

Land South of Longfield Road

Meopham



October 2025

Design and Access Statement
incorporating Gravesham Design Code Compliance Statement



ABOUT RICHBOROUGH

Richborough is a specialist land promotion business which supplies the housebuilding community with consented land to accelerate delivery of their new homes. It is a Founder Member of the Land Promoters & Developers Federation (LDPF) which is a collection of the UK's leading land promotion and development businesses.

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RICHBOROUGH (BIRMINGHAM)

Waterloo House
20 Waterloo Street
Birmingham
B2 5TB

0121 633 4929



ABOUT PEGASUS DESIGN

Pegasus Group's experience embraces all types of projects within the development industry from large scale urban extensions and strategies for area regeneration to renewable energy and residential schemes.

Our work supports planning applications and we have an exceptional understanding of the development control process and planning policy requirements in relation to design. Our design team is well regarded and is increasingly involved in expert design review and witness work.

PEGASUS (LICHFIELD)

Central House,
Queen Street,
Lichfield,
WS13 6QD

0121 308 9570
Lichfield@pegasusgroup.co.uk

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This document is designed to be viewed as A3 double sided

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DRAFT ISSUE 1: For client comment	02.10.2025



Vision...

for Longfield Road, Meopham

“

The site will create sustainable and well-connected new living environments of the highest standard. Taking cues from the local village vernacular, including the historic hamlets of Hook Green and Meopham Green, the development will create a place to be proud of, articulating the character that makes Meopham distinct, with a variety of homes suitable for people at every stage of life.

Landscaped streets and greens will promote active lifestyles and integrate natural features, blending Meopham’s village character with modern sustainable design principles.

”



The proposals will provide:

- Up to 120 high-quality new homes in a range of types, sizes and tenures;
- 50% affordable homes in-line with national planning policy;
- New dedicated vehicular access from Longfield Road;
- A sustainable and landscape-led development, creating a network of green spaces, reflective of the local character and for the benefit of new and existing residents;
- Publicly accessible open spaces, including children's play areas;
- Retention of existing mature vegetation and the creation of new green infrastructure;
- A well-connected network of tree lined streets and active travel routes;
- Potential school drop-off parking located adjacent to Longfield Road; and
- Retention of the public right of way crossing the south-east of the site.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

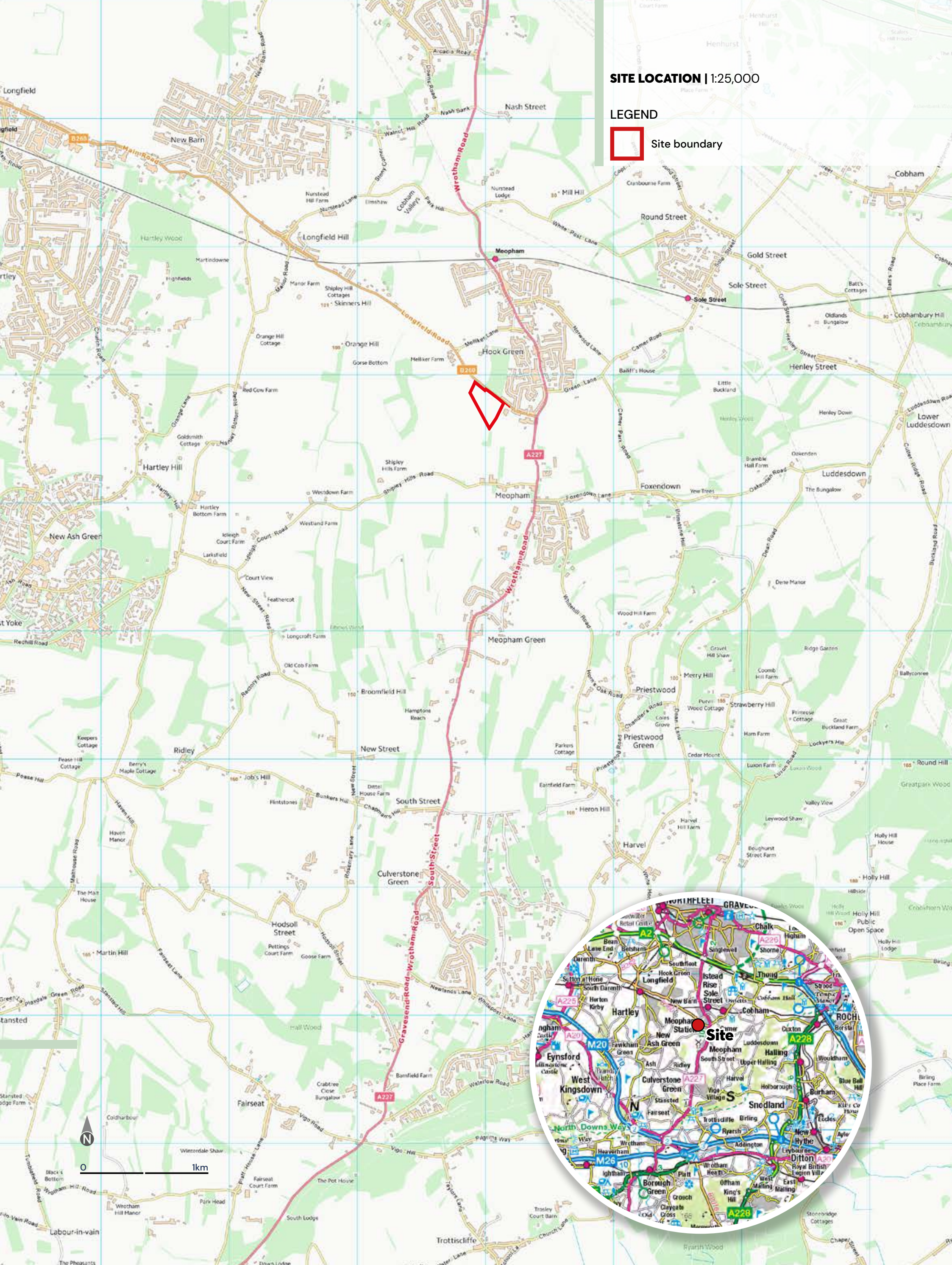
- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Design (part of Pegasus Group) on behalf of Richborough to accompany the submission of an Outline Planning Application for the residential development of Land South of Longfield Road, Meopham (the site), with proposed development comprising:
- "Outline application for the erection of up to 120 residential dwellings, public open space and associated works. Approval is sought for the principal means of vehicular access from Longfield Road and all other matters are reserved."**
- 1.2 This statement has been prepared in accordance with Article 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (DMPO), which requires certain applications to be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement.
- 1.3 The DMPO also states the following requirements:
- "(2) An application for planning permission to which this paragraph applies must, except where paragraph (4) applies, be accompanied by a statement ("a design and access statement") about:*
- (a) the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development; and*
- (b) how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with.*
- (3) A design and access statement must:*
- (a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;*
- (b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;*
- (c) explain the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account;*
- (d) state what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation; and*
- (e) explain how specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed."*

PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

- 1.4 The purpose of this Design and Access Statement is:
- "...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."*
- (Para. 029, PPG, Reference ID: 14-029-20140306)
- 1.5 This document achieves this within the following sections:
- **Section 1: Introduction.** Outlines the purpose of this document;
 - **Section 2: Planning Policy.** Presentation of the key Planning Policy requirements, derived from a combination of Local Authority and National Government Policy;
 - **Section 3: Assessing the Context.** Considers the site's location in terms of connectivity, the physical, historical and social setting, as well as the local character of the place;
 - **Section 4: Assessing the Site.** Considers the site and its immediate surroundings in terms of the technical and physical context, identifying the opportunities and considerations for proposed development;;
 - **Section 5: Design Development.** Presents the design principles that have been derived from a combination of Government Policy and site assessment, outlining the stakeholder engagement undertaken, as well as its key findings and the subsequent design evolution;
 - **Section 6: Design Proposals.** Presents the key design proposals, including the **Uses; Movement; Built form; Homes and Buildings; Identity; Public Spaces; Nature; Resources** and, **Lifespan**;
 - **Section 7: Conclusion; and**
 - **Appendix A: Design Code Compliance Checklist.**
- 1.6 The items highlighted above are the ten characteristics of well-designed places, as set out in the National Design Guide, which this Design and Access Statement responds to accordingly.
- 1.7 These characteristics also align with the design principles of Gravesham Borough Council's 'Design for Gravesham' Design Code SPD, which this Design and Access Statement also responds to accordingly.
- 1.8 This statement should be read in conjunction with the Outline Planning Application and its accompanying pack of supporting documents.




**The ten characteristics of a well-designed place
(National Design Guide)**



SITE LOCATION | 1:25,000

LEGEND

 Site boundary



SITE LOCATION

- 1.9 The site is located in Meopham, a large village in Kent located around 6 miles south of Gravesend and 12 miles north-east of Sevenoaks.
- 1.10 The village lies within the North Downs, providing an attractive rural setting whilst being within commuting distance of London.
- 1.11 Historically three separate hamlets (Hook Green, Meopham and Meopham Green), Meopham exists today as a continual linear settlement along the A227, which runs north-south through the village from Hook Green in the north down to Meopham Green in the south.
- 1.12 There are three Conservation Areas in the settlement, relating to the historic village hamlets and designated as 'Hook Green', 'The Street, Meopham' and 'Meopham Green'.
- 1.13 Meopham offers a range of local amenities which the application site is within walking distance of, including local shops, schools, cafes, places of worship, public houses, a leisure centre and a community hall.
- 1.14 To the north, the A227 connects the village with the A2 A-road, providing direct links to the M2 and M25 motorways. To the south, the A227 connects the village directly to the M20 for additional links to the national highway network.
- 1.15 Meopham railway station, located around 1km from the site at the north end of the village, is on the Chatham Main Line and provides direct railway links to London Victoria and Dover (Dover Priory).
- 1.16 Bus services operate routes along the A227, with bus stops located adjacent to the local centre. These bus services provide transport to surrounding local centres including Gravesend and Sevenoaks.
- 1.17 Further details of the site's context are set out in Section 3 of this document.




THE SITE

- 1.18 The site is approximately 5.68ha / 14.04 acres and comprises of agricultural land immediately to the south-west of Hook Green.
- 1.19 The site is bound by Longfield Road to the north, Helen Allison School to the east and agricultural fields to the south and west.
- 1.20 The site is accessed directly off Longfield Road (B260) in the north of the site.
- 1.21 The site features belts of established tree planting to its northwest and southeast boundaries with the site open to the countryside to the south and southwest clear of any tree planting and hedgerow.
- 1.22 Fronting the site along the opposite side of Longfield Road is an established woodland and residential dwellings. A local centre including shops and cafes is located on Wrotham Road.
- 1.23 The site's topography falls generally from south to north, from around 117 AOD to around 106 AOD.
- 1.24 A public right of way crosses the site's north-east corner and runs adjacent to the eastern boundary within the Helen Allison School curtilage and connects to the footway on Longfield Road.
- 1.25 The site is located within the Green Belt but is not within a Conservation Area or National Landscape. 'The Street, Meopham' Conservation Area is located to the east adjacent to Wrotham Road, whilst the 'Hook Green' and 'Meopham Green' Conservation Areas are separated from the site by intervening built form and landscaping.
- 1.26 There are no Listed Buildings in or adjacent to the site. The Church of St John the Baptist (Grade I Listed) is located to the west of the site within the Conservation Area, separated from the site by intervening landscaping.
- 1.27 Further details of the site's context are set out in Section 4 of this document.

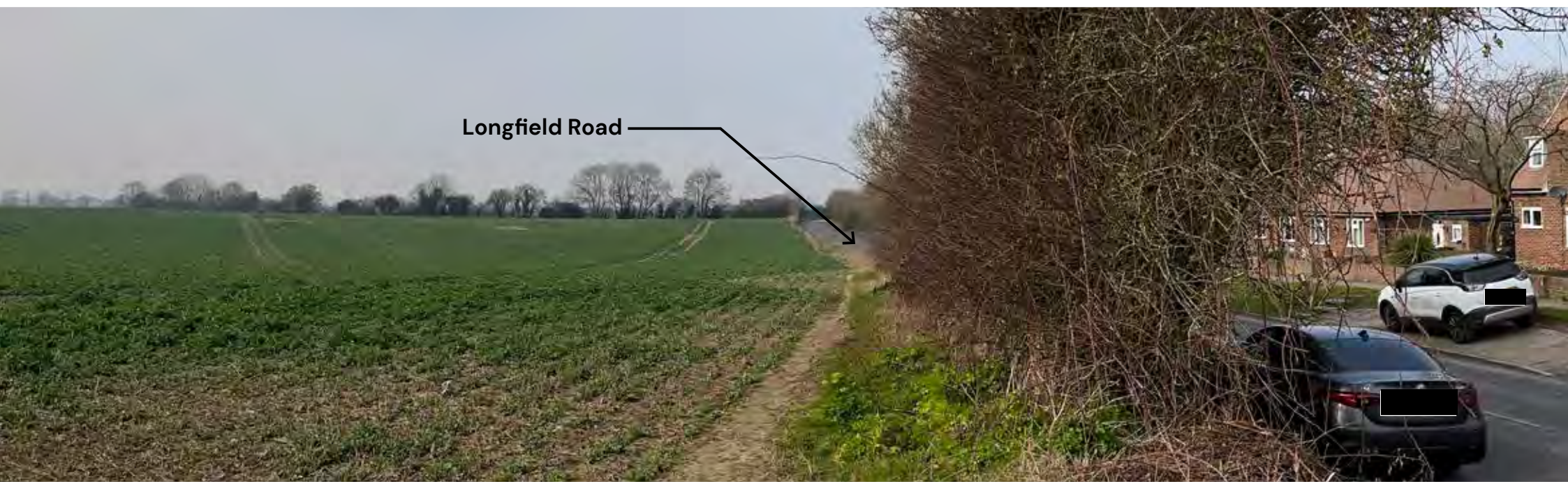


SITE AND PHOTOGRAPH LOCATIONS | Not to scale

LEGEND

-  Site boundary
-  Photograph location
-  Public right of way





PLANNING POLICY

“Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or

b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.”

(Para. 134. NPPF 2024)

- 2.1 The development proposals have been formulated with due regard to the policies that make up the statutory Local Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance, together with Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024), National Design Guide (published in 2019 and 2021) and the National Model Design Code (January 2021).



NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 2.2 Government guidance in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies and how these should be applied. The NPPF states at Paragraph 8 that the planning system has 3 interdependent key objectives, which when pursued in a mutually supportive way, can achieve sustainable development. The three key objectives are
- An economic objective;
 - A social objective; and
 - An environmental objective.
- 2.3 There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out at Paragraph 11. Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport (para. 108) of the NPPF points to the role that design has to play in ensuring that transport issues are considered at the earliest stages of development proposals, and the role that design can play to ensure that development maximizes opportunities for sustainable transport options.
- “...patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.”*
- (Para. 109(b) NPPF Dec 2024)
- 2.4 The Government also continues to place a high emphasis on design and the NPPF expands on the principles of good design, to define what is expected of well-designed places. It also explains how policies and decision-making processes should support the inclusion of good design, to achieve “high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places”. Detailed advice on how to achieve this objective is provided in Section 12: Achieving well-designed and beautiful places. The contribution which good design makes to sustainable development is set out in paragraph 131, as follows:
- “The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities...”*
- (Para. 131, NPPF Dec 2024)
- 2.5 The NPPF is also clear at paragraphs 132 and 133 that Development Plans should set out a clear design vision to provide certainty to applicants, and that design policies should be prepared in conjunction with local communities to reflect local aspirations.
- 2.6 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF states that with regard to design planning policy and decision making should ensure that developments;
- “a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to the local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”*

PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE

2.7 The NPPF is accompanied by the on-line Government resource Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The Design: Process and Tools PPG provides guidance on the methods and processes available to both applicants and local authorities to ensure the delivery of well-designed and high-quality, long lasting places with considered design solutions, under the following headings:

- Planning for well-designed places;
- Making decisions about design;
- Tools for assessing and improving design quality; and
- Effective community engagement on design.

2.8 Paragraph 1 of the Design PPG reinforces the Government and NPPFs commitment to requiring the creation of well-designed places and the role that early engagement can play in this.

“Well-designed places can be achieved by taking a proactive and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process, from policy and plan formulation through to the determination of planning applications and the post approval stage”

(para. 001, PPG, ID: 26-001-20191001, October 2019)

NATIONAL DESIGN GUIDE

2.9 The National Design Guide (NDG) published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in 2019 and updated in 2021 further reinforces the way in which the design process can be used to ensure the delivery of quality places:

“In a well-designed place, an integrated design process brings the ten characteristics together in a mutually supporting way. They interact to create an overall character of place.”

(Para. 13, NDG 2021)

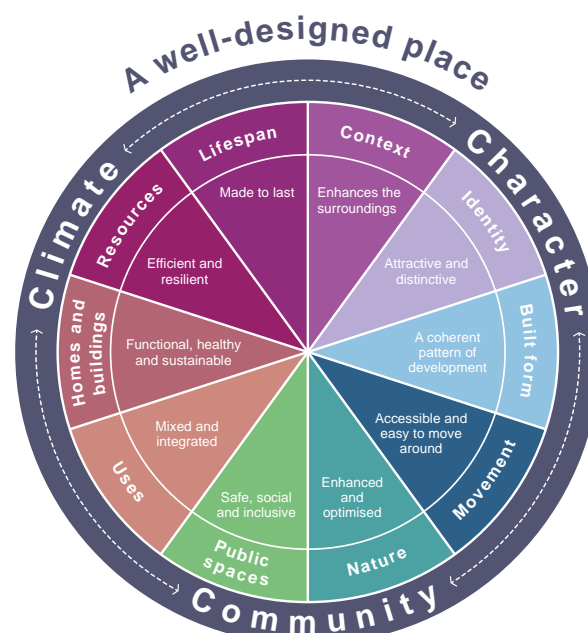
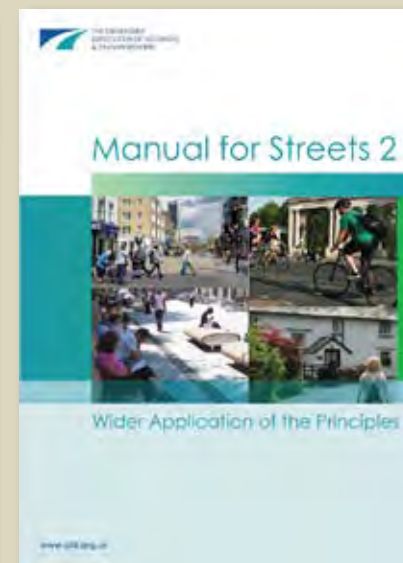
2.10 The NDG outlines and illustrates the Governments priorities for well-designed place in the form of ten characteristics, based on national planning policy, planning guidance and objectives for good design.

2.11 The ten characteristics contribute towards the cross-discipline themes for good design set out in the NPPF and fall under three broad aims:

- To create physical **character**;
- To help to nurture and sustain a sense of **community**; and
- To positively addresses environmental issues affecting **climate**.

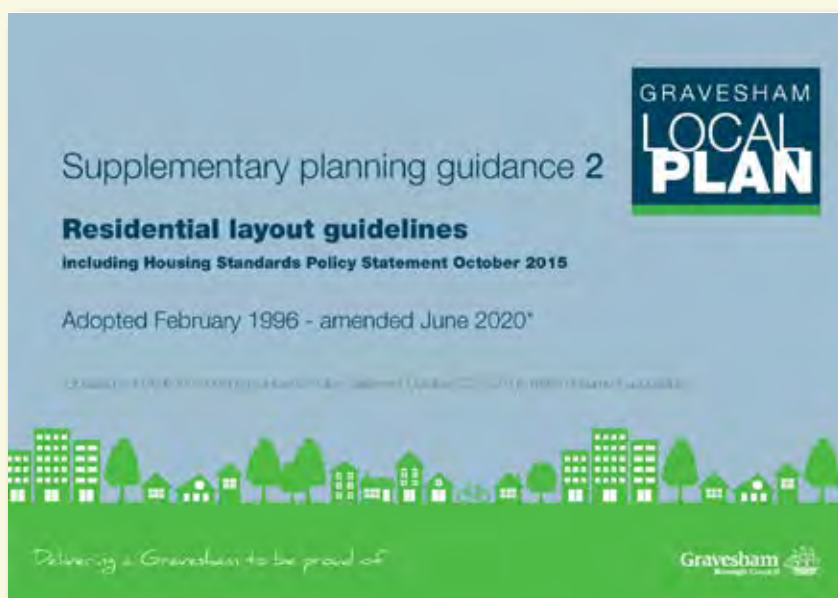
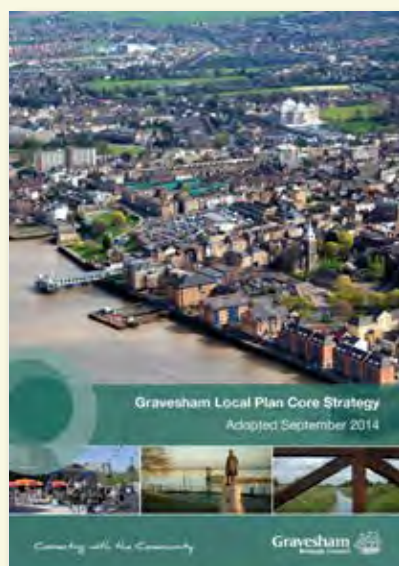
2.12 Whilst the NPPF, PPG, NDG and the NMDC are the primary points of reference, there are other well-regarded design guidance documents that are still relevant to creating good design including:

- Manual for Streets 1 & 2 (Department of Transport/Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007/2010); and
- Building for a Healthy Life (Homes England, June 2020) is the latest edition, and new name for Building for Life 12 (BFL12) written in partnership with NHS England, NHS Improvement and MHCLG.



LOCAL PLANNING CONTEXT

- 2.13 This section does not seek to repeat the policy review contained within the Planning Statement submitted as part of this application. This section of the DAS highlights the local planning policies and guidance relating to design.
- 2.14 The development proposals have been formulated having due regard to the Local Development Plan of Gravesham Borough Council, comprising;
- Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)
 - Saved Local Plan First Review (1994)
- 2.15 Consideration has also been given to the following local planning and design guidance;
- Design for Gravesham – Design Code SPD
 - Kent Design Guide



LOCAL PLAN CORE STRATEGY

Site Specific Policies

- 2.16 The site is located within the Green Belt (CS02) and adjacent to the settlement boundary for Hook Green. There is a designated Local Centre (CS08) immediately opposite the eastern parcel, and a short walk from the western parcel. Hook Green Conservation Area (CS20) lies approximately 300m to the north of the site.

Design Policies

- 2.17 **Policy CS 19: Development and Design Principles** confirms new development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It will conserve and enhance the character of the local built, historic and natural environment, integrate well with the surrounding local area and meet anti-crime standards. The design and construction of new development will incorporate sustainable construction standards and techniques, be adaptable to reflect changing lifestyles, and be resilient to the effects of climate change.

Housing Mix and Type

- 2.18 **Policy CS14: Housing Type and Size** confirms that GBC will expect new housing development to provide a range of dwelling types and sizes taking into account the existing character of the area and evidence of local need to create sustainable and balanced communities.
- 2.19 Meopham Rural Housing Needs Assessment (2020) confirms that the survey responses received indicated an existing housing mix as follows:
- 1 bed – 3%
 - 2 bed – 16%
 - 3 bed – 41%
 - 4 bed – 33%
 - 5 bed – 7%
- 2.20 The Regulation 18 Stage 2 Consultation (2020) document states at paragraph 1.6.14:
- "Based on current evidence and consultations undertaken so far, what we do know is that more **one, two and three-bedroom affordable and market homes are needed in the Borough over the plan period to provide a suitable mix of housing types and sizes that help meet the needs of newly forming households, existing families and older households wishing to downsize.**"*
- 2.21 This is the limited extent of data that can be found in respect to mix preferences at this time. The emerging evidence base will be monitored and the Note updated upon receipt of relevant requirements.

2.22 **Policy CS15: Housing Density** confirms sites will be developed at a variety of densities, depending on their location and accessibility to public transport. The form and density of housing will vary across the larger sites, in response to accessibility and other characteristics of each part of the site. Variations in density across a site should be used to develop different character areas. However, in the rural area, new residential development will be expected to achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare.

2.23 **Policy CS16: Affordable Housing** confirms affordable housing is to be provided on proposals for 3 dwellings or more in the rural area at a rate of 35%. GBC will seek an affordable housing mix of 70% affordable rented and social rented accommodation and 30% intermediate housing. The ‘Golden Rules’ within the new NPPF requires affordable housing on sites released from the Green Belt to be delivered at a rate of 15% over the adopted Policy up to a cap of 50% (NPPF paragraph 157). Therefore, the scheme should comprise 50% affordable housing.

Open Space

2.24 **Policy CS12: Green Infrastructure** confirms a multifunctional linked network of green spaces, footpaths, cycle routes and wildlife stepping stones and corridors will be created, protected, enhanced and maintained.

2.25 The overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced. The greatest weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and natural beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting. Proposals will take account of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan, the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, and the Cluster Studies where relevant.

2.26 **Policy CS13: Green Space, Sport and Recreation** confirms that GBC will seek to make adequate provision for and to protect and enhance the quantity, quality and accessibility of green space, playing pitches and other sports facilities, in accordance with an adequate, up to date and relevant evidence base.

2.27 Page 43 of the Open Space Standards Paper confirms the household occupancy rate of 2.3 persons per dwelling should be used. The plan at the back of the document confirms Meopham is within the Rural Area.

2.28 The recommended open space standard per 1,000 population is as follows:

Open Space Typology	Hectares per 1,000 population
Amenity Greenspace	0.92
Children and Young People	0.03
Allotments	0.41

2.29 The Open Space Standards Paper identifies a gap in the catchment for the provision of open space suitable for children and young people at Meopham Green, Sole Street and Higham.

SITE ALLOCATION

2.30 The site was identified as an emerging allocation in the most recent Regulation 18 Stage 2 Site Allocations Document, for **120 dwellings**.



POLICY ALLOCATION PLAN | Not to scale

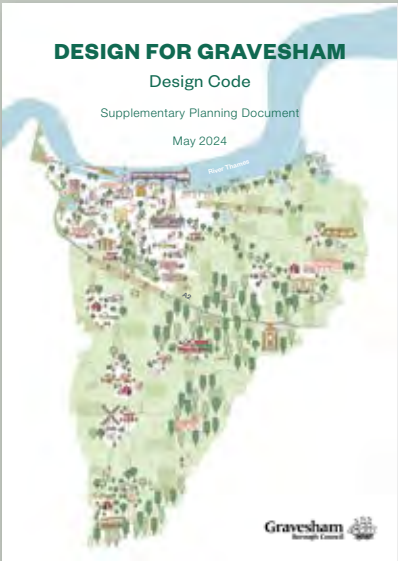
“Design for Gravesham aims to guide development in the Borough to ensure it responds to its context and creates neighbourhoods that are sustainable, vibrant and resilient, shaped around the needs of Gravesham’s community”

(Para 3.8, Design for Gravesham)

2.31 Gravesham Borough Council’s Design for Gravesham SPD is a design code document providing guidance to ensure high-quality, sustainable design across the Borough.

2.32 Building on the core design policies within the NPPF, the NDG and the Local Plan, the Design Code sets out the expectations for architecture, public spaces, landscaping, and environmental standards, supporting the Local Plan’s vision for attractive, functional, and inclusive developments.

2.33 The Design Code encourages developers to respect local character, integrate green infrastructure, and prioritise pedestrian-friendly, accessible spaces. Its aim is to create well-designed places that enhance the Borough’s identity and improve the quality of life for all residents.



THE VISION

2.34 The vision of the Design for Gravesham SPD revolves around four main threads, within which are the design principles which respond to the ten characteristics of the National Design Guide:

- Community First
 - Engagement
 - Identity
 - Context
- Quality and Place
 - Public Spaces
 - Built form
 - Homes and Buildings
- Connectivity and Infrastructure
 - Movement
 - Nature
 - Resources
- Future for Gravesham
 - Uses
 - Lifespan

Design Parameters

2.35 The SPD includes two types of parameters: mandatory and expected.

2.36 Mandatory parameters are:

“in-line with the Development Plan and material planning considerations. They are considered to be essential characteristics for the proposed development and must be followed.”

2.37 Expected parameters are:

“in addition to the Development Plan and material planning considerations, and are therefore for guidance.”

2.38 Whilst it is recognised that not all aspects of the Design for Gravesham SPD are relevant to this outline stage development proposal, this Design and Access Statement includes a Compliance Checklist (Appendix A) which confirms the Proposal's compliance with the relevant design principles of the Design Code SPD.



8 Appendix

Compliance checklist

Applicants will be expected to submit a completed Compliance Checklist with their application. This should be included with the Design and Access Statement when this is required.

The Compliance Checklist will be used by the planning authority to aid with the assessment of the planning application.

Applicants are encouraged to use the Compliance Checklist at an early stage and throughout the design process.

Applicants are expected to provide an explanation with each answer given.

Item	Description	Mandatory parameters only	Mandatory and partial interpretative parameters	Both mandatory and interpretative parameters	N/A
1	Do the 4 main threads (Community First, Quality and Place, Connectivity and Infrastructure and Future for Gravesham?) underpin the design proposals?				
2	Are the design proposals accompanied by a vision? Has the vision being clearly set out in the Design and Access Statement?				
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?				
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?				
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?				
6	Do the design proposals follow the guidance for public space as set out in the interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.1?				
7	Has the proposed play space been designed in line with the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.2?				
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?				
9	Have inclusive design and accessibility been considered from the outset in line with the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.4?				

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Item	Description	Mandatory parameters only	Mandatory and partial interpretative parameters	Both mandatory and interpretative parameters	N/A
10	Has the proposed street furniture been designed in line with the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.5?				
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?				
12	Has the proposed wayfinding been designed in line with the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.7?				
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?				
14	Does the proposed development pattern, grain and scale follow the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.9?				
15	Does the proposed height reflect the existing local character as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.10?				
16	Have the proposed tall buildings been designed as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.1?				
17	Does the proposed density reflect the existing local character as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.12?				
18	Does the proposed development respect the existing building line as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.13?				
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?				
20	Does the development respect and respond to the prevailing roof form as set out in the interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.15?				

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Appendix

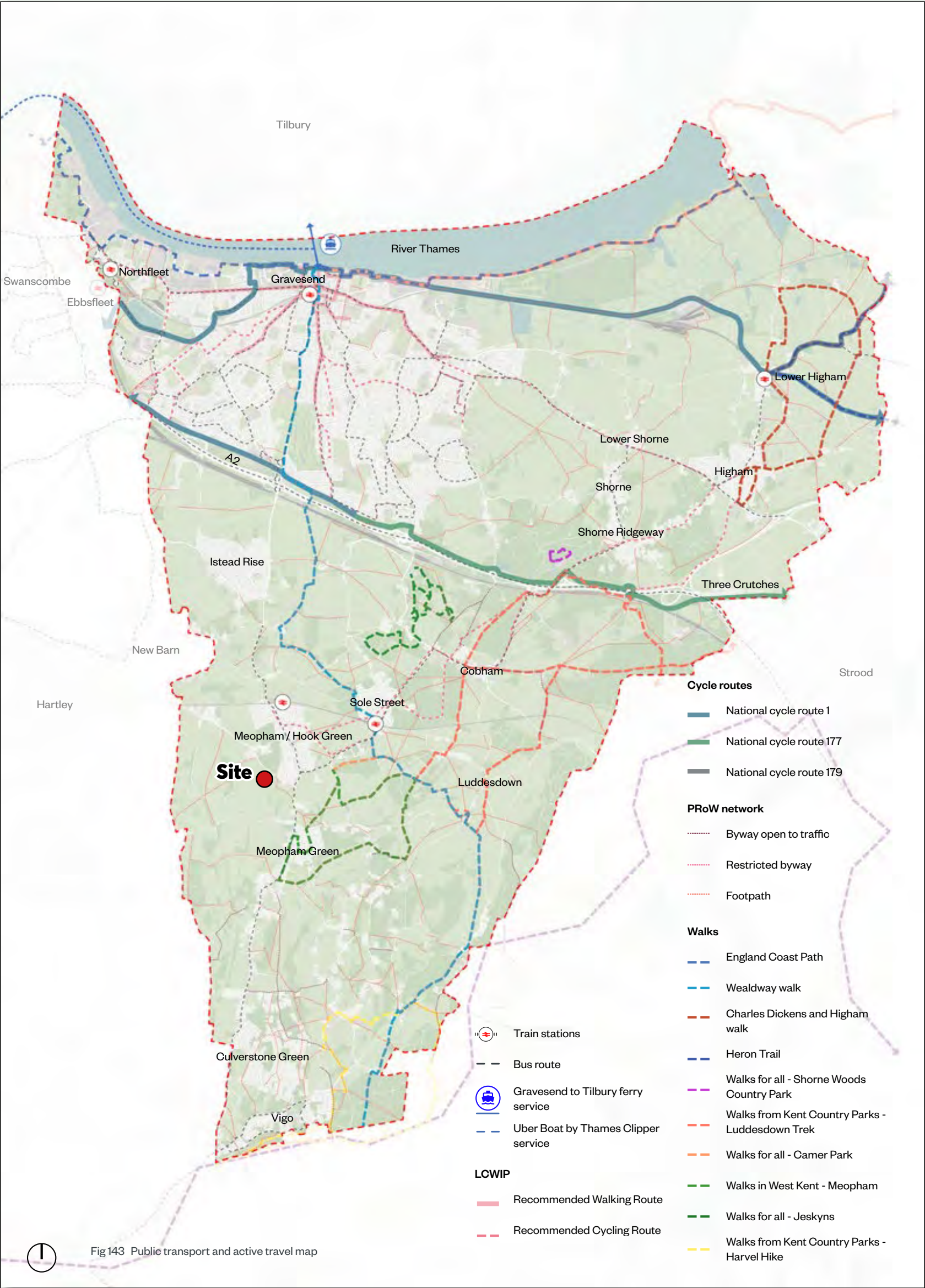
Item	Description	Mandatory parameters only	Mandatory and partial interpretative parameters	Both mandatory and interpretative parameters	N/A
21	Have the proposed elevations been designed to respond to the scale and proportions of the surrounding character areas as set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.16?				
22	Have proposed materials been chosen in line with the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.17?				
23	Do the proposed dwellings meet the requirements set out in the mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.18?				
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?				
25	Has private and communal amenity been designed in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.20?				
26	Have proposed balconies been designed in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 5.21?				
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 5.2?				
28	Have streets been designed to follow mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.2?				
29	Has vehicular parking been designed to follow mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.3?				
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?				
31	Has cycle parking been designed to follow mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.5?				

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Item	Description	Mandatory parameters only	Mandatory and partial interpretative parameters	Both mandatory and interpretative parameters	N/A
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?				
33	Have the proposed open spaces been designed in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.7?				
34	Has biodiversity been considered, protected and enhanced in the design proposals in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.8?				
35	Have Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) been integrated in the design proposals in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.9?				
36	Has planting been proposed in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.10?				
37	Have new trees been proposed in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.11?				
38	If the development sits along the Gravesham Riverside, does the proposed design follow mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.12?				
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?				
40	Have the design proposals consider retrofit of existing buildings in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 6.14?				
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?				
42	Has development carefully considered management and maintenance throughout the design process in line with mandatory and interpretative parameters of Design Principle 7.2?				

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2.39 Meopham and the application site are located within the Rural Area as defined in the Design Code. As such, the following pages set out the Code’s design principles which apply to design proposals at this outline application stage.



3.11 Future for the rural areas?

- a. Promote a **sustainable network of unique villages** co-locating key community facilities and commercial activities and better connected by pedestrian and cycling routes and by excellent, cost-effective public transport.
- b. Improved **pedestrian and cycling permeability** throughout each village with legible streets and new markers and environmental features to aid navigation.
- c. Reinforced and **welcoming village centres** to strengthen community identity, local economy and pride of belonging.
- d. Improved **settings of heritage assets**.
- e. Promoting a **contextual architecture** that talks to the heritage and character of each unique village.
- f. Rural villages to play a fundamental role as **gateways to Gravesham's unique and outstanding nature** such as Kent Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with benefits for the local economy and tourism.
- g. An improved **play offer** for children through play on the way, safer streets and improved playgrounds.
- h. An improved network of **open spaces** to promote outdoor activities and sports for all ages.
- i. Promotion of villages with new housing that can cater to an ageing population following the **HAPPI principles** (Housing for an Ageing Population Panel for Innovation).
- j. Promotion of **retrofit** of existing building stock where appropriate to improve resilience against climate change.
- k. Promotion of **tree planting and**

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) throughout each village to reinforce links with surrounding nature and countryside.

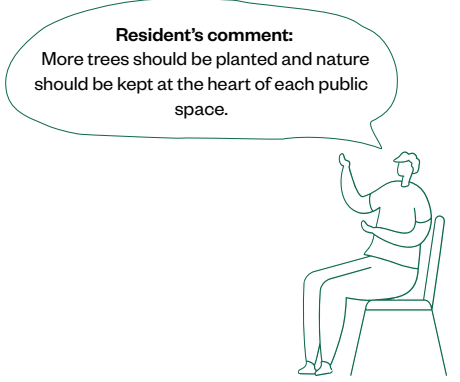
i. Valuing and strengthening Gravesham's **rural economy** and its contribution to the overall local economic growth.



Design principle 4.1
Responding to the local community

- a. When required to validate a planning application, applicants **must** engage with the local community throughout the design process. Engagement can happen via diverse methods (e.g. online surveys, in-person events and/or focus group workshops).
- b. When community engagement is carried out, new development **must** respond to the community needs and aspirations which are material planning considerations.

- c. New development **should** support community cohesion, inclusion and equality.
- d. Applicants of major developments **should** demonstrate a clear understanding of local issues that their design proposals **should** aim to, directly and indirectly, address (e.g. delivering specialist accommodation, affordable housing, local jobs, public realm improvements, transport improvements, provision of local infrastructure and services).



Design principle 4.2
Enhance and contribute to local identity

- a. Development **must** positively respond to Gravesham's diverse identities and to the cultural and socially distinct characteristics of the surrounding areas.
- b. Development **must** engage, enhance and celebrate the surrounding environment and community, whilst meeting the needs of all its occupants and users.
- c. Development **must** enrich and reinforce local identity to ensure it remains resilient to today's and future challenges.
- d. Development **must** reinforce or promote a place-specific local identity. Applicants **must** use the Design and Access Statement to demonstrate how this has been achieved.

- e. Applicants **should** consider integrating appropriate "meanwhile uses" in their development phases to avoid plots remaining vacant for long periods of time and negatively impacting on surrounding communities, their feeling of belonging and identity.

Design principle 5.9
Pattern, grain and scale

- a. New development **must** respond sensitively to the prevailing pattern and intervals of existing development to reflect the grain of the existing character area where the building (or larger development) is placed.
- b. A coarse development pattern with large monolithic buildings or uniform development frontages **must** be avoided.

- c. New development **should** reflect the prevailing pattern of the built form in those areas where there is a cohesive scale and grain such as the town centre, local centres and rural villages.
- d. On large regeneration sites along the Gravesham Riverside there will be potential to introduce new development form and massing. Nevertheless, massing **should** create a rhythm of vertically proportioned bays or individual buildings.
- e. When a larger developments is proposed, the massing **should** be broken down into smaller proportionate elements that contextually respond to the character of the area and create a human-scaled street scene.

Design principle 5.15
Roofscape

- a. New development **must** respect the character of the local area and **must** respond to prevailing roof forms in a way that is appropriate to the context.
- b. Where there is a higher level of coherency in the character of an area, major variations to the roof form, pitch, colour and materiality **must** be avoided.
- c. Roofscape design **must** consider sustainability and orientation.
- d. Materials used in roofs **must** be robust and appropriate for Gravesham's estuary environment.

- e. Inconsistent roof pitches **should** be avoided.
- f. Roofs **should** be proportionate to the scale of the building.
- g. Roofscape design **should** respond to the existing topography and to views from above where applicable.
- h. In larger developments a variety of roof forms **should** be adopted to aid legibility of character areas and street hierarchy.
- i. Rooftop plants **should** be appropriately screened and should be considered as integral parts of the roof design.
- j. False roofs or screens without a function **should** be avoided.



Design principle 5.18
Space standards for dwellings

- a. The internal floor area of the home **must** meet the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS), as set out in the adopted SPD on residential layout guidelines.
- b. All new dwellings **should** be Building Regulations Approved Document M4(2) compliant.
- c. 10% of all new dwellings **should** be Building Regulations Approved Document M4(3) compliant (wheelchair homes).
- d. All one-bedroom homes **should** have at least two habitable rooms. Sliding doors or walls may be used to separate the bedroom from the main living space.
- e. Proposals for older people's housing **should** consider HAPPI (Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation) design principles.
- f. Design proposals **should** consider providing additional secure storage at ground or basement level for individual dwellings in flatted buildings, and external storage in dwellings with gardens.

Design principle 6.2
Streets

- a. New developments **must** establish a clear hierarchy of streets and variety of street typologies.
- b. The design of all streets **must** consider servicing and emergency access.
- c. All primary and secondary streets **must** be designed to accommodate street trees and/or soft landscape.
- d. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) **must** be prioritised when designing streets.
- e. Developers **must** consult with the Highways Authority and **must** follow the Highways Authority design guidance when designing roads for adoption.
- f. All street types **should** provide for clear pedestrian priority and minimise carriageway width.
- g. Streets **should** be designed to prioritise pedestrians first, then cycling, then public transport and lastly vehicular movement.
- h. On-street parking **should** be located to avoid key pedestrian desire lines and the related obstruction of pedestrian movement.
- i. Streets **should** maximise opportunities for social interactions with pause points, seating, pocket amenity spaces and squares.

Design principle 6.6
Protecting and enhancing blue and green infrastructure

- a. New developments **must** be designed to conserve, enhance, connect, and improve the use and access of the Borough's existing blue and green infrastructure.
- b. New open space provision **must** be designed to be inclusive and enjoyable by all community groups.
- c. New developments **must** integrate approaches for the creation of green and blue infrastructure at a doorstep and strategic level, responding to the site context.
- d. Trees, hedges, woodland and natural green spaces positively contribute to the sense of identity of a place and **should** be integrated into the design proposals with a presumption against removal in all instances.

ASSESSING THE CONTEXT



“An understanding of the context, history and the cultural characteristics of a site, neighbourhood and region influences the location, siting and design of new developments. It means they are well grounded in their locality and more likely to be acceptable to existing communities. Creating a positive sense of place helps to foster a sense of belonging and contributes to well-being, inclusion and community cohesion.”

(Para. 39, NDG 2021)

- 3.1 This section provides a summary of the assessment of the site's context which has been carried out to inform the design proposals.

CONNECTIVITY

- 3.2 The site is well connected to the surrounding urban area of Meopham, and benefits from access to public transport and strategic highway links within close proximity of the site.
- 3.3 The plan opposite illustrates the location of the site within the local context of the surrounding access and movement network.

Public Transport

- 3.4 The nearest bus stops (northbound and southbound) to the site are located on Wrotham Road, adjacent to the local centre providing direct services to local urban centres including Gravesham and Sevenoaks. These are approximately a 500m walk.
- 3.5 Both bus stops provide access to several services, including the 306, 308 and 416 which, collectively, connect to Vigo, Gravesend and Sevenoaks with a total of thirteen services per day. Additional services also call at the bus stops adjacent to Meopham railway station.
- 3.6 There are also an additional eight school bus services providing connections to local schools, including but not limited to, Dartford Boys Grammar School, Willmington Grammar School for Girls, Meopham Secondary School and Wrotham School.
- 3.7 The nearest railway station is Meopham c.1.9km to the north of the site. Connections are provided to London Victoria, Gillingham and Dover Priory at an average frequency of 2 per hour 7 days a week.

Pedestrian and Cycle Connections

- 3.8 Local pedestrian and cyclist connections include;
- Routes and footpaths around the adjoining residential settlement to local amenities and destinations, accessed via Longfield Road;
 - A Public Right of Way (PRoW) (ref: NS253) crossing the north-east corner of the site connecting Longfield Road to The Street and Camer Park Road further east.
 - Public footpath NS253 as depicted on the Kent County Council's Public rights of way map indicates the location of the footpath within the boundary of Helen Allison School to its south and western edges. The plan opposite shows footpath NS253 plotted along the existing trodden footpath outside the school and then cutting across the northeast corner of the site and connecting to Longfield Road.
 - A network of PRoWs crossing the countryside around the site, providing footways to surrounding settlements and the Kent Downs National Landscape.

Local Highway Network

- 3.9 The site has links to the A2, located around 4.5km north of the site providing direct links to London, Dover, the M25 and M2 motorways.
- 3.10 The site is also around 8km north of junction 3 of the M20 motorway, providing direct links to London, Folkestone and the M26.



Proposed access point off B260 Longfield Road



Access point off Longfield Road





The Parade – Local Centre



Meopham School (Secondary)

St Paul's Community Church



Hook Green



Bartella's Restaurant



The George Inn



LOCAL FACILITIES

- 3.11 The Local Facilities Plan opposite shows the location of key local facilities and services in relation to the site. Meopham provides a range of local shops and public services, including:
- Local shops;
 - Schools;
 - Healthcare services such as Medical centre, Dentist and Pharmacy
 - Places of worship;
 - Cafes;
 - Library;
 - Leisure centre;
 - Community hall; and
 - Public houses.
- 3.12 Surrounding villages and settlements, including Wrotham, Hartley and Snodland offer similar additional amenities and facilities.
- 3.13 Gravesend provides a wide range of amenities, including education, leisure, cultural, retail and entertainment facilities.
- 3.14 The site is situated adjacent to Camer Parade within 800m, which contains a range of facilities including;
- Café;
 - Restaurant and Takeaways;
 - Tesco Express (incl. ATM and EVRI parcel drop);
 - Hairdressers; and
 - Garage
- 3.15 In addition, Meopham Community Academy is a 2-form entry primary school located on Longfield Road with a zebra crossing is provided across Longfield Road to a car parking area off school close and also to Camer Parade.
- 3.16 Helen Allison National Autistic School lies immediately west of the primary school. A crossing off Wrotham Road is provided to the south of Longfield Road by means of a large protected central refuge area. Both schools are within an 800m walk of the site.
- 3.17 Further facilities are available within the wider village, within 2km of the site, including a secondary school, community spaces, places of worship and eateries. Local facilities are shown on the plan opposite.



Meopham Community Academy



Meopham Medical Centre



Costcutter



Tesco Express



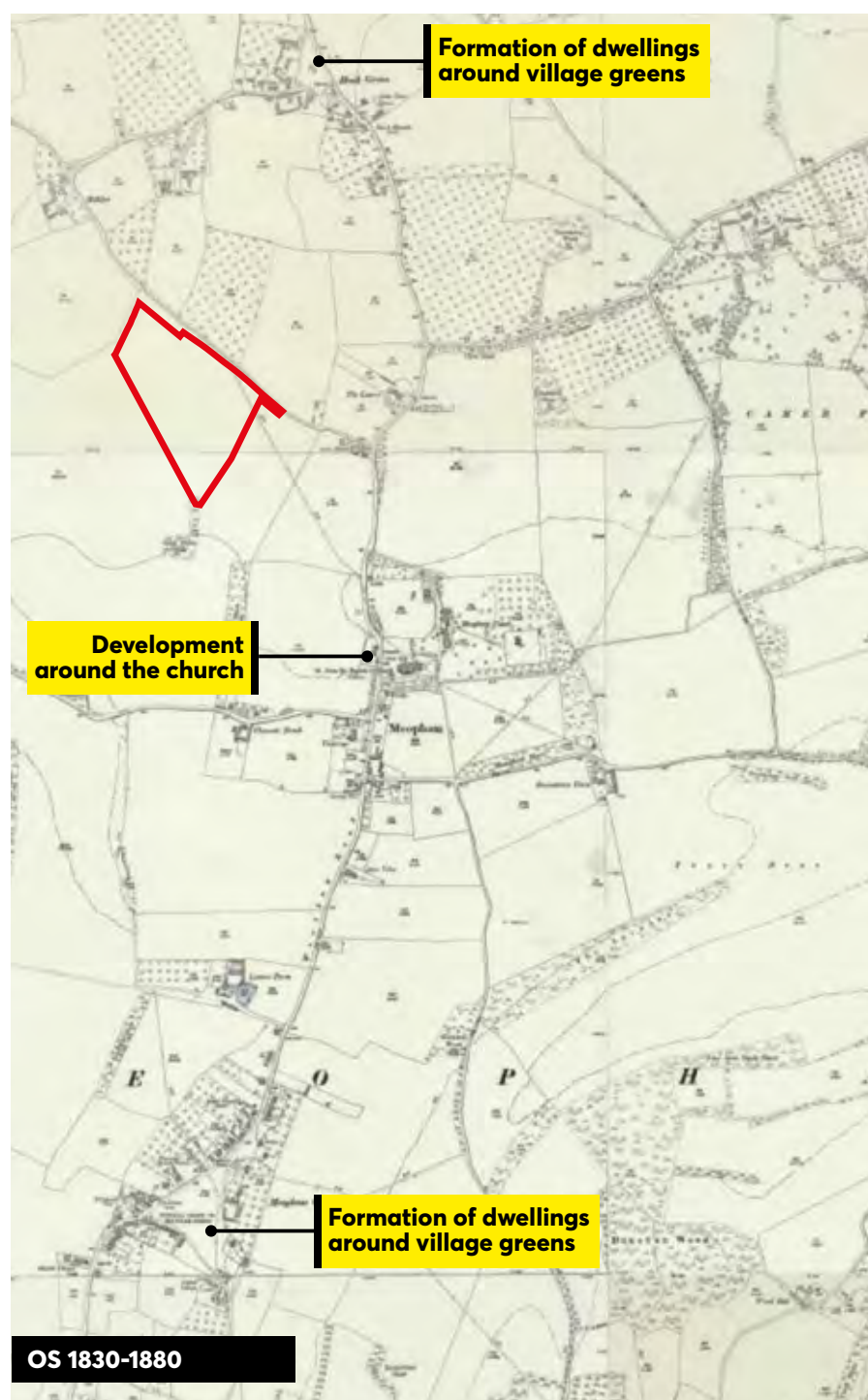
HISTORIC GROWTH

“When determining how a site may be developed, it is important to understand the history of how the place has evolved. The local sense of place and identity are shaped by local history, culture and heritage, and how these have influenced the built environment and wider landscape.”

(Para. 46, NDG 2021)

19th Century

- 3.18 Historically, Meopham grew as a series of separate hamlets and farming settlements, including Hook Green, The Street and Meopham Green which today are all designated Conservation Areas.
- 3.19 During the 19th Century, railway construction brought improved accessibility to London and neighbouring towns, making the village an attractive location for those seeking a rural lifestyle with urban connections.
- 3.20 Population growth prompted new brick-built cottages, schools and chapels. Infrastructure improvements, including the road network, further integrated Meopham with the surrounding region and supported urban growth.

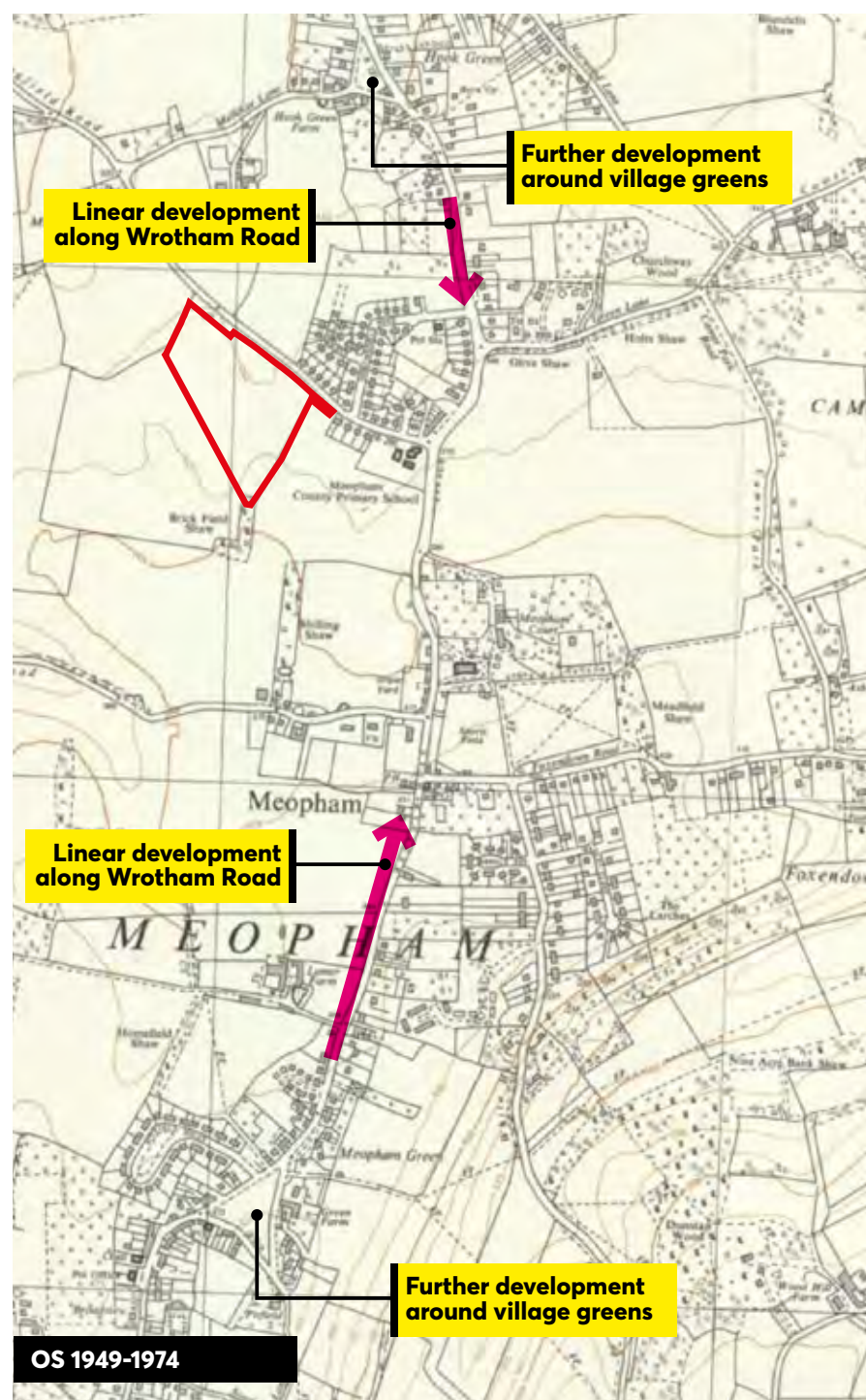


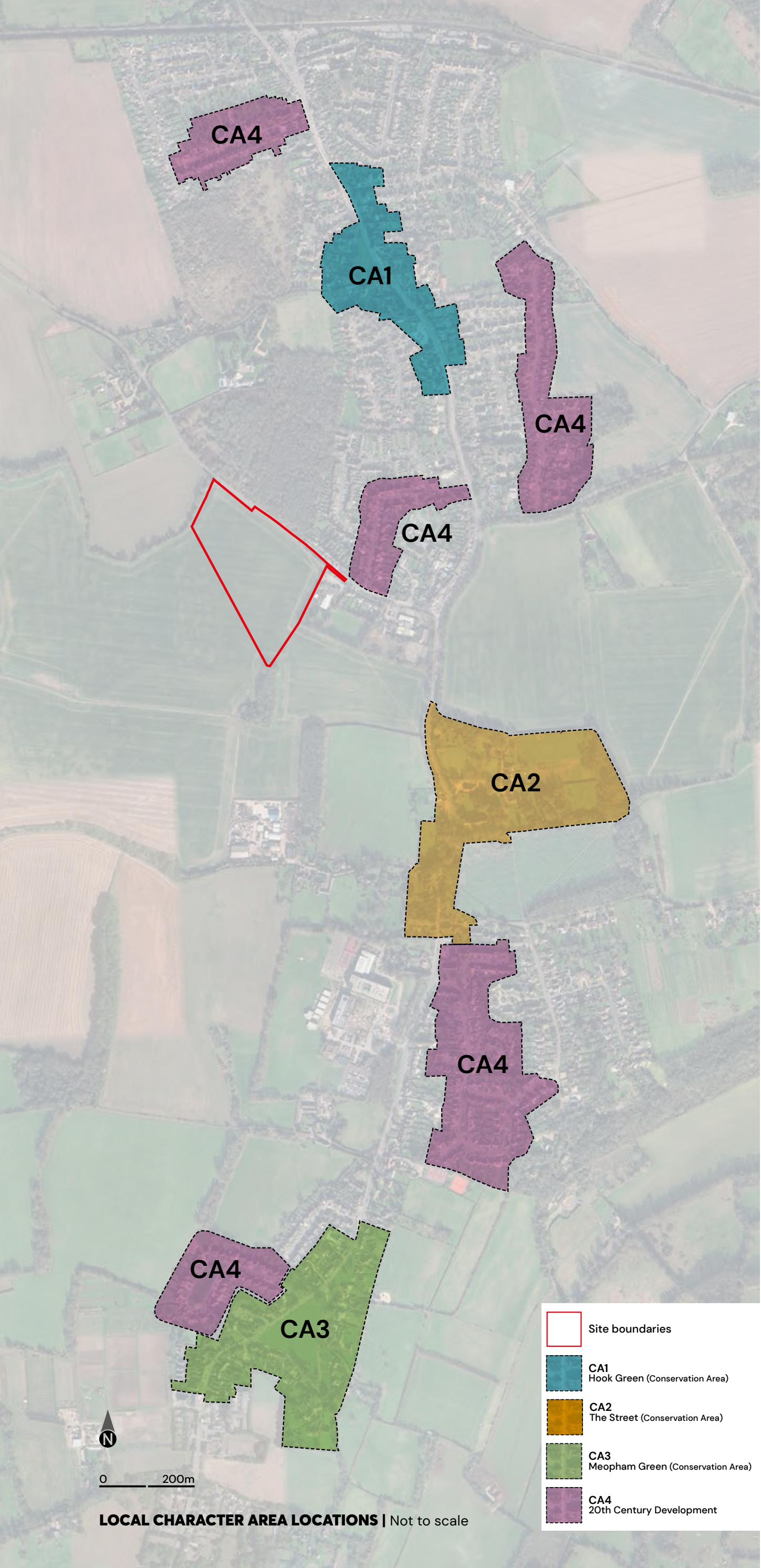
20th Century

- 3.21 The 20th Century saw an acceleration in Meopham’s urban growth and a transition from a largely agricultural community into a semi-rural commuter village. This development was shaped by broader national trends, such as suburbanisation, improvements to transportation and post-war housing policy.
- 3.22 The village saw an increase in residential development outward from the traditional settlements in the post-war years, primarily along the A227 (Wrotham Road) and close to the railway station, with new residential estates and amenities including shops, schools and recreational facilities supporting the growing community.
- 3.23 The expanded railway network and increased use of motor vehicles made daily commuting possible. As the trend of commuting to London grew, Meopham became more desirable for its semi-rural character and rail connectivity.

Present Day

- 3.24 Meopham today exists as a continual linear settlement along the A227. The urban landscape is defined by the traditional hamlets blended with more recent residential developments and local facilities. An analysis of Meopham’s local character as it exists today is explored on the next few pages.





LOCAL CHARACTER

“Local identity is made up of typical characteristics such as the pattern of housing, and special features that are distinct from their surroundings. These special features can be distinguished by their uses and activity, their social and cultural importance, and/ or their physical form and design. Most places have some positive elements of character, particularly for their users. These can help to inform the character of a new development.”

(Para. 52, NDG 2021)

3.25 The National Design Guide states that well-designed new development is influenced by:

“...an appreciation and understanding of vernacular, local or regional character, including existing built form, landscape and local architectural precedents;”

(Para. 53, NDG 2021)

3.26 An analysis of the existing local vernacular of Meopham will help identify patterns of development and key design components. Together these character generators and design components will help to inform the design approach.

3.27 The immediate urban context is residential, where a range of architectural styles, detailing and materials, and thereby character, are evident, as demonstrated across the following pages.

3.28 Four character areas have been identified around Meopham which illustrate a morphological expansion of the settlement and provide examples of contrasting urban forms and building details which generate a palette of design references that may be drawn from. This will allow the proposed design response to reflect local character.

3.29 The character areas are identified on the plan below as follows:

- CA1: Hook Green
- CA2: The Street, Meopham
- CA3: Meopham Greem
- CA4: 20th Century Development

HOOK GREEN

“Hook Green Conservation Area is of special interest for its triangular village green with its mature landscaping, bordered on two sides by historic buildings, and for its offshoots to north and south along the Wrotham Road. The latter areas comprise small outlying collections of listed buildings and their settings”

(Hook Green, Meopham: Rural Conservation Area Appraisal SPD)

- 3.23 The Conservation Area is largely linear, following the arterial route of Wrotham Road, with buildings arranged loosely around Hook Green. The Conservation Area’s distinctive character is most clearly expressed in the central area and the triangular village green.
- 3.24 The Conservation Area retains a strong sense of place. Its built form, historic layout and architectural character contribute to its significance.
- 3.25 The well-kept village green is a grassed space with groupings of mature trees to its edges. An attractive ‘Meopham’ signpost is prominent within the green, well-seen when travelling along Wrotham Road.
- 3.26 A key feature of the area is its relatively low density and spacious character, with large plots, mature trees and green spaces. Rural perimeter lanes to the west and south of the green feature built form consisting of two-storey detached dwellings, cottages and converted farm buildings.
- 3.27 Historic buildings within the Conservation Area include converted farm buildings, such as Hook Green Farmhouse and Evenden Farmhouse, and late 19th Century/early 20th Century houses built as ‘villas’ set in relatively large plots, such as The White House and Evenden House. These historic dwellings are arranged informally, creating irregular building lines reinforcing the low density and spacious character of the area.
- 3.28 The overall architectural character is defined by proportion, scale and materials that blend with the village setting. Materiality is characteristic of Kent building materials, include slate tiles, exposed timber frame, timber frames clad externally and weatherboarding. Red and yellow brickwork in Flemish bond are prominent, together with smooth stucco over brick. Chimneys, porches, bay windows, gables and dormer windows are common architectural elements, contributing to a varied but harmonious streetscape. Flint walling is visible on properties and in boundary walls.
- 3.29 Contemporary residential properties along the third side of the green, along Wrotham Road, continue the themes of low density, spacious character and irregular building lines of the historic buildings. Modern dwellings are set back from the highway with front gardens, trees and planting. Orientated to face the green rather than being angled to directly front the road.
- 3.30 Road has a tighter urban grain north and south of the green, with built form following a more linear pattern along the street. Wrotham Road itself features footpaths to both sides of the carriageway, with a grass verge to one side including tree planting and low timber bollards. Pockets of irregular built form are visible with historic houses and converted agricultural buildings at the former Evenden Farm and The Old Forge.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

- Well-kept triangular village green with mature trees
- ‘Meopham’ signpost on the village green
- Low density and spacious character around the green
- Rural character of the lanes to the west and south sides of the green
- A tighter urban grain along Wrotham Road north and south of the green
- Listed and historic buildings of local importance
- Predominantly two-storey properties
- Focal wide-frontage elevations
- Converted agricultural buildings
- Materials including slate tiles, exposed timber frame, timber frame clad externally and weatherboarding, red and yellow brickwork in Flemish bond, and smooth stucco over brick
- Detailing including chimneys, bay windows, porches, gables and dormer windows
- Flint walling visible on properties and in boundary walling
- Semi-mature trees and grass verge along Wrotham Road.



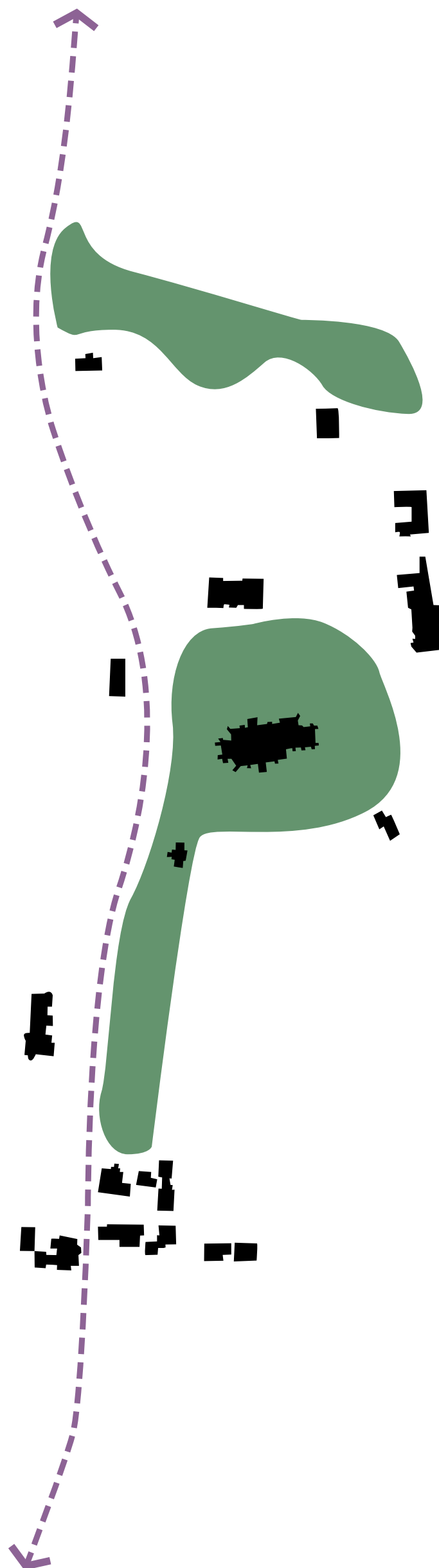


THE STREET

“Meopham The Street Conservation Area is of special interest for its historic buildings and for the various wall-, hedge-, and tree-enclosed spaces around and to the north, east and west of the St John’s Church and Meopham Court; for the hedges, tree belts and garden spaces along the Wrotham road; and for the grouping of buildings around the junction of The Street with Wrotham Road.”

(The Street, Meopham: Rural Conservation Area Appraisal SPD)

- 3.31 The Conservation Area of ‘The Street, Meopham’ represents the original settlement of Meopham, between the later satellite hamlets of Hook Green and Meopham Green.
- 3.32 In the north of the Conservation Area, trees are a key element of the character. With visually dominant woodland, trees and hedges providing a setting for small scale development. Flint boundary walls run along Wrotham Road and built form is largely sited away from public roads and screened from public footpaths. Hedges and trees enclose land in the north of the Conservation Area, screening the area from outward views and providing a rural setting.
- 3.33 St John the Baptist Church provides a focal point within the Conservation Area. Seen from the Wrotham Road, the Church’s west tower is a striking feature in its open setting and there are glimpsed views of the tower from around the wider landscape. Other buildings of note in the northern part of the Conservation Area include the mid-Victorian Meopham Court and the Old Vicarage. Aside from the Church, built form in the north of the Conservation Area is small scale, low density and mostly set back from view.
- 3.34 The built up ‘centre’ of this historic hamlet developed around the junction of The Street and Wrotham Road. This southern area of the Conservation Area features a tight urban grain along the streets, with continuous frontages, buildings built to back of footpath and a sense of enclosure.
- 3.35 The usual palette of Kent building materials occurs within the historic buildings of the Conservation Area. Timber frames clad externally with weatherboarding or finished with painted external plaster are present. There is a small scale use of tile hanging at Meopham Court’s north lodge. Local plain red, red and blue header and yellow brickwork also feature, together with smooth stucco and modern painted renders over brick. Roofs are almost all clad in local peg-tile with some natural slate roofs. Flint and brick walling is seen in a number of buildings and in boundary walling.
- 3.36 Whilst the positive features noted in the Rural Conservation Area Appraisal SPD includes “The grouping of historic buildings about the junction of The Street with Wrotham Road”, it is also noted that 20th Century widening of Wrotham Road has resulted in a loss of the Conservation Area’s historic character. Heavy traffic along Wrotham Road is also a negative feature, with no concessions made to the road passing through a Conservation Area.



MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

- Woodland setting around the north of the Conservation Area
- Tree and hedge surroundings of the northern and central sections of the Conservation Area
- Prominence of St John the Baptist Church and its tower
- Listed and historic buildings of local importance
- Tight urban grain around the junction of The Street with Wrotham Road
- Materials including slate tiles, exposed timber frame, timber frame clad externally and weatherboarding, red and yellow brickwork in Flemish bond, and smooth stucco over brick
- Flint and brick walls to each side of Wrotham Road
- Modern widening and straightening of Wrotham Road and heavy traffic.



MEOPHAM GREEN

“The special interest of Meopham Green Conservation Area lies firstly in its large, two-part, village green. This is almost all down to grass but with a few mature trees in key places. The setting of the green comprises historic and other buildings facing onto it from all three sides. Some of these stand in mature gardens with hedges and trees between and around them, helping to frame the green. Of particular note among the buildings is Meopham windmill. This stands at the point where the south west corner of the green meets the second area of interest, the south-west quarter of the Conservation Area. This area, urban in character and thus contrasting with the green, for the most part comprises historic buildings arranged along, and fronting, both sides of Wrotham Road.”

(Meopham Green: Rural Conservation Area Appraisal SPD)

- 3.37 The Conservation Area takes the form of development around a large two-part triangular green with Wrotham Road along one side. The Conservation Area exhibits a strong sense of place and its built form, historic layout and architectural character contribute to its significance.
- 3.38 Similar to Hook Green, the Conservation Area’s distinctive character is most clearly expressed in the central area around the internal triangular village green and other smaller greens. The large green is a well-kept open space with groupings of mature trees to its edges and a war memorial in the northern corner. The green is used for local cricket matches, and there is a white timber pavilion on the southern corner of the green.
- 3.39 A key feature of the area is its relatively low density and spacious character. Rural lanes bound the green to the south and cross the green to the east. These narrow lanes serve a mixture of detached dwellings within large plots, converted farm buildings, cottages and terraced dwellings framing the green. Dwellings are typically two storey, with some 2.5 storey properties in the mix.
- 3.40 Meopham Green exhibits a sense of community, with public houses fronting the green and the green itself used for local cricket matches.
- 3.41 The Windmill, a local landmark located south-west of the village green, is visible from the green due to the relatively low lying nature of surrounding built form. Other notable buildings include Meopham Lodge, Dashwood Court, Barnside and Norway House. These historic buildings, many with symmetrical wide-fronted elevations, are arranged informally around the green and create an informal pattern of development, with a loose urban grain and irregular building lines reinforcing the low density and spacious character of the area.
- 3.42 North and south of the green, Wrotham Road and South Street comprise a street character that contrasts with the spacious character of the green. This street character features linear built form and a tight urban grain, including built form to back of footpath, terraced dwellings and less space between dwellings. Footpaths are to one or both sides of the carriageway with little to no grass verges, creating a strong sense of enclosure in contrast to the open sense of space experienced within the village green.
- 3.43 The overall architectural character is defined by proportion, scale and materials that blend with the village setting. Materiality is characteristic of Kent building materials, include slate tiles, tile hanging, exposed timber frame, timber frames clad externally and weatherboarding. Red and yellow brickwork in Flemish bond are prominent, together with smooth stucco over brick.
- 3.44 Chimneys, porches, bay windows, gables and dormer windows are common architectural elements, contributing to a varied but harmonious streetscape. Flint walling is visible in boundary walls.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

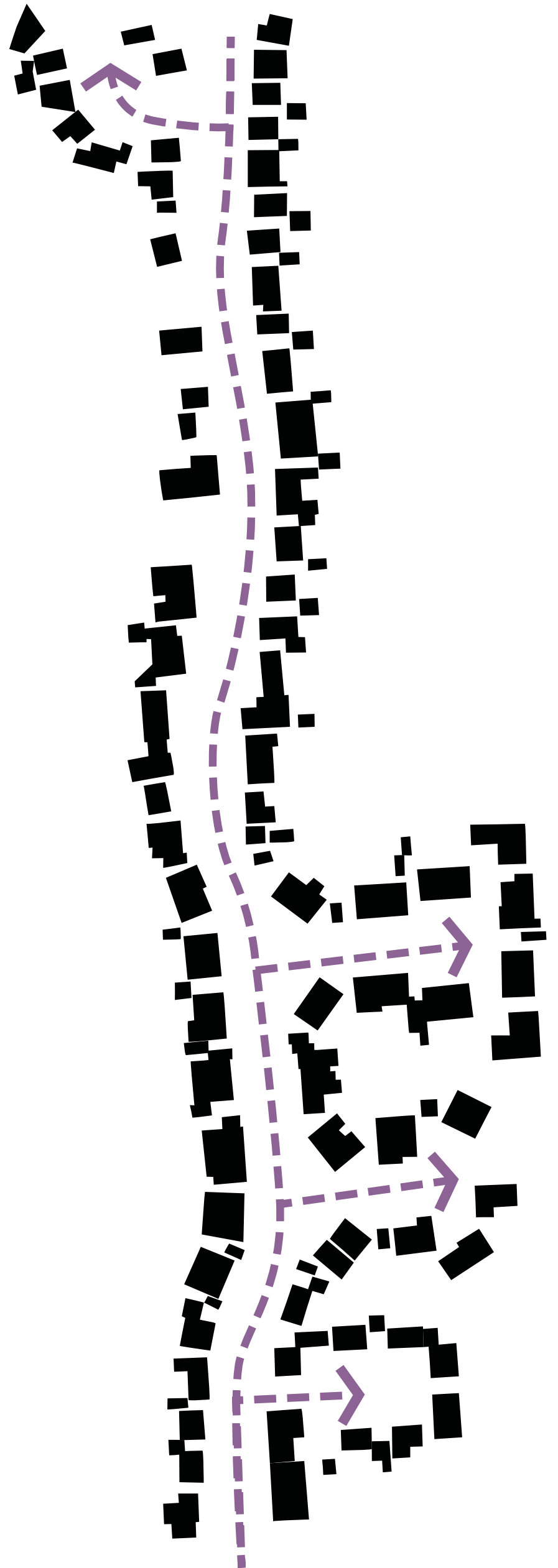
- Well-kept triangular village green with mature trees, a war memorial and small cricket pavilion
- Smaller linked greens
- Low density and spacious character around the green
- Rural character of the lanes east and south of the green
- A tighter urban grain along Wrotham Road and South Street
- Listed and historic buildings of local importance
- Predominantly two-storey properties, with some 2.5 storey buildings
- Focal wide-frontage elevations
- The Windmill
- Materials including slate tiles, exposed timber frame, timber frame clad externally and weatherboarding, tile hanging, red and yellow brickwork in Flemish bond, and smooth stucco over brick
- Diversity of uses and a sense of community, with public houses and the green used for cricket matches
- Detailing including chimneys, bay windows, porches, gables and dormer windows
- Flint walling visible in boundary walling





20TH CENTURY DEVELOPMENT

- 3.45 Areas of 20th Century development throughout Meopham consist of post-war and late 20th Century residential development which expanding outward of the Conservation Areas and the traditional areas of the village.
- 3.46 These developments are typically cul-de-sacs, or accessed off a main road in one or two locations depending on the size of development, with the rest of the road layout arranged as cul-de-sacs.
- 3.47 As was characteristic of housing built in the mid and late 20th Century, development in these areas are insular, maximising land use with plots backing onto field edges. Whilst creating interest within the developments, such as housing arranged around an open green on Pitfield Drive, this results in negative edges to the countryside, with rear gardens backing onto open fields.
- 3.48 Densities and massing are in keeping with the local vernacular, with built form typically a range of detached and semi-detached plots, with some terraced dwellings. Building heights are typically 2 storey, with 1 and 1.5 storeys present together with a range of eaves and ridge heights. Varying roofscapes are present, with the varied use of pitched and gable fronted roofs, boxed eaves and dormer windows featuring throughout.
- 3.49 Building lines are relatively formal, built in linear arrangements along the streets, with dwelling frontages accommodating a mixture of driveway parking and landscaped front gardens.
- 3.50 20th Century development around Meopham features a mixed materials palette, including red/orange and stock brick, timber cladding, render and tile hanging. Details such as window heads and cills are limited. Use of enclosed, flat and pitched roof porches are present throughout, together with chimneys, bay windows and cat slide roofs.
- 3.51 A range of parking typologies are present ranging from on-plot side and front parking, adjoining and integral garages and on-street parking.
- 3.52 Varying use of boundary treatments are visible, including hedgerows and brick walls. Front gardens feature a mix of grass lawns, trees and landscape planting.
- 3.53 Where post-war development include dwellings around public space, such as Pitfield Drive, this replicates the traditional village greens around Meopham, with grass lawns and mature tree planting. The extent of grass verges and tree-lined streets varies. Where areas of landscaping are present they contribute to the visual appeal, environmental sustainability and accessibly recreational opportunities of the area.



MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

- Post-war and later 20th Century residential development
- Regular and linear building lines along streets
- Predominantly 2 storey built form, with 1 and 1.5 storey dwellings in the mix
- Typically detached and semi-detached dwellings with space between dwellings and limited continuous frontages
- Some replications of traditional village greens with mature tree planting in post-war developments
- On-plot side and frontage parking, adjoining and integral garages and on-street parking
- Materials including red/orange and stock brick, timber cladding, render and tile hanging
- Details include enclosed, flat and pitched roof porches, chimneys, bay windows and cat slide roofs
- Boundary treatments including hedgerows and brick walls.
- Front gardens featuring a mix of grass lawns, trees and landscape planting.



ASSESSING THE SITE

“Well-designed new development is integrated into its wider surroundings, physically, socially and visually. It is carefully sited and designed, and is demonstrably based on an understanding of the existing situation...”

(Para. 43, NDG 2021)

LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

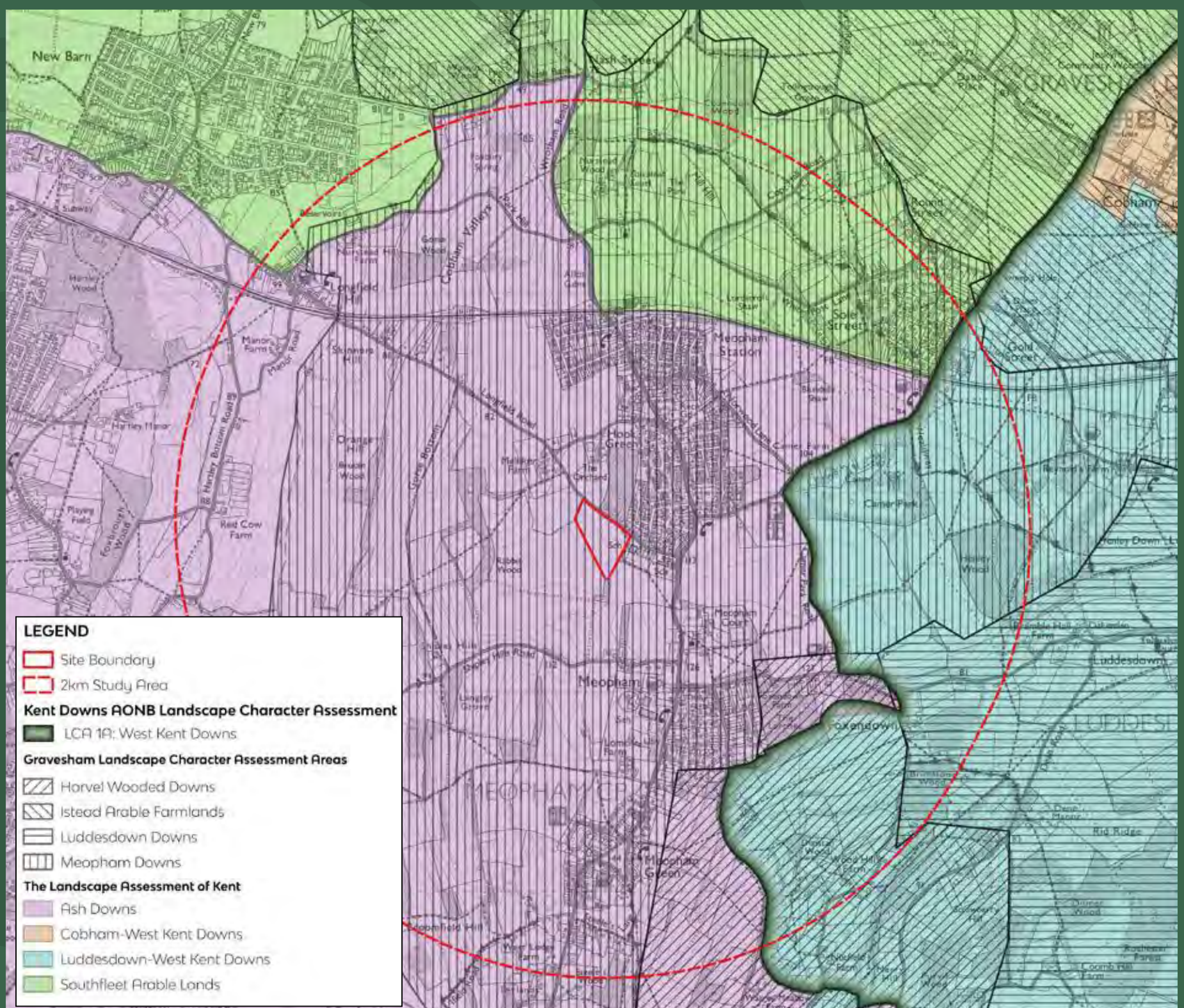
4.1 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared by Tyler Grange.

Landscape Character

4.2 The site lies on the western edge of Meopham, forming part of a gently undulating agricultural landscape typical of the Meopham Downs character area. It comprises a small section of a larger arable field, with its most notable feature being a mature hedgerow along the western boundary. Other boundaries are more open, with limited vegetation, giving the site a relatively simple structure. While the wider landscape retains a rural character, the site itself is influenced by nearby settlement and road infrastructure, creating a transitional setting between the built edge and open countryside.

Visual Context

4.3 The site is generally well-contained by existing vegetation and landform, with the most open views available from Longfield Road along the northern boundary and from the Public Right of Way that runs along the eastern edge. Beyond these localised views, visibility is quickly curtailed by intervening vegetation, settlement, and the rolling landform to the south and west. Where views occur, they are typically experienced in the context of the existing settlement edge, so the site reads as part of a semi-rural fringe rather than an isolated rural landscape.

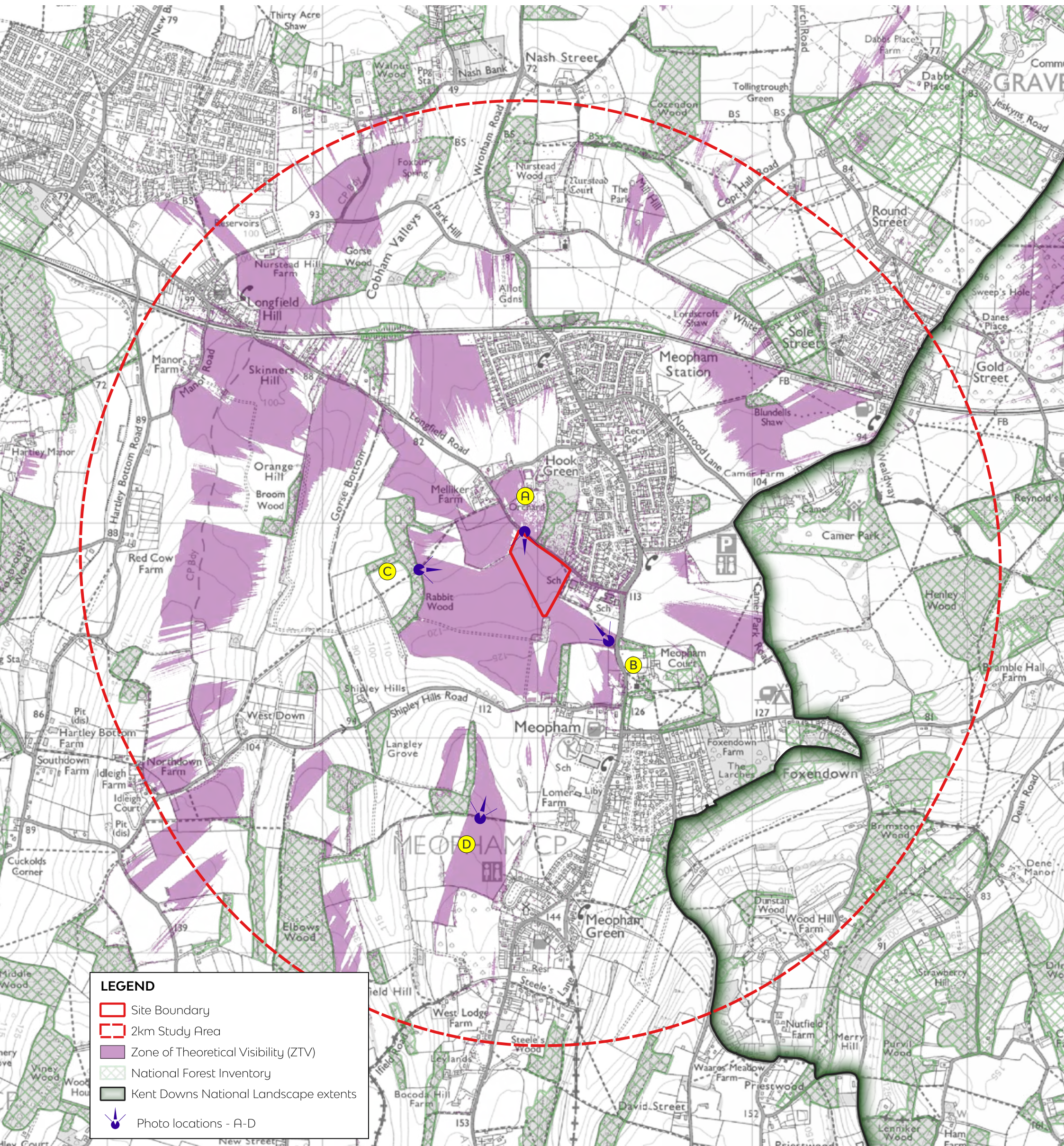


LANDSCAPE CHARACTER | Not to scale

See drawing number 17740_P08 prepared by Tyler Grange



0 1km



ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY AND VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS | Not to scale
 See drawing number 17740_PO9 prepared by Tyler Grange



0 1km



A View from Longfield Road, adjacent to the northern boundary at the north-eastern corner of the site, looking south-west



B View from public right of way NS253 to the east of the site, looking north-west



C View from public right of way NS251 to the west of the site, looking east



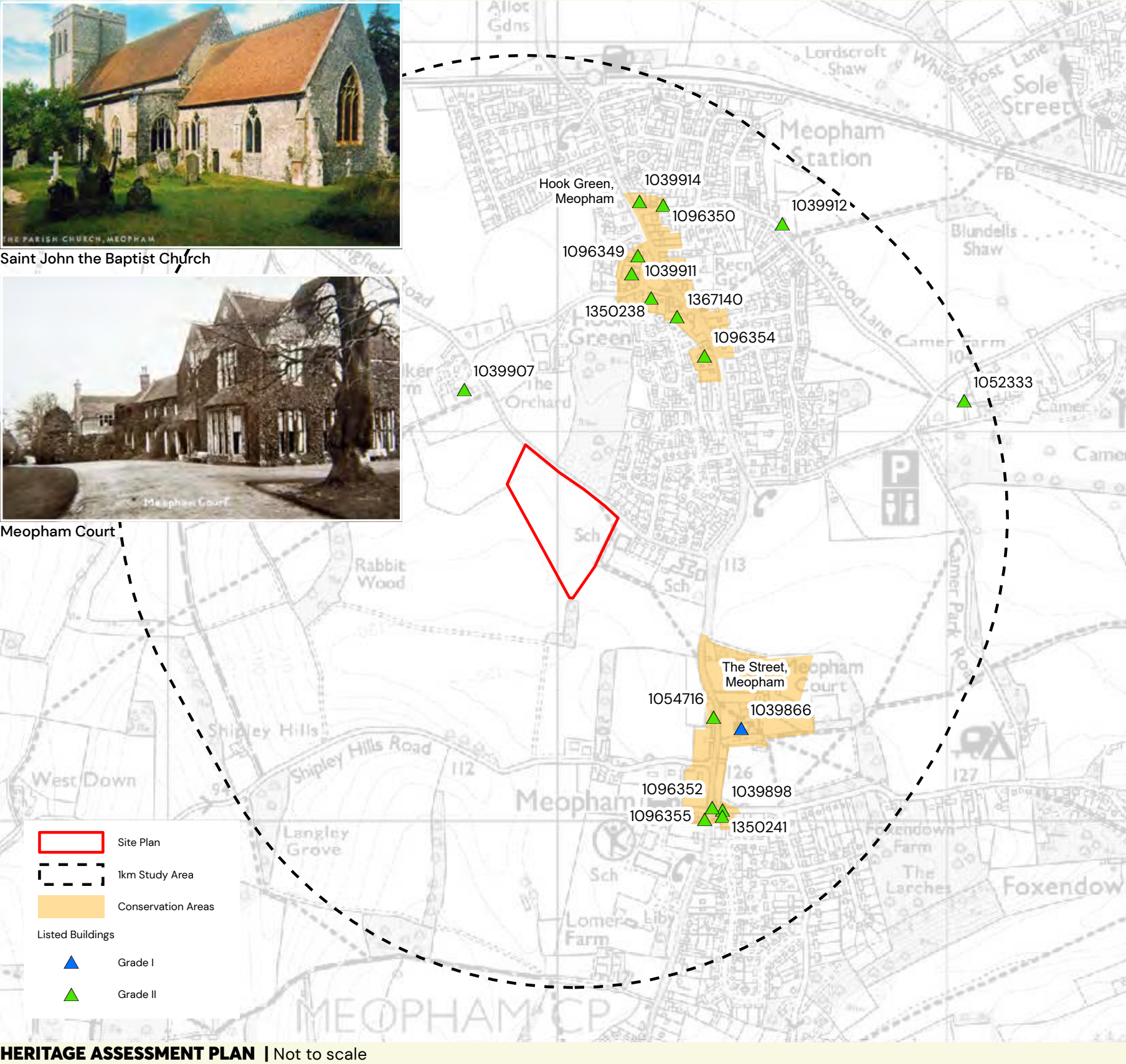
D View from public right of way NS283 to the south of the site, looking north-east

HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY

4.4 A specialist consultant, Pegasus Group, has reviewed the potential heritage and archaeological features evident in the area and mitigation measures as necessary.

Built Heritage

4.5 The Heritage Statement also provides an assessment of the heritage significance of designated heritage assets in the surrounds of the site and the potential impact the proposed development could have on said significance. There are no designated heritage assets located within the Site. Assets located within the surrounds of the Site include the Grade II Listed Melliker Farmhouse (c.210m northwest from the Site), the Meopham The Street Conservation Area (c.325m southeast from the Site) and the Grade I Listed Parish Church of St John the Baptist (c.545m southeast from the Site). The Site is not considered to form any part of the setting that positively contributes to the overall heritage significance of these assets. While there is some visual connection between the Site, the Conservation Area and the Listed Parish Church, the proposed development is expected to cause 'no harm' to the heritage significance, through changes to their setting.



Archaeological Resource

- 4.6 A Geophysical Survey was undertaken across the Site in April 2025. The survey identified anomalies of natural and undetermined origins. Modern interference was limited to the edges and isolated areas within the survey areas, associated with extant field boundaries and ferrous debris.
- 4.7 A full Heritage Statement (Pegasus Group, 2025), which includes a review of the archaeological resource of the Site and the wider area (as provided by the Kent HER), as well as the results of the Geophysical Survey, has been prepared and submitted alongside the application. The Report concluded that the potential for archaeology dating from the prehistoric, Romano-British, or medieval periods within the Site is low. Historic mapping indicates that the Site has operated as agricultural land since the early 19th century. Aerial photography from 1940 shows three unknown structures along the northern edges of the Site, these are considered to be possible Second World War Armstrong Huts, and these were taken down by 1946. Any surviving remains of these structures have likely been truncated by ploughing and the significance of such archaeology would be considered low.

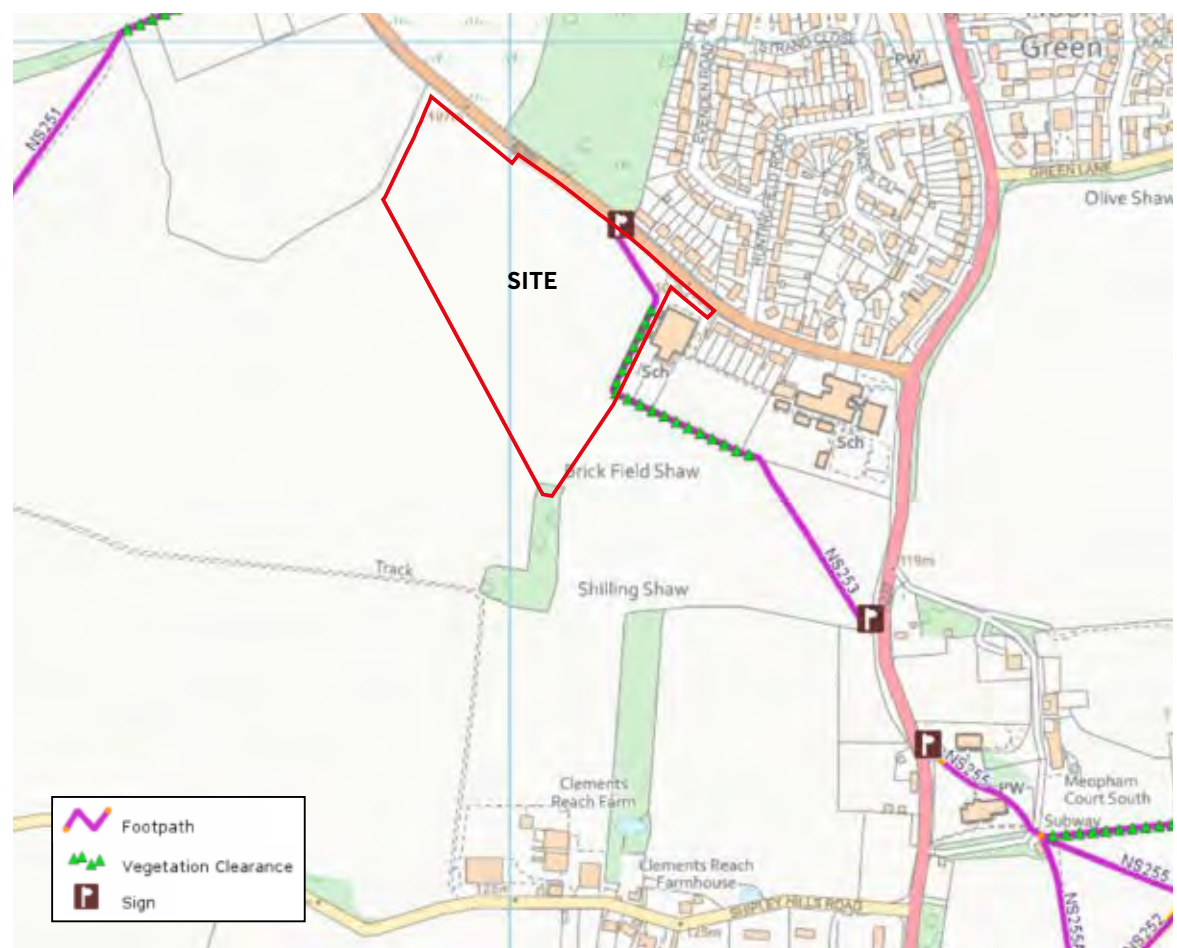
ARBORICULTURE

- 4.8 An Arboriculture Assessment has been prepared by RammSanderson to review the vegetation across the development area.
- 4.9 The survey assessed 19 individual trees, 2 groups of trees, 2 areas of woodland and 1 length of hedgerow. All of the individual trees, 1 group of trees and the hedgerow surveyed were of low arboricultural merit (Category C). The remaining group of trees and the area of woodland to the north of Longfield road were deemed to be of moderate arboricultural quality (Category B) as they displayed good amenity and landscape value. The remaining area of woodland to the south, albeit located offside, was surveyed due to its proximity to developments and was deemed to be of high quality (Category A).
- 4.10 There are no TPO's covering the site.

- 4.11 Other than minimal loss of hedgerow for delivery of the access infrastructure, the proposed development does not require the removal of any trees, groups, hedgerows or areas of woodland to facilitate the development plans, and therefore will have no arboricultural impact on the site. Through good design and masterplanning, the site lends itself to enhancing its arboricultural value through additional planting, thereby improving its overall merit and landscape/amenity value.
- 4.12 The installation of a three-dimensional cellular confinement system for the construction of proposed footpath is required within the root protection area of T1. Proposed footpaths also encroach within the root protection areas of T5, T7 and G2, however no mitigation measures are required in these instances due to the minor impacts. A minor section of footpath is also proposed within the RPA of high-quality woodland (W2), this footpath is to be laid with gravel or similar, with no excavation permitted.

TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

- 4.13 A Transport Assessment has been prepared by Hub Transport Planning. Observations and traffic surveys carried out during peak periods on the local highway network have indicated that the local highway network generally operates within capacity during the peak periods, however some limited peak hour queues and delays were noted at the Wrotham Road/Longfield Road junction.
- 4.14 Detailed discussions have taken place between Hub and the local highway authority regarding the use of the Kent/Gravesham Strategic Transport Model to assess the potential future impacts of the proposed development.
- 4.15 Capacity assessments will be carried out as part of the Transport Assessment Addendum at key junctions in the vicinity of the site once the outputs of the strategic modelling exercise have been reviewed.
- 4.16 On-Street parking during school drop-off/pick-up periods was observed on surrounding local roads, and it was also observed that the local facilities on Camer Parade and subsequent off-street parking is well used.
- 4.17 The plan below show the definitive rights of way (and associated reference number) in and around the site (source Kent County Council website). Public footpath NS252 crosses the south-eastern corner of the site.



DEFINITIVE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY EXTRACT | Not to scale
From Kent County Council website



UK HABITATS PLAN | Not to scale
Drawing prepared by RammSanderson

ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

- 4.18 An Ecological Assessment has been prepared by RammSanderson to review the potential ecology in the area that may pose a constraint to development, and mitigation measures as necessary.
- 4.19 The site does not lie within or in close proximity to a Designated Site for Nature Conservation.
- 4.20 The site is dominated by cropland with grass verges and hedgerows. The site is bounded by further crop fields and woodlands. The majority of the habitats within the site are of low ecological value, such as the cropland. The habitats noted for their higher ecological value include the hedgerows and woodlands adjacent to the site.

- 4.21 The site has been noted to have potential to support a variety of protected species. This includes breeding bird populations, badgers, bats and hazel dormouse. A suite of protected species surveys will be undertaken within the site and within the Zone of Influence, to determine presence/absence and to inform required mitigation requirements to ensure legal compliance within wildlife legislation and policy.

HYDROLOGY AND DRAINAGE

- 4.22 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Sustainable Drainage Statement have been carried out by M-EC to review the hydrology and drainage issues pertinent to the development, and mitigation measures if necessary.
- 4.23 The FRA confirms the site is in Flood Zone 1. The site is at a low risk of surface water flooding and at a low risk of flooding from all other sources including groundwater and artificial sources.

NOISE

- 4.24 A Noise Assessment has been carried out by M-EC to review the potential noise sources that may pose a constraint to development, and mitigation measures including
- 4.25 The principal sources of noise affecting the site are from transportation using Longfield Road, coupled with any contributions from the neighbouring Helen Allison School.
- 4.26 The Noise Assessment has been completed using relevant criteria contained within ProPG, BS8233, AVOG whilst giving consideration to typical condition ventilation requirements in AD-F.
- 4.27 This has confirmed relevant external criteria can be satisfied at all garden locations on the Site with a carefully designed layout and standard 1.8m high close boarded timber fencing . Internal acoustic conditions can be predominately be satisfied with standard thermal double glazing and window mounted trickle ventilators to achieve whole-dwelling ventilation. Up-rated acoustic glazing and acoustically rated through wall trickle ventilators are required for the most exposed plots overlooking Longfield Road.

AIR QUALITY

- 4.28 An Quality Assessment has been carried out by M-EC to review published air monitoring and modelling data for the local area and calculate relevant air pollutant concentrations from nearby local roads to determine impacts from the site pre and post development and identify likely mitigation measures.
- 4.29 Assessment has shown that the annual mean air quality objectives will be met at the most exposed receptor locations. Nevertheless, to assist in offsetting incremental creep in pollutant emissions, a number of mitigation measures are proposed:
- Low NOx boilers;
 - Electric vehicle charging;
 - Sustainability measures to support the use of public transport and improve cycling and walking;
 - Damage cost sum; and
 - Dust control measures.



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY'S FLOOD MAP FOR PLANNING (Rivers and Sea)

Not to scale



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY'S FLOOD RISK FROM SURFACE WATER (including climate change for the 2050's epoch)

Not to scale

OVERVIEW OF SITE AND CONTEXT

4.30 The results of the site studies, as summarised in this section of the DAS, are used to inform and structure the development proposals. These are illustrated, where appropriate, on the opportunities and considerations plan presented opposite, and include:

CONSIDERATIONS

- Existing vegetation along the northwestern and southeastern boundaries in the form of tree lines and hedgerow;
- Open aspect to the southern boundary, a sensitive edge overlooking the countryside
- Gently falling topography to the north with potential for locating sustainable drainage;
- Existing public right of way to the eastern edge of the site connecting Longfield Road with Wrotham Road and Camer Park Road further east;
- Proximity of Helen Allison School to the east;
- Mitigate the impact of the development on the wider countryside; and
- Maintain a sense of separation between Meopham and Hook Green.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Retain and enhance green infrastructure;
- Potential Gateway to Meopham from the west;
- Potential cycle and pedestrian link to connect existing public footpaths to improve connectivity;
- Potential to provide a viewing corridor to Saint John the Baptist Church;
- Highway improvements to the new development access arrangements at Longfield Road with potential new school parking;
- Provide locally inspired, high quality design providing a range of different housing types, sizes and tenures which respect local character;
- Create a road hierarchy that is not dominated by vehicular movement and promotes active travel;
- Create outward facing residential frontages to soften the transition from built form to open space and helping to promote self-surveillance and reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour;
- Provide sustainable forms of drainage (SuDS) to the north of the site at its lowest point;
- Create green space, including play areas, a network of footpaths, cycle paths and community orchards within the open space for new and existing residents;
- Structural planting to the southern edge to contain development and mitigate impact of development; and
- Incorporate contextual views into new streets and green spaces.



SUMMARY OF SITE AND CONTEXTUAL OBSERVATIONS | Not to scale

LEGEND

	SITE LOCATION		SITE HIGH/LOW POINTS		SURFACE WATER FLOODING 1 IN 30 YEAR
	PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY		SPEED LIMITS		SURFACE WATER FLOODING 1 IN 100 YEAR
	WIDER VIEWS TO SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE		BUS STOPS		SURFACE WATER FLOODING 1 IN 1000 YEAR
	LOCAL CENTRE (INCLUDING A PRIMARY SCHOOL, CONVENIENCE STORES AND FOOD AND DRINK OUTLETS)		LISTED BUILDINGS		
	CONTOURS (0.5m INTERVAL)		EXISTING HIGHWAYS NETWORK		
	EXISTING VEGETATION AND ROOT PROTECTION AREA		PARKING PROBLEMS (RELATING TO THE HELEN ALLISON SCHOOL)		

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

“Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.”

(Para. 137, NPPF Dec 2024)

- 5.1 This section of the DAS sets out the consultation and engagement that has been carried out, and the evolutionary process of the design proposals' development in response to it.
- 5.2 Richborough were keen to ensure that the local community was involved in shaping the proposals and also kept informed of progress. By means of active and early engagement, they have sought to address queries and concerns from the outset, making use of meaningful consultation and using feedback to shape the proposals as they develop.
- 5.3 Richborough's consultant team also engaged with relevant statutory consultees concerning the technical and other matters associated with the potential development of the site.
- 5.4 The discussions have shaped the design proposals presented in Section 6 of this document. A timeline of the design development process is shown above.



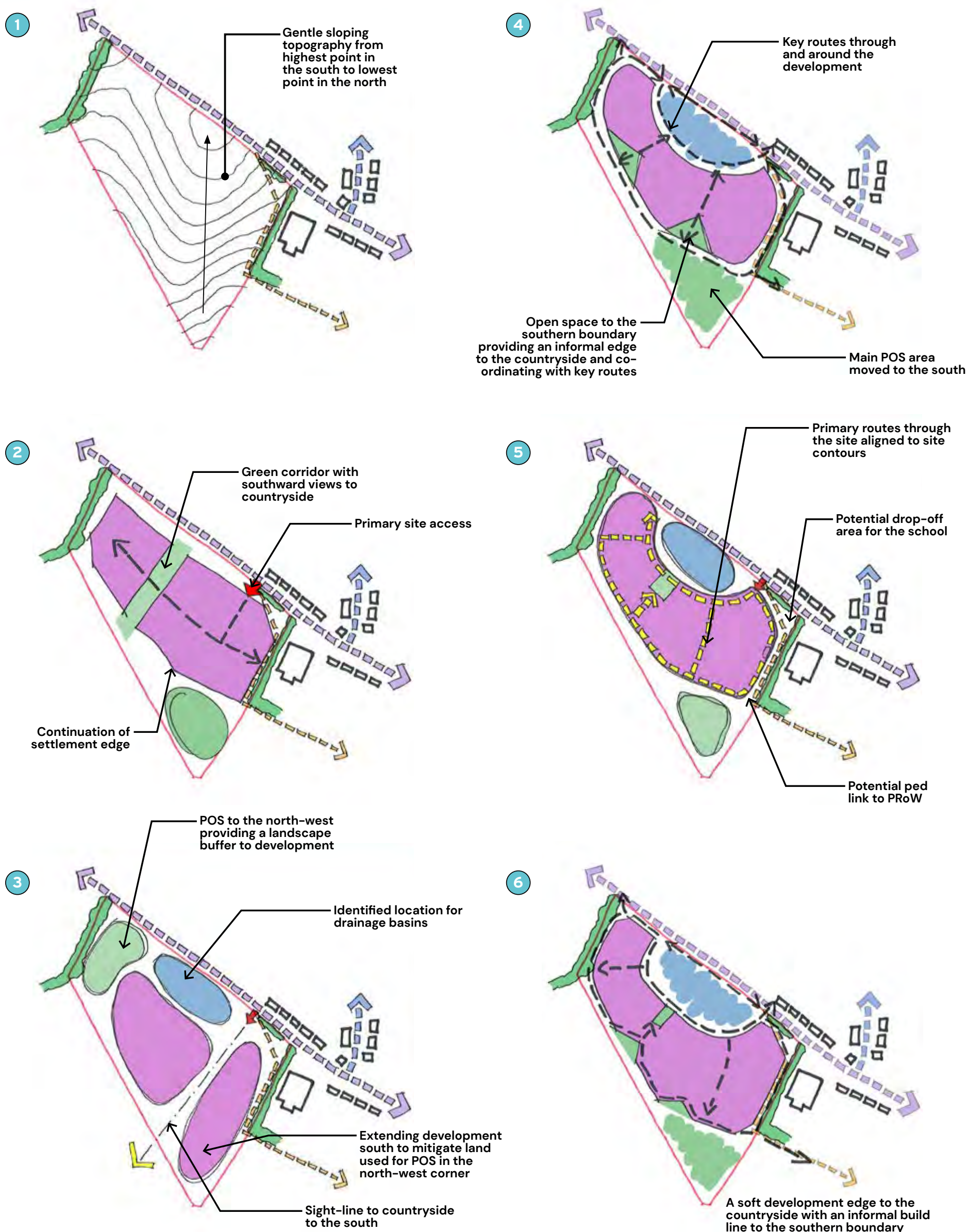
THE APPLICATION SITES

- 5.5 Whilst this outline planning application relates to "Land south of Longfield Road", Richborough also control "Land east of Wrotham Road" for which a separate outline application is being made. The two sites are within 300m of each other and are proposed to be brought forward at similar timescales. Public consultation on the emerging proposals for both sites was undertaken at the same time and therefore comments presented in this section relate to both development proposals.

02

INITIAL DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Initial design optioneering was undertaken with a series of sketches identifying key constraints and design opportunities.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

“Local communities can play a vital role in achieving well-designed places and buildings and making sure there is a relationship between the built environment and quality of life. Communities can be involved in design processes through approaches such as co-design, design workshops and other engagement techniques, so that places and buildings reflect local community preferences, improve their quality of life and fit well into their surroundings.”

(Para. 17, NDG 2021)

- 5.6 The submitted Statement of Community Engagement details the consultation activities undertaken prior to submission of the application. The pre-application consultation was undertaken for the application site.
- 5.7 The public and stakeholder engagement strategy for the two sites involved:
- Formal Pre-application engagement with Gravesham Borough Council;
 - Prior notification of the public consultation and providing further information in respect of milestones ahead of the planning application submission to Meopham Parish Council, Meopham North Ward Councillors and Meopham South and Vigo Ward Councillors;
 - Pre-application discussions with National Highways and Kent County Council Highways;
 - Design Review Panel;
 - Leaflet distributed to stakeholders and residents (1,846 addresses) providing details of the proposal and how to comment; and
 - A website with information relating to the proposals and the opportunity to provide written comments or complete a questionnaire.

Leaflet Distribution

5.8 Leaflets were distributed on 12th May 2025 and included information about the proposals, a plan of the development, and directed residents to the project specific website where more information and FAQs could be found. The consultation was live for a period of two weeks up to 26 May 2025, although responses received after that date were also accepted.

Website

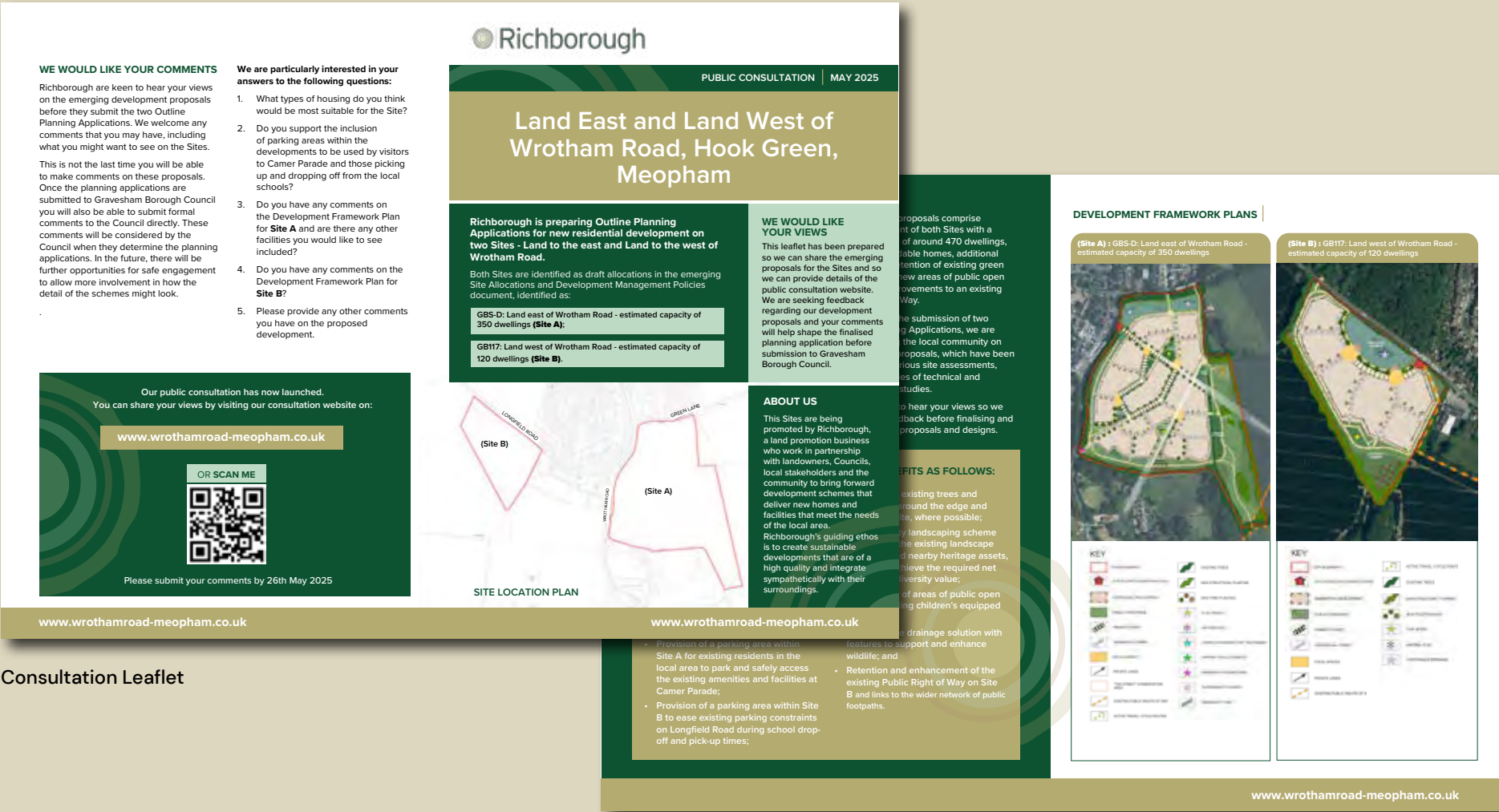
5.9 The following project specific website went live on 11th May 2025:

<https://www.wrothamroad-meopham.co.uk/>

5.10 The website provided details of the scheme and included a feedback facility. The interactive public consultation allowed local residents to explore and comment on the proposals and included a guided tour of the proposed layout, allowing respondents to easily identify and comment on critical aspects such as vehicular and pedestrian access points, open space and play provision.

Feedback and Responses

5.11 A total of 114 pieces of feedback were received from local residents. Whilst the majority of comments expressed an objection to the development, there were some constructive comments relating to a range of different themes, including requests for affordable properties, the provision of smaller properties, the request for a car park to serve Camer Parade. The majority of comments however, were concerned about the impact on existing services and amenities such as GP’s and schools. A significant number of comments also raised concerns regarding the impact on traffic in the surrounding area and the loss of open countryside or Green Belt.

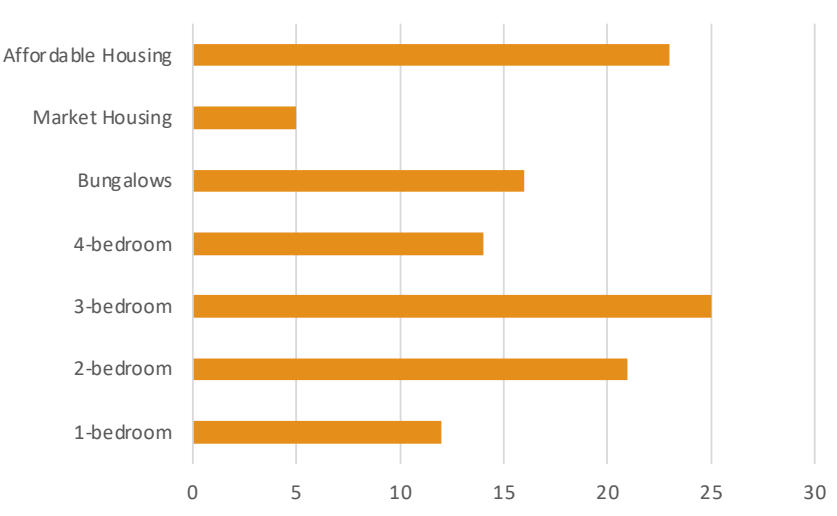


Consultation Leaflet

Questionnaire Feedback

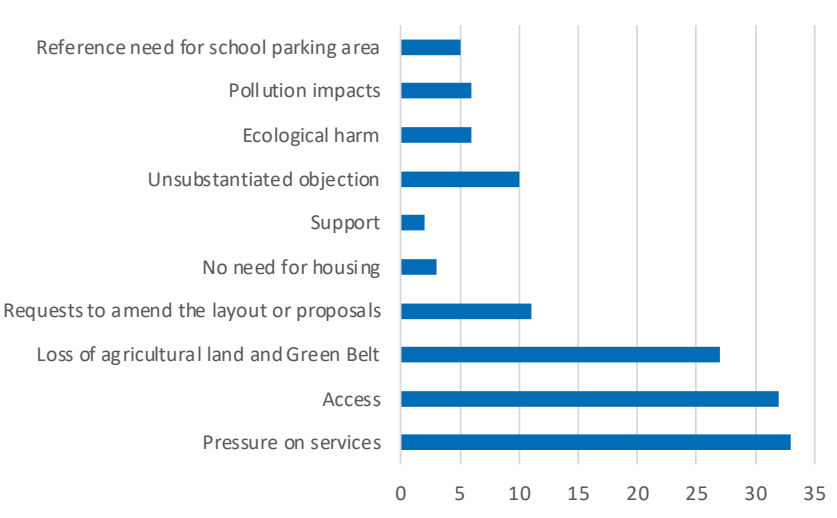
5.12 The online questionnaire included a series of questions which were asked to understand the level of support for the proposals and for people to identify issues which were important to them. Responses to each of the questions are provided below, but it is worth noting that respondents didn't necessarily answer each question so the number of responses to each question is different and may not total 114.

QUESTION 1
What types of housing do you think would be most suitable for the site?



Whilst several respondents did not answer this question, the majority considered there was a need for 3 and 4 bedroom properties, as well as affordable homes. There was also some support for 1 and 4 bedroom homes and bungalows.

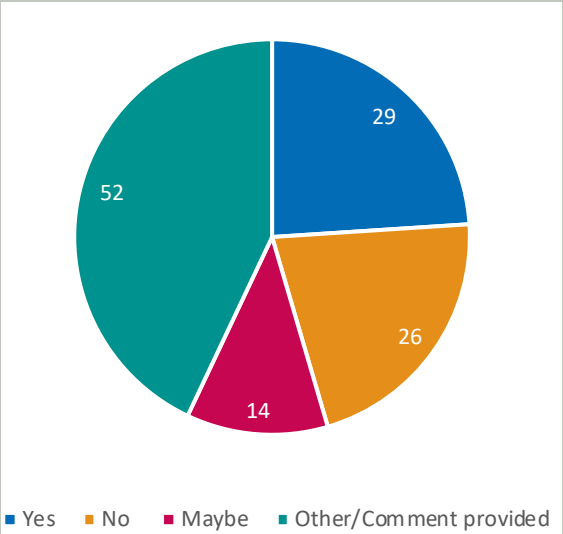
QUESTION 4 (RELATES TO APPLICATION SITE*)
Do you have any comments on the Development Framework Plan and are there any other facilities you would like to see included?



The responses to this question were mostly copied from the answer to question 3, although there were several instances where additional comments or points specific to Site B were made. These are provided below:

- In respect of access, some comments suggested the footpath provision on Longfield Road was too narrow. Other comments suggested there was an issue with on-street parking along this stretch of Longfield Road and associated with the schools.
- A number of comments suggested the proposal was inappropriate as it would negatively impact the pupils at the Helen Allison School because people on the autism spectrum often experience heightened sensitivity to sensory input.
- One comment requested that a doctor's surgery be provided onsite.
- One comment suggested that local residents should be offered the affordable properties in the first instance, and another suggested the site is not suitable for the provision of affordable dwellings.

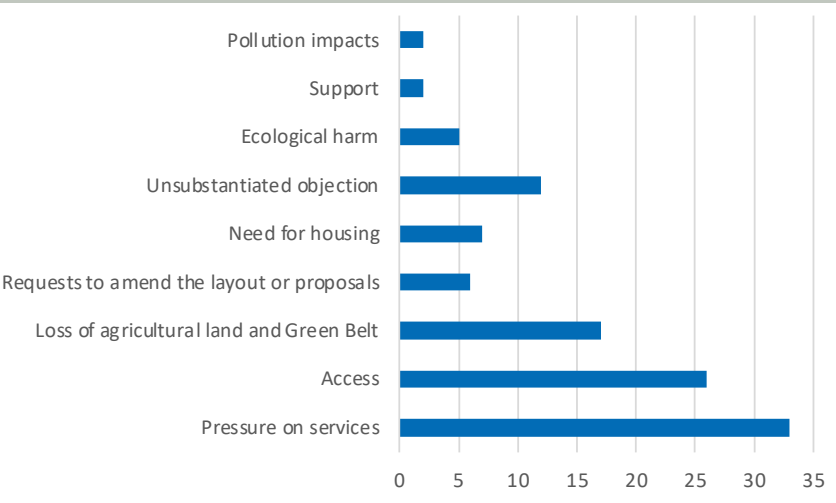
QUESTION 2
Do you support the inclusion of parking areas within the developments to be used by visitors to Camer Parade and those picking up and dropping off from the local schools?



Overall, the responses were supportive of the proposed parking facilities but the following comments were raised:

- On-street parking is problematic at Camer Parade and near the school during pick-up/drop-off times.
- Concerns about pedestrian safety crossing Wrotham Road due to traffic and proposed parking.
- Many comments raised highway capacity concerns.
- Calls for more emphasis on active and sustainable travel options.
- Objections to loss of agricultural land/open countryside.
- Some comments questioned the need for additional housing.

QUESTION 5
Please provide any other comments you have on the proposed development.



The majority of comments were in the form of objections to the proposed development. The most common reason for the objection was on the ground of infrastructure capacity and highways and traffic impacts.

- New comments that were not raised in response to questions 3 and 4 above include:
- A request for a car park to serve Camer Parade and the local schools.
- One expression of dissatisfaction with the local bus services.
- One comment which expressed concern with food safety due to the number of developments coming forward on agricultural land.
- A request to provide solar panels on the properties.
- Requests for housing suitable for the elderly, a housing mix that reflects those in the settlement, affordable family homes and provision of 1 and 2 bedroom properties.

* Question 3 relates to Land east of Wrotham Road

Response to Feedback

- 5.13 All of the feedback received during the consultation has been considered by Richborough and wider project team. The response to each key theme, covering both the application site and the separate application for 'Land east of Wrotham Road' is as follows:

CAPACITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES

The Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement and Transport Assessment submitted with the applications demonstrate the accessibility of the sites and proximity to existing services. The submitted Illustrative Framework Plans demonstrate how the sites can link to key transport nodes and arterial routes in the local area to facilitate various modes of active and sustainable methods of travel to nearby services in Meopham and Meopham Green, as well as those further afield.

TRAFFIC AND ACCESS

The site is sustainably located within walking distance of a range of amenities which cater for the needs of residents. This includes shops and cafes at Camer Parade on Wrotham Road, schools, doctors, a dentist, pharmacy, takeaways, and a church.

Wrotham Road is also on a regular bus route with services to nearby towns and schools. Meopham train station is within cycling distance of the two application sites and provides regular services to London and Gillingham (up to every 2 hours) 7 days a week.

A detailed Transport Assessment (TA) and Travel Plan (TP) have been prepared for both sites and are submitted with the applications. The TA's assess the existing highway capacity and the likely impact the proposed development would have on the surrounding roads. Traffic and speed data has been collected on Wrotham Road using automated traffic counts (ATC). This data has informed the visibility splays required for the proposed accesses based on current traffic speed data. It is worth noting that the mitigation measures for the site south of Longfield Road include an extension of the 30mph speed limit further west.

Kent County Council Highways expressed support for the proposed access designs following a Road Safety Audit and pre-application engagement. KCC have been involved in establishing the parameters of the highway modelling scenarios and have provided comments on the access arrangements, parking requirements and the need for a separate emergency vehicle access. KCC Highways have also been instrumental in establishing the proposed off-site highway works.

The proposed highway mitigation includes the provision of pedestrian crossings on Wrotham Road to facilitate permeable access to Camer Parade. Improvements to the cycle infrastructure on Wrotham Road have also been proposed.

The mitigation measures also include tactile crossing facilities on Longfield Road to ensure residents and pupils of the schools can gain access to the wider footpath north of Longfield Road and can avoid any parked cars on the southern side of Longfield Road during busy periods.

The two sites include an area of land suitable for public parking. The land south of Longfield may include a parking area to accommodate school drop-off and pick-up times and the applicant has been in contact with Helen Allison School to understand if access from the car park to the existing school plot would be beneficial. Land to the east of Wrotham Road includes a car park area close to Camer Parade and may help alleviate existing parking issues at the Parade. KCC considered the parking areas may promote private vehicle trips for short journeys so this element of the proposals will be considered further during the determination of the applications.

The Travel Plans incorporate a commitment to provide welcome Travel Packs to each household that include maps of local walking/cycle routes, bus services and timetables, and available rail services. The Packs will reference relevant active/sustainable travel websites, promote the health benefits of active travel and include a voucher for use on cycle equipment or bus taster tickets. The Travel Plans also commit to providing a Travel Plan Coordinator.

The provision of Construction Traffic Management Plans can be secured via condition.

HOUSING NEED

There is a requirement for each authority to demonstrate a five year deliverable housing land supply against the relevant housing requirement. The most recent Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement covers the period 2024–2029 and confirms that GBC can only demonstrate a housing land supply of 3 years and there is a deficit over this period of 1,603 dwellings.

The Government also monitors housing delivery via a Housing Delivery Test that is published annually. GBC have failed the test as it has delivered only 59% of the number of homes required over the three year period (2020/21–2022/23).

There is a demonstrable need for housing in Gravesham Hook Green is a suitable and sustainable location for future development.

With regard to housing mix, the proposed development is for two sites of 120 dwellings and 350 dwellings with matters related to scale and layout to be agreed at a later date. The Illustrative Layouts presented in the Design and Access Statements (DAS) therefore don't provide a breakdown of the housing mix by size as this will be agreed through the submission of reserved matters applications subject to approval of the outline applications. The housing shown on the Illustrative Masterplan includes a mix of apartments, terraced, semi-detached and detached properties offering a range of sizes.

This application is proposing affordable housing at a rate that complies with the National Planning Policy Framework's 'Golden Rules'. This results in a 15% overprovision from the Council's policy requirement to 50%. It is the intention that the affordable dwellings would be integrated throughout the development and be tenure blind to create an integrated community.

The tenure split for the affordable housing provision is to be agreed through the determination of the application but is anticipated to be 70% affordable housing for rent and 30% affordable home ownership in accordance with the Council's Housing Development Strategy.

Allowance has also been made across the Illustrative Masterplan such that all dwellings meet Nationally Described Space Standards and are M4(2) Building Regulations compliant for accessible and adaptable dwellings. A further 10% of the affordable dwellings will be built to M4(3) Building Regulations standards to meet the needs of wheelchair users and those requiring enhanced accessibility.

LOSS OF OPEN COUNTRYSIDE, AGRICULTURAL LAND AND GREEN BELT

Whilst the site includes the retention of a small section of Public Right of Way, the application site is in private ownership, currently farmed and therefore not publicly available countryside.

The site has been used for agricultural purposes and an Agricultural Land Assessment has been submitted with the application. An intrusive soil survey at the site identifies the majority of the site as Grade 2, very good quality agricultural land and a small amount as Subgrade 3a, good quality. The proposed development would result in the loss of 9.8 ha of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. The Natural England Agricultural Land Classification Map for the East Region shows that CCC has significant amounts of BMV agricultural land and therefore the loss of a site of this scale will not jeopardise the overall agricultural capacity of the Borough.

The proposed development incorporates significant additional tree and vegetation planting, including the creation of wetland features and drainage basins. The proposed development is committed to achieving the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain and expected to achieve at least 20%. With regard to the developments being located in the Green Belt the Planning Statement and Landscape Visual Impact Assessment provide a detailed assessment against national policy in respect of development in the Green Belt and a Green Belt Appraisal that provides judgements on the developments impacts on the Green Belt purposes.

Adopted GBC Policy CS02 is titled 'scale and distribution of development' and establishes the housing requirement and the spatial strategy for the plan period, 2011-2028. The following supporting text is relevant to the planning applications [emphasis added]:

"The Core Strategy acknowledges that as development opportunities within the existing urban area and settlements inset from the Green Belt become more limited, some development may be required on land in the rural area before the end of the plan period to meet the Borough's housing needs and sustain rural communities. The Green Belt has therefore been identified as a broad location for future growth and its boundaries will be subject to a review."

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 established the concept of Grey Belt as follows:

"For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development."

The application submission demonstrates that the site is a suitable grey belt site having regard to the Stage 2 Green Belt Study (2020) prepared by GBC.

The Planning Statement demonstrates that there is an unmet need for housing in the Borough and there is an insufficient housing supply to meet future needs. Therefore, having regard to the NPPF, the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies.

Finally, the application also complies with the NPPF's Golden Rules and it has been demonstrated that the site is sustainably located. The proposed development incorporates 50% affordable housing, allow for discussions regarding financial contributions towards local infrastructure and the provision of 2.43 ha of publicly accessible open space.

04

INDEPENDENT DESIGN REVIEW

"Local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. The primary means of doing so should be through the preparation and use of local design codes, in line with the National Model Design Code. For assessing proposals there is a range of tools including workshops to engage the local community, design advice and review arrangements, and assessment frameworks such as Building for a Healthy Life. These are of most benefit if used as early as possible in the evolution of schemes, and are particularly important for significant projects such as large scale housing and mixed use developments. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the outcome from these processes, including any recommendations made by design review panels."

(Para. 138, NPPF Dec 2024)

- 5.14 An Independent Design Review was carried out on 6th June 2025 at the request of Richborough and in accordance with para 138 of the NPPF. The Panel was made up of a multi-disciplinary team and the session started with a site visit.
- 5.15 Members of the consultant team and Gravesham Borough Council were present for the Design Review session.
- 5.16 The information submitted for review was considered positively by the Panel, who cited it as a high quality presentation demonstrating the key characteristics of the site. The Panel was encouraged by the overall ambition of the scheme and welcomed the early engagement.
- 5.17 Written feedback included the following conclusions:
- The Panel recognised the sensitive approach to landscape and heritage
 - Sketch iterations demonstrated how optioneering has evolved and was helpful in understanding how the scheme has progressed
 - The proposals were a well-considered approach
 - Wider connectivity to offsite vehicular and pedestrian routes is generally fully supported
 - The Panel were not clear how the vehicular movement through and around the site was proposed to work and questioned whether it would be outward facing development, in particular southward towards the countryside
 - The principle of incorporating greens into the masterplan is supported
 - The principle of tree-lined streets is supported. The position of utilities should not compromise this concept
 - The tree planting shown in public spaces is considered appropriate
 - Internal circulation through the proposed layout appears to work well, although it may benefit from some simplification and distillation of ideas
 - The inclusion of some three storey development appears appropriate; it would be beneficial to explore where this is most appropriate.
- 5.18 The recommendations made by the Panel have been reviewed and addressed where appropriate during subsequent design iterations and included on the submitted design proposals within Section 6 of this DAS.

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. Key active travel routes providing connections to nearby movement infrastructure.
2. Key 'commons' providing sustainable drainage solutions, equipped areas for play and community spaces.
3. Proposed development edge to respect existing development and public right of way line.
4. Structural planting to southern boundary to provide enclosure and screen the development edge.
5. School drop-off provision.
6. Maximise outward facing development over newly created public open space.



CONCEPT MASTERPLAN PRESENTED AT THE DRP | Not to scale

LEGEND

	SITE BOUNDARY		PRIVATE LANES		PLAY SPACES
	SITE ACCESS VIA LONGFIELD ROAD		ACTIVE TRAVEL / CYCLE ROUTES		SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE
	RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT		FOOTPATH LINK		POTENTIAL HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENTS
	PUBLIC OPEN SPACE		EXISTING TREES		POTENTIAL SCHOOL DROP OFF PARKING
	PRIMARY STREET		NEW STRUCTURAL PLANTING		EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY
	RESIDENTIAL STREET		NEW TREE PLANTING		
	FOCAL SPACES		COMMUNITY ORCHARD		

05 and 06

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE AND DISCUSSIONS

Gravesham Borough Council

5.19 The proposed development was subject to pre-application discussions with Gravesham Borough Council on 15th July 2025. Key areas of discussion principally focussed on:

- The design and layout of the development proposals;
- Highways and active travel links;
- Flood risk and drainage;
- Consultation strategy; and
- The timings for the application submission.

5.20 No written feedback has been received at the time of submission.

Meopham Community Academy

5.21 A meeting was held with the Headmaster of the Meopham Community Academy on 4 July 2025. The key area of discussion focused on the capacity of schools in the local area; the need for specific facilities across the nine schools that make up the Academy Trust; and the existing parking issues in the morning and afternoon.

5.22 Richborough have also tried to make contact with the Headmaster at Helen Allison School, with no success. It was agreed that the Headmaster of the Meopham Community Academy would attempt to reach out to other stakeholders in the area to widen the discussions.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES MADE TO THE MASTERPLAN

5.23 The proposals have evolved significantly throughout the design development process.

5.24 The design of the proposed development has been informed by the pre-application discussions, the design review panel and emerging technical information.

5.25 Following the consultation process, the following changes have been made to the initial presented masterplan and draft scheme proposals:

- A. The intention of the access and movement strategy has been made clearer to articulate the intention for outward facing development with informed circulation and travel routes around the site**
- B. The trodden path of the existing PRow is retained and included within the wider proposed pedestrian/cycle movement strategy**
- C. A vista towards St John the Baptist Church is retained from the high point of the site where the PRow trodden route enters the site**

5.26 These are shown on the plan opposite.