

5.0

Design Process



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5.1 Initial Design Response to Constraints and Opportunities

This site is allocated in the Local Plan Review (Oct 21). The allocation excludes The Howlands to the north east and this defines the red line.

Along Copper Lane, to the southern boundary of the site, are the series of ponds as natural features. This promotes an extensive parkland of open space to the south of the site, incorporating the attenuation. Other design features are:-

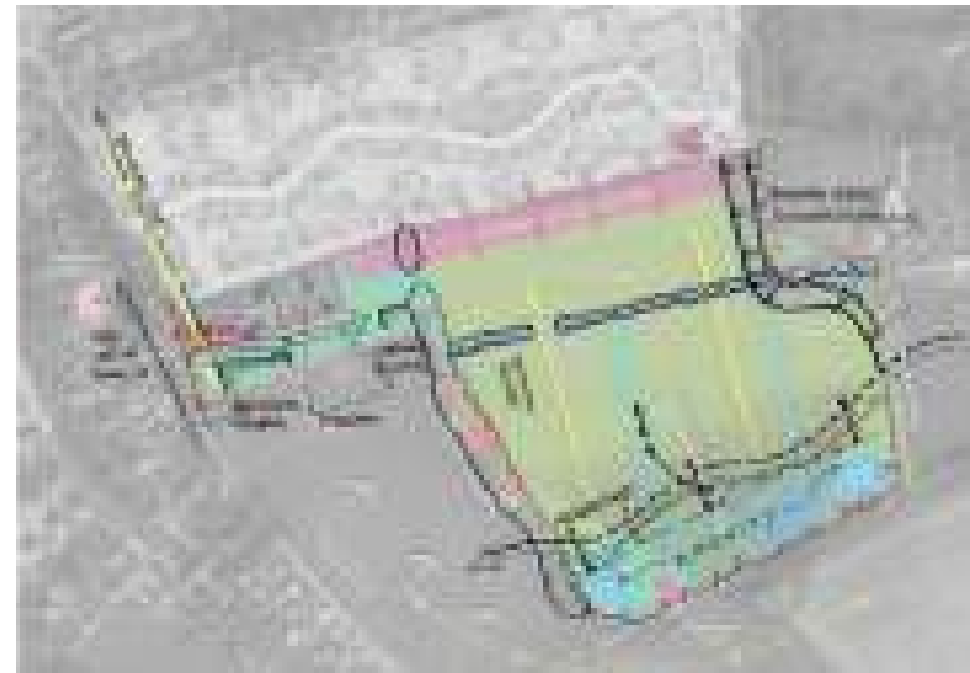
- Russet Grove - to north - as backdrop
- Site access off Albion Road
- “Northern” site delineated by existing ‘wind break’ tree line
- The northern part of the site is therefore screened and less sensitive for development
- Site falls north to south
- Site is an orchard - north-south - retain areas as community orchard(s)
- Existing perimeter landscaping - reinforced / offset
- Existing hedgerows
- Access of Copper Lane - as second emergency only access
- Buildings to east of site - suggesting screened boundary to east

The initial concept is to create an irregular street pattern of houses leading from Thorn Road towards a “village green”, creating a central community space. This will merge the village centre character with the more ‘individual’ property aesthetic of Albion Road.

The historic field pattern - of hedgerows and watercourses is reintroduced to the south of the retained ‘windbreak’ tree line.

The silver birch tree line is a strong linear constraint east- west, as the current field pattern but is considered less important as a landscape site feature.

The proposals are less dense to the south, arranged in ‘pockets’ of dwellings set within the landscaping, with considerable areas of open space. The scale of the properties can also be reduced here.



1. Entrance - Landscape / Agricultural Inferences / Building Line



3. Sense of Place / Community Space



2. Streetscape / Conservation Area Streetscene Inferences



4. Less Formality Respecting ‘Historic’ Field Pattern Reducing Density Southward - more informal ‘pockets’ of development - Lower Scale

“Kentish villages are intimate in character and centred around a square or green”

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Built form
Movement

5.2 Initial Concept Diagram - April 2022

The development is set back from Copper Lane in the Initial Concept Plan- to provide to provide a parkland of hedgerows, landscaping, ponds and potentially retaining a community orchard. This extensive public open space is linked to Copper Lane providing a landscaped setting for development. This open space is further increased, with a greater set back of development, through the emerging proposals that follow.

The initial concept plan considered (up to) 130 dwellings, as a balance of amenity and landscaping provisions, including a retained “community” orchard area centrally.

This was considered prior to the need for an (additional) attenuation pond to the south - but established an approach to be worked up over a series of iterations during spring / summer 2022



Initial Concept Diagram

Increase southern boundary offset - increase open space (and) retained “community” orchards

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Nature

5.3 Evolving Concept Layout - May 2022

The constraints and opportunities provides a basis for considering an evolving concept layout which is tested against the consultant inputs. This is for 124 dwellings with increased public open space, particularly to the south.

Concept “Testing” Heritage

The access arrangements and the offset of the layout to the eastern edge with enhanced screening is reasonable. Reinforcing the historic field boundaries with stronger delineation is advocated. The concept of an agricultural grouping at the entrance “softens” the transition to the rural edge of the Marden Village.

Concept “Testing” - Flood Risk

HSP Consulting assessed the emerging concept and advise that for the most part, residential dwellings are located outside of the surface water flood risk envelope.

Recommendations:

- A few dwellings to the southwest of the site infringe the risk envelope - move northwards
- Preferable to maintain the actual flood route down to the pond as a natural feature - rather than a culvert/ engineered means of aminating the flow at the western “field boundary”

Concept “Testing” Landscaping

The concept layout would benefit from strengthening of boundary/perimeter landscaping and reinforcing the historic field boundary definitions. The development ideally needs to be further from the southern boundary, enabling the potential for the orchard edge to be retained as a landscape transition from the extensive amenity ponds to a more “random” built edge, considering reduced scale properties at angles and offsets. Strengthening the historic field boundary to the east would further reduce the visual impact when viewed from the south/Copper Lane/beyond.

Concept “Testing” Arboriculture

The TPZ’s of all the existing trees to be retained are reasonably respected in the emerging proposals. The windbreak trees are retained but are the less successful arrangement of the site centrally - creating two “seperated2 sites.

This layout was progressed to wider consultation as Work in Progress - May 2022

Attenuation Pond

This is located as per the engineers requirements, but considered as a ‘boardwalk’ through the extensive open space to the south.



Initial Concept Plan

“Boardwalk” through southern open space - as walkway and educational feature - with interpretation and viewing potential

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5.4 Public Consultation - Summer 2022

A comprehensive Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) will accompany this Outline Planning Application (prepared by SP Broadway who coordinated the consultation process).

A public consultation was held in Marden Village Hall on 2nd (Saturday) and 6th (Tuesday) July '22. The presentation explained the background and the emerging proposals at that time.

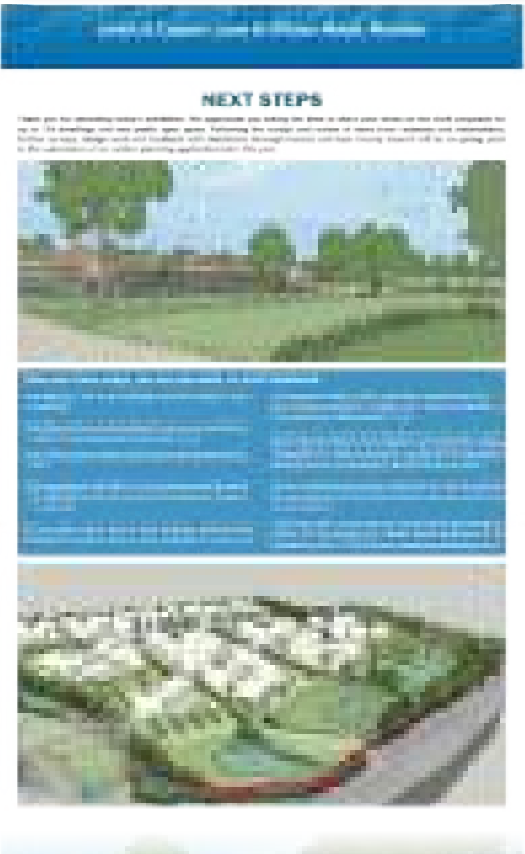
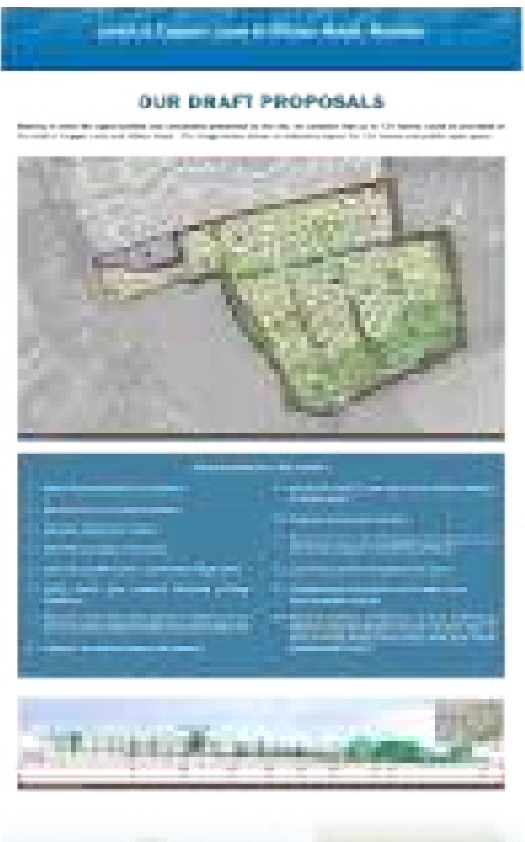
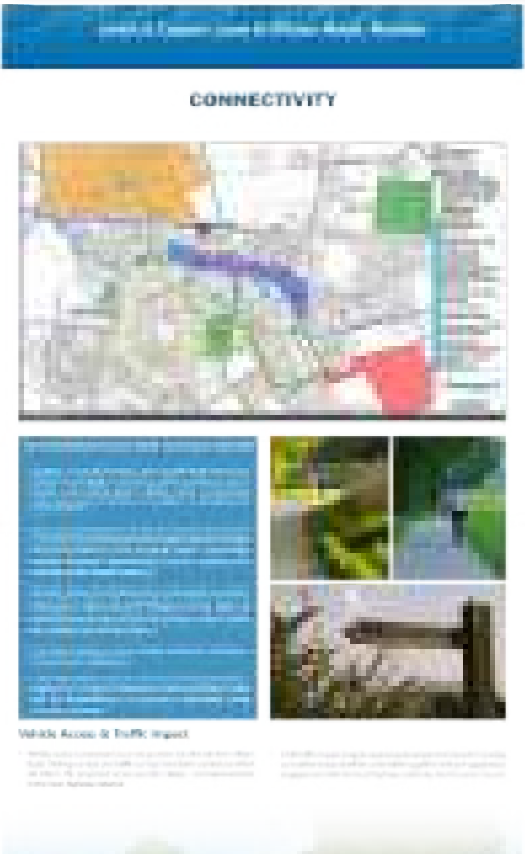
The primary concern from residents of Russet Grove was the proximity of new development to their recently occupied dwellings.

Many were unaware that the site to the south is allocated under the same Local Plan Review as the Russet Grove site and called for the proposals to be set away from the conjoined boundary. The SCI records the other feedback but this is the key design inference of the public consultation.

The introduction of a village green and extensive open space to the south were generally supported.



Public Consultation Banners



“The masterplan approach is the subject of community engagement to influence the emerging (outline planning application) proposals”

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5.5 Pre Application - Summer 2022

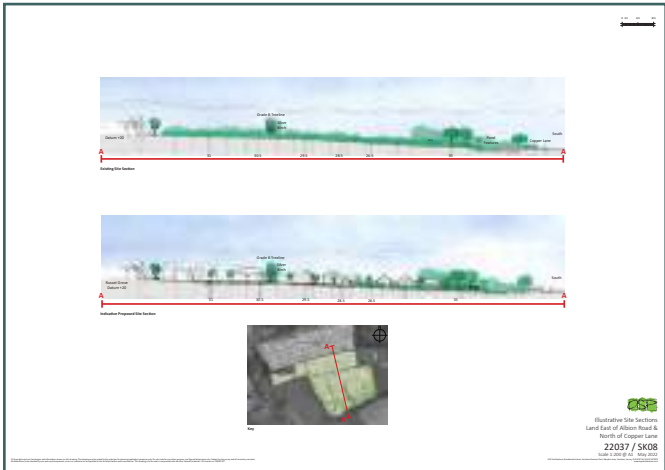
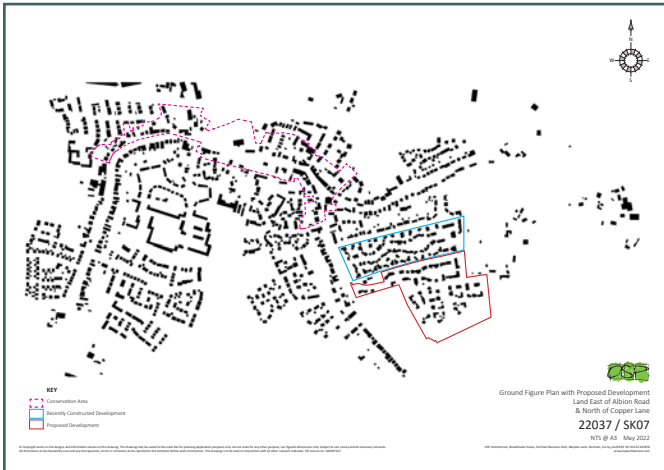
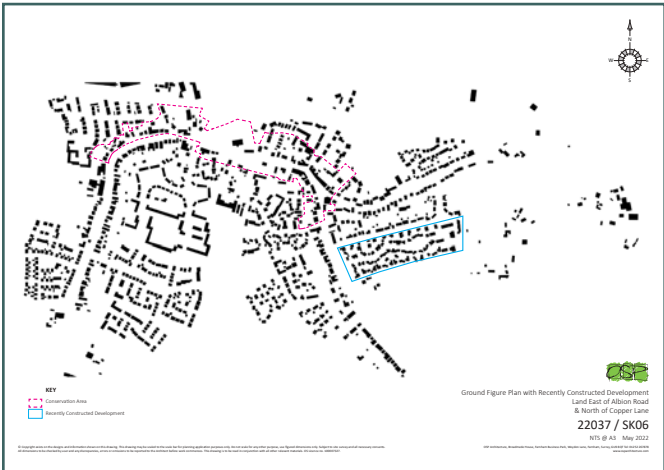
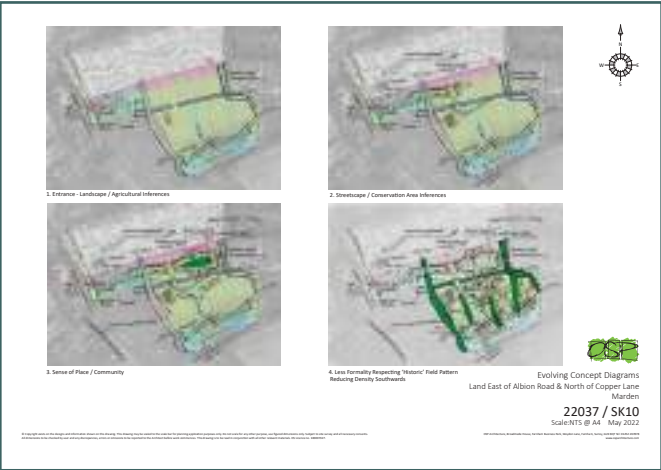
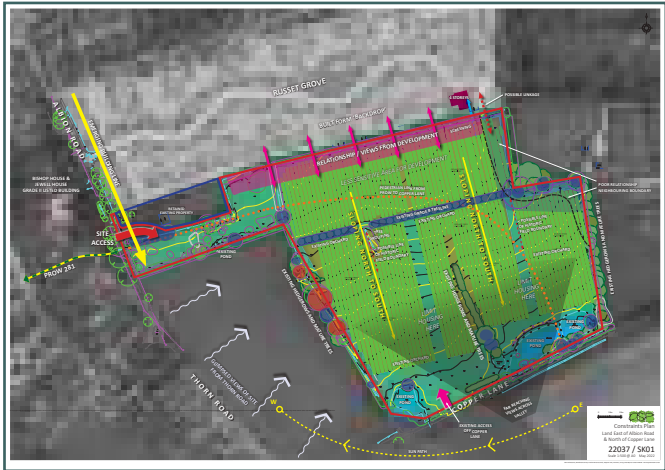
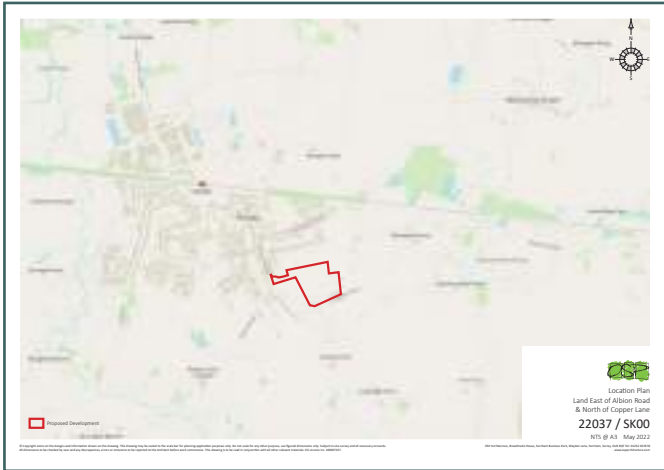
An initial explanatory meeting with the Local Planning Authority was convened prior to the public consultation -on Monday 27th June 2022.

The pre application presented the work in progress and considered the site constraints and opportunities based on an initial document issued at the end of May 2022

This was subsequently followed up with a further (remote) pre application meeting on 9th August '22 and a subsequent formal response setting out areas of concern to be addressed in the site layout.

The formal pre application response is dated 16th August '22 and the design team considered both the public consultation responses and the pre application responses in reconsidering an illustrative layout in support of this outline planning application.

The clear feedback is that a reduction in dwellings is required to address these concerns and that the scale and relationships to the south with the open space are to be revisited.



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Nature
Public spaces

5.6 - Pre-Application Responses - August 2022

The consultation responses are tabulated as follows:-

Consultation Responses
Public Proximity to Russett Grove Boundary
Local Authority Density <ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of units is too high (particularly to north)Cramped appearance due to continuous built form to North East
Storey Heights <ul style="list-style-type: none">Storey Heights to not reflect the sensitive landscape settingRefer to Marden Neighbourhood Plan in regard of storey heightsStorey heights to mitigate views into the site from the south
Site Entrance The 6 units at the entrance are cramped -rural character and appearance on that side of Albion Road
Spine Road Main spine road needs dwellings to be set back – street pointing to verges The village green needs to be more “visible” on the Spine road
Public Open Space <ul style="list-style-type: none">Amenity open space needs to be of more visual benefit and all need public surveillanceFurther clarity required on open space typologiesInsufficient natural/semi natural open space
Structural Landscaping <ul style="list-style-type: none">More tree screening/structural landscaping is required access the site (east to west) to break up the visual massing when viewed W-S and S-NThe silver birch needs to have more undeveloped buffer space
Perimeter Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none">Not enough distance is provided between the pond areas and the built environmentNot enough distance is left between the perimeter trees and the built environment
Cycles Clear cycle link required
Ecology Matters
Sections are required – sloping site Show street trees (separate from dwellings demise)
Substation, Refuse Collection, Pumping Station
External lighting
Affordable Units – concentrated in one area
Maidstone Building for life 12 – alignment with...



Emerging Landscape Strategy Diagram

A clear landscape strategy diagram is established which moves the village green westwards and strengthens the access as a “greenway” which skirts the community space and diverts southwards and eastwards as a linear green of landscaped frontages and more set back dwellings. The silver bitch alignment is considered more as a linear “feature line” in the landscape.

Orchards are retained to east and west with smaller, lower density pockets of development to the south interspersed with large tree groupings and an extensive boardwalk through the ponds, attenuation (to be reshaped) and parkland.

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5.7 Revised Proposals - September 2022

In order to address the southerly scale concern bungalows were considered to the southern development edge, but the larger footprints appeared incongruous and reduced opportunity for open space.

This approach was therefore DISCOUNTED, in preference for a more expansive “greenway” in the revised proposals with 1.5 storey dwellings as the southerly built form.

In other aspects the Consultation Responses were reasonably addressed, based on the landscape strategy and hierarchy of landscaping north - south, particularly the introduction of large tree groupings to the south.

The offset to the Russet Grove boundary is clear which has set the development southwards, with the village green now interfacing with the silver birch alignment.

The central part of the silver birch is therefore replaced with a built form edge creating the enclosure to the community space whilst maintaining the east-west alignment of the field boundary.

Two ‘rectilinear’ community orchards are retained to S.E. and S.W., reflecting the formality and extent of the existing use on site.

The ‘boardwalk’ is considered as more curved, softer feature interlinking the ponds to the south, and connecting the two orchard retained features, of thinned out trees set within the extensive public open space.

The key feature is the “greenway” traversing through the proposals creating setbacks, enclosure and interest as a ‘movement’ feature. This leads to an allocated and enclosed area on the eastern boundary - as a dedicated Ecology Area



Revised Proposed Layout - September 2022 - Bungalows to South DISCOUNTED

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5.8 Revised Proposals - October 2022

Consultation Responses	Response
Public Proximity to Russett Grove Boundary	The proposals to the northern perimeter, which is landscaped and set inboard in places, reinforced by trees
Local Authority Density <ul style="list-style-type: none">Number of units is too high (particularly to north)Cramped appearance due to continuous built form to North East	The proposal has reduced from 130 dwellings initially to 117, representing a density of 19.56 dwellings/hectare
Storey Heights <ul style="list-style-type: none">Storey Heights to not reflect the sensitive landscape settingRefer to Marden Neighbourhood Plan in regard of storey heightsStorey heights to mitigate views into the site from the south	The storey heights range from single storey to two and half storeys to the north only. The dormers in the roof is consistent with the Neighbourhood Plan and the character appraisal. All the units to the southern edge are single/ one and half storey with hipped gables.
Site Entrance The 6 units at the entrance are cramped -rural character and appearance on that side of Albion Road	The entrance agricultural grouping has been reduced to four dwellings in a retained landscape setting.
Spine Road Main spine road needs dwellings to be set back – street pointing to verges	A greenway is promoted, running through the site following the Spine road.
The village green needs to be more “visible” on the Spine road	The village green has been relocated westwards, is widened and elongated as a considerable community space.
Public Open Space <ul style="list-style-type: none">Amenity open space needs to be of more visual benefit and all need public surveillanceFurther clarity required on open space typologiesInsufficient natural/semi natural open space	The swathes of open space are orientated east – west and interconnected, with clearer typologies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Community Village GreenGreen WaySouthern useable and visual amenity
Structural Landscaping <ul style="list-style-type: none">More tree screening/structural landscaping is required access the site (east to west) to break up the visual massing when viewed W-S and S-NThe silver birch needs to have more undeveloped buffer space	A structural landscape approach is proposed with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Trees to north/village greenSilver birch alignment returned – east and westStructured tree planting – particularly to green wayLarge tree grouping to south
Perimeter Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none">Not enough distance is provided between the pond areas and the built environmentNot enough distance is left between the perimeter trees and the built environment	The perimeters to the north (Russet Grove), east, west and south are all increased, providing an amenity landscape setting.
Cycles Clear cycle link required	The cycle route follows the spine road along the greenway, then descends due south to the emergency access off Copper Lane
Ecology Matters	A dedicated Ecology Area is allocated to the western perimeter, which will be fenced off and planed appropriately, remote from street lighting and adjacent to the retained western orchard and open space.
Sections are required – sloping site	These are included in the DAS - Section 4.8
Show street trees (separate from dwellings demise)	These are shown illustratively and will be supported by the Landscape report
Substation, Refuse Collection, Pumping Station	Locations for these are identified on the site layout, including turning for refuse vehicles (arrows)
External lighting	A scheme of directional and energy efficient lighting will be considered, with particular note to minimise any lighting to the western Ecology area.
Affordable Units – concentrated in one area	The affordable provision is now spread to the north and south of the Birch Tree alignment (east and west)
Maidstone Building for life 12 – alignment with...	See section 7

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