

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

THE LION, LUDDSDOWN

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Authored by: Stephen Wadsworth CMLI
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Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Methodology	4
3. Baseline Context.....	7
4. Description of Proposed Development	14
5. Planning Policy Context.....	16
6. Effect on Landscape Elements and Character	20
7. Effect on Visual Amenity.....	27
8. Summary and Conclusions	36
9. Appendices	38

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan
- Appendix 2 – Detailed Methodology
- Appendix 3 – Context Views
- Appendix 4 – Designations
- Appendix 5 – Luddesdown: West Kent Downs
- Appendix 6 – Luddesdown Downs
- Appendix 7 – 1A West Kent Downs
- Appendix 8 – Proposed Site Layout Plan
- Appendix 9 – Representative Views

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This report is prepared as a Landscape and Visual Appraisal by Briarwood Landscape Architecture Limited by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute¹, to accompany a proposed pub garden extension including new walkway and HGV access to the existing winery ('the proposed development') at The Lion public house, Luddesdown Road, Luddesdown ('the site') on behalf of Vineyard Farms Limited.
- 1.2** The location of the proposed development is shown on the Site Location Plan at Appendix 1. The centre of the site is located at grid coordinate TQ 67210 66646. The site is in the administrative area of Gravesham Borough Council.
- 1.3** This report assesses the potential effects of the proposed development on the site on :
- Landscape elements and features such as vegetation, topography and water bodies etc.,
 - Landscape character and,
 - Visual amenity
- 1.4** The primary objectives of this preliminary LVA are as follows:
- To identify, describe and evaluate the current landscape character of the site and its surrounding area
 - To identify, describe and evaluate any notable individual landscape elements and/or features within the site
 - To determine the sensitivity of the landscape to the type of development proposed
 - To identify potential key visual receptors (i.e., people who would be able to view the proposed development) and to evaluate their sensitivity to the type of changes proposed
 - To identify and describe any potential effects of the proposed development in so far as they affect the landscape and/or views.
- 1.5** Where mention is made to heritage assets such as listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments etc. then this is done only in the context of such assets being features of the landscape.

¹ In line with TGN 01/20, the author of this report has experience in preparing, coordinating and reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments and Appraisals.

2. Methodology

Use of the term LVA

- 2.1** This report is presented as a proportionate Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) rather than as an ES related Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).

Guidance

- 2.2** This LVA has been undertaken with regard to the following best practice guidance:
- 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition)' – Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA).
 - 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations' – Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21.

Detailed Methodology

- 2.3** A detailed methodology is given in Appendix 2. As recommended within the published guidance, landscape (elements and character) and visual effects are assessed separately.

Nature of an Effect

- 2.4** The nature, as opposed to the scale, of a particular effect on landscape, character and visual amenity can be
- adverse (negative)
 - beneficial (positive) or
 - neutral.

- 2.5** There can also be 'no effect' where the proposed development would result in no change to a particular landscape and/or view so the nature of the effect would usually always be regarded as neutral.

Neutral Nature of a Particular Effect

- 2.6** The neutral nature of a particular effect is one where, on balance, the existing integrity, quality or key characteristics of a landscape or view, would be maintained. The scale/level of effect and whether it will have a positive or negative (or neutral) consequence are independent of each other so that it is possible to report a major and neutral effect i.e. an important change, but one which is neither better nor worse.

Default Position

- 2.7** For the purposes of this assessment, unless otherwise stated, any change to the landscape and visual amenity as a result of the proposed development is considered to be permanent and non-reversible and adverse in nature.

Assessment Period

- 2.8** Operational effects are assessed at years 1 and 15 so as to take into account any mitigation measures such as new planting etc. Unless expressly stated otherwise, the effect, and the nature of the effect, at year 15 is considered to be the same as year 1.

Study Area

- 2.9** The initial study area covered a 2km radius radiating from the centre of the site. This distance has been defined as broadly the furthest distance that the development would be theoretically discernible in the landscape. Later in the assessment process, on site evaluations of possible views within this area have indicated that potential visual effects, beyond those of an assessed negligible level, are confined to a distance less than 100 metres from the site boundary.

Photography and Photoviews

- 2.10** Photographs used as part of the detailed visual assessment have been taken using a Canon E05 Mark III, full frame sensor, digital camera with a 50mm lens. The lens has a standard focal length and is considered to best represent the human eye.
- 2.11** Photography took place in sunny weather, with good visibility, on the 19th June 2025. The camera was at a height of approximately 1.6 metres. Leaf cover was present so visibility was at a minimum. Consideration has been given to the effect on views with a full leaf cover in place and visibility at a maximum.

Caveat

- 2.12** It is acknowledged that when carrying out the site visit and taking photos from the chosen viewpoint locations (from publicly accessible areas and vantage points), the report's author is actively and deliberately 'looking' for the 'site' within the local landscape.
- 2.13** In reality, visual receptors such as users of the public rights of way network and motorists alike will not 'actively' be 'looking' for the site (or the development) whilst traversing the public rights of way and road network. Whilst each visual receptor will have a varying degree of appreciation for their surroundings, depending on what they are doing (playing sport, walking, driving), their efforts will typically not be concerned with 'actively' and 'deliberately' looking for any given 'site' or 'residential development'.

2.14 The photoviews were accurate at the time they were taken. Site conditions can be subject to change, for example garden and field boundary hedgerows can be cut/trimmed by landowners/farmers, trees can be felled by landowners or blown over by adverse weather, and new trees can be planted.

2.15 Therefore, the extent of visibility can potentially increase or decrease since the photoviews were taken. Such eventualities are not within the control of the report's author. The assessment of visibility within photoviews is accurate at the time of writing.

Time sensitivity

2.16 Owing to the evolving nature of the landscape, it is considered that the assessment made in this report should not be relied on beyond 24 months of final issue without a formal review.

3. Baseline Context

Description of the Site

- 3.1** The site comprises the existing access into the Vineyard Farm winery together with a margin of land, between the store building for the winery complex and a pair of semi-detached residential properties fronting onto Luddesdown Road, and the entrance area into the recently constructed winery staff car park.
- 3.2** The boundaries of the site are only partially defined on the ground at present. A series of context views help to illustrate the nature of the site as it appears at present (see Appendix 3 – Context Views).

Scale and Geographic Extent of the Proposed Development

- 3.3** The site is considered to be of a small scale relative to its host landscape.
- 3.4** The proposed development in relation to the site itself is considered to be of a small scale. The site would remain predominantly open internally.
- 3.5** Site visits have confirmed and supports the author's judgement that the extent of the physical influence of the proposals upon its surroundings would be confined to the site's redline application boundary.

The Site and Surrounding Area

- 3.6** The following section describes the individual elements, attributes and key characteristics of the existing site and local landscape that together contribute to an understanding of the local landscape character. The following physical landscape attributes will be described:
- Topography and Landform
 - Hydrology and Water Features
 - Landscape Framework - Trees and Vegetation Cover
 - Land Use
 - Public Rights of Way
 - Public Highways and Transport Corridors
 - Settlement Pattern and Built Form
 - Landscape Designations

Topography and Landform

- 3.7** The site ranges in height from approximately 46 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to approximately 48 metres AOD with no obvious changes in level.
- 3.8** The site is located on the floor of a narrow valley. The topography around the site rises to a height of approximately 100 metres AOD.

Hydrology and Water Features

- 3.9** There are no obvious water features on or adjacent to the site.

Landscape Framework – Trees and Vegetation Cover

- 3.10** The main vegetation on the site is associated with the rear gardens of the two residential properties fronting Luddesdown Road through which the site boundary passes. The garden vegetation is predominantly non-native species including evergreen conifers.
- 3.11** Hedgerows and hedgerow trees together with tree belts and woodland are features of the area surrounding the site.

Land Use

- 3.12** The land use of the site is a mix of residential garden curtilage and agricultural.
- 3.13** The wider landscape is predominantly agricultural. The agriculture is mixed and includes extensive vineyard areas.

Public Rights of Way

- 3.14** The site is currently entirely private with no public access. The closest public right of way is adjacent to the southern end of the site on the western side of Luddesdown Road.
- 3.15** The public right of network is greater to the south of the site. The Wealdway long distance trail is located to the south-west of the site. The trail comes within approximately 0.5km of the site at its closest point

Public Highways and Transportation Corridors

- 3.16** The Lion pub is located close to the junction of several lanes. These include Cutter Ridge Road, Henley Street and Luddesdown Road. The latter contains the site to the west.

Settlement Pattern and Built Form

- 3.17** Settlement in the local host landscape is scattered. Luddesdown is a dispersed settlement. The site is located in Lower Luddesdown, which comprises several residential properties, commercial and agricultural/viticultural buildings.
- 3.18** Luddesdown church and a cluster of further residential properties is located approximately 0.5km to the south of the site. Henley Street is linear group of residential buildings approximately 800 metres to the north-west of the site.
- 3.19** Residential built form is typically traditional consists of brick 2 storeys properties with slate pitched roofs. Other non-residential buildings are more variable. Many are of a modern agricultural style buildings that include the use of materials such as timber cladding and metal roofs.

Designations

- 3.20** The site and its environs are located with the Kent Downs National Landscape (see Appendix 4 – Designations). The Kent Downs National Landscape is one of national importance as identified in the NPPF. Brookers Farm to the east of the site is a grade II listed building.
- 3.21** The site and the surrounding area are within the Green Belt. The Green Belt is a planning rather landscape protection designation.

Published Landscape Character Assessments

- 3.22** A hierarchy of national/regional, county and borough published landscape character assessments are available. These respective documents describe the host landscape of the site at an increasingly refined level. The published landscape assessments are intended to provide a foundation for understanding the key component elements and features that characterise the host landscape and potential the site itself.
- 3.23** It is considered that owing to the scale of the proposed development, the effect on the character of the landscape at a national/regional level would be limited. Attention is focused to the finer grain published landscape character assessments at the county and borough level.

County Landscape Character Assessment

- 3.24** The Landscape Character Assessment of Kent (2004) places the site in the Luddesdown: West Kent Downs landscape character area (LCA) (see Appendix 5).
- 3.25** The key characteristics of the LCA are given as:

“Rolling valley side pasture and extensive undulating arable fields. Large areas of mixed woodland dominate skyline. Peaceful and rural, but threatened by suburban influences and industrial developments. Many hedgerows removed.”

- 3.26** The now 20 year old published character assessment, judges the landscape of the LCA to be in a ‘good’ condition and to have a ‘high’ sensitivity.
- 3.27** Owing to the small scale of the site, it is considered that the site possesses none of the LCA’s key characteristics.

Borough Landscape Character

- 3.28** The Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (May 2009) places the site within the Luddesdown Downs LCA (see Appendix 6). It is noted that the borough’s character assessment is now very nearly 16 years old.
- 3.29** The key characteristics of the LCA are given as:
- “Very undulating topography with
 - farmland used as arable and pasture
 - Irregular field pattern, with fields of various shapes and sizes
 - Fields divided by native hedgerows
 - Areas of native woodland
 - Narrow winding lanes which follow contours
 - Properties and farmsteads along lanes
 - Small settlements within valleys
 - Traditional timber framed buildings and Kent peg tiles.”

- 3.30** In the ‘Landscape Description’ of the LCA the following is noted:

“...The settlements of Luddesdown and Lower Luddesdown are situated within a valley and buildings are traditional, providing a strong sense of place and definite local vernacular. The settlements comprise few buildings, clustered around lane junctions...”

- 3.31** At the time of publishing the borough’s character assessment judged the condition of the landscape within the LCA as ‘very good’. The sensitivity of the landscape was judged to be ‘very high’. The overall aim of the guidelines for the LCA is to ‘conserve’.
- 3.32** Within the list of elements to conserve, the published assessment includes the following three:

- “...Assess development proposals within the area to maintain the character of sparse and distinctive built development.
- Conserve the isolation and small-scale farmsteads and hamlets.
- Encourage the use of vernacular materials and techniques for buildings and built elements, particularly the use of flint and Kent peg tiles.”

Kent Downs National Landscape Character

- 3.33** The ‘Kent Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment Update 2020 Revised and Published 2023’ document places the site in the Chalk Downs landscape character type (LCT) and specifically in the 1A West Kent Downs LCA (see Appendix 7).
- 3.34** The published assessment subdivides the LCA further. The site is located in the Luddesdown sub-area. Under the description of the Luddesdown sub-area, the following is noted:

“...The settlements of Luddesdown and Lower Luddesdown comprise clusters of traditional buildings...”

Author’s Assessment of Local Character

- 3.35** The character of the area within approximately 0.5km of the site boundary is assessed as follows:
- Woodland enclosure to settlement,
 - Area mainly pastoral farmland and vineyards,
 - Small intimate to large scale open fields,
 - Overhead transmission lines and towers a visual detractor,
 - Movement of farm/commercial vehicles reduces perceived tranquillity,
 - Winery and associated shop together with Court and Brookers Farm buildings are typically modern and of medium scale,
 - Existing Lion pub building comprises rendered and painted brick facades with slate pitched roof making the building distinctive in the area where most small scale, residential buildings are brick with Kent peg tiles or slate roofs.

Baseline Visual Receptors

- 3.36** A range of visual receptors i.e. people, have been considered as part of a visual assessment. Such receptors include the occupiers of existing residential properties, users of the public highway network and users of the public right of way network.

- 3.37** It is from the public highway and public right of way networks where there is the greatest potential for there to be sight of the proposed development from publicly accessible vantage points.
- 3.38** Typically, users of the public right of way network and open access land will be most sensitive to visual changes in the landscape. For these visual receptors, the appearance of the landscape and particular views are often the primary reason for their using the public right of way or entering open access land.
- 3.39** Similarly, occupiers of residential properties are often sensitive to changes in the view from their habitable rooms. Users of the public highway are regarded as less sensitive to change in a particular view as their main focus is generally in the direction of travel.

Representative Views

- 3.40** A series of representative viewpoints have been chosen to form the basis of a detailed visual assessment (see below). The representative viewpoints have been chosen, where possible, to include different types of visual receptors in different locations and at different distances from the site boundary.
- 3.41** It should be noted that the viewpoints are not intended to be exhaustive. In reality, there would be many more locations within the local landscape from where the proposed development would not be seen as compared to those locations chosen as representative viewpoints where a view is anticipated.

Residential Properties

- 3.42** The potential for any intervisibility between existing residential properties and the site is limited. The greatest potential for intervisibility is with those properties immediately adjacent or close to the site boundary. There is direct intervisibility between the site and numbers 88 and 89 Luddesdown Road, which are owned by the applicant and rented to farm workers, parts of whose rear gardens are within the application redline boundary.
- 3.43** However, intervisibility between the site and other nearby residential properties is restricted through a combination of the orientation of the particular property and the presence of existing vegetation and/or built form in the intervening space between the property and the site boundary.
- 3.44** For residential properties located at greater distances than 0.5km from the site boundary, the undulating and rolling topography of the area and the presence of trees, hedgerows and woodland belts act to restrict many views of the site. Where views of the site are possible, the existing built form adjacent to the site would typically limit views to discrete parts of the site rather than seeing the site in its entirety.

Public Highways

- 3.45** The greatest potential for views of and into the site is from a short section of Luddesdown Road and Clutter Ridge Road. Luddesdown Road contains the site to the west.
- 3.46** Elsewhere in the wider landscape, potential views of the site from the public highway network are generally restricted. Such a restriction is brought about through the screening effect of vegetation (particularly field boundary vegetation along the roadside), topography (the site is at the bottom of a narrow valley) or built form in the intervening landscape between the road users and the site boundary.

Public Rights of Way. Landscape Designations & Open Access Land

- 3.47** The Site Location Plan shows that there are several public rights of way routes in the vicinity of the site. The greatest potential to see the site from the public right of way network is from the section of the Cutter Ridge Road that forms part of the Luddesdown Trek (a County promoted circular walk).
- 3.48** From the remainder of the public rights of way network, views of the site, and potential views of the site are typically restricted through factors such as the particular route's orientation, changes in topography, and the presence of existing built form and vegetation including field hedgerow boundaries, tree belts and woodland.

4. Description of Proposed Development

- 4.1** This section describes the key components of the proposals, and the nature of the anticipated effects that are likely to occur. The site of the proposed development is adjacent to The Lion (also known as The Golden Lion) public house. There is a permitted extension to the pub (planning application reference 20250053) that has yet to be implemented but includes works to the existing pub garden that extend up to the boundary with the site.
- 4.2** The architects for the proposed development, DHA, have prepared a Proposed Site Layout (see Appendix 8). This layout has been used in the preparation of this LVA report.
- 4.3** The proposed development includes for the extension of the existing pub garden of The Lion to the south-west. The extension of the garden would remove the existing access off Luddesdown Road into the yard of The Vineyard Farm winery. The garden extension would be at higher level than the existing garden and would be accessible from the existing garden area via 2 access stairs
- 4.4** A new pedestrian walkway would be created leading from the proposed garden extension to the recently constructed farm workers car park to the south-west of the Winery complex. In addition a new HGV access would be constructed leading off Luddesdown Road into the Winery yard.
- 4.5** The proposed new walkway would run parallel to the proposed HGV access. The former would cross the latter close to the farm workers car park. The creation of the new walkway and the HGV access would involve the reconfiguration of the rear gardens of the residential properties of 88 and 89 Luddesdown Road.
- 4.6** The proposed walkway would be 2 metres in width and would be surfaced in resin bound gravel. The walkway would be illuminated during hours of darkness when the pub is operational up to 11.30pm only. The walkway would be securable through gates at either end.
- 4.7** A new concrete access way would connect the farmyard to the loading area off Luddesdown Road, south-west of the residential properties.
- 4.8** New soft landscape would be introduced to either side of the proposed walkway. New soft landscape would also be introduced along the south-west and south-east boundaries of the proposed garden extension. A flint wall would extend along the

garden extension's boundary with Luddesdown Road – matching that for the existing garden as approved under application 20250053.

5. Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.1** The latest iteration of the NPPF was published in December 2024 with revisions in February 2025. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policy and in combination these policies give the Government's vision of sustainable development. The NPPF emphasises the need for good design, promoting healthy communities and conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 5.2** Regarding landscape and green infrastructure, the Natural Environment section of the NPPF provides a policy context for open countryside and green infrastructure. The key objectives are to protect valued landscapes and, where possible, provide net gains in biodiversity.
- 5.3** The NPPF has been of material consideration as part of our assessment of the site and its setting. The proposed development is deemed to have taken into consideration the overall framework guidance and principles contained within the NPPF.
- 5.4** Specifically, paragraph 189 of the NPPF states:
- “Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads⁶⁶. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”

Local Plan Policy

- 5.5** The site is located within the administrative area of Gravesham Borough Council. The Development Plan for Gravesham currently consists of:
- Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and Local Plan Policies Map (2014)
 - Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) – saved Policies
 - Kent County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 (2020)
- 5.6** The following policy are relevant to landscape and visual matters.
- 5.7** Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles. The policy states:

“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 anticrime 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.

NB Underlining above is author's emphasis

Kent Downs National Landscape

- 5.8** The online resource for the Kent Downs National Landscape includes a series of policies:

<https://kentdowns.org.uk/planning/aonb-mp-planning/>

- 5.9** Under Sustainable Development, policy SD9 states:

"The particular historic and locally distinctive character of rural settlement and buildings of the Kent Downs National Landscape will be maintained and strengthened. The use of locally-derived materials for restoration and conservation work will be encouraged. New developments will be expected to apply appropriate design guidance and to be complementary to local character in form, setting, scale, contribution to settlement pattern and choice of materials. This will apply to all development, including road design (pursued through the adoption and implementation of the AONB Rural Streets and Lanes Design handbook), affordable housing, development on farm holdings (pursued through the farmstead design guidance), and rights of way signage."

NB Underlining above is author's emphasis

5.10 Under 'Landform and Landscape Character (LLC)' policies LLC1 and HCH5 respectively state:

“LLC1 The protection, conservation and enhancement of special characteristics and qualities, natural beauty and landscape character of the Kent Downs AONB will be supported and pursued.

HCH5 The application of high standards of design sympathetic to cultural heritage within the AONB, identified in guidance including the AONB Landscape Design Handbook, Kent Downs Farmstead Guidance and any relevant Village Design Statements and Neighbourhood plans, will be pursued.”

Response to Policy

5.11 The assessment process has taken into account the above national and local planning policies.

6. Effect on Landscape Elements and Character

- 6.1** The key landscape receptors that are likely to be affected by the proposed development are as follows:
- The landscape elements and features that comprise the landscape;
 - The character of proposed development site and its immediate environs; and
 - The surrounding landscape within the study area (see paragraph 2.9) as expressed in the respective published assessments for the Luddesdown: West Kent Down, Luddesdown Downs and, 1A West Kent Downs LCAs.

Landscape Value

- 6.2** The identified landscape receptors are located within a nationally important landscape i.e. a National Landscape/Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as outlined in the NPPF. as such the landscape value of key receptors is typically 'high'.

Landscape Susceptibility

- 6.3** In terms of the susceptibility of the landscape resource to accommodate change of the type proposed, it is considered that the presence of existing built form and structural development on the site, reduces the susceptibility of the site to change as a result of a proposed development.
- 6.4** It is considered that the landscape character of the site has capacity to accommodate a considerably designed extension to the existing pub garden such as that being proposed. There would be no overall loss of openness internally to the site and that the proposals have potential to enhance the site.
- 6.5** The susceptibility of the landscape resource to change of the type proposed is considered to be low. The proposals would not alter the physical characteristics of the surrounding area.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 6.6** The sensitivity of a particular landscape to a particular type of development is derived through a judgement based upon a landscape's susceptibility i.e. "the ability of a defined landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences" and the landscape's 'value' i.e. "the relative value that is

attached to different landscape by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons”.

- 6.7** As part of the Kent Downs National Landscape, the site and its surrounding host landscape are assessed as having a high value. With a high value and a low susceptibility, the overall sensitivity of the landscape is assessed as medium.

Likely causes of Effect

- 6.8** In the context of the proposed development as outlined above, this section sets out an assessment of the likely physical effects on landscape and elements and features together with the anticipated effects on the landscape character of the site and the local area.

Causes of temporary effects during the construction phase

- 6.9** The temporary construction work that may give rise to effects on landscape features and character include:

- Site clearance and demolition;
- Presence and movement of construction vehicles and plant;
- Presence of stored materials, plant and machinery, work compound and shelters;
- Construction of the proposed extension and boundary wall, surfacing and associated infrastructure;
- Implementation of soft landscape.

Causes of effects at completion

- 6.10** The permanent components of the proposals that may give rise to effects on landscape elements and features and on the character of the landscape include:

- Removal of existing hard standing;
- Construction of new garden extension;
- Construction of new walkway and HGV access to yard;
- Erection of new boundary wall and boundary structures;
- Introduction of new lighting;
- Installation of new soft landscape onto the site e.g. trees, hedgerows, shrubs and grassed areas.

- 6.11** Effects at completion are primarily concerned with the medium to long term change to the landscape from its current baseline context as a result of the proposed development being in place on the site.

- 6.12** In respect of physical changes to landscape elements and features, direct changes would be restricted to the site and its boundary. There would be no additional direct physical effects on the wider area the site.

Effects upon Landscape Elements and Features

- 6.13** An assessment is made on the effect of the proposed development on the landscape elements and features that currently characterise the site. Effects are assessed at:

- Year 1 of the operational phase (short-term), when built form has been completed and any soft landscape treatment has been implemented but has yet to establish and grow; and
- Year 15 of the operational phase (medium term), when built form has begun to mellow and weather and soft landscape including any grass, trees, hedgerows and shrubs etc have fully established and are starting to fill out.

Topography

- 6.14** The topography of the site is not considered to be rare or unusual in the context of the wider landscape. The site topography has previously been reprofiled so as to accommodate the existing structures on the site and is assessed as having a low value.
- 6.15** No major cut or fill exercise is anticipated. Any changes to the generally level profile of the site are likely to be localised and comparatively minor. The susceptibility of the site topography to the type of development being proposed is low.
- 6.16** With a low value and a low susceptibility, the site's topography is assessed as being of low sensitivity to change. Although permanent, it is considered that any minor changes to the site's overall topography as a consequence of retaining structures, steps installation, placing of thresholds etc, with the proposals in place would bring about a low magnitude of change.
- 6.17** With a low magnitude of change and a low sensitivity, the scale of effect on the site's topography at year 1 of the operational phase is assessed as negligible neutral. It is assessed that the scale of effect at year 15 of the operational phase would remain negligible neutral.

Trees and shrubs

- 6.18** The existing tree and shrub resource on the site are predominantly non-native, garden specimens, associated with the rear gardens of numbers 88 and 89 Luddesdown Road. The vegetation as a landscape feature does make some limited contribution to the character of both the site and the local area. The vegetation is assessed as having a low value.

- 6.19** Trees and shrubs have an inherently high susceptibility to all types of development that might have an effect on their root system. With a low value and a high susceptibility, the existing tree and shrub resource on the site is assessed as having an overall medium sensitivity.
- 6.20** It is anticipated that much of the existing vegetation would need to be removed so as to accommodate the proposed walkway and HGV access. However, new tree and shrub planting is proposed to either side of the new walkway. New planting is also proposed within the proposed garden extension. Any new planting will be comparatively immature at year 1 of the operational phase.
- 6.21** The magnitude of change at year 1 is assessed as medium. With a medium sensitivity, the scale of effect at year 1 of the operation phase of the proposed development is assessed as moderate adverse.
- 6.22** By year 15, the proposed new planting would have fully established and will have filled out. It is judged that the proposed planting would provide a notable enhancement to the site and that the scale of effect at year 15 would alter to moderate beneficial.

Public Rights of Way

- 6.23** No public rights of way pass through the site. Change to the public right of way network would be perceptual i.e. visual rather than physical (see section 7).

Water Features

- 6.24** There would be no water features directly affected by the proposed development on the site.

Effects Upon Landscape Character

The site, the immediate landscape and the surrounding environs

- 6.25** There would be a noticeable change to the character of the site with the proposed development in place. Any change would be long term. However, such a change is judged to be consistent, in respect of landscape and visual matters, with the requirements and aspirations of the relevant Local Plan and National Landscape Management Plan policies.
- 6.26** The proposals would remove an area of hard standing and timber fencing associated with the existing entrance to the yard to the Vineyard Farm winery off Luddesdown Road. Those structure's to be removed are of variable quality and, together with the existing hard standing, are considered to contribute little positively to the character of the site or to that of the wider landscape in the surrounding local area.
- 6.27** The greatest change would be to the internal rather than external aspect of the site. An area of hard standing would be removed at the existing entrance to the yard of the

adjacent winery. Although a new walkway and HGV accessway is to be created, much of the proposed extension would be imperceptible from publicly accessible locations in the wider landscape.

- 6.28** Consistent with the relevant Local Plan and National Landscape policies, the proposed development is intended to be of a high quality design. The proposals would introduce new tree and shrub planting together with grassland areas on to the site that have the potential to positively contribute to the character of both the site and the local host area. Similarly, the choice of hard landscape materials, as required of policy, would make reference to the vernacular of the local area and immediate site context. As such the proposals would maintain the local distinctiveness of the site and the wider settlement of Lower Luddesdown.
- 6.29** It is judged that the replacement of the existing boundary close boarded and timber palisade fencing fronting Luddesdown Road with a new flint wall, would be a positive improvement to the streetscape. The use of flint is a recognised characteristic of the local area
- 6.30** In respect of night time effects, the proposed development would introduce some new light sources. However, the site is already situated in the context of other light sources both residential and commercial. A lighting design is not available at the time of writing this LVA report. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that the form and design of the proposed walkway external lighting would be agreed by the local planning authority through a suitably worded condition.
- 6.31** The proposals would not result in the removal of any notable landscape features from the site that contribute appreciably to the local character of the National Landscape. With the proposed development in place on the site, there would be no change to the physical characteristics of the surrounding local landscape.
- 6.32** With the possible exception of new services and utilities, which would be underground, it is anticipated that no works associated with the proposals would occur outside the site boundary. Any changes to the landscape surrounding the site would be experiential and/or perceptual ones.
- 6.33** Experientially, the proposals would be a source of activity and noise. However, much of the area adjacent to the site is either an active pub/restaurant or a commercial winery and noise and activity is already a feature of the site. It is anticipated that there would be little change to the perceived level of tranquillity on or around the site with the proposed development as a whole in place.
- 6.34** The primary perceptual change would be visual. There would be a notable change to the appearance of the site from certain locations with the proposed development in place. However, the visual envelope in which any important changes to the appearance of the local landscape would occur would be limited to a very close proximity to the site

boundary. Beyond a distance of approximately 100 metres from the site boundary, the proposed development would either not be visible or would be barely perceptible in the context of more expansive views containing other more prominent and/or dominant development.

- 6.35** The proposals would not give rise to any physical or visual coalescence of settlements. Nor would the presence of the proposed development restrict any views of key landmark features such as local churches etc.

Magnitude of Change

- 6.36** The magnitude of change on the character of the site is assessed as high. The magnitude of change on the character of the local landscape is assessed as low. Physical change would only occur on the site, but the wider pattern of the landscape would be altered to only a limited degree.

Scale of Effect Year 1 and 15

- 6.37** With a medium sensitivity and a high magnitude of change, it is assessed that the scale of effect on the site at year 1 major neutral - where on balance the effect would maintain the quality, integrity or key characteristics of the landscape or visual receptor and where the change is different but represents neither a deterioration nor enhancement.
- 6.38** With a medium sensitivity and a low magnitude of change, the scale of effect on the wider local landscape at year 1 would be minor neutral.
- 6.39** At year 15, the proposed garden extension features would have become established and the materials used would have mellowed with weathering, making the new parts a closer match with existing, retained materials. At year 15, the proposed new planting would have also fully established and filled out. It is assessed that the scale of effect on landscape character of both the site and the local area would alter to minor beneficial.

Summary

- 6.40** The potential effects on the character and appearance of the local landscape associated with the proposed extension to The Lion pub garden would primarily be localised. Physical changes would be confined to the site. Though the changes to the site would be permanent during the operational phase of the proposed development, it is judged that any effect on the local character of the National Landscape would be confined to a comparatively narrow margin of land around the site.
- 6.41** No landscape features that profoundly contribute to the character of the area would be removed as a result of the proposed development. The design of the proposed garden extension would reflect and reference the local vernacular in respect of the choice of materials. There is scope for much of the proposed planting to be of native species.

- 6.42** The features of the proposed development would be generally discrete and would be in keeping with the local area's mainly commercial character, providing a development that would be wholly suited to its context. As such, The proposals accord with the objectives and policies at a national and local level as they relate to landscape and visual matters.

7. Effect on Visual Amenity

Assessment of Visual Effects

- 7.1** The site survey and photographic assessment was undertaken on 19th June 2025. The locations of the representative viewpoints are shown on the individual assessment sheets (see Appendix 9).
- 7.2** In line with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - 3rd Edition, the representative viewpoints form part of a detailed visual assessment. The visual assessment has been undertaken to help determine how the proposed development might influence the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape.
- 7.3** The visual assessment was taken when leaf cover on the deciduous trees was present and visibility was at a minimum. Consideration has also been given to when leaf cover is absent and visibility is at a maximum.

Selection of Representative Viewpoints

- 7.4** A series of 8 viewpoints have been selected from a desk top study, and then micro-sited in the field. These viewpoints are regarded as being representative of the range of potential views and visual receptors e.g. people using the public highway, rights of way etc., from various distances and directions around the site. The views are not intended to be exhaustive.

Visual Commentary

Viewpoint 1

Description of Baseline View

- 7.5** This view is taken from the junction of Cutter Ridge Road and Luddesdown. The view looks south-west across the car park of The Lion pub which is seen to the right of the view in the middle distance. The winery (shop) is seen to the left of the view.
- 7.6** Views into the site are restricted by built form and structures. The view is representative of users of the public highway. It is noted that this section of the highway forms part of the Luddesdown Trek walkers trail.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptor

- 7.7** Users of the public highway network are assessed as having a medium susceptibility to changes in the view but as part of a recreational walking route the walkers using the highway are assessed as having a high susceptibility to changes in the view. The view is assessed as having a low value. The overall sensitivity of the visual receptor i.e. the person observing the view, is assessed as medium.

Predicted View at Year 1 & Magnitude of Change

- 7.8** With the proposed development in place there would be little change to the view. The consented extension to the pub would continue to screen views into the site. At year 1 the magnitude of change is assessed as negligible.

Scale of Visual Effect

- 7.9** With a medium sensitivity and a negligible magnitude of change, it is assessed that the scale of effect at year 1 would be negligible neutral. By year 15, some of the proposed planting on the site would be visible in part. At year 15, the scale of effect is assessed as minor beneficial.

Viewpoint 2

Description of Baseline View

- 7.10** This view is taken from Cutter Ridge Road and looks west through a gap in the roadside vegetation. Not all the site is visible. The northern part of the site including that within the farmyard can clearly be seen.
- 7.11** The view is representative of users of the public highway. It is noted that this section of the highway forms part of the Luddesdown Trek walkers trail.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptor

- 7.12** Users of the public highway network are assessed as having a medium susceptibility to changes in the view but as part of a recreational walking route the walkers using the highway are assessed as having a high susceptibility to changes in the view. The view is assessed as having a low value. The overall sensitivity of the visual receptor i.e. the person observing the view, is assessed as medium.

Predicted View at Year 1 & Magnitude of Change

- 7.13** With the proposed development in place there would be a noticeable change. New boundary treatments would be seen in the middle distance separating and screening the yard from Luddesdown Road. The existing vegetation would be removed to the rear of the residential properties whilst some new planting would be apparent – though immature. The magnitude of change is assessed as medium.

Scale of Visual Effect

- 7.14** With a medium sensitivity and a medium magnitude of change, it is assessed that the scale of effect at year 1 would be moderate neutral. By year 15, the change to the view would no longer be readily perceived, as all the elements of the proposals would have weathered and melded with the retained elements of the view. The proposed tree and shrub planting would have filled out and would have softened some of the site boundary. At year 15, the scale of effect is assessed as minor beneficial.

Viewpoint 3 and 4

Description of Baseline View

- 7.15** These views are two sequential ones taken from Luddesdown Road to the north and south respectively of the existing entrance to the yard of the winery. The views show an assortment of visual clutter and poor quality boundary treatments. Not all the site is visible.
- 7.16** The views are representative of users of the public highway network.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptor

- 7.17** Users of the public highway are assessed as having a medium susceptibility to changes in the view. The views are assessed as having a low value. The overall sensitivity of the visual receptor i.e. the person observing the view, is assessed as low.

Predicted View at Year 1 & Magnitude of Change

- 7.18** With the proposed development in place on the site, the magnitude of change is assessed as high. Much of the site would be screened from view through the construction of the proposed tall flint wall.

Scale of Visual Effect

- 7.19** With a low sensitivity and a high magnitude of change it assessed that the scale of effect at year 1 and year 15 of the operational phase will be moderate beneficial. It is judged that the proposed wall will be a positive enhancement to what is currently an open and degraded view of a commercial facility.

Viewpoint 5

Description of Baseline View

- 7.20** This view is a sequential one taken from Luddesdown Road. The view looks north along the road.
- 7.21** The Lion pub and its existing garden structures is seen to the north of the existing entrance to the winery yard. In the foreground is the front garden to 88 Luddesdown Road. The remainder of the site is screened from view.

- 7.22** The views are representative of users of the public highway.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptor

- 7.23** Users of the public highway network are assessed as having a medium susceptibility to changes in the view. The view is assessed as having a low value with little inherent merit aesthetically. The overall sensitivity of the visual receptor i.e. the person observing the view, is assessed as low.

Predicted View at Year 1 & Magnitude of Change

- 7.24** The proposed development would bring about a notable change to the view. Much of the view would be screened with the introduction of the proposed new flint wall to the boundary of the proposed garden extension and along the reconfigured boundary of number 88.
- 7.25** The Lion pub, and the consented pub building extension, would be seen in part rising above the proposed flint wall.
- 7.26** The magnitude of change is assessed as high. The nature of the change in the view is judged to be positive.

Scale of Visual Effect

- 7.27** With a low sensitivity and a high magnitude of change, the scale of effect is assessed as moderate beneficial at year 1 and year 15.

Viewpoint 6

Description of Baseline View

- 7.28** This view is a sequential view taken from Luddesdown Road directly opposite the proposed loading area and the rear garden of 89 Luddesdown Road. Most of the site is screened from view. The existing store building is seen and to the left of this the proposed new access to the farmyard can be distinguished (though a container blocks views further into the site). Dense garden vegetation is evident, which also screens views deeper into the site.
- 7.29** The view is representative of users of the public highway.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptor

- 7.30** Users of the public highway network are assessed as having a medium susceptibility to changes in the view. The view is assessed as having a low value. The overall sensitivity of the visual receptor i.e. the person observing the view, is assessed as low.

Predicted View at Year 1 & Magnitude of Change

- 7.31** Much of the existing garden vegetation in the view would be removed so as to facilitate the construction of the proposed walkway and HGV access. The existing container in the centre of the view would be removed and the threshold to the existing store building made good.
- 7.32** New garden fencing, and gates to the proposed walkway, would be evident in the foreground. New replacement planting associated with the new walkway would be comparatively immature.
- 7.33** The magnitude of change is assessed as high.

Scale of Visual Effect

- 7.34** With a low sensitivity and a high magnitude of change, the scale of effect at year 1 is assessed as moderate neutral. The view would neither deteriorate nor improve.
- 7.35** At year 15, the scale of effect would alter to minor neutral. The proposed tree planting associated with the proposed walkway would have grown sufficiently to be noticeable above the new garden fencing.

Viewpoint 7

Description of Baseline View

- 7.36** This view is taken from public right of way NS225 and looks north-east towards the site. Much of the site is screened and is not visible.
- 7.37** Existing vegetation frames the southern central part of the site which is seen in the centre of the view. The existing (off-site) store building is the most prominent feature.
- 7.38** The view is representative of users of the public right of way network.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptor

- 7.39** Users of the public right of way network are assessed as having a high susceptibility to changes in the view. The view is assessed as having a low value. The overall sensitivity of the visual receptor i.e. the person observing the view, is assessed as medium.

Predicted View at Year 1 & Magnitude of Change

- 7.40** Most of the proposed development would be screened. However, there would be some change to the view.
- 7.41** The area in front of the existing store building would be resurfaced and made good. There would be a loss of vegetation in the middle distance associated with the construction of the proposed walkway and HGV access route through to the yard.

7.42 The new gate to the walkway would be evident as would new garden fencing to 88 and 89 Luddesdown Road. Any proposed planting would be comparatively immature. The existing off-site store building would remain the most prominent and dominant feature in the view.

7.43 The magnitude of change at year 1 is assessed as medium.

Scale of Visual Effect

7.44 With a medium sensitivity and a medium magnitude of change, the scale of effect at year 1 is assessed as moderate neutral. At year 15, new planting implemented as part of the proposed development would have fully established and filled out, and would be visible in the view. Any loss of vegetation would be mitigated. The scale of effect would alter to minor beneficial at year 15.

Viewpoint 8

Description of Baseline View

7.45 This view is taken from Luddesdown Road on its northern approach into Lower Luddesdown. Numbers 88 and 89 Luddesdown Road can be seen in the middle distance. Only a small area of the site in front of the existing off-site store

7.46 The views are representative of users of the public highway.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptor

7.47 Users of the public highway network are assessed as having a medium susceptibility to changes in the view. The views are assessed as having a medium value. The overall sensitivity of the visual receptor i.e. the person observing the view, is assessed as medium.

Predicted View at Year 1 & Magnitude of Change

7.48 There would be a slight change in the view with the proposed development in place on the site. There would be some loss of garden vegetation in the middle distance at the centre of the view to be replaced by new garden fencing and planting associated with the proposed walkway. The magnitude of change is assessed as low. The area around the site would remain unaltered visually.

Scale of Visual Effect

7.49 With a medium sensitivity and low magnitude of change, the scale of effect at year 1 is assessed as minor neutral.

7.50 At year 15, the proposed tree and shrub planting associated with the proposed walkway would be sufficiently developed as to screen much of the lower part of the cottage and any garden fencing. The scale of effect would alter to minor beneficial.

Summary of detailed visual assessment

7.51 A summary of the effects on visual amenity of the 10 representative viewpoints is given in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1 – Summary of the effects on representative viewpoints

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Scale of Effect at years 1	Scale of Effect at year 15
Viewpoint 1 - View from junction of Luddesdown Road and Cutter Ridge Road looking south-west	Medium	Negligible	Negligible neutral	Minor beneficial
Viewpoint 2- View from Cutter Ridge Road looking west	Medium	Medium	Moderate neutral	Minor beneficial
Viewpoint 3 - View from Luddesdown Road opposite existing entrance into yard looking south	Low	High	Moderate beneficial	Moderate beneficial

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Scale of Effect at years 1	Scale of Effect at year 15
Viewpoint 4 – View from Luddesdown Road opposite 88 Luddesdown Road looking east	Low	High	Moderate beneficial	Moderate beneficial
View 5 – View from Luddesdown Road opposite number 89 looking north	Low	High	Moderate beneficial	Moderate beneficial
View 6 – View from Luddesdown Road opposite the loading area looking west	Low	High	Moderate neutral	Minor neutral
Viewpoint 7 – View from public right of way NS225 looking north- east	Medium	Medium	Moderate neutral	Minor beneficial

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Scale of Effect at years 1	Scale of Effect at year 15
Viewpoint 8 – View from Luddesdown Road adjacent to overspill car park looking north-east	Medium	Low	Minor neutral	Minor beneficial

7.52 No adverse visual effects were identified. The proposed development is intended to be of a high quality design. The existing structures that the proposals would be replacing or screening are not inherently visually attractive or appealing when seen from the public realm.

7.53 Although it is anticipated that some vegetation would be removed to accommodate the proposals, new tree and shrub planting is proposed. Once established and filled out, this new planting will mitigate for any losses and will positively contribute to particular views – functioning as a screen and providing visual interest.

7.54 Residual effects for the representative views would range from moderate beneficial to minor neutral.

Summary

7.55 The visual appraisal undertaken for the proposed development demonstrates that the area within the host landscape from where the proposals would be seen is limited. The site has a limited and well contained zone of visual influence, owing to the proximity of large blocks of woodland and the surrounding undulating topography. Also, given the pub and winery's comparatively isolated location, the number of potential visual receptors is limited. In most instances, the proposed development would have a beneficial effect on the general visual amenity of the local area.

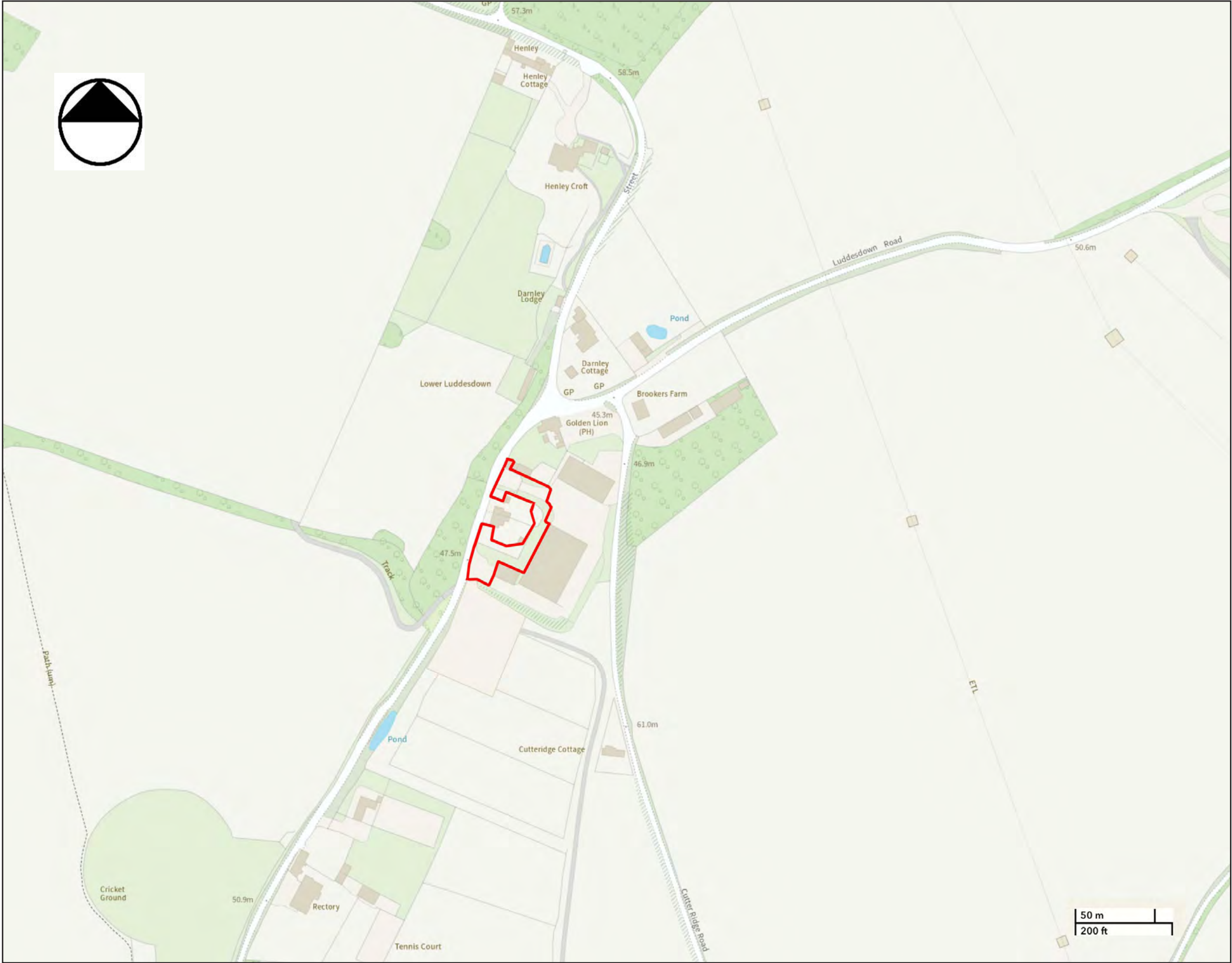
8. Summary and Conclusions

- 8.1** This report is prepared as a Landscape and Visual Appraisal by Briarwood Landscape Architecture Limited by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute, to accompany a proposed pub garden extension ('the proposed development') at The Lion (also known as The Golden Lion) public house, Luddesdown Road, Luddesdown.
- 8.2** The site comprises the existing access into the Vineyard Farm winery together with a margin of land, between the store building for the winery complex and a pair of semi-detached residential properties fronting onto Luddesdown Road together with parts of the properties gardens and the entrance area into the recently constructed winery overflow car park.
- 8.3** The site is currently entirely private with no public access. The closest public right of way is adjacent to the southern end of the site on the western side of Luddesdown Road. The site and the local area are within the Kent Downs National Landscape.
- 8.4** The proposed development includes for:
- The extension of the existing pub garden of The Lion to the south-west including the construction of a new tall flint boundary wall
 - A new illuminated pedestrian walkway to be constructed leading from the proposed garden extension to the recently constructed overflow car park to the south-west of the Winery complex
 - A new HGV concrete access way to be created to connect the farmyard to the loading area off Luddesdown Road, south-west of the residential properties
 - The introduction of new tree and shrub planting
- 8.5** The potential effects on the character and appearance of the local landscape associated with the proposed extension to The Lion pub garden would primarily be localised. Physical changes would be confined to the site.
- 8.6** Though the changes to the site would be permanent during the operational phase of the proposed development, it is judged that any experiential or perceptual effect on the local character of the National Landscape would be confined to a comparatively narrow margin of land around the site.
- 8.7** No landscape features that profoundly contribute to the character of the area would be removed as a result of the proposed development. The design of the proposed garden extension would reflect and reference the local vernacular in respect of the choice of materials.

- 8.8** The introduction of the proposed flint boundary wall would enhance the character of the site by removing detracting features such as old fencing and by screening other potentially detracting elements such as working and storage areas of the adjacent winery. Similarly, there is scope for much of the proposed planting to be of native species which would represent an enhancement over the present predominantly non-native planting on the site.
- 8.9** The features of the proposed development would be discrete and would be in keeping with the local area's mainly commercial character, providing a development that would be wholly suited to its context. As such, the proposals are judged to accord with the objectives and policies at a national and local level as they relate to landscape and visual matters.
- 8.10** The visual appraisal undertaken for the proposed development demonstrates that the area within the host landscape from where the proposals would be seen is limited. The site has well contained zone of visual influence, owing to the presence of dense hedgerows, tree belts and woodland together with the surrounding undulating topography. Also, given the pub and winery's comparatively isolated location, the number of potential visual receptors is limited. In most instances, It is judged that the proposed development would have a beneficial effect on the general visual amenity of the local area.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan



KEY TO PLAN



The Site



DRAWING Site Location Plan			
PROJECT The Lion, Luddesdown			
SCALE As shown	DATE July. 2025	DRAWN SW	
DRAWING NUMBER BLA451-01		REVISION A	

Appendix 2 – Detailed Methodology

DETAILED METHODOLOGY

Introduction

1. This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been undertaken with reference to best practice, as outlined in the following published guidance:
 - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) - Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013)
 - Notes and Clarifications on Aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLIVA3) – LITGN- 2024-01 (August 2025) - The Landscape Institute
 - An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment – Natural England (2014)
 - Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 – Assessing landscape value outside national designations – The Landscape Institute
2. The proposed scheme is assessed for the purposes of the landscape and visual analysis. Landscape and visual effects are assessed through professional judgements on the sensitivity of landscape elements, landscape character, visual receptors and representative viewpoints combined with the predicted magnitude of change arising from the proposed development.
3. The landscape and visual effects of the proposals have been assessed in the following sections:
 - Effects on landscape elements;
 - Effects on landscape character; and
 - Effects on visual amenity.
4. As outlined in paragraph 1.11 of GLVIA3, though the processes used to undertake them are very similar, the term Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been used to distinguish this standalone report from a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which often constitutes part of a larger, formal, EIA document.

5. Whilst the processes and principles are fundamentally the same for an 'appraisal' as an LVIA, Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2004-01 explains:

"In carrying out an LVA, the same principles and process as set out in GLVIA3 may be applied to report on effects (identifying the relative importance/ levels of the effects on a scale with reference to sensitivity and magnitude of effect), but it is not required to establish whether the effects arising are or are not significant."

6. NB 'Significance' is not determined as part of the LVA.

Study Area

7. The initial study area for the LVA is taken to be a 5km radius from the site. Unless otherwise stated, the main focus of the assessment is taken as a radius of 2km from the site as it is considered that beyond this distance, even with good visibility, the proposed development would not be perceptible in the composite landscape.

Heritage and Ecology

8. The effects on settings of heritage assets or ecological/environmental assets are not considered within this LVA.

Nature of Effects

9. An impact is an action e.g. building a wall. An effect is the consequence of a particular action on the integrity of the landscape, feature or view.
10. The nature of any effect will be adverse, beneficial or neutral and are summarised as:

- Adverse - where on balance there is a negative effect on the quality, integrity or key characteristics of the landscape or visual receptor
- Beneficial - where on balance there is a positive effect on the quality, integrity or key characteristics of the landscape or visual receptor
- Neutral – where on balance the effect would maintain the quality, integrity or key characteristics of the landscape or visual receptor or where the change is different but represents neither a deterioration nor enhancement

11. Unless expressly noted, effects are deemed to be adverse in nature.

Duration and reversibility

12. These are separate but linked considerations. Duration is judged according to the defined terms set out in below. Reversibility is a judgement about the prospects and practicality of the particular effect being reversed in, for example, a generation. The categories used in this assessment are set out below.

Duration:

- Long term (20 years+)
- Medium to long term (10 to 20 years)
- Medium term (5 to 10 years)
- Short term (1 year to 5 years)

Reversibility:

- Permanent with unlikely restoration to original state e.g. major road corridor, power station, urban extension etc;
- Permanent with possible conversion to original state e.g. agricultural buildings, retail units etc;
- Partially reversible to a different state e.g. mineral workings etc;
- Reversible after decommissioning to a similar original state e.g. renewable energy development etc; and
- Quickly reversible e.g. temporary structures.

Landscape Elements and Character Assessment Baseline

13. A baseline landscape assessment is carried out to determine the current elements and character of the landscape within and surrounding the site. This involved an initial desktop study of but not necessarily limited to:

- Ordnance survey maps at 1:50,000, 1:25,000 scales
- Aerial photographs of the site and surrounding area
- Datasets for rural designations from the MAGIC website (Multi Agency

Geographic Information for the Countryside)

- Relevant planning policy
- National and local scale landscape character assessments

Visual Assessment Baseline

14. The assessment of visual effects is undertaken on the basis of viewpoint analysis as recommended in best practice guidelines. The viewpoints which are in different directions from the site and are at varying distances and locations were selected to represent a range of views and visual receptor types.
15. The viewpoints are representational and not exhaustive. They are taken from publicly accessible land and not from any third party, private, land unless otherwise stated.
16. The viewpoints were used as the basis for determining the effects of visual receptors within the entire study area. The viewpoints were photographed at approximately 1.6 metres above ground level.

Sensitivity of Landscape Elements and Features

17. The sensitivity attributed to a landscape element or feature is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a particular landscape element feature and the susceptibility of the landscape element/feature to changes that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development as outlined in pages 88-90 of GLVIA3.

Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors

18. Within GLVIA3, Susceptibility is defined as: 'The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences' (p158). Susceptibility is further defined in accordance with Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01 and the Oxford English Dictionary as being:

'The quality or condition of being susceptible; capability of receiving, being affected by, or undergoing something'.

"This definition would imply that a higher susceptibility would mean more

liable to be harmed by a particular thing...”

19. To understand susceptibility to change, the various characteristics/factors that make up a particular landscape must be identified and consideration given as to how these will be affected by the specific characteristics of the proposed development.
20. The overall susceptibility to change is allocated using professional judgement based upon consideration of the various factors outlined below and the relative weight attached to these (which will vary from landscape to landscape).
21. A landscape may have different levels of susceptibility to different scales and types of development (e.g. new houses; wind turbines; power lines etc). Consideration is given to physical and perceptual factors which are considered together to derive an overall susceptibility to the specific type of change.
22. The types of factors influencing the susceptibility of a landscape to change are set out below:
 - **Scale:** A larger scale landscape (relative to the development proposed) will typically be less susceptible than a smaller scale landscape.
 - **Pattern/Complexity:** The susceptibility of a receiving landscape to change will be influenced by the specific pattern of features and elements present and by the complexity of this pattern. A simpler landscape pattern will typically be more susceptible than a complex one. The pattern of the landscape may also be predominantly horizontal, or it may be vertical. The former would be less susceptible to development that had a horizontal emphasis whilst a landscape pattern with a strongly vertical would be less susceptible to a development that complemented such an emphasis.
 - **Development/Human Influence:** A landscape that includes obvious alterations to natural ground levels, includes many contemporary development elements or structures, or that is clearly

functional/utilitarian in its land use will typically be less susceptible to change that introduces contemporary structures than one where development is either absent or more traditional in style, or where natural influences and natural or long-established landforms are predominant.

- **Connections with adjacent areas:** A landscape which has a clear relationship with other surrounding landscapes, for example in relation to views in and out, will typically be more susceptible than one that is more enclosed where such intervisibility not present.
- **Visual Interruption:** A landscape where views are frequently interrupted by screening features, for example vegetation cover or variations in landform, will typically be less susceptible than one where there are few / no screening features.

23. A particular landscape may have different characteristics that are more or less susceptible to change.

24. Susceptibility is assessed as high, medium or low. The rationale in support of the assessment of susceptibility is set out for each receptor in the assessment, so that it is clear how each judgement has been made.

Table 1: Susceptibility of Landscape Elements and Features

Susceptibility to change	Criteria
High	A very limited ability of the landscape element of feature to accommodate the type of development being proposed – a particular susceptibility. Few opportunities for mitigation and enhancement.
Medium	A moderate ability of the landscape element of feature to accommodate the type of development being proposed – some susceptibility. Some opportunities for mitigation and enhancement .
Low	A well-defined ability of the landscape element of feature to accommodate the type of development being proposed – little susceptibility. Good opportunities for mitigation and enhancement .

Susceptibility of Landscape Elements and Features

25. The susceptibility criteria of landscape elements and features is given in Table

2 but a judgement has been made by linking back to the evidence gathered at the baseline stage.

Table 2: Value of Landscape Elements and Features

Low	Ones that: • have no or little rarity and/or, • make no and/or make only a limited contribution to the character and local visual and amenity value and/or • are of such poor condition that the element/feature has lost its ability to contribute effectively to the character of the landscape
Medium	Ones that: • are notable in the landscape, with some visual and/or amenity interest but, • do not make a particularly strong or important contribution to the character of the landscape and/or, • ones that are an intrinsic element of landscape but in poor condition
High	Ones that: • make an important contribution to the character of the landscape and/or • have particular historical or cultural reference and/or • are distinctive or rare and typically of good condition

Table 3: Sensitivity of Landscape Elements and Features

	VALUE			
SUSCEPTIBILITY		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
	HIGH	High	High	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Low

	LOW	Medium	Low	Low
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Magnitude of Change on Landscape Elements and Features

26. Professional judgement, using the criteria given in Table 4 , and also considering geographic extent and the duration and reversibility of the effect, has been used to determine the magnitude of direct physical impacts on individual existing landscape elements and features. NB Alterations may include the addition of new elements and features.

Table 4: Criteria for magnitude of change for landscape elements and features

Negligible	No loss or very minor alteration to part of an existing landscape element and/or feature
Low	Minor loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape element and or feature
Medium	Some loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape element and/or feature
High	Total/major loss or alteration of an existing landscape element and/or feature

Sensitivity of Landscape Character

27. Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a landscape and the susceptibility of the landscape to changes that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development as outlined in pages 88-90 of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

28. Table 5 below provides the potential levels of ‘value’ attributable to a particular landscape. In assessing the relative value of a particular landscape a range of factors are considered based upon Box 5.1 on page 84 of GLVIA3 and Technical Guidance Note 02/21.

Table 5: Value of Landscape Character

Low	An area that is in a recognisably poor condition/quality and/or with a weak strength of character that typically has a clear indication of being damaged and/or contains a high number of detractors, and/or is of limited visual cohesion; rare or distinctive elements and features are not a notable component that contribute to the character of the area. No known associations with cultural/historic people.
Medium	An area is recognisable as being in reasonable condition/quality and/or with a strength of character but likely to exhibit some damage or deterioration and/or some visual cohesion and interest; rare or distinctive elements and features make some contribution to the character of the area. Possible or limited associations with cultural/historic people.
High	Areas with international or national landscape designations, i.e. National Parks and National Landscape/AONB or occasionally landscapes non-designated landscape in particularly good condition/quality and/or strong strength of character or of particular local value and/or with few visual detractors; rare or distinctive elements and features are likely to be a key component that contribute to the character of the area. Recorded associations with cultural/historic people may be present.

Table 6: Susceptibility of Landscape Character

Susceptibility to change	Criteria
High	A very limited ability of the landscape to accommodate the type of development being proposed – a particular susceptibility. Few opportunities for mitigation and enhancement.
Medium	A moderate ability of the landscape to accommodate the type of development being proposed – some susceptibility. Some opportunities for mitigation and enhancement .
Low	A well-defined ability of the landscape to accommodate the type of development being proposed – little susceptibility. Good opportunities for mitigation and enhancement .

Susceptibility of Landscape Elements and Features

29. The susceptibility criteria of landscape elements and features is given in Table 6 but a judgement has been made by linking back to the evidence gathered at the baseline stage.

Table 7: Sensitivity of Landscape Character

	VALUE			
SUSCEPTIBILITY		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
	HIGH	High	High	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Low
	LOW	Medium	Low	Low

Magnitude of Change on Landscape Character

30. Professional judgement using Table 8, and also considering geographic extent and the duration and reversibility of the effect, has been used to determine the magnitude change on landscape character

Table 8: Criteria for magnitude of change for landscape character

Negligible	No notable introduction of new elements into the landscape or change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
Low	Introduction of minor new elements into the landscape or some minor change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
Medium	Introduction of some notable elements into the landscape or some notable change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape
High	Introduction of major elements into the landscape or some major change to the scale, landform, land cover or pattern of landscape

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

31. Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a view and the susceptibility of the receptor to changes in that view that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development as outlined in pages 113-114

of GLVIA3. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium or low.

32. GLVIA3 says a judgement should be made as to the value of a particular view being experienced. In making a professional judgement as to the value attached to a view, the following criteria have helped guide the process. Not all the criteria have to apply to a particular view and the criteria are not in a hierarchy.

Table 9: Criteria for judging levels of visual value

Low	• Views from within, across or towards undesignated landscapes and/or features of either importance to the site only or of no wider importance • View has little aesthetic merit e.g. has numerous visual detractors, is badly degraded etc. • View makes a limited contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the landscape • Views with no known social, cultural or historic associations • Views from locations that are not necessarily destination points or that are infrequently visited
Medium	• Views from within, across or towards undesignated landscapes and/or features of local importance • View with some limited aesthetic appeal • View makes a reasonable contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the landscape • Views with some known local social, cultural or historic associations • Views from locations that are locally popular destination points or that are frequently visited by locals but not necessarily by visitors from further afield

High	• Views from within, across or towards designated landscapes and/or features of importance at district level and above • View with great aesthetic appeal • View makes an important contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the landscape • Views with some known national or international social, cultural or historic associations especially to art and literature • Views from locations that are popular regional, national or international destination points or that are frequently visited by large numbers of visitors from further afield
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Susceptibility of Visual Receptors

33. GLIVA3 advises (on page 113) that susceptibility of a particular visual receptor (observer) to change in a view is mainly a function of the nature of the activity or occupation of the person or people experiencing a view at a particular location and the extent to which their interest or attention is drawn to the view.

34. In general, it is considered that:

- Occupiers of residential properties and people using public rights of way (where enjoyment is primarily drawn from the view) have a high susceptibility to change.
- Users of roads, railways and open space or engaged in an activity where an appreciation of the view forms a part of the experience are considered to be of medium susceptibility to change.
- People engaged in formal sport or occupiers of commercial premises or in areas of employment, where the view has limited importance to the activity being undertaken, are considered to be of low susceptibility to change.

Table 10: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

	VALUE			
SUSCEPTIBILITY		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
	HIGH	High	High	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Low
	LOW	Medium	Low	Low

Magnitude of Change on Visual Amenity

35. Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude change for visual receptors based upon the criteria outline in Table 11 but also considering the size and scale of change (including the loss or addition of features, changes in visual composition etc.) , the geographic influence of the change (orientation and angle of view in relation to the visual receptor, distance of the viewpoint from the main development, extent of area over which change would occur etc.) and, the duration and potential reversibility of any change (short term 0-5 years, medium term 5-10 years, medium to long term 10-15years and long term 20 years +, temporary, permanent, intermittent, continuous and whether the views will be full, partial or glimpsed).

36. It is possible for the proposed development to bring about 'no change' to a particular view. There would correspondingly be 'no effect'.

Table 11: Criteria for magnitude of change for visual receptors

Negligible	No notable change in the view
Low	Some change in the view that is not prominent / few visual receptors affected
Medium	Some change in the view that is clearly visible and forms an important but not defining element in the view

High	Major change in the view that has a defining influence on the overall view / many visual receptors affected
------	---

Scale of Effects

37. The scale of the landscape and visual effects is determined by cross referencing the sensitivity of the landscape feature, landscape character or view with the magnitude of change. The scale of effects is described as major, moderate, minor or negligible.

Table 12: Scale of effect thresholds for landscape character, landscape elements/features and visual receptors

		Magnitude of Change			
Sensitivity		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible

Appendix 3 – Context Views



Context view 1 - View from within existing pub garden looking south



Context view 2 - View from within site looking south along the proposed access to the farmyard



Context view 3 - View from within farmyard looking west



Context view 4 - View from within farmyard looking north-west

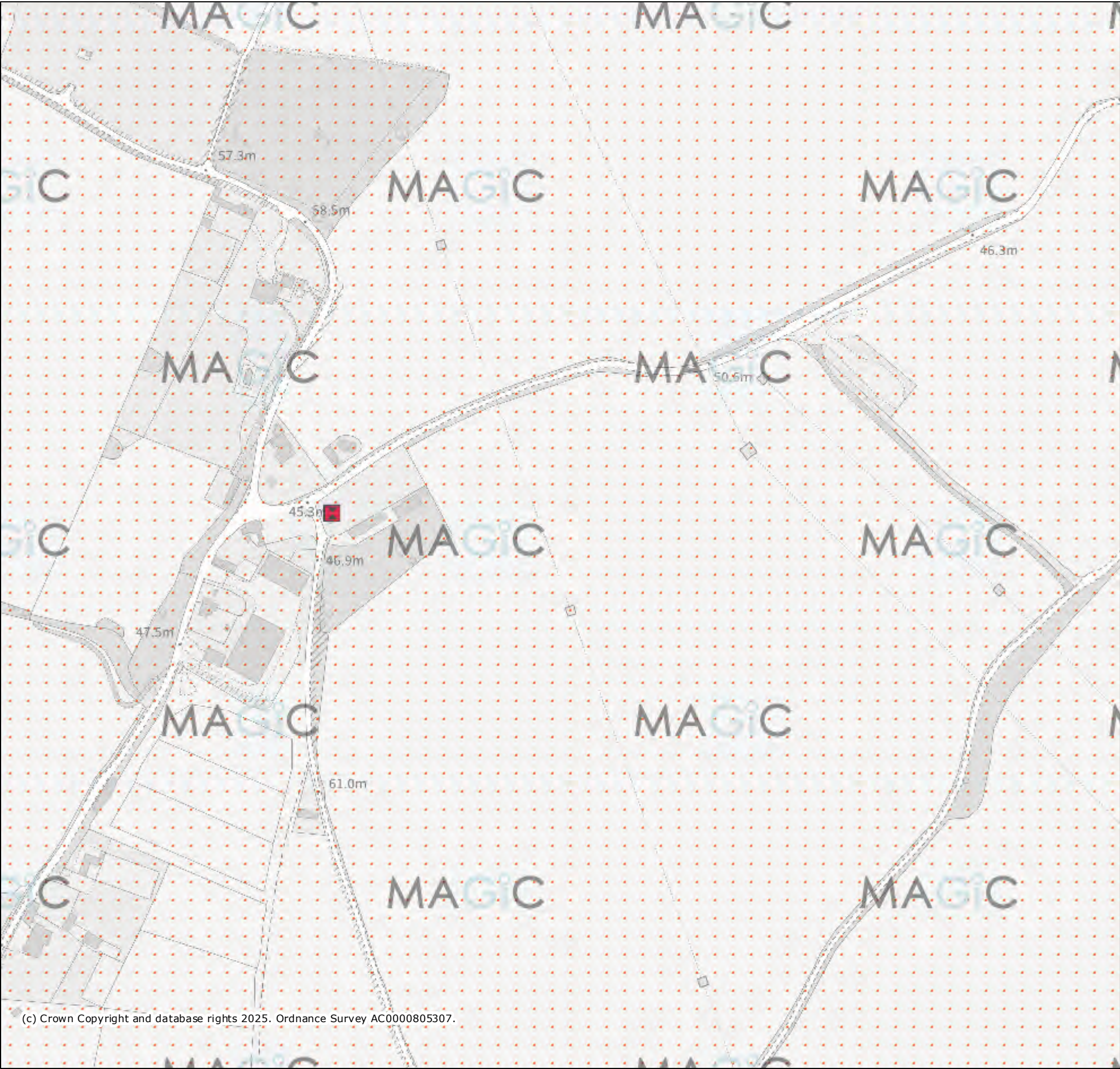


Context view 5 - View from within the farmyard looking south



Context view 6 - View from within site looking north along proposed access route to the farmyard

Appendix 4 – Designations



Legend

 National Landscape

Listed Buildings (England)

 I

 II

 II*

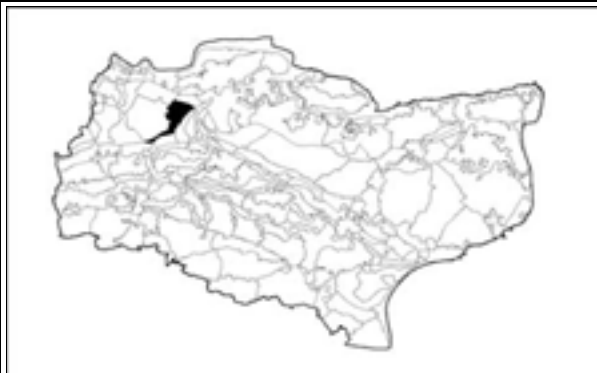
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ymax = 167100



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Appendix 5 – Luddesdown: West Kent Downs

LUDDESDOWN: WEST KENT DOWNS



LUDDESDOWN

This is a rich agricultural patchwork of rolling, valley-side pastures and extensive, undulating arable fields. Large areas of mixed woodland dominate the skyline, and form thick walls around fields, giving a strong definition to the fields. Extensive hedgerow removal, for arable cultivation, has increased the importance of these woodlands in giving structure to the landscape.

Threatened from the west by creeping suburbanisation and from the east by urban and industrial influences, it is still a peaceful, rural area. The thick belt of woodland along the eastern and southern scarp top plays an important role in preserving this atmosphere by sheltering the area from the Medway towns and factories.

WEST KENT DOWNS

Luddesdown lies within the larger character area of the West Kent Downs.

The south-facing, chalk scarp between the Medway and the Darent provides a strong visual boundary, dividing the Kemsing Vale from the deep, dry valleys and wooded plateau of the West Kent Downs. This sense of separation is increased by the extensive tracts of ecologically valuable deciduous woodlands along the top of the scarp.

Woodland is very significant in this landscape, providing an important backdrop for the rolling landform, the network of small country lanes, the scattered settlements and the extensive valley pastures. In the east, around Luddesdown, the fields are contained by thick walls of woodland, and strips of remnant coppice, or shaws, occur frequently along the steeper valley sides. Hidden away among trees are several medieval buildings, such as Luddesdown Court, constructed from the local Kentish ragstone, while the villages of Vigo and West Kingsdown are set deep in the woodlands themselves.

The clay-with-flints soil on the plateau and ridge tops is reflected in the pasture and woodland dominating these areas; in the valleys, the extent of the finer silt soils is reflected by the predominance of arable cultivation. The downland becomes increasingly open in the north, where the intimate character of the scarp top gives way to a large-scale landscape of intensively farmed, rolling valleys and large blocks of deciduous woodland. West of Rochester, the mature woodlands and historic parkland of Cobham Hall are severed from the deciduous coppice woodlands of Shorne Wood Country Park by the busy A2 trunk road and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL).

[next >>](#)

LUDESLOW: WEST KENT DOWNS

PHOTOGRAPH



CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

Rolling valleyside pasture and extensive undulating arable fields. Large areas of mixed woodland dominate skyline. Peaceful and rural, but threatened by suburban influences and industrial developments. Many hedgerows removed.

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition

The unity between landform and landscape elements is slightly interrupted by loss of hedgerow and the intensity of some areas of cultivation. However, there are very few visual detractors - some unsympathetic farm complexes and pylons amongst other minor detractors. The strong and extensive ecological base of wooded ridges is modified by the intensive agricultural use within arable areas on the lower slopes. The condition of heritage features is variable: tree cover is good, but field boundaries are few and declining. The scattered and isolated historic farmsteads are dominated by piecemeal residential development in the west of the character area. Characteristic building styles are of mixed age and have a moderate positive impact. The condition of the area is considered to be good.

Sensitivity

The area has a strong time-depth, reinforced by the distinctive ridgeline woodland and ancient highway routes. The historic hedgerow pattern is in decline and no longer contributes to the local distinctiveness. Many of the characteristic narrow, banked roads are open within arable areas, having lost their hedged boundaries. However, where they persist, they have a distinctive mix of species and are characteristically tall. Visibility is moderate as the landform is apparent and tree cover is intermittent. Sensitivity is considered to be high.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS

It is the ancient characteristics which are the strong element of this landscape, which should be conserved and enhanced. The unity between landform and the landcover is another very positive attribute. The loss of hedgerow in the arable areas may be addressed by conserving and extending remaining hedges along the highway, but this is possibly not appropriate within arable fields. The isolation and small-scale of farmsteads and hamlets should be conserved.

CONTEXT

Regional: Kent Downs AONB

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

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

ConditionGood.

Pattern of elements:	Coherent.
Detracting features:	Few.
Visual Unity:	Unified.
Cultural integrity:	Variable.
Ecological integrity:	Moderate.
Functional Integrity:	Coherent.

SensitivityHigh.

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

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

CONSERVE.

Conserve the ancient characteristics of the landscape such as woodland cover and the isolation of settlements. Conserve woodland on ridges, and enhance woodland by extending wooded shaws into lower slopes. Conserve mix of hedgerow species and management of tall hedgerow. Conserve the characteristics and enclosure of ancient highways

[previous <<](#)

Appendix 6 – Luddesdown Downs LCA

9. Luddesdown Downs



Landscape Description

Luddesdown Downs lies on the eastern boundary of Gravesham Borough, covering the settlements of Luddesdown and Lower Luddesdown. The area forms part of the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The geology comprises Chalk with Flints to the south, with areas of Upper and Middle chalk flowing across the valley sides. Ribbons of Undivided Flood Plain Gravel follow the central lines of Middle Chalk. Soils across valley sides are silty, with loam to clay across higher areas and plateaus.



The topography is very undulating, with views along dry valleys and wider views out to the urban edge of Gravesend and large electricity pylons to the north from higher parts. The land is a mixture of grazed pasture and arable land. Field shape and size is varied because of the topography. Tree belts, native hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees form

distinct boundaries. Woodland blocks add to the structure of the landscape, providing enclosure in parts and defining field edges. Woodland is generally native with some conifers in places.

The settlements of Luddesdown and Lower Luddesdown are situated within a valley and buildings are traditional, providing a strong sense of place and definite local vernacular. The settlements comprise few buildings, clustered around lane junctions. Development within the wider character area is sparse, with some properties and farmsteads scattered along the lanes. Timber framed buildings and Kent peg tiles are common, along with flint that reflects the geology of the Downs. Luddesdown Court is a notable Grade I building. Overhead wires cut across the landscape, following the line of Buckland Road in part.



Roads are narrow and winding and follow the contours of the downland landscape. Buckland Road runs through a valley known as the Bowling Alley. Footpaths are mostly concentrated around Luddesdown, with the Wealdway running north south linking Luddesdown with Great Buckland.

Key Characteristics

- Very undulating topography with farmland used as arable and pasture
- Irregular field pattern, with fields of various shapes and sizes
- Fields divided by native hedgerows
- Areas of native woodland
- Narrow winding lanes which follow contours
- Properties and farmsteads along lanes
- Small settlements within valleys
- Traditional timber framed buildings and Kent peg tiles



Condition: Good

The pattern of landscape elements is unified, with few visual detractors. Tree clumps and the undulating landform minimise views of the overhead wires. Overall, the visual unity is defined as strongly unified. Hedgerows form ecological corridors and are dense and complete along some boundaries and contain gaps along others. Native woodland is in good condition and the mixture of pasture and arable farmland increases ecological potential. Built development generally respects local vernacular and provides a distinct sense of place. There is strong ecological integrity and cultural integrity is traditional. The condition of the landscape is very good.

Sensitivity: High



This is a landscape that is likely to have remained largely unchanged in structure since medieval times. Settlements and buildings are generally traditional and distinct, providing coherency and a strong sense of place within the landscape. The landscape is recognised as an AONB. Hedgerows and woodlands are ancient and the lanes have derived from ancient routes. Landform is

apparent and tree cover is open in places allowing high visibility along valleys. Therefore, the sensitivity of the landscape is assessed as very high.

Guidelines: Conserve

The distinctive features that make up the Luddesdown Downs should be conserved to protect and maintain its character and quality.

- Conserve and manage ancient characteristics including woodland blocks and hedgerows.
- Conserve mix of hedgerow species.
- Conserve and maintain characteristic narrow lanes.
- Assess development proposals within the area to maintain the character of sparse and distinctive built development.
- Conserve the isolation and small-scale farmsteads and hamlets.
- Encourage the use of vernacular materials and techniques for buildings and built elements, particularly the use of flint and Kent peg tiles.

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

Appendix 7 – 1A West Downs LCA

2.0 West Kent Downs

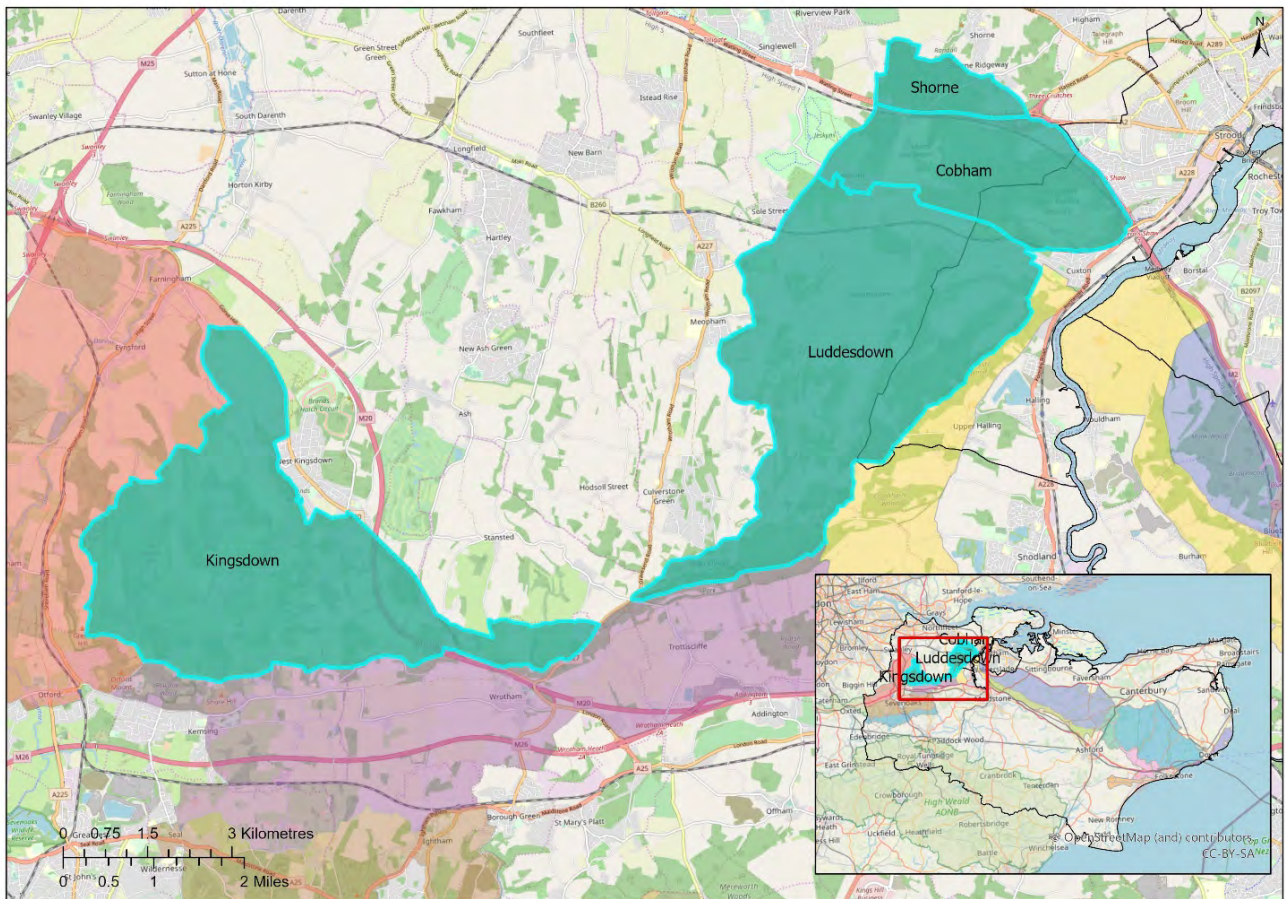
Landscape Character Area 1A

Landscape Character Type 1: Chalk Downs

Districts/ Boroughs: Sevenoaks; Tonbridge and Malling; Gravesham

Landscape/Countryside Partnerships: Medway Valley Countryside Partnership; Small part of Darent Valley

Location and Context: The West Kent Downs LCA is located in the west of the Kent Downs AONB, between the Darent Valley LCA (to the west) and the Medway Valley LCA (to the east). To the south is the Kemsing Scarp and Vale LCA. The northern boundary follows the AONB boundary, and includes Cobham Park and Shorne Wood.



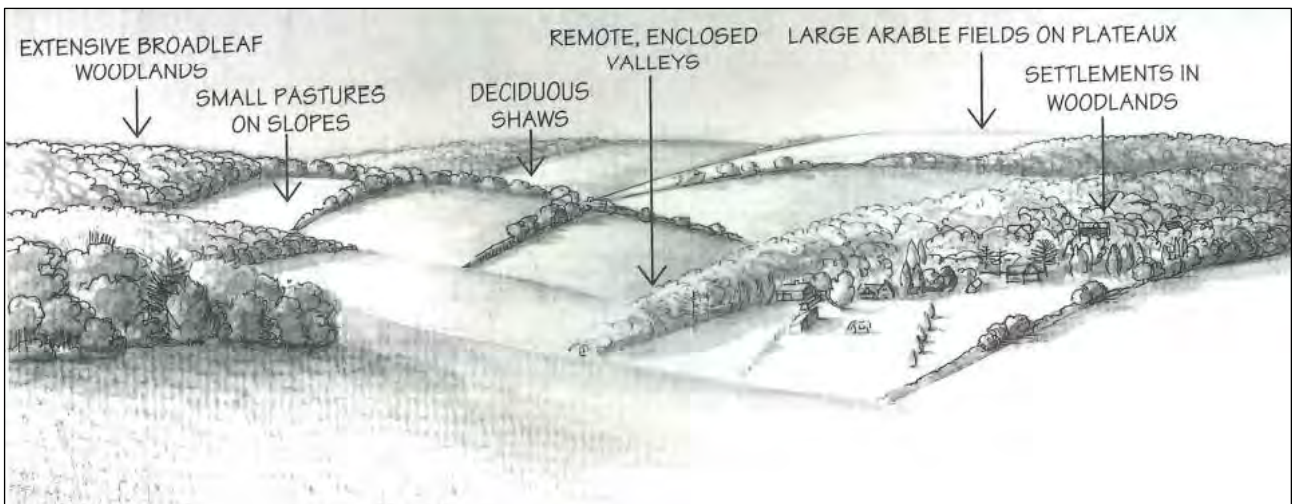
Location map for West Kent Downs LCA, also showing Local Character Areas of Kingsdown, Luddesdown, Cobham and Shorne



A typical view within the West Kent Downs Landscape Character Area. It is a strongly rural and well-treed landscape with extensive woodlands, thick hedgerows and little settlement. A series of steep, enclosed, dry valleys are separated by rolling chalk ridges.

Summary Characteristics

- Underlying geology of Cretaceous chalk, overlain with clay-with-flints, and occasional pockets of sand and gravel.
- A dip-slope landform of dry valleys running roughly north-south, interspersed with broad undulating ridges and plateaux.
- Very little surface water, limited to occasional pools where clay impedes drainage.
- Extensive blocks of woodland, as well as strips of woodland on valley sides. Luxuriant hedgerows and (in places) parkland trees add to the sense of enclosure and of a well-treed landscape.
- Arable agriculture is the predominant land use, with some pasture. Fields vary in shape and size, but are generally hedged.
- Semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, chalk grassland, scrub and occasional small quarry sites. Veteran trees occur in parkland and woodland.
- A strongly historic landscape, much of which has seen relatively little landscape change. Historic settlements and churches are linked by a network of ancient lanes, within a setting of fields, woodland and historic parkland.
- Main roads are limited to the periphery, and the lanes which run through it are generally narrow, quiet and lined with trees or hedges. Some are sunken, particularly where they cut through valley sides.
- In much of the area, the topography and/ or woodland restrict views, creating an insular and intimate feel, but with occasional long views along valleys.
- A peaceful, rural feel and a sense of isolation contrasts with the nearby urban areas and busy roads.
- Deciduous woodlands and trees create strong seasonal changes in the landscape, particularly in spring and autumn.
- Cobham Park, Ranscombe Farm Reserve, Ashenbank Woods and Shorne Woods Country park are popular places for local people to visit and enjoy the countryside.



Sketch of the West Kent Downs from 'The Kent Downs Landscape' (1995)

2.1 Description

- 2.1.1 This Landscape Character Area comprises the dip slope of the chalk between the Darent Valley in the west, the Medway Valley in the east, and the Kemsing Scarp and Vale to the south. The Mid Kent Downs and Kemsing Scarp are separated by both extensive tracts of woodland. The West Kent Downs contains a series of deep dry valleys running roughly north-south, separated by ridges and areas of broader plateaux.
- 2.1.2 It is a well-wooded area, which creates an enclosed and often intimate landscape. Where it opens out there are occasional long views, including striking views along valleys. With the exception of high land around Ranscombe and above the Darent Valley, there are few views out of the area, giving it quite an insular quality. The deeply rural and historic character of much of the area is particularly remarkable given its close proximity to urban centres.
- 2.1.3 Woodland is very significant in this landscape, providing an important backdrop for the rolling landform, the network of small country lanes, the scattered settlements and the extensive valley pastures. In the east, around Luddesdown, the fields are contained by thick 'walls' of woodland, and strips of remnant coppice, or shaws, occur frequently along the steeper valley sides. There are also areas of coppice woodland, including sweet chestnut and hornbeam. Much of the woodland is ancient, and the luxuriant, species-rich hedgerows add to the well-treed character of the landscape. There are also significant areas of chalk grassland, particularly on steeper slopes, although scrub encroachment and fragmentation of grassland habitats is a concern. Many of the woodland and grassland sites are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 2.1.4 Hidden away among the trees are several medieval buildings, such as Luddesdown Court and Upper Bush, constructed from the local Kentish ragstone or timber-framed using local oak. The villages of Vigo and West Kingsdown are set deep in the woodlands themselves. A network of narrow, winding lanes connects the villages and farms. Local features related to the underlying geology are the chalk quarries, ponds (some in old gravel pits) marl pits and ditches. Many attract wildlife and have their own ecosystems. Some are also threatened by fly tipping and other antisocial behaviour.

- 2.1.5 Historically, the heavy clay-with-flints soil on the higher land meant these areas were used for woodland or pasture. Arable cultivation generally took place on finer silt soils in the valley bottoms. From the mid twentieth century, increased mechanisation and intensification of farming resulted in the ploughing of some higher pastures, particularly in the north of the area. The downland therefore becomes increasingly open in the north, where the intimate character of the scarp top gives way to a larger-scale landscape of intensively farmed, rolling valleys and large blocks of deciduous woodland. Analysis of historic maps shows some loss of field boundaries, particularly in areas of intensive arable agriculture, but survival of most of the woodland which was present in the late 19th Century.
- 2.1.6 Although the topography and the presence of woodland remains fairly consistent across the West Kent Downs, there are four Local Character Areas which reflect the variations in historic land ownership, settlement patterns and transport corridors.

2.2 Local Character Areas

Kingsdown

- 2.2.1 The name 'Kingsdown' comes from being part of a large pre-Norman Conquest royal estate, centred on the Darent Valley. In Kent, '-down' or '-dun' implied thickly forested hills, indicating that at this time the area was heavily wooded. Today, the southern part of this area has a smaller scale field pattern, tiny sunken lanes and still contains a considerable amount of formerly coppiced, mixed woodland and Scots pine, interspersed by small, irregular pastures and thick hedges. Ash Dieback is increasingly affecting the mixed woodlands; only skeletal dead and dying ash trees are present in many places and the effect is expected to intensify. Sweet chestnut coppice (traditionally used for fencing) is typical. This woodland has a strong ecological value and also results in an enclosed, intimate landscape, which successfully absorbs much of the residential development that has spread through parts of the area. In the north, however, the landscape is slightly more open, revealing rolling sweeps of downland and the chalky white soils of intensive arable cultivation.
- 2.2.2 The area is under considerable pressure from suburbanisation, and its local character is influenced by the presence of low-density late 20th Century residential ribbon development along lanes, particularly around Knatts Valley and East Hill. This has introduced a wide and disparate range of fences, gateways, sheds and ornamental conifers into the landscape, giving an inappropriate urban-edge feel to the area, reinforced by recreation developments, such as golf courses and caravan parks. Many properties have long back gardens which extend up the valley sides or into the surrounding trees, resulting in a landscape of tiny smallholdings, subdivided horse paddocks and 'gardened' woodland.
- 2.2.3 Nevertheless, historic and ancient landscape patterns remain dominant elements in the wider countryside, and the sense of place remains strong with attractive, secluded chalk valleys, grazed downland rich in wildflowers, and species-rich hedgerows. The historic settlement pattern can still be identified through isolated farm buildings of a traditional flint, weatherboard and brick vernacular, accessed by narrow, winding lanes. This network of tiny lanes is supplemented by a good Public Rights of Way network, including the North Downs way along the southern boundary.



Species-rich hedges and pasture at Magpie Bottom, with glimpsed views of higher chalk downs.

Luddesdown

- 2.2.4 This is a rich agricultural patchwork of rolling, valley-side pastures and undulating arable fields. The field pattern is irregular, with fields of various shapes and sizes, generally divided with native hedgerows. Large areas of native mixed woodland dominate the skyline, and form thick ‘walls’ around the fields, giving a strong definition to the fields and providing valuable ecological habitat. Late twentieth century hedgerow removal in areas of arable cultivation, has increased the importance of woodland in giving structure to the landscape. Recent vineyard planting is generating a notable change to the agricultural patterns of the landscape.

Settlement is limited to occasional hamlets and isolated farms within valleys, reflecting the fact that the soils were difficult to work and could only support a small population. The lack of settlement is one of the area’s characteristic features. The settlements of Luddesdown and Lower Luddesdown comprise clusters of traditional buildings, including Luddesdown Court (Grade 1 listed) and the thirteenth century church of St Peter and St Paul. A church was recorded here in the Domesday Book, and the adjacent house and farm are late eleventh century in origin. There are good examples of traditional timber-framed buildings and Kent peg tiles, including the Upper Bush Conservation Area. The farms and hamlets are linked by a network of narrow and winding lanes which follow the contours of the rolling downland landscape, and Buckland Road runs through a valley known as ‘bowling alley’. The Wealdway Long Distance footpath runs north-south through the area.

- 2.2.5 The village of Vigo, set within coppice woodland at the top of the scarp was built in the mid-late twentieth century on the site of a former army barracks. It is contained by trees and does not impact on the wider landscape character.
- 2.2.6 This is a tranquil, complex and distinctive landscape, with a peaceful remote feel, strong sense of place and few detracting features. It has a strong sense of time-depth, and the structure of the landscape has remained largely unchanged since the late nineteenth century, although there has been some field boundary loss. The thick belt of woodland along the eastern and southern scarp

top plays an important role in preserving this atmosphere, by sheltering the area from the surrounding settlements and transport corridors.



A typical valley view near Luddesdown

Cobham

- 2.2.7 In the north around Cobham, the character of the landscape begins to change. The dominance of farmland gives way to parkland and extensive mixed woodlands associated with Cobham Hall. The topography is slightly undulating, with occasional non-natural features.
- 2.2.8 The cultural integrity of the landscape is strong, with the estate parkland and management creating a distinctive character and sense of time depth. Cobham Hall (which is on the site of a Roman villa) is an Elizabethan Manor House set in a parkland landscape designed by Humphrey Repton. A dramatic lime avenue extends from Cobham Village towards the house, although the main vehicular approach is along a sweeping driveway. Cobham Park has its origins as a medieval deer park, and contains several veteran trees. There are also extensive dense Ancient Woodlands (containing exceptionally tall ash trees), parklands and wood pasture. Part of the park is now used as a golf course. There are a number of estate features, including lodges and the recently-restored Darnley Mausoleum. Boundaries include native hedgerows, wrought iron estate railings and timber fencing. Cobham Village is a traditional village centre, typical of the north Kent landscape, and contains a rich diversity of historic buildings constructed in timber, brick and flint. Elsewhere small pockets of orchard and pony paddocks occur in the area.
- 2.2.9 Ashenbank Wood (to the west of Cobham Park) is also extensive and dense Ancient Woodland, and contains a range of archaeological sites including a Bronze Age burial ground and WW2 bunkers. It is an accessible area of woodland popular for recreation. To the east of Cobham Park, Ranscombe Farm is managed as a wildflower reserve. From high points here there are views across the Medway Valley and glimpses of the urban edge of Strood. A further 'country park' at Jeskyns Farm extends from the western portion of the area. In combination with Shorne, there is an extensive collection of sites in protective ownership managed primarily for landscape, nature and public access.



Parkland trees and woodland in Cobham Park



Ranscombe Wildflower Reserve, with the woodlands of Luddesdown visible beyond.

Shorne

- 2.2.10 The local character area of Shorne has been severed from the more extensive landscape of similar character to the south by the A2 road corridor. The wooded ridge forms a discrete tract of steeply undulating landscape lying between the extensive built-up areas of Rochester and Gravesend. It is bounded to the north by the open farmland of the Hoo Peninsula. The extent of woodland is the key distinguishing feature, in combination with the ridge landform. This significant landform feature provides an attractive backdrop in views from the north.
- 2.2.11 The area contains Ancient Woodland, much of which is actively worked chestnut coppice, and more recent woodland established on former clay workings. The Ancient Woodlands contain several notable and veteran trees. They also generate a strong sense of enclosure. The heathy vegetation, reflecting a local change in the underlying geology, adds to the area's ecological value. Shorne Wood is important for recreation, containing a country park, historic remains (including Randall Manor) and visitor centre. There are few roads within the area, although the busy A2 runs along its southern boundary.



Shorne Country Park



Ashenbank Wood, near Cobham



Veteran tree at Cobham Park



Valley-side farm, near Luddesdown



Timber-framed buildings in Upper Bush Conservation Area



Dog walkers on the North Downs Way enjoy the long views from Ranscombe Reserve



The quiet lanes and peaceful countryside of the West Kent Downs are only a few miles from busy urban areas

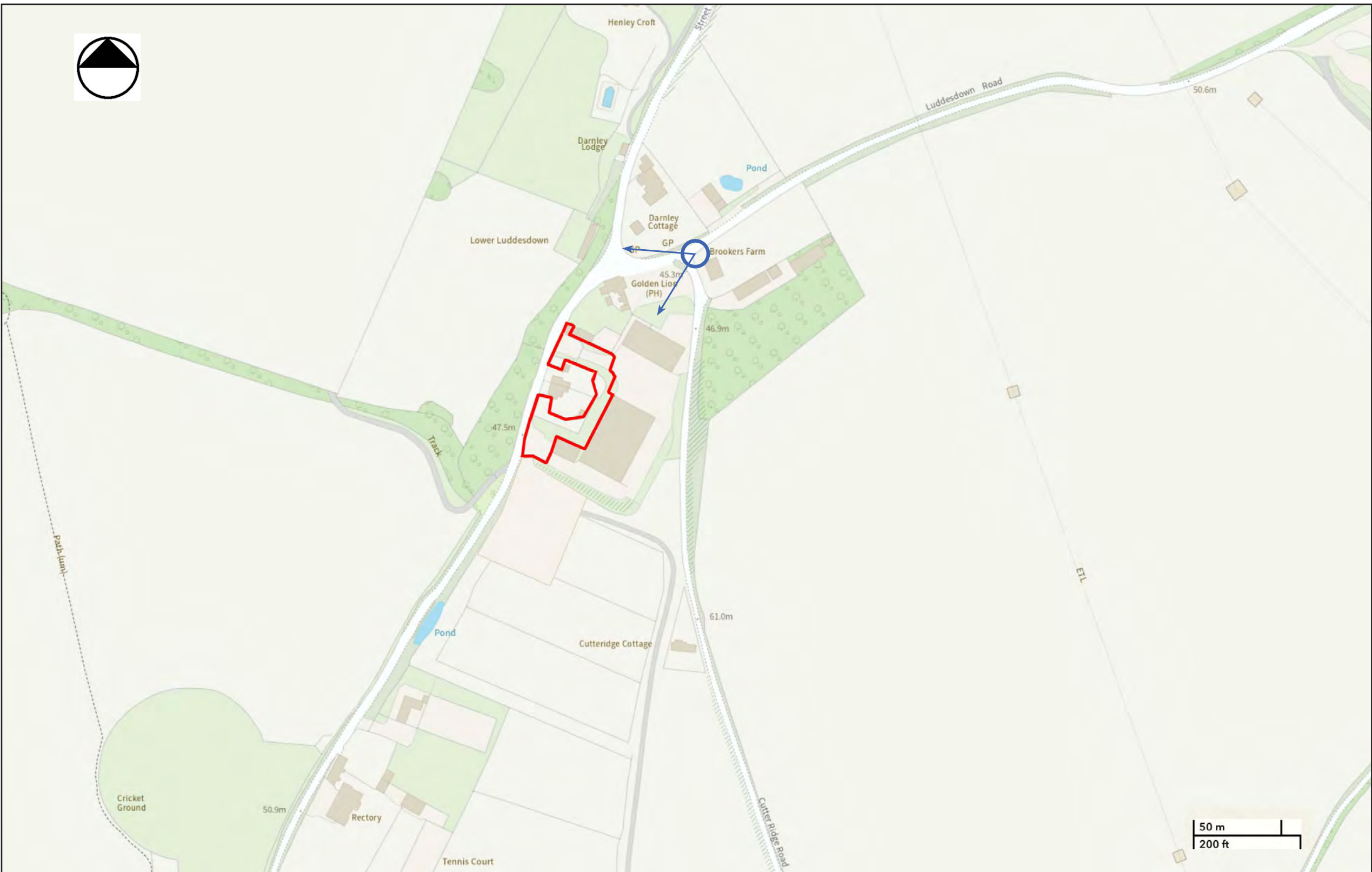
Appendix 8 – Proposed Site Layout Plan



Appendix 9 – Representative Views



Viewpoint		Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1	
Camera make & model	- Canon EOS 5D	Viewpoint height (AOD)	- 44m
Lens make & focal length	- Canon EF 50mm, f/1.4 USM	Distance from site	- 73m
Date of photograph	- 19th June 2025	Projection	- Cylindrical
OS grid reference	- TQ67269 66702	Sheet Size	- A1
		Visualisation Type	- Type 1
		Horizontal Field of View	- 90°
		Height of camera AGL	- 1.6m
		Page size / Image size (mm)	- 841 x 297 / 820 x 240



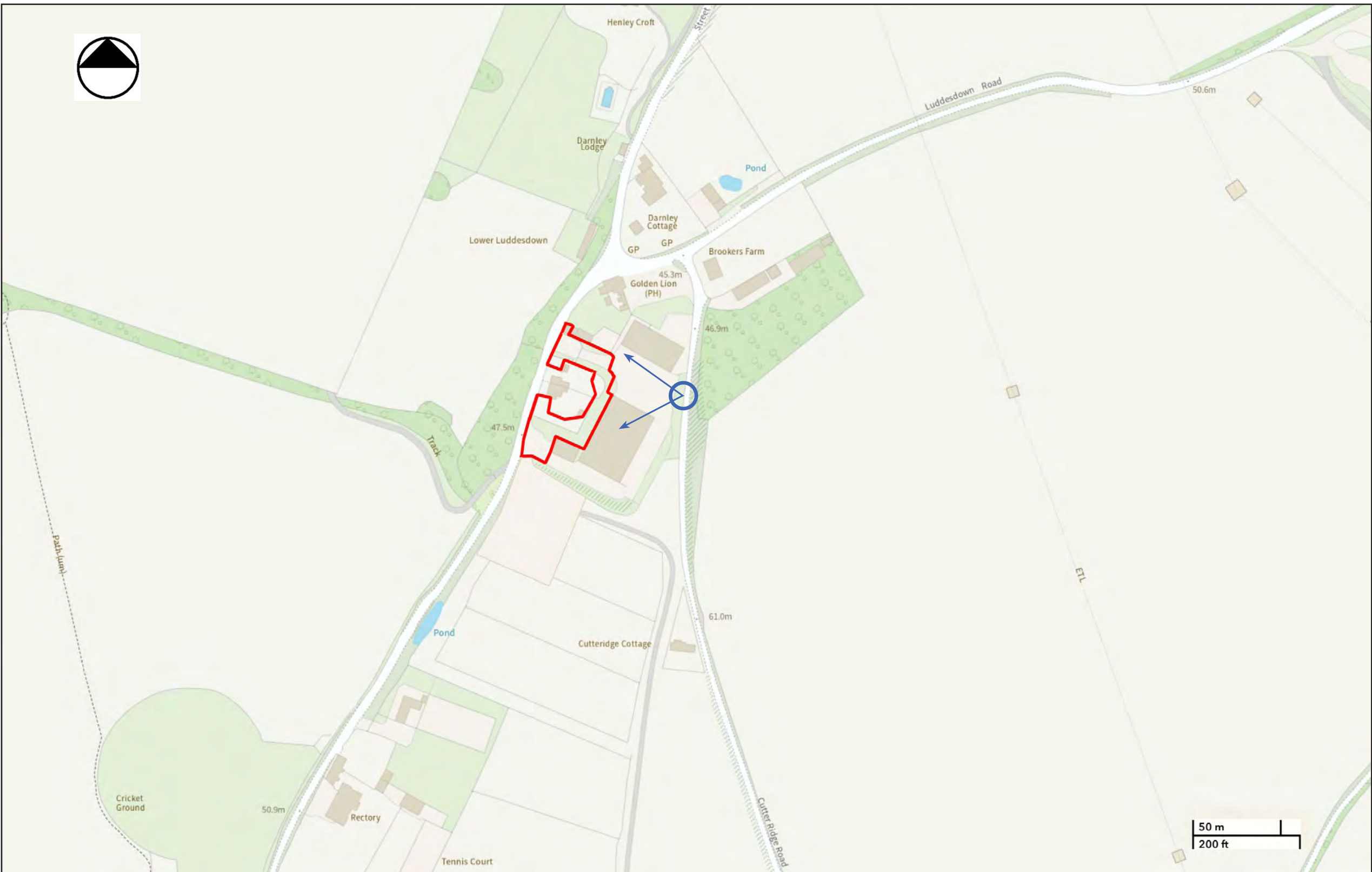
Location Plan

VIEWPOINT 1 - 8

View from junction of Luddesdown Lane and Cutter Ridge Road looking south-west



Viewpoint		Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1	
Camera make & model	- Canon EOS 5D	Viewpoint height (AOD)	- 52m
Lens make & focal length	- Canon EF 50mm, f/1.4 USM	Distance from site	- 47m
Date of photograph	- 19th June 2025	Projection	- Cylindrical
OS grid reference	- TQ67274 66621	Sheet Size	- A1
		Visualisation Type	- Type 1
		Horizontal Field of View	- 90°
		Height of camera AGL	- 1.6m
		Page size / Image size (mm)	- 841 x 297 / 820 x 240



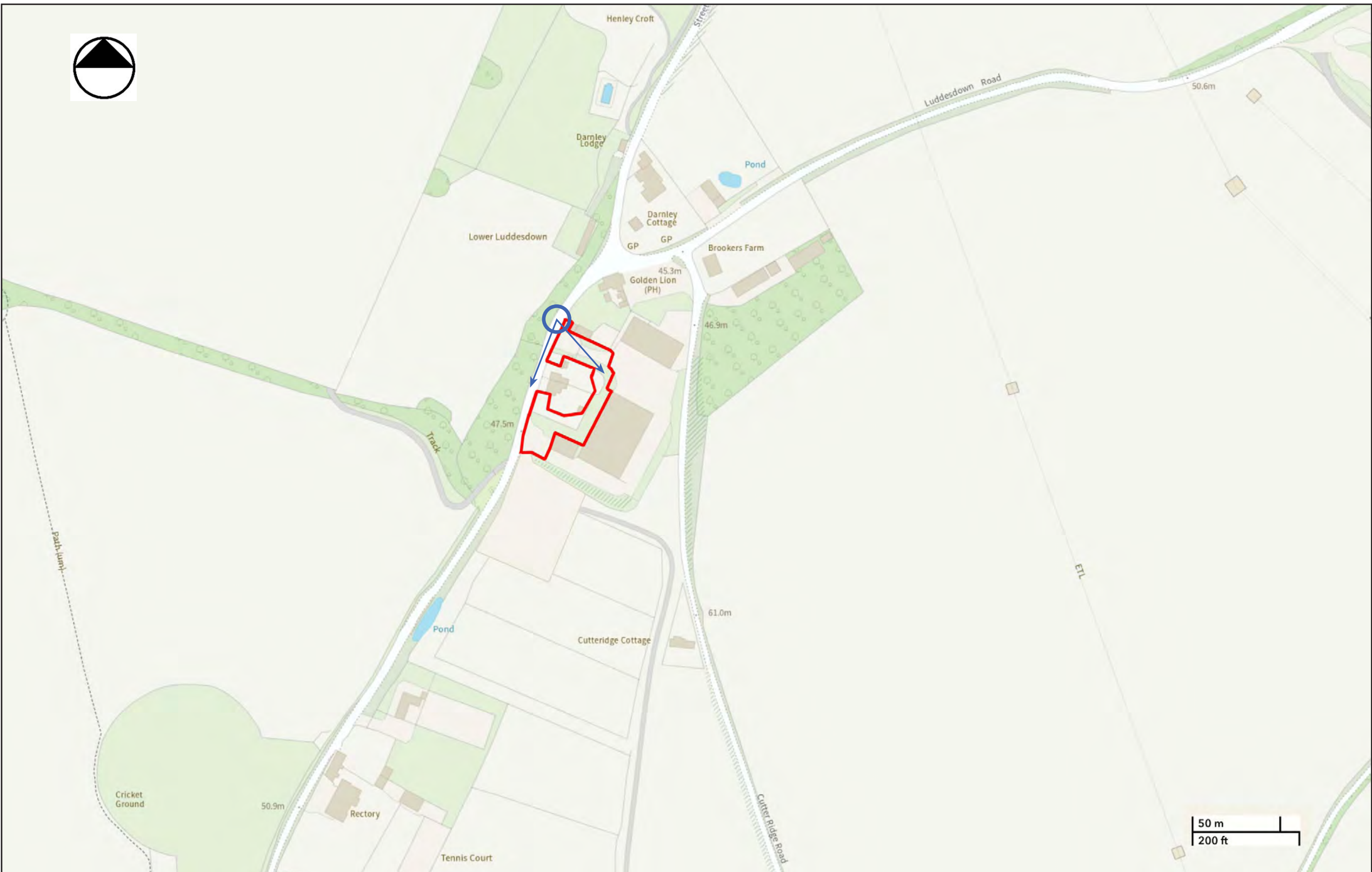
Location Plan

VIEWPOINT 2 - 8

View from Cutter Ridge Road looking west



Viewpoint		Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1	
Camera make & model	- Canon EOS 5D	Visualisation Type	- Type 1
Lens make & focal length	- Canon EF 50mm, f/1.4 USM	Horizontal Field of View	- 90°
Date of photograph	- 19th June 2025	Height of camera AGL	- 1.6m
OS grid reference	- TQ67198	Page size / Image size (mm)	- 841 x 297 / 820 x 240
Viewpoint height (AOD)	- 50m		
Distance from site	- 10m		
Projection	- Cylindrical		
Sheet Size	- A1		



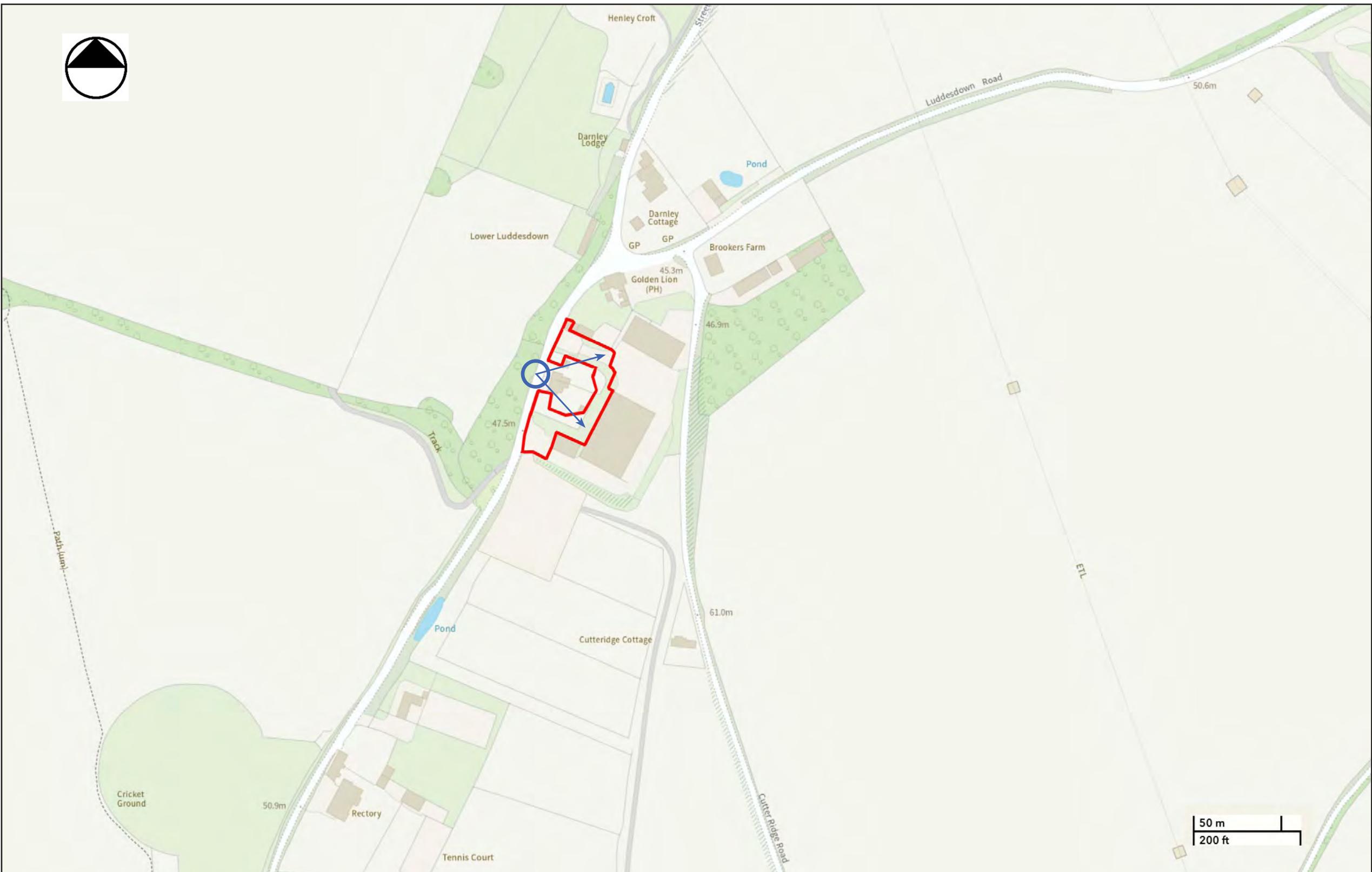
Location Plan

VIEWPOINT 3 - 8

View from Luddesdown Road opposite existing entrance into commercial yard looking south



Viewpoint		Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1	
Camera make & model	- Canon EOS 5D	Viewpoint height (AOD)	- 49m
Lens make & focal length	- Canon EF 50mm, f/1.4 USM	Distance from site	- 10m
Date of photograph	- 19th June 2025	Projection	- Cylindrical
OS grid reference	- TQ67189 66648	Sheet Size	- A1
		Visualisation Type	- Type 1
		Horizontal Field of View	- 90°
		Height of camera AGL	- 1.6m
		Page size / Image size (mm)	- 841 x 297 / 820 x 240



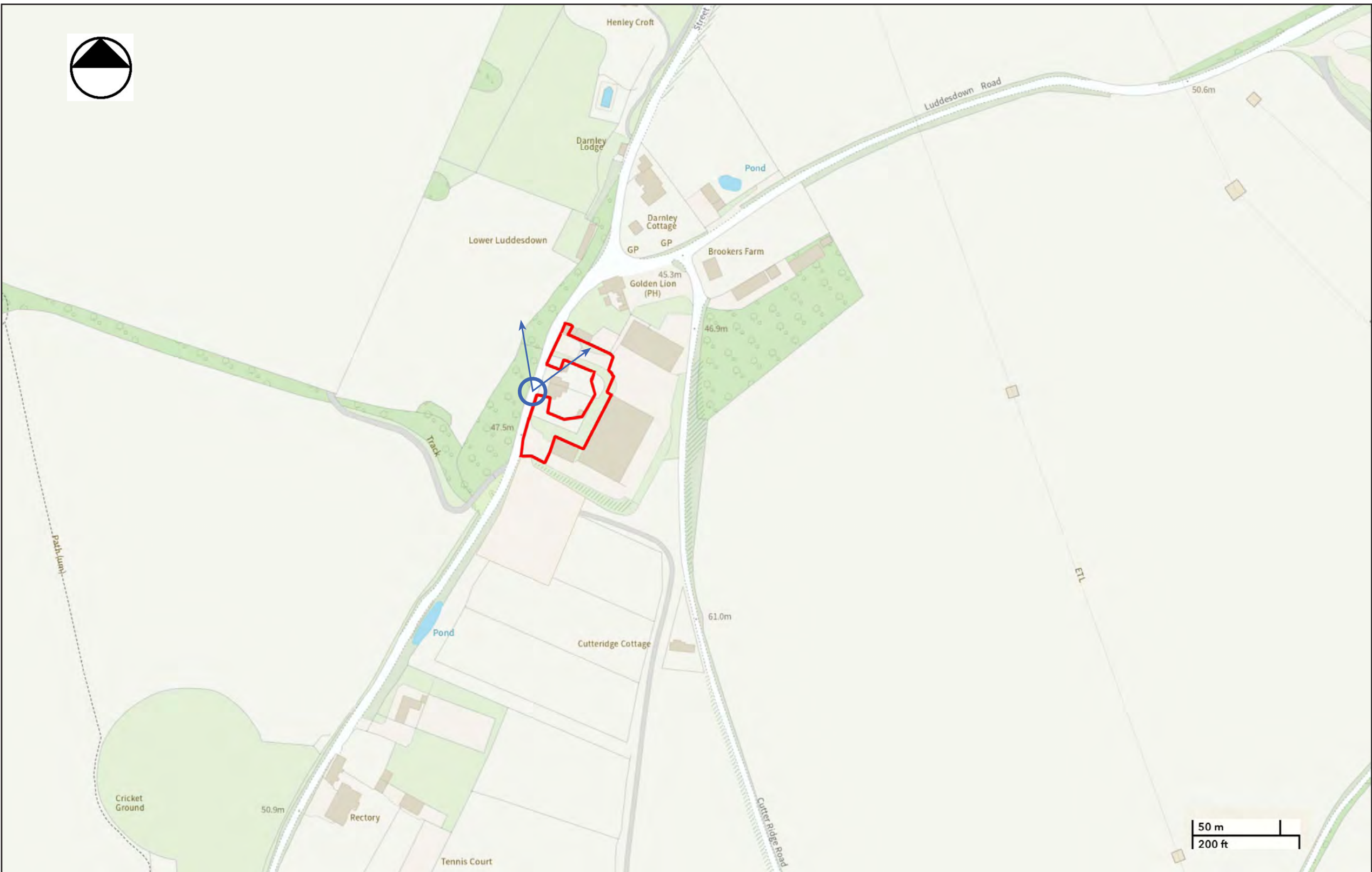
Location Plan

VIEWPOINT 4 - 8

View from Luddesdown Road opposite 88 Luddesdown Road looking east



Viewpoint		Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1	
Camera make & model	- Canon EOS 5D	Viewpoint height (AOD)	- 50m
Lens make & focal length	- Canon EF 50mm, f/1.4 USM	Distance from site	- 15m
Date of photograph	- 19th June 2025	Projection	- Cylindrical
OS grid reference	- TQ67184 6632	Sheet Size	- A1
		Visualisation Type	- Type 1
		Horizontal Field of View	- 90°
		Height of camera AGL	- 1.6m
		Page size / Image size (mm)	- 841 x 297 / 820 x 240



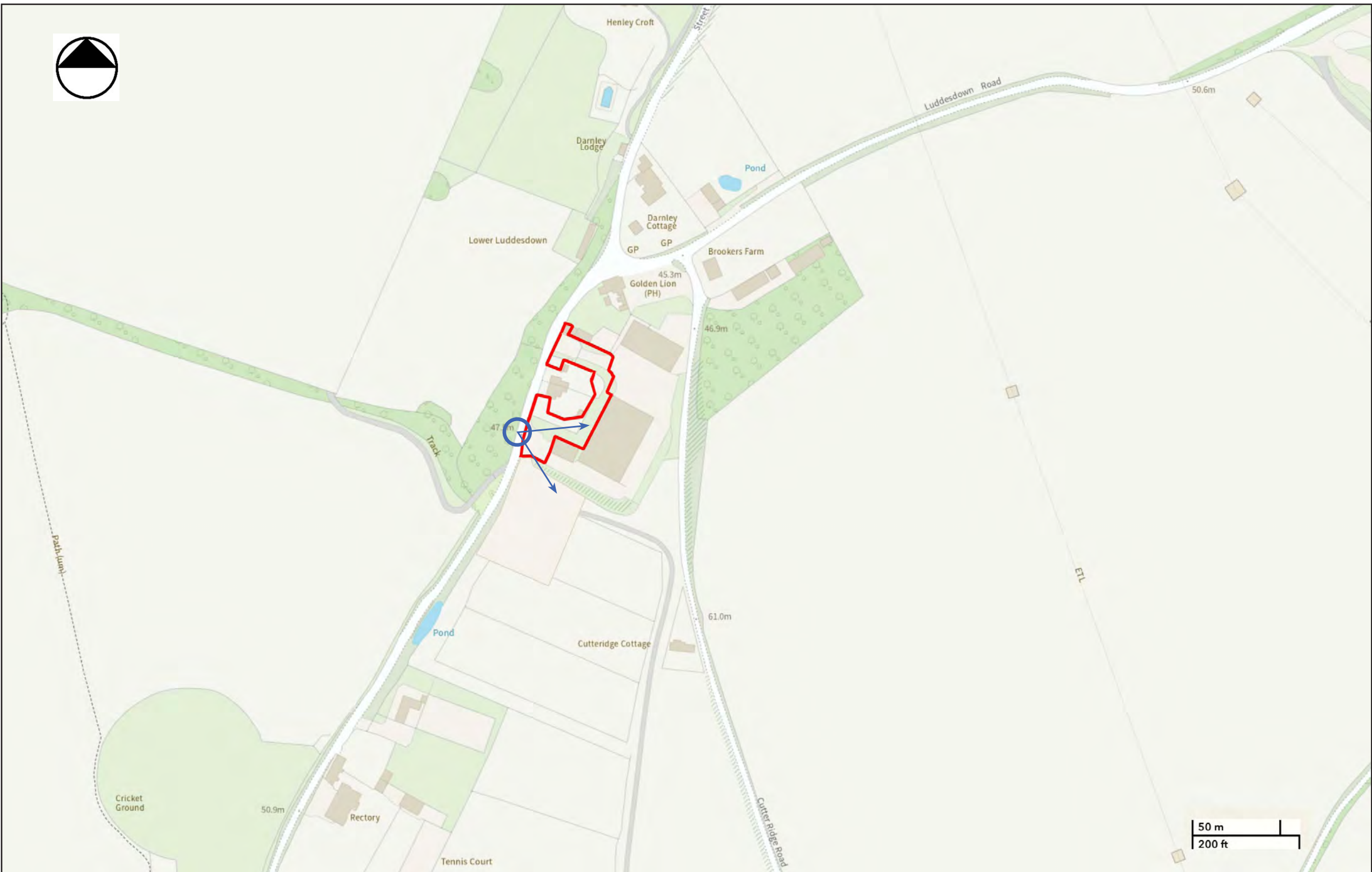
Location Plan

VIEWPOINT 5 - 8

View from Luddesdown Road opposite number 89 looking north



Viewpoint		Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1	
Camera make & model	- Canon EOS 5D	Viewpoint height (AOD)	- 48m
Lens make & focal length	- Canon EF 50mm, f/1.4 USM	Distance from site	- adjacent
Date of photograph	- 19th June 2025	Projection	- Cylindrical
OS grid reference	- TQ67180 66607	Sheet Size	- A1
		Visualisation Type	- Type 1
		Horizontal Field of View	- 90°
		Height of camera AGL	- 1.6m
		Page size / Image size (mm)	- 841 x 297 / 820 x 240



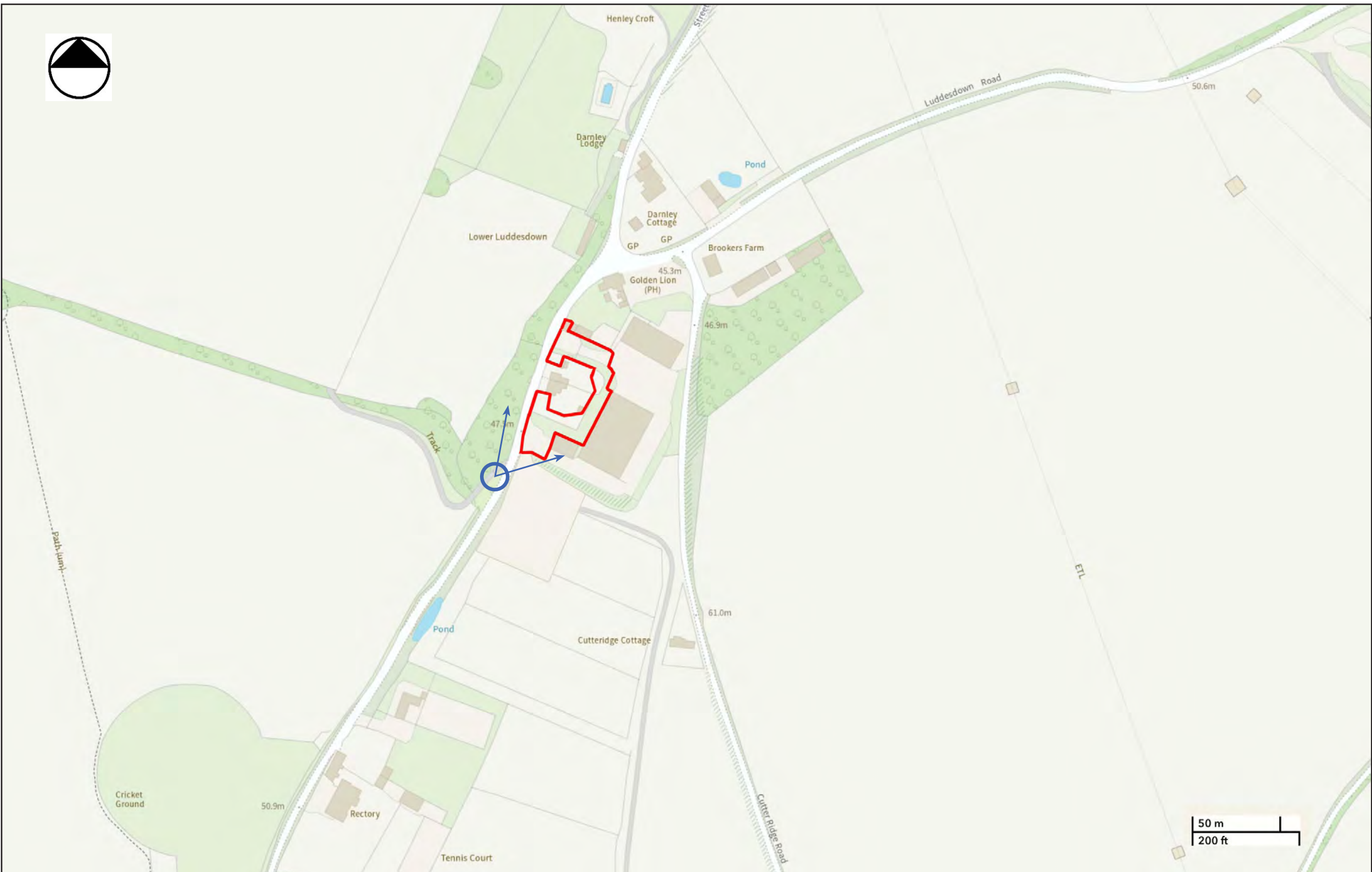
Location Plan

VIEWPOINT 6 - 8

View from Luddesdwon Road opposite the loading arealooking west



Viewpoint		Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1			
Camera make & model	- Canon EOS 5D	Viewpoint height (AOD)	- 47m	Visualisation Type	- Type 1
Lens make & focal length	- Canon EF 50mm, f/1.4 USM	Distance from site	- 19m	Horizontal Field of View	- 90°
Date of photograph	- 19th June 2025	Projection	- Cylindrical	Height of camera AGL	- 1.6m
OS grid reference	- TQ67160 66574	Sheet Size	- A1	Page size / Image size (mm)	- 841 x 297 / 820 x 240



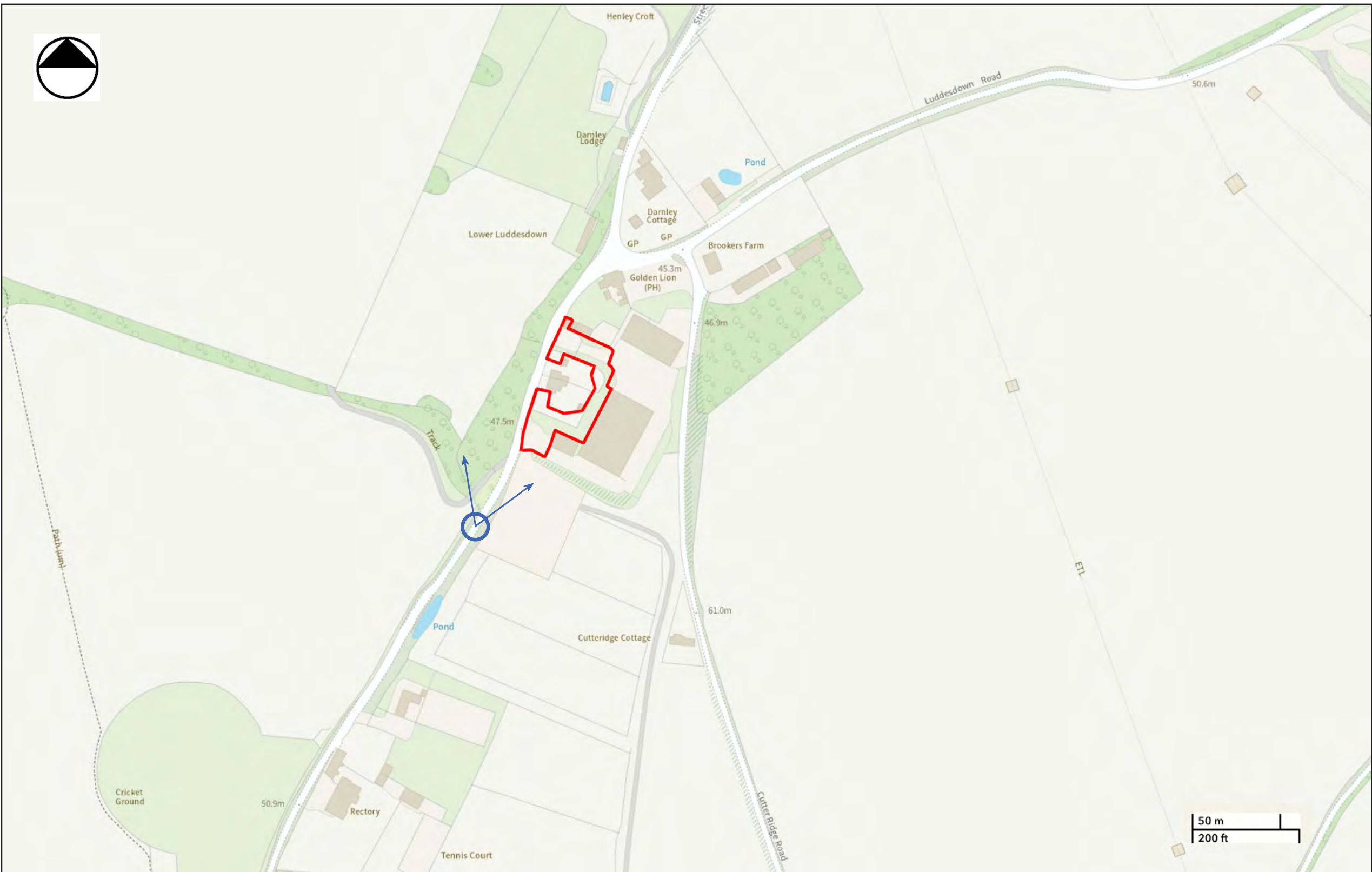
Location Plan

VIEWPOINT 7 - 8

View from public right of way NS225 looking north-east



Viewpoint				Panoramic Image - 820mm width x 250mm height when printed at A1	
Camera make & model	- Canon EOS 5D	Viewpoint height (AOD)	- 45m	Visualisation Type	- Type 1
Lens make & focal length	- Canon EF 50mm, f/1.4 USM	Distance from site	- 20m	Horizontal Field of View	- 90°
Date of photograph	- 19th June 2025	Projection	- Cylindrical	Height of camera AGL	- 1.6m
OS grid reference	- TQ67163 66584	Sheet Size	- A1	Page size / Image size (mm)	- 841 x 297 / 820 x 240



Location Plan

VIEWPOINT 8 - 8

View from Luddesdown Road adjacent to overspill car park looking north-east