



Aerial view of The Site

Design & Access Statement Ashwood Site Burwash Common TN19 7LT

W&M Architects LLP with Roger Howells Architects

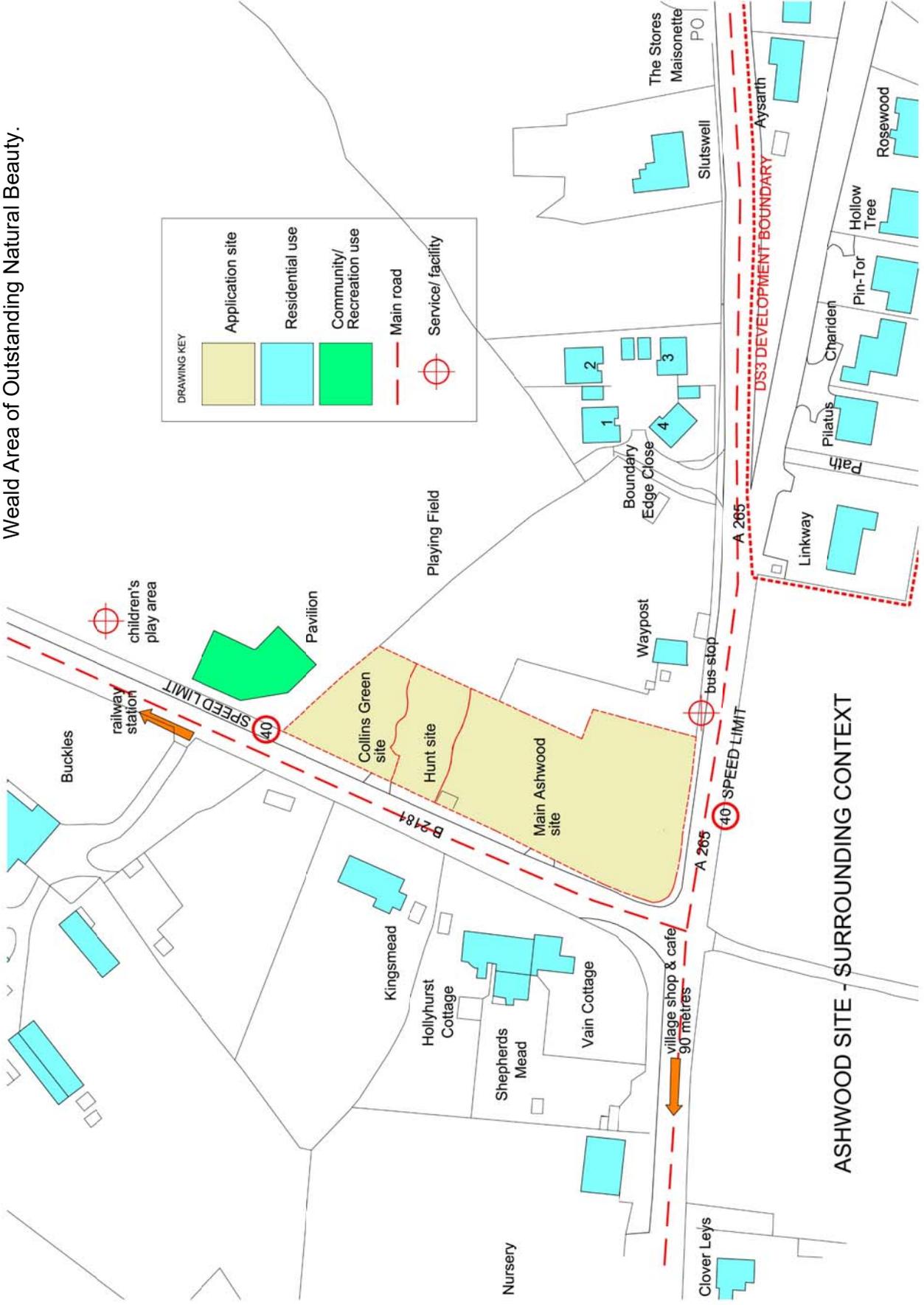
September 2020

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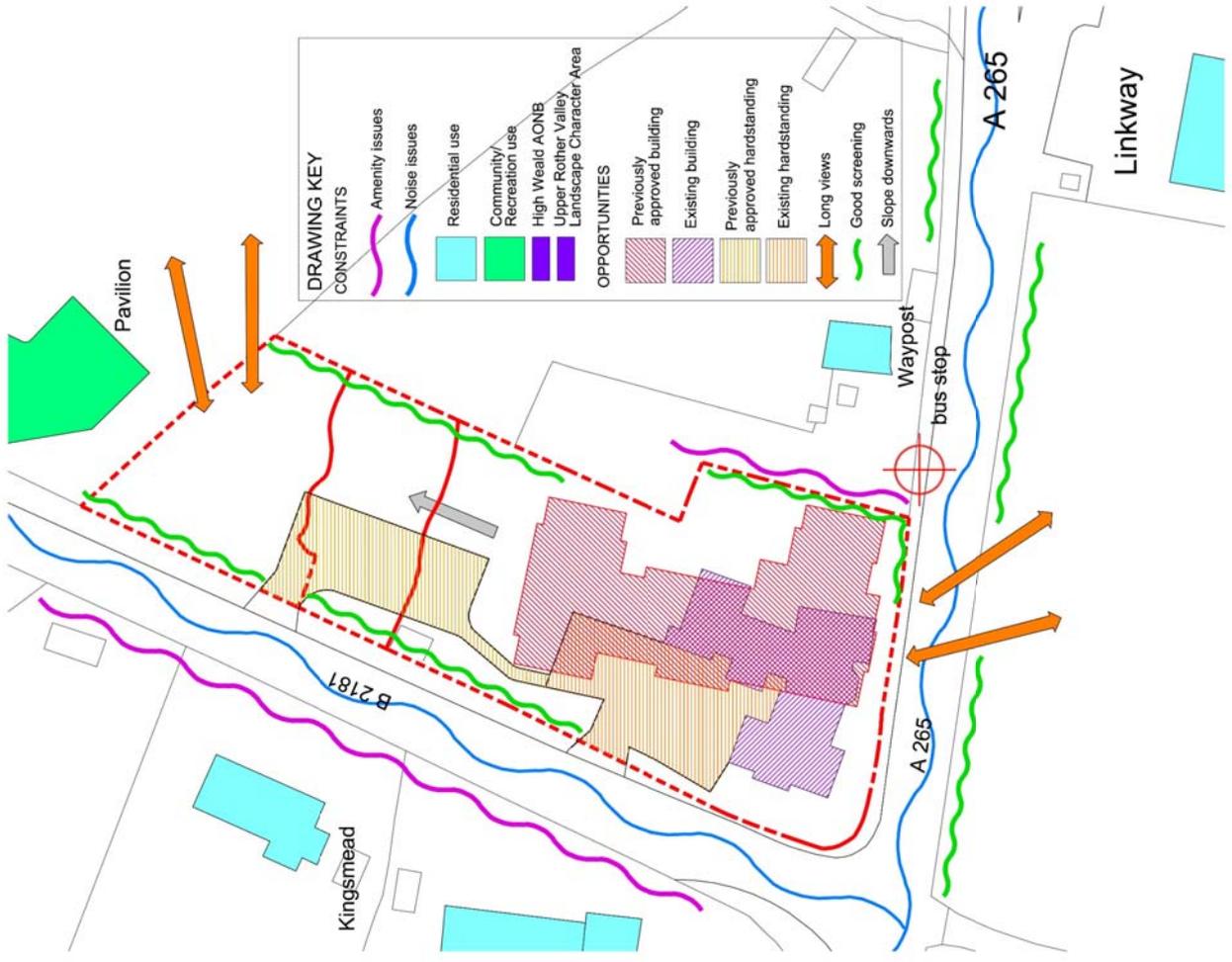
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1 Site analysis - surrounding context

We have undertaken a detailed analysis of the site and its surroundings to fully understand the constraints and opportunities relevant to developing the site, including its position within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



1 Site analysis – Opportunities & Constraints



1 Site analysis – photo views A



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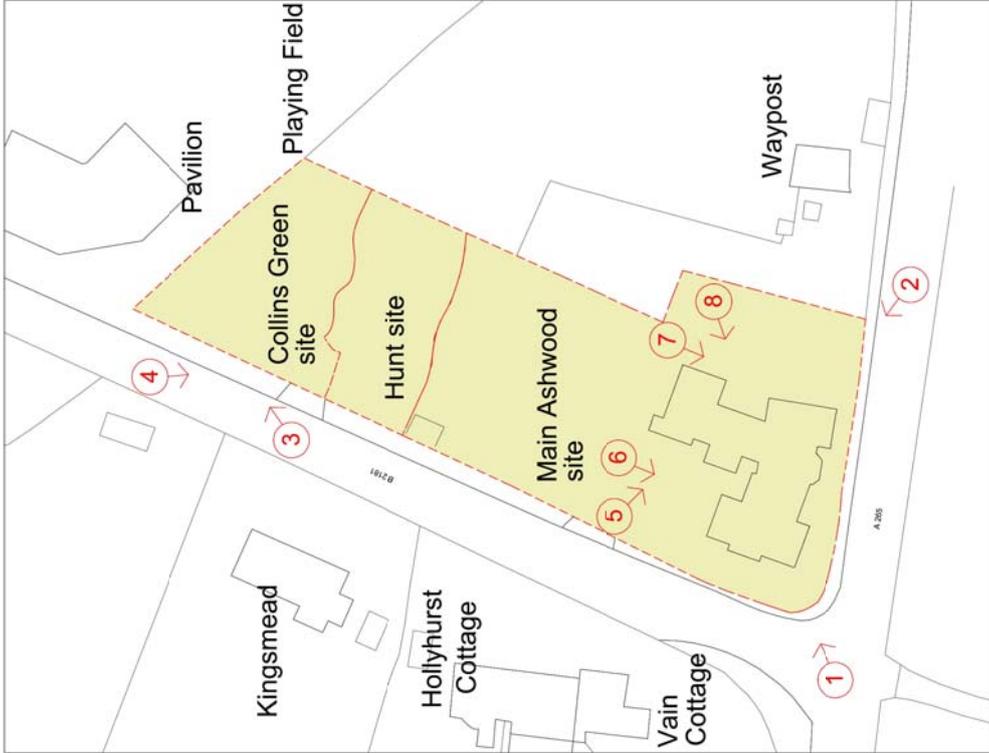
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1 Site analysis – photo views B



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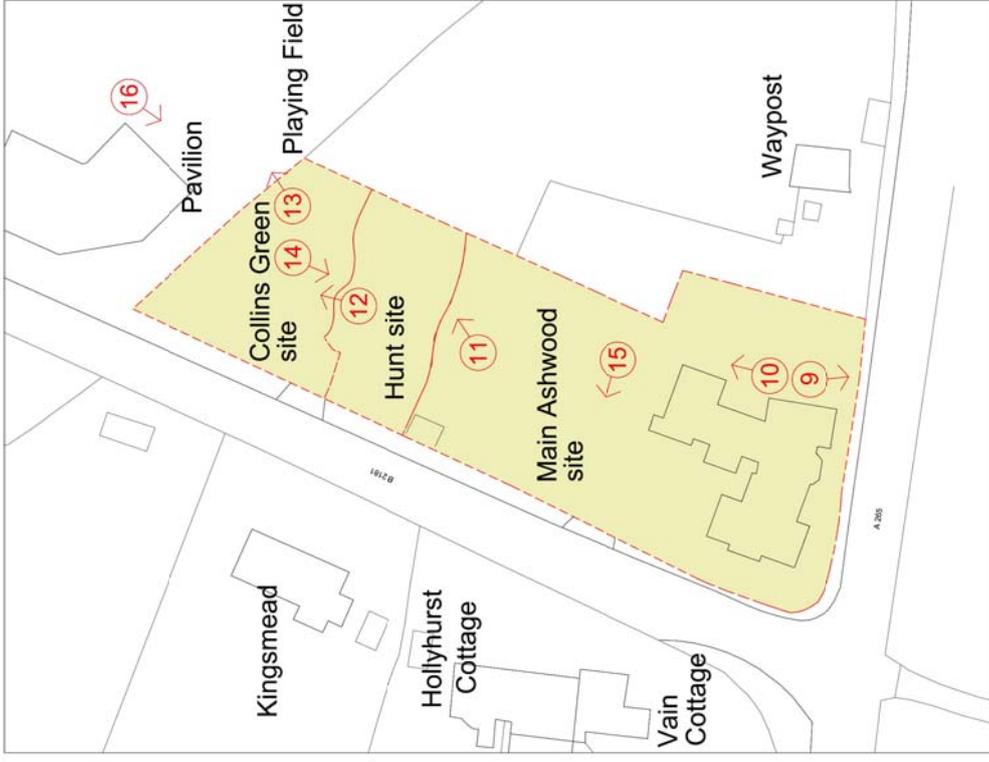
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2 Use and amount

Use:

Existing: The current use is a redundant care home with parking.

Proposed: The proposed use is for a series of dwellings, comprising four flats, two semi-detached houses, three terrace houses and three detached houses (two of which are self-builds) and associated parking.

Amount (all in sq m):

	<i>Gross Internal Area</i>	<i>Gross External Area</i>
Existing care home	710	775
Consented care home	2145	2336
Existing hardstanding	381 sq m	
Consented hardstanding	920 sq m	

Proposed: The proposal contains dwellings with the following areas:

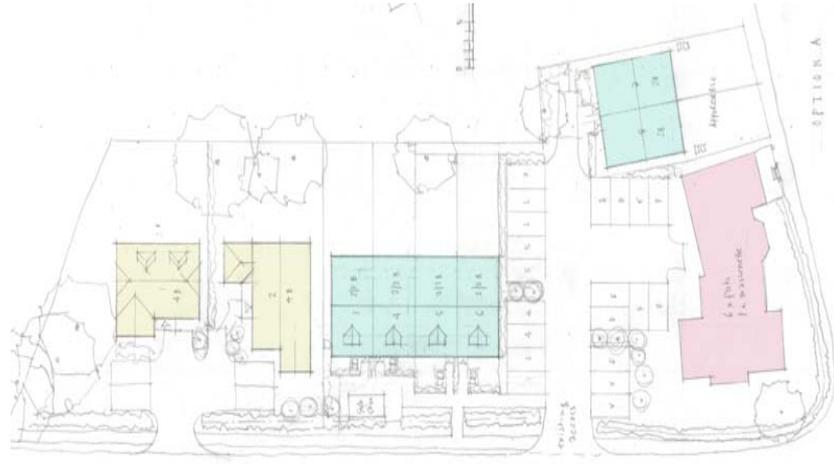
<i>Flats</i>	<i>Gross Internal Area</i>	<i>Gross External Area</i>	<i>Footprint</i>
Flat 1 (Unit 9)	70.5	82.9	
Flat 2 (Unit 10)	70.5	82.1	
Flat 3 (Unit 11)	57.8	68.4	
Flat 4 (Unit 12)	70.5	82.1	
Entire block of flats		(185 gf) (164 1 st)	185.0
<i>Terraced houses:</i>			
Unit 6 LH house	110.2	134	
Unit 7 Middle house	110.2	134	
Unit 8 RH house	110.2	134	150.3
<i>Semi detached houses:</i>			
Unit 4 LH house	110.2	140.2	
Unit 5 RH house	110.2	140.2	101.3
<i>Detached house</i>			
Unit 3 LH house	174	204.3	79.0
Collins Green house	156.1	174.9	
Hunt house	<u>156.1</u>	<u>174.9</u>	

Totals: **1,306.5** **1,552**

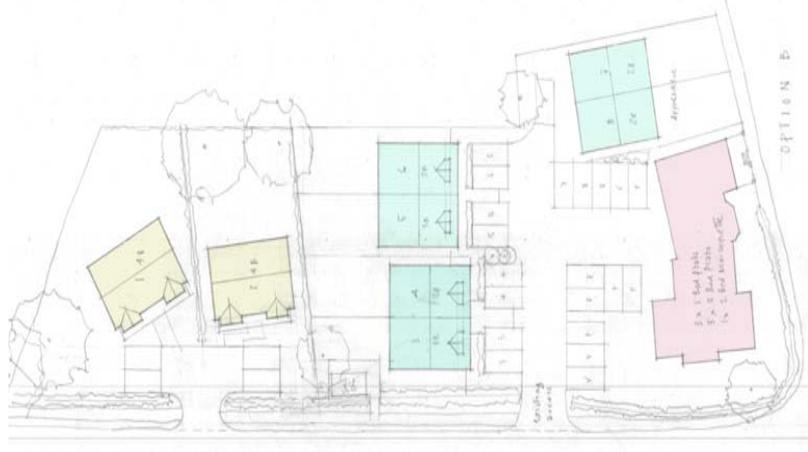
3 Early Design Evolution

The layout of the proposal evolved over four distinct design phases:

Our initial design considered retaining the existing buildings and converting to seven to nine flats, plus looking at the possibility of additional housing units on the site to maximise the reuse of this brownfield site. Following early consultations with local groups and residents it became clear that there was significant support to demolish the existing buildings and redevelop with new residential units. The resulting designs first included a large block of new build flats, of a similar mass and height to the original building (Options A-C), but it was felt that this would be too dominant on the corner of the site, and that we had an opportunity to reduce the massing and impact of the scheme on this sensitive site.



Option A had a larger 3-storey block of flats with a pair of houses to the east and a terrace of four houses orientated east-west running up to the two self-build houses at the north end which also had east-west orientation.



Option B also had a large 3-storey block of flats with a pair of houses to the east and two pairs of semi orientated north-south running up to the two self-build houses at the north end which had off-axis orientation.



Option C had a larger 3-storey block of flats orientated to the main road with a pair of houses to the east and two pairs of semis orientated north-south running up to the two self-build houses at the north end which also had off-axis orientation.



Option D also had a smaller block of flats with only two storeys orientated to the main road and close to the corner with two pairs of houses to the east and two pairs of semis orientated north-south running up to the two self-build house sites.



Early planning of the flats had a larger number of units in a 2.5 storey building with a long street frontage to the A265



Later planning of the flats had only four units in a 2 storey building with a much shorter street frontage to the A265



Early planning of the flats had a larger 2.5 storey building with a long street frontage to the A265 and more complex elevations



Later planning of the flats had a smaller 2 storey building with a much shorter street frontage to the A265 and simplified massing and elevations

4 Consultation Process

Drawings submitted to Rother District Council and the Parish Council for pre-application consultations elicited the following concerns, observations and requests:

- Particular consideration should be given to local styles, traditions and materials, and the design should pay particular attention to the surrounding built form – a particular request was made to save the date stone from the original Victorian building and incorporate into the new development, to provide continuity of style and reference to the architectural heritage of the building
- Design of the flats was generally felt to be too generic, with little reference to local styles and existing built forms
- Too many units at the South end of the site, leading to a slightly cramped feel
- Too much parking
- Houses should be orientated to front the A265 and B2181 where possible to give continuity of street scene, consistent with the local area
- Houses should have well defined frontages, with hedges and fences to delineate
- A preference was indicated by some respondents for a small terrace, rather than predominantly semi-detached
- A greater mix of house types was requested
- Landscaping and planting should be suitable for the area and include indigenous species

Using the above comments, and further detailed discussions with Parish Council members and Save Our Fields group, the design team completed a study of the existing and surrounding buildings to establish a baseline for developing the revised scheme design, and this resulted in establishing the following design points, and with particular reference to the **High Weald Housing Design Guide (HWHDG)**:

5 Post-Consultation Design

Outline:

The houses and flats in the main part of the site are all designed to provide good accommodation for families and all meet, or exceed the National Space Standards.

The flats block and small terraced houses are all planned to have a similar orientation to the A265 bordering the site and all the houses have gardens that are a minimum of 10 metres long.

Parking for 18 cars (with one disabled space and one visitor space) is positioned between the front terrace of houses/flats facing onto the A265 and the rear semi detached houses and has access from a slightly modified access off the B2181. The detached house, unit 3, has separate parking along side the house.

The self-build houses are positioned to provide a pair of car spaces each off a short driveway leading from the new pavement crossing off the B2181.

Each self-build house has a split-level design with a mid level at the entrance to the house and a spiral staircase connecting it with the bedrooms on the lower level and the living/ dining/ kitchen space on the upper level. Thus the upper level makes use of the distant views across the playing fields for the living areas, which each have a full width balcony.

High walls connecting the self-build houses to their boundary walls provide privacy for both houses by forming a small 'public' entrance/ car area which is separate from the rear gardens.

Security for the residents in the main site is provided by having substantial fences with lockable gates for the rear gardens and a central 'public' parking area with good natural surveillance of this area by the surrounding houses.

Security for the self-build houses is provided by having high walls which contain visitors to the access/ parking areas and the only access to rear gardens is provided via lockable gates in high walls.

Site Context (DG1) – The existing village comprises a generally linear form along the ridge of Burwash Common and the site is set within the village. There is extensive built form of a variety of differing styles and materials, however, the dominant style adjacent to the site is late Victorian, or early Edwardian, as the photographs show:

Scale - The scale of the proposal is for a relatively modest development of just twelve dwellings. The development includes 1 and 2 bedroom homes, in keeping with the requirement for smaller homes in the locality, and of none are more than two storeys, in keeping with the scale of the surrounding area.

The largest building by volume is the flats building which is also two storey with a pitched roof, with a roof height lower than the existing building thereby reducing its scale to that similar and in keeping to the surrounding houses.

The flats building is about 13m long as seen from the A265, compared to the existing building at about 23m and the adjoining house building opposite on the B2181 (Hollyhurst Cottage and Vain Cottage) at around 28m long.

Careful consideration has been given to the detached home, fronting the Stonegate Road, with a scale similar to the houses opposite. The two semi-detached homes internally to the site are of modest scale and proportion.

The self-build houses are designed to adopt a low profile by using the natural slope of the site combined with a split level design, with three internal levels. This means that, from the road aspect, these houses have very low profiles which, when combined with the natural falls on the site, produce a very low, discreet appearance which suggests they might be single storey houses, even though they are not. The presence of the existing hedges, which are only briefly interrupted by the new driveway opening, means that, for people walking past, the self-build houses will be all but invisible. Their green roofs assist in making them unobtrusive. They also form a visual bridge between the taller dwellings to the south in the main part of the application site and the cricket pavilion to the north which is a single storey building with a pitched roof set on a lower land level than the self-build houses.

Existing Building and Dominant Buildings Nearby



Existing Ashwood Building



Vain Cottage, Shepherd's Mead, The Coach House



Buckles

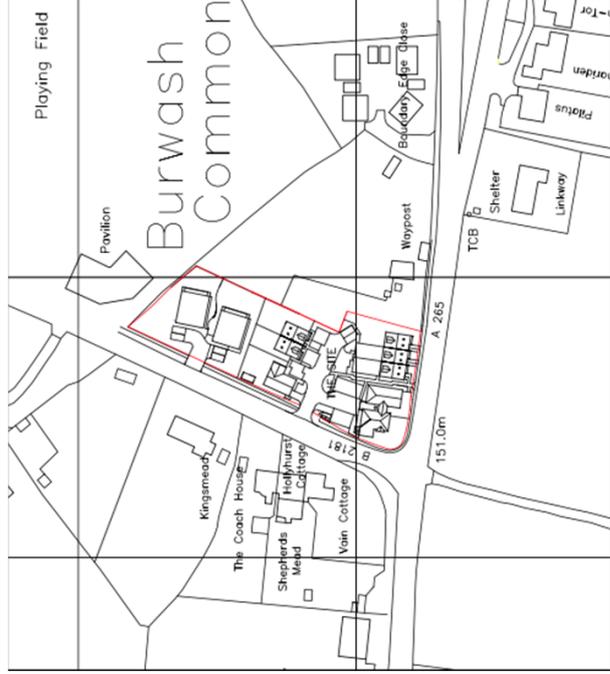


Clover Leys

Less Dominant Buildings Nearby



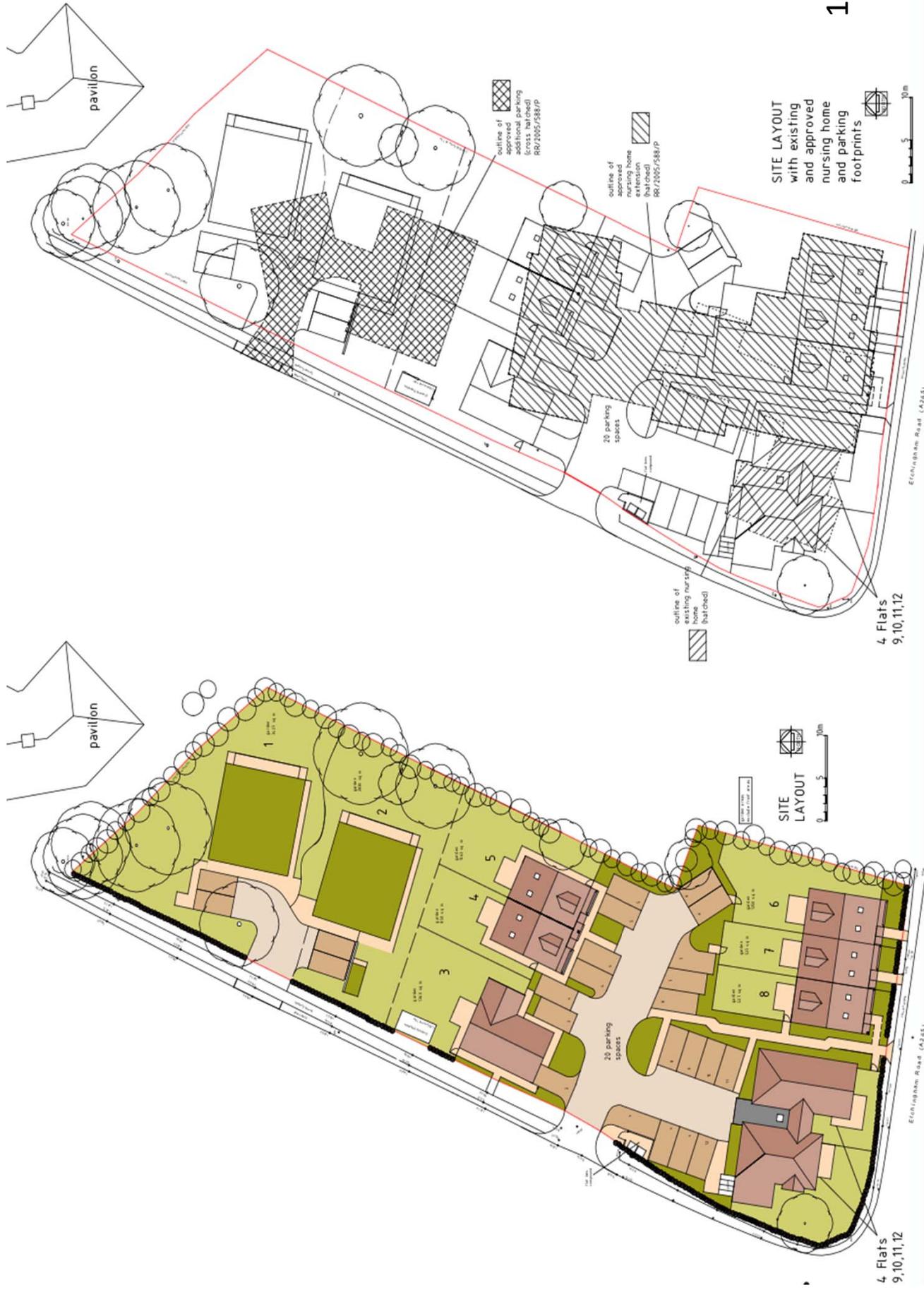
Burwash Common Nursery



Kingsmead

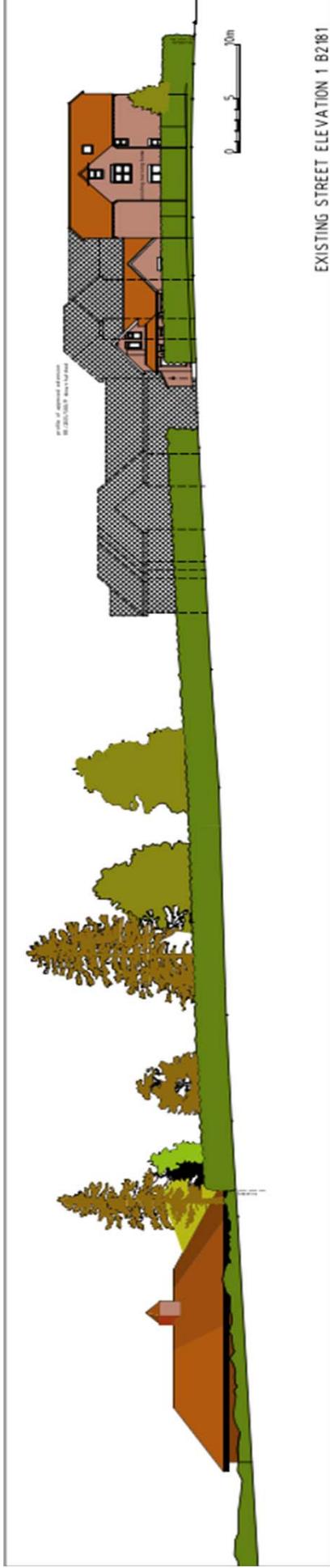
OS plan shows the proposed buildings in context to their surroundings

Site Layout and Structuring (DG3) – The now varied building types and sizes, including flats, terrace, semi-detached and detached houses give a feel of organic evolution as can be seen with surrounding areas of the village. The mature hedges and trees that bound the site form a natural green structure that softens the proposed built form, which is further enhanced by the proposed green roofs to the self-build homes.

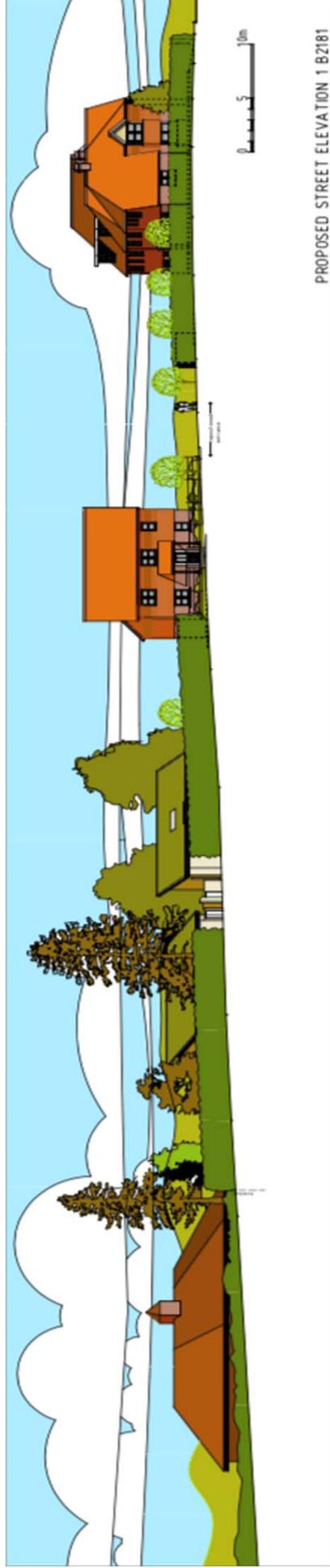


Using Buildings to Define Streets and Spaces (DG4) – This policy is referred to in the Planning Statement, however, it is worth noting the specific request of several consultees that, where possible, new homes should be fronted onto the A265 and B2181 so as to better define the streets and spaces. The original design sought to have new homes fronting an internal access drive and parking area which was considered to be contrary to DG4 and visually less attractive to the street scene. By reducing the number of units from fourteen to twelve, we then had the opportunity to introduce a detached house (plot 3), fronting the B2182, that more sympathetically reflects the style of the existing building immediately opposite at Vain Cottage and Shepherd's Mead.

Streetscape elevations



Stonegate Road – Existing streetscape elevation and outline of agreed extension



Stonegate Road – Proposed streetscape elevation

Streetscape elevations - Continued



Heathfield Road – Existing streetscape elevation and outline of agreed extension



Heathfield Road – Proposed streetscape elevation

The Right Built Form (DG5) – Whilst this policy has been extensively addressed in the Planning Statement, it is worth reiterating that the form of proposed buildings have been designed to reflect and acknowledge the scale, massing, and style of the predominantly late Victorian/early Edwardian buildings that are most prominent in the locality. Whilst there are a number of differing styles, the references to the style chosen give opportunity for strong traditional style and detailing that do not exist in the more contemporary buildings nearby. It was also felt that reference to a more vernacular style would not be correct as there are very few vernacular ‘Sussex style’ buildings in Burwash Common, and the general style is different in tone and context to Burwash, with its terraces of tile hung and weatherboarded cottages. Burwash Common streetscape is very different and the proposed development at Ashwood needs to reflect this.

The design of the two self build homes received considerable support and approval from the extensive consultations and introduces a more contemporary style to the overall scheme, which in turn reinforces the organic feel, that the area has developed over time with slightly differing styles, as evidenced by the building Kingsmead, immediately opposite. Additionally, the specific requirements for this part of the site meant that a larger and more traditional design would have been too dominant in relation to Kingsmead and the pavilion building adjacent.

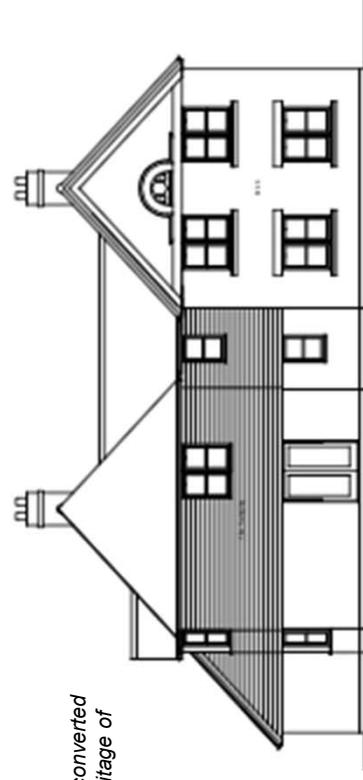
Building Appearance (DG7)

Flats, Terrace, Semi-detached and Detached

The consultation process enabled the design team to consider what type of design and style would best suit the location, as well as considering the surrounding house styles. The principles set out in the High Weald Housing Design Guide were also considered and the resulting design therefore acknowledges influences from the late Victorian to early Edwardian period, including the original structure on the site and the properties immediately opposite. The houses and flats in the main Ashwood site are designed to have a traditional appearance with materials and massing which fit comfortably into the styles of building nearby, using pitched roof forms.

The appearance of the flats was of particular concern during the consultation process and it was felt important to reduce the massing of the block originally proposed, to appear similar to a large house rather than a purpose-built block. Similarly, requests were made by several local residents to keep the date stone of the old building, so this will be incorporated into the gable wall of the new block to give continuity of style and relevance.

Materials have been chosen carefully to suit the area and architectural style, being a combination of brick, render, tile hanging, white windows and clay tile roofs, however, we acknowledge that final details and materials will be dealt with by planning condition.



Proposed new flats designed to resemble a large converted house, with detailing to reflect the architectural heritage of the site and surrounding area

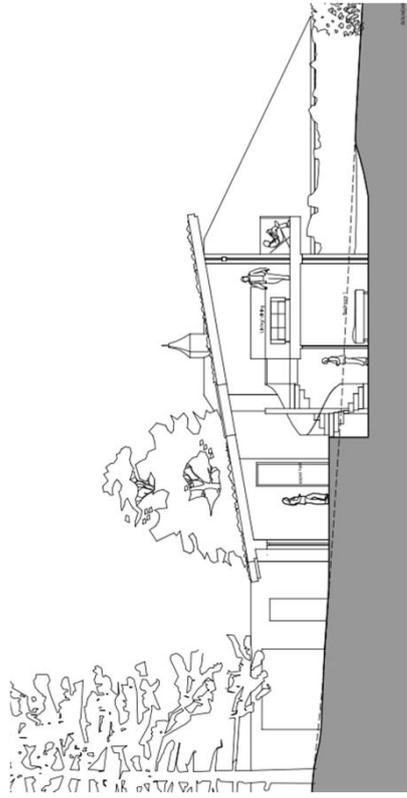
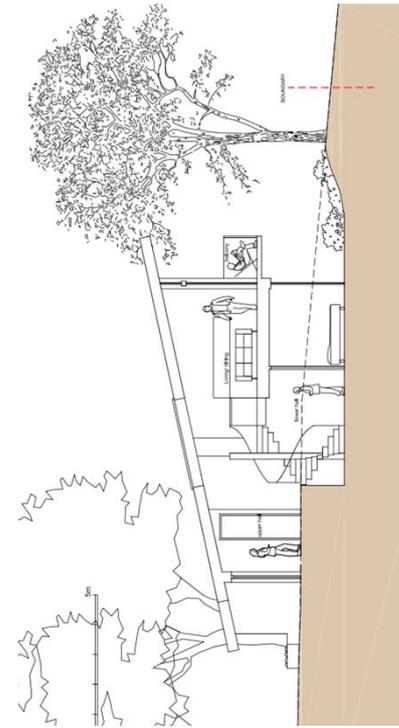
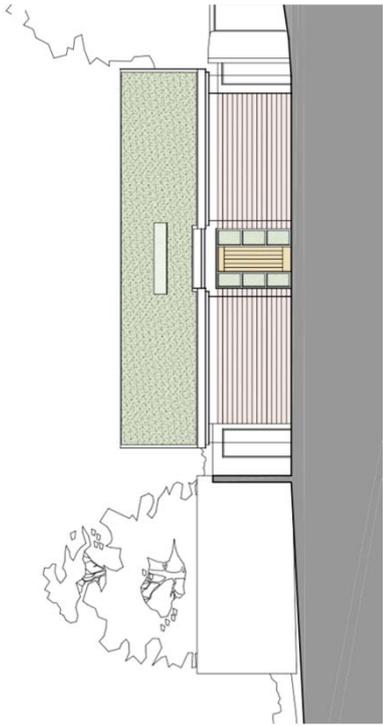
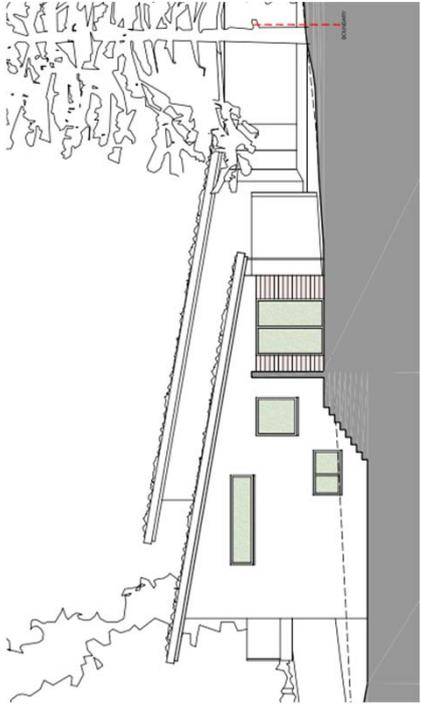


Proposed new houses designed to include traditional proportions, styling and materials. Frontages to be clearly defined with estate fencing and hedges

Self-Build Houses

The two split-level self-build houses at the north end of the site are small-scale domestic buildings of a contemporary design and they have monopitch roofs which slope up towards the ENE distant views.

These houses take an opportunity to introduce a more innovative kind of design and have a discreet, modern appearance and are unusual in their split level/ monopitch roof design. This limits the height of the roofs which in turn mitigates the visual effect of the houses to Kingswood, opposite.



Self-build houses – Design Details:

The Collins Green house is faced externally in off-white render with weather boarding to the front and part of the sides which is proposed to be a slightly darker off-white/ taupe colour. The windows are dark grey in colour.

The Hunt house has an earth-coloured render finish overall with white windows.

Both houses have green roofs with vertical chain drainage in the lower two corners, the chains dropping into small circular gravel beds, and both have natural oak plank front doors.

Both houses also feature large windows and sliding glass doors, cantilevered balconies to the living areas and a circular staircase which connects all three internal levels.



Monopitch roof



Large sliding glass doors



Render finish



Weatherboard finish

6 - Landscaping

TREES

The master landscape plan shows the location of the principle existing trees to be retained, in addition to the proposed planting of up to 25 new trees on the application site.

Current trees on site include : - (TO BE CONFIRMED BY BROAD OAK TREE CONSULTANTS)

T2 Blue Atlas Cedar - TO BE RETAINED

T7 Cut Leaf Beech - TO BE RETAINED

T6 Sycamore/Maple - TO BE RETAINED

T3 Ash - TO BE RETAINED

T8 – Holly (On Boundary) TO BE RETAINED

T10 Weeping Willow - TO BE RETAINED

T11 Red Sycamore/Maple - TO BE REMOVED DUE TO LACK OF SPACE

T12 - Himalayan Birch - TO BE RETAINED

T13 Fruit Tree Species TO BE REMOVED

T14 Ornamental Cherry TO BE RETAINED

T15 Ornamental Cherry MAY BE REMOVED SUBJECT TO TREE ROOTS

T17 Ornamental Cherry TO BE RETAINED

T18 - Red Sycamore - TO BE RETAINED

T19 - Red Sycamore - TO BE RETAINED

T21 - Scots Pine - TO BE REMOVED

T28 - Box Elder/Maple - TO BE RETAINED

On the north west boundary there is a mature Atlas Cedar (T2), a semi mature Sycamore (T6), Ash (T3) and a Cut Leafed Beech tree (T7). These trees will be retained subject to survey. The existing Holly (T8) is sited in the boundary hedge and will be retained.

On the eastern boundary currently has a large Hazel shrub G9, which will be cut back and removed and replaced with new mixed planting. The existing mature weeping willow (T10) and Himalayan Birch tree (T12) will be retained. The fruit tree of unknown species (T13), to be removed, as it is too close to the proposed curved blockwork boundary wall. The Ornamental Cherry tree (T14) will be retained, but a further Ornamental Cherry tree (T15) may be removed, subject to extent of tree roots during excavation works. There is an immature Red sycamore (T11) sited between the weeping willow (T10) and birch tree (T12) that may be removed due to lack of growing space.

Towards the front of the boundary on the south eastern side, there is an Ornamental Cherry (T17), a Red Sycamore/Acer (T18), a further Red Sycamore/Acer (T19), all of which will be retained.

The existing Scot's Pine (T21) is in poor health, with distorted growth and will be removed

On the front south western corner there is an existing Box Elder/Maple tree (T28) that will be retained.

In addition to the retained trees, it is proposed to plant up to 25 new trees using a combination of the following selection, which have been chosen as they are good small native cultivars, all providing flowering, fruiting, are bee and insect friendly, provide some evergreen screening, autumn colour and require minimal maintenance throughout their lifespan.

Betula utilis (Himalayan Birch) mature height 3-8m, bark interest

Crataegus laevigata Paul's Scarlet (Hawthorn) mature height 5-7m, flowering & bee friendly, autumn colour.

Ilex aquifolium (Common Holly) mature height 3-8m fruiting, native evergreen tree

Ilex castaneifolia (Sweet Chestnut Leaved Holly) for evergreen screening

Malus toringo Scarlet Brouwers Beauty – mature height 3-8m, flowering, fruiting & Bee friendly

Sorbus aucuparia Vilmorini (Rowan) mature height 3/8m flowering, fruiting, bee friendly & autumn Colour.

PLANTING SPACES

Mixed Development Area

Each individual house will have its own enclosed garden area, consisting of lawn and planted boundaries consisting of new small trees, mixed shrubs and perennials. Where space allows, suitable trees have been selected and sited in the corner of each garden to provide a link for wildlife.

Within the whole mixed development area, it is proposed to plant up to 18 new trees. These will be a combination of *Betula utilis* *jacquemontii*, *Crataegus laevigata* 'Paul's Scarlet', *Ilex aquifolium* 'Argentea Marginata', *Malus toringo* Scarlet Brouwers Beauty and *Sorbus vilmorinii*.

Collins-Green & Hunt Houses

The garden areas for both houses will be predominantly planted with mixed shrubs and perennials, suitable for the aspect and soil type. A small area of lawn will be sited on the northern boundary between the furthest house and the adjacent cricket field.

A total of 7 new trees will be planted between both houses, these will include *Betula utilis jacquemontii*, *Crataegus laevigata* 'Paul's Scarlet', *Ilex castaneifolia*, *Malus toringo* Scarlet Brouwers Beauty and *Sorbus vilmorinii*.

We have been mindful to encourage biodiversity and the scheme maximises opportunity for soft landscaping to encourage biodiversity. Densely planted borders together with native species trees, aim to enhance the site and create a wider range of habitats creating a more bio-diverse and ecologically sustainable place for prospective occupiers and those in properties surrounding.

SURFACES

Currently, the site is covered by a large area of hardstanding and parking area at the rear of the existing building footprint. The remaining areas are open grassland. The proposal incorporates fully permeable surfaces for all driveways and parking areas. Where practical, planting areas are adjacent to these areas to further enhance surface water run-off into these areas .

LIGHTING

There are no plans for external lighting except for exterior side passage lights and lighting within covered storage areas, to minimise light disturbance for wildlife.

LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

Ongoing maintenance for the shared communal areas will be managed from the outset through a pre agreed service charge applicable to relevant households.

5 Access

Access for vehicles is via two entrances. The existing entrance, slightly modified, gives access to 20 parking spaces (one being a disabled space) for the flats and two-storey houses. The other vehicle entrance (serving the self-builds) is new, with a new pavement crossing, and serves the two self-build houses which each have two parking spaces.

Pedestrian access is also via the two vehicle entrances with the three terraced houses with gardens adjacent to the Etchingham Road having their own garden gates.

There is ample space for residents to have bicycle storage.

All of the dwellings are 'visitable dwellings' as defined by Part M of the Building Regulations and all have been designed to conform to these regulations. At least one of the dwellings will be designed to be suitable for occupation by disabled residents.

Access for emergency services will be via the two vehicle entrances.

The new vehicle entrance will not produce any road safety concerns as it is spaced away from the existing one and it will have very good sightlines in both directions. In addition the road has a 40 mph speed limit, there are other driveways along this stretch of road and the site is close to the junction with the A265, producing lower driving speeds. Please refer to specialist Highways report for details.

Refuse collection

Refuse and recycling collection will be from a vehicle parked in the B2181 which allows easy access to bins placed by the site boundary by the residents of all dwellings.

Each individual house will have a dedicated bin storage area either in the rear or side garden, which is concealed from view from the road and shared entranceways. A covered storage unit to store commercial sized bins for the flat dwellings will be sited near the main entranceway.

6 Sustainable drainage

Sustainable drainage will be incorporated into the design – please refer to specialist drainage design report for details.

7 Benefits of the proposal

- The lack of harm to the community that arises from losing the long redundant nursing home facility;
- The re-use of a previously developed site bringing it back into beneficial use thus making an effective use of such land;
- The improvements to the aesthetics of the site when viewed from the street scene and surrounding area;
- The lack of visual harm to the AONB;
- The minimal impacts on neighbouring residential amenity;
- The delivery of 12 new housing units of mixed tenure to help meet local needs (including smaller and self-build dwellings);
- The introduction of an element of affordable housing that would create a more balanced and sustainable rural community.
- Its accessibility by walking and cycling to local facilities such as shops, community centres, pubs, play equipment and churches.
- Its accessibility to bus stops that serve bus routes to the other facilities of Burwash, Etchingham and Heathfield;
- The help that future residents would bring to sustaining local services and facilities in the area;
- The delivery of social and economic benefits arising from the construction work.