

A blue-tinted photograph of a residential street. In the foreground, there's a dark asphalt road. Behind it, a row of houses with gabled roofs and dormer windows is visible. A large, leafy tree stands in front of one of the houses. A car is parked on the street to the right. The sky is overcast.

Town Road Cliffe Woods

Design and Access Statement
August 2016



FPCR Environment and Design Ltd, Lockington Hall, Lockington, Derby, DE74 2RH ■ t: 01509 672772 ■ f: 01509 674565 ■ e: mail@fpcr.co.uk ■ w: www.fpcr.co.uk
masterplanning ■ environmental assessment ■ landscape design ■ urban design ■ ecology ■ architecture ■ arboriculture

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01 Introduction

This section describes the vision and purpose of the Design and Access Statement



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1 Introduction

Introduction

This is a Design and Access Statement (DAS) for a proposed residential development at Town Road in Cliffe Woods, Medway Kent (See Figure 1 Opposite).

The submitted planning application seeks outline planning consent for a high quality sustainable development. The application includes the following:

- Land for up to 225 new houses;
- Green Infrastructure (GI) including retained hedges, trees and new areas of greenspace incorporating habitat creation, sustainable drainage features, play and recreation space;
- Access is applied for in full.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan (NTS)

1 Introduction

The Vision

To create a well designed place, which embraces the design principles of Building for Life and Manual for Streets and provides a mix of high quality homes to meet the needs of the area.

To provide a layout which is inspired by the existing village vernacular and reflects the existing characteristics and styles found within Cliffe Woods and the surrounding area.

To deliver a safe, attractive and secure neighbourhood incorporating pedestrian and cyclist friendly streets, which connect with the existing footpath and public transport network.

To set housing within a strong landscape framework, which will help to integrate buildings with their landscape setting at the western edge of the village.



Indicative site perspective

1 Introduction

Purpose of the Statement

The key purpose of the DAS is to explain the design process, which has led to the vision and application proposals. The DAS will be used by the Local Authority to ensure that the detailed design and the appearance of the place embrace the design principles that have been set out within the DAS.

The DAS follows the approach that is contained within national Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), which came into force on 6th March 2014. This states that:

"A Design and Access Statement is a concise report accompanying certain applications for planning permission and applications for listed building consent. They provide a framework for applicants to explain how the proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting, and demonstrate that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users. Design and Access Statements can aid decision-making by enabling local planning authorities and third parties to better understand the analysis that has underpinned the design of a development proposal."

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 states that a design and access statement must:

(a) explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;

(b) demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;

(c) explain the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account;

(d) state what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation; and

(e) explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.

The DAS also demonstrates the steps taken to appraise the context of the scheme and how the design of the development takes that context into account.

This Design and Access Statement is comprised of the following sections:

- 1. Introduction** - This section introduces the development proposals and sets out the vision and purpose of the Design and Access Statement
- 2. Assessment** - This section demonstrates the steps taken to appraise the site and its surroundings
- 3. Evaluation** - This section identifies the constraints and opportunities of the site and its surroundings and sets out key urban design principles for the scheme
- 4. Design Proposals** - This section describes and illustrates the design proposals and demonstrates how they respond to the constraints and opportunities identified in Section 3.0 and local design guidance
- 5. Summary** - This section evaluates the proposals against Building for Life 12

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02 Assessment

This section demonstrates the steps taken to appraise the site and its context



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2 Assessment

Site Location and Context

To the east of the Site lies the existing residential edge of Cliffe Woods. This includes properties along Mortimers Avenue and Ladyclose Avenue off the B2000 Town Road, adjoining the Site along its eastern boundary. Beyond the Site to the north-east lies Cliffe Woods Recreation Ground accessed via Merryboys Road and Wentworth Drive off View Road. In addition, Cliffe Woods Primary School is situated off View Road to the north-east of the Site. The village centre which includes The Parks Medical Practice, Pharmacy, Mini Market, Newsagent and Cliffe Woods Social Club is also situated to the east of the Site between Town Road and the residential area on Parkside.

Open countryside represented by a mix of arable and pastoral land lies to the north, south and west of the Site. Orchard cover and the presence of polytunnels are evident, dispersed throughout the surrounding landscape. The presence of polytunnels is particularly evident along Lee Green Road associated with Mockbeggar Farm to the south-east of the Site beyond existing development on Town Road.

The ancient parish of Cliffe includes the two villages of Cliffe and the more recent development associated with Cliffe Woods. Cliffe Woods adjoins the Site to the east with Cliffe located to the north of the Site. A number of residential and commercial properties are also situated along Station Road which runs between Cliffe Woods and Cliffe, including St Helen's Church of England

Primary School and Cliffe Memorial Hall.

Buckland Road runs to the north of the Site, merging with Lillechurch Road towards the village of Higham that lies beyond agricultural land to the south-east of the Site within Gravesham Borough administration area. Development along these roads consists of dispersed farmsteads and isolated groups of properties such as Oakleigh Farm, the Grade II* Listed Rectory and further Listed Buildings associated with Buckland Farm off Buckland Road. Lillechurch Farm located on Lillechurch Road and a group of residential bungalows located at the intersection between Lillechurch Road and Buckland Road where the roads merge into Gore Green Road are also evident. Two Listed Buildings associated with Gore Green Farm and further development are located along Gore Green Lane as it enters Higham.

Higham railway station and Conservation Area are located within the village of Higham to the south-west of the Site. Further west of the Site is situated Buckland Lake Reserve, Cliffe Pools Nature Reserve and Shorne Marshes Nature Reserve occupying lower ground bordering the Thames Estuary.

Figure 2 and the photographs adjacent and on the following pages provide an overview of the location and context of the Site.



1. View from within Site towards properties on Ladyclose Avenue (off Town Road) which back onto the Site.



- Site Boundary
- Railway Line
- Proposed Developable Area
- Existing Development
- Existing woodland
- Water Body/Course
- Primary Roads
- Secondary Roads
- Public Right Of Way (PROW)

Figure 2: Site Overview (NTS)

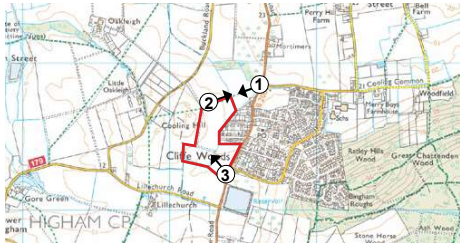
2 Assessment

Existing Site Features

The Site itself comprises several field parcels and forms part of the surrounding agricultural field system. One Public Right of Way (PROW RS72) run through the northern Site parcel parallel to the existing hedgerow comprising the Site's northern boundary. The PROW enters the Site from Town Road to the east and exits the Site along its western boundary, eventually emerging onto Buckland Road adjacent to the entrance to Oakleigh Farm.

The Site boundaries are extensively contained by existing features. Several existing properties on Mortimers Avenue and Ladyclose Avenue off the B2000 Town Road form part of the Site's eastern boundary. A substantial tree belt forms the Site's western and southern boundary with agricultural land extending beyond. The Site's northern boundary is formed by the existing hedgerow/tree belt that runs parallel to the existing PROW RS72.

An area of woodland cover adjoins part of the Site's eastern boundary including a substantial tree belt to the north-east. To the north, south and west the Site adjoins agricultural land.



1. View towards the Site from PROW RS72 as it passes through the woodland to the north-east of the Site from the B2000 Town Road.
2. Views towards the substantial tree belt located to the north-east of the Site from PROW RS72.
3. Views of the rising landform and boundary vegetation at the western Site boundary.

Town Road, Cliffe Woods | Design and Access Statement

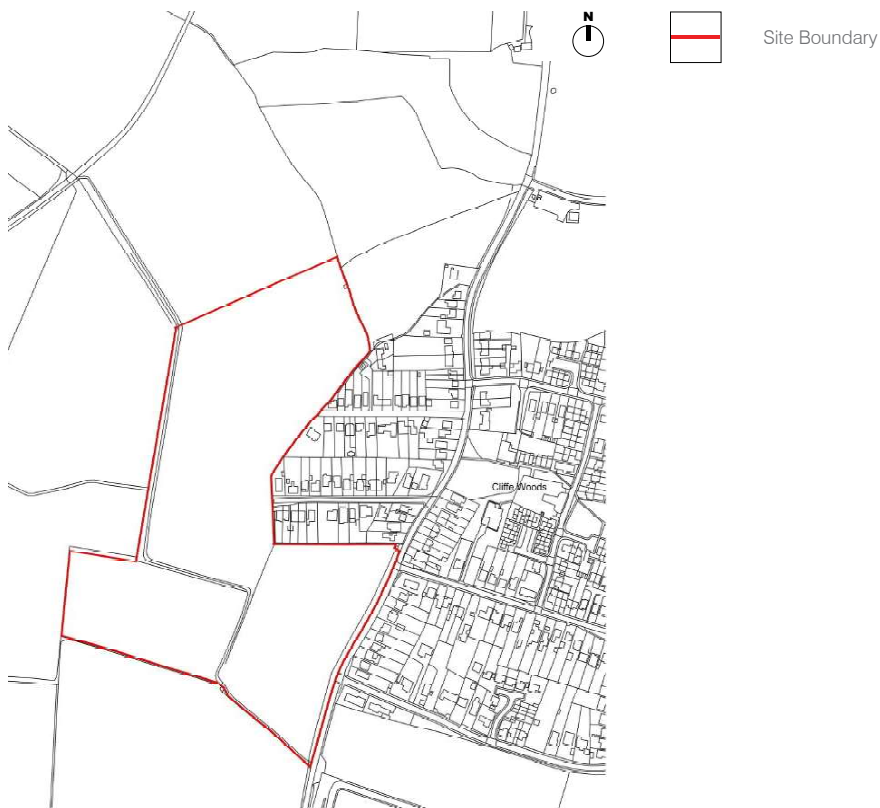


Figure 3: Site Plan (NTS)

2 Assessment



- Site Boundary
- PROWs
- Railway Line

Figure 4: Aerial Plan (NTS)

2 Assessment

Planning Context and Design Guidance

A detailed assessment of the planning policy framework is set out in the Planning Statement, which accompanies this planning application. This section focuses on the local planning policies most relevant to the design and access proposals for the development.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart of the NPPF is a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' .

Section 7 of the NPPF 'Requiring Good Design' establishes the Government's commitment to good design and requires that developers address the following:

- Add to the overall quality of the area;
- Establish a strong sense of place;
- Optimise the use of land and placing an importance on high quality design;
- Respond to the local character and history;
- Create safe and accessible environments;
- and (developments which) are visually attractive with good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

As part of this commitment to good design, the NPPF expects applicants *"to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Proposals that can demonstrate this in developing the design of the new development should be looked on more favourably."* (paragraph 66, NPPF, 2012)

Design Guidance

Whilst the NPPF replaced Planning Policy Statements, the following documents are still relevant and aim to inspire well designed schemes that will create attractive places and inclusive new communities. The following principal documents have informed the design proposals:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), DCLG 2012;
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), DCLG, 2014
- Manual for Streets 2: Wider Application of the Principles, 2010;
- Urban Design Compendium 1 and 2, English Partnerships - Housing Corporation, 2000-2007;
- Building for Life 12 (3rd Ed.), Design Council, 2015



2 Assessment

Medway Local Plan (May 2003)

The Adopted Medway Local Plan is the Council's key planning document and is used as the basis for all planning decisions taken within the district. It contains saved policies against which development proposals can be assessed. Currently, the Adopted Local Plan forms part of the Development Plan for the district.

The key policies of relevance to the DAS are outlined below.

- Policy S4 – Landscape and Urban Design Guidance
- Policy BNE1 – General Principles for Built Development
- Policy BNE2 – Amenity Protection
- Policy BNE6 – Landscape Design
- Policy BNE7: Access for All
- Policy BNE8: Security and Personal Safety
- Policy BNE38: Wildlife Corridors and Stepping Stones
- Policy BNE42: Hedgerow Retention
- Policy BNE43: Trees on Development Sites
- Policy H1: New Residential Development
- Policy H10: Housing Mix
- Policy L3: Protection of Open Space
- Policy L4: Provision of Open Space in New Residential developments
- Policy L10 : Public Rights Of Way

Of particular importance to this DAS include the following Policies: Policy S4 – Landscape and Urban Design Guidance; Policy BNE1 – General Principles for Built Development; and Policy BNE6 – Landscape Design.

Policy BNE1 – General Principles for Built Development states:

"The design of development (including extensions, alterations and conversions) should be appropriate in relation to the character, appearance and functioning of the built and natural environment by:

- (i) being satisfactory in terms of use, scale, mass, proportion, details, materials, layout and siting; and*
- (ii) respecting the scale, appearance and location of buildings, spaces and the visual amenity of the surrounding area; and*
- (iii) where appropriate, providing well structured, practical and attractive areas of open space."*

Policy BNE6 – Landscape Design states:

"Major developments should include a structural landscaping scheme to enhance the character of the locality. Detailed landscaping schemes should be submitted before development commences and should have regard to the following factors:

- (i) provide a structured, robust, attractive, long term, easily maintainable environment including quality open spaces, vistas and views; and*
- (ii) include planting of a size, scale and form*

appropriate to the location and landform, taking account of underground and overground services; and

- (iii) include details of the design, materials and quality detailing of hard works elements such as gates, fences, walls, paving, signage and street furniture; and*
- (iv) retain important existing landscape features, including trees and hedgerows, and be well related to open space features in the locality; and*
- (v) support wildlife by the creation or enhancement of semi-natural habitats and the use of indigenous plant material where appropriate; and*
- (vi) include an existing site survey, maintenance and management regimes and a timetable for implementation."*

Medway Emerging New Local Plan 2012-2035

The Council's Emerging Local Plan has undergone the first formal stage towards its adoption and resulted in The Issues and Options consultation document being approved by the Medway Council Cabinet on 24 November 2015. The weight to be afforded to relevant Development Plan and emerging Development Plan policies is discussed in detail in the submitted Planning Statement.

The document does not set out detailed policies or identify specific sites for development. Rather, it presents key contextual matters that will be the drivers for the new Local Plan.

2 Assessment

Supplementary Planning Documents and Technical Studies / Background Evidence

Supplementary Planning Documents expand upon and provide further details and guidance to policies in the adopted Development Plan Documents. The following SPDs are considered to be of relevance of the DAS:

- *Medways Housing Standards (Interim) Adopted 2011*
- *The Kent Design Guide (n.d)*

The Kent Design Guide (n.d)

The Kent Design Guide serves as best practice guidance for the county. The Guide describes the character of the county and gives guidance for the design of buildings and landscape.

Medways Housing Standards (Interim) (2011)

The Medway Housing Design Standards (interim) provides planning guidance that builds upon the existing Medway Local Plan policies S2: maintaining and improving environmental quality and design standards; BNE1: General Principles for Built Development, BNE2: Amenity Protection and H6: Flat Conversions.

The document provides guidance on the main principles and minimum layout and space standards that will be expected in design of new housing and considers standards for the provision of open space within new developments, expanding upon the saved Local Plan policy L4 (Medway Local Plan adopted 2003).

For instance, with regards to the standards for the provision of open space in new developments the guidance states:

Baseline standards

- Open space should be provided in accordance with Local Plan Policy L4, which states:

"Where there is a proven deficiency: minimum 2.4 hectares per 1000 population for formal and informal recreation and play (residential development of 100 people or more),

- *minimum 0.7 hectares per 1000 population for play and casual recreation (between 50 and 100 residents)*
- *Further detail in policy L4.*

Good practice standards

- *Open space should be a minimum of 10m in width on small sites and commensurately wider on larger sites."*



Historic Development

The historic maps on the following page show the Site in the context of the growth of the settlement over the past 146 years.

The configuration of the field parcels that comprise the Site have remained largely unaltered from the 1870 mapping up to the present day.

Between the 1870 to 1938 mapping, the main road structure and layout were much the same as present day. Woodland cover presented a dominant feature of the landscape to the east of the Site and Town Road with open agricultural field parcels dominating the landscape to the east. Dispersed farmsteads dotted the landscape and remain in place to the present day.

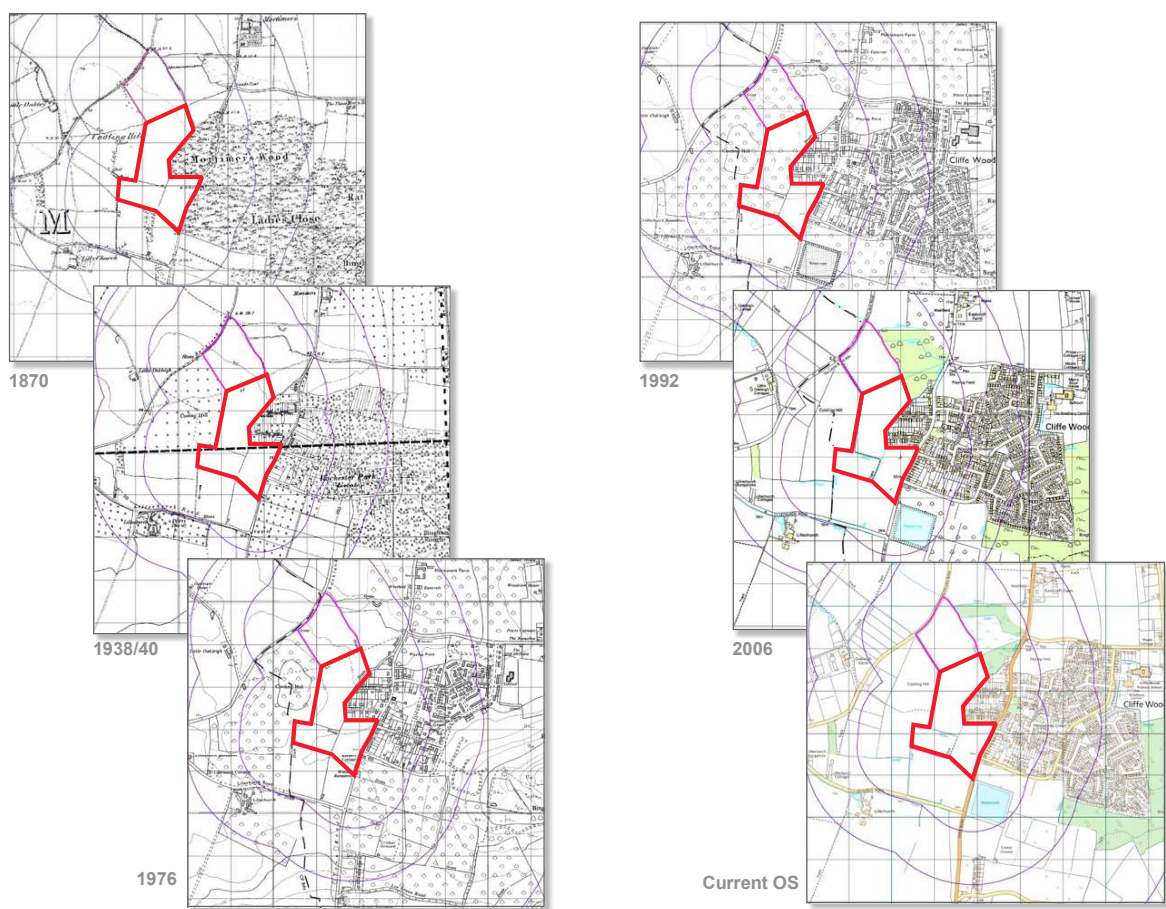
The 1938/40 mapping shows the first signs of development at what is now Cliffe Woods then noted as Rochester Park Estate, including the start of the road pattern present in today's settlement. The mapping shows large portions of woodland, namely Mortimers Wood and Ladyclose Avenue had been cleared and the land partitioned into discernible field enclosures. There is a significant expansion of orchard cover during this period, continuing up to 1992 when part of the Site is shown under orchard cover.

The mapping from 1976 and beyond shows the evolution and expansion of development in accordance with the lie of the land. This period shows the appearance of a discernible service centre including a post office, playing field, cricket ground, and a school supporting the emerging and expanding community.

The reservoir to the south-east of the Site and the emerging new settlement noted on the 1992 mapping as Cliffe Woods, is evident at this point in time. Orchard cover reduces dramatically between the 1992 and 2006 mapping, including that evident within the Site and along Cooling Hill.

The Site provides a logical location for the future expansion of the village, located close to the existing service centre and road network.

2 Assessment



2 Assessment

Topography

The landform of the Site and the Study Area is illustrated by the Topography Plan on the following page.

The Site gently slopes westwards towards the local high point of Cooling Hill, rising to 30m AOD. Within the site landform rises to a high point of approximately 22m AOD along its western boundary, reaching a low point of approximately 15m AOD located to the north-east corner of the site at its eastern boundary.

In the wider context to the north and west landform remains relatively flat falling away towards the Thames Estuary and towards Cliffe Pools Nature Reserve to the north-west of the Site. To the south of the Site, landform becomes increasingly undulated as it rises towards the A289.



View looking south from within the Site from its western boundary, demonstrating the undulating landform of the Site and the surrounding landscape



View looking west from within the Site from along its eastern boundary, demonstrating the sloping landform towards the highpoint within the landscape to the west along which runs the row of trees, comprising the Site's western boundary.

2 Assessment

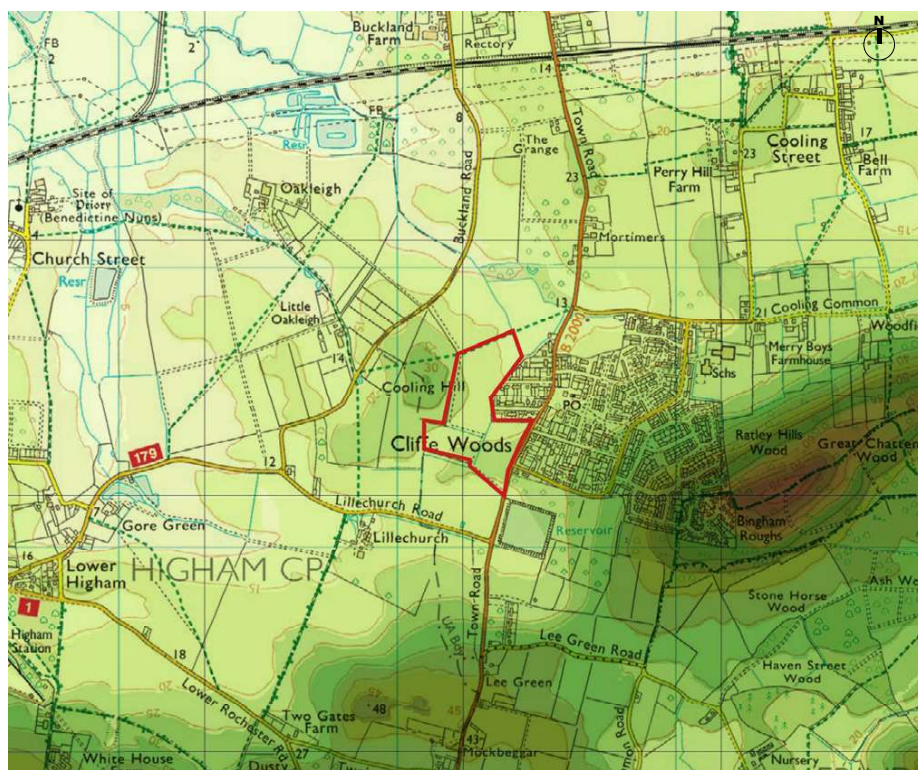
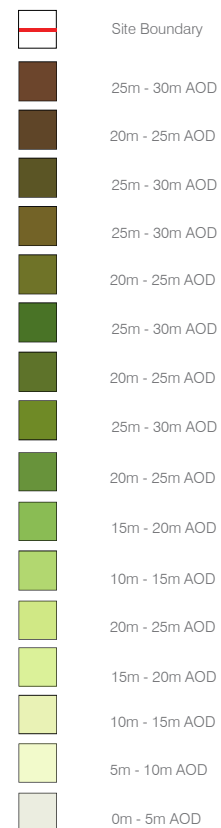


Figure 5: Topography Plan (NTS)



2 Assessment

Designations

Figure 6 shows the designations within the context of the site. No designations apply to the Site with regard to landscape value.

The Green Belt bounds the Site along a section of its western boundary and covers a vast area to the west lying wholly within Gravesham Borough. The North Kent Marshes Special Landscape Area covers a substantial area to the north edge of Cliffe, just over 1km to the north of the Site. A Designated Area of Local Landscape Importance lies approximately 1km to the north-west of the Site and includes Cliffe Conservation Park and South Thames Estuary and Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

South Thames Estuary and Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) overlaps these landscape designations and lies approximately 1km to north-west of the Site bordering the Thames Estuary.

Although there are no Listed Buildings or heritage assets that fall within the Site, there are a few heritage assets within the surrounding area. The nearest Listed Building is the Grade II Listed Mortimers Farm House, located approximately 0.5km to the north of the Site on Town Road.

There are a number of Conservation Areas to the north and west of Cliffe Woods which include a number of Listed Buildings, including the historic core of Cliffe, northern section of the village of Higham and an area to the north of Higham along Church Street. Approximately 1.5km to the north-west of the Site there are a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, including St Mary's Priory on Church Street and Cliffe Fort within the Cliffe Pools Nature Reserve. Existing development, landform and existing tree groups separate these heritage assets from the Site.

The Conservation Areas in Medway - a guide to the law and our policy (Revised January 2011) provides a general guide for development impinging on its Conservation Areas.

The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lies outside of the study area, located approximately 5km to the south of the Site at its nearest boundary.

The landscape and visual impacts upon designations within the vicinity of the Site are discussed within the Landscape and Visual Appraisal which accompanies this application.

2 Assessment

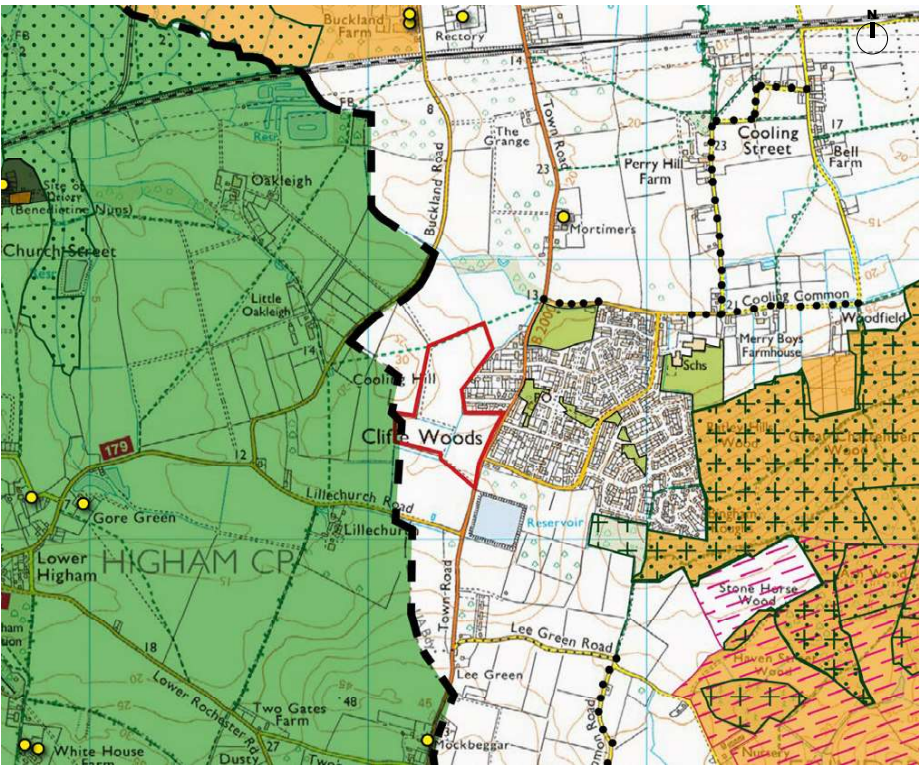
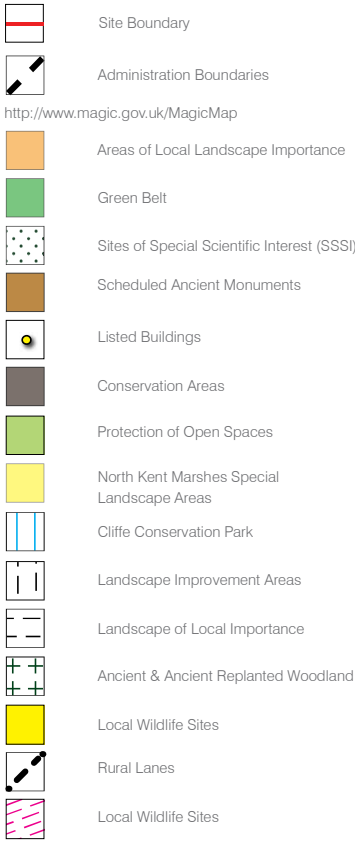


Figure 7: Designations (NTS)



2 Assessment

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of the proposed development has been carried out as part of an iterative design process by FPCR Environment and Design. The conclusions of the LVA are summarised below:

The Site is not subject to any national, local or other landscape designations and is considered to be a relatively indistinctive landscape largely devoid of landscape features. However, the Site exhibits a gently sloping landform and there are two hedgerows running through the Site denoting the field boundaries that comprise the Site. The Site is considered of medium landscape value.

The landscape appraisal has identified a number of points including:

- Within the County's landscape character assessment the Site is located within a LCA identified as being of poor condition and of moderate sensitivity, with the report citing the appropriate action as 'restore and create'.
- Within the District's landscape character assessment the Site is located within a LCA identified as being of moderate condition and sensitivity with the report citing the appropriate action as 'conserve and create'.

- Positive characteristics of the Site character including the existing boundary vegetation comprised of hedgerows and trees as well as the existing PROW will be retained and incorporated into the design of the scheme. The proposed GI for the scheme includes public open space, hedgerow and tree planting, attenuation pond and equipped play. This GI will introduce new habitats and features which will bring beneficial effects to the landscape of the Site.
- Landscape effects on the Site and the immediate context are considered to be Moderate Adverse on completion, reducing to Moderate/Minor Adverse at maturity.
- Effects on character areas identified at National, regional, County and District level range from None to Minor Adverse/Negligible at completion depending on the scale and location of the character areas. Effects will be mitigated as proposed GI within the Site matures resulting in no more than Minor Adverse / Negligible effects at year 10.

The visual appraisal has identified a number of points including:

- There are few receptors, which will have close range views of the proposals, particularly the existing residences along Ladyclose Avenue and Mortimers Avenue that bound the Site along its eastern boundary.

- The Site's visual envelope is limited to the immediate landscape surrounding the Site with limited views into the Site particularly from the north due to intervening built form and vegetation. Views to the south are more open, but there are limited residential receptors to the south of the Site. A degree of inter-visibility is permitted in views from the elevated landscape to the south particularly along Town Road owing to the undulating landform and varying roadside vegetation.
- Within the wider landscape intervening vegetation and landform including local high points restrict views towards the Site.
- The proposed development is to be set back from the southern boundary providing a large strip of proposed GI to the south of the Site. This will serve to mitigate views from receptors to the south of the Site, including those travelling northwards along Town Road.
- New development will be set back from its eastern boundary, incorporating GI and a proposed pedestrian route. Rear gardens of new housing will back onto existing back gardens of residences and will mitigate views from these receptors to some extent.

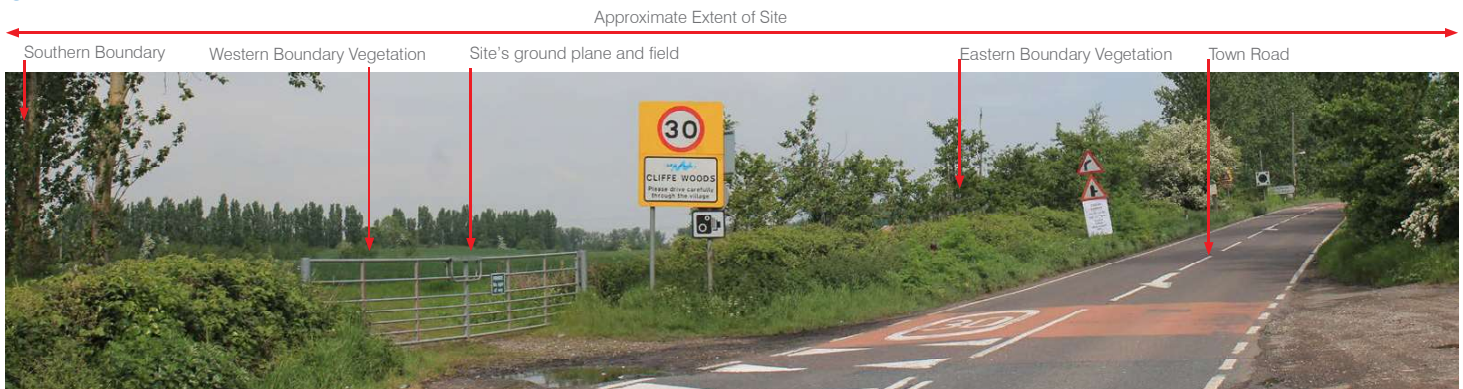
2 Assessment



2 Assessment



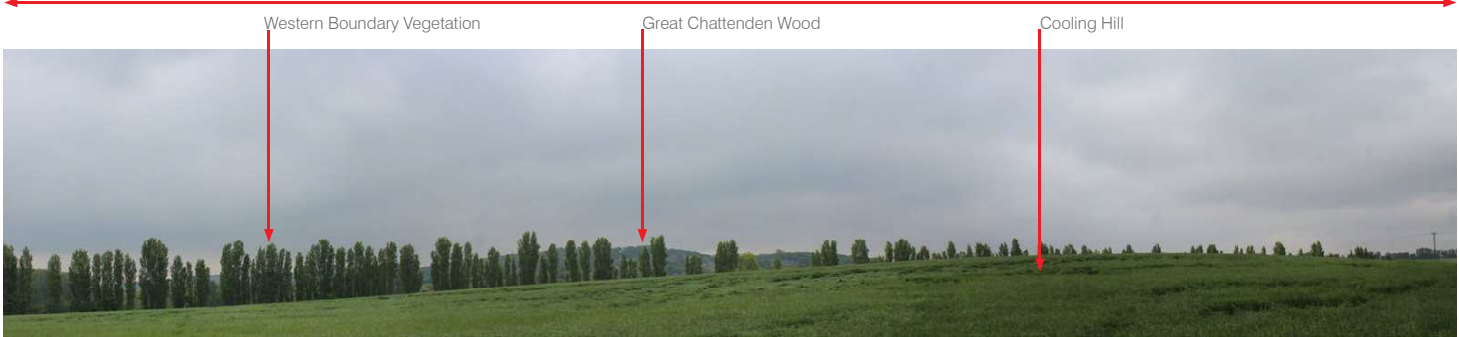
1 View West from Ladyclose Avenue off the B2000 Town Road.



2 View North West from the B2000 Town Road.

Assessment

Approximate Extent of Site (Behind Western Boundary Vegetation)



3 View East from Public Footpath RS-72.

Approximate Extent of Site



4 View North West from the junction between B2000 Town Road and Lee Green Road.

2 Assessment

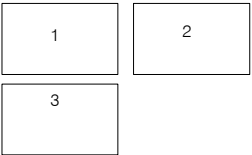
Access, Movement and Facilities

A range of local services and facilities are located within the village and include: Cliffe Woods Primary School; Cliffe Woods Recreation Ground providing a children's play area, sports ground and public open space; Autoshoppe Garage; Orchard Bed and Breakfast; Phoenix Day Nursery; and Woodside Green Open Space.

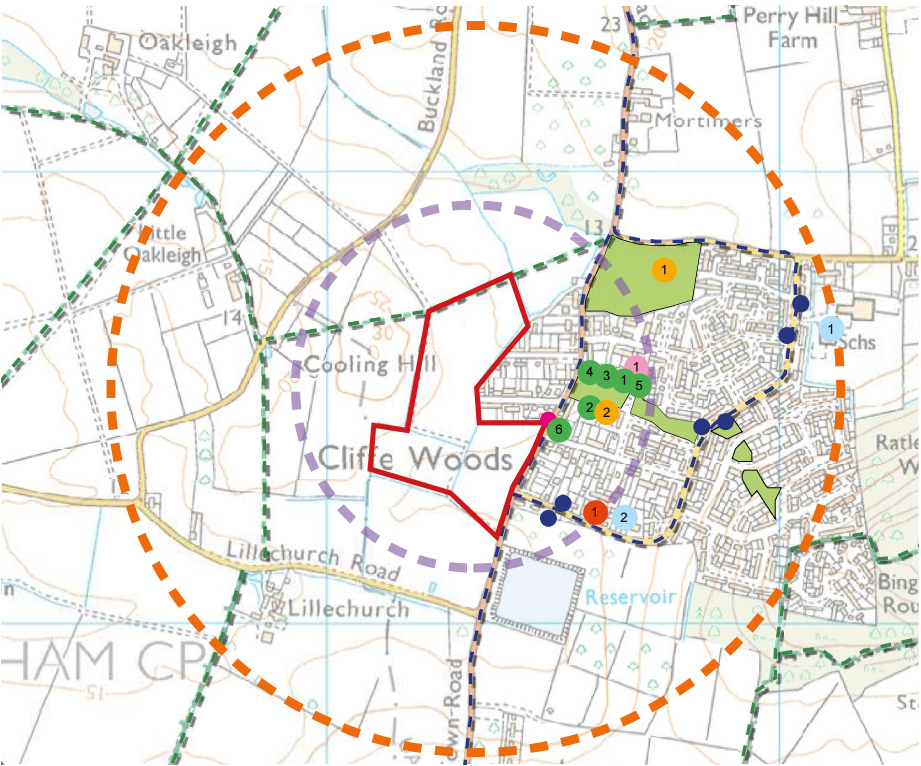
The village centre is located along Parkside to the east of the Site and includes a convenience store, post office, social club, medical practice, several takeaways, pharmacy and a Christian centre.

The services and facilities detailed above lie within 800m (circa 10 minutes walk) of the site. Additional facilities are located within Cliffe, which is easily accessible via the B2000 Town Road.

There is also a frequent bus service operating between Cliffe/ Cliffe Woods and Rochester, Strood and Chatham. The nearest bus stop is situated to the west of View Road close to the Site's south-eastern boundary.



1. Cliffe Woods Social Club and Public House at Parkside.
2. Cliffe Woods Recreation Ground.
3. Cliffe Woods Primary School.



- Site Boundary
- 1 Shops
- 2 Social Club
- 3 Post Office
- 4 Doctor
- 5 Take-away
- 6 Car Repair Garage
- 1 Bed & Breakfast
- 1 School
- 2 Day Nursery
- 1 Play Area
- 2 Community Centre
- 1 Religious Centre
- Bus Stops
- School Bus Stops
- Bus Routes
- Public Right of Way
- 400 metre distance offset from site
- 800 metre distance offset from site
- Open Green Space

Figure 9: Services and Facilities (NTS)

2 Assessment

Existing Settlement Pattern and Character

The plan opposite (figure 10) illustrates the location and extent of the Site in relation to the existing urban area of Cliffe Woods.

Cliffe Woods is part of Cliffe Parish, the historic core of Cliffe lying approximately 2.5km to the north along Station Road. Development has evolved along Town Road, expanding considerably to the east of this road. Development located along Town Road and the majority of Cliffe Woods comprises a variety of architectural styles, house types and ages the majority of which dates from the 20th century.

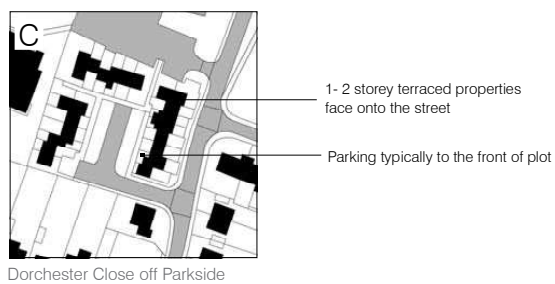
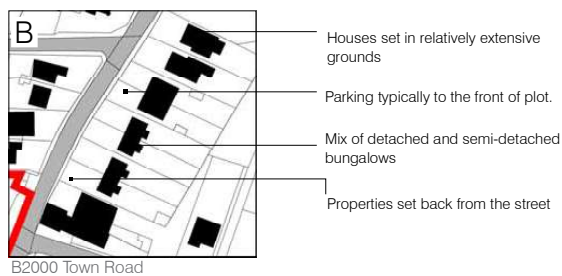
Historic buildings within the local landscape are typically substantial detached properties, mainly farmsteads setback from the road within their own grounds.

Buildings from the 20th century tend to be smaller in scale and higher in density. These comprise a variety of types although mainly detached with private driveways. Modern residential development includes housing estates of semi-detached and detached properties. Buildings in the village are generally two-storey and modest in scale.

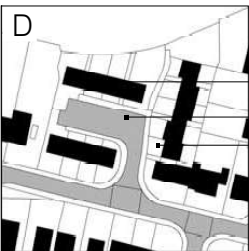


Figure 10: Townscape Location Plan (NTS). See following page for inset plans.

2 Assessment

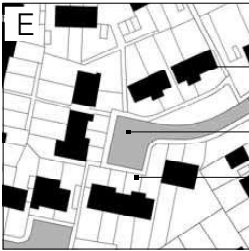


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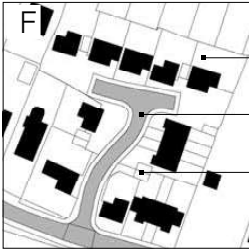
Newbury Close

- 2 storey flats
- Cul-de-sac layout
- On-street parking



Gardens Road

- Semi-Detached & Detached Properties
- Cul-de-sac layout
- Parking typically to the front of plot. Some properties incorporate integral garages



Bronte Close

- Large 2 storey modern detached & some semi-detached properties.
- Cul-de-sac layout
- Private driveways. Some detached garages.

2 Assessment

Traditional Detail and Materials

A range of details and materials can be observed within the village depending on the date of construction of buildings. The Kent Design Guide (KCC) has been prepared by Kent County Council to ensure the application of Good Design across the county by providing the criteria necessary for assessing planning applications. With regard to design, The Guide: *"does not seek to restrict designs for new development to any historic Kent vernacular. Rather it aims to encourage well considered and contextually sympathetic schemes that create developments where people really want to live, work and enjoy life."*

With regard to 'Building Design' and particularly 'Style' the guide states:

"New design should avoid the confused application of architectural styles or inappropriate historic imitation. Emphasis should be placed on the quality of the design solution, whether it is a reflection of a historic style or a contemporary approach. An applied veneer of cladding in a traditional material can weaken the integrity of the building. This form of design often lacks the detailing or sense of scale of the original and imitations offer a poor copy. Details derived from local buildings should retain the scale of the original."

A modern house dressed up in 'period' costume is immediately obvious and merely devalues the original

concept. Local constraints normally dictate the design approach, but there may be circumstances where freedom of design is possible. Infill developments will almost always be expected to harmonise with their context. Quality and detail of all materials and components will be of paramount importance. Such matters can easily be settled at feasibility stage through informal discussions with the Local Planning Authority."

With regard to 'Building Materials & Local Character' the guide considers that good quality design relies on the choice and combination of materials.

With regard to respecting and reinforcing local character and distinctiveness, the guide considers the types of materials used historically. As these vary across the county, local materials should be sourced in order to reinforce the character and identity of an area whilst reducing the need for transport of materials.

The guide encourages the use of contemporary building materials in certain contexts where these can be used to produce innovative and unique buildings. However, the guide states: *"materials for walls should conform to the dominant local character, colour and texture where these are of a consistent quality and type."*

Further to this, the guide states: *"The use of tile hanging, stained or painted boarding, render and brick varies across the county. These differences should be respected and used to reinforce local character."*

The guide also considers that the re-use and recycling of building materials as well as materials sourced from local suppliers can aid the integration of new development into its setting.

2 Assessment



An eclectic mix of modern vernacular styles, materials and colours in use along Town Road.



Semi-detached properties on Hale Road illustrating the mix and combination of materials and styles typical observed within the local area.



Large detached character properties exhibiting a mix of vernacular styles and materials such as red brick and tile located on View Road.



A small scale modern residential development off View Road utilising render and red brick.

2 Assessment

Ecology

An Ecological Assessment for the site have been prepared by FPCR Environment Design Ltd.

The key findings and conclusions of the Ecological Assessment are illustrated in figure 10 on the opposite page, and include the following:

Baseline

The Site comprises several arable fields with substantial grass/ruderal margins.

The majority of the Site boundaries were delineated by mature poplar tree lines, comprised of hybrid black poplar *Populus x canadensis* and Lombardy poplar *Populus nigra 'Italica'*. Other species were generally associated with back gardens.

Six hedgerows were present along the eastern and western boundaries generally typical of arable field hedgerows largely dominated by one or two native species. Three hedgerows contained over 80% native species and were identified as habitats of principal importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act. None of the hedgerows were found to be important under the Wildlife and Landscape criteria of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

Six internationally designated Sites fall within 15km of the Site boundary. Further to this, the Site lies within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for Chattenden Woods and Lodge Hill SSSI. However, there are no non-statutory sites present within 1km of the Site boundary. The mosaic of hedgerows, trees, arable land and margins provides corridors across the Site and commuting, foraging and nesting opportunities for local wildlife such as bats, birds and reptiles.

Several records of protected, notable or local BAP species are present within 1km of the Site. These included a number of notable bird species.

Recommendations

- *'All hedgerows will be retained, enhanced, managed sympathetically, substantially buffered and safeguarded from direct impacts during the construction phase;*
- *Existing gaps between hedgerows will be planted up and standard trees incorporated throughout to provide continuous corridors in order to enhance diversity, increase connectivity;*
- *The proposals ensure the majority of habitat suitable for nesting birds is retained; and this will be enhanced through buffering and widening of hedgerows;*
- *Wide grassland margins will be created, particularly*

along the northern and western boundaries;

- *Native shrubs and trees will be planted and species-rich tussock grassland created to enhance the GI;*
- *Local native woody species, including nectar, berries, fruit and nut bearing species will be selected to enhance foraging opportunities;*
- *Planting should seek to provide additional habitat and combine a range of native species and range of forms to benefit biodiversity;*
- *Creation of 'hop-overs' will increase the flight paths of bats (and birds) ensuring dark corridors remain;*
- *The creation of attenuation /balancing facilities will provide additional foraging opportunities;*
- *Roosting opportunities should be enhanced through the installation of bat boxes on retained trees or incorporated on to selected new buildings;*
- *The development lighting scheme should be designed with regard to good practice guidance, as set out in the Bat Conservation Trust; and*
- *A balancing facility will be created within the north-eastern extent of the site within an area of GI which will be retained for biodiversity."*



Figure 11: Phase 1 Habitat Survey (NTS)

2 Assessment

Arboriculture

An Arboricultural Assessment for the site has been prepared by FPCR Environment Design Ltd.

The Site is located to the north west of Cliffe Woods and is comprised of several arable field parcels separated by either field ditches or outgrown hedgerows.

Baseline & Evaluation

Tree cover is predominantly confined to the boundaries, dominated by hybrid black poplar and Lombardy poplar.

In addition a linear belt of trees defines the Site's northern boundary comprised of semi mature specimens of predominantly alder *Alnus glutinosa* alongside blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and holly *Ilex aquifolium*.

Tree cover situated to the east provides a green separation between the pastoral field parcel and the rear gardens of properties along Ladyclose Avenue and Mortimers Avenue. Similarly, tree cover along the southern boundary retains the separation between the Site and the agricultural field system beyond. Species observed along these boundaries comprise a mixture of native types such as Elm, Oak wild cherry and Hawthorn alongside hybrid black Poplar.

Generally tree cover comprising the Site boundaries are of fair condition, defined as: 'Trees with minor rectifiable

defects or in the early stages of stress from which it may recover with characteristics commonly found with trees that border arable environments.'

Dead branches were also regularly observed in various proportions with ivy growth and dense undergrowth established on a number of trees.

Recommendations

The proposals will not result in significant tree loss as the majority of the development will be located within arable field parcels mostly devoid of trees. All existing boundary trees will be retained and incorporated within landscape buffer strips and areas of green open space as part of the proposals.

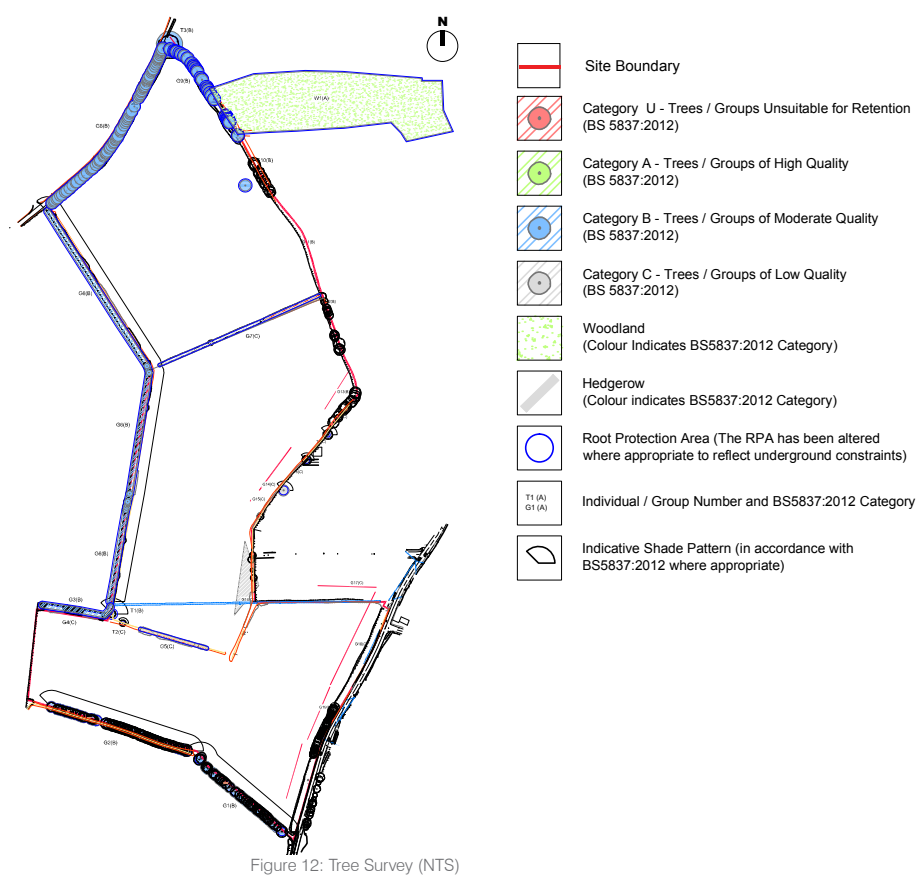
The removal of a small section of category C tree cover will be required in order to facilitate the proposed main vehicular access off Town Road to the north. The loss will be mitigated for with new tree and hedgerow planting across the Site.

Generous buffer strips adjacent to the existing boundary tree cover are proposed. Further to this, properties should front onto the boundary tree cover to provide additional set back between the development and large trees in order to reduce future pressure to prune or seek

their removal.

A large area of green space is proposed to the north and south of the Site which will create the opportunity to plant new trees, both mitigating for any required tree losses and also securing future tree cover within the surrounding landscape.

The proposals present the opportunity to improve and increase tree cover in the local area without significant tree loss. Planting within the proposed new open space; associated gardens and green spaces will serve to increase tree cover and enhance visual amenity within the local area.



2 Assessment

Water, Drainage and Hydrology

The outline planning application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) carried out by Lees Roxburgh Consulting Engineers, July 2016 which describes the Site's water and drainage issues.

The FRA has identified that the Site lies in an area of Zone 1 Flood Risk. The development will incorporate a number of measures to deal with storm and surface water drainage, including the attenuation basin to the north-east in accordance with current national and local guidance. As such, the FRA has demonstrated that the development is not at risk of flooding from external sources neither will it increase flood risk and is therefore considered appropriate.

Heritage

A Heritage Statement has been prepared by RPS CgMs and submitted as part of this application.

The report documents the historical environment comprising the Site and surrounding area and assesses the significance of any heritage assets which may be affected by a proposals, including any contribution made by their setting.

The report records the following points in relation to the historical environment:

- There are no designated heritage assets located within the Site;

- One Grade II* and four Grade II listed buildings lie within a 1 km search radius;
- 15 non-designated built heritage assets are located within the 1 km radius; and
- No Parks & Gardens of Special Historic Interest lie within the Site or 1 km radius.

The report concludes that the proposals will have no physical impact on the heritage assets recorded and potential impact upon the built historic environment would be restricted to changes within the asset's settings.

Consultation

Gladman Developments has engaged in a process of community consultation, which has informed the development of the proposals for the site.

A leaflet covering the application proposals was delivered to core stakeholders and interested parties for information.

Full details of the consultation and information presented, which includes the consultation boards, are set out within the Statement of Community Involvement accompanying the Planning Application.



Sample of consultation boards used in the public

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