



LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

F D ATTWOOD AND PARTNERS

DARLAND FARM

PEAR TREE LANE, HEMPSTEAD

REF. NO. 3760_RP_001

STATUS: SUBMISSION

DOCUMENT CREATED: 22.06.16

LLOYD BORE LTD
33 ST GEORGE'S PLACE
CANTERBURY
KENT, CT1 1UT

Tel: 01227 464340
Fax: 01227 464341

mail@lloydbore.co.uk
www.lloydbore.co.uk



CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	2	6. APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY	25
Proposed Development Layout	2	Assessment Methodology	25
About The Author	2	Assessment Tables & Matrices	25
Guidance	2	Baseline Studies and Scoping	25
Structure of the Report	2	Baseline Photography	26
Assessment Approach	3	Project Description	26
Sources of Information	3	Identification of Impacts	27
Establishing the Study Area	4		
2. BASELINE STUDIES	5		
The Site and Surroundings	5		
Land use / Land cover	5		
Settlement Envelope	6		
Topography	6		
Public Rights of Way	7		
Landscape Character Areas	9		
Visual Context and Accessibility	11		
3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION	13		
Access	13		
Key Features and Components	13		
Mitigation measures	13		
4. IDENTIFICATION OF IMPACTS	14		
Landscape Impacts	14		
Visual Impacts	14		
Summary of Impacts upon visual amenity	23		
5. CONCLUSION	24		
Landscape Impacts	24		
Visual Impacts	24		
Summary	24		

Author:	
Checked / Approved by:	

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document has been produced on behalf of F D Attwood and Partners to accompany a planning application for proposed residential development at Darland Farm on Pear Tree Lane, Hempstead.
- 1.2 Lloyd Bore were instructed in February 2016 to undertake a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of development proposals for the site.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to undertake an impartial appraisal of the potential visual and landscape impacts of the proposed development. It will:
- Describe the existing baseline conditions with regard to key landscape components and identify the unique landscape character areas (LCAs) that result from the combination of these components for an appropriately sized study area and to assess their sensitivity to change.
 - Identified the visual envelope of the proposed development and assess the sensitivity of the available visual receptors.
 - Describe the anticipated changes resulting from the proposed development and assess the 'magnitude of change' upon landscape character and views.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT LAYOUT

- 1.4 This assessment is based on drawing 712 L(--03 produced by CDP Architects.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- 1.5 This report has been compiled by Wendy Lancaster on behalf of Lloyd Bore Ltd.
- 1.6 Wendy is a Chartered Landscape Architect and Principal LVIA consultant to Lloyd Bore Ltd (established 1996), which is a specialist practice offering consultancy services in Landscape Architecture, Ecology and Arboriculture, based in Canterbury, Kent.
- 1.7 Wendy is a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute with ten years' post qualification experience in landscape assessment work, including many years involvement in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment projects. She is also a qualified Urban Designer and Registered Practitioner in Urban Design.

GUIDANCE

- 1.8 The approach adopted for this report has been informed and guided by the following key sources:
- The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Third Edition, 2013. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. (GLVIA);*
 - Natural England, 2014. An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment;*
 - Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11. Photography and photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment; and*
 - Scottish Natural Heritage, Visual Representation of Wind Farms, Version 2, 2014.*

Note. The latter document is relevant to photographic methodology in general.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

- 1.9 In relation to the above, this report will be based on the general principles set out for a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and will adopt the following structure:
- Section 1: Introduction*
- 1.10 This section introduces the type and structure of the report. It includes relevant information about the author, their qualifications, professional experience and involvement in the design and / or assessment process.
- Section 2: Baseline Studies*
- 1.11 This section describes the existing landscape and visual environment. It identifies appropriate landscape receptors and character areas. It describes the visual context and accessibility of the site, the likely visual receptors and representative viewpoints.
- 1.12 It identifies the relevant issues which need to be included in the assessment and those which can be appropriately 'scoped out' in accordance with the GLVIA.
- Section 3: Project Description*
- 1.13 This section describes the key features and components of the proposed development which relate to landscape and visual amenity, including details of potential impacts and effects and any primary mitigation measures which have been included within the design.
- Section 4: Identification and Assessment of Impacts*
- 1.14 This section summarises the anticipated impacts that would arise from the operational phase of the proposed development, upon landscape character and visual amenity.
- 1.15 These are determined by consideration of the size / scale, geographic extent, duration and reversibility of the impact. For visual impacts the issues of viewing distance and elevation, exposure, prominence, atmospheric and seasonal conditions are also considered.
- Section 5: Conclusion*
- 1.16 This section comprises a non-technical summary of the main conclusions resulting from the assessment.

ASSESSMENT APPROACH

- 1.17 The detailed methodology used in compiling this assessment is described in **Appendix 1** of this report.
- 1.18 The Landscape Institute have published a 'GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/ 13 (June 2013)' to provide clarification of the effect of the latest LVIA guidance upon the recommended approach for undertaking landscape and visual appraisals (LVA). The document states :
- 'In carrying out appraisals, the same principles and process as LVIA may be applied but, in so doing, it is not required to establish whether the effects arising are, or are not, significant given that the exercise is not being undertaken for EIA purposes.'*
- 1.19 Therefore, no assessment of significance is included within this document.

Terminology

- 1.20 The purpose of LVA is to identify the landscape and visual receptors which are most sensitive to the type of development proposed, and that may therefore require mitigation measures to be protected, and the impacts which would potentially be of the greatest magnitude and would therefore require mitigation to reduce them. A full methodology is included within Appendix 1 but a summary of the key terms are included here:

Sensitivity

- 1.21 The sensitivity of a receptor to change is a product of its susceptibility and its value, both of which are described further below. Tables to help assess the sensitivity of receptors are included within the Methodology in Appendix 1.

Susceptibility

- 1.22 The appraisal will discuss the susceptibility of the landscape and visual resource to the particular type of development proposed. Susceptibility of landscape receptors takes into account the following:
- What characteristics of the landscape and visual baseline (positive or negative) would be shared by the proposed development?
 - How appropriate would the proposed development be within the landscape and visual context of the proposal site and surrounding study area, in terms of the intended land use, scale, massing and location?

- 1.23 Susceptibility of visual receptors takes into account the activity that the person is undertaking and therefore how much attention they are paying to their surroundings. For instance, people using Public Rights of Way are more likely to be focussed on their surroundings and will be of higher sensitivity whereas workers at their place of work are considered to be less focussed on their surroundings.

Value

- 1.24 Value of receptors may be indicated by designations but this should not be taken as the sole factor. Local cultural, historic or other factors may make a receptor more valuable to the local population or landscape resource.

Magnitude of Impact

- 1.25 The magnitude of impact is a product of the scale of the impact, the extent over which it is experienced, how long it will last and whether or not it is reversible, or intended to be reversed. This is to allow a distinction between impacts which are experienced over a wider area and those which are experienced in a limited location. Tables to help assess the magnitude of identified impacts are included within the Methodology in Appendix 1.

Nature of Change

- 1.26 Landscape and Visual Appraisal may identify impacts of the greatest magnitude but this does not identify whether those impacts are beneficial, neutral, adverse or any combination of the three.

Mitigation

- 1.27 LVA reports will usually describe the nature of any mitigation measures which have been incorporated into a scheme during the design process in order to avoid, minimise or reduce potential impacts upon landscape and visual amenity, arising from the proposed development. Such mitigation measures will be assessed as part of the finished scheme.
- 1.28 The report may also make further recommendations for additional mitigation measures which could further help to avoid, minimise or reduce identified impacts.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- 1.29 Preliminary desktop investigations have identified the following sources of key information to be relevant to this assessment:
- OS digital mapping data.
 - MAGIC online mapping data.

- Medway Local Plan (2003) Saved Policies
- Natural England's National Character Areas (2015)
- The Landscape Assessment of Kent (2004)
- Medway Landscape Character Assessment (2011)
- Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation



ESTABLISHING THE STUDY AREA

1.30 The defined study area for this assessment is shown in **Figure 1**.

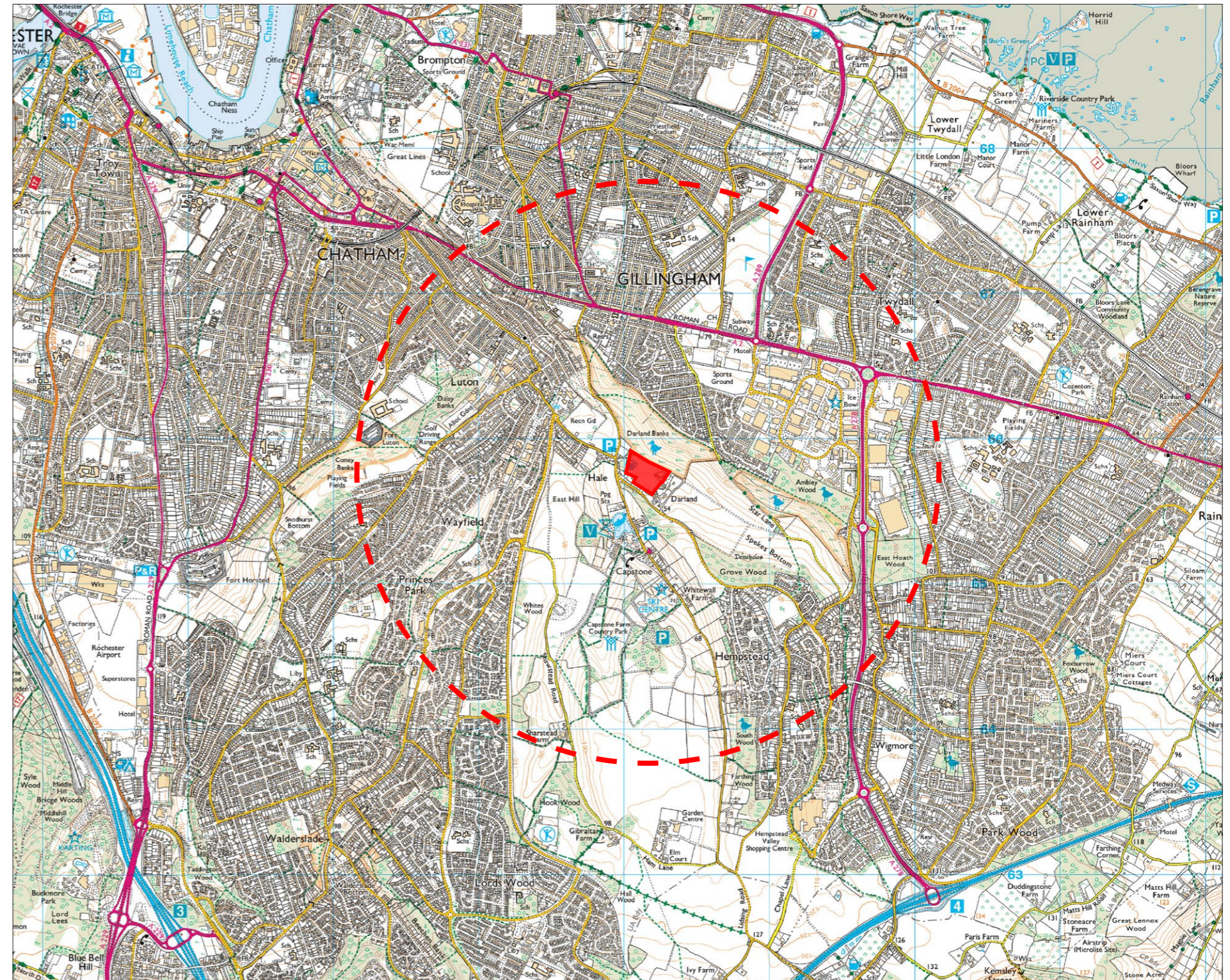
Extent of the physical and visual landscape

1.31 In determining the study area for assessment, it is important to distinguish between the study of the landscape character and the study of views. The study area for the assessment of landscape character requires a comparison of the proposal site as compared to its wider context. In areas of built environment, changes in character can occur from street to street. The study area for the purposes of this appraisal has been set to two kilometres, centred on the site. The study area for the visual assessment extends to the whole of the area from which the Proposed Development would likely be visible, known as the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI), and is dependent on factors such as the local topography and vegetation. A wider area is initially assessed and areas considered not relevant to the landscape or visual assessment are scoped out.

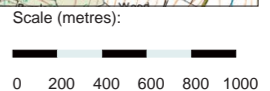
1.32 It is not possible or practicable to assess the potential visual impact of a proposed development from every part of the local area. The purposes of the LVA are to identify sensitive receptors and impacts of high magnitude that may arise from the proposed development. Narrowing the assessment to a series of representative viewpoints of the highest sensitivity is generally considered to be sufficient to fulfil this task.

1.33 The baseline assessment describes the receptors that are located within the study area and which of these are considered either not relevant to the assessment or not likely to experience impacts of medium or high magnitude are scoped out.

Figure 1: Study Area



 **Proposal site boundary**
 **Study area**



2. BASELINE STUDIES

THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The location and extent of the development site is shown on **Figure 2** alongside important key features mentioned within the report.
- 2.2 The proposal site comprises an irregular shaped pastoral field between Hale and Darland and at the base of Darland Banks. It contains a number of agricultural structures which appear to be in various states of disrepair.
- 2.3 The site is located within a green wedge of land extending northwards from the M2 into the combined settlement area of Chatham and Gillingham between Hempstead and Lords Wood and known as Capstone Downs. These areas of settlement appear to be contiguous both when viewed on the map and experienced in person, giving the impression of a continuous area of development surrounding Capstone Downs.
- 2.4 The proposal site is located on Pear Tree Lane which separates into two sections as it runs between Darland and Hale. Pear Tree Lane joins with Capstone Road and Ash Tree Lane to the west of the proposal site at the edge of the recreation ground. The eastern stretch of Pear Tree Lane, from which the proposal site takes access, is a designated Rural Lane as set out in Policy BNE47 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.
- 2.5 The area to the immediate north of the proposal site comprises the Darland Banks area of Open Access Land which rises up to the strongly defined settlement edge on Kingsway. The area to the immediate west of the proposal site comprises an area of modern barn-style houses named Darland Farm, the Waggon at Hale Public House and a large detached dwelling called The Gleanings. These form part of the settlement of Hale which appears to focus around the junction of Pear Tree Lane, Ash Tree Lane and Capstone Road. To the immediate east and southeast are a number of generally large detached dwellings in extensive grounds, marked as Darland on the OS map. These areas of development give the impression of rural low density housing set within wooded surroundings and contrasting with the more suburban development of Chatham and Gillingham. More details regarding the local settlement is given later in this report.

LAND USE / LAND COVER

- 2.6 The proposal site is located at the northern end of a wedge of predominantly rural and rural fringe land, known as Capstone Downs, which extends north from the M2 into the built settlement of Chatham and Gillingham. There are areas of woodland extending south along Capstone Road and southeast along Pear Tree Lane. Many of these are Ancient Woodland, as shown on **Figure 5**.
- 2.7 There are areas of tree cover along the southern and western edges of the proposal site and large areas of scrub to the north on Darland Banks. The area to the south of the proposal site appears well wooded with small areas of woodland and frequent tree belts.
- 2.8 Settlement within the area of the proposal site is generally seen as set within belts of mature large scale trees. The area of Darland is less wooded with houses appearing more exposed in the landscape, particularly when viewed from the north. More detail is included below.

Figure 2: Location of local features



Proposal site boundary
 Study area

Gibraltar Farm site

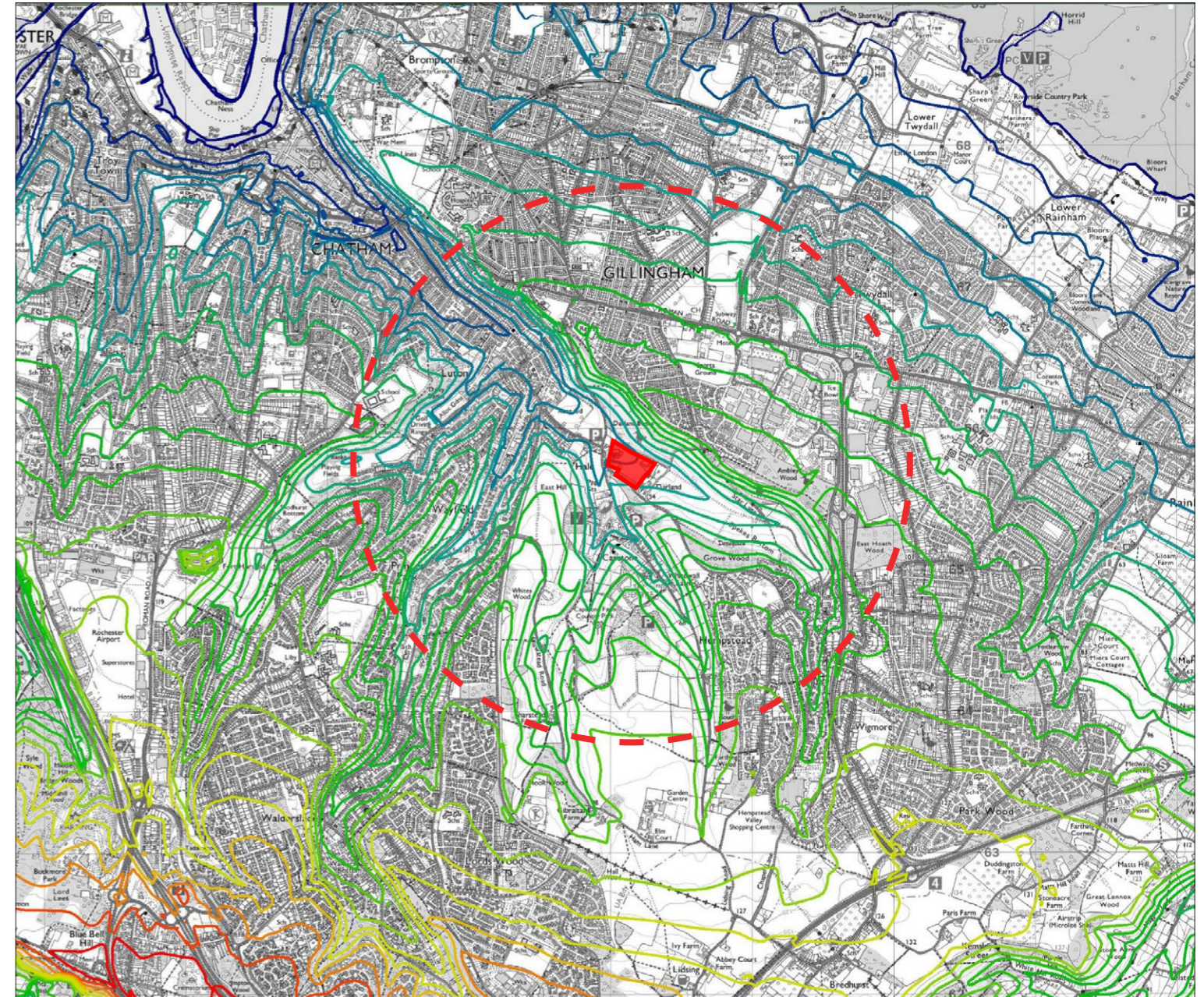
SETTLEMENT ENVELOPE

- 2.9 The settlement area which surrounds Capstone Downs comprises a number of different settlements which have merged together. Primarily they comprise Chatham and Gillingham but also include Lords Wood, Princes Park and Hempstead amongst others. The overall impression is of a single and continuous area of suburban development which ends abruptly along the northern boundary of Darland Banks.
- 2.10 Settlement at Hale and Darland immediately abuts the northwest and southeastern boundaries of the site respectively and the site currently forms the main separation between these two areas. Hale is located closer to the edge of the main urban settlements listed above and the presence of the main road and the proximity of the larger settlements creates an urban fringe character. Further to the south east, Hale becomes more rural in character with large buildings set within a strong landscape structure of mature large scale trees.
- 2.11 Darland comprises a series of detached dwellings in what appears to be the grounds of Darland Farm. These buildings comprise a range of styles. From the south, these appear to be surrounded by a well wooded landscape but from the north, these buildings appear more exposed and less integrated within the landscape.
- 2.12 The areas of settlement at Hale and Darland are generally more rural in character, perceived as individual dwellings set within a mature landscape, and contrasting with the more suburban development of Chatham, Gillingham and its associated centres.

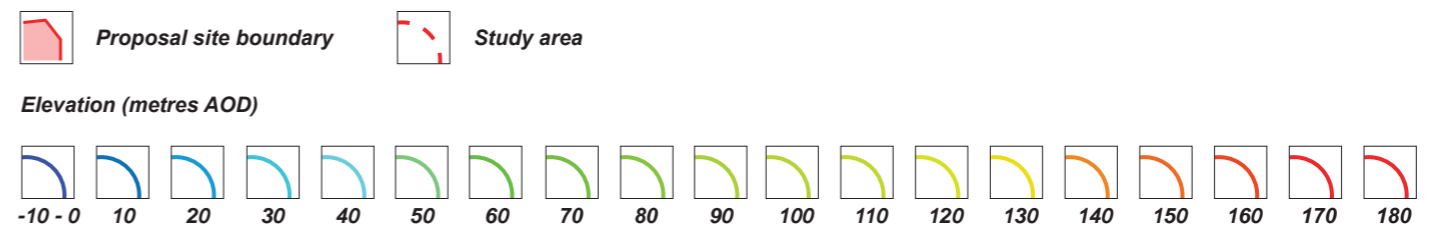
TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.13 The general topography of the site and study area, based upon OS 10m contour data and standard 5m OS Terrain Data is shown in **Figure 3**.
- 2.14 The landform falls away from over 190m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) in the Kent Downs to the south of the M2 in the south of the study area towards the Medway in the north which is at or near sea level. This is reflected in the National Character Areas which intersect in the area of the site with the lower lying Kent Plains and Greater Thames Estuary to the north and the higher Kent Downs to the south.
- 2.15 It is possible to see how the land falls away broadly from south to north in a series of ridges with valleys between them. The proposal site is near the junction of a number of these valleys and is therefore within a dip in the landform.

Figure 3: Topography.



Scale (metres):
0 200 400 600 800 1000



PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

2.16 There is a strong network of Public Rights of Way in the area. The North Downs Way is located approximately 5100m to the southwest of the proposal site and the Saxon Shore Way is located approximately 3400m to the northeast.

Public Rights of Way

- 2.17 Footpaths RC31, RC2, GB22, GB24A and GB24 run along the higher parts of the Darland Banks Area of Open Access Land. Intermittent views towards the site were possible from sections of these footpaths where scrub did not form a visual barrier.
- 2.18 Footpath RC32 runs uphill from the junction of Capstone Road with Pear Tree Lane and Ash Tree Lane towards the area of Wayfield.
- 2.19 Footpath GB25 is located at Spekes Bottom, approximately 1km southeast of the proposal site. It joins to the southern end of Star Lane and a designated Rural Lane which runs from Spekes Bottom to the proposal site.
- 2.20 Footpaths RC6A and RC13 are located within Capstone Farm Country Park and are well surrounded by trees.
- 2.21 The proposed development will not physically impact upon any of the identified rights of ways but views from certain routes are assessed in the visual appraisal later in this document.

Open Access Land

2.22 There are two areas of Open Access Land within the study area: at Princes Park and on Darland Banks. No views from Princes Park were identified and therefore only Darland Banks is assessed further in this document.

Country Parks

2.23 There is one Country Park within the study area, at Capstone Downs Country Park. No views from the Country Park were identified during the field assessment and impacts upon it are scoped out of this appraisal.

Figure 4: Access and Public Rights of Way.

