



Appendix 12.7 – Landscape Assessment Table

Baseline		Assessment								
Landscape Receptor		Construction Phase		Construction Phase (Residual)		Operational Phase – Year 1		Operational Phase – Year 15 (Residual)		Description of Effects
Name	Sensitivity <i>(including Value and Susceptibility)</i>	Magnitude	Significance	Magnitude	Significance	Magnitude	Significance	Magnitude	Significance	
Landscape Features										
Cropland	Medium - The majority of the Site comprises Grade 2 agricultural land that supports cereal crops, which is commonplace in the surrounding landscape context. Evidently the cereal crops form a provisioning function, in addition to contributing to the pattern of the landscape and is on balance of medium value. The cropland, given its open and monoculture typology, contributes to the sense of place. It is a readily replaceable landscape element as is evidenced through crop rotation and traditional farming practices. However, the nature of the development proposals may potentially alter the overall integrity of the receptor through its fragmentation and accordingly is of medium susceptibility.	Large	Moderate Adverse	Large	Moderate Adverse	Large	Moderate Adverse	Large	Moderate Adverse	The introduction of construction activities within the Site will mean that plant and machinery will be brought onto Site and faming activities will cease to continue. As a result, the cropland will cease to be a landscape element within the Site, being wholly lost. Once completed, while the Proposed Development does incorporate element such as allotments and orchards as a means to food propagation, the cropland habitat will no longer be present within the Site. The open nature of the landscape will be replaced by predominantly built form in the western part of the Site – tying in to the existing settlement of Hook Green, while the eastern part of the Site will be much more open, forming an extension to Camer Park in the setting of the Kent Downs National Landscape.
Grassland	Medium – Peripheral areas of the Site feature grassland (including the north-western corner of the Site and field margins), comprising a mix of grass species types. The grassland itself exhibits no standout scenic or perceptual qualities beyond its intrinsic absence of built form and accordingly is of low value. Although the grassland is a readily replaceable landscape element that can swiftly re-establish, the nature of the development proposals may potentially alter the overall integrity of the receptor through its fragmentation and accordingly is of medium susceptibility.	Very Small	Negligible Adverse	Very Small	Negligible Adverse	Large	Moderate Beneficial	Large	Moderate Beneficial	The introduction of plant and machinery into the landscape and ongoing construction works will result in temporary disturbance to the grassland habitat within the Site, and in some instances its removal, particularly where vehicle tracking occurs or in those locations where built forms emerge. However, some areas of grassland will also be preserved, particularly in the north-west of the Site, where this coincides with the proposed areas of open space. Upon completion the quality and quantum of grassland within the Site will be noticeably enhanced, whereby it will coincide with the areas of open space as set out in the Land Use Parameter Plan. By Year 15, and as demonstrated in the Illustrative Masterplan, the eastern part of the Site will feature a vast open area of grassland interspersed with ornamental and structural planting and active travel links, while a green spine running through the centre of the Site east-west will also feature amenity grassland. Private gardens are also likely to feature areas of grassland.
Hedgerows, scrub and treebelts	Low – Hedgerow, scrub and treebelts within the Site are fragmented and very gappy in parts, often with an unkempt appearance and exhibiting no standout scenic or perceptual quality. The condition varies and they do not particularly create a sense of	Small	Negligible Adverse	Small	Negligible Adverse	Very Small	Neutral	Small	Negligible Beneficial	To facilitate the construction of the Proposed Development, including new built form and highway infrastructure, it will be necessary to remove short sections of hedgerow and shrub. The precise locations with the areas of proposed open space will be contingent on detailed design, however, to deliver both the Zone for improvements to Norwood Lane

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	containment or enclosure, making little contribution to the landscape structure – being neither representative or distinctive. No Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) are enforced within the Site and there are no veteran trees present, resulting in a low value. Given that this receptor does not particularly contribute to the structure of the landscape, and that reinstatement or enhancement is readily achievable, it is considered to be of low susceptibility to the type of development proposed.									and Camer Road, as indicated on the Land Use Parameter Plan, will necessitate the removal of all vegetation within these areas. Outside these areas vegetation will be retained and suitably protected. At Year 1 of operation, the areas of public open space within the Site will likely include new areas of planting although the precise nature of which is reserved for detailed design. This will likely counterbalance the areas of lost vegetation. At Year 15, and in line with the Illustrative Masterplan, new areas of hedgerow and scrub will be provided so as to provide a stronger structure and sense of enclosure along both Norwood Lane and Camer Road, while new pockets of tree planting will be provided in the Camer Park extension in the eastern part of the Site. These landscape interventions will benefit from several years' growth and will be well established at this point, and collectively contributing positively to the landscape.
Public Footpaths on Site	Medium – An existing PRoW (NS192) runs through the Site, providing connections between Manor Road / Sallows Shaw in the north-east with Norwood Lane in the west. The route contributes to the landscape fabric through the way in which it has shaped the fieldscape while simultaneously providing access and connectivity. It is not overgrown and there is clear usage from the community, although it is not a promoted or named route. On the basis of the above it has a medium landscape value. Given the type of development proposals there is clear scope to accommodate within the layout without diminishing the ability to provide connections east-west and ability to understand the pattern of the landscape and therefore is of low susceptibility.	Medium	Minor Adverse	Medium	Minor Adverse	Large	Moderate Beneficial	Large	Moderate Beneficial	During the construction phase, to facilitate the delivery of the new community, it may be necessary to temporarily divert the course, or put in place a temporary closure, of PRoW NS192. However, the duration within which this occurs will be limited, being restricted to Phase 3 of the Indicative Phasing Plan. Upon completion, the Movement and Access Parameter Plan indicates that not only will the existing PRoW that extends through the Site be retained, but several additional active travel routes will be provided in line with LTN 1/20. Accordingly, the quantum of public footpaths within the Site will be increased, and consequently the recreational function that the Site delivers will be improved. At Year 15 the establishment of planting proposals will enhance the setting for users of the footpaths through the Site, improving their visual amenity experience.
Woodland	High – Three woodland blocks are present within the Site, including Blundells Shaw, the largest and most centrally located within the Site, which is noted in the Priority Habitat Inventory as deciduous woodland. The woodland is not defined as ancient woodland and there are no Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) enforced. The woodland is in good condition and creates a localised	None	Neutral	None	Neutral	Very Small	Negligible Beneficial	Small	Minor Beneficial	During the construction phase the existing woodland within the Site will be retained and protected in accordance with BS5837:2012, with sufficient setbacks to ensure that adverse effects do not arise. At Year 1, the Land Use Parameter Plan indicates a large area of open space, which is to include areas of planting and is likely to include some woodland. However, at this stage it will not yet be established,

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	degree of containment and enclosure. Accordingly the woodland is of medium value. The woodland is not a readily replaceable feature given the length of time it takes to establish and on this basis is of high susceptibility to the type of development proposed.									
comprising juvenile specimens that do not function or feature as woodland. By Year 15 the introduced planting will have established. As demonstrated in the Illustrative Masterplan, this is likely to include copses of woodland within the eastern part of the Site, forming an extension to the Camer Park landscape and managed as part of a holistic long-term maintenance regime. Accordingly the quantum and quality of the woodland within the Site will be enhanced, helping to assimilate and soften the appearance of the introduced built form into the landscape setting.										
Landscape Character										
Ash Downs LCA	Medium – The Ash Downs LCA is noted as an undulating landscape comprising a mix of deep valleys, wooded ridges and broad plateau tops, interspersed with villages and larger 20 th century settlement. Extensive arable farmland is a characteristic of the plateau tops, as is hedgerow removal due to field amalgamation. The latter, in combination with a lack of clear defining built vernacular, leads to a lack of cohesion in the landscape that reduces its scenic quality and perceived condition/quality. That said, there are pockets of ancient woodland, conservation areas are present, and some scenic quality and tranquillity in the enclosed valleys and consequently, it is considered to be of medium value. Given that modern development is noted as a characteristic of the landscape, and with consideration of the potential for potentially wide visual envelopes owing to hedgerow removal, there is considered to be some scope to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue consequences on the maintenance of its existing state, and with good potential to apply published guidelines for development in the area, and therefore is of medium susceptibility.	Small	Minor Adverse	Small	Minor Adverse	Very Small	Negligible Adverse	Very Small	Negligible Beneficial	The introduction of plant and machinery into the landscape during the construction phase will undoubtedly lead to a sense of instability and reduction in tranquillity and rurality for a temporary period, with the ongoing works presenting as detracting elements in a localised part of the landscape. Upon completion at Year 1 there will be new development introduced into a very small geographical extent of this LCA, tied-in to the existing settlement of Hook Green. In the absence of design details, which would likely be secured through subsequent Reserved Matters Applications, the principle of the replacement of farmland with built form up to 3 storeys high is considered to represent an adverse alteration, albeit with acknowledgement that larger 20th century settlement on the plateau is a stated characteristic of the area. By Year 15 and as demonstrated in the Illustrative Masterplan, the Proposed Development will read as an extension to the existing settlement, with enclosure and settlement containment provided by the areas of woodland introduced as part of the design – a published management objective for the landscape – with broadleaved woodland the defining characteristic of the settlement edge. The introduction and establishment of planting proposals over time both in the eastern part of the Site and through the built development zones, will assist in softening the appearance of introduced development and help to assimilate it into the landscape. Through the application of high quality materials that take inspiration from the local built vernacular the Proposed Development will be perceived as

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										reinforcing and uplifting the character of the area, creating a greater degree of coherence and unity.
Luddesdown: West Kent Downs LCA	High – Noted for its undulating nature, featuring large tracts of mixed woodland that dominate the skyline. Generally a tranquil landscape that features a mix of pasture and arable, which gives rise to a sense of rurality and coherence and sense of time depth, although the area does exhibit substantial hedgerow removal. On balance it is of medium value. Given the largely undeveloped nature of the landscape and that the stated characteristics include that the area is threatened by suburban influences, it is considered that the LCA has a high susceptibility to the type of development proposed.	Very Small	Negligible Adverse	Very Small	Negligible Adverse	Very Small	Negligible Adverse	Very Small	Neutral	The more intensive construction activities will not result in direct effects on this LCA, as the proposed built elements lie to the west. Notwithstanding the above there will be plant and machinery present within the LCA and its setting for a temporary period, which will introduce detracting elements into the landscape that diminishes the sense of tranquillity and rurality. Upon completion, at Year 1 there will be new built form introduced into the setting of this LCA, whereby its presence will be experienced from a very localised area. Direct alterations to the fabric of this LCA will relate to the provision of an area of open space that will act as an extension to Camer Park, with the arable land likely replaced by accessible amenity grassland, planting and SuDS. The overriding perception of a farmed landscape will remain across the LCA. In the absence of design details, which would likely be secured through subsequent Reserved Matters Applications, the principle of the replacement of farmland in the setting of this LCA with built form up to 3 storeys high is considered to represent an adverse alteration. At Year 15 and in accordance with the Illustrative Masterplan, the establishment and maturation of planting proposals within the Camer Park extension will reinforce the woodland cover characteristic of the landscape. In turn, this woodland cover will soften the appearance of, and thus reduce the influence that the introduced built form makes over the wider landscape. The gapping up of hedgerow along Camer Park – managed so as to be tall – will reflect the remaining hedgerow in the wider landscape and be received as a positive intervention.
Meopham Downs LCA	Medium – Although the area is not subject to national designation, it contains a number of locally valued features, including a strong field structure, historic hedgerow networks, and traditional built form. These elements contribute to local distinctiveness and are supported by published management guidance advocating their protection and enhancement. On balance the area is of medium value.	Small	Minor Adverse	Small	Minor Adverse	Small	Negligible Adverse	Small	Negligible Beneficial	During the construction phase the introduction of plant and machinery will lead to a sense of instability and fragmentation in the landscape, alongside a reduction in tranquillity and rurality for a temporary period, with the ongoing works presenting as detracting elements in a localised part of the landscape. At Year 1, the Parameters Plans illustrate a transition from publicly accessible open space in the east to residential-led development within the west of the Site. Although the scale of change is modest in the context of the wider LCA, the introduction of built

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	The susceptibility of the LCA to the type of development proposed is also considered medium. The landscape has a coherent pattern and can accommodate some development, provided it aligns with the existing structure, respects the scale and vernacular of adjacent settlements, and reinforces characteristic features such as hedgerows and woodland edges. However, the intact and nature of the character of the area limits its tolerance for poorly integrated or out-of-scale change.									form, road infrastructure, and access points introduces a discernible change in local character. The permanent loss of arable land and the establishment of a built settlement edge alters the existing land use and visual condition at this interface. The effect is partly offset by the retention of existing woodland features and the proposed enhancement of boundary vegetation, including along Camer Road, which will begin to soften the transition between the development and the adjoining landscape. Importantly, the wider Meopham Downs LCA remains largely unaffected, with the Site contained by its proximity to the railway line in the north, Hook Green in the west, and Camer Road to the south-east. As such, the character impact is spatially limited. By Year 15, the Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates that the development will have matured into a well-integrated extension of the settlement. Reinforced boundary planting and the provision of green infrastructure will visually soften and structurally contain the built form, reducing the perceptual influence of development on the surrounding landscape. The orientation of dwellings, strategic use of open space – allowing for a green spine through the Site that connects with a large swath of publicly accessible open space, and alignment with the settlement grain contribute to a development that is both visually and functionally consistent with local character. Experientially, the softened edges and layered vegetation will improve the setting to Hook Green and reduce the sense of encroachment.
Character of the Site and its Immediate Surroundings	Medium – The Character of the Site and its Immediate Surroundings is of medium landscape quality. Public access to the Site is limited to that along PRoW NS192, and the Site is not inherently scenic beyond being an everyday ordinary countryside landscape. The Site’s character is influenced by the adjoining urbanising features of development at Sole Street and Hook Green, in addition to the interface with the railway infrastructure and the pylons and high-voltage wires that oversail the Site. These features detract from what would otherwise be a rural landscape. There are no known associations with the Site that would elevate its value and on the basis of the above, the character of the	Large	Moderate Adverse	Large	Moderate Adverse	Large	Minor Adverse	Medium	Negligible Beneficial	During the construction phase, the Proposed Development will result in a direct alteration to the fabric of the landscape, whereby an inherently open and farmed landscape that features minimal activity and animation (beyond low-intensity occasional farming activities and people travelling along the course of the footpath) will be changed to an active and intensive construction site, featuring the movement and tracking of heavy plant and machinery, material stockpiles, and welfare facilities. Once operational, at Year 1 the Parameter Plans highlight that built development will be consolidated within the western part of the Site, primarily serving two functions. Firstly, it will relate to the existing settlement pattern of Hook Green, with the building height strategy providing legibility in the landscape. Secondly, by retaining the eastern part of the Site free of built form this enables the delivery of open green space that can both allow for the introduction of

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	Site and its Immediate Surroundings is assessed of medium value. Given that the Site is gently sloping and adjoined by built form the west and east, that it is in proximity to two railway stations, and has a good ability to accommodate residential development without the need for vegetation removal, the character of the Site and its Immediate Surroundings is considered to have a medium to low landscape susceptibility to the type of development proposed.									planting to create a wooded edge to settlement (as advocated in published character guidance as a positive and desired intervention) and to provide a parkland setting as a sympathetic response to the Kent Downs National Landscape that adjoins the Site to the east. By Year 15 and in line with the Illustrative Masterplan, the built form will appear as a high quality development that reinforces the local vernacular and sense of place. The planting proposals will have established and create a soft edge to the settlement of Hook Green. The eastern parkland extension allows for generous green infrastructure provision that includes natural open space, formal and informal recreation areas, linear ecological corridors, and multifunctional amenity spaces. Together, these elements create an interconnected green framework that supports biodiversity, sustainable drainage and a high-quality landscape setting for the new neighbourhood. This ethos runs through the centre of the Site through the green spine that also relates to the course of the retained PRoW. A defining element of the strategy is the retention of Blundells Shaw, a key woodland block located on a subtle ridgeline at the centre of the Site. This feature is characteristic of the local landscape and contributes to the wooded skyline, ecological connectivity and sense of place. Existing hedgerows, tree belts and other woodland fragments will be similarly enhanced over time through their long term maintenance and management and contribute positively to the character of the area. While it is accepted that there will be a loss of farmland, which is in itself a characteristic feature, this will be more than offset by the emergence of a community that uplifts the design quality of the area, providing a sympathetic transition between settlement and the wider area.
Kent Downs National Landscape	Very High – The Kent Downs National Landscape is a nationally designated and valued landscape that is noted for its dramatic landform and views, biodiversity-rich habitats, its farmed landscape interwoven with woodland and trees and parkland, a rich legacy of historic and cultural heritage including its heritage coasts, the geology and natural resources of the area, and its tranquillity and remoteness – including star-gazing at night and woodland bathing. Its is of very high value. While the Kent Downs is known for its scenic quality, it is also a	Very Small	Negligible Adverse	Very Small	Negligible Adverse	Very Small	Neutral	Very Small	Negligible Beneficial	As noted within the Kent Downs National Landscape Setting Position Statement, the key principle is to ensure that proposals do not negatively impact on the distinctive landform, character, special qualities and key views to and from the Kent Downs. The document also notes located where development and changes to the landscape may be more keenly felt, of which importantly the Site is not situated within, Notwithstanding the above, it is acknowledged that development in the setting of the National Landscape may have the potential to increase urban fringe pressures on land in the National Landscape itself. This includes increased recreational pressures as a

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	living and working landscape that is shaped and managed by people, with the management plan noting that surrounding the designated landscape and several rapidly growing communities that contrast with Kent Downs landscape. In light of the above there is some scope to deliver the type of development proposed without affecting the integrity of the landscape, and therefore it is of medium susceptibility.									result of development in proximity to the National Landscape. To directly address these aspects the design of the Proposed Development has evolved to ensure that built form is consolidated to the existing built-up area of Hook Green and that the revised settlement footprint threshold relates to a natural ridge in the landform, with dense woodland cover provided to its east. This not only provides a softer edge to the proposed built forms, but also represents a betterment than the existing abrupt edge that is present in the form of Hook Green and the railway line. The provision of an expansive parkland in the east is also intended to provide an additional recreation resource that can help to steer additional pressure away from the National Landscape, which in turn provides a sympathetic transition in character. In addition, it is anticipated that floodlighting will not be required and that where practicable lighting will be designed so as to limit light-spill and not interrupt an appreciation of the dark night skies – this includes reduced working hours during the construction phase. Evidently there will be a slight reduction in tranquillity during the construction phase on account of the presence of and movement of plant and machinery in the setting of the Kent Downs. However, once completed the above strategy is considered to over time represent an improvement to the setting of the National Landscape, albeit only experienced from within exceptionally localised areas. In light of the above the overall integrity of the National Landscape will largely remain unaltered, and where the Proposed Development is perceived, will represent a subtle betterment due to its transitional parkland setting, and therefore not just conserving but enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of this nationally designated landscape.

Notes:

Sensitivity: Based on professional judgement, value and susceptibility. Defined as Very High, High, Medium or Low.

Magnitude: Based on professional judgement, scale, extent, duration and reversibility. Defined as Large, Medium, Small, Very Small or None.

Significance: Based on professional judgement, sensitivity and magnitude. Defined as Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible or Neutral. The nature of the significance is expressed as Adverse or Beneficial.