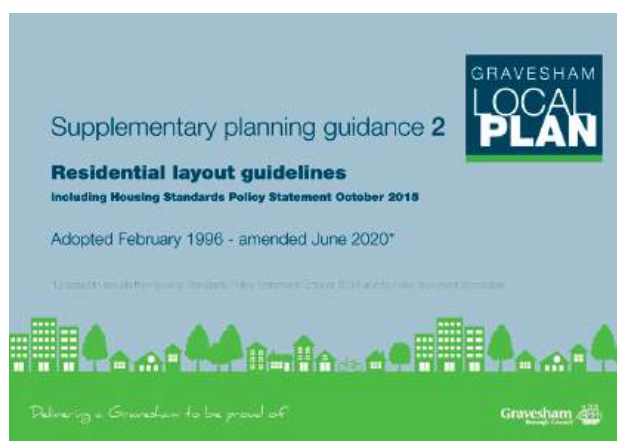


The Kent Design Guide

Residential Layout Guidelines SPG2

Gravesham's Residential Layout Guidelines SPG2 provide practical standards for new residential development. They address matters including amenity, garden space, privacy distances, layout, parking and the relationship between new and existing dwellings. The guidance forms an important local reference for ensuring that residential development provides a good standard of amenity for future and existing residents.

At this outline stage, the proposal demonstrates that the site can accommodate up to 100 homes within a robust landscape, movement and green infrastructure framework. Detailed matters such as precise layout, house types, garden sizes, parking, refuse collection, privacy distances and detailed amenity provision will be addressed through future reserved matters applications.



Gravesham Local Plan - SPG 2

Design Response for Land to the north of The Drove Way

The design response has been shaped by the site's Green Belt edge-of-settlement context, its visual containment, its relationship with Istead Rise and the presence of existing trees, hedgerows and woodland.

The emerging approach is landscape-led. Built development is concentrated within a contained part of the site, while the wider green and blue infrastructure framework provides public open space, SuDS, meadow planting, orchard planting, retained and enhanced vegetation, informal routes, natural play and biodiversity enhancement.

The result is a design strategy that seeks to create a sensitive northern edge to Istead Rise, connect new and existing communities, and provide a framework for a high-quality residential development that responds positively to local design guidance.

A SUSTAINABLE LOCATION

The site is located on the northern edge of Istead Rise, within walking and cycling distance of a range of local services, community facilities and recreational opportunities.

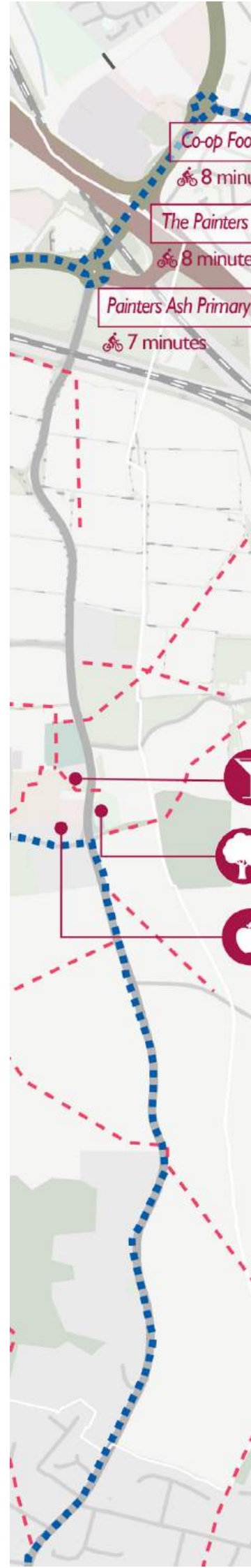
Social Infrastructure

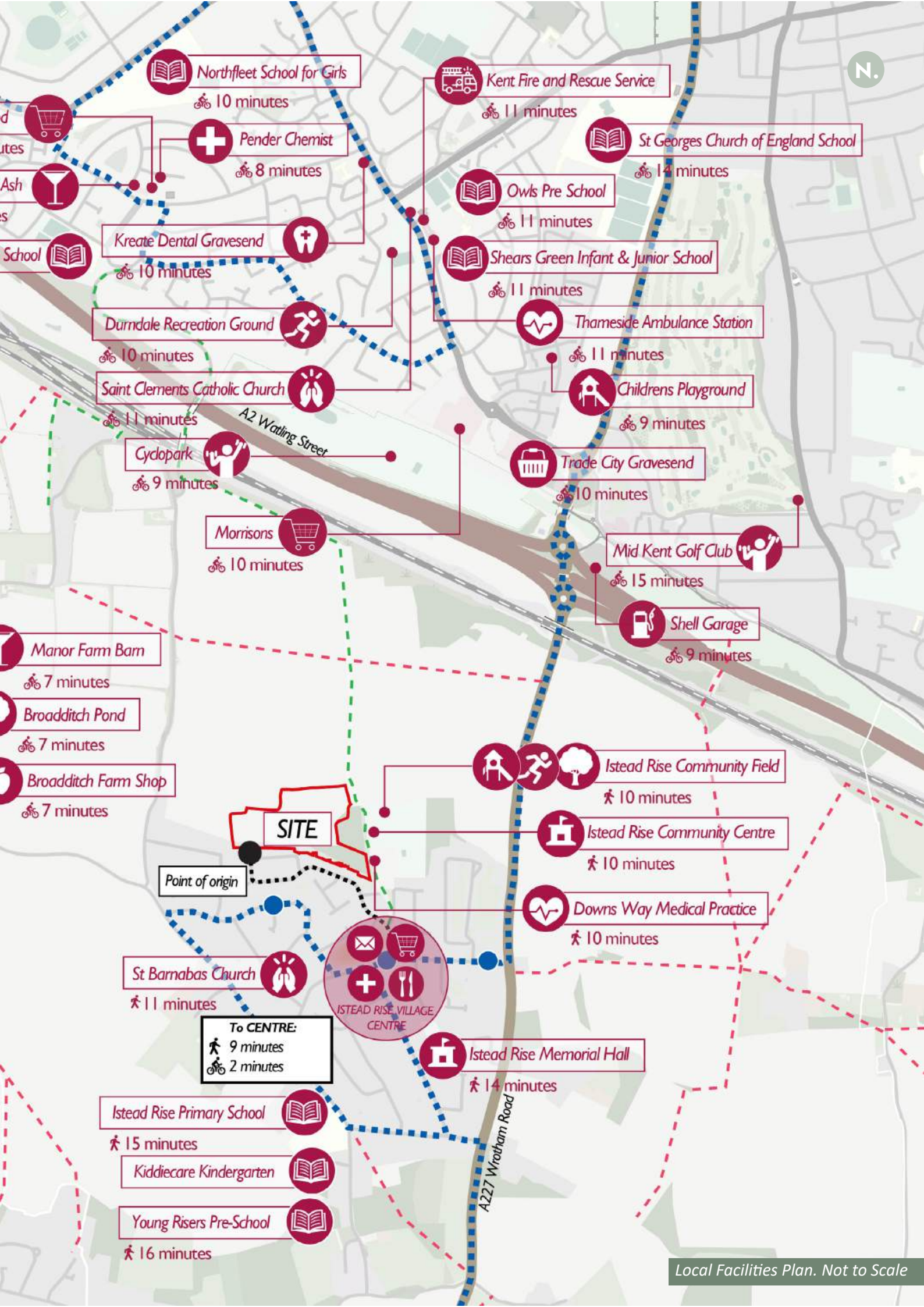
The site benefits from access to a range of existing social infrastructure within Istead Rise. Facilities within the wider village include Istead Rise Village Centre, Istead Rise Community Centre, Downs Way Medical Practice, Istead Rise Community Field, Istead Rise Memorial Hall, St Barnabas Church and Istead Rise Primary School.

The village centre lies to the south-east of the site and provides a local focus for everyday services. The community centre, medical practice and community field are located to the east and south-east, close to the site boundary, reinforcing the site's relationship with existing community facilities.

The proposed development provides the opportunity to support these facilities through the delivery of new homes, public open space, natural play, informal recreation routes and improved access to green infrastructure.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
|  Site boundary |  Restaurant |  Play area |
|  Bus route |  School |  Recreational grounds |
|  Public right of way: Footpath |  Surgery |  Post office |
|  Public Right of Way: Bridleway |  Pharmacy |  Retail park |
|  Nearest bus stop |  Convenience store |  Dentist |
|  Supermarket |  Petrol station |  Fire station |
|  Cafe |  Community centre |  Leisure centre |
|  Public house |  Place of worship | |
| |  Woodland area | |





Movement: Public Transport

The site is located within walking distance of bus stops on the local road network, including stops close to Istead Rise Village Centre and along Wrotham Road. These provide opportunities for travel by public transport to wider destinations, including Gravesend and surrounding settlements.

While Istead Rise remains a village location, the site's relationship with existing bus routes means that future residents would have access to public transport as part of a wider range of travel choices.

Movement: Walking and Cycling

The site is well placed to connect with the existing pedestrian network within Istead Rise and the wider public rights of way network. Public right of way NU27 runs along the north-eastern edge of the site, providing a connection between Istead Rise and the countryside to the north.

The illustrative masterplan shows how the proposals could provide informal footpaths, green corridors, woodland walking routes and pedestrian connections through the site. These routes would help connect new homes with public open space, the community centre, nearby recreation facilities and the wider village.

The development therefore provides an opportunity to encourage short, everyday journeys on foot and by cycle, while also improving access to nature and informal recreation.

Movement: Roads

Vehicular access is proposed from The Drove Way, connecting the site to the existing local road network. The Drove Way provides access through the northern part of Istead Rise and links with the wider village street network, including connections towards Wrotham Road.

Istead Rise benefits from access to the wider strategic road network via the A227 Wrotham Road, which runs north-south through the village and provides connections towards Gravesend to the north and Meopham, Longfield and Sevenoaks to the south. The A2 lies to the north of Istead Rise and provides wider east-west strategic connections towards Gravesend, Dartford, the M25 and Medway.

Summary

The site's relationship with Istead Rise provides the opportunity to deliver a connected, landscaped neighbourhood with access to local services, community facilities, public transport, walking and cycling routes, public open space and the surrounding countryside.



Istead Rise Primary School



Istead Rise Village Centre



Istead Rise Community Centre and fields



Downs Way Medical Practice



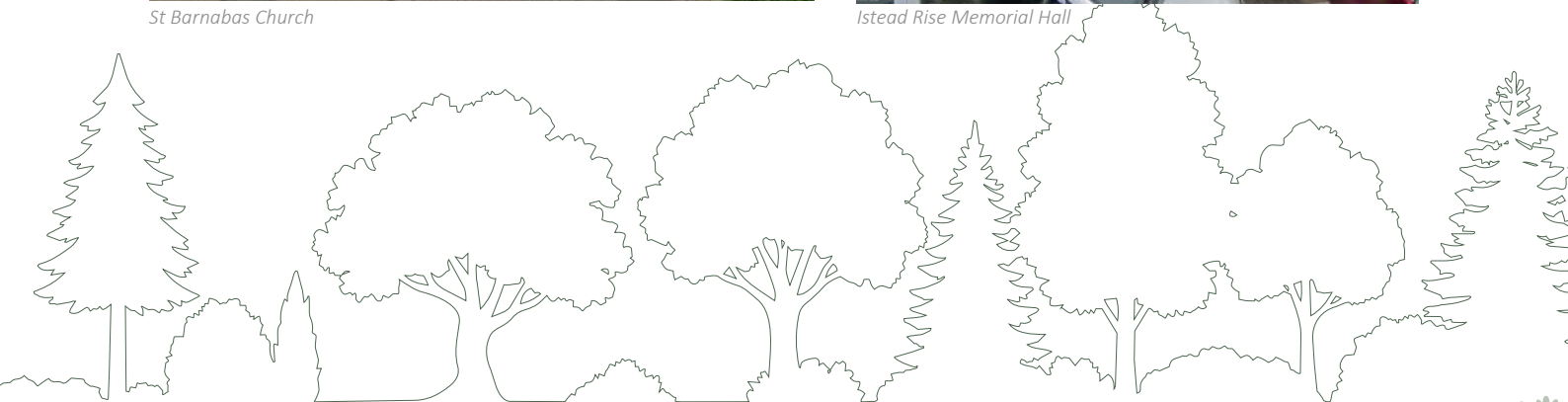
St Barnabas Church



Wroughton Road



Istead Rise Memorial Hall



CHARACTER CONTEXT

This chapter considers the character of Istead Rise and its surrounding landscape setting, and identifies the key cues that have informed the emerging design approach for Land to the north of The Drove Way.

Istead Rise is a village that has evolved over time, shaped largely by twentieth-century residential growth set within a wider rural landscape of arable fields, hedgerows, tree belts and woodland. Its character is not defined by a single historic core or architectural style, but by the relationship between low-rise suburban neighbourhoods, mature landscape structure, generous gardens, local community facilities and the surrounding countryside.

The site lies immediately north of The Drove Way and Flowerhill Way, where the existing residential area meets the open landscape beyond. This creates an important transition between the built edge of Istead Rise and the wider countryside to the north. The character assessment therefore considers both the settlement and the landscape: the street

pattern, built form, density, materials, roofscape and domestic scale of nearby neighbourhoods, as well as the enclosing hedgerows, woodland, arable fields and public rights of way that define the site's rural-edge setting.

This analysis has informed a landscape-led design response. Rather than simply extending the existing suburban pattern northwards, the proposals seek to create a sensitive new edge to Istead Rise, with development contained within a strong green and blue infrastructure framework. Existing trees, hedgerows and woodland are retained and enhanced, while new open spaces, SuDS, meadow planting, orchard planting, informal routes and natural play help to create a softer and more positive relationship between new homes, the existing village and the surrounding countryside.



Aerial view looking across the northern edge of Istead Rise, showing the transition from residential development to the enclosed arable landscape north of The Drove Way

Historical Evolution

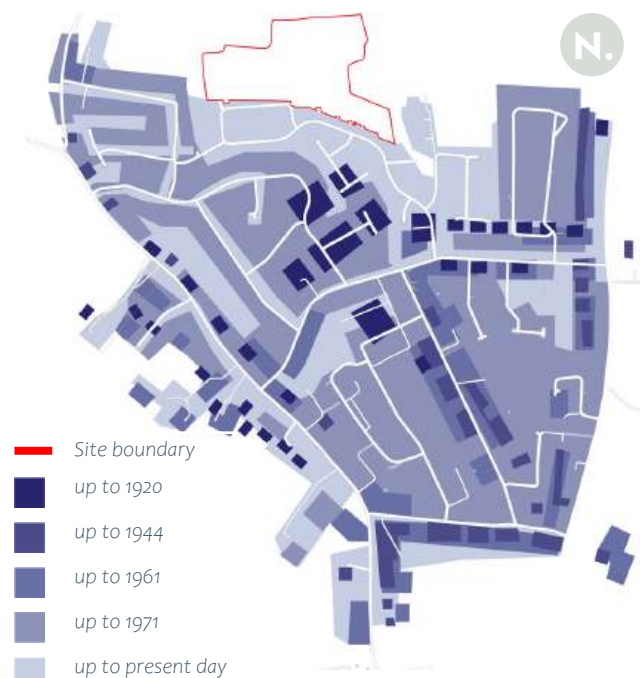
Istead Rise is a comparatively modern settlement whose present-day character has been shaped primarily by twentieth-century growth. The settlement did not develop as a compact historic village around a traditional centre. Instead, it evolved incrementally from a rural landscape of fields, orchards and dispersed development into a large residential village on the rural edge of Gravesham.

The historic growth diagram illustrates this pattern of change. Up to 1920, development was limited and mainly associated with established routes through the area. By 1944, the settlement remained modest in scale, with development still largely following the main roads and rural lanes. The most significant period of growth occurred after the Second World War, particularly through the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, when new residential streets, cul-de-sacs and looped suburban layouts were established.

This period of growth also supported the creation of local community infrastructure. The building of the Parish Church of St Barnabas began in 1960 and was completed in 1961, while Istead Rise Primary School opened in January 1966. The local medical practice also reflects the settlement's post-war growth, with the surgeries at Istead Rise and Shorne opening in the late 1960s.

The result is a settlement with a predominantly post-war suburban character, rather than a traditional village core. Its identity is defined by residential streets, generous gardens,

mature planting, local facilities and its relationship with the surrounding rural landscape. The site sits immediately north of this post-war residential edge, where the settlement transitions into enclosed arable land, hedgerows, tree belts and woodland.



Historic growth diagram showing the incremental expansion of Istead Rise from early route-based development to post-war suburban growth.

Settlement Structure and Urban Grain

The urban grain of Istead Rise reflects its historic evolution. Early development was generally focused along established routes, including Downs Road, Wrotham Road, Lewis Road and Istead Rise. These areas tend to have a more linear character, with dwellings arranged along the main roads and lanes.

The later residential areas, including the neighbourhoods around The Drove Way, Flowerhill Way, Fairview Road, Lyndhurst Way and The Knole, have a more recognisably post-war suburban pattern. Homes are arranged along curving streets, loops, cul-de-sacs and short residential closes. This creates an informal suburban grain, with varied plot widths,

front gardens, on-plot parking and regular gaps between buildings.

The area closest to the site is characterised by the rear gardens of homes along The Drove Way and Flowerhill Way. These properties form the existing northern settlement edge. Beyond this edge, the land transitions quickly into an arable field pattern enclosed by mature hedgerows, tree belts and woodland.

The site therefore occupies a clear edge condition. It relates physically and visually to the existing residential area to the south, but is also shaped by the rural landscape to the north, west and east. This dual relationship is central to the design response.



Aerial view of the northern settlement edge, showing the relationship between The Drove Way, rear gardens and the adjoining arable field

Overview of Istead Rise's Density

The density analysis reviews a range of existing residential densities within Istead Rise. The examples include areas close to the site, such as The Drove Way, as well as other parts of the village including The Knole, Long Walk, Worcester Close, Brookside Road, Lyndhurst Way, Castlefields, Edgehill Gardens and Arcadia Road.

The analysis shows that Istead Rise contains a varied suburban grain rather than a single uniform density. The examples range from lower-density areas, such as Arcadia Road at approximately 17 dwellings per hectare, to more compact areas such as Castlefields at approximately 43 dwellings per hectare. Most examples sit broadly between approximately 25 and 37 dwellings per hectare, reflecting the village's mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses, together with front gardens, rear gardens and on-plot parking.

The Drove Way, immediately south of the site, is shown at approximately 33 dwellings per hectare and provides one of the closest character references for the proposed development. Other local examples, including Lyndhurst Way at approximately 37 dwellings per hectare and Castlefields at approximately 43 dwellings per hectare, demonstrate that more compact suburban layouts also form part of the established character of Istead Rise.

This is important because a proposed development density of around 37.5 dwellings per hectare would sit within the observed local range. It would be slightly higher than The Drove Way, but comparable with other established residential areas in the village and below the highest-density example reviewed. The density is therefore not out of character in principle, particularly where it is delivered through a familiar low-rise domestic form.

The illustrative masterplan shows a residential layout that remains principally composed of the same broad housing typologies found across Istead Rise, including detached,

semi-detached and terraced houses. These building types are part of the established character of the village and allow a moderately compact form of development to be achieved without relying on apartment blocks or an overtly urban built form.

The proposed density also reflects the need to make efficient and sustainable use of land. In the context of a Green Belt site where a grey belt case is being advanced, it is important that the development does not underuse a well-related edge-of-settlement location. At the same time, the density must remain responsive to local character, landscape sensitivity and the transition to the countryside.

A density of around 37.5 dwellings per hectare achieves this balance. It would deliver an efficient residential layout within the observed local range, while retaining a low-rise domestic form and a generous green and blue infrastructure framework.

The density analysis has therefore informed the design response in two key ways. First, it confirms that a moderately compact suburban form can be appropriate within Istead Rise, where it remains domestic in scale and responds to the prevailing two-storey character of the village. Secondly, it shows that density should be considered alongside housing typology, landscape structure, open space and edge conditions, rather than as a simple numerical target.

For Land to the north of The Drove Way, the proposed density is balanced by a substantial green and blue infrastructure framework. Built development is concentrated within the more contained part of the site, while open space, retained vegetation, SuDS, meadow planting, orchard planting and informal routes create a softened northern edge to the village. This allows the scheme to draw from the village's established residential character while responding positively to the site's more sensitive rural-edge setting.

Design lesson

The local density analysis shows that Istead Rise accommodates a range of suburban densities, including examples at and above the proposed density of around 37.5 dwellings per hectare. The proposals should therefore draw on the village's existing residential grain, while ensuring that the site's rural-edge location is addressed through a low-rise, landscape-led layout, retained boundary vegetation, generous open space and a softened transition to the countryside.



1. The Drove Way

Approximately 33 dwellings per hectare



2. The Knole

Approximately 36 dwellings per hectare



3. Long Walk

Approximately 25 dwellings per hectare



4. Worcester Close

Approximately 28 dwellings per hectare



5. Brookside Road

Approximately 32 dwellings per hectare



6. Lyndhurst Way

Approximately 37 dwellings per hectare



7. Castlefields

Approximately 43 dwellings per hectare



8. Edgehill Gardens

Approximately 31 dwellings per hectare



9. Arcadia Road

Approximately 17 dwellings per hectare

Streetscape Character

The nearby streets of The Drove Way and Flowerhill Way have a quiet suburban character. The street view photographs show wide residential carriageways with pavements, front gardens, driveways and regular on-plot parking. In places, the street scene is softened by garden planting, hedges, ornamental shrubs and mature trees.

The houses are typically two-storey detached or semi-detached dwellings, with some bungalows and chalet-style forms in the wider area. Buildings are generally set back from the street, creating a domestic frontage with small gardens, boundary walls, low fences, hedges and driveways.

Parked cars and private driveways are a visible part of the streetscape, but the overall character remains low-rise, residential and domestic. The streets are not strongly urban or formal. Instead, they have a loose suburban quality, with varied house types, building lines, plot widths and boundary treatments.

The Drove Way is particularly relevant to the site because it forms the immediate residential edge to the south. Existing homes along this edge currently back onto the application site. The proposed development provides an opportunity to create a more positive and outward-facing settlement edge, structured by new public open space and landscape planting rather than relying on rear garden boundaries alone.



The Drove Way: low-rise suburban residential character with detached and semi-detached homes, front gardens, on-plot parking and varied roof forms



The Drove Way: broad residential carriageway, informal suburban character and strong presence of private driveways and garden boundaries



The Drove Way: two-storey homes set back from the street, with a mix of brick, tile hanging, porches, low walls and garden planting



Flowerhill Way: established residential street with two-storey homes, front gardens, domestic planting and a consistent low-rise scale

Built Form and Architectural Character

Istead Rise does not have a single dominant historic architectural style. Its built character comes from the cumulative effect of post-war residential development, earlier linear dwellings, later infill and suburban extensions.

The most common architectural elements include:

- detached and semi-detached homes, generally two storeys in height;
- bungalows and chalet-style dwellings in parts of the wider settlement;
- simple pitched roof forms, including gables and hipped roofs;
- red, brown and buff brick elevations;
- areas of tile hanging or cladding, particularly to upper storeys;
- brown, red and grey roof tiles;
- white or light-coloured windows, fascias and garage doors;
- porches, bay windows and small-scale domestic detailing;
- front gardens, low walls, hedges and on-plot parking.

The character is varied rather than uniform. Some properties have prominent gabled frontages and stronger roof forms, while others have simpler post-war elevations with broad frontages and horizontal window proportions. This variety contributes to the informal residential character of the village.

Future detailed design should avoid an overly urban character. It should draw from the village's domestic scale, varied roofscape, simple forms, garden setting and landscape context, while creating a coherent and contemporary residential neighbourhood.



Semi-detached homes and chalet-style dwellings



Semi-detached bungalows with hipped roofs and low front walls



Dwellings containing bay windows and gable end pitched roofs



Front gardens with a mixture of on street and on-plot parking



Dwellings with tile hanging, buff brick and front porches

Landscape and Rural Edge Character

The wider setting of Istead Rise is strongly influenced by its relationship with the surrounding countryside. The village sits within the rural area south of Gravesend, where arable fields, hedgerows, tree belts, woodland and public rights of way contribute to the area's landscape character.

The aerial views show the site's context clearly. The existing settlement edge lies immediately to the south, while the application site forms part of an enclosed arable field to the north. The site is contained by structural hedgerows and mature trees to the north, west and east, with woodland and the community centre field to the east.

Although the site forms part of the wider rural landscape, it is not experienced as an isolated parcel of countryside. It has a close relationship with the existing residential edge of Istead Rise and is visually contained by vegetation and development. Rear gardens and dwellings along The Drove Way and Flowerhill Way define the southern edge, while hedgerows, tree belts and woodland contain views to and from the wider landscape.

The landscape character is therefore transitional. It is shaped by both the village edge and the adjoining countryside. This supports a landscape-led design response, where development is carefully contained and the surrounding green and blue infrastructure is used to create a robust new rural edge.



Aerial view looking across the northern edge of Istead Rise, showing the transition from residential development to the enclosed arable landscape north of The Drove Way

Summary Lessons

Key Character Cues

The character analysis identifies a number of cues that should inform the emerging proposals:

- development should remain low-rise and domestic in scale;
- building heights should respond to the prevailing two-storey character of Istead Rise;
- streets should feel residential, green and informal rather than urban or over-engineered;
- the layout should respond to the existing settlement edge while creating a more positive and permanent rural edge;
- existing trees, hedgerows and woodland should be retained and enhanced wherever possible;
- new open spaces should reflect the rural-edge setting through meadow planting, orchard planting, native trees, SuDS and informal routes;
- architecture should use a coherent but varied palette of brick, tile, pitched roofs and locally responsive detailing;
- public routes and open spaces should be overlooked and connected, while respecting existing neighbours.

Design Implications for Land to the north of The Drove Way

The character context supports a landscape-led response. The proposal should not seek to create a dense or urban form of development. Instead, it should establish a carefully contained residential neighbourhood that sits within the existing landscape framework and strengthens the northern edge of Istead Rise.

The detailed design should take its cues from the domestic scale, varied roofscape, soft frontages and green suburban character of The Drove Way and Flowerhill Way, while improving the quality of the settlement edge through new public open space, tree planting, meadow grassland, orchard planting, SuDS and pedestrian connections.

The site provides an opportunity to create a more structured and landscape-led settlement edge. Rather than simply continuing a pattern of rear gardens backing onto open countryside, the proposals can establish a new outward-facing edge where homes, open space, SuDS, orchard planting, meadow grassland and green routes are planned together as part of a coherent village-edge neighbourhood.



CONSIDERATIONS

The site presents a range of constraints and opportunities that have informed the emerging design response.

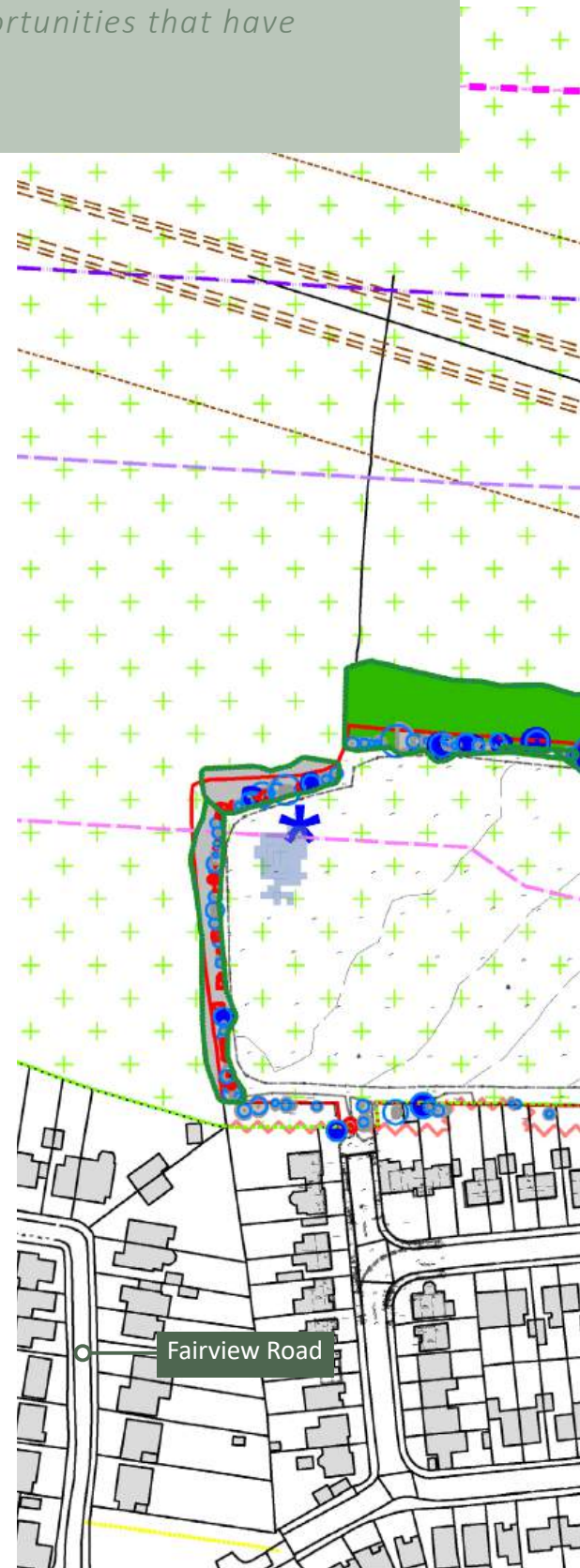
These include the site's Green Belt location, existing trees, hedgerows and woodland, root protection areas, priority habitat, public rights of way, adjoining residential properties, overhead power lines, a high-pressure gas pipeline and associated consultation zones, surface water flood risk and local topography.

These considerations have shaped the development parameters and the illustrative masterplan. Built development is focused within the more contained parts of the site, while areas affected by landscape, utilities, drainage and ecological considerations are used positively as part of the green and blue infrastructure strategy.

This approach allows the proposals to retain and enhance existing landscape features, create new public open space, integrate SuDS, support biodiversity and establish a softened northern edge to Istead Rise.

The following pages provide a more detailed overview of the technical work and reports undertaken to support the application.

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Site boundary |  Outer zone of the HSE Consultation Distance for the existing high-pressure gas pipeline (Feeder 18) |
|  Extent of high surface water flood risk |  Priority Habitat |
|  Extent of medium surface water flood risk |  Traditional orchards |
|  Extent of low surface water flood risk |  Built edge, including the rear and side of buildings and vegetation |
|  Topographic low point within the site |  Green Belt |
|  General fall of land |  Root protection area |
|  5m Contours |  Category A tree/group |
|  Public Right of Way - Footpath |  Category B tree/group |
|  Public Right of Way - Bridleway |  Category C tree/group |
|  Overhead powerline with 30m offset |  Category U tree/group |
|  Gas Main pipeline | |
|  Inner zone of the HSE Consultation Distance for the existing high-pressure gas pipeline (Feeder 18) | |
|  Middle zone of the HSE Consultation Distance for the existing high-pressure gas pipeline (Feeder 18) | |





Constraints plan. Not to scale.

TECHNICAL SUMMARIES

Ecology

Considerations

The site is currently dominated by arable land which is of low ecological value. Other habitats present within the site include arable field margin tussocky, mixed scrub and lowland mixed deciduous woodland. Of these, lowland mixed deciduous woodland is identified as a priority habitat. The habitat survey noted that the traditional orchard previously present within the woodland parcel has since been lost and now forms a continuation of the surrounding woodland, however, has still been treated as priority habitat for the purposes of this assessment.

The Site offers opportunities for a range of protected species, including bats (commuting, foraging, roosting), badger (commuting, foraging and sett establishment), breeding birds and reptiles.

We have no designated sites within 250m, and no local wildlife sites (or similar non-statutory designated sites) within 2km of the proposed development. The closest designated site is the Thames Estuary & Marshes Ramsar which is located 4.6km away.

Response

Full surveys have been completed for badger and breeding birds. Current mitigation required through the scheme includes retention of woodland and scrub habitats, the implementation of a lighting strategy to avoid light spill onto adjacent woodland, the establishment of Root Protection Areas (RPAs) to protect retained trees, and the use of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS).

Retained habitats include mixed scrub, with lowland mixed deciduous woodland enhanced through measures such as the selective removal of dead trees, the creation of additional open space within the woodland, and the potential veteranisation of retained trees. The proposed Root Protection Areas (RPAs) will provide a suitable buffer to the surrounding woodland habitat and protect retained tree roots from damage during construction activities.

Habitat creation includes lowland mixed deciduous woodland, modified grassland (amenity grassland), other neutral grassland (wildflower meadow), traditional orchard, sustainable drainage systems, and 30no individual trees. Collectively, these measures will contribute towards habitat enhancement and improved ecological connectivity across the Site.

Drainage

Considerations

The Environment Agency (EA) Flood Map for Planning shows that the site is located within Flood Zone 1, therefore is at a low risk of flooding from fluvial and tidal sources. The EA's 'Risk of Flooding from Surface Water' map also shows much of the site is at a 'Very Low' risk to surface water flooding, with the exception of a small area of surface water accumulation in the northwest corner of the site. This area is within a 'low' to 'medium' susceptibility to surface water flooding area.

In terms of drainage, there are no watercourses or surface water sewers nearby to discharge surface water runoff to, however, the site is located in an area of naturally permeable geology and therefore an infiltration based drainage solution is feasible.

There are Southern Water foul sewers located to the south of the site. As land levels on Site fall away to the north, pumping will be required to discharge foul water to the public sewer network.

Response

To ensure that the development does not increase the risk of flooding to the surrounding area as a result of increased surface water runoff, a surface water drainage strategy will be submitted alongside the application. The surface water drainage strategy will follow the drainage hierarchy by favouring the use of infiltration features, with all features sized to accommodate runoff from the hardstanding areas of the Proposed Development in line with planning policy and guidance. A pre-application meeting was held with KCC to discuss the requirements and agree on parameters.

The surface water drainage strategy will include the integrated use of SuDS and will be developed and informed by the existing site constraints and hydrological catchments.

Attenuation and treatment will be provided by infiltration basins, sized to accommodate runoff from the developed areas during extreme storm events. Additional SuDS features such as permeable surfacing, swales and rain gardens will be considered for inclusion at the reserved matters stage when further detail is available.

The risk of flooding from all sources is considered to be low and therefore additional flood risk mitigation measures are not considered necessary. The small area of surface water accumulation is likely to be a result of rain falling on the site itself and accumulating within a low point, which will be managed through the inclusion of the surface water drainage system.

Foul water will be pumped to the Southern Water public sewer to the south of the Site, within The Drove Way.



Arboriculture

Considerations

A full tree survey has been carried out in accordance with BS 5837:2012. The tree population densely screens the site on the western, northern, eastern and south-eastern aspects. The southern boundary has sporadic garden trees. The woodland on the south-eastern corner of the site has well established paths. The high canopy of the woodland is one third ash, which is at varying stages of ash dieback disease. On the south eastern corner is the traditional orchard, which is largely subsumed by hawthorn, elder, elm with only 10% apple. The key consideration is maximum tree retention and ensuring that retained trees have room to continue to thrive.

Response

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment reference submitted with the planning application addresses how trees will be protected during construction. The proposal retains the important enclosed woodland belts around the edges and provides enhancements for the existing woodland and orchard. The only tree removals required to facilitate the application are of 7 small trees (6 C and 1 U) to form the two access points from The Drove Way. The loss of these trees will only have a highly localised visual impact. Care will be taken of adjacent offsite trees during installation, following detailed design to avoid conflicts. Trees to be retained will be protected during construction by tree protection fencing which will be installed and inspected by the arboricultural consultant prior to use of machinery on site. There is sufficient room for services, surfaces, play, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and other infrastructure without impacting retained trees.

The orchard would benefit from active management to reduce bramble and remove dead and dying elms from G251. This will be subject to an Orchard Management Plan to enhance the area in accordance with the Traditional Orchard objectives. The woodland will be subject to a woodland and ecological management plan for biodiversity enhancement for the Reserved Matters stage. This will include a Tree Risk Management Plan, diseased tree management and replanting, coppicing hazel and ecological enhancements.

Providing the measures in this report are followed, the proposal will have a positive arboricultural impact due to the retention of all but 7 trees, the protection during works, new planting and appropriate woodland and orchard management. The proposal is policy compliant in terms of arboriculture.

Utilities

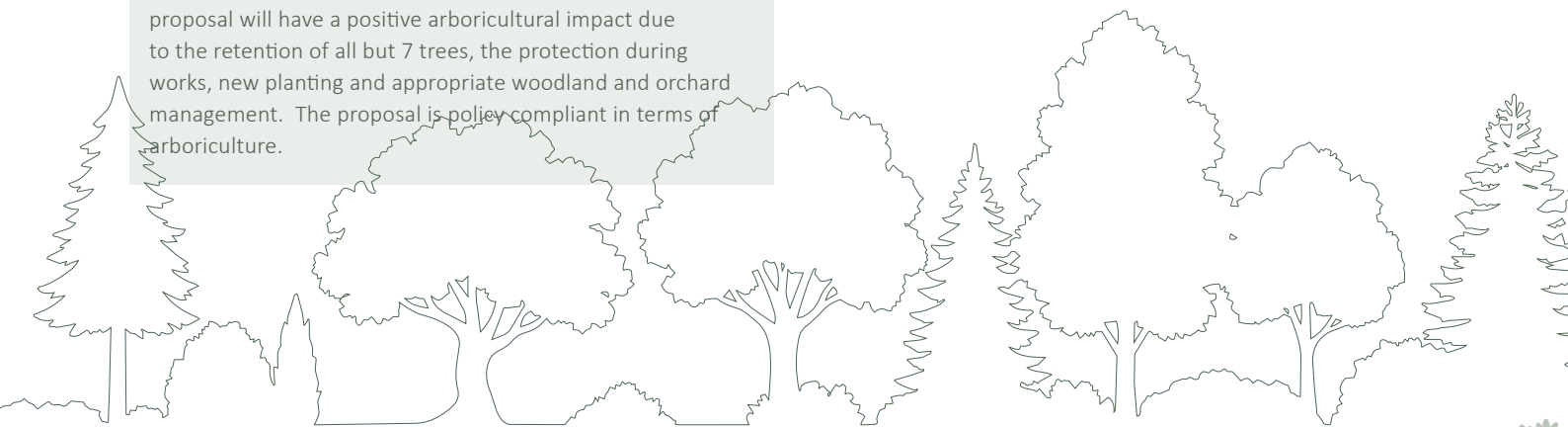
Considerations

Utility asset plans were requested to check whether any existing infrastructure would influence the site layout. Capacity enquiries were also made to better understand whether alterations to the current networks were necessary to supply the proposed development.

Response

A Utilities and Wastewater Assessment report was produced following consultation with the key utility providers. The existing overhead electrical cables crossing the site and their associated easement, along with the Health and Safety Executive's Consultation Zones associated with the adjacent gas mains, have been respected by the site layout. Capacity responses confirmed that off-site reinforcement works will not be required and that the proposed development can be suitably supplied with electricity, potable water and telecom services from the existing networks.

Reinforcement works will be required to the existing sewer network to accept the proposed development flows, however, the sewerage undertaker aims to provide this within 24 months following the date that planning is granted



Landscape

Considerations

A landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) to assess the potential effects of the proposals on landscape and views has been carried out to inform the design process and accompany the planning submission. The landscape character of the site and its wider setting have been assessed in terms of its sensitivity and capacity to accommodate the proposed development. The LVIA and GBC's own studies show the local landscape character has limited sensitivity to, and medium to high capacity to accommodate the proposed development and is suitable for development. Whilst designated as part of the Green Belt, the site was identified as a suitable development site by GBC and was therefore allocated in the draft regulation 18 plan. It was removed at regulation 19 stage. A green/grey belt review was also undertaken which determined that the site does not make a strong contribution to purposes A, B or D, and that development of the parcel would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt. In terms of policy, the key landscape policy is CS12, Green Infrastructure. The proposals will provide the stated biodiversity elements, they do not affect designated sites, the elements of the site that contribute to biodiversity are retained and enhanced and the proposals will have only minor and localised impact on landscape character with no effect on valued landscape of National Landscape areas. In relation to impact on views, a detailed analysis of the visibility of the site and proposed development, including potential visibility mapping was undertaken to determine potential viewpoints and visual sensitivity. The site is visually very well contained by vegetation and development and the LVIA studies found that views from the wider landscape are limited. More detail on the above points is provided in the landscape section of the DAS and the LVIA.

Response

The scheme will retain and enhance the mature existing field boundary vegetation and woodland that enclose the site to the north, west and east. This will create visual separation from the wider landscape, restrict visual effects to the immediate local area and provide an attractive setting to the development. The development height will be restricted to assimilate with the local development scale and minimise landscape and visual effects. Proposed planting, new grassland and SuDS will enhance the ecological value of the site landscape. The proposals meet and exceed GBC's public on-site open space requirements including play provision, are in close proximity to the community recreation and play facilities and connect directly to the wider network of public rights of way. They will be designed to reinforce the rural edge character of the proposals. The recreational value of the site and wider community will therefore be enhanced via the provision of new pedestrian footpath network, naturalistic planting, informal play zones, traditional orchards and links to the wider settlement, recreational areas and playgrounds as well as the wider public right of way network.

Highways

Considerations

There are limited locations where vehicular accesses can be provided to connect with the surrounding highway network. Various trees are also present along the southern site boundary which could affect site access. An existing public right of way (PRoW) lies directly to the east of the site, running in a north-south alignment.

Response

Two vehicular access points will be provided, connecting with existing spurs from The Drove Way. The western access will provide the principal vehicular access into the site, while the eastern access will be an active travel/emergency route, increasing permeability and encouraging healthy lifestyles whilst ensuring the resilience of the development. The site accesses have been designed to minimise loss of vegetation and work around the trees which lie along the southern site boundary.

Informal walking routes will be investigated within the site to connect with the existing PRoW to the east, which will encourage active travel behaviour and link the site with the wider area.



Built Heritage

Considerations

A Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment has been prepared.

Historic England does not record any designated heritage assets within the site. Within the wider 1km search area, there is one designated heritage asset: Downs Hall, a Grade II Listed Building, located approximately 630m to the south of the site. Downs Hall is screened from the site by intervening built form and there are no known historic connections between the two. The assessment therefore concludes that Downs Hall is not sensitive to the proposed development of the site.

The Kent Historic Environment Record identifies a number of archaeological records within the wider 1km search area, including archaeological remains, buildings and finds. The site also lies within a Kent County Council Archaeological Notification Area, reflecting some palaeolithic potential and a broader background potential for multi-period archaeology. This may relate in part to the presence of a cropmark of a possible prehistoric trackway approximately 120m west of the site.

The assessment concludes that the site has moderate potential for prehistoric to Roman period remains, and low potential for remains of all other periods. However, the preservation of any archaeological remains is expected to be very low due to previous disturbance associated with chalk working and the site's former use as a plantation, including planting and subsequent grubbing out of trees.

Response

The assessment concludes that the proposed development would not give rise to harm to any designated built heritage assets. Downs Hall is located at sufficient distance from the site, is visually separated by intervening development, and has no known historic association with the site. As such, the proposals are not expected to affect its setting or significance.

In archaeological terms, the assessment identifies some potential for prehistoric to Roman remains, although the likelihood of well-preserved remains is considered low due to previous ground disturbance. Any further archaeological requirements, including the need for trial trenching, watching brief or a written scheme of investigation, can be agreed with the relevant archaeological advisor through the planning process.

The proposals have therefore been informed by an appropriate level of historic environment assessment. Subject to any necessary archaeological mitigation, the development can come forward without unacceptable harm to built heritage or archaeological interests.







INVOLVEMENT AND EVALUATION

Chapter 3

INVOLVEMENT

Public engagement has been undertaken in advance of the submission of the outline planning application for Land North of The Drove Way, Istead Rise. This included a targeted resident consultation exercise comprising a letter drop to approximately 630 residential properties in the vicinity of the site. The purpose of the exercise was to inform local residents of the emerging proposals, explain the planning context and key elements of the scheme, and provide an opportunity for feedback prior to the submission of the application.

The consultation material outlined proposals for approximately 100 new homes, including 50% affordable housing, new access arrangements from The Drove Way, pedestrian and cycle connectivity improvements, and enhancements to existing woodland and informal footpaths. Residents were invited to provide comments or raise questions via a dedicated email address or by writing directly to the applicant team.

A summary of the responses received is located within the Planning Statement.

[Address]

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS, LAND NORTH OF THE DROVE WAY

Dear Resident,

We are writing to inform you about our emerging plans to develop the site, which will provide needed new homes and provide you with the opportunity to comment on the plans before we submit a planning application to Gravesham Borough Council.

The site is a level, irregularly shaped parcel which lies directly to the east of the development on The Drove Way in agricultural use which is contained within the Green Belt, hedgerows and a small area of woodland in the south west corner.

It was identified by the Council as a suitable site for housing development in the 18th Version of the Local Plan and, whilst still currently in the Green Belt, it has passed all relevant Green Belt tests.

Our proposals seek to transform this land for around 100 new homes, including 50% affordable. A new vehicular access point will be created onto The Drove Way, providing pedestrian and cycle access throughout. As well as proposed enhancements to the existing woodland area, the landscape strategy for the site includes the creation of new existing informal footpath routes through the south-east woodland area, which will provide links to the adjacent community centre, recreation ground and The Drove Way adjoining the site.

We are currently in the process of preparing an outline planning application with all matters reserved except access. This means that we are seeking a general type of development on the site, with all further details (including landscaping scale and layout) to be submitted separately after our outline planning application is approved.

We are now seeking the views of the local community and would like to hear from you on one of the following ways to let us know your thoughts:

- By email: isteadrise@ptarmiganland.com
- In writing: using address above, referencing "Istead Rise"

Alternatively, if you have any questions please get in touch and we will be happy to discuss them.

Yours faithfully,

Ptarmigan Land Developments Ltd (registered no. 13720881) with subsidiaries and associated companies
All incorporated in England and Wales. Full list is available at the Registered Office: 2 Frederick Street, Gravesham, Kent, ME14 2JG

Consultation leaflet



2 Frederic Mews, Knightsbridge
LONDON, SW1X 8EQ

13th May 2026

WAY, ISTEAD RISE

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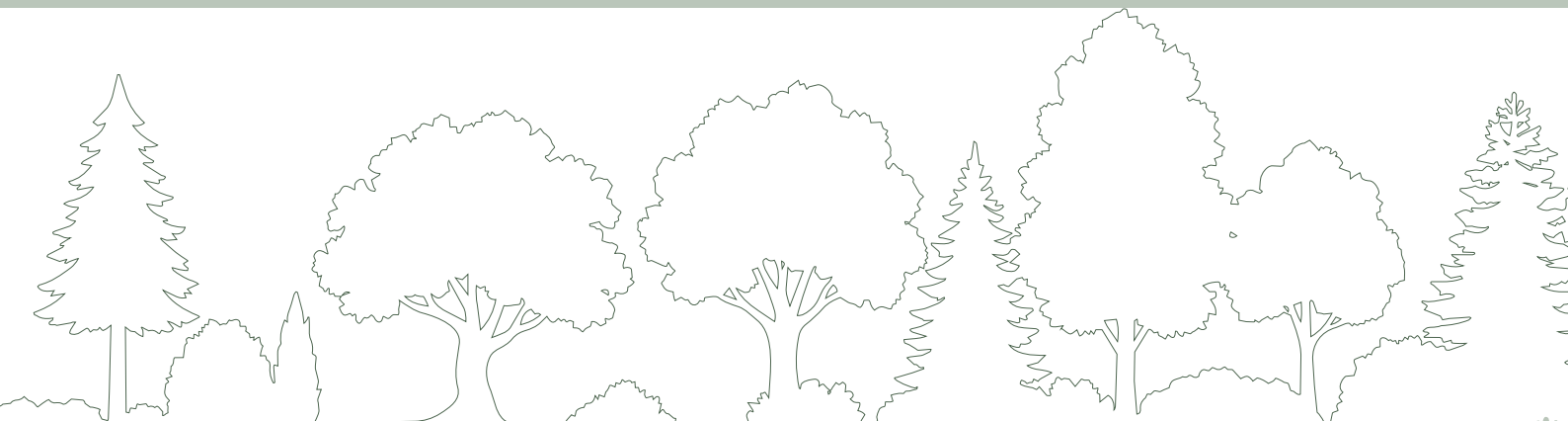


Ptarmigan Ltd

Aerial Photograph of Site



Initial Plans for the Site



DESIGN EVOLUTION

The illustrative masterplan and development parameters have been refined through a process of key stakeholder engagement and informed by detailed technical and environmental assessments.

This chapter provides a summary of the key revisions and alterations made throughout the design phase, illustrating the progression and enhancement of the proposals.

Evolution 1: Initial framework masterplan and Pre-application

An initial framework masterplan was prepared early in the project with limited technical information to test the site's development capacity. The initial plan included:

- Up to 100 homes with a maximum building height of two and a half storeys.
- Development set back from overhead powerlines and a buried gas pipeline to the north.
- Development backing onto The Drove Way, securing existing rear gardens within a perimeter block.
- Vehicular access from either side of The Drove Way
Pedestrian connection point to existing Bridleway to the east.
- Retention and extension of the traditional orchard.



Evolution 2: Development of parameters plan

Following additional technical work—including preliminary drainage and BNG calculations, as well as landscape advice—a NDA/parameter plan was developed. The revisions included:

- An adjusted green space along the western edges of the site to accommodate preliminary drainage work within the project team.
- The introduction of a children's play space as a community benefit along the route of the public right of way.
- Development extent revised to accommodate further gas pipeline easement requirements.



Evolution 3: Final illustrative masterplan

Final iterations of the illustrative masterplan included the following:

- The redesignation of the access junction to the east of The Drove Way as pedestrian/cycle and emergency access only. Vehicular access proposed to west of The Drove Way only.
- Additional pedestrian access route to the Bridleway from the south east of the site.
- Informal woodland walking routes proposed through existing woodland.
- Children's play features to be “play on the way” routed throughout the site's open space.







DESIGN

Chapter 4

VISION

Land to the north of The Drove Way will create a sensitive northern edge to the village, delivering up to 100 new homes, including up to 50% affordable housing, within a generous framework of publicly accessible landscape, green and blue infrastructure and enhanced rural-edge habitats.

The proposals will form a new residential neighbourhood that is well related to Istead Rise, while responding carefully to the site's Green Belt location, landscape containment and relationship with the surrounding countryside. Built development will be focused within the more contained part of the site, allowing the wider landscape framework to shape the setting, structure and character of the new neighbourhood.

The design approach is intended not only to deliver new homes, but also to improve the way the northern edge of Istead Rise meets the countryside. Rather than relying on an irregular pattern of rear garden boundaries and field edges, the proposals will create a more robust, legible and permanent village edge defined by public open space, retained and enhanced vegetation, SuDS, green corridors and habitat creation. This will provide a substantial publicly accessible landscape buffer and a clearer, more defensible Green Belt edge between the built settlement and the wider countryside.

The vision is rooted in the character of Istead Rise. The settlement is principally formed by low-rise, domestic housing set within green suburban streets and a wider rural landscape. The proposed development will draw from this

character through a predominantly low-rise arrangement of detached, semi-detached and terraced homes, supported by generous open spaces, walking routes and connections to existing community facilities and public rights of way.

The scheme will make efficient and sustainable use of a well-related edge-of-settlement site, while recognising the need for a sensitive design response in the context of the Green Belt and the grey belt case being advanced through the planning application. The proposed density, housing typologies and layout will balance the delivery of much-needed homes with the creation of a softened, accessible and lasting landscape edge to Istead Rise.

This aligns with the emerging Gravesham Local Plan's strategic approach, which seeks to deliver inclusive growth, provide quality mixed-tenure housing including affordable housing, protect and enhance public open spaces, and ensure that development delivers holistic benefits for residents and communities. It also responds to the Design for Gravesham Design Code, which expects new development to respond to Gravesham's unique towns, villages, neighbourhoods and landscapes, and to deliver sustainable, place-led development with people at its heart.

Key themes



A stronger and more defensible village edge

The proposals will create a stronger and more coherent northern edge to Istead Rise. Built development is focused within the more contained part of the site, while the surrounding open space and planting framework forms a substantial buffer to the countryside.

Retained hedgerows, tree belts, woodland, meadow planting, orchard planting and SuDS will help establish a clear and permanent transition between the village and the open land beyond. In this way, the scheme will provide a more robust and defensible Green Belt edge than the existing condition, while also delivering public landscape, recreation and biodiversity benefits.



New homes and affordable housing

The development will deliver up to 100 new homes, including up to 50% affordable housing. This will make a meaningful contribution to local housing needs and support the creation of a mixed and inclusive neighbourhood.

The proposed density of around 37.5 dwellings per hectare will make efficient use of land while remaining within the observed local range of densities in Istead Rise. The illustrative masterplan demonstrates that this can be achieved through familiar low-rise housing typologies, principally detached, semi-detached and terraced homes, rather than apartment-led or overtly urban forms.

This approach supports the Local Plan's wider objective of delivering quality mixed-tenure housing, including affordable housing, in locations where development can provide community and infrastructure benefits.





Green and blue infrastructure as the organising framework

The site's constraints and opportunities have directly shaped the structure of the proposals. Existing vegetation, root protection areas, priority habitat, public rights of way, overhead power lines, the high-pressure gas pipeline and associated consultation zones, surface water flood risk and local topography have all informed where built development, access, open space and SuDS are located.

Areas affected by utilities, drainage and landscape sensitivity are used positively as part of the green and blue infrastructure strategy. This allows the development to accommodate technical constraints while also creating habitat, managing water, supporting informal recreation and reinforcing the rural edge.



A landscape-led neighbourhood

The proposals will create a new residential neighbourhood structured around landscape, open space and the rural edge setting. Existing trees, hedgerows and woodland will be retained and enhanced wherever possible, with new planting used to soften the built form, filter views and provide a long-term green setting for the development.

Open space will form a defining part of the scheme, rather than leftover land. A substantial publicly accessible landscape will be delivered alongside new homes, providing informal recreation, natural play, walking routes, SuDS, biodiversity enhancement and opportunities for community growing or orchard planting.

The landscape strategy will also support the delivery of a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain, through the retention and enhancement of existing habitats, the creation of new species-rich grassland, orchard planting, native tree and hedgerow planting, SuDS habitats and woodland edge enhancements.

Together, these elements will help create an attractive and healthy place for both new and existing residents, while establishing a lasting landscape framework for the northern edge of Istead Rise.





A connected and walkable place

The site is well related to the existing village, with community facilities, recreation space, healthcare and local services located within the wider settlement. The proposals will strengthen this relationship by providing pedestrian connections, informal routes through the open space network and links to the existing public right of way along the north-eastern edge of the site.

The movement strategy will prioritise walking and cycling for local trips, connecting new homes with The Drove Way, nearby community facilities, open space and the wider public right of way network. Vehicular access will be integrated into a residential street structure designed to avoid a highway-dominated character.

This reflects the Design for Gravesham emphasis on connected, place-led development and the importance of linking communities to green spaces, local services and sustainable movement routes.



Responding to Istead Rise's character

The character of Istead Rise is principally low-rise, domestic and suburban, with a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses, front gardens, on-plot parking, varied roof forms, brick elevations and garden planting.

The proposed development will draw from this established character, while improving the quality of the settlement edge through a more integrated landscape response. The detailed design will be addressed through future reserved matters applications, but the DAS establishes the key principles of domestic scale, appropriate building heights, overlooked streets and open spaces, green frontages and a coherent but varied architectural character.



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following series of diagrams illustrates the key organising principles for the proposed development at Land to the north of The Drove Way.

The design rationale is based on the placemaking concept outlined in the previous pages, as well as the contextual analysis and technical constraints discussed earlier in this document.



1. Retain and enhance existing landscape features

The proposals will retain and enhance the site's existing framework of trees, hedgerows and woodland wherever possible. These features provide the starting point for the layout, helping to preserve the rural-edge character of the site, filter views and establish a mature landscape setting for new homes.



2. Establish a stronger and more defensible Green Belt edge and create a comprehensive green and blue infrastructure network

The proposals will create a clearer and more defensible Green Belt edge to the north of Istead Rise. Rather than relying on rear garden boundaries and irregular field edges, the development will be contained by a substantial publicly accessible landscape buffer, creating a more legible transition between the village and the wider countryside.

Green and blue infrastructure will form the organising framework for the new neighbourhood. Public open space, SuDS, meadow planting, orchard planting, retained vegetation and habitat creation will work together to manage water, support informal recreation, enhance biodiversity and help deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain.

A substantial publicly accessible landscape will be delivered alongside new homes. This will provide informal recreation, natural play, walking routes and opportunities for community growing, creating benefits for both new and existing residents.

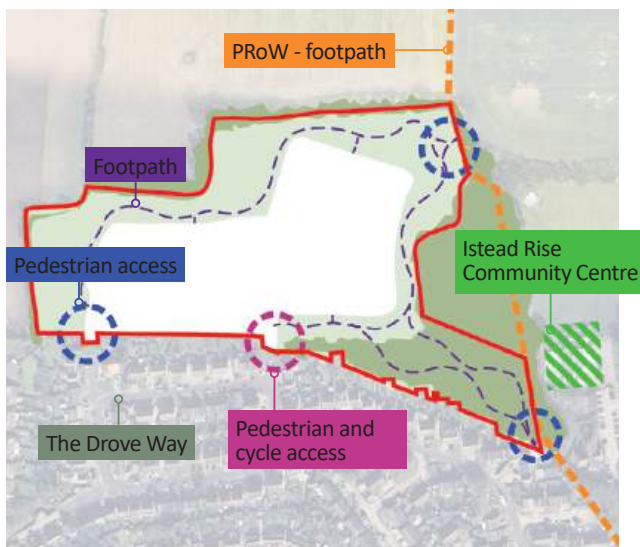


3. Create an overlooked landscape edge with appropriate height transitions

New homes will be arranged to overlook new public open spaces, including SuDS, play areas and informal walking routes, creating a positive outward-facing relationship with the landscape. Building heights will be two storeys where development interfaces with the countryside and existing built areas of Istead Rise, with limited 2.5-storey elements located within the more contained parts of the site. This will maintain a low-rise domestic character while allowing appropriate variety and efficient use of land.

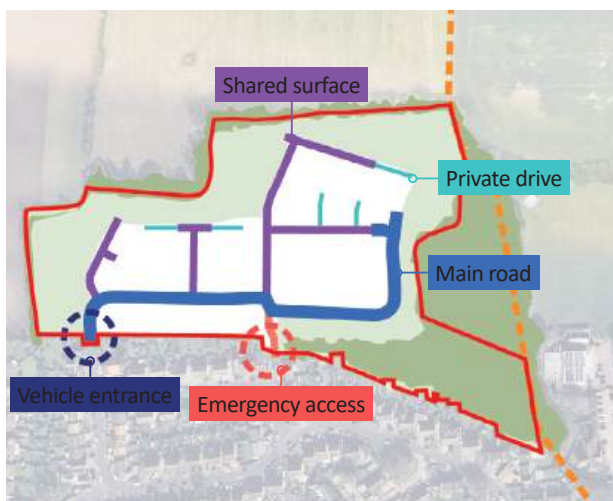
The net developable area has been shaped by existing vegetation, utilities, drainage, landscape sensitivity, public rights of way and the relationship with neighbouring homes. Built development is focused within the most contained part of the site, where it relates most closely to the existing residential edge of Istead Rise.

The proposed development will draw from the established character of Istead Rise, which is principally low-rise, domestic and suburban. A mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced homes allows an efficient density of around 37.5 dwellings per hectare to be achieved through locally familiar housing types rather than apartment-led or overtly urban forms.



4. Connect into Istead Rise and the wider public rights of way network

The development will connect into the existing village through a network of pedestrian and cycle routes. These links will connect new homes with The Drove Way, nearby community facilities, public open space and the wider public rights of way network.



5. Vehicular access and residential circulation

Vehicular access will be provided from The Drove Way, with a legible internal street structure that serves new homes while maintaining a low-speed, residential character. A separate emergency access point will also be provided from The Drove Way.

ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

The Benefits:



Delivery of up to 100 new homes, with up to 50% affordable housing, helping to meet local housing needs.



A landscape-led approach, retaining and enhancing mature trees, hedgerows, woodland and green corridors to promote biodiversity, habitat connectivity and landscape containment.



Creation of a stronger and more defensible Green Belt edge to the north of Istead Rise through the provision of a substantial publicly accessible landscape buffer and structured rural edge.



New public open space for both new and existing residents, including parkland, informal recreation routes, natural play, meadow planting, orchard planting and edible landscapes.



A comprehensive green and blue infrastructure framework, incorporating SuDS, retained vegetation, species-rich grassland, habitat creation and woodland edge enhancements to help deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain.



Development focused within the most contained part of the site, where it relates closely to the existing residential edge of Istead Rise, while the wider landscape framework softens the transition to the countryside.



A low-rise residential neighbourhood that reflects the established character of Istead Rise, with familiar housing typologies including detached, semi-detached and terraced homes.



Homes arranged to overlook streets, open spaces, SuDS, play areas and informal walking routes, helping to create a safe, legible and outward-facing neighbourhood.



Improved pedestrian and cycle connections through the site, linking new homes with The Drove Way, nearby community facilities, public open space and the wider public rights of way network.



Vehicular access from The Drove Way, with an internal street structure designed to serve new homes while maintaining a low-speed residential character.



Opportunities for long-term community benefit through publicly accessible landscape, walking routes, natural play, community growing, orchard planting and enhanced access to nature.



Key

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 01 Vehicular and pedestrian access point | 08 Meadow planting and sp landscapes |
| 02 Potential pedestrian access point | 09 Informal footpaths |
| 03 Pedestrian, cycle and emergency access point | 10 Green corridor |
| 04 Sustainable urban drainage system (SuDS) | 11 Retained and enhanced |
| 05 Development backing onto existing residential properties | 12 Foul water pumping stat |
| 06 Parkland area which could include naturalistic young children's play spaces, tree planting and meadow planting | 13 Informal woodland walk |
| 07 Edible landscapes including community gardens, orchard planting, and/or fruit bearing trees and plants | Public right of way: foot |
| | ★ Potential play on the wa |



species rich
vegetation
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path
y features

Illustrative Masterplan. Not to scale. Aerial Photograph © Google Earth

DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS

The application is based on development parameters rather than a fixed masterplan. Consequently, this Design & Access Statement refers to an “Illustrative Masterplan”, which represents one way of accommodating up to 100 homes, public open space and associated infrastructure, but not the only approach by which the development could progress in accordance with the established parameters.

The development parameters set out the broad location and extent of built development, green infrastructure, retained vegetation, access and movement connections, as well as the maximum building heights across the site.

Building heights

Building heights will be restricted to predominantly two storeys, with limited areas of up to 2.5 storeys located within the more contained parts of the site.

Density

The proposed development has a net density of approximately 37.5 dwellings per hectare.

Access

Vehicular and pedestrian access will be provided from The Drove Way.

The Parameter Plan also identifies a pedestrian, cycle and emergency vehicle access point, together with potential future pedestrian connections. These links will help connect the development with the existing village, nearby community facilities and the wider public rights of way network.

Green Infrastructure

A substantial area of green infrastructure will be provided around the development. This will include retained and enhanced vegetation, public open space, SuDS, meadow planting, orchard planting, pedestrian and cycle routes, natural play and habitat creation.

This landscape framework will help create a softened and more defensible northern edge to Istead Rise, while supporting recreation, biodiversity and a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain.

Key

-  Application boundary
-  Residential development use class C3 dwelling houses, up to 2 storey in height, including private garden space, car parking areas, street trees, and Sustainable Drainage Systems
-  Residential development use class C3 dwelling houses, up to 2.5 storey in height, including private garden space, car parking areas, street trees, and Sustainable Drainage Systems
-  Green Infrastructure to include; retained marginal grassland, strategic public open space, woodland, traditional orchard, grassland areas, access roads, growing spaces, utility corridors, pedestrian and cycle routes, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and children's play areas
-  Vehicular and pedestrian access point
-  Pedestrian, cycle and emergency vehicle access point
-  Managed and enhanced vegetation to be retained
-  Potential future pedestrian connection zone (exact location tbc)
-  Vegetation to be removed
-  Public right of way: footpath



ing; access road,
ms (SuDS)
iding; access road,
ms (SuDS)
ace, native
nfrastructure,
provision

N.



Parameters plan with application red line. Not to scale

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

The development of the landscape strategy which encapsulates the green and blue infrastructure is informed by the landscape studies described in the preceding paragraphs and set out in the LVIA; local policy, biodiversity, drainage, arboricultural and place-making considerations. It preserves the existing framework of trees and hedgerows, maintaining a key element of rural edge character and offering an attractive setting for the development whilst maintaining effective screening of development from the surrounding landscape. The open space areas enhance biodiversity, respect existing neighbouring development, and respond sensitively to the surrounding landscape, ensuring that the character of the adjoining countryside is sensitively maintained.

Key components of the Strategy

The landscape strategy comprises the following key components:

- an attractive landscape setting for the development that retains, integrates and enhances the existing enclosure and rural field pattern maintaining a strong rural character interfacing with the surrounding landscape;
- provides a sensitively designed and robust new rural edge to Istead Rise;
- provides the required open space and play provision;
- integrates the new and existing communities with shared landscape open space;
- provides a multifunctional open space area;
- connects with the neighbourhood community facilities and public rights of way network;
- drainage attenuation strategy integrated into landscape and biodiversity strategy.

The strategy includes the following key landscape zones, illustrated on the landscape strategy plan:

Western Gateway - space immediately west of the main site access presenting an immediate attractive rural and natural character.

- space to retain, manage and enhance the strong existing landscape framework of trees and hedgerows;
- space for integrated SuDS attenuation basin;
- visual role, creating a green gateway first impression for the proposed development;
- provide green setting seen from adjacent parts of the existing development edge, sensitively integrating it with the new development;

- key area for biodiversity enhancements;
- role as green corridor connection with the existing community.

Northern Green Corridor- green space providing setting to the development

- Linear space for informal recreation, including natural play;
- rural/semi-natural character;
- SuDS attenuation basin integrated;
- pumping stations accommodated;
- major biodiversity enhancement area;
- play on the way natural play features/LAP space stationed along the corridor;
- additional tree planting within area will supplement screening effect of existing vegetation and soften edges;
- pedestrian movement corridor providing connection with the public right of way.

North-east Orchard Space - Area of open space partially constrained by overhead power line constraints on vegetation height

- Wider area of open space providing informal recreation area;
- space connecting main open space green corridors and existing PRoW network;
- provides appropriate location for orchard.

South-east Woodland Edge - Area of open space wrapping around the south east corner of the development and including enhanced existing woodland area.

- Provides attractive woodland setting to development;
- Existing retained woodland to be managed and enhanced for biodiversity;
- provides buffer between woodland and development;
- play on the way natural play features/LAP space stationed along the corridor;
- pedestrian movement green corridor connecting to rest of open space, existing PRoW network and potential connection with community park recreation and play area via existing informal woodland paths.



Soft landscape strategy

Strategy for existing site trees and hedgerows

The site has a boundary framework of existing trees, woodland and hedgerows. There are no tree protection orders on site and no part of it is within a conservation area.

The arboricultural impact assessment and ecology survey submitted with this application provide full details of the existing trees, hedgerows and other vegetation on site. The ecology surveys and arboricultural assessment have informed the retention of vegetation, identified tree protection zones and potential areas of ecological and arboricultural enhancement.

Strategy for new planting

New planting, grassland creation and the enhancement of retained existing trees, woodland hedgerows and retained margin areas, will be designed to enhance biodiversity. It will also provide an additional screening effect and create an attractive, rural appearance to the development and assimilate with local landscape character.

Planting areas and grasslands in the public open space areas are indicated on the illustrative masterplan.

Tree planting in the open spaces, will provide additional screening, augmenting the screening effect of retained

existing vegetation. The larger open spaces may include larger species including field maple, oak, hornbeam, lime and disease resistant elm, to enhance the rural character of the development setting subject to height constraints in relation to the overhead power lines in the north eastern area of the site.

Tree planting in the area of the overhead power line height restrictions will be selected from lower growing species, including the proposed orchard trees. Planting will include predominantly native species and grassland mixes recommended by the ecologists.

Native tree and shrubs will be planted to enhance the existing vegetation and add to the currently linear edges, to create a softer and more naturalistic edge to the development.

Street tree planting, the detail for which will come forward as part of a reserved matters submission, will provide additional softening of the development and assimilation with its rural setting.

Grasslands will consist of a flowering lawn mix for amenity grass areas, combining biodiversity and durability, predominantly in amenity areas closer to the developed area. Meadow grass will be established around the peripheral areas, forming a natural transition from mown areas to a more rural character for the edges. The attenuation basins will be seeded with meadow grassland suitable for damper conditions.



Hard landscape strategy

Details of the design and materials for the public open space and residential areas will be provided as part of a reserved matters submission.

Materials for surfacing and edgings, boundary treatment, street furniture and natural play features will be selected to complement the built character of the development informed by local vernacular and appear appropriate in the rural edge local context.

Open Space and Play Provision

The table below sets out the current quantitative and qualitative requirements for types of open space provision for new developments within Gravesham; as described in the Gravesham Borough Council's Local Plan & Supplementary Planning Documents. The figures slightly vary between 'Urban' and 'Rural' settings and should be applied to the application site accordingly. The site is in a rural setting therefore the 'rural' provision applies.

The quantities to the right are based on an anticipated population of 230 for a 100 unit/dwelling scheme (based on the population calculator of 2.3 persons per dwelling as set out on page 43 of GBC's Open Space Standards Paper (OSSP).

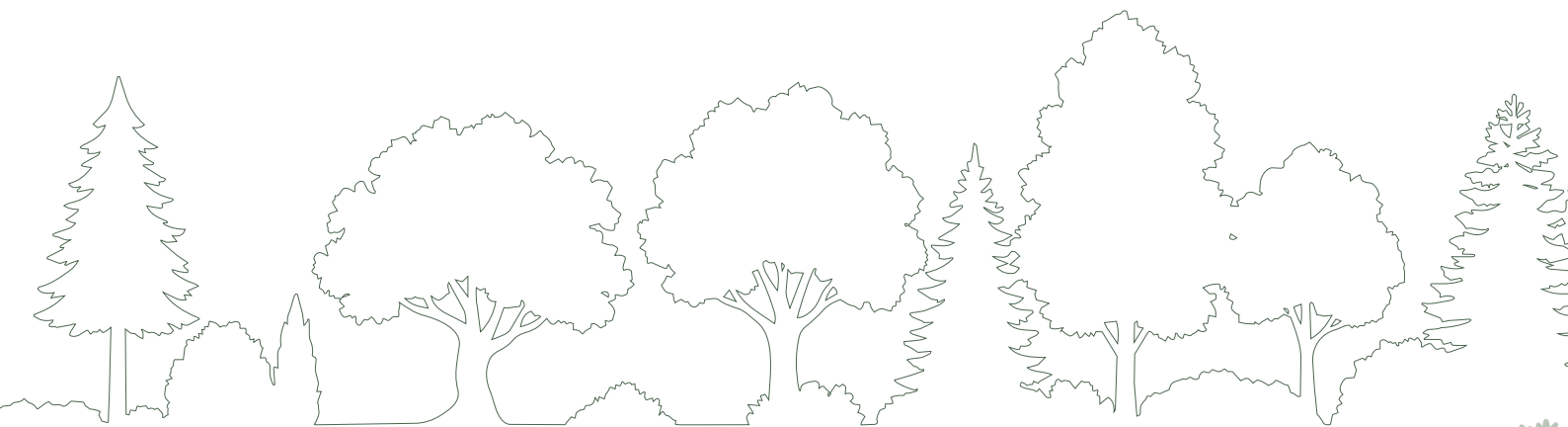
Quantitative Requirements

Type of Public Open Space (P.O.S)	GBC standard/1000 population	Requirement for 100 dwellings (230 pop)
Parks & Gardens	'Inappropriate to set a quantity standard for parks provision in the Rural Analysis Area' (GBC OSSP p33)	-
Natural & Semi Natural G/S	'Inappropriate to set a quantity standard' (GBC OSSP p34)	-
Amenity G/S	0.92 (GBC OSSP p35)	0.22
Provision for children & young people	0.03 (GBC OSSP pp36 and 44)	0.01
Youth Provision	'No standard set specifically for youth provision. Use of standard for provision for children and young people should be utilised' (GBC OSSP p19)	- included as part of children and young people provision
Allotments	0.41 (GBC OSSP p37)	0.1ha (equivalent to four plots or 8 half plots)

- LEGEND**
- Drainage Features
 - Naturalistic Play on the Way
 - Traditional Community Orchard
 - Pedestrian Circulation
 - Public Open Space Character Areas
- Western Gateway
 - Northern Green Corridor
 - North East Orchard Space
 - South East Woodland Edge



Landscape Illustrative Masterplan. Not to scale



Ecology Strategy

The proposed development has been informed by the ecological characteristics of the site and seeks to retain and enhance existing habitats wherever possible, in accordance with national and local planning policy. The scheme follows the mitigation hierarchy by seeking to avoid impacts where possible, retaining valuable habitats and incorporating opportunities for habitat enhancement and creation throughout the development.

The site is predominantly comprised of arable farmland of generally low ecological value, together with areas of arable field margins, mixed scrub and lowland mixed deciduous woodland. The woodland represents the principal ecological feature within the site and is identified as a Priority Habitat. Ecological surveys identified the potential for a range of protected and notable species, including bats, badger, breeding birds, reptiles and invertebrates. No statutory or non-statutory designated sites are located within 2km of the site, with the nearest being the internationally designated Thames Estuary and Marshes Ramsar Site, approximately 4.6km to the north-east.

The masterplan has evolved to retain and enhance the site's most valuable ecological features. Existing woodland along the eastern boundary will be retained and enhanced, maintaining an ecological corridor and supporting habitat connectivity with the wider landscape.

Habitat enhancement and creation measures have been integrated throughout the development and include:

- Retention and enhancement of lowland mixed deciduous woodland;
- Creation of species-rich neutral grassland areas;
- Establishment of a traditional orchard within the open space network;
- Creation of new mixed scrub habitats around retained woodland edges;
- Provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) designed to deliver biodiversity benefits; and
- Planting of approximately 30 new trees throughout the development.

Enhancement of the retained woodland will include the creation of additional open space within woodland compartments, selective management of diseased trees, veteranisation of suitable retained trees and the installation of deadwood habitats to increase structural diversity and provide habitat opportunities for a range of species.

A range of mitigation measures will be secured through the planning process and implemented during construction and occupation, including:

- A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP);
- A sensitive lighting strategy to minimise light spill onto retained woodland and bat commuting routes;

Surface Water Drainage Strategy

The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 and considered to be at a low risk of flooding from all sources. The proposed development is therefore already located in a sequentially preferable area and mitigation to manage flood risk to the site is not considered necessary.

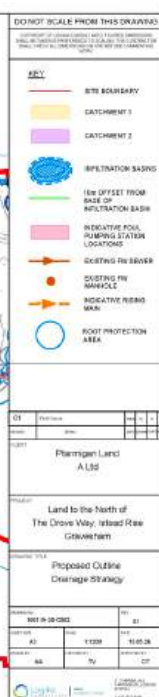
It is necessary however to ensure that the development does not increase flood risk to the surrounding area, and, therefore, a drainage strategy has been developed to accompany the application.

The existing Site is greenfield in nature and it is anticipated that the Site currently drains naturally via infiltration. At the outline stage, the drainage strategy has been designed to mimic the existing drainage scenario as much as possible.

The strategy utilises infiltration basins which have been sized to accommodate runoff from the hardstanding areas of the Proposed Development in line with planning policy and guidance utilising the worst-case scenario design parameters. At the detailed design stage the use of other SuDS, such as permeable surfaces, would be incorporated into the scheme.

Foul water will be pumped to the Southern Water public sewer to the south of the Site, within The Drove Way.

- The illustrative masterplan demonstrates that sufficient opportunities exist within the site to achieve the statutory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain requirements whilst delivering meaningful ecological enhancements and contributing to the creation of a high-quality and sustainable residential environment.



ACCESS AND MOVEMENT STRATEGY

Vehicular access

Vehicular access to the proposed development will be provided from The Drove Way, using two new access points which connect to existing highway spurs on the northern side of the road. The western access will provide the principal vehicular access into the site and is proposed to comprise a 5.5m wide carriageway, suitable for two-way vehicle movement, together with a 2m footway on the eastern side. Visibility splays will be provided in accordance with relevant Manual for Streets and Kent County Council design guidance.

A second access is proposed to the east. This will function as an emergency access and active travel connection rather than a general vehicular access. It will comprise a 4m wide carriageway and 2m footway, with lockable or retractable bollards used to prevent general vehicular through-movement while maintaining access for emergency vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

The proposed accesses will connect directly with the existing residential street network on The Drove Way. The detailed internal layout of the development, including final road alignment, parking, turning heads, servicing and refuse collection arrangements, will be confirmed at reserved matters stage. The Transport Assessment confirms that the proposed access strategy is suitable for the scale of development and that the local highway network is capable of accommodating the forecast traffic associated with the scheme.

Public transport

The site is located within an established residential settlement and benefits from access to existing public transport services. The nearest bus stops are located on Flowerhill Way, approximately 450m from the site, and at the Istead Rise shops, approximately 700m from the site. These stops are within a comfortable walking distance for future residents.

Bus service 308 provides connections between Sevenoaks and Gravesend, including links to Meopham Station and

Gravesend town centre. Additional lower-frequency services also operate from the wider Istead Rise area.

The nearest railway station is Meopham Station, approximately 3.1km to the south of the site. The station is accessible by bus, cycle and car, and provides regular Southeastern services, including services to London Victoria, Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, Bromley South and other destinations. The rail service therefore provides a realistic option for longer-distance and commuting journeys.

Future residents will be encouraged to use public transport through the measures set out in the Residential Travel Plan, including the provision of travel information within resident welcome packs.

Street hierarchy

The site will be accessed from The Drove Way, which is a residential street forming part of the established Istead Rise estate network. The Drove Way is a two-way single carriageway road, subject to a 30mph speed limit, with footways provided along the road. It has a local residential function and does not operate as a through-route, with a modal filter preventing direct vehicular access between The Drove Way and Hadlow Way to the south-west.

Istead Rise forms the main local spine road through the village and connects the local residential street network to the wider highway network, including the A227 Wrotham Road. The A227 provides the principal north-south route between Gravesend, the A2 and routes further south.

The detailed street layout within the development will be developed at reserved matters stage. The internal street network will be designed to reflect its residential character, accommodate access for refuse, servicing and emergency vehicles, and encourage low vehicle speeds. The layout will prioritise pedestrian and cycle permeability while ensuring that vehicle access is safe and appropriate for the scale of development proposed.

Pedestrian / cycle movement

The development has been designed to promote walking and cycling as practical choices for local journeys. The surrounding pedestrian environment in Istead Rise is generally well established, with footways provided along The Drove Way and throughout the local residential estate.

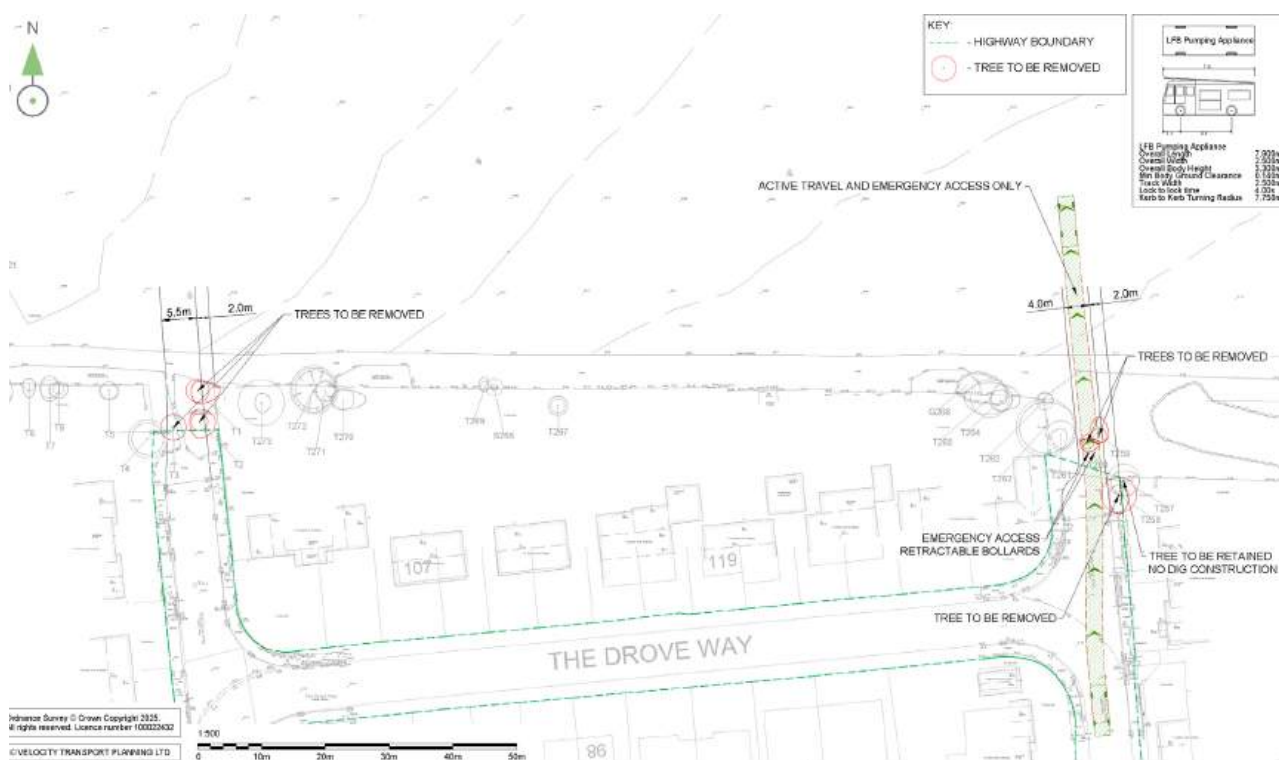
The proposed access arrangements include 2m footways connecting the site with the existing pedestrian network on The Drove Way. The eastern access will also provide an active travel and emergency connection, with general vehicular access restricted by bollards, helping to improve permeability for pedestrians and cyclists. Informal walking routes will be investigated to connect with the existing PRow to the east of the site.

A range of day-to-day facilities are available within walking distance of the site, including Istead Rise Recreation Ground, Istead Rise Community Centre, Downs Way Medical Practice, local shops, pharmacy, post office, childcare and Istead Rise Primary School. These facilities are generally within a

20-minute walk of the site, supporting the opportunity for residents to make local trips without relying on private car use.

Cycling also provides a realistic option for short and medium-distance trips. Although there are no dedicated cycle lanes in the immediate vicinity of the site, the local street network experiences relatively low traffic levels and is suitable for cycling. Meopham Station is approximately 3.1km from the site and can be reached by cycle in around 11 minutes, supporting cycle-rail journeys.

Cycle parking will be provided in accordance with Kent County Council guidance, with the precise arrangement to be confirmed at Reserved Matters stage once the detailed housing mix and layout are fixed. The scheme will also be supported by a Residential Travel Plan, which will include measures to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport by future residents.



SECURED BY DESIGN: RESIDENTIAL GUIDE 2025

Designing in crime prevention from the outset is key to creating a new socially sustainable development at Land to the north of The Drove Way.

Introduction

Secured by Design achieves a reduction of crime risk by combining minimum standards of physical security and well-tested principles of natural surveillance and defensible space. The guide also reflects upon the Home Office 'Violence Against Women and Girls' (VAWG) agenda, so that consideration is given through environmental design.

The design of Land to the north of The Drove Way has incorporated the key elements of safe and sustainable design appropriate to the outline planning application stage to create a successful community where people will enjoy living and visiting. Reference has been made to Secured by Design, Residential Guide 2025 and its principles have been integrated into the project masterplanning and urban design approach. At the detailed design stage, it is recommended that Kent's Secured by Design Crime Prevention Officers are consulted prior to the submission of any reserved matters planning application.

Design Consideration of Secured by Design principles

Layout of vehicular/pedestrian routes:

Features will be designed to identify routes through the development and clearly define areas of public and private space. This will be further explored during the preparation of the reserved matters applications.

Communal areas:

Communal areas such as public spaces and playgrounds will be designed throughout the development to allow natural surveillance from nearby dwellings and with safe and accessible routes to come and go. Public and private space will be clearly defined. Public spaces, SuDS and woodlands will be overlooked to ensure safety and create a vibrant setting for homes. This is explored in the illustrative masterplan and will be further illustrated in future reserved matters applications.

Dwelling boundaries:

The proposals are made with public and private areas clearly identified. To the front of homes, walls, fences and hedges will be kept low to ensure an open view to housing. This will be explored in more detailed plans and artworks and will be further developed through reserved matters planning applications.

Layout and orientation of dwellings:

The proposal provides 'active frontages' of overlooked streets. The development has been arranged to provide activity and natural surveillance and will avoid, where possible, the creation of blank walls adjacent to public spaces.

Rear access paths:

Back gardens will be secure and any access to the rear of properties will be gated. However, this will be further developed through reserved matters planning applications.

Dwelling identification:

There will be clear signage of properties to assist residents, postal workers and the attendance of emergency services. This will be developed through reserved matters planning applications.

Climbing aids:

Boundaries will be designed so as not to provide climbing aids to gain access into properties. It is not possible to explore this level of detail given the outline nature of the planning application and supporting material. However, this will be further developed through reserved matters planning applications.

Parking:

The development has been designed to provide for vehicle parking in either garages or hardstanding areas within the dwelling boundary. If communal parking areas are needed, these will be in small groups near homes with natural surveillance or in parking courts. Adequate space for cycle parking will be designed in accordance with the advice given by Secured by Design officers. This will be explored in more detail at reserved matters.

Landscape planting:

The proposals include planting to create attractive and safe new environments without impeding natural surveillance. A detailed design and management plan for the open space will be agreed with Gravesham Borough Council. The detailed design for landscape will be further developed through reserved matters planning applications.

Lighting:

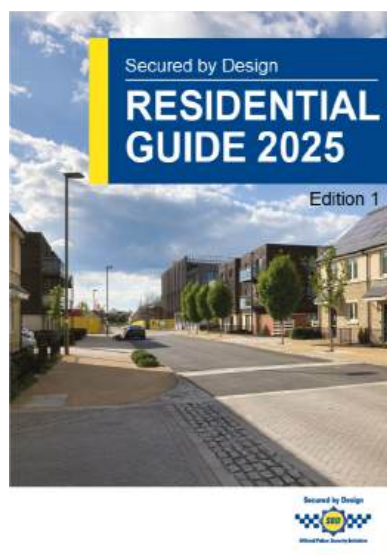
Street lighting will be designed according to Secured by Design principles to ensure public spaces are appropriately lit. Where possible, environmentally friendly light sources will be used. The development will provide lighting of external doors, car parking and garage areas. The detailed design for lighting will be further developed through reserved matters planning applications.

Dwelling entrances:

The development will be designed with front doors that are visible from the public realm and promote natural surveillance. The detailed design for dwelling entrances will be further developed through reserved matters planning applications and will seek to locate communal entrance doors centrally and that they are visible from the public realm.

Windows:

It is not possible to explore issues associated with windows given the outline nature of the planning application and supporting material. However, the general principles for windows will be further developed through reserved matters planning applications having regard to Secured by Design principles. We acknowledge that proposals should ensure that ground floor, basement and easily accessible windows are secured.







CONCLUSION

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this Design & Access Statement is to outline the development principles for the site and support the application for Outline Planning Permission.

The masterplan in this DAS has been prepared with reference to current design policy and guidance, including the Design for Gravesham Design Code, the emerging Gravesham Local Plan, local character analysis and the technical work prepared in support of the application.

The proposed development at Land to the north of The Drove Way will create a sensitive, landscape-led northern edge to the village, delivering up to 100 new homes, including up to 50% affordable housing, set within a generous framework of publicly accessible landscape, green and blue infrastructure and enhanced rural-edge habitats.

The masterplan has been shaped by a clear and considered vision: to create a well-integrated residential neighbourhood that reflects the character of Istead Rise, responds positively to its Green Belt and rural-edge setting, and delivers meaningful benefits for both new and existing residents.

The layout is underpinned by a strong landscape framework, retaining and enhancing existing trees, hedgerows and woodland while introducing new public open space, SuDS, meadow planting, orchard planting, natural play, informal

walking routes and biodiversity enhancements. This will help create a softened and more defensible Green Belt edge to the north of Istead Rise, replacing an irregular settlement edge with a more legible and permanent landscape transition to the countryside.

The proposed homes are focused within the most contained part of the site, where development relates most closely to the existing residential edge along The Drove Way and Flowerhill Way. The illustrative masterplan demonstrates how up to 100 homes can be accommodated through familiar low-rise housing typologies, including detached, semi-detached and terraced homes, with building heights and density responding to the established character of Istead Rise.

The proposals are grounded in technical evidence and informed by landscape, ecology, arboriculture, drainage, utilities, access and movement considerations. The development responds to existing constraints positively, using them to shape the open space network, strengthen the landscape structure, support a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain and create a connected, walkable and well-overlooked neighbourhood.

Summary of benefits to the future and existing local community



Delivering up to 100 new homes, including up to 50% affordable housing, helping to meet local housing needs.



Making efficient and sustainable use of a well-related edge-of-settlement site, in the context of the grey belt case being advanced.



Creating a stronger, more coherent and defensible Green Belt edge to the north of Istead Rise.



Providing a substantial publicly accessible landscape for both new and existing residents.



Retaining and enhancing existing trees, hedgerows, woodland and green corridors.



Supporting the delivery of a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain through habitat creation and enhancement.



Providing new informal recreation routes, natural play, meadow planting, orchard planting and edible landscapes.



Managing surface water sustainably through SuDS integrated into the landscape framework.



Improving pedestrian and cycle connectivity, with links to The Drove Way, nearby community facilities and the public right of way network.



Creating a low-rise residential neighbourhood that responds to the established character of Istead Rise.



Designing homes to overlook streets, open spaces, SuDS, play areas and walking routes, supporting a safe and legible place.



Securing long-term landscape, biodiversity and community benefits through a framework capable of future stewardship and management.

This Design & Access Statement demonstrates that Land to the north of The Drove Way presents a valuable and deliverable opportunity to meet local housing needs in a way that respects the village setting, enhances public access to green space, improves the northern edge of Istead Rise and secures lasting landscape, biodiversity and community benefits.





APPENDIX

Design for Gravesham Design Code Compliance Checklist

The Design for Gravesham Design Code SPD requires applicants to complete and submit the Compliance Checklist as part of relevant planning applications. Where a Design and Access Statement is required, the checklist should be included within, or submitted alongside, the DAS. The SPD also confirms that applicants should provide a proportionate response to the Design Principles that are relevant to the type, scale and nature of the application.

The proposed development falls within the definition of a medium residential site, as it proposes up to 100 homes. This checklist has therefore been completed on that basis.

At this outline stage, the application is based on development parameters rather than a fixed detailed layout. The Parameter Plan establishes the broad location and extent of residential development, green infrastructure, access, movement connections, retained vegetation and maximum building heights. The Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates one way in which those parameters could be delivered through future reserved matters applications.

The checklist response is therefore proportionate to the outline nature of the application. Matters such as detailed layout, scale, appearance, materials, landscaping, parking, lighting, street furniture and detailed public realm design will be addressed through future reserved matters applications. Where these matters are reserved, the checklist identifies the relevant principles established by the DAS, Parameter Plan and Illustrative Masterplan.

The following table provides a proportionate response to the relevant Design Code checklist items.

Item	Description	Response
1	Do the 4 main threads (Community First, Quality and Place, Connectivity and Infrastructure and Future for Gravesham) underpin the design proposals?	<i>Yes. The proposals respond to the four main threads through a landscape-led approach that delivers new homes, up to 50% affordable housing, public open space, green and blue infrastructure, SuDS, biodiversity enhancement, pedestrian connections and a stronger northern edge to Istead Rise.</i>
2	Are the design proposals accompanied by a vision? Has the vision being clearly set out in the Design and Access Statement?	<i>Yes. The DAS includes a clear Vision and Key Themes section. The vision is to create a sensitive northern edge to Istead Rise, with up to 100 homes set within a generous publicly accessible landscape framework.</i>
3	Has the applicant engaged meaningfully with the local community throughout the design process as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 4.1?	<i>Community engagement has been undertaken and is summarised within the Involvement section of the DAS and the Statement of Community Involvement. The consultation material explained the emerging proposals, including new homes, affordable housing, access, open space, pedestrian and cycle connectivity and landscape enhancements.</i>
4	Do the design proposals positively respond to Gravesham's unique identities as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 4.2?	<i>Yes. The proposals respond to the local identity of Istead Rise as a low-rise, domestic, suburban village set within a rural landscape. The design approach retains and enhances trees, hedgerows, woodland and open space, while future reserved matters will develop architecture, materials and detailing in response to local character.</i>
5	Do the design proposals promote a place-specific and contextual approach as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 4.3?	<i>Yes. The contextual analysis, historic evolution, local character analysis, density review, landscape assessment and technical constraints have informed the Parameter Plan, Illustrative Masterplan and design principles. The proposals respond specifically to the site's northern edge-of-settlement location, Green Belt context and relationship with The Drove Way and Flowerhill Way.</i>
6	Do the design proposals follow the guidance for public space as set out in the interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.1?	<i>Yes, insofar as appropriate at outline stage. The proposals provide a substantial publicly accessible landscape framework, including parkland, informal routes, natural play, SuDS, meadow planting, orchard planting and green corridors. Detailed public realm design will be developed through reserved matters.</i>
7	Has the proposed play space been designed in line with the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.2?	<i>Yes, at a strategic level. The Illustrative Masterplan identifies opportunities for naturalistic young children's play and play-on-the-way features within the open space network. Detailed play design, equipment and safety requirements will be addressed at reserved matters stage.</i>
8	Have the proposed surface finishes been designed using high quality, robust materials promoting accessibility for all as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.3?	<i>This is a reserved matter. The DAS establishes the principle that streets, paths and public spaces should be accessible, legible and appropriate to the rural-edge setting. Detailed surface materials will be agreed through future reserved matters applications.</i>

Item	Description	Response
9	Have inclusive design and accessibility been considered from the outset in line with the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.4?	<i>Yes. The movement framework seeks to provide legible pedestrian and cycle connections through the site, linking new homes with The Drove Way, public open space, nearby community facilities and the public right of way network. Detailed gradients, crossing points, seating, lighting and inclusive public realm details will be addressed through reserved matters.</i>
10	Has the proposed street furniture been designed in line with the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.5?	<i>This is a reserved matter. The DAS establishes that street furniture should be limited, robust and appropriate to the landscape-led rural-edge character of the development. Details will be provided at reserved matters stage.</i>
11	Does the proposed lighting create a safe and welcoming environment as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.6?	<i>This is a reserved matter. The detailed lighting strategy will need to balance safety, accessibility, landscape character, ecology and residential amenity. Lighting will be developed through future reserved matters and relevant technical approvals.</i>
12	Has the proposed wayfinding been designed in line with the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.7?	<i>Yes, at a strategic level. The layout is structured around clear access points, green corridors, informal routes and connections to the wider public right of way network. Detailed signage and wayfinding will be developed at reserved matters stage.</i>
13	Has the proposed community-led art been integrated in the public realm and designed in line with the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.8?	<i>Not fixed at outline stage. There may be opportunities for locally responsive interpretation, play features, orchard/community growing references or landscape-led wayfinding within the public open space. Any such details can be considered at reserved matters stage.</i>
14	Does the proposed development pattern, grain and scale follow the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.9?	<i>Yes. The density and character analysis demonstrates that Istead Rise contains a range of low-rise suburban densities and forms. The proposed density of around 37.5 dwellings per hectare sits within the observed local range and can be delivered through familiar housing typologies, including detached, semi-detached and terraced homes.</i>
15	Does the proposed height reflect the existing local character as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.10?	<i>Yes. Building heights are controlled through the Parameter Plan. The development will be predominantly two storeys, with limited areas of up to 2.5 storeys in more contained parts of the site. This responds to the prevailing low-rise character of Istead Rise and the site's countryside edge.</i>
16	Have the proposed tall buildings been designed as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.11?	<i>No. The proposals do not include tall buildings. The Parameter Plan restricts development to two storeys and limited 2.5-storey areas.</i>
17	Does the proposed density reflect the existing local character as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.12?	<i>Yes. The proposed density of around 37.5 dwellings per hectare makes efficient use of a well-related edge-of-settlement site while remaining within the range of existing residential densities found in Istead Rise. The density is balanced by a generous green and blue infrastructure framework.</i>
18	Does the proposed development respect the existing building line as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.13?	<i>Yes, at an outline level. The Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates how future development could create coherent streets and outward-facing frontages. Detailed building lines will be fixed through reserved matters, informed by the Parameter Plan, Illustrative Masterplan and local character analysis.</i>
19	Have thresholds and frontages been integrated within the proposed architecture and landscape and designed in line with the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.14?	<i>Yes, at an outline level. The Illustrative Masterplan shows homes arranged to address streets, green corridors and public open spaces, helping to create natural surveillance and a positive relationship between built form and landscape. Detailed thresholds, front gardens, boundary treatments and entrances will be addressed through reserved matters.</i>
20	Does the development respect and respond to the prevailing roof form as set out in the interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.15?	<i>This is a reserved matter. The character analysis identifies the importance of pitched roofs, varied roof forms and low-rise domestic scale within Istead Rise. Future reserved matters should use this analysis to develop an appropriate roofscape.</i>

Item	Description	Response
21	Have the proposed elevations been designed to respond to the scale and proportions of the surrounding character areas as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.16?	Elevations are reserved. The DAS identifies local character cues including brick, tile, pitched roofs, domestic proportions, garden frontages and varied roofscape. Detailed elevations will be prepared through reserved matters in response to these principles.
22	Have proposed materials been chosen in line with the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.17?	Materials are reserved. The DAS identifies the need for a coherent but varied materials palette that responds to the character of Istead Rise and Gravesham. Detailed materials will be agreed through reserved matters.
23	Do the proposed dwellings meet the requirements set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.18?	Detailed dwelling layouts are reserved. Future reserved matters applications will need to demonstrate compliance with relevant internal space standards, accessibility requirements and residential amenity standards, though the illustrative masterplan is compliant with amenity standards.
24	Have the proposed dwelling been design taking into account aspect, orientation, daylight and sunlight as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.19?	Yes, at an outline level. The Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates that homes can be arranged to address streets and open spaces while providing garden areas and appropriate relationships between dwellings. Detailed orientation, daylight, sunlight and privacy matters will be addressed through reserved matters.
25	Has private and communal amenity been designed in line mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.20?	Yes, at a strategic level. The proposals provide a substantial publicly accessible landscape framework alongside private residential development parcels. Detailed private garden sizes, privacy distances and communal amenity arrangements will be resolved through reserved matters in accordance with SPG2 and relevant standards.
26	Have proposed balconies been designed in line mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.21?	Not applicable at outline stage. The proposals are expected to be principally detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. If balconies are proposed at reserved matters stage, they will need to be designed to avoid unacceptable overlooking or amenity impacts.
27	Has the development been designed to respond to existing or planned public transport accessibility and to promote active travel in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.1?	Yes. The site is located within walking and cycling distance of existing village facilities, bus stops, community facilities and recreational spaces. The proposals include pedestrian and cycle connections through the site and links to The Drove Way and the wider public right of way network.
28	Have streets been designed to follow mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.2?	Yes, at an outline level. The Illustrative Masterplan shows a legible residential street structure served from The Drove Way. Future reserved matters will develop detailed street hierarchy, carriageway widths, footways, parking, street trees, refuse access and traffic calming.
29	Has vehicular parking been designed to follow mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.3?	Parking is reserved. The Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates that parking can be accommodated within the residential layout. Future reserved matters will need to provide parking in accordance with adopted standards while avoiding a car-dominated street scene.
30	Have servicing requirements been incorporated into the design of the public realm and proposed buildings in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.4?	Yes, at a strategic level. The Parameter Plan and Illustrative Masterplan demonstrate that the site can be accessed and served from The Drove Way. Detailed refuse collection, emergency access, tracking and service locations will be addressed through reserved matters and technical approvals.
31	Has cycle parking been designed to follow mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.5?	Cycle parking is reserved. Future reserved matters will need to provide secure and convenient cycle parking for homes and, where appropriate, public open space users. The movement strategy supports walking and cycling as part of local trips.

Item	Description	Response
32	Has the development been designed to conserve, enhance, connect and improve the use and access of the Borough's blue and green infrastructure in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.6?	<i>Yes. This is a central organising principle of the proposals. Existing trees, hedgerows, woodland and retained vegetation are protected and enhanced wherever possible. Public open space, SuDS, meadow planting, orchard planting, informal footpaths and green corridors form a connected green and blue infrastructure network.</i>
33	Have the proposed open spaces been designed in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.7?	<i>Yes. The scheme provides a substantial publicly accessible landscape framework around the development, including a northern green corridor, western gateway landscape, woodland edge, orchard/edible landscape and informal routes. This creates a softened and more defensible northern edge to Istead Rise.</i>
34	Has biodiversity been considered, protected and enhanced in the design proposals in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.8?	<i>Yes. Biodiversity has informed the landscape-led design approach. The proposals retain and enhance existing habitats, provide meadow planting, orchard planting, SuDS and woodland edge enhancement, and are intended to deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain.</i>
35	Have Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) been integrated in the design proposals in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.9?	<i>Yes. SuDS are integrated into the green and blue infrastructure framework and form part of the open space and landscape strategy. Detailed drainage design will be confirmed through the relevant technical approvals and reserved matters.</i>
36	Has planting been proposed in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.10?	<i>Yes, at a strategic level. The landscape strategy proposes a predominantly native and wildlife-friendly planting approach, including tree planting, meadow grassland, orchard planting, hedgerow enhancement and wetland/SuDS planting. Detailed planting specifications will be provided at reserved matters stage.</i>
37	Have new trees been proposed in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.11?	<i>Yes. Existing trees, hedgerows and woodland have informed the layout and will be retained and enhanced wherever possible. The proposals include new tree planting, woodland edge management and orchard planting. Detailed arboricultural protection and planting proposals will be addressed through reserved matters and planning conditions.</i>
38	If the development sits along the Gravesham Riverside, does the proposed design follow mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.12?	<i>Not applicable. The site is not within Gravesham Riverside and does not adjoin the River Thames.</i>
39	Have buildings and spaces been designed to improve energy efficiency and resilience in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.13?	<i>Yes, at an outline level. Detailed building fabric, energy strategy, heating systems, renewable technologies and climate resilience measures will be addressed through reserved matters, Building Regulations and relevant planning conditions. The overall layout supports climate resilience through green infrastructure, SuDS, tree planting and active travel connections.</i>
40	Have the design proposals consider retrofit of existing buildings in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.14?	<i>Not applicable. The site is an undeveloped edge-of-settlement site and the application is for new residential development.</i>
41	Does the development contribute towards the provision of a rich-mix of opportunities in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 7.1?	<i>Yes. The proposals will deliver up to 100 homes, including up to 50% affordable housing, together with publicly accessible open space, informal recreation, natural play, walking routes, orchard planting, meadow planting, biodiversity enhancement and connections to nearby community facilities.</i>
42	Has development carefully considered management and maintenance throughout the design process in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 7.2?	<i>Yes, at a strategic level. Long-term management and stewardship will be required for public open space, SuDS, retained vegetation, new planting, play features, orchard planting and habitat areas. Detailed management arrangements will be secured through planning conditions, legal agreements or reserved matters as appropriate.</i>

