

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment



**Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
September 2025**



**Tyler
Grange**

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Admin QA	Author	Checked	Approved
-	Mike Berwick BSc(Hons) MLA CMLI	Anneliese Walker Ba(Hons) PGDip LA CMLI Tom Rosser-Smith Ba (Hons) PGdip	Anneliese Walker Ba(Hons) PGDip LA CMLI Tom Rosser-Smith Ba (Hons) PGdip

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Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

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Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1. Tyler Grange Group Limited (TG) has been appointed by Richborough Estates Ltd to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to accompany an outline planning application for the residential development on land east of Wrotham Road, Meopham (hereby referred to as 'the Site'). The Site is located within the administrative area of Gravesham Borough Council (GBC).
- 1.2. The Site, as shown on **Plan 1: Site Location and Context**, extends to approximately 15.73 ha and comprises a single arable field located on the eastern edge of Hook Green, within the parish of Meopham. It is bounded by Wrotham Road (A227) to the west, Green Lane to the north, and Meopham Court to the south, with open countryside extending to the east. The Site is enclosed by mature tree belts and hedgerows along its northern, southern, and western boundaries, providing a degree of visual containment, while the eastern boundary is more open and defined in part by a recently planted hedgerow. The landform is gently undulating, falling slightly from north to south.
- 1.3. The proposals seek outline planning permission for the erection of up to 350 residential dwellings, public open space and associated works. Approval is sought for the principal means of vehicular access from Wrotham Road and all other matters are reserved. The proposals are referred to as the 'Proposed Development' within this LVIA.
- 1.4. This LVIA is accompanied by a series of illustrative plans and photographs, included at the rear as follows:
 - Appendix 1 – LVIA Figures;
 - Plan 1: Site Location and Context;
 - Plan 2: Landscape Planning Policy and Designations;
 - Plan 3: Topography;
 - Plan 4: Published Landscape Character;
 - Plan 5: Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Photoviewpoint Locations;
 - Plan 6: Illustrative Landscape Strategy
 - Appendix 2 – LVIA Methodology;
 - Appendix 3 – Proposed Site Layouts;
 - Appendix 4 – Planning Policy Extracts;
 - Appendix 5 – Landscape Character Area Extracts;
 - Appendix 6 – Sensitivity of Receptors Tables;
 - Appendix 7 – Photoviewpoint Sheets;



- Appendix 8 – Landscape Effects Assessment Tables; and
- Appendix 9 – Visual Effects Assessment Tables.

1.5. The location of the Site is identified within **Plan 1** and **Plan 2: Landscape Policy and Designations**. The area shown within 2km of the Site is referred to as the 'Study Area'. The Study Area has been derived through the use of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping, desktop analysis and on-site assessment work.

1.6. This is a standalone report and does not constitute a landscape chapter in the context of an Environmental Statement required by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations. The scheme was screened out from requiring EIA by GBC. The approach taken in the preparation of this report is considered to be appropriate and proportional in the context of professional guidance published by the Landscape Institute.

1.7. This assessment has been prepared and reviewed by Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute (CMLI).



Section 2: Methodology and Scope

2.1. To assist the reader in understanding the purpose of undertaking landscape assessment work, the definition of 'landscape' from the European Landscape Convention (ELC, 2000) is provided below.

"Landscape" means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. This definition applies to all landscapes—urban, peri-urban, rural, ordinary, degraded, outstanding, or protected, and underpins the inclusive and perceptual nature of landscape assessment.

2.2. The methodology used in this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is based on the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Third Edition (GLVIA3), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA). GLVIA3 defines LVIA as:

...the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity

2.3. In line with this definition, the assessment considers the likely effects of the Proposed Development in an objective and systematic manner, while recognising the inherently perceptual and therefore subjective nature of landscape experience. Although subjectivity cannot be entirely removed, a structured and transparent methodology enables robust and reasoned conclusions to be drawn.

2.4. The LVIA process addresses two interrelated but distinct aspects:

- **Landscape Character:** The effects of the Proposed Development on discrete landscape character areas and/or types, defined by recognisable patterns of elements and features; and
- **Visual Context:** The effects of the Proposed Development on views experienced by people (visual receptors), and the associated visual amenity.

2.5. GLVIA3 defines landscape character as:

A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

2.6. Changes to landscape character may arise from:

- Alterations to the physical fabric of the landscape, such as the loss or introduction of key elements; and
- Changes in how the landscape is perceived or experienced.

2.7. Changes to views will occur where there is:

- A change in the composition or content of the view;



- A change to the skyline; and/or
- A shift in the distribution or dominance of visual elements.

LVIA Methodology

2.8. The area shown within 2km of the Site boundary on **Plan 2** is referred to as the 'Study Area'. This LVIA relates to the Study Area and assesses both landscape and visual effects, which are interrelated but considered separately in accordance with best practice.

2.9. The assessment process is set out in further detail in **Appendix 2 - LVIA Methodology**. The methodology is based upon the GLVIA3 and has been legally reviewed and tested at planning appeals.

2.10. The assessment of effects arising from the Proposed Site Layout is based on the Parameters Plan and Building Heights Plan in **Appendix 3 - Proposed Site Layouts**.

Scope of Assessment

2.11. Two stages of scoping were undertaken as part of the assessment process. The first stage involved a desktop-based review to scope out receptors that would not be affected by the Proposed Development, or where effects were anticipated to be no greater than negligible adverse. This stage was informed by ZTV analysis (see **Plan 5 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Photoviewpoint Locations** in **Appendix 1**), alongside other desk-based sources.

2.12. To refine the focus of the assessment on receptors likely to experience effects greater than negligible adverse, a second stage of scoping was carried out following a detailed site visit. Visual receptors identified through the ZTV were reviewed in the field and scoped out where no views of the Proposed Development were possible. A comprehensive walkover survey of the Study Area was undertaken to establish the actual visual envelope of the Site. This enabled the exclusion of areas that, while identified in the ZTV as having theoretical visibility, were screened by intervening vegetation or built form. Several representative photoviewpoints have been included to illustrate 'no view' scenarios and to provide justification for the scoping out of certain receptors.

2.13. The scope of this LVIA was informed by pre-application discussions with Gravesham Borough Council. The Council expressed broad support for the landscape-led approach and the integration of green infrastructure and PRoW connections. This engagement provided confidence in the methodology and viewpoint selection, supporting the decision to scope out receptors where effects were anticipated to be negligible.

2.14. As detailed in Section 4 of this LVIA, the following landscape receptors have been **scoped out** of the assessment:

- Landscape character areas and types outside the ZTV;
- National Character Areas;
 - North Downs National Character Area (NCA);



- County Landscape Character Areas (LCAs);
 - Luddesdown: West Kent Downs LCA;
 - Southfleet Arable Lands LCA;
- National Landscape Character Areas;
 - West Kent Downs LCA 1A;
- Local Landscape Character Areas;
 - Harvel Wooded Downs LCA;
 - Istead Arable Farmlands LCA; and
 - Luddesdown Downs LCA.

2.15. As detailed in Section 5 of this LVIA, the following visual receptors have been **scoped out** of the assessment:

- Visual receptors beyond the 2km Study Area (**Photoviewpoints 10 and 13**);
- Visual receptors outside the coverage of the ZTV (see **Plan 5**);
- Visual receptors located within the Kent Downs NL (**Photoviewpoint 12** along PRoW NS173);
- Users of PRoW NS192 (**Photoviewpoint 11**); and
- Users of PRoW NS251 (**Photoviewpoint 9**).



Section 3: Planning Policy and Evidence Base

3.1. The following section summarises the local planning policies relevant to landscape and visual matters, as well as adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and other published guidance and studies that are of particular relevance. A full extract of the national and local planning policies of relevance to the LVIA are contained within **Appendix 4 - Planning Policy Extracts**. Discussion around Green Belt and relevant policies is undertaken in **Section 8** of this report. The location of the Site in relation to relevant planning designations is illustrated on **Plan 2**.

3.2. At the local level, the Site lies within the administrative area of the Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) Local Planning Authority (LPA), and approximately 250m west of the boundary of the Kent Downs National Landscape.

Local Policy

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted September 2014)¹

3.3. There is no standalone landscape-specific policy within the adopted Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy. However, relevant considerations are embedded within the policies below and detailed in **Appendix 4**:

- Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development (Green Belt).
- Policy CS12: Green Infrastructure.
- Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles.

Local Plan Core Strategy Partial Review and Site Allocations (October 2020)²

3.4. The emerging Local Plan has progressed through Regulation 18 (Stage 2) consultation (October–December 2020). The Council is currently preparing the Regulation 19 submission draft, scheduled for consultation later in 2025. At this stage, the emerging policies carry very limited weight in decision-making but are noted here for context.

3.5. Policies within the emerging Local Plan relevant to landscape and/or visual matters are summarised below and detailed in **Appendix 4**:

- Policy GI5: Landscape Character.
- Policy GI1: Green Infrastructure.
- Policy GI2: Biodiversity and Habitat Connectivity.

¹[Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy - September 2014 - Google Drive](#)

²[Emerging Local Plan Partial Review, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies \(Regulation 18 - Stage 2\) Consultation - Gravesham Borough Council Planning Consultations](#)



Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2021 - 2026³

3.6. The Kent Downs Management Plan applies to the entire designated area and sets out aims and principles for its conservation and enhancement. The following principles are particularly relevant to landscape and visual matters in relation to the Site.

- SD8 - *"Ensure proposals, projects and programmes do not negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the Kent Downs AONB."*

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Gravesham Stage 2 Green Belt Study (August 2020)⁴

3.7. The Stage 2 Study provides an assessment of the London Area Green Belt within Gravesham Borough, evaluating its performance against both national and local Green Belt purposes. It represents an update to previous Green Belt studies undertaken by the Council. As shown on **Plan 2**, the Site lies within the London Area Green Belt, which extends across the wider Study Area.

3.8. The findings of this Stage 2 Study supersede those of earlier assessments, incorporating the relevant amendments to the NPPF in effect at the time, alongside good practice guidance and relevant case law. It is acknowledged that this study was completed in 2020, prior to the most recent updates to the NPPF in December 2024, which introduced new provisions relating to the Green Belt, including the formal recognition of the Grey Belt.

3.9. Although Green Belt is a spatial planning designation rather than a landscape designation, the LVIA will include a dedicated chapter on visual openness and Green Belt considerations. This will be supported by a Grey Belt Study to assess the Site's suitability for redevelopment within the Green Belt context.

Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study⁵

3.10. The Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (March 2016) provides an assessment of landscape and visual sensitivities around defined settlements in the Borough. The Site falls within Parcel HG3 – Hook Green South East, which is one of six parcels assessed around Hook Green.

3.11. As shown in **Figure 1** below, the Site is located in the western part of Parcel HG3 and does not cover the full extent of the parcel.

3.12. The study identifies Parcel HG3 as having medium-high sensitivity to small-scale development. It notes that the north-west corner of the parcel, where the Site is located, relates most closely to the existing settlement form and would likely result in a more limited impact on the setting of Hook Green. However, it also states that any development in this

³ [The-Kent-Downs-AONB-Management-Plan-2021-2026-Adopted.pdf](#)

⁴ [Emerging Local Plan Partial Review, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies \(Regulation 18 - Stage 2\) Consultation - Gravesham Borough Council Planning Consultations](#)

⁵ [Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Studyw.pdf](#)



area would require planting and appropriate mitigation to reduce potential impacts on the rural character of the parcel and to avoid compromising the openness of the field.

3.13. Since the publication of the study, an internal hedgerow has been planted through the centre of the Site in a north-south orientation, connecting vegetation associated with Priestfield Shaw to that near the Conservation Area to the south (see **Plan 1**). While still establishing, this hedgerow has begun to influence the perception of openness and visual connectivity across the parcel and may provide a degree of internal containment for future development.

Landscape Parcel: HG3 – Hook Green south east

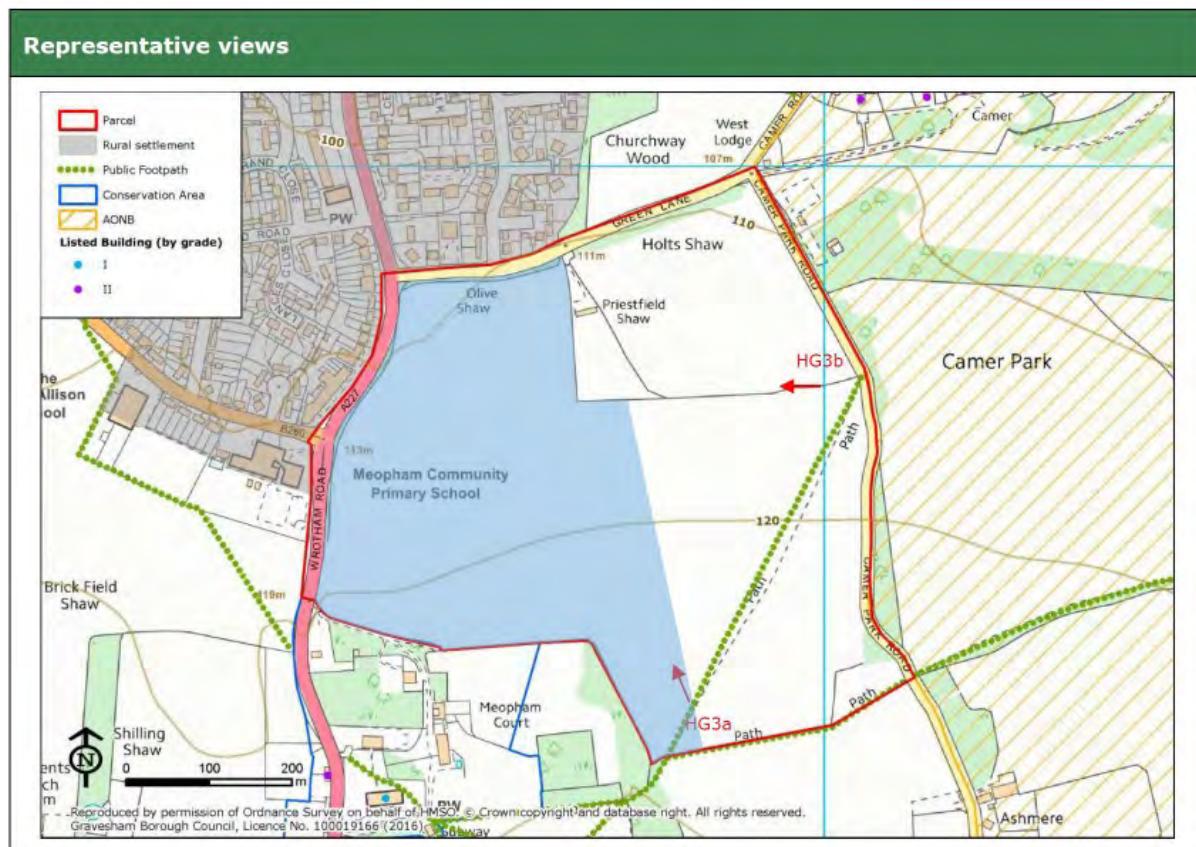


Figure 1: Extract from the Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study highlighting the extents of parcel HG3. The site area is denoted by a light blue infill.

Landscape Designations

3.14. As shown on **Plan 2**, the Site is not located within or adjacent to any national or local landscape designations.

Kent Downs National Landscape

3.15. The Site is located approximately 250m west of the Kent Downs National Landscape (NL) (previously known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)). The extent of the Kent Downs NL and its proximity to the Site are illustrated on **Plan 2**. While the Site is not located within the Kent Downs NL, and therefore not subject to direct impacts, its proximity (circa



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250m) to the boundary necessitates consideration of potential indirect impacts on the setting and views from the Kent Downs NL.

Kent Downs National Landscape Special Qualities

3.16. The Kent Downs NL is designated for a combination of physical, ecological, cultural, and perceptual attributes that contribute to its national importance. These are summarised below:

- Dramatic landform and views – Chalk escarpments, dry valleys, and rolling farmland.
- Biodiversity-rich habitats – Chalk grasslands, ancient woodlands, and species-rich hedgerows.
- Historic and cultural heritage – Archaeological sites, historic routes, and traditional villages.
- Tranquillity and dark skies – Strong sense of peace, low light pollution, and rural character.
- Farmed landscape – Long-established mixed farming shaping the character.
- Woodlands and trees – One of Britain's most wooded landscapes, including ancient woodland.
- Water and wetlands – Chalk streams, rivers, ponds, and marshes.
- Vibrant communities – A living, working landscape shaped by local people.

3.17. These qualities underpin the Kent Downs NL's high sensitivity to change and form the basis for assessing potential effects on its setting. While the Site lies outside the Kent Downs NL and is visually and physically separated from the NL, its proximity requires consideration of whether the Proposed Development could influence these qualities, particularly those relating to tranquillity, dark skies, and scenic integrity.

Other Designations

3.18. As identified in *The Street, Meopham Rural Conservation Area Appraisal*, the 'The Street, Meopham' Conservation Area lies adjacent to the southern boundary of the Site (see **Plan 2**). While Conservation Areas are not landscape designations, they can include published guidance on important views that may be relevant to LVIA. In this instance, the Meopham Conservation Area Appraisal does not identify any key views directed towards the Site. This LVIA therefore considers the Conservation Area only in terms of its visual context, with detailed assessment of setting addressed separately within the Heritage Assessment (ref. P25-0095).

3.19. Other environmental and heritage designations within the Study Area, such as ancient woodland, scheduled monuments, and listed buildings, are also shown on **Plan 2** for context, although they fall outside the scope of this LVIA.

Open Access and Rights of Way

3.20. All Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the Study Area are shown on **Plan 1** and **2**.



3.21. One PRoW, NS252, crosses a section of the Site's south-eastern corner before continuing in a north-easterly direction across the adjacent field.

3.22. Several other PRoW are located in close proximity to the Site, including:

- A section of PRoW NS 173, which runs east-west adjacent to the Site's south-eastern boundary;
- PRoW NS 253, approximately 57m southwest;
- PRoW NS 255, approximately 195m southwest; and
- PRoW NS 255A, approximately 277m southwest.

3.23. The long-distance footpath Weald Way lies approximately 920 metres east of the Site, while the North Downs Way is located approximately 3.2 kilometres to the southeast.

3.24. The entrance to Camer Park Country Park is situated approximately 325 metres east of the Site, with the park extending further eastward. No other areas of Common Land or Access Land are located within the Study Area.

3.25. The primary vehicular and pedestrian route is Wrotham Road, which has a 30mph speed limit through the built-up area. Green Lane is a narrow, verge-lined lane bordered by mature vegetation and residential properties. Camer Park Road, located to the east of the Site, is a single-track rural lane with an open character.



Section 4: Landscape Baseline

4.1. This section identifies the landscape receptors and sets out the existing landscape context of the Site and Study Area in terms of:

- The landscape setting, features and character of the Site;
- The landscape character of the Study Area; and
- The sensitivity of the identified landscape receptors to the Proposed Development.

Landscape Context

4.2. As shown on **Plan 1**, the Site is located on the settlement edge of Hook Green, with the built form extending to the north and west. To the south lies the settlement of Meopham. Immediately south of the Site is Meopham Court, comprising a cluster of residential dwellings set within mature, well-vegetated gardens. A single residential property with an associated garden is situated adjacent to the north-eastern boundary, while countryside extends beyond the Site to the east. To the west, the Site is bounded by Wrotham Road and a small retail parade with associated parking.

4.3. The Site is enclosed by mature vegetation along its boundaries, which provides a degree of visual containment and reduces intervisibility with the surrounding area. Nevertheless, the Site occupies a transitional zone between established residential and mixed-use development and the wider landscape to the east.

Settlement and Land Use

4.4. As illustrated on **Plan 2**, the Site is bordered by existing settlement on three sides, with a single dwelling located adjacent to the north-eastern boundary. Within the wider Study Area, Hook Green and Meopham represent the two principal settlements, connected by Wrotham Road—a major north-south route through the area. Sole Street lies to the north-east, and the surrounding landscape includes scattered farmsteads and low-density residential properties.

4.5. The Site comprises a single arable field, divided by an internal hedgerow near the eastern boundary (see **Plan 1**). The northern, southern, and western boundaries are defined by mature tree lines and dense vegetation. The eastern boundary is partially defined by a hedgerow along the northern section adjacent to a single dwelling and garden. The eastern boundary then extends across a field to the south. The limited landscape features present within the Site are concentrated along its periphery, as the interior is largely devoid of features due to intensive agricultural use. As shown on **Plan 1**, the landform is gently undulating and typical of the surrounding landscape, characterised by arable land partially enclosed by vegetation.

4.6. Beyond the developed edge, the surrounding landscape is predominantly agricultural, comprising medium to large, irregularly shaped fields, primarily in arable use. To the north-east, large-scale orchards become more characteristic of the landscape, and Camer Park Reserve to the east of the Site is a feature in the landscape. Field boundaries are typically



defined by tree lines and interspersed with woodland blocks, contributing to a varied and textured rural character.

Topography and Hydrology

- 4.7. The topography of the Study Area is illustrated on **Plan 3: Topography**. Elevations range from approximately 75m AOD in the south to around 100m AOD in the north and northeast, reflecting the transition towards the North Downs. The Site itself occupies gently undulating ground, falling slightly from north to south, and is relatively level compared to the more pronounced ridgelines to the south and east. A local ridgeline to the south of the Site provides a degree of visual containment, limiting long-distance views from that direction.
- 4.8. The Site occupies gently undulating ground, falling slightly from north to south, as illustrated on **Plan 1**. While the wider Study Area includes more pronounced ridgelines to the south and northeast, the Site itself is relatively level, reflecting its current agricultural use..
- 4.9. The topography suggests a natural drainage pattern flowing from the higher ground in the north-east towards the lower-lying areas in the south-west.
- 4.10. The landform supports a transitional landscape between the elevated chalk ridges of the North Downs and the lower-lying agricultural plains.

Landscape Character Baseline

- 4.11. The landscape character appraisal process considers the broader landscape at a national level, then examines more detailed characteristics at the district and local levels. This is set within the context of site-specific land use, helping to define local distinctiveness and sense of place. Together, these elements form the baseline against which the potential impacts of development are assessed.
- 4.12. The characterisation process is a non-value judgement process; therefore, classifying landscapes into distinct areas does not suggest that one character is more sensitive than another or valued by people more or less.
- 4.13. The published landscape character areas within the Study Area for this LVIA are illustrated on **Plan 4 - Landscape Character**. The relevant character areas are summarised below with full details provided at **Appendix 5**.

National Landscape Character

- 4.14. The Site and entire Study Area lies within the North Downs National Character Area (NCA)⁶, reference 119. NCA 119 extends from Surrey to the Kent coast. The area is characterised by a prominent chalk ridge with steep escarpments, dry valleys, and a gently undulating dip slope, supporting a mosaic of arable farmland, species-rich chalk grassland, and ancient woodland. Field patterns are typically defined by hedgerows and small woodland blocks, contributing to a textured and varied rural character.

⁶ [Natural England Access to Evidence - National Character Areas](#)



4.15. While NCA profiles provide a broad overview of the wider landscape context, they are often too generalised to support a detailed assessment of the appropriateness of development proposals at the site level. In contrast, more localised landscape character assessments—at the county, district, or borough scale—typically offer a finer grain of detail and a more accurate reflection of local landscape characteristics. As such, potential impacts on NCA 119: North Downs are considered likely to be no greater than negligible adverse and have therefore been scoped out of further assessment.

Kent Downs NL Character

4.16. The Kent Downs NL Landscape Character Assessment⁷ was updated in 2020 and forms part of the Kent Downs NL Management Plan, which was consulted on alongside the 2021–2026 revision. The updated assessment identifies six overarching Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within the NL, which are further subdivided into thirteen LCAs, each reflecting distinct combinations of landform, land use, vegetation, and settlement pattern.

1A: West Kent Downs Landscape Character Area

4.17. As illustrated on **Plan 4**, the Site lies approximately 250 metres west of LCA 1A: West Kent Downs. This LCA is defined by a chalk dip slope situated between the Darent and Medway Valleys. The landscape is characterised by extensive woodland cover, deep dry valleys, and prominent ridgelines, which together create an intimate and enclosed character, punctuated by occasional long views. Despite its proximity to urban centres, the area retains a strong rural and historic identity, with a landscape structure that reflects centuries of agricultural and woodland management.

4.18. Although the Site lies in relatively close proximity to LCA 1A, it is physically separated by intervening agricultural land and mature vegetation associated with Camer Park Road, which limit visual and perceptual connectivity. There is no direct intervisibility between the Site and the LCA due to this screening and the local topography. As a result, it is considered that the proposed development would not give rise to landscape effects on LCA 1A greater than negligible adverse. Accordingly, LCA 1A: West Kent Downs is scoped out of further detailed assessment within this LVIAs.

Setting to the Kent Down NL

4.19. The Site lies approximately 250m west of the boundary of the Kent Downs NL, which follows Camer Park Road in this location. The Kent Downs Management Plan provides the following guidance on setting:

"The setting of the Kent Downs AONB is broadly speaking the land outside the designated area which is visible from the AONB and from which the AONB can be seen, but may be wider when affected by intrusive features beyond that. The setting of the Kent Downs is not formally defined or indicated on a map"

4.20. A strong tree line along Camer Park Road, combined with an internal hedgerow following a historic field boundary within the Site, contributes to a clear sense of physical and visual separation between the Site and the Kent Downs NL. The intervening land comprises

⁷ [2.0-LCA-1A West-Kent-Downs FINAL.pdf](#)



medium-scale arable fields and a single residential property, further reducing any direct landscape or visual continuity.

4.21. As a result, the Site does not form part of the primary setting of the Kent Downs NL. Instead, it functions as part of a transitional landscape between the built edge of Hook Green / Meopham and the designated landscape. The absence of intervisibility between the Site and the Kent Downs NL, as confirmed through fieldwork and ZTV analysis, further limits the Site's contribution to the character, experience, or appreciation of the designated landscape.

County Landscape Character

4.22. The Kent Landscape Assessment⁸ (KLA) provides a strategic framework for understanding and managing the county's diverse landscapes. It consolidates existing landscape character assessments across Kent and aims to develop character-based strategies that maintain and enhance the distinctiveness of the county's varied landscape types. At the county scale, the KLA divides Kent into a series of LCAs, each representing a distinct combination of physical, ecological, historical, and aesthetic attributes specific to a particular location.

Ash Downs Landscape Character Area

4.23. As illustrated on **Plan 4**, the Site lies within the Ash Downs LCA. This LCA is described as a predominantly rural landscape comprising a mix of grassland and extensive arable farmland, interspersed with fragmented patterns of small woodland blocks. The area is defined by a combination of landform, vegetation, and settlement patterns that contribute to its distinctive character. Full details of the LCA are found at **Appendix 5**, and characteristics relevant to the Site and Study Area are summarised below.

- *"A pleasant mix of deep, dry pastoral valleys enclosed by wooded ridges and species rich hedgerows, with broad plateau tops beyond."*
- *Small valley-bottom villages and large 20th century settlements on plateau.*
- *A winding network of narrow, historic lanes often eroded by traffic."*

District Landscape Character

4.24. At the district level, Gravesham Borough Council has prepared a Landscape Character Assessment (2009)⁹, which provides a detailed understanding of the borough's landscape character and informs landscape planning and management decisions.

4.25. The Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment identifies 11 LCAs, four of which fall within the 2 km Study Area, as illustrated on **Plan 4**.

- Meopham Downs.
- Harvel Wooded Downs.
- Luddesdown Downs.

⁸ [Kent's Landscape Assessment - Kent County Council](#)

⁹ [Microsoft Word - Gravesham LCA May 09.doc](#)



- Istead Arable Farmlands.

4.26. Although located within the Study Area, the Site is physically and visually separate from the Harvel Wooded Downs, Luddesdown Downs, and Istead Arable Farmlands LCAs. As a result, it is considered that the Proposed Development would not give rise to any landscape effects on district level LCAs outside of the Site boundary greater than negligible adverse. Accordingly, LCAs Harvel Wooded Downs, Luddesdown Downs, and Istead Arable Farmlands are scoped out of further detailed assessment within this LVIA.

Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area

4.27. The Site is located within the Meopham Downs LCA, a gently undulating rural landscape characterised by a mix of arable and pasture farmland. The field pattern varies from small, square fields in the south to broader, irregular fields in the north. Native hedgerows and hedgerow trees define field boundaries, while small woodland clumps and remnants of orchards contribute to the area's texture. The landscape is interspersed with traditional settlements such as Meopham, Meopham Green, and Culverstone Green, all located along the A227.

4.28. Published characteristics of the LCA that are relevant to the Site and Study Area are summarised below, with full details provided at **Appendix 5**.

- *"Gently undulating topography with a mix of arable and pasture farmland.*
- *Neat pattern of small, square fields in the south.*
- *Broader, irregular-shaped fields to the north.*
- *Narrow lanes and roads lined with hedgerows.*
- *Three large settlements located along the A227.*
- *Traditional architecture surrounding village greens, contributing to local vernacular."*

LCA Condition

4.29. The Meopham Downs LCA is assessed as being in good condition. The landscape exhibits a coherent pattern of elements, with few visual detractors. Native hedgerows and small woodland clumps are generally well-maintained and provide ecological connectivity.

LCA Sensitivity

4.30. The LCA is considered to have 'moderate sensitivity'. The landscape's key characteristics - historic field patterns, native hedgerows, and traditional village centres, relate to a more rural character.

LCA Management Guidelines

4.31. The Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment outlines the following management objectives for the Meopham Downs LCA:



- Conserve and reinforce the traditional landscape structure; new elements should respect existing patterns;
- Conserve characteristic narrow, winding lanes and dense native hedgerows;
- Conserve the traditional built character through the use of local materials and techniques;
- Reinforce village identity and maintain separation between settlements;
- Conserve and enhance broadleaf woodland cover and wooded edges to arable plateaus;
- Support traditional land uses such as orchards and explore new horticultural opportunities;
- Conserve and reinforce agricultural land use.

Site-specific Landscape Character

4.32. Fieldwork was undertaken by Tyler Grange in March 2025 to assess the landscape character of the Site and the 2km Study Area. The Site is situated between the settlements of Hook Green to the north and northwest, beyond Green Lane and Wrotham Road respectively, and Meopham to the south. It occupies a transitional location between the established settlement edge and the wider landscape.

4.33. The Site comprises a single, medium arable field split by an internal hedgerow, and is typical of the surrounding landscape. It is bounded by Wrotham Road to the west and Green Lane to the north. The limited landscape features present within the Site are concentrated along its periphery, as the interior is largely devoid of features due to intensive agricultural use. Boundary features include mature tree lines and hedgerows that provide a degree of visual containment, as well as the establishing hedgerow to the east of the Site. The gently undulating landform reflects the broader topographical character of the area. However, the proximity of nearby settlements and road infrastructure introduces urbanising influences that diminish the overall sense of rurality.

4.34. At a local level, the Site's character somewhat aligns with the Meopham Downs LCA, which is defined by gently undulating topography and arable. However, the Site's immediate context reflects a more transitional and semi-rural character due to its proximity to settlement and infrastructure.

Summary of Landscape Receptors

4.35. As for reasons detailed above, the following landscape receptors have been **scoped out** for further assessment:

- National Character Areas;
 - North Downs National Character Area (NCA);
- County Landscape Areas;



- Luddesdown: West Kent Downs LCA;
- Southfleet Arable Lands LCA;
- National Landscape Character Areas;
 - West Kent Downs LCA 1A;
- Local Landscape Character Areas;
 - Harvel Wooded Downs LCA;
 - Istead Arable Farmlands LCA; and
 - Luddesdown Downs LCA.

4.36. The following landscape receptors have been identified for further assessment:

- Character of the Site;
- Character of the local landscape as illustrated by Meopham Downs and Ash Down LCAs; and
- The setting of the Kent Downs National Landscape.

Landscape Value

4.37. TGN 02/21 identifies a range of factors that can assist in understanding the value of the landscape, which forms part of the understanding of its sensitivity. An assessment of the value of the Site and local landscape in accordance with TGN 02/21 is provided at **Appendix 6**.

4.38. Having conducted an analysis in light of TGN 02/21, it is considered that the Site represents a **medium to low** landscape value overall and the local landscape is of **medium to high** value (see **Appendix 6** for details).

Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

4.39. The full appraisal of sensitivity of landscape receptors is set out in **Appendix 6** and summarised below:

- Character of the Site (**Medium**);
- Character of the local landscape as illustrated by Meopham Downs and Ash Down LCAs (**Medium to High**); and
- The setting of the Kent Downs National Landscape (**High**).



Section 5: Visual Baseline

5.1. To assess the potential visual effects of the Proposed Development, it is essential to establish a clear understanding of the existing visual context. This includes identifying the extent to which the Site is currently visible, the nature of available views, and the receptors (people) who may experience changes in their visual amenity. In accordance with Chapter 6 of the GLVIA3, the visual baseline should define:

- The area from which the Proposed Development may be visible;
- The groups of people (visual receptors) likely to be affected;
- The representative viewpoints that illustrate these views; and
- The character and quality of views from each viewpoint.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

5.2. The visibility of the Site has been assessed through a combination of desk-based analysis and field verification. Initial analysis was informed by ZTV mapping (refer to **Plan 5**), which identifies areas within the surrounding landscape from which the Proposed Development may theoretically be visible. This was supplemented by fieldwork to confirm the actual extent of visibility and to refine the assessment.

5.3. The ZTV was generated using digital surface modelling software, based on a maximum proposed ridge height of 10.5 metres (equivalent to three storeys). The model assumes a receptor eye level of 1.6 metres and covers a 2km radius Study Area. The analysis uses 1m resolution LIDAR Digital Surface Model (DSM) data, which incorporates existing built form and vegetation to provide a realistic representation of potential visibility.

5.4. While LIDAR DSM data accounts for many intervening features, it represents a snapshot in time. Changes such as vegetation growth or clearance, or the construction or demolition of buildings, may not be reflected. Additionally, the ZTV may indicate theoretical visibility from elevated features such as rooftops or tree canopies, which are not accessible to the public. As such, ZTV outputs are indicative only and must be interpreted with caution.

5.5. To address these limitations, the ZTV was verified through a comprehensive site visit undertaken in March 2025. This fieldwork confirmed the actual extent of visibility and informed the selection of representative viewpoints. These viewpoints illustrate both areas where the Site is visible and locations where no views are available, despite theoretical visibility. The viewpoints are presented in **Appendix 7**. In accordance with GLVIA3, the visual baseline focuses on publicly accessible external spaces. Views from private properties are not assessed in detail but are considered where relevant and where visibility is confirmed.

Approach to Identification of Views

5.6. Photographs were captured from selected viewpoints using a digital camera with a 50mm focal length lens, approximating the human field of view. All photographs were taken at eye



level (approximately 1.6 metres above ground level) to reflect a typical viewing experience. A total of 13 representative viewpoints were identified around the Study Area to assess the potential visual effects of the Proposed Development from a range of directions and receptor types. Locations are shown on **Plan 5**, and summarised in **Table 1: Photoviewpoint Locations** below. The Photographs are provided at **Appendix 7**.

5.7. The selected viewpoints are intended to be representative of the range of views available within the Study Area. However, they do not provide exhaustive coverage of all possible locations. In many cases, views are experienced sequentially or intermittently as people move through the landscape. Such transient or fleeting views are also considered within the assessment, particularly along transport corridors and PRoW routes. Several of the viewpoint locations also represent a 'no view' to provide evidence and transparency to this assessment.

5.8. All viewpoint photography was undertaken in March 2025, when vegetation was not in full leaf, under clear weather conditions, with very good to excellent visibility. This ensures that the assessment reflects a worst-case scenario in terms of potential visibility of the Proposed Development.

Table 1: Photoviewpoint Locations

Representative Photoviewpoint Number	Photoviewpoint Location	Photoviewpoint description
1	At the junction of Green Lane and Wrotham Road	View from Wrotham Road to the north-west of the Site, looking south-east towards the Site. Views of the partially undefined boundary in the north-west corner of the Site, with views of the internal arable field and southern boundary vegetation possible.
2	Along Green Lane, adjacent to the access to Priestfield Shaw	View from Green Lane, adjacent to the north-eastern access point into the Site, looking south-west across the Site. Views of the partially undefined boundary in the north-east corner of the Site, with views of the internal arable field, western and southern boundary vegetation possible.
3	Along Camer Park Road at the entrance to Camer Park Reserve	View from the entrance to Camer Park along Camer Park Road to the east of the Site, looking west towards the Site. Views of the Site are predominantly obscured by Priestfield Shaw, with views of the eastern section of the Site, to the east of the internal hedgerow, possible.
4	Along PRoW NS252	View from PRoW NS252 to the east of the Site, looking west across the Site. PRoW is located in a field adjacent to the Site, so views of the internal arable field and settlement to the west are possible.
5	Along PRoW NS173	View from PRoW NS173 to the south-east of the Site, looking north-west across the Site. Field boundary vegetation curtails views from the majority of this section of the PRoW, but where gaps are present, views of the internal arable field and settlement to the west are possible.



6	Along PRoW NS252	View from the start of PRoW NS252 where it partially crosses the Site in the south-east corner, looking north across the Site. Views across the eastern extents of the Site towards the northern boundary are possible.
7	Along Wrotham Road adjacent to Meopham Court access road	View from Wrotham Road to the south-west corner of the Site, looking east across the Site. Vegetation along the western boundary filter views of the Site, but views across the internal arable field towards Priestfield Shaw are possible.
8	Along PRoW NS253	View from PRoW NS253 to the west of the Site, looking east towards the Site. Vegetation along Wrotham Road and the western boundary filter views of the Site, with glimpse of the eastern boundary possible.
9	Along PRoW NS251	View from PRoW NS251 to the west of the Site, looking east towards the Site. The undulating topography and intervening vegetation between the Site and PRoW screens views of the Site.
10	Along Longfield Road, outside of settlement	View from Longfield Road to the north-west of the Site, looking south-east towards the Site. The undulating topography and intervening vegetation between the Site and road screens views of the Site.
11	Along PRoW NS192	View from PRoW NS192 to the north-east of the Site, looking south-west towards the Site. The undulating topography and intervening vegetation and settlement between the Site and PRoW screens views of the Site.
12	Along PRoW NS173 (within Kent Downs NL)	View from PRoW NS173 to the east of the Site, looking west towards the Site. The undulating topography and intervening vegetation between the Site and PRoW screens views of the Site.
13	Junction of PRoW NS187 and NS185	View from PRoW NS187 and NS185 on the western edge of Cobham to the east of the Site, looking west towards the Site. Intervening commercial orchards screen views of the Site.

Visual Receptor Study

5.12. The visibility of the Site is influenced by gently undulating topography, mature boundary vegetation, and the proximity of settlement. While the ZTV mapping indicates a broad theoretical extent of visibility across the 2km Study Area, field verification confirms that actual views are more limited and fragmented due to intervening vegetation and deeply rolling landscape outside of settlement. The below study focuses on receptors in the public realm, but a separate section is included for residential and retail receptors.

Views from the North

5.13. Approaching from the north, the landscape is defined by a mix of farmland and settlement that radiates out from Wrotham Road, with a railway line running east-west through the



northern part of the Study Area. Landform falls away from the Site to the north (see **Plan 3**), which, when combined with dense settlement and vegetation, screens medium and long distance views towards the Site (Photoviewpoint **11** and **13**).

- 5.14. Locally, views of the Site are partially screened and intermittent. Views of the Site from the north are limited to road users along Wrotham Road and Green Lane, adjacent to the Site. Views from the northern section of Wrotham Road are predominantly screened by settlement and boundary vegetation. Typically, the Site only becomes visible when directly adjacent (**Photoviewpoint 1**). With exception to a small gap in the north-west corner of the Site, boundary vegetation heavily filters views from the north.
- 5.15. Sections of Green Lane lie below the level of the Site, and the dense vegetation along the northern boundary heavily screens views of the Site, even in winter. The only section of Green Lane where views are possible, is at the north-east corner of the Site where a small gap in vegetation is present (**Photoviewpoint 2**). The majority of the Site remains screened from this view by existing vegetation.

Views from the East

- 5.16. To the east, the landscape opens into a patchwork of arable fields and hedgerows, with Camer Park Reserve and the Kent Downs NL providing a tranquil and scenic backdrop. From PRoW NS252 (**Photoviewpoint 4**) and Camer Park Road (**Photoviewpoint 3**), views towards the Site are possible, particularly towards its southern extent where an undefined boundary affords local views into the Site. Vegetation and Priestfield Shaw provides screening qualities to the northern extents of the Site.
- 5.17. Beyond Camer Park Road, views of the Site are obscured by the dense tree belt along this road, in particular from the Kent Downs NL. As shown on **Plan 3**, landscape to the east of the Site lies on similar contours to the Site before falling to Luddesdown, which when combined with dense field boundary and roadside vegetation, limits views of the Site from the Kent Downs NL and general receptors to the east (**Photoviewpoint 12**).

Views from the South

- 5.18. As highlighted by the ZTV (**Plan 5**) and the topography plan (**Plan 3**), a local ridgeline to the south of the Site restricts views to local receptors only. Views from PRoW NS252 are detailed above, but from the southern extent of this PRoW, views are limited to the most eastern and north-eastern extents of the Site (**Photoviewpoint 6**).
- 5.19. The section of PRoW NS173 to the west of Camer Park Road runs along the southern side of a field boundary with partial vegetation. Views towards the Site are predominantly obscured by vegetation, with views of the Site experienced where small gaps occur along the field boundary (**Photoviewpoint 5**).

Views from the West

- 5.20. To the west, the Site is enclosed by dense settlement and vegetation along the Site boundary and Wrotham Road. Glimpsed views of the Site from the single local PRoW to west (PRoW NS253) are possible, but the treelines on both sides of Wrotham Road heavily filter views



towards the Site (**Photoviewpoint 8**). Glimpsed and partial views into the Site from Wrotham and Longfield Road are experienced where roads users pass the Site (**Photoviewpoint 7**).

5.21. Further west, views are further restricted by the rolling landscape. **Photoviewpoint 9**, taken from PRoW NS251, and **Photoviewpoint 10**, taken from Longfield Road near the railway bridge, offers a broad view of undulating farmland beyond Meopham's settlement boundary. While mature trees and distant residential properties are visible, the Site itself is screened by intervening vegetation and built form along Longfield Road.

Views from the Kent Downs National Landscape

5.22. The Kent Downs NL lies approximately 250 metres east of the Site, with its boundary extending along the eastern side of Camer Park Road. While the ZTV mapping indicates potential visibility from parts of the Kent Downs NL, field verification confirms that actual visibility is curtailed by intervening vegetation and landform (**Photoviewpoint 12**). Even along the sections of PRoW nearest Camer Park Road, the dense tree belt and vegetation limits views east of the road.

5.23. The boundary of the Kent Downs NL extends south around the southern aspect of Meopham. Views from the Kent Downs NL are screened by settlement, vegetation, and the local ridgeline to the south of the Site (**Plan 3**).

5.24. The visual relationship between the Site and the Kent Downs NL is therefore extremely limited. While the Site lies within the theoretical visual envelope, the absence of direct intervisibility ensures that the Proposed Development would not materially affect the character or quality of views from the designated landscape, nor would it compromise the scenic quality or tranquil character that defines the Kent Downs NL. Therefore visual receptors located within the National Landscape will not be assessed further.

Retail Receptors

5.25. A small parade of retail units is located to the west of the Site, separated by the A227 Wrotham Road and secondary road used for parked vehicles. These units include estate agents, salons, takeaways, food shops, and a limited number of cafés with outdoor seating.

5.26. Views of the Site from the retail parade are predominantly filtered by the established tree line along the western boundary (see **Photoviewpoint 1**). As a result, any visibility is limited and likely focused on existing roadside infrastructure, such as the A227 and nearby services, rather than the Site.

Residential Receptors

5.27. While this LVIA focuses primarily on publicly accessible views, residential receptors are considered separately due to their high susceptibility to visual change. While private views are not protected under planning policy, they remain relevant in understanding the potential effects of the Proposed Development on visual amenity.

5.28. The Site's visual influence on residential properties is moderated by mature boundary vegetation, local topography, and dwelling orientation. As a result, only a small number of properties in close proximity to the Site are likely to experience any degree of visibility. Where



views are available, they are typically filtered, partial, and experienced in the context of the existing settlement edge.

5.29. Properties with potential views include:

- Dwellings along Wrotham Road, particularly those immediately west of the Site. Roadside vegetation provides intermittent screening, though filtered views may be possible from both ground and upper floors.
- Properties on Tradescant Drive, to the north, are generally well screened by dense vegetation along Green Lane. However, any reduction in this vegetation could allow upper-storey views of the Site.
- Meopham Court, directly south of the Site, is separated by mature tree-lined boundaries. While this vegetation offers strong visual containment, some filtered views may be possible, particularly from upper storeys.
- Priestfield Shaw, adjacent to the eastern boundary, is similarly enclosed by boundary planting. Views from this property are limited to upper-storey windows.

5.30. Overall, the visual relationship between the Site and surrounding residential properties is constrained by existing landscape features. Where visibility does occur, it is typically limited in extent and character, and experienced within a semi-rural, edge-of-settlement context.

Summary of Visual Receptors

5.31. The following visual receptors have been **scoped out** for further assessment:

- Visual receptors beyond the 2km Study Area (**Photoviewpoints 10 and 13**);
- Visual receptors outside the coverage of the ZTV (see **Plan 5**);
- Visual receptors located within the Kent Downs NL (including from **Photoviewpoint 12** along PRoW NS173);
- Users of PRoW NS192 (**Photoviewpoint 11**); and
- Users of PRoW NS251 (**Photoviewpoint 9**).

5.32. The following visual receptors have been identified for further assessment:

- Users of PRoW NS173 (west of Camer Park Road only) (**Photoviewpoint 5**);
- Users of PRoW NS252 (**Photoviewpoints 4 and 6**);
- Users of PRoW NS253 (**Photoviewpoint 8**);
- Users of A227 Wrotham Road and Longfield Road (**Photoviewpoints 1 and 7**);
- Users of Green Lane and Tradescant Drive (**Photoviewpoint 2**);
- Users of Camer Park Road (**Photoviewpoint 3**);
- Retail users associated with Wrotham Road parade of shops; and



- Residents associated with Wrotham Road, Tradescant Drive, Meopham Court, and Priestfield Shaw.

5.33. Residential receptors are analysed separately within this LVIA.

Visual Value

5.34. In visual terms, value relates to that attached to views experienced by receptors (people).

5.35. The Site is not visible from recognised/important viewpoints or designated landscapes (Kent Down NL), tourist destinations, designed views, nationally recognised routes (i.e. National Trail) or land with public access (i.e. Open Access Land).

5.36. Details of visual value for each type of receptor is found at **Appendix 6**.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

5.37. The sensitivity of visual receptors is a product of value and susceptibility, as set out in the methodology in **Appendix 2**. The assessment of sensitivity is set out in **Appendix 6**, and summarised as follows:

- High sensitivity:
 - Residents of Meopham Court.
- High/Medium sensitivity:
 - Users of PRoW NS173 (west of Camer Park Road), NS252, and NS253; and
 - Residents associated with Wrotham Road, Tradescant Drive, and Priestfield Shaw.
- Medium/low sensitivity:
 - Users of Green Lane and Tradescant Drive; and
 - Users of Camer Park Road.
- Low sensitivity:
 - Users of A227 Wrotham Road; and
 - Visitors to Wrotham Road parade of shops.



Section 6: Proposed Development and Mitigation

The Proposed Development

6.1. The Proposed Development comprises up to 350 residential dwellings, with access taken from Wrotham Road to the west. All matters are reserved except for access. The scheme includes a series of Green Infrastructure (GI) components, including informal open space, structural planting, and sustainable drainage features, which together form the basis of the landscape strategy.

The Design Evolution

6.2. The design has evolved through an iterative process informed by landscape and visual sensitivities identified during baseline appraisal and consultation with the local authority. Constraints, such as proximity to the Kent Downs NL, the adjacent Conservation Area, and an unbound eastern boundary, have shaped the layout and extent of development. The masterplan has responded by incorporating generous landscape buffers, varied building setbacks, and a network of green corridors that reinforce the transition between built form and countryside.

Design Review Panel Feedback

6.3. A Design Review Panel session was held to test the emerging masterplan. Recommendations included:

- Creating a green gateway at the site entrance to enhance arrival experience;
- Establishing a visual and physical connection to Camer Parade, including alignment with the existing pedestrian crossing on Wrotham Road. This would include light crown lifting the tree belt along Wrotham Road to improve permeability and visual connection;
- Removing the MUGA from the scheme due to concerns over landscape impact; and
- Retaining the eastern parkland connection but removing the long-distance viewing corridor towards the open countryside.

6.4. These recommendations were reviewed in consultation with the various consultants in the design team. The following amendments were made:

- A new green space has been introduced at the site entrance;
- The layout now includes a pedestrian link aligned with the crossing at Wrotham Road;
- The tree belt has been selectively thinned to improve visibility while retaining screening;
- The MUGA has been removed, with open space provision redistributed; and
- The eastern parkland connection has been retained, but the long-distance view corridor has been omitted.



Pre-Application Engagement

6.5. A pre-application meeting was held with Gravesham Borough Council, where the lead planning officer for the application was present. While a formal written response is pending, the planning team was broadly supportive of the approach taken. The submitted statement outlined:

- The landscape-led design rationale;
- The integration of open space and green infrastructure;
- The retention and enhancement of PRoW;
- The proposed access strategy, parking provision, and active travel links; and
- The approach to heritage and visual sensitivity.

6.6. The Council acknowledged the scheme's alignment with emerging policy and its potential to deliver high-quality development within the context of the Green Belt and local housing need.

Landscape Strategy

Landscape Strategy

6.7. As shown on **Plan 6: Illustrative Landscape Strategy** in **Appendix 1**, the landscape design for the proposed development has been carefully developed to complement the surrounding landscape character and visual context. A network of green corridors, informal open spaces, and tree-lined streets weaves through the development, creating a soft and permeable edge that responds sensitively to adjacent countryside and more sensitive edges. Existing vegetation along the northern, western, and southern boundaries are designed to frame the Site along the new provision of a large Public Open Space (POS) along the eastern boundary. These features help to filter views and preserve glimpses of heritage and landscape features.

6.8. Internally, the scheme integrates a series of connected greens and pedestrian routes that promote active travel and enhance legibility. Sustainable drainage features, including swales and attenuation basins, are designed as multifunctional landscape elements, contributing to biodiversity and visual interest. The landscape strategy also strengthens connections to Camer Park and the wider public right of way network, ensuring the development is well integrated into its rural context while offering meaningful recreational and ecological benefits.

Landscape Mitigation

6.9. To ensure the proposed development is sensitively integrated into its setting, a series of landscape mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design:

- **Boundary planting:** The undefined eastern boundary has been transformed into a linear POS, with development set back from this boundary. The proposed planting is layered through hedgerows and trees to soften views and reinforce the rural transition, in particular regard to the Kent Downs NL further east.



- **Green corridors:** The internal layout shaped around connected green spaces and tree-lined streets to break up built form and enhance connectivity.
- **PRoW integration:** Existing routes retained within generous green corridors, with new links into the Site.

Landscape Enhancement

6.10. The proposals deliver a range of enhancements that strengthen the Site's landscape character, ecological value, and sense of place:

- **Setback from boundaries:** Development is set back from boundary features to retain and enhance the landscape framework;
- **Strengthening vegetation:** Existing hedgerows and mature trees are retained and reinforced to improve structure, screening, and biodiversity.
- **New habitat creation:** Although the application is submitted in outline form, the parameters allow for the delivery of these mitigation and enhancement measures within the defined development areas and green infrastructure framework.
- **Improved habitat connectivity:** Green corridors and open spaces link existing and proposed habitats, enhancing ecological networks across the site.
- **Accessible green infrastructure:** Over 33% of the site is dedicated to open space, including informal parkland, allotments, and play areas.
- **Enhanced connectivity:** New pedestrian and cycle links connect to the wider PRoW and active travel network, encouraging recreation and sustainable travel.



Section 7: Assessment of Effects

- 7.1. This section of the LVIAs assesses the potential effects of the Proposed Development upon the landscape and visual receptors identified through the baseline appraisal set out earlier in this report. This has included consideration of the effects arising at Year 1 and Year 15, i.e. before and after mitigation planting has become established.
- 7.2. The methodology and criteria tables at **Appendix 2** have been used to inform the judgements made.

Likely Landscape Effects

- 7.3. The assessment of the landscape effects at Year 1 and residual effects of the Proposed Development upon completion and maturation of the landscape planting (Year 15) is set out in full at **Appendix 8: Landscape Effects Assessment Tables**. The findings are summarised in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Likely effects upon landscape receptors

Landscape receptor	Sensitivity of the receptor	Magnitude of effects		Importance of effects	
		(Construction) / Year 1	Year 15	(Construction) / Year 1	Year 15
Character of the Site	Medium	(Large) Large	Medium	(Major / Moderate adverse) Major / Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
Local Landscape Character	Medium	(Small / Medium) Small / Medium	Small / Negligible	(Moderate / Minor adverse) Moderate / Minor adverse	Minor / Negligible adverse
Setting of the Kent Downs National Landscape (Kent Downs NL)	High	(Small / Negligible) Negligible	Negligible	(Minor adverse) Negligible adverse	Negligible Neutral

Likely Visual Effects

- 7.4. The assessment of visual effects at Year 1 and residual effects of the Proposed Development upon completion and maturation of the landscape planting (Year 15) is set out in full at **Appendix 9: Visual Effects Assessment Tables**. The findings are summarised in **Table 3** below.



Table 3: Likely effects upon visual receptors

Visual receptor	Sensitivity of the receptor	Magnitude of effect		Importance of effect	
		(Construction) / Year 1	Year 15	(Construction) / Year 1	Year 15
Users of PRoW NS173 (west of Camer Park Road) - <i>Representative Photoviewpoint 5</i>	High to Medium	(Small) Small	Negligible	(Minor Adverse) Minor Adverse	Negligible Adverse
Users of PRoW NS252 - <i>Representative Photoviewpoint 4 and 6</i>	High to Medium	(Large) Large	Small	(Major / Moderate Adverse) Major / Moderate Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse
Users of PRoW NS253 - <i>Representative Photoviewpoint 8</i>	High to Medium	(Small / Negligible) Small / Negligible	Negligible	(Minor / Negligible Adverse) Minor / Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse
Users of Wrotham Road - <i>Representative Photoviewpoint 1 and 7</i>	Low	(Large / Medium) Medium	Small	(Moderate / Minor Adverse) Moderate / Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
Users of Green Lane - <i>Representative Photoviewpoint 2</i>	Medium to Low	(Negligible) Negligible	Negligible	(Negligible Adverse) Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse
Users of Camer Park Road - <i>Representative Photoviewpoint 3</i>	Medium to Low	(Medium) Medium	Negligible	(Moderate / Minor Adverse) Moderate / Minor Adverse	Negligible Adverse
Retail Visitors to Wrotham Road parade of shops	Low	(Medium) Medium	Small	(Minor Adverse) Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse

7.5. This LVIA has focussed upon the analysis of views from publicly accessible locations. Views from private residential dwellings have not been tested in the field and therefore the nature



of the change for these people is set out in full within **Appendix 9**. The findings are summarised in **Table 4** below.

Table 4: Likely magnitude of effects upon residential views

Receptor	Likely Magnitude of effect	
	(Construction) / Year 1	Year 15
Residents associated with Wrotham Road	(Large / Medium) Large / Medium	Medium / Small
Residents associated with Tradescant Drive	(Negligible) Negligible	Negligible
Residents associated with Meopham Court	(Small / Negligible) Small / Negligible	Negligible
Residents associated with Priestfield Shaw	(Large) Large	Medium



Section 8: Green Belt Assessment

Introduction

- 8.1. This Green Belt Assessment (GBA) has been prepared to accompany the LVIA. It assesses the Site's contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) and considers whether the Site meets the definition of Grey Belt introduced in the updated NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG, February 2025).
- 8.2. The GBA should be read alongside the LVIA and the Planning Statement (PP0022) accompanying this application:
 - The LVIA provides detailed baseline information on landscape character, visual context, and designations, which this GBA cross-references to avoid duplication.
 - The Planning Statement addresses matters relating to housing need, sustainability, and the "Golden Rules" in NPPF paragraphs 155(b)–(d). This GBA focuses on paragraph 155(a): whether development would fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt.

Policy and Evidence Base

National Policy

NPPF (December 2024):

- 8.3. Paragraph 142: "The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence."
- 8.4. Paragraph 143: Sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt:
 - (a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
 - (b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
 - (c) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
 - (d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
 - (e) To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 8.5. Paragraphs 148 and 155: Introduce the concept of Grey Belt and criteria for considering development on such land.



PPG (February 2025):

8.6. Provides guidance on assessing Green Belt purposes and Grey Belt status, including criteria for determining whether land "does not strongly contribute" to purposes (a), (b), or (d).

Local Policy and Evidence Base

8.7. The Site lies within the London Area Green Belt as defined in the Gravesham Local Plan (see Plan 2).

Gravesham Green Belt Study Stage 1 (2018)

8.8. The Gravesham Stage 1 Green Belt Study (April 2018) provided a high-level assessment of the Green Belt across the Borough, dividing it into large strategic parcels and evaluating their contribution to the national purposes of Green Belt policy. The Site falls within this assessment, and the findings are summarised below:

- The Site is located within Parcel 19: East of Hook Green;
- Parcel 19 is assessed as causing significant harm to the purposes of the Green Belt if released as the entire parcel; and
- The Study assessed the following contributions of Parcel 19 to each purpose;
 - Purpose A (Check unrestricted sprawl): Minimal/No Contribution;
 - Purpose B (Prevent neighbouring towns merging): Minimal/No Contribution; and
 - Purpose C (Safeguard countryside from encroachment): Significant Contribution.

Gravesham Green Belt Study Stage 2 (2020)

8.9. The Gravesham Green Belt Study (GGBS) (Stage 2 Study, August 2020) provided a finer-grain assessment of harm to the purposes of the Green Belt from releasing land adjacent to inset settlements. The Site falls within this assessment, and the findings are summarised below:

- The Site is located within Parcel HG6 in the Meopham Green assessment area;
- Parcel HG6 is assessed as causing high harm to the purposes of the Green Belt if released as the entire parcel; and
- The Study assessed the following contributions of Parcel HG6 to each purpose;
 - Purpose A (Check unrestricted sprawl): Limited/No Contribution;
 - Purpose B (Prevent neighbouring towns merging): Limited/No Contribution; and
 - Purpose C (Safeguard countryside from encroachment): Significant Contribution.



Methodology

Purpose

8.10. This GBA provides an appraisal of the contribution the Site makes to the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG, February 2025). It also considers the potential effect of its release on the integrity of the remaining Green Belt and identifies opportunities for mitigation.

Scope

8.11. The assessment focuses on Purposes (a), (b), and (c) as defined in the NPPF:

- (a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
- (b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
- (c) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

8.12. Purpose (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns – is not relevant to this assessment. Neither Meopham nor Hook Green are historic towns in the context of the NPPF, and the Green Belt in this location does not contribute to the setting of any historic town. This approach is consistent with the GGBR, which concluded that '*no land within the Borough plays a role in fulfilling Purpose 4*'.

8.13. Purpose (e) – to assist in urban regeneration – is not assessed as all greenfield sites contribute equally.

8.14. A separate stage considers whether the Site meets the definition of Grey Belt under PPG (Feb 2025).

Assessment Process

8.15. The assessment combines desk-based analysis, site appraisal, and professional judgement informed by planning and landscape expertise. It follows these steps:

- Context Review: Identify the Site's location, boundaries, and relationship to settlements and open countryside.
- Assessment Against Green Belt Purposes: Each relevant purpose is assessed using a four-tier contribution scale, consistent with the terminology set out in the PPG:
 - Strong – Land plays a critical role in fulfilling the relevant Green Belt purpose.
 - Moderate – Land supports the purpose but with limiting factors such as partial enclosure or existing development.
 - Weak – Land offers limited support to the purpose due to physical or visual disconnection.
 - None – Land does not meet any criteria relevant to the purpose being assessed.



- Criteria include:
 - Purpose (a): Relationship to large built-up areas and potential to contain or enable sprawl.
 - Purpose (b): Role in maintaining separation between settlements, including spatial and visual gaps.
 - Purpose (c): Degree to which the land retains countryside character and resists encroachment.
- Openness and Boundary Strength: Evaluates whether the Site is visually and physically open, and whether a strong, permanent boundary exists or could be established to contain development.
- Effect on Remaining Green Belt: Considers whether the release of the Site would compromise the ability of adjacent Green Belt land to continue fulfilling its purposes.
- Overall Judgement: Synthesises findings to determine the Site's overall contribution to the Green Belt and the potential harm arising from its release.

Grey Belt Assessment

8.16. The PPG (Feb 2025) introduces the concept of Grey Belt: land that does not strongly serve purposes (a), (b), or (d). This assessment applies the published criteria to determine whether the Site qualifies as Grey Belt, recognising that Purpose (c) is not used in Grey Belt identification but remains relevant to Green Belt appraisal.

Site Context

8.17. A detailed description of the Site's physical, visual, and landscape context is provided in sections 4 and 5 of this LVIA. This section provides a brief summary for completeness.

8.18. The Site lies on the eastern edge of Hook Green, within the London Area Green Belt. It comprises a single arable field with a gently undulating landform, contained by mature vegetation along the northern, southern, and western boundaries, and an internal hedgerow along the eastern edge that reintroduces an historic field boundary (see **Figure 2**). The eastern boundary adjoins agricultural land.

8.19. The Site is bounded by:

- North: Green Lane and residential properties.
- West: Wrotham Road and a small retail parade, with school and residential properties located beyond the road.
- South: Meopham Court and associated gardens.
- East: Single dwelling in the north-east corner and arable countryside.

8.20. The Site forms a transitional edge between the built-up area and the wider rural landscape. It lies within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area, which is characterised by gently undulating farmland, hedgerows, and scattered woodland.





Figure 2: Screenshot taken from the National Library of Scotland that shows a historic map of the Site from 1888-1915 alongside a present aerial of the Site. The historic field boundary along the eastern edge has been recently reinstated

Assessment of the Contribution of the Site and proposals to the purposes of the Green Belt

8.21. Within **Table 5** below, an updated Green Belt review is provided in line with paragraph 143 of the NPPF (December 2024), taking into account the updated PPG (February 2025). It is therefore important to understand the contribution the Site makes to preventing physical, perceptual and visual encroachment. The assessment of the Site against purposes (a-d) includes consideration of the ability of the remaining Green Belt to meet that purpose should the Site be developed.

Table 5: Contribution of the Site to Purposes of the Green Belt

NPPF Purpose (December 2024)	Discussion	Contribution
Purpose A: Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	<p>The Site is located on the eastern edge of Hook Green, a small rural settlement not classified as a large built-up area within the Gravesham Stage 2 Green Belt Study. It is visually contained by mature vegetation and does not adjoin or lie in proximity to Gravesend or Strood, the only settlements considered to meet the definition of large built-up areas for the purposes of Green Belt assessment. As such, the Site does not play a strategic role in preventing the outward expansion of a large built-up area. Its contribution to Purpose A is therefore considered to be none.</p> <p>Even if Hook Green were considered a Large Built-Up Area (contrary to the Stage 2 Study), the Site's contribution to Purpose A would remain very limited. This is because the Site is physically and visually contained on three sides by mature vegetation and adjacent development, and its release would not enable unrestricted sprawl or materially weaken the ability</p>	None



	<p>of the remaining Green Belt to fulfil this purpose. The proposed landscape-led eastern boundary, incorporating a substantial area of Public Open Space and layered planting, would further reinforce containment and prevent any future risk of sprawl.</p>	
Purpose B: Prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	<p>The Site is not located within a strategic gap between neighbouring towns. As confirmed in the Gravesend Stage 2 Green Belt Study, the only settlements considered to meet the definition of "towns" for the purposes of Green Belt assessment are Gravesend and Strood. The Site is associated with Hook Green and Meopham Green, which are not classified as towns, and it is not located between Gravesend and Strood or any other settlements that would contribute to a merging scenario. The PPG (2025) clarifies that contribution to Purpose B is based on the role land plays in maintaining spatial and visual separation between towns. Given the Site's location and context, it does not perform a strategic function in preventing the merging of neighbouring towns. Its contribution to Purpose B is therefore considered to be none.</p>	None
Purpose C: Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	<p>The Site comprises an arable field on the eastern edge of Hook Green, forming part of the settlement fringe. While it is currently in agricultural use, its character is influenced by the adjacent built form and strong boundary vegetation, giving it a transitional quality rather than an open rural setting.</p> <p>The GGBS identifies that the western edge of the HG6 parcel relates more closely to the settlement and is partially enclosed, which is where the Site is located.</p> <p>The LVIA confirms that the Site is visually and physically contained on three sides by mature vegetation and adjacent settlement, with the eastern boundary more related to countryside; although it is noted that an establishing hedgerow is located along this eastern edge along the lineage of the historic field boundary (see Figure 1 above), providing a degree of containment and visual separation.</p> <p>Importantly, the proposed development is entirely contained within this single field and does not extend eastward beyond the historic field boundary into the adjacent field, which is more visually and physically disconnected from the settlement. This distinction is critical in understanding the Site's limited contribution to countryside safeguarding.</p> <p>While the Site retains some openness in Green Belt terms, openness alone does not equate to a strong contribution where containment and settlement association are dominant factors. Due to the identifiable physical and visual containment on three sides, and the presence of a historic and defensible eastern boundary, the Site's relationship with the wider countryside is limited.</p> <p>The proposed development does not breach this boundary and includes a substantial area of POS along the eastern edge, incorporating layered hedgerow and tree planting. This will create a permanent and defensible boundary to the new settlement edge, reinforcing the transition to countryside and reducing the Site's visual and physical relationship with the wider landscape.</p>	Weak



	Accordingly, the Site is considered to make a weak contribution to Purpose C.	
Purpose D: Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The Site does not form part of the setting of a historic town, nor does it have a visual, physical or experiential connection to the historic parts of Gloucester to the west or Cheltenham to the north-east.	None
(e) To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	All greenfield sites contribute equally to this purpose.	Not assessed

Openness and Boundary Strength

8.22. The Site retains a degree of openness in spatial and visual terms, consistent with its current agricultural use. However, this openness is moderated by its edge-of-settlement location and the presence of surrounding development and mature vegetation on three sides.

8.23. The LVIA confirms that the Site is visually and physically enclosed to the north, west, and south by Green Lane, Wrotham Road, Meopham Court, and associated built form. These boundaries are defined by mature tree belts and hedgerows, which provide a strong sense of containment and substantially limit intervisibility with the wider countryside.

8.24. The eastern boundary, while more open, is partially defined by an internal hedgerow that follows a historic field pattern, supported by adjacent vegetation. This historic boundary is identifiable on mapping (see **Figure 2** above) and provides a clear physical and visual edge to the field. The proposed development is entirely contained within this field, and does not extend eastward into the adjacent field, which is more visually and physically disconnected from the settlement.

8.25. The proposed scheme includes a substantial area of POS along the eastern edge, incorporating layered hedgerow and tree planting (**Plan 6**). This will reinforce the eastern boundary and establish a strong, permanent and defensible edge to the new settlement. Crucially, the built form is confined to the main body of the field, respecting the historic field pattern and avoiding encroachment into more open countryside. The eastern POS not only strengthens the boundary but also delivers public and ecological benefits, further supporting the case for containment.

8.26. Overall, the Site exhibits limited openness, with strong containment on three sides and the potential to establish a robust eastern boundary through landscape-led design. The combination of existing and proposed boundary treatments ensures that development would be clearly defined and well contained.



Effect on the Remaining Green Belt

- 8.27. The release of the Site would not undermine the ability of adjacent Green Belt land to continue fulfilling its purposes. The Site lies on the western edge of Parcel HG6, which the GGBS identifies as being more enclosed and closely related to the settlement. This part of parcel HG6 is visually and physically contained on all sides, by development and mature vegetation to the north, west, and south, and by a historic field boundary to the east, which is reinforced by an established hedgerow. The proposed development is entirely contained within this single field, and does not extend eastward into the adjacent field, which is more visually and physically disconnected from the settlement.
- 8.28. The proposed development includes a landscape-led eastern boundary, comprising a substantial area of POS with layered hedgerow and tree planting. This will reinforce the transition to open countryside and establish a strong, permanent and defensible edge to contain development.
- 8.29. The GGBS notes that release of land beyond the southernmost extent of Hook Green would result in a moderate weakening of distinction between the inset settlement and the Green Belt. However, the Site's location on the western edge of HG6, where containment is strongest, ensures that its release would have very limited impacts on the strategic function or integrity of the wider Green Belt.
- 8.30. The PPG (2025) emphasises the importance of ensuring that Green Belt release does not undermine the ability of the remaining Green Belt to continue fulfilling its purposes. In this case, the Site's release would result in a contained and well-defined extension to the settlement, with limited impacts on the strategic role or integrity of the wider Green Belt.

Grey Belt

- 8.31. Grey belt is addressed in paragraph 148 and 155 onwards of the NPPF (December 2024) and is defined within Annex 2 of the NPPF as:

"Land in the Green Belt comprising Previously Developed Land and/or any other land that in either case, does not strongly contribute to any purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143."
- 8.32. Paragraph 148 states that development plans should consider grey belt before other previously undeveloped Green Belt land.
- 8.33. Footnote 55 states that development within the Green Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate *"in the case of development on previously developed land or grey belt land."* Paragraph 155 states that *"development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where (inter alia) (a) the development would utilise grey belt and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan".*
- 8.34. The February 2025 update to national PPG states in paragraph 006 that a site may be considered grey belt if it does not contribute strongly to purpose (a), (b) or (d) of the Green Belt, and is not covered by a footnote 7 designation other than Green Belt.



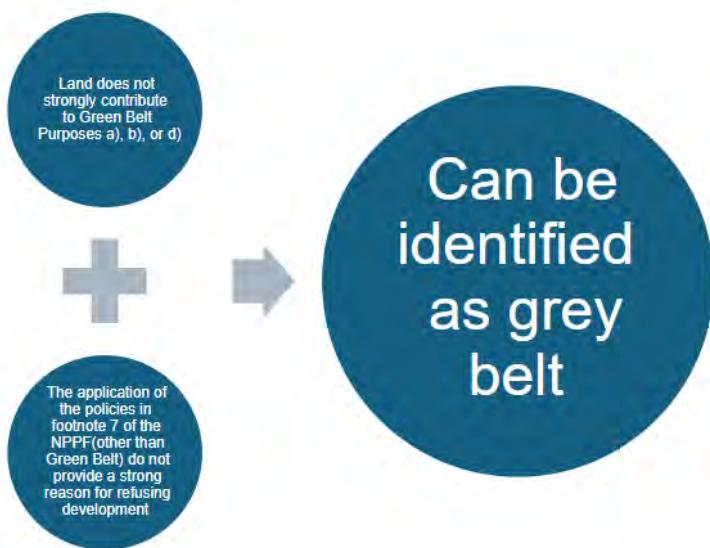


Figure 3: Paragraph (Reference 64-007-20250225) from updated PPG (February 2025)

Grey Belt Assessment

8.35. The various paragraphs and definitions in effect create a series of criteria for whether a site can be considered grey belt, and whether development within it may or may not be considered appropriate. For clarity, this is set out in the table below.

Table 6: Grey Belt Assessment

Criteria and reference	Discussion	Does it pass?
Is the Site covered by footnote 7, beyond its inclusion as Green Belt? NPPF Annex 2	The Site does not form part of any footnote 7 designation beyond its inclusion of Green Belt. While it lies near the Kent Downs National Landscape, it is not within it, and the LVIA confirms there is no intervisibility or perceptual connection that would elevate its sensitivity.	Yes
Does the Site perform strongly against Green Belt purpose (a), (b) or (d)? NPPF Annex 2	The Site was not assessed as performing strongly against any of the purposes in the TG assessment.	Yes

Overall Judgement

8.36. This Green Belt Assessment has been undertaken from a landscape perspective, with a focus on the Site's physical characteristics, containment, and relationship with the surrounding countryside. It has been prepared in coordination with the Planning Statement, which sets out the policy context and planning rationale for the proposed development. Together, these documents provide a consistent and integrated appraisal of the Site's performance against Green Belt purposes and its suitability for release.



8.37. The Site makes no contribution to Purposes A (sprawl), B (merging), or D (historic towns), and a weak contribution to Purpose C (encroachment). This reflects its transitional edge-of-settlement location, its strong containment on three sides, and the presence of a historic and defensible eastern edge that defines the extent of development.

8.38. The proposed scheme is entirely contained within a single field, respecting the historic field pattern and avoiding any breach into the more open countryside beyond. The inclusion of a landscape-led eastern boundary, comprising POS and layered planting, reinforces the settlement edge and establishes a permanent and defensible boundary in line with the PPG (2025).

8.39. The GGBS assigns Parcel HG6 an overall harm rating of high if released. However, the Study also notes that the western edge of the parcel, where the Site is located, is more enclosed and closely related to the settlement, with containment provided by existing development and mature vegetation. This part of the parcel is therefore noted as having lower harm than the parcel as a whole due to its containment and settlement relationship, and its release would not likely compromise the ability of adjacent Green Belt land to continue fulfilling its purposes.

8.40. The Site meets the definition of Grey Belt under the updated NPPF and PPG, and development of the Site would not be regarded as inappropriate, subject to compliance with paragraph 155. The coordinated approach between landscape and planning disciplines ensures that the proposed development is landscape-led, policy-compliant, and capable of being delivered without undermining the strategic function or integrity of the wider Green Belt.

8.41. This Green Belt Assessment should be read alongside the Planning Statement, which sets out the policy rationale and planning justification for the proposed development. Together, they provide a coordinated and consistent appraisal of the Site's performance against Green and Grey Belt purposes and its suitability for release.



Section 9: Summary and Conclusions

Summary

9.1. This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been prepared to accompany an outline planning application for residential development on land east of Wrotham Road, Meopham. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with GLVIA3 and relevant Technical Guidance Notes, and considers both landscape and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development.

9.2. The Site lies within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area, approximately 250m west of the Kent Downs NL, and adjacent to the Meopham Conservation Area. It comprises an arable field enclosed by mature vegetation, forming a transitional edge between settlement and countryside. The Site itself is not subject to any landscape designations.

9.3. The Proposed Development has been informed by a landscape-led design rationale, with the layout shaped around existing landscape features, as well as ecological, heritage, and biodiversity features. This includes a large area of informal POS along the eastern edge, retention and enhancement of boundary vegetation, and a network of green corridors and tree-lined streets. These measures are designed to respond to the management guidelines of the Meopham Downs LCA and align with Policy CS12 (Green Infrastructure) and Policy CS19 (Development and Design Principles) of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy.

9.4. At Year 1, the maximum level of landscape effect is judged to be Major/Moderate adverse at the Site level, reducing to Moderate/Minor adverse on the surrounding landscape. Effects on the setting of the Kent Downs NL are Negligible adverse due to the absence of intervisibility and the presence of intervening vegetation and landform. By Year 15, following the establishment of mitigation planting and green infrastructure, the maximum level of landscape effect reduces to Moderate adverse at the Site level, Minor/Negligible adverse on the wider landscape, and a Negligible Neutral effect on the setting of the Kent Downs NL.

9.5. Visual effects are greatest at Year 1 for users of PRoW NS252, where views across the Site result in Major/Moderate adverse effects. Users of PRoW NS173 experience Minor adverse effects due to filtered visibility, while users of PRoW NS253 experience Minor/Negligible adverse effects. By Year 15, the establishment of layered planting within the eastern POS and internal green corridors reduces visibility across all routes. Effects on PRoW NS252 reduce to Moderate/Minor adverse, while effects on NS173 and NS253 reduce to Negligible adverse.

9.6. Road users along Wrotham Road and Camer Park Road experience Moderate/Minor adverse effects at Year 1, reducing to Minor and Negligible adverse by Year 15 as frontage and boundary planting establishes, including the substantial area of POS along the eastern boundary. Users of Green Lane experience Negligible adverse effects throughout. Retail visitors to the Wrotham Road parade experience Minor adverse effects. Effects are contained to localised receptors only, with no wider impacts on the surrounding visual context.

9.7. The Site lies within the London Area Green Belt, and has been assessed from a landscape perspective in coordination with the Planning Statement. The Green Belt Assessment confirms that the Site makes no contribution to Purposes A, B or D, and a weak contribution



to Purpose C, reflecting its highly contained, transitional edge-of-settlement location. It has also been demonstrated that the Site meets the definition of Grey Belt under the updated NPPF and PPG, and that development here would not be regarded as inappropriate.

Conclusions

- 9.8. The LVIA demonstrates that the Proposed Development has been sensitively designed to respond to the Site's landscape and visual context. The scheme retains and reinforces landscape features, integrates a substantial proportion of open space (including a layered buffer along the eastern edge), and reflects the settlement pattern and character of the surrounding area.
- 9.9. The landscape strategy has been developed to align with published character guidance and local policy. The inclusion of native planting, sustainable drainage features, and PRoW integration ensures that the development contributes positively to landscape structure, ecological connectivity, and public access.
- 9.10. While some adverse effects are anticipated at the Site level and for adjacent receptors, these are moderated by the embedded mitigation and will reduce over time. The development does not alter the character or experience of the Kent Downs NL, nor does it affect the wider landscape beyond the immediate context.
- 9.11. Overall, the Proposed Development is considered to be acceptable in landscape and visual terms. The design responds appropriately to the Site's transitional character and delivers a well-integrated scheme that supports the long-term resilience and quality of the local landscape.



Appendix 1: LVI& Figures

Plan 1: Site Location and Context

Plan 2: Landscape Planning Policy and Designations

Plan 3: Topography

Plan 4: Published Landscape Character

Plan 5: Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Photoviewpoint Location Plan

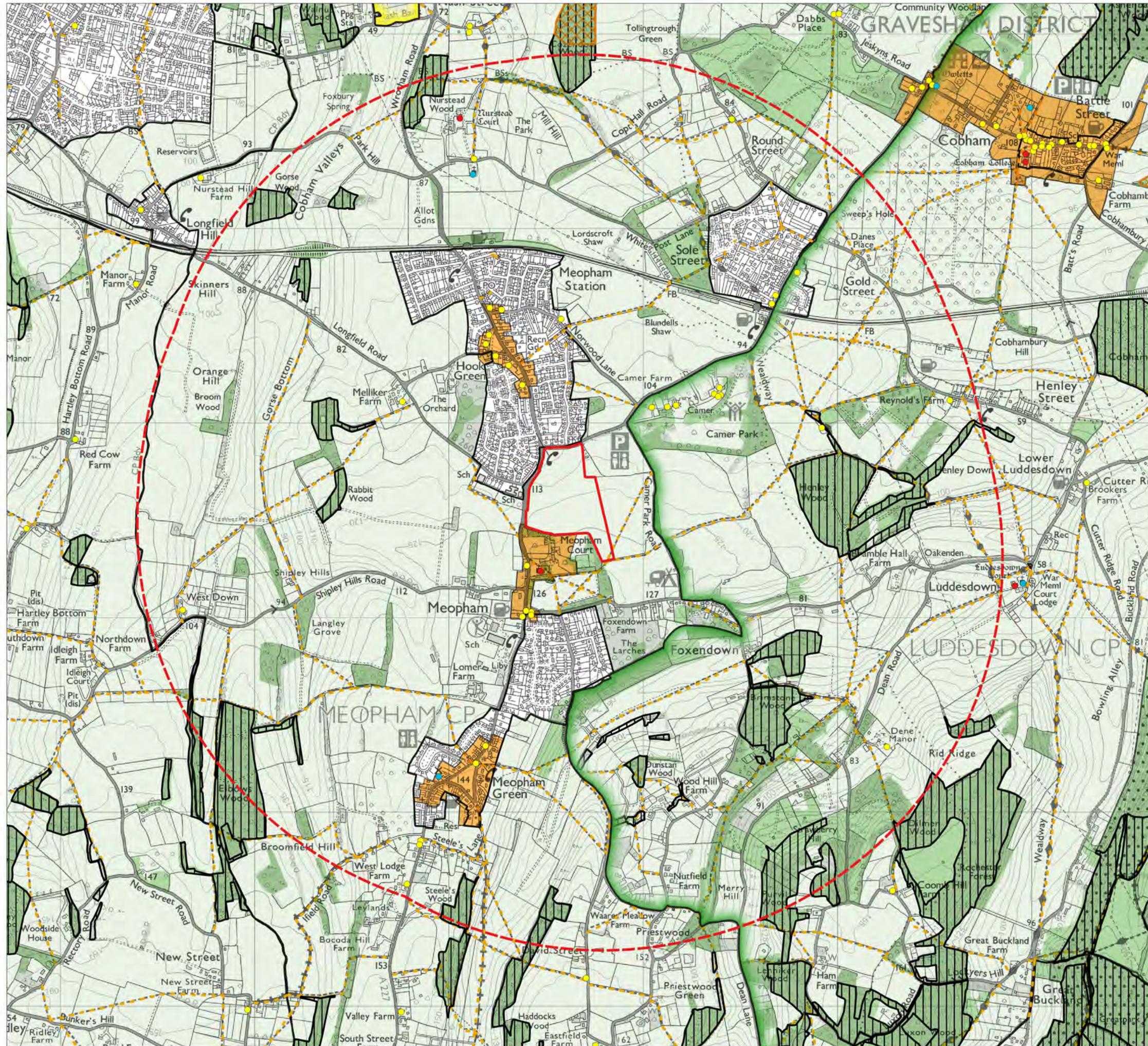
Plan 6: Illustrative Landscape Strategy



Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

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LEGEND

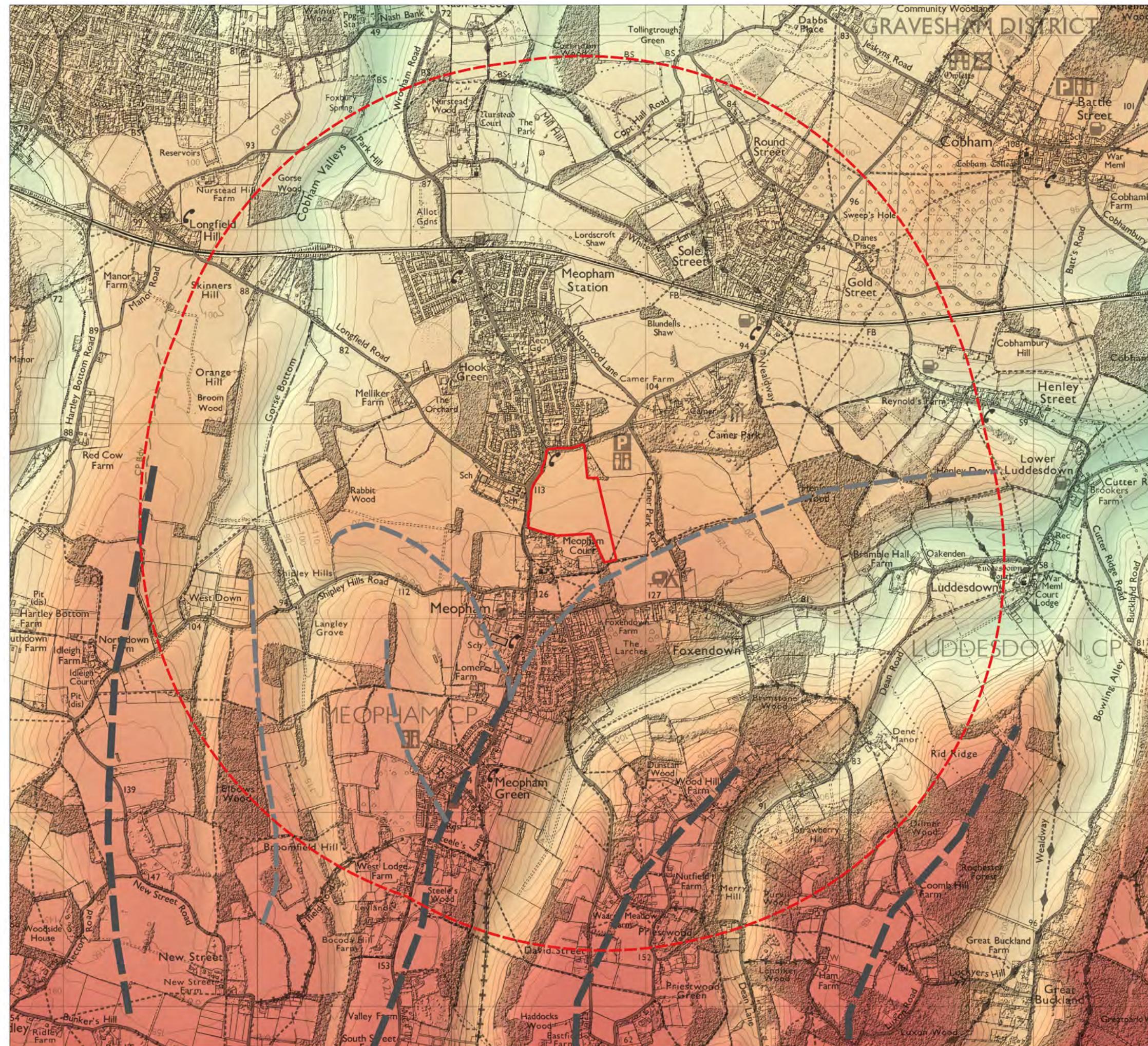
- Site Boundary
- 2km Study Area
- Ancient Woodland
- National Landscape
- CRoW Access Land
- Green Belt
- Public Right of Way
- Scheduled Monuments
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- National Forest Inventory
- Conservation Areas

Listed Buildings

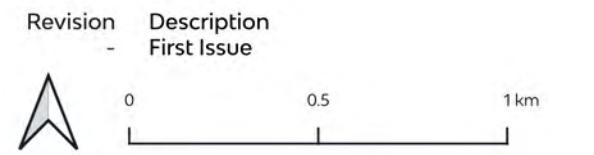
- I
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Revision	Description
- First Issue	
	0 0.5 1 km
Project	Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
Title	Plan 2: Landscape Planning Policy and Designations
Scale	1:20000 @ A3
Drawing No.	17741_P11
Date	SEPTEMBER 2025
Checked	IJ/
 Tyler Grange	

Head Office: 97 Icknield Street, Hockley, Birmingham, B18 6RU
 T: 0121 828 4043 E: hello@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk



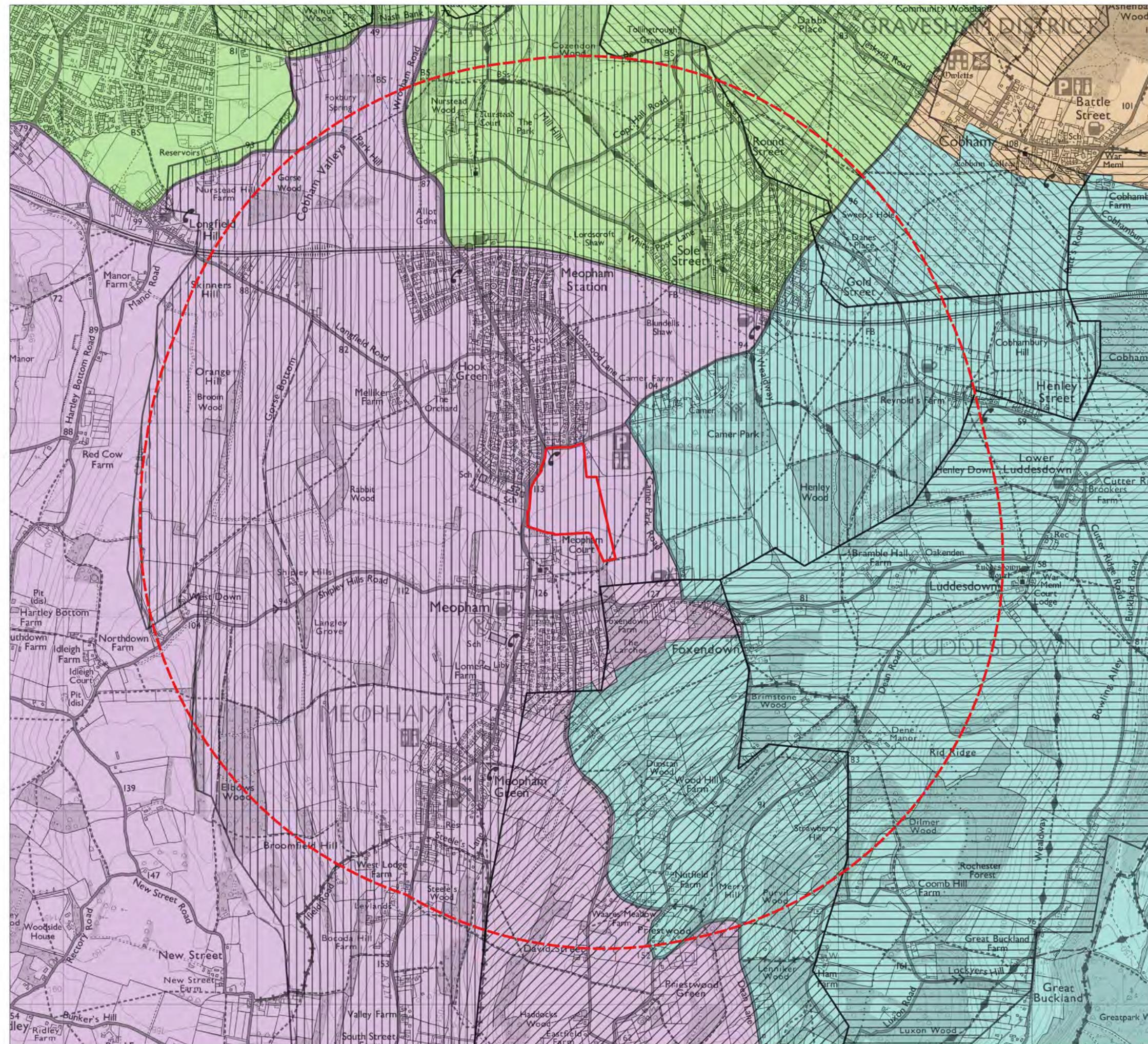
Source:
The plan has modelled using GIS computer software (QGIS) and LIDAR Composite DTM 2022 2m data.



Project: Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
 Title: Plan 3: Topography
 Scale: 1:20000 @ A3
 Drawing No.: 17741_P10
 Date: SEPTEMBER 2025
 Checked: IJ/



Head Office: 97 Icknield Street, Hockley, Birmingham, B18 6RU
 T: 0121 828 4043 E: hello@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk



LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- 2km Study Area

Kent Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment

LCA 1A: West Kent Downs

The Landscape Assessment of Kent

-  Ash Downs
-  Cobham-West Kent Downs
-  Luddesdown-West Kent Downs
-  Southfleet Arable Lands

Gravesend Landscape Character Assessment Areas

-  Harvel Wooded Downs
-  Istead Arable Farmlands
-  Luddesdown Downs
-  Meopham Downs

Revision - Description
First Issue



0.5 1 km

Project | Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham

Title Plan 4: Published Landscape Character

Scale 1:20000 @ A3

Drawing No. 17741_P12

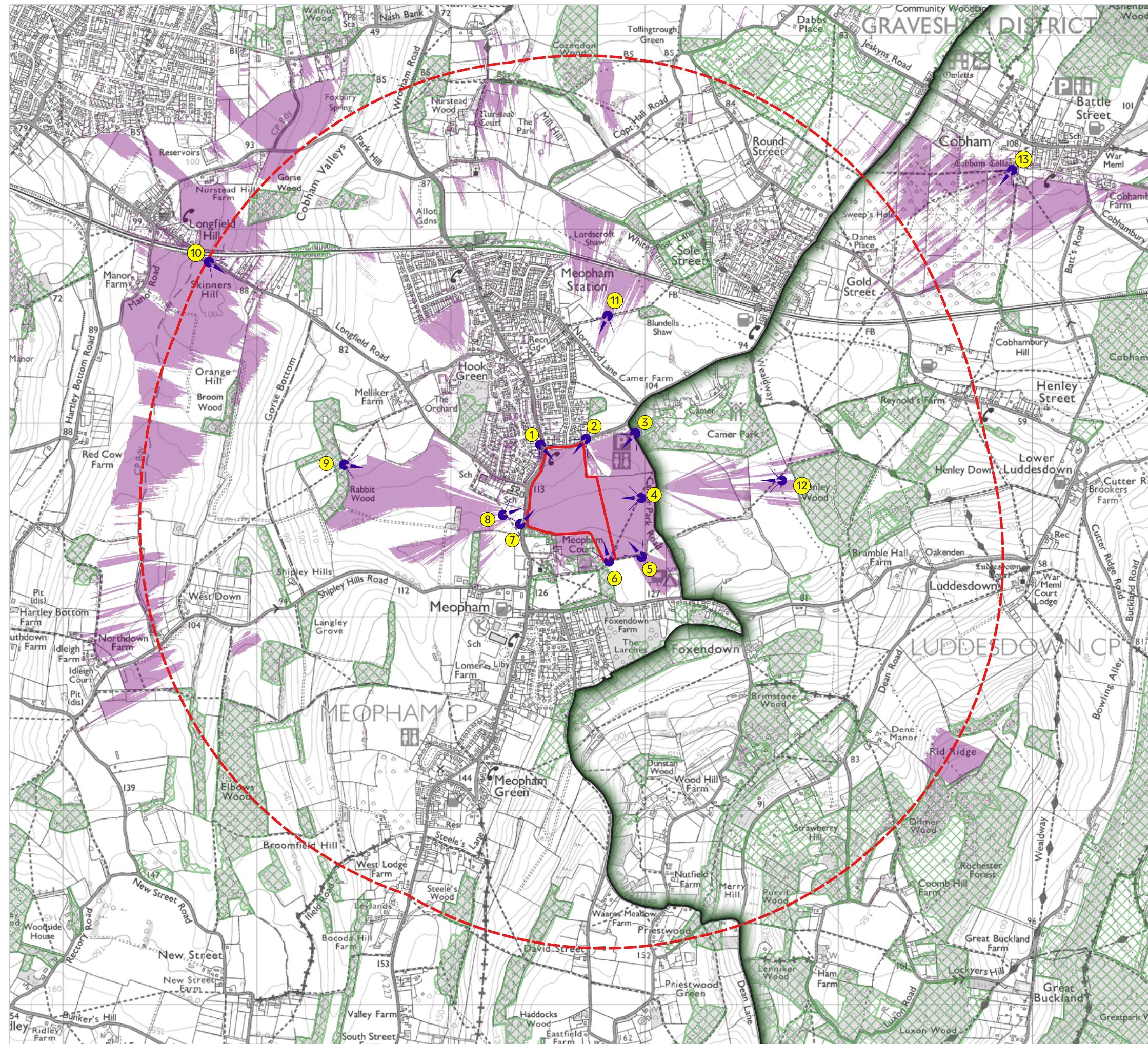
Date **SEPTEMBER 2025**

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LEGEND

- Site Boundary
- 2km Study Area
- Kent Downs National Landscape
- National Forest Inventory
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility
- Viewpoint locations 1-13

Notes:

The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) illustrates the extent to which the proposed built form on site (based on a maximum height of 10.5m above ground level) is potentially visible within a 2km radius (to a 1.6m high receptor). The ZTV has been modelled using GIS computer software (QGIS) and LIDAR Composite First Return DSM 2022 2m Data, and as such, takes into account existing built form and vegetation present within the landscape surrounding the site. Field verification is required to refine the accuracy of the ZTV.

Revision	Description
- First Issue	
0	0.5
1	1 km
Project	Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
Title	Plan 5: Zone of Theoretical Visibility & Viewpoint Locations
Scale	1:20000 @ A3
Drawing No.	17741_P08
Date	SEPTEMBER 2025
Checked	IJ/



Bridge across SUDS Basin
(bridge and SuDS to engineer's design and specification)



Pocket Green in development
with a mix of planting, seating
and natural play



On-street swales and rain gardens



Internal access roads will be planted with appropriate street trees, considering species diversity, resilience and eventual sizes for their location, in addition to pedestrian character and microclimate benefits.

Tree pits design to support adequate soil and growing conditions for establishment and future growth.

Front gardens to be defined by a suitable mix of native and non-natives shrubs, considering seasonal character and biodiversity values such as nectar-producing species



Key:

- Site boundary
- Existing boundary trees/woodland retained
- New native hedgerows
- New tree planting (Street trees)
- Boundary buffer planting - dense tree planting
- Community orchard with local orchard tree varieties
- Primary road
- Footpath
- Secondary road / Parking Court
- Shared surface / Home zone
- Gravel footpath within public green space
- Close mown path within public green space
- Species rich grass
- Private amenity lawn
- SuDS Basin with wetland meadow mix and marginal planting
- Natural play and seating elements within attenuation basin
- PROW
- Long distance view



Project

Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham

Drawing Title

Illustrative Landscape Strategy

Scale

A3: 1:2500

Drawing No

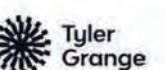
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Date

September 2025

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Appendix 2: LVI^A Methodology



Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

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Appendix 2: Methodology

- 1.1. The methodology and guidelines used in the preparation of this assessment have been developed from the following document:
 - An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England, Second Version, October 2014¹;
 - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), Third Edition, LI and IEMA, 2013;
 - Visual Representation of Development Proposals (TGN 06/19), LI, September 2019;
 - Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations (TGN 02/21), May 2021; and
 - Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (LITGN-2024-01), LI, August 2024.
- 1.2. To assist the reader in understanding the purpose for undertaking landscape assessment work, the definition of 'landscape' as defined by the European Landscape Convention (ELC, 2000) is set out below.

"Landscape' means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors."
- 1.3. In the context of this definition the assessment process seeks to consider the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual receptors in an objective and systematic manner whilst recognising the perceptual and therefore subjective response to the landscape. Whilst subjectivity can never be removed from the assessment process, by following a systematic and structured framework of assessment, a more robust assessment can be performed, and more rational and transparent conclusions drawn.
- 1.4. Furthermore, the LVIA process deals with the separate but interlinked issues of:
 - Landscape Character: The effects of the Proposed Development upon discrete character areas and/or character types comprising features possessing a particular quality or merit; and
 - Visual Context: The effects of the Proposed Development on views from visual receptors, and upon the amenity value of the views.

- 1.5. Landscape character is defined in the GLVIA3 as:

"A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse."

¹ Natural England (2014) [An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Second Edition](#)



1.6. Changes to the landscape character can arise as a result of:

- Changes to the fabric of the landscape including either the loss of key elements or introduction of new features which alter the distinct character of the landscape; and
- Changes which alter the way in which the landscape is perceived or appreciated.

1.7. Changes to views will occur where there is alteration of the view in terms of elements present and their distribution or dominance. Such changes may or may not have a significant effect on the visual amenity of identified visual receptors.

1.8. The assessment process is set out in further detail below but involves the following steps:

- Baseline appraisal of landscape, visual and planning policy baseline;
- Identification of potential receptors to change and their sensitivity;
- Assessment of potential effects on identified receptors;
- Proposed mitigation measures.

Baseline Appraisal

1.9. The baseline appraisal process is a crucial part of any assessment and includes:

- A desktop and on-site appraisal of the landscape features and topography of the area;
- The identification of relevant designations at national and local level;
- The review of relevant planning policy and evidence base;
- The review of relevant published landscape character assessments;
- An on-site review of the character of the Site and its surroundings;
- Field work to determine the extent to which the Site can be seen from the wider area, taking into account any significant vegetation or built form which restricts or limits the extent of visibility; and
- Identification of representative viewpoints and determination of likely visual receptors.

Identification of Receptors and Their Sensitivity

1.10. The desktop and on-site appraisals are used to identify potential receptors to change. Landscape receptors may be individual landscape elements, such as trees and hedgerows, or landscape character. In order to avoid double counting, this methodology addresses the loss or enhancement of landscape elements in the round when dealing with changes to landscape character. Visual receptors are always people. The sensitivity of the identified receptors to change are then assessed.



Identification of Receptors

- 1.11. Receptors are identified through the baseline analysis as set out above. This is used to identify areas of landscape character and visual receptors that may be affected by the Proposed Development. Receptors that are identified but then deemed to not be affected by the Proposed Development are scoped out of the assessment in accordance with the GLVIA3.
- 1.12. Visual receptors are identified and refined at a number of stages. An initial desktop, often including a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) model is used to identify potential visual receptors to change. These are verified on-site and any views which are unlikely to be affected are scoped out. Views representing receptor groups that may be affected are included as photosheets. Further scoping may be carried out to remove further visual receptor groups from the assessment. Effects on the remaining receptor groups are taken through the assessment.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.13. Landscape sensitivity is dependent on:
 - The susceptibility of the landscape to the type of change proposed; and
 - The value placed on the landscape.
- 1.14. As a general rule, those landscape resources which make a notable contribution to the character and cannot be replaced or substituted, or where the type of proposed development is inconsistent with the baseline situation will be of a high sensitivity. Those resources which are replaceable or contribute little to the overall character of the landscape, and where the type of proposals complement the baseline situation will be of low sensitivity.
- 1.15. Landscape susceptibility indicates the ability of a defined landscape receptor to accommodate the Proposed Development *“without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.”* (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 5.40). An example of how susceptibility can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in Table 1 below.
- 1.16. Landscape Value is *“the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society”* (GLVIA, 3rd edition, page 157). Box 5.1 (GLVIA 3rd version, page 84) sets out factors to be considered in the assessment of the value of designated landscapes, with TGN 02/21 relating to non-designated landscapes.
- 1.17. The value of the local landscape is assessed in Appendix 3.

Visual Sensitivity

- 1.18. The sensitivity of people (visual receptors) who may experience a change to views and visual amenity arising from the proposed development is a combination of the susceptibility of the receptor and the value of the view.



- 1.19. Susceptibility for visual receptors (people) relate to "the occupation or activity of people experiencing views at particular locations and the extent to which their attention may be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at a particular location." (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 6.32). An example of how susceptibility can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in Table 2 below.
- 1.20. In visual terms, value relates to that attached to views experienced by receptors (people). An example of how value can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided below for visual receptors in Table 2 below.
- 1.21. The assessment of sensitivity of receptors is included in Appendix 3.

Magnitude of Effects

- 1.22. The assessment of the magnitude of effects is undertaken in the knowledge of the scheme proposals and the existing baseline situation.
- 1.23. Scale of effect is assessed for both landscape and visual receptors and identifies the degree of change which would arise from the development. An example of how scale of effect can be described for landscape and visual receptors at each end of the continuum of small to large is provided in Tables 3 and 4 below.
- 1.24. Geographical extent of effect is assessed for both landscape and visual receptors and indicates the geographic area over which the effects will be felt. An example of how geographical extent can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in the tables below for both landscape and visual receptors.
- 1.25. Duration and reversibility of effect is assessed for all landscape and visual receptors and identifies the time period over which the change to the receptor would arise as a result of the development. An example of how duration and reversibility can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in the tables below for both landscape and visual receptors.
- 1.26. The above elements are combined using professional judgement to reach an assessment of the magnitude of effect.
- 1.27. It should be noted that visual effects are assessed on receptor groups and not viewpoints (TGN 24-01 6(7)), the latter of which are used as a visual aid to understand the nature of views experienced by receptor groups.

Level or Importance of Effects

- 1.28. The level of any landscape and visual effect is a function of the sensitivity of the affected landscape resources and visual receptors against the magnitude of change that they would experience. The GLVIA3 refers to this aspect as significance. However, this can cause confusion with what may be considered 'significant' when used in the context of an EIA. Therefore, the combination of the magnitude and sensitivity is referred to as the 'level of effect'.



1.29. Best practice guidelines stipulate that the level of any landscape or visual effect should be evaluated, both during the construction works and following completion of the development.

1.30. It is also important to note that the latest GLVIA (3rd Edition) places greater emphasis on professional judgement and the supporting narrative and less emphasis on a formulaic, mechanistic approach; a transparent assessment process should be evident.

1.31. Matrix 5 below indicates how the general relationship between sensitivity and magnitude of change determines the level of effect. The level of effect is rated within the range of Major – Major / Moderate – Moderate – Moderate / Minor – Minor – Negligible.

1.32. The assessment of magnitude and level/importance of effects is included in Appendices 8 and 9.

Nature of Effects

1.33. Landscape and visual effects are considered likely to arise during both the Construction and Operation phases of the Proposed Development. The changes will be judged to be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) in their overall consequences for identified receptors.

1.34. The following terms have been used to define landscape effects:

- Adverse: The Proposed Development may result in direct loss of physical landscape/townscape resources, weaken key characteristics or negatively affect the integrity of a landscape/townscape designation; and
- Beneficial: The Proposed Development may replace poor quality elements of the existing landscape/townscape or strengthen existing landscape/townscape characteristics.

1.35. Where there will be negligible or no change, the nature of effect can be considered 'Neutral'.

Mitigation Measures

1.36. The consideration of mitigation with the aim where possible, of avoiding, reducing or offsetting adverse landscape or visual effects is determined during the course of the assessment where this can be addressed through a suitably worded condition.

1.37. The evaluation of landscape and visual effects following mitigation, are known as residual effects.

Photography Methodology

1.38. Photographs were taken from selected viewpoints with a digital camera with an equivalent 50mm focal length lens at eye level (approximately 1600mm above ground). Photographs were stitched in Photoshop using the cylindrical method and presented on photosheets in accordance with the Landscape Institute TGN 06/19.

1.39. A total of 13 representative viewpoints have been chosen from locations surrounding the Site to enable the effects of the development to be assessed from all directions (see Plan 5 in Appendix 1 and Photoviewpoints 1-13 in Appendix 7).



Table 1: Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

	Landscape Value Characteristics and features as recognised in published landscape character assessments or policy (using the criteria set out in Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 for non-designated landscapes, and using Box 5.1 of the GLVA3 for designated landscapes).	Landscape Susceptibility The ability of a defined landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences	
<p>High</p>  <p>↑</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>Landscape makes very strong contribution to criterion</p> <p>Landscape displays higher than average level of conformity with criterion.</p> <p>Landscape displays typical level of conformity with value criterion.</p> <p>Landscape displays below average conformity with or makes below average contribution to value criterion.</p> <p>Landscape makes little or not contribution to or has little or no conformity with value criterion.</p>	<p>The landscape is such that changes in terms of the proposed development would be entirely at odds with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.</p> <p>The proposed development has a degree of consistency with the existing scale, pattern, grain, land use of the prevailing character, although mitigation may be appropriate to enhance assimilation.</p> <p>The proposed development is entirely consistent with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.</p>	<p>High</p>  <p>↑</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Low</p>



Table 2: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

	Value (attached to views)	Visual Susceptibility	
High	<p>Recognised national / Important Viewpoints, including those identified within and protected by policy.</p> <p>These viewpoints may be tourist destinations and marked on maps.</p> <p>Designed views, including from within historic landscapes.</p> <p>Users of nationally recognized routes e.g. National Cycle Network, National Trails.</p> <p>Land with public access (i.e. Open Access Land and National Trust Land).</p> <p>Locally important views/ views.</p> <p>Views from within locally designated landscapes e.g. Conservation Areas and local planning policy.</p> <p>Views from local routes identified on maps</p> <p>Permissive routes, not recognised by policy or identified on maps.</p> <p>No designations present</p>	<p>People visiting recognised viewpoints</p> <p>People using Public Rights of Way and Access Land</p> <p>Users of local roads where speeds are lower and where footways may be present</p> <p>People using recreational facilities or playing outdoor sports but for whom views are not the main focus.</p> <p>People travelling along major roads or using transport routes where the focus is not on the views and speeds are high</p> <p>People at places of work where attention is not on the views.</p>	High
Low			Low



Table 3: Magnitude of Landscape Effects

	Scale Identifies the degree of change which would arise from the development	Geographical Extent Indicates the geographic area over which the effects will be felt	Duration and Reversibility Identifies the time period over which the change to the receptor would arise as a result of the development.
Large	Highly noticeable change, affecting most key characteristics and dominating the experience of the Landscape/Townscape; introduction of highly conspicuous new development; and the baseline situation will be fundamentally changed.	Extensive, affecting the majority or all the character area / receptor.	Long-term or permanent, the change is expected to be in place for 10+ years and there may be no intention for it to be reversed or only partially reversed.
Medium	Partial alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline situation will be largely unchanged but noticeable despite discernible differences.	Partial, affecting a moderate amount of the character area / receptor.	Medium-term, the change is expected to be in place for 5-10 years and the effects may be reversed or partially reversed.
Small	Minor alteration to few elements, features qualities or characteristics resulting in a barely perceptible change.	Affecting the character area / receptor to a minor extent.	Short-term, the change is expected to be in place for 0-5 years and the effects are likely to be reversed.
Negligible / None	Negligible to no perceptible change	Affecting an extremely limited part of the character area/receptor.	

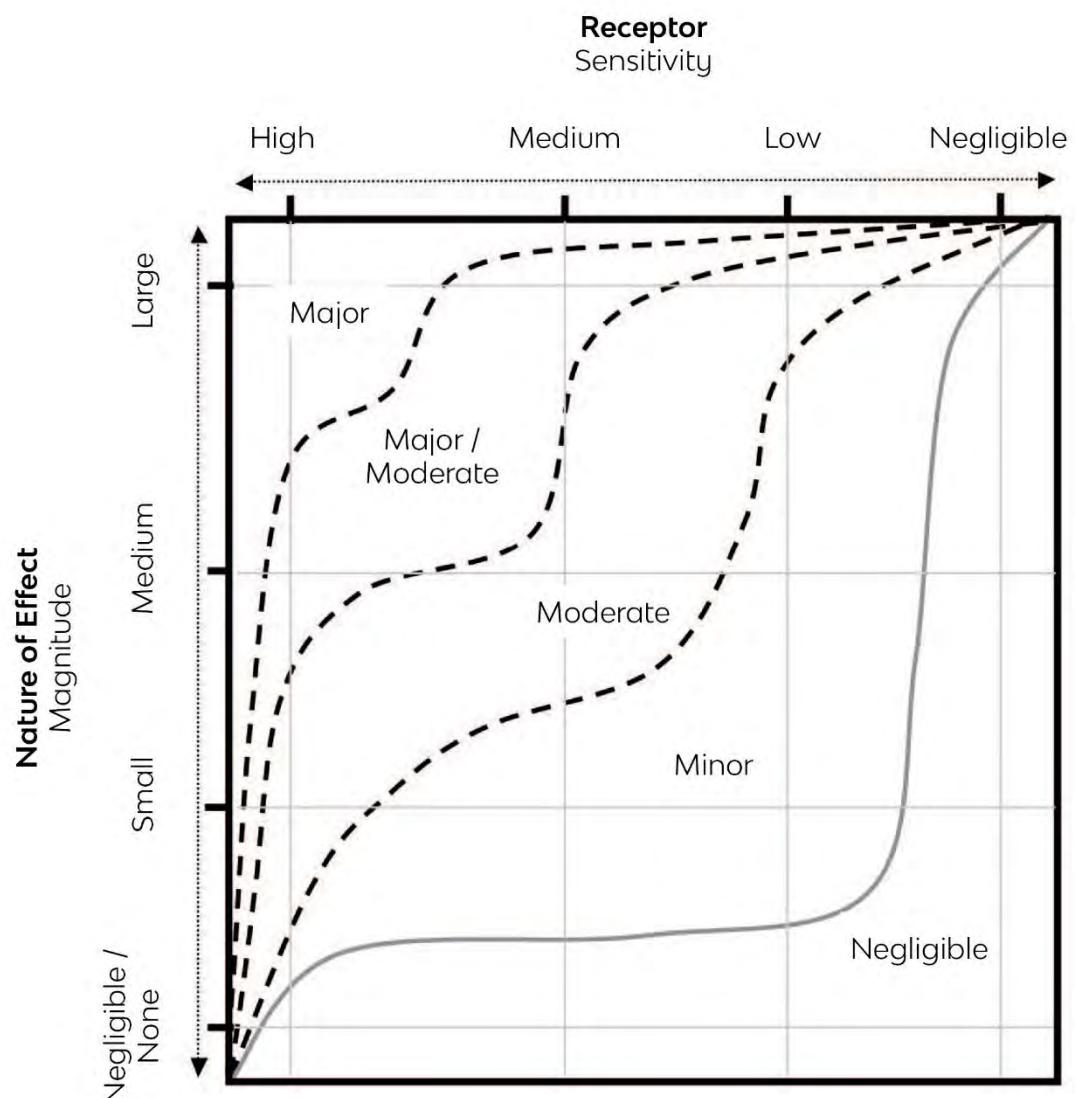


Table 4: Magnitude of Visual Effects

	Scale identifies the degree of change which would arise from the development	Geographical Extent Wide, and/or within close proximity, and/or open views.	Duration and Reversibility identifies the time period over which the change to the receptor would arise as a result of the development.
Large	Intensive/dominant or major alteration to key elements of the baseline view.	Changes perceived over wide area.	Long-term or permanent, the change is expected to be in place for 10+ years and there may be no intention for it to be reversed or only partially reversed.
Medium	Partial/noticeable or minor alteration to key elements of the baseline view.	Changes perceived by receptors over moderate to localised area.	Medium-term, the change is expected to be in place for 5-10 years and the effects may be reversed or partially reversed.
Small	Minor alteration to few elements of the baseline view.	Changes perceived by receptors over a localised or isolated extent e.g., a single viewpoint.	Short-term, the change is expected to be in place for 0-5 years and the effects are likely to be reversed.
Negligible / None	Barely perceptible or no change to the baseline view.		



Table 5: Landscape and Visual Significance Matrix (derived from IEMA 2011²)



² IEMA (2011) Special Report – The State of Environmental Impact Assessment Practice in the UK

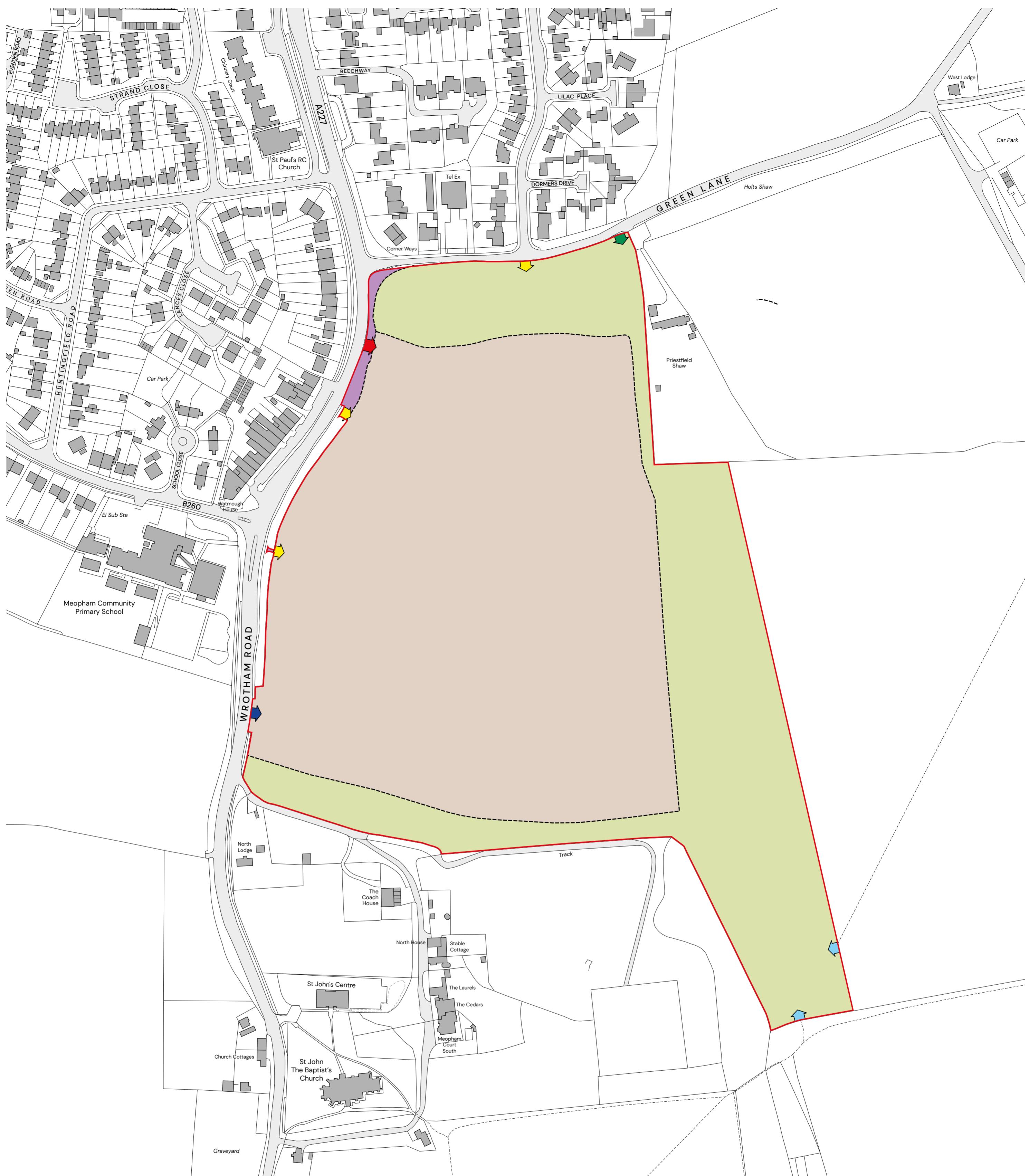


Appendix 3: Proposed Site Layouts



Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
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LEGEND

	Site boundary
LAND USE PARAMETERS	
	Indicative area of land required for the proposed access, not within the residential land use (subject to detailed design)
	Proposed residential development (Use Class C3) including roads, footpaths, private drives, amenity and incidental open space and other associated infrastructure, subject to detailed design
	Proposed open space including roads, footpaths, children's play provision, allotments, orchard, landscaping, footpaths, drainage and other associated infrastructure, subject to detailed design
ACCESS PARAMETERS	
➡	Proposed access/egress for all modes (subject to detailed design)
➡	Potential access/egress for cyclists and pedestrians only (subject to detailed design)
➡	Existing public right of way access retained
➡	Potential emergency access for emergency vehicles and access/egress for cyclists and pedestrians (subject to detailed design)
➡	Potential access/egress for pedestrians only (subject to detailed design)

Note: All features and areas are subject to detailed design and to a tolerance of 10m.

REV C: Amended access and red line boundary
REV B: Amended land use areas
REV A: Amended access and land use areas
FIRST ISSUE: For client comment

19/09/2025 CM
04/09/2025 CM
03/09/2025 CM
27/08/2025 CM

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DESIGN | ECONOMICS | ENVIRONMENT | HERITAGE | LAND & PROPERTY | PLANNING | TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

TEAM/DRAWN BY: CM | APPROVED BY: JW | DATE: 27/08/2025 | SCALE: 1:2000 @ A2 | DRAWING REF: P25-0485_DE_1006 | SHEET: 1 | REV: C | CLIENT: RICHBOROUGH

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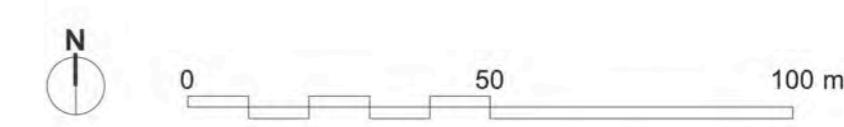


KEY

 SITE BOUNDARY	 EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY	★ OVERFLOW PARKING FOR VISITORS
█ PROPOSED ACCESS AND STREET CROSSING VIA WROTHAM ROAD	█ ACTIVE TRAVEL / CYCLE ROUTES	★ PARKING FOR ALLOTMENTS
█ RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	█ KEY FOOTPATHS	★ SHARED ACCESS LANE FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLES, PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS
█ PUBLIC OPEN SPACE	█ EXISTING TREES	★ PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE CONNECTION TO WROTHAM ROAD AND THE PARADE
█ PRIMARY STREET A	█ RETENTION OF EXISTING TREES, WITH CROWN LIFTING AND SELECTIVE MANAGEMENT TO IMPROVE THE VISUAL CONNECTION TO THE PARADE	★ EXISTING CROSSING POINT AT WROTHAM ROAD
█ PRIMARY STREET B	█ NEW STRUCTURAL PLANTING	★ SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE
█ SECONDARY STREET	█ NEW TREE PLANTING	★ PROPOSED TACTILE CROSSING AND FOOTWAY LINK
█ TERTIARY STREETS/SHARED SURFACE	█ COMMUNITY ORCHARD	
█ FOCAL SPACES	★ PROPOSED PLAY	
█ PRIVATE LANES	★ INFORMAL KICK ABOUT SPACE	
 "THE STREET" CONSERVATION AREA	█ EMERGENCY LANE	

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. GREEN COMMON PROVIDING AN EQUIPPED AREA OF PLAY;
2. SERIES OF THEMED GREENS PROVIDING INFORMAL PLAY AND RECREATION;
3. CAMER PARKLAND PROVIDING A LANDSCAPED SPACE FOR ECOLOGICAL AND BIO-DIVERSITY ENHANCEMENTS;
4. COMMUNITY USE SPACES IN THE FORM OF ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY ORCHARD;
5. KEY VIEWING CORRIDORS THROUGH DEVELOPMENT TO SURROUNDING CONTEXT;
6. STRUCTURAL PLANTING ALONG EASTERN BOUNDARY AND LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS TO CAMER PARKLAND;
7. WETLAND CORRIDOR PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS;
8. LOWER DENSITY, INFORMAL DEVELOPMENT EDGE TO THE SOUTH AND OUTWARD FACING FRONTAGES/ NATURAL SURVEILLANCE ON THE EASTERN DEVELOPMENT EDGE; AND
9. RETENTION OF EASTERN BOUNDARY TREE BELT WITH CROWN LIFTING AND SELECTIVE MANAGEMENT TO IMPROVE VISUAL CONNECTION TO THE PARADE.



Appendix 4: Planning Policy Extracts



Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
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Appendix 4: Landscape Planning Policy Extracts

1.1. This section sets out the relevant national and local landscape policy and evidence base as it pertains to landscape/visual matters and the Proposed Development.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹

1.2. The NPPF was updated in December 2024 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

1.3. Footnote 7 of the NPPF identifies areas and assets of particular importance to which the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply. These include:

- Habitat sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 187); and/or
- Designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty), National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast;
- Irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 72); and
- Areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

1.4. At Paragraph 8, criterion 'c' describes the '*environmental objective*' to "*protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy*".

1.5. Paragraph 20 states that strategic policies that should make sufficient provision for the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes, and green infrastructure and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation

1.6. The NPPF Paragraph 131 states that "*The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities*".

1.7. Paragraph 136 describes how trees make an "*important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change*". It states how "*new streets [should be] tree-lined*", and "*that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted*

¹ [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible". In respect to this matter, it is important to note that whilst this is an outline planning application, the requirements for tree lined streets have been considered at this stage.

- 1.8. Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment specifies how planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Given the Site's proximity to the Kent Downs National Landscape, the assessment has considered the potential for effects on its setting, including views to and from the designated area. This is in accordance with Paragraph 187 of the NPPF, which states that the protection and enhancement of "valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils" should be "in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan." It also notes that the "intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services" should be recognised.
- 1.9. Paragraph 188 further clarifies that there is a hierarchy to the importance and value attributed to landscapes, and that development plans should identify the quality of particular landscapes that are not subject to statutory protection. In respect of this, the LVIA has adopted the GLVIA3 Box 5.1 approach, guided by the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21, to assess landscape value in a structured and transparent manner.

Local Planning Policy

- 1.10. At local level, the Site lies within the administrative area of the Gravesham Borough Council Local Planning Authority (LPA).
- 1.11. The following text summarises the planning policies relevant to landscape and visual matters, as well as adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and other published guidance and studies that are of relevance.

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted September 2014)²

- 1.12. Policies within the Local Plan Core Strategy relevant to landscape and/or visual matters include:

Policy CS02: Scale and Distribution of Development

- *"The development strategy for the Borough is to retain and improve the existing stock of housing and suitable employment land and to make provision for the Borough's objectively assessed need for at least 6,170 new dwellings delivered at a variable rate as follows; at least 325 dwellings per year for 2011/2012 – 2018/2019, at least 363 dwellings per year for 2019/2020 – 2023/2024, at least 438 dwellings per year 2024/2025 – 2027/2028, and at least 186,490 sq m gross employment floorspace (within use classes B1, B2 and B8) during the plan period.*
- *Development will be distributed throughout the Borough as follows: around 3,890 new dwellings and around 186,490 sq m gross employment floorspace (within use classes B1, B2 and B8) will be provided in the Opportunity Areas at Northfleet Embankment and Swanscombe Peninsula East; Gravesend Riverside East and North East Gravesend; Ebbsfleet (Gravesham) and Gravesend Town Centre and on land at the Coldharbour*

² Available at: [Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy - September 2014 - Google Drive](#)

Road Key Site; around 2,280 new dwellings will be provided on other sites in the urban area and rural settlements inset from the Green Belt.

The strategy prioritises development in the urban area as a sustainable location for development. This will be achieved by:

- *Promoting regeneration by prioritising the redevelopment and recycling of underused, derelict and previously developed land in the urban area. This will be principally through redevelopment of former industrial sites in the Opportunity Areas of Northfleet Embankment and Swanscombe Peninsula East, and Gravesend Riverside East and North East Gravesend to create new residential neighbourhoods and employment areas;*
- *The continued development of a new sustainable mixed use community in the Ebbsfleet (Gravesham) Opportunity Area, which will include the provision of high quality employment floorspace;*
- *Revitalising the Gravesend Town Centre Opportunity Area as a focal point for retail, leisure, cultural and tourism facilities and small scale office provision to serve the needs of the Borough whilst preserving and enhancing its character as a riverside heritage town; and*
- *Bringing forward a range of suitable sites in other parts of the urban area for residential and employment*
- *Development, including Land at Coldharbour Road Key Site.*
- *In the rural area, development will be supported within those rural settlements inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those settlements, including affordable housing and proposals to maintain and diversify the rural economy, will be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in this plan. The extent of the Green Belt is defined on the Policies Map. A strategic Green Belt boundary review will be undertaken to identify additional land to meet the housing needs up to 2028 and to safeguard areas of land to meet development needs beyond the plan period, while maintaining the national and local planning purposes of the Green Belt.”*

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 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."*

Kent County Council Supplementary Guidance³

- 1.13. Gravesham Borough Council have adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) produced by Kent County Council. The aim of the SPG is to supplement the policies and proposals of the adopted development plans so they can be better understood and effectively applied.
- 1.14. Section 2.10 of the SPG relates to Opportunities to Enhance Landscape Character states as follows:

"Development should, where possible, provide opportunities to enhance landscape character. For example by:

- 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."*

Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan⁴

- 1.15. The first Kent Downs AONB Management Plan was adopted in April 2004. The third edition of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2021 - 2026 sets out the vision, aims and policies for the management, conservation and enhancement of the AONB and its settings.
- 1.16. Section SD8 of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan states as follows:

³ [Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2006](#)

⁴ [The-Kent-Downs-AONB-Management-Plan-2021-2026-Adopted.pdf](#)

"Ensure proposals, projects and programmes do not negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the Kent Downs AONB."

Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study⁵

- 1.17. The Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study was issued on the 23rd of March 2016. The purpose of this assessment is to provide an assessment of the landscape and visual sensitivities within assessment parcels within Gravesham Borough.
- 1.18. Paragraph 1.2 AND 1.3 of the Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study states as follows:

"The role of the study is not to address potential capacity in terms of the quantity of built development, as this would be dependent on a much wider range of considerations other than landscape and visual effects – such as highways impact, ecological effects, archaeological constraints and other environmental and sustainability factors.

It is intended that the assessment will help to inform:

- Strategic decisions on the direction of future growth in the Borough;
- The allocation of sites in the updated Strategic Land Availability Assessment;
- The selection of sites for allocation in the forthcoming Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document; and
- Future Development Management decisions.

⁵ [Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Studyw.pdf](#)

Appendix 5: Landscape Character Area Extracts



Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

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The Landscape Assessment of Kent

October 2004





A mix of deep, dry valleys with wooded ridges and broad plateau tops, containing a mix of small villages and larger 20th century settlement, this landscape extends broadly from the A20 to the A227 in the east, and north past Horton Wood to the London to Chatham railway line, incorporating the settlements of Meopham and Longfield.

The land use is a mix of grassland with extensive arable farmland, notably on the plateau tops where larger machinery can be used and the hedgerows have been removed. Along the winding lane network the bushy hedgerows are largely intact which, with the remaining woodlands, helps retain the sense of this being an enclosed Downland landscape.

The fragmented pattern of small woodlands includes Horton Wood near Fawkham Green, an ancient woodland developed on the Clay-with-flints above the dry valley floor. Hartley Wood is also an ancient mixed broadleaf woodland, formally managed as coppice with standards and with old woodbanks.

Amongst this pattern of undulating landform and enclosing trees and hedgerows are contained many scattered farmsteads, villages and larger, more recent settlements such as New Ash Green and Hartley. Further away from the main roads such as the A20, in narrow wooded lanes, such as Scratcher's Lane, the effects of the concentration of this settlement can be seen in the erosion of the lane edges and the presence of scattered litter in the woodlands.

At New Ash Green, although the settlement is well-screened by the remaining woodland, the intensity of traffic has led to carriageway problems and pedestrian erosion of woodland edges. The village centre itself is developing a muddled appearance with some of the distinctive exposed aggregate surfacing replaced with bland concrete pavers. The village green too is disjointed by unsympathetic choices of brick.

Between New Ash Green and Longfield the mix of housing styles and eroded hedgerows, fences and lanes gives a more chaotic element to the landscape. From New Ash Green to Hartley and Longfield the lanes have become more degraded, being used for short-cuts. Occasional unsightly uses, such as car-breakers, are frequent but incongruous elements in the landscape.

In contrast to these 20th century settlements, the remaining historic villages are dispersed on the flat dip slope of the Downs, cut by its dry valleys. Fairseat is an attractive flint, brick and clapboard village. Stansted too, which is further down the same dry valley, is in a dramatic wooded setting enclosed by the steeply sloping valley sides.

Frequently, the winding lanes are closely wooded or enclosed with high bushy hedgerows containing Old Man's Beard, and a profusion of holly and hazel, hawthorn and field maple.

Further east, Meopham Green clusters around an historic core, a pre-Domesday settlement, birth-place of an Archbishop of Canterbury and the famous John Tradescant, traveller and collector, notably of plants overseas. The land use is a mix of grazing and arable fields, which after cultivation exposes the flinty soils. The fields are framed with attractive shaws and hangers of beech on the low ridge tops. As the land rises towards the scarp, nearer to the A20, the landscape flattens and opens out and there are occasional tremendous views north to the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge.

[next >>](#)

ASH DOWNS

PHOTOGRAPH



CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

A pleasant mix of deep, dry pastoral valleys enclosed by wooded ridges and species rich hedgerows, with broad plateau tops beyond.
Small valley-bottom villages and large 20th century settlements on plateau.
A winding network of narrow, historic lanes often eroded by traffic

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition

The pattern of landscape elements is coherent and in most cases reflects the underlying landform. Some visual detractors such as commercial buildings and unsympathetic land uses intrude into some of the views. The high ecological value of the area in general, supported by the wooded network on ridges and shaws, is reduced by the intensity of arable cultivations on the plateau. The condition of heritage features such as field boundaries and vernacular buildings is good, however, much recent isolated development using unsympathetic materials has a negative impact. Overall, the area is considered to be in good condition.

CONTEXT

Regional: North West Kent

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	<u>CONSERVE</u>
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE

low moderate high

Sensitivity

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Condition

Good.

Pattern of elements: Coherent.
Detracting features: Some.
Visual Unity: Coherent.
Cultural integrity: Good.
Ecological integrity: Moderate.
Functional Integrity: Strong.

Sensitivity

High.

The characteristic features of this landscape are strongly represented and portray both an historic and ancient time-depth. Recent development of urban areas has a localised effect; the area retains local distinctiveness and a strong sense of continuity. The existing highways and the evidence of vernacular materials (such as flint) in historic buildings, in particular, enhance the sense of place. Visibility is moderate due to the intermittent tree cover. The area is considered to be of high sensitivity.

Sensitivity

High.

Distinctiveness: Characteristic.
Continuity: Ancient.
Sense of Place: Strong.
Landform: Apparent.
Extent of tree cover: Intermittent.
Visibility: Moderate.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS

Conserve the small scale of the agricultural use of the valley slopes, retaining hedged enclosure and applying long-term management plans for this purpose.
Conserve the wooded edge to the arable plateau which encloses the landscape and contains the wider views.
Conserve and enhance the use of vernacular materials and the scale of historic built form.
Resist the intrusion of large-scale buildings or groups of buildings into the view.
Conserve the settlement pattern with isolated, small villages on valley bottoms and hamlets on the plateau.
Conserve the dominance of the broadleaf woodland in the landscape.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

CONSERVE.

Conserve broadleaf woodland cover
Conserve small scale field pattern on valley sides
Conserve wooded edges to arable plateau
Conserve the impact of vernacular materials and the historic scale of built form
Conserve the enclosure of settlements within wooded areas
Conserve original highway characteristics

[previous <<](#)

Gravesend Landscape Character Assessment

May 2009



JACOBSTM

Gravesend
Borough Council



8. Meopham Downs



Landscape Description

Meopham Downs is a large character area, stretching from the centre to the south of Gravesham Borough along the eastern edge of Sevenoaks District.

The majority of the geology comprises Upper Chalk and a wide band of Clay with Flint, stretching from north to south. An area of Blackheath / Oldhaven Beds sits beneath the large village of Meopham and an area of Claygate Beds sits west of the neighbouring village Meopham Green. Soils across the character area are silty, with loam to clay across high areas.

The topography is gently undulating with clear views across the immediate landscape and occasional wider views from the main road towards the residential settlements of Istead Rise and New Barn. The dominant land use is agricultural, with a mixture of grazed pasture and arable use. Small clumps of woodland, neglected orchards and commercial horticulture exist in parts. There is a presence of horse related activity scattered throughout the landscape.

Field shape and size differs, with a neat pattern of small square fields in the south and broader irregular shaped fields to the north. Field boundaries are distinctly formed by native hedgerows, with hedgerow trees.



The large village of Meopham is located to the north of the area, with Meopham Green located at the centre of the area and Culverstone Green to the far south. Traditional architecture surrounds village greens in both Meopham and Meopham Green, providing a strong sense of place and local vernacular. All three settlements comprise dense clusters of buildings that have formed along the A227 that runs from north to south and links all three villages. In addition the small recent settlement of South Street is located to the north-east.

Small traditional clusters of isolated farmsteads can be found to the east and west. Small traditional Victorian red brick architecture and elements of flint are common, reflecting their locality within the Kent landscape. Meopham Windmill, located along Wrotham Road, provides a unique and

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating topography with a mixture of arable and pasture farmland
- Neat pattern of small square fields in the south
- Broader irregular shaped fields to the north
- Narrow lanes and roads lined with hedgerows
- Three large settlements located along A227 running east and west
- Traditional architecture surrounding village greens provide local vernacular



traditional attraction within the area. Overhead wires run across the landscape near the small settlement of Henley Street.

The A227 is the areas largest highway and acts as a busy link between the north and south. Narrower, winding, hedge lined roads and lanes run east and west from the A227 into the adjacent landscape.



Condition: Good



The pattern of landscape elements is coherent, with few visual detractors. Established hedgerows and small woodland clumps limit the visual impact of detractors. Hedgerows are native and in good condition, providing ecological corridors along field boundaries. Woodland clumps are mostly native and mature and vary in condition, whilst the remains of orchards are in poor condition. In general the ecological integrity of the area varies.

Both Meopham and Meopham Green have Conservation Areas at their centres with traditional buildings and village greens. In

general the uses of the landscape are traditional, however the quality of the landscape and land development to the south is of a lower quality than that to the north. Taking into consideration the traditional architecture, land use, coherent pattern of elements and the lack of visual detractors the condition of the landscape can be assessed as being good.

Sensitivity: Moderate

The key characteristic elements of the landscape are distinct, providing coherency and a strong sense of place within the landscape. Although woodland is restricted to small woodland clumps, hedgerows that run along field boundaries are historic and distinct. Both the settlements of Meopham and Meopham Green have distinct traditional village centres. In addition, traditional vernacular architecture can be found scattered across the landscape. The other two remaining settlements have more recent architecture that is less in keeping with the local vernacular. Strength of character and visibility are moderate, providing a moderate sensitivity overall.



Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

The key landscape elements characteristic of the Meopham Downs should be conserved and reinforced.

- Conserve and reinforce the traditional landscape structure and where necessary introduce new elements they should respect and enhance the pattern.
- Conserve characteristic narrow winding lanes and dense native hedgerows.

- Conserve traditional character of built environment by drawing on traditional building materials and techniques for new development.
- Reinforce village identity, keeping villages distinct and separate from one another.
- Reinforce the enclosure of settlements within wooded areas.
- Conserve and reinforce broadleaf woodland cover and wooded edges to arable plateau.
- Encourage the use of local produce to support traditional land uses such as orchards.
- Explore new horticultural land uses.
- Conserve and reinforce agricultural land use.

Condition	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high

Sensitivity

Appendix 6: Sensitivity of Receptors Tables



Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

17741_R01a_September 2025_MB_AW

Table A6.1: Value of Landscape Receptors

Criterion from TGN 02/21	Wider Study Area (Meopham Downs LCA)	The Site
Natural heritage <i>Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape</i>	<p>The local landscape comprises gently undulating topography with a mix of arable and pasture farmland. Hedgerows, tree-lined lanes, and traditional village architecture contribute to a coherent rural character outside of larger settlement areas.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>The Site comprises a medium-sized arable field with limited ecological features, as confirmed in the EclA. Features a tree belt along the western boundary and a thicket of trees and scrub along the northern boundary. An internal hedgerow in the eastern part of the Site is in the early stages of establishment and currently offers limited ecological or visual interest.</p> <p>Medium to Low</p>
Cultural heritage <i>Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape</i>	<p>The landscape to the north and west is influenced by modern infrastructure and development, including A-roads and retail units. To the east, the Kent Downs National Landscape (NL) extends across rural countryside, including the non-designated Camer Park Reserve. The Meopham Downs LCA highlights the presence of Conservation Areas at Meopham and Meopham Green, with traditional buildings and village greens contributing to a strong sense of place.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>The Site contains no designated heritage assets (as confirmed in the Heritage Assessment). However, the southern boundary abuts the Meopham Conservation Area. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment confirms there are no ancient or veteran trees within or adjacent to the Site. The Kent Downs NL boundary lies approximately 250m to the east.</p> <p>Medium to Low</p>



Criterion from TGN 02/21	Wider Study Area (Meopham Downs LCA)	The Site
Landscape condition <i>Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure</i>	<p>The Meopham Downs LCA describes the landscape as being in generally good condition, with coherent field patterns, intact hedgerows, and few visual detractors. Traditional village greens and vernacular architecture contribute to its cultural integrity.</p> <p>High</p>	<p>The Site is intensively farmed with limited internal structure. Landscape features are concentrated at the periphery. Field margins are narrow (1-2m) and show limited evidence of active management. The AIA identifies several individual trees and hedgerows of moderate to low quality.</p> <p>Medium to Low</p>
Associations <i>Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts</i>	<p>The Meopham Downs LCA does not identify nationally significant cultural associations. However, it does highlight features of local cultural interest within the wider LCA.</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>There are no known cultural associations with the Site.</p> <p>Low</p>
Distinctiveness <i>Landscape that has a strong sense of identity</i>	<p>The Meopham Downs LCA describes the landscape as having a recognisable rural character with locally distinctive features such as hedgerows, small woodland clumps, and traditional village greens. These contribute to a coherent sense of place, though the landscape is not considered rare or exceptional in the wider context.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>The Site contains few distinctive features. The tree belt along the western boundary contributes to the setting of the Wrotham Road retail parade but does not confer a strong sense of place.</p> <p>Medium to Low</p>
Recreation Value <i>Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important</i>	<p>Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are present throughout the Study Area, particularly near the Kent Downs NL and Camer Park Reserve. These routes offer opportunities for walking and appreciation of the rural landscape.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>The Site has no formal public access, except for a short 20m section of PRoW (NS252) crossing the southeastern corner. This provides limited recreational value.</p> <p>Low</p>



Criterion from TGN 02/21	Wider Study Area (Meopham Downs LCA)	The Site
Perceptual (Scenic) <i>Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense</i>	<p>The western and northern parts of the Study Area are influenced by residential and retail development. However, the rolling landform and vegetation help to screen built form. Scenic quality improves in the eastern Study Area within the Kent Downs NL.</p> <p>Medium to High</p>	<p>The Site is visually influenced by nearby settlement and road infrastructure. It lacks scenic features and is typical of a working agricultural landscape. Boundary vegetation provides some visual interest but does not elevate the Site's scenic value.</p> <p>Medium to Low</p>
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity) <i>Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies</i>	<p>The published LCA notes limited tranquillity in the western parts of the Study Area due to infrastructure. In contrast, the Kent Downs NL to the east offers a more tranquil and rural experience.</p> <p>Medium to High</p>	<p>The Site lacks perceptual qualities of wildness or tranquillity due to its proximity to roads and built development. Boundary vegetation provides some screening but does not significantly enhance perceptual value.</p> <p>Medium to Low</p>
Functional <i>Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape</i>	<p>The Kent Downs NL to the east performs an ecological and landscape function. Elsewhere, the landscape is more fragmented and influenced by development.</p> <p>Medium to High</p>	<p>The Site functions as arable farmland and does not perform any notable ecological or hydrological function beyond this.</p> <p>Medium to Low</p>
Summary Analysis	Medium to High	Medium to Low



Table A6.2: Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

Landscape Receptor	Value of the Receptor	Susceptibility of the Receptor	Sensitivity of the Receptor
Character of the Site	Medium to Low	<p>The Site comprises a single arable field with limited internal landscape features due to intensive agricultural use. Higher-quality features are concentrated along the boundaries, including mature tree lines and hedgerows. While the Site is influenced by surrounding settlement and infrastructure, boundary vegetation provides a degree of containment. The proposed development would not be uncharacteristic of the adjacent settlement pattern, and the layout seeks to retain landscape features.</p> <p>Medium</p>	Medium
Landscape Character of the wider Study Area	Medium to High	<p>The surrounding landscape includes post-war residential and retail development, particularly to the north and west, alongside infrastructure such as the A227. The type of development proposed reflects the existing settlement pattern and prioritises the retention of boundary vegetation and other landscape features of value.</p> <p>This wider Study Area includes the Meopham Downs LCA, which is assessed as having good condition and moderate sensitivity. The proposed development lies at the western edge of this character area. The landscape to the east opens up to become more rural, with a large portion of the Study Area located within the Kent Downs National Landscape. To the south, the low density dwellings of Meopham Court with well vegetated gardens provide a softer transition from urban to rural.</p> <p>Medium to High</p>	Medium to High



Landscape Receptor	Value of the Receptor	Susceptibility of the Receptor	Sensitivity of the Receptor
Setting of the Kent Downs National Landscape (KDNL)	High	<p>The Site lies approximately 250m west of the KDNL boundary. A strong tree line along Camer Park Road and an internal hedgerow along a historic field boundary contribute to a sense of physical and visual separation. The intervening land includes arable fields and a single residential property, further reducing direct connectivity. Settlement to the north of Green Lane is also located near the KDNL boundary, reinforcing the transitional character of this edge.</p> <p>High</p>	High

Table A6.3: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Visual Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	Value of the Receptor	Susceptibility of the Receptor	Sensitivity of the Receptor
Users of PRoW NS173 (west of Camer Park Road) - <i>Representative Photoviewpoint 5</i>	<p>The receptor is a pedestrian using a PRoW, which provides access to the rural landscape and is likely to be used for recreational walking. While the route is not nationally designated, it is publicly accessible and contributes to the local experience of the countryside..</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Users of PRoW are likely engaged in some form of recreational walking. The activity is likely to involve a high level of attention to the surrounding landscape and visual amenity.</p> <p>High</p>	High to Medium
Users of PRoW NS252 - <i>Representative Photoviewpoint 4 and 6</i>	<p>The receptor is a pedestrian using a PRoW, which provides access to the rural landscape and is likely to be used for recreational walking. While the route is not nationally designated, it is publicly accessible and contributes to the local experience of the countryside.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Users of PRoW are likely engaged in some form of recreational walking. The activity is likely to involve a high level of attention to the surrounding landscape and visual amenity.</p> <p>High</p>	High to Medium



Visual Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	Value of the Receptor	Susceptibility of the Receptor	Sensitivity of the Receptor
Users of PRoW NS253 - <i>Representative Photoviewpoint 8</i>	<p>The receptor is a pedestrian using a PRoW, which provides access to the rural landscape and is likely to be used for recreational walking. While the route is not nationally designated, it is publicly accessible and contributes to the local experience of the countryside.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Users of PRoW are likely engaged in some form of recreational walking. The activity is likely to involve a high level of attention to the surrounding landscape and visual amenity.</p> <p>High</p>	High to Medium
Users of A227 Wrotham Road - <i>Representative Photoviewpoint 1 and 7</i>	<p>The receptor is a driver travelling along an A road, where views are experienced intermittently and are incidental to the primary activity of travel. The route is undesignated and not recognised for scenic or recreational value.</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>The receptor is a driver travelling along an A road, where the primary activity is movement at speed and attention is focused on traffic and navigation. The route is not designed for landscape appreciation and views are typically experienced peripherally.</p> <p>Low</p>	Low
Users of Green Lane and Tradescant Drive - <i>Representative Photoviewpoint 2</i>	<p>The receptor is a driver travelling along a B road, where views are experienced intermittently and are incidental to the primary activity of travel. The route is undesignated and not recognised for scenic or recreational value.</p> <p>Medium to Low</p>	<p>The receptor is a driver travelling along a B road, where speeds are generally lower and the route passes through a more rural setting. While the primary activity remains movement, there is greater opportunity for incidental appreciation of the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>Medium to Low</p>	Medium to Low
Users of Camer Park Road - <i>Representative Photoviewpoint 3</i>	<p>The receptor is a driver travelling along a B road, where views are experienced intermittently and are incidental to the primary activity of travel. The route is undesignated and not recognised for scenic or recreational value.</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>The receptor is a driver travelling along a B road, where speeds are generally lower and the route passes through a more rural setting. While the primary activity remains movement, there is greater opportunity for incidental appreciation of the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>Medium</p>	Medium to Low



Visual Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	Value of the Receptor	Susceptibility of the Receptor	Sensitivity of the Receptor
Retail Visitors to Wrotham Road parade of shops	These comprise commercial premises serving local needs, located at the settlement edge and adjacent to a primary road Low	The receptor is a retail user within existing settlement, engaged in commercial or transactional activity. Attention is generally focused on the immediate environment and task at hand, rather than the wider landscape. Low	Low
Residents associated with Wrotham Road	The receptor is a private resident located within existing settlement. Residential receptors in settlement are typically considered to be of medium value, as views contribute to the enjoyment of the home environment and are locally appreciated in a more urbanised setting.. Medium	Views from ground storey windows where the principle rooms of the house are likely to be located, where the appreciation of the view is a focus from the windows. High	High to Medium
Residents associated with Tradescant Drive	The receptor is a private resident located within existing settlement. Residential receptors in settlement are typically considered to be of medium value, as views contribute to the enjoyment of the home environment and are locally appreciated in a more urbanised setting. Medium	Views from ground storey windows where the principle rooms of the house are likely to be located, where the appreciation of the view is a focus from the windows. High	High to Medium
Residents associated with Meopham Court	The receptor is a private resident located outside of settlement. Residential receptors are typically considered to be of high value, as views contribute to the enjoyment of the home environment and are locally appreciated. High	Views from ground storey windows where the principle rooms of the house are likely to be located, where the appreciation of the view is a focus from the windows. High	High



Visual Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	Value of the Receptor	Susceptibility of the Receptor	Sensitivity of the Receptor
Residents associated with Priestfield Shaw	<p>The receptor is a private resident located within existing settlement. Residential receptors in settlement are typically considered to be of medium value, as views contribute to the enjoyment of the home environment and are locally appreciated in a more urbanised setting.</p> <p>Medium</p>	<p>Views from ground storey windows where the principle rooms of the house are likely to be located, where the appreciation of the view is a focus from the windows.</p> <p>High</p>	High to Medium



Appendix 7: Photoviewpoint Sheets



Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

17741_R01a_September 2025_MB_AW



View from Wrotham Road to the north-west of the Site, looking south-east towards the Site.



Monken Estate, Benenden, Canterbury, CT7 7EX

T: 01226 804045 E: landscape@tylergrange.co.uk W: www.tylergrange.co.uk

When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm
Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date: 19.03.25
GPS Number: 564472, 166881
Direction of View: South

Field of View: 90 degrees
Projection: Cylindrical
Camera: Canon EOS 6D Mark II
Lens: 50mm
Distance to site: 33m
Visibility: Good

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Image Enlargement: 96%
Page Size: A1 width

Project No: 17741
Client: IJ/MB
Status: Planning
Date: 15/04/25
Project: Land East of Wrotham Rd, Meopham
Title: Viewpoint 1



View from Green Lane, adjacent to the north-eastern access point into the Site, looking south-west across the Site.



Monken Estate, Bencombe, Cirencester, GL7 7EX

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0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm
Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date: 19.03.25

GPS Number: 564690, 166902

Direction of View: South West

Field of View 90 degrees

Camera: Canon EOS 6D Mark II

Distance to site: 21m

Projection: Cylindrical

Lens: 50mm

Visibility: Good

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Image Enlargement: 96%

Page Size: A1 width

Project No: 17741

Client: IJ/MB

Status: Planning

Date: 15/04/25

Project:

Title:

Land East of Rothinch Rd, Meopham
Viewpoint 2



View from the entrance to Camer Park along Camer Park Road to the east of the Site, looking west towards the Site



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When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm
Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date: 20.03.25
GPS Number: 564947, 166939
Direction of View: West

Field of View 90 degrees
Projection: Cylindrical
Camera: Canon EOS 6D Mark II
Lens: 50mm
Distance to site: 292m
Visibility: Good

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Image Enlargement: 96%
Page Size: A1 width

Project No: 17741
Client: IJ/MB
Status: Planning
Date: 15/04/25
Project: Land East of Wrotham Rd, Meopham
Title: Viewpoint 3



View from PRoW NS252 to the east of the Site, looking west across the Site



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When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

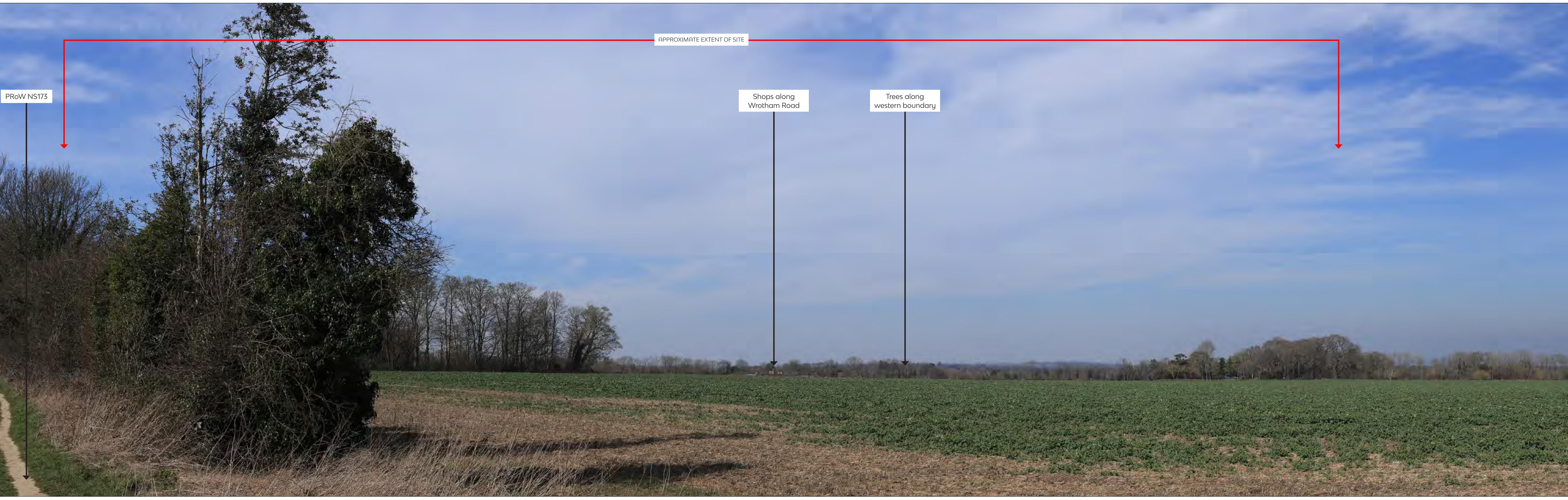
0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm
Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date: 19.03.25
GPS Number: 564935, 166537
Direction of View: West

Field of View 90 degrees
Projection: Cylindrical
Camera: Canon EOS 6D Mark II
Lens: 50mm
Distance to site: 193m
Visibility: Good

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Image Enlargement: 96%
Page Size: A1 width

Project No: 17741
Client: IJ/MB
Status: Planning
Date: 15/04/25
Project: Land East of Wrotham Rd, Monken Estate
Title: Viewpoint 4



View from PRoW NS173 to the south-east of the Site, looking north-west across the Site



View from the start of PRoW NS252 where it partially crosses the Site in the south-east corner, looking north across the Site



View from Wrotham Road to the south-west corner of the Site, looking east across the Site



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When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm
Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:

19.03.25

GPS Number:

564370, 166482

Direction of View:

North East

Field of View

90 degrees

Projection:

Cylindrical

Visualisation Type:

Type 1

Camera:

Canon EOS 6D Mark II

Lens:

50mm

Image Enlargement:

96%

Distance to site:

32m

Visibility:

Good

Page Size:

A1 width

Project No:

17741

Client:

IJ/MB

Date:

15/04/25

Project:

Land East of Wrotham Rd, Meopham

Status:

Planning

Title:

Viewpoint 7



View from PRoW NS253 to the west of the Site, looking east towards the Site



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When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm
Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date: 19.03.25
GPS Number: 564309, 166486
Direction of View: East

Field of View: 90 degrees
Projection: Cylindrical
Camera: Canon EOS 6D Mark II
Lens: 50mm
Distance to site: 137m
Visibility: Good

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Image Enlargement: 96%
Page Size: A1 width

Project No: 17741
Client: IJ/MB
Status: Planning
Date: 15/04/25
Project: Land East of Wrotham Rd, Meopham
Title: Viewpoint 8



View from PRoW NS251 to the west of the Site, looking east towards the Site

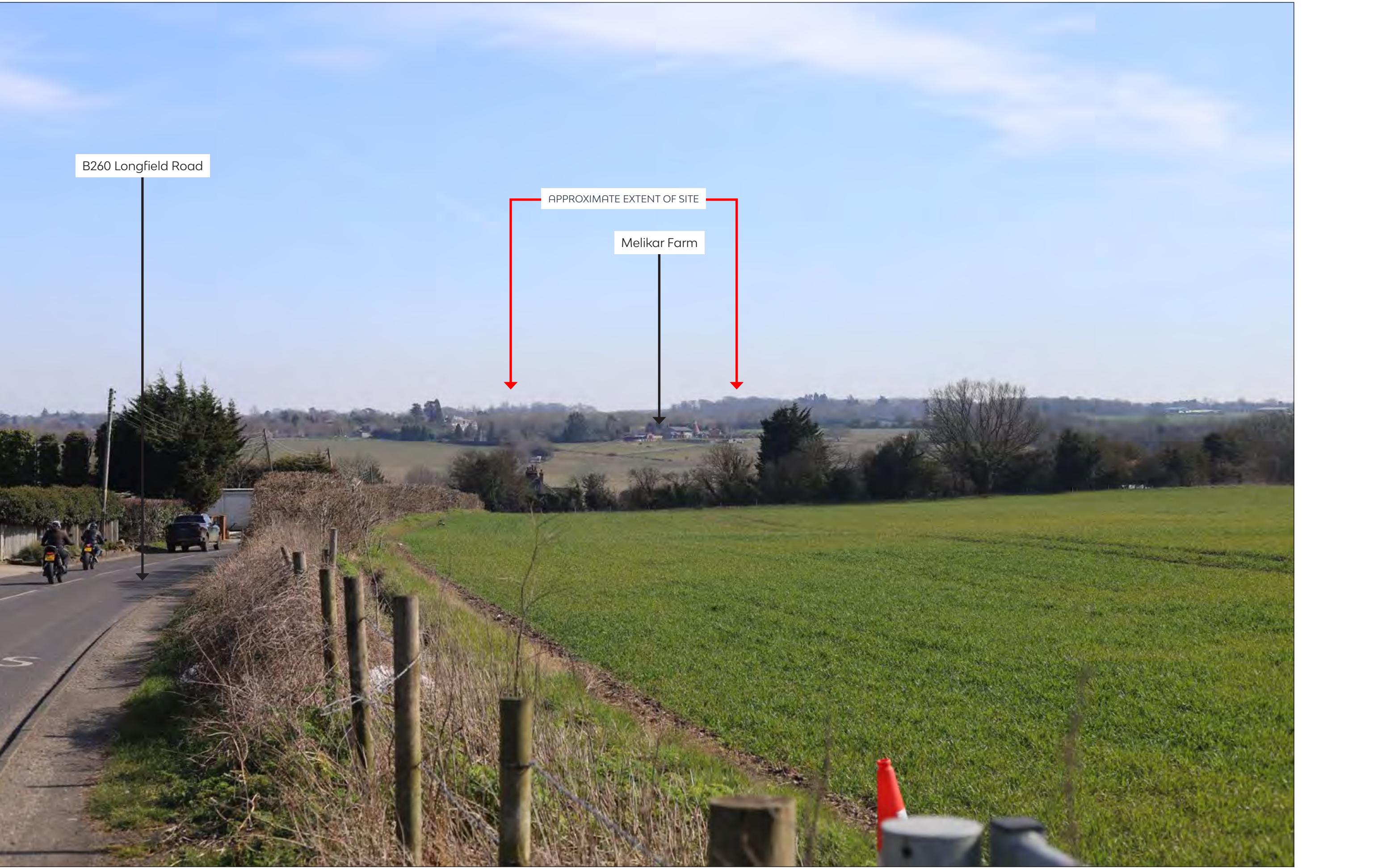


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When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm
Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	19.03.25	Field of View	90 degrees	Projection:	Cylindrical	Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Project No:	17741	Date:	15/04/25
GPS Number:	563460, 166780	Camera:	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	Lens:	50mm	Image Enlargement:	96%	Client:	IJ/MB	Project:	Land East of Rotham Rd, Motham
Direction of View:	East	Distance to site:	966m	Visibility:	Good	Page Size:	A1 width	Status:	Planning	Title:	Viewpoint 9



View from Longfield Road to the north-west of the Site, looking south-east towards the Site



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0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm
Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:

19.03.25

GPS Number:

562760, 167822

Direction of View:

South East

Field of View

Single Image

Projection:

Planar

Camera:

Canon EOS 6D Mark II

Lens:

50mm

Distance to site:

2km

Visibility:

Good

Visualisation Type:

Type 1

Image Enlargement:

96%

Page Size:

A1 width

Project No:

17741

Client:

IJ/MB

Status:

Planning

Date:

15/04/25

Project:

Land Easit of Wrotham Rd, Meopham

Title:

Viewpoint 10



View from PROW NS192 to the north-east of the Site, looking south-west towards the Site



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0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm
Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:	20.03.25	Field of View	90 degrees	Projection:	Cylindrical	Visualisation Type:	Type 1	Project No:	17741	Date:	15/04/25
GPS Number:	564808, 167543	Camera:	Canon EOS 6D Mark II	Lens:	50mm	Image Enlargement:	96%	Client:	IJ/MB	Project:	Land Easements W/rotham Rd, Mioham
Direction of View:	South West	Distance to site:	691m	Visibility:	Good	Page Size:	A1 width	Status:	Planning	Title:	Viewpoint1



View from PRoW NS173 to the east of the Site, looking west towards the Site



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When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm
Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date:

19.03.25

GPS Number:

565701, 166706

Direction of View:

West

Field of View

Single Image

Projection:

Planar

Camera:

Canon EOS 6D Mark II

Lens:

50mm

Distance to site:

946m

Visibility:

Good

Visualisation Type:

Type 1

Image Enlargement:

96%

Page Size:

A1 width

Project No:

17741

Client:

IJ/MB

Status:

Planning

Date:

15/04/25

Project:

Land East of Rothinch Rd, Metham

Title:

Viewpoint 12



View from PRoW NS187 and NS185 on the western edge of Cobham to the east of the Site, looking west towards the Site



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When printed, cylindrical images need to be curved around the viewer to represent real-world viewing angles. Alternatively they could be viewed flat by moving the head to maintain a constant viewing distance across the panorama. (Ref: LI TGN 06/19)

0cm (Original image width 820mm) 10cm
Please note: To view this image digitally, calibrate this scale bar, on screen, for a correct scale representation and view the image at a comfortable arm's length

GPS Date: 20.03.25
GPS Number: 566893, 168296
Direction of View: South West

Field of View: Single Image
Camera: Canon EOS 6D Mark II
Distance to site: 2.7km

Projection: Planar
Lens: 50mm
Visibility: Good

Visualisation Type: Type 1
Image Enlargement: 96%
Page Size: A1 width

Project No: 17741
Client: IJ/MB
Status: Planning

Date: 15/04/25
Project: Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
Title: Viewpoint 13

Appendix 8: Landscape Effects Assessment

Tables



Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

17741_R01a_September 2025_MB_AW

Table A8.1 Magnitude and Importance of Landscape Effects

Receptor	Sensitivity of landscape receptor (see Appendix 3)	Predicted Change	Construction		Year 1		Year 15 (Residual Effects)	
			Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects	Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects	Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects
Character of the Site	Medium to Low	<p>Construction: Localised vegetation removal will occur along the western boundary (overall, approximately 52m) to accommodate infrastructure, although access points have been aligned with existing gaps to minimise loss. Two small sections (approximately 14m overall) of the northern boundary will also be removed to facilitate a pedestrian link, improving connectivity with the wider active travel network. During construction, temporary, visually discordant elements such as plant and hoarding will be introduced, resulting in a short-term, adverse effect on landscape character.</p> <p>Year 1: At completion, the introduction of built form will result in a permanent change from arable land to residential use, although the design approach seeks to conserve and reinforce landscape features. The eastern edge of the Site will be transformed into a large informal POS, creating a softer settlement edge and enhancing Green Infrastructure connectivity. Within the main development area, a series of linked green spaces will break up the built form and maintain landscape permeability. Boundary treatments will be strengthened, particularly along the eastern edge, through new native planting to reinforce landscape structure, improve ecological connectivity, and integrate the Site into its surroundings.</p> <p>The Proposed Development has been designed to conserve the majority of the existing landscape framework, including boundary vegetation along the eastern and southern edges and most of the northern and western boundaries. These retained features will maintain elements of local landscape character and provide a structural framework for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Year 15: By Year 15, the establishment of new planting will create a more robust and resilient landscape framework, and the eastern POS will provide a well-integrated settlement edge and enhanced Green Infrastructure links. While the overall character of the Site will remain fundamentally altered, these measures will ensure the development is assimilated as sensitively as possible within the local landscape context.</p>	Large	Major / Moderate Adverse	Large	Major / Moderate Adverse	Medium	Moderate Adverse
Local Landscape Character	Medium	<p>Construction: During the construction phase, temporary and visually discordant elements such as machinery, hoarding, and site activity will be introduced, resulting in a short-term, adverse effect on local character. These effects will be perceptible only from a limited number of very localised viewpoints.</p> <p>As outlined above, the Proposed Development will retain the majority of existing landscape features within the Site and concentrate built form within the main field. Vegetation removal will be limited to localised sections of the northern and western boundaries to facilitate new access points, which have been aligned with existing gaps to minimise loss and maintain connectivity with the adjacent settlement.</p> <p>Year 1: The Proposed Development lies within the Meopham Downs Landscape Character Area, which is defined by gently undulating farmland, hedgerow-enclosed fields, and a strong rural structure. The design responds to this context by conserving</p>	Small / Medium	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Small / Medium	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Small / Negligible	Minor / Negligible Adverse



		<p>existing boundary vegetation and reinforcing the traditional landscape framework through new native planting, particularly along the more open eastern edge. This approach aligns with LCA management guidelines to conserve and reinforce hedgerows, maintain settlement separation, and strengthen wooded edges to arable plateaus. The introduction of a large POS along the eastern boundary will create a softer settlement edge and provide a transitional landscape between built form and countryside.</p> <p>Year 15:</p> <p>By Year 15, the establishment of new planting will reinforce existing vegetation patterns, increase structural diversity, and enhance the resilience of the local landscape framework. While the overall character of the Site will remain permanently altered from arable land to a developed settlement, these measures will ensure the change is assimilated as sensitively as possible and will deliver enhancements that reflect and strengthen characteristics of the Meopham Downs LCA.</p>						
Setting of the Kent Downs National Landscape (NL)	High	<p>The Site lies approximately 250m west of the Kent Downs NL boundary. At present, the Site is not perceptible from the Kent Downs NL due to the strong tree line along Camer Park Road, intervening vegetation, and local topography. This creates a clear sense of physical and visual separation, and the Site does not contribute to the experience or appreciation of the designated landscape.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is not anticipated to alter this relationship. The combination of existing screening and the introduction of a substantial landscape buffer along the eastern edge, comprising a large POS and layered planting, has been designed to reinforce the sense of separation and create a softer, more graduated transition between settlement and countryside. This approach responds directly to the high sensitivity of the Kent Downs NL setting and aligns with best practice for conserving its special qualities.</p> <p>Construction:</p> <p>During the construction phase, temporary activity such as plant movement and construction noise may result in a limited effect on the perceptual qualities of the Kent Downs NL, particularly tranquillity. However, these effects will be short-term, reversible, and experienced only intermittently from the most localised parts of the intervening landscape. The designated landscape itself will remain visually and physically separate, and its scenic qualities will not be affected.</p> <p>Year 1:</p> <p>At completion, the Proposed Development will remain imperceptible from the Kent Downs NL due to the strong vegetated buffer and intervening landform, ensuring that the designated landscape continues to be experienced as physically and visually distinct from the settlement edge.</p> <p>Year 15:</p> <p>By Year 15, the establishment of new planting will further consolidate the vegetated buffer, ensuring that the settlement edge is well integrated and that the special qualities and perceptual attributes of the Kent Downs NL, such as its rural character and scenic integrity, are conserved. While the Proposed Development represents a permanent change within the wider setting, its influence on the Kent Downs NL will remain negligible, and the design measures will deliver a positive contribution by strengthening the transitional landscape between settlement and designated countryside.</p>	Small / Negligible	Minor Adverse	Negligible	Negligible Adverse	Negligible	Negligible Neutral



Appendix 9: Visual Effects Assessment Tables



Land East of Wrotham Road, Meopham
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

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Table A9.1 Magnitude and Importance of Visual Effects

Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	Sensitivity of visual receptor (see Appendix 3)	Predicted Visual Change	Construction		Year 1		Year 15 (Residual Effects)	
			Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects	Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects	Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects
Users of PRoW NS173 (west of Camer Park Road) - Representative Photoviewpoint 5	High to Medium	<p>Construction:</p> <p>Construction activity would introduce temporary, visually discordant elements such as plant and hoarding into filtered views from short sections of the route. Visibility would be limited to glimpses through gaps in vegetation adjacent to the PRoW and the eastern edge hedgerow extending through the Site. The effect would occur over a small portion of the route and persist for the duration of the construction period, resulting in a small magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 1 (Completion):</p> <p>Built form would remain largely filtered by retained vegetation, with glimpsed views where gaps occur and the height of the built form exceeds the height of the eastern edge hedgerow. The landscaping associated with the POS along the eastern boundary would not yet provide effective screening, as intended in the design. The change would be noticeable in these localised gaps but visually contained overall, resulting in a small magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 15 (Residual):</p> <p>By Year 15, structural planting along the eastern edge and within the POS would be established, further reducing visual permeability from NS173. Perception of built form would be limited to fleeting, heavily filtered glimpses, and the route would continue to read as semi-rural with a contained settlement edge, resulting in a negligible magnitude of change.</p>	Small	Minor Adverse	Small	Minor Adverse	Negligible	Negligible Adverse
Users of PRoW NS252 - Representative Photoviewpoint 4 and 6	High to Medium	<p>Construction:</p> <p>Construction activity would be clearly visible at close range, introducing prominent temporary elements into views along the route. Visibility would extend across the full length of this PRoW, with construction features forming a noticeable component during the works period. These effects would persist for the duration of construction, resulting in a large magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 1 (Completion):</p> <p>At completion, users would perceive the introduction of built form within the Site. The retained hedgerow on the eastern edge would reduce visibility, but the proximity and clear sightlines along NS252 mean the development would remain a clearly noticeable component above this vegetation. The landscaped eastern edge would begin to soften the massing but would not yet provide the intended screening effect.</p> <p>Year 15 (Residual):</p> <p>By Year 15, layered planting within the eastern POS and along internal green corridors would be established, breaking up massing and interrupting sightlines from NS252. Layers of hedgerow and tree planting would be established between the built form and receptor. The settlement edge would read as softer and more graduated, with views of built form heavily filtered along the route.</p>	Large	Major / Moderate Adverse	Large	Major / Moderate Adverse	Small	Moderate / Minor Adverse



			Construction		Year 1		Year 15 (Residual Effects)	
Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	Sensitivity of visual receptor (see Appendix 3)	Predicted Visual Change	Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects	Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects	Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects
Users of PRoW NS253 – Representative Photoviewpoint 8	High to Medium	<p>Construction: Views would be heavily filtered by vegetation along Meopham Road, with only occasional glimpses of construction activity through gaps in the tree line. The effect would occur over a very limited section of the route and persist for the duration of the construction period, resulting in a small to negligible magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 1 (Completion): The effect would be confined to short sections of the route and would be permanent, resulting in a small to negligible magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 15 (Residual): As planting establishes, additional filtering is provided and the settlement edge becomes less perceptible from this route, resulting in a negligible magnitude of change.</p>	Small / Negligible	Minor / Negligible Adverse	Small / Negligible	Minor / Negligible Adverse	Negligible	Negligible Adverse
Users of Wrotham Road – Representative Photoviewpoint 1 and 7	Low	<p>Construction: Road users pass immediately adjacent to the western boundary. Works to form the vehicular/pedestrian access and connect with the road would require localised vegetation removal, exposing construction activity at close range. Temporary hoarding, plant movement, and highway interface works would be prominent for those passing the frontage, albeit brief and transient due to traffic speeds and driver focus. The effect would occur over a very limited section of the route and persist for the duration of the construction period, resulting in a medium magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 1 (Completion): At completion, the new site access would remain apparent in close-range, with glimpsed views of internal streets and rooftops along the access point. The western tree belt is largely retained, and even with management inputs, will continue to filter views along most of the frontage. The settlement-edge context and transient viewing conditions moderate the experience, but the proximity and new access opening sustain a medium magnitude.</p> <p>Year 15 (Residual): By Year 15, street and frontage planting will have established, softening the access opening and interrupting near-field views into the Site. The majority of the frontage would read as a green corridor, with built form typically glimpsed rather than open. Given the transience of views and increased vegetation structure, magnitude reduces to small.</p>	Large / Medium	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Medium	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Small	Minor Adverse



			Construction		Year 1		Year 15 (Residual Effects)	
Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	Sensitivity of visual receptor (see Appendix 3)	Predicted Visual Change	Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects	Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects	Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects
Users of Green Lane – Representative Photoviewpoint 2	Medium to Low	<p>Construction: Green Lane is enclosed by dense vegetation along the Site boundary, providing robust screening. Visibility is limited, confined to a small gap at the north-eastern corner where localised activity may be glimpsed. A narrow section of the vegetation will be removed to accommodate a cycle path that links with active travel connections, but this would be no more than 3-5m wide, and any views would be brief and highly localised. The effect would occur over an extremely limited section of the route and persist for the duration of the construction period, resulting in a negligible magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 1 (Completion): Completed built form remains screened along almost all of the route. Glimpsed views may occur at the north-east corner but would be brief and heavily filtered. The effect would be confined to an extremely limited section of the route and would be permanent, resulting in a negligible magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 15 (Residual): Further establishment of boundary vegetation and adjacent planting maintains very limited intervisibility.</p>	Negligible	Negligible Adverse	Negligible	Negligible Adverse	Negligible	Negligible Adverse
Users of Camer Park Road – Representative Photoviewpoint 3	Medium to Low	<p>Construction: The western edge of Camer Park Road is largely open, allowing mid-distance views west across the landscape towards the Site. While Priestfield Shaw and associated vegetation obscure the northern part of the Site, and the hedgerow along the eastern edge combined with falling topography reduces visibility, construction activity within the southern and central parts of the Site will be perceptible. Temporary elements such as plant, hoarding, and movement will be visible in oblique views from open sections of the road. The effect would occur over a short section of the route and persist for the duration of the construction period, resulting in a medium magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 1 (Completion): At completion, built form will be visible in oblique, mid-distance views from sections of Camer Park Road, particularly towards the southern part of the Site. The newly formed POS along the eastern boundary will be complete, but not established enough to provide noticeable screening qualities. The effect would remain limited to a short section of the route and would be permanent, resulting in a medium magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 15 (Residual): Mature eastern POS planting adds further layering to the vegetated transition; any change is negligible in this view—negligible magnitude.</p>	Medium	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Medium	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Negligible	Negligible Adverse



			Construction		Year 1		Year 15 (Residual Effects)	
Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	Sensitivity of visual receptor (see Appendix 3)	Predicted Visual Change	Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects	Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects	Magnitude of Effects	Importance of Effects
Retail Visitors to Wrotham Road parade of shops	Low	<p>Construction: The retail parade faces the A227 with parking and circulation areas in the foreground. Along this frontage, access formation and localised vegetation removal would expose close-range construction activity at the new entrance, with filtered views of the internal construction through vegetation. These changes would be noticeable in near-field views, although experienced in a busy environment where attention is not primarily on the view. The effect would occur over a very limited section of the frontage and persist for the duration of the construction period, resulting in a medium magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 1 (Completion): At completion, the new site access would remain apparent in close-range, with glimpsed views of internal streets and rooftops along the access point. The western tree belt is largely retained, and even with crown lifting, will continue to filter views along most of the frontage. The settlement-edge context and transient viewing conditions moderate the experience, but the proximity and new access opening sustain a medium magnitude.</p> <p>Year 15 (Residual): By Year 15, street and frontage planting will have established, softening the access opening and interrupting near-field views into the Site. The majority of the frontage would again read as a green corridor, with built form typically glimpsed in views.</p>	Medium	Minor Adverse	Medium	Minor Adverse	Small	Minor Adverse



Table A5.2 Likely Magnitude of Effects upon Residential Views

This LVIA has focussed upon the analysis of views from publicly accessible locations. Views from private residential dwellings have not been tested in the field and therefore the following commentary is based upon professional judgement.

Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	Sensitivity of visual receptor	Visual Change	Construction	Year 1	Year 15 (Residual Effects)
			Magnitude of Change	Magnitude of Change	Magnitude of Change
Residents associated with Wrotham Road	High to Medium	<p>Construction: Close-range orientation towards the western boundary means construction activity, including vegetation removal and plant movement, would be clearly perceptible for the nearest properties. The effect would be confined to a small cluster of dwellings and persist for the duration of the construction period, resulting in a large to medium magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 1 (Completion): The widened access and visibility splays remain noticeable to the nearest properties, with glimpsed internal streets and rooftops beyond. Elsewhere along Wrotham Road, retained tree belts continue to limit views to brief, filtered glimpses. The effect would remain focused on a small part of the receptor group and would be permanent, resulting in a large to medium magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 15 (Residual): Established frontage and street planting soften the access and interrupt near-field views. From most properties, views revert to filtered glimpses through a predominantly green frontage; nearest properties still perceive occasional views of the access and movements. The effect would be very limited in extent, resulting in a medium to small magnitude of change.</p>	Large / Medium	Large to Medium	Medium to Small
Residents associated with Tradescant Drive	High to Medium	<p>Construction: Properties to the north are well screened by dense vegetation along Green Lane and intervening gardens. Any construction perception would be very limited, potentially confined to indirect awareness of activity. The effect would occur over an extremely limited area and persist for the duration of the construction period, resulting in a negligible magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 1 (Completion): Boundary vegetation continues to screen views from both ground and upper floors. Occasional winter glimpses may occur where vegetation is thinner, but these would be heavily filtered and incidental. The effect would remain extremely limited in extent and permanent, resulting in a negligible magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 15 (Residual): Further establishment of vegetation maintains effective screening. The scale of change remains negligible, and the geographical extent extremely limited, resulting in a negligible magnitude of change.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible



			Construction	Year 1	Year 15 (Residual Effects)
Receptor (Representative Photoviewpoint Number)	Sensitivity of visual receptor	Visual Change	Magnitude of Change	Magnitude of Change	Magnitude of Change
Residents associated with Meopham Court	High	<p>Construction: Properties to the south are separated by mature tree-lined boundaries and garden vegetation. Construction would be largely obscured, with the potential for filtered, seasonal glimpses from upper floors toward the northern part of the Site. The effect would occur over a very limited area and persist for the duration of the construction period, resulting in a small to negligible magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 1 (Completion): Completed development remains filtered by intervening vegetation; views, where present, are glimpsed and seasonal, typically from upper floors. The effect would remain very limited in extent and permanent, resulting in a small to negligible magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 15 (Residual): Mature POS and structural planting would enhance filtering and separation, reducing any intermittent perception to a very limited level, resulting in a negligible magnitude of change.</p>	Small to Negligible	Small to Negligible	Negligible
Residents associated with Priestfield Shaw	High to Medium	<p>Construction: This property lies adjacent to the eastern boundary where a mature, dense hedgerow and a thicket of garden vegetation provide strong containment at ground level, curtailing views from lower storey windows. However, open views from upper storeys are possible, allowing construction activity within the Site to be perceived. The effect would be confined to a single property and persist for the duration of the construction period, resulting in a large magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 1 (Completion): Built form will be set back from the eastern and northern boundary, with drainage and open space located in the northern part of the Site adjacent to this property. This arrangement reduces the intensity of change at close range. From ground floors, views remain filtered by the hedgerow and garden vegetation; from upper floors, open views of the development are likely. The effect would be very limited in extent and permanent, resulting in a large magnitude of change.</p> <p>Year 15 (Residual): By Year 15, established planting within the northern open space will provide some filtering qualities, breaking up massing and reducing visibility of built form from upper floors, while ground floors remain enclosed by vegetation. The effect would be extremely limited in extent, resulting in a medium magnitude of change.</p>	Large	Large	Medium





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