



**Land to Rear of 128 High Street
Newington, Swale**

January 2024

D E S I G N C O D E

Project Team

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This document was prepared by Clague Architects on behalf of Aile Homes in January 2024. Additional content has been kindly provided by EDLA, Considine and Aspect Ecology.

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OUTLINE PLANNING APPROVAL & DESIGN CODE

This Design Code has been prepared following the Outline Planning Approval for up to 46no. new dwellings on land to the rear of 128 High Street in Newington under 21/505722/OUT, dated 28 July 2023.

The Outline Planning Approval includes the demolition of an existing residential dwelling, erection of up to 46no. residential dwellings, including affordable housing, with access from A2 High Street (access only being sought). All other matters, comprising Layout, Scale, Appearance and Landscaping, have been reserved for detailed design at a later date.

Condition 6 of the 21/505722/OUT Decision Notice relates to the preparation of a Design Code, and in the interest of clarity, is shown here in full.

It is required, and acknowledged, that the future Reserved Matters application shall be designed to accord with this Design Code, once approved. The reasons stated for the requirement of this Design Code are “in the interests of providing a high-quality layout and design for the development.”

This Design Code has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Condition 6 of the OPA, and in keeping with the guidance set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government guidance document “National Model Design Code” Parts 1 & 2 (2021).

CONDITION 6

“Prior to the submission of a reserved matters application, a design code shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The design code shall be based upon the Site Parameter Plan drawing 23254C/150_A; and Design and Access Statement, and shall include the following:

A local study (regarding urban design, landscape character and architecture). The local study will cover:

1. *Urban form;*
2. *Block pattern and size;*
3. *Development to space relationships, such as building heights to street widths;*
4. *Open space typologies;*
5. *Built response to topography;*
6. *Local Landscape Characters at national and Local levels;*
7. *Local habitats and species as well as patterns of vegetation;*
8. *Boundary treatments;*
9. *Architectural vernacular and details.*

A design strategy for buildings, to include housing mix, density and massing, architectural treatment, the use of feature buildings in key locations, principles for the use of external materials, boundary treatments, and provision of car parking. The masterplan shall be based on a design response to the local study:

1. *Principles for establishing character areas;*
2. *Principles for road hierarchy, pedestrian and cycle connections, including the alignment, width, lighting and surface materials to be used;*
3. *A strategy for street tree planting;*
4. *Principles for the layout to accommodate and respond to existing landscape features within the site;*
5. *Design of the public realm, including principles for the design and layout of public open space, areas for play, lighting, street furniture and sustainable urban drainage;*
6. *A strategy to provide open space, footpath and cycle linkages.*

Chapter II

Landscape Character Study

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NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

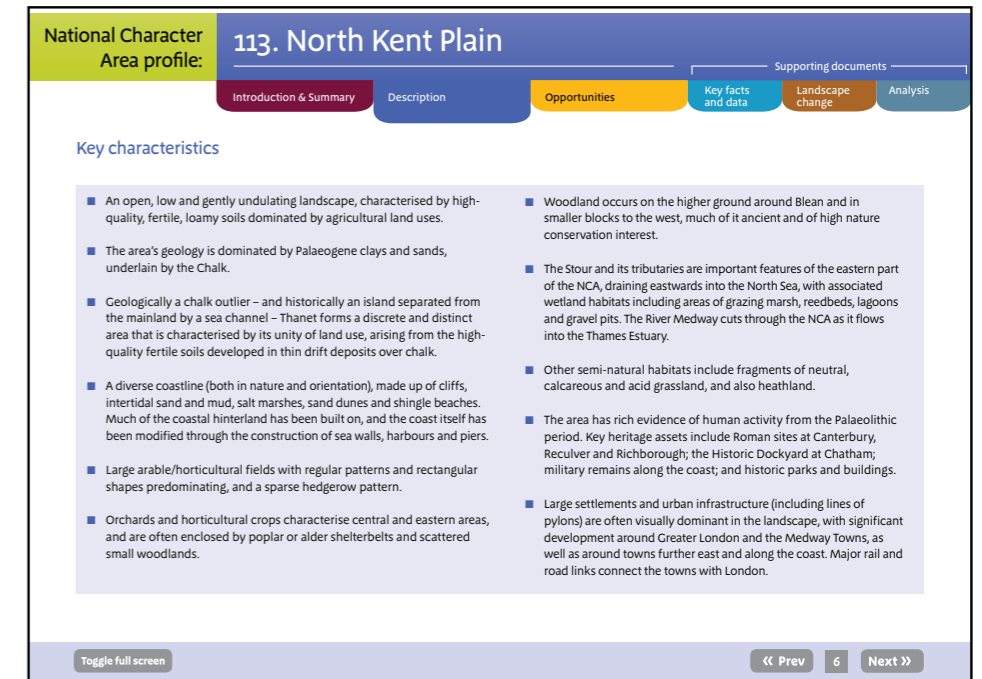
DESCRIPTION:

The Site lies within the NCA Profile 113: North Kent Plain, which is identified as having the following relevant key characteristics:

- An open, low and gently undulating landscape, characterised by high quality, fertile, loamy soils dominated by agricultural land uses.
- The area’s geology is dominated by Palaeogene clays and sands, underlain by the Chalk.
- Large arable/horticultural fields with regular patterns and rectangular shapes predominating, and a sparse hedgerow pattern.
- Orchards and horticultural crops characterise central and eastern areas, and are often enclosed by poplar or alder shelterbelts and scattered small woodlands.
- Other semi-natural habitats include fragments of neutral, calcareous and acid grassland, and also heathland.



1. Extracts from NE357: NCA Profile: 113. North Kent Plain, March 2016. (c) Natural England.



DESIGN GUIDANCE

- Maintain the historic character and long tradition of a farmed landscape, creating habitats to establish more resilient and coherent ecological networks within the farmed and peri-urban areas, benefiting biodiversity and geodiversity, and helping to regulate water and soil quality. Protect traditional practices including the long-standing associations of the fruit belt, maintaining a strong sense of place, and reinforcing Kent’s reputation as the Garden of England.
- Protect and enhance the strong character and heritage of the urban areas. Plan for the creation of significant new areas of green space and green corridors to provide a framework for new and existing development in urban areas and along major transport routes.

Not to scale.

COUNTY LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

DESCRIPTION:

As identified in the Landscape Assessment of Kent (October 2004) the Site is located within the Thames Gateway - Fruit Belt Landscape Character Area. This LCA is noted as a predominantly rural, agricultural landscape, which beyond Sittingbourne consists of small scattered villages and farm complexes.

Orchards are identified as the most distinctive features of the landscape, however, it is also noted that the areas to the north-west and south-west of Sittingbourne are characterised by open arable farmland. The A2 is stated as a notable feature that has attracted development to it over the course of its history.

DESIGN GUIDANCE

- Create an urban edge, using woodland blocks and the retention of shelterbelts where appropriate.
- Create mature standard tree cover at nodes such as road junctions, in hedgerow and at settlement edges.
- The cultural heritage of the area may be enhanced by the creation of new settings for heritage buildings in the landscape.
- The creation of traditional orchards may be used as cosmetic or suburban features in this way.



1.Extracts from the The Landscape Assessment of Kent, October 2004.
(c) Kent County Council.

FRUIT BELT

This is predominantly a rural, agricultural landscape characterised by a complex landscape pattern of orchards, shelterbelts, fields of arable and pasture and horticultural crops, and divided by small blocks of woodland. Apart from the large urban area of Sittingbourne, the area contains only small, scattered villages and farm complexes which contribute to its rural character and landscape diversity. The A2 and A249 route corridors, and associated ribbon development, run through the area and have a localised urbanising effect. To the south of the A2 the gently rolling landform is punctuated by two valley systems running north south through the landscape. These main valleys are reflected by minor valley forms to the north-west and south-east creating distinct features in the landscape. To the north of the A2 the landform becomes flatter as it approaches the Swale and Medway Marshes and loses some of its distinctiveness.

In general terms geology can be divided into two distinct types. To the north of the A2, London Clay and Head Brick Earth predominate with pockets of Thanet Beds and River Gravel creating a consistently flatter landform. To the south of the A2, linear pockets of chalk divide areas of clay with flint, Thanet Beds, Head Brick Earth and Head Deposits. This more complex geology is reflected in the more varied relief.

Land cover is dominated by a richly varied pattern of agricultural land uses. Orchards are the most distinctive feature of the landscape and are still widespread across this area. Mixed in amongst them are fields of pasture, arable and horticultural crops, all of which are typically defined by strong hedgerows or shelterbelts, mainly of poplar. The complexity of this land use mix varies across the area, however, and some areas (notably to the north-west and south-west of Sittingbourne) are now more typically open arable farmland. In contrast to areas further south, woodlands are not a significant landcover element, but small blocks occur in a scattered distribution across the area. Small settlements and farm complexes add to the varied landcover. The extensive urban area of Sittingbourne, transport corridors and associated ribbon development and suburban land uses have a distinctly localised influence on the generally rural character of the area.

Woodlands, often with a coppice understorey, are the main natural ecological resource within this intensively managed landscape. Hawes Wood, Rook Wood, Yaugher Woods and Fox Burrow Woods are listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory. Other elements potentially of ecological and wildlife value are the shelterbelts, which are a more consistent framework of wildlife corridors than the often patchy hedgerow cover, and regenerating woodland and wetland habitats in the disused quarries to the south-east and north-east of Sittingbourne.

A notable feature in this landscape is the Roman Road Watling Street, now the A2. This transportation corridor has attracted development to it over the course of history. The fruit orchards have been a distinctive feature of this landscape since the 18th century.

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DISTRICT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**DESCRIPTION:**

The Site is located within the Newington Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area (LCA) in addition to the Fruit Belt Landscapes LCT identified in the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal (published 2011). This LCA is identified as having the following relevant key characteristics:

- Historic associations with apple and cherry orchards, resulting in rectangular field patterns. However, many of the traditional orchards are noted as having been replaced by arable crops and more intensive arable farming.
- The Newington Arable Farmlands LCA extends between the defined built area of Newington and the A249 and is noted for its loss of traditional character due to agricultural intensification.
- Rolling arable landscape
- Simple geology of Thanet Bed deposits
- Settlement limited to ribbon development along major roads and isolated farmsteads;
- Mixed field pattern, generally medium-scale.
- Few isolated remnant woodlands at field margins.
- Views mainly enclosed by topography, roadside screening and built development
- 'A' roads, motorway and open narrow winding lanes.

Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal

Supplementary Planning Document Revision A November 2011

JACOBS



*1. Extract from the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal, November 2011.
(c) Swale Borough Council.*

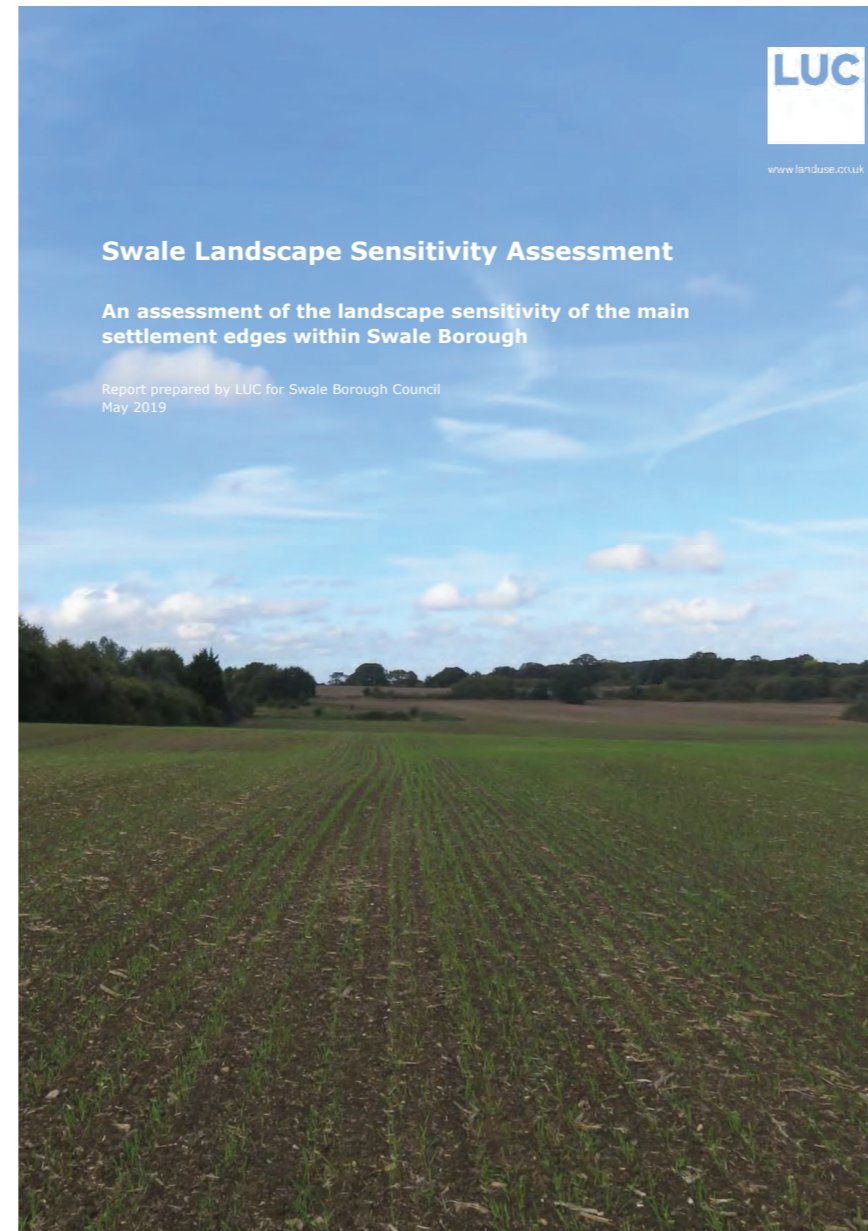
DESIGN GUIDANCE

- Encourage the planting of new community orchards around settlements, within large housing development schemes and on land of currently low biodiversity value to form part of the green infrastructure provision for strategic development schemes in the fruit belt.
- Safeguard remaining remnants of woodland, orchard and hedgerow, especially along lanes and look for opportunities for their re-creation, for example by the enclosure of existing open areas, the integration of existing and new development with woodland blocks and hedgerows (replacing post and wire) and by linking existing isolated woodlands and hedgerows.
- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries - red or yellow stock brick walls, chestnut paling fences or hedgerows, for roofs - clay tiles, slate and for building walls – weatherboarding, red or yellow stock brick.
- For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, hazel, blackthorn, dog rose, crab apple, bullace, damson, field maple and dogwood, for mixed woodland or other planting - pedunculate oak, ash, wild cherry, field maple, hazel, hawthorn and elder and silver birch in colonising areas. Additionally, within developed areas - older fruit tree varieties for trees and beech as hedging. Shelterbelts - poplar.

SWALE LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT**DESCRIPTION:**

The Site is located within area NN2 within the Swale Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2019). Key characteristics identified are:

- The area contains medium scale fields, which have either totally lost their hedgerows and field boundaries, or have been replaced with post and wire fencing, which increases the internal sense of scale throughout the area. This is balanced by the enclosure created by topography and small areas of woodland.
- The landscape contains relatively few areas of remnant semi-natural habitats. Shelterbelts, mature trees and trees and areas of woodland provide habitats, existing within and alongside grazing farmland.
- The A2 along the northern boundary is at a low elevation and offers few views out over this area with views restricted by mature vegetation and residential properties. Despite the landscape being at a higher elevation than much of the surrounding landscape, it does not form a visually prominent skyline in views. Undulating topography within the area limits views from the south;
- The settlement edge of Newington is enclosed by vegetation and residential properties are inward facing. Occasional glimpses of the landscape are visible behind properties. The landscape provides some contribution to the Newington Manor Conservation Area as a rural and open backdrop, although views into this landscape are generally obscured.



1. Extract from the Swale Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, May 2019.

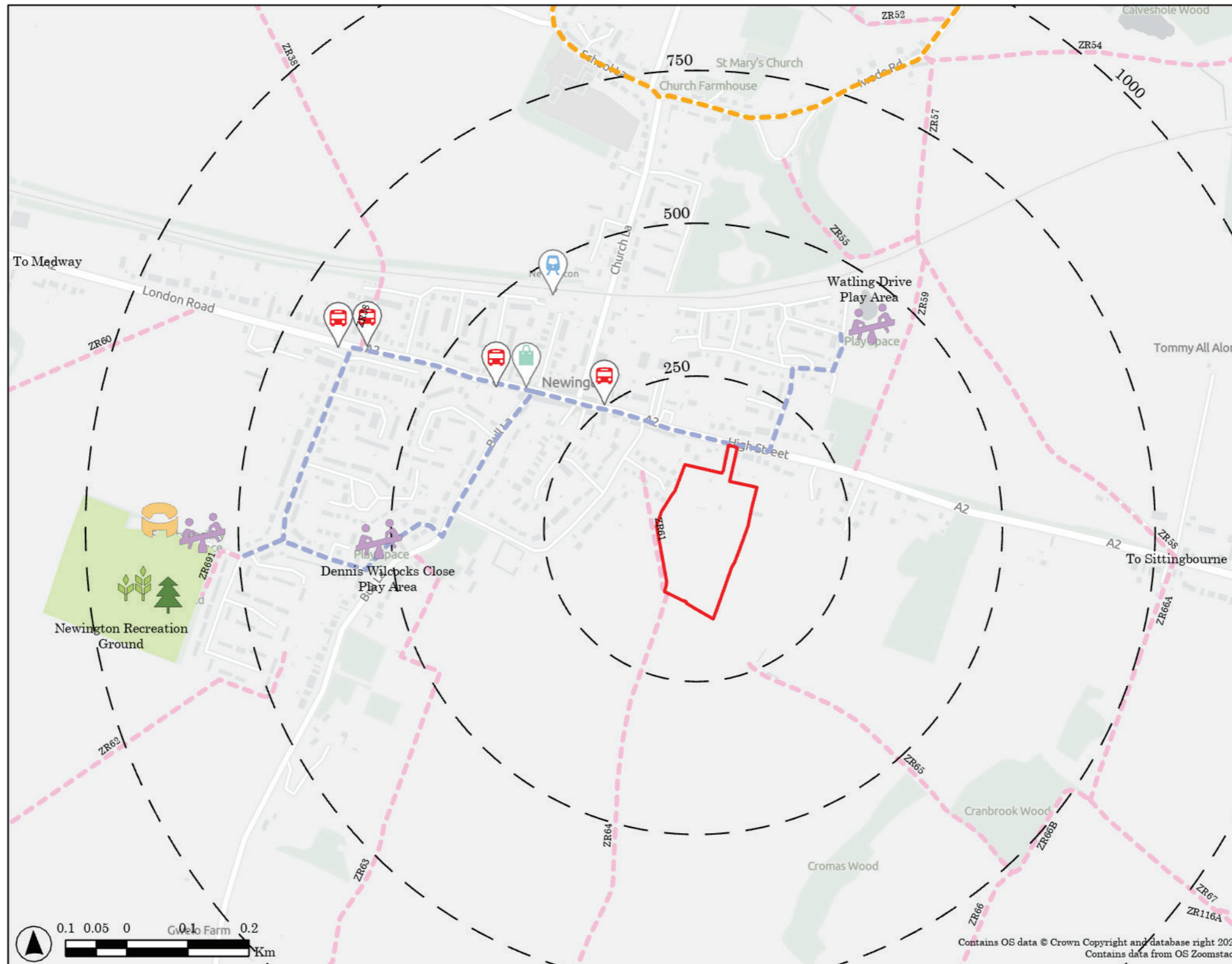
(c) Swale Borough Council.

DESIGN GUIDANCE

- Any new development should follow a landscape-led approach, utilising landform and natural contours to sensitively contain and provide boundaries to built form; and conserving and reinforcing the existing network of shelterbelts, hedgerows, copses and orchards, which provide landscape structure, enclosure and screening. Consider the creation and restoration of such features, where these have been lost, for example the traditionally managed orchards.
- Ensure any new development is sensitive to local character and context in terms of building styles, materials, scale and massing. Sensitive lighting design should be considered;
- Conserve the rural setting of the Newington Manor Conservation Area;
- Maintain and enhance the well-integrated edges of the settlement so that development is not generally visible from the surrounding rural landscape.
- Maintain Newington as a distinct settlement and avoid the visual impression of a continuous suburban character linking Sittingbourne, Keycol and Newington.

LOCAL OPEN SPACES & LANDSCAPE CONNECTIVITY

The site is located within walking distance of a number of local amenities including play spaces, allotments and open spaces. The proposed scheme will provide pedestrian connectivity to the PRoW which runs adjacent to the western boundary of the Site as well as connectivity to the High Street allowing residents to access the wider landscape by making use of the existing extensive network of PRoWs and footpaths within the local vicinity.



- Legend**
- Site Boundary
 - Walking Distance (m)
 - Public Right of Way
 - National Cycle Route 1 - Sittingbourne to London
 - Pedestrian Connectivity
 - Bus Stop
 - Newington Train Station
 - Local Amenities
 - Local Green Spaces DM18
 - Allotments
 - Equipped Play Area
 - MUGA
 - Playing Field



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LOCAL HABITATS & SPECIES

The site was originally surveyed in June 2020 based on standard extended Phase 1 methodology. In addition, a general appraisal of faunal species was undertaken to record the potential presence of any protected, rare or notable species. An update extended Phase 1 survey and faunal evaluation survey was undertaken during January 2024 which confirmed the habitats present are broadly the same as previously recorded and no significant changes to the potential to support protected, rare or notable species.

The site itself is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory ecological designations. All of the ecological designations in the surrounding area are physically well separated from the site, and are therefore unlikely to be adversely affected by the proposals.

The update Phase 1 confirmed the site comprises habitats including semi-improved grassland, Bramble scrub, tall ruderal vegetation, hedgerows, trees and buildings. Areas of bare ground, recolonising ground, amenity grassland and hardstanding are also present within the site. The update Phase 1 record evidence of recently cleared areas likely associated with archaeological trenching works, this has left areas of disturbed / bare ground. Additionally, buildings B10 and B11 are no longer present.

Of the habitats within the site, hedgerows are considered to qualify as Priority Habitats and therefore constitute important ecological features. During the update faunal evaluation, update internal inspections were undertaken of the buildings within the site. This inspection recorded no evidence of roosting bats and as such the previous assessment remains valid. Additionally, habitats on site remain suitable to support reptiles so their continued presence is likely. As such, appropriate mitigation measures, namely a translocation exercise, will be completed before habitat clearance to safeguard reptiles during the development.

Habitats such as scrub and buildings offer potential to support nesting birds. As such, these will be removed outside of nesting bird season (1st April – 30th September inclusive) where practicable. Should suitable habitats be required to be removed within nesting bird season they will be subject to a nesting bird survey to confirm absence by a suitably qualified ecologist.



Chapter III

Settlement Character Study

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