

## Appendix A

Sevenoaks District Council

Reference: 304016-00/Site assessments

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## Site assessments

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Job number 304016-00

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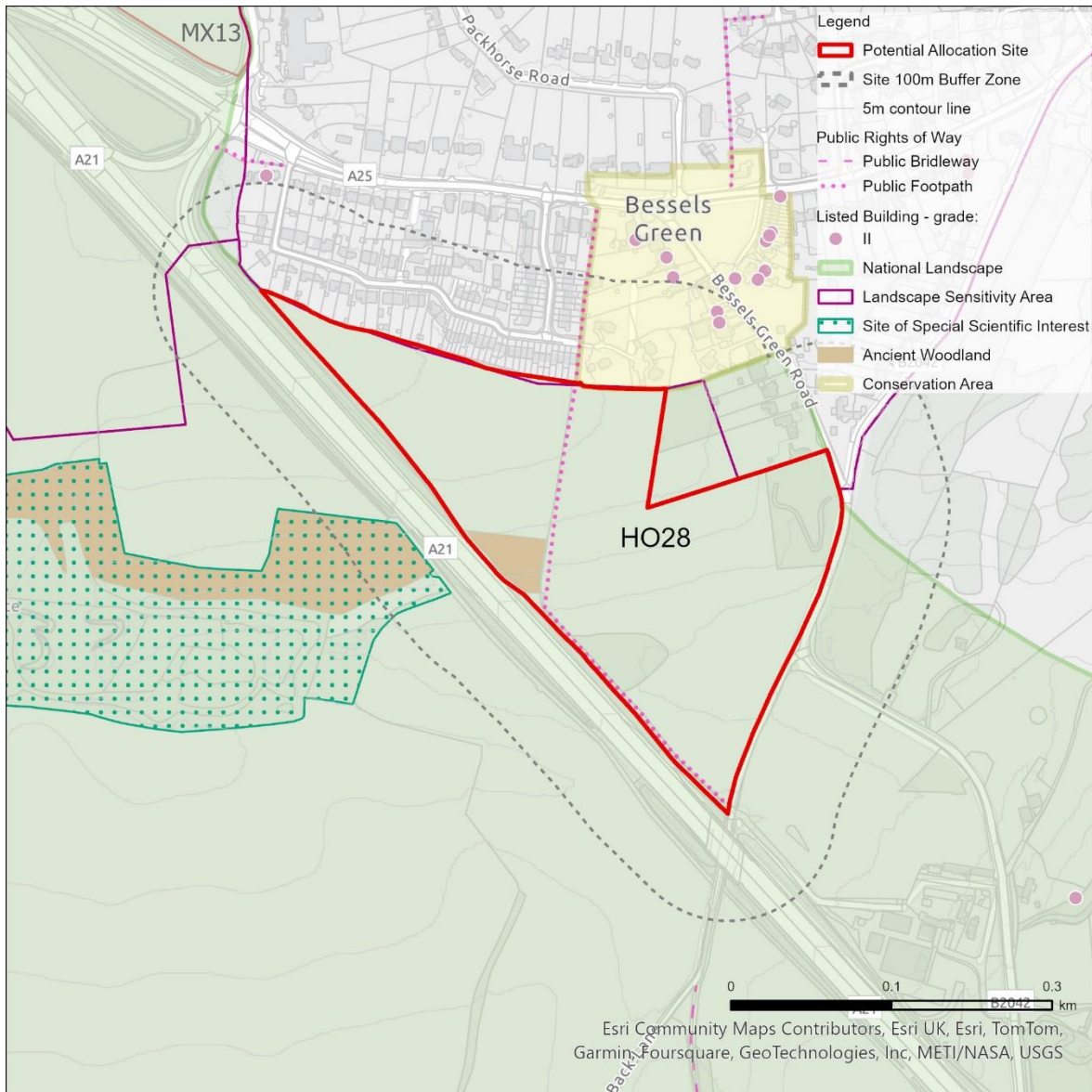
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## A.1 HO28 Land between Back Lane and the A21, Bessels Green



### 1 Context map

#### Site description

Site HO28 consists of a single, large irregular shaped arable field located between the north-western edge of Sevenoaks and the A21 trunk road. The landform is steeply undulating, falling towards the north-west where it meets the existing edge of the settlement. Site boundaries are defined by Back Lane to the east, the A21 to the west and the suburban streets of Larkfield Road, Bessels Way and Bessels Green Road on the settlement edge to the north. The site lies wholly within the Kent Downs National Landscape, the boundary of which extends up to the existing settlement edge.

## Context

Environmental data	Environmental designations and features within the site and immediate surroundings
<b>Environmental designations within 100m</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent Downs National Landscape – within the site</li> <li>• Ancient woodland– within the site</li> <li>• Archaeological notification area – within the site</li> <li>• Local wildlife sites: Dryhill Country Park, Sundridge – within 50m</li> <li>• Tree preservation order – within 50m</li> <li>• Conservation area – within 50m</li> <li>• Grade II listed Bessels House – within 100m</li> <li>• Grade II listed Mansethe Baptist Church – within 100m</li> <li>• Biodiversity opportunity area (Greensand Heaths &amp; Commons) – within 100m</li> <li>• Dryhill SSSI – within 100m</li> </ul>
<b>Other relevant planning considerations within 100m</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green belt – within the site</li> <li>• Public right of way – within the site</li> <li>• Urban confines (Sevenoaks) – within 50m</li> </ul>
<b>Kent Downs landscape character area</b>	LCA 5a: Westerham Greensand, Sevenoaks Greensand Ridge
<b>Sevenoaks residential character area</b>	Adjacent to the site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C10 Larkfield Road</li> <li>• K01 Bessels Way</li> <li>• H16 Cold Harbour Road</li> </ul>
<b>Sevenoaks landscape character area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LCA 9a: Westerham to Sundridge Parks and Farmlands</li> </ul>
<b>Sevenoaks landscape sensitivity assessment area – Sensitivity level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S4: Sevenoaks west (medium- high sensitivity)</li> </ul>

## 2 Environmental context

### Landscape sensitivity

#### Key characteristics

The site is enclosed by dense trees and vegetation and has a rural character despite its proximity to the edge of Sevenoaks and the A21 dual carriageway. Its key characteristics comprise:

- Northern undulating slopes of the Greensand Ridge to the west of Sevenoaks.
- Small to medium scale enclosed agricultural landscape with strong hedgerows and scattered dense woodland.
- Rural, low density settlement pattern of scattered farms and hamlets in the wider landscape away from Sevenoaks.
- Traditional vernacular building styles including Oasts, timber framed barns and properties in ragstone or brick, some half tile hung, and with clay tile roofs in the wider landscape.
- Narrow sunken hedge-lined lanes and droving roads – including Back Lane and Cold Arbor Road.
- Glimpsed views out northwards to the North Downs scarp.

#### Sensitivity

In relation to the Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, the site is a small area within S4: Sevenoaks West (medium- high sensitivity). In terms of areas indicated as lower sensitivity, the sensitivity assessment notes “*Areas closer to the existing modern settlement edges of Sevenoaks (but not associated with the historic Montreal Park) and on flatter land and well enclosed by trees are marginally less sensitive.*” Whilst the landform towards the western part of the site is flatter, it is still undulating and slopes upwards towards the A21.

**Key susceptibilities relevant to the site are:**

- The shaws and woodland, including ancient woodland, which are valued features of the landscape.
- The remnant historic parkland landscape of ‘Montreal Park’, which lies to the east of the site.
- The steeper slopes, including the higher land in the south of the site and the sloping and undulating landform in the central and southern part of the site, which may be visible from areas on the edges of Sevenoaks, including from Bessels Way and from the north side of the Darent Valley.
- The rural character and moderately dark night skies.
- The historic field patterns comprising irregular fields with straight boundaries.
- Narrow sunken hedge lined lanes and droving roads, including Back Lane and Cold Arbor Road.

**Key valued features and characteristics relevant to the site are:**

- Ancient woodland that provides a sense of history and contributes to biodiversity and scenic interest.
- The network of hedgerows, shaws and copses that provide an intact biodiversity network.
- The rural settlement pattern within the wider landscape of farmsteads, historic houses and rural hamlets that contribute to the sense of history and scenic quality.
- The views of the North Downs scarp.
- Bessels Green Conservation Area and its setting.

**Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape**

The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and as such is valued at the highest level.

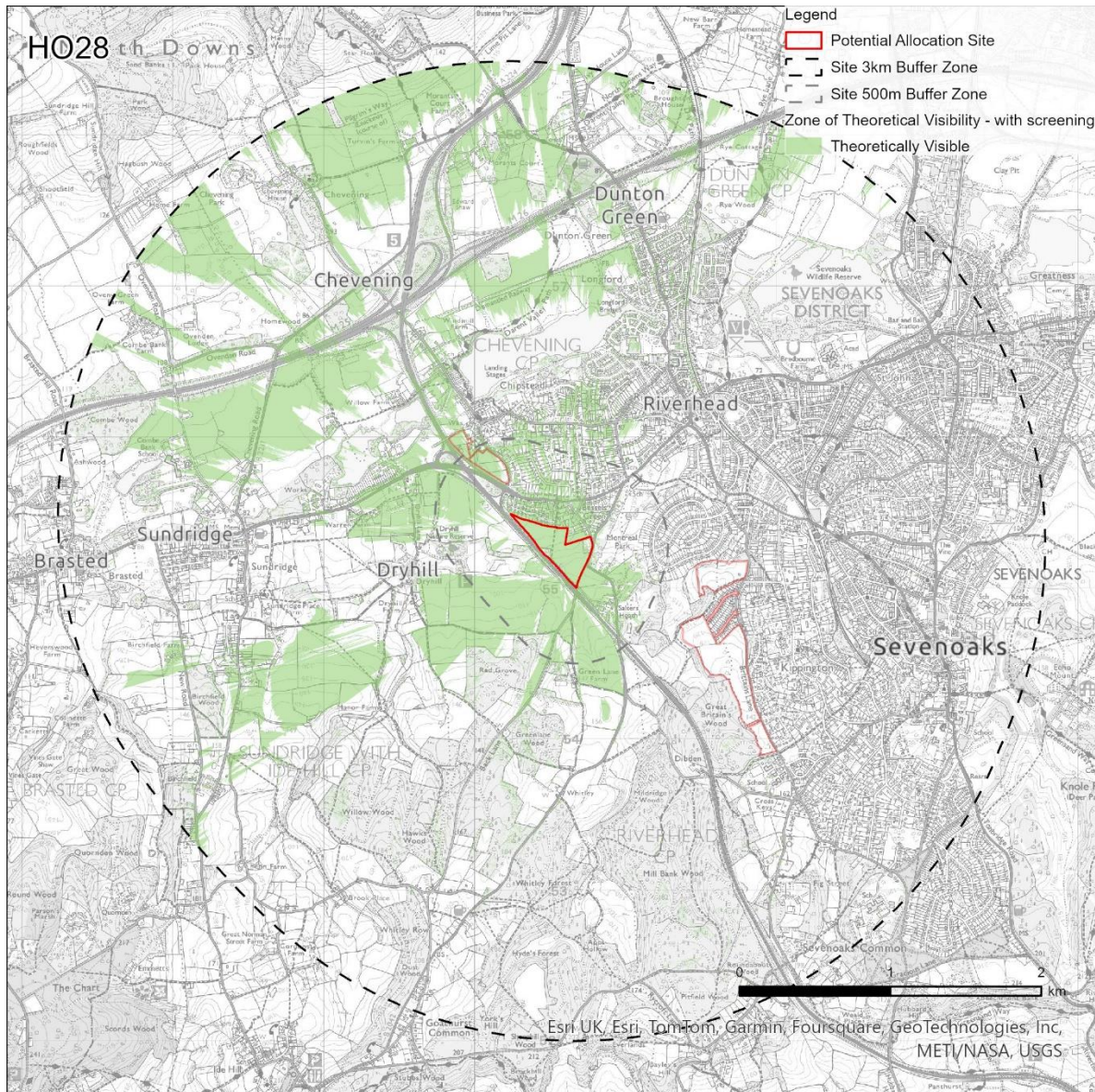
<b>Special qualities of the Kent Downs</b>	<b>How are they represented within the site?</b>
<b>Dramatic landform and views</b>	Whilst not typical of the dramatic landform found in some other parts of the National Landscape, the landform is locally distinctive, sloping downwards towards the north and the settlement edge of Sevenoaks, from approximately 115m AOD in the south of the site to 90m AOD in the north-west corner of the site. Views are not considered dramatic, but there are some longer views to the North Downs.
<b>Biodiversity-rich habitats</b>	The site consists of arable farmland which is unlikely to be biodiversity-rich, although at the field margins are blocks of trees, scrub and grass, including a small area of ancient woodland in the west of site which continues west of the A21 as Dryhill Wood. Dryhill Country Park local wildlife site is within 50m and Dryhill SSSI is within 100m. There is also a block of woodland in the east of the site highlighted as a Priority Habitat.
<b>Farmed landscape</b>	The site is under arable land use, which contributes to the mixed farming character of the National Landscape but does not reflect the most highly valued pastoral scenery of the Kent Downs.
<b>Woodland and trees</b>	There are two small blocks of woodland within the site and some groups of mature trees, highlighted as an important characteristic of the Kent Downs.
<b>A rich legacy of historic and cultural heritage</b>	There are no statutorily designated heritage assets within the site, however the site lies within an archaeological notification area and adjacent to Bessels Green Conservation Area. The fields are irregular in shape with straight boundaries which may have some historic time depth. Bessels Green Road is an ancient route leading to Bessels Green.
<b>Geology and natural resources</b>	Due to its undeveloped character, soil within the site is likely to represent an important natural capital resource. The site is classed as Grade 3 agricultural land (good to moderate quality). The site does not contain any chalk rivers or streams.
<b>Tranquillity and remoteness</b>	The trees and woodlands within the site and its boundaries have a naturalistic character, and the undulating landform creates scenic interest. Whilst tranquillity is affected by the road noise of the adjacent A21, visually it is well screened. The site does not represent the characteristic peaceful, dark night skies found elsewhere in the Kent Downs and falls within a night light classification of 2-4 nanowatts / cm <sup>2</sup> / sr which is considered a medium level of radiance shining into the night sky.
<b>Summary of the extent to which the site reflects the special qualities</b>	The biodiversity, woodland, mixed farmland character, potential heritage value, soils and natural qualities, means the site reflects many of the special qualities of the Kent Downs. These elements alongside the undulating topography and distant views of the North Downs contribute to the natural beauty of the site and, albeit to a localised extent, to the natural beauty of the Kent Downs National Landscape.

### 3 Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape

#### Detractors

- Heavy traffic and noise associated with the adjacent A21 dual carriageway.
- The character of the adjacent Bessels Way is negatively affected by inconsistent surface treatments and boundaries, and lack of vegetation or non-native coniferous species.
- The visually open site boundary at Larkfield Road reduces sense of enclosure and sense of rurality within the site.
- Telegraph poles and wires extend through the site.

#### Visual amenity



#### 4 Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)

##### Extent of potential visibility

The ZTV indicates there may be quite extensive visibility of development from within 500m, from roads, public rights of way, from adjacent residential areas and from within the conservation area of Bessels Green. Views of development from the wider landscape to the south and within Sevenoaks to the east would be limited by topography, woodland and intervening built form. There may also be distant views from within the Darent Valley to the north of the site and from the north side of the Darent Valley around 2.5-3km north of the site.

## Key views

### Potential views for residents/ local community and recreational users within 500m of the site:

- The local communities of and residents of dwellings in and around:
  - Sevenoaks – Larkfield Road, Bessels Way and Cold Harbour Road residential character areas, including Bessels Green Conservation Area;
  - The B2042 and A21.
- Recreational visitors to Dryhill Nature Reserve, although due to the wooded and enclosed character of this area, in reality views would be unlikely;
- Users of public rights of way:
  - SR183 within the site, leading to Westerham Road and Back Lane;
  - Bridleway SR187 south of the site, between Back Lane and Whitley;
  - Bridleway Sr185 to the south-west of the site between Back Lane and Dryhill;
  - SR181 west of the site near Dryhill Nature Reserve;
  - SR179 north-west of the site between the A25/A21 and Homedean Road;
  - SR184 north of the site between Woodfields and the A25 Worships Hill.

### Potential views from promoted routes within 3km of the site:

- Darent Valley Path, approximately 1.5km north of the site at the nearest point.
- North Downs Way, approximately 2.5-3km north of the site at the nearest point.

### Key strategic views (within 3km)

- None identified.



Houses on Larkfield Road and the distant view towards the North Downs beyond



The steeply undulating site from the public right of way

## 5 Representative views of site HO28

## Potential effects and mitigation

Potential effects and whether they may affect the key susceptibilities or valued features, as well as mitigation opportunities to avoid or minimise effects or to restore landscape features are considered below.

Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes	Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)
The shaws and woodland, including ancient woodland.	It would be possible for existing trees and woodland to be retained, although it is likely there would be impacts associated with creating site access for construction and operation. Where impacts on trees could not be avoided, it would be possible to provide compensation with new tree planting. However, it would several years for these trees to establish to mitigate the loss. Effects related to permanent site access would be unavoidable.
The remnant historic parkland landscape of 'Montreal Park', to the east of the site.	The remnant historic parkland landscape would not be directly impacted, although its setting may be. It is not a designated heritage asset. A heritage assessment would need to be undertaken to understand potential impact on heritage significance associated with the parkland and any associated assets. Visual screening through tree planting within the south-eastern corner of the site may assist in integrating development into the landscape and minimising adverse impacts on views.

Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes	Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)
The higher ground in the south of the site and the sloping, undulating landform in the central and southern part of the site.	<p>Developing on top of the higher ground and sloping landform may result in impacts on the setting of, and views from, the edge of Sevenoaks including Bessels Way and the Bessels Green Conservation Area, and potentially from the north side of the Darent Valley. Modifying the landform to set development lower may increase physical impacts to the landscape but could reduce impacts on views and visual amenity.</p> <p>Development could avoid the more exposed central and southern parts of the site where landform is most sensitive, but this would leave only a small area in the north of the site available for development.</p>
The rural landscape character, naturalistic qualities and rural settlement pattern.	<p>Whilst the site is located on the edge of Sevenoaks and its tranquillity is already affected by the busy A21, the site retains rural characteristics which development in line with the parameters would completely change. It also provides a buffer and setting to the edge of Sevenoaks, and if the upper slopes were developed, development may affect the rural character of the wider landscape. Whilst some existing development on the settlement boundary is less dense towards the edge, such as within the conservation area, development of the densities established in the development scenario would disrupt the transition from settlement to countryside.</p> <p>Development could be integrated with additional planting to create a stronger sense of enclosure, and materials, design, scale and form could be sensitively designed appropriate to the context to help minimise effects on the wider landscape. However, residual effects would remain.</p>
The historic field patterns – irregular fields with straight boundaries.	The site boundaries could be retained, which would retain the irregular field shape. However, there would be unavoidable loss of openness as a result of development replacing arable fields.
Narrow sunken hedge lined lanes	It may be possible to avoid affecting Back Lane and Cold Arbour Road by providing an alternative site access and through appropriate mitigation. However, should site access be proposed from Back Lane, there would be effects on the rural character of the lane. It could be possible to avoid impacts on Bessels Green Road.
Bessels Green Conservation Area and its setting.	There may be effects on the setting of the conservation area which would be difficult to avoid, given the site would change from an open field to developed site. There may be views of development from within the conservation area, particularly if the higher land was developed.
Views from the edge of Sevenoaks including Bessels Way.	There would potentially be effects on views for the local community in the Larkfield Road/Bessels Way/Cold Arbour Road area of Sevenoaks and around the B2042/A21 area. This would include views from properties overlooking the site.
Views from nearby public rights of way.	There would be effects on views for users of the public right of way within the site, and other nearby public rights of way. The public right of way through the site could be retained to maintain access, and considered within the design approach, however, views from the footpath would substantially change.
Longer distance views including from the north side of the Darent Valley.	There may be longer distance views of development, and a detailed visual impact study would need to establish effects on longer distance views from the north side of the site including from the Darent Valley Path, the North Downs Way and the Darent Valley.
Special qualities of the Kent Downs.	The site reflects some of the special qualities, some of which may be affected, including biodiversity, farmland character, potential heritage value, soils and natural qualities. Whilst it may be possible to mitigate impacts on biodiversity, it would not be possible to mitigate or compensate for effects on the farmland character, which would be replaced by development.

## 6 Potential effects and mitigation



## Conclusion

Site HO28 lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and exhibits some of the valued features including its rural land use, biodiversity, trees and woodlands. The character is reflective of the wider landscape.

The location of the site adjacent to the existing edge of Sevenoaks means that it would represent a continuation of the settlement pattern. The site is also relatively enclosed by dense trees around the boundaries and the tree belts along the A21 to the south. However, development in the southern part of the site in particular, would introduce development to elevated and more exposed slopes which provide a setting to this part of Sevenoaks and to the Bessels Green Conservation Area. Whilst the A21 already affects the perceptual qualities of the site, particularly its tranquillity, the trees, woodland and landform nevertheless create a rural character which is likely to be negatively affected if developed in line with the development parameters.

Views of development within Site HO28 would be experienced in close proximity for people using the footpath within the site and for the local community in the residential areas adjacent to the north, therefore potential scale of change could be quite large. There may also be effects on more distant views from the south-facing slopes of the Darent Valley.

Development may result in the following key effects on landscape character and views:

- Views of development on the higher land and undulating landform.
- Potential for relatively extensive visual effects including effects on views from Sevenoaks around Bessels Way and on views from the north side of the Darent Valley including the Darent Valley Path.
- Loss of existing vegetation to facilitate the site access resulting in impacts on the wooded boundaries and character of the adjacent rural lanes including Back Lane.
- Effects on the rural character of the site and wider landscape resulting from the change from rural to urban land use.
- Development within the historic field pattern.
- Potential effects on the setting of Bessels Green Conservation Area.
- Adverse effects on the special qualities of the National Landscape, particularly the farmed landscape.

Without additional mitigation, the potential significance of effects is considered to be **high**.

If development were limited to the lower and flatter part of the site in the north, this would be likely to reduce effects, as it would be seen as a continuation of existing settlement and would be more contained on the flatter ground. However, this would more than halve the developable area of the site. With this additional mitigation, the likely significance of effects is considered to be **medium**.

## Guidance and opportunities

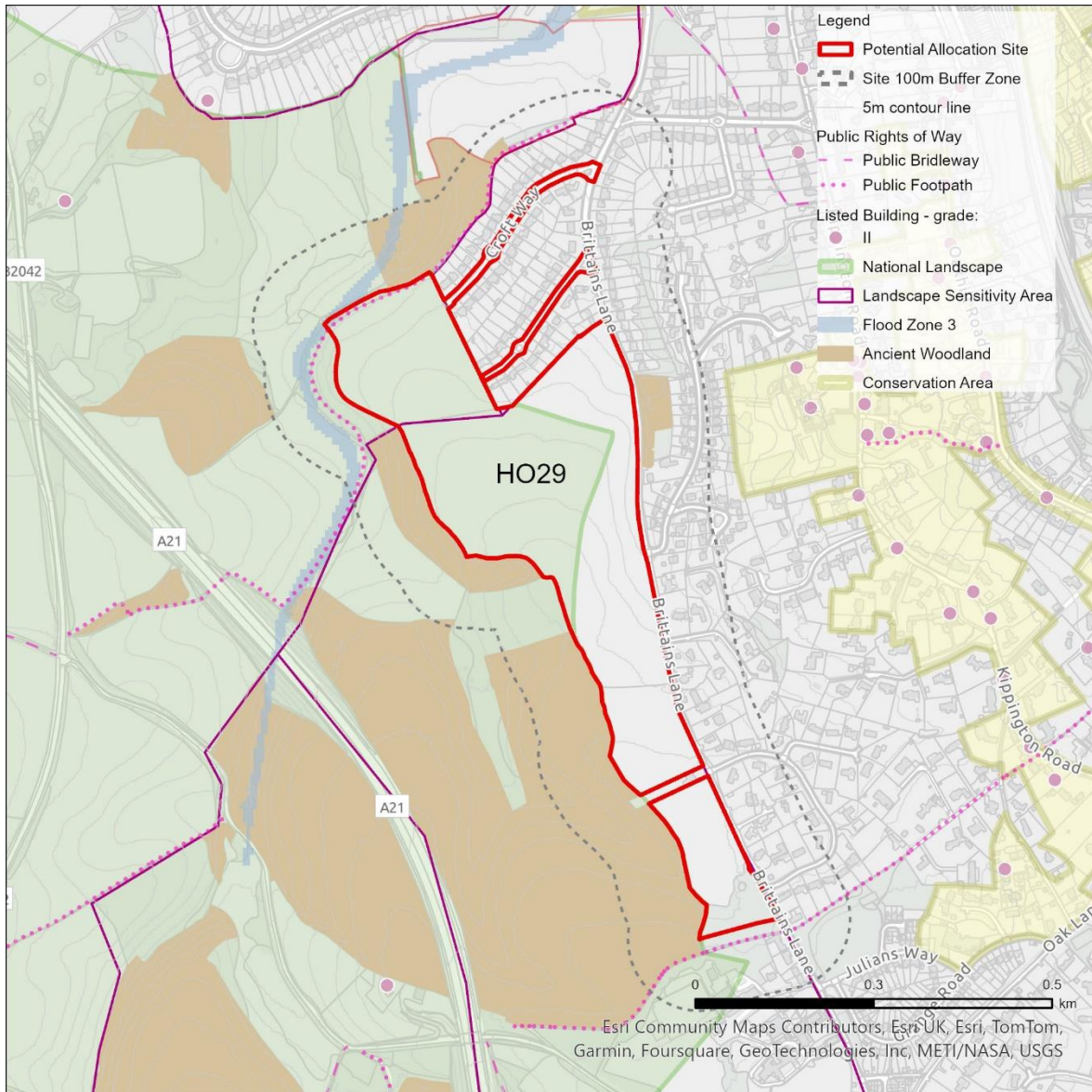
### Guidance

- Locate development on the flat or less steep landform - consider views from the north side of the Darent Valley/ North Downs scarp and from the edges of Sevenoaks and minimise visibility in siting and planting.
- Retain the woodlands, hedgerows, shaws and copses and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible.
- Conserve the rural character by giving special attention to the boundaries, which should be natural in form with native species where they adjoin countryside, and lighting which should be minimised.
- Ensure that development pays regard to the Kentish vernacular including brick walls, steeply pitched clay tiled roofs, vertical tile hanging on first floor walls and weather boarding.
- Retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of existing lanes and introducing suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting.
- Retain the public right of way through the site.

### Opportunities to further the statutory purposes of the Kent Downs National Landscape

- Potential restoration of historic landscape features of Montreal Park.
- Biodiversity enhancements beyond the boundaries of the site in line with the aims of the wider biodiversity opportunity area.
- Management of woodland including coppicing, pollarding and if appropriate, undergrazing, to achieve age and species diversity and diversity of ground flora, and management of invasive species. Consider the diversification of woodlands using appropriate range of native species to provide resilience to climate change and tree disease.
- Reinforce and restore wooded edges to the existing settlement edge of Sevenoaks.
- Promote new hedgerow and roadside trees from existing hedge stock. Retain and manage hedgerows along narrow, vergeless lanes.
- Work with highways authorities to increase the biodiversity value of verges and hedgerows without compromising safety.

## A.2 HO29 Brittains Lane, Kippington, Sevenoaks



### 7 Context map

#### Site description

The site consists of small to medium scale arable fields, overlaid on gently undulating landform, which forms a localised ridgeline. This ridgeline slopes down to a dry valley to the west of the site and towards Brittain's Lane to the east. The northern part of the site consists of a gentle south-facing slope. Site boundaries are defined by dense, mature woodland to the west, the settlement boundary of Kippington to the east, and a public right of way to the south, adjacent to which is New Beacon School. The site lies partly within the Kent Downs National Landscape, with the southern part of the site lying outside of the designated boundary but within its immediate setting.

## Context

Environmental data	Environmental designations and features within the site and immediate surroundings
<b>Environmental designations within 100m</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent Downs National Landscape – covers part of the site</li> <li>• Biodiversity opportunity area (Greensand Heaths &amp; Commons) – within the site</li> <li>• Archaeological notification area – within the site</li> <li>• Ancient woodland (including Great Britains Wood ancient and semi-natural woodland and ancient replanted woodland) – within 50m</li> <li>• Tree preservation order– within 50m</li> </ul>
<b>Other relevant planning considerations within 100m</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green belt – within the site</li> <li>• Public rights of way – within 50m</li> <li>• Urban confines (Sevenoaks) – within 50m</li> <li>• Open space allocation (Julians Meadow amenity green space) – within 50m</li> <li>• Open space allocation (Middlings Wood natural and semi natural) – within 50m</li> </ul>
<b>Kent Downs landscape character area</b>	LCA 5a: Westerham Greensand, Sevenoaks Greensand Ridge
<b>Sevenoaks residential character area</b>	Adjacent to the site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D1 Grange Road</li> <li>• I9 Beaconfields</li> <li>• I11 The Middlings</li> <li>• F6 Downsview Road</li> <li>• H5 Kippington Road Area</li> <li>• F15 Redlands Road/Brittains Lane</li> </ul>
<b>Sevenoaks landscape character area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LCA 10b: Sevenoaks Western Chart</li> <li>• LCA 9a: Westerham to Sundridge Parks and Farmlands</li> </ul>
<b>Sevenoaks landscape sensitivity assessment area – Sensitivity level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S3: Sevenoaks south-west (medium - high sensitivity)</li> <li>• S4: Sevenoaks west (medium - high sensitivity)</li> </ul>

### 8 Environmental context

## Landscape sensitivity

### Key characteristics

The site spans two character areas immediately to the west of the settlement boundary of Sevenoaks, although it is quite visually and perceptually separated from the settlement by the narrow, tree-lined Brittains Lane. It has a rural character, though it is also influenced by existing development adjacent.

- Extensive woodland in the wider landscape creates a strong sense of separation from the landscape to the west,
- Northern, undulating slopes of the Greensand Ridge to the west of Sevenoaks, supporting small to medium scale fields.
- Closely associated with low density development within Kippington on the western edge of Sevenoaks.
- Narrow sunken hedge lined lanes and droving roads.
- Glimpsed views out northwards to the North Downs scarp from open areas.

### Sensitivity

In relation to the Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, the site lies within S3: Sevenoaks south-west, which is attributed medium - high sensitivity, and S4: Sevenoaks west, also with medium - high sensitivity. In terms of areas indicated as lower sensitivity, the site is close to the existing modern settlement edge of Sevenoaks, adjacent to modern human influences along Brittains Lane, comprising arable fields. The northern-most part of the site is on flatter land, and is enclosed by mature trees and woodland, so would be marginally less sensitive.

**Key susceptibilities relevant to the site are:**

- The steep slopes and elevated hill tops and ridges.
- The woodlands and commons (including the characteristic ‘Charts’) – in the wider landscape.
- The rural nature of the wider landscape including relatively dark skies and high scenic quality.
- The pre-1810 woodland and pre-19<sup>th</sup> century copses in the wider landscape and potential historic field pattern (assarts).
- The steeper and more visible slopes that may be visible from the north side of the Darent valley and from areas on the edges of Sevenoaks.

**Key valued features and characteristics relevant to the site are:**

- Extensive mature woodland, adjacent and in the wider landscape.
- Potential historic assarts representing fields converted from woodland from the Medieval period – the historic landscape characterisation indicates the fields are irregular assarts although they are not strongly characteristic of assart fields.
- Rural settlement character in the wider landscape away from Sevenoaks, comprising villages set around greens or scattered in a linear form along the edge of commons.
- Narrow, wooded Britains Lane.

**Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape**

The northern part of the site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and as such is valued at the highest level. The boundary of the National Landscape designation does not follow any particular physical feature, although in the north of the site the boundary does align with the existing settlement edge.

<b>Special qualities of the Kent Downs</b>	<b>How are they represented within the site?</b>
<b>Dramatic landform and views</b>	The site is situated on a localised ridge, with a high point of 142m AOD, sloping gently to 110m AOD in the north of the site. The site does not exhibit dramatic landform but is part of the dip slope ridges and dry valleys of the greensand ridge landscape of the wider Kent Downs. There are panoramic views from the north-facing slopes in the middle part of the site to the North Downs (mentioned in the site promoter’s assessment).
<b>Biodiversity-rich habitats</b>	The arable fields are unlikely to contribute to the biodiversity-rich habitats in a significant way, although the shrub, hedgerows and woodlands on the site boundaries and within field boundaries do serve important biodiversity functions as part of the wider network of habitats.
<b>Farmed landscape</b>	The site is under arable land use, which contributes to the mixed farming character of the National Landscape but does not reflect the most highly valued pastoral scenery of the Kent Downs.
<b>Woodland and trees</b>	There are some hedgerow trees in the south of the site, and a hedgerow field boundary in the north of the site. The extensive Great Britain’s Wood ancient woodland adjoins the site to the west, and some trees along the eastern boundary along Britains Lane are covered by tree preservation orders.
<b>A rich legacy of historic and cultural heritage</b>	The fields may be irregular assarts which would represent some historic time depth. There are no listed heritage assets within or around the site, although some of the houses along Britains Lane adjacent to the site are locally listed. The site lies within an archaeological notification area.
<b>Geology and natural resources</b>	Due to its undeveloped character, soil within the site is likely to represent an important natural capital resource. The site is classed as Grade 3 agricultural land with good to moderate quality. The site does not contain any chalk rivers or streams.
<b>Tranquillity and remoteness</b>	Despite its proximity to the urban edge of Sevenoaks, which affects perception of tranquillity to the north, the site has a rural character, with the enclosed Britains Lane and well-integrated development to the south-east. Road noise from the A21 (within 300m) negatively affects sense of tranquillity and remoteness. The site does not represent the dark night skies found elsewhere in the Kent Downs, but falls within a night light classification of 1-4 nanowatts / cm <sup>2</sup> / sr which is considered a low to medium level of radiance shining into the night sky.
<b>Summary of the extent to which the</b>	The mixed farmland character, boundary trees and adjacent woodland, potential time depth, soils, rural character and relative tranquillity, means the site reflects many of the special qualities of the Kent Downs. These elements alongside the pronounced topography contribute to the natural

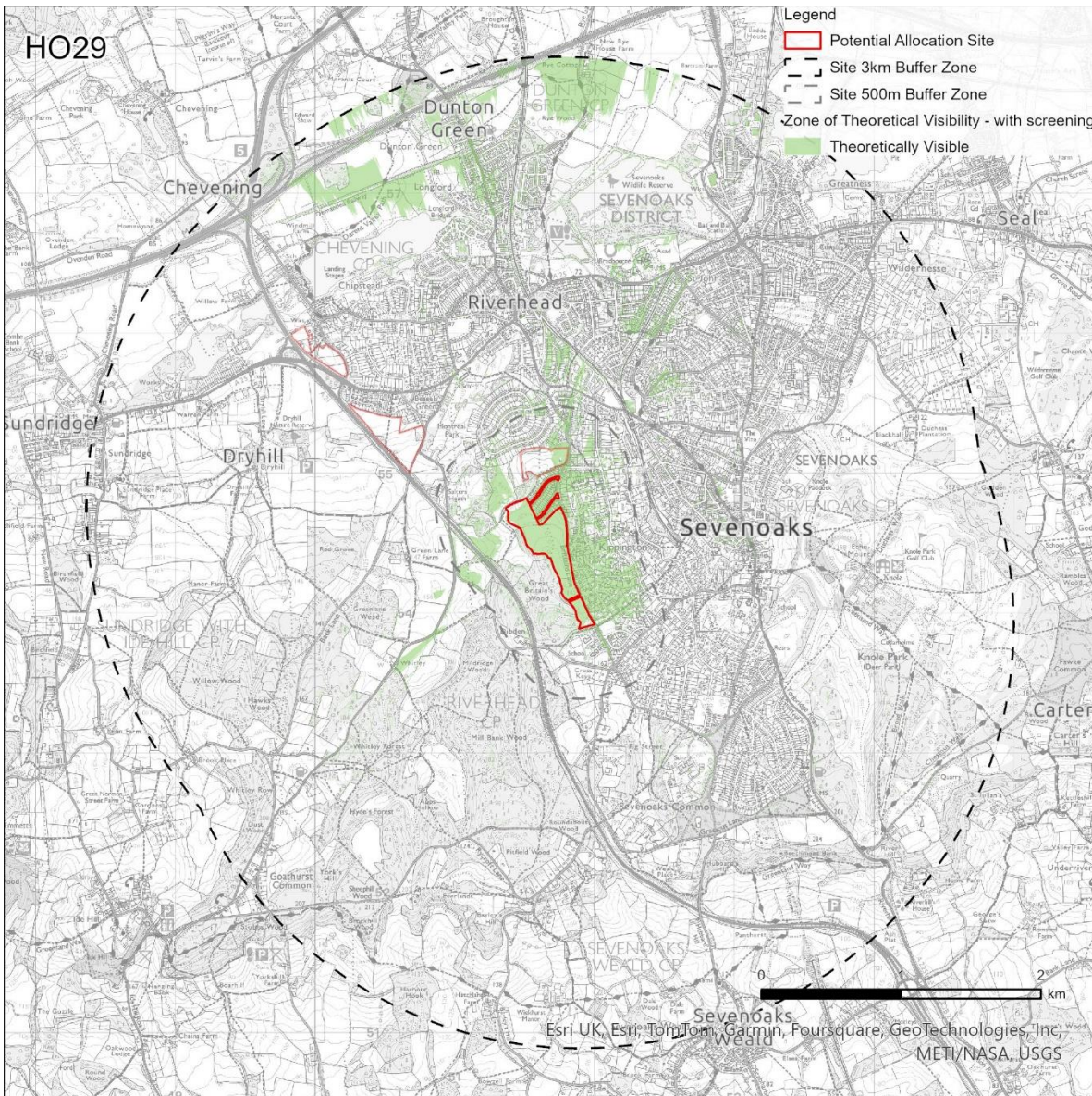
<b>Special qualities of the Kent Downs</b>	<b>How are they represented within the site?</b>
<b>site reflects the special qualities</b>	beauty of the site and, albeit to a localised extent, to the natural beauty of the Kent Downs National Landscape.

**9 Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape**

**Detractors**

- Suburban edge of Sevenoaks, particularly in the northern part of the site adjacent to denser development on the hillside.
- Traffic noise from the A21.

**Visual amenity**



**10 Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)**

**Extent of potential visibility**

The ZTV indicates that, due to the wooded and enclosed character of much of the site, potential views of development are likely to be very contained and localised within 500m from the site. Beyond the immediate surroundings of the site, there may be occasional views from roads orientated towards the site, although they will be screened or filtered by intervening built form and vegetation. Views from the wider landscape to the

east, south and west are very limited by topography and woodland, and views from the north are also limited by development north of Sevenoaks.

## Key views

### *Potential views for residents/ local community and recreational users within 500m of the site:*

- The local communities of and residents of dwellings in the Kippington area of Sevenoaks, including:
  - Downsvie Road: there may be views of development from along Croft Way and Downsvie Road, which would appear above the existing tree line.
  - Redlands Road/ Brittain's Lane: there may be very occasional and glimpsed views beyond and between existing trees and buildings, particularly in winter.
  - The Middlings: part of the site is very visible from a short section of The Middlings, rising sharply behind houses as noted in the Sevenoaks residential character area assessment. Tree belts form a backdrop to the development and contribute to the green character.
  - Kippington Road: likely to be few views due to existing trees and vegetation within the area.
  - Beaconfields: may be views of development above existing buildings and beyond the trees lining Brittain's Lane.
- Users of public rights of way:
  - SU21 to the south of the site between Great Britain's Wood and Kippington;
  - SU13 to the north of the site between Brittain's Lane and Back Lane.

### *Potential views from promoted routes within 3km of the site:*

- The ZTV shows there may be occasional areas of potential visibility from around 3km north of the site along the Darent Valley Path, although from a distance.

### *Key strategic views (within 3km)*

- None found.



View towards the site from Croft Way



View of the site rising steeply from The Middlings in the background behind houses with a wooded skyline

## 11 Representative views of the site

## Potential effects and mitigation

Potential impacts and whether they may affect the key susceptibilities or valued features, as well as mitigation opportunities to avoid or minimise effects or to restore landscape features are considered below.

Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes	Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)
The landform and elevated hill top/ridge.	Most of the site is on an elevated local ridgeline, except for the northern-most part which dips down adjacent to Croft Way and Downsview Road. Development within the northern section of the site would avoid the most open and distinctive areas of landform. However, it constitutes a small part of the site. Slopes within the site are not especially steep.
The steeper and more visible slopes that may be visible from the north side of the Darent valley and from areas on the edges of Sevenoaks.	There may be occasional views from the north side of the Darent Valley, although they would be distant and filtered by intervening vegetation. There would be views from areas on edges of Sevenoaks, mostly notably The Middlings. Earthworks and tree planting may help to reduce visual effects; however, this would result in additional effects on character and views, and it may be difficult to mitigate these effects overall.  There are unlikely to be important effects on users of the public rights of way due to existing vegetation screening or filtering views, and these views already being characterised by development.
The woodlands in the wider landscape.	Impacts on trees and woodland adjacent to the site could be avoided by implementing tree protection measures during construction and providing adequate setbacks in the design. .
The rural nature of the wider landscape including relatively dark skies and high scenic quality.	Towards the south, Brittain's Lane provides a clear defining boundary to the settlement edge of Sevenoaks. This part of the site does therefore have a rural character and strong association with the National Landscape to the west, despite not lying within the boundary of the National Landscape. The landscape provides a buffer on the edge of the town. However, to the north of the site, Croft Way and Downsview Road have already extended development west beyond Brittain's Lane, meaning that further development adjacent to these roads would likely not have much additional impact as this area is largely enclosed.
Historic field patterns (including assarts)	The wavy wooded boundaries of the fields indicate the fields may once have been assarts, however, they are not strongly characteristic of assart fields. The wavy site boundaries could be retained.
Narrow wooded Brittain's Lane.	It is likely that access requirements would necessitate modifications to the narrow Brittain's Lane, including some vegetation removal. This would be likely to result in effects on its rural character and qualities.
Special qualities of the Kent Downs.	The site reflects some of the special qualities, some of which may be affected. This includes the mixed farmland, soils, rural character and relative tranquillity, although it is already affected by the proximity of existing settlement in Sevenoaks and noise from traffic on the A21.

## 12 Potential effects and mitigation

## Conclusion

The site lies partly within the Kent Downs National Landscape and reflects some of the valued qualities and features including its rural character and relative tranquillity. The site reflects the character of the wider landscape.

The location of the site adjacent to the urban edge of Sevenoaks means that development would form an extension of the settlement existing pattern, particularly in the context of Croft Way and Downsview Road which have already extended development west of Brittain's Lane. Great Britain's Wood and other woodland to the north of the site would provide physical separation from the landscape to the west and a good sense of visual and perceptual enclosure to the site. Perceptual qualities in this area are already affected by noise associated with traffic on the nearby A21 and suburban development on the edge of Sevenoaks, particularly around Downsview Road and The Middlings.



Whilst potential views of development are likely to be limited in extent, there would likely be large scale change in close proximity for the local community in the vicinity of The Middlings, from where the site provides a prominent backdrop.

Development on the site of the scale and density of the parameters would introduce urbanising features into a site on the edge of Sevenoaks. The density of development on the existing settlement edge is low and well-integrated – particularly the area around Kippington and Beaconfields, and Brittain's Lane itself. Whilst not within the National Landscape, the southern part of the site has a strong relationship with it, and development within the site would therefore affect the special qualities of the National Landscape and its setting.

Development may result in the following key effects on landscape character and views:

- Effects on views and landscape as a result of development on the ridge line, including views from the residential area of Sevenoaks, particularly The Middlings. There may be glimpsed, distant views from the north side of the Darent Valley.
- Effects on the rural character of the wider landscape, including the setting of Sevenoaks, relatively dark skies and relative tranquillity.
- Effects on the rural character of Brittain's Lane.
- Effects on the special qualities of the National Landscape and its setting.

Without additional mitigation, the likely significance of effects is considered to be **high**.

If development were limited to the lower and flatter part of the site in the north, this would be likely to reduce effects. However, this would be a much smaller part of the wider site. With additional mitigation, the likely significance of effects is considered to be **low-medium**.

## Guidance and opportunities

### Guidance

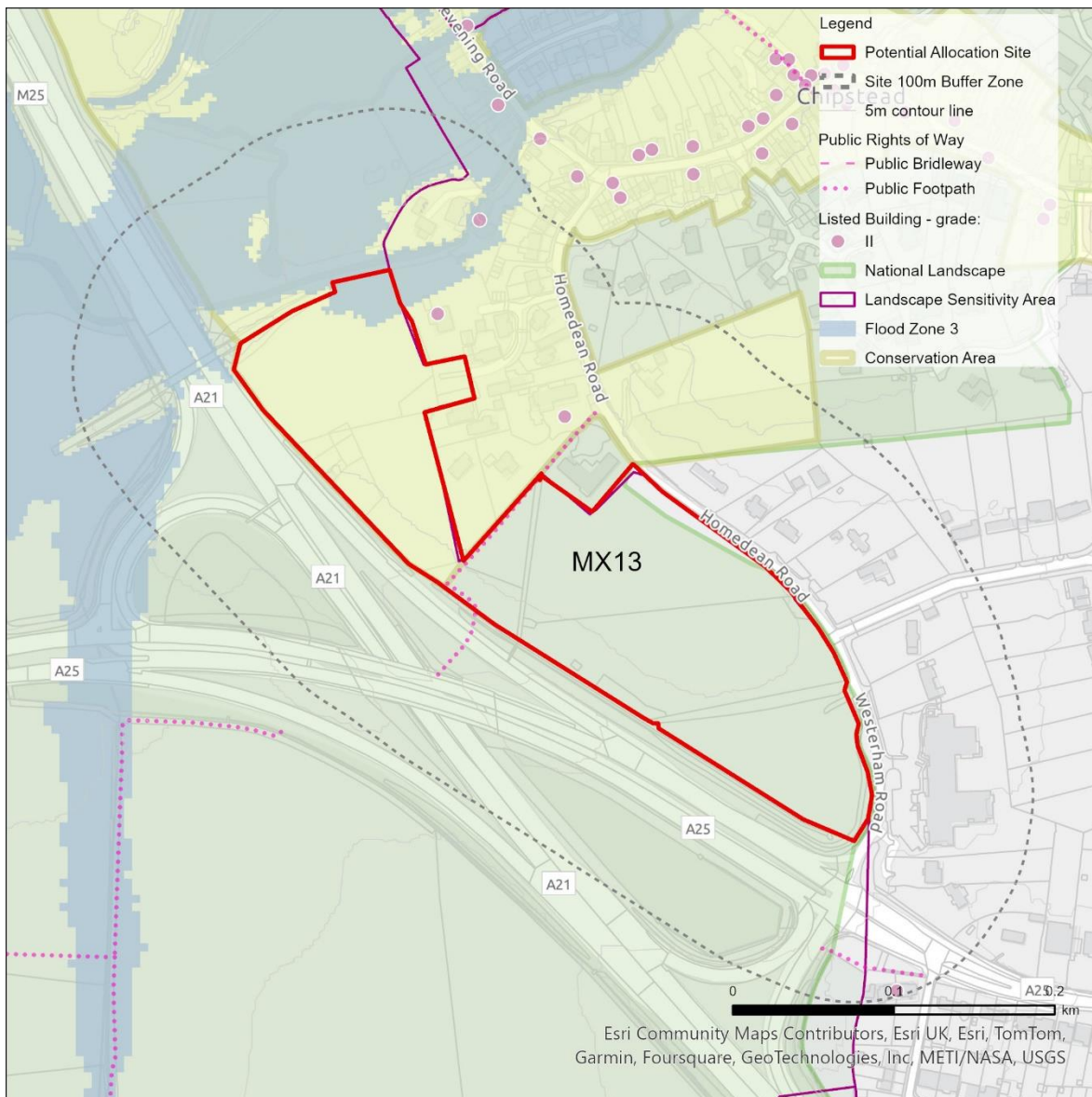
- Carefully consider siting in relation to the landform, avoiding the hill tops where possible - consider views from the north side of the Darent Valley/ North Downs scarp and from the edges of Sevenoaks when planning any development and minimise visibility using siting and planting.
- Retain the woodlands and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible.
- Retain the rural character – special care should be paid to boundaries, which should be rural in nature where they adjoin countryside, and lighting, which should be minimised.
- Fit with the density and character of development that defines the character of areas that border this part of Sevenoaks.
- Ensure that any development pays some regard to the Kentish vernacular which comprises brick or ragstone walls and buildings, clay tiled roofs, vertical tile hanging on first floor walls, and white painted weather boarding.
- Retain the character of the narrow rural lanes, avoiding widening of roads and suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible.
- Extensive broadleaved tree planting is likely to be appropriate.
- It may be appropriate to review the strategy on density and test visual impacts through 3D modelling.

### Opportunities to further the statutory purpose of the Kent Downs National Landscape

- Management of woodland including coppicing, pollarding and if appropriate, undergrazing, to achieve age and species diversity and diversity of ground flora, and management of invasive species. Consider the diversification of woodlands using appropriate native species to provide resilience to climate change and tree disease.
- Reinforce wooded edges to the existing settlement edge of Sevenoaks, and farmed areas.
- Plant new hedgerow and roadside trees from existing hedge stock. Retain and manage hedgerows along narrow, vergeless lanes.

- Grassland management through appropriate grazing and cutting to enhance the diversity of flora and supported species.
- Work with highways authorities to increase the biodiversity value of verges and hedgerows without compromising safety.

## A.3 MX13 Land at Moat Farm, off Homedean Road, Chipstead



### 13 Context map

#### Site description

The site consists of five fields on the edge of Sevenoaks, on relatively flat land. Land use consists of horse paddocks, with some of the fields possibly used for pasture or under grass. The site is located between the settlement boundary and the busy and large-scale M25/A21 junction to the west. The other site boundaries are defined by Homedean Road to the east and belts of trees to the north, marking an access overbridge over the M25 and lining a tributary of the River Darent. Development within Sevenoaks to the east of the site includes detached houses on Moat Close and Homedean Road. The site lies wholly within the Kent Downs National Landscape.

## Context

Environmental data	Environmental designations and features within the site and immediate surroundings
<b>Environmental designations within 100m</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent Downs National Landscape – within the site</li> <li>• Archaeological notification area – within the site</li> <li>• Conservation area – within the site</li> <li>• Biodiversity opportunity area (Greensand Heaths &amp; Commons) – within 50m</li> <li>• Chalk Rivers: River Darent– within 50m</li> <li>• Tree preservation order– within 50m</li> <li>• Grade II listed Chipstead War Memorial– within 50m</li> <li>• Grade II listed Moat Farmhouse– within 50m</li> <li>• Grade II listed Mill House – within 100m</li> <li>• Grade II listed Park view prospect Cottage— within 100m</li> </ul>
<b>Other relevant planning considerations within 100m</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green belt – within the site</li> <li>• Public rights of way – within the site</li> <li>• Urban confines (Sevenoaks) – within 50m</li> </ul>
<b>Kent Downs landscape character area</b>	LCA 4a: Chevening (formerly West Darent), Darent Valley
<b>Sevenoaks residential character area</b>	Adjacent to the site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H8 Packhorse Road</li> <li>• K16 Denesfield Court</li> </ul>
<b>Sevenoaks landscape character area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LCA 8a: Upper Darent Valley - west</li> </ul>
<b>Sevenoaks landscape sensitivity assessment area – Sensitivity level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S5: Sevenoaks north-west (medium sensitivity)</li> </ul>

### 14 Environmental context

## Landscape sensitivity

### Key characteristics

The site has a rural character, influenced by the settlement edge of Chipstead village, although there are some suburban influences from development along Homedean Road. The River Darent and its floodplain creates an enclosed, intimate character despite the proximity to major road corridors.

- A gently undulating valley predominantly underlain by clay and mudstone (Gault Formation).
- Enclosed by the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.
- Narrow tree-lined River Darent corridor flows eastwards to the north of the site.
- Restored sand and gravel workings at Chipstead Lake create an ecological and recreational resource (within Chipstead).
- Mature hedgerows with isolated standard oaks.
- Blocks of mixed broadleaf woodlands and shaws.
- Historic field pattern of regular parliamentary and older irregular fields disrupted locally.
- Rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads with scattered 20th century residential and industrial development on settlement edges in the wider landscape.
- Historic riverside settlement of Chipstead.
- Characteristic vernacular architecture in the wider landscape.
- Long views across the valley towards the North Downs and Greensand Ridge – including from within the adjacent residential areas in Sevenoaks within the Packhorse Road residential character area.
- Generally, a peaceful rural landscape disrupted locally by transport corridors.

## Sensitivity

In relation to the Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, the site is a small area within S5 Sevenoaks north-west, attributed with medium sensitivity. In terms of areas indicated as lower sensitivity, the assessment notes that the area along Homedean Road in Chipstead where the settlement edge is more open, indicates lower sensitivity.

### Key susceptibilities relevant to the site are:

- The hedgerows, mature field trees, shaws and woodlands which are typical of the Clay Valleys.
- The local vernacular including cottages and historic houses built from ragstone, weatherboarding, and warm red brick at Chipstead in the wider landscape.
- Views to the backdrop of the North Downs.
- The role the site plays as a setting and gateway to Chipstead, and in providing a perceived sense of separation between Chipstead and Sevenoaks.

### Key valued features and characteristics relevant to the site are:

- The historic field pattern running down to the river floodplain contributes to local distinctiveness – fields are a mixture of shapes with some irregular straight boundaries and some wavy boundaries which may have some sense of historic time depth.
- The hedgerow network which contributes to landscape pattern and provides ecological links.
- Mixed deciduous woodlands and shaws that provide a valuable semi-natural habitat for wildlife and a sense of history.
- The historic riverside mill settlement of Chipstead including its conservation area, and listed buildings and their settings.
- The local vernacular in the wider landscape, including cottages and historic houses built from ragstone, half tile hung facades and weatherboarding, and warm red brick which provide sense of place.
- The narrow tree-lined River Darent, adjacent to the site.
- Some glimpsed views and vistas to the wider landscape of the Kent Downs.

## Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape

The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and as such is valued at the highest level.

Special qualities of the Kent Downs	How are they represented within the site?
<b>Dramatic landform and views</b>	Generally flat landform, around 80-85m AOD, sloping to the north towards the Darent Valley. The valley provides intimate and enclosed vistas typical of the Kent Downs.
<b>Biodiversity-rich habitats</b>	There are no recognised priority habitats within the site, which consists predominantly of improved grassland. There are some hedgerows and trees present within the site and along the site boundaries.
<b>Farmed landscape</b>	The site is under grassland, with some fields used as paddocks, although historically some of the fields may be pastoral, which contributes to the mixed farming characteristic of the Kent Downs.
<b>Woodland and trees</b>	There are no woodlands within the site. No trees within the site are designated as ancient woodland or protected by Tree Preservation Orders.
<b>A rich legacy of historic and cultural heritage</b>	The western part of the site is within Chipstead Conservation Area. Four grade II listed buildings lie within 100m of the site, including Moat Farmhouse which is adjacent to the east of the site. The site may be considered to contribute to the setting of the farmhouse, being part of the former farmland surrounding the building. The fields may have some sense of time depth although their pattern is not clearly of historic origin.
<b>Geology and natural resources</b>	Due to its undeveloped character, soil within the site is likely to represent an important natural capital resource. The River Darent, which is a rare chalk river, lies adjacent to the north of the site.
<b>Tranquillity and remoteness</b>	The site has a semi-rural character, although tranquillity is affected the busy A21/M25 roads and the junction. The site does not represent the characteristic peaceful, dark night skies found elsewhere in the Kent Downs and falls within a night light classification of between 2-4 and 4-8 nanowatts / cm <sup>2</sup> / sr which is considered a medium level of radiance shining into the night sky.
<b>Summary of the extent to which the</b>	The site reflects the typical river valley landscape of the Kent Downs, with intimate and enclosed views and vistas. The heritage, natural resources are also elements which reflect the special qualities of the Kent Downs.

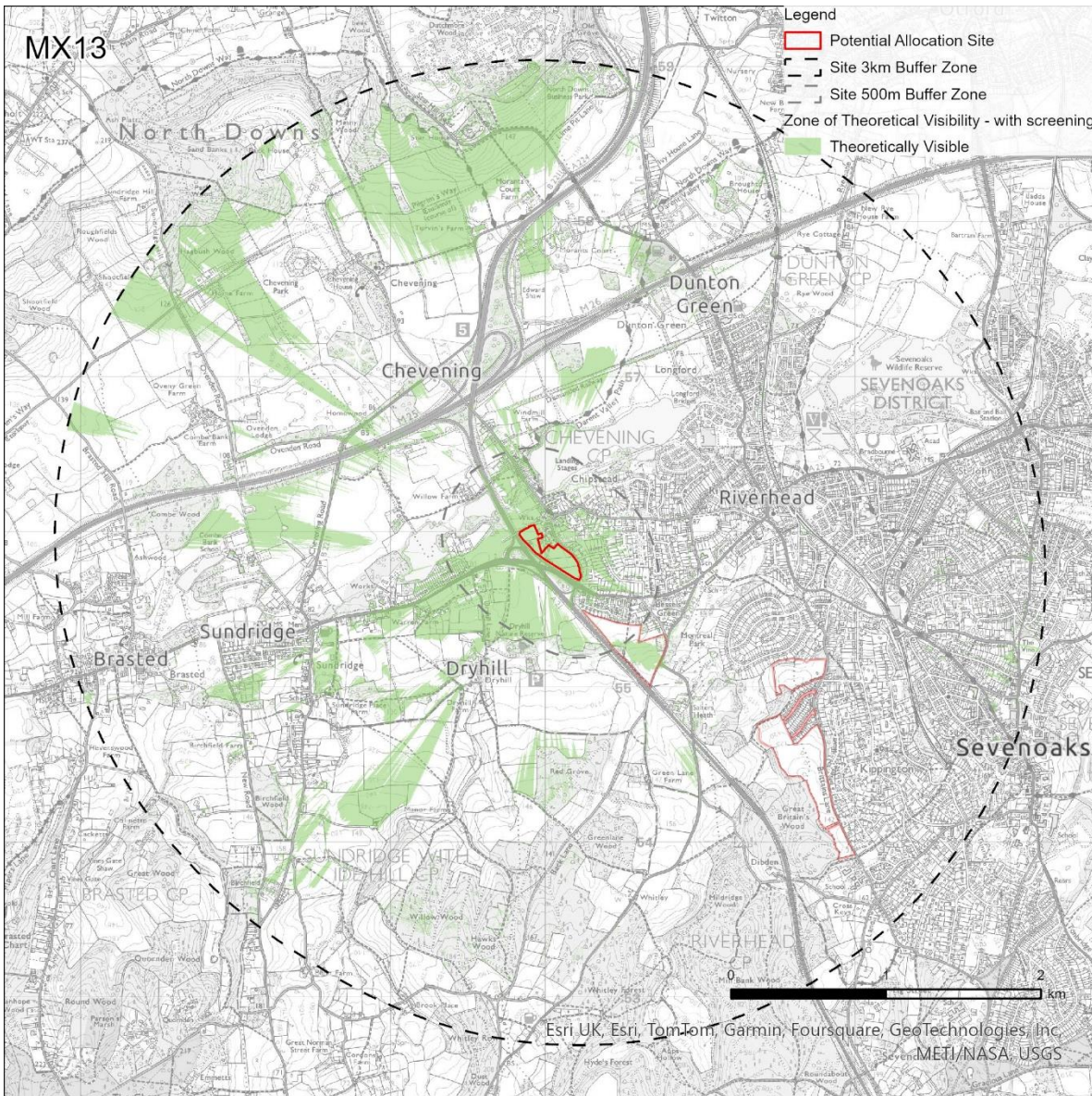
<b>Special qualities of the Kent Downs</b>	<b>How are they represented within the site?</b>
<b>site reflects the special qualities</b>	

**15 Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape**

**Detractors**

- Heavy traffic and noise associated with nearby A21/M25 junction affects perceptual qualities of the site.
- Suburban character of the existing residential urban edge in Chipstead including inconsistent boundary features and non-native, coniferous vegetation.

**Visual amenity**



**16 Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)**

**Extent of potential visibility**

The ZTV indicates that views of development would be largely contained to within 500m of the site. The low-lying character of the area and the enclosure provided by trees, hedgerows and copses and woodland belts along the major roads, mean that there is little intervisibility with the wider landscape. Whilst views of development from within the Darent Valley to the north of the site are likely to be mostly limited by landform, there may be views from the upper slopes of the North Downs to the north of the site.

## Key views

### *Potential views for residents/ local community and recreational users within 500m of the site:*

- The local communities of and residents of dwellings in and around:
  - Chipstead, including the conservation area and the residential character areas of Packhorse Road and Denesfield Court;
  - Properties on Homedean Road which overlook the site;
  - Dryhill Lane and the A25 to the south-west of the site.
- Users of public rights of way:
  - SR179 within the site;
  - SR181 to the south of the site between Dryhill Lane/ Dryhill Nature Reserve and the A25;
  - SR180 to the south-west of the site between SR181 and Sundridge;
  - SR176 to the north of the site near Chevening Road, within the Chipstead Conservation Area;
  - SR105 forms part of the Darent Valley Path, to the north of the site within Chipstead Conservation Area;
  - SR178 to the north of the site along Chevening Road;
  - A small part of SR180 to the east of the site between the A25 Westerham Road/Bessels Green and Back Lane.

### *Potential views from promoted routes within 3km of the site:*

- Darent Valley Path within 500m to the north of the site and on the opposite side of Chipstead Lake;
- North Downs Way to the north of the site, as it climbs the hillside.

### *Key strategic views (within 3km)*

- None found.



View across the site to properties on Homedean Road



View looking north to the northern part of the site

## 17 Representative views of the site

## Potential effects and mitigation

Potential effects and whether they may affect the key susceptibilities or valued features, as well as mitigation opportunities to avoid or minimise effects or to restore landscape features are considered below.

Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes	Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)
The hedgerows, mature field trees, shaws and woodlands.	It would be possible for development to avoid valued areas of trees and woodland through integrating development within the existing field pattern and avoiding areas of existing trees and woodland which are concentrated along the site boundaries.
The historic field pattern.	The historic field pattern has already been disrupted by the A21/M25 junction to the west and alterations such as post and wire fencing. There may be some sense of time depth associated with the field pattern which would be affected by development.
The role the site plays as a setting/gateway to	Chipstead and Sevenoaks settlements have merged, and therefore the site plays a limited role in separation. However, the site is a perceived gateway to Chipstead and is important to the

Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes	Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)
Chipstead, and in providing a perceived sense of separation between Chipstead and Sevenoaks.	distinction between the settlements. Development on the site would adversely affect this, and the density of development would be out of character with the density of development in Chipstead. Mitigation could reduce density of development within the site and incorporate an open space and retaining the gateway function into the design approach for the site.
The historic riverside mill settlement of Chipstead including its conservation area, and listed buildings and their settings.	<p>Part of the site lies within the conservation area and would therefore be directly affected by development. However, the site is not highlighted as being important in the conservation area appraisal for Chipstead, and whilst the site had a historic relationship with the listed farmhouse, the farmhouse is now residential and relates to the cul de sac in which it is located.</p> <p>There may also be effects on the settings of listed buildings within the conservation area, particularly those closest to the site, which are the Moat Farmhouse and Chipstead War Memorial. The site may form part of the setting of other listed buildings within Chipstead, and further heritage assessment should be undertaken to understand potential effects.</p> <p>Development could minimise adverse effects by avoiding development within the north-western part of the site; or otherwise through careful siting and design. This should consider the scale, form, mass, colour, materials and details so that it respects the character of the surrounding area. Nevertheless, the loss of openness close to the River Darent may result in adverse effect on the historic character of the conservation area.</p>
The narrow tree-lined River Darent.	The River Darent is outside of the site boundary and therefore would not be directly affected.
Effects on local views	There would be views for properties on Homedean Road overlooking the site, although views from the core of the conservation area would generally be filtered by intermittent buildings due to the inward-looking character of the village.
Effects on distant views	Potential effects on views from the Darent Valley Path and the North Downs Way.
Special qualities of the Kent Downs	The site reflects some of the special qualities, some of which may be affected, including views and vistas, heritage and natural resources. It is likely that effects on some or all of these elements would remain even after mitigation.

## 18 Potential effects and mitigation

## Conclusion

The site is adjacent to the existing settlement in Chipstead that has merged with Sevenoaks to create an extensive urban area to the east. Whilst the north-western part of the site within the conservation area is particularly sensitive, the site does not form an obvious backdrop to views and vistas within the residential area and conservation area; the site is generally well enclosed and visually separate from the landscape to the west.

The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and has valued qualities and features including its semi-rural character, historic character, and the naturalistic character of trees and hedgerows, and the character of the River Darent.

Views of development would predominantly be experienced within 500m, although there would be nearby views for people in the local community of Chipstead. This includes a small number of adjacent houses on Homedean Road, some locations within the conservation area and the public right of way through the site. There are unlikely to be views from the Darent Valley Path due to the presence of intervening vegetation, although there may be some views in winter.

There are opportunities for mitigation to avoid or minimise effects by precluding development in the north-west of the site or ensuring development respects and enhances the character of the conservation area. There are also opportunities to improve the existing settlement edge of Homedean Road.

Development may result in the following key effects on landscape character and views:

- Effects on the role of the site as a gateway and distinction in character between Sevenoaks and Chipstead.
- Development within the conservation area and effects on the setting of listed buildings.
- Effects on the special qualities of the National Landscape.



- Effects on local and more distant views.

The likely significance of effects is considered to be **medium**.

## Guidance and opportunities

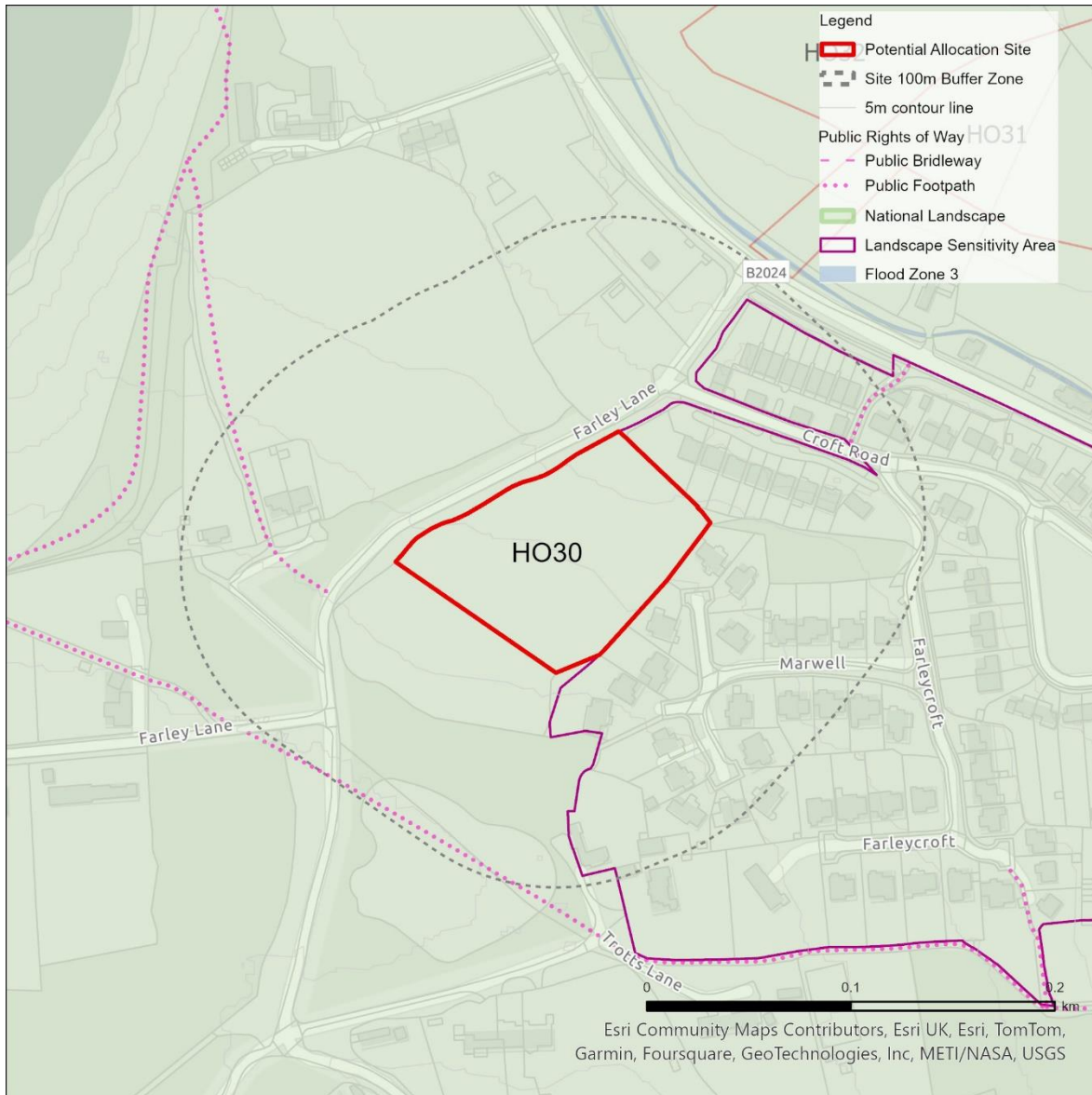
### Guidance

- Enhance the existing interface between Sevenoaks and the surrounding countryside of the Clay Valleys. New built development may present an opportunity to improve some of the less attractive or harsh urban edges at Homedean Road in Chipstead.
- Retain the hedgerows, mature trees, shaws and small woodlands which are typical of the Clay Valley and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible.
- Special care should be paid to boundaries, which should be rural in nature where they adjoin countryside and lighting, which should be minimised, especially in rural areas.
- Ensure any development pays regard to the local Kentish vernacular.
- Consider intervisibility with the scarp. Development should be well integrated into the landscape.
- Avoid suburban-style property boundary and entrance treatments and avoid the use of non-native conifer species.
- Retain the public right of way through the site.

### Opportunities to further the statutory purpose of the Kent Downs National Landscape

- Improvement to the existing pedestrian access and connectivity across the A21/M25 junction, connecting footpaths SR181 and SR179.
- Management of the River Darent, encouraging in-stream river enhancement and river restoration, including enhancing water quality, managing riparian habitats, removing invasive species and promoting planting of native species such as willow, alder, hornbeam and poplar along the course of the river. Encourage recreational access to the river banks.
- Restore water meadows and create additional floodplain and riparian habitats to increase the visibility of the river and restore distinctive habitats which are now largely absent.
- Restore farm ponds and ditches.
- Manage visitor attractions such as the lakes, particularly where numbers of visitors are causing detriment to the landscape. Improve sustainable access into the wider landscape through enhancements to the public rights of way network (including riverside paths) and enable visitors to spread out over a larger area without detracting from it.
- Manage woodlands, shaws and trees outside woodlands, including woodland planted as road screening, to achieve a diversity of age and species of trees which includes locally characteristic species such as yew, holly, beech and oak. Maintain coppice management in areas where this is already taking place and look to extend active woodland management.
- Sensitive tree planting schemes including within streetscapes. Be mindful of the need to retain noise masking of traffic.
- Plant new hedgerow and roadside trees from existing hedge stock.
- Improve the urban edge of existing settlements along the valley, using new planting and existing hedgerows to contain built form, and to provide links between settlements and the wider countryside. These could include parkland-style planting where appropriate.
- Restore field boundaries where they have been lost in order to break up large fields, to minimise soil erosion, and to slow water runoff.
- Develop a village design statement for Chipstead, to retain and promote local distinctiveness in built form and open spaces. Consider developing the visitor infrastructure, in order to increase the area's visitor capacity, but without detriment to the rural landscape character. Promote awareness of the cultural heritage of the area.
- Work with highways authorities to increase the biodiversity value of verges and hedgerows without compromising safety.

## A.4 HO30 Land south of Farley Lane, Westerham



### 19 Context map

#### Site description

The site consists of three-quarters of a small arable field, which slopes downwards towards the north-east. A dense belt of woodland lines the north-western site boundary, partly within the site and along Farley Lane. The site is located outside the settlement boundary but adjacent to the western edge of Westerham. The northern site boundary is defined by recent hedgerow/trees beyond which is a recent residential development off Croft Road. The eastern site boundary is defined by mature trees, beyond which is residential development at Marwell. The southern site boundary is not defined by any features, although beyond the boundary, the field is defined by dense woodland which is part of Farley Common.

## Context

Environmental data	Environmental designations and features within the site and immediate surroundings
Environmental designations within 100m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent Downs National Landscape – within the site</li> <li>• Archaeological notification area – within the site</li> <li>• Tree preservation order– within 50m</li> <li>• Local wildlife sites– within 50m</li> </ul>
Other relevant planning considerations within 100m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green belt – within the site</li> <li>• Public rights of way – within 50m</li> <li>• Urban confines (Westerham) – within 50m</li> <li>• Registered common land – within 100m</li> </ul>
Kent Downs landscape character area	LCA 4a: Chevening (formerly West Darent), Darent Valley
Sevenoaks residential character area	Not applicable
Sevenoaks landscape character area	LCA 8a: Upper Darent Valley - west
Sevenoaks landscape sensitivity assessment area – Sensitivity level	W1: Westerham North - Medium sensitivity

### 20 Environmental context

## Landscape sensitivity

### Key characteristics

The site is on the edge of the settlement on two sides, although it is visually enclosed by trees along its boundaries.

- Situated on the top of a valley slope predominantly underlain by clay and mudstone (Gault Formation).
- Blocks of mixed broadleaf woodlands and shaws, adjacent and to the north of the site.
- Historic field pattern of regular parliamentary and older irregular fields - disrupted locally due to adjacent residential development.
- Historic droveways from the North Downs to the Greensand Ridge, potentially including Farley Lane.
- Long views across the valley towards the North Downs and Greensand Ridge.
- Generally, a peaceful rural landscape disrupted locally by transport corridors.

### Sensitivity

In relation to the Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, the site is a small area within W1: Westerham North, which is attributed with medium sensitivity. In terms of areas indicated as lower sensitivity, the site is characterised by gently undulating landform and located to the north-west of the settlement. The settlement edge is less clearly defined and screened from view by woodland and the topography of Farley Common, although it provides some part in providing a setting to Westerham.

### Key susceptibilities relevant to the site are:

- The hedgerows, shaws and woodlands on the site boundaries.
- The rural and low density settlement pattern of the wider landscape beyond Westerham, with scattered farmhouses outside the villages.
- Farley Common, adjacent and close to the site to the west and south, which has historic time depth and is a localised hill.
- Long open views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.
- Historic droveways, possibly including Farley Lane, from the North Downs to the Greensand Ridge.
- Generally a peaceful rural landscape.
- The sloping landform, with potential views of development sited on higher ground.

**Key valued features and characteristics relevant to the site are:**

- Mixed deciduous woodlands and shaws that provide a valuable semi-natural habitat for wildlife and a sense of history.
- Historic droving routes along narrow lanes from the North Downs to the Greensand Ridge which give a strong sense of time-depth to the area – Farley Lane, adjacent to the site.
- Farley Common is both historic commonland and valuable semi-natural habitat for wildlife, which is designated as a Local Nature Reserve, adjacent to the site.
- Long open views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the scarps which are locally distinctive.

**Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape**

The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and as such is valued at the highest level.

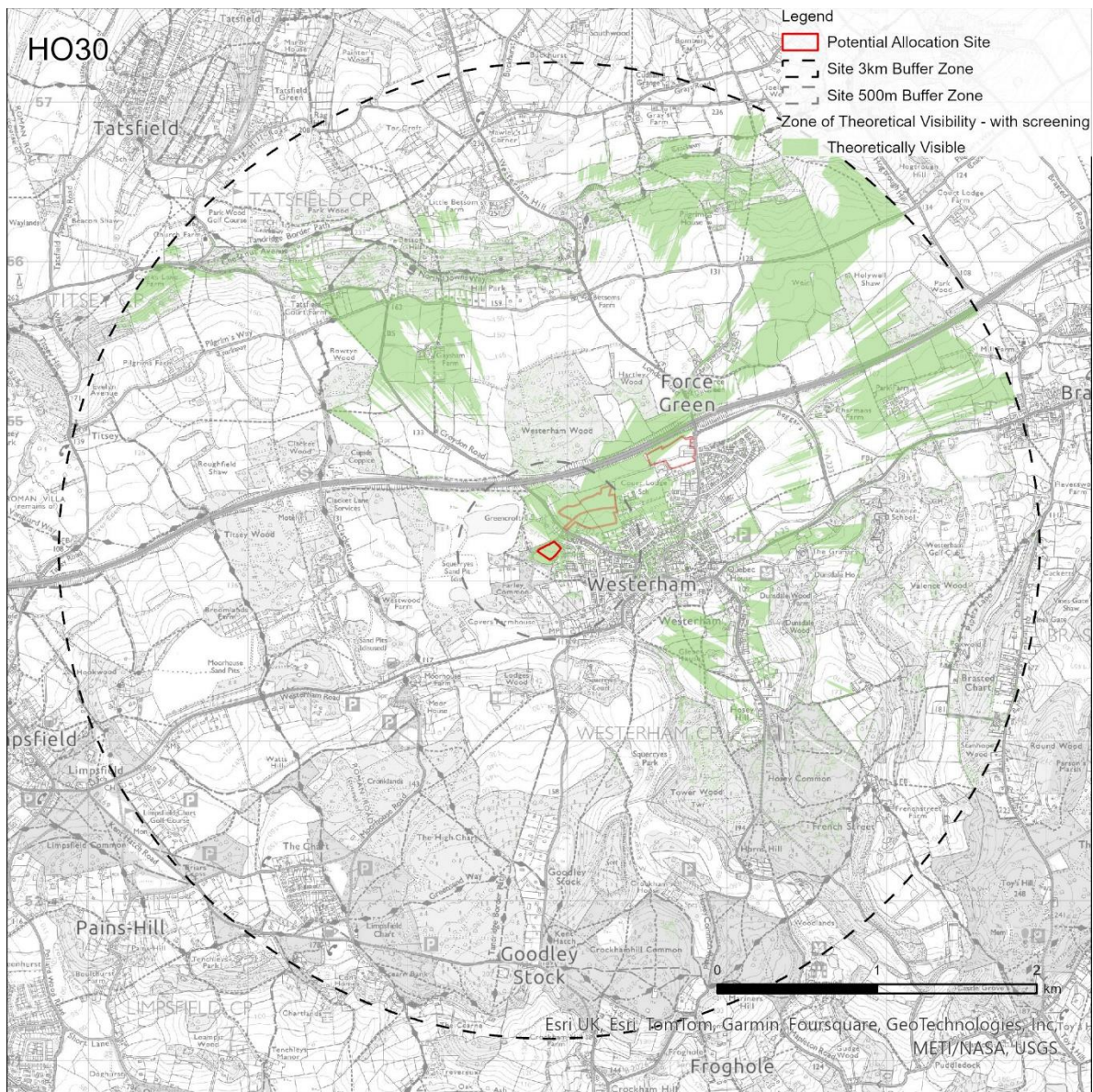
<b>Special qualities of the Kent Downs</b>	<b>How are they represented within the site?</b>
<b>Dramatic landform and views</b>	The landform of the site is not dramatic, but slopes gently downwards towards a tributary to the River Darent to the north of the site, from approximately 135m AOD in the west of the site to 125m AOD in the north-east. There are long distance views to the North Downs.
<b>Biodiversity-rich habitats</b>	The site consists of arable farmland which is unlikely to be biodiversity-rich. Mature trees line the site boundaries. A local wildlife site (Farley Common) and biodiversity opportunity area lie within 50m.
<b>Farmed landscape</b>	The site consists of a small arable field which contributes towards the farmed landscape of the Kent Downs but is not as valued as pastoral land use within the Kent Downs.
<b>Woodland and trees</b>	Mature trees line the site boundaries. Some of the trees along the south-eastern boundary are covered by a tree preservation order.
<b>A rich legacy of historic and cultural heritage</b>	There are no notable features of historic or cultural heritage in or around the site. The conservation area of Westerham lies over 400m to the east.
<b>Geology and natural resources</b>	Due to its undeveloped character, soil within the site is likely to represent an important natural capital resource. The site is classed as Grade 3 agricultural land (good to moderate quality). The site does not contain any chalk rivers or streams.
<b>Tranquillity and remoteness</b>	The site has a semi-rural character with some naturalistic features and characteristics including a sense of enclosure and wooded and intact field boundaries, but sense of tranquillity and remoteness is reduced by built development and activity in the adjacent settlement of Westerham to the east and traffic on roads including Croydon Road to the north and noise from the M25 within 400m to the north. The site does not represent the characteristic peaceful, dark night skies found elsewhere in the Kent Downs and falls within a night light classification of 2-4 nanowatts / cm <sup>2</sup> / sr which is considered a medium level of radiance shining into the night sky.
<b>Summary of the extent to which the site reflects the special qualities</b>	The farmland character, trees, soils and natural qualities means the site reflects many of the special qualities of the Kent Downs. These elements alongside the distant views of the North Downs contribute to a localised extent, to the natural beauty of the Kent Downs National Landscape.

**21 Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape**

**Detractors**

- The immature, recent planting on the boundary with the new residential development on Croft Road results in an urban edge character due to the backs of properties being visually exposed, although it is likely the planting will mature and screen views of this development in the future.
- Gaps in the boundary vegetation also allows for views to the backs of properties on Marwell, detracting from the rural character.

## Visual amenity



### 22 Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)

#### Extent of potential visibility

The ZTV indicates that, despite being located on a hillside, development within the site would be relatively visually contained. This is due to the mature trees and woodland in the surrounding area and the influence of topography in obscuring views from the south and west. There may be views of development within the site from higher ground 2-3km away. However, in reality it is likely that individual trees and tree belts in the surrounding landscape and near the site would screen or heavily filter views, and where visible, development would be an indistinguishable part of development in Westerham.

#### Key views

##### *Potential views for residents/ local community and recreational users within 500m of the site:*

- The local community of Westerham, including residents of properties to the east of the site on Marwell and Croft Road, although the ZTV indicates there would be very limited visibility.
- Residents of detached properties to the north of the site and west of the B204 Croydon Road.

*Potential views from promoted routes within 3km of the site:*

- The ZTV indicates there may be views from the North Downs Way, approximately 1.7km to the north of the site at its nearest point. However, it is likely these views would be screened by intervening trees and vegetation, and where visible, development would be seen as part of development in Westerham.

*Key strategic views (within 3km)*

- None found.



View across the site to the houses on Croft Way and the North Kent Downs in the distant background beyond



View east along Farley Lane and into the site through a gap in the roadside vegetation

**23 Representative views of the site**

**Potential effects and mitigation**

Potential effects and whether they may affect the key susceptibilities or valued features, as well as mitigation opportunities to avoid or minimise effects or to restore landscape features are considered below.

<b>Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes</b>	<b>Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)</b>
Hedgerows, shaws and woodlands.	There are no trees, hedgerows or woodlands within the site itself, except for on the site boundary. Development could avoid impacts to these trees by ensuring existing trees are retained and appropriately protected during construction and appropriate offsets are incorporated into the design. However, it may be difficult to completely avoid impacts to trees considering site access.
The rural and low density settlement pattern	Development would adjoin existing development to the north and east on the settlement edge and therefore associated with Westerham. Retaining existing trees and planting additional trees within the site would help to integrate development into its setting and minimise the perception of built form. Reducing the density and typology of development to create more of a transition from the suburban settlement edge to the detached houses beyond the settlement, would reduce effects on the rural character.
Farley Common (adjacent to the site).	Farley Common would not be directly impacted by development on the site. Planning of access routes to avoid the loss of existing vegetation could minimise effects on its integrity and setting.
Long open views to the backdrop of the North Downs	Whilst development would obscure the long views to the North Downs from within the site and from the site entrance at Farley Lane, it would not obscure these views from other locations which are already screened by vegetation.
The rural character of Farley Lane.	It may be difficult to avoid impacts to Farley Lane considering site access requirements. Whilst access routes should be carefully planned to avoid effects on the historic character of the lane, some vegetation loss may be unavoidable.
Generally a peaceful rural landscape.	It is likely there would be some effects on the rural character which would be unavoidable, however, effects would be localised due to the enclosure of the site and development would be associated with the adjacent settlement. Effects could be partially mitigated through appropriate tree planting within the site to ensure any development sits within a landscape context.
Sloping landform	Development on the higher ground may be more visible in distant views, although the site is visually well-enclosed with vegetation, and development on the site would be seen in the context of other development within Westerham.

Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes	Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)
Views from nearby receptors to the north of the site	If development ensures existing trees along field boundaries are retained and new tree planting is integrated into development, most effects on views and visual amenity could be mitigated.
Distant views from the north side of the Darent Valley	Within more distant views development within the site would appear as part of development in Westerham. Mitigation should ensure the design of development is considered in longer views and incorporate an appropriate design response.
Special qualities of the Kent Downs.	The site reflects some of the special qualities, some of which may be affected, including farmland character, soils and natural qualities. Whilst it may be possible to mitigate impacts on most trees, it would not be possible to mitigate or compensate for effects on the farmland character, which would be replaced by development.

## 24 Potential effects and mitigation

### Conclusion

Whilst it is generally contiguous with the pattern of existing settlement that has expanded into this area, the settlement pattern in these outskirts of Westerham is typically characterised by detached houses.

The site is at a relatively high point on an east-facing slope which theoretically makes it visually exposed. However, the dense woodland and frequent mature trees on the site boundaries and in the surrounding area, including along the adjacent Farley Lane, mean that views towards the site are very limited. Views of development would potentially be well-contained, owing to the well wooded landscape and the existing wooded site boundaries.

There are opportunities for mitigation to avoid or minimise effects on key features and character. However, development may result in the following key effects on landscape character and views:

- Effects on existing trees and woodland at the site boundaries relating to access.
- Effects on the character of Farley Lane relating to access and increased traffic.
- Effects on the naturalistic character of the area including landform.
- Limited effects on people's views from nearby rural properties in Westerham.
- Effects on the special qualities of the Kent Downs.

Without additional mitigation, the likely significance of effects is considered to be **medium-high**.

If the density of development was reduced, and development was in the order of four to five detached houses set within open space with woodland planting, this would help to graduate the suburban settlement edge of Westerham. It would create a positive transition between the settlement and the countryside and would reflect the more dispersed pattern of houses along Farley Lane. With this additional mitigation, the likely significance of effects is considered to be **low-medium**.

### Guidance and opportunities

#### Guidance

- Test the height of development within the site using modelling so that development does not breach the tree line.
- Celebrate the local vernacular of the wider landscape with use of local brick, ragstone, weatherboard and tile-hung facades— any potential development should adopt an appropriately contextual design response.
- The design of roads and paths within the site should avoid suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible.
- Developments should integrate appropriate green infrastructure and biodiversity proposals which retain and enhance existing natural features on site.
- Maintain a strong link between the historic edges of Westerham and the surrounding rural landscape.
- Maintain and enhance the interface with the rural countryside.

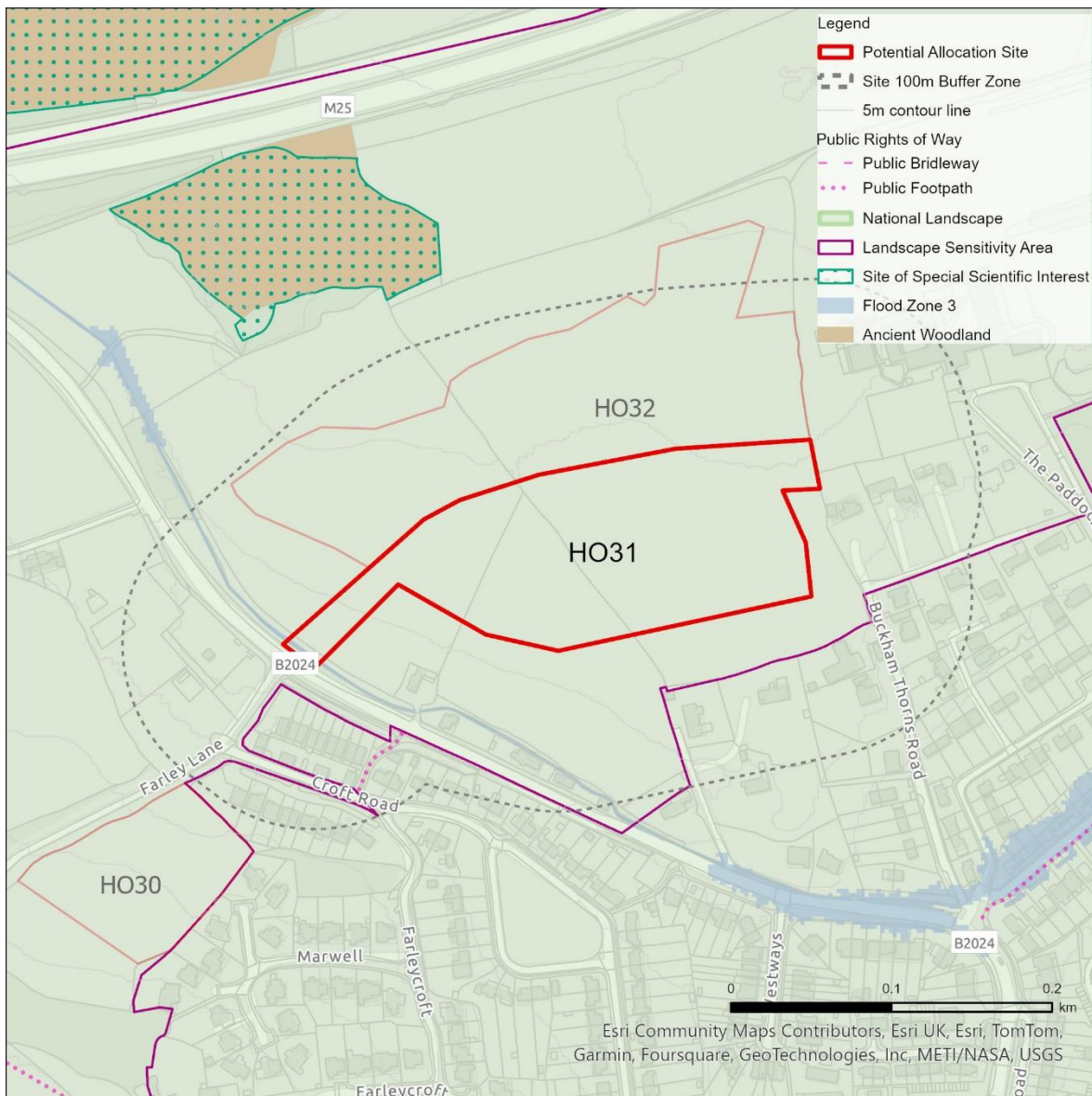
- Retain the hedgerows, shaws and small woodlands which are typical of the Clay Valley and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible.
- Special care should be paid to boundaries, which should be rural in nature where they adjoin countryside, and lighting, which should be minimised, especially in rural areas.
- Consider views from the North Downs, including the North Downs Way and the Greensand Ridge (e.g. Hosey Hill). Ensure any new development is well integrated with the landscape and minimise visibility through siting and landscaping.

#### Opportunities to further the statutory purpose of the Kent Downs National Landscape

- Investigate any potential for enhancements to the local wildlife site and in connection with the biodiversity opportunity area.
- Manage woodlands, shaws and trees outside woodlands, including woodland planted as motorway screening, to achieve a diversity of age and species of trees which includes locally characteristic species such as yew, holly, beech and oak.
- Maintain coppice management in areas where this is already taking place and look to extend active woodland management.
- Potential for planting schemes to retain the trees outside of woodlands component of the land and streetscapes.
- Plant new hedgerow and roadside trees from existing hedge stock.
- Develop a village design statement for Westerham to retain and promote local distinctiveness in built form and open spaces.
- Work with highways authorities to increase the biodiversity value of verges and hedgerows without compromising safety.



## A.5 HO31 Land east of Croydon Road (southern parcel), Westerham



### 25 Context map

#### Site description

The site consists of parts of three arable fields on flat to gently sloping landform, which falls gradually to the south-west. Two hedgerow field boundaries with hedgerow trees dissect the site roughly north-south. The site is located approximately 50m outside of the settlement boundary to the south, and detached houses are located adjacent to the east of the site, with a school to the north-east. The site boundaries are offset from the edges of the field boundaries, with a narrow section in the south-west leading to the B2024 Croydon Road. The site is located adjacent to the south of site HO32 and lies wholly within the Kent Downs National Landscape, which washes over the entirety of the settlement of Westerham.

## Context

Environmental data	Environmental designations and features within the site and immediate surroundings
Environmental designations within 100m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent Downs National Landscape – within the site</li> <li>• Archaeological notification area – within the site</li> <li>• Biodiversity opportunity area (Greensand Heaths &amp; Commons) – within the site</li> <li>• Chalk rivers: River Darent tributary – within 50m (north and south-west)</li> </ul>
Other relevant planning considerations within 100m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green belt – within the site</li> <li>• Urban confines (Westerham) – within 50m</li> <li>• Public right of way – within 100m</li> </ul>
Kent Downs landscape character area	LCA 4a: Chevening (formerly West Darent), Darent Valley
Sevenoaks residential character area	Not applicable
Sevenoaks landscape character area	LCA 8a: Upper Darent Valley – west
Sevenoaks landscape sensitivity assessment area – Sensitivity level	W1: Westerham north – medium sensitivity

### 26 Environmental context

## Landscape sensitivity

### Key characteristics

The site has a rural character, comprising medium scale open fields, and is influenced by the proximity of clusters of small groups of houses on the edge of Westerham.

- Part of a gently undulating valley predominantly underlain by clay and mudstone (Gault Formation).
- Enclosed by the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.
- Mature hedgerows with isolated standard oaks.
- Blocks of mixed broadleaf woodlands and shaws including areas of ancient woodland in the wider landscape.
- Historic field pattern of regular parliamentary and older irregular fields disrupted locally.
- Rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads with scattered 20th century residential and industrial development on settlement edges.
- Historic riverside settlements – Westerham, to the south of the site.
- Characteristic vernacular architecture in the wider surroundings.
- Long views across the valley towards the North Downs and Greensand Ridge.
- Generally a peaceful rural landscape disrupted locally by transport corridors.

### Sensitivity

In relation to the Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, the site is a small area within W1: Westerham north, assessed as having medium sensitivity to residential development. In terms of areas indicated as lower sensitivity, the site is on gently undulating landform and in an area to the north of Westerham where 20<sup>th</sup> century development has already expanded and is influenced by the motorway corridor, indicating lower sensitivity in terms of perceptual character.

### Key susceptibilities relevant to the site are:

- The hedgerows, shaws and woodlands which are valued features of the Clay Valleys.
- The historic field pattern where this pattern is still intact – the site is identified by the historic landscape character assessment as being small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries which may indicate some time depth.
- The rural and low density settlement pattern of Westerham with scattered farmhouses outside the villages (in the wider landscape).
- The local vernacular including cottages and historic houses built from ragstone, weatherboarding, and warm red brick in the wider landscape.

- Long open views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.

**Key valued features and characteristics relevant to the site are:**

- The hedgerow network which contributes to landscape pattern and provides ecological links.
- Mixed deciduous woodlands and shaws that provide valuable semi-natural habitat for wildlife and a sense of history including Westerham Wood (approximately 150m from the site), one of the few remaining ancient woodlands on Gault Clay in Kent.
- Within the Greensand Heaths & Commons Biodiversity Opportunity Area.
- Long open views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the scarps which are locally distinctive.
- The historic settlement of Westerham and its conservation area (approximately 400m to the south of the site).
- Generally a peacefulness of the rural landscape.

**Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape**

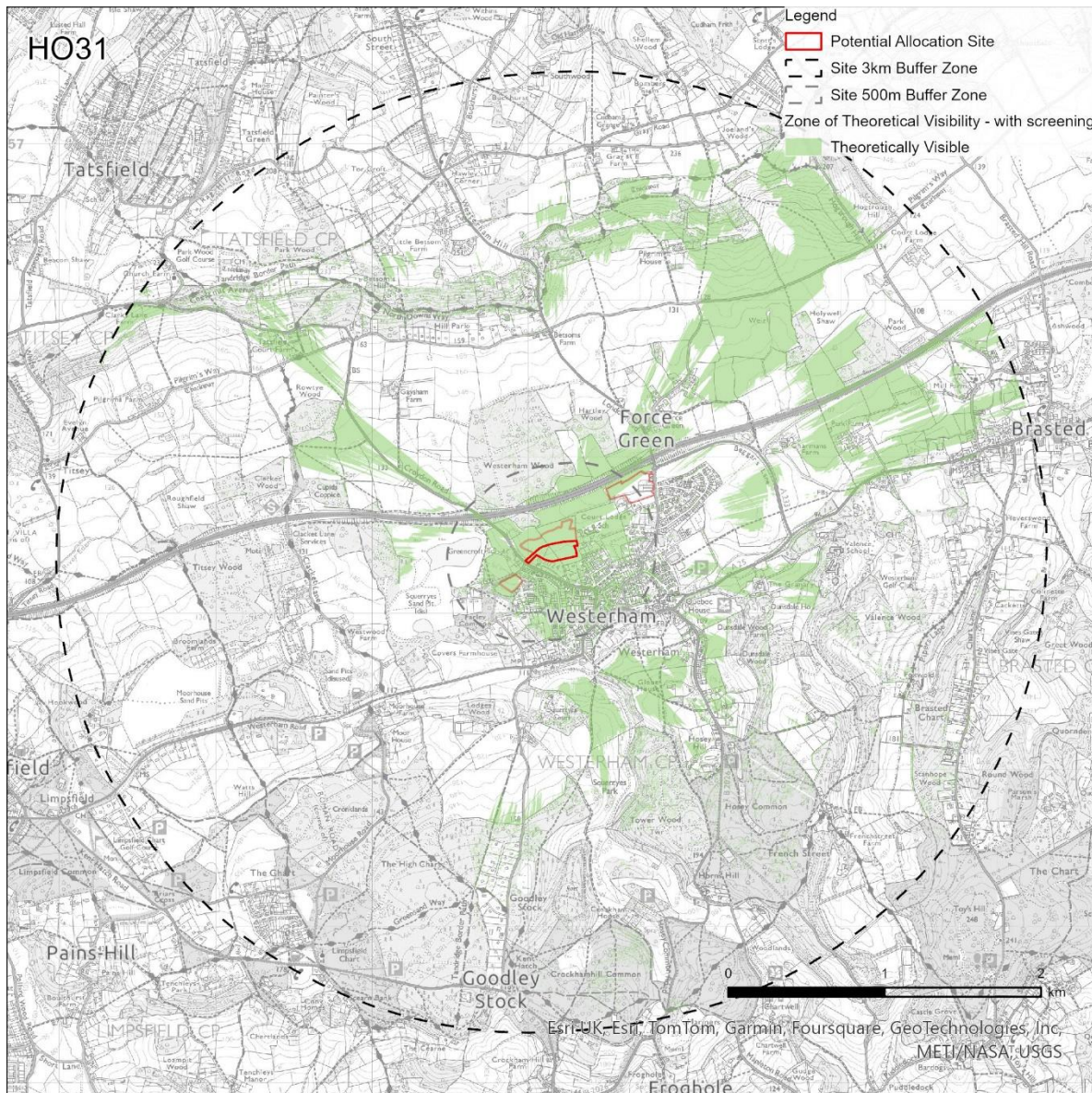
The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and as such is valued at the highest level.

<b>Special qualities of the Kent Downs</b>	<b>How are they represented within the site?</b>
<b>Dramatic landform and views</b>	The site is relatively flat at around 120m AOD with a gentle slope in the south-west of the site towards the minor tributary along the B2024 Croydon Road. Views within the valley are generally enclosed, with some longer distance views north to the Kent Downs and Greensand Ridge, although this could not be verified on site as it was not publicly accessible.
<b>Biodiversity-rich habitats</b>	The site comprises arable farmland which is unlikely to be biodiversity-rich. The hedgerows, hedgerow trees and individual trees within the site are valued habitats in the Kent Downs.
<b>Farmed landscape</b>	The site is under arable land use, which contributes to the mixed farming character of the National Landscape but does not reflect the most highly valued pastoral scenery of the Kent Downs.
<b>Woodland and trees</b>	There are no woodlands within the site, although there are some individual trees, hedgerows and hedgerow trees within field boundaries crossing through the site, which are highlighted as an important characteristic of the Kent Downs. No trees within the site are designated as ancient woodland or protected by Tree Preservation Orders.
<b>A rich legacy of historic and cultural heritage</b>	The site is located approximately 50m beyond the existing urban edge of Westerham, approximately 400m from the Westerham Conservation Area. The fields within the site are characterised as small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries which may indicate some time depth although they have been disrupted by modern development on the outskirts of Westerham.
<b>Geology and natural resources</b>	Due to its undeveloped character, soil within the site is likely to represent an important natural capital resource. The site is underlain by sandstone and mudstone and is classed as Grade 3 agricultural land (good to moderate quality). There is a chalk stream, which is a tributary of the River Darent, adjacent to the south-west of the site.
<b>Tranquillity and remoteness</b>	The site has a semi-rural character with some naturalistic features and characteristics including rural land use, intact field boundaries and occasional long distance views of the Kent Downs to the north. Tranquillity is affected by human influences such as the M25 approximately 250m north of the site and the B2024 Croydon Road adjacent to the south-west of the site.  Due to the proximity of the site to the settlement of Westerham, it does not represent the characteristic peaceful, dark night skies found elsewhere in the Kent Downs and falls within a night light classification of 2-4 nanowatts / cm <sup>2</sup> / sr which is considered a medium level of radiance shining into the night sky.
<b>Summary of the extent to which the site reflects the special qualities</b>	The biodiversity, mixed farmland character, woodland, soils and natural qualities, means the site reflects many of the special qualities of the Kent Downs. These elements alongside the enclosed views within the valley, the sloping topography contribute to the natural beauty of the site and, albeit to a localised extent, to the natural beauty of the Kent Downs National Landscape.

**Detractors**

- Heavy traffic and noise associated with nearby M25 and traffic and movement along the adjacent A2024 Croydon Road.

**Visual amenity**



**28 Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)**

**Extent of potential visibility**

Presence of woodland to the north and west of Westerham would limit views of development from the north and west of the site. The ZTV indicates that views of development would generally be limited to within 500m of the site, extending in localised patches to the north-east and south-east. To the south-east, there may be views from the western and central parts of Westerham, including the conservation area. There may also be views from higher and more exposed areas in the surrounding landscape, for example to the south of Westerham near Glebe House and Hosey Hill. To the north-east there are likely to be few people to experience views, limited to the roads such as Pilgrim’s Way and Hogtrough Hill, although in reality views would generally be screened or filtered by trees and woodland in the surrounding landscape from these locations.

## Key views

### *Potential views for residents/ local community and recreational users within 500m of the site:*

- The local communities of and residents of dwellings in and around:
  - Westerham, including properties at Farleycroft, Croft Road and Granville Road, and potential views from the conservation area;
  - Properties on and close to the B2024 Croydon Road.
- Users of public rights of way:
  - SR207 to the south of the site between Croft Road and B2024 Croydon Road;
  - SR338 to the south-west of the site between Westerham and the M25;
  - SR339 to the south-west of the site between Farley Lane and SR338.

### *Potential views from promoted routes within 3km of the site:*

- Small points on the Tandridge Border Path to the north-west of the site.
- The North Downs Way to the north of the site, although this route is largely in woodland. Views towards the site would likely be intermittent, more likely in winter, and views from further east would be screened or filtered by intervening woodland such as Westerham Wood.

### *Key strategic views (within 3km)*

- None found.



The site visible between houses on Croft Road



Glimpsed view between buildings towards the site from Buckingham Thorns Road

## 29 Representative views of the site

## Potential effects and mitigation

Potential effects and whether they may affect the key susceptibilities or valued features, as well as mitigation opportunities to avoid or minimise effects or to restore landscape features are considered below.

<b>Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes</b>	<b>Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)</b>
The hedgerows and trees.	Two hedgerows dissect the site north-east to south-west and north-west to south-east. There are some hedgerow trees and a small group of trees in the south-west of the site. It may be difficult to retain these features given the shape of the site in relation to the field pattern. Mitigation should consider extending the site boundaries to provide mitigation planting in the areas around the site boundaries.
The historic field pattern.	Although the field pattern is locally disrupted, given the shape of the site it may be difficult to retain a sense of the historic field pattern, and it is likely there would be effects on this characteristic.
The rural and low density settlement pattern of Westerham.	The location of the site means it would be associated with the settlement of Westerham. However, development on the outskirts of Westerham north of the Croydon Road (to the east of the site), is low density. Therefore, development at the density of the parameters may appear out

Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes	Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)
	of context. Substantial tree planting within the site and beyond the site boundaries would help to minimise effects.
The local vernacular.	Design of development could respond and reflect the local vernacular through choice of styles and materials.
Long open views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.	The site is not publicly accessible and therefore views from the site could not be confirmed at the site visit. There may be longer views to and from the site, although development on the site would be seen as part of wider development within Westerham and would not affect longer views along the river valley.
The historic settlement of Westerham and its conservation area.	Whilst the countryside and wooded hills form an important setting to Westerham Conservation Area, the site is set relatively low on the valley slopes and is therefore less visible. Effects on the setting of the conservation area are unlikely to be significant due to the distance and the extent of intervening development. However, comprehensive visual assessment should be undertaken to confirm potential views.
General peacefulness of the rural landscape.	It is likely there would be some effects on the rural character which would be unavoidable, however, effects would be localised due to the enclosure of the site and development would be associated with the adjacent settlement. Effects could be partially mitigated through appropriate tree planting within the site to ensure any development sits within a landscape context.
Special qualities of the National Landscape	The site reflects some of the special qualities, some of which may be affected, including biodiversity, mixed farmland character, woodland, soils and natural qualities. Whilst it may be possible to mitigate impacts on most trees, it would not be possible to mitigate or compensate for effects on the farmland character, which would be replaced by development.

### 30 Potential effects and mitigation

## Conclusion

The site is located close to the settlement edge to the north of Westerham and whilst it would extend development into the rural countryside north of Westerham, it would be generally contiguous with the existing pattern of settlement. The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and has valued qualities and features including its semi-rural character and the naturalistic character of trees and hedgerows, although there are no designated features within the site. Whilst there is a semi-rural character to the site and its surroundings, it is affected by noise and visual intrusion of major roads and the influence of existing development within Westerham.

Due to the wooded nature of the surrounding landscape, views of potential development are likely to be relatively contained, although there are likely to be relatively close distance views for the community of Westerham including potential views from the conservation area.

Loss of hedgerows and trees may not be easily avoided, although compensation would be possible through integrating appropriate planting as part of any development.

Development may result in the following key effects on landscape character and views:

- The loss of hedgerows, trees and small scale fields.
- Effects on the low density settlement pattern and semi-rural character of the wider area.
- Obscuring or partial loss of long views to the Kent Downs to the north.
- Effects on people's views from Westerham and local public rights of way.

Overall, the likely significance of effects is considered to be **medium**.

## Guidance and opportunities

### Guidance

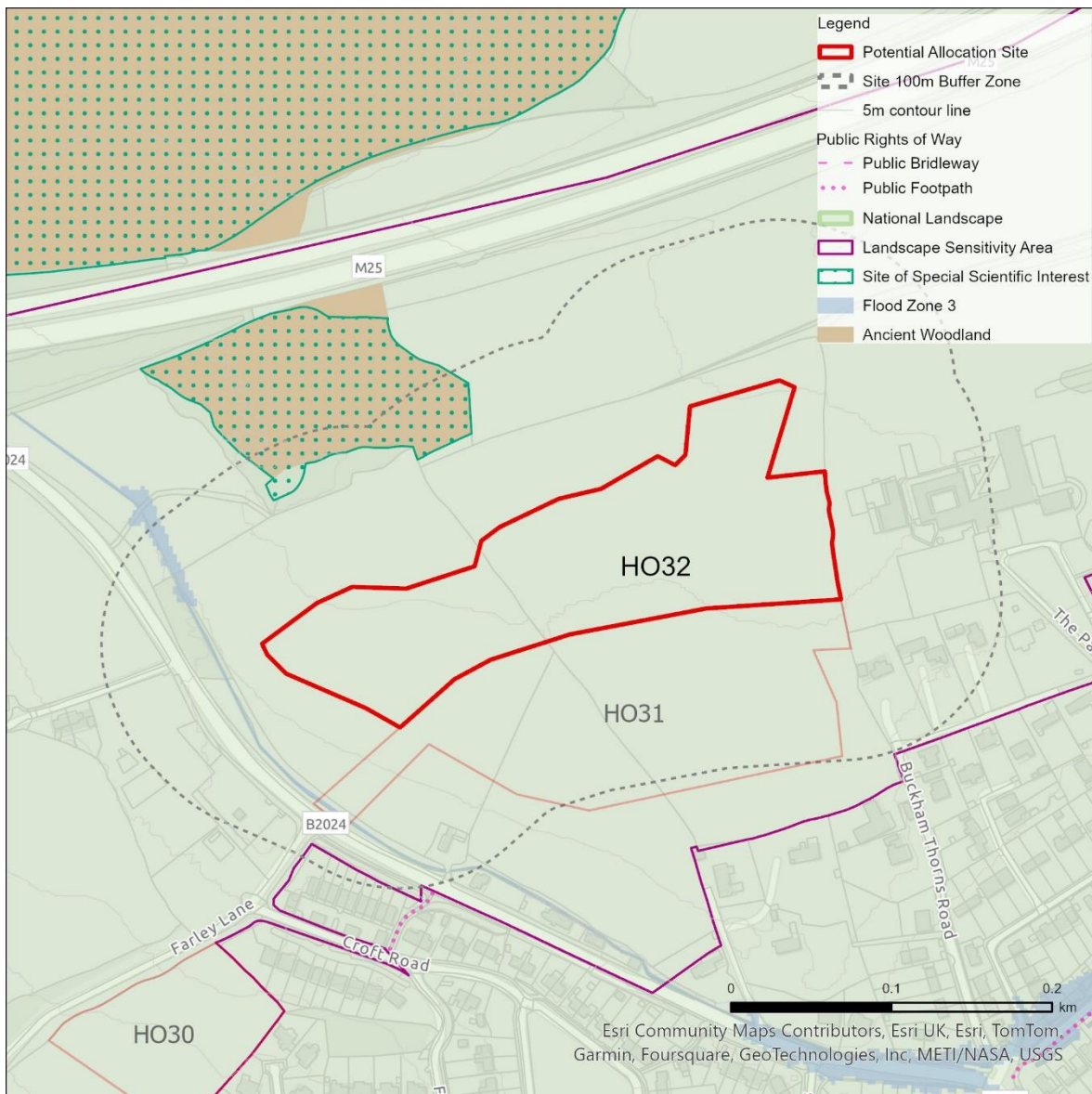
- Conserve the special architectural and historic character of Westerham and maintain a strong link between its historic edges and surrounding rural landscape.

- Retain the hedgerows and trees where possible. Ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible.
- Special care should be paid to boundaries (which should be rural in nature where they adjoin countryside) and lighting (which should be minimised, especially in rural areas). Conserve and enhance the existing interface between Westerham and the surrounding countryside. Avoid the use of non-native conifer species.
- Celebrate the local Kentish vernacular with use of local red brick, ragstone, weather boarding and half tile hung façades.
- Consider views from the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge. Ensure any new development is well integrated with the landscape and minimise visibility through siting and landscaping.
- Integrate appropriate planting and zoning as part of any development design to reflect the wider historic field pattern and help to fit development into the wider rural context.

### Opportunities to further the statutory purpose of the Kent Downs National Landscape

- Investigate any potential for enhancements in line with the aims of the Greensand Heaths & Commons Biodiversity Opportunity Area.
- Consider community and education outreach programmes linked to the adjacent primary school.
- Manage woodlands, shaws and trees outside woodlands, including woodland planted as road screening, to achieve a diversity of age and species of trees which includes locally characteristic species such as yew, holly, beech and oak. Maintain coppice management in areas where this is already taking place and look to extend active woodland management.
- Sensitive tree planting schemes including within streetscapes. Be mindful of the need to retain noise masking of traffic.
- Improvements to the urban edge of existing settlement to the east and south of the site, using new planting and existing hedgerows to contain built form, and to provide links between settlements and the wider countryside.
- Develop a village design statement for Westerham to retain and promote local distinctiveness in built form and open spaces.
- Work with highways authorities to increase the biodiversity value of verges and hedgerows without compromising safety.

## A.6 HO32 Land east of Croydon Road (northern parcel), Westerham



### 31 Context map

#### Site description

The site consists of parts of two arable fields on generally flat landform. A hedgerow field boundary dissects the site roughly north-south. The site is located outside of the settlement boundary but just over 100m (to the south), and a school is located adjacent to the east of the site, with detached houses to the south-east. Apart from the eastern boundary, the site boundaries are offset from the edges of the field boundaries. The site is located adjacent to the north of site HO31 and lies wholly within the Kent Downs National Landscape.



## Context

Environmental data	Environmental designations and features within the site and immediate surroundings
<b>Environmental designations within 100m</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent Downs National Landscape – within the site</li> <li>• Archaeological notification area – within the site</li> <li>• Biodiversity opportunity area (Greensand Heaths &amp; Commons) – within the site</li> <li>• Chalk rivers: River Darent tributary– within 50m (north and south-west)</li> <li>• Ancient woodland (Westerham Wood) – within 100m</li> <li>• Site of special scientific interest (SSSI) (Westerham Wood) – within 100m</li> </ul>
<b>Other relevant planning considerations within 100m</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green belt – within the site</li> <li>• Urban confines (Westerham) – within 100m</li> </ul>
<b>Kent Downs landscape character area</b>	LCA 4a: Chevening (formerly West Darent)
<b>Sevenoaks residential character area</b>	Not applicable
<b>Sevenoaks landscape character area</b>	LCA 8a: Upper Darent Valley – West
<b>Sevenoaks landscape sensitivity assessment area – Sensitivity level</b>	W1: Westerham north – medium sensitivity

### 32 Environmental context

## Landscape sensitivity

### Key characteristics

The site has a semi-rural character, influenced by the medium scale open fields, and clusters of small groups of houses and the school on the edge of Westerham.

- The top of a subtle and gently undulating valley predominantly underlain by clay and mudstone (Gault Formation).
- Enclosed by the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.
- Mature hedgerows with isolated standard oaks.
- Blocks of mixed broadleaf woodlands and shaws including areas of ancient woodland (in the wider landscape, including Westerham Wood).
- Historic field pattern of regular parliamentary and older irregular fields disrupted locally.
- Rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads with scattered 20th century residential and industrial development on settlement edges.
- Historic riverside settlements – Westerham, to the south of the site.
- Characteristic vernacular architecture (in the wider surroundings).
- Long views across the valley towards the North Downs and Greensand Ridge.
- Generally a peaceful rural landscape disrupted locally by transport corridors.

### Sensitivity

In relation to the Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, the site is a small area within W1: Westerham north, assessed as having medium sensitivity to residential development. In terms of areas indicated as lower sensitivity, the site is on flat/gently undulating landform and in an area to the north of Westerham where 20<sup>th</sup> century development has already expanded and is influenced by the motorway corridor, indicating lower sensitivity in terms of perceptual character.

### Key susceptibilities relevant to the site are:

- The hedgerows, shaws and woodlands which are valued features of the Clay Valleys.
- The historic field pattern where this pattern is still intact – the site is identified by the historic landscape character assessment as being small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries which may indicate some time depth.
- The rural and low density settlement pattern of Westerham with scattered farmhouses outside the villages (in the wider landscape).

- The local vernacular including cottages and historic houses built from ragstone, weatherboarding, and warm red brick (in the wider landscape).
- Long open views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.

**Key valued features and characteristics relevant to the site are:**

- The hedgerow network which contributes to landscape pattern and provides ecological links.
- Mixed deciduous woodlands and shaws that provide valuable semi-natural habitat for wildlife and a sense of history including Westerham Wood (approximately 60m north of the site), one of the few remaining ancient woodlands on Gault Clay in Kent and designated ancient woodland and SSSI.
- Within the Greensand Heaths & Commons Biodiversity Opportunity Area.
- Long open views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the scarps which are locally distinctive.
- The historic settlement of Westerham and its conservation area (approximately 475m to the south of the site).
- General peacefulness of the rural landscape.

**Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape**

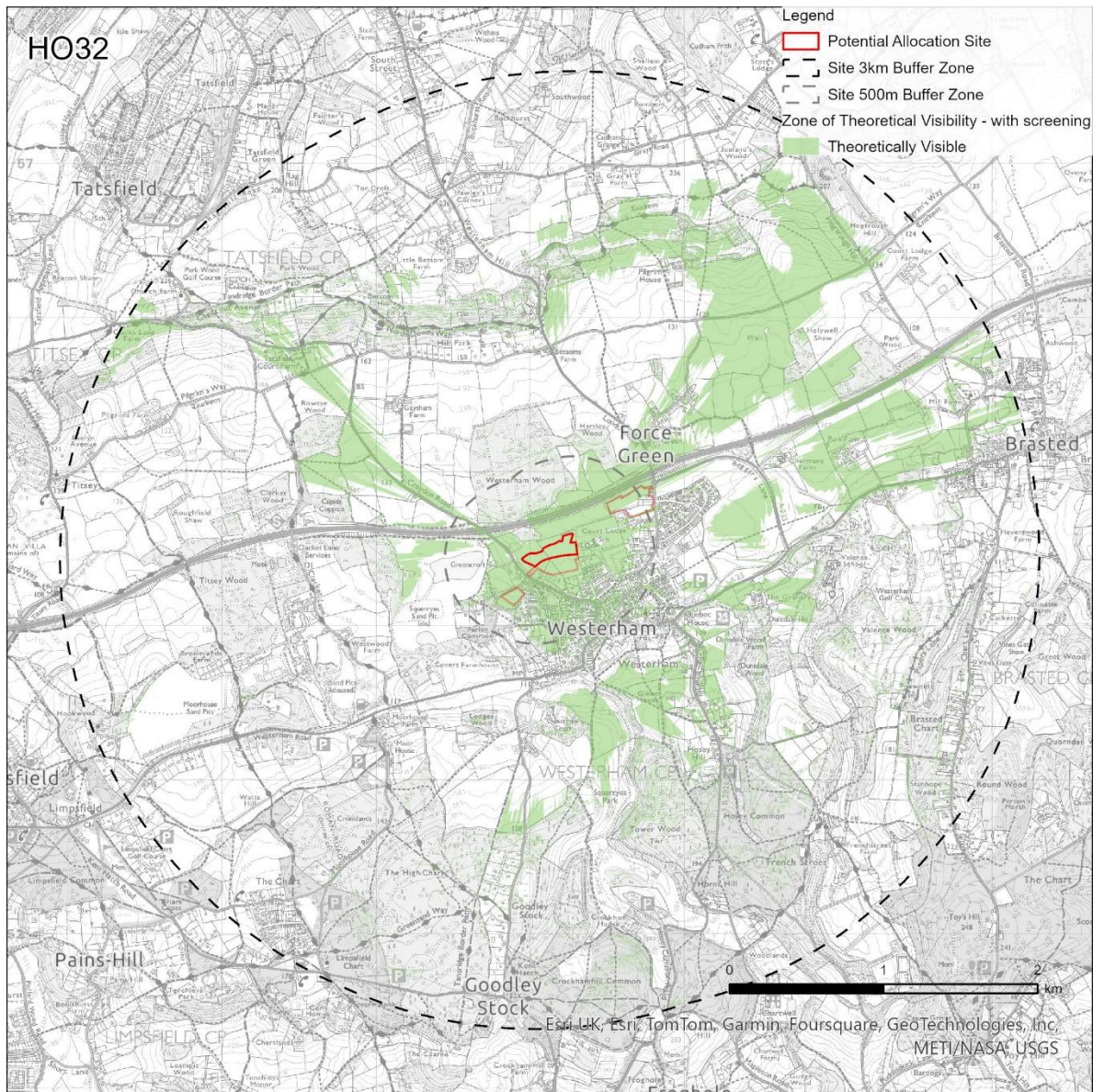
The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and as such is valued at the highest level.

<b>Special qualities of the Kent Downs</b>	<b>How are they represented within the site?</b>
<b>Dramatic landform and views</b>	The site is relatively flat at around 120m AOD. Views within the valley are generally enclosed, with some longer distance views north to the Kent Downs and Greensand Ridge (although this could not be verified on site as it was not publicly accessible).
<b>Biodiversity-rich habitats</b>	The site comprises arable farmland which is unlikely to be biodiversity-rich. The hedgerows, hedgerow trees and individual trees within the site are valued habitats in the Kent Downs.
<b>Farmed landscape</b>	The site is under arable land use, which contributes to the mixed farming character of the National Landscape but does not reflect the most highly valued pastoral scenery of the Kent Downs.
<b>Woodland and trees</b>	There are no woodlands within the site, although there is a hedgerow/ hedgerow trees within the field boundary crossing through the site and a belt of trees along the eastern boundary, which are highlighted as an important characteristic of the Kent Downs. No trees within the site are designated as ancient woodland or protected by Tree Preservation Orders.
<b>A rich legacy of historic and cultural heritage</b>	The site is located on the outskirts of Westerham, approximately 475m from the edge of Westerham Conservation Area. The fields within the site are characterised as small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries which may indicate some time depth. Nearby development is generally relatively modern.
<b>Geology and natural resources</b>	Due to its undeveloped character, soil within the site is likely to represent an important natural capital resource. The site is underlain by sandstone and mudstone and is classed as Grade 3 agricultural land (good to moderate quality). There is a chalk stream (tributary of the River Darent) adjacent to the west and north of the site.
<b>Tranquillity and remoteness</b>	The site has a semi-rural character with some naturalistic features and characteristics including rural land use, intact field boundaries and occasional long distance views of the Kent Downs to the north. Tranquillity is affected by human influences such as the M25 approximately 150m north of the site and the B2024 within 50m to the south-west of the site.  Due to the proximity of the site to the settlement of Westerham, it does not represent the characteristic peaceful, dark night skies found elsewhere in the Kent Downs and falls within a night light classification of 2-4 nanowatts / cm <sup>2</sup> / sr which is considered a medium level of radiance shining into the night sky.
<b>Summary of the extent to which the site reflects the special qualities</b>	The biodiversity, mixed farmland character, woodland, soils and natural qualities, means the site reflects many of the special qualities of the Kent Downs. These elements alongside the enclosed views within the valley, the sloping topography contribute to the natural beauty of the site and, albeit to a localised extent, to the natural beauty of the Kent Downs National Landscape.

Detractors

- Heavy traffic and noise associated with nearby M25.

Visual amenity



34 Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)

Extent of potential visibility

Presence of woodland to the north and west of Westerham would limit views of development from the north and west of the site. The ZTV indicates that views of development would generally be limited to within 500m of the site, extending in localised patches to the north-east and south-east. To the south-east, there may be views from the western and central parts of Westerham, including the conservation area. There may also be views from higher and more exposed areas in the surrounding landscape, for example to the south of Westerham near Glebe House and Hosey Hill. To the north-east there are likely to be few people to experience views, limited to the roads such as Pilgrim’s Way and Hogtrough Hill, although in reality views would generally be screened or filtered by trees and woodland in the surrounding landscape from these locations.

## Key views

### Potential views for residents/ local community and recreational users within 500m of the site:

- The local communities of and residents of dwellings in and around:
  - Westerham, including properties at Farleycroft, Croft Road and Granville Road, and potential views from the conservation area;
  - Properties on and close to the B2024 Croydon Road.
- Users of public rights of way:
  - SR207 to the south of the site between Croft Road and B2024 Croydon Road;
  - SR338 to the south-west of the site between Westerham and the M25;
  - SR339 to the south-west of the site between Farley Lane and SR338.

### Potential views from promoted routes within 3km of the site:

- Small points on Clacket Lane National Trail to the north-west of the site.
- The North Downs Way to the north of the site, although this route is largely in woodland. Views towards the site would likely be intermittent, more likely in winter, and views from further east would be screened/filtered by intervening woodland such as Westerham Wood.

### Key strategic views (within 3km)

- None found.



The site just visible beyond site HO31 between houses on Croft Road



View towards the site from Buckham Thorns Road

## 35 Representative views of the site

## Potential effects and mitigation

Potential effects and whether they may affect the key susceptibilities or /valued features, as well as mitigation opportunities to avoid or minimise effects or to restore landscape features are considered below.

Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes	Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)
The hedgerows and trees.	One hedgerow dissects the site roughly north-south. It may be difficult to retain these features given the shape of the site in relation to the field pattern. Mitigation should consider extending the site boundaries to provide mitigation planting in the areas around the site boundaries.
The historic field pattern.	Although the field pattern is locally disrupted, given the shape of the site it may be difficult to retain a sense of the historic field pattern, and it is likely there would be effects on this characteristic.
The rural and low density settlement pattern of Westerham.	The location of the site means it would be associated with the settlement of Westerham. However, development on the outskirts of Westerham north of the Croydon Road (to the east of the site), is low density. Therefore development at the density of the parameters may appear out of context. Substantial tree planting within the site and beyond the site boundaries would help to minimise effects. If this site were to be developed in isolation

Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes	Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)
	(i.e. without site HO31 to the south), the site would be disconnected from the settlement and effects on landscape character would therefore be larger.
The local vernacular.	Design of development could respond and reflect the local vernacular through choice of styles and materials.
Long open views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.	The site is not publicly accessible and therefore views from the site could not be confirmed at the site visit. There may be longer views to and from the site, although development on the site would be seen as part of wider development within Westerham and would not affect longer views along the river valley.
The historic settlement of Westerham and its conservation area.	The conservation area is approximately 400m from the site. Whilst the countryside and wooded hills form an important setting to Westerham Conservation Area, the site is set relatively low on the valley slopes and is therefore less visible. However, comprehensive visual assessment should be undertaken to confirm potential views. Effects on the setting of the conservation area could be mitigated through appropriate tree planting within the site to integrate development into its landscape setting. The form, mass, height, colour and materials should be carefully considered with respect to any valued views from Westerham and the conservation area.
General peacefulness of the rural landscape.	It is likely there would be some effects on the rural character which would be unavoidable, however, effects would be localised due to the enclosure of the site and development would be associated with the adjacent settlement. Effects could be partially mitigated through appropriate tree planting within the site to ensure any development sits within a landscape context.
Special qualities of the National Landscape	The site reflects some of the special qualities, some of which may be affected, including biodiversity, mixed farmland character, woodland, soils and natural qualities. Whilst it may be possible to mitigate impacts on most trees, it would not be possible to mitigate or compensate for effects on the farmland character, which would be replaced by development.

### 36 Potential effects and mitigation

## Conclusion

The site is located close to the settlement edge to the north of Westerham and whilst it would extend development into the rural countryside north of Westerham, it would be generally contiguous with the existing pattern of settlement, if it was developed at the same time as, or after site HO31. If the southern parcel was not developed, development within this site would not be related to the rest of the settlement.

The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and has valued qualities and features including its semi-rural character and the naturalistic character of trees and hedgerows, although there are no designated features within the site. Whilst there is a semi-rural character to the site and its surroundings, it is affected by noise and visual intrusion of major roads and the influence of existing development within Westerham.

Due to the wooded nature of the surrounding landscape, views of potential development are likely to be relatively contained, although there are likely to be relatively close distance views for the community of Westerham including potential views from the conservation area.

Loss of hedgerows and trees may not be easily avoided, although compensation would be possible through integrating appropriate planting as part of any development.

Development may result in the following key effects on landscape character and views:

- The loss of hedgerows, trees and small scale fields.
- Effects on the low density settlement pattern and semi-rural character of the wider area.
- Obscuring or partial loss of long views to the Kent Downs to the north.
- Effects on views of and the setting of Westerham Conservation Area.
- Effects on people's views from Westerham and local public rights of way.

Overall, the likely significance of effects is considered to be **medium**.

## Guidance and opportunities

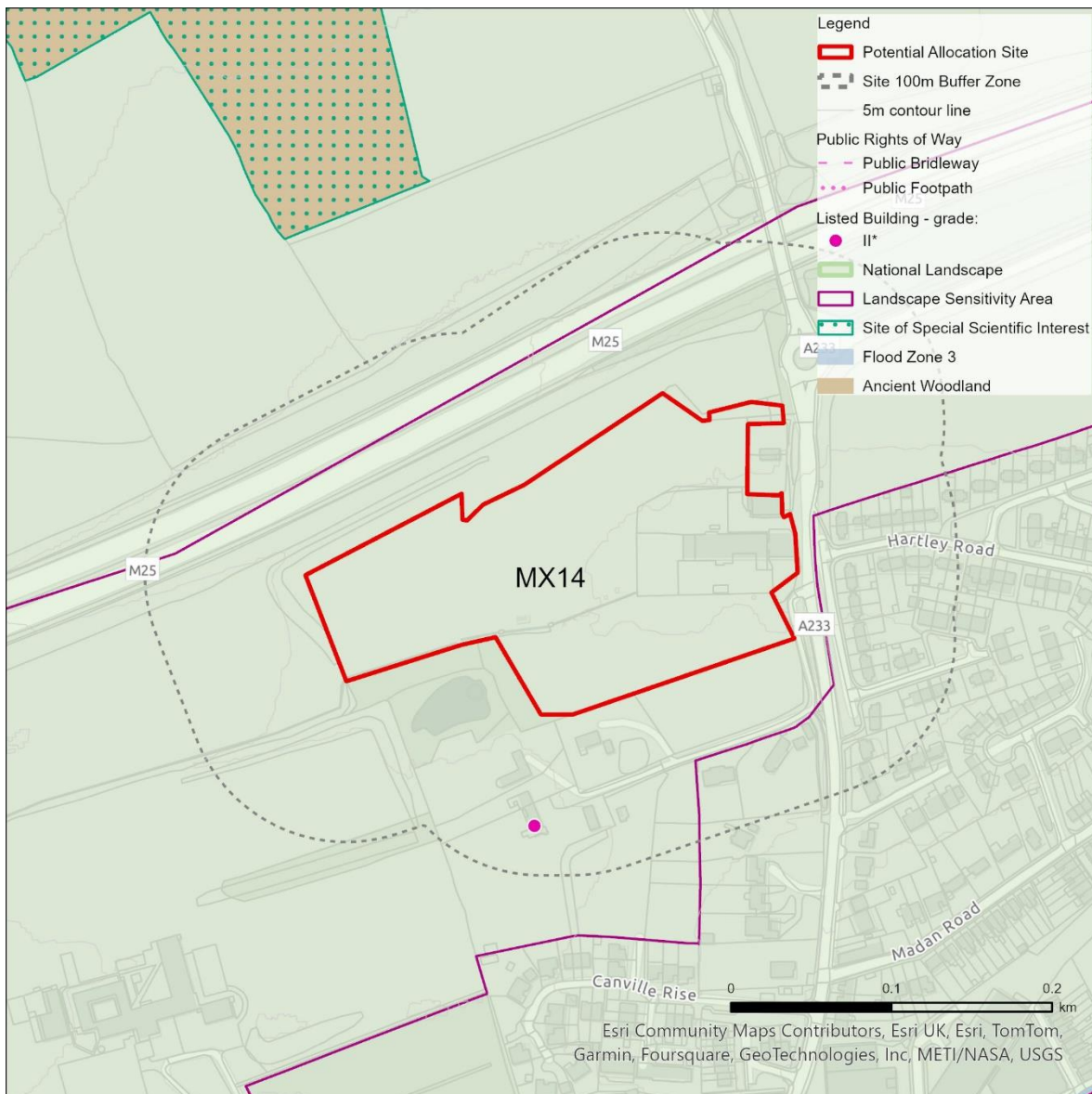
### Guidance

- Conserve the special architectural and historic character of Westerham and maintain a strong link between its historic edges and surrounding rural landscape.
- Retain the hedgerows and trees where possible. Ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible.
- Special care should be paid to boundaries (which should be rural in nature where they adjoin countryside) and lighting (which should be minimised, especially in rural areas). Conserve and enhance the existing interface between Westerham and the surrounding countryside.
- Celebrate the local Kentish vernacular with use of local red brick, ragstone, weather boarding and half tile hung facades.
- Consider views from the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge. Ensure any new development is well integrated with the landscape and minimise visibility through siting and landscaping.
- Integrate appropriate planting and zoning as part of any development design to reflect the wider historic field pattern and help to fit development into the wider rural context.

### Opportunities to further the statutory purpose of the Kent Downs National Landscape

- Investigate any potential for enhancements in line with the aims of the Greensand Heaths & Commons Biodiversity Opportunity Area.
- Consider community/education outreach programmes linked to the adjacent primary school.
- Management of the River Darent, encouraging in-stream river enhancement and river restoration, including enhancing water quality, managing riparian habitats, removing invasive species and promoting planting of native species such as willow, alder, hornbeam and poplar along the course of the river. Encourage recreational access to the river banks.
- Manage woodlands, shaws and trees outside woodlands, including woodland planted as road screening, to achieve a diversity of age and species of trees which includes locally-characteristic species such as yew, holly, beech and oak. Maintain coppice management in areas where this is already taking place and look to extend active woodland management.
- Sensitive tree planting schemes including within streetscapes. Be mindful of the need to retain noise masking of traffic.
- Improvements to the urban edge of existing settlement to the east and south of the site, using new planting and existing hedgerows to contain built form, and to provide links between settlements and the wider countryside.
- Develop a village design statement for Westerham to retain and promote local distinctiveness in built form and open spaces.
- Work with highways authorities to increase the biodiversity value of verges and hedgerows without compromising safety.
- Potential to provide new public rights of way to connect the site to Westerham and other public rights of way.

## A.7 MX14 Land at Wolfe Westerham, 190 London Road, Westerham



### 37 Context map

#### Site description

The site consists of two pasture fields and a BP garage. Landform is generally flat, and a tributary of the River Darent flows through the site west to east. Site boundaries are defined by tree and hedgerow-lined field boundaries along most edges, and by A233 London Road to the east of the site. A pair of semi-detached houses lie adjacent to the east of the site close to a roundabout with the A233 London Road/ Beggars Lane and overbridge for the M25 (the M25 lies within 50m to the north of the site). The site lies wholly within the Kent Downs National Landscape.

## Context

Environmental data	Environmental designations and features within the site and immediate surroundings
Environmental designations within 100m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent Downs National Landscape – within the site</li> <li>• Archaeological notification area – within the site</li> <li>• Biodiversity opportunity area (Greensand Heaths &amp; Commons) – within the site</li> <li>• Chalk Rivers: tributary of the River Darent– within the site</li> <li>• Tree preservation order– within 50m</li> <li>• Grade II* listed Court Lodge – within 100m</li> </ul>
Other relevant planning considerations within 100m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green belt – within the site</li> <li>• Urban confines (Westerham) – within 50m</li> </ul>
Kent Downs landscape character area	LCA 4a: Chevening (formerly West Darent), Darent Valley
Sevenoaks residential character area	Not applicable
Sevenoaks landscape character area	LCA 8a: Upper Darent Valley - west
Sevenoaks landscape sensitivity assessment area – Sensitivity level	W1: Westerham north – medium sensitivity

### 38 Environmental context

## Landscape sensitivity

### Key characteristics

The site is located in close proximity to the M25, and its sense of tranquillity is affected by the traffic and noise of the key road corridor. Despite this, mature trees and hedgerows and occasional glimpsed views along the valley to wooded skylines lend a semi-rural character in parts.

- A gently undulating valley predominantly underlain by clay and mudstone (Gault Formation).
- Enclosed by the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.
- Mature hedgerows with isolated standard oaks.
- Blocks of mixed broadleaf woodlands and shaws (in the wider landscape).
- Historic field pattern of regular parliamentary and older irregular fields disrupted locally.
- Rural settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads with scattered 20th century residential and industrial development on settlement edges.
- Historic riverside settlements – Westerham, in the wider landscape.
- Characteristic vernacular architecture (less characteristic in this part of Westerham).
- Long views across the valley towards the North Downs and Greensand Ridge.
- Generally a peaceful rural landscape disrupted locally by transport corridors.

### Sensitivity

In relation to the Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, the site is a small area within W1: Westerham north, assessed as having medium sensitivity to residential development. In terms of areas indicated as lower sensitivity, the area has a flat/ gently undulating landform and is in an area to the north of Westerham where 20<sup>th</sup> century development has already expanded and is influenced by the motorway corridor, indicating lower sensitivity in terms of perceptual character.

### Key susceptibilities relevant to the site are:

- The hedgerows, shaws and woodlands which are valued features of the Clay Valleys.
- The historic field pattern where this pattern is still intact – there may be some remnants of historic fields in the wavy boundaries within the south-west of the site in particular.
- The rural and low density settlement pattern of Westerham with scattered farmhouses outside the
- Villages (in the wider area) – south of the site the settlement pattern consists of detached houses in large plots, reflecting its interface with the wider countryside. However, to the east of the A233 London Road settlement pattern is suburban in character and does not reflect the low density settlement character.



- The local vernacular including cottages and historic houses built from ragstone, weatherboarding, and warm red brick (in the wider area).
- Long open views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.

**Key valued features and characteristics relevant to the site are:**

- The hedgerow network which contributes to landscape pattern and provides ecological links.
- Mixed deciduous woodlands and shaws that provide a valuable semi-natural habitat for wildlife and a sense of history.
- Wetlands and wet pasture on the valley floor and around large water bodies that are a valuable semi-natural habitat for wildlife – may be present within the site, although there are no priority habitats present within the site.
- Long open views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the scarps which are locally distinctive.

**Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape**

The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and as such is valued at the highest level.

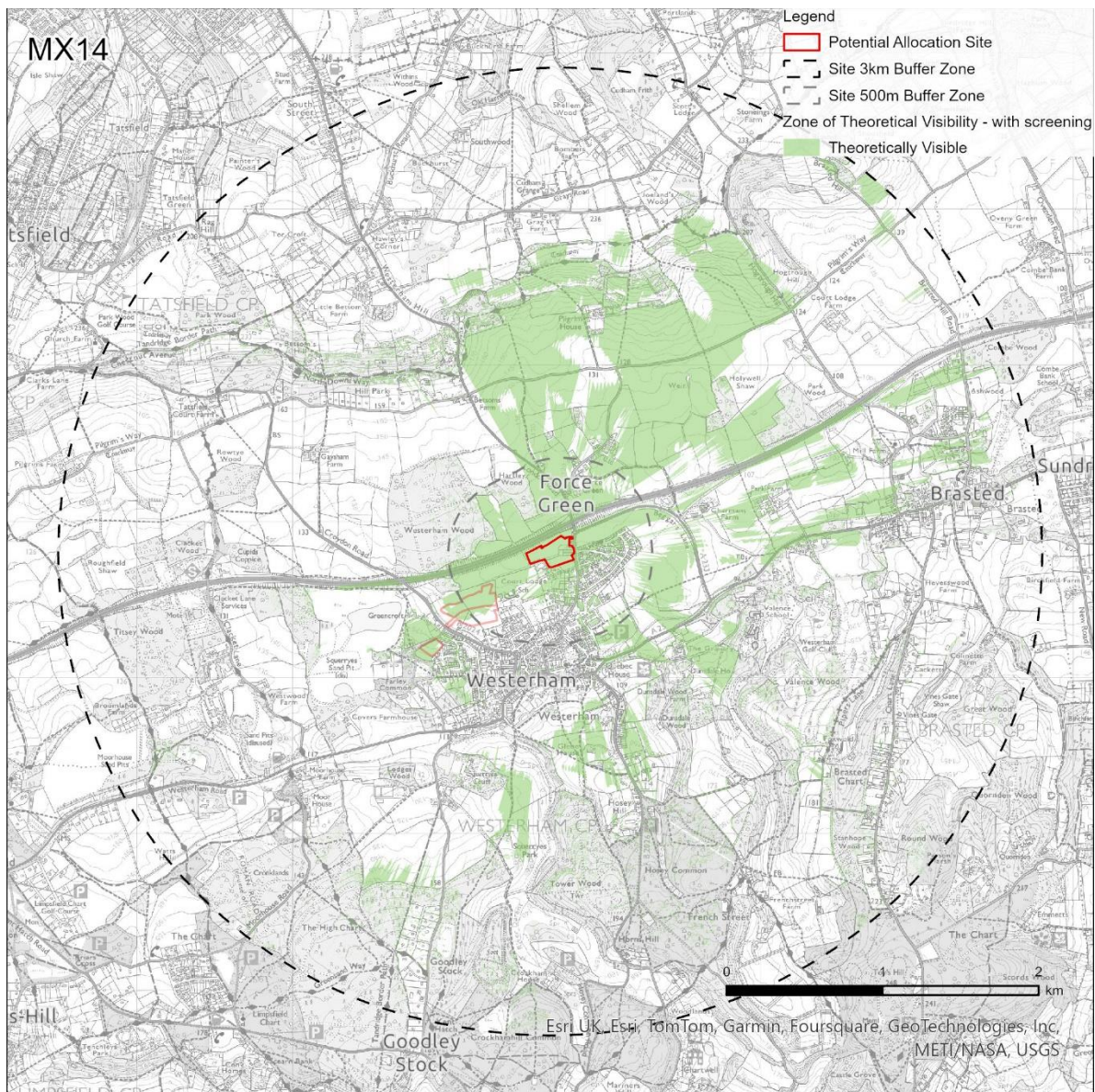
<b>Special qualities of the Kent Downs</b>	<b>How are they represented within the site?</b>
<b>Dramatic landform and views</b>	The site is relatively flat at around 115m AOD. Views within the valley are generally enclosed, with some longer distance views north to the Kent Downs.
<b>Biodiversity-rich habitats</b>	There are no priority habitats or ecological designations present within the site or immediate surroundings.
<b>Farmed landscape</b>	Land use on the site is not farmland.
<b>Woodland and trees</b>	There is a hedgerow and hedgerow trees within the site and trees and hedgerows at the site boundaries, which are an important characteristic of the Kent Downs. No trees within the site are designated as ancient woodland or protected by Tree Preservation Orders.
<b>A rich legacy of historic and cultural heritage</b>	There are no designated heritage assets within the site. Grade II* listed Court Lodge lies to the south of the site but it is enclosed by dense trees and vegetation, reducing the likelihood of effects on its setting. The fields are identified as being small rectilinear with wavy boundaries, and may have some sense of historic time depth, although the modern garage and proximity of the M25 and other settlement has already affected the setting.
<b>Geology and natural resources</b>	Due to the undeveloped character across most of the site, soil is likely to represent an important natural capital resource. The site is classed as Grade 3 agricultural land (good to moderate quality). There is also a chalk stream within the site which is a tributary of the River Darent.
<b>Tranquillity and remoteness</b>	The site’s proximity to the M25 (within 50m), as well as other development within Westerham, has already affected its perceptual qualities, reducing sense of tranquillity. The site does not represent the characteristic peaceful, dark night skies found elsewhere in the Kent Downs and falls within a night light classification of 2-4 nanowatts / cm2 / sr which is considered a medium level of radiance shining into the night sky.
<b>Summary of the extent to which the site reflects the special qualities</b>	The trees and natural resources, including the chalk stream running through the site are reflective of the Kent Downs special qualities, however, the site does not strongly contribute to the special qualities of the Kent Downs. There are occasional views into and through the site to elsewhere in the Kent Downs and wider valley which increase sense of rurality despite the presence of nearby roads.

**39 Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape**

**Detractors**

- Noise, traffic and movement associated with the M25 to the north of the site, as well as the London Road and roundabout to the east of the site.
- Poorly integrated settlement edge with suburban character in the north-east of Westerham, to the east of the site.

## Visual amenity



### 40 Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)

#### Extent of potential visibility

The ZTV indicates that views of development would be limited within the village of Westerham, although views would be more extensive within the open, south-facing slopes to the north of the site. There would be open views from the M25, and some footpaths close to the site. However, due to the influence of hedgerows and woodlands in the wider landscape, it is likely that views would, in reality, be limited from further away.

#### Key views

##### *Potential views for residents/ local community and recreational users within 500m of the site:*

- The local communities of and residents of dwellings in and around:
  - Westerham, in the vicinity of the A233 London Road (not within the conservation area);
  - Local community within Hartley Road, Elm Road and Ash Road to the east of the site;
  - Force Green, although due to intervening vegetation there are unlikely to be many views.
- Users of public rights of way:
  - SR337 to the north-east of the site, east of Force Green;

- SR341 to the south-west of the site as it crosses open space (King George’s Field) on the edge of the settlement.

*Potential views from promoted routes within 3km of the site:*

- The North Downs Way to the north of the site, although this route is largely in woodland. Views towards the site would likely be intermittent, more likely in winter, and views from the north-west would be screened/filtered by intervening woodland such as Westerham Wood, or localised hedges along routes.

*Key strategic views (within 3km)*

- None found.



Field to the south of the site



BP garage within the site

**41 Representative views of the site**

**Potential effects and mitigation**

Potential effects and whether they may affect the key susceptibilities or valued features, as well as mitigation opportunities to avoid or minimise effects or to restore landscape features are considered below.

<b>Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes</b>	<b>Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)</b>
The hedgerows, shaws and woodlands.	It should be possible to retain the majority of trees and hedgerows within the site, particularly on the site boundaries. However, there may be some loss of hedgerow or hedgerow trees within the site.
The historic field pattern.	The historic field pattern has already been affected by development within the site, major infrastructure and settlement on the edge of Westerham. However, the remaining field pattern would be affected by development on the site.
The rural and low density settlement pattern.	The location of the site means it would be associated with the settlement of Westerham. Nevertheless, development at the density of the development parameters would be out of character with the character of the edges of Westerham to the south of the site. It would be more in character with development to the east of the site although this is referred to negatively in the landscape character assessment. There may therefore be effects on landscape character which could be partially mitigated through a landscape-led design approach and sensitive tree and green infrastructure planting around and within the site.
The local vernacular	Design of development could respond and reflect the local vernacular through choice of styles and materials.
Long open views across the river valley and to the backdrop of the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge.	Development may affect long views from within and near the site, however, further from the site it is likely that development would become associated with the edge of Westerham and would not affect longer views along the river valley.
Special qualities of the National Landscape	The site reflects some of the special qualities, some of which may be affected, including trees and natural resources. Whilst the site is not strongly characteristic of the Kent Downs, it does help to provide a setting to existing development and a buffer between the built form and the M25, helping to reduce the effects of these features on the wider landscape.

**42 Potential effects and mitigation**

## Conclusion

The site is located on the edge of the settlement of Westerham and would be broadly contiguous with the existing settlement pattern. The site lies within the National Landscape and has some valued qualities and features including the hedgerows and trees within the site and its boundaries and the stream within the site, although it does not contribute strongly to the special qualities of the National Landscape. Nevertheless, the open part of the site does provide a buffer between the settlement of Westerham and the M25. The open part of the site allows views along the valley floor and helps to retain a sense of ruralness within the National Landscape despite the surrounding development and the M25.

Views of development would generally be quite contained due to topography and vegetation both around the site and in the wider landscape. Views within Westerham would also be limited, including views from within the conservation area.

There are opportunities for mitigation to avoid effects on key features, although there may be some loss of hedgerows and trees.

Development may result in the following key effects on landscape character and views:

- Loss of hedgerow and trees.
- Effects on the rural character of the landscape, although these would be relatively contained.
- Special qualities of the National Landscape.

Overall, the likely significance of effects is considered to be **low-medium**.

## Guidance and opportunities

### Guidance

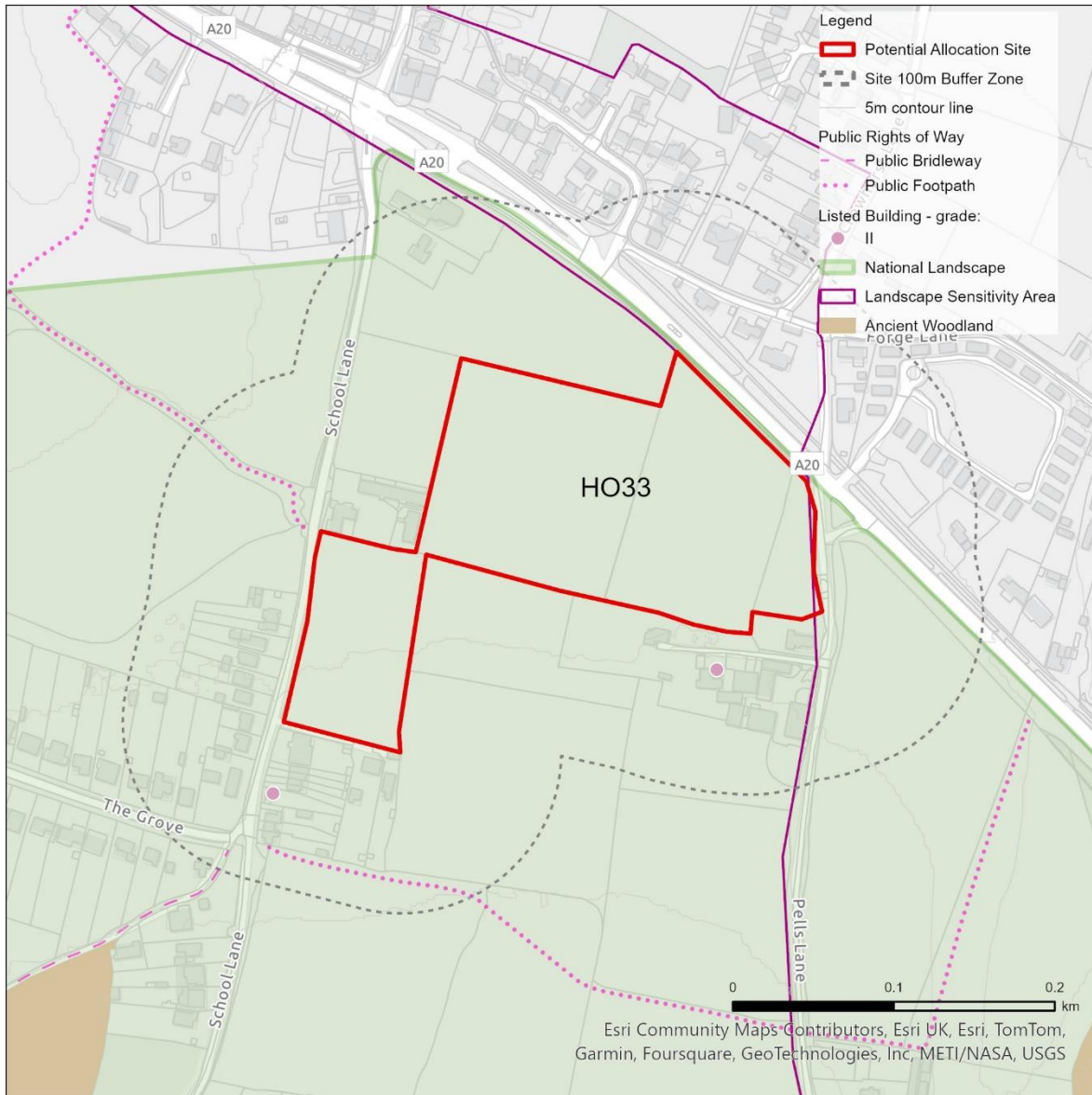
- Enhance the existing interface between Westerham and the surrounding countryside of the Clay Valleys. New built development may present an opportunity to improve some of the less attractive or harsh urban edges.
- Retain the hedgerows, shaws and small woodlands which are typical of the Clay Valley and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible.
- Special care should be paid to boundaries (which should be rural in nature where they adjoin countryside) and lighting (which should be minimised, especially in rural areas).
- Celebrate the local Kentish vernacular with use of local red brick, ragstone, weather boarding and half tile hung facades.
- Consider views from the North Downs and the Greensand Ridge. Ensure any new development is well integrated with the landscape and minimise visibility through siting and landscaping.

### Opportunities to further the statutory purpose of the Kent Downs National Landscape

- Investigate any potential for enhancements in line with the aims of the Greensand Heaths & Commons Biodiversity Opportunity Area.
- Management of the River Darent, encouraging in-stream river enhancement and river restoration. Work with the Environment Agency to enhance water quality. Manage riparian habitats, removing invasive species and promoting planting of native species such as willow, alder, hornbeam and poplar along the course of the river. Encourage recreational access to the river banks.
- Restore farm ponds and ditches.
- Manage woodlands, shaws and trees outside woodlands, including woodland planted as motorway screening, to achieve a diversity of age and species of trees which includes locally-characteristic species such as yew, holly, beech and oak. Continue to integrate motorways into the landscape using sensitive, non-linear tree planting. Maintain coppice management in areas where this is already taking place and look to extend active woodland management. Take forward careful planting schemes to retain the trees outside of woodlands component of the land and streetscapes. Be mindful of the need to retain noise masking of traffic. Promote new hedgerow and roadside trees from existing hedge stock.

- Improve the urban edge of existing settlements along the valley, using new planting and existing hedgerows to contain built form, and to provide links between settlements and the wider countryside. These could include parkland-style planting where appropriate. Avoid suburban-style property boundary and entrance treatments and avoid the use of non-native conifer species.
- Work with Highways authorities to increase the biodiversity value of verges and hedgerows without compromising safety.

## A.8 HO33 Land at Mill Farm, West Kingsdown



### 43 Context map

#### Site description

The site consists of three rectilinear fields overlaid on mostly flat landform with a subtle rise in the south, and a wedge-shaped area of woodland and scrub in the east along Pells Lane. The site is located outside the settlement boundary but adjacent to the southern part of West Kingsdown. Site boundaries are defined by the A20 and hedgerow-lined field boundaries to the north, School Lane and field boundaries to the west, Pells Lane to the east and hedgerow/ tree-lined field boundaries to the south. Kingsdown Mill and The Old School are located along the eastern and western edge respectively. The site lies wholly within the Kent Downs National Landscape.

## Context

Environmental data	Environmental designations and features within the site and immediate surroundings
Environmental designations within 100m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent Downs National Landscape – within the site</li> <li>• Archaeological notification area – within the site</li> <li>• Grade II listed Kingsdown Mill – within 50m</li> <li>• Grade II listed Tidy’s Cottage – within 50m</li> </ul>
Other relevant planning considerations within 100m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green belt – within the site</li> <li>• Public rights of way – within 50m</li> <li>• Baseline site (Land at London Road, West Kingsdown) – within 50m</li> <li>• Urban confines (West Kingsdown) – within 50m</li> </ul>
Kent Downs landscape character area	LCA 1a: Kingsdown, West Kent Downs
Sevenoaks residential character area	Not applicable
Sevenoaks landscape character area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LCA 3b: East Hill Wooded Downs</li> <li>• LCA 1a: West Kingsdown Settled Downs (adjacent to the site)</li> </ul>
Sevenoaks landscape sensitivity assessment area – Sensitivity level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WK3: West Kingsdown south – low-medium sensitivity</li> <li>• WK2: West Kingsdown east – medium sensitivity (adjacent to the site)</li> </ul>

### 44 Environmental context

## Landscape sensitivity

### Key characteristics

The site has a semi-rural character, influenced by the hedge-lined School and Pells Lanes, and clusters of small groups of houses, becoming more influenced by built development and road infrastructure to the north, and the suburban character of the linear development along The Grove to the south-west of the site. There are some scenic views to wooded ridges of the West Kent Downs to the south, but the proximity of major highways including the M20 in the east affects the perceptual qualities of the site.

- Undulating chalk plateau overlain with clay and flints.
- Small to medium scale field pattern of regular parliamentary enclosures. Field boundaries are typically defined by hedgerows, with occasional hedgerow trees.
- In the wider surroundings, historic farmsteads and hamlets, with extensive C20th linear residential settlements such as the adjacent West Kingsdown and Knatts Valley.
- Semi-enclosed due to high hedgerows and woodland, but with some views out.
- Blocks of broad-leaved native woodland give a well wooded appearance in the wider area, but within the site trees are along field boundaries or concentrated in the east around Pells Lane and Kingsdown Mill.
- Narrow rural lanes, but also affected by major routes of A20 and M20, partly in cutting.

### Sensitivity

In relation to the Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, the site is a small area within WK3: West Kingsdown south and is adjacent to WK2: West Kingsdown east.

In terms of areas indicated as lower sensitivity, the site is located adjacent to (not disconnected from) the settlement edge. The assessment states: “*Due to the small scale field pattern, the landscape would be better able to accommodate smaller, lower density housing developments which may also present an opportunity to improve the coherence of the existing settlement edge, particularly to the north of the area adjacent to West Kingsdown*”. The site’s situation on the gently undulating chalk landform, the noise and visual intrusion from major highways, and proximity to areas of existing modern linear development such as The Grove (off School Lane) which have resulted in a weak settlement edge and suburbanising features, are also indicated as lower sensitivity characteristics.

**Key susceptibilities relevant to the site are:**

- The low density settlement pattern of isolated farms and houses.
- The narrow rural lanes including Pells Lane lined by thick, mature hedgerows, giving a sense of enclosure.
- The small to medium-scale field pattern bounded by frequent hedgerows, contributing to the naturalistic character of the landscape.
- The characterful rural buildings including Kingsdown Mill.
- The semi-natural habitats including scrub and woodland in the centre and east of the site alongside Pells Lane.
- Some longer views out to the West Kent Downs to the south.
- Semi-rural character and role in the landscape setting to West Kingsdown.

**Key valued features and characteristics relevant to the site are:**

- The coherent small-medium scale historic landscape pattern which reflects historic usage and enclosure of the landscape.
- Areas of valued semi-natural habitat, including woodlands.
- Continuous thick hedgerow boundaries and shaws that create a strong landscape pattern and contribute to green infrastructure/biodiversity value.
- Historic features which have survived the rapid change of the landscape including the Grade II listed Kingsdown Mill (a smock mill built in 1880) and Grade II listed Tidy’s Cottage, and potential archaeological features indicated by the inclusion of the site within an archaeological notification area.
- Occasional long views from the elevated and open areas of the landscape.

**Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape**

The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and as such is valued at the highest level.

<b>Special qualities of the Kent Downs</b>	<b>How are they represented within the site?</b>
<b>Dramatic landform and views</b>	The landform of the site is relatively flat with a subtle north-south gradient. Much of the site sits around 173m AOD before rising in the south to c. 177m AOD. The site does not exhibit dramatic landform but is part of the wider plateaux which is characteristic of the Kent Downs.
<b>Biodiversity-rich habitats</b>	The site appears to comprise improved grassland which is not a recognised as a Priority Habitat or highlighted as being special to the Kent Downs.
<b>Farmed landscape</b>	The open grassed fields appear to have been used for pasture in the past, although were not under pasture at the time of writing. In terms of the contribution to the valued pastoral scenery of the Kent Downs, the site is located on the edge of the designation and at the transition to West Kingsdown, and the presence of development and highways nearby affect its scenic qualities.
<b>Woodland and trees</b>	There are no woodlands within the site, although there are groups of trees/scrub in the central and eastern parts of the site, as well as some hedgerow trees within field boundaries. Individual hedgerows and trees are highlighted as an important characteristic of the Kent Downs. No trees within the site are designated as ancient woodland or protected by Tree Preservation Orders.
<b>A rich legacy of historic and cultural heritage</b>	The site is absent of built form but two Grade II listed buildings are situated close the boundary, namely Kingsdown Mill and Tidy’s Cottage in the east and south respectively. The fields within the site are generally a consistent shape and size and defined in part by roads with a largely urban character.
<b>Geology and natural resources</b>	Due to its undeveloped character, soil within the site is likely to represent an important natural capital resource. The site is classed as Grade 3 agricultural land (good to moderate quality). The site does not contain any chalk rivers or streams.
<b>Tranquillity and remoteness</b>	The site has a semi-rural character with some naturalistic features and characteristics including rural land use, intact field boundaries and occasional medium range views of the West Kent Downs. Tranquillity is affected by human influences such as the A20 along its



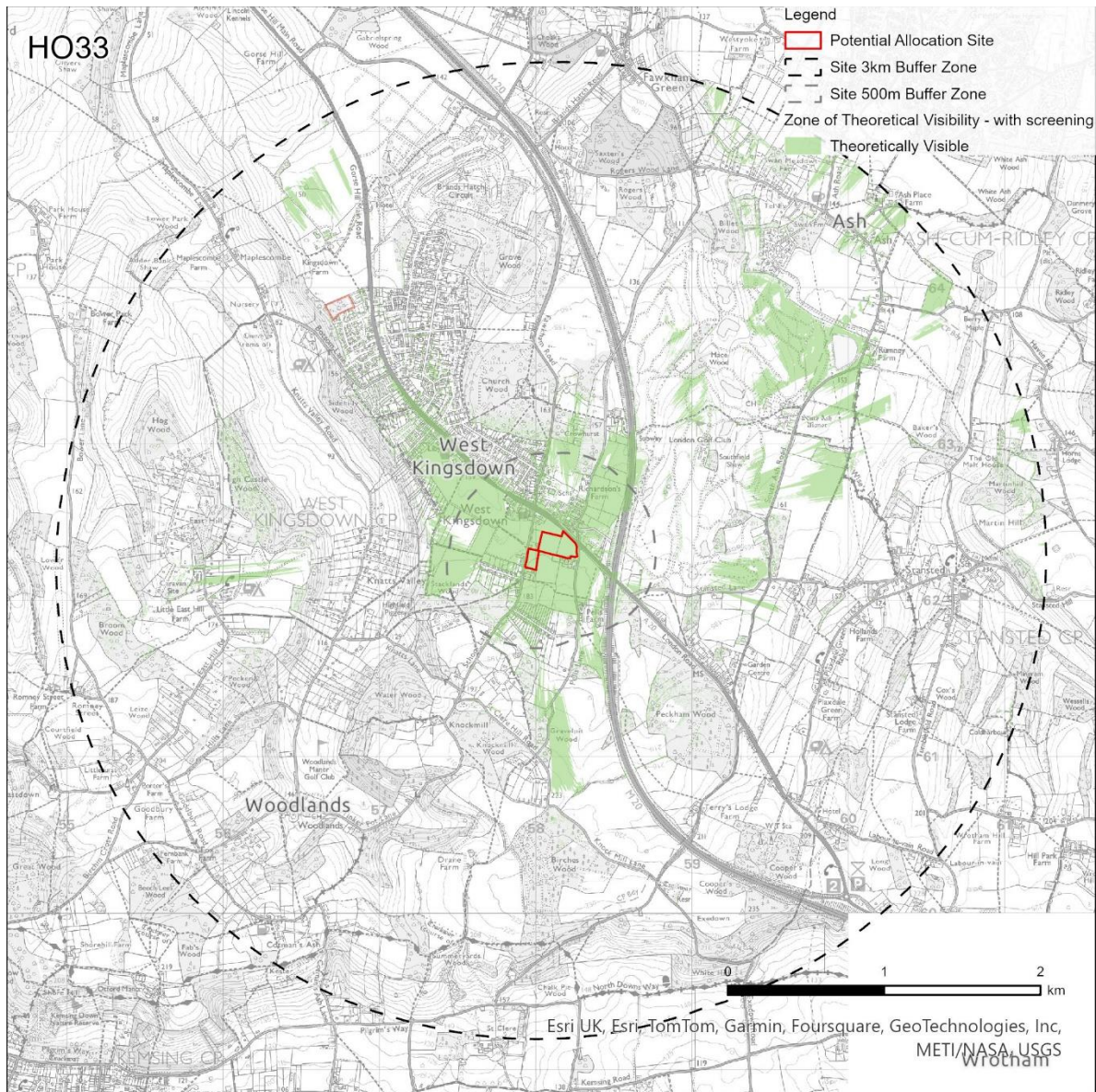
<b>Special qualities of the Kent Downs</b>	<b>How are they represented within the site?</b>
	<p>northern boundary, neighbouring urban development, and the M20 passing within 250m of the eastern boundary on embankment.</p> <p>The site does not represent the characteristic peaceful, dark night skies found elsewhere in the Kent Downs and falls within a night light classification of 2-4 nanowatts / cm<sup>2</sup> / sr which is considered a medium level of radiance shining into the night sky.</p>
<b>Summary of the extent to which the site reflects the special qualities</b>	<p>The site has a rural (possibly pastoral) land use and its location on a plateau is characteristic of the Kent Downs. There are some trees and hedgerows present, and there is a degree of tranquillity as a result of its undeveloped character, with some long distance views to the south. However, the site does not contain any particularly distinctive features or characteristics, and its perceptual qualities are influenced by the nearby settlement and major roads including the A20 on the northern site boundary and the M20 to the east.</p>

#### 45 Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape

##### Detractors

- Nearby weak settlement edge to West Kingsdown and areas of linear modern development which introduce suburbanising features.
- Heavy traffic and noise associated with nearby M20 and A20 affect perceptual qualities of the site.

## Visual amenity



### 46 Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)

#### Extent of potential visibility

The ZTV indicates that views of development would be largely contained to within 1km of the site boundary. The open fields along the A20 mean that there would likely be some views of development in relatively close proximity. Views towards the site beyond these areas would mostly be screened by large swathes of woodland on the upper slopes of the Knatts Valley in the south and west, together with the dense urban area of West Kingsdown and other large woods including Church Wood in the north. Mature roadside vegetation along the M20 would obscure most views of development on the site from the east, with only occasional glimpses from the rising land to the north-east.

#### Key views

##### *Potential views for residents/ local community and recreational users within 500m of the site:*

- The local communities of and residents of dwellings in and around:
  - West Kingsdown (mostly in the vicinity of the A20 London Road);
  - School Lane, and roads off it including The Grove and Hollywood Lane;
- Users of public rights of way:

- SD278 to the west of the site, between the A20 and School Lane;
- SD259 to the south and east of the site, between School Lane, Pells Lane and A20;
- SD276 to the west of the site, between Knatts Valley and The Grove;
- Bridleway SD291 to the south-west of the site, between Knatts Lane and School Lane;
- SD260 to the south-east of the site, between the M20 and Pells Lane.

*Potential views from promoted routes within 3km of the site:*

- None found.

*Key strategic views (within 3km)*

- None found.



View from south-west corner of the site on School Lane



View across the A20 to the site with Kingsdown Mill beyond

**47 Representative views of the site**

**Potential effects and mitigation**

Potential effects and whether they may affect the key susceptibilities or valued features, as well as mitigation opportunities to avoid or minimise effects or to restore landscape features are considered below.

<b>Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes</b>	<b>Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)</b>
Low density settlement pattern.	The site is located on the edge of West Kingsdown and as such development would be associated with the settlement, in combination with development on the baseline site to the west. Developing the site would affect the wider low density settlement pattern to an extent by extending development outwards from the main settlement.
The small-medium scale field pattern	The field pattern would change as a result of development, although it may be possible to retain field boundaries.
Valued trees and woodland within the site.	It is possible for development to avoid valued areas of trees and woodland through integrating development within the existing field pattern and avoiding areas of existing trees and woodland which are concentrated along the eastern boundary and in the centre of the site. Impacts could also be mitigated through a comprehensive ecological assessment and management plan, proposed tree/ scrub and other planting, and habitat compensation where relevant.
Narrow rural lanes (in the wider area)	Due to the site's proximity to major roads and the urban area of West Kingsdown, it should be possible to avoid negatively affecting the character of rural lanes such as Pells Lane and School Lane by using existing major roads for access rather than impacting narrow rural lanes.
Historic features including the setting of listed buildings (Grade II listed Kingsdown Mill and Grade II listed Tidy's Cottage).	There are no protected historic features within the site. The setting of the two nearby listed buildings (Kingsdown Mill and Tidy's Cottage) would be changed by development within the site. Views towards the mill from the edge of the settlement are distinctive, and development within the site would affect these views. It could be possible for mitigation to be incorporated into a well-designed masterplan to

Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes	Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)
	minimise effects on the landscape and heritage value of the Mill through designing appropriate buffer zones and views, subject to specialist heritage advice.
Long views from the elevated and open areas of the landscape	These occasional long views from within the site and the A20 would be affected by development, although viewpoints could be incorporated into the design of any development to retain some long views.
Semi-rural character and role in the landscape setting to West Kingsdown.	Whilst the rural character and naturalistic qualities of the site would be affected by development, it is already affected by urbanising influences (from nearby settlement and major roads). There is potential for development to help improve the existing urban edge of West Kingsdown as noted in the landscape sensitivity study, with appropriate woodland planting and landscape-led design which reflects the importance of the site as a gateway and setting to West Kingsdown.
Special qualities of the Kent Downs	The site reflects some of the special qualities, some of which may be affected, including trees, heritage, natural resources and the naturalistic semi-rural character. It is likely that effects on some or all of these elements would remain even after mitigation.

#### 48 Potential effects and mitigation

## Conclusion

The site would be contiguous with existing settlement pattern, although development would extend settlement beyond the existing urban confines. The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and has valued qualities and features including its semi-rural character and the naturalistic character of trees and hedgerows, albeit not reflective of the higher levels of tranquillity found elsewhere in the Kent Downs due to the presence of nearby roads and suburban settlement edge.

Views of development would predominantly be experienced within 1km, although there would be nearby views for people in the local community of West Kingsdown and surrounding developments (School Lane, and roads off it including The Grove and Hollywood Lane) and a number of public rights of way.

There are opportunities for mitigation to avoid or minimise effects on key features, although it is likely that effects on landscape and visual amenity would remain. There is opportunity for well-designed mitigation to respect and/or improve the existing settlement edge, in combination with potential development within the adjacent baseline site to the west.

Development may result in the following key effects on landscape character and views:

- The loss of small scale fields.
- Effects on the low density settlement pattern and semi-rural character of the area.
- Obscuring or partial loss of long views to the Kent Downs to the south.
- Effects on views of and the setting of Kingsdown Mill from the north.
- Effects on people's views from West Kingsdown, nearby residential areas and local public rights of way.

The likely significance of effects is considered to be **medium**.

## Guidance and opportunities

### Guidance

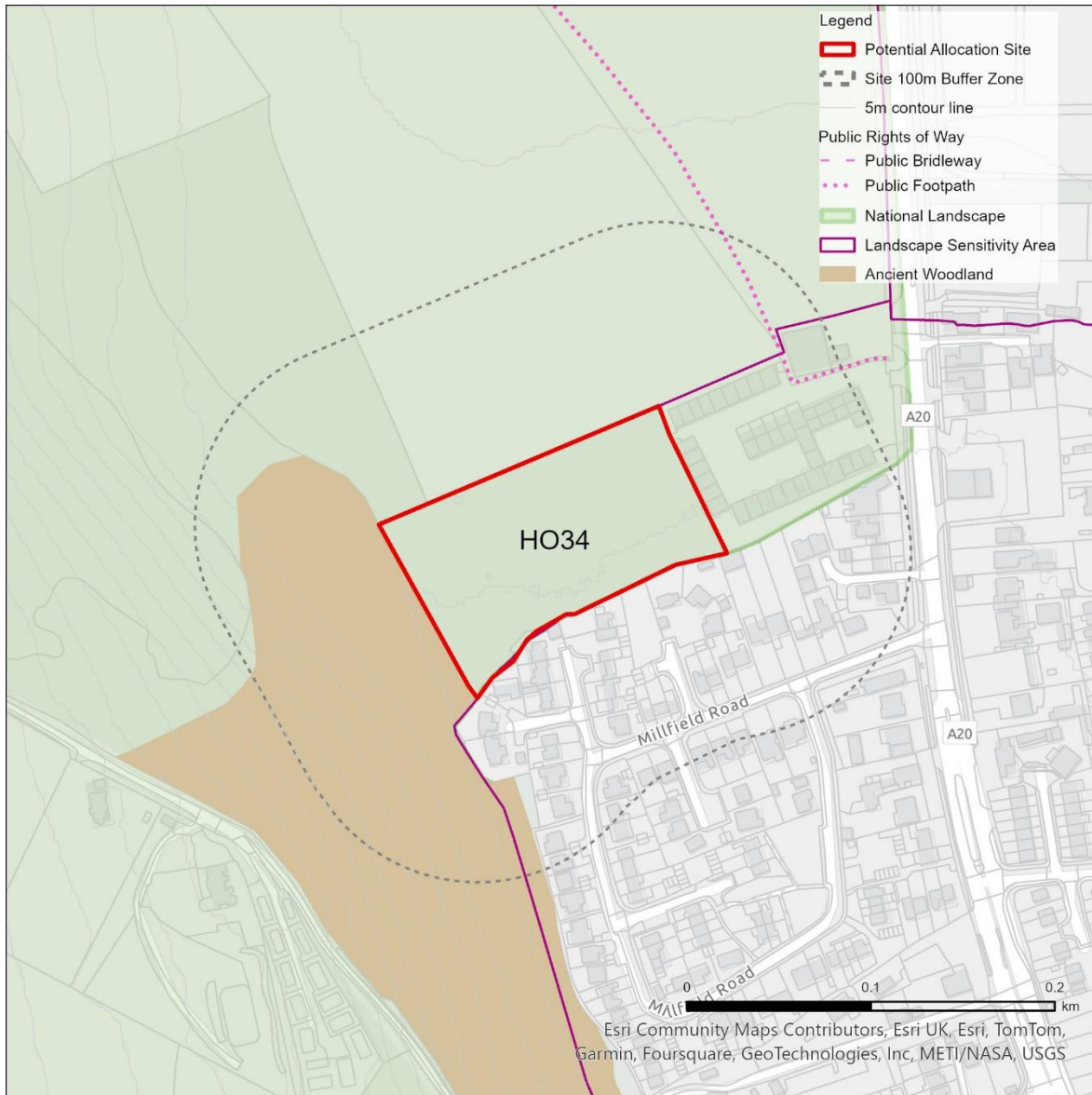
- Utilise the existing field pattern to delineate different character zones within the development. Development should not be linear in form.
- Celebrate the local vernacular with use of local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung facades, and seek to unify the varied building styles that currently exist – any potential development should adopt an appropriately contextual design response.
- Provide a suitable landscape buffer and screening to the residential properties to the south.
- Consider lower heights and density of built form around Kingsdown Mill to maintain sight lines from in and around the site.

- Consider primary access opportunities from the A20 in the north and seek to avoid introducing additional urbanising features along School Lane.
- There is potential for development to help improve the existing urban edge of West Kingsdown and help to integrate existing development.
- The design of roads/ routes within the site should avoid suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible.
- Developments should integrate appropriate green infrastructure and biodiversity proposals which retain and enhance existing natural features on site.
- Ensure a sensitively considered and well-landscaped boundary to the A20, considering the role of the site in the setting of West Kingsdown and its importance in marking a gateway to the settlement. Development should be set back from the road to ensure appropriate proportion of open space to built development at the approach to West Kingsdown.
- Development should minimise additional light sources.
- A design code for West Kingsdown should be prepared to understand and enhance the special qualities of the settlement, and to ensure any development within the baseline site and site HO33 are unified. This should include opportunities to improve off-site areas such as School Lane e.g. with tree planting, and ensuring an appropriate gateway/ approach to the settlement e.g. by slowing traffic, setting development back from the road etc.

### Opportunities to further the statutory purpose of the Kent Downs National Landscape

- Increase biodiversity of field boundaries and enhance green infrastructure networks within the site and in the wider landscape.
- Provision of public footpath connections between built heritage assets.
- Improve integration of suburban settlement edges into the surrounding landscape through woodland planting. Prepare design guidance for property boundaries, gateways and driveways.
- Promote new hedgerows and roadside trees from existing hedge stock.
- Promote access and sensitive recreation in this area, including signage, interpretation, path restoration etc. where needed and generate a coherent shared plan between individual sites. Work with local communities to raise awareness of the countryside on their doorstep.
- Continue to work with outside agencies to address fly-tipping and other anti-social behaviour issues.

## A.9 HO34 Land at Millfield Road, West Kingsdown



### 49 Context map

#### Site description

The site consists of a single rectilinear field overlaid on mostly flat landform with a subtle fall to the north and west. A belt of woodland occupies the eastern part of the site adjoining the eastern boundary. The site is located outside the settlement boundary but adjacent to the north-western part of West Kingsdown. Site boundaries are defined by a belt of trees to the south and east, which marks the line of the urban confines. The northern boundary is defined by a tree-lined field boundary and the western boundary is defined by Sidehilly Wood. Residential development within Millfield Road lies adjacent to the south of the site, and the Blue Chalet Industrial Park (employment allocation), currently a service garage, lies adjacent to the east. The site lies wholly within the Kent Downs National Landscape.

## Context

Environmental data	Environmental designations and features within the site and immediate surroundings
Environmental designations within 100m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent Downs National Landscape – within the site</li> <li>• Archaeological notification area – within the site</li> <li>• Ancient Woodland– within 50m</li> <li>• Tree preservation order– within 50m</li> <li>• Local wildlife sites– within 50m</li> </ul>
Other relevant planning considerations within 100m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green belt – within the site</li> <li>• Public rights of way – within 100m</li> <li>• Urban confines (West Kingsdown) – within 50m</li> </ul>
Kent Downs landscape character area	LCA 1a: Kingsdown: West Kent Downs
Sevenoaks residential character area	Not applicable
Sevenoaks landscape character area	LCA 2b: Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs
Sevenoaks landscape sensitivity assessment area – Sensitivity level	WK1: West Kingsdown west –Medium-high sensitivity

### 50 Environmental context

## Landscape sensitivity

### Key characteristics

The site is on the edge of the settlement on two sides, affecting sense of tranquillity, although it is visually enclosed by trees along its boundaries. It is situated on the edge of the plateau, with valley sides sloping steeply to the west at Sidehilly Wood which extends up to the ridgeline and creates a strong feeling of enclosure. Historic aerial imagery indicates the site was previously wooded.

- Gently undulating chalk landscape with broad plateau tops and a steep slope adjacent to the site to the west.
- Small-medium- scale field, enclosed by mature trees.
- Mixed woodland on adjacent valley slopes.
- The busy A20 approximately 100m to the east of the site.
- Semi-rural, although there is urban development of West Kingsdown adjacent to the south and east.
- Strong feeling of enclosure in the woodlands (west of the site, and from tree belts on the site boundaries) contrasts with long views along the plateau to the north.

### Sensitivity

In relation to the Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, the site is a small area within WK1: West Kingsdown west. In terms of areas indicated as lower sensitivity, the site is located in the flatter area to the north of West Kingsdown and close to the A20. Sidehilly Wood to the west of the site integrates the existing settlement edge of West Kingsdown.

### Key susceptibilities relevant to the site are:

- The dramatic steep slopes of the dry chalk valley (adjacent to the site to the west).
- The strong wooded character, with in-field and hedgerow trees and areas of ancient replanted woodland, particularly on slopes – woodland in the eastern part of the site (and ancient woodland adjacent to the west).
- Semi-rural character, particularly linked to the landscape beyond the site to the north and west.

### Key valued features and characteristics relevant to the site are:

- Adjacent Sidehilly Wood, which provides valued semi-natural habitat and contribute to visual interest, is ancient replanted woodland and designated as a Local Wildlife Site.

- Long, open views over adjacent Downs to the north which contrast with the sense of enclosure afforded by the topography and the woodland cover.
- The dramatic landform of the ridges and deep dry valleys which are typical of a chalk landscape and the sense of tranquillity within them.

### Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape

The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and as such is valued at the highest level.

<b>Special qualities of the Kent Downs</b>	<b>How are they represented within the site?</b>
<b>Dramatic landform and views</b>	The landform of the site is relatively flat at approximately 155m AOD. It lies on the plateau edge which drops steeply to the west of the site, and which is a characteristic feature of the Kent Downs.
<b>Biodiversity-rich habitats</b>	The site contains a small woodland belt in the east of the site and along the site boundaries.
<b>Farmed landscape</b>	The land use of the site is unclear (the site is not publicly accessible) but it appears to be an area of cleared woodland now given to grass which is not necessarily characteristic of the special qualities of the Kent Downs.
<b>Woodland and trees</b>	There is a small belt of woodland within the eastern part of the site. There is also a belt of trees to the south of the site (within the urban confines) which is covered by a tree preservation order. Ancient woodland (Sidehilly Wood) lies to the west of the site.
<b>A rich legacy of historic and cultural heritage</b>	There are no notable features of historic or cultural heritage in and around the site.
<b>Geology and natural resources</b>	Due to its undeveloped character, soil within the site is likely to represent an important natural capital resource. The site is classed as Grade 3 agricultural land (good to moderate quality). The site does not contain any chalk rivers or streams.
<b>Tranquillity and remoteness</b>	<p>The site has some naturalistic features and characteristics including a sense of enclosure and wooded and intact field boundaries. However, tranquillity is affected by the adjacent settlement of West Kingsdown to the south (residential) and east (service garage) and the nearby A20 which passes approximately 100m to the east of the site.</p> <p>The site does not represent the characteristic peaceful, dark night skies found elsewhere in the Kent Downs and falls within a night light classification of 4-8 nanowatts / cm<sup>2</sup> / sr which is considered a medium level of radiance shining into the night sky.</p>
<b>Summary of the extent to which the site reflects the special qualities</b>	<p>The site is enclosed and semi-rural, and its location on the edge of a plateau is characteristic of the Kent Downs. There are thick trees around the site boundaries, and there is a degree of tranquillity as a result of its undeveloped character and the influence of the enclosed woodland to the west of the site and open, undeveloped fields to the north of the site.</p> <p>However, the site does not contain any particularly distinctive features or characteristics, and its perceptual qualities are influenced by the nearby settlement and commercial uses and A20 road.</p>

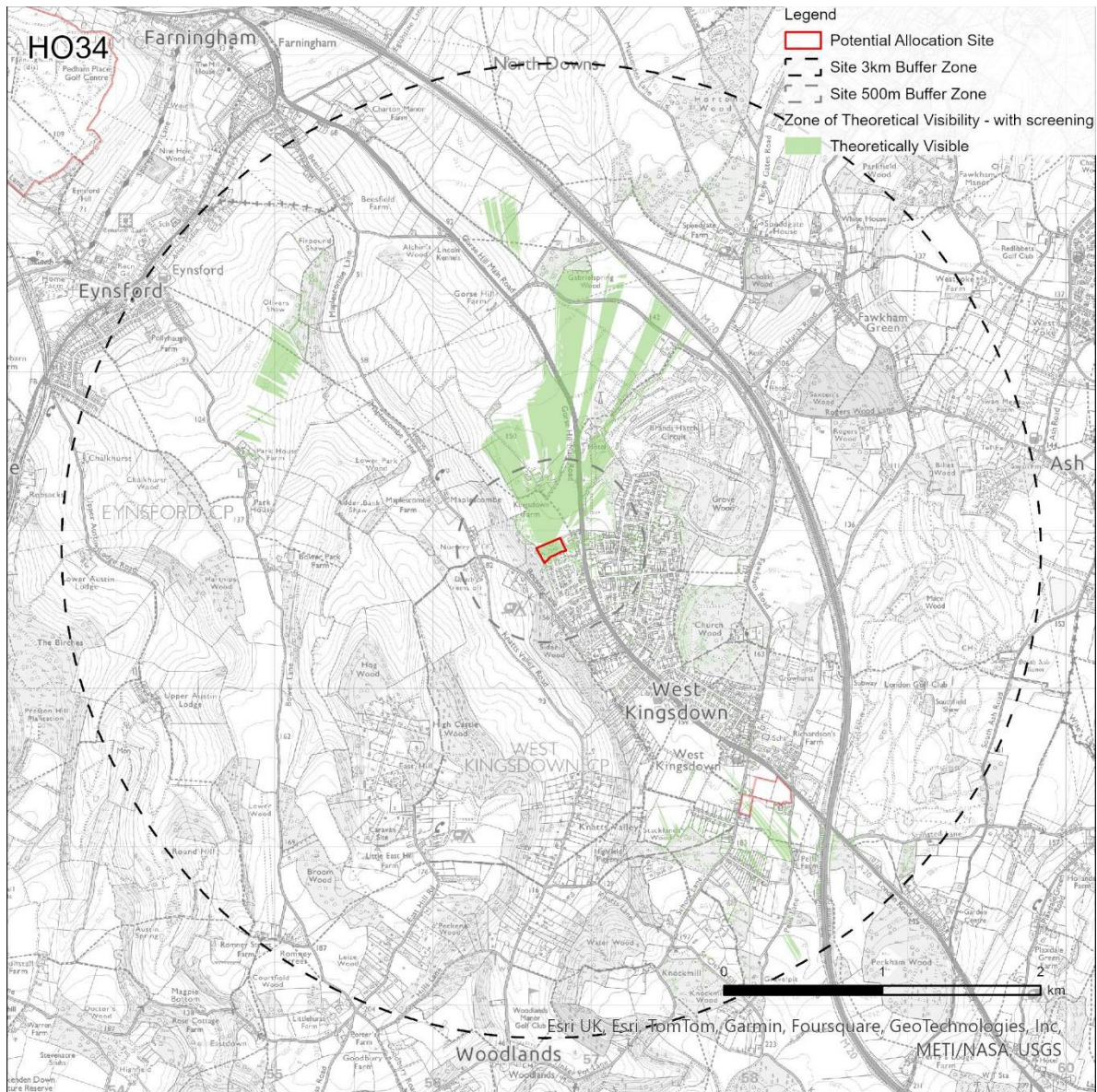
### 51 Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape

#### Detractors

- Nearby settlement and commercial uses in West Kingsdown introduce suburbanising features.
- Heavy traffic and noise associated with nearby A20 affect perceptual qualities of the site.



## Visual amenity



### 52 Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)

#### Extent of potential visibility

The ZTV indicates that development within the site is likely to be relatively visually contained. Topography and the wooded valley sides would limit views from the west, and trees and intervening buildings would help to limit views from the south and east. Whilst there may be occasional glimpses of development from more open areas to the north of the site, the existing trees around the site boundaries and in the wider landscape, would help to limit views.

#### Key views

##### *Potential views for residents/ local community and recreational users within 500m of the site:*

- The local community of West Kingsdown, although views would be likely to be only occasional glimpses.
- Residents of Kingsdown Farm
- Users of public right of way SD172 to the north of the site, linking West Kingsdown and Eynsford.

*Potential views from promoted routes within 3km of the site:*

- None found.

*Key strategic views (within 3km)*

- None found.



The site beyond houses on Millfield Road



Trees on the site boundary visible above the crops in the field to the north of the site

**53 Representative views of the site**

**Potential effects and mitigation**

Potential effects and whether they may affect the key susceptibilities or valued features, as well as mitigation opportunities to avoid or minimise effects or to restore landscape features are considered below.

<b>Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes</b>	<b>Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)</b>
The steep slopes adjacent to the west and plateau topography.	Development would not affect the steep slopes or plateau topography.
The strong wooded character.	Development may affect some of the existing trees in the east of the site and some of the trees on the site boundaries (including those covered by a tree preservation order to the south of the site) to enable access. It is possible for development to avoid particularly valued trees, and removal of trees could be minimised. Retaining the majority of trees on the site boundaries wherever possible should help to retain a sense of wooded character.  Impacts could also be mitigated through a comprehensive ecological assessment and management plan, proposed tree/ scrub and other planting, and habitat compensation where relevant.
Semi-rural character, enclosure and relative tranquillity, particularly linked to the landscape beyond the site to the north and west.	The semi-rural character and relative tranquillity would be affected, although effects on character of the wider landscape would be minimised through retaining existing trees and planting additional trees and vegetation within the site to retain a sense of enclosure and help to integrate development into the landscape context. Due to the site’s location adjacent to settlement, tranquillity is already affected by urban influences.
Adjacent Sidehilly Wood	Development would not directly affect Sidehilly Wood.
Views from nearby receptors to the north of the site	If development ensures existing trees along field boundaries are retained and new tree planting is integrated into development, most effects on views and visual amenity could be mitigated.

**54 Potential effects and mitigation**

**Conclusion**

Development within the site would fit with the existing settlement pattern of West Kingsdown, in being located on the plateau, as well as being visually and perceptually contained from the west by the wooded slopes of Sidehilly Wood. The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and does have valued qualities and features including its semi-rural character and the naturalistic character of trees and woodland,

although there are no designated features within the site. Whilst there is a semi-rural character to the site and its surroundings, it is affected by the influence of existing development within West Kingsdown including the adjacent service garage and the A20.

Views of development would potentially be well-contained, owing to the well wooded landscape and the existing wooded site boundaries.

There are opportunities for mitigation to avoid effects on key features and character.

The site has some potential to accommodate the development parameters although there may be a few negative effects on the character of the landscape, the special qualities of the Kent Downs National Landscape, and the views and visual amenity of people living, visiting and enjoying the local area.

Development may result in the following key effects on landscape character and views:

- Effects on existing trees and woodland within the site and site boundaries.
- Effects on the semi-rural character of the area.
- Limited effects on people's views from West Kingsdown, the public right of way to the north of the site and Kingsdown Farm.

The likely significance of effects is considered to be **low-medium**.

## Guidance and opportunities

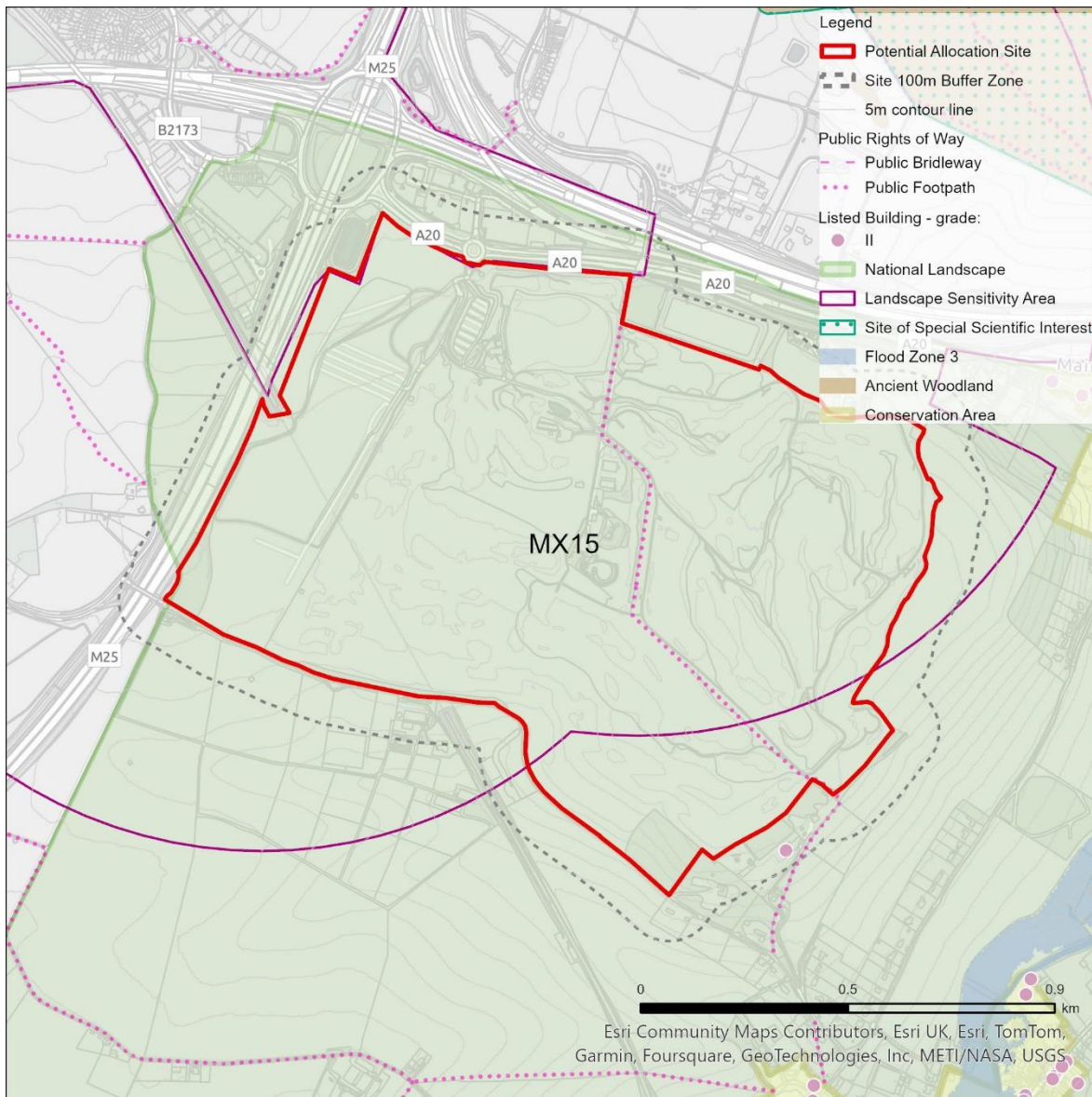
### Guidance

- Test the height of development within the site using modelling so that development does not breach the tree line.
- Celebrate the local vernacular with use of local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung facades, and seek to unify the varied building styles that currently exist – any potential development should adopt an appropriately contextual design response.
- Retain existing trees wherever possible, particularly on the site boundaries.
- The design of roads/ routes within the site should avoid suburban features such as kerbs and street lighting where possible.
- Developments should integrate appropriate green infrastructure and biodiversity proposals which retain and enhance existing natural features on site.

### Opportunities to further the statutory purpose of the Kent Downs National Landscape

- Investigate any potential for enhancements to the local wildlife site.
- Increase biodiversity of field boundaries and enhance green infrastructure networks within the site and in the wider landscape.
- Improve integration of suburban settlement edges into the surrounding landscape through woodland planting. Prepare design guidance for property boundaries, gateways and driveways.
- Promote new hedgerows and roadside trees from existing hedge stock.
- Promote access and sensitive recreation in this area, including signage, interpretation, path restoration etc. where needed and generate a coherent shared plan between individual sites. Work with local communities to raise awareness of the countryside on their doorstep.
- Continue to work with outside agencies to address fly-tipping and other anti-social behaviour issues.

## A.10 MX15 Pedham Place, London Road, Swanley



### 55 Context map

#### Site description

The site covers Pedham Place Golf Centre, which occupies a broad plateau. It is located to the south-east of Swanley, outside of the settlement boundary and is separated from it by the M25 which defines its western boundary. The northern boundary is defined by the A20 and M20, and the southern boundary is defined by Crockenhill Lane. The eastern boundary is defined by field boundaries marking the top of Eynsford Hill. The site straddles two parishes: the parish of Farningham, Horton Kirby and South Darenth; and the parish of Eynsford. The site lies wholly within the Kent Downs National Landscape, although it is on the edge of the designation.

## Context

Environmental data	Environmental designations and features within the site and immediate surroundings
<b>Environmental designations within 100m</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kent Downs National Landscape – within the site</li> <li>• Archaeological notification area – within the site</li> <li>• Fort Farningham: a London mobilisation centre Scheduled Monument – within the site</li> <li>• Biodiversity opportunity area (Central North Downs) – within the site</li> <li>• Tree preservation order– within the site</li> <li>• Grade II listed Eynsford Hill and attached terrace walls, masonry steps and gazebo – within 100m</li> </ul>
<b>Other relevant planning considerations within 100m</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green belt – within the site</li> <li>• Public rights of way – within the site</li> <li>• Urban confines (Swanley) – within 50m</li> <li>• Adopted allocation (Teardrop Industrial Estate) – within 50m</li> <li>• Adopted allocation (Wested Lane Industrial Estate, Swanley) – within 100m</li> </ul>
<b>Kent Downs landscape character area</b>	LCA 4a: Shoreham (North Darent), Darent Valley
<b>Sevenoaks residential character area</b>	Not applicable
<b>Sevenoaks landscape character area</b>	LCA 2a: Farningham Downs
<b>Sevenoaks landscape sensitivity assessment area – Sensitivity level</b>	SW2: Swanley east (Low-medium sensitivity)

### 56 Environmental context

## Landscape sensitivity

### Key characteristics

The site is characterised by a broad plateau on the edge of rolling chalk downland, which has been altered locally with artificial landforms for the golf course. From the middle of the site at the high point there are extensive views south across the Darent Valley and an open, exposed character.

- Rolling chalk downland and a steep slope adjacent to the Darent Valley to the east.
- In the wider landscape, settlement is typically scattered, with isolated cottages and farms and small linear settlements in sheltered areas. Mixed 20<sup>th</sup> century residential properties are found along roads including converted barns and horse paddocks.
- The golf course is popular for recreation and supports other uses, including an extensive area for car boot sales.
- Long, open views across the Darent Valley.
- Pylons and motorway infrastructure are intrusive features, which create hard boundaries and lines of severance in the landscape.

### Sensitivity

In relation to the Sevenoaks Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, the site is within SW2: Swanley east, which is attributed with low-medium sensitivity. In terms of areas indicated as lower sensitivity, the site is located in the area close to the edge of Swanley and the motorway junction, noted as having a lower sensitivity. The site already contains development and substantial alterations to landform which are incongruous in the wider landscape.

### Key susceptibilities relevant to the site are:

- The steeply sloping landform of the slopes of the Darent Valley (east of the site) and the south-facing slopes at the south of the site.
- The Scheduled Monument at Fort Farningham at the centre of the site, dating from the 1890s.

- The narrow, winding rural lanes which are often banked by high hedges, including Sparepenny Lane to the east of the site and Crockenhill Lane to the south of the site.
- The rural nature of the landscape including sparse settlement of isolated farms and detached houses outside the main settlements.
- The role the site plays as a backdrop and skyline in views from the Darent Valley.
- The relationship with existing settlement, which is currently well-contained by the motorway boundaries (Swanley) and woodland/landform (Farningham).
- The role the landscape provides as a rural setting to Swanley, and as a gap between the town and Farningham.

**Key valued features and characteristics relevant to the site are:**

- Mature trees and hedgerows provide valued habitats within the intensively farmed landscape, as well as providing a strong landscape pattern. A section of woodland in the south-east of the site is covered by a tree preservation order.
- Historic buildings including the adjacent Grade II listed Eynsford Hill.
- Setting of nearby grade II Registered Park and Gardens - Lullingstone Castle, approximately 1.2km to the south and Franks Hall, approximately 1.5km to the north-east.
- Potential areas of remnant chalk grassland.
- Recreational value of the golf course which allows an appreciation of the landscape.
- Long views across the Darent Valley to the Greensand Ridge around Sevenoaks from the Darent Valley Path. Views along the valley include the Eynsford viaduct.

**Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape**

The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and as such is valued at the highest level.

<b>Special qualities of the Kent Downs</b>	<b>How are they represented within the site?</b>
<b>Dramatic landform and views</b>	The dramatic steep slopes of the Darent Valley sit outside of the site boundary. Within the site itself, topography ranges from 113m AOD at a local high point to about 80m AOD in the southern corner of the site. There are breath-taking, long-distance panoramas from the south of the site across the Kent Downs. Whilst at a broad scale landform reflects the special qualities of the National Landscape, at a local scale landform has been substantially altered by historical landfill tipping and earthworks associated with its use as a golf course.
<b>Biodiversity-rich habitats</b>	There may be some remnant chalk grassland within the site, and there are some individual and groups of trees. However, most of the site is characterised by improved and managed grassland associated with the golf course.
<b>Farmed landscape</b>	The site is not a farmed landscape.
<b>Woodland and trees</b>	There is little woodland within the site, although there is a small section of woodland in the southern corner of the site which is covered by a tree preservation order. There are some individual trees and groups of trees amongst the fairways.
<b>A rich legacy of historic and cultural heritage</b>	Fort Farningham Scheduled Monument lies within the site. Constructed during the 1890s, it formed part of a comprehensive military scheme known as the London Defence Positions, to protect the capital in the event of enemy invasion. Unusually for this type of monument, Fort Farningham has remained largely free of alteration or renovation and, despite the infilling of the ditch, survives comparatively well and will retain evidence relating to the construction and use of mobilisation centres, including tunnels beneath the rampart. It also contains a later Royal Observer Corps underground Monitoring Post.
<b>Geology and natural resources</b>	Due to its undeveloped character, soil within the site is likely to represent an important natural capital resource. The site is classed as Grade 3 agricultural land (good to moderate quality), although its use as a golf course means it is unlikely to be potential productive land. The site does not contain any chalk rivers or streams although it may contribute to a chalk aquifer given its chalk geology.
<b>Tranquillity and remoteness</b>	Tranquillity varies across the site. To the north and west, perceptual qualities are negatively affected by noise, lighting and movement associated with the M25, M20 and A20 roads and their junctions, commercial development located along the A20, and buildings and development associated with the golf course including car parking, buildings, driving range and roads and tracks. Visually the site is also affected by the presence of electricity pylons. The southern part of the site is considered relatively more tranquil due to the sense of

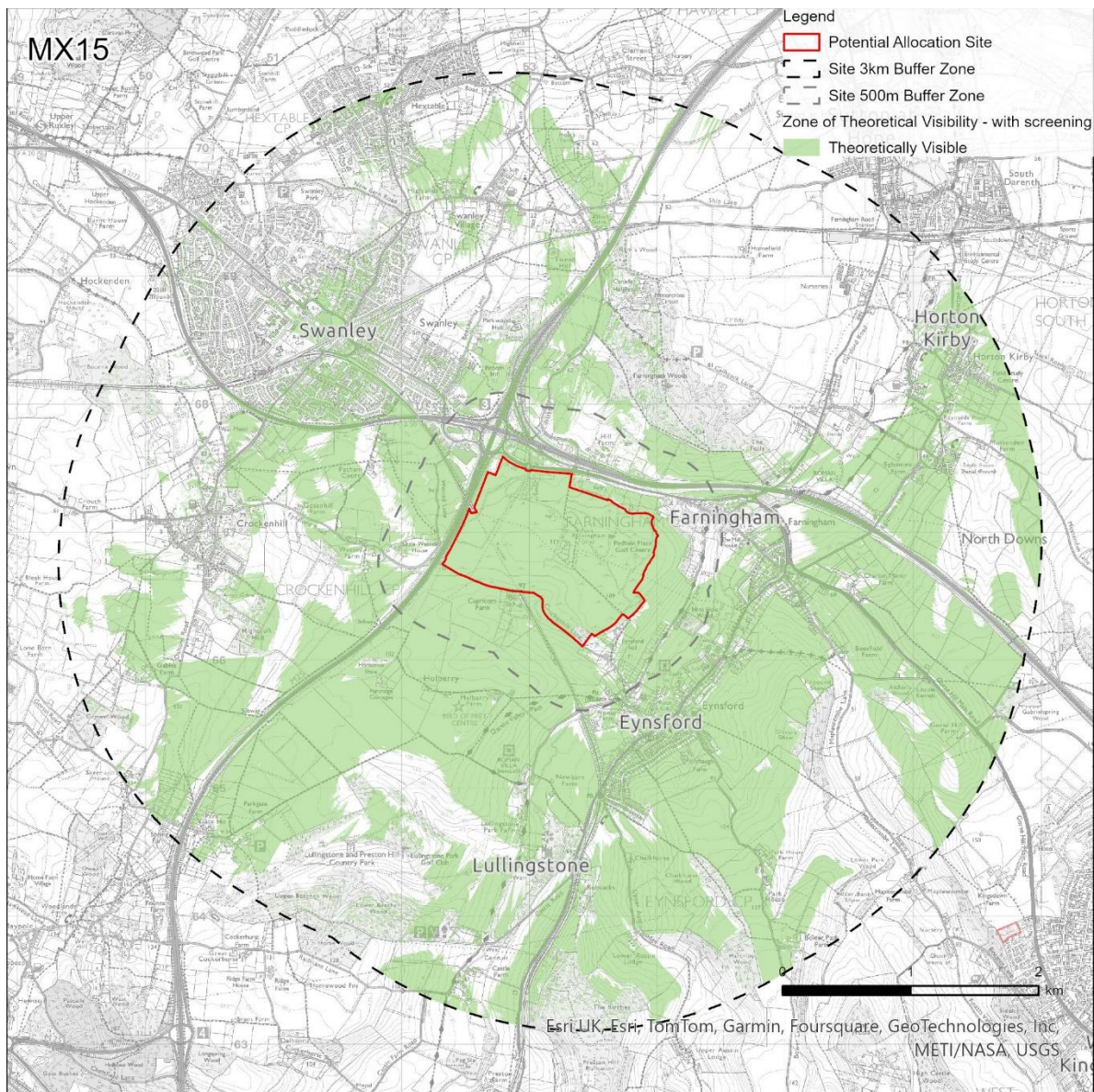
<b>Special qualities of the Kent Downs</b>	<b>How are they represented within the site?</b>
	<p>exposure and long distance views, albeit there is still notable presence of activity associated with the golf course.</p> <p>Whilst the northern part of the site is affected by lighting associated with the major road junctions, commercial development, and flood lighting within the golf driving range within the site, the southern part of the site is characterised by relatively darker skies, falling within a night light classification of 1-2 nanowatts / cm<sup>2</sup> / sr which is considered a low-medium level of radiance shining into the night sky.</p>
<b>Summary of the extent to which the site reflects the special qualities</b>	<p>The landform and views, heritage, natural resources and relative tranquillity and darker skies within the southern part of the site, means the site reflects many of the special qualities of the Kent Downs. These elements contribute to the natural beauty of the site and, albeit to a localised extent, to the natural beauty of the Kent Downs National Landscape.</p>

**57 Contribution to the Kent Downs National Landscape**

**Detractors**

- Major road corridors adjacent to the site including the M25, M20 and A20, affecting perceptual qualities including noise, views and lighting.
- Commercial development on the A20.
- Electricity pylons in the north and west of the site.

## Visual amenity



### 58 Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)

#### Extent of potential visibility

The ZTV indicates that views of development without mitigation would be extensive, particularly within the National Landscape to the south and east, including from the Darent Valley. Some parts of the site towards the south and east are open and exposed, with long-distance views and it is likely that any development in these locations would be widely visible. Views of development from the north would be likely to be screened by Farningham Woods, although there may be views from the north-east including from Franks Hall Grade II Registered Park and Garden. The ZTV indicates that there may be some views from Lullingstone Country Park, Lullingstone Castle and Grade II Registered Park and Garden. The ZTV also indicates visibility from Farningham and Eynsford Conservation Areas.

#### Key views

##### *Potential views for residents/ local community and recreational users within 500m of the site:*

- The local communities of and residents of dwellings in and around:
  - Eynsford, including the conservation area and Eynsford Castle Scheduled Monument;
  - Farningham, including the conservation area;
  - Farms and individual properties on Crockenill Lane;



- Individual properties on Wested Lane;
- Individual properties on Sparepeny Lane, although in reality views from here are likely to be screened by immediate trees and vegetation.
- Users of public rights of way:
  - SD181 within the site leading to SD195 to Eynsford;
  - The Darent Valley Path (SD194) to the south of the site;
  - SD190 to the west of the site between Swanley and Wested Lane;
  - SD1784 to the north of the site near the M20/M25 junction.

*Potential views from promoted routes within 3km of the site:*

- Darent Valley Path – there may be sequential views from within 500m of the site to 3km, and particularly for locations at higher elevations such as near the Bird of Prey centre.

*Key strategic views (within 3km)*

- None found.



View looking across the north of the site towards the M25



View from the high point of the site looking south along the Darent Valley



View from the Darent Valley Path south of the site near the Bird of prey centre



View from Priory Lane, Eynsford looking towards the treed skyline of the eastern site boundary

**59 Representative views of the site**

**Potential effects and mitigation**

Potential effects and whether they may affect the key susceptibilities or valued features, as well as mitigation opportunities to avoid or minimise effects or to restore landscape features are considered below.

Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes	Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)
The steeply sloping landform east and south of the site.	The steep slopes of the Darent Valley are outside the site boundary. The gentler slopes along the southern site boundary could be avoided for development.
The Scheduled Monument at Fort Farningham.	Fort Farningham Scheduled Monument could be avoided for development. Its setting should be carefully considered and integrated into any development design, and there may be wider opportunities associated with development such as creating interpretation/visitor access.

<b>Key susceptibilities and valued features or attributes</b>	<b>Potential effects and mitigation (avoid, minimise, restore or compensate)</b>
The rural lanes including Sparepenney Lane and Crockenhill Lane.	Effects on the rural lanes to the east and south of the site could be avoided, with access restricted to the north-west of the site.
The rural nature of the landscape.	The site has some rural qualities, mainly towards the south and east of the site and at the high point in the centre of the site by the Scheduled Monument. It may be possible to avoid development within these areas, or carefully site development to avoid adverse impacts on valued attributes. Nevertheless, the scale of development within the site means that the character of the site would certainly change from a rural character to an urban/developed character.
The role the site plays as a backdrop/skyline to views from the Darent Valley, including views from Eynsford and Farningham and the Darent Valley Path.	The areas towards the south and east of the site contribute to the rural backdrop to views from the wider landscape. It may be possible to locate development towards the northern and western parts of the site, whilst considering a strategy of tree planting which respects local character and preserves rural views from the wider landscape, particularly from within the Darent Valley and its west-facing slopes.
Mature trees and hedgerows	Tree coverage within the site is not extensive, and impacts on trees could probably be avoided, particularly the trees covered by the tree preservation order.
Setting of the adjacent grade II listed Eynsford Hill.	As the listed building is on the east-facing wooded slopes outside the development boundary, important effects on its setting could be avoided through careful siting and design of development.
Setting of Lullingstone Castle and Franks Hall	The ZTV indicates that views from these locations are likely to be contained to parts of the assets, due to their locations within the valley landform.
Potential areas of remnant chalk grassland.	It could be possible to conserve/restore/ reintroduce areas of chalk grassland if development towards the south and east of the site was avoided.
Recreational value of the golf course.	If developed, it is likely the use as a golf course would be lost, unless it may be possible to incorporate a small area of golf course within the masterplan. It may be possible to incorporate other recreational uses such as public rights of way and visitor facilities associated with the Scheduled Monument to encourage access to the landscape.
Long views across the Darent Valley.	Existing views across the Darent Valley could be retained to an extent within a future development masterplan.
The relationship with existing settlement, which is currently well-contained.	Development of the site would unavoidably affect the existing settlement pattern of the area, creating a new settlement pattern. If the site boundaries were well-defined by extensive new woodland planting to the south and east, then this could form an effective new settlement boundary.
The role the landscape provides as a rural setting to Swanley, and as a gap between Swanley town and Farningham.	Development of the site may affect the rural setting to Swanley, however, its existing role in this regard is not considered to be substantial as there is no visual interrelationship between the site and the town, and the site is already affected by multiple detracting features.  Development of the site would negatively affect the gap and sense of separation between Swanley and Farningham. Potential mitigation for this could involve enhancing the sense of separation between the site and Farningham through extensive woodland planting, including along the A20. This, alongside a stronger association with Swanley (considering the site as an extension to Swanley and accepting the change in character in this respect) may help to reinforce a sense of separation with Farningham and the National Landscape to the east.
Special qualities of the Kent Downs	The site reflects some of the special qualities, some of which may be affected, including landform and views, heritage, natural resources and relative tranquillity and darker skies. With substantial mitigation it could be possible to mitigate impacts on views, heritage and darker skies, however it would not be possible to mitigate or compensate for effects on the sense of relative tranquillity (albeit still affected by activity associated with the golf course) which would be affected by development.

## 60 Potential impacts and mitigation

## Conclusion

Development of the site would not be contiguous with existing settlement pattern. However, its proximity to Swanley means that it would be likely to be associated with, and seen as an extension of, Swanley town.

The site lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape, and it reflects many of the special qualities. Its situation on high ground means there are extensive views to the south, and this part of the site feels open, exposed and rural. However, it is previously developed land, and its character has been substantially modified by earthworks and other development associated with the golf course, including buildings, the driving range, roads and tracks, and the adjacent motorways and electricity pylons. The perceptual qualities in part of the site are therefore already affected and means it does not strongly contribute to the special qualities of the National Landscape.

Views of development could potentially be extensive, owing to its exposed and open character at the top of the Darent Valley western slopes. Careful design and mitigation planting could potentially ensure development is integrated, and views from the wider landscape are not negatively affected. However, there is potential for substantial effects on landscape character, including the special qualities of the National Landscape, setting of the villages and conservation areas of Eynsford and Farningham and Registered Parks and Gardens of Lullingstone and Franks Hall including nearby Scheduled Monuments.

Development may result in the following key effects on landscape character and views:

- Changes to the rural characteristics of the site and potentially the wider landscape.
- Loss of recreational value of the golf course.
- Changes to long views across the Darent Valley – although views of development may be able to be screened, views would change to woodland, reflecting the woodland mitigation.
- Effects on the setting and sense of separation between Swanley and Farningham.

Without additional mitigation, the likely significance of effects is considered to be **high**.

If development was substantially set back from the southern and eastern parts of the site, and with extensive woodland planting on these ridges, this would be likely to reduce effects on views from the Darent Valley. Wooded ridgelines are a characteristic of the wider landscape, and therefore extensive woodland planting on the slopes and ridges could help to not only reduce effects on landscape and views but could help to restore a key landscape characteristic as well as providing biodiversity and other environmental benefits. With this additional mitigation (as described in further detail in the guidance section below), the likely significance of effects is considered to be **low-medium**.

## Guidance and opportunities

### Guidance

- Ensure a landscape-led masterplan design which is sensitive to its location in the National Landscape. A design code should be prepared to identify a landscape framework which considers the site's sensitivities and valued features and potential effects on the wider landscape and National Landscape.
- Avoid development on the slopes in the south of the site and set development back from the top of these slopes and the slopes on the east of the site at the top of the Darent Valley. Impact assessment and testing should model potential effects on the skyline above the valley – consider views from the opposite valley side, for example above Eynsford. Design of development should be comprehensively tested with 3D modelling and photographs to understand potential effects on views from the wider landscape including from Eynsford, Farningham, and the setting of Lullingstone Castle and Franks Hall Registered Park and Gardens.
- Retain remnant thick hedgerows and woodlands wherever possible, and ensure any new built development is well integrated into the landscape, improving and enhancing these features where possible. Use new planting and existing hedgerows to contain built form, and to provide links between settlements and the wider countryside. These could include parkland-style planting where appropriate. Carefully consider the boundary and entrance treatments so they are appropriate to the wider rural context and avoid the use of non-native conifer species.
- Maintain a sense of separation between Farningham and Swanley through, for example, extensive new woodland planting along the A20 and along the eastern site boundary.

- Avoid any impacts on the narrow rural lanes to the east and south of the site through ensuring access is from the north.
- Ensure development within the site follows a design code which should be appropriate to its location. Consider the potential to celebrate the local vernacular with use of local brick, weatherboard and tile-hung facades to improve coherence in an area with many building styles and ages.
- Consider public transport and active travel strategies to the site and beyond (e.g. from Swanley onwards to the Darent Valley).
- Consider development on the site as an extension of Swanley, orientated west and away from the Darent Valley.
- There is opportunity for extensive new tree and woodland planting within the site which is relatively limited in woodland cover compared with the surrounding landscape. Ridgetop ancient woodlands are characteristic of the wider character area, therefore there may be an opportunity for substantial native woodland planting with species characteristic of ancient woodland including yew and beech, on the ridgeline to screen views of development, subject to appropriate testing and impact assessment.
- Consider opportunity to incorporate long views from the high point within the site, whilst considering potential impact of any development on longer distant views from the south.
- Opportunity for new interpretation/ visitor access to the Scheduled Monument within the site, to tie into public rights of way and link with the existing Darent Valley Path.
- Consider the potential for visitor facilities including viewing points, café etc.
- Consider opportunities for other recreation opportunities to mitigate for the loss of the golf course such as a 9 hole golf course/ driving range.

### Opportunities to further the statutory purpose of the Kent Downs National Landscape

- Undergrounding the existing pylon lines would address one of the substantial detractors to the character of the area and the National Landscape.
- Investigate the potential for a new public right of way connection from within the site to the Darent Valley Path.
- Investigate the potential for biodiversity enhancements including chalk grassland, woodlands and new nature reserve.
- Management of woodlands, shaws and trees outside woodlands, including woodland planted as motorway screening, to achieve a diversity of age and species of trees which includes locally-characteristic species such as yew, holly, beech and oak. Maintain coppice management in areas where this is already taking place and extend active woodland management.
- Sensitive planting schemes for trees outside of woodlands including streetscapes. Promote new hedgerow and roadside trees from existing hedge stock.
- Continue/ improve the co-ordination of habitat management, including the grazing/ cutting of existing chalk grasslands and chalk grassland restoration.

### *Off-site opportunities*

- Management of the River Darent, encouraging in-stream river enhancement and river restoration, enhance water quality, manage riparian habitats, removing invasive species and promoting planting of native species such as willow, alder, hornbeam and poplar along the course of the river. Encourage recreational access to the river banks.
- Restoration of water meadows and creation of additional floodplain and riparian habitats to increase the visibility of the River Darent and restore distinctive habitats which are now largely absent.
- Restoration of farm ponds and ditches.
- Management of visitor attractions, particularly where numbers of visitors are causing detriment to the landscape. Improve sustainable access into the wider landscape through enhancements to the public rights of way network (including riverside paths) and enable visitors to spread out over a larger area without detracting from it. Work with recreation providers such as golf clubs to promote good environmental management.
- Improve the integration of the M25 into the landscape whilst retaining key views from the road, using sensitive, non-linear tree planting. Be mindful of the need to retain noise masking of traffic.

- Extend the Darent Valley Path to Westerham (an aspiration for many communities), whilst remembering that placement of paths adjacent to rivers needs to balance the needs of all river users, land managers, wildlife and walkers.
- Within parkland areas: management of parkland, woodpasture and veteran trees, promoting parkland management plans where appropriate. Encourage replanting of replacement trees which will become the parkland and veteran trees of the future.
- Management of farmland, encouraging management of hedgerows and planting of hedgerow trees, particularly on lower slopes.
- Restore field boundaries where they have been lost in order to break up large fields, to minimise soil erosion, and to slow water runoff.
- Develop village design statements for local villages to retain and promote local distinctiveness in built form, including strategies for visitor infrastructure to manage traffic and visitors.
- Promote awareness of the cultural heritage of the area.
- Work with highways authorities to increase the biodiversity value of verges and hedgerows without compromising safety.
- Consider the relationship with Swanley and potential improvements to the town including town centre improvements.