

08284A
East Hill, Chatham

3.03 Understanding Ecology

The majority of the site is generally of low ecological value as it is mostly intensively farmed agricultural land, however the boundaries and margins of the site provide high quality ecological features.

1. Fragments of chalk grassland have been recorded around the margins of the arable fields and in unmanaged or infrequently managed areas. These species-rich areas of grassland also support man orchid, which is a UK BAP priority vascular plant species. Important hedgerows under the wildlife and landscape criteria of the Hedgerows Regulations have been identified.
2. North Dane Wood and Whites Wood is ancient woodland.
3. 'Low' populations of slow worm were found in one location within the northern edge of the Site. A single 'Good' slow worm population was found on the banks of Shawstead Road. A single 'Exceptional' slow worm population on the western boundary of the Site. A 'low' population common lizards were recorded in two locations during the surveys and a 'low' population grass snake were recorded across the entire Site. The reptile populations identified across the Site are considered to be of Local Importance.
4. Evidence of dormice have been recorded in a total of 30 tubes/boxes around the Site's boundaries, including a peak count of 18 dormice seen by the surveyors during one

5. A roost of common pipistrelle bats identified within a tree northern boundary of the site. Bat activity the surveys have recorded a low level of activity although a moderate diversity of bat species were recorded. The bat habitat and the species assemblage identified is therefore considered to be of Neighbourhood Importance.
 6. Badger surveys have been carried out at East Hill, Hempstead and evidence of badger use has been identified. Four areas of the Site showed evidence of use by badgers and were monitored throughout 2018. One hole has been confirmed to be in active use by badgers and appears to be an outlier sett. There are an additional five holes located on the Site's southern boundary within the edge of North Dane Wood. It is considered that the badger population within Site is of Local Importance.
- The wider survey area is considered to be of minor importance to the functionality of the nearby SPA, given the extent of these types of habitats in the surrounding area, many of the arable fields in the area are likely to support these bird species at some time during the winter period. The bird assemblage supported is considered to be of Local Importance.
- A total of 24 species have been recorded breeding in the Site. A total of eight species of conservation importance were found

to be breeding or likely breeding within the survey area. Based on the range of bird species of conservation importance recorded, it is considered that the Site should be considered as being of Local Importance for its breeding birds.

Invertebrate monitoring surveys were been carried out in 2018. A total of 617 species have been recorded across the site. This has included 12 Red data book species, 11 Nationally Scarce, eight Nationally Scarce a and 30 Nationally Scarce b species and two UK Biodiversity Action Plan Species.



08284A
East Hill, Chatham

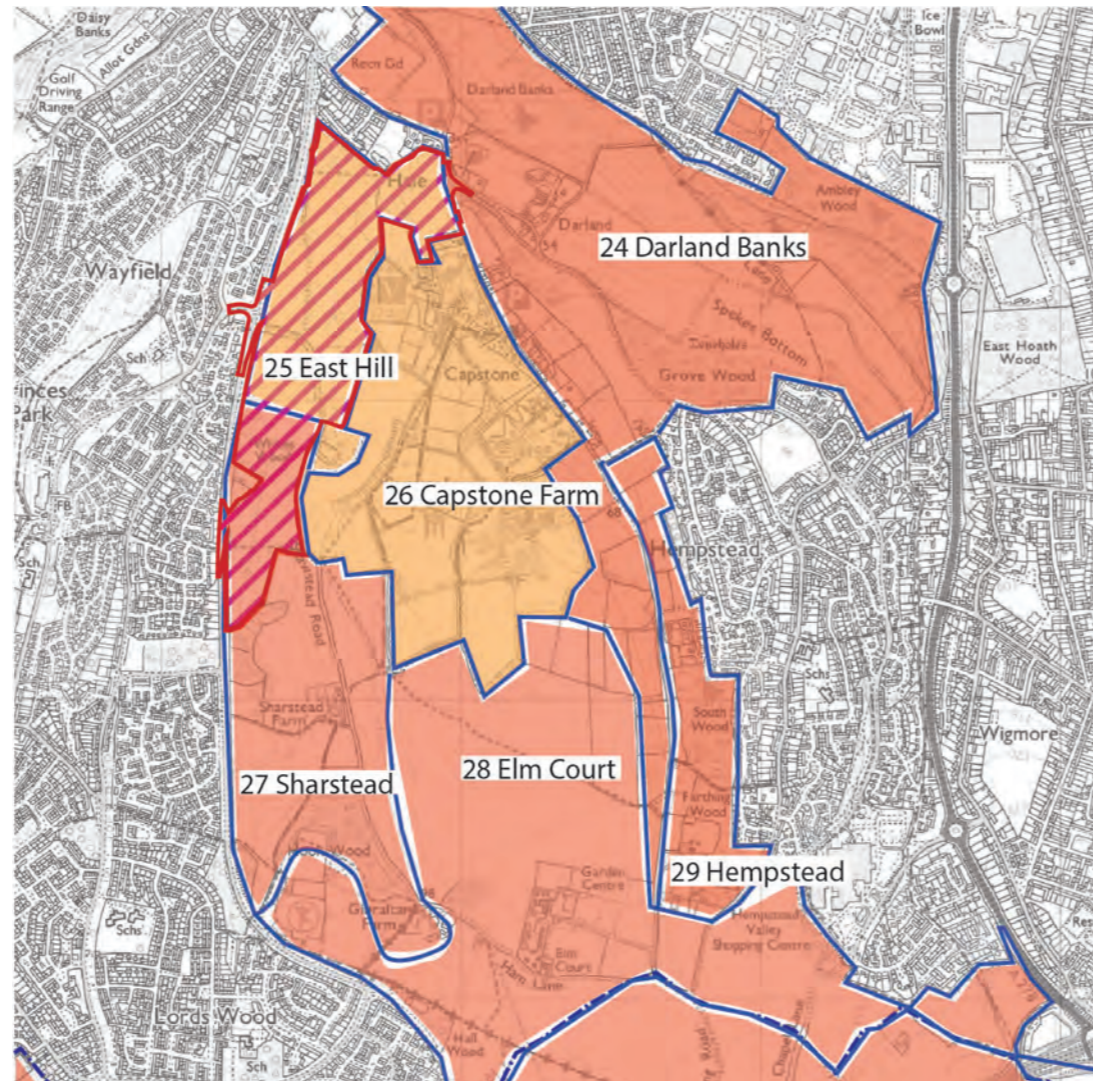
3.04 Understanding Landscape Character & Vegetation

The East Hill site forms a small part of an extensive corridor of countryside extending northwards from the M2 to Motorway and North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty up to the settlement edge of the Medway towns of Chatham, Gillingham and Hempstead. Although attractive in appearance none of the landscape north of the motorway is subject to any statutory landscape designation.

The local authority has undertaken a landscape character assessment of all the land beyond the urban edges in the borough. The East Hill site forms part of a collection of character areas centred on the Capstone Farm Country Park. Most of these parcels of countryside were assessed as being of high landscape sensitivity. The exception to this being the East Hill Character Area (No.25) which is rated as having a lower, moderate, sensitivity, and contains the main part of the proposed development area. The southern part of the site extends into the Sharstead Farm LCA (No.27) but in terms of character and condition it is closely aligned with LCA 25.

Vegetation

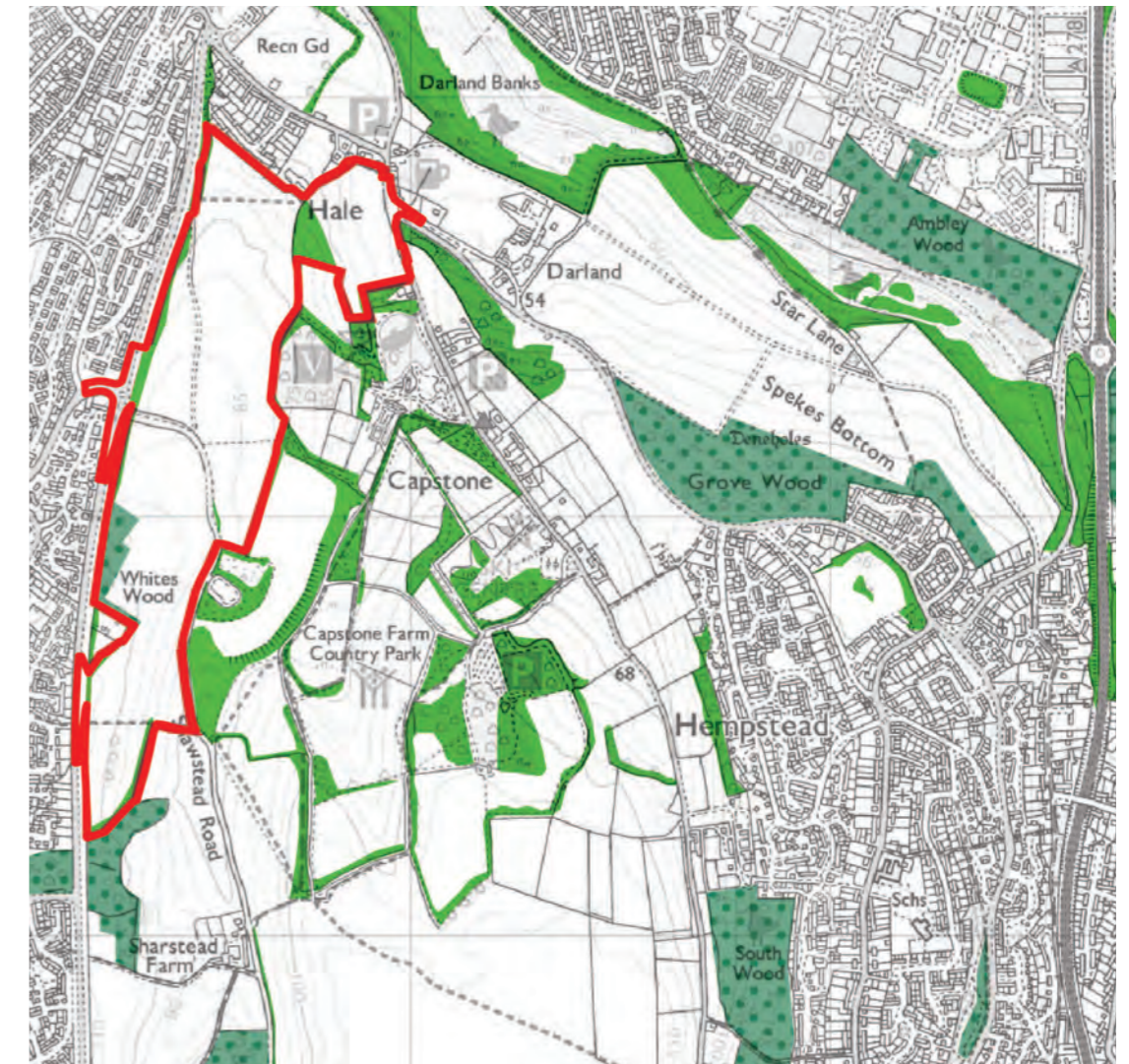
The site consists predominantly of arable agricultural land with little on-site vegetation of note other than a piece of woodland between fields on the sloping ground to the north-east, a number of field boundary hedges and more sporadic hedgerows beside road verges along Shawstead Road. The more extensive blocks of vegetation lie immediately adjacent to the site along North Dane Way and on high ground along the Capstone, Hempstead and Darland Banks ridges.



Character and Sensitivity

LEGEND

- High Sensitivity
- Moderate Sensitivity



Significant Vegetation

LEGEND

- Ancient woodland
- Existing significant vegetation

08284A
East Hill, Chatham

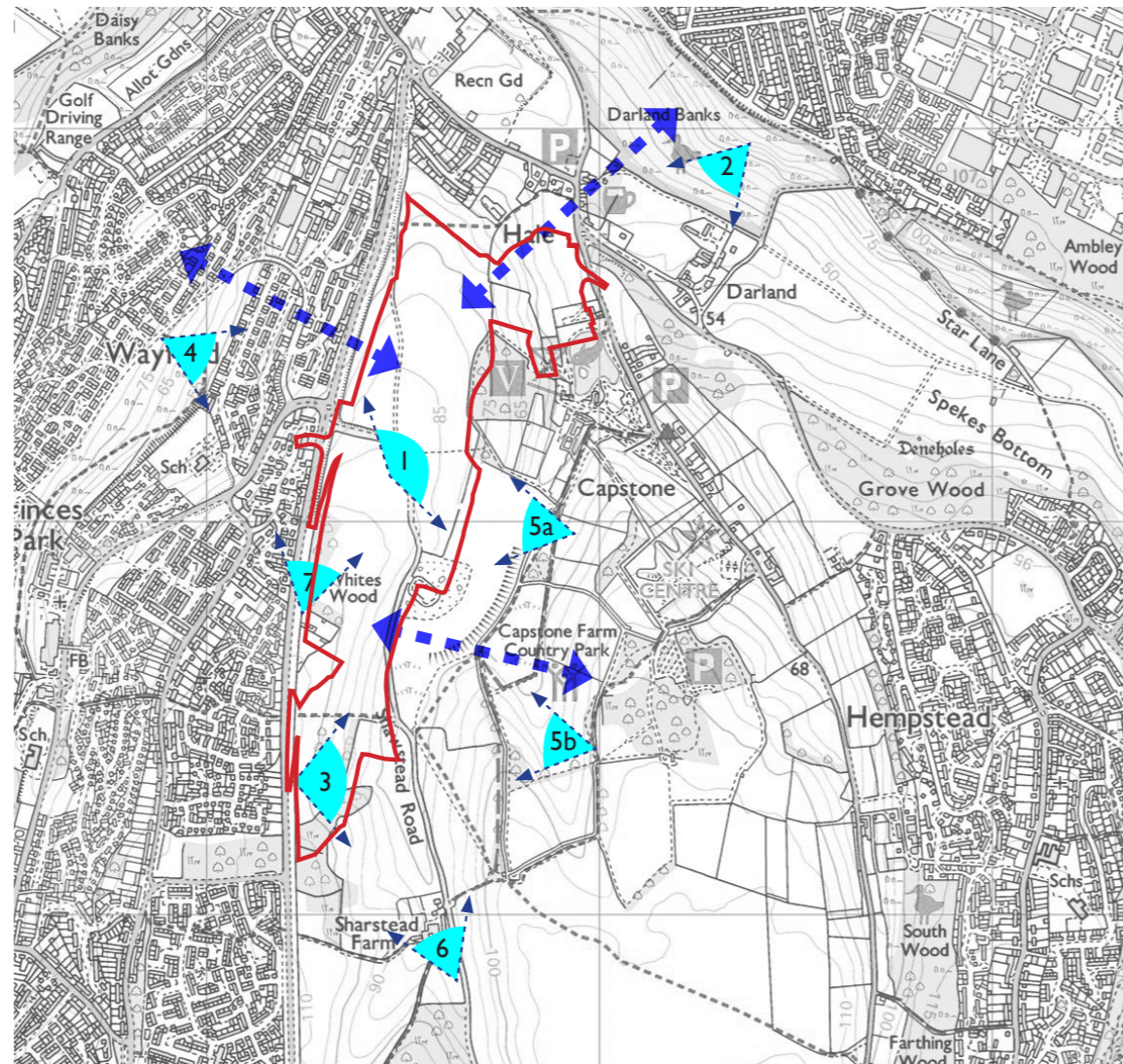
3.05 Understanding Views

The steeply undulating chalk Downs topography around the East Hill sites provides panoramic views between the high ridge tops while hiding or containing views within the intervening deep narrow valleys. The ridge top woodlands form the skyline in many views and further restrict intervisibility across the landscape.

Views from the East Hill ridge and the site extend for several kilometre across Chatham, Luton and the Medway estuary towards the skyline at Wainscott and Hoo as well as southwards towards Lordswood and Bredhurst. However, from these distant viewpoints the site, where visible, is an insignificant element in the wider landscape and is often seen in the context of the adjacent large urban backdrop.

The main part of Gillingham to the north is not visible from the site, lying on lower dip slope ground but the edge of settlement at Kingsway on the ridge crest above Darland Banks is a prominent and distinctive local visual landmark – as is the Great Lines War Memorial and Medway Maritime Hospital also on the ridge. The wooded skyline ridge at Hempstead hides the large settlement to the east.

The topographical features result in the main intervisibility between the site and surrounding landscape being limited to a comparatively small zone of visual influence that includes neighbouring ridge tops, particularly at Capstone Farm and Darland Banks while omitting large areas of housing in the Wayfield and Princes Park valley north of Luton



Key views and photographic view points



View 1. Site - East Hill Ridge



View 2. Darland Banks Ridge - Kingsway



View 3. North Dane Way



View 4. Wayfield Ridge



View 5a. Capstone Farm Country Park



View 5b. Capstone Farm Country Park



View 6. Shawstead Road



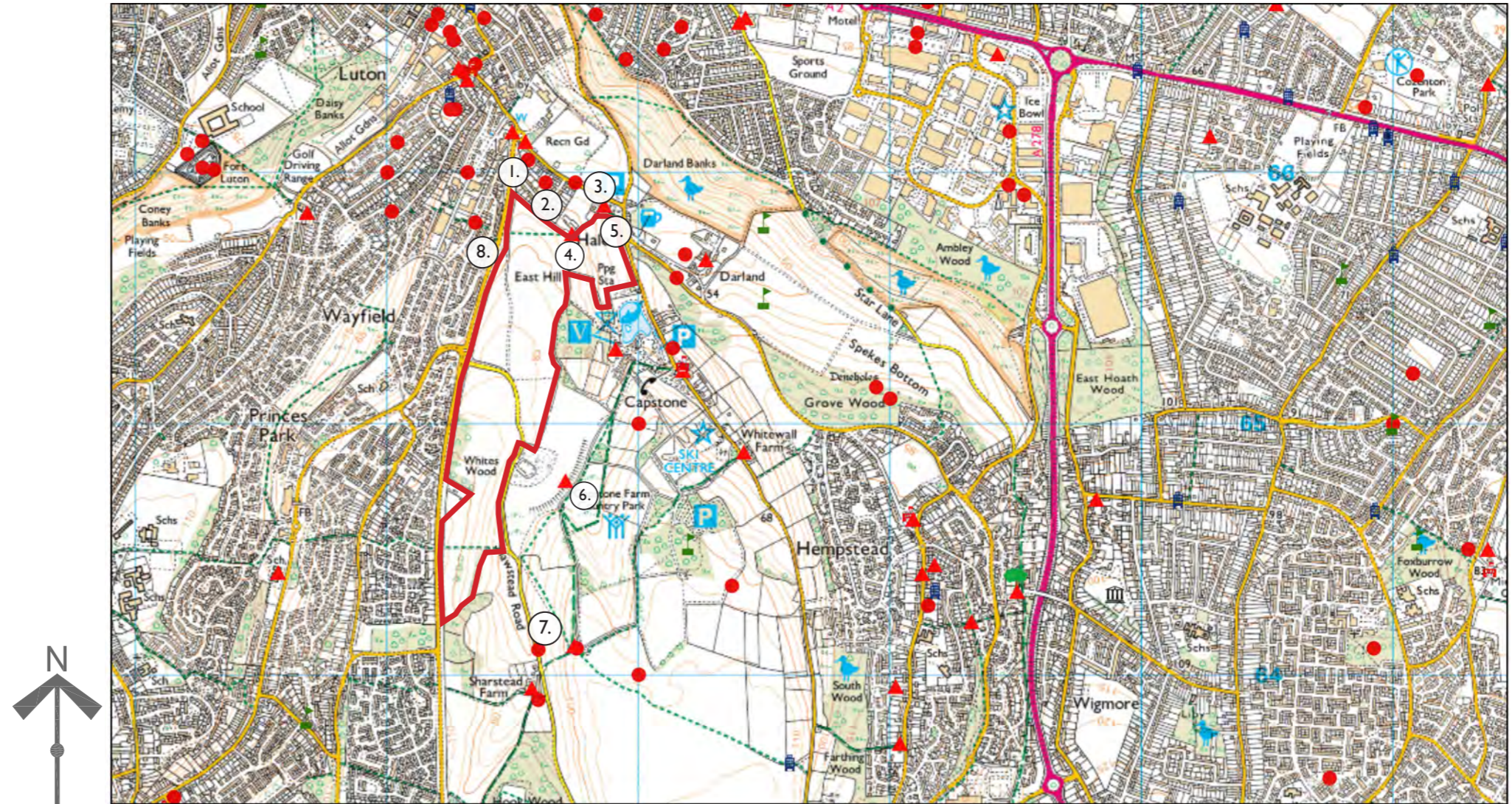
View 7. North Dane Way

08284A
East Hill, Chatham

3.06 Understanding the Archaeology

To date there are no significant archaeological finds on the site.

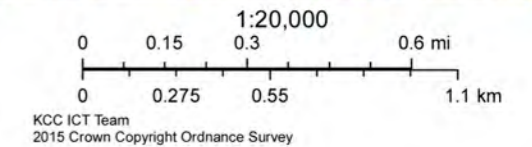
- 1. Clay pit
- 2. Romano-British burials, near Hale Farm, Chatham
- 3. Chapel
- 4. Ancient Farm
- 5. Ancient Farm
- 6. Ancient Farm
- 7. Dene Hole
- 8. Clay pit



October 5, 2018

Archaeological Sites and Buildings

- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------------|----------|
| Building | Findspot | Listed Building | Monument |
| Farmstead | Hedgerow | Maritime | Place |
| | Landscape | | |



Produced by: KCC GIS Development Team
 Copyright Kent County Council 2018

08284A East Hill, Chatham

3.07 Understanding the History of the place

- About 1km east of Chatham, stood the Romano-British town of Durobrivac (Rochester) at the crossing of the Medway; through which ran the Roman Road from London to Dover (Watling Street). However, the area was probably very wooded during this time.
- The history of Chatham and Gillingham can be traced back to a settlement of approximately mid-Saxon origin on the banks of the Medway and foothills of the North Downs.
- The area suffered destructive Danish-Viking raids between 986 and 1016.
- Gillingham and Chatham grew up around the manors and churches in the area, with an Archbishopal Palace in Gillingham close to the Parish church.
- Chatham was the smaller of the settlements whilst Gillingham was on the coastal road parallel to the old Watling Street, high on the ridge.
- Mid 16th Century, Gillingham Harbour was used as a naval dockyard, supplying 39 ships to fight the Spanish Armada. Eventually, Chatham replaced Gillingham as the naval shipyard.
- The modern Medway conurbation grew rapidly during the 19th and 20th Centuries as the Naval Dockyard expanded. During WWI, 11,000 people were employed in the Dockyard, rising to 13,000 during WW2.



1762 Andrews Map



1802 Mudge Map



1940 Google Earth



1802 Mudge Map (close up of site)

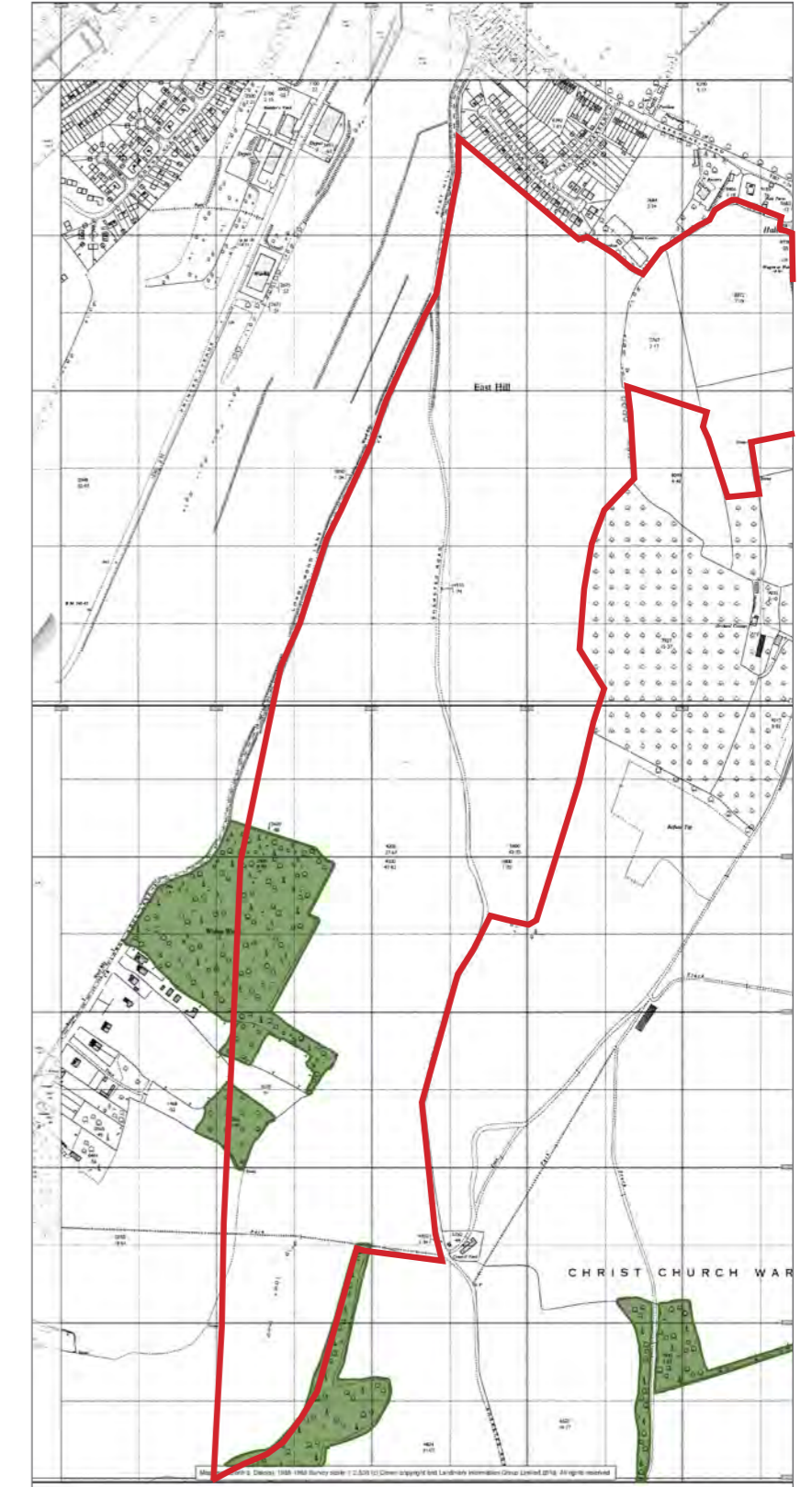
08284A East Hill, Chatham

3.08 Understanding the History of the place

- Other industries came to the area, attracted by good rail and sea access, including brick and cement works who used the chalk from quarries in the nearby Downs – some close to this site.
- The land between Watling Street (A2) and the coast was developed further and the valleys to the south eventually were to extend the road as far as Luton and Hale.
- Major suburban expansion (1960s) west of the North Downs Way between Luton and Walderslade. Towards the east of the site, housing was constructed for the workers in the Dockyard and the local industries.
- One of the earliest mapping sources showing the site is the Andrews map of 1760's, which shows Luton, Hale and Capstone as villages with cleared, presumably, agricultural land around them. Whilst the higher ground to the east of Hale, where this site sits, remained wooded.
- The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map dates from 1869 and shows the site cleared of trees and divided into a series of small fields. This land was farmed until the 1960-1970's, after which the field divisions virtually disappeared except for the old road pattern.
- Around this time, there was a major expansion of the urban area by the construction of a large new suburban area of Lordwood, situated between Luton and the A2. At its eastern edge, a new road was built – the B2156 North Danes Way - along with the road south of Walderslade. The intention was to create a Medway Towns Southern Relief Road, but the middle section across the Capstone Valley was never implemented.



1896



1955 - 1965

08284A
East Hill, Chatham

3.09 Understanding the Utilities

Utilities

A study has been done to identify the provision of utilities for the development. For full details, please see the Utilities Assessment which accompanies this report.

Electricity

There are two high voltage lines which cross the site which would need to be diverted to allow the development to take place. Local diversions of services would be needed by roundabouts and at least three sub-stations and some off-site reinforcement would be needed.

Gas

There are gas mains around the site and preliminary assessments show new gas mains into the site would be available without network reinforcement. There would need to be local diversions to allow for new roundabouts.

Internet

There are telecommunication connections available around the site to bring wired connections to homes.

Foul Services

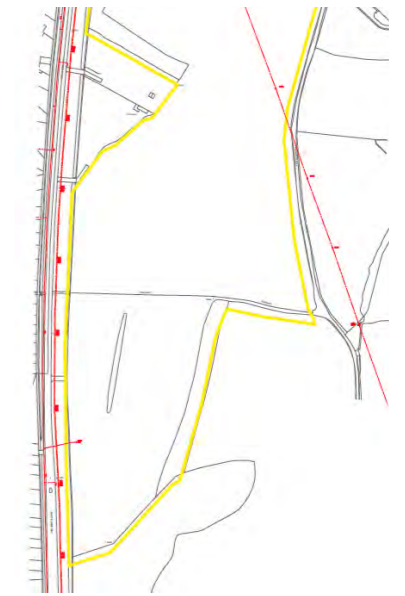
There are foul sewers in North Danes Way and through the development site adjacent to Hale which can be connected too, which connects with the foul pumping station north of Capstone Road roundabout and will need to stay. The development needs to respect this drain and allow for future access to it by not building within at least 3m on either side of the Easement.



UKPN existing network (North)



UKPN existing network (Central)



UKPN existing network (South)



Southern Water drainage network (North)



- Design cannot start until the context is understood.
- New homes should reflect existing variety and character.

4.00 Define Routes

