

# SOUTHBOROUGH AND HIGH BROOMS

## Design Guidelines and Codes

Final report  
April 2024

## Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
Ivan Bruce Senior Consultant	Ivan Bruce Senior Consultant	Ben Castell Director
Lavenya Parthasarathy Graduate Urban Designer		
Chatnam Lee Graduate Urban Designer		

## Revision History

Issue no.	Issue date	Details	Issued by	Position
03	02.04.2024	Review	Samantha Banks	Locality
02	22.03.2024	Review	Ivan Bruce	Senior Consultant
	22.03.2024	Final Report	Lavenya Parthasarathy	Graduate Urban Designer
01	11.03.2024	Comments from NPSG	Alison Eardley	Southborough NPSG
	22.02.2024	Draft Report	Lavenya Parthasarathy	Graduate Urban Designer

This document has been prepared by AECOM Limited ("AECOM") in accordance with its contract with Locality (the "Client") and in accordance with generally accepted consultancy principles, the budget for fees and the terms of reference agreed between AECOM and the Client. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by AECOM, unless otherwise expressly stated in the document. AECOM shall have no liability to any third party that makes use of or relies upon this document.

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4. Design guidelines and codes</b>	<b>41</b>
	1.1 Purpose and process	5		4.1 Introduction	41
	1.2 Policy context	6		4.2 Part 1: General design considerations	42
	1.3 Area of study	8		4.3 Part 2: Key design guidance	44
	1.4 Stakeholder engagement	10			
<b>2</b>	<b>2. Place Analysis</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5. Checklist</b>	<b>72</b>
	2.1 History and heritage	13			
	2.2 Landscape and spatial setting	20			
	2.3 Connectivity and movement	24			
<b>3</b>	<b>3. Character Study</b>	<b>27</b>			
	3.1 Defining the character areas	27			
	3.2 SWOT analysis	38			





Introduction

01



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose and process

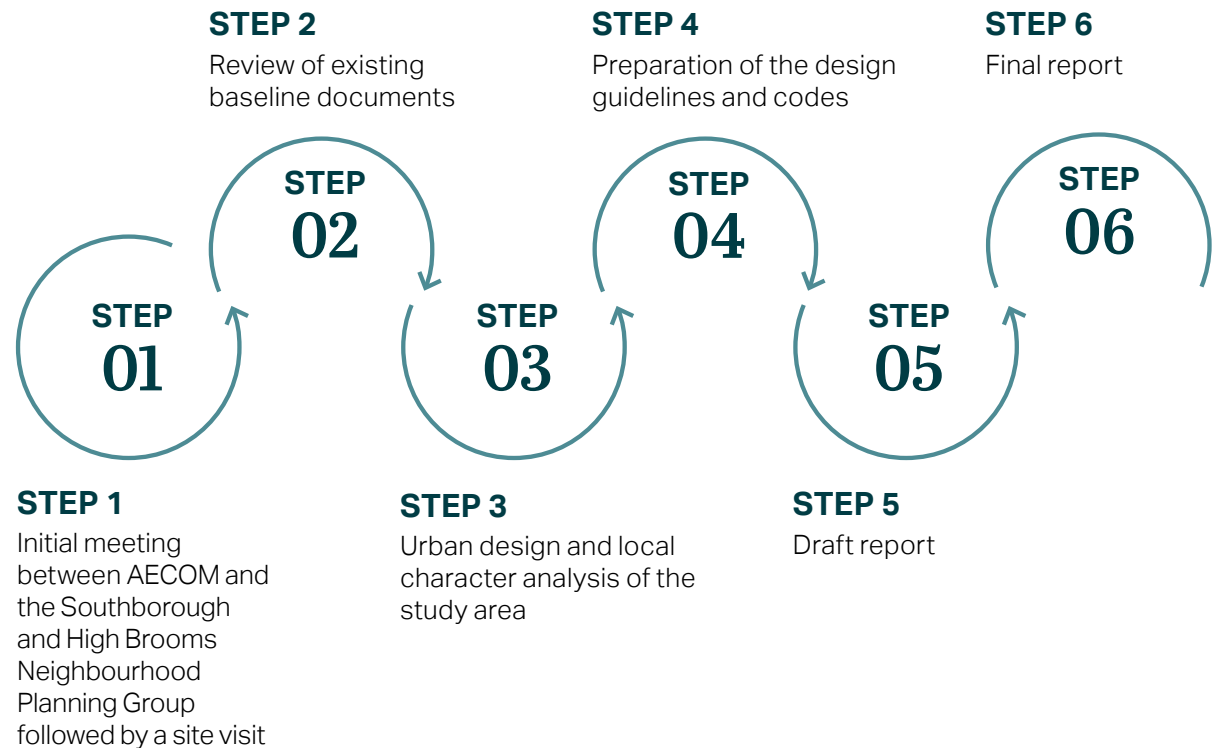
The general design guidelines and specific codes set out in this report will provide a detailed framework that should be followed by any future design proposals that come forward within the neighbourhood area to ensure it meets a consistent, high quality standard of design and positively contributes to the unique character of Southborough.

It is intended that this report becomes an integral part of the Southborough Neighbourhood Development Plan by informing policies that will influence the design of new development and have weight in the planning process.

To help guide the reader, content and section references are colour coded for ease of navigation. The report is distinguished in two parts:

- **Introduction, Place Analysis, Character Study**
- **Design guidelines and codes, Checklist** as the 'reference' section.

The following steps were agreed with the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group to produce this report, which draws upon policy development and engagement work undertaken by the Group:



## 1.2 Policy context

This section outlines the national and local planning policy and guidance documents which should be read in conjunction with this design guide.

### 1.2.1 NATIONAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE

#### **National Planning Policy Framework** Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities | 2023

The NPPF sets out the nationwide planning policies and government's expectations on how these should be applied. The document was updated in September 2023 to meet the current challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal resilience. As a result, the update can be a useful tool in decision-making processes to make the most of and improve existing renewable energy capacities.

The NPPF requires all local planning authorities to prepare design guides or codes consistent with the national guidance documents. The previous NPPF update in 2021, introduced references to the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code and the use of area, neighbourhood, and site-specific design guides, in order to ensure good quality and context sensitive design.

#### **Building for a Healthy Life** Homes England | 2020

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is the Government endorsed industry standard for well designed homes and neighbourhoods. The BHL toolkit sets out principles to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed (and completed) developments, but can also provide useful prompts and questions for planning applicants to consider during the different stages of the design process.

#### **National Design Guide**

Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities | 2019

The National Design Guide 2019 illustrates how well designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.

#### **National Model Design Code**

Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities | 2021

The National Model Design Code 2021 provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It expands on 10 characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide. This guide should be used as reference for new development.

#### **Manual for Streets**

Department of Transport | 2007

Development is expected to respond positively to the Manual for Streets 2007, the Government's guidance on how to design, construct, adopt and maintain new and existing residential streets. It promotes streets and wider development that avoid car dominated layouts but that do place the needs of pedestrians and cyclists first.



## 1.2.2 LOCAL DESIGN GUIDANCE

### **Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy**

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council | 2010

The core strategy directs development on a particular course during the period up to 2026 by providing the overarching principles of the local development framework by which the essential development needs of the Borough will be delivered. This includes a spatial vision, strategic objectives, a delivery strategy and an implementation and monitoring framework. Core Policy 10: Development in Southborough states that Southborough will remain a town centre of distinctive character and development or redevelopment will serve to strengthen the sense of place, independent of Royal Tunbridge Wells, with approximately 300 net additional dwellings to be delivered across various sites.

### **Tunbridge Wells Submission Local Plan**

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council | 2021

The emerging local plan, which covers the period 2020-2038 and is envisaged to be adopted by the end of 2024, sets out the spatial vision, strategic objectives, and the overarching development strategy for the borough and establishes the planning policy framework necessary to deliver them. Policy EN1: Sustainable Design states that all proposals for development will be required to satisfy criteria relating to design, character and site context; highway safety and access; water/flooding issues; landscape, trees and amenity; bio/geodiversity; residential amenity; crime reduction; design and construction guidance; and community engagement. Policy STR/SO 1: The Strategy for Southborough allocates approximately 42 new dwellings on two sites. Both have had planning permission and 16 are now built.

### **The Kent Design Guide**

Kent Design Initiative | 2005

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) seeks to provide a starting point for good design while retaining scope for creative, individual

approaches to different buildings and different areas. It aims to assist designers and others achieve high standards of design and construction by promoting a common approach to the main principles which underlie Local Planning Authorities' criteria for assessing planning applications. An updated guide is currently being prepared.

### **High Weald Housing Design Guide**

High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) | 2019

As of November 2023 all designated *Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty* (AONBs) in England and Wales become *National Landscapes*. The design guide helps achieve well-designed places and the conservation and enhancement of the National Landscape. The document is divided in three sections, 'Response to Setting', 'Making a Place', and 'The Right Details', providing guidance relating to the most common design issues, with a particular emphasis on tailoring design approaches and decisions to support the overall character and identity of the High Weald.

### **Site Allocations Local Plan**

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council | 2016

This document outlines an area that spans across Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough that is designated as an Area of Change, where a wide range of sites have been allocated.

### **Southborough Conservation Area Appraisal**

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council | 2003

The appraisal outlines the boundary of the Conservation Area, describes its location and setting, archaeology and historical development, and sets out spatial and character analysis on the streetscape, gateways, listed buildings that contribute to the area's special character.

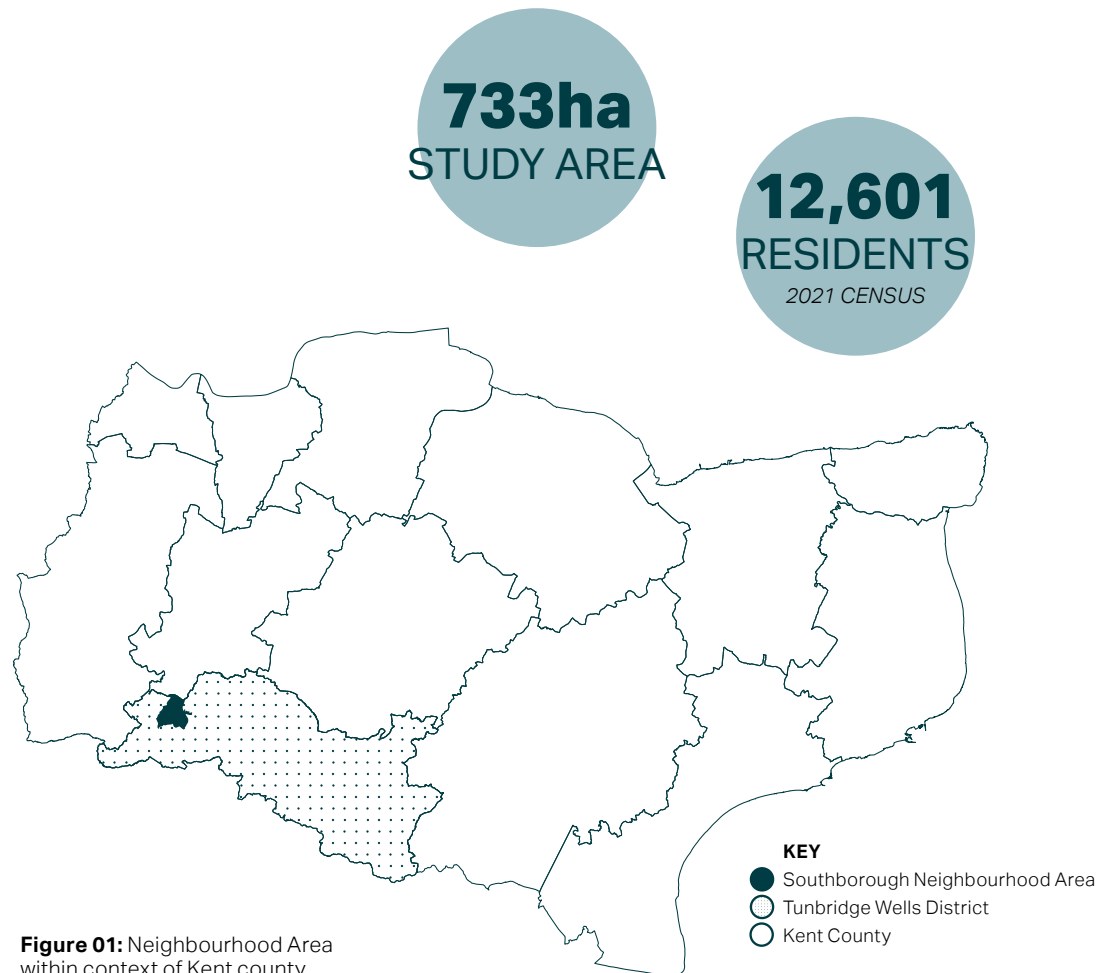
Other SPDs of relevance include the Tunbridge Wells Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2017), Southborough Conservation Area Appraisal (2003), Alterations and Extensions SPD (2006) and the Recreation Open Space SPD (2006).

## 1.3 Area of study

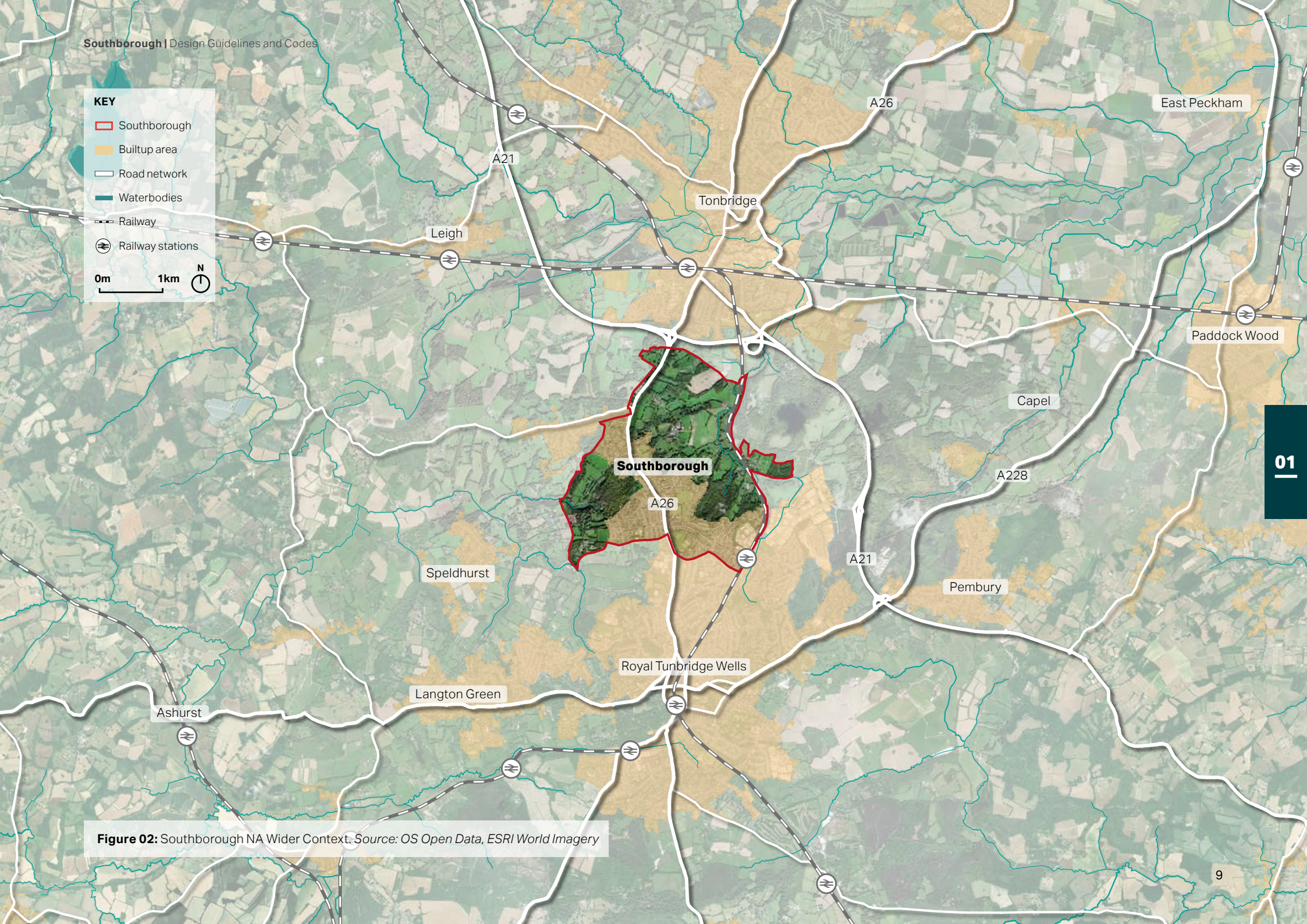
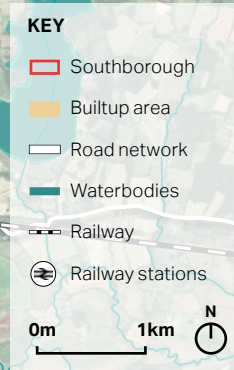
The Neighbourhood Area (NA) of Southborough is a civil parish within Kent, located in South East England and covers an area of approximately 733 hectares. The NA of Southborough includes Southborough town and also the historic settlement at High Brooms.

The A26 (London Road) is the principal route running north-south through the town, linking to Tonbridge in the north and Royal Tunbridge Wells in the south, approximately 2.5 miles from each. The Southeastern train line runs along the eastern boundary of the town, with the nearest stations at High Brooms, Tonbridge, and Tunbridge Wells.

Southborough boasts some outstanding natural beauty, best captivated by the areas which fall within the High Weald National Landscape. There are also a number of amenities in Southborough, including the civic centre, primary schools, cricket club, football club, multiple shops and supermarkets on the High Street (London Road). Surrounding villages such as Bidborough rely on Southborough services.







**Figure 02:** Southborough NA Wider Context. Source: OS Open Data, ESRI World Imagery



## 1.4 Stakeholder engagement

A community engagement session was held during the Southborough Winter Fayre 2023 at the Civic Centre to seek views and opinions of the local residents concerning the design of housing in Southborough.

People were shown a set of posters including the photographs of local housing types and designs and were asked to answer the following questions:

- *Does this photo set a good example for the type of housing design we should be striving for in Southborough?*
- *What do you like about the design?*
- *What do you not like about this design?*

Some of the key points that were raised during the engagement session are illustrated overleaf.

The answers to the above questions were concentrated around themes and design elements related to:

- *Building appearance*
- *Materials and their relevance to the local area*
- *How buildings relate to one another and to the street or other public areas*
- *Building height and size*
- *Gardens*
- *Public space*
- *Boundary treatment (walls, hedges, paving etc.)*
- *Car parking*
- *General feel of the place*
- *How friendly it is for pedestrians and cyclists*
- *Sustainability (energy saving, efficient use of land, wildlife etc.)*



**Figure 03:** Southborough Winter Fayre 2023.  
Image Credit: <https://shillingsnaps.co.uk/southborough-street-winter-fayre-2023>



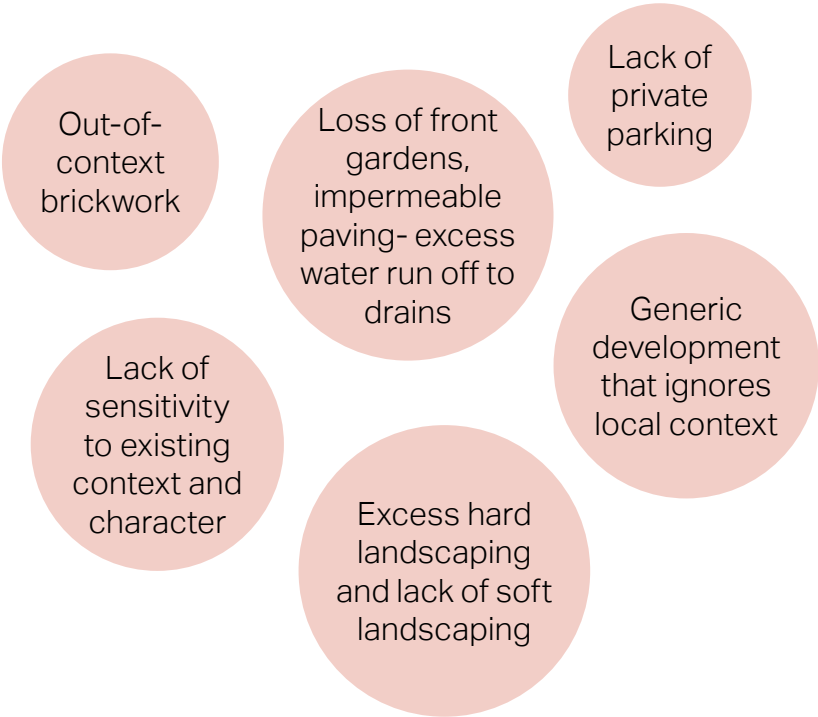
**Figure 04:** Examples of engagement posters produced by AECOM for the Southborough Winter Fayre 2023.



What people would like to see in new developments in Southborough:



What people would not like to see in new developments in Southborough:





**Place Analysis**

**02**



## 2. Place Analysis

**This section presents a snapshot of the Neighbourhood Area today to inform the design objectives of the Design Guidance and Codes. It provides an overview of Southborough and High Brooms' movement network, heritage, and landscape setting.**

### 2.1 History and heritage

#### Historic Origins

Southborough is an historic settlement with records dating back to pre-conquest period, archaeological remains of flint arrowheads and stone axeheads indicate early traces from the perhistoric period.

In the 11th century, William the Conqueror granted Richard Fitz Gilbert lands and bestowed the title Lowey of Tonbridge. The Manor of Southborough was one part of the Lowey.

Until the 16th century, most areas south of the Medway formed part of the Royal Forest of Southfrith, which was reserved by royalty for hunting. Settlements were established as isolated hamlets outside the royal preserve, including Nonsuch Green, Holden

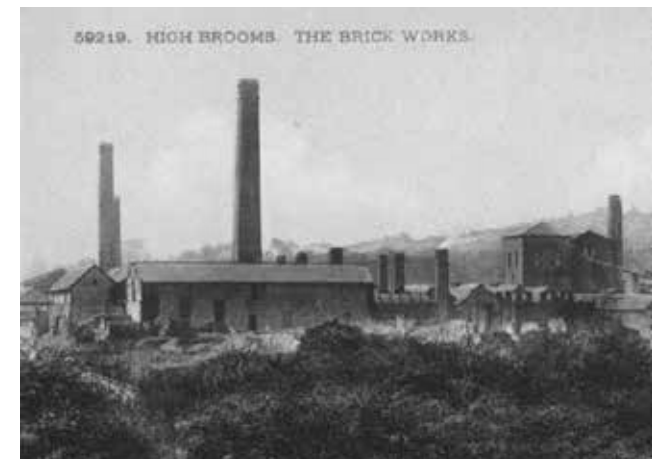
Corner, Modest Corner and a few houses near the Common. By 1639, Southborough is referred to as a hamlet of timber cottages.

#### Industrial Heritage

The Southborough NA has an extensive industrial heritage - stretching from the ironworks from the prehistoric period, to more recent history of gunpowder, cricket ball, and brick manufacturing. Between 1885 and 1968, the High Brooms Brick & Tile Company (HBBC) excavated clay in the area to manufacture local red bricks. The influence of the HBBC can still be seen within the architecture of both Southborough and High Brooms. High Brooms bricks were also used nationally. Some examples are Blackwall and Rotherhithe Tunnel.



**Figure 05:** Historic photograph of the High Street, London Road.  
Image Credit: <https://southboroughsociety.org.uk/southborough>



**Figure 06:** The High Brooms Brick Works.  
Image Credit: [Highbrooms Society on WordPress.com](https://highbroomsociety.wordpress.com)

## Conservation Area

The Southborough Conservation Area was originally designated in 1972. Buildings in the conservation area, principally date from the 16th and 20th centuries. The Conservation Area Appraisal outlines six different character areas, each with unique geographical, historic and physical relationships: The Bounds, The Common, Modest Corner, Holden Corner, Commonsides/The Broadway, The Parade/Park Road. Please refer to the Conservation Area Appraisal for more information on each.

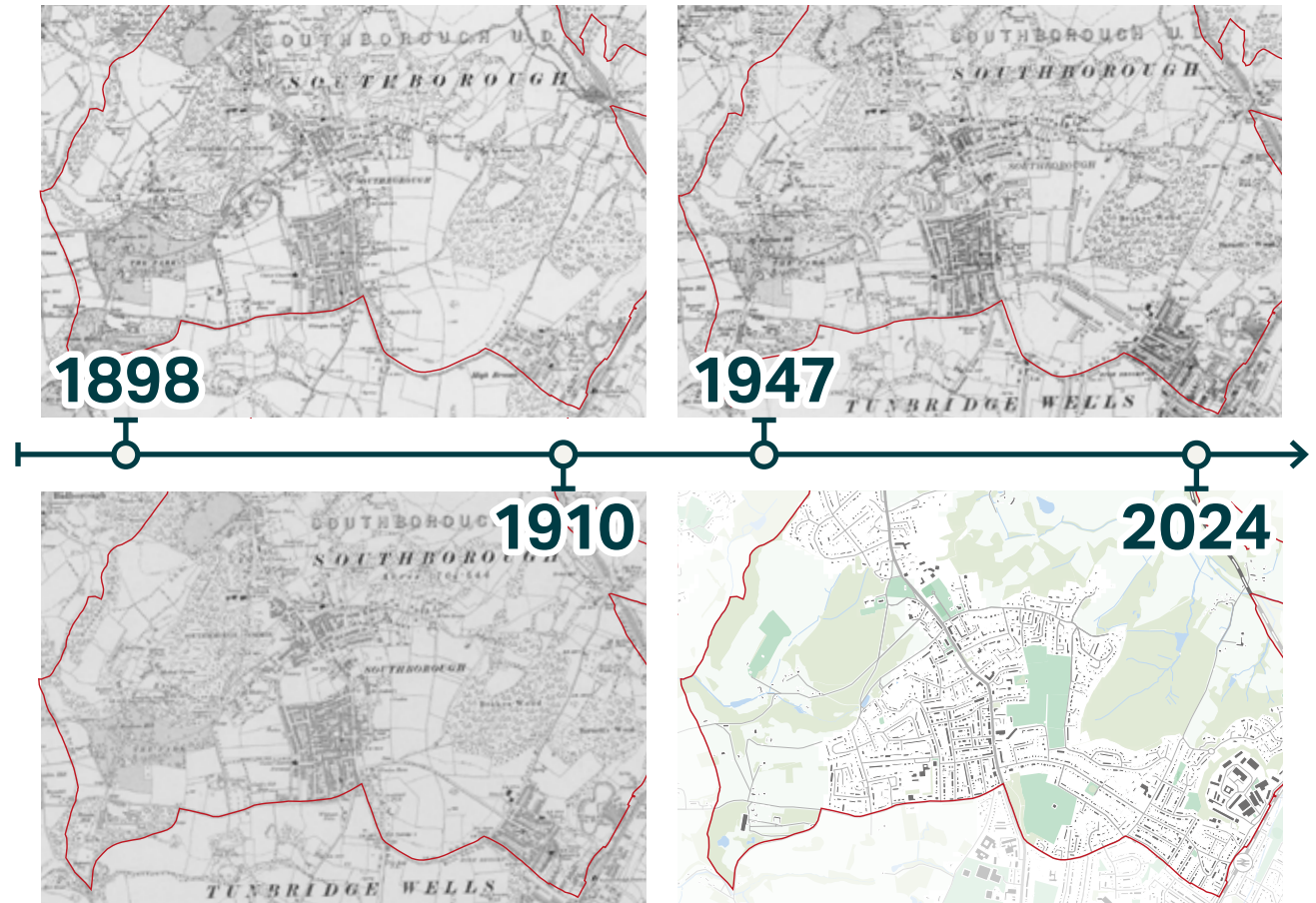
## Historic Parks and Gardens

Salomons and Bentham Hill House are notably listed within Kent Compendium's List of Historic Parks and Gardens as parks and gardens of local importance.<sup>1</sup>

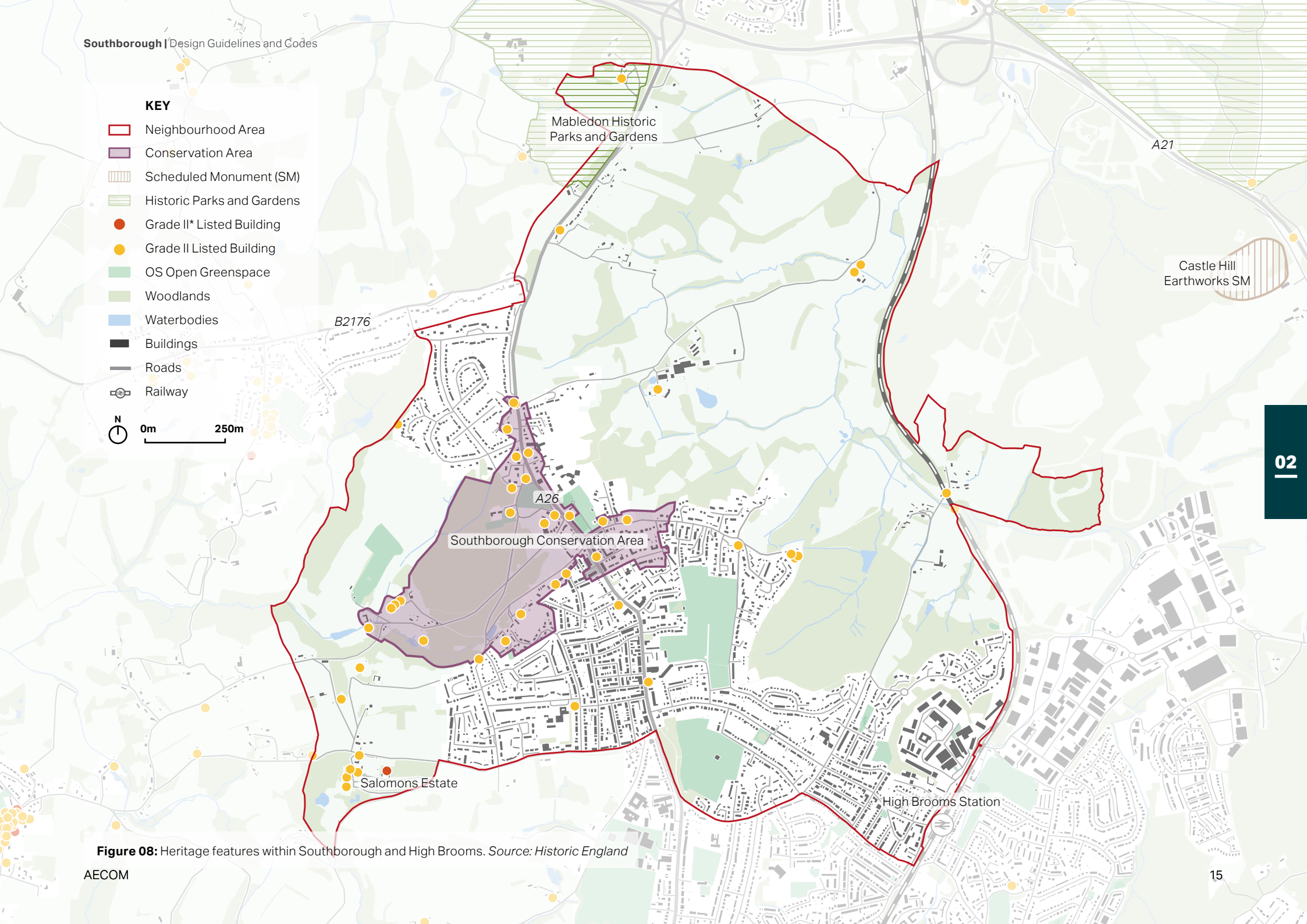
In addition to the above, some areas of the Mabledon estate falls within the boundary of Southborough. The gardens and parkland surrounding Mabledon are protected under Historic England's 'Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England'.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https://thegardenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Final-Historic-Pks-Gardens-Review\\_Sep10-1.pdf](https://thegardenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Final-Historic-Pks-Gardens-Review_Sep10-1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001296>



**Figure 07:** Historic map timeline of Southborough from 1898 to 2024.  
Source: © 2024 National Library of Scotland



**Figure 08:** Heritage features within Southborough and High Brooms. Source: Historic England



## Listed Buildings

Southborough's rich architectural heritage is evident in the number of listed buildings. There are 50 Listed Buildings, one Grade II\* listed and 49 Grade II. The majority of these sit within the Conservation Area. Some notable Listings are below:

- Broomhill / Salomons Estate, features multiple listings, including the Grade II\* listed stables to east of salomons' house and other Grade II features;
- Church of St Peter, Grade II listed. Originally built in 1830 by Decimus Burton. Yellow- brick and sandstone;
- Former Weaver's Restaurant, Grade II listed. C16 L-shaped timber-framed hall house. Ground floor rebuilt in red brick; timber frame exposed above with plaster infilling;
- Ivy House Farm, Grade II listed. C.1460 L-shaped timber-framed house with plaster infilling and curved braces on 1st floor, except tile-hung west wing;
- Colebrook (or Southborough) Viaduct. Grade II listed. Built with red brick in 1845, with stringcourse and parapet above the arches.



Figure 10: David Salomons House & Estate.



Figure 12: Church of St Thomas, Grade II listed.

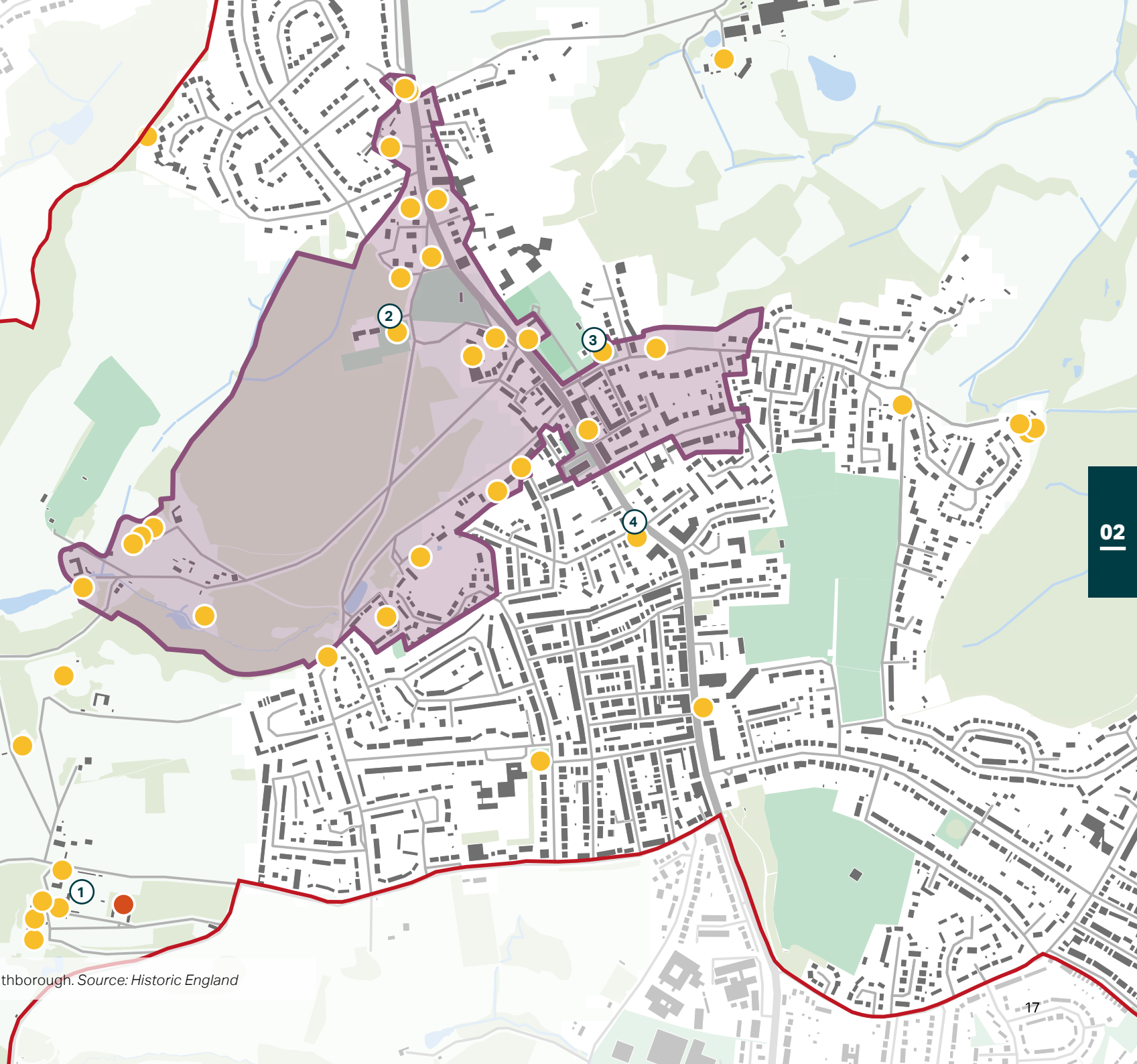
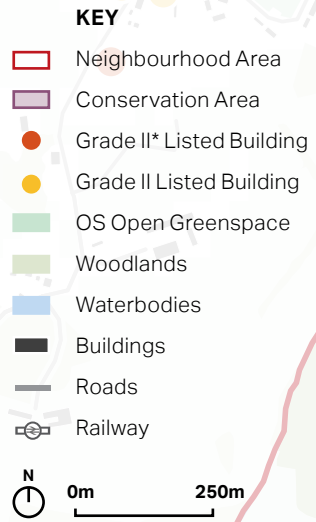


Figure 11: Church of St Peter, Grade II listed.



Figure 13: Former Weaver's Restaurant, Grade II listed.





**Figure 14:** Heritage features within Southborough. Source: Historic England  
AECOM

Settlement Pattern

The Southborough Neighbourhood Area includes two settlement areas: Southborough and High Brooms. The image adjacent shows the location of each of the settlements and how they relate to each other spatially, with connecting road networks and public rights of way (PRoW).

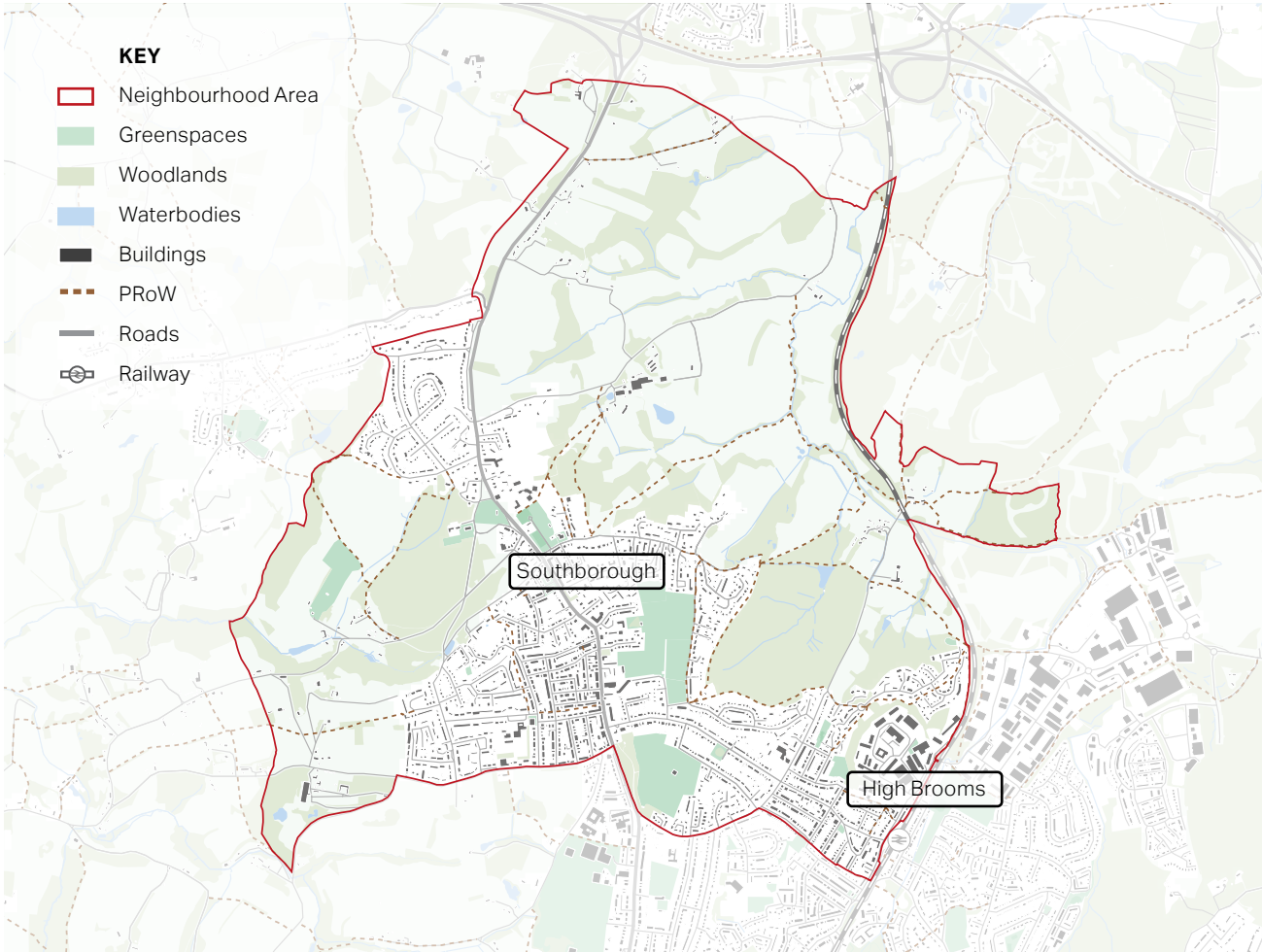


Figure 15: Spatial context of Southborough and High Broom.





**Figure 16:** Salomans Estate - historically important landmark to Southborough for its architectural design and setting .



**Figure 17:** Example of terraced houses within Southborough. Typically a mixture of local red brick, and white render.



**Figure 18:** Distinctive High Brooms Plaques.



**Figure 19:** Example of semi-detached houses within High Brooms. Typically local red brick, with decorative brickwork and plaques.

## 2.2 Landscape and spatial setting

### High Weald National Landscape

Southborough is situated within the scenic setting of the Kentish High Weald National Landscape. Excluding the built-up areas of the town, the surrounding countryside is all within the High Weald National Landscape, which is characterised by its attractive landscape with a mosaic of small farms and woodlands, historic parks, sunken lanes and ridge-top villages.

### Site of Special Scientific Interest

The 'Southborough Pit' is a 1.06 hectare site, and officially designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site demonstrates an example of Wadhurst Clay and Lower Tunbridge Wells landscape character transition, and is critical for sedimentological modelling.<sup>1</sup>

### Local Nature Reserve

Barnett's Wood is a designated Local Nature Reserve (LNR), and spans around 12 hectares.

<sup>1</sup> <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1005484.pdf>

The site features ancient woodlands, wildflower meadows, ponds and an outdoor classroom, along with multiple walking routes. Some well known walking trails are the sculpture trail and woodland.

### Green Belt

The Green Belt was first set out in the 1980 Kent Structure Plan, and has since proved an effective tool in maintaining urban growth, and protecting the countryside. Please refer to the Tunbridge Wells Green Belt Study for more information.<sup>2</sup>

### Woodlands

There are several areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, such as Brokes Wood. Ancient woods are areas of woodland that have persisted since 1600 in England. They are a valuable natural asset for wildlife, soils, carbon sequestration, and various other ecological benefits. There are also areas of deciduous woodland throughout the Neighbourhood Area.

<sup>2</sup> <https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/previous-stages/draft-local-plan/environment-and-landscape/tunbridge-wells-green-belt-study>

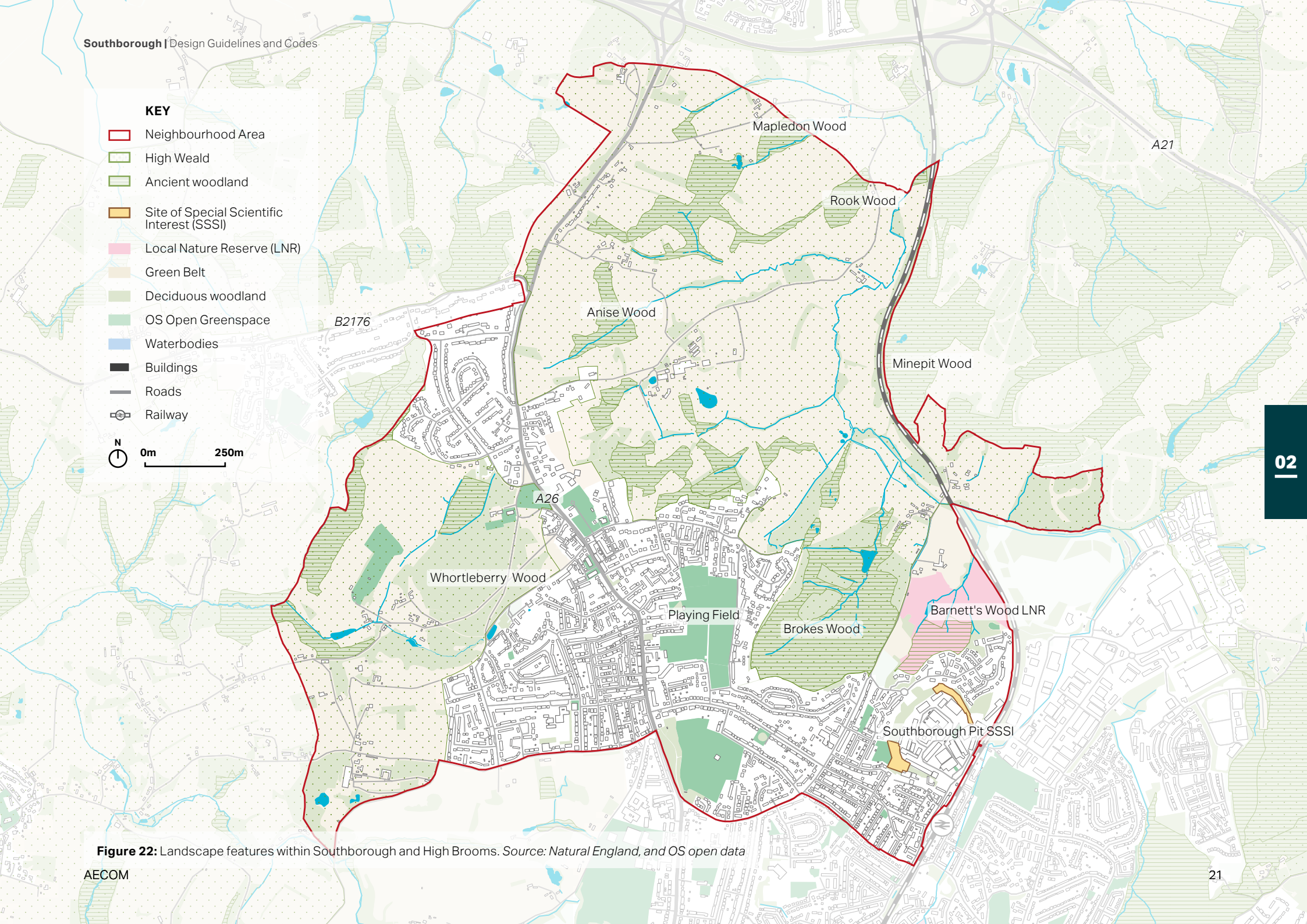


**Figure 20:** High Weald Rolling Hills. Source: [highweald.org](http://highweald.org)



**Figure 21:** Footpath at Brokes Wood (Ancient Woodland). Source: [www.geograph.org.uk](http://www.geograph.org.uk); Copyright N Chadwick and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence.





**Figure 22:** Landscape features within Southborough and High Brooms. Source: Natural England, and OS open data

## Topography

The landscape and topography of Southborough makes a significant contribution to its character and setting. Situated within the idyllic setting of the Kentish High Weald National Landscape, the undulating ridges and gentle valleys creates sweeping views over the landscape.

## Flood Zones

The main settlements of Southborough and High Brooms sit on a ridgeline and thus have minimal impact from flooding. Some areas towards north-east of the NA fall within Flood Risk Zones 2 & 3, defined as below.<sup>1</sup>

- Flood zone 2: “annual probability of river flooding between 1.0% and 0.1% and annual probability of sea flooding between 0.5% and 0.1%.”
- Flood zone 3: “1% or greater annual probability of river flooding or a 0.5% or greater annual probability of sea flooding.”

<sup>1</sup> <https://geosmartinfo.co.uk/2016/03/flood-zones-explained/>



**Figure 23:** North of Pennington Road. Source: [www.geograph.org.uk](http://www.geograph.org.uk); Copyright N Chadwick and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence.



**Figure 24:** View towards Nightingale Farm from Vauxhall Lane. Source: [www.geograph.org.uk](http://www.geograph.org.uk); Copyright N Chadwick and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence.

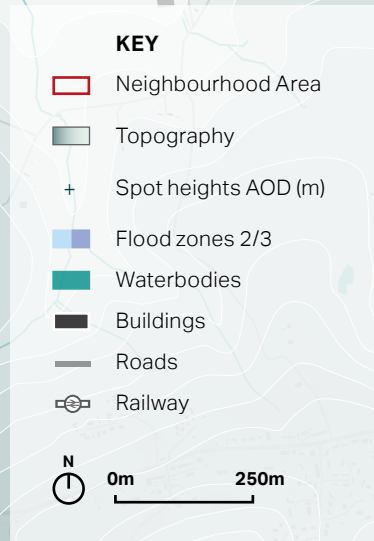


**Figure 25:** Southborough Bourne. Source: [www.geograph.org.uk](http://www.geograph.org.uk); Copyright N Chadwick and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence.



**Figure 26:** Duck Pond at Holden Corner. Source: [www.geograph.org.uk](http://www.geograph.org.uk); Copyright N Chadwick and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence.





**Figure 27:** Landscape features within Southborough and High Brooms. Source: Natural England, and OS open data



## 2.3 Connectivity and movement

### Roads

Southborough is well-connected, the London Road (A26) runs centrally through the settlement giving easy access to the M25, M26 and M20.

Traffic congestion on the High Street (A26) and the movement of heavy goods vehicles through the town are concerns for residents. The remaining road network in the neighbourhood area is formed of residential and country roads.

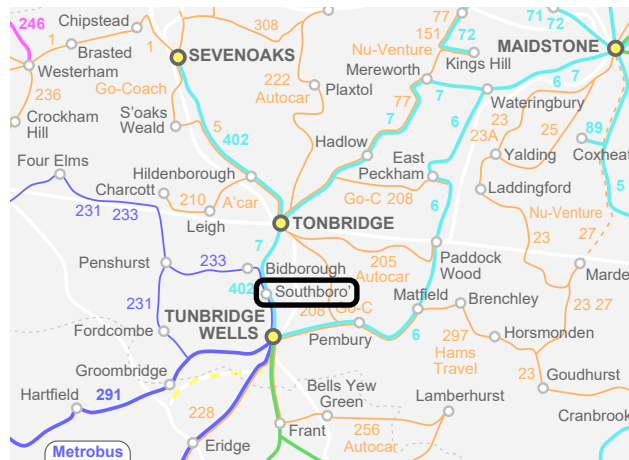
### Walking and active travel

The Neighbourhood Area benefits from a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) that connects the main settlement areas to the surrounding countryside, and the High Weald National Landscape. There is also a good network of footpaths within the built-up area which provides permeability through the residential quarters.

There are no National Cycle Network Routes through the Neighbourhood Area. However there are local cycles routes within the borough as picked up in the codes.

### Public transport

The Southeastern train line runs along the eastern boundary of the neighbourhood area, with the nearest stations at High Brooms, Tonbridge, and Tunbridge Wells, providing links into London. There are direct train connections from High Brooms to London Bridge within 40 minutes. Southborough is also well-connected via a public bus network to surrounding towns and villages, such as Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge, Maidstone, among others.



**Figure 30:** Bus routes around Southborough.  
Source: <http://www.busatlas.uk/>



**Figure 28:** London Road (A26) towards Tonbridge to the north of the Neighbourhood Area.



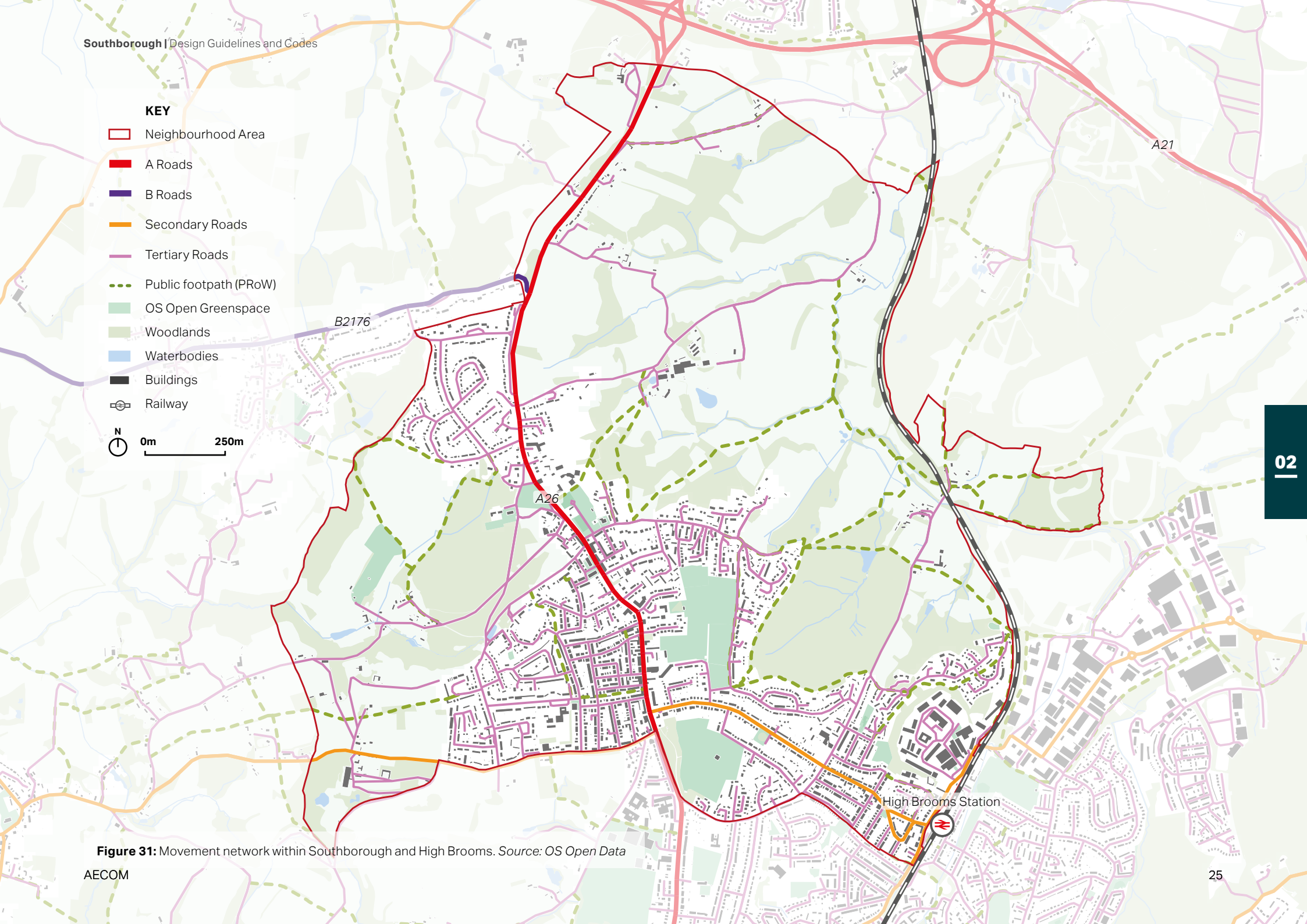
**Figure 29:** Public footpaths at High Brooms Village Green, with views towards Tunbridge Wells.

**KEY**

- Neighbourhood Area
- A Roads
- B Roads
- Secondary Roads
- Tertiary Roads
- Public footpath (PRoW)
- OS Open Greenspace
- Woodlands
- Waterbodies
- Buildings
- Railway



0m 250m



**Figure 31:** Movement network within Southborough and High Brooms. Source: OS Open Data





Character Study

03



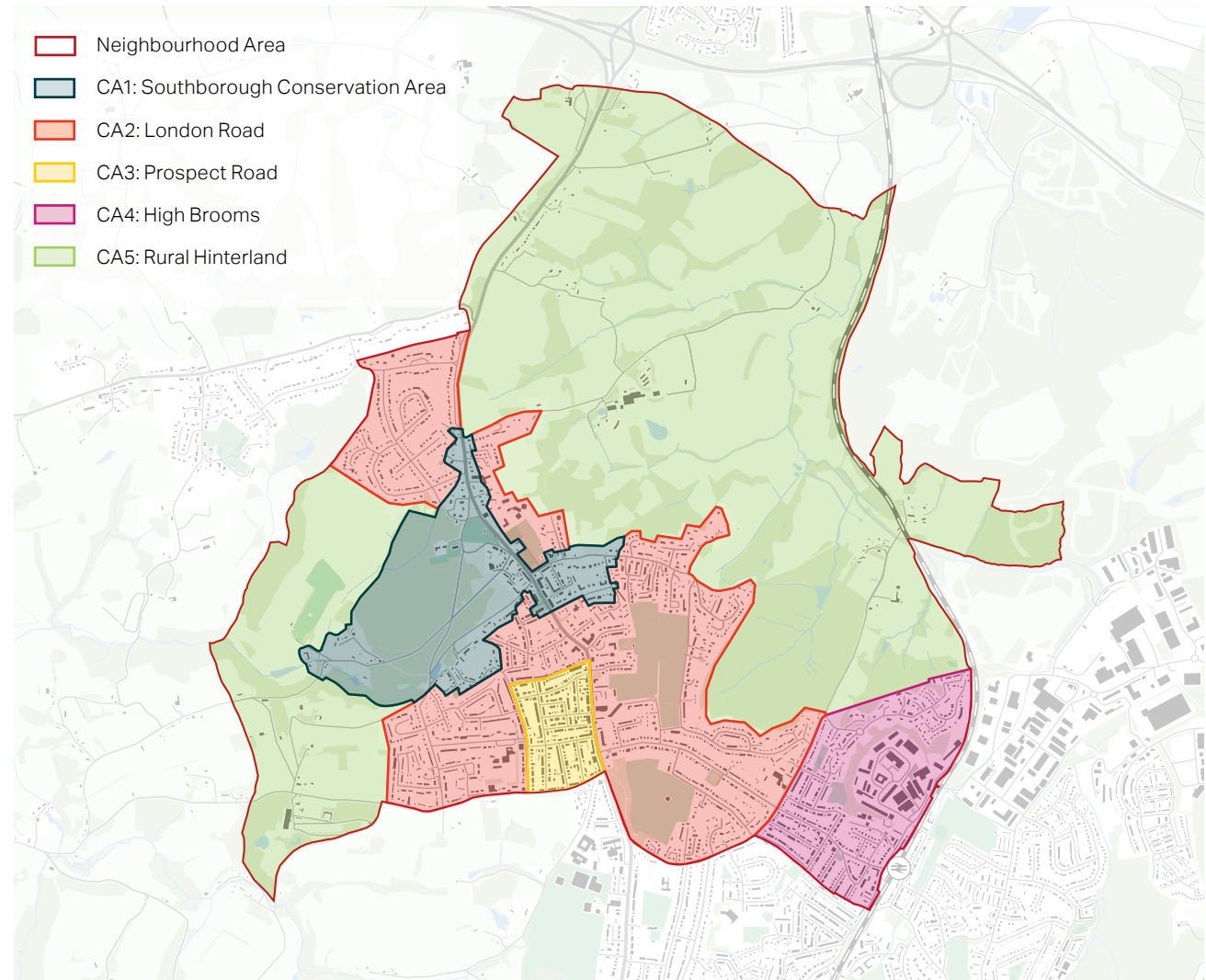
## 3. Character Study

**This section outlines the character areas (CA) within Southborough and High Brooms. These areas vary in character primarily due to their location, setting and period of development.**

### 3.1 Defining the character areas

Following on from the analysis set out above, this chapter focuses on the different character areas within the neighbourhood area. The different areas are characterised by variations in topography, movement, views and landmarks, green space and landscape cover, public realm and streetscape, built form and architectural details.

Development in each CA should respond to and reflect the prevailing built and landscape features, as defined in this study, to maintain its unique setting. Any new development outside a CA boundary should refer to the closest CA.

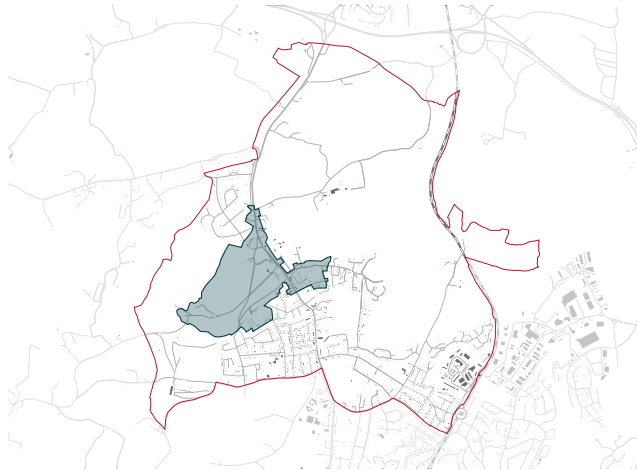


**Figure 32:** Indicative character typologies within Southborough and High Brooms.



## CA1

# Southborough Conservation Area



The Southborough Conservation Area consists of Southborough's historic core. The distinguishing feature is the green space of the Common and the buildings which gradually evolved round its perimeter. As noted, the Conservation Area Appraisal outlines six different character areas, each with unique geographical, historic and physical relationships. This section will nonetheless attempt to summarise the overall elements that contribute to the area's special character.



**Figure 33:** Developments within CA 1 - Southborough Conservation Area, highlighting terraced red brick or white rendered houses forming consistent building lines with little setback from streets. Ground floor retail with upper floor residential uses is a common arrangement within the historic core.

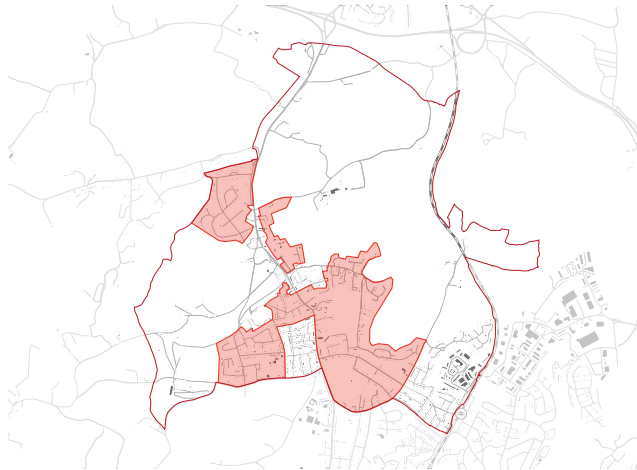
<b>Land use</b>	Stretch of commercial buildings lining London Road , with a cluster of residential buildings in the areas splintering off to the east and west of the main road. Also contains St Dunstan's Church, a large wooded area and green spaces such as Southborough Common.
<b>Pattern of development</b>	The area features an axis of linear development running along London Road. The northern section is complemented by open green spaces on either side of the road to form occasional gaps between the detached homes. The southern section is characterised by a more dense development pattern on the eastern side of the road to provide a high street feel to the area. The western residential area features regimented blocks of narrow streets lined by semi-detached homes, whilst the eastern section features more varied, twisting roads.
<b>Building line</b>	There is a variety of building lines across the different character areas within the Conservation Area. The commercial area on London Road features shops that directly abut the pavement, whilst the residential buildings to the north often feature gated driveways. The other residential areas tend to have more traditional front gardens/walkways, though some narrow streets such as Castle Street contain very short set backs of no more than 1-2 meters.
<b>Scale, density and roofline</b>	There is a variety of sizes and types of buildings, with cottages, workshops, and retail with residential over, and larger houses. Buildings are a maximum of three storeys with a mixture of pitched and hip roofs. They exhibit differing styles, materials and ages. All, however, have a human scale and are well proportioned. The southern cluster exhibits a much denser pattern than the buildings around Southborough Common. There is a recent trend to converting warehouse structures to residential, eg Draper Street.
<b>Public realm</b>	The majority of pavements along London Road are made of brick, generally marked by stones or posts. Alongside the pavements there are informal roadside verges and spaces such as at Modest Corner, as well as the important acid grassland areas. Apart from the A26 corridor, the character of the area benefits from low-key lighting and a general lack of road signs.
<b>Materials</b>	Traditional materials dominate the area including render, brick and tile hanging. Slate roofs predominate with few examples of clay tiling.

**Figure 34:** Table of characteristics within the Southborough Conservation Area Character Area



## CA2

### London Road



The London Road CA comprises the majority of the residential areas within the town. The character area is primarily made up of post-war detached and semi-detached housing, built in a variety of architectural styles. Clusters of homes are separated by a variety of important green spaces, acting as playing fields and community gardens.



**Figure 35:** Properties within CA 2 - London Road, houses are generously sized and set are set on large plots to provide well-sized front and back gardens. Recent developments of 3-storey flats can also be found within this character area on Salomans Grove, use of material (buff brick) is generally sympathetic with existing developments in the character area.

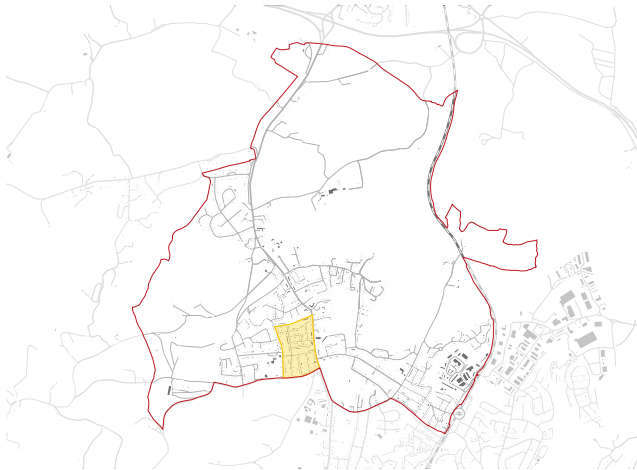
Land use	This area covers the largest residential area of all other CA in Southborough. It is largely split into two, with a western and eastern residential cluster divided by the commerical land use on London Road running down the middle. The eastern section also has a number of green spaces.
Pattern of development	Buildings are arranged in varied patterns across this area. Many are set out in a linear pattern along the straight roads, whilst many others are also set among meandering cul-de-sacs that shoot off of the longer roads.
Building line	Beyond the shopfronts on London Road, buildings tend to be arranged in a regimented manner, parallel to the road with a moderate set back leaving space for front gardens and/or driveways. There are some examples of smaller set backs and on-street parking along cul-de-sacs in the northeast of the area.
Scale, density and roofline	Buildings in the character area are generally two storeys with a mixture of gabled, hipped and cross-gabled roofs. Many dwellings feature gable dormers. The density is relatively consistent with that of the other areas across Southborough.
Public realm	Routes feature ample pavement sustaining pedestrian movement, with grass verges buffering plots from the streets, particularly where front gardens are less prevalent to provide some green areas to the streetscape. The area includes a number of well-kept, important green spaces, primarily as playing fields but also through the Southborough Allotments to the east of the area.
Materials	A variety of materials are used across this widespanning area. Red and light brick facades are commonly found, often with a mix of coloured hangiles. Alternatively, many dwellings feature a colour render facade. Roofs generally consist of clay tiling, though slate tiles are not uncommon. There is an abundance of PVC casement windows and fascias throughout. The use of PVC is not inkeeping and should not set a precedent.

Figure 36: Table of characteristics within the London Road Character Area



## CA3

### Prospect Road



The Prospect Road Character Area lies to the south of Southborough and consists of a more regimented, block-like pattern than much of the rest of the town. Homes here are older and date to late Victorian/Edwardian period than those in the surrounding blocks such as those in CA2. Large bay windows are popular in the area and most homes are either red-brick or lightly painted in cream, white or pale-blue, many with decorative features.



**Figure 37:** Properties within CA3 - Prospect Road, terraced houses are commonly found within the character area, typically in rows of 3 or 4. A variety of red brick, white rendered, painted and red brick with white rendered quoins can be found across the character area. Houses tend to have smaller setback from streets, front gardens are also smaller compared to other parts of the NA. Due to the terraced typology, on-street parking is the dominant parking solution in this character area.

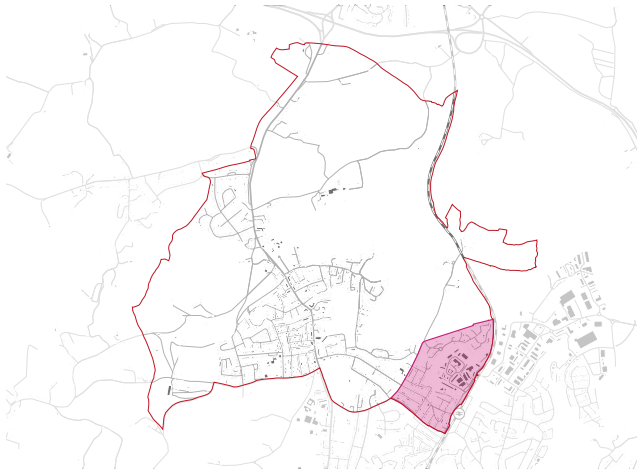
Land use	This CA is primarily residential, with a stretch of services that serve the local area along London Road.
Pattern of development	The area is made up of a mix of terraced, detached and semi-detached housing arranged in a regimented pattern of rectangular blocks.
Building line	Building lines within the Prospect Road Character Area are relatively uniform, with properties following a consistent rhythm in the regimented layout. Homes generally have small set backs, with a walkway to the front door, requiring on-street parking.
Scale, density and roofline	Homes tend to be slightly larger, yet generally still limited to two storey and roofs are mostly gabled or cross-gabled. Streets feel more narrow than other areas, which alongside the higher density of homes, creates a more compact feel than other Character Areas.
Public realm	Public realm is primarily limited to the streetscape, which tends to feature narrow pavements. An astroturf football pitch can be accessed from Charles Street.
Materials	This area is dominated by red and light brick facades with large bay windows on the ground floor. These buildings also often feature additional decorative features that run along the facade between the first and second storeys. These homes are supplemented by lightly coloured cream, white or pale blue painted homes. Roofing materials vary between clay/concrete tiles and slates.

Figure 38: Table of characteristics within the Prospect Road Character Area



## CA4

### High Brooms



The High Brooms area is a residential area that is complemented by a large industrial park to east. The southern and western sections of the area comprise a range of terraced and semi-detached housing that is distinct from homes in the northern section, which were developed later in the latter half of the twentieth century. The southeastern railway runs along the east of the area, making the suburb a popular choice of residence amongst commuters to London.



**Figure 39:** High Brooms is characterised by red brick Victorian terraces, with arched doorways and canted bay windows. Consistency in building line, given rise from the terraced typology, and the wide use of red brick provide a sense of uniformity across the character area. Properties are typically paired with low brick walls, hedges or iron railing as boundary treatment.

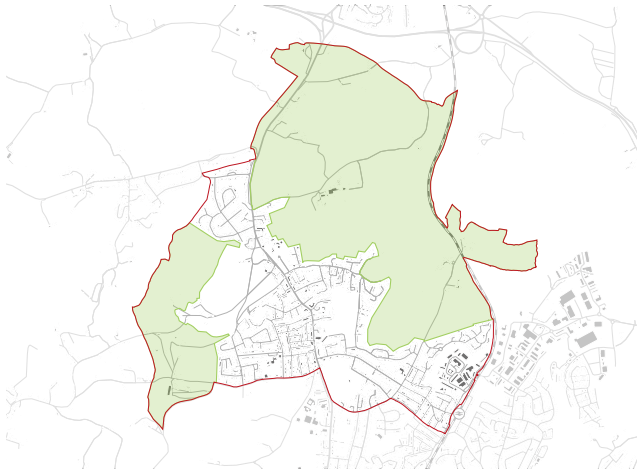
<b>Land use</b>	Around a quarter of this Character Area is covered by the High Brooms Industrial Park, which contains a mixture of commercial stores and recreational spaces. The rest is covered by residential land use.
<b>Pattern of development</b>	The southern and western sections of residential land is arranged in an organised, block-like pattern, with relatively straight and longer-stretching roads lined with terraced and semi-detached homes. In contrast, the northern section is arranged in a meandering pattern with many small, winding cul-de-sacs creating a swirling pattern from above. The industrial park is shouldered by densely packed vegetation with tall trees to create a separation from the residential areas.
<b>Building line</b>	Where homes are arranged in a more block-like pattern on narrower roads, the buidling line is relatively regimented with small setbacks of around 1-2 metres, requiring on-street parking. There is more variety in the northern and southeastern sections, with homes positioned at a variety of angles to the street, generally with larger setbacks, leaving space for a small front garden and/or driveway.
<b>Scale, density and roofline</b>	Homes are generally two storeys, with a mixture of gabled and hipped roofs. The density is relatively consistent with that of the other areas across Southborough, with around 40-50 dph, though the northern section is arranged in a more sprawling manner and therefore slightly less densely organised.
<b>Public realm</b>	Public space is relatively limited, though the Frank Weare Play Area offers a green space and playground for residents. The residential area has good pavement links, including access to and around the industrial park.
<b>Materials</b>	The area predominantly features red brick facade which are, like in CA3, supplemented by lightly coloured cream, white of pale blue painted homes. Clay pantiles are the most commonly used roof material and most homes features PVC casement windows, some with a wood style finish. The use of PVC is not inkeeping and should not set a precedent.

Figure 40: Table of characteristics within the High Brooms Character Area



## CA5

### Rural Hinterland



The rural hinterland includes the undeveloped surrounds that make up the majority of the Neighbourhood Area. It is largely constrained by multiple designations - High Weald National Landscape, Green Belt, outside Limits to Built Development by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. It is mostly green fields and arable farmland, though there are a few notable developments scattered throughout. Most eminently, Salomons Estate, a Victorian mansion and associated gardens, sits to the southwest. In addition, a range of homes are situated along London Road to the north.



**Figure 41:** Photos of CA5 - Rural Hinterland, highlighting the undulating landscape setting and green infrastructure network that Southborough is embedded within.

<b>Land use</b>	The rural hinterland is mostly made up of arable farmland and lush, green woodland. Beyond a range of agricultural buildings and warehouses, notable residential development can be observed along the northern section of London Road. Salomon's Estate, which contains a number of Grade II and II* listed buildings/ structures also lies to the southeast of the area, hosting a range of uses including a hotel, event venue, theatre, museum, preschool, ambulance training centre and offices.
<b>Pattern of development</b>	The stretch of homes along London Road are arranged in a clear linear pattern, exclusively located on the eastern side of the road, bar one large home that sits to the west and contains a private road. The Salomon Estate buildings are arranged in a cluster linked by a network of artery-like roads.
<b>Building line</b>	The homes along London Road are well set back, all with driveways off of the main road, many with gated access. The Salomon's Estate hotel building includes a grand square, whilst the associated buildings further down the road are fronted by a car park.
<b>Scale, density and roofline</b>	The housing along London Road consists of large two storey detached homes with hipped and cross-hipped roofs. Given their rural setting, these homes are less densely arranged.
<b>Public realm</b>	London Road features a one-sided pavement with green verges. Elsewhere, roads have no pavements and are mostly bordered by hedgerows, though a range of footpaths link the wider town.
<b>Materials</b>	The homes along London Road consist of either red-brick facades or cream/white painted facades. Roofs are formed by clay pantiles. Many of these homes have timber or PVC sash windows. The main building on Salomon's Estate, the stable block completed in 1894. The Salomons stable block now has planning permission for conversion to tourist use. It is articulated by exposed brick arches and glazed screens, and with decorative tiles, joinery and ephemera relating to the stables of the past.

**Figure 42:** Table of characteristics within the Rural Hinterland Character Area



## 3.2 SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis is set out in this section to summarise key findings informed by the context analysis and more detailed character area analyses. These findings will help to shape the design codes and guidance in the following chapter.

Points of strengths and opportunities will be harnessed and further reinforced by the design codes and guidance. Any weaknesses and potential threats identified will be targeted and mitigated against through suggestions of good urban design practices and principles.



**Figure 43:** New development along Salomons Grove.



**Figure 44:** Traditional Victorian terraces at High Brooms



**Figure 45:** Abundance of ancient and deciduous woodlands.

**STRENGTHS**

- Heritage assets such as the various listed buildings and features underpin the character of the town;
- Southborough’s landscape setting and the High Weald National Landscape adds to the semi-rural setting location and feel of the town;
- Views out from the urban area;
- Networks of PRoWs maintain the neighbourhood area’s connectivity within itself and with surrounding villages and towns.

**WEAKNESS**

- A number of recent extensions and conversions detracting from the local vernacular;
- Streets should avoid being cluttered by on-street parking that can lead to congestion and a car-dominated streetscape.
- The cohesiveness of the streetscape could be undermined by inappropriate building densities and massing in new constructions or modifications.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- Creating a green network with the abundance of woodlands, and other green spaces;
- The Civic Centre and adjacent square, with library, medical centre serves as an active community hub;
- Promoting and protecting the multiple locally important heritage assets.

**THREATS**

- The number of retrospective planning applications could continue to undermine the character and local architectural merits of the town if they are not sensitively designed;
- New development could create abrupt edges with the rural countryside. Natural boundary treatments such as hedgerows and shrubs should be in place to allow for a smooth transition into the landscape.





**Design Guidelines and  
Codes**

**04**

## 4. Design guidelines and codes

This section sets out the Design Guidance and Codes that support the Neighbourhood Plan. This design guide is in addition to, and should be read in conjunction with, national and local policy and guidance on design.

Development in the Neighbourhood Area should demonstrate how best practice design guidance contained in national and local policy and guidance documents, including this design guide, has been considered in the layout, architectural and landscape design.

### 4.1 Introduction

This section is divided into two parts. The first is a set of key elements to consider when assessing a design proposal. These are presented as general guidance which should be considered by developers and their design teams who should provide clarification and explanation as necessary.

The second part is the design guidance and codes, setting out the expectations that are specific to the context of the Southborough Neighbourhood Area. The Design Guidance and Codes apply to the whole Neighbourhood Area.

The codes are divided into sections by theme, as shown on this page, each one with a different number of subsections.

- **LB:** Layout and buildings
- **SF:** Sustainable futures
- **EC:** Ecology
- **AM:** Access and movement



## 4.2 Part 1: General design considerations

The scope of the design code is not limited to large interventions within the main settlement area but also within the wider rural setting as well as individual small-scale developments. Creating good places demand a focus on achieving quality and this needs to be embedded in the heart of the process. Also, quality does not necessarily equate to higher costs. Through partnership and collaboration, developers should aim to deliver places that comprise these qualities.

- 1 Development should demonstrate synergy with, and be complementary to, existing settlement in terms of physical form, movement/access, and land use type;
- 2 Development should relate sensitively to local heritage buildings, topography/landscape features, countryside setting, and long-distance views;
- 3 Development should reinforce or enhance the established character of the settlement;
- 4 Development should integrate with existing access, public rights of way (PRoW), streets, circulation networks, and understand use;
- 5 Development should explore opportunities to enhance access to public green space, to reflect settlement needs;
- 6 Development should reflect, respect and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness, avoiding pastiche replication;
- 7 Redevelopment of heritage buildings including farms should aim to conserve as many vernacular features as is practicable;

- 8 Development should retain and incorporate important existing landscape and built-form features;
- 9 Building performance in terms of conservation of heat and fuel over-and-above building regulations should be a key design driver for new development;
- 10 Development should respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form, and massing;
- 11 Development should adopt contextually appropriate materials and construction details. Embodied carbon toolkits should be used to guide material specification;
- 12 Development should ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access, and parking relate well to each other; to provide safe, connected, and attractive spaces;
- 13 Net Zero aims should be integrated, and development should adopt low-energy and energy generative technologies within the development at the start of the design process; and
- 14 Development should use nature-based water management solutions/ SuDS to manage on-site water and boost biodiversity habitat.



# 4.3 Part 2: Key design guidance

The following set of design guidance and codes forms the main substance of this document. These codes set out the expectations that are specific to the context of the Southborough Neighbourhood Area. The use of photographs and diagrams help to reflect good precedents, demonstrate design issues for consideration and further highlight the application of each design.

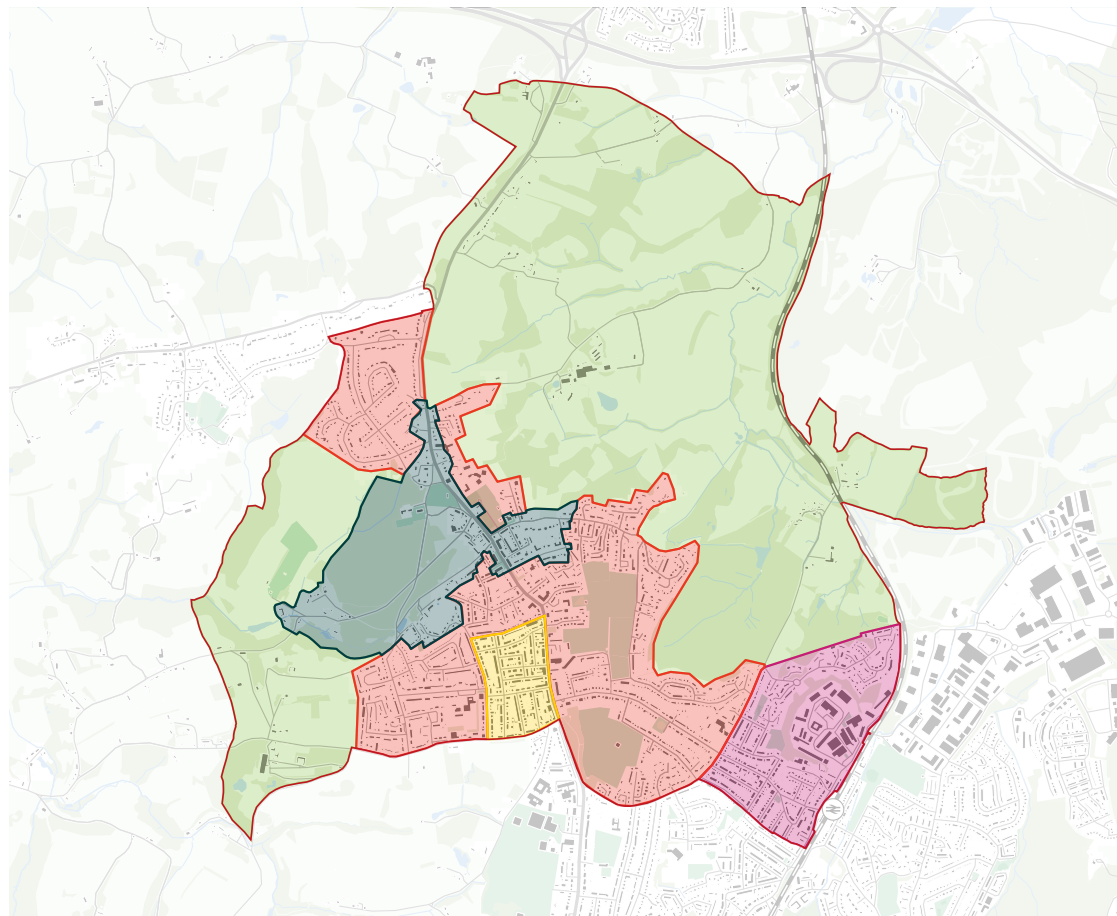
The guidance advocates for character led design which responds to and enhances the landscape and town character. It is important that new development responds to local context and enhances the “sense of place” whilst meeting the aspirations of residents.

Theme	Prefix	Code	Relevant Character Area
Layout and buildings (LB)	LB01	Pattern of development	CA1,2,3,4
	LB02	Preserving and promoting the local vernacular	CA1,2,3,4
	LB03	Extensions, conversions and infill	CA1,2,3,4
	LB04	Shop fronts	CA1,2
Sustainable futures (SF)	SF01	Energy efficiency	CA1,2,3,4
	SF02	Safe and friendly neighbourhoods	C1,2,3,4
Ecology (EC)	EC01	Landscape setting	CA1,2,3,4,5
	EC02	Wildlife and biodiversity	CA5
Access and movement (AM)	AM01	Promoting active travel	CA1,2,5
	AM02	Parking typologies	CA1,2,3,4
	AM03	Traffic calming measures	CA1,2

## How to apply the design guidelines and codes

Each of the areas on the Character Area plan to the right relates to the appropriate design code prefix, to enable an understanding of where each of the codes should be applied in the town.

- Neighbourhood Area
- CA1: Southborough Conservation Area
- CA2: London Road
- CA3: Prospect Road
- CA4: High Brooms
- CA5: Rural Hinterland



**Figure 46:** How to apply the codes on defined character areas.



## LAYOUT AND BUILDINGS (LB)

### LB01 Pattern of development

An understanding of the existing patterns of growth in Southborough and High Brooms combined with an efficient use of land are required for any new development. Any new development should adhere to the following principles:

- New developments, including larger scale housing developments, must demonstrate an understanding of the scale, building orientation, enclosure, and rhythm of the surrounding built environment;
- The density of any development should reflect the character of the immediate area and location within the village. The optimum density will respond to surrounding densities, whilst making efficient use of land; and
- Development should relate sensitively to local heritage buildings, topography/ landscape features, countryside setting and long-distance views. Where it is abutting surrounding countryside, there should be a gradual transition and ample of landscape screening to reduce visual impact.



CA1 Southborough Conservation Area



CA2 London Road



CA3 Prospect Road



CA4 High Brooms

## LB02 Preserving and promoting the local vernacular

The Southborough NA's built heritage underpins the character of its built form as an area with historic roots. Both Southborough and High Brooms offer distinctive characteristics, which are unique within each settlement. These, alongside other Listed Buildings across the town and the Southborough Conservation Area, act as landmarks which creates a unique identity for the Neighbourhood Area. More analysis on specific characteristics within each area of Southborough can be found in Section 3 *Character Study*.

Some design guidelines to be in-keeping with the local vernacular are:

- Any development should be rooted in Southborough and High Brooms' historical architectural character; and
- Any Listed Buildings (see Figure 7 and 13) should be protected and adequately maintained, as they serve as important historic assets to the NA and can act as effective landmarks for navigation whilst adding to the quality of the built environment;

### Architectural detailing and fenestration

- Include locally distinctive fenestration and detailing in new development, drawing on examples from the listed buildings within each settlement. It is best for developments to avoid mixing historic styles;
- Details such as patterned ornate brick patterns around fenestration are commonly featured. Such elements provide visual interest and reduce the scale and bulk of the buildings;
- High Broom's unique history and the brickworks have been preserved through the distinctive red brick buildings and footways, any new development should respect and make references to these elements; and
- Include detailing on roofs and façades to minimise the bulk and scale of buildings, for example with the use of flanking chimney stacks for the roofs and detailing around fenestration.

### Detailing and fenestration



Bay windows



Timber framed



Brick detailing



Red - grey hungtile mix



Brick detailing



Roof detailing

## Building height, scale, and roofline

- Creating variety and interest in the roofscape is an important element in placemaking. Rooflines in Southborough are varied, with staggered ridge heights and a mix of gable and hipped roofs. Flat roofs are to be avoided;
- Building heights should refer to it's respective character area (CA) for guidance on the maximum height, any new development outside CA boundary should refer to the closest CA.
- Ensure the height of development responds to the surrounding buildings, street width and sense of enclosure, topography and mature vegetation; and
- Front dormers should be avoided. Any others should be in proportion to the dimensions and roof of the building, and reflect the rhythm of windows.

### Wall



**Red brick**



**Light coloured paint**



**White roughcast**

### Roofline



**Clay pantile**



**Slate roof**



**Chimney stacks**

### Surfacing



**Red brick paving**



**Paving blocks**



**Asphalt**



## Boundary treatments

- Any new development must include appropriate boundary treatments. Low-brick walls are the most common within Southborough, along with some examples of hedges to soften;
- Quality boundary treatments are a key design element in new development, particularly when they are facing onto green open spaces, and the perimeter of properties are visible to others;
- Boundary treatments should be used at the plot edge to provide a sense of continuity and cohesion along the street as well as providing separation;
- Boundary treatments for new development should be designed to frame the building and improve the overall streetscape;
- Boundary treatments such as high fences should be avoided in order to maintain an active frontage and natural surveillance; and
- Boundary treatments should offer privacy and screen parked vehicles and ground floor windows facing the street.

## Boundary treatments



**Low-medium hedges**



**Low brick walls**



**Low timber post and rail fence**

## LB03 Extensions, conversions and infill

There are a number of principles that residential extensions and conversions should follow to maintain character. Many household extensions are covered by permitted development rights, and so do not need planning permission. These rights do not apply in certain areas such as Conservation Areas.

Please refer to the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Limits to Built Development Topic Paper for more information.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/300765/Limits\\_to\\_Built\\_Development\\_Topic\\_Paper.pdf](https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/300765/Limits_to_Built_Development_Topic_Paper.pdf)

### Extensions

- Extensions should consider the materials, architectural features, window sizes and proportions of the existing building and respect these elements to design an extension that matches and complements the existing building;
- Extensions should aim to be in-keeping with the existing building line of the street; and
- In the case of side extensions, the new part should be set back from the front of the main building and retain the proportions of the original building. This is in order to reduce any visual impact of the join between existing and new.

### Conversions

- Features and general layout of the site setting that signify the historic working of the building/s should be retained;
- The use of domestic add-ons such as chimneys, porches, satellite dishes,

domestic external lighting and hanging baskets should be avoided; and

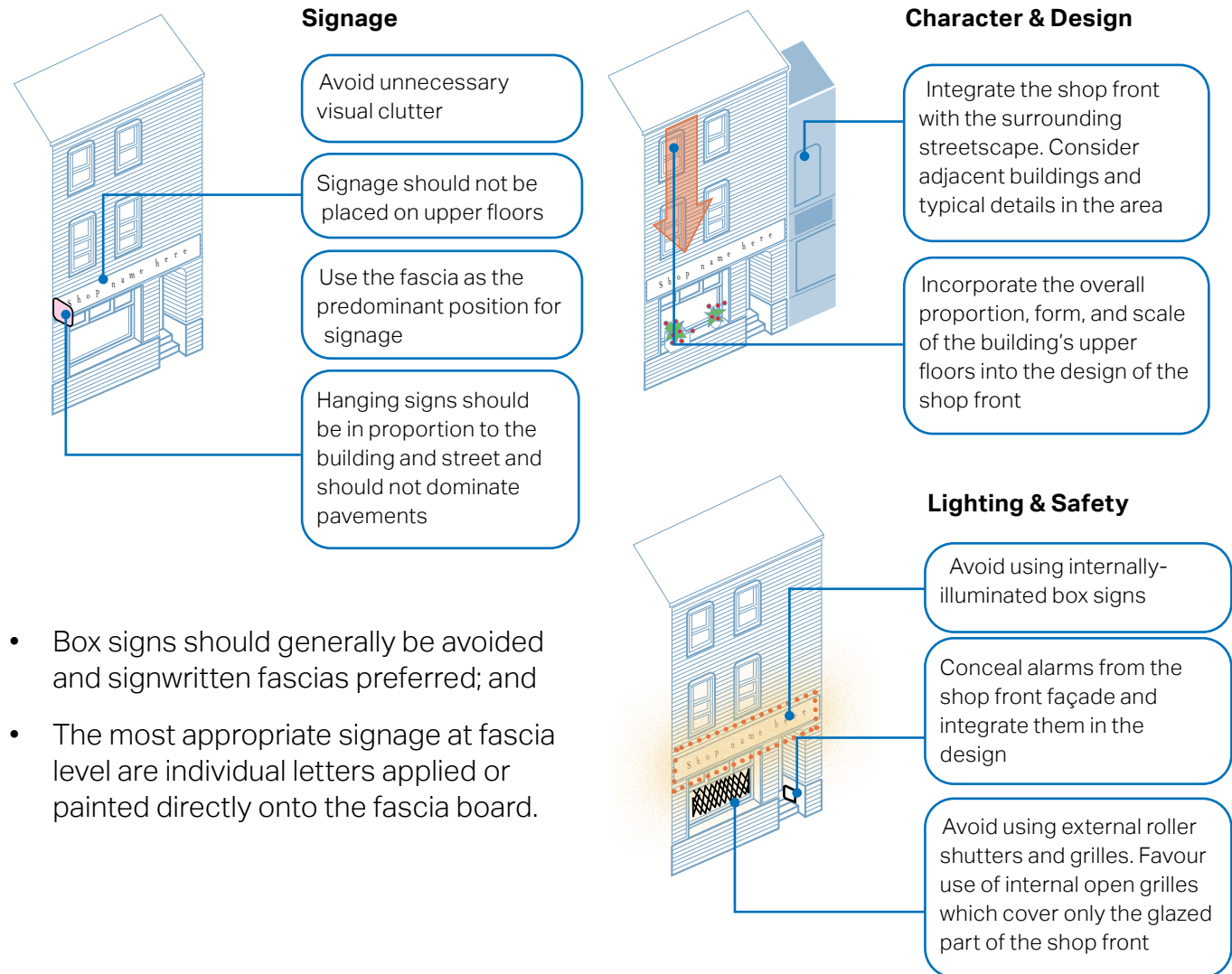
- New openings should generally be avoided and kept to a minimum justified, the form should be sympathetic to the existing building.

### Infill

- Complement the street scene into which it will be inserted. Points of continuity in the streetscape can be created by material / colour palette, roofscape features (such as chimneys and ridge/eave heights), scale and massing; and
- The density of any new infill development should reflect its context and its location in the town. The different character areas require different densities and approaches to infill development.

## LB04 Shop fronts

- The design of shop fronts should take into account the rhythm and character of the street such as the width of building, the horizontal or vertical emphasis, the variety of style and the architecture of the building itself. Where the shop front continues to another building, a change in its design may be required;
- The fascia is the most important area of a shop front for advertising the business. Signage within the established proportions and confines of the fascia board should be maintained. Large box signs or additional flat boards should be avoided as they create disproportionate depth and height;
- Illuminated shop signs should only illuminate what is necessary for purpose, ie. individual letters where allowed and not fully internally illuminated;





## Guidance on conversion of shops and pubs

Southborough has an important retail offer and a historically significant High Street, parts of which lies within the Conservation Area. Unfortunately, wider trends have led to the gradual closure of several shops and pubs, and cumulative effect of loss of High Street businesses, as also observed in other parts of the country.

A number of shops and commercial units have been converted into residential use while the shopfronts have been boarded, creating an inactive ground floor frontage on the High Street. The local community do not favour such conversions which create an atmosphere of an inactive High Street because of the effect on adjoining businesses; although these are sometimes subject to permitted development. However, if they are converted in any way, it is important that it is not to the detriment of the area's appearance.

When it is possible to convert retail and pub uses into residential (subject to any article directions or permitted development):

- The original shopfront should be retained and if this is not possible at least some of the features should be retained in the design of the new residential building;
- The design should demonstrate a positive impact on the host building and compatibility with the character and appearance of the local area;
- Privacy should be achieved in any conversion without adversely impacting the character and appearance of the host building and the Southborough street scene. Materials such as mirror glass should be avoided as it nullifies an active frontage; and
- The conversion design should consider how upper floors are to be accessed if the proposal is to subdivide the building.



**Figure 48:** Example of a commercial to residential converted unit, with the shopfronts boarded, nullifying an active frontage.

## SUSTAINABLE FUTURES (SF)

**Tunbridge Wells' declaration of a climate and biodiversity emergency in July 2019<sup>1</sup> has led to the borough commitment to become carbon natural borough by 2030. In light of this, the design code for Southborough supports that any new development should consider its impact on the environment and demonstrate design principles that respond to the impacts of climate change such as renewable energy generation, energy conservation, reduced waste and mixed communities that support the 20-minute neighborhood.**

<sup>1</sup> <https://twbcclimateaction.co.uk/what-were-doing/climate-emergency-declaration/>

### SF01 Energy efficiency

Energy-efficient and eco-design principles consider the energy consumption requirement for appliances, lighting, and technologies within new buildings and consider the local context that considers the orientation of building to maximise the potential for renewable energy generation and can enable passive ventilation.

#### Low-Carbon Homes/Energy Efficiency

- Conversion of existing buildings or extended will require energy integration of energy-saving measures and new technologies to make buildings more efficient and sustainable;
- Buildings contribute almost half (46%) of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions in the UK.<sup>1</sup> The government has set rigorous targets for the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and minimising fossil fuel energy use, and by 2050 the Government has committed to 100% reduction which is often referred to as the Net Zero Target;

<sup>1</sup> <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/631222898fa8f54234c6a508/20220901-Carbon-Net-Zero-Guidance-Note.pdf>

- There is a good number of energy-efficient technologies that could be incorporated in buildings. The use of such principles and design tools is strongly encouraged to futureproof buildings and avoid the necessity of retrofitting;
- Energy efficient or eco-design combines all-around energy efficient appliances and lighting with commercially available renewable energy systems, such as solar electricity and/or solar/ water heating;
- Initiating at the design stage to incorporate technologies and design approaches such as passive heating and cooling along with the consideration of the landscape setting appropriate within the local climate and site conditions;
- Any new developments must demonstrate that it is responding to climate change and reducing its carbon dependency. The government's forthcoming Future Homes Standard <sup>2</sup>,

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-standard-changes-to-part-l-and-part-f-of-the-building-regulations-for-new-dwellings>

including changes to Part L and Part F of the Building Regulations, will aim to cut carbon emissions by 80% in all new homes by 2025;

- For new homes this likely means a ‘fabric-first’ approach with the highest standards of insulation and energy conservation - roof, wall and underfloor insulation, efficient double or triple glazing and air-tightness. Ventilation with heat recovery, solar panels, ground and air source heat pumps must be considered alongside smart meters;
- It should be noted that eco-design can be adapted to a wide variety of architectural styles including existing and historic buildings. Existing and Historic buildings can be retrofitted in a way that considers both the environment and the historic features; and
- Figure 49 features an array of sustainable design features, where the top ones are strongly encouraged to be implemented into existing homes, while those on the bottom show additional features that new build homes should be encouraged to incorporate from the onset.

### Thermal mass

- Thermal mass describes the ability of a material to absorb, store and release heat energy. Thermal mass can be used to even out variations in internal and external conditions, absorbing heat as temperatures rise and releasing it as they fall. Thermal mass can be used to store high thermal loads by absorbing heat introduced by external conditions, such as solar radiation, or by internal sources such as appliances and lighting, to be released when conditions are cooler. This can be beneficial both during the summer and the winter; and
- Thermal storage in construction elements can be provided, such as a Trombe wall placed in front of a south-facing window or concrete floor slabs that will absorb solar radiation and then slowly re-release it into the enclosed space. Mass can be combined with suitable ventilation strategies.

### Insulation

- Thermal insulation can be provided within the internal cavity of any wall or roof of a building to prevent heat loss. Particular attention should be paid to heat bridges around corners and openings at the design stage; and
- Provide acoustic insulation to prevent the transmission of sound between active (i.e. living room) and passive spaces (i.e. bedroom). Provide insulation and electrical insulation to prevent the passage of fire between spaces or components and to contain and separate electrical conductors.



Implementing eco-design into homes

The following guidelines and suggestions focus on improving the energy efficiency of properties through the implementation of eco-design principles.

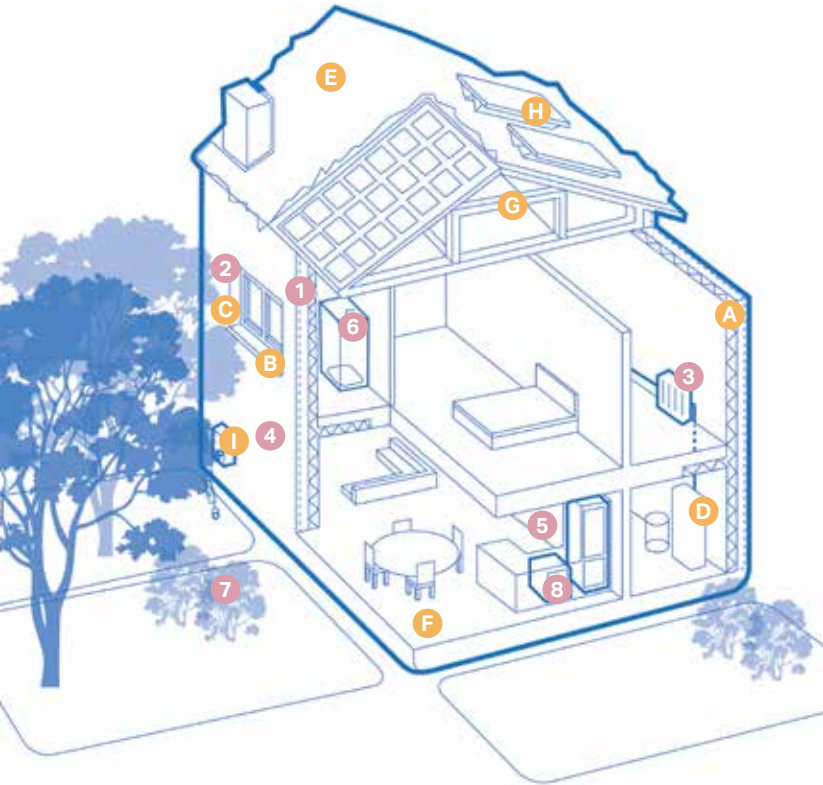


Figure 49: Sustainable design features

Existing homes

- 1



**Insulation**  
in lofts and walls (cavity and solid)
- 2



**Double or triple glazing with shading**  
(e.g. tinted window film, blinds, curtains and trees outside)
- 3



**Low- carbon heating**  
with heat pumps or connections to district heat network
- 4



**Draught proofing**  
of floors, windows and doors
- 5



**Highly energy-efficient appliances**  
(e.g. A++ and A+++ rating)
- 6



**Highly water-efficient devices**  
with low-flow showers and taps, insulated tanks and hot water thermostats
- 7



**Green space (e.g. gardens and trees)**  
to help reduce the risks and impacts of flooding and overheating
- 8



**Flood resilience and resistance**  
with removable air back covers, relocated appliances (e.g. installing washing machines upstairs), treated wooden floors

Additional features for new build homes

- A



**High levels of airtightness**
- B



**Triple glazed windows and external shading**  
especially on south and west faces
- C



**Low-carbon heating** and no new homes on the gas grid by 2025 at the latest
- D



**More fresh air**  
with mechanical ventilation and heat recovery, and passive cooling
- E



**Water management and cooling**  
more ambitious water efficiency standards, green roofs, rainwater harvesting and reflective walls
- F



**Flood resilience and resistance**  
e.g. raised electrical, concrete floors and greening your garden
- G



**Construction and site planning**  
timber frames, sustainable transport options (such as cycling)
- H



**Solar panel**
- I



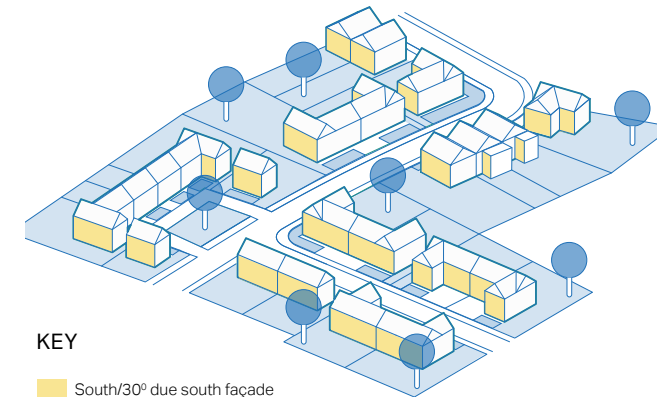
**Electric car charging point**

## Airtightness

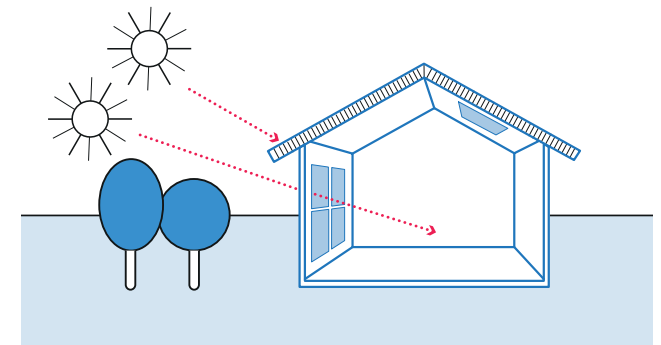
- Airtight constructions help reduce heat loss, improving comfort and protecting the building fabric. Airtightness is achieved by sealing a building to reduce infiltration- which is sometimes called uncontrolled ventilation. Simplicity is key for airtight design. The fewer junctions the simpler and more efficient the airtightness design will be;
- An airtight layer should be formed in the floor, walls and roof. Doors, windows and roof lights to the adjacent walls or roof should be sealed. Interfaces between walls, the floor and between walls and the roof, including around the perimeter of any intermediate floor should be linked;
- Water pipes and soil pipes, ventilation ducts, incoming water, gas, oil, electricity, data and district heating, chimneys and flues, including air supplies to wood burning stoves, connections to external services, such as entry phones, outside lights, external taps and sockets, security cameras and satellite dishes should be considered.

## Building orientation

- The orientation of buildings within the plot, along with the site topography must be considered to maximise solar gain, while keeping a consistent frontage to the street. In addition, living spaces within each typology should be oriented according to the expected use of each room, e.g. sun in the morning for kitchens, during the day for living areas, and in the evening for bedrooms; and
- In general, the design of new developments must maximise the use of energy efficiency and energy conservation fixtures, fittings and technology. Passive methods of heating and cooling and the use of renewable energy technologies such as ground source and air source heat pumps, biomass heating, photovoltaics and solar panels must be considered for new developments. Opportunities for the use of the same technologies in existing buildings, when undergoing refurbishment, will also be expected.



**Figure 50:** Elevations that would benefit from passive solar gain



**Figure 51:** The use of roof window, pitch roof, location and size of windows in favour of maximising solar gain

## Heating

- Heading towards a more ecological agenda, it is expected that the use of fossil fuels will be deprecated and other techniques, for instance air/ground source heat pumps will be preferred over gas boilers. These draw in heat from the air or the ground around the houses and use that to warm the inside of the house, whilst they cool by pulling the warm air out of the house, rather than using energy to cool air from outside. Electric heat pumps are not only used during winter, but also during summer for cooling.

## Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) include a range of approaches to reduce flood risk and improve water quality that include new technologies however it is important to note that SUDS that utilise natural systems and vegetation are the most effective to slow and clean water whilst having a positive impact on biodiversity.

## Roof solar panels

Solar panels over a rooftop can have a positive environmental impact, however their design and installation should be done carefully. Preserving the character of the town is the priority. Some solutions for the sensitive implementation of solar roof panels are suggested as follows:

### New Builds

- Design solar panel features from the start, forming part of the design concept. Some attractive options are solar singles and photovoltaic slates; and
- Use the solar panels as a material in their own right.

### Existing Buildings

- Analyse the proportions of the building and roof surface in order to identify the best location and sizing of panels;
- Consider the integration of other slates and tiles to create a composition with the solar panels;

- Carefully consider the location of solar panels on buildings within the High Weald National Landscape and Southborough conservation area, further guidance for planning and installing solar panels for historic buildings can be found in Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Solar Electric (Photovoltaics) <sup>1</sup>. It might be appropriate to introduce solar panels to areas of the building that are more concealed in order to preserve the character and appearance of more sensitive areas; and
- Solar panels can be added to listed buildings but they need to be carefully sited and planning consent will be required.

<sup>1</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/eehb-solar-electric/>

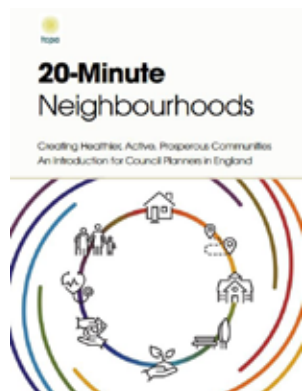


## SF02 Safe and friendly neighbourhoods

As set out by Homes England in the “Building for a Healthy Life”<sup>1</sup> Manual, it is vital to create:

- Integrated Neighbourhoods
- Distinctive Places
- Streets for all

The following section provides guidance on the above categories in relation to Southborough and High Brooms.



**Figure 54:** TCPA 20-minute neighbourhoods

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.designforhomes.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/BFL-2020-Brochure.pdf>

## Integrated Neighbourhoods

Any new development should aim to balance the housing stock to cater for the needs of all, particularly for younger families and people looking to downsize. Homes should be ‘future-proofed’, to cater for changing demographics and life-cycle stages.

Southborough has a rich series of distinct and historic characteristics which the town has developed around. It is recommended that these separate but unique settlement cores should be well-integrated and connected, while also considering that the steep topography may act as natural barriers.

Southborough aspires to adopt the concept of the 20-minute neighbourhood, which requires that day to day facilities must be accessible and close by to new housing and that land uses must be mixed to provide the widest variety of amenities nearby. This may be shops, services and open spaces. Please refer to the ‘20-minute neighbourhoods’ document by TCPA for more information.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.tcpa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/final\\_20mnguide-compressed.pdf](https://www.tcpa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/final_20mnguide-compressed.pdf)



**Figure 52:** Example of community space, Rushden Lakes, UK.



**Figure 53:** The use of streetlighting creates a safe public space. Image credit: Ruth Chambers.

## Streets for All

Rapid rates of growth within Southborough in recent years have resulted in traffic congestion and air quality concerns. To mitigate against further impacts, public transport and other sustainable transport methods such as walking and cycling are encouraged and should be prioritised.

The following guidelines should help create places that are easy to move through and around. Streets should be designed to not only accommodate vehicles but also as 'spaces' for people who live on and along them. An active streetscape is an essential part of a successful public realm design.

- Development should be well connected, supporting community cohesion and use of the town centre
- New streets must be designed as a 'space' to be used by all. Existing streets should be retrofitted for the same purpose and to discourage speeding;

- Create public realm spaces which provides plenty of places for sit, chat or play in the street;
- Active ground floor street frontages can help create safer and friendly environments;
- Make use of landscape and planting layers which adds sensory richness; and
- New development schemes should provide the appropriate amount and type of street lighting to ensure night-safe spaces.



**Figure 55:** Example of creating spaces for the local community to get together; with a central play feature, and street furniture. Image credit: <https://landezine.com/futureproof-village-realm-alpen-by-felixx/>



**Figure 56:** Example of creating landscape and planting layers. Image credit: <https://landezine.com/sky-uk-headquarters-by-urban/>

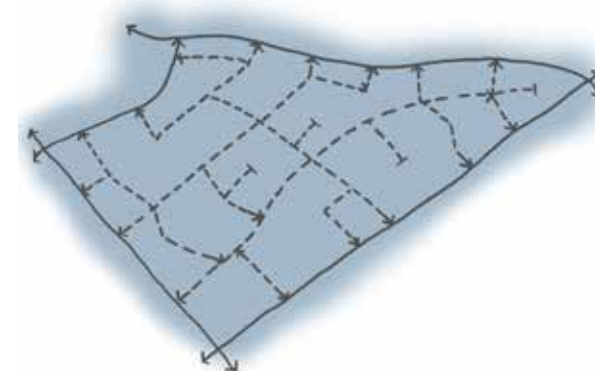
More guidance on encouraging active travel can be found in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (March 2021)<sup>1</sup>, NDP, Transport (TR1 Pedestrian networks, TR2 Cycle routes)

- New footpath links should be provided wherever possible, and these must connect up with the existing walking network (see Figure 32), placing the priority on the pedestrian, thereby encouraging people to favour active travel over the car;
- The design of the street network should respond to the topography and natural desire lines;
- Streets and footpaths should be laid out in a permeable pattern, allowing for multiple connections and choice of routes, particularly on foot. Any cul-de-sac should be relatively short and provide onward pedestrian links; and
- Development should design internal streets and paths that are well-connected and direct, responding to any desire lines.

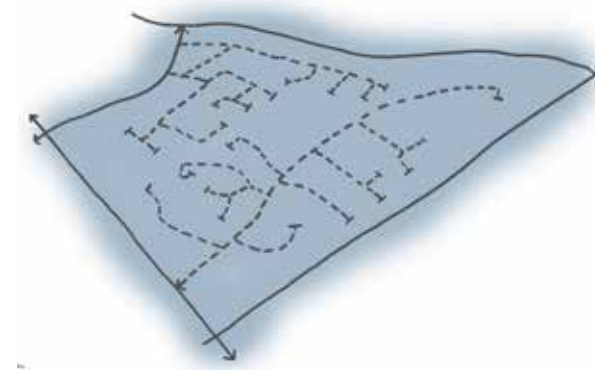
<sup>1</sup> [https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/385329/01\\_LCWIP-Phase-1-March-2021.pdf](https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/385329/01_LCWIP-Phase-1-March-2021.pdf)



**Figure 59:** Footpaths should be well-lit and create an inviting atmosphere, and ensure safety for pedestrians.  
*Image Credit: Ruth Chambers*



**Figure 57:**  
A connected layout, with some cul-de-sacs, balances sustainability and security aims in a walkable neighbourhood.



**Figure 58:**  
A layout dominated by cul-de-sacs encourages reliance on the car for even local journeys.



## Distinctive Places

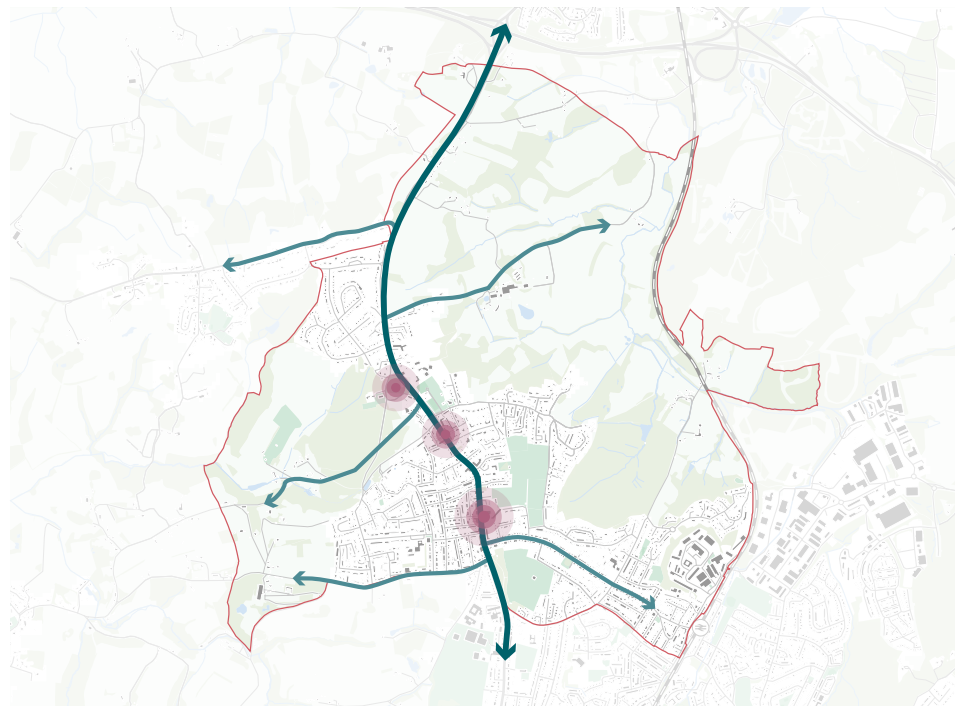
The historic and local landmarks within Southborough should be protected and enhanced. Any new development should analyse the wider context of the site and identify assets to use as anchor features, such as a historic corner plot, large green spaces, mature trees or other existing features. The creation of public 'gateway' spaces could prove useful in creating a landmark for any development, this also creates connections and invites people into the site.

- Characteristics such as street types, landscape character, urban grain, plot shapes and sizes, building forms and materials being used should reflect the local character, refer to Layout and Building (LB) guidelines within this document;
- The town centre should support additional growth whilst maintaining its character. There is an opportunity for new well connected development which could enable this;

- The existing views and vistas surrounding the High Weald National Landscape and the surrounding countryside views should be allowed reasonable clearance and any

potential views a development can offer is encouraged; and

- Where possible, interlock back gardens of existing and new development to create new habitats.



### KEY

- Nodes / key activated spaces
- Movement network

**Figure 60:** Key activated spaces along London Road which act as anchor points.

## ECOLOGY (EC)

### EC01 Landscape setting

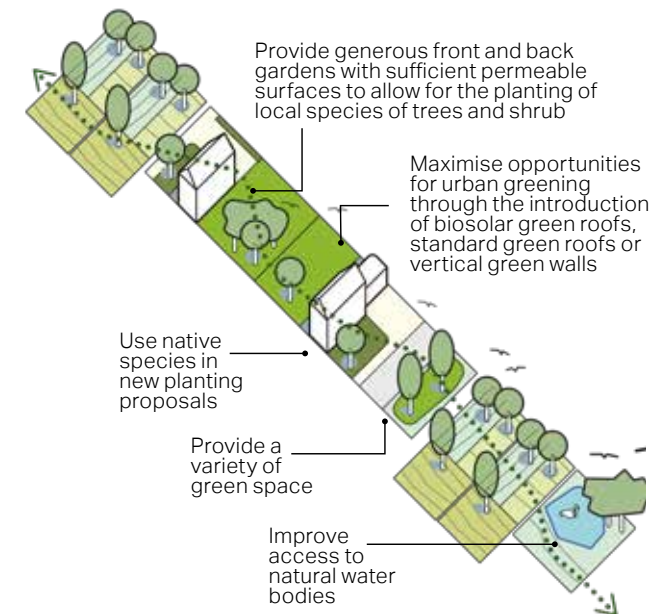
There are a number of public open spaces, High Weald National Landscape, and SSSI such as Southborough Pit, within the NA. Opportunities should be encouraged that introduce green assets within designs and positively contribute to biodiversity and wildlife conservation. Green infrastructure relates to network of multi-functional green space and other green features. Blue infrastructure relates to urban water infrastructure, including ponds, lakes, streams, rivers and storm water provision.

Some of the design guidelines for wildlife and biodiversity are:

- New development, where possible, should enhance the existing green and blue infrastructure that connects wildlife sites and incorporates water management features;
- Recreational spaces should be provided within woodland walks and play areas to cater for the needs of the existing and new population. In addition, recreational spaces should be designed to be linked

with one another and also link with existing adjoining sites taking particular in enhancing the green network;

- Front gardens should allow space for soft landscaping, impermeable paving materials should be avoided. Extensively hard landscaped front gardens should be avoided and green spaces should be maximized;
- Surrounding buildings should overlook play areas and public green spaces to encourage movement, activity and natural surveillance;
- Edge of settlement development, especially close to the High Weald National Landscape, should gradually transition to the surrounding landscape context, with a soft, lower-density edge;
- High rise on the edges are inappropriate, building elevations along the existing settlement edge should connect into it and should provide an attractive and positive frontage; and



**Figure 61:** Illustrative diagram showing a green and blue network

- New development adjoining open fields and countryside should have a soft landscaped discreet edge to create a gradual transition into the surrounding rural landscape;
- A minimum gap from built development to the open countryside should be considered, and soft landscaping will be required to create a buffer.

## EC02 Wildlife and biodiversity

The declaration of Climate and Biodiversity Emergency declared by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council in July 2019 <sup>1</sup> set a series of actions including the Borough becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Enhanced biodiversity has multiple benefits such as protecting the natural environment, educating and increasing knowledge, responding to climate change and supporting the local economy. Therefore, the design guidelines will be fully aligned with the Tunbridge Wells Local Biodiversity Plan. <sup>2</sup> This also includes considerations to reduce carbon emissions, the degradation of the environment and combating climate change.

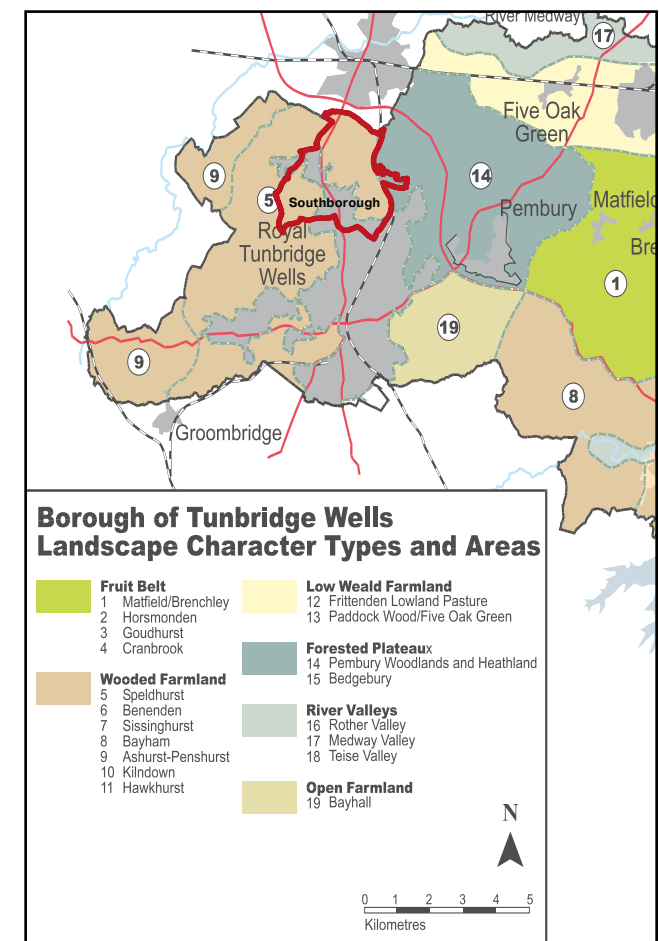
New development should aim to strengthen the existing green networks and avoid proposing developments that reduce vegetation and green spaces that could impact wildlife and biodiversity.

<sup>1</sup> <https://twbcclimateaction.co.uk/what-were-doing/climate-emergency-declaration/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/planning/conservation-and-heritage/biodiversity-action-plan>

Some guidelines for wildlife and biodiversity improvements are:

- Biodiversity should be protected, retaining important areas of green infrastructure;
- Improve the knowledge of what habitats exist within the neighbourhood area and surrounding areas. This will include identifying any habitat and species that are of national and local importance and include preservation measures to protect and enhance the landscape;
- Existing boundary trees and hedgerows should be retained and reinforced with native species; and
- To develop targets and actions to protect and enhance Southborough's biodiversity, especially protection for the High Wealds National Landscape. This should consider opportunities to establish partnerships and to create community groups that can enhance, manage and protect biodiversity in the town;

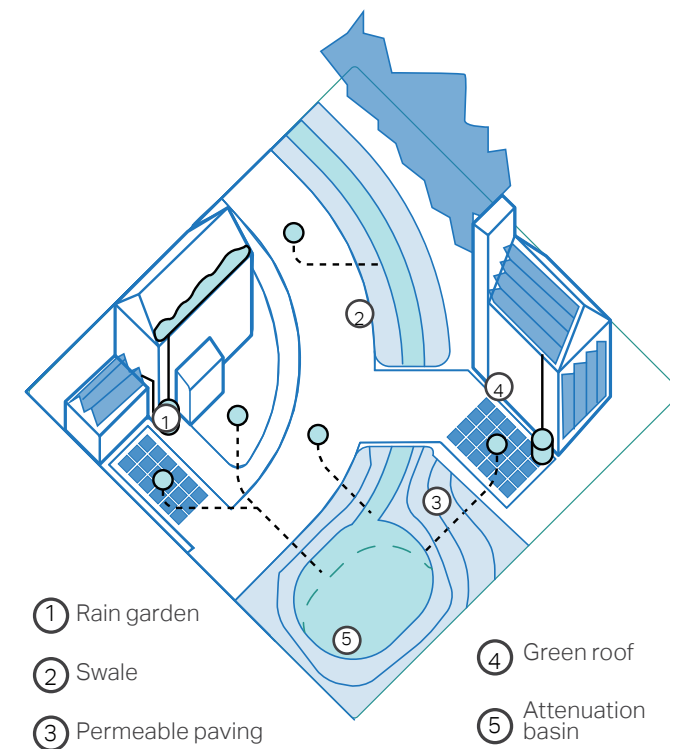


**Figure 62:** Map of Landscape Character and habitat types from the Tunbridge Wells Local Biodiversity Action Plan



- New design proposals of any scale should consider the impacts on wildlife and biodiversity. New developments should take into consideration the existing trees, green verges and open spaces, including habitat sites and surrounding countryside;
- New development should ensure that protected conservation of High Weald National Landscape in the neighbourhood area consider larger green areas and are well linked to protecting wildlife and biodiversity. New development should seek to maximise gains for wildlife and biodiversity. The multi-functionality of green networks helps to support sustainable methods of transport, the protection and enhancement of wildlife and biodiversity, improve mental health for citizens with the connection to nature and support SUDs opportunities to reduce surface water run-off and flooding for surrounding communities;
- New developments should prioritise tree planting, identify existing biodiversity corridors and contribute to their preservation and enhancement. They must also demonstrate a 10% increase of biodiversity on or near new development sites in alignment with the national legislation on Biodiversity Net Gain<sup>3</sup>;
- New development should avoid threatening existing ecological assets for instance the SSSI site, LNR and preserve the clear distinction between green spaces and urban settings; and
- Where new developments are adjacent to green spaces it is recommended that it fronts onto the green and blue network to maximise open views.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain>



**Figure 63:** Diagram showing the best use of harvesting water systems rain garden, swales, permeable paving, green roofs.

## Green infrastructure and biodiversity

Open space plays a vital role in enhancing a healthy environment and preserving the rural characteristics of the neighbourhood area whilst supporting the ecological and wildlife habitats which is further discussed above. Some considered guidance for open spaces within Southborough are:

- New open spaces should retain all woodland, hedgerows and trees within their layout with new planting to supporting existing biodiversity and habitats;
- Access to the countryside and surrounding green spaces should be maintained for all to benefit from;
- New green infrastructure should have a long-term management plan including replacement plans for trees/shrubs that die within the plan period;
- Land identified in the "Local Green Space Designation Methodology"(Jul 2019)<sup>1</sup> will retain its green and open character and

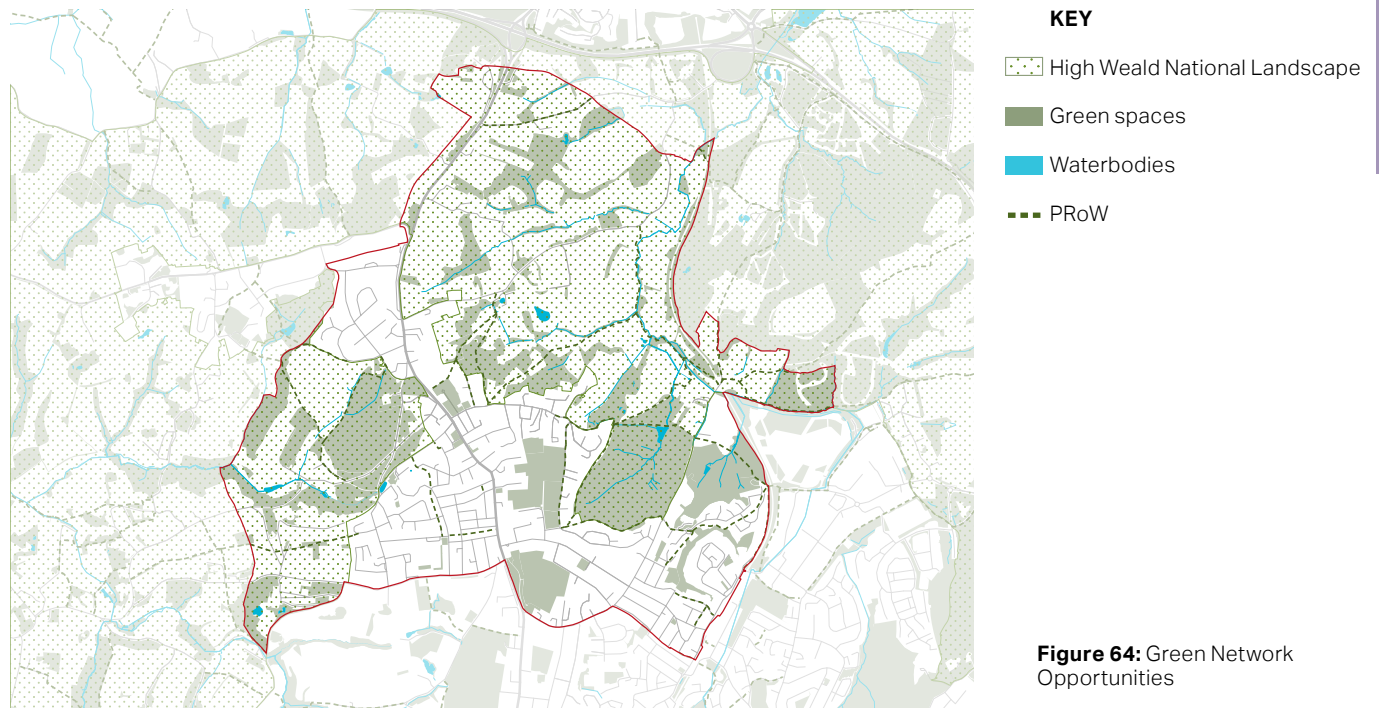
<sup>1</sup> [https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/384759/Local-Green-Space-Designation-Methodology\\_accessible.pdf](https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/384759/Local-Green-Space-Designation-Methodology_accessible.pdf)

will remain free of hard surfacing, except for the purposes of pedestrian access; and

- New Development should support a connected green network. New designs should propose new links to the surrounding countryside to integrate

the existing green spaces, improving pedestrian connectivity and supporting active travel.

This section should be read alongside the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Development Framework, Core Policy 4: Environment.



**Figure 64:** Green Network Opportunities

## ACCESS AND MOVEMENT (AM)

### AM01 Promoting active travel

Footpaths and twittens are an important local characteristic to Southborough and High Brooms. Where possible, newly developed areas must retain these connections or provide direct and attractive footpaths between neighbouring streets and local facilities and amenities (see Figure 32 for these routes). Establishing a pedestrian network between existing and new developments is a key principle for encouraging active travel. There is a clear aspiration to enhance Southborough's cycle routes within the town and connect surrounding neighborhoods as depicted in "Tunbridge Well Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Phase 1" (March 2021) that has evaluated all the cycle routes across the Tunbridge Wells Borough and seeks to prioritise investments needs to enhance high-quality walking and cycling routes to

enable more sustainable modes of travel.

Although there are no National Cycle Network routes through the town, there are local cycle routes within Southborough which new developments should aim to connect to and enhance the active travel network.

- Pedestrian and cycle networks within residential communities should enable natural surveillance and offer good sightlines and unrestricted views to make people feel safer;
- Design features such as barriers to vehicle movement, gates to new development, or footpaths should be accessible;
- Cycle parking should be provided for both private and public spaces, including close to local amenities or even along cycle



**Figure 65:** Example of cycle parking using high-quality and contextually sensitive materials. *Source: Streetlife*

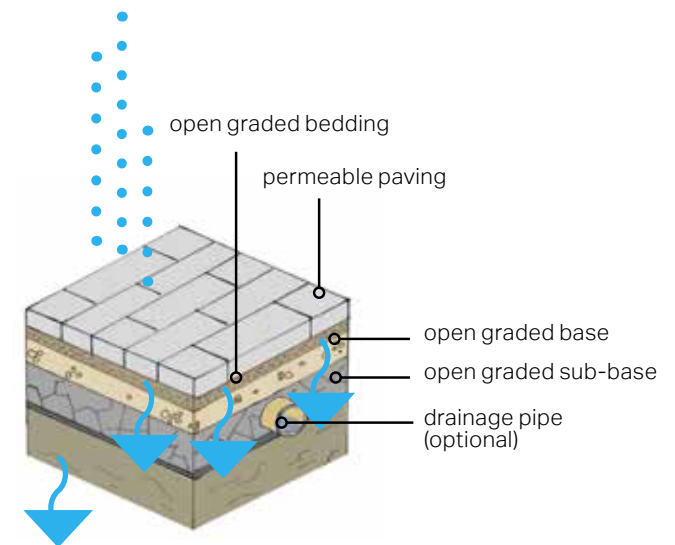


lanes to further encourage cycling in the town;

- Paving used along pedestrian and cycle links should be permeable to reduce surface water run-off and to mitigate future risks of flooding. Future investments and upgrades to pedestrian and cycle links should avoid any kind of impermeable paving. Materials can vary and depend on the context, it is recommended that a more earthy palette is applied to fit more within the local context and rural surroundings;
- A green network should be created and enhanced from new and existing pedestrian and cycle links to further encourage usage on a daily basis. Signage can play an important role in informing people about local destinations, landmarks and surrounding neighborhoods that include clear distances. However new signposts

should be in keeping with the characters and avoid creating visual clutter;

- Width for green links can vary depending on the context, they should be a minimum of 2 meters if located within residential development, and they can go over 2 meters if located in open countryside; and
- Distinct cycleways are preferred particularly on road networks that has high volumes of traffic such as the A26 that helps encourage use and to improve safety. Whilst it is recognized that the secondary road system in the town includes narrower streets that may not allow the opportunity for distinct cycle lanes.



**Figure 66:** Diagram illustrating the function of a soak away.

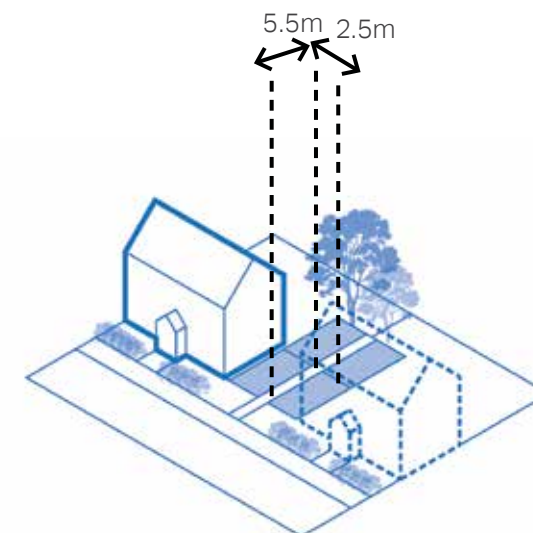
## AM02 Parking typologies

Parking areas remain a necessity for many modern developments. However, they do not need to be unsightly or dominate the streetscape. Parking provision should be undertaken as an exercise of placemaking. This section provides some design principles and guidelines for on-plot and on-street parking solutions that any new development should adhere to, alongside guidance provided in the Parking Standards guidance set out by the Kent Design Guide<sup>1</sup>.

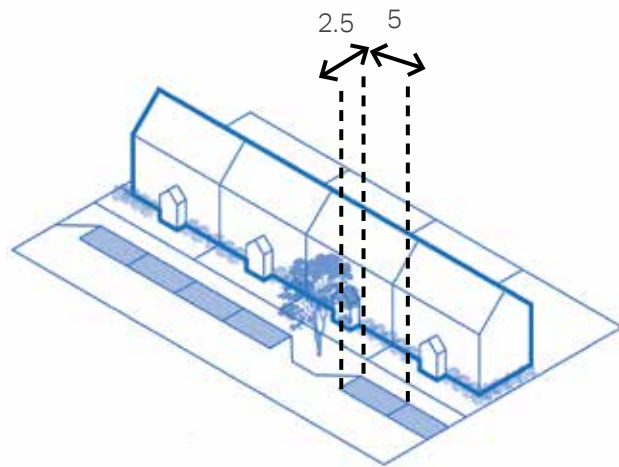
<sup>1</sup> <https://parkingstandards.co.uk/Standard/Kent%20-%202021-09-01.pdf>

### On-plot side or front parking

- Parking provided on driveways directly in front of dwellings should be restricted due to the visual impact that cars have on the street;
- The use of on-plot car parking ports is recommended for terraces as a space efficient car parking typology;
- On-plot parking should aim to be well screened with hedgerows when providing parking space to the front of a dwelling;
- Parking provided on a driveway for a single vehicle should be a minimum of 5m x 2.5m, and 6m x 2.5m for parallel spaces;
- Front drives could be provided on streets where necessary, some examples are Yew Tree Road, Chestnut Avenue, and Pennington Road; and
- The parking should be set behind the building line so that it doesn't dominate the street scene.



**Figure 67:** Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-plot side parking.



**Figure 68:**  
Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-street parking

### On-street parking

In order to reduce the visual impact of parked cars on the street, on-street parking should not be the only form of parking arrangement in future developments and on-plot parking should be encouraged for the majority of cases. Where they are needed:

- On-street parking must be designed to avoid impeding the flow of pedestrians, cyclists, and other vehicles. They can also serve as informal traffic calming; and
- On low-traffic residential streets or lanes that are shared between vehicles and pedestrians, parking bays can be clearly marked using changes in paving materials instead of road markings.

### EV charging

- Where possible, electric vehicle charging points should be incorporated into on-plot parking in new developments to promote more sustainable modes of transport;
- EV charge points that are ground fixed should have a measure in place to prevent a vehicle inadvertently driving into the charge point. This could include bollards, a guard provided by the manufacturer, or the charge point could be mounted on a kerbed footway; and
- Given the move towards electric vehicles, every opportunity must be taken to integrate charging technologies into the fabric of road and street furniture in the public and private realm.



## AM03 Traffic calming measures

Traffic calming uses physical design and other measures to improve safety for everyone. These measures can be applied on roads that have traffic issues such as the A26 (London Road). There are also issues with loading and unloading for delivery vehicles on the High Street.

It aims to encourage safer, more responsible driving and potentially reduce traffic flow. Paving materials in all traffic calming measures should contribute to the character of Southborough and High Brooms as a place to be coherent.

Note that traffic calming is usually outside the remit of neighbourhood planning policies, unless as part of a wider planning application.

### Safe pedestrian crossings

- Raised pedestrian crossings could act as speed tables, often situated at intersections, as well as improving the walking environment; and
- Making use of a distinctive paving materials helps distinguish the crossing and creates a safer road environment.

### Loading bays

- Any loading bays provided should be located to minimise the transfer distance from the vehicle to the delivery point; and
- Positing loading bays on busy lanes of traffic should be avoided for safety reasons. Instead they could be provided on side roads or near rear entrances.

More indicative information could be found in the Kerbside Loading Guidance set out by TFL.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/kerbside-loading-guidance.pdf>



**Figure 69:**  
An example of raised pedestrian crossing with a plateau, Hemel Hempstead.



**Figure 70:**  
An example of High Street loading bay in Walworth Road, London.

This page has been intentionally left blank.

SHEFFIELD  
PLACE  
1865

Checklist

05

THE GALLERY



## 5. Checklist

This concluding section provides a number of questions based on established good practice against which the design proposal should be evaluated.

The checklist can be used to assess all proposals by objectively answering the questions below. Not all the questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment as to whether the design proposal has taken into account the context and provided an adequate design solution.

As a first step there are a number of ideas or principles that should be present in all proposals. These are listed under 'General design guidelines for new development'. Following these ideas and principles, a number of questions are listed for more specific topics.

# 1

### General design guidelines for new development:

- Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;
- Reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of streets, greens, and other spaces;
- Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;
- Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long distance views;
- Reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;
- Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;
- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
- Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;
- Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality.

# 1 (cont.)

## General design guidelines for new development:

- Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;
- Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;
- Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours;
- Positively integrate energy efficient technologies;
- Positively integrate green infrastructure in accordance with national design guidance to positively contribute to liveability, biodiversity and climate change resilience; and
- Ensure that places are designed with management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities in mind;

# 2

## Street grid and layout:

- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity? If not, why?
- Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

# 3

## Open environmental areas, views & character:

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?
- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?
- Can trees be used to provide natural shading from unwanted solar gain? i.e. deciduous trees can limit solar gains in summer, while maximising them in winter.
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquillity of the area been fully considered?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how this will be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?
- Is there opportunity to increase the local area biodiversity?

# 4

## Gateway and access features:

- What is the arrival point, how is it designed?
- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing gaps between settlements?
- Does the proposal affect or change the setting of a listed building or listed landscape?
- Is the landscaping to be hard or soft?

# 5

## Buildings layout and grouping:

- What is the typical built pattern of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?



## 5 (cont.)

### Buildings layout and grouping:

- What is the typical built pattern of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?
- Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, are new buildings oriented to incorporate passive solar design principles, with, for example, one of the main glazed elevations within 30° due south, whilst also minimising overheating risk?

## 6

### Building line and boundary treatment:

- What are the characteristics of the building line?
- How has the building line been respected in the proposals?
- Has the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?

## 7

### Building heights and roofline:

- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing and scale?
- If a higher than average building(s) is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?
- Will the roof structure be capable of supporting a photovoltaic or solar thermal array either now, or in the future?
- Will the inclusion of roof mounted renewable technologies be an issue from a visual or planning perspective? If so, can they be screened from view, being careful not to cause over shading?

## 8

### Household extensions:

- Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood, and does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy, overbearing or overshadowing impact?
- Is the roof form of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?
- Do the proposed materials match those of the existing dwelling?
- In case of side extensions, does it retain important gaps within the street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?
- Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?
- Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?
- Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?

## 9

### Building materials & surface treatment:

- What is the distinctive material in the area?
- Does the proposed material harmonise with the local materials?
- Does the proposal use high quality materials?
- Does the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?
- Are recycled materials, or those with high recycled content proposed?
- Has the embodied carbon of the materials been considered and are there options which can reduce the embodied carbon of the design? For example, wood structures and concrete alternatives.

## 10

### Car parking:

- What parking solutions have been considered?
- Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?
- Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?
- Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?
- Have the needs of wheelchair users been considered?
- Can electric vehicle charging points be provided?
- Can secure cycle storage be provided at an individual building level or through a central/ communal facility where appropriate?

## About AECOM

AECOM is the world's trusted infrastructure consulting firm, delivering professional services throughout the project lifecycle — from planning, design and engineering to program and construction management. On projects spanning transportation, buildings, water, new energy and the environment, our public- and private-sector clients trust us to solve their most complex challenges. Our teams are driven by a common purpose to deliver a better world through our unrivaled technical expertise and innovation, a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion, and a commitment to environmental, social and governance priorities. AECOM is a *Fortune 500* firm and its Professional Services business had revenue of \$13.2 billion in fiscal year 2020. See how we are delivering sustainable legacies for generations to come at [aecom.com](https://aecom.com) and [@AECOM](https://twitter.com/AECOM).