



Land North of Camer Road, Meopham Environmental Statement

Chapter 2: Description of the Site, Surroundings and Background

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2. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE, SURROUNDINGS AND BACKGROUND

Introduction

- 2.1 This chapter provides a summary of the existing Site and its surrounding area, including key features, designations, and sensitive receptor locations. This provides the context for evaluating the existing baseline conditions and for assessing the Proposed Development. A full description of the baseline conditions relevant to the technical assessments is provided in each technical chapter.

Site Description

- 2.2 The 44.32ha Site is located to the east of Hook Green and to the southwest of Sole Street and is bordered by the Chatham Main Line to the north, Camer Road to the southeast, and Norwood Lane to the southwest.
- 2.3 The Site is bound by the following:
- The north of the Site is bound by the Chatham Main Line, the Storage Box Self Storage and Network Rail yard. Sole Street train station (including the Station Approach access road) is located to the immediate northeast corner of the Site. Immediately adjacent to the northeast corner of the Site is 'The Railway Inn and Railway Pétanque Club' and associated parking. To the north of the Chatham Main Line is mature woodland (designated as priority habitat inventory – deciduous woodland), undeveloped agricultural land and cul-de-sacs of residential dwellings associated with Manor Road, Scratton Fields and Sallows Shaw.
 - The east of the Site is bound by Camer Road. Directly beyond are residential dwellings, Royal Hounds Dog Park and agricultural fields. The south east of the Site is also bound by Camer Road. Beyond are (detached) residential dwellings and Camer Park Country Park. Beyond are agricultural fields interspersed with woodlands, road infrastructure and rural villages. This land (to east and south-east) of the Site is located within Kent Downs National Landscape (KDNL).
 - The south-west of the Site is bound by Norwood Lane, a small parcel of agricultural land and residential dwellings (with associated gardens and paddocks) located on the northern edge of Norwood Lane. To the south of Norwood Lane is a parcel of undeveloped agricultural land (bounded by Green Lane, Camer Road and Tradescant Drive), and cul-de-sacs of residential dwellings along with some commercial uses, including Judson's Recreation Ground.
 - The west of the Site is bound by residential dwellings associated with Nursery Road and Fairview Gardens and commercial uses along The Railway Sidings, including Meopham Welding Supplies. Directly beyond is cul-de-sacs of residential dwellings and Meopham train station. Beyond Wrotham Road is more residential development and extensive areas of undeveloped agricultural land.

- 2.4 The Site, which sits within the green belt, comprises agricultural land with two (small) areas of woodland located within the centre of the Site. A residential property, with associated small stable block and small pastoral field are located within the western section of the Site.
- 2.5 There is a Public Right of Way (PRoW) (NS192) running through the Site connecting the north and south-west boundaries. This PRoW connects Manor Road/Sallows Shaw with Norwood Lane and Wrotham Road (A227).
- 2.6 **Figure 2.1** shows a satellite image of the existing Site, with the boundary in red.

Figure 2.1 Location of Site (Satellite View)



Environmental Context and Constraints

Introduction

- 2.7 **Figure 2.3 to Figure 2.5** identify the key environmental designations within, and in proximity to, the Site. Further details of the environmental sensitivities are provided in the technical chapters. A summary is provided below.

Archaeology and Heritage

- 2.8 The Site is within an Archaeological Notification Area. There are no Scheduled Monuments or World Heritage Sites within 1km of the Site. The nearest Scheduled Monument is 'Deserted medieval manorial settlement of Cossington' located approximately 1.2km north of the Site. Camer Park Country Park, located directly south of the Site is identified as a Historic Park. A geophysical survey has been conducted and is submitted with this planning application.
- 2.9 The Site does not contain any heritage assets designated as being of national importance, such as listed buildings or Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. However, the Site is surrounded by Grade II listed buildings, such as Norwood Farmhouse on the western boundary of the Site (LEN: 1039912). The nearest Grade I listed building is Parish Church of St John the Baptist, approximately 1km south-west of the Site. The nearest Scheduled Monument is deserted medieval manorial settlement of Cossington, approximately 1.2km from the Site.
- 2.10 The Site is not located within a Conservation Area, the closest Conservation Area: Hook Green is 0.2km west of the Site.
- 2.11 Further details on the archaeological potential and built heritage are provided in **Chapter 9: Archaeology** and **Chapter 11: Built Heritage**.

Ecology

Internationally Designated Sites

- 2.12 There are no internationally designated sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas, or Ramsar) within immediate proximity to the Site. The nearest such designation is the North Downs Woodlands SAC, 2.6km south-east of the Site.

Statutory Designated Sites

- 2.13 The Site is not located within or directly adjacent to any statutory designated nature conservation sites, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves (NNRs), or Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). The closest statutory site is North Kent Woods and Downs NNR, 1.2km south-east of the Site.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

2.14 The nearest non-statutory sites are:

- GR09 Nurstead and Cozendon Woods, Nash Street LWS, 0.6km north-west;
- GR04 Henley Wood and Pasture LWS, 0.7km south-east;
- GR04 A227 Wrotham Road RNR, 0.8km northwest of the Site;
- GR05 B260 Longfield Road (East) RNR, 0.9km south-west of the Site;
- GR15 Grassland and Scrub, Istead Rise LWS, 1.5km northwest of the Site;
- GR06 Strawberry Hill Pasture and Woodland, Meopham LWS, 1.5km south-west of the Site;
- GR03 Pasture South of Istead Rise LWS, 1.6km north-west of the Site;
- GR10 Happy Valley, Meopham LWS, 1.7km south-west of the Site; and
- GR08 B260 Longfield Road (West) RNR, 1.7km west of the Site.

2.15 There is no Ancient Woodland¹ located within or immediately adjacent (30m) of the Site.

2.16 There are no Tree Preservation Orders within the Site or its immediate surroundings.

2.17 Further details of features of ecological significance are set out in **Chapter 10: Ecology** and additional information on trees is included in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (October 2025) submitted as part of the planning application.

Air Quality and Noise

2.18 GBC has declared three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) due to exceedances of the air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) although these are not in close proximity to the Site. The closest AQMA to the Site is the Gravesham A2 AQMA, which is located approximately 2.7km to the northeast of the Site.

Transport and Access

2.19 Existing vehicular access is located off Camer Road. Pedestrians can access the Site via PRoW (NS192).

2.20 The nearest train station is Sole Street, located on the boundary of the north-east corner of the Site. The second nearest train station is Meopham located approximately 500m west of the Site. Both stations are operated by southeastern trains and provide services to London Victoria, Rochester, Gillingham, Dover Priory and Ramsgate.

2.21 The nearest bus stops are 'The Railway' stops located on either side of Camer Road, at the north-east corner of the Site. 'Scratton Fields' bus stops are approximately 270m north east of the Site (either side of Sole Street). Both bus stops are served by routes 311, 416 and 695 and provides

services to Gravesend and Meopham. There are several bus stops to west of the Site, along the A227 (Wrotham Road) including 'Station Road' and 'Norwood Lane' stops.

Figure 2.2 PRoW within and around the Site



- 2.22 Further information on transport and access is provided in **Chapter 3: Proposed Development, Construction and Alternatives** and **Chapter 5: Transport and Access**.

Water Environment and Flood Risk

- 2.23 The Site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 and therefore has the lowest possibility of fluvial flooding. The vast majority of the Site is at 'very low' risk of surface water flooding, meaning that the Site has less than 0.1% of surface water flooding each year. However, small sections of land within the Site lies within 'high', 'medium' and 'low' risk of surface water flooding.
- 2.24 The Site is located within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. The majority of the Site, (with the exception of the eastern section of the Site) is located within Zone II and III Source Protection Zone.

Landscape

- 2.25 The Site is bordered by the KDNL along the east and south-eastern boundary, beyond Camer Road.
- 2.26 The Site falls within North Downs National Character Area (NCA 119)², defined by Natural England as 'a chain of chalk hills extending from the Hog's Back in Surrey and ending dramatically at the internationally renowned White Cliffs of Dover. The settlement pattern is characterised by traditional small, nucleated villages, scattered farms and large houses with timber framing, flint walls and Wealden brick detailing. Twisting sunken lanes, often aligned along ancient drove roads, cut across the scarp and are a feature of much of the dip slope. The Kent Downs and Surrey Hills National Landscape designations are testament to the qualities and natural beauty of the area'.

Agricultural Land

- 2.27 Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) mapping³ identifies 98% of the Site as comprising Grade 2 agricultural land, 'very good quality agricultural land'. The remaining 2% as non-agricultural land.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

- 2.28 A Phase I Desk Study is submitted with the planning application, prepared by RSK Environment Ltd trading as Leap Environmental.
- 2.29 Historical mapping shows that from 1867 onward, the Site remaining largely agricultural land. The railway along the northern boundary has been present since at least 1867. A varnish factory, with a chimney and later expanded buildings, was constructed immediately north of the Site around 1931 and remained operational until the 1980s. By the 1970s–1990s, the wider area transitioned to predominantly residential development with agricultural land beyond.
- 2.30 The Site is underlain by the Thanet Sand Formation in the central eastern area (Secondary A aquifer) and the Seaford Chalk Formation in the west and far east (Principal aquifer).
- 2.31 Potential contamination sources include widespread historic agricultural use, one bonfire site in the central woodland and off-site risks from the former varnish factory immediately north.

- 2.32 As noted in the EIA Scoping Report (**Appendix 1.3**) Demolition and construction works will be undertaken in line with standard practice and legislative requirements to manage any encounters of contaminated land to minimise pollution risks to groundwater and human health of construction workers.

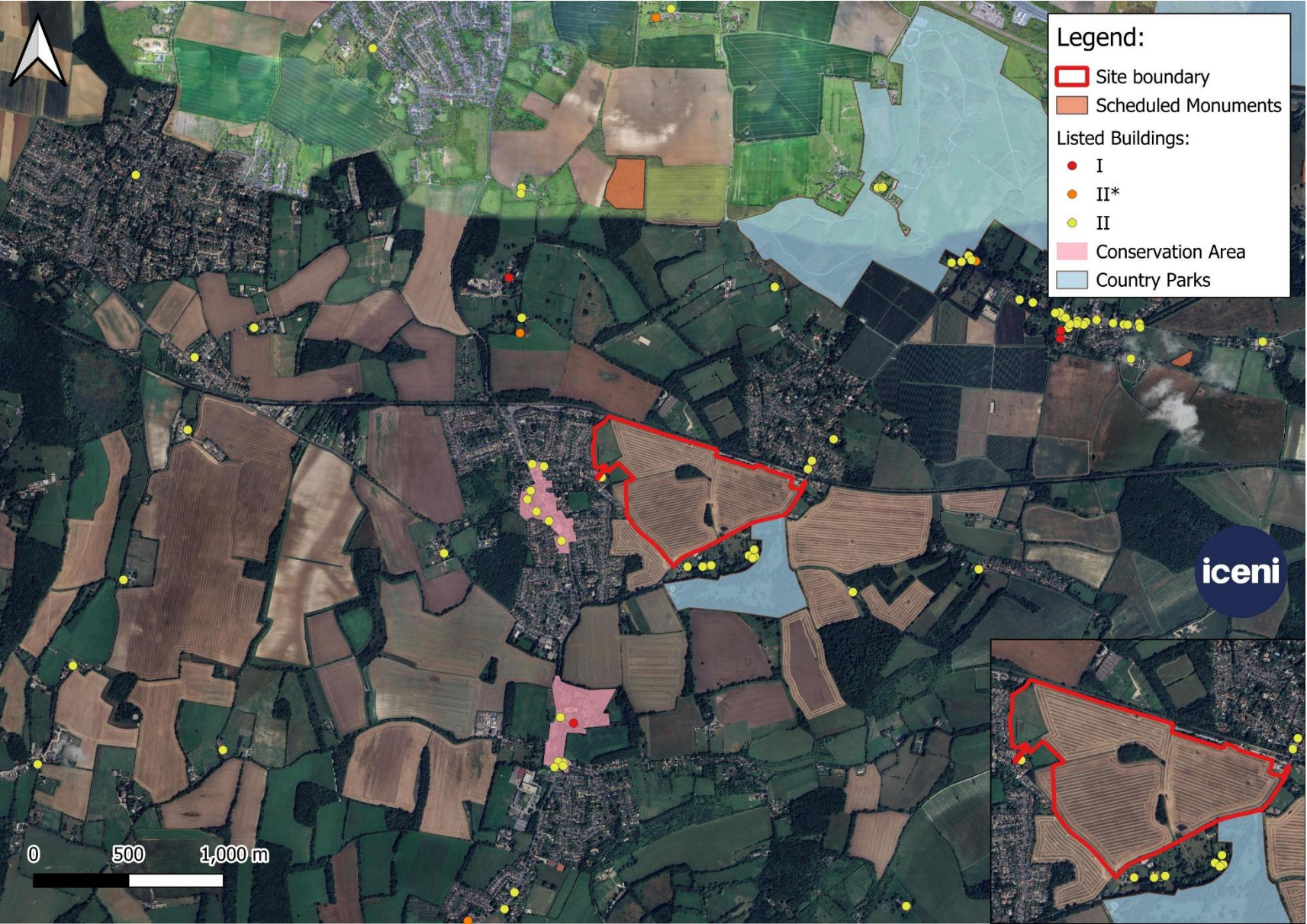
Figure 2.3 Environmental Sensitivities



Figure 2.3 Key Ecology and Arboriculture Sensitivities



Figure 2.4 Heritage Assets



References

- ¹ Landmark Solutions (2024) Magic Map <<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>>
- ² Natural England. (2013). NCA Profile: 119: North Downs. Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/7036466>
- ³ Natural England. (2017). Provisional Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) (England). Available at: <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/provisional-agricultural-land-classification-alc-england/explore>