Sandhurst

Parish-wide Design Guidance

Final report

Updated December 2024

Delivering a better world

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
Stela Kontogianni **Associate Urban Designer**	Niamh McDevitt **Town Planner**	Ben Castell **Director**
Chatnam Lee **Consultant Urban Designer**		

Revision History

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	23/08/2023	Final draft review	Stela Kontogianni	Associate Urban Designer
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	16/05/2023	Site visit, drawings & report, review	Stela Kontogianni	Associate Urban Designer
	15/05/2023	Site visit, drawings & report	Chatnam Lee	Consultant Urban Designer

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Summary

This document has been prepared by AECOM Limited ('AECOM') in accordance with its contract with Locality (the 'Client').

Through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Programme led by Locality, AECOM was commissioned to provide design support to Sandhurst Parish Council.

As the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) notes, 'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'.

Research, such as for the Government's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (now part of the Design Council; see, for example, The Value of Good Design[1]) has shown that good design of buildings and places can improve health and well-being, increase civic pride and cultural activity, reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and reduce pollution.

Therefore, this document seeks to harness an understanding of how good design can make future development as endearingly popular as the best of what has been done before.

***Chapter 1** sets the scene by explaining the importance of good design, followed by a brief summary of the scope of this report as well as the steps followed up its completion (Final report).*

***Chapter 2** outlines the local context and key characteristics of Sandhurst by exploring green infrastructure, built environment, streetscape, heritage, local vernacular, views, topography etc. The analysis will begin with a parish-wide focus to understand the wider context and then, have a closer look to Sandhurst village settlement. The findings will then inform and shape the design guidelines (included in Chapter 3) influencing future development. Those design guidelines were consulted with the wider community during workshops organised by Jim Boot, Community Planner, on behalf of the NP Steering Group.*

***Chapter 3** presents two sets of design guidelines. The first is a set of general design considerations that should be addressed by applicants and their design teams, appropriate for Sandhurst's character. The second is a set of design guidelines regarding key characteristics of Sandhurst. Both sets have been informed and shaped by the local character analysis of the parish aiming to guide future development, of any scale, including infill developments, house extensions or larger developments.*

***Chapter 4** explains why this report is a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development in the parish and offers recommendations of various ways that this document could be used by each actor in the planning and development process.*

It is intended that this report will become an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan and be given weight in the planning process.

1. https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/the-value-of-good-design.pdf

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Introduction

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1. Introduction

Through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Neighbourhood Planning Support Programme led by Locality, AECOM was commissioned to provide design support to Sandhurst Parish Council.

1.1 The importance of good design

As the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 131) notes, 'good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'.

Research, such as for the Government's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (now part of the Design Council; see, for example, The Value of Good Design1) has shown that good design of buildings and places can improve health and well-being, increase civic pride and cultural activity, reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and reduce pollution.

This document aims to offer guidance in future development that promotes good design, respects and preserves local characteristics, whilst encouraging modern and innovative design.

Following the analysis of the parish, a set of architectural and design qualities will be created. This set of qualities combined with good design practice will inform the design guidelines that any development within Sandhurst should follow in order to comply with this parish-wide design guidance.

1. https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/the-value-of-good-design.pdf

1.2 The purpose of this document

Design guidance identifies how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice. Design codes are requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for development. Proposals for development within the NA should demonstrate how the guidance has informed the design and how the design codes have been complied with. Where a proposal cannot comply with a code (or several) a justification should be provided.

The NPPF 2023, paragraphs 132-133 states that:

'*Plans should... set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have*

as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. Neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development...'

'To provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans ... should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.'

The Government is placing significant importance on the development of design guidance and codes in order to set standards for design upfront and provide firm guidance on how sites should be developed.

Sandhurst is located at the eastern end of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council about 18 miles east of Royal Tunbridge Wells and 60 miles south-east of London.

It is 3 miles east of Cranbrook Road (A229) and 5 miles east of London Road (A21). The heart of Sandhurst is 10 miles south of Staplehurst Station and 11 miles east of Wadhurst Station, which are used by many commuters to reach their employment in London and elsewhere.

Only a limited amount of bus services operate in the parish, the no. 349 provide connections between Hawkhurst and Hastings via Sandhurst.

The entire parish lies within the High Weald National Landscape enjoying the landscape and the spectacular views towards the countryside.

Sandhurst's vision is to protect and enhance the rural nature of the parish creating a pleasant place to live, whilst providing the environment to engender a true community spirit for all the residents.Areas within the designated National Landscape, village greens, variety and richness in architectural styles and details should be protected and promoted by any new development.

Specifically, this parish-wide design guide will provide design guidance to ensure that any potential development, of any scale, housing extension or conversion within the parish follows good design practice and contributes to a sustainable and thriving community that retains the local character and vernacular.

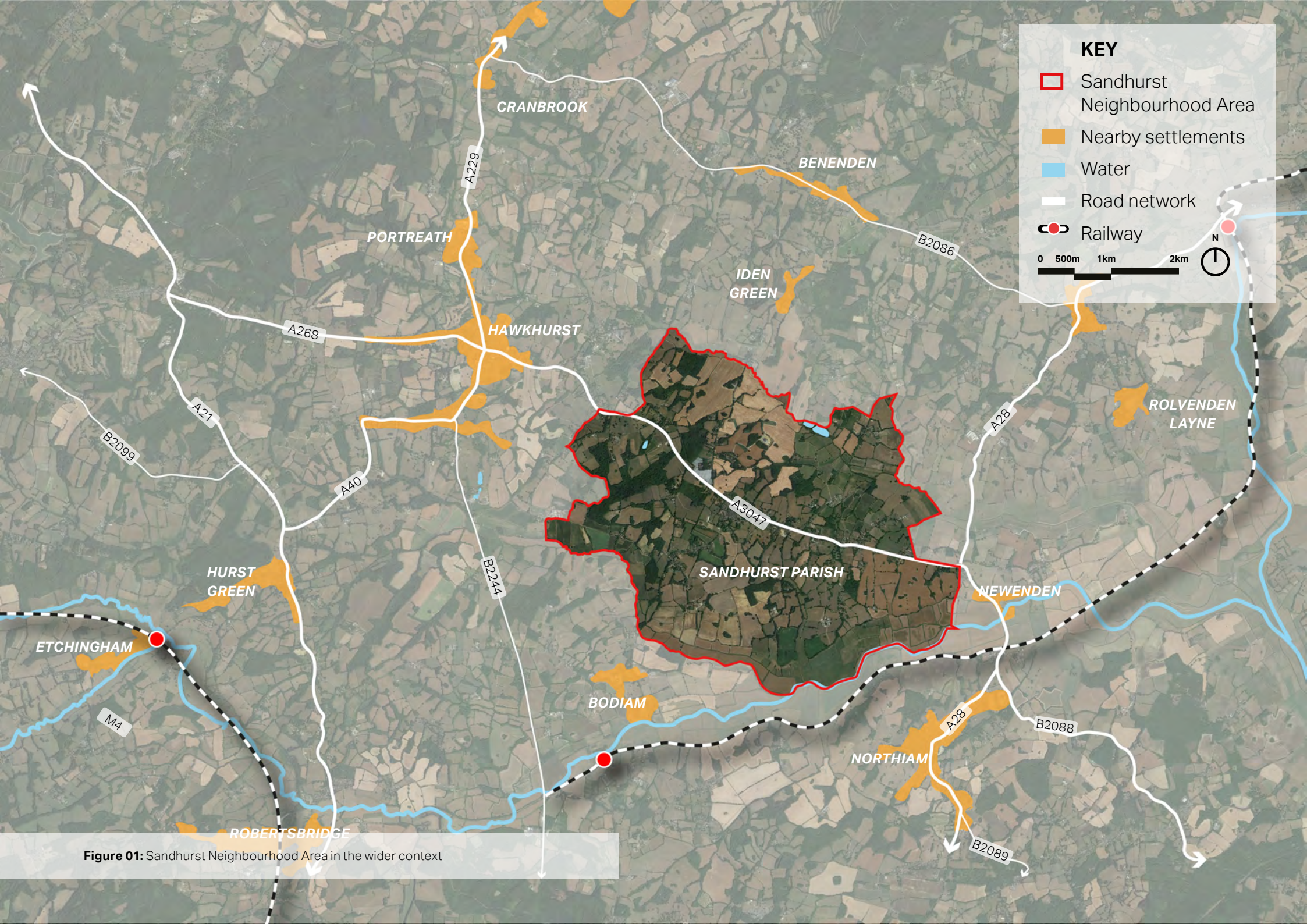


Figure 01: Sandhurst Neighbourhood Area in the wider context

1.3 Preparing the design guidance report

Following a site visit with members of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, the following steps were agreed with the Group to produce this report:

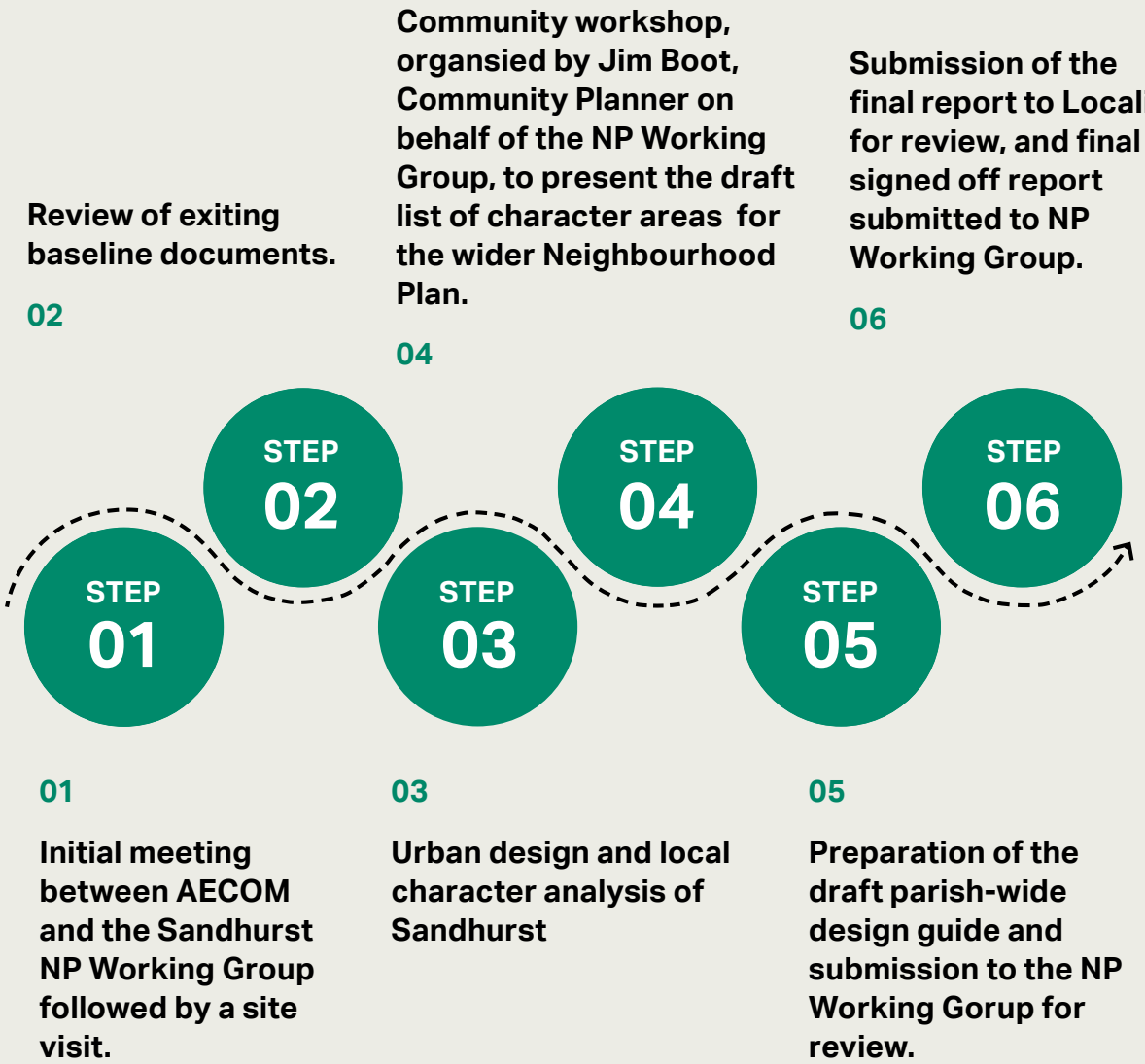


Figure 02: A brief chronological breakdown of the key elements and milestones used throughout the duration of the production of this document.

Local character analysis

02

2. Local character analysis

This chapter details the local context and key characteristics of Sandhurst by exploring its heritage, built environment, streetscape, views, landscape and topography.

2.1 Parish-wide analysis

2.1.1 Access and movement

Access and movement around Sandhurst is sustained through a hierarchy of routes which enables onward connectivity to surrounding villages, towns and urban centres. Public transport options are provided through a regular bus service running through the village to surrounding villages such as Hawkhurst, Cranbrook and Staplehurst. Active travel is supported by an extensive network of footpaths within and around Sandhurst.

Major roads: The A268 running across Queen Street through the heart of the village and passing through Linkshill underpins much of Sandhurst's overall east-west connectivity with surrounding areas - such as Hawkhurst to the west and Rye to the southeast. Connection onto the A21 at Hawkhurst provides access towards Royal Tunbridge Wells to the north and south towards Hastings. Residential frontages are found on both sides on the A268.

Access to the wider motorway network is made possible via the A21, onward travel around throughout the south east via the M25 towards London, and Maidstone along the M26 and M20.

Local roads/rural lanes: Two key local routes link Sandhurst with surrounding settlements whilst providing connections across the parish. Bodiam Road is one of Sandhurst's main spine, after Queen Street, enabling access towards Sandhurst Cross - a more rural part of the village. This road has a relatively rural character justified by its gently meandering layout and prevalence of trees along the road. Aside from residential uses, several farms are located along this route. Similarly, Sponden Lane provides access to farmsteads and houses to the north, and is a critical link for further onward travel outside of Sandhurst. It shares similar characteristics with Bodiam Road, whilst it becomes a country lane towards the north merging with Mills Street.

A network of rural lanes sustains north-south movement throughout the parish, extending beyond to nearby settlements. These include Crouch Lane, and Stone Pit Lane running north of the A268, and Marsh Quarter Lane and Ethnam Lane to the south of A268.

Cul-de-sacs: A series of cul-de-sacs branch off from Queen Street and Bodiam Road, providing local access to neighbourhoods such as Oaks Fostral, Tanyard and Old Orchard.

Public Rights of Way: Sandhurst is well connected to the countryside through an extensive network of public footpaths. These are well-used recreationally and serve as 'green' links across the parish and to nearby villages. In absence of any significant dedicated cycle infrastructure, these local and rural routes also sustain cycling beyond the village core.

Bus services: Bus no.349 is the only bus route passing through Sandhurst with a stop on Queen Street, running between between Hawkhurst and Hastings on an infrequent schedule. Overall, the parish is not well-serviced by public transport.

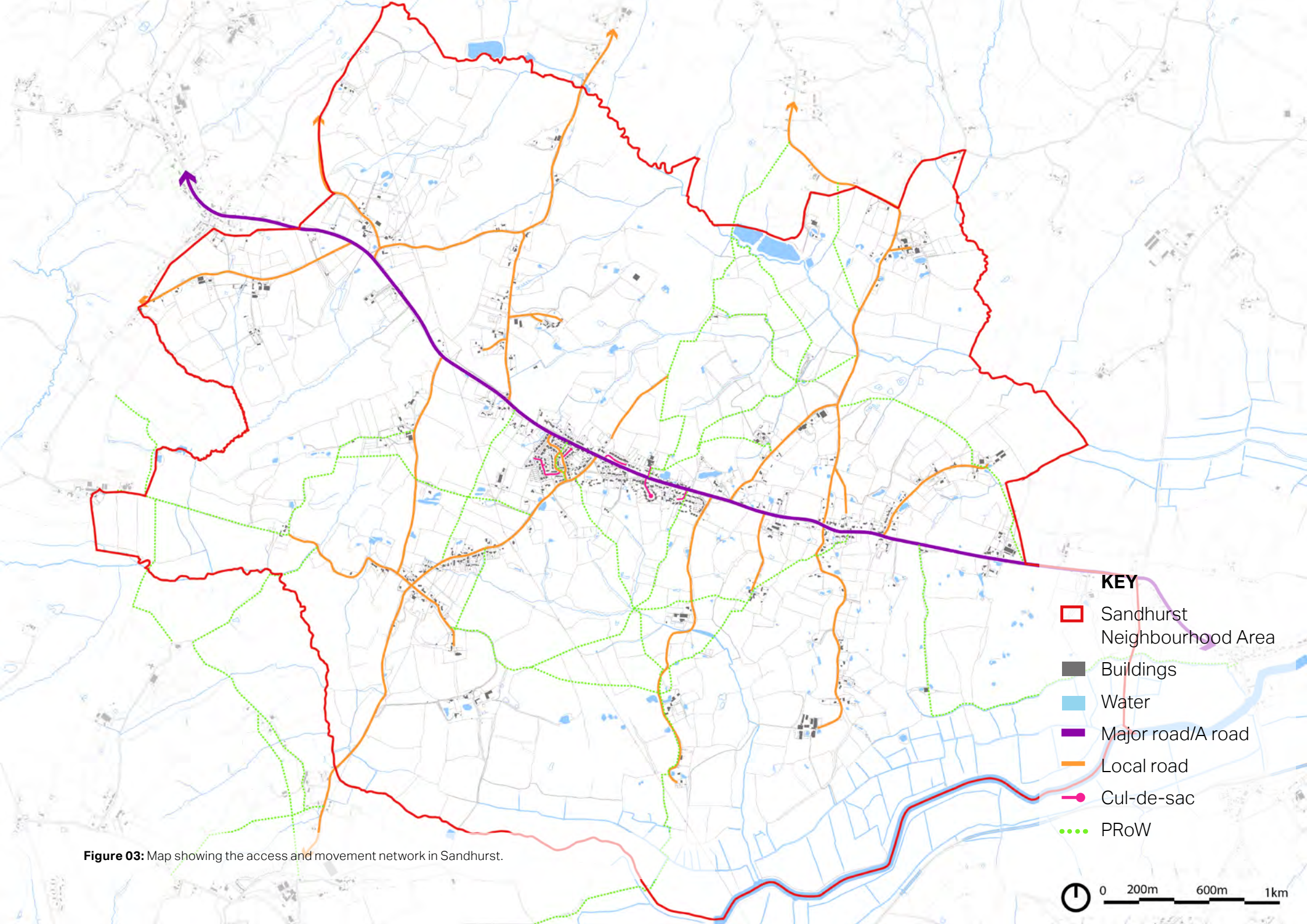


Figure 03: Map showing the access and movement network in Sandhurst.

2.1.2 Heritage & Green Infrastructure

High Weald National Landscape contributes significantly to Sandhurst's setting as a rural village and parish. Within its rural surrounds are multiple areas of ancient and deciduous woodlands as well as multiple valued heritage assets within and beyond the village's conservation area, all reinforce Sandhurst's rural and historic character.

High Weald National Landscape: Swathes of open farmland, rolling hills and networks of ancient woodlands of the High Weald National Landscape define Sandhurst's overall landscape character setting which the village is embedded within. More details on the landscape character of Sandhurst can be found in Tunbridge Wells Borough Landscape Character Assessment (LUC, Dec 2017).

Ancient woodlands: There are extensive areas of ancient and deciduous woodlands surrounding Sandhurst. Most notably, Hurst Wood and Lord's Wood to the north of the parish and Downgate Woods to the south-east of the parish. Rectory Meadow to the north west of the parish is also an area of deciduous woodland and a local nature reserve. Tree Preservation Orders are in place within some of these woodland areas, demonstrating their importance as critical green assets within the parish.

Tree Protection Orders: TPOs are also in place in multiple areas throughout the village. Significant areas include the mature wooded area around Orchard Farm to the west of Sponden Lane which extends to Lords Wood. Similarly, wooded areas to the west of Stone Pit Lane and Hastings Road are all covered by TPOs.

Flood Risk: The main watercourse in Sandhurst is the River Rother, which forms the southern boundary of the parish. The Kent Ditch is a small tributary that branches off from River Rother flowing between fields in the south of the parish. Majority of the settlement area within the parish falls in Flood Risk Zone 1 area, at low risk of flooding, with fields to the immediate north and south of River Rother and the Kent Ditch falling within Flood Risk Zone 3 with high flood risk. However, Sandhurst is susceptible to surface drainage problems during storm events, especially in more rural parts of the parish, such as Sandhurst Cross.

Conservation area and listed buildings: Sandhurst's rural heritage is well preserved with a varied collection of listed buildings, most of which fall within the Sandhurst Conservation Area which covers the historical core of the village along Queens Street and the village green. A number of dwellings survive as examples of Sandhurst's development as a rural agricultural community throughout the 17th and 18th Centuries and many are Grade II listed. Many feature Kentish peg tile roofs, red brick and hung tile facades, typical of the Kentish rural setting. Examples include the Grade II listed Bell Farmhouse and Shrewsbury Cottage along Queens Street. Beyond the conservation area, the Grade II* listed St Nicholas Church on the hilltop of Sandhurst Cross can be dated as far back as the 13th Century.

Key views: Due to the rolling topography and expansive open fields that surrounds Sandhurst Village, long views into the surrounding landscape setting contribute to its character as a rural village. These include views towards the village from St Nicholas Church in Sandhurst Cross, and from the Windmill towards the northern part of the parish.

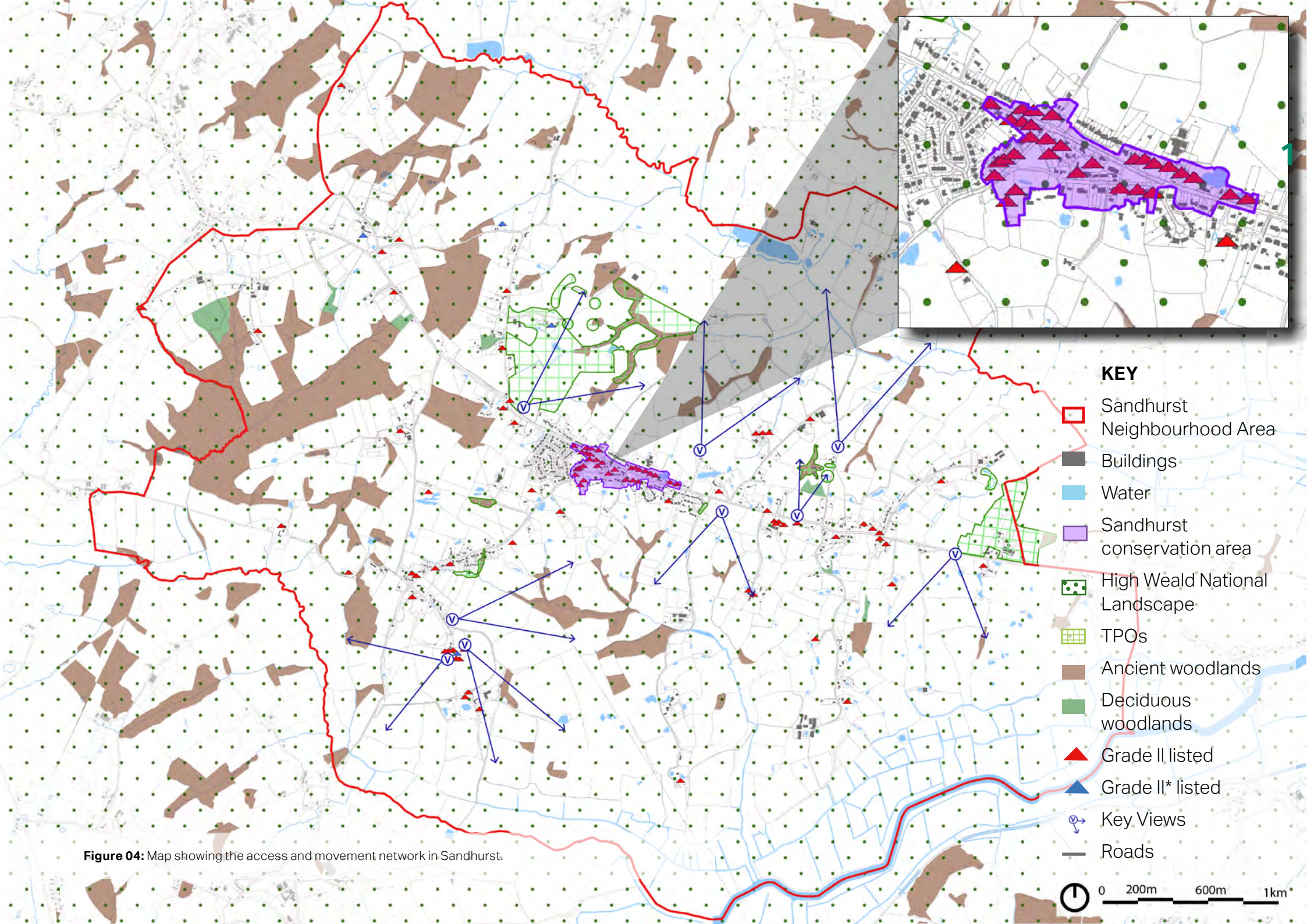


Figure 04: Map showing the access and movement network in Sandhurst.

2.2 Character of Sandhurst

This section will offer a spatial analysis of Sandhurst. The parish will be organised in character areas identifying variations in street patterns, patterns of growth, building lines and plot sizes.

The map on this page identifies the character areas as discussed and agreed with the NP Steering Group and local community. Additional analysis will also cover land uses, green and blue infrastructure, topography and architectural styles and materials. The findings will then help inform the design guidance presented in Chapter 3. A summary of the findings can also be found in pages 26 and 27.

- Conservation area
- Ribbon developments
- Sandhurst Cross & Linkhill
- Outlying farmsteads
- Mid-20th century onwards developments

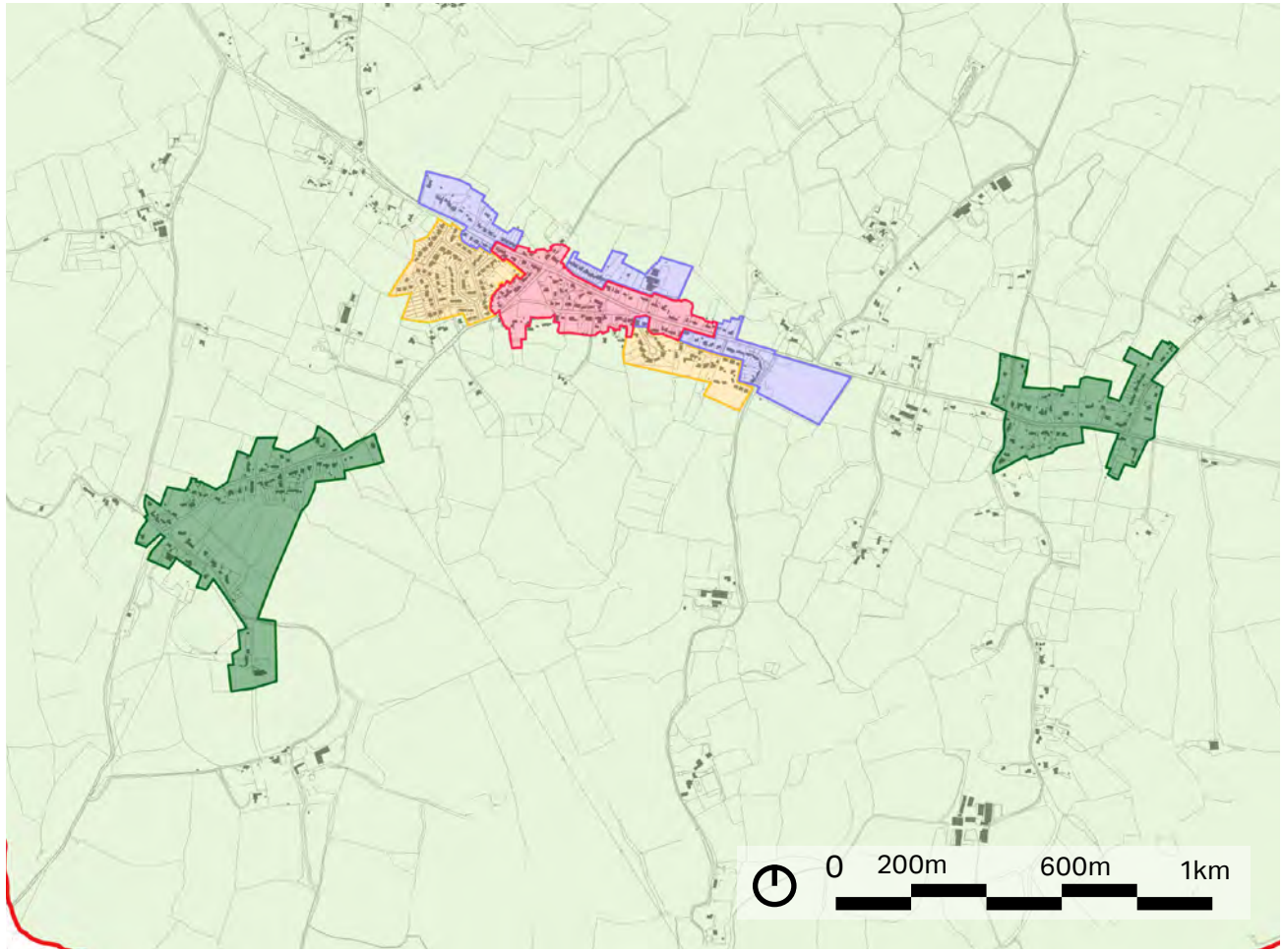


Figure 05: Map showing the character areas of Sandhurst.

Conservation area

This character area comprises most part of the main village settlement along Queen Street including the two village greens. This area is the heart of the village and significantly contributes to the local vernacular of the area.

Theme	Description
Pattern of Development	This character area includes linear development set along Queens Road, as well as areas overlooking The Green and Lower Green. There is a mix of building typologies up to 2 storeys high, ranging between detached, semi-detached houses and bungalows. Some landmark buildings include the windmill, the old post office, the clock tower and the converted old forge along Queen Street. Plot sizes and widths vary, reinforcing the village's rural character. In addition, plot sizes along Bodiam Road are of a range of widths and lengths. Building lines also vary due to the different levels of setbacks.
Building Line/ Plot Arrangement	Plots of varying sizes follow a general linear pattern, front gardens of different sizes create subtle variations in building lines. This variation reinforces the rural character of the village and creates visual diverse streetscene. Levels of enclosure also vary; properties set along the main road are characterised create less enclosure, whilst properties along Back Road generate a more enclosed feel due to the narrow width of the road. Properties around the village greens are arranged less formally to create irregular building lines and setbacks, and hence a sense of openness. The Green is bordered by housing along quieter and narrower residential streets, street trees and ample of natural boundary treatment - all contribute towards a heightened sense of enclosure. On the other hand, Lower Green is a less enclosed open space located along Queen Street which is a wider thoroughfare, with properties which tend to have generous front gardens and are setback further from the road. Comparatively, properties along Back Road tend to have smaller or no front gardens due to higher densities and mixed land uses.

Table 01: Conservation area character area profile

Ribbon developments

This character area comprises the linear settlements to the west and east of the conservation area along Queen Street, which also act, unofficially, as entrances/ welcome points to the heart of the village.

Theme	Description
Pattern of Development	Those developments are characterised by a linear layout, set along Queen Street. Pavements border the road on both sides. However, the general environment along the streetscene is usually hindered by heavy traffic and high speeds.
Building Line/ Plot Arrangement	The overall feel of the Queen Street remains informal and in-keeping with its rural context, due to varied building setbacks and rolling topography. In particular, most properties are characterised with long driveways and generous setbacks, whilst others are at a lower level from the street. The varied streetscape is enhanced by boundary treatments ranging between hedges, trees and flower beds, and low height brick or stone walls and timber fencing. Plots sizes and widths vary, with larger plots found to the north of the main road, whilst smaller ones to the south due to higher densities.

Table 02: Ribbon developments character area profile

Sandhurst Cross & Linkhill

This character area comprises the two rural settlements in the parish, Sandhurst Cross and Linkhill. Both include well-vegetated lanes of meandering character and low density developments celebrating the rural environment.

Theme	Description
Pattern of Development	Those developments are characterised by a linear layout, which often gets interrupted by the generally meandering layout of Bodiam Road, Church Road and Queen Street. This street layout allows for interesting perspectives along the streetscape. There are no pavements on either side and the rural lanes are bordered with rich vegetation.
Building Line/ Plot Arrangement	In general, the level of enclosure along those lanes is higher compared to the main village core, mainly due to the rich vegetation and the narrow width of the roads. Building density is lower compared to the centre of the village and thus, most of the houses are either detached or bungalows. However, there are also some examples of semi-detached houses.

Table 03: Sandhurst Cross & Linkhill character area profile

Outlying farmsteads

This character area comprises the rural lanes in the parish where farm buildings or converted farms into residential buildings can be found.

Theme	Description
Pattern of Development	There is a number of farmsteads around the parish, along the rural lanes, that either include operating farms or converted farmhouses into residences or both. Those properties are usually setback from the meandering rural lanes and they are bordered with natural boundary treatments including hedgerows, hedges and trees. Long driveways lead to the buildings mitigating views and offering a good buffer from the main road. Residential properties are also found scattered along rural lanes, for instance on Sponden Lane, Mill Street and Ethnam Lane. Those have smaller setbacks compared to the farm buildings, however, they are also bordered with natural boundary treatments.
Building Line/ Plot Arrangement	Building lines are irregular celebrating the rural environment, whilst building orientations offer great variations. Plot shapes are also irregular and generous in size.

Table 04: Outlying farmsteads character area profile

Mid-20th century onwards development

This character area comprises all neighbourhoods that were completed in the mid-20th century onwards. These include the converted barn development - The Coomes, Tanyard Estate as well as properties along Oaks Forstal. More recent examples of these include Old Orchard and Marsh Quarter Lane. These developments are grouped together due to similar patterns of growth, however, any differences between them will also be highlighted.

Theme	Description
Pattern of Development	These developments are organised in a cul-de-sac layout fronting the streets, whilst backing the countryside, woodlands or vegetation. Tanyard Estate is characterised by a denser and tighter-knit development pattern, providing a large proportion of housing within the parish. Properties are arranged back-to-back and follow the gently meandering roads, mostly constructed with yellow/buff brick with some examples of red brick and white render. The Coomes has a relatively different layout compared to the rest of the developments in this character area, as it was built following a farmstead typology. More specifically, buildings are spaciously set around a courtyard whilst the chosen local vernacular is in keeping with the farm buildings heritage (e.g. black weatherboarding). Properties along Marsh Quarter Lane are arranged to overlook onto the countryside which is a unique spatial arrangement to the village.
Building Line/ Plot Arrangement	Plot sizes and widths in Tanyard Estate are generally regular with small variations, whilst building lines also present some subtle variations. Front gardens are well-vegetated with grass, flowerbeds or bushes. Due to the lack of hedges or brick walls, there is a feeling of shared/communal space along those streets. However, there is rich vegetation with trees and woodlands bordering the back of properties along Stream Pit Lane and Old Orchard, offering a smooth transition into the countryside to maintain the rural character of the parish. Contrastingly, housing in Oak Fostral and The Coombe are characterised by a more irregular building line, due to greater variation in orientation of the buildings and more generously sized gardens. However, there is generally a lack of natural boundary treatment and a more prevalent use of hardscaped surfaces in the more recent developments of Old Orchard and Marsh Quarter Lane. This contradicts with the overall rural setting of Sandhurst.

Table 05: Mid-20 century onwards development character area profile

Photo gallery

The diverse character of streets, as a result of different patterns of development, building heights, choice of boundary treatments, contribute towards diverse streetscenes and add visual interest for all road users. The rural setting of Sandhurst is core to its identity, much of this can be attributed to smooth transitions between built up areas and the countryside through adequate landscape buffering as a way to minimise visual impact of built up areas to the countryside.

DG.5 offers design guidance on different types of patterns of development that can be introduced in new development (depending on the context), as a way to integrate with the existing rural character of Sandhurst parish.

DG.6 provides design guidance on how to create appropriate boundaries between properties and streets using boundary treatments that are typical of Sandhurst.

Linear neighbourhoods - Conservation area

Figure 06: Old Post Office set in the corner of the main road and opposite to the green space acts as a landmark and focal point for the village.

Figure 07: Properties characterised with larger setbacks from the main road, generous front gardens and a mix of landscape and fencing as boundary treatments.

Figure 08: Sandhurst tearoom - a ground floor cafe with residential unit above, with little setback from the main road.

Linear neighbourhoods - Sandhurst Cross, Queen Street

Figure 09: Generous green verges along the main street offer a feel of openness in the area promoting the rural character.

Figure 10: Hilly topography allows for height differences generating interesting visuals along the streetscape.

Figure 11: Slight meandering rural lane offers interesting perspectives along the streetscape, Sandhurst Cross.

Photo gallery

Village Greens

Figure 12: Properties fronting informal road with no verges, leading to the village green on Back Road, providing passive surveillance to activity taking place on the green.

Figure 13: Sandhurst village green - a key historical focal point of the village on Bodiam Road, with properties overlooking it.

Mid-20th century onwards development

Figure 14: Semi-detached houses built with a mixture of yellow and red brick along Tanyad/Poundfield Road.

Figure 15: Cul-de-sac lane branching out, on a higher level, from the main street.

Mid-20th century onwards development (recent examples)

Figure 16: Recent developments on Marsh Quarter Lane with little landscape buffer to mitigate against their visual impact on the rural setting.

Figure 17: Recent development in traditional style sensitively set around an existing building preserving existing green assets.

Farmstead conversion and isolated developments

Figure 18: Local example of a recent farmstead conversion development at the edge of the village with sensitive choice of material , Bodiam Road

Figure 19: Example of a 20th century isolated development set along a rural lane with generous gardens and outstanding views towards the open countryside, Sandhurst Cross.

Village Character	Description
Land Uses	Land use across Sandhurst is predominantly residential. Sandhurst Tea room and The New Swan pub can be found on Queen Street. Sandhurst Nursery and Primary School are located along the A268, as well as Kemp Car Care centre and Texaco petrol station. A convenience store, the village hall and Sandhurst Mission Church are located on Back Road. There are two other churches in the parish - Sandhurst Baptist Church in Linkhill and St Nicholas Church in Sandhurst Cross.
Green and blue infrastructure	Set within the High Weald National Landscape, Sandhurst Parish is home to an extensive network of green and blue infrastructure that contribute significantly to biodiversity, some of these include ancient and deciduous woodlands that are accessible from the village via PRoWs (as outlined on Figure 2). Within the village, there are 2 village greens located on Back Street and Bodiam Road. These are historically important open spaces in Sandhurst, where many community events (such as summer fairs and festivals) take place. To the east of the A268 is the Sandhurst playing fields and a well-equipped and maintained playground. Another smaller, but less well-maintained, playground can also be found in Old Orchard. A community allotment is also located in the vicinity, at the end of Old Orchard. Apart from open spaces, well-vegetated streets, front and back gardens with rich landscaping also contribute to the green infrastructure network of Sandhurst, particularly those in Sandhurst Cross and Linkhill. Tree-lined streets and rural lanes, such as Back Road, Bodiam Road Ethnam Lane and Stone Pit Lane, reinforce the rural character of Sandhurst. In terms of blue infrastructure, the main watercourse in the parish - River Rother, flows along the southern parish boundary. However, the closest access point to the river is in Newenden in the neighbouring Cranbrook parish to the east. The Kent Ditch also flows along this part of the parish boundary and between fields. There are also a number of ponds of varying sizes distributed across the parish, some of the more notable ones are located along Bodiam Road towards Sandhurst Cross.
Topography and views	Based on the Historic Landscape Characterisation (Revised Kent HLC, 2000, Tunbridge Wells), the parish lies at the eastern end of the Borough of Tunbridge Wells overlooking to the south, the valley of the upper reaches of the River Rother. A central ridge of high ground runs east to west forms a spine through the parish. To the north is a valley, a tributary of the Rother called the Hexden Channel. Smaller streams flow either north or south into these valleys creating smaller valleys between which are knolls of higher ground. It is a particularly wooded parish especially in the west, with smaller gills and coppices in the stream valleys. This topography offers breathtaking views towards the open fields from many viewpoints; some characteristic ones are from St Nicholas Church to the north-east and from the Windmill to the north. In addition, the hilly landscape can also be appreciated within the settlement due to some height differences between the road and the plots.

Table 06: Sandhurst Village overall character profile

Photo gallery

Green and blue infrastructure contribute to Sandhurst's rural character and enhance surrounding landscape and biodiversity. These features should be integrated into new designs.

DG.4 offers design guidance on how new development should treat edges, by either preserving existing vegetation or adding green buffers to create a smooth transition into open fields, unploughed meadow or ancient watermeadow. Additional guidance focuses on preserving key views and vistas.

DG.11 offers design guidance on biodiversity interventions for the private and public space that could improve the environment, the wildlife and educate the community about the existing species and habitats. Additional guidance focuses on ways to support species' habitats.

Figure 20: View towards Sandhurst village from St Nicholas church with the Windmill offering some variety in the otherwise consistent roofline. However, other features like the new development to the east also stand out due to the bright colours that were chosen for the facade eroding the overall natural colour palette.

Figure 22: The main road slightly slopes down towards the west offering nice views towards the backdrop vegetation.

Figure 21: View along Bodiam Road towards the open fields to the west.

Figure 23: Height differences within the built environment offer visual interest along the streetscape.

Local vernacular

Sandhurst Village is characterised by a mixture of housing typologies, sizes, architectural styles and roofscapes. This variety creates visual interest along the streetscape and makes Sandhurst what it is.

The next pages will present a gallery of the materials, roof types, wall finishes, boundary treatments and other decorative features that are found in the parish.

Roof types & materials

Roof types range between gabled, hipped, mansard, cross-gabled and cat-slide roofs. New developments along Marsh Quarter Lane are designed with steep roofs that create an imposing roofline against its rural backdrop. Such steep roof pitches are also not typical of Sandhurst's vernacular.

Roof materials are mostly Kentish peg tiles or clay tile, there are some examples of slate roofs - all contributing to the local vernacular. Brick chimney stacks are commonly seen on properties, creating dynamic rooflines.

Figure 24: Oast house with hipped roof stowage & square kiln with pyramidal roof

Figure 25: Older roof with kent peg tiles, brick chimney & dormer window

Figure 26: Cat-slide roof with kent peg tiles and brick chimney

Figure 27: Cross gabled roof with slates & decoration.

Figure 28: Contemporary interpretation - cross gabled roofs with metallic panels

Figure 29: Hipped timber porch with matching clay hungtiles to the house facade

Figure 30: Timber gabled open porch with clay tile roof over low brick walls

Figure 31: Half-gabled hooded porch with clay tile roof that blends in with red hungtiles used on the property facade

Figure 32: Enclosed porch with a clay tile hipped roof and matching white weatherboard to the house facade

Facades and other decorative features

Brick is the prevailing material used on the façades of both older and more recent housing. Many of the older houses in Sandhurst have white render, weatherboarding (white or black) or hungtiles paired with red brick, these are also seen in some recent infill developments and forms a significant part of Sandhurst's local vernacular. Some houses are decorated with stone and shiplap.

Most properties in the parish have wooden casement windows painted white, with a few examples of sash windows. Some properties also have leaded lights on their doors or windows to add visual interest. UPVC windows are most common in recent properties.

Figure 33: Upper: Weather boarding & lower: red brick. Porches and chimneys act as decorative features

Figure 34: Upper: Hung tiles & lower: Rendered

Figure 35: Upper: Hung tiles & lower: red brick, both from local clay, in the local vernacular

Figure 36: Red brick, some vitrified

Figure 37: Weather boarding. White/off-white is commonly used in residential properties

Figure 38: Sandstone & red brick side extension

Boundary treatments

The majority of the properties in Sandhurst have either hedges, fences or a mixture of both as boundary treatment. Close boarded fencing or fence panels are popular for posts and railings for properties with larger gardens. Some of the more recently built properties have concrete gravel boards and posts at boundaries. There are very few properties that front directly onto the road with no boundary treatments.

Sandhurst's unique local vernacular contributes to its heritage and character. Listed buildings as well as non-designated buildings of heritage value can be a source of inspiration for new developments.

DG.3 offers design guidance on how infill development can be designed sensitively to the surrounding built and natural environment.

DG.8 offers design guidance on how new development can respect the local history and suggest design that is in keeping with the Sandhurst palette.

DG.9 offers design guidance on eco-design techniques which can be introduced in both new and existing homes, while respecting Sandhurst's local vernacular and rural character.

Figure 39: High hedges bordering the driveway to the property

Figure 40: High hedgerows combined with a low-height iron gate

Figure 41: High hedgerows

Figure 42: Hedges and trees combined with low height timber fencing

Figure 43: Hedges and bushes combined with a timber gate (with gaps)

Figure 44: Low height timber fencing (with gaps)

Figure 45: Rocks form a boundary combined with grass and flowerbeds

Figure 46: Low height stone wall with flowerbeds, grass and tree

Figure 47: Low height brick wall combined with trees and grass

Summary table (positive characteristics)

Positive characteristics in Sandhurst that could act as references in future development	Relevance to the design guidelines in Chapter 3
The topography and landscape of the parish is of high value, so any future development should promote and enhance it.	DG.3, DG.4
There is a variety of different patterns of development within the parish offering visual interest along the streetscape, whilst it also celebrates the rural nature of the parish. Those patterns need to be respected and referenced in any future development.	DG.3, DG.4, DG.5
Sandhurst is a 'green' village with well-vegetated streets, rich natural boundary treatments and green spaces surrounded with open fields, countryside and woodlands. Blue infrastructure is also in place with ponds and streams spread around the parish as well as the main village settlement. Those green and blue assets need to be preserved and integrated into any new development to protect the rural character of the parish and promote biodiversity.	DG.4, DG.6, DG.11
Long and short-distance views towards the settlement, green spaces, backdrop woodland or the open fields should be preserved and promoted in any new development.	DG.3, DG.4, DG.7
There are distinctive architectural styles and local vernacular materials in Sandhurst that should be referenced in future development.	DG.3, DG.9, DG.10
Views to landmarks like the Windmill, the churches and Clock Tower should be preserved.	DG.4
Eco design should be promoted and houses should include environmentally conscious features (e.g. water storage, solar panels, ground/air source heating, insect friendly bricks etc.)	DG.9
Electric car charging points should be an integral part of the design of new developments.	DG.1, DG.9

Table 07: Summary of positive characteristics of Sandhurst

Summary table (issues and potential threats)

Issues and potential threats in Sandhurst that should be addressed by design guidance	Relevance to the design guidelines in Chapter 3
Choice of colours on façades of any new development should be subtle and sensitive to the general colour palette that is used within the village.	DG.3, DG.8
Building density and massing of new houses should match the surrounding environs to preserve the rural context.	DG.5, DG.7
Abrupt edges in the rural countryside should be avoided. Instead, natural boundary treatments should be in place to allow for smooth transition into the open fields.	DG.4, DG.6
Natural boundary treatments should prevail over hard boundary treatments. In addition, closeboarded gates and high timber fences should be avoided as they hinder the movement of species and erode the general rural character along the streets.	DG.6
Lighting for any new development should be kept to the minimum in order to protect the dark skies of Sandhurst's rural setting. Other forms of indirect lighting sources should be used instead.	DG.2
There are examples of rooflines of new developments that are imposing to the overall village scene due to high pitches, different roof materials or larger massing and heights. The roofline of any new development should match the local examples and complement the streetscene.	DG.3, DG.4, DG.7, DG.8
Mixtures of housing sizes should be promoted to meet the needs of the wider population.	DG.3, DC.5

Table 08: Summary of issues and potential threats of Sandhurst

Design guidelines

03

3. Design guidance

This chapter provides design guidance aiming to shape future development, of any scale, in the parish including infill development and house extensions or conversions. Where possible, images and diagrams are used to exemplify the design guidelines.

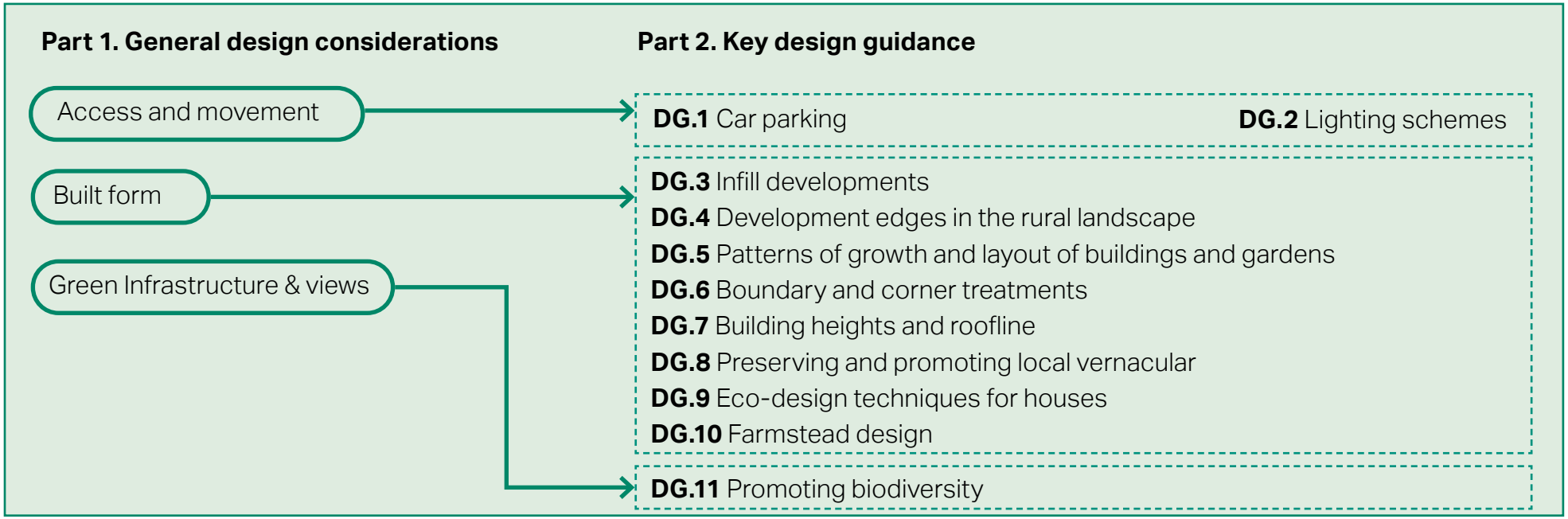
3.1 Introduction

This section is divided into two parts:

Part 1. General design considerations. A set of general design considerations appropriate to Sandhurst's built and natural character. These considerations should be addressed by applicants and their design teams. Where such considerations are covered by planning documents or design guides in national, district or parish level, relevant links have been added.

Part 2. Key design guidance. A set of design guidelines, regarding key aspects/ characteristics of Sandhurst Parish. Those guidelines are not fully covered by planning documents and therefore, more detailed guidance are provided.

Overall, both the design considerations and design guidelines focus on residential environments, of any scale, including infill development, potential conversions or housing extensions as well. The table below offers an overview of Chapter 3.



Part 1. General design considerations

3.2 Part 1: General design considerations

3.2.1 Access and movement

- New development should propose street design that meets the needs of all users and does not compromise the needs of one over the other; drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities;
- Streets should be considered a 'place' to be and contribute to the local character of Sandhurst. Thus, a good understanding of the existing street typologies and characteristics, widths and enclosure is needed so that any new design reflects the existing rurality. For example, as analysed in Section 2.1, some existing street typologies include linear streets bordered with vegetation and street trees, meandering lanes and short cul-de-sac lanes;
- In large scale developments, a hierarchy of street typologies should be proposed to filter traffic as well as creating a variety of environments. Those new streets must reference the existing street typologies and ensure the character and environment of Sandhurst is preserved and enhanced;
- Development should integrate with existing movement networks in Sandhurst Parish and enhance them; Public Rights of Way (PRoW), footpaths, streets and cycle routes;
- New development should propose streets that incorporate opportunities for landscaping, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage. This approach will enhance the rural character and environment of Sandhurst as well as boosting biodiversity;
- Parking should be well integrated in design and not dominate the public realm. For that reason, soft landscape is suggested along the edges as well as the use of an earthy-coloured palette for paving materials, as opposed to concrete paving. This will mitigate any visual impact, increase visual attractiveness and reduce non-permeability of surfaces, refraction and heating. Detailed guidance on parking are covered in DG.1 Car parking;
- Parking courts should be overlooked by properties or other facilities to create a safe environment. High-quality and well-designed soft landscaping can also be used;
- All parking areas must be constructed from porous materials to minimise surface water run-off and help mitigate potential flooding;
- Electric vehicles charging points, both for off-street and on-street parking, should be integrated into the design for sustainability enhancement;
- Parking garages must not dominate the appearance of dwellings and must not reduce the amount of active frontages to the street;
- Adequate provision should be made for bin storage, including areas for waste separation, holding and recycling;

Part 1. General design considerations

- Adequate provision should be made for cycle parking, in public and private land; and
- Energy-efficient lighting schemes, that do not affect biodiversity, should be in place to promote safety in movements, whilst ensuring the protection of dark skies. Detailed guidance on lighting can be found in DG.2 Lighting schemes;

Relevant planning policies:

- **Manual for Streets (2007), Department for Transport. Link:** https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1072722/Essex_Manual_for_Streets_Redacted.pdf
- **National Model Design Code (Part 2 - 2021), DLUHC. Link:** https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1009795/NMDC_Part_2_Guidance_Notes.pdf
- **Building for a Healthy Life (2020), Homes England. Link:** https://www.udg.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/files/14JULY20%20BFL%202020%20Brochure_3.pdf
- **Rural Lanes Supplementary Planning Guidance (1998), Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Link:** https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/343633/SPG_Rural_Lanes.pdf
- **Kent Design Guide (2000), Kent Design Initiative. Link:** https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/service-specific-policies/housing,-regeneration-and-planning-policies/regeneration-policies/kent-design-guide

Figure 48: Rocks form a boundary combined with grass and flowerbeds

Figure 49: Example of cycle parking storage that fits sensitively within a rural environment, elsewhere in UK.

Figure 50: Example of bin storage surrounded by flowers and plants that improves the surroundings and enhances biodiversity.

Part 1. General design considerations

3.2.2 Built form

- New development should gain a good understanding of the rich local vernacular of Sandhurst to make sure any new design reflects the heterogeneity of the parish. Please see DG.8 for more design guidelines on architectural details and materials;
- New development should suggest design that is sensitive to the surrounding low density environment. In particular, the density in Sandhurst Village Centre is approximately 18 dph (dwellings per hectare), whilst it considerably drops in the wider area. Thus, the massing, height and scale of the new structures should match the surrounding context;
- New development should retain any existing trees, hedges, hedgerows and woodlands and incorporate them into the new design. For example, those existing green features could be part of green spaces within the new development or green buffers along the development edges to allow for a smooth transition into the surrounding open fields. Please see DG.4 for more design guidelines on development edges;
- New development should propose design that allows for relatively irregular building lines and varied plot sizes and widths to match the surrounding context of Sandhurst. Irregular building lines can create visual interest along streets with buildings either facing directly onto the pavements or having well-sized front gardens. Please see DG.5 for more design guidelines on patterns of growth;
- New development should propose a mix of housing to include a range of house types and sizes to allow for a variety of options and thus, meet the needs of a wider group of people;
- Infill development should complement the street scene into which it will be inserted. Thus, building lines, boundary treatments, massing, heights should all be appropriate to the surrounding context. Refer to DG.3 for guidance on infill developments;
- Buildings should front onto the streets and avoid having blank façades that hinder activity and movement;
- Buildings, where possible, should overlook green spaces, open fields and nature in general;
- New development should prioritise soft boundary treatments (trees, green verges, hedges etc.) over harder surfaces. Hard boundary treatments can be kept to the minimum matching the existing character of Sandhurst. Refer to DG.6 for more detailed guidance; and
- New development should propose design that creates different levels of enclosure along the streetscape to offer visual interest. For example, tree-lined streets like the Queen Street offer strong levels of enclosure, whilst lanes like Crouch Lane, adjacent to open fields offer a lower levels of enclosure.

Part 1. General design considerations

Relevant planning policies:

- **Kent Design Guide (2000), Kent Design Initiative. Link:** https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/service-specific-policies/housing,-regeneration-and-planning-policies/regeneration-policies/kent-design-guide
- **Alterations & Extensions SPD (2006) Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Link:** https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/343626/SPD_Alterations_Extensions.pdf
- **Farmsteads Assessment Guidance for Tunbridge Wells Borough SPD (2016) English Heritage & High Weald AONB. Link:** https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/343638/Farmsteads-SPD-Adopted-Feb-2016_lowres.pdf
- **Building for a Healthy Life (2020), Homes England. Link:** https://www.udg.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/files/14JULY20%20BFL%202020%20Brochure_3.pdf
- **National Model Design Code (Part 2 - 2021), DLUHC. Link:** https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1009795/NMDC_Part_2_Guidance_Notes.pdf

3.2.3 Green Infrastructure and views

- New development should provide adequate open space in terms of both quantity and quality. Adequate private/communal amenity space should be proposed to meet the needs of the population;
- New development should avoid threatening existing ecological assets within the parish as well as propose new ones to promote biodiversity. Please see DG.11 for more details on the ecological assets and design guidelines on how to promote biodiversity;
- New development should identify existing biodiversity corridors and contribute to their preservation and enhancement;
- New development should promote walking and cycling within the parish by improving access to the countryside and offering more opportunities for walking or cycling;

Part 1. General design considerations

- New development should promote green links (cycle ways, footpaths, tree lined and grass verge-lined streets) into the new design to connect with existing neighbourhoods within the parish and surrounding settlements;
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) should be part of the overall landscape infrastructure and improve the environment;
- New development should gain a good understanding of the landscape context and character of the parish and propose design that does not undermine the existing qualities of the area, especially its setting within the High Weald National Landsacpe;
- New development should relate sensitively to views and vistas within the built environment as well as the surrounding landscape; and
- Any building extension of modification should not exceed the surrounding average building height or block any views towards important built landmarks and landscape features.

Relevant planning policies:

- **Landscape and Nature Conservation Principles (2002), Kent Design Initiative. Link:** https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/service-specific-policies/housing,-regeneration-and-planning-policies/regeneration-policies/kent-design-guide
- **Green Infrastructure Plan SPD (2014), Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Link:** https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/343636/Green-Infrastructure-Plan-SPD-adopted-August-2014-.pdf
- **High Weald National Landscape Management Plan (2024) High Weld Joint Advisory Committee, Link:** https://highweald.org/document-library/aonb-management-plan/high-weald-aonb-management-plan-2024-2029/?layout=default
- **National Model Design Code (Part 2 - 2021), DLUHC. Link:** https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1009795/NMDC_Part_2_Guidance_Notes.pdf

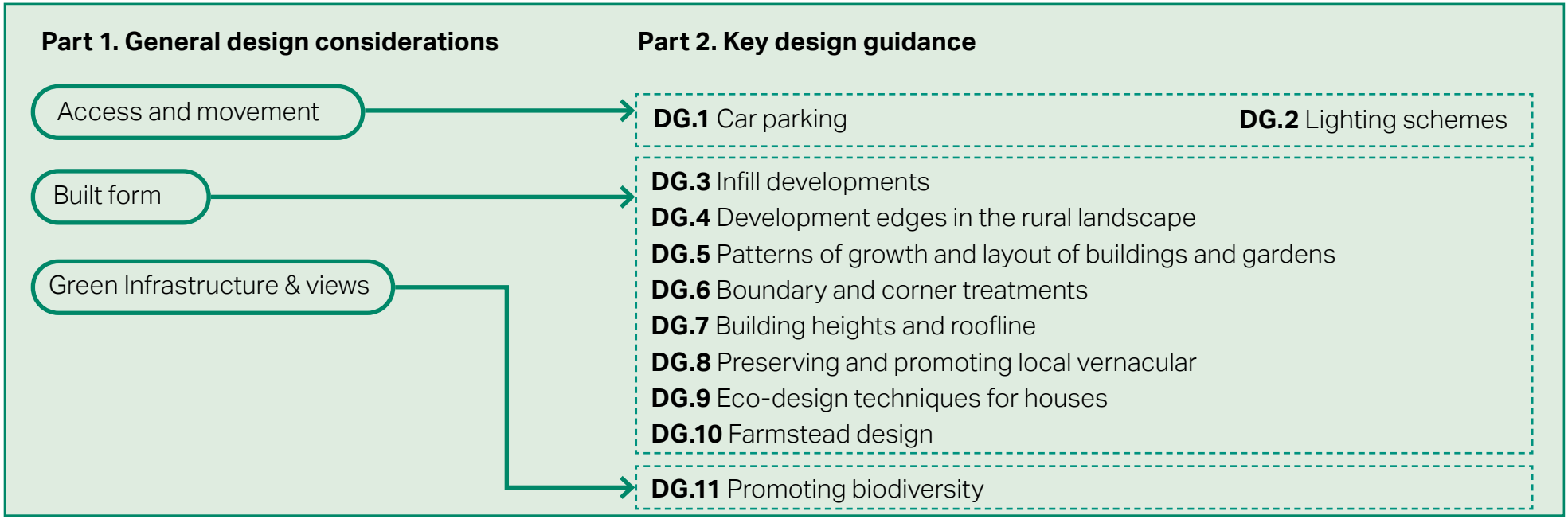
Part 2. Key design guidance

3.3 Part 2. Key design guidance

This section offers more detailed design guidance on some of the design considerations presented in Part 1 and they are categorised in themes as shown in the table below.

The design guidance presented in both Part 1 and Part 2 will be used:

- As a guide for applicants, developers or landowners reflecting the ambitions of the community in Sandhurst;
- As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications. This report should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions;
- As a guide for the Parish Council when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the parish-wide design guidance is complied with; and
- As a tool to promote community-backed development and inform comments on planning applications.



DG.1 Car parking

DG.1 Car parking

Although the aim to create a good network of active travel routes within Sandhurst Parish is a priority, the need to cater for private car parking as a main mode of transport remains important. Therefore car parking has to be carefully integrated into the design of developments. In addition, energy efficiency is also an important consideration and the need for more electric cars is rising.

The dominant car parking typology found across the parish is on-plot parking; however, there are also cases of on-plot garage parking and on-street parking. Therefore, the design guidelines on the next pages will focus on the typologies mentioned above.

Guidelines for on-plot or on front car parking

- Parking should be well integrated into design so as not to dominate the public realm and remain in harmony with existing streetscapes;
- High-quality and well-designed soft landscaping should be used to increase the visual attractiveness of the parking and enhance the rural character of the parish, driveways must be constructed with porous materials, to minimise surface water run-off to help mitigate potential flooding; and
- Electric vehicles charging points and associated services should be integrated into the design of new developments, if possible with each house that provides off-street parking.

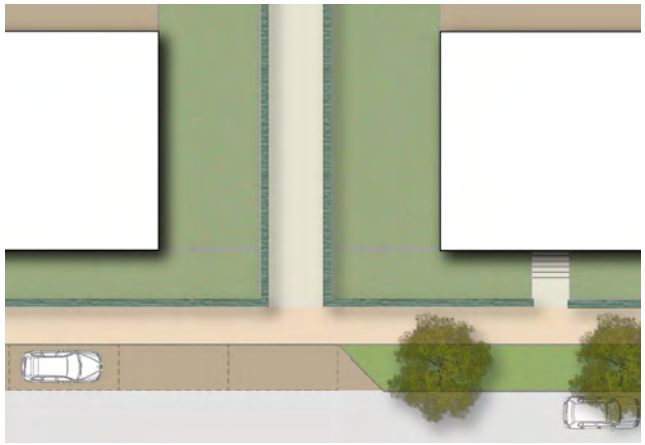


Figure 51: Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-street inset parking.

Figure 52: Example of on-street parking with parking bays and street trees to mitigate the impact of the cars on the streetscape, Poundbury, Dorset.

Figure 53: Example of on-street electric vehicle charging points.

DG.1 Car parking

Guidelines for garages and cycle parking

- Garages must be set back behind the building line, must not dominate the appearance of dwellings and must not reduce the amount of active frontage to the street;
- Covered and secured cycle parking should be provided within the domestic curtilage with easy access (e.g. garage sheds, secure bike storage boxes on front gardens - to avoid cluttering the streetscape); and
- The use of planting and smaller trees alongside cycle parking can be used, 'green living roofs' are encouraged.

Figure 54: Example of an on-plot garage parking within a rural environment which is 'hidden' behind the rich vegetation along the building frontage mitigating any visual impact, UK.

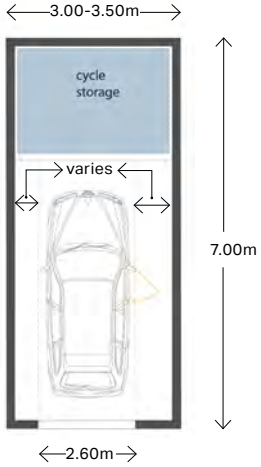


Figure 55: Indicative layout of a garage with a cycle storage area

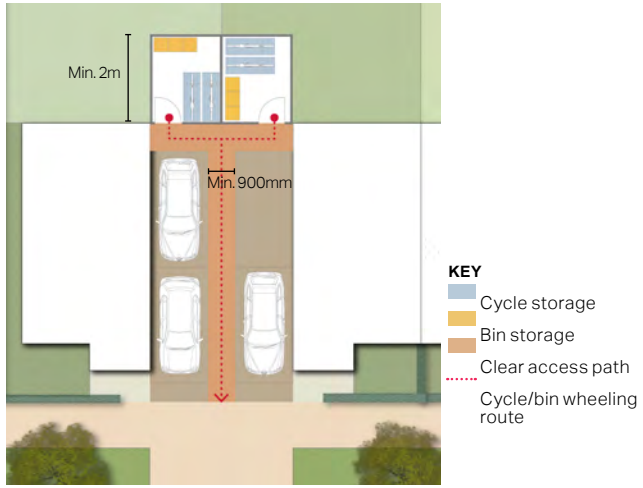


Figure 56: Indicative layout of a bicycle and bin storage area at the back of semi-detached properties.

DG.2 Lighting schemes

DG.2 Lighting schemes

Sandhurst Parish has a strong rural character and thus, dark skies is another key characteristics that should be protected and maintained, especially along settlement edges that meet with the open countryside. To protect the parish's dark skies, new developments should minimise unnecessary street lighting. The following guidelines aim to ensure there is enough consideration given at the design stage of new developments:

- New development should choose lighting that is energy-efficient and sustainable. For instance, the installation of motion sensors on the lights should be encouraged and these should be directed downward to avoid reducing dark skies or disturb neighbours and passers-by; and
- Alternative lighting techniques, such as up-lighting, down-lighting, path-lighting and back lighting, should be considered aside from conventional street lights.

Figure 57: Example of up-lighting, light is focused on an object or tree from a low fixed location.

Figure 58: Example of path lighting, use of flow fixtures which direct illumination downwards and outward.

Figure 59: Example of back lighting used behind a bush to create a glowing effect.

Figure 60: Example of a foot/cycle path which is lit by solar cat's-eye for pedestrian and cyclists, minimising disturbance to nearby properties and natural habitats.

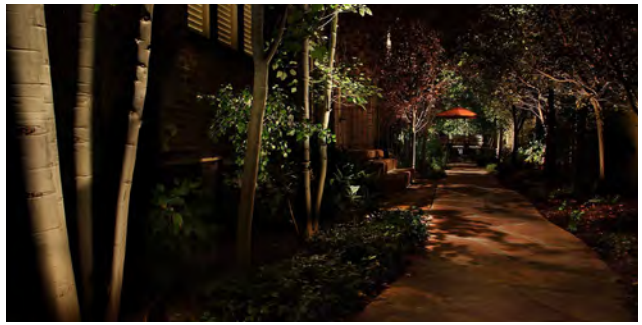


Figure 61: Example of down lighting with bullet-type fixture placed above eye-level above trees to illuminate pathways.

DG.3 Infill developments

DG.3 Infill developments

The context and scale of infill development will vary according to the location of the infill site; however any new infill development can have significant impact on the character and appearance of the built environment. Therefore some design guidelines for infill sites are:

- Infill development should complement the street scene into which it will be inserted. It does not need to mimic the existing styles but its scale, massing and layout need to be in general conformity with the existing. In particular infill development should not be located too close to existing buildings and should not be of a larger scale which dwarfs existing properties and/or presents overlooking issues;
- Infill development in close proximity to heritage assets should propose sensitive design which respects the setting of the heritage asset. This includes the scale, massing, boundary treatment and materials of the infill development;
- The building to plot size ratio of infill development should ensure a good amount of outdoor amenity space. There are differing sizes of front and back gardens in Sandhurst, though in general most properties are set back with both a front and back garden. At the edges of development where it is more rural, larger gardens are more common. Infill development should follow existing context whilst also meeting national standards;
- The building line of new development should be in conformity with the existing. Where there is an existing strong building line, for example with terraced or dense groupings of houses, the building line of infill should be similar in order to preserve the character of the street. In other cases where the building line is more informal, for example in less dense areas, a more varied building line is acceptable;
- The density of any new infill development should reflect its context and its location in the village. The optimum density will respond to surrounding densities while making efficient use of the land; and
- Where there are opportunities for infill development, proposals should retain existing views and vistas between buildings and along view corridors wherever possible.

Figure 62: Positive local infill development examples designed to reflect the existing character of the Burnt Farmhouse, in terms of scale, massing and use of materials, The Coomes.

DG.3 Infill developments

Privacy and space between buildings

- Any proposed infill development must not cause an unacceptable impact on the residential amenities of adjacent residential properties.
- Hedges and fences usually protect privacy at ground floor level, so any privacy issues tend to arise from upstairs windows either looking into neighbours' windows or down into their private garden space.
- To avoid overlooking of habitable rooms and gardens a minimum distance of 15m should be achieved between dwellings where a side elevation of one dwelling faces a rear elevation of another. Where a side elevation is windowless the separation distance can be reduced to 12m. A minimum separation distance of 19m should be achieved between facing windowed rear elevations.
- Where dwellings with facing elevations are positioned on different levels, the above separation distances should be increased by 2m for every 1m difference in level. Where there is a level difference and distances are increased, the lower dwelling should have the longer garden to compensate for any slopes or retaining structures.
- Future housing developments should design the spacing between dwellings to allow for retrospective introduction of gardens and cycle storage as well sustainable measures such as air source heat pumps.

Space between side elevations should allow for breaks in the building line to protect views and provide adequate space for access and storage

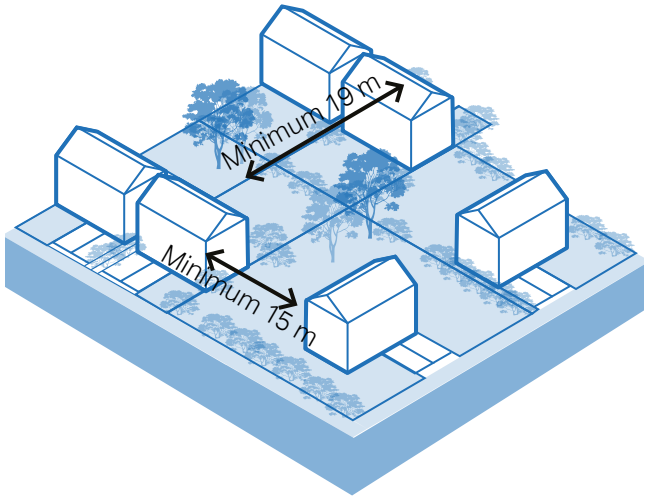


Figure 63: Diagram showing privacy and space between buildings

DG.4 Development edges in rural landscape

DG.4 Development edges in the rural landscape

Sandhurst Parish has a strong rural character and landscape as well as rich vegetation including woodlands, hedges, hedgerows, tree-lined and grass verge-lined streets etc. Those ecological assets should not be undermined by any new development. In particular, any new development set on the edges of the village or next to existing woodlands needs to respect the existing nature and enhance it. Thus, some design guidelines on how new development should treat rural development edges are:

- New development should conserve existing native trees and shrubs along the lanes and within any potential developable site and incorporate any green/ecological asset within design, whilst any unnecessary loss of flora should be avoided. For example, the recent development along The Coomes has introduced native tree planting on site to mitigate against the loss of vegetation from development;
- Abrupt edges with little vegetation or landscape on the edge of the development should be avoided. On the contrary, rich vegetation including native trees and hedgerows should be in place to provide a smooth transition from the built-up areas to the rural landscape;
- Edges must be designed to link rather than segregate existing and new neighbourhoods. Therefore, green corridors should be proposed to provide additional pedestrian and cycle links that will improve connectivity between neighbourhoods and contribute to the successful integration of any new development within the parish. For example, the development along Oak Lane includes a footpath that connects it with the village centre;
- New development adjoining public open spaces should face onto them, as shown in Figure 66, to frame natural views and vistas; and
- New development adjoining open fields and countryside should have a soft landscaped edge, as shown in Figures 64 and 65 to create a gradual transition into the open fields.

DG.4 Development edges in rural landscape

Figure 64: Diagram showing privacy and space between buildings

Figure 65: Diagram showing privacy and space between buildings

Figure 66: Diagram showing privacy and space between buildings

DG.5 Patterns of growth and layout of buildings and gardens

DG.5 Patterns of growth and layout of buildings and gardens

As analysed in Section 2.1, there are two main patterns of growth within the parish, the linear layout and cul-de-sac developments and each one presents different qualities in terms of street layout, buildings lines, plot sizes and widths. In addition to this, there are also examples of farm buildings or converted farms that add some variety in the built environment.

The close relationship of the village with the countryside also contributes to the character of these patterns. Thus, any new development should suggest design that matches the existing patterns of growth and some design guidelines are:

- New developments should be within the village settlement boundary, whilst also protecting important views (shown in Figures 4) to the countryside and existing vegetation;
- New developments must demonstrate a good understanding of the scale and massing of the surrounding built environment and avoid proposing design that exceeds the surrounding roofline or creates unpleasant views to the existing properties;
- New development must demonstrate a good understanding of the built environment (building lines, roofline, orientation, materials) as analysed in Sections 2.2, and propose design that reflects the rural qualities of Sandhurst;
- The building densities of new developments should reflect the rural character of the parish. For example, any development in close proximity to the village centre should be of approximate density 15-20 dwellings per hectare (dph). This density fits with the prevailing character of the settlement, but still seeks to maintain efficient use of land. Density should level off reaching more rural parts of the parish, such as Sandhurst Cross and Linkhill. In general, any proposal that would adversely affect the physical appearance of a rural lane, or give rise to an unacceptable increase in the amount of traffic, noise, or disturbance must be avoided;
- Building setbacks and building lines should be slightly irregular to introduce an informality and therefore, reinforce the rural character of the village;
- The size of plots and their pattern should be varied to contribute to the rural character of the village;
- The sizes of front and back gardens should be varied to reinforce the rural character of the village. However, they should not show great discrepancies with the front and back gardens of the surrounding properties which range between 5-12m and 7-20m respectively;
- Existing hedges, hedgerows and trees should be integrated into design, whilst more planting and vegetation is encouraged to form part of the green network strategy; and
- Appropriate signage should be incorporated along the road to indicate the low speed limits or provide navigation.

DG.5 Patterns of growth and layout of buildings and gardens

Figure 67: Local example of a linear terraced and semi-detached developments where buildings, mainly 2-2.5-storeys, are set along the street, Queen Street.

Figure 68: Local example of a cul-de-sac development where buildings, mainly 2-2.5-storeys, are set along a meandering streets with limited boundary treatments, mainly small grass verges and flowerbeds, Old Orchard.

Figure 69: Diagram showing examples of a linear layout (above) and a cul-de-sac layout (below) within the village illustrating key elements like building lines, density and dimensions for front and rear gardens that should be referenced into the new development.

Linear layout along Queen Street

- Building lines and rotations are generally irregular reinforcing the rural character of the village.
- Front gardens vary between 7-12m.
- Rear gardens vary between 15-20m.

Cul-de-sac layout on Old Orchard

- Building lines and rotations follow the gently meandering cul-de-sac in a cluster manner
- Front gardens vary between 5-7m.
- Rear gardens vary between 7-10m.

DG.6 Boundary and corner treatments

DG.6 Boundary and corner treatments

Aside from the creation of potential local landmarks, treatment of corners and boundary lines are also crucial aspects for successful streetscapes. The following guidelines should be applied in new and infill developments:

- Natural boundary treatments should reinforce the sense of continuity of the building line and help define the street. They should be mainly continuous hedges and low walls using traditional materials which are deemed appropriate for the parish;
- Existing hedges, hedgerows and trees should be integrated into the design of new developments to preserve biodiversity;
- If placed at important intersections the building could be treated as a landmark and thus be slightly taller or display another built element, signalling its importance as a wayfinding cue; and
- All the façades overlooking the street or public space, through the incorporation of windows, balconies, or outdoor private space.

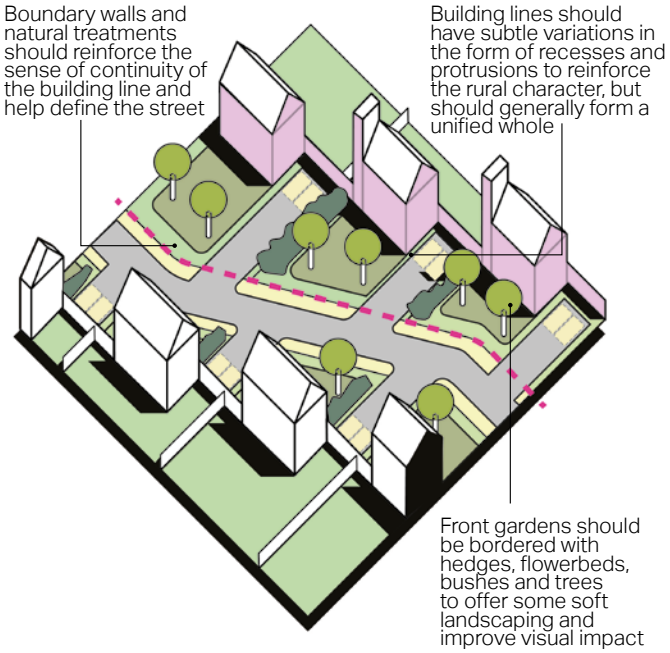


Figure 70: 3D diagram to illustrate some design principles for boundary and corner treatments.

Figure 71: Tall hedges and trees, combined with wooden fencing are typical boundary treatments across Sandhurst, providing good buffering for properties along busy main roads, such as Queens Street.

Figure 72: Positive local example of a corner unit with adequate amount of vegetation as boundary treatment that effectively frames the intersection between Bodiam Road and Queens Street, whilst providing good sight lines for pedestrians to navigate around the corner.

DG.7 Building heights and rooflines

DG.7 Building heights and rooflines

Properties across Sandhurst Parish tend to be 2-2.5 storeys high with some examples of single storey bungalows. As a result of different street layouts, form and heights of buildings, contrasting characters are created across different parts of the parish. It is important that new and infill developments are sensitive to building heights and rooflines of existing developments to maintain Sandhurst's rural character. Some design guidelines are:

- Any development within the parish should adhere to the building height range of 1-2.5 storeys (including outbuildings) to provide variation and a response to the predominantly rural context of the parish, especially areas in close proximity to ancient woodlands and open fields;
- Heights of any offices, workshops and light industrial units should also adhere to the average building height of 1-2.5 storeys to remain in-keeping with local context;
- Subtle changes in roofline could be incorporated in larger developments; and
- Traditional local roof materials and details, such as brick chimney stacks should be considered and implemented in new developments. Roofline should be set lower than the vegetation backdrop, avoiding hard lines of the silhouette against the sky.

Figure 73: Local example of a 2-storey building, the roofline of which is sensitively sitting below the backdrop vegetation, Sandhurst Cross.

Figure 74: Another local example of a 2-storey building, with a roofline sensitively sitting below the backdrop vegetation, Back Road.

DG.8 Preserving and promoting local vernacular

DG.8 Preserving and promoting local vernacular

Sandhurst Parish has distinctive architectural styles and details, presented in Section 2.2, that can act as references for new developments.

New developments should be respectful of architectural styles and use of materials of surrounding housing, whilst ensuring that a mix of styles are provided that is in keeping with the Sandhurst style and colour palette. Some design guidelines for new developments are:

- Architectural design in new development shall reflect the high quality local design references in both the natural and built environment and make a valuable contribution to the rural character of the village;
- Regarding the natural environment, the number of trees and rich vegetation in the village contribute to its rural character and reinforce biodiversity. Therefore, any new development should make sure it proposes a similar level of greenery, including native and context-appropriate species, in the new design to create a consistent setting;
- Regarding the built environment, new development shall only use appropriate materials that contribute to the local vernacular. Those materials should be Kentish tiles, red brick, combination of white render and red brick, weatherboarding and hungtiles;
- New development should prioritise soft boundaries over hard ones to match the surrounding styles along the streetscape. In particular, there are stretches of trees or grass greens, as well as brick or flint walls bordering some properties in the village combined with either trees or long hedges and bushes;
- The choice of colour and finish of materials is an important design factor in reducing the impact of the buildings on the surrounding landscape. Generally very light colours, like white, cream or light grey, and large areas of intense strong colours do not blend well with the rural landscape. Thus, muted and darker tones could be a better option. Colours should be guided by the High Weald Colour Study; and
- The use of traditional, natural and preferably locally sourced materials is generally more appropriate than man-made synthetic, pre-coloured materials, as they lack the variation on colour and texture found in natural materials.

DG.9 Implementing eco-design principles into homes

DG.9 Implementing eco-design principles into homes

Although some high level aspects of eco-design are covered in Part 1. General design considerations, this guideline will focus on some additional design guidelines and suggestions for properties to improve their energy efficiency.

- **A Triple glazed windows and external shading**
  especially on south and west faces
- **B High levels of airtightness**
- **C Low-carbon heating**
  and no new homes on the gas grid by 2025 at the latest
- **D More fresh air**
  with mechanical ventilation and heat recovery, and passive cooling
- **E Water management and cooling**
  more ambitious water efficiency standards, green roofs and reflective walls
- **F Flood resilience and resistance**
  e.g. raised electrical, concrete floors and greening your garden
- **G Construction and site planning**
  timber frames, sustainable transport options (such as cycling)
- **H Solar panels**
- **I Electric Vehicle charging port**
- **J Heat pumps**

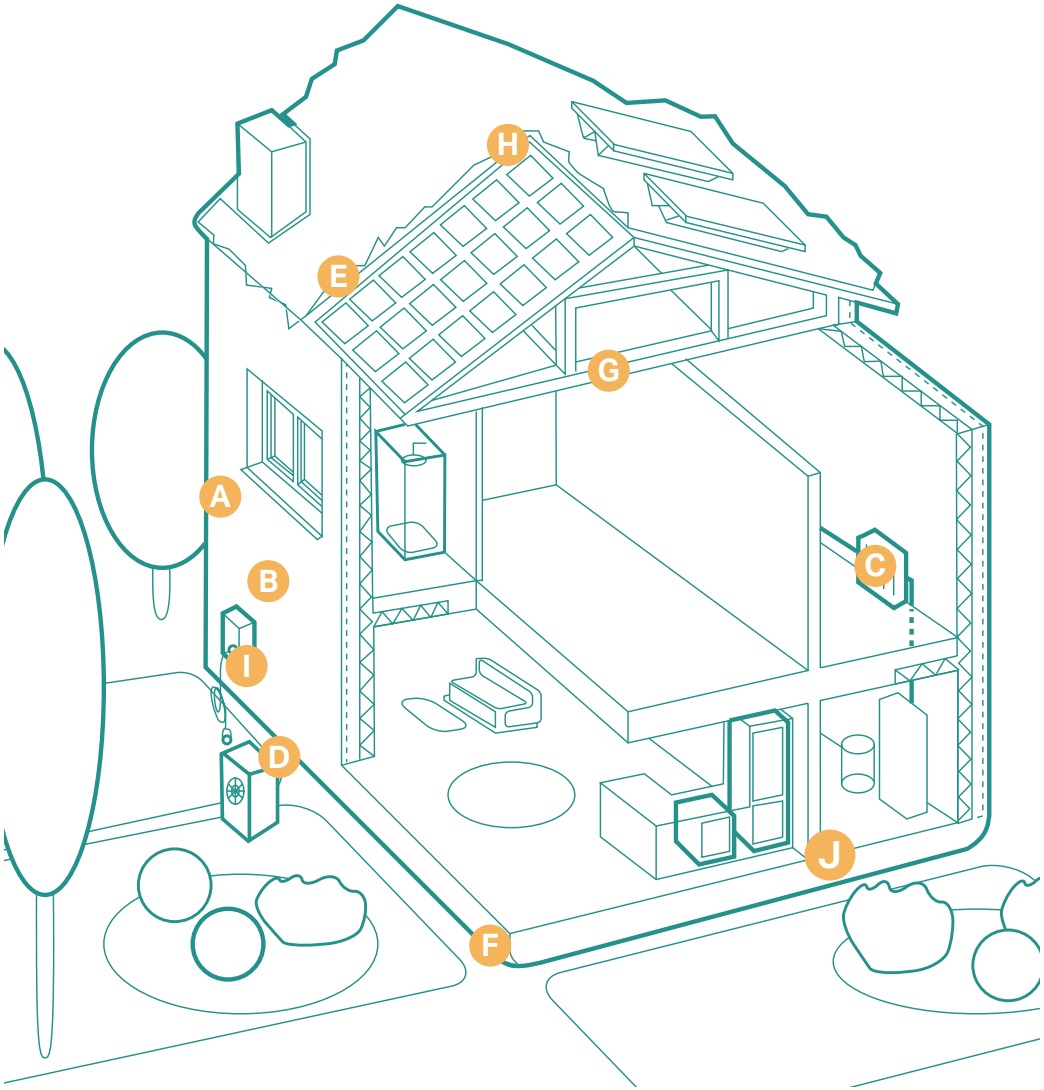


Figure 75: Diagram showing low-carbon homes in both existing and new build conditions.

DG.9 Implementing eco-design principles into homes

Site analysis

- Determine the position of the sun throughout the year;
- Identify the direction of the prevailing wind;
- Determine seasonal characteristics; and
- Identify topographical features that might optimise or degrade the performance of the buildings. For instance, slopes, tree belts, the shape and orientation of the site.

Building orientation

- One of the main glazed elevations should be within 30° due south to benefit from solar heat gain. Any north-facing facades might have a similar proportion of window to wall area to minimise heat loss on this cooler side;
- If houses are not aligned east-west, rear wings could be included so that some of the property benefits from solar passive gain;
- Neighbouring houses to the east and west can provide protection from low east and west sun;
- Homes should be designed to avoid overheating through optimisation of glazed areas, natural ventilation strategies including high- and low- level openings, longer roof overhangs, deep window reveals and external louvres/ shutters to provide shading in hotter summer months.

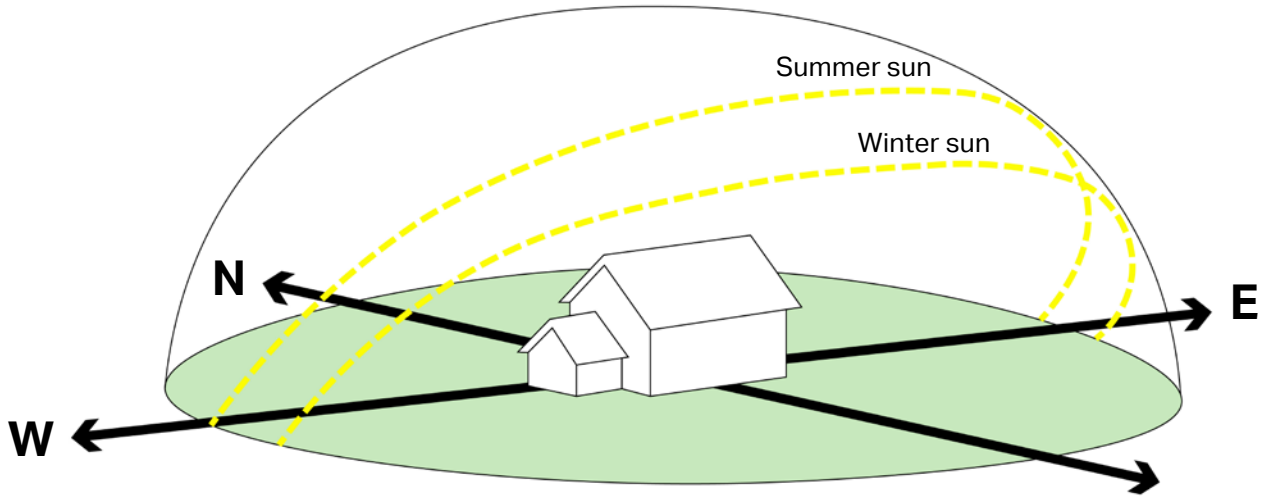


Figure 76: Diagram showing sitting with the sun during summer and winter periods. In cooler months, the lower position of the sun can heat the indoors.

DG.9 Implementing eco-design principles into homes

Building form

- Design should minimise the building surface to volume area;
- Terraced housing and blocks provide more efficient envelopes compared to semi-detached and detached houses;
- Building layouts should suggest cooler service spaces to be located with a northerly aspect and habitable rooms to be located to the warmer southerly aspect;
- Exposed areas of the site with no natural shelter should be avoided;
- Narrow frontage should be facing the direction of the prevailing wind; and
- Vegetation on the walls could provide an additional thermal layer and aid biodiversity although care is needed to protect the fabric of buildings.

Figure 77: Local example of a south facing property (approx. 30 degrees) that maximises the solar gain, whilst plantation to the north offers protection from cold northerly winds, Queen Street.

Figure 78: Local example of terraced housing. This typology provides more efficient envelopes compared to semi-detached or detached houses.

DG.10 Farmstead conversions

DG.10 Farmstead conversions

Farmsteads are a dominant feature of the parish, however, over time the working buildings of farms fall out of regular use, except for some that have been converted into residential. Therefore design guidance is needed to ensure that any other future conversion does not undermine the original use of the farm building. Some design guidelines are:

- Features and general layout of the building setting that are characteristics of historic working buildings need to be retained and not filled in. For instance, loose courtyard arrangements of buildings, physical boundary treatments, openings or wagon doors. New openings should generally be avoided and kept to a minimum when necessary;
- Retain original features such as brickwork and openings, which should not be filled in, as well as ventilation slots and any use-specific historic additions;
- The use of domestic add-ons such as chimneys, porches, satellite dishes, domestic external lighting and hanging baskets must be avoided;
- Features such as dormer windows must be avoided. If rooflights are used, they should be sited discreetly so as to not become over dominant in the landscape;
- Courtyards should be surfaced in a material that reflects its rural setting. Farmyards should remain open and not be divided by fences or walls;
- Parking spaces should not be formally marked out;
- Boundary brick walls should be left intact, and not chopped through or reduced for access or to create visual splays; and

Any new farmstead conversions and new agricultural buildings should closely reference the **Farmsteads Assessment Guidance for Tunbridge Wells Borough SPD**.

Figure 79: Positive local example of the conversion of an agricultural building into housing, Sandhurst Cross.

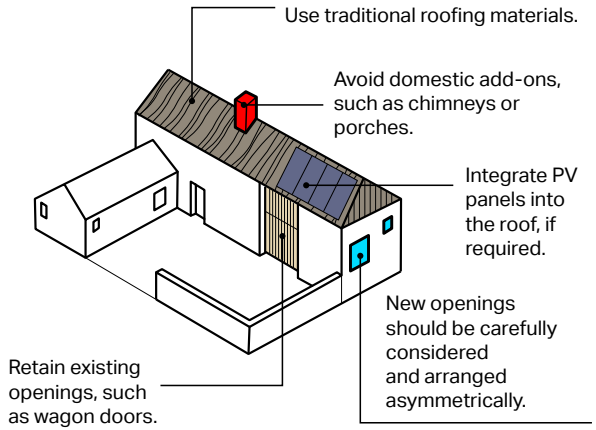


Figure 80: Diagram to illustrate some additional design principles for the conversion of agricultural building to workspaces.

DG.11 Promoting biodiversity

DG.11 Promoting biodiversity

This guideline will focus on some additional design guidelines and suggestions that could be implemented in private properties, for instance front and back gardens or roofs, or public spaces to enhance biodiversity across Sandhurst. Some design guidelines are:

- Biodiversity interventions in the public space could help improve the environment as well as inform and educate the community about the existing species and habitats. For instance, having hedgehog streets, wildlife friendly show gardens, community forests or designated areas within green space for wildlife could raise awareness about biodiversity;

Figure 81: Positive local example of the conversion of an agricultural building into housing, Sandhurst Cross.

Figure 82: Positive local example of the conversion of an agricultural building into housing, Sandhurst Cross.

- In private properties, smaller interventions could be proposed or implemented to provide species with cover from predators and shelter during bad weather. Some examples are bat boxes, bug hotels and frog houses. Those interventions can also help create new habitats and wildlife corridors;
- Gardens and boundary treatments should be designed to allow the movement of wildlife and provide habitat for local species, as well as to retain the rural character of the parish. For that reason, rich vegetation and plantation is suggested, whilst less permeable boundaries like brick walls and timber fencing should be used less and allow for regular gaps to facilitate movement for species. Timber fencing with no gaps between panels should not be accepted;

DG.11 Promoting biodiversity

- Blue assets can also contribute to biodiversity connectivity. Therefore, the existing ditches and streams should be considered in design proposals, in the form of ponds or pollinator gardens when planning for wildlife corridors; and
- Green roofs could also help boost biodiversity as well as improve the aesthetics of the surroundings.

Figure 83: Positive local example of the conversion of an agricultural building into housing, Sandhurst Cross.

Figure 84: Positive local example of the conversion of an agricultural building into housing, Sandhurst Cross.

Figure 85: Positive local example of the conversion of an agricultural building into housing, Sandhurst Cross.

Figure 86: Positive local example of the conversion of an agricultural building into housing, Sandhurst Cross.


Delivery
04

4. Delivery

The Design Guidance will be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development in Sandhurst, especially on potential sites that might come forward in the future. They will give more certainty to both developers and the community in securing developments that are designed to the aspirations of the community and potentially speed up the planning process.

The opposite table summarises the various ways that this document can be used by each actor in the planning and development process.

Actors	How they will use the design guidance
Applicants, developers, & landowners	As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines as planning consent is sought.
Local Planning Authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications. The Design Guidelines should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
Parish Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidelines are complied with.
Community organisations	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.
Statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

Table 09: Use of this design guidance document by different actors and stakeholders

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