



WADHURST

Design Code

Final Version - May 2024





Prepared by



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1. Introduction

1.1 Design Code summary



Built Form

- New development must be sympathetic to existing building types and heights.
- Allow gentle intensification in the town centre.



Identity of Buildings

- Preserve and promote the identity of Wadhurst's Wealden architecture.
- Preserve and improve Wadhurst's identity by the quality of façade treatment, roofs, windows, doors and brickwork



Movement

- Design streets that encourage walking and cycling
- Connect streets together to avoid cul-de-sac developments.



Public Space

- Create attractive and green public spaces that have buildings fronting onto them.
- Focus on the creation of several small public spaces ('little and often').



Nature

- Preserve the natural beauty of the town and its surrounds.
- Incorporate sustainable drainage and tree planting into streets.
- Use Dark Sky compliant lighting to protect natural and human wellbeing and enable dark skies at night.

1.2 What is a design code?

A design code is like a recipe for a place. It is a series of specifications for new developments, streets and buildings, which direct how they will look and feel.

The code aims to address the hopes and concerns of Wadhurst residents when it comes to development. The code is based on feedback from the community and reflects what they like in the built environment and how they wish to see it develop.

The design code aims to protect the distinct identity of Wadhurst whilst still allowing variety and creativity within a pattern. A strong code gives local residents confidence in the planning process and peace of mind that any future development will be appropriate for the town and surrounding region. The code promotes the use of traditional, local building materials and encourages design that accurately reflects and preserves Wadhurst's heritage.

This code reflects 2023 updates to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and mirrors the structure of the new National Model Design Code (NMDC).

Note to developers: It is intended that this document be read through from start to finish. The code should be seen as a supplement to the Wealden Design Guide and High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide, but setting out in greater detail specific requirements for Wadhurst.



1.3 Community vision and engagement

The community objectives on which this design code is based have been drawn from three stages of engagement conducted by Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on behalf of Wadhurst Parish Council:

1. Feedback from the community at the start of the neighbourhood plan process refined in detailed responses from the neighbourhood plan household survey.
2. Interactive map using the Create Communities tool (advertised in Summer 2021 Reg 14 phase 1 consultation; promoted via social media, posters, website, household leaflet drop, Focus magazine.)
3. Reg 14 phase 2 consultation on the finished design code as requested by WDC as part of formal engagement for the neighbourhood plan.

1. Neighbourhood plan household survey and character assessment

In March 2019, a household survey was undertaken with surveys sent to all 2,237 households in the parish. A total of 997 responses were received.

- 913 out of 921 respondents (99%) felt that the visual impact of the development on the surrounding countryside is very important or important;
- 858 out of 909 respondents (94%) felt that being sympathetic to existing stock is very important or important;
- 828 out of 895 respondents (93%) felt that natural/appropriate local materials is very important or important; and
- 835 out of 886 respondents (93%) felt that it is very important or important that any new housing developments should create a community feel.

A character assessment was also undertaken in 2018.

Results from the household survey, in conjunction with the Wadhurst Character Assessment, were referenced in creating a design code reflecting the most important concerns for the community. They guided areas where codes were more or less prescriptive, or where something should be a 'must' or a 'should.' For example, some of the most prescriptive codes are for using local materials and colours.

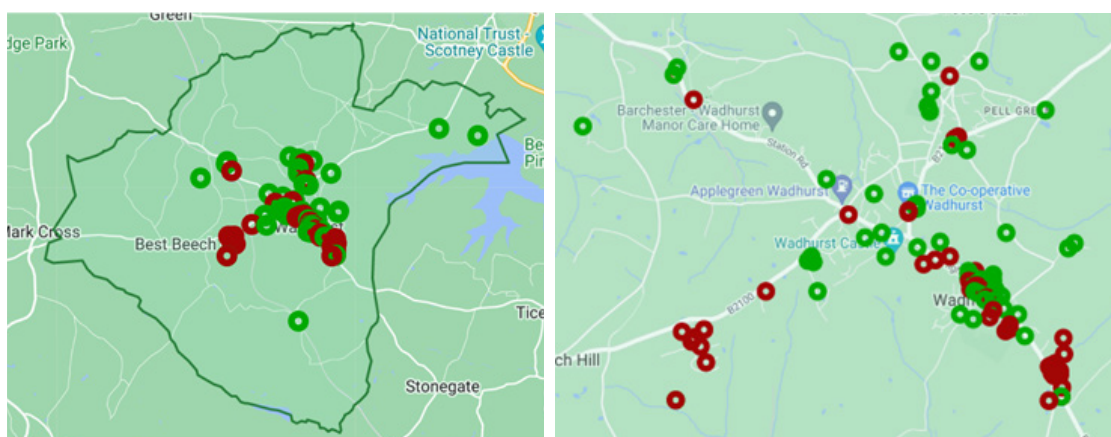
2. Interactive map using the Create Communities tool

In June 2021, the Create Communities platform was used to gauge the preferences of the local community, which asked respondents to choose a place or building which they liked or disliked. This was followed up by optional further questions relating to the details of the selected place. 106 responses were received.

58 responses were places people liked and 48 responses places they disliked, giving a good balance of local characteristics which people liked or didn't like or, in other words, those they would like to avoid or encourage in future developments. The data from the exercise was then used to draft the code.

Further questions on the map included:

1. If you liked this place, what kind of setting would it be appropriate for? (Choice of rural, village, town centre or other)
2. What else stood out as positive or negative about this place?
3. Do you like the materials?
4. Does it have a sense of place (it feels like it belongs in the Parish of Wadhurst)?
5. Do you like the ornamentation and decoration?
6. Do you like the proportions (including windows, doors and dormers)?
7. Does it fit with the neighbouring buildings?
8. Do you like the pavement materials?
9. Do you like the road materials?
10. Is it pedestrian friendly?
11. Are there good cycling routes?
12. Is there good public transport from this location?
13. Do you like the feel of the green spaces?
14. Are biodiversity and nature well integrated?
15. Are commercial and community uses well integrated?
16. Is the parking designed and integrated well?
17. Do you have any other comments?



Screenshots of the Create Communities map for Wadhurst showing the geographic spread of the 106 responses, colour coded for places people liked and disliked. Liked places are concentrated in the village centre, while new developments are least liked.

There was a clear preference for buildings which fit into their setting and concern about newer buildings which stood out. Liked buildings often listed “in keeping” or “typical Wealden” as positive aspects and highlighted natural materials. In contrast, several disliked buildings included comments about being “out of keeping” or built from cheap materials.

Key themes emerging from responses

In keeping: harmonious with existing styles vs ‘identikit’ developments

- When asked ‘What else stood out as positive or negative about this place?’ 25% of responses referred to their chosen location as being in keeping, or not in keeping with the area.
- ‘...the overdevelopment of the plot feels unsympathetic to the area’
- New developments were considered to be not in keeping with Wadhurst while local shops and places of worship considered to be in keeping.

Proximity: new buildings are too close to one another

- In a freeform questionnaire, 8% of responses made reference to the spacing of homes, where ‘well spaced’ family homes were preferred to ‘far too many houses packed onto [a] plot’. Some new builds were considered to be encroaching on old buildings and the natural environment.

Views: preservation of the landscape

- Views of Wadhurst’s natural landscape give ‘a sense of being a single community with a common identity.’
- In a freeform questionnaire, 9% of responses referenced the importance of views or not losing them.
- Regarding a new development: ‘A lot of houses seem to have been squeezed very close to the existing village and the village lost such beautiful views.’
- ‘One of the best views in the county of East Sussex.’ (The Donkey Steps)

Getting around: public transport and parking infrastructure are lacking

- When asked ‘is there good public transport from this location?’ 67% of those that responded answered no and when asked ‘are there good cycling routes?’ 84% of those that responded said no.
- ‘No attention to parking in plans leaving the village car parks to be used a school overflow parks thus preventing shoppers from accessing the town easily.’
- A narrowed high street has been highlighted as causing congestion with cars and lorries having to compete for spaces.

In the details: material choice and quality

- New development are generally considered to be constructed using ‘cheap materials’

-
- A new courtyard development is 'imaginatively designed' with 'good materials and use of space'

Places people liked the most included houses reflecting local architecture and materials:

- New terrace on the site of the former red lion pub - 'Well-ish proportioned and appointed. Owners have made good use of green space. Style not unfitting with local style.'
- Church Street cottages and Gate House - 'From the front and the back they have a sense of place, and are both very old, but also timeless.'

Places people disliked the most included new developments on the edge of the village:

- 'the overdevelopment of the plot feels unsympathetic to the area'
- 'This is an identikit development of executive homes that spoils the approach to the village and detracts from the HWAONB beauty'
- 'A lot of houses seem to have been squeezed very close to the existing village and the village lost such beautiful views.'

How the Create Communities responses influenced the code

The responses allowed the comparison of places people liked and which they disliked, and for what reasons. The code then aimed to amplify the most liked aspects while making it harder to build the kinds of places residents disliked.

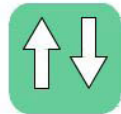
For example, the two most disliked places are both suburban in nature, with residents feeling they didn't reflect local architectural traditions or provide the kinds of homes the local community needs. This influenced a code aimed at smaller homes with local architectural details and materials.

Concerns about the scale of a new sustainable drainage system (SuDS) led to a SuDS section prioritizing smaller solutions integrated into the street scene, while concerns over the scale and style of the large local supermarket influenced the inclusion of a code for shopfront designs.

Considering the community engagement meetings, focus group outputs and survey responses, the main challenges identified, in no particular order, are the need to:



Preserve the natural environment.



Improve traffic flow and reduce vehicle idling.



Improve the approach to parking.



Avoid urban sprawl.



Protect local heritage.



Maintain dark skies.



Preserve the rural village feel.



Keep the High Street vibrant.



Preserve the individual character of the settlements.



ST JAMES COTTAGE

1.4 About Wadhurst

Located in the High Weald in East Sussex, Wadhurst is close to the border with Kent. Royal Tunbridge Wells to the north is the nearest significant town.

Identity and location



Location plan



Houses in Church Street with distinctive tiles and steep roofs.

The town's architectural identity is typically Wealden with distinctive red clay tiles and steep roof pitches. Medieval buildings sit alongside Georgian, Victorian and post war structures, mostly sympathetic to the architectural heritage.

The B2099 which has been a significant road on the trans-Weald route for centuries, runs through the town centre and brings with it a large volume of daily traffic.

History of development

Settlement in Wadhurst can be traced back to Neolithic times and there are five known historical ironworking sites close to Wadhurst.

The church of St Peter and St Paul has existed since at least the early 12th century. The earliest evidence of sizeable settlement was the granting of a weekly Saturday market and a fair in 1253.

Timber, leather, clay tiles, bricks and iron production had a significant impact

on the town's economy. The town historically also served as a stop-over location on the trans-Weald route.

The railway came to Wadhurst in 1851, with a station 1.5 miles north-west of the town. Wadhurst's 20th century expansion has been nearer the station at the former hamlets of Durgates and Sparrows Green.

In 1956 an RAF jet crashed in Wadhurst, destroying a number of buildings on the High Street's south side. This resulted in rebuilding and accounts for the parade of buildings from that era.



Wadhurst High Street (1907). Image courtesy Wadhurst History Society Centre

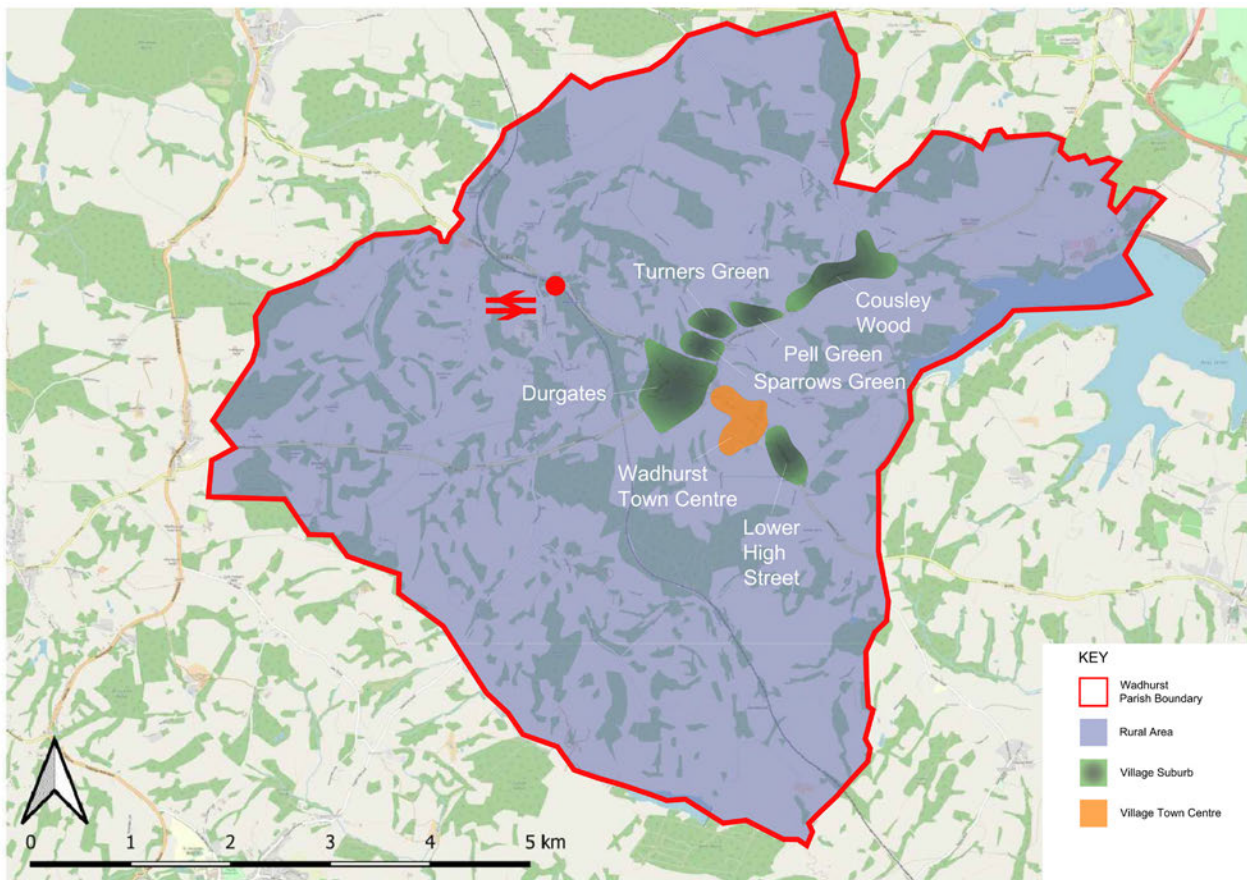


Wadhurst High Street (1911). Image courtesy Wadhurst History Society Centre



Wadhurst High Street, early 20th century. Image courtesy Wadhurst History Society Centre

1.5 Area types



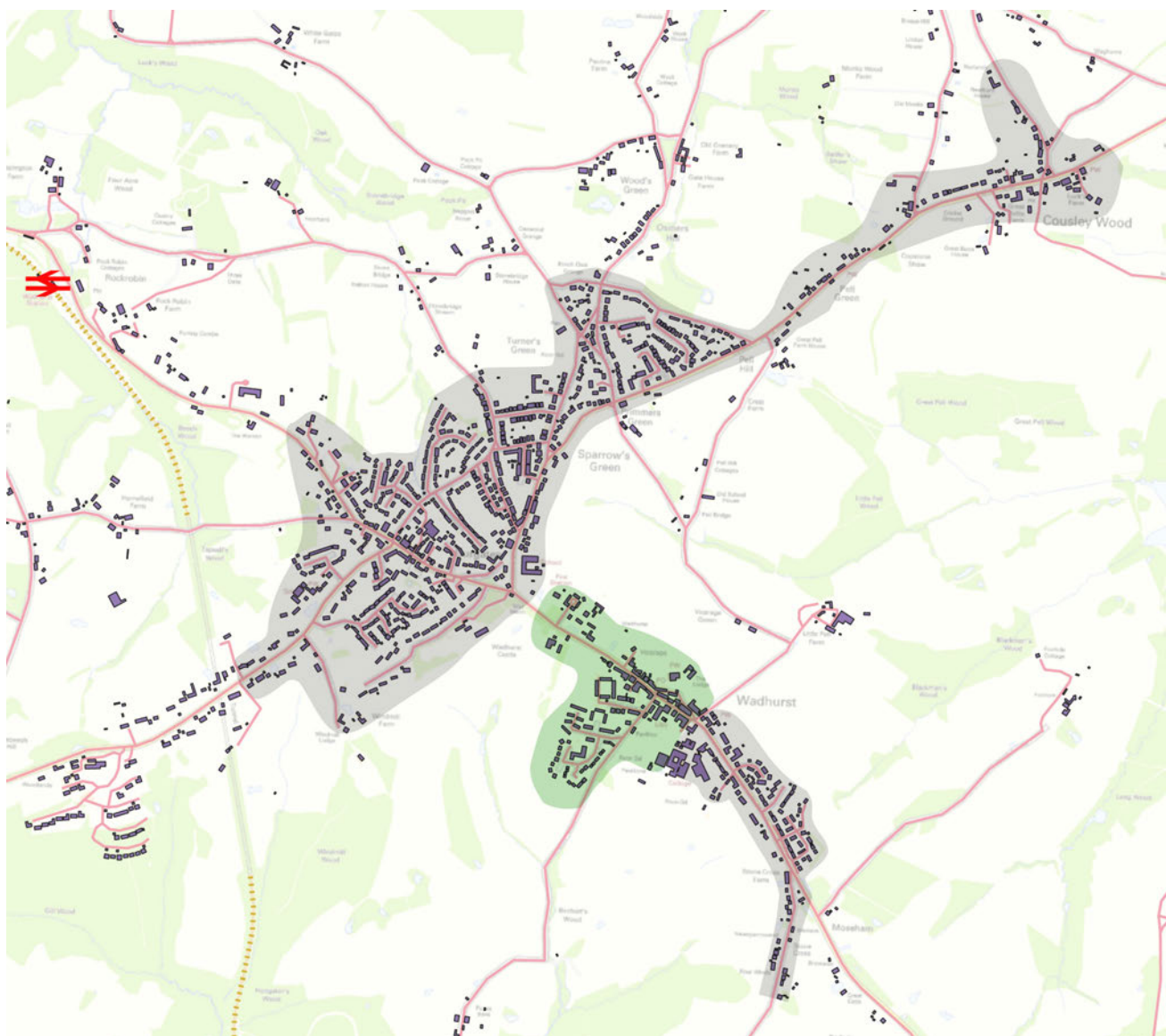
An overview of the area types in Wadhurst Parish

Wadhurst Parish is characterised by three distinct area types. Most codes usually apply in all areas, but where they differ this is highlighted in coloured boxes.

Town Centre

Neighbourhood settlements

Rural areas



A zoomed in look at the division of existing area types around Wadhurst Town Centre and neighbourhood settlements. Rural hamlets are not included. These are coded for within the Rural area type.

-  **Town Centre**
-  **Neighbourhood settlements**
-  **Rural areas**

Town Centre

Wadhurst town centre and high street is referred to locally as “the village” and indeed is considered a village. However, in the context of a planning document, it is referred to here as “town” or “town centre.”

The town centre is Wadhurst’s main shopping centre. This area starts at the intersection with Station Road and Sparrows Green Road in the



A view of the High Street looking south



A view looking north west

north west and ends where Lower High Street begins in the south east. The high street incorporates most of the Wadhurst village conservation area, which is subject to extra planning controls by Wealden District Council.

The main shopping area is about 200 metres long and is characterised by historic buildings on the north and a mix of historic and post-war buildings on the south.



1950s development on the south side



Parking in the town square, view looking north west

Neighbourhood settlements

Outside of the main town centre are the residential neighbourhoods of Lower High Street, Durgates, Sparrows Green, Turners Green, Pell Green and Cousley Wood. These are predominantly residential with few amenities. Homes are mostly detached and semi-detached houses. The Wadhurst Village conservation area also extends down into the Lower High Street neighbourhood.



The neighbourhood settlement of Durgates

Rural areas

Most of the parish is rural, rural hamlets or as standalone houses in the countryside. Hamlets are usually small clusters of dwellings based around historical farmsteads. Hamlets have not been defined on the map due to their small scale.



A rural farmhouse near Shover's Green



A house in Scrag Oak



1.6 How to use this code

This design code can be applied to existing streets, shopfronts and new developments. Each subsection sets out standards for new developments. The code will also highlight differences in standards between area types. The code is broken down into the following sections in accordance with the adopted National Model Design Code.

Chapter 2: Built form

Chapter 3: Movement

Chapter 4: Public Space

Chapter 5: Nature

The code uses three levels of guidance.

MUST: Mandatory design practices; developments that do not abide by them will not be permitted.

SHOULD: Design practices which are strongly encouraged due to the benefit that they will have on the neighbourhood. Exceptions to this are where the design practice cannot be applied for specific reasons.

CAN: Design practices which are recommended but whose absence will not drastically affect the overall quality of the development.

The rationale behind the designation of **MUST**, **SHOULD** and **CAN** to elements of the design code is based on a number of factors which the authors of the document have considered. These include the results of primary and secondary research, best practice and professional judgement. Foremost, designations are based on how critical an element is to meeting the primary objectives of the community.

Where policies are designated as a **MUST**, these are deemed to be **essential** and non-negotiable to ensure the success of future development and the preservation of the look and feel of Wadhurst. These policies are designed in line with the objectives set out in the NPPF to achieve well-designed, beautiful and safe places through policies regulating pattern, scale and design quality. **MUST** policies are also backed up by research results such as those from previous character assessments as well as observations, assessments and research undertaken by the authors. If a policy is ever to be upgraded from a **SHOULD** to a **MUST**, there has to be supporting material evidence to back up the change.

Where policies are designated as **SHOULD**, these are deemed to be **highly recommended** and aspirational but are not so strict as to exclude the possibility of appropriate development. These designations are also based on research results, best practice and professional judgements by the authors. Where a developer is not able to achieve a **SHOULD** policy, they will need to provide evidence for those reasons so as to be granted exemption. These reasons would include limitations beyond the developer's control such as unforeseen environmental conditions or first-choice building materials that are impossible to source. In these cases, exemptions to the design code would be granted.

Where policies are designated as **CAN**, as described earlier, these are **recommended** but whose absence will not drastically affect the overall quality of the development. Implementing these policies is often at no extra cost to inferior design alternatives and are therefore recommended based on best-practice, professional judgement and aspiration.

2. Built Form

2.1 Density

Housing densities

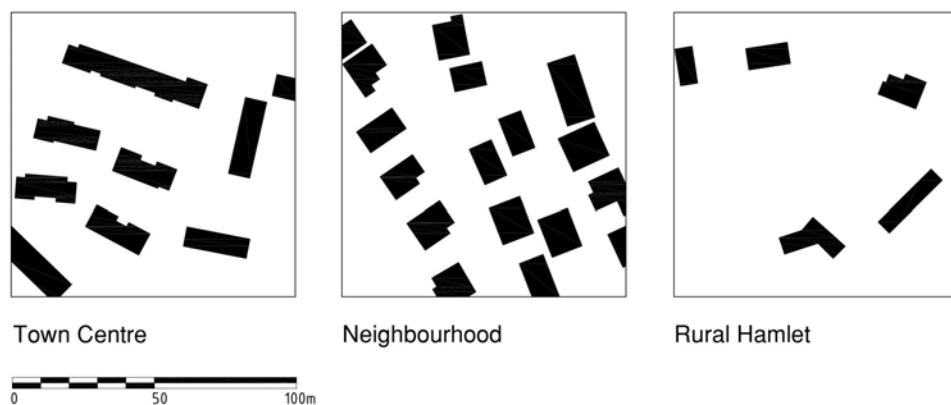


Figure ground plans illustrate the comparative densities of the three area types

Residential densities in dwellings per hectare (dph)

- Infill development is permissible within the town centre as long as other policies are followed. Residential density **should** average at least 35 dph (dwellings per hectare).

- Neighbourhood housing density in new developments **should** average at least 20 dph across the site whilst reflecting the grain and density of the area in which it is being proposed and should follow the traditional hierarchical grouping of buildings seen in the High Weald with lower densities being used to help make the transition to the edge of the site away from the core area

- There is no minimum housing density for rural areas

2.2 Building Types and Forms

Wadhurst has a limited variety of building types but has a combination of terraced, semi-detached and detached buildings. Most buildings have wider rather than taller proportions and have a maximum height of three storeys (although typically no more than two storeys plus in-roof dormers).

- Development in the town centre **must not** contain detached buildings.
- Development in neighbourhood settlements **should** be mainly terraced or semi-detached.
- Building in new developments **must not** exceed three storeys with the top floor consisting of a loft level with proportionally sized dormers



The high street has a mix of building proportions, but the majority tend to be wider types.

- Town centre developments **should** normally be wide-fronted (wider than 8 metres) rather than narrow-fronted (below 8 metres) to fit the character of existing buildings.
- There **should** be a variety in the grouping of houses to contribute to a village character.
- Variable, small setbacks **can** be used for differentiation between homes and for urban texture.



2.3 Blocks

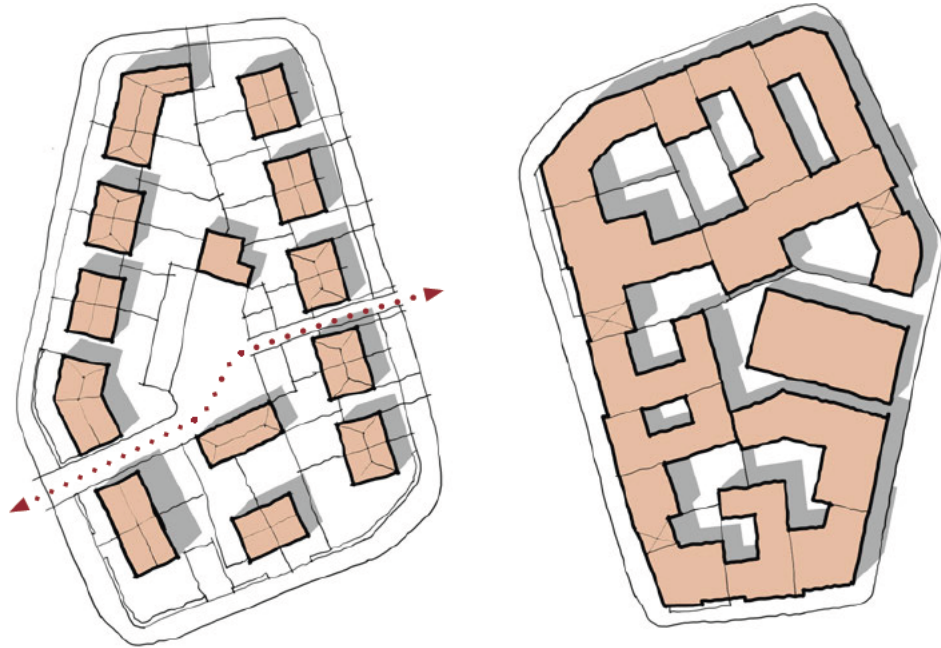
Development blocks **should** be designed to create walkable and safe neighbourhoods. Infill development **must** conform to existing block patterns, the establishing of new blocks is likely to be in the neighbourhood settlements.

- Blocks **should** be between 50m and 100m in length to give many direct walking routes.
- Cul-de-sacs **should not** be used unless no other option exists.



Examples of a well-connected layout with block lengths between 50m & 100m.

- Development blocks **should** have an irregular, rural character.



An informal block (l) with pedestrian permeability is suitable for neighbourhood settlements. A courtyard block (r) offers good residential density and is suited to locations close to the town centre. The informal shapes of both suit the character of Wadhurst.

Shown below are good design principles that **should** be incorporated into new block designs.

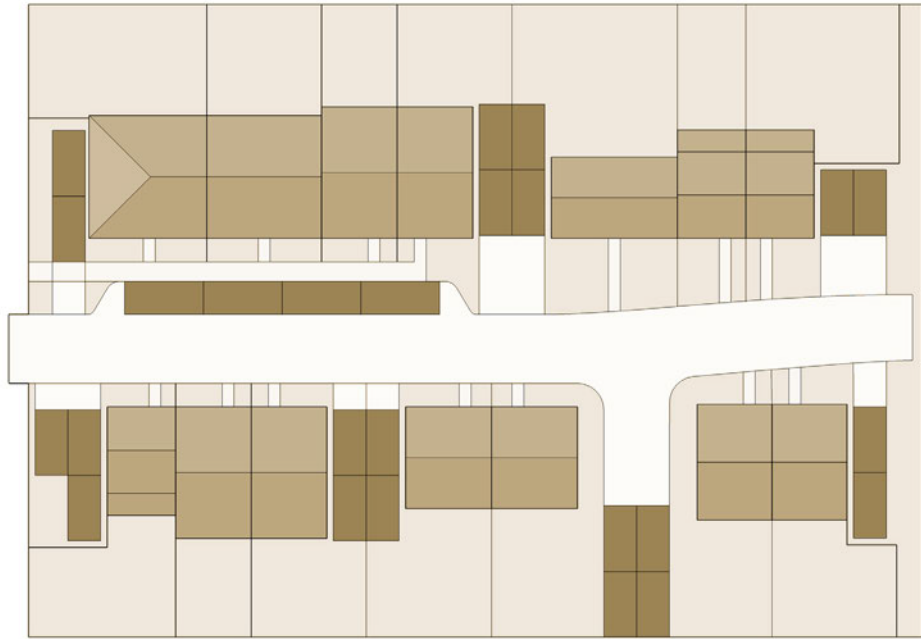
- Curved street: Except in rare cases, streets **should** be curved to fit in with the rural character.
- Variable street widths: Streets **can** have varying widths to fit a rural character and their irregular nature discourages motorists from driving quickly.
- Shared surface: In schemes where vehicle traffic is expected to be low, pavements **should not** be necessary. Instead, a shared surface where pedestrians have priority is preferred.
- Garden walls or hedges of modest height: Gardens walls or hedges of modest height **should** frame front gardens to convey clearly the division between public and private realms.
- Green space: Green spaces along the border of a scheme **can** be an amenity for residents, set aside for allotments, as habitat for wildlife or integrated with sustainable drainage (SuDS).
- Trees: Trees **must** be a prominent feature in the landscaping of developments, both for their visual benefits and their recognised health benefits.
- Turning head: The visual impact of turning heads **should** be limited by using permeable paving. Tarmac **should** be avoided.

-
- Variable setbacks: A curving, variable width lane permits front gardens with a variable setback, which is common in traditional villages. These **should** be used where appropriate.
 - Clear public vs. private space: Land adjoining homes **should** clearly belong to the home to prevent ambiguity regarding responsibility for care and maintenance.
 - Village greens: Greens add beauty and can be the only public space in a site otherwise devoted exclusively to streets and homes. A green **can** also be a point of gathering for the community.

Example site plans which demonstrate these principles:



A small site with a curved street and integrated turning head.



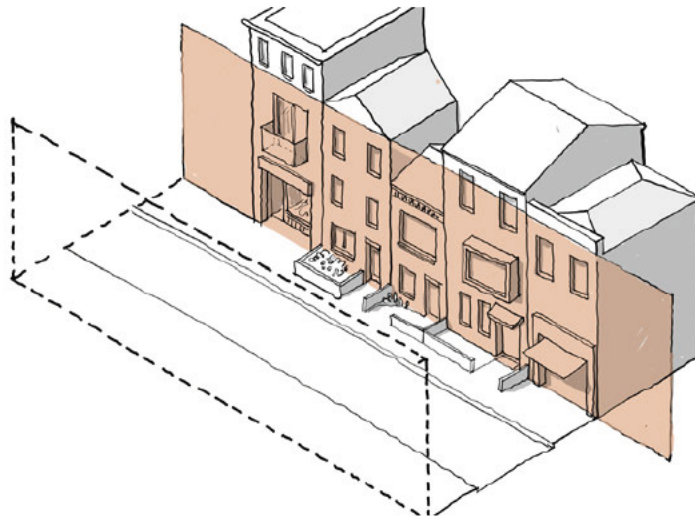
A larger site with a mix of terraced and semi-detached houses and some on-street parking.



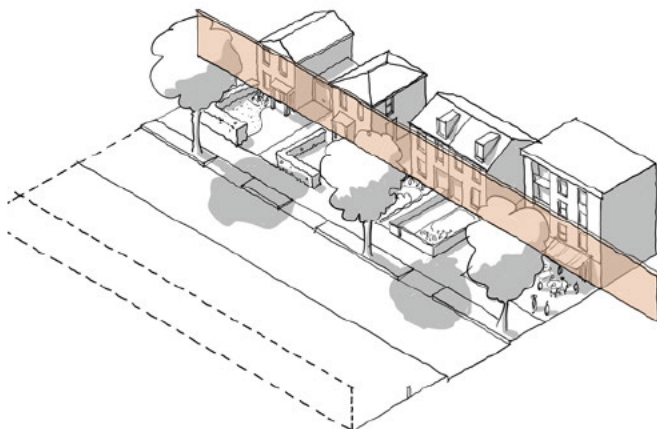
A large site with a small green at its heart. The green is enclosed by houses and well overlooked.

2.4 Building Lines

A building line represents the alignment of the front face of the buildings in relation to a street or other public space. The nature of this line and its position in relation to the street contribute to the character and identity of a place. It may be straight or irregular, continuous or broken. A consistent approach to building line in an area type or street type helps to give it a coherent identity.



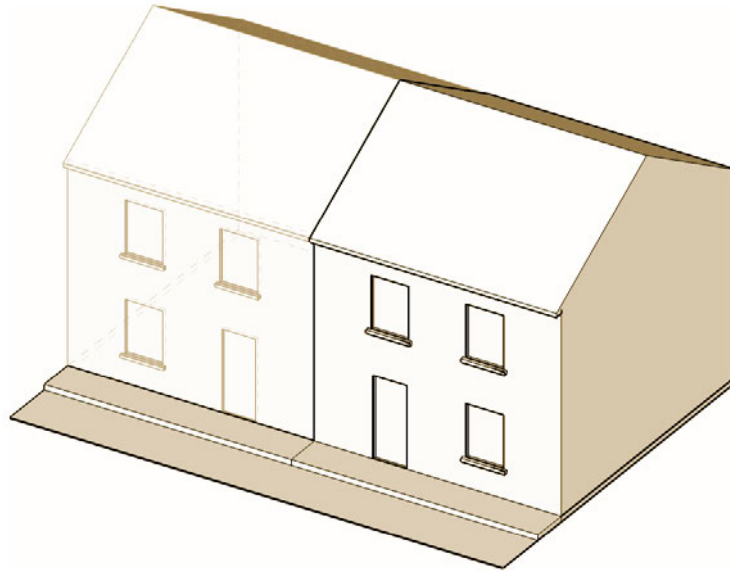
The high street and other town centre streets **should** have a continuous building line set close to the street.



In neighbourhood settlements, the building line **can** be set further back from the street.

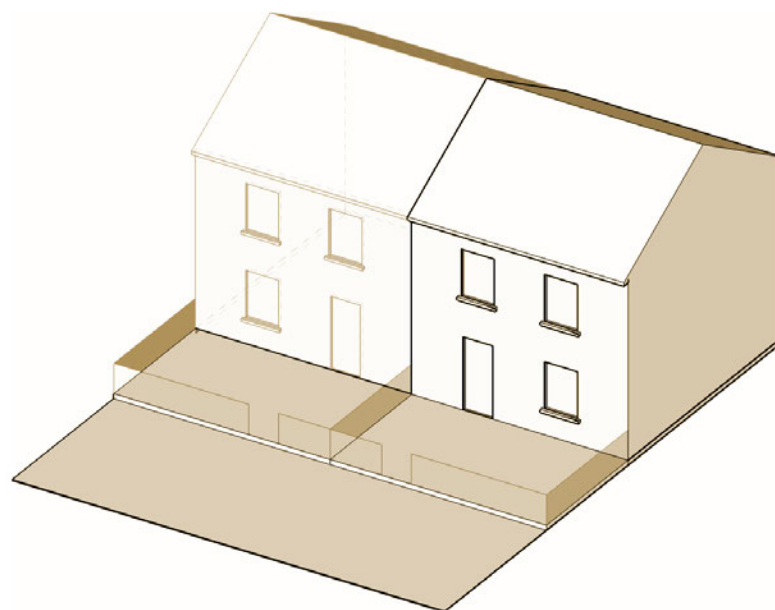
Setback principles for individual houses:

Along footpath or narrow lane



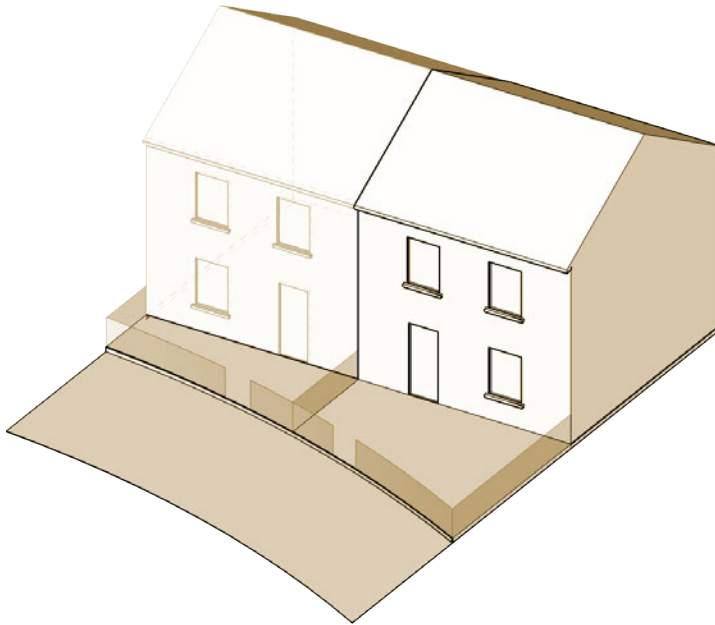
Where homes border a footpath, narrow lane or a court rather than a street, a small setback of as little as one metre from the footpath or lane **should** be sufficient. This provides enough space for a flowerbed and a buffer between the public and private areas.

Along Street



Along a street, setbacks **should** be no less than two metres to provide a buffer between houses and noise and pollution from passing vehicles. A larger setback also permits a bin store at the front.

Variable setback



Where a street or footpath is curved, the setback **can** vary considerably between houses, between one to four metres. This can be more appropriate than rotating the houses.

2.5 Front gardens

Variety between different front gardens is strongly encouraged. Front gardens **should** usually be enclosed by a brick or stone wall, a hedge, or in combination with an iron railing. However, smaller gardens, especially those abutting footpaths, do not necessarily have to be enclosed.

- Bin stores **should** be tucked away behind garden walls.
- Driveways **should** be permeable.
- There **can** be a small gap between the driveway and houses for border planting.
- A small gap **can** be left between the garden wall and footpath for border planting.



Front garden examples clockwise from top left: A larger front garden with a fruit tree and permeable driveway; a narrow front garden with border planting; a front garden enclosed by a wall with a small fruit tree; and a front garden with bin storage.

2.6 Height

Most buildings in the town centre, neighbourhood settlements and rural areas are two storeys high. Building heights vary due to differing roof pitch angles but eaves heights are mostly about 4.5m high.



Typical building heights on the High Street.

- New buildings in the town centre must be no more than three storeys high with the third storey within the roof void with dormers. This applies regardless of the building type or use.
- The underside of the eaves **should** be at least 4m high from the natural ground level but less than 5m.
- Ridge heights **should** be determined by the angle of the roof pitch (see section 3.2).

2.7 Extensions

Extensions have a strong impact on the look and character of a building and should not be overlooked.

- Extensions **should** fit in and feel part of the original building, using the same palette of materials.
- The roof pitch of a multiple storey extension **should** match that of the original building.
- Extensions **should not** infringe on the privacy of neighbouring houses.



A street scene of a portion of the high street on the north east side.



Two examples of rear extensions which fit in, using a complimentary architectural style and very similar materials as the original homes.



3. Identity of Buildings

The high street dates back to medieval times though buildings are mainly more recent, mainly Georgian, Victorian or twentieth century. The High Street's appearance is detracted by parking on both sides of the road and by the business of the road.

Buildings are mostly two or three storeys high. Building materials are predominantly red and burnt clay bricks, Kent clay peg tiles and timber weatherboards.

In most recent buildings an effort has clearly been made to preserve Wadhurst's character though with varying success. Houses in the neighbourhoods are double storey. Like the buildings in the town centre, they are characterised by the features illustrated below. Clay peg tiles are used both as roof tiles and as hung tiles on facades.



Distinctive architectural features of Wadhurst.

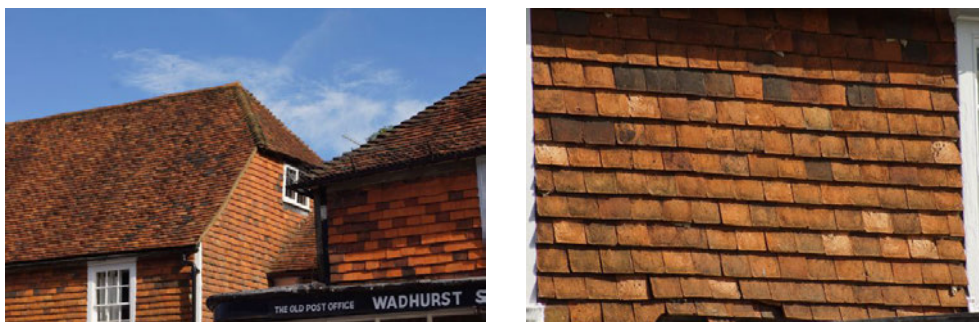


3.1 Facades

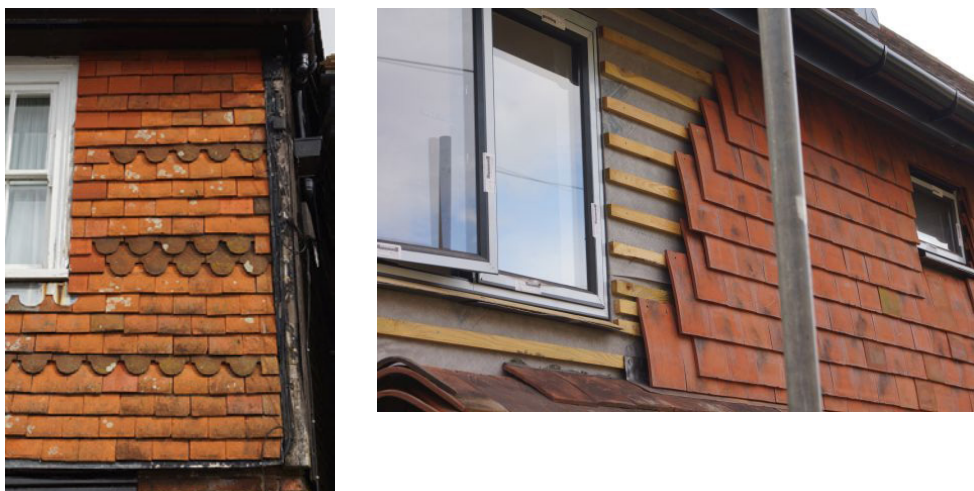


*A core palette of these colours **should** be kept on all façade treatment.*

Building facades in Wadhurst are one of the most important features that contribute to the town's character. The hung tiles and weatherboarding are particularly prominent.



Examples of clay hung tiles.

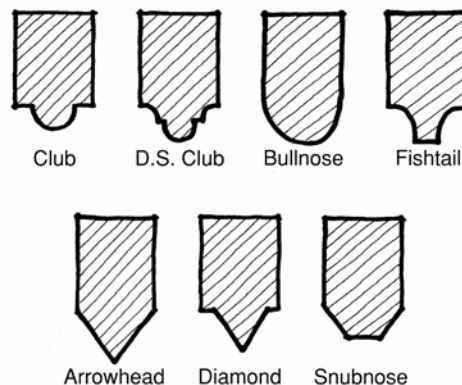


Ornamental tiles used in banding adds texture and interest and is encouraged (l). Clay tile in the process of being hung on timber battens (r).



An example of timber weatherboarding.

- Hung tiles **must** be traditional clay tiles in traditional Sussex colours and should be sourced from manufacturers using local clay.
- In conservation areas, weathered hung tiles **should** be used, either reclaimed or new but aged by the manufacturer. Weathered tiles **can** also be considered for new construction.
- In larger developments, variety **should** be used and can be achieved by using various ornamental tiles for cladding such as club, bullnose, fishtail, arrowhead, diamond and snubnose tiles.



Ornamental clay tiles.

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- Brick headers can be used to form a dentilled course below the hung tiles, adding texture detail.



Brick headers used to form a dentilled course below the hung tiles.

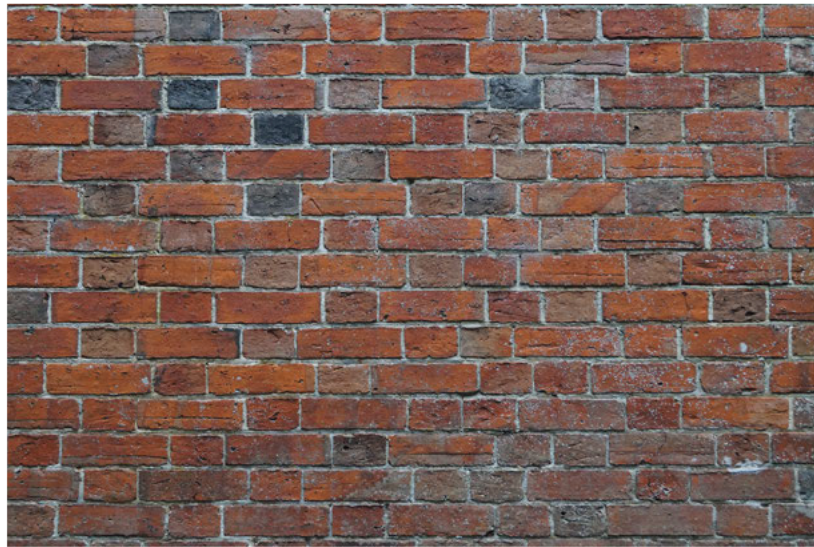
- Weatherboarding must be made from sustainably sourced timber and should predominantly be painted white or occasionally in a dark natural finish. Light coloured timber must be stained a dark, natural tone.
- Weatherboarding should be used as cladding on the first floor up to the eaves of the roof. Examples of full-height weatherboarding are found in Wadhurst and so full-height weatherboard cladding can be used when appropriate to the context. Weatherboarding must be horizontal and not vertical.



*An example of full height weatherboarding (l). Vertical weatherboarding (r) **must not** be used.*

When using brick, red brick must be used for all new buildings and should be locally sourced and manufactured from local clay. This ensures authenticity of colour and the unique folding on the bricks associated with local brick stock.

- Burnt headers **can** be used to add variety and Flemish bond brickwork **can** be used to give a sense of architectural heritage.
- Engineering bricks **must not** be used as the primary type of brick
- Cut bricks **can** be used to simulate a Flemish bond to accommodate a cavity wall.



A local wall showing Flemish bond brickwork with burnt headers.

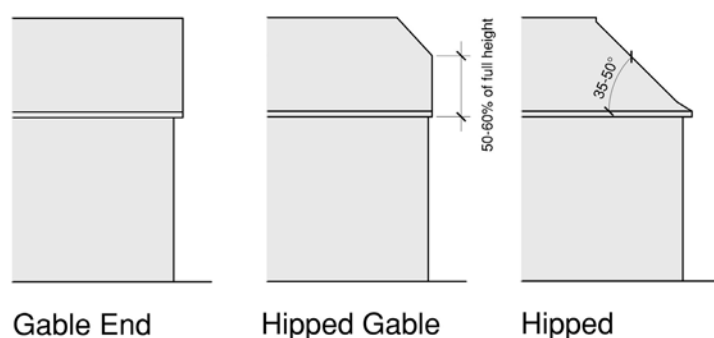
3.2 Roofs

The predominant roofing material used in Wadhurst is red clay tile. Grey slate is also used but is secondary to the clay tiles.



Roofs of Wadhurst, primarily red clay tile with grey slate as a secondary material.

- Roofs **should** be finished in traditional 10" x 6", plain, clay tiles. Grey slate should only be used as a second-choice alternative.
- Slate roofs **must** be capped with natural slate plain angle ridges.
- Clay roof tiles **must** be in traditional Sussex colours and **should** be sourced from manufacturers using local clay to ensure this.
- Roof pitches **must** be between 35 & 50 degrees.
- For the sake of variety, any new multi-home development over five homes **must** include a combination of at least two of the three different types of roofs; (1) pitched roofs with gable ends, (2) hipped roofs and (3) roofs with hipped gables.
- The primary roofs of buildings **must** not be flat.
- Gable ended roofs **can** have decorative barge boards if suited to the design of the building which **must** be in a period style.



Roof types and pitches



A historical decorative barge board.

3.3 Windows

Windows in Wadhurst are varied and contribute significantly to the town's architectural character. A combination of casement and double-hung sash windows can be found. Glazing bars are commonly used and leaded windows are also traditionally used in Wadhurst.



Side-hung casement windows



Double-hung sash windows



Top hung opening out

Side-hung central sash

Leaded casement

- Windows **should** be constructed from timber or an aluminium/timber composite. Steel or aluminium **can** be used as a like-for-like replacement on a restoration. uPVC windows **must not** be used.
- Casement windows **should** be side hung and opening out with ventilator lights top hung opening out.
- Glazing bars **should** be constructed as fine as possible and should be less than 20mm in width.
- Bay windows are a distinctive feature of Wadhurst and **can** be included.

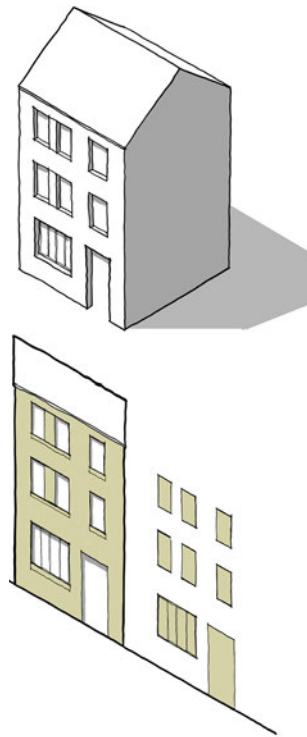


A traditional bay window with flat roof.



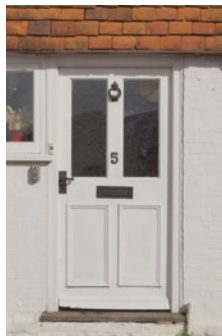
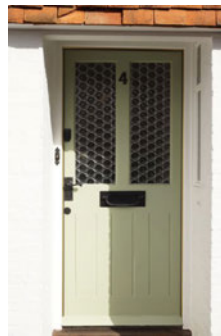
Matching bay windows spanned by a single roof.

- Window and door openings combined **should** make up 15-35% of a façade for best proportions.



3.4 Doors

Doors add to the character of the town and provide an opportunity for some design variety.



A sample of doors in Wadhurst which show examples of panelling.

- Residential doors **must** be constructed from timber.
- Door panelling is common in the town and **can** be used as decoration to add texture.
- Door furniture such as handles, knockers, escutcheons and post slots **should** normally be black.

3.5 Porches

Enclosed porches are a distinctive feature of houses in Wadhurst. Porches on new developments **should** be enclosed and must have double pitched roofs. Porch roofs **can** be gabled or hipped.



Traditional, enclosed porches with hipped roof (l) and gable ended roof (r).

3.6 Utility boxes



- Where meter box locations are visible from the street, they **must** be placed as low as possible on the wall or preferably housed in a ground chamber.
- Meters **should** be concealed by vegetation or bin stores.

- For detached or semi-detached houses where the meters are wall mounted, the meters **must** be located at the side of the house.

3.7 Boundary walls / fences

Boundary walls and fences contribute significantly to the character and heritage of the town.

- Low-level, timber picket fencing is traditional in Wadhurst and **should** be used for boundary fencing. The fencing **should** be painted white but **can** left natural. Low fences **can** be used in conjunction with hedges.
- Closeboard timber fencing **should not** be used.
- Concrete and wire fencing **must not** be used.
- Boundary walls facing the street **should** be constructed from clay brick.



A traditional timber picket fence (l). Two neighbouring picket fences, one painted white and the other with a natural finish (r).

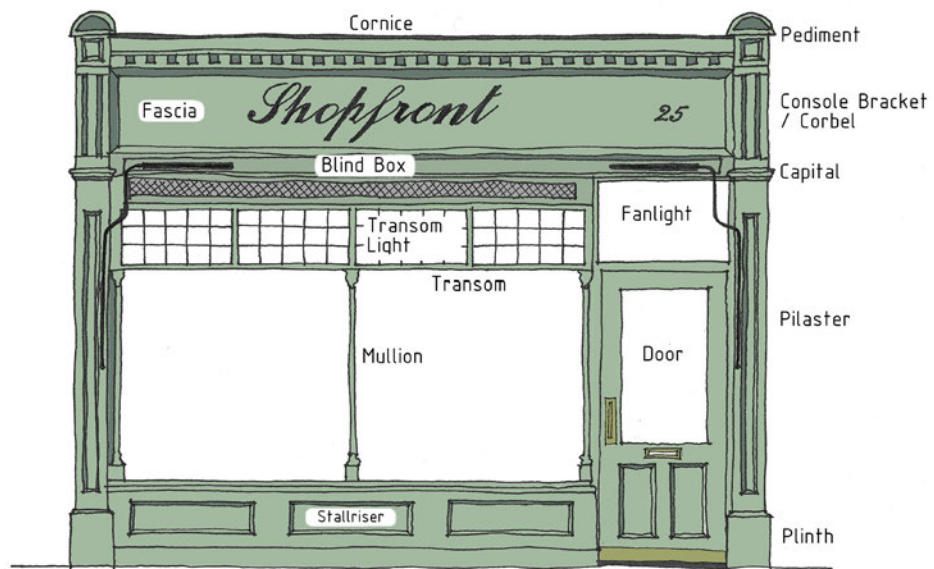
3.8 Shopfronts

Wadhurst has a rich heritage of trading and historical shopfronts, a heritage that is worth preserving and promoting. The following code will ensure that any new shopfronts follow a design recipe that honours that heritage.

New shopfronts need not be pastiche replicas of historical styles but a similar vernacular can be achieved simply by including certain key elements as outlined in the following code.

Note that most of the shopping streets falls within the Wadhurst conservation area.





Elements of a shopfront

Fascia & Cornice

- Lettering on fascia **should** be centred and properly aligned. It **should** include the shop name and street number and avoid all other writing as this can make the shop front feel cluttered.
- Where a shop occupies several adjacent shop units, each **should** have a separate fascia, linked visually by a common design. One continuous fascia is considered to be too dominant.
- Fascia **should** be made from a durable material and avoid plastic finishing.
- Fascia **must** be capped by a cornice which **must** include drip detailing to avoid rainwater damage and unsightly streaking over time.

Shop Blinds / Awnings

- Shop blinds **can** be included for shading.
- Blind boxes **can** be designed flush with the fascia or sit proud of it and **must** be constructed of timber. Blind boxes that sit proud of the fascia **must** have drip detailing designed into them to avoid rainwater streaking.
- Shop blind material **must** be traditional canvass and **must not** be made from plastic, vinyl or other synthetic materials. Colours **should** be compliant with the general, muted colour palette for this code. Blinds **can** be plain or striped.
- All shop blinds **must** be retractable.
- Blinds **can** be mounted above or below the fascia. Blinds should be free of any graphics, logos or text.

Pilasters

- Pilasters are used to frame a traditional shopfront. These **can** be decorated or left plain but **should** be included in any new shopfronts except where there are legitimate construction limitations.
- Pilasters are usually capped by a capital, console bracket and pediment. These elements **must** be included and **can** be designed using a simple design or one that is more ornate depending on the overall style of the shopfront.
- Plinths are found at the base of pilasters and **must** always be included.

Stallrisers

- The stallriser is the base of the shop window. Like the fascia, it should be in proportion to the rest of the shopfront elements. A minimum height of 500mm **should** be achieved.
- Stallrisers **can** be panelled or plain.
- Stallrisers **must** be made from timber or rendered & painted brickwork.
- Stallrisers **must** be free of any advertising, permanent or temporary.

Lettering

- The type of lettering used on shopfront signs **should** be easily legible but within proportion of the fascia. The colouring of the letters **must** stand out against the colour of the fascia board without a harsh contrast. Gimmicky fonts **should** be avoided, traditional. Classic font types **should** be used.



Windows and Doors

- Shop windows **can** be panelled but vertical rather than horizontal proportions **should** be achieved.
- Shop windows **must** be free of any posters or vinyl applications fixed to the glass.
- Transom lights **can** be used to reduce the main shop window to a more human scale. These **can** also be of the opening type to improve natural ventilation and **should** be bottom hung opening inwards or top hung opening outwards.
- Shop doors **should** be glazed

Hanging signs

- Hanging signs are few in the Wadhurst high street but **can** be used.
- Hanging signs **should** be no larger than 750mm x 750mm and extend no further than 1 metre.



Hanging signs on ornamented steel brackets.

- Sign hanger brackets must be made from metal, **must** be painted black and **should** be ornamented in the style of brackets which are currently found in the village. Hanging signs **can** be an opportunity to add a sense of playfulness and heritage to the High Street.

Security Shutters

- Rolling, internal mesh grilles **should** be used rather than external roller shutters. This is to maintain the aesthetic of the streetscape and give the shops a sense of occupation rather than a sense of vacancy outside of business hours.

Electronic devices and cooling fans

- Electronic devices, such as security boxes, and other installations such as cooling fans, **should** be hidden where possible in order to reduce the appearance of clutter on the shopfront. This includes electrical wires and satellite antennae.



*Electronic clutter **should** be avoided on shopfronts.*

Materials and colours

Natural materials **should** be used for shopfronts. Where artificial materials are used, they **should not** have high reflectivity. Use of materials **should** be limited to two or three per shopfront.

4. Movement

4.1 The Street Network

The street network is how our streets are laid out and interconnect. It is important because it can help or hinder how people travel around. In most cases, the street network will outlive the buildings it originally served.

A connected street network provides a variety and routes for moving around. It **should** be direct, allowing people to make efficient journeys. Direct routes make walking and cycling faster and more enjoyable.

- New developments **must** consider connectivity, taking future development into account. This will prevent developments becoming isolated and impermeable.
- Each street **should** have more than one connection to another street.
- Some streets and lanes **can** be for pedestrian and cycle access only.



Disconnected



Connected



The image above shows the residential neighbourhood south of the high street. It is characterised by culs-de-sac and dead ends which limit movement choice.

4.2 Public Transport

Access to public transport is key to providing people with choice for everyday journeys beyond the immediate neighbourhood, especially for those not able to drive. Good access to public transport helps reduce reliance on the private car. A site or location has good public transport accessibility when dwellings have a public transport stop within walking distance. This is particularly important in Wadhurst as the railway station is located about 2km outside the town centre.



The local bus service is important to Wadhurst locals, especially the elderly and those needing to access the out-of-town railway station.

- New homes **should** be no more than 5 minutes' walk from a bus stop on a good frequency bus route (or 10 minutes' walk to a train station).
- New bus routes **should** aim to pass through large new developments or close to small developments.
- New bus shelters **must** be built at new bus stops. The design of the shelters **must** reflect the Wealden architectural aesthetic and add to the town's character.
- New bus shelters **should** be constructed of timber or a combination of timber and brickwork. Timber weatherboarding **can** be used and is recommended as a material. Steel, aluminium or plastic shelters **must not** be used.



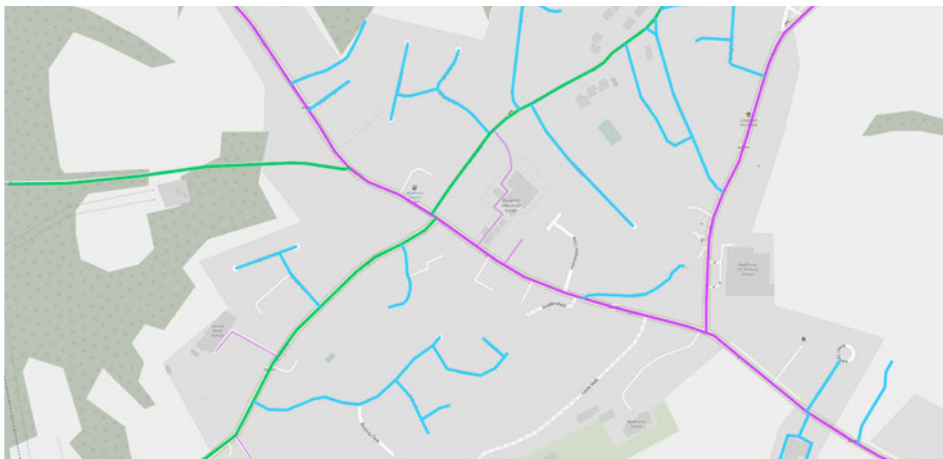
Examples of timber bus shelters; A286, East Sussex (l), and Wadhurst town centre (r).

4.3 Street Hierarchy

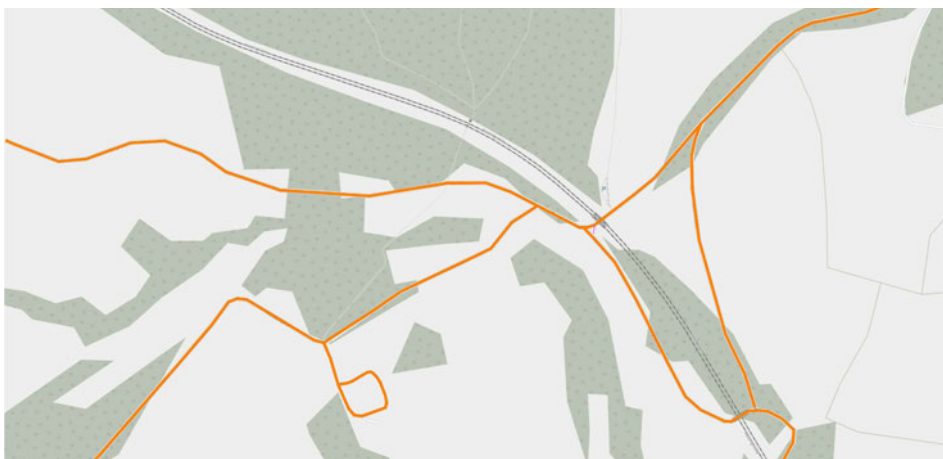
The rural nature of Wadhurst means that there are a limited number of road types in the street hierarchy. In the town centre there is a high street, with local and tertiary streets feeding off it.



Town centre



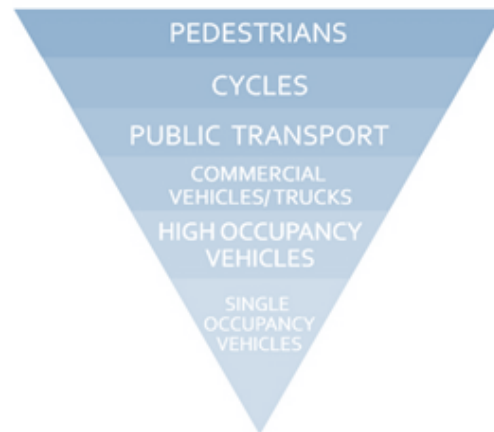
Neighbourhoods



Rural areas

 High Street	 Secondary Street	 Local Street
 Primary Street	 Tertiary Street	 Rural Lane

- All streets in residential areas **must** adhere to Manual for Streets design principles
- All new streets **must** enable safe movement for all residents including mobility impaired people, visually impaired people, and people with non-visible disabilities.
- Pavements **must** have a width of at least 1.6m
- Streets **should** be designed according to the following hierarchy of users:



Listed below is the street hierarchy in Wadhurst as defined by the NMDC (National Model Design Code).

- Primary streets. Designed to take through traffic and public transport. Although defined in the NMDC, there are no primary streets in Wadhurst.
- High streets (with traffic). The main business street of a town, normally with the highest density, shops and businesses on the ground floor with flats or offices above, often with public spaces. **Can** have on-street parking and typically wide with two lanes for motor traffic.
- High streets (without traffic). These are the main business street of a town. They **should** have the highest density, shops on the ground floor with flats above, sometimes with public spaces.
- Secondary streets. These **should** link to high streets and provide access into neighbourhoods. Secondary streets **can** accommodate shops and retail space. They **can** also be good locations for cafés and restaurants as well as community facilities such as schools, health service and community centres.
- Local streets. These **should** form most of the streets in the network, which **should** be attractive places to live, safe and convenient to walk and cycle and accommodate low levels of slow traffic.
- Mews/back streets. A narrow road lined by homes, often to the rear of large houses. **Should** normally have a level surface with no pavements.
- Rural/village lanes. These **should** have a distinctive character. They may not have separate footpath or street lighting and **can** have constrained vehicular access, depending on local character.

4.4 Walking and Cycling Routes

A network of well-connected streets provides more ways to get about and shorter and more direct routes. However, without safe places to cross, they can be a barrier. If this is a risk, then safe but attractive places to cross should be provided.



Pedestrian traffic adds to the vibrancy of the town centre (l) but crossing the high street can feel dangerous at all times of the day (r).

The Wadhurst high street in the town centre is heavily trafficked during most of the day. Understanding where pedestrians need and want to cross the street is important in ensuring that amenities can be reached easily and safely.

- Multiple safe crossings over the high street **should** be created at direct and popular crossing points.
- Culs-de-sac **should** be avoided unless on a tertiary street type for accessing small developments
- Pavements suitable for walking and wheelchair use **must** be provided.
- Frequent places to stop, rest or chat **should** be provided.
- New developments **should** incorporate safe and direct cycling and walking routes to connect to main roads or the town centre and its amenities. On busy trafficked routes and fast roads segregated cycle lanes **should** be used.



Two examples of narrow pavements that are not safe or pleasant for walking on an historic street (l) and a more recent development (r).



An example of a wide and attractive tree-lined path with a bench for resting.

4.5 Car Parking

Car parking needs to be placed and designed to balance Wadhurst's rural character. It is problematic in the town centre, where parking **must** work well with a pleasant pedestrian environment.

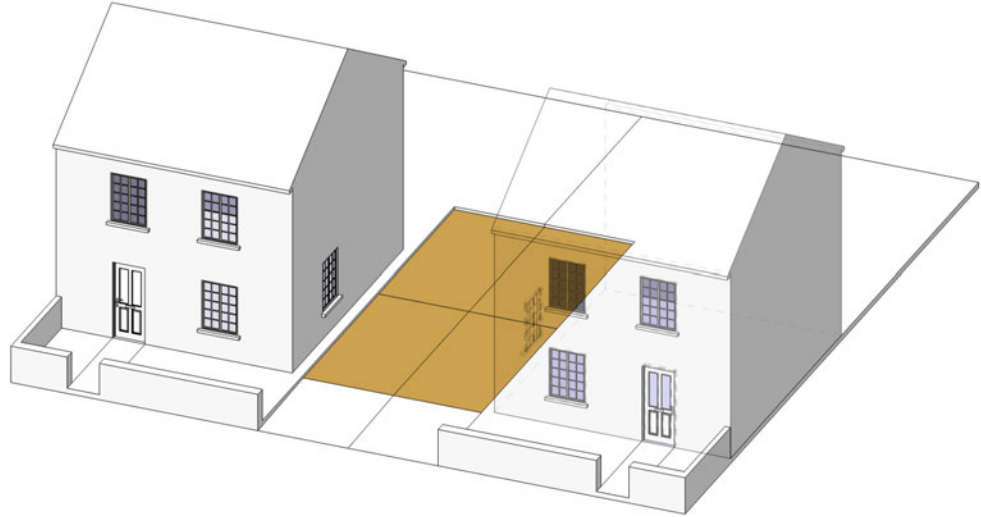
- Parking for high streets, community and commercial use **should** be concentrated at either end of the high street. This **can** increase provision and free up the central street itself for a safer more pleasant pedestrian environment and reduced congestion. Disabled access standards **must** be met.
- Residential parking **should** not obstruct the building line. Parking spaces **should not** protrude beyond the building line.
- On street parking **should** be parallel not perpendicular. It **can** be at an angle of 45 degrees if necessary.
- Courtyard parking spaces in developments **should not** exceed 12 spaces in one courtyard. This is to prevent residential parking provision feeling like a car park and helps reduce anti-social behaviour.
- Trees and other vegetation **should** be provided to break up the visual impact of cars. This **should** be done in public and private spaces.
- Parking **can** be peripheral in new developments. This **can** save space and creates opportunities for car-free areas in the centre of the development.
- Parking **must not** be on any part of a pavement.



The development to the left uses a combination of courtyard, on street and curtilage parking. The development on the right uses peripheral parking at the edge of the site. The development on the left uses roughly seven times as much land for car access and storage.

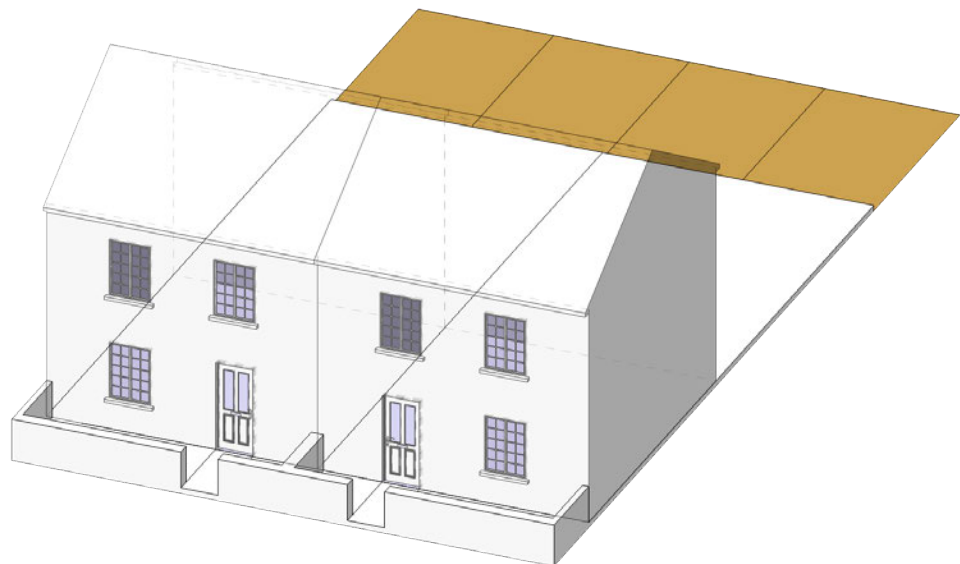
In new developments, the following parking patterns **should** be used:

Narrow curtilage



Space efficient configuration suitable for detached, semi-detached or end-of-terrace homes. **Can** be used side-by-side with an identical configuration to form a two space wide driveway serving two homes.

Rear parking



This layout **should** be in the form of a rear lane or courtyard parking. This parking **must** be overlooked by neighbouring buildings.

On-street



On street parking **can** be used for homes where only one parking space is required or in front of wide home types where a second parking space can be provided elsewhere. A footpath **should** be present between the homes and parking space.



When parking is provided behind the building line or in rear lanes or courtyards, it's possible to avoid a vehicle dominated layout (l) and instead create place-oriented layouts (r) where homes and the public realm take centre stage.

4.6 Cycle Parking

Dedicated cycle parking is minimal in the town centre and **should** be improved, especially with the growth of e-bikes. Enabling cycling to the town centre can help to free up space for residents who need to use private vehicles.

- Developments **should** provide bicycle storage in communal protected areas or back gardens.
- Public bike parking **should** be prominently located as close to amenities as possible and **must** ensure a clear 1.6m minimum pavement width is maintained.

4.7 Services and utilities

New developments **must** be designed with the resident first. They **must not** be designed around prioritising refuse vehicles.

Refuse collection options for new developments **should** be one of the options shown below.

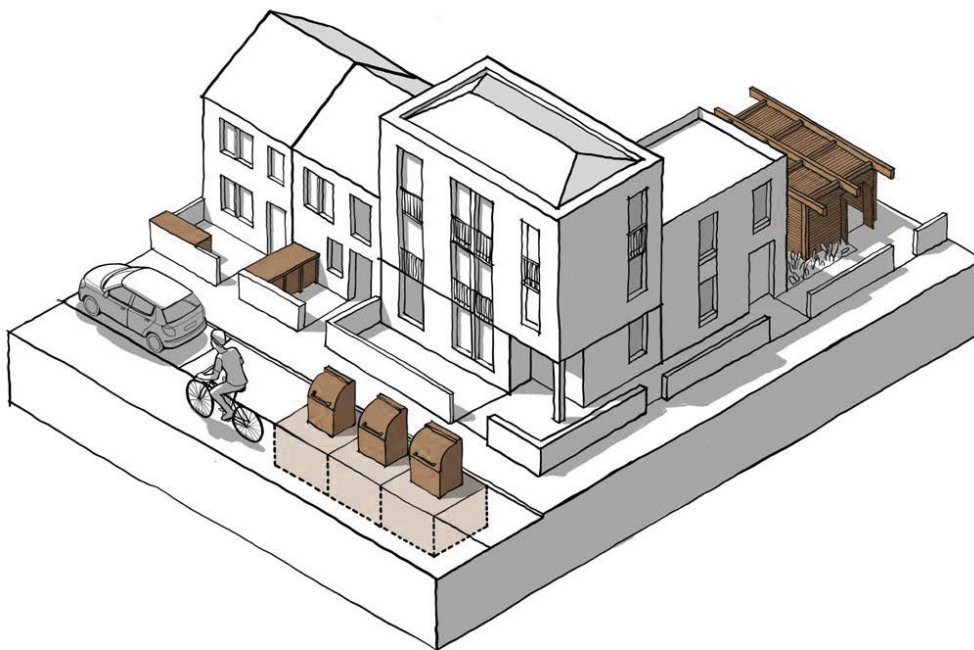
In-curtilage provision:

- With detached or semi-detached houses, this **can** be provided to the side or rear of the property.
- For terraced housing, collection **should** either be from the rear or a bin store **must** be provided at the front.

Communal provision:

An alternative for terraced housing as well as for flats is communal provision. Reference **should** be given to guidance on carry distances and distances to collection points.

- These **can** be underground if the council collection permits.



Bin enclosures

- A range of bin solutions **can** be used. Whether they are individual or communal bins. New developments **must not** have bins visible at the front of the house.
- Refuse storage, whether in wheelie bins, larger communal bins or bagged, **should** be concealed to help maintain the quality of the streetscape.
- Bin enclosures **must** be constructed from timber or brick.
- If stored at the front of the house, the bin store **should** be concealed behind a wall or hedge where possible.

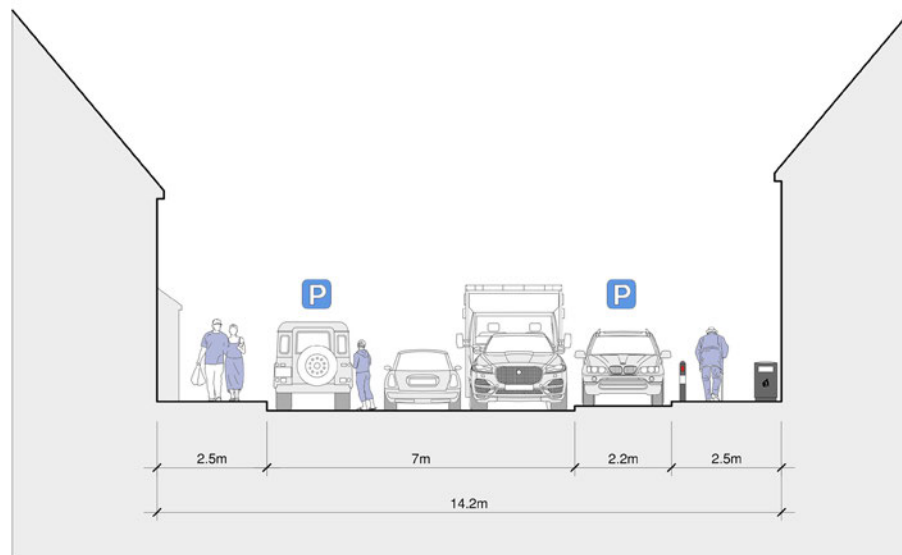


Timber bin enclosures are recommended and should be concealed as much as possible.

5. Community Aspirations - Public Space

These community aspirations have been generated from parishioners' input into the Neighbourhood Plan consultation, the Household Survey and Create Communities consultations. They represent what residents would like to see and developers and builders are encouraged to hold conversations with the relevant authorities with the aim of implementing these aspirations. If they do, they will find greater support from the local community (and places which more closely look and feel like Wadhurst).

5.1 Streets



This section through the high street shows a good enclosure ratio (height to width) of about 1:2.5

New development **must** contribute to the character of the street on which it is located. This character will be different depending where the street sits in the street hierarchy and the context in which it is located.

Street furniture

- Public litter bins **should** be cast iron and floor mounted. Enclosures **should** be painted black or green. Bins **should** have partially enclosed lids to prevent overspill from wind and wildlife.



Examples of cast iron bins. Images from Broxap

Provision of benches in the town centre is encouraged and offers an opportunity to reinforce the town's heritage. Benches **should** be cast iron or timber such as the examples below.



Examples of cast iron and timber benches. Images from Black Country Metalworks (l) and Broxap (r)

- Street signage throughout Wadhurst **must** be kept to essential signage only to maximise space for pedestrians and reduce street clutter. Signs **should** be combined on shared posts.



Traditional East Sussex Fingerpost with cast metal cap and oak post.

- Out-of-town signage **should** be placed on traditional East Sussex fingerposts painted white with black detailing.
- Lighting **should** be placed on buildings or columns. Lighting columns **must** be human-scale and should be a maximum of 5m high.
- Street lights **must** be a lantern style and finished in satin black as the existing examples on the high street.
- Lamp posts **must** be made from metal and **must** be able to accommodate hanging baskets.
- Street lighting **must** have a colour temperature no higher than 3,000K (2,700K on residential streets) to minimize the amount of harmful blue light in the spectrum. Glare-free light engines **should** be specified.
- Lamp posts **can** have flower beds around their base as long as these don't reduce the pavement width below 1.6m.



Street lights on Wadhurst's High Street are not historical but are a traditional lantern style.

-
- Electric vehicle chargers **must** be discreet, preferably housed within existing structures such as lamp posts.
 - Charging points **must not** obstruct pedestrian walkways or intrude on existing pedestrian or cycling space.
- Plastic bollards are commonly found on the high street. These are out of keeping with the nature of the town centre, are easily damaged and **must not** be used in future development.
 - Cast iron or wooden bollards **should** be used.

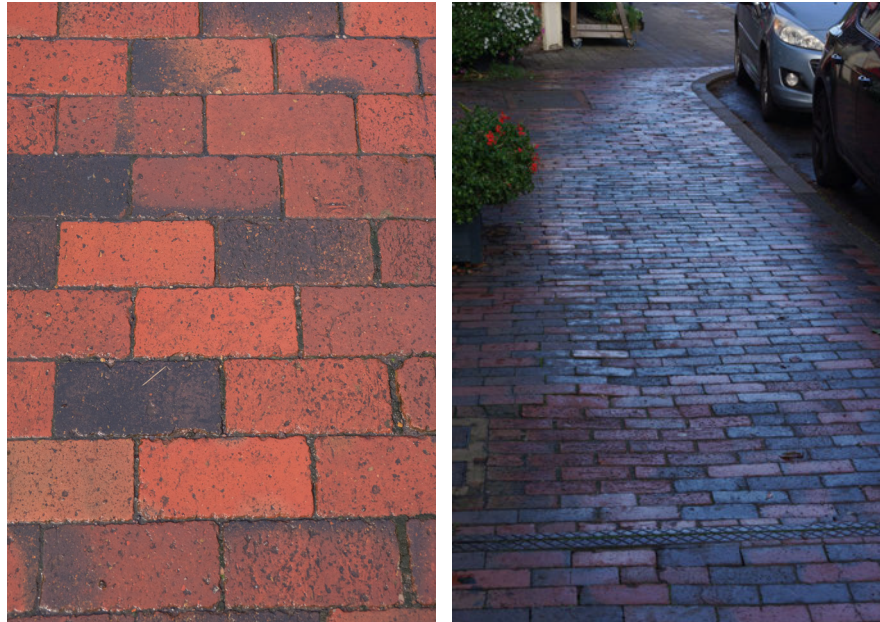


A cast iron bollard is durable and adds to the sense of heritage in the town centre.

- Planters are helpful when tree or ground planting cannot be used. Seating **can** also be combined with planters.

Public realm materials

- Brick pavers **should** be used as a paving material on the high street. Bricks **should** be locally sourced and made from local clay to preserve the character of the town centre.



Brick paving on the high street brings a fine urban texture and reinforces the colour tones provided by bricks made from local clay.

- Brick pavers in red or grey **can** be used for streets in new developments in neighbourhood settlements.



- Tarmac **should not** be used as a paving material for footpaths

5.2 Squares, parks and greens

Many neighbourhoods include public spaces as focal points at the heart of the community. They may include city and town squares, market places and village greens. Squares can be green spaces enclosed by railings or paved surfaces for use as markets and public events. All of these spaces provide informal settings for activities such as meeting, resting, playing, holding events and parking.

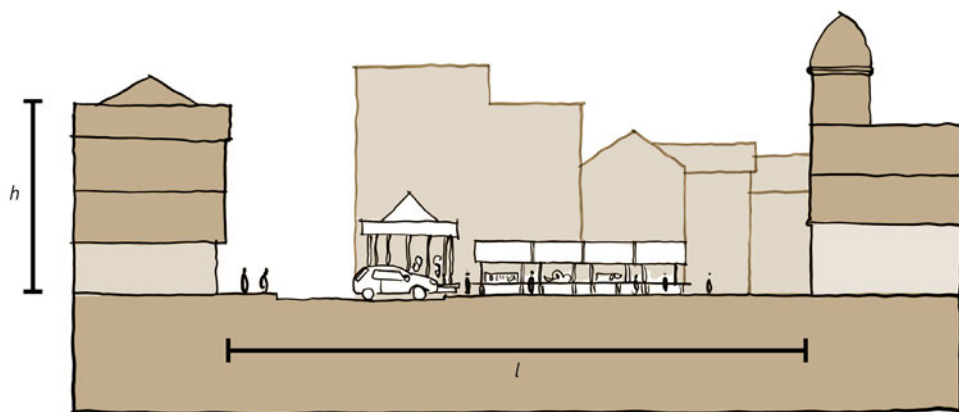
Types of public space



(From left to right) Village green: One of the oldest forms of public space. It is normally grassed with roads around its edge and also possibly a pub or local shop; Town square: An example of a town square, with hard standing, roads on three sides, and opportunities for markets and other public events; Garden square: An example of a garden square enclosed by houses with a play area for children.

Scale: Public spaces need to be appropriately sized and proportioned. In new development, it is good practice to identify suitable precedents to inform their dimensions.

Enclosure: The size of a square is informed by the scale of surrounding buildings. Typically, the enclosure ratio of the short dimension of a square is at least twice the height of the buildings.



The short side of a square should be at least twice the length (l) of the height (h) of the surrounding buildings.

Public uses: Squares may act as a focus for public uses such as educational buildings, churches, pubs, restaurants and cafes. They are also gathering space for uses that draw large numbers of people.

In Wadhurst, the small market square bordered by the High Street, Blacksmith's Lane and Church Street presents an opportunity to re-instate an outdoor market in the town centre. A new market would serve as an attraction to visitors, a retail opportunity to local businesses and a unique place of which the community could be proud.

The square currently houses 11 car parking bays. Some or all of these **should** be repositioned elsewhere in the town centre if a permanent or part time market returns to the square.



Potential location for a new public square or Sunday pop-up market at the junction of the High Street and Church Street.

6. Nature

Protecting and enhancing the High Weald National Landscape (HWNL) and the landscape and nature in towns and villages around Wadhurst is essential to promote local biodiversity. Wadhurst's location presents some particularly unique opportunities to design in some sophisticated and sustainable solutions that will help preserve the look and feel of the town.

- Development **must** enhance the natural as well as the built environment.
- The High Weald AONB Management Plan **should** be read in addition to this code.

6.1 Green Infrastructure

Nature of spaces

- Green spaces **should** be linked by safe and enjoyable walking and cycling routes
- Street trees **should** be planted every 8-15 metres on streets.
- Street trees **can** be planted symmetrically on both sides of the street. This is to provide a sense of enclosure and symmetry to the street.
- Existing wildlife corridors **should** be used and (where necessary) expanded with new corridors to improve local ecosystems' resilience.



Sports pitches with wide sweeping views over the surrounding landscape.



An illustrative diagram from the National Model Design Code (NMDC) showing (in principle) how green corridors can be designed into developments.

- Green spaces **should** follow the principle of little and often rather than be concentrated in one area of a development
- Allotments **can** be considered for developments outside the town centre.
- New homes **should** be no more than 10 mins walk to a park or green space

Light pollution has an adverse effect on wildlife migration and animals' sleeping and feeding patterns.

- *Assess the local wildlife.* Environmental statements **should** include a survey of species of conservation significance as listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan that may be sensitive to light. In addition, a light spill map showing levels as low as 0.5 lux **should** be produced. The aim **should** then be to mitigate light pollution to achieve no net increase in light pollution on wildlife habitats.
- *Warm lighting.* Where lighting is required, Dark Sky compliant street lighting with a colour temperature below 3,000 Kelvin (and 2700K on residential and peripheral streets) **must** be used after dark. The more damaging wavelengths of light increase the more blue the light is (lights with Kelvin above 3000). Softer and warmer lights, with lower Kelvin ratings, are less disruptive to wildlife.
- *Motion detectors* **should** be used on street lighting. Fit street and road lamps with dimmer switches and motion detectors. This is so that their brightness is reduced when there are fewer pedestrians and vehicles. Motion detectors **can** be used to turn lights off completely when there is no human activity nearby.

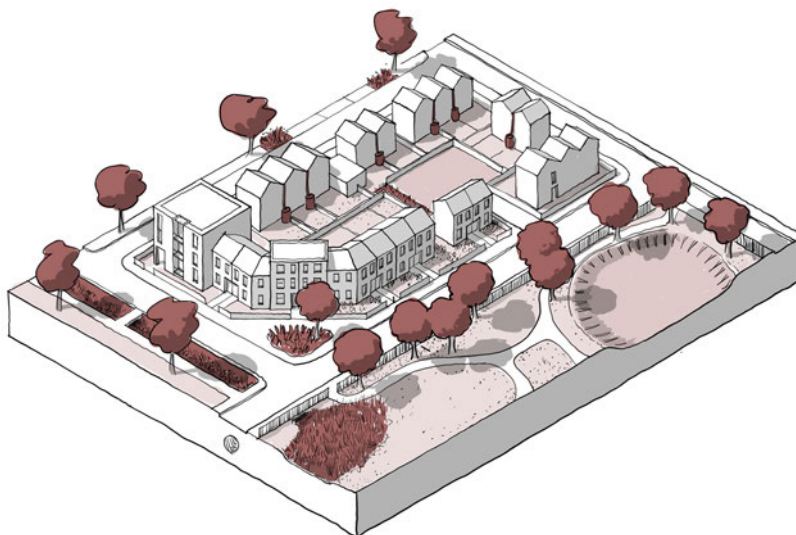
- *Light spillage **should** be limited.* Directing lights or allowing light to spill sideways or upwards towards natural habitats such as hedgerows, trees, water bodies and grassland should be avoided. Globe luminaires and other luminaires that emit light at angles greater than 70° **should not** be used.
- *Avoid shining lighting on water.* Lighting near water **should** be minimised and, where necessary, water **should** be shielded to prevent artificial light from shining directly onto the surface of the water.



Lighting can have an adverse effect on wildlife (l). Warmer lighting with a colour temperature below 3000 Kelvin after dark that uses motion detectors and limits light spillage can minimise the impact of lighting on wildlife (r).

6.2 Water and Drainage

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) **must** be integrated into new developments to minimise flood risk, improve ground water quality and create attractive spaces for people and wildlife. SuDS are also associated with improved mental health among residents who live close to them.



A neighbourhood with rain gardens incorporated into the street and a shallow attenuation pond within a small park.

- SuDS **should not** be seen as isolated features. They are a good way of creating blue corridors that connect existing or future habitats such as wetlands or reedbeds. When creating wildlife corridors, SuDS schemes **can** be incorporated in ways that can also create better places to live.
- Create safe SuDS. Shallower rather than deeper SuDS provide more benefits for people and wildlife. Where ponds feature as part of SuDS schemes, ponds **must** be designed safely and should have as much natural surveillance as possible. Low reeds and shrubs must highlight the water edge and provide a barrier to swimming.
- Driveways **must** be built from permeable paving.
- Unadopted streets and footpaths **should** be built from permeable paving.
- Where possible, peripheral parking areas **should** be permeable, with a preference for grass blocks or similar.



SuDS attract biodiversity, promote well-being, improve ground water quality and help to prevent local flooding. A SuDS at Water's Reach, Wadhurst is shown on the right. This particular example features a retaining wall from gabions.

6.3 Biodiversity

Wildflower meadows are an important habitat especially in winter when food sources for insects and invertebrates is scarce. Wildflowers improve the look of an area and are associated with improved mental and health.

- Native wildflowers **should** be planted in place of grass in communal green spaces.
- Rapidly establishing species **should** be planted. Common knapweed, bird's foot trefoil, selfheal, Oxeye daisy, and red clover can establish rapidly and provide immediate benefits for people and pollinators. Yellow rattle **can** also help with initial meadow creation by competing with grass species that might otherwise compete with the wildflowers.
- Invasive non-native species **must not** be planted.



Street trees in Wadhurst along a public footpath.



Street trees in Poundbury, Dorset.



