



Dean Lewis Estates

Old Ashford Road, Lenham

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

September 2019

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been carried out for the proposed development on land at Old Ashford Road, Lenham by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd (FPCR). The purpose of this LVA study is to provide an assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. The landscape and visual effects have been considered in relation to the proposals detailed in the planning application (Drawing Ref 7968-L-11 PARAMETERS PLAN) and Design and Access Statement (DAS).
- 1.2 FPCR is a multi-disciplinary environmental and design consultancy with over 60 years' experience of architecture, landscape, ecology, urban design, masterplanning and environmental impact assessment. The practice is a member of the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and is frequently called upon to provide expert evidence on landscape and visual issues at Public and Local Plan Inquiries.

Site Location

- 1.3 The site is situated along the eastern settlement edge of Lenham, a small market village in Kent, on the southern edge of the North Downs AONB. The site runs adjacent to Old Ashford Road, is located approximately 750m from the village centre and 14.5km from Maidstone town centre.
- 1.4 Figure 1 shows the location of the site and the site context is shown in the aerial photograph in Figure 2.

Proposed Development

- 1.5 The development proposals primarily include a high-quality residential development and an area dedicated to recreational open space, forming a total area of 11.60ha. This will form part of the wider Green Infrastructure (GI) network and contribute to recreational open space for the Lenham community.
- 1.6 The section of the site adjacent to Old Ashford Road is to incorporate a residential development area for up to 100 dwellings, with vehicular access from Old Ashford Road. Within this it includes informal public open space within a village green, sustainable urban drainage systems, internal footpaths, structural planting and landscaping and retains mature, existing vegetation where possible.
- 1.7 The southern section of the site forms a dedicated sports and recreation area including community sports pitches, a pavilion with parking, a trim trail with exercise equipment and an equipped area for play. The proposals retain and enhance mature vegetation along field boundaries and existing streams where possible and provide new structural planting to blend the development in to the existing landscape.
- 1.8 Although not within the site boundary, mitigation proposals include a 5m wide landscape buffer strip within the field parcel to the north of the A20 Ashford Road. This currently consists of a patchy hedgerow and is proposed to be enhanced with additional planting to help soften views of the development from the north.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 This LVA has been prepared based upon the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, third edition (GLVIA3), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, in 2013.

2.2 In summary, the GLVIA3 states:

“Landscape and Visual impact assessment (LVIA), is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity.” (GLVIA3 paragraph 1.1.)

2.3 There are two components of LVIA:

- *“Assessment of landscape effects; assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right;*
- *Assessment of visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.”* (GLVIA3 paragraph 2.21.)

2.4 The GLVIA3 states:

“LVIA can be carried out either as part of a broader EIA, or as a standalone ‘appraisal’ of the likely landscape and visual effects of a proposed development...”

- *As a standalone ‘appraisal’ the process is informal and there is more flexibility, but the essence of the approach – specifying the nature of the proposed change or development; describing the existing landscape and the views and visual amenity of the area that may be affected; predicting the effects, although not their likely significance; and considering how those effects might be mitigated – still applies”.* (GLVIA paragraph 3.2)

2.5 The components of this report include: baseline studies; description and details of the landscape proposals and mitigation measures to be adopted as part of the scheme; and identification and description of likely effects arising from the proposed development.

2.6 In terms of baseline studies, the assessment provides an understanding of the landscape that may be affected, its constituent elements, character, condition and value. For the visual baseline, this includes an understanding of the area in which the development may be visible, the people who may experience views, and the nature of views.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

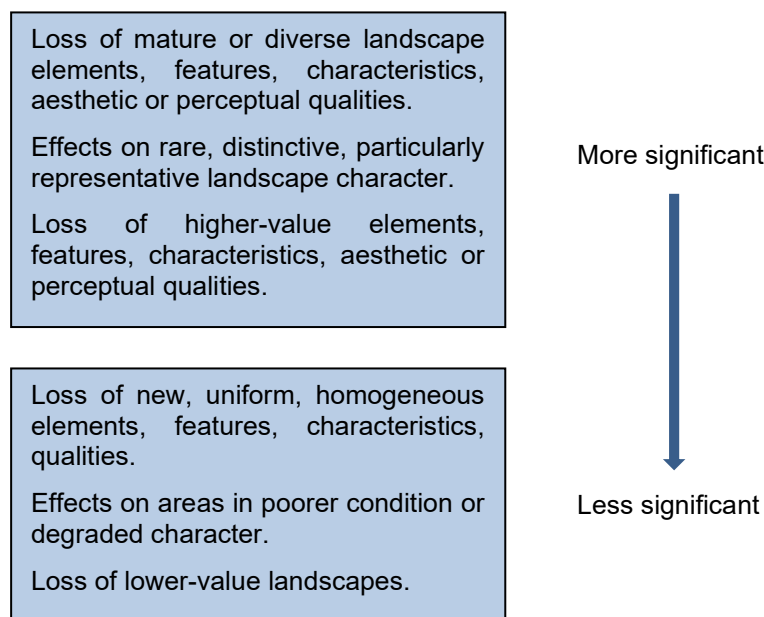
2.7 GLVIA3 states that *“An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource”* (GLVIA3 paragraph 5.1).

2.8 The baseline landscape is described by reference to existing published Landscape Character Assessments and by a description of the site and its context.

2.9 A range of landscape effects can arise through development. These can include:

- Change or loss of elements, features, aesthetic or perceptual aspects that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the landscape;
- Addition of new elements that influence character and distinctiveness of the landscape;

- Combined effects of these changes.
- 2.10 The characteristics of the existing landscape resource are considered in respect of the susceptibility of the landscape resource to the change arising from this development. The value of the existing landscape is also considered.
- 2.11 Each effect on landscape receptors is assessed in terms of size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. In terms of size or scale of change, the judgement takes account of the extent of the existing landscape elements that will be lost or changed, and the degree to which the aesthetic or perceptual aspects or key characteristics of the landscape will be altered by removal or addition of new elements.
- 2.12 The level of effect is determined by considering the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of effect on the landscape. Final conclusions on the overall landscape effects are drawn from the assessment components described. This appraisal describes the nature of the landscape effects, and whether these are adverse or beneficial, at the following stages of development; construction, completion (year 1) and longer term (year 15).
- 2.13 GLVIA3 sets out some guidance on the underlying principles, which are used in this appraisal. This includes Figure 5.10, Scale of significance. Whilst this scheme is not EIA development, and judgements on significance are not therefore required, the Figure does provide useful guidance on reaching an overall judgement on the level of effects. This is repeated below (note this includes the correction of a typo, from the published document).



- 2.14 The criteria used in the appraisal are set out in Appendix A.

Assessment of Visual Effects

- 2.15 An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity. This appraisal describes the nature of the visual effects and, whether these are adverse or beneficial, at the following stages of development; construction, completion (year 1 Winter) and longer term (year 15 Summer).

- 2.16 The first stage in the assessment is to identify approximate visibility/ visibility mapping. This is done by either a computerised Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)¹, or by manual methods using map study and field evaluation. A series of viewpoints are included within the assessment that are representative of views towards the site from surrounding visual receptors. Other views of the site are included where it supports the description and understanding of the site's landscape and visual characteristics.
- 2.17 The views also typically represent what can be seen from a variety of distances from the development and different viewing experiences.
- 2.18 It is important to remember that visual receptors are all people. For each affected viewpoint, the assessment considers both the susceptibility to change in views and the value attached to views.

"The visual receptors most susceptible to change are generally likely to include:

- *Residents at home;*
 - *People, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views;*
 - *Visitors to heritage assets, or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience;*
 - *Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area;*
- Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes tend to fall into an intermediate category of moderate susceptibility to change. Where travel involves recognised scenic routes awareness of views is likely to be particularly high."* (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.33.)

"Visual receptors likely to be less sensitive to change include:

- *People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape;*
- *People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity, not on their surroundings, and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life (although there may on occasion be cases where views are an important contributor to the setting and to the to the quality of working life)." (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.34.)*

- 2.19 Each of the visual effects is evaluated in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration or reversibility.

- 2.20 In terms of size or scale, the magnitude of visual effects takes account of:

- *"The scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;*
- *The degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line height, colour and texture;*

¹ Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV): A map usually digitally produced, showing areas of land within which a development is theoretically visible. [GLVIA3]

- *The nature of the view of the proposed development, in terms of the relative amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses” (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.39).*
- 2.21 The geographical extent of the visual effect in each viewpoint is likely to reflect:
- The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
 - The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development;
 - The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.
- 2.22 As with landscape effects, the duration of the effect could be short to long term or permanent and the same definitions apply.
- 2.23 GLVIA3 states that there are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and context and with the type of proposal, but the following points should be noted;
- *“Effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant*
 - *Effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant*
 - *Large-scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view.” (GLVIA3 paragraph 6.44)*
- 2.24 The criteria used in this appraisal are set out in Appendix A.

Overall Landscape and Visual Effects

- 2.25 The final conclusions on effects, whether adverse or beneficial, are drawn from the separate judgements on the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of the effects. This overall judgement is formed from a reasoned professional overview of the individual judgements against the assessment criteria.
- 2.26 GLVIA3 notes, at paragraphs 5.56 and 6.44, that there are no hard and fast rules with regard to the level of effects, therefore the following terms have been used for this appraisal:
- **Major**
 - **Moderate**
 - **Minor**
 - **Negligible**
- 2.27 Where it is determined that the assessment falls between or encompasses two of the defined criteria terms, then the judgement may be described as, for example, Major/ Moderate or Moderate/ Minor. This indicates that the effect is assessed to lie between the respective definitions or to encompass aspects of both.

3.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2018 updated 19th June 2019)

- 3.1 The NPPF sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policy and in combination these policies give the Government's vision of sustainable development. The NPPF emphasises the need for well-designed places, promoting healthy and safe communities and conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 3.2 Regarding landscape and green infrastructure, the Natural Environment section of the NPPF provides a policy context for the countryside and green infrastructure. The key objectives include protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and, minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- 3.3 Paragraph 170 states at part a) that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance valued landscapes and goes on to clarify that this should be in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan. Part b) states that planning policies and decisions should recognise *"the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside"*.
- 3.4 Paragraph 171 advises that:
"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries".
- 3.5 Paragraph 172 goes on to add:
"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues".
- 3.6 The site is within an undesignated landscape with no special protected status, however is located immediately adjacent to the boundary of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The character of the site and its immediate context is assessed within this report to help inform decisions regarding *"the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside"*. The potential to enhance green infrastructure networks is also considered.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG,)

- 3.7 The PPG was first published on 6th March 2014 and is a regularly updated online planning resource which provides guidance on the NPPF and the planning system. The NPPF continues to be the primary document for decision making.

Local Planning Policy

Maidstone Borough Local Plan (Adopted 25 October 2017)

- 3.8 The Maidstone Borough Local Plan was adopted on the 25th of October 2017 and sets out a framework for development until 2031. With regards to spatial distribution of development, the document states:

“Lenham provides a good range of local facilities and is the only rural service centre with a secondary school. The village has access to employment opportunities locally, and good rail and bus links to Maidstone and Ashford towns. There is easy access to the A20 which leads to Junction 8 of the M20 motorway. There are landscape constraints but, despite this, the village is considered the most suitable to accommodate the most housing development of all the rural service centres.”

- 3.9 The following local development documents are superseded by the Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017:

- All policies of the Maidstone Borough-wide Local Plan 2000 that were saved in 2007;
- Affordable Housing Development Plan Document (2006);
- Open Space Development Plan Document (2006);
- Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document (2006).

- 3.10 The following adopted policies are of relevance to landscape and visual matters in relation to the proposed development:

Policy SP5 Rural Service Centres

- 3.11 This policy considers rural service centres outside of the town centre and urban area, which are considered the most sustainable settlements in Maidstone's settlement hierarchy and includes Lenham.

- 3.12 Specifically, the policy states:

“Within the designated rural service centres of Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst, as shown on the policies map, the council will:

1. Focus new housing and employment development within the settlements when it is:

i. An allocated site or broad location in the local plan;

ii. Minor development such as infilling; or

iii. The redevelopment of previously developed land that is of a scale appropriate to the size of the village.

2. Retain and improve existing employment sites and encourage new employment opportunities provided the site is in an appropriate location for, and suited to, the use.

3. Resist the loss of local shops, community facilities and green spaces, whilst supporting new retail development, community services and green spaces to meet local need.”

Policy SP8 Lenham Rural Service Centre

- 3.13 This policy specifically considers the role of Lenham as a Rural Service Centre, which are described as the *“second most sustainable settlements in the hierarchy to accommodate growth.”*
- 3.14 To this effect the policy states:
- “1. In addition to minor development and redevelopment of appropriate sites in accordance with policy SP5, approximately 155 new dwellings will be delivered on two allocated sites (policies H1(41) to H1(42)).”*
- 3.15 Considering infrastructure requirements, policy SP8 states:
- “iii. Provision of 0.34 hectares of natural/semi-natural open space...*
- 5. ...open space will be supported to meet local needs in accordance with policy SP5(3).”*
- 3.16 In addition to this, the policy discusses the role of Lenham as a ‘Broad location for housing growth’, whereby it is identified as suitable to support the delivery of 1000 dwellings post April 2021.
- “Lenham is also identified as a broad location for growth for the delivery of approximately 1,000 dwellings post April 2021, in accordance with policy H2(3). Master planning of the area will be essential to achieve a high quality design and layout, landscape and ecological mitigation, and appropriate provision of supporting physical, social and green infrastructure. Housing site allocations and associated infrastructure requirements will be made through the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan or through the local plan review to be adopted by April 2021. Housing sites should avoid significant adverse impact on the setting of the AONB and coalescence with neighbouring Harrietsham.”*

Policy H2 Broad locations for housing growth

- 3.17 This separate policy is in addition to policies SP8 and reiterates the suitability of Lenham along with Maidstone town centre and Invicta Barracks as potential locations for significant housing provision.
- 3.18 With regard to Lenham specifically, the document states that the existing range of facilities, transport infrastructure and employment opportunities combined with the suitability of the land adjacent to existing built form make it a suitable location for approximately 1000 dwellings. It identifies that masterplanning of the area including infrastructure improvements and housing site allocations is essential to ensure that Lenham remains a sustainable settlement, through the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan. This is discussed later in the document.
- 3.19 The policy states:
- “The broad locations for future housing growth allocated under policies H2(1) to H2(3) have the potential to deliver up to 2,440 homes to meet the borough's housing need within the plan period. These locations will deliver a range of developments of varying sizes, types and densities. In addition to the specific requirements set out in the detailed policies for the broad locations, all sites should meet the following criteria:*
- i. Development will be subject to the results and recommendations of a phase one ecological survey as determined by the council;*
 - ii. Appropriate surface water and robust flood mitigation measures will be implemented where the site coincides with identified flood zones 2 and 3 and shall be subject to a flood risk*

assessment, including sites in Flood Zone 1 greater than 1ha in area, and shall incorporate sustainable drainage systems;

- iii. Provision of, or contributions towards, publicly accessible open space should be made in accordance with policy DM19;*
- iv. Provision of affordable housing and a suitable mix of dwelling sizes should be made in accordance with policies SP19 and SP20;*
- v. An individual transport assessment for each development, to be submitted to and approved by the Borough Council in consultation with Kent County Council as the highway authority and Highways England, where appropriate, will demonstrate how proposed mitigation measures address the cumulative impacts of all sites taken together; and*
- vi. Appropriate contributions towards strategic and local infrastructure will be provided where proven necessary.”*

Policy H2 (3) Lenham broad location for housing growth

3.20 The policy addresses the role of Lenham as a broad location for housing growth.

3.21 The policy states:

“The rural service centre of Lenham is identified as a broad location in accordance with policies SP8 and H2 for approximately 1,000 dwellings post April 2021. Master planning of the area will be essential to achieve a high quality design and layout, landscape and ecological mitigation, and appropriate provision of supporting physical, social and green infrastructure. Housing site allocations and associated infrastructure requirements will be made through the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan and/or the local plan review.

It is important that development of Lenham takes place in a manner that is well integrated with the existing communities of Lenham, so that they are seen as, and function as, the village which they adjoin, rather than stand-alone communities. In order to ensure a coordinated and planned approach, proposals for development within Lenham which come forward prior to an agreed Neighbourhood Plan and/or the local plan review being adopted will be refused.

Housing site allocations and associated infrastructure requirements will be made through the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan and/or the local plan review which will illustrate how environmental, social, design and economic objectives of the local plan will be met and to demonstrate the physical and functional integration of the site(s) within Lenham. The Neighbourhood Plan and/or local plan will incorporate and address the following principles:

- 1. Make efficient use of land and provide a broad range of housing choice by size and tenure (including market and affordable housing) and cater for people with special housing needs;*
- 2. Outline measures to mitigate the traffic impacts from development on the strategic and local road networks;*
- 3. Identify appropriate provision of, or contributions towards infrastructure improvements;*
- 4. Incorporate primary school(s) and secondary school(s) if the scale of development justifies on-site provision, or if not, contributions to provision off-site in order to meet the needs generated by the broad location;*

5. *Ensure development is fully integrated with the surrounding village through shared community uses, and a variety of transport modes including walking, cycling and public transport;*
6. *Provide, commensurate with the scale of development, a network of open spaces and green infrastructure for amenity, play, sport and recreation, including allotments, local nature reserves woodlands, green spaces and wildlife corridors. Such provision should respond positively to the wider area to ensure enhanced linkages and networks;*
7. *Incorporate appropriate landscape treatment which ensures that developments can be satisfactorily assimilated into the surrounding area;*
8. *Protect and, where possible, enhance any features of biodiversity value on site or which are off-site but might be affected by the proposed development;*
9. *Incorporate an appropriate flood risk management strategy and measures for its implementation; and*
10. *Ensure adequate provision is made for enhanced and comprehensive sewerage infrastructure."*

Policy SP17 Countryside

- 3.22 This policy considers the countryside defined as: *"all those parts of the plan area outside the settlement boundaries of the Maidstone urban area, rural service centres and larger villages with defined settlement boundaries and is depicted on the policies map. The countryside has an intrinsic character and beauty that should be conserved and protected for its own sake. However, there is also a need to ensure a level of flexibility for certain forms of development... This needs to be mitigated in a way that maintains and enhances the distinctive character of the more rural parts of the borough."*
- 3.23 The policy goes on to consider the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting, drawing attention to the open countryside located immediately to the south of the AONB which forms a large extent of the setting for this designation.
- 3.24 The policy considers how this sensitive landscape is coming under threat from inappropriate development. To this effect, the *"council will ensure proposals conserve and enhance the natural beauty, distinctive character, biodiversity and setting of the AONB."*
- 3.25 Consideration also extends to the setting of the AONB, described by the Management Plan as *"the land outside the designated area which is visible from the AONB and from which the AONB can be seen, but may be wider when affected by intrusive features beyond that."*
- 3.26 The policy also goes on to consider Landscapes of Local Value, such that the council will seek to conserve or enhance its valued landscapes.
- 3.27 Specifically, the policy states:

"The countryside is defined as all those parts of the plan area outside the settlement boundaries of the Maidstone urban area, rural service centres and larger villages defined on the policies map.

1. Development proposals in the countryside will not be permitted unless they accord with other policies in this plan and they will not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.

...

3. Great weight should be given to the conservation and enhancement of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4. Proposals should not have a significant adverse impact on the settings of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

...

6. The distinctive landscape character of the Greensand Ridge, the Medway Valley, the Len Valley, the Loose Valley, and the Low Weald, as defined on the policies map, will be conserved and enhanced as landscapes of local value.

7. Development in the countryside will retain the separation of individual settlements.

Account should be taken of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan and the Maidstone Borough Landscape Character Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document."

Policy DM3 Natural environment

3.28 This policy considers Maidstone's natural environment as a fundamental part of the borough's economic wealth and social wellbeing, with far reaching benefits.

3.29 With regards to landscape, the policy considers the visual character of Maidstone's landscape is highly valued by those that live work and visit the borough and include a number of high-quality landscapes including the Kent Downs AONB.

3.30 The policy considers both designated and undesignated landscapes as natural assets. In line with the NPPF, valued landscapes including the Greensand Ridge, the Low Weald, and the river valleys of the Medway, the Loose and the Len, which are afforded protection in policy SP17.

3.31 A landscape character assessment, together with capacity studies, forms part of the local plan evidence base and should be used to inform development and land management proposals.

3.32 In relation to landscape and visual matters, the policy specifically states:

"1. To enable Maidstone borough to retain a high quality of living and to be able to respond to the effects of climate change, developers will ensure that new development protects and enhances the natural environment by incorporating measures where appropriate to:

i. Protect positive landscape character, areas of Ancient Woodland, veteran trees, trees with significant amenity value, important hedgerows, features of biological or geological interest, and the existing public rights of way network from inappropriate development and avoid significant adverse impacts as a result of development;

...

v. Provide for the long-term maintenance and management of all natural assets, including landscape character, associated with the development;

vi. Mitigate for and adapt to the effects of climate change; and

vii. Positively contribute to the improvement of accessibility of natural green space within walking distance of housing, employment, health and education facilities and to the creation of a wider network of new links between green and blue spaces including links to the Public Rights of Way network.

2. Where appropriate, development proposals will be expected to appraise the value of the borough's natural environment through the provision of the following:

...

iii. A landscape and visual impact assessment to take full account of the significance of, and potential effects of change on, the landscape as an environmental resource together with views and visual amenity.

3. Publicly accessible open space should be designed as part of the overall green and blue infrastructure and layout of a site, taking advantage of the potential for multiple benefits including enhanced play, wildlife, sustainable urban drainage, tree planting and landscape provision. The form and function of green infrastructure will reflect a site's characteristics, nature, location and existing or future deficits..."

Policy DM19 Open space and recreation

- 3.33 This policy considers the provision of open space and recreation and states: "The council will seek to secure publicly accessible open space provision for new housing and mixed use development sites, in accordance with quantity, quality and accessibility standards set out in Policy DM19."
- 3.34 The policy goes on to state quantity, quality and accessibility standards according to categories of publicly accessible open space provision for new housing or mixed-use development sites within the borough.

Policy DM30 Design principles in the countryside

- 3.35 This policy considers the design principles that must be met for all development within the countryside in order to achieve high quality design.
- 3.36 Specifically, the policy states:

"Outside of the settlement boundaries as defined on the policies map, proposals which would create high quality design, satisfy the requirements of other policies in this plan and meet the following criteria will be permitted:

- i. The type, siting, materials and design, mass and scale of development and the level of activity would maintain, or where possible, enhance local distinctiveness including landscape features;
- ii. Impacts on the appearance and character of the landscape would be appropriately mitigated. Suitability and required mitigation will be assessed through the submission of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments to support development proposals in appropriate circumstances;
- iii. Proposals would not result in unacceptable traffic levels on nearby roads; unsympathetic change to the character of a rural lane which is of landscape, amenity, nature conservation, or historic or archaeological importance or the erosion of roadside verges;
- iv. Where built development is proposed, there would be no existing building or structure suitable for conversion or re-use to provide the required facilities. Any new buildings should, where practicable, be located adjacent to existing buildings or be unobtrusively located and well screened by existing or proposed vegetation which reflect the landscape character of the area; and
- v. Where an extension or alteration to an existing building is proposed, it would be of a scale which relates sympathetically to the existing building and the rural area; respect local building styles and materials; have no significant adverse impact on the form, appearance or setting of the building,

and would respect the architectural and historic integrity of any adjoining building or group of buildings of which it forms part.

Account should be taken of the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan and the Maidstone Borough Landscape Character Guidelines SPD."

Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation Draft (September 2018)

- 3.37 The Regulation 14 version of the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan sets out the community's aspirations for land use and development in the parish of Lenham up until the period of 2031. The plan is based on guiding principles set out in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, with an overarching vision of the plan aiming to *"Protect the heritage features of Lenham village and the hamlets of the Parish, and their setting in relation to the AONB, and the rural parts of the Parish, while allowing appropriate growth."* The document also identifies that: *"The unique character and heritage of Lenham village and the hamlets should be protected. It will also be necessary to protect the landscape setting with respect to the North Downs AONB and rural countryside."*
- 3.38 The following policies are of relevance to landscape and visual matters in relation to the proposed development:

Quality Design: Policy D1

"Proposals for new development should seek to optimise the capacity of the site by responding appropriately to the scale, character, materials, grain and architectural rhythm of the existing built form. Proposals should also demonstrate how they respond to the landscape, local and longer-views, the environment and historic assets.

...

The design of new development shall be mindful of Lenham's location in the immediate foreground of the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);

The size of buildings should be such that the buildings are almost screened by trees and other vegetation when viewed from the scarp of the AONB;

...

Planning permission will not be granted for development of a poor design that does not respond to the opportunities for improving local character and quality."

Natural and amenity green space: Policy GS1

"Subject to other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, support will be given to proposals for new development that:

- *Create new wildlife habitats, connect, enhance and retain existing wildlife habitats.*

...

- *Improve links between Lenham and the surrounding countryside, upgrading the quality of the landscape along these routes and strengthening connections with the rural footpath network, including the North Downs Way."*

- 3.39 Whilst the northern part of the site is situated within the revised settlement boundary within the plan, the southern section is located outside of the boundary. The following policy relates to development outside of the boundary, which is classed as 'countryside'.

Countryside Protection: Policy CP1

"...Proposals for new development in the countryside beyond the extended settlement boundary will be assessed in terms of the potential impact of the development upon the visual setting and landscape features of the site and its surrounds..."

- 3.40 The plan and local policies map highlight the proposed development site as a 'Strategic Housing Delivery Site' in the 'North-East of Lenham Village Extension' and illustrates the settlement boundary as being extended to include the proposed development site. The southern part of the site is dedicated to sports provision is indicated on the local policies map as 'Local Green Space' and labelled as 'Sport and Recreation Area'.
- 3.41 The following policy relates to general design principles for sites highlighted as Strategic Housing Delivery Sites:

Policy SHDS2: Housing Delivery Sites: Design Principles

"Application for development should demonstrate how they meet the following design principles:

- (i) Achieve a high quality, attractive, accessible and safe environment;*
- (ii) Promote innovation in design so that contemporary and traditional design approaches are proposed where appropriate;*
- (iii) Achieve a high level of integration between the existing communities and new development and ensure that the new development is part of a cohesive whole;*
- (iv) Create a sense of place within each character area and reinforce local distinctiveness where appropriate;*
- (v) Create a legible layout with buildings addressing road frontages, public area frontages and a coherent structure of buildings, open space and routes for movement (walking, cycling, public transport, private car);*
- (vi) Design measures that minimise journeys to school by car must be integrated within the proposed development.*
- (vii) Optimise the placemaking function of streets, allowing for public transport connectivity but without vehicles dominating the street environment.*
- (viii) Ensure that a mix of housing types and styles are provided across the site and therefore a diversity of building forms and a varied street scene;*
- (ix) Ensure that the edges of the sites, where development meets the surrounding countryside, is addressed sensitively in landscape terms;*
- (x) Secure attractive and clearly defined public and private spaces that will enable retention and enhancement of the existing landscape, trees and vegetation."*

- 3.42 The following policy is specific to the proposed development site highlighted as a 'Strategic Housing Delivery Site':

Policy – Strategic Housing Delivery Site 1 (Land South of Old Ashford Road)

“Land South of Old Ashford Road, shown on Site 1 on the Lenham Local Policies Map is allocated for development of approximately 85 dwellings at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare. In addition to the requirements set out in other policies of this Plan, planning permission will be granted if the following criteria are met”:

- 3.43 With regard to design and layout, the policy states the following:

“The design and layout of the site will be informed by a detailed landscape and ecological analysis and Masterplan reflecting that analysis and will incorporate the following features:

- (i) the provision of a robust tree-planted wildlife landscape corridor to the east of the site including a demonstration of the mechanism whereby such corridor will be permanently retained.*
- (ii) appropriate footpath/cycleway linkages incorporating existing public footpaths within the site (diverted if necessary) to link in with a new footpath/cycleway link along the Old Ashford Road frontage to the site and a new footpath/cycleway link along the eastern boundary of the housing area.*
- (iii) the provision of a robust tree-planted wildlife landscape corridor at least 15 m wide along the north side of the A20 Ashford Road. The corridor shall include appropriate breaks to provide for views to Lenham Cross which lies to the north.*

The design and layout will follow the principles established in the illustrative Masterplan appended to this Neighbourhood Plan.”

Other Relevant Strategies, Guidelines or Documents

- 3.44 Maidstone has adopted several supplementary planning documents (SPD) and planning policy advice notes, which provide supplementary guidance to local and national planning policies.

- 3.45 Adopted supplementary planning documents (SPD) and supplementary guidance documents (SG) of relevance to the site include the following:

- Kent Design Guide (2005);
- Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 (Second Revision)(2014);
- Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment Supplement (2012).

Kent Design Guide (2005)

- 3.46 The Kent Design Guide was developed in 2005/2006 by the Kent Design Initiative, and aims to provide guidance on how to achieve high standards in planning applications in terms of design and construction within Kent. The document provides guidance on criteria used to assess planning applications of new developments. The following sections from the document discuss landscape and visual matters:

- 3.47 Section 1.3 refers to ‘Respecting Context and Character’, and states:

“To achieve a well-integrated design, the established character of existing towns, villages and countryside must be respected. The design of new developments should evolve from the special local or Kentish character. This means:

- *Respecting the scale, street patterns, landscape, local materials, colours, style and detailing of surrounding areas*

...

- *Maintaining and creating good views and vistas, and*
- *Forming a harmonious composition with surrounding buildings or landscape features.”*

3.48 Section 1.7 refers to ‘Landscape and Open Space’, and states:

“Landscape is a combination of nature and culture; it is formed by topography, trees, hedges, paths, roads, structures and materials. These elements determine the landscape character of an area...”

3.49 Section 2.1.1 refers to ‘The Site Appraisal’, and in terms of the ‘Landscape Setting’, states:

“The landscape setting of a development site should be understood, extended and enhanced within the site.

Landscape is a combination of nature and culture; it is formed by topography, trees, hedges, paths, roads, structures and materials. These elements determine the landscape character of an area.

A well-designed landscape will provide:

- *an attractive setting for a development, its users and occupiers*

...

- *a sense of place with a clear identity*
- *a sense of space and enclosure*
- *spatial benefits including integrating the visual impact of the built environment with nature*

...

- *noise and visual screening, and*
- *retention of cultural associations with the natural environment.”*

Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-2019 (Second Revision)(2014)

- 3.50 The Kent Downs AONB Management Plan was revised in 2014 and sets out aims, policies and actions for the conservation management and enhancement of the AONB over a five-year period as well as setting a longer-term vision.
- 3.51 The Management Plan was adopted by all planning authorities with land in the AONB and considers issues affecting the AONB, categorizing these according to a number of themes. *Sustainable Development* is a theme of particular relevance to the site include consideration of ‘*Setting and Pressure of growth and infrastructure*’.
- 3.52 The site lies directly adjacent to The Kent Downs AONB, however is located wholly outside of its boundary and is physically separated from the designated landscape by the A20 Ashford Road, Ashmill Business Park and Old Ashford Road.
- 3.53 In particular, the setting of the AONB namely the land outside the designated area which is visible from the AONB and from which the AONB can be seen, is of particular relevance. Although not given the same weight as proposals located within the AONB itself, weight given to proposals

affecting the setting of the AONB will depend on the significance of the impact and include matters such as the size of proposals, their distance and incompatibility with their surroundings. Considerable emphasis is given to potential effects upon the intrinsic qualities of the AONB. To this effect, the management plan includes policies to protect the AONB from inappropriate development and adverse effects upon its setting, with consideration of satisfactory mitigation.

- 3.54 The management plan considers the pressure of growth and infrastructure upon the AONB and considers this in relation to the expansion of significant urban areas that adjoin or lie in close proximity to the AONB boundary.
- 3.55 In addition to the pressure exerted upon the AONB by large-scale development, there is continual pressure for small-scale development and change creating a cumulative impact on the special character and qualities of the AONB.
- 3.56 Considering views from within and outside of the AONB, Aim 6 of Sustainable Development theme states: *"The setting and views in and out of the AONB are conserved and enhanced."*
- 3.57 Further to this, Policy SD8 states: *"Proposals which negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the AONB will be opposed unless they can be satisfactorily mitigated."*

Policy Summary

- 3.58 Lenham has been highlighted as a sustainable location for substantial new residential development in regional policy and local policy which has established the proposed site as suitable for residential and recreational development. Regional and local policy both offer strong protection to the Kent Downs AONB and its setting. Design guidance should be utilised in the development of proposals to reduce impacts of new development on views, particularly with regard to those from the Kent Downs AONB.

4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

Landscape Character

National Character

- 4.1 National Character Area (NCA) profiles have been prepared by Natural England for the 159 NCAs defined across England. These NCA profiles include a description of the natural and cultural features that shape the landscape, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics. Figure 4a illustrates the NCAs and County defined character areas within the context of the site while District areas are shown on Figure 4b.
- 4.2 At this very broad landscape scale, the site lies within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 120 'Wealden Greensand'. This NCA stretches from Folkestone on the east coast in Kent to the edge of Alton in Hampshire before curving south east to Storrington in West Sussex. It therefore covers a very extensive landscape area.
- 4.3 A summary description of the NCA is given, and states:
- "The long, curved belt of the Wealden Greensand runs across Kent, parallel to the North Downs, and on through Surrey. It moves south, alongside the Hampshire Downs, before curving back eastwards to run parallel with the South Downs in West Sussex. Around a quarter of the NCA is made up of extensive belts of woodland – both ancient mixed woods and more recent conifer plantations. In contrast, the area also features more open areas of heath on acidic soils, river valleys and mixed farming, including areas of fruit growing."*
- 4.4 The site itself is within the section of the character area described as:
- "...eastwards from Dorking the character becomes considerably more urbanised, with many towns including Maidstone, Reigate, Ashford and Folkestone. The area forms a major transport corridor, with the M25, M20 and M26 motorways and other major road and rail routes all running through it..."*
- 4.5 The Key Characteristics for the NCA of pertinence to the site and its context include:
- *"A long, narrow belt of Greensand, typified by scarp-and-dip slope topography, including outcrops of Upper Greensand, Gault Clay and Lower Greensand. The Greensand forms escarpments separated by a clay vale: the overall undulating and organic landform... gives a sense of intimacy to the landscape;*
 - *Fields are predominantly small or medium, in irregular patterns derived from medieval enclosure. Boundaries are formed by hedgerows and shaws, with character and species reflecting the underlying soils. On the clay, hedgerows are dense and species-rich, with occasional standard oaks. On more acidic soils they generally consist of hawthorn and blackthorn, also with occasional oak trees, and often trimmed low;*
 - *Agricultural land comprises a mosaic of mixed farming, with pasture and arable land set within a wooded framework. There is a fruit-growing orchard belt in Kent...;*
 - *The rural settlement pattern is a mixture of dispersed farmsteads, hamlets and some nucleated villages. Large houses set within extensive parks and gardens are found throughout the area;*

- *In the east of Kent, the Wealden Greensand has a gentler and more open aspect than in the wooded west. This part of the area is also more marked by development, with the presence of major towns and communication corridors such as the M26, M25 and M20 motorways and railway lines including the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (High Speed 1);*
 - *The local built vernacular includes the use of Greensand, ragstone... as well as timber-framing and weatherboarding;*
 - *There are a range of historic landscape features, including... small quarries and relics of the iron industry (including hammer ponds... older deer parks and more recent 18th-century parklands;*
 - *Surface water is an important feature across the Greensand, with many streams and rivers passing through the NCA: the Western Rother, Wey, Arun, Medway and the Great and East Stour."*
- 4.6 The profile for (NCA) 120 'Wealden Greensand' includes a number of Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO), the following of which are considered to be of relevance to the Site and proposals;
- 4.7 SEO 1: *"Protect and manage the nationally recognised and distinctive character of the landscape, conserving and enhancing historic landscape character, tranquillity, sense of place, and the rich historical and geological heritage of the Wealden Greensand. Enhance access provision where appropriate, to maintain public benefit from and enjoyment of the area."*
- 4.8 Suggested methods for achieving SEO 1 of relevance to the Site and development proposals include:
- *"Using an understanding of the areas traditional and historical architecture, its distinctive local materials (timber-framing with weatherboarding, Greensand, ragstone and, in the west, malmstone) and its patterns of settlement, to inform the appropriate conservation and use of historic buildings, and to plan for and inspire any new development so that it makes a positive contribution to local character;*
 - *Maintaining and enhancing rights of way and open access throughout the area, improving links...to towns and villages. Developing new permissive access to historical sites and quality green space as part of a cohesive network of inspiring access provision...;*
 - *Maintaining the sense of intimacy within the landscape and the expansive views over the Low Weald, South Downs and London from the scarp tops; and*
 - *Supporting local initiatives for the restoration of traditional orchards and hop gardens that are characteristic of Kent, and parts of Hampshire and Surrey. Using and promoting local fruit varieties where viable, and where this provides links to our heritage and sense of place, and maintains genetic diversity."*
- 4.9 SEO 2: *"Protect, manage and significantly enhance the mosaic and connectivity of semi-natural habitats within the mixed farmed landscape - particularly the internationally important woodland and heathland habitats - for the benefit of biodiversity, pollination, soil and water regulation, landscape character and enhanced adaptation to climate change."*
- 4.10 Suggested methods for achieving SEO 2 of relevance to the Site and development proposals include:

- *“...Restoring hedgerow boundaries and shaws, especially where they will help to impede cross-land flows (and thus further aid the regulation of water quality), maintain the predominantly irregular field pattern to benefit cultural heritage and the sense of place, improve the landscape character, and help to create a robust, interlinked wildlife network with enhanced resilience to climate change;*
 - *...Improving the ecological connectivity of woodlands, heathlands, copses, grasslands, road verges, hedgerows and wetlands, strengthening the overall network of habitats, reducing fragmentation and improving the permeability of the landscape for species movement. This ecological connectivity should extend out from the NCA and link with adjoining areas, creating a coherent suite of quality habitats.”*
- 4.11 SEO 3: *“Manage and significantly enhance the quality of the characteristic wetland and water environment of the Greensand. This will contribute to sustainable flood risk management, will benefit the regulation of water quality and water availability, as well as enhancing the sense of place, biodiversity, recreation and wetland habitat adaptation to climate change.”*
- 4.12 Suggested methods for achieving SEO 3 of relevance to the Site and development proposals include:
- *“...Ensuring that the ditch systems and wet grasslands (which support a rich ditch flora and attract nationally important populations of winter birds) are appropriately managed to maintain their biodiversity value as core sites;*
 - *Enhancing the recreational assets of the wetland environment, including its aesthetic qualities, any water-based activities, and walking and cycling routes along the river corridors...*
 - *Encouraging sustainable water use...”*
- 4.13 SEO 4: *“Plan to deliver a network of integrated, well managed green spaces in existing and developing urban areas, providing social, economic and environmental benefits, and reinforcing landscape character and local distinctiveness - particularly on or alongside the boundaries of the designated landscapes within the Wealden Greensand.”*
- 4.14 Suggested methods for achieving SEO 4 of relevance to the Site and development proposals include:
- *“... Providing local recreational opportunities that divert pressures from the SPA and SAC designated areas of heath, helping to provide climate change adaptation, flood alleviation, enhanced landscape character and biodiversity benefits...*
 - *Creating enhanced areas of new – and improving any existing – multifunctional natural green space...*
 - *Ensuring that development and its associated infrastructure (including light, noise and air pollution), does not intrude on the rural landscapes or the special qualities of adjacent protected landscapes (the South Downs National Park, the Kent Downs AONB and the Surrey Hills AONB) conserving remaining areas of tranquillity;*
 - *Promoting the use of sustainable and locally sourced materials, vernacular building techniques and styles, and existing landscape character, to inform design and ensure integration with the surrounding landscape.”*
- 4.15 Extracts from the profile of this NCA are included at Appendix B.

- 4.16 Natural England's character area boundaries are not precisely mapped, and there is a statement which indicates there is a "zone of transition between NCAs". For this reason, the adjacent National Character Area 119: 'North Downs' to the north (which encompasses a wide proportion of the Kent Downs AONB) is also relevant due to its close proximity to the site, as illustrated by Figure 4a. This NCA runs adjacent to the northern section of the Wealden Greensand NCA, and stretches from Farnham in Surrey to Dover on the east coast in Kent and therefore also covers a very extensive landscape area stretching over 150km.
- 4.17 A summary description of the NCA is given, and states:
- "The North Downs National Character Area (NCA) forms 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 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty designations are testament to the scenic qualities and natural beauty of the area..."*
- 4.18 The Key Characteristics for the NCA of pertinence to the site and its context include:
- *"Cretaceous Chalk forms the backbone of the North Downs. A distinctive chalk downland ridge rises up from the surrounding land, with a steep scarp slope to the south providing extensive views across Kent..."*
 - *The area is cut by the deep valleys of the Stour... The river valleys cut through the chalk ridge, providing distinctive local landscapes which contrast with the steep scarp slope.*
 - *Woodland is found primarily on the steeper slopes of the scarp, valley sides and areas of the dip slope capped with clay-with-flints. Well wooded hedgerows and shaws are an important component of the field boundaries, contributing to a strongly wooded character...*
 - *Small, nucleated villages and scattered farmsteads including oasts and barns form the settlement pattern..."*
- 4.19 The North Downs NCA also has four SEO's, those that are considered pertinent due to the proximity of the site include:
- 4.20 SEO 1: *"Manage, conserve and enhance the distinctive rural character and historic environment of the North Downs... Protect the tranquillity of the landscape and sensitively manage, promote and celebrate the area's rich cultural and natural heritage, famous landmarks and views for future generations."*
- 4.21 SEO 4: *"Plan to deliver integrated, well-managed multi-functional green space in existing and developing urban areas, providing social, economic and environmental benefits and reinforcing landscape character and local distinctiveness, particularly on or alongside the boundaries of the designated landscapes within the North Downs."*

The Landscape Assessment of Kent, October 2004.

- 4.22 The Landscape Assessment of Kent was prepared for Kent County Council by Jacobs Babbie and was published in October 2004. It compiles existing landscape character assessments undertaken across the county in order to conform to the current landscape assessment guidance in defining the landscape character areas. It also includes a condition and sensitivity study of the character

areas to formulate character-based strategies which aim to “ensure the continued distinctiveness of the Kent Landscape”.

- 4.23 The site lies within the ‘Hollingbourne Vale East’ landscape character area, adjacent to ‘Hollingbourne Vale’ to the north, ‘Hollingbourne Vale West’ to the west and ‘Hothfield Heathy Farmlands’ to the south.
- 4.24 Key characteristic features of ‘Hollingbourne Vale East’ are described as:
- “Gently undulating landscape on heavy clay soils. Small streams draining east to Great Stour. Mixed farmland of small sheep-grazed pasture and larger arable fields. Locally extensive loss of hedgerows and woodland to allow exploitation of good quality soils at scarp foot. Scarp foot villages. Chalk scarp dominating views to north.”*
- 4.25 The character area description with particular relevance to the site includes:
- “Just east of Lenham the landscape is unusually open, this characteristic extending up into the grazing land of the chalk scarp face above East Lenham and New Shelve Farm... cultivation to improve pastures and the intensification of arable utilising huge machines, however, has encouraged a bleak pattern of few trees or hedgerows. The Downs remain enclosing the landscape to the north but the lack of trees and hedgerows allows sight of the M20 and Channel Tunnel Rail Link to the south. This enlarged transport corridor... has a profound effect on the tranquillity of the vale on its northern boundary.*
- ...The outskirts of Lenham have now crept down the A20 towards Charing and need restraint on the eastern boundary to conserve the essentially rural character of the village. Elsewhere, on the clay, settlement is limited to scattered farmsteads, often vernacular in construction and of ancient origin.”*
- 4.26 The condition of the Character Area is described as ‘**Very Poor**’ owing to a number of detracting elements within the landscape, specifically:
- “The extensive loss of hedgerow and shaws in this large-scale arable landscape has resulted in an incoherent landscape, void of features, which no longer reflects the landform. There are some visual detractors associated with the trunk road, and... unsympathetic farm buildings. The ecological interest is weak - there are a few small patches of wetland, some generative vegetation on the railway embankment and fragments of hedgerow.”*
- 4.27 The sensitivity of the Character Area is described as ‘**Low**’ and is attributed to the following:
- “There are few distinguishing features in the landscape which contribute to a local sense of place. The gently undulating landform is unremarkable within the area, although bounded by the chalk scarp to the north. Visibility is therefore moderate over the open landscape.”*
- 4.28 A strategy for each Character Area is provided, which relates to its character and condition. The strategy for ‘Hollingbourne Vale East’ is identified as ‘**Create**’. The summary of actions which relate to the site and its context include the following:
- *“Create regenerative woodland to the scarp-side of large arable fields and, whilst maintaining the large scale of farmland, reintroduce cross-contour shaws to link with existing streams.*
 - *Create new corridors of riparian vegetation.”*
- 4.29 The site lies immediately adjacent to ‘Hollingbourne Vale’ Character Area to the north, which loosely corresponds to the boundary with the Kent Downs AONB.

- 4.30 The character area description includes the following which relates to the site and its context:
- The steep scarp of the Downs between Boxley and the Stour Valley, overlooks a wide, rolling landscape of mixed farmland.*
- ...
- The scarp is crossed by a considerable number of roads and footpaths... Its open nature, and the wide views it offers, mean that this stretch of landscape is particularly sensitive to development. The existing road and railway network, along the southern boundary, already has a considerable impact on the views and quiet enjoyment of this part of the AONB."*
- 4.31 Key characteristic features of this character area are described as:
- "Rolling landscape of mixed farmland overlooked by yew-dominated scarp. Thick hedges along Pilgrim's Way. Large, scarp-foot arable fields. Historic springline villages."*
- 4.32 The condition of the Character Area is described as '**Poor**' which is described as owing to visual detractors including industrial and unremarkable suburban development, with visual unity interrupted by rail and road transport corridors and a weak ecological integrity due to fragmented habitats which are in decline. Positive features include the pattern associated with the scarp and the Pilgrim's Way as a notable heritage feature.
- 4.33 Recent built form apparent in the landscape and few characteristic features other than the hedgerows along some roads and Pilgrim's Way leads to low distinctiveness. The sensitivity of the character area however is described as '**Moderate**' as the landform itself is a dominant feature and associated with high visibility due to an unenclosed landscape.
- 4.34 The summary of recommended actions within this character area is to '**Restore and Create**'.
- 4.35 The 'Hollingbourne Vale West' Character Area is situated to the west of the site where the settlement edge of Lenham village begins, and spreads west to Eccles, just north of Maidstone. Key characteristic features of this character area are described as:
- "Undulating landscape on wet clay soils. Small broadleaf woodlands and irregular pastures. Infrequent settlement. Small streams (the head waters of the river Len) draining west to Maidstone. Chalk scarp dominating views to north".*
- 4.36 The Character Area is said to contain frequent woodlands and streams with positive impact associated with historic buildings and farmhouses mixed with more recent built form, however the visual unity of the landscape is interrupted by the rail and road corridors, industrial and urban development leading to overall condition being described as '**Poor**'.
- 4.37 The sensitivity is described as '**Moderate**' which is attributed to the historic sense of place and views of the landform, however there is some enclosure by woodland and there has been modification by recent development.
- 4.38 The summary of recommended actions is to '**Restore and Create**'.
- 4.39 The 'Hothfield Heathy Farmlands' Character Area is situated to the south of the site Key characteristic features of this character area are described as:
- "Undulating landscape of mixed farmlands. Heathland or heath characteristics on the Folkestone Beds. Historic Parkland."*

- 4.40 The Character Area is said to maintain a coherent land use pattern and some positive built development with clusters of high-ecological importance habitat. The condition is classed as '**Poor**' however due to negative impacts associated with unsympathetic land uses, the motorway and railways and poor landscape heritage features such as woodland and field enclosures.
- 4.41 The area is said to have a moderate sense of place associated with the heathland and parkland features however local distinctiveness is low, with low visibility over an unremarkable landform due to intermittent tree cover leading to '**Low**' sensitivity.
- 4.42 The summary of recommended actions is to '**Create**'.

Maidstone Character Assessment 2012 (amended July 2013).

- 4.43 Maidstone Character Assessment published in 2012 was prepared by Jacobs Engineering Ltd on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council and amended following consultation in July 2013.
- 4.44 The report identifies seven landscape types and fifty-eight character areas within the rural areas outside of Maidstone. The report includes a description of each character area and continues with an assessment of the condition and sensitivity in order to arrive at landscape management guidelines.
- 4.45 This report supersedes the 2000 study and provides a more detailed sub-division of the original eighteen Character Areas, taking account of the changes that have occurred in the landscape as well as changes in the landscape assessment techniques and methodology.
- 4.46 The seven identified landscape character types are areas that have "...broadly similar patterns of key physical elements such as geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern."
- 4.47 The site itself is situated within the broader landscape type 'Gault Clay Vale', which spans the width of Maidstone and described as:

"The Gault Clay Vale is situated at the foot of the chalk scarp of the North Downs. Some of the northern parts of this landscape are situated within the nationally designated Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

...

To the south of the Kent Downs AONB, the landscape forms the setting to the AONB designation. From the vale, panoramic views of the North Downs escarpment are often available. As the immediate foreground to, and the foothills of, the Downs, the landform is undulating, and numerous spring lined settlements and farmsteads are situated where the Gault Clay meets the Lower Chalk."

- 4.48 Generic guidelines for this broad landscape type of pertinence to the site and the development proposals include:
- *"Conserve the undeveloped foreground and rural setting of the Kent Downs AONB;*
 - *Conserve the species rich hedgerow boundaries and promote enhanced species diversity within hedgerows where this has been weakened;*

...

- *Where possible, woodland habitats should be increased and the historic hedgerow network should be reinstated. Woodlands should be linked through replacing post and wire fences with species rich hedgerows;*

...

- *Conserve the undeveloped rural landscape, which forms an appropriate setting to the spring line settlements;*
- *Consider views towards any proposals from the elevated North Downs scarp."*

4.49 The site is situated within the 'East Lenham Vale' LCA (number 17), within the Gault Clay Vale. It is adjacent to number 11, 'Lenham Scarp' to the north, number 33, 'Lenham Heath Farmlands' to the south and number 16, 'Harrietsham to Lenham Vale' to the west. The LCA begins at the settlement edge of Lenham Village and spreads east to the boundary with Ashford, which is 2km to the west of the site, as 'East Lenham Vale' is the easternmost Character Area within the study. Its northern boundary runs along the North Downs Way / Pilgrims Way mid-way up the escarpment, and shares some of its southern boundary with Lenham Heath Road.

4.50 Key characteristics of 'East Lenham Vale' are described as follows:

- *"Landscape to north of A20 is situated within the Kent Downs AONB;*
- *Series of springs and drains run south towards the Great Stour;*
- *Medium to large sized fields of arable and pasture;*
- *Field boundaries and roads run against and along the contours;*
- *Isolated farmsteads;*
- *Railway line cuts through landscape with arched brick underpasses."*

4.51 The Character Area landscape description which relates to the site and its context includes the following:

"...the landscape is slightly more enclosed than the exposed downland landscape to the north... a simple pattern of large open arable fields, divided by native hedgerows...fields are medium sized and there is a greater sense of enclosure, with scattered mixed blocks of ancient woodland and frequent native hedgerows... railway line is defined by a mature vegetation belt where it crosses the landscape... a series of vegetation lined ditches and drains running southwards towards the Great Stour... very few roads cross the landscape, which is largely accessed via private tracks which link farmsteads and a network of public footpaths, which cross the landscape and include the Stour Valley Walk promoted Long Distance Path... the busy A20 follows the contours along the foot of the Downs... Traffic on the A20 to the north and the M20 to the south is audible and detracts from the remoteness and tranquillity of some parts of this landscape."

4.52 With regards to topography, the assessment states:

"The landform is undulating, and begins to rise most evidently north of the A20 at the foot of the scarp."

4.53 With regards to views, the assessment states:

"As the ground rises to the north there are some longer views across the lower landscape to the south and traffic on the A20 is evident. From the A20 there is a sense of being at the foot of the

Downs, with immediate views of the inclining landscape to the north.... The developed extent of Lenham is noticeable in views from fields immediately to the east of the village, where the distinctive flint and ragstone Lenham Church and the facade of a timber barn at Court Lodge stand out within other more recent residential development. Facing north, there are long, extensive, panoramic views of the elevated North Downs. The chalk memorial cross to the north of Lenham and the A20 stands out as a key landmark feature that draws the eye in many views across the undulating rural foreground."

- 4.54 The assessment considers the condition of the Character Area to be **'Good'**, stating:

"This is a unified landscape where the consistently undulating topography, frequent woodland blocks and hedgerow enclosed fields provide a coherent pattern of elements... few visual detractors... a good hedgerow network and frequent woodland blocks..."

- 4.55 By contrast, the assessment also identifies that:

"...cultural integrity is variable... the setting of some historic farm buildings has been degraded slightly with the location of more recent and large farm buildings".

- 4.56 The sensitivity of the Character Area is described as **'High'** based on locally distinctive natural and built development and long-distance views associated with the Kent Downs, stating:

"The location at the foot of the Downs, evidenced by the sweeping views of the elevated downland to the north, is a distinctive feature. The field pattern, hedgerow network, woodland blocks and vernacular style farmhouses are very distinctive key characteristics which contribute both to local distinctiveness and continuity. Overall, visibility is high in this location at the foot of the Downs. Whilst immediate views are often enclosed by intervening vegetation, there are striking long distance views of North Downs."

- 4.57 The assessment considers condition and sensitivity of the Character Area in order to arrive at the recommended 'Summary of Actions'. A number of actions of relevance to the site include:

- *"Conserve the undeveloped foreground and rural setting of the Kent Downs AONB;*
- *Conserve and enhance hedgerows and tree belts and restore hedgerow boundaries and field headlands where practicable;*
- *Restore historic hedgerow and shaw pattern where opportunities arise;*
- *Plant new oak standards in hedgerows to replace ageing specimens;*
- *Conserve the traditional setting of historic buildings and Conservation Areas, and soften the impact of recent farm buildings through native planting*
- *Conserve the defined boundary between Lenham's Compact settlement and the surrounding rural area."*

- 4.58 Key characteristics of 'Lenham Scarp' are described as follows:

- *"Landscape forms part of the steep scarp of the North Downs, and is situated within the Kent Downs AONB;*
- *Open views across the landscape to the south;*
- *Large, open arable fields and a strong sense of exposure;*
- *Small fragments of broadleaved woodland;*

- *Isolated farmsteads and clusters of properties;*
 - *Narrow lanes run across and along contours.”*
- 4.59 Key characteristics of ‘Lenham Heath Farmlands’ are described as follows:
- *“Landscape forms part of the wider foreground to the Kent Downs AONB;*
 - *Poor acidic soils;*
 - *Severance caused by HS1 and the M20;*
 - *Sand extraction;*
 - *Artificial landform resulting from infrastructure mitigation;*
 - *Headwaters of the Great Stour;*
 - *Loss of traditional hedgerow boundaries;*
 - *Equestrian grazing with temporary electric fencing.”*
- 4.60 Key characteristics of ‘Harrietsham to Lenham Vale’ are described as follows:
- *“Landscape to the north forms part of the Kent Downs AONB;*
 - *Topography slopes upwards to the north across the foothills and lower slopes of the North Downs;*
 - *Mosaic of mixed farmland divided by non rectilinear hedgerow boundaries;*
 - *Pocket of lowland dry acid grassland;*
 - *Small field pattern and equestrian grazing north of Harrietsham;*
 - *Series of drains running south, often defined by ribbons of native vegetation;*
 - *Blocks of native woodland;*
 - *Large scale industrial and commercial development.”*

Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment Supplement 2012

- 4.61 The Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment Supplement 2012, is intended to be read together with the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment 2012.
- 4.62 The LCA Supplement contains typical planting lists based on those previously set out in the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Guidelines 2000. These have been reviewed and amended to reflect the landscape character types identified by the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment 2012.
- 4.63 Further to this, the LCA Supplement contains saved parts of the Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Guidelines 2000, namely the general landscape guidance, special issues and plant lists. This information will not be reviewed until the Landscape Character Guidelines Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is published.

Maidstone Landscape Capacity Study: Sensitivity Assessment (January 2015)

- 4.64 The Landscape Capacity Study: Sensitivity Assessment was published by Jacobs on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council in January 2015 and provides a broad comparative sensitivity of landscape character areas within the borough to possible development.
- 4.65 The report forms part of the evidence base to the Local Plan and will be used to inform the Sustainability Appraisal of land allocation proposals in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 4.66 The report is not intended to identify in any detail areas suitable for development but may provide guidance to the local planning authority when deciding the type and scale of development that may be appropriate within Maidstone Borough whilst respecting its character.
- 4.67 The report considers landscape character areas defined in the published Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment 2012 with the exception of the Kent Downs AONB and urban area of Maidstone.
- 4.68 The assessment draws upon data in the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment 2012, alongside desktop study and field verification to provide a description of the factors that contribute to landscape character sensitivity and visual sensitivity for each landscape character area. It then assigns a value for landscape character sensitivity and visual sensitivity to arrive at a value for overall landscape sensitivity and identifies each landscape character area's capacity to tolerate change.
- 4.69 As in the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment 2012, this document identifies the site as wholly within Landscape Character Area 17, 'East Lenham Vale'. The landscape sensitivity is identified as '**High**' and visual sensitivity is also identified as '**High**', thus indicating that the area is sensitive to change, stating:
- "Development should be limited to infill within the village boundaries".*
- 4.70 The study provides guidelines which reiterate those included in the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment 2012.

Maidstone Landscape Capacity Study: Site Assessments (January 2015)

- 4.71 The Maidstone Landscape Capacity Study: Site Assessments was published by Jacobs on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council in January 2015 and forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.
- 4.72 The study determines the capacity of the landscape to accommodate either housing, mixed use, employment or economic development on a number of sites throughout the Maidstone Borough.
- 4.73 The assessment derives a judgement on landscape capacity through the assessment of a combination of landscape character sensitivity, visual sensitivity and landscape value. These culminate in an assessment on Landscape Capacity to Accommodate Change determined on a three-point scale from high, moderate or low.
- 4.74 The southern part of the site forms part of 'HO3-297 (25) South of Old Ashford Road, east of Tanyards Farm', which is assessed as having a '**High**' landscape character sensitivity combined with a '**Moderate**' visual sensitivity, culminating in a '**High**' landscape sensitivity overall. When combined with a '**High**' landscape value, the result is that the character area has a '**Low**' capacity to accommodate housing.

- 4.75 'Landscape character Sensitivity' of the site is described as follows:
- *"A large open flat landscape typically representative of the Gault Clay Vale with many characteristic elements including a network of ditches with occasional trees and intermittent boundary hedges;*
 - *Predominately large arable fields with smaller areas of pasture;*
 - *Generally in good condition with strong rural character."*
- 4.76 Visual sensitivity of the site is described as follows:
- *"Extensive views over the open wider countryside, albeit contained locally by the railway line to the south;*
 - *As the site is detached from the village, visual receptors are somewhat distant but include residents in properties on the east side of Lenham;*
 - *Views are possible from properties on the Old Ashford Road, Tanyard Farm and the farm buildings to the west although many are screened by intervening vegetation;*
 - *Visible from the Kent Downs AONB."*
- 4.77 Landscape value relating to the site is described as follows:
- *"Locally distinct landscape that forms part of the setting of the Kent Downs AONB;*
 - *Potential views from Lenham Conservation Area;*
 - *Numerous public rights of way linking the village centre to the wider countryside, including the Stour Valley Walk."*
- 4.78 Opportunities and Constraints are identified as follows:
- *"Potential impact on the setting of and views from the Kent Downs AONB*
 - *Extension of urban edge would increase the footprint of Lenham when viewed from the AONB including the effects of lighting*
 - *Potential cumulative effects with adjacent sites."*
- 4.79 The following mitigation measures are considered:
- *"Reflect the style, density, pattern and materials of adjacent properties;*
 - *Consider the relationship with the adjoining countryside;*
 - *Integrate green links along existing public rights of way to maintain attractive links between the village centre and the wider countryside;*
 - *Consider the development of a village framework to address cumulative effects with adjacent sites."*
- 4.80 The northern part of the site adjacent to the A20 and Old Ashford Road is not assessed in this document.

Kent Downs AONB Landscape Assessment (1995)

- 4.81 The Kent Downs AONB Landscape Assessment was prepared by the Countryside Commission. A description of the Kent Downs AONB landscape character is available on the Kent Downs website

under 'Landscape Management – Landscape Character', and describes the 13 main character areas.

- 4.82 'Hollingbourne Vale' character area characterises the stretch of landscape within the AONB between Boxley to Westwell to the north of the site beyond the A20 Ashford Road, which corresponds to the that identified in the Maidstone Character Assessment 2012 and illustrated on Figure 4a.
- 4.83 Key characteristics of the character area are as follows:
- *“Yew dominated scarp woodlands in the west, open cultivated fields on the scarp in the east, with many hedgerow trees.*
 - *Extensive views from the scarp.*
 - *Large arable scarp foot fields.*
 - *Some mixed farmland.*
 - *Predominantly grassland on scarp.*
 - *Thick hedges along Pilgrim's Way.*
 - *Historic springline villages.*
 - *Scarp crossed by considerable number of roads and footpaths (some, former drove-ways).”*

Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014 – 2019 (Second Revision April 2014)

- 4.84 In recognition of the national and international importance of AONB landscapes local authorities are required to jointly prepare, publish and subsequently review a management plan and includes a number of policies for the management of the AONB.
- 4.85 The Kent Downs AONB Management Plan was prepared by the Kent Downs AONB Unit and Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) for the relevant local authorities.
- 4.86 The aim of the Management Plan is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB, the statutory purpose of the designation.
- 4.87 The AONB Management Plan policies will be reflected and in part implemented through policies in each Local Plan and in development management decisions.
- 4.88 The Management Plan contains a number of policies according to several themes, of particular relevance are those which consider sustainable development as well as those landform and landscape character.

Designations

- 4.89 Neither the site nor the immediate context is covered by any landscape designations at the national or regional scale, however the boundary of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located within close proximity to the site, immediately north of the A20 Ashford Road.
- 4.90 The site itself is identified in the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation Draft as policy 'Strategic Housing Delivery Site 1', with the south of the site being identified as contributing to 'Local Green Space'. The land immediately west of the southern section of the site and up to the

south eastern settlement edge is also identified as 'Lenham Local Landscape Area' (Policy LLLA1), described as:

"... particularly attractive in the landscape and forms a very special setting to the village. This area should be given long-term protection from harmful, intrusive development and within this area priority will be given to the protection of the landscape and countryside setting of the village over other planning objectives."

- 4.91 There are a number of Listed Buildings within Lenham, mostly associated with the village centre and set within the Conservation Area, including the Grade 1 Listed buildings the 'Church of St Mary' and the 'Barn at Court Lodge', both approximately 650m from the site. The closest is the Grade 2 Listed Building, 'Tanyard Farmhouse' approximately 150m away from southern section of the site, the Grade 2 Listed war memorial at 'The Cross' is 750m away along the North Downs Way within the AONB, and there are others associated with scattered farm houses of varying distances from the site.
- 4.92 One Scheduled Ancient Monument is located within the village centre, an early 18th century mortuary and lock-up on Faversham Road.
- 4.93 Within the wider landscape the Chilston Park Registered Park and Garden is located to the south of Lenham Heath Road. The majority of the park is located to the south of the M20. It also contains Chilston Park Hotel which incorporates three listed buildings, approximately 1.8km from the site. It is described by Historic England as: *"A late C17 or early C18 formal garden with early to late C19 alterations and additions, set in an C18 park with additional planting of C19 and C20 origin."*
- 4.94 There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the wider landscape, the closest of which is Lenham Quarry (also known as Pivington Quarry) situated 600m away at its closest boundary point, which is also a Geological Conservation Review (GCR) site. It is named by the Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership as 'Lenham Chalk Cliffs', and described on their website as: *"...sand and chalk geology... a great place for chalk downland wildlife and views along the scarp slope, across the Greensand Ridge and over to the Weald."*
- 4.95 Access to the 'Chalk Cliffs' site is identified with an information board along Hubbard's Hill and the North Downs Way which illustrates the location of a sculptural bench. A viewpoint within the site is also identified on OS mapping.
- 4.96 Figure 3 illustrates the location of the landscape designations within the site context.

Topography

- 4.97 The following should be read in conjunction with Figure 5.

Context – Landform

- 4.98 In the wider context the local topography is characterised by gently rolling land, with a distinct change to the north of Lenham, where the Kent Downs rise dramatically from the A20 to a high point of approximately 200m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), approximately 1km to the north of the site. This southern escarpment runs in a south east to north west direction through Kent, with the major road corridors and settlements following the same pattern on the lower area to the south of the ridge off the M20 Motorway and A20 Ashford Road.

- 4.99 Lenham village is situated on a locally elevated position between the valley for the River Len to the north west and the Great Stour to the south east. The landform is more elevated towards Lenham to the west, and falls gently to the south west towards the site, where field drainage ditches and channels eventually lead to the Great Stour.

Site - Landform

- 4.100 The site is situated on the lower slope of the Kent Downs southern escarpment. The topography across the site slopes in a south-westerly direction from the site's northern boundary adjacent to Old Ashford Road at 116m AOD, down towards the two streams within the site's southern parcel, lying at approximately 100m AOD.

Site and Immediate Context

- 4.101 An assessment of landscape character of the site and its immediate context has been carried out, providing a finer level of assessment than the published studies.
- 4.102 The site lies on the eastern edge of the settlement of Lenham and extends to approximately 11.60ha in total, occupying sections of four irregularly shaped, medium size agricultural fields. The site is bound in part by hedgerows with mature trees and watercourses that are tributaries of the Great Stour river, running through the southern section of the site in two places and forming a section of the eastern boundary of the site. Some sections of the site boundary currently have no physical definition.
- 4.103 The northern section of the site encompasses a triangular shaped field parcel which shares its northern boundary with Old Ashford Road adjacent to Ashmill Business Park. The site spreads south east encompassing sections of three more fields, with the southernmost section of the site boundary approximately 150m north of the railway embankment, currently with no physical boundary. The western boundary is adjacent to Burnside Cottages in the northern section, but further south is bound by existing field boundaries and has nothing physically defining it in the southernmost section of the site. The eastern boundary runs adjacent to the access track and buildings at East Lenham, and further south is bound by mature vegetation along a stream and also has sections which currently have no physical definition.
- 4.104 There are three Public Rights of Way (PROW) which traverse through the site linking the North Downs Way within the Kent Downs AONB to the centre of Lenham Village, including PROW Footpaths ref KH400, KH399 and KH399A.
- 4.105 Recent development at Tanyard Farm is visible from much of the southern section of the site, and built form at Ashmill Business Park and properties off Old Ashford Road, particularly Burnside Cottages and Pivington House are visible from the northern parcel. Road noise from Old Ashford Road and the A20 Ashford Road is also noticeable from the northernmost section of the site. There are expansive views of the escarpment to the north from much of the site, only impeded in places due to the adjacent built form or trees along field boundaries. Views south are limited by the railway embankment and by Mill Wood.

Landscape Value

- 4.106 In terms of 'landscape value' it is appropriate to examine the role of the site and its immediate context in terms of the range of local factors set out in the GLVIA3 (Box 5.1, page 84), and

summarised in the methodology. This considers the landscape in terms of a range of factors as set out below. As a starting point, landscape designations have been considered.

Landscape Designations:

- 4.107 The site itself is not subject to any local, national or other landscape designations, however within the site context lies the Kent Downs AONB, located north of the A20 Ashford Road. Further to this, the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation Draft identifies 'Lenham Local Landscape Area' located directly west of the southern section of the site, which extends to the edge of Lenham village.

Landscape Quality (Condition):

- 4.108 The site lies within a settlement edge location and is influenced by adjacent uses such as traffic along Old Ashford Road and the A20 Ashford Road, commercial buildings at Ashmill Business Park, residential properties along Old Ashford Road and recent residential development at both Tanyard Farm and Glebe Gardens.
- 4.109 The site is mostly managed as arable and pastoral farmland with trees limited to field boundaries. Some sections of hedgerows along field boundaries are intermittently patchy however there is more substantial mature vegetation along the streams running through the southern section of the site.

Scenic Quality:

- 4.110 The site is relatively open, with views of the escarpment possible from within much of the northern section of the site. The internal watercourses running through the site and along boundaries with mature vegetation offer some scenic quality.
- 4.111 The situation of Ashmill Business Park adjacent to the northern boundary is visible from much of the site and residential properties along the western site boundary are also visually prominent due to a lack of boundary vegetation and gaps in field boundary hedgerows. Recent development at Glebe Gardens and Tanyard Farm is visible from much of the southern section of the site and from the Public Rights of Way. Frequent passing traffic along the A20 Ashford Road and Old Ashford Road influences the tranquillity of the site, with occasional interference from the railway line to the south.

Rarity and Representativeness:

- 4.112 The site is located within the East Lenham Vale within the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment and reflects its key characteristics. The site is typical of the edge of settlement location and does not feature any rare landscape features.

Conservation Interest:

- 4.113 An ecological appraisal of the site has been carried out which included an extended Phase 1 habitat survey and protected species surveys. This has identified that the grassland is of low intrinsic and nature conservation importance. A single hedgerow has been identified as 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations with all hedgerows qualifying as a habitat of Principle Importance under the S41 of the NERC Act (2006). Pressure on designated non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) within the local context was judged to be negligible due to intervening distance.

- 4.114 There is one listed building within close proximity to the site: Tanyard Farmhouse is Grade 2 listed and lies approximately 130m from the site boundary, separated by pasture farmland. It is also part of a new residential development under construction at the time of the site assessment.
- 4.115 Recreational Value:
- 4.116 The site is in private ownership, although three Public Rights of Way cross through the site, Footpath ref KH400, KH399 and KH399A.
- 4.117 Views across the site are possible from adjacent footpaths, and the site also forms part of the wider mixed landscape visible from Public Rights of Way further afield, mostly on the higher ground of the escarpment within the AONB to the north.
- 4.118 Perceptual Aspects:
- 4.119 The site is managed for arable and pastoral agriculture, and is relatively low lying, therefore not overly exposed or 'wild'. From footpaths within the site, users experience views of the escarpment within the AONB to the north, and the Lenham Cross War Memorial is visible from various parts of the site. Industrial buildings within Ashmill Business Park and adjacent residential properties also form part of the perceptual experience, and tranquillity is partly disturbed by passing traffic along Old Ashford Road.
- 4.120 Associations:
- 4.121 The site itself is not known to have any particular associations with particular artists or writers, or historic events that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area. It is, however, part of the wider landscape and views which are of importance to the setting of the Kent Downs AONB.
- 4.122 The site is also approximately 500m from a route which forms part of both the North Downs Way National Trail and Pilgrims Way situated on higher ground along the escarpment within the Kent Downs AONB, and so also forms part of the experience for those viewing the wider landscape whilst walking along those routes.
- 4.123 In conclusion and having appraised the above factors it is judged that the site and the immediate landscape is of **Medium** landscape value.

Visual Baseline

- 4.124 A visual appraisal has been undertaken for the site. This has explored the nature of the existing visual amenity of the area and sought to establish the approximate visibility of the site from surrounding locations and receptors. A series of photo viewpoints have been selected which support this analysis.
- 4.125 Photographs have been taken to illustrate a view from a specific vantage point, or to demonstrate a representative view for those receptors that are moving through the landscape, e.g. rights of way users. The photographs may demonstrate varying degrees of visibility and include both short- and long-range views. The photographs were taken on the 05th and the 06th of March 2019, and seasonal differences have been taken into account when determining the visual effects on these receptors.

Photo Viewpoints

- 4.126 An assessment of the likely visual effects of the proposed development upon surrounding receptors is detailed in the subsequent section. Figure 6 details the location of the Photo Viewpoints and Figures 7-22 illustrates the photo viewpoints. They are briefly described below.

Viewpoint 1a

- 4.127 This viewpoint is located within the site boundary and looks west from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH400/2 and represents its users as well as users of Footpaths Ref KH399/1 and KH399A/1 as the viewpoint is taken from the junction with those routes.
- 4.128 The escarpment within the AONB forms a significant part of the wider view, with residential properties and Ashmill Business Park more prominent in the foreground. Hedgerows along field boundaries create a localised sense of enclosure, with Mill Wood and woodland along the railway embankment intervening views to the south.

Viewpoint 1b

- 4.129 This viewpoint looks north from PROW Footpath ref KH399/1 at a gap in the hedgerow that is within the site boundary, and represents views of users of both footpaths ref KH400/1 and KH399/1. The gap in the hedgerow allows for full views across the northern section of the site, and expansive views of the escarpment to the north. Residential properties along Old Ashford Road (Burnside Cottages and Pivington House) and commercial buildings at Ashmill Business Park are prominent in the foreground.

Viewpoint 1c

- 4.130 This viewpoint looks east from PROW Footpath ref KH399/1 from a point to the east of the development at Tanyard Farm. It represents users of the footpath and also potential views from ground floors of the properties at Tanyard Farm. Properties along Old Ashford Road (Tanyard Cottages, Redhouse Cottages and Burnside Cottages) are prominent in the view as they have little vegetation along their rear garden boundaries. The properties and vegetation along Old Ashford Road screen views of the escarpment at this point. Mature hedgerows and trees along the field boundaries obscure views of the site.

Viewpoint 2

- 4.131 This viewpoint is taken from the junction of PROW Footpaths ref KH399/1, KH398/1 and KH397/2, at the boundary of the Church of St Mary which is also the boundary of Lenham Conservation Area. It represents views for users of these footpaths, visitors to the Church of St Mary and Tithe Barn, and potential views from properties along Old Ashford Road and Glebe Gardens.
- 4.132 It shows the routes of the three adjoining footpaths, with properties and recent residential development at Tanyard Farm and Glebe Gardens in the foreground screening views of the escarpment to the north. Views of the site are screened by the buildings at Tanyard Farm and intervening vegetation along the field boundaries and the watercourse running from the village pond.

Viewpoint 3a

- 4.133 This viewpoint is located along footpath ref KH398/1, looking north east towards the site. Lenham Cross and the escarpment are visible in the background but are partially screened by intervening vegetation along field boundaries. Development at Tanyard Farm and Glebe Gardens is prominent in the view and buildings at Ashmill Business Park are visible through gaps in the intervening vegetation. Glimpsed views of the site are possible through gaps in the hedgerow along field boundaries.

Viewpoint 3b

- 4.134 This viewpoint looks north east from PROW Footpath ref KH398/2 at the junction with the railway underpass and represents views of the footpath users as they emerge from the underpass. The rise in landform in the foreground is evident in the view, with the escarpment and the Lenham Cross forming part of the background. Vegetation along field boundaries screens most of the site, with glimpses of properties at Glebe Gardens and residential development under construction at Tanyard Farm and Glebe Gardens evident through gaps in boundary vegetation. The majority of the site is not visible from this point due to vegetation along field boundaries; however, the southernmost section of the site is visible due to a lack of boundary vegetation.

Viewpoint 4

- 4.135 This viewpoint is situated at the boundary of the Kent Downs AONB and looks south west from the pavement along Old Ashford Road. It shows the entrance to Burnside Cottages driveway which is the beginning of the PROW Footpath ref KH400/1. The viewpoint represents the potential views experienced by users of the road and pavement along Old Ashford Road and users of the footpath. It shows the hedgerow field boundary along Old Ashford Road and vegetation within gardens of Burnside Cottages partially screens views in to the site.

Viewpoint 5

- 4.136 This viewpoint is situated at the boundary of the Kent Downs AONB, from the pavement along the A20 Ashford Road at the entrance to Hubbards Hill. It is representative of users of the A20 Ashford Road and users of the pavement running alongside it, users of Hubbards Hill and of those coming from the PROW Footpath ref KH390/1. The road is busy and along the road the buildings within Ashmill Business Park are visible, with Pivington House residential property prominent in the foreground. The tree lined avenue which provides access to properties and farm buildings at East Lenham provides some screening of the site, but glimpsed views are possible through the trees. Hedgerows along the road and along the boundary of Pivington House partially screens Old Ashford Road and views in to the site. Properties along the south eastern edge of Lenham Village are evident on higher ground in the background.

Viewpoint 6

- 4.137 This view is situated within the Kent Downs AONB along PROW Footpath ref KH390/1, where it starts on elevated ground mid-way up the escarpment off Hubbards Hill. The expansive view contains much of Lenham Village, with Ashmill Business Park and recent development at Tanyard Farm evident to the south west. Pivington House and farm buildings at East Lenham are visible, and a lack of vegetation along the A20 allows views of the busy road. The tree lined avenue along

the access track to East Lenham screens part of the site, however there is a partial view possible of the northernmost section of the site.

Viewpoint 7

- 4.138 This viewpoint is located along PROW Footpath KH399A/1 where it runs adjacent to Mill Wood, and represents views of users of that route as they look north. It is partially enclosed by vegetation along the watercourse, however glimpsed views of recent development at Tanyard Farm are possible through the trees. Residential properties at Burnside Cottages and buildings at Ashmill Business Park are visible through wide gaps in the hedgerow field boundary, which also make partial views in to the site possible. The escarpment within the AONB and Lenham Cross are visible over intervening vegetation, and Oxley Wood is also visible over the intervening vegetation along the railway embankment.

Viewpoint 8

- 4.139 This viewpoint is located on a high point where the Stour Valley Walk runs along PROW Footpath ref KH397/2 and passes over the railway line, and represents views for people using the footpath. The view is facing north east towards the site, and shows the footpath route heading north towards Lenham Village which is visible in the distance. An intervening cluster of woodland partially screens the escarpment, however views are still extensive. Intervening field hedgerow boundaries partially screen views of the site, however it is possible to discern from this point. The development at Tanyard Farm is visible between gaps in hedgerows with rooftops of buildings within Ashmill Business Park and Pivington House visible over intervening vegetation due to their situation on higher ground.

Viewpoint 9

- 4.140 This viewpoint is located from a grass verge along the road on Old School Lane, at the south eastern edge of Lenham. The view illustrates how thin and low-cut sections of the hedgerow along the field adjacent to the road offer some extensive views north east towards the escarpment. Buildings off High Street, Old Ashford Road and at East Lenham are visible through gaps in the intervening trees and hedgerow field boundaries, which also partially screen the site, however a glimpse is still possible from this point.

Viewpoint 10

- 4.141 This viewpoint is situated on a high point in the landform along PROW Footpath ref KH397/4 off Lenham Heath Road, and represents views for users of the footpath. Intervening landform, vegetation along the railway embankment and hedgerow field boundaries screen much of the lower landform beyond, with the escarpment forming more prominent part of the wider view. A glimpse of the site is possible amongst the built form of Ashmill Business Park, with scattered farm buildings and glimpses of buildings at Lenham Village visible against the escarpment in the background.

Viewpoint 11

- 4.142 This viewpoint is located on a high point at a wide gap in the hedgerow along Lenham Heath Road. Intervening patches of woodland within fields, vegetation along the railway embankment and hedgerow field boundaries mostly encloses the view and screens views of the lower landform

beyond. Patches of built form are visible between gaps in the vegetation and on higher ground along the escarpment, mainly the residential properties along Rayners Hill, farm buildings at East Lenham and Ashmill Business Park, with only a glimpse of the site possible from this point.

Viewpoint 12

- 4.143 This viewpoint is situated within the Kent Downs AONB along PROW Byway ref KH212/1, which is also section of Pilgrims Way, the North Downs Way and National Cycle Network Route 17. The route runs along the escarpment, and the view looks south east towards the site. The landform allows for extensive open views to the south, however intervening vegetation along the A20 Ashford Road and Faversham Road acts as a screen to much of Lenham and the site. Glimpses of built form in the north of Lenham Village and Ashmill Business Park are possible over the landform and between gaps in the vegetation, and tops of trees along the tree-lined avenue access track to East Lenham are also visible, however the site itself is not visible from this point.

Viewpoint 13a

- 4.144 This view is situated within the Kent Downs AONB on PROW Footpath ref KH288A/5 at the boundary of the property at Lea Farm, and looks south east towards the site. It represents users of the footpath and of residents using their property grounds. Due to the location on high ground at the top of the escarpment, the view is extensive to the south. Large blocks of woodland at Highfield and dense vegetation along Faversham road acts as a screen to views to the east. Pockets of built form along Faversham Road and Hill Crescent are more prominent in the foreground, with Lenham Village and properties along Old Ashford Road less visible in the background. Glimpses of Ashmill Business Park are possible through the woodland, and a glimpse of the southern section of the site is visible from this point.

Viewpoint 13b

- 4.145 This view is situated within the Kent Downs AONB on PROW Footpath ref KH288A/6 accessed off Faversham Road, which is part of the North Downs Way. Being situated approximately half way down the escarpment, the views are less expansive but still incorporate long views to the south. In the foreground, residential properties at Hill Crescent and properties along Faversham Road – Glovers Cottages are prominent in the view. Dense woodland strips along Faversham Road and vegetation along A20 Ashford Road combined with the undulating landform rising to the east of the viewpoint offers screening effects to the site. Whilst partial views of Ashmill Business Park are possible through gaps in intervening vegetation, there are only glimpsed views possible of the site, which are difficult to distinguish at this distance.

Viewpoint 14

- 4.146 This viewpoint is situated within the Kent Downs AONB along PROW Footpath ref KH438/1, a footpath route leading down from Pilgrims Way adjacent to the properties off Faversham Road (The House by the Cross, Northdown and The View) before joining Faversham Road opposite the properties at Hill Crescent. The view looks south east towards the site, with expansive views to the south due to lack of intervening vegetation in the foreground. Electric power lines running adjacent to the footpath route are visually prominent, however mature trees and hedgerows within the cemetery and along the A20 Ashford Road screen much of Lenham Village. Gaps in the field boundary vegetation alongside the A20 closer to the site offer almost unobstructed views of traffic

running along the road and more prominent views of Ashmill Business Park, which also impedes views in to the site. Only glimpsed views of the site are possible at this point, which are hard to distinguish at this distance.

Viewpoint 15

- 4.147 This viewpoint is situated within the Kent Downs AONB on PROW Byway ref KH219/3, Pilgrims Way / North Downs Way and National Cycle Network Route 17, adjacent to 'The Cross' – Lenham War Memorial and the junction with PROW Footpath ref KH433/1. It represents the views experienced by people visiting the war memorial, and those moving along the footpath routes as they view look south east towards the site. Patchy vegetation along the field boundary south of the route offers some degree of enclosure, but still allows for expansive views so the south. Vegetation along the intervening field boundaries offers some screening of the built form of Lenham Village, however new development at Tanyard Farm and buildings at Ashmill Business Park are visible over and through gaps in the vegetation. Glimpsed views of the site are possible at this point, however Ashmill Business Park screens most of the site.

Viewpoint 16a

- 4.148 This viewpoint is situated within the Kent Downs AONB on PROW Footpath ref KH389/6 at the top of the escarpment, looking south west towards the site. Intervening vegetation along Pilgrims Way partially encloses the view from this point, however the gradient of the landform allows for extensive views to the south over the intervening vegetation. Industrial buildings at Ashmill Business Park are visually prominent in the view due to open field boundaries along the A20 Ashford Road, which also allow for full views of the busy road. The height of this location on the escarpment allows for partial views in to the site. This is seen within the context of the rest of Lenham Village and other recent development at Tanyard Farm, off Glebe Gardens and off Groom Way in the middle of the view. Views extend much further south, past Platts Heath and to Boughton Malherbe on higher ground in the far distance, and so the site forms a small part of a much wider view.

Viewpoint 16b

- 4.149 This viewpoint is situated within the Kent Downs AONB on PROW Footpath ref KH389/5 just south of Pilgrims Way, looking south towards the site. Low-cut intervening hedgerow field boundaries offer little visual enclosure, allowing wide views to the south and east, with farm buildings at New Shelve Farm and Wheatgratten Farm visible in the wider distance. The new development at Tanyard Farm is visible ahead of the footpath route as it traverses down the escarpment. Mature hedgerows and trees along the A20 partially screen views towards Lenham Village, however closer to the site and towards Ashmill Business Park the field boundaries are more open and allow more prominent views of industrial style buildings and full views of traffic along the busy road. The site itself is not visible from this point due to the proximity of the business park.

Viewpoint 17

- 4.150 This viewpoint is situated within the Kent Downs AONB and within the Lenham Quarry Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) / Pivington Quarry Geological Conservation Review (GCR) site, which is accessed off Hubbards Hill. The photo is taken from a high point in the site identified on Ordnance Survey mapping as a viewpoint. The view south is extensive due to the topography, with dense, mature vegetation along Hubbards Hill and Pilgrims Way to the south offering little visual

enclosure. Mature hedgerows and trees along the A20 partially screen views west towards Lenham Village however views south west towards site, the field boundaries are more open. Hedgerows along Hubbards Hill are low-cut and allow more prominent views of industrial style buildings at Ashmill Business Park beyond, and full views of traffic along the A20 Ashford Road. Partial views of recent development at Tanyard Farm and Groom Way are possible with glimpses of development at Glebe Gardens. From this vantage point, farm buildings at East Lenham and Pivington House are visible adjacent to the site, which also allows for almost full views in to the site.

Viewpoint 18

- 4.151 This viewpoint is situated within the Kent Downs AONB on PROW Footpath ref KH391/1 accessed off Hubbards Hill, and looks south west towards the site. Farm buildings and properties along Hubbards Hill are prominent in the foreground ahead of the route of the footpath. The view south east is extensive due to the position on the top of the escarpment, and encompasses scattered farmsteads and patches of woodland amongst the low-lying agricultural fields. The view is however, partially enclosed by patches of intervening mature woodland within the field and by the field boundary hedgerows which run along Hubbards Hill, and the A20 Ashford Road is prominent at the foot of the escarpment. The landform at Lenham Quarry SSSI protrudes out and screens much of Lenham Village from view, however the recent development at Tanyard Farm and farm buildings at East Lenham are still visible from this point. Mature vegetation along Pilgrims Way and Hubbards Hill visually screens the lower lying land below, and while the tops of trees along the tree lined access track to East Lenham are visible, neither Ashmill Business Park nor the site itself are visible from this point.

Viewpoint 19

- 4.152 This viewpoint is situated within the Kent Downs AONB off Rayners Hill, along PROW Byway KH220/2, Pilgrims Way / North Downs Way and National Cycle Network Route 17, adjacent to Rayners Hill Cottages, and looks south west towards the site. It represents the view experienced by users of the long-distance routes, and potential views from residential properties at Rayners Hill Cottages. The view south east is relatively extensive due to the position mid-way up the escarpment, and mainly encompasses the fields and farms on lower lying land to the south, with New Shelve Farm visible to the south west. Wide gaps in the hedgerow along the track allow for extensive views to the south, and open field boundaries allow for full views of traffic along the A20 Ashford Road. Intervening topography screens some of the lower lying land to the south west, and much of Ashmill Business Park is not visible, with only the tops of buildings visible over the landform. A number of the farm buildings at East Lenham are visible and some of the properties at Burnside Cottages to the west of the site, however the tree-lined access track to east Lenham visually screens the site itself so it is not visible from this point.

Viewpoint 20

- 4.153 This viewpoint is situated on Forstal Road adjacent to New Shelve Farm and looks north west towards the site. It represents the view for road users and potentially ground floor views of residential properties and farms along Forstal Road. The view is relatively enclosed by the vegetation along the A20 Ashford Road, and partly by the field hedgerow along Forstal Road, although this is low-cut and the field beyond is visible over the top. Internal field hedgerows partially

enclose the view to the west and electricity pylons within the field are prominent in the foreground. Some glimpses of roof tops of properties along the eastern edge of Lenham Village are visible in the distance. Only the tops of the trees along the tree-lined access track to East Lenham are visible over the landform due to the undulating intervening topography and so views in to the site are not possible from this point.

Summary of Visual Baseline

4.154 The baseline analysis results in a number of reasoned conclusions which are summarised below:

- The site is influenced by the settlement edge with residential development, farm buildings and infrastructure featuring in views from within the site and its immediate context. The escarpment to the north forms a prominent part of the landscape and features in views from much of the site and its context.
- Views south towards the site from various points within the AONB along the escarpment to the north are expansive, and incorporate patches of woodland and built form, most prominently Lenham Village, Ashmill Business Park and scattered farms. The A20 Ashford Road is readily visible at the bottom of the escarpment due to a lack of field boundary vegetation along the road. Sections of footpaths along the escarpment are partly enclosed by dense vegetation which also impede views to the south, however unvegetated sections allow users to potentially experience partial and glimpsed views of the site over intervening vegetation and the built form of the business park. As the landform falls at the base of the escarpment, views from footpaths are less extensive and the buildings associated with Ashmill Business Park become more prominent, screening views to the site.
- To the east, intervening higher landform limits the visibility of the site, and mature vegetation associated with built form at East Lenham and along the access track screens the site from view.
- To the west, recent development at Tanyard Farm and mature vegetation along the site and intervening field boundaries screens views of much of the site from view, with views limited to glimpses through gaps in hedgerows and trees.
- The railway embankment to the south screens the site from the lower landform to the south, however glimpsed views are possible from raised landform south of the railway. North of the railway embankment, glimpsed views are possible from gaps in field boundary hedgerows, however this is set within the context of existing views of built form of Lenham Village and recent more prominent development at Glebe Gardens and Tanyard Farm.

5.0 LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

Introduction

- 5.1 The development proposals are described in the Design and Access Statement and other information accompanying the planning application. The existing landscape resource and the visual receptors and amenity of the site have been considered by the planning and design process and have informed the resultant scheme. This approach has entailed collaboration between landscape, urban design, ecological and other professionals. The landscape components of the scheme are an important integral part of the proposals.

Landscape Design and GI Objectives

- 5.2 The key objectives of the landscape and GI proposals for the scheme are to:
- Create an attractive residential development with abundant open space and additional tree planting, to create an attractive outlook for new dwellings, provide formal and informal recreation opportunities for new residents and break up the built form within views from the AONB;
 - Create an attractive sports and recreational ground which will contribute to the village community open space facilities;
 - Retain and enhance existing features such as hedgerows, streams and woodland and incorporate into a wider Green Infrastructure (GI) to create an attractive setting for the development which blends with the existing built context;
 - Retain existing PROW and incorporate into a strategy of new footpath connections through the development;
 - Enhance the site biodiversity.

Landscape and Green Infrastructure (GI) Proposals

- 5.3 The landscape and GI proposals for the scheme are detailed in the Design and Access Statement accompanying the planning application. In summary these proposals include:
- The provision of 7.34 hectares of land dedicated to landscape, green infrastructure, public open space, sports and recreation, play and habitat-related proposals – representing approximately 63% of the total site area;
 - Provision of a Village Green within the development which provides an attractive aspect for new residents and formal green space centrally located for recreation. The Village Green will also break up the built form and soften views from higher points within the AONB;
 - Provision of a recreation ground in the southern section of the site which includes three sports pitches, an equipped play space, a trim trail and pavilion with dedicated parking area;
 - Enhanced structural boundary planting and creation of a planted bund to soften the interface of the new development with existing residential and commercial development and views from the AONB;
 - Retention and enhancement of existing hedgerow field boundaries and vegetation along the streams where possible, and creating new habitat corridors by planting hedgerows and trees

along the site boundaries which are currently not defined, to retain and enhance habitat connectivity; and

- Creation of new wetland habitat associated with the site sustainable urban drainage system.

- 5.4 The landscape and GI proposals will establish an attractive setting for the development with formal and informal areas of open space providing a recreation resource for existing and new residents.

Landscape Management

- 5.5 All of the landscape areas and public open space features will be managed and maintained. This would be achieved through the implementation of a comprehensive Landscape Management Plan (LMP), to ensure the successful establishment and continued thriving of the landscape proposals.

6.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

- 6.1 The following section outlines the likely landscape and visual effects that would arise from proposed development on the site. Schedules detailing these likely landscape and visual effects for the receptors are included in Appendices C and D respectively. Please refer to these in conjunction with the following descriptions.

Landscape Effects

Construction

- 6.2 All construction works would be carried out in accordance with best practice procedures to minimise effects on landscape character. Appropriate methods will be adopted to protect trees and vegetation during the construction phase based upon guidance contained within BS 5837.
- 6.3 There will be an initial disruption on the site's landscape during the construction phase, which will include the erection of protective fencing for retained hedgerows and trees, culverting the stream to facilitate new vehicular and foot bridges, the creation of the new access from Old Ashford Road and earthworks to accommodate the attenuation pond, bund, development plots and car park.
- 6.4 For both of the National landscape character areas (NCA) 119: 'North Downs', and NCA 120: 'Wealden Greensand', construction effects are assessed as **Negligible** due to the very small scale of the site within / adjacent to these extensive character areas.
- 6.5 At the district scale, effects at construction for LCA's are also assessed as **Negligible** for the Landscape Assessment of Kent 'Hollingbourne Vale East' LCA due to the small scale of the site in the wider character area. The adjacent LCAs 'Hollingbourne Vale West' and 'Hothfield Heathy Farmlands' are both judged to experience **Negligible** effects at construction mainly due to distance from the site and minimal inter-visibility. The adjacent 'Hollingbourne Vale' LCA is judged to experience **Minor Adverse** effects at construction, due to the elevated landform of this area and its location adjacent to the site.
- 6.6 At the local scale for the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment, construction effects are judged as **Minor Adverse** for the wider LCT 'Gault Clay Vale', as the site is set within this LCT and there is some inter-visibility of the site with the higher landform to the north, however and the site encompasses only a very small part this broad type, which expands for the whole width of Maidstone.
- 6.7 The site is located within LCA 'East Lenham Vale' which is a smaller part of the 'Gault Clay Vale' LCT. This LCA boundary is mid-way up the escarpment, and so encompasses some higher ground to the north which allows some intervisibility with the site, and there are likely to be views from much of the area. The construction effects are therefore judged to be **Moderate Adverse** for this LCA. Construction effects are judged to be **Minor Adverse** for the LCA 'Lenham Scarp' as it encompasses the higher part of the escarpment to the north and experiences some limited intervisibility with the site. Both LCAs 'Lenham Heath Farmlands' and 'Harrietsham to Lenham Vale' are judged to experience **Negligible** effects at construction due to distance and minimal inter-visibility with the site.
- 6.8 Chilston Park Registered Park and Garden is also judged to experience **Negligible** effects at construction due to distance and minimal inter-visibility with the site.

- 6.9 With regard to the site itself and the immediate context, construction effects are assessed as **Major/Moderate Adverse** and would directly affect the site's landscape. It is assessed that the effects during the construction phase would be over a relatively short duration (c1-2 years) and consequently, there would be a short-term effect as a result.
- 6.10 The site landform, trees and water features are all judged to experience **Moderate Adverse** effects during construction, due to there being minimal losses due to the site proposals being directly informed by the existing landscape features, and the temporary nature of the disruption expected to be experienced by the individual site elements respectively during the construction phase.

Operation (following Completion)

National Character Area

- 6.11 'The Wealden Greensand' NCA 120 stretches from Folkestone on the east coast in Kent to the edge of Alton in Hampshire before curving south east to Petersfield in East Hampshire and ending in Storrington in West Sussex, and therefore covers a very extensive landscape area. Due to the large extent of the NCA, there will be localised variations in landscape sensitivity.
- 6.12 The proposals include a new residential development to occupy existing arable farmland adjacent to the settlement edge of Lenham Village, however the site occupies a small land parcel and is located immediately adjacent to a business park and a busy road. There are also existing residential properties and pockets of new residential development within the immediate site context. The key characteristics identify that this section of the NCA is 'more marked by development', and combined with the existing transport corridors forming a prominent feature of the landscape, key characteristics will as such be unaffected by the development.
- 6.13 The site proposals also compliment many of the recommended methods of achieving SEOs of the NCA, by:
- Maintaining rights of way, providing access to quality green space, maintaining expansive views, implementing orchard planting (SEO1);
 - Maintaining and enhancing hedgerow boundaries and stream (SEO2 / 3);
 - Maintain the streams and implementing sustainable drainage systems (SEO3); and
 - Creating new recreational facilities for sports and play, strategically designing green infrastructure to provide a buffer of the development to the adjacent AONB (SEO4).
- 6.14 In the context of the national scale NCA, the completed and operational development will have no discernible effects at this very large geographic scale and landscape effects are assessed as **Negligible** on completion and at Year 15.
- 6.15 Due to the close proximity to the site, potential effects on the adjacent NCA 120 'The North Downs' have been considered.
- 6.16 This NCA runs adjacent to the 'Wealden Greensand' NCA. It stretches from Farnham in Surrey to Dover on the east coast in Kent and therefore also covers a very extensive landscape area. The proposals incorporate features which tie in to the SEOs of this character area, including strategic landscape buffers which aim to mitigate any effects on the setting of the AONB within this character area along with sensitive consideration of the layout (SEO1). The development also provides

recreational facilities and features of open space which reinforce locally distinctive features (SEO2).

- 6.17 Whilst the development does incorporate features which aim to reduce effects on the setting of the AONB, inter-visibility of the site with this character area is limited. In the context of the national scale NCA, the completed and operational development will have no discernible effects at this very large geographic scale and landscape effects are assessed as **Negligible** on completion and at Year 15.

Landscape Assessment of Kent

- 6.18 The site is located fully within 'Hollingbourne Vale East' Landscape Character Area (LCA), which begins at the settlement edge of Lenham Village, and spreads approximately 8km east to encompass all of the village of Charing. As described in the 'Landscape Analysis' section, the condition of the landscape within the LCA is 'very poor', with a 'low' landscape sensitivity. The proposals mitigate some existing visually detracting landscape features identified in the assessment such as visually buffering the A20 and creating additional hedgerow and woodland planting to impede views of the M20 Motorway and railway links to the south. While the description states that *"the outskirts of Lenham have now crept down the A20 towards Charing and need restraint"*, the development proposals do not protrude further south east towards Charing than the existing development edge of Ashmill Business Park, and is enclosed by the existing built edge associated with the farm buildings at East Lenham.
- 6.19 The proposals also incorporate elements which respond to recommended 'Landscape Actions' as prescribed in the assessment, including;
- Retaining and enhancing the stream through the site as a corridor through the recreation area to the south to *"Create new corridors of riparian vegetation"*; and
 - Linking streams and creating additional woodland and hedgerow planting, and adding a landscape buffer strip in the field south of the escarpment which helps to *"Create regenerative woodland to the scarp-side of large arable fields... reintroduce cross-contour shaws to link with existing streams..."*
- 6.20 The site encompasses a small section to the west of this low sensitivity character area. The development is set within the existing settlement context adjacent to other recent development and the A20 Ashford Road. The proposals incorporate features which could create some positive changes. With moderate visibility over the landscape, the development is judged to have a **Negligible** effect overall at both completion and year 15.
- 6.21 'Hollingbourne Vale' LCA is set within the Kent Downs AONB, located just north of the A20 Ashford Road, approximately 50m north of the site. It begins in Detling just north of Maidstone and spreads approximately 25km east to Broughton Lees just north of Ashford, generally associated with the escarpment along the Kent Downs. As described in the Landscape Analysis section, the condition of the landscape is described as 'Poor', partly attributed to declining woodland and hedges, with a 'moderate' landscape sensitivity mostly due to the dominant landform offering expansive views but with recent development apparent in the landscape, stating:

"The scarp is crossed by a considerable number of roads and footpaths.... Its open nature, and the wide views it offers, mean that this stretch of landscape is particularly sensitive to development."

The existing road and railway network, along the southern boundary, already has a considerable impact on the views and quiet enjoyment of this part of the AONB."

- 6.22 The development proposals incorporate features which respond to the recommended 'Landscape Actions', by:
- Planting a 5m wide landscape buffer at the base of the field along the boundary of the A20 Ashford Road, which once mature should effectively help to *"Restore occasional woodland shaws"* and *"Reduce the visibility and impact of recent built form"* – this would help to reduce the existing detracting visual impacts of Ashmill Business Park on the footpaths and roads within the AONB along with helping to visually screen the development beyond; and
 - Creating a well vegetated landscape strip along Old Ashford Road which would include both hedgerows and trees, to *"Restore thick, well managed hedgerows to highways"*, which would also help to reduce visual impacts of the site on the footpaths and roads within the AONB.
- 6.23 The site encompasses a very small section of land adjacent to this moderate-sensitivity character area, and features some potentially positive changes. Visibility across the landscape is very high due to the landform, however the development would be seen in the context of existing and recent development adjacent to the site, therefore is considered to have a **Minor Adverse** effect at completion. Once mature, the landscape buffer and vegetation within internal green space could potentially improve existing views south of recent development and Ashmill Business Park from the footpaths along the escarpment, therefore the development is judged to have a **Negligible** effect at year 15.
- 6.24 'Hollingbourne Vale West' LCA begins approximately 300m west of the site at the settlement edge of Lenham Village and spreads west to Eccles just north of Maidstone. It is described as: *"Undulating landscape on wet clay soils. Small broadleaf woodlands and irregular pastures. Infrequent settlement. Small streams (the head waters of the river Len) draining west to Maidstone. Chalk scarp dominating views to north"*.
- 6.25 The overall condition of the landscape in this LCA area is described as 'Poor', partly due to the visual unity of the landscape being interrupted by rail and road corridors, and other visual detractors related to urban and industrial development. The area is described as having some historic sense of place but this is affected by visual detractors such as modern development. The presence of woodland offers some enclosure to views, and so the landscape sensitivity is described as 'Moderate'.
- 6.26 Due to the location west of the site, the presence of intervening vegetation along field boundaries and the built form of Lenham Village screening views to the west, there is limited inter-visibility between the site and this character area, with potential glimpses of the site limited to the easternmost boundary of the LCA. Development of the site is therefore judged to have a **Negligible** effect on this LCA at both completion, and year 15.
- 6.27 'Hothfield Heathy Farmlands' LCA is approximately 600m south of the site. It begins at Sandway just south of Lenham, and spreads east to the edge of Wye, north of Ashford. It is described as: *"Undulating landscape of mixed farmlands... Heathland or heath characteristics on the Folkestone Beds. Historic Parkland."*
- 6.28 The overall condition of the landscape is described as 'Poor' mostly due to the scale and pattern of the area being interrupted by the rail and motorway links and quarries. Sensitivity is described

as 'Low' due to low visibility due to the unremarkable landform and intermittent tree cover, with historic rural elements no longer contributing to local distinctiveness.

- 6.29 The presence of the M20 Motorway, the railway embankment and associated vegetation and the intervening landform limits the inter-visibility between the site and this LCA. Undulations in the topography and pockets of woodland to the south east of the site, namely Mill Wood, Roughet Shaw and Wheatgratten Wood effectively screen the site from most of this LCA, with only distant glimpsed views possible from particular points on higher ground. Development of the site, therefore, is judged to have a **Negligible** effect on this LCA at both completion and year 15.

Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment

- 6.30 This site is situated within the 'Gault Clay Vale' broad landscape type, which stretches west to east across the entire width of Maidstone District. It is described as "... *situated at the foot of the chalk scarp of the North Downs. Some of the northern parts of this landscape are situated within the nationally designated Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).*"
- 6.31 The development proposals incorporate a selection of features which complement some of the recommended generic guidelines listed for this landscape type, including:
- Planting a 5m wide landscape buffer at the base of the field along the boundary of the A20 Ashford Road once mature, should soften existing prominent views of Ashmill Business Park. Planting within landscape buffers around the site boundary and particularly in the north eastern corner should also provide some screening effects in to the site. The internal green and tree planting throughout the design should also work to visually break up the built form. This links to: "*Conserve the undeveloped foreground and rural setting of the Kent Downs AONB*", and "*consider views toward any proposals from the elevated North Downs scarp*".
 - The enhancement of fragmented existing field hedgerow boundaries and the creation of new connective boundaries formed by hedgerow and trees within the southern section of the site serves to: "*Conserve the species rich hedgerow boundaries and promote enhanced species diversity within hedgerows where this has been weakened...*" and "*woodland habitats should be increased and the historic hedgerow network should be reinstated*".
- 6.32 Another guideline recommends to: "*conserve the undeveloped rural landscape, which forms an appropriate setting to the spring line settlements*". The site encompasses a very small part of this broad landscape type, and is set within the existing settlement context adjacent to the business park, other recent residential development, busy roads and the railway line. The proposals incorporate features which could create some positive changes, and the development is judged to have a **Minor Adverse** effect on this landscape type at completion, reducing to **Negligible** at year 15.
- 6.33 The site is located wholly within the 'East Lenham Vale' LCA, which incorporates part of the escarpment to the north and the Kent Downs AONB. It begins at the settlement edge of Lenham Village and spreads east to the boundary with Ashford, approximately 2km to the west of the site. 'East Lenham Vale' is the easternmost Character Area within the study. Its northern boundary runs along the North Downs Way / Pilgrims Way mid-way up the escarpment, and shares some of its southern boundary with Lenham Heath Road.
- 6.34 The site is typical of this character area and contains some elements identified within the 'Key Characteristics', namely "springs and drains run south towards the Great Stour", "Medium to large

sized fields of arable and pasture” and “Field boundaries and roads run against and along the contours”. While the agricultural field use will change with the development, the rest of the features will be retained within the layout, namely the field boundaries and streams.

- 6.35 The development proposals incorporate a number of features which respond to the suggested ‘Actions’ for the character area, such as:
- Planting a 5m wide landscape buffer at the base of the field along the boundary of the A20 Ashford Road once mature, should soften existing prominent views of Ashmill Business Park. Planting within landscape buffers around the site boundary and particularly in the north eastern corner should also provide some screening effects in to the site. The internal green and tree planting throughout the design should also work to break up the built form. These link to the recommendation to: *“Conserve the undeveloped foreground and rural setting of the Kent Downs AONB”*;
 - The enhancement of fragmented existing field hedgerow boundaries and the creation of new connective boundaries formed by hedgerow and trees within the southern section of the site. These link to the recommendation to: *“Conserve and enhance hedgerows and tree belts and restore hedgerow boundaries...”*, *“Restore historic hedgerow and shaw pattern where opportunities arise”* and *“Plant new oak standards in hedgerows to replace ageing specimens”*.
 - Locating the residential development to the northern section of the site, adjacent to the existing built form also serves to: *“Conserve the defined boundary between Lenham’s Compact settlement and the surrounding rural area.”*.
- 6.36 Due to the elevated landform of the escarpment, there are extensive views south over the landscape towards the site from the higher ground. The A20 Ashford Road, the railway, recent residential development and Ashmill Business Park already form features within the long-distance views over the character area from the escarpment. The development proposals aim to reduce the visual impacts of both existing visual detractors and the site itself is designed to minimise visibility from higher ground, however there will likely be partial views possible of the built development and so it is judged that there will be a **Moderate Adverse** effect at completion.
- 6.37 The 5m planted buffer strip and structural planting within the development will soften the views of built form from higher ground once mature. Some elements of the design should also help to promote longevity of features characteristic of the LCA; therefore, it is judged that there will be a **Minor Adverse** effect on the LCA at year 15.
- 6.38 The ‘Lenham Scarp’ LCA set within the Kent Downs AONB and begins approximately 600m north of the site, at the North Downs Way / Pilgrims Way route, mid-way up the escarpment. It encompasses the steepest and highest parts of the landform and spreads approximately 5km east to south west from flint lane to the district boundary with Ashford. It is described as: *“Undulating landscape on wet clay soils. Small broadleaf woodlands and irregular pastures. Infrequent settlement. Small streams (the head waters of the river Len) draining west to Maidstone. Chalk scarp dominating views to north”*.
- 6.39 Due to the height and gradient of the landform, there is a degree of inter-visibility between this LCA and the site. While the site is potentially visible from points within the LCA throughout the construction phase, the development will be seen within the context of surrounding built form of Lenham Village and recent residential development. The site will also form a very small part of vastly extensive views. Once mature, the landscape proposals and buffer strip will offer a degree

of screening effects to the site and will help to screen existing features which detract from the tranquillity of the landscape, namely the A20 Ashford Road and Ashmill Business Park. For these reasons, the effect on this LCA is judged to be **Minor Adverse** at completion, reducing to **Negligible** at year 15 once planting within the green infrastructure has matured.

- 6.40 The 'Lenham Heath Farmlands' LCA is approximately 900m south of the site. It begins at Sandway just south of Lenham, and spreads east to share the district boundary with Ashford. Views within this LCA are described as: *"Infrastructure routes have generally been well integrated into the topography and there are few extensive views of the M20/HS1 from the immediately surrounding landscape. Although the undulating landform and intervening vegetation restrict views throughout the immediate landscape, there are some open views of the North Downs"*.
- 6.41 The overall condition of the landscape is described as 'Very Poor' mostly due to fragmentation in to small land parcels and the major road and rail infrastructure. Sensitivity is described as 'Low' due to a weak sense of place, recent development lacking character, and views limited by garden vegetation although there are some longer views possible across open fields.
- 6.42 The presence of the railway embankment and associated vegetation and the intervening landform limits the inter-visibility between the site and this LCA. Pockets of woodland to the south east of the site, namely Mill Wood, Roughet Shaw and Wheatgratten Wood along with undulations in the topography effectively screen the site from most of this LCA, with only distant glimpses possible from particular points on higher ground. Development of the site, therefore, is judged to have a **Negligible** effect on this LCA at both completion and year 15.
- 6.43 The 'Harrietsham to Lenham Vale' LCA begins approximately 300m west of the site at the settlement edge of Lenham Village and spreads west to encompass most of Harrietsham village. Descriptions of the views within this LCA include: *"To the south of the A20, views within the area are generally restricted by vegetation and built development... Where intervening vegetation and development allows, there are extensive panoramic views of the higher downland outside the area to the north... From higher ground along the Pilgrim's Way, views are more open across the landscape to the south."*
- 6.44 The overall condition of the landscape in this LCA area is described as 'Moderate', partly due to significant visual detractors such as industrial sites, the railway and busy A20. The rural landscape, however, is described as reasonably intact with vegetation causing good habitat connectivity. Landscape sensitivity in this LCA is described as 'Very High', partly due to the distinctive field and woodland pattern, traditional buildings and expansive views associated with the escarpment, although infill development and expansion is described as having weakened the sense of place.
- 6.45 Due to the distance from the site, the presence of intervening vegetation along field boundaries and the built form of Lenham Village screening views to the west, there is very limited inter-visibility between the site and this character area. Potential glimpses of the site limited to the easternmost boundary of the LCA or from higher ground along the escarpment. These views would be set within the context of existing built form of Ashmill Business Park, Lenham Village and recent residential development adjacent to the site. Development of the site is judged to have a **Negligible** effect on this LCA at both completion and year 15.

Chilston Registered Park and Garden

- 6.46 Chilston Registered Park and Garden is situated approximately 1.2km south of the site, just south of Lenham Heath Road, which borders its northern boundary. It is described by Historic England as: *“A late C17 or early C18 formal garden with early to late C19 alterations and additions, set in an C18 park with additional planting of C19 and C20 origin.”*
- 6.47 The formal and ornamental gardens of the park is set within 72ha of parkland and woodland. The M20 Motorway runs through the northern section of the park, which has formed approximately 13ha of woodland and parkland detached from the rest of the park. South of the motorway, the main part of the park is set within a shallow valley which contains some grade I and II listed buildings, one of which is currently used as a hotel. Views from the listed building are described as being *“...contained by the ridge to the north”*.
- 6.48 Lenham Heath Road is lined with hedges and hedgerow trees, and glimpsed views of the site are only possible from high points along the road at gaps in the hedgerow to the north of the road. Most of the park is situated on low lying landform and the existing intervening infrastructure of the M20 Motorway and the railway line fragment the northern section from the main part of the park. Combined with the distance and intervening pockets of woodland and vegetation particularly along Lenham Heath Road and the railway embankment south of Lenham, there is very limited visibility of the site from all but the northern boundary of the park. It is therefore judged that the proposed development will have **Negligible** effect on Chilston Park at both completion and year 15.

Site and Immediate Context

- 6.49 The site occupies sections of five irregularly shaped agricultural fields, adjacent to the settlement edge and within the context which features residential properties, Ashmill Business Park and the A20 Ashford Road. In the wider context the landform is a prominent feature from views within the site and its immediate context, with further influences from adjacent recent development visible through gaps in field boundary vegetation.
- 6.50 The proposed development will inevitably alter the character of the site from settlement edge arable and pastoral farmland to residential development with associated infrastructure and sports / recreational grounds. The loss of existing farmland would be permanent and irreversible. The new landscape will however include significant green infrastructure, which will extend to approximately 63% of the total site area.
- 6.51 The existing PROW footpaths passing through the site will, on completion, be maintained albeit marginally changed due to the presence of new paths, roads and the sports pitch, however access through the site will be maintained and pedestrians will be able to follow the route of the trim trail while the pitch is in use. New footpath connections will be created through the site connecting the development with the existing PROW network.
- 6.52 The magnitude of landscape change at completion would be High / Medium due to the loss of open land to development and changing the character from private farmland with rights of way to formally accessible open and recreational space. This will reduce over time as the development and planting matures. The landscape proposals provide access to recreational facilities and once mature will be beneficial in local landscape terms.

- 6.53 Landscape effects for the site and immediate context are assessed as **Moderate Adverse** on completion due to the location and influence of existing built form, reducing to **Moderate / Minor Adverse** once the development and green infrastructure matures.
- 6.54 The creation of a bund and SUDS basin within the northern section of the site will irreversibly change the site landform, and so is judged to have a **Minor Adverse** effect at completion. Generally, the built development will be located on similar ground as existing and so the majority of the site landform will remain as existing. Planting along the bund and will integrate sensitively with planting around the SUDS basin and once mature will merge with existing field boundaries to maximise contribution to landscape and biodiversity terms alongside drainage requirements. Once planting matures, the bund and basin should visually integrate with the existing hedgerows and trees along the field boundaries, and so is judged to have a **Negligible** effect at year 15.
- 6.55 Site woodland, trees, hedgerows and vegetation is currently limited to hedgerow field boundaries with scattered trees and some mature vegetation along the watercourses. The proposed main and secondary access will both be off Old Ashford Road along the site's northern boundary, which will require the removal of two sections of hedgerow to accommodate construction of the road network. A section of vegetation along the stream will also need to be removed in order to facilitate the construction of the road crossing it to the sports pavilion.
- 6.56 The GI strategy proposes to enhance the planting along the existing hedgerows and streams, and also provides planting along the bund and new green corridors along the sections of the site boundary which are currently bare. There will be additional tree planting associated with the plot frontages and throughout the residential development area, along with a central village green with orchard and avenue tree planting, softening views of the development by breaking up the built form. The planting will comprise predominantly native and indigenous species that will draw upon the planting guidelines contained within the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment Supplement document, to ensure species selected are appropriate to the site's location and landscape characteristics and will satisfy other biodiversity aims. A new green frontage along the road and a small gateway green in the north western corner of the site offers an arrival space complemented by new hedgerow and tree planting. The recreational ground to the south of the site encompasses two hectares of sports fields, a pavilion with dedicated parking, a trim trail and equipped area for play, and encompasses additional structural planting throughout. At completion, impacts on site woodland, trees, hedgerows and vegetation is judged to be **Moderate Adverse**. At year 15, the significant site planting will have matured and effects are judged to be **Minor Beneficial**.
- 6.57 In terms of site water features and watercourses, the site currently supports some dry ditches adjacent to field hedgerow boundaries, and sections of two streams defined by some mature vegetation which are tributaries of the Great Stour. The streams are already culverted in places, with PROW KH399 crossing one via an informal foot bridge consisting of two wooden sleepers. The layout of the recreation grounds is designed to minimise impacts on the streams, however there may need to be three sections of the streams culverted to facilitate the construction of the trim trail and also a vehicular crossing to enable access to the car park and sports pavilion. Additional planting alongside the streams are proposed within the GI strategy, along with a SUDS basin within the south eastern corner of the northern residential section of the development. This will create an additional water body and additional opportunities for biodiversity within the site. Developments effects are judged to be **Minor Adverse** at completion and **Minor Beneficial** at year 15, once wetland habitats have established.

Visual Effects

Visual Envelope (VE)

- 6.58 The VE (Figure 6) of the proposed development identifies the surrounding land from within which views towards any part of the proposed development are likely to be possible. The VE is not however, an indicator of the effect of the proposed development on the view but simply, its visible extent in the surrounding landscape.
- 6.59 A hand drawn VE for the proposed development was initially prepared based upon the local topography context and proposed building heights. This has then been reviewed on site and refined to take account of the visual 'screening' provided by buildings, trees and other features.
- 6.60 The VE for the proposed development is mostly limited to a relatively localised area. The VE encompasses most of the escarpment to the north of the site, as the higher landform allows for fuller views south over the site. From various points along the escarpment, there are mostly partial views of the site and the proposed development is likely to be visible, however this is seen within the context of the built development at Ashmill Business Park, the traffic along the A20 Ashford Road, and the rest of Lenham Village. North of the highest point of the escarpment, the intervening landform screens views of the site.
- 6.61 To the north west, the VE is restricted by the mature, dense vegetation and along Faversham Road and the woodland block to the north of the properties off Pilgrim's Way / the North Downs Way.
- 6.62 To the east and north east, the VE is limited by the localised high points in the intervening landform and the mature trees along the access track to East Lenham. There may be views from upper storeys at residential properties within the farmsteads to the east of the development, however views from roads and footpaths are mostly limited to areas on higher ground to the north.
- 6.63 The VE is limited to the south and south east as a result of the railway embankment and mature woodland adjacent to the site at Mill Wood and East Lenham. There are smaller patches of land south of the railway line from which the development could be visible, however these are limited to glimpsed views from high points in the landform or to gaps in the embankment at the railway underpass.
- 6.64 Local visual receptors include adjacent residents of properties off Old Ashford Road and users of the local PROW network running through and adjacent to the site including those coming across and down the escarpment on footpaths and the North Downs Way / Pilgrims Way. People visiting the Chalk Cliffs SSSI could also experience partial views of the development, however this would be within the context of existing built form and would encompass a small part of a much wider view.
- 6.65 There could be some limited locations (beyond the extent of the VE shown) that could have a potential distant or very limited view to a part of the development. Equally, there could be some locations shown within the VE that would not experience any views to the resultant development.

Construction

- 6.66 All construction works will be carried out in accordance with best practice procedures to protect and to minimise, as far as practicable, adverse impacts on visual amenity. It is assessed that the

overall visual effects during the construction phase would be over a relatively short duration (c1-2 years) and consequently, there would be a short-term effect as a result.

- 6.67 During the construction phase, adverse effects upon the local visual resource will occur and this depends on the actual extent of visibility of the site for receptors. Inevitably the greatest visual effects are likely to be experienced by residential receptors in closest proximity e.g. residents and users of Burnside Cottages to the west, Pivington House and East Lenham to the east. This also applies to users of PROW which traverse through the site who will likely experience a High to Medium magnitude of visual change, with full views of construction activity including vehicular movement and associated machinery, site compounds, and earthworks/ground modelling, and so are judged to likely experience **Major Adverse** effects. Users of nearby PROW footpaths or residents with partial views of the site but not immediately adjacent or traversing through it would likely experience **Major / Moderate Adverse** effects.
- 6.68 Nearby residents and road users of Old Ashford Road with partial or glimpsed views of the site are likely to experience **Moderate Adverse** effects, along with users of PROW footpaths approaching the site from higher ground to the north east who may have partial views in to the site over the top of intervening vegetation and built development. Users of the PROW footpaths and residents of properties further to the north east experience views which encompass more intervening vegetation, particularly the tree-lined access track to East Lenham and mature trees along Hubbards Hill which screens the site and so receptors likely experience **Moderate / Minor Adverse** effects. Residents and users of PROW footpaths to the north west experience screening by vegetation along Pilgrims Way and where views are more open, they often include more prominent views of built development at Lenham Village. From these points, the site is also partially screened by the built development at Ashmill Business Park. Users of PROW footpaths to the south west experience screening by mature vegetation along intervening field boundaries and recent development at Tanyard Farm, along with screening by vegetation along the railway embankment, however partial views are still possible and will also likely experience **Moderate / Minor Adverse** effects at construction.
- 6.69 Receptors that are likely to experience **Minor Adverse** or **Negligible** effects at construction, are those with limited views of the site, namely residential receptors at a distance with views limited to upper storeys, road users with transient glimpsed views of the site or users of PROW footpaths with localised views limited to distant glimpses through gaps in intervening vegetation or from high points which already encompass views of existing built form.

Operation (following Completion)

- 6.70 The following provides a summary of the visual effect's assessment included at Appendix C.

Residential Properties and Settlement

- 6.71 A number of residential properties are located along Old Ashford Road, with varying degrees of inter-visibility with the site.
- 6.72 Residential properties at Burnside Cottages back on to the site western boundary, with full views in to the northern section of the site due to limited screening offered by post and wire fences along the garden boundaries and limited vegetation within a number of the rear gardens. The proposed development will cause views from these properties to be shortened and there will likely be views of new dwellings from both upper and ground storeys. There is a degree of screening offered by

new planting along the boundary and the presence of a small green space at the site entrance sets back the built development from the existing properties to a degree, however views will be static and permanent and so visual effects are judged to be **Major / Moderate Adverse** at completion. As this planting matures, it will offer additional screening and so at year 15 effects reduce to **Moderate Adverse**.

- 6.73 Residents at Pivington House currently experience full views of the northern section of the site from both upper and ground storeys, due to post and wire fences and low wooden fences on their property western boundary. The existing view consists of the open field with Burnside Cottages visible. At completion, views will be shortened due to the development, however a section of the field adjacent to the property will be retained retaining some openness to the view and offering a degree of separation. Views of the new buildings will possibly be seen from both upper and ground storeys, and so effects are judged to be **Major / Moderate Adverse** upon completion.
- 6.74 At year 15 views will be permanently shortened, however planting along the bund will, once mature, offer some screening effects to the views of the built development. Views will therefore retain similar characteristics to the existing view, and so effects are judged to lessen to **Moderate Adverse** at year 15.
- 6.75 Properties at East Lenham share sections of the site eastern boundary, which currently consists of post and wire fencing with mature hedgerows. The southern section of the site is separated by a section of field currently bound by new hedgerow planting and post and wire fencing. Residents currently experience partial views of both the northern and southern section of the site, with potential views from both upper and ground storey windows. Intervening vegetation within the property grounds and along the field boundaries and stream offer some screening effects, however views through gaps and over hedgerows are likely. At completion, views will be shortened due to the development, however the planted bund and structural planting along the site boundary will offer some screening effects. The situation of the SUDS attenuation basin in the site south western corner will also offer a degree of separation between East Lenham and the built development. New planting to define currently unvegetated boundaries and enhancement of existing vegetation along the boundaries and stream will also offer some screening in to the recreational area to the south of the site, however new built form may be visible through and over the new planting. Effects are therefore judged to be **Moderate Adverse** upon completion.
- 6.76 At year 15, planting along the site boundaries and along the bund will have matured and will offer screening effects, however partial views may still be possible, particularly from upper storeys. Effects are therefore judged to remain **Moderate Adverse** at year 15.
- 6.77 Residents of properties to the west of the site including Tanyard Cottages, Rehouse Cottages, Lanrig and The Marvel are judged to experience **Moderate Adverse** effects at completion. Residents are currently likely to experience partial views of the site, with limited visibility of the northern part of the site which will contain the residential part of the development. Some properties share the site boundary with the southern section of the site. Intervening vegetation along the site field boundaries and within the gardens of the properties restricts visibility of the site from these dwellings, although some views may still be possible from upper storeys. There may be some views of the new play equipment and of the sports grounds from upper storeys or through gaps in the field boundaries, however the character of the view will still be open. At year 15 once new boundary enhancement planting is mature it will offer further screening effects to soften views, and effects reduce to **Minor Adverse**.

- 6.78 Residents at Tanyard Farm and within newly constructed dwellings are located approximately 130m west of the southern section of the site. The intervening field contains some individual trees and is bound by maintained hedgerows and individual trees. There are potential views in to the site from both upper and ground floors of the properties, however views are predominantly of the southern section of the site and limited to glimpses through gaps in intervening hedgerow field boundaries. Glimpses of roof tops may be possible from above intervening vegetation along the intervening field boundaries and the sports ground and play area may be visible through gaps in the vegetation and so receptors are also judged to experience **Moderate Adverse** at completion.
- 6.79 At year 15, additional planting along the site boundary will have matured to offer additional screening, however glimpsed views may still be possible, particularly from upper storeys. The intervening field parcel offers a degree of separation and the open nature of the sports and recreation area allows views to remain open and retain the majority of elements which feature in existing views. The effects are therefore judged to reduce to **Minor Adverse** at year 15.
- 6.80 Residents of properties at Glebe Gardens are unlikely to currently experience views of the site, as intervening vegetation along field boundaries and streams and the new development at Tanyard Farm screens views of the site. At completion there are unlikely to be any views of the development due to the residential part of the development being situated in the northernmost section of the site, and the aspect of the rear of dwellings at Glebe Gardens facing south west, away from the site. Effects are therefore judged to be **Minor Adverse** at completion. At year 15 the boundary planting will have matured and it is unlikely that any views of the development will be possible, and so effects are judged to lessen to **Negligible**.
- 6.81 Lenham Village is situated on a localised high point in the landform. Residents of the easternmost properties at the south east edge of Lenham including High Street, Court Lodge Farm, Old School Close, Mill Close and The Millers currently experience relatively expansive views to the east due to the landform falling away before rising as it reaches the northern section of the site. Intervening vegetation along field boundaries within the lower landform offers a degree of visual screening mostly of the southern section of the site, however glimpsed views of the northern field parcel may be possible over the vegetation and over the new development at Tanyard Farm due to the location of the properties on slightly elevated landform. The built development could possibly be visible from some ground floors; however, this is likely to be mostly limited to upper storeys. This is also going to be seen in the context of built form along Old Ashford Road and East Lenham and recent development at Tanyard Farm and Glebe Gardens, and will constitute a minor part of the view. Effects are therefore judged to be **Minor Adverse** upon completion.
- 6.82 At year 15, glimpsed views over planting could still be possible, however planting along the site boundary will have matured to offer some additional visual screening effects and views would be in the context of other recent development. Effects are therefore judged to lessen to **Negligible** at year 15.
- 6.83 Properties to the north east off Rayners Hill (Rayners Hill Cottages) are situated along PROW Byway ref KH 220 / Pilgrims Way / North Downs Way, just off Rayners Hill. The properties currently experience an expansive view to the south due to their position mid-way up the escarpment. The view currently consists of expanses of large fields, pockets of woodland and scattered farms, and the tops of buildings at Ashmill Business Park over the landform. The south eastern settlement edge of Lenham Village is also visible in the distance to the south west. The site itself is unlikely to be visible from ground floors due to the screening effects of the tree-lined access track to East

Lenham, but could be visible from upper storey windows. At completion, glimpsed views of roof tops from upper storeys may be possible, however the site forms a very small part of the expansive view at this distance, and the view already consists of built form therefore will not be overly different in character. Effects are therefore judged to be **Minor Adverse** upon completion. At year 15 glimpsed views may still be possible, however the planting along the bund, around the site boundary and within the 5m landscape buffer strip north of the A20 may provide screening of the site from these properties and upper storeys, and so effects are judged to lessen to **Negligible**.

- 6.84 Properties to the north west along Pilgrims Way off Faversham Road (The House by the Cross, Northdown and The View) are situated along PROW Byway ref KH219 / Pilgrims Way / North Downs Way, just off Faversham Road. The properties likely experience an expansive view to the south due to their position mid-way up the escarpment, mostly from upper storeys. Views likely consist of expanses of large fields, with pockets of woodland and scattered farms, with buildings at Ashmill Business Park and traffic along the A20 Ashford Road in the foreground.
- 6.85 At completion, glimpsed views of roof tops may be possible over the buildings at Ashmill Business Park, however this is likely limited to upper storeys of those properties furthest to the east due to dense vegetation along Pilgrims Way and in gardens. Effects are therefore judged to be **Minor Adverse** upon completion. At year 15, glimpsed views may still be possible however planting around the site boundary and within the 5m landscape buffer strip will have matured to offer screening, and so effects are judged to lessen to **Negligible**.
- 6.86 Scattered farm properties to the north west including Marlow Farm and Lea Farm currently experience expansive views to the south due to their position at the top of the escarpment. Glimpsed views of the site are possible over intervening woodland along and adjacent to Faversham Road.
- 6.87 At completion, distant glimpsed views of roof tops may be possible over vegetation, however would be seen in the context of adjacent built form already visible along Old Ashford Road and Burnside Cottages, with properties along Faversham Road and Hill Crescent in the foreground of the views. Effects are therefore judged to be **Negligible** at completion.
- 6.88 At year 15 planting around the site boundary once mature may provide screening effects, however glimpsed views may still be possible from upper storeys. These views are likely to be very small due to the distance and context, and therefore judged to be **Negligible**.
- 6.89 Farms to the south east including New Shelve Farm, Wheatgratten Farm, Old Shelve and Old Shelve Farm are approximately 1-1.5km south east of the site. They likely experience very limited views of the site as it is partially screened by trees along the access track to East Lenham and the rise in landform, however residents potentially experience glimpsed views of the site from upper storeys. At completion there may be glimpses of roof tops possible through intervening vegetation, and at year 15 there may be glimpses of roof tops possible through vegetation however planting along the boundary may offer screening effects once mature. Effects at both completion and year 15 are therefore judged to be **Negligible**.

Public Rights of Way (PROW) and Other Footpaths etc

- 6.90 Users of Public Rights of Way KH400 and KH399 which traverse through the site will likely experience the most significant changes and are judged to experience **Moderate Adverse** effects upon completion.

- 6.91 PROW Footpath ref KH400 begins at the tree lined access track to East Lenham and traverses through the site along its eastern and southern boundaries, before exiting the site and following the driveway to Burnside Cottages off Old Ashford Road. Footpath users experience open views across the northern section of the site, and the fragmented hedgerow along the southern boundary offer expansive views of the escarpment to the north. Ashmill Business Park and properties along Old Ashford Road are visible along the route.
- 6.92 At completion, the eastern section of the route will experience shortened views, however will still experience views of the escarpment. The route will become more enclosed as it passes through new structural planting along the site boundary and through the open space, and will likely experience enclosure of views due to the development of buildings in the northern section. The route will also need to cross over the road which accesses the car park. At year 15, structural planting will have matured to offer some filtering of views of the built form, however the 5m landscape buffer could also screen views of the escarpment from the route. Views will be permanently altered, however will encompass an extension of features already experienced in existing views, and so effects are judged to reduce to **Moderate / Minor Adverse** at year 15.
- 6.93 PROW Footpath ref KH399 is considered in two sections due to the built form at the Tanyard Farm development visually screening the site for users on the section of the route to the west of the development. For users on sections of the route east of Tanyard Farm, there are varying degrees of enclosure as the route passes across small open fields, through hedgerows and trees along field boundaries and over the stream. The route passes through the southern section of the site which currently consists of a small field used for pasture. Views to the north include views of the escarpment in the background through gaps in the fragmented hedgerow along the southern boundary offering full views of the site. Built form at Ashmill Business Park, properties off Old Ashford Road, East Lenham and Tanyard Farm form a prominent feature of the foreground.
- 6.94 At completion, views north will be permanently altered due to the construction of the development impeding views of the escarpment to the north. The proposals include the creation of recreational open space and sports pitches within the southern section of the site, and the nature of the views will remain open in character in places. At year 15, structural planting will have matured to offer some screening of views of the built form. Views will be permanently altered, however will encompass an extension of features already experienced in existing views. Effects are therefore judged to be **Moderate / Minor Adverse** at year 15.
- 6.95 Users of PROW Footpath ref KH399A experience varying degrees of enclosure as the route passes across small open fields, through hedgerows and trees along field boundaries and alongside Mill Wood. Views also consist of built form at Ashmill Business Park, Burnside Cottages and East Lenham. The footpath passes through the southern section of the site and the northern section of the site is visible from much of its route.
- 6.96 At completion, access through the site will be retained however the route itself will be altered. Much of the route will retain the existing character of views due to the open nature of the recreational ground, and the residential section of the site being partially screened by vegetation along the streams and field boundaries. Views will be noticeably altered due to the construction of the residential development however, and views of the escarpment will be restricted.
- 6.97 At year 15, structural planting will have matured to offer some screening of the built form, however that and the 5m landscape buffer could also partly screen views of the escarpment from the route. Views will be permanently altered with the built development, however will encompass an

extension of features already experienced in existing views and the escarpment will likely still be visible over the built development. Effects are therefore judged to lessen to **Moderate / Minor Adverse** at year 15.

- 6.98 Users of footpaths north of the railway line adjacent to the site and those from higher ground to the north facing the northern section of the site can have full or partial views of the site, are also judged to experience **Moderate Adverse** effects at completion.
- 6.99 Users of PROW Footpath ref KH398 north of the railway line route currently experience varied visibility of the site, with partial views through gaps in the intervening field boundary vegetation. The section of the route just north of the railway has a full view of the southernmost section of the site as there is no physical boundary currently defining it. The rest of the site, however is screened from view due to intervening boundary vegetation particularly along the streams running through the site. Built form at Tanyard Farm and Glebe Gardens is also prominent from the route, with the settlement edge of Lenham visible in places and views of the escarpment possible over intervening field boundary vegetation. At completion, glimpsed views of roof tops maybe possible over vegetation, however this would be seen in the context of the development at Tanyard Farm in the foreground. The new boundary planting along the southernmost section may offer some screening of the sports field, however it will likely be visible.
- 6.100 At year 15 there may be glimpsed views possible of roof tops and the sports fields over / through vegetation however planting along the boundary will offer some screening effects once mature. This would be seen within the context of the development at Tanyard Farm in the foreground and more distant views of Glebe Gardens and Lenham village, and so effects are judged to be **Minor Adverse** at year 15.
- 6.101 Users of PROW Footpath ref KH397 north of railway (Stour Valley Walk) generally experience varied visibility of the site. On higher ground as the route passes over the railway line, there are open views across the lower lying land to the east and the escarpment in the background to the north, with partial views possible of the site over intervening vegetation. Further towards Lenham village as the landform drops, the intervening field boundary vegetation and the new development at Tanyard Farm obscures views of the site. At completion, there will likely be partial views of the development possible from higher ground around the railway overpass. These views already consist of the built form of the Tanyard Farm development, Ashmill Business Park, Pivington House and the settlement edge of Lenham Village, and the site constitutes a very small part of the wider view.
- 6.102 At year 15 there may be partial views of the development possible over vegetation however planting along the boundary may offer screening effects once mature. This would be seen within the context of the development at Tanyard Farm in the foreground and more distant views of Lenham village, and so effects are judged to be **Minor Adverse** at year 15.
- 6.103 Users of PROW Footpath ref KH390 experience open, expansive views to the south which incorporates much of Lenham. Ashmill business park, buildings at East Lenham, Pivington House and the development at Tanyard Farm are all prominent along the route due to their position ahead of the route as it approaches the site. Traffic along the A20 Ashford Road is also noticeable due to the lack of boundary vegetation along the field in which the route is situated. The tree-lined access track to East Lenham offers a degree of screening in to the site, however partial views are still possible. At completion, full views of the residential development will likely be possible, however the new bund and boundary planting will offer a degree of screening.

- 6.104 At year 15, planting along the bund and site boundary will have matured to offer more substantial screening effects, however there will likely still be partial views of the development from higher points along the route. Planting within the 5m landscape buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road will also have matured and will offer screening of Ashmill Business Park, which will soften existing views of built form, and so effects are judged to be **Minor Adverse** at year 15.
- 6.105 Users of PROW Footpath ref KH389 north of Pilgrims Way experience open views along the higher ground at the top of the escarpment, with Lenham Village, scattered farms and Ashmill Business Park visible on the lower ground. The site is screened by dense vegetation along Hubbards Hill, Little Pivington Farm and Lade Wood along the northernmost sections of the route, however at the top of the escarpment users experience expansive views to the south with partial views in to the site beyond full views of Ashmill Business Park. As the route approaches the dense vegetation along Pilgrims Way views become more enclosed and the site is less visible. At completion, partial views of the residential development will likely be possible, however Ashmill Business Park will continue to screen the northernmost part of the site. The 5m planted buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road and boundary planting will offer a degree of screening.
- 6.106 At year 15 there will likely be partial distant views of the development possible from higher points along the route. Planting along the site boundary and the 5m landscape buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road will have matured however, to offer more substantial screening effects of both Ashmill Business Park and the site itself, therefore effects are judged to be **Minor Adverse** at year 15.
- 6.107 Users of Public Rights of Way Pilgrims Way including PROW Footpaths ref KH389, KH433 and KH438 which are located on higher landform directly north of the site, experience views partially screened by more prominent views of built form at Ashmill Business Park, and so are likely to experience **Moderate / Minor Adverse** effects upon completion.
- 6.108 Users of PROW south of Pilgrims Way including PROW Footpaths ref KH389, KH433 and KH438 experience views that are still open but less expansive than routes north of Pilgrims Way. Features within the lower lying landform to the south are mostly screened from view due to the intervening built form of Ashmill Business Park, properties along Old Ashford Road and mature vegetation along the Western sections of the A20 Ashford Road and within the business park. Views of the site are therefore limited to glimpses above and between the existing built form. At completion there may be partial views of roof tops possible from these routes, however the development will be mostly screened by the built form of the business park.
- 6.109 At year 15, planting along the site boundary and the 5m landscape buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road will have matured to offer more substantial screening effects of both Ashmill Business Park and the site itself, however there will likely still be glimpsed views of the development possible. Effects at year 15 are judged to remain **Negligible**.
- 6.110 PROW Byway ref KH219 is also a section of longer routes including Pilgrim's Way, the North Downs Way and the National Cycle Network number 17, and can be accessed from both Hubbards Hill and Faversham Road. Much of the route has limited visibility south due to dense mature woodland along the route enclosing the views, with a long section enclosed with vegetation from Hubbards Hill and a shorter section enclosed from Faversham Road, up to the final dwelling (The House by the Cross). A 400m section of the route has only limited fragments of vegetation enabling users to experience expansive views to the south which incorporate areas of built form within Lenham, along Old Ashford Road, Ashmill Business Park and scattered farms in the distance. The

site is partially screened, with only glimpsed views possible over intervening vegetation and the business park. At completion, partial views of the residential development will likely be possible, however Ashmill Business Park will continue to screen the northernmost part of the site. The 5m planted buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road and boundary planting will offer a degree of screening.

- 6.111 At year 15, planting along the site boundary and the 5m landscape buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road will have matured to offer more substantial screening effects of both Ashmill Business Park and the site itself, however there will potentially still be glimpsed views of the development possible from gaps in vegetation along the route. Effects are judged to remain **Negligible** at year 15.
- 6.112 Users of PROW Footpath ref KH397 south of the railway line experience glimpsed views of the site which are limited to localised points on higher ground. Mature vegetation along the raised railway embankment provides a visual buffer to views from locations immediately south of its route, with only sections located on higher ground experiencing glimpsed views through gaps in adjacent intervening vegetation and pockets of woodland within fields. At completion, distant glimpsed views of the development may be possible over the intervening vegetation, however pockets of built form along the escarpment and at Ashmill Business Park are already visible, and so effects are judged to be **Minor Adverse** upon completion.
- 6.113 At year 15 there may be distant glimpsed views of the development possible over vegetation from localised high points in the landform, however planting along the boundary may offer screening effects once mature, and so effects remain **Negligible** at year 15.
- 6.114 A number of PROW are located at a greater distance to the proposed development site or generally experience views enclosed by adjacent built form and vegetation. These include PROW KH391 and KH392, KH412, KH398 and permissive routes along the Stour Valley Walk. Views experienced along these routes also consist of built form adjacent to the site, and so are judged to be **Negligible** upon completion.
- 6.115 Users of PROW Footpaths to the north east of the site including PROW refs KH391 and KH392 experience limited views of the site. The protruding landform along the escarpment restricts views of the lower lying land of the site beyond, and as the routes approach Hubbards Hill, dense, mature vegetation along the road and the tree-lined access track to East Lenham east of the site also screen views in to the site. At completion, distant glimpsed views of the development may be possible over the intervening vegetation, however would be seen in the context of existing pockets of built form visible in the distance at Tanyard Farm and at East Lenham, with more prominent built form in the foreground along Hubbards Hill.
- 6.116 At year 15 distant glimpsed views of the development may be possible over the intervening vegetation, however would form a minute part of the wider view, and so effects are judged to remain **Negligible** at year 15.
- 6.117 Users of PROW south of the railway on lower ground including KH412, KH398 along Stour Valley Walk and including permissive routes along Stour Valley Walk experience limited views north due to the vegetated embankment, with no views of the site possible until users are directly south of the underpass, where distant glimpsed views may be possible through gaps in intervening vegetation. At completion, a glimpsed view of the southernmost sports field might be possible through the new boundary planting from the route directly south of the underpass, however there will likely be no views possible from most the rest of the routes.

- 6.118 Once the boundary planting has matured at year 15, this glimpsed view will likely be screened due to the boundary planting and effects are judged to remain **Negligible**.
- 6.119 PROW Byway ref KH220 is within the Kent Downs AONB to the north east of the site. It is a section of longer routes including Pilgrim's Way, the North Downs Way and the National Cycle Network number 17. The route can be accessed off Rayners Hill, and constitutes the access track to properties at Rayners Hill Cottages. Much of this section route has limited visibility south due to dense mature woodland along the route enclosing the views, particularly along the western section towards Hubbards Hill. The eastern section has some open views; however, the site is screened by the intervening rise in landform, the tree-lined access track to East Lenham and also by the built form of Ashmill Business Park. Users of this section of the route could potentially experience glimpsed views of roof tops over the built form of the business park at completion.
- 6.120 At year 15, planting within the 5m strip and along the bund will have matured to offer significant screening effects which will further limit the glimpsed views, and so effects are judged to remain **Negligible**.
- 6.121 Footpath routes to the north west of the site within the Kent Downs AONB include PROW Byway ref KH212, KH288A and KH288B. The Byway Ref KH212 is also a section of longer routes including Pilgrim's Way, the North Downs Way and the National Cycle Network number 17, and is accessed from Faversham Road. Users of these routes experience similar views which are more open to the south, however there is minimal visibility of the site due to the distance, intervening landform, vegetation along the A20 Ashford Road and the built form at Ashmill Business Park obscuring views of the site. At the top of the escarpment, views are still restricted due to the protruding intervening landform and dense woodland adjacent to Faversham Road. At completion, distant glimpsed views of the residential development may be possible, however Ashmill Business Park will continue to screen the much of the site. The 5m planted buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road and boundary planting will offer a degree of screening.
- 6.122 At year 15, planting along the site boundary and the 5m landscape buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road will have matured to offer more substantial screening effects of both Ashmill Business Park and the site itself, however there will potentially still be distant glimpsed views of the development possible from gaps in vegetation along the route. Effects at year 15 are judged to remain **Negligible**.
- 6.123 The section of PROW Footpath ref KH399 to the west of Tanyard Farm is visually contained due to the presence of built form at the eastern settlement edge and to the north off Old Ashford Road, with recent development off Glebe Gardens screening views of the escarpment to the north. Recent development at Tanyard Farm is prominent along the route and screens views east towards the site. At completion, glimpsed views of roof tops may be possible over vegetation, however this would be seen in the context of the development at Tanyard Farm in the foreground.
- 6.124 At year 15 there may be glimpses of roof tops possible over vegetation however this would be seen within the context of Tanyard Farm in the foreground. Planting along the boundary may offer screening effects once mature and so effects remain **Negligible** at year 15.

Roads & Transport Users

- 6.125 Old Ashford Road runs parallel to the A20 Ashford Road which it joins to the east of Ashmill Business Park, and connects to the centre of Lenham at the square and High Street. It runs

adjacent to the site northern boundary and the pavement along the road ceases at Burnside Cottages. Road users potentially experience some open views over the site from field access points or over the top of the field boundary hedgerow when it is cut low. Generally, the road is quite enclosed due to the hedgerow boundaries and tall vegetation along Ashmill Business Park. Built form at the business park and residential properties are visible along the road. At completion, partial views of built development may be possible from the road. The built development will be set back from the road with boundary planting which will retain some features of existing views. The new access points also reflect existing junctions off the road, and so effects on road users are judged to be **Moderate / Minor Adverse** at completion.

- 6.126 At year 15, site boundary planting will have matured to offer some screening in to the site and would reflect the mature vegetation on the northern side of the road. Partial views of built development may still be possible through the vegetation and at access points, however the new planting should blend with the existing built form along the road. Effects are therefore judged to lessen to **Minor Adverse** at year 15.
- 6.127 The A20 Ashford Road is a busy main road which runs along the bottom of the escarpment and AONB, and is joined by Old Ashford Road at the site north eastern corner. Views are expansive along the road due to a lack of field boundary vegetation, offering wide views of the escarpment to the north and across lower lying land to the south. As the road approaches Lenham, views are more contained due to the built development at East Lenham, Pivington House and Ashmill Business Park. Views of the site are restricted by the tree-lined access track to East Lenham and the business park, to glimpses at field access points and over the hedgerow along Old Ashford Road for a short section. At completion, views of the escarpment to the north may be impeded for a short section of the road due to the planting of the 5m landscape buffer north of the road. There may be a glimpsed view possible of the built development over the field boundary hedgerow, however this will be limited to a very small section of the road, and so effects are judged to be **Negligible** upon completion.
- 6.128 At year 15, views will be permanently altered due to the maturing of planting in the 5m planted buffer which will impede views of the escarpment along that section of road, however this enclosure from vegetation is common along stretches of the road further west towards Lenham village. Views of built development will be further screened by site boundary vegetation and the bund along the site eastern edge, and so effects are judged to remain **Negligible** at year 15.
- 6.129 Hubbards Hill begins at Warren Street to the north east, and traverses down the escarpment before reaching the A20 Ashford Road, close to the site north eastern boundary. Well maintained, tall field boundary vegetation along the road screens views of the adjacent fields and views to the south west towards the site. There are currently no views of the site from the road. At completion, there may be glimpsed views of built development possible over the field boundary hedgerow as road users wait to join the A20 Old Ashford Road, and the 5m planted buffer may screen views of the road and of the business park as users approach the junction. Effects are therefore judged to be **Minor Adverse** upon completion.
- 6.130 At year 15, the 5m planted buffer will have matured to further screen views of the road and business park, and planting along the site boundary and bund will screen views of built development. Effects are therefore judged to remain **Negligible** at year 15.
- 6.131 Rayners Hill also begins at Warren Street and runs down the side of the escarpment, approximately 1km east of Hubbards Hill. There are no field boundary hedgerows alongside the road, and so

views are expansive. The site itself is not currently visible from the road. At completion, there may be some glimpsed views of roof tops possible above intervening vegetation, however this would encompass a minute part of a very broad view. Effects are therefore judged to be **Negligible** at completion.

- 6.132 At year 15, the 5m planted buffer strip will have matured and could further screen views of Ashmill Business Park and the site. Effects are therefore judged to remain **Negligible** at year 15.

Other Visual Receptors

- 6.133 Lenham Quarry Site of Special Scientific Interest is also known as Pivington Quarry Geological Conservation Review site. The site is also known as 'Lenham Chalk Cliffs' and contains a viewpoint highlighted on OS mapping. From this high point along the escarpment, views to the south are extensive. Mature hedgerows and trees along the A20 partially screen views west towards Lenham Village, however views south west towards the sites field boundaries are more open and allow full views of Ashmill Business Park and of traffic along the A20 Ashford Road. Partial views of recent development at Tanyard Farm and Groom Way are possible with glimpses of development at Glebe Gardens. Farm buildings at East Lenham and Pivington House are visible adjacent to the site with almost full views possible to the site. At completion, partial views of the residential development will likely be possible, however Ashmill Business Park will continue to screen the northernmost part of the site. The 5m planted buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road and boundary planting will offer a degree of screening, however effects are judged to be **Moderate / Minor Adverse** upon completion.
- 6.134 At year 15, planting along the site boundary and the 5m landscape buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road will have matured to offer more substantial screening effects of both Ashmill Business Park and the site itself, however there will likely still be partial views of the development. This would be seen within the context of the business park and adjacent recent development however, and so effects are judged to lessen to **Negligible** at year 15.
- 6.135 Lenham Cross War Memorial grade II listed building is situated north off the Pilgrims Way route. It consists of a 61m tall and 27m wide symbolic chalk cross cut in to the hillside of the escarpment, including a separate stepped enclosure with a plaque and fixed bench. Visitors to the cross can sit and look out over the expansive view to the south, which currently consists of partial views of Lenham Village and scattered farms amongst pockets of woodland in the undulating landscape, with Ashmill Business Park and other properties off Old Ashford Road in the foreground. The A20 Ashford Road is also readily visible at the bottom of the hill due to open field boundaries.
- 6.136 At completion, partial views of the residential development will likely be possible, however Ashmill Business Park will continue to screen the northernmost part of the site. The 5m planted buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road and boundary planting will offer a degree of screening, and so effects are judged to be **Moderate / Minor Adverse** upon completion.
- 6.137 At year 15, planting along the site boundary and the 5m landscape buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road will have matured to offer more substantial screening effects of both Ashmill Business Park and the site itself, however there will potentially be glimpsed views of the development possible. Effects are judged to lessen **Negligible** at year 15.
- 6.138 Ashmill Business Park is situated adjacent to the site north of Old Ashford Road. People at work in commercial buildings may have glimpsed views of the site, mostly limited to upper storeys. Views

likely consist of the site field, the boundary hedgerow along Old Ashford Road and views of built form residential properties off Old Ashford Road and at East Lenham. At completion, full views of built development may be possible through the new boundary planting, however this would mostly be limited to upper storeys. Effects are judged to be **Minor Adverse** at completion.

- 6.139 At year 15, site boundary planting will have matured to offer some screening in to the site, however partial views of built development may still be possible, mostly from upper storeys of the commercial buildings. Effects are judged to remain **Minor Adverse** at year 15.
- 6.140 The Parish Church of St Mary is a Grade I Listed Building with several Grade II listed buildings within the church yard, set within the Lenham Conservation Area. Visitors to the church and church yard currently have no views in to the site, due to the built form of properties along roads off Old Ashford Road, and at the Tanyard Farm development. At completion, glimpsed views of roof tops may be possible over vegetation, however this would be seen in the context of the development at Tanyard Farm in the foreground.
- 6.141 At year 15 there may be glimpses of roof tops possible over vegetation however planting along the boundary may offer screening effects once mature and this would be seen within the context of Tanyard Farm in the foreground. Effects are judged to be **Negligible** at both completion and year 15.
- 6.142 Chilston Park Registered Park and Garden is a late 17th Century garden within an 18th century park, with listed buildings associated with Chilston Park Hotel. It is situated at least 1.8km south of the site at its closest point. From the vast majority of the park, there is no visibility of the site due to the location on low lying landform, and screening of views to the north due to the M20 and the railway line which run through the northern section of the park. There may be distant, glimpsed views possible from the northernmost boundary adjacent to the Chilston Pines section, adjacent to Lenham Heath Road.
- 6.143 At both completion and at year 15, there may be very distant glimpsed views of roof tops possible through gaps in intervening pockets of woodland, however these would be minute in the context and only legible from the park boundary. Effects are judged to be **Negligible** at both completion and year 15.

Night-time Visual Effects

- 6.144 The project will follow the latest best practice guidance on lighting installations to minimise lighting emissions and pollution on the surrounding landscape and on the night time skies. It is expected that the proposed development will follow the latest best practice guidance on lighting installations to minimise light emissions and pollution on the surrounding landscape.
- 6.145 The site is located adjacent to the settlement edge of Lenham however there are currently no lighting columns along Old Ashford Road adjacent to the site. The sports pitches are not due to be floodlit, and so will not result in any additional lighting in the southern section of the site.
- 6.146 Overall, given the existing illumination of the local area including Ashmill Business Park and residential properties along Old Ashford Road, it is considered that the proposed development will only result in a slight increase in lighting levels from that already provided by the settlement.

Cumulative Effects

- 6.147 A number of potential development sites within the local context have been identified. Recent developments at Tanyard Farm and Glebe Gardens were under construction at the time of the assessment and have been considered within the main assessment. Seven further sites were not under construction at the time of assessment and so the cumulative effects of the proposed development within the context of these potential developments have therefore been considered here. These include a consented development on land north of Old Ashford Road, and two broad areas to the west and south west of the village, both divided into 3 individual Strategic Housing Delivery Sites, as identified in the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation Draft (Sept 2018).
- 6.148 With regards to effects on the local landscape character, the two Strategic Housing Delivery Sites lie within the Harrietsham to Lenham Vale Landscape Character Area of the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment while the site north of Old Ashford Road and the proposal site lie within the adjacent East Lenham Vale landscape character area. The Strategic Housing Delivery Sites are located on the western and south western edge of the village and are separated from the proposal site by the wider extent of Lenham and have very limited intervisibility with the proposal site. The site north of Old Ashford Road lies to the north west of the proposal site, but is visually separated by recent development at Tanyard Farm and by the existing business park and therefore shares some limited inter-visibility with the proposal site.
- 6.149 The additional sites are all located adjacent to the village edge and it is assumed that any future applications would be accompanied by a mitigation strategy to include good design and the provision of a green infrastructure strategy. The combined developments will result in the overall expansion of the village, however these will be in the context of the existing settlement and will be relatively contained by existing features such as the woodland blocks, railway and road corridors. Cumulative effects on the local landscape character areas, of these potential development areas in combination with the site and proposed development is judged to be **Negligible** due to the intervening distance and lack of inter-visibility between the sites.
- 6.150 With regards to visual effects, built form is already a feature of views for local receptors including residential receptors and users of the local PROW network and road network. The Strategic Housing Delivery Sites are located at a distance to the proposal site and the site north of Old Ashford Road, and are visually separated by the wider extent of the village. It is unlikely that all developments will be viewed together by visual receptors.
- 6.151 In the wider landscape, the development north of Old Ashford Road could result in the extension of the built form already visible at Ashmill Business Park for high sensitivity users of public rights of way along the escarpment within the AONB. The proposed development at Old Ashford Road includes proposed additional planting along the site's northern boundary and a central green along the PROW route KH433 which passes through the site. This will provide some screening effects and internal softening of the built form. There are however likely be partial views of the development possible for users of these footpaths. The proposed development sites are however, mostly visually screened by the existing buildings within the Ashmill Business Park, and will only result in a very minor increase in overall visible built form. The combined effects of the two developments on these receptors are considered to be **Minor Adverse**.

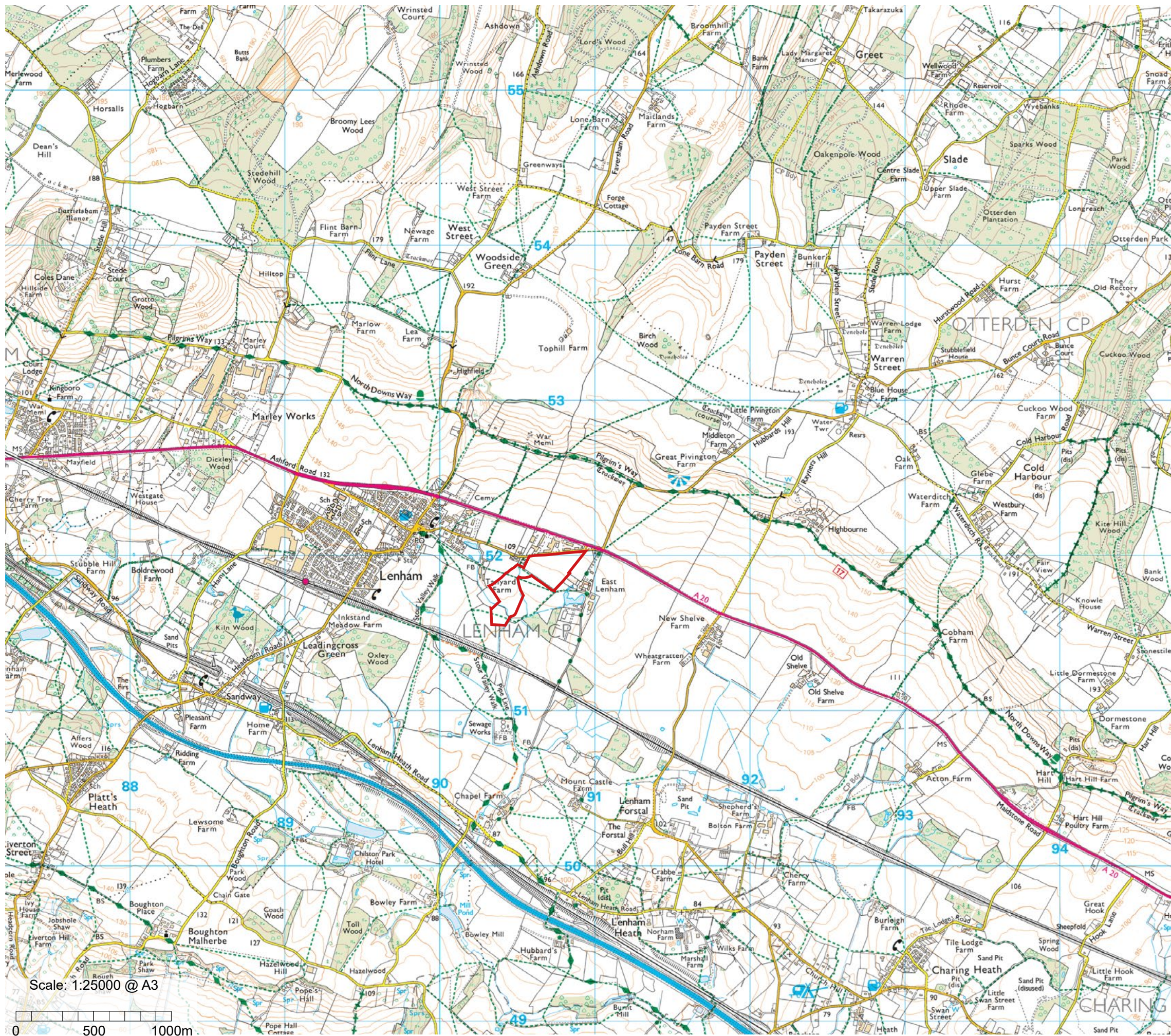
- 6.152 The other consideration is the cumulative sequential effects of both developments on views and experiences of road users along Old Ashford Road. Currently, the site north of Old Ashford Road allows for views north of the escarpment where the Chalk Cross can be seen from much of the road, however scattered trees along the field boundary adjacent to the road do offer some visual enclosure. Once developed, the site north of Old Ashford Road will impede views north from much of the road, changing the character of the route to be more enclosed. The proposed development will also further enclose the road adjacent to the sites northern boundary by limiting views to the south. This section of road currently does not experience views of the escarpment due to the business park which, combined with the residential properties adjacent to the site, already encloses views from the road. The cumulative effects on road users of Old Ashford Road, are therefore judged to be **Minor Adverse**.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The site is situated on the eastern edge of Lenham village in Kent and covers a total area of 11.60 hectares. It consists of a mix of arable and pasture agricultural fields located to the south of Old Ashford Road adjacent to Ashmill Business Park, and extends south west towards the railway line.
- 7.2 The site is bound in part by hedgerows with mature trees and watercourses that are tributaries of the Great Stour, running through the southern section of the site. Some sections of the site boundary currently have no physical definition.
- 7.3 The proposed development will deliver up to 100 dwellings and major sports provision including a new recreational area with a sports pavilion, sports pitches, trim trail and play equipment. The primary site access will be gained off the Old Ashford Road along the northern boundary. A 5m wide landscape buffer is proposed to be planted to the north of the A20 Ashford Road as part of the mitigation proposals to reduce visual impacts on the AONB.
- 7.4 Lenham is identified as a Broad Location for Housing Growth in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017). The site itself is allocated as a Strategic Housing Delivery Site as set out in the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan (2018). The site itself is not subject to any local or national landscape designations, however the Kent Downs AONB is located to the north of the site beyond the A20 Ashford Road.
- 7.5 The site is situated on the lower slope of the Kent Downs southern escarpment. The topography across the site slopes in a south-westerly direction from the site's northern boundary at 116m AOD, down towards the two streams within the site's southern parcel, lying at approximately 100m AOD.
- 7.6 In the wider context the local topography is characterised by gently rolling land, with a distinct change to the north of Lenham, where the Kent Downs rise dramatically from the A20 to a high point of approximately 200m AOD approximately 1km to the north of the site. Lenham village is situated on a locally elevated position between the valley for the River Len to the north west and the Great Stour to the south east. The landform is more elevated towards Lenham to the west, and falls gently to the southwest towards the site, where field drainage ditches and channels eventually lead to the Great Stour.
- 7.7 The site is located within the NCA120: 'Wealden Greensand', and within close proximity to NCA190: 'The North Downs'. At this very broad national scale, effects on both character areas are judged to be **Negligible**.
- 7.8 The Landscape Assessment of Kent (2004) identifies Landscape Character Areas at the county level. The Landscape Character Area which contains the site itself is 'Hollingbourne Vale East', which is judged to have **Negligible** effects as a result of the development, due to limited visibility across the character area and existing detracting features such as the railway and main roads.
- 7.9 Adjacent character areas to the south and west – 'Hothfield Heathy Farmlands' and 'Hollingbourne Vale West' are also judged to experience **Negligible** effects primarily due to a lack of inter-visibility between them and the site.
- 7.10 The adjacent character area to the north is 'Hollingbourne Vale', and due to the rising landform of the escarpment, expansive views to the south over the site are possible from various points within this character area. The development is judged to have potentially **Negligible** effects on this character area overall at year 15 post-completion due to the screening of existing visual detractors

such as Ashmill Business Park as the planting within the development and the landscape buffer strip north of the A20 Ashford Road matures.


- 7.11 At the district level, the site lies within the Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment (2012/2013) 'East Lenham Vale' Character Area, which is part of the 'Gault Clay Vale' broader Landscape Type. Effects on this Type is judged to be **Negligible** at year 15 due to the scale of the area and the inclusion of both positive elements which will enhance existing green infrastructure and screen existing built form from the higher landform within the northern section of the areas within the AONB. Effects on 'East Lenham Vale' Landscape Character Area is judged to be **Minor Adverse** at year 15, due to the smaller scale of the area, and the possibility of views due to the landform influencing visibility.
- 7.12 Adjacent character areas to the north, west and south include 'Lenham Scarp', 'Harrietsham to Lenham Vale' and 'Lenham Heath Farmlands'. Due to the limited inter-visibility between the site and these character areas, effects are also judged to be **Negligible** at year 15.
- 7.13 Chilston Park Registered Park and Garden to the south of the site is also judged to experience **Negligible** effects due to the lack of inter-visibility.
- 7.14 The main sensitive visual receptors are limited to residents on or near to site boundaries or users of public rights of way which pass through the site.
- 7.15 High sensitivity visual receptors are generally associated with the raised landform to the north within the AONB, and include users of the long-distance route and national trail, the North Downs Way / Pilgrims Way. Users experience views which are quite enclosed in some sections due to dense vegetation along the route, and so visibility of the site is limited. In some sections, however, users will experience distant partial and / or glimpsed views of the site, however from this elevation, views will also consist of existing built form at Lenham Village, including new residential developments and Ashmill Business Park.
- 7.16 There are also some footpaths which traverse down the escarpment. Those which face towards the site from the north east are likely to experience more significant effects as they currently experience relatively unimpeded views of the site. Those which face away from the site or those located more to the north will likely experience less significant effects, as their views already consist of the built form at Ashmill Business Park, which effectively screens the majority of the site, particularly from lower ground as the routes traverse down the escarpment. Mature woodland along Faversham Road offers significant screening to footpaths further to the north west.
- 7.17 Users of PROW to the south of the railway line are generally limited to high points in the landform, as views are impeded by the railway embankment and associated mature vegetation along its route. Footpaths to the north of the railway line adjacent to the southern section of the site are likely to experience varied effects due to the presence of intervening vegetation along field boundaries.
- 7.18 In conclusion, the landscape character of the site and its context has the ability to absorb change in the form of high-quality development which responds to the existing character of the village within its landscape setting. The proposed residential and recreational development will form a sympathetic extension to the village and the associated green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements combined with increased public access associated with the recreational ground will provide additional community and environmental benefits. The effects on landscape and visual resources, as a result of the proposed developments would not give rise to any unacceptable long-term landscape and visual harm.



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client
Dean Lewis Estates

project
**Old Ashford Road,
Lenham**

drawing title
SITE LOCATION PLAN

scale
1:25000 @ A3

drawn
JES/TCM

issue date
Sept 2019

rev:
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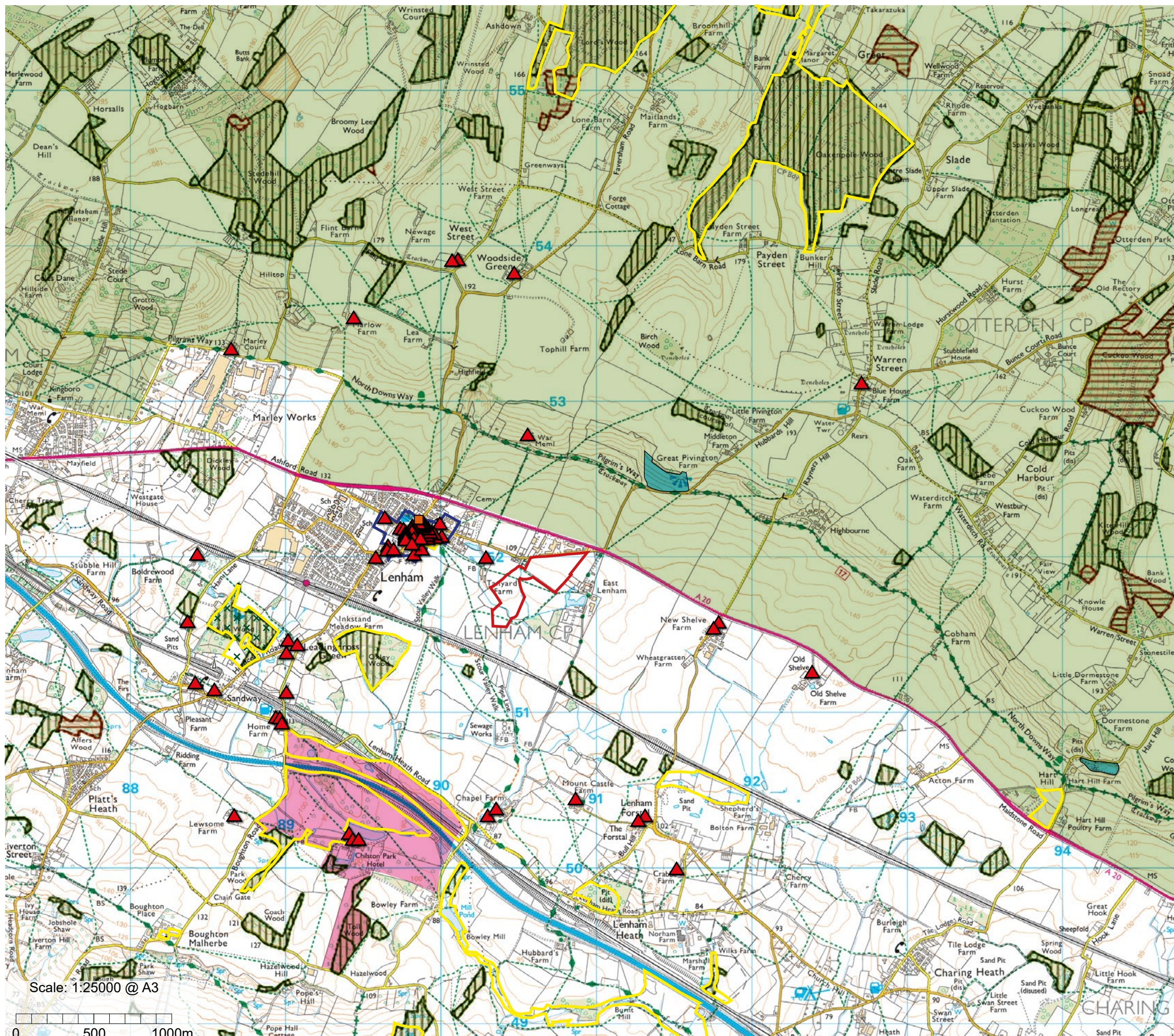
Figure 1



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









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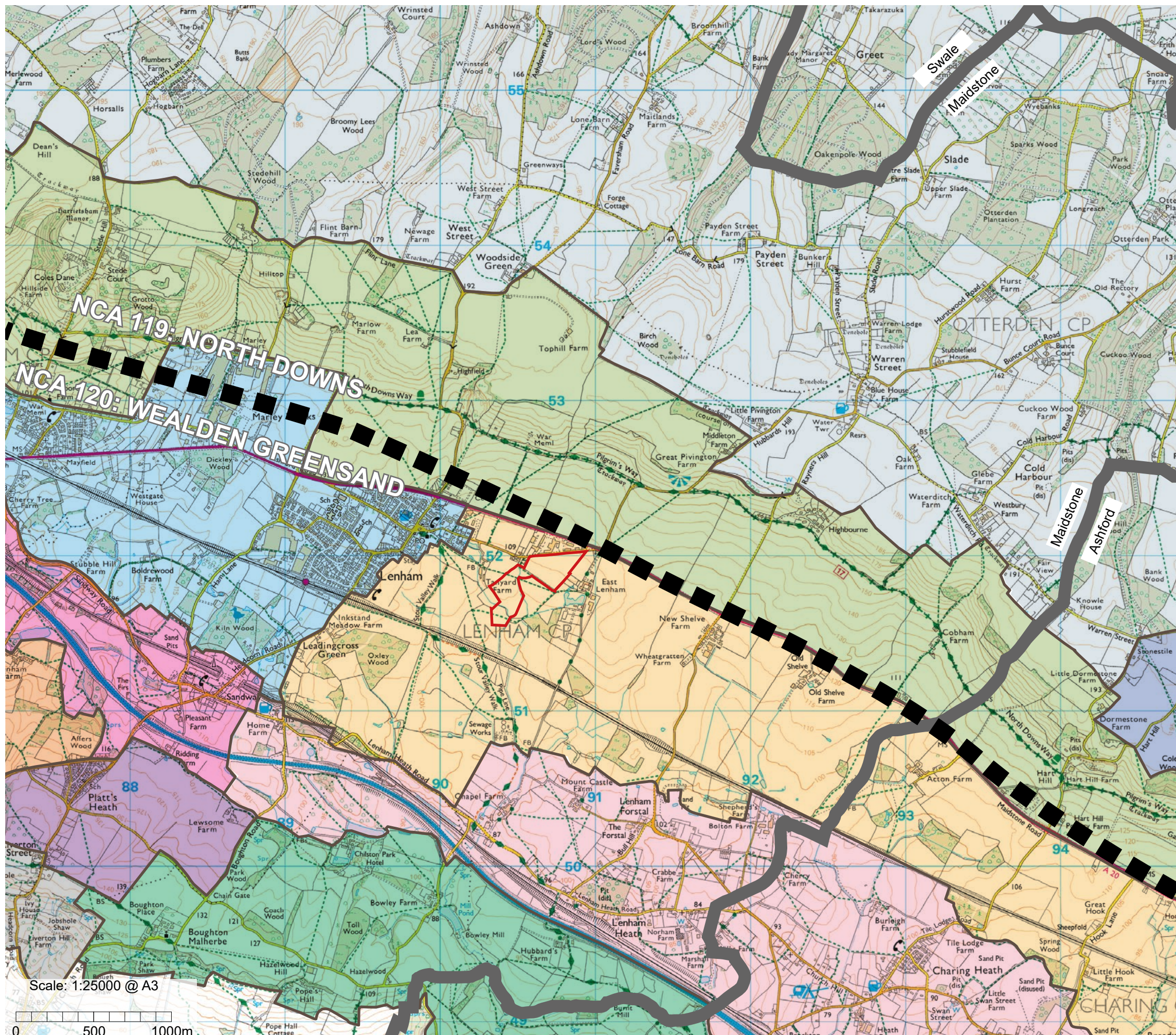
-  Site Boundary
-  Scheduled Monuments
-  Listed Buildings (within 2km from site)
-  Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
-  Registered Park and Garden
-  Conservation Areas (within 2km from site)
-  Local Wildlife Site
-  Local Nature Reserve
-  Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
-  Ancient and Replanted Woodland

client
Dean Lewis Estates
project
Old Ashford Road,
Lenham
drawing title
DESIGNATIONS

scale
1:25000 @ A3
drawing / figure number
Figure 3

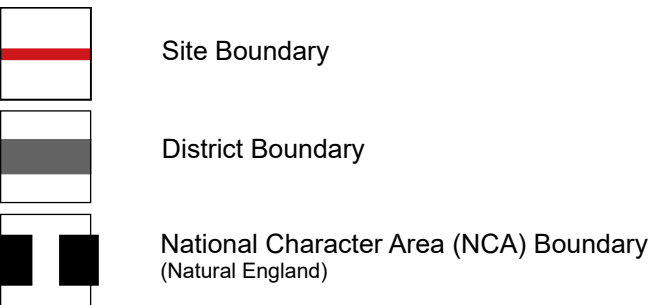
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JES/TCM

issue date
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The Landscape Assessment of Kent, 2004



client
Dean Lewis Estates

project
Old Ashford Road,
Lenham

drawing title
**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
NATIONAL AND COUNTY**

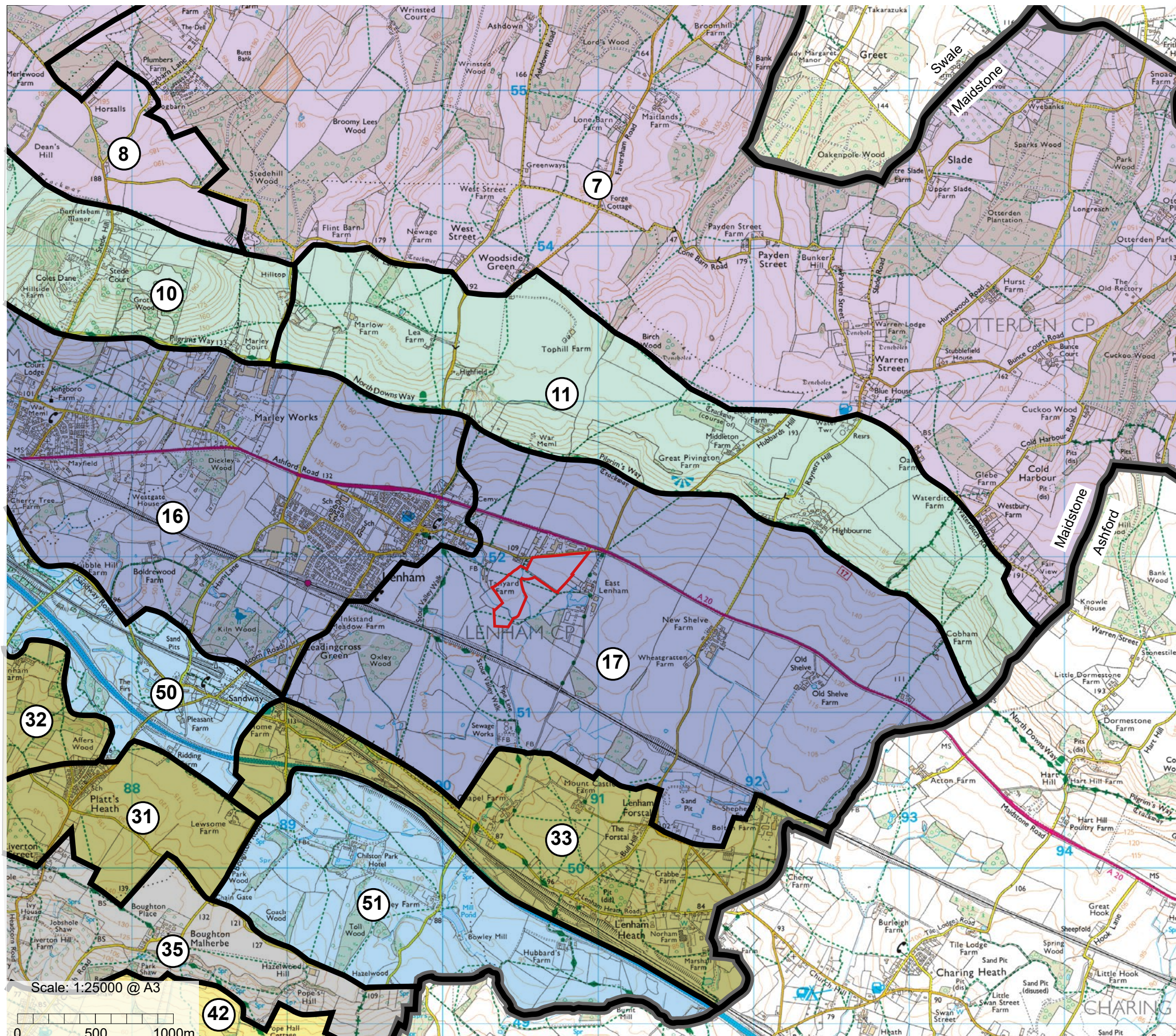
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Figure 4a




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-  Site Boundary
-  District Boundary

Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment, March 2012 (Amended July 2013) (Jacobs)

- Landscape Types
-  Gault Clay Vale
 -  Chalk Scarp Landscapes
 -  Dry Valleys and Downs
 -  Valleys
 -  Greensand Orchards and Mixed Farmlands
 -  Greensand Ridge
 -  Low Weald

- Landscape Character Areas
-  17 - East Lenham Vale.
 - 16 - Harrietsham to Lenham Vale.
 - 11 - Lenham Scarp.
 - 10 - Thurnham, Hollingbourne and Harrietsham Scarp.
 - 7 - Wormshill, Frinstead and Otterden Downs and Dry Valleys.
 - 8 - Ringlestone Downs.
 - 33 - Lenham Heath Farmlands.
 - 31 - Kingswood Plateau.
 - 32 - Broomfield Undulating Farmlands.
 - 50 - Harrietsham Vale.
 - 51 - Chilston Parklands.
 - 35 - Sutton Valence Greensand Ridge.
 - 42 - Ulcombe Mixed Farmlands.



client
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project
Old Ashford Road,
Lenham

drawing title
**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
DISTRICT**

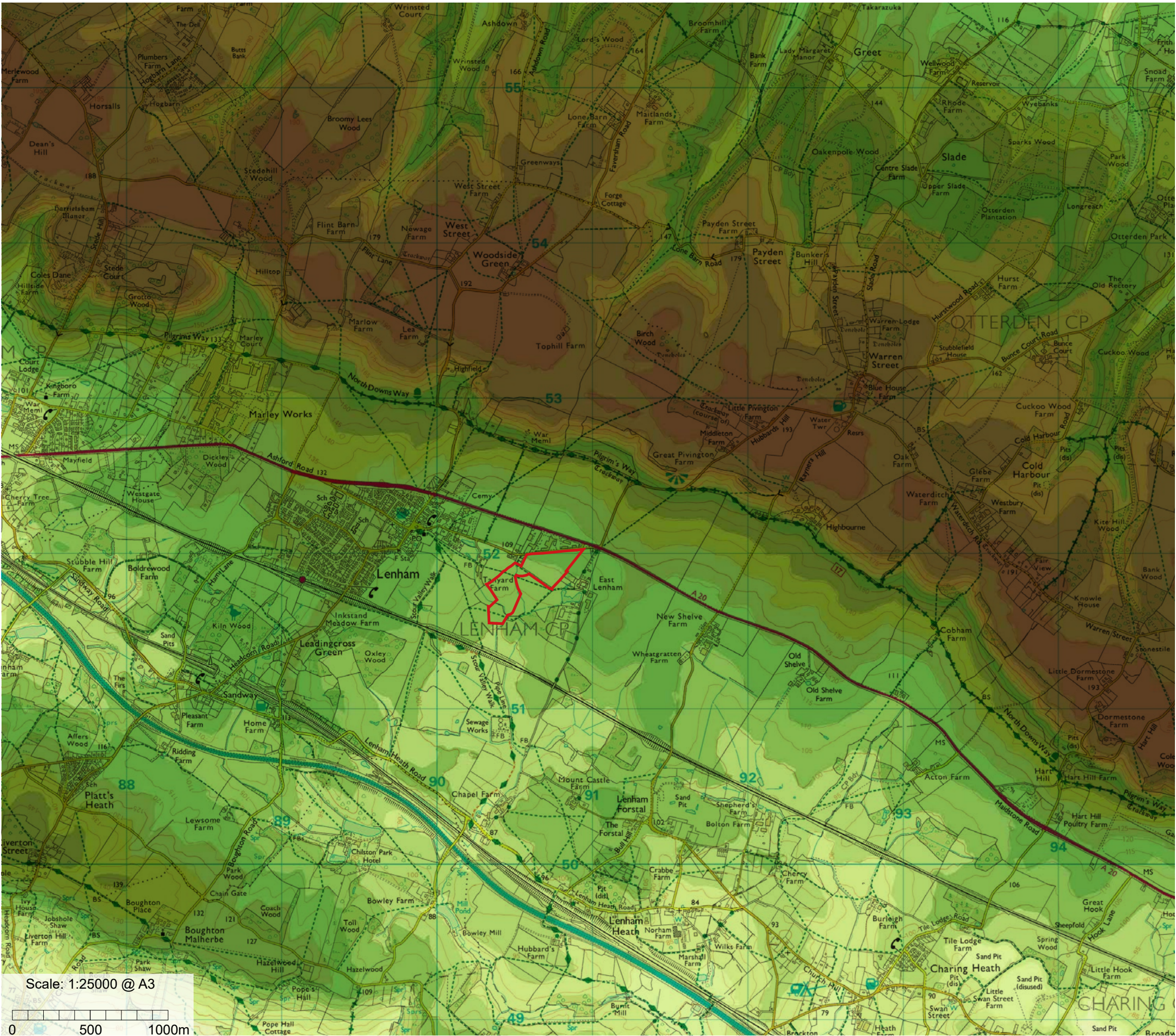
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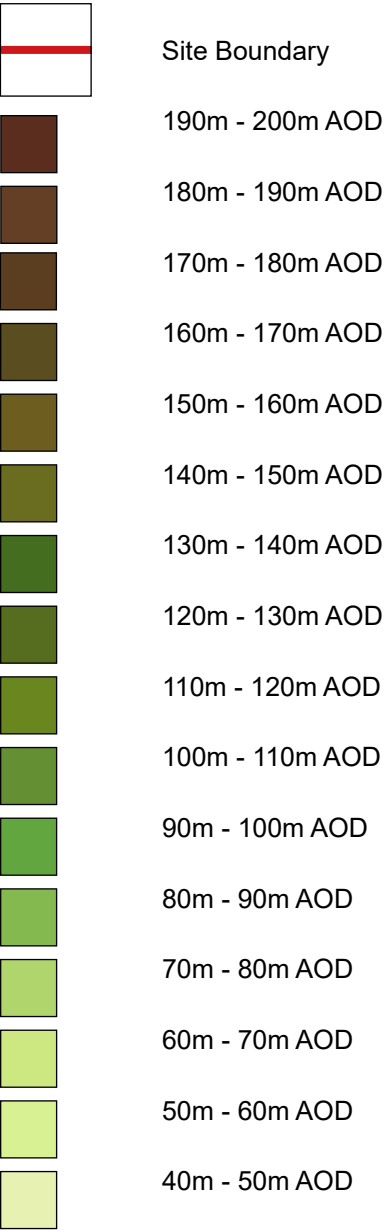
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Figure 4b



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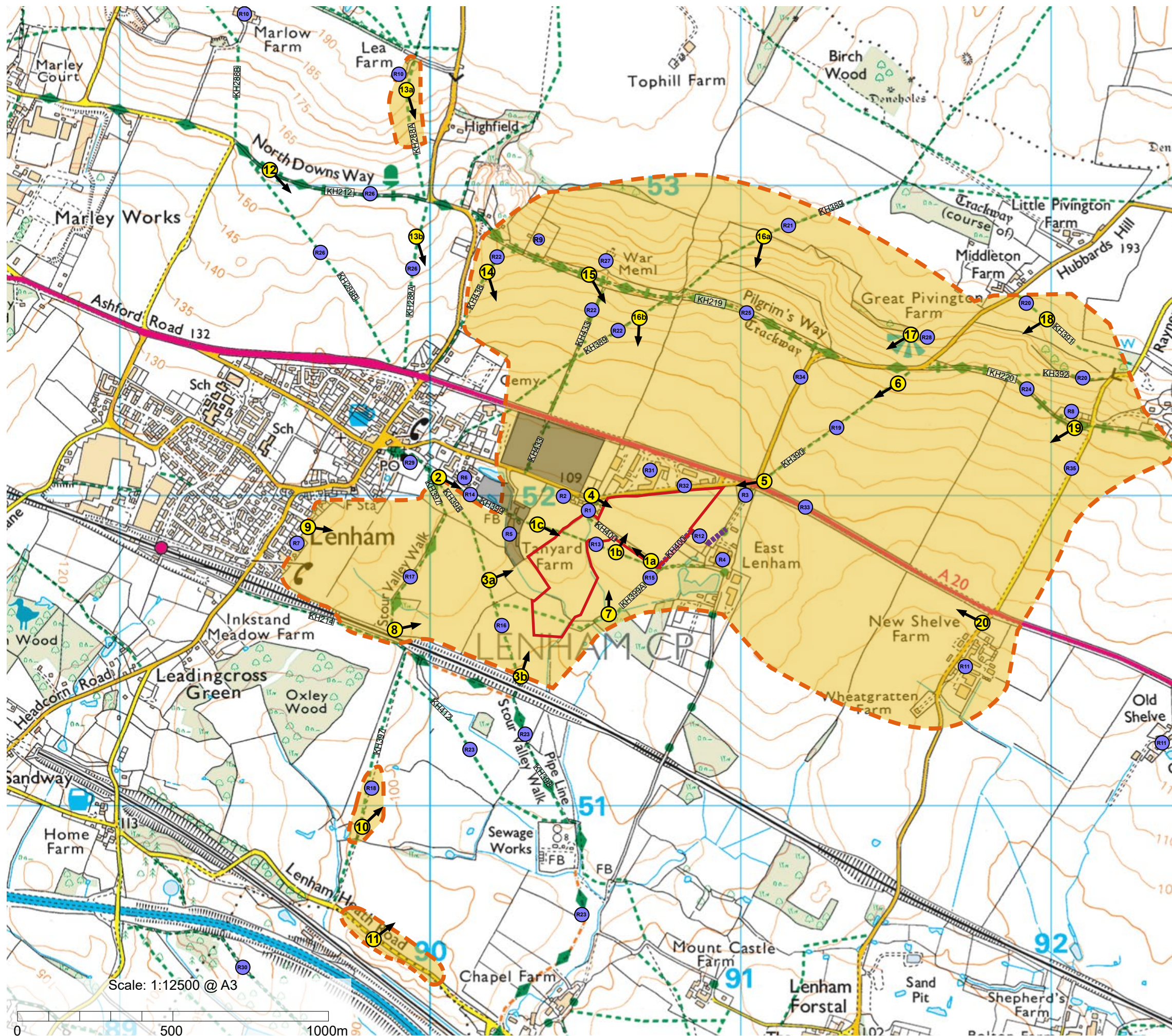
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




Figure 5

A




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-  Site Boundary
-  Permitted Development / Residential Development in Progress
-  Footpath Reference
-  Diverted Public Footpath KH400 - (Public Path Diversion and Definitive Map and Statement Modification Order 2014)
-  Potential Viewpoint Locations
-  Receptor Reference
-  Visual Envelope (VE)*

Note:
The VE provides a representative boundary and representative area of visual influence. Within the 'envelope', existing landscape and/or physical features provide localised screening effects. Further distant views may occur outside the envelope boundary, although the effects of the proposed development upon these views is considered to be negligible as a result of the distance and intervening screening effects.



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Figure 6

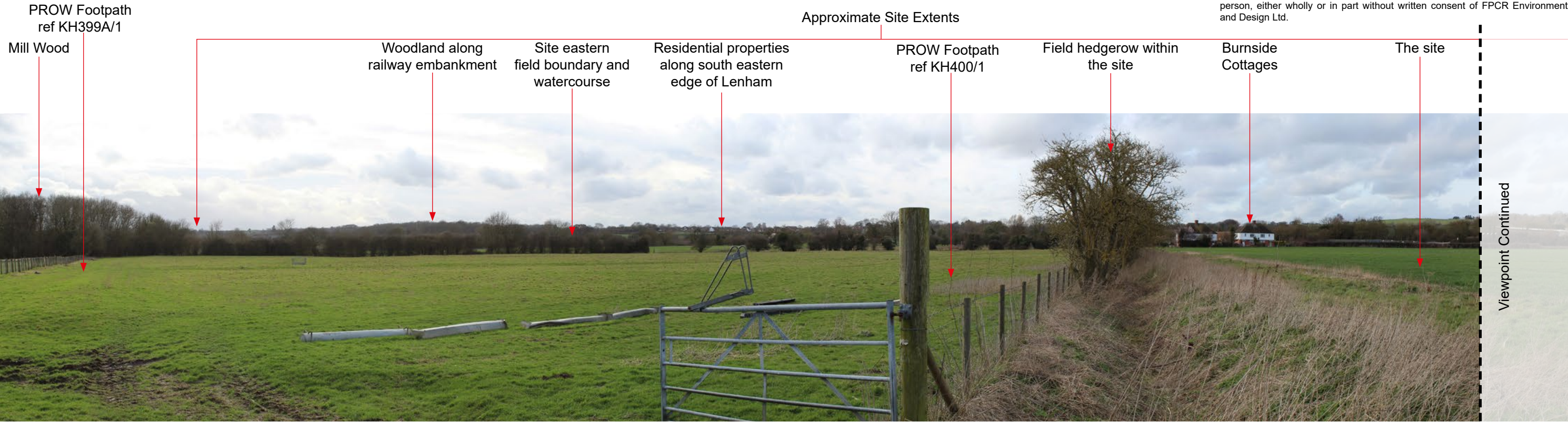


PHOTO VIEWPOINT 1a: View north west from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH400 within Site 1 boundary.

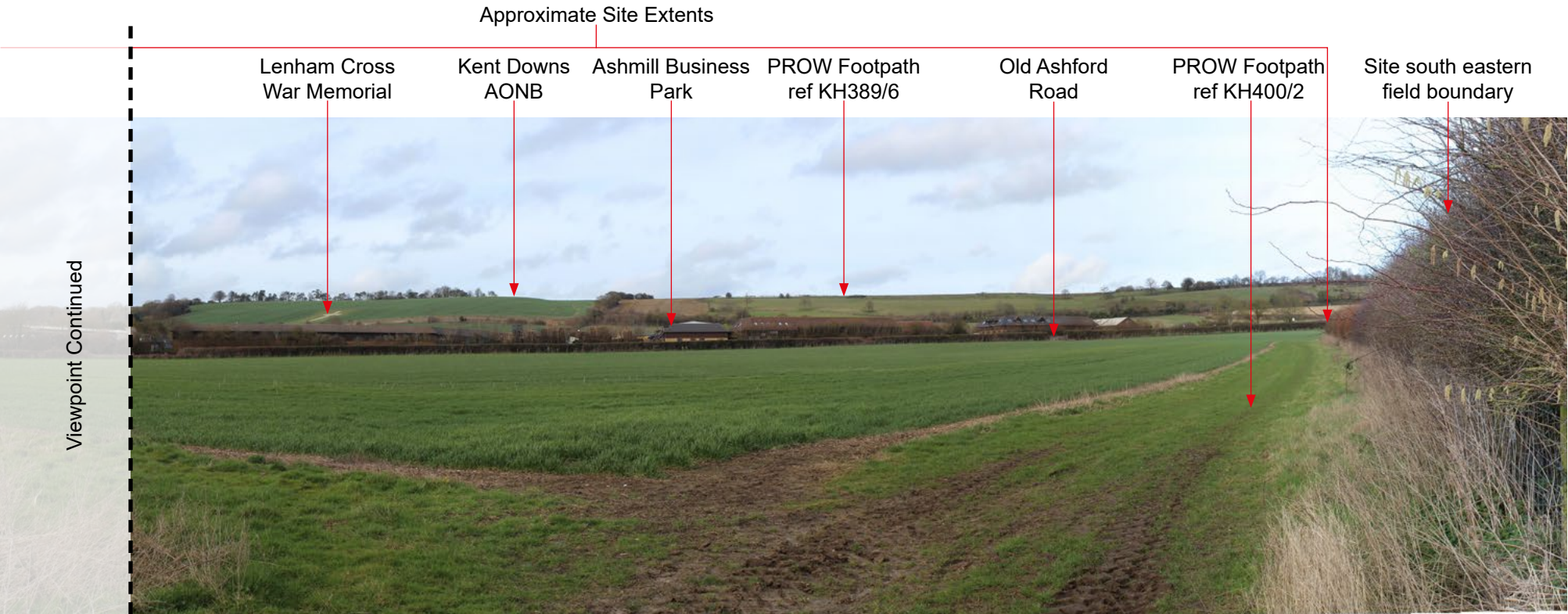



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 1a continued.



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PHOTO VIEWPOINT 1A

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Figure 7

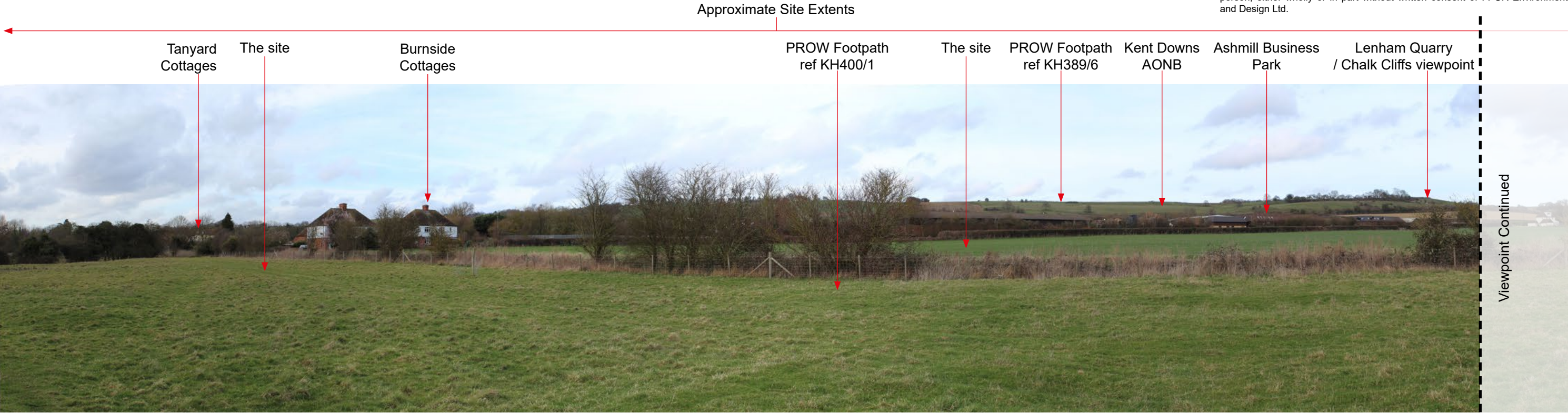



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 1b: View north from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH399/1.



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 1b continued.



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PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 1B

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Figure 8

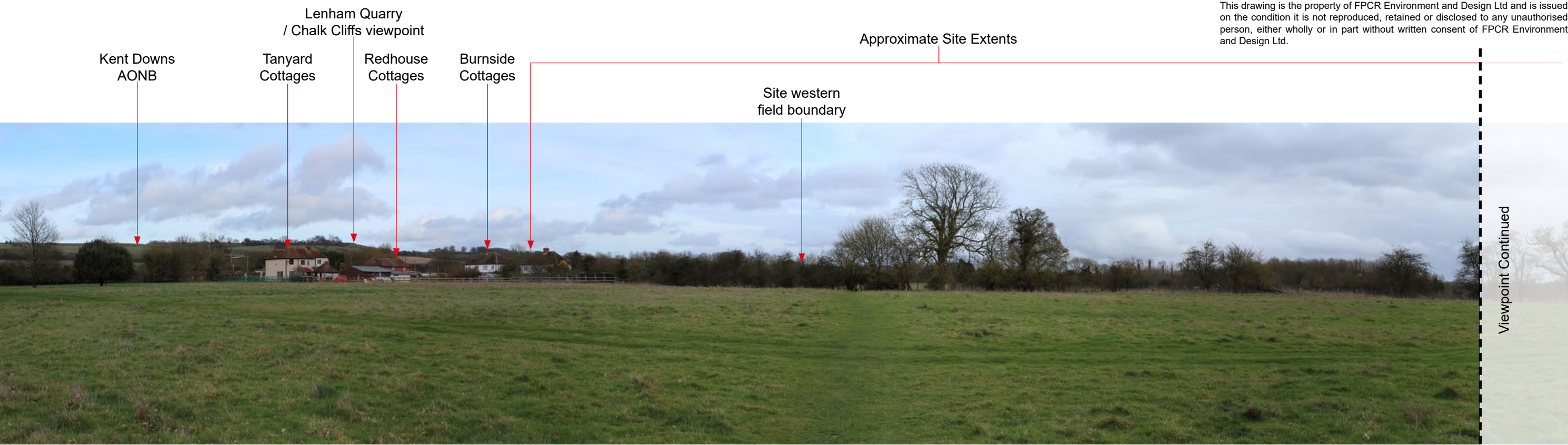



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 1c: View east from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH399/1 adjacent to residential development under construction at Tanyard Farm.



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 1c continued.



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PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 1C

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Figure 9

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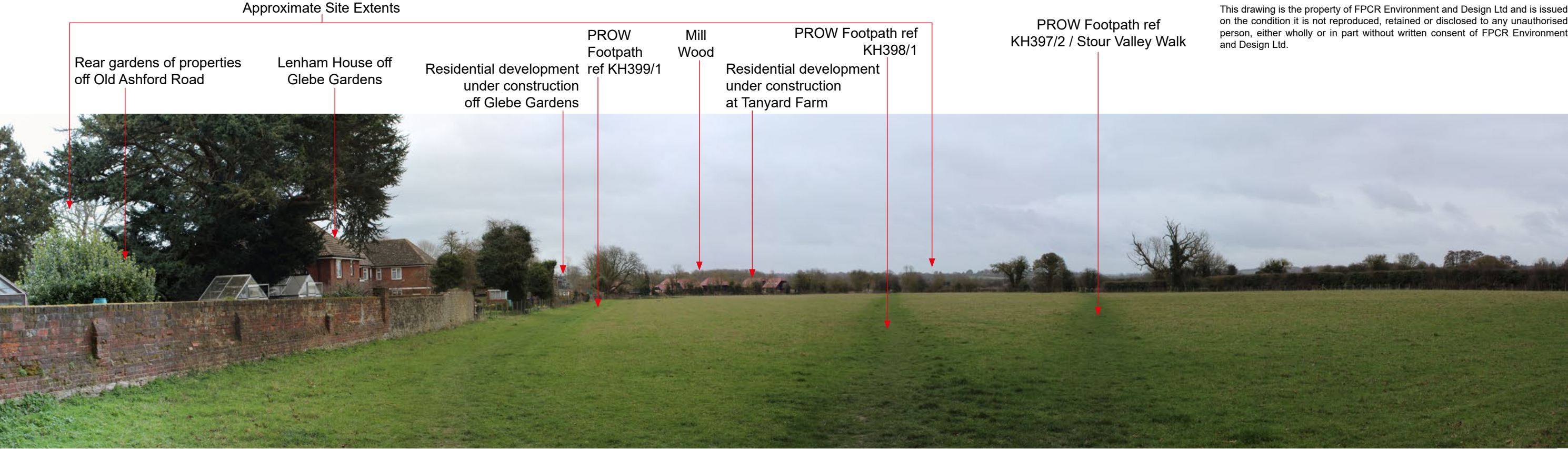



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 2: View east from junctions of Public Right of Way Footpaths ref KH399/1, KH398/1 and KH397/2 (Stour Valley Walk) at the boundary of Parish Church of St Mary / Lenham Conservation Area.



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 3a: View east from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH398/1.



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 3a continued.



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PHOTO VIEWPOINT 3A

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Figure 11

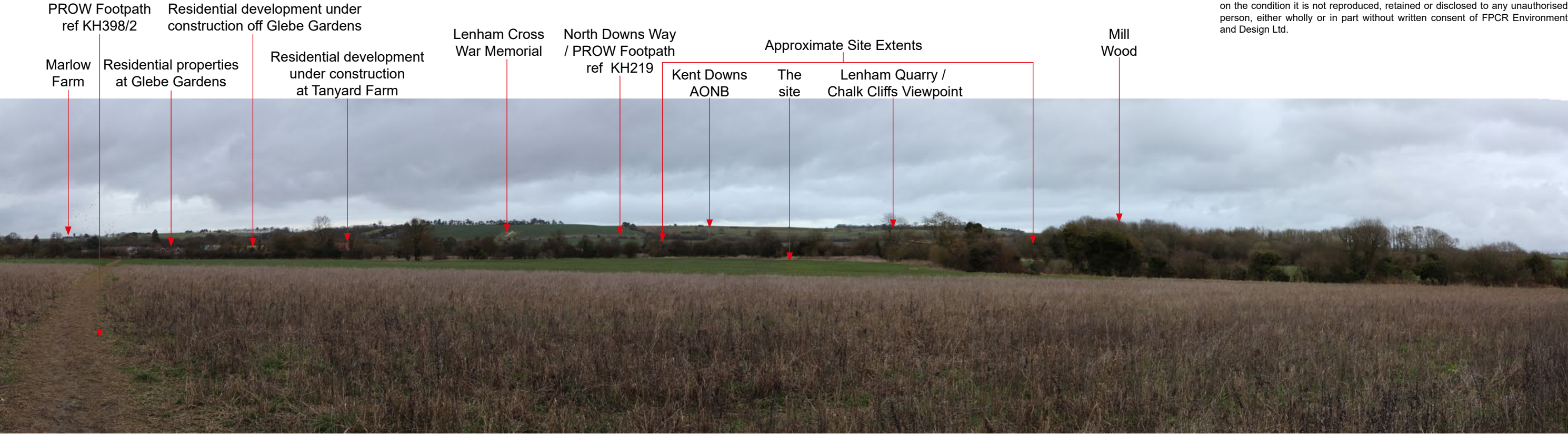


PHOTO VIEWPOINT 3b: View north east from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH398/2 at junction with Railway Underpass.

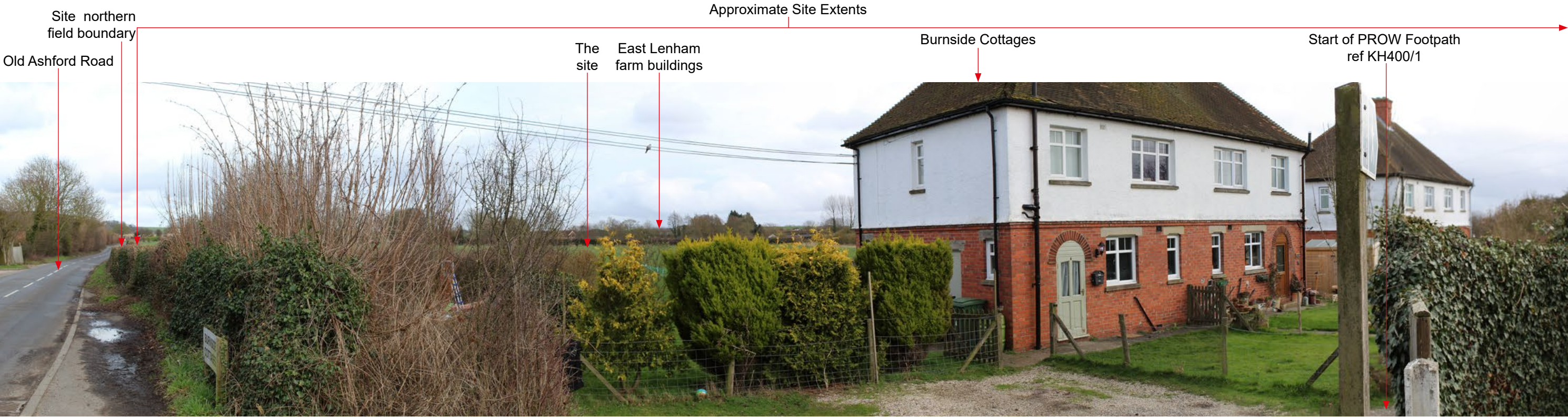



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 4: View south east from junction of Old Ashford Road with Burnside Cottages / PROW Footpath Ref KH400/1.



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Old Ashford Road,
Lenham

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PHOTO VIEWPOINT 3B & 4

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Figure 12

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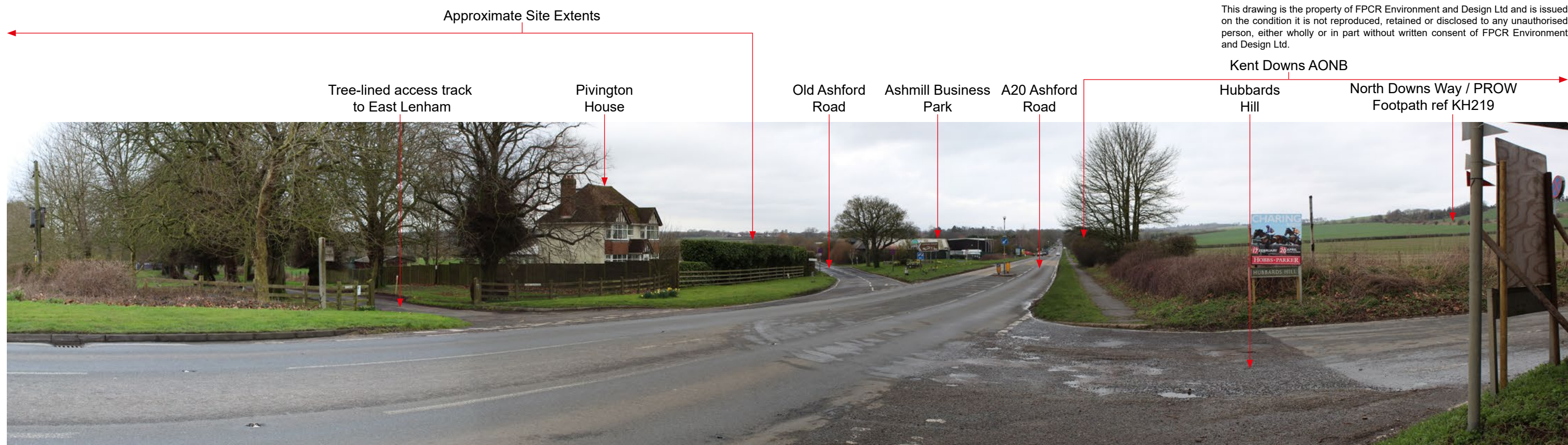


PHOTO VIEWPOINT 5: View south west from pavement along A20 Ashford Road at junction with Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH390 at the edge of Kent Downs AONB.



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 6: View south west from Public Right of Way Footpath Ref KH390 off Hubbards Hill within the Kent Downs AONB.

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Kent Downs AONB

Hubbards Hill

North Downs Way / PROW Footpath ref KH219

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Old Ashford Road,
Lenham

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PHOTO VIEWPOINT 5 & 6

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Figure 13

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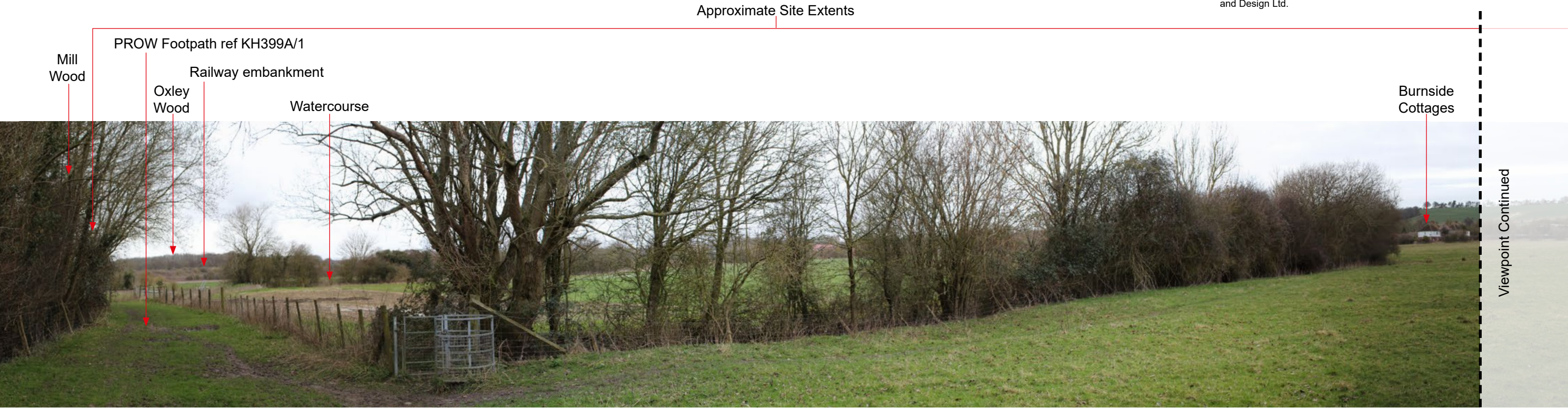


PHOTO VIEWPOINT 7: View north west from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH399A/1 adjacent to Mill Wood.

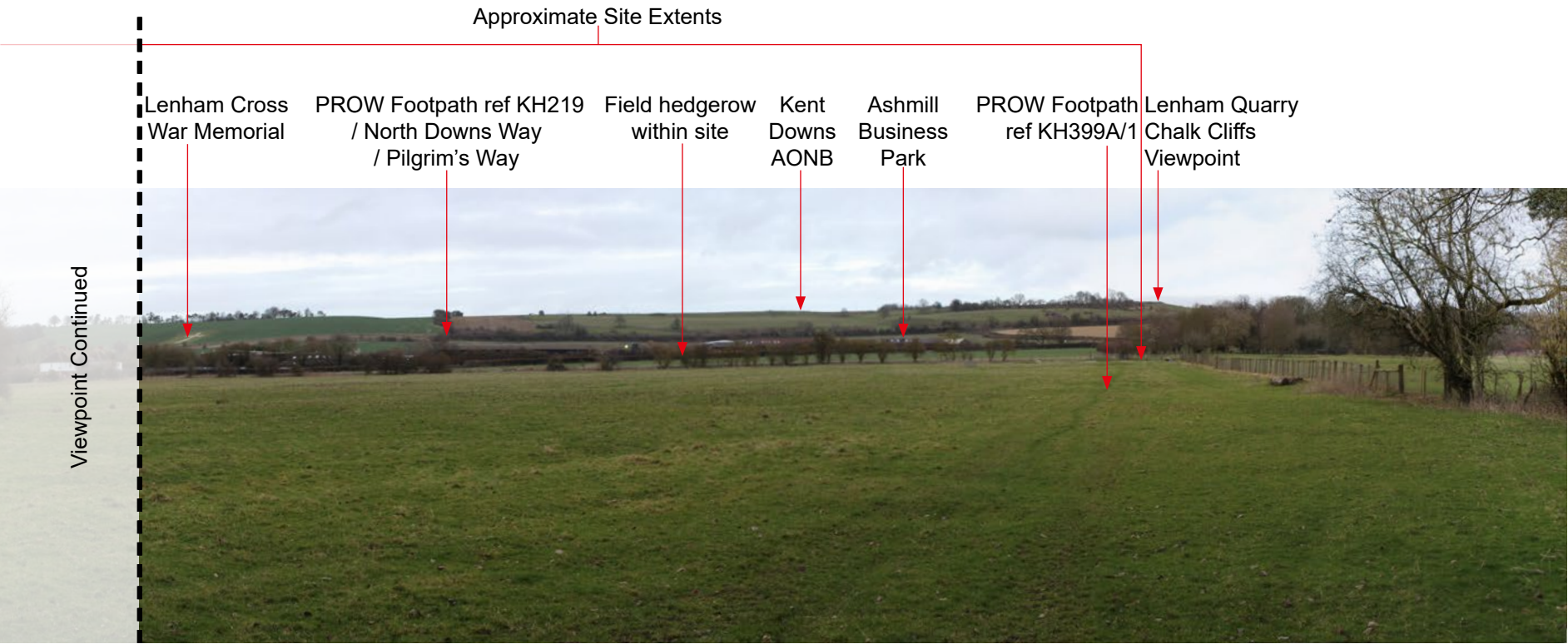



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 7 continued.



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PHOTO VIEWPOINT 7

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Figure 14

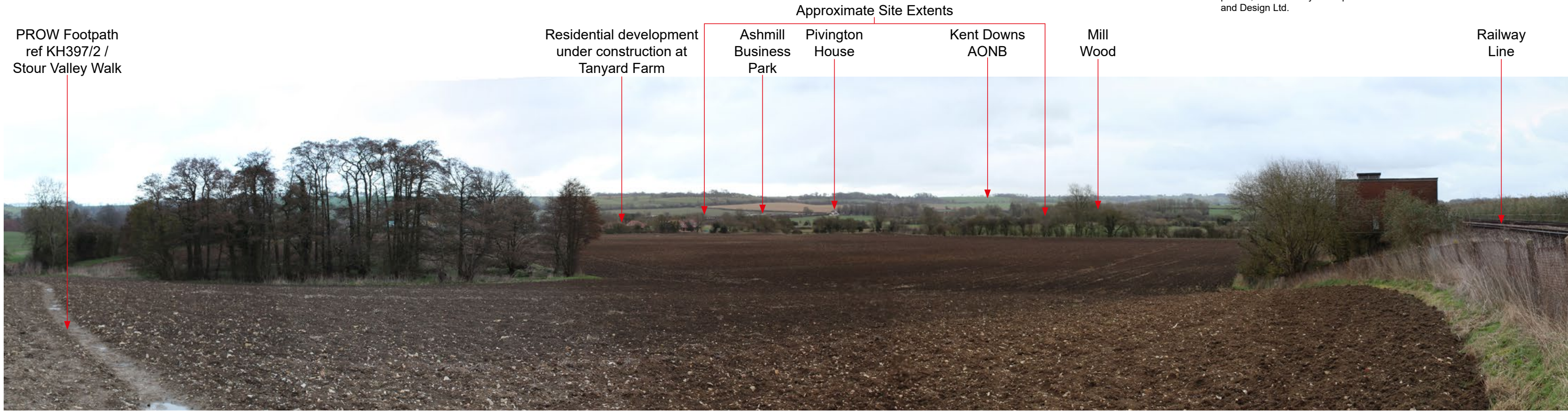



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 8: View north east from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH397/2 along the Stour Valley Walk at railway line crossing point.



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 9: View east from Old School Close, at the south eastern edge of Lenham village.



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Old Ashford Road,
Lenham

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PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 8 & 9

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Figure 15



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 10: View north east from high point along Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH397/4.



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 11: View north east from high point on Lenham Heath Road adjacent to the northern edge of Chilston Park Registered Park and Garden.

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PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 10 & 11
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Figure 16

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PHOTO VIEWPOINT 12: View south east from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH212/1 / North Downs Way / Pilgrims Way within the Kent Downs AONB.

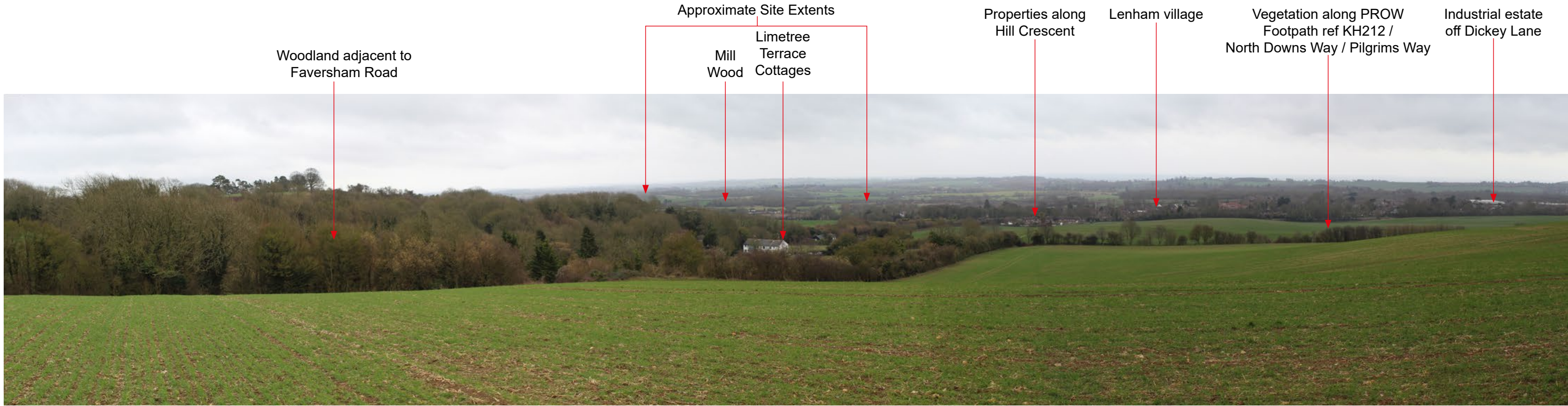



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 13a: View south east from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH288A/5 adjacent to Lea Farm within the Kent Downs AONB.



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Old Ashford Road,
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PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 12 & 13A

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Figure 17



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 13b: View south east from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH288A/6 within the Kent Downs AONB.



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 14: View south east from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH438 within the Kent Downs AONB.

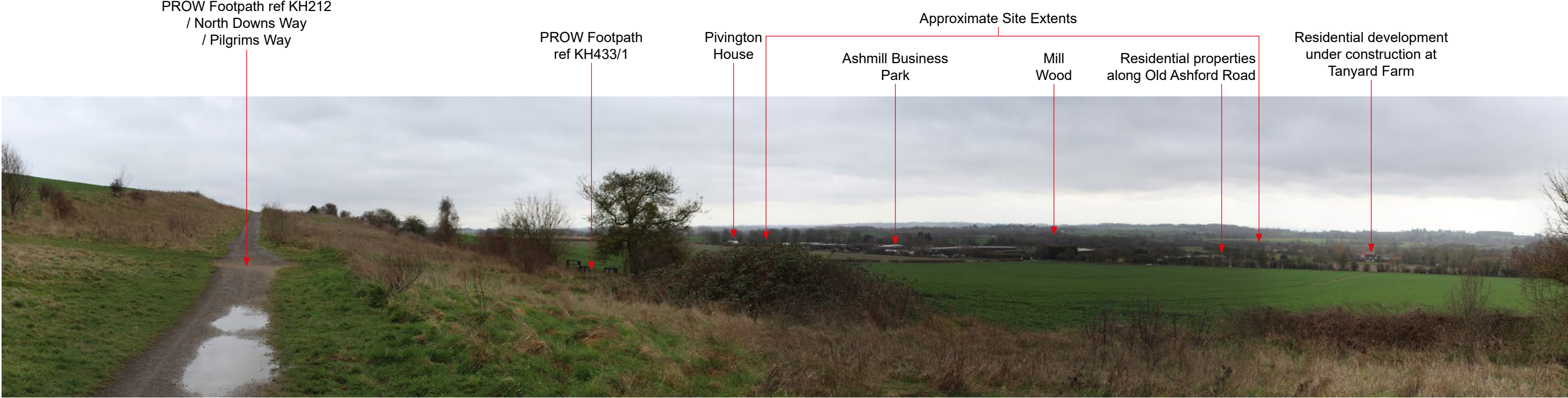


PHOTO VIEWPOINT 15: View south east from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH212 / North Downs Way / Pilgrims Way within the Kent Downs AONB.

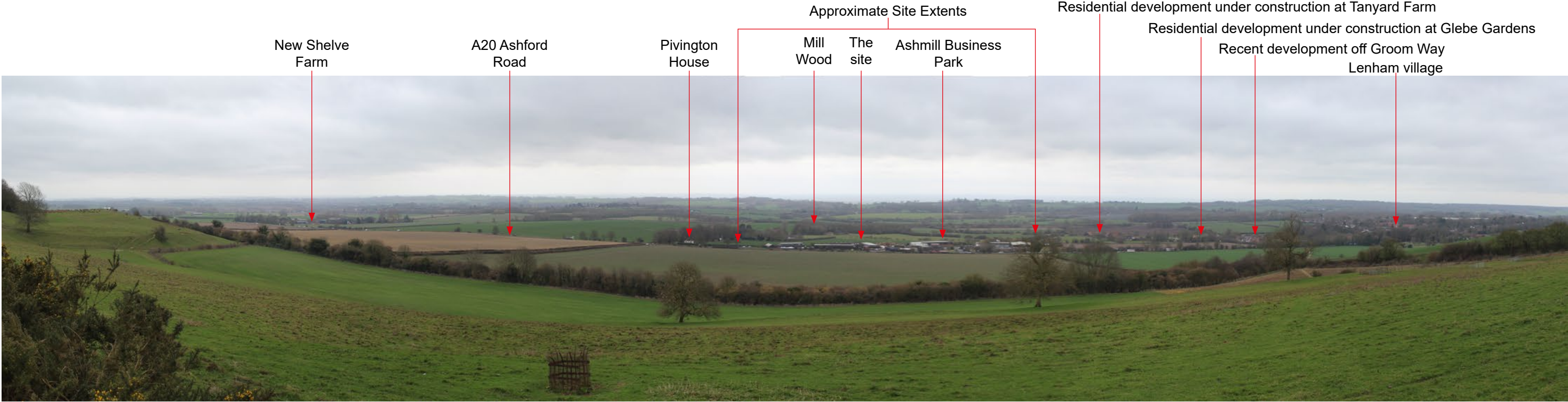



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 16a: View south west from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH389 at high point along the ridge line within the Kent Downs AONB.



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PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 15 & 16A

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Figure 19

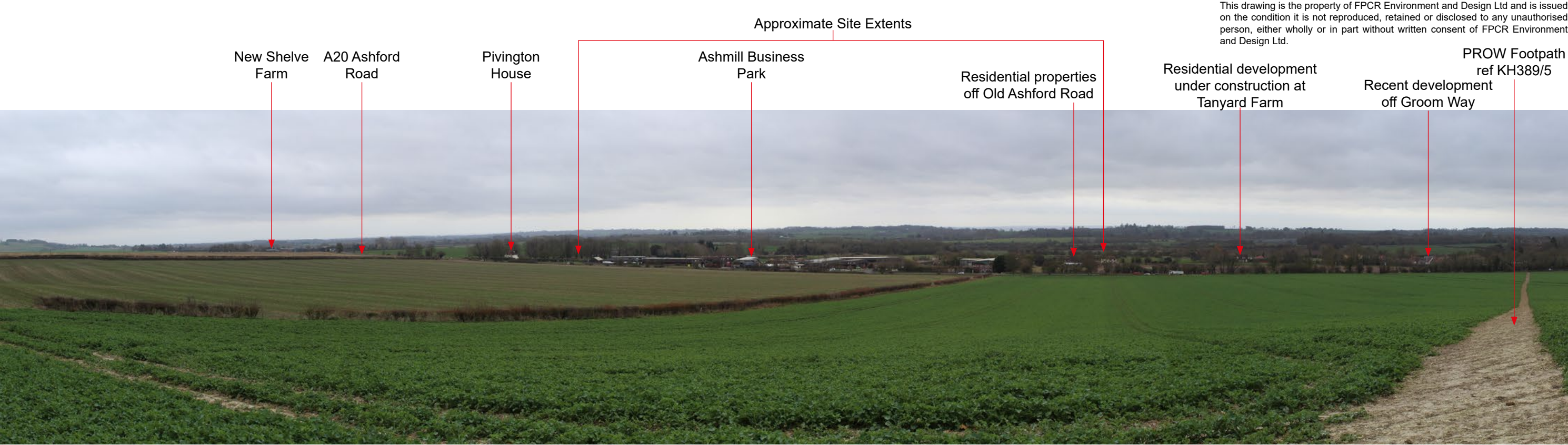


PHOTO VIEWPOINT 16b: View south west from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH389/5 at lower point along the ridge line within the Kent Downs AONB.

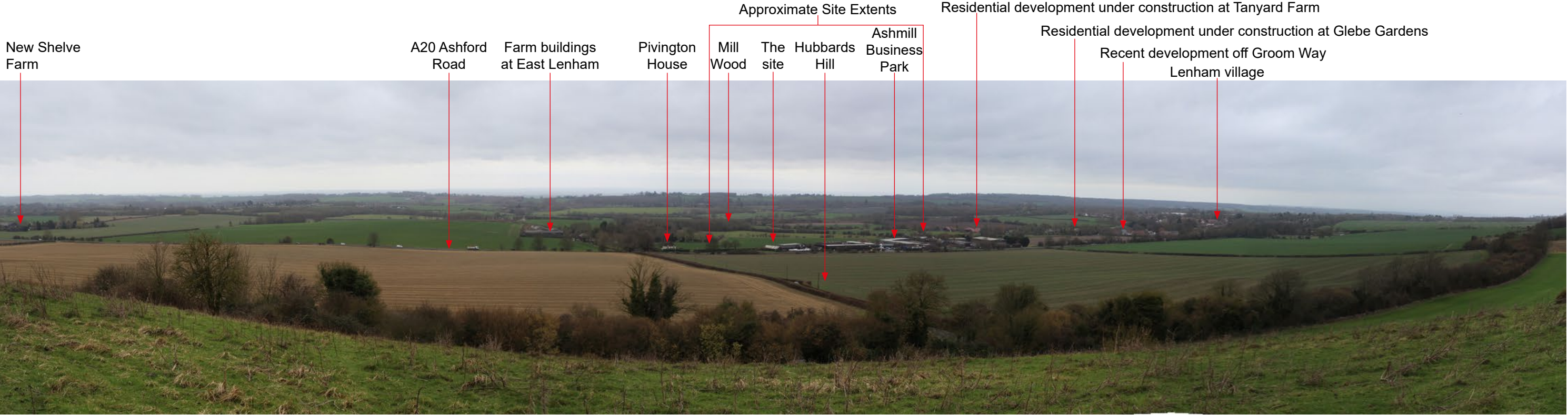


PHOTO VIEWPOINT 17: View from OS viewpoint at Lenham Quarry / Chalk Cliffs SSSI, within the Kent Downs AONB.



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PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 16B & 17

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Figure 20

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Approximate Site Extents

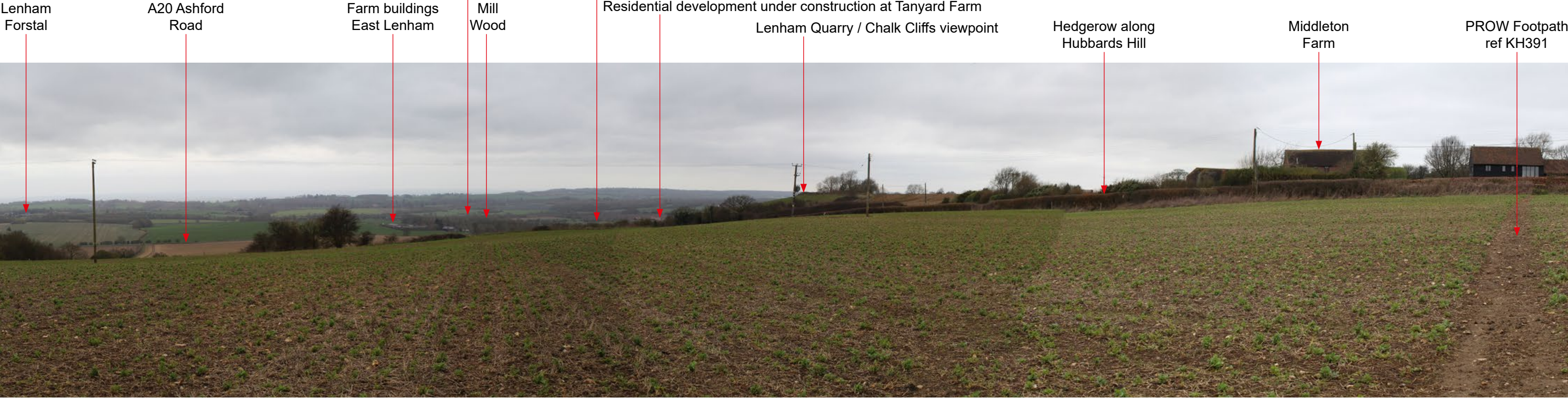


PHOTO VIEWPOINT 18: View south west from Public Right of Way Footpath ref KH391 off Hubbard's Hill within the Kent Downs AONB.

Approximate Site Extents

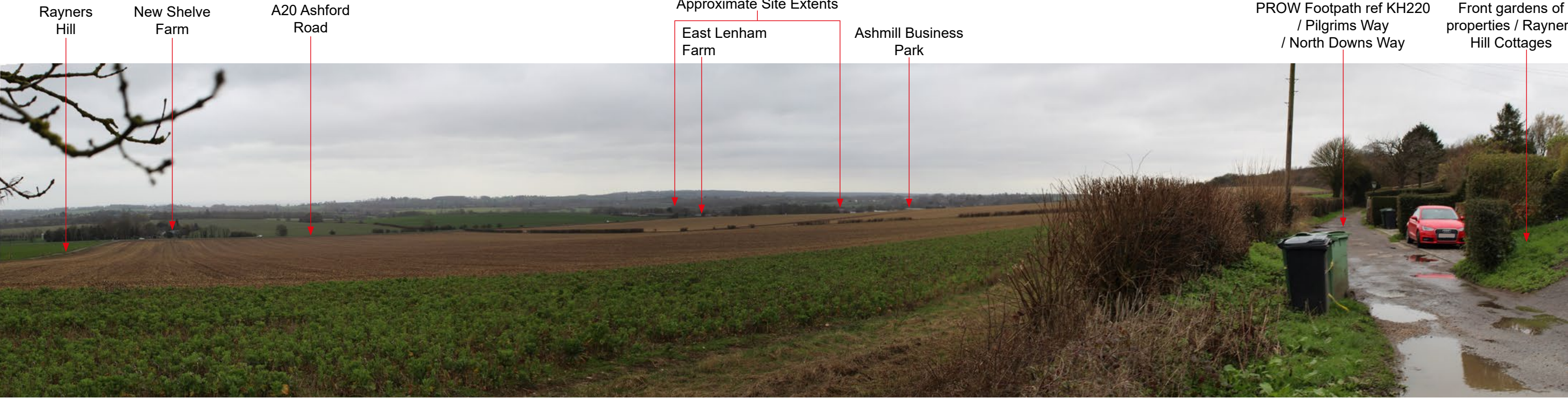



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 19: View south west from PROW Footpath ref KH220 / Pilgrims Way / North Downs Way adjacent to Rayners Hill Cottages within the Kent Downs AONB.



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PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 18 & 19

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PHOTO VIEWPOINT 20: View west from Forstal Road adjacent to New Shelve Farm.

Appendix A

Landscape and Visual Appraisal – Methodology and Assessment Criteria

Appendix A

Landscape and Visual Appraisal – Methodology and Assessment Criteria

Introduction

- 1.0 The methodology for the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) undertaken for the proposed development is detailed in the LVA report. The following information should be read in conjunction with this methodology.
- 1.1 As advised in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) (GLVIA3), the judgements made in respect of both landscape and visual effects are a combination of an assessment of the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the landscape or visual effect. The following details the definitions and criteria used in assessing sensitivity and magnitude for landscape and visual receptors.
- 1.2 Where it is determined that the assessment falls between or encompasses two of the defined criteria terms, then the judgement may be described as High/ Medium or Moderate/ Minor etc. This indicates that the assessment lies between the respective definitions or encompasses aspects of both.

Landscape

Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.3 Landscape receptors are assessed in terms of their 'Landscape Sensitivity'. This combines judgements on the value to be attached to the landscape and the susceptibility to change of the landscape from the type of change or development proposed. The definition and criteria adopted for these contributory factors is detailed below.
- 1.4 There can be complex relationships between the value attached to landscape receptors and their susceptibility to change which can be especially important when considering change within or close to designated landscapes. For example, an internationally, nationally or locally valued landscape does not automatically or by definition have a high susceptibility to all types of change. The type of change or development proposed may not compromise the specific basis for the value attached to the landscape.

Landscape Value

- 1.5 Value can apply to a landscape area as a whole, or to the individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions which contribute to the character of the landscape. The following criteria have been used to categorise landscape value. Where there is no clear existing evidence on landscape value, an assessment is made based on the criteria/ factors identified below (based on the guidance in GLVIA3 paragraph 5.28, Box 5.1).
- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Landscape quality (condition) | • Conservation interest |
| • Scenic quality | • Recreation value |
| • Rarity | • Perceptual aspects |
| • Representativeness | • Associations |

Landscape Value	Definition
High	Landscape receptors of high importance based upon factors of quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreational value, perceptual qualities and associations.
Medium	Landscape receptors of medium importance based upon factors of quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreational value, perceptual qualities and associations.
Low	Landscape receptors of low importance based upon factors of quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreational value, perceptual qualities and associations.

Landscape Susceptibility to Change

- 1.6 This means the ability of the landscape receptor (overall character type/ area or individual element/ feature) to accommodate the change (i.e. the proposed development) without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline position and/ or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies. The definition and criteria for the assessment of Landscape Susceptibility to Change is as follows:

Landscape Susceptibility to Change	Definition
High	A highly distinctive and cohesive landscape receptor, with positive characteristics and features with no or very few detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape features intact and in very good condition and/ or rare. Limited capacity to accept the type of change/ development proposed.
Medium	Distinctive and more commonplace landscape receptor, with some positive characteristics/ features and some detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape features in moderate condition. Capacity to accept well planned and designed change/ development of the type proposed.
Low	Landscape receptor of mixed character with a lack of coherence and including detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape features that may be in poor or improving condition and few that could not be replaced. Greater capacity to accept the type of change/ development proposed.

Magnitude of Landscape Effects

- 1.7 The magnitude of landscape effects is the degree of change to the landscape receptor in terms of its size or scale of change, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The table below sets out the categories and criteria adopted in respect of the separate considerations of Scale or Size of the Degree of Change and Reversibility. The geographical extent and duration of change are described where relevant in the appraisal.

Scale or Size of the Degree of Landscape Change

Scale or Size of the Degree of Landscape Change	Definition
High	Total loss of or substantial alteration to key characteristics / features and the introduction of new elements totally uncharacteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be fundamentally changed.
Medium	Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key characteristics / features and the introduction of new elements that would be evident but not necessarily uncharacteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be obviously changed.
Low	Limited loss of, or alteration to one or more key characteristics/ features and the introduction of new elements evident and/ or characteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be perceptibly changed.
Negligible	Very minor alteration to one or more key characteristics/ features and the introduction of new elements characteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be minimally changed.
None	No loss or alteration to the key characteristics/ features, representing 'no change'.

Reversibility

Reversibility	Definition
Irreversible	The development would be permanent and the assessment site could not be returned to its current/ former use.
Reversible	The development could be deconstructed/ demolished and the assessment site could be returned to broadly its current/ historic use (although that may be subject to qualification depending on the nature of the development).

Visual

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

- 1.8 Visual sensitivity assesses each visual receptor in terms of their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views. The definition and criteria adopted for these contributory factors is detailed below.

Visual Susceptibility to Change

- 1.9 The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of; firstly, the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and secondly, the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on the views and visual amenity they experience.

Visual Susceptibility to Change	Definition
High	Residents at home with primary views from ground floor/garden and upper floors. Public rights of way/ footways where attention is primarily focussed on the landscape and on particular views. Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and/ or on particular views. Communities where views make an important contribution to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents. Travellers on recognised scenic routes.
Medium	Residents at home with secondary views (primarily from first floor level). Public rights of way/ footways where attention is not primarily focussed on the landscape and/ or particular views. Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes.
Low	Users of outdoor recreational facilities where the view is less important to the activities (e.g. sports pitches). Travellers on road, rail or other transport where views are primarily focussed on the transport route. People at their place of work where views of the landscape are not important to the quality of the working life.

Value of Views

- 1.10 The value attached to a view takes account of any recognition attached to a particular view and/ or any indicators of the value attached to views, for example through guidebooks or defined viewpoints or references in literature or art.

Value of Views	Definition
High	A unique or identified view (e.g. shown as such on Ordnance Survey map, guidebook or tourist map) or one noted in literature or art. A view where a heritage asset makes an important contribution to the view.
Medium	A typical and/ or representative view from a particular receptor.
Low	An undistinguished or unremarkable view from a particular receptor.

Magnitude of Visual Effects

- 1.11 Magnitude of Visual Effects evaluates each of the visual effects in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The table below sets out the categories and criteria adopted in respect of the Scale or Size (including the degree of contrast) of Visual Change. The distance and nature of the view and whether the receptor's view will be stationary or moving are also detailed in the Visual Effects Table.

Scale or Size of the Degree of Visual Change	Definition
High	The proposal will result in a large and immediately apparent change in the view, being a dominant and new and/ or incongruous feature in the landscape.
Medium	The proposal will result in an obvious and recognisable change in the view and will be readily noticed by the viewer.
Low	The proposal will constitute a minor component of the wider view or a more recognisable component that reflects those apparent in the existing view. Awareness of the proposals will not have a marked effect on the overall nature of the view.
Negligible/ None	Only a very small part of the proposal will be discernible and it will have very little or no effect on the nature of the view.

Level of Effect

- 1.12 The final conclusions on effects, whether adverse or beneficial, are drawn from the separate judgements on the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of the effects. This overall judgement is formed from a reasoned professional overview of the individual judgements against the assessment criteria.
- 1.13 GLVIA3 notes, at paragraphs 5.56 and 6.44, that there are no hard and fast rules with regard to the level of effects, therefore the following descriptive thresholds have been used for this appraisal:
- **Major**
 - **Moderate**
 - **Minor**
 - **Negligible**
- 1.14 Where it is determined that the assessment falls between or encompasses two of the defined criteria terms, then the judgement may be described as, for example, Major/ Moderate or Moderate/ Minor. This indicates that the effect is assessed to lie between the respective definitions or to encompass aspects of both.

Appendix B

National / **County** / **District** Character Area Extracts



Introduction

As part of Natural England's responsibilities as set out in the Natural Environment White Paper¹, Biodiversity 2020² and the European Landscape Convention³, we are revising profiles for England's 159 National Character Areas (NCAs). These are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment.

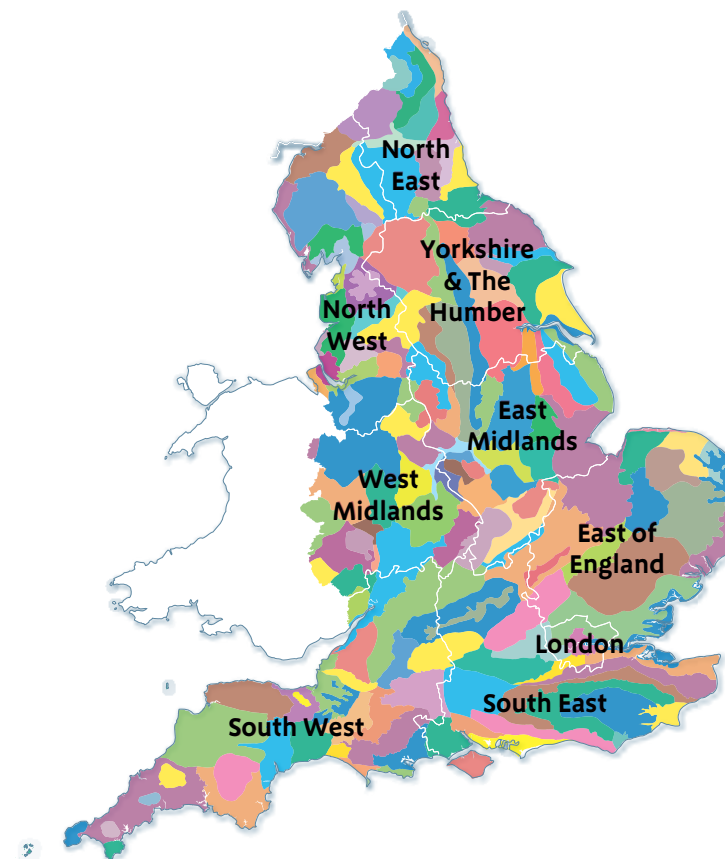
NCA profiles are guidance documents which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for. The information they contain will support the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale, inform the delivery of Nature Improvement Areas and encourage broader partnership working through Local Nature Partnerships. The profiles will also help to inform choices about how land is managed and can change.

Each profile includes a description of the natural and cultural features that shape our landscapes, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics and ecosystem services. Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) are suggested, which draw on this integrated information. The SEOs offer guidance on the critical issues, which could help to achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future.

NCA profiles are working documents which draw on current evidence and knowledge. We will aim to refresh and update them periodically as new information becomes available to us.

We would like to hear how useful the NCA profiles are to you. You can contact the NCA team by emailing ncaprofiles@naturalengland.org.uk

National Character Areas map



¹ The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature, Defra (2011; URL: www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf)

² Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services, Defra (2011; URL: www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf)

³ European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe (2000; URL: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm>)

Summary

The long, curved belt of the Wealden Greensand runs across Kent, parallel to the North Downs, and on through Surrey. It moves south, alongside the Hampshire Downs, before curving back eastwards to run parallel with the South Downs in West Sussex. Around a quarter of the NCA is made up of extensive belts of woodland – both ancient mixed woods and more recent conifer plantations. In contrast, the area also features more open areas of heath on acidic soils, river valleys and mixed farming, including areas of fruit growing.

The area has outstanding landscape, geological, historical and biodiversity interest. Some 51 per cent of the NCA is covered by the South Downs National Park, Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Surrey Hills AONB – a testament to the area's natural beauty. The underlying geology has shaped the scarp-and-dip slope topography, with its far-reaching views, but it has also had a significant bearing on the area's sense of place: there are clear links between vernacular architecture, industry and local geology. The heritage assets provide vital connections to the NCA's industrial, military and cultural history, and include distinctive deer parks and more recent 18th-century parklands. Biodiversity interests are represented by internationally and nationally designated sites alongside numerous local sites and other non-designated semi-natural habitats. The internationally designated sites include three Special Protection Areas (SPAs), two Ramsar sites and eight Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), representing the outstanding value and quality of the heathland, woodland, wetland and coastal habitats found within the NCA. In addition, fragments of acid grassland and parkland landscapes add to the overall diversity of habitats.

The south-western part of the area remains essentially rural, with only small market towns such as Petworth and Petersfield, but eastwards from Dorking the character becomes considerably more urbanised, with many towns including Maidstone, Reigate, Ashford and Folkestone. The area forms a major transport corridor, with the M25, M20 and M26 motorways and other major road and rail routes all running through it.

A short coastal stretch extends from Folkestone to Hythe, with a heavily developed hinterland: as a result, most of the coastline is protected by coastal defences. The exception is Copt Point, where the eroding cliffs are designated for their wildlife and geological interest. This part of the coastline is also part of the defined Dover–Folkestone Heritage Coast. The coastline offers a contrasting recreational experience from that associated with the heathlands, wetlands and woodlands of the wider NCA.

Click map to enlarge; click again to reduce.

Development pressures are likely to pose significant challenges within the NCA, with increasing demands on water resources, the landscape, biodiversity and the sense of place. Well planned green infrastructure is likely to play a critical role in both new and existing developments, to bring about a range of economic, social and environmental benefits. The creation of resilient ecological networks will become increasingly important, especially as our climate changes. There are opportunities to strengthen the networks of semi-natural habitats – particularly wetlands, woodlands and heathlands – integrating them into the mixed farmed landscape and taking action to reduce further fragmentation.



Fields near Petworth, West Sussex.

Statements of Environmental Opportunity

- **SEO 1:** Protect and manage the nationally recognised and distinctive character of the landscape, conserving and enhancing historic landscape character, tranquillity, sense of place, and the rich historical and geological heritage of the Wealden Greensand. Enhance access provision where appropriate, to maintain public benefit from and enjoyment of the area.
- **SEO 2:** Protect, manage and significantly enhance the mosaic and connectivity of semi-natural habitats within the mixed farmed landscape – particularly the internationally important woodland and heathland habitats – for the benefit of biodiversity, pollination, soil and water regulation, landscape character and enhanced adaptation to climate change.
- **SEO 3:** Manage and significantly enhance the quality of the characteristic wetland and water environment of the Greensand. This will contribute to sustainable flood risk management, will benefit the regulation of water quality and water availability, as well as enhancing the sense of place, biodiversity, recreation and wetland habitat adaptation to climate change.
- **SEO 4:** : Plan to deliver a network of integrated, well managed green spaces in existing and developing urban areas, providing social, economic and environmental benefits, and reinforcing landscape character and local distinctiveness – particularly on or alongside the boundaries of the designated landscapes within the Wealden Greensand.

Description

Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

The curved Greensand ridge partially encircles the adjoining Low Weald NCA, while its outer edge is rimmed by the chalk outcrops of the North and South Downs, and the Hampshire Downs in the west. The ridge affords far-reaching views over the Low Weald, South Downs and London. In Kent, the ancient coastline reflected in the Lympne Escarpment overlooks the Romney Marshes.

In the south-west the Western Rother joins the Arun, which drains south into the South Downs NCA and on to the coast. In the north-west the rivers Wey and Mole drain north through the North Downs, and into the Thames. Further east the River Medway drains north through the downs, via the Medway Gap, and into the Greater Thames Estuary. The source of both the Upper Great Stour and the East Stour is on the Greensand ridge: these two rivers join to form the Great Stour, which flows north-east through the North Downs and the North Kent Plain. The Kent Lower Greensand groundwater body is considered a major aquifer, important for public and industrial water supply both within and outside the NCA.

Although it is only a short section, the management of the coastal stretch between Folkestone and Hythe influences and is influenced by the coastal stretches in adjoining NCAs (North Downs and Romney Marsh). Sediment supply in the development and denudation of beaches has a critical influence on the rate of coastal erosion and coastal squeeze.

A major transport corridor runs through the eastern part of the NCA, including the Channel Tunnel rail link connecting Folkestone to London.



View north from the Greensand ridge across Thursley Common. The dry heath, dominated by ling and bell heather, supports a wide range of wildlife including uncommon reptiles and rare heathland birds.

Key characteristics

- A long, narrow belt of Greensand, typified by scarp-and-dip slope topography, including outcrops of Upper Greensand, Gault Clay and Lower Greensand. The Greensand forms escarpments separated by a clay vale: the overall undulating and organic landform – particularly in the west – gives a sense of intimacy to the landscape. Leith Hill in Surrey is the highest point in south-east England.
- There are extensive areas of ancient mixed woodland of hazel, oak and birch, with some areas having been converted to sweet chestnut coppice in past centuries. These areas reflect the diverse geology, including the distinctive chalk grassland elements within the East Hampshire Hangers Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the wooded commons ('charts') of East Surrey and West Kent, and conifer plantations.
- Semi-natural habitats include: remnant lowland heathland, mostly concentrated in West Sussex, Hampshire and West Surrey; the wetlands associated with the River Arun in West Sussex; and unimproved acid grasslands found in commons, parklands, heathland and other areas of unimproved pasture.
- Fields are predominantly small or medium, in irregular patterns derived from medieval enclosure. Boundaries are formed by hedgerows and shaws, with character and species reflecting the underlying soils. On the clay, hedgerows are dense and species-rich, with occasional standard oaks. On more acidic soils they generally consist of hawthorn and blackthorn, also with occasional oak trees, and often trimmed low.
- Agricultural land comprises a mosaic of mixed farming, with pasture and arable land set within a wooded framework. There is a fruit-growing orchard belt in Kent and also around Selborne in Hampshire.
- The rural settlement pattern is a mixture of dispersed farmsteads, hamlets and some nucleated villages. Large houses set within extensive parks and gardens are found throughout the area.

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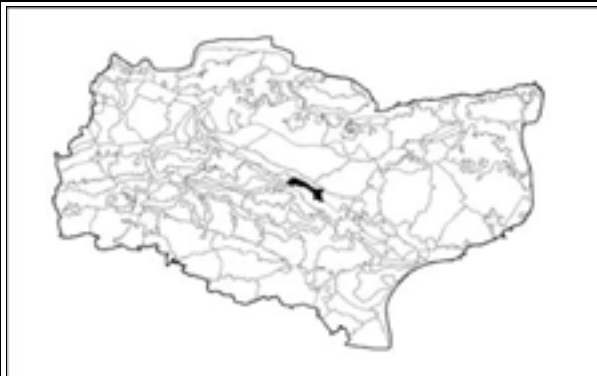


Apple harvest at Blackmoor Estate, Hampshire.

Key characteristics continued

- In the east of Kent, the Wealden Greensand has a gentler and more open aspect than in the wooded west. This part of the area is also more marked by development, with the presence of major towns and communication corridors such as the M26, M25 and M20 motorways and railway lines including the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (High Speed 1).
- The local built vernacular includes the use of Greensand, ragstone and, in the west, malmstone, bargate stone, plus dark carrstone patterned in the mortar between stones ('galleting') in Surrey, as well as timber-framing and weatherboarding.
- There are a range of historic landscape features, including field monuments, old military defences, prehistoric tumuli, iron-age hill forts, Roman forts, the Royal Military Canal, small quarries and relics of the iron industry (including hammer ponds). Sunken lanes cut into the sandstone are a historic and characteristic feature, as are older deer parks and more recent 18th-century parklands.
- Surface water is an important feature across the Greensand, with many streams and rivers passing through the NCA: the Western Rother, Wey, Arun, Medway and the Great and East Stour.
- The Greensand ridge meets the coast of Kent between Folkestone Warren and Hythe. While most of the coastal strip is now built up and protected by sea defences, the undeveloped sea cliffs at Copt Point provide important geological exposures, are designated for their nature conservation interest and fall within the Dover-Folkestone Heritage Coast.

HOLLINGBOURNE VALE EAST



Hollingbourne Vale East continues this distinctive rural character area from Hollingbourne Vale West on the Gault Clay of a gently undulating agricultural landscape punctuated by small woodlands and scattered settlement developed on the heavy clay soils. This eastern part of the vale forms part of the catchment of the Great Stour, which rises near Lenham and drains eastwards rather than west to the Len and the Medway.

Just east of Lenham the landscape is unusually open, this characteristic extending up into the grazing land of the chalk scarp face above East Lenham and New Shelf Farm. The land here straddles the difficult to work clay soils with the more easily cultivated soils of the scarp foot that have long been worked on a large scale. Further cultivation to improve pastures and the intensification of arable utilising huge machines, however, has encouraged a bleak pattern of few trees or hedgerows. The Downs remain enclosing the landscape to the north but the lack of trees and hedgerows allows sight of the M20 and Channel Tunnel Rail Link to the south. This enlarged transport corridor, exploiting the stable substrates beneath the clay, has a profound effect on the tranquillity of the vale on its northern boundary.

Mineral extraction is also locally a feature of this area, with Lenham Forstal pit an active mineral site and Brett Gravels extracting near Charing.

Towards Charing the landscape becomes more varied with a mix of sheep-grazed pasture and arable fields divided by gappy hedgerows with scattered trees. Small broadleaf copses become more frequent once again, and the enclosure of the Downs is emphasised by extensive scarp-face woodlands.

Charing and Lenham are both ancient villages that have developed at the scarp foot due to the line of springs that seep out from the junction of the chalk with the clay. The source of the Great Stour is found in this area at Tanyard Farm pond.

The outskirts of Lenham have now crept down the A20 towards Charing and need restraint on the eastern boundary to conserve the essentially rural character of the village. Elsewhere, on the clay, settlement is limited to scattered farmsteads, often vernacular in construction and of ancient origin.

South of Charing a pocket of this traditional character area remains between the motorway and the railway. Further eastwards the landscape becomes more remote with a rich and varied pattern of grassland, hay crops and arable fields.

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HOLLINGBOURNE VALE EAST

PHOTOGRAPH



CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

Gently undulating landscape on heavy clay soils. Small streams draining east to Great Stour. Mixed farmland of small sheep-grazed pasture and larger arable fields. Locally extensive loss of hedgerows and woodland to allow exploitation of good quality soils at scarp foot. Scarp foot villages. Chalk scarp dominating views to north.

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition

The extensive loss of hedgerow and shaws in this large-scale arable landscape has resulted in an incoherent landscape, void of features, which no longer reflects the landform. There are some visual detractors associated with the trunk road, and a few due to unsympathetic farm buildings. The ecological interest is weak - there are a few small patches of wetland, some generative vegetation on the railway embankment and fragments of hedgerow. The condition of the landscape is considered to be very poor.

Sensitivity

There are few distinguishing features in the landscape which contribute to a local sense of place. The gently undulating landform is unremarkable within the area, although bounded by the chalk scarp to the north. Visibility is therefore moderate over the open landscape. The sensitivity of the area is considered to be low.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS

Create regenerative woodland to the scarp-side of large arable fields and, whilst maintaining the large scale of farmland, reintroduce cross-contour shaws to link with existing streams. Create new corridors of riparian vegetation. Create a design code to ensure that agricultural buildings contribute to the open view and respect the scale of historic farm buildings.

CONTEXT

Regional: Greensand Belt

Condition

good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
	low	moderate	high

Sensitivity

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Condition

Very Poor.

Pattern of elements:	Incoherent.
Detracting features:	Some.
Visual Unity:	Interrupted.
Cultural integrity:	Poor.
Ecological integrity:	Weak.
Functional Integrity:	Very Weak.

Sensitivity

Low.

Distinctiveness:	Indistinct.
Continuity:	Historic.
Sense of Place:	Weak.
Landform:	Insignificant.
Extent of tree cover:	Open.
Visibility:	Moderate.

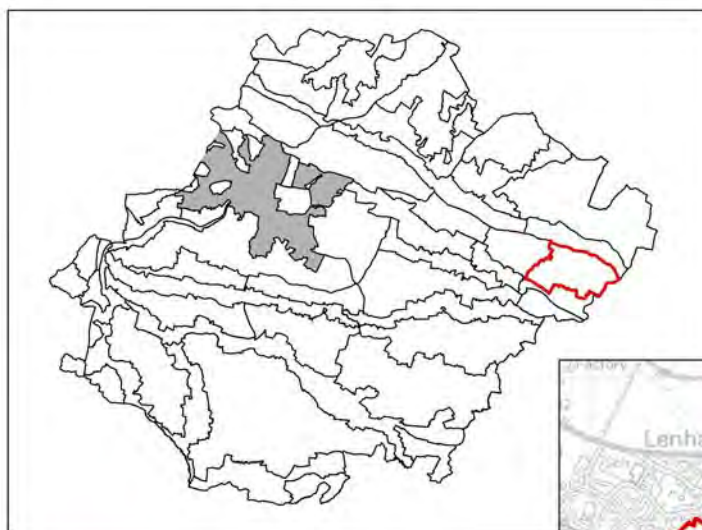
SUMMARY OF ACTIONS


CREATE.

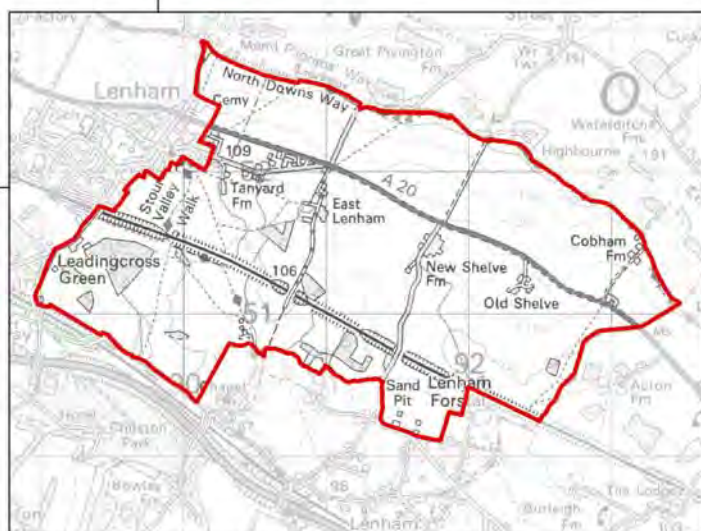
Create ecological interest by the sensitive management of some arable and pastoral farmland
Reintroduce shaws and riparian vegetation around streams
Create regenerative woodlands
Create a local design code for agricultural buildings

previous <<

17. East Lenham Vale



 Borough Wide Landscape Character Area



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Landscape to north of A20 is situated within the Kent Downs AONB
- Series of springs and drains run south towards the Great Stour
- Medium to large sized fields of arable and pasture
- Field boundaries and roads run against and along the contours
- Isolated farmsteads
- Railway line cuts through landscape with arched brick underpasses

Location

17.1 East Lenham Vale lies to the far east of Maidstone, and the landscape to the north of the A20 forms part of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Pilgrim's Way forms the northern boundary, along the bottom of the steepest section of the scarp face of the Downs. To the south, the area is broadly defined by the extent of the Gault Clay. The periphery of Lenham forms the western boundary, and the Maidstone Borough boundary forms the edge of the character area to the east. This is the study area boundary, which therefore forms an artificial boundary in terms of landscape character. The landscape outside the study area, to the east, may therefore form a continuation of this character area.

17. East Lenham Vale



LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

17.2 Here at the foot of the steepest section of the scarp face of the North Downs, the landscape is slightly more enclosed than the exposed downland landscape to the north. The field and vegetation patterns are varied. To the north and east there is a simple pattern of large open arable fields, divided by native hedgerows which run against and along the contours in a distinct and regular pattern. There is a strong consistency in species, which mostly comprise hawthorn, hazel, field maple and dogwood, entangled with old man's beard. Immediately to the east of Lenham and to the south, fields are medium sized and there is a greater sense of enclosure, with scattered mixed blocks of ancient woodland and frequent native hedgerows, often with standard oak trees. Taller tree belts run against and along the gentle contour pattern to enclose a patchwork of fields containing arable crops and some pasture. The field pattern becomes smaller immediately surrounding farms and at Leadingcross Green, where horses graze within fenced paddocks.

17.3 A railway line is defined by a mature vegetation belt where it crosses the landscape, and distinctive brick archways allow access beneath the tracks and frame the view of the rural landscape on either side. Again, following the contours, the railway line does not generally detract from the surrounding field pattern. Springs emerge in this location at the foot of the Downs, with a series of vegetation lined ditches and drains running southwards towards the Great Stour. Willow trees often differentiate

these water courses from other hedgerow boundaries.

17.4 There is limited development with 20th century housing at Leadingcross Green, to the south of Lenham, warehouses and recent commercial development along the A20 at Ashmill Business Park, and scattered farmsteads which are often located at the sources of springs. Of particular note, New Shelve Farm and Old Shelve Farm provide distinctive collections of vernacular style buildings, including oast houses and ragstone and timber weatherboarded barns. Many of the farmhouses throughout the area comprise mid 17th to late 18th century grade II listed farmhouses of chequered red and grey brick with plain tiled roofs. An adjacent dovecote to New Shelve Farm is also grade II listed, constructed in 1711 of red brick with occasional sections of Flemish bond. Very few roads cross the landscape, which is largely accessed via private tracks which link farmsteads and a network of public footpaths, which cross the landscape and include the Stour Valley Walk promoted Long Distance Path. However the busy A20 follows the contours along the foot of the Downs, marked by scattered ash trees, and with minor hedgerow lined lanes running against the contours as the land rises northwards. Traffic on the A20 to the north and the M20 to the south is audible and detracts from the remoteness and tranquillity of some parts of this landscape.

17. East Lenham Vale

Geology, soils and topography

17.5 The solid geology of the area is predominantly Gault Clay, with Lower Chalk across the slightly higher foothills of the Downs to the north. There are extensive drifts of head, and alluvium deposits follow the course of streams. Soils are seasonally wet deep clay across the Gault Clay, although they become shallower and silty across the chalk. The landform is undulating, and begins to rise most evidently north of the A20 at the foot of the scarp.

Views

17.6 As the ground rises to the north there are some longer views across the lower landscape to the south and traffic on the A20 is evident. From the A20 there is a sense of

being at the foot of the Downs, with immediate views of the inclining landscape to the north. A large silo at Marlow Farm provides a prominent elevated feature within the landscape to the west, clearly visible from parts of the A20. The developed extent of Lenham is noticeable in views from fields immediately to the east of the village, where the distinctive flint and ragstone Lenham Church and the facade of a timber barn at Court Lodge stand out within other more recent residential development. Facing north, there are long, extensive, panoramic views of the elevated North Downs. The chalk memorial cross to the north of Lenham and the A20 stands out as a key landmark feature that draws the eye in many views across the undulating rural foreground.

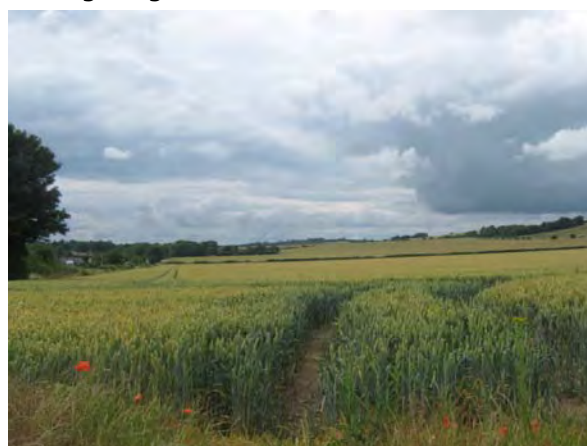
LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Condition

17.7 This is a unified landscape where the consistently undulating topography, frequent woodland blocks and hedgerow enclosed fields provide a coherent pattern of elements. There are few visual detractors, comprising sewerage works to the south (although this is not widely visible), and warehouses and a business park along the A20. Despite significant loss of historic hedgerow boundaries and shaws, a good hedgerow network and frequent woodland blocks remain. Oxley Wood and pasture and ponds at Lenham Forstal are designated as Local Wildlife Sites. However, the significant amount of arable intensification means that the ecological integrity is moderate. The cultural integrity is variable. Whilst some trees are over mature and there are some gaps in hedgerows, the overriding condition of remaining hedgerows, woodland and the built environment is good. However, the setting of some historic farm buildings has been degraded slightly with the location of more recent and large scale agricultural barns.

Sensitivity

17.8 The location at the foot of the Downs, evidenced by the sweeping views of the elevated downland to the north, is a distinctive feature. The field pattern, hedgerow network, woodland blocks and vernacular style farmhouses are very distinctive key characteristics which contribute both to local distinctiveness and continuity. Overall, visibility is high in this location at the foot of the Downs. Whilst immediate views are often enclosed by intervening vegetation, there are striking long distance views of North Downs.



17. East Lenham Vale

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Condition Assessment	Good	Sensitivity Assessment	High
Pattern of elements:	Coherent	Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Detracting features:	Few	Continuity:	Historic
Visual Unity:	Unified	Sense of Place:	Moderate
Ecological integrity:	Moderate	Landform:	Dominant
Cultural integrity:	Variable	Tree cover:	Open
Functional integrity:	Coherent	Visibility:	Very High

GUIDELINES - CONSERVE

Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	IMPROVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & IMPROVE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	IMPROVE	RESTORE & IMPROVE	RESTORE
		low	moderate	high
		Sensitivity		

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

- Consider the generic guidelines for the Gault Clay Vale
- North of the A20, the landscape is situated within the Kent Downs AONB. The Kent Downs AONB is a nationally important designation which offers a high level of development constraint
- Land management policies for the conservation, management and enhancement of this landscape are set out within the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2009 – 2014. Also refer to guidance documents referenced in Appendix A
- Conserve the undeveloped foreground and rural setting of the Kent Downs AONB
- Conserve and enhance hedgerows and tree belts and restore hedgerow boundaries and field headlands where practicable
- Restore historic hedgerow and shaw pattern where opportunities arise
- Plant new oak standards in hedgerows to replace ageing specimens
- Conserve the traditional setting of historic buildings and Conservation Areas, and soften the impact of recent farm buildings through native planting
- Conserve the defined boundary between Lenham's compact settlement and the surrounding rural area



Appendix C
Landscape Effects Table

APPENDIX C: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)									
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape			Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Overall Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
National Landscape Character									
Natural England, National Character Area Profile (NCA) Wealden Greensand	Varies across this large NCA. Mainly Medium	Varies across this large NCA. Mainly Medium	Varies across this large NCA. Mainly Medium	Construction: Negligible Completion: Negligible Year 15: Negligible	No	<p>This NCA stretches from Folkestone on the east coast in Kent to the edge of Alton in Hampshire before curving south east to Petersfield in East Hampshire and ending in Storrington in West Sussex, therefore covers a very extensive landscape area. Due to the large extent of the NCA, there will be localised variations in landscape sensitivity.</p> <p>The proposals include a new residential development to occupy existing arable farmland adjacent to the settlement edge of Lenham Village, however the site occupies a small land parcel and is located immediately adjacent to a business park and a busy road, with existing residential properties and pockets of new residential development within the immediate site context. The key characteristics identify that this section of the NCA is ‘more marked by development’, and combined with the existing transport corridors forming a prominent feature of the landscape, key characteristics will as such will be unaffected by the development.</p> <p>The site proposals also compliment many of the recommended methods of achieving SEOs of the NCA, namely;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maintaining rights of way, access to quality green space, maintaining expansive views, implementing orchard planting (SEO1);- Maintaining and enhancing hedgerow boundaries and streams (SEO2 / 3);- Maintain the streams and implementing sustainable drainage systems (SEO3); and- Creating new recreational facilities for sports and play, strategically designing green infrastructure to provide a buffer of the development to the adjacent AONB (SEO4). <p>In the context of the national scale NCA, the completed and operational development will have limited discernible effects at this very large geographic scale and landscape effects are assessed as Negligible on completion and at Year 15.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

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Natural England, National Character Area Profile (NCA) The North Downs	Varies across this large NCA. Mainly Medium	Varies across this large NCA. Mainly Medium	Varies across this large NCA. Mainly Medium	Construction: Negligible Completion: Negligible Year 15: Negligible	No	<p>Natural England’s National Character Area (NCA) boundaries are not precisely mapped, and there is a statement which indicates there is a “<i>zone of transition between NCAs</i>”, and due to the close proximity to the site, potential effects on this NCA are also considered.</p> <p>This NCA runs adjacent to the northern section of the Wealden Greensand NCA, and stretches from Farnham in Surrey to Dover on the east coast in Kent and therefore also covers a very extensive landscape area.</p> <p>The proposals incorporate features which tie in to the SEOs of this character area, including strategic landscape buffers which aim to mitigate any effects on the setting of the AONB within this character area along with sensitive consideration of the layout (SEO1). The development also provides recreational facilities and features of open space which reinforce locally distinctive features (SEO2).</p> <p>In the context of the national scale NCA, the completed and operational development will have no discernible effects at this very large geographic scale and landscape effects are assessed as Negligible on completion and at Year 15.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

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	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
Landscape Character Assessment (LCA): County/District									
Landscape Assessment of Kent (2004) Landscape Character Area: Hollingbourne Vale East	Medium / Low	Low (as 'Very Poor' condition is stated within the Landscape Analysis section of the assessment)	Low (as 'Low' sensitivity is stated within the Landscape Analysis section of the assessment)	Construction: Low Completion: Negligible Year 15: Negligible	No	<p>The site is located fully within this Landscape Character Area (LCA), which begins at settlement edge of Lenham Village, and spreads approximately 8km east to encompass all of the village of Charing. As described in the Landscape Analysis section, the condition of the landscape within Hollingbourne Vale East is 'very poor', with a 'low' landscape sensitivity. The proposals mitigate some existing visually detracting landscape features identified in the assessment such as visually buffering the A20 and creating additional hedgerow and woodland planting to impede views of the M20 and railway links to the south. While the description states that <i>“the outskirts of Lenham have now crept down the A20 towards Charing and need restraint...”</i>, the development proposals do not protrude further south east towards Charing than the existing development edge of Ashmill Business Park, and is enclosed by the existing built edge associated with the farm buildings at East Lenham.</p> <p>The proposals also incorporate elements which respond to some of the recommended 'Landscape Actions' as prescribed in the assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Retaining and enhancing the stream through the site as a corridor through the recreation area to the south to <i>“Create new corridors of riparian vegetation”</i>; and- Linking streams and creating additional woodland and hedgerow planting, and adding a landscape buffer strip in the field south of the escarpment which helps to <i>“Create regenerative woodland to the scarp-side of large arable fields... reintroduce cross-contour shaws to link with existing streams....”</i>. <p>The site encompasses a small section to the west of this low sensitivity character area. The development is set within the existing settlement context adjacent to other recent development and a busy road. The proposals incorporate features which could create some positive changes. With moderate visibility over the landscape, the development is judged to have a Negligible effect at both completion and year 15.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

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	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Overall Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
Landscape Assessment of Kent (2004) Landscape Character Area: Hollingbourne Vale	Varies, but mainly Medium	Varies, but mainly Low (as 'Poor' condition is stated within the Landscape Analysis section of the assessment)	Medium (as 'Moderate' sensitivity is stated within the Landscape Analysis section of the assessment)	Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 15: Negligible	No	<p>This LCA set within the Kent Downs AONB, located just north of the A20 Ashford Road, approximately 50m north of the site. It begins in Detling just north of Maidstone and spreads approximately 25km east to Broughton Lees just north of Ashford, generally associated with the escarpment along the Kent Downs. As described in the Landscape Analysis section, the condition of the landscape is said to be 'Poor', partly attributed to declining woodland and hedges, with a 'moderate' landscape sensitivity mostly due to the dominant landform offering expansive views but with recent development apparent in the landscape, stating:</p> <p><i>"The scarp is crossed by a considerable number of roads and footpaths.... Its open nature, and the wide views it offers, mean that this stretch of landscape is particularly sensitive to development. The existing road and railway network, along the southern boundary, already has a considerable impact on the views and quiet enjoyment of this part of the AONB."</i></p> <p>The development proposals incorporate a selection of features which respond to some of the recommended 'Landscape Actions', including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planting a 5m wide landscape buffer at the base of the field along the boundary of the A20 Ashford Road, which once mature should effectively help to <i>"Restore occasional woodland shaws"</i> and <i>"Reduce the visibility and impact of recent built form"</i> – this would help to reduce the existing detracting visual impacts of Ashmill Business Park on the footpaths and roads within the AONB along with helping to visually screen the development beyond; and - Creating a well vegetated landscape strip along Old Ashford Road which would include both hedgerows and trees, to <i>"Restore thick, well managed hedgerows to highways"</i>, which would also help to reduce visual impacts of the site on the footpaths and roads within the AONB. <p>The site encompasses a very small section of land adjacent to this moderate sensitivity character area, and features some potentially positive changes. Visibility across the landscape is very high due to the landform, however the development would be seen in the context of existing and recent development adjacent to the site, therefore is considered to have a Minor Adverse effect at completion. Once mature, the landscape buffer and vegetation within internal green space could potentially improve existing views south of recent development and Ashmill Business Park from the footpaths along the escarpment, therefore the development is judged to have a Negligible effect at year 15.</p>	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Negligible

APPENDIX C: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)									
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape			Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Overall Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
Landscape Assessment of Kent (2004) Landscape Character Area: Hollingbourne Vale West	Low	Varies, but mainly Low (as 'Poor' condition is stated within the Landscape Analysis section of the assessment)	Medium (as 'Moderate' sensitivity is stated within the Landscape Analysis section of the assessment)	Construction: Negligible Completion: Negligible Year 15: Negligible	No	<p>This LCA begins approximately 300m west of the site at the settlement edge of Lenham Village and spreads west to Eccles just north of Maidstone. It is described as: <i>“Undulating landscape on wet clay soils. Small broadleaf woodlands and irregular pastures. Infrequent settlement. Small streams (the head waters of the river Len) draining west to Maidstone. Chalk scarp dominating views to north”</i>.</p> <p>The overall condition of the landscape in this LCA area is said to be 'Poor', partly due to the visual unity of the landscape being interrupted by rail and road corridors, and other visual detractors related to urban and industrial development. There is some historic sense of place but this is affected by visual detractors such as modern development. The presence of woodland offers some enclosure to views, and so the landscape sensitivity is said to be 'Moderate'.</p> <p>Due to the location west of the site, the presence of intervening vegetation along field boundaries and the built form of Lenham village screening views to the west, there is limited inter-visibility between the site and this character area, with potential glimpses of the site limited the easternmost boundary of the LCA. Development of the site is therefore judged to have a Negligible effect on this LCA at both completion and year 15.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
Landscape Assessment of Kent (2004) Landscape Character Area: Hothfield Heathy Farmlands	Low	Varies, but mainly Low (as 'Poor' condition is stated within the Landscape Analysis section of the assessment)	Low (as 'Low' sensitivity is stated within the Landscape Analysis section of the assessment)	Construction: Negligible Completion: Negligible Year 15: Negligible	No	<p>The boundary of this LCA is approximately 600m south of the site. It begins at Sandway just south of Lenham, and spreads east to the edge of Wye, north of Ashford. It is described as: <i>“Undulating landscape of mixed farmlands. Heathland or heath characteristics on the Folkestone Beds. Historic Parkland.”</i></p> <p>The overall condition of the landscape is said to be 'Poor' mostly due to the scale and pattern of the area being interrupted by the rail and motorway links and quarries. Sensitivity is said to be 'low' due to low visibility due to the unremarkable landform and intermittent tree cover, with historic rural elements no longer contributing to local distinctiveness.</p> <p>The presence of the M20, the railway embankment and associated vegetation and the intervening landform limits the inter-visibility between the site and this LCA. Pockets of woodland to the south east of the site, namely Mill Wood, Roughet Shaw and Wheatgratten Wood along with undulations in the topography effectively screen the site from most of this LCA, with only distant glimpses possible from particular points on higher ground. Development of the site, therefore, is judged to have a Negligible effect on this LCA at both completion and year 15.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

APPENDIX C: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)									
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape			Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Overall Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment (2012/2013) Landscape Character Type: Gault Clay Vale	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 15: Negligible	No	<p>This site is situated within this very broad landscape type, which stretches west to east across the entire width of Maidstone District. It is described as: “... situated at the foot of the chalk scarp of the North Downs. Some of the northern parts of this landscape are situated within the nationally designated Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).”</p> <p>The development proposals incorporate a selection of features which respond to the recommended ‘Actions’, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Planting a 5m wide landscape buffer at the base of the field along the boundary of the A20 Ashford Road - once mature this should soften existing prominent views of Ashmill Business Park. Planting within landscape buffers around the site boundary and particularly in the north eastern corner should also provide some screening effects in to the site. The internal green and tree planting throughout the design should also work to visually break up the built form. These link to the recommendation to: “Conserve the undeveloped foreground and rural setting of the Kent Downs AONB”, and “consider views toward any proposals from the elevated North Downs scarp”.- The enhancement of fragmented existing field hedgerow boundaries and the creation of new connective boundaries formed by hedgerow and trees within the southern section of the site, which link to the recommendation to: “Conserve the species rich hedgerow boundaries and promote enhanced species diversity within hedgerows where this has been weakened...” and “woodland habitats should be increased and the historic hedgerow network should be reinstated.” <p>Another guideline recommends to: “conserve the undeveloped rural landscape, which forms an appropriate setting to the spring line settlements”. The site encompasses a very small part of this broad landscape type, and is set within the existing settlement context adjacent to the business park, other recent residential development, busy roads and the railway line. The proposals incorporate features which could create some positive changes and so the development is judged to have a Minor Adverse effect on this landscape type at completion, reducing to Negligible at year 15 once planting has matured.</p>	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Negligible

<p>Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment (2012/2013) Landscape Character Area:</p> <p>East Lenham Vale</p>	Medium	High / Medium (as 'Good' stated in the assessment)	High (as 'High' stated in the assessment)	<p>Construction: Medium</p> <p>Completion: Medium</p> <p>Year 15: Low</p>	No	<p>The site is located wholly within this LCA, which incorporates part of the escarpment to the north and the Kent Downs AONB. It begins at the settlement edge of Lenham Village and spreads east to the boundary with Ashford, approximately 2km to the west of the site. 'East Lenham Vale' is the easternmost Character Area within the study. Its northern boundary runs along the North Downs Way / Pilgrims Way mid-way up the escarpment, and shares some of its southern boundary with Lenham Heath Road.</p> <p>The site is typical of this character area and contains some elements identified within the 'Key Characteristics', namely <i>"springs and drains run south towards the Great Stour"</i>, <i>"Medium to large sized fields of arable and pasture"</i> and <i>"Field boundaries and roads run against and along the contours"</i>. While the agricultural field use will change with the development, the rest of the features will be retained within the layout, namely the field boundaries and streams.</p> <p>The development proposals incorporate a number of features which respond to the suggested 'Actions' for the character area, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planting a 5m wide landscape buffer at the base of the field along the boundary of the A20 Ashford Road once mature, should soften existing prominent views of Ashmill Business Park. Planting within landscape buffers around the site boundary and particularly in the north eastern corner should also provide some screening effects in to the site. The internal green and tree planting throughout the design should also work to break up the built form. These link to the recommendation to: <i>"Conserve the undeveloped foreground and rural setting of the Kent Downs AONB"</i>; - The enhancement of fragmented existing field hedgerow boundaries and the creation of new connective boundaries formed by hedgerow and trees within the southern section of the site. These link to the recommendation to: <i>"Conserve and enhance hedgerows and tree belts and restore hedgerow boundaries..."</i>, <i>"Restore historic hedgerow and shaw pattern where opportunities arise"</i> and <i>"Plant new oak standards in hedgerows to replace ageing specimens"</i>. - Locating the residential development to the northern section of the site, adjacent to the existing built form also serves to: <i>"Conserve the defined boundary between Lenham's Compact settlement and the surrounding rural area."</i>. <p>Due to the elevated landform of the escarpment, there are extensive views south over the landscape towards the site from the higher ground. The A20 Ashford Road, the railway, recent residential development and Ashmill Business Park already form significant features within the long-distance views over the character area from the escarpment. The development proposals aim to reduce the visual impacts of both existing visual detractors and the site itself is designed to minimise visibility from higher ground, however there will likely be partial views possible of the built development and so it is judged that there will be a Moderate Adverse effect at completion.</p> <p>The 5m planted buffer strip and structural planting within the development will soften the views of built form from higher ground once mature. Some elements of the design should also help to promote longevity of features characteristic of the LCA; therefore, it is judged that there will be a Minor Adverse effect on the LCA at year 15.</p>	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Minor Adverse
<p>Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment (2012/2013) Landscape Character Area:</p> <p>Lenham Scarp</p>	High / Medium	High / Medium (as 'Good' condition stated in the assessment)	High (as 'Very High' stated in the assessment)	<p>Construction: Low</p> <p>Completion: Low</p> <p>Year 15: Negligible</p>	No	<p>This LCA is set within the Kent Downs AONB and begins approximately 600m north of the site at the North Downs Way / Pilgrims Way route, mid-way up the escarpment. It encompasses the steepest and highest parts of the landform. It spreads approximately 5km east to south west from flint lane to the district boundary with Ashford. It is described as: <i>"Undulating landscape on wet clay soils. Small broadleaf woodlands and irregular pastures. Infrequent settlement. Small streams (the head waters of the river Len) draining west to Maidstone. Chalk scarp dominating views to north"</i>.</p> <p>Due to the height and gradient of the landform, there is a degree of inter-visibility between this LCA and the site. While the site is potentially visible from points within the LCA throughout the construction phase, the development will be seen within the context of surrounding built form of Lenham Village and recent residential development. The site will also form a very small part of vastly extensive views. Once mature, the landscape proposals and buffer strip will offer a degree of screening effects to the site and will help to screen existing features which detract from the tranquillity of the landscape, namely the A20 Ashford</p>	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Negligible

APPENDIX C: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)									
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape			Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Overall Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
						Road and Ashmill Business Park. For these reasons, the effect on this LCA is judged to be Minor Adverse at completion and reduces to Negligible year 15.			
Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment (2012/2013) Landscape Character Area: Lenham Heath Farmlands	Medium / Low	Low (as 'Very Poor' condition stated in the assessment)	Low (as 'Low' stated in the assessment)	Construction: Negligible Completion: Negligible Year 15: Negligible	No	<p>The boundary of this LCA is approximately 900m south of the site. It begins at Sandway just south of Lenham and spreads east to share the district boundary with Ashford. Views within this LCA are described as: <i>"Infrastructure routes have generally been well integrated into the topography and there are few extensive views of the M20/HS1 from the immediately surrounding landscape. Although the undulating landform and intervening vegetation restrict views throughout the immediate landscape, there are some open views of the North Downs"</i>.</p> <p>The overall condition of the landscape is said to be 'Very Poor' mostly due to fragmentation in to small land parcels and the major road and rail infrastructure. Sensitivity is said to be 'Low' due to a weak sense of place, recent development lacking character, and views limited by garden vegetation although there are some longer views possible across open fields.</p> <p>The presence of the railway embankment and associated vegetation and the intervening landform limits the inter-visibility between the site and this LCA. Pockets of woodland to the south east of the site, namely Mill Wood, Roughet Shaw and Wheatgratten Wood along with undulations in the topography effectively screen the site from most of this LCA, with only distant glimpses possible from particular points on higher ground. Development of the site, therefore, is judged to have a Negligible effect on this LCA overall.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

APPENDIX C: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)									
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape			Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Overall Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment (2012/2013) Landscape Character Area: Harrietsham to Lenham Vale	High / Medium	Medium (as 'Moderate' condition stated in the assessment)	High (as 'Very High' stated in the assessment)	Construction: Negligible Completion: Negligible Year 15: Negligible	No	<p>This LCA begins approximately 300m west of the site at the settlement edge of Lenham Village and spreads west to encompass most of Harrietsham village. Descriptions of the views within this LCA include: <i>“To the south of the A20, views within the area are generally restricted by vegetation and built development... Where intervening vegetation and development allows, there are extensive panoramic views of the higher downland outside the area to the north... From higher ground along the Pilgrim’s Way, views are more open across the landscape to the south.”</i></p> <p>The overall condition of the landscape in this LCA area is said to be 'Moderate', partly due to significant visual detractors such as industrial sites, the railway and busy A20. The rural landscape, however, is said to be reasonably intact with vegetation causing good habitat connectivity. Landscape sensitivity in this LCA is said to be 'Very High', partly due to the distinctive field and woodland pattern, traditional buildings and expansive views associated with the escarpment, although infill development and expansion is said to have weakened the sense of place.</p> <p>Due to the distance from the site, the presence of intervening vegetation along field boundaries and the built form of Lenham village screening views to the west, there is very limited inter-visibility between the site and this character area. Potential glimpses of the site limited to the easternmost boundary of the LCA or from higher ground along the escarpment. These views would be set within the context of existing built form of Ashmill Business Park, Lenham village and recent residential development adjacent to the site. Development of the site is therefore judged to have a Negligible effect on this LCA overall.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

APPENDIX C: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)									
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape			Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Overall Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
Chilston Park Registered Park and Garden	High / Medium	High / Medium	High / Medium	Construction: Negligible Completion: Negligible Year 15: Negligible	No	<p>This Registered Park and Garden is situated approximately 1.2km south of the site, just south of Lenham Heath Road, which borders its northern boundary. It is described by Historic England as “A <i>late C17 or early C18 formal garden with early to late C19 alterations and additions, set in an C18 park with additional planting of C19 and C20 origin.</i>”</p> <p>The formal and ornamental gardens of the park is set within 72ha of parkland and woodland. The M20 runs through the northern section of the park, which has formed approximately 13ha of woodland and parkland detached from the rest of the park. South of the M20, the main part of the park is set within a shallow valley which contains some grade I and II listed buildings, one of which is currently used as a hotel. Views from the listed building are described as being “...<i>contained by the ridge to the north</i>”.</p> <p>Lenham Heath Road is lined with hedges and hedgerow trees, and glimpsed views of the site are only possible from high points along the road at gaps in the hedgerow to the north of the road. Most of the park is situated on low lying landform and the existing intervening infrastructure of the M20 and the railway line fragment the northern section from the main part of the park. Combined with the distance and intervening pockets of woodland and vegetation particularly along Lenham Heath Road and the railway embankment south of Lenham, there is very limited visibility of the site from all but the northern boundary of the park. It is therefore judged that the proposed development will have Negligible effect on the Chilston Park overall.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

APPENDIX C: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)									
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape			Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Overall Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
Landscape Character: Site and Immediate Context									
Site and Immediate Context	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction: High Completion: High / Medium Year 15: Medium	No	<p>The site currently occupies arable and pasture farmland, largely devoid of landscape features. There are some mature trees along the streams which flow along and through the southern section of the site. Some sections of the site boundary currently have no physical definition as the site comprises smaller sections of four fields. Some hedgerows within the site are fragmented and contain wide gaps, which allow for wide views of the escarpment to the north. There are also views of the A20 Ashford Road and Old Ashford Road from points in the northern section of the site, with residential properties at Burnside Cottages and industrial buildings at Ashmill Business Park forming prominent features in views within and adjacent to the site.</p> <p>The effect of the proposed development upon the character of the landscape at a site-wide scale would be localised in its extent, while the primary change would arise as a direct result of the replacement of arable fields with residential development and associated infrastructure in the northern section. The significance of this change is lessened to an extent due to the effects of existing built form adjacent to the site.</p> <p>While the site character will be changed, existing public rights of way will be maintained and the southern section of the site will increase access to recreational open space which limits the negative effects of losing arable and pasture fields to development. Planting of landscape buffers along the boundaries of the residential section will also lessen the effects of extending the built character of the site on its context. The majority of site features such as the streams, trees and hedgerows will be maintained and enhanced, and proposed planting will provide additional screening of the site to its context once mature. The effects of the development on the site and its immediate context are therefore judged to be Moderate Adverse at completion Moderate / Minor Adverse at year 15.</p>	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse

APPENDIX C: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)									
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape			Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Overall Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
Site Landscape Features/ Characteristics									
Site Landscape Features <i>Landform</i>	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction: Medium / Low Completion: Medium / Low Year 15: Low / Negligible	No	Built development would be located on similar ground levels to the existing built form along Old Ashford Road, and that of the existing landform as it slopes down to the south west. Some localised changes would occur during construction of the development together with associated access road and paved areas, although the underlying direction and gradient of falls would generally remain as existing. The formation of an attenuation basin within the south western corner of the site would constitute only a minor change to the landform. The creation of a planted bund along the eastern site boundary aims to screen views of the built development on views from the east. Once the vegetation along the bund matures, the bund will visually integrate with the existing hedgerows and trees along the field boundaries. The effects of the development on site Landform is therefore judged to be Minor Adverse at completion, and Negligible at year 15 once planting has matured.	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Negligible
Site Landscape Features <i>Woodland, Trees, Hedgerows and Vegetation</i>	High / Medium	High / Medium	High / Medium	Construction: Medium Completion: Medium Year 15: Low / Negligible	No	Woodland and vegetation within the site at the moment is limited to fragmented hedgerows and trees along field boundaries, with some more dense mature trees along the streams. The majority of these hedgerows and trees will be maintained and enhanced as part of the proposals, however two sections of the hedgerow along Old Ashford Road will need to be removed to accommodate two vehicular access points. The vehicular route through to the car park and pavilion within the sports and recreational ground will potentially require sections of hedgerow and trees along the stream to be removed, and access in to the southernmost section of the site may require the removal of some sections of the vegetation along the stream to facilitate the creation of the trim trail. The development incorporates the creation of additional structural planting and connective hedgerows along boundaries which currently have no physical definition. Significant shrub and tree planting along the bund on the eastern boundary and along the southern boundary adjacent to the development area will also substantially increase the tree cover of the site. The green infrastructure proposals and open space within the development also provide additional vegetation in the form of hedgerows, standard trees and fruit trees within the central green, which will increase the diversity of vegetation on site. The loss of the arable field to development and the loss of pasture grassland to sports fields and play space is judged to be outweighed by the additional planting and enhancement proposed in the development, therefore the overall effect on site Woodland, Trees, Hedgerows and Vegetation at completion is judged to be Moderate Adverse , and once planting has matured is judged to be Minor Beneficial .	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Minor Beneficial

APPENDIX C: LANDSCAPE EFFECTS TABLE (LET)									
Landscape Receptor and Reference	Judged Sensitivity of Landscape			Judged Magnitude of Landscape Effect		Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion
	Susceptibility to Change	Landscape Value	Overall Sensitivity	Scale or Size of the Degree of Change including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project	Where applicable, are the Effects Reversible?		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None
	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low	High Medium Low Negligible None	Yes No N/A		Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial	Adverse Beneficial
Site Landscape Features <i>Water Features and Watercourses</i>	Medium	Medium	Medium	Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 15: Low / Negligible	No	<p>The site currently contains two dry ditches alongside field hedgerow boundaries – one to the north of the hedgerow within the northern section and one along the western field boundary within the southern section of the site. There are two streams which run through the southern part of the site and eventually join the Great Stour.</p> <p>The Public Right of Way footpath ref KH399 crosses over the stream via a bridge which consists of two large wooden sleepers. This would be developed in to a vehicular bridge and so this section of the stream would need to be culverted. Construction of the trim trail is likely to include creation of two foot bridges or sections of culvert where it crosses the stream in to the southernmost section of the site.</p> <p>The southern section of the site is due to be developed as open space and recreational / sports facilities and the position of the streams has guided the layout of the sports pitches. Adjacent to the stream, a car park with tree planting, an equipped play area and a trim trail route is due to be created, with additional planting around the boundary alongside the stream. The wider green infrastructure strategy for the site will also include provision of SuDs feature consisting of an attenuation basin within the south eastern corner of the northern section of the site. This will create an additional water body and opportunities for biodiversity within the site. The development effects on site water features and watercourses is therefore judged to be Minor Beneficial overall.</p>	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Beneficial

Appendix D
Visual Effects Table

APPENDIX D: VISUAL EFFECTS TABLE (VET)												
Ref	Receptor Type, Location and photographs (including approx no. of dwellings where applicable)	Judged Sensitivity of Visual Receptor			Judged Magnitude of Visual Effects				Description/ Notes	Overall Effect at Construction Phase	Overall Effect Upon Completion (Winter)	Overall Effect at 15 Years Post Completion (Summer)
		Susceptibility to Change	Value	Overall Sensitivity	Distance from Site Boundary (or Built Development where stated) (approx. m/km)	Nature of View	Is the View Temporary or permanent?	Size/Scale of Visual Effect (including degree of contrast/ integration) at Stages of Project		Major Moderate Minor Negligible None Adverse or Beneficial	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None Adverse or Beneficial	Major Moderate Minor Negligible None Adverse or Beneficial
R1	Residents of properties to the immediate west with rear gardens adjacent to the site western boundary. (Burnside Cottages) Approx 4 properties See viewpoint 4.	High	Medium	High	Approx 0m	Full	Permanent	Construction: High / Medium Completion: High / Medium Year 15: Medium	Residents of Burnside Cottages to the immediate west of the northern section of the site share the site western boundary, and currently experience full views in to the site from ground and upper storeys. Some boundaries of properties are post and wire fences with little enclosure which allows for full views in to the site, while some experience a degree of enclosure from vegetation in their rear gardens. During construction it is likely that construction machinery and activity will be visible from both upper and ground storeys. At completion, views will be shortened with the presence of housing, however do already consist of some built form along Old Ashford Road and at East Lenham. At year 15 views will be permanently shortened however the housing is set back from the boundary with a small open space at the site entrance therefore the built form will be slightly offset. Once mature, boundary planting will offer some screening effects to soften the views.	Major / Moderate Adverse	Major / Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse
R2	Residents of properties to the west of the site (Tanyard Cottages, Rehouse Cottages, Lanrig and The Marvel) Approx 6 properties	High	Medium	High	Approx 0-45m	Partial / Glimpse	Permanent	Construction: Medium Completion: Medium Year 15: Negligible / None	Residents of these properties off Old Ashford Road to the west of the site currently experience partial views of the site, with limited visibility of the northern section. Some properties share the site boundary with the southern section of the site. Intervening vegetation along the site field boundaries and within the gardens of the properties restricts visibility of the site from these dwellings, although some views may still be possible from upper storeys. During construction, some views of machinery may be possible from both upper and ground storeys. At completion, there may be some views of the new play equipment and of the sports grounds from upper storeys or through gaps in the field boundaries, however the character of the view remains open.	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Minor Adverse

									At year 15 once new boundary enhancement planting is mature it will offer further screening effects to soften views.			
R3	Residents of properties to the immediate north east of the site (Pivington House) Approx 1 property See viewpoint 5.	High	Medium	High	Approx 40m	Full	Permanent	Construction: High / Medium Completion: High / Medium Year 15: Medium	Residents at Pivington House currently experience full views of the northern section of the site from both upper and ground storeys, due to post and wire fences and low wooden fences on their property western boundary. The existing view consists of the open field with Burnside Cottages visible. During construction it is likely that construction machinery and activity will be visible from both upper and ground storeys. At completion, views will be shortened due to the development, however a section of the field adjacent to the property will be retained retaining some openness to the view and offering a degree of separation. Views of the new buildings will possibly be seen from both upper and ground storeys. At year 15 views will be permanently shortened, however planting along the bund will, once mature, offer some screening effects to the views of the built development. Views will therefore retain similar characteristics to the existing view.	Major / Moderate Adverse	Major / Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse
R4	Residents of properties to the east of the site (East Lenham) Approx 1-2 properties	High	Medium	Medium	Approx 0-230m	Full	Permanent	Construction: High / Medium Completion: High / Medium Year 15: Medium	Properties at East Lenham share sections of the site eastern boundary, which currently consists of post and wire fencing with mature hedgerows. The southern section of the site is separated by a section of field currently bound by new hedgerow planting and post and wire fencing. Residents currently experience partial views of both the northern and southern section of the site, with potential views from both upper and ground storey windows. Intervening vegetation within the property grounds and along the field boundaries and stream offer some screening effects, however views through gaps and over hedgerows are likely. During construction it is likely that construction machinery and activity will be visible from both upper and ground storeys. At completion, views will be shortened due to the development, however the planted bund and structural planting along the site boundary will offer some screening effects. The situation of the SUDS attenuation basin in the site south western corner will also offer a degree of separation between East Lenham and the built development. New planting to define currently unvegetated boundaries and enhancement of existing vegetation along the boundaries and stream will also offer some screening in to the recreational area to the south of the site, however new built form may be visible through and over the new planting. At year 15, planting along the site boundaries and along the bund will have matured and will offer screening effects, however partial views may still be possible, particularly from upper storeys.	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse
R5	Residents of properties to the west of the site	High / Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 130m	Partial	Permanent	Construction: Medium Completion: Medium	Tanyard Farm is situated approximately 130m west of the southern section of the site, with a small intervening field separating the property boundaries. The property is being redeveloped to support additional dwellings, and is bound by maintained hedgerows and individual trees. There are	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Minor Adverse

	(Tanyard Farm development) Approx 7 properties See viewpoint 1C.							Year 15: Negligible / None	<p>potential views in to the site from both upper and ground floors, however views are predominantly of the southern section of the site and limited to glimpses through gaps in intervening hedgerow field boundaries.</p> <p>During construction it is possible that construction machinery and activity will be visible from both upper and ground storeys.</p> <p>At completion, glimpses of roof tops may be possible from above intervening vegetation along the intervening field boundaries. The sports ground and play area may be visible through gaps in the vegetation.</p> <p>At year 15, additional planting along the site boundary will have matured to offer additional screening, however glimpsed views may still be possible, particularly from upper storeys. The intervening field parcel offers a degree of separation and the open nature of the sports and recreation area allows views to remain relatively unchanged and open.</p>			
R6	Residents of properties at Glebe Gardens Approx 24 properties See viewpoint 2.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 230-400m	Glimpse	Permanent	<p>Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 15: Negligible / None</p>	<p>Glebe Gardens and properties at the new residential development off Glebe Gardens are approximately 230-400m west of the site. Currently residents are unlikely to experience views of the site, as intervening vegetation along field boundaries and streams and the new development at Tanyard Farm screens views of the site.</p> <p>During construction there may be glimpsed views possible of construction machinery and activity over intervening vegetation.</p> <p>At completion there are unlikely to be any views of the development due to the residential part of the development being situated in the northernmost section of the site, and the aspect of the rear of dwellings at Glebe Gardens facing south west, away from the site.</p> <p>At year 15 it is unlikely that any views of the development will be possible.</p>	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Negligible
R7	Residents of properties at the south east edge of Lenham (Properties off High Street, Court Lodge Farm, Old School Close, Mill Close and The Millers) Approx 25 properties See viewpoint 9.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 630-850m	Glimpse/None	Permanent	<p>Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 15: Negligible / None</p>	<p>Lenham Village is situated on a localised high point in the landform. Residents of properties at the south eastern edge of the settlement experiences moderately expansive views to the east due to the landform falling away to the east and rising towards the northern section of the site. Intervening vegetation along field boundaries within the lower landform offers a degree of visual screening mostly of the southern section of the site, however glimpsed views of the northern field parcel may be possible over the vegetation and over the new development at Tanyard Farm due to the location of the properties on slightly elevated landform.</p> <p>During construction glimpsed views of construction machinery and activities will likely be visible over the intervening vegetation.</p> <p>At completion, the built development could possibly be visible from some ground floors, however this is mostly limited to upper storeys. This is also going to be seen in the context of built form along Old Ashford Road and East Lenham and recent development at Tanyard Farm and Glebe Gardens.</p> <p>At year 15, glimpsed views over planting could still be possible, however planting along the site boundary will have matured to offer some additional visual screening</p>	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Negligible

									effects and views would be in the context of other recent development.			
R8	Properties to the north east off Rayners Hill (Rayners Hill Cottages) Approx 8 properties See viewpoint 19.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 1.1km	Glimpse	Permanent	Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 15: Negligible / None	<p>These residential properties (Rayners Hill Cottages) are situated along PROW Byway ref KH 220 / Pilgrims Way / North Downs Way, just off Rayners Hill. The properties currently experience an expansive view to the south due to their position mid-way up the escarpment. The view currently consists of expanses of large fields, pockets of woodland and scattered farms, and the tops of buildings at Ashmill Business Park over the landform. The south eastern settlement edge of Lenham Village is also visible in the distance to the south west. The site itself is not visible from ground floors due to the screening effects of the tree-lined access track to East Lenham, but could be visible from upper storey windows.</p> <p>During construction, it is possible that residents will see construction machinery from upper storeys.</p> <p>At completion, glimpsed views of roof tops from upper storeys may be possible, however the site forms a very small part of the expansive view at this distance, and the view already consists of built form therefore will not be overly different in character.</p> <p>At year 15, the planting along the bund, around the site boundary and within the 5m landscape buffer strip north of the A20 may provide screening of the site from these properties and upper storeys, whilst glimpsed views may still be possible, the effect at this stage is judged to be negligible.</p>	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Negligible
R9	Properties to the north west along Pilgrims Way off Faversham Road (The House by the Cross, Northdown and The View) Approx 4 properties See viewpoint 19.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 850m-1km	Glimpse	Permanent	Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 15: Negligible / None	<p>These residential properties are situated along PROW Byway ref KH219 / Pilgrims Way / North Downs Way, just off Faversham Road. The properties likely experience an expansive view to the south due to their position mid-way up the escarpment, mostly from upper storeys. Views likely consist of expanses of large fields, with pockets of woodland and scattered farms, with buildings at Ashmill Business Park and traffic along the A20 Ashford Road in the foreground.</p> <p>During construction, glimpsed views of construction machinery may be possible over the tops of the buildings at Ashmill Business Park.</p> <p>At completion, glimpsed views of roof tops may be possible over the buildings at Ashmill Business Park from upper storeys, however this is likely limited to upper storeys of those properties furthest to the east due to dense vegetation along Pilgrims Way and in gardens.</p> <p>At year 15 planting around the site boundary and within the 5m landscape buffer strip once mature may provide screening effects, however glimpsed views may still be possible.</p>	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Negligible
R10	Scattered farm properties to the north west including Marlow Farm and Lea Farm Approx 2 properties See viewpoint 13A.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 1.5-2km	Glimpse	Permanent	Construction: Negligible / None Completion: Negligible / None Year 15: Negligible / None	<p>Scattered farms to the north west including Marlow Farm and Lea Farm currently experience expansive views to the south due to their position at the top of the escarpment. Glimpsed views of the site are possible over intervening woodland along and adjacent to Faversham Road.</p> <p>During construction glimpsed distant views of construction machinery may be possible over the intervening vegetation.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

									At completion, distant glimpsed views of roof tops may be possible over vegetation, however would be seen in the context of adjacent built form already visible along Old Ashford Road and Burnside Cottages, with properties along Faversham Road and Hill Crescent in the foreground of the views. At year 15 planting around the site boundary once mature may provide screening effects, however glimpsed views may still be possible from upper storeys. These views are likely to be very small due to the distance and context, and therefore judged to be negligible.			
R11	Farms to the south east including New Shelve Farm, Wheatgratten Farm, Old Shelve and Old Shelve Farm. Approx 3 properties See viewpoint 20.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 1-1.5km	Glimpse / None	Permanent	Construction: Negligible / None Completion: Negligible / None Year 15: Negligible / None	Residents of the scattered farms approximately 1-1.5km south east of the site likely experience views that are partially screened by trees along the access track to East Lenham and the rise in landform, however potentially experience glimpsed views of the site from upper storeys. During construction there may be glimpsed views of construction machinery from upper storeys of the closest farms namely New Shelve Farm and Wheatgratten Farm. At completion there may be glimpses of roof tops possible through intervening vegetation. At year 15 there may be glimpses of roof tops possible through vegetation however planting along the boundary may offer screening effects once mature.	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
R12	Users of PROW Footpath ref KH400 See viewpoints 1A and 1B.	High / Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 1-100m	Full	Permanent	Construction: Medium Completion: Medium Year 15: Medium / Low	This footpath route begins at the tree lined access track to East Lenham and traverses through the site along its eastern and southern boundaries, before exiting the site and following the driveway to Burnside Cottages and ceasing at Old Ashford Road. Footpath users experience open views across the northern section of the site, and the fragmented hedgerow along the southern boundary offer expansive views of the escarpment to the north. Ashmill Business Park and properties along Old Ashford Road are visible along the route. During construction, there may be some temporary disruption to the route as the proposals are being built. At completion, the eastern section of the route will experience shortened views, however will still experience views of the escarpment. The route will become more enclosed as it passes through new structural planting along the site boundary and through the open space, and will likely experience enclosure of views due to the development of buildings in the northern section. The route will also need to cross over the road which accesses the car park. At year 15, structural planting will have matured to offer some screening of views of the built form. Views will be permanently altered, however will encompass an extension of features already experienced in existing views.	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse
R13	Users of PROW Footpath ref KH399 (east of Tanyard Farm) See viewpoints 1B and 1C.	High / Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 20-110m	Full	Permanent	Construction: Medium Completion: Medium Year 15: Medium / Low	Users of this route on the section east of the Tanyard Farm development experience varying degrees of enclosure as the route passes across small open fields, through hedgerows and trees along field boundaries and over the stream. The route passes through the southern section of the site which currently consists of a small field used for pasture. Views to the north include expansive views of the escarpment in the background through gaps	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse

									<p>in the fragmented hedgerow along the southern boundary offering full views of the site. Built form at Ashmill Business Park, properties off Old Ashford Road, East Lenham and Tanyard Farm form a prominent feature of the foreground.</p> <p>During construction, there may be some temporary disruption to the route as the proposals are being built.</p> <p>At completion, views north will be permanently altered due to the construction of the development impeding views of the escarpment to the north. The proposals include the creation of recreational open space and sports pitches within the southern section of the site, however, and so the nature of the views will remain open in character in places.</p> <p>At year 15, structural planting will have matured to offer some screening of views of the built form, however the 5m landscape buffer could also screen views of the escarpment from the route. Views will be permanently altered, however will encompass an extension of features already experienced in existing views.</p>			
R14	<p>Users of PROW Footpath ref KH399 (west of Tanyard Farm)</p> <p>See viewpoint 2.</p>	High / Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 180-500m	Glimpse	Permanent	<p>Construction: Negligible / None</p> <p>Completion: Negligible / None</p> <p>Year 15: Negligible / None</p>	<p>This section of the route is visually contained due to the presence of built form at the eastern settlement edge and to the north off Old Ashford Road with recent development off Glebe Gardens screening views of the escarpment to the north. Recent development at Tanyard Farm is prominent along the route and screens views east towards the site.</p> <p>During construction, glimpsed views of construction machinery may be possible over the development at Tanyard Farm.</p> <p>At completion, glimpsed views of roof tops may be possible over vegetation, however this would be seen in the context of the development at Tanyard Farm in the foreground.</p> <p>At year 15 there may be glimpses of roof tops possible over vegetation however planting along the boundary may offer screening effects once mature and this would be seen within the context of Tanyard Farm in the foreground.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
R15	<p>Users of PROW Footpath ref KH399A</p> <p>See viewpoint 7.</p>	High / Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 0-150m	Full	Permanent	<p>Construction: Medium</p> <p>Completion: Medium</p> <p>Year 15: Medium / Low</p>	<p>This footpath passes through the southern section of the site and the northern section of the site is visible from much of its route. Users of this route experience varying degrees of enclosure as the route passes across small open fields and through hedgerows and trees along field boundaries and alongside Mill Wood. Views also consist of built form at Ashmill Business Park, Burnside Cottages and East Lenham.</p> <p>During construction, there will be temporary disruption of the route whilst the proposals are built, and users of the route will likely experience full views of construction machinery.</p> <p>At completion, access through the site will be retained however the route itself will be altered. Much of the route will retain existing character of views due to the open nature of the recreational ground, and the residential section of the site being partially screened by vegetation along the streams and field boundaries. Views will be noticeably altered due to the construction of the</p>	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse

									residential development however, and views of the escarpment will be restricted. At year 15, structural planting will have matured to offer some screening of the built form, however that and the 5m landscape buffer could also partly screen views of the escarpment from the route. Views will be permanently altered with the built development, however will encompass an extension of features already experienced in existing views and the escarpment will likely still be visible over the built development.			
R16	Users of PROW Footpath ref KH398 north of railway line See viewpoints 3a, 3b and 2.	High / Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 100- 450m	Full / Partial	Permanent	Construction: Medium Completion: Medium Year 15: Low	Users of the route currently experience varied visibility of the site, with partial views through gaps in the intervening field boundary vegetation. The section of the route just north of the railway has a full view of the southernmost section of the site as there is no physical boundary currently defining it. The rest of the site, however is screened from view due to intervening boundary vegetation particularly along the streams running through the site. Built form at Tanyard Farm and Glebe Gardens is also prominent from the route, with the settlement edge of Lenham visible in places and views of the escarpment possible over intervening field boundary vegetation. During construction, full views of construction machinery within the southernmost section of the site may be possible, however intervening field boundary vegetation partially screens views in to the northern sections of the site. The development at Tanyard Farm also partially screens the site from northern sections of the route. At completion, glimpsed views of roof tops maybe possible over vegetation, however this would be seen in the context of the development at Tanyard Farm in the foreground. The new boundary planting along the southernmost section may offer some screening of the sports field, however it will likely be visible through the new planting. At year 15 there may be glimpsed views possible of roof tops and the sports fields over / through vegetation however planting along the boundary will offer some screening effects once mature. This would be seen within the context of the development at Tanyard Farm in the foreground and more distant views of Glebe Gardens and Lenham village.	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Minor Adverse
R17	Users of PROW Footpath ref KH397 north of railway (Stour Valley Walk) See viewpoints 2 and 8.	High / Medium	High / Medium	High	Approx 315- 500m	Partial	Permanent	Construction: Medium Completion: Medium Year 15: Negligible / None	Users of this route generally experience varied visibility of the site. On higher ground as the route passes over the railway line, there are open views across the lower lying land to the east and the escarpment in the background to the north, with partial views possible of the site over intervening vegetation. Further towards Lenham village as the landform drops, the intervening field boundary vegetation and the new development at Tanyard Farm obscures views of the site. During construction, there will likely be partial views of construction machinery between and over the intervening field boundary vegetation, however the site constitutes a very small part of the wider view. At completion, there will likely be partial views of the development possible from higher ground around the railway overpass. These views already consist of the built form of the Tanyard Farm development, with Ashmill Business Park, Pivington House and the settlement edge	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Minor Adverse

									<p>of Lenham Village, and the site constitutes a very small part of the wider view.</p> <p>At year 15 there may be partial views of the development possible over vegetation however planting along the boundary may offer screening effects once mature. This would be seen within the context of the development at Tanyard Farm in the foreground and more distant views of Lenham village.</p>			
R18	<p>Users of PROW Footpath ref KH397 south of railway</p> <p>See viewpoint 10.</p>	High / Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 460m-1km	Glimpse	Permanent	<p>Construction: Low</p> <p>Completion: Low</p> <p>Year 15: Negligible / None</p>	<p>Users of this route south of railway line experience glimpsed views of the site which are limited to localised points on higher ground. Mature vegetation along the raised railway embankment provides a visual buffer to views from locations immediately south of its route, with only sections located on higher ground experiencing glimpsed views through gaps in adjacent intervening vegetation and pockets of woodland within fields.</p> <p>During construction, there may be glimpsed views of construction machinery over the top intervening vegetation.</p> <p>At completion, distant glimpsed views of the development may be possible over the intervening vegetation, however pockets of built form along the escarpment and at Ashmill Business Park are already visible.</p> <p>At year 15 there may be distant glimpsed views of the development possible over vegetation from localised high points in the landform, however planting along the boundary may offer screening effects once mature.</p>	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Negligible
R19	<p>Users of PROW Footpath ref KH390</p> <p>See viewpoints 5 and 6.</p>	High / Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 100-700m	Full	Permanent	<p>Construction: Medium</p> <p>Completion: Medium</p> <p>Year 15: Low</p>	<p>Just south of Hubbards Hill within the Kent Downs AONB, users of the route experience open, expansive views to the south which incorporates much of Lenham. Ashmill business park, buildings at East Lenham, Pivington House and the development at Tanyard Farm are all prominent along the route due to their position ahead of the route as it approaches the site. Traffic along the A20 Ashford Road is also noticeable due to the lack of boundary vegetation along the field in which the route is situated. The tree-lined access track to East Lenham offers a degree of screening in to the site, however partial views are still possible.</p> <p>During construction, users of the route will likely experience full views of construction machinery.</p> <p>At completion, full views of the residential development will likely be possible, however the new bund and boundary planting will offer a degree of screening.</p> <p>At year 15, planting along the bund and site boundary will have matured to offer more substantial screening effects, however there will likely still be partial views of the development from higher points along the route. Planting within the 5m landscape buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road will also have matured and will offer screening of Ashmill Business Park, which will soften existing views of built form.</p>	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Minor Adverse
R20	<p>Users of PROW Footpaths to the north east of the site including PROW refs KH391 and KH392</p>	High / Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 950m-1.4km	Glimpse	Permanent	<p>Construction: Negligible / None</p> <p>Completion: Negligible / None</p>	<p>Footpath routes to the north east within the Kent Downs AONB experience limited views of the site. The protruding landform along the escarpment restricts views of the lower lying land of the site beyond, and as the routes approach Hubbards Hill, dense, mature vegetation</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

	See viewpoint 18.							Year 15: Negligible / None	<p>along the road and the tree-lined access track to East Lenham east of the site also screen views in to the site.</p> <p>During construction, there may be glimpsed views of construction machinery over the top intervening vegetation and landform.</p> <p>At completion, distant glimpsed views of the development may be possible over the intervening vegetation, however would be seen in the context of existing pockets of built form visible in the distance at Tanyard Farm and at East Lenham, with more prominent built form in the foreground along Hubbards Hill.</p> <p>At year 15 distant glimpsed views of the development may be possible over the intervening vegetation, however would form a minute part of the wider view.</p>			
R21	<p>Users of PROW Footpath ref KH389 north of Pilgrims Way</p> <p>See viewpoint 16a.</p>	High / Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 650m-1.6km	Partial	Permanent	<p>Construction: Medium</p> <p>Completion: Medium</p> <p>Year 15: None</p>	<p>This section of the footpath within the Kent Downs AONB is accessed off Hubbards Hill and users experience open views along the higher ground at the top of the escarpment, with Lenham Village, scattered farms and Ashmill Business Park visible on the lower ground. The site is screened by dense vegetation along Hubbards Hill, Little Pivington Farm and Lade Wood along the northernmost sections of the route, however at the top of the escarpment users experience expansive views to the south with partial views in to the site beyond full views of Ashmill Business Park. As the route approaches the dense vegetation along Pilgrims Way views become more enclosed and the site is less visible.</p> <p>During construction it is likely that users will experience full views of construction machinery, over the built form of Ashmill Business Park</p> <p>At completion, partial views of the residential development will likely be possible, however Ashmill Business Park will continue to screen the northernmost part of the site. The 5m planted buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road and boundary planting will offer a degree of screening.</p> <p>At year 15, planting along the site boundary and the 5m landscape buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road will have matured to offer more substantial screening effects of both Ashmill Business Park and the site itself, however there will likely still be partial distant views of the development from higher points along the route.</p>	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Minor Adverse
R22	<p>Users of PROW south of Pilgrims Way including PROW Footpaths ref KH389, KH433 and KH438</p> <p>See viewpoints 14 and 16b.</p>	High / Medium	High / Medium	Medium	Approx 220-900m	Glimpse	Permanent	<p>Construction: Low</p> <p>Completion: Low</p> <p>Year 15: Negligible / None</p>	<p>Sections of footpaths within the Kent Downs AONB, heading south down the lower part of the escarpment from Pilgrims Way experience views that are still open but less expansive than routes north of Pilgrims Way. Features within the lower lying landform to the south are mostly screened from view due to the intervening built form of Ashmill Business Park, properties along Old Ashford Road and mature vegetation along the Western sections of the A20 Ashford Road and within the business park. Views of the site are therefore limited to glimpses above and between the built form of the business park.</p> <p>During construction, there may be glimpsed views of construction machinery over the top of intervening built form of the business park.</p>	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Negligible

									At completion there may be partial views of roof tops possible from these routes, however the development will be mostly screened by the built form of the business park. At year 15, planting along the site boundary and the 5m landscape buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road will have matured to offer more substantial screening effects of both Ashmill Business Park and the site itself, however there will likely still be glimpsed views of the development possible.			
R23	Users of PROW south of the railway on lower ground including KH412, KH398 along Stour Valley Walk and including permissive routes along Stour Valley Walk	High / Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 230m-1.3km	Glimpse / None	Permanent	Construction: Negligible / None Completion: Negligible / None Year 15: Negligible / None	PROW and permissive footpath routes on low-lying land south of the railway experience limited views north due to the vegetated embankment, with no views of the site possible until users are directly south of the underpass, where distant glimpsed views may be possible through gaps in intervening vegetation. During construction, it is not likely for there to be any visibility of construction machinery or the development until users have reached the underpass, where partial views of the southernmost section of the site and construction machinery may be possible. At completion, a glimpsed view of the southernmost sports field might be possible through the new boundary planting from the route directly south of the underpass, however there will likely be no views possible from most the rest of the routes. Once the boundary planting has matured at year 15, this glimpsed view will likely not be possible due to screening effects of the new planting.	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
R24	Users of PROW Byway ref KH220 See viewpoint 19.	High / Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 770m-1.2km	Glimpse	Permanent	Construction: Negligible / None Completion: Negligible / None Year 15: Negligible / None	This route is within the Kent Downs AONB to the north east of the site. It is a section of longer routes including Pilgrim's Way, the North Downs Way and the National Cycle Network number 17. The route can be accessed off Rayners Hill, and constitutes the access track to properties at Rayners Hill Cottages. Much of this section route has limited visibility south due to dense mature woodland along the route enclosing the views, particularly along the western section towards Hubbards Hill. The eastern section has some open views; however, the site is screened by the intervening rise in landform, the tree-lined access track to East Lenham and also by the built form of Ashmill Business Park. During construction and at completion there could potentially be glimpsed views of construction machinery or roof tops over the built form of the business park. At year 15 planting within the 5m strip and along the bund will have will have matured to offer significant screening effects, which will further limit the glimpsed views.	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
R25	Users of PROW Byway ref KH219 See viewpoint 15.	High	Medium	High / Medium	Approx 550m-1km	Glimpse	Permanent	Construction: Low Completion: Low Year 15: Negligible / None	This route is within the Kent Downs AONB to the north of the site. It is a section of longer routes including Pilgrim's Way, the North Downs Way and the National Cycle Network number 17. The route can be accessed from both Hubbards Hill and Faversham Road. Much of the route has limited visibility south due to dense mature woodland along the route enclosing the views, with a long section enclosed with vegetation from Hubbards Hill and a shorter section enclosed from Faversham Road, up to the final dwelling (The House by the Cross). A 400m section of the route has only limited	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Negligible

									<p>fragments of vegetation enabling users to experience expansive views to the south which incorporate patches of built form within Lenham, along Old Ashford Road, Ashmill Business Park and scattered farms in the distance. The site is partially screened, with only glimpsed views possible over intervening vegetation and the business park.</p> <p>During construction it is likely that users will experience glimpsed views of construction machinery, over the built form of Ashmill Business Park.</p> <p>At completion, partial views of the residential development will likely be possible, however Ashmill Business Park will continue to screen the northernmost part of the site. The 5m planted buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road and boundary planting will offer a degree of screening.</p> <p>At year 15, planting along the site boundary and the 5m landscape buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road will have matured to offer more substantial screening effects of both Ashmill Business Park and the site itself, however there will potentially still be glimpsed views of the development possible from gaps in vegetation along the route.</p>			
R26	<p>Users of PROW routes to the north west including Byway ref KH212, and Footpath refs KH288A and KH288B.</p> <p>See viewpoints 12, 13a and 13b.</p>	High	Medium	High / Medium	Approx 1.1-1.6km	Glimpse	Permanent	<p>Construction: Negligible / None</p> <p>Completion: Negligible / None</p> <p>Year 15: Negligible / None</p>	<p>These routes are within the Kent Downs AONB to the north west of the site, including PROW Footpath refs KH 288A, KH288B and PROW Byway ref KH212 which is a section of longer routes including Pilgrim's Way, the North Downs Way and the National Cycle Network number 17. Also,</p> <p>Users of these routes experience similar views which are more open to the south, however there is minimal visibility of the site due to the distance, intervening landform, vegetation along the A20 Ashford Road and the built form at Ashmill Business Park obscuring views of the site. At the top of the escarpment, views are still restricted due to the protruding intervening landform and dense woodland adjacent to Faversham Road.</p> <p>During construction it is possible that users will experience distant glimpsed views of construction machinery, over the vegetation and built form of Ashmill Business Park.</p> <p>At completion, distant glimpsed views of the residential development may be possible, however Ashmill Business Park will continue to screen the much of the site. The 5m planted buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road and boundary planting will offer a degree of screening.</p> <p>At year 15, planting along the site boundary and the 5m landscape buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road will have matured to offer more substantial screening effects of both Ashmill Business Park and the site itself, however there will potentially still be distant glimpsed views of the development possible from gaps in vegetation along the route.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
R27	<p>Visitors to Lenham Cross War Memorial</p> <p>See viewpoint 15.</p>	High	High / Medium	High	Approx 740m	Glimpse	Permanent	<p>Construction: Low</p> <p>Completion: Low</p> <p>Year 15: Negligible / None</p>	<p>Lenham Cross War Memorial grade II listed building is situated north off the Pilgrims Way route, and consists of a 61m tall and 27m wide symbolic chalk cross cut in to the hillside of the escarpment, including a separate stepped enclosure with a plaque and fixed bench. Visitors to the cross can sit and look out over the expansive view to the south, which currently consists of partial views of</p>	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Negligible

									<p>Lenham Village and scattered farms amongst pockets of woodland in the undulating landscape, with Ashmill Business Park and other properties off Old Ashford Road in the foreground. The A20 Ashford Road is also readily visible at the bottom of the hill due to open field boundaries.</p> <p>During construction it is likely that users will experience glimpsed views of construction machinery, over the built form of Ashmill Business Park.</p> <p>At completion, partial views of the residential development will likely be possible, however Ashmill Business Park will continue to screen the northernmost part of the site. The 5m planted buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road and boundary planting will offer a degree of screening.</p> <p>At year 15, planting along the site boundary and the 5m landscape buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road will have matured to offer more substantial screening effects of both Ashmill Business Park and the site itself, however there will potentially still be glimpsed views of the development possible.</p>			
R28	<p>Visitors to the Chalk Cliffs local scenic viewpoint / Lenham Quarry SSSI</p> <p>See viewpoint 17.</p>	High	High	High	Approx 760m	Partial	Permanent	<p>Construction: Low</p> <p>Completion: Low</p> <p>Year 15: Negligible / None</p>	<p>Lenham Quarry Site of Special Scientific Interest is also known as Pivington Quarry Geological Conservation Review site. The site is also known as 'Lenham Chalk Cliffs' and contains a viewpoint highlighted on OS mapping.</p> <p>From this high point along the escarpment, views to the south are extensive. Mature hedgerows and trees along the A20 partially screen views west towards Lenham Village, however views south west towards site the field boundaries are more open and allow full views of Ashmill Business Park and of traffic along the A20 Ashford Road. Partial views of recent development at Tanyard Farm and Groom Way are possible with glimpses of development at Glebe Gardens. Farm buildings at East Lenham and Pivington House are visible adjacent to the site with almost full views possible to the site.</p> <p>During construction it is likely that users will experience full views of construction machinery, over the built form of Ashmill Business Park.</p> <p>At completion, partial views of the residential development will likely be possible, however Ashmill Business Park will continue to screen the northernmost part of the site. The 5m planted buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road and boundary planting will offer a degree of screening.</p> <p>At year 15, planting along the site boundary and the 5m landscape buffer north of the A20 Ashford Road will have matured to offer more substantial screening effects of both Ashmill Business Park and the site itself, however there will likely still be partial views of the development though within the context of the business park and adjacent recent development.</p>	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Negligible
R29	<p>Visitors to the Parish Church of St Mary</p> <p>See viewpoint 2.</p>	Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 500-650m	Glimpse / None	Permanent	<p>Construction: Negligible / None</p> <p>Completion: Negligible / None</p>	<p>The Parish Church of St Mary is a Grade I Listed Building with several Grade II listed buildings within the church yard, set within the Lenham Conservation Area. Visitors to the church and church yard currently have no views in to the site, due to the built form of properties along roads</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

								Year 15: Negligible / None	<p>off Old Ashford Road, and at the Tanyard Farm development.</p> <p>During construction, glimpsed views of construction machinery may be possible over the development at Tanyard Farm for users at the boundary of the church yard, looking south east.</p> <p>At completion, glimpsed views of roof tops may be possible over vegetation, however this would be seen in the context of the development at Tanyard Farm in the foreground.</p> <p>At year 15 there may be glimpses of roof tops possible over vegetation however planting along the boundary may offer screening effects once mature and this would be seen within the context of Tanyard Farm in the foreground.</p>			
R30	<p>Visitors to Chilston Park Registered Park and Garden</p> <p>See viewpoint 11.</p>	Medium	Medium	Medium	Approx 1.1-2.4km	Glimpse / None	Permanent	<p>Construction: Negligible / None</p> <p>Completion: Negligible / None</p> <p>Year 15: Negligible / None</p>	<p>Chilston Park Registered Park and Garden is a late 17th Century garden within an 18th century park, with listed buildings associated with Chilston Park Hotel. It is situated at least 1.8km south of the site at its closest point.</p> <p>From the vast majority of the park, there is no visibility of the site due to the location on low lying landform, and screening of views to the north due to the M20 and the railway line which run through the northern section of the park. There may be distant, glimpsed views possible from the northernmost boundary adjacent to the Chilston Pines section, adjacent to Lenham Heath Road.</p> <p>During construction, completion and at year 15, there may be very distant glimpsed views of construction machinery or roof tops possible through gaps in intervening pockets of woodland, however these would be minute in the context and only legible from the park boundary.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
R31	<p>People in their workplace at Ashmill Business Park</p> <p>See viewpoint 4.</p>	Low	Medium / Low	Low	Approx 15-125m	Glimpse	Permanent	<p>Construction: Medium</p> <p>Completion: Medium</p> <p>Year 15: Low</p>	<p>Ashmill Business Park is situated adjacent to the site north of Old Ashford Road. People at work in commercial buildings may have glimpsed views of the site, mostly limited to upper storeys. Views likely consist of the site field, the boundary hedgerow along Old Ashford Road and views of built form residential properties off Old Ashford Road and at East Lenham.</p> <p>During construction, full views of construction machinery may be possible over the boundary hedgerow.</p> <p>At completion, full views of built development may be possible through the new boundary planting, mostly limited to upper storeys.</p> <p>At year 15, site boundary planting will have matured to offer some screening in to the site, however partial views of built development may still be possible, mostly from upper storeys of the commercial buildings.</p>	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
R32	<p>Users of Old Ashford Road</p> <p>See viewpoint 4.</p>	Low	Low	Low	Approx 1-690m	Partial / Full	Permanent	<p>Construction: High / Medium</p> <p>Completion: High / Medium</p> <p>Year 15: Low</p>	<p>Old Ashford Road connects the A20 Ashford Road with the village square. It runs adjacent to the site northern boundary and the pavement along the road ceases at Burnside Cottages. Road users potentially experience some open views over the site from field access points or over the top of the field boundary hedgerow when it is cut low. Generally, the road is quite enclosed due to the hedgerow boundaries and tall vegetation along Ashmill</p>	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse

									<p>Business Park. Built form at the business park and residential properties are visible along the road.</p> <p>During construction, full views of construction machinery will likely be possible over the boundary hedgerow and the creation of two new access points along the northern boundary to the road will form new features within the views.</p> <p>At completion, partial views of built development may be possible from the road. The built development will be set back from the road with boundary planting, which will retain a degree features of existing views. The new access points also reflect existing junctions off the road.</p> <p>At year 15, site boundary planting will have matured to offer some screening in to the site and would reflect the mature vegetation on the northern side of the road. Partial views of built development may still be possible through the vegetation and at access points, however this should blend with the existing built form along the road.</p>			
R33	Users of the A20 Ashford Road See viewpoint 5.	Medium / Low	Medium	Medium	Approx 30m	Glimpse	Permanent	<p>Construction: Negligible / None</p> <p>Completion: Negligible / None</p> <p>Year 15: Negligible / None</p>	<p>The A20 Ashford Road is a busy main road which runs along the bottom of the escarpment and AONB, and is joined by Old Ashford Road at the site north eastern corner. Views are expansive along the road due to a lack of field boundary vegetation, offering wide views of the escarpment to the north and across lower lying land to the south. As the road approaches Lenham, views are more contained due to the built development at East Lenham, Pivington House and Ashmill Business Park. Views of the site are restricted by the tree-lined access track to East Lenham and the business park, to glimpses at field access points and over the hedgerow along Old Ashford Road for a short section.</p> <p>During construction there may be glimpsed views of construction machinery possible over the field boundary hedgerow for a very small section of the road.</p> <p>At completion, views of the escarpment to the north may be impeded for a short section of the road due to the planting of the 5m landscape buffer north of the road. There may be a glimpsed view possible of the built development over the field boundary hedgerow, however this will be limited to a very small section of the road.</p> <p>At year 15, views will be permanently altered due to the maturing of planting in the 5m planted buffer which will impede views of the escarpment along that section of road, however this enclosure from vegetation is common along stretches of the road further west towards Lenham village. Views of built development will be further screened by site boundary vegetation and the bund along the site eastern edge.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
R34	Users of Hubbards Hill See viewpoint 6.	Medium / Low	Medium	Medium	Approx 100-525m	Glimpse	Permanent	<p>Construction: Low</p> <p>Completion: Low</p> <p>Year 15: Negligible / None</p>	<p>Hubbards Hill begins at Warren Street to the north east, and traverses down the escarpment before reaching the A20 Ashford Road, close to the site north eastern boundary. Well maintained, tall field boundary vegetation along the road screens views of the adjacent fields and of views to the south west towards the site. There are currently no views of the site from the road.</p> <p>During construction there may be glimpsed views of construction machinery possible over the field boundary hedgerow as road users wait to join the A20 Old Ashford Road at the bottom of the escarpment.</p>	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Negligible

									<p>At completion, there may be glimpsed views of built development possible over the field boundary hedgerow as road users wait to join the A20 Old Ashford Road, and the 5m planted buffer may screen views of the road and of the business park as users approach the junction.</p> <p>At year 15, the 5m planted buffer will have matured to further screen views of the road and business park, and planting along the site boundary and bund will screen views of built development.</p>			
R35	Users of Rayners Hill See viewpoint 19.	Medium / Low	Medium	Medium	Approx 960m-1.2km	Glimpse	Permanent	<p>Construction: Negligible / None</p> <p>Completion: Negligible / None</p> <p>Year 15: Negligible / None</p>	<p>Rayners Hill also begins at Warren Street and runs down the side of the escarpment, approximately 1km east of Hubbards Hill. There are no field boundary hedgerows alongside the road, and so views are expansive. The site itself is not visible from the road.</p> <p>During construction and at completion, there may be some glimpsed views of construction machinery or roof tops possible above intervening vegetation, however this would encompass a minute part of a very broad view.</p> <p>At year 15, the 5m planted buffer strip will have matured and could further screen views of Ashmill Business Park.</p>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible