

## 2.0 Site Context

### 2.11 Area 3 Settlement Pattern

The development area uses an organic and curvilinear street layout with curving streets and cul-de-sacs. Buildings have been arranged in clusters with differing density. Some areas of the development are compact with terraced and semi-detached housing, whereas other areas made up of detached dwellings with generous open space.

The settlement can be shown to have buildings aligning with the roads. In this area it is common to have small cul-de-sacs off of primary and secondary roads with development.



## 2.0 Site Context

### 2.12 Area 4 Architectural Style Study

Area 4 includes built form around Meopham Green and along Wrotham Road (A227). The area was built up in 1955-1964, however features many traditional English village architecture, including many listed buildings. The area has a picturesque and well-preserved historic character, with several pubs, farmhouses, and period homes that have been carefully maintained or restored.

Many of the buildings in area 4 exhibit Kentish vernacular architecture with decorative gables and sash windows.

#### Materiality





## 2.0 Site Context

### Roof Articulation

The roofs in area 4 area mix of forms. Many of the older, historical and listed housing uses hips which has been continued through to some of the newly developed areas. Other areas predominantly use front-to-back roof forms.



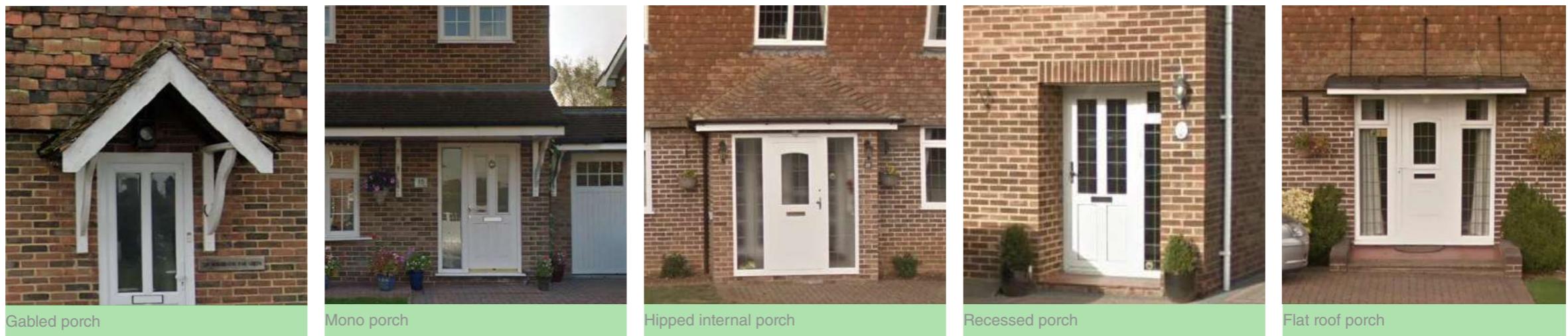
### Window Details

A mix of white PVC casement windows and sash windows are primarily found in this area often with astragal bars or lead detail. Decorative details around the windows are frequent in this area.



### Entrances

There are a variety of porch types used within area 4 however the area consistently uses gabled and mono porches.



## 2.0 Site Context

### 2.13 Area 4 Settlement Pattern

The development around Meopham Green is shown to be more irregular than other areas in Meopham with the area developing organically over time with more historical and listed buildings. Around the green buildings are dispersed more with large front gardens and with buildings dispersed more.

The surrounding areas, especially Pitfield Drive, shows newer linear development with buildings aligned along roads with a denser character.

Buildings in area 4 are consistently detached and semi-detached with occasional blocks of terraced housing. The settlement pattern in the area shows a semi-rural setting where historical development followed terrain and natural features rather than strict planning regulations.



# 2.0 Site Context

## 2.14 Key Characteristics

In conclusion from all 4 area analysis', it is clear Meopham has a very traditional architectural style with areas taking a modern more contemporary twist of the traditional historical farmsteads and architectural styles.

### Key Architectural characteristics and details found include:

- Bay windows
- Astragal bars
- Hipped/barn hipped roofs (especially in more rural character areas)
- 3 panelled windows
- Solider course details
- Recessed porches
- Gable and mono porches (frequently hipped)
- 1-2.5 storeys
- Gables with feature material



### Key Architectural materials found include:



## 2.0 Site Context

### 2.15 Local Heritage

The site is in Hook Green, home to 16 Grade II listed buildings that reflect the area's heritage. Dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries, these properties feature tiled roofs, exposed beams, and period detailing, contributing to Hook Green's rural charm and distinct identity.

#### Grade II Listed Buildings:

1 Waterditch, Norwood Lane	12 Camer House, Camer Estate
2 Nevill House, Norwood Lane	13 5 and 6, Camer Street
3 Norwood Farmhouse, Norwood Lane	14 Somers, 7, Camer Street
4 The White House, Melliker Lane	15 9 and 10, Camer Street
5 Mulberry House, Melliker Lane	16 Camer Green Cottage, 8, Camer Street
6 Hook Green Farmhouse, Melliker Lane	
7 The Old Forge Cottage, Wrotham Road	
8 Evenden Farmhouse, Wrotham Road	
9 Melliker Farmhouse, Longfield Road	
10 Bailiffs House, Camer Estate	
11 Building West of Camer House, Camer Estate	



Nevill House, Norwood Lane



Norwood Farmhouse, Norwood Lane



The Old Forge Cottage, Wrotham Road



Melliker Farmhouse, Longfield Road



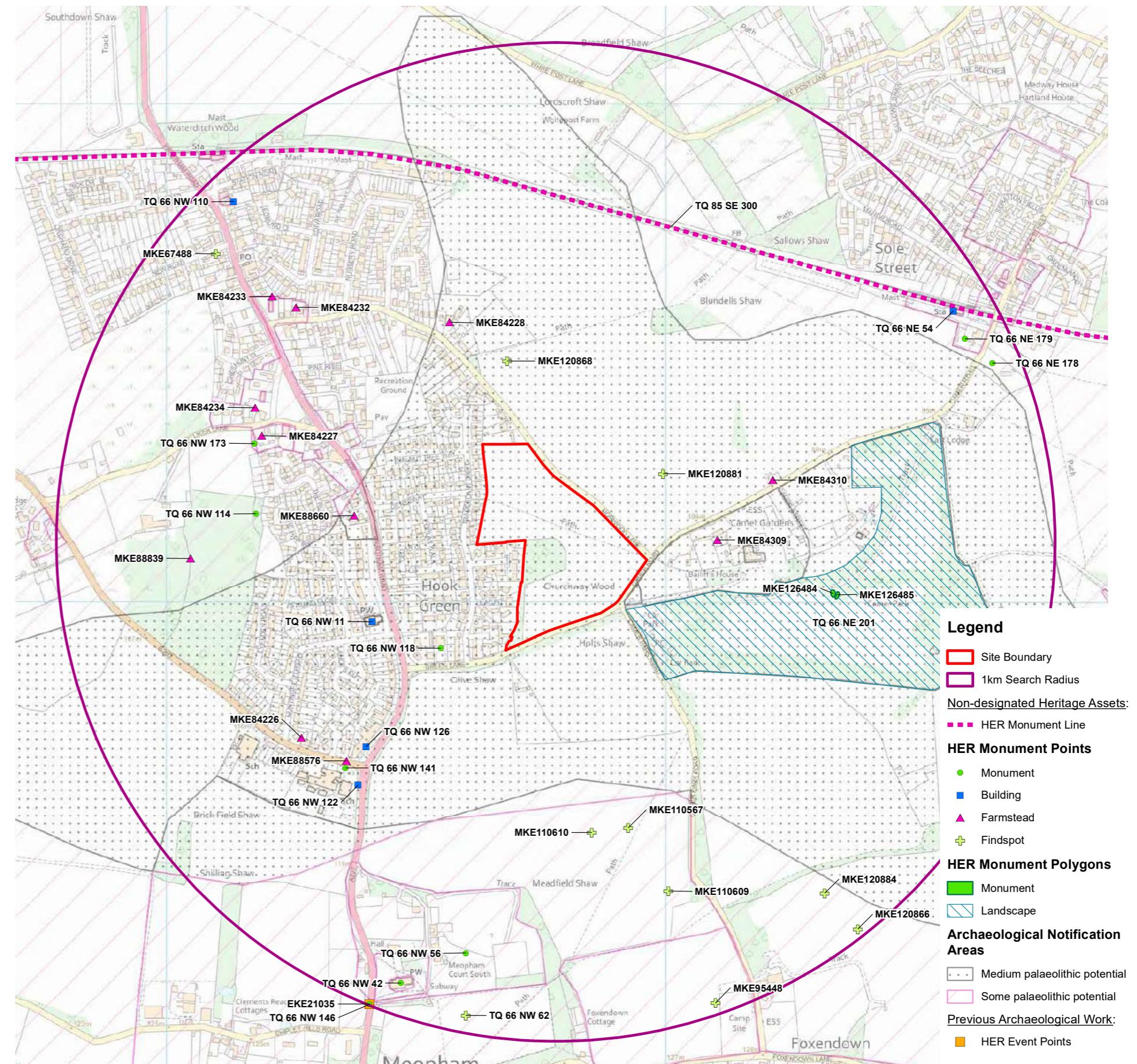
Bailiffs House, Camer Estate

## 2.0 Site Context

### 2.16 Cultural Heritage

A Cultural Heritage Desk Based Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with guidance issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and Historic England, and informed by the Kent Historic Environment Record and other sources. A geophysical survey of the Site has also been undertaken in March 2025. The geophysical survey did not indicate the presence of any significant archaeological features within the site.

The archaeological assessment and investigation to date suggest that the Site has a low potential to contain evidence relating to any past period of human activity. The Site is, however, likely to have been cultivated since the Medieval period onwards and so is likely to contain evidence of historical cultivation and related activity in the form of plough soils or below ground evidence of land division that would be of limited, local significance only. It is considered that an archaeological evaluation could be secured by condition against the granting of any future planning permission.

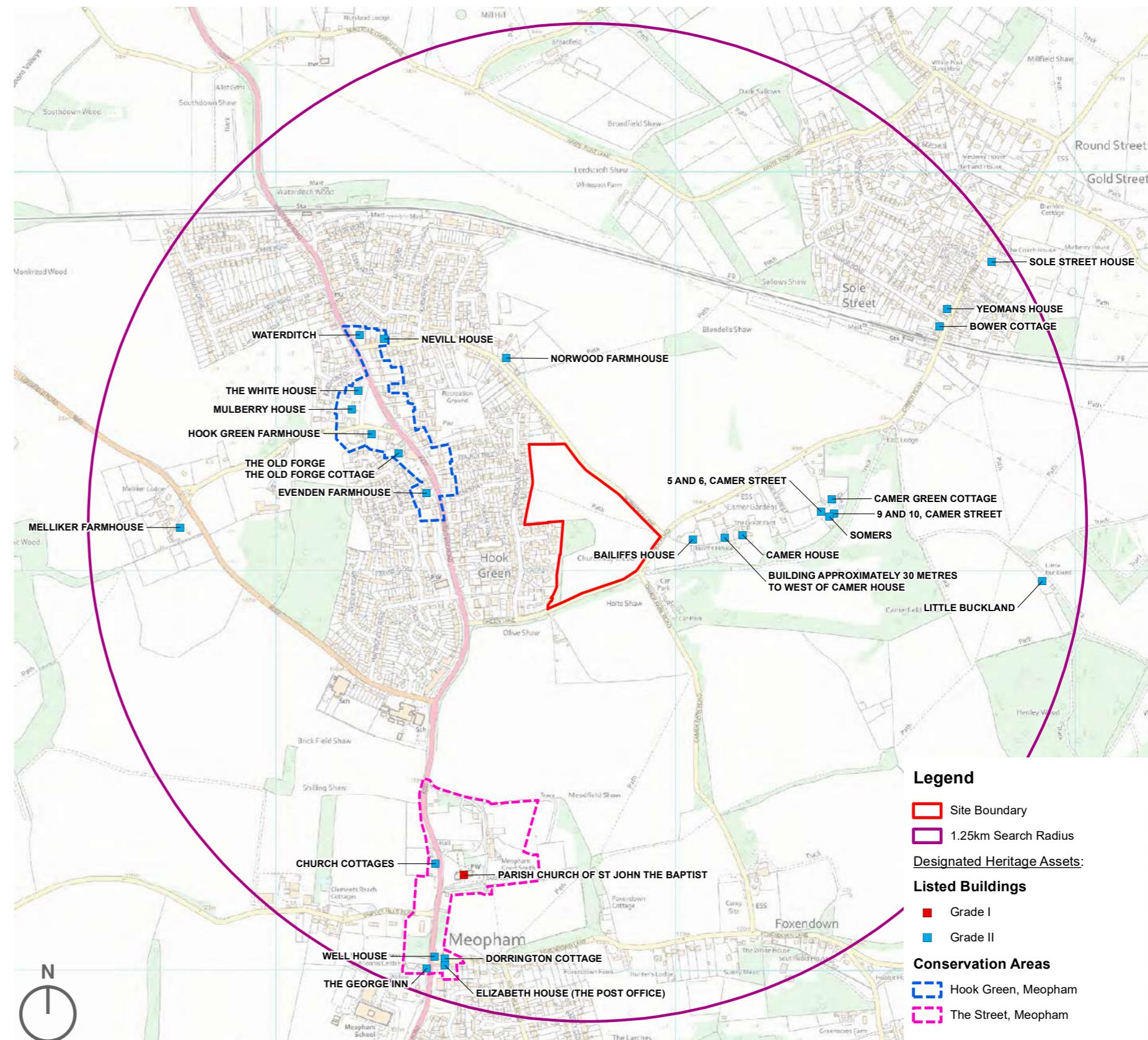


# 2.0 Site Context

## 2.16 Cultural Heritage

In terms of relevant designated built heritage assets, the Grade II\* Church of St Mildred (NHLE ref.1096351), the Grade II Northwood Farmhouse (NHLE ref.1039912), the Grade II Bailiffs House (NHLE ref.105233), the Grade II Camer House (NHLE ref. 1052357), and the Grade II Building Approximately 30 Metres to West of Camer House (NHLE ref.1350234) are considered relevant to the proposed development. This is a result of the proposed development representing an alteration to their wider settings that may affect their significance. Embedded design mitigation is evolving as a core part of the proposed development to avoid and minimise potential built heritage impacts. The closest listed building (Bailiffs House) lies just over 75m from the Site boundary.

Based on the concept plan submitted as part of this submission, the proposed development is considered likely to represent an overall low degree of harm to the significance of the Grade II Bailiffs House on the spectrum of less than substantial harm through the erosion of the building's wider rural-agricultural setting with which it has a historical-functional relationship. The proposed development is not considered likely to affect the significance of the Grade II Camer House or the Grade II building approximately 30m west of Camer House as a result of intervening visual and experiential barriers. The proposed development is considered to represent a probable low degree of less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II\* Listed Church of St Mildred, through change to a long range viewing corridor from the Site by which this building can be appreciated as a local landmark of historical origin within a historically rural-agricultural landscape context. The levels of potential impact to relevant Built Heritage Assets have been reviewed at this outline planning submission stage and will be further reviewed at RM stage.



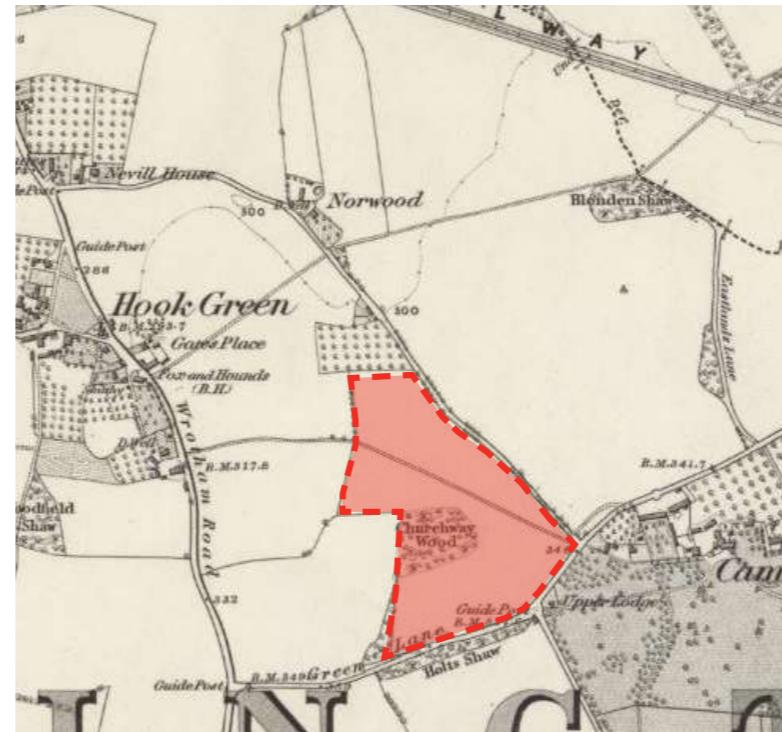
## 2.0 Site Context

### 2.17 History

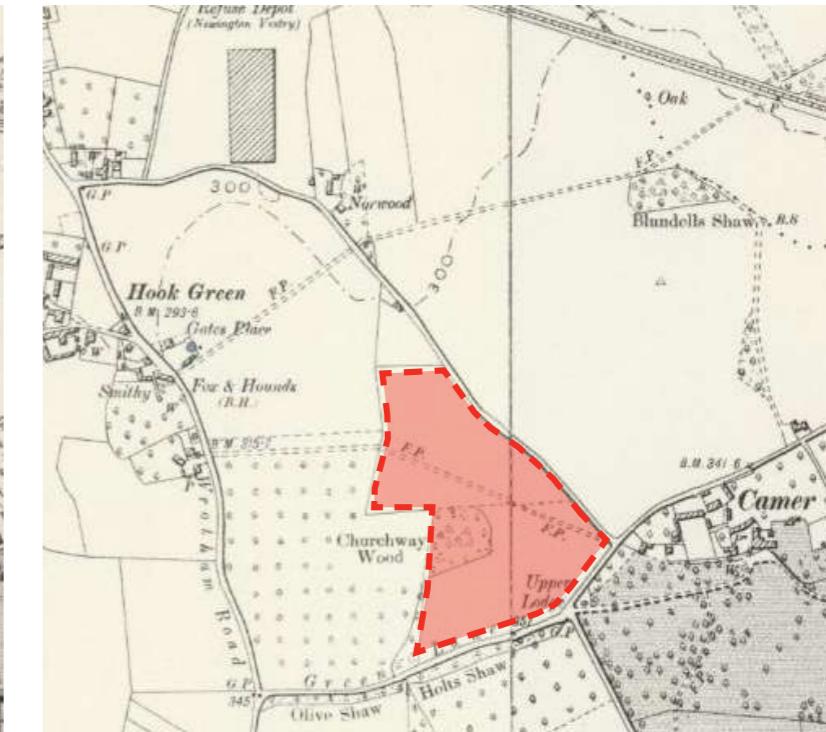
The site has seen minimal change over time, remaining agricultural for centuries. Churchway Wood, a deciduous woodland, has been present since the 1800s.

Hook Green, Meopham, has developed organically, shaped by its rural and agricultural character. The area features a dispersed settlement pattern with traditional farmsteads, cottages, and larger period homes along winding country lanes. Many buildings date back to the 17th and 18th centuries, constructed with local materials such as timber, brick, and tile. This layered development creates a varied streetscape, with buildings set back at different distances to respond to the natural topography. Mature trees, hedgerows, and open spaces further enhance the area's historic rural charm.

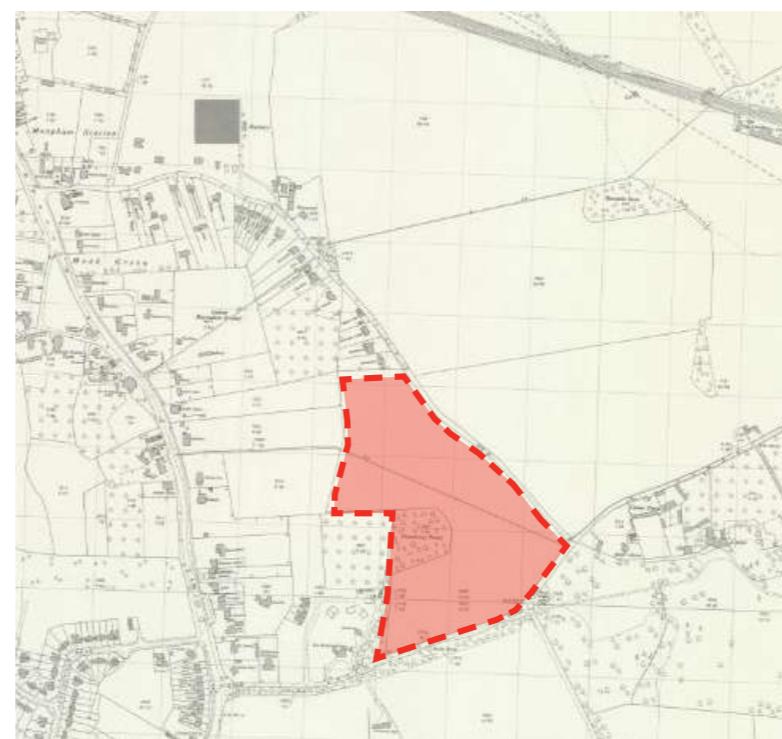
Post-WW2 development has introduced newer housing on agricultural land adjacent to the site's western boundary.



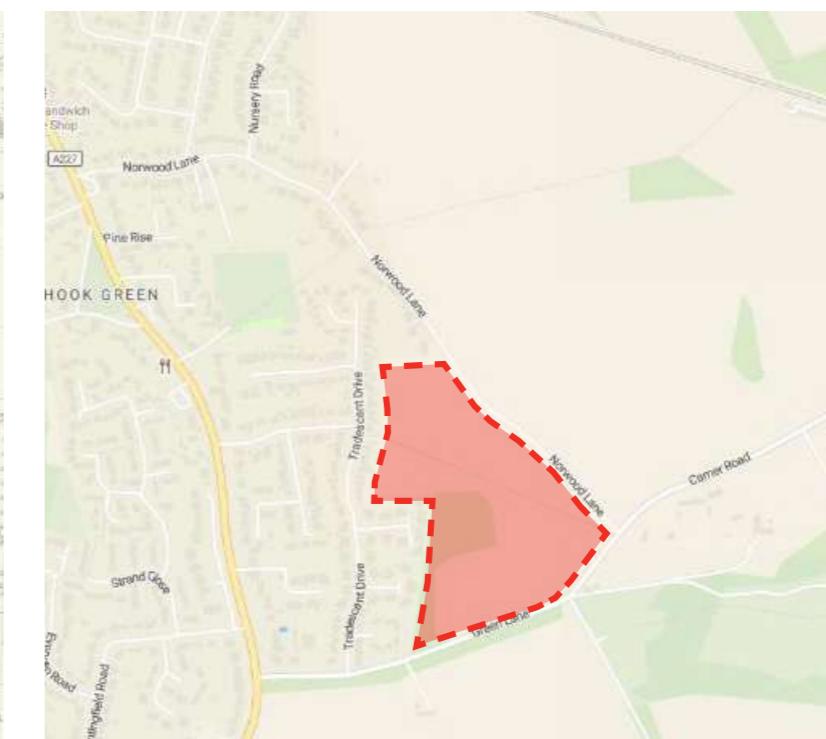
1830-1880



1888-1915



1940-1970



Present

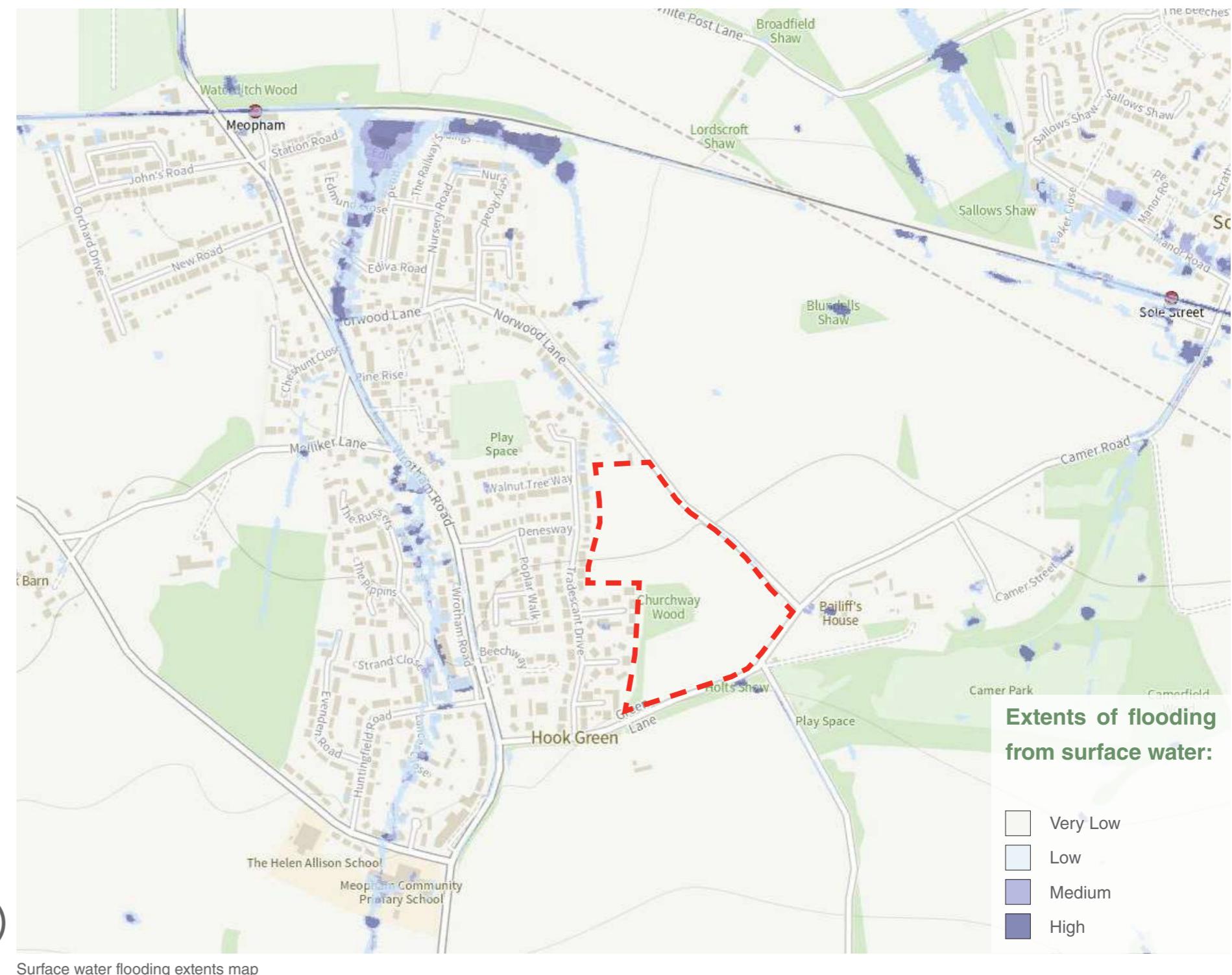
## 2.0 Site Context

### 2.18 Flood Risk

The site steadily falls at a gradient of 1 in 30 from a high point of 109.51mAOD (meters above ordnance datum) upon the south-western boundary to a low point of 93.76mAOD on the north-western boundary.

The EA Flood Map for Planning, which is available online, indicates that the site is located totally within Flood Zone 1 (low flood risk from fluvial and tidal sources).

The EA's updated Flood Map for Surface Water, which is available online and updated in January 2025, indicates that this site is at 'very low' surface water risk which corresponds with an annual probability of flooding that is less than 1%. There is 'low' risk of surface water flooding isolated in the north corner parallel to Tradescant Drive and pooling along Norwood Lane. Both areas of flooding relate to the extreme event surface water flooding with very shallow flooding.



## 2.0 Site Context

### 2.19 Landscape and Visual Context

A baseline landscape and visual appraisal has been undertaken by chartered landscape architects from Turley, to identify the landscape and visual constraints of the site and provide a landscape-led approach to the development proposals.

The appraisal identified that, within the 2009 Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment, the Site is within the Meopham Downs landscape character area which was assessed as an area of Moderate sensitivity. Key Site features which currently contribute to the character of the local area are Churchway Wood, boundary hedgerows along Norwood Lane and Green Lane, a belt of mature trees along the south-west boundary of the Site and a public footpath which passes through the middle of the Site.

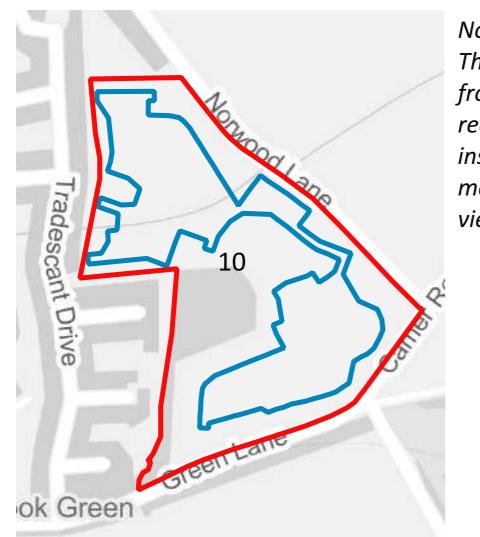
The south eastern boundary of the Site lies adjacent to the Kent Downs National Landscape and the Site is therefore considered to form part of its setting. A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) plan has been prepared based on the indicative concept plan. This shows that there is very little intervisibility between the Site and the National Landscape due to the presence of substantial belts of mature vegetation. The Site is therefore not considered to contribute to the scenic beauty or special qualities of the National Landscape. However, it will still be important to ensure that the scheme proposals are sensitively designed and that the National Landscape is conserved and enhanced.



## 2.0 Site Context

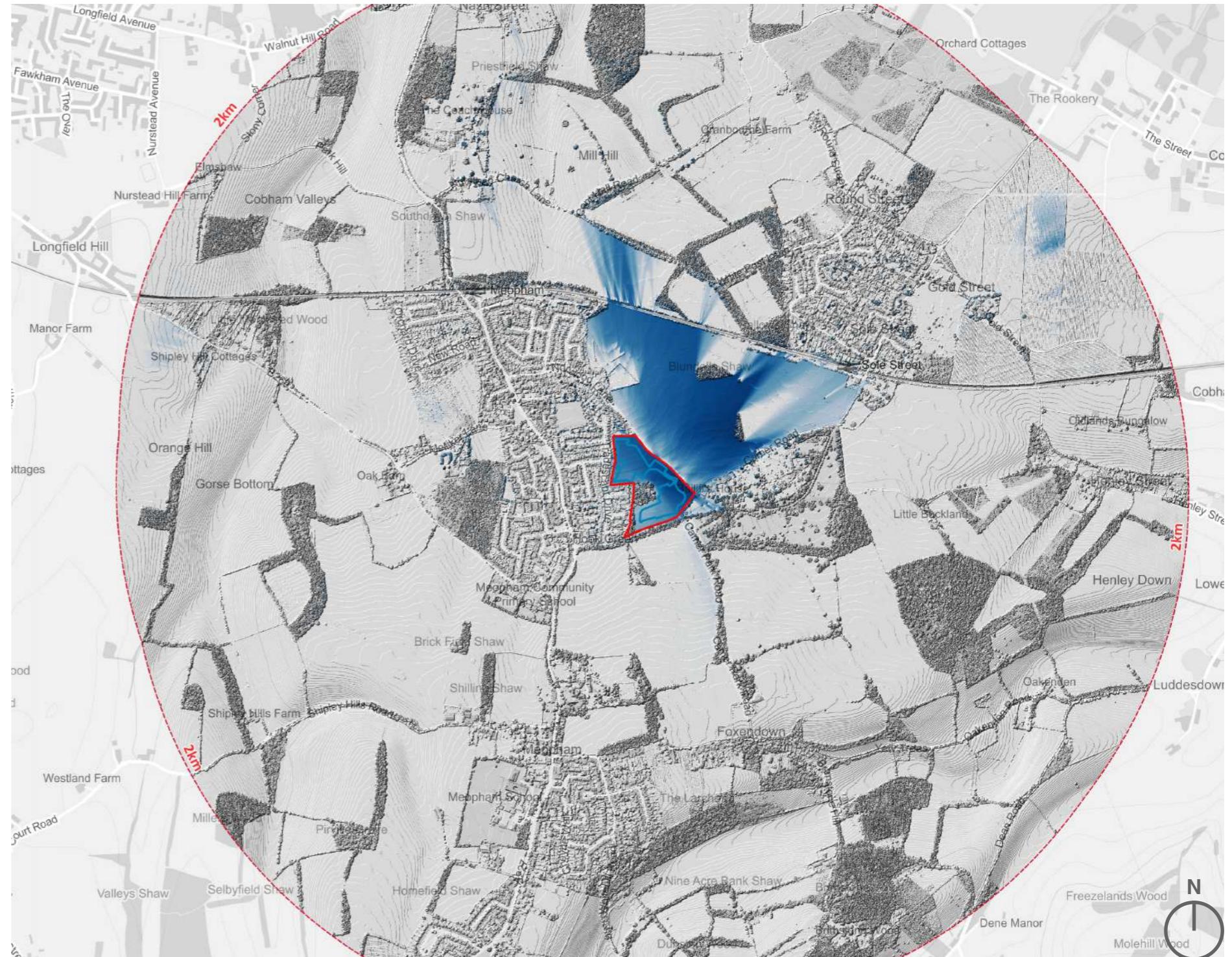
The ZTV plan identified that the key views towards the Site are from: Norwood Lane; Camer Road/Green Lane, the public footpath which crosses the Site; and a public footpath between Sole Street and Norwood Lane. Representative viewpoints to be considered within the application LVIA have been identified.

The low-lying topography of the Site, existing landscape features, and its proximity to the adjacent settlement area Hook Green/Meopham provide design opportunities which would allow for the proposed development to be sensitively integrated within the rural landscape. A strong green infrastructure framework will be needed to help contain the proposed built development, to redefine the settlement edge of Meopham, and to create new landscape opportunities which are beneficial to local people, flora, and fauna.



**Notes:-**  
This viewshed was created using Lidar data from Defra Data Services Platform. The most recent data to cover this area is from 2022. The inset map shows the building heights (in metres from ground level) used for the viewshed.

■ Site Boundary  
■ Study Area  
Zone of Theoretical Visibility  
■ High potential visibility  
■ No visibility



## 2.0 Site Context



## 2.0 Site Context

### 2.20 Key Landscape Design Principles

The below key Landscape Design Principles are the recommended measures to mitigate potential landscape and visual effects of the proposals including measures needed to demonstrate that the proposals would contribute to conserving and enhancing the National Landscape. These principles will be accommodated within the site layout and landscape design.

- Retain open area to form landscape buffer in south east corner (where site adjoins the boundary with the National Landscape) and along edge to Green Lane. These buffers will create a meaningful landscaped area which would form an appropriate transition between the development and the National Landscape Area to the south-east and minimise potential adverse impacts on the designated area.
- Introduction of a new pedestrian and cycle connection to Camer Country Park and connection to Meopham station via north-eastern corner of the Site and Norwood Lane (to provide improved access for all to the National Landscape).
- Inclusion of seating and an interpretation board within the green spaces in the development to provide new opportunities for appreciation and enjoyment of the National Landscape.
- Incorporate new wayfinding posts for footpath routes to promote and improve accessibility to the National Landscape.
- An outward facing development to create positive frontages to the Public Right of Way and areas of public open space. Public Right of Way to be predominately located within greenspace or segregated from vehicular carriageways, allowing for additional landscape enhancements along the routes.
- No street lighting within the development area to preserve character of the National Landscape as a dark landscape.
- Inclusion of key views between the development area and the National Landscape to retain visual connection and allow appreciation of the National Landscape. Including a viewline north towards the church tower of Church of St Mildred in Nurstead. Tree planting would be carefully arranged to not obstruct key views.
- Location of higher density and taller buildings in the north-western part of the Site and reduced height and density on the south and south-eastern edge to minimise potential effects of development on the character of the National Landscape.
- Inclusion of tree planting within the development as street trees, within public open spaces and along the southern and south-eastern boundaries to increase tree cover in the setting of the National Landscape and reduce impact of the proposed dwellings on the character and appearance of the National Landscape.
- Enhancements to Churchway Wood on Site with management and planting works and introduction of regular management regime, secured by a LEMP, to improve management of a Priority Habitat and restore to a favourable condition.
- Creation of wildlife-rich habitats within the proposed open spaces and infiltration basins to create enhanced biodiversity of land within the setting of the National Landscape.
- Repair and reinforce boundary hedgerows and introduce large-maturing hedgerow trees (e.g. oak) to reinforce ecological connectivity with the National Landscape and soften visual impacts of the development in views from adjacent roads and the wider areas to the east and south of the Site.
- Creation of a new public open space at the heart of the development to contribute to the local identity of the site. More active in character than the peripheral semi-natural open spaces whilst remaining in keeping with the scenic countryside surroundings. The open space would include an Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP), community growing spaces (including an orchard), and areas of amenity grass for informal recreation.
- Use palette of colours and materials recommended in the Kent Downs AONB Guidance document on colour to create a development which responds appropriately to the National Landscape and to ensure integration with the contextual landscape.

## 2.0 Site Context

### 2.21 Arboricultural Context

To inform the layout of development a tree survey was undertaken in accordance with BS5837:2012: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendation. The constraints and opportunities presented by trees were identified during that process and fed in to the design concept.

Where better quality trees, such as the tree belt and Churchway Wood along the western boundary, they are retained unaffected by the proposals. Hedgerows around the perimeter of the site are conserved, except for connections to the site where replacement planting will conserve the hedgerow network.

The layout of dwellings, infrastructure and SUDS is being developed to ensure a harmonious relationship with retained trees and provide ample scope to provide new and replacement planting to derive a net gain of trees upon the site.

An arboricultural impact assessment and tree protection plan will be prepared to discuss the impact on trees and to show the protective measures needed during the works.

The outcome of this process is a scheme that retains significant trees, and other tree cover, as well as extensive new tree planting.



View of western boundary of site with tree belt seen in the left hand side of the image and Churchway Wood seen to the right. These features are retained unaffected by the proposals



View of fragmented hedge along eastern boundary of site, with Norwood Lane. Churchway Wood seen in the far left of the image

## 2.0 Site Context

## 2.22 Ecological Status of the Site

Aspect Ecology has carried out a series of ecological surveys in support of the proposal, including a Phase 1 Habitat Survey, with specific surveys having been/currently being carried out with respect to Bats, Badger, Breeding Birds, Dormouse and Reptiles.

The site itself comprises a single large arable field, bound by areas of ruderal/ephemeral vegetation and species-poor grassland field margins. The site is bound by thin, species-poor and heavily managed hedgerows. An area of Lowland mixed deciduous woodland is present along the site central western boundary, whilst a further area of deciduous broadleaved woodland binds the site to the southeast.

## 2.23 Designations

There are no Statutory or Non-statutory nature conservation designations within or immediately adjacent to the site, and the proposals are unlikely to have any effect on more distant designations. The nearest ecological designation is Shorne and Ashenbank Woods (SSSI) located approximately 2.7km northeast of the site.

## 2.24 The Use of the Site by Wildlife

The site generally offers limited opportunities for protected species. Therefore, following replacement hedgerow planting, and the creation of habitats within public open space, there is not expected to be any reduction in the overall amount of bat foraging habitat. A number of trees were recorded to have bat potential within the area of central Woodland habitat, all of which are to be retained under the proposals, and an allowance has been made for a 15m buffer around the area of Priority Habitat.

Should protected species become apparent within the site during the course of the Phase 2 faunal surveys, these will be safeguarded through appropriate mitigation measures, along with faunal and habitat enhancement opportunities to provide enhanced habitat value and new opportunities for local faunal species.

The proposals have sought to minimise impacts and subject to the implementation of appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures, it is considered unlikely that the proposals will result in significant harm to biodiversity. On the contrary, the opportunity exists to provide a number of biodiversity net gains as part of the proposals.



# 2.0 Site Context

## 2.25 Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunity

A proportion of the site is designated within the national habitat network as being within Network Enhancement Zone 1. Land here is defined as Land connecting existing patches of primary and associated habitats which is likely to be suitable for creation of the primary habitat. Factors affecting suitability include proximity to primary habitat, land use (urban/rural), soil type, slope and proximity to coast. Therefore, the action in this zone: to join up existing habitat patches and improving the connections between them can be targeted here.

Thus, the National Habitat Network mapping document highlights the potential opportunity for the sites development proposals to add ecological connectivity within the local area, with the significance if any, being the importance of maintaining robust habitat corridors when designing development and restoring previously neglected/degraded habitats. This enhancement and connectivity opportunity for wildlife will be addressed through the protection and enhancement of on-site woodland areas, along with the bolstering of site boundary features (hedgerows), in addition to careful schematic design and layout, as discussed further below.

In addition, the draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Kent and Medway identifies the site as being within a zone where the safeguarding and enhancement of small pockets of woodland should be prioritised to provide stepping stones for species movement and to connect with hedgerows and scrub. Therefore, an opportunity exists to contribute to the targets within the draft LNRS to safeguard and enhance the existing woodland on site and bring it under favourable long-term management.

## 2.26 Planning for Biodiversity

In accordance with the provisions of national and local polices on maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, as well as the BS:42020 code of practice for biodiversity and guidance from CIEEM, the masterplan has followed the mitigation hierarchy in seeking firstly to avoid impacts on receptors of ecological value. Where such impacts cannot be wholly avoided, schemes of ecological mitigation and compensation have been developed to ensure that there will be no net loss of biodiversity, with the aim of delivering a net biodiversity gain in the longer- term as areas of new habitat creation mature. Ecological enhancements will be incorporated into the scheme in the following ways.

- Enhancement of the existing on-site woodland, by the removal of garden waste tipping, suitable seedling/scrub planting, and woodland ecotone enhancement.
- Creation of ecological buffer zones and green corridors within the context of the wider landscape, comprising new and retained grassland, scrub and tree planting.
- Creation of new species rich grassland throughout the open space areas, notably within the southern and western stretch of open space.
- New and enhanced native hedgerow planting to increase ecological permeability, in particular restoring former hedgerow connections and forging new ones to afford better connectivity. This hedgerow planting will further provide screen planting benefits to buffer the local area from the wider landscape.
- Creation of SuDS features with ecologically sensitive designs.
- New native tree and buffer planting to the peripheries of the site and throughout areas of Public Open Space.

- The introduction of ecologically appropriate and sustainable management regimes for retained and newly created habitats.
- Provision of bird and bat boxes, habitat piles, and the use of hedgehog highways incorporated into all proposed garden boundaries.

## 2.27 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Calculations of biodiversity change have been undertaken using Natural England's biodiversity metric calculation tool 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric' (as published by Natural England in November 2023).

Taking into account the habitat creation and enhancement works described above, and the sympathetic management of proposed ecologically sensitive habitats, a biodiversity net gain of at least 10% is achievable, for both area-based habitats and linear features (hedgerows and ditches). Additional increases in biodiversity which are not reflected within the current metric will also be incorporated, such as bird and bat boxes and reptile hibernaculum, as well as an overall increase in the ecological permeability of the site.

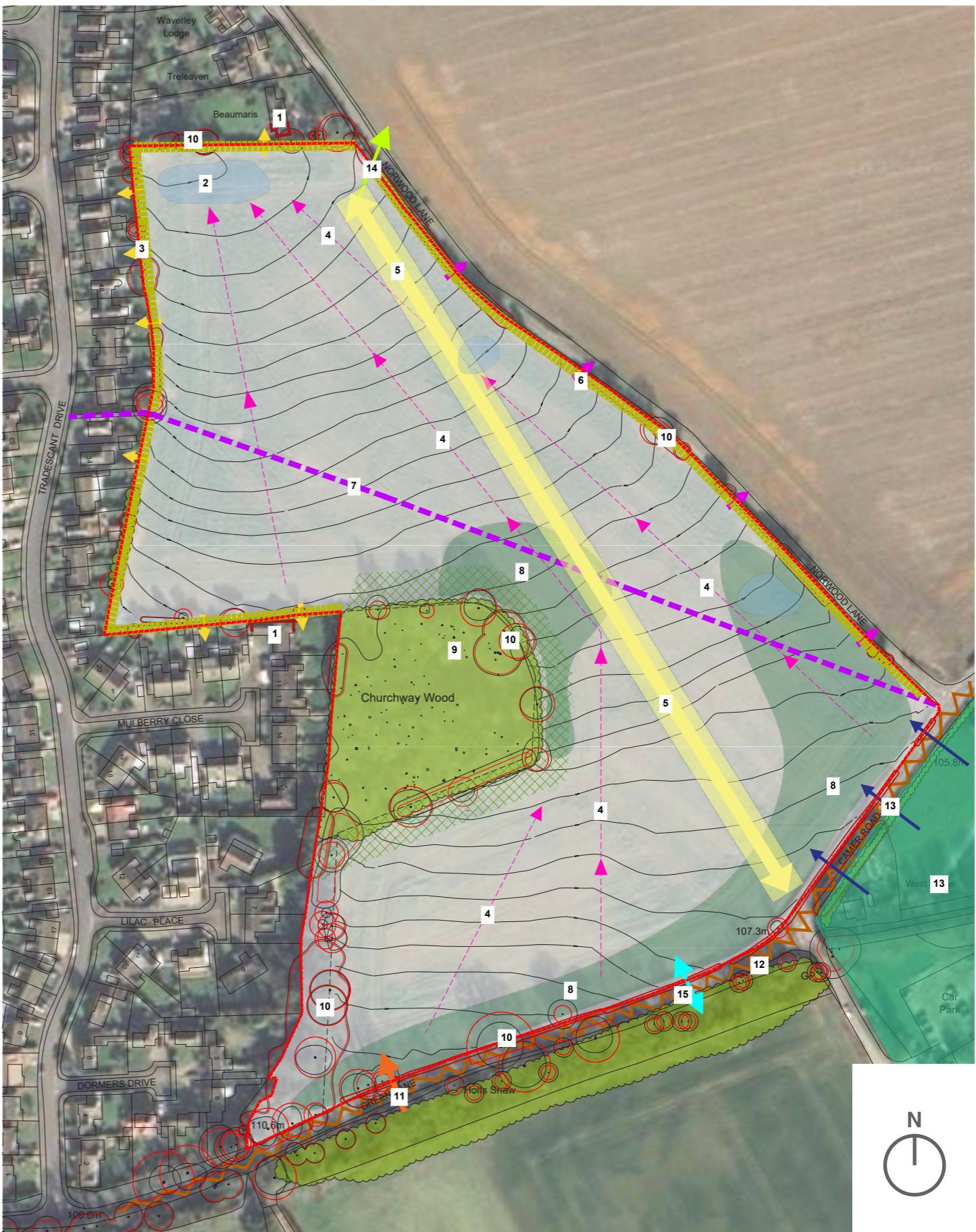
# 2.0 Site Context

## 2.28 Opportunities and Constraints

Key opportunities and Constraints for the site have been identified and are listed below:

1. Buildings are in close proximity to the site boundary - New dwellings to be offset from boundary to prevent overlooking.
2. Potential position for drainage basin (lowest point on the site).
3. Residential interface - dwellings to be backing onto the boundary to prevent overlooking.
4. Site falls towards the north western corner.
5. Potential viewing corridor towards St Mildreds Church to the North and the National Landscape to the South
6. Countryside interface with sparse planting - potential to enhance the eastern boundary.
7. Public Right of Way running north-west to southeast through the site.
8. Potential areas for formal/informal open space and biodiversity enhancement.
9. Churchway Woods to be retained with a 15m buffer to any residential development for protection.
10. Existing Category A-C trees to be retained where possible and new planting to be added.
11. Proposed site access point.
12. Potential noise constraint from Green Lane and Camer Road - buffer to the road and development.
13. Kent Downs National Landscape to the south eastern boundary - area should be designed with sensitivity to the landscape and environment.
14. Proposed emergency access point.
15. Potential pedestrian link to create a public route to Camer Country Park.

Key
► Site Fall
► Residential Interface
► Countryside interface
■ Residential building in close proximity to site boundary
■ Viewing corridor towards St Mildreds Church and the National Landscape
— Public Right of Way (PROW)
▲ Noise
► Proposed Site entrance
■ Kent Downs National Landscape
► Kent Downs National Landscape interface
► Proposed Emergency Access and Cycle link
► Potential Pedestrian link
■ Existing Hedgerow
● Existing Trees
○ Tree RPA
■ Potential drainage basin location
■ Potential Open space areas
❖ 15m buffer to Churchway Wood



# 3.0

## Planning Context

- 3.01 Planning Background
- 3.02 National Design Guide
- 3.03 Local Planning and Housing Need
- 3.04 Green Belt
- 3.05 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

# 3.0 Planning Context

## 3.01 Planning Background

Relevant planning law requires that applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Planning Statement identifies the Development Plan, its relevant policies and the other material planning considerations and assesses the extent to which the proposed development complies.

### Development Plan

The Borough's Development Plan sets out what the opportunities are for development in the Borough and policies to be taken into consideration when determining planning applications for development.

The Development Plan currently consists of:

- Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy and Local Plan Policies Map (2014)
- Gravesham Local Plan First Review (1994) – saved Policies
- Kent County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 (2020)

### Local Plan

The Local Plan (Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)), consists of the core strategy and replaces the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994, acting as the main document in the Gravesham Local Plan. Key policies include policies CS01, CS02, CS11, CS12, CS14, CS15, CS16 and CS19.

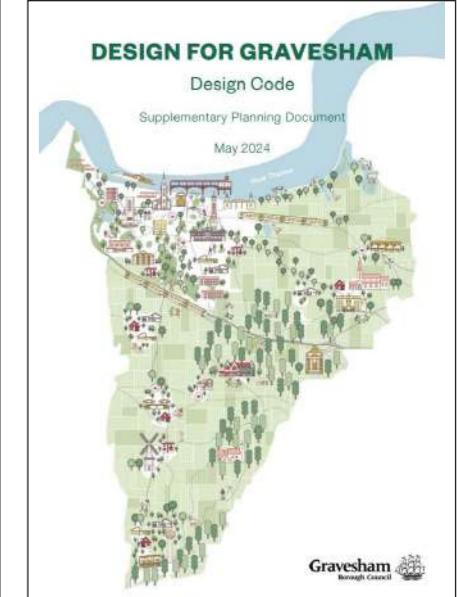
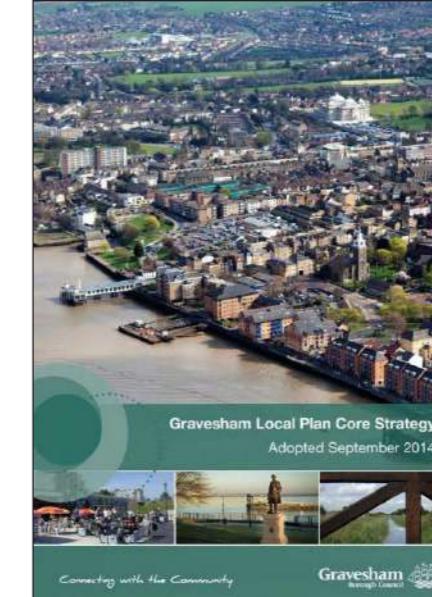
### Supplementary Planning Documents

Various Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) have been published by Gravesham Borough Council and Guidance which has been adopted from Kent County Council. The design process has been informed by and supported by many of these documents. Key SPD's and supplementary planning guidance includes:

- Design for Gravesham - Design Code SPD
- Planning Guidance on Waste Collection Requirements
- Hook Green, Meopham - Rural Conservation Area Appraisal SPD
- Kent Design Guide (except the supplementary guidance on residential parking)
- SPG4: Kent Vehicle Parking Standards (July 2006)

### National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the government's strong support for providing housing, sustainable development, supporting the economy and achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF explains that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and where policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of date, granting permission unless certain tests are failed.



# 3.0 Planning Context

## 3.02 National Design Guide

The National Design Guide sets out principles of how schemes should be developed to create good design. The different sections are listed below and the Design and Access Statement submitted as part of this application demonstrates how these principles have been met.

The outline planning application has informed the National Design Guide - Ten characteristics of well designed places.

**Context** – enhances the surroundings.

**Identity** – attractive and distinctive.

**Built form** – a coherent pattern of development.

**Movement** – accessible and easy to move around.

**Nature** – enhanced and optimised.

**Public spaces** – safe, social and inclusive.

**Uses** – mixed and integrated.

**Homes and buildings** – functional, healthy and sustainable.

**Resources** – efficient and resilient.

**Lifespan** – made to last.



National Design Guide - Ten characteristics of well-designed places

# 3.0 Planning Context

## 3.03 Local Plan and Housing Need

The site is located within the Green Belt on the eastern edge of Hook Green, Meopham, within Gravesham Borough's administrative area. Hook Green, Meopham is a village inset from the metropolitan Green Belt.

The Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in 2014 and it makes provision for 6,170 homes over the plan period 2011-2024, which averages at 362 dwellings per annum. This is significantly below the current local housing need which is 672 dpa as calculated using the standard methodology.

In February 2025, the borough Council published a Five-Year Land Supply Statement for the period 2024-2029, using the latest calculation of local housing need. It concluded that the council can only demonstrate a housing land supply of 3 years.

A review of the Gravesham Local Plan commenced some time ago, with a stage 2 Regulation 18 document published for consultation in 2020. Within this consultation document, Meopham (including Hook Green) was reconfirmed as a large village in the second tier of the settlement hierarchy. The consultation draft proposed that large villages are suitable for expansion and accommodating some growth. The site was identified as a draft development allocation (ref: GB36) for 150 homes.

The Regulation 19 version is due to be published this Autumn.

## 3.04 Green Belt

National policy seeks to prevent inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However, the NPPF makes clear that a review of the Green Belt is justified where there are exceptional circumstances, and this includes where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes.

Furthermore, a recent change in national policy allows for development of 'grey belt' sites which are within the Green Belt, where a number of other conditions can also be satisfied (1). This proposal outlines how it satisfies the criteria of paragraph 155, with further detail provided later within this vision document.

*a) 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;*

We have undertaken a green and grey belt appraisal of the Site (2) which concluded that the Site does not make a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes a, b or d and no areas or assets of importance (3) are present within or close to the Site which would be likely to provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development. The Site therefore meets the definition of grey belt land. Furthermore, the appraisal concluded that the development would not affect the strategic functioning of the Green Belt across the Borough due to its small size and its proximity to the existing settlement of Hook Green.

*b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;*

The borough's latest five year land supply statement, published in February 2025 states the council can only demonstrate a 3 year housing land supply, and the 2023 Housing Delivery Test result was 59%; both of which constitute evidence of significant unmet housing need within Gravesham.

*c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to [paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework] 57;*

The site is within a short walking distance of a number of services and facilities and the proposal seeks to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity through the site and onwards to key destinations in Hook Green. See the Transport and Connectivity section for further detail.

*d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below;*

The proposal includes provision of 50% affordable housing on site, improvements to local pedestrian infrastructure and provision of new publicly accessible green space on site. As such it satisfies the Golden Rules of the NPPF.

(1) Paragraph 155 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024).

(2) Following the approach and assessment criteria set out in the Planning Practice Guidance on Green Belt Assessment (February 2025)

(3) NPPF Footnote 7.

# 3.0 Planning Context

## 3.05 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

The Council faces a high level of housing need over the emerging Local Plan period and has recognised the need to review Green Belt boundaries.

There is also a significant shortfall in housing land supply at present over the period 2024 – 2029 (3 years supply). As a result, paragraph 11d of NPPF is considered to be engaged for decision making purposes. Site assessment work has concluded that the site is unaffected by NPPF footnote 7 policies which would provide a strong reason for refusal.

Any growth around Hook Green, Meopham will require the release of some Green Belt land, and it is considered that development of this site would utilise grey belt land. The site is well located to access a range of local services and facilities by sustainable modes of travel, and is within 1km of Meopham station. The site has no known overriding constraints to its delivery in the next five years.

Taylor Wimpey are working up a outline planning application for the site within this context, whilst continuing to promote the case for the site's allocation and release from the Green Belt in the emerging Local Plan.

# 4.0 Proposal

4.01 Concept Masterplan

4.02 Parameters Plan

4.03 Illustrative Masterplan

4.04 Drainage

4.05 Character Areas

4.06 Rural Edge

4.07 Rural Edge Street Scene

4.08 Central Core

4.09 Central Core Street Scene