

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Mid Sussex Design Guide

Supplementary Planning  
Document SPD

**Consultation Draft**

July 2019





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# 1 Purpose of the Design Guide

The aim of the Design Guide is to deliver high quality new development across Mid Sussex that responds appropriately to its context and is inclusive and sustainable. The Design Guide sets out clear principles and objectives that aim to inspire developers and designers and assist landowners, developers, applicants and planners in the process of delivering high quality and well designed development.

The District is experiencing pressure for growth and new development within the district should be of a quality that contributes to the success of settlements, to a strong local economy and benefits existing residents, visitors and future generations. The Design Guide highlights the importance of a robust design process and careful consideration of context to create sustainable, successful, well-used places.



# 1 Purpose of the Design Guide Objectives



Beautiful countryside in the High Weald AONB near to Balcombe

## 1.1 Overall objectives

1.1.1 This Design Guide is intended to inform and guide the quality of design for all development across the District. Its main focus is larger schemes (urban extensions or proposals on brownfield sites), however it is also relevant for proposals for a single house, for a household extension or building conversion.

1.1.2 The Guide puts forward principles and standards for new development that aim to create safe and attractive places that are sensitive to Mid Sussex's special character while also allowing creative and innovative design solutions.

***“A thriving and attractive District, a desirable place to live, work and visit. Our aim is to maintain, and where possible, improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of our District and the quality of life for all, now and in the future.”***

Mid Sussex District Council Vision from District Plan

1.1.3 High quality design is essential to optimise the development potential of sites and also to deliver the kind of places that will provide economic and environmental well-being and quality of life for the District's residents both now and into the future.

1.1.4 This Design Guide provides clear design principles to encourage a design-led approach to development. These principles are based on the policy framework provided by District Plan Policy DP26: Character and Design.

## DP26: Character and Design

**Strategic Objectives:** 2) To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District's distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence; 4) To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities; 12) To support sustainable communities which are safe, healthy and inclusive; and 14) To create environments that are accessible to all members of the community.

All development and surrounding spaces, including alterations and extensions to existing buildings and replacement dwellings, will be well designed and reflect the distinctive character of the towns and villages while being sensitive to the countryside. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that development:

- is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace;
- contributes positively to, and clearly defines, public and private realms and should normally be designed with active building frontages facing streets and public open spaces to animate and provide natural surveillance;
- creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscape;
- protects open spaces, trees and gardens that contribute to the character of the area;
- protects valued townscapes and the separate identity and character of towns and villages;
- does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing nearby residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of the impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution (see Policy DP29);
- creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible;
- incorporates well integrated parking that does not dominate the street environment, particularly where high density housing is proposed;
- positively addresses sustainability considerations in the layout and the building design;
- take the opportunity to encourage community interaction by creating layouts with a strong neighbourhood focus/centre; larger (300+ unit) schemes will also normally be expected to incorporate a mixed use element; and
- optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.

# 1 Purpose of the Design Guide

## A user friendly guide

### 1.2 Structure of the Guide

#### Design Principles

1.2.1 Each chapter is structured around a number of Design Principles that must be followed when designing and promoting new development within Mid Sussex. The principles are drawn from best practice (see additional resources below), respond to the unique environment within the District and are intended to guide and assist applicants on the design aspects that must be considered and addressed when drawing up their proposals.

1.2.2 This Design Guide provides general guidance on the form that new development should take. This addresses a range of development types including:

- New urban extensions and large residential developments;
- Brownfield and urban infill sites;
- New dwelling design;
- Household extensions;
- Building conversions; and
- Employment and commercial developments.

1.2.3 Not all principles will be relevant for smaller scale development proposals (including for single dwellings, household extensions or building conversions). Chapters three and four, in particular, are most relevant for larger sites which must establish their own structure, either as part of an existing settlement or as an extension to an existing settlement.

1.2.4 The design principles are supported by illustrations and photographs of best practice examples including case studies from both within the District and elsewhere. Poor practice is also illustrated.

#### Checklists

1.2.5 Checklists are provided at the end of each chapter in the guide. The checklists are intended to act as prompts to applicants to ensure that the issues raised are considered at the right stage of the design process and to optimise the potential of the site to accommodate appropriate development.

1.2.6 Not all checklists or all the issues raised in individual checklists will apply to every site and each case will be decided on its merits.

1.2.7 Applicants are expected to demonstrate compliance where checklists do apply or robustly justify their proposals where a different approach has been taken.

#### Additional resources:

- Building for Life 12 , The Sign of a good place to live (Cabe at the Design Council, Design for Homes and Home Builders Federation) [www.builtforlifehomes.org](http://www.builtforlifehomes.org)  
- Urban Design Compendium 1 (3rd edition, HCA and Studio REAL, 2013)

# 1 Purpose of the Design Guide

## A user friendly guide

1.2.8 The Design Guide is structured in nine chapters and Figure 1.1 sets out the design principles that relate to each of these. It also identifies the development types to which each principle is relevant. Reference is also made to the 12 principles identified in Building for Life 12 (BfL12) and how the Design Guide principles relate to these.

| Design Guide Chapter                | Design Principles  | Building for Life Reference (BL12) | DEVELOPMENT TYPES  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|                                     |  |                                    | Strategic housing developments and urban extensions (300+ homes) | Major residential development (10 - 300 dwellings) | Brownfield and urban infill | Commercial or employment | Mixed use scheme | Individual houses | Household extensions | Building conversions |
| <b>2 Understanding the context</b>  | DG1: Designations  | 5/6                                |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                     | DG2: Character study   | 5/6                                |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                     | DG3: Landscape character   | 5/6                                |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                     | DG4: Settlement and site context   | 5/6                                |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                     | DG5: Site appraisal  | 5/6                                |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
| <b>3 Establishing the structure</b> | DG6: Work with the natural features and resources of the site                    | 5/6                                |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                     | DG7: Establish a landscape and green infrastructure network                      | 5/6/11                             |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                     | DG8: Water features and sustainable urban drainage                               | 5/6                                |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                     | DG9: Design to enhance biodiversity  | 5/6                                |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                     | DG10: Respond to topography and strategic views                                  | 5/6                                |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                     | DG11: Establish a clear movement network that connects with the surrounding area | 1/6/8/9                            |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                     | DG12: Reduce reliance on the private car   | 3/9                                |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                     | DG13: Anticipate future development  | 1                                  |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                     | DG14: Respond to the existing townscape, heritage assets and historic landscapes | 5/6                                |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |

Figure 1.1: Table setting out the structure of the design guide, the design principles and the type of developments to which they are applicable.

# 1 Purpose of the Design Guide

## A user friendly guide

| Design Guide Chapter              | Design Principles  | Building for Life Reference (BL12) | DEVELOPMENT TYPES  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|                                   |  |                                    | Strategic housing developments and urban extensions (300+ homes) | Major residential development (10 - 300 dwellings) | Brownfield and urban infill | Commercial or employment | Mixed use scheme | Individual houses | Household extensions | Building conversions |
| 4 Site layout, streets and spaces | DG15: Deliver a clear structure of streets and spaces that is easy to understand and move through  | 7/8/11                             |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                   | DG16: Provide enclosure and positive frontage to streets   | 7/8                                |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                   | DG17: Use markers, landmarks, vistas, and street hierarchy to aid legibility   | 5/6/8                              |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                   | DG18: Create a positive development edge   | 5/6/8                              |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                   | DG19: Provide attractive streets and spaces defined by buildings rather than the highway, that encourage low speeds and that are safe to use by everyone | 7/9/10                             |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                   | DG20: Integrate parking to meet needs and support attractive streets and spaces  | 7/10                               |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                   | DG21: Consider and allow for servicing, refuse collection and deliveries   | 7/12                               |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                   | DG22: Plan for and integrate sub-stations, utilities and pump stations into the design of new development  | 12                                 |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                   | DG23: Integrate refuse and recycling into the design of new development  | 12                                 |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                   | DG24: Plan for cyclists  | 12                                 |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                   | DG25: Enhance the environment and sense of place through open spaces   | 5/6/11                             |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                   | DG26: Enhance the environment and sense of place through tree planting and soft landscape  | 5/6/11                             |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                   | DG27: Integrate space for play into the design   | 11                                 |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                                   | DG28: Deliver a high quality, coordinated and attractive public realm that is easy to manage and maintain  | 5/6/9/11                           |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |

Figure 1.1 (Part 2 continued): Table setting out the design guide principles and the type of developments to which they are applicable



# 1 Purpose of the Design Guide

## A user friendly guide

| Design Guide Chapter                              | Design Principles  | Building for Life Reference (BL12) | DEVELOPMENT TYPES  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|---|--|------------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|   |  |                                    | Strategic housing developments and urban extensions (300+ homes) | Major residential development (10 - 300 dwellings) | Brownfield and urban infill | Commercial or employment | Mixed use scheme | Individual houses | Household extensions | Building conversions |
| 4 Site layout, streets and spaces                 | DG29: Design for everyone and look to the future   | 9/11                               |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|   | DG30: Deliver attractive and efficient employment areas  |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
| 5 Site optimisation and community focused layouts | DG31: Optimise the development potential of sites to deliver homes and new employment space in the most sustainable locations, reducing pressure on the countryside and the need to travel | 5/6                                |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|   | DG32: Managing increased density and development height and massing  | 5/6                                |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|   | DG33: Potential for taller buildings   |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|   | DG34: Promote a mix of uses within large schemes to provide services to meet local needs, conveniently located where they are most accessible  | 1/2/3                              |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|   | DG35: Promote a mix of residential typologies within residential schemes to create mixed communities and ensure these are adaptable to change  | 4                                  |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|   |  |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
| 6 High quality and sustainable building design    | DG36: Promote high quality buildings that respond to their location and deliver a sense of place   | 5/6/7                              |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|   | DG37: Promote buildings that respond to and help to animate the street space   | 7/11                               |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|   | DG38: Promote buildings that have architectural integrity utilising high quality materials and detailing   | 5                                  |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|   | DG39: Consider the location and design of utility meters and external pipes so that they don't adversely impact the quality of development   | 12                                 |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|   | DG40: Commercial buildings   |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|   | DG41: Minimise environmental impact by energy efficient and sustainable design   |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |

Figure 1.1 (Part 3 continued): Table setting out the design guide principles and the type of developments to which they are applicable

# 1 Purpose of the Design Guide

## A user friendly guide

| Design Guide Chapter          | Design Principles   | Building for Life Reference (BL12) | DEVELOPMENT TYPES  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|                               |   |                                    | Strategic housing developments and urban extensions (300+ homes) | Major residential development (10 - 300 dwellings) | Brownfield and urban infill | Commercial or employment | Mixed use scheme | Individual houses | Household extensions | Building conversions |
| <b>7 Residential amenity</b>  | DG42: New development must be designed to respect the privacy of existing residents                 |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                               | DG43: Provide attractive and useable external amenity space for all homes                           |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                               | DG44: Homes should be designed to receive adequate daylight and sunlight and to avoid overshadowing |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                               | DG45: Design to minimise the impacts of noise, air and light pollution                              |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
| <b>8 Household extensions</b> | DG46: Respond to local character  |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                               | DG47: Consider your neighbours  |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                               | DG48: Extensions should be subservient to the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling      |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                               | DG49: Respond to the design of the original dwelling  |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                               | DG50: Side extensions   |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                               | DG51: Front extensions, canopies and porches  |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                               | DG52: Rear extensions   |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                               | DG53: Loft conversions and roof extensions  |                                    |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
| <b>9 Building conversions</b> | DG54: Conversion of agricultural buildings  | 5                                  |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                               | DG55: Conversion of chapels, schools and churches   | 5                                  |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |
|                               | DG56: Conversion of commercial buildings  | 5                                  |  |  |                             |                          |                  |                   |                      |                      |

Figure 1.1 (Part 4 continued): Table setting out the design guide principles and the type of developments to which they are applicable

# 1 Purpose of the Design Guide

## The opportunity

### 1.3 Opportunities and constraints

1.3.1 Mid Sussex is a rural District set in beautiful countryside and benefiting from good access to London and the south coast.

1.3.2 Nearly 50% of the District is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and over 10% is within the South Downs National Park. The National Park Authority is the local planning authority for this area (refer also to Figure 2.2).

1.3.3 The High Weald AONB Partnership is preparing its own design guide for the High Weald AONB. Applicants will also need to consider the guidance in this document if their site falls within the AONB.

1.3.4 Between these designations is an area of small-stream valleys and hedgerows within a gently rolling landscape known as the Low Weald. The District's proximity to London and the south coast, together with its landscape setting, make Mid Sussex an attractive place to live and work.

1.3.5 The District is experiencing pressure for growth with the Mid Sussex District Plan setting a housing provision of 16,390 homes to be built in the 17 year period from 2014 to 2031, to meet both the District need and unmet need in Horsham and Crawley.

1.3.6 Employment growth is also anticipated with a business park and Science and Technology Park planned at Burgess Hill.

1.3.7 These new homes and jobs provide opportunities for the District, helping to sustain its towns and villages and improve their economic performance, but also present challenges.

1.3.8 The District contains many environmental designations which influence where development may take place and it is important that change does not erode the essentially rural character of the District, its rich heritage and the distinctive character of its towns and rural settlements.

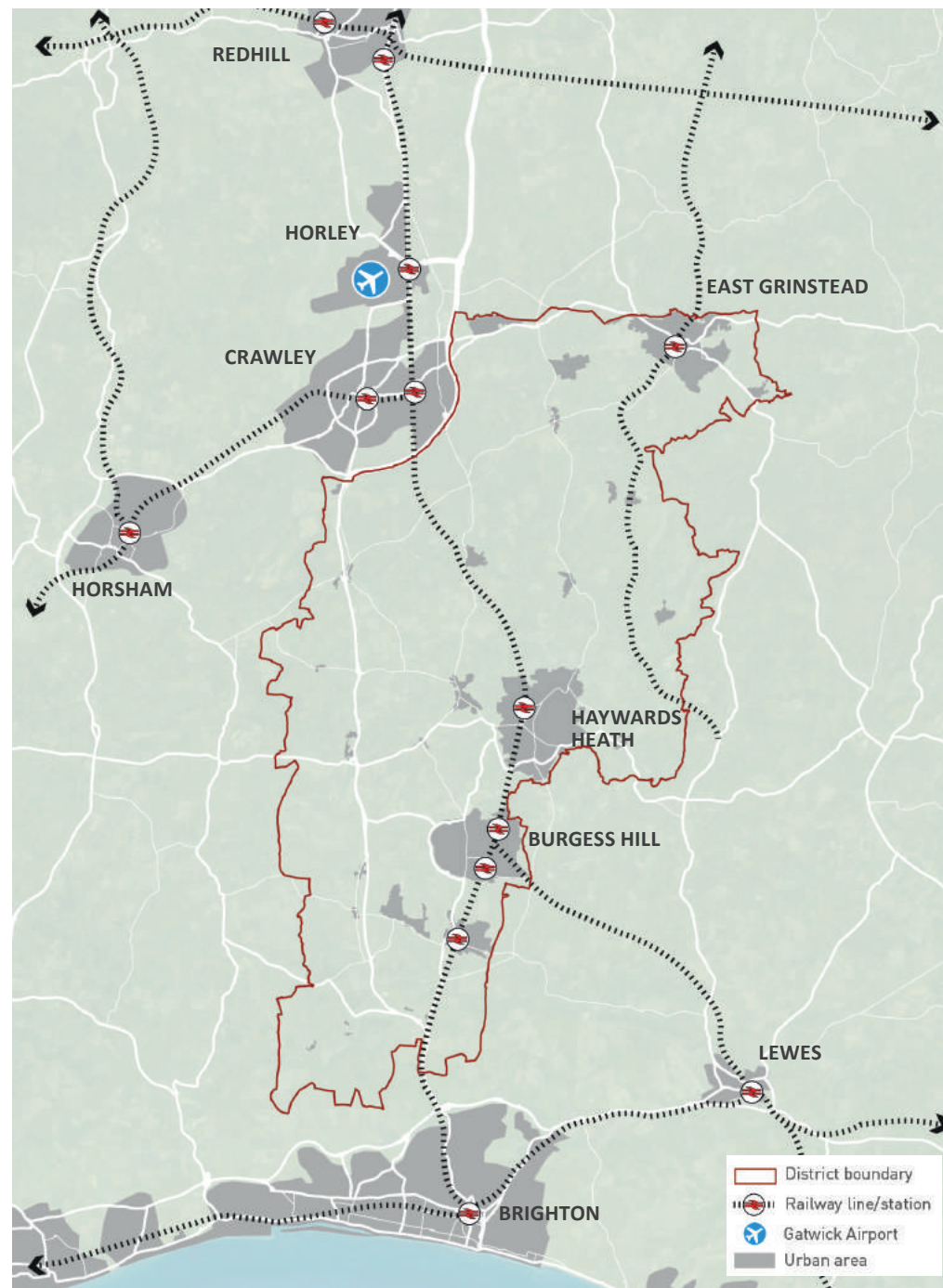


Figure 1.2: Mid Sussex Context Plan



# 1 Purpose of the Design Guide

## The value of good design

### 1.4 The value of good design

1.4.1 The importance of design quality is intrinsic to national planning policy with a clear mandate within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to deliver high quality built environments.

1.4.2 Design matters because it influences the way we appreciate and experience the villages, towns and homes that we live, work and socialise in. It is through good design that successful places that people want to live and work in are created.

1.4.3 Good design can help transform places and enhance people's lives. The orientation and height of buildings; the materiality, enclosure and sunlight within a public space and the presence or not of trees and planting in a street or space can have a profound impact on people's wellbeing and mental health.

1.4.4 Research by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and national guidance, including the Urban Design Compendium, have all demonstrated the link between good design and improved quality of life, equality of opportunity and economic growth:

- A well designed hospital will help patients get better more quickly;
- A well designed school will improve the educational achievement of its pupils;
- A well designed public realm increases retail rents;
- A well designed department store will have a direct impact on stock turnover; and
- A well designed neighbourhood will benefit from lower crime and higher house values.

1.4.5 Design affects how people respond to a space and the choices they make when using it. For instance for a public square – a simple thing like the amount of sunlight that it receives will have a significant impact on the feel of the space and, the economic success and survival of the businesses that surround it.

1.4.6 Good design is about more than just the architecture and in Mid Sussex we are looking to create high quality places that meet the needs of the whole community. Streets and spaces that are accessible for everyone, that function well and improve the quality of life.



Examples of more innovative design delivered in the District in recent years, FROM TOP LEFT: Turners Hill Road, Crawley Down (facade detailing / use of materials); Wilmington Way, Haywards Heath (sustainable buildings); housing at Tobias School of Art, East Grinstead (contemporary architectural form); and apartments on Rocky Lane, Haywards Heath (materials and detailing).

#### Additional useful and interesting resources:

- Paved with gold: The real value of good street design (CABE, 2007)
- By Design, Urban design in the planning system: Towards better practice (DETR and CABE, 2000)
- The value of good design (CABE, 2002)
- The value of urban design (CABE and DETR, 2001)
- Valuing Sustainable Urbanism (Prince's Foundation, Savills and English Partnerships, 2007)
- Public Health England briefing for local authorities - Working together to promote active travel (2016)
- Building the foundations - tackling obesity through planning and development (LGA, 2016)

# 1 Purpose of the Design Guide

## High quality design



New homes at Horsted Park, Chatham

### 1.5 High quality design and innovation

1.5.1 The aim of this Guide is to inspire designers to rise to the challenge to deliver high quality, well designed buildings, streets and spaces that are in keeping with their environment and respond to the challenge to deliver sustainable development.

1.5.2 Designers are encouraged to be inventive and innovative; to prepare proposals that respond to place, that meet the needs of modern lifestyles and that are adaptable in the future. Contemporary solutions of high architectural quality that deliver outstanding places are welcomed and encouraged

1.5.3 This Design Guide is intended to be a design manual and a working tool. It is intended for frequent reference and will be essential for anyone charged with preparing or assessing the quality of planning applications.

1.5.4 The Design Guide should be read by:

- Developers and builders, in considering potential development proposals;
- Householders, considering residential extensions;
- Design professionals, in drawing up schemes for development;
- Town and parish councils, statutory and non-statutory consultees and the public in commenting on planning applications; and

- The council, in determining planning applications and in upholding decisions at planning appeals.

1.5.5 Compliance with the Design Guide will help to speed up the planning process by reducing the chance of objections due to poor design.

1.5.6 This draft document is subject to a formal 6 week period of public consultation between XXXX to XXX with statutory consultees, developers and the local community. Following consultation there will be a review of the feedback received and where appropriate changes will be made to the Design Guide.

1.5.7 The Design Guide will be adopted by the Council as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and as such will be a material consideration in determining planning applications submitted to the Council. Having been subject to scrutiny and amendment through a public consultation process, the SPD will carry weight in decision making.



# 1 Purpose of the Design Guide

## The design process

### 1.6 The design process

1.6.1 The delivery of high quality development is dependent on good design professionals undertaking a robust and iterative design process.

1.6.2 This must ensure that a scheme responds to place and takes account of local issues, opportunities and constraints and the opinions of the public and other stakeholders.

1.6.3 In order to deliver good design there are a number of important steps that must be taken. These steps are indicated in the simple flowchart in Figure 1.3.

1.6.4 The level of detail, and engagement required, will be dependent on the scale and complexity of the application.

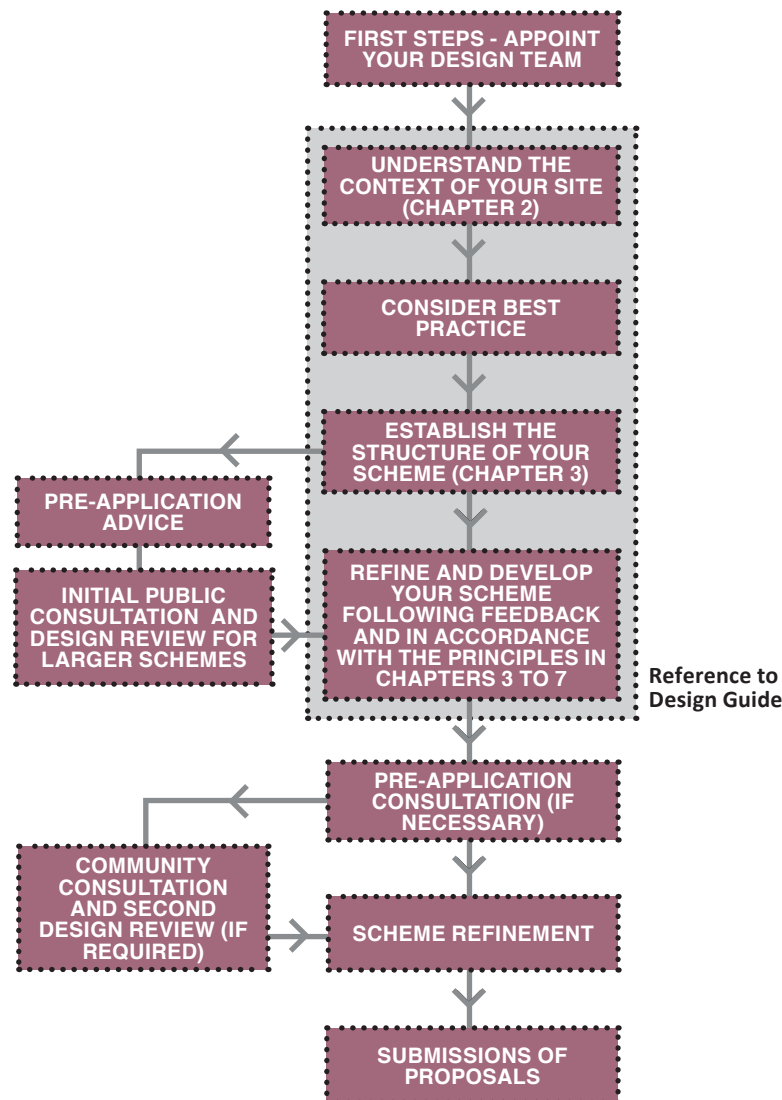


Figure 1.3: Flow chart setting out the design process for preparing a design proposal

### Engaging professionals

1.6.5 A design guide alone cannot produce good creative solutions; this is the job of a good creative professional. One of the first stages in preparing a design scheme will be to engage skilled design professionals to ensure high-quality solutions through the design process.

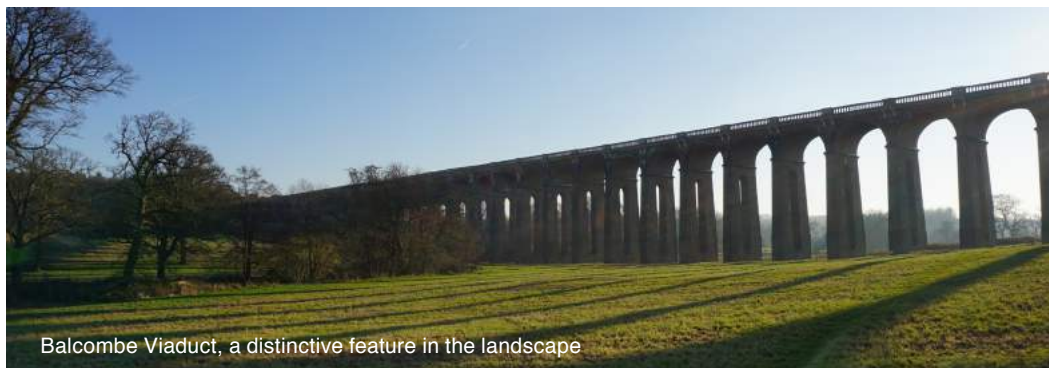
1.6.6 Mid Sussex District Council strongly encourages householders, local builders, developers and any other organisation commissioning design within the built environment to employ appropriate design professionals such as architects, landscape architects, arboricultural consultants, heritage consultants and urban designers.

1.6.7 The following organisations can assist with providing contact details for professionals.

- Landscape Institute  
<http://www.landscapeinstitute.org>
- Royal Institute of British Architects  
<http://www.architecture.com>
- Royal Town Planning Institute  
<http://www.rtpi.org.uk>
- Urban Design Group  
<http://www.udg.org.uk>

# 1 Purpose of the Design Guide

## The design process



Balcombe Viaduct, a distinctive feature in the landscape

### Understanding the planning context

1.6.8 National and local planning policies will influence whether a site is suitable for development and the form and nature of this development. One of the first things that an applicant should do is to carry out research to understand relevant planning policy that relates to their site.

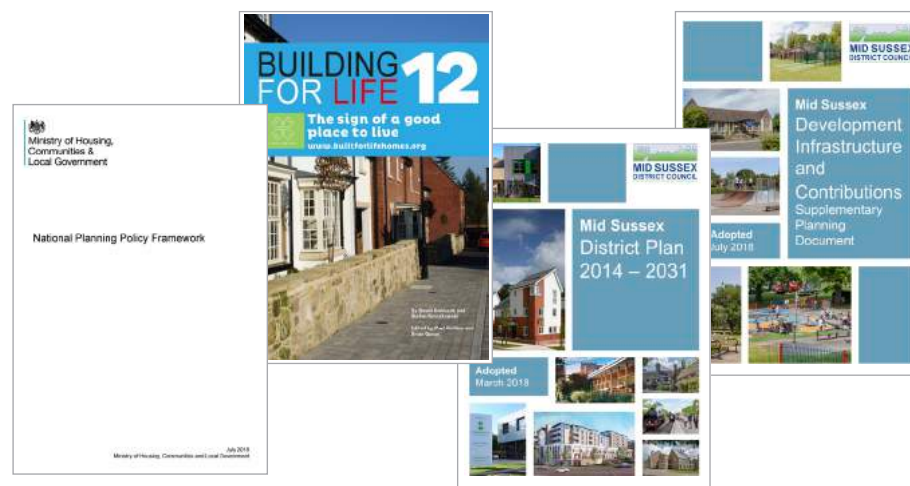
1.6.9 The Development Plan for the District is the Mid Sussex District Plan and Neighbourhood Plans, which cover the majority of the District.

1.6.10 The District Plan can be found at <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/mid-sussex-district-plan/>

1.6.11 The Neighbourhood Plans can be found at <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/neighbourhood-plans/>

1.6.12 There are also other supporting policy or strategy documents that may relate to a site. These may include Supplementary Planning Documents, Conservation Area Appraisals, Historic Character Area Assessments and Masterplans, which have been adopted or endorsed by the Council.

1.6.13 Details of documents endorsed or adopted by the Council are available on the Council's website at <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk>



# 1 Purpose of the Design Guide

## Who to talk to

### 1.7 Who to talk to

#### Early engagement

1.7.1 Depending on the scale of development, applicants should consult with relevant statutory and non-statutory authorities and council officers to understand their policy requirements and initial advice. Relevant organisations are listed in Figure 1.4.

#### Pre-application consultation

1.7.2 Applicants should hold pre-application discussions at an early stage in the design process. This will provide an important opportunity to identify and discuss emerging ideas and sensitivities and to ensure that the design process is heading in the right direction.

1.7.3 Pre-application discussions also provide an opportunity to discuss the information and level of detail required to accompany a particular planning application.

1.7.4 Planning Performance Agreements are recommended for larger applications.

1.7.5 Pre-application advice may be subject to charges. Details of fees and charges can be found at the following link: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-pre-application-advice/>

#### Community consultation

1.7.6 Depending on the scale and nature of an application it may be appropriate to carry out consultation with the public and stakeholders. Applicants should refer to the MSDC's Statement of Community Involvement which sets out a Code of Practice for consultation. <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/3713/draft-statement-of-community-involvement.pdf>

1.7.7 Community engagement can be a useful way to discover more about a site and its setting and to gain an understanding of any concerns that the community may have in relation to an application.

1.7.8 Applicants should document the engagement process and demonstrate how community and stakeholder feedback has been taken account of in their proposals.

1.7.9 The council encourages all applicants and their agents to consult their neighbours before they submit a planning application.

#### Design Review

1.7.10 The NPPF advocates the use of design review to improve the quality of development (paragraphs 128 and 129). Mid Sussex District Council has established a Design Review Panel to provide independent and professional design advice and evaluation of significant schemes, either by virtue of their scale or sensitivity, that are proposed in the District.

1.7.11 Schemes should be presented to the Panel early in the design process when the Panel's inputs can be most helpful and influential and again later in the design process when the scheme is more fully developed closer to the submission of a planning application. The Council will have regard to the recommendations from the Design Review Panel when assessing applications.

#### Relevant Statutory Authorities and organisations

- Natural England: Landscape, Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity;
- High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- South Downs National Park Planning Authority;
- Historic England: heritage assets;
- West Sussex County Council: access, drainage, highways, transport, rights of way, archaeology and cultural heritage, education, libraries etc;
- Environment Agency: flooding, rivers and pollution;
- Utility companies;
- Police service: police liaison and crime prevention officer;
- Fire service; and
- Town and parish councils.

**Figure 1.4: Organisations that might be relevant to consult to provide initial advice**



# 2

## Understanding the context

Mid Sussex is an historic and beautiful district, with large tracts of its landscape and townscape protected for their special qualities.

One of the fundamental objectives of this Design Guide is to ensure that new development respects, responds to and enhances the unique characteristics of the District; that it shares common characteristics with its locality, integrates and functions as a natural part, or extension, of existing settlements and contributes in a positive manner to the character of Mid Sussex.

An understanding of context is an essential starting point and this chapter identifies the approach that applicants should take to achieve this.





# 1 Understanding the context

## Introduction



## 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This chapter, 'Understanding the context' provides an overview of Mid-Sussex, outlining what makes it distinctive and special.

2.1.2 It identifies the important characteristics that an applicant will be expected to consider to:

- Understand the context and character of their site; and
- Establish the constraints and opportunities that will guide their proposals.

2.1.3 Applicants will be required to demonstrate a clear link between their appraisal of the context, any applicable planning designations, the character of their site, physical constraints and opportunities and their development proposals. This link or rationale will need to be articulated through the Design and Access Statement that will support their planning application.

2.1.4 The steps required in this process are set out in the flow chart in Figure 2.1

### Principle DG1: Designations

Applicants should clearly identify whether their site lies within or in the setting of any statutory or non-statutory designation. Any development proposals within or in the setting of one or more of these designations will be required to demonstrate how the proposals respond to national and local policies relevant to that particular designation.

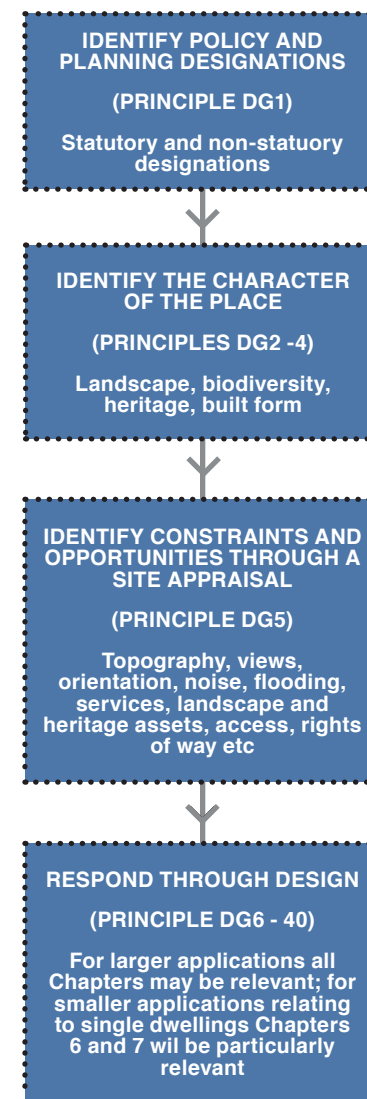


Figure 2.1: Flowchart indicating the process applicants should follow to 'Understand the context' of their site

## 2 Understanding the context

### Overview of the District

#### 2.2 Overview of the District

2.2.1 The Mid Sussex District covers an area of approximately 33,400 hectares and stretches from its boundary with Surrey in the north to the boundaries of Brighton and Hove in the south.

2.2.2 Mid Sussex has a distinctive settlement pattern, containing three main towns, Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath and East Grinstead together with a large number and wide variety of villages.

2.2.3 The District is crossed by railway lines extending north-south through the District and in places creating spectacular features, notably in the form of the Ouse valley Viaduct at Balcombe, and by an extensive network of roads, both strategic and local.

2.2.4 The District's environment is protected by a number of local, national and international designations which seek to preserve the area's natural and built environment for future generations.

2.2.5 Nearly 50% of the District is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Mid Sussex is the tenth most wooded District in the South East with two-thirds of this woodland classified as 'ancient'.

2.2.6 The District also has many sites valued for their biodiversity including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. The District also has over 1,000 Listed Buildings, 25 Ancient Monuments, over 500 Sites of Archaeological Interest, 36 Conservation Areas and 9 Registered Parks and Gardens.

2.2.7 Approximately 10% of Mid Sussex District lies within the South Downs National Park. The National Park Authority is the local planning authority for this area and is progressing a Local Plan for the whole of the National Park that is to be adopted later in 2019. Once adopted, the policies in the South Downs Local Plan will apply to the area within Mid Sussex that falls within the National Park.

2.2.8 Applicants will need to carry out their own desktop analysis to understand whether their site is covered by any designations. Applicants should check the Policies Maps on the Council's website for further details. <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/policies-maps/>

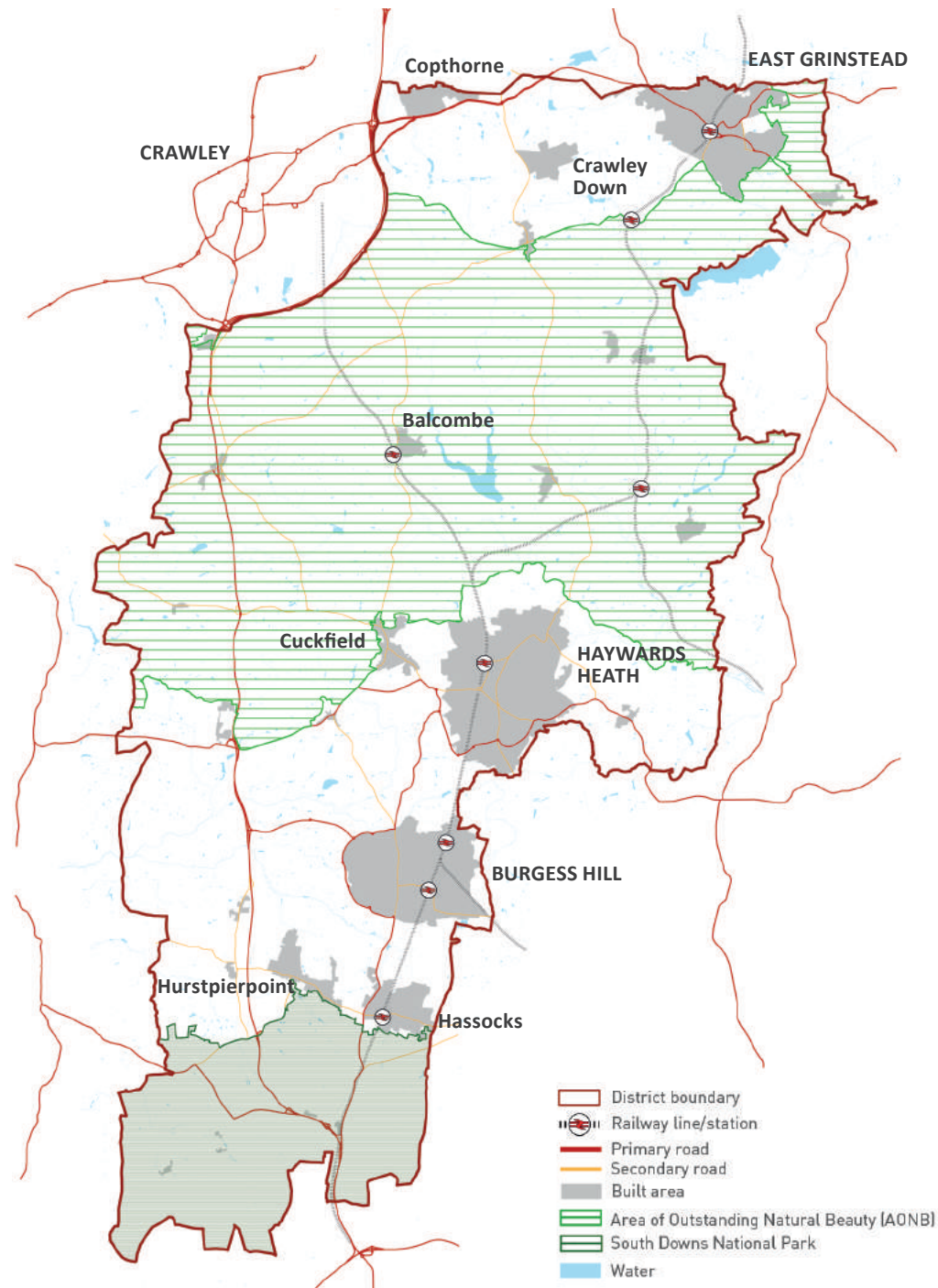


Figure 2.2: Mid Sussex Overview Plan

## 2 Understanding the context

### Overview of the District

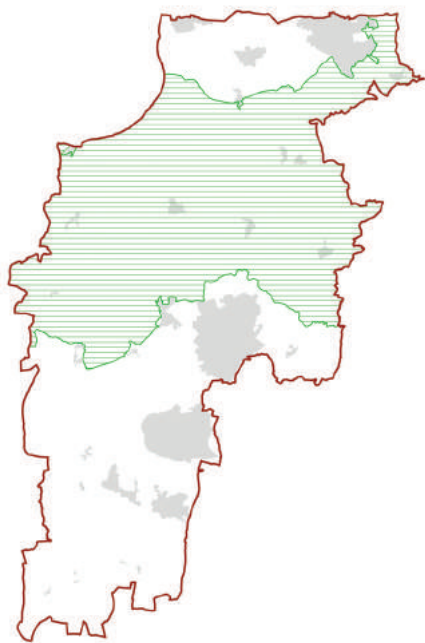
#### REFERENCES

District Plan Policy DP16: High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

District Plan Policy DP18: Setting of the South Downs National Park

District Plan Policy DP37: Trees woodland and hedgerows

Designations and features that help to characterise Mid Sussex include:

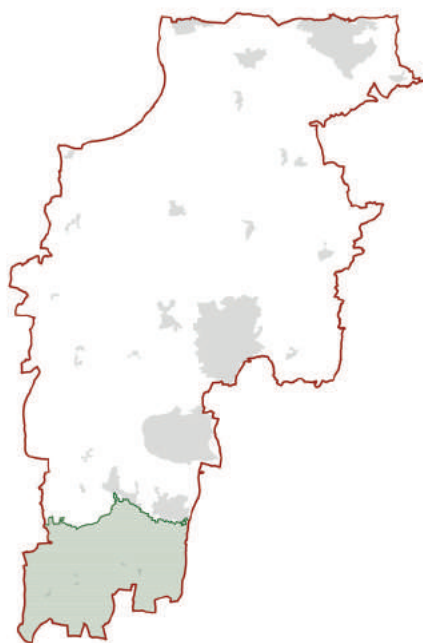


#### High Weald AONB

**Area:** 16,353Ha (49% of the District),

**Character:** a medieval landscape of rolling hills, woodland, ancient route ways and farmsteads. Offers long views from the ridges with water courses the valleys.

**Importance:** Any development within the AONB must conserve and enhance its distinctive features. Land outside of the AONB contributes to its setting and should not adversely affect views in and out of the AONB.



#### South Downs National Park

**Area:** 3,684Ha (11% of the District)

**Character:** open elevated landscape that offers spectacular views across the Weald.

**Importance:** Land surrounding the South Downs National Park makes a contribution to it's setting and development must not detract from, or cause detriment to, the National Parks visual and special qualities including views and outlook, tranquillity and dark skies.

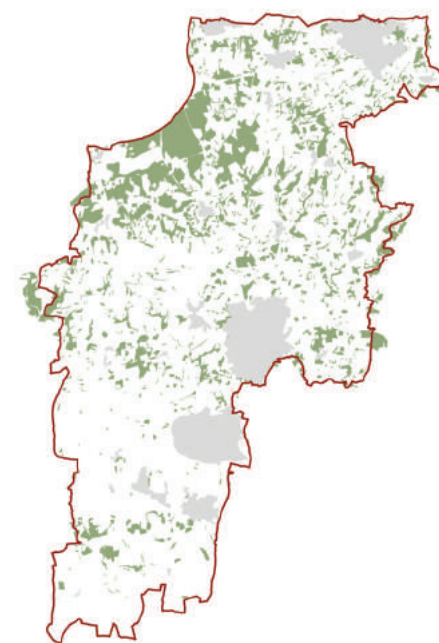


#### Woodland

**Area:** 9,158Ha (27.4% of the District)

**Character:** Mid Sussex's woodland is an integral part of its character both within the wider landscape and where it extends into, or close to, settlements.

**Importance:** Woodland enhances the setting of settlements and the wider landscape helping to conceal development, contributing to the landscape mosaic, conferring a sense of intimacy, seclusion and tranquillity and supporting wildlife.



#### Ancient Woodland

**Area:** 5,741Ha (17.2% of the District)

**Character:** As 'Woodland'.

**Importance:** This land has been woodland since 1600 or beyond as so is particularly important in the District and therefore requires a greater level of protection and larger buffer zones.



## 2 Understanding the context

### Overview of the District

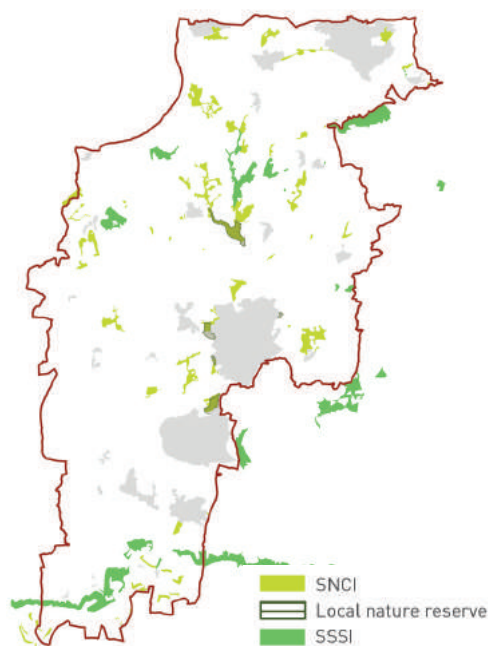
#### REFERENCES

District Plan Policy DP34: Listed buildings and other heritage assets

District Plan Policy DP35: Conservation Areas

District Plan Policy DP36: Historic Parks and Gardens

District Plan Policy DP38: Biodiversity



#### Nature Conservation

**Area:** 1,938Ha (5.8% of the District)

**Character:** Varies

**Importance:** These designations protect environments that are important for nature conservation.

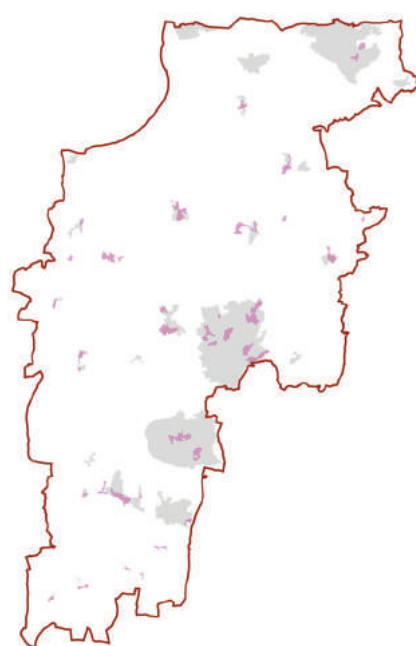


#### Water and rivers

**Area:** 476Ha (1.4% of the District)

**Character:** The extensive network of watercourses running from the Districts higher ground to its valleys are an important feature of the landscape within the District.

**Importance:** The Districts' watercourses enhance character and biodiversity and should be retained and protected within development.

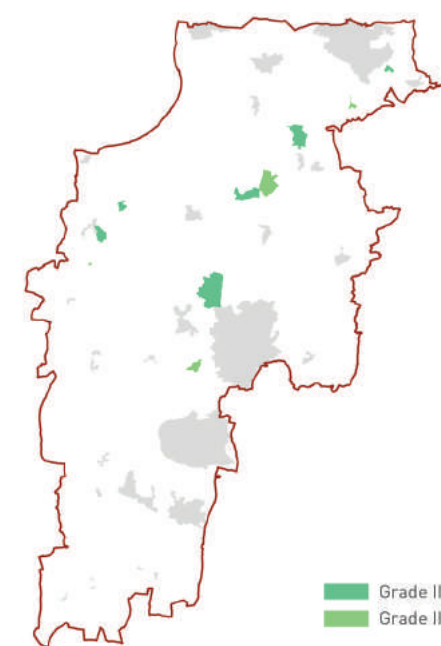


#### Conservation Areas /heritage

**Area:** 438Ha (1.3% of the District)

**Character:** Characteristics of each of the 36 Conservation Areas is described on the Council's website

**Importance:** Designated for their special architectural or historic interest. The District includes over 1,000 Listed Buildings, 25 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and over 500 Sites of Archaeological Interest (West Sussex Historic Environment Record).



#### Historic Parks and Gardens

**Area:** 435Ha (1.3% of the District)

**Character:** Designed landscapes often associated with country houses (9 across the District including Standen House, Wakehurst and Nymans).

**Importance:** Designated for their special local historic interest

## 2 Understanding the context

### Character study

REFERENCES  
District Plan Policy DP26: Character and Design

### 2.3 Character study

2.3.1 Mid Sussex District Council will normally require a Character Study to be prepared to support a development proposal, irrespective of scale for any development proposal requiring a Design and Access Statement. The objective of the Character Study is to identify, analyse and describe in a systematic and objective way, those elements, or combination of elements, that have a positive role in helping to form the character of a place. Elements may be drawn from the immediate surroundings or (where relevant) from adjacent settlements or landscapes within Mid Sussex.

2.3.2 The level of detail in the study should be related to the scale of the development proposals. For example:

- A proposal for an urban extension should be supported by a comprehensive study to consider the extension in the context of the existing settlement, its location in the wider landscape and its movement and green space network, carefully considering how the development would integrate with and enhance the settlement;
- An application for infill development or single dwelling may just consider the character of the street and the neighbouring properties to inform how the development can successfully complement the streetscene; and
- For sites located in areas where it may not be desirable to replicate or respond to the immediate character, applicants should consider adjacent areas or settlements and draw from those elements which help make Mid Sussex a distinctive place.

2.3.3 The checklists at the end of Chapter 2 provide guidance on the appropriate scope and subject areas for the Character Study depending on the scale of the proposed development.

#### Principle DG2: Character Study

Applicants should prepare a Character Study that identifies the context within which the application site is set. This should consider the structure and history of the settlement within which it is located or relates, the character of the landscape, the positive features within the streets and spaces and the built form.

The Character Study will help to guide and inform the proposals that are prepared later in the design process and applicants will be required to demonstrate how the study informs the design proposals.

The Character Study should identify the existing characteristics that can help to reinforce local identity and/or create a defined sense of place.

The Character Study will form part of the Design and Access Statement that supports a planning application.



## 2 Understanding the context

### Landscape character



#### 2.4 Landscape character

2.4.1 The landscape of Mid Sussex is essentially rural in character, dominated by fields and interspersed with small woods and settlements of farms and hamlets.

2.4.2 The structure and relief of the landscape is fundamentally influenced by the underlying rocks. Geology and the process of weathering, erosion and deposition influence the shape and form of the landscape and its drainage and soils. In turn, these influence patterns of vegetation and land use.

2.4.3 The District crosses the main geological divisions of the South Downs and the Weald and, and contains three national Character Areas – from north to south the High Weald, Low Weald and South Downs.

2.4.4 Woodland is a major component of the landscape of the District, particularly in the High Weald. Over 30% of the High Weald AONB area is wooded, with 90% of ancient woodlands having survived since 1600.

2.4.5 The countryside is an asset that is highly valued by the Council and local residents and is recognised as having social value in enhancing the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors.

2.4.6 The character of the landscape varies across the District both in terms of landform, tree cover and openness and this influences both where settlements are located and the opportunity to accommodate development in the future.

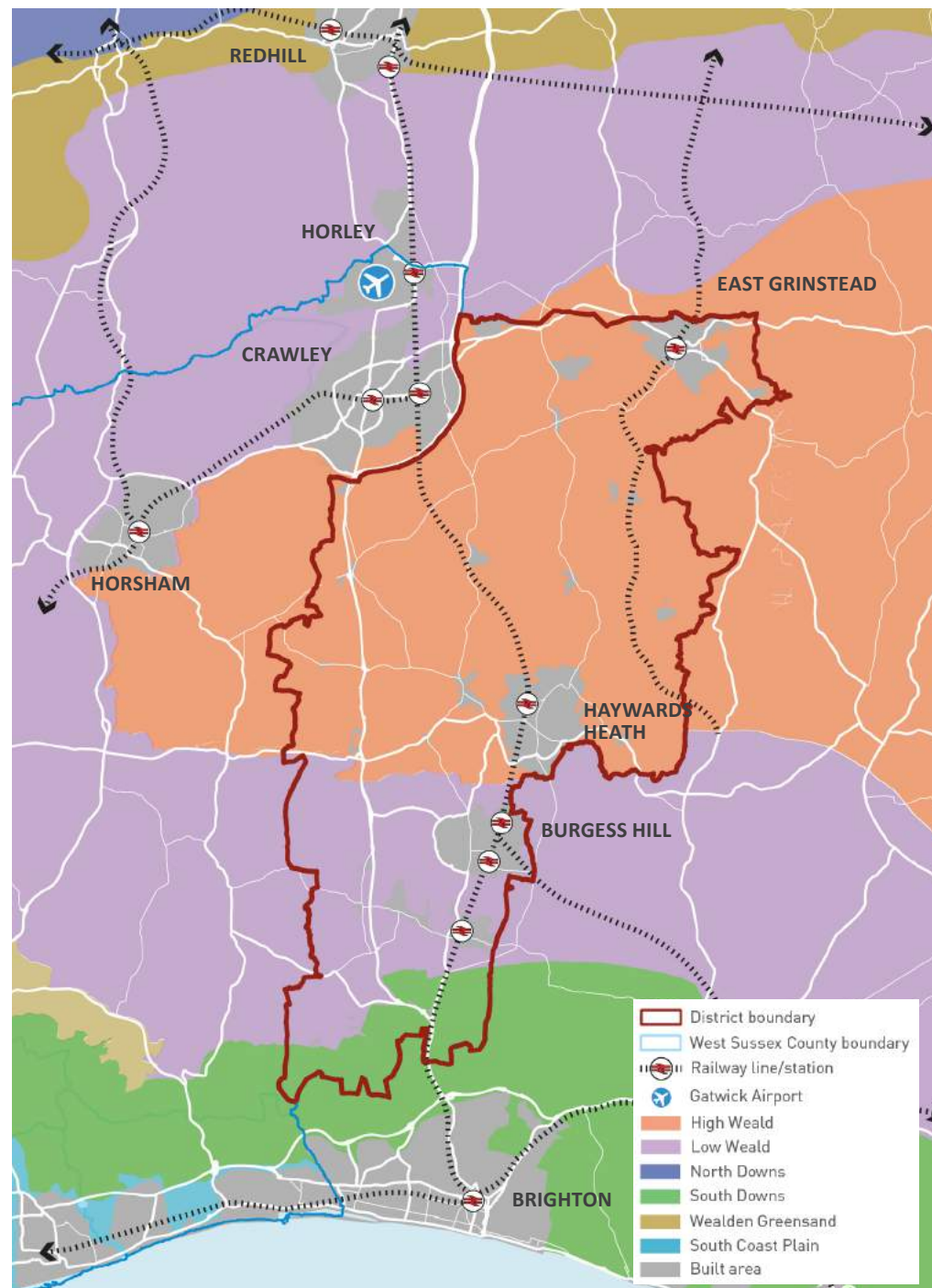


Figure 2.3: National landscape character areas

## 2 Understanding the context

### Landscape character

REFERENCES  
The Landscape Character Assessment for Mid Sussex (2005)

#### Landscape character areas and their characteristics

The landscape character assessment sub-divides the District into ten character areas.




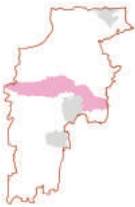

| Area   | Landform and landscape   | Settlement pattern  | Local materials   |
|--|--|---|---|
|  <b>High Weald</b>           | Hilly landscape of ridges and secluded valleys with significant woodland cover and a dense network of hedgerows and copses, creates a sense of enclosure | Historic settlements on high ridges, hilltops and high ground and connected by twisting lanes. The principal settlement is East Grinstead and some expanded and smaller villages. | Diverse materials including timber framing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile hanging                         |
|  <b>High Weald Plateau</b>   | A plateau landscape with significant woodland cover and a dense network of hedgerows and copses, creates a sense of enclosure                            | Main settlements at Copthorne and Crawley Down have expanded through 20th century. Roads busy with ribbon development in places.  | Diverse materials including timber framing and varieties of local brick and tile hanging  |
|  <b>Worth Forest</b>        | Densely wooded, plateau landscape with long views over the Low Weald to the South Downs.   | Sparse, dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads.   | Diverse materials including timber-framing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging                         |
|  <b>Ouse Valley</b>        | Rural valley landscape with the watercourse broadening from a stream in the west to a river meandering through water meadows in the east.                | No settlements in the valley other than dispersed farmsteads although Haywards Heath, Lindfield and Cuckfield lie on the valley edges   | Diverse materials including timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging  |
|  <b>High Weald Fringes</b> | Densely-wooded southern flanks of the High Weald Forest Ridge  | Dispersed historic settlement pattern, with Cuckfield, Haywards Heath and Lindfield and a few villages and hamlets to the east.   | Diverse materials including timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing, Wealden stone and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging. |

Figure 2.4: District landscape character areas

## 2 Understanding the context

### Landscape character

#### Principle DG3: Landscape character

As part of the Character Study applicants should identify the landscape character within which their site is located, the specific landscape characteristics of the area and consider how this might influence and guide their development proposals.

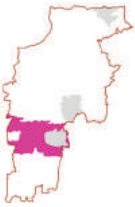




|  | Area                                   | Landform and landscape  | Settlement pattern  | Local materials  |
|--|--|---|---|--|
|    | <b>Hickstead Low Weald</b>             | Lowland mixed arable and pastoral landscape with a strong hedgerow pattern.                                     | Mix of farmsteads and hamlets often in ridgeline locations, and with Burgess Hill to the east.  | Diverse materials including timber-framing, weatherboarding, Horsham Stone roofing and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging.            |
|    | <b>Upper Adur Valley</b>               | A small part of the extensive upper catchment of the River Adur.  | Agricultural landscape with farmsteads and hamlets.   | Diverse materials including flint, timber-frame and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging  |
|   | <b>Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes</b> | Undulating arable and pastoral landscape with areas of ancient woodland on the lower lying areas.               | Expanded ridgeline villages with suburban development at Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks. Also smaller villages and dispersed farmsteads.       | Diverse materials including flint, timber-framing, Horsham Stone roofing and varieties of local brick and tile-hanging. Also painted render. |
|  | <b>Fulking to Clayton Scarp</b>        | Distinctive steep, abrupt chalk escarpment with precipitous north-facing slopes.                                | Few buildings on the step slopes.   |  |
|  | <b>Devil's Dyke and Clayton Downs</b>  | Elevated, open rolling landform of hills, dry valleys and a steep escarpment on chalk bedrock. Panoramic views. | Isolated farms and farm buildings on the high downland and sparse settlement elsewhere, clustered in the valleys, in hamlets and farmsteads | Traditional rural buildings built of local flint and brick with weatherboarded barns.  |

Figure 2.4 (continued): District landscape character areas

NOTE: Fulking to Clayton Scarp and Devil's Dyke and Clayton Down landscape character areas and part of the Hurstpierpoint Scarp Footslopes landscape character area are within the South Downs National Park.



## 2 Understanding the context

### Settlement character

#### 2.5 Settlement character

2.5.1 Mid Sussex has a distinctive settlement pattern of small to medium-sized towns, villages and hamlets.

2.5.2 A settlement hierarchy is identified in Policy DP6 of the District Plan with five categories of settlement characteristics. This ranges from the larger settlements Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and East Grinstead (Category 1 towns) to the small settlements or hamlets (Category 5).

2.5.3 The three towns are the focus for shopping, employment and community and cultural uses across the District. Along with strategic allocations they present the greatest opportunity for change and intensification to meet the District's housing and employment needs during the Plan period.

2.5.4 Larger villages in the District (Category 2 and 3) act as local centres for their immediate catchment and typically have a historic village centre structured around a church and high street. These villages have continued to grow with successive suburban developments extending the villages into the surrounding countryside.

2.5.5 Many of the District's smaller settlements (Category 4 and 5) have seen only modest growth and remain as strings of homes extending along a route or more often clustered around the meeting point of several routes. These have a close relationship with the surrounding countryside and this means that they are particularly sensitive to new development.

#### REFERENCES

District Plan Policy DP6: Settlement hierarchy

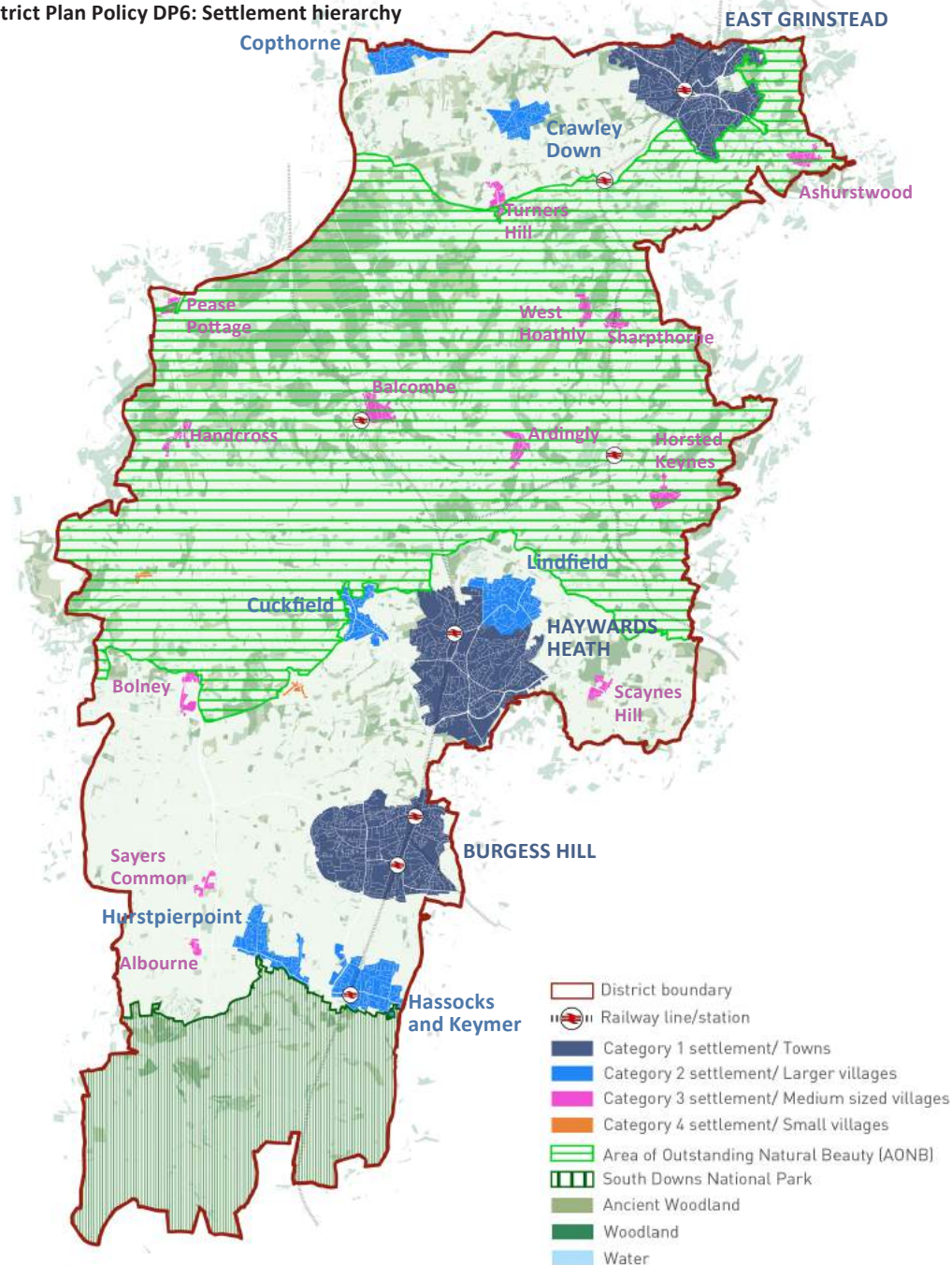


Figure 2.5: Mid Sussex's settlements

## 2 Understanding the context

### Settlement character

#### Settlement contexts

2.5.6 The pattern of settlements gives rise to a number of broad character types across the District:



#### The urban context (fine grain)

2.5.7 The historic centre of a settlement is normally characterised by a development pattern that is fine grain (i.e. composed of small scale development that has a predominantly vertical rhythm and which is characterised by tight street enclosure), and where a mix of uses provide activity and features buildings that tightly define a series of streets, squares, alleys and courts.

2.5.8 These areas are often rich in character and include historic buildings of heritage value and a high level of archaeological interest.



2.5.9 In some centres the fine grain development is mixed and includes Victorian, 1930s and later development. In these areas the quality of the built fabric varies and there may be scope for some change and intensification. However this would need to take into account the context and character of the area.

2.5.10 The fine grain urban context is found in the District's main settlements and large villages including Lindfield, Cuckfield, Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint where they are linked with the surrounding countryside.

#### Principle DG4: Settlement and site context

As part of the Character Study applicants should carry out a context appraisal that identifies the broad settlement context within which their site is located and this should inform their development proposals.



#### The urban context (coarse grain)

2.5.11 The town centres are also characterised by areas with a coarser grain with a less consistent built form that reflects greater change. These areas include larger floorplate buildings of a greater scale and massing and a mix of uses including shopping centres, offices, food stores and apartment buildings.

2.5.12 The quality of the environment and the relationship of development to streets varies within these areas with buildings sometimes set within extensive surface car parks.

2.5.13 Coarse grain urban areas are located within the District's three main settlements and may offer opportunity for change, intensification and improvement.



#### Victorian / Edwardian urban streets

2.5.14 The edge of town centres features Victorian residential streets.

2.5.15 Generally properties in these areas are two storey, brick built and set close to the footway behind a small garden / privacy strip which is often defined by a low brick wall. Car parking is generally on street.

2.5.16 These areas are urban in character and laid out as part of a gridded structure of connected streets with medium densities of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare



## 2 Understanding the context

### Settlement character



#### Suburban context

2.5.17 Much of 20th and 21st century development in Mid Sussex is suburban housing found in the towns and larger villages.

2.5.18 Many of the established suburban areas benefit from mature trees and new trees that have been retained or incorporated into developments. These are often native species either part of former hedgerows or copses, or sometimes exotic conifers planted in Victorian times and now grown to a significant size and often visible from far and wide. They are important as they help to soften the impact of the housing.

2.5.19 In other areas the public realm can be unattractively dominated by estate roads and car hard standings. Whilst buildings usually front the streets, frontages are sometimes fragmented by gaps and buildings are often too loosely grouped or of insufficient height to enclose the street space.

2.5.20 Suburban residential densities are normally between 20 and 35 dwellings per hectare.

#### Lower density suburban

2.5.21 The low density areas are characterised by large residential properties set within relatively well-landscaped grounds. In these areas, the landscape and mature vegetation is an important component of the area's character. Residential densities within these areas are typically less than 20 dwellings per hectare.

2.5.22 This character type can be found towards the edge of the main towns and larger villages and largely originates from the post war years through to the 1990s.

## 2 Understanding the context

### Settlement character



#### Traditional rural village context

2.5.23 Villages set within the wider countryside are often located at the intersection of routes (nucleated settlements eg Horsted Keynes) or extending along a route (linear settlements eg Ardingly and Bolney) that display both rural and urban qualities.

2.5.24 Buildings are tightly clustered to define space in key locations such as around nodes, main streets and defining important spaces (eg village greens).

2.5.25 The relationship of the dwellings to the landscape is important within these settlements with views to the open countryside and trees an important feature and densities generally reducing towards the settlement edge.

#### Rural context

2.5.26 The countryside features isolated dwellings, country estates and small groups of dwellings such as hamlets and farm buildings. In these locations the surrounding landscape is the dominant feature.

#### Industrial Estates

2.5.27 Within Mid Sussex's towns there are a number of industrial estates that present a different urban condition where large floorplate sheds set within yards and served by estate roads predominate. These provide an important part of the local economy but often present a poor quality pedestrian environment that is unattractive to move through.

2.5.28 These estates may present opportunity for intensification of employment uses and in these cases consideration must be given to both the interface of the estate with adjacent residential neighbourhoods and the potential to improve the street environment.

#### Mid Sussex's town centres

2.5.29 The Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 supports the regeneration and renewal and environmental enhancement of Mid Sussex's town centres including mixed use and tourism related development, provided it is appropriate in scale and function to its location including the character and amenities of the surrounding area; has regard to the relevant Town Centre Masterplans and is in accordance with the relevant Neighbourhood Plan.

2.5.30 The pages that follow provide an overview of the three towns and the constraints and opportunities that they present.



## 2 Understanding the context

### Haywards Heath



Victoria Park on South Road, Haywards Heath

#### Haywards Heath Overview

2.5.31 Haywards Heath is a railway town established in the 19th century. The town centre is dispersed extending in a linear fashion from the station along Perrymount Road, The Broadway, South Road and Sussex Road.

2.5.32 The name Haywards Heath describes the heath on which the core of the town was built following the opening of the London-Brighton railway in the 1840's. The railway was intended to serve the existing nearby towns of Cuckfield and Lindfield and this precipitated rapid growth through the 19th century.

2.5.33 This growth was underpinned by the establishment of a corn market and later a fortnightly cattle market that served the wider area. The railway, and the good access to London and Brighton that this brought, encouraged residential development and an increasing diversity of trades, businesses and retail outlets to the town.

2.5.34 Haywards Heath continued to expand through the 20th century with the building of residential suburbs in all directions. South Road and Sussex Road emerged as the main retail focus of the town and a commercial district has established around the station notably on Perrymount Road.

2.5.35 The town lacks a central focal point but the cafes and bars in the Broadway, with their outdoor seating, provides Haywards Heath with a congregating area.

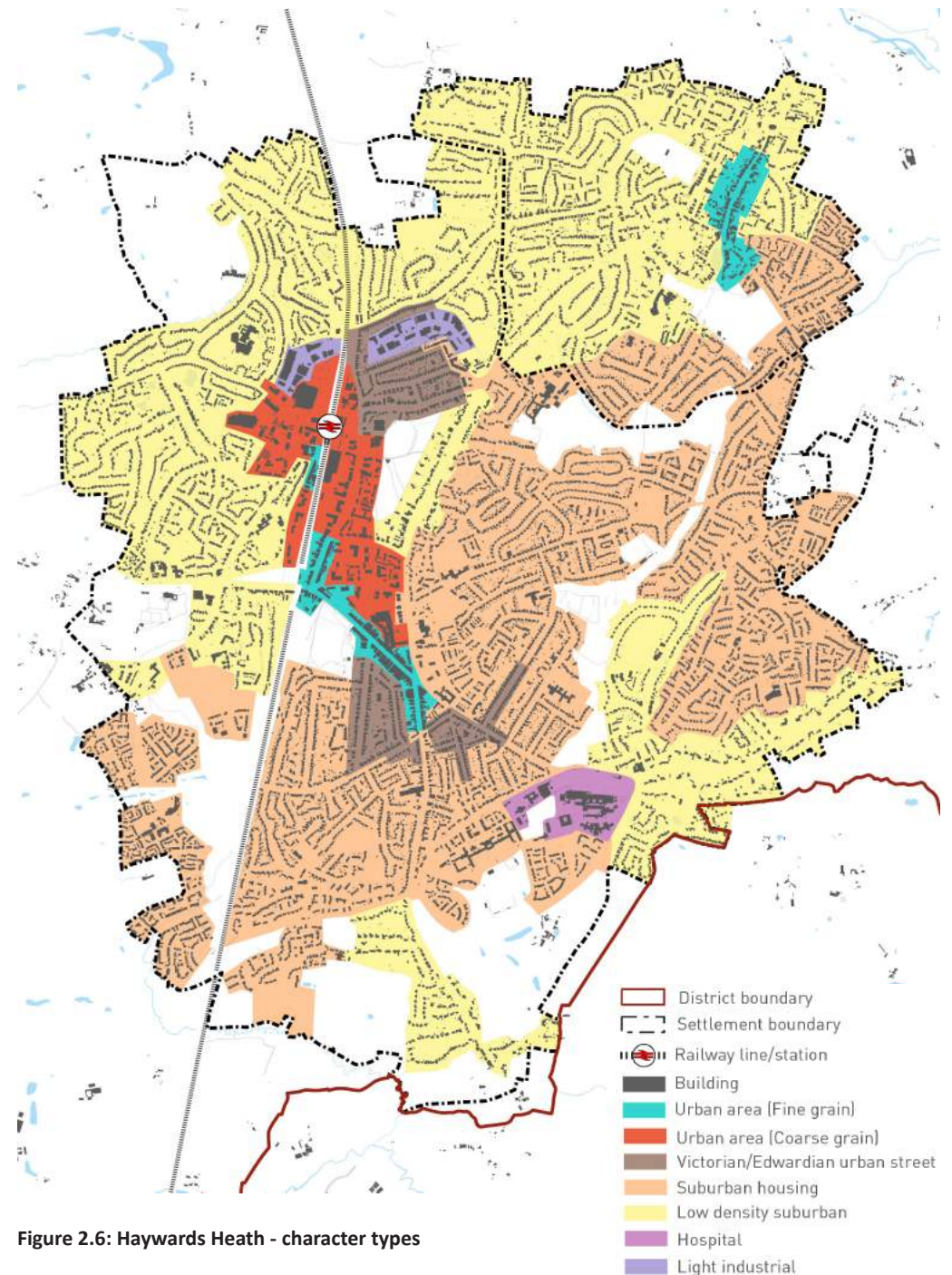


Figure 2.6: Haywards Heath - character types



## 2 Understanding the context

### Haywards Heath

#### Constraints

- Haywards Heath's establishment as a 19th century railway town, and subsequent phases of redevelopment, has left little evidence of the town's early origins.
- There are a number of Listed Buildings in the centre and several Conservation Areas. Pre-urban houses formerly scattered around the heath have survived the coming of the town, and form an important part of the historic environment.
- Haywards Heath is set within rolling hills. This creates vantage points to view the surrounding countryside but also requires the scale and massing of development in the town to respond carefully to its location and topography with consideration given to the potential visual impact.

#### Neighbourhood Plan Vision

2.5.36 The vision for Haywards Heath set out in the Neighbourhood Plan is to achieve:

- A healthy, family focused and safe town;
- A strong community spirit embracing both young and older people;
- A vibrant economy;
- Excellent public services; and
- High quality public spaces with the countryside on its doorstep.

2.5.37 Within the town centre the neighbourhood Plan encourages a diverse range of uses including new office, leisure, community, hotel, retail and residential uses which can be shown to support the core retail offer and generate vitality and add viability to the town centre whilst avoiding harm to existing businesses and residential properties.

2.5.38 Further information on the Haywards Heath Neighbourhood Plan can be found at: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/2801/haywards-heath-neighbourhood-plan.pdf>

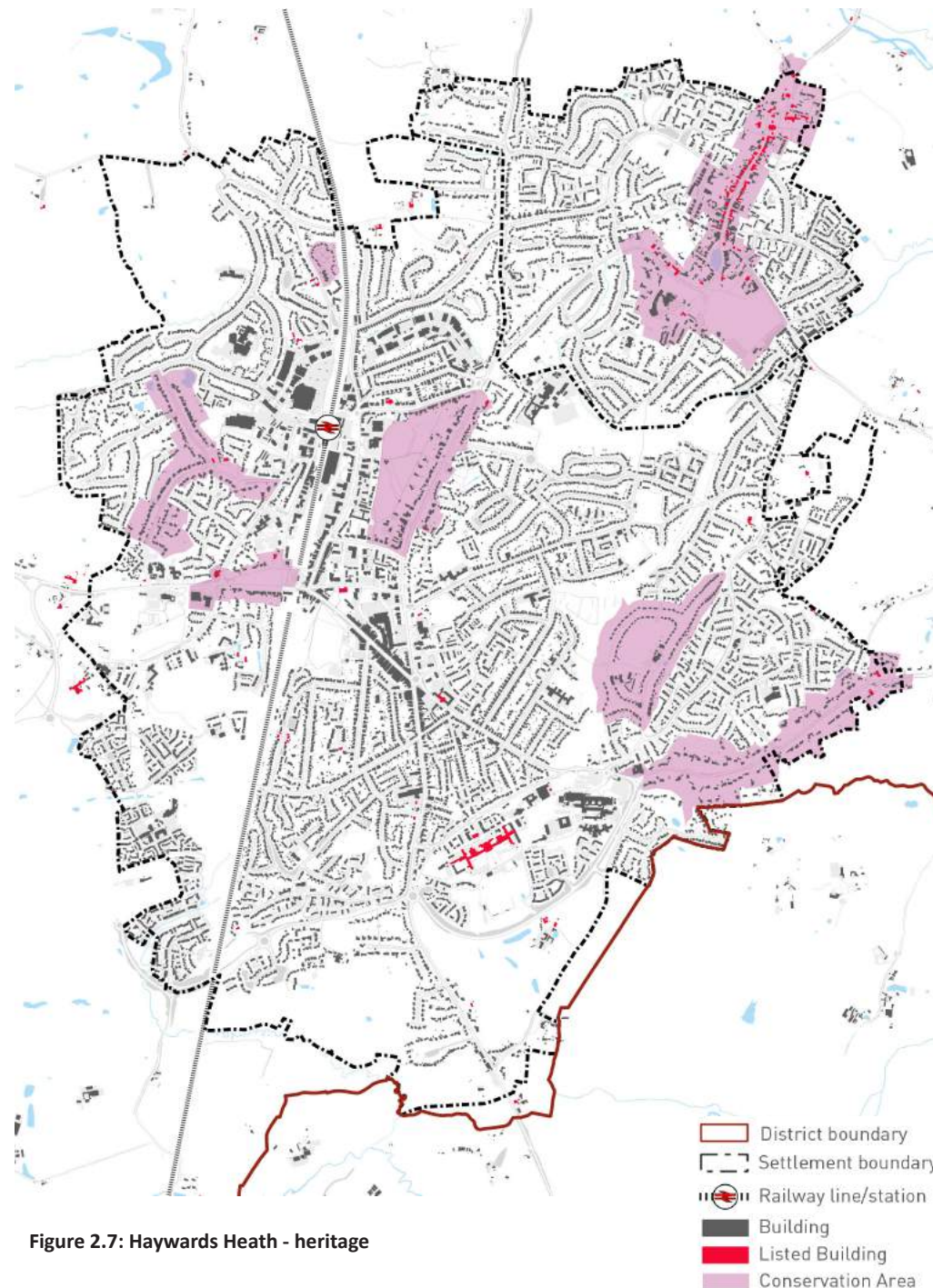


Figure 2.7: Haywards Heath - heritage

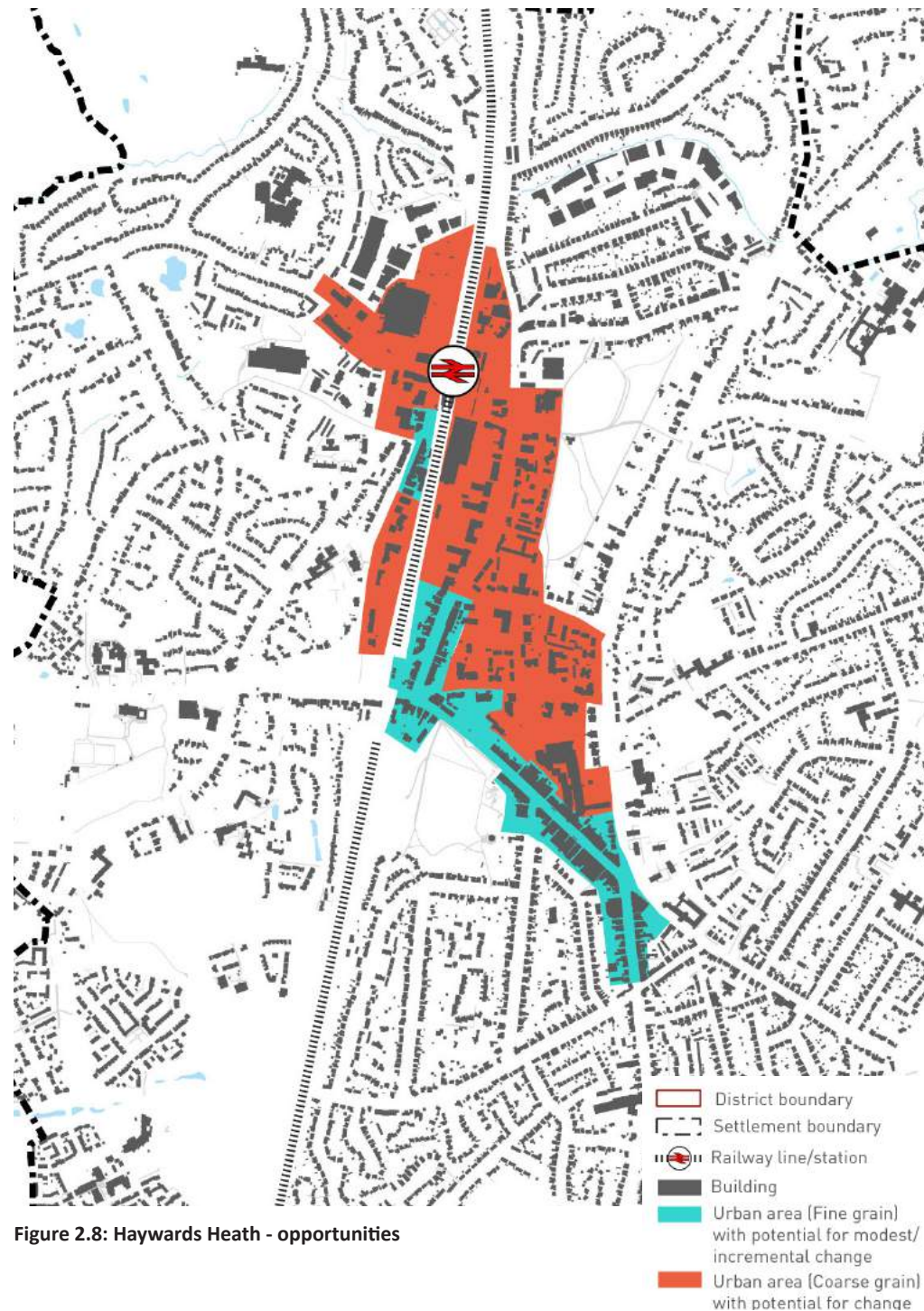


## 2 Understanding the context Haywards Heath



### Opportunities

- The urban focus of Haywards Heath offers opportunity for intensification to deliver a vibrant mix of town centre uses including new employment and residential.
- The most opportunities in the coarse grain areas where the quality of the existing built fabric is varied however there is also scope for intensification in the fine grain areas.
- Building scale, height and massing must however respond to the context of a particular site. The varied topography in Haywards Heath means that some sites can more easily take additional height than others and development must respond sensitively to views to and from the wider countryside.
- Developments of greater scale and massing (4-6 storeys) have recently been delivered within the town centre, and through intensification of other sites, a more compact urban centre could be brought forward.
- Buildings of this scale with active uses at ground floor on main streets and with upper storeys set back to reduce the impact of height on the street, are considered appropriate as this balances the opportunity to intensify uses to create a more vibrant place, with the historic setting of the market town and the desire to retain a human scale to development.
- Developments of four to six storeys could deliver residential densities in excess of 100 dwellings / ha. Chapter 5 - Site Optimisation, which provides principles that explain how more intensive development (in terms of scale, height, massing and density) can be achieved.





## 2 Understanding the context

### Burgess Hill



#### Burgess Hill

##### Overview

2.5.39 Burgess Hill is a railway town established in the mid 19th century. Its principal shopping area is concentrated on Church Road with some commercial businesses on London Road. The town centre lacks a strong focus / congregating point although St John's Park is an attractive nearby open space.

2.5.40 The name Burgess Hill has described the hill just east of the railway station since at least the 15th century. Until the arrival of the London to Brighton railway in the 1840s the adjacent St John's Common (to the north-west) was a more conspicuous settlement, being the location of both brickworks and substantial newly-built villas.

2.5.41 The railway facilitated the growth of the town and the brick and tile works that supplied the materials for the new buildings both in the town and further afield. Between 1850 and 1880 Burgess Hill grew from a rural settlement to a town of 4,500 residents.

2.5.42 Through the 20th century the traditional brick, tile and pottery industry in Burgess Hill was replaced by the banking and finance sectors, and the town now has a concentration of high technology industry and commerce, principally in the Sheddingdean and Victoria business parks to the north and west of the town centre.

2.5.43 The town has continued to grow with new suburban estates built throughout the 20th and early 21st century.

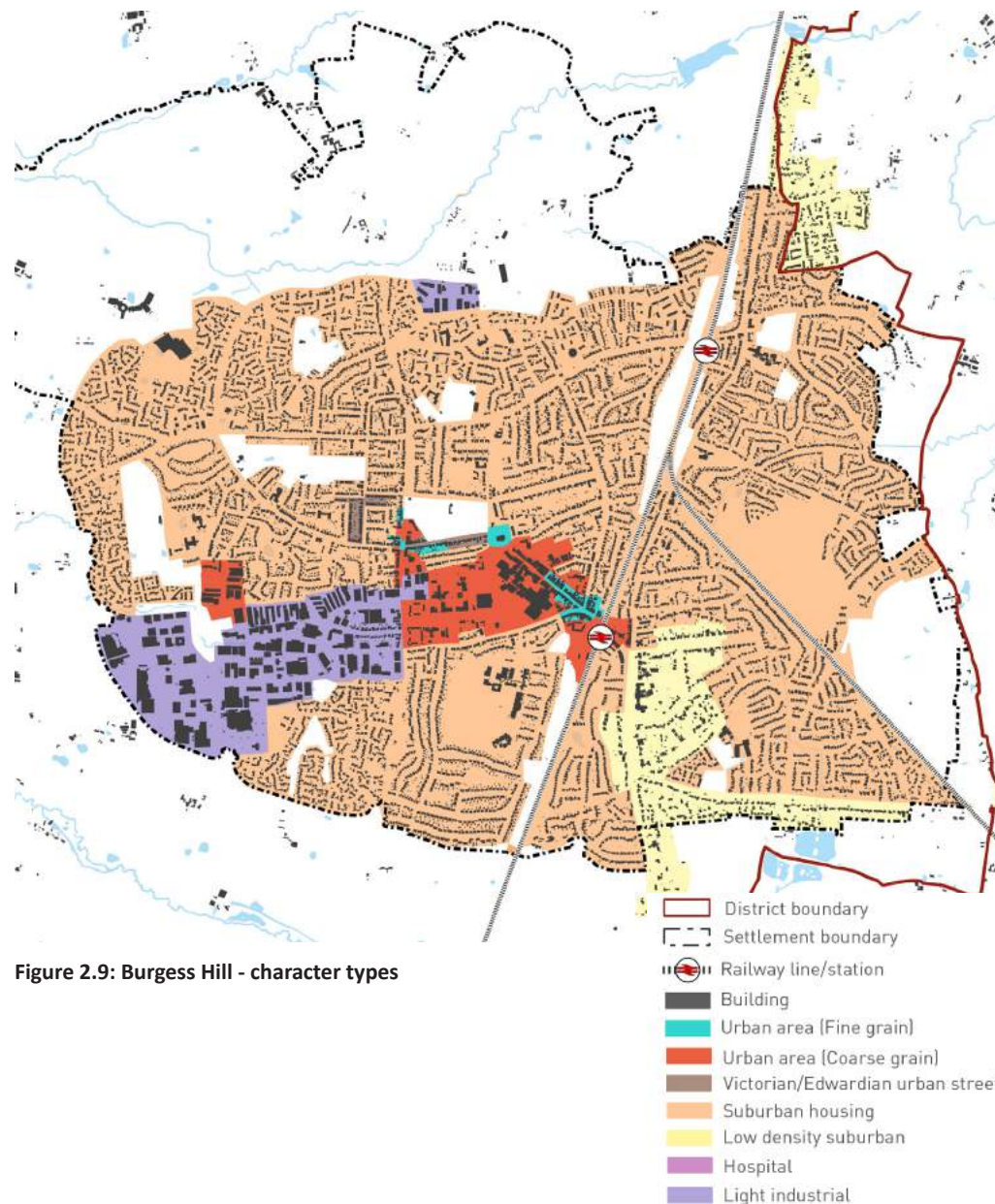


Figure 2.9: Burgess Hill - character types



## 2 Understanding the context

### Burgess Hill



#### Constraints

- Burgess Hill's establishment as a railway town, and subsequent phases of redevelopment, has left little of the town's early origins.
- There are three Conservation Areas in Burgess Hill and a small number of Listed Buildings in the centre.

#### Neighbourhood Plan Vision

2.5.44 The Burgess Hill Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision for the town that:

*'seeks to provide a sustainable 21st century town, focused around a vibrant town centre; where the existing and future population can enjoy a range of community facilities and high quality green space for play and recreation.'*

2.5.45 Its core objectives include to:

- Promote the vitality and vibrancy of Burgess Hill town centre and enhance the accessibility and public realm within the town centre; and
- Promote sustainable and well-designed development in the right location taking into account the character and amenity of the local area.

2.5.46 The Neighbourhood Plan establishes five areas (known as spatial quarters) within the town centre where new development and investment is to be focused – each with its own identity and range of projects.

2.5.47 Further information on the Burgess Hill Neighbourhood Plan can be found at: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/2759/burgess-hill-neighbourhood-plan.pdf>

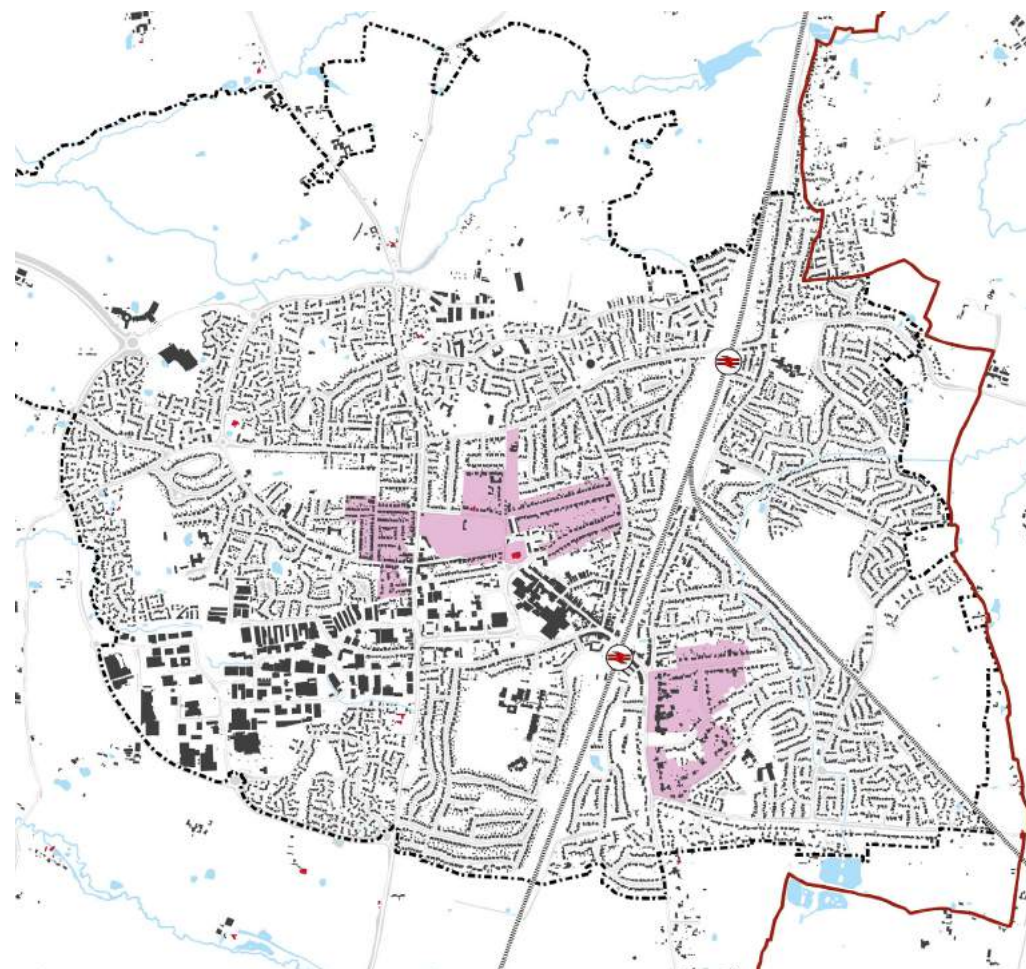


Figure 2.10: Burgess Hill - heritage

- District boundary
- Settlement boundary
- ⊕ Railway line/station
- Building
- Listed Building
- Conservation Area

## 2 Understanding the context

### Burgess Hill

#### Opportunities

- The Strategic Growth Programme for Burgess Hill is the most ambitious programme of change anywhere in the sub-region and will deliver 5,000 new homes and 15,000 jobs (including construction jobs) together with supporting infrastructure including schools, health and leisure facilities. This is recognised through site allocations in the District Plan which focus new housing and employment development both in the town centre and on the town's rural edge.
- Approximately 3,500 homes together with 25 hectares of employment land (for high quality business park) are proposed as part of the Northern Arc development on the northern edge of the town.
- The town centre is fragmented and in need of investment. Road space, surface car parks and service yards dominate and much of the pedestrian environment is unattractive and confusing.
- There is potential to establish a new more urban character in the town centre that can deliver both a more attractive and legible streetscape and new homes for the district. Opportunity is predominantly in the coarse grain parts of the town but there are also opportunities in fine grain areas where the built fabric is of varying quality.
- Developments of greater scale and massing (4-6 storeys) have recently been delivered or approved within the town centre. Buildings of this scale with active uses at ground floor on main streets and with upper storeys set back to reduce the impact of height on the street, are considered appropriate as this balances the opportunity to intensify uses to create a more vibrant place, with the desire to retain a human scale to development.
- Developments of four to six storeys could deliver residential densities in excess of 100 dwellings / ha. Chapter 5 - Site Optimisation, provides principles that explain how more intensive development (in terms of scale, height massing and density) can be achieved.



Figure 2.11: Burgess Hill - opportunities

- District boundary
- - - Settlement boundary
- Railway line/station
- Building
- Urban area (Fine grain) with potential for modest/incremental change
- Urban area (Coarse grain) with potential for change



## 2 Understanding the context East Grinstead



### East Grinstead Overview

2.5.48 East Grinstead is a hill town, situated on the northern edge of the High Weald on a ridge overlooking the valleys of the eastwards flowing rivers – the Medway (to the south) and the Eden (to the north). The historic core of the town sits on the high ground with the 19th and, especially, 20th century suburbs spreading out over the slopes. The surrounding street layout of the town centre has seen only minor changes since the 19th century.

2.5.49 The town dates from Saxon times and is mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086). In the 13th century it was awarded a charter allowing it to hold weekly markets and an annual fair that attracted people from a wide area.

2.5.50 The town was located on the main road from London to Lewes and would have provided an overnight stay for travellers. Later in the mid 18th century it became a stagecoach town for people passing through to Brighton.

2.5.51 Through the 16th to 18th centuries the town's importance in the county was evident through it being the location for local courts (assizes). At the same time leather working and iron production were important to the local economy.

2.5.52 The creation of a more direct route to Brighton in the 18th century, bypassing the town, and the opening of the London to Brighton mainline railway in the 1840s slowed the town's expansion but the arrival of the railway in the 1850s nevertheless led to continued growth through the 20th century.

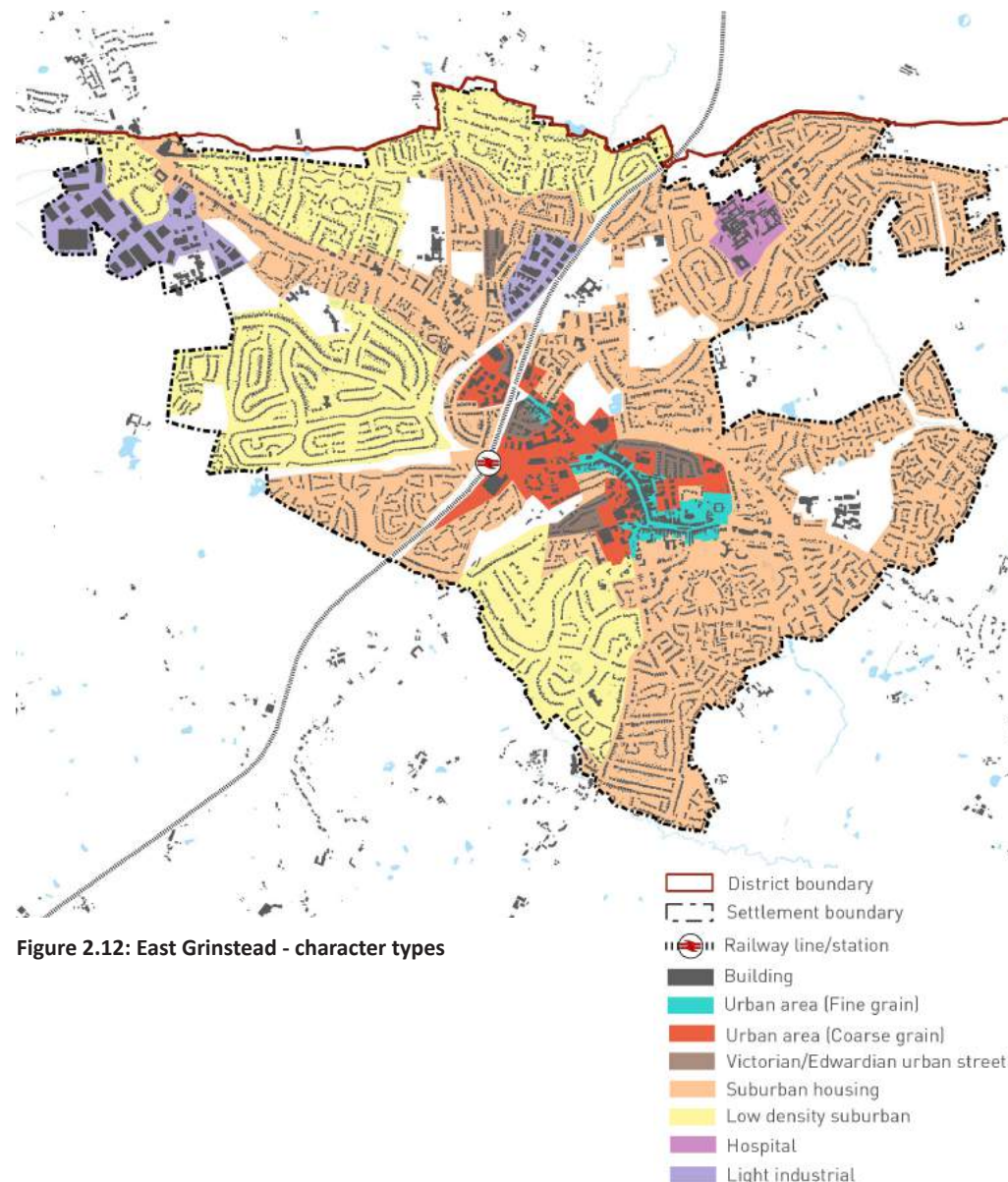


Figure 2.12: East Grinstead - character types

## 2 Understanding the context East Grinstead



### Constraints

- Both the buildings and burgage plots of High Street are amongst the very best survivals of late medieval and early post-medieval Sussex.
- There are numerous Listed Buildings, or groups of buildings in the town centre many dating from the 15th to 17th centuries. Most of these are located within the town's Conservation Area covering the eastern portion of the town centre.
- The pre-1700 buildings of the town are predominantly timber framed, although several 17th century buildings are wholly or partly of sandstone. Thereafter, brick is the dominant building material with clay tiles used for roofs, and tile-hanging.

### Neighbourhood Plan Vision

2.5.53 The vision for the town set out in the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan is:

*'To provide for a positive future for East Grinstead that is socially inclusive for all, vibrant, economically robust and will allow residents to live with a high degree of self-sufficiency in a town with a first rate natural, built and historic environment'.*

2.5.54 Its core objectives include to:

- Make prudent use of natural resources by promoting development on previously developed sites within the built-up area boundary; and
- Promote development that will provide sustainable economic growth, including business and tourism related development and maintain a prosperous town centre.

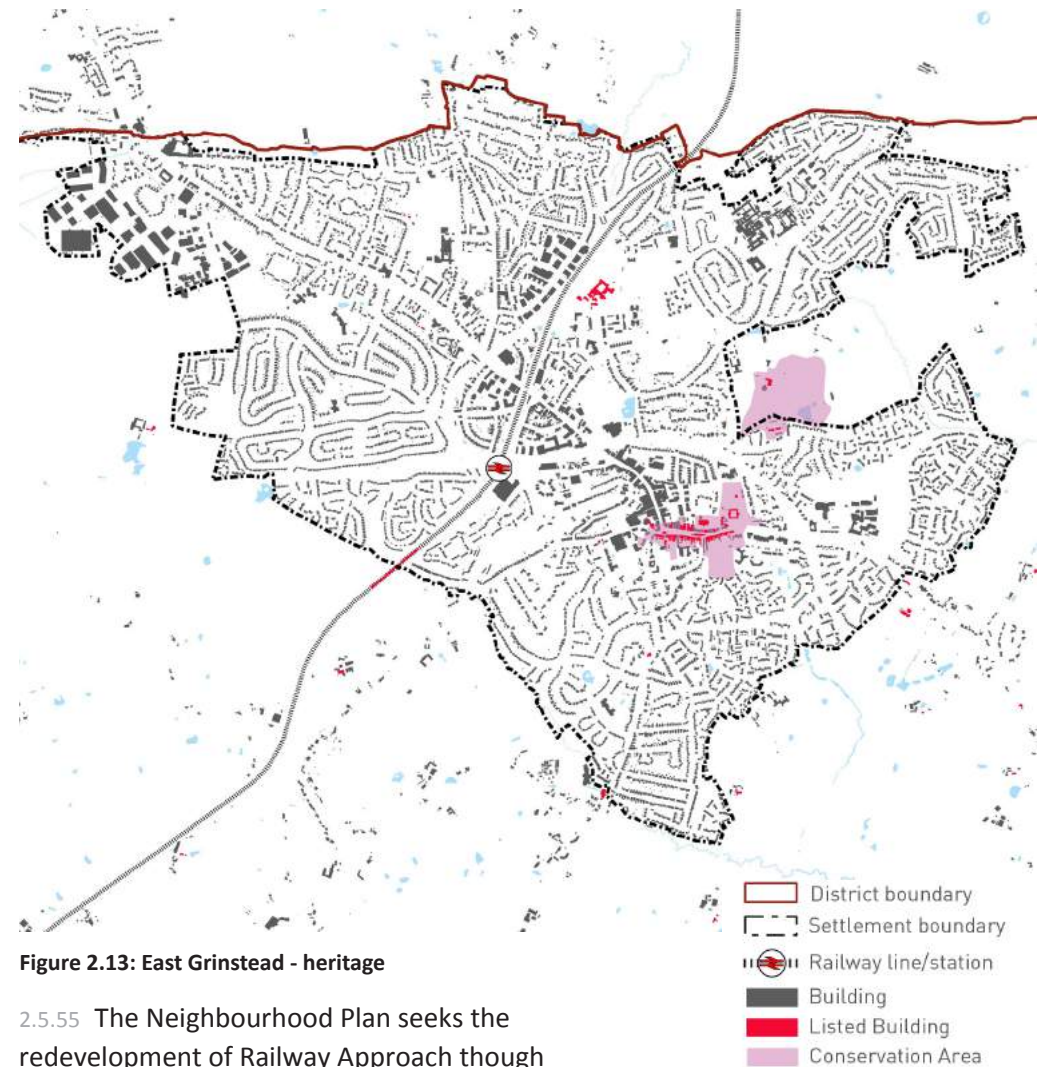


Figure 2.13: East Grinstead - heritage

2.5.55 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks the redevelopment of Railway Approach through a mixed-use scheme and the comprehensive redevelopment of Queens Walk for a mix of uses comprising retail, restaurant/café uses at ground floor, office and/or residential uses at upper floor level.

2.5.56 Further information on the East Grinstead Neighbourhood Plan can be found at: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/2784/east-grinstead-neighbourhood-plan.pdf>



## 2 Understanding the context East Grinstead



### Opportunities

- Whilst the eastern part of the centre is sensitive to change the western part is less so and carefully designed schemes within this part of the town, that are sympathetic to the historic centre, could help to strengthen the urban fabric and bring additional life to the town.
- The design quality of recent schemes in the centre has been mixed with some developments interfacing poorly and contributing little to the town's streets and offering little amenity to residents.
- There have been a number of office to residential conversions in the centre incorporating detailing and materials that appear out of context in the town.
- There are opportunities in both coarse and fine grain areas in East Grinstead where the quality of the existing built fabric is varied.
- Developments of greater scale and massing (4-5 storeys) have recently been delivered in the town centre where this scale has been successfully integrated into the existing streetscape. Buildings of this scale, with active uses at ground floor on main routes and with upper storeys set back to reduce the impact of height on the street, are considered appropriate as this balances the opportunity to intensify uses to create a more vibrant place, with the historic setting of the town and the desire to retain a human scale to development.
- Building scale, height and massing must however respond to the context of a particular site. The varied topography in East Grinstead means that some sites can more easily take additional height than others and development must respond to sensitive views to and from the wider countryside.
- Developments of four to five storeys could deliver residential densities in excess of 100 dwellings / ha. Refer to Chapter 5 - Site Optimisation, which provides principles that explain how to achieve more intensive development in terms of scale, height massing and density.



Figure 2.14: East Grinstead - opportunities

Particular care must be taken to avoid harm to the towns sensitive heritage assets.

- District boundary
- - - Settlement boundary
- Railway line/station
- Building
- Urban area (Fine grain) with potential for modest/incremental change
- Urban area (Coarse grain) with potential for change

## 2 Understanding the context

### Site appraisal



### 2.6 Site Appraisal

2.6.1 Having identified planning designations relevant to their site and prepared a Character Study, applicants should then carry out a detailed Site Appraisal to consider the physical aspects of their site, including topography, drainage, existing natural features, and access points in order to identify the key constraints and opportunities that may impact on future development.

2.6.2 The objective of this Site Appraisal is to identify, in spatial terms, those constraints that will influence the design and the opportunities afforded by the site.

2.6.3 The scope and areas covered in the Site Appraisal should be related to the scale of the development proposals.

2.6.4 The checklist at the end of the Chapter provides guidance on the appropriate scope and subject areas for the Site Appraisal. This should not be considered as an exhaustive list of the constraints and opportunities but rather a starting point for consideration.

#### Principle DG5: Site Appraisal

Applicants should carry out a Site Appraisal that identifies and illustrates the physical aspects of their site and identifies key constraints and opportunities that will help to inform their proposal.

The Site Appraisal will form part of the Design and Access Statement that supports a planning application (including outline, full or reserved matters applications) and will include proposal drawings, supporting text and illustrations that demonstrate that the site appraisal has been comprehensively undertaken.

#### Potential constraints and opportunities for consideration as part of the Site Appraisal

This is not an exhaustive list but a starting point for consideration:

- Topography and views;
  - Geology and ground conditions;
  - Site orientation and microclimate;
  - Air quality and noise;
  - Drainage, hydrology and flood risk;
  - The location and capacity of existing services;
  - The history and heritage of the site and the potential for significant archaeological artefacts;
  - Existing landscape features that are of value;
  - Trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's);
  - Sensitive ecological habitats and biodiversity;
  - Site access; and
  - Rights of way or opportunities to connect and integrate with the existing development pattern.
- Refer also to the Checklist at the end of Chapter 2.



## 2 Understanding the context

### Character Study CHECKLIST

#### How to use

This table provides a checklist of things to consider when preparing a **Character Study**.

The checklist should be used by applicants and planning officers as prompts when preparing the Character Study.

| SUBJECT  | DESCRIPTION  | CONSIDERATION   | CHECK |
|--|--|---|-------|
| <b>Wider setting</b>                                     | What is the wider setting of the site and the location of the settlement in relation to other settlements within the region?   | Function of the settlement and relationship to adjacent areas |       |
|  | What is the wider context within which the site is located?  | Settlement + site context (Principle DG4)                     |       |
| <b>Settlement structure</b>                              | How is the settlement within which the site is located structured and where does it connect to? Does it have a linear structure along a main route or is part of a grid of streets for example?  | Historical development  |       |
|  | What is the existing hierarchy and network of streets and spaces within the settlement and how does this contribute to its character?  | Structure and hierarchy of streets and spaces                 |       |
|  | Are there any places or uses that provide a focus for the settlement?  | Identity  |       |
|  | What is the prevailing density of the settlement? Does it vary and what would be appropriate for the application site?   | Density of development  |       |
|  | How does the existing settlement mark arrival points or the meeting of routes? Can this be drawn upon to mark gateways and nodes within the proposal?  | Gateways and nodes  |       |
|  | How large are existing plots or blocks within the settlement? Is the pattern regular or irregular?   | Plot and block size   |       |
| <b>Landscape character/ natural features/ topography</b> | What is the broad landscape character, the underlying geology and how might this influence the development? Are there particular landscape, arboricultural, ecological or geological characteristics, for instance, that give a place its essential character? | Landscape and settlement character (Principle DG3)            |       |
|  | Are there landscape features (trees, hedgerows, ecological or geological), within the site that give the place its character and can these be incorporated into the proposals?   | Existing landscape features, water features, trees, hedges    |       |
|  | Are there any important views to and from the site and beyond that are valuable and should be retained? Understanding how the new development will be perceived from the surrounding area.   | Views and skyline   |       |
| <b>Streets and public spaces</b>                         | What is the prevailing level of enclosure for existing street types within the settlement? Does this contribute to their character? How are spaces enclosed?   | The containment of streets and public open spaces             |       |
|  | Are there particular public realm characteristics, such as planting, form, materials to draw influence from?   | Layout and form of spaces                                     |       |
|  | How does the interface between private and public spaces contribute to the settlement's character?   | Public and private space interface                            |       |
|  | How does public art contribute to the settlement's character?  | Public art  |       |
| <b>Built character</b>                                   | What is the local built character and how does this provide cues for appropriate design forms?   | Scale, form and massing                                       |       |
|  | Does the building frontage define the public realm or are there front gardens? What are the prevailing boundary treatments?  | Treatment of building frontages and boundaries                |       |
|  | Are there common building types prevalent within the settlement? Can these be re-interpreted?  | Building types  |       |
|  | Are there common building materials within the settlement which would be relevant to the proposal?   | Use of materials  |       |

## 2 Understanding the context

### Site Appraisal CHECKLIST

#### How to use

This table provides a checklist of things to consider when preparing a **Site Appraisal**. The checklist should be used by applicants and planning officers as prompts to identify **Constraints and Opportunities** for all sites.

| SUBJECT              | COMPONENT                     | SITE APPRAISAL  | CHECK |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|---|-------|
| Physical Environment | Topography and views          | What is the topography of the site and how will this influence the proposals? How is the site viewed or overlooked from afar? Are there prominent overlooked areas that may be best left undeveloped? How can the development provide a well-defined external image to the countryside? |       |
|                      | Geology and ground conditions | What is the existing geology of the site? Are there areas of the site which are difficult to build on, contaminated or less porous than others?   |       |
|                      | Orientation and microclimate  | How is the site orientated? Can this be capitalised on?   |       |
|                      | Air quality, noise            | Are there areas of the site which are affected by noise or poor air quality such as adjacent to major strategic roads or rail infrastructure or existing cultural or community buildings?   |       |
|                      | Drainage and hydrology        | How does the site currently drain? Are there locations where water collects? Are soils permeable? How will this affect the proposals and the potential for sustainable urban drainage systems?  |       |
|                      | Flooding                      | Are there areas of the site within the flood plain? Are there areas of the site prone to flooding?  |       |
|                      | Services                      | Are there existing services and/or capacity to serve the development? Are there any existing utilities or service infrastructure that may constrain your development. For instance overhead power lines or a significant sewer.   |       |
| Heritage             | Archaeology                   | Are there likely to be any archeological remains within the area? Is an archeology study required?  |       |
|                      | Historic assets               | Are there any historic assets on the site or does the site form the setting of a Heritage Asset?  |       |
| Landscape            | Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) | Are there any TPO's on the site?  |       |
|                      | Existing features             | Are there any existing features such as trees, hedgerows, watercourses, or areas of woodland that have value and should be retained?  |       |
|                      | Ecology and biodiversity      | What is the existing ecological and biodiversity value of the site? Are there particular areas or features which have a high ecological/biodiversity value that should be protected? Is there opportunity for habitat creation and enhancement?   |       |
| Highways             | Access                        | What are the existing access arrangements for the site? Does an alternative means of access have to be introduced?  |       |
|                      | Connections and Links         | Are there existing rights of way across the site? Can the site connect back to an existing neighbourhood and be integrated with an existing street network?   |       |

## 2 Understanding the context

### Character Study CHECKLIST

#### How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to how an application responds to its setting.

**PROCESS:** Have you:

- Identified all planning designations;
- Considered the character of the site within its settlement and prepared a Character Study; and
- Carried out a detailed Site Appraisal and established the constraints and opportunities that apply to the site.

**PROCESS:** The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by both the applicant and officer as a checklist.

| PRINCIPLE                               | DESCRIPTION   | CHECK |
|---|---|-------|
| <b>DG1: Designations</b>                | Has the applicant clearly identified whether the site lies within or adjacent to any area with a statutory or non-statutory planning designation? |       |
|   | Has the applicant understood the implications of these designations on the development of the site?   |       |
| <b>DG2: Character Study</b>             | Has the applicant carried out a Character Study and covered the topics set out in the relevant checklist?   |       |
| <b>DG3: Landscape Character</b>         | Has the applicants Character Study included an evaluation of the landscape character of their site and its setting?                               |       |
| <b>DG4: Settlement and site context</b> | Has the applicant identified the potential opportunities for new development to make a positive contribution to the character of a settlement?    |       |
| <b>DG5: Site Appraisal</b>              | Has the applicant prepared a detailed Site Appraisal and identified the constraints and opportunities that apply to their site?                   |       |

**SUMMARY:** At this stage the applicant should have a full understanding of their site and its context. This work should be undertaken before developing design proposals.



# 3

## Establishing the structure

Getting the structure of development right – the layout of streets, landscape, land uses and buildings and how they integrate with the existing streets, landscape and buildings is crucial to creating successful, attractive and sustainable places. The places we love to live, work and visit all have robust structures that define the character of the place. All too often new development lacks this coherent structure and therefore lacks a sense of place.

It is critical when planning large-scale development that the principles of place-making are carefully considered. This means considering the street layout and connectivity, the land uses, landscape and buildings in an holistic manner.

This chapter explains how applicants should translate their understanding of context into the establishment of a structure for their proposed development.



### 3 Establishing the structure

## Natural resources



### 3.1 Natural resources

#### Principle DG6: Work with the natural features and resources of the site

Applicants should use the physical characteristics of a site including topography, orientation, landform, geology, watercourses and drainage patterns, field patterns, boundaries and landscape and vegetation to shape the form and layout of new development.

The landscape structure should be considered from the outset of the design process and as an integral part of the proposal. Development proposals should retain important landscape features and watercourses, mature trees and planting and positively incorporate these features into the public realm.

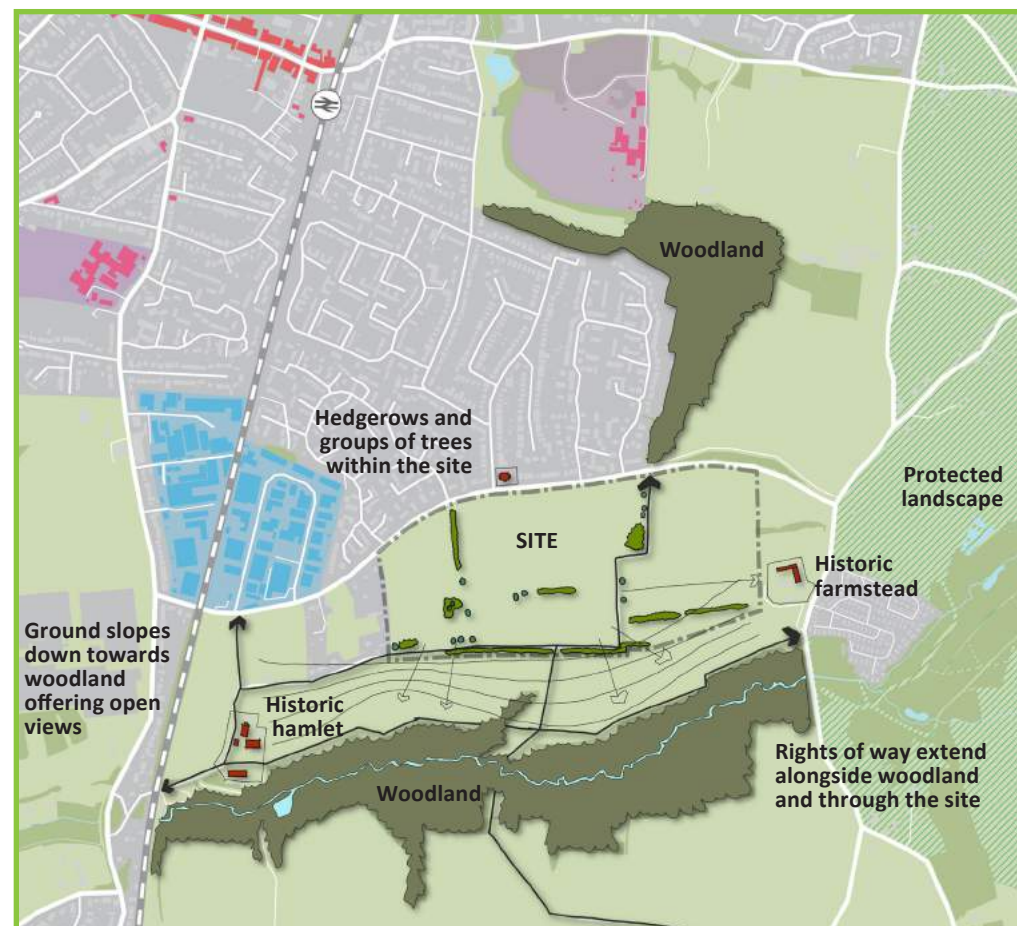


Figure 3.1: INDICATIVE SITE CONCEPT PLAN 1 - Identifying natural features and resources

#### Reason

3.1.1 The existing landscape, mature trees and planting are an important part of the character of most sites and help to provide sense of place. These features can give instant maturity to a scheme, enhance the setting of development and reduce impacts of the built form on the wider setting and landscape. Planting can also provide windbreaks and shelter.

3.1.2 Rolling hills are a feature of much of Mid Sussex and applicants will often need to consider how to respond to changes in level when laying out development. Consideration must be given to views, sensitively responding to the site's natural shape and contours, development aspect (to maximise daylight and solar gain) and the relationship of the site with adjacent sites as an early consideration in preparing development layouts.



### 3 Establishing the structure

## Natural resources



#### Principle DG7: Establish a landscape and green infrastructure network

Open space should normally be provided as:

- An integral part of new development and should be located where it is safe, most accessible and central to a scheme rather than isolated towards the edge; and
- Part of a coherent landscape structure and linked to existing and proposed landscapes to form open space networks whenever possible, revealing existing landscape features.

New open spaces should maximise the opportunity to accommodate landscape features such as mature trees and water courses / ponds, while fulfilling drainage requirements.

The shape and form of open space should be positively planned at the outset and inform the layout of new development.

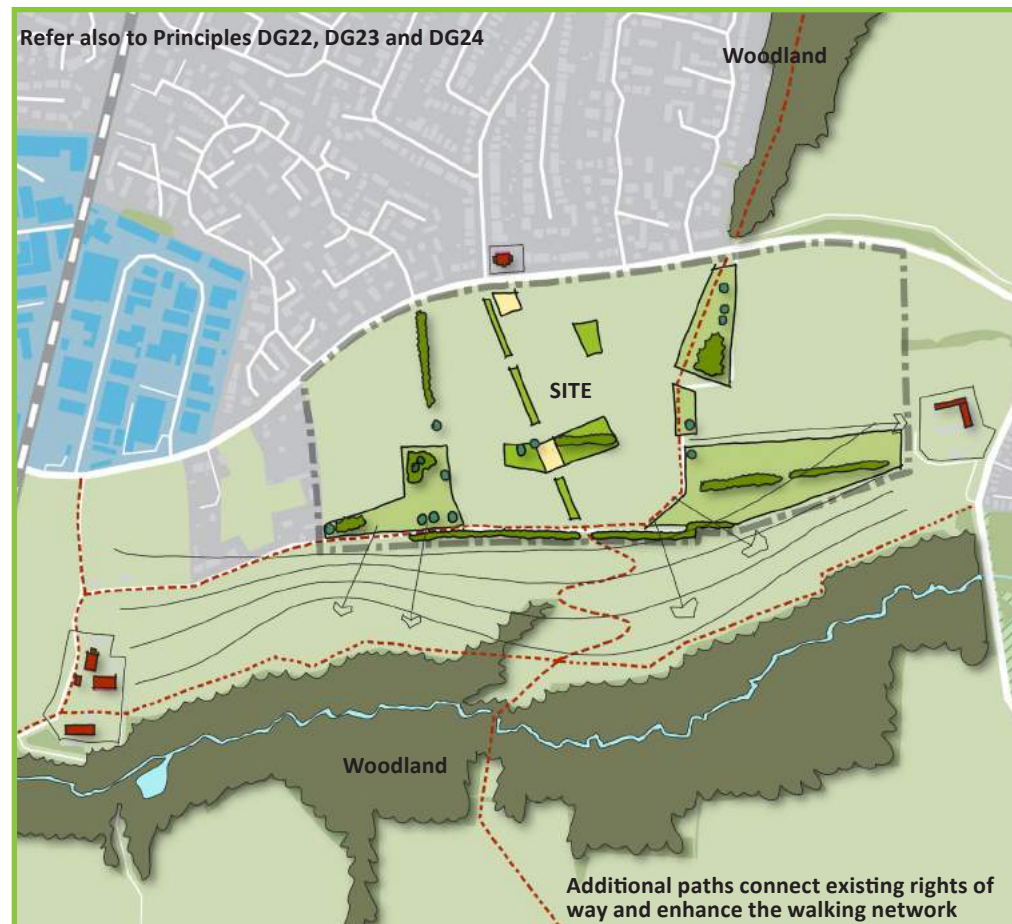


Figure 3.2: INDICATIVE SITE CONCEPT PLAN 2 - Establishing a landscape strategy

A network of connected open spaces is proposed through the site. These are strategically located to:

- Maximise the benefits of existing green infrastructure
- Provide open spaces within the heart of the new development
- Respond to, and soften the impact of development on existing heritage assets; and
- Link areas of woodland to the north and south of the site

#### Reason

3.1.3 Landscape and open space makes a significant contribution to the character and success of a development and helps to provide identity and sense of place.

3.1.4 If not positively planned open space can become under-used negative space.



### 3 Establishing the structure

## Natural resources



A waterbody provides an attractive setting on Lindfield High Street

#### Principle DG8: Water features and sustainable urban drainage

Whenever possible applicants should retain, enhance or re-establish watercourses and other surface waterbodies as positive features contributing to the character, sense of place, ecological value and biodiversity of new development.

Applicants should consider how to manage surface water to minimise flood risk and flows to watercourses. Development proposals should normally incorporate the use of sustainable urban drainage as an integral part of the landscape structure.

SuDs should be positively designed into the development from the outset as public realm features including ponds, retention planters/basins, green back lanes and wetlands. SuDs should be designed to make a positive contribution to the biodiversity, character and appearance of a development. Consideration must also be given to the future management and maintenance of the SuDs.

Swales and attenuation ponds should be designed so that water features and plants are visible from the surrounding area and should avoid unattractive boundary treatments or engineered surrounds. Attenuation ponds on slopes should be avoided if they need deep embankments or bunding.

Applicants should normally maximise the amount of porous hard surfacing to enable infiltration and consider the use of rain gardens in street environments wherever soil conditions permit.

#### Reason

3.1.5 Surface water features, SuDs and watercourses can make a significant contribution to the landscape character, biodiversity and sustainable performance of development and reinforce identity and sense of place.

3.1.6 The choice of public realm materials, the balance between soft and hard landscape areas and the use of attenuation ponds, swales and rain gardens can help to reduce demand on the sewer network and reduce the risk of flooding.



Storm water planters can be incorporated within the street design to attenuate rainwater



SUDs feature integrated within the streetscene in Upton, Northampton



SUDs feature at Maltings Park, Burgess Hill



### 3 Establishing the structure Best Practice Case Study

#### Case Study One: Imberhorne Lane, East Grinstead

##### *Working with the natural resources of the site*

###### Overview

This scheme, located on the western edge of East Grinstead, responds well to its woodland setting. The scheme is developed into the landscape with homes arranged as loose perimeter blocks that look onto and define open spaces and groups of mature trees, both on the boundaries and within the heart of the site. The buildings have been organised to face towards open countryside to the west and Imberhorne Lane to the east. SuDs are incorporated within the spaces.

Whilst the homes and public realm are well detailed it is the sensitive and positive response to the landscape that distinguishes the development and provides a sense of place.

**Architect:** JTP Architects

**Site area:** 5.53 Hectares

**Number of Homes:** 110

**Density:** 20 homes per hectare





# 3 Establishing the structure

## Natural resources



Wetland area at Clayton Mills, Hassocks



### Principle DG9: Design to enhance biodiversity

Applicants should seek to deliver net biodiversity gain as a minimum requirement of any development.

Landscape features that have high biodiversity/ecological value should normally be retained and incorporated within proposals and consideration given to the creation of new habitats.

Hedges, wildflower meadows, wild corners, old trees, ponds, hard landscaping features such as dry stone walls and rock piles and nest boxes installed in the eaves of buildings can all make a significant contribution to species diversity.

New planting and landscapes should respond to the wider landscape through use of native species that support greater biodiversity and provision of areas of wildflower meadows.

Details of how the landscape and biodiversity features on the site will be maintained should be included as part of a planning application.

### Reason

3.1.7 Biodiversity is important to most aspects of our lives. We value biodiversity for many reasons, some utilitarian, some intrinsic. Utilitarian values include the many basic needs humans obtain from biodiversity such as food, fuel, shelter, and medicine. Ecosystems provide crucial services such as pollination, seed dispersal, climate regulation, water purification, nutrient cycling, and control of agricultural pests. Many studies have found links between human well-being and access to nature and the countryside.

3.1.8 Biodiversity is threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation, unsustainable resource use, introduction of invasive species, pollution, and global climate change.

3.1.9 The District has a number of valued landscapes, habitats and species which need to be protected and enhanced. Mid Sussex District Council is committed to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. District Plan policy DP38 requires that development will improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments.



### 3 Establishing the structure Topography and views



#### Principle DG10: Respond to topography and strategic views

Development proposals should work with the topography with buildings integrated within the existing landform in order to soften their appearance within the landscape.

Applicants should identify important views into and out of their site. This may include long distance views to landscape features or buildings or shorter distance views to attractive or distinctive townscape. Where appropriate development should be laid out so that these views are retained and where possible enhanced to improve legibility whilst ensuring that new development is appropriately screened so as not to impact on views towards the site.

New buildings should not obscure or cause adverse impact on existing views including those from the South Downs National Park and particular attention must be given to the impact of development against the skyline or ridgelines of hills.

Where there are no direct sight lines through to an important landmark (for instance a church or public building), consideration should be given to how the new development could be structured to open up views. This can help to enhance identity and legibility.

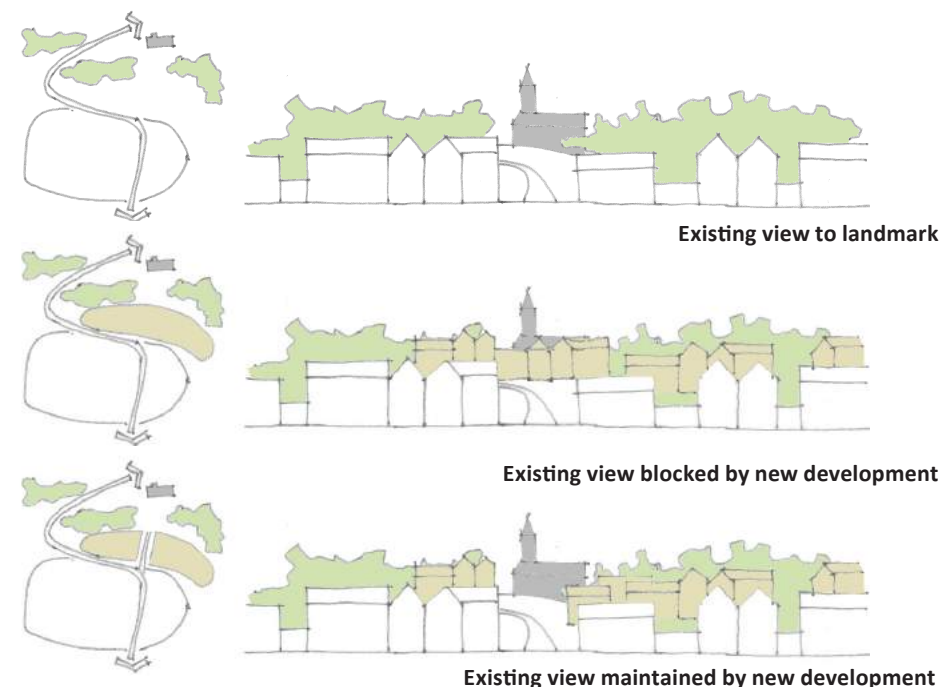


Figure 3.3: Landmarks and views

#### Reason

3.1.10 Views across the open countryside from elevated locations in the District particularly in the High Weald and South Downs National Park are an important part of the character of the District and must be retained.

3.1.11 New development, particularly at a larger scale, can have a significant impact on these views and the open character and must be carefully managed to minimise adverse impacts.

3.1.12 On a more local level changes in topography can serve to both conceal or increase visibility of development. Applicants must manage their proposals to minimise visual impacts through careful siting of buildings and landscape. Developments must also provide a well-defined external image to the countryside (Refer also to DG18 Development Edge).

# 3 Establishing the structure Movement network

## 3.2 Movement network

### Principle DG11: Establish a clear movement network that connects with the surrounding area

Applicants should design the layout of new development to to:

- Link with existing routes and access points;
- Create direct, attractive and safe connections through the site for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicular modes which follow natural desire lines and connect to existing streets, open spaces, local facilities or destinations;
- Avoid turning heads by creating continuous vehicular routes around perimeter blocks;
- Carefully integrate public rights of way; and
- Respond to topography and landscape features.

The network should provide a choice of routes for all modes and follow a spatial and visual hierarchy. The character of a street should reflect its position in this hierarchy and respond to local characteristics (refer to Design Principles DG2-4).

While direct routes are most convenient, the design should also balance visual attraction, traffic calming and safety to optimise the pedestrian's experience.

Applicants should avoid promoting developments that are accessed off a single location or promote long culs-de-sac that do not provide a choice of direct and convenient routes.

The opportunity should be taken to make pedestrian / cycle connections between adjacent development sites.

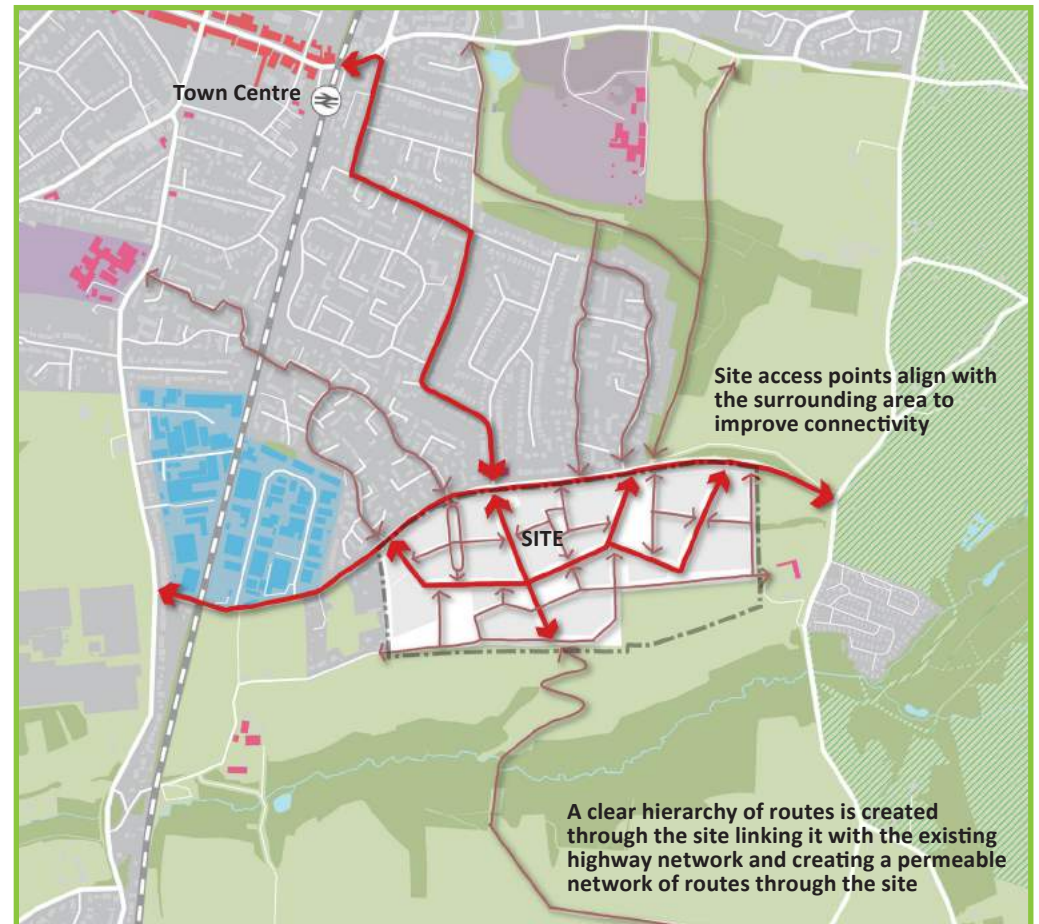


Figure 3.4: INDICATIVE SITE CONCEPT PLAN 3 - Establishing a clear movement network

### Reason

3.2.1 Successful places are easy to get to, easy to move through and easy to find your way around. A connected network of streets offers choice, aids legibility, avoids turning heads and other engineered solutions and provides a hierarchy of street types which respond to the function and role of the street.



### 3 Establishing the structure Movement network



#### Principle DG12: Reduce reliance on the private car

Applicants should plan and lay out their development to minimise reliance on the private car. They should create an attractive network of safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes integrated with the development and connecting with the wider area and adjacent sites.

Public transport should also be accommodated where appropriate.

For larger developments (over 300 homes) applicants must consider at the outset how buses can be routed through a site and the provision of stops in the most accessible locations where they may serve both new and existing residents. This will inform consideration of street design at the more detailed design stage. Whenever possible new homes should be located within 400m (approximately 5 minutes walk) of a bus stop.

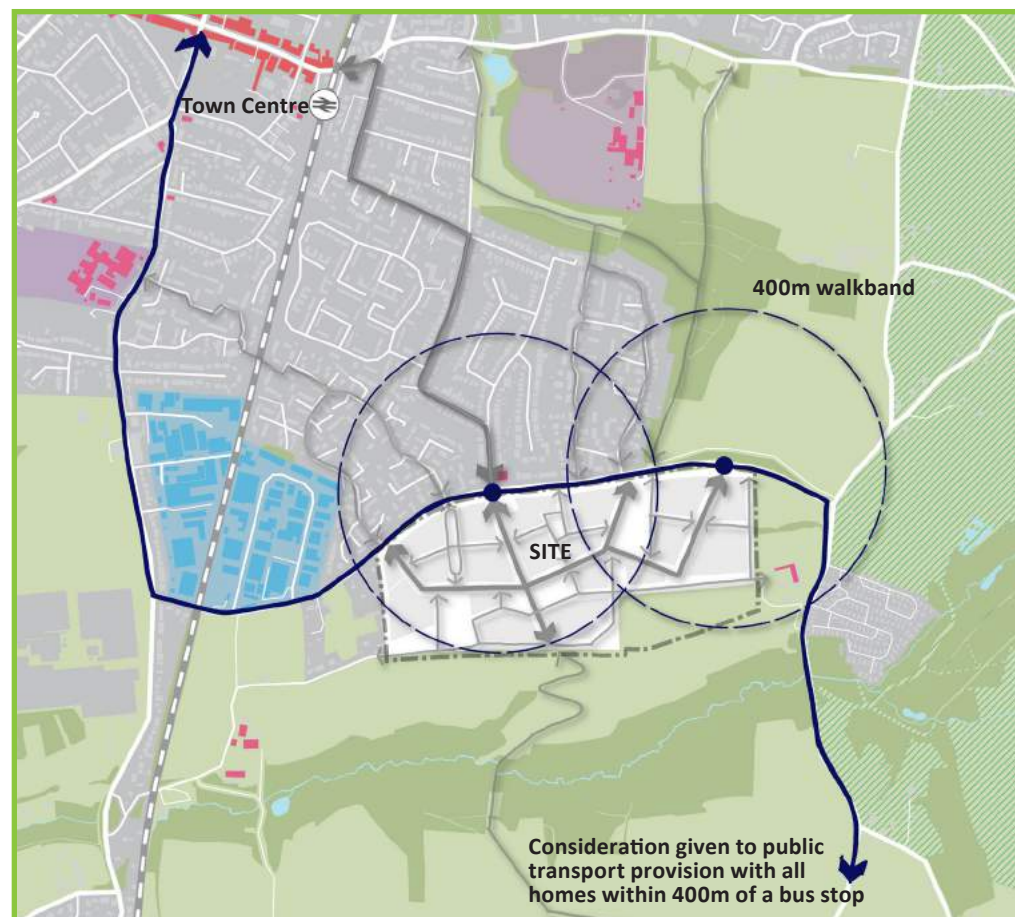


Figure 3.5: INDICATIVE SITE CONCEPT PLAN 4 - Accommodating public transport within the proposal

#### Reason

3.2.2 Developments must encourage sustainable lifestyles, minimise reliance on the car and provide choice to residents. This needs to be planned early in the design process to provide space for alternative modes and to ensure that carriageway widths are sufficient.

3.2.3 Applicants must consider the needs of the most vulnerable road users first in accordance with the recommendations in Manual for Streets.

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Consider first<br>↓ | Pedestrians   |
|                     | Cyclists  |
|                     | Public transport users  |
|                     | Specialist service vehicles (eg emergency services, waste, etc) |
| Consider last       | Other motor traffic   |

Figure 3.6: User hierarchy from Manual for Streets



### 3 Establishing the structure Movement network



#### Principle DG13: Anticipate future development

The movement network / layout should be future proofed by providing streets that later phases of development can connect into at the edges of development sites.

This is typically achieved by a combination of:

- Legible links through the site; and
- Perimeter block layouts that generate roads around the perimeter of the site and building frontages that face the boundaries.



Figure 3.7: INDICATIVE SITE CONCEPT PLAN 5 - Scheme is laid out to allow for further development phases in the future

#### Reason

3.2.4 A lot of development built during the latter part of the 20th century is laid out as a network of culs de sac accessed off a distributor route and offering little potential for further expansion / extension at a later date. This reduces the potential to deliver well-connected sustainable development patterns and should be avoided.

## 3 Establishing the structure

### Existing townscape and heritage



### 3.3 Existing townscape and heritage

#### Principle DG14: Respond to the existing townscape, heritage assets and historic landscapes

Applicants should respond to the existing townscape, heritage assets and historic landscapes when preparing proposals.

New development should generally respond to the scale, massing and grain of adjacent areas and the settlement context within which it is located (refer to Principle DG4). For larger sites there may be potential to introduce a new character / development form and massing, within the site itself (refer to Principle DG28).

Heritage assets and historic landscapes should be celebrated, enhanced and preserved where appropriate, for the enjoyment of existing and future residents. Applicants should respect the setting of heritage assets and where appropriate integrate these into their proposals in order to reinforce a sense of place and define a strong local identity and distinctiveness

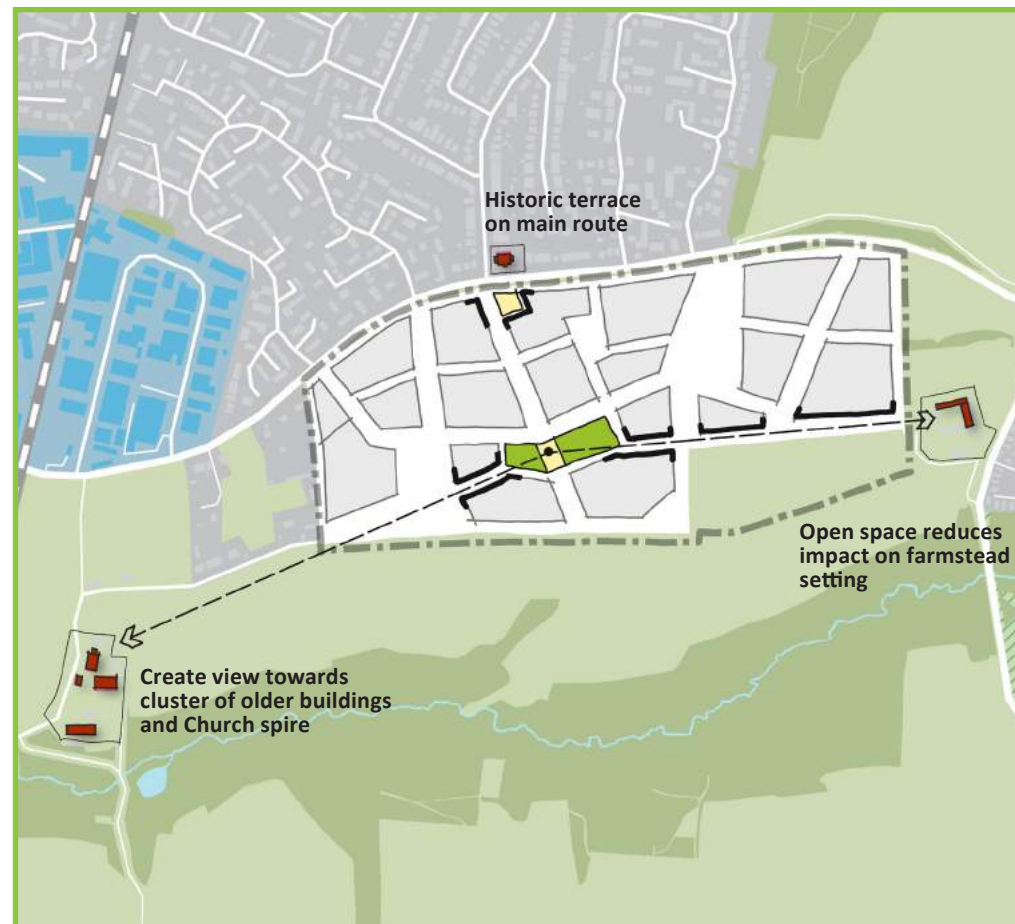


Figure 3.8: INDICATIVE SITE CONCEPT PLAN 6 - Scheme responding to existing townscape and heritage

#### Reason

3.3.1 Within the District there are a number of different settlement contexts as identified in section 2.5 of this Design Guide.

3.3.2 Whilst some offer scope for intensification (eg urban context coarse grain areas), others present a more consistent character and form; in these areas new development should be sympathetic to the existing townscape and respond to the scale, height and massing to deliver a coherent and consistent urban fabric.



### 3 Establishing the structure Best Practice Case Study

#### Case Study Two: St Margarets, East Grinstead

##### *Responding to townscape and heritage*

###### Overview

This scheme has been formally laid out and structured to respond to the Grade 1 listed St Margaret's Convent. Dwellings are arranged as formal terraces that front onto an axis focusing directly onto the Convent. This celebrates the cluster of convent buildings and provides a strong point of reference in the townscape.

Homes are laid out to form quadrants that reflect the collegiate arrangements within the Convent and the gable frontages and materials palette used for housing facades also references the sandstone and gables employed in the convent buildings.



**Architect:** Clague Architects

**Site area:** 2.97 Hectares

**Number of Homes:** 74

**Density:** 25 homes per hectare



### 3 Establishing the structure CHECKLIST

#### How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to how an application has established the structure of the proposal.

**PROCESS:** Have you read, understood and applied the principles set out through Section 3?

**PROCESS:** Have these principles been considered in conjunction with the Planning Designations, Character Study and Site Appraisal prepared in Response to the Site and Setting in Section 2?

**PROCESS:** The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicants and officers as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

| PRINCIPLE   | DESCRIPTION  | CHECK |
|---|--|-------|
| <b>DG6 and 7: Natural resources</b>                     | Has the design proposal used the physical characteristics of the site identified in Section 2 to influence the form and layout of new development?                               |       |
|   | Has the proposal maximised the site resources in response to Principles DG6 and DG7?   |       |
| <b>DG8: Water features and SuDs</b>                     | Where applicable has the design sought to retain, enhance and/or re-establish surface water features identified in Section 2 as positive features?                               |       |
|   | Has the design incorporated the use of sustainable urban drainage as an integral part of the layout and landscape structure?   |       |
| <b>DG9: Ecology and biodiversity</b>                    | Have landscape features with high biodiversity/ecological value identified in Stage 02 been retained and incorporated within the proposals?                                      |       |
|   | Do the proposals deliver net biodiversity gain?  |       |
|   | Have new habitats been created within the landscape structure to encourage additional species?   |       |
| <b>DG10: Topography and strategic views</b>             | Does the design work with the topography and integrate the buildings within the landscape?   |       |
| <b>DG11: Connect with the existing</b>                  | Does the proposal integrate with existing routes and access points, and create direct and attractive connections through the site for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicular modes? |       |
|   | Does this movement network respond to topography and landscape features and integrate public rights of way?  |       |
| <b>DG12: Reduce the reliance on the car</b>             | Does the proposal prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable road users first creating an attractive network of safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes?                |       |
|   | Does the proposal incorporate space for public transport where appropriate?  |       |
| <b>DG13: Anticipate future development</b>              | Is the design future proofed by providing streets that later phases of development can connect into at the edge?   |       |
| <b>DG14: Heritage Assets and the Historic Landscape</b> | Does the design respond to, celebrate, enhance and preserve any heritage assets and historic landscapes within the proposals?  |       |



# 4

## Site layout, streets and spaces

Well designed streets and public spaces contribute significantly to the success of places. These should be laid out to be comfortable, stimulating and attractive environments that encourage social interaction, act as meeting points for communities, add value to surrounding properties and generally add to the character of a neighbourhood.

The design of the public realm (the streets and spaces around buildings) is as important as the design of buildings. All too often in new development these elements are given less design consideration or dictated by standardised, engineered solutions.

The guidance in this chapter will help applicants to develop the structure of their development into a more detailed layout. It emphasises the importance of the public realm as well as the design of social spaces that contribute to the success of an area.





## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Urban structure

#### 4.1 Urban structure - perimeter block

##### **Principle DG15: Deliver a clear structure of streets and spaces that is easy to understand and move through**

Applicants should promote an urban structure to their development that is easy to understand and where there is a clear street hierarchy and network of open spaces.

Development should create a grid network of streets and perimeter blocks which may be regular or irregular in form. The perimeter block is most appropriate for achieving successful development as it:

- Optimises connections to surrounding areas;
- Provides a clear distinction between public and private spaces;
- Enhances permeability and legibility;
- Generates building frontages that face the street and thereby increases natural surveillance and activity on the street;
- Creates secure and private rear gardens and elevations;
- Can work at any scale or location; and
- Ensures attractive street frontages.

The block size and shape will vary according to the density of development, location within the District and mix of uses. The blocks should take into account natural features, orientation and topography.



Figure 4.1: INDICATIVE SITE CONCEPT PLAN 7 - Delivering a clear structure of streets and spaces

##### **Reason**

4.1.1 The layout of all existing towns and cities can be simplified into a grid of blocks and plots. The blocks within the grid may be regular shaped squares or rectangles (providing a regular grid), as found in many new towns, or it may be more irregular (providing a more irregular grid), as found in historic towns and villages.

4.1.2 Blocks will vary in size and shape and should be broadly reflective of the sites settlement context whilst respecting natural features, orientation and topography, and providing sufficient back to back distances to provide residential amenity.

4.1.3 In general, blocks between 50 - 120 metres in length provide a permeable network for both pedestrians and vehicles. Larger blocks are appropriate where rear court parking is accommodated.

## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Urban structure

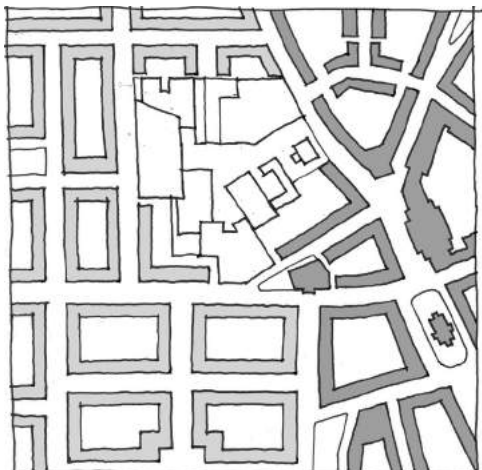


Figure 4.2: Regular gridded street pattern (west) and historic pattern (east)

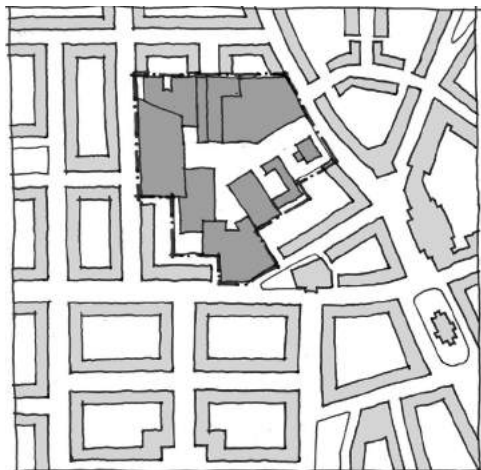


Figure 4.3: Development site of former industrial buildings identified for change

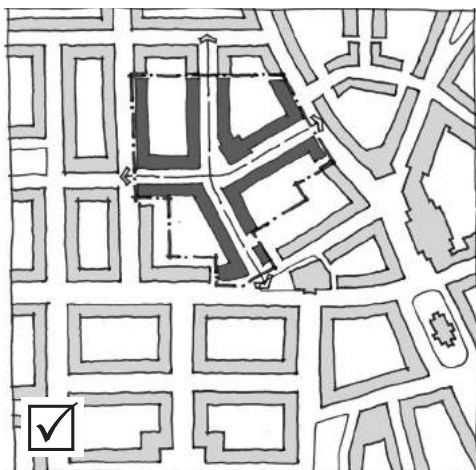


Figure 4.4: Development proposes a connected network of streets with blocks contributing to the existing pattern

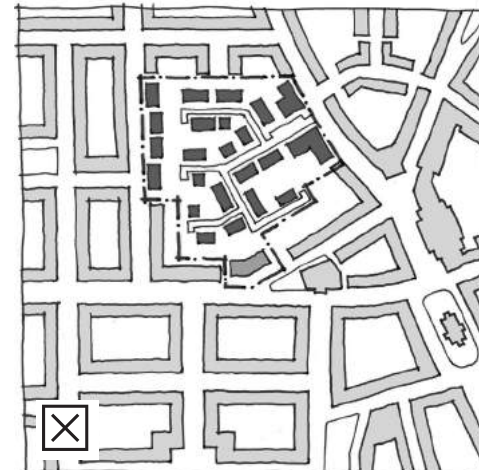


Figure 4.5: Development proposal is internalised with new buildings accessed via cul-de-sac streets

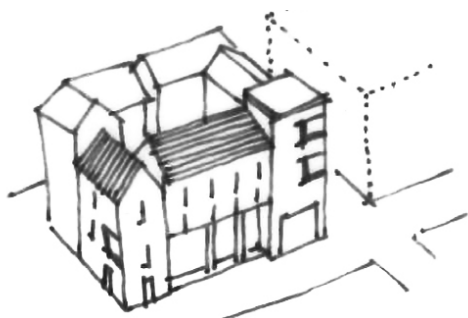


Figure 4.6: Higher density, urban blocks are suitable in more urban locations

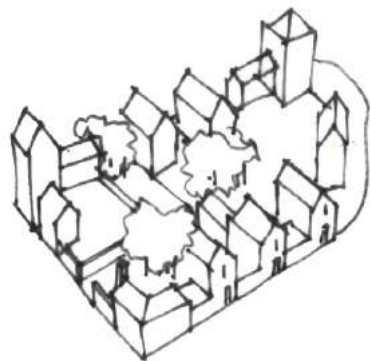


Figure 4.7: Lower density, blocks are more suitable in rural locations



Properties expose their rear boundaries to the street providing no animation or overlooking of the streetspace



The layout of housing at Newton Road, Lindfield is arranged as a series of perimeter blocks (image courtesy of Google maps)

## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Urban structure

#### 4.2 Urban structure - enclosure

##### Principle DG16: Provide enclosure and positive frontage to streets

New development should normally provide strong street enclosure and continuous frontages that provide coherent building lines with the corners of blocks emphasised. Buildings should be arranged with public areas to the front and private areas to the rear and so that buildings overlook and provide natural surveillance to streets and spaces.

Proposals should provide a sense of enclosure appropriate to the role of the street within the street hierarchy and in order to achieve a human scale. This will help to create a sense of place and reinforce the legibility of the development.

Streets and spaces that do not provide adequate enclosure or are dominated by roads or parking will not be acceptable.

##### Reason

4.2.1 The siting of buildings in relation to the street can have a significant effect on the success of a development. The most successful layouts have 'public fronts and private backs'. These streets have clearly defined 'edges' and allow for natural surveillance minimising opportunities for crime and escape.

4.2.2 Within established urban areas where there is an existing building line, this should inform the design and layout of a new development with new buildings following the established line.

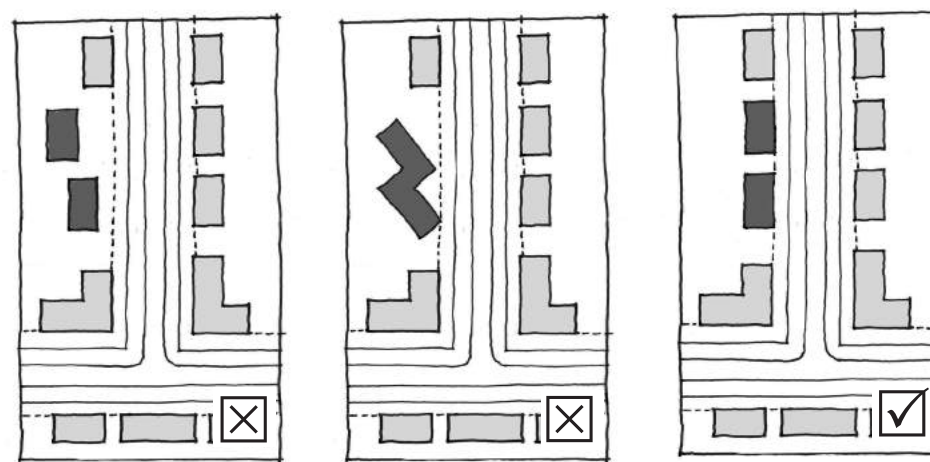


Figure 4.8: New buildings in a street should follow the established building line

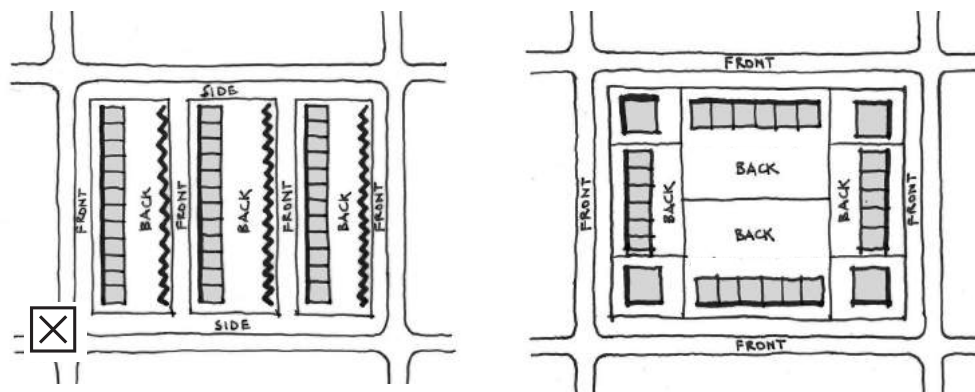


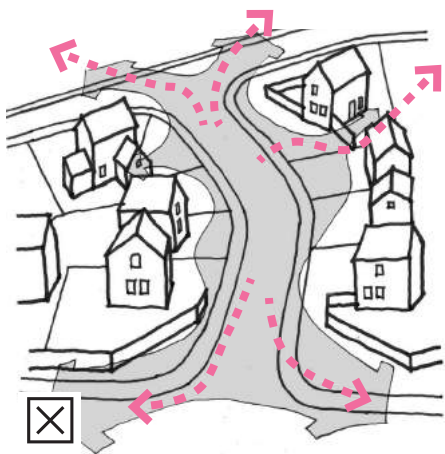
Figure 4.9: Perimeter block layout ensuring a clear definition of front and backs and a strong building line to the street

Figure 4.10: Streets should not mix fronts and backs



## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Urban structure

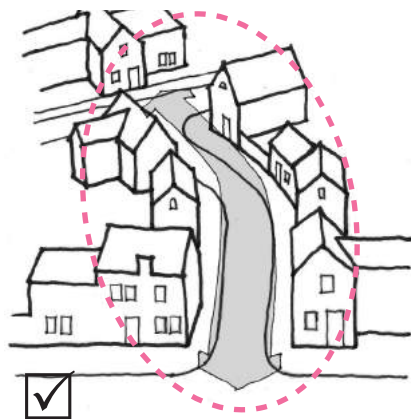


**Figure 4.11: Road dominated: lack of enclosure**

4.2.3 The distance that the building line is set back from the street, together with the height of the buildings determines the level of enclosure that is experienced within the street.

4.2.4 Enclosure may be building dominated or landscape dominated. Trees, hedges and walls can contribute towards creating a sense of enclosure.

4.2.5 Enclosure also creates different conditions. In the case of a square or courtyard, enclosure helps to create a 'static' environment; in a street, where movement is the main characteristic, enclosure helps to create a 'dynamic' environment.



**Figure 4.12: Place focused: enclosure provided by buildings creates a better street environment**

4.2.6 Enclosure is normally calculated by the ratio of the height of the buildings to the width of the street or space.

4.2.7 It is usually appropriate to set buildings back from the public realm to provide a private defensible space. Even the smallest setback can help privacy and security.

4.2.8 The setback distance should normally be between one and three metres with applicants balancing the need for enclosure, site optimisation and privacy.

4.2.9 Applicants should refer to their Character Study (Chapter 2) to inform the level of enclosure appropriate for their site. As a rough guideline, a ratio of between 1:1.5 to 1:3 (height:width) is likely to be appropriate depending on the hierarchy of street or public space (Refer to Urban Design Compendium). The space between buildings should be well defined but not oppressive.

4.2.10 A significant challenge for larger residential developments is to provide a form of development that is appropriate to people rather than cars. When buildings are set back from the street, road space and parking areas should not dominate the street scene.

4.2.11 Human-scaled streets can normally be achieved through increased levels of enclosure (typical of historic developments that pre-date the motor car) by setting buildings close to the street edge (responding to pedestrian rather than car movements).

4.2.12 Creating a sense of enclosure on a main street through a development may require an increase in building height to balance the increased building to building distance.



**Housing at Newton Road, Lindfield positively fronts onto and encloses the street space**



**Exposed blank flanks to buildings fail to address the street**



**Inconsistent building line presents blank side elevation of dwelling to the street space**

## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Legibility and image



#### 4.3 Legibility and image

##### Principle DG17: Use markers, landmarks, vistas and street hierarchy to aid legibility

Applicants should enhance legibility by laying out development to respond to existing landscape features, structures or buildings or through the careful location of new features or buildings to act as markers or landmarks. For larger schemes development should be laid out with a clear street hierarchy that allows users to easily distinguish main streets from secondary and minor routes.

##### Reason

4.3.1 Landscape features, structures or special buildings can help to add distinctiveness to a place and act as visual cues to aid legibility and understanding.

4.3.2 Streets that create a varied sequence of spaces and vistas aligned with focal buildings can be more rewarding and contribute to the understanding of a place. This can be achieved through:

- A curve or kink in the street;
- Off-setting the street network and terminating the view on a building;

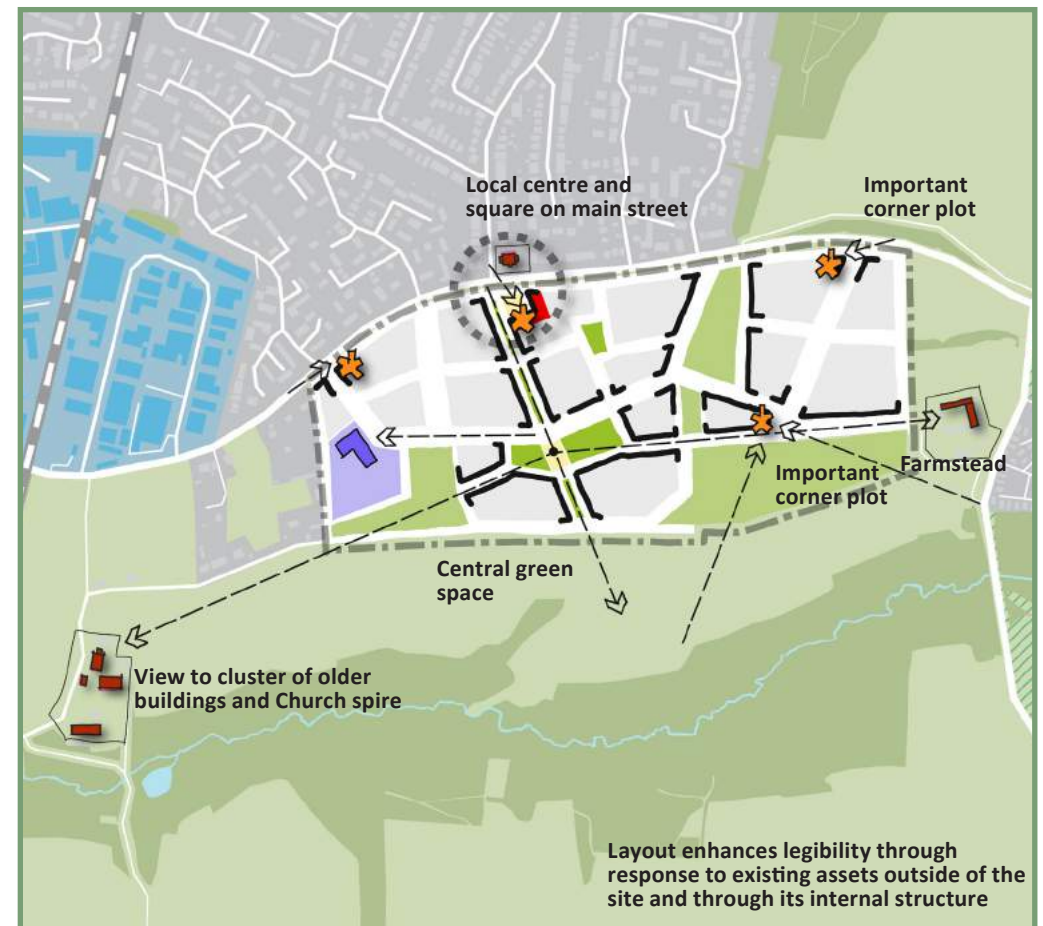


Figure 4.13: INDICATIVE SITE CONCEPT PLAN 8 - Enhancing legibility

- Creating a pinch point; and/or
- Locating a taller building to terminate the street which marks the end of an axis.

4.3.3 Landmark or marker buildings may be a little taller than the surrounding context but this increase in height must be proportionate to the role that they play in the streetscape.

## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Legibility and image



#### Principle DG18: Create a positive development edge

Applicants should normally design their proposals with building frontages facing site boundaries served by new access roads that run adjacent to the site edge for the following reasons:

- To avoid back fences abutting the countryside and existing roads / built up areas;
- To fully reveal existing trees and hedgerows to the public realm; and
- To safeguard the future of existing trees / tree belts / hedgerows by incorporating them outside private gardens while also avoiding overshadowing of rear gardens.

Development should be sensitively designed so that it avoids imposing upon the rural edge and existing roads that are characterised by their hedgerows and tree belt. This may require additional boundary planting. At the rural edge lower density development will normally be necessary

#### Reason

4.3.4 The interface between a settlement and the countryside should provide a positive transition between the two environments. On the one hand there is a need for a clear definition of where the settlement starts that provides a welcoming edge and sense of arrival. On the other hand it will often be necessary to use planting to help to soften the impact of new development on the surroundings.



The edges of development should respond positively to the existing landscape and avoid fences abutting the countryside

4.3.5 Properties should not back onto the settlement edge and the edge should not be defined by rear garden fences. This can create security problems and over time the quality of the environment can become degraded as fences are replaced or fall into disrepair. When viewed from the countryside this creates an unresolved and untidy edge that diminishes the quality of the environment.



## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Pedestrian friendly streets



#### 4.4 Pedestrian friendly streets / street hierarchy

**Principle DG19: Provide attractive streets and spaces defined by buildings rather than the highway, that encourage low speeds and that are safe to use by everyone**

Streets should be designed as social spaces with the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users put above the needs of the motorist.

Within larger developments a clear street hierarchy should be promoted with the principal vehicular routes integrated within the structure of development as main streets or boulevards with tree lined building frontages and not as peripheral distributor roads (bypasses).

Streets should be well defined and enclosed by building frontages normally in combination with a line of trees and landscaping.

Streets should encourage pedestrian movement through appropriate pavement widths, avoiding unnecessary barriers or clutter and providing places for pedestrians to rest, gather and socialise.

Residential streets should be designed to a maximum speed of 20 miles per hour. Traffic calming measures should be integrated within the design of the streets (and not as engineered solutions imposed afterwards) to encourage drivers to drive with care and caution.



Priority should be given to buildings and enclosure

Design footways to follow the buildings line

Minimize space given over to carriageway. Use the resulting space for hard or soft landscaping with parking as appropriate

Figure 4.14: Design streets as social spaces

#### Reason

4.4.1 Streets should be designed as public spaces that serve many functions, not only the circulation of traffic, but also walking, cycling, play and places for social interaction. As such the design of streets should not be led by engineering solutions or dominated by the car but instead have a strong emphasis on place-making and pedestrian movement.

4.4.2 New developments must be designed to encourage sustainable transport modes and healthy lifestyles and to reduce reliance on the car. To achieve this it is important that the street environment is attractive to pedestrians and cyclists.



Buildings provide a poor interface and definition of the street in Sayers Common



Streets with generous footways, tree planting and good overlooking from adjacent buildings feel safer to use

## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Pedestrian friendly streets



Successful shared surface street incorporating tree planting, soft landscaping and parking

4.4.3 Traffic calming measures can help to create a more pedestrian friendly environment.

4.4.4 Measures may include:

- The use of shared surfaces;
- Varying the alignment of the vehicular route;
- Use of tight junction radii;
- Narrowing down the carriageway and the use of planting and build outs;
- The provision of on-street parking;
- Raised areas at junctions and nodal points; and
- Changes to surface colour/materials.

4.3.5 Bolt-on measures such as speed bumps will not be acceptable.

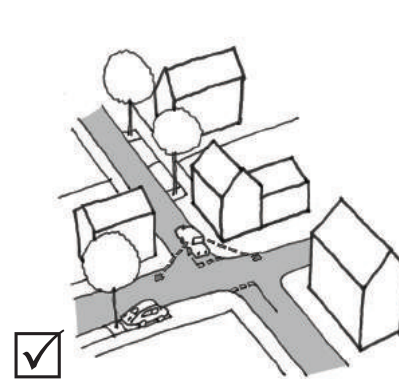


Figure 4.15: Frequent changes in directions and tight corners with narrow sight lines to control speed

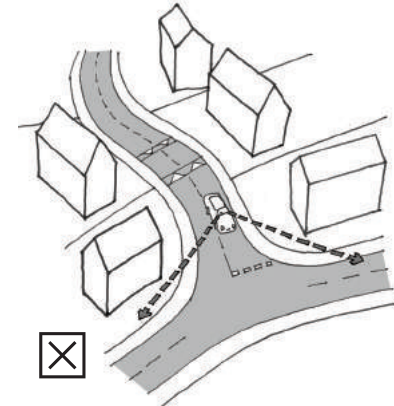


Figure 4.16: 'Fast' road with gentle bends and wide sight lines controlled by speed bumps gives mixed messages and can encourage speed



Speed bumps as a traffic calming measure for new roads should be avoided.



Controlling traffic speeds through road narrowing at Bolnore, Haywards Heath



Shared surface areas surfaced in clay pavers at Imberhorne Lane, East Grinstead



Traffic calming measures should be integrated within the design of streets



## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Parking

#### 4.5 Parking

##### **Principle DG20: Integrate parking to meet needs and support attractive streets and spaces**

The quality of the street environment should be a paramount consideration in designing parking spaces into the street. The inclusion of landscape and street trees as well as the provision for pedestrians should be integral to the design.

Applicants should prepare a comprehensive car parking strategy which contains a combination of appropriate parking solutions with a balance of on-street and off-street parking provided.

To achieve well defined streets with a good level of enclosure and avoid parking dominating streets, it will normally be necessary to accommodate, rear court, under-croft or underground parking in the higher density areas with terraced housing and flats. Rear courts need to be small in scale to avoid large soulless hard-edged environments and designed so that they benefit from direct overlooking while being well screened from the street.

Larger parking courts/squares will normally be unacceptable unless they are designed as part of a well landscaped and ordered open space that contributes positively to the development.

On-street (right-angle and parallel parking) and front threshold parking will need to be well landscaped and incorporate generous safeguarding areas around trees and shrubs to protect them from pedestrian as well as vehicular movement, and provide for private defensible space at the front of dwellings.

Off-street parking in front of houses should normally be avoided. This is likely to result in environments dominated by hard surfaces and generates greater face to face building distances leading to weaker street enclosure unless combined with taller building frontages.

Right-angle on-street parking is nevertheless sometimes acceptable providing it is positively designed as part of a comprehensive landscaped public realm and is limited to one part of a comprehensive parking strategy for the higher density areas.

For lower density areas with detached and semi-detached houses, parking should normally be discreetly accommodated to the side of dwellings.

##### **Car club and electric charging points**

Applicants for larger sites should also include car club spaces and provide electric charging points.

##### **Reason**

4.5.1 Applicants should provide parking for both residents and visitors at an adequate level in response to the location of the site. The number of spaces must be determined using the West Sussex Parking Calculator which forecasts likely car ownership.

4.5.2 The accommodation of parking represents a significant design challenge. If poorly designed parking can have a significant negative impact on the appearance of the public realm.

4.5.3 A balanced approach should be taken to achieve convenient parking in close proximity to households whilst reducing the dominance of parking on the street scene. This will normally result in a range of parking solutions being incorporated.

4.5.4 Non-allocated, shared parking (generally on street) is more efficient than designating parking to individual dwellings and this approach is encouraged to reduce parking numbers within development schemes especially in respect of terraced housing.

4.5.5 The suitability of parking solutions will vary depending on the location and nature of the proposal.



## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Parking



Attractive street incorporating trees and car parking

#### On street parking

4.5.6 On-street parking for residents provides convenient spaces adjacent to properties and adds to the activity of the street and natural surveillance. On-street car parking also avoids vehicle crossovers on the pedestrian footway.

4.5.7 Lines of on-street parking spaces should be broken up into blocks of a maximum of 5 parking bays separated by kerb build-outs which may accommodate street trees, planting and pedestrian crossings.

4.5.8 Streets must be designed so that where on street parking is proposed there is adequate width to accommodate this parking without causing an obstruction to the highway.

4.5.9 On street parallel parking is a good solution for main streets where it can form part of a formal arrangement that aids legibility of the development. Parking must be designed with particular care to minimise visual impact, enable free movement of buses (where appropriate) and retain continuity of footways.

4.5.10 In wider streets and avenues, with taller building frontages, small groups of parking spaces can be provided at right-angles to the carriageway and set within a framework of planting.



Figure 4.17: A good formal arrangement for a primary street that incorporates parallel parking with regular tree planting within kerb build outs reducing its impact on the street space (Section)

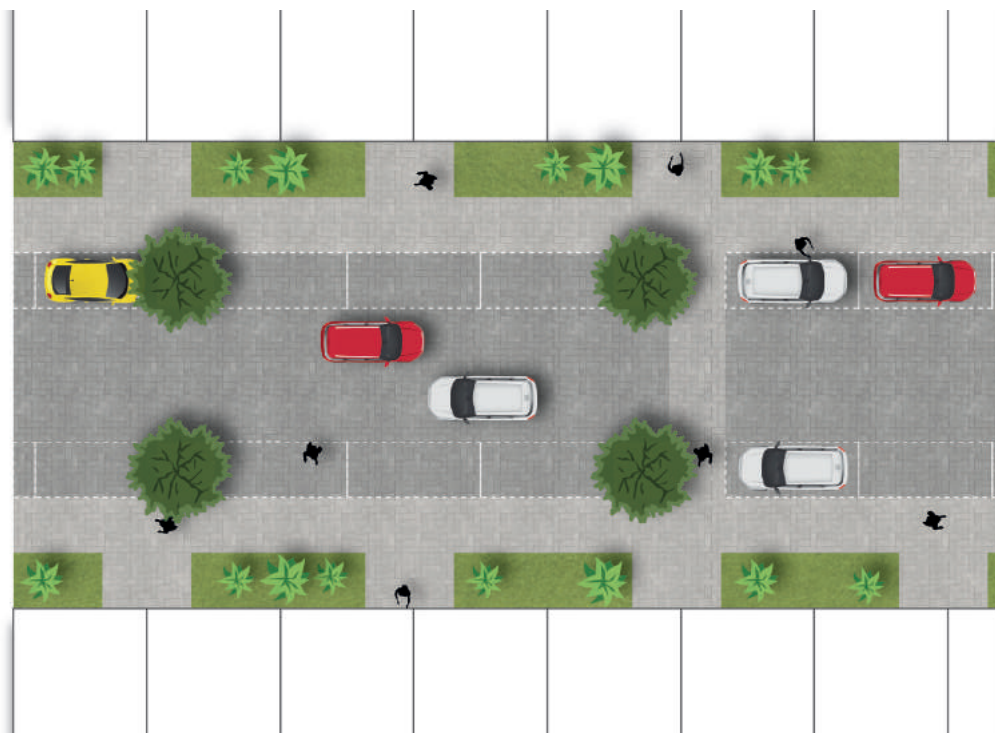


Figure 4.18: A good formal arrangement for a primary street that incorporates parallel parking with regular tree planting within kerb build outs reducing its impact on the street space (Plan)



## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Parking



On street parking broken up with street trees at Bolnore, Haywards Heath



Parking square broken up by mature planting which 'softens' the appearance of parked cars



Integrated garages at ground floor level reduce natural surveillance of the street space



Entrance to parking area under apartment block in Haywards Heath is made discrete by attractive metalwork panels



Keymer Tiles, Burgess Hill - on some streets the carriageway is too narrow to accommodate car parking and residents park across the footway



Large parking squares devoid of landscaping should be avoided



The use of gates rather than garage doors can be beneficial in ensuring the space is used for parking cars and not storage



Access to undercroft car parking is discretely located on the street however the setting back of the gate presents a security risk



A mix of perpendicular and parallel parking may be possible but only if the street is well landscaped

#### Parking Squares

4.5.11 Large unsightly expanses of tarmac should be avoided. Parking squares may offer flexible use including providing space for events or markets and parking should normally be set out in marked bays to ensure efficient use of space.

#### On plot parking

4.5.12 On plot parking can take a number of forms some of which contribute better to the quality of the street environment.

#### Within car ports or garages

4.5.13 This solution also allows buildings to be close to the street. Integral garages should be used sparingly as they reduce animation of the street at ground level.

#### Undercrofts or basements

4.5.14 Appropriate for apartment schemes. This is generally an acceptable solution provided that a positive interface between the building and street is provided and entrances to car parking areas are designed to minimise intrusion on the street space.



## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Parking



Wychwood, Crawley Down - car parking is discretely located to the side of property



Parking court and garages are exposed to the street



Large car parking courts may impact on security of the surrounding properties



Parking in front of properties reduces street enclosure and here lack of planting creates a somewhat bleak streetscape



The impact of car parking is reduced by planting, street enclosure and attention to detailing in the public realm



Access to rear parking court is discretely located and means that less car parking is located on the street



Flats over garages provide natural surveillance to the rear parking court



Car parking dominates the street environment where property frontages are set back from the street

#### To the side of dwellings

4.5.15 This allows buildings to be closer to the street space with car parking less visible from the street. Tandem parking arrangements avoid over-wide separation gaps between building frontages.

#### Rear parking courts

4.5.16 Where these are proposed they should be small scale, overlooked and only serve properties that are located around the court. Entrances to parking courts should be carefully designed to create a semi-private appearance and courts should be secure;

4.5.17 Rear court parking courts work well with flats over garages (FOG's) as they provide natural surveillance and screen the parking areas from the street; and

#### To the front of dwellings

4.5.18 Whilst this is historically a popular model it should generally be avoided except in rural locations as this necessitates wider streets, tends to have a considerable visual impact and can restrict informal surveillance of the street space.



## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Refuse, storage and utilities



#### 4.6 Refuse, storage and utilities

##### Principle DG21: Consider and allow for servicing, refuse collection and deliveries

The layout of development should be designed to facilitate service vehicles and refuse collections. The layout should be tested and tracked to ensure that this can be facilitated. A connected network of streets helps in this regard avoiding the need for large turning areas for servicing vehicles.

Consideration must be given to the storage and collection of bins at individual and communal properties, making sure residents are able to move bins easily to collection points and collection vehicles can access designated bin storage areas, minimising the risk of bins impacting negatively on the streetscape.

##### Reason

4.6.1 If not properly planned for refuse collection and storage can have a significant detrimental impact on the quality of the streetscape.



Bin store is located within parking spaces and appears to be an afterthought



Bin store obscures building frontage and presents a poor outlook from properties

## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Refuse, storage and utilities

#### Principle DG22: Plan for and integrate sub-stations, utilities and pump stations into the design of new development

Enclosures for utility services including sub-stations and pump stations should be carefully designed and integrated into development so that they do not detract from the quality of streets and public spaces.

Utility runs should normally run under the footway or carriageway and the location should be carefully planned so that it does not impact on the potential for street tree planting.

#### Principle DG23: Integrate refuse and recycling into the design of new development

Facilities for refuse storage should be:

- A suitable size to accommodate all the refuse containers to meet the needs of residents and be of a size acceptable to the refuse collection service;
- Located where they are neither visually obtrusive or where they obstruct passive surveillance of the street;
- Located where they will not be obstructed by car parking;
- Within secure and well ventilated areas; and
- Located so that they may be easily accessed from properties but where they will not cause nuisance through unpleasant odours or noise; and
- Coordinated with cycle storage (refer to Principle DG24 and Figures 4.19 to 4.22).

#### REFERENCES

Refer also to Principle DG24: Plan for cyclists

#### Reason

4.6.2 Consideration of the location of refuse storage and utilities apparatus must take place early in the design process as they can have considerable impact on the quality of environment within a development.

4.6.3 Applicants should refer to the MSDC Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for new developments for further guidance. <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/media/1975/waste-storage-and-collection-guidance-for-new-developemets.pdf>



Locating sub-stations within areas of open space will not be acceptable



Pumping stations should be discretely located where they don't impact negatively on the quality of the environment



If refuse facilities are not considered at an early design stage then bins often dominate the streets



Refuse areas should be considered as part of the design of the buildings. If refuse areas are located to the front of the building they should be designed as an integral part of the elevation

## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Refuse, storage and utilities

#### Principle DG24: Plan for cyclists

Space should be made available within new development for parking of bicycles in accordance with the Council's cycle parking standards.

Secure cycle storage should be accommodated in a convenient location within each residential plot, within the rear garden, car port, garage or outbuilding.

Secure and convenient cycle storage for apartments should be provided within the main buildings, preferably close to main entrances. External communal stores are usually inappropriate as they are unlikely to offer convenient access for all residents and they are less secure.

Large separate bicycle storage buildings that do not benefit from good natural surveillance should be avoided.

Dedicated visitor cycle parking should also be provided for apartments close to main entrances and well overlooked by habitable rooms.

#### Reason

4.6.4 For cycling to become an attractive alternative to the car, bicycles must be readily accessible and securely stored.

4.6.5 The type of storage will depend largely on the type of dwelling and the scale of the development. However, it is generally recognised that if secure cycle storage is conveniently located within individual dwellings or close to entrances, cycles are more likely to be used.

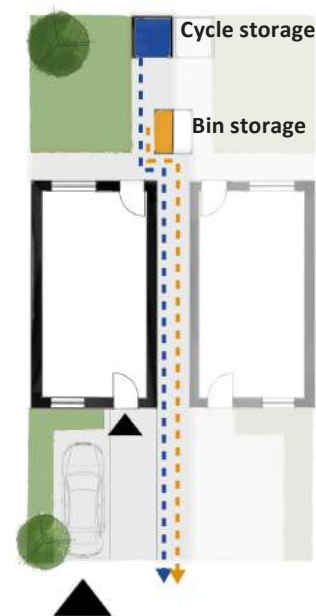


Figure 4.19: Accommodating refuse and cycle storage in rear garden for semi-detached house

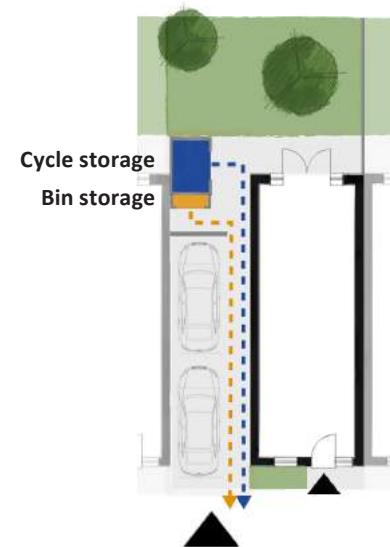


Figure 4.20: Accommodating refuse and cycle storage to rear of car port

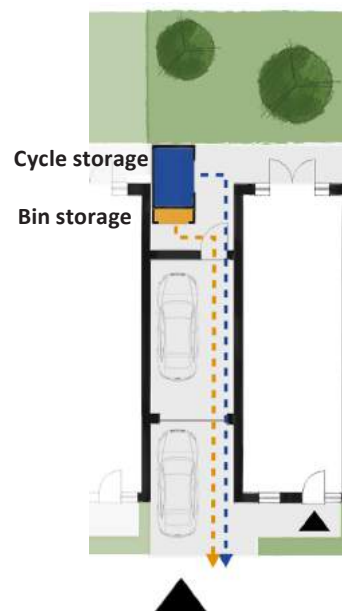


Figure 4.21: Accommodating refuse and cycle storage to rear of garage

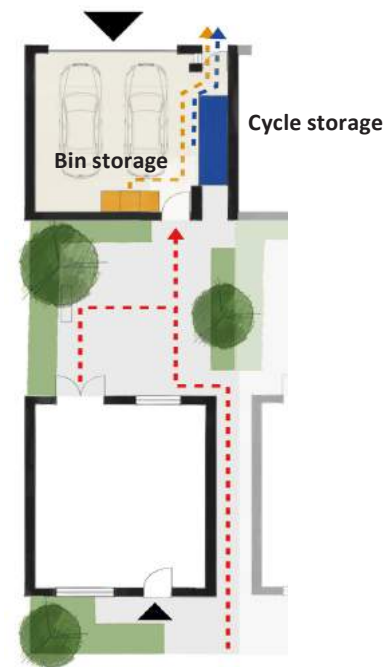


Figure 4.22: Accommodating refuse and cycle storage in garage accessed from rear shared court



## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Open space and public realm

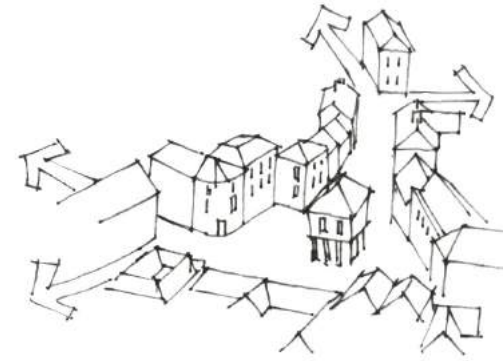


Figure 4.23: Informal space and buildings

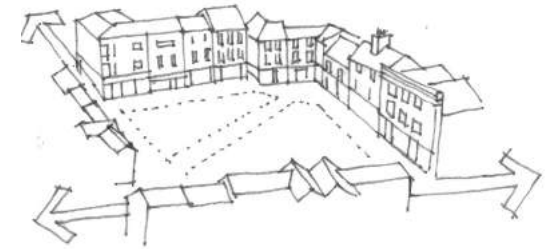


Figure 4.24: Formal space with semi-formal building

### 4.7 Open space and public realm

#### Principle DG25: Enhance the environment and sense of place through open spaces

Open space should be provided as an integral part of a development and should be designed with a specific role or function as part of the wider open space network. Spaces should generally incorporate hard and soft surfaced areas with the balance of each dependent on their location, the anticipated use and level of activity. Spaces should generally be defined by building frontages providing appropriate enclosure and overlooking.

Where furniture and equipment are provided, their design should be attractive robust, durable and coordinated.

Applicants should also consider the future maintenance of open spaces when designing proposals and provision should be made for the ongoing cost of this maintenance.

#### Reason

4.7.1 Open spaces make an important contribution to the character of an area by providing both physical and visual amenity and a focus for social, play and sporting activities and events.

4.7.2 Open spaces come in a range of forms from a hard paved urban square to a landscaped park and must be designed in anticipation of the type and level of use and activity that may take place within them.

4.7.3 Most open spaces will be multi-functional and with different uses taking place within them at different times of the year. The design of a space must anticipate this and consideration be given to the use of suitable materials appropriate to the likely uses. The design of a space should also respond to potential desire routes that may cross a space.

4.7.4 Applicants should refer to the Mid Sussex District Council Development Infrastructure and Contributions SPD which indicates the Council's requirements in terms of open space, outdoor play and sports provision for new residential development.

## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Open space and public realm



Grange Road, Crawley Down - investment in the landscape enhances the streetscape

#### Principle DG26: Enhance the environment and sense of place through tree planting and soft landscape

Tree planting and soft landscaping are an important component of all open spaces and a clear landscape strategy should be provided for all new development as part of the scheme's overall design. Tree planting and soft landscaping should be provided on all street types as a matter of principle.

The selection of species should respond to the location and size at maturity and also respond to the character of the wider area, including the local soil conditions, native habitats and plant communities, and the need for formality, informality and enclosure. More formalised tree planting, and tree species that grow to a larger size, will often be sought on main streets to reinforce its importance in the street hierarchy.

Native trees and shrubs and longer-lived species should be selected where possible and appropriate.

Applicants should seek advice from appropriate professionals (landscape architects, arboriculturists, ecologists or nurserymen), for guidance on plant selection and planting procedures.

Applicants must also consider the future maintenance of planting when designing proposals and provision should be made for the ongoing cost of this maintenance.

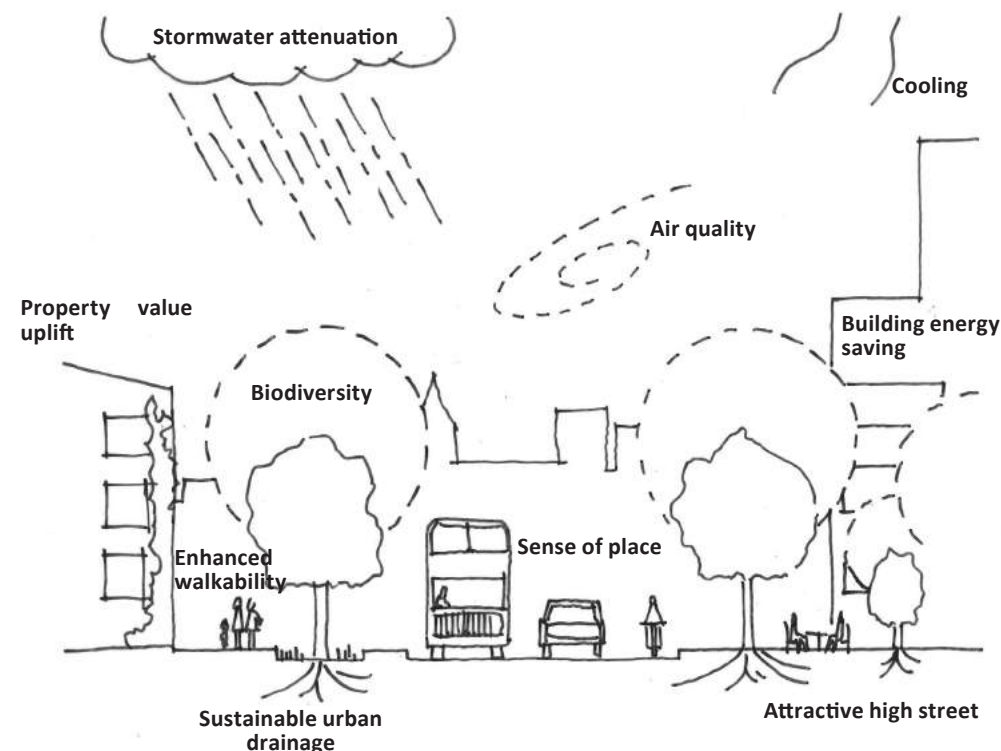


Figure 4.25: The benefits of tree planting and soft landscaping

#### Reason

4.7.5 Trees and soft landscape make an important contribution to the character of an area by providing both physical and visual amenity, improving biodiversity and enhancing sense of place. They have a strong impact on peoples' well-being, soften the impact of buildings and structures, and indicate the passage of the seasons through their growth and change through the year.

4.7.6 The landscape is constantly evolving and this change must be anticipated when open spaces and landscaped areas are designed. Plant species must be carefully considered with an understanding of their mature size and the management and maintenance of the landscape must be considered from the outset.

## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Open space and public realm



4.7.7 Native species support a greater variety of wildlife, are often more suited to local conditions and better reflect the character of the wider countryside.

4.7.8 Trees and soft landscaping should be selected and located according to:

- Its final height, spread and form;
- The soil type and volume of soil / growing space available;
- The existing species in the locality;
- The intended character of an area, street or public space e.g. formal sculptural planting or softer informal planting;
- The location of existing underground or overhead services;

- Whether they are deciduous or evergreen to ensure they do not block daylight from elevations during the winter period and provide shade and shelter in the summer;
- Proximity to roads, ensuring sight lines and forward visibility is maintained;
- Proximity to buildings ensuring that overlooking of the street and spaces is maintained; and
- The location of highway lighting.

4.7.9 Trees can help to provide additional legibility on streets as part of new development. The species selected should be appropriate to the scale and importance of a street with larger stature trees on main streets and smaller more ornamental species selected for minor routes. This should also reflect the scale of the street space.

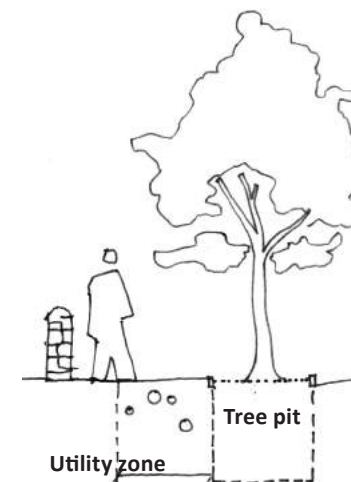
4.7.10 Street trees should have a regular shape and form. The following tree species are recommended as street trees within Mid Sussex:

For main streets species including:

- *Acer platanoides* 'Emerald Queen' (Norway maple);
- *Ginkgo biloba* (Maidenhair tree);
- *Liriodendron tulipifera* (tulip tree);
- *Platanus x hispanica* (London plane);
- *Quercus palustris* (pin oak);
- *Quercus robur* (oak);
- *Tilia cordata* 'Streetwise' or 'Greenspire' (small leaved lime); and
- *Ulmus* 'New Horizon' (elm).

For residential streets species including:

- *Acer campestre* (field maple);
- *Corylus colurna* (Turkish hazel);
- *Pyrus caleryana* 'Chanticleer' (Calery pear);
- *Sorbus aria* (whitebeam); and
- *Sorbus aucuparia* (rowan)



**Figure 4.26: Professionally designed tree pits should be used to provide the necessary soil volume required to successfully establish the tree. Tree pit design needs to consider any adjacent service runs and particular care is needed for trees in hard surfaces**

For minor routes species including:

- *Crataegus x lavalleyi* (hawthorn);
- *Malus* 'Evereste' (crab apple);
- *Prunus* 'Pandora' (cheery) and
- *Sorbus aucuparia* (rowan).

4.7.11 Whilst creating avenues of a single species helps to deliver character and legibility applicants should avoid long stretches of the same species to safeguard against the risk of tree losses through disease. Changing species block by block is preferred.



## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Open space and public realm



#### Principle DG27: Integrate space for play into the design

Children's play areas and equipment should normally be provided as part of new residential developments of 50 dwellings and above and on smaller developments when there are no existing nearby facilities. Play spaces should not be marginalised to the edge of developments but provided centrally in an accessible location where they are overlooked by surrounding properties.

Play spaces should provide a range of equipment suitable for the intended age group and integrated with natural landscape to enable contact with nature.

The national guidance on inclusive play, should be followed in Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces (Play England, August 2008) and Public Space Lessons: Designing and planning for play (CABE, October 2008).



Play spaces should not be sited to the rear or side of buildings where overlooking is limited. This can often lead to anti-social behaviour

#### Reason

4.7.12 Playing is important to children's well being. It helps to develop their physical abilities and their emotional responses. Where play is collaborative, it can help to improve children's interpersonal skills. Where play involves exploration and creativity, it can help children think in a flexible manner and develop learning and problem solving skills.

4.7.13 Play space provides an important community focus particularly where there is an absence of other community facilities in housing developments.



Play spaces should be integrated within the overall landscape design and include elements of natural play and learning environments

4.7.14 On larger developments, where there are other facilities, play areas and open space should be located close to neighbourhood centres to create a critical mass of activity and help to sustain the facilities.

4.7.15 Play space should be located where it is integral to developments and well overlooked by building frontages.

4.7.16 Applicants should refer to the Mid Sussex District Council Development Infrastructure and Contributions SPD which indicates the Council's requirements in terms of play space provision for new residential development.

## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Open space and public realm

#### **Principle DG28: Deliver a high quality, coordinated and attractive public realm that is easy to manage and maintain**

Applicants should ensure that the public realm is designed in a coordinated manner using a consistent palette of high quality and robust materials and avoiding cluttering the street with excessive furniture or signage. Street furniture should be informed by both the existing character of an area as well as their intended purpose, appearance, and technical requirements.

#### **Materials**

Natural stone either as flags, setts or cobbles or brick may be the most appropriate, especially in historic and rural locations. Concrete or tarmac should be used with caution as their uniform appearance and sharp finish can undermine the character of a new development.

#### **Street furniture**

Street furniture should be simple, high quality, well designed, robust and responsive to its setting. Seating and other street furniture should be considered in an integrated way into the design of the landscape.

Street furniture should be restricted to essential items and functions should be combined where possible. For example attaching signs to lamp posts, mounting streets signs and/or lighting on buildings.

#### **Lighting**

Lighting features should accord with the design approach for other street furniture. Lighting columns should be kept to a minimum and, wherever possible, light fittings should be located on existing or new buildings.

Light fittings should be low energy and be designed to avoid causing light pollution particularly in sensitive and dark sky rural areas.

#### **Utilities**

Applicants should consider utility requirements such as supply boxes, cable runs and maintenance access and the location of electric vehicle charging points at an early stage of the design process to avoid conflicts between these and landscape features, tree planting and public realm designs.

#### **Public art**

Public art should be integrated into the public realm within new development. It should be considered at an early stage in the design process to ensure it is well related to the development proposals.

The palette of materials to be used should be discussed and agreed with the Council prior to submission of an application and consideration given to future maintenance and management.

#### **Reason**

4.7.17 The design of the public realm (the streets and spaces around buildings) is as important as the design of buildings. The public realm, together with landscape, can have a huge impact on the quality and experience of a place. It forms the backdrop to public activities and engagement and when designed well can encourage social interaction, act as meeting points for communities, add value to surrounding properties and generally add to the character of a neighbourhood.

4.7.18 The choice of materials, street furniture and lighting is important to get right. A simple, coordinated palette of robust and easily maintained (or replaceable) materials, that reflect local character, helps to create a coherent environment and sense of place that can stand the test of time.



## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Open space and public realm



#### Public realm quality



Imberhorne Lane, East Grinstead - high quality materials distinguish the shared surface areas



Ashplats House, East Grinstead - the public realm treatment is uninspiring and lacks street trees



Attractive and well landscaped public realm enhances the scheme



Public art can be used as an integrated feature within the streetscene



Folders Farm, Burgess Hill - apartment block interfaces poorly with an uninspiring public realm



Folders Farm, Burgess Hill - the streetscape is dominated by tarmac surfaces



Woodlands Close, Crawley Down - open space is fragmented and located towards the edge of development



A granite sett rumble strip marks the junction between secondary and minor streets



## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Open space and public realm

#### Principle DG29: Design for everyone and look to the future

The public realm should be designed so that it:

- Reflects the diversity of people using spaces;
- Is convenient, safe and easy to use for all people without having to experience undue effort, barriers to access or separation;
- Enables everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently in everyday activities irrespective of a person's mobility, age, gender or ethnicity;
- Meets the needs of wheelchair users, mobility impaired people and people with pushchairs;
- Encourages social interaction and does not purposely design-out the activities of young people or other groups; and
- Provides sensory richness.

In particular applicants should:

- Ensure that street furniture, signage, lighting and visual and textural contrast in the paving materials are carefully designed and reflect the needs of all potential users; and
- Provide sufficient levels of accessibility for all potential users in terms of accessible parking, pavement space and access to public transport.

#### Reason

4.7.19 Buildings and public spaces should be designed so that they are accessible and inclusive to all users.

4.7.20 An inclusive approach to design enables everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently in everyday activities.



Street is comfortable to use for everyone

## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Commercial buildings



#### 4.8 Layout of employment areas

##### Principle DG30: Deliver attractive and efficient employment areas

New employment areas should be accommodated sensitively to their context. Where they are adjacent or visible from the countryside a generous landscape buffer will normally be needed to screen the development. New employment areas should be structured as a network of connected streets with development fronting those streets wherever possible.

Development within new and existing employment areas should take a landscape led approach focusing investment in areas that will significantly contribute to the quality of the workplace environment.

Employment led development should:

- Be laid out so that new buildings front onto streets with parking and servicing provided to the rear;
- Establish a coherent and common design language throughout an employment area;
- Enhance the street environment and establish a clear street hierarchy through planting of street trees and enhancements to footways and cycle routes;
- Provide open space within a central location where it can form a focus for the site; and
- Rationalise parking so that it has less impact on the street and break up larger expanses with planting and trees.

Existing employment areas are often located adjacent to residential areas and the interface between the two uses must be carefully considered to avoid overshadowing, loss of daylight or impacts on privacy (refer also to Principle DG40).

##### Reason

4.8.1 Many of the employment areas in the District have evolved over time without a clear plan and present an environment that is unattractive for pedestrians and cyclists, that is dominated by car parking and service yards and that lacks trees and landscape.

4.8.2 There is often little amenity for employees and in many cases land is not used efficiently.

## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### Commercial buildings

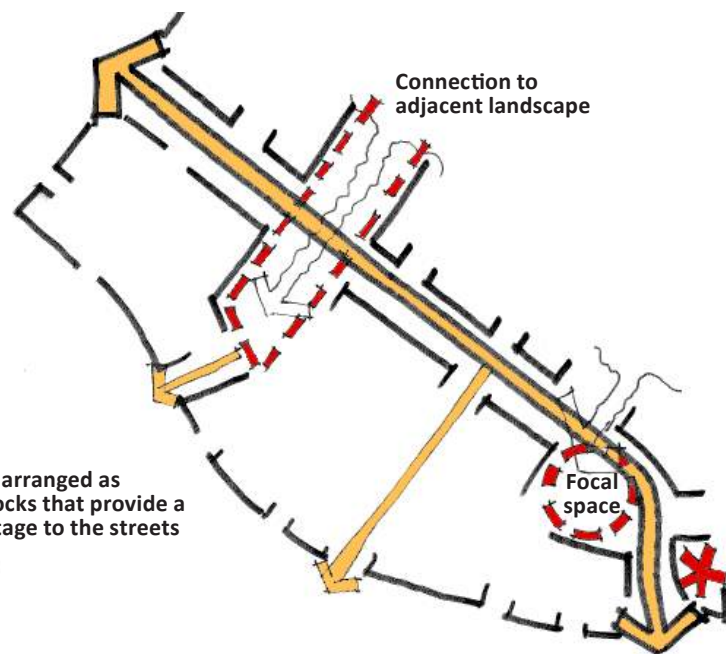


Figure 4.27: Concept for employment area indicating primary route as boulevard, central space and key gateway buildings



Figure 4.28: Layout plan showing indicative block layout with frontage and entrances overlooking the boulevard



Figure 4.29: Service yards and parking should be internalised within the perimeter block to reduce impact on the street environment



## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### CHECKLIST (Part One)

#### How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to how an application has addressed the site layout, streets and spaces.

**PROCESS:** Have you read, understood and applied the principles set out above?

**PROCESS:** The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

| PRINCIPLE                                     | DESCRIPTION   | CHECK |
|---|---|-------|
| <b>DG15: Urban structure</b>                  | Does the design provide a clear street hierarchy and network of open spaces?  |       |
|   | Does the design create a grid network of streets and perimeter blocks?  |       |
|   | Do development blocks take account of natural features orientation and topography?  |       |
| <b>DG16: Enclosure</b>                        | Does the design provide enclosure of street space and continuous frontages with corners of blocks appropriately emphasised?   |       |
|   | Does the proposal provide an appropriate sense of enclosure appropriate to the street hierarchy and achieve a human scale?  |       |
| <b>DG17: Legibility, landmarks and vistas</b> | Does the structure or layout of the proposed development appear easy to navigate and easy to understand?  |       |
|   | Has the applicant demonstrated how the use of landmarks, marker buildings and vistas has informed the proposal?   |       |
| <b>DG18: The development edge</b>             | Has the applicant (where applicable) demonstrated how their proposals provides a positive edge with building frontages facing site boundaries served by roads that run adjacent to the site edge?                     |       |
|   | Has the applicant (where applicable) demonstrated a sensitive response to the rural edge? This will normally require less density and additional soft landscaping along the boundary.                                 |       |
| <b>DG19: Pedestrian friendly streets</b>      | Are the proposals designed as social spaces with the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users put above the needs of the motorist?   |       |
|   | Is the street environment designed to encourage pedestrian movement through appropriate pavement widths, avoiding unnecessary barriers or clutter and providing places for pedestrians to rest, gather and socialise. |       |
|   | Are traffic calming measures integrated within the design of the streets?   |       |
| <b>DG20: Car parking</b>                      | Is parking for both residents and visitors proposed at an adequate level in response to the location of the site and in locations that safeguard the quality of the street environment?                               |       |
|   | Is the parking provision in line with West Sussex County Council Parking standards?   |       |
|   | Have car club spaces and electric charging points been incorporated into the proposals? (larger sites only)   |       |
| <b>DG21-23: Refuse, storage and utilities</b> | Has the layout of development been designed to facilitate service vehicles and refuse collections?  |       |
|   | Are sub-stations and pump stations carefully designed and integrated into development so that they do not detract from the quality of streets and public spaces?  |       |
|   | Are utility runs located where they do not impact on the potential for street tree planting?  |       |
|   | Are refuse and recycling facilities conveniently located and unobtrusive  |       |

## 4 Site layout, streets and spaces

### CHECKLIST (Part Two)

| PRINCIPLE                               | DESCRIPTION  | CHECK |
|---|--|-------|
| <b>DG24: Plan for cyclists</b>          | Does the design provide adequate cycle parking in suitable locations for both public and private users?  |       |
|   | Does the design include for secure and convenient storage of bicycles in residential dwellings?  |       |
| <b>DG25: Open space</b>                 | Does the design link existing and proposed landscapes and open spaces to form open space networks and contribute and respond to the hierarchy of existing open spaces?   |       |
|   | Are all spaces designed with a specific role or function to avoid residual, unused or neglected spaces?  |       |
|   | Do the proposals provide the appropriate level of open space in accordance with MSDC Infrastructure and Contributions SPD?   |       |
| <b>DG26: trees and soft landscape</b>   | Has tree planting and soft landscaping been provided within street designs? Are tree species appropriate for their location and to the nature and hierarchy of the street.   |       |
|   | Has the applicant demonstrated that the species selected are appropriate for the location?   |       |
|   | Has the applicant demonstrated that the long-term maintenance and management of landscape elements have been considered to ensure their successful establishment?  |       |
| <b>DG27: Play space</b>                 | Where applicable has the design provided the appropriate level of playspace in accordance with the MSDC Infrastructure and Contributions SPD?  |       |
|   | Is the design for playspaces in line with guidance on inclusive play, including Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces (Play England, August 2008)?   |       |
| <b>DG28: Public realm</b>               | Has a suitable palette of high quality materials been proposed that responds to the character of the place as identified in the Character Study?   |       |
|   | Has the selection of street furniture been restricted to essential items and have functions been combined where possible?  |       |
|   | Is the street furniture simple, high quality, well designed, robust and responsive to its setting?   |       |
|   | Has a lighting strategy been proposed that: minimises the impact of lighting columns on the streets; accords with the design approach to other street furniture and avoids causing light pollution particularly in sensitive and dark rural areas? |       |
|   | Has the location, design and integration of utilities within the landscape been considered to mitigate their impact on the public realm?   |       |
|   | Has the provision of public art been considered?   |       |
| <b>DG29: Inclusive design</b>           | Has the applicant demonstrated that the principles of inclusive design has been considered and incorporated within the design from the outset?   |       |
| <b>DG30: Layout of employment areas</b> | Has the layout of employment areas (where appropriate) been designed taking a landscape led approach that links to natural assets, creates open spaces for workers and minimises the impact of car parking and servicing?                          |       |





# 5

## Site Optimisation and community focused layouts

The District has three towns as well as many villages and hamlets. The towns and larger villages form the centres of activity within the District and are the focus for shops, community and employment uses. These centres offer the potential for intensification to provide much need homes and jobs in the most accessible and sustainable locations. This will reduce pressure on the countryside and the need to travel. New homes and footfall can help to support additional community facilities and bring additional life to the District's centres.

This chapter identifies where there may be opportunity for intensification across the District and the form and mix of uses that it may take.



# 5 Site optimisation and community Optimisation

## 5.1 Optimisation

**Principle DG31: Optimise the development potential of sites to deliver homes and new employment space in the most sustainable locations, reducing pressure on the countryside and the need to travel**

New development should generally respond to the scale, massing and grain of adjacent areas and the settlement context within which it is located. However in some parts of the District there may be an opportunity to deliver a new development character provided this is part of a comprehensive vision, establishes sense of place and does not impact on the sensitive townscape or landscape assets of an area.

In particular there are opportunities to:

- Promote development of a greater intensity in Mid Sussex's three town centre locations within areas identified as being coarse grain (refer to Section 2.5 of this Design Guide);
- Promote development of a greater intensity in the most accessible parts of new urban extensions where this does not adversely impact on existing homes / character and the rural edge; and
- Intensify and increase the efficiency of employment sites (as identified in Section 2.5 of this Design Guide).

Increased scale and density of development should be restricted to areas where there is good accessibility to shops and services and to public transport in order to minimise the need to travel.

Schemes of greater density should promote green travel options including reduced parking provision, provision of car club spaces and improved public transport provision.

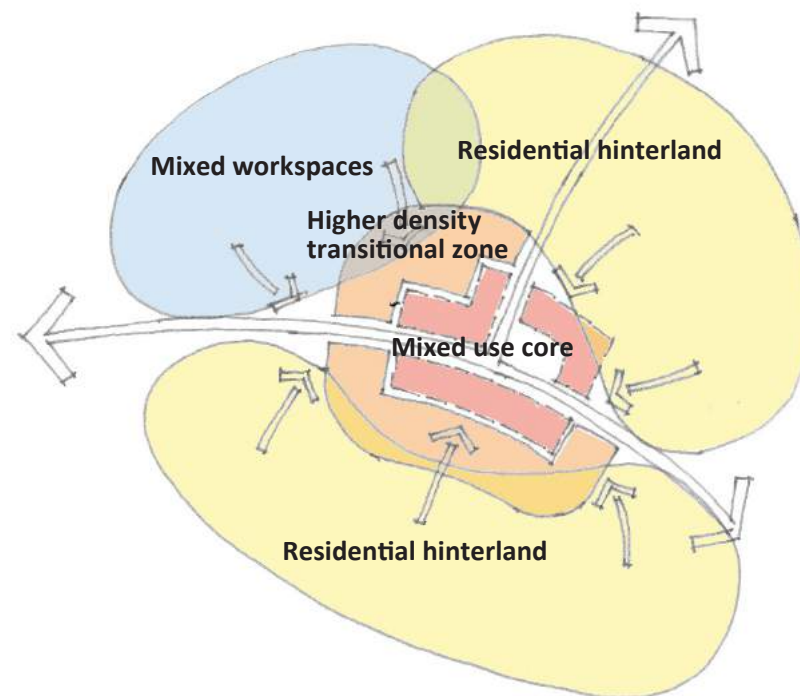


Figure 5.1: Promote higher density development in more sustainable locations

### Reason

5.1.1 Increasing the intensity of development in the most accessible locations within the District and within new residential extensions will help to deliver much needed homes and employment space in the most sustainable places and reduce pressure on the countryside.

5.1.2 The scale and massing of development should be appropriate for the site in which it is promoted.



A public square enclosed by buildings with shops and facilities at ground floor provides an attractive and distinctive hub at Bolnore, Haywards Heath

## 5 Site optimisation and community Optimisation

### Principle DG32: Managing increased density and development height and massing

Development density should be appropriate to the location and respond to and/or enhance the character of the existing settlement.

For larger development proposals a range of densities, building types and forms will be required. Increased densities should be focused:

- Around key movement intersections;
- Along strategic routes;
- Overlooking public spaces; and
- Within town, village and local centres.

This varied density profile adds character and interest, supports local facilities and public transport and can provide the building mass to create strong framing of public spaces.

Within areas identified under Principle DG31 as offering potential for intensification, increased density and development height and massing may be possible.

Mid Sussex's towns have grown over time and are largely composed of low rise development, typically of two and three storey buildings. Increased height within the town centre intensification areas must be carefully managed as part of a coherent and comprehensive vision which establishes a more urban form composed of street blocks and spaces with typical building heights of four to six storeys.

Within larger new residential urban extensions building height and scale in the most accessible and central areas may be up to four or five storeys. This will deliver higher density development, diversify the mix of residential typologies and create a focus for the new development.

Within employment sites the height and scale of employment related buildings may also be increased to up to four storey.

Development that is of a greater scale, height and massing than the existing context can have both adverse local impacts in respect of daylighting, overshadowing, views and microclimate and adverse visual impacts from further afield particularly if a proposal is on elevated land (refer also to Principle DG30).

Any development that promotes a scale, height and massing that is greater than the existing context must therefore demonstrate that:

- It does not cause unacceptable impacts on adjacent properties in respect of daylighting, sunlighting and overlooking; and
- That it does not adversely impact on views of the wider townscape.

Consideration must also be given to the provision of car parking within higher density schemes and applicants will need to promote solutions that do not adversely impact on the quality of the streets and spaces.

### Reason

5.1.3 Increasing the intensity of development in the most accessible locations within the District will help to deliver much needed homes and employment space in the most sustainable places and reduce pressure on the countryside.

5.1.4 The scale and massing of development must be appropriate for the site in which it is promoted.

5.1.5 In the last decade or so a number of higher density schemes have been delivered in Mid Sussex's three town centres. These are typically three to four storey buildings, sometimes with an additional set back storey above. The majority are residential buildings but some commercial buildings have also been brought forward. This has started to establish a more urban feel within the centres and increases the residential catchment for town centre functions.



## 5 Site optimisation and community Optimisation



Queen Elizabeth Avenue, Burgess Hill establishing a new urban density in the town and strongly defining the street edge with a consistent building line.

5.1.6 Whilst delivering higher density developments within town centres is generally welcomed consideration must be given to:

- **The scale of buildings**

This should normally relate to the immediate and wider context;

- **The uses at ground floor level**

On the main commercial streets within town centres, uses should generally be non-residential and provide an 'active' frontage that animates the street (shops, café, restaurant, office, community use for instance). Blank frontages will not be acceptable;

- **The interface of buildings with the street**

Where active uses are promoted buildings should front directly onto the public realm with the building positioned to conform with an established building line. Where residential uses are promoted at ground floor level, buildings should be set back from the street and appropriate privacy created through boundary and interface treatments and planting (refer to Principle DG37); and

- **The location of car parking**

This should not dominate or adversely impact on the quality of the street environment.



Recent higher density schemes within Haywards Heath town centre that discretely accommodates car parking at semi-basement level



Recent higher density schemes within Haywards Heath town centre carefully designed so that it doesn't overwhelm nearby buildings



New residential development replacing employment uses on Victoria Road, Burgess Hill. establishes a consistent scale and massing and building frontage line



A poor residential conversion of an office building in East Grinstead. The fascia boarding above the second floor windows undermines the vertical articulation



# 5 Site optimisation and community

## Best Practice Case Study

### Case Study Three: Town Centre Intensification - Walthamstow High Street

#### *Delivering compact higher density development*

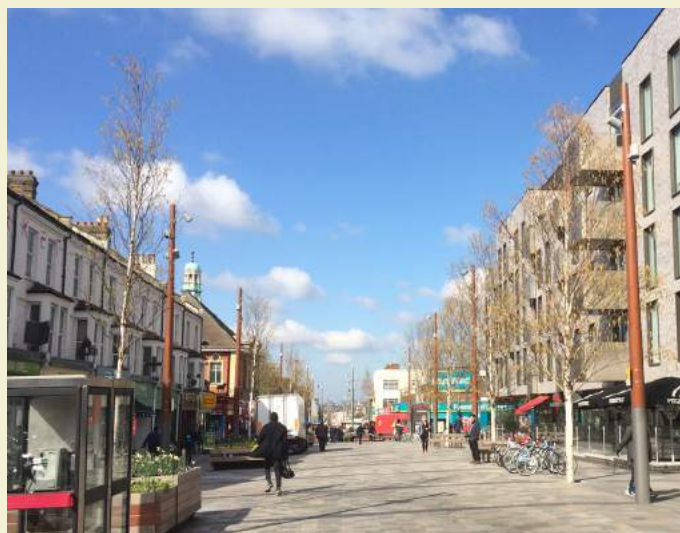
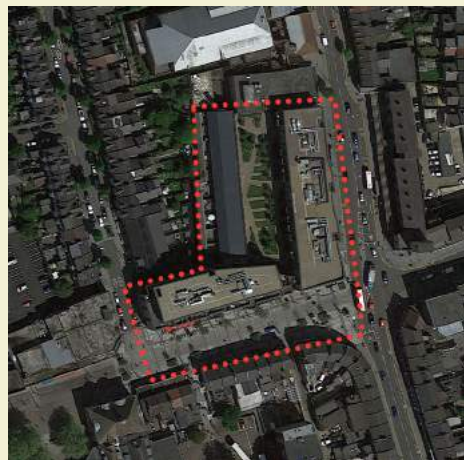
##### Overview

This scheme has similarities with Mid Sussex towns as it introduces intensification within the context of a two and three storey residential area.

It delivers a compact mixed use urban scheme that has brought new life and activity to the area. The scheme includes a multiplex cinema, restaurants and shops at ground floor level with apartments above within blocks of five and six storeys.

Buildings have been carefully articulated so that they do not overwhelm the existing townscape. The scheme is mixed tenure with residents having access to a courtyard space in the heart of the scheme.

The street environment on the high street has been transformed and cafes and restaurants spill out across a high quality hard paved space. The public realm is coordinated and simple and includes mature trees.



**Architect:** Pollard  
Thomas Edwards

**Site area:** 0.67 Hectares

**Number of Homes:** 121

**Density:** 180 homes per  
hectare

## 5 Site optimisation and community Optimisation



5.1.7 Within larger urban extensions the character and form of the different parts of the development should vary in order to enhance legibility and sense of place and deliver a variety of residential typologies to create a more balanced community.

5.1.8 This variation of development character across a site will deliver a range of residential densities with higher density development in the more accessible locations and lower density development in the more peripheral areas.

5.1.9 More compact development that creates a stronger sense of street enclosure should be promoted along main streets and around local / neighbourhood centres. This may be delivered through a combination of greater height, vertically articulated frontages and terracing of properties to deliver a more continuous street frontage with underlying rhythm and order.

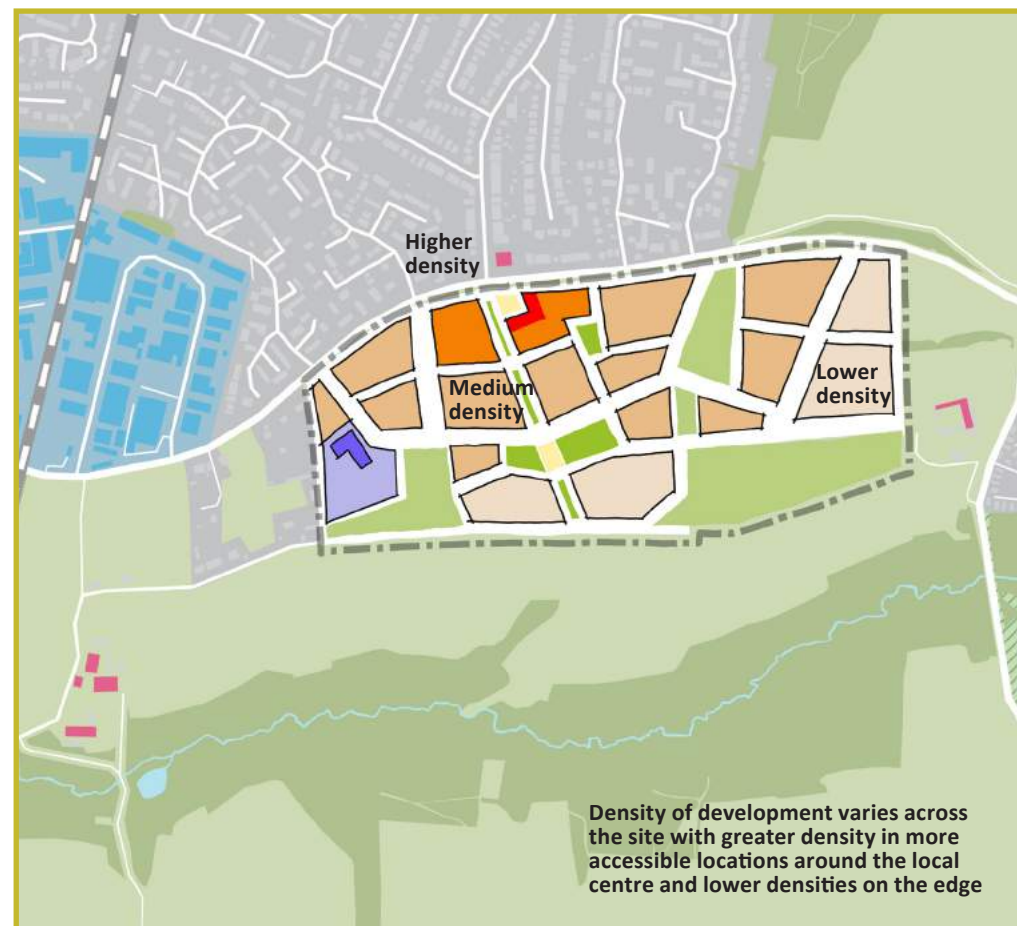


Figure 5.2: INDICATIVE SITE CONCEPT PLAN 9 Increasing density in relation to accessibility



# 5 Site optimisation and community

## Best Practice Case Study

### Case Study Four: Compact urban extension - Upton, Northampton

#### *Delivering a compact urban extension*

##### Overview

A greenfield urban extension to the south west of Northampton, Upton delivers new homes at a relatively high density whilst also providing a strong identity through a perimeter block arrangement that incorporate a framework of open spaces. The development incorporates a local centre and school

Buildings are generally two and three storeys in scale with greater height along the main streets which also incorporate SuDs. Car parking is generally provided within rear courtyards where it is less conspicuous on the street.

The development was delivered in several phases and whilst buildings in the early phases are fairly traditional in style later phases adopt a more contemporary architectural language.

**Architect:** various following EDAW masterplan

**Site area:** 43 Hectares

**Number of Homes:** 1,350

**Density:** 31.4 homes per hectare overall (including open spaces) but net densities 50-60 dwellings per hectare



# 5 Site optimisation and community Optimisation

## Principle DG33: Potential for tall buildings (over 6 storeys)

In exceptional circumstances there may be potential for tall buildings (i.e. above six storeys) in the town centres, where it can be demonstrated that they play a role in improving legibility, for instance marking the location of the railway station or a civic space.

Any tall building will need to:

- Be of a height and scale, mass and volume that is proportionate to its role, and the importance of the location in the local context;
- Be of outstanding design quality and make a positive contribution to the skyline when viewed from any direction;
- Enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area without adversely affecting established valued townscapes and views including Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings and their settings;
- Present a positive relationship with the street and deliver a high quality public realm; and
- Demonstrate that it does not adversely impact on the microclimate and amenity of the proposal site and the surrounding area.



Stockwell Court, Haywards Heath - one of the few tall buildings in the District - poorly designed at right angles to the street and inappropriately tall in relation to its context

## Reason

5.1.10 High density development can be delivered through well designed compact development without the need for tall buildings.

5.1.11 However it is recognised that in exceptional circumstances tall buildings can offer positive benefits to town centres including:

- Increasing density to make best use of infrastructure;
- Enhancing legibility through marking a specific and important location or vista;
- Shaping and redefining the image and sense of place of a centre;
- Acting as a catalyst for regeneration, increasing market confidence and development activity in an area; and
- Assisting viability of schemes.

5.1.12 Tall buildings also present a number of challenges that must be carefully considered and addressed including:

- Causing harm to heritage assets by:
  - Impacting on setting; and / or
  - Impacting on views to and from an asset.



- Contributing to a fragmented skyline and poor image if not carefully planned;
- Impacting on microclimate; and
- Impacting on the quality of place if not well designed and if the servicing and car parking requirements are not addressed appropriately.

5.1.13 The relationship of a tall building with the public realm is important and tall buildings should be promoted as part of a comprehensive proposal that can address the challenges of servicing and provision of a mix of uses to provide activity at the ground floor level.



# 5 Site optimisation and community

## Mix of uses

### 5.2 Mix of uses

#### **Principle DG34: Promote a mix of uses within larger schemes to provide services to meet local needs, conveniently located where they are most accessible**

Larger proposals will normally require a range of local services and facilities to be incorporated. The viability and vitality of these uses will depend on the existing and proposed catchment.

The location of mixed-use centres and neighbourhood hubs is key to their viability and long-term success.

Mixed-use centres should:

- Be conveniently located at the intersection of well-connected streets;
- Be highly visible;
- Cluster a mix of facilities around an appropriately scaled high quality public realm or public space as a central focus with buildings serving to enclose the space;
- Include residential development within the mix above non-residential uses to ensure activity and surveillance throughout the day and night;

- Wrap and conceal the non-active parts of larger non-residential buildings (such as supermarkets or leisure buildings) within blocks with a perimeter of active development;
- Locate servicing areas where they do not visually dominate the streetscene and avoid dead frontage overlooking the public realm;
- Be accessible for all users, with particular consideration given to how the elderly and disabled will access and use the centre;
- Provide short stay / visitor and disabled car parking spaces and secure cycle parking integrated into the streetscape or landscape design with convenient access to capitalise on passing trade. The appropriate number, location and layout will depend on the local context; and
- Be served by a frequent bus route with bus stops conveniently located and well-overlooked to encourage patronage.

#### **Reason**

5.2.1 Successful communities require a full range of local facilities and services conveniently located and integrated within a settlement and that are connected by safe and pleasant streets.

5.2.2 A mixed-use development helps to support activity and surveillance throughout the day and night contributing to a greater feeling of safety.



A public square enclosed by buildings with shops and facilities at ground floor provides an attractive and distinctive hub at Bolnore, Haywards Heath



Foodstore presents a blank facade onto Perrymount Road in Haywards Heath



## 5 Site optimisation and community

### Mix of uses

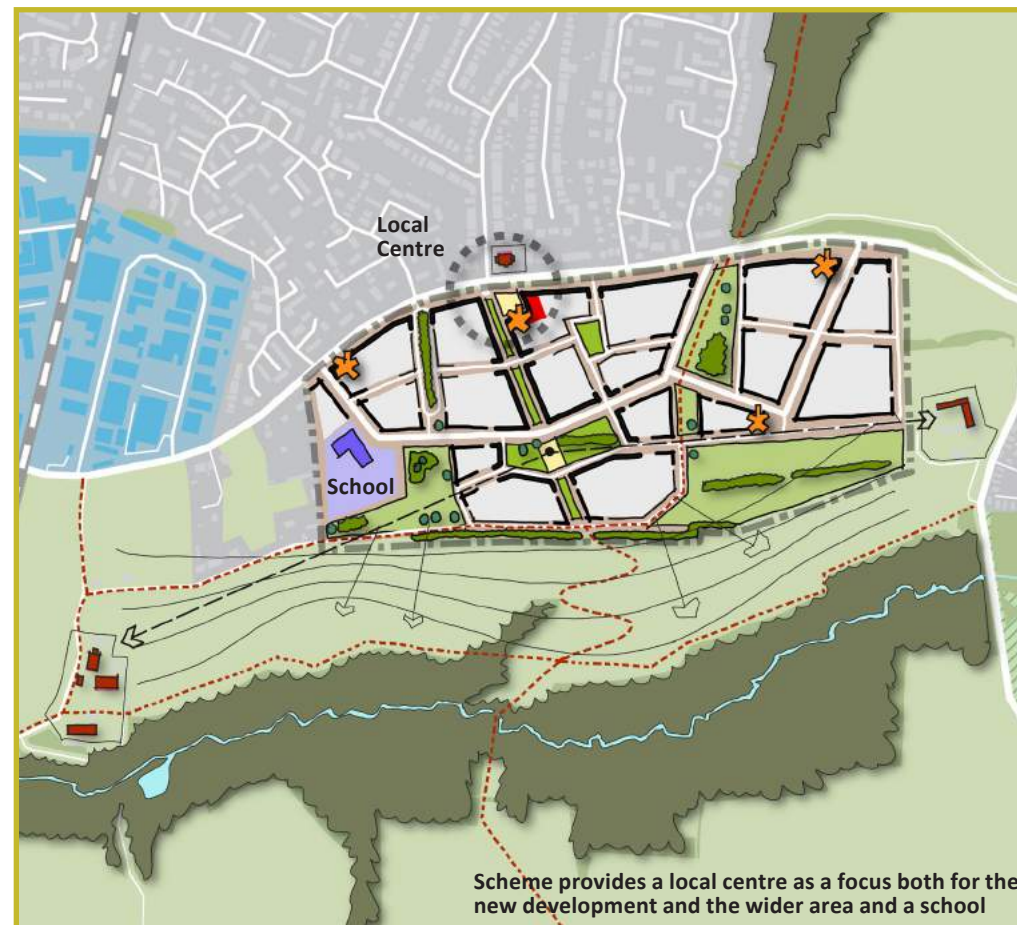


Figure 5.3: INDICATIVE SITE CONCEPT PLAN 10 - Provide a mix of uses

## 5 Site optimisation and community

### Mix of uses



#### **Principle DG35: Promote a mix of residential typologies within residential schemes to create mixed communities and ensure these are adaptable to change**

Applicants should promote development that provides a mix of dwelling types (including apartments and terraced homes) and tenures to meet local need as identified in District Plan Policies DP30: Housing Mix and DP31: Affordable Housing. Applicants should agree this mix through discussion with the Council.

Affordable housing should be 'pepper-potted' throughout the site, and have the same external appearance and quality of finishes as private housing. There are nevertheless architectural benefits of grouping identical housing types as it gives street frontages underlying rhythm and order. Grouping housing types also aids diversity across the development.

Buildings should be designed so that they can be altered internally or externally over time without the need for demolition or rebuilding as needs change. Very narrow fronted buildings are unlikely to be easily altered or extended. By building flexible internal space, rooms can be adapted to different uses depending on family requirements.

Buildings should be designed to maximise the potential for lifetime use. Refer to Lifetime homes guidance for further details. <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>

New residential developments should address the needs of people with disabilities by complying with Building Regulations. This requires reasonable provision to be made for people with disabilities to gain access to and to use buildings.

Wheelchair accessible homes should be designed in accordance with recognised guidance such as Wheelchair Housing Design Guide (Habinteg, 2006). These homes should be positioned in highly accessible locations.

#### **Reason**

5.2.3 People have differing requirements of their home, depending on cultural needs, economics, health requirements and age. The housing available should reflect this diversity and allow people to up and downsize as their life changes or to adapt their property to respond to changing needs.

5.2.4 Development that is capable of responding to changing social, technological and economic conditions is more likely to be successful and ultimately more sustainable.

# 5 Site optimisation and community CHECKLIST

## How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to how an application has addressed issues around site optimisation and community focused layouts.

**PROCESS:** Have you read, understood and applied the principles set out above?

**PROCESS:** The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

| PRINCIPLE  | DESCRIPTION  | CHECK |
|--|--|-------|
| <b>DG31-32: Optimisation and intensification</b> | Has the applicant demonstrated that their site is located in an appropriate location in which to promote development of a scale, height and massing that is greater than the prevailing context? |       |
|  | Has the applicant demonstrated that their proposals do not cause unacceptable impacts on adjacent properties in respect of daylighting, sunlighting and overlooking?                             |       |
|  | Has the applicant demonstrated that their proposals do not adversely impact on views of the wider townscape?   |       |
| <b>DG33: Tall buildings</b>                      | Where a tall building is promoted is the height proportionate to the buildings role, and the importance of the location in the local context?  |       |
|  | Where a tall building is promoted is it of outstanding design quality and does it make a positive contribution to the skyline when viewed from any direction?                                    |       |
|  | Where a tall building is promoted does it enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area without adversely affecting established valued townscapes and views?                              |       |
|  | Where a tall building is promoted does it present a positive relationship with the street and deliver a high quality public realm?   |       |
|  | Where a tall building is promoted has it been demonstrated that it does not adversely impact on the microclimate and amenity of the proposal site and the surrounding area?                      |       |
| <b>DG34: Mix of uses</b>                         | Does the proposal provide a mix of uses conveniently located to meet local needs? (where appropriate)  |       |
|  | Are these uses located where they are easily accessible and visible to attract custom?   |       |
|  | Are servicing areas designed so that they do not visually dominate the streetscene?  |       |
|  | Is adequate cycle and car parking provided and in a convenient location?   |       |
| <b>DG35: Residential mix</b>                     | Does the proposal promote a mix of residential dwelling types and tenures to meet local need?  |       |
|  | Are affordable homes 'pepper-potted' throughout the site, and have the same external appearance and quality of finishes as private housing?  |       |
|  | Are buildings designed so that they can be altered internally or externally over time without the need for demolition or rebuilding as needs change?   |       |



# 6

## High quality and sustainable building design

It is important that the design of buildings and in particular their form, proportions, roofscape and overall appearance is borne from the place and therefore contributes positively to the character of the existing settlement. All too often new development is built which fails to contribute to the distinctiveness of a place resulting in standard development that could be found anywhere. Being responsive to the character of the existing built form should not result in pastiche replicas, instead the emphasis should be placed on contemporary interpretation of traditional building forms to suit today's needs.

This chapter outlines the important principles to consider in designing new buildings. Housing makes a significant contribution to CO2 emissions in the UK. The construction industry utilises substantial volumes of non-renewable resources and generates pollution and waste. The need for sustainable approaches to building design is therefore fundamental if the challenges associated with climate change, resource depletion and pollution are to be addressed.



## 6 High quality building design

### Deliver sense of place

#### 6.1 Deliver sense of place

##### **Principle DG36: Promote high quality buildings that respond to their location and deliver a sense of place**

Applicants should promote high quality buildings that provide a positive interface with street space, are designed from high quality robust materials and that respond to their location within the District. The Council welcomes innovative and inventive design solutions and adaptable buildings that can accommodate changing lifestyles and challenge standard house types or development models.

##### **Scale, height and massing**

The scale of new buildings should relate to their context (rural or urban), their location within the hierarchy of routes and whether they act as a focal point, landmark or corner building and the topography of a site.

Subtle variations in height can be used to add visual interest. This can be achieved with differing ridge and eaves heights, as commonly found in traditional streets. Similarly, variations in frontage widths and plan forms can add further interest to the street scene. This can be appropriate in both urban and rural locations.

The majority of traditional buildings in Mid Sussex, in both urban and rural areas, adopt a very consistent, simple form, with rectangular floorplans and pitched roofs. In most instances new development should adopt this simple form, with a rectangular floorplan and pitched roof unless a strong justification can be provided. Good contemporary design that respects context will be welcomed as long as it well designed; pastiche design approaches that aim to mimic historic vernacular will normally not be acceptable particularly where they are poorly detailed and fail to incorporate local materials.

##### **Corner buildings**

Particular attention should be given to corner buildings (those located on the intersection of two streets). These buildings should be designed so that they 'turn the corner' providing active frontages to both streets; 'L' shaped buildings maintaining continuity of built frontage and incorporating corner windows and entrances will be welcomed in these locations.

Applicants should demonstrate how the design of corner buildings will aid legibility. Exposed, blank gable ends with no windows fronting the public realm will not be acceptable.

##### **Apartment buildings**

Corner locations are often suitable for apartment buildings where additional height may help to mark the corner. Apartment buildings will be welcomed on town centre sites, neighbourhood hubs, adjacent to important spaces or landscapes, nodal points, corners or the junction of major routes.

Apartment buildings may be deeper in floorplan than houses and as such care should be taken to avoid buildings appearing bulky. These larger buildings should be broken down into a hierarchy of simple rectangular elements and should step down adjacent to lower scale buildings.

Single aspect, north facing apartments will not normally be acceptable.



# 6 High quality building design

## Deliver sense of place

### Reason

6.1.1 Post-war development within the District is of mixed quality. In many cases it neither responds to local character or delivers distinctive or interesting contemporary accommodation that provides for the needs of modern living.

6.1.2 Many developments rely on pastiche designs that present poor interpretations of the past and unsuccessfully imitate vernacular designs; typically they get the dimensions and scale of features wrong, oversimplify details or use inappropriate materials to save cost. These poor pastiche designs sit uncomfortably within the context of the District and fail to offer a contemporary response to the changing lifestyles and accommodation requirements.

### Responding to context



Poorly integrated roof and porch projections which appear as 'bolt on' features



Brick banding is poorly integrated into the design



Secondary materials (tiles) poorly integrated on the facade



Poor pastiche response and repetitive use of 'cottage' style homes



Poor pastiche with dimensions of design detailing failing to achieve a contextual response



Poor pastiche response where the highway dominates over the buildings



Contemporary interpretation of vernacular architecture at the Beckers,



Contemporary architecture Adobe, Great Knighton



Contemporary approach to development in a rural environment



## 6 High quality building design

### Deliver sense of place

#### Scale, height and massing



Figure 6.1: Applicants should assess the prevailing scale, form and massing of successful development within the locality to inform their proposals

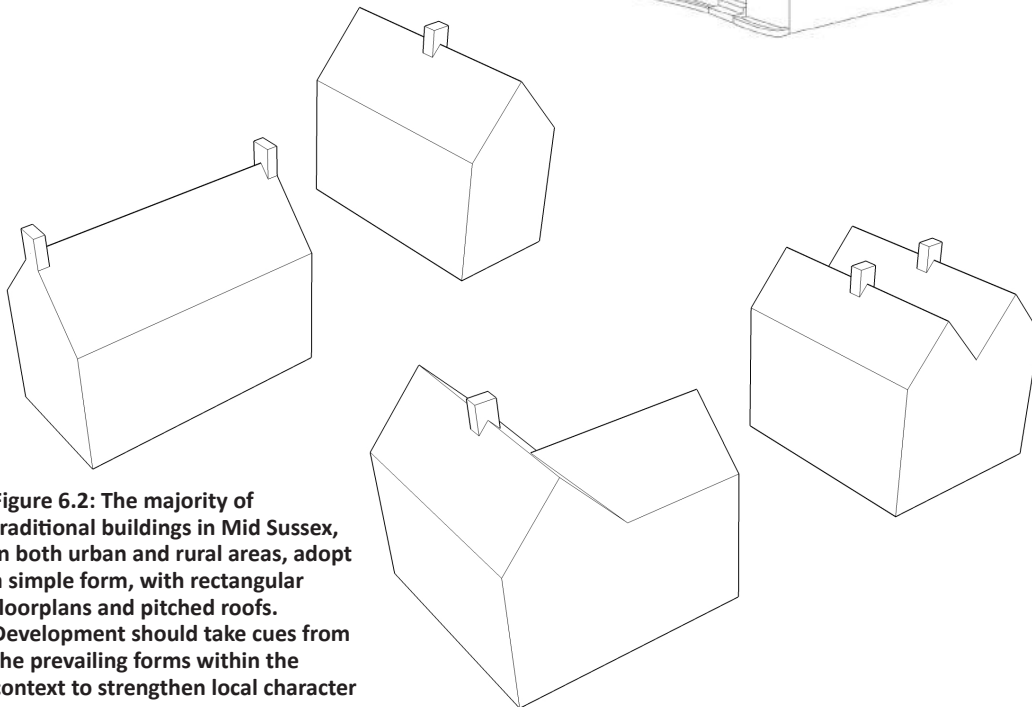


Figure 6.2: The majority of traditional buildings in Mid Sussex, in both urban and rural areas, adopt a simple form, with rectangular floorplans and pitched roofs. Development should take cues from the prevailing forms within the context to strengthen local character



Historic vernacular - simple pitched roof on terraced properties in the District



Historic vernacular - hipped roof on an older property in the District



Vernacular architecture from the District

## 6 High quality building design

### Deliver sense of place



Scheme respond well to topography with an ordered rhythm



Scheme respond well to topography with buildings stepping in an ordered and harmonious manner



This apartment block has been designed with no attempt to relate to the scale and form of the adjacent houses and has little underlying order or form



Poorly proportioned detached houses with narrow fronts, deep plans and pitched roofs with high ridge lines and over-large and mostly blank flanks



Apartment building steps harmoniously to relate to topography



The block has been designed so that it evokes the repeated rhythm of a run of terraced houses



Figure 6.3: Development should reflect the scale, grain and diversity of the existing settlement



Figure 6.4: Apartment buildings should respond to the scale, massing and grain of the context in a complementary way and avoid becoming overbearing

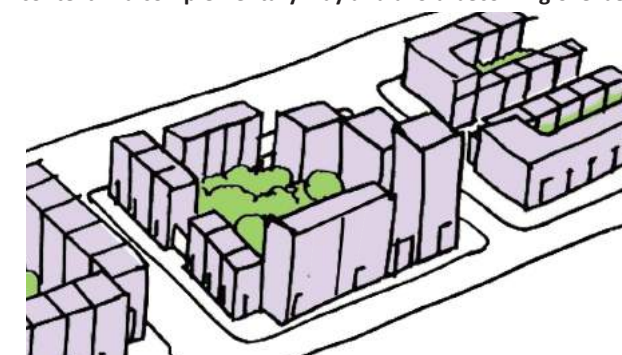


Figure 6.5: Apartments should be proposed at appropriate locations within urban areas and add to the legibility of an area



## 6 High quality building design

### Deliver sense of place



#### Addressing corners



Entrance areas and windows “turn” the corner to provide overlooking to both streets



Corner of the street is emphasised at Wilmington Way, Haywards Heath, through additional height



New office development in Haywards Heath addresses the highway as it turns the corner



Woodlands Close, Crawley Down - property addresses both the street and pedestrian path to the side

Building designed to turn the corner to avoid blank gable ends



Figure 6.6: Gable ends which incorporate windows provide overlooking

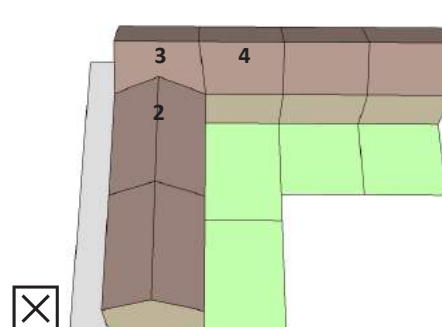


Figure 6.7: Linking houses together at a corner causes problems with garden space and privacy. Here the example shows there is no garden for houses 2, 3 and 4

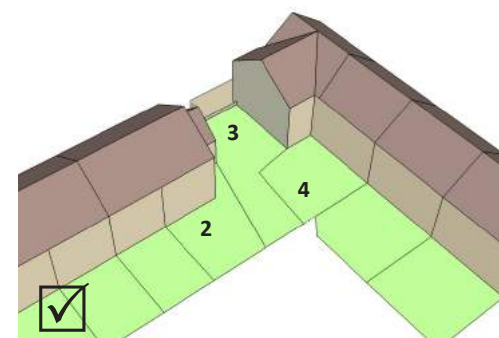


Figure 6.8: By extending plot 3 to turn the corner and setting back plot 2 it provides sufficient space for a garden. By providing plot 2 with a single storey element and an adjoining brick wall, it further assists with maintaining a built frontage



## 6 High quality building design

### Deliver sense of place

#### **Principle DG37: Promote buildings that respond to and help to enclose and animate the street space**

Development should be designed to ensure that urban streets and public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance from buildings. This can be achieved by ensuring that in urban areas, streets and spaces are overlooked by ground floor habitable rooms and upper floor windows.

Apartment buildings within town centre locations should generally have non-residential uses at ground floor level and these should be designed to provide an 'active' frontage to the street.

Apartment buildings that do not incorporate ground floor non-residential uses should be designed to avoid bedrooms at the ground floor level overlooking the public realm as this can reduce privacy for residents and also reduce passive surveillance of the public realm. It is often more appropriate to incorporate maisonettes on the ground and first floor of apartment buildings to avoid such scenarios.

#### **Boundary treatments**

In town or village centre locations or mews style developments, buildings may be located directly to the rear of the footway or public realm, but in most cases properties should have a boundary that defines public and private space.

Boundary treatments should be reflective of the area and local traditions in terms of height, structure and materials. This should be drawn from the applicants Character Study (refer to Section 2).

Boundary treatments should not impair natural surveillance.

For larger developments boundary treatments should be coordinated to contribute to the character of the street but allow for some variety and individuality.

#### **Building entrances**

Main entrances to houses, ground floor flats, communal entrances for flats and non residential uses should directly face onto the street and be clearly visible from the public realm.

All building entrances should be welcoming and easily identifiable to help improve legibility.

The scale and style of an entrance should relate to its function. The more important the function of the building, the more impressive the entrance should be. For example, a public building should have a larger and more prominent entrance than a house.

Recessed entrances or canopies integrated into the design of the building facade should be provided. Canopies should not appear to be 'bolt-on' solutions and instead make a positive contribution to the building facade.

For apartment buildings entrances to shared stair cores should be directly from the street and should be generously proportioned, well lit by natural light and naturally ventilated.

Ground floor dwellings within apartments should have individual entrances direct from the street. This increases the animation of the public realm and reduces the numbers of dwellings served by communal cores.

## 6 High quality building design

### Deliver sense of place

#### Overlooking the street

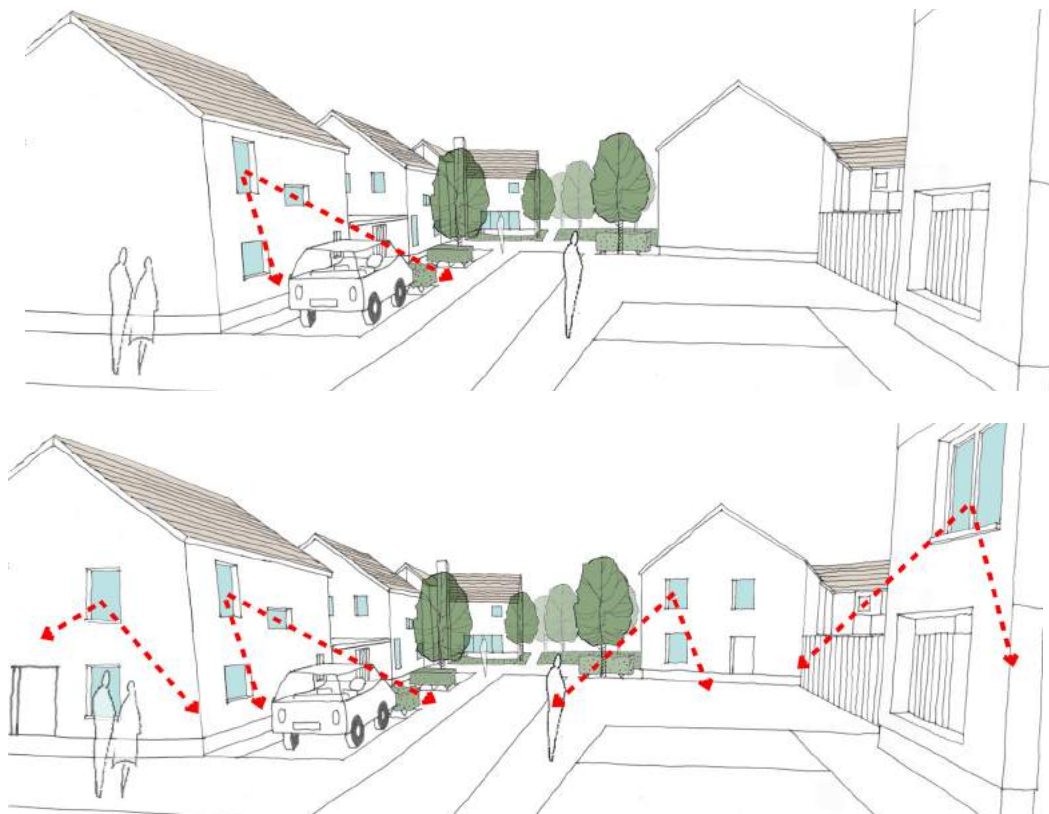


Figure 6.9: Ensuring that all public areas are overlooked by adjacent buildings, to increase 'eyes on the street' will reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour



Homes fronting the street at Bolnore, Haywards Heath, provide natural surveillance over the street space



Manor Road, Burgess Hill - Blank gables provide no natural surveillance of the street



Buildings must respond appropriately to topography with the property threshold at street level



Some properties front onto side streets only at Folders Meadow, Burgess Hill reducing the attractiveness of the main route for pedestrians



## 6 High quality building design

### Deliver sense of place



**Boundary treatments and building entrances**



Low brick walls and railings define the front boundary at Wilmington Way, Haywards Heath



Chestnut post and rail fencing is a characteristic feature in more rural parts of the District



Public realm areas are defined by a brickwall with planing softening the interface



Lack of a defined edge to the housing plots diminishes the quality of the street environment



The use of close panel timber fencing to define the highway boundary is unacceptable

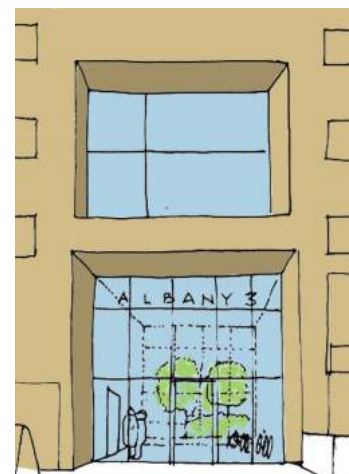


Figure 6.10: Entrances to important buildings, apartments and non-residential uses should be more civic in their appearance

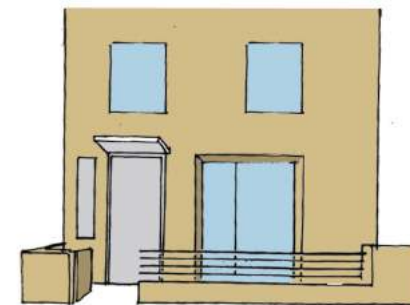


Figure 6.11: Entrances to dwellings should have a more domestic scale to them



Building entrances should be at street level, or slightly elevated but not below street level



The entrance to this residential conversion is hard to spot and the interface with the street is poorly defined



# 6 High quality building design

## Architectural integrity

### 6.2 Architectural integrity

#### Principle DG38: Promote buildings that have architectural integrity utilising high quality detailing and materials

Applicants should establish an architectural approach and identity borne from the place in the design of building.

The facade and elevational treatment, roofscape fenestration and materials used in existing buildings within the locality should be a starting point for the consideration of architectural design of new buildings. However this should not result in pastiche replicas of traditional buildings. Instead a re-interpretation of key aspects of their form should be demonstrated; for instance, their symmetrical layout, window to wall ratio, and proportions and placement of windows and doors.

The architectural approach must consider

- Elevational treatment and façade design;
- A choice of window design that is determined by the overall design approach;
- A simple roofscape and form that creates a harmonious composition and minimises the visual impact of downpipes and guttering;
- Incorporation of dormer windows informed by the character and appearance of the local vernacular;
- A contemporary interpretation of traditional chimneys (where appropriate); and
- A context appropriate palette of good quality materials, with a preference for local materials and/or materials with low embodied energy. The durability and resistance to weathering of materials is an important consideration in selection.

#### Reason

6.2.1 New development within Mid Sussex must respond to the characteristics of the place. Applicants should refer to their Character Study (refer to Section 2) to understand distinctive features and characteristics of the area and re-interpret this in their proposals.



Homes at Tobias School of Art in East Grinstead provide a successful contemporary response to their site whilst avoiding pastiche



Applying different facing materials on the same standard building types fails to achieve a sense of variety and undermines the opportunity to achieve some architectural integrity and underlying order / form / rhythm



Contemporary re-interpretation of a traditional terrace in East Grinstead. Repetition achieves order and rhythm as well as architectural interest

# 6 High quality building design

## Architectural integrity

### Facade and elevations

6.2.2 Applicants should refer to their Character Study (refer to Section 2) to consider the facade and elevational treatment of existing buildings within the locality and this should be a starting point for the consideration of elevational treatment and facade design for new buildings.

6.2.3 The District has a wide range of architectural styles and the arrangement of facades varies however building facades are usually simply organised with windows and doors aligned horizontally and vertically.

6.2.4 Applicants should avoid crowded façades and arrangements that are almost, but not quite, aligned.

6.2.5 Particular care must be taken with the:

- Choice of materials to respond to place and allow for future maintenance. Applicants should promote a consistent treatment to the front and rear facade and avoid the use of render;
- Design of balconies to ensure that they are integrated into the design and do not appear as 'bolt-on' or dominant features;
- Integration of rainwater downpipes;
- Location of meter boxes to ensure that they are inconspicuous



Recessed balconies integrated into design of building facade



Balconies do not over dominate the building frontage



Figure 6.12: Modern town house elevation takes inspiration from traditional patterns and proportions



Figure 6.13: Modern town house elevation takes inspiration from traditional gable patterns and proportions





## 6 High quality building design

### Architectural integrity

#### Windows

6.2.6 The choice of window design should be determined by the overall design approach. For example, a contemporary design may incorporate large glazed elevations, which would be inappropriate in a more traditional design. The number of window openings and their size can have a profound effect on the appearance of a building.

6.2.7 With careful design, windows can create a light and airy impression and make a building appear less bulky. However, if poorly designed, too many windows can make a building appear overly fussy and fail to respect the character of the area. It should also be noted that a greater window area will increase the energy demands of a building.

6.2.8 Buildings of traditional design should have rectangular windows, usually constructed of timber, with the emphasis on either the horizontal or vertical axis. Modern buildings can have a variety of window designs provided they are part of an overall design concept.

6.2.9 The positioning of windows, including sill and arch/lintel heights, needs careful consideration to ensure the design reflects the character of the area. In more traditional designs, the positioning of windows within their reveals is also important – windows that finish flush with the front face of a building can appear flat and uninteresting, whereas windows that are set back within reveals cast shadows which add visual interest. The degree of any window recess should also take into account the choice of facing material. For example, stone buildings can accommodate a deeper window recess than brick buildings.

6.2.10 Bay windows can be used to add interest to elevations and create attractive features on buildings.

6.2.11 UPVC windows are less successful in design terms, particularly in traditional buildings due to their bulky frames and glazing bars. Wherever possible, timber should be used unless an alternative material is shown to be more appropriate.



Top hung windows pretending to be sash windows are not acceptable



Window openings are too small

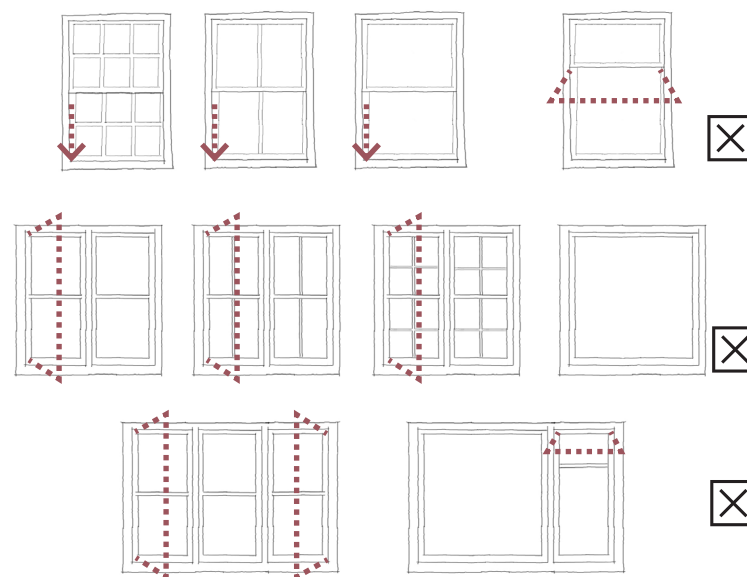


Figure 6.14: Illustration of inappropriate window alteration in traditional buildings

The window proportions, size and number of panes in addition to style of opening should all be respected in traditional buildings

Sash windows should not be replaced by top or side hung casements

Glazing bars should not be removed to allow a large expanse of glass



## 6 High quality building design

### Architectural integrity

#### Roofscape

6.2.12 The pitch and form of roofs and the roofscape within a settlement are important to the character of the place.

6.2.13 Applicants should refer to their Character Study (refer to Section 2) to consider the prevailing roofscape within the locality.

6.2.14 The predominant roof forms in the District are simple double pitched gable ends or hipped roofs (more commonly used for detached dwellings). New development should respect these simple characteristics.

6.2.15 If there is a prevalent angle of pitch within a settlement this can be a powerful contributor to the character of the area. Applicants should consider if this is the case and whether this should be reflected within their proposals.

6.2.16 Proposals should avoid inconsistent or shallow pitched roof profiles.



Roof articulation adds interest on the main frontage overlooking park



Clumsy juxtaposition of properties with inconsistent roof angles / over-dominant roof dormers



Wilmington Way, Haywards Heath is designed to capture solar gain and this is reflected in the roofscape

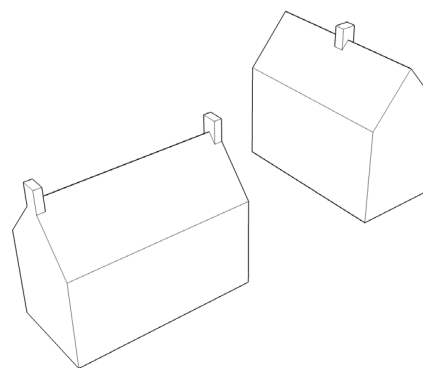


Figure 6.15: Simple pitched roof (model)

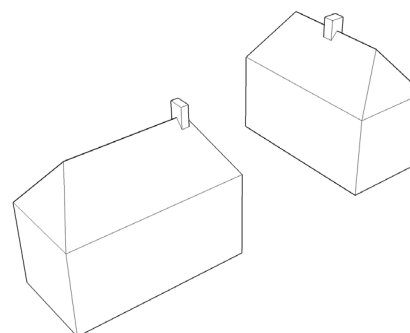


Figure 6.16: Hipped roofs (model)

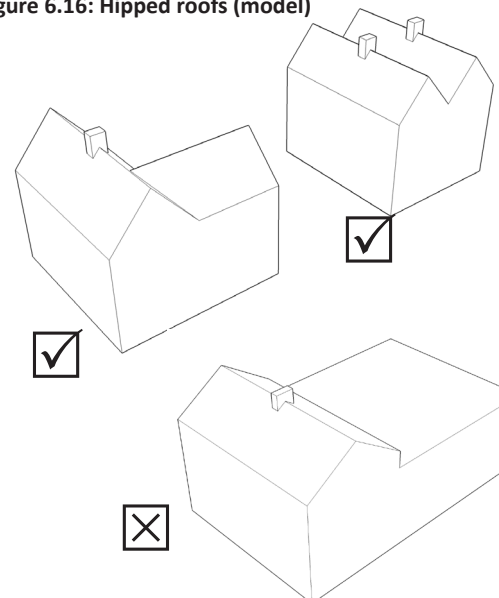


Figure 6.17: Breaking down larger floorplan buildings into a number of simple roof profiles (model)

## 6 High quality building design

### Architectural integrity

#### Chimneys

6.2.17 Chimneys are a traditional feature within the Vale which contribute to the character of the area. Developments are encouraged to include chimneys as they can contribute to the overall appearance of a development.

6.2.18 Chimneys or stack features can be used in modern ways such as for thermal stacks to aid ventilation in summer, to incorporate flues from wood burning stoves or as a service core for gas flues or vent outlets.

6.2.19 Chimneys can be located in a number of positions including:

- On the gable end or projecting from the gable end, usually at first or sometimes second floor level;
- Along a side or rear wall or occasionally on the front;
- Within the gable end;
- Along the ridge;
- Projecting from the roof plane away from the ridge; or
- A central position within the building optimises energy efficiency as there is less heat loss than if located on an external wall.



Chimneys can be used in new development to reflect local vernacular in a modern way. Care should be taken to avoid tokenistic use or pastiche replicas of traditional buildings



Chimney is integrated into the dwelling design at Imberhorne Lane, East Grinstead

#### Dormers

6.2.20 Dormer windows can be prominent traditional features in the streetscene. However, care needs to be taken with their design, proportions and position on the roof.

6.2.21 The choice of design should be informed by the character and appearance of the local vernacular.

6.2.22 Dormers should be positioned so that they line up with openings on the main façade.



Dormers can be used in new development to reflect local vernacular in a modern way. Care should be taken to avoid dormers that are out of proportion with the façade



Town houses on Station Road, Burgess Hill incorporating contemporary dormers as an integral part of the design

## 6 High quality building design

### Architectural integrity

#### Materials

6.2.23 Whilst architectural style varies within the District a prevailing characteristic of most successful buildings is a simple, restrained palette of materials, detailing and architectural features integral to the design.

6.2.24 The choice of materials and architectural features in new development is often overly complicated, pastiche or includes 'bolt-on' elements that area out of place.

6.2.25 The choice of materials and detailing should be drawn from the local context and re-interpreted in a contemporary manner.

6.2.26 Materials should reflect the character of the area and also the style of architecture adopted. For instance, for a traditional architectural approach use the materials that are used within the area (eg for roofs normally plain clay tiles or slates) where as if a contemporary approach is taken there is potential to explore a wider range of materials (eg zinc / copper roofing).



The context above informed the architectural expression and use of materials



Turners Hill Road, Crawley Down - attention is given to the detailing and materials in the building facade



Render facades at Quarry Rise, East Grinstead are not aging well



## 6 High quality building design Best Practice Case Study

### Case Study Five: Horsted Park, Chatham

#### *Delivering architectural integrity*

##### **Overview**

A suburban edge site that takes its design inspiration from the farmyard clusters in Kent.

The design successfully creates an environment with a unique sense of place. In response to the site's semi-rural setting, the opportunity was taken to develop a series of new house types which reference the rural vernacular of Kent's farmsteads. Clusters of detached, semi-detached and terraced homes are arranged as a series of farmyard courts with fingers of accessible parkland, defining the edge and interface between each cluster.

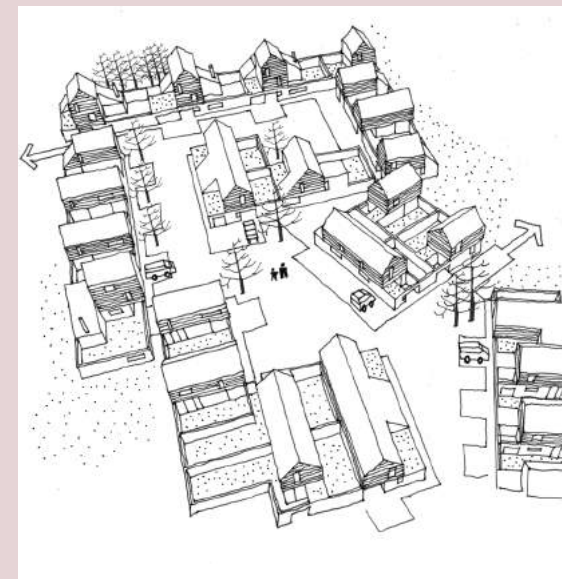
The detailing of the landscape and building facades creates a distinctive and contemporary reworking of traditional building forms.

**Architect:** Proctor Matthews Architects

**Site area:** 4.1 Hectares

**Number of Homes:** 154

**Density:** 38 homes per hectare



## 6 High quality building design

### Architectural integrity

#### Principle DG39: Consider the location and design of utility meters and external pipes so that they don't adversely impact the quality of development

Utility meters should be carefully planned for so that they are both conveniently located and unobtrusive.

Enclosures for utility services and meters must not dominate the building frontage and solutions must be harmonious with the overall architectural design of the property.

Wherever possible, external service pipes and other apparatus should be grouped together and discretely located on elevations which are not prominent. This requires careful consideration of the provision of all services at the initial design stage.

Apartment buildings should always have a communal aerial and satellite dish if cable TV is not available, and a condition should be attached to the planning permission to this effect.

#### Reason

6.2.27 The apparatus of modern services (e.g. external pipework, flues, vents, meter cupboards, satellite dishes and aerials) can create a cluttered appearance and detract from the design of an otherwise successful development. Careful consideration, therefore, needs to be given to their location and positioning on buildings.



Rain water pipes have been positively accommodated to define the individual building frontages and thereby generate underlying rhythm



Little thought has been given to the positioning of rain water pipes, which is especially an issue when the eaves line is broken



Meter boxes are prominent on building frontages

# 6 High quality building design

## Commercial buildings

### 6.3 Commercial buildings

#### Principle DG40: Commercial buildings

Employment buildings should respond positively to the character and architectural traditions of the district in terms of scale, mass, form, materials and detailing.

Within town centres offices must present a positive interface with the street with entrances prominent and helping to animate the street space.

On business parks and industrial estates as a general principle, the landscape and public realm should form the dominant feature within employment areas with the buildings forming a more neutral background. As such, the design of simple, rectilinear buildings within the landscape is promoted.

The design of commercial buildings must consider:

- Articulation of the ground floor of buildings to create a more human scale;
- The design of building entrances so that they are generous and welcoming, include covered areas and are easily identifiable to help improve legibility and provide protection from the weather;
- The location of reception areas and office space so that it positively contributes to the surveillance of entrance areas and forecourts; and
- The location and coordination of signage to minimise its impact and ensure that signage on buildings is not overbearing on the streetscape or out of proportion with the scale of buildings.

Whilst it is accepted that some employment buildings will be of a significant scale, applicants should consider the impact of these buildings on views from the countryside and the wider context. Measures to mitigate their impact should be considered. For example, low profile pitches / barrel vault roofs may be preferable to angular flat roofs. Green roofs should be considered where appropriate.



#### Reason

6.3.1 Well designed commercial buildings that are designed to respond to place and to animate and address streets will contribute to more attractive environment for people working in Mid Sussex and also to the image and perception of the place as a location to establish new businesses or relocate to. This could have significant economic benefits for the District.



## 6 High quality building design

### Sustainable buildings

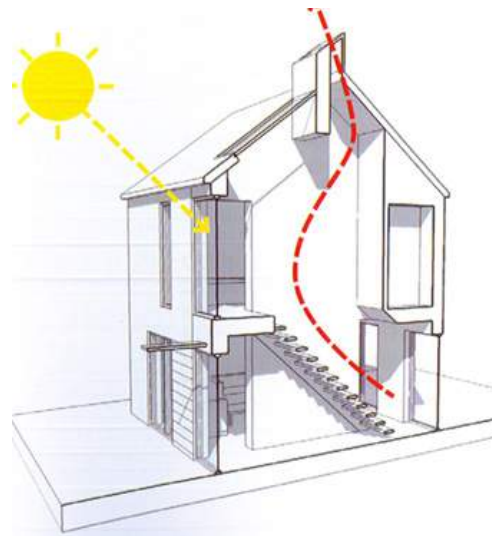
#### 6.4 Sustainable buildings

##### Principle DG41: Minimise environmental impact by energy efficient and sustainable design

The Council is committed to sustainable design and construction and all development must be designed so that the use of resources and energy are minimised both through building construction and on completion.

Applicants must demonstrate how this has informed their design and must consider in particular:

- Orientation and design of buildings to maximise daylight and sun penetration, whilst also avoiding overheating;
- The use of green roofs or walls to reduce storm water run off, increase sound-proofing and biodiversity;
- The use of materials with low embodied energy or, where possible, recycled materials (for example re-use of existing concrete as road fill or in foundations);
- The use of materials with a high thermal mass, such as stone or brick, which store heat and release it slowly;
- The use of photovoltaics or solar thermal water heating;
- The use of ground or air source heat pumps for heating;
- The use of low flow technology in water fittings, rainwater harvesting systems and grey water recycling systems to reduce water consumption; and
- The use of sustainable materials that are locally sourced wherever possible.



##### Reason

6.4.1 The UK Government is committed to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This is not only to tackle the climate emergency for future generations but also a huge opportunity to increase energy efficiency, improve resilience and deliver a greener, healthier society.

6.4.2 Investing in zero carbon solutions is good for growth - boosting jobs and the economy - and it is cheaper for business, organisations and government to tackle climate change now than to manage its impacts in the future.



Wilmington Way, Haywards Heath is designed to capture solar gain and this is reflected in the roofscape



Photovoltaic panels incorporated into roof design to minimise impact



Photovoltaic panels are intrusive to the street scene

## 6 High quality building design

### Best Practice Case Study

#### Case Study Six: **Wilmington Way, Haywards Heath**

##### *Delivering sustainable buildings*

###### **Overview**

The Wilmington Way scheme replaced a drab flat-roofed systems-built estate with a highly legible scheme which features an open space as its centrepiece with the playground providing a natural community focus. This space and the streets are well overlooked and defined by new building frontages, resulting in an attractive and safe public realm, and secure private gardens at the rear of the buildings.

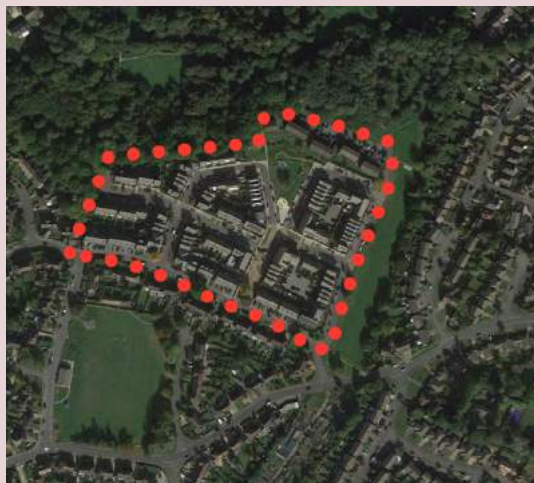
The contemporary styled houses give the scheme a strong identity. The predominantly south facing roof profiles ingeniously respond to their site conditions by maximising the collection of solar energy, whilst not compromising the street based layout and demonstrate how the architects considered the sustainability agenda from the outset.

**Architect:** PRP Architects

**Site area:** 3.58 Hectares

**Number of Homes:** 185

**Density:** 52 homes per hectare



## 6 High quality building design Checklist (Part One)

### How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to the design of buildings within a proposal.

**PROCESS:** Have you read, understood and applied the principles set out above?

**PROCESS:** The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

| PRINCIPLE  | DESCRIPTION   | CHECK |
|--|---|-------|
| <b>Response to character</b>                     | Do the proposals demonstrate a response to the character of the area as identified within the Character Study in Section 2?   |       |
| <b>Response to constraints and opportunities</b> | Do the proposals demonstrate a response to the site constraints and opportunities as identified within the Site Appraisal in Section 2?   |       |
| <b>DG36: Sense of place</b>                      | Does the design generally reflect or respond to the scale of the existing settlement and positively contribute to the character as identified in the Character Study in Section 2? If not has a strong justification been provided? |       |
|  | Does the scheme incorporate variations in height responding to the location within the proposal, for instance reflecting the street hierarchy, enhancing legibility of an important corner or node or emphasising a particular use? |       |
|  | Is the location of any apartment buildings justified and justifiable?   |       |
|  | Does the new development adopt a simple form in-keeping with the character of the area? If not is the reason justified?   |       |
|  | Do corner buildings 'turn the corner' providing frontage to both streets?   |       |
|  | Has the applicant demonstrated how the use of corner buildings has been considered in order to aid legibility?  |       |
|  | Does the scheme avoid exposed, blank gable ends with no windows fronting the public realm?  |       |
| <b>DG37: Enclose and animate the street</b>      | Does the development ensure that all streets and public spaces have good natural surveillance from buildings?   |       |
|  | Does the development clearly define public and private space through the use of appropriate boundary treatments? If not, is this justified?   |       |
|  | Are these boundary treatments reflective of the area as established in the Character Study?   |       |
|  | Are all property entrances directly onto and easily visible from the public realm? Are they legible and welcoming?  |       |
|  | If there are apartments within the scheme are their communal entrance cores generous, well lit by natural light and naturally ventilated?   |       |



## 6 High quality building design

### Checklist (Part Two)

| PRINCIPLE                                    | DESCRIPTION  | CHECK |
|--|--|-------|
| <b>DG38: Architectural integrity</b>         | Has the applicant demonstrated an architectural approach and identity borne from the place and reflected through the Character Study?  |       |
|  | Is the choice of window design appropriate to the overall design approach?   |       |
|  | Does the roofscape proposed reflect the simple roof structures characteristic within the District?   |       |
|  | Are larger buildings broken up into a series of smaller spans or modules of a simple form to ensure the roof does not dominate the building or surrounding area?                     |       |
|  | If chimneys are incorporated into the design are they reflective of the character of the area?   |       |
|  | If dormers are incorporated into the design are they reflective of the character of the area?  |       |
|  | Are they positioned to line up with openings on the main façade?   |       |
|  | Is the palette of materials and detailing proposed of high quality and reflective of the character of the area as established through the Character Study?                           |       |
| <b>DG39: Utility meters / external pipes</b> | Are utility meters located where they are both convenient and unobtrusive?   |       |
|  | Are external service pipes and other apparatus grouped together and discretely located on elevations so that they are not prominent?   |       |
| <b>DG40: Commercial buildings</b>            | Do employment buildings (where appropriate) respond positively to the character and architectural traditions of the district in terms of scale, mass, form, materials and detailing? |       |
|  | Is the ground floor of commercial buildings articulated to create a more human scale with entrances generous and welcoming?  |       |
|  | Do reception areas and office space positively contribute to the surveillance of entrance areas and forecourts?  |       |
|  | Is signage on commercial buildings in proportion with the scale of building and appropriate to the streetscape?  |       |
| <b>DG41: Sustainable buildings</b>           | Are buildings designed to minimise the use of resources and energy?  |       |

# 7 Residential amenity

Design can have a direct impact on the quality of life of Mid Sussex's residents. Privacy, protection from noise and poor air quality and access to daylight and sunlight must be respected through new design for existing and future residents.

Private outdoor amenity space can provide an extension to living space but will only serve residents well if it is well located and designed.

This chapter outlines principles to ensure residential amenity is respected in new development.



# 7 Residential amenity

## Privacy



### 7.1 Privacy

#### **Principle DG42: New development must be designed to respect the privacy of existing residents**

Applicants will need to demonstrate how privacy will be maintained between new and existing development whilst designing to the principles of compact neighbourhoods in more urban locations.

The relationship of buildings to each other, their height and the positioning of windows and the provision of good noise insulation can all have an impact on the privacy enjoyed by neighbouring properties. When promoting more compact development applicants may consider positioning of windows or arrangement of habitable rooms to reduce direct views.

The use of set back upper floors, recessed balconies and internal courtyards can all help to deliver higher densities whilst respecting privacy.

Direct overlooking of private amenity space by habitable rooms in neighbouring properties should be avoided.

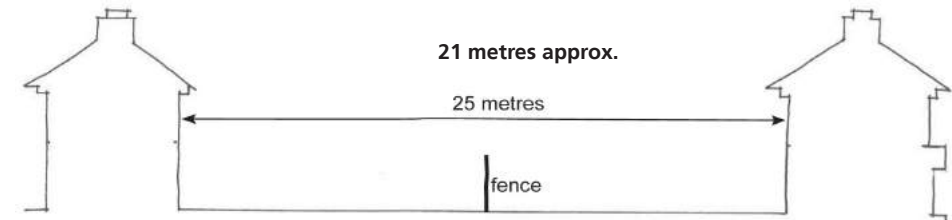


Figure 7.1: An adequate distance between facing habitable rooms helps enable people to feel comfortable in their own homes. Sometimes, through creative design, it is possible to reduce the back to back distances with other measures to avoid overlooking.

#### **Reason**

7.1.1 It is important that all residents are able to feel comfortable in their own home and an adequate level of privacy is required to assist this.



# 7 Residential amenity

## Amenity

### 7.2 Amenity

#### **Principle DG43: Provide attractive and usable external amenity space for all homes**

All dwellings should have access to private outdoor amenity space. This open space should be appropriate to both the location of the proposal and the type and size of accommodation and it should be located where it is not subject to continuous overshadowing.

Amenity space should be provided in the form of a private garden, patio or balcony, depending on the type of dwellings being provided. Where no private gardens are proposed private communal gardens should be provided. Private gardens should be treated as an extension of the living space of the house.

External access to rear gardens should be provided. Long, narrow alleyways should be avoided.

Communal gardens should be incorporated to the rear of blocks to provide visual amenity and outdoor space for residents. Soft landscaping should be prioritised over areas of hard standing and consideration should be given to provision of outdoor seating, eating, drying and growing space.

Ground floor homes in apartment blocks should have access to a well defined, rear, private area. This will act as 'defensible space' and create good quality amenity.

Residents living in upper floor apartments should have access to a balcony which is large enough to be enjoyed. Balconies should be positioned to ensure they do not cause overlooking of neighbouring properties.



#### **Reason**

7.2.1 Providing private amenity space in the form of garden space, balconies or communal gardens is important in achieving a successful and attractive development.

# 7 Residential amenity

## Amenity

### **Principle DG44: Homes should be designed to receive adequate daylight and sunlight and to avoid overshadowing**

All properties must have access to adequate daylight and sunlight. Single aspect north facing apartments should be avoided as they do not gain direct light and single aspect south facing apartments are not generally welcomed as they are subject to overheating.

Within higher density developments care should be taken to avoid areas which are permanently in shade or overshadowed by adjacent buildings.

Buildings close to the boundary of neighbouring properties can increase overshadowing or loss of daylight to neighbouring properties. Habitable room windows should ideally be at least 12 metres away from the flank wall of the neighbouring property.

### **Principle DG45: Design to minimise the impacts of noise, air and light pollution**

Noise disturbance can be reduced through careful design. The following techniques can be used:

- Orientate buildings so that habitable rooms and sitting out areas do not face noise sources;
- Introduce design features such as recessed balconies and acoustic lobbies;
- Construct barriers such as garages or walls between noise sources and dwellings;
- Use landscape to absorb noise; and
- Locate noisy external activities such as play areas close enough to the properties they serve to be safe and usable but far enough way to avoid noise disturbance

### **Reason**

7.2.2 Noise can be a source of significant aggravation for residents, particularly at night. Issues associated with noise are particularly prevalent in locations close to external sources of noise such as railway lines and busy roads.

# 7 Residential amenity Checklist

## How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to residential amenity within a proposal.

**PROCESS:** Have you read, understood and applied the principles set out above?

**PROCESS:** The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

| PRINCIPLE                            | DESCRIPTION   | CHECK |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------|
| DG42: Privacy                        | Does the design respect the privacy of existing residents in adjacent dwellings?  |       |
|                                      | Does the design respect the privacy of future residents in the proposed development?  |       |
| DG43: Amenity                        | Do the proposals provide attractive and usable external amenity space appropriate to the location of the proposal and the type and size of accommodation? |       |
| DG44: Daylight and sunlight          | Do all properties receive adequate daylight and sunlight?   |       |
|                                      | Does the proposal avoid providing single aspect north facing apartments?  |       |
|                                      | Does the proposal minimise provision of single aspect south facing apartments (which are subject to overheating)?   |       |
| DG45: Noise, air and light pollution | Is the proposal designed to respond to and minimise the impacts of noise, air and lit pollution?  |       |





# 8

## Household extensions

Extensions to dwellings can have a significant impact on the character and appearance of a dwelling itself and the street or area in which it is set. A well-designed extension can enhance the appearance and value of a property, whereas an unsympathetic extension can have a harmful impact, create problems for neighbouring residents, and affect the overall character of the area.

This chapter examines the design approaches that should be adopted when extending a dwelling. It sets out the differing approaches that should be adopted when designing side, front and rear extensions, and loft conversions. Reference must also be made to residential amenity (Chapter 7).

Householders are encouraged to make their extensions as energy efficient and sustainable as possible, in line with the design principles set out in Chapter 6.





## 8 Household extensions

### Planning and designations



#### 8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 Some smaller-scale extensions may constitute ‘permitted development’ which means they do not need planning permission. The Council's Planning Service can advise on whether planning permission is required.

8.1.2 If planning permission is required the Council has a validation checklist for householders to help people in preparing applications and ensure all necessary information is included. Refer to: <https://www.midsussex.gov.uk/planning-building/apply-for-planning-permission/#topic-application-checklists>

8.1.3 Building Regulations approval may also be required for any extensions or alterations to a dwelling. Advice on Building Regulations can be provided by the Council's Building Control Service.

8.1.4 If a building is Statutorily Listed or is located within a Conservation Area or AONB, some forms of development or alteration that would otherwise be classed as permitted development will require planning permission, Listed Building Consent or combinations of these.

8.1.5 Any applications that affect a Listed Building or Conservation Area will require a Design and Access Statement incorporating a Heritage Statement. Applicants should consult the West Sussex Historic Environment Record at: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/land-waste-and-housing/landscape-and-environment/historic-environment-record/>

8.1.6 Extensions to historic buildings can be harmful if their significance is not fully understood. Further advice on alterations to your property can be requested through pre-application advice.

8.1.7 More information on how to understand the significance of a heritage asset can be found in the Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 2 – Managing significance in Decision taking in the Historic Environment <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa2-managing-significance-in-decision-taking/>



## 8 Household extensions

### Local character and neighbours

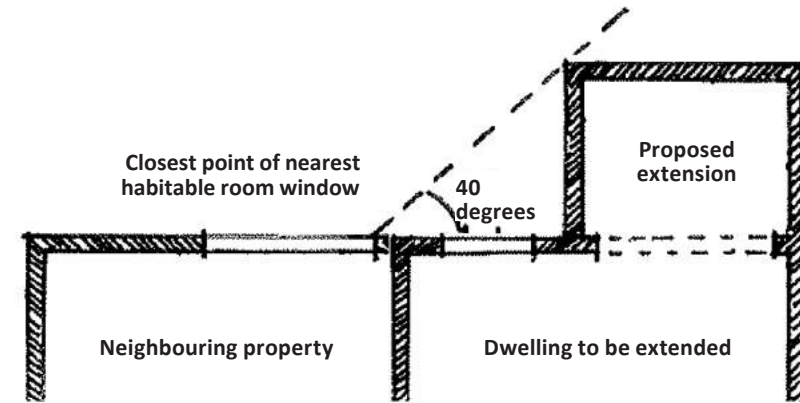


Figure 8.1: The 40 degree rule: The proposed extension should not project beyond the '40 degree line' (indicated by the dashed line) into the neighbours protected area

### 8.2 Responding to local character and neighbours

#### Principle DG46: Respond to local character

Respond to the character of the area and immediate neighbourhood within which your property is located.

Use this character as a starting point for design in terms of building form, size, position within the plot and relationship to plot boundaries.

Maintain established building lines.

Use simple uncomplicated building forms.

Use building materials and details typical of your area or demonstrate how the materials chosen are appropriate.

#### Principle DG47: Consider your neighbours

Make sure proposed extensions do not intrude upon a neighbour's privacy.

All extensions should take into account the impact on neighbouring properties in terms of overshadowing. Consider the position, size and form of the extension in relation to adjacent properties and the path of the sun.

Any extension to a house should not lead to an oppressive or overbearing impact, which would be harmful to the amenity of occupiers of nearby neighbouring dwellings.

In particular, two storey extensions should not encroach beyond a 40 degree line taken from the edge of the nearest ground or first floor window of a habitable room of a neighbouring property.

Any side facing upper floor windows to habitable rooms (e.g. bedrooms) need to be carefully located and/or designed to ensure they do not cause overlooking problems for neighbouring properties. A minimum distance of 12m is recommended between habitable windows and flank walls.

Carefully consider the position of new garages to avoid an increase in noise and disturbance from vehicle movements.

# 8 Household extensions

## Scale, form and massing



### 8.3 Scale, form and massing

#### Principle DG48: Extensions should be subservient to the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling

Extensions should not result in a significant loss to the private amenity area of the dwelling.

The original building should remain the dominant element of the property whether you have one extension or several. The effect of any extension should not overwhelm the house from any given view point.

Any existing external access from the front of the dwelling to the rear garden is a significant asset to service the garden. Consideration should be given to the value of retaining this access.

Extensions should use simple, uncomplicated building forms to compliment and coordinate with the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling.

Applicants should avoid proposals that wrap around the existing dwelling and involve complicated roof forms. This is likely to result in a bulky appearance.

The pitch and form of roof used on a dwelling adds to its character and extensions should respond to this where appropriate.

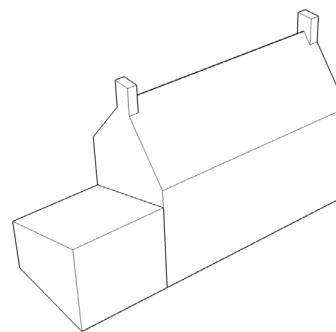


Figure 8.2: The scale and massing of the extension bears no relationship to the existing dwelling

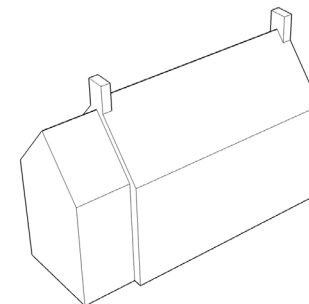


Figure 8.3: Fig 10.7 The extension has an appropriate scale and massing in relation to the original dwelling

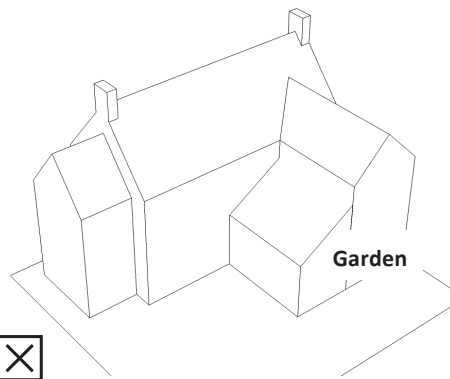


Figure 8.4: Multiple extensions over time can have a compound impact and overwhelm the original dwelling

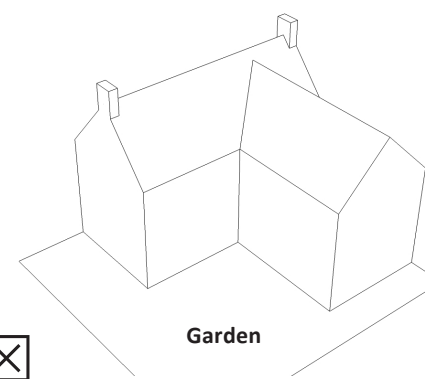


Figure 8.5: The size of the extension overwhelms the original dwelling and also results in a significant loss of private amenity

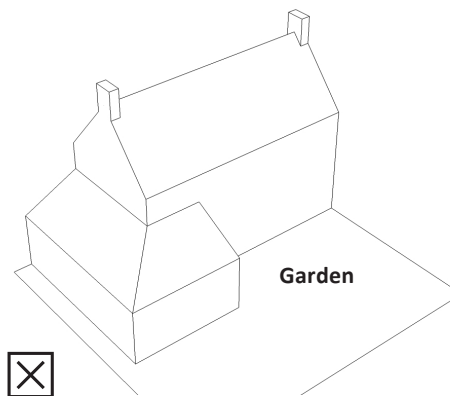


Figure 8.6: Extensions that wrap around the existing dwelling should be avoided

## 8 Household extensions

### Responsive design



Figure 8.7: Side extension subservient to original dwelling with sympathetic window detail



Figure 8.8: Fig 10.13 Side extension with unsympathetic window detail

### 8.4 Design considerations

#### Principle DG49: Respond to the design of the original dwelling

Extensions should respond to the design of the original dwelling and applicants should demonstrate how local character has informed the design proposal.

Applicants that do not use materials to match those of the existing dwelling should demonstrate the appropriateness of the alternatives proposed.

Owners of Listed Buildings or buildings in Conservation Areas should also make use of the Statutory List, Conservation Area Character Appraisals or any other assessment of the building's significance when considering an extension so that their design sustains or enhances the features that contribute to its significance or better reveals them. Owners of listed buildings should also refer to the West Sussex Historic Environment <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/land-waste-and-housing/landscape-and-environment/historic-environment-record/>

The position, size, proportion, height and style of new windows and doors and the ratio of solid wall to openings all help to define the character of a dwelling. It is important, therefore, that the extension responds to the existing pattern of window and door openings.

#### Reason

8.4.1 There are generally two design approaches that can be adopted when considering extending a property.

8.4.2 The first is to consider the materials, architectural features, window sizes and proportions of the existing building and to recreate this style to design an extension that matches or complements the existing building.

8.4.3 The second is to consider the proportion, materials, architectural features and window sizes of the existing building and to develop a contemporary response to those by taking cues from the key aspects. This approach requires a high quality design.

8.4.4 Both options can create successful, well designed extensions that can be mutually beneficial to both the house and the wider area.



# 8 Household extensions

## Side extensions

### 8.5 Detailed principles

#### Principle DG50: Side extensions

Side extensions should be subservient to the original dwelling and normally be set back from the front of the house to retain the proportions of the original building and reduce the visual impact of the join between existing and new.

Extensions that close an important gap within the street scene or lead to a terracing effect will not be accepted.

Two storey extensions should generally be constructed with the same angle of pitch as the existing roof.

The design of all side extensions should take into account the impact on neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking, overshadowing and over dominance.

#### Reason

8.5.1 In built-up areas, the gaps between dwellings can often be small. Cumulatively, these gaps can make an important contribution to the character of an area. Extending at two storeys to the side of a detached or semi-detached dwelling can result in development right up to the site boundary, resulting in an inappropriate 'terracing effect'.

8.5.2 The problem can be exacerbated where an extension has the same roofline as the original building and where a neighbouring property already lies on, or close to, the boundary.

8.5.3 To reduce such a 'terracing effect', it is desirable to maintain a gap between the extension and the site boundary and for the extension to have a lower ridge height than the main building. The extent of the gap should be determined by the pattern of development in the area but, in general, it should not be less than 1 metre wide.

8.5.4 An alternative way of avoiding a terracing effect is to set the first floor element of the extension back from the front elevation – it should be set back at least one third of the depth of the dwelling.

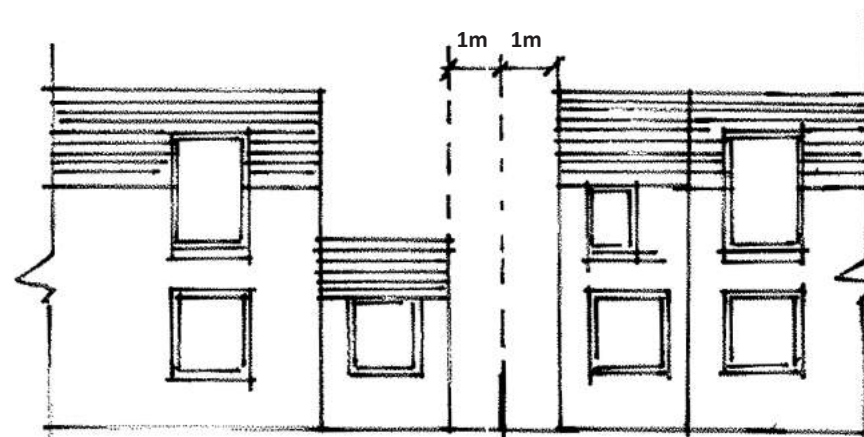


Figure 8.9: A minimum of 1 metre must normally be retained between the new side wall of the extension and the boundary of the site to prevent a terracing effect

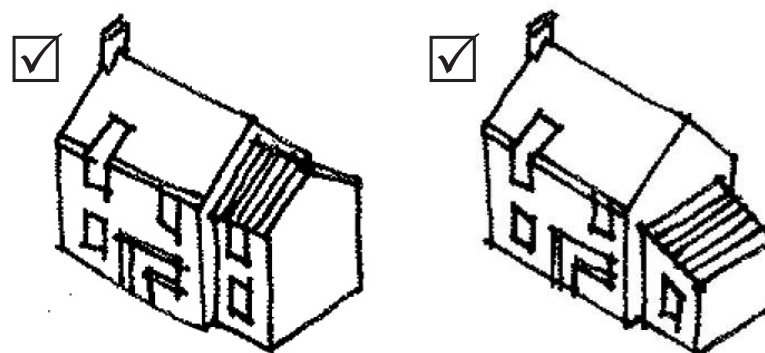


Figure 8.10: Extensions subservient to original dwelling with sympathetic roof and window details

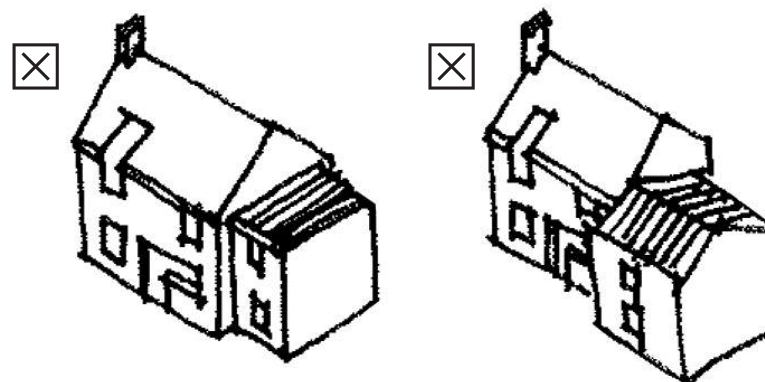


Figure 8.11: Flat roof on extension (left) does not sit well with the original ridged roof. Extension (right) is not subservient, nor seamless with, the original dwelling. The extension also projects forward of the established building line

## 8 Household extensions

### Side and front extensions

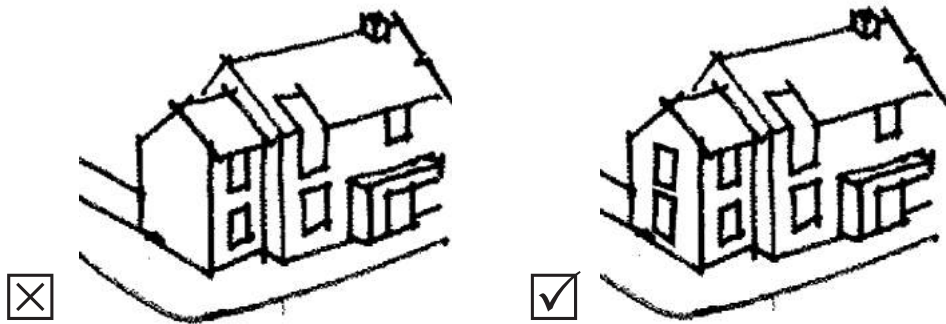


Figure 8.12: Extensions where side elevations face the street should incorporate windows to provide passive surveillance



Successful two storey extension complements the original dwelling



Successful single storey extension which is subservient to the original dwelling



Front extensions can often detract from the appearance of the dwelling

#### Principle DG51: Front extensions, canopies and porches

Front extensions will be resisted where they have a significant impact on the street scene or are damaging to the appearance of a dwelling.

Modest front extensions or porches that reflect the character of the existing property in terms of their scale, details and materials are more likely to be acceptable.

When located close to a neighbouring property, front extensions or porches should not normally project more than 1.4 metres in front of the dwelling.

Front extensions are more likely to be acceptable where the building line is staggered or where the dwelling is set well back from the road.

They should normally be designed with a pitched roof.

## 8 Household extensions

### Rear extensions



A contemporary rear extension to a Victorian property

#### Principle DG52: Rear extensions

Rear extensions should not have a harmful effect on neighbouring properties in terms of privacy, overshadowing or overbearing.

An adequate distance between facing habitable rooms must be retained to enable people to feel comfortable in their own homes (refer to Principle DG40).

Rear extensions should not have a detrimental impact on the existing dwellings usable amenity space.

Applicants should respect the 40 degree rule as set out in Principle DG45.

Rear extensions which are not visible from the street and do not negatively impact on neighbouring properties can be expressed in many forms, including through the use of contemporary architecture.

#### Reason

8.5.5 Extending terraced and semi-detached dwellings represents the most significant challenge in terms of potential loss of residential amenity due to the close proximity of neighbouring properties. Problems can be mitigated by limiting the scale of the proposed extension and applying the 40 degree rule (refer to Figure 8.1). Single storey extensions are easier to accommodate successfully. An alternative solution is for neighbours of adjoining properties to work together to extend both dwellings concurrently.

8.5.6 Single storey rear extensions and conservatories often do not need planning permission as they can be built under 'permitted development' rights. MSDC's Planning Service can advise on whether planning permission is required..



## 8 Household extensions

### Loft conversion and roof extensions



#### Principle DG53: Loft conversions and roof extensions

As a general rule extensions that alter the existing ridge of the roof or significantly alter the roof profile of a building will not be accepted.

Dormer windows should be designed as features principally to provide light and ventilation. They should be small and should sit appropriately in the roof-slope, well above the eaves line, well below the ridge line and set in from the gable ends. Two or three smaller dormers are often more successful than a single large dormer.

Where a clear rhythm of fenestration is established, the position and proportion of dormer windows should respond to existing windows and/or doors.

Rear flat roof dormers may be acceptable to the rear of properties provided they don't rise above the main ridge of the roof, are subservient to the main dwelling, do not impact on the privacy of neighbours and that their design is informed by the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and the surrounding area

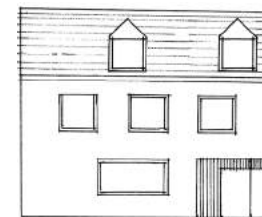
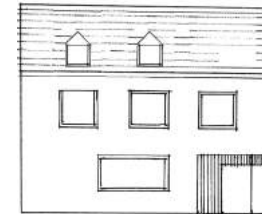
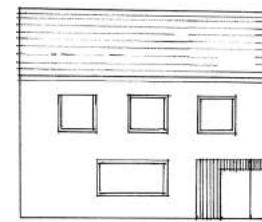
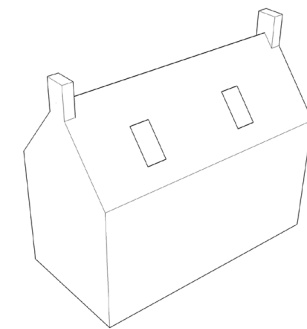


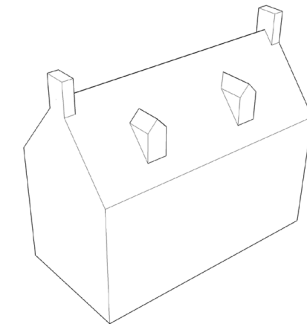
Figure 8.13: If dormer roof extensions are acceptable in their context, the position and proportion of dormer windows should respond to existing windows

#### Reason

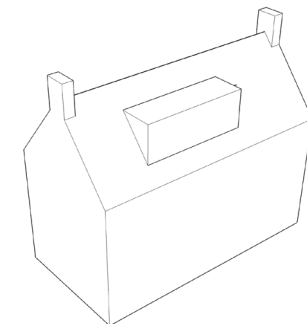
8.5.7 A loft conversion is a space efficient means of extending the amount of living accommodation in a dwelling. However if they are out of scale with the roofscape and proportions of a dwelling they can have significant impacts on the character of both the dwelling and the streetscape



Loft conversion incorporating rooflights



Loft conversion incorporating dormers



Large flat roofed single dormer out of scale with the original dwelling

## 8 Household extensions CHECKLIST

### How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to the design of a **household extension** as part of an application.

**PROCESS:** Have you read, understood and applied the principles set out above?

**PROCESS:** The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

| PRINCIPLE                                   | DESCRIPTION  | CHECK |
|---|--|-------|
| DG46: Responding to local character         | Has the applicant demonstrated how the proposal responds to and respects the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood?  |       |
| DG47: Consider your neighbours              | Has the applicant considered and demonstrated that the proposal does not have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to overshadowing, privacy or an oppressive or overbearing impact?                     |       |
|   | Does the proposal comply with the 40 degree rule?  |       |
| DG48: Scale, form and massing               | Is the extension a simple, uncomplicated building form that compliments and coordinates with the scale, form and massing of the original dwelling? The original building should remain the dominant element of the property. |       |
|   | Is the roof form appropriate to the original dwelling? Generally this should be constructed with the same angle of pitch as the existing roof.   |       |
| DG49: Design considerations                 | Do the materials proposed match those of the existing dwelling or has the applicant demonstrated the appropriateness of the alternatives proposed?   |       |
|   | Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?   |       |
| DG50: Side extensions                       | Is the side extension set back from the front of the house? If not, has the reason been justified?   |       |
|   | Does the side extension retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid creating a 'terracing effect'?   |       |
| DG51: Front extension, canopies and porches | Does the front extension, canopy or porch reflect the character of the property in terms of scale, details and materials?  |       |
| DG52: Rear extensions                       | Does the rear extension avoid detrimental impact on the existing dwelling's usable amenity space?  |       |
| DG53: Loft conversions and roof extensions  | Are any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?   |       |
|   | Does the position and proportion of dormer windows respond to the location of existing windows and/or doors?   |       |

# 9

## Building conversions

There are many buildings in Mid Sussex both within settlements and in the countryside that are no longer used or are vacant. These buildings include farm buildings, chapels, schools, factories and offices. The re-use of existing buildings preserves their contribution to settlements and the countryside but is also more sustainable. The embodied energy in a buildings fabric is considerable i.e. it takes a lot of energy to demolish and rebuild existing buildings.

With this in mind the council seeks to encourage the re-use of buildings wherever possible particularly when the building makes a positive contribution to the character of an area. Their conversion and re-use however must be done with great care in order to ensure that the essential character of the original building is not lost or that the contribution the building makes to the wider area is not compromised.

This chapter examines the design approaches that should be adopted when converting a range of existing building types. It should be noted that conversion to residential use is not always the most appropriate solution, particularly where the building is listed or is situated in an isolated location in the open countryside.





## 9 Building conversions

### Agricultural conversions



#### 9.1 Agricultural building conversions

##### Principle DG54: Conversion of agricultural buildings

The primary objective of all conversions of agricultural buildings must be to retain the character and appearance of the original building.

Where conversion to residential uses is proposed this may require compromises in terms of the residential layout and the provision of natural light into all habitable rooms.

The introduction of conspicuous domestic features such as chimneys, satellite dishes, aërials, porches and additional window or door openings tend to be out of character with the original building and, wherever possible, such features should be avoided.

Natural light can be provided by introducing glass roof tiles, glass insertions into honeycomb brickwork and slit windows. Existing openings in elevations can be used for windows or doors, and to 'borrow' light into the more central parts of the building. A simple window design is usually most appropriate.

Internal walls should be retained where ever practically possible and the introduction of additional walls kept to a minimum. Timber roof trusses should be retained and not cut or removed to provide head height at first floor level.

Dis-proportionately large extensions or ancillary buildings are not usually appropriate for conversions. Such elements can dominate the original building and so detract from its character. Residential type features such as conservatories should be avoided.

Wherever possible, existing ancillary buildings should be used as garaging to avoid the need for new buildings. Conversions should not subdivide historic farmyards.

Landscaping and boundary treatments need careful attention and should be designed to be as simple as possible. Hard and soft landscaping should be kept informal, and walls, fences, kerbing and any other urban features should be avoided where they would harm the building's agricultural character or farmyard setting.

A structural report will need to be submitted with any planning application to demonstrate that the building is capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding or extension.

## 9 Building conversions

### Agricultural conversions



Successful retention of existing openings



Domestic style porch and projecting roof lights detract from the barns character

#### Reason

9.1.1 The conversion of traditional agricultural buildings such as barns, stables and cartsheds, is common in Mid Sussex.

9.1.2 Continuation of the original agricultural use is usually most appropriate to preserve the character and appearance of such buildings. However, if a building is no longer needed or suitable for modern agricultural purposes, its disuse can result in the building falling into disrepair. Conversion to an alternative use is a successful way of securing the future of such traditional agricultural buildings.

9.1.3 Owners should refer to the Historic England guidance on Conversion of Traditional Agricultural Buildings: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/rural-heritage/farm-buildings/>

9.1.4 The importance of an agricultural building to the history, character and appearance of an area can be assessed with reference to its age, design, form, materials used, roof structure and the presence of any architectural detailing.

9.1.5 Agricultural buildings typically have an informal farmyard or open field setting. The proposed conversion should respect the building's setting, either as part of a group of traditional buildings or as part of the surrounding landscape.

9.1.6 It should be noted that residential conversions are not always the most appropriate solution, particularly where the building is listed or is situated in an isolated location in the open countryside. Non-residential uses may be easier to accommodate.

#### Structural integrity

9.1.7 Many agricultural buildings will have been unused for extended periods of time or they may not have been well maintained – consequently, their structure may have suffered. The structural integrity of a building will be a critical factor in determining whether it is capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding or extension.

9.1.8 If substantial rebuilding or extension is required, it is unlikely that planning permission will be granted as the proposed works would no longer constitute a conversion.

## 9 Building conversions

### Chapels, schools and churches



#### 9.2 Conversion of chapels, schools and churches

##### Principle DG55: Conversion of chapels, schools and churches

The primary objective of all conversions of chapels, schools and churches must be to retain the character and appearance of the original building.

Where conversion to residential uses is proposed this may require compromises in terms of the residential layout and the provision of natural light into all habitable rooms.

The introduction of conspicuous domestic features such as chimneys, satellite dishes, aerials, porches and additional window or door openings tend to be out of character with the original building and, wherever possible, such features should be avoided.

Existing opening in elevations should be used for windows and doors and a simple window design is usually most appropriate.

The internal wall divisions should be retained wherever possible and the introduction of additional walls or floors should be kept to a minimum. Existing window openings and window detailing, such as stained glass, should be retained and refurbished.

Where additional floors are introduced, they should not cut across tall windows in such a way as to be visible from outside the building.

Large extensions or ancillary buildings are not usually appropriate for conversions. Such elements can dominate the original building and so detract from its character.

Any existing ecclesiastical fixtures and fittings should be retained wherever possible, and the inclusion of additional detailing which would detract from the character of the building should be avoided.

Landscaping and boundary treatments should be designed to be as simple as possible.

Paint colours and finishes should be chosen to reflect the character and appearance of the building.



## 9 Building conversions

### Chapels, schools and churches



Internal floor division is visible through window



Entrance to nursery is not designed to be respectful of the historic chapel



Successful retention of feature windows

#### Reason

9.2.1 Similar to barn conversions, the design challenges associated with the conversion of these buildings often relate to the creation of room and floor divisions in buildings which originally comprised large internal spaces.

9.2.2 The defining characteristics of chapels, schools and churches are often similar, comprising formal proportions and a simple rectangular footprint, tall sash windows, brick or stone arches, uninterrupted roof slopes, long ridge lines, and large internal spaces, sometimes with mezzanine floors. Architectural detailing may include stained glass windows, ornate timberwork and plasterwork on walls and ceilings, and ecclesiastical memorials.

9.2.3 These features are essential to the building's character and, therefore, need to be retained as part of the proposed conversion.

9.2.4 Chapels, schools and churches are typically located in central village locations. The buildings often include limited external space as part of the site, which can present a challenge in terms of providing amenity space and minimising any overlooking of neighbouring dwellings for residential conversion.

## 9 Building conversions

### Commercial buildings



### 9.3 Commercial building conversions

#### Principle DG56: Conversion of commercial buildings

The primary objective for conversion of historic commercial buildings must be to retain the character and appearance of the original building. For conversion of office to residential the objective is to deliver a building that has architectural integrity.

Where conversion to residential uses is proposed this may require compromises in terms of the residential layout and the provision of natural light into all habitable rooms.

The introduction of conspicuous domestic features such as chimneys, satellite dishes, aërials, porches and additional window or door openings tend to be out of character with the original building and, wherever possible, such features should be avoided. If additional light is required, it may be appropriate to introduce glass roof tiles or appropriately designed rooflights.

The internal walls should be retained and the introduction of additional walls or floors should be kept to a minimum. Existing window openings and detailing should be retained. Where additional floors or mezzanines are introduced, they should not be visible through windows.

Large extensions or ancillary buildings are not usually appropriate for historic conversions. Such elements can dominate the original building and so detract from its character. Wherever possible, existing ancillary buildings such as storage sheds should be used as garaging to avoid the need for new buildings.

Existing commercial or industrial fixtures and fittings should be retained wherever possible. Original features such as internal metalwork can make a positive contribution to the final scheme. The introduction of additional detailing, which would detract from the character of the building, should be avoided.

Landscaping and boundary treatments need careful attention and should be designed to be as simple as possible and should respond to the character and materials of the building being converted. Walls and fences should be avoided where they would harm the building's character or setting.

Paint colours and finishes should be chosen to reflect the character and appearance of the building.

## 9 Building conversions

### Commercial buildings



Water tower successfully converted to residential use



Office building in East Grinstead BEFORE conversion



Office building in East Grinstead AFTER conversion. Whilst there are still some issues with the public realm treatment the scheme is generally a positive improvement

#### Reason

9.3.1 There are relatively few former commercial buildings in Mid Sussex, including shops, pubs and warehouses. More typically conversions are from office to residential use.

9.3.2 These larger buildings are often converted into self-contained flats which have additional amenity, parking and storage requirements that should be considered at the outset of the design process.

9.3.3 Where a property is being converted to flats, the development should, where possible, be contained within the existing building envelope. If extensions are necessary, for example to accommodate a lift or to meet building regulations, proposals need to be carefully designed.

9.3.4 Whilst pubs and shops usually have a domestic scale and design, industrial buildings such as warehouses and breweries are usually much larger, with a more formal architectural composition.

9.3.5 The defining characteristics of these industrial buildings include formal proportions usually in a rectangular plan, and large windows (i.e. plate glass in iron frames with top-hinged openings, small pane timber sash windows or Crittall Windows).

9.3.6 For office to residential conversions it is important to maintain a simple architectural formality through the pattern of window openings and where possible to introduce a vertical rhythm to the facade.



# 9 Building conversions CHECKLIST

## How to use

This table provides a checklist for use by both the applicant and planning officer to check that appropriate consideration has been given to the design of a **building conversion** as part of an application.

**PROCESS:** Have you read, understood and applied the principles set out above?

**PROCESS:** The adjacent table summarises the key principles set out within this section and can be used by applicant and officer as a checklist.

The applicant is expected to meet the requirements of all relevant Principles (ie a tick in each box) or provide a justification for failure to do so.

| PRINCIPLE                                  | DESCRIPTION  | CHECK |
|--|--|-------|
| <b>DG54: Agricultural buildings</b>        | Has a structural report been submitted with any planning application to demonstrate that the building is capable of conversion without substantial rebuilding or extension? If substantial rebuilding or extension is required, it is unlikely that planning permission will be granted as the proposed works would no longer constitute a conversion. |       |
|  | Does the conversion retain the character and appearance of the original building as established in the Character Study? The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided.   |       |
|  | Has the conversion used the existing openings in elevations for windows and doors? New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings. A simple window design is usually most appropriate.   |       |
|  | Does the landscaping, boundary treatments and access roads reflect the agricultural character of a farmyard setting?   |       |
| <b>DG55: Chapels, schools and churches</b> | Does the conversion retain the character and appearance of the original building as established in the Character Study? The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided.   |       |
|  | Has the conversion used the existing openings in elevations for windows and doors? New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings. A simple window design is usually most appropriate.   |       |
|  | If additional floors are introduced, do they avoid cutting across tall windows?  |       |
|  | Are existing ecclesiastical fixtures and fittings retained wherever possible?  |       |
| <b>DG56: Commercial buildings</b>          | Is landscaping and boundary treatments designed in a simple manner that does not detract from the building?  |       |
|  | Does the conversion retain the character and appearance of the original building (where appropriate) as established in the Character Study? The introduction of conspicuous domestic features should be avoided. Where this is not appropriate has the building been designed with architectural integrity (refer also to Principle DG38)              |       |
|  | Has the conversion used the existing openings in elevations for windows and doors? New windows or doors should be added sparingly and should not significantly alter the overall proportion of solid wall to openings. A simple window design is usually most appropriate.   |       |
|  | Are existing commercial or industrial fixtures and fittings retained where appropriate?  |       |
|  | Is the landscaping and boundary treatment designed in a simple manner and in keeping with the industrial aesthetic?  |       |



