

MEADOW COTTAGE, THE STREET, PRESTON

Landscape Visual Appraisal

APRIL 2024

Issue 1



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1.0 Introduction

1.0.1 Hill-Wood & Co (Kent) Ltd have been commissioned by Mr Hanson to prepare a Landscape Visual Assessment for this site at Meadow Cottage, The Street, Preston.

1.0.2 This report has been prepared following the plans and reports as supplied by Clague.

1.1 Methodology

1.1.1 This report has been prepared and follows the Technical Guidance note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals 17th September 2019 published by the Landscape Institute.

1.1.2 The photographs in this report have been taken using a length of lens at 50mm on a digital camera, with a single lens reflex camera.

The following specifications are based on a 50mm Focal Length (FL) and Full Frame Sensor (FFS) combination, and are suitable for all types of photography and visualisation. See below for an alternative specification (cropped frame) which is acceptable for Visualisation Types 1 and 3.

If a 50mm FL lens cannot capture the view in landscape or portrait orientation the use of wider-angled prime lenses should be considered, working through the following sequence of fixed lenses in this order: 35mm FL > 28mm FL > 24mm FL. In these unusual situations, the reasoning for the choice and the approach used should be documented.

1.1.3 This report has been prepared to assess the potential visual impact of development within this site on the surrounding landscape. If visual impact is assessed, then mitigation proposals are recommended to soften the development and reflect the landscape character to be retained / enhanced. This report will assess the impact by:

- Assessment of the site and the surroundings through desk study and site visit
- Desk study to provide Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) to enable the location of viewpoints where the proposed development may impact the landscape or view
- Assess the baseline landscape and visual context
- Recommend suitable mitigation

1.2 Landscape

1.2.1 The definition of 'landscape' is important and the one in the European Landscape Convention (20 October 2000) defines it as:

"Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors". (2.2)

1.3 Sustainable Development

1.3.1 Sustainable Development can be part of an LVA and the most widely accepted definition is that in the Brundtland report (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987):

'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. (2.14)

This is considered in the extent of the impacts of the proposed development and the duration of the impacts.

1.4 Landscape and Visual Assessment

1.4.1 This visual assessment has been prepared in accordance with: Landscape Institute Technical Committee TGN 06/19 - Visual Representation of development proposals. The Advice Note links to and follows the principles set out in The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition 2013 in the selection of viewpoints and taking and preparing photographs.

1.5 Role of the Landscape Architect

1.5.1 The role of the professional in preparing an LVA is made clear. *"It is always the primary responsibility of any landscape professional carrying out an assessment to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the particular circumstances." (1.20)*

1.6 Landscape

1.6.1 The assessment will describe the site and its setting within the neighbouring landscape. The assessment will include the visibility of the proposed development within spring and summer versus autumn and winter.

1.6.2 Mitigation will be assessed within the different seasons where provided.

1.6.3 Table 1 (in Section 4) provides the immediate, short term and medium term impact based on the proposed mitigation, stated as, Neutral Low Moderate High impact. These are subjective to the desk study and the professional perception of the consultant.

1.6.4 It is stated in 5.37 that: *"One of the more challenging issues is deciding whether the landscape effects should be categorised as positive or negative. It is also possible for effects to be neutral in their consequences for the landscape. An informed professional judgement should be made about this and the criteria used in reaching the judgement should be clearly stated. They might include but should not be restricted to: The degree to which the proposal fits with existing character; The contribution to the landscape that the development may make in its own right, usually by virtue of good design, even if it is in contrast to existing character."*

1.7 Visual Effects

1.7.1 The selection of final viewpoints for the LVA should include:

- *"The accessibility to the public;*
- *The potential number and sensitivity of viewers who may be affected;*
- *The viewing direction, distance (i.e. short-, medium- and long-distance views) and elevation;*
- *The potential for cumulative views of the proposed development in conjunction with other development." (6.20)*

1.7.2 The baseline photography should:

- *Be sufficiently up to date to reflect the current baseline situation.*
- *Include the extent of the site and sufficient context*
- *Be presented at a size and relative position, on a corresponding sheet, to allow for like to like comparison with the visualisation*
- *Be based on good quality imagery, secured in good, clear weather conditions wherever reasonably possible*
- *Avoid foreground clutter*
- *In LVIA/LVA baseline photography, if relying on only existing views with no visualisations, clearly identify the extent of the application site in the view*

1.7.3 Visualisations should:

- *Provide a fair representation of what would be likely to be seen if the proposed development is implemented*
- *Be based on replicable, transparent and structured processes and use a reasonable choice of agreed viewpoint locations, view direction, view angles and times of day*
- *Be accompanied by appropriate information, including a technical Methodology and required data within page title blocks*

1.7.4 The producers of visualisations should:

- *The landscape professional is likely to need to determine an approach to visualisation before having completed the LVA/LVIA itself. Therefore a preliminary judgement on the likely overall 'Degree or Level of Effect' will be required. Whilst this should not prejudice the detailed process or outcome of the LVA/LVIA, the context and likely extent of the proposal will be known at an early stage and should be sufficient to inform the initial assessment.*
- *Use visualisation types 1-4, selected by reference to purpose of use and anticipated users, combined with the indicative overall Degree or Level of Effect (a product of magnitude and sensitivity) See 1.10 for the breakdown of the visualisation types*
- *Use techniques and media, with appropriate explanation, that represent the proposed scheme and its setting as accurately as reasonably practicable, proportionate to its effect*
- *Where reasonable within project timescales, include maximum effect scenario.*

1.8 Desk study

1.8.1 A preliminary desk study has been conducted to establish the context of the proposal site in terms of planning designations, special areas of statutory protection and landscape character.

1.8.2 Ordnance Survey maps, contour mapping and GIS software to identify nearby features within the surrounding landscape, such as; public rights of way, listed buildings and monuments.

1.8.3 The site visit required the walking of all types of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) to assess the worst case view of the site from the identified viewpoints. Where worst case views are just off the PRoW, or by standing on a raised carriageway verge, these have been adjusted on site and taken to provide the worst case view.

1.9 Glossary of terms

The below terms are used in the LVA Section 3 in assessing the Visual Impact and relate to each view:

SUSCEPTIBILITY (VISUAL)

DEFINITION OF LOW:

Site is screened by vegetation, buildings or other structures.
Site comprises a limited portion of the view.

E.G. Dense hedgerows or tree canopies obstruct the site within the view. Topography considerably limits views of the site.

DEFINITION OF MODERATE:

Parts of the proposal site form noticeable sections of the view. There is scope for noticeable effects within the view which would alter the visual character of the view.

E.G. There are some screening factors but parts of the site remain visible in central parts of the view.

DEFINITION OF HIGH:

The proposal site is clearly visible in a considerable portion of the view. Vegetative screening is minimal and sight line towards the site is unobstructed.

E.G. The viewpoint is elevated and allows clear views of all or the majority of the site.

VALUE (VISUAL)

DEFINITION OF LOW:

View comprises unremarkable features.
Some detractors are likely to be present.
Views are foreshortened or impeded

E.G. Dense hedgerows or tree canopies obstruct the view. Detractors are clearly evident.

DEFINITION OF MODERATE:

View comprises common landscape features.
Some detractors may be present in the view.
Views are likely to be of medium length but not include long distance views to the horizon.

DEFINITION OF HIGH:

View comprises protected designation (AONB/National Park)
View comprises heritage asset. (listed building/conservation area)
Long views to horizon/elevated viewpoint
No significant detractors.

SUSCEPTIBILITY (LANDSCAPE CHARACTER)

DEFINITION OF LOW:

Landscape character is able to accept considerable change without perceptible loss of characteristic features.

(E.G. Landscape has some characteristic features which may be affected in a small way, however the site can accommodate change and mitigation is likely to be effective)

DEFINITION OF MODERATE:

Landscape character is able to accept some change without perceptible loss of characteristic features.

(E.G. Landscape has some characteristic features which may be affected in a small way, however the site can accommodate change and mitigation is likely to be effective)

DEFINITION OF HIGH:

Landscape can accept very limited change before harmful effects, such as loss of characteristic features, occur.

(E.G. Landscape character could easily be lost through small interventions)

VALUE (LANDSCAPE CHARACTER)

DEFINITION OF LOW:

Industrial/derelict sites.
Poor management of landscape features.
Low habitat value.
Little historic interest.

DEFINITION OF MODERATE:

Natural features of reasonable interest (woodland/open land/hedgerows)
Good habitat/green infrastructure.
Good levels of land management.
Medium to long term established land uses.

DEFINITION OF HIGH:

Proximity to protected designation (AONB/National park)
Strong habitat connectivity/green infrastructure.
Historic landscape/land use/boundaries.
High levels of stewardship/land management.

The below terms are used in the Significance of Impact Table 1 in Section 4 of the LVA and cover: during construction, 5 years and 10 years on from completion:

Neutral
Low
Moderate In order of impact (low to high)
High

Ancient Woodland; woodland that has existed continuously since 1600 or before

Arable; used or suitable for growing crops

Binocular; using both eyes to see something

Convex; having an outline or surface curved like the exterior of a circle or sphere

Concave; having an outline or surface that curves inwards like the interior of a circle or sphere

Farmstead; the house belonging to a farm and the buildings around it

FFS; full frame sensor

FFS+50mm; full frame sensor with 50mm lens

FL; Focal length

Hamlet; small settlement, generally one smaller than a village without a church

HFoV; Horizontal Field of Vision

Monocular; viewing distant objects with one eye

Pasture; and covered with grass and other low plants suitable for grazing animals, especially cattle or sheep

Scrub; vegetation dominated by shrubs

1.10 Visualisation types 1-4

Type 1 Annotated viewpoint photographs

Type 2 3D wireline/model

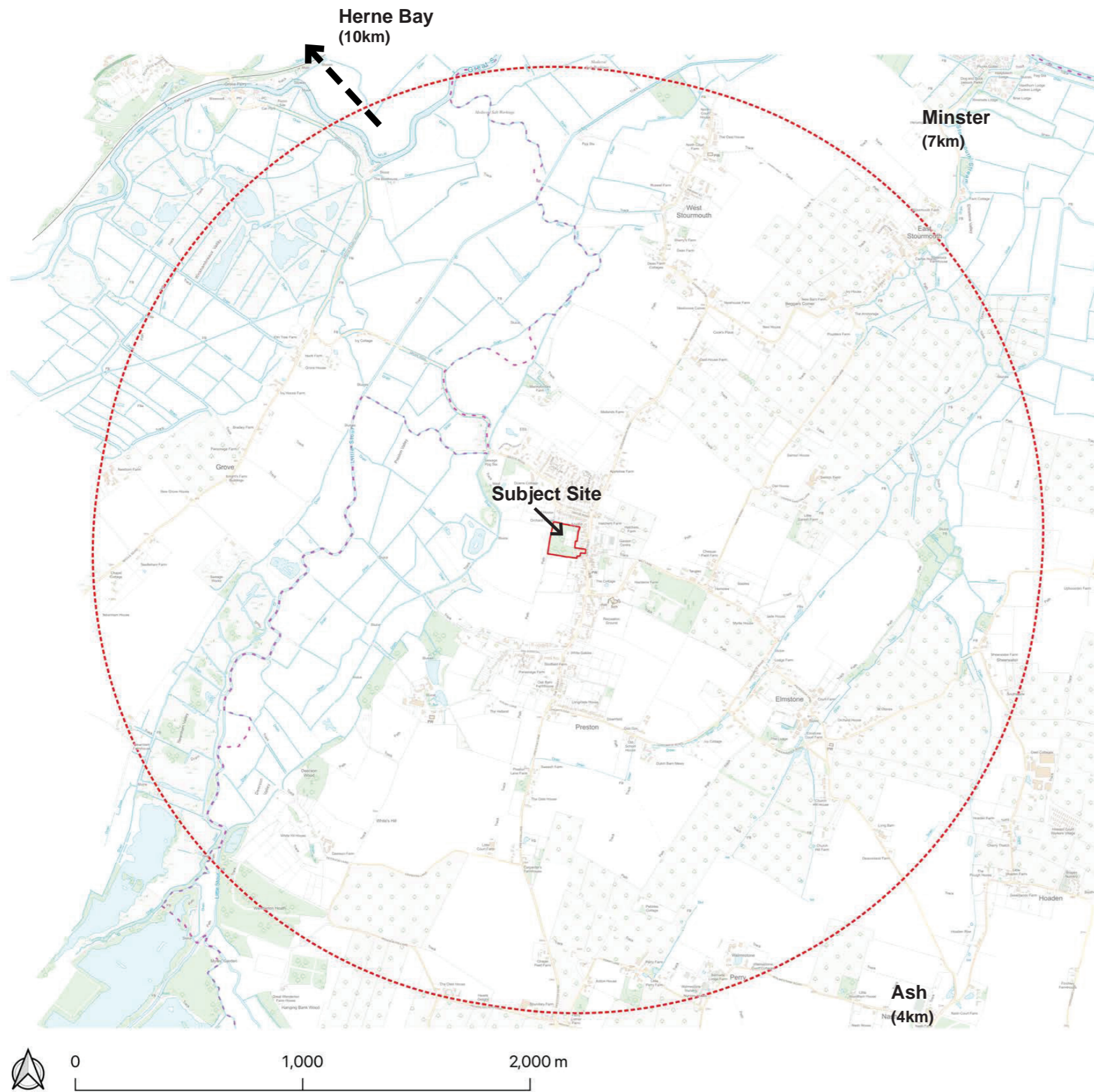
Type 3 Photomontage / photowire

Type 4 Photomontage/photowire (survey / scale verifiable)

The most sophisticated Visualisation Types are appropriate when the Purpose / User requires the highest levels of accuracy and the Sensitivity and Magnitude combine to generate the highest Degree or Level of indicative overall Effect.

Table 1 provides a broad indication as to appropriate Visualisation Types for different Purposes and Users. Note that categories A-D illustrate four convenient levels along a scale, not four fixed interpretations

Table 1: Relationships between Purpose, User and Visualisation Types		
Category	Purpose and Users	Appropriate Visualisation Types
A	Evidence submitted to Public Inquiry, most planning applications accompanied by LVIA (as part of formal EIA), some non-EIA (LVA) development which is contrary to policy or likely to be contentious. Visualisations in public domain.	2 - 4
B	Planning applications for most non-EIA development accompanied by LVA, where there are concerns about landscape and visual effects and effective mitigation is required. Some LVIA's for EIA development. Visualisations in public domain.	1 - 4
C	Planning applications where the character and appearance of the development is a material consideration. LVIA / LVA is not required but supporting statements (such as Planning Statements and Design and Access Statements) describe how the proposal responds to landscape context and policies. Visualisations in public domain.	1 - 3
D	To inform the iterative process of assessment and design with client, and / or pre-application consultations with the competent authority. Visualisations mainly confidential.	1 - 2



Key

- Site
- 2km Site Buffer

2.1 Site Location

2.1.1 The site is some 10km south east of Herne Bay, south west of Minster by some 7km and north west of Ash by some 4km. Preston is the nearest village to the subject site. There are clusters of mature trees and scrub to the north, north west and south west of the subject site. The subject site is bordered to the north by an established tree line bordering the properties south of Grove Road, and to the east bordering the properties west of The Street. South west and west of the subject site are arable fields.

2.1.2 The Street runs north south of the subject site, and borders the south eastern corner of the subject site.

2.1.3 The site is currently unused land, bordered to the north, east and south west by established hedgerows, mature trees and scrub.



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Drawing title

Site Location

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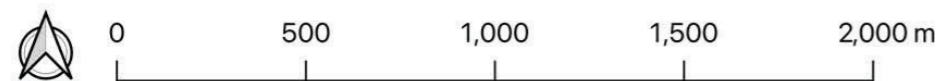
Key

- Site
- 2km Site Buffer
- Woodland
- Contours (m)

2.2 Topography and Woodland

2.2.1 The topography of the site and the surrounding area is clearly shown, with the subject site sitting on the land rising gradually to the south, with the land falling to the north west of the subject site before rising again at a distance of some 2.8km by Upstreet.

2.2.2 There are numerous small blocks of woodland scattered around the site, mainly situated on lower ground to the east and south west.



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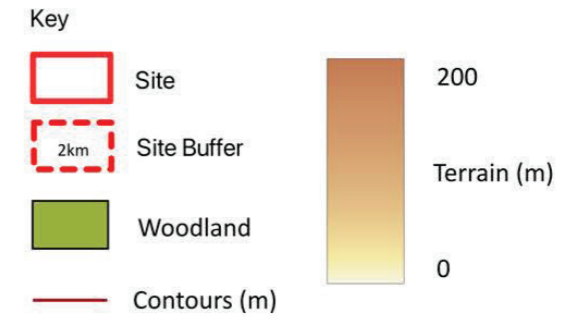
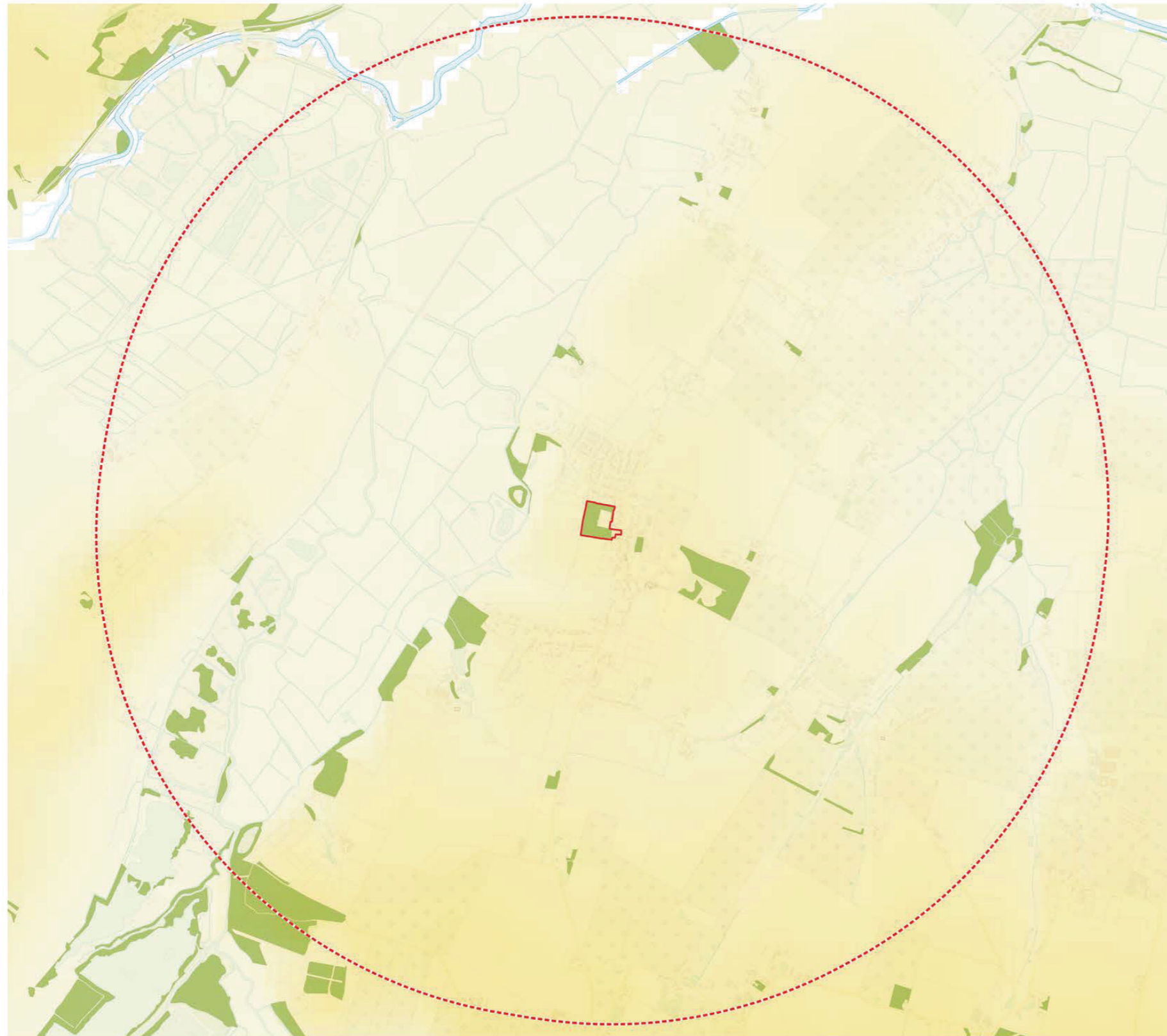
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Topography and Woodland

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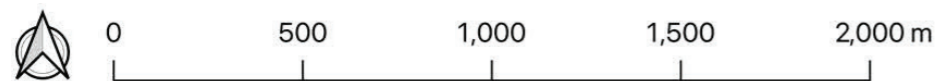
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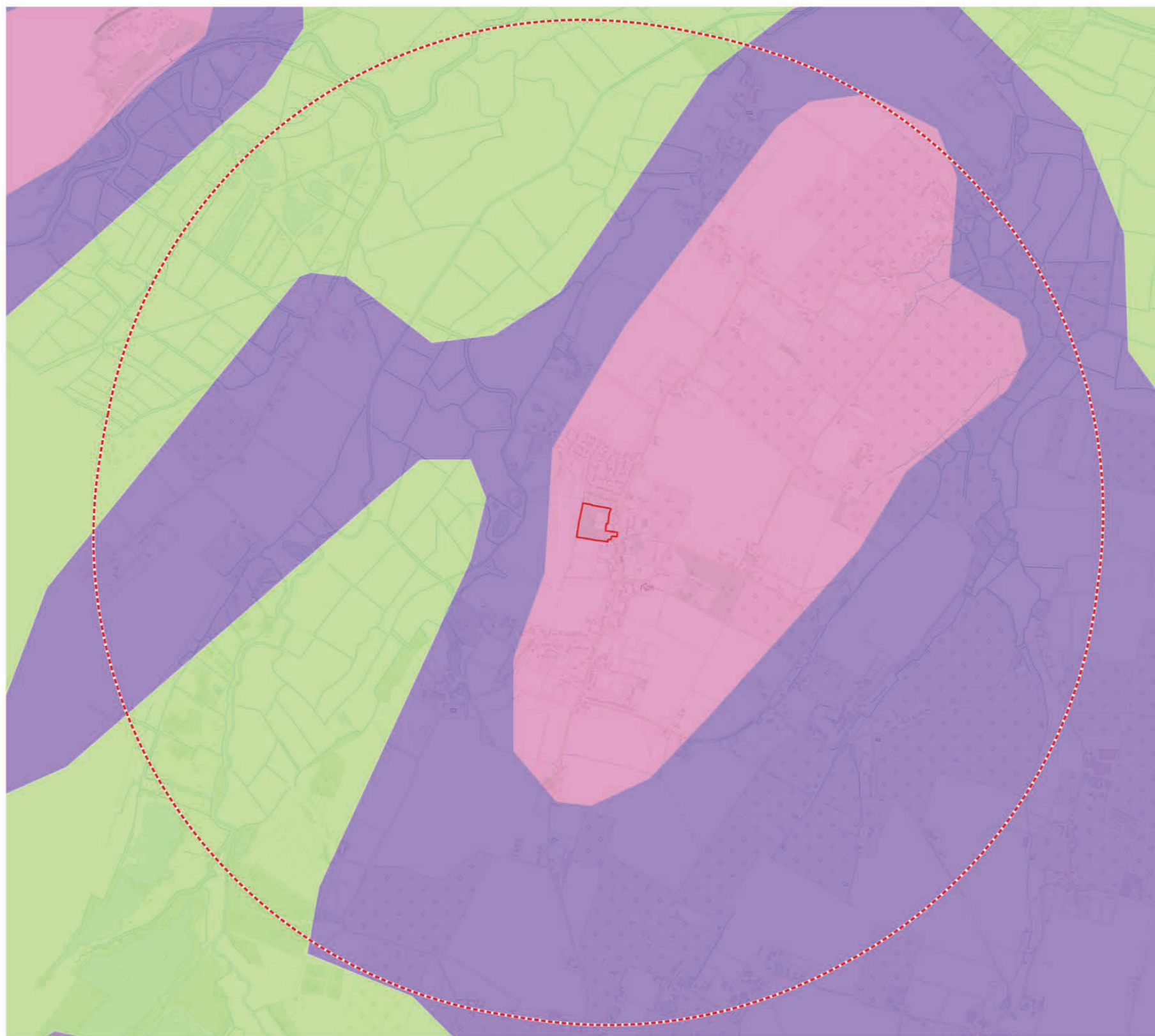
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Topography and Woodland

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Key

- Site
- 2km Site Buffer
- London Clay
- Sussex Chalk
- Thanet Formation

2.3 Geology

2.3.1 The site is located on the underlying geology of London Clay.



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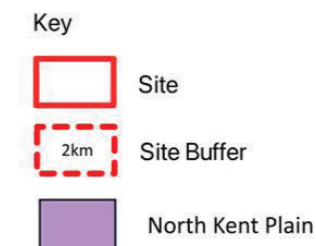
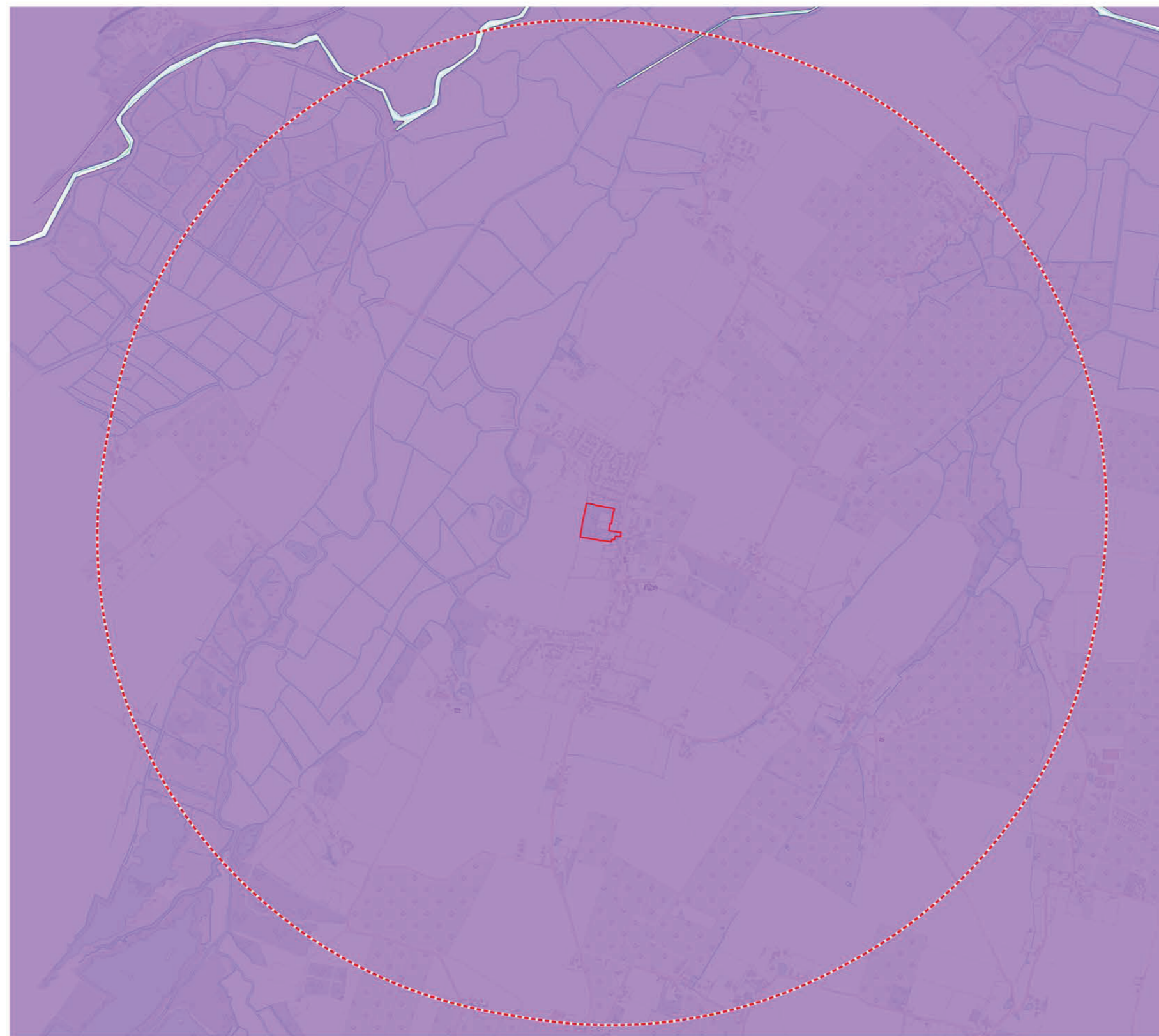
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Geology

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2.4 Natural England - National Character Area

2.4.1 The 'National Character Area Profile' (prepared by Natural England, 2013) locates the site within the landscape character area of: North Kent Plain. This is identified as:

2.4.2 "The North Kent Plain National Character Area (NCA) is the strip of land between the Thames Estuary to the north and the chalk of the Kent Downs to the south. The area is open, low and gently undulating. It is a very productive agricultural area"

2.4.3 The environmental opportunity of the North Kent Plain is noted as Conserving and enhancing tranquillity within the National Character Area (NCA) and, where appropriate, planting broadleaved woodland to screen development while simultaneously linking habitats, improving ecological connectivity and resilience, and providing a source of local community green space. Restoring hedgerow boundaries. This will aid improvements in water quality, as well as restoring the character of native hedgerows and traditional field patterns – especially where lost in peri-urban areas.

2.4.4 Natural England have provided the following information regarding trees and woodland within this area:

- Poplar and alder shelter belts form a distinctive boundary feature, historically associated with fruit growing areas. Fields in the NCA are often defined by changes in crop type, rather than by hedgerows, with exposed fields common.



01622 437196 - lydia@hwandco.co.uk - www.hwandco.co.uk
2 Keswick Drive, Maidstone, Kent ME16 0DQ Hill-Wood & Co (Kent) Company no. 10066666

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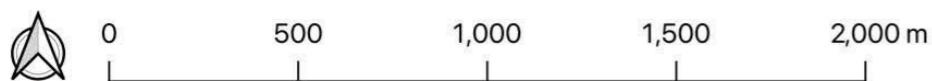
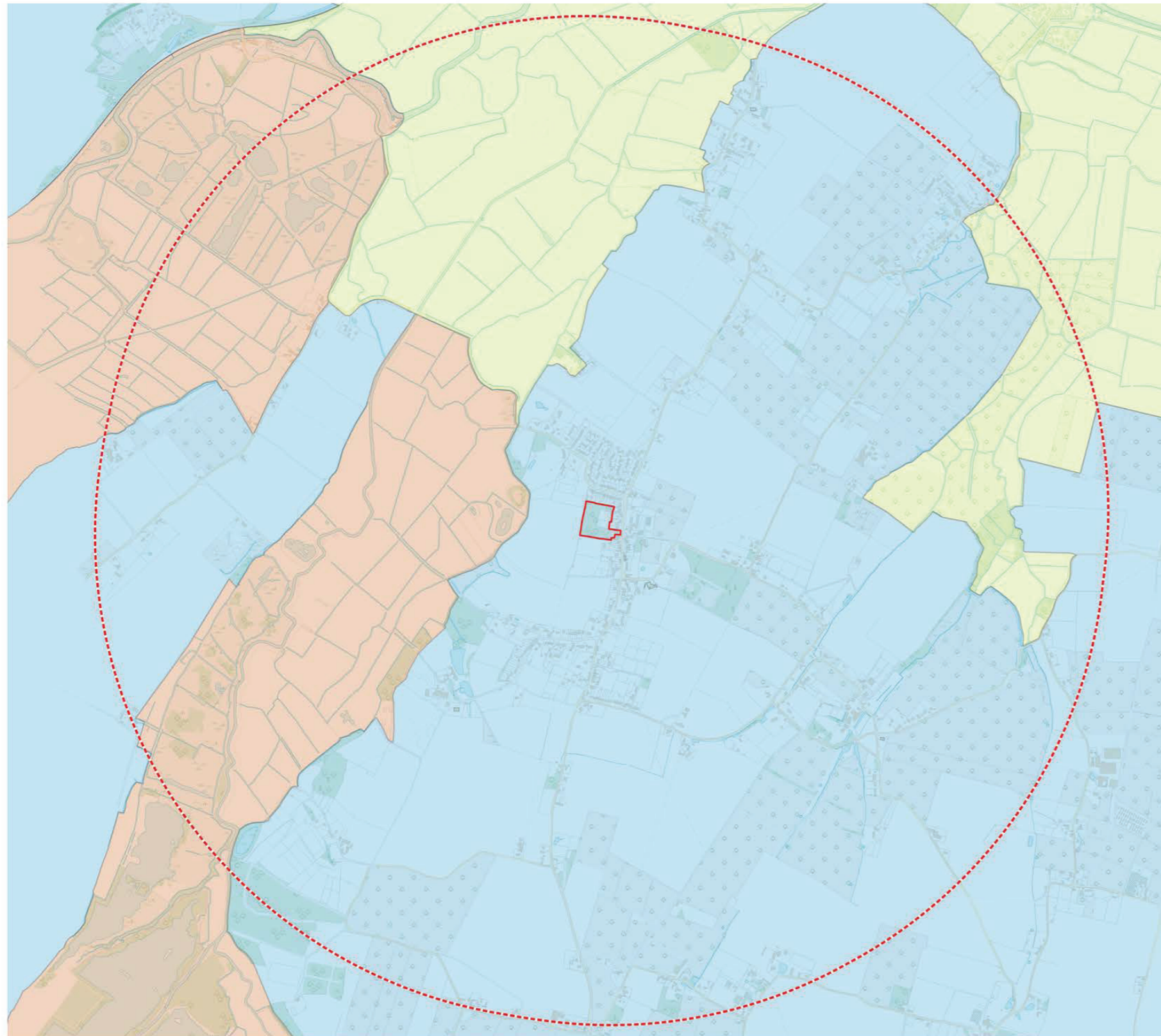
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Natural England – National Character Areas






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Key

-  Site
-  2km Site Buffer
-  East Kent Horticultural Belt
-  The Stour Valley
-  The Wantsum and Lower Stour Marshes

2.5 County Landscape Character

2.5.1 The 'Landscape Assessment of Kent' (prepared by Jacobs Baptie in October 2004) locates the site within the landscape character area of: East Kent Horticultural Belt. This is identified as:

2.5.2 "Enclosed by hedgerows and shelterbelts, medium scale, gradually sloping or flat. Some contained, small-scale landscapes in the central area. Long views from higher ground. Coastal and marsh edges."

2.5.3 The character of the East Kent Horticultural Belt, is identified by the Landscape Assessment Assessment of Kent as: Create and Reinforce.

2.5.4 The following recommendations to 'create and reinforce' are provided:

- Create nuclei of small-scale landscapes within the area
- Reinforce drainage patterns and shelterbelts as functional and visual elements within the landscape
- Create an edge to the marsh areas by encouraging the development of wetland areas



01622 437196 - lydia@hwandco.co.uk - www.hwandco.co.uk
2 Keswick Drive, Maidstone, Kent ME16 0DQ Hill-Wood & Co (Kent) Company no. 10066666

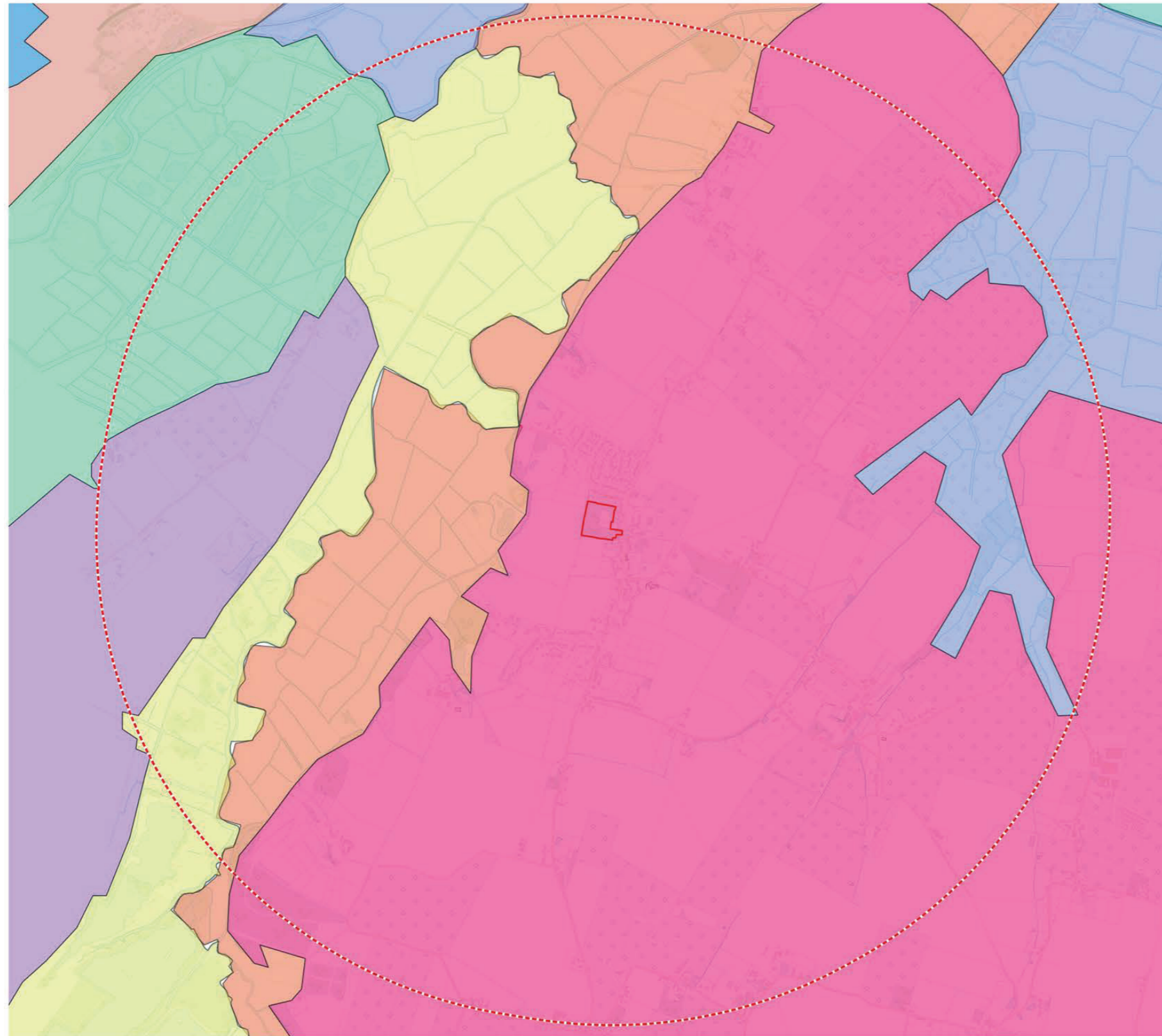
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County Landscape Character Areas

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Key

-  Site
-  2km Site Buffer
-  Preston and Ash Horticultural Belt
-  Little Stour Marshes
-  Little Stour Valley
-  Ashlevel

2.6 Borough Landscape Character

2.6.1 The 'Dover District Landscape Character Assessment' (prepared by Jacobs Baptie in 2006) locates the site within the landscape character area of: Preston and Ash Horticultural Belt. This is identified as:

2.6.2 "Small fields with varied land use such as private grazing for horses, orchards, glasshouses and some arable and pasture land."

2.6.3 The character of Preston and Ash Horticultural Belt, is described by the Dover District Landscape Character Assessment as follows:

- The hedgerows and hedgerow trees are commonly native and poplar.
- There are several orchards, pasture fields with some arable land.
- There are villages in Ash and Preston, with clusters of farm buildings and isolated farms.
- These settlements are mostly made up of vernacular style older dwellings and farmsteads, oasthouses and large farm barns.



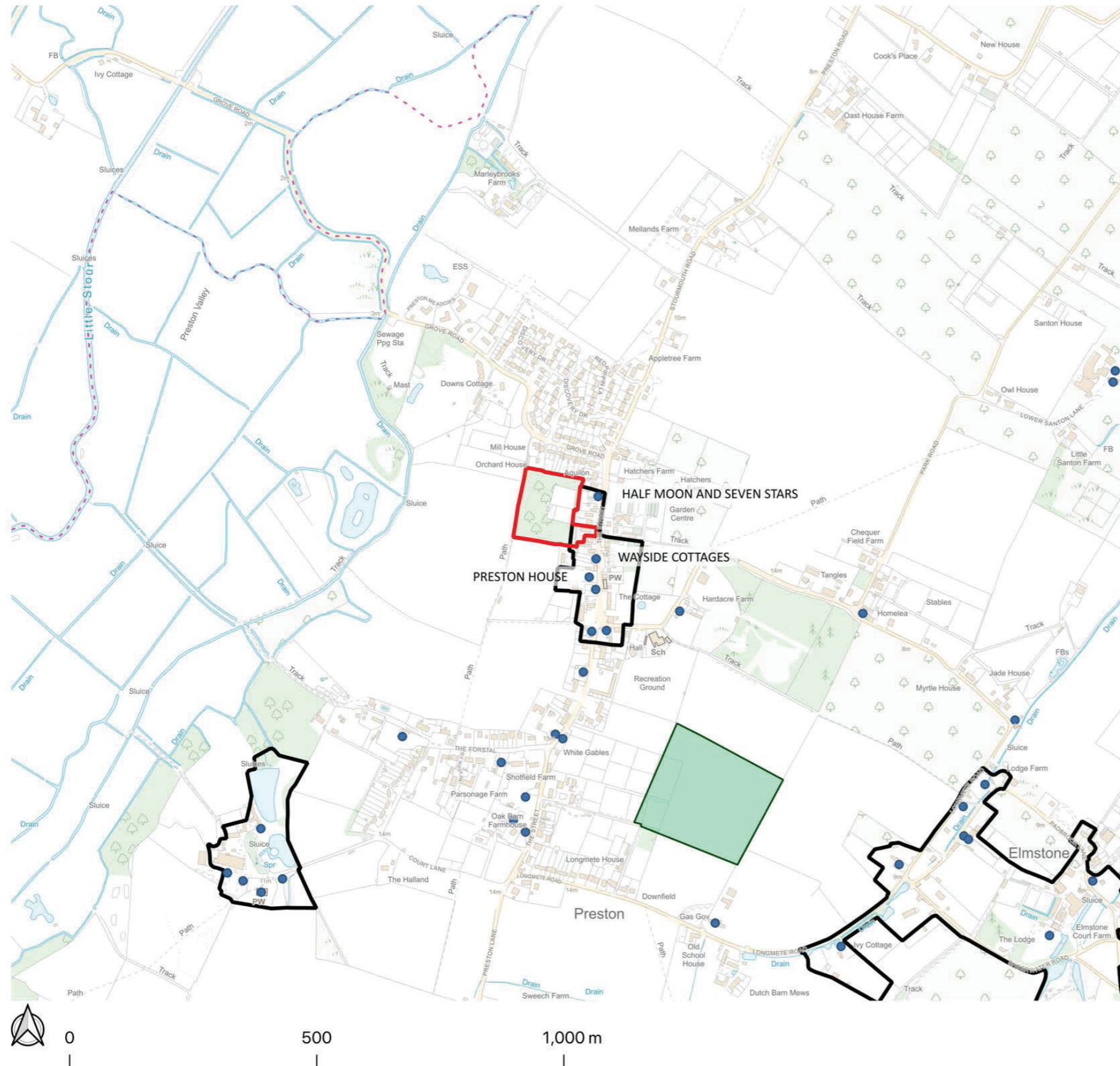
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Borough Landscape Character Areas

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Key

- Site
- 2km Site Buffer
- Listed Buildings
- Ancient Monuments
- Conservation Area

2.7 Conservation Areas, Monuments and Listed Buildings

2.7.1 The south eastern corner of the subject site is partially within the Conservation Area. There are no monuments or listed buildings within the site.

2.7.2 The nearest listed buildings are Half Moon and Seven Stars to the north east of the subject site, west of The Street. To the south east of the subject site also west of The Street is Wayside Cottages and Preston House.



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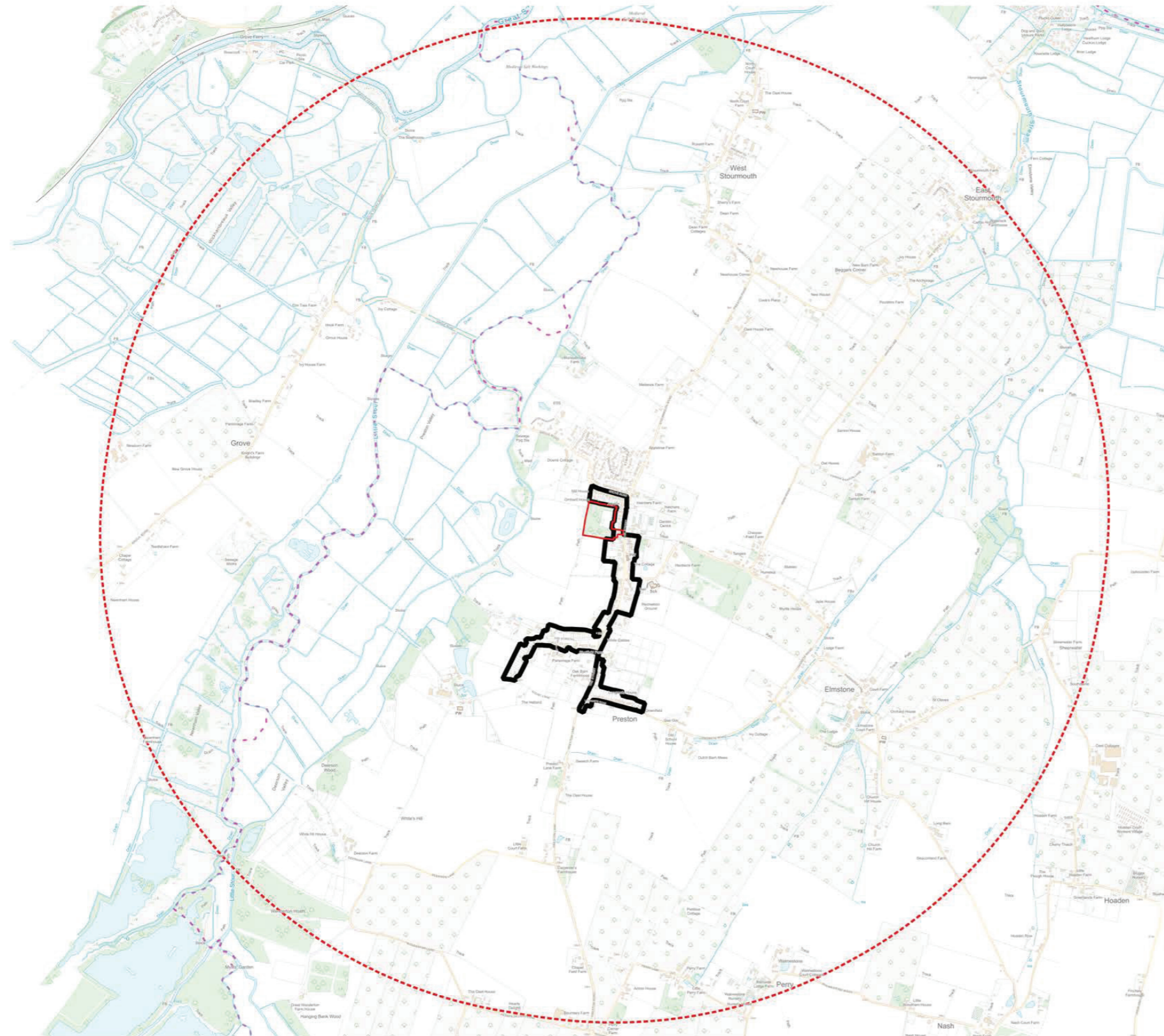
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Conservation Areas, Monuments and Listed Buildings

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Key

- Site
- 2km Site Buffer
- Settlement Boundaries

2.8 Settlement

2.8.1 The subject site is partially within the identified settlement area of Preston.

2.8.2 The settlement area stretches west of the subject site directly to the north and further south of the subject site.



01622 437196 - lydia@hwardco.co.uk - www.hwardco.co.uk
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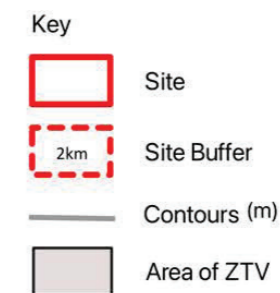
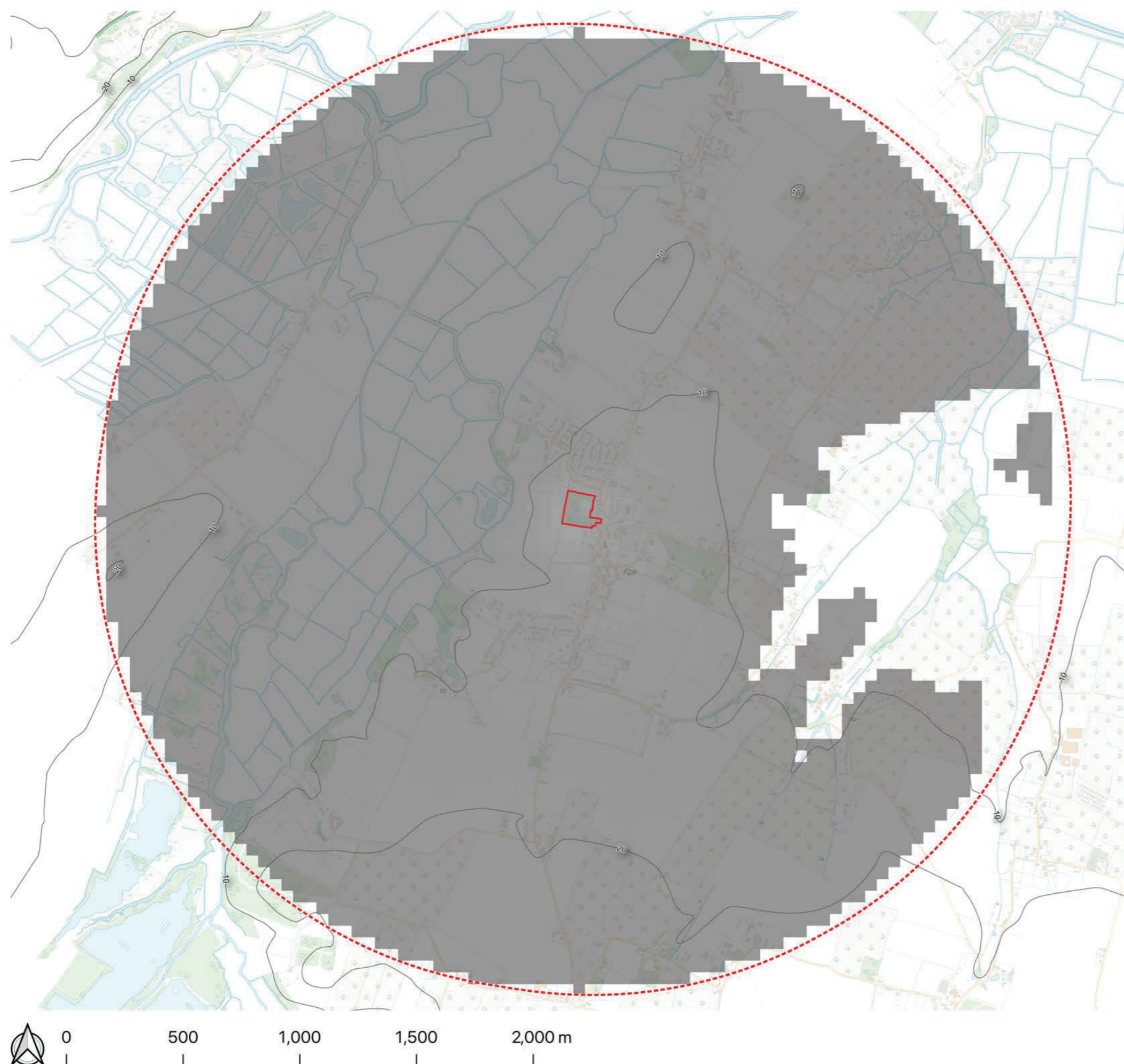
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Settlement Boundaries

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2.10 Zone of Theoretical Visibility

2.10.1 The zone of theoretical visibility is calculated via a fixed height of 9m within the centre of the site and the grey area indicated on the drawings represents the theoretical visibility of this object based on the topography of the site and the surrounding landscape. However the ZTV does not take into account woodland, hedgerows or buildings which may obscure views of the site. It is also important to note that the proposed development on this site is proposed at no greater than 9m.

2.10.2 The location of viewpoints are located by the assessment of the ZTV, woodland, built development and PRoW. All viewpoints are taken from publically accessible locations.



01622 437196 - lydia@hwandco.co.uk - www.hwandco.co.uk
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Zone of Theoretical Visibility

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