

NICHOLSONS

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Client: M Scott Properties Ltd

Site: Land west of School Lane, Higham, Kent

Date: 20th January 2026

Revision: **V2**



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Rev	Description of Change	Date	Initial
D1	Original Draft	06.10.2025	AB
QC	Quality Review	08.12.2025	ID
V1	Final Version	11.12.2025	AB
V2	Amendments following client comments	20.01.2026	AB

Executive Summary

The Site is comprised of a single arable field, located along the settlement edge of Higham, near Gravesend, Kent.

The landscape impact assessment concluded that the Site's relationship with its landscape setting is largely influenced by the immediate settlement edge to the south, east, west and north-eastern corner. Whilst the Site is largely contained by mature vegetation or built form, it is acknowledged that the open section of western boundary allows the Site to have some interaction with the open countryside to the north-west.

The greatest adverse landscape impacts identified were upon the arable use of the Site and its overall landscape character, both of which are anticipated to experience an adverse effect of Moderate significance.

However, it is judged that the Site feels relatively isolated from the wider arable countryside, and therefore its influence beyond its immediate setting is limited.

It is judged that the inclusion of a robust landscape scheme could reduce these effects over time, as the planting matures.

All other landscape receptors scored either a Moderate/Minor or Minor adverse score, and are therefore considered to be of lesser relevance.

The visual impact assessment concluded that the visual envelope of the Site is largely confined to the immediate residential setting of the Site to the south, with some adjacent residential views from Taylors Lane to the west and School Lane to the east and north-east.

The greatest adverse visual impacts identified were upon residents of High View and users of Restricted Byway NS153, who are anticipated to experience an adverse effect of Moderate significance as a result of the close proximity of these dwellings and gardens to the Site, and the location of the byway within the Site.

All other visual receptors scored either a Moderate/Minor or Minor adverse score, and are therefore considered to be of lesser significance.

It is judged that the inclusion of a robust landscape strategy, including hedgerow and tree planting along the Site's southern boundary, will help to settle the proposed development into the existing landscape and townscape, whilst providing wider biodiversity and green infrastructure benefits.



Image 1: View across the Site looking south towards the settlement edge

1. Introduction

Instruction

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared by Nicholsons on behalf of M Scott Properties Ltd in respect of an outline planning application for up to 50 dwellings on land to the west of School Lane, Higham, Kent.

Scope

- 1.2 This assessment was undertaken using an established methodology, derived from the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment jointly published Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3), which is the nationally accepted guidance for the consideration of landscape and visual effects.

- 1.3 The terms of reference for this assessment are as follows:

- To assess the baseline landscape and visual characteristics of the proposed Site, including desk survey information and first-hand field evidence;
- To assess the proposals, and where appropriate, provide recommendations in relation to key landscape and visual mitigation requirements; and
- To propose, where possible, suitable mitigation measures to reduce adverse impacts to an acceptable level.

- 1.4 A number of plans and photographs have been prepared to illustrate the character and visual environment of the Site and its context, and these have been appended to this report.

- 1.5 This report should be read in conjunction with all other information submitted in support of this Application.

Site Description

- 1.6 The Site is comprised of a single arable field, located along the northern edge of the settlement of Higham, Kent.
- 1.7 The Site central grid reference is TQ 71179, 71822 and the Site extends to approximately 2.65 ha.



Image 2: View across the Site looking south towards the settlement edge

2. Planning Policy Background

2. National Planning Policy Background

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.1 The latest version of the NPPF was published in December 2024, replacing a previous version of this document. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England, and how these should be applied, as well as setting out a framework for the production of locally prepared housing and development plans.
- 2.2 Chapter 8 of the NPPF relates to the promotion of healthy and safe communities. It states at Paragraph 96 that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places that promote social interaction, are safe and accessible, and enable and support healthy lifestyles. Measures to achieve these objectives include street layouts enabling easy pedestrian and cycle connections, active street frontages, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, high quality public spaces that encourage active and continual use, and the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure.
- 2.3 Paragraph 103 recognises the importance of access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity for the health and well-being of communities.
- 2.4 Paragraph 105 states that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance Public Rights of Way and access, including taking opportunities to improve users' facilities and to create additional connections to existing networks.
- 2.5 Chapter 12 of the NPPF relates to the achievement of well-designed places. In particular, it recognises that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps to make development acceptable

to communities, and it establishes the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable places as a fundamental goal of the planning and development process.

- 2.6 Paragraph 135 sets out a number of positive design criteria that planning policies and decisions should ensure. These include contributing to the overall character of an area in the long term, being visually attractive, being sympathetic to local character and history, establishing or maintaining a strong sense of place, and creating safe, inclusive and accessible places that promote health and well-being.
- 2.7 Paragraph 136 recognises the importance of trees in creating high quality places, and contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation. It recommends that planning policies and decisions ensure that new streets are tree-lined, and also promotes the incorporation of trees elsewhere in developments. To ensure the sustainability of these benefits, it recommends that appropriate measures should be in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.
- 2.8 Paragraph 139 states that development that is not well designed should be refused, and it attributes significant weight to development that is in compliance with local design guidance, and/or which is outstanding or innovative, promoting high levels of sustainability.
- 2.9 Chapter 15 of the NPPF relates to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Paragraph 187 states that planning policies should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by a range of measures including protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan) and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

- 2.10 Paragraph 189 places great weight upon the conservation and enhancement of landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and it identifies these areas as having the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. It states that development within these areas should be limited, and also that development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- 2.11 Paragraph 036, Reference ID: 8-034-20190721 of the PPG presents the national guidance for landscape and planning. It states that:

"The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.

Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully."

- 2.12 Paragraph 041, Reference ID 8-041-20190721 of the PPG specifically addresses the approach to development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It states that:

“The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that the scale and extent of development in these areas should be limited, in view of the importance of conserving and enhancing their landscapes and scenic beauty. Its policies for protecting these areas may mean that it is not possible to meet objectively assessed needs for development in full through the plan-making process, and they are unlikely to be suitable areas for accommodating unmet needs from adjoining (non-designated) areas. Effective joint working between planning authorities covering designated and adjoining areas, through the preparation and maintenance of statements of common ground, is particularly important in helping to identify how housing and other needs can best be accommodated.

All development in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Beauty will need to be located and designed in a way that reflects their status as landscapes of the highest quality. Where applications for major development come forward, paragraph 172 of the Framework sets out a number of particular considerations that should apply when deciding whether permission should be granted.”

- 2.13 Paragraph 042, Reference ID 8-042-20190721 of the PPG recognises the importance of the setting of National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It states that:

“Land within the setting of these areas often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and where poorly located or designed development can do significant harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account.”

- 2.14 Under the heading Light Pollution, paragraph 001 (Ref ID: 31-001-20140306), PPG refers to the risk of artificial lighting undermining enjoyment of the night sky in the countryside and, in paragraph 2, considers the potential effect on protected areas of dark skies or intrinsically dark landscapes. PPG then provides guidance for mitigation-by-design of artificial lighting, including location, timing and extent of lighting.

Local Planning Policy Background

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- 2.15 The Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in September 2014, covering the period from 2011 to 2028. It sets out the long term vision for the future of Gravesham, as well as providing a consistent basis for planning application decisions.
- 2.16 Those policies considered to be of relevance to the Site and its setting are listed below, with full details provided within **Appendix 1**.
- 2.17 Policy CS12- Green Infrastructure.
- 2.18 Policy CS18- Climate Change.
- 2.19 Policy CS19- Development and Design Principles.
- 2.20 Policy CS20 - Heritage and the Historic Environment.

Saved Policies from the 1994 Local Plan

- 2.21 The Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) was replaced by the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy in 2014, although a number of policies from the former Local Plan remain operational. In September 2007, the Secretary of State issued a direction on policies to be saved and deleted.
- 2.22 Those saved policies considered to be of relevance to this Site and its setting are listed below, with full details provided within **Appendix 1**.

- Policy TC2- Listed Buildings.
- Policy TC3- Development affecting Conservation Areas.
- Policy LT6- Additional open space in new Housing Developments.

Emerging Policy

- 2.23 A new, up to date Local Plan will be produced for the Borough comprised of a single document, which will include site allocations.
- 2.24 Once adopted, this new Local Plan will supersede the Local Plan Core Strategy and remaining saved policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review.
- 2.25 The new Local Plan is currently estimated for adoption by the Council in December 2026.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG1: Landscape Character

- 2.26 The Landscape Character SPG was produced and adopted by Kent County Council in July 2006, and covers the county of Kent.
- 2.27 This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) sets out what landscape character is, how landscape character should be considered, and provides a series of tools to help include and consider landscape character within development proposals.
- 2.28 The SPG notes the following opportunities for enhancement of landscape character:
- “Opportunities to Enhance Landscape Character Development should, where possible, provide opportunities to enhance landscape character.*
- For example by:*
- *Ensuring that new built development maintains*

and, if appropriate, enhances distinctive landscape character;

- *Encouraging the use of existing building styles and materials in new built development;*
- *Seeking to maintain characteristic land cover, vegetation patterns, contours and textures of the landscape and its ecological and cultural value; encouraging the creation, restoration and management of “mosaic landscapes” through the restoration of a variety of semi natural habitats.*
- *Ensuring that development and structures in the landscape are subject to a visual impact assessment appropriate to the scale of the development proposed and carefully designed to minimise their impact on the landscape character.*
- *Supporting improved land management through sustainable farming techniques.”*

The Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plan 2021-2026

- 2.29 The Kent Downs National Landscape (AONB) Management Plan 2021-2026, sets out the shared vision of the future of this designated landscape. The plan identifies the key issues, opportunities and threats facing the landscape and sets out aims and principles for the positive conservation and enhancement of the Kent Downs for a five-year period.
- 2.30 The goal of the Management Plan is to ensure that the natural beauty and special character of the landscape and vitality of the communities are recognised, valued, enhanced and strengthened well into the future.
- 2.31 Whilst the Site lies outside of the Kent Downs National Landscape, a very small section of the northern edge of this designation lies within the very southern extent of the Study Area.

3. Baseline Assessment

Study Area

- 3.1 For this assessment, a Study Area of 2.5km has been used. It is judged that beyond this distance, the influence of the proposed residential development will reduce to the extent that significant effects are unlikely.

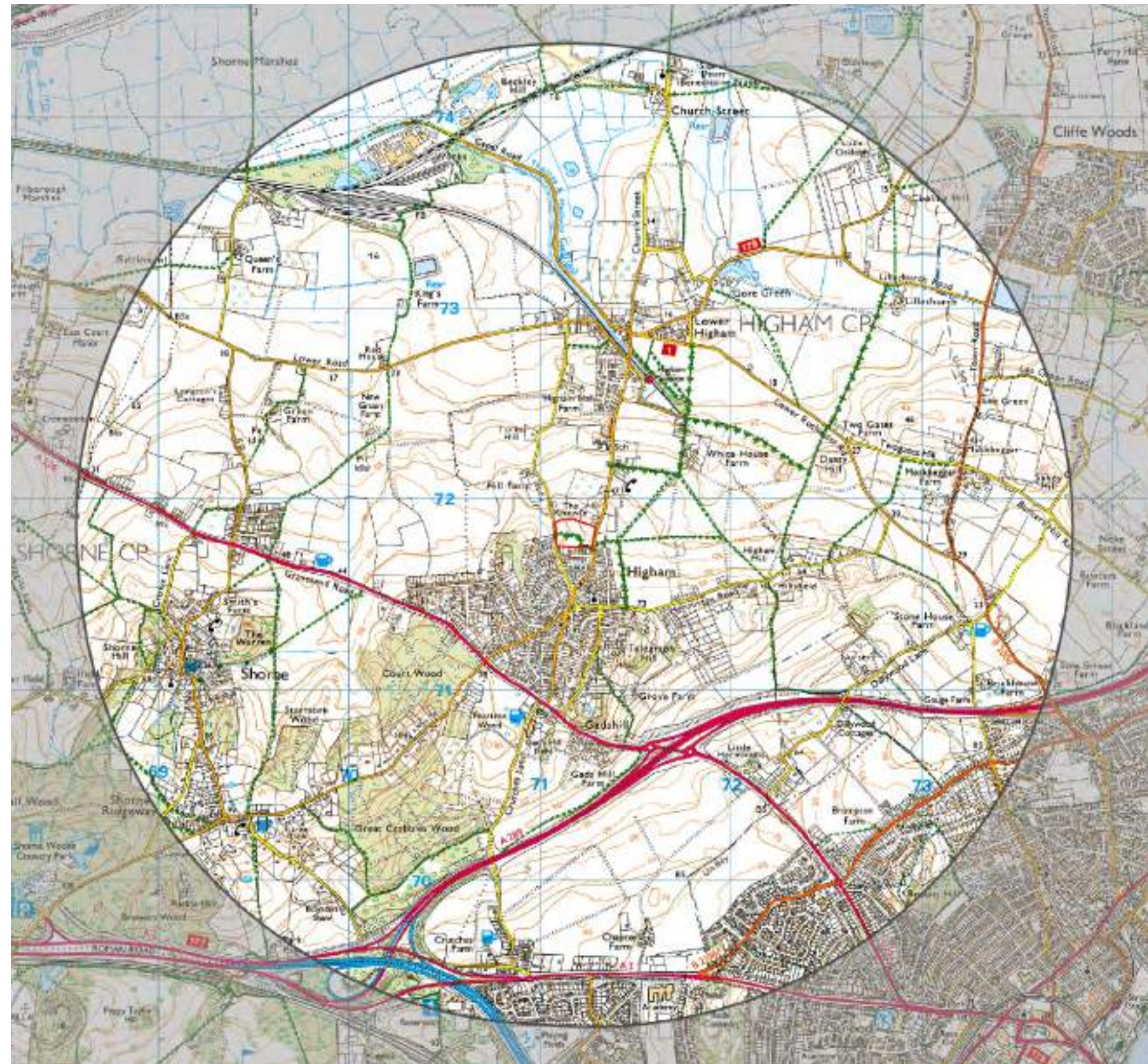


Figure 1: Redline Boundaries Map

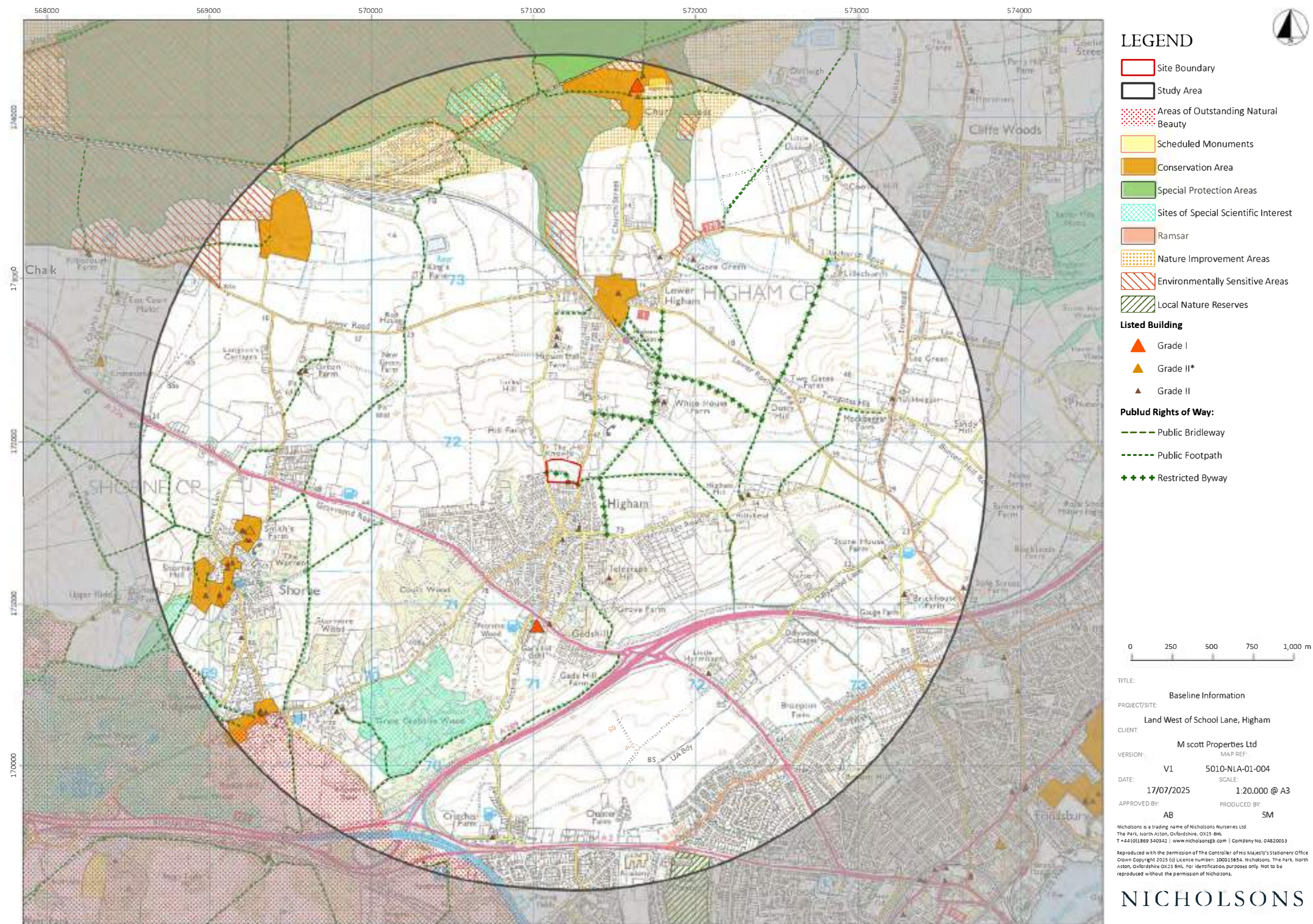


Figure 2: Baseline Information Map

Site Overview

- 3.2 The Site comprises a single arable field lying along the northern edge of the main settlement of Higham
- 3.3 Restricted Byway NS153 crosses through the Site from east to west, entering the Site at its south-eastern corner adjacent to School Lane, and exiting the Site along its western boundary adjacent to Taylors Lane.
- 3.4 The Site is bound along its southern boundary by sections of wooden panel fence, post and wire fence and some mature vegetation, allowing for some views of the existing residential dwellings along the settlement edge.
- 3.5 The Site's eastern boundary lies slightly higher than School Lane, and is comprised largely of overgrown nettles and scrub.
- 3.6 The Site's western boundary is open, devoid of vegetation and again largely lies above the level of Taylors Lane.
- 3.7 The Site's northern boundary is comprised of mature trees and vegetation, with the exception of the north-eastern corner, which is comprised of a hedgerow with fewer large trees, and therefore allows for some views of the existing dwellings to the immediate north.

Site Context

- 3.8 The Site lies along the northern settlement edge of Higham in Kent. Higham is a largely nucleated settlement, focused around Villa Road and Forge Lane, however extends north along School Lane with pockets of development, including Higham Primary School and Preschool, finally adjoining the smaller settlement of Lower Higham to the north.
- 3.9 To the north of the Site lies a small block of mature woodland, along with a mature hedgerow boundary, which largely serve to contain the Site from countryside

to the north. Knowle Country House (a hotel and wedding venue) lies within the adjacent field to the north, set within a landscaped parkland and separated from the Site by mature vegetation and a small row of residential dwellings that lie at the north-eastern corner of the Site.



Figure 3: Aerial Photo

- 3.10 Further north, School Lane continues to head north with a series of small arable and pasture fields lying to both the east and west. Higham Primary School and playing fields lie to the west of School Lane, and Higham Village Pre-School and recreation ground lie to the east of School Lane.
- 3.11 The small settlement of Lower Higham lies beyond the schools, focused around the railway line and Higham train station.
- 3.12 To the east of the Site lies School Lane, with a small number of residential dwellings facing towards the Site. The Orchards, a large residential dwelling is set much further back from the road, behind a row of tall, mature trees.
- 3.13 Further east lie a series of small to medium sized arable fields, punctuated by small farmsteads and small blocks of woodland, along with a considerable network of public footpaths and restricted byways.
- 3.14 A large area of polytunnels lies at the very eastern edge of the Study Area.
- 3.15 To the south of the Site lie residential dwellings along High View, that have their rear elevations and gardens backing onto the southern boundary of the Site.
- 3.16 The main settlement area of Higham extends further south on rising land, and is therefore partially visible from within the Site, including the Grade II Listed St John's Church.
- 3.17 Further south beyond the settlement of Higham lies the A289, a major road corridor that connects the town of Strood to the M2 motorway.
- 3.18 The very northern edge of the town of Strood lies within the south-eastern corner of the Study Area.
- 3.19 To the west of the Site lies Taylors Lane, a narrow

road that continues north towards Lower Higham.

- 3.20 Beyond the road lie a series of moderately sized arable fields, as well as large areas of polytunnels. A large block of mature woodland lies to the west of Taylors Lane, along the northern edge of the settlement of Higham.
- 3.21 A small area of residential dwellings along Green Farm Lane lie at the very western extent of the Study Area.

Topography & Landform

- 3.22 The Site displays a series of undulations, lying at an approximate height of 60m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum), falling away to approximately 55m AOD at the north-western corner, and towards the eastern edge of the Site.
- 3.23 Smaller undulations exist across the Site, however the Site largely rises across the centre of the field, falling away to both the east and west.
- 3.24 To the north of the Site, the landform begins to fall away, reaching an approximate height of 5m AOD at the very northern extent of the Study Area.
- 3.25 To the east, the landform gradually falls, with some minor undulations, reaching an approximate height of 40m AOD at the eastern extent of the Study Area.
- 3.26 To the south, and south-east, the landform rises across the settlement of Higham, reaching a top height of 94m AOD at Gads Hill, before falling away steeply towards the A289, at an approximate height of 45m AOD.
- 3.27 To the west, the landform rises to a maximum height of approximately 86m AOD, at the eastern edge of the settlement of Shorne, with some local undulations across the landscape.

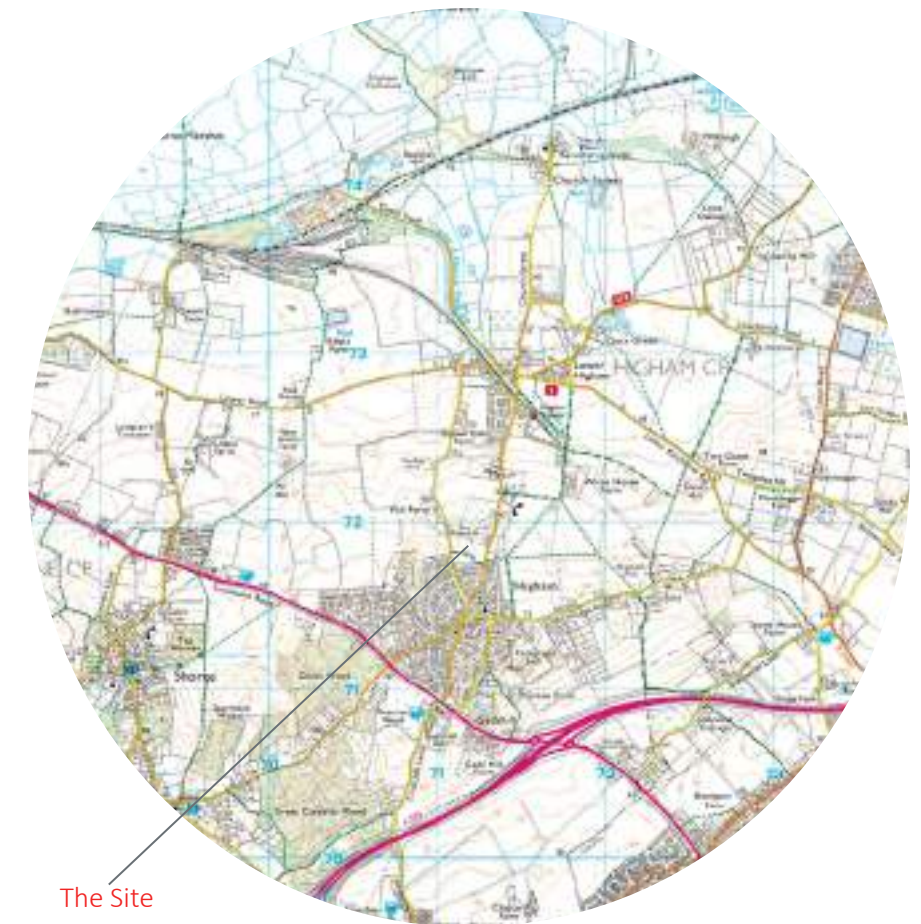


Figure 4: 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey Baseline

Public Rights of Way

- 3.28 A Public Right of Way (PRoW) crosses through the Site from west to east, recorded as Restricted Byway NS153/1.
- 3.29 This byway connects School Lane to the east with Taylors Lane to the west, however it does not connect to any of the other offsite PRoW.
- 3.30 A number of additional PRoW passing through the Study Area that have the potential to be affected as a result of the Site's development are shown on the Baseline Information Map and listed within **Appendix 2**.

Designations

Listed Buildings

- 3.31 There are no Listed Buildings within the Site.
- 3.32 There are a number of Listed Buildings within close proximity to the Site, the closest of these to the Site are as follows:
- Grade II listed 'St John's Church', located approximately 288m to the south of the Site.
 - Grade II listed 'Firtrees', located approximately 344m to the south of the Site.
 - Grade II listed 'White House Farm Barn', located approximately 630m to the north-east of the Site.
 - Grade II 'White House Farm', located approximately 655m to the north-east of the Site.
 - Grade II listed 'Barn at Higham Hall', located approximately 710m to the north.
 - Grade II listed 'Higham Hall' and 'Garden walls to Higham Hall', located approximately 760m to the north.
- 3.33 Given the distance from Site, the existing adjacent built form and intervening vegetation, it is judged that the Site does not form a part of the landscape setting of these heritage assets.
- 3.34 A number of additional Listed Buildings lie within the wider Study Area, over 1km from the Site or more. These Listed Buildings are separated from the Site by intervening built form or mature vegetation and topography, and therefore it is judged that the Site does not form a part of the landscape setting of these heritage assets.

Metropolitan Green Belt

- 3.35 The settlement of Higham is excluded from the Metropolitan Green belt, however the Site itself lies within the Green Belt, along the boundary of the

settlement. An assessment of the Green Belt and the Site against the latest NPPF and PPG with regards to Green Belt policy is provided within the accompanying Green Belt Assessment.

Kent Downs National Landscape (formerly AONB)

- 3.36 The Kent Downs National Landscape is located over 2.2km to the south of the Site. Given the distance from Site and the presence of major road infrastructure and built form of the settlement of Higham located between the Site and the edge of the National Landscape, it is judged that the Site does not form a part of the setting of this designation.

Illustrative Viewpoints

3.37 To assist in understanding the character and composition of the Sites and the landscape in which they are located, a series of illustrative views are presented over the following pages.

3.38 The locations of these illustrative viewpoints are shown on the Illustrative Viewpoint Location Map.



Figure 5: Illustrative Viewpoint Map



Illustrative Viewpoint 1

Location	View from within Site, looking North.
Grid Ref	TQ 71260 71743
Description	The view looks north across the Site from its south-eastern corner, and illustrates the rising topography across the Site to the north and north-west. An area of mature woodland lies to the left of the view, beyond the Site's northern boundary, along with glimpses of a field boundary hedgerow marking the edge of the Site. Further mature vegetation is visible beyond the Site within the adjacent field. A single two storey residential dwelling is visible to the right of the view, with its side aspect facing towards the Site's northern boundary. Further mature vegetation is visible beyond and to the right of this dwelling.

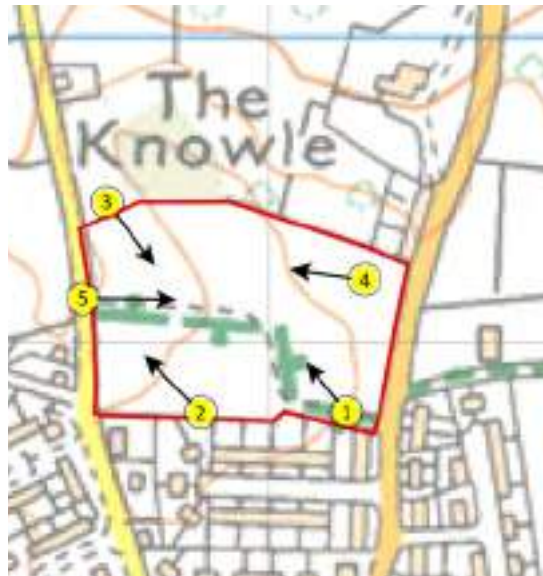


N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and when reproduced at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through an identical radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be used as a substitute for visiting the viewpoint.



Illustrative Viewpoint 2

Location	View from within Site, looking North-West.
Grid Ref	TQ 71163 71743
Description	The view looks north-west across the Site and illustrates the significant fall in topography within the wider landscape to the north-west of the Site, allowing for a long view towards the River Thames. The Site itself falls away towards its western boundary, with some upper floor and rooftop views available of two dwellings along Taylor's Lane, visible to the left of the view. An area of mature woodland is visible beyond these dwellings. To the right of the view, a lack of any boundary treatment along this edge of the Site, in combination with the falling topography, allows for long views north of fields stretching away towards the River Thames. Some large industrial structures along the river are visible in the distance. To the right of the view, a single dwelling is just visible, further north along Taylor's Lane.



N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and when reproduced at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through an identical radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be used as a substitute for visiting the viewpoint.



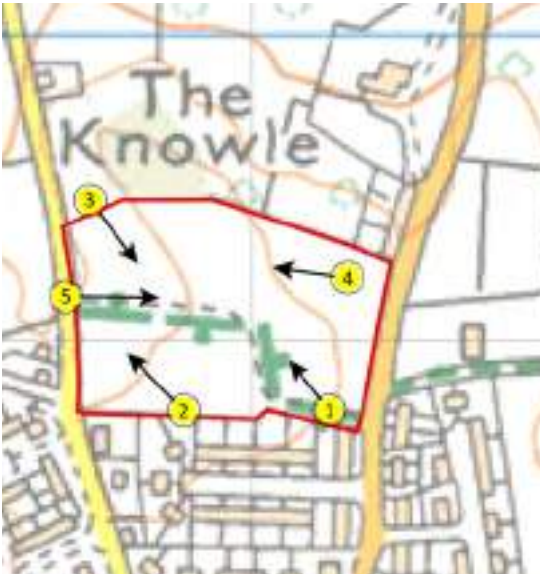
Illustrative Viewpoint 3	
Location	View from within Site, looking South-East.
Grid Ref	TQ 71101 71882
Description	The view looks south-east across the Site towards the settlement edge of Higham, and illustrates the undulating topography across the Site. The landform rises towards the south-west corner, as well as towards the centre of the Site, to the left of the view. Some mature vegetation is visible along the Site's southern boundary across the centre of the view, however views of residential dwellings are also available, given the rising topography across the settlement to the south. A view of the Grade II Listed St John's Church is available within the rising land to the south.



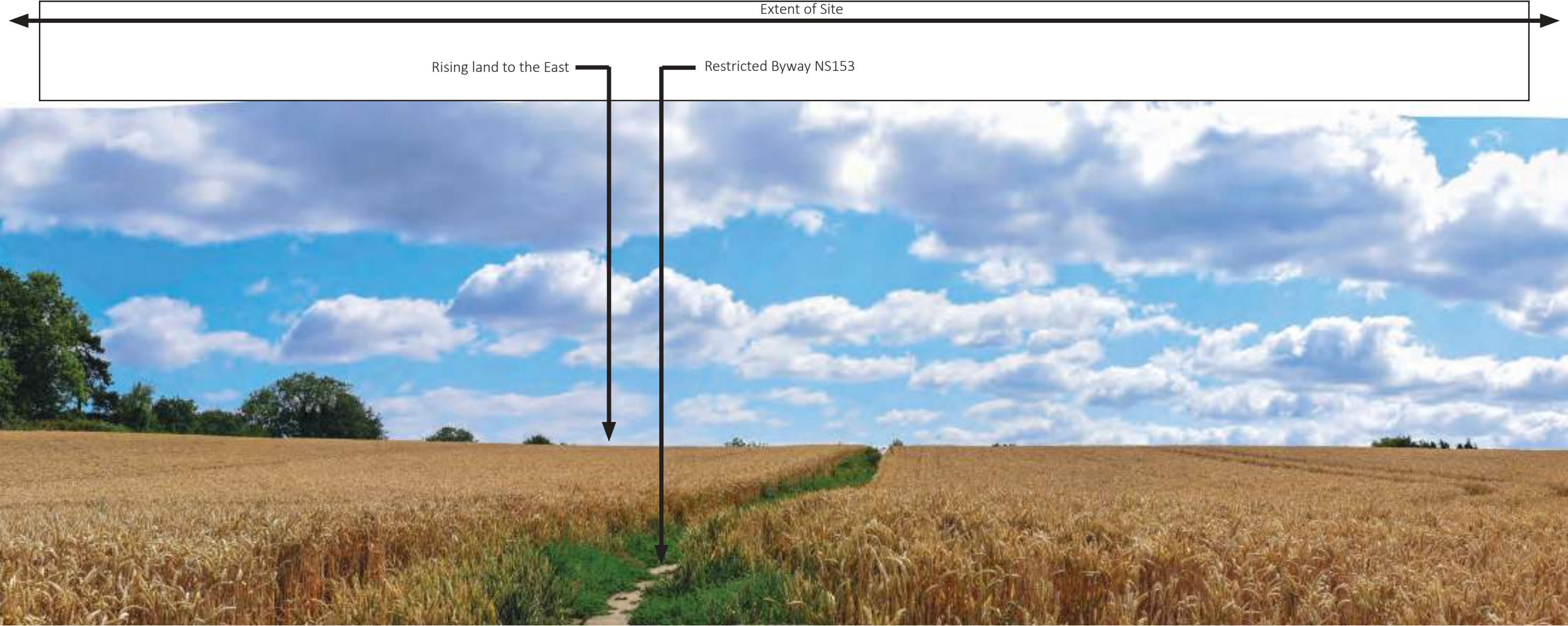
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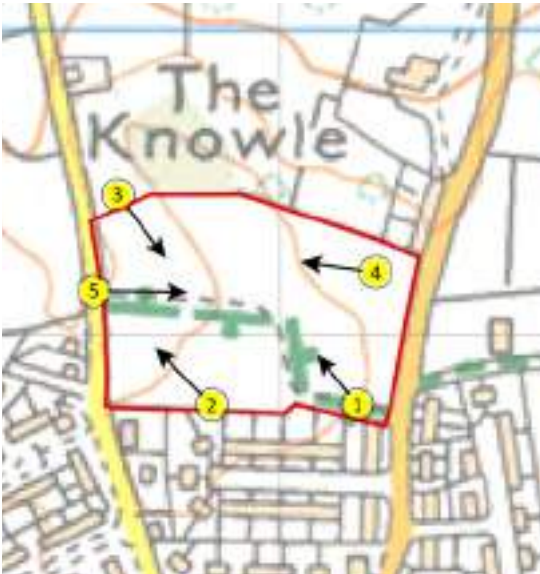
Illustrative Viewpoint 4	
Location	View from within Site, looking West.
Grid Ref	TQ 71272 71831
Description	The view looks west across the Site and illustrates the rising landform towards the centre of the Site, which serves to restrict views further west from this section of the Site. A large area of mature woodland is visible to the left of the view, lying beyond the Site and the settlement edge. An area of mature woodland and over-grown hedgerow are visible to the right of the view, lying along and beyond the Site's northern boundary.



N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and when reproduced at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through an identical radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be used as a substitute for visiting the viewpoint.



Illustrative Viewpoint 5	
Location	View from the Western Site boundary, looking East.
Grid Ref	TQ 71086 71819
Description	The view looks east across the Site, and illustrates the presence of a Restricted Byway crossing through the Site, visible within the centre of the view. The landform rises towards the centre of the Site, restricting views further east from this section of the Site. Mature vegetation is visible to the left of the view, lying along and beyond the Site's northern boundary, restricting views further north from this viewpoint.



N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and when reproduced at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through an identical radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be used as a substitute for visiting the viewpoint.

4. Landscape Baseline

Overview

- 4.1 In order to accurately define the baseline sensitivity of the receiving landscape to any type of proposal, it is important to identify and assess the specific physical elements and perceptual qualities, and assemblages of these, that are likely to be affected. These are commonly referred to as landscape receptors.
- 4.2 Landscape receptors are defined in paragraph 3.21 of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition as *“including the constituent elements of the landscape, its specific aesthetic or perceptual qualities and the character of the landscape in different areas”*.
- 4.3 The identification of these features will be informed through:
- Review of Ordnance Survey mapping, historical map data and aerial and other remote sensing imagery where appropriate.
 - Review of relevant published landscape character assessment at national, regional, sub-regional and local levels as appropriate.
 - Identification of landscape-based designations.
 - Identification and description of individual elements, features, aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape which contribute to its character.
 - Assessment of the general condition of the receiving landscape.
- 4.4 Once a list of landscape receptors has been established, the sensitivity of each will be assessed through:
- Assessment of the relative value of each receptor.
 - Assessment of the relative susceptibility of the receptor to a change of the type proposed.
 - Combination of relative value and susceptibility scores to derive an overall relative sensitivity score.
- 4.5 A full methodology for this assessment is presented at **Appendix 3**.



Image 3: The Site

Review of Published Landscape Character Assessments

National Level Assessment

4.6 Natural England's National Character Assessment places the Site within the North Kent Plain National Character Area (NCA 113).

4.7 The key characteristics of the North Kent Plain NCA is as follows, with those considered to be of relevance to the Site and its setting highlighted in bold text:

- **An open, low and gently undulating landscape, characterised by high quality, fertile, loamy soils dominated by agricultural land uses.**
- The area's geology is dominated by Palaeogene clays and sands, underlain by the Chalk.
- Geologically a chalk outlier – and historically an island separated from the mainland by a sea channel – Thanet forms a discrete and distinct area that is characterised by its unity of land use, arising from the high quality fertile soils developed in thin drift deposits over chalk.
- A diverse coastline (both in nature and orientation), made up of cliffs, intertidal sand and mud, salt marshes, sand dunes and shingle beaches. Much of the coastal hinterland has been built on, and the coast itself has been modified through the construction of sea walls, harbours and piers.
- **Large arable/horticultural fields with regular patterns and rectangular shapes predominating, and a sparse hedgerow pattern.**
- Orchards and horticultural crops characterise central and eastern areas, and are often enclosed by poplar or alder shelterbelts and **scattered small woodlands.**
- Woodland occurs on the higher ground around

Blean and in smaller blocks to the west, much of it ancient and of high nature conservation interest.

- The Stour and its tributaries are important features of the eastern part of the NCA, draining eastwards into the North Sea, with associated wetland habitats including areas of grazing marsh, reedbeds, lagoons and gravel pits. The River Medway cuts through the NCA as it flows into the Thames Estuary.
- Other semi-natural habitats include fragments of neutral, calcareous and acid grassland, and also heathland.
- The area has rich evidence of human activity from the Palaeolithic period. Key heritage assets include Roman sites at Canterbury, Reculver and Richborough; the Historic Dockyard at Chatham; military remains along the coast; and historic parks and buildings.
- Large settlements and urban infrastructure (including lines of pylons) are often visually dominant in the landscape, with significant development around Greater London and the Medway Towns, as well as around towns further east and along the coast. Major rail and road links connect the towns with London.

4.8 Based upon the above analyses, the Site and its setting are considered to be barely representative of the North Kent Plain NCA.

District Level Assessments

Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment

4.9 Gravesham Borough Council commissioned Jacobs to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment of Gravesham Borough in May 2009.

4.10 The Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment has been produced in order to *'provide logical, robust and defensible justifications for managing pressures for*

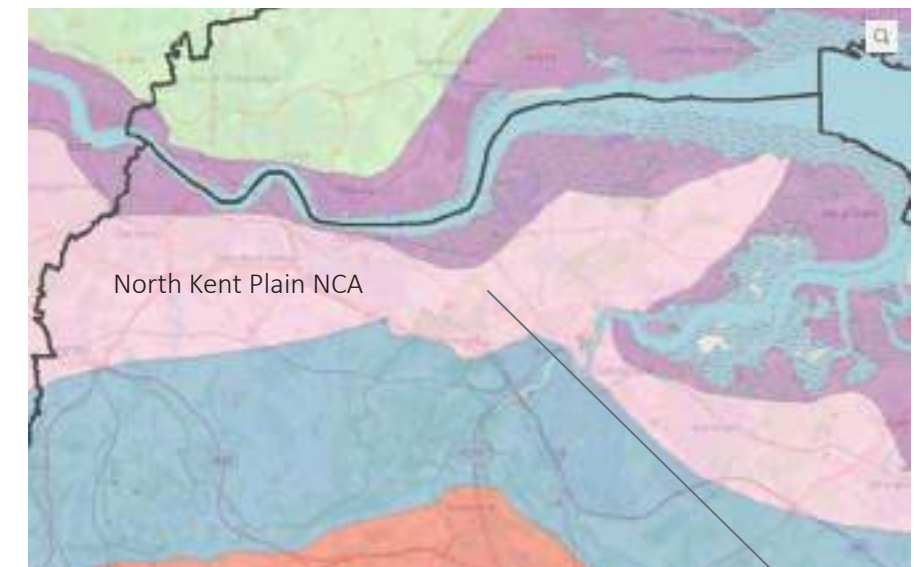


Figure 6: Character Map Extract

change in the Borough, without diminishing the value of the landscape.'

4.11 The Site is located within the Higham Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area (LCA).

4.12 The key characteristics of the Higham Arable Farmlands LCA are as follows, with those considered to be of relevance to the Site and its setting highlighted in bold text:

- **Very gently undulating topography.**
- **Open arable farmland.**
- **Views out to the marshes and the River Thames in the north.**
- **Original Saxon village of Lower Higham and more recent development to the south.**
- Marsh side hamlets and settlements.
- Isolated farmsteads and scattered properties with locally distinct styles and materials.
- Pockets of orchards and garden nurseries.
- Historic sites including a Priory and Gad's Hill, once home to Charles Dickens.

- Thames and Medway Canal (disused) runs to Lower Higham.

- 4.13 Based upon the above analyses, the Site and its setting are considered to be partially representative of the Higham Arable Farmlands LCA.
- 4.14 The assessment identifies this character type to be of poor overall condition, owing to the fragmentation of land use, intense agriculture and some visually detracting features. However, the sensitivity of the character area is identified as moderate with local distinctiveness and cultural associations linked with the area, including Charles Dickens.
- 4.15 As a result, the assessment has published a list of guidelines to help restore and create within the Higham Arable Farmlands LCA, as follows:
- Restore and create field boundary hedgerows.
 - Restore and create ecological networks by linking existing isolated woodland clumps and orchards.
 - Create design standards for new developments in the area.
 - Resist proposals that introduce extensive or obtrusive elements within visually sensitive areas of the open landscape.
 - Create areas of regenerative woodland within farmland to create woodland links.
 - Restore small pockets of heritage landscape around existing settlement.
 - Improve footpaths and access throughout the area to link woodlands to marshlands.
 - Raise awareness and promote awareness of the cultural associations of the landscape.

Appraisal of Site Character and Local Representation

- 4.16 As described in Section 3, the Site lies along the northern settlement edge of the village of Higham.
- 4.17 The Site comprises a single arable field, that displays substantial undulations, rising in the centre of the field and falling away towards the boundaries, particularly to the west and north-west.
- 4.18 Restricted Byway NS153 crosses through the Site from east to west.
- 4.19 The Site is bound to the north by sections of mature hedgerow, with some gaps particularly along the north-eastern corner, allowing for some visual interaction with a short row of residential dwellings along School Lane.
- 4.20 To the east, there is no physical boundary demarcation, with the Site lying at a significantly higher level than School Lane which runs parallel to the Site boundary. As a result, there is a visual interaction between the Site and a number of residential dwellings facing towards the Site.
- 4.21 A line of mature conifers along the eastern side of the road does serve to restrict views further east.
- 4.22 To the south, the Site is bound by sections of garden fence, mature hedgerows and some mature trees, which allows some visual interaction with a series of residential dwellings that back onto the Site.
- 4.23 Further south, the landform rises across Higham, and therefore sections of the village, including the Grade II Listed St John's Church are visible from sections of the Site, particularly at the highest point within the centre of the Site.
- 4.24 To the west, the Site has no physical boundary demarcation. The landform falls away significantly to

the north-west beyond the Site, which in combination with the lack of boundary along this edge of the Site, creates long views towards the River Thames and the industrial features that lie along the river.

- 4.25 The Site feels connected to the existing village, through visual interactions with residential dwellings to the north, south, east and south-west, creating a transitional sub-settlement character across this single arable field.
- 4.26 The Site largely feels contained by mature vegetation, built form or rising topography, with an exception to the north-west, where long views over countryside towards the River Thames are available.
- 4.27 For the purposes of this assessment, the following physical and perceptual elements are considered to be relevant receptors in terms of landscape character:
- Single arable field.
 - Undulating topography across the Site.
 - Transitional sub-settlement character through close visual association with Higham.
 - Open countryside to the north-west.
 - Overall character of the Site.
 - Overall character of the setting of the Site.

Assessment of Receptor Sensitivity

Assessment of Landscape Value

- 4.28 In absence of external measures of landscape value, for example designations, the value of the Site has been assessed in relation to a number of suggested indicators of value within Table 1 of the Landscape Institute TGN02/21 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations', (which is an evolution of Box 5.1 of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3)), considering each

of the following factors:

- Natural Heritage.
- Cultural Heritage.
- Landscape Condition.
- Associations.
- Distinctiveness.
- Recreational.
- Perceptual (scenic).
- Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity).
- Functional.

4.29 With regard to the individual landscape receptors listed above, the relative value of each characteristic is judged to be as follows:

- *Single arable field:* The Site is comprised of a single, small arable field located on the northern settlement edge of the village of Higham. The Site has a strong association with the village, through clear visual connections to residential built form to both the north, east and in particular to the south. The Site feels largely separated from the wider arable fields to the north and east by intervening built form, mature vegetation and topography, however there is some association with the wider open countryside to the west and north-west as a result of an open boundary along the Site's western edge. A Public Right of Way in the form of a Restricted Byway crosses through the Site, connecting School Lane to Taylor's Lane, however it is acknowledged that there are no PRoW connections to the west. Taking all of these factors into consideration, this receptor is judged to be of **Medium** value.
- *Undulating topography across the Site:* The Site displays an undulating topography, with rising land within the centre of the Site, falling away to

the east, and more significantly to the west and north-west. As a result, some parts of the Site feel more exposed than others, in particular the central and western sections of the Site. The Site also lies at a level higher than School Lane which runs parallel to the eastern boundary, and Taylors Lane which runs parallel to the western boundary. The undulating topography continues south beyond the Site across the settlement of Higham, as well as falling away significantly to the north and west of the Site. Taking all of these factors into consideration, this receptor is judged to be of **Low** value.

- *Transitional sub-settlement character through close visual association with Higham:* The Site is bound to the south by residential dwellings along High View, however the rising land to the south allows for some views of the wider settlement of Higham, including the Grade II Listed St John's Church. Residential dwellings are also located along sections of the Site's eastern and western boundaries, and a small row to the north-eastern corner of the Site. The lack of boundary vegetation along these edges allows for a clear visual interaction with the Site, and therefore the Site feels connected to the settlement. The Site shares some relationship with the open countryside to the north-west, particularly within the western section of the Site. Taking all of these factors into consideration, this receptor is judged to be of **Low** value.
- *Open countryside to the north-west:* A lack of boundary vegetation along the western Site boundary, along with falling topography along the western edge allows for long views north-west towards the River Thames. Views extend across an area of arable countryside, with distant views of the River Thames and a number of large industrial features along the river bank at Tilsbury and

Gravesend. The landscape to the north lies outside of the National Landscape, however views consist of a working landscape, with views of large ships moving along the River Thames, as well as views of fields and farmsteads. Taking all of these factors into consideration, this receptor is judged to be of **Medium** value.

- *Overall character of the Site:* As previously noted, the Site is comprised of a single arable field, with notable topography, some mature hedgerows and trees along sections of the boundaries, as well as some open boundaries. A PRoW crosses through the Site in the form of a Restricted Byway, allowing public access into the Site. However, the Site feels strongly connected to the existing settlement edge, with only some association with the wider countryside to the north-west. Taking all of these factors into consideration, this receptor is judged to be of **Medium** value.
- *Overall character of the setting of the Site:* To the north, west and east of the Site lies open countryside of largely commercial scale arable farming. To the south lies the settlement of Higham, with the larger town of Rochester lying just inside the Study Area. Major infrastructure crosses through the Study Area in the form of the A289, the A226, the M2 motorway, as well as a section of the Southeastern Railway, and a now defunct Thames and Medway Canal to the north. The Kent Downs National Landscape lies at the very south-western extent of the Study Area, covering only a very small area to the south of Shorne, and extending south and west beyond the Study Area. Taking all of these factors into consideration, this receptor is judged to be of **Medium** value.

Assessment of Landscape Susceptibility

4.30 The susceptibility of each receptor to the type of change proposed is judged to be as follows:

- *Single arable field:* It is acknowledged that the proposed development of the Site would result in the loss of a small arable field in a settlement edge setting. However, the Site feels connected to the settlement edge, with residential dwellings to the south, west, east and north-east, which largely contain the Site from the wider countryside. A lack of boundary vegetation to the west and falling topography does allow some connection to the arable fields to the immediate west and north-west. Given the small size of the Site and its close association with the settlement edge, its loss as an arable field would largely be limited and isolated. Therefore, this receptor is judged to be of **Low** susceptibility to change.
- *Undulating topography across the Site:* The topography across the Site largely reflects the wider landscape setting, with the settlement of Higham located on a north facing slope, falling away to the River Thames to the north. It is judged that the proposed development of the Site could require some remodelling of the Site's landform, however this would be contained within the Site boundaries and its influence upon the wider setting would be limited. Therefore this receptor is judged to be of **Low** susceptibility to change.
- *Transitional sub-settlement character through close visual association with Higham:* It is judged that the Site is already influenced by the visual presence of built form in particular along the southern edge, as well as to the north-east, east and south-west. Whilst the Site largely lies to the north of the settlement of Higham, pockets of built form along School Lane mean that the Site feels a part of the settlement, and therefore it is judged

that some residential dwellings within this area would not appear entirely incongruous. Therefore, this receptor is judged to be of **Low** susceptibility to change.

- *Open countryside to the north-west:* The lack of any boundary vegetation and sloping landform along the Site's western edge, means that the Site shares some relationship with the open countryside to the north-west, including some long views towards the River Thames. The undulating character of the Site means that the central and eastern sections of the Site however share more of a relationship with the settlement edge. The Site comprises a single, small arable field in a settlement edge setting, in comparison to the larger arable fields to the north-west, and therefore the Site's influence is considered to be limited. This receptor is therefore judged to be of **Low** susceptibility to change.
- *Overall character of the Site:* The Site represents a single, small arable field in a settlement edge

setting. The presence of a Public Right of Way through the Site means that the Site is partially publicly accessible. The Site has strong landscape and visual connections to the existing built form along sections of most of the Site boundaries. Some relationship with the wider countryside to the north-west is noted. Therefore, taking all of these factors into consideration, this receptor is judged to be of **Low** susceptibility to change.

- *Overall character of the setting of the Site:* The Site lies within a settlement edge setting, with open countryside of arable fields extending to the north, east and west beyond the settlement. The Kent Downs National Landscape lies to the south-west beyond the settlement, at the very edge of the Study Area. Major road and rail infrastructure crosses through the Study Area, punctuating the largely agricultural landscape. Taking all of these factors into consideration, this receptor is judged to be of **Medium** susceptibility to change.

Table 1: Landscape Sensitivity			
Receptor	Value	Susceptibility to change	Sensitivity
Single arable field.	Medium	Low	Medium/Low
Undulating topography across the Site.	Low	Low	Low
Transitional sub-settlement character through close visual association with Higham.	Low	Low	Low
Open countryside to the north-west.	Medium	Low	Medium/Low
Overall character of the Site.	Medium	Low	Medium/Low
Overall character of the setting of the Site.	Medium	Medium	Medium

5. Visual Baseline

Overview

- 5.1 The visual baseline study commences with a process of desk study to generate a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) using 3D terrain modelling software, which shows the 'bare earth' visibility of the proposed development based upon local topography, i.e. devoid of structures and vegetation. The extent of the visual envelope is then refined through field investigation. The ZTV is shown on the adjacent plan.
- 5.2 The baseline assessment is used to identify the likely visual receptors of the proposals. These are defined as individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal.
- 5.3 For each confirmed visual receptor, a viewpoint photograph or series of photographs will be taken from the point or points of greatest visibility. A description is provided below each viewpoint, along with a plan showing their location.
- 5.4 This description will then be used to assess the sensitivity of each receptor, in line with the criteria presented within Table 6 at Appendix 3.

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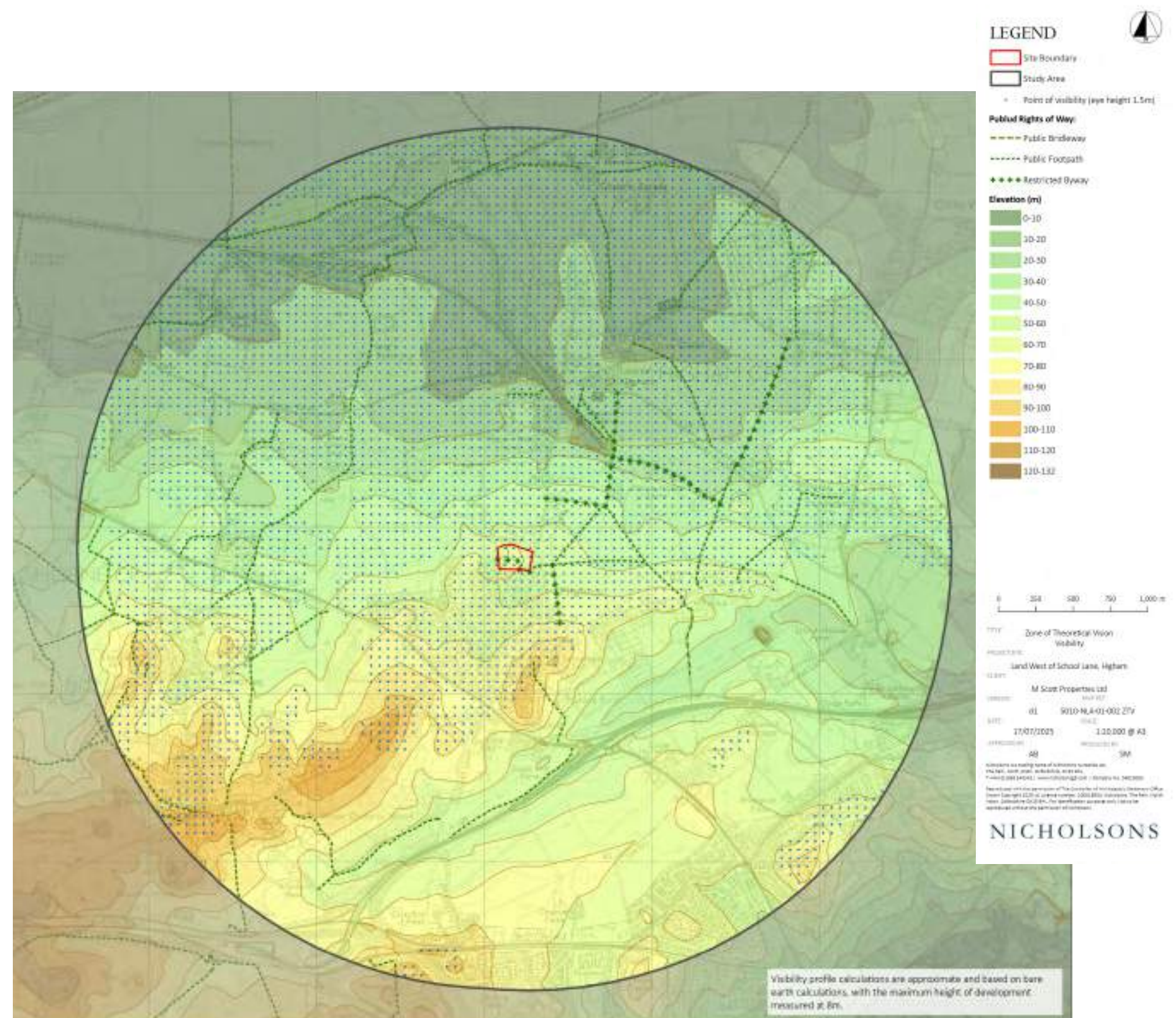


Figure 7: Zone of Theoretical Visibility

Receptor Viewpoints

- 5.5 To assist in understanding the character and composition of the Sites and the landscape in which they are located, a series of receptor views are presented over the following pages.
- 5.6 The locations of these viewpoints are shown on the Receptor Viewpoint Location Map at Figure 8.

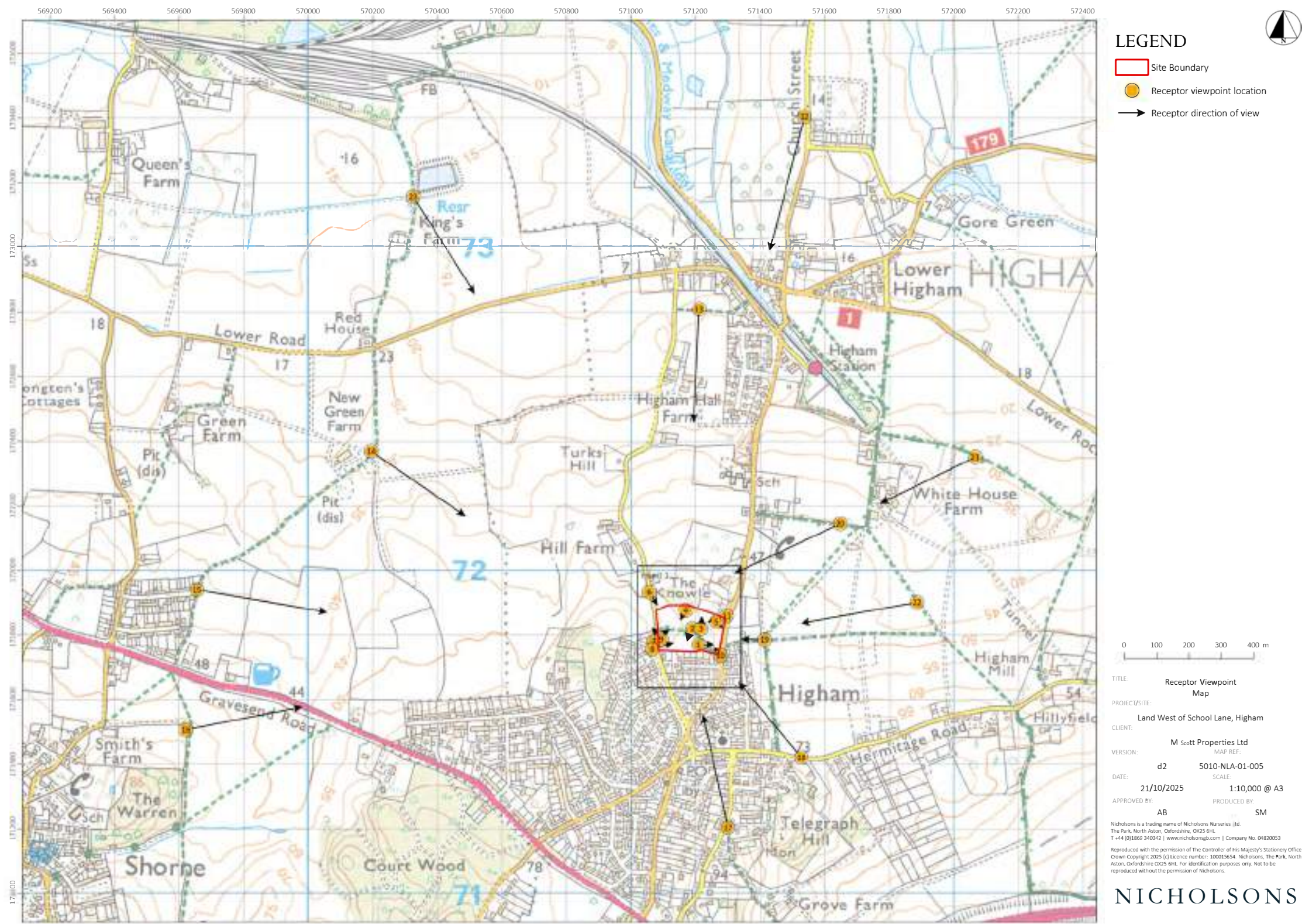
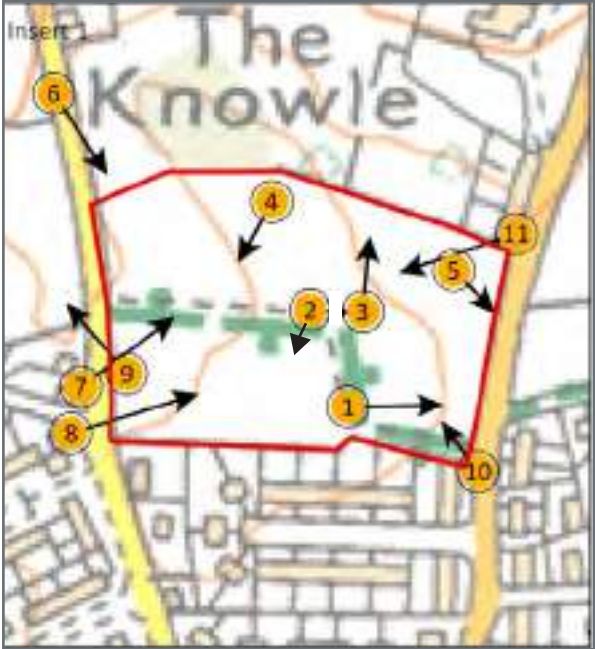


Figure 8: Receptor Viewpoint Map



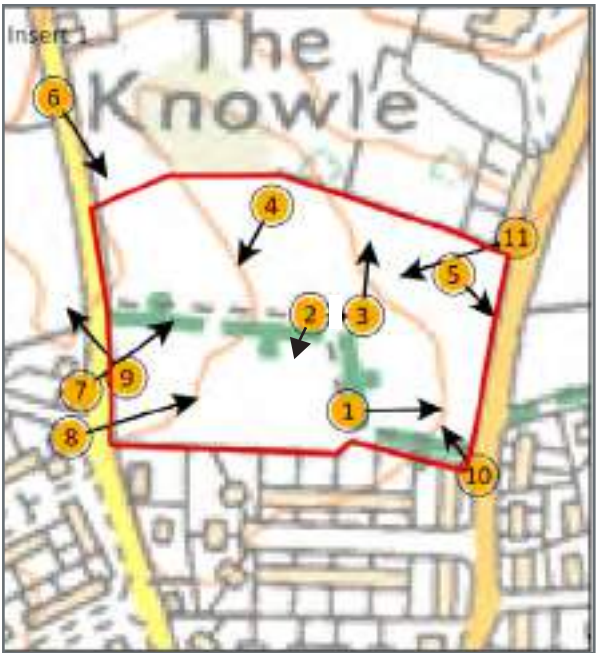
Receptor Viewpoint 1							
Location	View from within Site, looking East.						
Grid Ref	TQ 71217 71760	Distance from Site: N/A- within Site		Nature of Receptor: Residents along School Lane, Users of Restricted Byway NS153			
Description	The view looks east across the Site from Restricted Byway NS153, which crosses through the Site from east to west. The arable field that forms the Site extends across the whole view, with views of Restricted Byway NS153 visible at the far right of the view. A row of mature conifers are visible within the centre of the view, lying to the east of School Lane. School Lane itself is not visible as a result of the higher level of the Site within the landscape, however it lies parallel to the Site’s eastern boundary. To the right of the view, a number of residential dwellings are visible along School Lane, with their front aspects facing towards the Site, in particular upper floor windows. To the left of the view, rooftop views of a number of dwellings are visible lying to the north of the Site, with the side elevation of one of these properties lying along the Site’s northern boundary. As a result of the mature trees that lie between the dwellings along School Lane, views further east beyond the settlement are limited. With regards to dwellings along School Lane, it is judged that a small number of these are likely to have clear views from upper floor windows into the Site in its current open form. However, the views are considered to be influenced by the existing settlement edge and are not considered to be rare or wild within this setting, therefore this receptor is judged to be of Medium value. It is judged that views across the Site are likely to include views of the existing settlement that lies to the immediate south of the Site, and therefore this receptor is judged to be of Medium susceptibility to change. With regards to users of restricted Byway NS153, this route crosses directly through the Site, however, it is judged that users of this route are already influenced by the strong presence of the settlement to the south, east, west and north, and therefore is judged to be of Medium value and Medium susceptibility to change.						
	Residents along School Lane:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Medium	Receptor Sensitivity:	Medium
	Users of Restricted Byway NS153:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Medium	Receptor Sensitivity:	Medium



N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and when reproduced at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through an identical radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be used as a substitute for visiting the viewpoint.



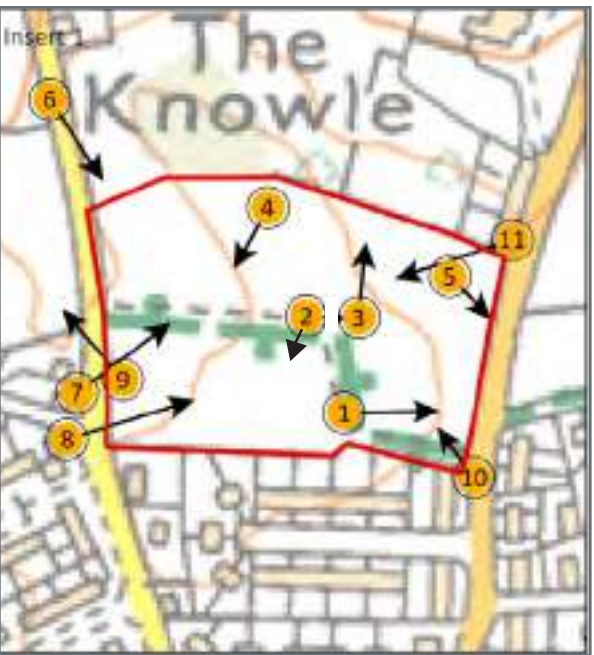
Receptor Viewpoint 2					
Location	View from within the Site, looking South.				
Grid Ref	TQ 71197 71810	Distance from Site:	N/A- within Site	Nature of Receptor: Residents along High View, Residents of Higham	
Description	The view looks south across the Site from Restricted Byway NS153 towards the main settlement area of the village. Across the centre of the view, a series of bungalows and some dormer style houses lie along High View, parallel to the Site’s southern boundary, with their rear elevations facing towards the Site. A general lack of boundary vegetation along this edge allows for some clear views of rooftops, and some upper floor windows, as well as views of rear gardens. Some mature vegetation is visible along this edge in small clusters, however views are generally open. The rising landform to the south-west allows for some more distant views of the main area of the settlement of Higham, with views of dwellings lying along the sloping ground facing north. With regard to views from dwellings along High View, it is judged that some of these properties are likely to have views across parts of the Site from their rear gardens and some rear windows, filtered by garden fences and some clumps of mature vegetation. Therefore this receptor is judged to be of Medium value. It is judged that the undulations of the Site mean that views are likely to be partial, with some views of existing built form and the settlement edge, therefore the susceptibility is judged to be Medium. With regards to residents from Higham, it is judged that views from the wider village are likely to be more distant and filtered by the presence of intervening built form and mature vegetation and therefore this receptor is judged to be of Medium value. The Site is likely to be viewed within the context of the existing settlement edge, given its small size and relative containment through built form and road infrastructure to the south, west and east. Therefore, this receptor is judged to be of Low susceptibility to change.				
	Residents along High View:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Medium
	Residents of Higham:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Low
				Receptor Sensitivity:	Medium
				Receptor Sensitivity:	Medium/Low



N.B. IMAGES TO ILLUSTRATE THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE CONTEXT ONLY. Panoramas are created from multiple photographs taken using a digital equivalent of a 35mm camera with 50mm lens in line with best practice and current guidance. Images illustrate a horizontal field of view of 68° and when reproduced at A3, should be viewed at a distance of 330mm curved through an identical radius in order to correctly illustrate the existing landscape context. To ensure considered judgements are accurately assessed, images should not be used as a substitute for visiting the viewpoint.



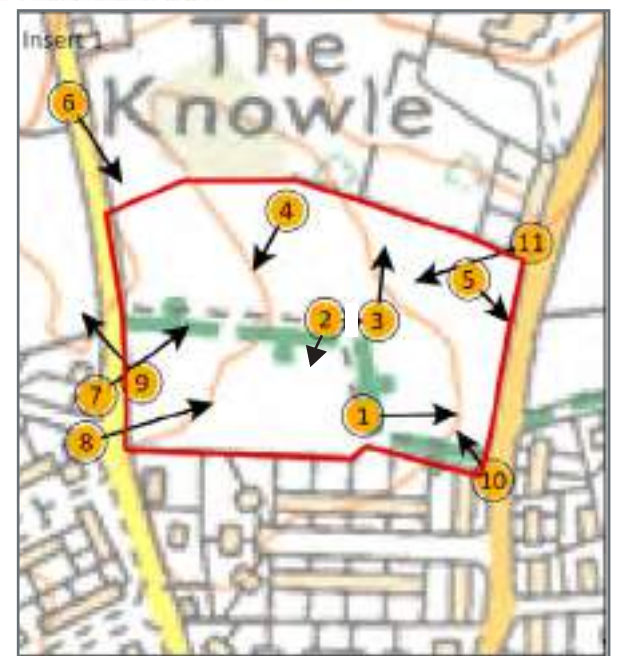
Receptor Viewpoint 3					
Location	View from within Site, looking North.				
Grid Ref	TQ 71197 71810	Distance from Site:	N/A- within Site	Nature of Receptor: Users of Knowle Country House, Users of Restricted Byway NS153	
Description	The view looks north from Restricted Byway NS153 within the centre of the Site, towards the Site’s northern boundary. The landform displays undulations, with a rise in topography towards the centre of the Site. The Site’s northern boundary is comprised of a mature hedgerow with large mature trees lying offsite further to the north, largely restricting views beyond the Site. A small gap within the boundary vegetation allows for a filtered view towards Knowle Country House, a hotel and wedding venue. With regards to users of Knowle House, it is judged that views from this hotel are currently filtered by the presence of existing mature vegetation both within the grounds of the hotel and along the Site’s northern boundary. Any views of the Site are therefore likely to be partial and filtered and looking south towards the existing settlement edge, and therefore this receptor is judged to be of Medium value. It is considered likely that views of the existing settlement edge could be available, particularly of the village of Higham on the sloping ground to the south, and therefore the any potential views of the Site are likely to be seen within the context of the existing settlement edge, and therefore this receptor is judged to be of Low susceptibility to change. With regards to users of Restricted Byway NS153, this receptor has been judged previously to be of Medium value and Medium susceptibility to change, and this viewpoint supports this judgement.				
	Users of Knowle Country House:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Low
	Users of Restricted Byway NS153:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Medium
				Receptor Sensitivity:	Medium/Low
				Receptor Sensitivity:	Medium



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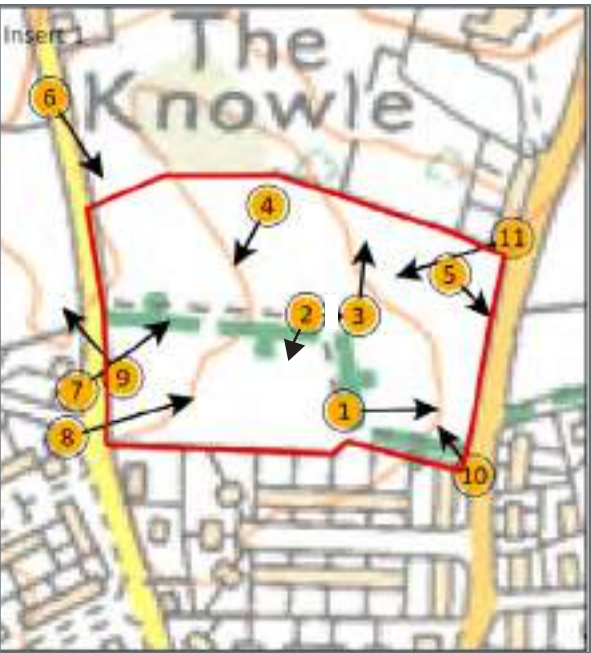
Receptor Viewpoint 4			
Location	View from within Site, looking South-West.		
Grid Ref	TQ 71177 71867	Distance from Site: N/A- within Site	Nature of Receptor: Residents of Higham
Description	The view looks south-west across the Site towards the western edge of the settlement of Higham. The Site displays a significant fall in topography towards the western Site boundary, which is open and largely devoid of vegetation. As a result, from this viewpoint, the Site shares a relationship with the arable field to the immediate west beyond Taylor’s Lane. The landform rises beyond the settlement, with an area of mature woodland creating a strong feature on the skyline, and serving to enclose the settlement to the west. An area of residential dwellings are visible within the centre of the view, lying along Taylor’s Lane, as well as within the western section of the village. With regard to residents of Higham, given the undulations across a relatively intact landscape, as well as intervening built form and mature vegetation, this receptor has been previously judged to be of Medium value and Low susceptibility to change and this viewpoint supports this judgement.		
	Receptor Value: Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change: Low	Receptor Sensitivity: Medium/Low



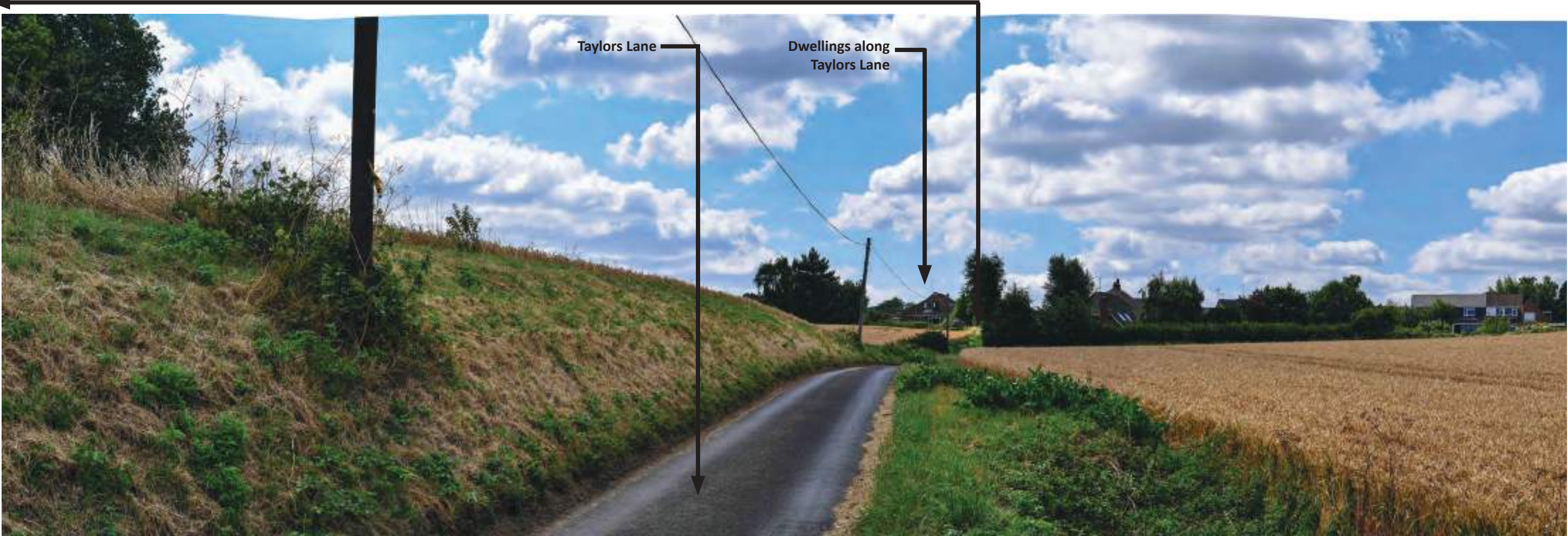
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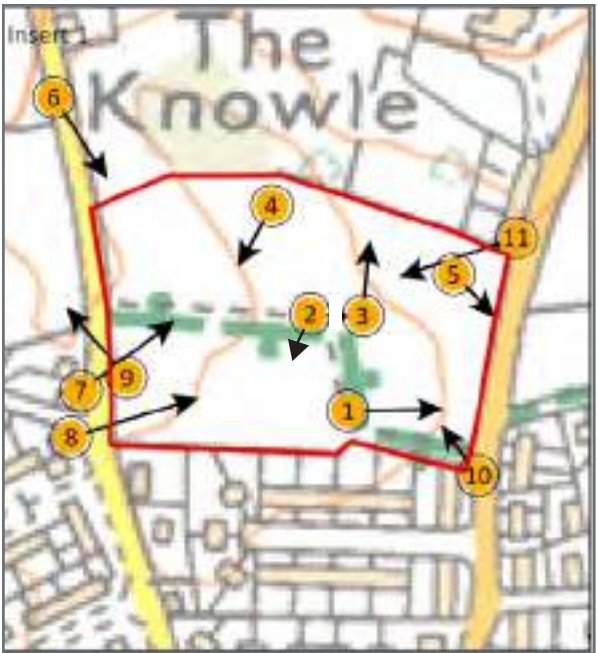
Receptor Viewpoint 5						
Location	View from within Site, looking South-East.					
Grid Ref	TQ 71272 71831	Distance from Site: N/A- within Site		Nature of Receptor: Residents along School Lane, Residents of Higham		
Description	The view looks south-east across the Site towards School Lane, and illustrates the openness of the Site’s eastern boundary. School Lane lies parallel to the field edge, however is not visible from this viewpoint as a result of its lower position within the landscape. To the left of the view, a residential dwelling is visible, facing towards the Site, however partially screened by a belt of mature conifer trees lying along the eastern side of the road. To the right of the view, views of residential dwellings within the village of Higham are visible on the rising land to the south. With regards to residents of School Lane, this receptor has been previously judged to be of Medium value and Medium susceptibility to change. With regards to residents of Higham, this receptor has been previously judged to be of Medium value and Low susceptibility to change. This viewpoint supports both of these judgements.					
	Residents along School Lane:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Medium	Receptor Sensitivity: Medium
	Residents of Higham:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Low	Receptor Sensitivity: Medium/Low



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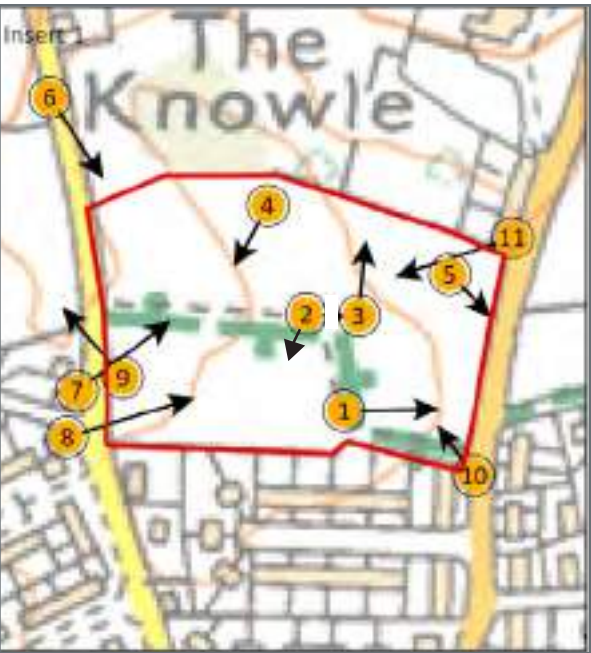
Receptor Viewpoint 6			
Location	View from Taylors Lane, looking South.		
Grid Ref	TQ 71064 71923	Distance from Site: 57m approx	Nature of Receptor: Users of Taylor’s Lane
Description	The view looks south towards the western edge of the Site from Taylor’s Lane, running parallel to the Site’s western boundary. The road lies at a significantly lower level than the Site, with a steep grassed bank visible to the left of the view, leading up to the Site. In the centre of the view, the very south-western corner of the Site is visible as a result of the lack of boundary vegetation and the rising topography to the south. Some mature vegetation is visible along the existing settlement edge, with filtered views of residential dwellings between the vegetation. With regards to users of Taylor’s Lane, it is judged that users are likely to be vehicle and cycle users given the lack of any footway and the steep bank to the west. Some partial views of the Site could be available, but are likely to be limited as a result of the landform undulations. On travelling south towards the settlement, views of the existing settlement edge are available, however views when travelling north along this road are more open. Whilst the open countryside to the north is considered to be a relatively intact landscape, the Site and its setting are influenced by the immediate settlement edge. It is therefore judged that this receptor is of Medium value and Low susceptibility to change.		
	Receptor Value: Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change: Low	Receptor Sensitivity: Medium/Low



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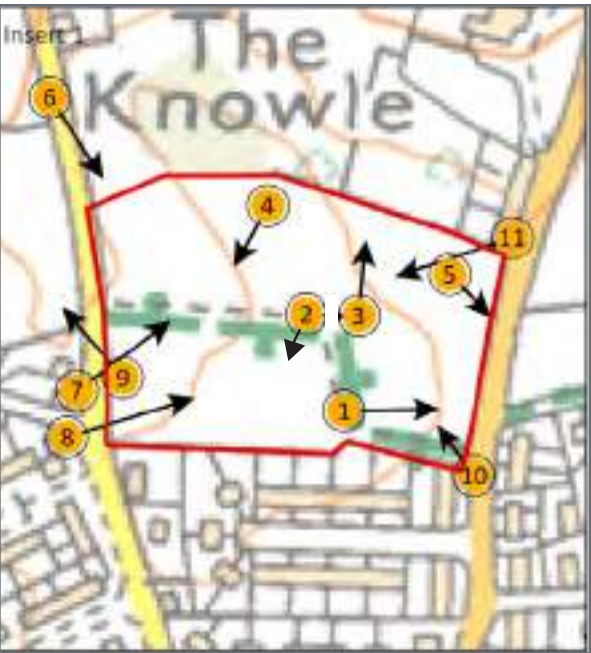
Receptor Viewpoint 7						
Location	View from Taylors Lane, looking North-East.					
Grid Ref	TQ 71078 71770	Distance from Site:	7m approx	Nature of Receptor: Residents of Taylor’s Lane, Users of Taylor’s Lane		
Description	The view looks north-east towards the Site from Taylor’s Lane, adjacent to the existing western settlement edge of Higham. In the foreground, the Site’s western boundary is visible as an open field edge, lying at a significantly higher level than the road, and a steep grassed bank leading down to the road. As a result in the difference in levels, much of the Site is not visible from this viewpoint, with the exception of the north-western corner of the Site where the landform slopes down towards the road. A small area of mature woodland is visible lying beyond the Site’s northern boundary, serving to contain many of the views further north. Taylor’s Lane is visible to the left of the view, heading north away from the village. With regards to residents of Taylor’s Lane it is judged that some partial views of the Site could be available from a small number of dwellings, likely to be limited to upper floor windows, as a result of the steep bank between these dwellings and the Site. These views would be experienced within the context of the existing residential dwellings along Taylors Lane, and separated from the Site by their front gardens and the road. As a result, this receptor is judged to be of Medium value and Medium susceptibility to change. With regards to users of Taylor’s Lane, this receptor has been previously judged to be of Medium value and Low susceptibility to change and this viewpoint supports this judgement.					
	Residents of Taylor’s Lane:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Medium	Receptor Sensitivity: Medium
	Users of Taylor’s Lane:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Low	Receptor Sensitivity: Medium/Low



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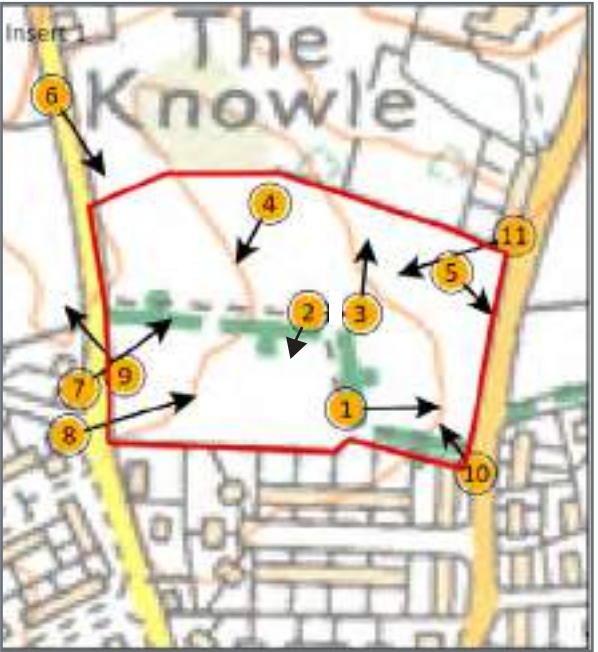
Receptor Viewpoint 8							
Location	View from Taylors Lane, looking North-East.						
Grid Ref	TQ 71073 71746	Distance from Site: 11m approx		Nature of Receptor: Residents along Taylor’s Lane, Users of Taylor’s Lane			
Description	The view looks north-east towards the Site from further along Taylor’s Lane, within the settlement of Highham. To the left of the view lie a series of residential dwellings and their front gardens, facing towards the road. To the right of the view, a steep bank denotes the Site’s western boundary, lying at a higher level than the road. An area of dense mature vegetation is visible to the far right of the view, at the Site’s south-western corner. As a result of the intervening mature vegetation and undulating landform, views of the Site from this viewpoint are restricted to the north-western corner of the Site. Dense mature vegetation is visible to the north of the Site, further restricting views beyond the Site. With regards to residents of Taylor’s Lane, this receptor has been previously judged to be of Medium value and Medium susceptibility to change. With regards to users of Taylor’s Lane, this receptor has been previously judged to be of Medium value and Low susceptibility to change. This viewpoint supports this judgement.						
	Residents along Taylor’s Lane:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Medium	Receptor Sensitivity:	Medium
	Users of Taylor’s Lane:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Low	Receptor Sensitivity:	Medium/Low



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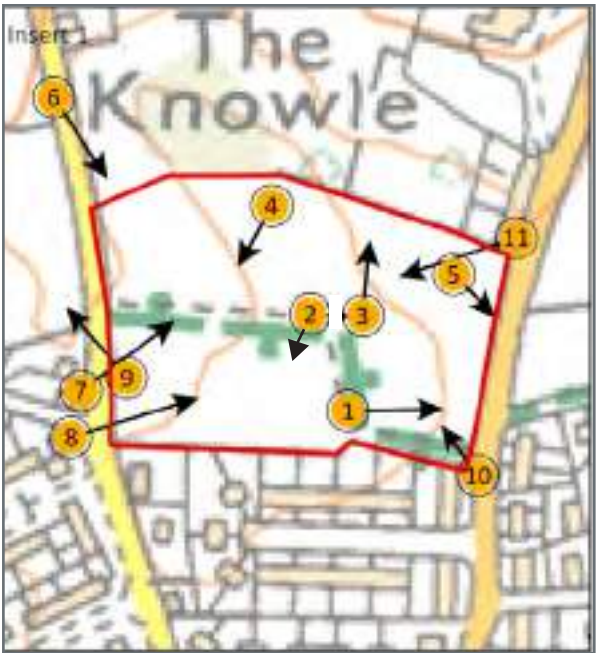
Receptor Viewpoint 9						
Location	View from within the Site, looking North-West.					
Grid Ref	TQ 71102 71777	Distance from Site: N/A- within Site		Nature of Receptor: Residents along Taylor’s Lane, Users of Taylor’s Lane		
Description	The view looks north-west towards the Site’s western boundary, with views of a number of residential dwellings lying along Taylor’s Lane, with front elevations facing towards the Site. The road and the dwellings lie much lower in the landscape, and as a result, views of the road and dwellings are partial. To the right of the view, the western edge of the Site slopes down towards the road, with no boundary vegetation creating long, open views to the north towards the River Thames. With regards to residents of Taylor’s Lane, it is judged that partial views of the Site from upper floor windows could be available, to a very limited number of dwellings along this road. Views are largely restricted as a result of the steep bank and difference in levels between the road and the Site. This receptor has been previously judged to be of Medium value and Medium susceptibility to change. With regards to users of Taylor’s Lane, this receptor has been previously judged to be of Medium value and Low susceptibility to change. This viewpoint supports these judgements.					
	Residents along Taylor’s Lane:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Medium	Receptor Sensitivity: Medium
	Users of Taylor’s Lane:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Low	Receptor Sensitivity: Medium/Low



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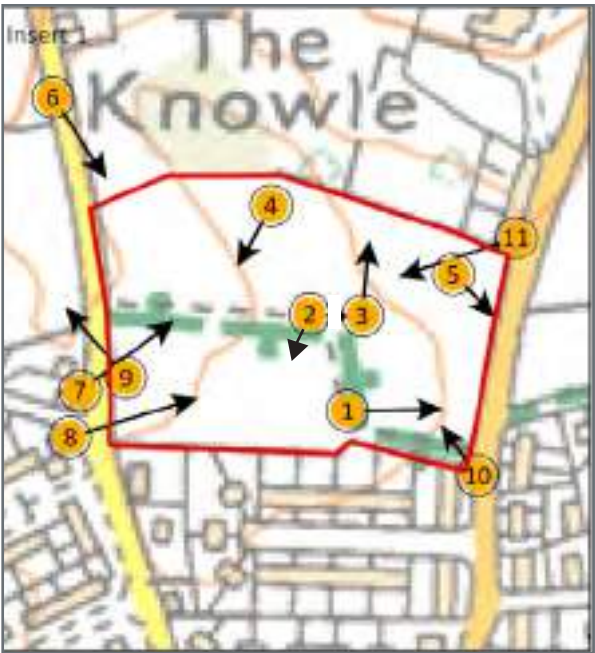
Receptor Viewpoint 10						
Location	View from School Lane, looking North-West.					
Grid Ref	TQ 71284 71726	Distance from Site: 13m approx		Nature of Receptor: Users of School Lane, Residents along School Lane		
Description	The view looks north-west towards the Site from a footway lying parallel to School Lane. The Site lies across the view, at a raised position from the road, with rough vegetation along the bank that defines the Site’s eastern boundary. A mature tree lies at the Site’s south-eastern corner, along with Restricted Byway NS153, which enters the Site from the road. Residential dwellings and driveways along School Lane are visible to both the right and left of the view. Several overhead powerlines and telegraph poles are visible across the view, contributing to the settlement edge character. Pedestrian footways run along both the eastern and western sides of the road.					
	With regards to users of School Lane, it is judged that this route is likely used by both vehicles and pedestrians, especially given that the road and footways lead out of the village towards Higham Primary School. The settlement edge is strongly experienced along this road, with residential dwellings lying along both sides of the road, to both the south, east and north of the Site. It is also judged that vehicle users are likely to have their attention focused on the road ahead. Pedestrian users are at a lower level in the landscape than the Site, and therefore views of the Site are likely to be restricted. Therefore this receptor is judged to be of Low value and Low susceptibility to change.					
	With regards to residents along School Lane, this receptor has been judged previously to be of Medium value and Medium susceptibility to change, given that a number of dwellings face towards the Site, and this viewpoint supports this judgement.					
	Users of School Lane:	Receptor Value:	Low	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Low	Receptor Sensitivity:
	Residents along School Lane:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Medium	Receptor Sensitivity:



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Receptor Viewpoint 11						
Location	View from School Lane, looking South-West.					
Grid Ref	TQ 71304 71850	Distance from Site:	15m approx	Nature of Receptor: Users of School Lane, Residents along School Lane		
Description	The view looks south-west towards the Site from School Lane, and illustrates the lower position of the road than the Site. The Site lies beyond the raised bank visible across the centre of the view, which itself is largely overgrown with nettles and scrub. A single large tree is visible at the south-eastern corner of the Site. A pedestrian footway is visible lying parallel to both the road and the Site’s eastern boundary. A row of terraced dwellings are visible to the right of the view, facing towards the road, with the end terrace dwelling having its side elevation facing towards the northern boundary of the Site. With regards to users of School Lane, this receptor has been judged previously to be of Low value and Low susceptibility to change. With regards to residents along School Lane, this receptor has been judged previously to be of Medium vale and Medium susceptibility to change, given that a small number of dwellings have their front aspects facing towards the Site. This viewpoint supports these judgements.					
	Users of School Lane:	Receptor Value:	Low	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Low	Receptor Sensitivity: Low
	Residents along School Lane:	Receptor Value:	Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change:	Medium	Receptor Sensitivity: Medium



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Receptor Viewpoint 12			
Location	View from Church Street, looking South.		
Grid Ref	TQ 71544 73394	Distance from Site: 1,550m approx	Nature of Receptor: Residents along Church Street
Description	The view looks south towards the Site from Church Street, adjacent to a small settlement of dwellings to the north of Lower Higham. In the foreground lies a large pasture field, displaying a relatively flat topography. In the middle and far distance, the landform begins to rise towards the settlement of Higham, with mature vegetation visible within field boundaries and on the skyline. The Site is located to the left of the view, lying behind an area of mature woodland, which lies adjacent to and beyond the Site’s northern boundary. As a result, the Site is not perceptible from this viewpoint.		



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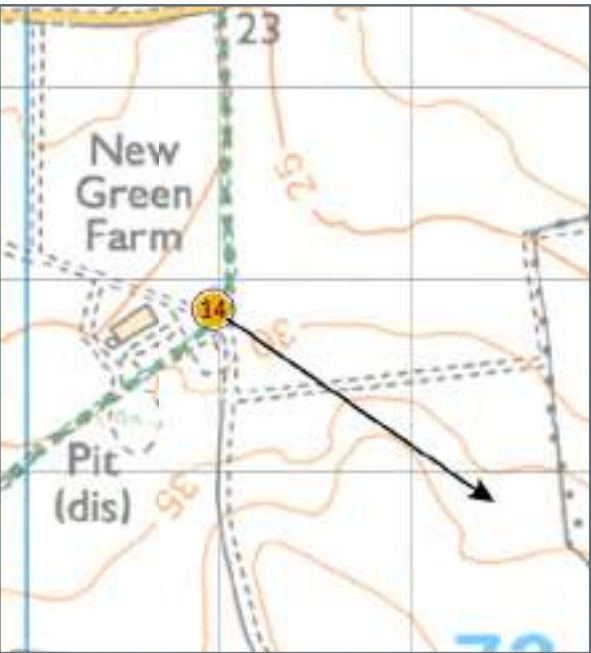
Receptor Viewpoint 13			
Location	View from Public Footpath NS145, looking South.		
Grid Ref	TQ 71218 72798	Distance from Site: 925m approx	Nature of Receptor: Users of Public Footpath NS145
Description	The view looks south from Public Footpath NS145, which lies adjacent to the small settlement of Lower Higham, to the north of the Site. The arable field in the foreground rises gradually towards the south, with mature vegetation visible along the field boundary. A number of agricultural buildings and residential dwellings are partially visible to the right of the view, along Taylor’s Lane. The Site lies within the centre of the view, lying behind an area of mature woodland. Mount Pleasant Cottage is visible lying to the north-west of the Site along Taylor’s Lane, however, the Site itself is screened by the rising land and mature woodland. As a result, the Site is not perceptible from this viewpoint.		

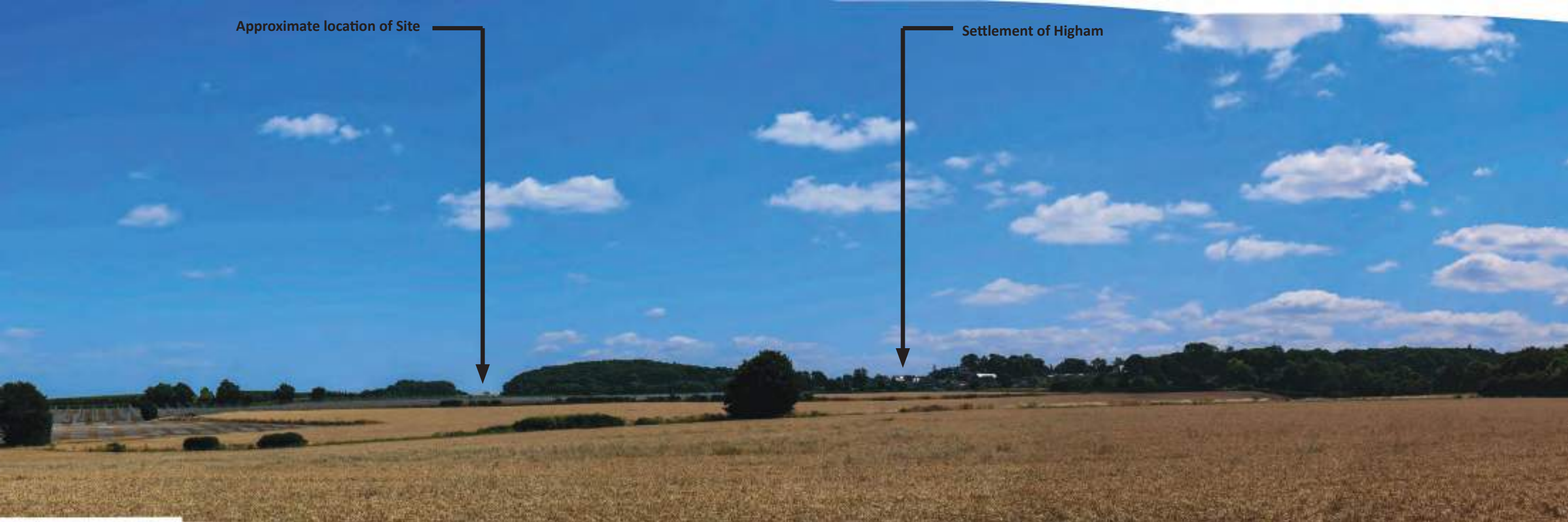


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Receptor Viewpoint 14	
Location	View from Public Footpath NS156. looking South-East.
Grid Ref	TQ 70203 72359 Distance from Site: 1,000m approx Nature of Receptor: Users of Public Footpath NS156
Description	The view looks south-east towards the Site from Public Footpath NS156, which crosses through a commercial fruit farm to the north-west of the Site. In the foreground, lies a large area of fruit tree planting, with the landform gradually rising towards the south. The Site lies to the left of the view, beyond the undulating landform. As a result of the distance from Site and topography, the Site is not perceptible from this viewpoint.





Receptor Viewpoint 15			
Location	View from Public Footpath NS156, looking East.		
Grid Ref	TQ 69663 71930	Distance from Site: 1,420m approx	Nature of Receptor: Users of Public Footpath NS156
Description	The view looks east towards the Site from Public Footpath NS156, adjacent to a small cluster of residential dwellings along Gravesend Road. In the foreground, the landform is relatively flat and comprised of large, open arable fields, with little boundary vegetation. In the middle distance, the settlement of Higham is visible, with glimpses of residential dwellings. However, some large areas of mature woodland serve to break up some of the views of the settlement. The Site is located to the left of centre, between two areas of woodland, and as a result of the gap in the vegetation, some long distance views of the Site are possible from this viewpoint. With regards to users of Public Footpath NS156, it is judged that users of this footpath could be seeking enjoyment of the countryside, in what is considered to be a relatively intact landscape to the west of the settlement, and therefore this receptor is judged to be of High value. It is also judged that views of the built form of the settlement of Higham are already available, but distant and partial as a result of the mature vegetation within the landscape. It is judged that views of the Site are also distant and partial as a result of the rising and falling topography across the Site. Therefore this receptor is judged to be of Low susceptibility to change.		
	Receptor Value: High	Receptor Susceptibility to Change: Low	Receptor Sensitivity: Medium



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Receptor Viewpoint 16	
Location	View from Public Footpath NS156, looking North-East.
Grid Ref	TQ 69630 71497 Distance from Site: 1,475m approx Nature of Receptor: Users of Public Footpath NS156
Description	The view looks north-east towards the Site from Public Footpath NS156, which lies to the south of Gravesend Road, close to the settlement of Shorne. The landform rises to the east and north-east, with mature vegetation present along field boundaries and larger woodland areas on the skyline. The Site is located within the centre of the view, and as a result of the distance from Site, topography and intervening mature vegetation, is not perceptible from this viewpoint.



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Receptor Viewpoint 17	
Location	View from Public Footpath NS150, looking North.
Grid Ref	TQ 71308 71193 Distance from Site: 550m approx Nature of Receptor: Users of Public Footpath NS150, Residents of Higham
Description	The view looks north towards the Site from Public Footpath NS150, which lies at the southern edge of the settlement of Higham. In the foreground lies Telegraph Hill, a residential road lying at the top of the hill, with residential dwellings to both the east and west of this road. Mature garden trees and hedgerows lie between the dwellings. The Site is located within the centre of the view. As a result of the falling topography and intervening built form and mature vegetation, the Site is not perceptible from this viewpoint.

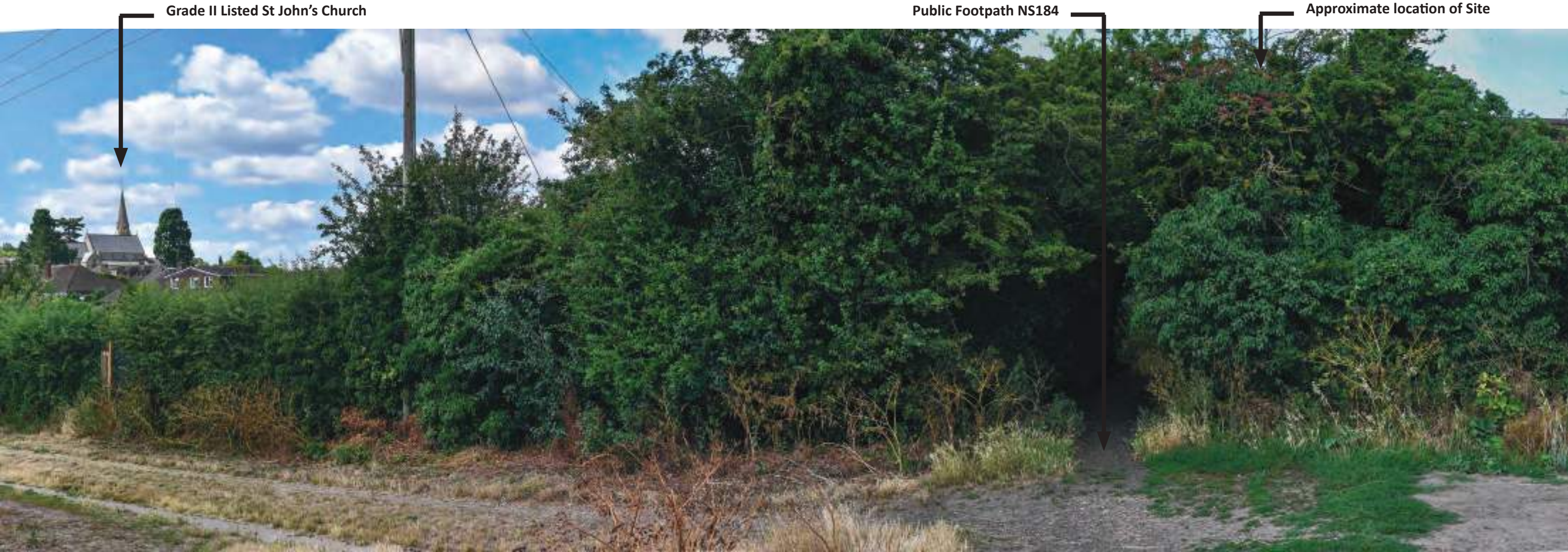




Receptor Viewpoint 18			
Location	View from Hermitage Road, looking North-West.		
Grid Ref	TQ 71535 71411	Distance from Site: 420m approx	Nature of Receptor: Users of Hermitage Road
Description	The view looks north-west towards the Site from Hermitage Road, lying along the eastern settlement edge of Higham. In the foreground, a series of arable fields extend north, gradually falling away towards the River Thames. As a result of the falling topography, very long distance views to the north are available. To the left of the view, clear views of the settlement of Higham are available, with views of dwellings along St John’s Road and School Lane. The Site lies to the left of centre beyond the visible dwellings, with some partial views of the northern section of the Site where the landform rises. An area of mature woodland to the north of the Site is clearly visible. With regards to users of Hermitage Road, it is judged that given that there is no pedestrian footway along this road, users are likely to be vehicle and cycle users. It is judged that users are likely to have their attention focused on the road, but with some appreciation of the view, given that there is little to no field boundary vegetation between the road and the field. Therefore, this receptor is judged to be of Medium value. However, it is judged that the Site is only partially visible and is viewed within the context of the existing built form within the view. Therefore, this receptor is judged to be of Low susceptibility to change.		
	Receptor Value: Medium	Receptor Susceptibility to Change: Low	Receptor Sensitivity: Medium/Low



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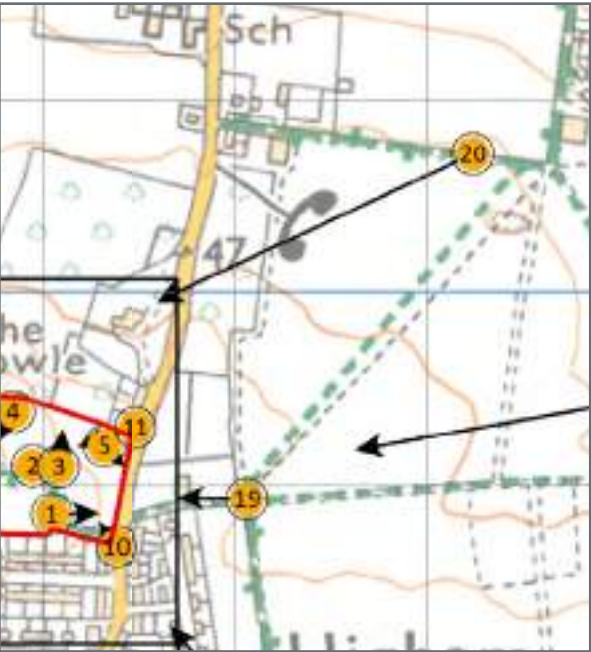
Receptor Viewpoint 19			
Location	View from Public Footpath NS184, looking West.		
Grid Ref	TQ 71421 71776	Distance from Site: 135m approx	Nature of Receptor: Public Footpath NS184
Description	The view looks west towards the Site from Public Footpath NS184, which connects to a series of Public Rights of Way within an area of arable fields to the east of School Lane. A mature hedgerow lies along the field boundary, with the footpath heading west into an area of dense vegetation. To the left of the view, views of the Grade II Listed St John's Church are available, and other residential dwellings are visible within the settlement. The Site lies to the right of centre, and as a result of the intervening mature vegetation is not perceptible from this viewpoint.		



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Receptor Viewpoint 20			
Location	View from Restricted Byway NS152, looking South-West.		
Grid Ref	TQ 71656 72135	Distance from Site: 480m approx	Nature of Receptor: Users of Restricted Byway NS152
Description	The view looks south-west towards the Site from Restricted Byway NS152, which connects to a series of Public Rights of Way within an area of arable fields to the east of School Lane. Mature vegetation lies along the fields’ western boundaries, thereby restricting views further west beyond the fields. The Higham Memorial Hall is visible within a gap in the vegetation. The Site lies to the left of the view, and as a result of the distance from Site and the intervening vegetation, is not perceptible from this viewpoint.		



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Receptor Viewpoint 21			
Location	View from Restricted Byway NS155, looking South-West.		
Grid Ref	TQ 72074 72341	Distance from Site: 920m approx	Nature of Receptor: Users of Restricted Byway NS155
Description	The view looks south-west towards the Site from Restricted Byway NS155, which lies within an area of arable fields to the north-east of the settlement and connects to a series of other Public Rights of Way. A series of arable fields extends south across the view, with mature vegetation lying along the field boundaries, as well as an area of mature scrub within the centre of the view. A series of dwellings are visible to the right of the view, lying along Land Way. To the left of the view, it is possible to glimpse distant views of built form associated with the settlement of Higham. The Site is located to the left of centre, lying in the distance beyond a row of poplar trees. As a result of the distance from Site and intervening mature vegetation, the Site is not perceptible from this viewpoint.		



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Receptor Viewpoint 22	
Location	View from Public Footpath NS147, looking South-West.
Grid Ref	TQ 71893 71891 Distance from Site: 625m approx Nature of Receptor: Users of Public Footpath NS147
Description	The view looks south-west towards the Site from Public Footpath NS147, which lies further east from the settlement of Higham within the open countryside of arable fields. In the foreground, the landform displays a very gradual rise towards the south, with large, arable fields extending towards an area of mature vegetation. In the far distance, the landform continues to rise, with mature vegetation visible on the skyline. Some built form is visible in the far distance along School Lane, however the Site itself is not visible. The Site is located to the left of the view, and as a result of the distance from Site and the intervening mature vegetation, the Site is not perceptible from this viewpoint.



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Receptor Viewpoint 23			
Location	View from Public Footpath NS156, looking South-East.		
Grid Ref	TQ 70333 73147	Distance from Site: 1,465m approx	Nature of Receptor: Users of Public Footpath NS156
Description	The view looks south-east towards the Site from Public Footpath NS156, which lies to the north of Lower Road, within open, arable countryside. The foreground is comprised of large, arable fields with little field boundary vegetation, allowing for some longer views to the south. In the middle and far distance, the landform begins to rise towards the settlement of Higham. The settlement edge is visible from this viewpoint, with distant views of residential dwellings and the Grade II Listed St John's Church available in the far distance. The western edge of the Site is partially visible, however the central and eastern sections of the Site are screened by the mature woodland to the north of the Site. With regards to users of Public Footpath NS156, it is judged that users are likely to be using this route for enjoyment of the countryside, and therefore this receptor is judged to be of High value. It is however also judged that views of the Site are very distant and partial, and viewed within the context of the existing built form and settlement edge, and therefore this receptor is judged to be of Low susceptibility to change.		
	Receptor Value: High	Receptor Susceptibility to Change: Low	Receptor Sensitivity: Medium



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Visual Summary

- 5.7 The visual baseline assessment identified that views of the Site are largely confined to the immediate context of the settlement edge to the south, as well as Taylor’s Lane and School Lane to the west and east respectively.
- 5.8 The potential availability of longer distance views from the open countryside to the north-west are acknowledged, along with the potential for some long distance filtered views from the east along Hermitage Road.
- 5.9 It should be noted that the visibility of the Site is more restricted than the ZTV identified in the initial baseline assessment. Any views from this distance are likely to be filtered by the presence of intervening vegetation and seen within the context of the existing settlement.

Table 2: Visual Receptor Sensitivities	
Receptor	Sensitivity
Residents along School Lane	Medium
Users of Restricted Byway NS153	Medium
Residents of High View	Medium
Residents of Higham	Medium/Low
Users of Knowle Country House	Medium/Low
Users of Taylor’s Lane	Medium/Low
Users of Hermitage Road	Medium/Low
Residents along Taylor’s Lane	Medium
Users of Public Footpath NS156	Medium
Users of School Lane	Low



Image 4: View south across the wider agricultural landscape, towards the settlement of Higham

6. Description of Proposals

Overview

- 6.1 As an overview, the proposals comprise a small-scale development of up to 50 private and affordable, single and two storey dwellings, with associated parking and access, landscaping and drainage, open space and areas for recreation.
- 6.2 Access into the development will be taken along School Lane, along the Site’s eastern boundary.



Figure 9: Proposed Landscape Design Strategy

Design Development

- 6.3 The layout of the proposed development has been informed by the appraisal of constraints and opportunities identified onsite, both in landscape and visual terms.
- 6.4 The development design seeks to address the most sensitive aspects of the Site, its immediate setting and the wider landscape, whilst bringing about wider green infrastructure benefits.
- 6.5 Residential dwellings have been focused within the central and southern areas of the Site, with a very small area of dwellings along the northern boundary.
- 6.6 As a result, the majority of the northern section of the Site remains open, with space for amenity grassland, landscape planting and a Locally Equipped Area for Play. This space allows opportunities for green infrastructure connections within and offsite, as well as Biodiversity Net Gain potential.
- 6.7 The main access road will head west into the Site, before dividing into two separate internal roads, one to the north and one to the south.
- 6.8 The existing Public Right of Way will be retained within its original position, allowing residents from the wider settlement to access the development and continue north and west into open countryside.
- 6.9 All existing boundary vegetation will be retained, with the exception of a small section of hedgerow removal to facilitate vehicular access into the Site.
- 6.10 The weaker boundaries will be strengthened with additional hedgerow and tree planting, in particular along the southern and eastern boundaries, to create green infrastructure corridors and connections and to soften any potential views of the proposed development from the wider settlement of Higham. Additional boundary planting is also suggested along

the southern section of the Site's western boundary.

- 6.11 The Site's north-western corner will remain open, with a large area of amenity grassland, seasonal bulbs and low shrub planting, in order to retain the long distance views north-west towards the River Thames.
- 6.12 Street planting is also proposed, in order to create visual interest, create areas of shade, minor green infrastructure corridors through the Site, as well as to soften any views of the proposed dwellings.
- 6.13 Drainage will take the form of underground cellular attenuation tanks, located in the north-western and north-eastern corners of the Site, within the proposed landscape areas. It is proposed that amenity grassland and some seasonal bulb planting will be placed above the tanks.

Suggested Mitigation Measures

- Wide landscape buffer within north-western and north-eastern corners of the Site, to enable habitat creation, green infrastructure, facilitate drainage and recreation, as well as to retain key views to the north-west.
- Much of the existing boundary vegetation will be retained and enhanced, with the exception of a small amount of removal along the eastern boundary to facilitate vehicular access.
- Retention of existing Public Right of Way within its original position.
- Street tree planting, as well as shrub beds where space allows, to create areas of shade, green infrastructure, biodiversity net gain and visual interest.
- Use of locally native species where appropriate, to ensure that the proposals are in keeping with and positively respond to the character of the Site, its setting and the wider landscape context.

- 6.14 The mitigation measures outlined above seek to ensure that the proposals relate positively to the character of the Site and its setting, and do not appear incongruous when viewed from the wider landscape setting.



Figure 10a: Proposed Landscape Design Strategy inset



Figure 10b: Proposed Landscape Design Strategy inset

7. Assessment of Effects - Landscape Character

- Overview**
- 7.1 This section will assess the anticipated effects upon the baseline landscape character as set out within Section 4 above.
- 7.2 For each of the identified landscape receptors, the effect of the proposed development will be described, and its magnitude determined in line with the methodology at Appendix 3. This will then be combined with the sensitivity of the receptor identified in Section 4 above to give an overall judgement of the significance of impact.
- 7.3 For reference, the landscape receptors of the proposed development and their respective sensitivity judgements are as follows:

Table 3: Landscape Receptor Sensitivities	
Receptor	Sensitivity
Single arable field.	Medium/Low
Undulating topography across the Site.	Low
Transitional sub-settlement character through close visual association with Higham.	Low
Open countryside to the north-west.	Medium/Low
Overall character of the Site.	Medium/Low
Overall character of the setting of the Site.	Medium

Assessment of Effects in Relation to Identified Receptors

Single arable field

- 7.4 The baseline assessment has identified this receptor to be of Medium/Low sensitivity.
- 7.5 It is acknowledged that the proposed development of the Site would alter the appearance and function of this small arable field. However, this field feels connected to the settlement of Higham through visual and landscape interactions with the settlement edge, with limited connection to the wider countryside as a result of surrounding built form and mature vegetation, with the exception of the open countryside to the north-west of the Site. As a result, the landscape character is already influenced by urbanising features.
- 7.6 This small area of arable land is contained to the south by the settlement edge, with some built form extending along School Lane to the east, and at the north-eastern corner of the Site. Mature vegetation also lies along the Site’s northern boundary, which in combination with the built form serves to largely contain the Site from the wider open countryside, and create an association with the settlement of Higham.
- 7.7 The proposed development is to be focused largely within the central and southern sections of the Site, with a small area extending up to the northern boundary.
- 7.8 It is anticipated that the existing boundary vegetation will be retained, with further enhancement planting closing any gaps and creating a robust edge to the proposed development, whilst retaining an open view corridor between the church and the open countryside to the north-west.
- 7.9 Taking all of these factors into consideration, the magnitude of change upon this receptor is judged to

be **Medium**.

- 7.10 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore judged to be an adverse effect of **Moderate** significance.
- Undulating topography across the Site.**
- 7.11 The baseline assessment has identified this receptor to be of Low sensitivity.
- 7.12 The landform across the Site largely rises across the centre of the field, falling away to both the east and west, which causes the Site to feel visually connected to the settlement edge to the immediate south, however restricts clear views of the entire Site from School Lane to the east and Taylor’s Lane to the west.
- 7.13 The proposed development would not alter the Site’s undulations, with the exception of some possible ground re-modelling to accommodate vehicular access along the Site’s eastern boundary.
- 7.14 Therefore, its topographic character would not alter significantly from its current condition.
- 7.15 Therefore the magnitude of change upon this receptor is judged to be **Negligible**.
- 7.16 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore judged to be **Minor**.
- Transitional sub-settlement character through close visual association with Higham.**
- 7.17 The baseline assessment has identified this receptor to be of Low sensitivity.
- 7.18 The presence of the existing settlement can be experienced from within the Site, with views of existing dwellings visible along the Site’s southern boundary and extending further south across the settlement of Higham, as a result of the rising topography to the south. Residential dwellings can also be viewed along

sections of the Site's northern, eastern and western boundaries, creating a sense of connection between the Site and the settlement of Higham, and creating a transitional sub-urban character across the Site.

- 7.19 As a result, the Site feels connected to the settlement, and less connected to the open countryside beyond Taylors Lane and School Lane.
- 7.20 It is judged that some residential development within the Site would not therefore appear entirely incongruous
- 7.21 The magnitude of change upon this receptor is therefore judged to be **Low**.
- 7.22 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore judged to be an adverse effect of **Minor** significance.

Open countryside to the north-west.

- 7.23 The baseline assessment has identified this receptor to be of Medium/Low sensitivity.
- 7.24 As a result of the undulating topography across the Site and a lack of strong boundary vegetation along the Site's western boundary, there is a long view available across the Site to the north-west towards the River Thames.
- 7.25 A large area of open space is to be retained along the western boundary and within the north-western corner of the Site, to allow for this open view to be retained, and will also provide opportunities for underground cellular attenuation tanks, and new low level shrub and scrub planting to create opportunities for biodiversity net gain.
- 7.26 It is also judged that the majority of the proposed dwellings will lie against the existing settlement edge.
- 7.27 Taking all of these factors into consideration, the magnitude of change upon this receptor is judged to

be **Low**.

- 7.28 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore judged to be an adverse effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance.

Overall character of the Site.

- 7.29 The baseline assessment has identified this receptor to be of Medium/Low sensitivity.
- 7.30 The overall character of the Site is that of a small arable field, within an urbanised context. There is a clear relationship with the adjacent settlement to the south and east, and mature vegetation means that the Site feels relatively well contained from the wider open countryside to the north.
- 7.31 The proposed development would introduce new residential dwellings and their associated infrastructure into this small area of agricultural land, against the existing settlement edge.
- 7.32 Much of the northern section of the Site is to remain undeveloped, with the exception of a small area of dwellings close to the mature woodland edge. This open area will be used for underground cellular attenuation tanks, as well as informal open space areas and spaces for tree, scrub and shrub planting. Additional boundary planting will serve to strengthen these existing boundary hedgerows.
- 7.33 The north-western corner of the Site will also remain undeveloped, acting as an important view corridor between the village church and the long views north-west towards the River Thames. This area will also contain underground cellular attenuation tanks, with space for lower level scrub and shrub planting to provide opportunities for biodiversity net gain, whilst retaining open views.
- 7.34 The existing Restricted Byway will remain in situ across the Site, allowing new and existing residents to access

the network of Public Rights of Way to both the east and west of the Site.

- 7.35 Taking all of these factors into consideration, the magnitude of change upon this receptor is judged to be **Medium**.
- 7.36 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore judged to be an adverse effect of **Moderate** significance.

Overall character of the setting of the Site.

- 7.37 The baseline assessment has identified this receptor to be of Medium sensitivity.
- 7.38 The immediate setting of the Site is characterised by the settlement edge of Higham to the south, south-western corner, and along the eastern edge of the Site, with pockets of built form extending north along School Lane, beyond the Site boundaries.
- 7.39 The mature vegetation along the Site's northern boundary serves to largely contain the Site from the more open countryside to the north, however there is an association with long views north-west through the Site's open western boundary.
- 7.40 The retention and enhancement of all boundary vegetation, and the inclusion of new hedgerow planting where gaps within the boundaries currently exist, will mean that the Site has the potential to feel further contained against the existing settlement edge.
- 7.41 It is judged that the conversion of this small arable field, to residential dwellings against the existing settlement edge, is likely to have a limited influence upon the wider landscape setting, given the presence of built form to the south, south-west, east and north-eastern corner, as well as mature vegetation along the Site's northern boundary.

- 7.42 Taking all of these factors into consideration, the magnitude of change upon this receptor is judged to be **Low**.
- 7.43 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore judged to be an adverse effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance.

Table 4 - Summary Table of Landscape Effects					
Receptor	Value	Susceptibility to change	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of Effect
Single arable field.	Medium	Low	Medium/Low	Medium	Moderate Adverse
Undulating topography across the Site.	Low	Low	Low	Negligible	Minor Adverse
Transitional sub-settlement character through close visual association with Higham.	Low	Low	Low	Low	Minor Adverse
Open countryside to the north-west.	Medium	Low	Medium/Low	Low	Moderate/Minor Adverse
Overall character of the Site.	Medium	Low	Medium/Low	Medium	Moderate Adverse
Overall character of the setting of the Site.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Moderate/Minor Adverse

8. Assessment of Effects - Visual Assessment

Overview

- 8.1 This section will assess the anticipated effects of the proposed development upon the visual receptors identified in Section 5 above.
- 8.2 For ease of assessment, the various viewpoints will be grouped into the following visual receptors which they represent:

Table 6: Visual Receptor Sensitivities	
Receptor	Sensitivity
Residents along School Lane	Medium
Users of Restricted Byway NS153	Medium
Residents of High View	Medium
Residents of Higham	Medium/Low
Users of Knowle Country House	Medium/Low
Users of Taylor’s Lane	Medium/Low
Users of Hermitage Road	Medium/Low
Residents along Taylor’s Lane	Medium
Users of Public Footpath NS156	Medium
Users of School Lane	Low

Assessment of Effects in Relation to Identified Receptors

Residents along School Lane - Views 1, 5, 10,11

- 8.3 With regards to inward views from residents along School Lane, it is noted that a small number of dwellings lie opposite the Site’s eastern boundary, at it’s south-eastern corner, with some views of the proposed development anticipated, particularly of the eastern edge of the Site.
- 8.4 A further larger dwelling lies further north along this eastern edge, however this is separated from the Site by a dense, tall conifer hedgerow, and therefore views from this dwelling are considered to be limited to very partial, filtered views through the dwelling’s gateway.
- 8.5 It is proposed that only a small number of dwellings will lie along the Site’s eastern edge, along with the main vehicle access point into the development.
- 8.6 The proposed dwellings at the south-eastern corner of the Site have been arranged with their front aspects facing School Lane, along with small driveways, which reflect the existing street character to the south.
- 8.7 Further north, beyond the proposed access point, a single building of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments will face towards the road, with a large area of open space lying at the Site’s north-eastern corner.
- 8.8 New shrub and hedgerow planting is proposed along the Site’s eastern boundary, to soften this edge and reflect the mature vegetation along the opposite side of the road, however incorporating native species rather than solely conifers.
- 8.9 Taking all of these factors into consideration, the magnitude of change upon this receptor is judged to be **Low**.
- 8.10 The overall impact upon this receptor is judged to be

an adverse effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance.

Users of Restricted Byway NS153 - Views 1 and 3

- 8.11 With regards to inward views from users of Restricted Byway NS153, it is acknowledged that additional built form will be introduced into the views when travelling east or west along this footpath.
- 8.12 It is proposed to retain the route of this byway, within a green corridor between the built form.
- 8.13 It is judged that users of this route already have clear views of the existing dwellings to the south, as well as the main area of the settlement of Higham on the rising land beyond the southern boundary.
- 8.14 Therefore, the presence of built form within views from this byway would not appear entirely incongruous. It is noted that views of existing dwellings to the east and at the north-eastern corner are already available from this route.
- 8.15 It is also noted that whilst the eastern extent of this byway connects to a series of other PRoW to the east of the settlement, the western extent of the byway terminates at the narrow Taylor’s Lane, with no connection to other PRoWs, and no footway along Taylor’s Lane.
- 8.16 Therefore, taking all of these factors into consideration, the magnitude of change upon this receptor is judged to be **Medium**.
- 8.17 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore judged to be an adverse effect of **Moderate** significance.

Residents of High View - View 2

- 8.18 With regards to inward views from residents along High View, a number of these dwellings have their rear elevations and gardens facing towards the Site’s

southern boundary, with some views of the proposed dwellings considered likely. It is acknowledged that most of these dwellings are single storey bungalows, however there are a small number of dormer-style dwellings with upper floor windows facing towards the Site.

- 8.19 Some mature vegetation exists along this boundary, including a number of mature garden trees, serving to filter some of the views north into the Site. However some large gaps exist, with only wooden fence panels separating some of the gardens from the Site.
- 8.20 Therefore, it is proposed to enhance this boundary with additional hedgerow and tree planting, to create a green edge and to soften views of the proposed dwellings over time as the planting matures.
- 8.21 It is also proposed to retain an open area at the Site's north-western corner, to retain the open views north towards the River Thames.
- 8.22 Therefore, taking all of these factors into consideration, the magnitude of change upon this receptor is judged to be **Medium**.
- 8.23 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore judged to be an adverse effect of **Moderate** significance, and therefore will need to be considered within the overall planning balance.

Residents of Higham - Views 2, 4, 5

- 8.24 With regards to inward views from Higham, the settlement extends south away from the Site on rising land, and therefore it is acknowledged that some partial and filtered views of the Site from the wider settlement to the south could be available.
- 8.25 Some mature vegetation exists along the Site's southern boundary, including a number of mature garden trees, which are considered to filter some of

the views of the Site, along with intervening built form across the settlement.

- 8.26 Some large gaps exist along this boundary however, with only wooden fence panels separating some of the gardens from the Site.
- 8.27 It is judged that given the topography of the Site, the central and northern area of the Site is likely to be the most visible.
- 8.28 It is proposed to retain a large section of the northern boundary as open space, with only small number of dwellings located close to the northern boundary, and the main area of dwellings located across the central and southern section of the Site.
- 8.29 It is also proposed to add additional tree and hedgerow planting along the Site's southern boundary, as well as street tree planting within the development, in order to break up the hard form of the proposed development.
- 8.30 Views from the main area of the settlement of Higham are likely to include views of dwellings along the existing settlement edge, and therefore views of built form within the Site will not appear entirely incongruous, however will extend the visibility of dwellings slightly further north.
- 8.31 Taking all of these factors into consideration, the magnitude of change upon this receptor is judged to be **Low**.

- 8.32 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore judged to be an adverse effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance.

Users of Knowle Country House - View 3

- 8.33 With regards to inward views from Knowle Country House, it is acknowledged that this is a wedding venue, and therefore not a residential property, and

likely not to be in full time occupation.

- 8.34 The house is set within landscaped grounds, including large, mature trees and tree groups.
- 8.35 It is therefore judged that any potential views of the Site from this property would be strongly filtered by the intervening mature vegetation, and likely to include views of the existing settlement of Higham on the rising land to the south.
- 8.36 It is proposed to retain a wide open buffer along the northern edge of the Site, thereby offsetting the development from this property and its grounds.
- 8.37 It is therefore judged that the magnitude of change upon this receptor is **Low**.
- 8.38 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore judged to be an adverse effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance.

Users of Taylor's Lane

- 8.39 With regards to inward views from Taylor's Lane, it is judged that views of the proposed development are likely to be partial given the topography across the Site, however views of the proposed dwellings at the south-western corner are likely to be available.
- 8.40 The north-western corner of the Site is to remain undeveloped, and therefore the proposed dwellings will be set back from this corner of the Site.
- 8.41 There is currently very little vegetation along this edge, and therefore new hedgerow planting is proposed at the south-western corner to help filter views of the proposed dwellings along this edge.
- 8.42 It is judged that when heading north along this road, whilst some views of new built form could be available to the east, these will not interrupt the long views north and west from this road.

8.43 When heading south along this road, views of the proposed dwellings at the south-western corner of the Site and partially along the southern boundary are considered likely. However, it is judged that these dwellings will be viewed within the context of the existing settlement of Higham, and would therefore not appear incongruous within this setting.

8.44 Therefore, taking all of these factors into consideration, it is judged that the magnitude of change upon this receptor is **Low**.

8.45 The overall impact upon this receptor is judged to be an adverse effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance.

Users of Hermitage Road - View 18

8.46 With regards to inward views from Hermitage Road, it is judged that some long distance views of the rooftops of the proposed dwellings from this road could be available, however are likely to be strongly filtered by the intervening built form along the eastern settlement edge, as well as mature vegetation along the edge of the allotments.

8.47 Any potential views would be partial and likely restricted to the central area of the Site on the highest ground, as well as being viewed within the context of the existing built form to both the south and east of the Site.

8.48 It is therefore judged that the magnitude of change upon this receptor is **Low**.

8.49 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore judged to be an adverse effect of **Moderate /Minor** significance.

Residents along Taylor's Lane - Views 6, 7, 8, 9

8.50 With regards to inward views from residents along Taylor's Lane, it is acknowledged that there are three residential properties that face towards the south-

western corner of the Site.

8.51 However, the Site's south-western corner lies at a considerably higher level in the landscape than these properties, and as a result, only partial views of the Site are available. It is also acknowledged that a short section of mature vegetation also lies at the south-western corner, which serves to further restrict views into the Site from the most southerly of these four offsite dwellings.

8.52 As a result, it is judged that only partial and restricted views of the proposed dwellings would be available, and likely limited to those proposed dwellings closest to the western boundary.

8.53 It is also acknowledged that only a small number of dwellings are proposed along the southern section of the western boundary, with the northern half of this boundary proposed to remain undeveloped.

8.54 The existing boundary vegetation is to be retained, along with the provision to add additional tree and hedgerow planting at the south-western corner of the Site to further filter any potential views.

8.55 Taking all of these factors into consideration, it is judged that the magnitude of change upon this receptor is **Low**.

8.56 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore judged to be an adverse effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance.

Users of Public Footpath NS156 - Views 15, 23

8.57 With regards to inward views from users of Public Footpath NS156, the Site is currently viewed from a small number of sections of this footpath, as a very distant view of an arable field, visible between two blocks of mature vegetation.

8.58 The settlement of Higham is also visible within these

views, to the south of the Site.

8.59 Given the distance from Site and the surrounding mature vegetation, it is judged that any potential views of the proposed dwellings would be partial and filtered, and limited to views of the proposed dwellings along the western edge of the Site.

8.60 It is proposed to locate only a small number of dwellings along this western edge, with much of the north-western corner of the Site remaining open and undeveloped.

8.61 Any remaining views of the proposed developments would also be seen within the existing context of the already visible settlement edge.

8.62 Therefore, the magnitude of change upon this receptor is judged to be **Negligible**.

8.63 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore judged to be an adverse effect of **Minor** significance.

Users of School Lane- Views 10, 11

8.64 With regards to inward views from users of School Lane, it is acknowledged that these will be both vehicular and pedestrian, owing to the footway that lies along the western side of this road.

8.65 The Site is currently partially visible from School Lane, however views are largely restricted to the eastern edge of the Site as a result in the difference in levels between the Site which sits higher than the road and footway.

8.66 There is some vegetation along this eastern edge, however much of it is low scrub and nettles, lying along the bank between the Site and the pedestrian footway.

8.67 It is proposed to located a small number of dwellings and access driveways at the south-eastern corner of

the Site, along with the main vehicular access into the Site.

- 8.68 It is also proposed to locate a small apartment block further north along this eastern boundary, however retaining a large section of the north-eastern corner as open space.
- 8.69 It is judged that the proposed new dwellings, driveway and access road will be visible to vehicle and pedestrian users when travelling north or south along this road.
- 8.70 However, it is judged that the presence of existing dwellings along both sides of this road, to both the south and the north of this Site, mean that this

section of the road feels sub-urban and within the existing settlement, and therefore the presence of dwellings along the eastern edge of the Site would not appear incongruous within this setting.

- 8.71 It is therefore judged that the magnitude of change upon this receptor is **Low**.
- 8.72 The overall impact upon this receptor is therefore judged to be adverse effect of **Minor** significance.

Table 7 - Summary Table of Visual Effects					
Receptor	Value	Susceptibility to change	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of Effect
Residents along School Lane	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Moderate/Minor Adverse
Users of Restricted Byway NS153	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse
Residents of High View	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse
Residents of Higham	Medium	Low	Medium/Low	Low	Moderate/Minor Adverse
Users of Knowle Country House	Medium	Low	Medium/Low	Low	Moderate/Minor Adverse
Users of Taylor’s Lane	Medium	Low	Medium/Low	Low	Moderate/Minor Adverse
Users of Hermitage Road	Medium	Low	Medium/Low	Low	Moderate/Minor Adverse
Residents along Taylor’s Lane	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Moderate/Minor Adverse
Users of Public Footpath NS156	Medium	Low	Medium	Negligible	Minor Adverse
Users of School Lane	Low	Low	Low	Low	Minor Adverse

9. Summary and Conclusions

Summary of Landscape Impacts

- 9.1 The landscape impact assessment concluded that the Site's relationship with its landscape setting is largely influenced by the existing settlement edge and urbanising features to the immediate south, and to a lesser extent to the west, east and north.
- 9.2 There is some limited open countryside influence from the north-west of the Site.
- 9.3 The greatest adverse landscape impacts identified were upon the arable use of the Site and its overall landscape character, both of which are anticipated to experience an adverse effect of Moderate significance.
- 9.4 However, it is judged that the Site feels relatively isolated from the wider arable countryside, and therefore its influence beyond its immediate setting is limited.
- 9.5 It is judged that the inclusion of a robust landscape scheme could reduce these effects over time, as the planting matures.
- 9.6 All other landscape receptors scored either a Moderate/Minor or Minor adverse score, and are therefore considered to be of lesser relevance.

Summary of Visual Impacts

- 9.7 The visual impact assessment concluded that the visual envelope of the Site is largely confined to the immediate residential setting of the Site to the south, with some adjacent residential views from Taylors Lane to the west and School Lane to the east and north-east.
- 9.8 The greatest adverse visual impacts identified were upon residents of High View and users of Restricted Byway NS153, who are anticipated to experience an

adverse effect of Moderate significance as a result of the close proximity of these dwellings and gardens to the Site, and the location of the byway within the Site.

- 9.9 It is judged that the inclusion of a robust landscape strategy, including hedgerow and tree planting along the Site's southern boundary, could reduce these effects over time, as the planting matures.
- 9.10 All other visual receptors scored either a Moderate/Minor or Minor adverse score, and are therefore considered to be of lesser relevance.

Conclusions

- 9.11 It is the conclusion of this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment that the Site can accommodate a small, well-designed residential development with a landscape-led approach to layout and form.

Appendix 1: Local Planning Policy - Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy

Policy CS12 - Green Infrastructure

A multifunctional linked network of green spaces, footpaths, cycle routes and wildlife stepping stones and corridors will be created, protected, enhanced and maintained. The network will improve access within the urban area, from the urban area to the rural area and along the River Thames. The key parts of the network are identified on Figure 19: Strategic Green Infrastructure Network.

Sites designated for their biodiversity value will be protected, with the highest level of protection given to internationally designated Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites, followed by nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, followed by Local Wildlife Sites and then by other areas of more local importance for biodiversity.

There will be no net loss of biodiversity in the Borough, and opportunities to enhance, restore, re-create and maintain habitats will be sought, in particular within the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas shown on the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network map and within new development.

Where a negative impact on protected or priority habitats/species cannot be avoided on development sites and where the importance of the development is considered to outweigh the biodiversity impact, compensatory provision will be required either elsewhere on the site or off-site, including measures for ongoing maintenance.

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.

Policy CS18 - Climate Change

Flood Risk

With the exception of the previously developed sites along the Thames Riverside (see Policies CS03, CS04 and CS05) and those other regeneration sites which have already been evaluated in accordance with the sequential and exception tests at the application stage, development will be directed sequentially to those areas at least risk of flooding.

Proposals in areas at risk of flooding must be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (in accordance with national policy and Environment Agency standing guidance as appropriate) and a Flood Risk Management Plan (if required) to demonstrate that they are adequately defended and safe over their lifetime. Planning permission will be refused for schemes which do not pass the sequential and exception tests.

The Council will prioritise the maintenance, improvement or replacement of flood defence infrastructure over other land uses where relevant. In addition to meeting their own flood defence and management needs, the Council will expect new development to take advantage of opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding from all sources where it is technically and financially feasible.

Water Quality

As part of its approach to climate change and environmental improvement, the Council will have regard to the delivery of the Water Framework Directive and associated Thames River Basin Management Plan objectives to support water bodies being progressively improved to “good” status over the plan period.

Sustainable Drainage and Surface Water Run-Off

The Council will seek to minimise the impact of drainage from new development on waste water systems. In particular, the Council will:

- Require that surface water run-off from all new development has, as a minimum, no greater adverse impact than the existing use; and
- Require the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems on all developments where technically and financially feasible.

Water Demand Management

The Council will seek to manage the supply of water in the Borough and reduce the impact of new development on the supply of potable water as much as possible. In particular, the Council will:

- Require all new homes to be built to at least level 3/4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes in terms of water use (105 litres per person per day consumption). Where it can be demonstrated that a development is unable to meet these standards, or the additional standards set out below, permission will only be granted if provision is made for compensatory water savings elsewhere in the Borough;
- Seek 5% of homes on Key Sites to act as exemplars by meeting level 5/6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes in terms of water use (80 litres per person per day consumption);
- Require all non-residential developments of 1,000 sq m and above to meet the BREEAM “excellent” standards of water efficiency and include provision for the collection of rainwater; and
- Support proposals to retrofit existing residential properties in ways which reduce water consumption.

Carbon Reduction

The Council will seek to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the Borough. In particular, the Council will:

- In the context of national policy on the transition to zero carbon development via amendments to Part L of the Building Regulations, require proposals for development of the Key Sites throughout the Borough and other major development elsewhere in the Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area to consider the potential and include proposals for low carbon and renewable energy generation, including combined heat and power. Where choosing not to do so, applicants must submit evidence which demonstrates that compliance is not technically or financially feasible or that improved fabric energy efficiency or an allowable solution results in improved carbon saving benefits;
- Support stand-alone decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy development where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and

where it accords with policies in this plan, in particular those relating to Development and Design Principles, Transport, Green Infrastructure, and Heritage and the Historic Environment; and

- Support other proposals which lead to a reduction in carbon footprint including the retrofitting of existing homes and businesses, including local initiatives based on carbon off-setting via allowable solution

Policy CS19 - Development and Design Principles

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. This will be achieved through the criteria set out below:

- Using the collaborative approach advocated in Building for Life 12 and in line with the guidance set out in Kent Design, the design, layout and form of new development will be derived from a robust analysis of local context and character and will make a positive contribution to the street scene, the quality of the public realm and the character of the area. Account will be taken of the scale, height, building lines, layout, materials and other architectural features of adjoining buildings. Account will also be taken of the wider site context, including strategic views, site topography, the significance of heritage assets and features of townscape and landscape value which contribute to local character and sense of place;
- New development will encourage sustainable living and choice through a mix of compatible uses which are well connected to places that people want to use, including the public transport network, local services and community facilities; encourage sustainable travel; enhance Green Grid links and encourage healthier lifestyles;
- New development will be located, designed and constructed to:
 - * safeguard the amenity, including privacy, daylight

and sunlight, of its occupants and those of neighbouring properties and land;

- * avoid adverse environmental impacts from pollution, including noise, air, odour and light pollution, and land contamination; and
- * not pose an unacceptable risk or harm to the water environment, including the quality and/or quantity of ground waters, surface waters, wetlands and coastal water systems;
- The design and layout of new residential development, including conversions, will accord with the adopted Residential Layout Guidelines;
- New development will be designed in an inclusive way to be accessible to all members of the community;
- New development will provide appropriate levels of private and public amenity space;
- New development will include details of appropriate hard and soft landscaping, public art, street furniture, lighting and signage and will ensure that public realm and open spaces are well planned, appropriately detailed and maintained so they endure;
- Car parking will be well related to the development it serves;
- New development will protect and, where opportunities arise, enhance biodiversity and the Borough's Green Infrastructure network. Support will be given to environmental enhancements where opportunities arise;
- New development will be fit for purpose and adaptable to allow changes to be made to meet the needs of users;
- The design and layout of new development will take advantage of opportunities to build in resilience to the effects of climate change. This will include protection against flood risk, where relevant, delivering carbon reduction, provision for low carbon and renewable energy, and minimising energy consumption and water use;
- New development will incorporate appropriate facilities for the storage and recycling of waste; and
- The layout of new development will create a safe and secure environment and provide surveillance to minimise

opportunities for crime and vandalism.

Policy CS20 - Heritage and the Historic Environment

The Council will accord a high priority towards the preservation, protection and enhancement of its heritage and historic environment as a non-renewable resource, central to the regeneration of the area and the reinforcement of sense of place.

Particular attention in this regard will be focused on those heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. Securing viable, sustainable and appropriate futures for such assets at risk will need to be reconciled with the sensitivity to change that many present.

Proposals and initiatives will be supported which preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of the Borough's heritage assets, their setting where it contributes to the significance of the asset and their interpretation and enjoyment, especially where these contribute to the distinct identity of the Borough.

These include:

- Gravesend Town Centre, its development as a heritage riverside town, and its setting;
- The Borough's urban and rural conservation areas; and
- Surviving built features and archaeology relating to the Borough's maritime, military, industrial and transport history.

When considering the impact of a proposed development on a designated heritage asset, the weight that will be given to the asset's conservation value will be commensurate with the importance and significance of the asset. For non-designated assets, decisions will have regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Gravesham Local Plan First Review - Saved Policies

Policy TC2 - Listed Buildings

The Borough Council will adopt the following approach to applications affecting listed buildings:-

(i) Proposals which involve the demolition of listed buildings will not be granted consent unless the applicant is able to demonstrate substantial and overriding reasons why such consent should be forthcoming. In those few cases where the Borough Council is satisfied that there is no alternative but to grant consent for such demolition, all available means will be used to secure early and appropriate redevelopment.

(ii) In the case of applications for development involving alterations or extensions to listed buildings or affecting the setting of listed buildings, the primary consideration of the Borough Council will be the maintenance of the integrity of the original listed building. Proposals will also need to be sympathetic to the listed building in terms of massing, scale, appearance and materials.

(iii) Applications for the change of use of listed buildings will be considered on their merits, in relation to the land use policies set out in this Written Statement. A major consideration will be whether the character or appearance of the listed buildings will suffer as a result

Policy TC3 - Development affecting Conservation Areas

The Borough Council will adopt the following approach to applications for development within or affecting conservation areas:-

(i) Where development is acceptable in relation to other policies in this Plan, it will be carefully judged for its impact and will be expected to make a positive contribution to the conservation area. The Borough Council will expect applications to contain sufficient details to enable the impact of the proposal upon the conservation area to be assessed.

(ii) The demolition of unlisted buildings will be resisted unless the Borough Council is satisfied that the existing building is harmful to the conservation area and that the proposals for redevelopment or other use of the site will be beneficial. To this end, the Borough Council may, in suitable cases, require an agreement for the replacement of the building or other suitable treatment of the site,

prior to the granting of conservation area consent for demolition.

Policy LT6 - Additional open space in new Housing Developments

Proposals for new housing development will be expected to make provision for open space and play space appropriate to the scale of development and type of housing proposed, having regard to the provision of and proximity to existing open space in the locality,

Appendix 2: Public Rights of Way

1.1 The following PROW lie within the Study Area:

- Restricted Byway NS153, located within the Site.
- Public footpath NS145, located to the north of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS140, located to the north of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS141, located to the north of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS142, located to the north of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS144, located to the north-east of the Site.
- Public footpath NS71, located to the north-east of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS143, located to the north-east of the Site.
- Restricted Byway NS152, located to the north-east of the Site.
- Restricted Byway NS151, located to the east of the Site.
- Restricted Byway NS155, located to the east of the

Site.

- Restricted Byway NS152, located to the east of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS148, located to the east of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS149, located to the east of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS148, located to the east of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS147, located to the east of the Site.
- Public footpath NS184, located to the east of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS154, located to the east of the Site.
- Restricted Byway NS154A, located to the south-east of the Site.
- Public Bridleway NS137, located to the south-east of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS134, located to the south-east of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS150, located to the south of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS117, located to the south of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS321, located to the south-west of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS160, located to the south-west of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS161, located to the south-west of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS168, located to the south-west of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS167, located to the south-west

of the Site.

- Public Footpath NS156, located to the west of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS159, located to the west of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS166, located to the west of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS163 and NS163A, located to the west of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS158, located to the west of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS157, located to the west of the Site.
- Public footpath NS171, located to the west of the Site.
- Public Footpath NS317, located to the north-west of the Site.

Appendix 3: Nicholsons Methodology

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This methodology is derived from the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (2013) (GLVIA 3), jointly published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. This publication gives guidance on carrying out a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), either as a standalone appraisal or part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
- 1.2 In the context of this methodology, the term “landscape” should be taken to include townscape and seascape considerations where relevant.

2. Defining The Study Area

- 2.3 Prior to any assessment being undertaken, it is important to consider the scope and extent of the study area. Typically the study area will be defined through the preparation and assessment of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and/ or desk based study and site assessment. This process will allow the identification of a delimited visual envelope, one which is defined by the prevailing topography, vegetation and built form.
- 2.4 A landscape study may extend beyond a relatively confined visual envelope, where there is clear evidence that the site is part of, or intrinsically linked to a wider character area. The detail of such studies will be appropriate to the scale of the development, for instance where tall structures such as wind turbines may have an influence over a larger distance, the assessment will take this into account.

3. Description Of Effects

- 3.1 The level of effect on both landscape and visual receptors should be identified in respect of the different components of the proposed development.

In order to assess the significance of the effect upon a receiving environment, it is necessary to consider the effect magnitude, i.e. the degree of change, together with the sensitivity of the receptor.

- 3.2 This assessment will identify whether the effects are:
 - Adverse, Beneficial or Neutral - Adverse effects would typically occur where there is loss of landscape elements, or the proposal detracts from the recognised landscape quality and character of an area or view. Neutral effects would include changes that neither add to nor detract from the quality and character of an area or view, but which nonetheless result in an identifiable change. Beneficial effects would typically occur where a development could positively contribute to the landscape character or view, for example through the replacement of incongruous elements with more appropriate uses.
 - Direct or Indirect – A direct effect will be one where a development will affect a view or the character of an area, either beneficially or adversely. An indirect effect will occur as a result of associated development i.e. a development may result in an increase of traffic on a particular route.
 - Short, Medium or Long Term – this relates to the expected duration and magnitude of a development. Within this assessment the potential effects are assessed during the Construction Phase, then at Years 1 and 15, of the Operational Phase.
 - Reversible or Irreversible – this is the assessment of whether the resulting effect of a development can be mitigated or not, and the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation at reducing the effect.

Significance of Effects (EIA only)

- 3.3 A final judgment is then made as to whether the identified effect is likely to be significant, as required by the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2011. In summarising the effects consideration should be given to the key issues, and an identification of the scope for reducing any negative/adverse effects will be undertaken. Mitigation measures should be identified in order to reduce, where possible, the final judgement on the significance of any residual adverse effects in the long term.

4. Methodology For Assessing Landscape Effects

Identifying and Assessing the Landscape Baseline

- 4.1 In order to accurately define the quality and character of the receiving landscaping it is important to identify and assess those landscape receptors and/or features that form part of the landscape and help to characterise it.
- 4.2 The identification of these features will be informed through:
 - Review of Ordnance Survey mapping, historical map data and aerial and other remote sensing imagery where appropriate;
 - Review of relevant published landscape character assessment at national, regional and local levels as appropriate;
 - Identification of landscape-based designations;
 - Identification and description of individual elements, features, aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape which contribute to its character;
 - Assessment of the general condition of the receiving landscape;
 - Assessment of the relative value of the receiving landscape (see below);

- Judgement of the susceptibility of the receiving landscape to a change of the type proposed (see below).
- 4.3 Where appropriate, and where the published character assessments do not reflect the specific characteristics of the receiving environment at a relevant scale, the LVIA will identify local landscape character areas for assessment. These character areas are determined through the site assessment, and will make reference to published landscape character assessments and the application of sound professional judgement based upon the evidence at hand.
- 4.4 Criteria for the selection of local landscape character areas within the likely study area include:
- Proximity and influence on the site;
 - Physical connections with the site (for example public rights of way, roads, vegetation and vegetation belts); and
 - Visual connection with the site (particularly where the view is a key characteristic of the local area).

Assessing Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.5 The sensitivity of the landscape is determined by combining the value of the landscape with its susceptibility to the type of change proposed.
- 4.6 **Susceptibility** is defined as the inherent sensitivity of the landscape and its ability to accommodate a particular change, and can apply to specific landscape features, the character of the site as a whole, or the character of the surrounding landscape, and other Landscape Character Areas defined within the published assessments or similar.

Table 1: Landscape Susceptibility to Change	
Susceptibility	Assessment Criteria
Very High	• No or very few detracting features; • Townscapes are likely to include a high proportion of historic assets; • Typical examples may be nationally designated e.g. World Heritage Sites, National Parks, Heritage Coasts, AONB's etc.
High	• Landscapes would be considered to have a high degree of intimacy, generally strong landscape structure, a high level of intactness and contain features worthy of protection; • Few detracting features; • Has some potential to accommodate change which is in keeping with the positive aspects of local character. • Townscapes may include a high proportion of historic assets; • Typical examples may be of Regional or County importance e.g. within the setting of National Parks, AONB's, Conservation Areas etc.
Medium	• Landscapes would be considered of good landscape structure, with some detracting features or evidence of recent change. • Townscapes may include a proportion of historic assets or of cultural value locally. • Demonstrates some potential to accommodate change through appropriate mitigation.
Low	• Landscapes that contain strong evidence of previous landscape change and little representation of their former character; • Degraded landscape structure, characteristic patterns and combinations of landform and land cover are compromised by land use.
Negligible	• Typical landscapes are likely to be heavily degraded, of weak landscape structure, support intensive land uses, and require landscape restoration.

Landscape Value

- 4.7 The value of a landscape is derived from the value or importance given to the area by society, statutory bodies, local and national government, local communities and society at large. National designations include National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 4.8 At a local level, Local Planning Authorities may have local landscape designations in their Local Plans. However, GLVIA 3 notes that the fact that an area is not covered by such a designation does not mean that it is not valued and in this case reference should be made to published character assessments, local planning policies and guidance. GLVIA 3 also notes that there should not be an over-reliance on designations, favouring a process of assessment and the application of sound, evidence-based professional judgement.
- 4.9 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) however, places greater weight on the importance of National level designations such as AONB's and National Parks. At a local level, any assessment of local value should be supported by a prescriptive, criteria based, NPPF compliant assessment. In the absence of such an assessment it is the role of the professional as part of the LVIA process to objectively assess the value of the receiving landscape in relation to a set of appropriate criteria, such as those suggested in Table 1 of the Landscape Institute TGN 02/21, an evolution of the criteria laid out in Box 5.1 of GLVIA3.

Table 2: Landscape Value			
Susceptibil-ity	Typical Criteria	Typical Scale	Examples
Very High	Landscape is recognised as an area of great importance, quality and rarity. Almost always recognised by national or international designation.	International National	World Heritage Sites National Parks Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
High	Landscape is recognised as being of high quality, importance and rarity, representing a number of recognised value criteria. Often identified through local landscape designations.	Regional Local	Wild or picturesque landscapes. Settings of designated landscapes. Areas whose value is expressed through published assessments or cultural celebration, e.g. art, history or literature.
Medium	Landscape is recognised as being of medium quality, importance and rarity. Typically undesignated but value may be expressed through published assessment. Represents some recognised value criteria.	Regional Local	Generally intact rural landscapes. Landscapes that are representative of published character.
Low	Landscape is of low quality, importance and rarity. Typically degraded with detracting features and in poor condition, but with some potential for restoration or improvement.	Local	Intensive arable landscapes. Landscapes with strong human influence or intensive management, e.g. golf courses.
Very Low	Landscape is of very low quality, importance and rarity. Typically degraded with many detracting features, and poorly managed. Change is likely to improve these landscapes.	Site	Unrestored mineral workings. Industrial landscapes.

Table 3: Overall Landscape Sensitivity							Sensitivity
Vs		Identified Landscape Value					
Identified Susceptibility		Very High Value	High Value	Medium Value	Low Value	Very Low Value	
	Very High Susceptibility	Very High	High	High/Medium	X	X	
	High Susceptibility	High	High	Medium/High	Medium	X	
	Medium Susceptibility	High/Medium	Medium/High	Medium	Medium/Low	Low	
	Low Susceptibility	X	Medium	Medium/Low	Low	Low/Negligible	
	Negligible Susceptibility	X	X	Low	Low/Negligible	Negligible	

Landscape Magnitude of Change

4.10 The magnitude of change relates to the degree in which proposed development alters the fabric of the receiving landscape. This change is characterised as high, medium, low, negligible or none.

Table 4: Magnitude to Change to Landscape Receptors	
Magnitude	Definition
High	Change resulting in a high degree of deterioration or improvement, or introduction of prominent new elements that are considered to fundamentally change the character of a landscape.
Medium	Change resulting in a moderate degree of deterioration or improvement, or constitutes a perceptible change within a landscape.
Low	Change resulting in a low degree of deterioration or improvement to a landscape or view, or constitutes only a minor component within a landscape.
Negligible	Change resulting in a barely perceptible degree of deterioration or improvement to a landscape.

4.11 When assessing the magnitude of change consideration will be given to:

- **The size or scale of the development:** the extent of the change to existing landscape receptors is considered, with weight given to the proportion of the total extent of the site that this represents and the contribution that the receptor makes to the overall character of the landscape;
- **The extent of the development:** consideration is given to the geographical area within which the landscape effects may be perceived. This is assessed at:
 - Site level;
 - Immediate setting;
 - At the scale of the local landscape character area; and
 - On a larger scale affecting a number of local landscape areas or National Character Areas (if required).
- **The permanency of the development:** consideration is given to whether the proposals will result in a long term or short term effect; whether the development is reversible or changes the status of the site (for example to previously developed land); and whether for example restoration to baseline conditions is envisaged at the end of this term;
- **The change to the key characteristics of the receiving landscape:** taking into account:
 - Changes to the appearance of the site;
 - Changes to identified landscape features;
 - Changes to key or special qualities or characteristics of the landscape; and
 - Changes in the landscape setting of heritage assets and landscape-related designations.

- **The proposed mitigation:** consideration should be given to the extent to which the development effects can be mitigated, through positive design, the provision of replacement or enhanced landscape features, or limiting effects on the wider landscape.

Significance of Landscape Effect

4.12 The level of effect upon the receptor should be identified in respect of the different components of the proposed development. In order to assess the significance of the effect on the receiving environment, it is necessary to consider the magnitude, i.e. the degree of change, together with the sensitivity of each identified receptor.

4.13 This will identify whether the effects are:

- **Adverse or Beneficial** - beneficial effects would typically occur where a development could positively contribute to the landscape character. Neutral effects would include changes that neither add nor detract from the quality and character of an area or view. Adverse effects would typically occur where there is loss of characteristic landscape elements, or the proposal detracts from the landscape quality and character of an area or view;
- **Direct or Indirect** – A direct effect is where a development will affect the character of an area either beneficially or adversely. An indirect effect would be associated with a development, i.e. an increase of traffic on a particular route.
- **Short, Medium or Long Term** – this relates to the expected duration and magnitude of a development. Within this assessment the potential effects are assessed during the construction phase, then at years 1 and 10 following completion of the development.
- **Reversible or Irreversible** – This is the judgement of whether the resulting effect of a development can be mitigated or not, and whether the result of

the mitigation is beneficial.

4.14 The significance of landscape effect is determined by cross-referencing the sensitivity of the receptor with the magnitude of change expected as a result of the development. Table 5 below outlines how the assessment of significance is undertaken.

Table 5: Landscape Significance of Effect						
Vs		Sensitivity of Landscape receptor				
Magnitude of Change		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
	High	Substantial	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor
	Medium	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor
	Low	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible/None
Significance of Landscape Effect						

* To be read in conjunction with Table 11 overleaf

5. Methodology For The Assessment Of Visual Effects

- 5.1 As set out within section 2 above, the visual baseline is identified through a process of desk study, Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), the extent of the visual envelope is then defined and tested through field assessment.
- 5.2 On the basis of the baseline assessment and field survey analysis, visual receptors are identified and classified as to their sensitivity to change. This will involve the identification of the visual receptors through:
- Identification of the area in which the development may be visible (the visual envelope;
 - Identification of publicly accessible, representative, viewpoints where views will be affected and the nature of those views;
 - Identification of any recognised viewpoints (i.e. known viewpoints from a key landmark or local feature);
 - Identification of the different groups of people who may experience views of the development.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

- 5.3 The sensitivity of a visual receptor should be established. This sensitivity will be dependent on the value attached to the view and the susceptibility of the visual receptor(s) to a change of the type proposed. This may be linked to the type of activity that the person is engaged in – for example someone walking in the countryside would be more sensitive to a change to the view than a person working in an office.
- 5.4 **Susceptibility** is defined as the ability of a defined visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue consequences. Regard

should be given to the activity of the people experiencing the view, and the extent to which their attention or interest may be focused on the views, as well as the visual amenity that they experience at particular locations.

Table 6: Visual Susceptibility to Change	
Susceptibility	Assessment Criteria
Very High	• No or very few detracting features within the view. • Type of development is out of keeping with its setting. • The view has little or no potential to accommodate the type of change proposed. • Users’ sole focus is on appreciation of the view.
High	• Views would be considered to have a high level of intactness and few detracting features, e.g. a public footpath within the countryside. • The view has limited potential to accommodate the type of change proposed. • Users’ main focus is on appreciation of the view.
Medium	• Views would be comprised of good landscape structure, with some detracting features or evidence of recent change, e.g. a public footpath near to a settlement or rural public highway. • Views would demonstrates some potential to accommodate change through appropriate mitigation. • Users would have some appreciation of the view whilst passing through.
Low	• Views of landscapes that contain strong evidence of previous change and some degraded features. • Views encompassing a high degree of human activity. • Users would be mainly focused on their activity.
Negligible	• Views of degraded landscapes or highly intensive human uses, e.g. industrial areas. • Users would typically have their sole focus on their activity, with no appreciation of the view.

Visual Value

- 5.5 The value of a view is derived from the value or importance given to that view by society at large.
- 5.6 Value can be derived from the value given to the view by visitors to an area, for example through guidebooks, tourist maps, interpretation signs, as well as reference in literature or art.

Table 7: Visual Value			
Susceptibility	Typical Criteria	Typical Scale	Examples
Very High	Views within nationally designated landscapes such as National Parks or AONB’s and users of National Trails where the focus is upon the landscape itself.	International National	World Heritage Sites National Parks. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Published routes.
High	Views are recognised as being of high quality, importance and rarity, representing a number of recognised value criteria. Views within regional/local landscape designations, users of Long Distance Routes or Sustrans cycle routes.	Regional Local	Wild or picturesque landscapes. Settings of designated landscapes. Areas whose value is expressed through published assessments or cultural celebration, e.g. art, history or literature.
Medium	Views within moderate quality landscapes. Typically undesignated but value may be expressed through published assessment.	Regional Local	Generally intact rural views. Views that are representative of published landscape character.
Low	Views within landscapes considered to be of low quality, importance and rarity.	Local	Strong human influence or intensive management within the view, e.g. major transport routes, golf courses.
Very Low	Views within landscape considered to be of very low quality, importance and rarity. Typically degraded with many detracting features.	Site	Industrial/degraded landscapes.

Table 8 Overall Visual Sensitivity							Sensitivity
Vs		Identified Visual Value					
Identified Susceptibility		Very High Value	High Value	Medium Value	Low Value	Negligible	
	Very High Susceptibility	Very High	High	High/Medium	X	X	
	High Susceptibility	High	High	Medium/High	Medium	X	
	Medium Susceptibility	High/Medium	Medium/High	Medium	Medium/Low	Low	
	Low Susceptibility	X	Medium	Medium/Low	Low	Low/Negligible	
	Negligible Susceptibility	X	X	Low	Low/Negligible	Negligible	

Magnitude of Change of Visual Receptors

5.7 The following definitions are used to assess the magnitude of change to visual receptors. As with the assessment of the magnitude of change for landscape receptors, consideration is given to:

- **The size or scale of the development:** taking into account:
 - The mass and scale of the development visible and the change experienced from an identified location; and
 - The loss or addition of features within the view and the changes to the view's composition (including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development and the degree

of contrast or integration of the proposed development within the context of the existing landscape elements) and the nature of the view in terms of duration and degree of visibility.

- **The extent of the development:** the extent of the development will vary between each identified viewpoint and will likely reflect the extent of the development visible in the view alongside the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development.
- **The permanency of the development:** considering whether:
 - The proposals will result in a long term or short term effect;

- The development is reversible or changes the status of the site (for example to previously developed land); and
- Restoration to baseline conditions is envisaged at the end of this term.
- **The proposed mitigation:** Judging the extent to which the landscape proposals will be able to mitigate the visual effects of the development by screening, or through design of the development (e.g. siting, use of visually recessive colours and materials and location of open space).

Table 9: Magnitude of Change to Visual Receptors	
Magnitude	Definition
High	Change resulting in a high degree of deterioration or improvement, or introduction of prominent new elements that are considered to make a major alteration to a view.
Medium	Change resulting in a moderate degree of deterioration or improvement, or constitutes a perceptible change within a view.
Low	Change resulting in a low degree of deterioration or improvement to a landscape or view, or constitutes only a minor component within a landscape.
Negligible	Change resulting in a barely perceptible degree of deterioration or improvement to a view.
No Change	It is also possible for a view to experience no change due to it being totally compatible with the character of the visual environment or not visible due to intervening structures or vegetation.

Significance of Visual Effect

5.8 The significance of visual effect is determined by cross referencing the sensitivity of the receptor with the magnitude of change expected as a result of the development. Table 8 below outlines how the assessment of significance is undertaken.

Table 10: Visual Significance of Effect						
Vs		Sensitivity of Visual receptor				
Magnitude of Change		Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
	High	Substantial	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor
	Medium	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor
	Low	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Negligible	Negligible/None
	No Change	None	None	None	None	None
Significance of Visual Effect						
* To be read in conjunction with Table 11 overleaf						

6. Understanding Significant Effects

- 6.9 For the purposes of the impact assessment beneficial or adverse effects of substantial, major and major/moderate effects are considered to be significant and to be of key importance in decision making. Moderate adverse effects should also be taken into account when considering the overall effects of the development in decision making.
- 6.10 It is important to consider that change does not necessarily result in an adverse effect or harm to a particular landscape or visual environment.
- 6.11 The landscape assessor, in determining the significance of effect, will apply a defined assessment methodology, in combination with sound professional judgement upon which the identification of significant effects should be based.

Table 11: Significance Thresholds	
Significance	Threshold Definition
Substantial	A very high magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view of national / international importance that has little or no ability to accommodate change.
Major	A high magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view that has limited ability to accommodate change.
Moderate	A medium magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape or view that may have the ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape.
Minor	A low magnitude of change that materially affects a landscape that has the ability to accommodate change. Positive effects will typically occur in a lower quality landscape or view.
Negligible	A negligible magnitude of change that has little effect on a landscape that has the ability to accommodate change.
None	It is also possible for a magnitude of change to occur that results in an effect of neutral significance due to the change being compatible with local character or not visible.

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Nicholson Nurseries Limited

Oxfordshire & Northamptonshire

Head Office: The Park, North Aston, Oxfordshire. OX25 6HL.

Tel 01869 340 342 Fax 01869 340 350 e-mail office@nicholsonsgb.com

www.nicholsonsgb.com

Registered office as above. Reg no 04820053