



Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
**Land off Pump Lane,
Lower Rainham**
28th September 2020

13374/R01e/RH/RP





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1 Introduction and Site Context

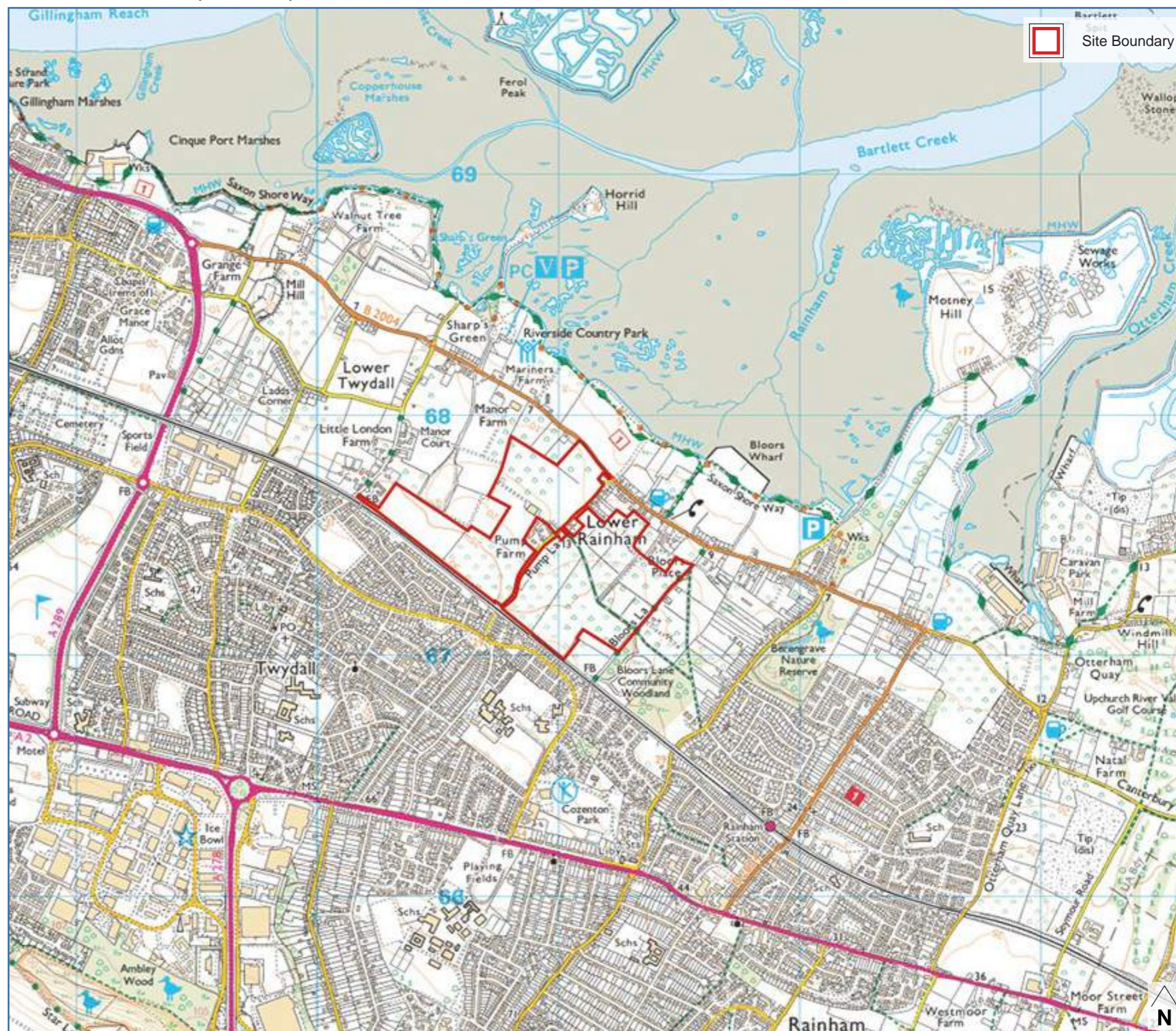
Background

- 1.1 Tyler Grange Group Limited have been appointed by AC Gotham and Son to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) in conjunction with an Appeal that is to be made against Medway District Council (the Council) for the refusal of outline planning permission for the redevelopment of land off Pump Lane, Lower Rainham (the site) for residential development of approximately 1,250 dwellings (application reference MC/19/1566). The proposed development also includes for a local centre, village green, two form entry primary school, 60 bed extra care facility, 80 bed care home and associated access (vehicular, pedestrian and cycle).

Site Context

- 1.2 The site comprises an area of land comprising approximately 51.2 hectares of agricultural land that is managed for commercial fruit growing and is laid to orchard. The site is situated on land to the immediate northeast of the built area of Twydall, which bounds the site alongside the London to Margate railway line. To the southeast, development at Rainham extends to the north of the railway. Houses along Berengrave Lane connecting with ribbon development on Lower Rainham Road to the east of the site. The wider conurbation of Gillingham is situated to the west, adjoining Twydall. The situation of the site and its' boundary are illustrated on **Plan 1: Site Location**.
- 1.3 To the northeast, the site is bounded by Lower Rainham Road, including the settlement of Lower Rainham. To the southeast, the site is bound by Lower Bloors Lane which connects with Lower Rainham Road and extends to the railway, where a footbridge provides pedestrian access into Twydall to the south. Allotments west of Lower Bloors Lane alongside the railway lie to the southeast of the site.
- 1.4 The western site boundary is irregular in shape, following field boundaries formed by hedgerows and tree belts to areas managed as orchards to the northwest, arable fields and a former Chalk Pit beyond east of Lower Twydall. The site extends alongside the railway towards the edge of Lower Twydall and a strip of land adjoining Lower Twydall Lane.
- 1.5 The site is bisected by Pump Lane, which runs north-south from Lower Rainham Road and crosses under the railway south of the site. To the centre of, and outside the site development along Pump Lane include Pump Farm and a modern development of houses at Russett Farm. Cottages are situated opposite the farm buildings and to the northeast. A row of houses connects with

Plan 1: Site Location (13374/P01)



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Plan 2: Site Context (13374/P02)



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1 Introduction and Site Context

Lower Rainham Road on the western edge of Lower Rainham, north of the site. Chapel House, a half-timbered building is situated on the junction of Pump Lane and Lower Rainham Road, west of the lane.

- 1.6 A bridleway runs diagonally from Lower Bloors Lane on the eastern boundary, connecting with Pump Lane opposite Pump Farm.
- 1.7 Fields within the site are divided by coniferous shelterbelts, including those along the bridleway, as well as bounding the allotments and railway line east of Pump Lane. Tall hedgerows run alongside Pump Lane and Lower Bloors Lane, with breaks in the vegetation at gateways, development frontages and accesses.
- 1.8 The site context, land use, features and land pattern are illustrated on the aerial image on **Plan 2: Site Context**.
- 1.9 The land slopes gently upward from the low-lying marshes north of Lower Rainham Road and shoreline beyond towards the edge of Twydall to the south. The urban area of Twydall, Rainham and Gillingham extend up the slopes towards the wooden skyline of the North Downs beyond.
- 1.10 Land along the shoreline lies within the Riverside Country Park, with car parks, café and play areas on land north of Mariners Farm, north of the site. Horrid Hill and Motney Hill project the shoreline into the Medway Estuary, with the Saxon Shore Way long distance path running along the shoreline. Bloors Lane community woodland lies to the east of the site, accessed off Bloors Lane. Woodland and shelterbelts along the shoreline and inland provide containment and are distinctive features in the local landscape.
- 1.11 The Landscape Character and site Features are considered in detail in **Section 4** of this LVIA. This has included a review of published landscape character assessments, as well as a site-specific landscape character assessment undertaken by Tyler Grange which identifies Local Landscape Character Areas and features within the site that maybe affected by the proposed development. The value and susceptibility of the landscape to changes is also identified.

Scope and Purpose

- 1.12 A previous LVIA was prepared by Lloyd Bore in January 2019 to support the planning application (report number 4930-LLB-RP-L-0001-S3-P02). The LVIA was reviewed by the Council, as well as their appointed Landscape Consultant Jon Etchells Consulting. Both the Council and Jon Etchells found the Lloyd Bore LVIA to use an appropriate and recognised methodology and make a reasonable assessment of landscape harm arising from the proposed development.
- 1.13 Matters relating to policy were addressed within the Planning Statement prepared by Rapleys LLP and submitted to support the planning application.
- 1.14 This LVIA prepared by Tyler Grange which provides an up-to-date, complete and independent assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. The scope and methodology employed by this LVIA is set out in further detail at **Section 2**, and at **Appendices 1 and 2**.
- 1.15 The Statement of Case sets out matters to be addressed through the Appeal, including those relating to the reasons for refusal and planning policy. These are to be further addressed through the preparation of Evidence. This LVIA forms a technical report to support the Appeal and Evidence.
- 1.16 The LVIA also forms a Technical Appendix to an updated Environmental Statement (ES) that has been prepared to support the Appeal, as well as informing the Landscape and Visual Effects Chapter within the ES.

Scoping and Assumptions

Study Area

- 2.1 As detailed in **Sections 7 and 8**, the baseline studies have identified those landscape character areas and landscape receptors and visual receptors (groups of people) who have views towards the site and may have the potential to have their views and visual amenity affected by the proposed development.
- 2.2 This has included the use of GIS Software to identify a Theoretical Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) for development of the height proposed. The ZTV highlighted the potential for views across the Medway Estuary to the north. However, more locally views are limited by the built area to the south and woodland, shelterbelts and hedgerows to the east and west.
- 2.3 The Study Area has been defined in order to enable the LVIA to take account of distant views across the estuary to the north and from within the local landscape, including shoreline, Riverside Country Park and adjacent roads, lanes and public rights of way. The assessment has also included for consideration of views for residents of properties adjacent to and overlooking the site.
- 2.4 The full Study Area is illustrated on **Plan 9: Viewpoint Location Plan**, which includes views from the Hoo Peninsula to the north.
- 2.5 Landscape effects have been considered within a smaller area, based upon the extent of local landscape character areas as identified within the Medway Landscape Character Assessment and visibility of the site and proposals to the south of the estuary. The extents of this area are illustrated on **Plan 4: Landscape Character** and **Plan 5: Site-Specific Character**.

Representative Photoviewpoints

- 2.6 Through the baseline studies and fieldwork, Tyler Grange have identified of 22 viewpoints that are representative of a range of views from different orientations, distances and for a range of groups of people. These include users of the Saxon Shore Way, Riverside Country Park, Local Roads and Rights of Way, as well as residents south of the site at Twydall.

Tyler Grange have contacted the Council and Jon Etchells Consulting to seek to agree the representative viewpoints and that these provide a suitable range of views to inform the LVIA. In an email dated 19th September 2020, Jon Etchells has responded and confirmed that the number and range of viewpoints are appropriate, with no suggestions for additional

views. The photographs from each of the viewpoints contained in the LVIA include commentary, labels and, where appropriate the approximate location and extent of site in these views. A copy of the email correspondence between Tyler Grange and Jon Etchells is included at **Appendix 1**.

Proposals – Revised Parameters and Illustrative Masterplan

- 2.7 The assessment has taken account of the revised parameters to provide open space and buffers to the Lower Twydall and Lower Rainham Conservation Areas. The strategic landscape planting within these buffers has been assumed to be as set out by the design principles and the Landscape Strategy prepared by Lloyd Bore to support the application, as included in the LVIA and Design and Access Strategy.
- 2.8 The building heights have remained the same as for the planning application, with development limited to 12m across the residential housing areas, and 10m for the village centre and school.

Mitigation – Landscape Framework and Assumptions for LVIA

- 2.9 For the purposes of this assessment, all landscape and visual mitigation has been embedded into the scheme.
- 2.10 Given that there is no certainty as to the phasing of the development and timing for implementation of areas of Green Infrastructure and structural landscape planting, it has been assumed that landscape mitigation is to be implemented at completion (year 1).
- 2.11 The assessment has considered the landscape and visual effects both upon completion, and for residual effects after 15 years when the planting will have established and matured sufficiently to provide effective mitigation.
- 2.12 Details of the mitigation measures are summarised at **Section 6** of this LVIA. These have been drawn from and informed by the Design and Access Statement prepared to inform the planning application.
- 2.13 The updated **Landscape Framework** plan prepared by Tyler Grange incorporates the Design Principles and parameters into the updated layout and provides an illustrative drawing of how these can be incorporated into the areas of Green Infrastructure, including landscape buffers, village green, recreation routes and areas of open space. A copy of the plan is included at **Section 6**.

LVIA Methodology and Approach

- 2.14 This LVIA considers the existing landscape and visual context associated with the site and the potential implications of the proposed development on the landscape and visual receptors.
- 2.15 As identified above, the Council's appointed landscape consultant has requested that the LVIA is prepared in accordance with the GLVIA and considers the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors, the magnitude of change and significance of the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development.
- 2.16 Landscape is defined by the European Landscape Convention, 2000 as:
- "... an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors." (page 4, Article 1 - Definitions, paragraph a)*
- 2.17 In the context of this definition the assessment process seeks to consider the effects in an objective and systematic manner whilst recognising the perceptual and therefore subjective response to the landscape. Whilst subjectivity can never be removed from the assessment process, by following a systematic and structured framework of assessment, a more robust assessment can be performed and more rational and transparent conclusions drawn.
- 2.18 The LVIA process deals with the separate but interlinked issues of:
- **Landscape Character:** The effects of the proposed development upon discrete character areas and/or character types comprising features possessing a particular quality or merit; and
 - **Visual Context:** The effects of the proposed development on views from visual receptors, and upon the amenity value of the views.
- 2.19 Landscape character is defined in the Landscape Institute's guidance 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Landscape Institute ('LI') and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment ('IEMA') 2013) as:
- "A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse."*
- 2.20 Changes to the landscape character can arise as a result of:
- Changes to the fabric of the landscape including either the

loss of key elements or introduction of new features which alter the distinct character of the landscape; and

- Changes which alter the way in which the landscape is perceived or appreciated.

2.21 Changes to views will occur where there is alteration of the view in terms of elements present and their distribution or dominance. Such changes may or may not have a significant effect on the visual amenity of identified visual receptors.

2.22 The methodology and guidelines used in the preparation of this assessment has been developed from the following:

- The revised and updated Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ('GLVIA'), Third Edition, Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013;
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England 2014; and
- Technical Guidance Note 06/19 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals' 17th September 2019, Landscape Institute

Baseline

2.23 The baseline appraisal process is a crucial part of any assessment and includes:

- An overview of statutory plans and other data regarding relevant designations and landscape and visual related planning policies for the area;
- An assessment of the landscape character of the site and surroundings with reference to published works and checked and verified through fieldwork. This includes the classification of the landscape into units of distinct and recognisable character and land use at a site specific level;
- Field work to determine the extent to which the site can be seen from the wider area, taking into account any significant vegetation or built form which restricts or limits the extent of visibility; and
- Identification of representative viewpoints and determining likely visual receptors.

Impact Assessment

2.24 The assessment process has considered the following factors. These are detailed further within the 'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology Summary of Approach and Criteria Tables' attached to the LVIA preapplication contained at **Appendix 2**.

- **Sensitivity:** Overall sensitivity lies along a continuum of low to high. The value and susceptibility of landscape and visual receptors are both considered in order to gain an understanding of overall sensitivity to the proposed development.
 - Landscape Value is defined by GLVIA as: "the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society". At Box 5.1, GLVIA sets out factors to be considered in the identification of valued landscapes. These can be broadly described as: Landscapes recognised and valued for their quality and/or cultural associations; Key characteristics and features as recognised in published landscape character assessments; and Landscape Condition and the degree to which the landscape is intact and legible.
 - In visual terms, value relates to that attached to views experienced by receptors (people).
 - Susceptibility is assessed for both landscape receptors including, landscape character areas, and for visual receptors (people). It indicates the ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the proposed development "without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies." (GLVIA,, paragraph 5.40).
- **Magnitude:** Overall magnitude of change lies along a continuum of low to high and includes consideration of: the Scale of effect; Geographical extent; Duration; and Reversibility
- **Significance of Effect:** Best practice guidelines stipulate that the significance of any landscape and visual related effect should be evaluated, both during construction and following completion of the development.
 - The significance of any landscape and visual effect is a function of the sensitivity of the affected landscape resources (nature of receptor) and visual receptors against the magnitude of change that they would experience (nature of effect).

- The nature of the effect can be classified as adverse or beneficial. However, there may be instances where the impact results in an effect which is neither adverse nor beneficial. These effects are considered to be neutral in nature.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.1 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan making, the presumption requires plans to positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of an area and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change. Footnote 6 accompanying the presumption identifies protected areas or assets of particular importance which includes Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), National Parks and areas defined as Heritage Coast.
- 3.2 The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve, as stated at paragraph 124.
- 3.3 Paragraph 127 seeks to ensure that developments, among others:
Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; and
Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).
- 3.4 Paragraph 170 requires planning policies and decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by fulfilling criteria including amongst others:
“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); and
Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.”
- 3.5 Paragraph 170 makes it clear that there is a hierarchy to the importance and value attributed to landscapes, and that the development plan should identify the quality of particular landscapes that are not subject to statutory protection.
- 3.6 The site is not situated within an area designated in recognition of its landscape quality or value at a statutory national level (i.e. AONB or National Park). However, the site is situated within the Gillingham Riverside Area of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI), a non-statutory designation that is defined within the Local Plan. The extent of the ALLI is shown on **Plan 3: Landscape Planning Policy**.

- 3.7 The ALLI designation represents the lowest tier in the hierarchy of local landscape designations, sitting below that of Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) that the Local Plan identifies for land within the North Downs and North Kent Marshes. The southern extents of the SLA are also illustrated on **Plan 3**. It should be noted that local policy does not seek to afford protection to land outside or intervisible with the SLA.
- 3.8 As set-out below when summarising those Local Plan policies of relevance to landscape and visual matters, the ALLI designation recognises both the character and functions of the area, providing an indication of those attributes for which the ALLIs are recognised.
- 3.9 In the absence of local designations, the development plan may identify qualities and attributes of the landscape (i.e. characteristics and features) that combine to provide the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. This is often set out within published Landscape Character Assessments and associated strategies and guidelines that form part of the evidence base prepared to support the local plan policies and their application.
- 3.10 Since the adoption of the Local Plan in 2003, the Council have produced the Medway Landscape Character Assessment that was prepared in 2011. This provides a more up-to-date assessment of the landscape that better reflects the current baseline conditions than that available when the ALLI designation was adopted in 2003. There is therefore merit in considering the assessment and guidelines as set out in the 2011 Study when identifying the value and importance of the local landscape.
- 3.11 At Section 16, the emphasis is upon conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 185 states that local planning authorities should take into account amongst other things, ‘*The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*’

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Landscape

- 3.12 The PPG makes reference to the National Planning Policy Framework, stating: “it is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes”. The PPG also goes on to state, “the cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully” (Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721, Revision date: 21 J07 2019).

- 3.13 At paragraph 037, the NPPG identifies that landscape character assessments can be prepared, as well as Landscape and Sensitivity and Capacity Assessments to help assess the type and scale of development that may be accommodated without compromising landscape character. This Chapter provides a review of published landscape character assessments and capacity and sensitivity studies as they relate to the site and Study Area. (Paragraph: 037 Reference ID: 8-037-20190721, Revision date: 21 07 2019)

- 3.14 The NPPG also states that a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment can be used to demonstrate the likely effects of a proposed development.

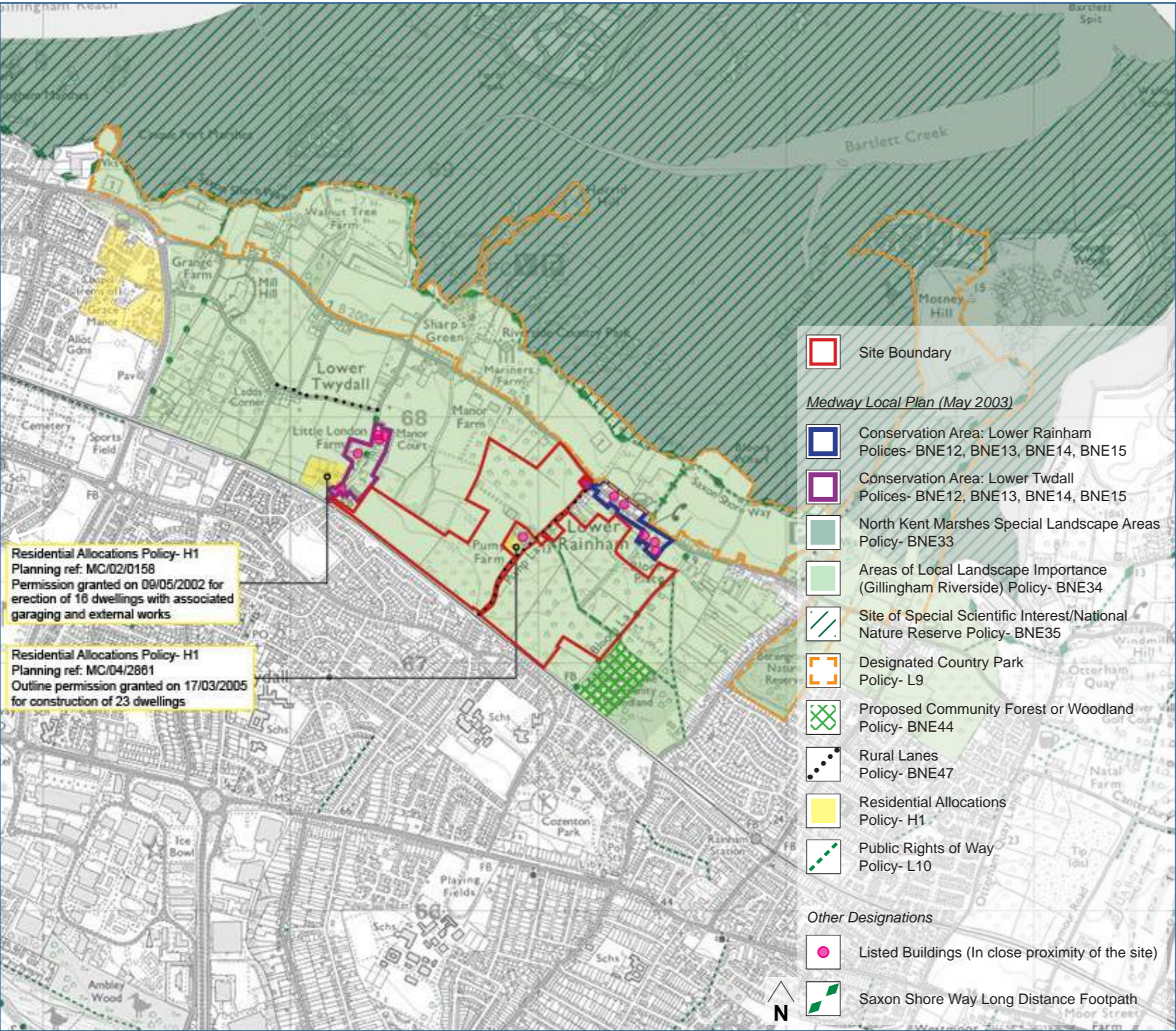
Green Infrastructure

- 3.15 The PPG highlights the multifaceted benefits provided through the provision of Green Infrastructure, including but not limited to: “enhanced well-being, outdoor recreation and access, enhanced biodiversity and landscapes, urban cooling, and the management of flood risk” (Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 8-005-20190721, Revision date: 21 July 2019). Moreover, the NPPG recognises how green infrastructure exists within a wider landscape context and can thus be used to reinforce and enhance local landscape character and contribute to a sense of place.

Design PPG, October 2019

- 3.16 The PPG confirms well-designed places can be achieved by taking a proactive and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process, from policy and plan formulation through to the determination of planning applications and the post approval stage. Good design is set out in the National Design Guide as comprising of 10 characteristic including context, identity, nature and public spaces (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 26-001-20191001, Revision date: 01 10 2019).
- 3.17 In confirming the role of parameter plans in achieving well designed places, the guidance confirms parameter plans can include information on the proposed land use, building heights, areas of potential built development, structure of landscape and green infrastructure, access and movement and other key structuring and place-making components (Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 26-011-20191001, revision date 01 10 2019).

Plan 3: Landscape Planning Policy (13374/P05)



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Local Planning Policy Context- Medway Local Plan (2003)

- 3.18 The text below identifies the adopted Local Plan policies that relate to landscape and visual matters and the development of the site. **Plan 3: Landscape Planning Policy** illustrates the policies relating to the site.
- 3.19 The key policies that are of primary importance in the consideration of development potential and landscape context outlined in the adopted local plan are set out below:
- 3.20 **Policy S4: Landscape And Urban Design-** Development should be of high quality build, with appropriate landscape mitigation. The proposals should “respond appropriately to its context, reflecting a distinct local character”.
- 3.21 **Policy BNE1: General Principles For Built Development-** The proposals should “be appropriate in relation to the character, appearance and functioning of the built and natural environment by”:
- “Being satisfactory in terms of use, scale, mass, proportion, details, materials, layout and siting;
 - Respecting the scale, appearance and location of buildings, spaces and the visual amenity of the surrounding area; and
 - Where appropriate, providing well structured, practical and attractive areas of open space.”
- 3.22 **Policy BNE6: Landscape Design-** Development proposals should:
- “Provide a structured, robust, attractive, long term, easily maintainable environment including quality open spaces, vistas and views;
 - Include planting of a size, scale and form appropriate to the location and landform, taking account of underground and overground services;
 - Include details of the design, materials and quality detailing of hard works elements such as gates, fences, walls, paving, signage and street furniture;
 - Retain important existing landscape features, including trees and hedgerows, and be well related to open space features in the locality;
 - Support wildlife by the creation or enhancement of semi-natural habitats and the use of indigenous plant material where appropriate; and

3 Policy Context

- *Include an existing site survey, maintenance and management regimes and a timetable for implementation.”*
- 3.23 Policy BNE25: Development In The Countryside- Development in the countryside will only be permitted if *“it maintains, and wherever possible enhances, the character, amenity and functioning of the countryside”*.
- 3.24 Policy BNE33: Special Landscape Areas- Development within the North Downs and the North Kent Marshes special landscape areas should *“conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area’s landscape”*.
- 3.25 Policy BNE34: Areas Of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI)- Policy BNE34 identifies a number of ALLIs that are considered to be landscapes that enhance local amenity and environmental quality, providing an attractive setting to the urban area and surrounding villages. In addition to their landscape importance, the ALLIs are also identified as having four other functions, namely:
1. As green lungs and buffers, helping to maintain the individual identity of urban neighbourhoods and rural communities;
 2. As green corridors, or links, for the community to reach the wider countryside;
 3. As edge or “fringe” land, needing protection from the pressures of urban sprawl; and
 4. As habitats for wildlife and corridors, along which wildlife from the wider countryside can reach the urban environment.
- 3.26 The site is situated within the Gillingham Riverside ALLI. Justification for each of the ALLIs is set out within the supporting text to Policy BNE34, providing guidance on the landscape features and functions that the Council wish to protect.
- 3.27 Policy BNE34 states that development within an ALLI will only be permitted if:
- “It does not materially harm the landscape character and function of the area; or*
- The economic and social benefits are so important that they outweigh the local priority to conserve the area’s landscape.”*
- 3.28 The location and character of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI are set out as:
- “Rural landscape of orchards and arable fields with country lanes. Situated to the north of Rainham and Twydall, adjacent to River Medway. Medway Towns Northern Relief Road forms the western boundary.”*
- 3.29 The function of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI is that it:
- *“Forms an important green buffer separating the built-up areas of Twydall and Rainham from areas of international importance for nature conservation and recreation along the Medway estuary;*
 - *Enhances the setting of the Medway Towns Northern Ring Road on the western boundary, and allows attractive views from the river and railway;*
 - *Provides residents within an extensive urban area with access to an attractive, rural landscape;*
 - *Provides an attractive setting to the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall conservation areas;*
 - *Contains a number of orchards, mature hedgerows and farm groups complementing and contributing to the Riverside Country Park; and*
 - *Forms a green backdrop when viewed from the Medway Estuary.”*
- 3.30 Policy BNE43: Trees On Development Sites- *“Development should seek to retain trees, woodlands, hedgerows and other landscape features that provide a valuable contribution to local character”*.
- 3.31 Policy BNE47: Rural Lanes- A section of Pump Lane that lies within the site, between the railway and Pump Farm is designated in the Local Plan as a rural lane. Policy BNE47 states that:
- “Development will only be permitted where there is no adverse effect upon the value of the lane in terms of its landscape, amenity, nature conservation, historic or archaeological importance”*.
- 3.32 Policy L10 : Public Rights Of Way- *“Development which would prejudice the amenity, or result in the diversion or closure, of existing public rights of way will not be permitted, unless an acceptable alternative route with comparable or improved amenity can be provided”*.

4 Landscape Character

- 4.1 The characterisation process is a non-value judgement process; therefore, classifying landscapes into distinct areas does not suggest that one character is more sensitive than another or valued by people more or less.
- 4.2 The landscape character appraisal process reviews the wider landscape character type at a County level and then explores in more detail character features at a district/local level, before analysing site-specific land use that informs local distinctiveness and sense of place.
- 4.3 Whilst there are National Character Areas assessed by Natural England, these are generalised and cover extensive areas, being of little relevance to site specific considerations. These have therefore not been included in this assessment.

Published Landscape Character Assessments

- 4.4 As set-out above when reviewing the adopted Local Plan policies, the Medway Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), 2011 is the most up-to-date and current study that has been adopted by the Council and has been used to inform the assessment of landscape character in this LVIA. The Medway LCA supersedes the studies that were available at the time the Local Plan was adopted in 2003.
- 4.5 At a Countywide level, the Landscape Assessment of Kent, 2004 provides a higher-level assessment of the Landscape and provides a wider contextual context.
- 4.6 The Landscape Character Areas identified in the above studies within the Study Area are illustrated on **Plan 4: Published Landscape Character**.

County Landscape Character

The Landscape Assessment of Kent (2004)

- 4.7 The site is situated within the 'Fruit Belt' Landscape Character Area (LCA) of the Kent County Council Landscape Character Assessment.
- 4.8 The key characteristics of the 'Fruit Belt' LCA includes the following:
- *"Rural/agricultural landscape;*
 - *Complex fruit, hops, pastoral and arable divided by small woodlands;*

- *Small scattered villages and farms;*
- *Rolling landscape with distinct valleys;*
- *Large pockets of flat, open farmland, especially in coastal areas; and*
- *The M2 & A2-ribbon development and urban features."*

- 4.9 The landscape actions for the 'Fruit Belt' LCA includes the following:

- *"Create ecological interest by planting broadleaf woodland on steeper valley sides and on ridges overlooking the coastal plain;*
- *Create an urban edge, using woodland blocks and the retention of shelterbelts where appropriate;*
- *Create small scale enclosure to the coastal ridge with diverse species broadleaf woodland;*
- *Create significant rural cultural features by the enhancement of the setting of large oasts; and*
- *Create mature standard tree cover at nodes such as road junctions, in hedgerow and at settlement edges."*

District Landscape Character

Medway Landscape Character Assessment (2011)

- 4.10 The site is situated within the 'Lower Rainham Farmland' Landscape Character Area (LCA) within the Medway Council Landscape Character Assessment.
- 4.11 The key characteristics of the 'Lower Rainham Farmland' LCA includes the following:
- *"Flat, small to medium scale mixed farmland – orchards, arable, rough grazing;*
 - *Neglected pockets of land and busy road gives transitional urban fringe character to area;*
 - *Some well managed areas of orchard, shelterbelt, farm buildings, cottages and distinctive rural hedgebanks;*
 - *Tranquil in many parts despite enclosure by road to north and rail to south;*

- *Poor accessibility – east/west and north/south links to urban areas;*
- *Recent urban extension to north west of Otterham Quay Lane now divides this character area and diminishes coherence. Area to east beyond Rainham has particularly detracting urban and industrial features including industrial estate, tip with vents and railway line. Golf course to north along Swale boundary; and*
- *Includes small conservation areas/hamlets at Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall."*

- 4.12 The guidelines for the 'Lower Rainham Farmland' LCA includes the following:

- *"Restore neglected and abandoned fields to appropriate and sensitive rural land uses;*
- *Improve east/west footpath links between Gillingham and open countryside and footpath links from Twydall;*
- *Introduce regular management of hedgerow boundaries (particularly along rural lanes);*
- *Discourage conifer planting and other forms of creeping suburbanisation – e.g. inappropriate fencing, gates, ornamental planting;*
- *Resist further built development and introduce more positive landscape management systems; and*
- *Consider this area integrally with Riverside Marshes character area for its integral value as a green buffer, wildlife corridor and link to wider countryside."*

- 4.13 The guidelines for the 'Lower Rainham Farmland' LCA suggests that the 'Riverside Marshes' LCA should be considered due to the LCA lying adjacent to the site.

- 4.14 The key characteristics of the 'Riverside Marshes' LCA include the following:

- *"Strip of marshland rising gently to farmland and stretching from southern coastal edge of Medway estuary to Lower Rainham Road;*
- *Strong industrial influences at Kingsnorth and Motney Hill, introducing urban influence;*

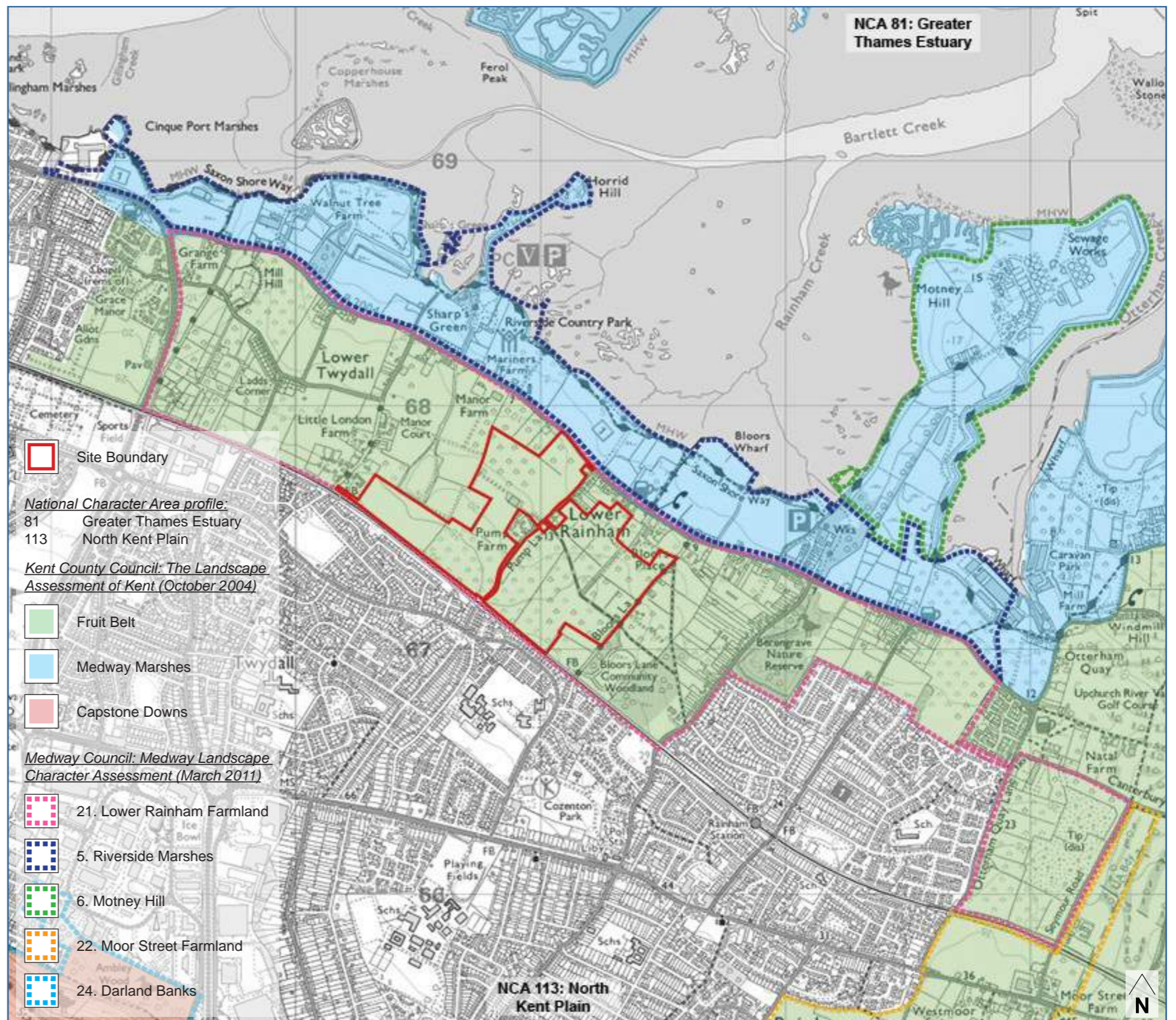
4 Landscape Character

- *Diverse land uses – scrub, orchards, small fields, equine related. Area fragmented and lacks overall sense of coherence. Land in poor condition around former equestrian centre at western end;*
- *Saxon Shore way forms strong east/west link along sea wall; weaker north south links;*
- *Several salt marsh areas add to distinctive character along estuary;*
- *Much of area owned by Medway Council and managed as country park with Visitor Centre and Car Park – introduces amenity element rather than distinctly rural character;*
- *Country Park designation (2003) extends to most of this character area;*
- *Forms important buffer to urban edge of Gillingham, protects Natura 2000/Ramsar sites, valuable recreational and biodiversity resource, green corridor from countryside into urban area and integrally linked with Lower Rainham Farmland character area;*
- *Historic features – includes Black House – small medieval grade 2 listed building to south of Visitor Centre in poor state of repair and strong industrial character remains from former uses; and*
- *Long views and open character in views out to estuary from sea wall. Stronger sense of enclosure to interior. Provides good vantage point to view wider estuary including late 19th century artillery forts.”*

4.15 The key guidelines for the ‘Riverside Marshes’ LCA includes following:

- *“Introduce positive land management that addresses future plans for country park;*
- *Reflect historic character of the marshes within interpretation of the country park;*
- *Balance potential conflicts between educational, recreational and wildlife interests;*
- *Ensure new development proposals protect area from adverse visual and landscape character impacts;*
- *Introduce more active management of farmland, including reintroduction of orchards, to reinforce sense of working*

Plan 4: Published Landscape Character (13374/P06)



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landscape and improve roadside verges and grassland areas with native species planting (hedgerows and native wildflower mixes);

- *Seek to manage signage and other features to strengthen and reinforce rural character;*
- *Improve habitat, access, recreation opportunities; improve access for urban communities to estuary –strengthen north-south footpath links towards urban areas at Twydall and Rainham;*
- *Area has key role as gateway into Medway; linking urban areas and countryside and as interface between estuary and orchards of North Kent Fruit Belt; and*
- *Include preservation and interpretation of Black House alongside other development plans for Country Park.”*

4.16 Beyond the Riverside Marshes LCA, Motney Hill lies on a peninsula that extends northwards into the estuary. Characteristics of the Motney Hill LCA are identified as including:

- *“Narrow peninsula with broad estuary to west and Otterham Creek to east forming boundary with neighbouring Swale;*
- *Natural and man-made features – marshland, reed beds, sea wall, scrub and saltmarsh – give varied and distinctive character to area with high biodiversity value;*
- *Dramatic open views across estuary from sea wall and inland from higher ground to north;*
- *Remote, tranquil and peaceful; informal routes along shoreline, especially at low tide; Saxon Shore Way route follows edges and crosses mid-point of peninsula;*
- *Includes some detracting industrial influences – especially sewage works but also views of Kingsnorth and Grain industry across estuary; and*
- *Country Park designation (2003) extends to most of this character area – excluding sewage works.”*

4.17 The key guidelines for Motney Hill are:

- *“Consider future land management plans for country park;*
- *Balance potential conflicts between educational, recreational and wildlife interests;*

- *Discourage further built development; ensure all new development proposals protect area from adverse visual, landscape character and biodiversity impacts;*
- *Seek to enhance character of area, screen adverse impacts and improve biodiversity value with native planting proposals; and*
- *Seek landscape and biodiversity enhancements as part of plans for new coastal path.”*

Local Site- Specific Character

- 4.18 Whilst the published assessments described above identify the main characteristics and features that help to define the character of the wider Lower Rainham Farmland within the Kent Fruit belt, as well as the Riverside Marshes, they do not identify the distinct areas within these at a local level that have their own character and features and are not specific to the site itself and its landscape context. This includes factors relating to both the physical and experiential components of the landscape such as views and use for recreation.
- 4.19 In order to provide a greater understanding of the site and its relationship with the adjacent farmland, marshes and shoreline, as well settlements and local roads and the influence of vegetation and landscape features, Tyler Grange have undertaken a site-specific landscape appraisal.
- 4.20 This has identified three Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs) that fall within the wider LCAs defined by the Medway LCA. These are:
- Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA;
 - Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA; and
 - Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA.
- 4.21 The LLCAs are illustrated on **Plan 5: Site-Specific Character**. The assessment has also identified features within the site and help define its character and which may be affected by the proposed development. These LLCAs and Features have been taken forwards into the assessment as Landscape Receptors.

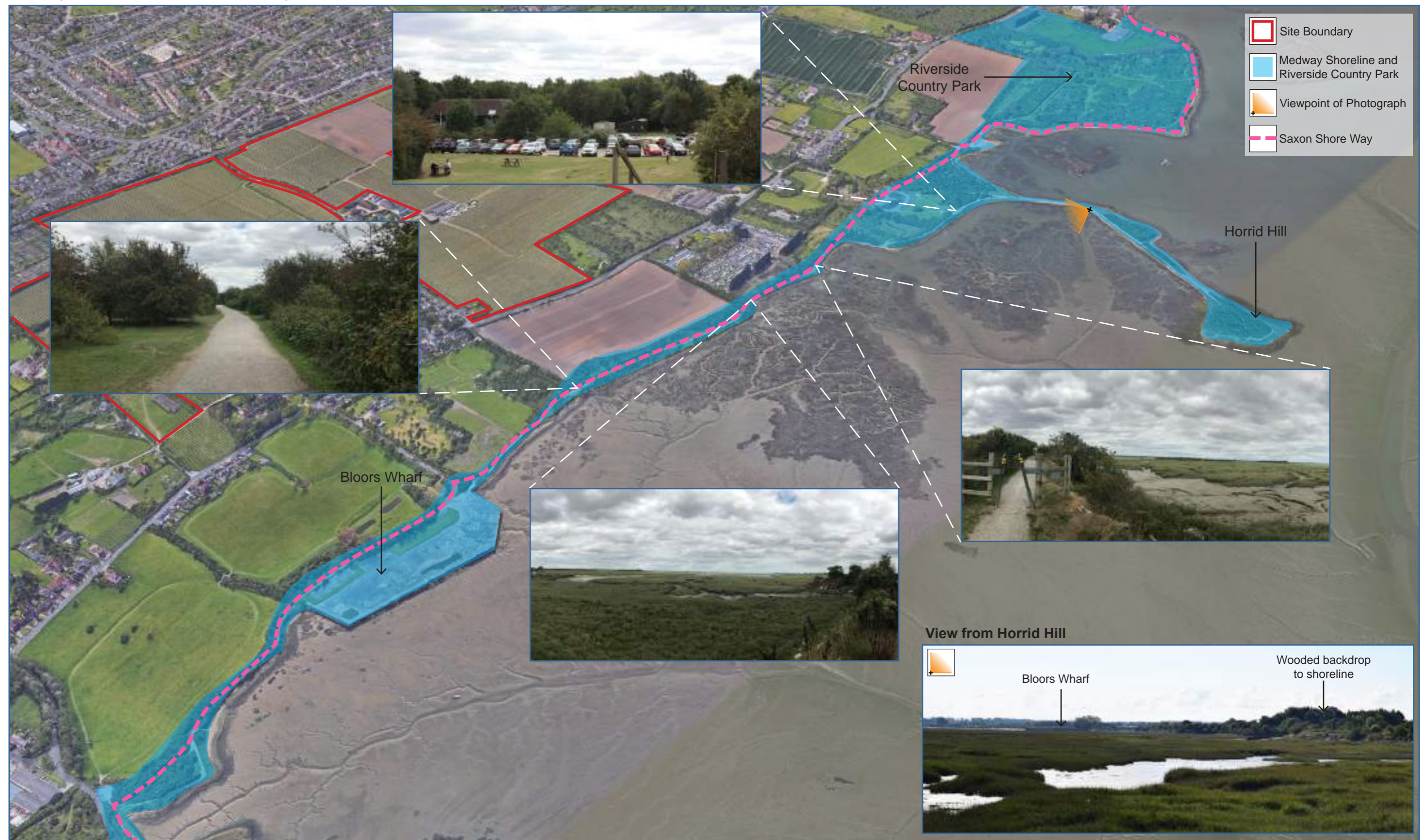
Plan 5: Site-Specific Character (13374/P07)



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4 Landscape Character

Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park Local Landscape Character Area



Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park Local Landscape Character Area

Description

- 4.22 The Medway Shoreline and Riverisde Country Park LLCA comprises a strip of land that runs along the southern shoreline of the Medway Estuary, between the Owens Way Industrial Centre to the west and Motney Hill to the east. The shoreline includes Sharp's Green Bay, enclosed by the causeway at Horrid Hill to the west and forms a semi-circular shoreline along the sea wall, with marshes and mudflats extending towards Rainham Creek and into the wider estuary.
- 4.23 Beyond the sea wall and interface with the mudflats, a band of vegetation including scrub, marshes, woodland and shelterbelts form a distinctive edge that provides a soft vegetated and well treed backdrop that separates adjacent areas and limits views inland from the path and shoreline.
- 4.24 The Saxon Shore Way long-distance path runs along the sea wall at the shoreline, with expansive views across the estuary obtained from along the path. Views include Darnet Fort and Hoo Fort on the mud flats within the estuary and the Hoo Peninsula as a backdrop alongside the Kingsnorth power station.
- 4.25 The LLCA contains parts of the Riverside Country Park including areas of a more formal and manicured character with amenity grassland, seating areas and car parking to the north of the café and play areas. These are contained within a distinct area by woodland to the east of Sharp's Green, south of Horrid Hill.
- 4.26 The causeway and promontory at Horrid Hill that extends into the estuary east of Sharp's Green Bay lies within the Riverside Park and forms a distinct feature and vantage point within the Riverside Park. The site of a former cement works, the hill and causeway combine with land at Motney Hill and Bloors Wharf with its engineered walls, railings and hard standing to provide a post-industrial character the reflects the historic use of the area.
- 4.27 The LLCA includes part of the Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI, SPAs and Ramsar Site along the coastline and peninsula of Motney Hill. Land to the south of Motney Hill includes an RSPB reserve, including a parking area and links to the Saxon Shore Way.

Key Characteristics

- Saxon Shore Way running along the sea wall and shoreline at the interface with the mudflats and estuary.
- Vegetation comprising scrub, salt marsh, reed beds, shelterbelts and woodland forms distinctive soft edge separating the shoreline from agricultural land, paddocks and development further inland.
- Open expansive views across the estuary from the Saxon Shore Way.
- Horrid Hill, Motney Hill and Bloors Wharf introduce features from the previous industrial land use of the area as a cement works, ship breakers and scrap yard.
- Car park and formal amenity areas including viewing mound and seating areas associated with Riverside Country Park set amongst woodland and trees.

Landscape Value

Landscape Designations

Special Landscape Area (SLA)

- 4.28 The causeway and land at Horrid Hill, and Motney Hill are situated within the North Kent Marshes SLA, a former Kent structure Plan designation. The SLA recognises the value of the landscape of the marshes within the Medway estuary at a County Level, with Local Plan Policy BNE33 seeking to protect the natural beauty of these areas.

Gillingham Riverside Area of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI)

- 4.29 The LLCA lies within the Gillingham Riverside ALLI, a locally designated landscape as set-out in the adopted Medway Local Plan (Policy BN3E4). The ALLI designation is the lowest level of designation and indicates a **Local Value** at District Level.
- 4.30 Policy BNE34 identifies an area of land including the Medway Shoreline and Riverside Park LLCA between Sharp's Green Bay and Motney Hill as falling within the Gillingham Riverside ALLI (see **Plan 3: Landscape Planning Policy**). The table below summarises the contribution that the LLCA makes to the landscape features and functions of the ALLI as set-out within Policy BNE34.

Contribution to Gillingham Riverside ALLI Landscape Features and Functions

Landscape Features and Function (as set out in Local Plan Policy BNE34)	Contribution of Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA
Green buffer separating built up areas of Twydall and Rainham from areas of international importance for nature conservation and recreation along the Medway estuary	The LLCA lies within and immediately adjacent to the Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI, RAMSAR site and SPA. The Saxon Shore Way runs through the LLCA on the shoreline, connecting with the wider area as part of the Long-Distance Path. The LLCA includes areas within the Riverside Country Park, including and at Horrid Hill and Motney Hill. High Contribution
Enhances the setting of the Northern Ring Road and allows attractive views from the river and railway	LLCA includes land within the Riverside Country Park with marshlands character adjacent to the ring road. LLCA provides a vegetated backdrop along the shoreline when viewed from the river. High Contribution
Provides residents within an extensive urban area access to an attractive, rural landscape	LLCA includes the Riverside Country Park and Saxon Shore Way providing access to large areas of open space and shoreline walks with parking facilities and connections with wider routes along the shoreline and access to adjacent urban areas. High Contribution
Provides an attractive setting to the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall conservation areas	Separated from Lower Rainham Conservation area by Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA. Intervisibility with Lower Rainham from Saxon Shore Way west of Bloors Wharf beyond paddocks to the north of the settlement. Medium Contribution
Contains a number of orchards, mature hedgerows and farm groups complementing and contributing to the Riverside Country Park	The LLCA lies within the Riverside Country Park but does not contain orchards or farm groups. The LLCA includes areas of scrub, hedgerows, shelter belts and woodland. These provide a strong character and define the shoreline, providing separation from the Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA to the south. Medium Contribution
Forms a green backdrop when viewed from the Medway Estuary	Woodland within the Riverside Country Park, tree belts and vegetation along the shoreline provide a strong structure and green backdrop to views from the Estuary, including from the shoreline at the edges of the LLCA at Horrid Hill and Motney Hill. High Contribution

4 Landscape Character

- 4.31 The analysis within the table above demonstrates that the Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA makes an overall High Contribution to the landscape features and function of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI. This reflects the role that the LLCA as a landscape that is locally valued for its ecology and recreational facilities, as well for providing mature vegetation including areas of woodland and tree belts that provide a green backdrop to the shoreline and a strong landscape structure.

Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA – Assessment of Landscape Value

- 4.32 Building on those factors and features that are identified for the ALLI, the table below provides a summary of the contribution that key characteristics of LLCA make to the value of the local landscape. These include perceptual aspects, as well as the condition / quality of the landscape and how representative it is of the character of the area as recognised in published landscape character assessments.

Landscape Susceptibility

- 4.33 The Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA is a narrow strip of land along the shoreline characterised by open expansive views from the Saxon Shore Way and distinctive woodland, trees and scrub forming a backdrop. The landscape is valued for its recreational and amenity associated with the Saxon Shore Way and Riverside Country Park, as well as ecological value associated with the marshes and mudflats as a habitats for birds. The characteristics and features within the LLCA are representative of those identified by the District Landscape Character Assessment.
- 4.34 The LLCA has a **High Susceptibility** to change associated with residential development within the area, which would be out of character and scale and would impact upon the identified valued aspects of the landscape.

- 4.35 As set-out at **Appendix 2**, landscape susceptibility relates to the ability of a defined landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences. The site lies outside the LLCA and is separated from it by the Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA to the north of Lower Rainham Road.

- 4.36 Development that lies adjacent to the LLCA at the Riverside Country Park and Mariners Farm is well contained and separated from the shoreline by the woodland and tree belts. This demonstrates the ability for development within close proximity to the LLCA to be well assimilated and preserve the key characteristics, features and qualities of the shoreline.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.37 As set-out above, the Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA is valued for its recreation, ecological and perceptual qualities associated with views across the estuary, as well as the distinctive character of the shoreline well vegetated backdrop. The area is of a Localised Landscape Value as recognised by its inclusion within the SLA and ALLI designations. The above analysis has determined that the LLCA makes a High Contribution to the features and function of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI.
- 4.38 Combined with the High Susceptibility to change associated with development within the LLCA, it is assessed as being of a **High Landscape Sensitivity** to residential development.
- 4.39 However, given the physical and visual containment by a strong band of vegetation along the inland edge of the shoreline, development outside the LLCA would not directly impact upon the recreation value of the land and views across the estuary, nor the distinctive character of the shoreline and associated vegetated edge.

Landscape Value Factors (GLVIA Box 5.1)	Contribution of Key Characteristics (Including: individual elements; landscape features; and notable aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities)
Landscape quality (condition)	The condition of the landscape within the LLCA is generally good. The key characteristics including the shoreline at the interface with the mudflats, open views across the Medway and shrubs, trees and belts of woodland inshore of the Saxon Shore Way are intact and represented across much of the LLCA.
Scenic Quality	The characteristic long open views across the Medway towards the Hoo Peninsula, Hoo Fort and Darney Fort that are identified for the Riverside Marshes LCA are present along the shoreline.
Rarity	Whilst there are no particularly rare features or elements within the LLCA it is distinctive of the Medway shoreline and local character. Unique features include Horrid Hill and the causeway that was historically used as a wharf and cement works.
Representativeness	The character and features of the LLCA are representative of those identified as key characteristics within of the Riverside Marshes LCA, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vantage points and long views across the estuary from the sea wall • Open character along shoreline • Saxon Shore Way forming east/west link along sea wall
Conservation interests	Includes ecological and biodiversity designated areas along shoreline (Medway Estuary and Marshes RAMSAR site, SSSI and SPA) Horrid Hill and causeway, Bloors Wharf and Motney Hill of historic interest associated with use of area as a cement works and shipbreakers.
Recreation Value	The LLCA has a high recreation value and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Riverside Country Park, with areas for formal and informal play and recreation in a range of areas including woodland, shoreline and Horrid Hill. • The Saxon Way long-distance path runs along the shoreline and sea wall. However, whilst east-west recreation links are strong, those with the urban area to the south are generally weak.
Perceptual aspects	The separation from the inland areas by trees, scrub and hedges / vegetation and wide, open views across the estuary provide a strong sense of place and tranquillity away from the urban area. There is a sense of wildness associated with the estuary resulting from the tidal waters, mudflats and sea air.
Associations	There are connections with the estuary and historic uses of the area including Horrid Hill, Bloor Wharf and Montey Hill within the LLCA, as well as shipwrecks and forts within the mudflats and wider estuary.

Medway Marshes Farmland Local Landscape Character Area



Medway Marshes Farmland Local Landscape Character Area

Description

- 4.40 The Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA is situated between the shoreline and Lower Rainham Road, separated from the Saxon Shore Way and Medway Estuary by woodland, shelterbelts and vegetation that contains the land to the northeast. The area extends from the A289 ring road to the northwest to the edge of Rainham at Ottenham Quay Lane to the southeast.
- 4.41 The marshes farmland comprises a series of medium to large scale rectilinear fields managed as arable farmland and pasture on low lying land that rises gently from the shoreline to a height of approximately 10m AOD. Land to the north of Lower Rainham and south of Motney Hill on the fringes of Rainham is managed as horse paddocks with associated stable boxes and fencing providing a peri urban character.
- 4.42 Fields are divided by hedgerows, hedgerow trees and small areas of woodland and shelterbelts that extend inland from the vegetated shoreline. Managed hedgerows and post and rail fencing along Lower Rainham Road provide an open aspect to fields, although views beyond to the estuary are screened by intervening vegetation and trees on the shoreline.
- 4.43 Linear settlement is situated along Lower Rainham Road to the southwest of the LLCA, including at Lower Rainham and to the north of Rainham at Berengrave. There are a number of older properties and buildings within the Lower Rainham Conservation Area, with a range of post-war and modern infill ribbon development elsewhere.
- 4.44 To the northwest of the LLCA, Mariners Farm is used as a boatyard and caravan storage. The area also contains the Riverside Country Park café, play areas and overspill parking. Coniferous shelterbelts, rows of poplars and tree belts combine with pockets of woodland to contain the boat yard and Riverside Park and facilities and are distinctive features in the landscape.
- 4.45 There are small fields and pockets of land throughout the area that are within or associated with curtilage of properties on the northern site of Lower Rainham Road. These smaller fields contain remnant traditional orchards, as well as unmanaged areas that have turned to scrub.
- 4.46 Woodland at the Berengrave Local Nature Reserve south of Motney Hill provides a treed backdrop that contains the LLCA to the east.

Key Characteristics

- Low-lying area of medium-large rectilinear fields manage for arable agriculture, pasture and horse grazing / paddocks.
- Fields separated from the shoreline by scrub and tree belts along the Saxon Shore Way, providing physical and visual containment from the estuary.
- Fields defined by hedgerows, hedgerow trees, small woodland and shelterbelts that connect with those along the shoreline to the north.
- Linear settlement pattern north of Lower Rainham Road, including traditional and historic buildings within the Lower Rainham conservation area and a range of modern housing fronting the road at Sharp's Green and between Lower Rainham and Berengrave to the southeast.
- Boatyard and caravan storage yards at Mariners Farm, enclosed by mature coniferous and deciduous shelterbelts.
- Café, equipped play areas and car parking at the Riverside Country Park, set within areas of woodland and tree belts.
- Pockets of remnant traditional orchard and scrubby pasture associated with properties and small settlements.

Landscape Value

Landscape Designations

Gillingham Riverside Area of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI)

- 4.47 The Medway Marshes Farmlands LLCA lies within the Gillingham Riverside ALLI, a locally designated landscape as set-out in the adopted Medway Local Plan (Policy BN3E4). The ALLI designation is the lowest level of designation and indicates a Local Value at District Level. The extents of the ALLI is illustrated on **Plan 3: Landscape Planning Policy**. The table below summarises the contribution that the LLCA makes to the landscape features and functions of the ALLI as set-out within Policy BNE34.

Contribution to Gillingham Riverside ALLI Landscape Features and Functions

Landscape Features and Function (as set out in Local Plan Policy BNE34)	Contribution of Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA
Green buffer separating built up areas of Twydall and Rainham from areas of international importance for nature conservation and recreation along the Medway estuary	The Berengrave Local Nature Reserve is situated within the LLCA. The Saxon Shore Way is accessible across the LLCA along public rights of way, and the Riverside Country Park. Development at Mariners Farm and Berengrave have compromised the function of the land as a green buffer. Houses and commercial premises at Motney Hill Road infill the LLCA. Medium Contribution
Enhances the setting of the Northern Ring Road and allows attractive views from the river and railway	LLCA includes land north of the ring road retained as marshland, scrub and woodland within the Riverside Country Park. The LLCA is set beyond woodland and tree belts along the shoreline screening views from the river. Medium Contribution
Provides residents within an extensive urban area access to an attractive, rural landscape	Limited public access within the LLCA. Riverside Country Park and rights of way provide access to the Saxon Shore Way and wider recreational resources. Rurality of landscape affected by traffic on Lower Rainham Road, housing and peri urban land uses including paddocks. Medium Contribution
Provides an attractive setting to the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall conservation areas	Setting to Lower Rainham conservation area within the LLCA comprises paddocks and associated stable boxes, fencing and paraphernalia. Medium Contribution
Contains a number of orchards, mature hedgerows and farm groups complementing and contributing to the Riverside Country Park	The LLCA includes mature hedgerows to field boundaries, shelter belts and woodland that form distinctive features. There are several small, contained areas of remnant traditional orchards within the area. Farm groups are limited to commercial operations at Mariners Farm and smallholdings on the edge of Lower Rainham and Berengrave with paddocks. Medium Contribution
Forms a green backdrop when viewed from the Medway Estuary	The low-lying fields are screened by trees and vegetation along the shoreline in views from the Medway Estuary. Trees and woodland within the area contribute to the green backdrop. Medium Contribution

4 Landscape Character

- 4.48 The analysis within the table above demonstrates that the Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA makes an overall **Medium Contribution** to the landscape features and function of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI.
- 4.49 Whilst the area contributes to the character and setting to the estuary, ring road and Lower Rainham Conservation Area, the landscape is influenced by peri urban land uses including paddocks, boatyard and the cafe and play area at the Riverside Country Park. Access across the area from the wider urban areas to the south and southwest to the shoreline and associated recreational and amenity facilities is limited.
- 4.50 Commercial land uses, housing / settlement and the amenity landscape and facilities of the Riverside Country Park influence

the character of the LLCA and limit its function as an effective green buffer between the urban areas and those valued for their recreational and ecological importance.

Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA – Assessment of Landscape Value

- 4.51 Building on those factors and features that are identified for the ALLI, the table below provides a summary of the contribution that key characteristics of LLCA make to the value of the local landscape. These include perceptual aspects, as well as the condition / quality of the landscape and how representative it is of the character of the area as recognised in published landscape character assessments.

Landscape Value Factors (GLVIA Box 5.1)	Contribution of Key Characteristics (Including: individual elements; landscape features; and notable aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities)
Landscape quality (condition)	The condition and quality of the landscape varies across the area. As recognised by the Medway Landscape Character Assessment, the marshes include diverse land uses and is fragmented with a lack of coherence. The poor condition of land associated with equine uses and the amenity elements associated with the Riverside Country Park are also identified. The condition of the landscape within the LLCA is generally good. The boatyard at Mariners Farm introduces a commercial / developed context adjacent to the Riverside Park. Guidelines identified for the marshes include more active management of farmland, including the reintroduction of orchards and improve roadside verges and grassland areas.
Scenic Quality	The agricultural fields with hedgerows and trees to boundaries that link with the woodland and vegetation to the shoreline provide a backdrop to views from Lower Rainham Road towards the coast. The ribbon development along Lower Rainham Road and coniferous shelterbelt interrupt the coherent character and scenic quality across the LLCA.
Rarity	There are no particularly rare features or elements within the LLCA. Distinctive features including hedgerows and tree cover are typical of the wider area.
Representativeness	The character and features of the LLCA identified for the Riverside Marshes LCA include the diverse land uses and fragmentation within the area. Important features are concentrated along the shoreline within the Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA where the Saxon Shore Way, salt marshes and views across the estuary are situated.
Conservation interests	The Berengrave Local Nature Reserve is situated within the LLCA, east of Berengrave Lane. The Lower Rainham conservation area is situated to the southern edge of the LLCA and includes several listed buildings that adjoin land managed for horse paddocks adjacent to the Saxon Shore Way.
Recreation Value	The play facilities and access to the Riverside Country Park to the northwest of the LLCA provides recreation and amenity opportunities. There are also links with the Motney Hill and Berengrave nature reserves with car parking and access to the Saxon Shore Way to the southeast of the LLCA. However, there is limited public access and recreational value across much of the LLCA, with connectivity from Lower Rainham Road to the shoreline limited to a single public right of way along Bloors Quay Lane and the country park and nature reserves.
Perceptual aspects	The enclosure of the area and separation from the shoreline and associated views across the estuary provide a greater sense of enclosure. Traffic using Lower Rainham Road and the presence of ribbon development and commercial premises in the area reduce the sense of tranquillity and provide a peri urban context and character across much of the LLCA.
Associations	Whilst there are connections with the estuary and historic uses of the area, the LLCA does not have any strong associations that may influence the perception of the area.

Landscape Susceptibility

- 4.52 The Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA is predominantly undeveloped, comprising agricultural land between Lower Rainham Road and the shoreline. However residential development along Lower Rainham Road influences the character. The settlement at Lower Rainham and ribbon development alongside the road provide a settled context, with development at Berengrave and Motney Hill Road connecting with the wider Rainham built form to the southeast of the area where there is a strong urban influence to the landscape.
- 4.53 Sensitivities associated with the area, include the nature reserves and Riverside Country Park that are of ecological and amenity / recreational value to the northwest and southeast of the LLCA. The character and identity of the conservation area at Lower Rainham is also a consideration, with the adjacent fields and paddocks providing the setting to the north of Lower Rainham Road.
- 4.54 The LLCA has a Medium Susceptibility to change associated with residential development within the area. This reflects the settled context along Lower Rainham Road and enclosure by shelterbelts, woodland and hedgerows that provide separation from the Shoreline to the north.
- 4.55 However, development would need to be limited to those areas that are of lower value, outside the Country Park and nature reserves, and with adequate offsets to the Lower Rainham conservation area and the shoreline. There are therefore limited opportunities for residential development within the LLCA.
- 4.56 As set-out at **Appendix 2**, landscape susceptibility relates to the ability of a defined landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences. The site lies outside the LLCA to the south of Lower Rainham Road.
- 4.57 As set-out in **Section 5** when considering the Visual Context, and as illustrated by the Photoviewpoints, the site is contained by tall hedgerows alongside Lower Rainham Road and set beyond areas including shelterbelts and woodland planting. Development at Lower Rainham also separates the site from the Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA. There are opportunities for the proposed development to preserve the character and features of the LLCA, as well as provide improvements to connectivity with adjacent areas for recreation.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.58 As set-out above, the Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA is valued for its recreation and ecological qualities associated with the Riverside Country Park and nature reserves. Woodland and hedgerows to field boundaries provide structure and enclosure, linking with the vegetation along the shoreline to the north. The area is of a Localised Landscape Value as recognised by its inclusion within the ALLI. The above analysis has determined that the LLCA makes a Medium Contribution to the features and function of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI.
- 4.59 The landscape within the LLCA is degraded in places, with varied land management including paddocks associated with settlement at Lower Rainham and Berengrave. As recognised by the Medway Landscape Character Assessment, the area lacks cohesion and is fragmented, being influenced by ribbon development along Lower Rainham Road.
- 4.60 Combined with the Medium Susceptibility to change associated with development within the LLCA, it is assessed as being of a Medium Landscape Sensitivity to residential development.
- 4.61 Development on land within the site to the south of the LLCA beyond Lower Rainham Road would not directly impact upon the recreation or ecological value of the land, nor the character of the agricultural land and associated trees and hedgerows linking with the woodland and vegetation along the shoreline.

Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt Local Landscape Character Area



Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt Local Landscape Character Area

Description

- 4.62 The Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA is situated between Lower Rainham Road to the north and the railway line on the edge of Twydall to the south. The A289 ring road bounds the area to the northwest. To the southeast, the built edge of Rainham formed by properties on Berengrave Lane form the south-eastern boundary.
- 4.63 The site is situated towards the centre of the LLCA to the east and west of Pump Lane.
- 4.64 The character of the LLCA reflects that of the Lower Rainham Farmland LCA, comprising mixed farmland with smaller fields managed as pasture and medium to large rectilinear fields managed as commercial orchards and arable land.

Topography

- 4.65 The land across the LLCA rises gently from Lower Rainham Road at approximately 10m AOD to the edge of Twydall to the southwest at approximately 30m AOD. The landform is gently rolling, with subtle changes in the slopes where Pump Lane and Lower Bloors Lane cross the area southwest to northeast. The lanes follow undulations in the landform and are sunken in places. To the southwest, the urban area of Twydall and Gillingham extends up the slopes beyond the railway line forming a developed backdrop.
- 4.66 As explored in more detail when considering the Visual Context and illustrated on the accompanying Photoviewpoints, the higher slopes to the southwest of the LLCA are visible beyond properties on Lower Rainham Road and set below the built edge of Twydall in views across the Medway from the Saxon Shore Way and Riverside Country Park.

Land Use

- 4.67 Across the centre of the area, the land is managed as commercial orchards, with geometric rows of fruit trees planted within large fields. To the southeast of Pump Lane, the fields are bound by tall hedgerows, including coniferous shelterbelts. Tall hedgerows along Pump Lane and Lower Rainham Road provide enclosure and limit views into the fields and across the area. Bridleway GB6 runs diagonally across the fields between Lower Bloors Lane and Pump Lane, lined by conifer hedging. An area of allotments bound by trees and conifer hedges lies adjacent to the railway line.

- 4.68 West of Pump Lane, the land is also predominantly managed as commercial orchards that extend to the edge of Lower Twydall and the railway line. South of Mariners Farm, an area of remnant traditional is enclosed by trees and hedgerows. To the west of this, the land use changes from orchards to arable fields bound by shelterbelts and tall hedgerows. A disused chalk pit east of Lower Twydall bound by tree belts breaks up the larger rectilinear fields.
- 4.69 To the northwest, adjacent to the ring road the land use is varied, with areas of remnant traditional orchards set within land managed for paddocks, with associated stables, outbuildings and menages. Rectilinear areas of woodland and scrub occupy land between Lower Rainham Road and Grange Lane at Ladds Corner, and west of Lower Twydall. The linear settlement at Ladds Corner and hamlet at Lower Twydall, combine with small groups of properties to provide a settled context. Woodland and hedgerows to field boundaries and along lanes provide enclosure within this part of the LLCA.
- 4.70 To the southeast of the LLCA beyond Lower Bloors Lane the land use is also varied, with the Bloors Lane Community Woodland combining with mature tree planting within the gardens and grounds of properties to provide enclosure and a wooded context and backdrop within the local landscape. The area includes land associated with large properties and farmsteads that are managed as paddocks, with some containing traditional orchard trees, as well as areas of more recent orchard planting.

Lanes

- 4.71 Lower Bloors Lane, Pump Lane and Lower Twydall Lane are narrow lanes bound by tall hedgerows that cross the LLCA between Lower Rainham Road and Twydall to the south. The lanes are sunken, with hedgebanks in places. A number of properties front onto the lanes, with some set back beyond driveways and vegetation along the roadside. Lower Bloors Lane and Lower Twydall Lane terminate at the railway line with a footbridge over.

Settlement

- 4.72 Properties at Pump Farm and Russett Farm site within the wider commercial orchard area. The modern development at Russett Farm comprises barns and houses that have an agricultural character and appear as a farmstead within the orchard.
- 4.73 The settlement of Lower Twydall to the northwest of the area comprises dwellings along Lower Twydall Lane set within a well treed context formed by mature hedgerows and tree to garden boundaries and adjacent fields. To the west of Lower Twydall

Lane, the recent development at Little York Meadows lies within a wooded area.

- 4.74 Lower Rainham is situated to the east of the LLCA on Lower Rainham Road, with properties backing onto the commercial orchards. This includes the Lower Rainham conservation area, including listed buildings of Chapel House, Bloors Place, Cart Lodge and Granary Wharf. Lower Rainham is a small linear settlement, with a range of building types including ribbon development comprising post war houses, interspersed with modern infill.

Key Characteristics

- Gently Sloping agricultural land rising from the marshes towards the built edge of Twydall to the southwest.
- Large scale rectilinear fields managed as commercial orchards and arable fields to the centre of the LLCA.
- Upper slopes visible from the Saxon Shore Way and Riverside Country Park, set against the backdrop of the Twydall urban edge.
- Coniferous shelter belts and hedgerows to field boundaries limit views across the LLCA.
- Varied land use including paddocks and remnant orchards to the northwest with fragmented and degraded character in places.
- Bloors Lane Community Woodland, tree belts and conifer hedgerows providing a wooded backdrop and enclosure to southeast of area.
- Pump Lane, Lower Bloors Lane and Lower Twydall Lane cross the area, bound by tall hedgerows.
- Properties at Pump Farm and Russett Farm set within commercial orchards off Pump Lane with agricultural character represent a farmstead.
- Linear settlement and ribbon development at Lower Rainham adjoining LLCA to the northeast, including conservation area and listed buildings.
- Lower Twydall set beyond tree belts and hedgerows to the west of Lower Twydall Lane.

4 Landscape Character

Landscape Value

Landscape Designations

Gillingham Riverside Area of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI)

- 4.75 The Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA lies within the Gillingham Riverside ALLI, a locally designated landscape as set-out in the adopted Medway Local Plan (Policy BN3E4). The ALLI designation is the lowest level of designation and indicates a Local Value at District Level. The extents of the ALLI is illustrated on **Plan 3: Landscape Planning Policy**. The table below summarises the contribution that the LLCA makes to the landscape features and functions of the ALLI as set-out within Policy BNE34.
- 4.76 The analysis within the table above demonstrates that the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA makes an overall **Low / Medium Contribution** to the landscape features and function of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI.
- 4.77 The LLCA is separated from the estuary and areas of ecological and recreational value, with limited access to the Country Park and Saxon Shore Way across the area from Twydall and Rainham. Public access to the landscape within the LLCA is limited to the Bloors Lane community woodland and enclosed rights of way through paddocks and commercial orchards.
- 4.78 Whilst a large proportion of the LLCA comprises orchards, they are not characteristic features typical of the traditional Kentish fruit belt. These are large, intensively cropped commercial orchards characterised by rows of fruit trees grown in large fields that are otherwise largely sterile land. The fields are bound by tall coniferous shelterbelts. The setting to the conservation areas at Lower Twydall and Lower Rainham comprise areas of commercial orchard planting which is not sympathetic to the historic land use and management.
- 4.79 Whilst woodland and tree belts within the LLCA provide a green backdrop to views from the estuary, the urban area at Twydall and Rainham is visible amongst and beyond this. Where the land is managed as orchards and arable fields, the linear built edge at Twydall forms a developed backdrop, detracting from the function of the ALLI as a green backdrop and detracting from the wooded character of the shoreline.

Contribution to Gillingham Riverside ALLI Landscape Features and Functions

Landscape Features and Function (as set out in Local Plan Policy BNE34)	Contribution of Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA
Green buffer separating built up areas of Twydall and Rainham from areas of international importance for nature conservation and recreation along the Medway estuary	<p>The shoreline and estuary are situated beyond the Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA that lies to the north of Lower Rainham Road and woodland and shelterbelts along the shoreline. Development along Lower Rainham Road and within the LLCA compromise the function of the area as a green buffer.</p> <p>There is limited access across the LLCA save for public roads with no pavements along Pump Lane, Lower Bloors Lane and Lower Twydall Lane.</p> <p>Enclosed nature of the lanes by hedgerows and hedgebanks restricts outward views and appreciation of the area as a green buffer.</p> <p>Medium Contribution</p>
Enhances the setting of the Northern Ring Road and allows attractive views from the river and railway	<p>LLCA includes land east of the ring road comprising paddocks and stables.</p> <p>Views across the LLCA from the railway are limited by intervening vegetation alongside the tracks. Glimpsed views from short sections of track only.</p> <p>LLCA separated from the river and shoreline beyond marshes farmland and Lower Rainham Road. Developed context to site in available views.</p> <p>Low Contribution</p>
Provides residents within an extensive urban area access to an attractive, rural landscape	<p>LLCA contains limited opportunities for public access. Recreation areas include Bloors Lane Community Woodland and Berengrave Nature Reserve.</p> <p>Access through the ALLI from Rainham and Twydall limited to bridleway GB6 and PRoW GB5 that are enclosed by hedgerows, limiting appreciation of the surroundings.</p> <p>Connectivity with the Riverside Country Park and shoreline limited to public lanes without pavements.</p> <p>Low Contribution</p>
Provides an attractive setting to the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall conservation areas	<p>Setting to Lower Rainham conservation area comprises commercial orchards and coniferous hedgerows / shelterbelts.</p> <p>Lower Twydall conservation area is enclosed by woodland and mature tree belts. Fields to the east include commercial orchards and arable fields.</p> <p>Medium Contribution</p>
Contains a number of orchards, mature hedgerows and farm groups complementing and contributing to the Riverside Country Park	<p>The LLCA is situated outside the Riverside Country Park.</p> <p>The majority of the orchards within the LLCA are commercial plantations with hedgerows comprising coniferous shelter belts. These do not reflect the traditional distinctive landscape character of the area.</p> <p>Farms within Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall are contained within the conservation areas, having been converted to residential properties and amalgamated into the settlements.</p> <p>The listed Pump Farm and barn conversions / new properties at Russett Farm on Pump Lane are distinctive features that respect the historic character.</p> <p>Medium Contribution</p>
Forms a green backdrop when viewed from the Medway Estuary	<p>The upper slopes managed as commercial orchards are visible from the estuary, set against the backdrop of the built edge of Twydall and urban area rising beyond and viewed beyond roofs of buildings on Lower Rainham Road.</p> <p>Bloor Lane Community Forest and tree belts to the southeast form a wooded backdrop in views from the estuary.</p> <p>Medium Contribution</p>

4 Landscape Character

Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA – Assessment of Landscape Value

Landscape Value Factors (GLVIA Box 5.1)	Contribution of Key Characteristics (Including: individual elements; landscape features; and notable aesthetic, perceptual or experiential qualities)
Landscape quality (condition)	The condition and quality of the landscape varies across the area. Areas to the northwest and southeast adjacent to the ring road and edge of Rainham have a peri urban context with land managed for paddocks and areas of pasture and orchards integrated into gardens. Whilst there are areas of woodland, intact field boundaries and traditional orchards on the edges of the area and around Twydall and Lower Bloors Lane, across much of the area the field boundaries are gappy, have been removed to facilitate agriculture / horticulture or have been replaced by coniferous shelterbelts that are somewhat out of character with the surrounding landscape. The commercial orchards are not typical of the traditional character of the fruit belt. The hedgebanks along the lanes within the LLCA are distinctive features. However, as recognised by the guidelines for the Lower Rainham Farmland LCA, there are opportunities to introduce regular management of the hedgerows. This reflects the poor condition of some sections of hedgerow.
Scenic Quality	Across much of the area, hedgerows, woodland and shelter belts limit views across the LLCA and the appreciation of the landscape as a whole. Views across the area are limited to potential glimpsed from passing trains through trackside vegetation. When experienced from the estuary, the LLCA is viewed in context with the urban development at Twydall and Rainham.
Rarity	Sections of Pump Lane to the south of Pump Farm are identified as “Rural Lanes” under Local Policy. This reflects the distinctive hedgebanks and character of the lane. The same character is present along Lower Bloors Lane and, to a lesser extent, Lower Twydall Lane to the northwest. Other features within the area are generally typical of the wider landscape and not particularly rare.
Representativeness	The character and features of the LLCA identified for the Lower Rainham Farmland LCA include the mixed farmland and use for orchards and arable land. The area does not contain any important landscape features. As set-out in the description for the LLCA, the intensive use of much of the area for commercial orchards has resulted in a degraded character and does not reflect the traditional orchards and land uses.
Conservation interests	The ecological value of the agricultural land and commercial orchards is limited due to the management of the field for crops. Areas of value for wildlife are associated with areas of woodland, scrub / traditional orchards and hedgerows and tree belts to field boundaries. There are a number of listed buildings throughout the LLCA. These are focused in and around Lower Twydall and Lower Rainham and the associated conservation areas. The management of the land around these settlements and buildings as commercial orchards and intensively farmed arable land does not reflect the historic land use.
Recreation Value	The recreation value of the LLCA is limited, with poor connectivity from adjacent urban areas to the Country Park and shoreline. This is recognised by the Medway Landscape Character Assessment. Routes east-west through the LLCA are limited to Pump Lane, Lower Bloors Lane and Lower Twydall Lane which do not have pavements for pedestrians to use. The Bloor Lane community woodland offers some recreational facility close to the urban edge. Connectivity through the area is limited to a public footpath and bridleway that are enclosed by hedges, offering limited recreational value. These routes do not connect through to any recreation / amenity areas or community facilities.
Perceptual aspects	The proximity of the area to the urban edge, railway and busy roads influence the tranquillity and perception of the area. As recognised for the Lower Rainham Farmland LCA, there is a transitional and urban fringe character to the area. Areas of relative tranquillity are associated with wooded areas that are enclosed and separated from the surroundings.
Associations	Whilst there are connections with the estuary and historic uses of the area, the LLCA does not have any strong associations that may influence the perception of the area.

4.80 Building on those factors and features that are identified for the ALLI, the table below provides a summary of the contribution that key characteristics of LLCA make to the value of the local landscape. These include perceptual aspects, as well as the condition / quality of the landscape and how representative it is of the character of the area as recognised in published landscape character assessments.

Landscape Susceptibility

- 4.81 The Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA is largely undeveloped, although it is bounded by development to the southwest and southeast on the edge of Twydall and Rainham, placing the site within a peri urban context and influencing the tranquillity.
- 4.82 The LLCA is separated from the shoreline and valued aspects of the landscape associated with riverside Country Park, Saxon Shore Way and ecological designations.
- 4.83 Key landscape sensitivities associated with the wider LLCA include the conservation areas at Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall, as well as areas of woodland including Lower Bloors Community Woodland, traditional orchards and hedgerows and shelterbelts to field boundaries. The potential for development to the southeast of Lower Bloors Lane is limited by the presence of properties with paddocks and large gardens. Whilst there may be opportunities to develop within this area this would be of a small scale and infill.
- 4.84 In addition to the conservation areas, the character of the lanes that cross the area are of value, and the buildings at Pump Farm and Russett Farm are distinctive features in the area.
- 4.85 The containment of the LLCA along Lower Rainham road by tall hedgerows, tree belts and roadside properties, as well as the shelterbelts and woodland within the marshes farmland separates the area from the sensitive landscape of the shoreline and estuary.
- 4.86 Development within the LLCA would reflect the pattern and extent of development within the area that extends to the northeast of the railway line but is set back from the shoreline and marshes.
- 4.87 Whilst the majority of the land within the LLCA is intensively farmed commercial orchards that are contained by tall hedgerows and shelterbelts, development on the higher land to the southwest would be visible from the estuary. Although the agricultural land is perceived and viewed in association with the backdrop of the urban area of Twydall, proposals within this area would need to be designed to assimilate with the existing landscape structure and

provide a softening to the developed backdrop, tying-in with the adjacent wooded context formed by shelterbelts and trees to the north and south.

- 4.88 Considering the above, on balance the whole of the LLCA has a **Medium Susceptibility** to change associated with residential development within in the area.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 4.89 The area is of a Localised Landscape Value as recognised by its inclusion within the ALLI. The above analysis has determined that the LLCA makes a Low / Medium Contribution to the features and function of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI. This recognises that, whilst the area makes a limited contribution overall,, the land within the LLCA has a role in providing a setting to the conservation areas at Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall, as well as part of a wider buffer between Twydall and Rainham and green backdrop in views from the estuary.
- 4.90 As set-out above and demonstrated by the proposals for the development of the site, there are opportunities to provide improved access across the LLCA to connect the urban areas with the shoreline and country park, as well as respect the character of lanes and historic land use for traditional orchards and native trees and hedgerows to field boundaries.
- 4.91 Combined with the Medium Susceptibility to change associated with development within the LLCA, it is assessed as being of a **Medium Landscape Sensitivity** to residential development.

Site Features and Landscape Receptors

Site Features

- 4.92 The site lies wholly within the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA and includes a number of the key characteristics and features identified within the Medway Landscape Character Assessment for the Lower Rainham Farmland and Riverside Marshes LCAs.
- 4.93 The LLCAs and site features indicate the 'Landscape Receptors' that may be affected by the development of the site and which are taken forwards into the assessment of landscape effects when identifying the nature of change at a site-wide scale.
- 4.94 The assessment of local landscape character has also included a review of the contribution that the LLCAs within the Study Area make to the features and functions of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI, as well as identifying valued aspects of the landscape using the GLVIA Box 5.1 factors. This process has also considered perceptual aspects and scenic quality, including the contribution that the site makes to recognised components as perceived from within the wider landscape.
- 4.95 The assessment has concluded that the site and wider Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA make an overall Low / Medium Contribution to the function and features of the ALLI:
- as part of a green backdrop in views from the Medway Estuary;
 - as part of a larger buffer between Twydall and Rainham and areas of ecological and recreational importance on the shoreline and within the Riverside Country Park;
 - in providing a setting to the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall conservation areas; and
 - containing characteristics and features that complement the Riverside Country Park, including orchards, hedgerows and farm groups.

Plan 6: Site Features Plan (13374/P09)



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4 Landscape Character

4.96 Key features of the site that may be impacted by the proposed development are set out on the table below, along with a summary of their character and sensitivities. Opportunities for the proposed development to incorporate mitigation and enhancement measures to integrate the proposals into the landscape are also identified. These have been taken forwards into the masterplan and Landscape Framework for the proposed development.

Site-Specific Landscape Susceptibility

4.97 As set-out at **Appendix 2**, landscape susceptibility relates to the ability of a defined landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences.

4.98 As detailed further within **Section 6** of this LVIA (**Proposed Development**) and illustrated on the **Landscape and Green Infrastructure Framework Plan**, the proposals have been developed to respond to the landscape and visual sensitivities and constraints.

4.99 The proposals respond to the character and sensitivities identified above and as set-out in the assessment of the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall LLCA, ensuring that the development respects the character of the wider landscape including the Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA and Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA, as well as the setting of Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall and the character of Pump Lane and Lower Bloors Lane.

4.100 In order to develop a scheme that takes the landscape context into account, the development incorporates mitigation measures as set-out in the above table for each of the identified site features. These include to reinforce boundary vegetation, provide strategic landscape planting and creation of substantial areas of open space and green infrastructure. This will facilitate improved accessibility across the site from the urban areas to the shoreline and Riverside Country Park, as well as providing sporting and informal recreation facilities on site.

4.101 Community orchards, a village green and meadows are also located to respect the character and setting of Pump Farm and the fruit belt. The scale, height and massing has been developed to ensure development is contained within the landscape and reflects existing development.

4.102 Finally, the Green Infrastructure Framework has been developed to ensure that substantial amounts of new tree planting within areas of open space, buffer and along streets will break up the built form and provide a soft backdrop when viewed from the estuary.

4.103 Considering the need for the above mitigation measures, the site

Feature	Character and Sensitivities	Opportunities for Mitigation
1. Lower Bloors Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enclosed lane with hedgebanks and tall hedges south of Pump Farm. Properties at Russett Farm and Pump Farm front onto the lane. Glimpsed views of orchards and buildings at Russett Farm set beyond over lower hedges and gateways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate buildings at Pump Farm and Russett Farm into areas of open space alongside Pump Lane. Set development back to retain character of the lane and provide an appropriate setting to the agricultural-style buildings at Russett Farm and Pump Farm farmhouse. Retain areas of orchard alongside the lane to reflect character of lane and site as experienced from the lane.
2. Pump Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enclosed lane with hedgebanks and tall hedges south of Pump Farm. Properties at Russett Farm and Pump Farm front onto the lane. Glimpsed views of orchards and buildings at Russett Farm set beyond over lower hedges and gateways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate buildings at Pump Farm and Russett Farm into areas of open space alongside Pump Lane. Set development back to retain character of the lane and provide an appropriate setting to the agricultural-style buildings at Russett Farm and Pump Farm farmhouse. Retain areas of orchard alongside the lane to reflect character of lane and site as experienced from the lane.
3. Bridleway GB6A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Path enclosed by tall coniferous hedgerows running diagonally from Lower Bloors Lane adjacent to the community woodland to Pump Lane opposite Pump Farm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of bridleway within areas of Green Infrastructure running through the development. Open-up lengths of bridleway to allow access to green space.
4. Pump Farm and Russett Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group of buildings fronting Pump Lane. Listed farmhouse at Pump Farm. Group of barns and properties at Russett Farm designed with agricultural character. Development has the character of a farmstead and associated agricultural buildings set within courtyards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set properties within an area of open space / land retained as orchard to respect the setting and agricultural character. Retain frontage onto Pump Lane.
5. Commercial Orchards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensively farmed fields of fruit trees planted in rows. Land managed for fruit production, with grass strips maintained short and controlled for weeds to aid in harvesting. Fields bound by coniferous shelterbelts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of traditional orchards incorporating a variety of local fruit varieties within areas of open space. Grassland and wildflower meadows within orchard areas for amenity and wildlife enhancements. Opportunity for these to be managed as Community Orchards with public access. Planting of native hedgerows and trees to replace conifer shelterbelts and improve diversity, habitats and respect local landscape character.
6. Lower Twydall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Houses set beyond tree belts and hedgerows to gardens. Framework of trees, hedgerows and scrub at former chalk pits bound site area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set development back from edge of Lower Twydall beyond areas of open space and landscape buffer planting to provide setting to conservation area, avoid coalescence and respect the amenity of residents.
7. Lower Rainham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rear gardens of properties back onto the site area. Mixture of boundary treatments to gardens, including tall coniferous hedges and post and rail fences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set development beyond landscape buffers incorporating tree planting to soften the built edge, provide a setting to the conservation area and respect the amenity of residents. School playing fields fronting buffer to maximise development set back.
8. Lower Rainham Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road corridor separating the site from the Medway Marshes Farmland and Shoreline. Tall hedgerows and areas of remnant traditional orchard alongside road provide physical and visual separation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen boundaries to road with tree planting and set development beyond landscape buffer with landscape buffer and tree planting and set development back to reinforce separation and retain buffer with the shoreline and estuary.
9. Green backdrop when viewed from the Medway Estuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upper slopes of site comprising commercial orchards visible from vantage points on Horrid Hill and Motney Hill. Site viewed against backdrop of the built edge of Twydall and development in the urban area rising to the south. Buildings at Pump Farm and Russett Farm and agricultural sheds visible adjacent to development at Lower Rainham in the foreground. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit height of development to reflect adjacent properties to the north (Lower Rainham) and south (Twydall). Lower density development on higher slopes. Planting of tree belts to site boundaries to provide strong framework and provide green edge and backdrop to soften development. Planting of trees within areas of linear green infrastructure and internal streets to break up the built form and create a green canopy across the development.

4 Landscape Character

has been assessed as having a **Medium Susceptibility** to change associated with proposed development.

Landscape Sensitivity to the Proposed Development

4.104 The site occupies much of the central part of the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA and includes areas of commercial orchard on the rising land between Lower Rainham Road and the edge of Twydall at the railway line. The site adjoins the conservation areas at Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall. Pump Lane bisects the site, with the buildings at Pump Farm and Russet Farm situated to the centre of the site area, outside the red line boundary.

4.105 Many of the characteristics, features and sensitivities that constrain the LLCA are relevant to the site and proposals, which include opportunities to create new orchards, planting of structural landscaping and improved access and recreation / amenity with links to the wider area including the shoreline and Riverside Country Park.

4.106 On balance, the site is assessed as being of an overall **Medium Landscape Sensitivity** to the proposed development.

Landscape Receptors

4.107 The landscape receptors that are to be taken forward into the assessment of effects are set out on the table below. These include the Local Landscape Character Areas identified by Tyler Grange the Site-specific Assessment, as well as the Site Area itself and the key features and sensitivities that have been identified through the baseline studies.

4.108 The LLCAs are considered to be appropriate to use within the assessment as they have drawn upon those areas contained within the Medway Landscape Character Assessment. The Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA reflects the extents of the Lower Rainham Farmland LCA between the ring road and edge of Rainham, being bound by the railway and Lower Rainham Road, including the site area.

4.109 The proposed development will not directly impact the landscape northeast of Lower Rainham Road. However, indirect effects on the adjacent landscapes of the Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA and Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA will be taken forward in the assessment of landscape effects at **Section 7** of this LVIA.

Landscape within the Study Area

4.110 The assessment of landscape effects will also provide a summary of how the proposed development may affect the landscape and townscape character within the Study Area as a whole. This will draw upon the assessment of the LLCAs and landscape receptors and consider how the development may affect the function of the landscape in relation to the settlement pattern, green infrastructure and accessibility to recreational resources, including the Riverside Country Park, Saxon Shore Way, nature reserves and community forests. This will also take into account the provision of green infrastructure and recreation / amenity facilities within the proposals, as well as accessibility and connectivity with the wider area.

Landscape Receptor	Key Features and Sensitivities	Landscape Value	Landscape Susceptibility	Overall Landscape Sensitivity
Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA		Local Value Gillingham Riverside ALLI: Medium Contribution to Features and Function	Medium	Medium
Site Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower Bloors Lane • Pump Lane • Bridleway GB6A • Pump Farm and Russett Farm • Commercial Orchards • Lower Twydall • Lower Rainham • Lower Rainham Road • Green backdrop when viewed from the Medway Estuary 	Local Value Gillingham Riverside ALLI: Low / Medium Contribution to Features and Function	Medium	Medium
Landscape Character Areas beyond the site area – Indirect Effects				
Medway Marshes Farmlands LLCA		Local Value Gillingham Riverside ALLI: Medium Contribution to Features and Function	Medium	Medium
Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA		Local Value Gillingham Riverside ALLI: High Contribution to Features and Function	High	High

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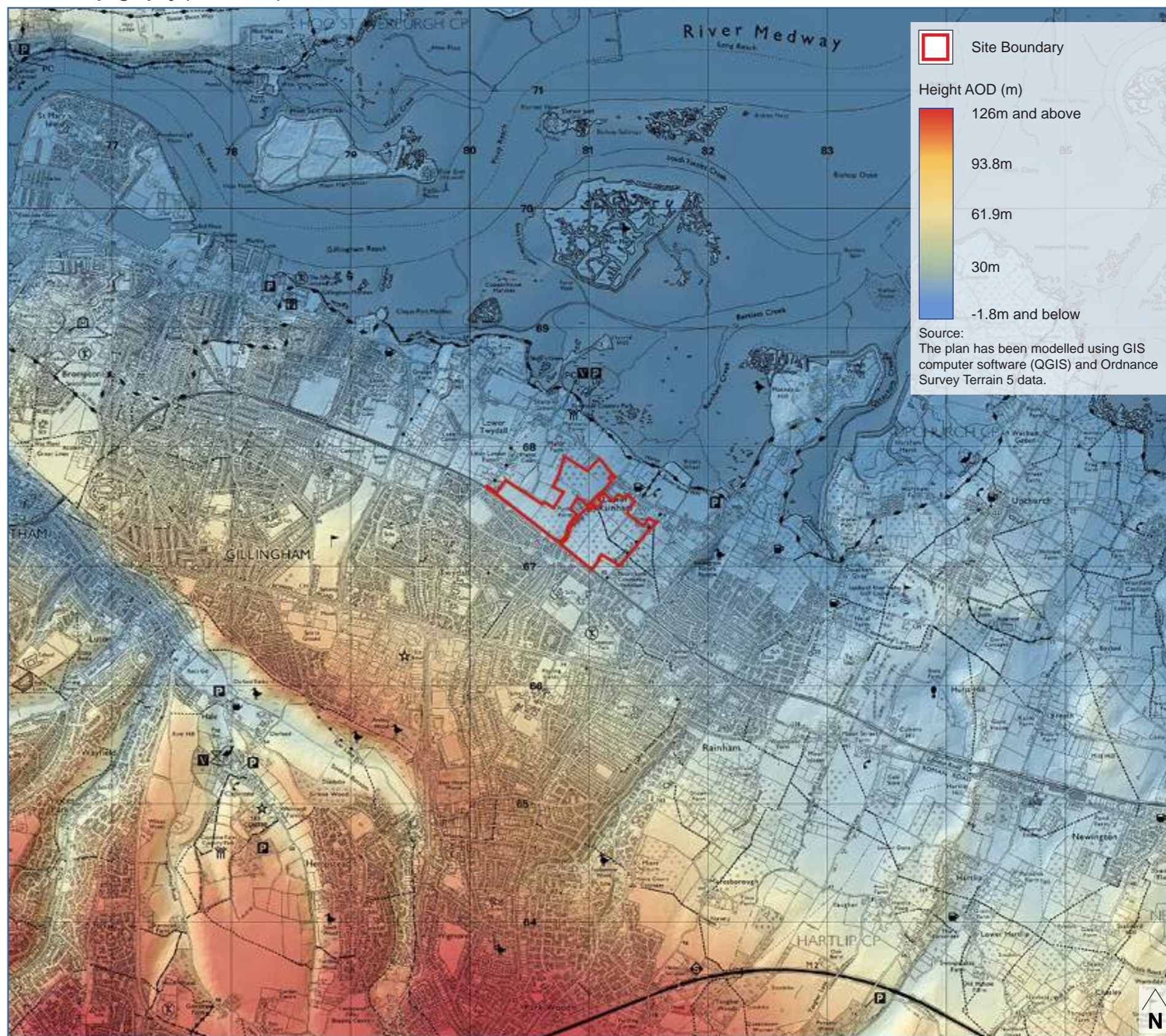
5 Visual Context

- 5.1 This section identifies the potential extent of visibility of the proposed development, the visual context within which the site is seen experienced and those groups of people (visual receptors) whom you have the potential to experience changes to their views and visual amenity resulting from development of the site.
- 5.2 In order to establish the degree of any change that may arise from future development and the extent to which this may affect those people identified, it is necessary to understand the availability, context and composition of views within the Study Area. As part of this process, the sensitivity of those people whose views and visual amenity may be affected is also established. This is determined through assessing both the value placed upon views and the susceptibility of those groups of people to the changes associated with the proposals.
- 5.3 As set-out in GLVIA, (paragraph 6.37), the value attached to particular views can be recognised through planning designation and in relation to heritage assets, as well as through appearance on maps and in guidebooks.
- 5.4 The susceptibility of visual receptors to change is defined by GLVIA as: *“The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on the views and the visual amenity they experience at certain locations”*(paragraph 6.32)
- 5.5 Further details regarding indicators of value and susceptibility are set out in the Methodology and Criteria Tables at **Appendix 2**.

Representative Photoviewpoints

- 5.6 A range of Photoviewpoints have been identified to inform the LVIA and to illustrate the visual context. These viewpoints include those from a range of orientations and distances and have been chosen to be representative of those groups of people (visual receptors) who may have views of the proposed development.
- 5.7 A total of 22 representative viewpoints have been chosen from locations surrounding the site to enable an understanding of the baseline conditions and inform an assessment of the effects of the development (see **Photoviewpoints 1-22**). Photographs were taken from selected viewpoints with a digital camera with an equivalent 50mm focal length lens at eye level (approximately 1600mm above ground).
- 5.8 The photoviewpoints are contained within this section, alongside a full description of the nature and composition of views, elements within them and an assessment of the sensitivity of the represented

Plan 7: Topography (13374/P03)



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5 Visual Context

rectors to visual change (value and susceptibility). Reference is made to these viewpoints when describing the extents of visibility, composition of views and to identify visual receptors.

- 5.9 Whilst the views are chosen to be representative of the area, they cannot provide continuous coverage of all potential locations within the vicinity of the development. Often, views will occur as a sequence within the surrounding environment, with the most significant views assessed further within this report.
- 5.10 Likewise, where transient or fleeting views are possible, these will also be assessed as part of the report.

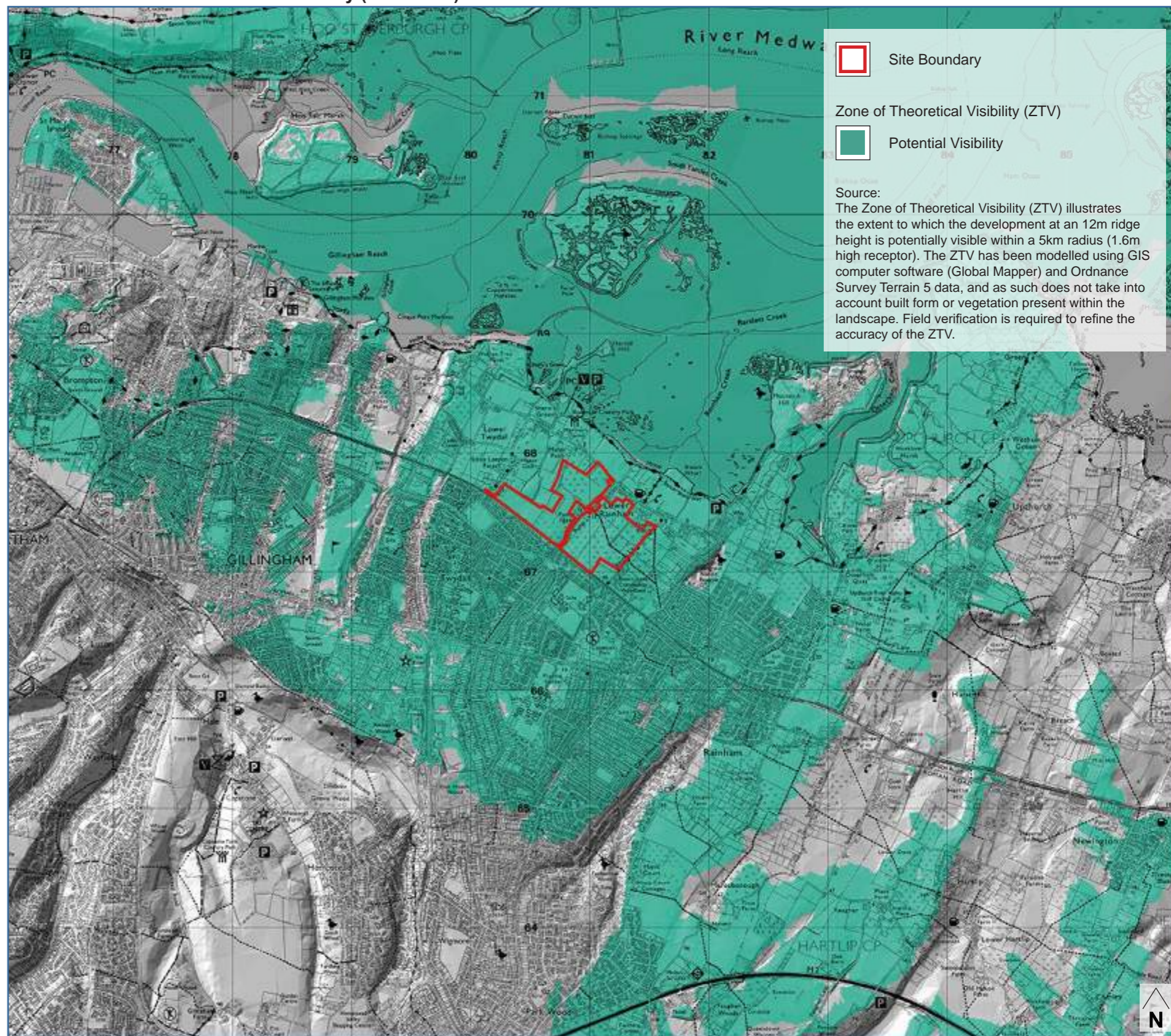
Extent of Visibility

- 5.11 The potential extents of visibility of the proposed development have been tested based upon the building height parameters of the proposed development, at 11 and 12m AOD. A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been generated which provides a first sieve analysis based on the findings of topographical mapping (**Plan 7: Topography**).
- 5.12 The GIS software generated ZTV illustrates the extent to which development would be potentially visible within a 5km radius to a 1.6m high receptor and is illustrated on **Plan 8: Zone of Theoretical Visibility**. The calculation is based on Ordnance Survey Terrain 5 data only and does not take into account built form or vegetation present within the landscape.
- 5.13 The extent from which the site is visible has been ascertained through fieldwork to determine the influence of vegetation and built form on the extent and composition of views.
- 5.14 The extent of visibility of the site is described below Reference is made to the topography plan, ZTV and representative Photoviewpoints where applicable.

Influence of Topography – Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 5.15 As illustrated on the **Topography Plan** the site slopes from the railway line to the southwest towards the lower lying land of the marshes that are situated beyond Lower Rainham Road. Beyond the marshes the Medway estuary and flats extend to the north, punctuated by Hoo Salt Marsh and Nor Marsh. Motney Hill rises beyond a headland to the northeast.
- 5.16 To the southwest, the land continues to rise up to a ridge that defines the edges of Gillingham and Chatham, beyond which the land slopes steeply away in a series of banks and incised valleys at the base of the North Downs.

Plan 8: GIS Zone of Theoretical Visibility (13374/P04)



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5 Visual Context

- 5.17 To the east and west, the land is low-lying with gentle undulations along ridges that run southwest -northeast between the estuary to the north and banks and valleys to the southwest.
- 5.18 The ZTV illustrates the limited effect that the lower-lying topography of the marshes and flats that extend into the estuary to the north have on screening views to the north, with the extent of potential visibility extending across the Medway towards the Hoo Peninsula.
- 5.19 To the southwest, development on the site would be screened beyond the ridgeline and incised valleys south of Gillingham. Views to the southeast and east are also limited by the series of ridgelines, with potential visibility from the ridges and north-western slopes to the east and south-eastern slopes to the west.
- 5.20 As set -out above, the ZTV does not take into account the influence of built form or vegetation of the extent of visibility. The extent of visibility is described below.

To the North

Distant Views (Greater than 2 km)

- 5.21 In views from the Saxon Shore Way to the north of the Medway (approximately 4km distant) the fields to the southwest of the site adjacent to the railway line are visible. As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 1** the lower lying fields to the north and east are screened by intervening built form at Lower Rainham, trees at the Riverside Country Park and vegetation within the marshes along the coastal strip.

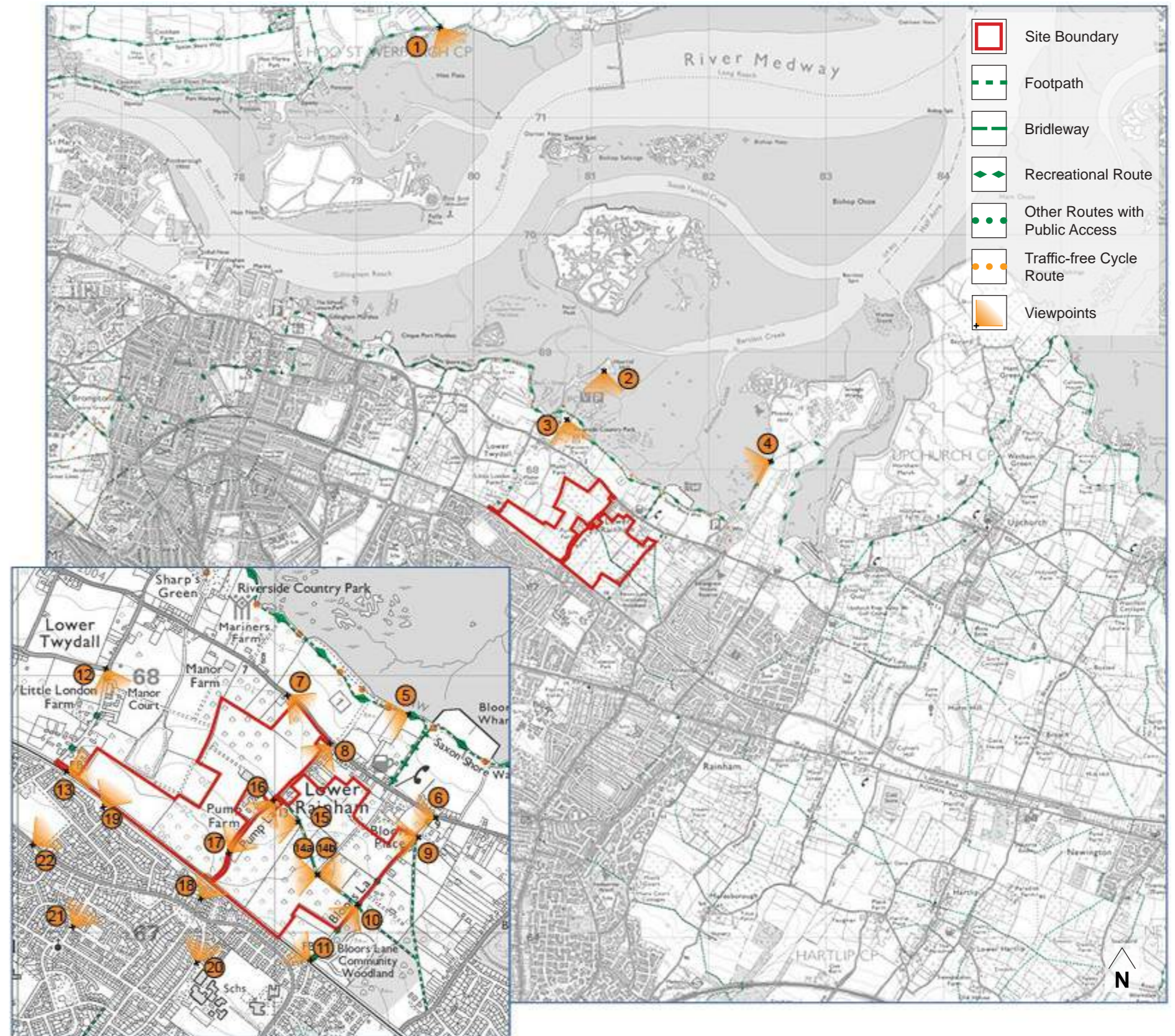
Middle Distance Views (500m – 2km)

- 5.22 In views from Horrid Hill (790m distant) much of the site is screened beyond intervening trees, woodland and vegetation in the Riverside Country Park and along the shoreline. As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 2**, there are views towards the fields to the southwest of the site adjacent to the railway line and glimpses of land to the southeast of the site beyond Pump Lane.
- 5.23 From the Saxon Shore Way south of Motney Hill (1.3km distant) land east of Pump Lane is screened by intervening vegetation and build form at Lower Rainham. Buildings at Pump Farm and the fields to the west are visible above intervening trees and woodland (**Photoviewpoint 4**).

Local Views (up to 500m from the site)

- 5.24 Trees and vegetation along the shoreline limit views towards the site from the Saxon Shore Way and coastal strip north of Lower Rainham Road. Where there are breaks in the vegetation north of Lower

Plan 9: Viewpoint Location Plan (13374/P08)



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Rainham, intervening buildings limit views of the site, with only limited glimpses of the site available (see **Photoviewpoint 5** from north of Lower Rainham).

- 5.25 From Lower Rainham Road, views into the site are screened by buildings within Lower Rainham (**Photoviewpoint 6**) and tall mature hedgerows and trees (**Photoviewpoint 7**). Views along Pump Lane into the site from the road are also screened by houses and tall hedgerows (**Photoviewpoint 8**).
- 5.26 Some properties adjacent to the site south of Lower Rainham Road have views beyond post and rail fencing to rear gardens into the site. Others have hedgerows and trees screening outward views.

To the East

- 5.27 There are no distant or middle-distance views to the site from the east, with development at Rainham screening views westwards from beyond Berengrave Lane.
- 5.28 Views of the site from the east are limited to those obtained from Lower Bloors Lane that runs adjacent to the site boundary. However, views into the site from the lane are limited by tall hedgerows along Lower Bloors Lane, as well as the Community Woodland. As illustrated by **Photoviewpoints 9 and 10** from the lane adjacent to the eastern boundary there are glimpsed views into the eastern edges of the site through occasional gateways, as well as over lower section of hedges. There are no clear views across the site area.
- 5.29 Residents of properties fronting and overlooking Lower Bloors Lane where there are gateways and lower sections of hedgers have views into the site.

To the South

Local Views (up to 500m from the site)

- 5.30 As illustrated by **Photoviewpoints 18, 20, 21 and 22**, views towards the site from within the built area of Twydall to the south are screened by intervening development and houses on Beechings Way that run alongside the railway line.
- 5.31 Views of the site from the south are limited to those obtained from residential streets and properties that lie adjacent to and overlook the railway line. As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 19** from Gifford Close, vegetation alongside the railway filters views into the site.

To the West

Local Views (up to 500m from the site)

- 5.32 In views beyond Lower Twydall Lane to the west, the site is set beyond intervening trees and hedgerows to field boundaries and local roads which screen the site from publicly accessible views.
- 5.33 Illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 12** taken from Lower Twydall Lane, views towards the site are filtered by field boundary vegetation and trees and hedgerows around the former Chalk Pits. In winter views there are glimpsed views to the western edges of the site and development at Russett Farm between intervening hedgerows.
- 5.34 As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 13** there are views across the southern and central site area from the railway footbridge on Lower Twydall Lane. These are elevated views from the short section of footbridge. There are no views into the site from the north or south of the railway line. Trees to the east of Lower Twydall screen views from the east.

Views from Within the Site Area

Bridleway

- 5.35 The bridleway that runs through the eastern site area between Pump Lane and Lower Bloors Lane is bounded along its length by tall coniferous hedgerows, limiting views into the site to those across adjacent fields through gateways (**Photoviewpoints 14a, 14b and 15**).

Pump Lane

- 5.36 Pump Lane is bound by tall hedgerows, limiting views into the site to those from gateways and over lower sections of hedgerow (**Photoviewpoints 16 and 17**).
- 5.37 Properties on Pump Lane, including Pump Farm and Russett Farm have views into the site from rear gardens which are bounded by post and rail fencing.

Composition of Views

- 5.38 A summary of the composition of views obtained from within the Study Area is set out below. A full description of the composition of views is included alongside the representative Photoviewpoint later within this section.

Views from the North

- 5.39 From the Hoo Peninsula on the northern shore of the Medway estuary there are expansive panoramic views across the mudflats and marshes towards the southern shoreline. Development at Gillingham and Chatham rises towards a wooded skyline on the North Downs beyond. Darnet Fort and Hoo Fort frame views towards the site area, which is set beyond Horrid Hill with Motney Hill as a backdrop to the east.
- 5.40 The shoreline and marshes to the north of Lower Rainham are well vegetated, with woodland at the Riverside Country Park and around Mariners Farm combining with trees and hedgerows to field boundaries to provide a soft green edge and backdrop to the views across the Medway. Beyond the marshes, houses at Lower Rainham are visible amongst the vegetation. The northern edge of Twydall is defined by linear housing that adjoins the railway line to the south of the site. These properties form a developed backdrop that then extends up the slopes towards Gillingham beyond.
- 5.41 There are also expansive views across the wider estuary and backdrop to the shorelines of the Hoo Peninsula to the north and Lower Rainham to the south from Horrid Hill and Motney Hill. The composition of the views from these locations is similar to that from the more distant views to the north, with the vegetated shoreline and buildings along Lower Rainham Road beyond.
- 5.42 The land to the southwest of the site adjacent to the railway line is situated in front of the properties on the northern edge of Twydall which form a linear edge and developed backdrop. The lower lying fields to the southwest and south of the site are set beyond intervening vegetation and built form. Tall hedgerows bounding the site along Lower Bloors Lane, the community woodland and hedges alongside the railway and bridleway provide enclosure and a well treed backdrop to the east.
- 5.43 Views from the shoreline along the Saxon Shore Way north of Lower Rainham Road are orientated across the expansive views of the Estuary to the north and northwest. Views inland are screened by the vegetation and woodland that runs alongside the shoreline associated with the Riverside Country Park and boundaries within the marshes.
- 5.44 Views along Lower Rainham Road include the linear settlement of Lower Rainham and tall hedgerows bounding the site, with glimpsed views across arable fields towards the estuary to the north.

5 Visual Context

Views to the East

- 5.45 From the east, the site is set beyond tall hedgerows and hedgebanks along Lower Bloors Lane. Views are focussed along the narrow, enclosed lane, with occasional glimpsed over hedgerows or through gateways.

Views to the South

- 5.46 Within the built area of Twydall, views are orientated along the residential streets and local roads. These follow a grid pattern, with Beechings Way running southeast – northwest channelling views.
- 5.47 From streets on the higher slopes that are orientated to look north-eastwards, there are framed views out across the estuary. In the foreground, linear development along Beechings Way forms a backdrop blocking views across the site.
- 5.48 There are some views north from properties and streets that overlook the site adjacent to the railway line. In the summer, when trees and hedgerows are in leaf views across the site are heavily filtered. In the wintertime, there may be some views across the site towards the wider views north of the estuary.

Views from the West

- 5.49 In views obtained from gateways on Lower Twydall Lane, the rolling topography and hedgerows to field boundaries limit distant views to the east. The main focus of views is along the narrow lane that is bounded by tall hedgerows with little outward visibility.
- 5.50 There are views along the railway line for the footbridge on Lower Twydall Lane, with oblique views across the site to the wooded backdrop beyond. Wider views are limited by trees surrounding properties at Lower Twydall.

Views from within the Site Area

- 5.51 Views from the bridleway that runs between Pump Lane and Lower Bloors Lane through the site are enclosed by tall coniferous hedgerows and channelled along the route of the path. Outward views are limited to those through gateways or short sections of post and rail fencing.
- 5.52 Views along Pump Lane are channelled by the tall roadside hedgerows with glimpses through gateways into the site. Properties at Pump Farm, Russetts Farm and cottages along the lane introduce development and focal points.

Visual Receptors

- 5.53 Having identified the extent of visibility, composition of views and representative viewpoints, those groups of people (visual receptor) who may have the potential to have their views and visual amenity affected by the proposed development have been identified. These will be taken forward into the assessment of likely effects.
- 5.54 Details of the visual receptors, representative views and an assessment of the sensitivity of these to the proposed development are set out on the following pages. The table below provides a summary of the receptors to be assessed:

Visual Receptor	Representative Photoviewpoint	Visual Sensitivity		
		Value	Susceptibility	Overall Sensitivity
Users of the Saxon Shore				
Northern shore of the Medway	Photoviewpoint 1	High	Low	Medium
South of Motney Hill	Photoviewpoint 4	High	Medium	Medium / High
North of Lower Rainham	Photoviewpoint 5	High	Low	Medium
Users of the Riverside Country Park				
Users of the Riverside Country Park - Horrid Hill	Photoviewpoint 2	High	Medium	Medium / High
Users of Lower Rainham Road	Photoviewpoints 6, 7 and 8	Low	Medium	Medium
Users of Lower Bloors Lane	Photoviewpoints 9 - 11	Medium	Medium	Medium
Users of Lower Twydall Lane	Photoviewpoints 12 and 13	Medium	Medium	Medium
Users of Bridleway GB6a	Photoviewpoints 14a, 14b and 15	Medium	Medium / High	Medium
Users of Pump Lane	Photoviewpoints 16, 17 and 18	Medium	Medium	Medium
Users of Trains Passing the Site		Medium	Low	Low/Medium
Residents of Properties adjacent to and overlooking the site				
Lower Twydall South of the Railway	Photoviewpoint 19	High	Medium	Medium
Pump Lane		High	High	High
Lower Bloors Lane		High	High	High
				Medium
Lower Rainham		High	High	High
Lower Twydall		High	Medium	Medium

Users of Trains Passing the Site

Description

- 5.55 Views across the site from passing trains are obscured by tree belts to the southeast of Pump Lane. West of Pump Lane views towards the site are filtered by vegetation, with glimpsed views. The views are fleeting and glimpsed and for only a short duration when passing the western site area.
- 5.56 Value- The focus of passengers on trains is not wholly on the views as they are travelling between locations and may be engaged in other activities including reading, working and in conversation with other passengers. However, views do form part of the experience and enjoyment of train travel, Passengers may therefore place a Medium value of views.
- 5.57 Susceptibility- Views of the site from passing trains are glimpsed and fleeting, being screened and partially filtered along much of the site boundary. Passengers of trains passing the site therefore have a Low susceptibility to visual change.

Users of the Saxon Shore Way and Riverside Country Park



Saxon Shore Way on northern shore of the Medway

Description

- 5.58 As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 1**, there are expansive open views from the Saxon Shore Way east of Hoo Marina across the estuary of the River Medway towards the southern shore and rising land beyond, including development at Twydall and Gillingham and distant wooded skyline of the North Downs. Hoo Fort and Darnet Fort situated on the marshes frame views towards Horrid Hill and the woodland and trees at the Riverside Country Park on the shoreline.
- 5.59 Given the expansive nature of the views and distance, the site is not an obvious feature, blending with the wider backdrop which comprises woodland and vegetation along the shoreline and hinterland, interspersed with development at Lower Rainham and the built area of Twydall and Gillingham situated on the rising land beyond.
- 5.60 As illustrated on the Telephoto Zoom of **Photoviewpoint 1**, trees and vegetation at the Riverside Park, Mariners Farm and around Lower Rainham screen views across the site area from this location, although there are views across the fields to the south of the site wards the built edge of Twydall north of the railway line.

Visual Sensitivity

Value Attached to Views	Susceptibility to Change	Overall Sensitivity
<p>The Saxon Shore Way is a Long-Distance footpath that runs from Gravesend to Hastings.</p> <p>At a local level, the path to the east of Hoo Marina is well accessed and forms part of a popular recreational route.</p> <p>The Hoo Peninsula is being proposed for improvement as a new public open space which will increase recreational and amenity benefits and access to the land.</p> <p>There is a High Value attached to views from the Saxon Shore Way across the Medway on the Hoo Peninsula.</p>	<p>The open, expansive views from the Saxon Way north of the Medway are experienced along a stretch of the footpath that runs along the shoreline for a distance of approximately 1km east of Hoo Marina. Views across the estuary are therefore experienced over a period of time when walking along the route.</p> <p>Given the distance of the views from the site (4km) development would not appear prominent.</p> <p>The site is viewed against the backdrop of the built form of Twydall on the rising land to the north, with the wooded shoreline and development at Lower Rainham in the foreground.</p> <p>Development would not introduce uncharacteristic or prominent new elements into the views. The expansive views across the estuary and wooded backdrop beyond would remain.</p> <p>Users of the Saxon Shore Way in this location therefore have a Low Susceptibility to change associated with the proposed development.</p>	<p>Taking into account the value attached to views and susceptibility to change, users of the Saxon Shore Way east of Hoo Marina have a Medium Visual Sensitivity to the proposed development.</p>

 Site Boundary  Viewpoint  Receptor: Users of Saxon Shore Way north of River Medway





Telephoto Zoom of Viewpoint 1:



Photoviewpoint 1: Taken from public footpath ref: Strood Rural/Peninsula RS93.

Orientation: South Distance from site: 4km

Users of the Riverside Country Park

Views from Horrid Hill

Description

- 5.61 The causeway and reclaimed land at Horrid Hill afford views across the estuary and along the shoreline towards Motney Hill to the east. The causeway is a popular walk within the country park and includes benches and viewing places along its length.
- 5.62 **Photoviewpoint 2** which is taken from Horrid Hill illustrates the views across the marshes and flats towards the shoreline to the south and southeast. In these views, the woodland within the country park and tree belts bounding Mariners Farm and vegetation along the shoreline provide a soft green backdrop, beyond which the roofs of dwellings at Lower Rainham and along Lower Rainham Road are glimpsed. Woodland on the North Downs beyond the built form of Gillingham forms an expansive wooded skyline and backdrop to the view.
- 5.63 The woodland and vegetation on the shoreline and to field boundaries north of Lower Rainham Road break up and screen views across much of the site when viewed from Horrid Hill. The western field adjacent to the railway line is partially visible beyond intervening trees within the country park, set against the backdrop of the linear built edge formed by properties backing onto the railway on the northern edge of Twydall. Fields to the southeast of the site are also visible above the roofline of properties in Lower Rainham and on Pump Lane, enclosed by tall conifer hedges and trees along the railway line and bounding the allotments and Lower Bloors Lane. Trees within the community woodland form a well treed backdrop on the skyline.




Views from within the Riverside Country Park on the Mainland

Description

- 5.64 Away from the shoreline and Horrid Hill, the majority of the country park is situated within a wooded context or areas that are well contained by woodland. This includes the car park, café, equipped play area and informal areas with walks and trails. The lower-lying land combined with the tree cover limits outward views, including those towards the site.
- 5.65 The containment of the park is illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 3**, which shows views looking southeast from the mound north of the Café next to the Saxon Shore Way, with belts of conifers at Mariners Farm combining with trees within the park to screen views towards the site.

Visual Sensitivity

Value Attached to Views	Susceptibility to Change	Overall Sensitivity
<p>The Riverside Country Park is valued as a recreational resource and place to visit to walk along the shoreline and enjoy the natural areas and surrounding landscape and views.</p> <p>Horrid Hill offers a destination within the country park from which there are views all around, including across the estuary to the north, east and west as well as back towards the shoreline and inland.</p> <p>There is a High Value attached to open views from Horrid Hill and the shoreline.</p> <p>Views from within enclosed areas of the country park are of a lower value due to the focus of activities and experience of the people enjoying the area for recreation.</p>	<p>The country park and Horrid Hill are destinations, with the open, expansive views from the causeway and Horrid Hill forming part of the experience.</p> <p>When looking towards the shoreline from Horrid Hill, the site sits beyond the trees and vegetation along the shoreline, set below the woodland that forms a backdrop. The site is viewed in context with and relation to existing development, including the linear edge formed by properties in Twydall along the railway line.</p> <p>Whilst visible beyond the shoreline trees, development on the site would not introduce uncharacteristic or prominent new elements into the views and would be contained within a framework of mature trees, woodland and existing residential built form.</p> <p>Considering the above, on balance users of the Riverside Country Park on Horrid Hill have a Medium Susceptibility to change associated with the proposed development.</p>	<p>Taking into account the value attached to views and susceptibility to change, visitors to Horrid Hill have a Medium to High Visual Sensitivity to the proposed development.</p> <p>It should be noted that views towards the shoreline to the south of Horrid Hill from only a part of the wider 360 degree panoramic views that may be obtained from Horrid Hill, with the open views across the estuary being particularly evocative and valued.</p>

 Site Boundary  Viewpoints  Receptor: Users of Riverside Country Park and Horrid Hill





Photoviewpoint 2: Taken from Horrid Hill. **Orientation:** South **Distance from site:** 790m



Photoviewpoint 3: Taken from permissive footpath at Riverside Country Park. **Orientation:** South **Distance from site:** 510m

Users of the Saxon Shore Way

South of Motney Hill

Description

- 5.66 As the Saxon Shore Way runs along the western shoreline south of Motney Hill there are views across the Medway estuary to the west and northwest towards Horrid Hill. Beacon Hill forms a distant skyline beyond. This is illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 4**.
- 5.67 The shoreline sweeps across views to the southwest, forming a varied vegetated edge with the marshes and flats interspersed with blocks of woodland and tree planting at the Riverside Country Park to the west and north of Lower Rainham. Houses located on Lower Rainham Road, north of Macklands form a developed edge south of Motney Hill.
- 5.68 The land within the site to the east of Pump Lane is screened by trees and woodland north of Lower Rainham in views from this location. The roofs of properties within Twydall site are visible above the shoreline trees with the wooded skyline of the North Downs beyond.
- 5.69 Properties at Russet Farm and Pump Farm are visible to the west of Pump Lane, set beyond the rooftops of houses within Lower Rainham. To the north and west of these buildings, the fields within the western site are set beyond the vegetation and field boundary hedgerows north of Lower Rainham Road, with properties on the northern edge of Twydall along the railway to the site boundary forming a defined developed edge. The wooded skyline south of Gillingham is punctuated by commercial buildings at Gillingham Business park and Beechings Way Industrial Centre. Trees east of Manor Court and Lower Twydall contain the site to the west.

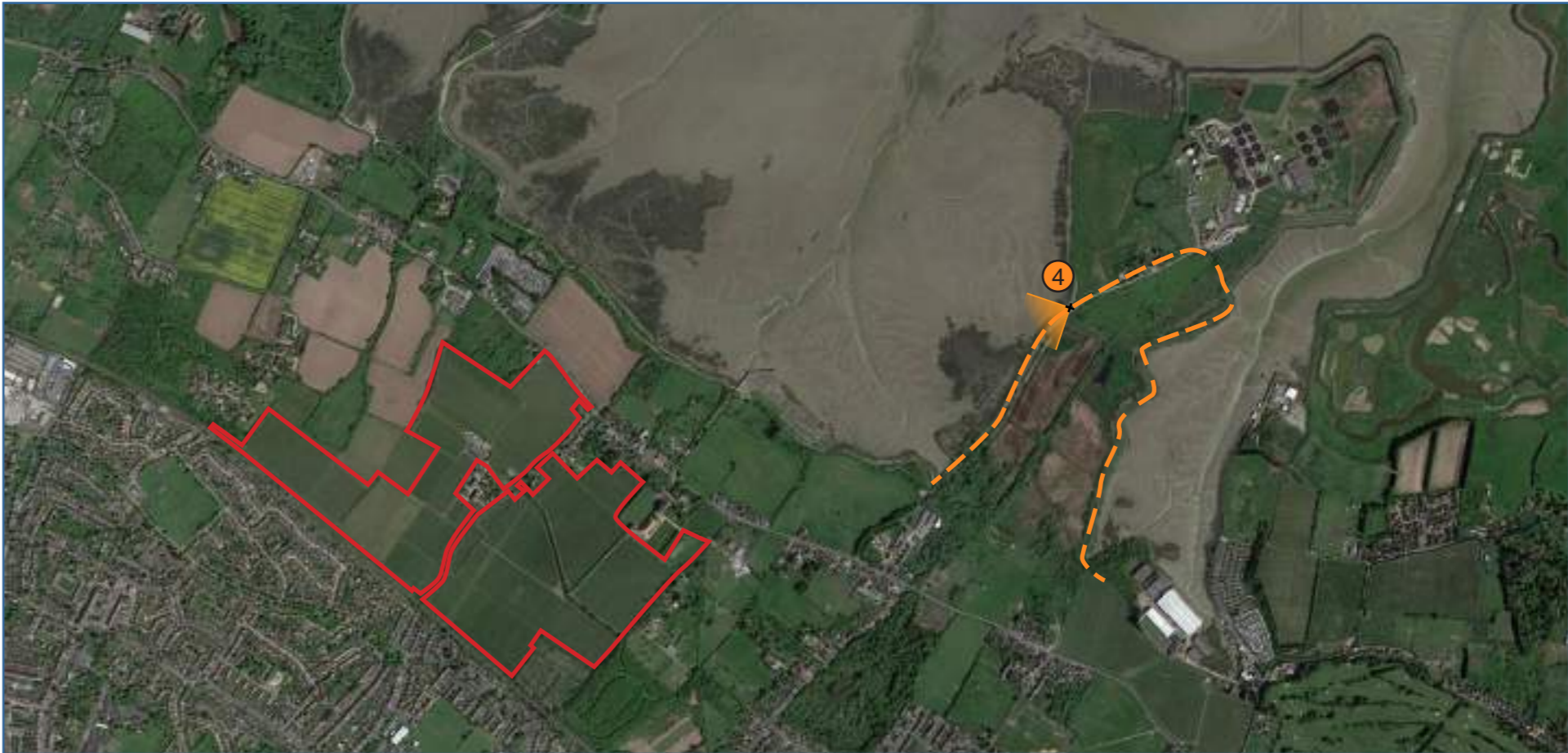
Visual Sensitivity

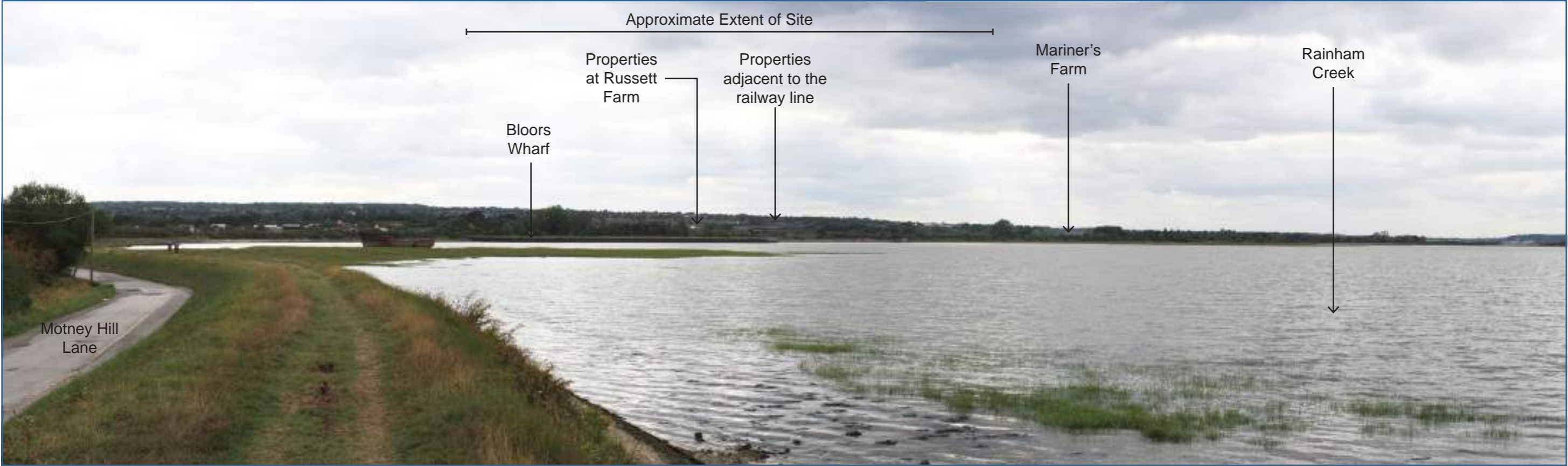
Value Attached to Views	Susceptibility to Change	Overall Sensitivity
<p>The Saxon Shore Way is a Long-Distance footpath that runs from Gravesend to Hastings.</p> <p>At a local level, the path lies adjacent to the Riverside Country Park and Motney Hill Nature Reserve and is easily accessible to the local community and visitors.</p> <p>The path is well used and includes information boards and vantage points from where people can stop and enjoy the views across the estuary.</p> <p>There is a High Value attached to views from the Saxon Shore Way across the Medway from Motney Hill.</p>	<p>Although this stretch of the footpath is not a recognised destination such as the Riverside Country Park of Motney Hill Nature Reserve, it links up with and forms part of local walks with views across the estuary.</p> <p>When looking towards the shoreline, the eastern site area sits beyond the trees and vegetation north of Lower Rainham.</p> <p>Land to the west of Pump Lane is viewed in context with and relation to existing development, including the linear edge formed by properties in Twydall along the railway line.</p> <p>Development within the site on the site would not introduce uncharacteristic or prominent new elements into the views and would be contained within a framework of mature trees, woodland and existing residential built form.</p> <p>Considering the above, on balance users of the Saxon Shore Way south of Motney Hill have a Medium Susceptibility to change associated with the proposed development.</p>	<p>Taking into account the value attached to views and susceptibility to change, users of the Saxon Shore Way south of Motney Hill have a Medium to High Visual Sensitivity to the proposed development.</p>

 Site Boundary

 Viewpoint

 Receptor: Users of Saxon Shore Way on Motney Hill





Photoviewpoint 4: Taken from Motney Hill.

Orientation: South West Distance from site: 1.3km

Users of the Saxon Shore Way

North of Lower Rainham

Description

- 5.70 There are expansive open views across the estuary of the River Medway to the north and northeast from the stretch of the Saxon Shore Way as it runs along the shoreline between Horrid Hill and Bloors Wharf. As shown on **Illustrative Viewpoint A**, the marshes and mudflats in the foreground are framed by the promontories of Horrid Hill and Motney Hill, with distant views towards the northern shore and Kingsnorth power station. There are a number of benches and viewing places along the route of the path, which is well used and connects with the Riverside Country Park and Motney Hill nature Reserve.
- 5.71 Inland views are limited by a belt of shrubs, tree planting and woodland that runs along the shoreline inland of the footpath, extending to enclose some localised stretches of the footpath, limiting outward views across the Medway (see **Illustrative Viewpoint B**).
- 5.72 There are glimpsed views between intervening trees and vegetation towards the roofs of houses and commercial buildings within Twydall on the rising land beyond the railway line. Views into the site are generally limited by woodland. An exception to this is a glimpsed view from the path north of Mariners Farm where the southwestern edge of the site is visible adjacent to the railway line, with houses beyond forming a backdrop. This is illustrated by **Viewpoint C**.
- 5.73 As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 5**, there are views to the south from an open stretch of the Saxon Shore Way west of Bloors Wharf across lower-lying paddocks towards properties at Lower Rainham. The houses are set within a well treed context, with a wooded skyline beyond. Beyond Lower Rainham to the southwest (right in the view), the roofs of properties on the edge of Twydall beyond the railway line are glimpsed between trees in the foreground, set beyond the site. Views into and across the site are extremely limited by trees in the foreground, with houses as a backdrop sitting below the wooded skyline in views from this location.

Visual Sensitivity

Value Attached to Views	Susceptibility to Change	Overall Sensitivity
<p>The Saxon Shore Way is a Long-Distance footpath that runs from Gravesend to Hastings.</p> <p>At a local level, the path lies adjacent to the Riverside Country Park and Motney Hill Nature Reserve and is easily accessible to the local community and visitors.</p> <p>The path is well used and includes benches and vantage points from where people can stop and enjoy the views across the estuary.</p> <p>There is a High Value attached to views from the Saxon Shore Way across the Medway north of Lower Rainham.</p>	<p>Views from the Saxon Way between the Riverside Country Park and Motney Hill are orientated across to look out across the Medway to the north and north.</p> <p>As illustrated on the accompanying photographs and aerial image, views inland towards the site are screened by intervening vegetation, trees and woodland.</p> <p>Where there are limited glimpsed views towards the site, these are limited to framed views towards the built edge of Twydall beyond the railway line.</p> <p>Residential development on the site would not introduce uncharacteristic features in glimpsed view. The wooded backdrop, overall composition and elements would remain.</p> <p>Users of the Saxon Shore Way in this location therefore have a Low Susceptibility to change associated with the proposed development.</p>	<p>Taking into account the value attached to views and susceptibility to change, users of the Saxon Shore Way north of Lower Rainham have a Medium Visual Sensitivity to the proposed development.</p>





Illustrative Viewpoint A:



Illustrative Viewpoint B:



Illustrative Viewpoint C:



Photoviewpoint 5: Taken from public footpath ref: Gillingham North/Rainham North GB1

Orientation: West Distance from site: 300m

Users of Lower Rainham Road

Approaching from the east: Junction with Lower Bloors Lane – Photoviewpoint 6

Description

5.74 From this location, commercial orchard trees are visible beyond hedgerow trees to the west of the junction with Lower Bloors Lane, with Bloors Place visible beyond. Properties fronting the road provide a developed, peri urban context. Views into the site are screened by the orchard planting and tall hedgerows bounding the lane and to internal field boundaries.

Approaching from the west: Opposite number 430 on site boundary – Photoviewpoint 7

Description

5.75 When approaching Lower Rainham from the west, there are views across arable fields and vegetation along the shoreline to the north (left of the view). The settlement is set beyond trees and woodland which bond a trackway to the shore. Street lighting, road signs, bollards and traffic lights at the entrance to Lower Rainham form a focal point at the junction with Pump Lane. Tall hedgerows along the roadside screen views into the site.

Junction with Pump Lane: Looking South – Photoviewpoint 8

Description

5.76 Views along Pump Lane are framed by the half-timbered listed Chapel House on the junction in the foreground, and properties on Pump Lane opposite. Tall hedgerows along Lower Rainham Road and Pump Lane limit views beyond the roadside into the site area.

Visual Sensitivity

Value Attached to Views	Susceptibility to Change	Overall Sensitivity
<p>Lower Rainham Road is a busy road connecting with the A128 bypass to the west. People travelling along the road will predominantly be using it as a means to travel from one place to another, as opposed to for amenity and enjoyment of the views as part of a leisure drive.</p> <p>Outward views across the landscape and estuary are limited by roadside hedgerows and vegetation along the shoreline.</p> <p>There is therefore a Low Value attached to views from Lower Rainham Road when passing the site and travelling within the Study Area.</p> <p>The value attached to views when travelling along Pump Lane are considered separately within this Assessment.</p>	<p>The focus of road user sis not upon views, reducing their susceptibility to change.</p> <p>However, as illustrated Photoviewpoint 6, 7 and 8, views into the site are screened by tall hedgerows to the roadside and intervening vegetation and trees to field boundaries. Development would be well screened if set back from the roadside beyond the existing hedges.</p> <p>The provision of a new site access off Lower Rainham Road would introduce additional engineered elements, signage and associated visual impacts.</p> <p>Users of Lower Rainham Road have a Medium Susceptibility to change associated with the proposed development.</p>	<p>Taking into account the value attached to views and susceptibility to change, users of Lower Rainham Road have a Medium Visual Sensitivity to the proposed development.</p> <p>This is primarily related to the potential for a new access to be provided off Lower Rainham Road. There is scope for development to be contained within a strong landscape framework that otherwise limits visual impacts on road users.</p>

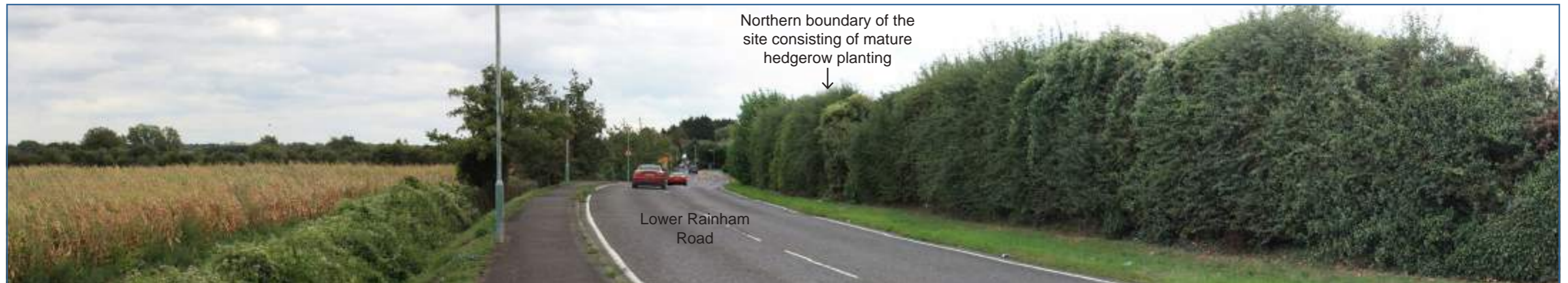


5 Visual Context



Photoviewpoint 6: Taken from Lower Rainham Road.

Orientation: West **Distance from site:** 110m



Photoviewpoint 7: Taken from Lower Rainham Road.

Orientation: South East **Distance from site:** 35m



Photoviewpoint 8: Taken from the junction of Pump Lane and Lower Rainham Road.

Orientation: South West **Distance from site:** 10m

Users of Lower Bloors Lane

Opposite entrance to Cherry Orchard Farm / end of Public Footpath GB6 – Photoviewpoint 9

5.77 From opposite Cherry Orchard Farm there are framed views into the site through a field gate towards areas of commercial orchard. Whilst Lower Bloor Lane is predominantly bound by tall hedgerows along most of its length, there are some sections such as in this location and adjacent to Public Footpath GB6 (see **Illustrative Viewpoint D**) where there are lower sections of hedgerow allowing views over and into the site. Given the banking of the land to the west of the lane, views into and across the site are generally extremely limited, even where there are views over the roadside hedgerows.

Opposite Bloors Lane Community Woodland and end of Public Footpath GB5 - Photoviewpoint 10

5.78 As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 10**, at this point the narrow lane is bound by dense hedgerows and trees to both sides, screening outward views and framing views along the alignment of the road. This is typical of the views along the lane, with tall hedgerows on the roadside banks providing strong enclosure.

Footbridge over Railway – Photoviewpoint 11

5.79 Trees and vegetation along the railway line limit any views out from the rail corridor at this point. Whilst deciduous trees in the foreground may allow filtered views towards the site in the winter months when the trees are out of leaf, the allotments are set beyond, and bounded by tall coniferous hedges and shelterbelts that will screen further views. Coniferous hedges run alongside the southern edge of the railway, limiting views into the site.



Illustrative Viewpoint D:

Visual Sensitivity

Value Attached to Views	Susceptibility to Change	Overall Sensitivity
<p>Lower Bloors Lane is a no-through road which accesses a number of individual properties, as well as public footpaths and the Community Woodland, with a footbridge over the railway.</p> <p>Users of the lane will therefore most likely be residents or people using the lane as part of a recreational route.</p> <p>Given the above, it is considered that there is a Medium Value attached to the visual amenity of users of Lower Bloors Lane.</p> <p>This judgement reflects the limited outward views balanced against the strong structure and character afforded by the hedges and hedgebanks.</p>	<p>The use of the lane as a route to access the community woodland and recreational paths increases the susceptibility of users to visual change.</p> <p>Given the containment of views along much of the lane by tall hedgerows and hedgebanks, changes associated with new accesses or development that requires the removal of hedgerows and reprofiling would have the potential to be visually intrusive.</p> <p>Users of Lower Bloors Lane therefore have a Medium Susceptibility to change associated with the proposed development.</p>	<p>Taking into account the value attached to views and susceptibility to change, users of Lower Bloors Lane have a Medium Visual Sensitivity to the proposed development.</p>

Site Boundary Viewpoints Illustrative Viewpoint Receptor: Users along Bloors Lane



5 Visual Context



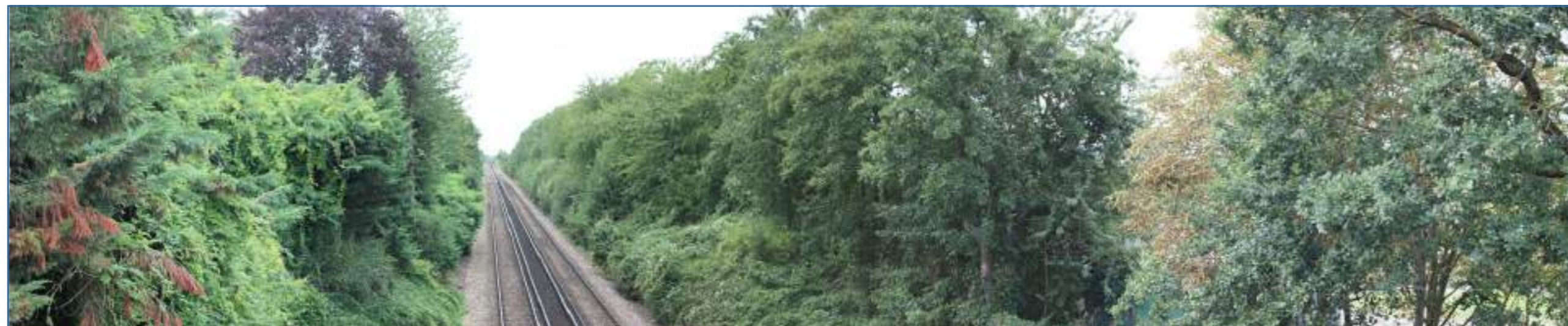
Photoviewpoint 9: Taken from Lower Bloors Lane.

Orientation: West **Distance from site:** 10m



Photoviewpoint 10: Taken from Lower Bloors Lane adjacent to the start of public footpath ref: Rainham North GB6.

Orientation: South West **Distance from site:** 5m



Photoviewpoint 11: Taken from the footbridge over the railway line.

Orientation: North West **Distance from site:** 160m

Users of Lower Twydall Lane

At junction with Grange Road – Photoviewpoint 12

Description

- 5.80 As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 12**, when the fields to the east of Lower Twydall Lane are being cropped with maize, there are no views towards the site from this location. Outward views from along the lane to the north of this location are screened by tall roadside hedges.
- 5.81 Even during the winter months when the fields have been cultivated, views towards the site are filtered by hedgerows and trees to field boundaries and those along the trackway and former chalk pits east of Manor Court. This is illustrated by View 6 within the Lloyd Bore LVIA (January 2019) prepared to support the planning application, with heavily filtered views towards properties at Russet Farm visible between intervening vegetation.

Footbridge over Railway – Photoviewpoint 13

Description

- 5.82 In elevated views from the footbridge over the railway line south of Lower Twydall fields within the western site area are visible beyond trees and vegetation that runs alongside the railway. As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 13**, in the summer months when trees and hedgerows are in leaf views into and across the site are filtered. As shown in View 1 within the Lloyd Bore LVIA (January 2019), in the winter when there a no leaves and the trackside vegetation has been cut there more open views across the site from the footbridge.
- 5.83 Trees bounding the railway and surrounding properties at Lower Twydall to the north of the railway screen views of neighbouring properties, although there are framed views between the trees towards the Medway in the distance. To the south, the gardens of properties on Kingsnorth Road back onto the railway, with the houses beyond forming a developed backdrop.
- 5.84 When looking across the site beyond the railway line, there are views across the fields within the site towards properties at Russet Farm and Pump Farm off Pump Lane. The tall hedgerows bounding Pump Lane cross the view beyond these buildings, combining with the treed backdrop formed by trees and hedgerows defining fields within the site and along the bridleway to the east, as well as surrounding Lower Rainham beyond.

Visual Sensitivity

Value Attached to Views	Susceptibility to Change	Overall Sensitivity
<p>The footbridge provides a link between Lower Twydall and the urban area of Twydall to the south.</p> <p>Give the limited number of properties north of the railway, Lower Twydall Lane is most likely used to access the shoreline and country park for recreational purposes.</p> <p>Outward views from the lane are limited and there are no recognised views or recreation routes along it.</p> <p>Given the above, it is considered that there is a Medium Value attached to the visual amenity of users of the footbridge and Lower Twydall Lane.</p>	<p>Lower Twydall Lane is not a recreational route, with limited views across the wider landscape. Views from Lower Twydall Lane across the site are limited by the tall hedgerows, with glimpsed views through gateways filtered by intervening vegetation to field boundaries.</p> <p>The view from the footbridge is framed by vegetation and properties alongside the tracks, with views across the site being oblique and fleeting.</p> <p>Opportunities exist for buffer planting along the railway line, setting back development and limiting heights to minimise affects on these views. Considering the above factors, users of the footbridge on Lower Twydall Lane have a Medium Susceptibility to change associated with the proposed development.</p>	<p>Taking into account the value attached to views and susceptibility to change, users of Lower Twydall Lane when crossing the footbridge have a Medium Visual Sensitivity to the proposed development.</p> <p>Given the limited outward visibility, users of the lane otherwise have a Low Sensitivity.</p>





Photoviewpoint 12: Taken from Lower Twydall Lane.

Orientation: South East Distance from site: 330m



Photoviewpoint 13: Taken from the footbridge over the railway line.

Orientation: East Distance from site: 25m

Users of Bridleway GB6A

Description


- 5.85 Bridleway GB6A crosses the eastern site area, running from Lower Bloors Lane at the south-eastern site boundary to Pump Lane, opposite Pump Farm. The path is bound by tall coniferous hedgerows along most of its length, limiting outward views. This is shown in **Illustrative Viewpoint E**.
- 5.86 Where the bridleway meets the intersection of gateways to two fields, views open up across the commercial orchards to the southwest (**Photoviewpoint 14a**) and northeast (**Photoviewpoint 14b**). In summer views when the orchard trees are in leaf views across the field to the site boundaries are screened. There are views beyond the fruit trees to a wooded backdrop formed by trees bounding the allotments to the south and bounding Bloors Place to the north. The orchard trees are planted in regularly space, regimented rows across the fields, with a strong linear and vertical pattern within these framed views from the bridleway.
- 5.87 As illustrated by View 2 in the Lloyd Bore LVIA (January 2019) prepared to support the planning application in the winter months there are more open views across the fields. In views to the south, properties at Beechings Way beyond the railway line are visible as a backdrop to the site. Properties at Pump Farm and Russett Farm are visible beyond the hedgerows along Pump Lane.
- 5.88 Approximately 200 metres east of Pump Lane, there is an open section of hedgerow to the southern site of the bridleway with views across the commercial orchard to properties at Russett Farm. During the summer months the densely planted rows of trees screen views across the field towards Pump Lane or the houses, with the roofs on the skyline. This glimpsed view is illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 15**.





Illustrative Viewpoint E:


Visual Sensitivity

Value Attached to Views	Susceptibility to Change	Overall Sensitivity
<p>Whilst users of the bridleway will be using the path as part of a recreational route, there are limited outward views.</p> <p>The bridleway offers limited connectivity between population centres and destinations, although it does link with Bloors Lane Community Woodland and rights of way to the southeast.</p> <p>Outward views from the bridleway are limited to those glimpsed across commercial orchards, coniferous hedgerows and residential development and commercial orchards with no outward views across the wider landscape.</p> <p>Considering the above factors, the there is a Medium Value attached to the visual amenity of users of the bridleway as it passes through the site.</p> <p>This judgement recognises that the bridleway may form part of a wider recreational route.</p>	<p>Given the limited views from the bridleway and its enclosure by coniferous hedgerows and tree belts, users of the path are of a lower susceptibility to visual change.</p> <p>However, given the fact that the bridleway runs through the site, users will still have a Medium to High Susceptibility to change associated with the proposed development.</p> <p>There may be opportunities to open-up the bridleway within the proposals to allow for integration within areas of Green Infrastructure and open space.</p>	<p>Taking into account the limited value attached to views and enclosed nature of the bridleway, users have a Medium Visual Sensitivity to the proposed development.</p>

 Site Boundary

 Viewpoints

 Illustrative Viewpoint

 Users of Bridleway GB6A





Photoviewpoint 14a: Taken from bridleway ref: Rainham North GB6A within the site. **Orientation:** West **Distance from site:** 0m



Photoviewpoint 14b: Taken from bridleway ref: Rainham North GB6A within the site. **Orientation:** East **Distance from site:** 0m



Photoviewpoint 15: Taken from bridleway ref: Rainham North GB6A within the site. **Orientation:** West **Distance from site:** 0m

Users of Pump Lane

Description

- 5.89 As is characteristic of the lanes within the local area, Pump Lane is bound by tall hedgerows, limiting outward views. As illustrated and described in relation to users of Lower Rainham Road (**Photoviewpoint 8**), there are houses on the southeaster side of the lane with hedgerows opposite screening views into the site.
- 5.90 Towards the centre of the site area, there are several properties clustered around Pump Farm. These include Pump Farmhouse and development at Russetss Farm in the character of barns and traditional agricultural buildings laid out in the form of a farmyard. The buildings and courtyard areas contrast with the narrow enclosed lane, opening up views and creating a focal point based around residential properties. This is shown by **Illustrative Viewpoint F** looking south along the opposite properties at Russet Farm.
- 5.91 There are glimpsed views through gateways into the commercial orchards that are accessed off the lane. The above is illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 16** taken from next to Pump Farm, looking south.
- 5.92 To the south of Pump Farm, the lane is bound by hedgerows leading up to the railway line on the edge of Twydall, with views across the site limited to those from a gateway and section of low hedgerow where there are views of the commercial orchards and rooflines of properties at Russett Farm. This is illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 17**, looking north along the lane.
- 5.93 As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 18** south of the railway line, the railway embankment and trackside vegetation screen views into the site from Pump Lane where it becomes a residential street on the edge of Twydall.



Illustrative Viewpoint F:

Land off Pump Lane, Lower Rainham
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
13374/R01e/RH/28th September 2020

Visual Sensitivity

Value Attached to Views	Susceptibility to Change	Overall Sensitivity
<p>There is no pedestrian footway along Pump Lane. The majority of users will be travelling in vehicles, as opposed to people using the lane as a recreational walking route.</p> <p>The lane is designated within the Local Plan as a Rural Lane which seeks to preserve the landscape and amenity value of the lane. This recognises the value placed by road users in relation to character and visual amenity.</p> <p>Given the enclosure of the lane by tall hedgerows and built form, the visual experience is limited to that of the lane itself and not views across the wider landscape.</p> <p>Considering the above factors, there is a Medium Value attached to the visual amenity of users of Pump Lane as it passes through the site.</p>	<p>Motorists using Pump Lane will not be focussed on views but on the road.</p> <p>As views from along the lane are limited by the tall hedgerows and properties scattered along it, views of development within the wider site area would be limited to those glimpsed through gateways.</p> <p>Development adjacent to the and / or fronting onto the lane would result in noticeable change.</p> <p>Users of Pump Lane will have a Medium Susceptibility to change associated with the proposed development.</p>	<p>Taking into account the limited value attached to views and enclosed nature of the bridleway, users have a Medium Visual Sensitivity to the proposed development.</p>

Site Boundary Viewpoints Illustrative Viewpoint Receptor: Users of Pump Lane



5 Visual Context



Photoviewpoint 16: Taken from Pump Lane adjacent to Pump Farm.

Orientation: South West **Distance from site:** 5m



Photoviewpoint 17: Taken from Pump Lane adjacent to Pump Farm.

Orientation: North East **Distance from site:** 5m



Photoviewpoint 18: From Pump Lane south of the railway line.

Orientation: North East **Distance from site:** 100m

Residents of properties adjacent to and overlooking the site

Residents of Lower Twydall south of the railway

Description

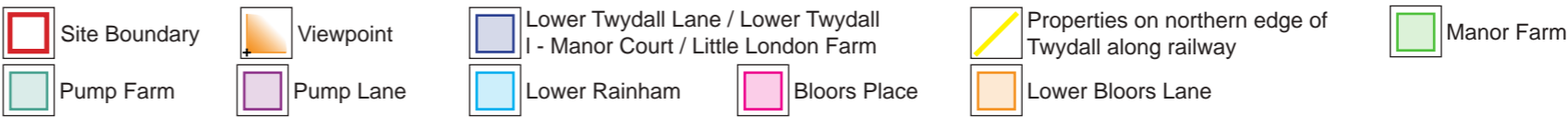
- 5.94 Views towards the site obtained from properties on the edge of Twydall adjacent to the railway to the south vary along the length of the site boundary. As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 11** from the footbridge on Lower Bloors Lane, views from properties on Beechings Way and street to the east of Pump Lane are predominantly screened by tall trees and coniferous hedgerows.
- 5.95 To the west of Pump Lane, boundaries to gardens tend to be lower, formed by close board fences and hedgerows with some lines of trees alongside the railway line. As illustrated by **Photoviewpoint 19** taken from Gifford Close, from these properties there are views of hedgerows bounding the site to the north beyond fencing, shrubs and tree to residential street and private gardens. Views into and across the site in the summer months are screened from ground level, although there may be views across the site towards the Medway from first floor windows.
- 5.96 Views from properties adjacent to and with views over the site are considered below, along with an assessment of the visual sensitivity of residents to the proposed development. This has been based upon a review of aerial imagery and observations from fieldwork, as the site work and assessment has been undertaken from within the public realm. No properties were visited a part of this LVIA.
- 5.97 As set-out overleaf, residents are considered to place a **High Value** on views from their properties.
- 5.98 The susceptibility to changes associated with the proposed development may depend on several factors, including distance from the site, intervening vegetation, enclosure of views by boundary vegetation and orientation of properties sin relation to the site.

Residents of Properties on Pump Lane

- 5.99 Properties on Pump Lane, including those at Russett Farm have views onto the lane, as well as views from private gardens over the site. Some properties do not have fencing or hedges to the gardens, with views into the orchard fields.
- 5.100 Considering the proximity to the development and views across the site, residents of properties on Pump Lane are considered to have a **High Susceptibility** to change and are therefore of a **High Visual Sensitivity** to the proposed development.

Visual Sensitivity

Value Attached to Views	Susceptibility to Change	Overall Sensitivity
Residents value views from their properties as part of their visual amenity. This includes views from within habitable rooms, gardens and as experienced on a day to day basis when at home. Residents attach a High Value to views from their properties and visual amenity.	Views from properties are experienced on a day-to-day basis. Views across the site from properties alongside the railway are set back from the site, with intervening vegetation filtering outward views. Fences and trees to screen views from within private gardens. There are opportunities to provide additional buffer planting to the site boundaries, set back development and limit the height of the proposed development to minimise visual impacts on residents. Residents of properties alongside the railway overlooking the site are therefore of a Medium Susceptibility to change associated with the proposed development.	Taking into account the value placed on views from properties, these residents have a Medium Visual Sensitivity to the proposed development.



5 Visual Context

Residents of Properties on Lower Bloors Lane

5.101 Those properties fronting onto Lower Bloors Lane directly overlook the site boundary and are therefore of a **High Susceptibility** and **High Visual Sensitivity** to change associated with the development.

5.102 Properties north of the community woodland are set back from the lane with trees and hedgerows screening views. Residents of these properties will be of a **Medium Visual Sensitivity** to the proposed development.

Residents of Properties at Lower Rainham

5.103 Properties at Lower Rainham that back onto the site, including Bloors Place are bound by mature vegetation, including tall coniferous hedges and orchards outside the site boundary. For these properties, the susceptibility to visual change is lower due to screening of views. However, there are some properties that have smaller gardens with less vegetation and post and rail fences to rear gardens that back onto the orchard fields within the site. Residents of these properties will have a **High Susceptibility** to visual change.

5.104 On balance, given the proximity of properties on the southern edge of Lower Rainham that bound the site, residents are of a **High Visual Sensitivity** to the proposed development.

Residents of Properties at Lower Twydall

5.105 Properties on the eastern edge of Lower Twydall are set beyond substantial tree and hedgerow planting to the site boundaries and within the adjacent landscape, including field boundary hedgerows and vegetation surrounding the former chalk pits. This vegetation will screen views into the site, with a resulting **Medium Susceptibility** to visual change and a **Medium Visual Sensitivity** to the proposed development.

Residents of Properties on Lower Rainham Road to the north

5.106 Properties on the eastern edge of Lower Twydall are set within a strong framework of trees, hedgerows and tree belts that provide visual containment. This vegetation will screen views into the site, with a resulting **Medium Susceptibility** to visual change and a **Medium Visual Sensitivity** to the proposed development.



Photoviewpoint 19: Taken from Gifford Close, south of the railway.

Orientation: North East Distance from site: 15m

5 Visual Context

Views from within the built area of Twydall

Description

5.107 Views from the following locations within the built area of Twydall have been included within this assessment to establish the nature of views towards the site from within the urban area situated on the higher ground that rises to the south:

From Pump Lane at junction with Aylward Way: Photoviewpoint 20

From Milstead Road at the junction with Petham Green: Photoviewpoint 21

From Beechings Way overlooking the Beechings Playing Fields: Photoviewpoint 22

5.108 As illustrated in all of these views, whilst there are framed views along streets and between buildings towards the Medway, views into and across the site are screened by built development and vegetation along Beechings Way that runs along the railway line, blocking views beyond.

5.109 Provided that development on the site is of an appropriate scale and height to reflect that of the properties within Twydall, there will be no appreciable visual changes experienced from within the built up area away from those properties to the north of the settlement edge that overlook or have glimpsed views across the railway line.



Photoviewpoint 20: Taken from the junction of Pump Lane and Aylward Way.

Orientation: North East **Distance from site:** 300m



Photoviewpoint 21: Taken from the junction of Milsted Road and Petham Green.

Orientation: North East **Distance from site:** 470m



Photoviewpoint 22: Taken from Beechings Way adjacent to Beechings Playing Fields.

Orientation: North East **Distance from site:** 305m

Landscape Design Principles and Mitigation

- 6.1 The proposals have been developed to ensure that the development responds to the landscape and visual context and incorporates appropriate mitigation measures.

Planning Submission

- 6.2 Details of the design principles, landscape principles and landscape strategy for the submitted planning application are set out in the Design and Access Statement (DAS) prepared by PRC Architecture & Planning (February 2019).

Design Principles

- 6.3 Design Principles as set-out in the DAS include the following that relate to the landscape, character and visual impacts of the proposals. These are set -out at Section 5 of the DAS:
- Create a village character to the development, with a village green in the middle of the site adjacent to existing development on Pump Lane;
 - Incorporate the historic orchard use in the area within parts of the structural landscaping;
 - Maintain and enhance the existing landscape structure at the edges of the site along the lanes and integrate with the surrounding open countryside, with significant areas of open space around the perimeter of the site;
 - Outward facing development facing the perimeter open space and public walking areas to provide a distinct rural edge;
 - Setting back development from existing properties to allow them to retain their current identity;
 - Retain the existing bridleway and extending across the site to link across the site and to connect with existing footpaths;
 - Enhancing connectivity through creating a pedestrian link to Lower Twydall Lane, a countryside walk around the perimeter of the site and pedestrian link to Lower Rainham Road;
 - Provision of two equipped play areas along the bridleway and main pedestrian connecting routes;
 - Creation of swales around the perimeter of the site along the perimeter walkway, with two permanently wet ponds within the village green and an educational pond at the edge of the

school playing fields;

- Creation of substantial landscape structure at edge of the loop road with glimpsed of development through structural planting; and
- Have an architectural finish and style that complements the natural surroundings and surrounding communities.

Character Areas

- 6.4 The DAS also identifies several Character Areas within the development, including the following:

- Village Heart – incorporating a village green
- Loop Road and landscape belt
- Interface with countryside
- Rail Edge
- Perimeter Housing
- Orchard Approach

- 6.5 Illustrative sections and descriptions of these are included in the DAS at Section 6.

Landscape Strategy

- 6.6 Details of the Landscape Strategy, as informed by Lloyd Bore include the following key principles. These are set out in Section 6 of the DAS:

1. Provide additional landscape screening and separation for the existing residential properties in addition to the high hedgerows and trees;
2. Provide a structural landscape around the perimeter of the development and loop road to allow development to blend with the landscape; and
3. Provide significant areas of open space for recreation for existing and new residents incorporating swales and ponds as part of the Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS).

- 6.7 Principle Characteristics of the landscape strategy set out in the DAS also include the following:

- Respect existing pattern of orchards and shelter belts by retaining and reinforcing these features to form:
 - Landscape buffer zones and strong vegetated edges within the development and to site boundaries;
 - Green routes through the development, framing outward views and softening views of development areas from within areas of open space and Green Infrastructure;
 - Green Infrastructure and open spaces to provide recreation and access opportunities for new and existing residents.
- Integrating characteristic features into the fabric of the development, including small blocks of woodland, orchards and areas of meadow grassland
- Siting of development, roads and Green Infrastructure to allow views out from the site across the estuary to the north.

- 6.8 The above principles and characteristics were integrated into the development and are illustrated on the Landscape Strategy drawing prepared by Lloyd Bore and included in both the DAS and LVIA prepared by Lloyd Bore to support the planning application.

Revised Masterplan Parameters: Updated Landscape Framework

- 6.9 Since the submission of the planning application, the parameters and illustrative masterplan have been amended to provide increased set-backs and buffers to the conservation areas and listed buildings at Lower Twydall and Lower Rainham. This has responded to advice received from the Heritage Consultants at Pegasus Group.
- 6.10 In addition to responding to heritage sensitivities,. The inclusion of these additional areas also provide increased landscape buffers that enable the proposals to respect the setting of Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall, the visual amenity of residents and provide greater areas of Green Infrastructure, including recreation areas.
- 6.11 Tyler Grange have prepared an updated **Landscape Framework** plan that fits within the revised parameters to include the increased buffer areas. The framework builds on the previous submission and includes details of the following principles. These reflect and reinforce the principles and characteristics set out above and

6 Proposed Development

included for the previously submitted landscape strategy and masterplan.

6.12 These principles have been taken into consideration when assessing the susceptibility and sensitivity of the landscape to the proposed development:

- Retaining hedgebanks and hedgerows along Pump Lane and Lower Bloors Lane to respect their character;
- Planting of community orchards incorporating traditional varieties of fruit trees and set within areas managed as grassland and wildflower meadows to reflect the historic orchards within the Kentish fruit belt;
- Orchards to be situated within areas of green space alongside Pump Lane and around the buildings at Pump Farm and Russett Farm, along with open spaces and a village green to provide setting to Pump Lane and the farm buildings / properties and reflect the agricultural heritage and character;
- Areas of open space incorporating native hedgerows, trees and woodland planting to provide separation and buffers to the conservation areas at Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall. The location of school sports pitches and gardens and grounds to the proposed care home will further provide an open, undeveloped aspect and buffer to properties within Lower Rainham and the conservation area;
- Strengthening of existing hedgerows to site boundaries with Lower Rainham Road, and provision of landscape buffers to incorporate tree belts and green corridors with recreation routes, foot cycleways and SuDS;
- Creation of improved connections through areas of Green Infrastructure and open space within the site to community orchards, sport provision, village green and local centre as well as through to the Riverside Country Park and Saxon Shore Way and nature reserves to the east;
- Opportunities for habitat creation and enhancements for wildlife within areas of green infrastructure;
- Planting of a landscape buffer alongside the railway line to soften views of development from overlooking properties and train users. The planting of tree belts along the southwestern boundary will also serve to soften the built edge of Twydall, tying-in with existing woodland and reinforcing the wooded backdrop in wider views;
- Setting back development from Lower Bloors Lane and strengthening / reinforcement of hedgerows with native tree and hedgerow planting to respect and preserve the character of the lane;
- Reinforcing existing field boundaries to the northwest to strengthen landscape structure, provide connectivity with shelterbelts and woodland and provide a soft edge and transition to the development;
- Limiting the height of development to respect the existing built form and ensure the character of the vegetated shoreline is retained;
- Incorporation of green infrastructure throughout the development containing foot and cycle links and linear green spaces with space for planting of trees, orchards and areas of both amenity grass and meadow grassland. There are opportunities to provide a range of play and sports provision within these spaces; and
- Strategic landscape buffer planting incorporating trees and woodland, as well as linear green spaces throughout the development and tree planting to streets will break up the built form and provide a soft green backdrop when the site is viewed from the estuary to the north. This will also serve to soften the form of the existing urban area on the edge of Twydall in these views.

Plan 10: Landscape Framework (13374/P11a)



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Summary

Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA

- 7.1 As detailed in the assessment tables below, the proposals have been assessed as resulting in **Moderate Adverse** landscape effects at the Local Landscape Character Area scale for the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA. This reflects the extent of the site within this LLCA and degree of change associated with the removal of the commercial orchards and construction of the proposed residential development.

Site-Wide Effects

- 7.2 The assessment has also identified that the effects at a site-wide level will also be **Moderate Adverse**. The containment of the site by existing development and woodland, shelterbelts / tree belts and tall hedgerows limit the influence that development will have upon the wider landscape. The strategic landscape buffers and associated planting proposed on the site boundaries will further contain and enclose the site, limiting any effects on landscape receptors and character areas beyond the site.
- 7.3 The assessment has also identified the likely effects on a number of landscape receptors within and bounding the site, taking into account embedded mitigation. These have identified **Moderate Adverse** effects for the Orchards, setting to Lower Rainham and character of Pump Lane, feeding into the overall site-wide assessment.

Indirect Effects: Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA

- 7.4 In addition to the effects on the site area and associated features, the assessment has also considered indirect effects on other landscapes within the Study Area, including the Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA and Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA that have been identified by the site-specific landscape character assessment undertaken by Tyler Grange as part of this LVIA.
- 7.5 Although these LLCAs are separated from the site by Lower Rainham Road, settlement and the belt of woodland and tree planting along the shoreline, land on the upper slopes to the southwest of the site is visible from vantage points on the shoreline from Horrid Hill (Riverside Country Park) and Motney Hill (Saxon Shore Way). As recognised within the Local Plan, the green backdrop to views from the estuary is a feature of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI, within which the site is situated. In this respect

the backdrop to the estuary is one of the perceptual aspects and part of the scenic quality of the Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA.

- 7.6 As recognised by the site-specific landscape character assessment, the vegetation along the shoreline within this LLCA makes a high contribution to the green backdrop to the estuary. The proposed development will not impact on this.
- 7.7 The tree planting associated with the proposed development will, upon maturation provide a green canopy that will soften and break up development both on the site and within the built area of Twydall on the rising land to the south. There will therefore be a residual **Localised, Indirect Minor Adverse Effect** on the Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park associated with the proposed development.

Landscape Effects Within the Study Area

Settlement Pattern

- 7.8 The site is situated within a peri urban context with the urban form of Twydall and Rainham impacting upon the character of the landscape across the Study Area. This is especially true of the site, which lies adjacent to the edge of Twydall alongside the railway line. As summarised above, the residential edge of Twydall and wider built area at Gillingham including commercial and retail development forms a developed backdrop in views from the shoreline and estuary. This is illustrated in the Photoviewpoints and described in detail in relation to the Visual Context within this LVIA (Section 5).
- 7.9 The settlement pattern in the area includes development that lies in proximity to the shoreline, including the edge of Gillingham to the northwest. In proximity to the site, land at Rainham to the east extends north beyond the railway line up to Lower Rainham Road, south of Motney Hill. Houses and commercial / light industrial units extend north of Lower Rainham Road on Motney Hill Road, on land adjacent to a nature reserve and in proximity to the Saxon Shore Way.
- 7.10 Within the wider Study Area, the proposed development would not be inconsistent with the pattern and extent of development.

Access and Recreation

- 7.11 As recognised within the Medway Landscape Character Assessment, the Medway Fruit Belt Landscape Character Area has poor east-west connectivity and access to the recreation

facilities and landscape of the Riverside Country Park and Saxon Shore Way. The site in particular has poor access and does not provide connections from the wider urban area to existing amenities, including nature reserves, community woodland and the wider Public Right of Way network.

- 7.12 The proposals offer the opportunity to greatly improve public access across the area, as well as the provision of attractive areas of green space including community orchards, recreation walks, equipped play areas, a village green and informal green spaces.

7 Landscape Effects

Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA

Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Medium	<p>Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years)</p> <p>The landscape impacts during the construction phase will introduce uncharacteristic elements into the landscape and be largely limited to those upon the site itself.</p> <p>Off-site impacts will include the construction of new site accesses off Lower Rainham Road and Pump Lane and work relating to the carriageways. There will also be some localised impacts associated with construction traffic.</p> <p>At a localised level, the construction works will also impact upon the character of Pump Lane and Lower Bloors Lane and result in the temporary closure of Bridleway GB6A.</p> <p>The implementation of areas of open space, drainage and the school playing fields and care home will temporarily affect the immediate setting of Lower Rainham whilst the buffer areas, grounds and sports pitches are being implemented.</p> <p>Outside the site area within the wider LLCA, the existing features will remain unaffected, including field boundaries and arable land use to the northwest.</p> <p>There will be no direct impacts upon adjacent areas associated with the construction phase, although noise and movement will have the potential to affect tranquillity. This may affect local residents and users of the Bloors Lane community woodland and local footpaths.</p> <p>The construction activities on the site will also affect the perceptual aspect and scenic qualities of the LLCA as part of the wider green backdrop in views from the estuary (Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA). However, the woodland and shelterbelts within the LLCA adjacent to the site will limit the extent of works that will be discernible beyond the site area within the adjacent landscape.</p> <p>Taking the above factors into account, the construction activities will result in a temporary medium / high magnitude of change when assessed for the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA.</p>	<p>The construction activities associated with the implementation of infrastructure, development of the houses and establishment of areas of green infrastructure and open space will result in Temporary Moderate / Major Adverse Effects at the LLCA scale.</p> <p>The construction works will introduce uncharacteristic elements into the local landscape, with the development changing the land use and character of the site area.</p>
	<p>At Completion - Effects Incorporating Mitigation</p> <p>The completed development will result in the loss of commercial orchards across much of the central part of the LLCA between Lower Twydall Lane and Lower Bloors Lane and replacement with residential development. This will change the character of the landscape, albeit that LLCA situated within a peri urban context and is influenced by adjacent development at Twydall and Gillingham as well as the busy road network and railway.</p> <p>Areas of remnant historic orchards and those planted in a traditional style are present scattered throughout the LLCA including to the north of the site off Lower Rainham Road and associated with properties to the southeast on Lower Bloors Lane. The proposals would not remove characteristic areas of traditional orchards from the local landscape within the fruit belt.</p> <p>The proposals provide substantial new areas of traditional orchards within areas of open space alongside Pump Lane and adjacent to Pump Farm and Russett Farm. Existing hedgerows and shelterbelts bounding the site and bridleway are to be retained, with the development fitting within the existing field pattern and landscape structure.</p> <p>Given the containment of the site area within the wider LLCA by woodland and tree belts along Lower Bloors Lane and associated with Lower Twydall and the former chalk pit, the influence of the proposals upon the wider LLCA will be limited.</p> <p>Wider impacts upon the perceptual aspects and scenic quality of the landscape include views of the proposals as part of the backdrop to the estuary as experienced from the shoreline. When viewed from the shoreline the proposals will be set amongst the developed edge and built form of Twydall and Rainham as well as properties at Lower Rainham and Mariners Farm combined with woodland, shelterbelts and trees along the shoreline and within the LLCA.</p> <p>As recognised by both the Medway Landscape Character Assessment and the site-specific assessment undertaken by Tyler Grange, there is poor accessibility within the LLCA and a lack of connectivity east-west. The proposals incorporate new routes through areas of green infrastructure, linking with the village green, community orchards and areas of amenity green space. The proposals will provide for greater connectivity with existing recreational assets within the LLCA including Bloors Lane Community Woodland, as well as improved access for pedestrians and cyclists across the site towards the shoreline and Riverside Country Park.</p> <p>Given the above factors, upon completion the proposals will give rise to a medium magnitude of change when assessed for the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA.</p>	<p>Beyond Lower Bloor Lane and Lower Twydall Lane the character of the LLCA will remain unaffected.</p> <p>The proposals are situated within a peri urban landscape that is strongly influenced by the adjacent urban areas and transport infrastructure (roads and railway).</p> <p>Despite these factors, given the nature of change and the scale of the development, upon completion the proposals will give rise to Moderate Adverse Effects upon the character of the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA.</p> <p>Whilst the proposals incorporate a range of embedded landscape mitigation measures, including landscape buffers, tree planting and implementation of new areas of community orchards and village green, the planting will take time to mature and become effective.</p>

Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Medium	<p>Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation Planting</p> <p>With the maturation of the strategic landscape planting and trees within open spaces and along streets, the development will be better assimilated into the landscape.</p> <p>The establishment of the community orchards within areas of publicly accessible open space running through the area along Pump Lane will reflect the traditional and historic character of the fruit belt.</p> <p>Tree belts and hedgerows to the site boundaries will strengthen the fragmented hedgerows that bound the site, tying-in with the areas of stronger, established mature trees and vegetation adjacent to the site on the edge of Lower Twydall, surrounding the former chalk pit and containing the areas of remnant traditional orchards alongside Lower Rainham Road to the north of the site.</p> <p>The resulting strong framework of tree belts along field boundaries will contain the development within the wider landscape within the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA</p> <p>In addition to the planting to site boundaries, trees within areas of open space and along primary streets throughout the development will add to the green canopy and wooded / treed backdrop that is characteristic of the LLCA when experienced from the estuary to the north. The strategic tree planting surrounding the site and throughout the development will also serve to break up the uniform rooflines and development edges at Twydall and Rainham that define the LLCA to the south, east and west.</p>	<p>Upon maturation of the strategic landscape mitigation planting, the proposed development will result in Permanent Moderate Adverse Effects upon the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA</p> <p>Despite the embedded mitigation measures within the proposals, given the scale of the development in relation to the LLCA and resulting loss of agricultural land, the overall effects upon the LLCA will remain as Moderate Adverse.</p> <p>Details of the residual effects associated with individual site features as landscape receptors are set out below in the assessment of effects on the Site Area.</p>

7 Landscape Effects

Site Area and Site Features

Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Medium	<p>Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years)</p> <p>The construction activities will introduce uncharacteristic elements across the site area. Works will include groundworks and removal of existing orchard trees, provision of a site office, compounds and storage areas, construction of new homes and buildings, implementation of road infrastructure, green infrastructure, SUDs and landscape buffer planting.</p> <p>Off-site impacts will include the construction of new site accesses off Lower Rainham Road and Pump Lane and work relating to the carriageways. There will also be some localised impacts associated with construction traffic.</p> <p>At a localised level, the construction works will also impact upon the character of Pump Lane and Lower Bloors Lane and result in the temporary closure of Bridleway GB6A.</p> <p>The implementation of areas of open space, drainage and the school playing fields and care home will temporarily affect the immediate setting of Lower Rainham whilst the buffer areas, grounds and sports pitches are being implemented.</p> <p>There will be no direct impacts upon adjacent areas associated with the construction phase, although noise and movement will have the potential to affect tranquillity. This may affect local residents and users of the Bloors Lane community woodland and local footpaths.</p> <p>The construction activities on the site will also affect the perceptual aspect and scenic qualities of the upper slopes within the site part of the wider green backdrop in views from the estuary (Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA).</p> <p>Taking the above factors into account, the construction activities will result in a localised, temporary and high magnitude of change to the landscape across the site area.</p> <p>At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation</p> <p>The completed development will result in a change from undeveloped land managed as commercial orchards to a new neighbourhood accessed off Lower Rainham Road and Pump Lane with associated village centre, school, care home, community orchards, village green and structural landscaping.</p> <p>Upon completion, the mitigation planting will not have fully matured. The character of the central spaces including the community orchards, village green and linear green space will have yet to establish, although the provision of spaces and network of green infrastructure throughout the site will provide a sense of place that relates to the local character.</p> <p>The setting back of development from the settlements at Lower Twydall and Lower Rainham with landscape buffers will provide an attractive open setting including trees, hedgerows, ponds and areas maintained as natural green space.</p> <p>The character of Lower Bloors Lane will be retained, with planting and gapping up of hedgerows and trees serving to strengthen the boundaries.</p> <p>Upon completion, the retained lengths of hedgerow bounding Pump Lane and associated new planting, along with community orchard will reflect the existing character, although new access roads and frontage to the village centre will introduce breaks in the hedgerow, with views into the site and residential development.</p> <p>The proposals will replace the backdrop of commercial orchards to the development when seen from vantage points in the estuary. The development will be set amongst the existing built form of Twydall on the sloping land south of the Medway.</p> <p>Considering the above factors, upon completion the proposals will result in a localised, high magnitude of change at a site-wide scale.</p> <p>The residual effects of the proposals are assessed below for the individual landscape features and receptors within the site, as well as for the Site Area as a whole.</p>	<p>The construction activities associated with the implementation of infrastructure, development of the houses and establishment of areas of green infrastructure and open space will result in Localised / site-wide, Temporary Major Adverse Effects.</p> <p>The construction works will introduce uncharacteristic elements into the local landscape, with the development changing the land use and character of the site area.</p> <p>Given the extent of development across the site area and the nature of change associated with the replacement of agricultural / horticultural land managed as commercial orchards with a residential development, the proposals will give rise to Localised, site-wide, Moderate / Major adverse effects upon completion.</p> <p>Whilst the proposals incorporate a range of embedded landscape mitigation measures, including landscape buffers, tree planting and implementation of new areas of community orchards and village green, the planting will take time to mature and become effective.</p> <p>The containment of the site within a framework of woodland, shelterbelts and tall hedgerows limits the impacts beyond the site area. This containment will be further enhanced through the structural landscape buffer planting to the site boundaries.</p>

7 Landscape Effects

Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Medium	<p><i>Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation Planting</i></p> <p><i>Site Area</i></p> <p>As the strategic buffer planting to the site boundaries and trees throughout the development mature (including those associated with the village green, green corridors and street trees) the development will become better integrated into the landscape.</p> <p>Within this time frame the community orchards will have become well established with ongoing management to ensure the longevity of the fruit trees and meadows.</p> <p>Hedgerow planting will also have established and, with continued management, will be retained at an appropriate height to ensure the character and visual context is maintained.</p> <p>Whilst the maturation of the landscape mitigation measures will assist in assimilating the proposals into the landscape, providing set backs and buffers to adjacent sensitive receptors and creating attractive areas of communal green space and orchards, the magnitude of change at a site-wide level will remain as a <i>localised, permanent and high</i>.</p> <p><i>Landscape Receptors (Site Features)</i></p> <p>The residual magnitude of change for the identified Site Features (landscape receptors) is assessed separately for each below. The magnitude of change relates to the individual receptor. The overall assessment of effects for the Site Area reflects the impacts and change associated with the proposals at a site-wide scale.</p> <p>Collectively the landscape receptors have been assessed as having a Medium Sensitivity to the proposed development. This has taken into account the susceptibility of these features when the design and embedded mitigation measures have been taken into account. These include for the setting back of development from hedgerows, trees, lanes and properties / settlement edges and provision of landscape buffers, open green space and planting of community orchards.</p> <p><i>Lower Bloors Lane</i></p> <p>The hedgerows and banks along the lane will be managed to retain the character of the lane and assist in screening views of development. Tree planting within the buffer alongside the lane will have matured sufficiently to soften and filter development beyond. The character of the lane will be retained and enhanced.</p> <p><i>Localised, permanent and low magnitude of change</i></p> <p><i>Pump Lane</i></p> <p>Ongoing maintenance of retained and new hedgerows will help retain character of the lane, with community orchards providing established character and setting to village green and adjacent properties.</p> <p>Maturation of trees at entrances and along streets will aid in softening the built edge as seen from the lane.</p> <p><i>Localised, permanent and medium magnitude of change</i></p> <p><i>Bridleway GB6A</i></p> <p>Trees and hedgerow along route of bridleway retained. Maturation of trees within linear green space provides attractive character and setting to residential frontages onto open space. Opening-up of views from bridleway onto green spaces incorporating recreation and play as well as areas of community orchards, village green and meadows.</p> <p><i>Localised, permanent and low magnitude of change</i></p>	<p>Upon maturation of the areas of green infrastructure, open space and landscape mitigation planting, the residual effects at a site-wide level will result in Permanent Moderate Adverse Effects.</p> <p>This assessment has taken into consideration the impacts on the individual site features and associated mitigation as set-out in detail below for each individually.</p> <p>Localised permanent minor adverse effect</p> <p>Localised permanent moderate adverse effect</p> <p>Localised minor beneficial effect</p>

7 Landscape Effects

Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Medium	<p><u>Pump Farm and Russet Farm</u></p> <p>Maturation of open space trees around village green and linear green space combines with established community orchards to provide structure and sense of place that respects fruit belt character.</p> <p>Localised, permanent and low magnitude of change</p> <p><u>Commercial Orchards</u></p> <p>The areas of community orchard alongside Pump Lane and Russett Farm will continue to establish, reflecting traditional Kentish orchards alongside the lane and central open spaces (village green and linear green space)</p> <p>Maturation of landscape buffers to field boundaries will provide strong framework within local field pattern, including pockets of retained commercial and traditional orchards to the north and west of the site.</p> <p>Development will result in loss of orchards and fields managed for horticulture across the site area. Hedgerows retained within development parcels where possible</p> <p>Site wide (localised), permanent and high magnitude of change</p> <p><u>Lower Twydall</u></p> <p>The establishment and maturation of landscape buffer tree planting to the site boundaries will screen views of development and provide a robust edge and transition with the arable fields as well as softening views from properties to the north of Lower Twydall.</p> <p>Local, permanent and low magnitude of change</p> <p><u>Lower Rainham</u></p> <p>Establishment and maturation of trees within landscape buffer, playing fields and care home grounds will provide a soft edge and transition, strengthening the green edge and separation with Lower Rainham. Increased effect of vegetation on softening views into the site from neighbouring properties.</p> <p>Local, permanent and medium magnitude of change</p> <p><u>Lower Rainham Road</u></p> <p>Maturation of landscape buffer to road frontage will screen development and frame entrance off Lower Rainham Road.</p> <p>Local, permanent and low magnitude of change</p>	<p>Localised, permanent and minor adverse effect</p> <p>Localised, permanent and moderate adverse effect</p> <p>This assessment reflects the changes across the site area associated with change of land use from commercial orchards to residential development.</p> <p>Localised, permanent and minor effect</p> <p>Assessment recognises that Lower Twydall is bound by mature tree belts and field vegetation adjoining and within proximity to the site.</p> <p>Localised, permanent and moderate adverse effect</p> <p>Localised, permanent and minor adverse effect</p> <p>Introduction of new access road will affect the character of the road at a local level, combining with existing signage, bollards and traffic lights at junction with Pump Lane and at Lower Rainham.</p>

7 Landscape Effects

Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Medium	<p><u>Green Backdrop when viewed from the Medway Estuary</u></p> <p>Maturation of tree belts and landscape buffers to site boundaries and within the site (green infrastructure, linear green space and street trees) will combine to break up the built form of development across the site area and create a green canopy as a backdrop. Trees along railway line will also soften built form on edge of Twydall.</p> <p>The effects also relate to the perceptual aspects and scenic quality in relation to views from the Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA.</p> <p>Local, permanent and medium magnitude of change</p>	<p>Localised, permanent and minor adverse effect</p> <p>Whilst there will be a medium magnitude of change in relation to the development and elements being introduced as part of the backdrop, the landscape buffer planting and trees within open space and street will combine to provide a green canopy. This will break up and soften both the proposed an existing development. Development at Twydall southwest of the site.</p>

Summary

- 8.1 A full assessment of the predicted visual effects of the proposed development during the construction phases, at completion and after 15 years is set out on the tables within this section. The assessment has assumed that the proposals have included the embedded mitigation measures as set out in Section 6 of this LVIA and, illustrated on the **Landscape Framework** plan and detailed in the Design and Access Statement prepared to support the planning application.
- 8.2 A summary of the key findings of the assessment are set out below for each of the groups of people (visual receptors) identified within the baseline assessment as having the potential to have their views and visual amenity affected by the proposed development. The effects during the construction phase are therefore generally greater than those experienced upon completion and the residual effects once the landscape mitigation has matured. Where the construction activities have resulted in Moderate or Major adverse visual effects, this is also noted below.

Users of the Saxon Shore Way and Riverside Country Park

- 8.3 As identified through the analysis of policy and the baseline studies, access to the countryside and the associated recreational and amenity benefits are valued aspects of the landscape, with the views along the shoreline and across the estuary forming part of the experience enjoyed by people using the Saxon Shore Way and Riverside Country Park. The contribution that the visual experience and views make to the value of the landscape has been incorporated into the assessment of landscape effects and has also informed the sensitivity of these people to visual changes associated with the proposals. This has included consideration of the contribution that the site makes as part of the green backdrop in views from the estuary, including those obtained from Horrid Hill (within the Riverside Country Park) and the Saxon Shore Way. Users of these recreation resources have been assessed as being of a Medium / High sensitivity to visual change associated with the proposed development.
- 8.4 During the construction phase, **Temporary Moderate Adverse Visual Effects** have been identified for visitors to Horrid Hill and views obtained from the Saxon Shore Way to the south of Motney Hill. This is due to the introduction of uncharacteristic elements and movement that will draw attention and disrupt views towards the site. The wider views across the estuary would remain unaffected.
- 8.5 Users of the Saxon Shore Way to the north of the Medway Estuary have the potential to experience residual **Permanent Minor**

Adverse Visual Effects upon completion of the development, reducing to **Neutral** after 15 years when the planting to site boundaries and within the site mature. This reflects the distance of the viewers and limited nature of change in relation to the expansive views across the wider estuary.

- 8.6 In views from the Saxon Shore Way south of Motney Hill and Horrid Hill within the Riverside Country Park, the proposals will be more visible due to the closer proximity. In views from these locations, the proposed development will be visible, set beyond vegetation on the shoreline and properties in Lower Rainham. The houses will be viewed against the built edge of Twydall and Rainham that extends up the slopes beyond the site to the south. Upon completion, there will be **Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects** resulting from the introduction of development into these views. However, upon maturation of the landscape buffer planting and trees throughout the development, this will reduce to residual **Permanent, Localised Minor Adverse Visual Effects**.
- 8.7 As recognised within the assessment for the above receptors, the expansive views across the estuary from these vantage points and along the recreational routes will not be affected by the proposals. In those views back towards the shore from the north and promontories of Horrid Hill and Motney Hill, the development will retain a green backdrop, set beyond the woodland and shelterbelts along the shoreline and tying-in with the woodland and trees that bound the site and within adjacent areas. The proposals will also soften the existing linear developed edge south of the railway line through the provision of extensive new planting to boundaries and within the site.

Users of Lower Rainham Road

- 8.8 For users of Lower Rainham Road passing the site, there will be a **localised minor adverse visual effects** arising from the implementation of the new site entrance to the northwest of Pump Lane both at completion and residual effects (after 15 years) when the landscape mitigation has matured. The site entrance will introduce a new gateway on the approach to Lower Rainham where there is a developed context with associated road signage, bollards and traffic lights. The development will be set back beyond the retained tall hedgerows to the road and landscape buffer beyond incorporating tree planting. This will serve to screen views of the development. At the site frontage beyond the entrance of Lower Rainham Road, development is set beyond landscape buffers and areas of open space incorporating ponds, trees and hedgerow presenting an attractive entrance to the site.

Users of Lower Bloors Lane

- 8.9 During the construction phase, **Temporary Moderate Adverse Visual Effects** have been identified for users of Lower Bloors Lane where the works will be in close proximity to the lane and visible beyond lower sections of hedgerow and gateways. Upon completion these will reduce to **Localised Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects** where views of houses may still be obtained in close proximity along the lane. The residual effects will be **Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse** once the mitigation planting has matured.

Users of Lower Twydall Lane

- 8.10 In the limited views of the site available Lower Twydall Lane, the site is set beyond intervening trees and hedgerows to field boundaries. In these views, the proposed development will result in **Minor Adverse Visual Effects** at completion, reducing to **Permanent Negligible Visual Effects** upon completion when the mitigation planting has matured.
- 8.11 In views from the footbridge over the railway on Lower Twydall Lane, there will be **Temporary Moderate Adverse Visual Effects** associated with the construction works in these localised and limited views. Upon completion, housing to the southwest of the site will replace oblique views across the site beyond filtering vegetation along the railway line. The development will be seen in context with houses at Lower Twydall to the south of the railway line and result in **Localised Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects**. These will reduce to Permanent, Minor Adverse with the maturation of the tree belts alongside the railway which will filter and soften views of the houses within the site.

Users of Pump Lane

- 8.12 During the construction phase, the works to create new accesses roads and development of the village centre, care home, school and housing will give rise to **Temporary, Major Adverse Visual Effects** for users of Pump Lane. This is a result of the proximity to the works and extent of construction works taking place along the lane, including the new access roads opening up views into the site as well as and disruption caused by temporary closures and traffic management.
- 8.13 Upon completion of the development, assuming the mitigation planting has not established there would be **Localised, Moderate Adverse Visual Effects**. Once the landscape planting and community orchard areas, village green and buffers to the village

centre, care home and school have established, the residual effects for users of Pump Lane will be **Permanent, Localised and Minor / Moderate Adverse**.

- 8.14 Development will be set back from the lane beyond areas managed as community orchards, the village green and opens spaces, in keeping with the existing glimpsed views of orchards obtained to the south of Russett Farm. The hedgerows along the lane and supplementary planting will screen views of development, with views along new accesses off the lane set beyond verges with street trees.

Users of Bridleway GB6a

- 8.15 During the construction phase, there will be disruption to users of the bridleway with temporary closures to allow for the implementation of the internal roads and development.
- 8.16 Upon completion, there will be **Localised, Minor Beneficial Visual Effects** for users of the bridleway, which will be incorporated into a green corridor. The bridleway will pass alongside areas of opens pace including play areas / pocket parks and pass through the village green. As the landscape establishes and planting matures, these will increase to **Permanent, Localise Minor / Moderate Beneficial Visual Effects**. This reflects the change from an enclosed path with glimpsed views of commercial orchards to a route that is integrated into areas of open space with recreation and amenity spaces at the heart of the new community.

Users of Trains Passing the Site

- 8.17 For users of trains passing the site, the development will result in the loss of filtered glimpsed views across the site west of Pump Lane. Upon completion, this will result in **Localised, Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects**. With the maturation of buffer planting incorporating tree belts along the railway, this will reduce to **Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effects**. The assessment reflects the fleeting, glimpsed nature and extent of the views from the trains and the existing vegetation that filters outward views across the site from along much of the southwestern site boundary.

Residents of Properties Adjacent to and Overlooking the Site

- 8.18 The Visual Assessment has also given consideration to the likely effects upon the views and visual amenity of residents of properties adjacent to and overlooking the site. No properties have been accessed as part of the baseline studies. The assessment is

based upon observation made from fieldwork in the public realm and from analysis of maps and aerial imagery.

Residents of properties in Twydall south of the railway

- 8.19 For residents of properties with views across the site, the construction works will give rise to **Temporary, Localised and Moderate / High Adverse Visual Effects**. Upon completion, prior to maturation of landscape buffer planting alongside the railway, the loss of views across the site will give rise to Localised, Moderate Adverse Visual Effects. Once the trees have matured, this will reduce to **Permanent Minor / Moderate Adverse**.
- 8.20 The assessment recognises the context within which the views of the site are experienced, beyond a busy railway line and planting to gardens and alongside the railway line filtering views across the site.

Residents of Properties on Pump Lane

- 8.21 During the construction phase, residents of these properties will likely experience **Temporary, Localised Major Adverse Visual Effects** on their views and visual amenity. This reflects the extent of construction works to the lane and on adjacent land surrounding the properties. This includes that associated with the implementation of infrastructure, opens space and development.
- 8.22 Upon completion there will be **Localised, Moderate / Major Adverse Visual Effects** before the landscaping to the open spaces and village green established, and trees within the community orchards, landscape buffers and opens paces mature.
- 8.23 Upon maturation of the trees and establishment of landscape to areas of green infrastructure and open spaces, the residual effects will reduce to **Permanent, Localised and Moderate Adverse**. This recognises the setting of the properties at the heart of a landscape framework to the centre of the site and development incorporating buffers, green spaces, the village green and community orchards.

Residents of Properties on Lower Bloors Lane

- 8.24 For residents of those properties fronting onto and overlooking Lower Bloors Lane, there may be **Localised, Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects** upon views and their visual amenity upon completion of the development and before the maturation of mitigation planting. Once gapping up and enhancement works to the hedgerows and trees / landscape buffer within the site has matured, these will reduce to **Permanent, Localised and Minor**

Adverse Visual Effects.

Residents of Properties of Lower Rainham

- 8.25 From properties overlooking the site, the construction works associated with the school and houses north of the bridleway will be visible, set back beyond the playing fields. This may give rise to **Temporary, Localised and Moderate Adverse Visual Effects** for these residents.
- 8.26 Upon completion, the setting-back of the development beyond a landscape buffer and the playing fields will result in **Localised, Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects**. These will reduce to **Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effects** with the maturation of the planting to the landscape buffers along the site boundaries and adjacent to the playing fields and housing south of the school.

Residents of Properties at Lower Twydall

- 8.27 There are limited views towards the site from properties at lower Twydall. For those with outward views to the east, intervening vegetation to field boundaries filters views into the western site area. Upon completion, any development visible from these properties will be set beyond intervening trees and hedgerows, resulting in a **Localised, Minor Adverse Visual Effects**. These will reduce to **Permanent Negligible Visual Effects** upon maturation of the landscape buffer planting to the western site boundary which will screen views of the development.

Users of the Saxon Shore Way

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Northern shore of the Medway Photoviewpoint 1	Medium	<p>Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years)</p> <p>Movement associated with the construction works, including machinery and plant, as well as construction traffic may draw the eye in these distant views and focus attention.</p> <p>However, given the distance of people on the northern shore of the Medway estuary from the site, the construction activities will not be prominent in expansive views across the wider estuary and landscape.</p> <p>The works and development will not break the skyline, with development at Twydall and Rainham on the higher slopes beyond the site providing a developed backdrop. The activities would be set beyond the vegetated shoreline that is formed by woodland and tree belts within the Riverside Country Park and bounding the Saxon Way. The nature and extent of the expansive views across the estuary would remain unaltered.</p> <p>Taking the above factors into account, the construction activities will result in a temporary low magnitude of change to the composition of views obtained from the northern shore of the Medway estuary.</p>	<p>The construction activities associated with the implementation of infrastructure, development of the houses and establishment of areas of green infrastructure and open space will result in Temporary, Minor Adverse Visual Effects for users of the Saxon Shore Way to the northern shoreline of the Medway estuary.</p>
		<p>At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation</p> <p>Upon completion, the development will replace the narrow strip of commercial orchards that are currently visible on the site with residential development.</p> <p>Properties situated on the higher slopes to the southwest of the site will be visible beyond the trees and vegetation along the shoreline and set against a backdrop formed by properties and development within Rainham and Twydall that extends up the slopes beyond the site. Trees and shelterbelts, including tall coniferous hedgerows along the railway line and bounding the allotments to the south of the site will continue to form a wooded backdrop</p> <p>The introduction of residential development on the site will not introduce uncharacteristic elements into the view, with the composition of remaining largely unaltered. The wooded skyline of the Downs forming the horizon to expansive views of the estuary will remain. The development will be set against residential development at Twydall, Rainham and Gillingham on the higher ground, interspersed with woodland and trees.</p> <p>Development on the lower lying parts of the site to the northeast and east of Pump Farm will sit beyond the wooded backdrop to views across the estuary formed by trees and shelterbelts along the shoreline, set amongst the rooflines of development at Mariners Farm, Lower Rainham Road and at Lower Rainham.</p> <p>Considering the above, upon completion the proposals will give rise to a low magnitude of change when assessed for views from the northern shoreline of the Medway Estuary.</p>	<p>The completed development will not be prominent in these distant views and will be experienced in context with existing development on the higher slopes to the southwest and south, set amongst woodland and tree belts to the southeast and along the shoreline.</p> <p>Upon completion the proposals will give rise to Minor Adverse Visual Effects for users of the Saxon Shore Way to the north of the Medway Estuary.</p>
		<p>Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation Planting</p> <p>With the maturation of the strategic landscape planting and trees to the site boundaries, within open spaces and along streets, the development will become integrated into the treed backdrop when experienced in views from the estuary to the north.</p> <p>Trees to open spaces and streets within the site and throughout development parcels will provide a green canopy and serve to break up and soften the built form, contributing to the green backdrop and wooded context to the backdrop formed by trees and woodland.</p> <p>With the maturation of the embedded mitigation planting, the development will blend into the backdrop, reflecting the existing composition of the view and filtering views of development both on the site and rising land beyond. On balance and taking into account the distance of the views from the site, the proposals would continue to give rise to a low magnitude of change when assessed for views from the northern shoreline of the Medway Estuary.</p>	<p>There will continue to be a low magnitude of change associated with the proposed development for these viewers after 15 years. However, the residual effects will be Permanent and Neutral for users of the Saxon Shore Way to the north of the Medway.</p> <p>This reflects the landscape buffers and tree planting that will provide a green canopy and soft edge breaking up the built form and filtering views of the development.</p>

Users of the Saxon Shore Way

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
South of Motney Hill Photoviewpoint 4	Medium/High	Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years) From this location, views across the eastern site area are screened by intervening woodland and trees along the shoreline and surrounding Lower Rainham. Construction works will be visible across the site to the west of Pump Lane and on the higher slopes to the southwest of the site, introducing movement and elements that are not characteristic in the views. The construction activities and associated development will not break the skyline. Development at Twydall and Rainham on the higher slopes beyond the site will continue to provide a developed backdrop. Construction works and development to the east of Pump Lane (south of Lower Rainham) would be set beyond properties and industrial units on Motney Hill Road and the vegetated shoreline that is formed by woodland and tree belts. The nature and extent of the expansive views across the estuary to the north and west would remain unaltered. Taking the above factors into account, the construction activities will result in a temporary, medium magnitude of change to the composition of views obtained from the Saxon Shore Way south of Motney Hill.	The construction activities associated with the implementation of infrastructure, development of the houses and establishment of areas of green infrastructure and open space will result in Temporary, Moderate Adverse Visual Effects for users of the Saxon Shore Way to the south of Motney Hill. The construction works will introduce movement and uncharacteristic elements into the views that may draw attention, whilst retaining the composition of wider views across the estuary.
		At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation Upon completion, the development will replace the fields managed as commercial orchards and agricultural sheds at Pump Farm that are currently visible on the site with residential development. Properties across the site to the west of Pump Lane will be visible beyond the shoreline vegetation, replacing the current views towards development on the edge of Twydall beyond the railway line. The housing will be contained by woodland and tree belts to the west. The introduction of residential development on the site will not introduce uncharacteristic elements into the view. The wooded skyline will remain, with the proposals not being prominent or obtrusive beyond the shoreline. The development visible to the northwest of the site will be set against residential development at Twydall and Gillingham on the higher ground. Depending upon the phasing of the development, the strategic landscape buffer planting to the site boundaries will soften the edge of the development along Lower Rainham Road and the northern site boundaries and filter views of the new development. Considering the above, upon completion the proposals will give rise to a low / medium magnitude of change when assessed for views from the northern shoreline of the Medway Estuary.	Whilst the proposals incorporate a range of embedded landscape mitigation measures, including landscape buffers, the planting will take time to mature and become effective. At completion, it would be expected that, whilst planting associated with earlier phases of development would have started to mature, there will be later phases that have less established planting to boundaries. Reflecting the fact that the development to the west of Pump Lane may be visible beyond the shoreline, upon completion the proposals would give rise to Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects for users of the Saxon Shore Way south of Motney Hill.
		Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation Planting With the maturation of the strategic landscape planting and trees to the site boundaries, within open spaces and along streets, the development will be set beyond a soft green edge in views from south of Motney Hill. This will integrate the development into the backdrop that is formed by trees and shelterbelts to the west and northeast and provide a continuation across the shoreline. Where there are glimpsed and filtered views of properties, these will replace the existing views towards the defined linear edge of Twydall and will be set below the development within Gillingham situated on the higher ground to the south. With the maturation of the mitigation planting, the proposals will result in a residual low magnitude of change when assessed for views from the Saxon Shore Way to the south of Motney Hill.	With the maturation of the landscape buffer planting, the proposals will give rise to residual Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effects for users of the Saxon Shore Way, south of Motney Hill. The composition and extent of views across the estuary to the north and west will remain unaltered. In views to the south towards the shoreline, the proposals will be set d beyond buffer planting to the site boundaries that tie-in with the exiting woodland and tree belts that screen the site and provide a wooded backdrop to the site.

Users of the Saxon Shore Way

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
North of Lower Rainham Photoviewpoint 5	Medium	Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years) The composition of views inland towards the site are screened from along much of the Saxon Shore way between the causeway at Horrid Hill and Bloors Wharf by trees and vegetation. In these views across paddocks north of Lower Rainham, the site is largely hidden from view beyond buildings at Lower Rainham and intervening trees and woodland. There are glimpsed views of housing on the northern edge of Twydall along the railway bounding the site to the southwest. Construction activities associated with development to the southwest of the site, adjacent to the railway would be visible, set against the properties beyond. The movement associated with the works may draw attention and include some activities that were visible on the skyline. Given the limited extent of works that may be experienced and the limited views from the Saxon Shore Way towards the site, the construction activities would give rise to a temporary, low / magnitude of change to the composition of these views.	The construction activities would result in Temporary, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effects for users of the Saxon Shore Way, north of Lower Rainham. The extent of construction activities on the site would be limited to those along a section of the southern site area. Views along the shoreline and across the estuary would remain unaffected.
		At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation On completion, most of the development will be set beyond intervening built form and vegetation and will not be visible from this location. Houses to the southwest of the site on the higher ground adjacent to the railway will sit in front of the houses at Twydall that currently form a backdrop to the glimpsed views between trees in the foreground. The development will not introduce uncharacteristic elements into the view and will retain the composition of the views and elements and features within them. Views along the shoreline and out to the estuary will remain unaffected. The completed development will result in a localised, low magnitude of change to the composition of these views.	Upon completion, the proposed development will give rise to Localised, Minor Adverse Effects on views of users of the Saxon Shore Way north of Lower Rainham. This reflects the introduction of additional housing to glimpsed views, albeit that the development will not introduce prominent new features that are out of character or alter the composition of the views. There will be a limited effect on the amenity of the users of the path, as the valued views across the estuary will remain unaffected.
		Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation Planting With the maturation of landscape planting of the site boundaries and trees within areas of open space including the village green, areas of green infrastructure and street trees, the development will be broken up and filtered beyond a soft green edge and green canopy to the rooflines. In views from the Saxon Shore Way to the north of Lower Rainham, the development will blend with the treed backdrop on the skyline and will result in a negligible magnitude of change . Views along the path and across the estuary will remain unaltered.	The residual effects of the proposed development on the amenity of these views from the Saxon Shore Way will be Localised, Permanent and Negligible . With the maturation of strategic landscape planting to the site boundaries and within the development, the development will be filtered and softened. The proposal will serve to replace the glimpsed development on the edge of Twydall with a landscaped edge.

Users of the Riverside Country Park

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Horrid Hill Photoviewpoint 2	Medium/ High	<p>Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years)</p> <p>From vantage points on Horrid Hill looking south, there are views beyond the wooded shoreline towards the land within the southern site area, set beyond the roofs of properties in Lower Rainham and contained by woodland at Bloors Lane Community Woodland and shelterbelts alongside the bridleway and bounding the allotments and railway line.</p> <p>The land to the southwest of the site adjacent to the railway line is also visible beyond the country park to the south, within the residential edge at Twydall as a backdrop.</p> <p>Construction works in these areas will introduce movement and uncharacteristic elements into the view, drawing the eye. The woodland within the Riverside Country Park and coniferous shelter belts at Mariners Farm combine with trees along the shoreline to screen views across the central area of the site and provide containment.</p> <p>The works will not break the skyline. The nature and extent of the expansive views across the estuary to the north and west would remain unaltered.</p> <p>Taking the above factors into account, the construction activities will result in a temporary medium magnitude of change to the composition of views obtained from Horrid Hill.</p>	<p>The construction activities associated with the implementation of infrastructure, development of the houses and establishment of areas of green infrastructure and open space will result in Temporary, Moderate Adverse Visual Effects for visitors to the Riverside Country Park at Horrid Hill.</p> <p>The construction works will introduce movement and uncharacteristic elements into the views that may draw attention, whilst retaining the composition of wider views across the estuary.</p>
		<p>At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation</p> <p>Upon completion, the development will replace the views of land managed for Commercial Orchards that is visible beyond Lower Rainham and the country park with residential development. The roof of the school may also be visible beyond the properties of Lower Rainham.</p> <p>The housing to the south of the site will be contained by woodland and shelter belts to the east of the site, set beyond vegetation along the shoreline and houses at Lower Rainham. The housing to the southwest will be set against and will replace the residential edge of Twydall to the south of the railway.</p> <p>The introduction of residential development on the site will not introduce uncharacteristic elements into the views from Horrid Hill. The wooded skyline will remain, with the proposals not being prominent or obtrusive.</p> <p>Depending upon the phasing of the development, the strategic landscape buffer planting to the site boundaries and within areas of green infrastructure and streets will have matured sufficiently to break up the development. This may also include trees within the buffer adjacent to Lower Rainham and the school playing fields and grounds that will soften the developed edge.</p> <p>Taking into account the above factors, upon completion the proposals will give rise to a medium magnitude of change.</p>	<p>At completion, it would be expected that, whilst planting associated with earlier phases of development would have started to mature, there will be later phases that have less established planting to boundaries.</p> <p>Reflecting the fact that mitigation planting may not have established, upon completion the proposals would give rise to Moderate Adverse Visual Effects for views from Horrid Hill towards the shoreline.</p> <p>The development will only be visible for a small proportion of the wider extensive views from Horrid Hill. Residential development is not uncharacteristic in these views. The development will be contained by trees and woodland, will not break the skyline and will be set beyond Lower Rainham.</p>
		<p>Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation Planting</p> <p>With the maturation of the strategic landscape planting and trees to the site boundaries and within open spaces and streets, the development will be set beyond a soft green edge that will tie-in with the woodland and tree belts bounding and surrounding the site.</p> <p>The defined linear edge to the south will be replaced with a soft transition, replacing views of the residential edge at Twydall.</p> <p>Development will be set-back from Lower Rainham beyond strategic landscape planting and a buffer area including school playing pitches.</p> <p>Combined with the trees to areas of green infrastructure and streets throughout the development, this will break up and soften the built form, integrating the houses into the backdrop that is formed by trees and shelterbelts on the higher ground to the southeast.</p> <p>With the maturation of the mitigation planting, the proposals will result in a residual low magnitude of change when assessed for views from Horrid Hill.</p>	<p>With the maturation of the landscape buffer planting, the proposals will give rise to residual Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effects for users of the Riverside Country Park at Horrid Hill.</p> <p>The composition and extent of views across the estuary to the north and west will remain unaltered. In views to the south towards the shoreline, the proposals will be set beyond buffer planting to the site boundaries that tie-in with the existing woodland and tree belts that screen the site and provide a wooded backdrop to the site.</p>

Users of Lower Rainham Road

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Users of Lower Rainham Road Photoviewpoints 6, 7 and 8	Medium	<p>Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years)</p> <p>During the construction phase, in addition to the work on site, there will be construction traffic using Lower Rainham Road, as well as work to create the site entrance and road junction to the northwest of Pump Lane.</p> <p>From the northeast at the junction with Lower Bloors Lane (Photoviewpoint 6) views into the site are screened by intervening hedgerows and trees to the roadside and bounding the house and grounds at Bloors Place. Construction activities within the development parcels to the northeast of the site may be glimpsed beyond the intervening vegetation, resulting in a localised, temporary and low magnitude of change.</p> <p>From the northwest approaching Lower Rainham and the junction with Pump Lane (Photoviewpoint 7), the construction of the new site access and road junction will result in traffic management and change associated with the removal of lengths of hedgerow, and new junction. Works associated with the construction of dwellings and the care home to the northeast of the site will be set beyond a landscape buffer and tall hedgerows to the roadside and largely screened from view. There may be activities associated with construction of houses and the care home visible above the hedgerow. In the winter months there will be filtered views of the works through the intervening hedgerows. The works will result in a localised, temporary and moderate magnitude of change.</p> <p>From the junction with Pump Lane, the development and associated construction activities will be set beyond Chapel House and tall roadside hedgerows that are to be retained. There may be glimpsed views of construction activities associated with the care home and village centre. From this location there will be a localised, temporary and low magnitude of change.</p> <p>On balance, the construction activities will give rise to a localised, temporary and medium magnitude of visual change for users of Lower Rainham Road approaching and passing the site.</p>	<p>The construction activities associated with the implementation of infrastructure and residential development will result in Temporary, Localised and Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects for users of Lower Rainham Road passing the site.</p> <p>The majority of these effects will relate to the implementation and construction of the new access of Lower Rainham Road, northwest of Pump Lane and the associated disruption and impacts associated with traffic control and works on and adjacent to the carriageway.</p>
		<p>At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation</p> <p>Upon completion of the development, the houses and associated development within the site will be set beyond landscape buffers and existing tall hedgerows, screening the development.</p> <p>Visual changes will relate primarily to the new junction and access into the development to the northwest of Pump Lane. The junction and access will introduce a new gateway on the approach to Lower Rainham, with views into the site and towards houses and the care facilities along the entrance.</p> <p>The proposals incorporate a set back to the development beyond a landscape buffer strip including attenuation features and planting of trees and hedgerows, creating an attractive frontage and entrance to the development.</p> <p>Upon completion, the landscape planting may have established, with the trees having been planted and landscape works implemented during early phases alongside the site access and infrastructure. However, the works may be later in the phasing of development, subject to delivery and phasing.</p> <p>Allowing for the potential variance in maturity of landscape planting, the completed development will result in a localised and low / medium magnitude of visual change.</p> <p>This will be limited to the changes associated with the new access road and site frontage at the site entrance. The remainder of the development will be set back from the road beyond existing tall hedgerows and trees.</p>	<p>The changes associated with the new site access will result in Local, Minor Adverse Visual Effects.</p> <p>This reflects the localised impacts associated with views from a short section of road when heading towards and leaving Lower Rainham where there is already a developed context, road signage, traffic lights and bollards.</p>
		<p>Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation Planting</p> <p>With the maturing of landscape planting, the site entrance and frontage to Lower Rainham Road will incorporate trees, hedgerows and green space incorporating attenuation features and associated opportunities for marginal planting and creation of an attractive gateway to the development.</p> <p>The magnitude of change for users of Lower Rainham Road will be localised, permanent and low.</p>	<p>With the maturation of the landscape planting associated with the site entrance and buffer to the northern boundary will result in Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effects.</p>

Users of Lower Bloor Lane

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Users of Lower Bloors Lane Photoviewpoints 9, 10 and 11	Medium	Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years) Construction of the development parcels to the south-eastern edge of the site adjoining Lower Bloors Lane, including the self-built plots will be visible from the lane, viewed above lower sections of hedgerow and through gateways (Photoviewpoint 9). The development is set-back from the lane beyond the roadside hedgerow and a landscape buffer strip. To the southwest of Bridleway GB6A, the combination of mature trees and hedgerows beyond the hedgebank will mitigate for any visual impacts associated with the construction activities. Where construction activities will be visible, they will introduce movement and uncharacteristic elements into the views in relatively close proximity. This would give rise to a localised, temporary and moderate / high magnitude of change for users of the lane northeast of the bridleway.	The construction works will result in Localised, Temporary and Moderate Adverse Visual Effects for users of Lower Bloors Lane. This reflects the proximity of the works and views into the site above sections of hedgerow and through gateways.
		At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation Upon completion, properties on the south-eastern edge of the site will be set beyond a landscape buffer incorporating planting to gap-up and enhance the existing hedgerows alongside the lane, as well as new tree and hedgerow planting within the site. Depending upon the phasing of the construction and build out of the self-build units, the planting may not have had sufficient time to mature by completion of the development. At completion, the proposals may therefore result in a localised, moderate magnitude of visual change for users of the lane relating to views above hedgerows to the houses beyond. Views through the gateway opposite Cherry Orchard Farm (Photoviewpoint 9) will be retained, with houses set beyond an access track and landscape buffer.	Views of the new housing development from Lower Bloors Lane will give rise to Localised, Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects for users of the lane where there are gaps or lower hedgerows. These effects will be limited to short sections of the lane.
		Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation Planting With the maturation of the new hedgerow and tree planting alongside the lane, the magnitude of change will reduce to be localised, permanent and minor .	With the establishment of boundary and buffer planting, the proposals will have Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effects on users of Lower Bloors Lane. Where there are views of development, they will be infrequent and glimpsed through gateways and beyond intervening roadside hedgerows and vegetation.

Users of Lower Twydall Lane

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Users of Lower Twydall Lane Photoviewpoints 12 and 13	Medium	Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years) Views towards the site from Lower Twydall Lane are limited to those obtained from the field gateway at the junction with Grange Lane (Photoviewpoint 12) and the footbridge over the railway (Photoviewpoint 13). From the lane, construction activities associated with the development of the land west of Pump Lane will be visible beyond intervening vegetation to field boundaries and the former chalk pits. Whilst movement associated with the works would draw the eye, the activities would not be prominent in these glimpsed views. The magnitude of change would be localised, temporary and low. For users of the footbridge there will be oblique views of construction works across the southern and eastern site areas, framed by trees in the foreground and filtered by trackside vegetation. The construction of the houses northeast of the railway will replace the existing view across the site. The construction activities, including machinery and plant will introduce uncharacteristic elements and movement into these views, resulting in a localised, temporary and medium / high magnitude of change. On balance, users of Lower Twydall Lane will experience a temporary, localised and medium magnitude of change in the limited views of the site available from the footbridge and field gateway.	The construction works and associated activities on the site will result in Temporary, Localised and Moderate Adverse Visual Effects for users of Twydall Lane. Views from the lane are limited and glimpsed to those obtained through a gateway Where the construction works are experienced from the footbridge, it is in the context of adjacent houses and the developed edge of Twydall to the south.
		At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation Upon completion, development to the western site boundaries may be visible beyond intervening vegetation from the gateway on Lower Twydall Lane. The development would not be prominent in these views, and would result in a localised, low magnitude of change. From the railway footbridge, the completed development will have replaced views across the site with development set beyond a landscape buffer. Depending upon the phasing and timing of the planting and establishment of trees within the landscape buffer, the houses may be set beyond intervening trees that strengthen the screening afforded by the existing trackside vegetation. The development will be experienced alongside the properties on the edge of Twydall that are situated to the south of the railway and will not introduce uncharacteristic elements into these oblique, framed views. For users of the footbridge the completed development would result in a localised medium / high magnitude of change .	For users of Lower Twydall Lane, in views through the gateway, there will be a Localised, Minor Adverse Visual Effect . For people using the railway footbridge, the completed development will result in a Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effect . This assessment recognises the limited views obtained from the footbridge, the context that oblique views of the site are experienced, being seen in conjunction with the adjacent development at Twydall when crossing the railway and the limited extent of views available.
		Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation With the establishment of strategic landscape planting to the site boundaries, the development will be screened in views through the gateway on Lower Twydall Lane and will assimilate with the existing hedgerows and trees. There will be a negligible magnitude of change. The maturation of the trees and planting alongside the railway line will soften views of the houses beyond, filtering views of the proposed development and combining with existing trees to provide a vegetated corridor. There will be a localised, permanent and medium magnitude of change to views obtained from the footbridge over the railway.	Upon maturation of the strategic landscape planting to site boundaries, there will be a residual Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effect for users of Lower Twydall Way as they cross over the railway footbridge. This assessment recognises that, whilst there may be a medium magnitude of change, the nature of change is not uncharacteristic in these views, being situated adjacent to existing houses south of the railway. The views across the site are limited, framed by trees in the foreground and with views across the site filtered by trackside vegetation.

Users of Bridleway GB6a

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Users of Bridleway GB6a Photoviewpoints 14a, 14b and 15	Medium	Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years) During the construction phase, access to the bridleway may be subject to temporary closures whilst various elements of the proposals are being implemented, including the internal road which crosses the bridleway and implementation of the village green southeast of Pump Lane. Whilst views from along the bridleway are largely channelled along the path by tall coniferous hedgerows, there are filtered outward views, as well as those obtained from gateways. If and when access was allowed along the bridleway, there would be a localised, temporary and high magnitude of change to views.	From those sections of the bridleway that may be open during construction works, there would be a Temporary, Localised and Moderate Adverse Visual Effect . This reflects that, whilst of a high magnitude of change, views from the bridleway are limited to glimpsed views within the site.
		At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation Upon completion, the bridleway will be set within a green corridor running between development parcels. The hedgerows bounding the path will be retained where possible, save for when crossing the roadway. Adjacent to the road, where there are existing views through gates, a play area will be set within a landscaped space. Where the bridleway crosses the village green, views will be opened up across the new public open space towards Russett Farm and Pump Farm set beyond community orchards and the hedge line Pump Lane. Given the above, upon completion, the proposals will result in a localised, moderate / high magnitude of change .	The opening up of views within the village green and associated amenity benefits, coupled with the retention of the existing hedgerows along the bridleway within development parcels, will result in users of the bridleway experiencing Localised, Minor Beneficial Visual Effects .
		Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation As the planting within the village green and community orchards establishes and matures, the character and visual amenity will be enhanced. From the baseline conditions, there will continue to be a localised, permanent and moderate / high magnitude of change.	The establishment of the village green and associated landscaping and planting, including community orchard, ponds, wildflower meadows and open space tree planting will provide an attractive environment for users of the bridleway. The setting of the bridleway within a green corridor, with street trees and pocket park / play areas where the path crosses roads will also ensure an attractive environment. On balance there will be residual Permanent, Localised and Minor / Moderate Beneficial Visual Effects for users of the bridleway.

Users of Pump Lane

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Users of Pump Lane Photoviewpoints 16, 17 and 18	Medium	Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years) During the construction phase, there will be works to Pump Lane to create new accesses to the south of Pump Farm at the point of existing field access (Photoviewpoint 17) and north of Pump Farm. These works will require the removal of lengths of hedgerow and regrading of hedgebanks to implement access roads off the lane. It is expected that there will be temporary road closures and / or traffic controls in place during the construction phase. In addition to the infrastructure works, construction of the housing, care facility, village centre and school will be visible through breaks in the hedgerows and screened by hoardings. The construction phase will give rise to localised, temporary, high magnitude of change for users of Pump Lane.	Given the enclosed nature of Pump Lane, the works to construct new accesses and associated infrastructure will result in a Localised, Temporary and Major Adverse Visual Effects on users of the lane during the construction phase.
		At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation Upon completion, development will be set back from Pump Lane, with the hedgerows retained, save for those lengths removed to facilitate the new access roads. To the southeast of the lane, areas of community orchards will replace the commercial orchards, viewed through the access and beyond the hedgerow. This will be in keeping with the existing views from this part of the lane (Photoviewpoint 17). There will be views into the site to the northwest of the lane towards houses, set beyond areas of community orchards and on streets lined with trees and verges. Depending upon the phasing of construction and implementation of green infrastructure and planting (enhancement of roadside hedgerows, the community orchards and landscaping of the village green) may not have fully established at year 1. In recognition of this, upon completion there will be a localised medium magnitude of change for users of Pump Lane.	The completed development will result in Localised, Moderate Adverse Visual Effects upon users of Pump Lane. This reflects the change in the composition of views associated with the new access roads off the lane and views into the site towards houses, the village centre, school and care home.
		Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation Upon maturation and establishment of the landscape works and planting, the hedgerows along the lane will screen views of development, save for those obtained at the accesses off Pump Lane and where there will be glimpsed views of the community orchards and into the open space of the village green. Where there are views into the site along new access roads, orchards, street trees and landscape verges will soften the built form. However, there will be change to the nature of views and the character of the lane. Despite the maturing of landscape planting and establishment of the orchard, there will continue be a residual permanent, localised and medium magnitude of change for users of the lane resulting from the new access roads changing the character of the lane and creating views of development.	With the maturation of mitigation planting along the land and site boundaries and establishment of community orchards, landscaping to open spaces and streets, the proposals will result in residual Permanent, Localised and Minor / Moderate Adverse Effects . Whilst the new accesses and views into the site will alter the character and views along some sections of the lane, the characteristic glimpsed views of orchards around properties will be retained, with development set-back from the road beyond open spaces and landscape buffers.

Users of Trains Passing the Site

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Users of Trains Passing the Site	Low/Medium	<p>Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years)</p> <p>Views across the site from passing trains are obscured by tree belts to the southeast of Pump Lane. West of Pump Lane views towards the site are filtered by vegetation, with glimpsed views. The views are fleeting and glimpsed and for only a short duration when passing the western site area.</p> <p>Construction works across the western site area will be visible beyond the trackside vegetation to the northwest of Pump Lane. The construction of houses to the southwest of the site will block outward views to the north, introducing movement and uncharacteristic elements into the views.</p> <p>There will be a temporary, localised and medium magnitude of change. This reflects the short duration and limited views across the site beyond intervening vegetation.</p>	<p>The construction of the housing to the northwest of Pump Lane to the south western edge of the site will give rise to Temporary, Localised and Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects for users of trains when passing the site.</p> <p>This assessment reflects the sensitivity of the receptors and views of construction activities, movement and machinery on land adjacent to the railway line.</p> <p>The construction works east of Pump Lane will not result in any appreciable visual effects as views from trains are screened by coniferous tree belts and vegetation alongside the railway.</p>
		<p>At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation</p> <p>Upon completion of the development, views into the site from trains will be screened by new houses, set beyond a landscape buffer alongside the railway line.</p> <p>Views across the site when trains pass over the bridge at Pump Lane will be retained.</p> <p>Depending upon the phasing of the construction and timing of implementation of green infrastructure and buffer planting, there may be little additional screening of the new houses other than that already present. Assuming this is the case, there would be a localised, medium magnitude of change to views from trains passing the site.</p>	<p>The replacement of filtered, glimpsed views across the sit with new housing will give rise to Localised, Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects for those using the trains.</p> <p>The duration and extent of the views effected will be transitional and fleeting and for a short duration.</p>
		<p>Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation</p> <p>Upon maturation of the landscape buffer planting along the railway, views of the edge of the proposed development will be filtered, set beyond the existing trackside vegetation.</p> <p>There will remain some glimpsed views in the gap of vegetation alongside the bridge over Pump Lane and on the adjacent slopes.</p> <p>The proposals will result in a residual permanent localised and medium magnitude of change for users of trains when passing the site.</p>	<p>The change from filtered and glimpsed views across the site northwest of Pump Lane and replacement with tree belts filtering the proposed housing will result in residual Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effects for users of trains passing the site.</p>

Residents of properties in Twydall south of the Railway

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Residents of properties in Twydall south of the Railway Photoviewpoint 19	Medium	Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years) As illustrated by Photoviewpoint 19, properties adjacent to the railway e west of Pump Lane have filtered views towards the site beyond trackside vegetation and fences and hedgerows to rear gardens / parking areas. East of Pump Lane views from properties are screened by a coniferous tree belt. For residents of properties with views of the site, construction of development west of Pump Lane will introduce activities and movement associated with the implementation and construction of housing. This will result in a temporary, localised and medium / high magnitude of change . This magnitude of change relates to the development of houses to the southwestern edge of the site, set beyond the railway line beyond existing vegetation beyond a landscape buffer. If parcels north of this were built out sooner, there would be a lower magnitude of change associated with previous phases of development.	The construction of housing to the southwest of the site opposite properties overlooking the railway line will give rise to Temporary, Localised and Moderate / High Adverse Visual Effects for residents of properties overlooking the site to the south of the This reflects the movement and activities including movement of vehicles and plant and disruption to the views caused by the works.
		At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation Upon completion, the filtered views to the southwestern site boundary and across the site from these properties will be replaced with new housing, set beyond a landscape buffer. Depending upon when the development parcel southwest of the site is developed with the overall phasing of the construction phase and the implementation of the landscape planting to boundaries, the buffer may not have reached sufficient maturity to effectively filter the properties beyond. Considering the above, the completed development will give rise to a localised, medium / high magnitude of change . This reflects the potential for some properties to have relatively unobstructed views across the site which will be lost to the development.	Given the potential loss of views across the site from some properties and uncertainty as to the establishment and maturation of landscape buffer planting, upon completion, the development will give rise to Localised, Moderate Adverse Visual Effects for residents of properties. This reflects the context within which the views are obtained next to a busy railway line and beyond garden boundaries and vegetation alongside the tracks.
		Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation Upon maturation of the buffer planting, views of the housing to the southwestern site boundary will be screened by tree belts and understory planting. This will serve to soften the views of the development, resulting in a permanent, localised and medium / high magnitude of effects for residents of those properties south of the railway line that have views towards the site.	The softening and screening of development by the landscape buffer planting will result in residual Permanent, Localised and Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects on residents of properties south of the railway line with views over the site.

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Residents of properties on Pump Lane	High	<p>Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years)</p> <p>During the construction phase, the works to implement the access roads, construction traffic, movement of plant and vehicles on site and construction of development associated with the village centre, school, care home and village green, as well as housing will affect the visual amenity of residents on Pump Lane.</p> <p>There will therefore be a temporary, localised and high magnitude of change to the views and visual amenity of these residents.</p>	<p>The construction works and activities will be disruptive and introduce uncharacteristic elements and movement into the views and surrounding of these properties.</p> <p>This will result in Temporary, Localised and Major Adverse Visual Effects for residents of properties on Pump Lane.</p>
		<p>At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation</p> <p>Upon completion, development will be set back from the properties, with the village green and community orchards providing a setting to properties at Pump Farm and Russett Farm. The village centre, care home and school are all set within areas set back from properties beyond landscape buffers incorporating landscape planting.</p> <p>At completion, the landscape planting, orchards and opens spaces may not have had time to establish and provide screening and softening of the new development. This will depend on the phasing of development and associated green infrastructure.</p> <p>Assuming that vegetation has yet to establish and mature to fulfil the required mitigation, the completed development will result in a localised, medium / high magnitude of change to the views and visual amenity of residents of Pump Lane.</p>	<p>Upon completion, the proposed development will result in Localised, Moderate / Major Adverse Visual Effects for residents of properties on Pump Lane.</p> <p>Without the maturation of the mitigation planting to site boundaries to properties on Pump Lane and the community orchard and planting within open spaces surrounding Pump Farm and Russett Farm, there will be clear views from these properties to the new housing and associated development.</p>
		<p>Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation</p> <p>With the maturation of the planting to site boundaries, within buffers and open spaces and the community orchards, village green and linear green space around Pump Farm and Russett Farm, the development will be set within a landscape framework will be set within a robust landscape framework at the centre of the site.</p> <p>A landscape buffer will separate the school playing fields from properties to the east of Pump Lane with the village green and community orchard providing a substantial offset with softening planting and street trees to the edge of the new housing.</p> <p>The community orchards and linear greenspace with new tree planting will surround Pump Farm and Russett Farm providing a set back, filtering views and retaining an open setting to these properties.</p> <p>Considering the above, the proposals will give rise to a residual permanent, localised and medium magnitude of change for residents of these properties.</p>	<p>With the establishment of mitigation planting and the orchards, opens pace trees and street trees to the centre of the site surrounding properties on Pump Lane, these residents will experience a residual Permanent, Localised and Moderate Adverse Magnitude of Visual Effects upon the views and visual amenity.</p>

8 Visual Effects

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Residents of properties on Lower Bloors Lane	High	<p>Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years)</p> <p>During the construction phase, activities on the site associated with the construction of dwellings to the east of the site will be visible from some properties on Lower Bloors Lane where there are gaps, gateways or lower sections of hedgerow. The movement associated with the construction works may draw attention in filtered views.</p> <p>Given the limited nature of these views and orientation of properties with gardens to the rear, there would be limited impacts, resulting in a localised, temporary and low to medium magnitude of change to the visual amenity of these residents.</p>	For residents of those properties with views over Bloors Lane and into the site through gateways or over sections of lower hedgerow, there may be Temporary, Localised and Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects on the views and visual amenity of resident son Bloors Lane with views towards the site.
		<p>At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation</p> <p>Upon completion of the development, there will be glimpsed or limited views of development set beyond a landscape buffer from properties on Lower Bloors Lane overlooking the site.</p> <p>Depending upon the phasing and timing of the gapping up of hedgerows and planting to landscape buffers along the lane, the mitigation planting may not be totally effective at completion.</p> <p>Assuming the planting has not yet matured, at completion there would be a localised, low to medium magnitude of change to the visual amenity of these residents where there are views of the development.</p>	Upon completion, those properties overlooking the site with views of new development through gaps or over hedgerows may experience Localised, Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects .
		<p>Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation</p> <p>With the maturation of the mitigation planting and enhancements / gapping up of the hedgerows along Lower Bloors Lane, development to the southeast of the site will be set back beyond a robust new boundary, screening views into the site and of the houses beyond.</p> <p>Given the above, there would be a residual permanent, localised and low magnitude of change to the views and visual amenity of residents of properties on Lower Bloors Lane.</p>	Upon maturation of mitigation planting, there would be residual Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effect on the views and visual amenity of residents of properties on Lower Bloors Lane.

8 Visual Effects

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Residents of properties of Lower Rainham adjacent to and overlooking the site	High	<p>Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years)</p> <p>During the construction phase, properties on the southern edge of Lower Rainham overlooking the site will experience views of the construction activities, vehicle movements and associated development and infrastructure on land to the east of Pump Lane from the rear of properties and gardens.</p> <p>The nearest development to these properties will be the school buildings, set back beyond the playing field area and landscape buffer. This will serve to minimise visual effects, although there may be some use of the field for storage, compounds and site office during the construction phase.</p> <p>Bloors Place and adjacent dwellings are separated from the site by tall coniferous hedgerows / shelterbelts and fields managed as orchards. These will effectively screen views into the site.</p> <p>Considering the above, there will be a temporary, localised and medium magnitude of change to the views and visual amenity of these properties during the construction phase.</p>	<p>The construction activities east of Pump Lane will be visible from the rear elevations and gardens of properties on the southern edge of Lower Rainham, resulting in Temporary, Localised and Moderate Adverse Visual Effects on the views and visual amenity of residents of these properties.</p> <p>The works will be set beyond the area of the school playing fields.</p>
		<p>At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation</p> <p>Upon completion of the development, the school buildings and houses will be set beyond the playing fields and a landscape buffer alongside rear gardens incorporating tree planting and attenuation features.</p> <p>If the mitigation planting to the site boundaries has not established at completion, there will be a localised, medium magnitude of change to the views and visual amenity of resident so flower Rainham overlooking the site.</p>	<p>Given the physical separation and distance of the school buildings and new houses from the properties at Lower Rainham overlooking the site, the completed development will give rise to Localised, Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects for the views and visual amenity of residents of these properties.</p>
		<p>Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation</p> <p>With the maturation of the landscape buffer planting, views of development on the site filtered and set beyond the playing fields. There will therefore be a residual permanent, low to medium magnitude of change to the views and visual amenity of these residents.</p>	<p>With the maturation of buffer planting to the site boundaries, there will be residual Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effects for the views and visual amenity of residents in Lower Rainham overlooking the site.</p>

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity of Receptor	Magnitude of Change	Level of Significance of Landscape Effect
Residents of properties at Lower Twydall	Medium	Construction Phase (Duration: 10 years) Properties at Lower Twydall are separated from the site by mature tree belts and hedgerow to garden boundaries and to field boundaries / the former chalk pits to the east. Despite this, there may be views of construction activities and movement to the west of the site from some gardens and upper floors of properties. This would result in a localised, temporary and low / medium magnitude of change .	Given the limited views to the site from these properties, the construction activities may result in Temporary, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effects on views and the visual amenity of residents of properties with views towards the site
		At Completion – Effects Incorporating Mitigation Upon completion, the development will be set beyond intervening trees and hedgerows, resulting in a localised low magnitude of change in views from properties overlooking the site.	Where there may be views of houses beyond intervening trees and hedgerows, this would give rise to Localised, Minor Adverse Visual Effects on the views and visual amenity of these residents.
		Year 15 – Residual Effects: Maturation of Mitigation With the maturation of landscape buffer planting to site boundaries, development would be screened in views beyond the vegetation to intervening field boundaries. There would be a permanent, negligible magnitude of change .	There would be Permanent, Localised and Negligible Visual Effects to the views and visual amenity of residents of properties at Lower Twydall arising from the proposed development.

- 9.1 This LVIA has been prepared by Tyler Grange to support an appeal against the refusal of planning permission for the redevelopment of land off Pump Lane, Lower Rainham for approximately 1,250 residential dwellings, local centre, village green primary school, care home and associated access.
- 9.2 The site comprises an area of land comprising approximately 51.2 hectares of agricultural land that is managed for commercial fruit growing and is laid to orchard. The site is situated on land to the immediate northeast of the built area of Twydall.
- 9.3 To the northeast, the site is bounded by Lower Rainham Road, including the settlement of Lower Rainham. To the southeast, the site is bound by Lower Bloors Lane which connects with Lower Rainham Road and extends to the railway. The western site boundary is irregular in shape, following field boundaries formed by hedgerows and tree belts to areas managed as orchard and arable fields to the northwest, east of Lower Twydall.
- 9.4 The site is bisected by Pump Lane, which runs north-south from Lower Rainham Road and crosses under the railway south of the site. To the centre of, and outside the site development along Pump Lane include Pump Farm and a modern development of houses at Russett Farm.
- 9.5 A bridleway runs diagonally from Lower Bloors Lane on the eastern boundary, connecting with Pump Lane opposite Pump Farm.
- 9.6 Fields within the site are divided by coniferous shelterbelts, including those along the bridleway, as well as bounding the allotments and railway line east of Pump Lane. Tall hedgerows run alongside Pump Lane and Lower Bloors Lane, with breaks in the vegetation at gateways, development frontages and accesses.
- 9.7 The land slopes gently upward from the low-lying marshes north of Lower Rainham Road and shoreline beyond towards the edge of Twydall to the south. The urban area of Twydall, Rainham and Gillingham extends up the slopes towards the wooden skyline of the North Downs beyond.
- 9.8 Land along the shoreline lies within the Riverside Country Park, with car parks, café and play areas on land north of Mariners Farm, north of the site. Horrid Hill and Motney Hill project the shoreline into the Medway Estuary, with the Saxon Shore Way long distance path running along the shoreline. Bloors Lane community woodland lies to the east of the site, accessed off Bloors Lane. Woodland and shelterbelts along the shoreline and inland provide containment and are distinctive features in the local landscape.

Area of Local Landscape Importance

- 9.9 The site is situated within the Gillingham Riverside Area of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI), a non-statutory designation in the Local Plan that represents the lowest tier of designations at a local level (Policy BNE34 within the Medway Local Plan, adopted 2003). The ALLI includes land that extends to the east and west of the site, as well as land to the north of Lower Rainham Road, including the shoreline. The ALLI includes the Riverside Country Park, Parts of the Medway Estuary SSI, SPA and RAMSAR Site, as well as the Motney Hill Local Nature Reserve. The Saxon Shoreline Way long-distance path runs alongside the shoreline within the ALLI.
- 9.10 In addition to their landscape importance, the ALLIs are identified as functioning as buffers between neighbourhoods and communities, green corridors or links for the community to reach the wider countryside, urban fringe land to be protected from urban sprawl and a habitat and wildlife corridors. More specific functions are identified for each of the ALLIs, with the following identified for the Gillingham Riverside ALLI:
- Green buffer separating Twydall and Rainham from areas of international importance for nature conservation and recreation along the Medway estuary;
 - Enhances the setting of the Medway Towns Ring Road and allows attractive views from the river and railway;
 - Provides residents with an extensive area with access to attractive, rural landscape;
 - Provides an attractive setting to the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall conservation areas;
 - Contains a number of orchards, mature hedgerows and farm groups complementing and contributing to the Riverside Country Park; and
 - Forms a green backdrop when viewed from the Medway Estuary.
- 9.11 The site-specific landscape character assessment undertaken by Tyler Grange to inform the LVIA has considered the function and features of the ALLI when assessing the value of each of the Local Landscape Character Areas identified.) This has allowed for the assessment to identify which of the features of each LLCA are related to those factors attributed to the designation of the ALLI and enabled an informed assessment of how the site contributes to

the local character, features and valued aspects of the landscape.

- 9.12 The assessment has found that there are opportunities to provide improved access across the site to connect the urban areas with the shoreline and country park, as well as respect the character of lanes and historic land use for traditional orchards and native trees and hedgerows to field boundaries. Development on land within the site would not directly impact upon the recreation or ecological value of the land along the shoreline north of Lower Rainham Road, nor the character of the agricultural land and associated trees and hedgerows linking with the woodland and vegetation along the shoreline.

Proposed Development

- 9.13 The proposals incorporate a range of mitigation measures to minimise the landscape and visual effects and respond to the local context. These are set out in the Design and Access Statement and have been illustrated on the Landscape Framework plan. The landscape principles and mitigation measures include the following:
- Retaining hedgebanks and hedgerows along Pump Lane and Lower Bloors Lane to respect their character;
 - Planting of community orchards within areas of green space alongside Pump Lane and around the buildings at Pump Farm and Russett Farm;
 - Provision of a village green to provide setting to Pump Lane and the farm buildings / properties and reflect the agricultural heritage and character;
 - Areas of open space incorporating native hedgerows, trees and woodland planting to provide separation and buffers to the conservation areas at Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall;
 - Strengthening of existing hedgerows to site boundaries and provision of landscape buffers to incorporate tree belts and green corridors with recreation routes, foot cycleways and SUDs;
 - Creation of improved connections through areas of green infrastructure and open space within the site;
 - Limiting the height of development to respect the existing built form; and
 - Strategic landscape planting throughout the development and

tree planting to streets to break up the built form and provide a soft green backdrop when the site is viewed from the estuary to the north.

Landscape Assessment

Landscape Character

- 9.14 The site is situated within the “Lower Rainham Farmlands” LCA as identified by the Medway Landscape Character Assessment. The LCA extends between the railway to the south and Lower Rainham Road to the north and includes land up to the ring road to the northwest and edge of Rainham to the southeast. The key characteristics of the LCA include the mixed farmland including orchards, shelterbelts, and hedgebanks, as well as the enclosure by Lower Rainham Road and the railway line.
- 9.15 The Medway Landscape Character Assessment recognises that the area has poor accessibility and links to urban areas and is divided by development at Rainham. Guidelines for the area include improving links between Twydall and the open countryside and with the Riverside Marshes to the north which is recognised for its value as a green buffer and link to the wider countryside.
- 9.16 The site-specific landscape character assessment undertaken by Tyler Grange has defined the **Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA** which covers the area of and between the ring road on the edge of Gillingham to the west and Rainham to the east. The site is situated within this LLCA, which is characterised by the gently sloping land with large rectilinear field managed as commercial orchards and arable fields. Paddocks and remnant orchards are present near the ring road to the northwest. Bloors Lane Community Woodland and tree belts provide enclosure to the southeast of the area.
- 9.17 The site-specific character assessment also identifies those features within and adjacent to the site which may be affected by the proposed development. These include: Lower Bloors Lane, Pump Lane, Bridleway GB6a, Pump Farm & Russett Farm, Commercial Orchards; Lower Rainham & Lower Twydall; Lower Rainham Road; and the role of the site as part of a green backdrop when viewed from the Medway.
- 9.18 The land north and east of Rainham has been identified as falling within the **Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA** which is separated from the site by Rainham Road to the north and development that extends northwards along Berengrave Lane to Motney Hill Road. The Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA provides separation between the shoreline and land south of Rainham Road.

- 9.19 The site-specific assessment has defined the strip of land north of the marshes farmland as the Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA. This includes the Saxon Shore Way and Riverside Country Park, including woodland and tree belts that form a distinctive vegetated backdrop to the estuary. Views across the estuary are identified as a perceptual attribute of this LLCA.

Landscape Sensitivity

Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA

- 9.20 The assessment has identified the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA, including the site, as having an overall **Medium Landscape Sensitivity** to residential development. The LLCA has been assessed as making a Low / Medium Contribution to the features and function of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI. The LLCA has a role in providing a setting to the conservation areas at Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall, as well as part of a wider buffer between Twydall and Rainham and green backdrop in views from the estuary.
- 9.21 The Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA has been assessed as having a **Medium Landscape Sensitivity**. The LLCA is valued for its recreation and ecological qualities associated with the Riverside Country Park and nature reserves. Woodland and hedgerows to field boundaries provide structure and enclosure, linking with the vegetation along the shoreline to the north. The LLCA has been assessed as making a Medium Contribution to the features and function of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI.
- 9.22 The Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA has been assessed as having a **High Landscape Sensitivity**. The LLCA is valued for its recreation, ecological and perceptual qualities associated with views across the estuary, as well as the distinctive character of the shoreline well vegetated backdrop. The LLCA makes a High Contribution to the features and function of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI.

Landscape Effects

- 9.23 Within the wider Study Area, the proposed development would not be inconsistent with the pattern and extent of development. The site is situated within a peri urban context with the urban form of Twydall and Rainham impacting upon the character of the landscape across the Study Area.
- 9.24 The settlement pattern in the area includes development that lies in proximity to the shoreline, including the edge of Gillingham to the northwest. In proximity to the site, land at Rainham to the east

extends north beyond the railway line up to Lower Rainham Road, south of Motney Hill. Houses and commercial / light industrial units extend north of Lower Rainham Road on Motney Hill Road, on land adjacent to a nature reserve and in proximity to the Saxon Shore Way.

- 9.25 As recognised within the Medway Landscape Character Assessment, the Medway Fruit Belt Landscape Character Area has poor east-west connectivity and access to the recreation facilities and landscape of the Riverside Country Park and Saxon Shore Way. The site in particular has poor access and does not provide connections from the wider urban area to existing amenities, including nature reserves, community woodland and the wider Public Right of Way network.
- 9.26 The proposals offer the opportunity to greatly improve public access across the area, as well as the provision of attractive areas of green space including community orchards, recreation walks, equipped play areas, a village green and informal green spaces.

Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA

- 9.27 The proposals have been assessed as resulting in **Moderate Adverse Landscape Effects** at the Local Landscape Character Area scale for the Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall Fruit Belt LLCA. This reflects the extent of the site within this LLCA and degree of change associated with the removal of the commercial orchards and construction of the proposed residential development.

Site-Wide Effects

- 9.28 The assessment has also identified that the effects at a site-wide level will also be **Moderate Adverse**. The containment of the site by existing development and woodland, shelterbelts / tree belts and tall hedgerows limit the influence that development will have upon the wider landscape. The strategic landscape buffers and associated planting proposed on the site boundaries will further contain and enclose the site, limiting any effects on landscape receptors and character areas beyond.
- 9.29 The assessment has also identified the likely effects on a number of landscape receptors within and bounding the site, taking into account embedded mitigation. These have identified **Moderate Adverse** effects for the Orchards, setting to Lower Rainham and character of Pump Lane, feeding into the overall site-wide assessment.

Indirect Effects: Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA

- 9.30 In addition to the effects on the site area and associated features, the assessment has also considered indirect effects on other landscapes within the Study Area, including the Medway Marshes Farmland LLCA and Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA.
- 9.31 Although these LLCAs are separated from the site by Lower Rainham Road, settlement and the belt of woodland and tree planting along the shoreline, land on the upper slopes to the southwest of the site is visible from vantage points on the shoreline from Horrid Hill (Riverside Country Park) and Motney Hill (Saxon Shore Way). As recognised within the Local Plan, the green backdrop to views from the estuary is a feature of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI, within which the site is situated. In this respect the backdrop to the estuary is one of the perceptual aspects and part of the scenic quality of the Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park LLCA.
- 9.32 As recognised by the site-specific landscape character assessment, the vegetation along the shoreline within this LLCA makes a high contribution to the green backdrop to the estuary. The proposed development will not impact on this.
- 9.33 The tree planting associated with the proposed development will, upon maturation provide a green canopy that will soften and break up development both on the site and within the built area of Twydall on the rising land to the south. There will therefore be a **Residual Localised, Indirect Minor Adverse Effect** on the Medway Shoreline and Riverside Country Park associated with the proposed development.

Visual Assessment

Visual Context

- 9.34 From the Hoo Peninsula on the northern shore of the Medway estuary there are expansive panoramic views across the mudflats and marshes towards the southern shoreline.
- 9.35 There are also expansive views across the wider estuary and backdrop to the shorelines of the Hoo Peninsula to the north and Lower Rainham to the south from Horrid Hill and Motney Hill. The composition of the views from these locations is similar to that from the more distant views to the north, with the vegetated shoreline and buildings along Lower Rainham Road beyond.

- 9.36 Views from the shoreline along the Saxon Shore Way north of Lower Rainham Road are orientated across the expansive views of the Estuary to the north and northwest. Views inland are screened by the vegetation and woodland that runs alongside the shoreline.
- 9.37 From the east, the site is set beyond tall hedgerows and hedgebanks along Lower Bloors Lane. Views are focussed along the narrow, enclosed lane, with occasional glimpsed over hedgerows or through gateways.
- 9.38 Within the built area of Twydall, views are orientated along the residential streets and local roads. These follow a grid pattern, with Beechings Way running southeast – northwest channelling views.
- 9.39 There are some views north from properties and streets that overlook the site adjacent to the railway line. In the summer, when trees and hedgerows are in leaf views across the site are heavily filtered.
- 9.40 In views obtained from gateways on Lower Twydall Lane, the rolling topography and hedgerows to field boundaries limit distant views to the east. The main focus of views is along the narrow lane that is bounded by tall hedgerows with little outward visibility.
- 9.41 There are views along the railway line for the footbridge on Lower Twydall Lane, with oblique views across the site to the wooded backdrop beyond. Wider views are limited by trees surrounding properties at Lower Twydall.
- 9.42 Views from the bridleway that runs between Pump Lane and Lower Bloors Lane through the site are enclosed by tall coniferous hedgerows and channelled along the route of the path. Outward views are limited to those through gateways or short sections of post and rail fencing.
- 9.43 Views along Pump Lane are channelled by the tall roadside hedgerows with glimpses through gateways into the site. Properties at Pump Farm, Russetts Farm and cottages along the lane introduce development and focal points.

Visual Effects

- 9.44 A summary of the key findings of the assessment are set out below for each of the groups of people (visual receptors) identified within the baseline assessment as having the potential to have their views and visual amenity affected by the proposed development. The effects during the construction phase are therefore generally greater than those experienced upon completion and the residual

effects once the landscape mitigation has matured.

Users of the Saxon Shore Way and Riverside Country Park

- 9.45 As identified through the analysis of policy and the baseline studies, access to the countryside and the associated recreational and amenity benefits are valued aspects of the landscape, with the views along the shoreline and across the estuary forming part of the experience enjoying by people using the Saxon Shore Way and Riverside Country Park. The contribution that the visual experience and views make to the value of the landscape has been incorporated into the assessment of landscape effects and has also informed the sensitivity of these people to visual changes associated with the proposals. This has included consideration of the contribution that the site makes as part of the green backdrop in views from the estuary, including those obtained from Horrid Hill (within the Riverside Country Park) and the Saxon Shore Way. Users of these recreation resources have been assessed as being of a **Medium / High sensitivity** to visual change associated with the proposed development.
- 9.46 Users of the Saxon Shore Way to the north of the Medway Estuary have the potential to experience **Minor Adverse Visual Effects** upon completion of the development, reducing to **Neutral** after 15 years when the planting to site boundaries and within the site mature. This reflects the distance of the viewers and limited nature of change in relation to the expansive views across the wider estuary.
- 9.47 In views from the Saxon Shore Way south of Motney Hill and Horrid Hill within the Riverside Country Park, the proposals will be more visible due to the closer proximity. In views from these locations, the proposed development will be visible, set beyond vegetation on the shoreline and properties in Lower Rainham. The houses will be viewed against the built edge of Twydall and Rainham that extends up the slopes beyond the site the south.
- 9.48 Upon maturation of the landscape buffer planting and trees throughout the development, this will reduce to **residual Permanent, Localised Minor Adverse Visual Effects**.
- 9.49 As recognised within the assessment for the above receptors, the expansive views across the estuary from these vantage points and along the recreational routes will not be affected by the proposals. In those views back towards the shore from the north and promontories of Horrid Hill and Motney Hill, the development will retain a green backdrop, set beyond the woodland and shelterbelts along the shoreline and tying-in with the woodland and trees that bound the site and within adjacent areas. The

proposals will also soften the existing linear developed edge south of the railway line through the provision of extensive new planting to boundaries and within the site.

Users of Lower Rainham Road

- 9.50 For users of Lower Rainham Road passing the site, there will be **Localised Minor Adverse Visual Effects** arising from the implementation of the new site entrance to the northwest of Pump Lane both at completion and residual effects (after 15 years) when the landscape mitigation has matured.

Users of Lower Bloors Lane

- 9.51 The residual effects will be **Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse** once the mitigation planting has matured.

Users of Lower Twydall Lane

- 9.52 In the limited views of the site available Lower Twydall Lane, the site is set beyond intervening trees and hedgerows to field boundaries. In views from the footbridge over the railway on Lower Twydall Lane, housing to the southwest of the site will replace oblique views across the site beyond filtering vegetation along the railway line. The development will be seen in context with houses at Lower Twydall to the south of the railway line and result in **Localised Permanent, Minor Adverse Visual Effects** with the maturation of the tree belts alongside the railway which will filter and soften views of the houses within the site.

Users of Pump Lane

- 9.53 Once the landscape planting and community orchard areas, village green and buffers to the village centre, care home and school have established, the residual effects for users of Pump Lane will be **Permanent, Localised and Minor / Moderate Adverse**.
- 9.54 Development will be set back from the lane beyond areas managed as community orchards, the village green and opens spaces, in keeping with the existing glimpsed views of orchards obtained to the south of Russett Farm. The hedgerows along the lane and supplementary planting will screen views of development, with views along new accesses off the lane set beyond verges with street trees.

Users of Bridleway GB6a

- 9.55 The bridleway will pass alongside areas of open space including play areas / pocket parks and pass through the village green.

As the landscape establishes and planting matures, these will increase to **Permanent, Localised Minor / Moderate Beneficial Visual Effects**. This reflects the change from an enclosed path with glimpsed views of commercial orchards to a route that is integrated into areas of open space with recreation and amenity spaces at the heart of the new community.

Users of Trains Passing the Site

- 9.56 With the maturation of buffer planting incorporating tree belts along the railway there will be **Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effects** for users of trains. The assessment reflects the fleeting, glimpsed nature and extent of the views from the trains and the existing vegetation that filters outward views across the site from along much of the southwestern site boundary.

Residents of Properties Adjacent to and Overlooking the Site

- 9.57 The Visual Assessment has also given consideration to the likely effects upon the views and visual amenity of residents of properties adjacent to and overlooking the site.

Residents of properties in Twydall south of the railway

- 9.58 With the maturation of landscape buffer planting alongside the railway, the loss of views across the site will give rise to **Permanent Minor / Moderate Adverse Visual Effects** for these residents.
- 9.59 The assessment recognises the context within which the views of the site are experienced, beyond a busy railway line and planting to gardens and alongside the railway line filtering views across the site.

Residents of Properties on Pump Lane

- 9.60 Upon maturation of the trees and establishment of landscape to areas of green infrastructure and open spaces, the residual effects will be **Permanent, Localised and Moderate Adverse**. This recognises the setting of the properties at the heart of a landscape framework to the centre of the site and development incorporating buffers, green spaces, the village green and community orchards.

Residents of Properties on Lower Bloors Lane

- 9.61 Once gapping up and enhancement works to the hedgerows and trees / landscape buffer within the site has matured, these will give rise to **Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effects**.

Residents of Properties of Lower Rainham

- 9.62 The setting-back of the development beyond a landscape buffer and the playing fields will result in **Permanent, Localised and Minor Adverse Visual Effects** with the maturation of the planting to the landscape buffers along the site boundaries and adjacent to the playing fields and housing south of the school.

Residents of Properties at Lower Twydall

- 9.63 There are limited views towards the site from properties at lower Twydall. For those with outward views to the east, intervening vegetation to field boundaries filters views into the western site area. There will be **Permanent Negligible Visual Effects** upon maturation of the landscape buffer planting to the western site boundary which will screen views of the development.

From: Jon Etchells
To: Robert Hughes; hannah.gunner@medway.gov.uk
Cc: "Duncan Parr"; "Michael Birch"
Subject: RE: Land off Pump Lane, Lower Rainham (application MC/19/1566) : Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
Date: 19 September 2020 10:36:26
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image007.png](#)
[image008.png](#)
[image009.png](#)

Rob,

I have now been asked to look at this by the Council and can now therefore provide advice on their behalf.

Thank you for the viewpoint information, which appears comprehensive, my only comments in respect of the viewpoints are:

1. The number and range of viewpoints now appear to be appropriate for a project of this scale, and I have no suggestions for additional views.
2. I think it would help in terms of understanding what the various photographs show if each could have a sentence of commentary beneath (or some labels) explaining what is shown in the view and what the approximate location/ extent of the site in the view is.

Regards,

Jon

From: Robert Hughes [mailto:r.hughes@tylerrange.co.uk]
Sent: 17 September 2020 08:55
To: Jon Etchells; hannah.gunner@medway.gov.uk
Cc: 'Duncan Parr'; 'Michael Birch'
Subject: RE: Land off Pump Lane, Lower Rainham (application MC/19/1566) : Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Good Morning Jon,

Apologies for any confusion.

It is understood that you are unable to provide feedback ahead of being instructed to do so by the Council and we were not expecting you to do otherwise.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course once you have been appointed.

Regards,

Rob



Robert Hughes CML
Technical Director

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From: Jon Etchells <je@jon-etchells.co.uk>
Sent: 17 September 2020 08:35
To: Robert Hughes <r.hughes@tylerrange.co.uk>; hannah.gunner@medway.gov.uk
Cc: 'Duncan Parr' <Duncan.Parr@rapleys.com>; 'Michael Birch' <Michael.Birch@rapleys.com>
Subject: RE: Land off Pump Lane, Lower Rainham (application MC/19/1566) : Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Rob,

Without wishing to be difficult, what I actually said in my message is that I can't advise you on this without being asked to do so by the Council, so I can't look at the views in advance of being asked to do that.

I don't imagine that it would be a problem, as it wouldn't take very long and as you say I did comment on the original LVIA, but I can't provide further advice without being asked to do so.

Regards,

Jon

From: Robert Hughes [mailto:r.hughes@tylerrange.co.uk]
Sent: 15 September 2020 09:59
To: hannah.gunner@medway.gov.uk; je@jon-etchells.co.uk
Cc: Duncan Parr; Michael Birch
Subject: Land off Pump Lane, Lower Rainham (application MC/19/1566) : Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Good Morning Hannah,

Tyler Grange have been appointed by AC Gotham and Sons to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the redevelopment of land off Pump Lane, Lower Rainham for approximately 1,250 residential units.

The LVIA is being prepared to support a Planning Appeal against the refusal of permission for the outline application.

I am writing to seek confirmation of the acceptance of the representative viewpoints that we propose to include in the new LVIA.

As part of the Officers Report, it is noted that Jon Etchells Consulting undertook a review of the LVIA that was prepared by Lloyd Bore to support the application. Within his review, Mr Etchells has summarised that the LVIA was prepared in accordance with an appropriate and recognised methodology, finding a reasonably balanced assessment of the likely effects on the landscape character at both years 1 and 15. However, he has criticised the use of only 8 representative views, considering that this is too few for a site of the size of the application site.

Having undertaken an independent baseline assessment informed by fieldwork, Tyler Grange have identified 22 representative viewpoints to support the new LVIA. I attach copies of the viewpoint location plan and photosheets.

I have been in touch with Jon Etchells and he has asked that I copy him in so he can take a look at the views, ahead of receiving confirmation of appointment by the Council to provide his feedback.

I would be grateful if you and Jon could review and confirm acceptance of the viewpoints and receptors listed below and attached.

The views are representative of the following groups of people (visual receptors):

- Users of the Saxon Shore Way (Viewpoints 1, 4 and 5);
- Users of the Riverside Country Park and Horrid Hill (Viewpoints 3 and 4)
- Users of Lower Rainham Road (Viewpoints 6 -8)
- Users of Lower Bloors Lane (Viewpoints 9 -11)
- Users of Lower Twydall Lane (Viewpoints 12 and 13)
- Users of Bridleway GB6a (Viewpoints 14a, 14b and 15)
- Users of Pump Lane (Viewpoints 16 – 18)
- Residents of properties adjacent to and overlooking the site on the edge of Twydall (Viewpoint 19).

Viewpoints 20 – 22 are taken from within the built area of Twydall and demonstrate that views into the site are screened by development along Beechings Way and in the wider built area.

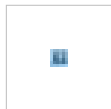
The LVIA is also considering the visual amenity of residents of properties on Pump Lane, Lower Bloors Lane, Lower Rainham and Lower Twydall.

I trust all is clear. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Rob



Robert Hughes CMLU
Technical Director

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Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology summary of Approach and Criteria Tables

The key terms used within assessments are:

- Susceptibility and Value – Which contribute to Sensitivity;
- Scale, Geographical Extent, Duration and Reversibility – which contribute to the Magnitude of change; and
- Significance of Effect – a judgement of the level of significance of effect when Sensitivity and Magnitude are combined.

Sensitivity

Overall sensitivity lies along a continuum of low to high. The *Value and Susceptibility* of a receptor are both considered understanding its overall sensitivity.

Susceptibility is assessed for both landscape receptors including, landscape character areas, and for visual receptors (people). It indicates the ability of a defined landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development “without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.” (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 5.40) and identifies “the occupation or activity of people experiencing views at particular locations and the extent to which their attention may be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at a particular locations.” (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 6.32). An example of how Susceptibility can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in the following tables below A and B for both landscape and visual receptors.

Landscape **Value** is “the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society” (GLVIA, 3rd edition, page 157). Box 5.1 (GLVIA 3rd edition, page 84) sets out factors to be considered in the identification of valued landscapes. These can be broadly described as: Landscapes recognised and valued for their quality and and/or cultural associations; key characteristics and features as recognised in published landscape character assessments; Landscape constriction and the degree to which the landscape is intact and legible. An example of how Value can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in the following table 1 for landscape receptors. In visual terms, Value relates to that attached to views experienced by receptors (people). An example of how Value can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided below for visual receptors in the following table 2.

Magnitude of Change

Overall magnitude of change lies along a continuum of low to high. Together the *Scale, Geographical Extent, and Duration and Reversibility* of effect are all considered in understanding the overall Magnitude of change.

Scale of effect is assessed for both landscape and visual receptors and identifies the degree of change which would arise from the development. An example of how Scale of effect can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in the following tables 3 and 4 for both landscape and visual receptors.

Geographical Extent of effect of is assessed for both landscape and visual receptors and indicates the geographic area over which the effects will be felt. An example of how Geographical Extent can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in the following tables 3 and 4 for both landscape and visual receptors.

Duration and Reversibility of effect is assessed for all landscape and visual receptors and identifies the time period over which the change to the receptor would arise as a result of the development. An example of how Duration and Reversibility can be described at each end of the continuum of low to high is provided in the following tables 3 and 4 for both landscape and visual receptors.

Significance of Effect

Best practice guidelines stipulate that the significance of any landscape related impact should be evaluated, both during the construction works and following completion of the development. The significance of any landscape and visual effect is a function of the sensitivity of the affected landscape resources and visual receptors against the magnitude of change that they would experience. As such, the assessment of potential and residual effects can be described as: negligible, minor, moderate, and major. A description is set out in table.5

The following terms will be used to define residual landscape/townscape effects:

Adverse: the proposed development may result in direct loss of physical landscape/townscape resources, weaken key characteristics or negatively affect the integrity of a landscape/townscape designation; and

Beneficial: the proposed development may replace poor quality elements of the existing landscape/townscape or strengthen existing landscape/townscape characteristics.


The following terms have been used to define residual visual effects:

Adverse: the proposed development reduces visual amenity; and

Beneficial: the visual amenity is improved by the proposed development.

Table.1 Sensitivity of Receptors: Landscape/Townscape Receptors

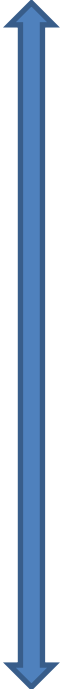
As set out below, the Sensitivity lies along a continuum of low to high. The Value and Susceptibility of a receptor are both considered in understanding its overall Sensitivity.

	Landscape Value			Landscape Susceptibility
	Designations and Conservation Interests/Associations <i>Landscapes recognised and valued for their quality and / or cultural associations / recreational value</i>	Key Characteristics and Features <i>As recognised in published Landscape Character Assessments or policy</i>	Landscape Condition <i>Degree to which the landscape is intact and legible & its scenic quality</i>	<i>The ability of a defined landscape to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences</i>
<div> <div>High</div> <div>  </div> <div>Low</div> </div>	National / Regional Importance (e.g. AONB, National Park, Registered Parks and Gardens)	<p>Features which are dominant within the landscape and are fundamental to defining the distinct landscape character of an area.</p> <p>Important characteristics and features recognised as forming intrinsic part of nationally and regionally designated landscapes.</p> <p>Distinctive individual or rare features.</p>	<p>Distinct landscape structure with strong pattern and intact features.</p> <p>Few detractors or uncharacteristic features or elements present.</p>	The landscape is such that changes in terms of the proposed development would be entirely at odds with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.
	Local importance (e.g. Conservation Areas, Special Landscape Areas / Features)	<p>Locally important and notable features that contribute to the overall character of an area.</p> <p>Features and elements protected by local policy.</p>	<p>Landscape exhibits recognisable structure and characteristic patterns.</p> <p>Some detracting features present.</p>	The proposed development has a degree of consistency with the existing scale, pattern, grain, land use of the prevailing character, although mitigation may be appropriate to enhance assimilation.
	No Designation	Features or elements that are uncharacteristic and detract from the landscape character of an area.	<p>Degraded landscape structure with fragmented pattern and poor legibility of character.</p> <p>Detracting features notable within the landscape.</p>	The proposed development is entirely consistent with the character of the local area, related to matters including pattern, grain, use, scale and mass.

e.g. Medium – Landscape Character Area does not include a designation but includes important characteristics and features that create a distinct landscape structure with strong pattern and intact features. The proposed development has a degree of consistency with the existing scale, pattern, grain, land use of the prevailing character, although mitigation may be appropriate to enhance assimilation.

Table.2 Sensitivity of Receptors: Visual Receptors

As set out below, the Sensitivity lies along a continuum of low to high. The Value and Susceptibility of a receptor are both considered understanding its overall Sensitivity.

	<i>Value (attached to views)</i>	<i>Visual Susceptibility</i> <i>The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view and the extent to which their attention or interest may be focused on the views and their visual amenity at particular locations</i>
High  Low	<p>Recognised national / Important Viewpoints, including those identified within and protected by policy.</p> <p>These viewpoints may be tourist destinations and marked on maps.</p> <p>Designed views, including from within historic landscapes.</p> <p>Users of nationally recognized routes e.g. National Cycle Network, National Trails.</p> <p>Land with public access (i.e. Open Access Land and National Trust Land).</p> <p>Locally important views/ views.</p> <p>Views from within locally designated landscapes e.g. Conservation Areas and local planning policy.</p> <p>Views from local routes identified on maps</p> <p>Permissive routes, not recognised by policy or identified on maps.</p> <p>No designations present</p>	<p>People visiting recognised viewpoints with views towards the development.</p> <p>People using Public Rights of Way and Access Land as part of recreational routes with extensive views towards the development.</p> <p>People using recreational facilities or playing outdoor sports with views of the development but for whom views are not the main focus.</p> <p>Users of Public Rights of Way and Access Land with intermittent views towards the development.</p> <p>People travelling along roads or using transport routes where the focus is not on the views and views of the development are fleeting.</p> <p>People at places of work where attention is not on the views.</p> <p>Users of Public Rights of Way and Access Land where views towards the development are limited to glimpses and are not the main focus of attention.</p>

e.g. Medium - views of the landscape are part of, but not the sole purpose of the receptors activities along local routes.

Table.3 Magnitude of Change: Landscape/Townscape Receptors

As set out below, magnitude of change lies along a continuum of low to high. Together the Scale, Geographical extent, and Duration and Reversibility of effect are all considered in understanding the overall magnitude of change.

	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Geographical Extent</i>	<i>Duration and Reversibility</i>
	<i>identifies the degree of change which would arise from the development</i>	<i>of effect indicates the geographic area over which the effects will be felt</i>	<i>of effect identifies the time period over which the change to the receptor would arise as a result of the development.</i>
High	Highly noticeable change, affecting most key characteristics and dominating the experience of the Landscape/Townscape; introduction of highly conspicuous new development; and the baseline situation will be fundamentally changed.	Extensive affecting the majority or all the Landscape/Townscape Character Area.	Long-term or permanent, the change is expected to be in place for 10+ years and there may be no intention for it to be reversed or only partially reversed.
	Partial alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline situation will be largely unchanged but noticeable despite discernible differences.	Localised, affecting the site and a proportion of the wider Landscape/Townscape Character Area.	Medium-term, the change is expected to be in place for 5-10 years and the effects may be reversed or partially reversed.
Low	Minor alteration to few elements, features qualities or characteristics resulting in a barely perceptible change.	Affecting the site and immediate setting only.	Short-term, the change is expected to be in place for 0-5 years and the effects are likely to be reversed.

e.g. Medium – Highly noticeable change with introduction of highly conspicuous development which will affect the site and a proportion of the character area for a short-term during construction. The effects are likely to be reversed.

Table.4 Magnitude of Change: Visual Receptors


As set out below, magnitude of change lies along a continuum of low to high. Together the Scale, Geographical extent, and Duration and Reversibility of effect are all considered in understanding the overall magnitude of change.

	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Geographical Extent</i>	<i>Duration and Reversibility</i>
	<i>identifies the degree of change which would arise from the development</i>	<i>Wide, and/or within close proximity, and/or open views.</i>	<i>identifies the time period over which the change to the receptor would arise as a result of the development.</i>
High	Intensive/dominant or major alteration to key elements of the baseline view.	Extensive, open and/or close proximity, and/or direct and/or affecting unscreened views.	Long-term or permanent, the change is expected to be in place for 10+ years and there may be no intention for it to be reversed or only partially reversed.
	Partial/noticeable or minor alteration to key elements of the baseline view.	Framed, and/or contained, and/or medium distance, and/or partially screened views.	Medium-term, the change is expected to be in place for 5-10 years and the effects may be reversed or partially reversed.
Low	Minor alteration to few elements of the baseline view.	Narrow, and/or fragmented, and/or long distance, and/or heavily screened views.	Short-term, the change is expected to be in place for 0-5 years and the effects are likely to be reversed.

e.g. Medium – Intensive and major alteration to key elements of the framed baseline view over a medium distance for a short period of time during construction. The effects are likely to be reversible.

Table.5 Level of Significance of Effect

Landscape/Townscape or visual effects above moderate adverse (i.e. Major) are considered to be significant; all other effects are considered not significant.

	Major beneficial:	The development would fit well with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape and bring substantial enhancements. The development would create a major improvement in views;
	Moderate beneficial:	The development would fit well with the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape, maintain and/or enhance the existing landscape character. The development would create a noticeable but improved change in the view;
	Minor beneficial:	The development would complement the scale, landform and pattern of the landscape, whilst maintaining the existing character. The development would result in minor improvements to the existing views;
	Negligible:	The development would cause very limited changes to the landscape and/or views but creates no significant effects; the development would create neither an adverse or beneficial change to the landscape or visual receptor;
	Minor adverse:	The development would cause minor permanent and/or temporary loss or alteration to one or more key elements or features of the landscape, to include the introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape. The development would cause limited visual intrusion;
	Moderate adverse:	The development would cause substantial permanent loss or alteration to one or more key elements of the landscape, to include the introduction of elements that are distinct but may not be substantially uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape. The development would be clearly visible and would result in adverse effects upon the landscape;
	Major adverse:	The development would irrevocably damage, degrade or badly diminish landscape character features, elements and their setting. The development would be irrevocably visually intrusive and would disrupt fine and valued views both into and across the area.