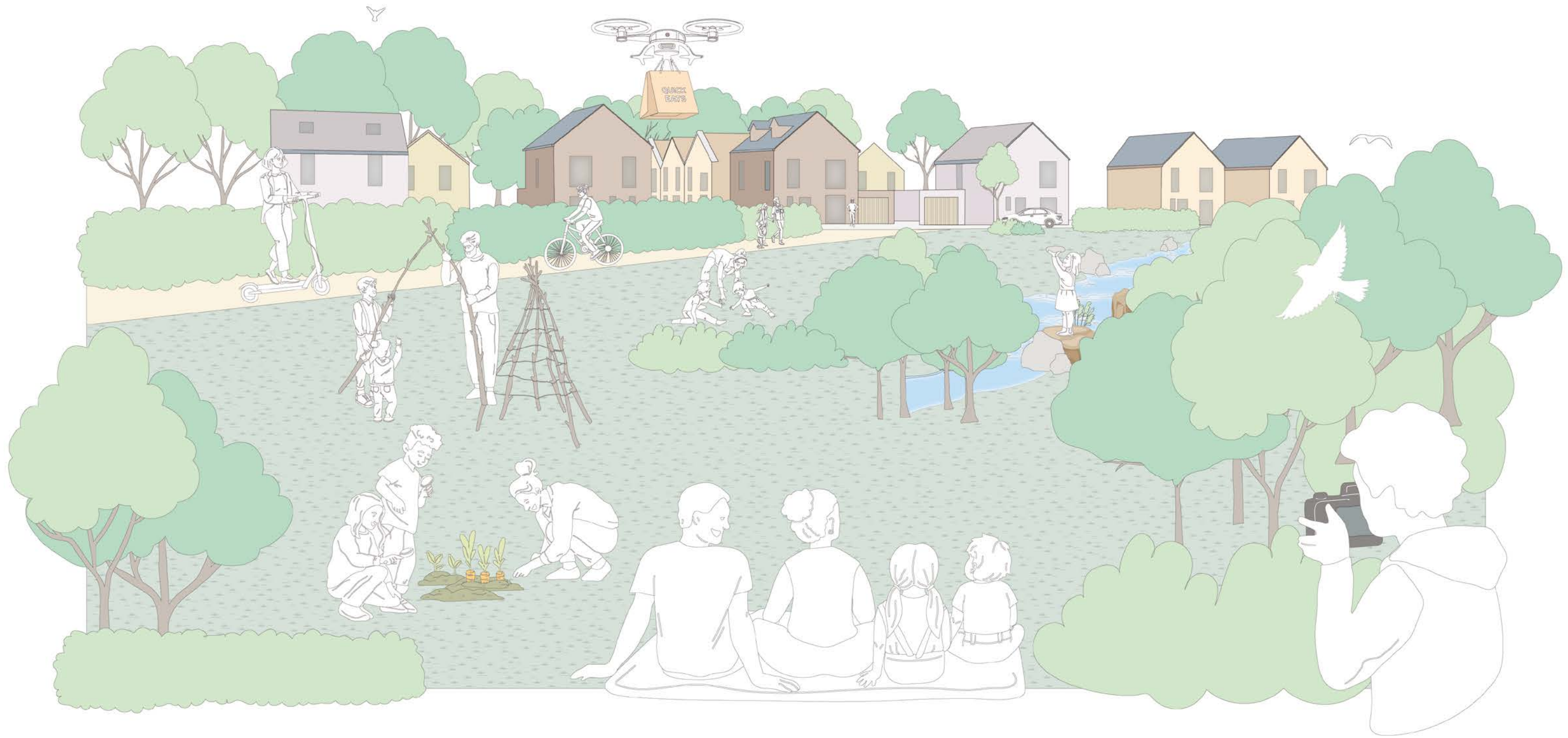




Land North of Camer Road
Meopham

Design and Access Statement

January 2026

Executive Summary

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared as part of an outline planning application on behalf of the McManus Family for all matters reserved except for access, for a new residential development of up to 730 homes on Land at Camer Road, Meopham.

The masterplan sets out a vision for a new residential-led, mixed-use neighbourhood that will deliver around 730 high-quality new homes, a 2fe primary school with playing fields, a new local centre and a connected network of green spaces and community infrastructure. A new access from Camer Road will provide a welcoming gateway into a place designed around people, nature, and movement, creating a vibrant and sustainable extension to the existing settlement.

The Site lies within the Green Belt, however it is considered to comprise grey belt land in accordance with the definition set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). As such, the proposals are capable of meeting the necessary tests to be considered not inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

In December 2024, the Government published an updated version of the NPPF, which included revised policies relating to development within the Green Belt. A new exceptions test was introduced as Paragraph 155, which states that the development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate where all the following apply:

1. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
2. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;
3. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and
4. Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157.

The applicant has undertaken a Green Belt Assessment of the application Site to assess the Site's contribution to Green Belt purposes (a), (b) and (d) in the context of the latest policy and guidance. It is considered that the Site does not contribute strongly to the aforementioned purposes, and that no strong reason for refusal exists to refuse or restrict the development under Footnote 7. As a result, the Site would meet the definition of grey belt as set out within the NPPF.

Furthermore, it is considered that all the necessary policy requirements are met to demonstrate that the proposal would not be regarded as inappropriate development in the Green Belt, including compliance with all of the Golden Rules.

It is also clear and accepted by the Council that Gravesham is unable to demonstrate a 5YHLS, with a published supply position of only 3 years, and that recent housing delivery has been poor. In this context, NPPF footnote 8 states that policies most relevant for determining applications can be considered out-of-date, including Policy CS02. As a result, the tilted balance at Paragraph 11d is engaged and the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, where planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Overall, the proposal represents an excellent example of sustainable development, contributing towards meeting significant unmet housing and affordable housing needs in the borough, in a highly sustainable location adjacent to two train stations, whilst providing a host of other public benefits and infrastructure improvements for the community.



Meopham Station

Wrotham Road

Hook Green

Judson's Recreation Ground

Norwood Lane

Draft allocation as emerging local plan

Camer Road

Sole Street Station

Railway Inn Pub

Kent Downs National Landscape

Camer Country Park

Fig. 1.1. Illustrative Masterplan

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Fig. 1.2. View looking west across the Site along the existing PRoW

Overview

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) sets out how the applicant has shaped and refined the proposals for the Site, from the earliest concepts through to the masterplan development and design review, in order to establish a coherent and deliverable vision for a new, sustainable neighbourhood. The process has been informed by a thorough understanding of the Site, its setting, and its relationship to the wider landscape and community.

The principles within this document have been informed by a thorough analysis of the Site and its context, consultation with stakeholders, and adherence to established good practice in urban design and placemaking. The approach draws upon national guidance including the National Design Guide, the Design Council CABI publication Design and Access Statements: How to Write, Read and Use Them (2006), and the Academy of Urbanism's Planning Consultant's Guide to Design and Access Statements (2024). The document is pursuant to, and complies with, the requirements of section 9 of the Town and Country (Development Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

This DAS provides a clear framework explaining how the proposed development responds sensitively and positively to the Site and its context. It demonstrates how the scheme can be accessed safely and conveniently by all users and how the design principles and concepts have evolved to create a high-quality place. The document should be read alongside the accompanying Parameter Plans.

The DAS explains the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development and shows how the local context has influenced the design. The masterplan illustrates:

- The amount and scale of development,
- The distribution of land uses,
- The movement and access strategy,
- The landscape character and green infrastructure,
- The structure and layout of residential neighbourhoods, and
- The intended appearance and character of the built form.

The Character Areas chapter illustrates how different parts of the masterplan will come together to create a varied yet cohesive place, describing the experience of those living in and visiting the new neighbourhood. This narrative extends to phasing and placemaking, outlining what life will be like for the first residents as the new community begins to take shape.

The Applicant

The masterplan is promoted by the McManus Family, long-standing landowners and residents of Meopham, with a clear ambition to create a high-quality, sustainable new place. Guided by a strong sense of stewardship and commitment to design excellence, the McManus Family has worked collaboratively with the consultant team to deliver a community that future residents can be proud to call home.

The Site vision is rooted in responsibility and legacy ensuring that this unique opportunity for growth delivers lasting benefits for both new and existing communities. The Site represents a deliverable and achievable proposal, providing new homes, employment opportunities, and public spaces within a highly sustainable location.

Consultant Team

- **Planning** - Icen Projects
- **Design** - Icen Projects
- **Landscape** - Icen Projects
- **Drainage/Flood** - GTA Civils
- **Sustainability** - Icen Projects
- **Transport** - TTC TP
- **EIA** - Icen Projects
- **Ecology** - Green Space Ecology
- **Engagement** - Icen Projects
- **Heritage** - Icen Projects

01

Introduction

The Site

The Site lies to the east of the linear village of Meopham and to the southwest of Sole Street, encompassing approximately 44.3 hectares of predominantly arable land.

The landscape is formed by a series of gently undulating, irregularly shaped field parcels that create an open, rural character punctuated by hedgerows and mature vegetation. Two small areas of woodland sit towards the centre of the Site, providing visual structure and ecological value within the wider landscape.

An overhead line and pylons cross the north eastern corner, forming a distinct visual and physical feature within the Site. The Chatham Main Line defines the northern boundary, with Sole Street Station immediately adjacent to the northeast and Meopham Station a short distance beyond the north western edges, together providing strong rail connectivity to London and the wider region. A small group of non-residential uses, including the Railway Inn pub and a small self-storage facility, are located close to the Sole Street station entrance, adding to local activity and character.

To the southeast, the Site overlooks Camer Park, a well-used country park that provides an established landscape setting and a valued local amenity. This boundary also runs parallel to the Kent Downs National Landscape, with nationally recognised views and natural character directly adjoining the Site.

The western and south western edges adjoin the existing settlement of Meopham, creating a natural interface with the village and opportunities for well-integrated connections. Along the western boundary, Norwood Lane provides an existing access route into the village, offering a key connection opportunity into the proposed development.

Fig. 1.3. Site Location Plan



Vision

The vision has been developed to inform the current design proposals and is shaped by local planning and design policy in Gravesham, drawing directly from existing guidance on Vision and Overarching Themes. The new proposed neighbourhood in Meopham will support healthy living, guided by three core pillars:

Quality and Place

The masterplan is landscape-led, delivering extensive areas of public open space for both residents and visitors. A new country park will form a natural extension to Camer Park, carefully responding to the character of the Kent Downs National Landscape. Green corridors will thread through the neighbourhood, protecting and enhancing the Site's ecological value. A network of ponds and wetlands will further enrich biodiversity and provide a range of habitats.

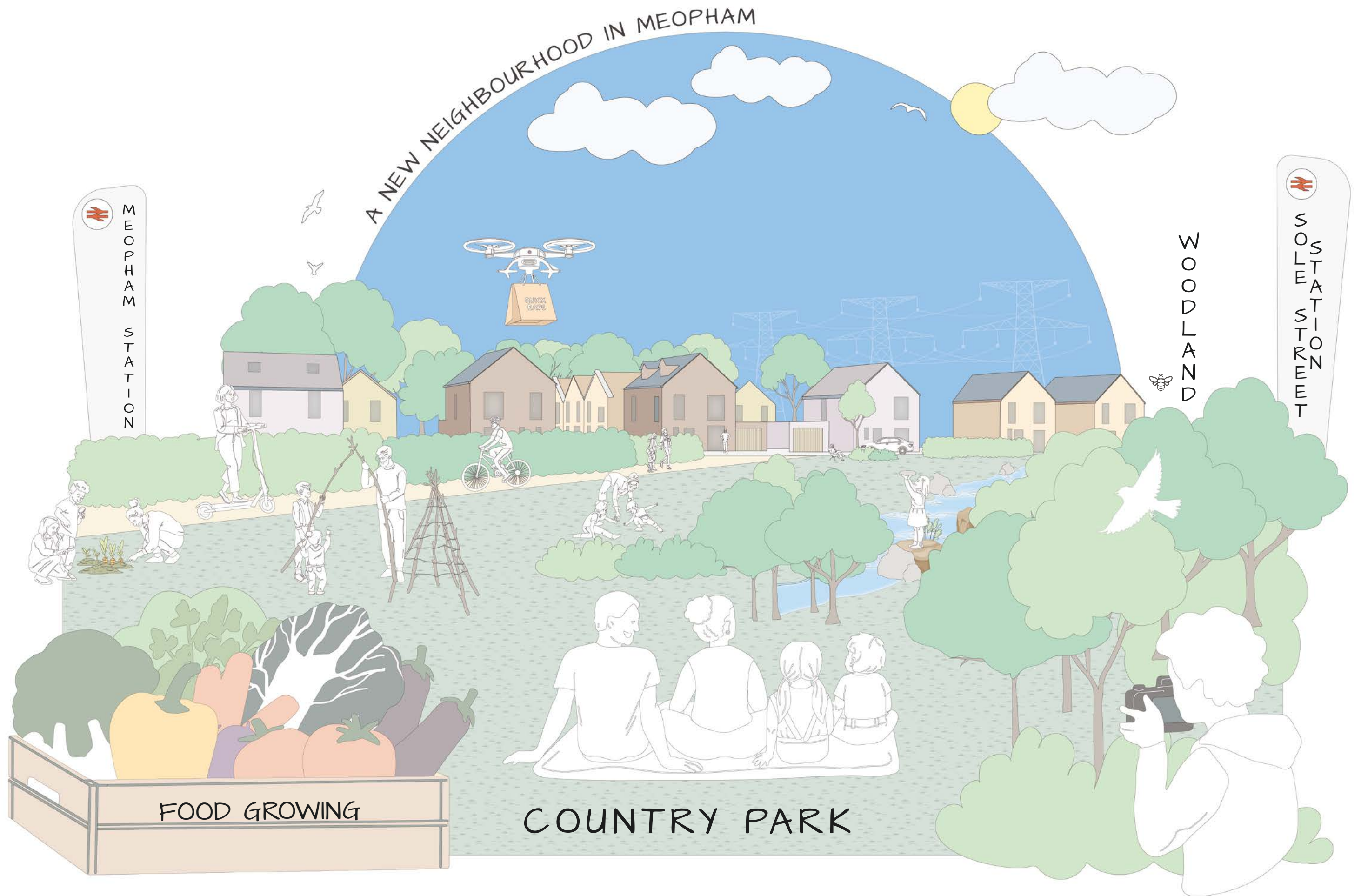
Connectivity and Infrastructure

Located between two railway stations, the new neighbourhood prioritises sustainable travel. Proposals will feature an expanded network of walking and cycling routes, complemented by a bus service looping through the Site. Direct, safe access to the nearby railway stations will ensure sustainable journeys are accessible and convenient.

Community First

Community life is central to the vision. A number of community facilities will encourage social interaction and shared experiences. A new primary school will serve both existing and future residents, while the local centre will include a corner shop to meet essential everyday amenities. Nearby, a new sports club will provide a wide range of opportunities for sports and leisure, supporting well-being and creating a valued resource for all generations.





02

Planning Policy Overview

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) sets out clear expectations for the planning and development process, emphasising the delivery of well-designed, beautiful, and sustainable places. It provides guidance ensuring that rural developments are well-integrated with the local context while addressing contemporary environmental and social needs. A full review of the relevant planning policies can be found in the accompanying Planning Statement.

Key Design Parameters for Rural Developments:

- **Functionality and Quality:** Developments must be designed to function well throughout their lifespan and contribute positively to the rural area's character, economy, and community. Proposals should enhance the local quality of life by creating spaces that are resilient and adaptable to changing needs.
- **Visual Attractiveness:** Rural developments should be visually appealing, integrating with their natural surroundings. Thoughtful architectural design, careful layout, and strategic landscaping are essential to ensuring that new developments respect and enhance the rural aesthetic.
- **Contextual Design:** Developments must respond to the distinct character and history of the rural area. This includes preserving and reinforcing the sense of place through materials, building forms, and layouts that are sympathetic to the local environment, heritage, and traditions.
- **Efficient Use of Land:** Developments should make optimal use of available land, ensuring a balanced approach to housing, employment, and community facilities. The NPPF encourages creating mixed-use developments that support local economies and reduce the need for travel, especially in rural areas where accessibility may be limited.

- **Safe, Inclusive, and Healthy Environments:** It is vital to create environments that are inclusive and accessible for all, promoting community cohesion, health, and well-being. This includes ensuring that developments are accessible by sustainable transport options, where possible, and offer spaces for social interaction and community activities.
- **Green Infrastructure:** The NPPF highlights the importance of green infrastructure in rural areas, including tree-lined streets, the preservation of existing trees, and the creation of new green spaces. New developments should integrate sustainable landscaping and long-term tree maintenance to enhance biodiversity and resilience against climate change.
- **Design Quality Tools:** The use of design codes, workshops, and frameworks like "Building for a Healthy Life" is encouraged to ensure that developments align with high design standards. These tools help ensure that rural development is well-planned and contributes positively to both the local community and the environment.
- **Promoting Excellence:** The NPPF emphasises the need to reject poorly designed developments and supports the approval of high-quality, innovative proposals. In rural settings, this means that designs must not only respond to local needs but also contribute to sustainability goals and environmental stewardship.

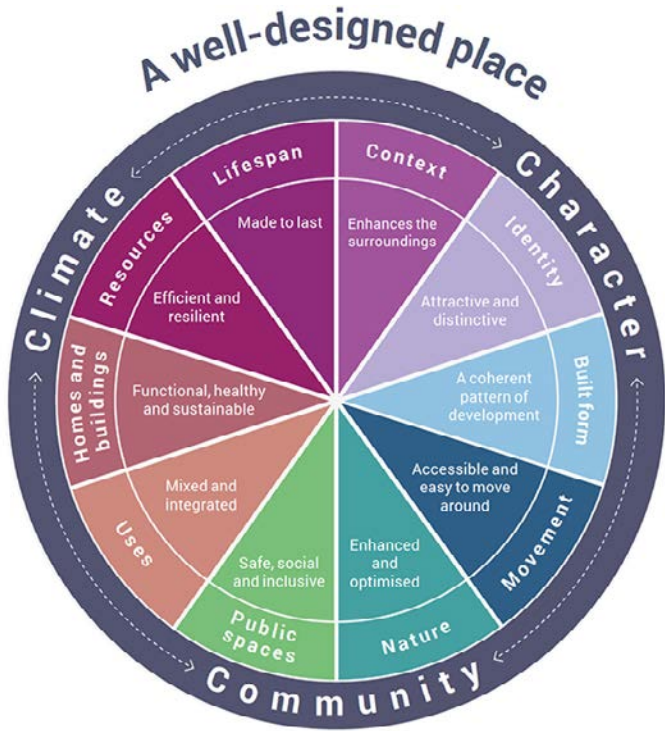
Climate-Conscious Development:

Section 14 of the NPPF reinforces the need for climate-conscious development, emphasising proactive measures to reduce carbon emissions, increase energy efficiency, and build resilience to long-term environmental challenges. In rural areas, this includes promoting sustainable agricultural practices, reducing transport emissions, and supporting renewable energy installations that respect the rural landscape.

The National Design Guide (2021)

The National Design Guide addresses the question of how we recognise well-designed places. The fundamental principles for good design are that is:

- Fit for purpose.
- Durable.
- Brings delight.
- It is relatively straightforward to define.
- Can identify uses and users.
- It can assess the quality of detail, materials, construction, and its potential flexibility.



Paragraph 20 identifies the components for places, other than buildings, being:

- The context for places and buildings.
- Hard and soft landscape.
- Physical infrastructure.
- Social infrastructure.

Paragraph 36 introduces the ten characteristics of a well-designed place. These are:

- Context: Respect and enhance the local setting, heritage, and culture.
- Identity: Create distinctive, attractive places that reflect local character.
- Built Form: Promote coherent, compact development with appropriate building types.
- Movement: Ensure ease of movement through connected, accessible routes for all transport modes.
- Nature: Integrate high-quality green spaces, support biodiversity, and manage water effectively.
- Public Spaces: Design inclusive, safe, and sociable public areas.
- Uses: Provide a mix of uses, tenures, and housing types to support inclusivity.
- Homes and Buildings: Ensure they are functional, sustainable, and contribute positively to their surroundings.

- Resources: Use energy and materials efficiently, and build for resilience.
- Lifespan: Design places to be durable, adaptable, and well-maintained over time.

Building for A Healthy Life (2020)

Building for Healthy Life (BHL) is a design framework aimed at creating places that support the well-being of people and nature. Developed in partnership with Homes England, NHS England, and NHS Improvement, it functions as a Design Code to guide the creation of high-quality new and expanding neighbourhoods. BHL is structured around 12 key considerations grouped under three themes:

Integrated Neighbourhoods:

- Natural Connections: Ensure developments are well-integrated with their surroundings, avoiding isolation.
- Walking, Cycling & Public Transport: Enable short trips via sustainable modes to boost health, reduce emissions, and ease congestion.
- Facilities & Services: Provide accessible local amenities to support daily life.
- Homes for Everyone: Deliver a diverse mix of housing that meets local needs.

Distinctive Places:

- Making the Most of What's There: Design in response to local context.

- Memorable Character: Create distinctive, memorable environments.
- Well-Defined Streets & Spaces: Develop enclosed, people-friendly streets and public spaces.
- Legibility: Design features that make navigation easy and intuitive.

Streets for All:

- Healthy Streets: Prioritise people as well as vehicles to support vibrant public life.
- Cycle & Car Parking: Encourage active travel with well-planned infrastructure while accommodating cars sensitively.
- Green & Blue Infrastructure: Incorporate features like ponds and rills to support biodiversity and well-being.
- Back of Pavement, Front of Home: Use thoughtful frontages to define space, add character, and support community interaction.



Manual for Streets (2007)

The Manual for Streets (2007) sets out principles for creating well-designed residential streets that prioritise people, sustainability, and community well-being. Key design principles include:

- Place-making: Streets should be designed as public spaces that enhance the sense of place and community identity, rather than simply serving as conduits for vehicles.
- People-first Approach: Prioritise the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users over those of motor vehicles. Streets should be safe, accessible, and welcoming for all.
- Integration with the Environment: Design streets that respect and enhance the local natural and built environment, fostering sustainability through biodiversity, water management, and reduced carbon emissions.
- Connected Networks: Streets should promote connectivity within the neighbourhood and to surrounding areas, supporting efficient and walkable layouts that encourage active travel.
- High-Quality Design: Focus on aesthetics, durability, and functionality, ensuring that streets contribute positively to the character and visual quality of the area.
- Flexibility in Design Standards: Move away from rigid design standards to allow context-sensitive solutions tailored to the unique needs and character of each location.
- Shared Spaces: Encourage the use of shared spaces to reduce dominance of vehicles, lower traffic speeds, and create inclusive, multi-functional areas for diverse activities.

Secured by Design Homes Guide (2024)

The Secured by Design (SBD) Homes Guide 2024 provides strategies to improve residential security through thoughtful design and accredited security products. Its key principles include:

- Natural Surveillance: Maximise visibility of shared spaces to deter crime.
- Access Control: Secure private areas with gates, boundaries, and controlled entry.
- Defensible Space: Clearly define space ownership to promote resident responsibility.
- Physical Security: Use doors, windows, and hardware that meet SBD standards.
- Lighting: Ensure consistent, adequate lighting in communal and access areas.
- Landscaping: Avoid obstructed views and hiding spots while keeping designs attractive.
- Maintenance & Management: Maintain shared areas and security features to prevent decline.
- Community Engagement: Involve residents in shaping and caring for their environment.

Cycle Infrastructure Design (2020)

The Cycle Infrastructure Design: Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) provides guidance for creating high-quality cycling infrastructure to support sustainable transport and active travel.

Key principles include:

- Core Design Principles: Ensure infrastructure is safe, comfortable, direct, and accessible for all users, including those with disabilities and varying cycling abilities.
- Network Approach: Develop a connected network that integrates with public transport and supports both short and long journeys.
- Inclusive Design: Accommodate a variety of cycle types, including cargo and adapted bikes.
- Segregation from Motor Traffic: Create dedicated lanes to minimize vehicle conflicts and prioritize cyclist safety.
- Crossings & Junctions: Design safe and intuitive crossings with features like protected junctions.
- Safety and Comfort: Provide smooth, wide surfaces and minimize exposure to motor traffic.
- Continuity: Maintain uninterrupted cycling routes for seamless travel.
- Adaptability: Design infrastructure to evolve with growing cycling demand.
- Integration: Facilitate easy transitions between cycling and other transport modes, with bike parking and bike-share schemes.
- User Experience: Ensure environments are welcoming and convenient, encouraging cycling uptake.

Local Planning Policy

Kent Design Guide (KDG, 2020 Revision)

The Kent Design Guide (KDG) is a county-wide framework produced by the Kent Design Partnership to promote well-designed, sustainable, and context-responsive development across Kent.

It provides overarching principles for creating attractive, functional, and enduring places that respect Kent’s diverse landscapes and communities, and forms an important reference for local planning authorities, including Gravesham Borough Council.

Purpose and Approach

The Kent Design Guide promotes a design-led planning process, encouraging early collaboration between applicants, planning officers, and local communities. It seeks to ensure that every development contributes positively to the character, function, and resilience of its setting.

The Guide advocates for:

- Early engagement with local authorities and stakeholders.
- Contextual design, informed by landscape, settlement pattern, and heritage.
- Sustainable construction that addresses climate change and resource efficiency.
- Long-term stewardship, ensuring places are designed to last and adapt over time.

Key Design Principles

The KDG is built around a series of core principles that guide the form, layout, and quality of development:

- Character and Identity: Respond to the distinct qualities of Kent’s towns, villages, and landscapes; reinforce local materials, forms, and heritage.
- Connectivity and Movement: Prioritise walkable, well-connected places with safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists and convenient access to public transport.
- Quality and Liveability: Create attractive, human-scaled neighbourhoods that support health, inclusivity, and social interaction.
- Sustainability and Resilience: Integrate green and blue infrastructure, energy efficiency, biodiversity enhancement, and climate-adaptive design.
- Community and Stewardship: Encourage community engagement and ensure long-term management and maintenance of places and spaces.

In Gravesham, the Kent Design Guide provides the county-level context for design quality, complementing the borough’s detailed expectations in the Design for Gravesham SPD.

It reinforces the ambition for development that is:

- Rooted in local character.
- Environmentally responsible.
- Inclusive and enduring in design.

Together, the KDG and local design policies ensure that proposals deliver well-connected, sustainable and distinctive places, contributing to the shared vision of a vibrant and resilient Gravesham.



Gravesham Local Development Plan (LDP)

The Gravesham Local Development Plan (Core Strategy, 2014) sets out the borough’s vision for sustainable growth up to 2028. It promotes regeneration within existing urban areas, particularly Gravesend, Northfleet, and the Riverside, while protecting the Green Belt, rural villages, and heritage assets.

The Plan seeks to create vibrant, well-designed, and connected communities through:

- High-quality design that reflects local character (Policy CS19).
- Sustainable development that addresses climate change and promotes biodiversity.
- A balanced mix of housing, including affordable and specialist homes.
- Improved accessibility via walking, cycling, and public transport.

Overall, the LDP provides the policy foundation for place-led regeneration ensuring new development enhances Gravesham’s distinct identity, supports inclusive growth, and delivers long-term environmental resilience.

Design for Gravesham Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (May 2024)

The Design for Gravesham document is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) adopted by Gravesham Borough Council in May 2024. It sets out a clear, borough-wide framework for achieving high-quality, sustainable, and locally distinctive design across Gravesend, Northfleet, and the surrounding villages.

Developed through extensive consultation with the local community,

the code acts as a practical guide for developers, architects, and residents, ensuring that all new development contributes positively to Gravesham’s identity and long-term regeneration.

Vision and Overarching Themes

At the heart of Design for Gravesham lies a vision for community and place-led regeneration, one that celebrates local identity while addressing modern challenges such as climate resilience, accessibility, and inclusive growth.

The vision is structured around four interconnected threads:

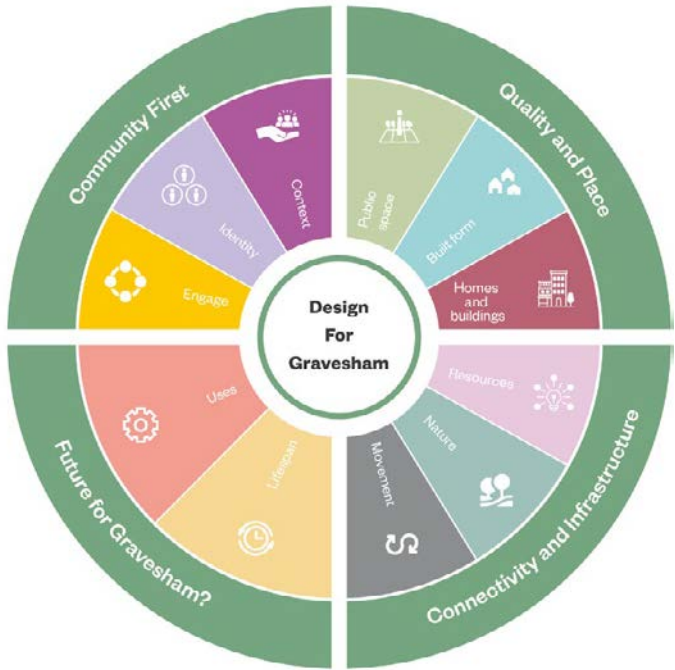
- Community First: Championing early engagement with residents and stakeholders to shape proposals that respond to local needs and values.
- Quality and Place: Ensuring that all new buildings, streets, and public spaces are well-designed, durable, and reflective of Gravesham’s distinctive character and heritage.
- Connectivity and Infrastructure: Promoting sustainable transport, improving access to the River Thames, and enhancing blue-green infrastructure networks.
- Future for Gravesham: Supporting sustainable growth through adaptable, energy-efficient development that enriches people’s lives and strengthens local identity.

Design Quality and Principles

The Design Code provides a comprehensive suite of mandatory and expected design principles covering every aspect of development, from site layout and building form to landscape, movement, and sustainability.

Key priorities include:

- Contextual design: Proposals must respond to the borough’s varied character areas: urban, suburban, and rural.
- Public realm excellence: Streets and spaces should be inclusive, safe, and accessible for all users.
- Sustainability and resilience: Schemes must integrate low-carbon design, promote biodiversity, and adopt a retrofit-first approach.
- Built form and materials: Use robust, locally appropriate materials that age gracefully and reinforce character.
- Green and blue infrastructure: Protect and enhance ecological assets, integrate SuDS, and link nature with everyday life.
- Inclusive play and social spaces: Encourage opportunities for recreation, health, and community cohesion.



03

Context & Site Analysis

Wider Context

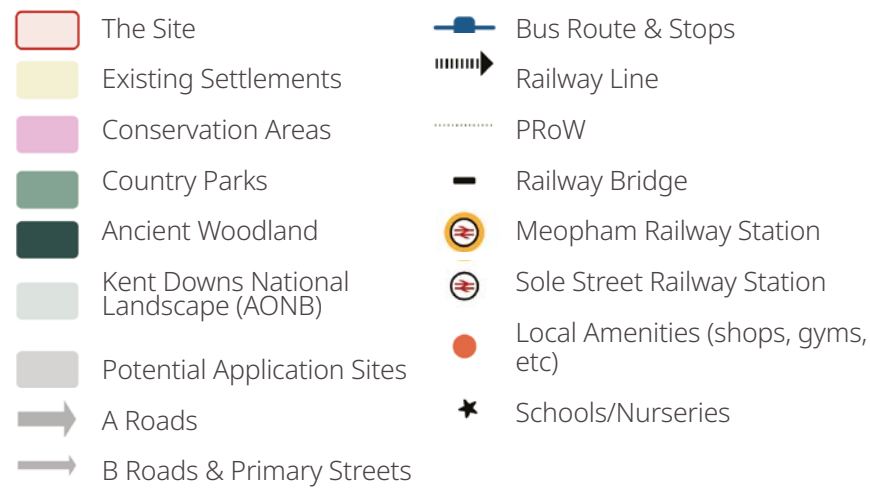
The Site is located to the north of Camer Road in Meopham, bordered by Norwood Lane and the Chatham Main Line. It lies within Gravesham Borough and forms a logical extension to the existing settlement pattern. The location benefits from good transport links and convenient access to local amenities, including shops, schools, community facilities, and open green spaces.

A network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) surrounding and within the Site, provides an opportunity for improving active travel routes and integrating the development with the wider area.

Meopham station is approximately 600m to the west and Sole Street station approximately 500m to the east, providing regular rail services to London Victoria in under an hour.

Wrotham Road (A227) is located to the west of the Site via Camer Road and Green Lane and provides easy access north towards the A2 and south towards the M20.

The surrounding area provides a high-quality landscape setting, characterised by its distinctive local character. Nearby green infrastructure, including Camer Park and Meopham Green, are easily accessible on foot or by cycle, offering valuable recreational and ecological assets. The Kent Downs National Landscape extends to the southeast of the Site.



Historic Development

The settlement of Meopham, recorded as Meapaham in the 8th century, originated as a Jutish settlement named after Meapa. By the 10th century it had developed into an established manor, granted royal recognition by King Athelstan (AD 939) and later gifted to Christ Church, Canterbury by Queen Ediva (AD 961). A Saxon church existed by the mid-10th century and was replaced in 1325 by the present Church of St John the Baptist, commissioned by Simon de Mepham, a local resident who later became Archbishop of Canterbury.

Meopham developed as a linear settlement along the main Gravesend–Wrotham road, its form influenced by surrounding manorial estates at Meopham, Dodmore, and Nurstead. Agriculture has been central to its economy throughout history, with milling and market gardening as key local industries. The introduction of the turnpike road in 1825 and the railway station in 1861 spurred modest expansion, though Meopham retained a predominantly rural character until more substantial suburban growth during the later 20th century.

Hook Green originated as an outlying medieval hamlet north of Meopham, likely established as a cattle station or vaccary within woodland pasture. Its triangular green, formed by the meeting of rural lanes, became the focus of early farmsteads, including the 16th century Mulberry House and Hook Green Farmhouse, both of which survive today. Although the arrival of the railway and later suburban housing altered its setting, the historic core of Hook Green, with its green, mature trees, and traditional buildings, retains much of its rural character.

Sole Street evolved as a small rural settlement following the opening of the London, Chatham & Dover Railway in 1861. Although originally intended to serve Cobham, opposition from the Darnley estate resulted in the station being named Sole Street. The area developed gradually around agricultural and light industrial uses, including a varnish works adjacent to the railway, and continued to expand incrementally through the 20th century.



Fig. 3.2. Map of the Site in 1838



Fig. 3.3. Hook Green in the 19th Century

To the south, Camer Park formed the ancestral seat of the Smith and later Smith-Masters family, its landscaped parkland and wooded boundaries defining a distinct area of designed estate character. Sold to the Strood Rural District Council in 1967, Camer Park opened as a public country park in 1970 and remains a valued local green space.

The Tithe Map of 1838 records the Site as part of the Camer Estate, owned by William Masters Smith, later inherited by the Smith-Masters family. The Camer Estate comprised of mainly arable fields, meadows, and small wooded shaws such as Blundells Shaw, with long-term continuity of agricultural use across the centuries.

Despite some loss of field boundaries and limited suburban encroachment, the Site has largely retained its historic field structure and agricultural character. The surviving pattern of large arable enclosures, woodland edges, and former routes reflects a landscape deeply rooted in Meopham's agrarian and estate history. This enduring rural quality continues to contribute to the area's sense of place and forms an important contextual influence for the proposed development.

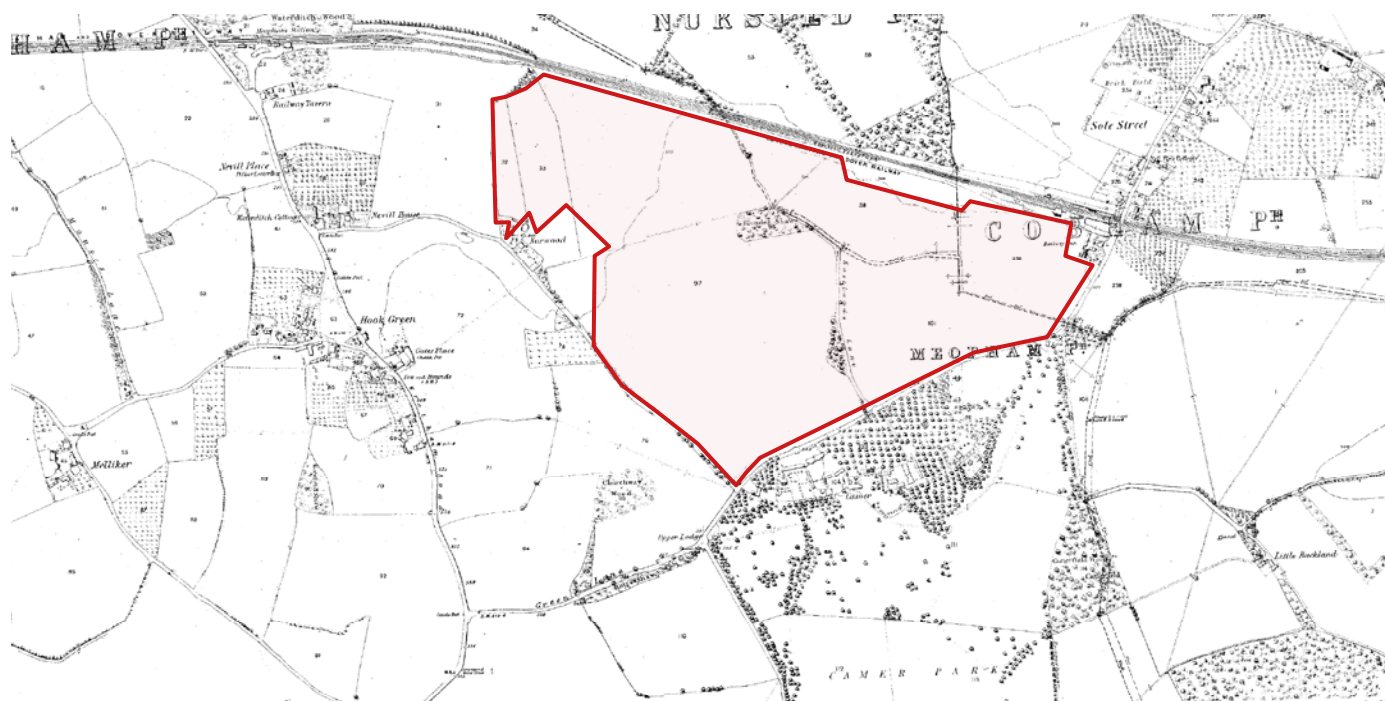


Fig. 3.4. OS Map 1871-1890 - Kent County Council Heritage Maps

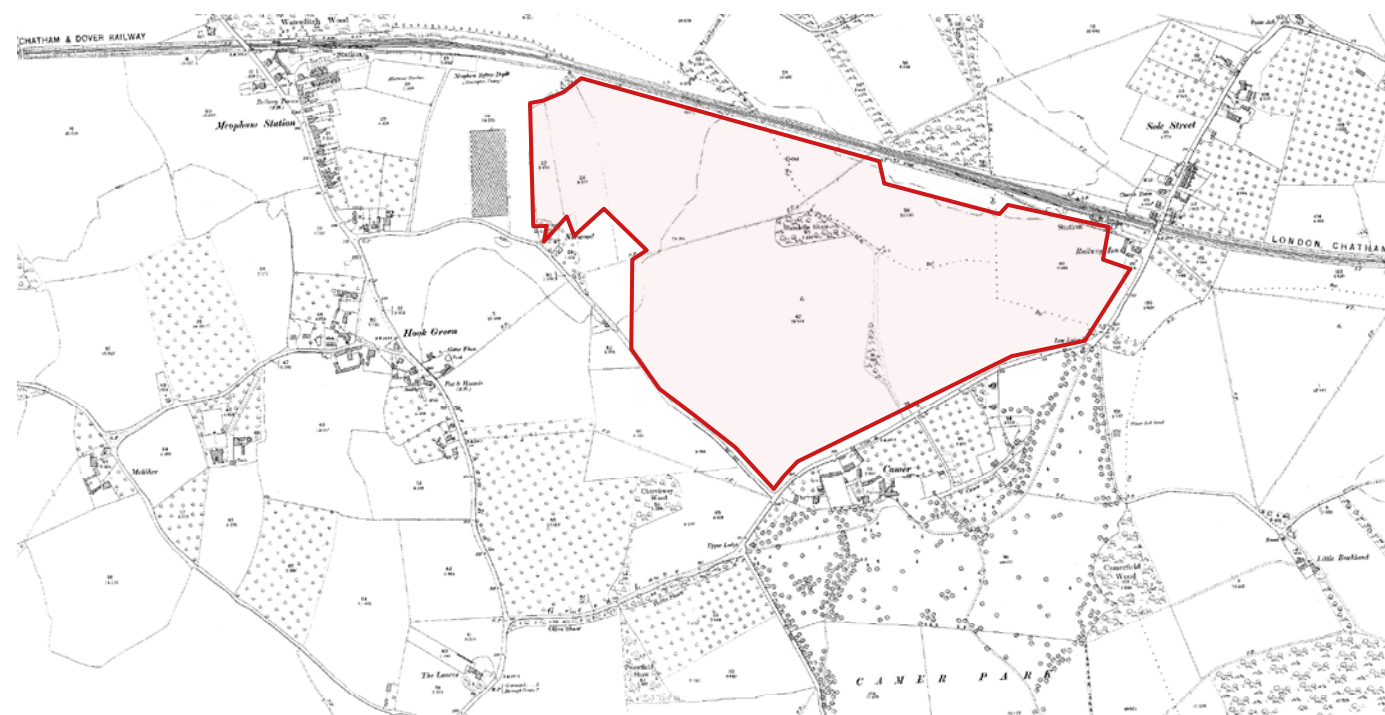


Fig. 3.5. OS Map 1897-1900 - Kent County Council Heritage Maps

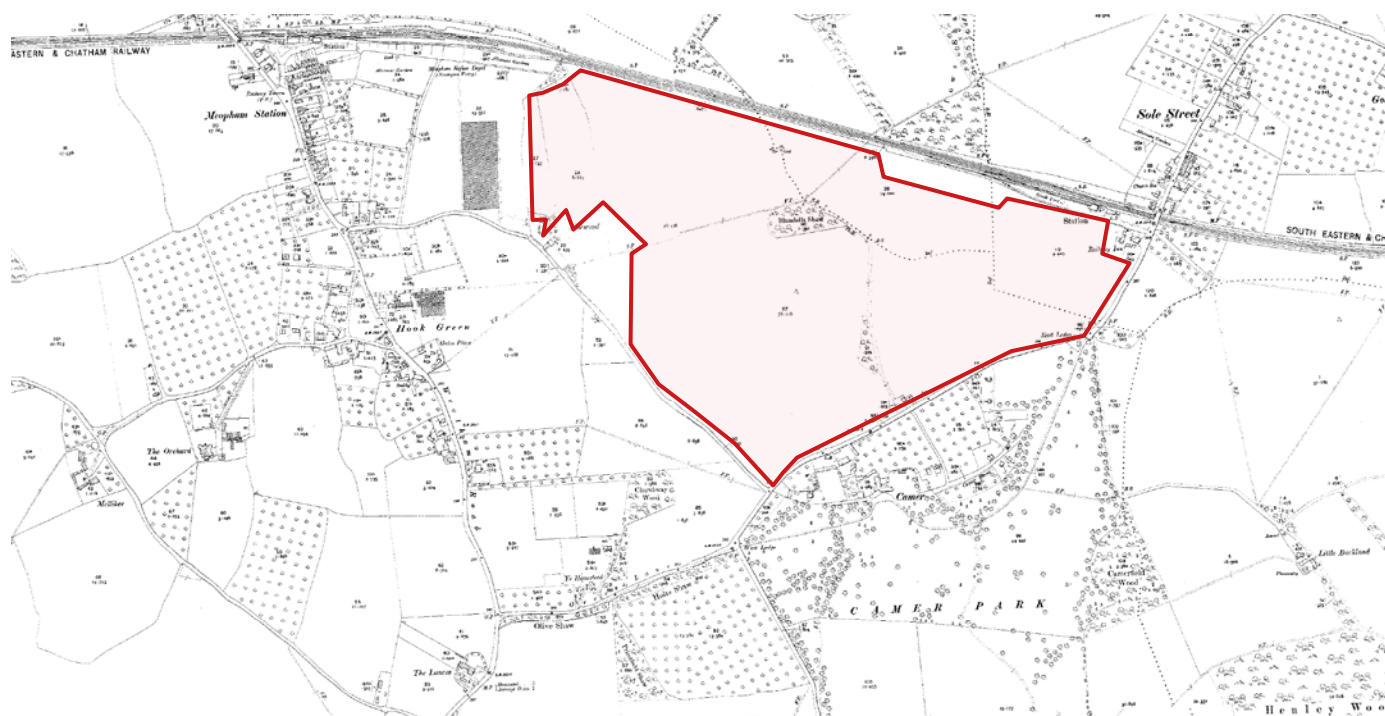


Fig. 3.6. OS Map 1907-1923 - Kent County Council Heritage Maps

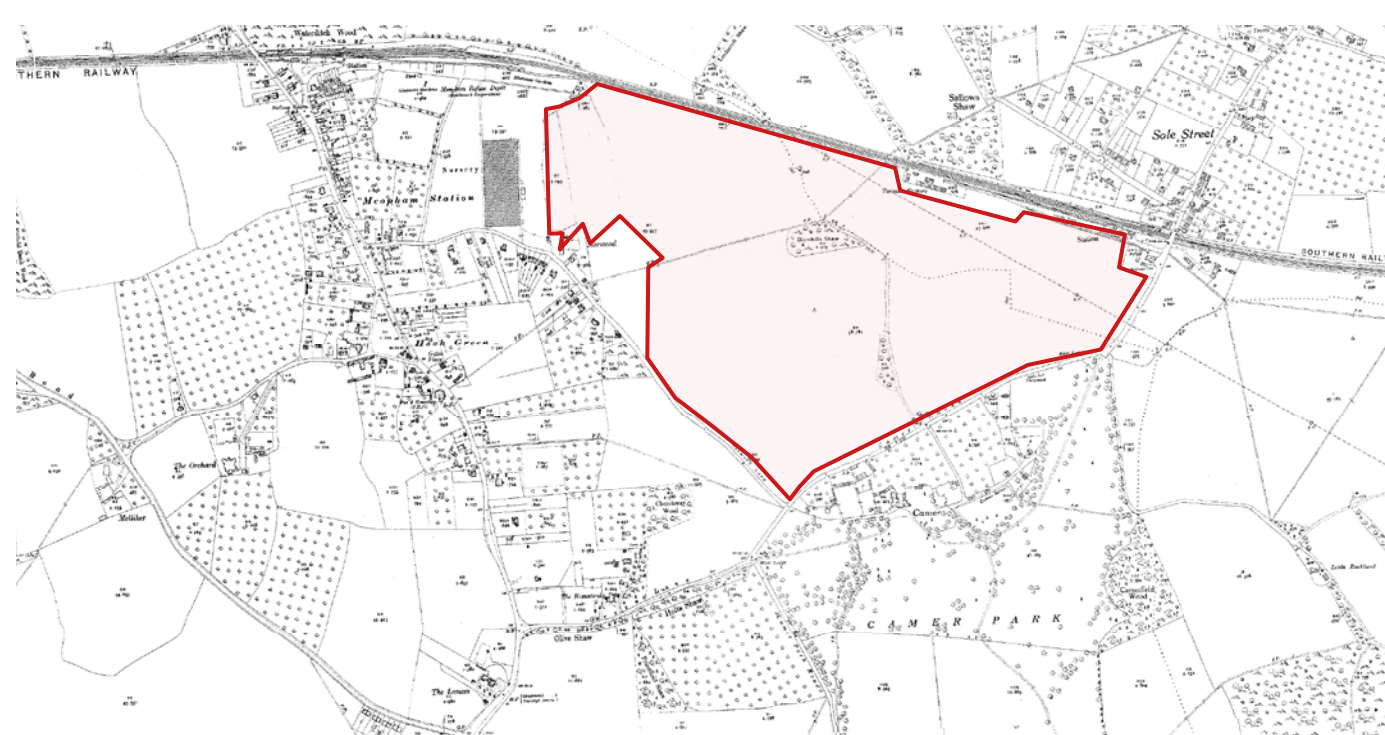


Fig. 3.7. OS Map 1929-1952 - Kent County Council Heritage Maps

Designations

Much of the surrounding landscape is designated as Green Belt, with the settlements of Hook Green and Sole Street identified as insets within this designation. The Kent Downs National Landscape lies immediately to the southeast of the Site. There are no statutory or locally designated ecological constraints within the immediate vicinity of the Site.

The Hook Green Conservation Area is located approximately 300m to the west of the Site, within which there are seven Grade II listed properties. In addition, there are a further seven Grade II listed properties within Camer Park to the south, as well as three more within Sole Street to the northeast of the Site. The closest listed building is the Grade II listed Norwood Farmhouse, which adjoins the Site to the west off Norwood Lane. With respect to the conservation area, the Conservation Area Appraisal notes that as the conservation area is enveloped by 20th century development there are no views of it from open countryside.

In this context, there is opportunity for new development to be successfully integrated with these designations through thoughtful and sustainable design. By respecting the Kent Downs National Landscape, the Hook Green Conservation Area and heritage assets, the proposal can contribute to both the local community and the surrounding environment.

- Site Boundary

Grade I Listed Building

Grade II Listed Building

Grade II* Listed Building

Conservation Areas

Scheduled Monuments

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Special Areas of Conservation

Special Protection Areas

Ancient Woodland

Green Belt

Parks and Gardens

National Landscapes
- Fig. 3.8. Site Designations Plan
-
- 20

Heritage

The Hook Green Conservation Area lies approximately 300m west of the Site and derives its special interest from its intact historic village plan, centred on a triangular green bordered by mature trees and historic buildings. The area reflects the evolution of rural domestic architecture in Kent, encompassing 16th–19th century timber-framed farmhouses, flint and brick cottages, and later stuccoed villas that together illustrate the village’s gradual development.

A number of Grade II Listed Buildings frame the green and main street, demonstrating a consistent use of Kentish materials and roof forms, and embodying the shift from vernacular agricultural dwellings to more formal Georgian villas.

Norwood Lane, located to the east of the Conservation Area and adjacent to the Site, retains a semi-rural character defined by dispersed housing, hedgerows, and informal boundaries. Norwood Farmhouse, positioned in close proximity to the Site, reinforces this historic pattern of edge development, marking the transition between the village core and the surrounding agricultural land.

These buildings retain a coherent relationship with the green and with each other, maintaining the linear settlement pattern and local character despite some modern change. The Site contributes only modestly to this setting, serving as a rural backdrop that reinforces the village’s agricultural context but having no direct visual or functional connection with the Conservation Area or its listed buildings.

- Site Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Grade II Listed Building

Fig. 3.9. Heritage Analysis Plan



Movement

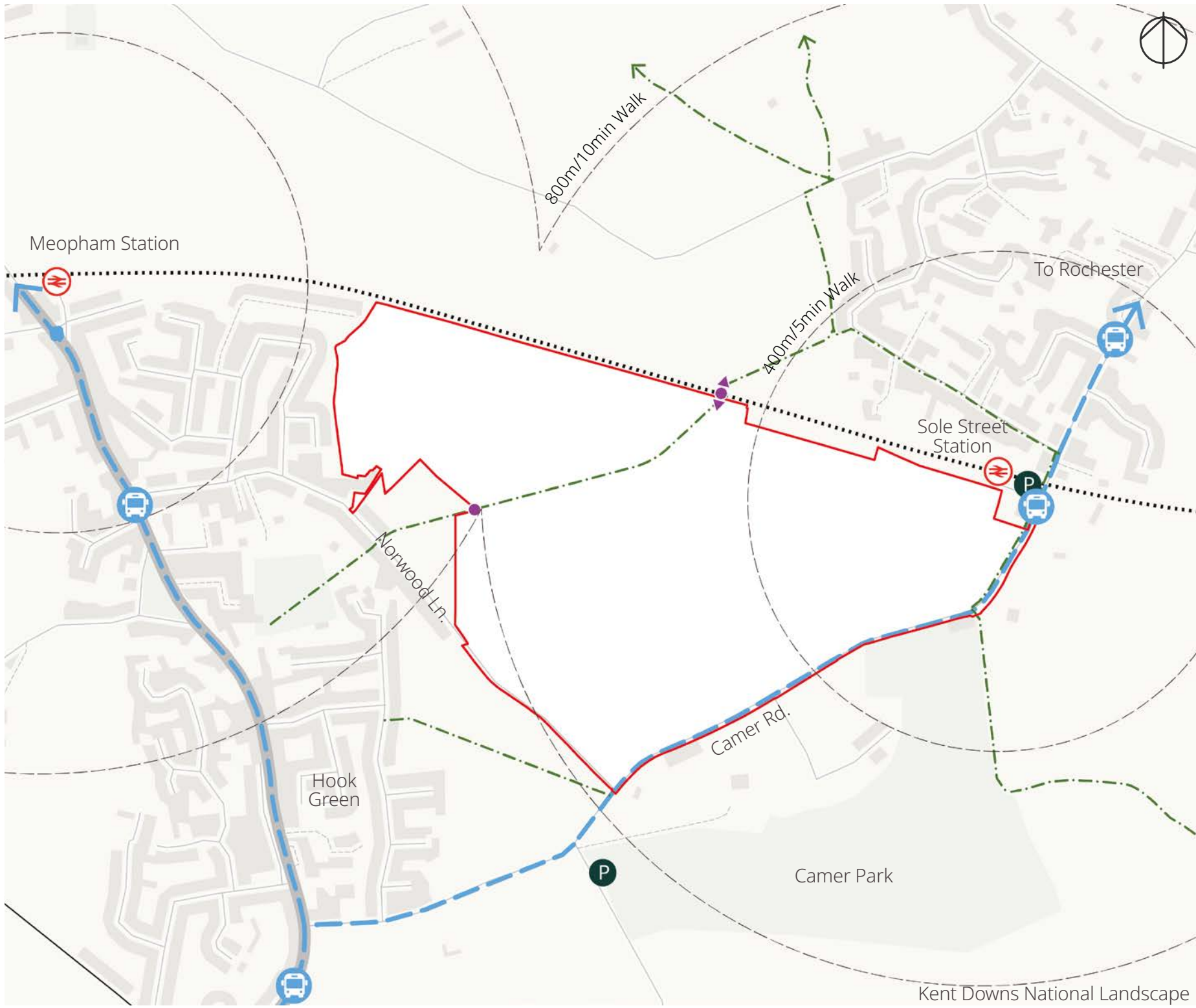
The Site is well connected by rail, road, and active travel networks. Meopham and Sole Street stations are both within close walking distance, offering direct services to London Victoria in under an hour.

Proximity to the Kent Downs National Landscape offers access to established recreational routes, including the Wealdway, which passes just north of the Site. A Public Right of Way (PRoW) also crosses the Site, linking Hook Green to the Wealdway via a pedestrian bridge over the railway.

Local connectivity is strong, with Sole Street and Hook Green reachable within a ten-minute walk, and Camer Park also offering nearby leisure routes. Bus services 311, 416, and 695 run along Camer Road near to the Site, providing regular links to Cobham, Gravesend, and surrounding settlements.

- Site Boundary
- Bus Route & Stops
- A Road
- Railway
- PRoW
- Isochrones
- Railway Over bridge Link
- Footpath access into the Site
- Parking incl. Cycle Parking

Fig. 3.10. Existing Movement Plan

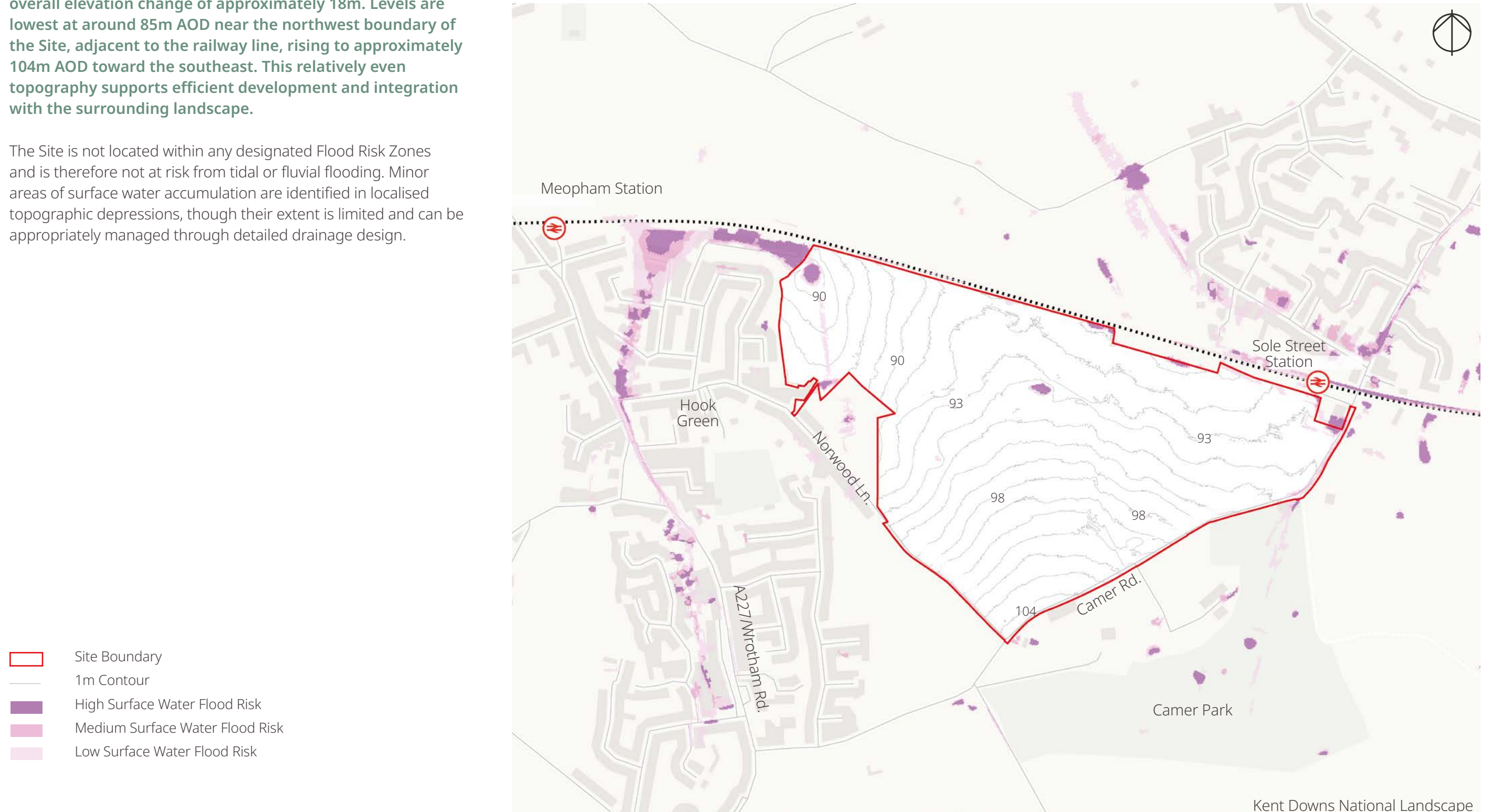


Topography and Flooding

The Site features a gently undulating landform with an overall elevation change of approximately 18m. Levels are lowest at around 85m AOD near the northwest boundary of the Site, adjacent to the railway line, rising to approximately 104m AOD toward the southeast. This relatively even topography supports efficient development and integration with the surrounding landscape.

The Site is not located within any designated Flood Risk Zones and is therefore not at risk from tidal or fluvial flooding. Minor areas of surface water accumulation are identified in localised topographic depressions, though their extent is limited and can be appropriately managed through detailed drainage design.

Fig. 3.11. Topography and Flood Risk Plan



Surrounding Land Uses

The Site is surrounded by a mix of residential and agricultural land uses, characterised by open arable fields interspersed with clusters of housing centred around the neighbouring settlements of Hook Green and Sole Street.

Small pockets of local services and community uses are present nearby, including the Railway Inn Public House and a village shop close to Sole Street Station, as well as a modest local centre at the southern end of Wrotham Road offering retail and light commercial uses.

The Site also benefits from proximity to significant areas of open space, most notably Camer Country Park, which forms part of the wider Kent Downs National Landscape and provides an important recreational and ecological resource for the local area.

Fig. 3.12. Surrounding Land Use Plan



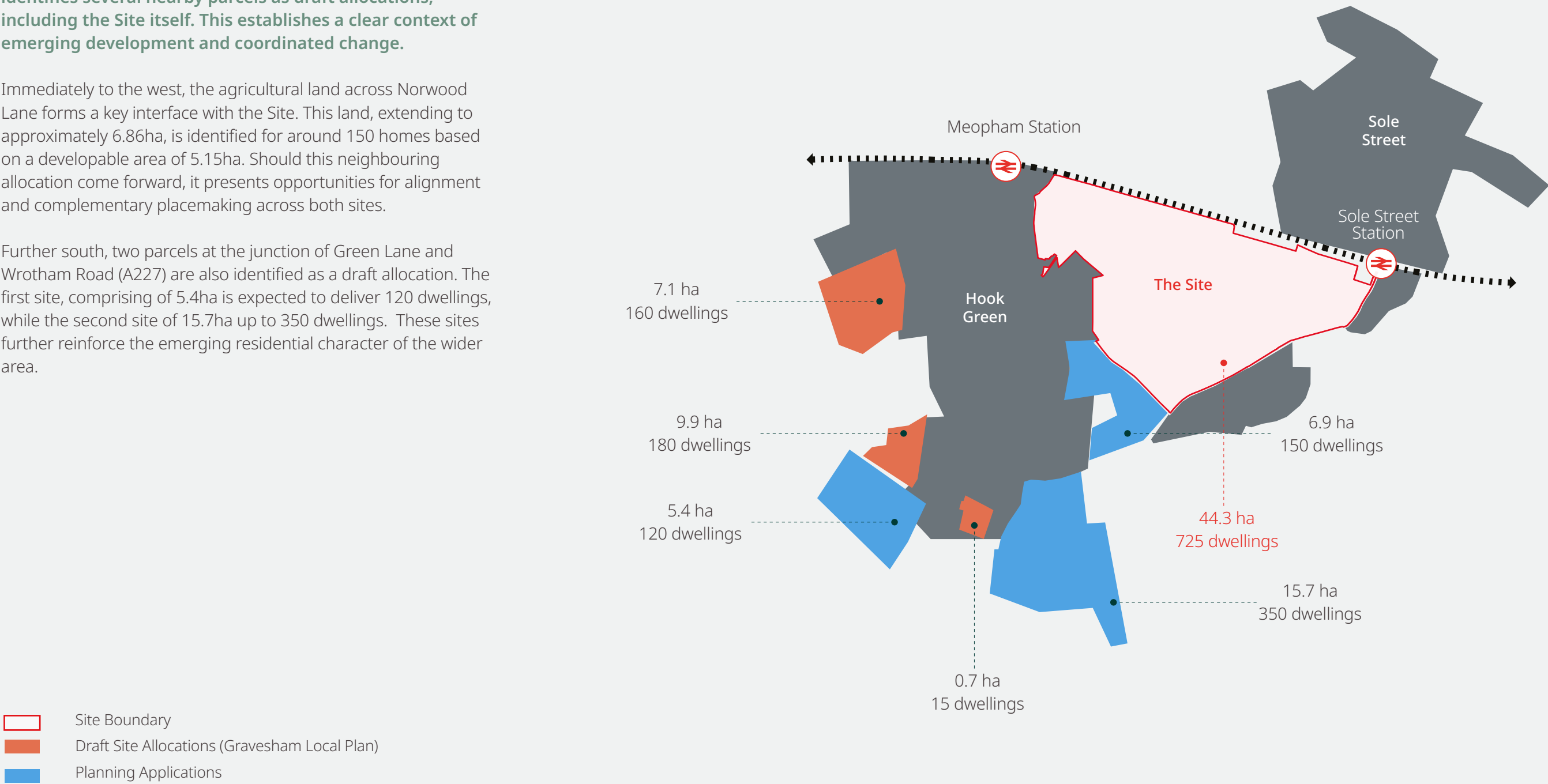
Neighbouring Allocations

The Site is positioned within an area experiencing ongoing and planned growth. The Gravesham Local Plan (2020) identifies several nearby parcels as draft allocations, including the Site itself. This establishes a clear context of emerging development and coordinated change.

Immediately to the west, the agricultural land across Norwood Lane forms a key interface with the Site. This land, extending to approximately 6.86ha, is identified for around 150 homes based on a developable area of 5.15ha. Should this neighbouring allocation come forward, it presents opportunities for alignment and complementary placemaking across both sites.

Further south, two parcels at the junction of Green Lane and Wrotham Road (A227) are also identified as a draft allocation. The first site, comprising of 5.4ha is expected to deliver 120 dwellings, while the second site of 15.7ha up to 350 dwellings. These sites further reinforce the emerging residential character of the wider area.

Fig. 3.13. Neighbouring Allocations



Summary of Site Influences

The Site benefits from strong connectivity, sitting within a short walking distance of both Meopham and Sole Street railway stations. A Public Right of Way runs through the Site, linking Hook Green and Sole Street via the existing pedestrian railway bridge and offering an early opportunity to integrate the development with surrounding neighbouring communities. Adjacent to the Site, along Norwood Lane, land has also been identified for future development.

The land is largely flat, posing few constraints on development, although areas of surface water flood risk are present, particularly within the northwestern part of the Site. Two areas of dense central woodland form key natural assets and should be retained, with development sensitively set back to protect their character and ecological value.

Access opportunities have been identified along Camer Road for vehicles, with additional potential for active travel connections from both Camer Road and Norwood Lane. An overhead power line crosses part of the Site and will need to be considered in the layout and design response.

- Site Boundary

Public Open Space

National Landscape

Future Development

Conservation Area

Bus Route & Stops

*

Grade II Listed Building

Public Right of Way

Opportunity for Vehicular Access

Opportunity for Active Travel Access

Railway
- Pedestrian Railway Bridge

Potential Noise & Vibration

Existing Woodland

Woodland Buffer

Groundwater Flood Risk

1m Contour

Overhead Cable

Indicative Cable Swing Zone

Meopham Station / Primary Service

Sole Street Station / Secondary Service

Fig. 3.14. Summary of Site Influences

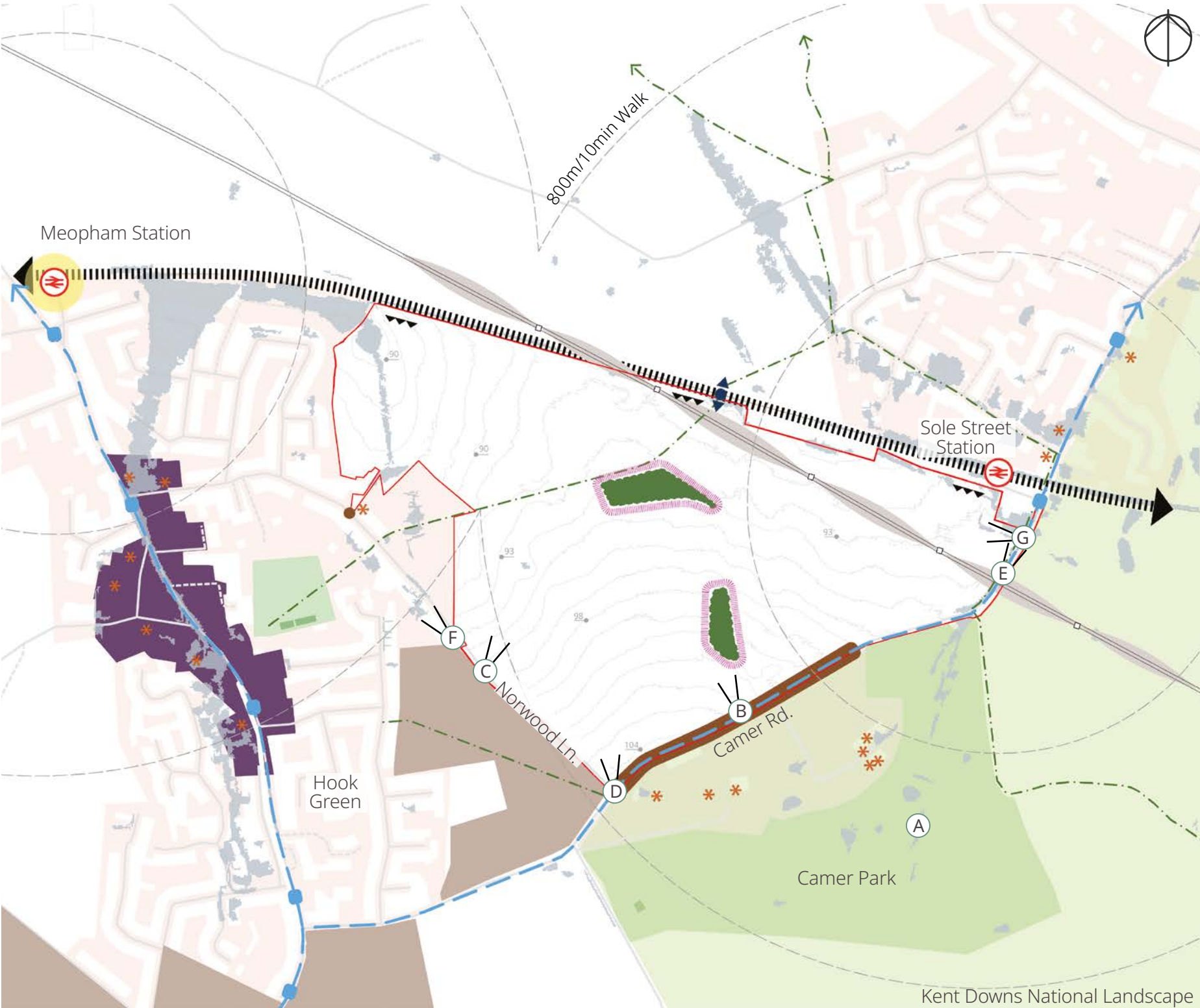




Fig. 3.15. Camer Park



Fig. 3.16. View from Camer Road looking towards Blundells Shaw



Fig. 3.17. View from Norwood Lane looking northeast



Fig. 3.18. Corner of Norwood Lane and Camer Road



Fig. 3.19. Existing footpath along Camer Road



Fig. 3.20. Existing houses along Norwood Lane



Fig. 3.21. View of Site from the Railway Inn Pub

Local Character

The Site is located alongside several historic settlements within the Kent Borough of Gravesham. Hook Green, part of the linear village of Meopham, and the village of Sole Street, flank the Site to the southwest and northeast respectively.

Hook Green is one of the four constituent settlements that make up the village of Meopham. Hook Green sits along the northern border of Meopham and is the largest built up area within Meopham. Hook Green includes a historic core centred around a village green, including several buildings of historic interest. The northern edge of Hook Green includes the Meopham railway station, part of the Chatham Main Line.

One stop on the railway to the east sits Sole Street station, and the wider village of Sole Street. Sole Street is a small village forming part of the Civil Parish of Cobham. Development in and around Cobham, including Sole Street, dates back to the 10th century and its architectural character reflects centuries of history.

Fig. 3.22. Local Character Plan



- Site Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Kent Downs National Landscape



Fig. 3.23. Hook Green in the 19th Century



Fig. 3.24. Evenden Farmhouse (Grade II)



Fig. 3.25. Yeomans House (Grade II)



Fig. 3.26. Camer House C. 1838



Fig. 3.27. Norwood Farmhouse (Grade II)



Fig. 3.28. Sole Street House (Grade II)

Hook Green

Hook Green is a distinctive settlement within Meopham, combining a historic village core with areas of contemporary suburban development.

The heart of Hook Green centres on the traditional village green, surrounded by mature trees and a cluster of seven listed buildings that exemplify Kent farmhouse architecture from the 16th to 19th centuries. Buildings here typically feature reddish brick, white render, timber cladding, and occasional pebble walls, reflecting the area’s rural heritage.

Beyond the Conservation Area, development follows Meopham’s characteristic linear pattern along Wrotham Road (A227), with residential streets branching off in a herringbone form. Homes are predominantly one to two storeys, with local centre buildings reaching up to three storeys, that accommodate retail and café uses at ground level and flats above. The area has a leafy, well-landscaped character, defined by mature trees, manicured hedges, and accessible pavements. Judson’s Recreation Ground provides a key open space and community focal point within the settlement.

Hook Green is largely residential, but has several pockets of activity, primarily at the northern and southernmost ends of Wrotham Road. This includes Camer Parade, identified by the Gravesham Local Plan as a local centre.

- Site Boundary
- Grade II Listed Building
- Hook Green Conservation Area
- F&B
- Retail
- Commercial
- Religious
- Local Centre (Gravesham Local Plan)

Fig. 3.29. Hook Green Local Character Plan

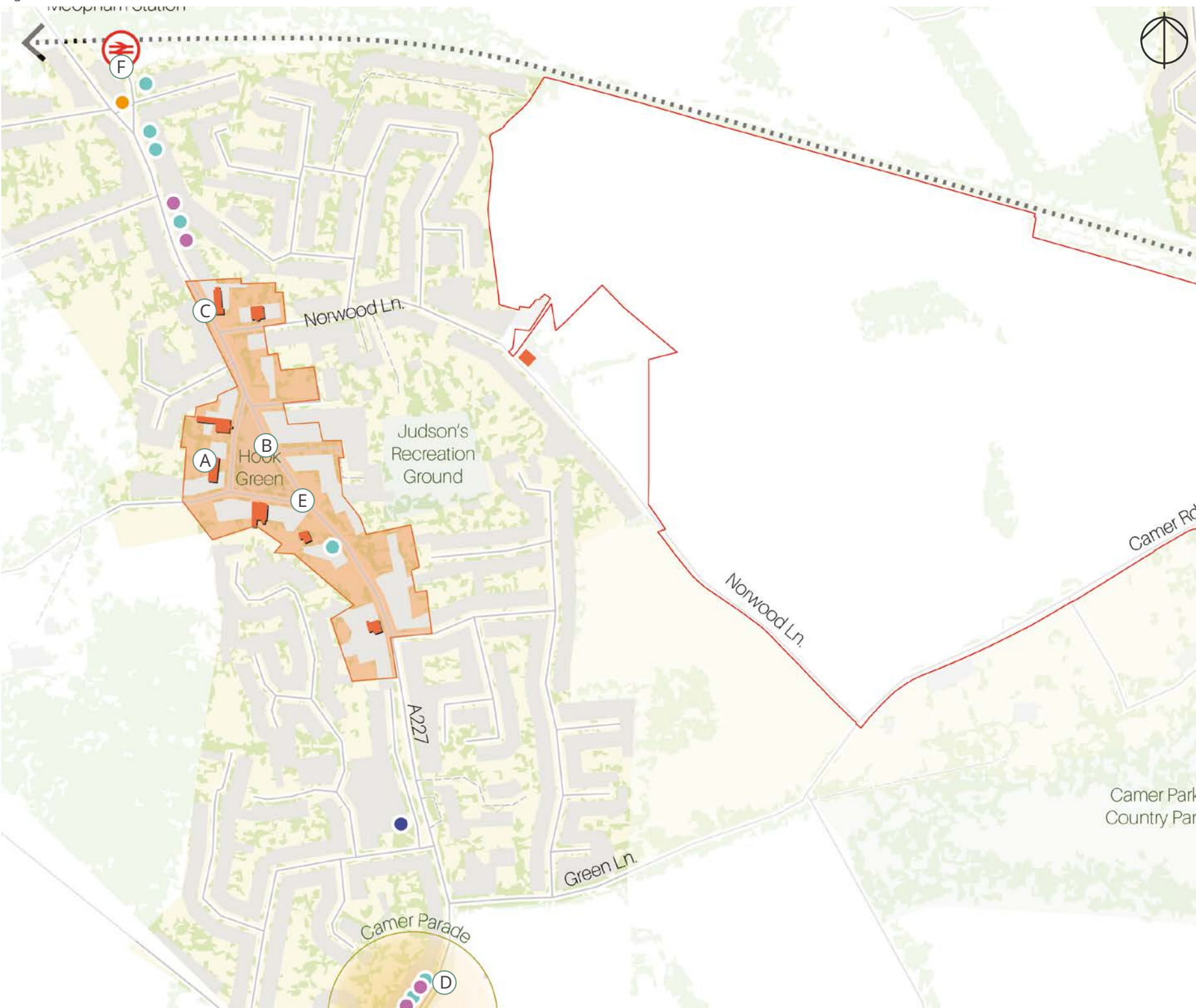




Fig. 3.30. Mulberry House, Hook Green



Fig. 3.31. View across Hook Green



Fig. 3.32. Waterditch, Norwood Lane



Fig. 3.33. Camer Parade, Wrotham Road



Fig. 3.34. Meopham Sign on the edge of Hook Green with The White House in the background



Fig. 3.35. Meopham Railway Station

Sole Street

Sole Street is a quiet residential settlement with a distinct rural character, defined by a mix of historic and postwar development.

The oldest buildings cluster around Sole Street Station, including several Victorian and earlier farmhouse properties, while later housing forms a series of gently curving residential roads and cul-de-sacs typical of postwar countryside layouts. Architecture across the village varies from traditional red and brown brick to white plastered and imitation Tudor façades, particularly near the station. The contemporary and post-war residential development in Sole Street is of mixed quality, with some poor examples from which any proposed development would look to significantly improve on.

The settlement's leafy and enclosed quality is one of its defining features. Narrow roads, generous gardens, and tall manicured hedges create a soft, green setting, with mature trees lining streets and private boundaries alike. Limited non-residential uses, such as the Railway Inn Pub and a small local shop, provide a modest focal point, but the overall atmosphere remains tranquil and residential, with Sole Street's verdant landscape reinforcing its village identity within the wider Meopham context.

- Site Boundary
- Grade II Listed Building
- F&B
- Retail
- Religious

Fig. 3.36. Sole Street Local Character Plan

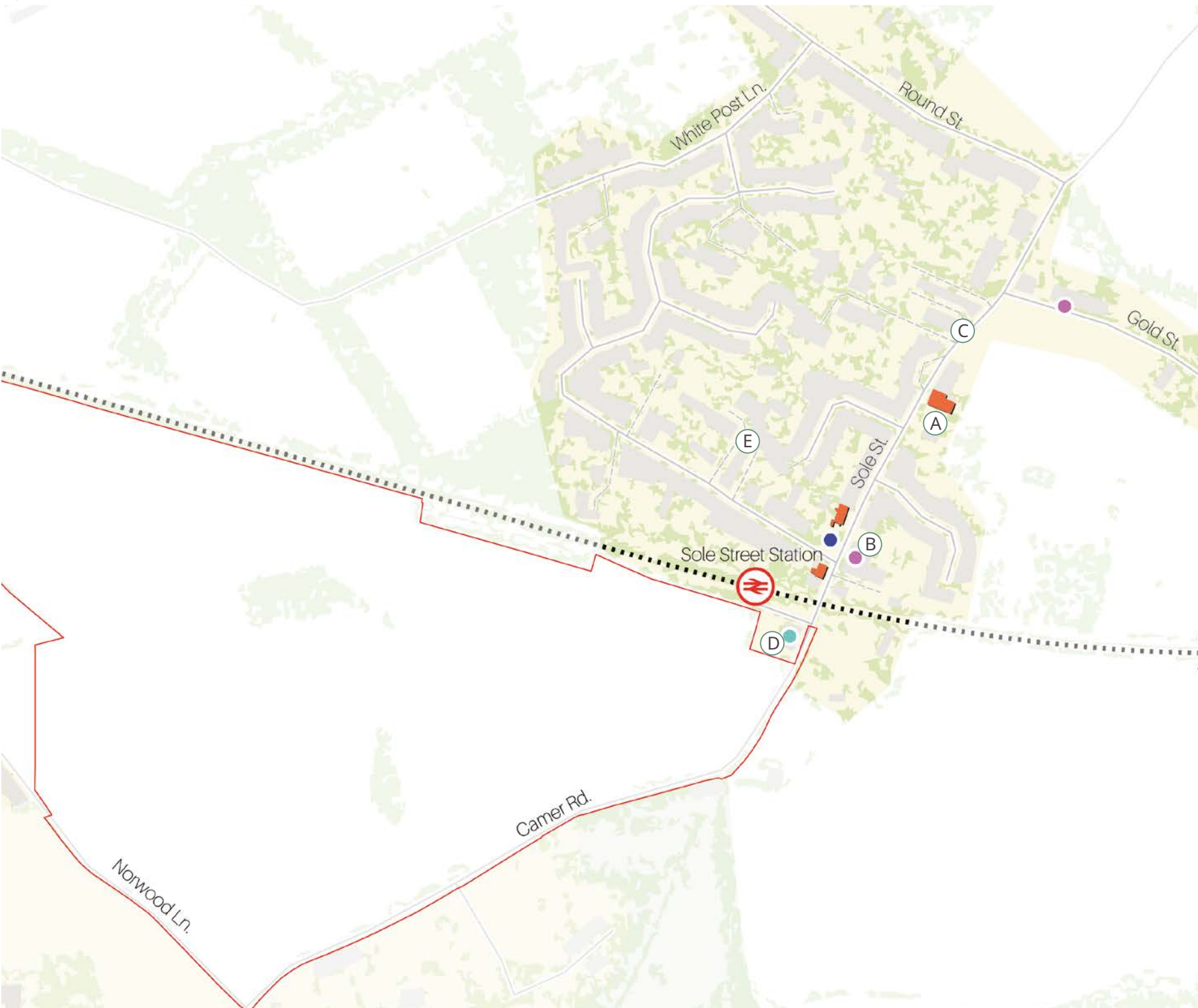




Fig. 3.37. Sole Street House



Fig. 3.38. The Little Shop and former Lion Pub



Fig. 3.39. Mature street trees in Sole Street



Fig. 3.40. The Railway Inn Pub



Fig. 3.41. Typical contemporary housing in Sole Street