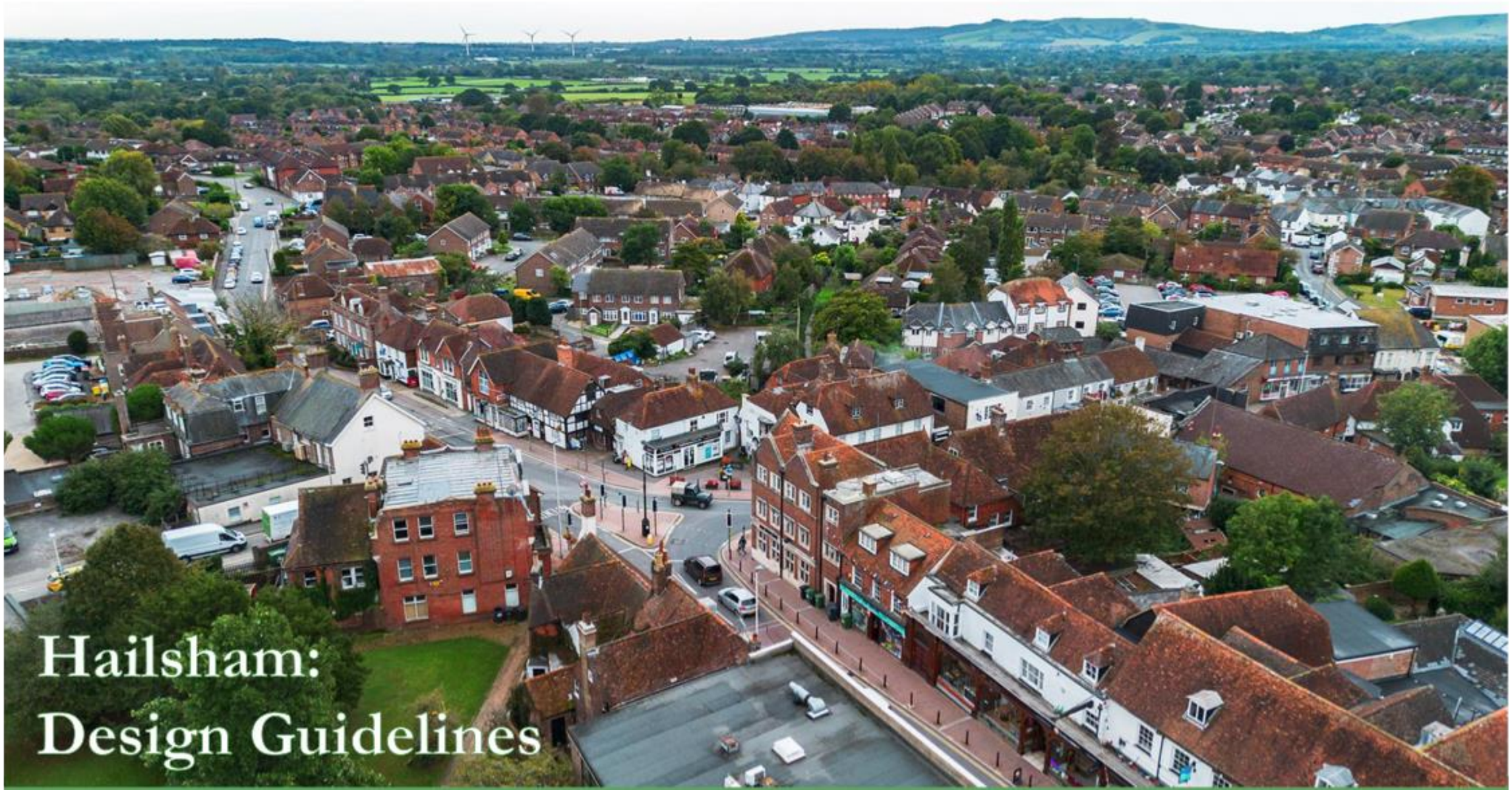
HAILSHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



Hailsham: Design Guidelines

Prepared by Troy Planning + Design

Final version
March 2026

Part of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan

Hailsham TOWN COUNCIL

Hailsham TOWN COUNCIL

Hailsham
Neighbourhood Plan
DESIGN GUIDELINES

March 2026

Prepared for:	Prepared by:
Hailsham Town Council Inglenook, Market Street, Hailsham East Sussex, BN27 2AE 01323 841702 www.hailsham-tc.gov.uk enquiries@hailsham-tc.gov.uk	Troy Planning + Design 33 Foley Street, London W1W 7TL 020 7096 1329 www.troyplanning.com info@troyplanning.com

Contents

Foreword	**ii**
Structure of the Guidelines	**iii**
A 'design vision' for Hailsham	**vi**
Part A	**1**
1. Introduction	**3**
2. Area context and qualities	**12**
3. The characteristics of well-designed places	**19**
Part B	**30**
4. Town centre	**32**
Part C	**51**
5. Residential development	**53**
6. Residential street design and parking provision	**65**
7. Small sites	**77**
8. Retrofitting existing streets	**82**
Part D	**90**
Case studies: Town centres	**91**
Case studies: Residential development	**95**
Case studies: Streets and spaces	**103**

Foreword

Hailsham Town Council took the important decision to develop these Design Guidelines alongside the review of the Neighbourhood Plan as an additional document in order that it will develop a framework to inform development proposals.

It is of paramount importance to Hailsham given the scale of growth envisaged to take place across the town: both in terms of residential development and wider aspirations for the revitalisation of the town centre.

The Design Guidelines are intended to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, so that development reflects local character and preferences, and to minimise current mismatches.

It will be used to influence development in the current plan period as well as those applications that will be coming forward in the future.

Furthermore, the scale of growth in the adjoining parish of Hellingly is seeing Hailsham Town Council and Hellingly Parish Council work more closely together and, subject to any future reorganisation of Council structures, parts of the document, such as those in respect of well-integrated residential development, variety and interest, may be relevant to future growth in Hellingly too.

Councillor Mary Laxton
Chair, Neighbourhood Planning Committee
Hailsham Town Council

Structure of the Guidelines

The Hailsham Design Guidelines (the 'HDG') is presented across four main parts.

The first part introduces the purpose of the HDG and relationship with wider national, county and district level policy, design principles and standards. It provides an overview of the growth and evolution of Hailsham over time, the form and structure of the town, and pattern of development that has taken place. It introduces the main component parts of the town and summarises the key characteristics of each. It concludes by assessing Hailsham against the ten characteristics of well-designed places established in the National Design Guide.

The first part of the HDG sets the scene for the second and third which present guidance and principles to be used to inform new development. It does not seek to reproduce good practice design principles and standards which are set out elsewhere, but rather how these can be applied in the context of Hailsham. The HDG thus has a specific focus on key areas where design guidance has been identified as being required in Hailsham. These are the Town Centre (as presented in the second part of the HDG) and residential growth (in the third part). A full list of the guidelines, and where they can be found, is presented in Table 1.

The geographic coverage of the guidelines is presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2. The guidelines in Part B apply to the Town Centre (Figure 1), with those guidelines in Part C applying to the rest of the built-up area (except for existing employment areas) as well as any areas of growth that will come forward on the periphery of Hailsham (Figure 2). Areas not covered by the guidelines (e.g.: existing employment areas and outlying hamlets) are subject to existing guidance, such as that set out in the Wealden Design Guide, and development proposals in these areas should have regard to this. Indeed, all sections need to be read alongside the wider guidance and advice signposted in the HDG and which provides more information on specific areas.

The focus of the HDG has been informed by identification of key issues and matters of concern raised through consultation on the original 'made' Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan and the subsequent review and update of that. It is thus strongly linked back to the vision and stated objectives within the Neighbourhood Plan. Indeed, responses to consultation on the update of the Neighbourhood Plan and, alongside this, the HDG, indicated a strong preference for improving the overall appearance of the town centre and quality of the street environment, that green space and parking must be well integrated within the design of new development, and that new development should help strengthen the sense of place and character, as reflected in the scale of development, materials used, the quality of the public realm and landscaping.

The fourth part of the HDG then presents a series of case studies that are intended to provide inspiration and demonstrate how the guidelines, or parts of them, might be realised.

The HDG provides illustrated design guidance and sits alongside the Neighbourhood Plan. It is intended to support the effectiveness of policies and implementation of them. The intention is that the HDG supports the achievement of high-quality design in new development across Hailsham. By establishing expectations, it will provide applicants and others with a degree of certainty and, as a result, help speed up the application process.

The HDG is intended for use by a variety of audiences. Applicants should consult the relevant section of the HDG that applies to their site and use this to inform proposals for development. Application material should show how it has been informed by and responds to the HDG. Planning Officers should refer to the HDG in considering applications. It should also be used to inform any pre-applications discussions that take place. Local residents and other interested local stakeholders can use the HDG to better understand the potential for change in an area and inform consultation responses to proposed development.

Reference	Guideline	Page Number
PART B	**The Town Centre**	**30 - 50**
HTC-01	Frontage, orientation and perimeter blocks	42
HTC-02	Building height and street enclosure	44
HTC-03	A layered approach to mixed-use development	45
HTC-04	A pedestrian friendly, walkable environment	46
HTC-05	Creating safer, gender and age inclusive places	47
HTC-06	Designing with weather	47
HTC-07	Shopfront design and signage	49
HTC-08	Change and development in the Conservation Area	50
PART C	**Residential development, streets and parking**	**51 - 89**
WEL-01	Creating well-integrated developments	57
WEL-02	Amenity green space	58
WEL-03	Natural green space	58
WEL-04	Food growing opportunities	59
WEL-05	Variety and interest in new residential development	63
STP-01	Street typologies	68
STP-02	Car parking in residential development	75
SMA-01	Small site design principles	80
RET-01	Sustainable drainage systems	86

Table 1: Full list of design guidelines

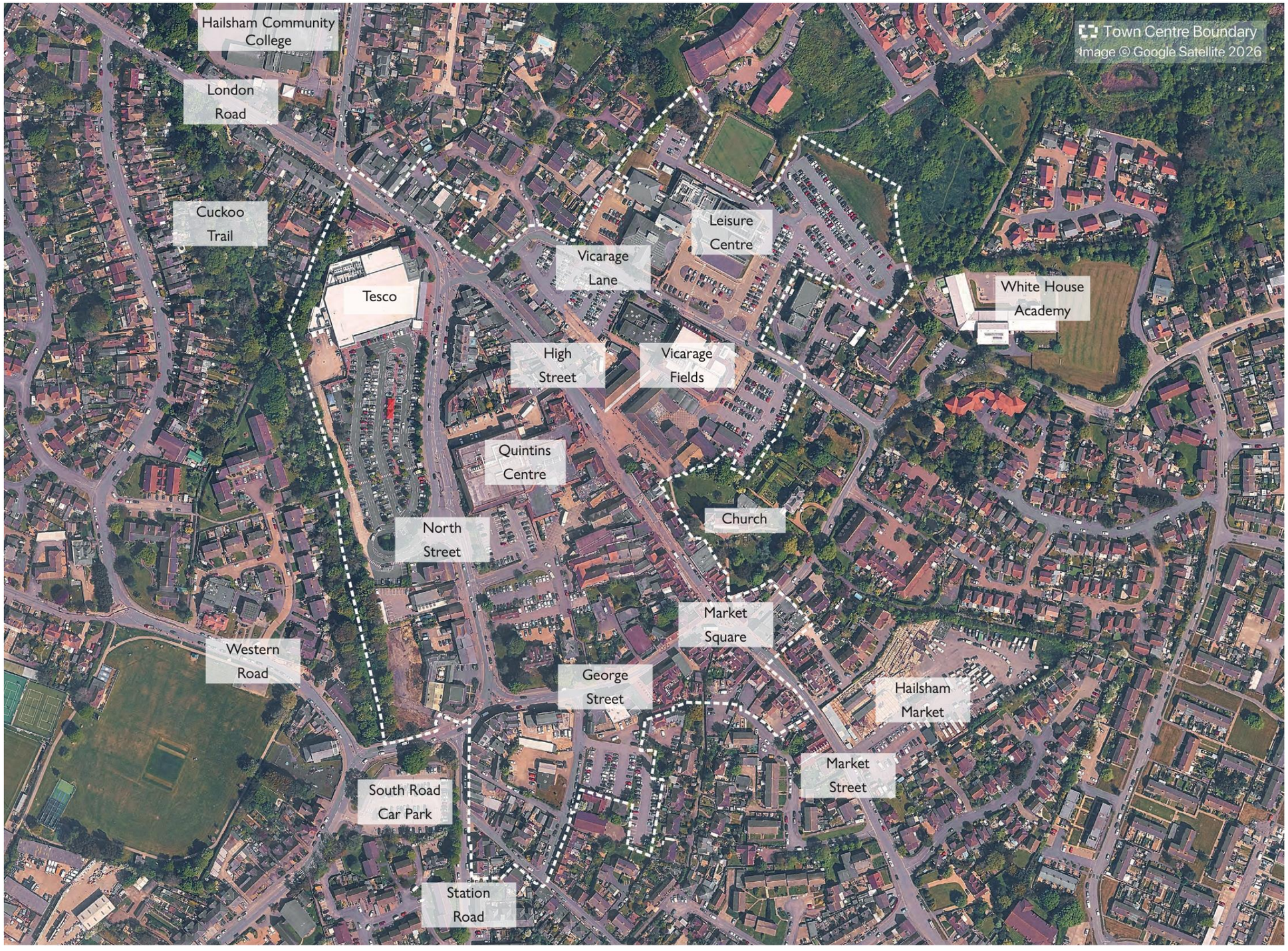


Figure 1: Hailsham Town Centre. The guidelines in Part B of this document apply to this area.

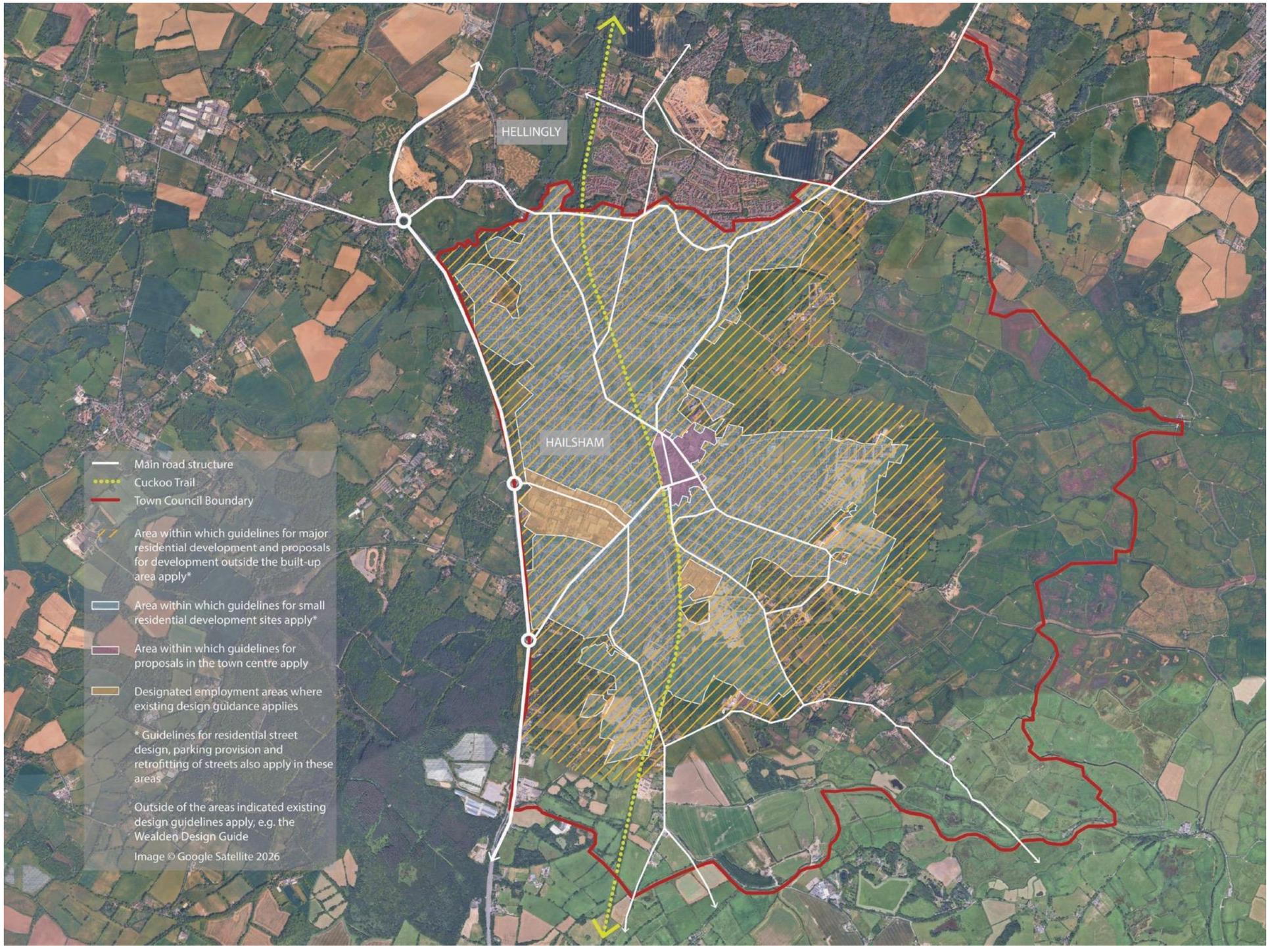


Figure 2: Geographic coverage of the guidelines presented in this document.

A ‘design vision’ for Hailsham

The design guidelines for Hailsham have been informed by consultation and analysis of issues and opportunities. This has led to creation of an over-arching design vision for the town and which frames the guidelines that follow. The design vision is:

By 2042, Hailsham will have evolved into a beautiful, walkable and socially connected ‘ten-minute town’, where people of all ages and abilities can easily reach the places that shape daily life. Guided by its historic character, landscape setting and the Cuckoo Trail as a defining green spine, the town will be distinguished by a richer, more coherent urban fabric: a revitalised town centre with active frontages, high-quality public spaces and an attractive High Street. Sensitive integration of heritage assets, improvements to shopfronts, and climate-responsive design will ensure new development enhances the town’s identity.

Residential neighbourhoods across Hailsham will be well-integrated, greener and more varied, with development that respects and extends the town’s characteristic pattern of permeable streets, generous planting, and a familiar palette of locally distinctive materials. Streets will feel safe and human-scaled, balancing movement with place, and designed around pedestrians, cyclists and public transport rather than through-traffic. A connected network of green spaces will support biodiversity, health and social cohesion. High-quality design will create interest and variety across neighbourhoods, with homes that are adaptable, energy-efficient and resilient to changing environmental conditions.

Hailsham in 2042 will be a climate-resilient and forward-looking town, where sustainable drainage, greener streets, low carbon buildings and well-designed public spaces form part of daily life. The town centre will host a more diverse mix of uses ensuring activity throughout the day and evening. New investment and incremental change will have strengthened local pride, brought new opportunities to live and work locally, and fostered a stronger sense of belonging. Through consistent application of the Design Guidelines, future growth will feel like a natural, high-quality continuation of Hailsham’s long story, rooted in the local context while confident about the future.

Part A

Introduction, character, qualities and opportunities

This part of the HDG forms an introduction and explains its relationship with the Neighbourhood Plan and wider policy, design guidance and principles established at national, county and district level policy. Understanding the growth of a place overtime helps to understand its form and structure, and how this can be used to inform new development that responds to local character and identity. This part of the HDG therefore also provides an overview of the growth and evolution of Hailsham over time, the form and structure of the town, and the pattern of development that has taken place. It introduces the main component parts of the town and summarises the key characteristics of each. It concludes by assessing Hailsham against the ten characteristics of well-designed places established in the National Design Guide.

CROWN
BATES & CO
B

1. Introduction

Purpose of the Design Guidelines

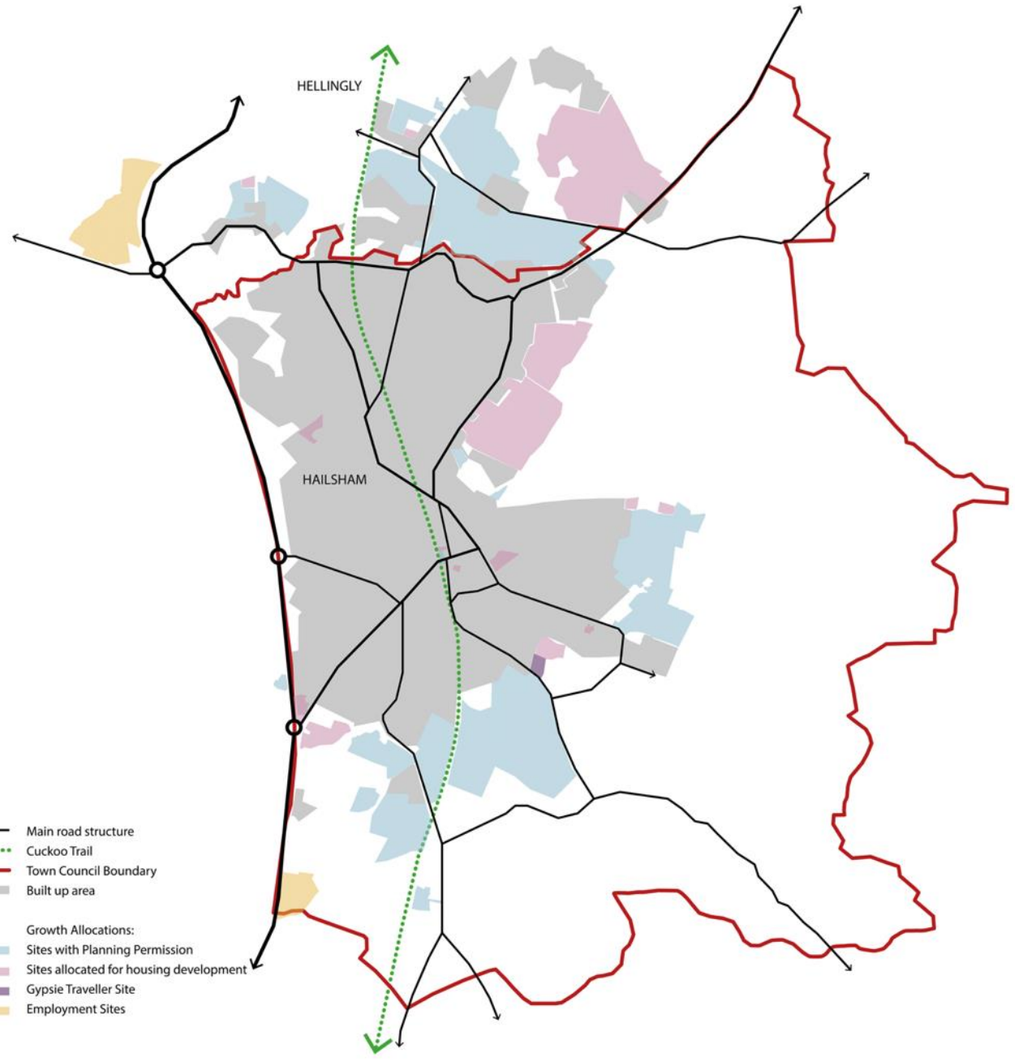


Figure 3: The Neighbourhood Plan and Design Guidelines apply to the designated Plan area, which is defined by the extent of the Town Council boundary. The focus of the Design Guidelines is on development within and adjacent to the existing built-up area. This Plan indicates committed growth and that allocated in the emerging Wealden Local Plan. This includes land in adjacent Hellingly Parish that immediately adjoins Hailsham and where residents 'look to' Hailsham for services and facilities. In addition to committed and allocated sites, the emerging Wealden Local Plan establishes a 'windfall development' allowance for Hailsham. This Design Guidelines applies to all development proposals that come forward, including those comprising 'windfall'. This plan is subject to change as the Local Plan evolves, but is shown for context and, given the scale of growth envisaged, to highlight the importance of preparing guidelines to inform this.

This document comprises the Hailsham Design Guidelines (the 'HDG'). It has been prepared by Hailsham Town Council and sits alongside the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan includes policies and aspirations in respect of good design and cross references the HDG which presents material that illustrates the expectations for change and development in Hailsham.

The HDG covers the same area as the Neighbourhood Plan, i.e.: the entire area covered by the Town Council (Figure 3).

The production and use of tools such as design guides and codes is strongly encouraged in the National Planning Policy Framework. It explains that:

'Design guides and codes provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality standard of design'.

It defines a design guide as *'a document providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with good design practice'*. Design codes are defined in the NPPF as *'A set of illustrated design requirements that provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code should build upon a design vision, such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area.'* The Hailsham Design Guidelines combines these, illustrating good approaches to development reflecting the local context. Alongside the Neighbourhood Plan it seeks to reflect the principles of sustainable development and seeks to enhance the quality of life for all.

The aspiration is for Hailsham to be a truly 'great place' (Figure 4). At the heart of every successful place is good accessibility for all, a thriving town centre, provision of a wide range of services, good proximity and access to these, and high quality, well-designed buildings and public spaces.

The vision for Hailsham is framed by the overarching concept of becoming a 'ten-minute town' (Figure 5), where people of all ages and abilities can easily access the services and facilities they need for day-to-day life, including schools, healthcare, shops, leisure and cultural activities.

The aspiration is that Hailsham becomes more socially inclusive and cohesive, with a range of housing choices and employment opportunities catering for all. New development should be well-integrated with existing communities, provide supporting infrastructure, make walking and wheeling a safe and attractive proposition, and protect open spaces, habitats and areas of biodiversity.

Consultation undertaken on the HDG and review of the Neighbourhood Plan asked whether the concept of the 'ten-minute town' remained relevant and appropriate for Hailsham. Consultation responses overwhelmingly supported the concept, recognising the importance of helping to shape and influence a more sustainable, inclusive and climate resilient place.

Figure 4: The benefits of a 'great place'. Image sourced and adapted from the PPS Group

Figure 5: The first Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan was framed by the overarching objective of Hailsham becoming a 'ten-minute town'. This can also be described as a 'compact, complete, connected and climate-friendly community'. Responses to consultation on the review of the Neighbourhood Plan indicate this remains relevant and that it should continue to evolve and inform an approach to sustainable development in Hailsham.

Hailsham is a town of around 23,000 people. It has grown considerably over the last decade, with extensive areas of new residential development having taken place on the periphery of the town, including that to the north where the built-form has begun to merge into neighbouring Hellingly.

There remains pressure on land for new development in Hailsham and the emerging Local Plan being prepared by Wealden District Council allocates further land to the east of the settlement for new residential growth (as per the adopted Core Strategy), as well as smaller 'infill' and redevelopment opportunities within the town itself. Furthermore, there have consistently been applications for smaller windfall sites in and around the town.

The emerging Local Plan establishes housing requirements in draft Policy SS2 and associated Table 5. It is expected that 2,640 new homes will be accommodated in Hailsham over the Plan period (2025 – 2042), plus further development immediately to the north of Hailsham in neighbouring Hellingly. Of these, 1,653 homes are already 'committed', meaning they have planning permission or are under construction, and 696 homes are on sites allocated for development, including areas of growth to the east of Battle Road. The remainder – around 300 homes – are expected to come forward as windfall development. Furthermore, the focussed consultation version of the Local Plan (February 2026) includes a series of option sites which may or may not be included in the submission version of the Plan. For Hailsham, this could result in land for an additional 463 homes being allocated, as well as 2,000 to the west of the A22. These may change as the Local Plan evolves.

A proportion of the windfall development may come forward through conversion and intensification of existing buildings and sites. However, the scale of windfall development envisaged is substantial. If all of these homes were to be built at densities consistent with recent development in Hailsham then around sixteen hectares of land (equivalent to approximately 22 football pitches) might be required to accommodate this (Figure 6). At the same time, draft Policy SS1 of the emerging Local Plan states that, other than where land is allocated, proposals for development should be directed to sites within existing built-up areas and where best use is made of previously developed land (otherwise known as brownfield land or sites). The scale of windfall development envisaged in Hailsham may however preclude this: if, that is, sites come forward at lower densities. A mix of housing typologies and development densities may thus need exploring, making better use of land and responding to location, character and context. As indicated in Figure 6, higher density development (though not meaning high-rise) can significantly reduce the amount of land required for new development. At the same time, different densities and house sizes may help cater for the full range of local housing need and levels of affordability.

The purpose of the HDG is to influence the form of this development, helping to achieve a high quality of design and placemaking that reflects local qualities and character, and which responds to the wider vision for Hailsham as a socially inclusive and connected place.

Hailsham Town Centre is the heart of the town. It has previously been subject to proposals for investment and redevelopment, but these have not come to fruition. Improvements are still though needed, supporting the quality of the visitor experience and its important role as a civic and transport hub. The HDG also therefore includes illustrated principles for change in the Town Centre.

Proposals for development in Hailsham are expected to have regard to and show how they have responded to the HDG. The HDG contains the following:

Guidelines:

Yellow shaded boxes, like this, present the Design Guidelines applicable to development in Hailsham and which applicants and decision makers are expected to respond to in shaping and determining proposals.

Information and signposting:

Green shaded boxes, like this, are included within the HDG to provide supporting information and signposting to other documents and guidance of relevance which should be referenced through the design and application process but which is not duplicated in the HDG.

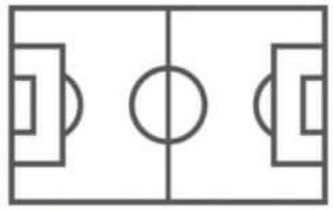
Alongside the HDG the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan supports the use of Design Review, making use of an independent panel of experts to support the delivery of high standards of design in new development. Design Review should take place for all major applications and also on smaller sites in sensitive or important locations. Use of the HDG should help inform discussion and advice provided during the Design Review process.

Further information on the Design Review process can be found on the Design South East website.

Detached homes

At a density of 25 homes per hectare

- Approx. 12 hectares of land for homes
- Plus allowance for other incidental space etc (around 25% of total land area)
- Approx. 16 hectares total



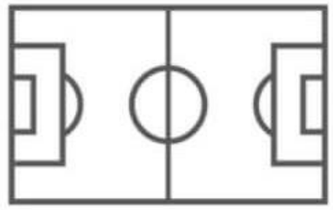
x22 football pitches

16ha

Terraced homes

At a density of 50 homes per hectare

- Approx. 6 hectares of land for homes
- Plus allowance for other incidental space etc
- Approx. 8 hectares total



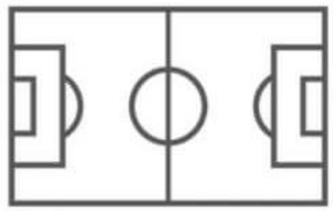
x11 football pitches

8ha

Flats and maisonettes

At a density of 75 homes per hectare

- Approx. 4 hectares of land for homes
- Plus allowance for other incidental space etc
- Approx. 5.3 hectares total



x7 football pitches

5.3ha

Figure 6: Diagram illustrating the amount of land required to accommodate the windfall housing requirement of 300 homes, as set out in the emerging Wealden Local Plan, at different development densities

Relationship with national, county and district guidance

The HDG is set in the context of national, county and district level design guidance and policy. These establish good practice design principles for new development, places and spaces, as well as key standards that need to be adhered to. The HDG does not repeat nor duplicate that information but instead shows how good design principles should be applied in Hailsham.

At appropriate places the HDG signposts relevant policy and guidance that applicants and decision-makers should refer to. Key documents are summarised below.

National

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) states, at paragraph 131, that:

'The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. 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. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this.'

This feeds through into the inclusion of design policies in Local and Neighbourhood Plans, and the use of tools, such as Design Codes, to provide clarity as to design expectations which reflect local character and design preferences.

The design section of the NPPF is supplemented by the National Design Guide (January 2021). This forms part of the suite of Planning Practice Guidance and presents ten characteristics that outline the Government's priorities for well-designed places (Figure 7). These form a useful framework for generating good design solutions. They can be used to help assess whether a place is well-designed, or not, and if not, whether planning permission should be recommended for refusal on the basis of poor design (as per paragraph 139 of the NPPF).

The National Model Design Code (NMDC) (June 2021) outlines the approach to and use of design codes and is to be read alongside the NPPF, National Design Guide and other national guidance, such as Manual for Streets (see below).

Along with the NPPF, the NMDC highlights the important role that local communities play in developing design guidance. The stated purpose of the NMDC is to set out:

'clear design parameters to help local authorities and communities decide what good quality design looks like in their area, based on local aspirations for how their area will develop, following appropriate local consultation'.

In January 2026 the government launched consultation on a new Design and Placemaking Planning Practice Guidance that proposes to consolidate the National Design Guide and NMDC into one document. There remains a strong focus on design. The ten characteristics of well-designed places are reinterpreted as seven-features of well-designed places. These retain but streamline the characteristics shown in Figure 7 and thus remain applicable to this document (as utilised in Section 3).

Figure 7: The ten characteristics of well-designed places, as illustrated in the National Design Guide (source: MHCLG)

The Manual for Streets 1 (MfS1) (2007) establishes guidance on residential street design and the important 'place-function' they have, showing how well-designed streets and places can be achieved that serve the community as a whole. It recommends the use of tools, such as design codes, to show how buildings, streets and spaces can combine to create locally distinctive places. It seeks to avoid the creation of streets that are primarily designed to meet the needs of motor traffic, which are bland, unattractive, unsafe and unwelcoming to pedestrians and cyclists.

The Manual for Street 2 (MfS2) (2010) further develops the principles established in MfS1 and is a companion guide to that. It shows how the principles can be applied to busier streets and roads in rural and urban areas.

The Department for Transport's Cycle Infrastructure Design Guide (LTN 1/20) (July 2020) provides guidance to local authorities on delivering high quality cycle infrastructure, including how to plan and design for safe cycle routes and connected networks, junctions, crossings and cycle parking provision. It is linked to the Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy which sets a clear ambition to make cycling and walking the natural choices for short journeys.

Best practice guidance on how to improve access to public transport and creating a barrier-free pedestrian environment, for people of all ages and abilities, is set out in Inclusive Mobility: making transport accessible for passengers and pedestrians (December 2021). It establishes important dimensions in terms of footway widths, crossings and gradients amongst others to help design for an inclusive environment. The guide explains that:

'Good, inclusive design benefits all users, including those who have non-visible disabilities. The overall objective of this guide is to enable practitioners to provide an inclusively designed public realm, and through that help achieve social inclusion'.

Building for Life helps bring the range of national design guidance and principles together. It is cited in the NPPF (paragraph 138) as a tool to be used to help assess proposals for development. It presents a range of design considerations that should be used to help inform new development, exploring the qualities of successful places and how these can be best applied in a proposed scheme. As a companion to this document, Streets for a Healthy Life acts as a guide to best practice in street design. It helps to illustrate and explain what good residential streets look like, and how they function.

Advice published by Historic England is also of relevance, particularly in respect of the designated Conservation Area in Hailsham town centre. The Streets for All advice note, together with the regional version (Streets for All: South East), provide advice on the design and implementation of highways and public realm works in sensitive historic locations. The documents look at how improvements can be made to public spaces without causing harm to character.

County

East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has responsibility for matters such as highways and flood risk and publishes a range of design guidance and standards that are to be followed.

The ESCC Local Design Guide for Residential Development (2010) forms a 'local' supplement to Manual for Streets 1 and is intended to inform developers of local preferences and adoption standards for new residential roads in the County. These standards are intended to form a base position which allows for creativity and innovation in urban street design.

The ESCC Design Standards for Industrial Roads recognises that these have a different emphasis to residential roads and need to be designed to cater for larger and heavier vehicles. It establishes standards in respect of street widths, visibility splays, turning spaces, access points and street gradients.

The ESCC Guidance on Parking at New Developments (March 2024) establishes general principles for parking (including parking for cycles and other two-wheeled vehicles), as well as guidance for residential and non-residential development. It is to be used to determine the appropriate level of parking required at new development and how this can be best provided. The intention is to *'achieve a balance of parking which supports travel choices across a variety of modes'*, whilst taking into consideration local characteristics. It states that '*developments must be designed around people not the car'* and that *'getting the parking layout right results in a well-functioning development and a better place to live and work'*.

In their role as Lead Local Flood Authority, ESCC has published a range of guidance in respect of managing flood risk. All developments across the County are encouraged to make use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage flood risk and improve water quality, the local environment and wildlife habitats (otherwise known as the 'four pillars' of SuDS).

The Guide to Sustainable Drainage in East Sussex (June 2015) outlines the importance of SuDS, the delivery and approvals process. Design guidance is presented in Water People Places: a guide for masterplanning sustainable drainage into developments (September 2013). It was jointly prepared on behalf of the Lead Local Flood Authorities across South East England and illustrates how a range of different types of SuDS can be incorporated into development. The requirement for SuDS applies to all sites and ESCC has also developed a Support Tool for Small Scale Development which is designed to assist planning authorities and developers in assessing the suitability of SuDS provision within small scale development proposals.

District

The Wealden Core Strategy (February 2013) establishes a set of spatial planning objectives which include, at SPO13, the promotion of high quality new development. The objective states:

'We will encourage the development of high quality, safe and attractive living environments for communities in both towns and villages, while promoting local distinctiveness through good design in all new development. We want future built development to create spaces and places which are sustainable, distinctive and durable - places where people will want to live. These will be expected to make a real contribution to addressing climate change issues and addressing the needs of our ageing population.'

There is no specific design policy in the Core Strategy, though saved policies of the Wealden Local Plan 1998 cover matters such as layout, design and landscaping which remain considerations. The Wealden Design Guide (November 2008) was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Local Plan and is *'intended to encourage a higher standard of design for development within the District than has often proved the case in the recent past'*. It does not establish prescriptive standards, but rather sets out basic design principles that are considered appropriate across the District. It draws on a District level assessment of character zones and local distinctiveness to establish guidance in respect of new residential development, alternations and extensions, new non-residential buildings, the public realm, the re-use and conversion of rural buildings, listed buildings, shopfronts and signage, and telecommunications equipment.

At the time of writing a new Wealden Local Plan is being prepared, covering the period to 2042. This was subject to 'Regulation 18' consultation between March and May 2024. A further round of 'focussed consultation' (Regulation 18 stage) took place in February and March 2026. The District Council anticipates that the emerging Local Plan will be submitted for examination in Quarter 3 of 2026/27, followed by adoption in Quarter 2 of 2027/28.

The new Local Plan recognises the importance of design and incorporates a 'mini vision' around the creation of attractive and locally distinctive places. This feeds through into Chapter 10 of the new Local Plan which sets of a range of policy criteria in respect of:

- Achieving well designed and high quality places (Policy DE1).
- Masterplans and Design Codes (Policy DE2).
- Spaces for people, nature and the public realm (Policy DE3).
- Shop fronts and advertisements (Policy DE4).

Policy DE1 states that development proposals will be supported where they:

'are locally distinctive, relate well to, and positively contribute to the character and topography of the surrounding built and natural environment (including its overall setting, townscape features, landscape, skyline, heritage, important views and green corridors). Proposals should create a positive sense of place by responding to the features of the site and the surrounding context'.

In the context of Policy DE1, the HDG helps establish the local character and how development should respond positively to this. It can thus form the basis of planning applications and decisions taken in accordance with Policy DE1, but also provide the starting point for more detailed site specific masterplans and codes for larger, strategic sites to be prepared in response to Policy DE2.

Supporting text to Policy DE2 highlights the importance of development being well-integrated with the exiting fabric of the settlement it is located in, stating:

'New developments should create high quality environments in which residents can live and work and also deliver benefits for existing communities, where relevant. A well-designed scheme will result in sustainable places which help to meet the development needs of the area whilst integrating well with existing settlements and also helping to meet economic, social and environmental objectives'.

The Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' in May 2021 and forms part of the development plan for Wealden. The Neighbourhood Plan embodies the principles of sustainable development and seeks to enhance quality of life for all. It aspires to Hailsham becoming a truly 'great place'. Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan establish a range of design criteria that seek to promote the highest quality of development in and around Hailsham. The Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan has now being updated and this HDG sits alongside it, supporting the implementation of design policies within it.

Evolution of the Design Guidelines

The importance of good quality design was highlighted through messages received in response to consultation activities undertaken as part of the first Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan. A strong preference was expressed for promoting higher quality design that protects and enhances Hailsham's built character. This fed through into the vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan and which framed policies in it, including those promoting high quality design and local distinctiveness. Support for high quality design forms part of the overall narrative of the Plan and informs the approach taken in many of the policies. This was recognised as a strength of the Plan by the Examiner who stated in their report that:

"Overall this is a hugely impressive Neighbourhood Plan which seeks to fundamentally influence the way that new development is developed. It strives to deliver high quality places, based on a clear strategy of ensuring connectivity and high-quality design... the document is Hailsham specific, having locally distinct policies which are based on evidence and a sound understanding of the existing character of the town. It draws upon good urban design principles and how they contribute to place making."

However, the Neighbourhood Plan was made in a policy vacuum: the Wealden Local Plan being prepared at the same time was withdrawn from Examination, meaning the saved policies of the 1998 Local Plan as well as strategic policies in the 2013 Core Strategy continued to be used for development management purposes, despite these documents effectively being 'out-of-date'.

The Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan sought to provide more up-to-date and locally specific policies in this vacuum. However, the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan and lack of a five-year supply of land for housing meant that many applications which have come forward have been judged against their contribution to the delivery of new homes. In many instances, and as demonstrated through a review of planning applications and decisions since the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan was made, the contribution to delivery of housing has outweighed other policy matters, including the importance of and delivery of high quality design.

The role and importance of good design remains, and with a new Local Plan now being prepared the opportunity has been taken to review and update policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. Alongside this, the decision was taken to prepare the HDG, to help support and strengthen policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, and implementation of these through the planning application process.

Through the first Neighbourhood Plan the following aspects were identified that detract from quality of place in Hailsham:

- Narrow street widths and front gardens in newer developments, with a lack of privacy and greenery.
- Vehicle dominated layouts with left over green spaces that have limited use and function.
- Poorly arranged parking, particularly in residential areas, that is not used in the way it was intended and results in people parking on the pavement.
- A lack of diversity and appearance of modern house types and limited use of materials.
- Poorly designed and equipped playing spaces in newer developments.
- Presence of blank gable ends fronting the street.
- Areas of surface parking which undermine the historic urban fabric of the town centre.

These issues remain. Consultation undertaken as part of the review of the Neighbourhood Plan and HDG (Figure 8) sought feedback on aims and aspiration for Hailsham, those aspects that should be improved, and how, and, through use of visual preference surveys, what respondents understand by 'good design' in the Hailsham context.

Many of the responses repeated those from the first Neighbourhood Plan and have been used to focus on a relatively small number of Guidelines which can have the most impact in Hailsham. They have a focus on:

- The potential for change and development in the Town Centre.
- Design quality in new growth areas and, importantly, how these can be successfully integrated with the existing built form.
- Street design and integration of car parking.
- Design Guidelines for smaller scale windfall developments.

Figure 8: Attendees to consultation events on the Neighbourhood Plan and Design Guidelines providing feedback on what they think represents 'good design'. Faces blurred for privacy purposes.

2.

2. Area context and qualities

The growth and evolution of Hailsham

Hailsham is the largest settlement in Wealden District. It has a population of more than 23,000 people and has experienced significant growth over the last decade, with the population growing by around 2,500 people between the 2011 and 2021 Census. The Neighbourhood Plan area extends to around 2,025 hectares with the landscape surrounding the town being characterised by open fields, woodlands and agricultural land in the north, south and west, and the Pevensey Levels, a protected wetland area, in the east. The town itself is typified by relatively low-density residential development, though more recent developments and upcoming proposals for growth allocations on the edge of the town feature higher densities.

Hailsham was first established as a small market town in the second half of the thirteenth century. Until the eighteenth century the extent of the town was focused around the High Street, Market Square and Market Street (see map of street names at Figure 1). With the Napoleonic Wars and an influx of troops at England's south coast, Hailsham experienced its first wave of expansion. Barracks for the soldiers were built on Hailsham Common to the south-west of the historic core of the town.

The nineteenth century marked several significant developments that shaped the image of Hailsham that we see today. The early part of the century was characterised by a wave of changes and rebuilding of the existing built structure within the town. In the middle of the century Hailsham established itself as the town with the most important cattle and livestock market in Sussex. In 1880 a new railway line (the 'Cuckoo Line') opened between Polegate and Eridge, running through Hailsham. With the arrival of the railway Hailsham experienced another spurt of growth at the end of the century. Modest-sized terrace houses for workers were built along Station Road, Garfield Road and Bell Banks Road in addition to the gothic style Railway Tavern on Station Road which is still in use to this day (Figure 10).

Hailsham experienced its next main growth phase during the post-war period. The radial expansion of the town, which continued through to the 1980's, included residential development as well as the introduction of new shopping centres, schools and civic buildings. During this period Hailsham's historic core was subject to significant infill development which shapes its appearance until this day. Hailsham also experienced smaller growth phases in the 1990s and 2010s, as well as more recent development from 2020 onwards.

The railway line was closed in in 1968 and reopened in 1992 under the name of the Cuckoo Trail as a walking and cycling path and bridleway. Nowadays it forms a green link through the town which is appreciated for its recreational value.

Signposting

Further information on the growth of Hailsham and our understanding of the town as it is today is presented, at length, in the draft Hailsham Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2020). Although the Conservation Area is focused on the Town Centre (Figure 9), the Appraisal sets this in the context of the growth and history of the town, and the influence this has had on modern day Hailsham. The Hailsham Historic Character Assessment Report (2008) also presents further detailed information, helps chart the development of the town and identifies heritage assets. Applicants for development should familiarise themselves with these documents to help inform an appropriate design response to local character.

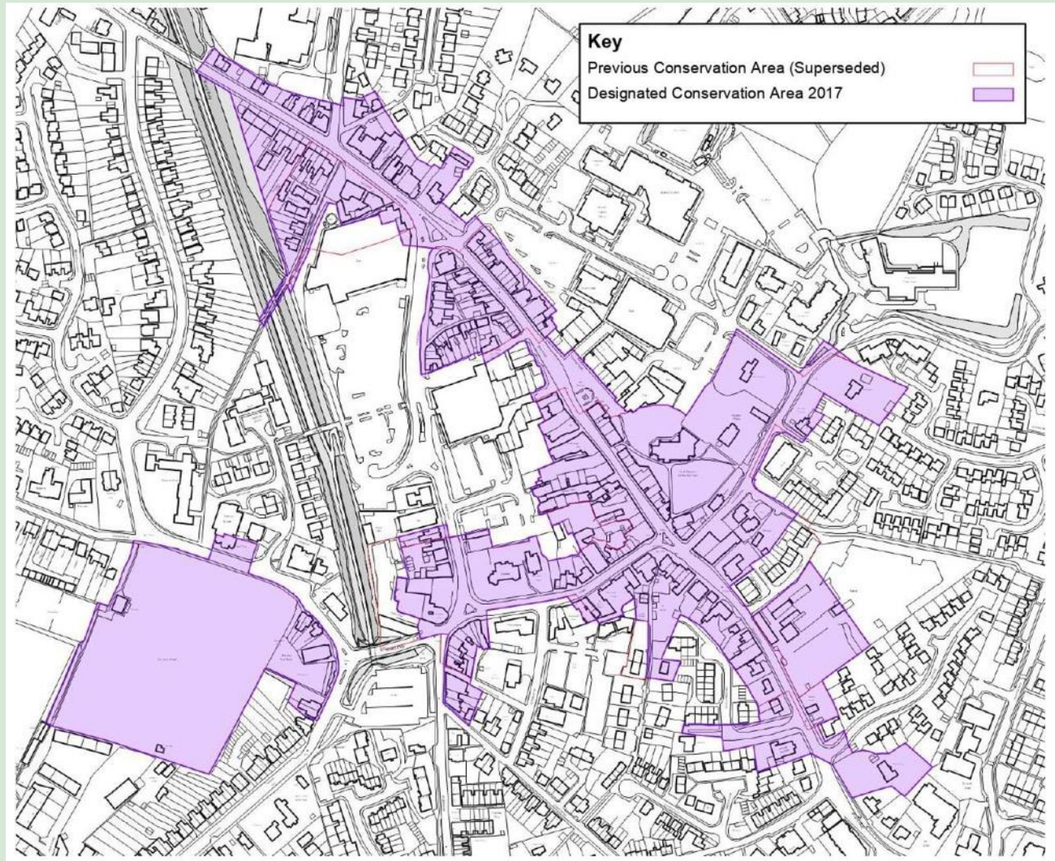


Figure 9: Extent of Hailsham conservation area (Source: Draft Hailsham Conservation Area Character Appraisal)

Figure 10: Historic plans of Hailsham Town Centre from (top left) mid-1800's, showing the railway line terminating at South Road, (top right) early 1900's, showing the railway line having been extended north and South Road realigned to bridge over the railway, (bottom left) mid-1900's, showing growth of the town including industrial uses along Western Road and new homes to the south and east of Common Pond, and (bottom right) from the 1970's, showing expansion of the town centre, including the Vicarage Fields Shopping Centre, and closure of the railway line (source: National Library of Scotland).

Last Train on the Cuckoo Line

It was September
when you left
you said "I'll catch the last train"

I didn't know
when we said goodbye
I'd never see you again

I didn't know
it was the last train ever
on the Cuckoo Line

Half past ten, closing time
I was still hoping
you'd changed your mind
and you'd be waiting
at my door
ready to give it one more try

I didn't know
it was the last train ever
on the Cuckoo Line

I awoke in the morning
on your side of the bed
on the wrong side of time

I didn't hear the whistle
I didn't hear the steam
I didn't feel your hand in mind

I didn't know
it was the last train ever
on the Cuckoo Line

From the musical String
Lyrics by Stephen Plaice
Music by Tony Biggin

Hailshamfestival.co.uk

Above: The closure of the railway line through Hailsham as commemorated in verse and appearing on the Eastwell Place Bridge ("The Artists' Bridge") across the Cuckoo Trail.

General form, structure and setting of the town

The general structure of the town includes several core elements that shape its form (Figure 11). The Cuckoo Trail functions as a green spine running through the town from north to south with the triangular shaped Town Centre situated roughly in the middle of the settlement. The Cuckoo Trail runs along the western side of the Town Centre.

The Town Centre is formed by North Street, George Street and High Street with St. Mary's Church as an important landmark. Residential growth that appeared in the previous century extends to all sides but is more significant to the north and south giving Hailsham an elongated footprint. To the west development is limited by the A22 (Hailsham Bypass) and, to the east, is limited by the area of flood risk associated with the Pevensey Levels.

There are two main employment areas within the town (at Diplocks Way and Station Road). Both are thriving areas with few vacancies, typified by warehousing and industrial style sheds with extensive areas of hard standing comprising a mix of car parking, servicing and storage areas.

Recreational assets and open spaces include two sport fields, the Western Road Recreational Ground and facilities near Battle Road associated with Hailsham Community College. Hailsham Common Pond to the south of the Town Centre is another distinct feature and important public open space.

Hailsham is located in the Low Weald, situated between the middle reaches of the River Cuckmere to the west and the Pevensey Levels to the east. The landscape is gently undulating with occasional steep-sided stream valleys, ridges and plateau, becoming hillier to the south as it reaches the South Downs.

Water is a dominant feature in the landscape, with the topography and underlaying clay giving rise to numerous ponds and meandering streams. The Low Weald is densely wooded in places, characterised by numerous and extensive blocks of ancient and semi-natural coppiced woodlands. Fields are generally small and irregular in shape, with species rich hedgerows likely being remnants of larger areas of former woodland. Key features of the landscape setting of Hailsham include:

- Treed, sensitive edges and woodland on the urban edges of the town, with a few pockets of exposed or prominent urban edges along the northern edges of the town, often associated with new development sites.
- The valley of the River Cuckmere, running to the north and west of the town.
- The vast expanse of the Pevensey Levels with its associated drainage ditches to the east of the settlement.
- Views to the South Downs National Park which forms a major landmark in the landscape to the south of Hailsham.

Information presented above draws on the draft Hailsham Conservation Area Character Appraisal. This provides more detail on the surrounding context and landscape character types.

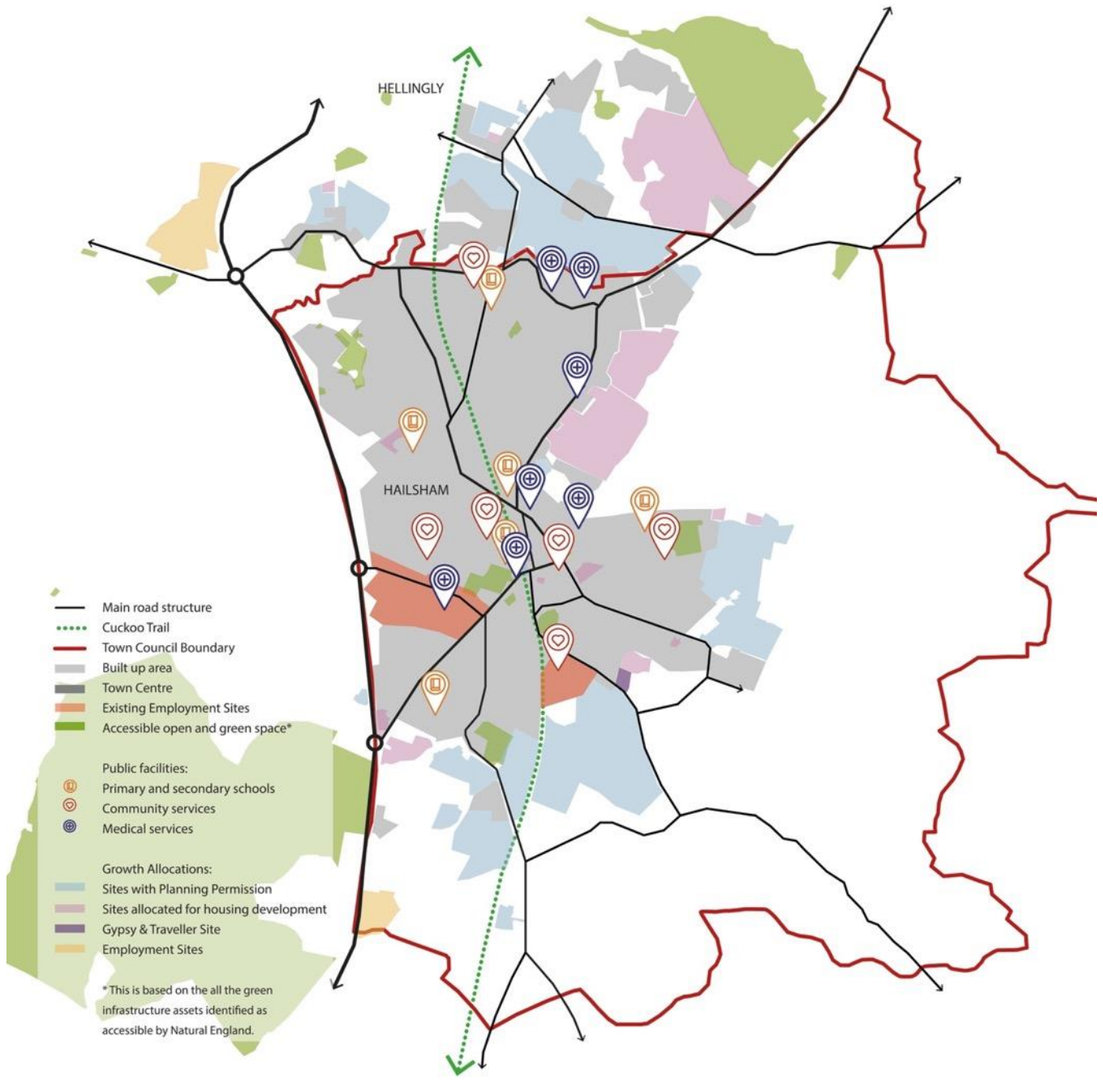


Figure 11: Plan showing general structure of the town, indicating the location and extent of the town centre, main areas of accessible green space, community facilities and growth areas. The Cuckoo Trail forms a central spine running through the town. Allocations indicated on the plan are based upon the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan (2024). These are subject to change but shown for context.

Materials, colours and details

Buildings in Hailsham follows a clear colour palette as well as distinct architectural elements and materials.

The colour palette for Hailsham mostly features natural tones reaching from dark greys, rich reds and oranges, to muted browns and greens as well as a soft beige or white.

Typical wall materials include bricks or vertical club tiles in varying shades of red or orange, timber-frames and weatherboarding, as well as pastel coloured render or light painted brick. It is also common for buildings to combine two or more materials lending them an interesting and varied appearance, adding to the character of Hailsham (Figure 12). Typical roof materials include red clay, dark slate and concrete tiles. The palette of colours and materials is reflective of the geology and historic growth of the town. As noted by Pevsner in The Buildings of England (Pevsner, N. and Nairn, I. 1965, Pevsner Architectural Guides: Sussex (The Buildings of England)):

"*The building materials reflect this geology. Flint on the Downs and the coastal plain, with occasional incursions a mile or two north into the Weald. Sandstone in the Weald itself, usually buff-coloured from Horsham eastwards, nutty and brown in the hills around Pulborough, greenish in the north west corner, north of Midhurst, where it is the same as the Burgate stone of Surrey. And after that, of course, brick everywhere: first seen at Herstmonceux Castle in the mid C15, now over the whole county, usually a cheerful vermillion*".

Typical roof shapes include gable, hipped, half-hipped and pent roofs. Roofs often have additional architectural elements like dormers and traditional chimneys.

Other distinct architectural elements for buildings in Hailsham include bay or sash windows, well integrated signage on historic buildings, and intricate eaves details. Further information on typical materials, architectural features and building styles, including roof forms, can be found in the Hailsham Character Assessment, extracts of which are illustrated in Figure 13.

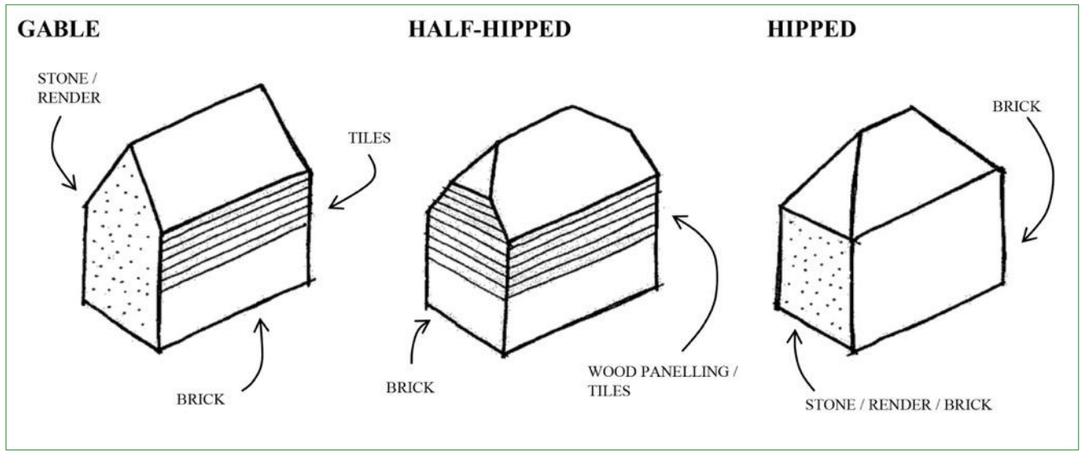


Figure 12: Diagram illustrating how common building materials and roof-types combine in older and more established parts of Hailsham, contributing to local character and sense of place.

Figure 13: Building materials, colours and details common in Hailsham

Design qualities and characteristics

The Town Centre

The Town Centre of Hailsham (Figure 14), with its historic High Street and the Conservation Area, is an important area that forms the distinctive character of the town. However, it also shows how different developments that have occurred in Hailsham over time have disrupted the homogenous structure of the Town Centre, with the urban fabric between new and old contrasting with each other. While the historic core is typified by a fine grain of development with active frontages, the edges of the Town Centre, with its larger-scale development from the 1950s through to the 1980s, has created many black walls, rear servicing and parking areas facing the streets which undermine character and potential for street-based activity in the centre. The key defining qualities of the Town Centre, issues, risks and opportunities are summarised in Table 2.

Key Qualities	Key Issues / Risks	Recommendations / Opportunities
• Historic fine-grain fabric and human-scale development in the conservation area. • Several listed buildings and church with churchyard comprise an important landmark. • Good mix of commercial offers and community services.	• Large surface car parking, service areas and retail units disrupt the historic fine-grain fabric of the Town Centre and conservation area. • Many blank walls and lack of active frontages in some areas, with the public and private realms being poorly defined. • Edges of blocks and gateway locations to the Town Centre area poorly undefined • Some colours, materials and signage in newer development is not sensitive to the conservation area and are harmful to the setting of heritage assets.	• Explore ways to screen car parking and service areas, potentially with active frontages, to better define public and private spaces. • Reflect the scale and massing of the historic fabric in new development, allowing for change and adaptation over time. • Significant public sector landownership within the Town Centre provides potential for investment in the quality of public space, buildings and mix of uses.

Table 2: Summary of key qualities, risks and opportunities for the Town Centre

Figure 14: Aerial view looking across the Vicarage Fields development in the town centre

Residential areas

Most residential areas in Hailsham are characterised by lower densities. Older residential areas include houses setback from the street edge with generous front and back gardens. Mature trees, hedges and flowerbeds, as well as some on-street parking, soften the street scene. Buildings tend to reflect a mix of architectural elements and materials, though use of red brick is very prominent throughout all areas.

In contrast, newer developments usually have a higher density which often results in a lack of green spaces and smaller setbacks. These developments often appear to be disconnected from the rest of the town as they are often designed around an internal access or loop road and culs-de-sac leading from this. This form of layout, combined with a lack of walking and cycling infrastructure, accentuates car dependency. House types, styles and sizes in these areas are fairly uniform, and areas are not distinctly Hailsham.

The key defining qualities of the residential areas in Hailsham, issues, risks and opportunities are summarised in Table 3.

Key Qualities	Key Issues / Risks	Recommendations / Opportunities
• Older areas offer close proximity to Cuckoo Trail, generous gardens and green spaces, as well as mature trees, giving them a soft, verdant character and sense of space. • The mix of architectural elements and materials in some areas provides variety and interest. • Use of and varied combinations of materials and colours that reflect the local geology and help create a sense of place.	• Limited mix of housing types, sizes, materials and colours in some areas can create monotony. • Layout and design increases car-based dependency. Inward facing developments are poorly integrated with the wider urban form. • Use of rear courtyard parking and or tandem parking can cause displacement of parking onto the street and pavement. • Lack of play and other open spaces, and which are often pushed to the edge of development.	• Introduce greater variety of house types. • Make use of a wider palette of materials, colours, roof shapes and other architectural features and details to support local character. • Create integrated routes for all, supporting active travel and connections with community infrastructure. • Introduce greenery into the street environment and plan for parking in a way that it will be used as intended.

Table 3: Summary of key qualities, risks and opportunities for residential areas in Hailsham

Employment areas

Hailsham has two main employment areas, both located in the southern part of the town. Businesses in these areas include a mix of industrial activities, offices and some retail uses. While the commercial area around Diplocks Way offers good accessibility to both the town and its surroundings with the direct connections to the A22, the employment area on Station Road is surrounded by residential use and does not benefit from the same level of accessibility. Both areas include areas of hardstanding and are vehicle dominated environments, with a high proportion of on-street parking, and which is not conducive to walking or cycling.

The key defining qualities of the employment areas, issues, risks and opportunities are summarised in Table 4.

Key Qualities	Key Issues / Risks	Recommendations / Opportunities
• Thriving areas embedded within the fabric of the town and providing local employment opportunities in close proximity to the home.	• The size of the employment areas and buildings within these causes disruption to the town's fabric. • High vehicle movements, parking and servicing areas, makes these unwelcoming places for people on foot or cycle, and can cause congestion on the surrounding street network. • Extensive areas of hard standing.	• Improving the infrastructure for active travel modes to support walking and cycling to work. • Explore opportunities to integrate landscaping within the employment areas.

Table 4: Summary of key qualities, risks and opportunities for employment areas in Hailsham

3.
CROWN
BATES & CO
B

3. The characteristics of well-designed places

The National Design Guide establishes ten characteristics of well-designed places (Figure 7). Commentary is set out below on how these characteristics might be incorporated into opportunities for development in Hailsham.

Context

The National Design Guide describes this characteristic as:

Context is the location of the development and the attributes of its immediate, local and regional surroundings.

An understanding of the context, history and the cultural characteristics of a site, neighbourhood and region influences the location, siting and design of new developments. It means they are well grounded in their locality and more likely to be acceptable to existing communities. Creating a positive sense of place helps to foster a sense of belonging and contributes to well-being, inclusion and community cohesion.

Hailsham is the largest settlement in the District. It's sense of place is defined by its history as a market town and industrial growth linked to the coming of the railway, its landscape setting in close proximity to the Pevensey Levels, and the presence of the Cuckoo Trail which forms a green walking and cycling route through the centre of Hailsham, linking it with the surrounding countryside and nearby settlements. Water, and woodland, are a dominate feature of the surrounding landscape and found in close proximity to the settlement edge. The gently sloping landscape of the settlement provides views across the Pevensey Levels and towards the South Downs National Park (Figure 15).

The historic core of the town is reflected through its status as a conservation area and, to this day, the High Street, Market Street and George Street reflect the historic character and growth of the Town. The town was granted market status in 1252 and the High Street, together with Market Street are, historically, the principal routes through the town around which it grew. The richness of buildings, architectural features and materials used in these reflect its significance as a market town, as well as displaying a clear link with the local geology. St. Mary's Church is a prominent feature in the town.

New development should respond positively to the historic fabric of the town and surrounding landscape, reflected through the use of materials and sensitive integration of natural assets, including areas of woodland and water.

Opportunities should be taken to maximise the Cuckoo Trail and better integrate this within the town, including connections with the town centre. Within the centre, the scale and form of development should respond to the historic scale, network of routes and respect the views and setting of important buildings that give clear visual clues to the history and evolution of the town. The function of Hailsham as a market town should be reflected in the quality of its civic spaces, the social, commercial and retail functions with the town centre.

Figure 15: Aerial view looking south west from the centre of Hailsham towards the South Downs National Park and surrounding landscape

Identity

The National Design Guide describes this characteristic as:

The identity or character of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. It is not just about the buildings or how a place looks, but how it engages with all of the senses.

Local character makes places distinctive. Well-designed, sustainable places with a strong identity give their users, occupiers and owners a sense of pride, helping to create and sustain communities and neighbourhoods.

Hailsham's identity is shaped by the historic core with its fine-grain urban fabric, spacious and verdant residential neighbourhoods with winding streets, and the Cuckoo Trail (Figure 16) as a continuous green spine passing through the town.

Historic landmarks like St. Mary's Church and smaller independent local shops along High Street and the Market Square give the Town Centre a welcoming and intimate feel. However, more recent large-scale developments towards the edge of the Town Centre disrupt the urban fabric, with large footprint uses, extensive areas of car parking and main roads undermining the historic setting of the central area. In many areas, servicing, car parking and the rear walls of buildings form the public view of the centre. An approach that reimagines these areas, activating edges through public use and diversification of the space could help repair the historic fabric of the town centre, creating welcoming spaces and inclusive spaces.

Older residential neighbourhoods in Hailsham are defined by their space, landscaping and visual interest. This pattern has not been reflected in more recent development that has taken place. Opportunities should be taken through new development to reflect the successful qualities of more established residential areas, involving the use of a mix of materials, colours and building styles common to the area.

The Cuckoo Trail, as a green spine running throughout the town, holds the opportunity to be a defining element of Hailsham's character. The Trail could be strengthened a primary route for active travel modes and a key destination for recreational use. To enhance these features, its presence should be better integrated with the town, particularly where adjacent to new developments or where opportunities might be taken to retrofit existing streets and spaces adjacent to this.

Figure 16: The Cuckoo Trail is a key feature of Hailsham.

Built form

The National Design Guide describes this characteristic as:

Built form is the three-dimensional pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings and open spaces. It is the interrelationship between all these elements that creates an attractive place to live, work and visit, rather than their individual characteristics. Together they create the built environment and contribute to its character and sense of place.

It is relevant to city and town centres, suburbs, villages and rural settlements. It creates a coherent framework that forms a basis for the design of individual developments within a place.

The built form and grain of development in Hailsham can vary significantly depending on the area but, overall, the town is generally characterised as having a relatively low density and fine urban grain.

The Town Centre has a contrasting urban fabric with a small-scale grain within the historic core and larger footprints towards the edge. The larger footprint buildings, coupled with servicing areas and extensive areas of car parking, undermine the fine grain nature of the historic form of the centre. The presence of some buildings with inactive frontages, particularly around areas of parking, has a negative impact on the activity and attractiveness of the Town Centre. Addressing these issues through the reintroduction of active edges and remodelling of the spaces could help repair the urban fabric, responding positively to the form of the historic core.

Residential neighbourhoods often consist of a mix of detached or semi-detached homes with generous front gardens, especially in the more established, older residential areas. A mix of roof types and architectural features, such as dormers and chimneys, are often present and create a distinct local vernacular for the mostly two-storey homes.

A common characteristic for buildings in Hailsham is the mix of two or more materials on the façade. Examples include brick or render mixed with hanging club tiles or weatherboarding. The setback of buildings from the street is quite common in Hailsham, providing a sense of space and allowing for the introduction of greenery into the street scene. This can also allow for the sensitive integration of parking into the street. However, in more recent residential development areas, the space between buildings facing each over across the street is generally much narrower. The consequence of this is that the newer residential areas do not share the same sense of space found in more established areas, there can be a lack of greenery and areas of parking dominate the street scene.

Opportunities should be taken through new development to introduce character through the use of different materials and building forms, and through provision of green infrastructure and sensitive location of car parking in residential areas.

Figure 17: Aerial view looking north along the High Street and which shows the contrast between the historic built form and larger scale buildings that have come forward over the last 40 – 50 years

Figure 18: The Church remains a key feature of the town, with views to it afforded along the High Street and from the Vicarage Fields development. The integration of the Church with the town centre could be improved, with public realm improvements introducing green infrastructure into the centre.

Movement

The National Design Guide describes this characteristic as:

Patterns of movement for people are integral to well-designed places. They include walking and cycling, access to facilities, employment and servicing, parking and the convenience of public transport. They contribute to making high quality places for people to enjoy. They also form a crucial component of urban character. Their success is measured by how they contribute to the quality and character of the place, not only how well they function.

Successful development depends upon a movement network that makes connections to destinations, places and communities, both within the site and beyond its boundaries.

The historic growth of the town means that main routes converge on the town centre. However, the presence of the former railway line, now reimagined as the Cuckoo Trail, means there are limited connections across this, and thus the town centre acts as a funnel through which traffic – particularly vehicular – moves. This can cause congestion in the town, particularly at school drop off and pick up times with schools and the Community College in close proximity to the centre.

Car-based travel is the dominant form of movement and areas of surface car parking occupy a high proportion of the land in the town centre. Use of the car is important in a place like Hailsham, particularly for longer intra-urban travel to surrounding towns and settlements, and where provision of sustainable travel options (bus, walking and wheeling) are limited: the most frequent bus routes (Figure 19) have a focus on the western half of the town (and thus not serving major new development areas to the north, south and east), and safe cycling routes are effectively limited to the Cuckoo Trail, and there are few connections to and from this to encourage its use. Walking routes are provided and are integral to the fabric of the town centre, particularly in terms of the network of alleys and twittens in the centre but, in places, these are interrupted by main road junctions and often run around the rear of properties, which can raise concerns about personal safety (real or perceived), and discourage their use.

The structure of recent residential development has often resulted in 'inward-looking' layouts which are poorly integrated with the existing built form, hindering active travel and reinforcing car dependency. In some cases where newer development has taken place the presence of narrow rural lanes leading to these means that space for bus connections, walking and cycling is limited.

Opportunities that support sustainable travel (bus, walking and cycling) should be taken, helping to relieve the town of traffic issues and provide a wider range of transport choices accessible to all. Providing new infrastructure within development, as well as within the existing fabric of the town, should be explored. Equally, new development should be laid out in such a way that enables people to travel by sustainable means. Well integrated developments, linked to the existing route network, and which are in close proximity to or can be connected to bus routes should be promoted.

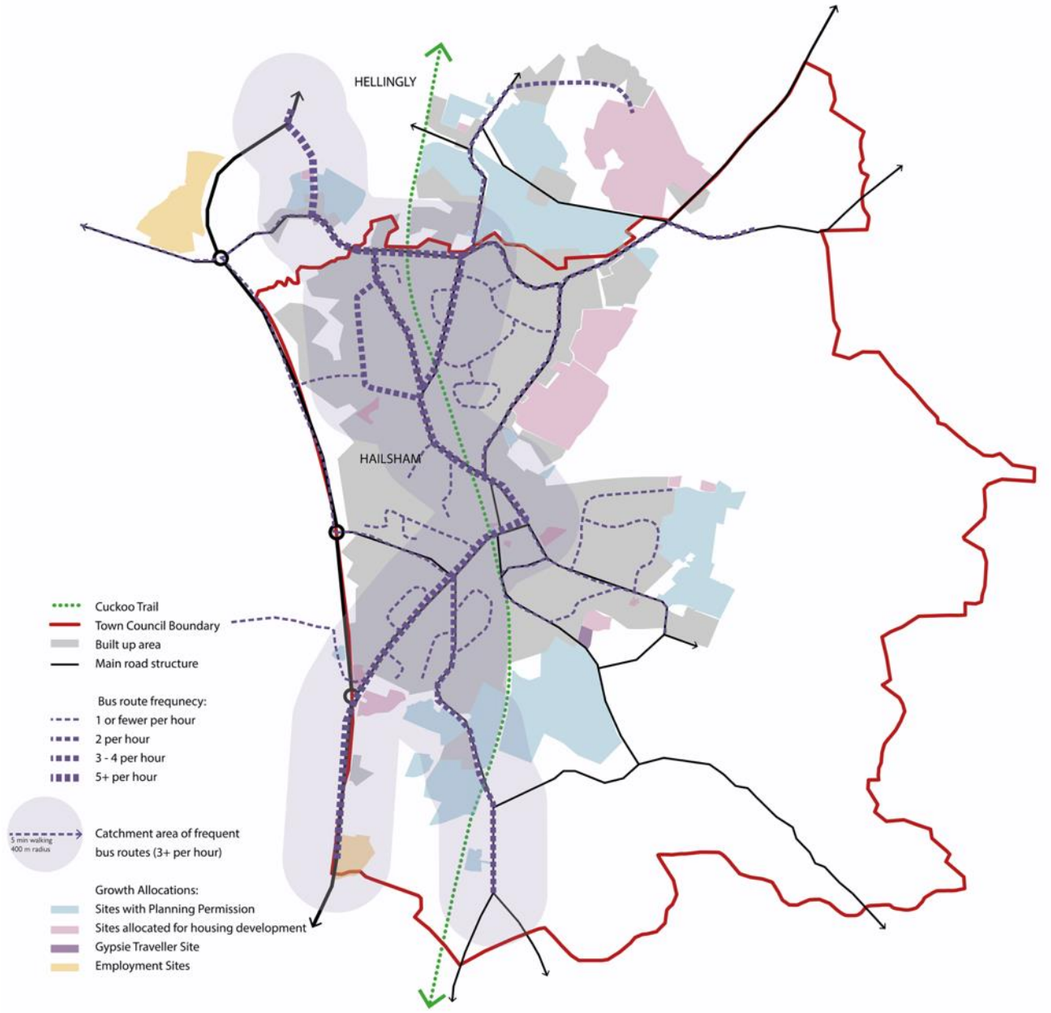


Figure 19: Plan illustrating the bus network in Hailsham and broad walking catchments around more frequent service routes. Allocations indicated on the plan are based upon the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan (2024). These are subject to change but shown for context.

Nature

The National Design Guide describes this characteristic as:

Nature contributes to the quality of a place, and to people's quality of life, and it is a critical component of well-designed places. Natural features are integrated into well-designed development. They include natural and designed landscapes, high quality public open spaces, street trees, and other trees, grass, planting and water.

Hailsham offers a variety of green spaces and natural features in and around the town (Figure 20). Within the built-up area there are several accessible amenity green spaces including sports fields, Hailsham Common Pond and the Cuckoo Trail. In addition, the older, more established residential neighbourhoods, are characterised by spacious front and back gardens as well as large street trees that create a verdant street scene. However, in some of the newer developments, green spaces are often located to the edges of the development area as opposed to being fully integrated within the neighbourhood.

The surrounding landscape offers a mix of open fields and ancient woodland with Abbots Wood to the south-west of Hailsham being a significant destination, albeit that the A22 forms a barrier to movement between Hailsham and Abbots Wood. To the east, Hailsham borders the Pevensey Levels, a Natural Nature Reserve characterised by large areas of wetland and meadows intersected by streams and endowed with a network of Public Rights of Way.

Despite proximity to larger natural green spaces, analysis indicates that access to natural green space closer to home is limited and that there is an absence of smaller natural and semi-natural green spaces within Hailsham.

Given the relatively compact nature of the town and it's landscape setting, there is an opportunity to improve existing green infrastructure and connectivity with this, as well as exploring opportunities for provision of new habitats and natural spaces within new development and the existing urban fabric. The requirement for developers to provide for biodiversity net gains can help support habitat creation across Hailsham, with a connected network of green spaces supporting wildlife and enriching the quality of the built form.

New developments should provide green space, areas for nature and biodiversity net gain as per standards established by the District Council and in national guidance. These should be well-integrated within the form of development and, as far as possible, maintain and protect existing natural assets, including woodland and hedgerows, and the quality of the wetland environment. This extends to the management of surface water runoff and utilisation of raingardens and similar in the urban environment to help manage water quality and impact of runoff from urban areas into the surrounding landscape.

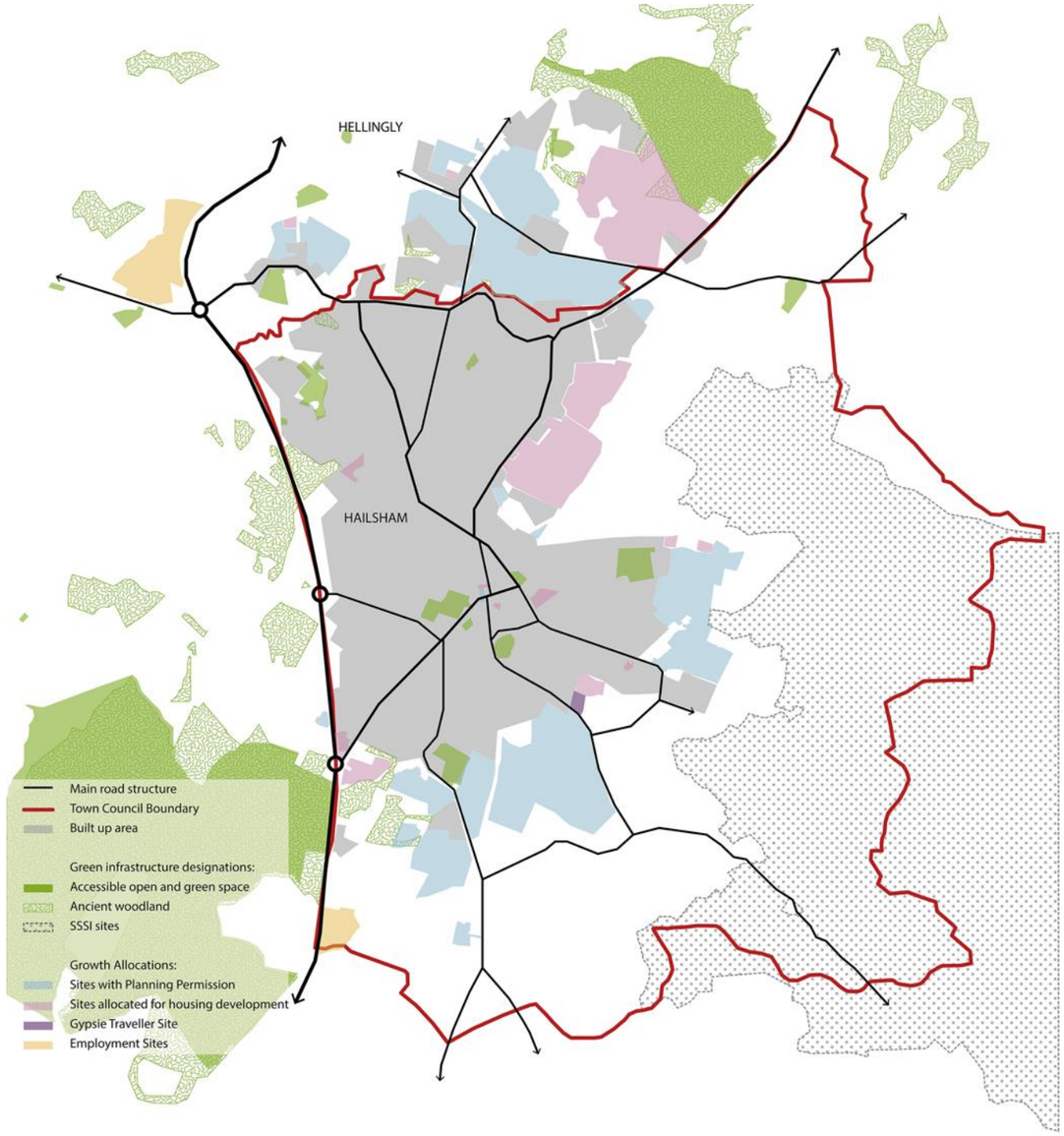


Figure 20: Designated areas of green infrastructure in and around Hailsham. Allocations indicated on the plan are based upon the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan (2024). These are subject to change but shown for context.

Public spaces

The National Design Guide describes this characteristic as:

The quality of the spaces between buildings is as important as the buildings themselves. Public spaces are streets, squares, and other spaces that are open to all. They are the setting for most movement.

The design of a public space encompasses its siting and integration into the wider network of routes as well as its various elements. These include areas allocated to different users–cars, cyclists and pedestrians–for different purposes such as movement or parking, hard and soft surfaces, street furniture, lighting, signage and public art.

High quality areas of public open space in Hailsham include Western Road Recreation Ground (Figure 21) the Common Pond (Figure 22) and Hailsham Country Park. However, whilst Hailsham does benefit from public and open spaces, these examples are an exception, with public space generally being limited both in quantum and quality. Within the town centre the main public space is that on the High Street adjacent to the Vicarage Fields shopping centre. This is primarily an area of hard landscape with limited functionality. The regeneration of the town centre has previously been explored and any future development proposals should consider how the quality of the public space might be improved, potentially providing defined spaces for different activities, greater spill out space for retail units, and new areas of green infrastructure.

Providing uses around all spaces that look onto them and thus provide natural surveillance will enhance the sense of safety of that space. Equally, the design of the space should avoid hidden and dark corners, whilst providing 'something for everyone', such that it becomes an inclusive space.

Much of the public realm and other semi-public spaces in the town centre comprise the streets, areas of car parking and servicing. These could be addressed through the management of traffic to support pedestrian priority and movement, as well as introduction of measures that better define key spaces and routes so that people know and understand where they are welcome. This might mean wrapping service yards with active development edges for example, or making use of green walls, public art and lighting to enliven the space.

The importance of designing for inclusive places applies to all public spaces across Hailsham, including parks and other amenity spaces within residential areas.

Figure 21: Western Road Recreation Ground

Figure 22: Aerial view of Common Pond

Uses

The National Design Guide describes this characteristic as:

Sustainable places include a mix of uses that support everyday activities, including to live, work and play.

Well-designed neighbourhoods need to include an integrated mix of tenures and housing types that reflect local housing need and market demand. They are designed to be inclusive and to meet the changing needs of people of different ages and abilities. New development reinforces existing places by enhancing local transport, facilities and community services, and maximising their potential use.

Where there is rapid social and economic change, such as sustainable growth or diversification in rural communities or town centres, well-designed buildings and places can accommodate a variety of uses over time.

The Town Centre offers a wide range of retail options, including local shops, pharmacies, restaurants and bakers, and large supermarkets. It also includes a wide range of services, including, but not limited to hairdressers, salons and property. As the main town in the District it has an important civic role and is also home to Wealden District Council and, next to this, Hailsham Leisure Centre. Coupled with local schools and other community services, the town centre is a major hub not just for Hailsham but for the surrounding towns and villages too.

There are two main employment areas within the town, including the Diplocks and Station Road estates. Both are vibrant, active locations, providing for a range of local employment opportunities, including office and workshop space for small enterprises and industrial activities.

Hailsham is largely residential, with supporting community services and facilities located around the town, including education, sports and play space. However, these are mainly focused in the central part of Hailsham.

As Hailsham continues to grow and evolve, so the role and function of the town centre, as an important hub for the town and surrounding area, should be strengthened. The civic role of the town, reflected through the presence of the District Council and other facilities, such as the leisure centre, should be extended to the provision of social and community facilities across Hailsham, with opportunities taken through development and improvement to existing facilities, to improve access and proximity to these, and the range of facilities available.

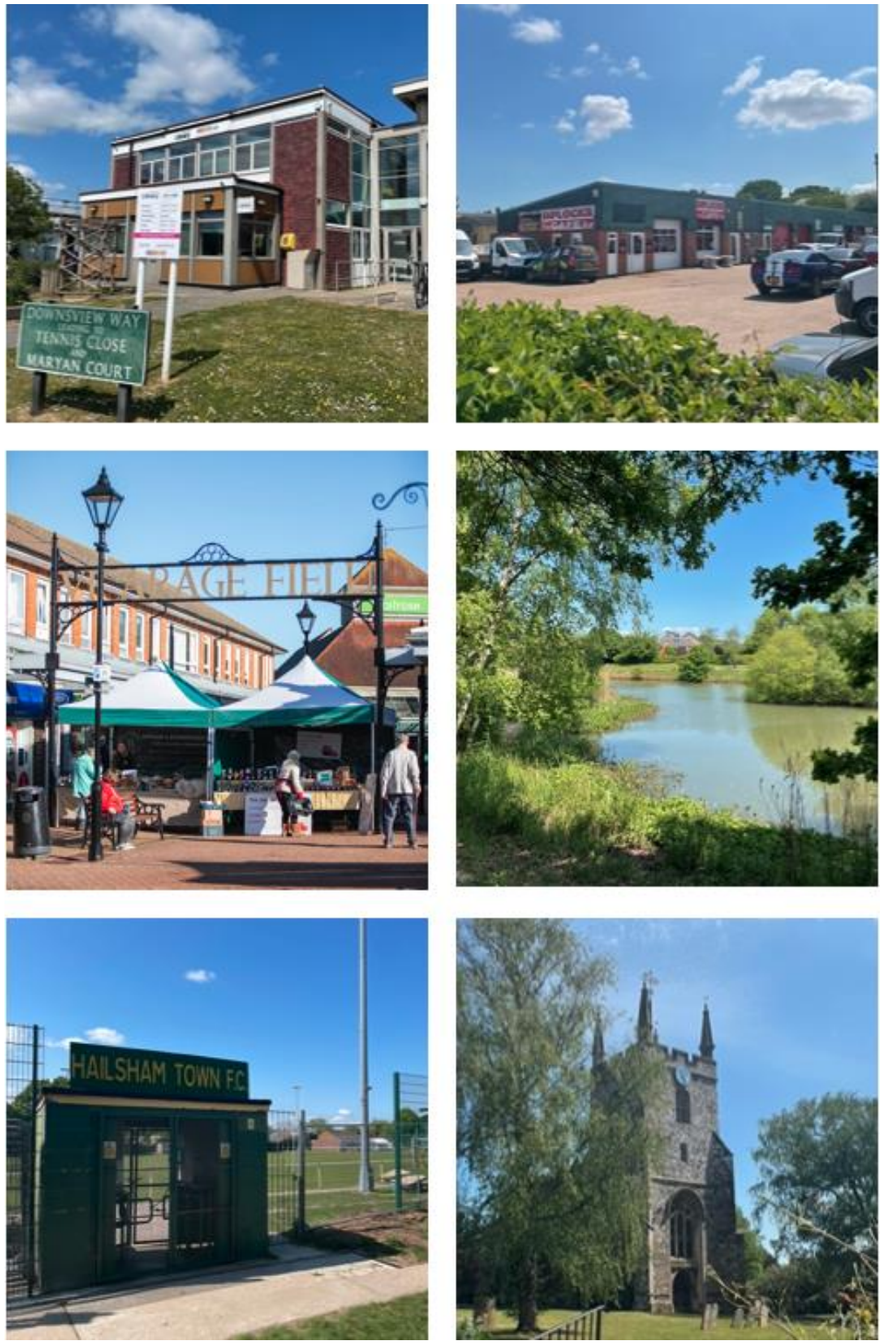


Figure 23: Hailsham benefits from a wide range and mix of uses catering for different needs and ages, including community and recreational facilities, employment opportunities, town centre retail, natural and amenity space

Homes and Buildings

The National Design Guide describes this characteristic as:

Well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable. They provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support the health and well-being of their users and all who experience them.

They meet the needs of a diverse range of users, considering factors such as the ageing population and cultural differences. They are adequate in size, fit for purpose and are adaptable to the changing needs of their occupants over time.

Successful buildings also provide attractive, stimulating and positive places for all, whether for activity, interaction, retreat, or simply passing by.

The residential neighbourhoods of Hailsham are dominated by traditional style suburban detached and semi-detached homes. A wider range of housing choice and opportunity would provide suitable housing options for all. This could include flexible and adaptable homes and associated annexes that cater for households at different stages of the lifecycle. The provision of new homes within the town centre could help support the vitality of the centre and may be appropriate for provision of homes suitable for an ageing population, being in close proximity to services and facilities.

While the more established residential neighbourhoods in Hailsham provide generous front and back garden space the newer developments are often of a higher density, and thus amenity and other incidental space is more limited, green infrastructure limited, hard landscaping and areas of parking visually dominate. Opportunities should be taken in new development to plan for a different configuration, including green infrastructure and locating parking so that it is used in the way intended. Opportunities may be taken to explore the retrofitting of existing streets to help introduce areas of greenery and rationalise parking spaces within these.

In Hailsham it is important that space is of a good quality, but that it is also useable. Left over spaces should be avoided, with green, open and public spaces being well-integrated within development, being located close to home, being designed with safety in mind, and where the provision of different features within the environment support use by different ages and genders. Animating space, through provision of development frontages that look out onto the spaces is important for a safety perspective, supports natural surveillance of those spaces, and also adds interest. This is important for the town centre where blank walls often front areas of car parking and servicing areas.

Figure 24: Recent growth and development has added to the stock of homes in Hailsham. However, there is little diversity in the type and size of homes provided.

Resources

The National Design Guide describes this characteristic as:

Well-designed places and buildings conserve natural resources including land, water, energy and materials. Their design responds to the impacts of climate change. It identifies measures to achieve mitigation, primarily by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimising embodied energy; and adaptation to anticipated events, such as rising temperatures and the increasing risk of flooding.

A compact and walkable neighbourhood with a mix of uses and facilities reduces demand for energy and supports health and well-being. It uses land efficiently so helps adaptation by increasing the ability for CO2 absorption, sustaining natural ecosystems, minimising flood risk and the potential impact of flooding, and reducing overheating and air pollution.

Buildings in Hailsham often display locally sourced materials including brick and timber-framing on their facades and dark slate and concrete tiles on the roofs. New developments should respond appropriately to these design elements, referencing local vernacular through use of materials and building forms to create places of interest. All building should be designed with carbon reduction in mind, meeting or, ideally, exceeding standards being established at the national level.

The relationship between Hailsham and the Pevensey Levels is a defining feature of the landscape and setting of the town (Figure 25). The Pevensey Levels is a highly sensitive environment and development must respond to this, including mitigation measures that reduce the risk of flooding and help manage the quality of the water entering the water table.

Much of the public realm in Hailsham is occupied by streets and, in the town centre, areas of hard standing for servicing and parking. Where opportunity allows, an approach to 'de-paving' should be explored, allowing for the integration of green infrastructure into these spaces. A street greening programme, including tree planting, would help absorb CO2. Provision of a wide range of green space types will help support efficient use of resources, with provision of allotments, community gardens and other food growing opportunities supporting local food production and resilience.

The form of development has a major impact on resource use, with disconnected street layouts and low frequency bus routes discouraging use of sustainable travel options. A well connected network of streets and spaces, supplemented by a range of travel options, will help facilitate travel by foot, bicycle and bus. Where services and facilities are provided in close proximity to the home this can support use of sustainable travel for short, everyday journeys, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

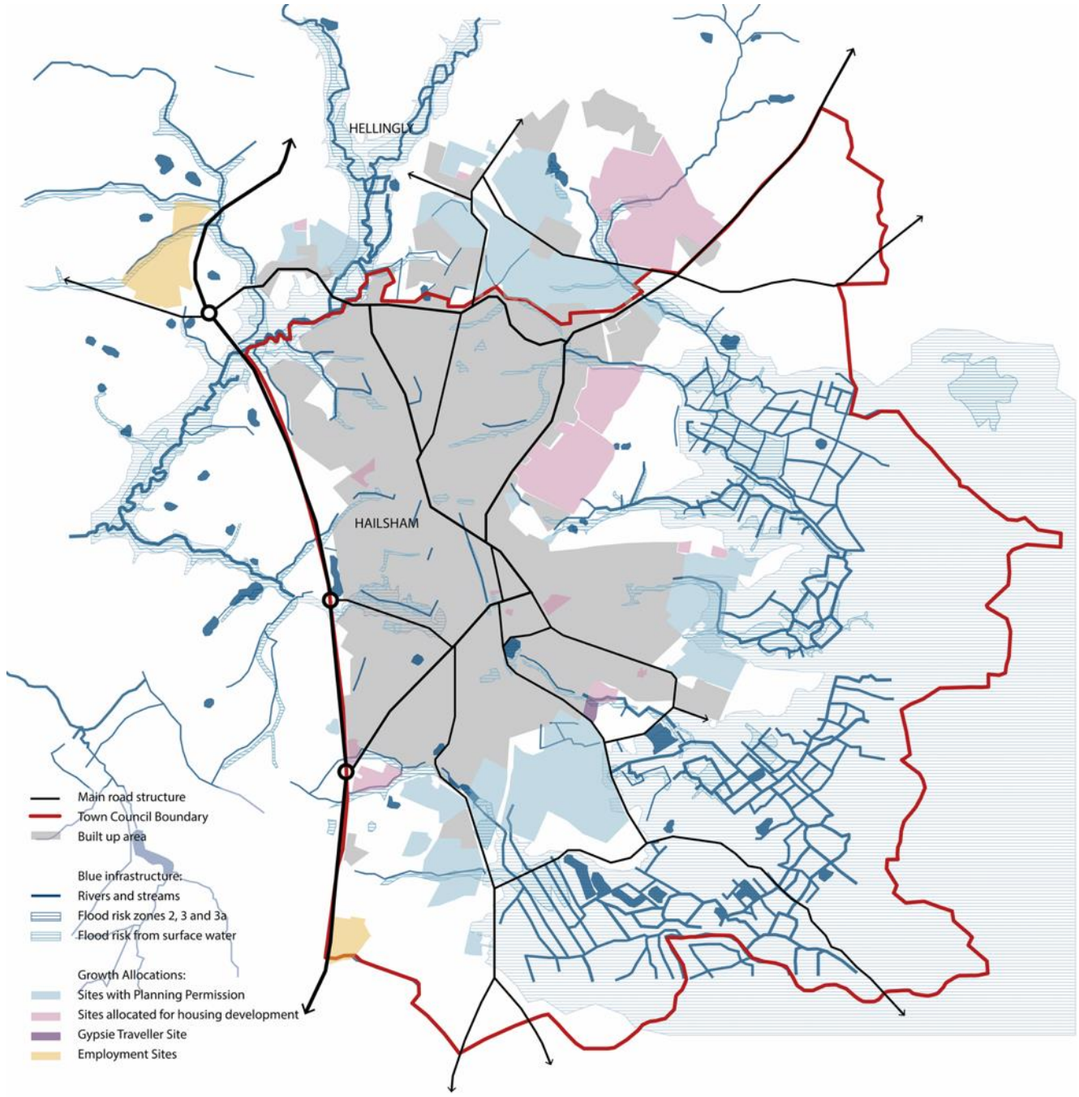


Figure 25: The blue infrastructure network and areas at risk from flooding in and around Hailsham. Allocations indicated on the plan are based upon the Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan (2024). These are subject to change but shown for context.

Lifespan

The National Design Guide describes this characteristic as:

Well-designed places sustain their beauty over the long term. They add to the quality of life of their users and as a result, people are more likely to care for them over their lifespan. They have an emphasis on quality and simplicity.

Hailsham benefits from a mix of uses and services, but many of these are mono-functional. Greater mixing and diversity of uses can support the needs of people at different stages of their lifecycle and help sustain local facilities.

Within the town centre, opportunities that support provision of mixed use development, either by way of retrofitting of existing buildings and spaces, or through new development, should be encouraged. This could help support different uses throughout the day, supporting the day time, early evening and late-night economy. The multi-functionality should extend to public spaces and community buildings, which can be adapted for use for different purposes through the day and week. Public space, for example, could be designed such that it can be reconfigured to accommodate market stalls, outdoor dining or other community events.

The quality of the public space is important and requires long term management and maintenance regimes to be put in place. Where new streets and public spaces are to be provided these should be designed to adoptable standards and provision of facilities, such as waste and recycling bins, and wider street furniture, sensitively accommodated within the space. Provision of new street furniture should be carefully located to avoid creation of visual clutter that impacts on the quality of the street environment.

The quality of space can help foster community pride and ownership. Well-designed spaces that are safe and encourage outdoor activity should be encouraged: well-designed community facilities that are accessible and inclusive to all, combined with features such as community gardens and food growing opportunities can allow local residents to feel belonging and take ownership of that space. The location of such facilities is also important. Where provided within areas of new development they should be equally accessible to new and existing residents to help develop a sense of community cohesion. This requires new development to be well integrated with the existing urban fabric.

A place with a long lifespan also benefits from a mix of housing types and sizes, including flexible and adaptable homes that enable households to say and grow in the area. New development across Hailsham should provide a mix of housing types and tenures that reflect the affordability and demographic needs of the population. Equally, provision of play space and healthcare is important for young families and the ageing population, and should be provided in locations within easy access of the home.

Figure 26: The former Hailsham Free Church building is a good local example of a building being repurposed and given new life following adaptation as the Station Youth Centre.

Sustainability standards

The ten characteristics of well-designed places support an approach to sustainable development and the move towards a net-zero environment.

The 2023 Written Ministerial Statement (Local Energy Efficiency Standards update) makes clear that the Government does not expect plan-makers to set local energy efficiency standards for buildings that go beyond current or planned buildings regulations.

The Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan, and HDG, do not therefore establish standards for sustainable design and construction. They do though support proposals for development built to the highest standards and which achieve zero or near zero net energy consumption.

Encouragement is given to the use of innovative and creative design solutions that help mitigate and build resilience to the effects of climate change. In particular:

- The Net Zero Toolkit is a good practice guide that presents a set of key design features that should be reflected in new developments and which include but are not limited to:
    - Using simple and compact building forms, avoiding or limiting features such as stepped roofs, terraces, overhangs and balconies, all of which increase the surface area of the building and decrease the energy efficiency of the building.
    - Orientating buildings to optimise solar gain and prevent overshadowing. Elevations facing +/-30^{O} south will benefit from solar gains all year round. Vertical and horizontal shading, such as brise-soleil, should be used to help control solar shading and gains at different times of the year.
    - Minimising heat loss from north facing facades through the use of smaller windows, offset by larger windows on south facing facades to allow for solar heat gain. This should be reflected in the internal layout of the building and location of habitable rooms.
    - Designing airtight buildings and ventilation systems that maintain good air quality whilst reducing heat loss. Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery units should be installed in new buildings. Dual aspect buildings are favoured, allowing for cross-ventilation.
    - Install and use heat pumps as a low carbon way of heating the property. Solar Photovoltaic panels can also be utilised. Roof tiles and panels should be designed such that they are sensitive to the setting and views across the landscape, including those to and from the Pevensey Levels.

Continued in next column

Continued from previous column

- A whole life-cycle approach should be taken to development, maximising the layout and orientation of buildings to respond to issues of overheating and cooling, minimising waste, conserving natural resources and using materials with high energy performance ratings.
- Opportunities should be taken wherever possible to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings, even where new development is not proposed:
    - Energy use targets and guidance on how to achieve these are set out in the LETI Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide, showing how existing homes can be retrofitted to support net zero targets.
    - Equally, the PAS specification provides guidance on how to assesses dwellings for retrofit, identify improvements, design and specify energy efficiency measures. This favours a 'fabric first' approach to reduce heat demand, ensure homes are well ventilated and issues in respect of damp and humidity are avoided
    - Where opportunities for introducing energy efficiency measures in historic buildings are taken it is important that the improvements do not cause harm to the building. Guidance established by Historic England on adapting older buildings should be followed.
- Existing and new buildings should incorporate smart technology, supporting more efficient use of energy, water and heating. Measures should also be implemented that help reduce water consumption, including greywater recycling systems and rainwater-harvesting measures.
- Development is expected to provide sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) in line with the Flood and Water Management Act. Opportunities should be taken to retrofit schemes to incorporate vegetative SuDS, maximising use of permeable surfaces.

Part B

The guidelines: Hailsham Town Centre

This part of the HDG is focussed on the Town Centre (Figure 1). It identifies a set of overarching objectives for future transformation and presents a series of guidelines and design principles for change and development in the Town Centre.

CROWN
BATES & CO
B

4. Town centre

Introduction

Planning policy, at all levels, supports the role and function of town centres, and stresses the importance of taking a positive approach to growth that strengthens their role at the heart of local communities. Policy directs retail and other services to town centres, such that they are vibrant, thriving places.

Figure 27: View looking south along Hailsham High Street towards Hailsham Parish Church

Town Centres, and 'High Streets' in particular, are going through a period of transition. The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, financial crisis, changing lifestyles, work patterns and shopping preferences has had a profound impact on the High Street. The House of Lords inquiry, High Streets: Life beyond retail?, sets out some important considerations for thinking about the future of the High Street and, by extension, the town centre as a whole.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Providing good, safe and easy access to the High Street for all.
- Designing places that are safe and inclusive at all times of the day.
- Celebrating local history, character and sense of place.
- Providing high quality public space, that is well maintained and is designed for all to feel comfortable using.
- Provision of essential local services, such as public toilets.

Creating an attractive Town Centre experience that offers a range of services and facilities is embedded within Local Plan Policy. The emerging Wealden Local Plan, at Policy TC1, supports proposals that:

- Provide a mix of uses, diversifying the offer and avoiding over-concentration of any single use type.
- Support and develop the evening and night-time economy, adding to the vitality and viability of the centre.
- Provide an attractive, accessible public realm, and where the design of this and new development reflects local character and responds positively to local heritage assets.

This builds upon the adopted Wealden Core Strategy, which stated that:

"The town has seen fairly rapid growth since the 1970s and although much of the town centre has retained its original architecture there is scope for much needed redevelopment. The town offers a reasonable range of choice for shoppers and the recent opening of a new Tescos store has strengthened the town's convenience shopping role. However, overall the centre lacks vibrancy and has a high level of vacant units."

Proposals for the regeneration and redevelopment of the town centre were previously explored through the 'Aspires' project. This envisaged major redevelopment of the Vicarage Fields shopping area as well as land around the District Council office and adjacent Leisure Centre. The timing of the proposals coincided with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and have since faltered.

The importance of the town centre and improving the quality of this remains a priority. This reflects messages received through consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan and HDG, with respondents wishing to see an improved retail offer and experience, a better quality of and creation of pedestrian-friendly public spaces.

Figure 28: View looking north along Hailsham High Street

The first version of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan identified a series of challenges for the Town Centre, some of which are illustrated in Figure 29 and are summarised as:

- The town centre benefits from a fine grain historic high street, but this is surrounded by large scale uses and development footprints that contrast with it, with surrounding streets, car parks and servicing areas causing fragmentation of the historic form and the quality of routes between the centre and surrounding areas.
- Car parking represents the single main use of land in the town centre and, although important to the operation of the centre, results in traffic dominated spaces that undermine the quality of the pedestrian experience. Areas of car parking could be arranged more efficiently to help create a more welcoming environment.
- The High Street is of a historic nature and retains strong and well activated frontages well related to the street, with listed buildings and the Church being important local landmarks. The quality and setting of historic assets is though undermined by the fractured environment and poor quality of buildings, and the 'back door' of these, to the rear of the High Street,
- The structure of the town as a whole funnels movement through the centre, with congestion at key junctions along North Street, often resulting in conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, bus users and those in private vehicles. Walking routes between the High Street and wider area are often incomplete and The Cuckoo Trail is poorly integrated with the Town Centre.
- There is a high leakage of expenditure to other towns, with investment in the quality of the public realm and expansion of the retail and service offer being required, supporting use and activity throughout the day.

These issues remain (as outlined in Section 2). As the town continues to grow and expand so increasing pressure is placed on the High Street. A strong town centre that meets the needs of the community as a whole and which can respond and adapt to changing circumstances and requirements over time is required. The HDG thus establishes a series of overarching objectives and associated principles for development in the Town Centre.

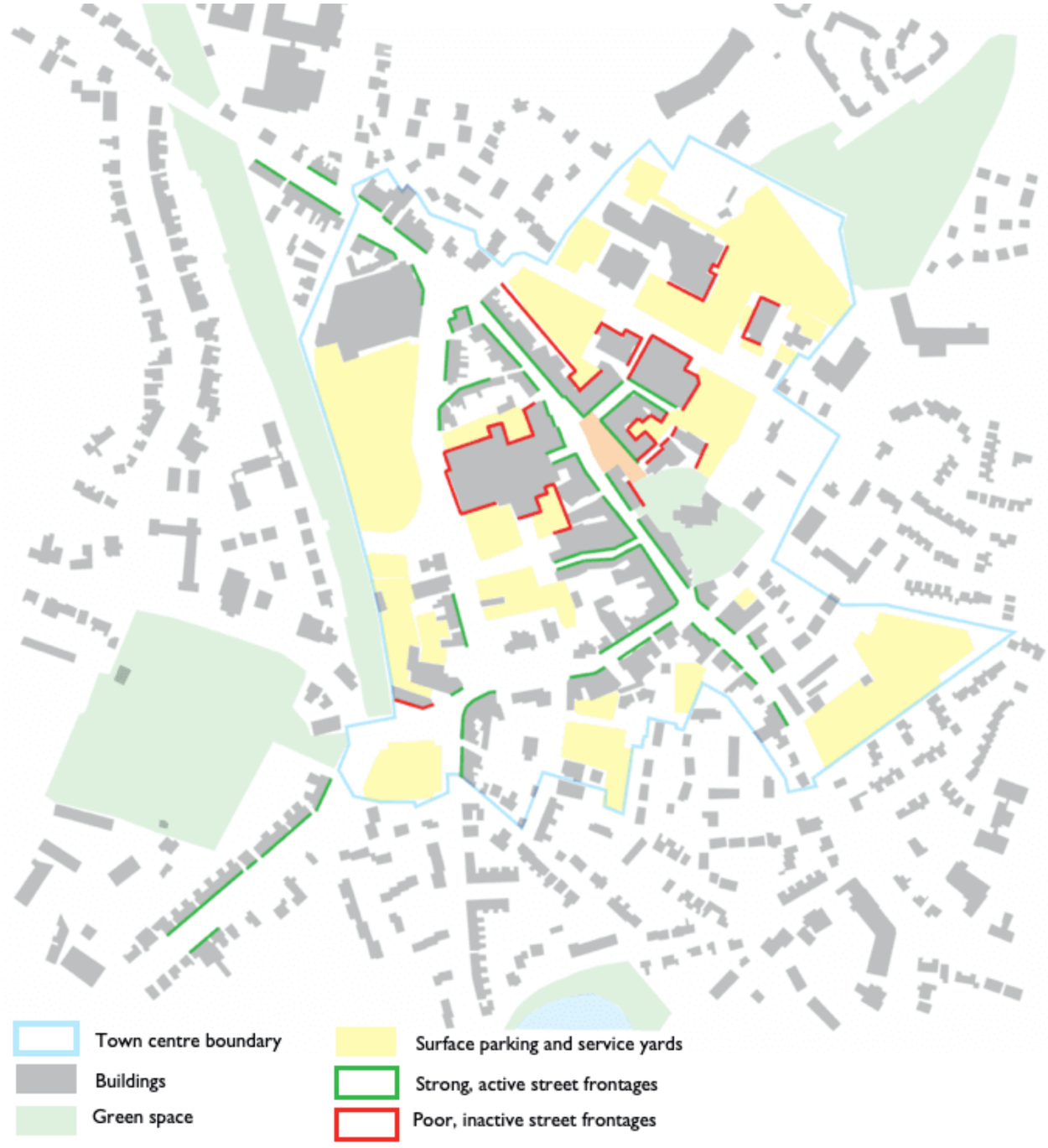


Figure 29: There are extensive areas of surface car parking and service yards within the town centre. These represent an inefficient use of land and have fractured the urban environment. Whilst the High Street and George Street benefit from strong, active building frontages, the presence of car parking and service yards has created poorly defined spaces and where the street edge is defined by the rear of properties. These often comprise blank walls that do not address the street or routes through them. The network of twittens in Hailsham that connect these car parks with the High Street are generally unwelcoming spaces. These combine to undermine the visitor experience of the town. Improvements to the use of land, quality of the public realm and connectivity of spaces are central to aspirations for the town centre.

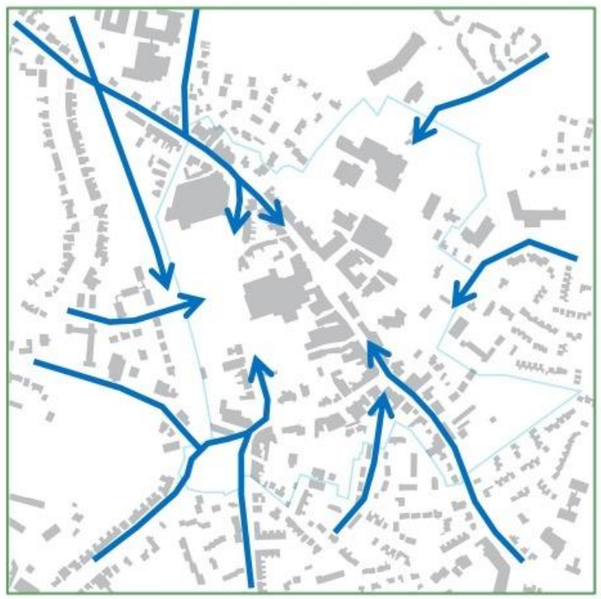
Overarching objectives

Five overarching objectives are identified for the Town Centre (Figure 31), under which a series of policy and project ideas, and design interventions, are presented. By their very nature there is some overlap between these. The objectives are:

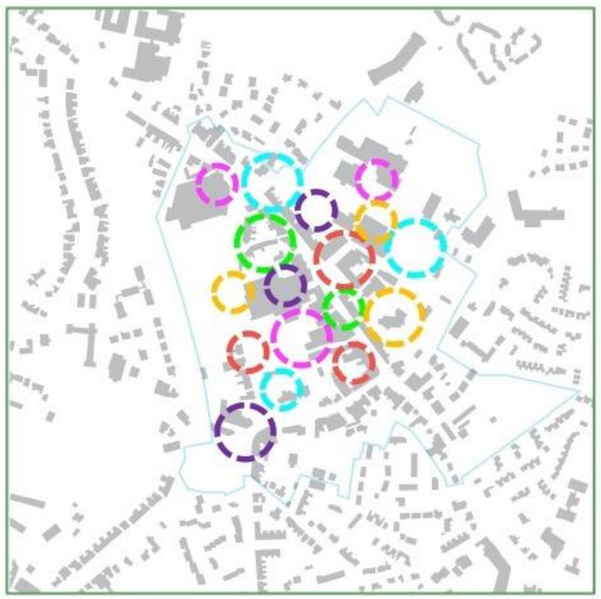
1. An accessible town centre
2. A diverse town centre
3. A walkable town centre
4. A green town centre
5. A climate resilient town centre

These seek to put in place a framework that creates the conditions for an attractive centre that caters for the needs of all, which builds on its assets and can be taken forward incrementally, and with the potential for change and adaptability in the future.

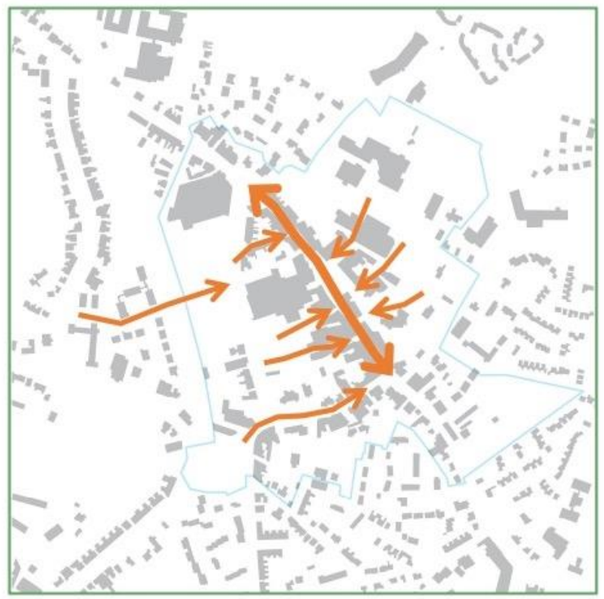
Figure 30: Multifunctional public space allows different activities and events to take place throughout the day, supporting the vitality of the town centre



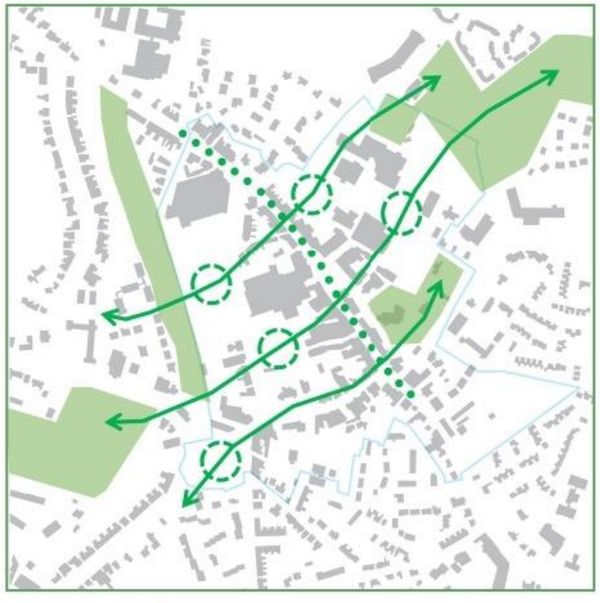
An accessible town centre



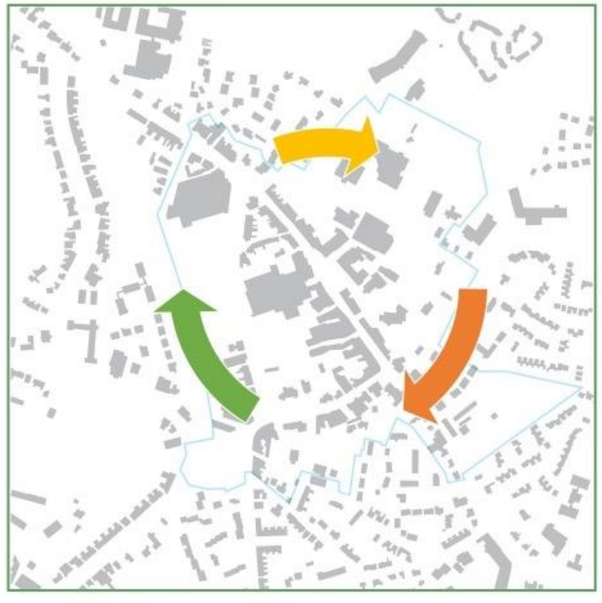
A diverse town centre



A walkable town centre



A green town centre



A climate resilient town centre

Figure 31: The overarching objectives to guide change in Hailsham Town Centre

Objective 1: An accessible town centre

This objective provides the basis for the following ideas and interventions:

- Multi-modal access provides travel choice and opportunity for all ages and abilities.
- A safe and well-connected walking, wheeling and cycle network enables this to become an attractive proposition and mode of choice.
- The Cuckoo Trail is well-integrated with the town centre, supporting daily use by residents as well as visitors to the town centre.
- New growth around town is well-integrated into the urban fabric and provides locally-based facilities, reducing travel needs and supporting reduced car use.
- Good quality bus infrastructure and improved services enable use of public transport.
- Travel by car remains an option with parking provided in the town centre but where space used for parking is rationalised, allowing for more effective use of land.

Objective 2: A diverse town centre

This objective provides the basis for the following ideas and interventions:

- A mix of uses is provided within the town centre – both across the centre and within individual developments.
- Support for windfall development that makes efficient use of land. Residential use incorporated in new development supports life and activity in the centre and helps meet 'windfall' housing figures for Hailsham in the emerging Local Plan.
- Provision of services, flexible work space, entertainment, culture and leisure uses brings diversity and activity at all times of the day, providing 'something' for all ages.
- The retail focus of the town centre remains but other uses bring additional footfall.
- Multifunctional public space allows for different activities to take place in the public realm.
- Flexible building design allows for change and adaptability over time.
- Design quality responds to the positive qualities of the urban fabric, in terms of historic growth, scale and massing of buildings

Figure 32: The town centre should be lively and welcoming to all, with a wide range and mix of activities and uses set around an improved public realm, that becomes a place for social cohesion and interaction

Figure 33: Example of a part-pedestrianised shopping street, Shoreham

Objective 3: A walkable town centre

This objective provides the basis for the following ideas and interventions:

- A pedestrian friendly town centre.
- Safe and attractive walking routes for all ages and generations.
- Links between arrival points and the High Street celebrate the sense of arrival and journey between these and the High Street
- Streets and spaces are well defined benefitting from a mix of active development frontages that supports use throughout the day.
- Sensitive lighting, wayfinding and public art help animate spaces, creating interest and sense of safety.
- A pedestrian friendly High Street, which is part-pedestrianised during the day, forms the backbone of the town, and strengthens the quality of the pedestrian environment.
- Multifunctional spaces, including part pedestrianisation of the High Street, allow for different uses and activities in the public realm throughout the day and at different times of the year

Objective 4: A green town centre

This objective provides the basis for the following ideas and interventions:

- A connected network of green streets and spaces is provided across the town centre.
- Green space connects the town centre with the surrounding countryside and the landscape setting of the town.
- A range of green infrastructure typologies is provided, including street trees, grasses and wildflowers, green walls and roofs.
- Provision of green infrastructure supports health and wellbeing, supports townscape quality, and contributes to biodiversity and resilience to climate change

Figure 34: Opportunities should be taken to improve the network of twittens in the town centre, making these more attractive routes that encourage use at all times of the day, with ne active edges and intimate spaces created alongside clear sightlines to connecting streets

Figure 35: Associated with potential development and as part of a public realm scheme for the High Street, the opportunity exists to revitalise the 'town square' outside the Vicarage Field shopping centre, introducing new paving, planting and street furniture

Figure 36: New green infrastructure and street furniture should be provided within the public realm in the town centre, and where green infrastructure has biodiversity and amenity benefits

Objective 5: A climate resilient town centre

This objective provides the basis for the following ideas and interventions:

- Introduction of permeable surfaces help to manage the risk of surface water flooding. Sustainable drainage that takes the form of raingardens brings added amenity and biodiversity benefits.
- The retrofit and refurbishment of existing buildings is encouraged over redevelopment to reduce embodied carbon.
- New development meets high sustainability standards, with the layout of buildings designed to give consideration to microclimatic conditions and air quality.
- Subject to heritage constraints, roofspace (on existing and new buildings) is utilised for renewable energy generation and green infrastructure.
- Transport hubs and associated information support the use of active travel networks to access and move around the town centre.

The design principles and guidelines that follow this section build upon the objectives and illustrate the nature of change that will be supported in Hailsham Town Centre.

Part pedestrianisation of the High Street

Creating a people friendly place is at the heart of the aspirations for the town centre. The potential for pedestrianisation of the High Street was raised through the consultation process. Part pedestrianisation, as opposed to full pedestrianisation, is seen as a key opportunity that would help lead to transformation change in the town centre.

Part pedestrianisation anticipates that the High Street would close to through traffic during regular business hours but open during early morning and later in the evening to allow for servicing and maintenance etc.

Part pedestrianisation would allow for a public realm improvement scheme to be rolled out across the High Street and which might comprise installation of a shared surface with multi-functional spaces designed within this which, at various points of the day or week, could provide outdoor dining space, space for market stalls or inset parking and servicing bays. The introduction of street greening would be integral to any scheme, including new street tree planting and rain gardens. Areas of planting would be strategically positioned to help demarcate multi-functional spaces along the street.

This would require further feasibility testing and consultation, giving consideration to impacts on aspects such as bus and taxi movements, as well as management and policing of access restrictions.

In Hailsham the aspiration is to improve the quality of experience along the High Street, making this an attractive place for people to visit and spend time in. An artist's illustration of the potential transformation of the High Street is presented in Figure 37.

The success of such schemes elsewhere demonstrates this is possible. Research undertaken by Living Streets and presented in The Pedestrian Pound indicates that pedestrianisation and other public realm improvements can help support local businesses, drive inward investment, support healthier and active lifestyles, improve wellbeing and help respond to the pressures of climate change.

Further testing, design and consultation of a suitable scheme for Hailsham Town Centre would be required. Key components of such a scheme would likely comprise:

- Part pedestrianisation of the High Street during business hours, with electric bollards used at entrances and exits to the High Street to help manage access.
- Creation of a shared surface between buildings facing each other across the High Street. Materials should respond sensitively to the historic setting of the centre with a consistent palette and design utilised that unifies the street as a whole. Feature paving may be used at key points along the High Street to help define different zones or areas of activity, including the Town Square (adjacent to the Vicarage Fields centre) and at locations where the network of twittens adjoin the High Street.
- Tactile and contrasting paving surfacing should be used alongside the centre of the street to help define vehicular space.
- Establishment of a 'furniture zone' along the High Street within which street furniture, including benches and bins, should be located. Street tree planting and raingardens should also be provided in this zone.
- Furniture zones along the street could be multifunctional: some being permanent locations for benches and planting, and others being temporary locations that enable different use through the day and week, including outdoor dining, market stalls and parking.
- Establishment of a furniture zone should be undertaken alongside a 'decluttering' exercise to remove unnecessary signage and other highways paraphernalia.
- The design and layout of the street and furniture zones along it should allow vehicle access either side of pedestrian only hours, but should encourage drivers to adapt behaviour and drive at slow speeds, respecting pedestrian priority and safety.
- Buses and Taxis would need to be rerouted during periods of operation, with North Street being the main focus of services, although Vicarage Lane would remain accessible. To support access between these and the High Street improvements should be made to the network of twittens in the town, including installation of material that matches the High Street and new lighting. Where development takes place this should help create clear sightlines and overlooked routes that enhance permeability.

Alongside the above, opportunities should be taken to improve the quality of shopfronts along the High Street as well as exploring opportunities to introduce wayfinding, public art and lighting that reflects the character of the town and supports orientation.

Figure 37: Artist's illustration of public realm improvements along the High Street forming a 'part-pedestrianisation' scheme, with the High Street as existing shown in the inset image top right

Creating active frontages and perimeter blocks

Opportunities for development in Hailsham town centre are most likely to arise from the redevelopment and intensification of existing sites and buildings, including surface car parks where scope for rationalisation presents itself, either by way of a new multi-storey car park being provided, or where evidence of utilisation demonstrates that release of land for development is justified.

In all cases development should create active street frontages, with doors and windows opening onto the street. Development should follow the established building line and help create or complete perimeter blocks that clearly distinguish between the public and private realm (Figure 38).

HTC-01: Frontage, orientation and perimeter blocks

1. All development must be orientated to create active ground floor frontages to the public realm. Windows and entrances should be located on the main street to which the building faces
2. Buildings should generally be set against the pavement edge.
3. Development should avoid creation of blank walls and blank gable ends.
4. Where buildings address two streets, corners must have a frontage to both streets. Corners can be chamfered to accentuate key movement corridors. Landmark buildings at corners can help aid legibility.
5. Development should create or help complete perimeter blocks which clearly define and distinguish between the public realm and private space. Service areas should be enclosed and screened from public view.
6. Development adjacent to twittens and rope walks should, as appropriate to the historic form of the route, create an active edge to the route and provide clear sightlines that support safe use of the routes, connecting surrounding streets and aiding permeability.
7. Development should avoid creation of 'big box' style development and incorporate a finer grain of development consistent with the historic core of the Town Centre and which supports change and adaptability over time.
8. Development can incorporate a mix of building styles and typologies (subject to the impact on and setting of heritage assets) that introduce variety and visual interest into the street scene.
9. Development must respect privacy distances, over shadowing and access to light of adjacent properties and reflect this in the proposed design.
10. Active ground floor uses include commercial and community activities. Residential uses will be appropriate on upper storeys.

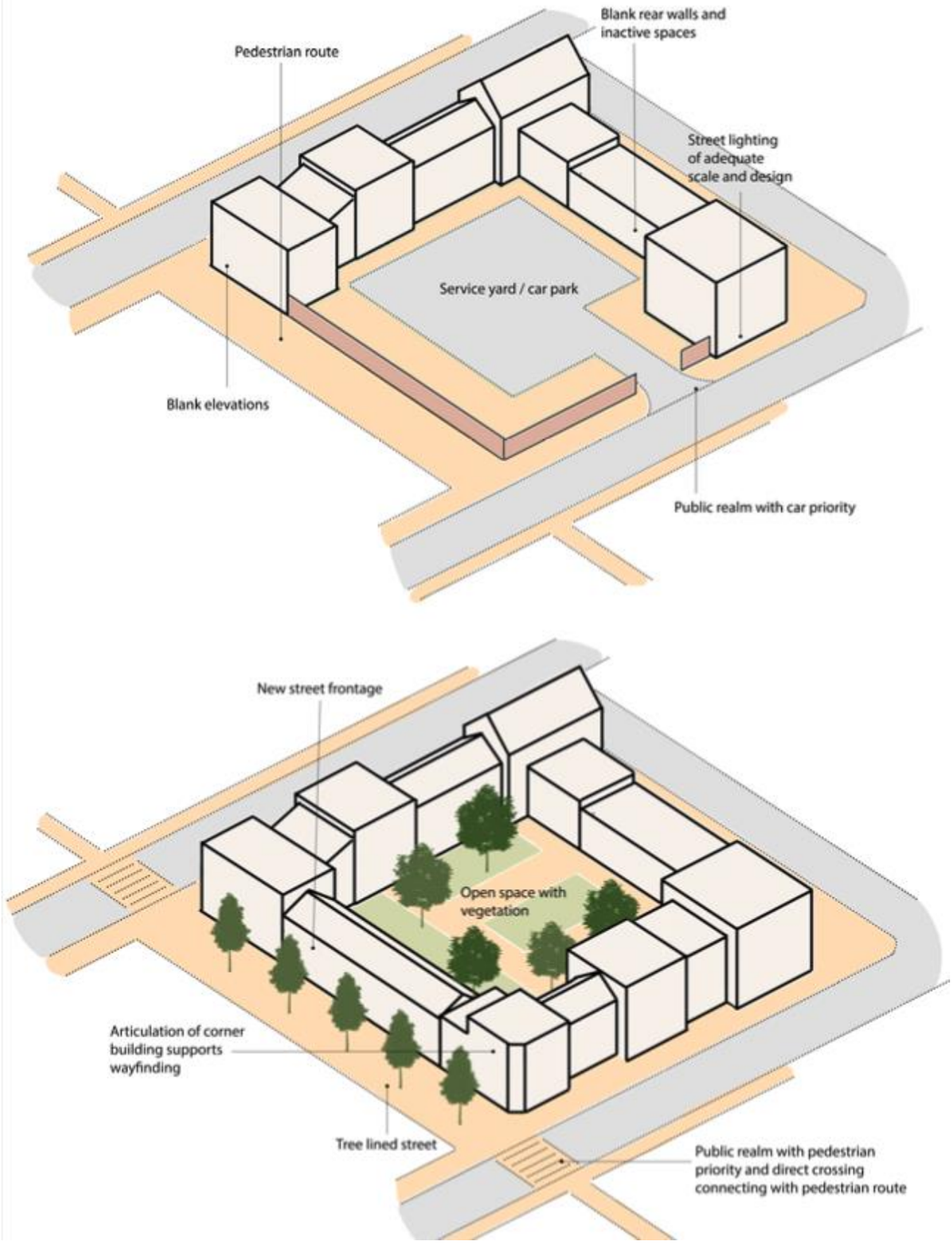


Figure 38: The top illustration shows a typical arrangement of shops, parking and service areas in the town centre. Where opportunities for development exist, these should seek to complete the perimeter block, as shown in the bottom illustration, and which clearly define the public and private realm, creating active street frontages and thus enhancing the quality of the townscape

Street enclosure and building heights

The scale, height and massing of development contributes to the sense of place. In Hailsham, the High Street is the historic heart of the town. This is typified by buildings of two storeys interspersed with three storey buildings. Some two storey buildings also include rooms within the roof, as evidenced through the presence of dormers in some buildings along the High Street.

The fine grain nature of development along the High Street is also evident in the subtle but varying differences in heights between buildings, often stepping up by no more than half a storey between buildings.

Building heights, in combination with the street width and distance between facing buildings across the street lends the High Street an intimate, human scale of development, with the Church remaining the dominant feature in the skyline.

The relationship between building heights and street dimension is often referred to as the 'enclosure ratio'. A ratio of 1:2 means the street is twice as wide as the buildings are high. Ratios of between 1:2 and 1:3 are generally considered to offer a comfortable and appealing pedestrian experience.

The enclosure ratio along much of Hailsham High Street is generally around 1:2 (Figure 40). Enclosure ratios in excess of this risk becoming poorly defined, 'leaky' spaces. Alongside the Vicarage Fields Centre in Hailsham the enclosure of the High Street extends, at its greatest point, to a ratio of 1:7.

Introducing street trees, public art and other features into the public realm, often designed around zones, can help 'break' the space up and create a series of comfortable spaces within an otherwise large expanse of space (Figure 39). Opportunities can be taken in Hailsham, through part pedestrianisation of the High Street, to redesign the public realm and create 'outdoor rooms' that break down the space outside Vicarage Fields.

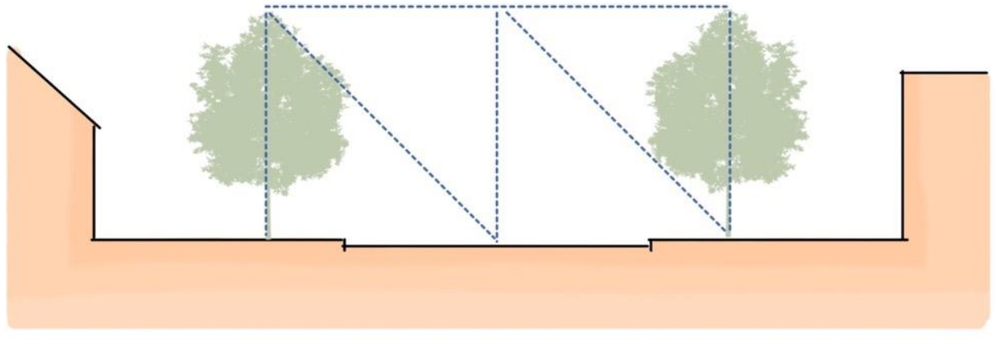


Figure 39: Where the street enclosure exceeds a ratio of 1:3 this can be adjusted through the introduction of street tree planting where the tree canopy helps break the space down and creates a sense of enclosure

Figure 40: Enclosure ratio of different sections of the High Street. This is typically in the order of 1:2 along much of the High Street, though extending significantly in the vicinity of Vicarage Fields (image source: Google Streetview image capture © 2024)

Opportunities for creating additional height can also be taken where the enclosure ratio is excessive (i.e.: greater than 1:4). Upwards extensions of the Vicarage Fields centre will be appropriate (subject to impact on and setting of heritage assets) where these have active frontages that overlook the street and where they retain views of the Church from the High Street. Upwards extensions to buildings can be set back from the main building frontage to reduce the impact of additional height and retain the overall character of the town centre. In general, buildings of two-three storeys are appropriate along the High Street, though taller elements of up to four storeys may be appropriate in certain locations, such as where this articulates an important corner or acts as a key local landmark.

Beyond the High Street new development should have regard to the prevailing building height and relationship between this and setting of the conservation area:

- On North Street the urban environment is fractured through the presence of 'big box development, servicing areas and car parks. Opportunities exist for development to recreate the street. Development of three to four storeys in height will generally be appropriate.
- On Vicarage Lane the nature of the street varies between domestic scaled residential development and 'big box' development represented by the Leisure Centre and District Council offices, and the rear of the Vicarage Fields development. Development of between two and three storeys will generally be appropriate.
- Elsewhere in the town centre, including Vicarage Road, George Street and Market Street, building heights should have regard to the historic fabric and be informed by assessment of the qualities of the conservation area. Buildings are typically two storeys in height.

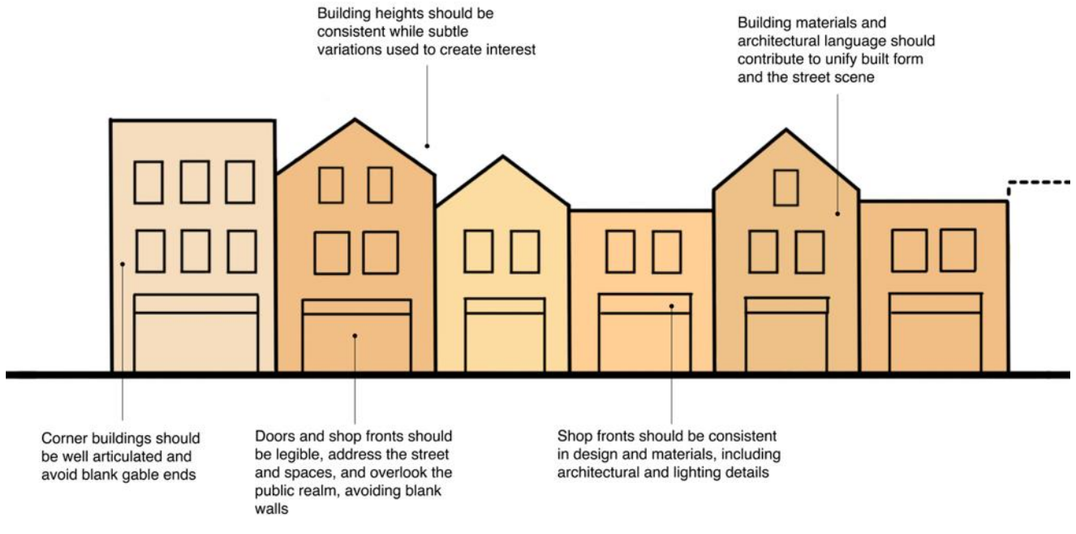


Figure 41: Building heights in Hailsham Town Centre should generally be in the order of two to three storeys, reflecting the historic form and fabric of the town. Height can vary between buildings.

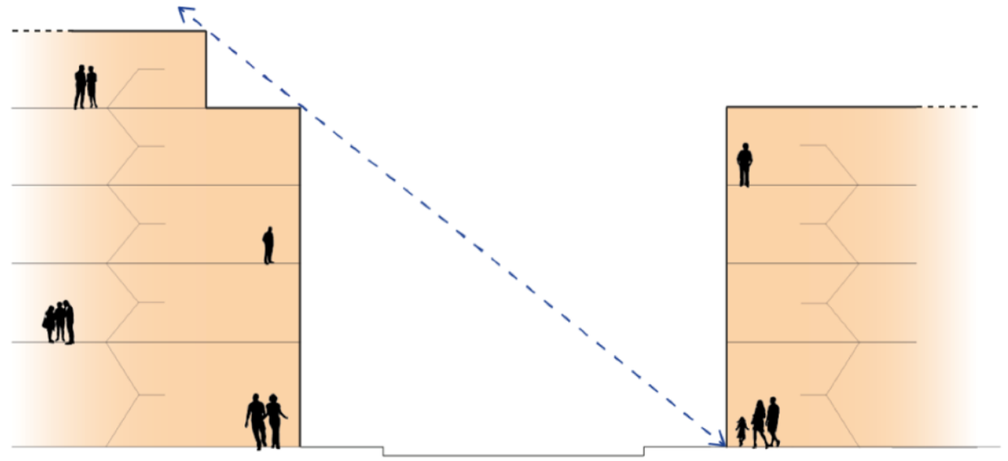


Figure 42: Buildings that exceed the prevailing height may be acceptable where the enclosure ratio of the street is retained and additional floors are set back form the 'shoulder height' of the established building line along the street

HTC-02: Building height and street enclosure

1. Building heights should generally be consistent with the prevailing height of buildings along the street. Buildings should be two to three storeys high, and should not exceed four storeys in height.
2. Variation in the eaves and ridge line of buildings is encouraged. The height of buildings can step up or down by half or one storey between buildings along the street.
3. Taller elements of buildings can be provided where these provide a landmark and or help articulate a key corner and are supported by urban design evidence to justify the height.
4. Building heights must be designed in proportion to the street width and help create an enclosure ratio of between 1:2 to 1:3.
5. Where the enclosure ratio exceeds 1:3, street tree planting and other landscaping features should be introduced in the public realm.
6. Additional height can be created through the provision of upper storeys set back from the main building line fronting the street, subject to the impact on and setting of heritage assets, and the impact of views of the Church along the High Street.

Mixed-use development

Proposals for a mix of uses that supports and strengthens the role and function of the town centre (including retail, leisure, office, food and drink, entertainment and cultural uses) should continue to be directed to the primary retail area. This may include residential use where it is accommodated on upper storeys.

Different uses may occupy different buildings with the town centre. Equally, mixed uses can be accommodated within buildings. Where this takes place, a 'layered' approach to the mixing of complementary uses within buildings should be followed, supporting diversity, community cohesion and inclusion. Key principles are outlined in HTC-03.

HTC-03: A layered approach to mixed-use development

1. A layered approach to development mixes complementary uses within a building as opposed to providing these in separate but adjacent buildings. Opportunities for such an approach should be taken in new development in Hailsham Town Centre:

   a) Layering can be both horizontal and vertical, allowing for provision of different uses on the ground and upper storeys, as well as between the front, public facing aspect of a building, and the rear, private facing aspect. This can support the creation of active frontages as distinct from communal residential areas for example.

   b) The approach to layering is appropriate for medium height buildings, typically containing retail, commercial or leisure uses on the ground level, office, civic and community uses in the middle storeys, and residential on upper storeys. Active uses on multiple floors strengthen the relationship and interaction with the street, supporting natural surveillance at all times of the day.

   c) An approach to layering can be integrated with larger floorplate uses, including large foodstores and similar, with different uses wrapping around and breaking these down, creating interest and variety at street level.

   d) Higher ceilings and deeper dimensions should be provided at the ground floor level, supporting flexibility and change of use over time.

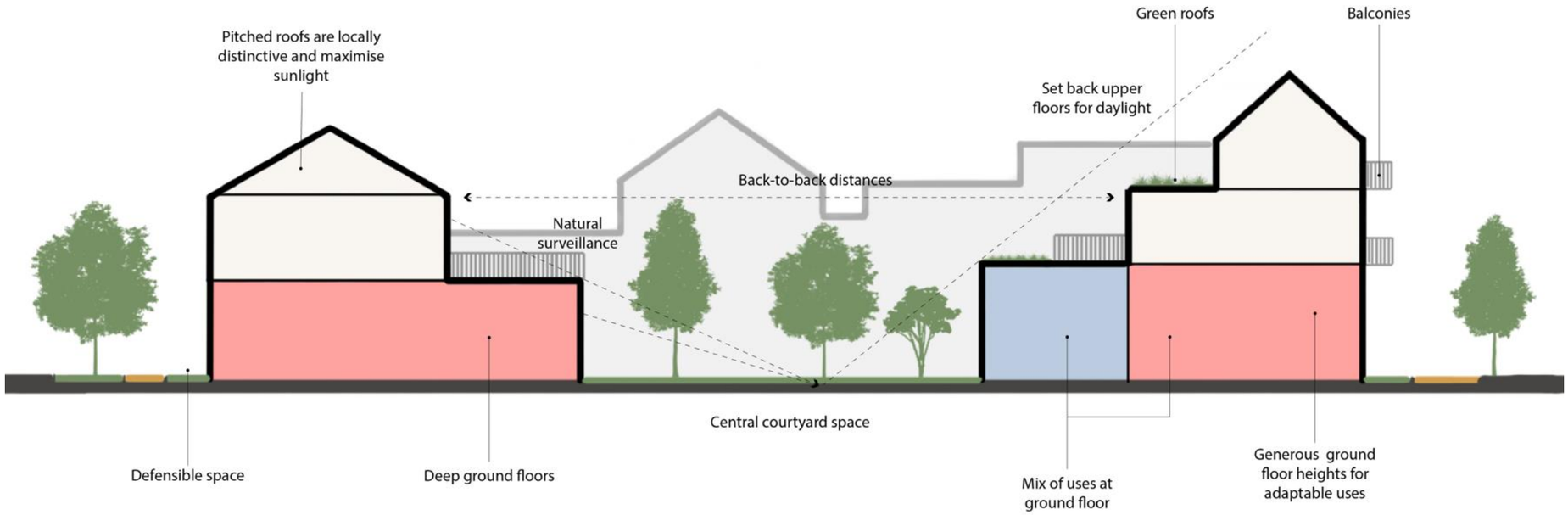


Figure 43: Cross section through a perimeter block indicating mixed use development with active uses at the ground floor and generous floor to ceiling heights that aloe for change and flexibility over time. Deep floorplates at ground floor can accommodate uses such as foodstores whilst respecting the urban grain

Principles for a safe, pedestrian friendly, inclusive environment

Proposals for development in Hailsham town centre, as well as those that involve public realm and street improvements, should be designed to help create a safe, pedestrian friendly environment. This can be achieved through the orientation of buildings, creating well-defined and overlooked public spaces, safe routes that avoid concealed spaces and hidden corners, and human scale buildings with well-defined entrances that enable people to walk into these and make use of stairs to access different storeys, supporting healthy lifestyles. Design principles are presented in HTC-04.

Buildings and spaces in Hailsham town centre must be designed with issues of inclusivity, personal safety and security in mind, responding to the needs and concerns of all ages and genders at all times of the day and night. Public spaces, for example, should be well-overlooked, incorporate features that support use by all ages, and with walking routes being direct and well-lit.

The quality, safety and use of public space will benefit from an approach to co-design and collaboration through the planning and design process. Places that are designed with women, children and the vulnerable in mind will become better, more attractive, vibrant and safer places for all. Key principles are presented in HTC-05.

Microclimatic conditions also influence the quality and enjoyment of public space. Taller buildings, or elements of buildings, can, for example, lead to overshadowing and the creation of a 'wind tunnel effect'. The negative impacts of building design and layout should be carefully considered in the design process. Analysis should be undertaken at the design stage of the implications of building scale, massing and layout on local weather conditions, including prevailing winds and access to sunlight. Principles for designing with weather are presented in HTC-06.

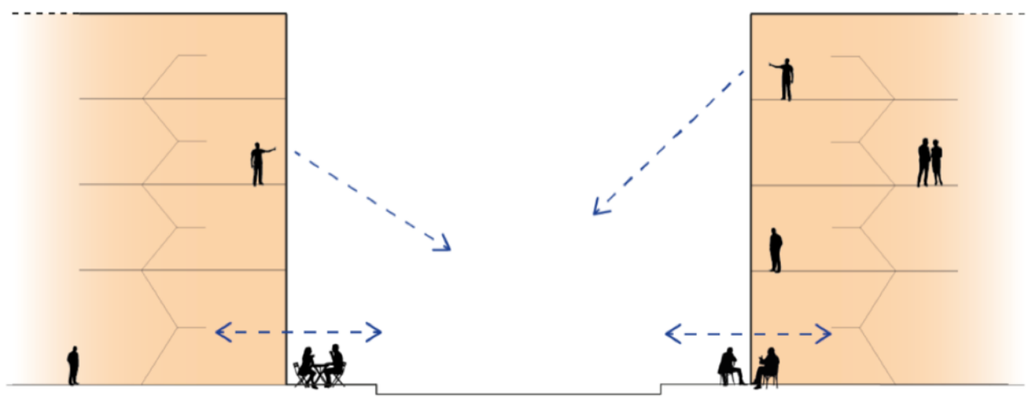


Figure 44: The frontages of buildings must have active edges, with entrances onto the street at ground level and windows on all floors overlooking the street, providing natural surveillance. As appropriate to the building and location, the Incorporation of balconies, loggias and terraces on upper storeys can provide interest and interaction with the street.

HTC-04: A pedestrian friendly, walkable environment

1. **Walk along:** Streets, spaces and routes along these should be direct, clutter free and of sufficient width to support walking. Where provided, street furniture should be carefully designed and coordinated to avoid hindrance and obstruction. High quality, durable and, as far as possible, low maintenance materials should be used, bringing unity to the street scene. All surfaces must be level.
2. **Walk across:** Regular, direct crossing points should be provided at junctions and along streets, facilitating safe and easy crossing. Design interventions should be included as appropriate that support ease of crossing, including raised crossings, the use of street medians and continuous footpaths across side streets. Crossing points should be provided on key desire lines and appropriate street materials used to clearly demarcate these.
3. **Walk, wander, relax:** Public spaces should provide opportunities for people to meet, sit and relax. A network of spaces should be provided in the Town Centre. Public art and planting features should ideally be multi-functional in design, so that it can operate as useable street furniture.
4. **Walk at all times:** Streets and spaces should be safe places for pedestrians to use at all times of the day. Buildings should be arranged so that all public spaces benefit from natural surveillance, with windows overlooking these. Streets and routes should be direct, avoiding unnecessary diversions, dark and hidden spots. Public spaces should be lit after hours of darkness.
5. **Walk in:** The ground floor of buildings should have a 'public face' to all streets they face, with the main entrances located on the primary street frontage enabling easy and direct access into these. Entrances should be clear, easy to find and designed with inclusivity in mind for all users.
6. **Walk up:** Human-scale, mid-rise buildings should help support social interaction and healthy lifestyles through the use of stair-wells that provide convenient access between the ground and upper storeys.
7. **Walk out:** Outdoor space should be provided in new buildings and, where possible, through the reuse of existing buildings, allowing for access to sunlight and interaction with the street. Balconies, loggias and roof terraces should be provided where appropriate, and where the privacy of neighbouring properties is respected.
8. **Walking with wheels:** Infrastructure and street design should support safe cycling and other wheeled modes of active travel that complement the walking network, and where priority is given to pedestrians.

HTC-05: Creating safer, gender and age inclusive places

1. **Active frontages** should be integrated within all new buildings, with the windows of commercial and residential buildings overlooking public spaces and pedestrian areas.
2. **Clear sight lines** should be created through the arrangement of buildings and public spaces.
3. **Wayfinding**, well integrated within the public realm, should be provided that supports orientation.
4. The orientation of buildings should support creation of a **connected movement network** and where step-free access is integral to this.
5. Street furniture should provide places for seating and relaxation in **well-overlooked spaces**.
6. The design of public spaces and facilities provided should allow for **inter-generational use**, providing for a range of functions to avoid it being used or dominated by one group.
7. **Flexible spaces and buildings** should allow for a variety of activities to take place throughout the day, with opportunities for co-locating community facilities with work and play space taken.
8. Buildings and spaces should incorporate **sensitive lighting schemes** that avoid glare.
9. **Public space design** should ensure that the placement of vegetation does not obscure lighting or sight lines, nor create physical obstructions. Public spaces should be multifunctional and inclusive, incorporating playable elements and equipment as appropriate and which caters for a range of ages and abilities.
10. The overreliance on CCTV and creation of recessed and dark spaces, hidden corners, blank facades and isolated spaces should be avoided.

HTC-06: Designing with weather

1. Development should consider microclimatic conditions and incorporate appropriate design features, including, but not limited to:
   a) Creating **perimeter blocks** that incorporate enclosed courtyard spaces that are protected from the wind, with mid-rise buildings enabling sunlight to penetrate the space. The creation of perimeter blocks may involve 'completing' existing development through the infill or redevelopment of previously developed or under-utilised land that helps create new street frontages.
   b) Other than where this would disrupt an otherwise well established and strong building line (such as in the historic core of the town centre), consideration should be given to the creation of angled public spaces and **asymmetrical development layouts** where the edges of adjoining perimeter blocks may be offset, creating breaks to wind and supporting places with pleasant microclimates for outdoor life, and with the variation in the public space creating interest. Asymmetric layouts should incorporate active edges and provide clear sight lines along the street.
   c) Incorporating **sloped or pitched roofs**, as opposed to flat roofs, which help eliminate strong winds, support ventilation and maximise access to sunlight.

Shop fronts

The quality of the shop fronts and commercial frontages along the High Street and within the town centre as a whole has an influence on the appearance and attractiveness of the town centre.

During consultation the visual appearance of buildings in the town centre was raised: many people thought that the upkeep and maintenance of the buildings could be improved, and that a consistent approach to signage and shopfronts would make an improvement to the experience of the town centre. Similar messages were made in response to consultation on earlier work undertaken by Hailsham Forward in 2013, with a third of all respondents noting that unkempt shopfronts make the town centre look untidy.

Signposting

The Wealden Design Guide, at Section 13, address shopfronts and signage at length. This explains the traditional elements and character of shop front design and illustrates good and bad examples. The guidance covers aspects such as access, the fascia, canopies and blinds, pilasters and consoles, stallrisers, thresholds, mullions, door furniture, signage, illumination and security. This guidance is not duplicated in this Design Guidelines document, albeit that key elements and principles are summarised, with applicants and design makers advised to consult the Wealden Design Guide.

Poor quality signs and materials undermine the visual quality of the town centre and the historic qualities of the centre that the District Council is seeking to preserve and enhance through the conservation area designation. It is thus considered important that shopfronts respond better to local character, and bring a consistency of style to the town centre.

Equally, the use of shop signage on pavements should be limited to reduce clutter within the town centre. Any new signage on pavements that is associated with the business of the individual premises should have due consideration for the character and design of the street furniture in the wider area and should seek to enhance the public realm.

The National Design Guide stresses the importance of creating active frontages, particularly in local centres, and, in terms of responding to character, states that consideration needs to be given to façade design. This includes aspects such as symmetry, variety, the pattern and proportion of doors and windows, and their details. However, in Hailsham, the presence of inactive building frontages in the town centre as a whole has resulted, in places, in a poor relationship with the street. Where there have been insensitive alterations to shopfronts, as well as newer, poorly designed shopfronts, these have begun to erode the character of both the local area and of the host buildings.

Figure 45: Example schemes where shopfront design, signage and details along the street are coordinated and respond positively to the character of the host building and street environment

It is important that shopfronts are designed and conceived in relation to the entire building, scale, proportions and architectural style. Key consideration include:

- Vertical elements within the overall building design, such as columns and fenestration, should be reflected in the shopfront design.
- Horizontal elements of the shopfront design, including signage, fascia and glazing should be consistent and relate well to surrounding facades.

The design of the shopfront should acknowledge and continue the overall design language and common features that occur on adjacent buildings, with the palette of materials and colours generally being consistent with the overall character of the street and the age of the building. To help support the relationship between ground floor activities and the street environment, the use of opaque film and vinyl stickers in windows should generally be avoided. Key design features are illustrated in Figure 46 and outlined in HTC-07.

Figure 46: The key features and design principles of a traditional shopfront

HTC-07: Shop front design and signage

1. Shopfront design is expected to complement the scale, proportion and architectural style of the host building and wider street scene, including, as appropriate, the scale, character and features of adjoining buildings.
2. The fascia must complement rather than obscure or damage existing architectural features including windows.
3. Where original and traditional shopfronts are restored, development should incorporate materials that replicate the original materials of the host building.
4. Signage will be expected to complement the host building and provide visual consistency along the street.
5. External lighting, if used, must be unobtrusive and protect the visual amenity of the area. Internally illuminated signage should not be used.
6. Doors and main points of access must be clearly defined and enable access directly from the main street onto which the shop unit fronts.
7. Window space should be maximised.
8. External shutters should only be used where there are no other reasonable alternative solutions that can provide adequate security. External shutters must be perforated and must be appropriate to the host building and wider shopfront design. The use of external shutters shall be avoided in the Conservation Area.

Heritage assets

Hailsham town centre is rich in history. Much of it is designated as a Conservation Area (Figure 9), within which there are 32 Listed Buildings, including the Parish Church of St. Mary which is Grade I Listed, and The Old Manor House and The Old Vicarage which are both Grade II* Listed.

Signposting

The NPPF (at Section 16) sets out an approach to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. This is supplemented by Planning Practice Guidance (Historic Environment). These make clear that the potential impact of development on the significance of the heritage asset, and its setting, needs to be considered, minimising any harm arising from development. It also notes that a positive approach should be taken where development might make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset, and or where it reflects and enhances local character. The Planning Practice Guidance also explains how the setting of a heritage asset should be determined.

The Historic England good practice guide, Design in the Historic Environment, establishes a set of principles for good design, relating proposals for development to matters such as context, character, streets and spaces, views, scale, materials and the visual composition of the setting.

The National Heritage List for England provides an up-to-date register of all nationally protected buildings and sites in England. Reference should be made to this to understand the importance of Listed Buildings in Hailsham.

When a planning application is made that affects a heritage asset, Wealden District Council will require the submission of a heritage statement.

The key qualities of the Conservation Area are presented in the draft Hailsham Conservation Area Character Appraisal. This breaks the Conservation Area down into a series of character areas, each of which describe the characteristics of each area, the landscape setting, built form, listed buildings and other key features in each area, as well as those which detract from each area.

The Appraisal notes that development in the Conservation Area is from a mix of periods and represents a mix of styles. It notes that buildings are generally in the order of two-storeys in height, with a small number of three storey buildings also present. It identifies the Church and its tower as the tallest building in the town. It's position in the town and height of surrounding buildings means that it benefits from long distance views, making it an important local landmark. Equally, there are long distance views from the Conservation Area out across the Low Weald and to the South Downs.

Detractors in the Conservation Area are identified as comprising the presence of traffic and associated street paraphernalia, such as road signage and traffic lights, areas of parked cars, poorly located and uncoordinated street furniture, unsympathetic shopfronts and replacement of historic windows with modern uPVC glazing. The Appraisal states that opportunities should be taken to enhance the Conservation Area by removal or replacement of detractors. In such instances, proposals for change should respond positively to the qualities of the Conservation Area.

It is important that new development is not viewed in isolation and must be informed by the wider context, including the historic character of the town centre, the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings. The general scale and form of development, use of materials and buildings styles, and the patterns of streets and spaces created, should reinforce the special qualities of the area.

The Appraisal establishes a set of guiding principles for change within the Conservation Area. These inform HTC-08. These should be read alongside all other guidelines for the town centre set out in this section of the HDG.

HTC-08: Change and development in the Conservation Area

1. Proposals for change and development in the Conservation Area must respond positively to the character of the Conservation Area and immediate setting of the site:
   a) Development must preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
   b) Development should respond to the historic pattern of development and be respectful of prevailing building heights and lines.
   c) Building materials that integrate development into the historic context should be used.
   d) Historic features of the built form and landscape, and architectural details that contribute to the character of the Conservation Area should be retained.
   e) Inappropriate change within the setting of the Conservation Area should be avoided.
2. Opportunities should be taken to remove or replace features that detract from the Conservation Area.
3. Reference must be made to the draft Hailsham Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the National Heritage List for England when proposals for development are prepared.

Part C

The guidelines: Residential development, streets and parking

This part of the HDG primarily relates to areas of major residential growth and development in Hailsham, including sites allocated for development in the emerging Wealden Local Plan and any other major development sites that may come forward during the life of the Neighbourhood Plan. The geographical coverage of this part of the HDG is illustrated in Figure 2.

The guidelines promote and illustrate an approach to development that is well-integrated with the existing built form supporting inclusive, walkable places, where green space is successfully incorporated into development and where development creates character, variety and interest. Guidelines are also presented in respect of appropriate street typologies and car parking arrangements.

In addition to large development sites, smaller infill, backland and windfall type developments will continue to come forward in Hailsham. This part of the HDG also presents guidance in respect of small site residential developments.

Information is also presented in respect of the existing street environment and how this might be retrofitted to realise wider aspirations in the Neighbourhood Plan in respect of street greening and active travel. This section of the HDG draws on and provides signposting to guidance, principles and standards published at the national and county level and which should be used to inform proposals for change in Hailsham.

5.

5. Residential development

Well-integrated residential development

Introduction

Hailsham has been and continues to be subject to proposals for growth and expansion, and the emerging Local Plan envisages further growth over the Plan period with additional allocations for residential development to the east of the existing built up area as well as to the immediate north of Hailsham in neighbouring Hellingly Parish. There are also a series of smaller allocations elsewhere in and adjacent to the existing built up area.

The first version of the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan stated that development must *'achieve a high level of integration between the existing communities and new development, and ensure that development is part of a cohesive whole'*. This remains important and is central to:

- Community cohesion, providing good connections between areas, existing and new residents, and shared use of community facilities.
- Supporting more effective patterns of movement and which helps facilitate sustainable and active travel.
- An approach to development that responds to the character of the town and its pattern of growth over time.

Signposting

Good practice guidance at the national level can be found in The Manual for Streets which sets out principles for creating well-integrated developments based on a clear street hierarchy. This is supplemented and expanded upon in Building for a Healthy Life which provides examples of and key design considerations to help create well-integrated places.

Respondents to consultation highlighted concerns with the form and impact of development around Hailsham, stating that it has led to increased car-user, that there is a lack of supporting infrastructure, and that green space is limited in size and lacks functionality. These messages are well-illustrated by reference to the built form of older, more established residential areas compared with experience on more recent developments, as summarised below.

Lessons from more established residential areas

Within these areas:

- Historically, when new development took place, new streets were well-connected with and 'plugged-in' to the existing street network, with new homes fronting onto these, continuing the pattern of development.
- The format of the street network generally allowed scope for future development to connect with these, with a hierarchy of streets and spaces created that supports public transport, walking and wheeling.
- Useable green space is generally integrated within the overall form and layout of development. The location of facilities is accessible to the wider community.

The outcome of this approach is that:

- Development has a more 'organic' feel, and that where development has taken place, it feels like a natural extension of the town.
- This allows for physical and social interaction between development areas.
- The form of development helps support and sustain the provision of community facilities, as well as providing opportunities for residents to make use of active and sustainable travel.

Approach, issues and challenges in more recent residential developments

Within more modern residential developments:

- Site layouts tend to be reflective of land ownership boundaries, with little connectivity between these.
- Development is often set behind a landscaped frontage alongside a major road junction, creating a disconnect between new and existing development.
- Development is often 'inward facing', based around an internal 'loop' road and cul-de-sac arrangement.
- Green corridors tend to be located on and around the edge of development, with limited useable amenity green space and limited provision of community infrastructure.

The outcome of this is that:

- Development is poorly integrated, physically and socially, with the existing built form and communities.
- A lack of facilities on-site, or links to nearby facilities, requires trips to be made further afield.
- The layout of development provides limited support for and integration of bus and cycle routes which, combined with provision of main road junctions, accentuates reliance on car-based travel.

The above indicates that more recent development has not been successful in responding to the policy framework nor the qualities of older, more established areas of development. The HDGC thus expands upon and highlights what is meant by well-integrated development and what is expected of new development.

Figure 47: Older, more established areas of housing are well integrated within the overall form of development, with street networks creating a permeable structure that supports walking and cycling

An integrated approach to development

Typical edge of settlement development site

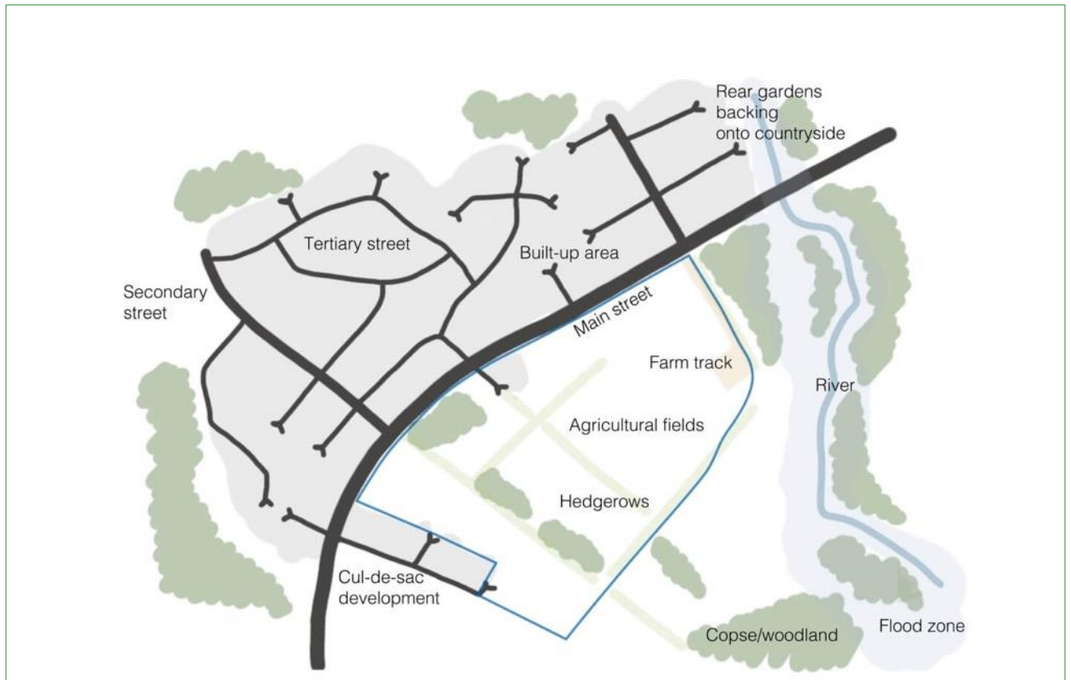


Figure 48: A typical edge of settlement development site

A typical edge of settlement development opportunity site is illustrated in Figure 48. Two example development scenarios are shown for the site, one illustrating 'what not to do' (Figure 49), and the other illustrating how the site can be laid out to support an integrated approach to development (Figure 50).

'What not to do'

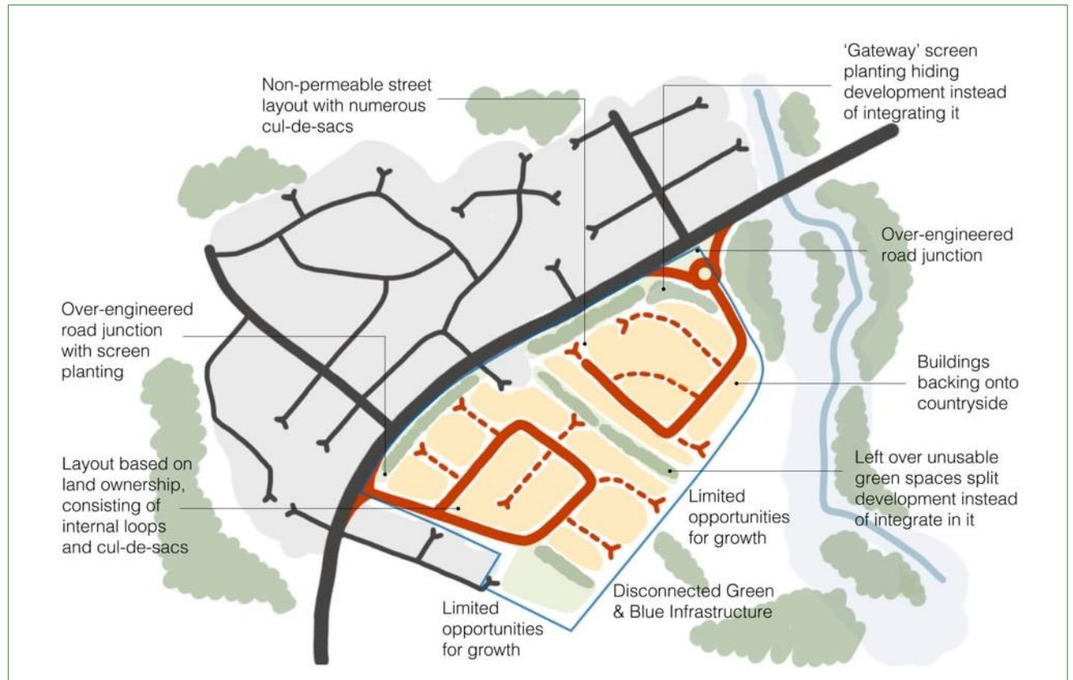


Figure 49: Illustration showing approaches to avoid during the design of edge of settlement development sites

The example illustrated in Figure 49 is included in the HDG to show those design decisions and choices that should be avoided when bringing forward new areas of growth adjacent to the existing built form. These include:

- Use of cul-de-sac and internal loop arrangement of streets with limited permeability and points of connection with the existing street pattern.
- An arrangement of development that limits potential for connectivity between existing and future growth areas, and thus results in this inward looking pattern of development being repeated on a site-by-site basis.
- Inclusion of over-engineered road junctions, set behind gateway planting that screen development and creates a barrier between the new and existing built form.
- Limited relationship between development and landscape assets, with green infrastructure comprising unusable and left over spaces between development.

An integrated approach to new residential areas

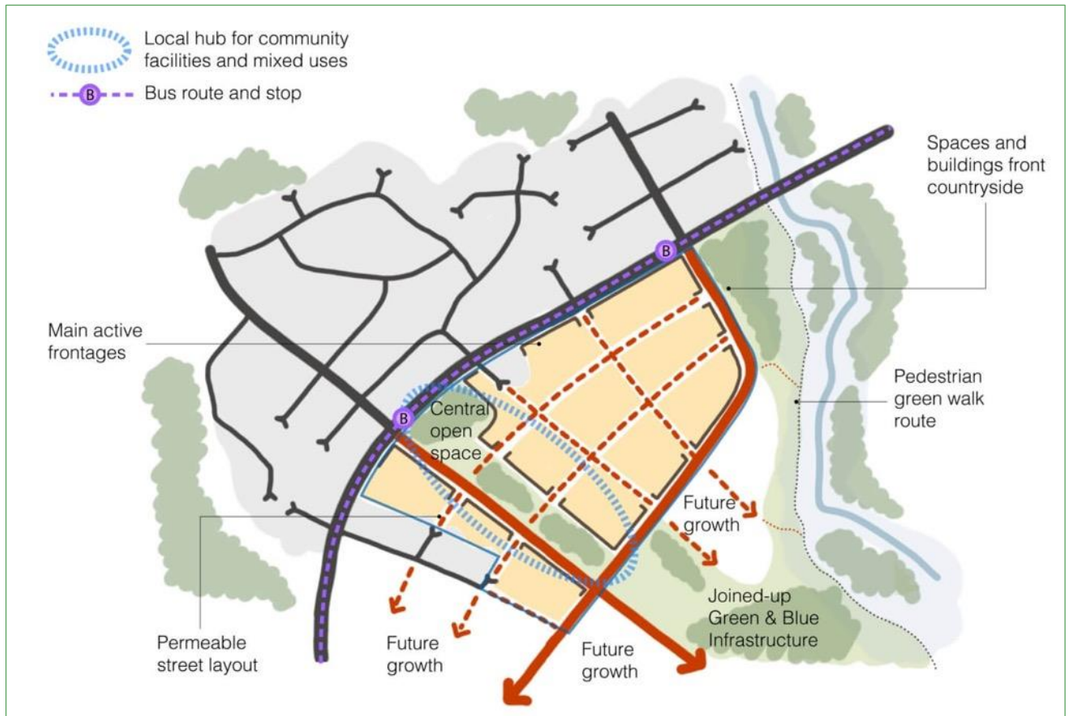


Figure 50: Illustration showing a good practice approach to creating a well-integrated edge of settlement development site.

The example illustrated in Figure 50 is included to highlight design choices and decisions that should be embedded within new residential development sites, helping to integrate these successfully with the existing built form. These include:

- Creation of a permeable street network that connects with the existing form of development and with a street pattern that supports public transport accessibility and enables future phases of growth to connect directly into this.
- An 'ownership blind' approach to masterplanning that addresses the relationship with adjacent sites and thus where green infrastructure and local facilities are integrated within the layout, are highly accessible and can be utilised by existing and new communities, including residents who move to the area following later phases of development.
- Development that fronts onto and responds well to the existing built form, completing the street scene as opposed to facing away from this.
- Development that responds to on-site and surrounding landscape assets and features, such that these form part of an overall network of connected green spaces, and where the green space is multi-functional, well-overlooked and of sufficient size and quality for people to use.

The interface between new development and the existing built-form

The interface refers to that area where new development meets the existing built form. In these areas it is important that the network of streets and spaces, and the arrangement of buildings, helps bind development together, supporting community cohesion and 'town-making'.

However, in many recent developments, the quality of the interface area has been dictated by a highways-led approach that has resulted in the creation of land hungry junction design that encourages vehicular movement and high speeds (see, Figure 51 image on left). This creates a barrier between the new and existing built form and where fragmented routes discourage people from walking or cycling, and where bus provision is located in response to junction design and thus disconnected from areas of new development. Landscaping is often provided around the road junction, partly as a visual and noise mitigation measure, and screening the new development from the existing. This acts as a further barrier between existing and new communities.

As an alternative to the above scenario, new development in Hailsham should follow the principles illustrated on the right in Figure 51. In this scenario the street and junction design forms a natural extension of the existing built form, creating a well-connected and permeable route network. This supports walking and cycling, and more efficient junction design enables bus stops to be located in closer proximity to walking routes, supporting use by residents. The arrangement of buildings in this scenario provides active frontages to streets and spaces, with functional landscaping and amenity space provided for the benefit of new and existing residents.

Figure 51: Illustration showing different approaches to the interface area between new development and the existing built form. The image on the left is an example of 'what not to do', based around the creation of an over-engineered road junction, provision of screen planting and inward facing development. The example on the right illustrates a good practice approach, creating a form of development that seamlessly extends the existing urban form, supporting a permeable network of streets and provision of infrastructure that can be utilised by new and existing residents.

WEL-01: Creating well-integrated developments

1. New development must be well-integrated with the existing built form:

   a) The network of streets within new development should connect with existing movement networks, avoiding provision of over-engineered highways junctions.

   b) The layout of development should involve creation of a permeable street and movement network that allows connectivity with adjacent and potential future growth areas, and across different land parcels.

   c) The layout of development should provide for safe and easy access, by foot, to existing bus services, or enable new routing of bus services, as appropriate, through the development area. All homes should be within 400m of a bus stop (measured based on the walking network as opposed to 'as the crow flies' distances).

   d) Functional open and amenity space should be provided where it can be used by residents and where this provides a meaningful link with existing green infrastructure networks.

   e) Community facilities should be in accessible locations that can be utilised by existing and future residents.

   f) Buildings should front onto new and existing streets, providing a natural extension of the existing built form.

Well-integrated green space

Amenity green space

Proposals for development will be required to provide new green space in line with standards established by Wealden District Council as set out in the Wealden Open Space Study, including amenity green space, natural and semi-natural green space, and play space. The provision of such space is important in helping to create an environment that supports community cohesion, health and wellbeing. Indeed, the Covid-19 pandemic emphasised the importance of having a network of local and accessible green spaces for leisure and recreation.

Where new green spaces are to be provided as part of development they should be safe, accessible and usable for all, and provide a range of open space types and play facilities that cater for all ages. In many instances in new development, amenity space is often located on the edge of the site in unwelcoming and disconnected spaces, which does not cater for the needs of the community nor encourage their use.

Amenity green spaces should be well-integrated within the development area. They should form part of the network of green infrastructure across Hailsham, including public rights of way, tree-lined and landscaped streets. This network of spaces should incorporate measures that help manage surface water run-off and include wildflowers enabling insect pollinators to extend their range.

Where play spaces are to be provided, these should be inclusive and designed to cater for play for all ages, and linked to other leisure and communal activities, including provision of outdoor gym equipment and allotment gardens. In particular, the design of the space and facilities provided within it should make space for girls, with engagement exercises undertaking to help design the space so it can be enjoyed safely by all. Resources published by Make Space for Girls should be used and help act as a conversation starter for engagement and co-design activities.

As far as possible, such spaces should be overlooked by new development, providing natural surveillance of that space.

WEL-02: Amenity green space

1. Where new amenity green space is to be provided it is expected that:

   a) It will be integrated within the development rather than being pushed to the periphery.

   b) It will be located within walking distance of as many residents as possible.

   c) It will as far as possible be connected with other new and existing green spaces through a network of green routes, including public rights of way and tree-lined or landscaped streets.

   d) A range of open space types will be incorporated into the development, including areas of play, exercise areas for dogs, opportunities for growing food, and quieter areas for relaxation, which cater for all ages, genders and abilities.

   e) Play areas and public spaces are well-overlooked, providing natural surveillance of the space. Hidden spots must be avoided.

   f) Play spaces are accessible for all children and incorporate elements relating to nature and landscape as well as play equipment.

   g) The creation of left over spaces, which lack purpose, will be avoided.

Natural green space

Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework supports nature recovery and the integration of nature into new development, increasing the extent and connectivity of nature rich-habitats. It also includes a commitment to everyone being able to access green infrastructure within a fifteen-minute walk of their home. Natural England's Green Infrastructure Maps show that although Hailsham benefits from an extensive network of green infrastructure, not all of this is accessible, with much of the area falling outside established 'Access to Natural Greenspace Standards'.

In Hailsham, new development should be planned in such a way that avoids habitat loss and fragmentation, and opportunities should be sought to improve ecological connectivity, including through the creation, restoration, and enhancement of linking habitats and 'stepping stones' through the landscape.

The protection and enhancement of biodiversity assets is dependent on robust networks of Green Infrastructure which facilitate movement and genetic exchange of wildlife and species. Provision of Green Infrastructure should ensure permeability for wildlife through development and provide sufficient beneficial habitat to support target species, independent of its connective function.

WEL-03: Natural green space

1. Development is expected to retain and integrate existing green infrastructure within the proposed layout. It is expected that the layout and design of development will:

   a) Include green links that connect formal and informal green spaces, both within the development and site and to existing natural green spaces adjacent to the site.

   b) Take opportunities to reconnect areas of woodland to allow for the movement of species.

   c) Provide permeability for wildlife through and around development, and function as a wildlife habitat in its own right.

   d) Maximise opportunities for people to interact with nature and encourage walking and cycling, ensuring that opportunities will not cause harm to wildlife and habitats.

Allotments and community-food growing opportunities

The Wealden Open Space study reports that the current provision of allotments in Hailsham equates to just 0.05 hectares per 1,000 people, which is well below the recommended national standard of provision which is 0.25 hectares per 1,000 people (as recommended by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners).

The Open Space study also recommends that allotments should be located within a fifteen minute walk of the home. However, with only two areas of allotments in Hailsham (at Station Road and Battle Road), the vast majority of households fall outside of this distance.

The provision of allotments and other community-based food growing opportunities are recognised as being important in terms of food resilience, health and mental well-being, providing an opportunity for people to come together and reducing the risks of social isolation, as well as increasing contact with nature. Local food growing also supports biodiversity.

Opportunities for local food production are identified as a key feature of compact and complete communities as outlined by the Town and Country Planning Association in their guide to '20-minute neighbourhoods' (a similar concept to the Hailsham ten-minute town idea, which features in the guidance as a case study).

All new development in Hailsham is expected to provide allotment space, or contributions to this, in line with the standards established in the Wealden Open Space Study.

The provision and layout of allotments, including access arrangements, landscaping, provision of communal areas and structures on site should be designed in line with good practice established by the National Allotment Society. Management of the allotments will be subject to agreement at the planning application stage. As an alternative to provision of formal plots, development may incorporate community orchards and gardens which allow residents to grow their own produce.

WEL-04: Food growing opportunities

1. Food growing opportunities, including allotments and community gardens must be provided in line with standards established by Wealden District Council. It is expected that:
   a) The location of the allotments or community should form part of the connected network of green infrastructure.
   b) The location must be accessible by foot.
   c) Use should be made of natural boundary treatments, including trees and hedges, around the allotments or community gardens.
   d) The size and layout of plots within allotments is aligned with guidance published by The National Allotment Society (21st Century Allotments in New Developments).

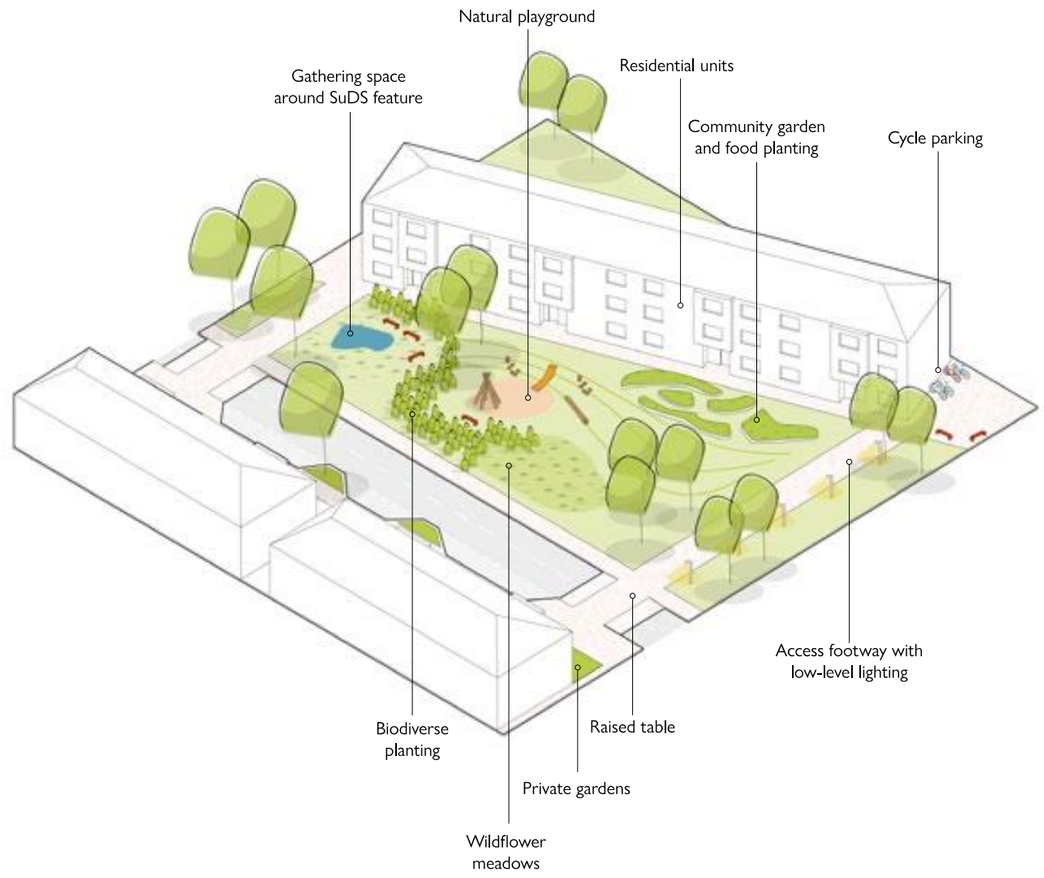


Figure 52: Example illustration showing how opportunities for local food growing may be integrated into existing amenity green spaces alongside other green space typologies

Where the scope exists to do so, opportunities may be taken to retrofit existing streets and spaces to incorporate food growing space. This may include opportunities to introduce food growing areas within underused amenity space (Figure 52).

Allowing people to experience the natural environment through shared responsibility of amenity areas can increase empowerment and uplift community spirits. Multi-functional options such as community gardens can support educational opportunities around climate change and mitigation methods.

Alongside food growing opportunities the diversification of existing space could also allow for natural play areas to be easily integrated with landscape features and other local small scale food production such as raised beds and fruit trees. Landscape features such as ponds, providing wildlife habitats, and functional green infrastructure including native mixed species hedgerows and biodiverse rain gardens, can be included as part of an overall landscape strategy for these areas.

Figure 53: Lamlash Street in south east London has been reimagined as a traffic free community garden. It provides a direct walking route between adjacent streets and opportunities for local food production.

Where the land is in council-ownership, use of the land by the community for the growing of food may be covered by the Council's public liability insurance. Where the land is in private ownership, agreement for use of the land will first need to be sought and separate insurances put in place. The community should work together to agree the role and type of community garden to be provided and establish a committee with clear responsibilities in terms of ongoing maintenance, health and safety. A small membership fee might be set to help sustain the garden.

Creating variety and interest

Creating interest in the quality of the built form is a key ingredient in the attractiveness of places, which helps enrich the sense of place, strengthens local identity and the sense of belonging. It can also help foster pride in place, ownership and maintenance of the street environment.

Hailsham and the immediately surrounding area have been subject to extensive growth and development over the last decade and more. Recent growth can generally be characterised as being highly uniform, with regularity in building form and street lines. There is no real sense that development has responded to the identity and character of the area, with buildings making use of a limited mix of materials and colours, and with the street scene dominated by areas of hardstanding.

By contrast, older and more established areas of the town display the following features that create interest and character:

- A wider mix of housing types.
- Use of different materials and colours, within a locally responsive palette (Figure 55).
- Areas of landscaping and mature planting within the street scene that softens the environment.

The above combine to help create a sense of space, character and interest within a common pattern.

Figure 54: The Avenue, in Saffron Walden, is a good example of a development that uses a limited palette of locally distinctive materials and colours in a variety of ways and combinations to create interest and character. Retention of mature trees and use of soft landscaping with the street environment and along property boundaries further enriches the quality of development.

Figure 55: Common materials and colours found on buildings in Hailsham and which can be combined to create variety and interest in new development

The positive aspects of more established residential areas were recognised as being important to quality of place during consultation exercises, with visual preference surveys of different housing types and developments representative of different periods of development being displayed. Those which displayed a mix of materials and incorporated areas of landscaping were preferred over those with a more limited palette and building form.

The illustrations in this section establish principles for introducing interest and variety into new areas of residential development. These, and the associated guidelines (WEL-05) should be read alongside those associated with street design, parking arrangements and provision of amenity green space as the combination of building design and public space can introduce diversity and interest into the street scene.

It is however important that development responds to an overarching pattern and, to this extent, the rhythm of development is important in bringing overall coherence to the street scene. Rhythm is established by the scale and massing of buildings, regular use and symmetry of architectural features, and the spacing or voids between buildings (Figure 56). Too much repetition can though create monotony, with variety and interest being introduced through the introduction of landscaping, the palette of materials, colours and architectural features utilised, and the roof form or roofscape created (Figure 57).

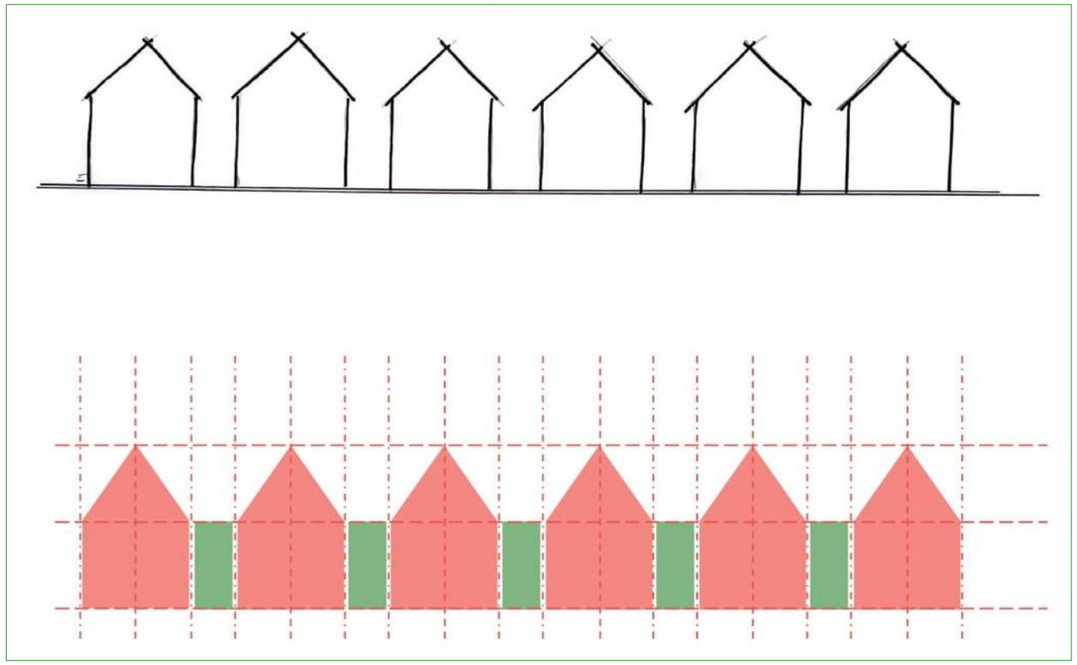
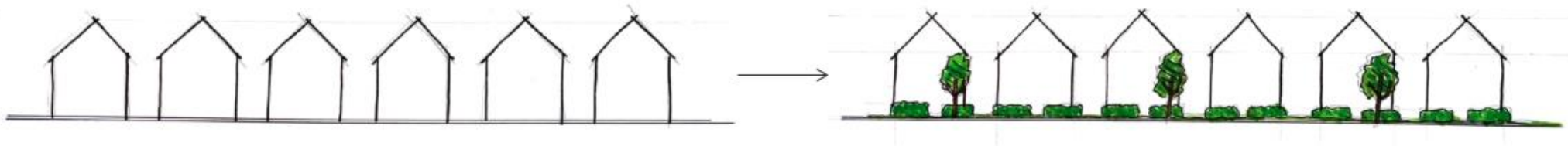


Figure 56: The rhythm of development is established by the scale and massing of buildings, regular use and symmetry of building features, and spaces between buildings. Variety and interest can be introduced within the overarching pattern of development



1: Landscape

Landscaping softens the street environment. This can be achieved through provision of front gardens, hedgerows along boundary edges, the use of street trees and planted edges between the footway and street. This supports biodiversity and surface water flood mitigation

2: Roofscape

Use of different roof forms and materials within the overall pattern of development, and which reflects locally distinctive building types, adds variety.

3: Palette

Combining a limited palette of locally distinctive materials and colours in a variety of ways can create interest and variety. A varied arrangement of windows, use of indents and projecting building forms can also add depth, enriching the sense of place

Landscape + Roofscape + Palette
Creates interest, variety and local character whilst respecting the rhythm of development

Figure 57: Introducing landscaping into the street environment, coupled with varied roof forms and use of materials can introduce interest and character whilst respecting the rhythm of development and local building typologies

WEL-05: Variety and interest in new residential development

1. Variety and interest should be created in new development through the use of landscaping, a locally distinctive palette of materials, colours and building forms. These should respect the overall rhythm of development and thus allow for interest within a coherent whole.

    a) Landscaping should be introduced into the street scene. This can be achieved by provision of some or all of the following elements: front gardens, hedgerows and other low level planting along the front of property boundaries, use of street trees and areas of planting between the footway and street. Areas of landscaping should support provision of biodiversity net gain and can be used to contribute to other mitigation measures including surface water flood risk mitigation.

    b) A limited palette of locally distinctive materials and colours should be combined in buildings in a variety of ways to create interest and variety.

    c) A mix of architectural features, including the arrangement of windows, use of indents and projecting building forms can be utilised to add depth, enriching the sense of place. These features should respond to the overall rhythm of development along the street.

    d) Use should be made of different roof forms and materials that reflect locally distinctive building types and which respond to the overall scale and massing of the street form established through the rhythm of buildings along the street.

CROWN
BATTS & CO
B
6.

6. Residential street design and parking provision

Street typologies

Introduction

The quality of new development and its relationship with the existing built-form is strongly influenced by the network of streets and spaces provided. Good street design can support healthier and more active lifestyles, help make it safe and easy for people of all ages and abilities to move around, and enrich quality of place.

The guidelines in this section are intended to apply to major development (i.e.: ten or more homes) although elements (such as parking solutions) will apply to small sites too.

Concern was expressed through consultation as to the density of development, limited provision of landscaping and the visual dominance of the car on the overall street scene. These messages are well-illustrated by reference to the built form of older, more established residential areas compared with experience on more recent developments across Hailsham, as summarised below.

Lessons from more established residential areas

Within these areas:

- Buildings are often set back from the edge of the footway, with front gardens provided.
- Landscaping is provided in front gardens and along the street, including grass or planted verges alongside the footway.
- Overall street width and building to building distances across the street tend to be greater than in more recent developments and allow for a mix of on-plot parking and unallocated parking within the street.

The outcome of this approach is that:

- Landscaping softens the environment.
- Where parking takes place on-street, the overall width of the street allows other vehicles to pass.
- Although some front gardens have been paved over to accommodate off-street parking, shallower gardens do not allow this and thus allow for the retention of landscaping and privacy.
- Integration of landscaping into the street environment supports biodiversity and helps mitigate the risk of surface water run-off.
- The overall form of development provides a sense of space.

Approach, issues and challenges in more recent residential developments

In contrast to the above, and within more modern residential developments:

- The overall street width in many instances is relatively narrow, with buildings close to the edge of the footway.
- There is often no or very limited front garden space, and a lack of landscaping within the street scene.
- A limited palette of materials is found with the overall composition of the street scene.
- 'Tandem' style parking (whereby one car parks behind the other to the side of the home) provision predominates.

The outcome of this is that:

- The landscape is dominated by hard surfaces which can exacerbate the risk of surface water run-off.
- Parking is often displaced onto the street, but the narrow overall street width can make parked vehicles difficult to pass.
- Parked cars thus often straddle the kerb, causing obstruction of pedestrians.
- Overall, development can feel 'cramped' and with limited sense of space.

Street hierarchy

The overview of design approaches to street types in Hailsham outlined above highlights the need for the HDG to establish expectations for new development. The HDG thus presents a set of street types and details of each of these, all of which can be integrated within new areas of development as appropriate to their size and nature (Figure 58). They include:

- A 'Central Street' (Figure 59), which may typically be provided on larger, major development areas, forming the central spine through development and the main point of access onto the existing highway network
- 'Residential Streets' (Figure 60), which are quieter streets designed for local movement and access.
- 'Garden, or Living Streets' (Figure 61), which are a narrower and more intimate street environment, designed primarily as a place for people, supporting social interaction and local play. This type of street is also often known as a 'homezone'.

Figure 58: Street typologies and hierarchy overlaid onto example development layout

Signposting

The Manual for Streets sets out principles for creating well-integrated developments based on a clear street hierarchy and which supports slow speeds and pedestrian priority environments.

Streets for a Healthy Life, Homes England, 2022, is a best practice guide to street design for use by highway authorities and housing developers. It builds upon Manual for Streets and presents a set of case studies based on four main street typologies, the typical features and application of each. It illustrates what good and poor practice looks like.

The Local Design Guide for Residential Development, East Sussex County Council, 2010, acts as a local supplement to Manual for Streets which it states is accepted as being the 'baseline' for the design of all new residential roads in the County. It includes a set of principles, dimensions and other standards that should be referenced.

Central Street

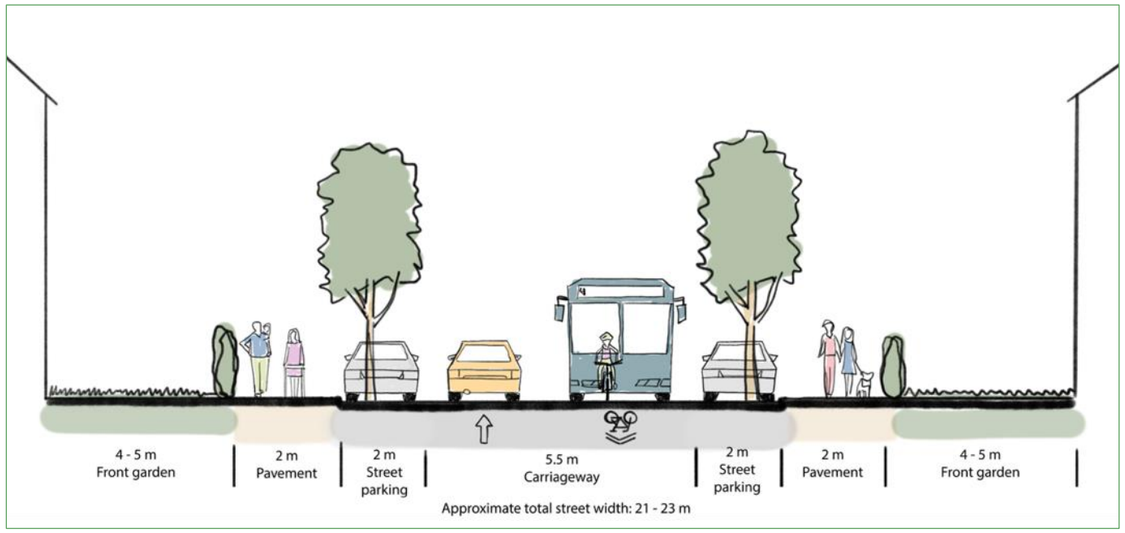


Figure 59: Cross section of 'central street' typology

Use of this street typology (Figure 59) will be appropriate where the following design principles are incorporated:

- The streets should be designed such that speeds are limited to 20mph max.
- This street type provides scope for accommodating bus services and supporting community uses, enhancing access to these. It will generally form the main link to the existing street network and allow for adjacent and future growth areas to connect in with this.
- Tree planting and other forms of landscaping help define the street and visually narrow the space between building frontages.
- Homes should be set back from the footway, with front gardens and hedge planting at the boundary defining the frontage and providing privacy.
- Parking should be accommodated on plot and on-street. Unallocated on-street parking should be provided in bays, defined by areas of landscaping and street trees to soften the visual impact of parked cars. Use of different materials to the main street will help define these and visually narrow the main carriageway, helping reduce speeds.
- Cycling can be accommodated on street but requires provision of safe infrastructure at junctions into the development area.
- The overall width of the street (measured between facing buildings across the street) should be around 21 metres. The use of street tree planting will break this down into three discrete elements: the central carriageway and the footpaths and front gardens either side of this. Scope may exist to reduce the depth of front gardens but will depend on the ability to accommodate parking requirements sensitively.
- Two and three storey buildings may be appropriate on this street typology.

Residential Street

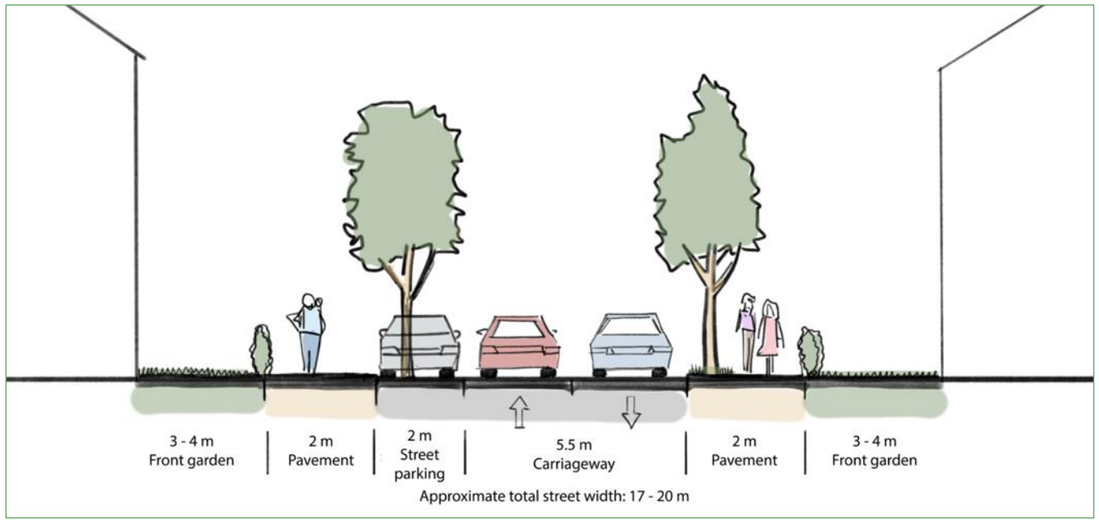


Figure 60: Cross section of 'residential street' typology

Use of this street typology (Figure 60) will be appropriate where the following design principles are incorporated:

- These streets should be designed such that speeds are limited to 20mph max.
- Use of 'filtered permeability' should limit vehicular through traffic but allow direct walking and cycling links to adjacent streets and spaces.
- Low traffic speeds and volumes allow for cycling to be accommodated within the street.
- Tree planting, verges and provision of front gardens along the street provide greenery.
- Front gardens should be provided in all properties, with the property boundary defined by hedges or similar form of planting.
- Parking should be provided on-plot. Where incorporated in the street, in unallocated bays, these should be defined by landscaping and use of different materials to the main carriageway.
- The overall width of the street (measured between facing buildings across the street) should be approximately seventeen to twenty metres.
- Buildings of two and two-and-a-half storeys are appropriate along this street typology. Three storey buildings may be appropriate on corners and or where there is an opportunity within the layout of development to provide a local view towards a feature building.

Garden Street

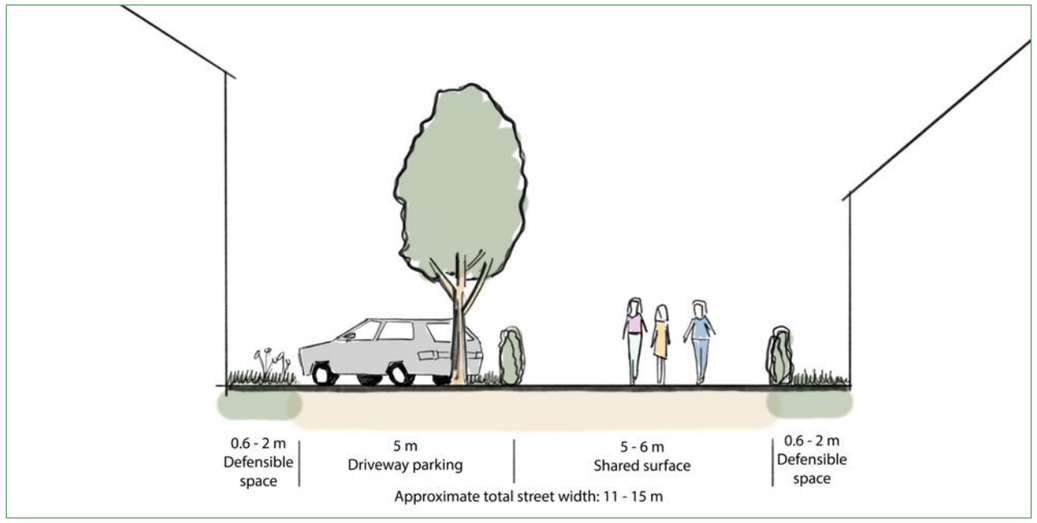


Figure 61: Cross section of 'garden street' typology

Use of this street typology (Figure 61) will be appropriate where the following design principles are incorporated:

- The street is designed as a pedestrian priority space with low traffic speeds (10mph max.) and where the car is a 'guest' in the environment.
- Use should be limited to short street sections and where vehicular access is limited to local movements only.
- This street type supports walking and should therefore be located within walking distance of bus service provision.
- Gateways, forming design features, should be used to define the entry points in to the street, with use of different materials used to define the extent of the street.
- Narrow front gardens allow for some form of personalisation and privacy, although creation of a direct relationship with the street is important to encourage use of this as a communal space.
- Integration of tree planting and other forms of soft landscaping within the street should be used to help define areas of parking and provide scope for integrating street furniture as appropriate, including cycle parking, pocket parks and play space,
- The overall width of the street (measured between facing buildings across the street) should be approximately eleven to fifteen metres.
- One and two storey buildings are appropriate along this street typology.

STP-01: Street typologies

1. Street design must balance the needs of users, avoiding conflicts between motor vehicles, bus users, pedestrians, cyclists and other forms of 'wheeling', including users of wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

2. The width and enclosure ratio of the street, use of materials and incorporation of green infrastructure must be designed to limit traffic speed. The overall dimensions of the street and components of it should be as defined in Figure 59 through to Figure 61:

    a) Residential streets should be designed to limit speeds to a maximum of 20mph, with lower speeds supported.

    b) Street design should support safe pedestrian movement, including provision of pedestrian priority homezone or garden street environments and raised crossings on side streets that give priority to pedestrians crossing the street. Footpaths alongside all streets must be a minimum width of 2.0m.

    c) Space for cycling infrastructure should be integrated into the street design as appropriate to the speed and volume of traffic using the street.

    d) Homezone or garden street typologies should have a high degree of enclosure and make use of materials and gateway treatments that clearly define these as pedestrian priority environments.

    e) Engineered solutions to traffic management, including speed humps, cushions and chicane should be avoided and the need for such interventions designed-out of the street environment.

3. Where parking is provided in the street this must be a minimum of 2.0m wide, interspersed with green infrastructure and make use of alternative materials to the main carriageway as per STP-02.

4. Green infrastructure, including street tree planting and sustainable drainage should be integrated within the street environment and should either be located between the carriageway and the footway, or between rows of on-street parking where integrated into the street design.

5. Boundary treatments to properties along the street should comprise natural landscaping, making use of native and non-invasive species.

6. Existing green infrastructure on site should be retained and integrated, as appropriate, within the design of street.

Figure 62: Example street typologies within new development, showing integration of green infrastructure within the street, on-street parking between planting, and use of materials to define different areas within the street

Parking

Introduction

The quality, location and provision of car parking can be a major determinant on the quality of place, particularly in residential areas. If it is not provided in the right place, it is unlikely to be used properly. This is reflected in Guidance on Parking at New Developments published by ESCC which states that:

- Parking provision should be sufficient to accommodate demand whilst also minimising adverse effects on road safety.
- Provision should be aligned with sustainable and active travel initiatives.
- Developments must be designed around people not the car.
- Developments should provide balanced and mixed parking provision and ensure that all spaces are useable without creating highway safety issues.
- Parking design must consider how parking spaces will be used in practice.

Signposting

East Sussex County Council has produced parking standards that will need to be complied with in new development, as set out in the Guidance on Parking at New Developments and supplemented by the Car Parking Demand Calculator. This Guidance includes a set of good principles and extends to matters such as parking dimensions, electric vehicle (EV) parking guidance and cycle parking provision.

Other good practice can be referenced in Streets for a Healthy Life, with the Wealden Design Guide, at section 7(10), also providing further guidance on how the car can be successfully designed into new development.

The impact of parking in residential areas in Hailsham is well-illustrated by reference to the built form of older, more established residential areas compared with experience on more recent developments, as summarised below.

Lessons from more established residential areas

Within these areas:

- Parking is generally accommodated on-plot and / or on street
- Where parking is provided on-plot, front gardens are often of sufficient depth to accommodate a parked car and where landscaping is provided in addition to this (although there are instances of front gardens being 'paved over' and thus losing their character).
- Streets are typically wide enough to allow for on street parking, often in marked bays.
- Where on street parking is accommodated, streets also often benefit from grass verges and street trees that soften the visual impact of parked cars.

The outcome of this approach is that:

- Parking is more sensitively accommodated in the built form.
- Provision of on-plot parking (including sufficient space in front of the property for parking of cars) may be perceived as a form of lower density development, but this is off-set by limited need for separate garage or parking courts and associated land take typically found in more recent development.
- Parking is more typically used where intended.

Approach, issues and challenges in more recent residential developments

Within more modern residential developments:

- The use of tandem parking causes additional vehicle movements and displacement of car parking onto the street.
- Garages are rarely used for parking.
- Rear courtyards are rarely used, causing displacement of parking, and can be a security concern.
- Narrow street typologies are unable to accommodate additional parked cars, often resulting in these being parked across the pavement.
- Where parking is provided for in the street, it is rarely accompanied by landscaping.

The outcome of this is that:

- Parking provision is inefficient in terms of land use and location.
- Parking in the street causes obstruction to other street users.
- Parking over of front gardens takes place as a result of the above. This has implications for surface water run-off and overall quality of the street scene.
- Parked vehicles can dominate the street.

Toolbox of parking solutions

The overview of parking approaches outlined above highlights the importance of establishing more detail on what comprises good parking provision so that it can be successfully accommodated within the street, so that it is used as intended and thus minimising the unintended consequences of poorly designed parking on quality of place.

A 'toolbox' of different parking solutions (Figure 64) is presented in the HDG, representing different solutions in respect of 'on-plot' parking and 'unallocated' parking. Details of each follows this. The form of parking used should be appropriate to the street typology and building form, and thus this section of the HDG should be read alongside those in respect of street types and development layouts.

Figure 63: Examples of on-plot parking provision, including (top left) parking in front of the house in Horsted Park, Chatham (image source: Building for a Healthy Life), (top right) on-plot parking and attached garage at The Avenue, Saffron Walden, (bottom right) garages integrated within the housing typology at Abode at Great Kneighton, Cambridge (image source: Fotohaus), and (bottom left) parking to the side of the house in Hailsham

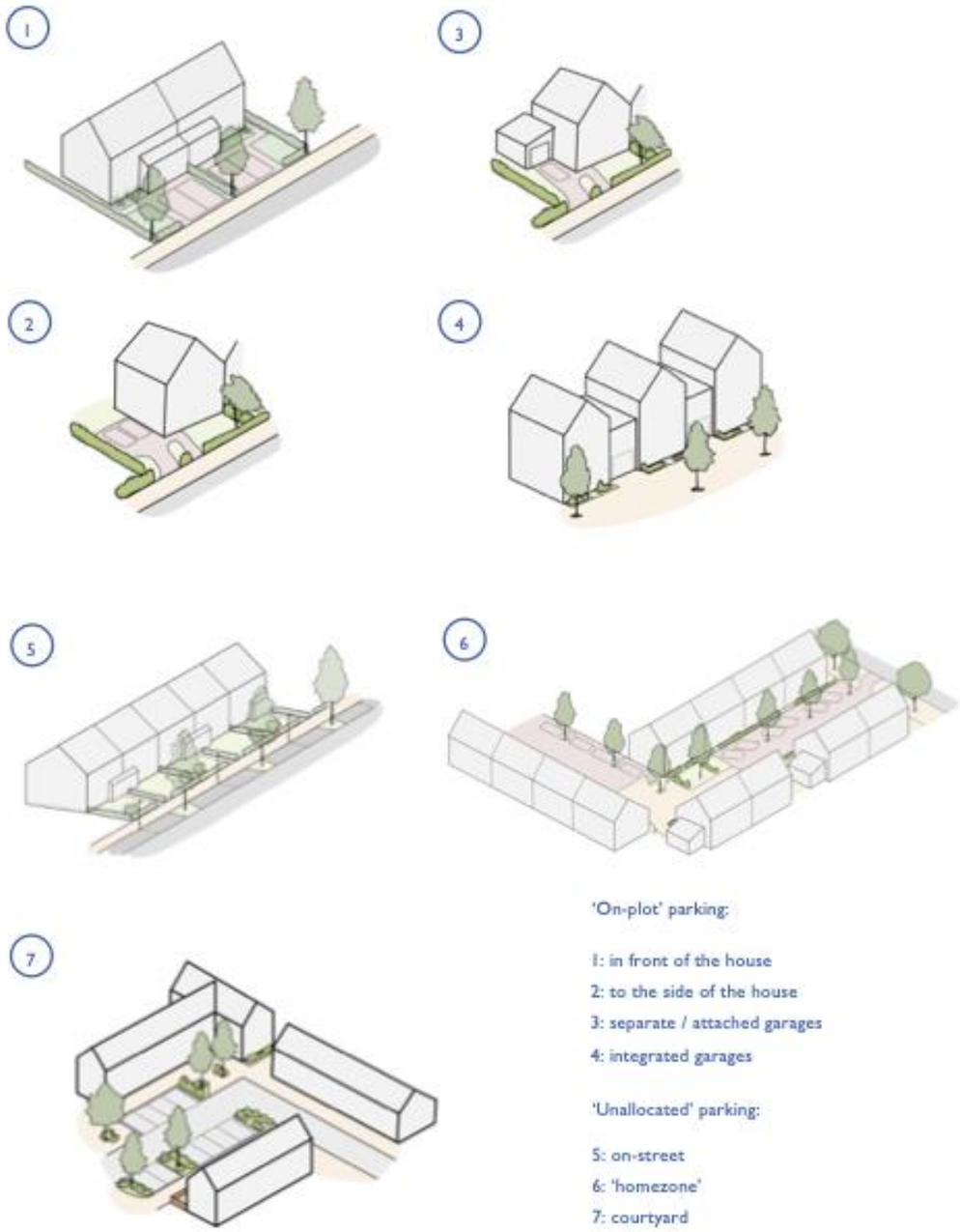


Figure 64: Toolbox of parking solutions appropriate for use in residential development in Hailsham

On-plot parking / in front of homes

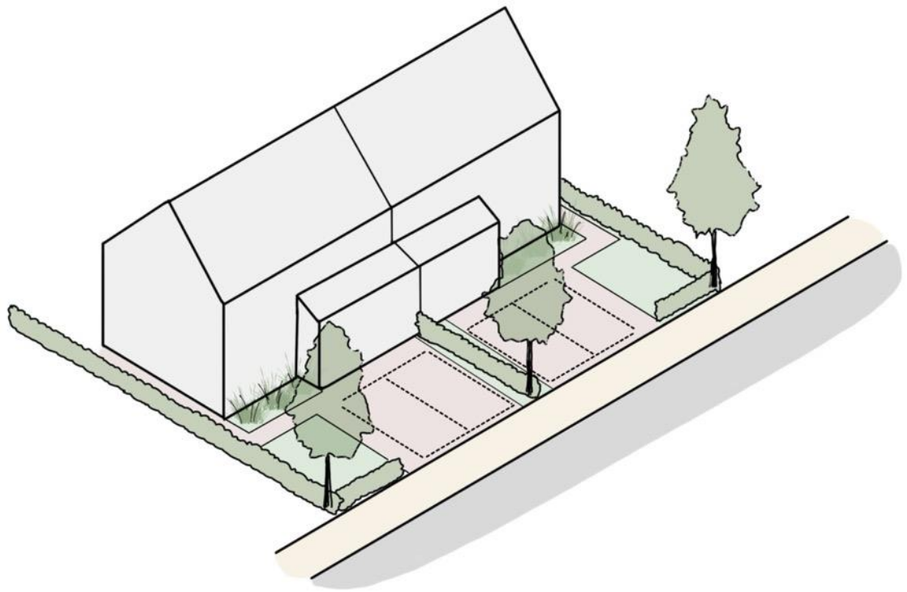


Figure 65: On-plot parking provided in front of the house

Principles associated with this typology (Figure 65) are:

- Parking in front of the house must be integrated with areas of soft landscaping.
- No more than two parking spaces must be provided next to each other.
- Kerbs and raised edges / upstands must be used around the areas of soft landscaping to protect them from over running vehicles.
- Buildings must be set back a sufficient distance from the footway to avoid parked cars overhanging this and causing obstruction to pedestrians.
- Areas of parking should utilise porous materials.

On-plot parking / to side of home

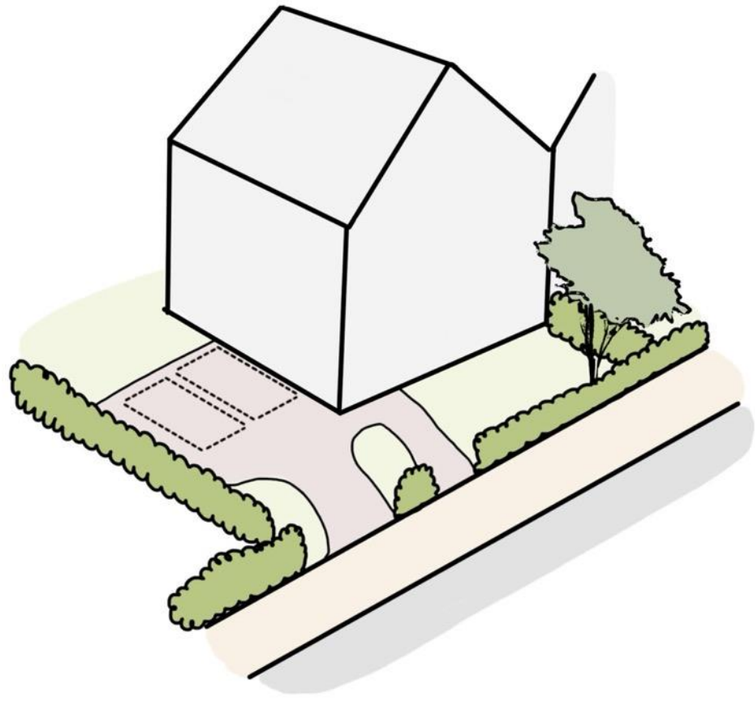


Figure 66: On-plot parking provided to the side of the house

Principles associated with this typology (Figure 66) are:

- Parking should be set back from the main building line along the street as defined by the front of houses.
- Two parking spaces can be provided next to each other.
- Where two car parking spaces are provided per home, the footway crossover should be restricted to one vehicle width only to minimise impact on the pedestrian environment.
- Tandem parking (one space in front of the other) should be avoided.
- Areas of parking should utilise porous materials.

On-plot parking / garages

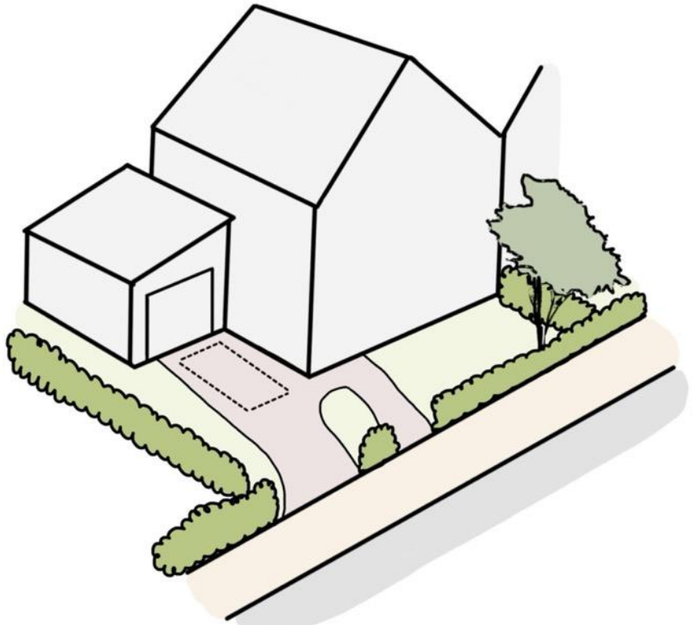


Figure 67: On-plot parking incorporating a separate or attached garage

Principles associated with this typology (Figure 67) are:

- Where garages are to be provided they will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the full parking requirements can be met without any displacement of parked cars onto the street.
- Garages must be of sufficient size to accommodate a parked car as well as providing space, as appropriate, for storage.
- Freestanding or attached garages must be located to the side of the house and set back from the main building line along the street, with sufficient space to park a car between the building line and front of the garage.
- Garages must be well-integrated with the architectural design of the house.

On-plot parking / integrated garages

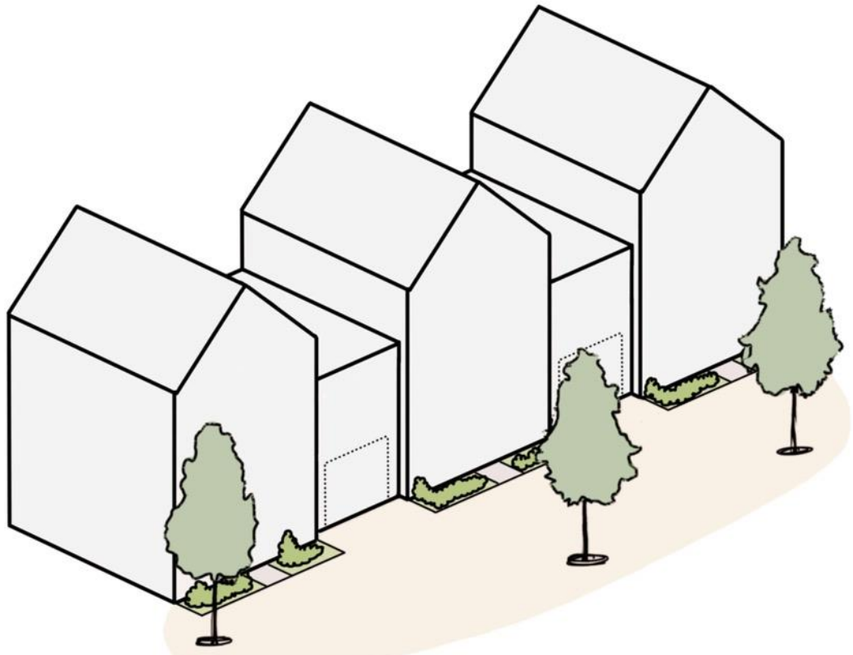


Figure 68: On-plot parking where the garage is integrated within the housing unit

Principles associated with this typology (Figure 68) are:

- The garage is integrated as part of the house type and without any other off-street parking provided.
- Garages integrated with the housing unit will be appropriate where the street typology does not allow for alternative parking provision which causes parking to be displaced elsewhere (i.e.: the garage must be used for parking).
- The garage must be designed as part of the house.
- Housing typologies should be designed to allow space above the garage to be utilised, either as living space or private amenity space.

Unallocated parking / parking in the street

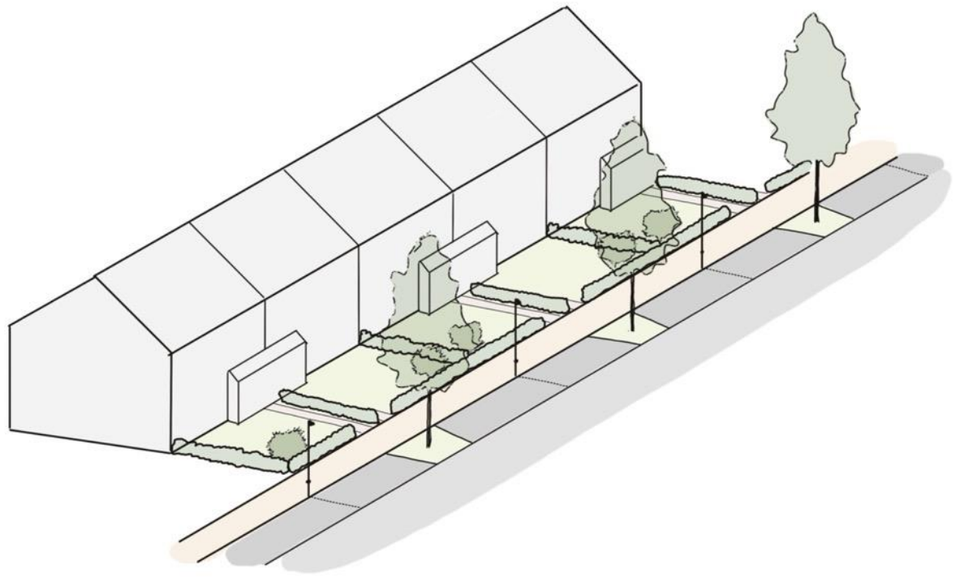


Figure 69: Unallocated parking provided within the street

Principles associated with this typology (Figure 69) are:

- Provision of unallocated spaces within the street, including visitor parking, is appropriate where on-plot parking is not achievable.
- No more than four parking bays must be provided in a row, with soft landscaping provided between these and protected by kerbs / raised edges to protect them from over running vehicles.
- Lighting columns, communal EV charging points and other utilities within the public realm should be located on build-outs between parking bays as opposed to being placed on the footway. EV charging points should be located where they can be used by more than one vehicle.
- Different surface materials should be used to distinguish areas of parking from the main carriageway.

Figure 70: An alternative approach to unallocated on-street parking, showing this provided in landscape bays along the centre of the street. This example is of Tweede Muntmeerterslann, Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Opportunities may be taken to explore alternative parking arrangements within the street. On-street parking may be centrally located within the street (Figure 70). In this instance the following principles apply:

- Soft landscaping, including tree planting, must be integrated within the area of parking and protected from over running vehicles by kerbs and raised edges.
- Lightning columns, communal EV charging points and other utilities must be sensitively located with the parking bays and areas of landscaping. EV charging points should be located where they can be used by more than one vehicle.
- Opportunities for safe crossing should be provided between areas of parking and landscaping.
- The overall street width should be in proportion to building heights and where carriageway dimensions require vehicles to be driven at slow speeds appropriate to the development context.

Unallocated parking / Homezone or garden street typology

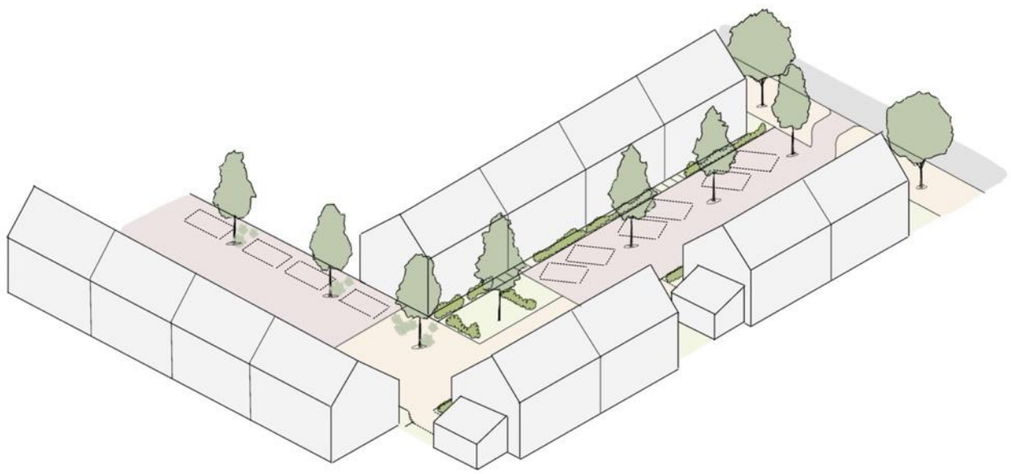


Figure 71: Unallocated parking within a homezone or garden street style typology

Principles associated with this typology (Figure 71) are:

- Shared surface areas allow for provision of unallocated parking.
- Parking must be integrated with areas of soft landscaping and doorstep play and amenity space which is protected form over running vehicles through use of kerbs and raised edges.
- Parking must be of sufficient width and depth to allow for passing vehicles (at slow speeds) along the street, with priority given to pedestrian movement.

Unallocated parking / communal areas

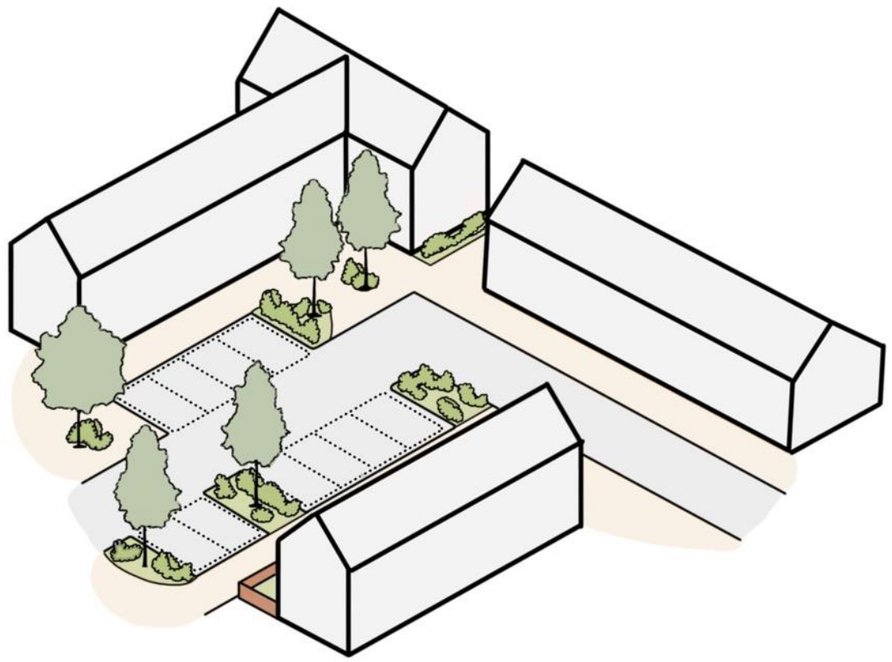


Figure 72: Unallocated parking in a communal area to the front of the home

Principles associated with this typology (Figure 72) are:

- Unallocated courtyard style parking must be located at the front of the home and the space occupied by parking must be overlooked by adjacent properties.
- The area of parking must be designed as a public space, incorporating soft landscaping and doorstep play and amenity space which is protected from over running vehicles through use of kerbs and raised edges.
- No more than four parking bays may be provided in a row. These should be separated from other parking bays through use of soft landscaping.
- Communal EV charging points must be sensitively located, being integrated with the parking bays and landscaping, minimising obstruction to pedestrians and where the charging points can be used by more than one vehicle.

STP-02: Car parking in residential development

1. The quantity of parking to be provided must be determined in accordance with standards published by East Sussex County Council.

2. Development should be designed to minimise the occurrence of informal parking that undermines the quality of the street environment. Parking should be unobtrusive and in locations that benefit from natural surveillance. The toolbox of parking solutions must be used to determine an appropriate form of parking for the proposed development:

    a) On-plot parking should be well-integrated in the plot and be of a sufficient size to accommodate a parked car. Areas of soft landscaping, defined by kerbs and raised edges or upstands, must be provided between areas of parking where more than two spaces are to be provided. Driveways must make use of porous materials that minimise surface water run-off.

    b) Garages provided on-plot must be well-integrated with the design of the house. Garages must not be located in front of the house. They must be of a minimum internal space to park a car.

    c) Unallocated parking spaces can be designed into the street. No more than four on-street parking spaces must be provided in a row. Trees and other forms of soft landscaping must be provided at the end of each row of car parking and defined by raised edges. Materials used to define the parking bays should be different to those within the main carriageway.

    d) Small parking courtyards can be provided at the front of properties and where they are designed as a public space incorporating soft landscaping and amenity space as appropriate.

    e) Electric vehicle charging points located in the public realm must be sited to avoid visual and physical obstruction. Charging points should not be located on the footway. They should be located where they can service more than one vehicle.

3. Tandem parking solutions should be avoided.

4. Rear garage and parking courts should be avoided. They are to be treated as an exception and if proposed must:

    a) benefit from natural surveillance;

    b) be directly accessible from the front of properties;

    c) be designed as attractive, functional spaces, incorporating tree planting; and

    d) avoid provision of narrow vehicular accessways.

5. Undercroft and decked parking must be wrapped with active development frontages, particularly at street level.

Figure 73: Examples of unallocated parking provision including (top) on-street parking in Derwenthorpe, York (image source: Streets for a Healthy Life), (bottom left) parking within a homezone / garden street type arrangement at Lime Tree Square, Somerset (image source: Google Streetview image capture © 2024), and (bottom right) communal courtyard parking to the front of the homes at Hanham Hall, South Gloucestershire (image source: Google Streetview image capture © 2024)

CROWN
BATES & CO
B

7. Small sites

Introduction

In addition to new homes on sites allocated for residential and mixed use development in the emerging Wealden Local Plan, other development is likely to take place in Hailsham. Indeed, the emerging Local Plan states that around 300 new homes are to come forward in Hailsham through 'windfall' development.

This may comprise mixed use development in the town centre, as discussed in more detail in section 4 of the HDG. The conversion of existing buildings will also contribute towards the windfall housing figures. More typically in Hailsham though, windfall has taken place through the redevelopment of small 'infill' or backland sites.

Infill sites are those which typically comprise a break in the street frontage and where the opportunity, through development, exists to 'fill' the gap and complete the street. Backland sites are those which typically represent intensification and redevelopment of an existing plot and use, often involving uses such as garage courts, light industrial uses and other under-utilised areas of land and building. These sites are typically classed as 'minor development', generally resulting in fewer than ten new homes.

Design principles

This section of the HDG establishes principles that apply to the design and development of small infill and backland development sites.

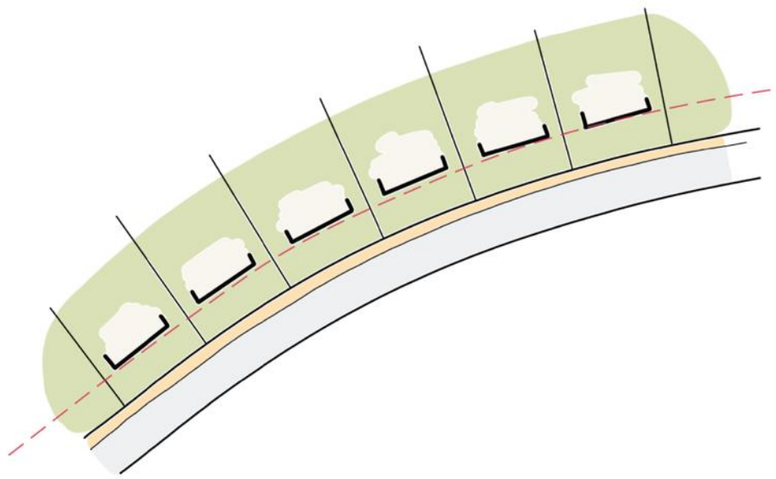
These principles seek to ensure that development is responsive to the immediate context of the development site. This however does not preclude innovation and creativity in design and architecture where there is a clear rationale for this and where it has been informed by the form and character of the street and adjacent development (Figure 74), particularly in terms of the scale, form and massing of development, the street pattern and palette of materials.

The design principles are illustrated in Figure 75 through to Figure 78. These include illustrations of example small site development opportunities and how the design guidelines may be applied to these.

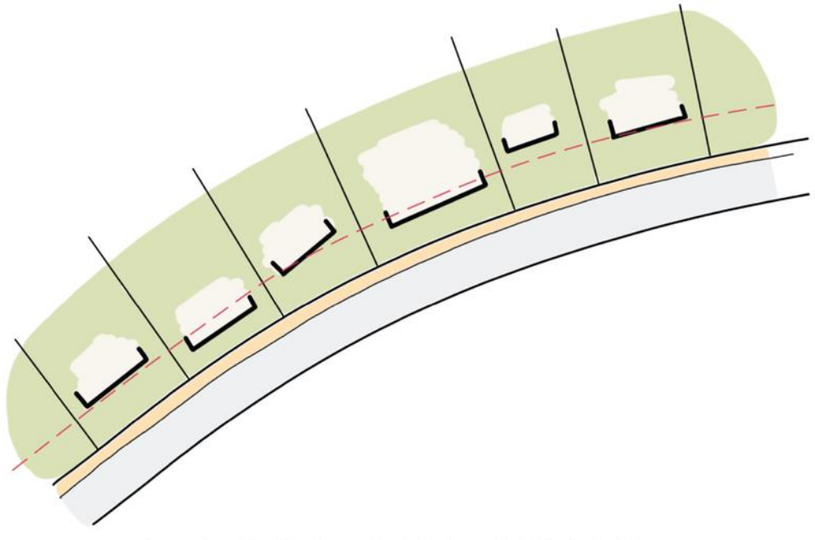
Signposting

The Wealden Design Guide illustrates, in Chapter 7, some principles for small site development. These are expanded upon in the HDG.

Figure 74: Examples of a new infill housing development which take a bespoke approach to design whilst responding sensitively to the scale and form of the existing pattern of development.

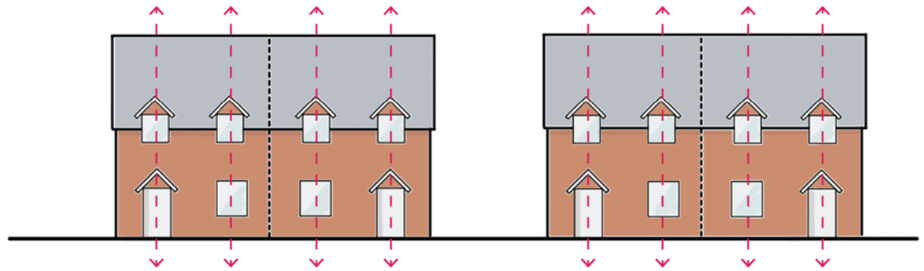


Regular / consistent building line and set-back from the street

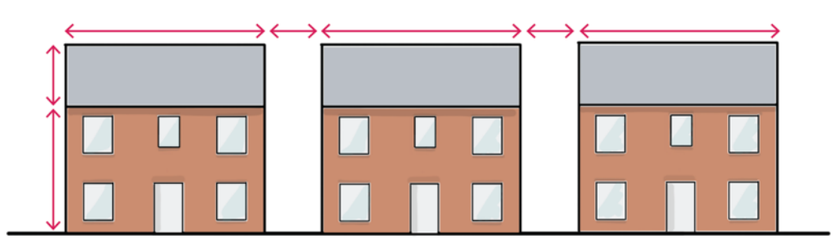


Inconsistent building line with set-backs and building footprint and orientation varying along the street

Figure 75: Where small site development comprises infill along an existing street the building should be aligned with those along the street, creating a consistent building line and respecting the established set-back from the street (top). In instances where there is an irregular building line, created as a result of different building dimensions and set-backs from the street edge (bottom), opportunities exist for an innovative approach to development that strengthens the variety that gives character to the street



Symmetry of architectural features in building brings harmony to the street



Regular rhythm of buildings along the street defined by a combination of building height, width and voids between them

Figure 76: Where small site development comprises infill on an existing street the development should respect the established rhythm of development present along the street. This will be informed by the proportions and symmetry of architectural details in buildings, including the alignment of doors and windows and, where existing development comprises semi-detached or terraced homes, repeating patterns and matching pairs of houses (top). The rhythm is also dictated by the scale and massing of development, including consistency of building heights and ridgelines, the width of properties and the spaces or voids between these (bottom).

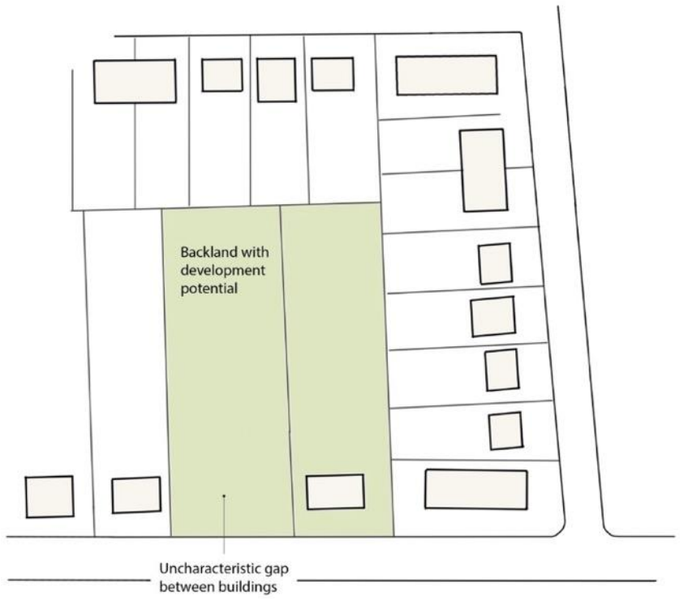


Figure 77: A typical infill and backland opportunity plot is illustrated above (top). Development of such sites (bottom) should create a street frontage consistent with the existing building form with backland development arranged around a communal space that prioritises pedestrian movement and social interaction. Buildings should respect overlooking and privacy distances. Where back-to-back distances between properties are limited innovative housing typologies can be utilised, with angled windows or internal courtyards created that protects the privacy of existing residents. Proposed new buildings should be consistent with or subservient to existing buildings on the street front in terms of their overall scale and massing. Buildings should be arranged to help create a sense of place, with views through the development terminating on buildings.

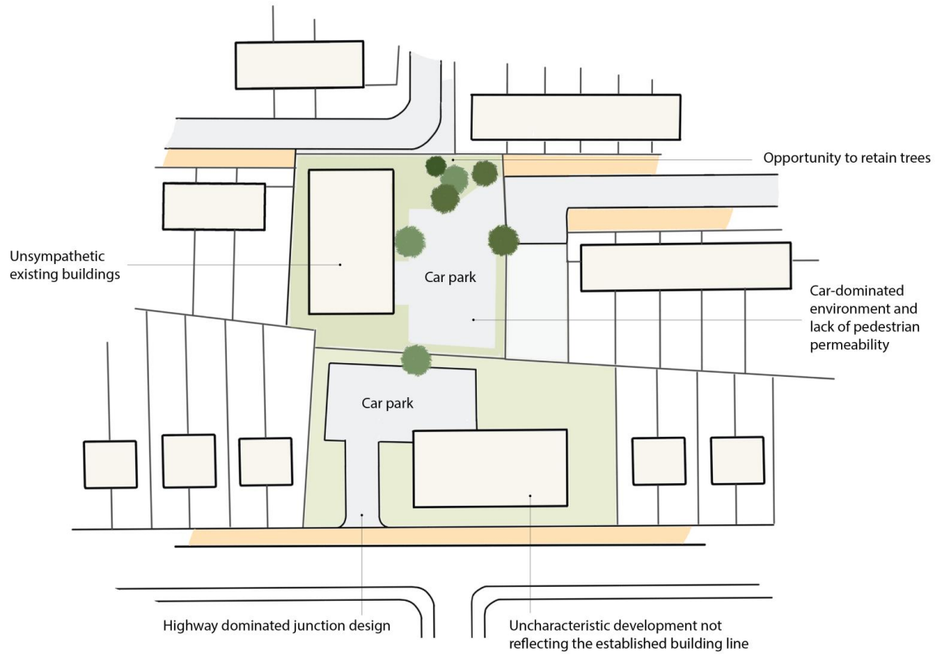


Figure 78: The image above (top) shows a typical small site opportunity between two streets. Development of such sites should take the opportunity to connect surrounding streets, supporting movement and permeability (bottom). Such routes should be pedestrian priority places and where the impact of vehicular movement caused by through traffic is restricted. The layout of development should respond positively to the established development pattern, respecting existing building lines, the scale and form of development.

SMA-01: Small site design principles

1. The design of small scale infill development sites should harmonise with the local townscape. Where infill involves creation of a street frontage:

    a) The front of the building should follow the established building line along the street, respecting established set-back distances from the street edge.

    b) The scale and height of the building should be consistent with the predominant scale of adjacent buildings. Infill building heights should not exceed the height of adjacent buildings, except where the site comprises a corner plot and additional height may help legibility.

    c) The width of plots and buildings, and spacing between these, should be consistent with the overall rhythm of buildings along the street.

    d) The use and positioning of fenestration details (comprising windows and doors) should present a vertical and horizontal rhythm within the building and strengthen the overall composition of building details either side of the infill site. Where architectural features create a sense of symmetry along the street, through positioning of windows, doors, porches, dormers and garages, for example, this should be reflected in the infill development.

    e) The roof form, pitch and materials used should be consistent with adjacent buildings.

    f) Buildings on corner plots should be well articulated, creating positive active frontages to all streets it faces. Blank frontages must be avoided.

2. Where small site development includes backland development:

    a) The positioning of buildings must respect back-to-back privacy distances between habitable windows. Where space is constrained innovative design solutions can be utilised, including angled and staggered windows and placement of non-habitable rooms on upper storeys to the rear of the buildings.

    b) The height of backland buildings must not exceed the height of buildings on the street frontage.

    c) Views from the street along points of access into the backland development should not terminate on areas of parking or fences.

    d) Backland development should be arranged around a communal space that incorporates parking, green infrastructure and amenity space, as appropriate. The design of the space should prioritise pedestrian movement.

    e) Where the backland site adjoins existing routes, opportunities should be taken through the development to connect these and support permeability for pedestrians and cyclists.

CROWN
BATES & CO
B
8.

8. Retrofitting existing streets

Introduction

Many of the aspirations in the Neighbourhood Plan relate to the existing street environment, including:

- Improving walking and cycling conditions, making these a better connected, safer, more attractive and compelling proposition for people, of all ages, to use for short everyday journeys.
- Integrating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) into the street to help manage and mitigate the risk of surface water flooding. This might include the introduction of biodiverse areas of SuDS, such as raingardens.
- Introducing new green infrastructure into the street, including new street trees, pocket parks and similar, that help create a connected network of green infrastructure across Hailsham, enhancing biodiversity and access to nature and play space for residents.

These ideas will inevitably require existing streets to be remodelled. Some of the key features involved in retrofitting, and the form these might take, are illustrated in Figure 79.

Delivery of these aspirations will not necessarily be linked to proposals for development and are thus not strictly addressed by policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. They will instead most likely be projects to take forward in partnership with other organisations, including the County and District Council, and other service providers.

There is a wealth of good practice guidance and standards associated with the above. The HDG does not repeat these but instead signposts and highlights guidance and examples of relevance to Hailsham. These should be used to help inform the development of detailed proposals related to the retrofitting or remodelling of existing streets.

Signposting

The Active Design guide published by Sport England with Active Travel England and Office for Health Improvement & Disparities establishes a series of principles that support active environments and healthy lifestyles. It encourages opportunities that retrofit and improve existing infrastructure and provides case study examples and illustrative material on how the principles can be applied. It notes that with simple intervention and support of communities, existing neighbourhoods can be adapted so that people can live physically active, healthier behaviours close to homes.

Natural England's Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide breaks down 'the building blocks of green infrastructure' and how these can be successfully integrated into different area types, including existing streets.

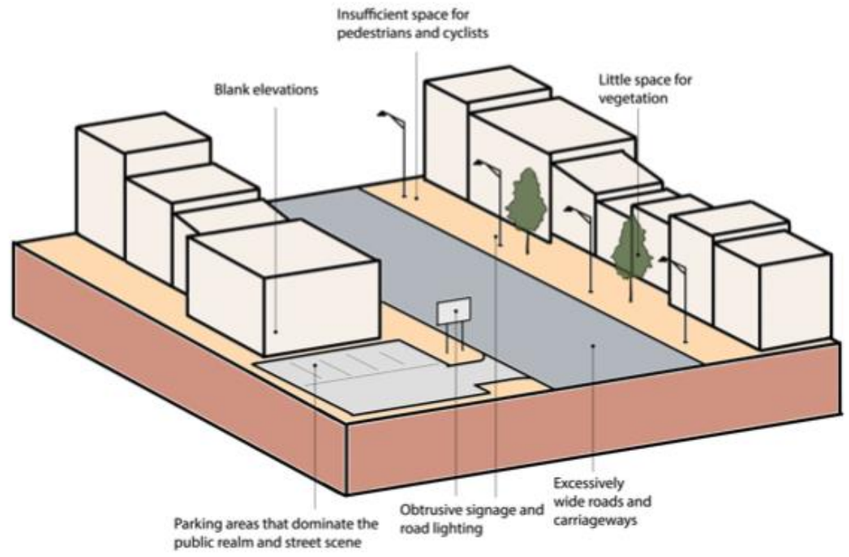


Figure 79: The top illustration depicts a typical, vehicle-dominated street environment. The bottom illustration shows how this might be remodelled to incorporate green and active travel infrastructure, making this a more attractive and welcoming street environment for all.

Figure 80: A good example of a street that has been designed to incorporate green infrastructure and safe, segregated infrastructure for cycling.

Active travel

The NPPF, at para 109, requires a 'vision-led' approach to be taken to *'transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places'*. This includes making good use of existing transport infrastructure and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use.

The East Sussex Local Transport Plan (LTP4, 2024 – 2050) supports a transition to net zero and healthier lifestyles, improving the safety, convenience and attractiveness of walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure. Enhancements to the Cuckoo Trail and delivery of a network of mobility hubs are Hailsham specific interventions identified in LTP4. LTP4 aspires to walking, wheeling and cycling becoming the natural choice for short, everyday journeys, and that road space should be redesigned to balance the needs of different road users, integrating infrastructure to support people to walk, wheel and cycle.

Key design principles for cycling are illustrated in Gear Change (DfT, 2020). These principles (Figure 81) should be reflected in the redesign of existing streets to support safe cycling conditions for all. The DfT's Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance (LTN 1/20) takes this further and presents standards to be complied with relating to all aspects of the journey, including junction design, crossings, signage and wayfinding. These documents, alongside other relevant guidance material, have been collated on the Active Travel England website, providing a library of guides and principles that should be followed in the design and retrofitting of streets. It is expected that the principles outlined in these documents will be followed in Hailsham.

Opportunities for new and improved walking and cycling routes and conditions are identified in the East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). In Hailsham, this identifies a need to provide designated cycling routes, of a high quality, that connect residential areas with services, including the town centre. It also notes the importance of improving walking conditions in and to the town centre, and improving connections with the Cuckoo Trail to maximise use of this.

The Street Improvement Manual, published by the Urban Design Group, is intended to provide a reference source for local authorities who are looking to transform existing streets such that they become safe for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities, and help support the social and economic life of the community. It includes a set of design ideas for standard street widths and guidance on various aspects of law and legislation to consider. Ideas include short term measures that could be tested relatively quickly and cheaply, as well as permanent measures that help meet wider aspirations and goals in respect of matters such as public health, air quality and carbon objectives.

Figure 81: Key design principle for cycling (source: DfT, 2020, Gear for Change)

The redesign of streets must be done in such a way that makes these attractive, inclusive and accessible spaces for all. To this end, LTP4 advocates use of the Healthy Streets indicators and assessment process to support the redesign of existing streets and spaces. The indicators of a Healthy Street are summarised in Table 5. The retrofitting of existing streets in Hailsham, and the design of active travel infrastructure as part of this, will be expected to deliver Healthy Streets for all.

The Global Street Design Guide provides guidance on how to design streets that prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport. It includes example design schemes of how streets might be redesigned as well as a tool box of ideas that might be applied depending on the context. These provide examples that could be adapted for use in Hailsham, though will need to be further developed and agreed with East Sussex County Council as highways authority. Key points stressed in the Global Street Design Guide in respect of redesigning exiting streets are:

- Streets should be designed to serve the most vulnerable users, include the elderly, children and people with disabilities.
- Streets should be designed to ensure that vehicles travel at safe speeds and reducing risk to other road users. This can be achieved through use of narrow lanes, tight corners at junctions and other speed reduction measures designed as part of the street.
- Street design should prioritise sustainable and active mobility choices, rebalancing the space afforded to private motorised vehicles and incorporating, as appropriate to the street, enlarged pedestrian areas and dedicated infrastructure for cycling.
- Incorporate spaces that are multi-functional and allow for a range of activities, supporting social interaction and cultural activities.
- Street design should reflect wider analysis of the hierarchy of streets and spaces, their role and function, and how the place making function of the street can be maximised.
- Opportunities for short term interventions should be explored and tested, which can be adapted and developed into permanent solutions over time.

Where streets are to be redesigned a process co-design should ideally be followed. This will involve residents and stakeholders in the assessment and design of streets and spaces to ensure that the needs of all users are considered and that the final design caters for all needs.

Healthy Street indicator	Summary
Everyone feels welcome	Streets must be welcoming places for everyone to walk, spend time and engage with other people. This is necessary to keep us all healthy through physical activity and social interaction. It is also what makes places vibrant and keeps communities strong. The best test for whether we are getting out streets right is whether the whole community, particularly children, older people and disabled people are enjoying using this space
Easy to cross	Our streets need to be easy to cross for everyone. This is important because people prefer to be able to get where they want directly and quickly so if we make that difficult for them they will get frustrated and give up. This is called 'severance' and it has real impacts on our health, on our communities and on businesses too. It is not just physical barriers and lack of safe crossing points that cause severance, it's fast moving traffic too.
Shade and shelter	Shade and shelter can come in many forms – trees, awnings, colonnades – and they are needed to ensure that everyone can use the street whatever the weather. In sunny weather we all need protection from the sun, in hot weather certain groups of people struggle to maintain a healthy body temperature, in rain and high winds we all welcome somewhere to shelter. To ensure our streets are inclusive of everyone and welcoming to walk and cycle in no matter the weather we must pay close attention to shade and shelter.
Places to stop and rest	Regular opportunities to stop and rest are essential for some people to be able to use streets on foot or bicycle because they find travelling actively for longer distances a challenge. Seating is therefore essential for creating environments that are inclusive for everyone as well as being important for making streets welcoming places to dwell.
Not too noisy	Noise from road traffic impacts on our health and wellbeing in many ways, it also makes streets stressful for people living and working on them as well as people walking and cycling on them. Reducing the noise from road traffic creates an environment in which people are willing to spend time and interact.
People choose to walk and cycle	We all need to build regular activity into our daily routine and the most effective way to do this is to walk or cycle for short trips or as part of longer public transport trips. People will choose to walk and cycle if these are the most attractive options for them. This means making walking and cycling and public transport use more convenient, pleasant and appealing than private car use.
People feel safe	Feeling safe is a basic requirement that can be hard to deliver. Motorised road transport can make people feel unsafe on foot or bicycle, especially if drivers are travelling too fast or not giving them enough space, time or attention. Managing how people drive so that people can feel safe walking and cycling is vital. People all need to feel safe from antisocial behaviour, unwanted attention, violence and intimidation. Street lighting and layout, 'eyes on the street' from overlooking buildings and other people using the street can all help contribute to the sense of safety.
Things to see and do	Street environments need to be visually appealing to people walking and cycling, and they need to provide reasons for people to use them – local shops and services, opportunities to interact with art, nature and other people.
People feel relaxed	The street environment can make us feel anxious – if it is dirty and noisy, it feels unsafe, if we don't have enough space, if we are unsure where to go or we can't easily get to where we want to. All of these factors are important for making our streets welcoming and attractive to walk, cycle and spend time.
Clean air	Air quality has an impact on the health of every person but it particularly impacts on some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the community – children and people who already have health problems. Reducing air pollution benefits us all and helps to reduce health inequalities.

Table 5: The Healthy Streets indicators (source: healthystreets.com)

Sustainable drainage

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are an approach to managing surface water runoff which seeks to mimic natural drainage systems and retain water on or near the site as opposed to traditional drainage approaches which involve piping water off site as quickly as possible. The SuDS manual published by CIRIA establishes the 'four pillars of SuDS', which are:

1. Water quantity: controlling the quantity of runoff to manage flood risk, maintain and protect the natural water cycle.
2. Water quality: manage the quality of the runoff to prevent pollution.
3. Amenity: create and sustain better place for people.
4. Biodiversity: create and sustain better places for nature.

SuDS offer significant advantages over conventional piped drainage systems in reducing flood risk by attenuating the rate and quantity of surface water run-off from a site, promoting groundwater recharge and biodiversity benefits, as well as improving water quality and amenity value. As a way of potentially delivering biodiversity net-gain, support is given to the use of SuDS, both as part of new development but also as part of a wider response to climate change and resilience across Hailsham. This may include the use of SuDS as 'raingardens' within the public realm as part of wider highways projects. These are generally low maintenance, wildlife-friendly spaces that manage rainwater runoff from hard surfaces. They are also often referred to as bioretention facilities.

SuDS are also important in terms of managing the volume of water that enters the foul and combined sewerage network, and thus helping to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the sewerage network to cater for population growth and the effects of climate change. It is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for surface water drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. Surface water drainage must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer as this is a major contributor to sewer flooding.

The use of SuDS is required by East Sussex County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for the area. However, the SFRA indicates that large parts of Wealden are within areas of groundwater concern, particularly in the fluvial river basins where high water tables can lead to groundwater flood risk.

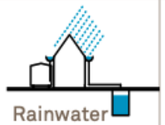
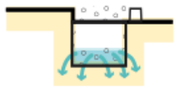
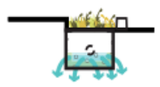
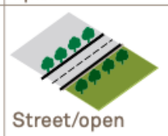
Depending on the height of the water table at the location of any proposed development site, restrictions may be placed on the types of SuDS appropriate to certain areas, reflecting SuDS guidelines published by East Sussex County Council. Where SuDS are appropriate to the location, they should be compatible with and contribute to local landscape character. This may involve the use of ponds, roadside ditches (alongside verges) and wet woodland, as well as complementary tree and hedge planting.

The LLFA has produced a guide to SuDS and, with other south east authorities, a guide to integrating SuDS within development through the masterplan process ('Water. Places. People'). This indicates that a wide range of SUDs might be suitable and can be utilised in different contexts (Figure 82). A tool for small site development has also been published.

The location and design of SuDS will need to be considered early in the design process to ensure they are well integrated with wider design aspects, including highways, open space provision, and proposals for biodiversity net gain. This should involve consultation with the County Council, Environment Agency, and Wealden District Council to advise on the appropriateness of the drainage solutions being proposed.

RET-01: Sustainable drainage systems

1. Where SuDS are proposed, either within development or as part of a street retrofit scheme:
   a) The design of SuDS should be informed by guidance established by the County Council in their 'Guide to Sustainable Drainage Systems' and 'Water, Places, People' (or subsequent successor documents to these).
   b) Where practicable, SuDS should be designed to be multi-functional and deliver benefits for biodiversity, amenity, water quality and quantity (the 'four pillars' of SuDS).
   c) Swales and attenuation ponds should be designed so that water features and plants are visible from the surrounding area and avoid unattractive and over-engineered boundary treatments. Attenuation ponds on slopes should be avoided if they need deep embankments or bunding.
   d) Where it is proposed to provide SuDS within the public realm these should be designed as an integral part of the green infrastructure and street network, responding positively to the character of the area. Where hard landscaping is needed the use of porous materials should be maximised to enable infiltration.
2. Design solutions shall be subject to consultation with East Sussex County Council and Environment Agency (EA), as well as Wealden District Council, as appropriate.

	Description	Setting	Required area
Green roofs	A planted soil layer is constructed on the roof of a building to create a living surface. Water is stored in the soil layer and absorbed by vegetation.	Building	Building integrated.
 Rainwater harvesting	Rainwater is collected from the roof of a building or from other paved surfaces and stored in an overground or underground tank for treatment and reuse locally. Water could be used for toilet flushing and irrigation.	Building	Water storage (underground or above ground).
 Soakaway	A soakaway is designed to allow water to quickly soak into permeable layers of soil. Constructed like a dry well, an underground pit is dug filled with gravel or rubble. Water can be piped to a soakaway where it will be stored and allowed to gradually seep into the ground.	Open space	Dependant on runoff volumes and soils.
Filter Strip	Filter strips are grassed or planted areas that runoff is allowed to run across to promote infiltration and cleansing.	Open space	Minimum length 5 metres.
Permeable paving	Paving which allows water to soak through. Can be in the form of paving blocks with gaps between solid blocks or porous paving where water filters through the block itself. Water can be stored in the sub-base beneath or allowed to infiltrate into ground below.	Street/open space	Can typically drain double its area.
 Bioretention area	A vegetated area with gravel and sand layers below designed to channel, filter and cleanse water vertically. Water can infiltrate into the ground below or drain to a perforated pipe and be conveyed elsewhere. Bioretention systems can be integrated with tree-pits or gardens.	 Street/open space	Typically surface area is 5-10% of drained area with storage below.

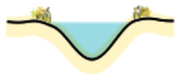
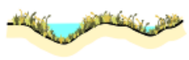
	Description	Setting	Required area
Swale	Swales are vegetated shallow depressions designed to convey and filter water. These can be 'wet' where water gathers above the surface, or 'dry' where water gathers in a gravel layer beneath. Can be lined or unlined to allow infiltration.	Street/open space	Account for width to allow safe maintenancce typically 2-3 metres wide.
Hardscape storage	Hardscape water features can be used to store run-off above ground within a constructed container. Storage features can be integrated into public realm areas with a more urban character.	Open space	Could be above or below ground and sized to storage need.
 Pond / Basin	Ponds can be used to store and treat water. 'Wet' ponds have a constant body of water and run-off is additional, while 'dry' ponds are empty during periods without rainfall. Ponds can be designed to allow infiltration into the ground or to store water for a period of time before discharge.	Open space	Dependant on runoff volumes and soils.
 Wetland	Wetlands are shallow vegetated water bodies with a varying water level. Specially selected plant species are used to filter water. Water flows horizontally and is gradually treated before being discharged. Wetlands can be integrated with a natural or hardscape environment.	Open space	Typically 5-15% of drainage area to provide good treatment.
Underground storage	Water can be stored in tanks, gravel or plastic crates beneath the ground to provide attenuation.	Open space	Dependant on runoff volumes and soils.

Figure 82: Common SuDS types and their suitability in different contexts (source: ESCC et al, Water. Places. People. A guide for master planning sustainable drainage into developments)

Street greening

Street greening can take a variety of forms, including:

- New street tree planting, supplemented, as appropriate, by shrubs and grasses. This can help provide shading and corridors for wildlife. In particular, the NPPF (para 136) notes that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, as well as helping mitigate and adapt to climate change. It goes on to note that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined.
- Introduction of wildflowers alongside the street (Figure 83), utilising native plants, flowers and shrubs, and which can form a network of 'b-lines' that support pollinators, including bees and butterflies. These may include features such as insect hotels that support species such as ladybirds and beetles that are a natural form of pest control.
- Incorporation of water features along the street, including SuDS, either within existing verges or newly created green spaces, and which take the form of rain gardens which help manage surface water flooding whilst also provide wildlife habitats (Figure 84).
- Retrofitting existing buildings through introduction of green walls and roofs and which may incorporate swift, bird and bat boxes (Figure 85). Green walls and roofs are beneficial for insulation, managing run-off and reflecting heat, thus managing the temperature of buildings. Incorporation of nest bricks and similar are essential for wildlife, and need to be appropriately located on the building to support use by species.

Signposting

Guidance published by the NHBC and RSPB (Biodiversity in new developments: creating wildlife-friendly communities) provides advice on how biodiversity and green infrastructure can be incorporated into development. The advice can be equally applied to existing streets and development areas. Where street trees are planted it notes that these can cause damage to the surface of the street and footpath, footings and services. It advises that extensive tree pits and root barrier membranes should be used, ensuring long-term healthy street growth, good soil aeration and protection of surfaces and services. This also allows trees to be utilised as part of a SuDS system.

Further regulations, standards and guidance in respect of trees, their planting and maintenance in the urban environment can be found in the documents below, all published by the Trees & Design Action Group, and which should be referenced when preparing proposals for the introduction of trees into new and existing streets:

Trees, Planning and Development: A guide for delivery (2023)

Trees in Hard Landscapes: A guide for delivery (2014)

Trees in the Townscape: A guide for decision makers (2012)

Tree Species Selection for Green Infrastructure: A guide for specifiers (2019)

Figure 83: Raingarden introduced into the street which incorporates wildflowers and helps manage surface water run-off

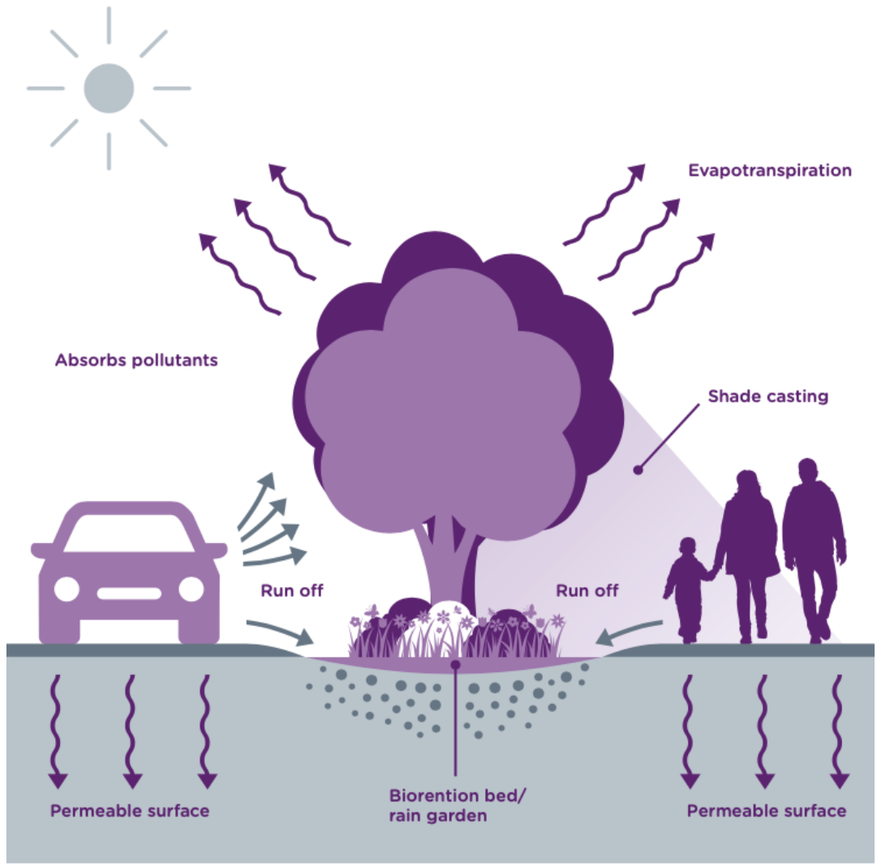


Figure 84: Example of a landscaped verge within the street that incorporates SuDS features (source: NHBC / RSPB, Biodiversity in new developments).

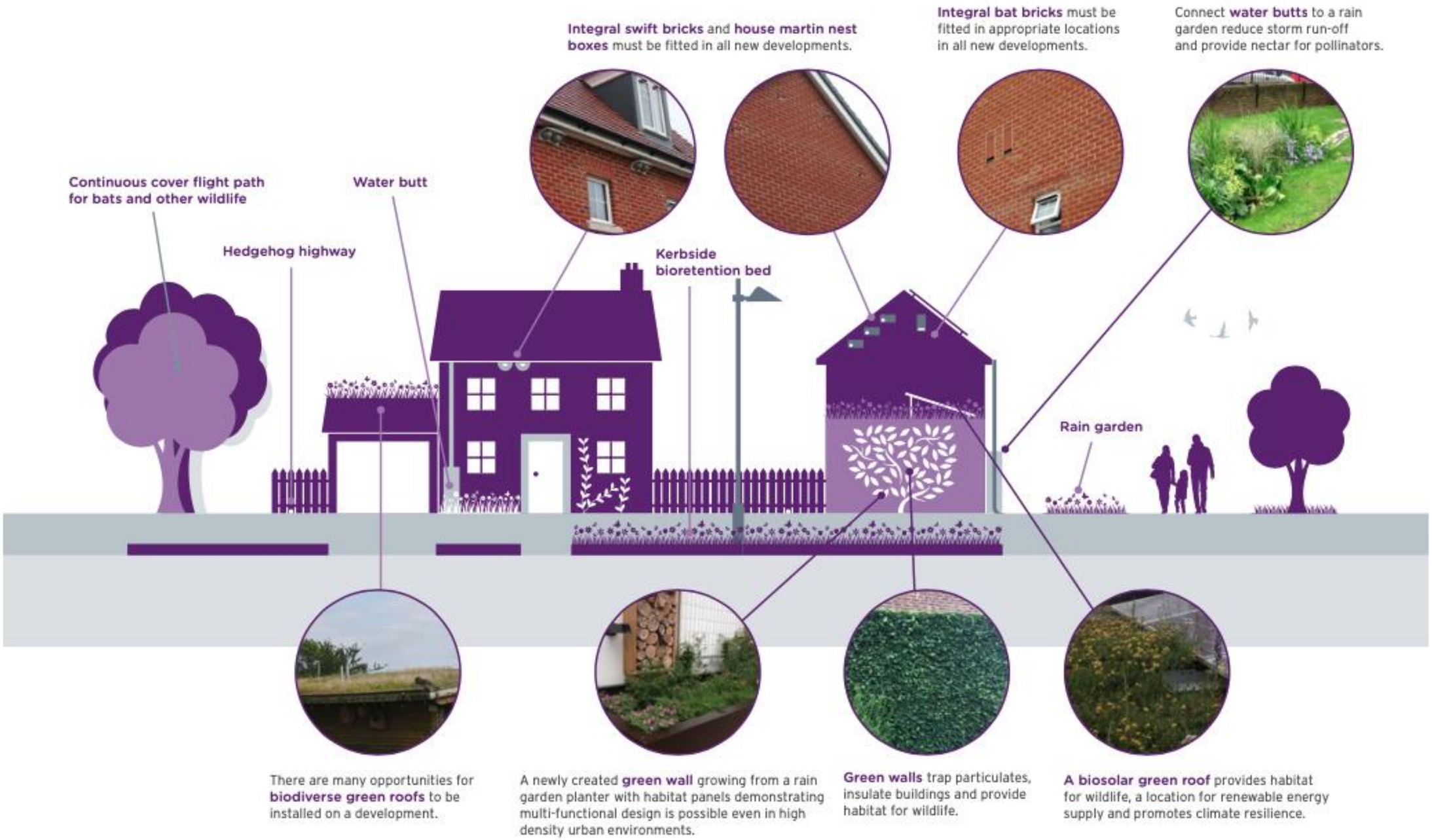


Figure 85: Various features that can be integrated into buildings to help deliver wildlife, climate and energy benefits, as well as increasing the amount of green infrastructure in the street environment (source: NHBC / RSPB, Biodiversity in new developments

Part D

Case studies

This section of the HDG presents a set of case studies. Inclusion of a case study does not imply that all aspects of it are appropriate to and should be replicated in Hailsham, but that elements of it can be used for inspiration and demonstrate how the guidelines, or parts of them, might be realised.

Case studies: Town centres

This section presents case studies of development and change in town centres of relevance to Hailsham.

Bond Street development, Chelmsford

The Bond Street scheme in Chelmsford, Essex, is a new retail-led scheme in the heart of the town centre. It has relevance to Hailsham in that it comprises redevelopment of an extensive area of surface car parking and servicing to the rear of the High Street and where the structure of the town had historically turned its back on the river.

The development has created new retail-lined pedestrian routes that connect the High Street with the river. Clear sightlines and active development frontages make this a well-used and highly active route, with provision of restaurants, cafes and other leisure facilities driving footfall throughout the day. These revitalise and reimagine former twittens running through the area.

Although the total number of car parking spaces on the site has been reduced, provision is still made for parking at basement level, and areas of servicing are integrated within the centre of the development block and wrapped with retail units that present an active frontage to the street environment.

The development is contemporary in style but reflects the overall scale and rhythm of development found along the historic High Street, with routes sensitively linking with this. Where routes connect with the High Street the materials used within the public realm have been designed to indicate this is part of the wider retail offer.

The development has strengthened the role and function of the town centre and had helped make the scheme a new destination in its own right.

Figure 86: Before (left above and below) and after (above and below) images of the development, showing how it has been transformed from an extensive area of parking into a retail-led destination (image sources: © Google Streetview image capture 2012 and 2024)

Figure 87: Selection of images showing the new retail lined pedestrian street that has reimagined a former twittern, successfully integrating this with the High Street and providing a new route through to the riverfront

Eccleston Yards, London

The Eccleston Yards scheme in central London has relevance for Hailsham in that it involves the reimagining and opening up of a 'backland area' where new retail and commercial space has been delivered. Combined with the opening up of the rear of existing buildings as new retail and restaurant space, this has reinvigorated an under-utilised area of land.

Provision of 'kiosk' style buildings in the new public space, along with new areas of landscaping and green infrastructure, has helped create in an attractive courtyard environment. This is accessed by a series of existing alleyways that have been opened up with active frontages, including shops and restaurants. The mix of uses, including office space, helps ensure this is an active environment and inclusive space.

Cleve use of artwork is made in and around Eccleston Yards to support wayfinding initiatives and which reinvigorates blank walls and spaces in a fun, co-ordinated and informative way.

Figure 88: Selection of images showing the use of public art as wayfinding in and around the Eccleston Yards scheme

Figure 89: Selection of images showing the newly created public space, new development and routes into the area from surrounding streets.

Local Centre Improvement Scheme, Bromley Village

The Bromley North Village Improvement Scheme was delivered in 2015. The project secured two rounds of the Outer London Fund to deliver a more vibrant and competitive town centre, improving accessibility whilst creating more attractive and distinct public spaces.

The programme was a holistic scheme that combined significant public realm improvements with a shop front improvement programme, wayfinding and signage enhancements, and a marketing and events strategy.

Previously East Street was a wide tarmacked carriageway with narrow pavements but is now clearly distinct from the adjacent arterial roads. The street has a shared textured road surface that accommodates green infrastructure and outdoor terraces for cafes, bars and restaurants alongside a single narrow carriageway designed to be a pedestrian priority area.

According to the Bromley North Village Improvement Scheme Impact Review (2017) the interventions have been well received by town centre businesses and users with a visitor satisfaction rate of 80%. The key successes of the project include a strong increase of footfall to and through the area, an increase in the diversity of uses in the town centre and improved appearance and perceptions of the area. The study also stated the importance of carefully considering the location of bus stops, parking and loading bays.

Figure 90: Bromley North village street improvement scheme (image source: Google Streetview image capture © 2024)

Nelson Health Centre, Wimbledon

This is an award winning, phased development that replaced an existing health centre that opened in 1911. Sitting within a conservation area, the scheme makes use of parts of the original building, marrying these with new structures, including a glass fronted entrance that opens out on to a public space which forms the centre point of a local shopping parade. The public space is a pedestrian priority area incorporating green infrastructure, places to sit and sensitive arrangement of parking that allows for people to be dropped off and picked up.

The new building is three storeys in height, blending in with the adjacent parade and neighbouring residential development. It is a BREEAM excellent rated building that includes GP services and wider health related facilities, including diagnostics, outpatient appointments and mental health services.

Although first and foremost a health centre it also incorporates other facilities for use by the wider community, including a pharmacy, café, exhibition space and meeting rooms.

Figure 91: The Nelson Health Centre, Wimbledon, as viewed from landscaped public space

Case studies: Residential development

The case studies presented in this section are all of award winning housing developments and of a scale and density relevant to the ongoing growth of Hailsham. They include:

- The Avenue, Saffron Walden, Essex: 76 homes at a density of 26 homes per hectare
- Derwenthorpe, Osbaldwick, York: 64 homes and a density of 35 homes per hectare
- Lime Tree Square, Street, Somerset: 408 homes at a density of 37 homes per hectare
- Horsted Park, Chatham, Kent: 54 homes at a density of 38 homes per hectare
- Abode at Great Kneighton, Cambridge: 308 homes at a density of 48 homes per hectare
- Marmalade Lane, Cambridge: 42 homes at a density of 48 homes per hectare
- Hanham Hall, Gloucestershire: 185 homes at a density of 50 homes per hectare

Each of the case studies provides information on the scale of development, mix of housing and supporting uses, density and parking ratios. Maps and images of each of the case studies are also presented alongside a summary of key features.

The key messages from the case study examples of relevance to Hailsham are:

- The schemes demonstrate that volume housebuilders can deliver 'non-standard' housing products and designs that embed high standards of sustainability, and should be actively encouraged in Hailsham.
- Parking can be successfully provided on-plot and on-street, integrated with landscaping.
- The schemes incorporate a mix of street types, including homezone type streets that provide intimate, pedestrian priority and child friendly spaces.
- The variety of house types and materials used (both within the buildings and the public realm) can help create interest and character.
- Open spaces, pocket parks, SuDS and other forms of green infrastructure are well integrated with development and connect to the wider network of green spaces.
- All provide a mix of house sizes and tenure types, supporting a mixed and balanced community.
- The provision of on-site facilities can support community cohesion, inclusiveness and foster a sense of belonging.

The Avenue, Saffron Walden, Essex

Details

Total homes	76 homes
Density	26 homes per hectare
Parking ratio	1.7 spaces per home
Developer	Hill
Housing mix	8% 1-bed, 28% 2-bed, 34% 3-bed, 30% 4-bed
Other uses	Housing mix includes elderly accommodation
Selected awards	National Housing Design award for family housing, 2015 RIBA National Housing award, 2016

Key features

- Includes a mix of house types, sizes and tenures, including homes for the elderly.
- Utilises bespoke house types that reflect local character and heritage setting.
- Development set around an avenue of mature lime trees and with housing arranged in a series of intimate courtyard spaces.
- A mixed but limited palette of materials creates variety and interest.
- Native hedgerows, fruit trees, wildflowers and grasses incorporated into the development.
- Solar thermals / photovoltaics integrated on pitched roofs.
- Parking integrated on-plot and in overlooked courtyard spaces.

Images

Figure 92: Selected images of The Avenue housing development in Saffron Walden, Essex

Derwenthorpe, Osbaldwick, York

Details

Total homes	64 homes (Phase 1)
Density	35 homes per hectare
Parking ratio	1 space per home
Developer	Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust / David Wilson Homes
Housing mix	28% 2-bed, 35% 3-bed, 37% 4-bed
Other uses	Community / meeting room, energy centre
Selected awards	National Housing Design award winner, 2013 RIBA Design Matters National Housing award, 2017

Key features

- A low carbon housing scheme with district heating network and on-site energy centre.
- Energy Centre (the 'Super Sustainability Centre') provides a meeting space for residents and community groups.
- Joint venture between a social landlord and private developer provides a mixed housing scheme.
- Direct, segregated cycle route between housing and city centre.
- Set around a series of connected green spaces incorporating play space, biodiverse areas and SuDS.
- Includes a series of small pocket parks and home zone style streets.
- Parking on-plot, on-street or overlooked courtyards. Landscaping and changes in materials define parking areas.

Images

Figure 93: Selected images of Derwenthorpe housing development in Osbaldwick, York (image sources: Google image Streetview image capture July 2019 ©, 2024 Google)

Lime Tree Square, Street, Somerset

Details

Total homes	408 homes
Density	37 homes per hectare
Parking ratio	1.5 spaces per home
Developer	Crest Nicholson
Housing mix	11% 1-bed, 61% 2-bed, 23% 3-bed, 5% 4-bed
Other uses	n/a
Selected awards	Building for Life award, 2009 Sustainable Housing award finalist, 2009

Key features

- Home zone style 'green streets' provide intimate spaces, parking and areas of landscape protected by kerbs to avoid vehicles running over these.
- Some terraced homes include integrated parking with private courtyards above the garage.
- Small courtyard style parking spaces at front of homes also incorporated in the scheme, with landscaping and change of materials within these defining the space.
- SuDS and mature trees integrated within the main street. Ponds and reed beds designed to reflect character of the Somerset Levels.
- Incorporates a large central green space overlooked by homes.

Images

Figure 94: Selected images of Lime Tree Square housing development in Street, Somerset (image sources: Google image Streetview image capture August 2023 & March 2024 ©, 2024 Google)

Horsted Park, Chatham, Kent

Details

Total homes	154 homes (Phase 1)
Density	38 homes per hectare
Parking ratio	1.8 spaces per home
Developer	Countryside Properties
Housing mix	20% 1-bed, 20% 2-bed, 33% 3-bed, 27% 4-bed
Other uses	Extra-care accommodation
Selected awards	National Housing Design awards winner, 2014 Best Major Residential Development award, Kent Design, 2014

Key features

- Edge of settlement location.
- Central green space with green fingers extending out from this to the surrounding countryside.
- All spaces are well overlooked.
- Parking provided on-plot and on- street, between areas of landscaping.
- Arrangement of buildings helps avoid rigid street lines, terminating and enclosing views, and creating space within the street to accommodate parking.
- Use of materials defines areas of parking.
- A consistent yet varied character created through use of a limited palette of building materials.

Images

Figure 95: Selected images of Horsted Park housing development in Chatham, Kent (image sources: Google image Streetview image capture May 2019 & October 2022 ©, 2024 Google)

Abode at Great Kneighton, Cambridge

Details

Total homes	308 homes
Density	48 homes per hectare
Parking ratio	1.5 spaces per home
Developer	Countryside Properties
Housing mix	10% studio/1-bed, 41% 2-bed, 31% 3-bed, 18% 4-bed+
Other uses	n/a
Selected awards	National Housing Design awards winner, 2012 RIBA Award for Housing, 2015

Key features

- Timber clad housing references local agricultural typologies.
- Incorporates a network of home zone style streets and 'green lanes' overlooked by homes that provide pedestrian links through the site.
- Incorporates a series of mews type homes, terraced villas and back to back housing typologies. Allows for a higher density scheme but remains predominantly two-three storey.
- Where parking is integrated in the housing unit raised courtyard spaces are provided above this.
- Parking also incorporated in the street, often alongside green verges and between street tree planting.
- Landscaped main street incorporates bus routing, with direct links to a new school.

Images

Figure 96: Selected images of Great Kneighton housing development in Cambridge (image sources: Google image Streetview image capture August 2014 & July 2019 ©, 2024 Google)

Marmalade Lane, Cambridge

Details

Total homes	42 homes
Density	48 homes per hectare
Parking ratio	1.2 spaces per home
Developer	TOWN and Trivselhaus
Housing mix	21% 1-bed, 36% 2-bed, 16% 3-bed, 27% 4-bed+
Other uses	Workshop, Common House, Gym
Selected awards	National Housing Design awards winner, 2019 RIBA National Housing Award, 2019 Civic Trust Award for Sustainability, 2021

Key features

- Community-led, cohousing scheme providing a range of dwelling types.
- Collaborative design approach undertaken with future residents to develop house types and design of shared spaces.
- All residents contribute to management of community spaces.
- Series of terraced homes arranged around shared gardens and pedestrianised play street.
- Parking located on edge of site, maximising safe play and communal space adjacent to homes.
- Fabric first design approach embeds high standards of sustainability.
- On-site common house allows for residents to socialise.

Images

Figure 97: Selected images of Marmalade Lane housing development in Cambridge

Hanham Hall, Gloucestershire

Details

Total homes	185 homes
Density	50 homes per hectare
Parking ratio	1.4 spaces per home
Developer	Barratt Homes
Housing mix	20% 1-bed, 34% 2-bed, 10% 3-bed, 36% 4-bed+
Other uses	Offices, Creche, Community Room, Cafe
Selected awards	National Housing Design awards, Best Affordable Housing, 2014 Sustainable Housing Project of the Year, 2015

Key features

- Zero-carbon standard housing scheme.
- Residents have shares in a Community Interest Company which manages and maintains the scheme and supporting facilities.
- Parking integrated within homes, on- street and in central, overlooked courtyard spaces.
- Landscaping defines and reduces visual impact of areas of parking.
- Shared surface spaces prioritise pedestrians and cycle use.
- Green space (including SuDS) integrated within the scheme, with direct links between this and surrounding green spaces.

Images

Figure 98: Selected images of Hanham Hall housing development in Gloucestershire (image sources: Google image Streetview image capture August 2014 & July 2019 ©, 2024 Google)

Case studies: Streets and spaces

This appendix presents a series of street transformation case studies.

Grey to Green, Sheffield

The Sheffield Grey to Green scheme was initially conceived as a response to the severe impact caused by surface water flooding in the city centre in 2007 but also as a means to improve local connectivity between the law courts, town hall and riverfront, minimise the impact of motorised traffic on the walkability of the centre, and to help introduce biodiversity into a traffic dominated environment.

The award-winning scheme was delivered with the support of funding from the European Union. It is the longest 'green street' corridor in the UK and largest retrofit sustainable drainage scheme in the country.

Formerly an inner city dual carriageway, rationalisation of space and removal of two of the traffic lanes has created space for biodiversity and wildlife, with the planting of wildflowers extending the range of pollinators and the green corridors providing a connected series of spaces that support the safe movement of wildlife. Habitat shelters integrated within the areas of planting provide nesting and hibernation space. The shelters also double-up as a series of public art sculptures that incorporate designs that reflect the history and evolution of the area.

The planting has helped improve air quality, removing carbon emissions from the atmosphere, and with flowerbeds helping to capture pollutants running off from the road, stopping them from entering the drainage system and thus helping manage water quality. The ability of the green corridor to capture surface water run-off not only helps manage localised flood risk but the captured water helps sustain planting in the landscape.

The scheme has also created more attractive routes for walking and safer spaces for cycling, further contributing towards a mode shift away from motorised traffic and contributing towards air quality improvements. The corridor also increases access to nature for people, thus contributing to health and wellbeing.

In addition to its environmental benefits it has also been a catalyst for economic growth, with new office and residential development taking place along the corridor. The food and drink offer has also grown, becoming a new destination for visitors, residents and workers. The public space created through the rationalisation of road space also allows the area to accommodate a regular inner-city flower market.

Figure 99: Image prior to delivery of 'Grey to Green' project, source: © Google Streetview image capture 2016

Figure 100: Image following delivery of 'Grey to Green' project, source: © Google Streetview image capture 2023

Alfred Place Gardens, London

Alfred Place runs parallel to Tottenham Court Road. Formerly a quite yet vehicle dominated service road, it has now been transformed into a linear urban park. The Park responds to the need for more accessible green space in the area, providing places to socialise, play and relax, as well as helping to improve local air quality and biodiversity, and managing localised flood risk.

The redesign of the street allows for emergency vehicle access and servicing for adjacent properties, but this is carefully managed and integrated within the new park environment that includes places to sit, a new lawn and child's play area, catering for residents, visitors and local employees.

It provides an opportunity for quiet refuge away from Tottenham Court Road, with the choice of planting providing colour and interest year-round. Existing street trees have been successfully integrated within the layout of the new park and have been supplemented with new planting, increasing the tree canopy cover and providing opportunities for shade during hotter months.

The use of permeable surfaces in the paths, coupled with areas of planting, supports water catchment, absorbing rainwater and minimising the risk of flooding cause by surface water run-off.

Located close to the Building Design Centre on Store Street it has, in a short time, become a focal point for the community, hosting the launch of the Bloomsbury Festival in 2023. This is facilitated through the provision of an events space with 'pop-up power' provision integral to the design of the park. The scheme was the winner in the public spaces category in the New London Awards 2022.

Figure 101: View looking north along Alfred Place Gardens

Figure 102: View looking south along Alfred Place Gardens

Marylebone, London

The Marylebone Rain Gardens were delivered through the Marylebone Low Emission Neighbourhood project, set up in response to and a successful bidder for funding from the Mayor of London to implement projects delivering local air quality improvements.

The Low Emission Neighbourhood covers Marylebone High Street, Paddington Street and New Cavendish Street: all relatively busy thoroughfares. These areas had suffered from serious flooding, with the existing drainage system unable to cope with extended rainfall events, causing them to overflow. The raingardens are a nature-based response to this as well as an opportunity, through planting and an increased tree-canopy cover, to help improve air quality.

Marylebone High Street is home to many stores, bars and cafes, many of which spill out onto the street, but where, historically, pavement space was limited and, given proximity to the street, air quality poor.

A series of rain gardens were delivered across the area in locations previously used as temporary on-street parking spaces. The rain gardens incorporate a mix of street trees, grasses and herbaceous perennials providing amenity and biodiversity value alongside management of storm water.

The scheme was designed and delivered around existing utilities and presence of under-ground structures, minimising impact on these. Small information boards are provide alongside the rain gardens as a means of community education, explaining the impact of urban flooding and importance of water management.

Delivery of the rain gardens has also brought other benefits. The rain gardens form a buffer between the pavement and street, enhancing pedestrian safety, particularly around crossing points, and the redesign of the street has also allowed for additional cycle parking to be installed, supporting active travel, as well as electric vehicle charging points that are sensitively located to avoid causing obstruction.

Figure 103: View looking north along Marylebone High Street showing raingardens, street trees and narrowing of road space including integrated parking and servicing area

Safe cycle infrastructure, Manchester

The Greater Manchester 'Bee Network' is a city wide strategy that has delivered new walking and cycling infrastructure, redesigning streets and spaces to make active travel a safer and more attractive proposition for short journeys, whilst also improving access to and the attractiveness of using public transport for longer journeys.

Active Travel Reports published by Greater Manchester indicate year on year increase in walking and cycling, with a Cycle and Stride programme and Bikeability training encouraging more people to cycle through the setting up of guided rides. The network has also had a positive impact on the school run, with more children now walking and cycling to school, with an expansion of the School Streets programme supporting further behavioural change.

Funding for the scheme came from a combination of public sector sources, including the Government's Cycling Cities Ambition Fund as well as from the local highways authority. The Oxford Road Scheme (Figure 104) was one of the first interventions delivered in Manchester. It is a heavy bus route and so incorporates a series of 'bus stop by-passes' that help separate cyclists from bus traffic. The volume of cyclists using this route increased by 176% after the first few years of opening. In 2018, the volume of cyclists using the route helped replace 621,000 journeys otherwise made by car, removing 873.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

The scheme won the Excellence in Cycling and Walking category at the 2018 National Transport Awards.

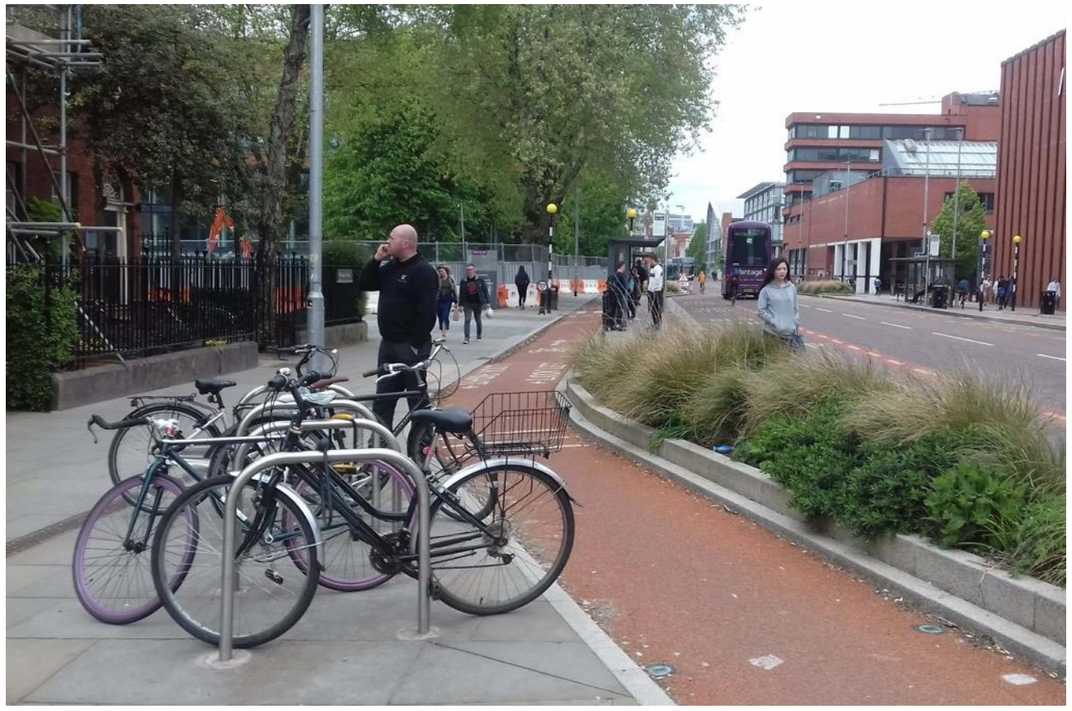


Figure 104: New segregated cycle lane in Manchester City Centre, including cycle parking, a 'bus stop bypass' and introduction of raingardens

Garden streets

City-led initiatives

The City of Antwerp has introduced eight 'Tuinstraten' (garden streets) across five districts in the city. This project involved transforming streets or carriageways into spaces with as much green infrastructure as possible including wall gardens, vegetable gardens, trees, planted areas and lawns. The aim of the project was to improve the quality of life for residents whilst adapting to the impacts of climate change. The project focussed on neighbourhoods with poor access to green space and populations vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including the elderly, children and people living in social housing.

Streets were designed in collaboration with the local community to provide green space that meets their specific needs. The community are granted ownership of the spaces and in some cases are responsible for planting and maintaining the garden streets. These garden streets reduce the urban heat island effect, improve drainage during heavy rain and create more attractive neighbourhoods with more space for social interactions and outdoor activities.

Community-led initiatives

Merton Garden Streets is a volunteer-led community initiative in the London borough of Merton with the aim to improve community well-being, increase wildlife, improve air quality and reduce flood risk. The project began in 2021 and was initially run by volunteers from Merton's Climate Action Group. The scheme is now delivered by Sustainable Merton, Merton Council, and led by local volunteers. The programme is funded by the Investing in Neighbourhoods Fund and monies received through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The project provides residents and volunteers with a welcome pack, manuals and a small quantity of plants and compost to begin greening their local street or front garden. This grass-roots strategy is owned, led, and maintained by the local community. Residents can decide what to plant and where to plant and are able to register their garden to an online platform that helps the wider gardening community connect with each other.

Lamlash Street community garden

Lamlash Street, London, is a reclaimed road in a residential area that has been transformed from an unloved fly-tipping hotspot into a thriving community garden. It has become a new social space in the heart of the neighbourhood, mixing places to sit and relax with opportunities for local food production, including seasonal fruit and vegetables, and an 'urban mini-orchard' of plum, apple, pear, cobnut and fig trees.

Figure 105: Lamlash Street community garden

Community gardens such as Lamlash Street have the potential to tackle many social and community issues we face today, including loneliness, inactivity, obesity, poor mental health. "Green prescribing" is increasingly becoming a part of healthcare advice, with healthcare professionals encouraging and prescribing patients to spend more time in nature to carry out activities such as community gardening, wild swimming and walking amongst nature.

The delivery and maintenance of the Lamlash Street Community Garden in London has been made possible through a combination of community support and financial backing from the local council, private foundations, and government grants focused on community development and green space initiatives, such as the Green Spaces Fund. Community members also played a crucial role by volunteering their time, engaging in fundraising activities, organizing events, and applying for smaller grants to cover specific garden-related expenses. The garden is now a well-used pedestrian route and, in 2016, was awarded 'Cleaner Greener Safer Funding' by Southwark Council to expand the project.

Community garden and venue

The Phoenix Garden is a wildlife and community space in central London. Located on a derelict site it was opened to the public and established as a charity in 1984. The Garden is run by a group of Trustees comprising local residents and workers who oversee the management of the garden and hosting of activities in the event space on the site, with money raised through these used to fund the upkeep and maintenance of the garden and facilities. Funding is also generated through hiring out of the event space for activities such as staff training days, parties, workshops, weddings and as a setting for photography.

Maintenance of the garden and venue is undertaken by volunteers, members (who pay a small annual payment) and local companies who donate time through their corporate social responsibility programmes. However, the plants selected in the garden have been selected as they are naturally low maintenance.

The Garden has a wider role in the community, with the Charity working with other organisations to offer educational workshops for local people, volunteer days and food banks.

Figure 106: The Phoenix Garden