

AMENDED

LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

Cull's Farm

Dean Street

East Farleigh

Kent

JFA Ref: KEN2071

DECEMBER 2020



BRINGING NATURE TO THE HEART OF DESIGN

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1.0 Executive Summary.

1.0 This report has been prepared by Jane Hart Ba (Hons) DipLA CMLI, Senior Chartered Landscape Architect at JFA Environmental Planning (herein referred to as JFA). This landscape appraisal considers both the landscape context and the relevant applicable planning policies for the proposed residential development, and then assesses the landscape and visual impact of the application proposals, both negative and positive in comparison with the current baseline.

1.1 The nature of the site and the proposals do not meet the screening threshold tests for residential development: it is not located within or partly within a sensitive area, does not exceed 5ha or propose 150 or more units, which would require a statutory environmental impact assessment, under the 2015 Regulations. However, the methodology for assessment below follows, in principle, the methodology set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3).

2.0 Introduction

2.0 JFA was commissioned by Oakwood's Group Limited to undertake a landscape and visual appraisal to assess the effects of the re-development of a commercial site used for car related services (two car sales garages and associated hard standing) to provide 10 dwellings and a small commercial class B1(a) office on Dean Street, East Farleigh, MAIDSTONE, Kent, ME15 0PS.

2.1 This report has regard to discussions at pre-app meetings on the 9th January and 20th April 2020. Suggestions (where possible) have been incorporated into the layout and design of the proposal.

2.2 The site is located on a 0.75ha area of PDL/brownfield land accessible from Dean Street in East Farleigh (OS Grid Reference TQ742528) and approximately 0.5km north-west of the larger settlement of Coxheath.

2.3 The site is technically located within the countryside and is located on the outskirts of the village of Dean Street, East Farleigh, but is within the existing footprint of development and adjacent to residential housing. It is located on the slope of an undulating ridgeline located between the two river valleys of the Medway and the Loose. The landform on site slopes down to the River Medway to the north and continues to rise to the south.

- 2.4 A walkover of the site and local landmarks and viewpoints of importance was undertaken on the 2nd September 2020 to help determine the landscape context of the site and the surrounding area and help evaluate the degree of change that might be expected to arise from the proposed development. Visibility was good for the time of year; more views may be available in the late autumn-winter during maximum visibility when leaves are off the trees.
- 2.5 The report findings are informed by the baseline information provided by the following drawings and documentation by Offset Architects:
- 5990-PD32 Volume & Area Calculations
 - 5990-PD10 Proposed Site Plan
 - 5990-PD15 Plot 01 Proposed Plans, Elevations & Sections
 - 5990-PD17 Plots 02 & 03 Proposed Plans, Elevations & Sections
 - 5990-PD19 Plots 04 & 05 Proposed Plans, Elevations & Sections
 - 5990-PD21 Plot 06 Proposed Plans, Elevations & Sections
 - 5990-PD23 Plots 07,08 & 09 Proposed Plans, Elevations & Sections
 - 5990-PD25 Plot 10 Proposed Plans, Elevation & Sections
 - 5990-PD27 Plot 11 Proposed Plan, Elevation & Sections
 - 5990-PD50 Design Access Statement
- 2.6 Other reports of relevance to this report are listed in Section 10.0.

3.0 Development Proposals

- 3.0 The development proposal is for the re-development of a commercial site used for car related services (two car sales garages and associated hardstanding for sales) to provide 10 dwellings (comprising three two bedroom, four three bedroom and three four-bedroom properties) and a small commercial class B1(a) office with three rooms and board room. The re-development proposals will result in a 14% reduction of building footprint, 36.6% reduction in hardstanding and 0.1% decrease in volume (**refer to drawing 5990/PD32**).
- 3.1 All buildings will be red brick with black weatherboard or clay tiling. Roofs will be in slate or clay tile. Dark recessive colours are used throughout for windows and porch timber and roof space is utilised to keep building heights low. Tile hanging, hip roofs, 1.8m high brick garden walls with a half round brick capping and ragstone panel and ragstone with quoins localised detailing pays homage to the vernacular.
- 3.2 Buildings range in height from 6.4m to 8.7m and will provide 8 detached buildings and a terrace of three dwellings. Building heights are as follows:

- Plot 1 6.40m (85.84m AOD)
- Plot 2 & 3 8.50m (86.84m AOD)
- Plots 4 & 5 6.20 (85.50m AOD)
- Plot 6 8.50m (87.07m AOD)
- Plot 7-9 8.50m (85.50m AOD)
- Plots 10 and 11 8.40m (85.80m AOD)

3.3 Eight semi-mature oaks (*Quercus* sp) and a single lime tree (*Tilia* sp) will be removed to facilitate the construction of the development proposals (**refer to Tree Survey to BS 5837:2021 by KPS dated 18.03.2021**). Eleven lime trees will be retained and incorporated within an area of open space used for the creation of a SUDS and orchard planting. Trees that are removed will be replaced with equivalent long lived and native species.

4.0 Methodology

4.0 The methodology includes a review of current national and local policy, which is carried out in relation to the proposed development proposal. The site is visited, and key views from various potentially sensitive locations are evaluated. The local landscape and local plan designations are identified, and any additional site or locality constraints or opportunities are noted.

4.1 The proposals are then considered in the context of the existing landscape and visual baseline. Recommendations may be made which result in a reduction of any impact on the baseline; mitigations of any landscape or visual impact are either incorporated into the proposals or are suggested for mitigation by means of an additional planning obligation. Further landscape or visual enhancements may also be identified.

4.2 GLVIA3 advises that assessment should be in proportion to the size of the development project and the potential issues raised.

5.0 Legislation & Planning Policy Guidance

5.0 A summary of the hierarchy of planning policies relevant to the landscape context of the site and the proposed development is set out below:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018)

5.1 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that: *'The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of*

sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.'

5.2 The NPPF considers sustainable development to be positive and paragraph 11 states there is a *'presumption in favour of sustainable development.'*

5.3 The NPPF requires that development plan policies and planning decisions should be based upon up-to-date information about the environmental, historic, and socio-economic characteristics of their areas and evolve to meet the needs of communities.

5.4 NPPF policies of relevance to this proposal are described in detail below.

5.5 Section 12 of the NPPF deals with achieving well designed places. Paragraph 127 notes that: *'planning policies and decisions should ensure that development:*

- *will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short-term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- *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);*
- *establish or maintain a strong sense of place; and*
- *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.'*

5.6 In Section 15, the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the natural environment noting at paragraph 170 that planning policies, *'should contribute to, and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils; and*
- *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside...'*

5.7 Landscape and visual considerations must be evaluated as part of any planning application.

Local Plan

5.8 Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan was formally adopted on the 25th October 2017. Local Plan policies of relevance to the proposals include the following:

- 5.9 Policy SP17 Countryside which states, *'The countryside is defined as all those parts of the plan area outside the settlement boundaries of the Maidstone urban area, rural service centres and larger villages defined on the policies map.'* It goes on to say, *'Development proposals in the countryside will not be permitted unless they accord with other policies in this plan, and they will not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.'*
- 5.10 Policy DM1 Principles of Good Design notes, *'Proposals which would create high quality design and meet the following criteria will be permitted:*
- i. Create designs and layouts that are accessible to all, and maintain and maximise opportunities for permeability and linkages to the surrounding area and local services;*
 - ii. Respond positively to, and where possible enhance the local, natural, or historic character of the area. Particular regard will be paid to scale, height, materials, detailing, mass, bulk, articulation and site coverage – incorporating a high quality, modern design approach and making use of vernacular materials where appropriate;*
 - iii. Create high quality public realm and where opportunities permit, provide improvements, particularly in town centre locations;*
 - iv. Respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties and uses and provide adequate residential amenities for future occupiers of the development by ensuring that development does not result in, or is exposed to excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicular movement, overlooking or visual intrusion, and that the built form would not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy or light enjoyed by the occupiers of nearby properties;*
 - v. Respect the topography and respond to the location of the site and sensitively incorporate natural features such as trees, hedges, and ponds worthy of retention within the site. Particular attention should be paid in rural and semi-rural areas, where the retention and addition of native vegetation appropriate to Local Landscape Character around the site boundaries should be used as a positive tool to help assimilate development in a manner which reflects and respects the local and natural character of the area;*
 - vi. Provide a high-quality design which responds to areas of heritage, townscape and landscape value or uplifts an area of poor environmental quality...*

- vii. *Orientate development where possible, in such a way as to maximise the opportunity for sustainable elements to be incorporated and to reduce the reliance upon less sustainable energy sources;*
- viii. *Protect and enhance any on-site biodiversity and geo-diversity features, where appropriate, or provide sufficient mitigation measures...'*

Account should be taken of Conservation Area appraisals and management plans, Character Area Assessments, the Maidstone Borough Landscape Character Guidelines SPD, the Kent Design Guide and the Kent Down's Area of Natural Beauty Management Plan.'

5.11 Policy DM5 Development on Brownfield Land states:

1. Proposals for development on previously developed land (brownfield land) in Maidstone Borough urban area, rural service centres and larger villages, that make effective and efficient use of land and which meet the following criteria will be permitted:

- i. *The site is not of high environmental value;*
- ii. *If the proposal is for residential development, the density of new housing proposal reflects the character and appearance of individual localities and is consistent with policy DM12 unless there are justifiable planning reasons for the change in density.*

2. Exceptionally the residential re-development of brownfield sites in the countryside which are not residential gardens and which meet the above criteria, will be permitted provided the re-development will also result in a significant environmentally improvement and the site is, or can reasonably be made accessible by accessible modes to Maidstone urban area, a rural service centre or larger village.

5.12 Policy DM30 Design Principles in the Countryside requires that, *'Outside of the settlement boundaries as defined on the policies map, proposals which would create high quality design, satisfy the requirements of other policies in this plan and meet the following criteria, will be permitted:*

- i. *The type, siting, materials and design, mass and scale of development and the level of activity would maintain, or where possible, enhance local distinctiveness, including landscape features;*
- ii. *Impacts on the appearance and character of the landscape would be appropriately mitigated. Suitability and required mitigation will be assessed*

- through the submission of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to support development proposals in appropriate circumstances;*
- iii. *Proposals would not result in unacceptable traffic levels on nearby roads, unsympathetic change to the character of a rural lane which is of landscape, amenity, nature conservation, or historic or archaeological importance or the erosion of roadside verges;*
- iv. *Where built development is proposed, there would be no existing building or structure suitable for conversion or re-use to provide the required facilities. Any new buildings should, where practicable, be located adjacent to existing buildings or be in-obtrusively located and well-screened by existing or proposed vegetation which reflect the landscape character of the area.'*

6.0 Landscape Character

6.0 Landscape character is defined in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) as: *'A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.'*

6.1 The general hierarchy of the published landscape character studies relevant to the site and its location are set out below:

National Character Area

6.2 The site and its surroundings lie within a rural area within National Character Area (NCA) 120. Wealden Greensand, as defined by Natural England in the NCA Profiles published on the 18th December 2013. This NCA runs across Kent broadly running parallel to the North Kent Downs. Its underlying geology has given rise to its characteristic undulating scarp and dip topography.

6.3 This section includes many large ancient woodlands and numerous river valleys (the Medway, Loose and Len) and mixed farming and extant areas of fruit growing.

6.4 Some of the key characteristics of NCA 120 that are relevant to the overall character of the landscape context surrounding the site are:

- *'A long, narrow belt of Greensand, typified by scarp-and-dip slope topography, including outcrops of Upper Greensand, Gault Clay and*

Lower Greensand. The Greensand forms escarpments separated by a Clay Vale...;

- *There are extensive areas of ancient, mixed woodland of hazel, oak and birch, with some areas having been converted to sweet chestnut coppice in past centuries;*
- *Fields are predominantly small or medium, in irregular patterns derived from Medieval enclosure. Boundaries are formed by hedgerows and shaws, with character and species reflecting the underlying soils. On the Clay hedgerows are dense and species-rich, with occasional standard oaks. On more acidic soils they generally consist of hawthorn and blackthorn, also with occasional oak trees, and often trimmed low;*
- *Agricultural land comprises a mosaic of mixed farming with pasture and arable land set within a wooded framework. There is a fruit growing orchard belt in Kent...;*
- *The rural settlement pattern is a mixture of dispersed farmsteads, hamlets and some nucleated villages. Large houses set within extensive parks and gardens are found throughout the area;*
- *In the east of Kent, the Wealden Greensand has a gentler and more open aspect than the wooded west;*
- *The local vernacular includes the use of Greensand, ragstone...as well as timber -framing and weather boarding;*
- *There are a range of historic landscape features...sunken lanes cut into the sandstone are a historic and characteristic feature;*
- *Surface water is an important feature across the Greensand, with many streams and rivers passing through the NCA.'*

6.5 This is an attractive landscape character area with many high value and historic landscape elements.

County Landscape Character

6.6 At a county level, the site is shown to be within Character Area (LCA) Greensand Fruit-belt - Maidstone (see Jacobs Babbie, The Landscape Assessment of Kent, October 2004). This assessment sets out landscape character objectives or management recommendations to be applied to the specific landscape character area to improve landscape quality. This area

is defined as a landscape in a good condition with moderate sensitivity and visibility with a prescribed policy action of **'CONSERVE & REINFORCE.'**

6.7 This character area is a continuation of the fruit-belt landscape situated south and east of Maidstone where most of the areas remaining fruit orchards are situated. The topography generally appears flat but descends steeply into the river valleys of the Medway, Len and Loose, which dissect the landform and separate this area from the urban outskirts of Maidstone. Views are directed across the Medway valley to the north west bank and outskirts of Maidstone and higher ground beyond. The various ridgelines are prominent.

6.8 Landscape elements or features in this area include:

- *'Elements in the landscape are strongly unified;*
- *The area benefits from the varied relief caused by the Medway tributaries;*
- *Shelterbelts are often single species and narrow in form;*
- *Historic farming settlements are frequent and have a positive impact on the view;*
- *Much evidence of vernacular style, including oasts and the use of ragstone;*
- *Urban edge is the most frequent detracting element but is considered to be a minor detractor in the well settled view;*
- *Strong sense of historic continuity in the landscape;*
- *Views are intermittent over the incised landscape; the visibility and sensitivity of the area are considered to be moderate.'*

6.9 The summary of guidance and recommended actions for this LCA, which are of relevance to the site include:

- *'The use and development of localised detail and material in all types of built form;*
- *Conserving the settings and scale of existing groups of buildings;*
- *Increase ecological base through the encouragement of diverse species and replanting;*
- *Encourage pockets of fruit growing.'*

Local Landscape Character

6.10 Maidstone Borough Council and Jacobs have prepared a borough wide 'Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment' (March 2012 and amended July 2013), and which builds on the earlier county level assessment and provides landscape guidance, advice and recommended plant lists for each identified local landscape area with homogenous features and landscape characteristics. The site is shown to be within the Greensand Orchards and Mixed Farmland (LLCA 27). The condition of the landscape is assessed as good condition and of high sensitivity.

6.11 Key characteristics for the LLCA include:

- *'Dip slope of the Greensand Ridge;*
- *Hythe Beds incised with Atherfield Clay river valleys;*
- *Orchards dominate the land use;*
- *Frequent broadleaf and coppice woodland blocks;*
- *Frequent settlements;*
- *Views across the Medway to the opposite valley side.'*

6.12 Relevant generic actions for the area include:

- *'Conserve the rural setting of historic buildings and settlements;*
- *Encourage the planting of isolated mature trees to conserve the parkland character;*
- *Promote the use of local materials in boundary treatments and access points and design gates and stiles in simple, clean styles.'*

6.13 LLCA 27 is further sub-divided into 16 smaller areas with more detailed analysis and guidance for each individual area. The site is located within LLCA 27-5 Dean Farmlands. The condition of the **landscape condition is very good** with few detracting features and a strong ecological and cultural integrity, with a summary recommendation to **CONSERVE**. In general, the landscape **sensitivity is high** and there is **moderate visibility**. The key characteristics for LLCA 27-5 includes:

- *'Orchards and pasture;*
- *Well maintained hedgerows;*
- *Traditional houses, including oasts;*
- *Modern housing built to traditional design;*
- *Few roads;*

- *Grid like pattern of walks between orchards.'*

6.14 Specific guidelines and summary of actions relevant to the proposal include:

- *'Follow generic guidelines for the Greensand Orchards and Mixed Farmlands;*
- *Resist the introduction of contrasting visual elements such as pylons and telecommunication masts;*
- *Conserve the sense of enclosure provided by ragstone walling and timber fencing;*
- *Conserve the orchard setting of East Farleigh and Dean Street Conservation Area and avoid expansion which would detract from its rural character.'*

6.15 The regional, local, and detailed landscape character descriptions are a true description of the site's contribution to its landscape setting. Recommended actions will be incorporated into the landscape strategy.

6.16 The ability of the landscape to accommodate change is explored in Maidstone Borough Council's Landscape Capacity Study (see paragraph 6.16 below).

Landscape Capacity

6.17 Maidstone Borough Council's 'Landscape Capacity Study' (Jacobs and Maidstone Borough Council, January 2015) which supplements the 'Landscape Character Assessment' identifies LLCA Farleigh Greensand Fruitbelt of high visual sensitivity and therefore sensitive to change as the undulating landform and intermittent hedgerows and scattered trees within the landscape allow clear, long-distance views to the higher land rising from the northern bank of the River Medway and Maidstone's urban fringe area. However, it notes on page 34 that ***'There is some minor development potential within the existing villages, and associated with the scattered properties and farmsteads, although further expansion of the village footprint should be resisted.'*** This development proposal is located on PDL/brownfield land and is located within the existing footprint of development for Dean Street, East Farleigh and incorporates appropriate mitigation following the guidelines for the local landscape character.

7.0 Baseline Landscape Context

7.0 The site and its baseline context are illustrated on **Figures 1 and 2**. Photographs of the site and the surrounding landscape context are provided by **Figure 3 Photo-sheets 1-5**.

7.1 The baseline is the current situation and is described below:

Access and Boundaries

- 7.2 The existing vehicular and pedestrian access is via a long driveway from Dean Street on the southern boundary. There is a mix of 1.2m high timber post and rail and post and wire fencing with intermittent hedge and bramble scrub growth along its length. A 2m high timber feather board fence with a triple line of barbed wire on top defines the western boundary and the northern boundary is defined by a 2m high feather board fence without barbed wire. The north-eastern corner is flanked by a tall evergreen hedge with a metal gateway access point within it.

Vegetation

- 7.3 The site has a line of twelve mature limes in front of the area of hard standing at the southern garage workshop entrance and an avenue of eight semi-mature oak trees which run diagonally across the south-eastern quadrant of the site from the main entrance. The boundaries are lined with bramble scrub and self-sown saplings and intermittent hedge growth with a more defined tall evergreen hedge along the north-eastern boundary. A 'Tree Survey to BS 5837:2021' incorporating a tree schedule of vegetation to be removed and retained and outlining tree protection measures during proposed construction activities was undertaken in March 2021.
- 7.4 The surrounding landscape is dominated by mixed farming with extensive traditional and dwarf orchards and linear shelterbelts forming dominant features in the view, particularly to the north-west. The lanes in East Farleigh are narrow, bordered by dense hedgerows and often do not have a verge (**refer to Photo-sheets 1-5**).

Topography

- 7.5 The site is located on the slope of a lower ridgeline of a series of dip and scarp topography. The site topography rises from 75m AOD on the northern boundary to 80m AOD in the south-west corner. The topography then continues to rise towards the ridgeline to the south of Coxheath at 130m AOD before dropping again. This second higher ridgeline forms a backdrop to the site in views from the north.

Local built context

- 7.6 The site is within the established footprint of East Farleigh, an extended linear village which stretches from the Medway River to the Greensand Scarp on its southern edge. Residential development is located at the historic bridge crossing and along the roads which radiate out from the historic village centre. East Farleigh contains two Conservation Areas, Lower Street

and Dean Street within which there are clusters of Listed Buildings. There are Edwardian houses along Lower Road and Forge Lane with white painted weather board and timber frame houses evident within the village centre of Dean Street. Ragstone and cross-spile timber fencing is used to define garden boundaries.

Public rights of way

- 7.7 There is a public right of way (PROW) to the north-east of the site (KM39) that connects Dean Street to Forge Lane. There is another PROW (KM335) that follows Forge Lane to the north of the site and a third (KM37) that links Vicarage Lane and Dean Street further to the south.
- 7.8 The Medway Valley Walk (KM30) follows the line of the River Medway to the centre of Maidstone. Other routes of PROW in the wider landscape are illustrated on **Figure 2**. Viewpoints from PROW within the study area are assessed in **Table 2**.

Landscape Condition and Quality

- 7.9 The landscape condition, and its quality are very good with evident historic time depth.
- 7.10 The landscape is generally well managed and appears valued. This is recognised in the Maidstone Borough Council's Local Plan with five identified Landscapes of Local Value in the vicinity: Len Valley; Loose Valley; Medway Valley and the Low Weald.
- 7.11 The site landscape condition and quality are consistent with the national, county, and local landscape character types described in paragraphs 6.2-6.17 above. It is a rural landscape with many isolated farmsteads, hamlets, and small groupings of buildings related to historic farming settlements.

Landscape Effects

- 7.12 Following the site survey and desk top study of the base-line landscape context, the proposed development proposals are deemed in keeping with the existing landscape quality and character. The site adjoins an existing residential settlement, with a mix of historic and more recent detached, semi-detached, and terraced housing. The development site is brownfield/PDL and the proposals sit within the extent of the existing site boundaries. There is a reduction of combined building footprint, area of hardstanding and decrease in volume **(refer to Section 3.0 Development Proposals)**.
- 7.13 The ridge heights of the proposed buildings will be higher than the existing structure (between 1.23 to 2.33m taller) as they are located throughout the site on sloping land, but the height of the structures will be lower than the established ridge heights of Moathouse

and Culls Farm Cottages higher up on Dean Street; the scale and the massing of built form is reduced and more appropriate to the rural village edge setting. The proposals will have less of an effect on the rural residential character of their surroundings, than the current situation.

- 7.14 The general settlement pattern in the Greensand Fruitbelt - Maidstone area is a mixture of isolated farmsteads and hamlets with some nucleated villages connected by narrow, winding lanes bordered with dense hedgerows and shaws. This proposed development is not inconsistent with this character and the existing narrow entrance drive and the wooded character of the site will reduce impact and assimilate the proposals into the landscape.

8.0 Baseline Visual Appraisal

Methodology

- 8.0 A walkover of the site was undertaken on the 2nd September 2020 to assess the landscape character and evaluate the effects of development. The PROW in the vicinity were walked and public viewpoints were visited and photographed to determine the potential visibility of the development. The locations of viewpoints are shown on **Figure 2** and the accompanying photographic viewpoints are illustrated on **Figure 3 Sheets 1-5**.

- 8.1 Viewpoints selected for assessment were chosen for their visual relationship to the site, such as proximity to site or raised landform and features of importance i.e. statutory designation. The sample viewpoints show the potential visibility and effects of development and represent a wide range of receptors including those at the viewpoint but also others nearby at a similar distance or direction.

Visual Relationship to Protected Features

- 8.2 The site and its surrounding landscape lie within the setting of the East Farleigh Lower Road and Dean Street Conservation Areas, the East Farleigh bridge Scheduled Monument and various clusters of Listed Buildings. Potential views to site from the Conservation Areas, scheduled monument and statutorily protected features in the surrounding landscape were assessed.

8.3 See **Table 1** below:**TABLE 1: VISIBILITY ASSESSMENT OF STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS**

Statutory Protection	Name	Distance from Site	Relevance
Scheduled Monuments	East Farleigh Bridge	0.9km	Not visible. Setting unaffected
Conservation Areas	East Farleigh, Dean Street	0.17km	Not visible from streetscene. Setting unaffected
	East Farleigh, Lower Road	0.82km	Not visible from streetscene. Setting unaffected
Listed Buildings	Malthouse Cottages Grade 2	55m east	Setting unaffected
	Dean Street/ Forge Lane Cluster – All Grade 2	0.2-0.3km	Setting unaffected
	Lower Road Cluster – all Grade 2* or 2	0.8km	Setting unaffected
	Horseshoe Public House Grade 2	0.8km	Setting unaffected
	Highlands Farmhouse Grade 2	1.36km	Setting unaffected
	Gallant's Farm Grade 2	1.3km	Setting unaffected
			2km

	Thatched House Grade 2		
Landscapes of Local Value	Greensand Ridge, Len Valley, Loose Valley, Medway Valley and the Low Weald	0.4km+	Not visible

8.4 From the results of the site survey, it was found that public views to site from the locality are minimal or filtered by orchard planting, roadside, and field boundary hedgerows, shaws and shelterbelts or the scarp and dip topography, which creates an intimate feel to the landscape and restricts views east to west. There are limited close to medium range viewpoints from publicly accessible land towards the site. The only identified views towards the existing garage and workshop roofline from the immediate locality are from a very short section of Dean Street and the access drive. The existing roofline is seen emerging above the landform and boundary vegetation (**see Figure 3 Panorama 1**)

8.5 There are long-distance views towards Dean Street and the existing buildings on site from Gatland Lane on the lower ridgeline above the north-western bank of the River Medway; the workshop structures are visible emerging above field boundary vegetation. However, this viewpoint is 1.75km distant and seen in the context of a panoramic view and the existing settlement footprint, of which the site forms a very small component. Other built form such as the oast house (Malthouse Cottages), Culls Farm Cottages and other properties on Dean Street and the workshops of Court Lodge Farm in the foreground, are more dominant in this view (**see Figure 3 Panoramas 6 and 7**). The roofline of the proposed development will be below the established height of the existing residential buildings in the locality and the ridgeline which continues to rise above the site. The use of dark materials used in the design of the buildings, will enable the structures to form a recessive feature in the view.

Visual Relationship to Representative Viewpoints

8.6 Representative viewpoint locations were chosen to evaluate the visibility and potential impacts of the proposed development from a range of directions. Beyond the 2.0km distance study area chosen, the development is likely to be screened by intervening local features, such as buildings, landform and vegetation or become a recessive element within

the landscape due to reduced contrast at longer distances. The visual appraisal is then used to inform the landscape strategy and mitigation proposals.

- 8.7 Eight representative viewpoints to site from the wider landscape were assessed for visual sensitivities. These viewpoints and their approximate distance to site are described in **Table 2** below. Many of these potential viewpoints were found to not have a view.

TABLE 2: VISIBILITY ANALYSIS – REPRESENTATIVE VIEWS (See Figure 2 and 3)

Location or Viewpoint No.	Description	Analysis	Mitigation or Enhancement Opportunity
Panorama 1: From Adjacent to Culls Farm Cottages, Dean Street (98m)	Transitory glimpsed view	Visible from certain locations	Retained lime trees and new boundary hedgerow and tree planting on boundaries and within development will filter views and break up the extent of development visible
Panorama 2: Along access drive from Dean Street (immediately adjacent)	Direct	Visible	Building height is lower on the higher ground (6.2-6.4m) with taller buildings (8.4-8.7m) located on the lower ground. Tree planting within the development will filter the extent of built form visible
Panorama 3: PROW KM39 (51m+)	Potential glimpsed view of roofline emerging through gaps in and above boundary vegetation	Visible through gaps and above boundary vegetation	Retained boundary vegetation will be enhanced by native hedgerow planting which will be interplanted to fill any gaps and improve screening function
Panorama 4: Forge Lane (0.19km+)	Not visible	Built form and high garden and roadside boundary	Not visible from streetscene

		hedges restrict views	
Panorama 5: Junction of Forge Lane and Vicarage Lane (0.75km distant)	Not visible	Extensive orchard and shelterbelt planting and rising landform screen views to the south east	Not necessary
Panorama 6: Gatland Lane (1.75km distant approx.)	Distant, glimpsed elevated panoramic view available through gaps between buildings and field boundary vegetation	Recessive element, just discernible	Gapping up of existing intermittent hedgerow and select tree planting will filter and soften views to site
Panorama 7: PROW KB17 (1.3km distant approx.)	Distant glimpsed panoramic view Similar views are visible from sections of KB12 and KB12A	Recessive element and barely discernible	Gapping up and boundary planting will filter and soften views.

8.8 It was concluded that there are no identified views from heritage assets or Conservation Areas within the study area and limited long-distance views from public rights of way in the wider landscape due to the extensive orchard, shelter belt and field boundary hedge planting and the topography. The key issue raised by the appraisal was the need to soften the existing limited views of the development from Dean Street.

9.0 Landscape Strategy

9.0 The main objective of the landscape strategy is to comply with all national and local policy relevant to landscape. The recommended actions to conserve and strengthen landscape quality outlined for LLCA 27-5 Dean Farmlands (Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment, 2012) have where relevant, been incorporated within the strategy.

9.1 The landscape strategy will provide consideration to improve biodiversity on-site and a series of environmental improvements will visually integrate the development into the wider landscape character through the following actions:

- Signage, street furniture and fencing will be kept to the minimum and will be chosen to be complementary in scale and design to the local landscape character. Timber fencing will be used to define garden boundaries and vernacular elements used i.e., hip roofs and ragstone quoins. This will comply with Maidstone Borough Council's policy DM1 Principles of Good Design, *'where possible enhance the local, natural or historic character of the area. Particular regard will be paid to scale, height, materials, detailing, mass, bulk, articulation and site coverage – incorporating a high quality, modern design approach and making use of vernacular materials where appropriate'*;
- Building materials, fencing, street furniture and fencing will be muted in colour and the use of reflective surfaces and street lighting minimised, to reduce impacts on glimpsed long-distance views from the north and ensure the proposals follow Maidstone Borough Council policy SP17 Countryside and *'will not result in harm to the character and appearance of the area'*;
- A low native hedgerow with scattered standard trees will be planted along the northern boundary to filter long-distance views to site from Gatland Lane and PROW KMB17, KB12 and KB12A while maintaining visual permeability. Boundary vegetation of good condition will be retained and inter-planted with locally appropriate trees and shrubs to provide a new softened and densely vegetated edge to the site, while allowing framed vistas out to the north. This is in accordance with Maidstone Borough Council's policy DM1 Principles of Good Design, *'the retention and addition of native vegetation appropriate to Local Landscape Character around the site boundaries should be used as a positive tool to help assimilate development in a manner which reflects and respects the local and natural character of the area'*;

- A strong green infrastructure will be established with a mosaic of habitats to form linkages with wildlife corridors in the surrounding landscape, including: a small orchard area with heritage varieties within the communal space (for foraging animals); wildflower meadow areas with a close mown edge; SUDS; and tree and scrub planting of locally appropriate native species of UK provenance to increase biodiversity on-site and provide connectivity to existing wildlife corridors in the surrounding landscape. This complies with Maidstone Borough Council's policy DM1 Principles of Good Design and will *'Protect and enhance any on-site biodiversity'*;
- The site is situated on brownfield/PDL adjacent to established settlement in a low visibility situation with screening boundary vegetation. Site visibility has been further reduced by sensitive layout so that taller buildings are located on the lower-lying ground and additional native tree and hedgerow planting will be inter-planted on the boundary to create a landscape buffer. This is in compliance with Maidstone Borough Council policy DM30 Design Principles in the Countryside *'new buildings should, where practicable, be located adjacent to existing buildings or be un-obtrusively located and well-screened by existing or proposed vegetation which reflect the landscape character of the area'*; and
- The landscaping will be managed to aid successful establishment and the long-term survival of biodiversity improvement on site. Aftercare may be secured by condition.

10.0 Conclusion

10.0 This appraisal has set out the landscape and visual context of the site for the proposed development of brownfield/PDL in Dean Street, East Farleigh. It identifies key landscape and visual attributes and sensitivities and suggests landscape proposals which may mitigate these impacts (refer to **Figure 4 Landscape Strategy** appended to this report).

10.1 A landscape strategy has been described in **Section 8.0**; the aim of this strategy is to visually integrate the proposals into the wider landscape using locally appropriate boundary fencing and native plant species. Landscape proposals will filter and mitigate potential views to site.

10.2 The roofline of plot 1 and plots 4 and 5 will be seen emerging above boundary fencing and vegetation from a short section of Dean Street, and the rear elevation of plots 9, 10 and 11 will be just discernible above and through gaps in roadside and field boundary vegetation in

- long distance views from sections of Gatland Lane and the PROW (KB12, KB12A and KB17) from the higher land on the northern bank of the River Medway. Additional standard tree planting and boundary vegetation on-site will soften this view.
- 10.3 Plots 7, 8 and 9 will be orientated to show the narrow end elevation to views from the north and existing vegetation and proposed additional tree and hedge planting will filter and reduce the extent of built form visible.
- 10.4 The ridge height of the new buildings will be between 85.50-87.70m AOD. This is higher than the existing garage workshops (currently 83.74m AOD) but the building scale and massing greatly reduced, more in keeping with the surrounding landscape context. The ridge heights will be lower than the existing buildings of Malthouse Cottage and Culls Farm Cottages on Dean Street and the proposal will sit on an area of established development, adjacent to residential housing. The proposal is compliant with Maidstone Borough Council's policy DM1 Principles of Good Design and *'the proposed development does not result in, or is exposed to excessive noise, vibration, odour, air pollution, activity or vehicular movement, overlooking or visual intrusion.'*
- 10.5 The impacts of the proposal on the wider landscape have been considered and a sensitive design approach used to reduce the already limited visual impact of the site, and to provide a small-scale residential development appropriate to its setting. The proposals follow the requirements of Section 12 paragraph 127 of the NPPF and *'are sympathetic to local character and history including surrounding built environment and landscape setting.'*

11.0 References

The Countryside Agency (now Natural England) Countryside Character Volume 7: South East and London, first published 1999 and now extensively updated

Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment (Jacobs and Maidstone Borough Council, March 2012 and amended July 2013)

Maidstone Landscape Capacity Study (Jacobs and Maidstone Borough Council, January 2015)

Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan (Adopted on the 25th October 2017)

Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2014-2019

NPPF (2019)

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) published in April 2013 by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment

MAGIC. 2017. Magic. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.magic.gov.uk/>. [Accessed August-September 2020].

FIGURE 1:
Site Location

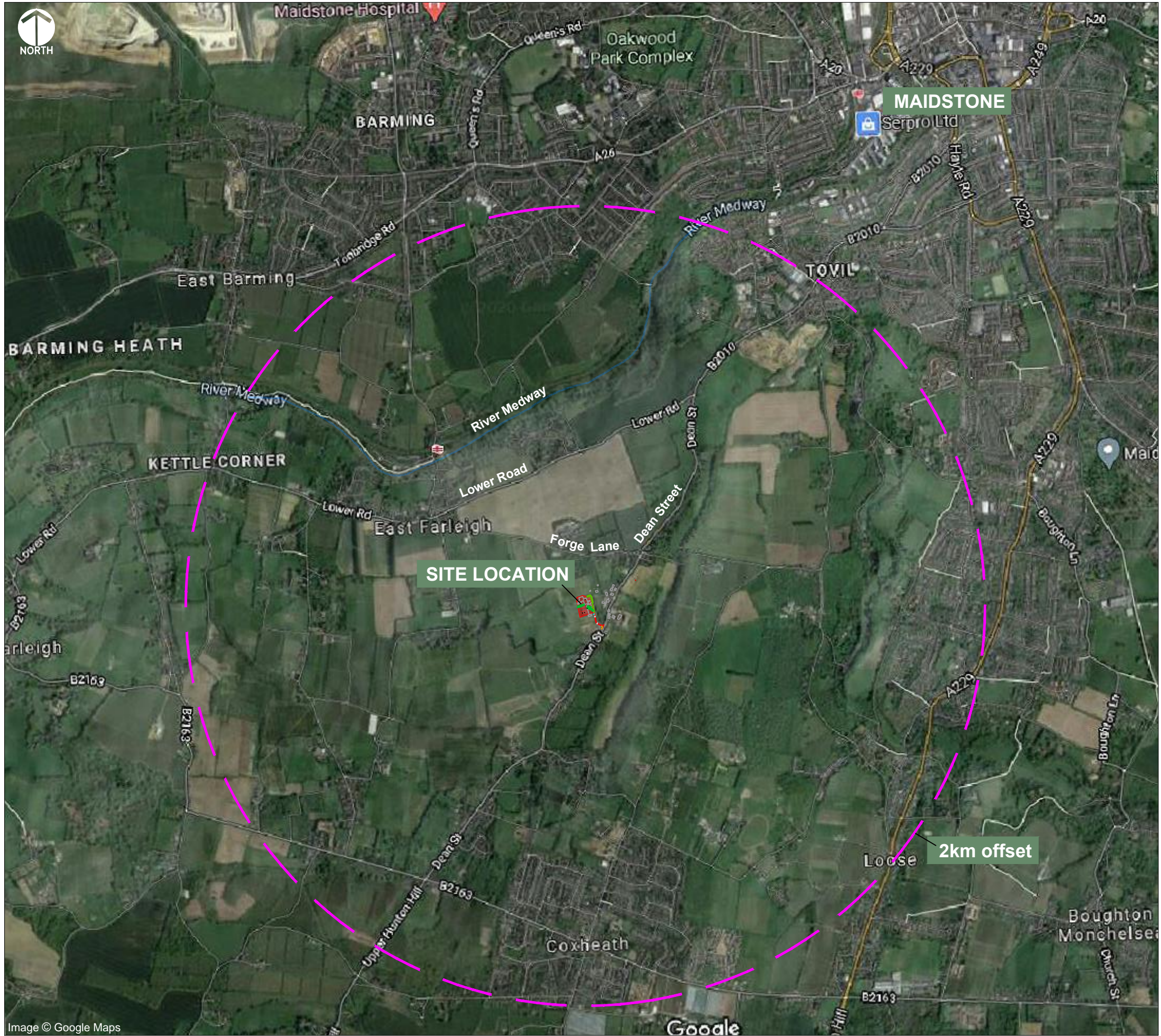


Image © Google Maps

Rev	Date	Description	Drwn/ Chkd by
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Client
 Oakwoods Group Ltd

Project name
 Culls Farm, East Farleigh, Kent, ME15 0PS

Drawing title
SITE LOCATION PLAN

Scale 1:20,000 @A3	Drawn by NB	Checked by JH	Date Sept 2020
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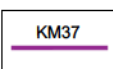
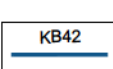



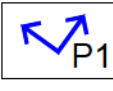

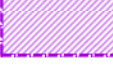
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FIGURE 2:

Landscape Context and Photographic Viewpoint Location



LEGEND

-  Site location
-  KB13 PROW - Public footpath; number denotes specific route
-  KM37 PROW - Public brideway; number denotes specific route
-  KB42 PROW - Restricted byway; number denotes specific route
-  Ancient woodland
-  Traditional orchards
-  Significant vegetation
-  P1 Photographic panorama viewpoint locations
-  Valley Landscapes of local value
-  Conservation area

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Client
 Oakwoods Group Ltd

Project name
 Culls Farm, East Farleigh, Kent, ME15 0PS

Drawing title
LANDSCAPE CONTEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS

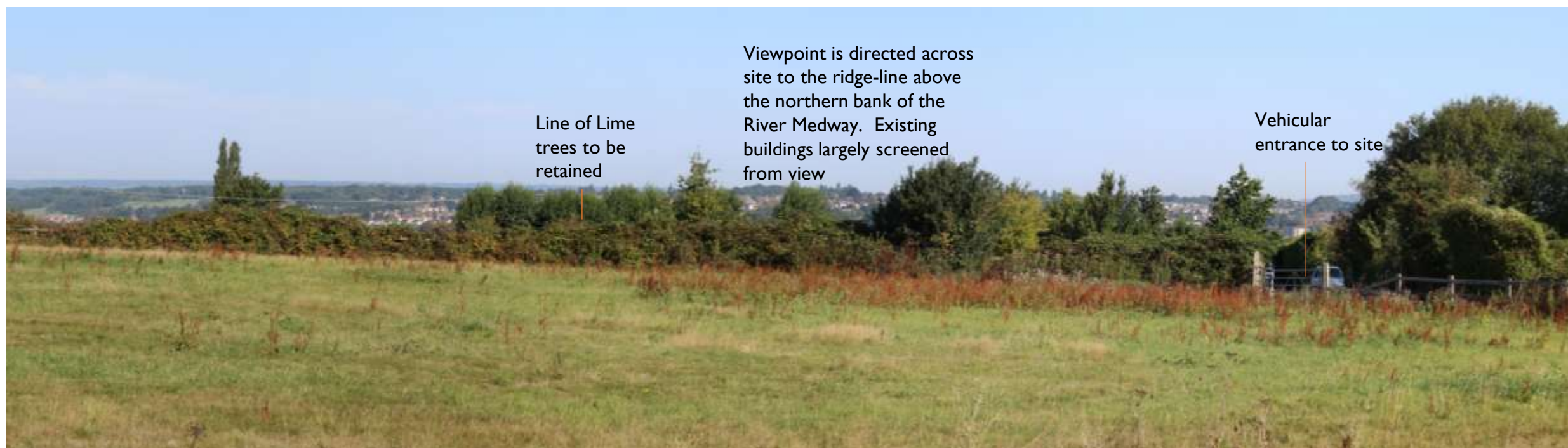
Scale 1:12,500 @A3	Drawn by NB	Checked by JH	Date Sept 2020
Job number KEN 2071	Drawing number Figure 02	Rev -	

FIGURE 3:

Photo Sheets 1-5



Panorama 1 – View North East along Dean Street Towards Malthouse Cottages



Panorama 2 – View North West towards Site from Dean Street

The roofline of the proposed development may be glimpsed through gaps in and above boundary vegetation



Panorama 3 – View West Towards Site from Public Right of Way KM39

Roadside and rear garden vegetation and intervening built form screen views to site



Panorama 4 – View South West Towards Site from Forge Lane

Figure 03 Photographic Panorama Viewpoints - Sheet 2
CULL'S FARM, EAST FARLEIGH, KENT



Landform and extensive orchard planting, road boundary hedgerows and shelterbelts screen views to site

Panorama 5 – View South East Towards Site from Junction of Forge Lane and Vicarage Lane



Site is barely discernible. There is a filtered view above and through boundary vegetation. This forms a very small component of a panoramic view

Panorama 6 – View South East Towards Site from Gatland Lane



A filtered view of the site through and above vegetation is discernible above and to the east of the workshops of Court Lodge Farm, which are a more dominant and intrusive element in the view.

Court
Lodge Farm

Panorama 7 – View South East Towards Site From KBI7



Photograph 1 – Dean Street, East Farleigh



Photograph 2 – Forge Lane



Photograph 3 – East Farleigh Railway Crossing



Photograph 4 – East Farleigh Bridge

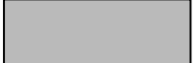


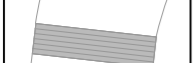

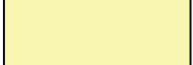











Figure 03 Photographs of Landscape Context - Sheet 5
CULL'S FARM, EAST FARLEIGH, KENT

FIGURE 4:
Landscape Strategy

CULL'S FARM LANDSCAPE STRATEGY



LEGEND

-  Macadam surface
-  Tar and chip surfacing with 200mm wide block edging
-  Block paving with contrasting 200mm wide block edging
-  Rumble strip
-  Slab paving
-  Resin bonded gravel surface
-  Resin bonded gravel surface with radial sett pattern
-  Existing fencing
-  Timber fencing 1.8m high
-  Timber fencing 1m high
-  1.8m high brick walls with a half round brick capping and rag stone panels
-  Curved timber bench
-  Amenity grass
-  Wildflower grass
-  Existing tree / vegetation
-  Proposed tree
-  Proposed planting

WOODLAND AREAS SPECIES MIX

General:

Common name	Latin name	% mix
Field maple	Acer campestre	5%
Chestnut	Castanea sativa	20%
Hazel	Corylus avellana	15%
Hawthorn	Crataegus monogyna	15%
Beech	Fagus sylvatica	20%
Privet	Ligustrum vulgare	5%
Blackthorn	Prunus spinosa	10%
Oak	Quercus robur	10%
		100%

Damper areas:

Common name	Latin name	% mix
Field maple	Acer campestre	15%
Alder	Alnus glutinosa	25%
Downy birch	Betula pubescens	10%
Oak	Quercus robur	10%
Goat willow	Salix caprea	15%
Sallow	Salix cinerea	15%
Osier	Salix viminalis	10%
		100%

HEDGE SPECIES MIX

Common name	Latin name	% mix
Hawthorn	Crataegus monogyna	80%
Hornbeam	Carpinus betulus	10%
Privet	Ligustrum vulgare	10%
		100%

SHELTERBELTS

100% Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Poplar (*Populus nigra*) or Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)

Client	Project name	Scale	Date	Job number	Drawing number	Rev
Oakwoods Group Ltd	Cull's Farm, East Farleigh, Kent	1:300@A1	Sept 2020	KEN 2071	Figure 04	E

E	23.06.21 - Adjusted to new layout
D	03.03.21 - Ash removed from mixes
C	06.01.21 - Scale bar added
B	01.10.20 - Paving to plots 2 and 3 updated; notes revised
A	23.09.20 - Layout updated
Rev	Date Description

NB/JH	Drwn/ Chkd by
NB/JH	
NB/JH	
NB/JH	

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