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Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request

Rose Farm, Istead Rise, Gravesham

Iceni Projects Limited on behalf of
Esquire Developments

June 2025

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ON BEHALF OF ESQUIRE
DEVELOPMENTS

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Environmental Impact Assessment
(EIA) Screening Request
ROSE FARM, ISTEAD RISE, GRAVESHAM

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Iceni Projects Limited (hereafter referred to as 'Iceni') on behalf of Esquire Developments (the 'Applicant') as part of a request to Gravesham Borough Council ('GBC') to adopt Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') Screening Opinion in respect of the development proposal at Rose Farm, Istead Rise (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').
- 1.2 The Applicant intends to submit a planning application for the redevelopment of the Site to provide a residential development (the 'Proposed Development'). A Site Location Plan is included at **Figure 1.1.** and **Appendix A1.**
- 1.3 This request has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 6 of *The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017* (as amended)¹ (referred to hereafter as the 'EIA Regulations'). In line with Regulation 6(2), this Screening Request provides the following information:
- A plan sufficient to identify the land (**Figure 1.1** and **Appendix A1**);
 - A description of the Site and surroundings and an identification of the environmental sensitivity of the areas likely to be affected (**Section 2**);
 - A description of the Proposed Development including its physical characteristics (**Section 3**);
 - Where applicable, a description of any likely significant environmental effects and any measures envisaged to avoid or prevent adverse effects (**Section 4**); and
 - A summary of the findings where the development sits in relation to the EIA Regulations (**Section 5**).
- 1.4 The following sections provide sufficient information for GBC to reach a conclusion on the potential for significant effects as a result of the Proposed Development and issue a screening opinion. In addition, the planning application will be supported by a wide range of supplementary documents addressing the potential impacts of the Proposed Development (see **Appendix A2**).

¹ Her Majesty's Stationery Office, (2018); *The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017* (as amended by the *Town and Country Planning and Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2018*))

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Site Description and Context

- 2.1 The Site extends to approximately 8 hectares ('ha') in size. The Site is located on the south western boundary of the residential area of Istead Rise, Gravesend. To the north, the Site is bound by existing residential development and to the east it is bound by Istead Rise Primary School and Kiddiecare Kindergarten. To the south and west, it is bound by arable agricultural land.
- 2.2 From a review of online mapping, the Site predominantly comprises land currently in agricultural (arable and pastoral) use, associated with Rose Farm. The Site also includes a residential building south of Downs Road, and agricultural buildings accessed via a track from Downs Road. Field boundaries are demarcated by hedgerow and mature trees.
- 2.3 GBC is currently preparing a new Local Plan. The Site has a draft allocation 'GRVS238' for 165 dwellings under 'Emerging Local Plan Partial Review, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Regulation 18 - Stage 2) Consultation'².
- 2.4 The environmental constraints to the Site are shown in **Figure 2.1**.
- 2.5 A full list of documents to be submitted as part of the wider planning application is included at **Appendix A2**, which will be referenced throughout the screening assessment.

Transport and Connectivity

- 2.6 The Site is accessible from the local road network, and pedestrian and vehicle access to the Site is taken via Downs Road.
- 2.7 The nearest option for public transport is the 'Upper Avenue' bus stop located on Downs Road, which offers regular services on the 306 and 308 routes to Gravesend, Sevenoaks and Vigo Village.
- 2.8 The closest train station to the Site is located approximately 1.74km south east of the Site, in Meopham, and offers frequent southeastern services to London and the south east coast.
- 2.9 A Transport Assessment is proposed for submission with the planning application.

Historic Environment

- 2.10 There are no listed buildings within the Site boundary, however 42 and 44 Downs Hall (Grade II) is located approximately 40m east of the Site. The Site is not located within, or in proximity to, a Conservation Area, the closest of which is the Red Street Conservation Area, which sits 1.37km to the north west of the Site in Southfleet, Dartford.

² Emerging Local Plan Partial Review, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Regulation 19 – Stage 2) Consultation (2018) Gravesham Borough Council. Available at: <<https://localplan.gravesham.gov.uk/consult/ti/dmpreg18/consultationHome>>

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- 2.11 There are no archaeological designations present within, or in proximity to, the Site. The nearest Scheduled Monument is 'Deserted Medieval Manorial Settlement of Cossington' located 1.23km south east of the Site.
- 2.12 A Heritage Assessment and a Desk-Based Archaeological Assessment (DBA) are proposed for submission with the planning application.

Water Environment and Flood Risk

- 2.13 The Environment Agency's Flood Mapping indicates that the Site is located within Flood Zone 1, and therefore has a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. Flood risk from groundwater and reservoirs are considered to be low.
- 2.14 The Site is not at risk of surface water flooding, excluding for a small, linear section that runs through the middle of the Site (running on an axis north east to south west) from Downs Road to the agricultural fields that lie beyond the south western boundary of the Site.
- 2.15 The north of the Site lies within Groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ) 3. The southern section of the Site lies within SPZ 2 and SPZ 1.
- 2.16 A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy are proposed for submission with the planning application.

Air Quality

- 2.17 The Site is not located within, or adjacent to, an Air Quality Management Area ('AQMA'). The nearest AQMA is the Gravesham A2 AQMA, located approximately 1.7km north of the Site and was designated for exceedances of the Annual Mean for NO₂ and 24-hour mean for PM₁₀.
- 2.18 The latest Air Quality Annual Status Report for GBC³ finds that road traffic is the dominant source of air pollution, particularly along major highway routes; however, currently there are no areas in the Borough where members of the public are exposed to concentrations of these pollutants in excess of the UK Air Quality Strategy (AQS) Objectives.
- 2.19 An Air Quality Assessment is proposed for submission with the planning application.

Ecological Designations

- 2.20 The Site is not subject to any ecological designations and there are none within the immediate proximity of the Site.
- 2.21 The nearest designations to the Site are Rectory Meadow Local Nature Reserve (LNR) located approximately 2.8km south west of the Site and Shorne and Ashenbank Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located approximately 3.4km east of the Site.

³ GBC (2024) Air Quality Annual Status Report. Available at <<https://www.kentair.org.uk/report/gravesham-borough-council-annual-status-report-2024>>

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- 2.22 The nearest European designation is Thames Estuary and Marshes Special Protection Area (SPA), located approximately 6.77km north east of the Site.
- 2.23 UK BAP Priority Habitat Traditional Orchard present within the southern section of the Site.
- 2.24 Ancient Woodland is present in the vicinity of the Site, with the closest parcel located 0.1km south of the Site and further parcels located 0.42km to the south of the Site and 0.78km to the south west of the Site.
- 2.25 An Ecological Impact Assessment, Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment are proposed for submission with the planning application.

Ground Conditions

- 2.26 The Site is underlain by White Chalk Subgroup at bedrock. A principal aquifer underlies the Site at bedrock and at superficial drift a secondary (undifferentiated) aquifer partly underlies the Site. Groundwater vulnerability at the Site ranges from 'Medium – High' to 'High'.
- 2.27 A Historic Landfill Site is located approximately 0.3km to the south east of the Site.
- 2.28 A Phase 1 Land Contamination Assessment is proposed for submission with the planning application.

Agricultural Land

- 2.29 In regards to Agricultural Land Classification (ALC), soils are graded by their quality where Grade 1 is Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land and Grade 5 is poorest quality. Online reporting (Natural England's Provisional Agricultural Land Classification) demonstrates that the ALC across the Site is Grade 3, which is considered to be good to moderate quality agricultural land. This designation for Grade 3 also extends across the developed area of Istead Rise.
- 2.30 An Agricultural Land Classification Survey is proposed for submission with the planning application.

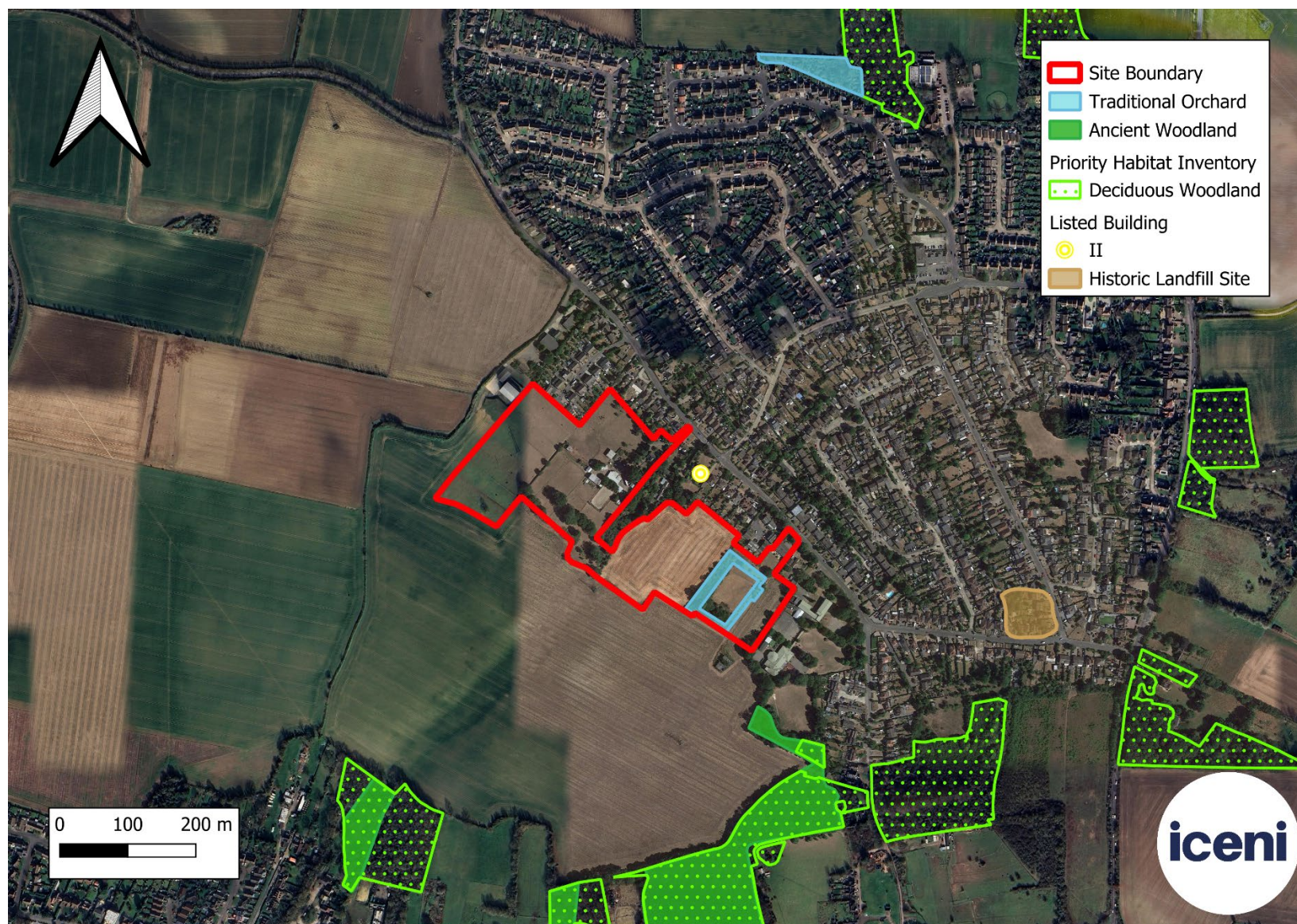
Landscape

- 2.31 The existing land use at the Site is agricultural, and is bordered by residential properties, trees and hedgerows. The Site lies within, but on the periphery of, the Green Belt.
- 2.32 The Site is not covered by any national, regional or local landscape designations. The nearest nationally designated landscape is the Kent Downs National Landscape, located approximately 2.95km to the south east of the Site, at its nearest point.
- 2.33 A preliminary Landscape and Visual Appraisal previously undertaken for the Site in 2017 finds that the majority of the Site lies within National Character Area (NCA) Profile 113: North Kent Plain. The North Kent Plain is an open, low and gently undulating landscape, characterised by high-quality, fertile, loamy soils dominated by agricultural land uses. The south-east edge of the Site is covered by NCA Profile 119: North Downs. The North Downs support arable cropping, which is the dominant land use within the NCA.
- 2.34 The preliminary Landscape Appraisal finds the Site to be of low landscape value because:

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- The Site is generally not of noteworthy scenic beauty insofar that it comprises a common place feature of a field with ruderal vegetation which is not a rare landscape feature;
 - The Site does not afford the opportunity for public recreation; and
 - The Site is not covered by any landscape designations.

2.35 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Landscape Masterplan are proposed for submission with the planning application.

Figure 2.1 Environmental Sensitivities Map



3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The Applicant intends to submit an outline planning application, with all matters reserved except for access. An Indicative Layout is shown at Figure 3.1, but note this is subject to change and assessment is undertaken on a worst-case basis.
- 3.2 The Proposed Development will provide up to 160 homes of up to two storeys in height.
- 3.3 It is expected that, subject to planning permission, construction will commence at the Site in 2027, and the Proposed Development will be fully operational by 2032.

Mitigation

- 3.4 In accordance with Regulation 6(2)(e) of the EIA Regulations, a number of mitigation measures have been committed to at screening stage as part of the Proposed Development, as follows:
- A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be implemented in order to mitigate the potential human and environmental health effects of the construction and decommissioning phases, respectively. This will be secured through a suitably worded planning condition;
 - A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will be implemented to mitigate the potential effects of the introduction of construction traffic. This will be secured through the CEMP or through a suitably worded planning condition;
 - The built development will be of a low height, up to a maximum of two storeys, in order to reduce the potential visual impacts of the Proposed Development and to ensure it is sensitive to the low-rise development to the north, the setting of surrounding designated heritage assets, and the surrounding countryside;
 - Landscaping and hedgerows will also be planted during the construction phase to soften the new built form, and integrate the Proposed Development into the surrounding area once operational. The Site borders a residential area, and the Proposed Development is residential-led scheme, therefore the final chosen embedded mitigation landscape and visual effects will be sensitive to this type of development;
 - The Proposed Development will provide open space to the south and west of the Site. This open space will act as a buffer between the built development proposed, and the agricultural fields located to the south and west of the Site;
 - All dwellings provided by the Proposed Development will be built with a 'fabric first' approach. Each dwelling will have an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) and an EV charging point, as standard;
 - The Proposed Development will provide a minimum buffer of 15m from Ancient Woodland; and
 - Once operational, a Travel Plan will be implemented including measures and targets to promote sustainable and active travel by residents and reduce transport movements and subsequently, reduce emissions.

Figure 3.1 Indicative Layout



4. EIA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 In order to determine whether the Proposed Development is likely to be considered EIA development and require an EIA to be undertaken, regard must be given to the 'EIA Regulations'.
- 4.2 Regulation 2 defines EIA development as either:
- **Schedule 1 Development** – where EIA is mandatory and includes major projects such as nuclear power stations, chemical installations, motorways, railway lines and ports; or
 - **Schedule 2 Development** – a project/ proposal likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location.
- 4.3 'Schedule 1 Development' is one that falls under Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations and includes those developments which have a clear potential for significant environmental effects, such as crude oil refineries and thermal and nuclear power stations. Proposals for Schedule 1 development must be accompanied by an EIA.
- 4.4 The Proposed Development does not fall within Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations.
- 4.5 'Schedule 2 Development' is defined as development of a description mentioned in Column 1 of the table in Schedule 2 where:
- It is located wholly or partly in a sensitive area (defined in Regulation 2 as including SSSIs, National Parks, AONBs, Scheduled Monuments, World Heritage Sites and European Sites); or
 - Any applicable threshold or criterion as set out in Column 2 of Schedule 2 is respectively **exceeded** or **met** in relation to the Proposed Development.
- 4.6 The Site is not located within a "sensitive area" as defined in Regulation 2(1) of the EIA Regulations, however, due to the nature of development and its size, the Proposed Development is considered a Schedule 2 development.. The Proposed Development falls within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations, category 10 'Infrastructure Projects', sub-section (b) 'Urban development projects'. The thresholds for such developments that could require an EIA are as follows:
- "(i) The development includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development; or*
- (ii) the development includes more than 150 dwellings; or*
- (iii) the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares."*
- 4.7 The Proposed Development exceeds threshold (ii) as identified above, as it will include more than 150 dwellings (up to 160 dwellings). Moreover, the overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares, as the Site is 8 hectares. As such, the Proposed Development is a Schedule 2 development.
- 4.8 Schemes which fall under Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations are only considered to be 'EIA Development' where there is the potential to give rise to likely significant effects on the environment by factors such as their nature, size and location. This report details the environmental context of the

Site and assesses whether the Proposed Development would trigger likely significant environmental effects.

- 4.9 However, not all Schedule 2 developments constitute EIA development and the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (having replaced Circular 02/99 (EIA)) contains specific guidance on the EIA Regulations. At paragraph 002 (Reference ID:4-002-20140306) of the NPPG⁴, it states that EIA should not be a barrier to growth and will only apply to a small proportion of projects considered within the town and country planning regime and Local Planning Authorities and developers should carefully consider if a project should be subject to an EIA. It states that only a very small proportion of Schedule 2 development will require an EIA (Reference ID: 4-018-20170728).
- 4.10 The PPG is clear that the focus should be on those effects which are significant. It provides as an Annex a series of Indicative Screening Thresholds which includes indicative criteria to assist in determining whether significant effects are likely, recognising that the location and sensitivity of an asset are important considerations.
- 4.11 The PPG states that an EIA is likely to be required for the development of sites which have not previously been intensively developed, if the area of the scheme is more than 5 hectares or if a development would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings).
- 4.12 Although the Site has not been intensively developed and the Site area extends to 8ha, the Proposed Development seeks to provide up to 160 dwellings, which is significantly less than the 1,000 dwellings stated, and the Proposed Development would be situated on a parcel of land that would act as a natural extension to Istead Rise. The accompanying technical reports listed in Appendix A2 will inform the design of the Proposed Development, which will, in turn, ensure that any potential significant effects can be mitigated.
- 4.13 In determining whether a development should be subject to an EIA, LPAs must take into account the relevant 'Selection Criteria' identified in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations. It identifies three broad criteria which should be considered, namely:
1. Characteristics of the development (such as size, cumulative effects, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisances, risk of accidents and risk to human health);
 2. Location of the development (by reference to the environmental sensitivity of the area); and
 3. Characteristics of the potential impact (having regard to the extent and magnitude of the impact, its transfrontier nature, intensity and complexity, probability duration, frequency and reversibility and the possibility of effectively reducing the impact).

⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, (2019); Guidance: Environmental Impact Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment>

4.14 The Proposed Development is assessed against these criteria, as follows:

Characteristics of Development

Description of Impact		Potential for significant effects
(a) The size and design of development	The design of the Proposed Development will be informed by environmental studies in order to avoid or prevent significant adverse environmental effects. The design of the Proposed Development will ensure that it responds sensitively to its surroundings to avoid significant adverse visual effects, and it will be in-keeping with the local context of the Site (residential) whilst remaining cognisant of the existing landscape setting and the setting of local heritage assets. The potential effects of the scale of the Proposed Development will be mitigated as far as practicable through sensitive design, and are reviewed further in the following sections through the review of potential operational effects. Moreover, the principle of a residential development in this area has been accepted by GBC through the allocation of a significant number of homes in this location. The size and design of the Proposed Development is to be further considered through the plan-making stage and evidence base to inform policy with the Regulation 19 plan.	With mitigation informing the design of the Proposed Development, no significant effects are anticipated.
(b) Cumulation with other existing development and / or approved development	The PPG states that there are occasions where other existing or approved development may be relevant in determining whether significant effects are as a consequence of a proposed development. A search has been undertaken based on the proximity of 'approved' and 'under construction' planning applications to the Site (approximately a 1km radius), and potential scale and massing in consideration of townscape and views (which cover the greatest spatial extent for potential cumulative effects), beyond which material cumulative effects are not considered to occur.	

	No schemes have been identified that are considered to generate significant effects when considered in cumulation with the Proposed Development.	
(c) The use of natural resources (particularly land, soil, water and biodiversity)	The Site comprises an ALC of Grade 3, which is considered to be good to moderate quality agricultural land. In the case of loss of agricultural land, a loss of less than 20ha of Grades 1, 2 or 3a is typically not considered significant and in need of consultation with Natural England; therefore, a significant effect to the availability of BMV agricultural land is not anticipated when comparing the Site area and its ALC composition. It should also be noted that the ALC Grade 3 designation extends across the built area of Istead Rise, which has been dedicated to residential development. The construction of the Proposed Development would require the use of a range of natural and man-made construction materials. The Proposed Development will not utilise any important, high quality or scarce resources and will seek to use locally and sustainably sourced materials, as far as practicable. It is expected that the consumption of energy, water and other natural resources during the operation of the Proposed Development will be in line with other surrounding uses. It is not expected to result in significant energy usage or water intensive activities and will be managed effectively through design and consultation with statutory utility providers to avoid any adverse impacts on their capacity to provide services. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that the Proposed Development will result in significant effects relating to use of natural resources.	The Proposed Development will not give rise to significant effects.
(d) The production of waste	As with any development project, there is likely to be waste generated through the construction phase (such as waste from surplus construction materials and from excavation). Construction waste will be reused and recycle on-Site where possible and the waste to be exposed off externally to the Site will be managed through	The Proposed Development will not give rise to significant effects.

	implementation of the CEMP to ensure it is disposed of at the correct facility, and is removed from the Site in a manner which does not generate excess transport movements, dust or odour. The operational Proposed Development would give rise to household waste streams, which are not anticipated to be hazardous, and be managed through the implementation of best practice site management processes. Waste and recycling storage volumes would accord with relevant requirements of GBC. It is unlikely that operation of the Proposed Development would give rise to hazardous waste, particularly regarding the scale and nature of the Proposed Development. As such, the Proposed Development is not likely to give rise to significant effects in relation to the production of waste.	
(e) Pollution and nuisances	During the construction of the Proposed Development, dust from construction works and emissions from construction vehicles are likely to be generated, which may lead to some indirect and localised temporary effects such as disruption on the local road network for other road users, dust, noise and emission of pollutants. These impacts will be managed in accordance with best practice measures, which will be set out in a CEMP and CTMP to be adhered to by the contractors delivering the project. Following mitigation, these effects are unlikely to be significant and are discussed further in the traffic, noise and vibration and air quality sections. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the environmental effects will be significant. The operational Proposed Development would not generate any significant level of environmental pollution or nuisance, and the intended use of the Proposed Development is similar to the existing nearby residential development in Istead Rise. Consequently, there is no likelihood of significant pollution or nuisance impacts arising from the Proposed Development during the operational phase that would require an EIA to be undertaken.	The Proposed Development will not give rise to significant effects.

(f) The risk of major accidents and/r disasters (including climate change)	During the construction phase, the contractor(s) will be obliged to implement measures in accordance with Health and Safety legislation/ requirements, and best practice to minimise the risks of accidents that could have adverse effects on people or the environment; all such measures will be incorporated into the CEMP. There are no anticipated significant risks of accidents during operation, as the Proposed Development will not involve the use of hazardous substances or operations. Therefore, the risk of major accidents or disasters is not considered to be significant. In addition, it is not considered that the Proposed Development will result in significant effects related to or from climate change. An Energy Statement is proposed for submission with the planning application.	The Proposed Development will not give rise to significant effects.
(g) The risks to human health	As discussed above, the construction works and the operational Proposed Development would not be likely to lead to significant effects on human health with regard to noise, air quality, contamination or flood risk. The Applicant has an obligation to follow relevant health and safety legislation in order to ensure those working on the Site are protected, and to ensure the protection of others who may be affected by the Proposed Development, e.g. those living, passing or working nearby, or visitors to the Site. Moreover, construction measures, as set out in the CEMP, will be followed to ensure there are no leaks or spillages on the Site itself, or within the surrounding area.	The Proposed Development will not give rise to significant effects.

Summary

- 4.15 As set out above, the characteristics of the Proposed Development are not expected to give rise to significant effects, and the potential effects are reviewed in further detail, as set out below.

Location of Development

(a) The existing and approved land use

- 4.16 The Site currently comprises agricultural land. The Site sits within the wider context of open countryside to the south and west, and the fringes of residential development within Istead Rise to the north and east. The Proposed Development would therefore be in line with the land uses local to the Site. As outlined in the introductory sections of this report, GBC is currently preparing a new Local Plan, where the Site has a draft allocation 'GRVS238' for 165 dwellings. The proposal for up to 160 dwellings on the Site therefore accords with the draft allocation.

(b) The relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) and its underground

- 4.17 The Proposed Development is unlikely to have significant effects in the abundance, availability and regenerative capacity of natural resources for the reasons set out below.

(c) The absorption capacity of the natural environment, paying particular attention to the following areas:

(i) wetlands, riparian areas, river mouths;	The Site is not within proximity of any water resources, such as rivers, lakes or coastal waters, nor are there any within the Site, therefore this consideration is not applicable.
(ii) coastal zones and the marine environment;	The Site is not within proximity of any water resources, such as rivers, lakes or coastal waters, nor are there any within the Site, therefore this consideration is not applicable.
(iii) mountain and forest areas;	The Site is not located within mountain or forest areas, therefore this is not applicable.
(iv) nature reserves and parks;	This is not applicable as the Site is not located within, or in proximity to a designated Local Nature Reserve, National Nature Reserve or National Park.
(v) European sites and other areas classified or protected under national legislation;	The nearest European designation is Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA, located approximately 6.77km north east of the Site.

(vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet the environmental quality standards, laid down in European Union legislation and relevant to the project, or in which it is considered that there is such a failure;	This Site is not located within, or in proximity to, an AQMA and local reporting identifies that AQS are not exceeded.
(vii) densely populated areas;	This Site is located on the south western fringe of Istead Rise, which is not located within a densely populated area, therefore this is not applicable.
(viii) landscapes and sites of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.	The Site is not located within a conservation area. There is one listed building within proximity of the Site. A Heritage Assessment, which will accompany the planning submission, will provide an assessment of potential effects. The Site is not subject to statutory landscape designations, however the Site lies within NCA Profile 113: North Kent Plain and NCA Profile 119: North Downs. The preliminary Landscape Appraisal undertaken for the Site, finds the Site to be of low landscape value.

Summary

- 4.18 The Site is not located in proximity to wetlands, riparian areas and river mouths, coastal zones and the marine environment and European sites and other areas classified or protected under national legislation. Therefore, detailed environmental assessments will be undertaken in accordance with appropriate guidance and submitted as part of the planning application as standalone supporting planning documents.
- 4.19 Further assessment work will inform the appropriate additional mitigation measures required to ensure there are no significant effects that may result from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. Therefore, based on the information above, significant effects as a result of locational factors are considered unlikely.

Characteristics of the Potential Impact

- 4.20 This section considers the characteristics of the potential impacts from the Proposed Development, having regard to Schedule 3 (3) (a-d) of the EIA Regulations. Initial assessments and analysis have been undertaken to inform a thorough understanding of baseline conditions; to inform the design of

the Proposed Development, to understand any possible effects and to ensure that they can be managed such that potential significant adverse effects would not occur.

- 4.21 During construction, management plans (such as a CEMP and a CTMP) would be implemented to manage construction activities, to prevent temporary emissions of nuisance and pollution (such as noise and dust management).
- 4.22 The extent of the impact of the Proposed Development is localised due to the nature of the proposals and can be satisfactorily mitigated. Where mitigation measures are relevant to GBC's consideration of these issues, they have been set out below.

Landscape

Construction

- 4.23 Potential landscape and visual effects during the construction phase of the Proposed Development are associated with the introduction of construction activity, traffic and fixed plant to an area formerly vacant of large-scale operations or plant. The Site is well-screened to the north east, due to established woodland and hedgerows, therefore construction activity and plant would be natural screened, to an extent, from receptors on Downs Road such as pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians and drivers.
- 4.24 Additional mitigation measures, such as the erection of hoarding and appropriate use of lighting, would be secured through a CEMP or suitably worded planning condition, which would reduce the potential effects during the construction phase.

Operation

- 4.25 A preliminary Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been prepared for the Site. It finds that vegetation lining Downs Road effectively curtails views of the Site. From within the landscape to the east, the Site is screened from view by the intervening woodland vegetation and landform. Similarly, the Site is screened from view by the undulating topography and hedgerow vegetation that traverses the agricultural land that separates Istead Rise from New Barn with views towards the Site featuring a number of pylon towers and the existing settled area of Istead Rise. The Site is not visible in its entirety from any one location, and where visible, the Site is seen in the context of the existing built development both sides of Downs Road and existing visual detractors such as the series of pylon towers.
- 4.26 The Proposed Development will introduce residential properties to the south western fringe of Istead Rise which is in-keeping with the existing residential land uses within the vicinity of the Site. The built development will be designed in line with relevant guidance, will remain sensitive to the local character of Istead Rise and will utilise landscaping and enhance existing planting to reduce potential effects to sensitive receptors. On this basis, the Landscape and Visual Appraisal finds that development of the Site is considered justified. This will be evidenced through further reporting to be provided with the planning application submission, such as the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

Built Heritage and Archaeology

Construction

- 4.27 As above, the construction phase of the Proposed Development is not expected to give rise to significant landscape and visual effects, due to natural screening and the implementation of the CEMP, therefore it is not expected to cause significant effects to the settings of the identified built heritage receptors.
- 4.28 The Site does not sit within an archaeological designation, therefore the identification of archaeological deposits on-Site is considered unlikely. Should the Archaeological DBA, to be submitted with the planning application, identify the potential for/ actual deposits, a mitigation plan will be agreed with the Heritage Officer at the appropriate Council to mitigate the potential effect through removal and recording of the deposit, or preservation in-situ. Significant effects are therefore not anticipated.

Operation

- 4.29 As above, the Proposed Development will be sensitively designed in line with relevant guidance, in order to reduce potential effects to the landscape. Moreover, the listed building in proximity to the Site benefits from existing screening from vegetation, therefore significant effects to the setting of built heritage receptor is not anticipated. This will be evidenced through further reporting to be provided with the planning application submission.
- 4.30 It is unlikely that there will be any effects to potential archaeological deposits during the operational; phase as, if deposits are identified, the potential effects will have been mitigated during the construction phase.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Construction

- 4.31 The Site sits within Flood Zone 1, and is therefore at low risk of flooding from fluvial (river or the sea) sources. A small area of the Site has a high chance of surface water flooding, which runs linearly through the middle of the Site (running on an axis north east to south west) from Downs Road to the agricultural fields that lie beyond the south western boundary of the Site. The north of the Site lies within SPZ 3, whilst the southern section of the Site lies within SPZ 2 and SPZ 1.
- 4.32 Potential risks to underlying ground conditions during construction will be controlled through standard measures. These measures would form part of the CEMP and include measures such as bunding of storage areas, petrol interceptors and good site management. As such, the Proposed Development is not likely to result in any significant water quality effects or ground conditions effects during construction.
- 4.33 There will be demand for wastewater capacity during the construction works. The CEMP will be implemented prior to and during the construction phase, which will include appropriate measures to manage any discharges of water from the Site to ensure the risk of surface water flooding is mitigated. Therefore, there will be no significant environmental effects during construction.

Operation

- 4.34 The Proposed Development drainage scheme will be designed in accordance with relevant legislation and policy guidance. Potential pollution sources within the operational Proposed Development, such as run-off, will be dealt with through standard design measures and the incorporation of a Surface Water Drainage Strategy (SuDS) and source control methods to ensure surface water is effectively managed. The Proposed Development will implement SuDS features such as detention basins, swales and permeable paving. Controlling flows to greenfield rates and incorporating SuDS into the proposals will ensure that the Proposed Development does not increase flood risk onsite, or to neighbouring properties. As such, the Proposed Development is not likely to result in any significant impacts on water quality or surface water.
- 4.35 Based on the information above, the Proposed Development is not likely to result in any significant flood risk or drainage related effects would require an EIA to be undertaken. The proposed FRA and Drainage Strategy will be prepared and submitted as part of the planning application to confirm the proposed management strategy.

Ecology

Construction

- 4.36 With appropriate mitigation measures in place, it is not expected that the construction of the Proposed Development would have a significant effect on nearby ecological receptors. Responsible construction practices, secured by a CEMP, will ensure that there will be no significant adverse effects on identified ecological receptors such as the Traditional Orchard on the Site and the Ancient Woodland parcels in proximity to the Site.
- 4.37 An Ecological Impact Assessment will be submitted with the planning application, which will identify the potential for habitats and species on-Site; where potential presence is identified, further species-specific surveys will be conducted and appropriate mitigation will be confirmed such as construction outside of breeding seasons and the protection of certain habitats if required. Following implementation of the proposed measures via the CEMP, no significant effects to ecological receptors are anticipated.

Operation

- 4.38 The Proposed Development will implement a range of landscaping measures to enhance biodiversity at the Site. As discussed, the Ecological Impact Assessment and detailed species surveys (if required) will recommend mitigation measures to avoid significant adverse effects to ecological receptors, which are anticipated to be incorporated to the design of the Proposed Development where practicable.
- 4.39 A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (BNG) will be submitted with the planning application which will detail the provisions for ecological enhancement on the Site and confirm the extent to which the proposed improvements promote BNG.

Transport

Construction

- 4.40 Given the modest scale of the Proposed Development there is predicted to only be a minor increase in light and heavy goods vehicle movements at peak hours and across the day. Traffic generated by the construction of the Proposed Development will be managed through the implementation of a CTMP to ensure that the impact to the local road network is minimised following the introduction of additional light and heavy goods vehicles. No significant effects are expected.

Operation

- 4.41 Once operational, the Proposed Development will lead to an uplift in vehicles accessing and egressing the Site. However, as the Proposed Development is modest in scale, it is considered that the potential trips generated would not trigger 'severe' traffic impacts or unacceptable safety impacts in Istead Rise, particularly when accounting for sustainable transport strategy (which will be secured through a Travel Plan). This will be confirmed through detailed transport modelling, to be provided in the Transport Assessment which will accompany the planning applications submission.

Noise and Vibration

Construction

- 4.42 The main source of noise during the construction of the Proposed Development will be from the vehicular access point to the Site (which would potentially impact noise-sensitive receptors along the construction traffic route) and noise generated from operational construction plant, which may potentially impact noise-sensitive receptors within the residential area to the north east of the Site, and within the primary school, which bounds the Site to the south east. Best practicable means will be employed to reduce noise as much as possible. A CEMP will be implemented at the Site to reduce the likelihood of adverse impacts. With mitigation measures proposed, which will form part of a CEMP, it is expected no significant environmental effects will be present during construction phase.

Operation

- 4.43 The primary noise source generated during the operational phase will be from traffic associated with the Proposed Development; however, the operational traffic is unlikely to trigger a 'severe' impact or increase from the existing traffic flows, therefore operational traffic is not expected to exceed existing flows to the extent that a significant noise effect is triggered.
- 4.44 A Noise Assessment will be submitted alongside the planning application.

Air Quality

Construction

- 4.45 During the construction works, the greatest potential air quality effects relate to dust nuisance and releases of pollutants into the air. Good practice measures will be implemented to minimise and control dust at source during construction which will be implemented as part of the CEMP, to reduce impact to nearby sensitive receptors. These good practice measures will be detailed through the use

of method statements and include measures such as hoarding, water suppression and covering of transport vehicles. Method statements will be based on industry standard guidance published by the Institute of Air Quality Management. Given the implementation of such measures and the temporary nature of construction activities, dust during the construction phase is not expected to give rise to significant or long-term adverse effects on local receptors.

- 4.46 In terms of exhaust emissions, plant and equipment used for construction works will also be modern and compliant with current emissions standards. As above, such measures will be detailed as part of a CEMP. With these standard practice measures in place and due to the scale of Proposed Development, exhaust emissions during construction works are not expected to give rise to significant adverse effects.
- 4.47 Construction traffic has potential to contribute to existing traffic levels on the surrounding road networks and may impact on local air quality. However, given the modest scale of the Proposed Development and appropriate mitigation measures implemented, there is predicted to only be a minor increase in HGV movements at peak hours and across the day. The temporary increase in traffic is considered unlikely to be significant regarding emissions. Any effects during construction are likely to be short-term and temporary in nature and would be mitigated by the implementation of the CEMP.
- 4.48 Consideration has been given to the health implications of the construction of the Proposed Development. During construction, the safety of the on-site works and associated health of the on-site workforce will be ensured through regularly health and safety measures (e.g. personal protective equipment (PPE)). For surrounding receptors, health and well-being will be managed through a CEMP, that will ensure public safety, amenity and site security, noise and vibration controls and air and dust management. As such, no significant construction related health effects or emissions are anticipated.

Operation

- 4.49 This Site is not located within, or in proximity to, an AQMA and local reporting identifies that AQS are not exceeded. It is not expected that the operation of the Proposed Development would result in a significant number of vehicle trips to and from the Site; therefore, it is not expected that the operation of the Proposed Development would give rise to significant effects related to air quality. The proposed uses of the Site (residential, employment, care) will not produce significant emissions, and therefore are not anticipated to adversely impact air quality.

Ground Conditions and Contaminated Land

- 4.50 The ground conditions at the Site will be ascertained through a Phase 1 Site Investigation Study, which will be undertaken prior to any construction works taking place on the Site. Should assessment work identify any sources of contamination on-Site, or pathways to off-Site sources of contamination, these will be remediated prior to works taking place at the Site.

Construction

- 4.51 The use of appropriate control measures during the construction phase will be implemented to mitigate any risks or impacts, should the presence of ground contamination be encountered.
- 4.52 Construction workers could conceptually be at risk if they were to be exposed to contaminated soils via the direct contact pathways. However, it is judged that such risks could be effectively ameliorated using appropriate PPE and health and hygiene practices.
- 4.53 The inhalation of contaminated dust could also have a conceptual impact on both on and off-Site human receptors, particularly if construction was to be carried out during the drier summer months when dust generation is more likely; however, regardless of contamination, appropriate dust suppression measures should be implemented upon all construction sites as good practice, implemented via the CEMP.
- 4.54 Although operations during construction could result in discharges to the surface water receptors in the vicinity of the Site, these risks and impacts would be mitigated by conducting the construction phase in accordance with the recommendations of a CEMP.

Operation

- 4.55 Post-construction, the hardstanding and buildings that will occupy the Site will form a permanent physical barrier that will prevent human exposure to any residual ground contamination remaining beneath the Site.
- 4.56 Design of the Site's drainage will need to be such that any escapes of potential contaminants are contained and not discharged to the ground or surface water bodies in the vicinity.

Waste

Construction

- 4.57 It is recognised that the demolition and construction phases of the Proposed Development will produce a volume of materials that will need to be disposed of correctly. Therefore, the waste materials will be organised in such a manner that maximises recycling and minimises the quantity of materials going to landfill. Best practice measures will be incorporated into a CEMP, which will be in place prior to any works on-Site.

Operation

- 4.58 The Proposed Development is of a similar nature to the existing residential uses that lie within proximity of the Site, meaning that it is unlikely to give rise to waste that could not be incorporated into the existing waste management regime for the current uses on these adjacent sites. Compliance with environmental and waste legislation is a minimum requirement when managing waste and will be a primary objective of the Proposed Development.
- 4.59 Waste and recycling collection will be managed, and waste and recycling storage volumes would accord with relevant requirements. It is unlikely that operation of the Proposed Development would

give rise to hazardous waste due to its residential nature. As such, the Proposed Development is not likely to give rise to significant effects in relation to production of waste.

Socio-Economics and Health

Construction

- 4.60 The construction of the Proposed Development would support economic activity in the area such as local jobs and workforce expenditure. Given the modest scale of the Proposed Development, this is considered to be beneficial, but not significant in EIA terms. Likewise, in the wider context of the mobility of construction workers and the level of existing construction employment in Kent, this is not considered significant.
- 4.61 During construction, the health of the on-Site workforce will be protected through measures such as personal protective equipment (PPE). For surrounding sensitive uses, such as residential dwellings, any potential effects on health will be managed through a CEMP with regard to public safety, site security, noise and vibration and dust management. As such, no significant construction related health effects are anticipated.

Operation

- 4.62 Once operational, due to its proposed uses, the Proposed Development is not anticipated to cause effects to human health through nuisance through generation of significant emissions to air quality (e.g. GHGs, odour, pollutants such as particulate matter) or noise.
- 4.63 An Economic Benefits Statement will accompany the planning submission.

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases

- 4.64 The IEMA Guide⁵ Assessing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Evaluating their Significance (February 2022)⁵ states that “...*in the absence of any significance criteria or defined threshold, it might be considered that all GHG emissions are significant...*”; however, the Guide does provide a means to determine the significance of a Proposed Development’s whole life greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, in the context of the UK’s net zero compatible trajectory. Where a development is considered compatible with the budgeted, science-based 1.5°C trajectory, or where it goes substantially beyond this, it may be concluded that the effect of a development with respect to GHG will be not significant.

⁵ IEMA (2022) Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to: Assessing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Evaluating their Significance. Available at < https://www.iema.net/media/soanjq22/eia-guide_ghg-assessment-and-significance_iema_16may17.pdf>

Construction

- 4.65 During construction of the Proposed Development, best practice measures will be employed to minimise GHG emissions associated with construction vehicles and plant. This will be outlined within a CEMP, to be secured through a suitably worded planning condition, and significant effects are therefore not anticipated.

Operation

- 4.66 The Proposed Development will incorporate appropriate climate change adaption measures designed to address the potential risks associated with climate change, including allowance for storm events in drainage design and implementation of energy efficiency measures within the design of the built development in order to reduce production of GHGs. An Energy Statement will be submitted alongside the planning application detailing the relevant measures in place to mitigate the impact of the Proposed Development on the climate.
- 4.67 It is anticipated that the GHG emissions associated with both the construction and operation of the Proposed Development will fall below those required to align with the 1.5°C trajectory. Therefore, it is considered that the Proposed Development will not have a significant impact with respect the GHG emissions.

Major Accidents, Fire and Natural Disasters

- 4.68 The Applicant is obliged to follow the necessary safety and maintenance procedures required during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development, to ensure the facility is operating safely. Therefore, the risk of a major accidents or disaster is not considered to be significant.
- 4.69 There are no hazardous uses comprised in the Proposed Development, therefore major accidents are not anticipated once operational.

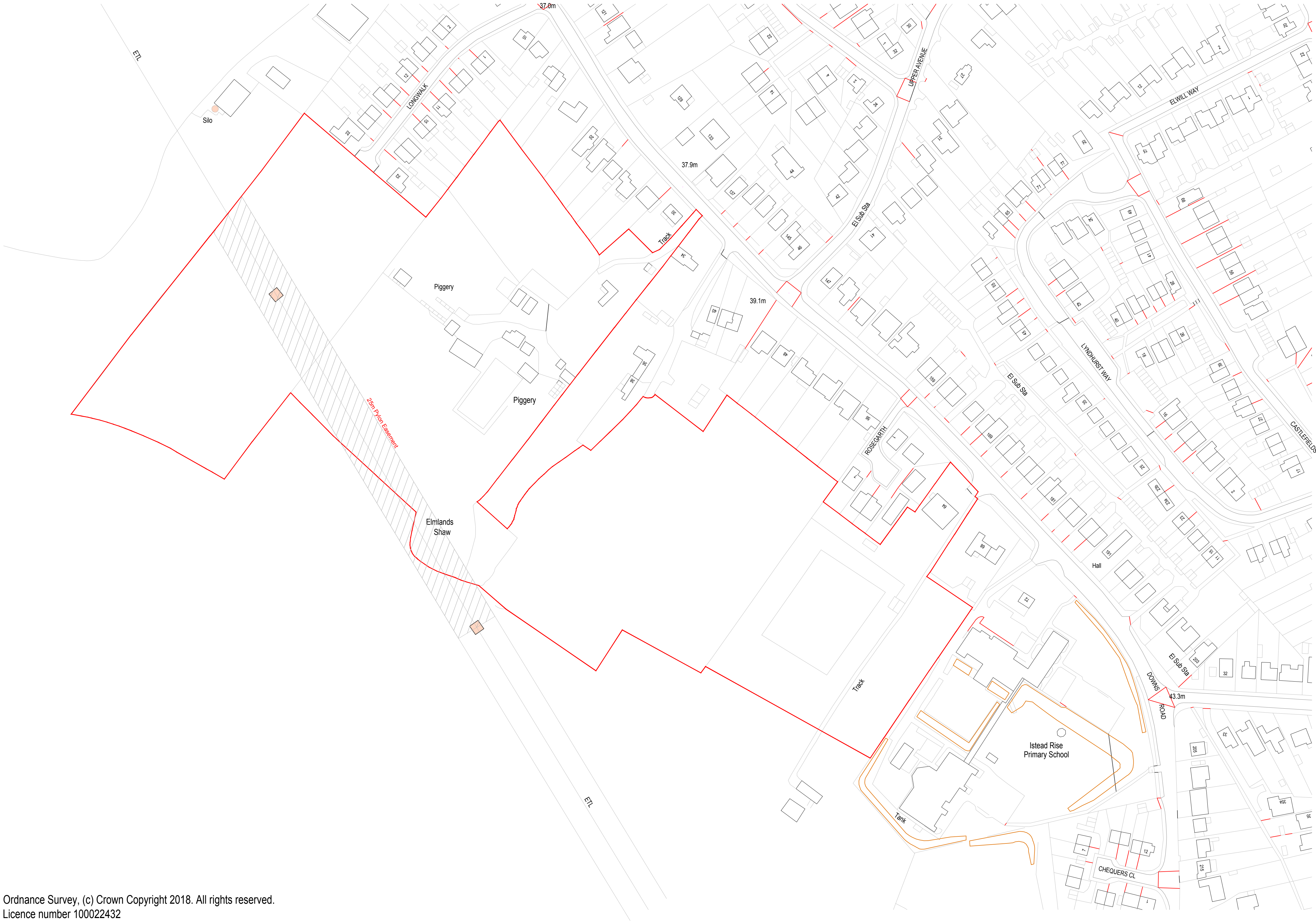
Summary

- 4.70 Having considered the characteristics of the potential impacts above, it is considered that there is unlikely to be likely significant effects. Where relevant, detailed assessments will be undertaken in accordance with appropriate guidance and submitted as part of the planning application as standalone supporting planning documents.

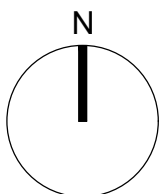
5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This EIA Screening Opinion request has been prepared in accordance with the EIA Regulations in order to ascertain whether the Proposed Development would require an Environmental Impact Assessment to be submitted as part of the planning application.
- 5.2 The PPG contains specific guidance on the EIA Regulations, and sets out that the focus should be on those effects which are significant, when determining if a development requires an EIA. The relevant indicative threshold and criteria outlined in the PPG are *“if a development would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings).”* The Proposed Development seeks to provide up to 160 dwellings as a natural urban extension to Istead Rise, which is significantly less than the 1,000 dwellings stated. Moreover, it is considered that the technical reporting (Appendix A2), which will inform the design of the Proposed Development, will ensure that any potential significant effects are identified and mitigated.
- 5.3 The Proposed Development comprises the development of the land to provide up to 160 new homes of up to two storeys in height. The Proposed Development would be similar in nature to the existing surrounding land uses, thereby responding sensitively to the residential context of Istead Rise, to the north east of the Site. Consequently, the extent of the impact of the Proposed Development will be localised in nature and characteristic of its end use. Embedded mitigation measures are incorporated in the design of the Proposed Development in order to ensure the design is sensitive to local constraints, whilst additional mitigation measures will be ascertained, where necessary, in further reporting to be submitted with the planning application.
- 5.4 Good construction practice and site operations will ensure minimal effects to the local environment, whilst its temporary nature will be offset by benefits the development will deliver. Effects will therefore be mainly limited and local in nature.
- 5.5 It is anticipated that the operation of the Proposed Development will give rise to beneficial effects on the local housing market, although these will not be significant considering the modest scale of the Proposed Development. Furthermore, the Proposed Development would be a natural extension to Istead Rise.
- 5.6 Thus, we submit this report to formally request a Screening Opinion, in relation to the Proposed Development in accordance with the EIA Regulations, from GBC confirming that the Proposed Development would **not result** in significant environmental effects and the submission of an EIA is not required.

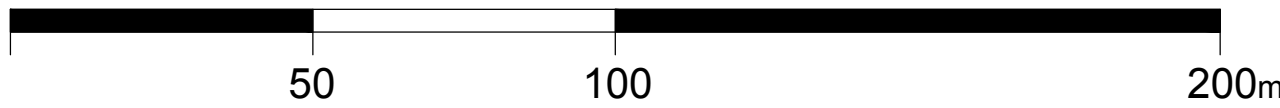
A1. SITE LOCATION PLAN



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Scale 1:1250



Notes:

Do Not Scale.
Report all discrepancies, errors and omissions.
Verify all dimensions on site before commencing any work on site or preparing shop drawings.
All materials, components and workmanship are to comply with the relevant British Standards, Codes of Practice, and appropriate manufacturers recommendations that from time to time shall apply.
For all specialist work, see relevant engineers drawings.
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REV.	DESCRIPTION:	BY:	DATE:
STATUS:			

ESQUIRE DEVELOPMENTS

Esquire Developments Ltd. www.esquiredevelopments.com
Studio 3, The Old Laundry 01474 706 184
Green Street Green Road
Longfield
Kent
DA2 8EB

PROJECT:
Downs Road
Istead Rise
Gravesend
Kent

DESCRIPTION:
Red Line Plan

SCALE AT A1: 1:1250	DATE: Jan 2018	DRAWN: BK	CHECKED:
PROJECT NO: ESQ-014	DRAWING NO: 014-1000	REVISION:	B

A2. INDICATIVE LIST OF PLANNING APPLICATION SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Air quality assessment
 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment
 - Desk-Based Archaeological Assessment
 - DAS incl. daylight/sunlight, energy statement,
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy
 - Ecological Impact Assessment
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
 - Heritage Assessment
 - Phase 1 Site Investigation
 - Transport Assessment
 - Landscape Visual Impact Assessment
 - Landscape Masterplan
 - Economic Benefits Statement
 - Planning Statement incl. SCI and Affordable Housing Statement
 - Utilities assessment
-

A3. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL AND GREEN BELT REVIEW

Land at Rose Farm, Istead Rise: Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review

Prepared on behalf of Esquire Developments Ltd

April 2017

Land at Rose Farm, Istead Rise: Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review

Prepared on behalf of Esquire Developments Ltd

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ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

Figure 1: Site Context Plan

Figure 2: Topography Plan

Figure 3: Landscape Character Plan

Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan

Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan

Figure 6: Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints Plan

Site Appraisal Photographs A

Site Context Photographs 1 – 5

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Overview

- 1.1 Barton Willmore Landscape Planning and Design (BWLPD) was commissioned by Esquire Developments Ltd to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review of the Land at Rose Farm, Istead Rise ('the Site'), in relation to its suitability for residential development and informing Gravesham's Site Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD). The aim of the DPD is to allocate sites for a variety of land uses and review the current strategic policy on the scale and distribution of development in the Borough.
- 1.2 BWLPD have previously undertaken a Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review of the land to the immediate east of the Site, at Downs Farm, in August 2016, also to inform the DPD. This concluded that Downs Farm would be suitable for both residential development and removal from the Green Belt, due to its very localised visual envelope, coherent relationship to the existing settlement pattern and existing defensible boundaries. The development of the Site and its potential release from the Green Belt is therefore considered in the context of Downs Farm being developed and providing access into the Site.
- 1.3 This report details the landscape character, landscape value and visual envelope of the Site, and provides an assessment of the contribution that the Site makes towards the purposes and function of the Green Belt, as set out in Paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.4 The objectives of this study are to:
 - Assess the landscape characteristics and quality of the Site and its surrounding and function within the landscape;
 - Assess the visibility of the Site and the nature and quality of the existing views from the surrounding area;
 - Consider the policy basis for the Green Belt designation that applies to the area;
 - Assess the contribution of the Site in response to its Green Belt function and its potential to be released from the Green Belt; and
 - Identify opportunities and constraints to development on the Site, from a landscape and visual perspective, in combination with the development of Downs Farm.
- 1.5 Supporting illustrative information is presented in the following plans and photographs:
 - Figure 1: Site Context Plan;
 - Figure 2: Topography Plan;
 - Figure 3: Landscape Character Plan;

- Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan;
- Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan;
- Figure 6: Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints Plan;
- Site Appraisal Photographs A; and
- Site Context Photographs 1 – 5.

DRAFT

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

- 2.1 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been prepared with reference to the guidelines as set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition, prepared by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.
- 2.2 A desktop review of the study area was undertaken, including for a review of the published landscape character information, landform, landscape features, relevant landscape and visual policy and landscape designations. This information was used as the initial basis against which to appraise the Site. A visit to the Site and surroundings was subsequently undertaken in July 2016 to verify the desk-based review and add further information to the landscape and visual context of the Site.
- 2.3 A description of the existing land use of the study area is provided and includes reference to existing areas of settlement, transport routes and vegetation cover, as well as local landscape designations, elements of cultural and heritage value, and local landmarks or tourist destinations. These factors combine to provide an understanding of landscape value and sensitivity and provide an indication of particular key views and viewpoints that are available to visual receptors.
- 2.4 To determine the extent of visual influence, a visual appraisal was undertaken of the Site to consider the nature of existing views from publicly accessible viewpoints including roads, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and public open space. Consideration was given to private views, however access to private properties was not obtained. Views were considered from all directions and from a range of distances. The viewpoints chosen are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to represent the potential views obtained towards the Site in order to identify areas of higher visual sensitivity that may not be best suited for development.
- 2.5 The inherent sensitivity of the Site is considered in terms of the following:
 - Landscape Character: i.e. landform, vegetation cover, land use, scale, state of repair of individual elements, representation of typological character, enclosure pattern, form/line and movement;
 - Landscape Value: i.e. national designations, local designations, sense of tranquillity/remoteness, scenic beauty and cultural associations; and
 - Visual Influence: i.e. landform influences, tree and woodland cover, numbers and types of residents, numbers and types of visitors and scope for mitigating potential for visual impacts.

- 2.6 A more detailed landscape appraisal of the Site was then undertaken, which in combination with the wider visual appraisal, assists in the identification of opportunities and constraints that would assist in defining the boundaries for potential future development, and thus an amended Green Belt boundary.

Green Belt Review

Assessment against the purposes of the Green Belt

- 2.7 The Site is assessed against the first four purposes of the Green Belt as set out in Paragraph 80 of the NPPF, which are:

- *"To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- *To prevent neighbouring towns from merging in to one another;*
- *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and*
- *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns..."*

- 2.8 With respect to the fifth purpose of the Green Belt *"to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land"*, should the Site be brought forward for development it would not prejudice derelict or other urban land being brought forward for urban regeneration. However, the principle of retaining land within the Green Belt holds true for all areas within the Green Belt, therefore the Site is considered to make the same contribution to this purpose of the Green Belt as any other land parcel within the Green Belt. Accordingly, no additional specific assessment is undertaken.

- 2.9 The NPPF endorses the permanence of Green Belts as an essential characteristic and stipulates in Paragraph 83 that *"once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan"*.

- 2.10 The NPPF seeks to align Green Belt boundary reviews with sustainable patterns of development, as set out in Paragraph 84, with Local Planning Authorities encouraged to *"consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary"*.

- 2.11 In this regard, where a given area of land contributes poorly towards meeting the purposes of the Green Belt and its release would contribute positively to promoting a sustainable development pattern, this may be considered to impart towards 'exceptional circumstances' and the Green Belt boundary should be reviewed accordingly. The criteria used to assess the contribution made to the first four purposes of the Green Belt is set out in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Purposes of the Green Belt – Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criteria		Contribution
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	a	Protects open land that is contiguous with large built-up area	Considerable: Contiguous with a large built-up area and protects open land from urban sprawl. Some: Contiguous with a large built-up area but does not protect open land. Limited: Not contiguous with a large built-up area.
	b	Prevent sprawl of large built-up area where development would not otherwise be restricted by boundary of permanence	Considerable: Provides a barrier for a large built-up area that is bordered by features not likely to be of permanence. Some: Provides an additional barrier for a large built-up area that is already bordered by consistent boundary features. Limited: Not contiguous with a large built-up area.
Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	a	Prevents development that would result in the merging or erosion of a gap between settlements	Considerable: Development would substantially reduce the physical distance between settlements. Some: Development is not likely to result in the physical coalescence of settlements. Limited: Development would not physically reduce the separation between settlements.
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	a	Protect the openness of the countryside and perceived rurality	Considerable: No built or engineered forms present and inherently rural in character. Some: Urbanising elements over the area, with minimal built for engineered forms. Limited: The majority of the area contains existing built or engineered forms or is urban in character / not perceived to be rural.
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	a	Conserve the setting and special character of heritage assets	Considerable: Heritage assets present within, or adjoining, the area. Some: Intervisibility with, or contribution to the setting of, heritage assets. Limited: No intervisibility with, or contribution to the setting of, heritage assets.

Assessment against the characteristics of the Green Belt

- 2.12 The NPPF states that the key characteristics of the Green Belt are "*their openness and their permanence*". In defining new boundaries to the Green Belt, it must be ensured that these characteristics are not diminished for the areas remaining within the Green Belt designation as a direct result of development. An assessment is made of the openness of the Green Belt in the vicinity of the Site and to what extent the Sites' removal could have on the perception of openness in the remaining designated area.
- 2.13 In addition, the relationship of the Site to existing elements and visual barriers, such as ridgelines, roads and areas of notable vegetation is demonstrated. This assists in the

assessment of impact of potential development upon the openness of the remaining designated area and assists in the identification of boundaries that may be considered to be 'permanent'.

Definitions

Openness

- 2.14 Openness is taken to be the degree to which an area is unaffected by built structures. It is considered that, in order to be a robust assessment, this should be considered from first principles, i.e. acknowledging existing structures that occur within the area, rather than seeing them as being 'washed over' by the existing Green Belt designation.

Sprawl

- 2.15 Disorganised and unattractive extension to an existing development area.

Defensible boundaries

- 2.16 The NPPF states that "*local authorities should define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent*".

Coalescence

- 2.17 The physical or visual linkage of two settlements or areas of built form.

Encroachment

- 2.18 Advancement of built development beyond the limits of the existing built up area into an area perceived as countryside.

3.0 RELEVANT POLICY

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2012

- 3.1 The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as "*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*", and providing it is in accordance with the relevant up-to-date Local Plan, and policies set out in the NPPF including those identifying restrictions with regard to designated areas.
- 3.2 The NPPF states that "*the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*" and that there are "*three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental*". The role the environment plays is described as "*contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use of natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy*".
- 3.3 Twelve Core Planning Principles are set out, of which the following are relevant to the consideration of landscape and visual matters, stating that planning should:
- ***"not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;***
 - *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
 - *take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
 - *contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; and*
 - ***conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations."***
- 3.4 Section 7 of the NPPF provides guidance on ensuring the delivery of good design. The NPPF requires development proposals to respond to local character and be visually attractive, as well as emphasising the need to integrate development proposals into the natural environment.

Paragraph 58 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- ***"will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;***
- *establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- *respond to local character and history and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and **appropriate landscaping**".*

3.5 Paragraph 61 of the NPPF states that:

"...planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment."

3.6 Section 9 of the NPPF relates to the protection of Green Belt land, with Paragraph 79 noting that *"the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open"*. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt, which are replicated in Paragraphs 2.7 - 2.8 of this report.

3.7 Paragraph 83 considers alterations to the designated Green Belt boundary, stating:

"Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period."

3.8 This is supported by Paragraph 85 of the NPPF that states with regard to defining boundaries that local planning authorities should *"not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open"* and to *"define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent"*.

3.9 Furthermore, Paragraph 85 notes that local planning authorities should "*satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period*" and "*where necessary, identify in their plans areas of 'safeguarded land' between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period*".

3.10 Emphasis on development to be appropriate to an underlying Green Belt designation is reinforced in Paragraph 87, which states:

"As with previous Green Belt Policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances."

3.11 This is supported by Paragraph 88, which states that:

"Local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."

3.12 With respect to the natural environment, Paragraphs 109 - 125 of the NPPF focus on the conservation and enhancement of the local and natural environment. The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the local environment by inter-alia "*protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils*".

3.13 Paragraph 110 of the NPPF sets out that the aim in preparing plans for development should be to minimise adverse effects on the local and natural environment, and that plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value. Paragraph 114 notes that furthermore, Local Planning Authorities should:

"set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure."

Local Policy

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted 2014

3.14 The Site lies within the administrative boundary of Gravesham Borough Council, Kent. Those policies of relevance to the immediate context of the Site and landscape, visual and Green Belt matters are set out below.

3.15 Policy CS02 'Scale and Distribution of Development' states that:

"...in the rural area, development will be supported within those rural settlements inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those settlements, including affordable housing and proposals to maintain and diversify the rural economy, will be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in this plan. The extent of the Green Belt is defined on the Policies Map. A strategic Green Belt boundary review will be undertaken to identify additional land to meet the housing needs up to 2028 and to safeguard areas of land to meet development needs beyond the plan period, while maintaining the national and local planning purposes of the Green Belt..."

3.16 The settlement of Istead Rise is noted as a 'Second Tier Settlement' within the rural area, inset from the Green Belt. Paragraph 4.2.6 notes that *"these boundaries do not define the full extent of each settlement but relate to a coherent and established built up area where infilling would not adversely affect local character and identity, or impact on the openness of the Green Belt"*.

3.17 Paragraph 4.2.7 notes that *"the national aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open"* and sets out the following local planning purposes:

- *"To maintain the break in development between the eastern edge of Gravesend and the Medway Towns which is one of the few barriers preventing the further eastward sprawl of London and the merging of towns along the southern part of the Thames Estuary;*
- *To assist in safeguarding the countryside by minimising the expansion of the Borough's rural settlements; and*
- *To assist in concentrating development on underused, derelict and previously developed land in the urban area of Gravesend and Northfleet."*

3.18 Paragraph 4.2.8 states that:

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

3.19 Policy CS12 'Green Infrastructure' states that:

"...there will be no net loss of biodiversity in the Borough, and opportunities to enhance, restore, re-create and maintain habitats will be sought..."

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

3.20 Policy CS14 'Housing Type and Size' states that:

"...the Council will expect new housing development to provide a range of dwelling types and sizes taking into account the existing character of the area..."

3.21 Policy CS14 'Housing Density' states that:

"...all new housing will be developed at a density that is consistent with achieving a good design and does not compromise the distinctive character of the area in which it is situated..."

3.22 Policy CS19 'Development and Design Principles' states that:

"New development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It will conserve and enhance the character of the local built historic and natural environment, integrate well with the surrounding local area and meet anti-crime standards...this will be achieved through..."

- *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..."*

Supplementary Planning Documents

Gravesham Strategic Land Availability Assessment, 2012

3.23 Gravesham's Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) collates information regarding the future development potential in the Borough and forms part of the evidence base to the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy. The Site is not included within the SLAA.

3.24 Paragraph 2.1.11 of the SLAA notes however that:

"The SLAA is a technical background document only. It is not a statement of Council policy, it does not allocate land, and is not a statutory planning document...it will not pre-empt or prejudice any decision the Council may make in the future on any particular site and does not alter any policies or land use designations as set out in the Local Plan."

Landscape Character Based Analysis of Potential Development Sites, 2011

3.25 The Landscape Character Based Analysis of Potential Development Site was prepared by David Hares Landscape Architecture on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council, and comprises a landscape character based analysis and review of a number of potential development sites, outlining their sensitivity to development; however the Site was not included within this study.

Residential Layout Guidelines, 1996

3.26 The Residential Layout Guidelines were prepared by Gravesham Borough Council to inform the layout of new development, setting out criteria that all planning applications for residential development should comply with. For the most part the criteria relate to the internal arrangement of development proposals, albeit reference is made to privacy distances, overshadowing, amenity space and play space provision.

Kent Design Guide, 2005

3.27 The Kent Design Guide seeks to provide a starting point for good design while retaining flexibility for creative, individual approaches to different buildings and areas, while also seeking to ensure that the best of Kent's places remain to enrich the environment for future generations. It does not seek to restrict designs for any new development to any historic Kent vernacular, but instead aims to encourage well considered and contextually sympathetic schemes.

3.28 The Kent Design Guide notes that successful places tend to:

- *"Be friendly, safe and attractive;*

- *Be well used – a steady passage of people provides a feeling of safety;*
- *Have public space and squares that draw people together;*
- *Have spaces for public events, markets and performances;*
- *Clearly distinguish private and public areas;*
- *Have building frontages with a direct relationship with the street;*
- *Have clearly defined entrances to buildings used by the public;*
- *Have a network of pedestrian routes and spaces;*
- *Give priority in streets to people rather than to vehicles;*
- *Have clearly defined boundaries for public areas – using hedges, fences and trees;*
- *Have a coordinated approach to street surfaces and furniture - lamps, seats, litter bins, paving, bus shelters and signs."*

3.29 It further notes that "*creating a 'sense of place' or 'character' is one of the most **important things for new development to achieve...***". With respect to the landscape setting it states that "*the landscape setting of a development site should be understood, extended and enhanced within the site*", and states that a well-designed landscape will provide:

- *"An attractive setting for a development, its users and occupiers;*
- *A positive environment of wider economic benefit;*
- *A sense of place with a clear identity;*
- *A sense of space and enclosure;*
- *Spatial benefits including integrating the visual impact of the built environment with nature;*
- *Environmental benefits including micro-climate creation, pollution attenuation and the reduction of water and energy consumption;*
- *Noise and visual screening; and*
- *Retention of cultural associations with the natural environment."*

3.30 With respect to new planting it is noted that it may take a long time to reach maturity, therefore "***...existing features which contribute to amenity and biodiversity should be retained to make the development attractive in its early years...***".

4.0 SITE CONTEXT

Landscape Setting

- 4.1 The Site covers 2 hectares (ha) and is broadly rectangular in shape, with the exception of the stepped alignment on the southern and northern boundaries. The land use is agricultural, consisting of a single field bordered by residential properties, trees and hedgerows.

Location and Local Land Use

- 4.2 As demonstrated by Figure 1: Site Context Plan, the Site is adjacent to the rural settlement boundary, being inset between residential built form extending from Longwalk; the southern side of Downs Road (and forming the southern edge of Istead Rise), Downs Farm and Istead Rise Primary School.
- 4.3 Istead Rise comprises predominantly post-second-world-war two storey and bungalow residential development. To the south and west of the Site the land use comprises sloping rising agricultural land that separates Istead Rise from New Barn. A disused agricultural building lies within this sloping land to the south-east of the Site, which is also traversed by a line of pylon towers, which are in close proximity to part of the Site's southern edge.

Access and Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 4.4 The key transport routes within the vicinity of the Site include:
- Downs Road, aligned broadly north-west to south-east, which extends through the settlement of Istead Rise and forms part of the connecting route between Southfleet and Hook Green;
 - A227 Wrotham Road, aligned north-south to the east of Istead Rise, which connects Hook Green with the A2 corridor; and
 - New Barn Road, aligned north-south to the west of the Site, which connects New Barn with Southfleet and the A2 corridor.
- 4.5 The Site is not crossed by any PRoW and overall there are very few PRoW within the vicinity of the Site.
- 4.6 PRoW DN38 (which turns into NU38 and then DR142) and NU37 lie within the elevated landscape to the south-west of the Site and provide connectivity between New Barn and Southfleet. PRoW NU35 lies to the south-east of the Site and provides connectivity between Istead Rise and Nash Street.

- 4.7 An area of Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act Land lies approximately 250m to the east of the Site, between Downs Road and the A227 Wrotham Road.

Topography and Hydrology

- 4.8 As demonstrated by Figure 2: Topography Plan, the Site comprises gently sloping land, from the northern edge of the Site at 40m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to 52m AOD at the southern edge. The Site forms part of a broadly north-facing slope that extends from the valley floor along Downs Road, south-west to New Barn and a ridgeline at 95m AOD.
- 4.9 The settlement of Istead Rise effectively extends over undulating landform, which rises from Downs Road to 65m AOD, before falling to 50m AOD at the eastern side of the settlement pattern.
- 4.10 There are no notable hydrological features within the vicinity of the Site or the settlement of Istead Rise.

Vegetation

- 4.11 With reference to Figure 1: Site Context Plan, the Site is contained by substantial tree belts that form part of the western and eastern boundaries to the Site.
- 4.12 Within Istead Rise, ornamental and structural planting is commonplace, with the streetscene generally featuring mature trees within the curtilage of residential dwellings and lining the roads (particularly along Downs Road).
- 4.13 Beyond Istead Rise there are wide strips of woodland and areas of chalk grassland, particularly within the steeper slopes, while field boundaries are generally defined by hedgerows featuring the occasional mature hedgerow tree.
- 4.14 Walnut Wood, Pigstiles Shaw and Thirty Acre Shaw are ancient woodlands to the south of the Site, forming part of the vegetated edge of New Barn.

Designations

- 4.15 The Site is not covered by any national, regional or local landscape designations.
- 4.16 The nearest nationally designated landscape, the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies approximately 2.9km to the south-east of the Site at its nearest point.
- 4.17 There are no national or local nature reserves in the vicinity of the Site.

- 4.18 The nearest Registered Park and Garden to the Site is the Grade II* Gravesend Cemetery approximately 3.5km to the north, while the Grade II* Cobham Hall Registered Park and Garden lies approximately 3.7km to the east.
- 4.19 There are few designated heritage assets within the vicinity of the Site. The nearest is the Grade II listed Downs Hall, which lies approximately 40m to the north of the Site. The nearest scheduled monument is the deserted medieval manorial settlement of Cossington, located approximately 1.2km to the east of the Site.
- 4.20 The Site, the landscape bordering Istead Rise and to the south and west of the Site is within the Green Belt.

Published Landscape Character

- 4.21 The landscape character assessment approach is a descriptive approach that seeks to identify and define the distinct character of landscapes that make up the country. This approach recognises the intrinsic value of all landscapes, not just 'special' landscapes, as contributing factors in people's quality of life, in accordance with the European Landscape Convention. It also ensures that account is taken of the different roles and character of different areas, in accordance with the NPPF Core Principles.
- 4.22 The description of each landscape is used as a basis for evaluation in order to make judgements to guide, for example, development or landscape management. The extent of published landscape character areas are illustrated on Figure 3: Landscape Character Plan.

National Landscape Character

- 4.23 As part of Natural England's responsibilities in delivering the Natural Environment White Paper, Biodiversity 2020 and the European Landscape Convention, Natural England has developed a series of National Character Area (NCA) profiles. These NCA profiles provide a broad range of information including an outline of the key characteristics of a given area; a description of the ecosystem services provided and how these relate to people, wildlife and the economy; and an array of opportunities for positive environmental change.
- 4.24 The Site is predominantly covered by NCA Profile 113: North Kent Plain. The key characteristics of NCA Profile 113: North Kent Plain, of relevance to the Site and surrounding area, are outlined as follows:

- *"An open, low and gently undulating landscape, characterised by high-quality, fertile, loamy soils dominated by agricultural land uses...;*

- *Large arable/horticultural fields with regular patterns and rectangular shapes predominating, and a sparse hedgerow pattern;*
- *Orchards and horticultural crops characterise central and eastern areas, and are often enclosed by poplar or alder **shelterbelts and scattered small woodlands...; and***
- *Large settlements and urban infrastructure (including lines of pylons) are often visually dominant in the landscape, with significant development around Greater London and **the Medway Towns, as well as around towns further east...***

4.25 The south-east edge of the Site is covered by NCA Profile 119: North Downs, of which the key characteristics relevant to the Site and surrounding landscape are:

- ***"...the footslope of the escarpment supports arable cropping, the dominant land use within the NCA. In the east, the richer, loamy soils of the lower dip slope support large tracts of mixed arable and horticultural production;***
- ***Woodland is found primarily on the steeper slopes of the scarp, valley sides and areas of the dip slope capped with clay-with-flints. Well-wooded hedgerows and shaws are an important component of the field boundaries, contributing to a strongly wooded character. Much of the woodland is ancient...; and***
- ***Small, nucleated villages and scattered farmsteads including oasts and barns form the settlement pattern, with local flint, chalk and Wealden brick the vernacular materials..."***

County Landscape Character

4.26 The Landscape Assessment of Kent was prepared by Jacobs Babbie on behalf of Kent County Council and was published in October 2004. The Landscape Assessment of Kent identifies a number of different Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) across Kent, and provides a description of and vision for each LCA.

4.27 The landscape encompassing the existing settled area of Istead Rise and covering the Site and surrounding area is identified as the Southfleet Arable Lands LCA, the characteristic features of which are defined as:

- *"Good quality soils developed on the Tertiary Beds overlying the chalk. A generally open arable landscape;*
- *Open landscape allowing transport routes, pylons and settlement to dominate many areas;*
- *Remnant unkept hedgerows, shelterbelts and woodland copses giving a scruffy and unmanaged feel; and*
- *Long views to the busy A2 (T) and Kent Thames-side beyond."*

4.28 The condition of the Southfleet Arable Lands LCA is identified as 'Very Poor', noting that there are *"many visual detractors which dominate the view, such as transmission pylons"*

and that "the 20th century development of historic village edges give a high negative impact on the view".

4.29 The sensitivity of the Southfleet Arable Lands LCA is identified as 'Moderate', stating:

"The undulating landform is apparent in the open views over the landscape area. Visibility is therefore high. The main inherent characteristics which make up the landscape pattern have become indistinct. The historic features of hedgerow enclosure and the more recent shelterbelts are now indistinct elements of the landscape. Building forms on the edge of settlements do not contribute to local distinctiveness and there is very little time-depth to the landscape's current dominant features..."

Local Landscape Character

4.30 The Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, which identifies eleven distinct LCAs within Gravesham Borough, was prepared by Jacobs on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council and was published in May 2009. The Site and the surrounding area is identified within the Istead Arable Farmlands LCA, the key characteristics of which are outlined as follows:

- *"Gently undulating topography with open arable fields;*
- *Fields divided by tracks, roads and occasional hedgerows;*
- *Orchards to the east;*
- *Minor native woodland clumps;*
- *Few roads, which are open in character;*
- *Istead Rise modern housing development;*
- *Clusters of properties and farmsteads; and*
- *Large pylons."*

4.31 It is noted that the condition of the LCA is 'Poor' and that "electricity pylons dominate the area and although there are few other detractors, the scale and frequency of the large pylons is a significant visual detractor", while the sensitivity of the LCA is assessed as 'Moderate', stating:

"Distinct landscape elements comprise isolated buildings and farmsteads that contribute towards local distinctiveness through their traditional style and use of materials. Enclosure provided by ditch lines and remaining hedgerows provides historic features. However, many features and elements of the landscape are indistinct and recent, and overall there is a weak sense of place. The open character of the landscape and consequential high visibility across the character area provide a moderate level of sensitivity overall."

Published Landscape Guidelines

National Landscape Guidelines

4.32 With respect to NCA 113: North Kent Plain, the following Statements of Environmental Opportunity of relevance to the Site are provided:

- *"SEO 1: Maintain the historic character and long tradition of a farmed landscape, creating habitats to establish more resilient and coherent ecological networks within the farmed and peri-urban areas...;*
- *SEO 3: Protect the distinct wooded areas of the landscape, particularly through the management of nationally important, ancient semi-natural woodlands, increased the area of broadleaved woodland where appropriate, while increasing the connectivity of the mosaic of associated habitats...;*
- *SEO 4: Protect and enhance the strong character and heritage of the urban areas. Plan for the creation of significant new areas of green space and green corridors to provide a framework for new and existing development in urban areas..."*

4.33 The following landscape opportunities of relevance to the Site are identified:

- *"Protect the open character of the gently undulating landscape and the remaining areas of tranquillity...;*
- *Manage and significantly enhance the area's existing broadleaved woodland cover...creating robust wildlife networks better adapted to climate change whilst also enhancing landscape character...; and*
- *Plan for the creation of significant new landscape that provide a framework to new and existing development....to provide a screening function and significantly benefit landscape as well as biodiversity."*

4.34 With respect to NCA 119: North Downs, the following Statements of Environmental Opportunity of relevance to the Site are provided:

- *"SEO 1: Manage, conserve and enhance the distinctive rural character and historic environment of the North Downs, including the long-established settlement pattern, ancient routeways and traditional buildings. Protect the tranquillity of the landscape and sensitively manage, promote and celebrate the area's rich cultural and natural heritage, famous landmarks and views for future generations;*
- *SEO 2: Protect, enhance and restore active management to the diverse range of woodlands and trees of the North Downs....recognising their contribution to sense of place, sense of history and tranquillity...; and*
- *SEO 4: Plan to deliver integrated, well-managed multi-functional green space in existing and developing urban areas, providing social, economic and environmental*

*benefits and reinforcing landscape character and local **distinctiveness...***

4.35 The following landscape opportunities of relevance to the Site are identified:

- ***"...Protect, conserve and enhance the characteristic medieval settlement pattern of small nucleated villages along spring lines, within valleys and on the lower dip slope linked by winding, often sunken lanes, along with the strong local flint, chalk and Wealden brick vernacular of traditional architecture, with new building sensitive to local styles and materials...; and***
- ***Manage, conserve, enhance and restore the characteristic pattern of thick well-treed hedgerows and shaws, forming a predominantly irregular field pattern..."***

County Landscape Guidelines

4.36 It is noted that the Southfleet Arable Lands LCA is a large-scale landscape that is "*denuded of characteristic features*". The following landscape actions are provided:

- *"Create a simplified pattern within the landscape using large blocks of woodland, large areas of arable fields;*
- *Create an edge to the urban area – restore some enclosure, using characteristic rural features;*
- *Create functional agricultural features;*
- *Create ecologically rich corridors;*
- *Restore the positive impact of historic highway features; and*
- *Restore open and controlled views across open farmland."*

Local Landscape Guidelines

4.37 The following guidelines of relevance to the Site are provided for the Istead Arable Farmlands LCA:

- *"Restore traditional field structure and enclosure with native hedgerows and boundary planting;*
- *Restore the landscape through the removal of detracting **features...**;*
- *Create design standards in keeping with local character for **new developments within the area...; and***
- ***Create a positive edge to the urban area..."***

5.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL SITE APPRAISAL

Overview

- 5.1 The Site and the surrounding environment was visited in August 2016, with Site Appraisal Photographs A illustrating the existing character of the Site. The locations from which the Site Appraisal Photographs were taken are shown on Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan. The visual context of the Site is illustrated by Site Context Photographs 1 - 5, the locations of which are illustrated on Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan.

Landscape Appraisal

- 5.2 A landscape appraisal has been undertaken to ascertain the existing character of the Site. This is accomplished through recording and analysing the existing landscape features and characteristics, the way the landscape is experienced, and the value or importance of the landscape and visual resources in the vicinity of the Site. The elements of the landscape that contribute to landscape character include the built and natural form, the pattern of features, detailing, scale, planting, land use and human perception. In this regard, landscape character is derived as a result of the perception of, and action and interaction of, natural and human factors.
- 5.3 As illustrated in Site Appraisal Photographs A the Site consists of a single field which slopes upwards from the residential edge of Istead Rise. The eastern edge of the Site is bordered by mature trees and residential properties, with hedgerows and trees also forming the southern and western boundaries. The combination of the undulating landform and vegetation limits views of the wider landscape, although there is inter-visibility with a large scale overhead pylon, to the south of the Site and residential properties to the north.
- 5.4 The Site is considered to be of low landscape value as:
- The Site is generally not of noteworthy scenic beauty, insofar that it comprises a common place feature of a field with ruderal vegetation which is not a rare landscape feature;
 - The Site does not afford the opportunity for public recreation; and
 - The Site is not covered by any landscape designations.

Visual Appraisal

- 5.5 A visual appraisal has been undertaken to determine the relationship of the Site with its surroundings and its approximate extent of visibility within the wider landscape from publicly accessible locations.

- 5.6 The potential visibility of the Site is largely determined by the intervening landform, as topographic features such as ridgelines and subtle undulations may block or curtail views towards the Site. In addition, land cover has an important role in determining potential visibility as woodland, treebelts or built forms may contribute to additional blocking, filtering or curtailing of views.
- 5.7 The effectiveness of vegetation as a screen depends to a considerable extent on its scale. A large mature feature will form a substantial screen throughout the year, but a hedgerow or intermittent treebelt may only be effective during the summer months. Whilst small features, such as hedgerows and individual trees can be very important, particularly when their combined effect is taken into account, they cannot be considered to be substantial or wholly effective screening features or visual barriers due to the seasonal nature of their effect.
- 5.8 Site Context Photographs 1 – 5 demonstrate that views of the interior of the Site are largely limited to the localised area of residential development to the north of the Site (Site Context Photograph 2). From this elevated area the Site is seen in the context of existing development along Downs Road and within the intervening slope, while an area of rising agricultural land seen against a wooded backdrop is visible beyond the Site in the background of the view. A dilapidated agricultural building and series of pylon towers lie within this elevated agricultural landscape beyond the Site to the south-east.
- 5.9 Vegetation lining Downs Road effectively curtails views of the Site (Site Context Photograph 1). From within the landscape to the east, the Site is screened from view by the intervening woodland vegetation (Site Context Photograph 3) and landform. Similarly, the Site is screened from view by the undulating topography and hedgerow vegetation that traverses the agricultural land that separates Istead Rise from New Barn (as illustrated in Site Context Photographs 4 and 5), with views towards the Site featuring a number of pylon towers and the existing settled area of Istead Rise.
- 5.10 The Site is not visible in its entire from any one location, and where visible, the Site is seen in the context of the existing built development both sides of Downs Road and existing visual detractors such as the series of pylon towers.

Summary

- 5.11 Overall the Site is considered to range between low/medium sensitivity as it is of low landscape value and it has a very localised visual envelope due to the orientation and nature of the landform within and adjoining the Site (given its siting within the lower reaches of the sloping landform) and is partially contained by existing vegetation.

6.0 SCOPE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Site is considered to provide the opportunity for residential development from a landscape and visual perspective due to the extent of enclosure provided by the existing vegetation framework bordering the Site and its low-lying position; the proximity to and influence of the existing built forms to the north and east; and as the existing settlement pattern already borders the Site to the east and to the west, via Istead Rise Primary School.
- 6.2 Nonetheless, any development within the Site would need to ensure that the southern and eastern boundary vegetation is retained and enhanced, so as to sensitively and sympathetically integrate the development into its setting, while views towards the agricultural landscape from the elevated residential properties north of the Site should be retained, with development not perceived as encroaching within this agricultural landscape.
- 6.3 Development of the Site is considered in combination with the development of Downs Road, to the immediate west of the Site. This is because Downs Road would provide the access into the Site, and therefore the two areas would logically be developed in tandem.

Site Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities

- 6.4 Opportunities for development within the Site are that:
- The Site is not covered by any landscape designations;
 - There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) enforced within the Site;
 - There is an existing vegetation framework bordering and enclosing the Site, which in combination with the orientation and low-lying position of the Site, results in a very localised visual envelope;
 - The Site does not exhibit any rare landscape features; and
 - The Site is not crossed by any PRoW and therefore is of no recreational value.

Constraints

- 6.5 Constraints to development within the Site include:
- Development should be offset from the existing boundary vegetation structure in response to Root Protection Areas (the extent of which should be determined by an arboricultural survey); and
 - Development would be visible from the residential properties on the elevated south-facing slope to the north of the Site, albeit this is a localised area and a robust landscape

framework would aid in screening and softening views, with the potential to incorporate advanced planting.

Response to Landscape Character

- 6.6 The development proposals could respond positively to the environment and landscape opportunities identified for the North Kent Plain NCA and the North Downs NCA through the protection and enhancement of green corridors/ecological networks (including the vegetation bordering the Site) and the creation of new landscape features and areas of green space, providing a robust landscape framework.
- 6.7 In relation to the Southfleet Arable Lands LCA and the Istead Arable Farmlands LCA the development proposals could create a softened positive edge to the urban area through the provision of additional boundary planting along the southern edge of the Site that reinforces a sense of enclosure.

Response to Planning Policy

- 6.8 The development proposals within the Site could respond positively to the identified policies within the NPPF and the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, in addition to the principles set out within the Kent Design Guide. As part of the development of the existing vegetation along the southern edge of the Site could be retained and enhanced, and could be supplemented through the provision of additional areas of planting (utilising locally distinctive species) to create green infrastructure linkages through the Site while fragmenting and softening the overall perceived scale, mass and extent of introduced built forms.
- 6.9 The siting, density, layout and materials of introduced built forms could contribute positively to the character of Istead Rise, while the existing visual amenity of receptors to the north could be enhanced by creating an enclosed edge to Istead Rise while maintaining open views of the rising agricultural land further afield that separates Istead Rise from New Barn and reinforcing the separate identity of these settlements.

Design Strategy

- 6.10 A series of design considerations have been identified as a result of the landscape and visual appraisal, as illustrated on Figure 6: Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints Plan, and include:
- Ensure that the introduced built forms contribute positively to the sense of place and local distinctiveness by using materials that reflect or complement the local vernacular and exhibit a high quality of design as advocated in the Kent Design Guide;

- Soften the appearance of the edge of the Site by ensuring that any built forms are set within robust structural planting;
- Ensure that the roofscape of the introduced built forms does not overtly obscure views of the agricultural land to the south of the Site in views from the elevated landscape to the north so as to ensure that the built development relates to the existing settled valley corridor and that any perception of encroachment is minimised, creating a positive and enclosed edge to the settled area of Istead Rise that consolidates the settlement pattern;
- Retain and enhance the existing vegetation bordering the Site and establish green infrastructure linkages;
- Provide new areas of planting, with appropriate locally distinctive species, to soften and fragment the perceived mass of the introduced built forms in views from the north; and
- Ensure that any built forms are offset in relation to the root protection areas of existing vegetation to be retained within and bordering the Site.

7.0 GREEN BELT REVIEW

7.1 An assessment of the contribution of the Site to the purposes of the Green Belt, as set out in Paragraph 80 of the NPPF, has been undertaken in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1: Contribution of the Site to the Purposes of the Green Belt

Purpose	Critique		Contribution
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	a	The Site is contiguous with the built-up area of Istead Rise, a 'Second Tier Settlement' within the rural area. There is no existing built form within the Site and therefore constitutes open land.	Considerable
	b	The northern boundary of the Site is defined by mature trees and the curtilage of residential properties on Downs Road. The western and eastern edges of the Site are both defined by mature tree belts. The southern edge of the Site is defined by a linear tree belt. Therefore the existing vegetation along the southern boundary provides a consistent boundary feature and additional boundary for the built up area, which is perceived as part of the vegetated framework extending along the southern edge of Istead Rise's settlement pattern.	Some
Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	a	The built-up area of Istead Rise frames the Site to the north with the settlement pattern also including built form to the east of the Site. The built form (Istead Rise Primary School) also extends southwards past the extent of the Site to the west. As these settled areas already extend further to the west and south of the Site, development within the Site would not physically reduce the separation distance between Istead Rise and New Barn (which lies within the neighbouring Local Planning Authority and is located approximately 700m to the south-west of the Site), while the intervening rising topography would prevent any coalescence.	Limited
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	a	The character of the Site is influenced by the inter-visibility with the built-up area of Istead Rise to the north and east of the Site. The perception of being within a countryside setting is diminished in this location due to the presence of dominant pylon towers within this adjoining agricultural landscape, while the topographic nature and existing built forms within the Site result in this part of the Site being well related to the exiting settlement pattern.	Limited
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	a	The Site is not within or adjacent to any heritage assets, while similarly there is no intervisibility with or contribution to the setting of any heritage assets.	Limited
Overall			Limited Considerable -

7.2 The NPPF states that the key characteristics of the Green Belt are "*their openness and their permanence*". As demonstrated in Table 7.1, the Site is considered to be open due to its land

use; and this is an inevitable result which would be similar for any agricultural field without existing built form. It is more pertinent that the Site is physically and visually related to the built-up area of Istead Rise, and as such exhibits the typical characteristics of an urban fringe landscape, such that whilst there would be a technical reduction in openness this would not constitute harm to the Green Belt. While the agricultural land to the south of the Site forms part of the wider context to the Site, it's more elevated and exposed nature is physically and visually distinct from the Site, with the Site more readily associated with the existing built development along the lower-reaches of the Downs Road valley corridor.

- 7.3 The existing northern boundary of the Green Belt in the vicinity of the Site comprises structural planting associated with the curtilage of residential properties. The eastern and western boundaries of the Site are formed by dense mature tree avenues that would be considered to be a more defensible boundary given their scale, extent of enclosure and recognisability in the landscape. The southern boundary forms a recognisable part of the settlement patterns edge, which extend further south than the Site via Istead Rise Primary School and therefore a defensible vegetated edge.
- 7.4 Given the above it is considered that the eastern, southern and western boundaries of the Site are more robust than the existing boundaries to the Green Belt and would form defensible boundaries. Furthermore, development of the Site would facilitate the provision of new vegetation to reinforce these boundaries to form a positive and definitive boundary to Istead Rise and altered Green Belt.
- 7.5 As noted in Table 7.1 should the Site be developed, the physical separation distance between Istead Rise and New Barn would remain unaltered, with the separate identities of these two settlements emphasised by the rising agricultural land. As previously noted, the Site is not perceived to form part of this rising agricultural land and instead physically and visually relates to the development along the lower-reaches of the slope (such as the Istead Rise Primary School, Rosegarth, properties along Downs Road, and Longwalk). Furthermore, there is no intervisibility between the Site and any identified heritage assets.
- 7.6 Should the Site be released from the Green Belt and subsequently be developed following the principles set out in Section 6 of this report, the openness of the remaining designated area would remain intact given its elevated nature, agricultural use and existing function in the landscape. On this basis, development of the Site would not compromise the purposes and function of the remaining Green Belt.

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

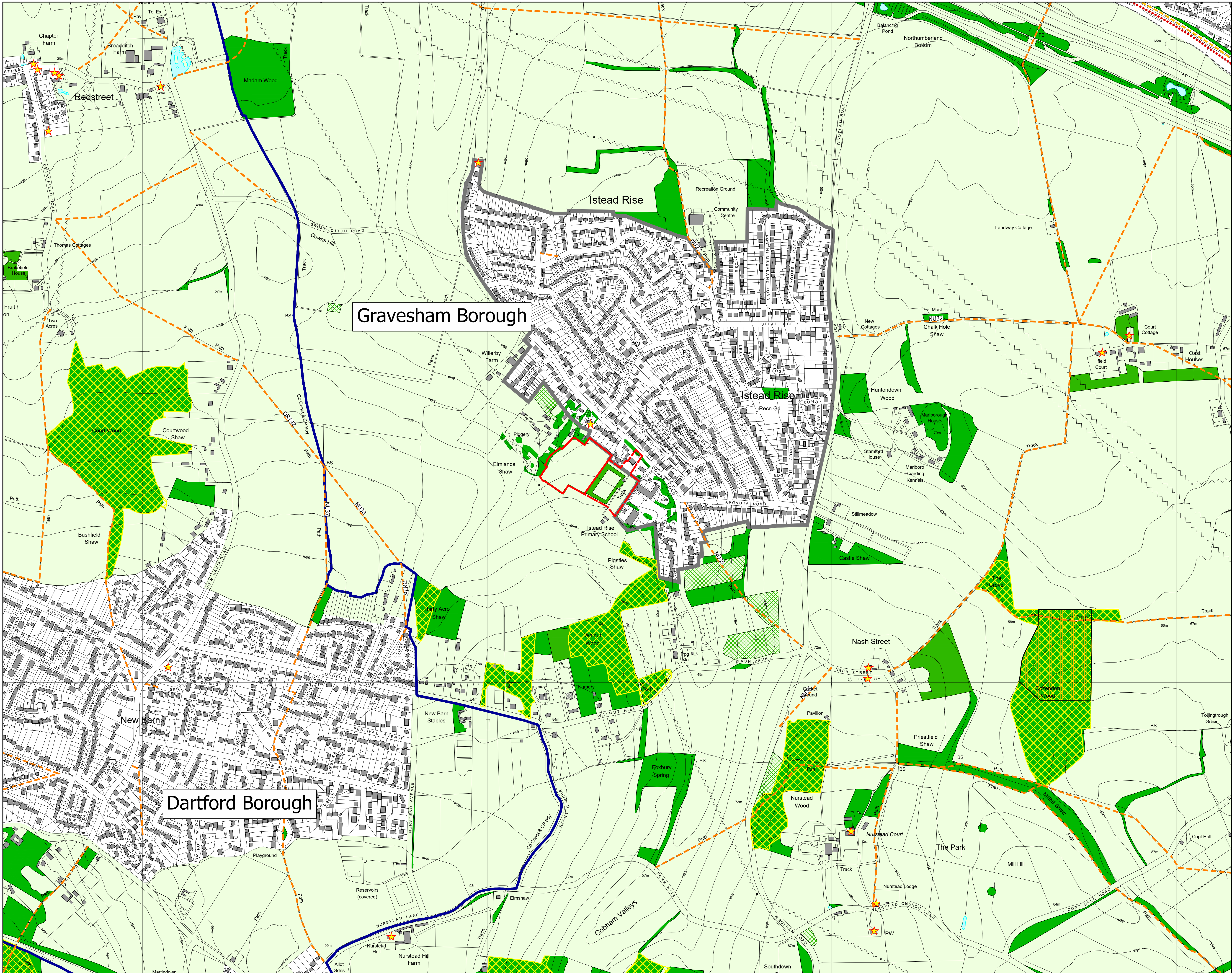
- 8.1 The preparation of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document provides an opportunity to provide a long-term strategy for growth across the Borough in line with Policy CS02 'Scale and Distribution of Development'. The NPPF endorses the permanence of Green Belts as an essential characteristics and stipulates in Paragraph 83 that "*once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan*".
- 8.2 The NPPF, as set out in Paragraph 84, seeks to align Green Belt boundary reviews with sustainable patterns of development. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF notes that when defining boundaries to the Green Belt the Local Planning Authority should take into account meeting the identified requirements for sustainable development and not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open. In this regard, a review of the Green Belt boundary in the vicinity of the Site provide the opportunity to shape future sustainable development in order to meet the longer-term needs of the Borough in a coherent and logical manner.
- 8.3 It is recommended that in accordance with Paragraph 85, the Local Planning Authority seek to maximise the potential of a revised Green Belt boundary in the vicinity of the Site for land that could be brought forward and contribute positively to the local area and promote sustainable development in line with the NPPF Core Principles.
- 8.4 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review has been undertaken to establish the opportunities and constraints to residential development from a landscape and visual perspective; the suitability of the Site to accommodate residential development; and to assess the contribution that the Site makes towards the purposes of the Green Belt (both nationally and locally) and to ascertain whether it is unnecessary to keep the Site permanently open.
- 8.5 The appraisal has included a review of published landscape character information, planning policy, and field work, to determine the landscape characteristics of the Site, its function in the wider landscape, and its influence within views from the surrounding area.
- 8.6 As previously noted, the NPPF seek to align Green Belt boundary reviews with sustainable patterns of development. Emphasis is placed on the purposes of the Green Belt as opposed to the quality of the landscape when undertaking a Green Belt Review. However, the consideration of landscape and visual opportunities and constraints provides a greater understanding of, and aids in the identification of, appropriate sustainable locations for development in the area.
- 8.7 The findings of this report demonstrate that the Site is very well contained from the wider landscape to the east, south and west due to the extent of enclosure afforded by existing

vegetation and landform, while visibility from the north is limited to localised areas of the existing built-up area of Istead Rise. The Site is in a low-lying position; framed by existing development to the east (Longwalk); exhibits a defensible southern vegetated boundary, and in relation to the settlement pattern, the built form of Istead Rise Primary School extends further south than the Site, such that the Site is physically and visually related to the existing settled area of Istead Rise and distinct from the elevated and expansive agricultural landscape area to the south of the Site.

- 8.8 Overall, the Site is considered to be of low landscape sensitivity as its character is influenced by the surrounding built elements; it is of low landscape value and without any rare landscape features; and it has a very localised visual envelope due to the orientation and nature of the landform within and adjoining the Site (given its siting within the lower reaches of the sloping landform) and is partially contained by existing vegetation. Furthermore, visibility of the Site is limited, and where visible, is seen in the context of the existing settlement pattern.
- 8.9 The Green Belt Review identifies that the existing boundaries to the Green Belt are poorly defined, consisting mainly of residential boundaries. The eastern, southern and western boundaries to the Site form robust boundaries, being defined by mature woodland and hedgerows which provided a defensible feature and coherent part of the vegetated pattern bordering Istead Rise. This southern boundary could be reinforced through development of the Site. Therefore, re-aligning the Green Belt boundary to the southern edge of the Site provides the opportunity to establish a more defensible and permanent Green Belt boundary.
- 8.10 The Site is technically open, as a result of its land use, akin to any agricultural field, and therefore contributing to this purpose of the Green Belt is inevitable. More pertinent is that the Site does not form part of the wider countryside character given its urban fringe character, and therefore whilst development would technically result in a reduction in openness, it would not result in harm to the Green Belt. This is because development of the Site would not reduce the separation distance between Istead Rise and New Barn or the open character of the landscape to the south of the Site. Furthermore, the Site is not within or adjacent to an identified heritage assets, nor is there any intervisibility with any heritage assets.
- 8.11 The Site would be developed in combination with Downs Farm to the east, which would provide access to the Site. The development of these two areas would enable a logical extension to Istead Rise's settlement pattern between Istead Rise Primary School and Longwalk, being retained within identified vegetated boundaries.
- 8.12 In conclusion, development of the Site and in combination with Downs Farm, could be effectively assimilated from a landscape and visual perspective and would not compromise the

purposes and function of the Green Belt. On this basis, the Site is considered appropriate for release from the Green Belt for residential development.

DRAFT



The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revision

Date

Drm

Ckd

N

Legend

Site Boundary

Downs Road Boundary

Local Planning Authority Boundary ^

Existing Woodlands, Copses and Tree Belts ^

Existing Scrub ^

Existing Water Courses and Features ^

Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^

Public Rights of Way *

Sustrans National Route +

Cycle Route ++

Listed Buildings ~

Scheduled Monument ~

Ancient Woodland #

Green Belt ^^

Rural Settlements inset from Green Belt **

Sources:

^

 GIS Mapping

#

 Natural England GIS Data Set

~

 Historic England National Monument Record GIS Data Set

+

 Kent County Council P10W Online Definitive Maps

+

 Sustrans National Cycle Network GIS Data

++

 Department of Transport (DoT) GIS Cycle Network Data

^^

 Department for Communities and Local Government GIS Data

**

 Gravesham Local Core Strategy - Policies Map - Adopted September 2014

Data collated for constraints and analysis mapping is based on publicly available sources at the time of preparation inserted using the British National Grid and may itself not be accurate. Barton Willmore shall not be liable for the accuracy of data derived from external sources.

FIGURE 1

Project

Land at Rose Farm, Istead Rise

Drawing Title

Site Context Plan

Date

06.04.2017

Scale

1:5,000 @A1
1:10,000 @A3

Drawn by

MN/GG

Check by

GM

Project No

26414

Drawing No

L101

Revision

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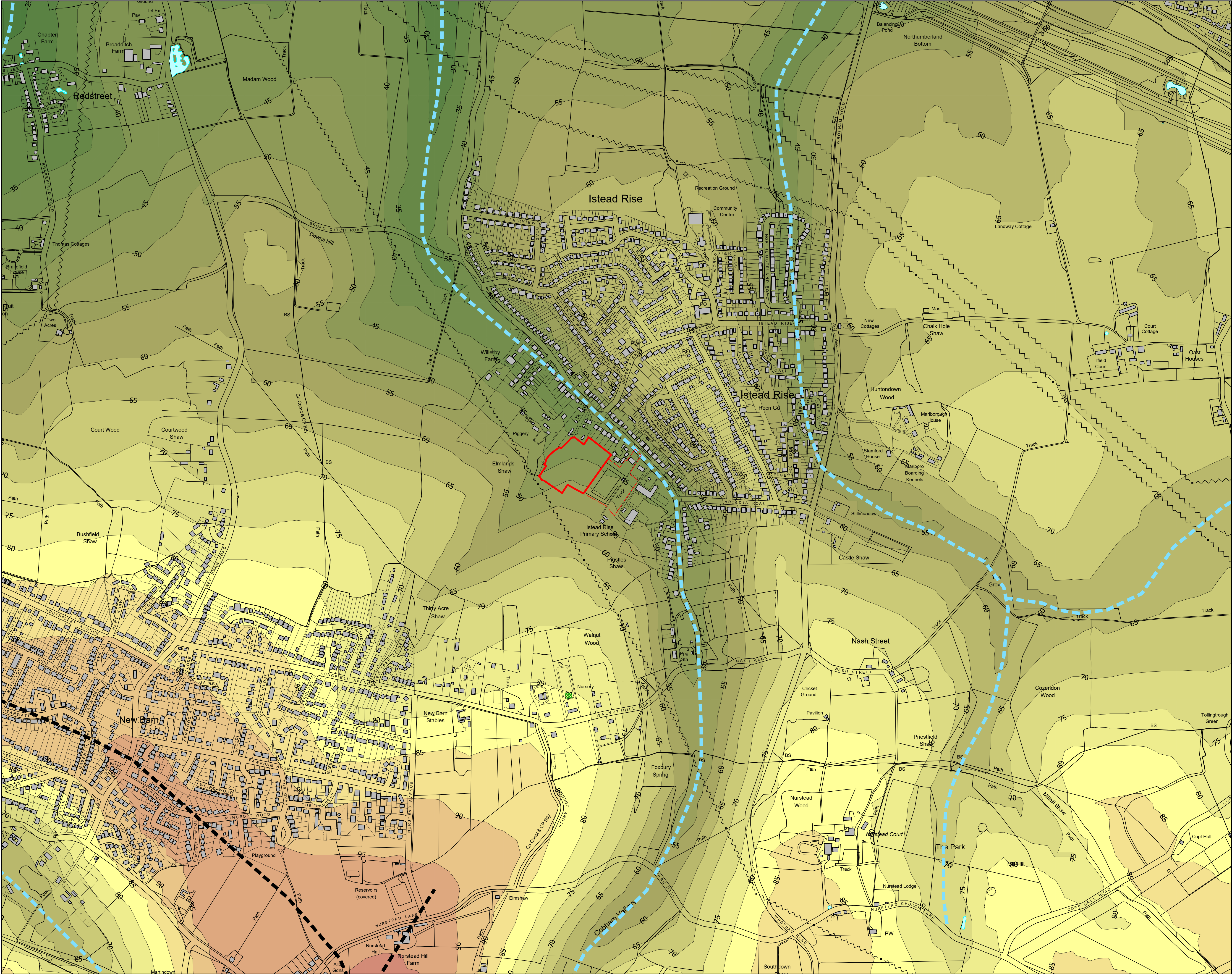
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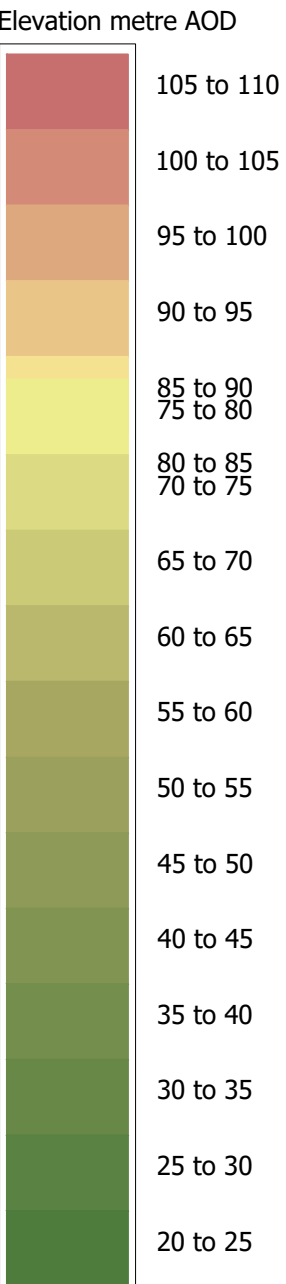


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Revision _____ Date _____ Dm _____ Ckd _____

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Downs Road Boundary
- Existing Water Courses and Features
- Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD)
- Ridgelines
- Valleys



Sources:
© Mapping

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FIGURE 2

Project
Land at Rose Farm, Istead Rise

Drawing Title
Topographical Features Plan

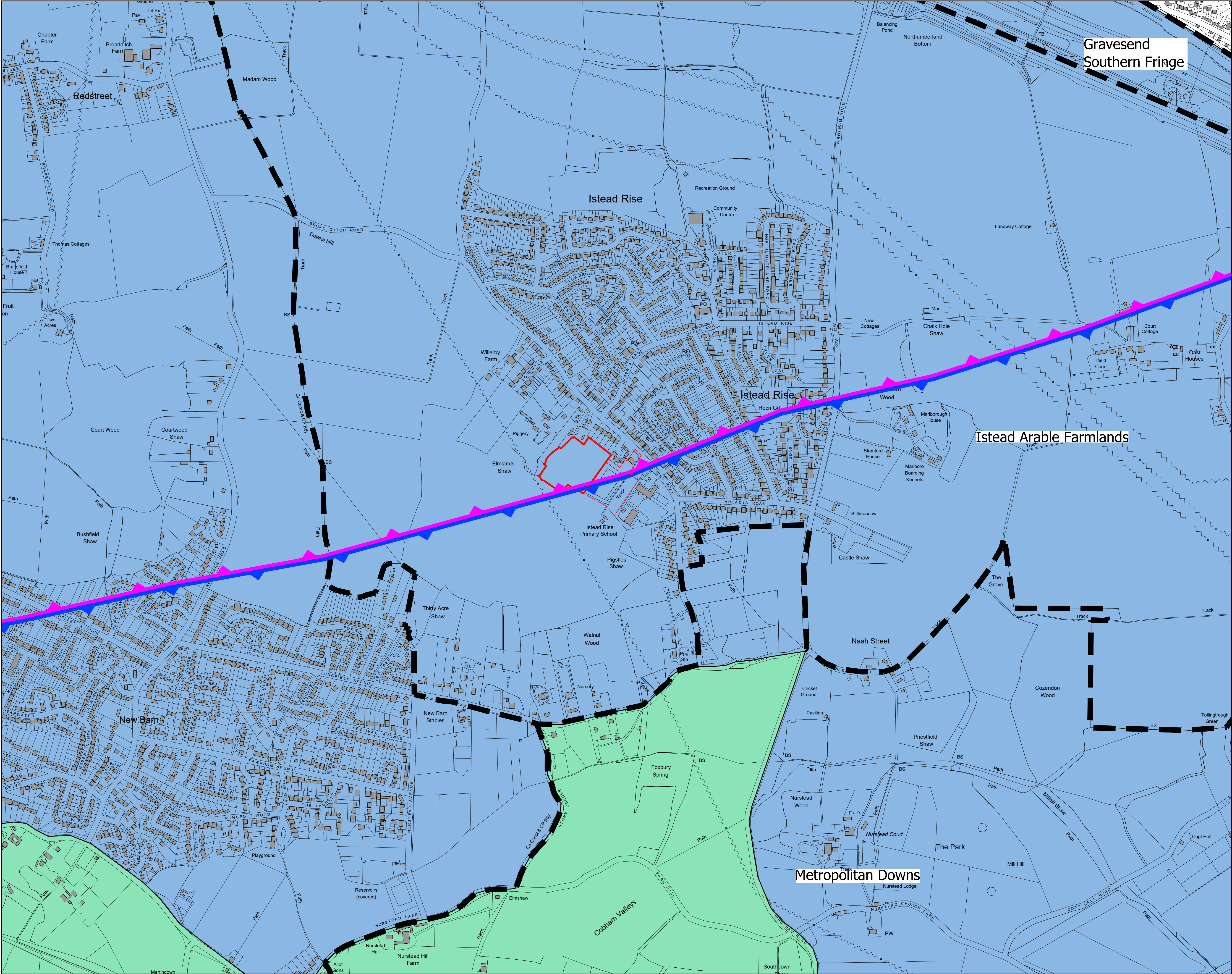
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Project No 26414	Drawing No L104	Revision -	

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Revision

Date

Drm

Ckd

N

Legend

Site Boundary

Downs Road Boundary

National Character Area Profiles #

Area 113: North Kent Plain

Area 119: North Downs

County Landscape Character Areas (Kent) +

Southfleet Arable Lands

Ash Downs

District Landscape Character Areas (Gravesham) *

Area

Sources:

OS Mapping

Natural England GIS Data Set

The Landscape Assessment of Kent - October 2004

Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment - May 2009

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FIGURE 3

Project

Land at Rose Farm, Istead Rise

Drawing Title

Landscape Character Plan

Date

04.04.2017

Scale

1:5,000 @A1

Drawn by

MN/GG

Check by

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Project No

26414

Drawing No

L103

Revision

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Revision	Date	Drn	Ckd
-	-	-	-

Legend

Site Boundary

Downs Road Boundary

Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^

Green Belt ^^

Location of Photographic Viewpoint
(Site Appraisal Photograph A)

Sources:

^

OS Mapping

^^

Department for Communities and Local Government GIS Data

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FIGURE 4

Project
Land at Rose Farm,
Istead Rise

Drawing Title
Site Appraisal Plan

Date	Scale	Drawn by	Check by
04.04.2017	1:1,000 @A3	MN/GG	-
Project No	Drawing No	Revision	
26414	L102	-	

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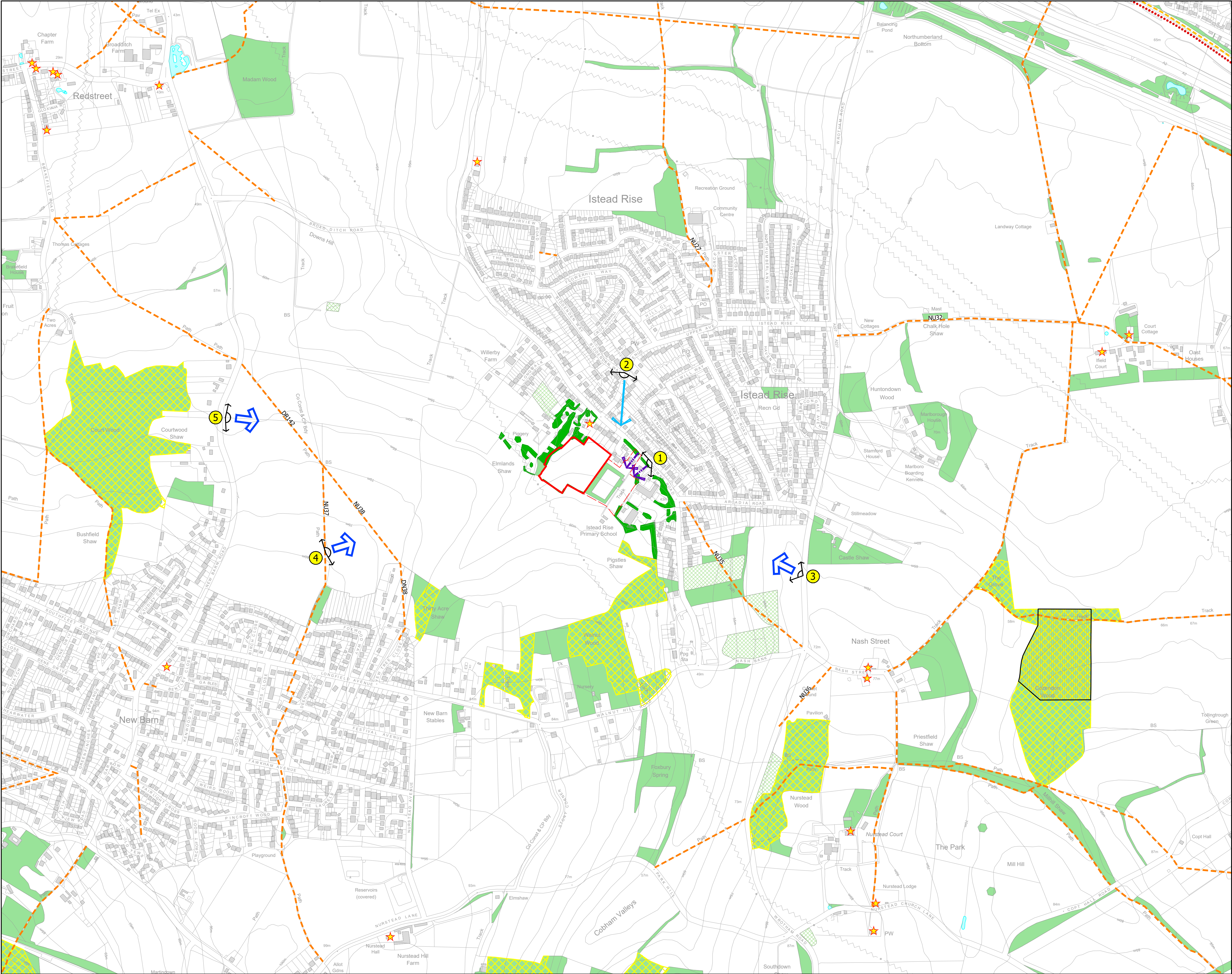
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Revision

Date

Drm

Ckd

Legend

Site Boundary

Downs Road Boundary

Existing Woodlands, Copses and Tree Belts ^

Existing Scrub ^

Existing Water Courses and Features ^

Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^

Public Rights of Way *

Sustrans National Route +

Cycle Route ++

Listed Buildings ~

Scheduled Monument ~

Ancient Woodland #

Open Views

Partial Views

Truncated /No Views

Location of Photographic Viewpoints (Site Context Photographs: 1-5)

Sources:
^ OS Mapping
Natural England GIS Data Set
~ Historic England National Monument Record GIS Data Set
+ Kent County Council P10W Online Definitive Maps
+ Sustrans National Cycle Network GIS Data
++ Department of Transport (DoT) GIS Cycle Network Data

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FIGURE 5

Project

Land at Rose Farm, Istead Rise

Drawing Title

Visual Appraisal Plan

Date

04.04.2017

Scale

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1:10,000 @A3

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Revision	Date	Drn	Ckd
-	-	-	-

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Downs Road Boundary
- Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^
- Green Belt ^^
- Existing Vegetation
- Low/Medium Landscape and Visual Constraints Area

Sources:
^ OS Mapping
^^ Department for Communities and Local Government GIS Data

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FIGURE 6

Project
Land at Rose Farm, Istead Rise

Drawing Title
Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints Plan

Date	Scale	Drawn by	Check by
04.04.2017	1:1,250 @A3	GG	RH

Project No	Drawing No	Revision
26414	L106	-



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Aerial photograph captured 2015



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH A

LAND AT ROSE FARM,
ISTEAD RISE

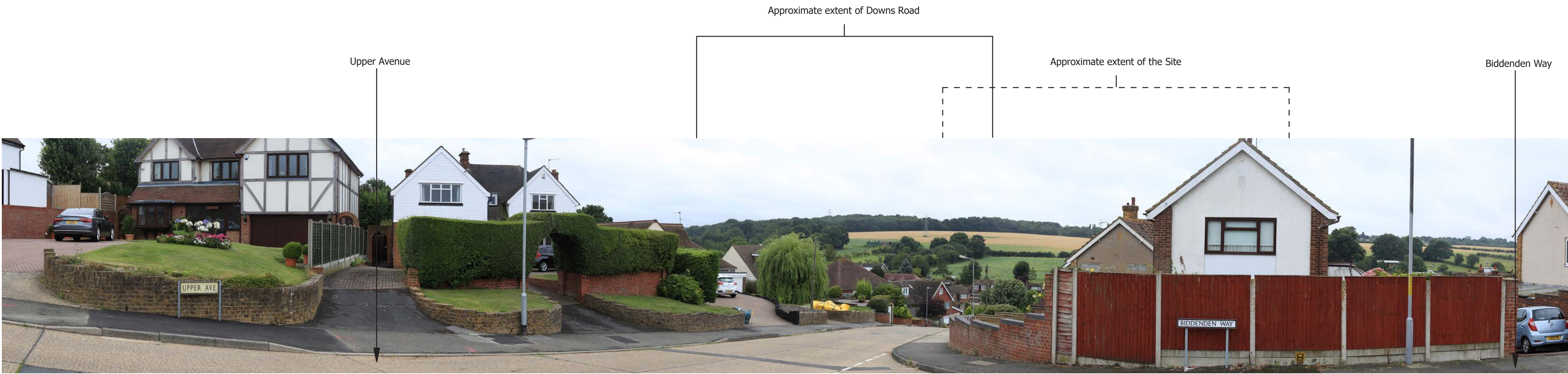
SITE APPRAISAL
PHOTOGRAPHS: A

RECOMMENDED VIEWING
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

DATE TAKEN: AUGUST 2016
PROJECT NUMBER: 26414



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 1: VIEW WEST FROM DOWNS ROAD



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 2: VIEW SOUTH FROM BIDDENDEN WAY



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 3: VIEW NORTH-WEST FROM THE A227 WROTHAM ROAD

LAND AT ROSE FARM,
ISTEAD RISE

SITE CONTEXT
PHOTOGRAPHS: 1 - 3

RECOMMENDED VIEWING
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

DATE TAKEN: AUGUST 2016
PROJECT NUMBER: 26414



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 4: VIEW EAST FROM PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY NU37



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 5: VIEW EAST FROM NEW BARN ROAD

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GRAPHIC DESIGN
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
RESEARCH

The 'Piggery', Istead Rise: Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review

Prepared on behalf of Esquire Developments Ltd

May 2018

The 'Piggery', Istead Rise: Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review

Prepared on behalf of Esquire Developments Ltd

Project Ref:	26414/A5
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ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

Figure 1: Site Context Plan

Figure 2: Topography Plan

Figure 3: Landscape Character Plan

Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan

Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan

Figure 6: Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints Plan

Figure 7: Strategic Green Belt Release Plan

Site Appraisal Photographs A - E

Site Context Photographs 1 – 9

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Overview

- 1.1 Barton Willmore Landscape Planning and Design (BWLPD) was commissioned by Esquire Developments Ltd to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review of the 'Piggery', Istead Rise (the 'Site'), in relation to its suitability for residential development and informing Gravesham's Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) Call for Sites, which will support the forthcoming Stage 2 Preferred Options consultation on the Local Plan.
- 1.2 BWLPD have previously undertaken two Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Reviews of the land to the east of the Site in August 2016 and April 2017. These reports concluded that the adjacent land to the east of the Site is suitable for residential development and removal from the Green Belt, due to its very localised visual envelope; coherent relationship to the existing settlement pattern; and existing defensible boundaries. The development of the Site and its potential release from the Green Belt is therefore considered in the context of the adjacent land being developed and providing access into the Site.
- 1.3 This report details the landscape character, landscape value and visual envelope of the Site, and provides an assessment of the contribution that the Site makes towards the purposes and function of the Green Belt, as set out in Paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.4 The objectives of this study are to:
 - Assess the landscape characteristics and quality of the Site and its surrounding and function within the landscape;
 - Assess the visibility of the Site and the nature and quality of the existing views from the surrounding area;
 - Consider the policy basis for the Green Belt designation that applies to the area;
 - Assess the contribution of the Site in response to its Green Belt function and its potential to be released from the Green Belt; and
 - Identify opportunities and constraints to development on the Site, from a landscape and visual perspective.
- 1.5 Supporting illustrative information is presented in the following plans and photographs:
 - Figure 1: Site Context Plan;
 - Figure 2: Topography Plan;
 - Figure 3: Landscape Character Plan;
 - Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan;

- Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan;
- Figure 6: Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints Plan;
- Figure 7: Strategic Green Belt Release Plan;
- Site Appraisal Photographs A - E; and
- Site Context Photographs 1 – 9.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

- 2.1 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been prepared with reference to the guidelines as set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition, prepared by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.
- 2.2 A desktop review of the study area was undertaken, including for a review of the published landscape character information, landform, landscape features, relevant landscape and visual policy and landscape designations. This information was used as the initial basis against which to appraise the Site. A visit to the Site and surroundings was subsequently undertaken in April 2018 to verify the desk-based review findings and add further information to the landscape and visual context of the Site.
- 2.3 A description of the existing land use of the study area (the extent as shown in Figure 1: Site Context Plan) is provided and includes reference to existing areas of settlement, transport routes and vegetation cover, as well as local landscape designations, elements of cultural and heritage value, and local landmarks or tourist destinations. These factors combine to provide an understanding of landscape value and sensitivity and provide an indication of particular key views and viewpoints that are available to visual receptors.
- 2.4 To determine the extent of visual influence, a visual appraisal was undertaken of the Site to consider the nature of existing views from publicly accessible viewpoints including roads, Public Right(s) of Way (PRoW) and public open space. Consideration was given to private views, however access to private properties was not obtained. Views were considered from all directions and from a range of distances. The viewpoints chosen are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to represent the potential views obtained towards the Site in order to identify areas of higher visual sensitivity that may not be best suited for development.
- 2.5 The inherent sensitivity of the Site is considered in terms of the following:
 - Landscape Character: i.e. landform, vegetation cover, land use, scale, state of repair of individual elements, representation of typological character, enclosure pattern, form/line and movement;
 - Landscape Value: i.e. national designations, local designations, sense of tranquillity/remoteness, scenic beauty and cultural associations; and
 - Visual Influence: i.e. landform influences, tree and woodland cover, numbers and types of residents, numbers and types of visitors and scope for mitigating potential for visual impacts.

- 2.6 A more detailed landscape appraisal of the Site was then undertaken, which in combination with the wider visual appraisal, assists in the identification of opportunities and constraints that would assist in defining the boundaries for potential future development, and thus an amended Green Belt boundary.

Green Belt Review

Assessment against the purposes of the Green Belt

- 2.7 The Site is assessed against the first four purposes of the Green Belt as set out in Paragraph 80 of the NPPF, which are:

- *"To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- *To prevent neighbouring towns from merging in to one another;*
- *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; and*
- *To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns..."*

- 2.8 With respect to the fifth purpose of the Green Belt *"to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land"*, should the Site be brought forward for development it would not prejudice derelict or other urban land being brought forward for urban regeneration. The principle of retaining land within the Green Belt holds true for all areas within the Green Belt, therefore the Site is considered to make the same contribution to this purpose of the Green Belt as any other land parcel within the Green Belt. Accordingly, no additional specific assessment is undertaken.

- 2.9 The NPPF endorses the permanence of Green Belts as an essential characteristic and stipulates in Paragraph 83 that *"once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan"*.

- 2.10 The NPPF seeks to align Green Belt boundary reviews with sustainable patterns of development, as set out in Paragraph 84, with Local Planning Authorities encouraged to *"consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary"*.

- 2.11 In this regard, where a given area of land contributes poorly towards meeting the purposes of the Green Belt and its release would contribute positively to promoting a sustainable development pattern, this may be considered to impart towards 'exceptional circumstances' and the Green Belt boundary should be reviewed accordingly. The criteria used to assess the contribution made to the first four purposes of the Green Belt is set out in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Purposes of the Green Belt – Assessment Criteria

Purpose	Criteria
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	Considerable - Development of the land would be strongly perceived as sprawl, as it is not contained by robust physical features and/or would extend the settlement pattern in an incoherent manner. Some - Development of the land would be perceived as sprawl, as it is partially contained by robust physical features and/or would extend the settlement pattern in a moderately incoherent manner. Limited - Development of the land would be perceived as sprawl to a limited degree, as it is largely contained by robust physical features and/or would extend the settlement pattern in a broadly coherent manner. None - Development of the land would not be perceived as sprawl as it is well contained by robust physical features and/or is entirely set within the existing coherent settlement pattern.
Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Considerable - Development would result in the physical unification of two (or more) towns. Some - Development would substantially reduce the physical or perceived separation between towns. Limited - Development would result in a limited reduction in the physical or perceived separation between towns. None - Development would not physically or perceptually reduce the separation between towns.
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Considerable: No built or engineered forms present and perceived as inherently undeveloped and/or rural in character. Development would potentially result in a strong urbanising influence over the wider landscape. Some: Built or engineered forms present but retaining a perception of being predominantly undeveloped and/or rural in character. Development would potentially result in a moderate urbanising influence over the wider landscape. Limited: Built or engineered forms present and a minimal perception of being undeveloped and or rural in character. Development would potentially result in a limited urbanising influence over the wider landscape. None: Built or engineered forms present and perceived as inherently developed and/or urban in character. Development would not result in urbanising influence over the wider landscape.
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	Considerable: Strong physical and/or visual and/or character connection with the historic part of a town. May be within or adjoining the historic part of a town. Some: Partial physical and/or visual and/or character connection with the historic part of a town, whilst not adjacent to it. Limited: weak physical and/or visual and/or character connection with the historic part of a town. None: No physical and/or visual and/or character connection with the historic part of a town.

Assessment against the characteristics of the Green Belt

- 2.12 The NPPF states that the key characteristics of the Green Belt are "*their openness and their permanence*". In defining new boundaries to the Green Belt, it must be ensured that these characteristics are not diminished for the areas remaining within the Green Belt designation as a direct result of development. An assessment is made of the openness of the Green Belt in the vicinity of the Site and to what extent the Sites' removal could have on the perception of openness in the remaining designated area.
- 2.13 In addition, the relationship of the Site to existing elements and visual barriers, such as ridgelines, roads and areas of notable vegetation is demonstrated. This assists in the assessment of impact of potential development upon the openness of the remaining designated area and assists in the identification of boundaries that may be considered to be 'permanent'.
- 2.14 Table 2.2 below provides a glossary of the terms used in relation to the Green Belt assessment.

Table 2.2: Definitions

Term	Definition
Brownfield	(see <i>Previously Developed Land</i>)
Character	A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that differentiates one area from another.
Coalescence	The physical or visual linkage of large built-up areas.
Countryside	In planning terms: land outwith the settlement boundary; and/or, In broader terms: the landscape of a rural area.
Defensible Boundary	A physical feature that is readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.
Encroachment	Advancement of a large built-up area beyond the limits of the existing built-up area into an area perceived as countryside.
Green Infrastructure	A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
Greenfield	Land (or a defined site) usually farmland, that has not previously been developed.
Large built-up area	An area that corresponds to the settlements identified in the relevant Local Plan, including those inset from the Green Belt.
Merging	(see <i>Coalescence</i>)
Neighbouring Town	Refers to settlements identified within the relevant Local Plan and those within the neighbouring authorities' administrative boundary that abut the Green Belt.
Open space	All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Term	Definition
Openness	Openness is taken to be the degree to which an area is primarily unaffected by built features, in combination with the consideration of the visual perception of built features. In order to be a robust assessment, this should be considered from first principles, i.e. acknowledging existing structures that occur physically and visually within the area, rather than seeing them as being 'washed over' by the existing Green Belt designation.
Previously Developed Land	Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.
Sprawl	The outward spread of a large built-up area in an incoherent, sporadic, dispersed or irregular way.

3.0 RELEVANT POLICY

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2012

- 3.1 The NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, defined as "*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*", and providing it is in accordance with the relevant up-to-date Local Plan, and policies set out in the NPPF including those identifying restrictions with regard to designated areas.
- 3.2 The NPPF states that "*the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*" and that there are "*three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental*". The role the environment plays is described as "*contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use of natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy*".
- 3.3 Twelve Core Planning Principles are set out, of which the following are relevant to the consideration of landscape and visual matters, stating that planning should:
- ***"not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;***
 - *always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;*
 - *take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*
 - *contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; and*
 - *conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations."*
- 3.4 Section 7 of the NPPF provides guidance on ensuring the delivery of good design. The NPPF requires development proposals to respond to local character and be visually attractive, as well as emphasising the need to integrate development proposals into the natural environment.

3.5 Paragraph 58 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- ***"will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;***
- *establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
- *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;*
- *respond to local character and history and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and **appropriate landscaping**".*

3.6 Paragraph 61 of the NPPF states that:

"...planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment."

3.7 Section 9 of the NPPF relates to the protection of Green Belt land, with Paragraph 79 noting that *"the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open"*. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt, which are replicated in Paragraphs 2.7 - 2.8 of this report.

3.8 Paragraph 83 considers alterations to the designated Green Belt boundary, stating:

"Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period."

3.9 This is supported by Paragraph 85 of the NPPF that states with regard to defining boundaries that local planning authorities should *"not include land which it is unnecessary to keep*

permanently open" and to "define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent".

- 3.10 Furthermore, Paragraph 85 notes that local planning authorities should "*satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period*" and "*where necessary, identify in their plans areas of 'safeguarded land' between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period*".
- 3.11 With respect to the natural environment, Paragraphs 109 - 125 of the NPPF focus on the conservation and enhancement of the local and natural environment. The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the local environment by inter-alia "*protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils*".
- 3.12 Paragraph 110 of the NPPF sets out that the aim in preparing plans for development should be to minimise adverse effects on the local and natural environment, and that plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value.
- 3.13 Paragraph 114 notes that furthermore, Local Planning Authorities should:

"set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure."

Local Policy

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, adopted 2014

- 3.14 The Site lies within the administrative boundary of Gravesham Borough Council, Kent. Those policies of relevance to the immediate context of the Site and landscape, visual and Green Belt matters are set out below.
- 3.15 Policy CS02 'Scale and Distribution of Development' states that:

"...in the rural area, development will be supported within those rural settlements inset from the Green Belt and defined on the Policies Map. Development outside those settlements, including affordable housing and proposals to maintain and diversify the rural economy, will be supported where it is compatible with national policies for protecting the Green Belt and policies in this plan. The extent of the Green Belt is defined on the Policies Map. A strategic Green Belt boundary review will be undertaken to identify additional land to meet the housing needs up to

*2028 and to safeguard areas of land to meet development needs beyond the plan period, while maintaining the **national and local planning purposes of the Green Belt...**"*

3.16 The settlement of Culverstone Green is noted as a 'Third Tier Settlement' within the rural area, inset from the Green Belt. Paragraph 4.2.6 notes that "*these boundaries do not define the full extent of each settlement but relate to a coherent and established built up area where infilling would not adversely affect local character and identity, or impact on the openness of the Green Belt*".

3.17 Paragraph 4.2.7 notes that "*the national aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open*" and sets out the following local planning purposes:

- *"To maintain the break in development between the eastern edge of Gravesend and the Medway Towns which is one of the few barriers preventing the further eastward sprawl of London and the merging of towns along the southern part of the Thames Estuary;*
- *To assist in safeguarding the countryside by minimising the expansion of the Borough's rural settlements; and*
- *To assist in concentrating development on underused, derelict and previously developed land in the urban area of Gravesend and Northfleet."*

3.18 Paragraph 4.2.8 states that:

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

3.19 Policy CS12 'Green Infrastructure' states that:

"...there will be no net loss of biodiversity in the Borough, and opportunities to enhance, restore, re-create and maintain habitats will be sought..."

The overall landscape character and valued landscapes will be conserved, restored and enhanced. The greatest weight will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and natural beauty of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting. Proposals will take account of the Kent Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan, the

Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, and the Cluster Studies where relevant."

3.20 Policy CS14 'Housing Type and Size' states that:

"...the Council will expect new housing development to provide a range of dwelling types and sizes taking into account the existing character of the area..."

3.21 Policy CS14 'Housing Density' states that:

"...all new housing will be developed at a density that is consistent with achieving a good design and does not compromise the distinctive character of the area in which it is situated..."

3.22 Policy CS19 'Development and Design Principles' states that:

"New development will be visually attractive, fit for purpose and locally distinctive. It will conserve and enhance the character of the local built historic and natural environment, integrate well with the surrounding local area and meet anti-crime standards...this will be achieved through..."

- ***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..."***

Supplementary Planning Documents

Gravesham Strategic Land Availability Assessment, 2012

3.23 Gravesham's Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) collates information regarding the future development potential in the Borough and forms part of the evidence base to the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy. The Site is not included within the SLAA.

3.24 Paragraph 2.1.11 of the SLAA notes however that:

*"The SLAA is a technical background document only. It is not a statement of Council policy, it does not allocate land, **and is not a statutory planning document...it will not pre-empt or prejudice any decision the Council may make in the future on any particular site and does not alter any policies or land use designations as set out in the Local Plan.**"*

Landscape Character Based Analysis of Potential Development Sites, 2011

3.25 The Landscape Character Based Analysis of Potential Development Site was prepared by David Hares Landscape Architecture on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council, and comprises a landscape character based analysis and review of a number of potential development sites, outlining their sensitivity to development; however the Site was not included within this study.

Residential Layout Guidelines, 1996

3.26 The Residential Layout Guidelines were prepared by Gravesham Borough Council to inform the layout of new development, setting out criteria that all planning applications for residential development should comply with. For the most part the criteria relate to the internal arrangement of development proposals, albeit reference is made to privacy distances, overshadowing and amenity space and play space provision.

Kent Design Guide, 2005

3.27 The Kent Design Guide seeks to provide a starting point for good design while retaining flexibility for creative, individual approaches to different buildings and areas, while also seeking to ensure that the best of Kent's places remain to enrich the environment for future generations. It does not seek to restrict designs for any new development to any historic Kent vernacular, but instead aims to encourage well considered and contextually sympathetic schemes.

3.28 The Kent Design Guide notes that successful places tend to:

- *"Be friendly, safe and attractive;*
- *Be well used – a steady passage of people provides a feeling of safety;*
- *Have public space and squares that draw people together;*
- *Have spaces for public events, markets and performances;*
- *Clearly distinguish private and public areas;*
- *Have building frontages with a direct relationship with the street;*
- *Have clearly defined entrances to buildings used by the public;*
- *Have a network of pedestrian routes and spaces;*

- *Give priority in streets to people rather than to vehicles;*
- *Have clearly defined boundaries for public areas – using hedges, fences and trees;*
- *Have a coordinated approach to street surfaces and furniture - lamps, seats, litter bins, paving, bus shelters and signs."*

3.29 It further notes that *"creating a 'sense of place' or 'character' is one of the most important things for new development to achieve..."* With respect to the landscape setting it states that *"the landscape setting of a development site should be understood, extended and enhanced within the site"*, and states that a well-designed landscape will provide:

- *"An attractive setting for a development, its users and occupiers;*
- *A positive environment of wider economic benefit;*
- *A sense of place with a clear identity;*
- *A sense of space and enclosure;*
- *Spatial benefits including integrating the visual impact of the built environment with nature;*
- *Environmental benefits including micro-climate creation, pollution attenuation and the reduction of water and energy consumption;*
- *Noise and visual screening; and*
- *Retention of cultural associations with the natural environment."*

3.30 With respect to new planting it is noted that it may take a long time to reach maturity, therefore ***"...existing features which contribute to amenity and biodiversity should be retained to make the development attractive in its early years..."***.

Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study, 2016

3.31 The Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study was prepared by LUC on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council and published in March 2016. The study provides an assessment of the landscape and visual sensitivities within defined assessment parcels around existing defined settlements to help inform judgements regarding the capacity of the landscape to accommodate new built development.

3.32 The Site is identified in Parcel IR5, which is described as follows:

"This parcel is the western slopes of the distinctive dry valley which runs broadly north - south from the Downs (Cobham Valleys system) and forms the edge of Istead Rise. Linear development, forming part of the defined settlement of Istead Rise, runs along Downs Road in the valley bottom (all within Flood Zone 3). This development, generally no more than a single line along the western side of the road, also includes Istead Rise Primary School. The

valley topography provides a distinctive setting to Istead Rise when viewed from the settlement, with the arable land framed by woodlands along the crest as at Walnut Wood. Boundaries are formed by the existing road and lane network (Walnut Tree Road, Downs Road, Broad Ditch Road), with the western edge formed by the borough boundary.

*This edge coincides with the north east edge of New Barn, which is located on the upper valley crest, generally well screened by existing woodland and extensive tree cover **within back gardens.***

- 3.33 Within this assessment criterion, under the heading of 'settlement form and edge', the following is noted:

"At Istead Rise the defined settlement extends across Downs Road with generally a single line of development fronting the road, although some residential development extends slightly up the slopes as at Longwalk. Farm buildings and sheds are contained within smaller scale fields along the base of the slope, and Istead Rise Primary school also extends into the valley. Sporadic built development occurs along Walnut Hill Road, outside the defined settlement boundaries, although this is contained within the woodland."

- 3.34 Under the heading of 'settlement setting' the following is noted:

"The parcel plays an important role in defining the setting of Istead Rise illustrating the settlement on the higher land contained by the contours of the dry valley to the west. The sweeping arable farmland provides a rural view out from Istead and creates a link with the wider landscape of the Downs. The valley and associated shaw woodlands on the crest are important in maintaining the gap and separation between Istead Rise and New Barn, which although not intervisible are in close proximity."

- 3.35 The following key sensitivities to development are provided:

- ***"Importance of the dry valley slopes and uncluttered crest as the rural view from and setting of Istead Rise;***
- *Lack of connectivity with the main ridge settlement of Istead Rise – extension here would extend development into a new landscape on the opposite side of the valley, although noting that some encroachment has already occurred;*
- *The ancient woodland and small fields that characterise the upper slopes in the area around Walnut Tree Wood and the role of these in screening New Barn;*
- *The sweeping contours of the dry valley which form a distinctive landscape feature; and*

- *The rural character and separation between Istead Rise and New Barn."*

3.36 The study outlines that Parcel IR5 has a 'Medium-Low' capacity for development, albeit noting (with respect to the lower slopes of the valley, within which the Site lies) that "*some limited small scale development could be accommodated in this area without significant adverse landscape and visual impacts providing it is restricted to the lower slopes and does not impinge on the upper slopes or crest...*". It goes on to note the following 'key requirements':

- ***"Limit to minor small scale infill on lower slopes;***
- *Maintain views out from Istead Rise to the contours of the upper valley slopes and the clear valley crest; and*
- *Seek opportunities for creating further woodland planting/tree cover, potentially linking into existing areas of woodland."*

Gravesham Green Belt Study, April 2018

3.37 The Gravesham Green Belt Study was published in April 2018 and provides a broad and high-level appraisal/assessment of the Green Belt in Gravesham against the national and local purposes of the Green Belt. The intention is that a more detailed piece of work will be prepared at a later stage for the Regulation 18 (Stage 2) consultation in 2019.

3.38 The related local purposes of the Green Belt as relevant to the Site are set out as follows:

- To maintain the break in development between the eastern edge of Gravesend and the Medway Towns which is one of the few barriers preventing the further eastward sprawl of London and the merging of towns along the southern part of the Thames Estuary (related to the first two purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF); and
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment by minimising the expansion of the Borough's rural settlements (related to the third purpose of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF).

3.39 The Site is identified within Parcel 13 'Istead Rise and New Barn Gap', the contribution of which to the Green Belt is summarised as follows:

"The parcel significantly contributes towards preventing rural settlements from merging and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.

There are limited opportunities for development in the parcel without adversely affecting the strategic purposes of the Green Belt. To the south of Istead Rise, Nash Bank, Downs Road and the A227 Wrotham Road would provide a

*more distinct boundary than the existing boundaries along the curtilages of dwellings and may provide an opportunity **for development.***"

4.0 SITE CONTEXT

Landscape Setting

- 4.1 The Site covers approximately 4.61 hectares (ha) and is irregular in shape. The land use is predominantly agricultural, with the north-western part of the Site consisting of a series of small paddocks that are subdivided by fencing featuring timber posts and electrified wires. A pylon tower is located within this part of the Site, with the overhead powerline passing through the Site on a broadly north-west to south-east orientation. The built form of 'The Piggery' is located within the south-eastern part of the Site, and comprises a series of buildings of varying materiality, scale, typology and use. A two-storey residential building lies within the northern part of the Site in proximity to the adjoining properties that line Downs Road at the foot of the slope.

Location and Local Land Use

- 4.2 As demonstrated by Figure 1: Site Context Plan, the Site lies adjacent to the rural settlement boundary, directly abutting the residential built form that extends south along Longwalk and the ribbon development that lies to the south of Downs Road. Further to the south-east lies the Istead Rise Primary School.
- 4.3 Istead Rise comprises predominantly post-second-world-war two storey and bungalow residential development. To the south and west of the Site the land use comprises sloping rising agricultural land that separates Istead Rise from New Barn. This farmed landscape is traversed by a line of pylon towers, which also pass through the Site.

Access and Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 4.4 The key transport routes within the vicinity of the Site include:
- Downs Road, aligned broadly north-west to south-east, which extends through the settlement of Istead Rise and forms part of the connecting route between Southfleet and Hook Green;
 - The A227 Wrotham Road, aligned north-south to the east of Istead Rise, which connects Hook Green with the A2 corridor; and
 - New Barn Road, aligned north-south to the west of the Site, which connects New Barn with Southfleet and the A2 corridor.
- 4.5 The Site is not crossed by any PRoW and overall there are very few PRoW within the vicinity of the Site. However, PRoW DN38 (which turns into NU38 and then DR142) and NU37 lie within the elevated landscape to the south-west of the Site and provide connectivity between New

Barn and Southfleet. PRoW NU35 lies to the south-east of the Site and provides connectivity between Istead Rise and Nash Street.

- 4.6 An area of Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act Land lies approximately 490m to the south-east of the Site, between Downs Road and the A227 Wrotham Road.

Topography and Hydrology

- 4.7 As demonstrated by Figure 2: Topography Plan, the Site comprises gently sloping land, which rises from approximately 40m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the northern part of the Site, to approximately 58m AOD in the south-western part of the Site, thereby forming part of the lower north-facing slope of this dry valley landscape that extends from the valley floor along Downs Road up to New Barn in the south-west to approximately 95m AOD. The settlement of Istead Rise effectively extends over undulating landform, which rises from Downs Road to 65m AOD, before falling to 50m AOD at the eastern side of the settlement pattern.
- 4.8 There are no notable hydrological features within the vicinity of the Site or the settlement of Istead Rise.

Vegetation

- 4.9 With reference to Figure 1: Site Context Plan, the Site is contained by a substantial tree belt along its eastern boundary, while more sporadic vegetation cover lies within the southern part of the Site in proximity to the built form of 'The Piggery' and in the northern part of the Site in the vicinity of the residential property. The western and southern boundaries of the Site are defined by hedgerows that feature the occasional hedgerow tree.
- 4.10 Within Istead Rise itself, ornamental and structural planting is commonplace, with the streetscene generally featuring mature trees within the curtilage of residential dwellings and lining the roads (particularly along Downs Road).
- 4.11 Beyond Istead Rise there are wide strips of woodland and areas of chalk grassland, particularly located within the steep slopes of the landscape. Field boundaries in the area are generally defined by hedgerows, which tend to feature the occasional mature hedgerow tree. To the south of the Site, Walnut Wood; Pigstiles Wood; and Thirty Acre Shaw, are all defined as ancient woodland and form part of the heavily vegetated edge of New Barn.

Designations

- 4.12 The Site is not covered by any national, regional or local landscape designations. However, the Site and surrounding landscape does lie within the designated Green Belt, with the exception of the main built-up area of Istead Rise (which is inset from the Green Belt).

- 4.13 The nearest nationally designated landscape, the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies approximately 3.5km to the east of the Site at its nearest point.
- 4.14 There are no national or local nature reserves in the vicinity of the Site.
- 4.15 The nearest Registered Park and Garden to the Site is the Grade II* Gravesend Cemetery approximately 3.3km to the north, while the Grade II* Cobham Hall Registered Park and Garden lies approximately 4km to the east.
- 4.16 There are few designated heritage assets within the vicinity of the Site. The nearest is the Grade II listed Downs Hall, which lies approximately 50m to the south-east of the Site. The nearest scheduled monument is the deserted medieval manorial settlement of Cossington, located approximately 1.4km to the south-east of the Site.

Published Landscape Character

- 4.17 The landscape character assessment approach is a descriptive approach that seeks to identify and define the distinct character of landscapes that make up the country. This approach recognises the intrinsic value of all landscapes, not just 'special' landscapes, as contributing factors in people's quality of life, in accordance with the European Landscape Convention. It also ensures that account is taken of the different roles and character of different areas, in accordance with the NPPF Core Principles.
- 4.18 The description of each landscape is used as a basis for evaluation in order to make judgements to guide, for example, development or landscape management. The extent of published landscape character areas are illustrated on Figure 3: Landscape Character Plan.

National Landscape Character

- 4.19 As part of Natural England's responsibilities in delivering the Natural Environment White Paper, Biodiversity 2020 and the European Landscape Convention, Natural England has developed a series of National Character Area (NCA) profiles. These NCA profiles provide a broad range of information including an outline of the key characteristics of a given area; a description of the ecosystem services provided and how these relate to people, wildlife and the economy; and an array of opportunities for positive environmental change.
- 4.20 The Site lies within the southern fringe of the area covered by NCA Profile 113: North Kent Plain. The key characteristics of this NCA Profile of relevance to the Site and surrounding area are outlined as follows:

- *"An open, low and gently undulating landscape, characterised by high-quality, fertile, loamy soils dominated by agricultural land uses...;*

- *Large arable/horticultural fields with regular patterns and rectangular shapes predominating, and a sparse hedgerow pattern;*
- *Orchards and horticultural crops characterise central and eastern areas, and are often enclosed by poplar or alder shelterbelts and scattered **small woodlands...; and***
- *Large settlements and urban infrastructure (including lines of pylons) are often visually dominant in the landscape, with significant development around Greater London and **the Medway Towns, as well as around towns further east...***

County Landscape Character

4.21 The Landscape Assessment of Kent was prepared by Jacobs Babbie on behalf of Kent County Council and was published in October 2004. The Landscape Assessment of Kent identifies a number of different Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) across Kent, and provides a description of and vision for each LCA.

4.22 The landscape encompassing the existing settled area of Istead Rise and covering the Site and surrounding area is identified as the Southfleet Arable Lands LCA, the characteristic features of which are defined as:

- *"Good quality soils developed on the Tertiary Beds overlying the chalk. A generally open arable landscape;*
- *Open landscape allowing transport routes, pylons and settlement to dominate many areas;*
- *Remnant unkept hedgerows, shelterbelts and woodland copses giving a scruffy and unmanaged feel; and*
- *Long views to the busy A2 (T) and Kent Thames-side beyond."*

4.23 The condition of the Southfleet Arable Lands LCA is identified as 'Very Poor', noting that there are *"many visual detractors which dominate the view, such as transmission pylons"* and that *"the 20th century development of historic village edges give a high negative impact on the view"*.

4.24 The sensitivity of the Southfleet Arable Lands LCA is identified as 'Moderate', stating:

*"The undulating landform is apparent in the open views over the landscape area. Visibility is therefore high. The main inherent characteristics which make up the landscape pattern have become indistinct. The historic features of hedgerow enclosure and the more recent shelterbelts are now indistinct elements of the landscape. Building forms on the edge of settlements do not contribute to local distinctiveness and there is very little time-depth to the landscape's current dominant **features...**"*

Local Landscape Character

4.25 The Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, which identifies eleven distinct LCAs within Gravesham Borough, was prepared by Jacobs on behalf of Gravesham Borough Council and was published in May 2009. The Site and the surrounding area is identified within the Istead Arable Farmlands LCA, the key characteristics of which are outlined as follows:

- *"Gently undulating topography with open arable fields;*
- *Fields divided by tracks, roads and occasional hedgerows;*
- *Orchards to the east;*
- *Minor native woodland clumps;*
- *Few roads, which are open in character;*
- *Istead Rise modern housing development;*
- *Clusters of properties and farmsteads; and*
- *Large pylons."*

4.26 It is noted that the condition of the LCA is 'Poor' and that " *electricity pylons dominate the area and although there are few other detractors, the scale and frequency of the large pylons is a significant visual detractor* ", while the sensitivity of the LCA is assessed as 'Moderate', stating:

"Distinct landscape elements comprise isolated buildings and farmsteads that contribute towards local distinctiveness through their traditional style and use of materials. Enclosure provided by ditch lines and remaining hedgerows provides historic features. However, many features and elements of the landscape are indistinct and recent, and overall there is a weak sense of place. The open character of the landscape and consequential high visibility across the character area provide a moderate level of sensitivity overall."

Published Landscape Guidelines

National Landscape Guidelines

4.27 With respect to NCA 113: North Kent Plain, the following Statements of Environmental Opportunity of relevance to the Site are provided:

- *"SEO 1: Maintain the historic character and long tradition of a farmed landscape, creating habitats to establish more resilient and coherent ecological networks within the farmed and peri-urban areas...;*
- *SEO 3: Protect the distinct wooded areas of the landscape, particularly through the management of nationally important, ancient semi-natural woodlands, increased the area of broadleaved woodland where appropriate, while increasing the connectivity of the mosaic of associated habitats...;*

- *SEO 4: Protect and enhance the strong character and heritage of the urban areas. Plan for the creation of significant new areas of green space and green corridors to provide a framework for new and existing development in **urban areas...**"*

4.28 The following landscape opportunities of relevance to the Site are identified:

- *"Protect the open character of the gently undulating landscape and the **remaining areas of tranquillity...**;*
- *Manage and significantly enhance the area's existing **broadleaved woodland cover...creating robust wildlife networks better adapted to climate change whilst also enhancing landscape character...; and***
- *Plan for the creation of significant new landscape that **provide a framework to new and existing development....to provide a screening function and significantly benefit landscape as well as biodiversity.**"*

County Landscape Guidelines

4.29 It is noted that the Southfleet Arable Lands LCA is a large-scale landscape that is "*denuded of characteristic features*". The following landscape actions are provided:

- *"Create a simplified pattern within the landscape using large blocks of woodland, large areas of arable fields;*
- *Create an edge to the urban area – restore some enclosure, using characteristic rural features;*
- *Create functional agricultural features;*
- *Create ecologically rich corridors;*
- *Restore the positive impact of historic highway features; and*
- *Restore open and controlled views across open farmland."*

Local Landscape Guidelines

4.30 The following guidelines of relevance to the Site are provided for the Istead Arable Farmlands LCA:

- *"Restore traditional field structure and enclosure with native hedgerows and boundary planting;*
- *Restore the landscape through the removal of detracting **features...**;*
- *Create design standards in keeping with local character for **new developments within the area...; and***
- ***Create a positive edge to the urban area..."***

5.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL SITE APPRAISAL

Overview

- 5.1 The Site and the surrounding environment was visited in April 2018, with Site Appraisal Photographs A - E illustrating the existing character of the Site. The locations from which the Site Appraisal Photographs were taken are shown on Figure 4: Site Appraisal Plan. The visual context of the Site is illustrated by Site Context Photographs 1 - 9, the locations of which are illustrated on Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan.

Landscape Appraisal

- 5.2 A landscape appraisal has been undertaken to ascertain the existing character of the Site. This is accomplished through recording and analysing the existing landscape features and characteristics, the way the landscape is experienced, and the value or importance of the landscape and visual resources in the vicinity of the Site. The elements of the landscape that contribute to landscape character include the built and natural form, the pattern of features, detailing, scale, planting, land use and human perception. In this regard, landscape character is derived as a result of the perception of, and action and interaction of, natural and human factors.
- 5.3 As illustrated in Site Appraisal Photograph A the western part of the Site consists of a series of paddocks that are subdivided into small enclosures by timber post and wiring. These paddocks are grazed by horses, with the periphery of the paddocks bordered and defined by hedgerow vegetation. The paddocks gently rise in elevation to the south, with a large pylon tower located on the higher ground that is a visual detractor. The built form of 'The Piggery' is present to the east (in the left of Site Appraisal Photograph A), albeit views of this built form are partially filtered by the intervening vegetation. Some mature trees lie within the upper reaches of the rising landform and punctuate and otherwise open skyline.
- 5.4 Site Appraisal Photograph B is taken from a central location within the Site and illustrates the intervisibility between the existing built form on Longwalk and the Site. As evidenced in Site Appraisal Photograph B this part of the Site is grazed by cattle and adjoins the nearby residential properties nestled at the foot of the slope and valley associated with the course of Downs Road. The northern boundary of the Site, defined by the limits of the curtilage of private dwellings, consists of various boundary treatments and is in varying states of repair. Some mature vegetation within the rear gardens of these properties limits intervisibility with the rising landform of the opposing valley slope of Istead Rise. The built form of 'The Piggery', visible to the left of this photograph, appears unkept and cluttered.

- 5.5 The central part of the Site is illustrated in Site Appraisal Photographs C and D, with the former demonstrating the lack of a visual connection with the wider landscape to the south due to the way in which the landform rises, in combination with the sporadic mature vegetation cover curtailing visibility and providing both visual and physical separation. As illustrated in Site Appraisal Photograph D however, there is clearly a visual relationship between the Site and the existing settled area of Istead Rise that occupies the rising land of the opposing valley slope. This relationship is amplified as the Site is perceived to be subservient to this built-up area, in part due to its lower-lying position in the landscape and the way in which built elements of the settled area already protrude into this landscape to the south of Downs Road.
- 5.6 This perception of being within a very different landscape to that further south is also exemplified in Site Appraisal Photograph E, which again demonstrates that the Site is distinct from this wider farmed area (and consequently there is no visual relationship. Instead, this part of the Site is dominated by the existing built form in the Site, which appears to be in a state of disrepair (albeit the boundary treatments appear to be in a good condition). The pylon tower within the western part of the Site is also a prominent feature (visible in the background of the photograph).
- 5.7 The Site is considered to be of low landscape value as:
- The Site is generally not of noteworthy scenic beauty, insofar that it largely comprises a series of sloping paddocks, contained by hedgerow vegetation;
 - The Site is not remote, given its proximity to (and perceptual relationship with) the existing built development and the highway network, and consequently does not have an air of tranquillity;
 - The Site does not form part of the historic landscape setting to a noted heritage asset;
 - The Site does not currently afford the opportunity for public recreation; and
 - The Site is not covered by any landscape designations.

Visual Appraisal

- 5.8 A visual appraisal has been undertaken to determine the relationship of the Site with its surroundings and its approximate extent of visibility within the wider landscape from publicly accessible locations.
- 5.9 The potential visibility of the Site is largely determined by the intervening landform, as topographic features such as ridgelines and subtle undulations may block or curtail views towards the Site. In addition, land cover has an important role in determining potential visibility as woodland, treebelts or built forms may contribute to additional blocking, filtering or curtailing of views.

- 5.10 The effectiveness of vegetation as a screen depends to a considerable extent on its scale. A large mature feature will form a substantial screen throughout the year, but a hedgerow or intermittent treebelt may only be effective during the summer months. Whilst small features, such as hedgerows and individual trees can be very important, particularly when their combined effect is taken into account, they cannot be considered to be substantial or wholly effective screening features or visual barriers due to the seasonal nature of their effect.
- 5.11 Site Context Photographs 1 – 9 demonstrate that views of the interior of the Site are limited to the localised area of residential development to the north of the Site. However, even from those locations in proximity to the Site, the Site's visibility is restricted due to the extent of containment provided by the vegetation and built form that encloses the Site (in combination with built form in the Sites' wider setting). An indication of the existing visual envelope of the Site is provided in Figure 5: Visual Appraisal Plan, which also shows where the Site Context Photographs were taken from.
- 5.12 As demonstrated in Site Context Photograph 1 there is some intervisibility with the Site from Longwalk, although fencing and residential premises restrict views into much of the Site, with only the ground plane of the eastern part of the Site visible. Nonetheless, from the windows of these properties there are likely to be more extensive views across the Site. The pylon tower in the eastern part of the Site is a visual detract in Site Context Photograph 1.
- 5.13 As demonstrated in Site Context Photograph 2 the built form that sits alongside the southern side of Downs Road curtails visibility with the Site, while vegetation in the rear gardens of these properties forms the backdrop to the views obtained, preventing any views further afield.
- 5.14 Nonetheless, from further to the west on Downs Road outside the settled area, there is some intervisibility with the Site (as demonstrated in Site Context Photograph 3), which is seen in the conjunction with the intervening built forms associated with Willerby Farm. The pylon towers, which extend across the landscape, are prominent features and erode the visual amenity experience.
- 5.15 From the elevated landscape to the east of the Site (Site Context Photographs 4 – 6), the more elevated parts of the Site are visible in the middle ground of the view and seen as part of a much broader swathe of agricultural land. However, even the uppermost southern parts of the Site appear distinct from this wider farmed and elevated landscape due to the sloping nature of the Site meaning that it is more readily associated with the valley landscape coinciding with Downs Road. Consequently it is the more level, plateau-like, rapeseed field that provides a separation function between Istead Rise and the settlement of New Barn that is visible in the distance (sitting at a higher elevation).

- 5.16 The Site is not discernible from the elevated landscape to the east, south or south-west, due to a combination of both its orientation and its siting in the lower reaches of the valley landscape (as evidenced in Site Context Photographs 7 – 9). Nonetheless, the pylon tower that sits within the western part of the Site is a discernible feature. In the later two photographs the settlement of Istead Rise is seen to straddle an elevated landscape in the context of a series of prominent pylon towers.

Summary

- 5.17 Overall the Site is considered to be of low/medium sensitivity as it is of low landscape value and it has a localised visual envelope due to the orientation and nature of the landform within and adjoining the Site (given its siting within the lower-reaches of the sloping valley landscape). Nonetheless, the uppermost part of the Site is considered to be of medium sensitivity as it has a more wide-reaching visual envelope and has some association with the wider farmed landscape. This wider farmed landscape is distinct to the valley landscape and environment of Istead Rise (within which the majority of the Site is perceived to fall within).

6.0 SCOPE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Site is considered to provide the opportunity for residential development from a landscape and visual perspective due to its low-lying position in the landscape and its proximity to and influence of the existing settled area of Istead Rise.
- 6.2 Nonetheless, any development within the Site would need to ensure that the boundary vegetation is retained and enhanced, so as to sensitively and sympathetically integrate the development into its setting, while views towards the agricultural landscape from the elevated residential properties in the direction of New Barn should be retained. With this in mind, the southernmost elevated part of the Site should remain free from built development, ensuring that the Sites redevelopment is not perceived as encroaching within the wider elevated agricultural landscape that separates Istead Rise and New Barn.

Site Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities

- 6.3 Opportunities for development within the Site are that:
- The Site is not covered by any landscape designations;
 - There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) enforced within the Site;
 - There is an existing vegetation framework that in part borders and encloses the Site, which in combination with the sloping nature of the Site and its orientation (sited within the lower-reaches of the valley formation), results in a localised visual envelope;
 - The Site does not exhibit any rare landscape features; and
 - The Site is not crossed by any PRoW and is not publicly accessible, and therefore is of no recreational value.

Constraints

- 6.4 Constraints to development within the Site include:
- Development should be offset from the existing boundary vegetation structure in response to Root Protection Areas (the extent of which should be determined by an arboricultural survey); and
 - Development in the southern part of the Site would be visible from the elevated landscape to the north due to the orientation of the landform and its elevated nature, and accordingly it is recommended that this part of the Site is kept free of built form.

Response to Landscape Character

- 6.5 The development proposals could respond positively to the environment and landscape opportunities identified for the North Kent Plain NCA through the protection and enhancement of green corridors/ecological networks (including the vegetation bordering the Site) and the creation of new landscape features and areas of green space, providing a robust landscape framework.
- 6.6 In relation to the Southfleet Arable Lands LCA and the Istead Arable Farmlands LCA the development proposals could create a softened positive edge to the urban area through the provision of additional boundary planting along the southern edge of the Site that reinforces a sense of enclosure, while new planting within the Site could restore historic boundaries through the provision of native hedgerows.
- 6.7 As recommended in the Gravesham Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study, views out from Istead Rise to the wider agricultural landscape and valley crest could be retained by ensuring that introduced built form is limited to the lower-slopes, i.e. below the 55m AOD contour line, while additional woodland cover could be provided in areas to the south to provide a green backdrop in views out, and a green edge in views towards Istead Rise.

Response to Planning Policy

- 6.8 The development proposals within the Site could respond positively to the identified policies within the NPPF and the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy, in addition to the principles set out within the Kent Design Guide. As part of the development, the existing vegetation both within and enclosing the Site could be retained and enhanced, and could be supplemented through the provision of additional areas of planting (utilising locally distinctive species) to create green infrastructure linkages through the Site while fragmenting and softening the overall perceived scale, mass and extent of introduced built forms.
- 6.9 The siting, density, layout and materials of introduced built forms could contribute positively to the character of Istead Rise, while the existing visual amenity of receptors to the north could be enhanced by creating an enclosed edge to Istead Rise while maintaining open views of the rising agricultural land further afield that separates Istead Rise from New Barn and reinforcing the separate identity of these settlements.

Design Strategy

6.10 A series of design considerations have been identified as a result of the landscape and visual appraisal, as illustrated on Figure 6: Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints Plan, and include:

- Ensure that the introduced built forms contribute positively to the sense of place and local distinctiveness by using materials that reflect or complement the local vernacular and exhibit a high quality of design as advocated in the Kent Design Guide;
- Soften the appearance of the introduced built form by ensuring that the built forms are set within robust structural planting;
- Ensure that the roofscape of the introduced built form does not overtly obscure views of the agricultural land to the south of the Site in views from the elevated landscape to the north, so as to ensure that the built development relates to the existing settled valley corridor and that any perception of encroachment is minimised;
- Ensure that the southernmost part of the Site remains free from built forms so as to not adversely impact upon the visual amenity of nearby surrounding receptors and to retain the distinction between the settled valley and upper crest and slope landscape that separates Istead Rise from New Barn;
- Retain and enhance the existing vegetation within and bordering the Site and establish green infrastructure linkages;
- Provide new areas of planting, with appropriate locally distinctive species, to soften and fragment the perceived mass of the introduced built forms in views from the north; and
- Ensure that any built forms are offset in relation to the root protection areas of existing vegetation to be retained within and bordering the Site.

7.0 GREEN BELT REVIEW

- 7.1 Given the findings of the landscape and visual appraisal and the recommendation that the southern part of the Site is kept free of built development, this Green Belt Review has assessed the contribution of the remaining part of the Site to the first four purposes of the Green Belt, i.e. omitting the area defined as 'Medium Landscape and Visual Constraints' on Figure 6: Landscape and Visual Opportunities and Constraints Plan from the area assessed. The Green Belt Review undertaken is set out in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1: Contribution to the Purposes of the Green Belt

Purpose	Critique	Contribution
Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	As this part of the Site occupies an area of largely open land that lies beyond the defined settlement boundary, its redevelopment will undoubtedly result in a physical extension of the settlement pattern. However, the extent to which this extension will be perceived as sprawl is heavily minimised by the nature of the underlying landform, with the lower-reaches of this valley slope already perceptually forming part of the settlement of Istead Rise. In this regard, should this part of the Site be developed it would extend the built-up area of Istead Rise in a coherent manner and in any event would be contained by the upper slopes and crest of the valley side, thereby the built-up area will be confined to the already built-up lower-reaches of this fold in the landscape coinciding with the ribbon development along Downs Road.	Limited
Prevent neighbouring towns from merging	The built-up area of Istead Rise, a 'Second Tier Settlement', frames this part of the Site to the north-east, with the settlement pattern also including some built form to the north (Willerby Farm and Longwalk) and east (Downs Road and Istead Rise Primary School), all sitting below the 55m AOD contour line. While there would be a minimal physical reduction in the separation distance between Istead Rise and New Barn (of approximately 100m) if this area was developed, crucially this developed area would sit below the 55m AOD contour line and therefore would be contained by the crest and upper slope of the valley side. As such, there would be no perceived reduction in the separation distance between Istead Rise and New Barn (neither of which are defined as 'towns' in any event).	Limited
Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	The character of the Site is strongly influenced by the intervisibility with the built-up area of Istead Rise. The perception of being within a countryside setting is therefore diminished, despite the overarching agricultural use, and in addition the presence of the dominant pylon towers further erodes any sense of rurality. Moreover, the orientation of the landform and its siting within the lower-reaches of the fold in the landscape, means that it is neither physically nor visually associated with the wider farmed landscape beyond that is perceived as countryside and which separates Istead Rise from New Barn. In light of the above, and the containment provided by the underlying topography, should this part of the Site be developed it would not result in a sense of urbanisation over the wider landscape. Accordingly, the lower reaches of this valley landscape make no contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.	None

Purpose	Critique	Contribution
Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	The Site does not have a physical, visual or character connection with the historic part of any town.	None

- 7.2 The NPPF states that the key characteristics of the Green Belt are "*their openness and their permanence*". As demonstrated in Table 7.1, the part of the Site recommend for development is considered to be inherently open due to its predominantly agricultural land use. However, it is pertinent that the Site is physically and visually related to the built-up area of Istead Rise and is perceived to already lie within the confines of this settlement due to the way in which the upper slopes and crest of the valley side contain the built development within the lower reaches of the valley, coinciding with the course of Downs Road.
- 7.3 In this regard, this part of the landscape exhibits the typical characteristics of an urban fringe landscape, such that whilst there would be a technical reduction in openness should it be developed, it would not constitute harm to the Green Belt. Furthermore, while the agricultural land to the south-west of the Site forms part of the wider context, it's more elevated and exposed nature is physically and visually distinct from the lower valley slopes associated with Istead Rise.
- 7.4 The existing Green Belt boundary is largely defined by the rear boundary curtilages of residential properties lining Downs Road, while additionally development at Longwalk slightly protrudes up the slope and results in an inconsistent boundary. As such, built development both within the Site (the 'Piggery' and the residential property) and in its immediate surroundings (such as at Willerby Farm to the north-west, and the residential property to the east) are 'washed-over' by the Green Belt designation.
- 7.5 As noted in Paragraph 85 of the NPPF, when defining Green Belt boundaries, local planning authorities should "*define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent*". While the boundary treatments of the residential properties are undoubtedly physical features that are recognisable, they are not considered to be permanent, consisting of a mix of boundary treatments in varying states of repair. The Gravesham Green Belt Study also highlights that the existing Green Belt boundary is "*relatively weak*".
- 7.6 In contrast, should the Site be developed in line with the recommendations set out in Section 6, there is the potential to introduce new structural vegetation that would form a defensible boundary to the Green Belt and simultaneously create a softened positive edge to the built-up area of Istead Rise as advocated in the published character guidance.

- 7.7 It is crucial to note that Paragraph 85 of the NPPF also stipulates that local planning authorities should “*not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open*”. This Green Belt Review has identified that there is no substantive rationale for the lower reaches of this part of the valley to be kept permanently open.
- 7.8 In this regard, should the northern part of the Site be released from the Green Belt and subsequently be developed as per the principles set out in Section 6 of this report, the openness of the remaining designated area would remain intact given the exceptionally limited visual envelope of the Site and that it is already perceived as forming part of the existing settlement pattern of Istead Rise. On this basis, development of this area would not compromise the purposes and function of the remaining Green Belt.
- 7.9 Accordingly, the northern part of the Site should be released from the Green Belt to satisfy the policy requirements of the NPPF and be allocated for residential development.

Consideration of the Gravesham Green Belt Study

- 7.10 As previously noted, the Site lies within the area identified as Parcel 13 ‘Istead Rise and New Barn Gap’. The Green Belt Study acknowledges that it is a high-level appraisal and that the parcels identified are intended to be strategic enough to inform growth options, rather than advising on the suitability of land for development or otherwise, noting that “*nothing within this document should be taken as a commitment to release Green Belt land for development in advance of its formal consideration through the Local Plan process...*”.
- 7.11 It is considered that the parcels identified within the Green Belt Study are too large to be meaningful, especially in the context of Istead Rise, and cannot be relied upon to provide a true reflection of the contribution that a smaller area within an identified large parcel makes in relation to the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 7.12 While it is right and proper to consider the local context in determining the contribution that an area of land makes to the purposes of the Green Belt, these purposes are inherently national by their very nature. As such, the consideration of ‘local purposes’ in the assessment of parcels runs contrary to the purposes of Green Belt, a national planning designation, as set out in the NPPF.
- 7.13 Should a local planning authority wish to judge an area of land against local criteria and purposes, then a local designation/planning tool (such as Strategic Gap) should be applied. This principle is supported in the recent Inspector Report on the Examination of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1 (February 2018), which highlights that local issues should be dealt with through the application of normal countryside protection policies. As such, the assessment

of the contribution that a Green Belt parcel makes to 'local purposes' is flawed and should be discounted when assessing the contribution that a given area makes to a national designation (with its purposes set out solely in the NPPF).

- 7.14 The findings of the Green Belt Study in relation to Parcel 13 aptly demonstrate that the area appraised is not reflective of a much smaller area, such as the Site, bearing no relation to the situation in this part of the landscape nor its contribution to the Green Belt. As an evidence base document to the Local Plan the Green Belt Study is clearly not fit-for-purpose and therefore the Local Plan could not be considered 'sound' at examination if the Green Belt Study is the primary source of information to guide Green Belt release, as it would not be justified (as per Paragraph 182 of the NPPF).

8.0 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

- 8.1 As previously noted the NPPF endorses the permanence of Green Belts as an essential characteristic and stipulates in Paragraph 83 that “*once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in expectational circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan*”. Paragraph 83 also goes on to state that “*authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permeance in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period*”. Clearly then, the review of the Local Plan provides an opportunity to provide a long-term strategy for growth across the Borough.
- 8.2 The NPPF also makes clear in Paragraph 84 that Green Belt boundary reviews should promote sustainable patterns of development, while Paragraph 85 notes that when defining boundaries to the Green Belt the Local Planning Authority should take into account meeting the identified requirements for sustainable development and not include that it is unnecessary to keep permanently open. In this regard, a review of the Green Belt boundary in the vicinity of the Site provides the opportunity to shape future sustainable development in order to meet the longer-term needs of the Borough in a coherent and logical manner.
- 8.3 Thus, it is recommended that in accordance with these principles of the NPPF, the Local Planning Authority seeks to maximise the potential of a revised Green Belt boundary in the vicinity of the Site for land that could be brought forward and contribute positively to the local area and promote sustainable development in line with the NPPF Core Principles.
- 8.4 Previously, it was recommended that the development of the adjacent land to the south-east could be effectively assimilated from a landscape and visual perspective, and that if this area of land was developed it would not compromise the purposes nor function of the wider Green Belt. A review of the wider area has taken this into account in drawing up a revised Green Belt boundary that seeks to promote sustainable patterns of development aligned to logical, robust and defensible boundaries. Consequently, this area of land to the south-east of the Site (in combination with the majority of the Site itself) is recommended to be released from the Green Belt and allocated for residential development.
- 8.5 A robust and defensible boundary could be provided along the southern boundary of this area, broadly aligned to the 55m contour line, as this area of land is both physically and visually distinct to the more elevated agricultural land (perceived as open countryside) that provides a separation function between Istead Rise and New Barn. A review of the wider area also indicates that there is the opportunity to further release land to the north-west of the Site from the Green Belt, continuing along the 55m contour line and tying in with the existing field boundaries, effectively rounding off the settlement pattern in an area of land that already

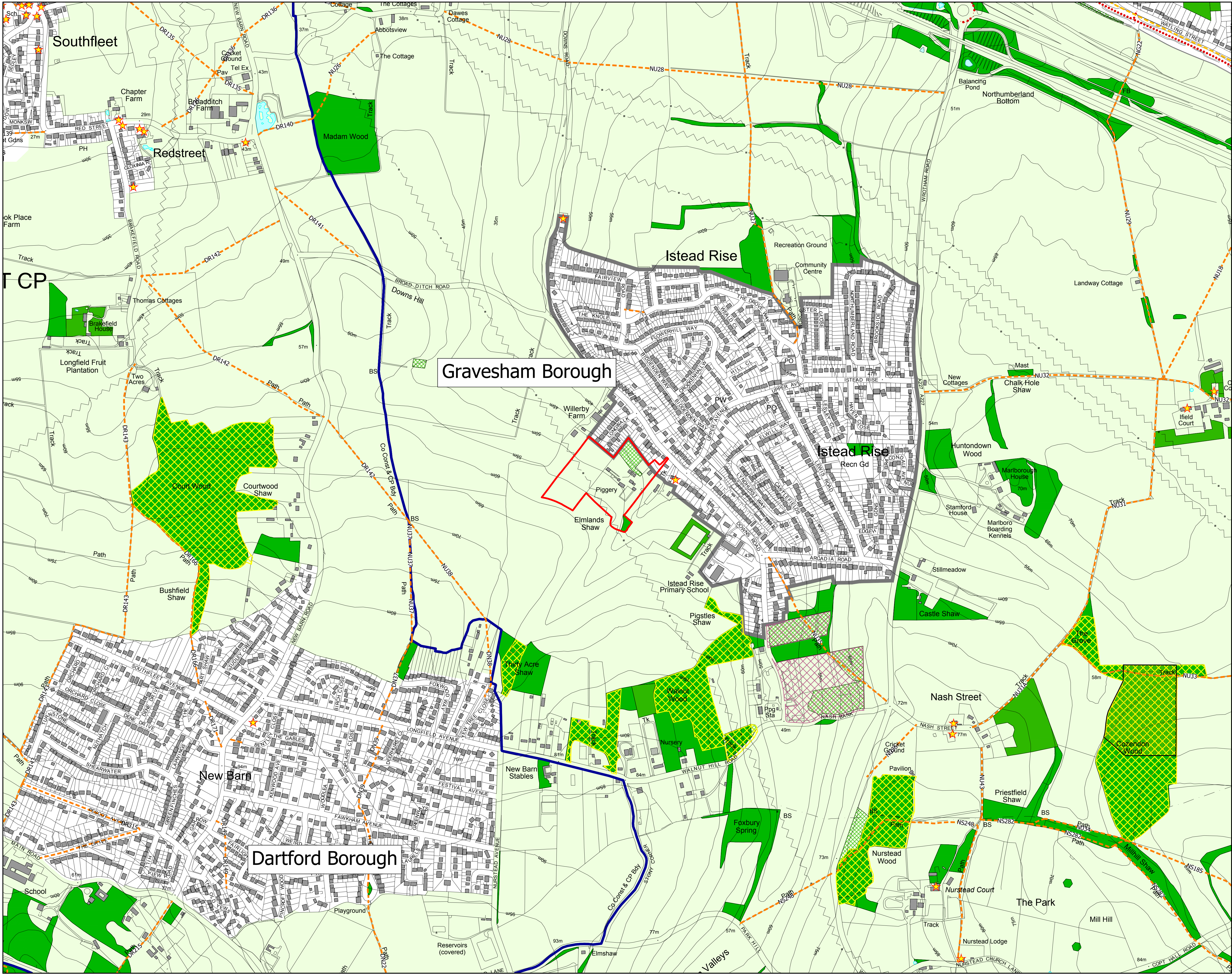
exhibits urban fringe characteristics and is already perceptually and physically associated with the settled area of Istead Rise rather than the wider farmed landscape. This parcel of land similarly has a limited visual envelope as it sits in the fold in the landscape associated with the lower-reaches of the valley slope coinciding with Downs Road.

- 8.6 This area of land could be released and safeguarded "*in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period*". As such, the local planning authorities will be able to "*satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period*", with the western boundary of this parcel of land supplemented with additional planting to create a positive green edge to the urban area that would be considered a defensible boundary (while also coinciding with an historic boundary).
- 8.7 As identified earlier, the Gravesham Green Belt Study highlights that the existing Green Belt boundary is "*relatively weak*", being delineated by residential and school curtilages. Clearly therefore, the above proposal will deliver a more defensible Green Belt boundary and will simultaneously release land from the Green Belt that "*is unnecessary to keep permanently open*". Accordingly, it is recommended that to satisfy the policy requirements of the NPPF, the area of land as illustrated on Figure 7: Strategic Green Belt Release Plan is released from the Green Belt, with the Site and adjoining land to the south-east allocated for residential development, and the area to the north-west identified as 'safeguarded land'.

9.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 BWLPD was commissioned by Esquire Developments Ltd to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review of the Site in relation to its suitability for residential development and informing Gravesham's Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) Call for Sites, which will support the forthcoming Stage 2 Preferred Options consultation on the Local Plan. The NPPF endorses the permanence of Green Belts as an essential characteristic and stipulates in Paragraph 83 that "*once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan*". As such, there is an opportunity to refine the Green Belt boundary through the forthcoming consultation on the Local Plan.
- 9.2 The NPPF, as set out in Paragraph 84, seeks to align Green Belt boundary reviews with sustainable patterns of development. Paragraph 85 of the NPPF notes that when defining boundaries to the Green Belt the Local Planning Authority should take into account meeting the identified requirements for sustainable development and not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open. In this regard, a review of the Green Belt boundary in the vicinity of the Site provide the opportunity to shape future sustainable development in order to meet the longer-term needs of the Borough in a coherent and logical manner.
- 9.3 It is recommended that in accordance with Paragraph 85, the Local Planning Authority seek to maximise the potential of a revised Green Belt boundary in the vicinity of the Site for land that could be brought forward and contribute positively to the local area and promote sustainable development in line with the NPPF Core Principles.
- 9.4 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal and Green Belt Review has been undertaken to establish the opportunities and constraints to residential development from a landscape and visual perspective; the suitability of the Site to accommodate residential development; and to assess the contribution that the Site makes towards the purposes of the Green Belt (both nationally and locally) and to ascertain whether it is unnecessary to keep the Site permanently open.
- 9.5 The appraisal has included a review of published landscape character information, planning policy, and field work, to determine the landscape characteristics of the Site, its function in the wider landscape, and its influence within views from the surrounding area.
- 9.6 As previously noted, the NPPF seek to align Green Belt boundary reviews with sustainable patterns of development. Emphasis is placed on the purposes of the Green Belt as opposed to the quality of the landscape when undertaking a Green Belt Review. However, the consideration of landscape and visual opportunities and constraints provides a greater understanding of, and aids in the identification of, appropriate sustainable locations for development in the area.

- 9.7 The findings of this report demonstrate that the Site is very well contained from the wider landscape to the east, south and west due to the extent of enclosure afforded by the underlying landform, being located on the north facing lower-slopes of the valley, and accordingly visibility of the interior of the Site is generally restricted to very localised areas to the north of the Site from properties that overlook this area.
- 9.8 The Site itself is generally not of noteworthy scenic beauty, insofar that it largely comprises a series of sloping paddocks, contained by hedgerow vegetation. Notably, the Site is perceived as forming part of the settled area of Istead Rise due to both its proximity to this built-up area and its orientation and siting within the lower reaches of the valley landscape coinciding with the course of Downs Road. The agricultural landscape continues to rise consistently to the south of the Site, before levelling out and extending towards the settled area of New Barn, ensuring that the Site is neither physically nor visually related to this wider landscape.
- 9.9 The Green Belt Review identifies that the existing Green Belt boundary is defined by the rear boundary curtilages of residential properties and as such there is the potential to realign to Green Belt boundary to a new feature that would be considered more defensible. Furthermore, the Green Belt Review identified that there is no substantive rationale for the lower reaches of the Site to be within the Green Belt and as such this area should be removed from the Green Belt, as per Paragraph 85 of the NPPF that states that local planning authorities should “*not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open*”. This recommendation should also be considered in light of the other emerging development proposals in the area and the need to ensure that the Green Belt boundary will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period and to meet longer-term development needs in a sustainable and well-planned manner.
- 9.10 In light of the above and on consideration of the policy requirements of the NPPF, realigning the Green Belt boundary to broadly correspond to the 55m AOD contour line (in conjunction with the release of Green Belt land to facilitate residential development to the east) and also providing new structural planting will offer the opportunity to establish a more defensible and permanent Green Belt boundary. Accordingly, the area of land as shown in Figure 7: Green Belt Release Plan should be released from the Green Belt.
- 9.11 In conclusion, development of the Site could be effectively assimilated from a landscape and visual perspective and would not compromise the purposes and function of the wider Green Belt. On this basis, and on consideration of the NPPF policy requirements set out in Paragraph 85, the majority of the Site is considered appropriate for release from the Green Belt alongside the immediately adjoining land, such that the realigned Green Belt boundary will be defined clearly within the fold in the landscape and supported by new planting, such that it will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period.



The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revision _____ Date _____ Dm _____ Ckd _____

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Local Planning Authority Boundary ^
- Existing Woodlands, Copses and Tree Belts ^
- Existing Scrub ^
- Existing Water Courses and Features ^
- Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^
- Public Rights of Way *
- Sustrans National Route +
- Cycle Route ++
- Countryside Rights of Way Access Areas #
- Listed Buildings ~
- Scheduled Monument ~
- Ancient Woodland #
- Green Belt ^^
- Rural Settlements inset from Green Belt **

Sources:
^ GIS Mapping
Natural England GIS Data Set
~ Historic England National Monument Record GIS Data Set
+ Kent County Council PLOW Online Definitive Maps
+ Sustrans National Cycle Network GIS Data
++ Department of Transport (DoT) GIS Cycle Network Data
^^ Department for Communities and Local Government GIS Data
** Gravesham Local Core Strategy - Policies Map - Adopted September 2014

Data collated for constraints and analysis mapping is based on publicly available sources at the time of preparation inserted using the British National Grid and may itself not be accurate. Barton Willmore shall not be liable for the accuracy of data derived from external sources.

FIGURE 1

Project
The 'Piggeries',
Istead Rise

Drawing Title
Site Context Plan

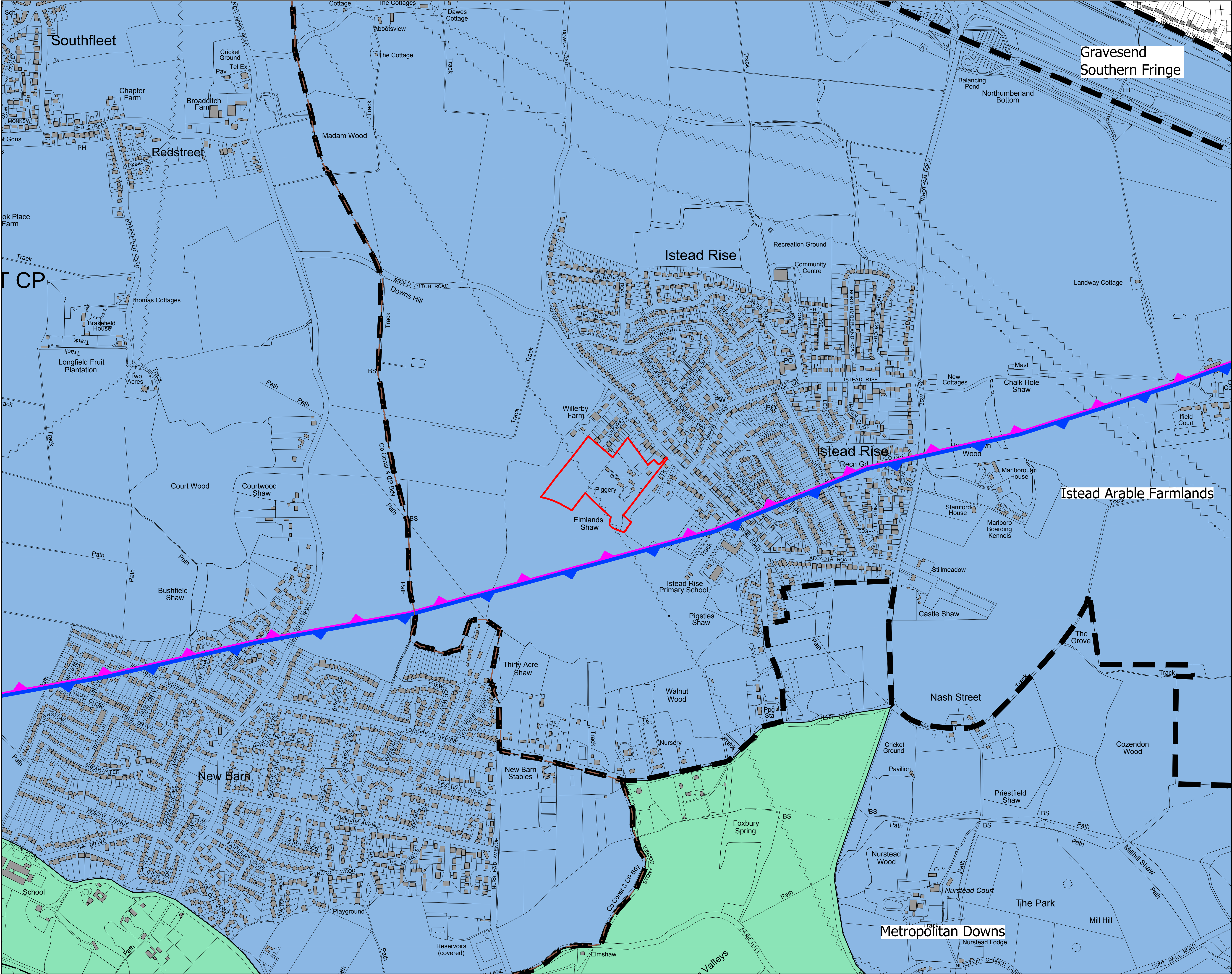
Date 16.04.2018	Scale 1:5,000 @A1 1:10,000 @A3	Drawn by MN	Check by GM
Project No 26414	Drawing No L201	Revision -	

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Revision _____ Date _____ Dm _____ Ckd _____

Legend

- Site Boundary
- National Character Area Profiles #
 - NCA Profile 113: North Kent Plain
 - NCA Profile 119: North Downs
- County Landscape Character Areas (Kent) +
 - Southfleet Arable Lands
 - Ash Downs
- District Landscape Character Areas (Gravesham) *
 - Area Boundary

Sources:
^ OS Mapping
Natural England GIS Data Set
* The Landscape Assessment of Kent - October 2004
* Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment - May 2009

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FIGURE 3

Project
**The 'Piggery',
Istead Rise**

Drawing Title
Landscape Character Plan

Date 27.04.2017	Scale 1:5,000 @A1 1:10,000 @A3	Drawn by MN/GG	Check by GM
Project No 26414	Drawing No L103	Revision -	

0 50 100 150 200 250 300m

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The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revision	Date	Drn	Ckd
-	-	-	-

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^
- Listed Building ~
- Green Belt ^^
- Location of Photographic Viewpoint (Site Appraisal Photographs: A-E)

Sources:
^ OS Mapping
~ Historic England National Monument Record GIS Data Set
^^ Department for Communities and Local Government GIS Data

Data collated for constraints and analysis mapping is based on publicly available sources at the time of preparation inserted using the British National Grid and may itself not be accurate. Barton Willmore shall not be liable for the accuracy of data derived from external sources.

FIGURE 4

Project
The 'Piggery',
Istead Rise
Drawing Title
Site Appraisal Plan

Date	Scale	Drawn by	Check by
27.04.2018	1:2,000 @A3	MN	GM
Project No	Drawing No	Revision	
26414	L202	-	

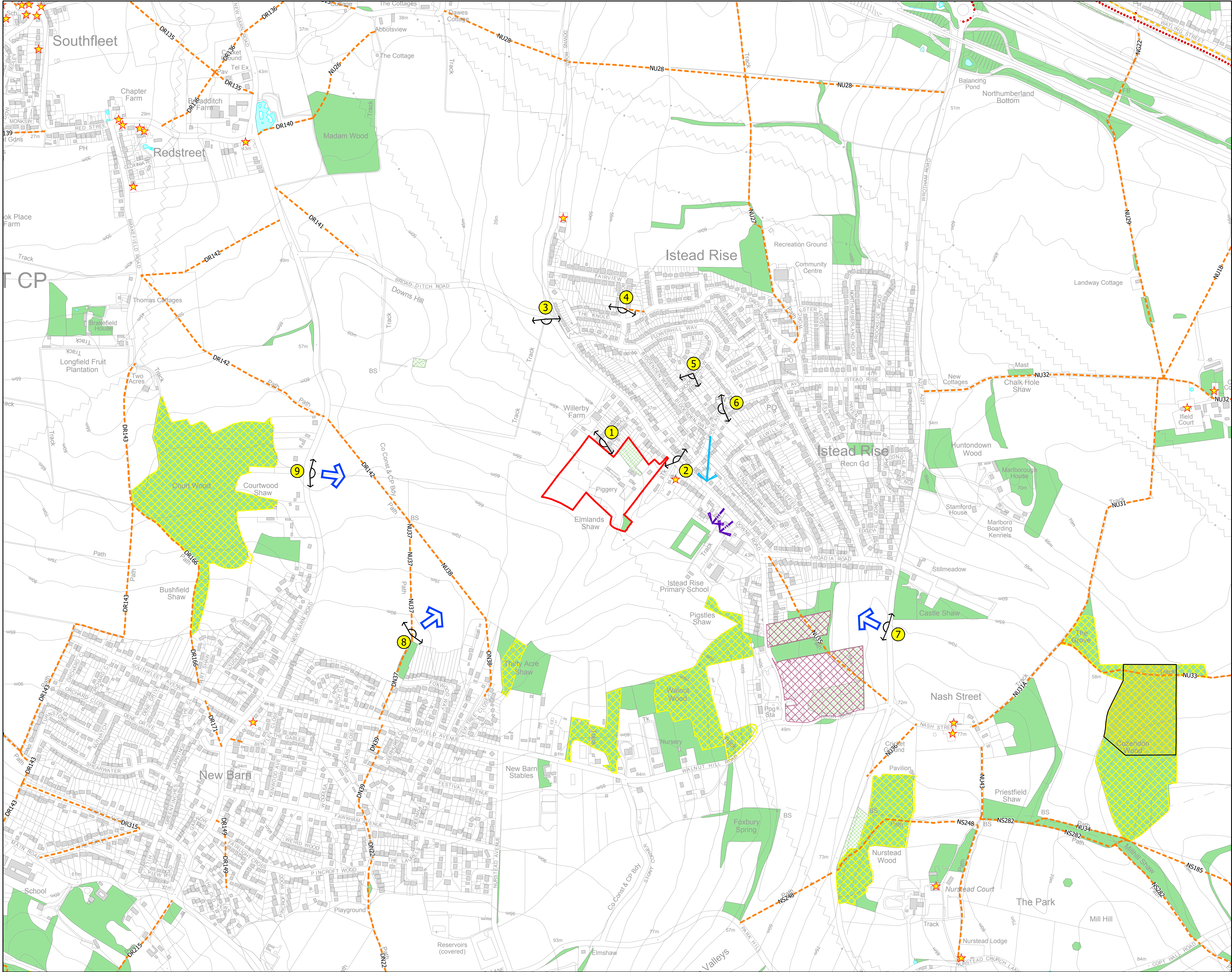
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Revision

Date

Drm

Ckd

Legend

Site Boundary

Existing Woodlands, Copses and Tree Belts ^

Existing Scrub ^

Existing Water Courses and Features ^

Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^

Public Rights of Way *

Sustrans National Route +

Cycle Route ++

Countryside Rights of Way Access Areas #

Listed Buildings ~

Scheduled Monument ~

Ancient Woodland #

Open Views (TBC)

Partial Views (TBC)

Truncated /No Views (TBC)

Location of Photographic Viewpoints (Site Context Photographs: 1-9)

Sources:

^ OS Mapping

Natural England GIS Data Set

~ Historic England National Monument Record GIS Data Set

+ Kent County Council P19w Online Definitive Maps

+ Sustrans National Cycle Network GIS Data

++ Department of Transport (DoT) GIS Cycle Network Data

Data collected for constraints and analysis mapping is based on publicly available sources at the time of preparation inserted using the British National Grid and may itself not be accurate. Barton Willmore shall not be liable for the accuracy of data derived from external sources.

FIGURE 5

Project

The 'Piggery', Istead Rise

Drawing Title

Visual Appraisal Plan

Date

16.04.2018

Scale

1:5,000 @A1
1:10,000 @A3

Drawn by

MN

Check by

GM

Project No

26414

Drawing No

L205

Revision

-

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The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revision	Date	Drn	Ckd
-	-	-	-

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Contours/Spot Heights (Metres AOD) ^
- Listed Building ~
- Overhead Line Corridor
- Existing Vegetation
To be retained and enhanced to soften the appearance and mass of the introduced built forms and contribute positively to the character and quality of the natural environment, ensuring that the development proposals integrate with the surrounding area in line with Policy CS19.
- New Structural Planting
To provide green infrastructure linkages within the Site as well as fragmenting the overall scale and mass of the built form within the Site.
- Low/Medium Landscape and Visual Constraints Area
Some intervisibility with the elevated landform to the north due to the slightly elevated nature and orientation of the landform, resulting in open views from residential properties within Istead Rise.
- Medium Landscape and Visual Constraints Area
Intervisibility with the elevated landform to the north within Istead Rise due to its sloping form and orientation, sitting above the 55m AOD contour line

Sources:
^ OS Mapping
~ Historic England National Monument Record GIS Data Set

Data collated for constraints and analysis mapping is based on publicly available sources at the time of preparation inserted using the British National Grid and may itself not be accurate. Barton Willmore shall not be liable for the accuracy of data derived from external sources.

FIGURE 6

Project
**The 'Piggery',
Istead Rise**

Drawing Title
**Landscape and Visual
Opportunities and Constraints Plan**

Date	Scale	Drawn by	Check by
23.04.2018	1:2,000 @A3	MN	GM

Project No	Drawing No	Revision
26414	L206	-

0 20 40 60 80 100m

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Google Earth Aerial photograph captured April 2015

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J:\26000-26999\26400-26499\26414 - Land At Downs Road, Istead Rise\A4 - Dwgs & Registers\Landscape\26414 L206 Opps And Cons Plan.dwg - A3



The scaling of this drawing cannot be assured

Revision	Date	Drn	Ckd
-	-	-	-

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Revised Green Belt
- Area to be released from Green Belt
- Area to be allocated for Residential Development
- Safeguarded Land for Residential Development

FIGURE 7

Project
**The 'Piggery',
Istead Rise**

Drawing Title
Strategic Green Belt Release Plan

Date 27.04.2018	Scale 1:5,000 @A3	Drawn by MN	Check by GM
Project No 28573	Drawing No L207	Revision -	

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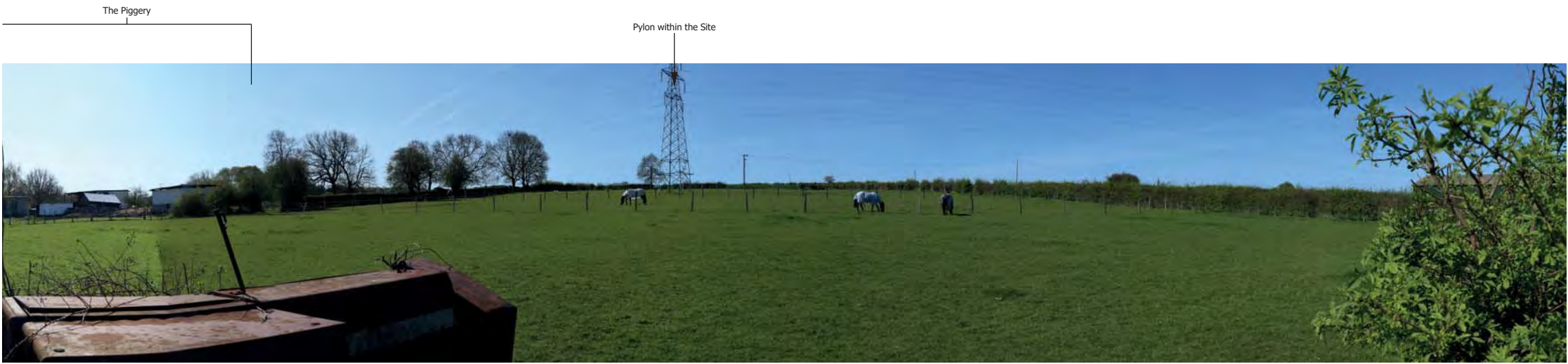
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SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH A



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH B



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH C

LAND AT DOWNS ROAD,
ISTEAD RISE

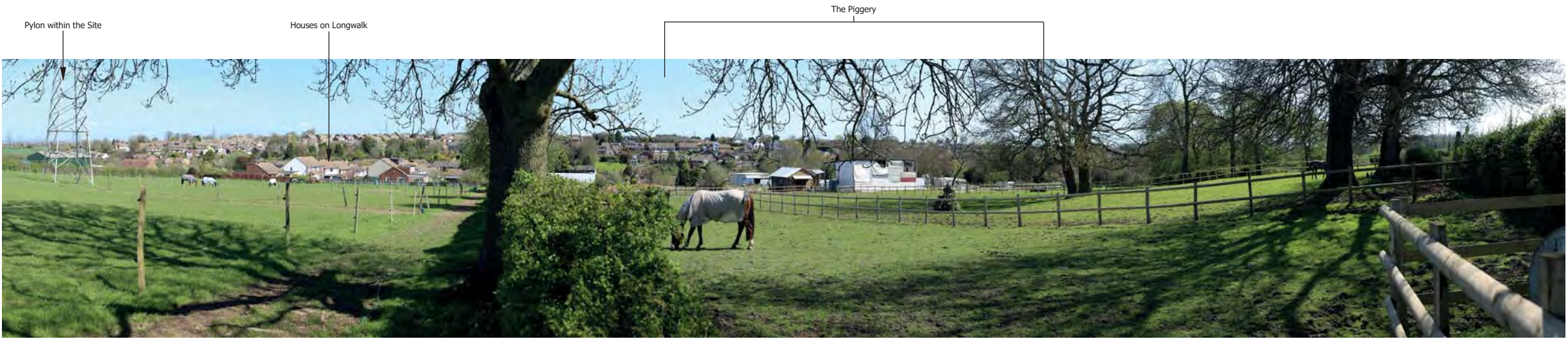
SITE APPRAISAL
PHOTOGRAPHS: A - C

RECOMMENDED VIEWING
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

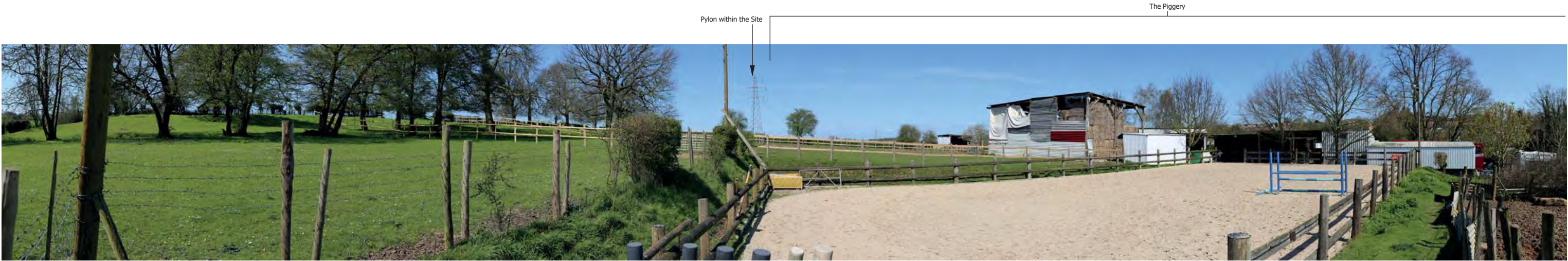
DATE TAKEN: APR 2018

PROJECT NUMBER: 26414

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SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH D



SITE APPRAISAL PHOTOGRAPH E



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 1: VIEW FROM LONGWALK, LOOKING SOUTH-WEST
 Distance: 17m
 Elevation: 41.2m AOD



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 2: VIEW FROM DOWNS ROAD, LOOKING NORTH-WEST
 Distance: 31m
 Elevation: 42.1m AOD



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 3: VIEW FROM DOWNS ROAD, LOOKING SOUTH-EAST
 Distance: 361m
 Elevation: 38.4m AOD

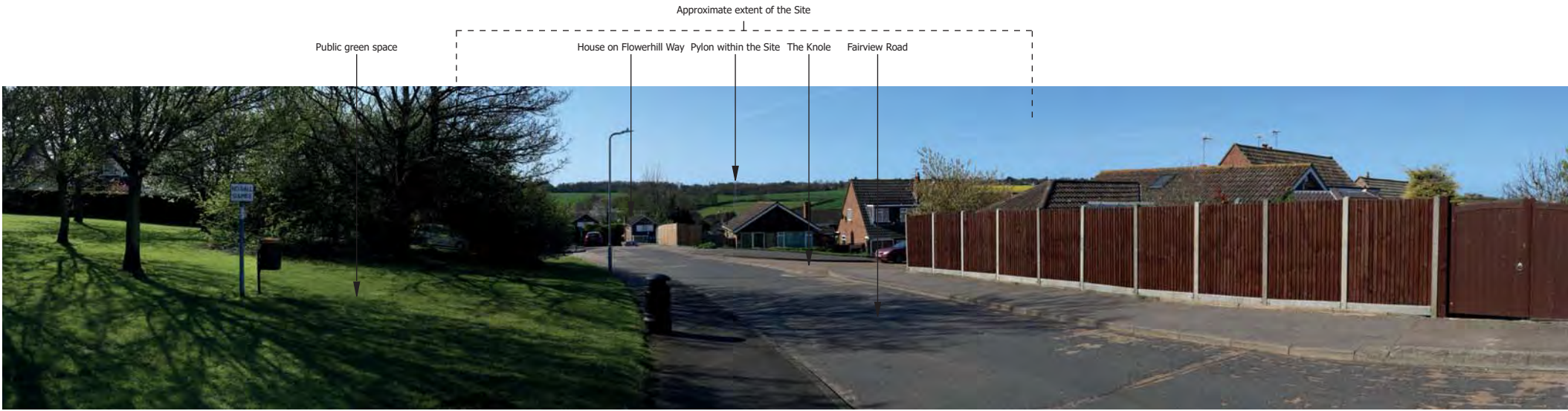
LAND AT DOWNS ROAD,
 ISTEAD RISE

SITE CONTEXT
 PHOTOGRAPHS: 1 - 3

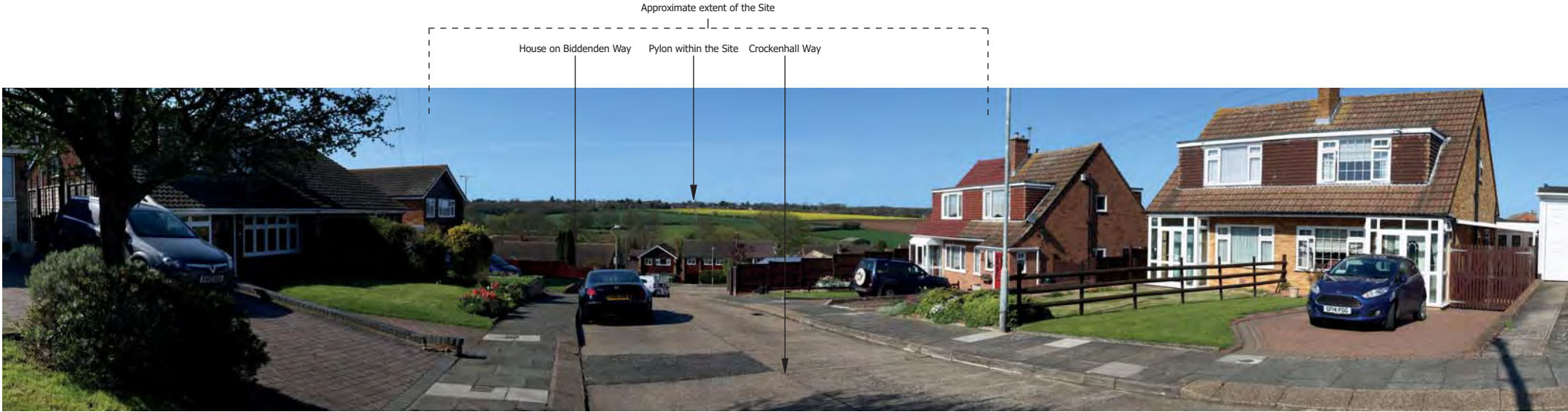
RECOMMENDED VIEWING
 DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

DATE TAKEN: APR 2018

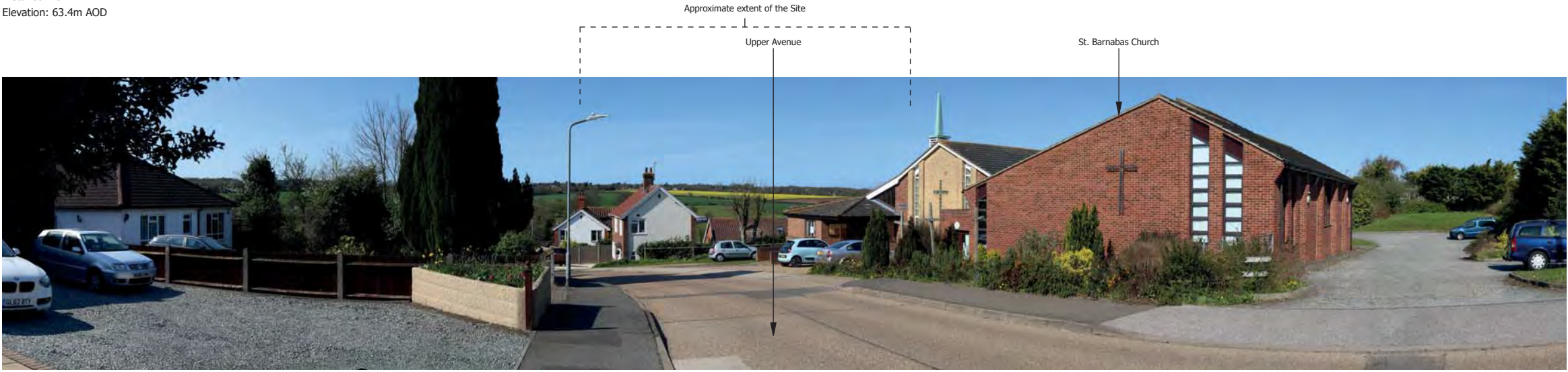
PROJECT NUMBER: 26414



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 4: VIEW FROM FAIRVIEW ROAD, LOOKING SOUTH
Distance: 376m
Elevation: 59.4m AOD



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 5: VIEW FROM CROCKENHALL WAY, LOOKING SOUTH
Distance: 254m
Elevation: 63.4m AOD



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 6: VIEW FROM UPPER AVENUE, LOOKING SOUTH-WEST
Distance: 216m
Elevation: 64.9m AOD

LAND AT DOWNS ROAD,
ISTEAD RISE

SITE CONTEXT
PHOTOGRAPHS: 4 - 6

RECOMMENDED VIEWING
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

DATE TAKEN: APR 2018

PROJECT NUMBER: 26414

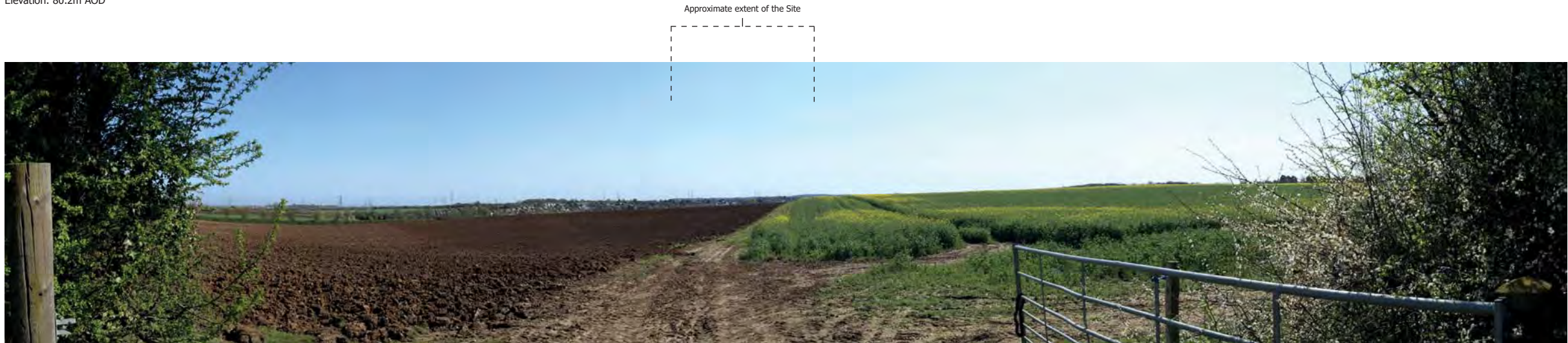
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SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 7:
Distance: 0.8km
Elevation: 68.9m AOD



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 8: VIEW FROM PROW NU37, LOOKING NORTH-EAST
Distance: 0.55km
Elevation: 80.2m AOD



SITE CONTEXT PHOTOGRAPH 9: VIEW FROM NEW BARN ROAD, LOOKING EAST
Distance: 0.68km
Elevation: 64.2m AOD

LAND AT DOWNS ROAD,
ISTEAD RISE

SITE CONTEXT
PHOTOGRAPHS: 7 - 9

RECOMMENDED VIEWING
DISTANCE: 20CM @A1

DATE TAKEN: APR 2018

PROJECT NUMBER: 26414

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& SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT
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