

Designations

Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

2.24 The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located outside the study area and over 1km from its boundary at its closest point (and over 3km from the site itself). From the desktop exercise no views of the site were predicted, and this was confirmed by fieldwork. Effects on the AONB will therefore not be considered further within this assessment.

Area of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI)

2.25 The proposal site and the area of Capstone Downs is located within an Area of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI) referred to as 'Capstone, Darland and Elm Court'. Effects on this designation are assessed within the document.

Ancient Woodland

2.26 There are areas of Ancient Woodland within the study area but none of these will be impacted upon by the proposed development and therefore impacts upon them are scoped out of the assessment.

Registered Parks and Gardens

2.27 There are no Registered Parks and Gardens within the study area

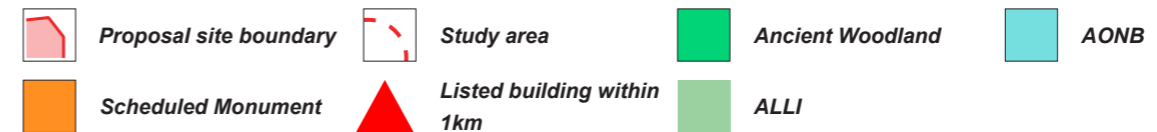
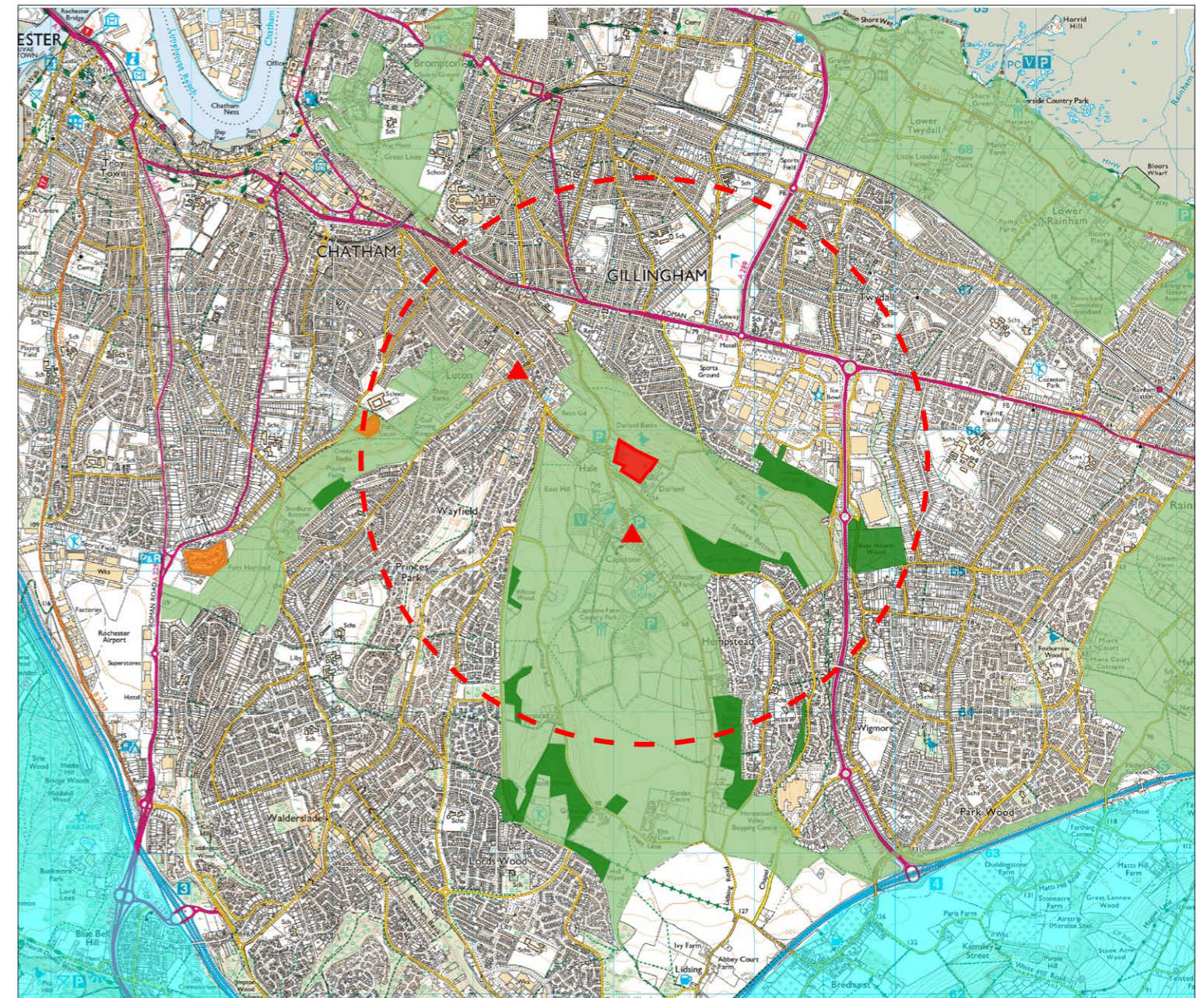
Historic Designations

2.28 There is one Scheduled Monument (SM) within the study area at Fort Luton. The proposed development will not impact upon the setting of the Scheduled Monument and it is not considered further in this assessment.

2.29 There are a large number of Listed Buildings within the study area. Those within 1km of the proposal site are the Grade II Listed Capstone Farmhouse located approximately 600m to the south of the proposal site and the Grade II Listed Pheasant House located approximately 990m to the northwest of the proposal site. The proposed development will not impact upon the setting of these and they are not considered further in the assessment.

2.30 There are no Conservation Areas within the study area and they are not considered further in this assessment.

Figure 5: Designations



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

National Character Areas

2.31 The proposal site is located at the junction of National Character Area (NCA) 113: North Kent and NCA 119: North Downs, according to Natural England (see **Figure 6**). These assessments will be used as a basis against which to compare the local level landscape character assessments.

Regional Landscape Character Areas

2.32 The study area is covered by the regional scale *Landscape Assessment of Kent (2004)*, as shown on **Figure 6** overleaf.

2.33 The Landscape Assessment of Kent places the proposal site within the Capstone Downs character area. Other character areas located within the study area include:

- Chatham Outskirts: Mid Kent Downs.
- Nashenden Valley: Mid Kent Downs.
- The Eastern Scarp: Medway.
- Medway Lower Valley.
- Hoo Peninsula.
- Medway Marshes.
- Fruit Belt.

2.34 The presence of the built area of Gillingham and the topography mean that notable effects will not be experienced beyond the Capstone Downs character area and therefore only this character area will be used as a basis for comparison.

Capstone Downs

2.35 The Landscape Assessment of Kent describes the Capstone Downs as follows:

“This narrow finger of North Downs landscape falls into two distinct landscapes. Firstly, the dramatic scarp and valley forms to the north. Secondly, rolling open plateau landscape in the centre and to the south. Remnant chalk grassland on the steepest slopes to the north lead into small fields of arable and pasture then ever larger arable units in the southernmost section. Blocks of deciduous woodland are a distinct feature throughout this Local character area providing much needed containment for the open arable landscape to the south. There

is a significant lack of development within the area itself but extensive urban areas are located on all but the southern boundary, this area is distinctly rural in character. However, there are definite indications of the development pressures these urban areas are putting upon this valuable and vulnerable landscape.”

2.36 Characteristic features of the area are listed as follows (inter alia):

- Steep ridges and valleys.
- Woodland and pasture-scrub invasion.
- Remnant chalk grassland.
- Urban context and encroachment of urban edge.

2.37 The *Landscape Assessment of Kent* has assessed the condition of the area to be **Poor** and the sensitivity to be **High** due to the degraded nature of the landscape but its visual openness.

2.38 The assessment makes the recommendation of **Restore** with the following actions:

- Restore the wooded edge to ridge tops where it is currently eroded.
- Restore selected areas of species-rich chalk grassland.
- Restore hedged boundaries to roads and other highways.

Local Landscape Character

2.39 The Medway Landscape Character Area places the site within the Capstone and Horsted Valleys in Character Area 24: Darland Banks. Other character areas within the study area include:

- 21. Lower Rainham Farmland.
- 25. East Hill.
- 26. Capstone Farm.
- 27. Sharstead Farm.
- 28. Elm Court.
- 29. Hempstead Fringe.
- 30. Horsted Valley.

2.40 The topography of the area and the presence of the built form of Gillingham mean that notable effects are unlikely to be experienced beyond the edge of the immediate character area. Therefore only impacts on LCA 24: Darland Banks are considered further in the assessment.

24. Darland Banks

2.41 The Medway Landscape Character Assessment describes this character area as a northwest and southeast facing chalk ridge and valley to the south side of Gillingham which stretches south to Elm Court. It is described as having the following characteristics:

- Series of parallel narrow ridges and dry valleys creates prominent, distinctive landscape
- Land cover of rare chalk grassland, deciduous woodland and arable farmland; unified and diverse landscape with high biodiversity value; scrub invasion to chalk slopes
- Medium to large arable field network with blocks of remnant ancient woodland
- Good east-west pedestrian accessibility between urban areas at Luton and Hempstead/Wigmore; area has high recreational value
- Strong uninterrupted views of open countryside looking south from Darland Banks
- Tranquil rural lane towards Spekes Bottom and Hempstead in south east
- Urban intrusion to north west with amenity uses and built development detracts from tranquil character

2.42 The assessment describes the condition of the area as ‘moderate’ with a ‘high’ sensitivity and a recommendation to ‘conserve and restore’.

2.43 The assessment identifies a number of issues which are relevant to the proposal site:

- Encroaching urban elements, hard edges and land uses
- Loss of unimproved chalk grassland to agricultural use and scrub invasion
- Loss of hedges, trees and woodland to arable uses
- Pressure for infill development (housing, retail and formal amenity facilities) from urban areas to east and west.
























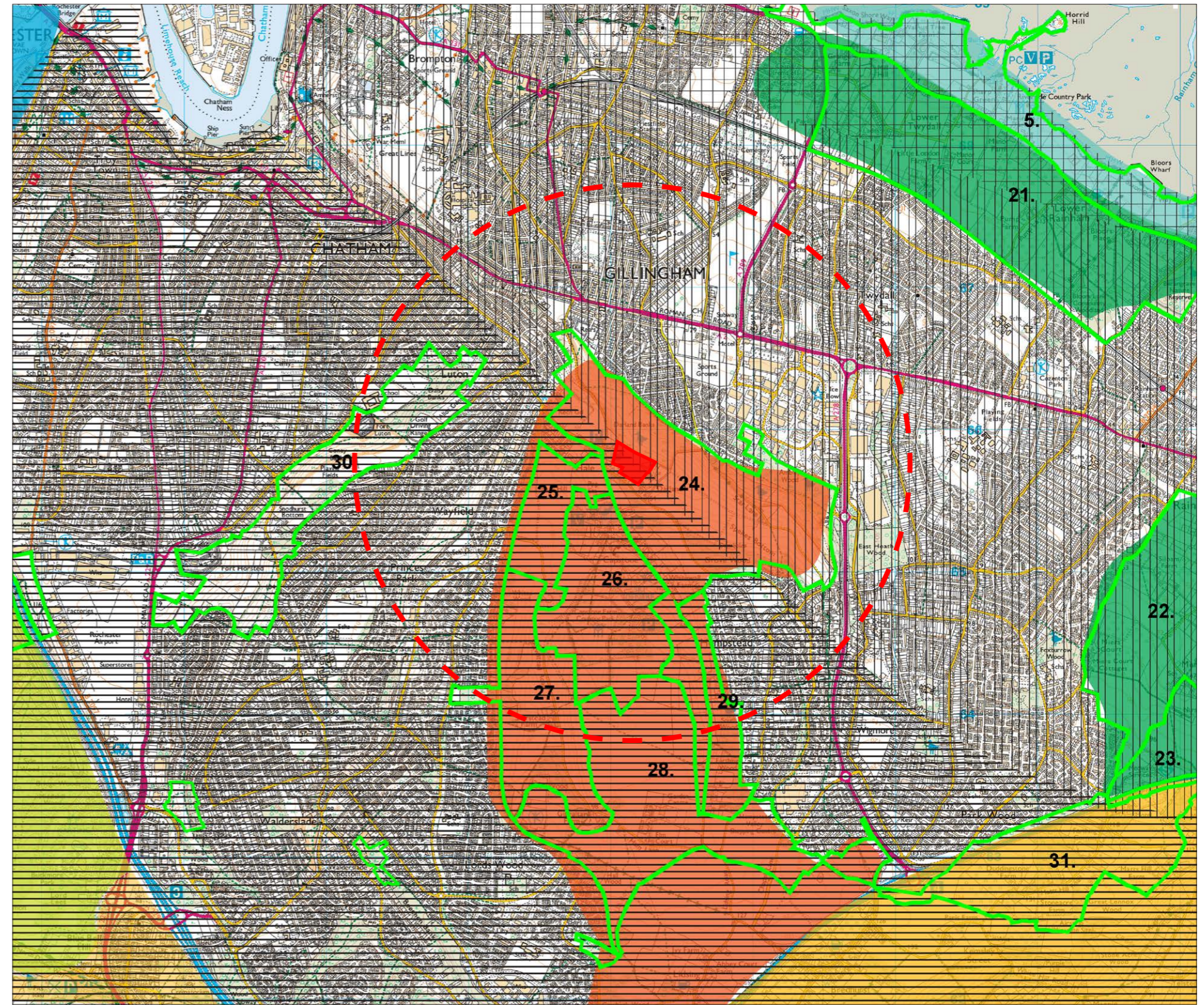
-  Proposal site boundary
-  Study area
- National Character Areas**
-  NCA 81: Greater Thames Estuary
-  NCA 119: North Downs
-  NCA 113: North Kent Plains
- Landscape Assessment of Kent**
-  Capstone Downs
-  Chatham Outskirts: Mid Kent Downs
-  Nashenden Valley: Mid Kent Downs
-  Fruit Belt
-  Medway Marshes
-  Medway Lower Valley
- Medway Landscape Character Assessment**
-  5 Riverside Marshes
-  21 Lower Rainham Farmland
-  22 Moor Street Farmland
-  23 Meresborough Farmland
-  24 Darland Banks
-  25 East Hill
-  26 Capstone Farm
-  27 Sharstead Farm
-  28 Elm Court
-  29 Hempstead Fringe
-  30 Matts Hill Farmland
-  31 Horsted Valley

Figure 6: Landscape Character Areas



Scale (metres):
0 200 400 600 800 1000

VISUAL CONTEXT AND ACCESSIBILITY

Visual Environment of the Proposal Site

- 2.44 The land rises steeply at Darland Banks to the northeast of the proposal site to the built edge of Gillingham. The land rises to the south but is intersected by valleys which created a tightly undulating landscape, see **Figure 3**. As a result, views towards the site are possible from the edge of Gillingham to the northeast, from Kingsway and the PRoW on Darland Banks but are obscured from the built form to the west from where the site is hidden in a dip in the landscape.
- 2.45 Views towards the site from the south are generally obscured from Capstone Road as this is located in a slight sunken valley and separated from the site by intervening woodland. The topography of the valleys means that views are focussed towards the site from footpaths to the southeast.
- 2.46 Capstone Farm Country Park contains areas of trees and high hedgerows and these prevent views towards the site from footpaths within the park.
- 2.47 Views from the north west are obscured by the intervening built form and ridges of land. The exceptions to this are from the slightly elevated land at the recreation ground and footpath RC32 at Hale.
- 2.48 In general, the visual envelope of the site is small due to the screening effect of the subtle changes in the landform and the mature landscape structure. The main exceptions to this are the views from the raised area of Darland Banks.

Visual Receptors

- 2.49 A number of visual receptors to change were identified and these are explored below in more detail.

Settlement

- 2.50 The application site is located in a green wedge within the combined settlement of Chatham, Gillingham and Hempstead. Although adjacent areas of development are set on higher ground, looking down towards the site, from most areas the site is hidden within a dip in the landscape and behind vegetation. Views towards the site are possible from the area of Darland Banks but views from the houses on Kingsway are generally screened by the intervening shrub planting. Views towards the site are investigated further from the following areas of settlement:
 - Houses immediately adjacent to the proposal site at Darland.

- Houses within Hale.
- Houses on Hoath Close.

- 2.51 Due to the effects of topography and intervening built development, there were no other receptors relating to views from houses which would be likely to be impacted upon by the proposed development.

Specified Viewpoints

- 2.52 There are no specified viewpoints shown on the OS map that fall within the study area.

Areas of Open Access and Public Land

- 2.53 The following areas of public access land were identified within the study area:
 - Capstone Farm Country Park.
 - Darland Banks Area of Open Access Land.
 - Coney Banks Area of Open Access Land.
 - Area of Open Access Land at Walderslade Bottom.
 - Recreation Ground at junction of Capstone Road and Ash Tree Lane.
- 2.54 The on site assessment identified no available views from Capstone Farm Country Park, Coney Banks or Walderslade Bottom and therefore only views from Darland Banks and the Recreation Ground are assessed.

National Trails

- 2.55 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. Views from both of these were not considered further due to distance and the intervening landform and built form.

Public Rights of Way

- 2.56 There is a large number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the study area. Views from the following footpaths were identified for further consideration within the assessment:
 - RC31/RC2/GB22 Darland Banks west.
 - GB24 Darland Banks east.
 - RC32 Hale.
 - GB25 Spekes Bottom.
 - Star Lane.

- Rural Lane from Star Lane to proposal site.
- RC6A/RC13 Capstone Farm Country Park.
- GB26/RC33 Whitewall Farm.

- 2.57 On site assessment, however, found that views could not be gained from Footpath GB25, Star Lane, footpaths in Capstone Farm Country park and at Whitewall Farm. As a consequence, it was judged that only the following PRoW required further assessment in this appraisal:
 - RC31/RC2/GB22 Darland Banks west.
 - GB24 Darland Banks east.
 - RC32 Hale.
 - Rural Lane from Star Lane to proposal site.

Local Roads

- 2.58 There is a dense network of local roads in the area. Views from the following have been considered further in this assessment:
 - Pear Tree Lane.
 - Ash Tree Lane.
 - Kingsway
 - North Dane Way.
 - Shawstead Road.

- 2.59 The on site assessment further scoped out views from some of these routes and only the following are assessed further in this document:
 - Pear Tree Lane.
 - Ash Tree Lane.
 - Kingsway

Visual Receptors

- 2.60 The following visual receptors were identified in the scoping exercise:
 - Houses immediately adjacent to the proposal site at Darland. (Represented by viewpoint 1.)
 - Houses within Hale. (Represented by viewpoint 1.)
 - Users of Darland Banks Area of Open Access Land and the footpaths within it. (Represented by viewpoints 2, 3 and 4)
 - Users of the Capstone Road Recreation Ground (Represented by viewpoint 6.)
 - Footpath RC32 at Hale. (Represented by viewpoint 7.)

- Rural Lane from Star Lane to proposal site. (Represented by viewpoint 5.)
- Pear Tree Lane. (Represented by viewpoint 1.)
- Ash Tree Lane. (Represented by viewpoint 6.)

Representative Viewpoint Locations

2.61 Representative viewpoint locations for identified key visual receptors / locations are shown in **Figure 7**. These are considered to be representative of the nature of available views from all identified receptor sites and sufficient for assessment of the potential visual effects of the proposed development.

2.62 The selected representative viewpoint locations comprise:

- **View 1. Entrance into the site from Pear Tree Lane**
- **View 2. Darland Banks on Kingsway**
- **View 3. Darland Banks**
- **View 4. Houses on Hoath Close**
- **View 5. Informal path from Spekes Bottom**
- **View 6. Capstone Road Recreation Ground**
- **View 7. Public Footpath RC32 at Hale**
- **View 8. Darland Farm at Hale**

2.63 The baseline photography was taken by Lloyd Bore during a site visit on the 26th February 2016.

Figure 7: Viewpoint Origins.



Proposal site boundary



Viewpoint origin

Image courtesy of (c) Google

3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 The following project description has been based upon the 'Annotated Site Plan', provided by CDP Architects (Figure 8).

ACCESS

3.2 The proposal site is accessed from Pear Tree Lane via an agricultural gate. There are no official Public Rights of Way through the application site but the site visit suggested permitted access along the track from the east at Spekes Bottom and Star Lane.

KEY FEATURES AND COMPONENTS

3.3 The main scheme components are summarised below and shown on the drawings to the right.

- Construction of 44 new residential properties with associated landscape treatment of tree and shrub planting with boundary hedgerows and gardens.
- A central area of public open space with public footpath.
- Site access from new road on Pear Tree Lane.

3.4 The buildings have been arranged in clusters with space around to allow for large scale tree and shrub planting. This will create pockets of houses set within a wooded landscape as seen in the surrounding area.

3.5 Buildings have been arranged so that they will overlook the areas of open space.

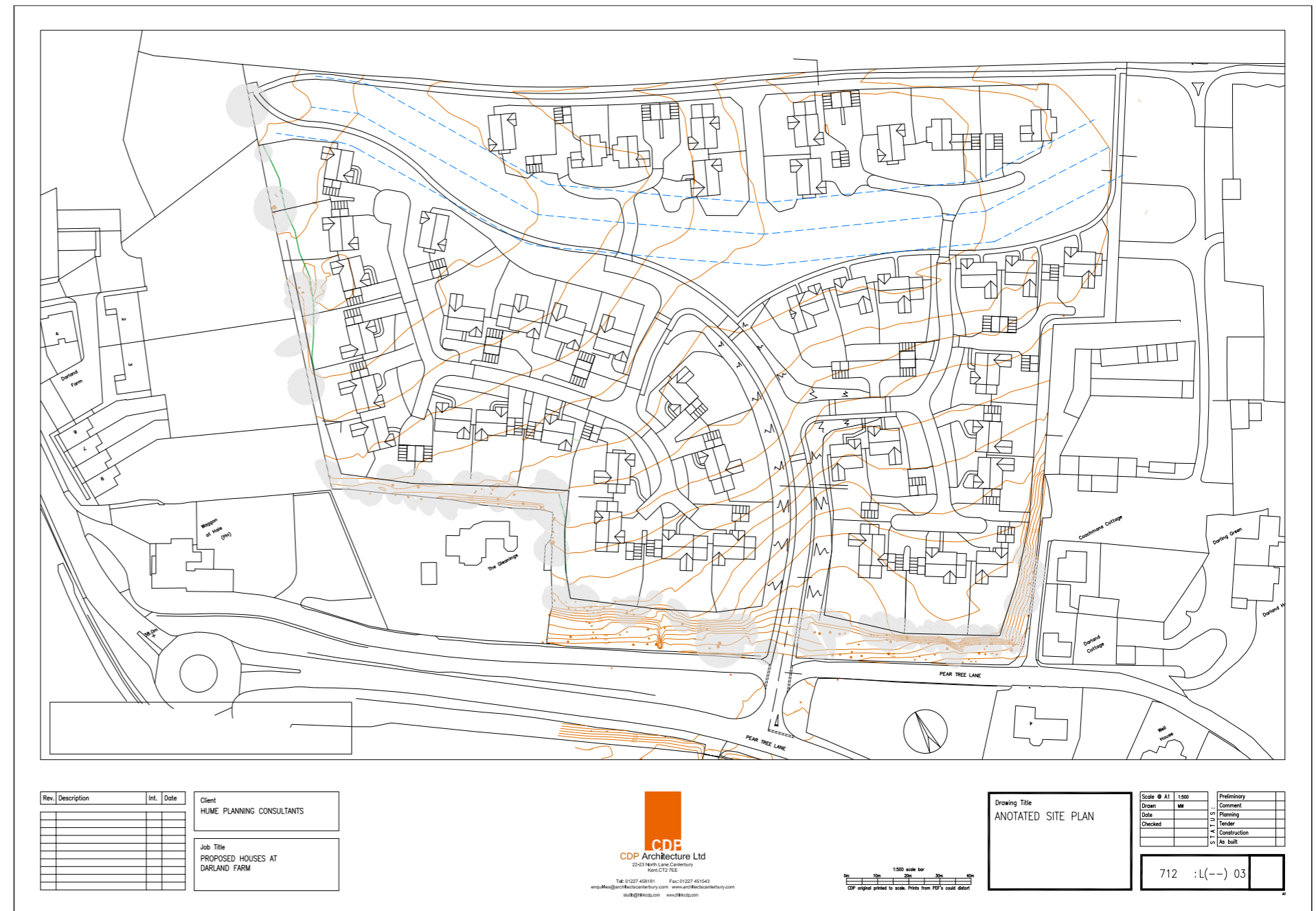
3.6 The proposed buildings would be 2-2.5 storeys in height and will use materials appropriate to the context and reflective of the surrounding building types.

MITIGATION MEASURES

3.7 The masterplan has been designed with the buildings collected together into clusters which will sit within what will become a mature green network containing large scale native trees. This will be reflective of the surrounding settlement type which comprises individual houses set within well landscaped grounds and mature tree planting.

3.8 A landscape masterplan is to be produced in accordance with the recommendations of this LVA and is submitted as part of the Application.

Figure 8: Proposed site layout plan (not to scale).



4. IDENTIFICATION OF IMPACTS

4.1 Completion of the baseline studies and review of the detailed development proposals has enabled the nature of potential impacts upon key landscape and visual receptors to be identified in the following section of the report.

LANDSCAPE IMPACTS

Impacts upon the ALLI

4.2 The proposal site and the area of Capstone Downs falls within ALLI ‘Capstone, Darland and Elm Court’. ALLI are covered by Policy BNE34 of the 2003 Medway Local Plan . It states that development will only be permitted in the ALLI if it does not materially harm the landscape character and function of the area or the economic and social benefits outweigh the priority to preserve the area. An assessment of the impact upon landscape character is included on this page. Policy BNE34 of the 2013 Local Plan describes the function of the ALLI and the following table assesses the impact upon each of these functions.

Table 1: Summary of effects upon landscape resources / character.

Function of ALLI	Impact of Development
Particularly attractive and important landscape feature defining urban areas, and preventing coalescence of Lordwood/ Princes Park and Hempstead.	The proposal site is not located between the named settlements but is further to the north in an area containing low density development.
Contributes significantly to informal open space needs of the communities which adjoin it.	There is no public access to the proposal site and its impact upon the setting of the adjacent open space is addressed in the visual assessment below.
Provides a rural landscape in close proximity to the urban area, bringing the countryside into the town.	Low density rural type development set within a mature landscape structure would be reflective of the adjacent development.
Provides a wider landscape setting for Capstone Farm Country Park.	The visual assessment has demonstrated that the proposal site is not visible from Capstone Farm Country Park.
Contributes to the setting of the Kent Downs AONB to the south and the M2 motorway.	If the proposal site were visible from the M2 or the AONB it would be as a negligible element in the context of the neighbouring development.

4.3 The proposed development will not impact upon the ability of the ALLI to perform its function.

4.4 The susceptibility of the ALLI to the proposed development is **medium** as the proposed development is not uncharacteristic of its context. The ALLI is a local designation and therefore its value is **medium**, resulting in a sensitivity of **medium**.

4.5 The scale of the change upon the ALLI will be **small** and will only be experienced within a limited area so extent will be **immediate**. All changes will be **permanent** and **irreversible**. Magnitude of change will be **small**.

Landscape Character Areas

4.6 Published character assessments are available for this area at national, regional and local level. However, only the local level assessment is used for the purposes of landscape appraisal. The regional and national character assessments are used as a basis against which to compare the local assessments and to identify those areas which may not be reflective of the wider character area.

Capstone and Horsted Valleys and Darland Banks

4.7 The Medway Landscape Character Assessment states that the Capstone and Horsted Valleys form an important link between the Kent Downs to the south and the built up area of Chatham and Gillingham and that the area is under increasing pressure from expansion of urban areas into open countryside. The document acknowledges that urban expansion at Hempstead and rural fringe land uses has led to a degradation of overall landscape quality and that further encroachment is likely to overwhelm local distinctiveness.

4.8 The description of the Darland Banks character area states that ‘urban intrusion to the north west with amenity uses and built development detracts from tranquil character’ and the description of East Hill states ‘close proximity to settlement and roads means that relative tranquillity interrupted in places by urban-rural fringe intrusions.’

4.9 The area of the proposal site is a rural fringe landscape strongly influenced by the adjacent settlement and surrounding roads. However, to the immediate southeast of the proposal site, the character of the landscape becomes more rural in nature. Development within this area has the potential to have an urbanising effect, extending the urban fringe characteristics further into

Capstone Downs. However, clusters of housing which reflect local housing typologies and which use local materials, set amongst a large scale and heavily wooded green structure would be reflective of the character of the housing in the immediate vicinity of the proposal site.

4.10 The size of the proposal site as compared to the Darland Banks character area means that impacts will be **medium scale**. Impacts will be experienced over the **local** area within the Darland Banks character area. The magnitude of change will be **medium**.

4.11 In this context, the effect upon the *Darland Banks character area* would be **Permanent** and **Irreversible**. Prior to the maturation of mitigation planting, impacts relating to the loss of open fields would be considered to be **adverse** as the buildings would appear as blocks of built form. Once the planting has matured, however, housing that is designed in a way that is reflective of the immediate area in terms of typologies and materials, and is set within a strong landscape structure, would be appropriate to the location and such impacts would be **neutral** in nature.

Summary of effects upon Landscape Resources / Character

4.12 The following table summarises the assessed effect of the proposed development upon landscape resources:

Table 2: Summary of effects upon landscape resources / character.

Landscape Character Area	Scale of Effects	Extent	Duration and Reversibility	Magnitude
Darland Banks	Medium	Local	Permanent, Irreversible	Medium

4.13 **Impacts** of medium magnitude will be limited to the local area of the site within the Darland Banks character area due to the scale of the proposal site as compared to Darland Banks. Development that is designed to reflect local building typologies and materials and which sits within a mature landscape structure would be appropriate to its surroundings and would be **neutral** in nature.

VISUAL IMPACTS

4.14 The proposed development would introduce new dwellings in a currently undeveloped location. This would impact upon the visual amenity of the following locations:

- Houses immediately adjacent to the proposal site at Darland. (Represented by viewpoint 1.)
- Houses within Hale. (Represented by viewpoint 1.)
- Users of Darland Banks Area of Open Access Land and the footpaths within it. (Represented by viewpoints 2, 3 and 4)
- Users of the Capstone Road Recreation Ground (Represented by viewpoint 6.)
- Footpath RC32 at Hale. (Represented by viewpoint 7.)
- Rural Lane from Star Lane to proposal site. (Represented by viewpoint 5.)

4.15 A series of eight photographic views were taken to represent the identified visual receptors. These are:

- **View 1. Entrance into the site from Pear Tree Lane**
- **View 2. Darland Banks on Kingsway**
- **View 3. Darland Banks**
- **View 4. Houses on Hoath Close**
- **View 5. Informal path from Spekes Bottom**
- **View 6. Capstone Road Recreation Ground**
- **View 7. Public Footpath RC32 at Hale**
- **View 8. Darland Farm at Hale**

4.16 An assessment of impacts upon these viewpoints is set out in the following section of this report.

Figure 7 (reproduced): Viewpoint Origins.



Proposal site boundary



Viewpoint origin

Image courtesy of (c) Google

Photo 1: Entrance into the site from Pear Tree Lane

Approximate horizontal extent of proposal site



View 1. Entrance into the site from Pear Tree Lane

- 4.17 This view is gained from a single point through the gate into the proposal site and is not representative of views from the main part of Pear Tree Lane. Similar views are possible from the neighbouring dwellings, including The Gleanings, but views would be filtered through the intervening vegetation.
- 4.18 This view would be experienced predominantly by:
 - Residents of properties on Pear Tree Lane, predominantly The Gleanings.
 - Walkers on Pear Tree Lane.

Nature of existing view, visual components & detractors

- 4.19 This is a short range, isolated view taken from Pear Tree Lane at the entrance to the proposal site. The existing buildings within the site are typical agricultural structures and are appropriate to their context despite being in some disrepair. This viewpoint offers open views towards Darland Banks and the urban edge of Gillingham on Kingsway. It is a predominantly rural view but the presence of garden fencing in the right of the view is an urbanising feature. From the rest of Pear Tree Lane, views would be possible only in winter months and seen filtered between the trees.

Nature of Change

- 4.20 From this location the proposed development would introduce the following new visual components:
 - New residential development in the form of 2-2.5 storey dwellings and associated circulation will obstruct some longer distance views towards Darland Banks.
 - Introduction of new planting.
- 4.21 The development would result in the loss of the following components from the existing view:
 - The agricultural buildings and silos in the right of the view.
 - The area of farmland will be replaced by residential development.
 - Some views towards Darland Banks.

Sensitivity to Change

- 4.22 Pedestrians on Pear Tree Lane would be of **medium susceptibility** as they would be aiming to experience the rural setting of the area but would be located on a local road. Residents in the local dwellings would be of **high susceptibility**.
- 4.23 The viewpoint is located within the ALLI which is a local designation and therefore sensitivity of receptors on the road are **medium** and receptors within the local houses would be **high**.

Magnitude of Impact

- 4.24 Impacts upon pedestrians using Pear Tree Lane would be of **large** scale in the **immediate** area and would be **permanent** and **irreversible**.
- 4.25 Receptors within the adjacent houses would experience **medium** scale effects as they would be filtered through the intervening trees, over the **immediate** area and these impacts would be **permanent** and **irreversible**.
- 4.26 Impacts upon receptors at this single point would be of **medium** magnitude. From the remainder of Pear Tree Lane, impacts would be **negligible**.

Nature of Impacts

- 4.27 The introduction of development without associated mitigation planting would be **adverse** as the buildings would appear as large masses of built form.
- 4.28 Once planting has matured, the **adverse** impacts relating to the loss of some of the long distance views would remain but the presence of rural type development set within a strong landscape structure would not be out of context with the area and impacts relating to its introduction would be **neutral**. However, the introduction of new tree planting would be of **beneficial** nature.

Photo 2: Darland Banks

Approximate horizontal extent of proposal site



View 2. Darland Banks on Kingsway

- 4.29 This view is representative of the views gained by walkers using the footpaths and Open Access Land at the northwestern end of Darland Banks. Views of the site, however, are intermittent due to the areas of dense scrub planting.
- 4.30 This view would be experienced predominantly by walkers on the footpaths and Open Access Land.

Nature of existing view, visual components & detractors

- 4.31 This is a medium distance view from a raised area of ground to the north of the proposal site. The large areas of scrub prevent most views towards the site but filtered views, such as that shown on photo 2 above, demonstrate the important role the site plays in the landscape when viewed from this angle. The view is generally rural and is characterised by rolling hills and woodland planting. In the middle ground, the houses of Darland appear more open which contrasts with the buildings at Hale, e.g. the Gleanings, which are surrounded by large scale tree belts.

Nature of Change

- 4.32 From this location the proposed development would introduce the following new visual components:
 - The construction of 2-2.5 storey dwellings with associated gardens and infrastructure will result in the introduction of new low-density residential development into a currently undeveloped area.
 - New planting within the proposed development, particularly along the northern boundary.
- 4.33 The development would result in the loss of the following components from the existing view:
 - The agricultural buildings and silos in the left of the view.

Sensitivity to Change

- 4.34 Walkers on the footpaths and within the Open Access Land would be of **high-medium** susceptibility as they would be aiming to experience the landscape setting of the area. The viewpoint is located within the ALLI and therefore receptors in this location are of **high to medium** sensitivity to change.

Magnitude of Impacts

- 4.35 This effect will **medium** scale in the **local** area and would be **permanent** and **irreversible**. This would result in effects of **medium magnitude**.

Nature of Impacts

- 4.36 It is concluded that the proposed development would have an **adverse** effect prior to mitigation planting as the new development would be viewed as unbroken areas of built form.
- 4.37 Once planting has matured, the proposed development will be viewed accommodated within a strong landscape framework which would be reflective of the character of previous developments within the area of Capstone Downs. Such impacts would be **neutral** with the addition of planting seen as **beneficial**.

Photo 3: Darland Banks

Approximate horizontal extent of proposal site

*View 3. Darland Banks*

- 4.38 This view is taken from the area of Darland Banks near the junction of Kingsway with Darland Avenue, approximately 400m to the northeast of the northeastern corner of the proposal site. It demonstrates the variation in visibility of the site from the area of Darland Banks caused by the areas of scrubland, and shows the site in the context of the houses at Darland.
- 4.39 This view would be experienced predominantly by walkers within the Darland Banks area of Open Access Land.

Nature of existing view, visual components & detractors

- 4.40 This is a medium range, elevated view from an area of publicly accessible land frequently used by dog walkers. It is possible to see the rural type development at Darland, comprising detached dwellings in extensive gardens. These dwellings vary in size and design and are laid out in an irregular pattern, creating a more rural character. Although the built form of Chatham is visible in the right side of the background, the overall character of this view is rural.

Nature of Change

- 4.41 From this location the proposed development would introduce the following new visual components:
- The construction of 2-2.5 storey dwellings with associated gardens and infrastructure will result in the introduction of new low-density residential development into a rural area.
 - Introduction of new tree and shrub planting.
- 4.42 The development would result in the loss of the following components from the existing view:
- The area of farmland will be replaced by residential development.

Sensitivity to Change

- 4.43 Walkers on the footpaths and within the Open Access Land would be of high-medium susceptibility as they would be aiming to experience the rural setting of the area. The viewpoint is located within the ALLI and therefore is of **high to medium** sensitivity to change.

Magnitude of Impact

- 4.44 The scale of change would **medium** and experienced over a **local** area. Changes would be **permanent** and **irreversible**. The magnitude of change would be **medium**.

Nature of Impacts

- 4.45 Prior to the maturation of mitigation planting, the development would appear as unbroken built form which would be **adverse**. However, once planting has matured, the buildings will be viewed within a strong landscape structure as is characteristic of the immediate area. Such changes would be **neutral** in nature and the addition of new tree planting would be **beneficial**.

Photo 4:Houses on Hoath Close

Approximate horizontal extent of proposal site



View 4. Houses on Hoath Close

4.46 This view is taken from the area of Darland Banks by the houses on Hoath Close close to the junction of the A278 and Hempstead Road. This is an elevated view along one of the valleys towards Chatham and is located 1.3km to the east southeast of the proposal site.

4.47 This view would be experienced predominantly by:

- Residents of properties on Hoath Close.
- Walkers in the area of Open Access Land.

Nature of existing view, visual components & detractors

4.48 This is a long range view from an elevated position and demonstrates the focus of views along the Spekes Bottom valley. The slight curve in the escarpment means that the proposal site is partly obscured by the intervening landform but the southern corner is visible behind the houses at Darland.

4.49 The settlement of Chatham forms a dominant feature in the background of the view and the proposal site is viewed at the junction of the more rural landscape and the urban edge. The dwellings at Hale and Darland are visible in this view but appear appropriate to their rural setting due to their well planted curtilages.

4.50 The overall impression is of detached dwellings sat within a well wooded landscape with more dense development in the background.

Nature of Change

4.51 From this location the proposed development would introduce the following new visual components:

- New residential development in the form of 2-2.5 storey dwellings will be evident and increase the impression of built form in the region of the site.
- New structural planting.

4.52 The development would not result in the loss of any features within this view.

Sensitivity to Change

4.53 Receptors represented by this viewpoint would be of **high to medium** susceptibility to change. This viewpoint is located within the ALLI which is a local level designation and therefore receptors at this point are of **high to medium** sensitivity to change.

Magnitude of Impact

4.54 The scale of change would be **small** due to the distance and will be experienced at a **local extent**. This effect will be **permanent and irreversible**. This would result in effects of **low magnitude**.

Nature of Impacts

4.55 New development within this view will be seen within the context of surrounding development but, before mitigation planting has matured, will be seen as a single block of built form. The introduction of new development into the view would result in marginally **adverse** effects.

4.56 Once planting has matured, effects will be **neutral** in nature as they will relate to housing seen within a strong landscape structure. The addition of new planting would be **beneficial** in nature.

Photo 5: Informal Path from Spekes Bottom

Approximate horizontal extent of proposal site



View 5: Informal Path from Spekes Bottom

4.57 This view is representative of isolated views along this informal path. The path is not an official footpath according to the Medway Footpath Map and could therefore be closed. As a result, receptors on this route would be of lower susceptibility to change within LVIA methodology. The viewpoint is located in the valley bottom at Spekes Bottom and is located approximately 550m to the east southeast of the proposal site.

4.58 This view would be experienced predominantly by walkers on the path.

Nature of existing view, visual components & detractors

4.59 This is a medium range view from a point at a similar elevation to the proposal site. The dwellings at Darland and the agricultural buildings within the proposal site are visible in this view with the settlement of Chatham in the background. Much of the proposal site will be obscured behind planting at Darland but the buildings in the north east corner of the site will be visible.

Nature of Change

4.60 From this location the proposed development would introduce the following new visual components:

- Introduction of new 2-2.5 storey low density residential development.
- New structural planting.

4.61 The development would result in the loss of the following components from the existing view:

- The agricultural buildings and silos in the centre of the view.

Sensitivity to Change

4.62 Receptors represented by this viewpoint would be of **medium** susceptibility. The viewpoint is located within the ALLI, a local designation, and therefore receptors are of **medium** sensitivity to change.

Magnitude of Impact

4.63 The scale of change would be **small** due to the distance and only experienced over an **immediate extent**. This effect will be **permanent and irreversible**. This would result in effects of **low magnitude**.

Nature of Impacts

4.64 The development would be seen sat against the existing edge of the settlement on the higher ground beyond. Until planting has matured, the proposed development would be perceived as a single block of built form which would appear out of scale with the surroundings. This would be marginally **adverse** in nature.

4.65 Once planting has matured it will result in **neutral** effects as the development will be seen sat within a mature landscape infrastructure as is characteristic of the area. The addition of new trees will result in **beneficial** effects.