Portslade Village Pavilions

Design & Access Statement

November 2023

MILLER BOURNE ARCHITECTS

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Project Details

Site
Portslade Village Centre (also known as Courthope Centre)
3 Courthope Close, Portslade.

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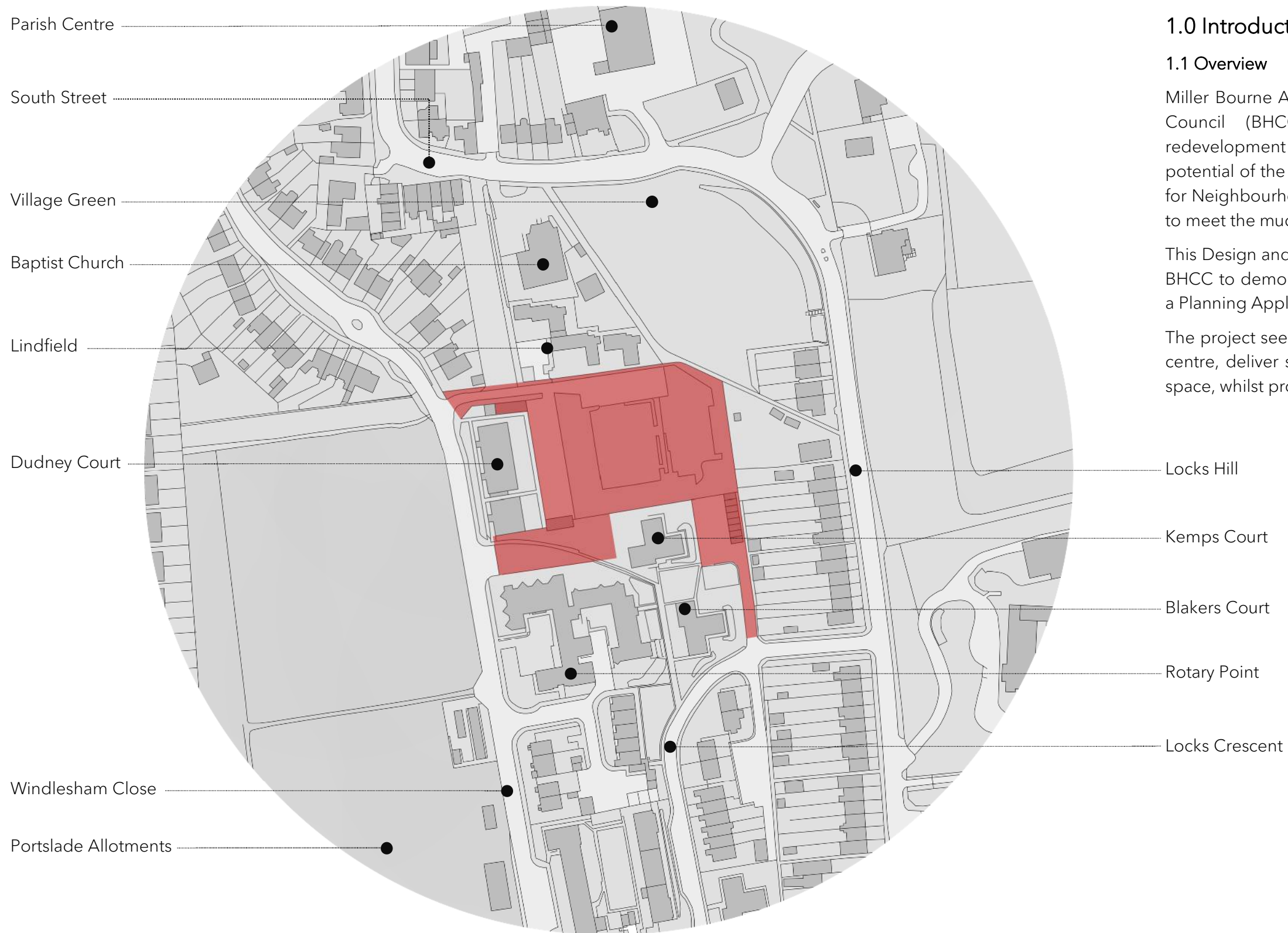### Accessibility Consultant
JAW Inclusive Design

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Miller Bourne Architects were appointed by Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC), to explore feasibility options for the redevelopment of Portslade Village Centre. The redevelopment potential of the site had been identified as part of the New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme, launched by the council in order to meet the much-needed new rented council homes.

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of BHCC to demonstrate the architectural design proposal as part of a Planning Application.

The project seeks to regenerate the site of the existing community centre, deliver significant improvement to the public realm, open space, whilst providing 28 new affordable housing.

Project Timeline

2018 ——————— 2019 ———— 2021 ———— 2022 ———— 2022 ———— 2023
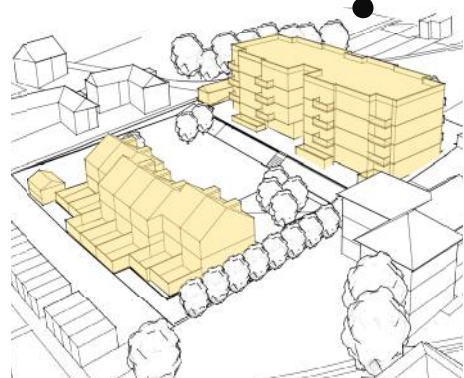

Original site boundary, around the existing community centre perimeter

Feasibility scheme developed for pre-app and a design panel review

The proposal was redeveloped from Stage 2, with a Landscape Led approach. This was submitted for a new pre-app and design review

Initial feasibility study exploring a mixed-used development, providing new community centre with residential units

Following the initial pre-app and design review, the site boundary was extended to allow the development to integrate into the wide community

Proposed Development to be submitted for Planning

1.0 Introduction

1.2 Project Background

In July 2018, Miller Bourne Architects were approached by BHCC to undertake a high-level feasibility study to outline options to redevelop the site of the existing Community Centre, known as Portslade Village Centre. Initially the site area was contained within the perimeter of the existing mesh fence, which is essentially landlocked between residential development. Whilst the brief always sought to retain the community facility, it was key to make the rest of the site work much harder and include much-needed new housing for the area. An initial scheme was developed for pre-application, testing the financial viability of the scheme, whilst gaining general feedback from the Local Planning Authority (PRE2021/00130). In addition to the pre-application, the scheme was presented to a design review panel in October 2021.

The overarching feedback from this initial pre-application and review process made the recommendation for the project to adopt a "Landscape Led" approach, which would place emphasis on the contextual landscape as the driving factor in developing the scheme.

Since then, a landscape architect was appointed, and the scheme redeveloped under a collaborative landscape led direction. With greater consideration for the concept of Placemaking, the site has expanded to include areas of surrounding council-owned land which help connect a narrative to the brief and development. Guiding the evolution of the project with public and community engagement has been key. A second pre-application (PRE2023/00016) and design panel has since followed.

1.0 Introduction

1.3 Sustainability

With the opportunity to redevelop a site that had not been historically considered or utilised well, came the potential to aim towards a much greater sustainable development. This not only applied to the inherit benefits that a new local community facility could offer to its community, but also by delivering highly thermal and energy efficient affordable housing that is comfortable and affordable to heat. To assist in developing a strategy for the Portslade Pavilions, a specialist sustainability consultant was appointed during the early design development stages to work closely with the team. This collaborative approach was crucial in minimising embodied and operational carbon, improving thermal efficiency, and reducing energy demands for future residents.

The following stages outline how the proposal has been developed with those sustainable aspirations. Full details of the sustainability strategy can be found within the supporting Sustainability Statement, which demonstrates how the scheme intends to achieve the RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge (2025 domestic target metrics).

Feasibility
- The initial feasibility process was key to understand the potential viability and options for redeveloping the site.

Existing Landscape and Building Appraisal
- An appraisal of the existing landscaping, building and site structures were considered to determine the potential value and condition of each.
- The existing site levels created by the initial development makes accessibility incredibly problematic, whilst the location, quality, and layout of the existing building means that it is no-longer fit for its purpose and limited future lifespan.
- The appraisal identified certain elements of the existing that might be salvageable, including fixtures, fitting, flooring, and building materials.

Establishing Goals
- With the early appointment of a sustainability consultant, a collaborative design development approach was fostered. This enabled the team to establish targets and a roadmap to get there.

Design Development
- The project adopted a landscape led approach, and a landscape architect was appointed at that start of RIBA Stage 2 to lead the site evaluation and development.
- An extensive site analysis was undertaken to assess the site, and surrounding area, determining the character of place, site forces, and sustainable and environmental opportunities.
- Collaborative design workshops were held throughout this process, to identify the opportunities and constraints of the existing landscape, character, functionality, and sustainable urban drainage .
- A site strategy was developed that identified opportunities to enhance and develop biodiversity, open space and public realm, whilst celebrating existing natural features, incorporating SuDs, and improve the connectivity between the site and the surrounding area.
- Furthermore, the site strategy also identified potential areas to develop for new buildings, and several options were considered. A single building option would have resulted in too great a scale to make the scheme feasible and was out of place within the area, whereas more than 3+ buildings only led to increased costs and reduced landscaping potential. Instead, the result of that study favoured a two building option, as this offers the greatest balance between area dedicated to landscaping and a feasible building footprint.
- The development of that scheme incorporated passive sustainable measures such as the orientation of the blocks and habitable rooms, utilising balconies to provide solar shading, simplified form to prevent heat loss and a highly-insulated envelope.

Technical Development
- Design workshops were held with the wider design team to explore options for sustainable structural systems, civils, and M&E systems. These options were assessed by the sustainability consultant and led to the preferred option for a panelised structural timber system, with mvhr, ground source heat pumps, and a thermally efficient envelope.
- Further assessment and workshops with the sustainability consultant enabled the project team to develop greater detailed information, whilst ensuring compliance with aspects of building regulations, such as balancing the overheating potential (Part O) with daylighting gains.

2

Identity of Place

The identity of Place is an overarching "Macro" study of Portslade, characterising the setting for the site.

Each neighborhood and local place have their own distinct feel, character, and presence; however, these places do not belong in isolation, they from part of the broader narrative that contributes to the sense of place. When we make our journeys to and from these individual sites, we take-in, interact and experience this wider area. We associate with its landmarks, features, and characteristics, all of which in turn become familiar. The ambition for the proposal is for the development to become an extension of that place, whilst making its own uniquely modern contribution.
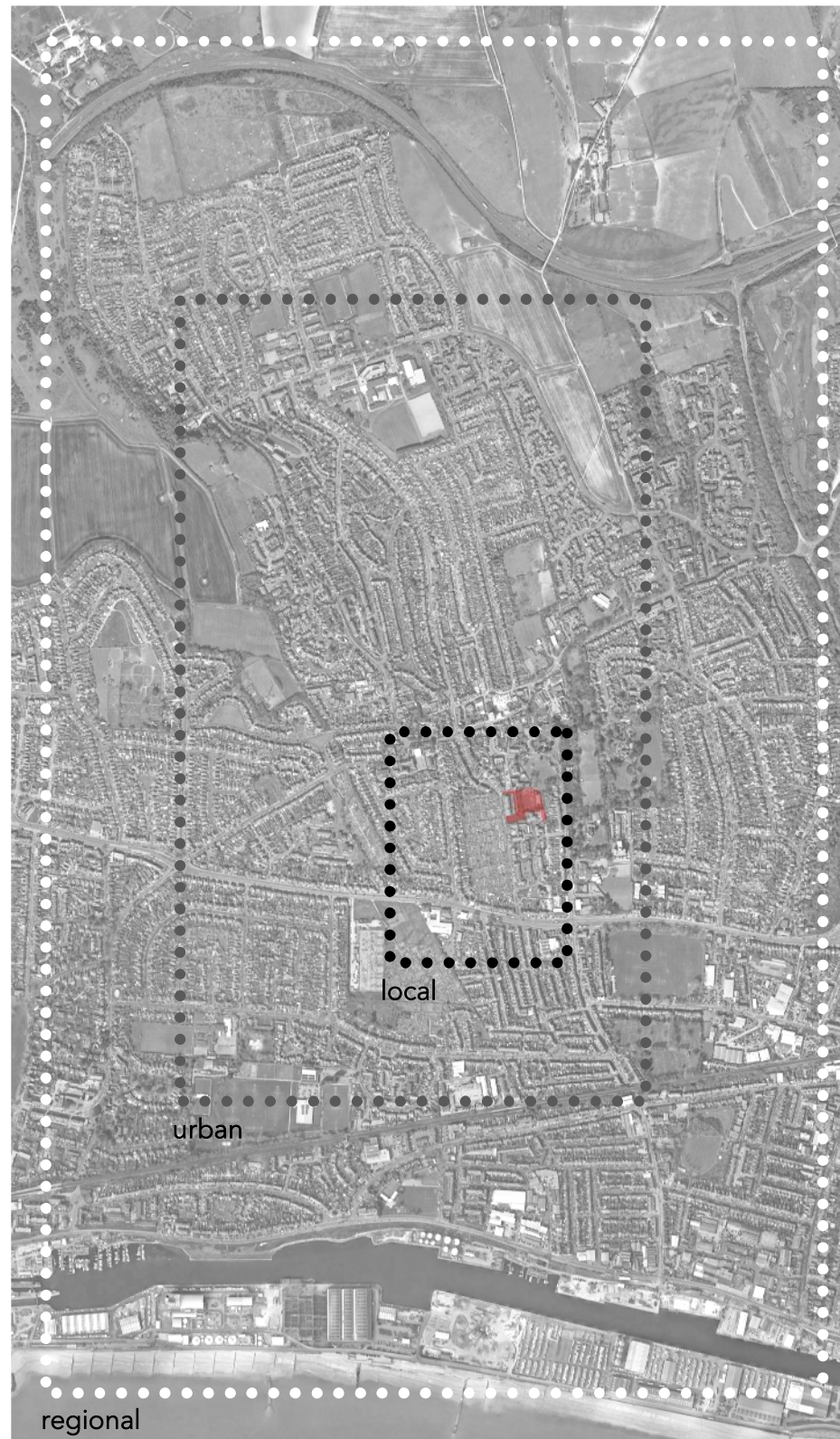
2.0 Identity of Place

2.1 Levels of Identity

A contextual analysis of the surrounding area was conducted to establish the identity of place. The initial scope can broadly be categorised into three levels of identity, each having an influence to the overall character of the area:

Regional

The wider context of Portslade takes in the South Coast of England and stretches into the South Downs National Park, combining Rural, Urban and Industrial character. This regional character has a wide influence over the site and local context from the perspective of the topographical form of the valley landscape, the historical influence which shaped the urban grain, typologies and materials, and also extends to modern day activities and vistas that provide a setting for Portslade.

Urban

The urban core of Portslade is focussed within the valley, sprawling out from the historic heart to meet the demands of modern urban growth. Busy commercial roads divide residential zones, which hug the valley hillsides. The urban identity shapes the way the community functions, zoning residential areas, amenities and transport networks.

Local

Within the heart of Portslade is the historic centre, and conservation area, which is focused around High Street. Just outside this, the local character can be identified by historic villas, 20th century low-rise flats, large allotments and small pockets of open spaces.

2.0 Identity of Place

2.1 Levels of Identity

Within walking distance, the landscape and indeed the identity of Portslade can change dramatically, illustrated by the narrative (left), which can be depicted in a journey, from a rural backdrop to an urban landscape.

Stretching out for miles around, the hills above Portslade extend into the South Downs National Park, featuring recreation areas [2], a patchwork of fields [1] and clusters of trees. The A27 has physically detached this landscape, forming an hard boundary around the northern perimeter of Portslade. Nevertheless, the landscape remains a permanent visual link, as there are still select routes for access. The rural boundary features a strong edge created by the A27, yet this is mostly sunken into the landscape and screened by vegetation. Inside this boundary and climbing up the valley hills from the core is an extensive 20th century residential zone.

High Street links both sides of the narrow valley, running from East to West [4]. The Old Brewery sits directly within the middle of High Street, whilst the tower of St Nicolas Church and the Emmaus Community rise up the eastern hill. Similarly, as the valley hill descends down to the coast, rows of semi-detached dwellings step down the grading topography and roads [5]. Old Shoreham Road forms a distinctive urban edge, separating the main core of Portslade village from its southern side [6]. This urban fringe is perforated by a small residential streets and a prime pedestrian gateway leading to Windlesham Close and the Village beyond [6].

Moving back within the valley floor, historic fields have made-way to allotments and mid-century small rise residential apartment blocks [7]. The heart of Portslade forms the historic core, which is dominated by the hierarchy of the Old Brewery [8].

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

Each level of identity contributes to the overall character and identity of a place. For the purposes of this design proposal, the key defining themes have been identified as;

1. Contextual relationships (distant views, pathways, journeys)

2. Green Infrastructure (natural connections and public realm)

3. Valley Landscape (shaping the streets, rooflines and landscape)

4. Levels of Intimacy (Public, Private and Semi-private spaces)

5. Historical Identity

6. Evolving Layers (creating unique palettes, details)

7. Movement (permeability, boundaries, edges)

8. Community (allotments, local growing, sports & activities)

9. Local architectural details and form

These 9 contextual factors have been key to the development of the site strategy and the design proposal, informing the approach to landscaping, massing, site connectivity, functions and material palette.

Portslade Village

Site

Windlesham Gateway

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.1 Contextual Relationships
Contextual relationships are made up of visual links, borrowed landscapes, and the overall setting of the area. Understanding these wider relationships helps to frame an idea as to how the site belongs within this area, and how it functions with the rest of the local landscape.

Portslade Village is separated from Portslade-by-sea by Old Shoreham Road. Similarly, The A24 highway arches around the north of Portslade, forming a boundary between the South Downs National Park. Access to the Village is largely condensed to a few narrow approaches from Old Shoreham Road. The principle pedestrian / cycle route is gained through a "gateway" to Windlesham Close. This route marks a significant component for the connectivity of the site, providing good local and regions links.

The South Downs

The Old Brewery

Village Centre

2.0 Identity of Place

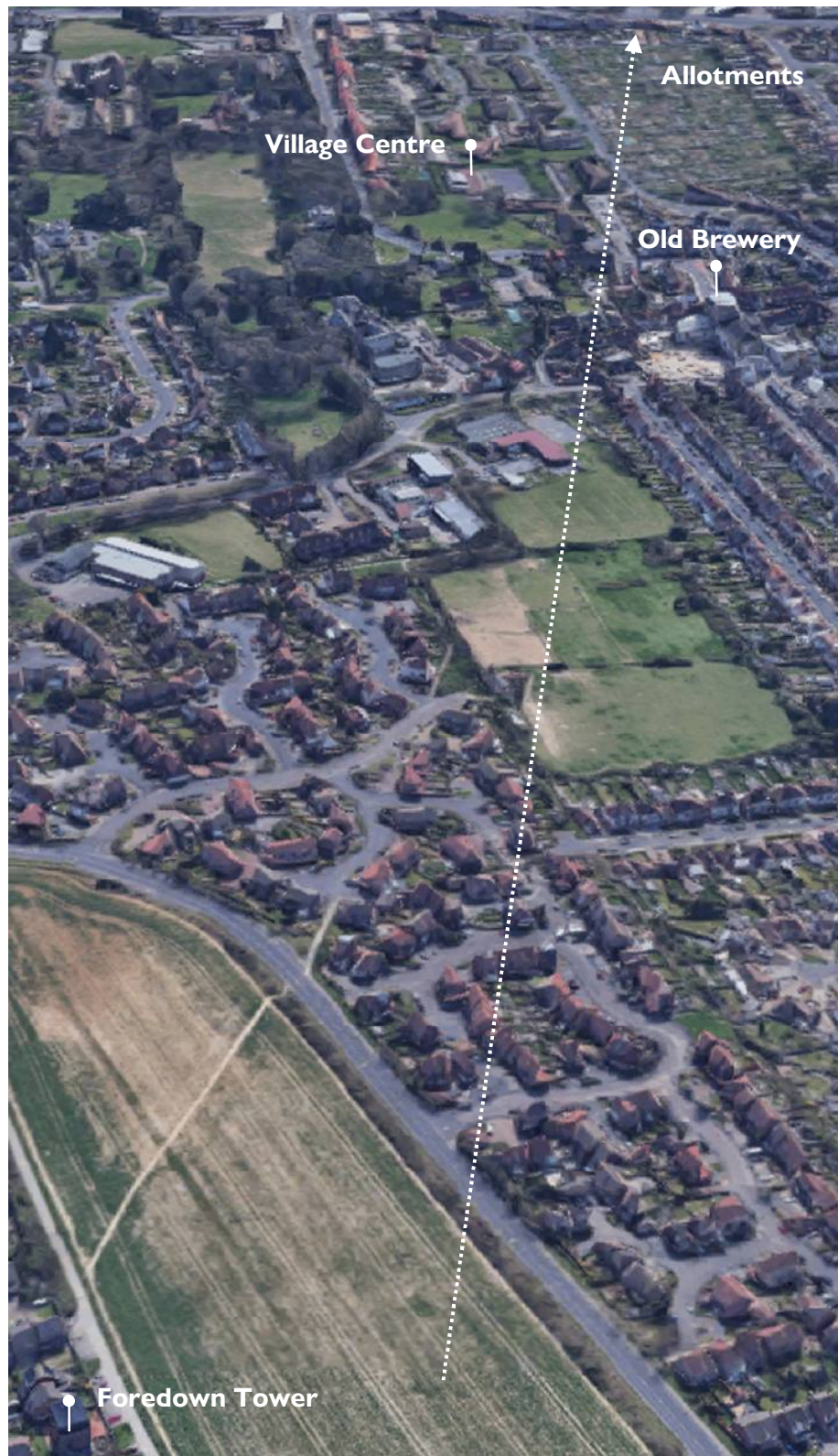### 2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.1 Contextual Relationships
Windlesham Gateway approach provides pedestrian and cyclist access to Windlesham Close. From here there is a link to the old village of Portslade, as located by the prominent form of the Old brewery, along with visual links to the rolling hills of the South Downs National Park rising up beyond.

Direction of Site: Landlocked between Windlesham Close and Locks Hill, Village Centre is neatly tucked away, being virtually invisible from the approach, until site access.

The Old Brewery is a prominent landmark on the roofline of Portslade.

Cockroost Hill and the South Downs Landscape provide a soft backdrop throughout Portslade, rising up from the valley and coast.

Windlesham Gateway: Whilst Old Shoreham Road acts as a very contrasting boundary, the ingress into the village at Windlesham close provides a picture of the local context contained within that boundary.

Allotments

Village Centre

Old Brewery

Foredown Tower

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.1 Contextual Relationships
Whilst the surrounding valley landscape slopes up around the site, distant views are difficult to attain. As the view opposite highlights, taken (from Foredown Tower), Portslade has continued to extend up the valley gradient, which means both mature vegetation and the buildings along the highest point of the valley obscure views down into large parts of the village. Due to its proximity to the village centre, within the bottom of the valley, the site is hidden from these distant views.

Site obscured behind foreground roofline and vegetation

Dudney Court Roof

Allotments

The Old Brewery

Foredown Tower perspective

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.1 Contextual Relationships

From a local perspective, one of the most poignant associations the site maintains is the relationship with the historic centre of Portslade. This is particularly relevant due its proximity with the adjacent Portslade Village Conservation Area, which lies to the northeast boundary, encompassing the Village Green. Whilst the site remains just outside this boundary, it has an important role to play on the setting of the conservation area.

Views from, towards, through and across the conservation area in the direction of the site, are quite limited due to the nature of the surrounding development, existing vegetation, and the form of the topography.

Distant views across the conservation area can be captured from the outlying modern residential developments, where streets are generally laid-out on a North-South axis and feature terraces and semi-detached housing. Southern views (1) are screened by the context of the conservation area, built on the opposite axis, whilst views west (2) are screened by both 20th century housing, wrapping around Easthill Park and dense woodland along Locks Hill. One area offering large expanses of open green space is Easthill Park. However, due to the sloping valley, falling to the west, a pronounced treeline obscures views beyond the park's perimeter (3).

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.1 Contextual Relationships

Within the historic village nucleus, distant views are primarily limited along an east – west axis, following the urban grain and valley profile. This greatly limits any immediate visual links between the site and conservation area. The only real views exist from the western end of high street, beyond the conservation area, where the Village Green and roofline of Locks Hill can be seen. The primary relationship between the site and conservation area then exists between the northeast corner, leading onto the Green. This area is predominantly influenced by the character of the Norman Church and neighbouring Villas and feature several listed and locally listed buildings. Each of which play a positive role in establishing a sense of character.

Boundary treatments and road / pavement layouts are seen as some of the defining features, which offer a sense of enclosure and privacy. Many of these boundaries are composed of flint walls, dense hedgerows and mature clusters of trees. Again the result of which naturally limit long views, and instead frames short views with this sense of enclosure.

Notably, the Norman church of St Nicolas, the ruins of the Old Manor and the impressive array of local historic villas are all set within large grounds, enclosed by walls and dense natural boundaries (1). Surrounding St Nicolas Church is a large flint wall, which is layered by tall trees and dense vegetation. These features contribute to the established treeline around the neighbouring villas and Village Green (2), sense of enclosure and restrict distant views.

Example of the tall flint wall and mature dense vegetation forming enclosed boundary treatment, obscuring views from St Nicolas' Church towards the site.

1

2

3

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.1 Contextual Relationships

As Manor Rd sweeps around to join Locks Hill and South Street, views of the Village Green come into focus. These views are well screened by layers of mature trees and shrubs, which wrap around the perimeter, enclosing the Green. Visual links to the site only really become apparent from within the Village Green, and these are broken by the understorey of mature trees. Views of the existing Community Centre from here is in part made more obvious since there is little to no screening directly beyond the Green. The white render, cladding and low pitch of the reflective metal roof of the Community Centre begin to stand out, incongruous to the warm and subtle hues of the bordering wall around the Parish Church and Lindfield.

Metallic standing-seam roof and white render draw the eye beyond the trees, standing hard against the Village Green

Existing material palette of the community centre stands out, incongruous to surrounding context, creating a contrast against the trees and natural screening
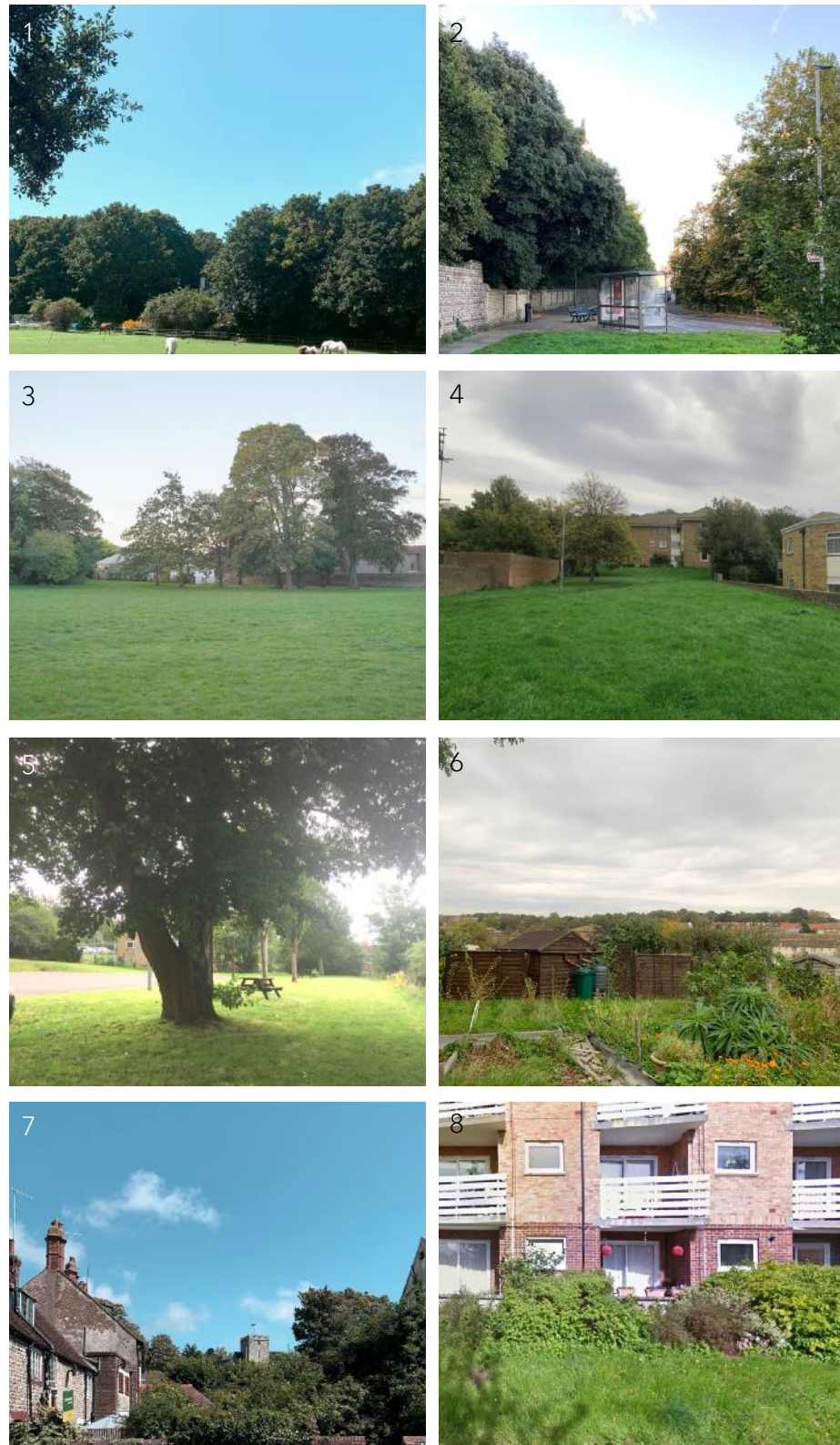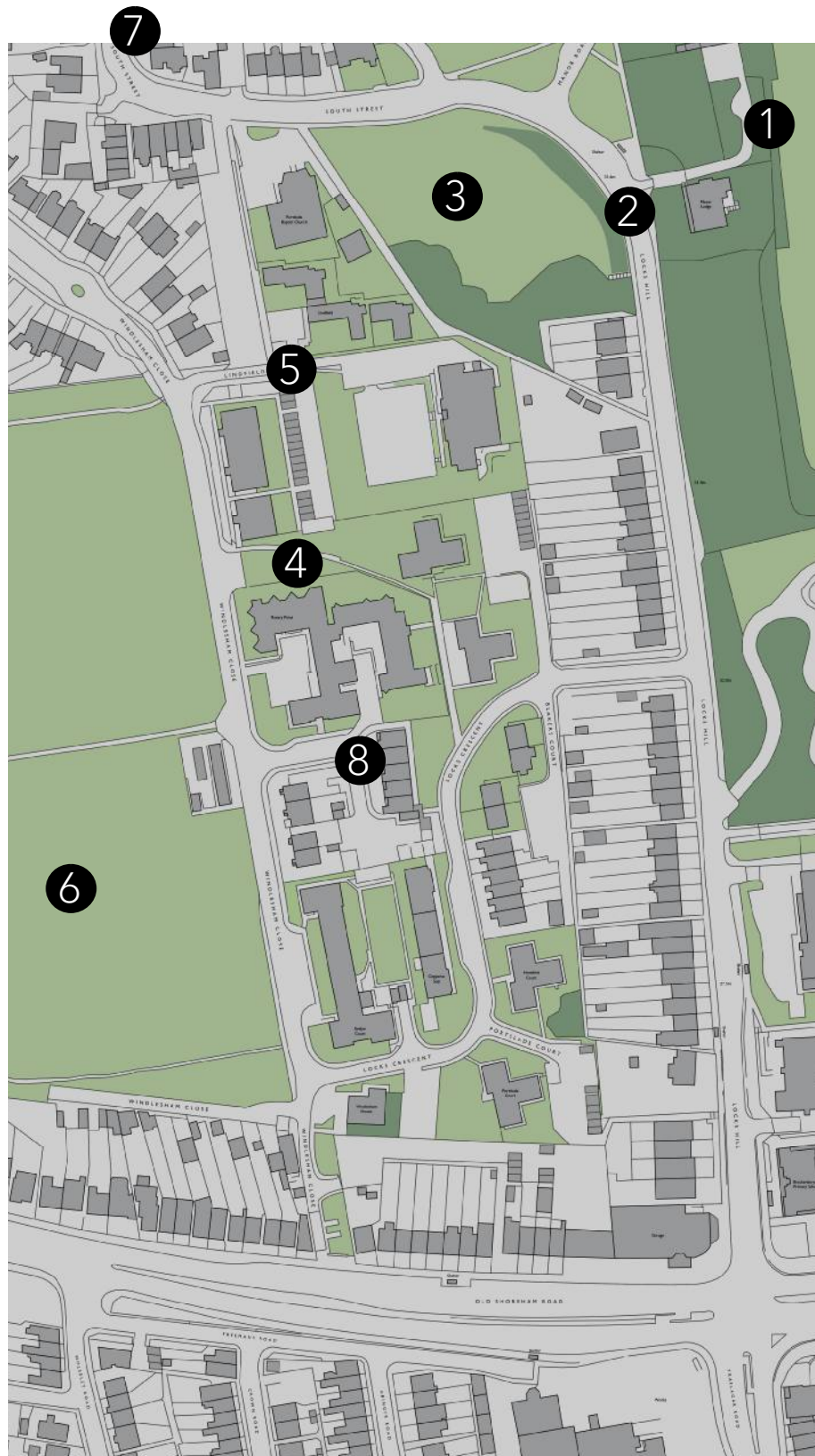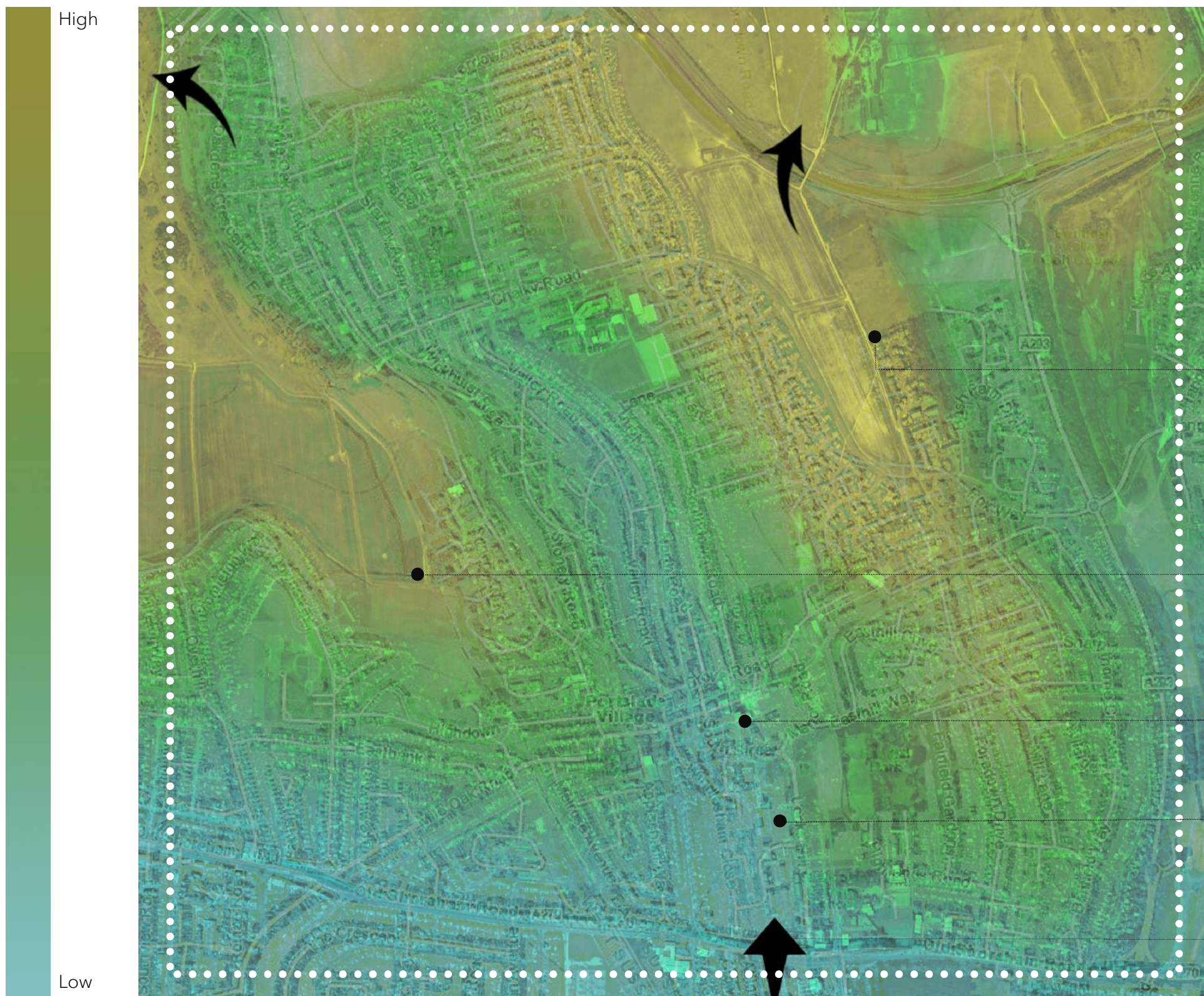
2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.2 Green Infrastructure

The urban density of this area is evidently much lower than neighbouring areas in Hove and Brighton, with open spaces, allotments, parks, and urban trees all positive contributions. Maintaining and enhancing this green infrastructure is crucial for any development within the area, especially since the proposed development site is located within a designated Nature Improvement Area.

Some of the key attributes of the existing green infrastructure can be categorised as the following;

1. Dense areas of mature woodland on the east side of the valley forming a boundary to Locks Hill and continuing up through and around Easthill Park
2. Mature trees and vegetation forming several boundaries surrounding the Village Green and continuing uninterrupted for large parts of Locks Hill, providing a treeline background for western views in and around the site.
3. Village green is an open green space enclosed by mature trees
4. Open green space with green boundaries off Windlesham Close
5. Several urban tree clusters and single specimen trees dotted through the area.
6. Large area of allotments
7. Private gardens filling voids and creating wildlife and nature links.
8. Green borders around buildings

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.3 Valley Landscape

Located in a shallow valley, Portslade has developed a unique character evidence by this distinctive topography. The shallow valley of Portslade forms an inlet channel, from its lowest level along the coast, reaching inland as far as the old village. From here, the land begins to rise, with higher ground arching around the historic village nucleus. To the west, the valley rises to Southwick Hill, to the North, Cockroost Hill, and to the east Foredown Tower.

Foredown Tower

Southwick Hill | Recreation Grounds

Portslade Village

Site

Windlesham Gateway

High

Low

Land Levels

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.3 Valley Landscape

Mapping the urban grain highlights the evolution of the character of Portslade Village during its development. Initially, the village evolved within the shallow basin of the valley landscape, centred around High Street, which runs from East to West. Both South Road and Drove Road are located parallel to the High St. and follow a similar pattern of development. The result of this east – west axis means that the buildings are mostly orientated north – south and step-up both sides of the valley as individual developed plots. Whilst many later buildings have infilled the streetscape within this area, they have been dictated by this original form, and so the roofscape and landscape character today still reflects this valley landscape. This is characterised by stepping rooflines and sloping street frontages. Alternatively, with the rapid growth of Portslade during the 20th century, many later developments followed old agricultural plots and streets were developed on a north – south axis. The result of this change in orientation leads to a very different streetscape, with the slope being incorporated into stepped gardens, and a roofscape that now varies in height from the east and west sides of the street.

1870 Portslade

2020 Portslade

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.4 Levels of Intimacy

The streets, open spaces and public realm within the area are an obvious by-product of each period and each unique type of development to have occurred. The modern private terraced housing and semi-detached estates that sprawl out around the historic core offer a good level of private amenity and outdoor space, but little in the way of public realm. The gardens which form street frontages are typically confined by small walls or fences to create a precise boundary to the public realm. This creates a distinction between public and private land. However, the inclusion of low walls and natural hedges at least invite visual links and opportunities to interact and communicate between the two spaces. This differs greatly within the area between the large, enclosed gardens of the impressive Villas and from the low-rise blocks of flats between Windlesham Close and Locks Hill. As a product of 1970's social housing, the low-rises are typically located centrally within a plot of land, flanked by amenity grass. Due to the communal nature of these blocks, the land that surrounds them feels only semi-private. Unlike private garden, these spaces are low maintenance and mostly featureless. However, there are niches within this amenity space where tenants have developed a sense of ownership, and formed small patches of planting, and seating areas.

1. Allotments
2. Community Open Space
3. Community Accessible Space
4. Green Verge
5. Inaccessible Green Space
6. Semi-private [defensible] space
7. Semi-private [sense of ownership] space
8. Vehicular Priority

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.4 Levels of Intimacy

Boundaries | Hard and soft boundaries are used throughout the area, dictating private, semi-private and public realm areas and permeability.

1. Hedges providing a soft boundary to offer privacy and defensible space within shared external amenity spaces.
2. Hard edges creating defined boundaries and access
3. Open edges. Often underused, especially in large areas as this area of grass off Windlesham Close

Gardens | Whilst many of the terraces have long narrow rear gardens, front gardens are often small and close to the pavement. These examples are usually maintained, exhibiting a sense of personal ownership and unique character and maintain a visual link to the streetscape, allowing for interactions.

4. Private gardens: Many of the historical cottages either have frontages directly onto the street or feature very small front patio / gardens, whereas later developments feature driveways or more modestly sized front gardens.
5. Shared communal gardens. Spaces like these have been created by local residents as areas to enjoy external amenity space which hasn't been planned or designated, yet offers a sense of ownership to residents.
6. Community gardening at Portslade allotments and Horticulture Society.

Local Amenities
7. Large Childrens play area located within Easthill Park
8. Football pitches located on Southwick Hill, located nearby Mile Oak Road Park.
9. Victoria Road Play Park
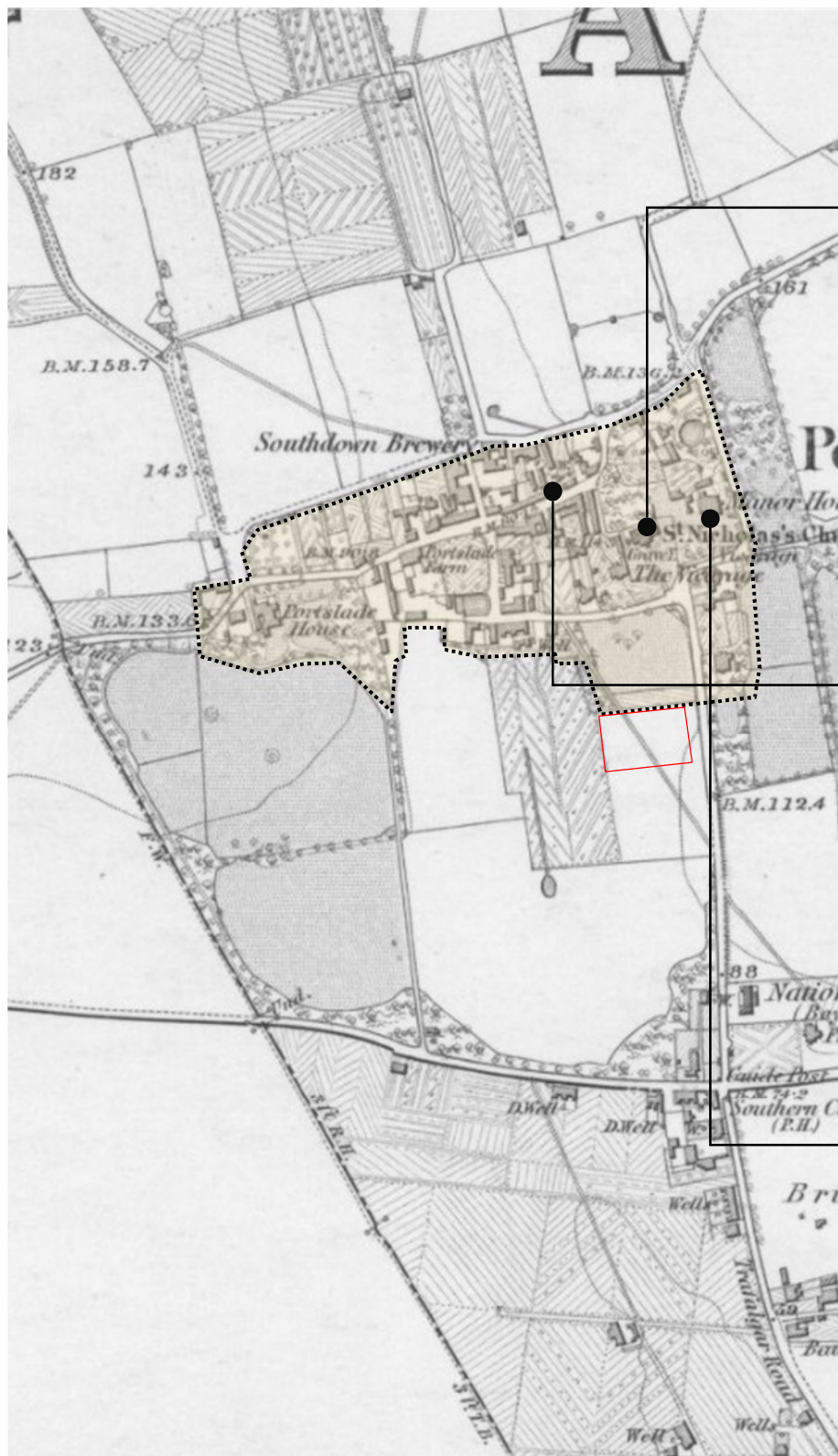
12th–Century. The Grade II* listed St Nicolas' Church alongside the site of Old Manor House, which is now a listed Schedule Monument. Both are examples of Caen stone and flintwork

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.5 Historical Identity

The historical heart of Portslade is centered around High Street, South Street and Drove Road, where several key heritage assets remain. These include the Norman Church of Saint Nicholas, along with the ruins of the Old Manor House, a cluster of traditional cottages, and the former Brewery & Malthouse. Extending out slightly further are several Georgian and Victorian Villas or Manor Houses, set within large enclosed gardens.

Within this historical Centre, many of the prevailing materials and construction methods are demonstrated both by the local vernacular and availability of materials. Examples of this are the extensive use of flintwork and also the influence of Norman rule, which is evident in the importation of Caen Limestone for details on the more important historic buildings.

16th–17th–Century. Traditional flint and render cottages on the sloping hill of High Street.

1807–Portslade Manor / St Mary's Convent is a Grade II listed building that was originally constructed to replace the old manor house. Like many of the large Villa's which were subsequently built within the area, the Manor House is set within a large lawned garden and cement rendered with a warm yellow hue.
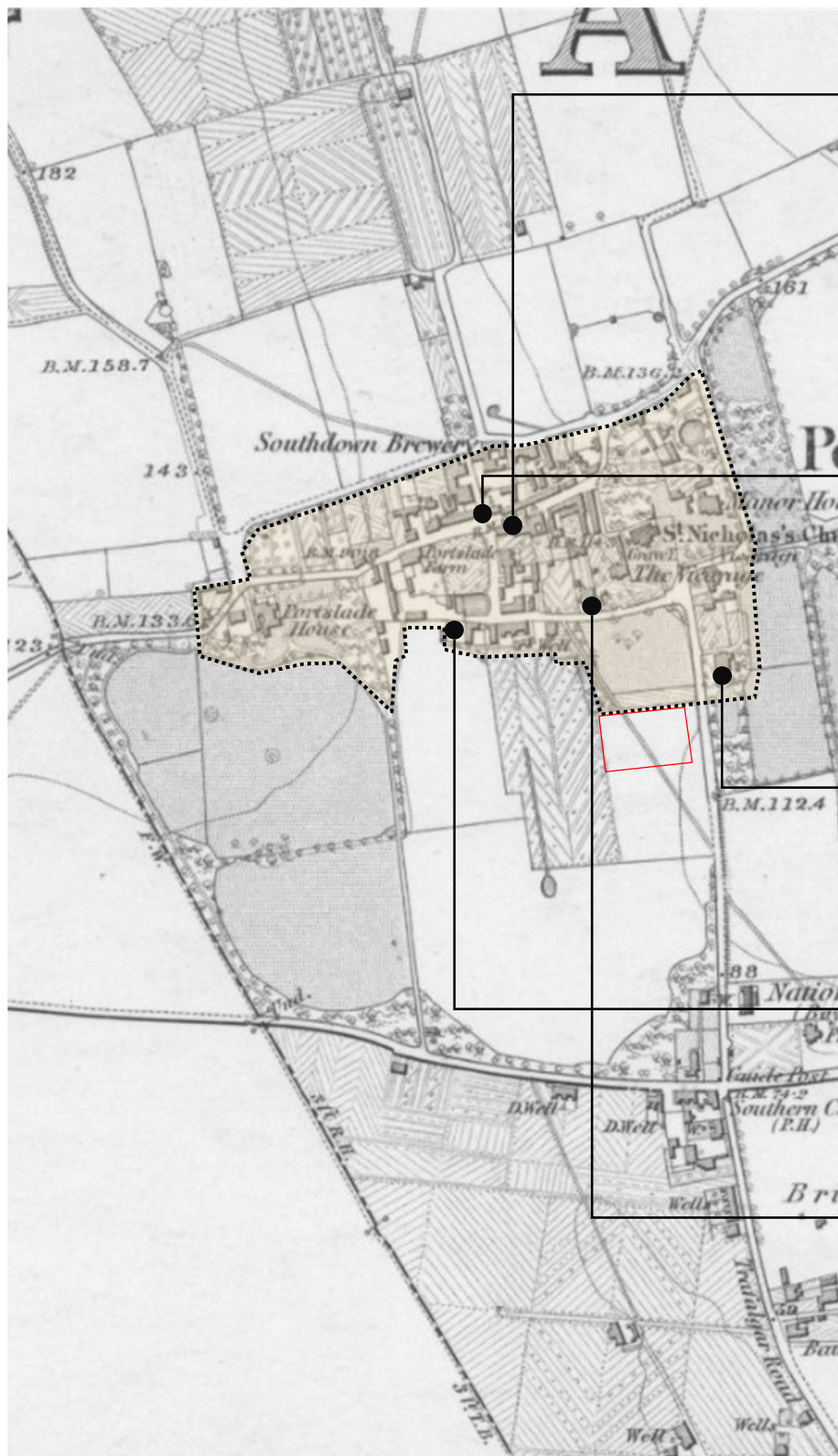
18th–Century. 44-50 High St Cottages built using flint and red brick, are listed buildings and face the old brewery

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.5 Historical Identity

19th–Century. Standing tall above all over buildings and dictating the skyline of Portslade Village, the former Brewery and Malthouse marks a significant change to the character of the village.

18-19th–Century. The Grade II listed Manor Lodge on Lock's Hill is a large Villa, enclosed within large gardens and bounded by a dense, mature treeline and large red brick 18th/19th century wall to Locks Hill.

19th–Century. Historic photo looking west down South St, towards the former farmhouse. Whilst little else remains, the farmhouse remains a significant point of the agricultural history of Portslade.

19th-Century. Whychote is a 3-storey house that sits at the top of South Street, looking over the Village Green. Its tall chimneys and variable gables rise up over the high green hedges which enclose the private front garden and ground

2.0 Identity of Place
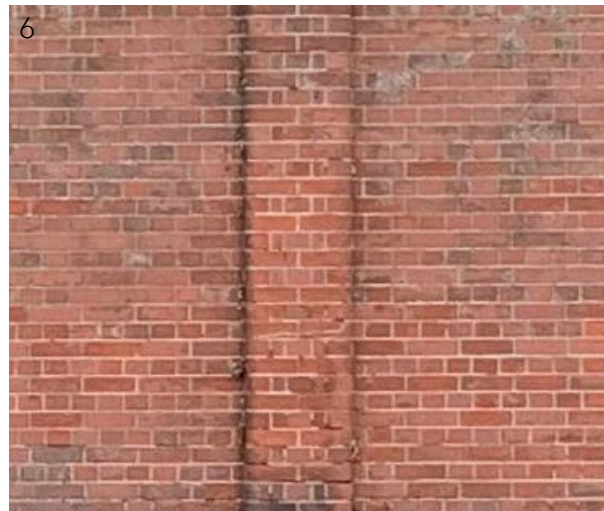
2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.5 Historical Identity

Just south of the conservation area and the main historical grain of Portslade Village, the site of the proposed development has largely been used as arable land for the agricultural industry which dictated the development of Portslade up until the late 19th century. During the first part of the 20th century, the site was incorporated under the allotments, which still occupy a large area spanning roughly between High St and Old Shoreham Road today. It wasn't until the mid-1960s that the site was developed.

The initial stage of this development involved an access road from what was the bottom of Windlesham Close, running east to the Village Green, with two large terraces cut into the sloping topography. These cuts provided a plateau for the existing Community Centre, formerly known as Courthope Centre and a lower external terrace. The Community Centre was located on the far eastern boundary of the site, adjacent to the houses along Locks Hill and alongside the sweeping footpath of the Village Green. The hardstanding court, garages and surrounding residential developments seem to have followed in the 1970s.

Whilst the original topography would likely have formed a gently slope up from the allotments to Locks Hill, the 20th century shaping of the land for development has dramatically altered the landscape, forming 3 large tiers. This treatment of the landscape differs significantly from the surrounding historical landscape which steps up the valley incrementally.

— Development by 1930

— 1940s Infill development

— 1960s Infill development

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.6 Evolving Layers

No landscape is forever static. They are ever evolving, developing new layers and character. The local vernacular palette of historic limestone, cement render and flint with redbrick detailing plays a dominant role within Portslade, establishing a palette of colour, tone and texture. Most later developments in and around the village have adopted a similar palette, even where the material might have transformed from stone or flint to brickwork, colours and tones such as the buff and yellow brick mostly tie-in as a modern reinterpretation. Further outside the village, these themes are lost within the patchwork of 20th century residential developments.

1.   Limestone (Caen) and flint wall

2.   Flint Wall

3.   Red brick quoin stones with flint walling

4.   Light yellow / buff brick of the Brewery

5.   White render

6.   Red brick

7.   Buff brick

8.   Multi/ contrasting brick

9.   Soft Red brick

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.7 Permeability

The lack of permeability through the site and surrounding area is a consequence of the rapid infill development of the 1960s-70s. When construction on the site initially began, it was developed in the corner of the large Allotment Gardens, nestled between the Village Green, Locks hill housing and the Baptist Church. Following further development to the south, hard-up against the boundary, the site found itself enclosed, poised between Locks Hill (East) and Windlesham Close (West). Small pathways were formed through these residential developments, however these feel private, since they lack visual direction beyond each low-rise block. This limited permeability is further accentuated by the style and setting of building types, and the boundary treatment.

Private | Closed

Buildings and spaces which are non-

Semi Private | Closed

Residential / corporate defensible

Primary Permeability

Pavements are mostly enclosed

Secondary Permeability

1. As a Primary Route to the Village, Windlesham close runs along a North-South axis with a range of residential frontages on the East and predominantly a closed boundary to the Allotments to the West.

2. Sections of Windlesham Close are very restrictive for Pedestrians, featuring many closed private boundaries and a single-sided pavement on the eastern side.

3. To the northern end, the allotments give way, and semi-detached houses feature on both sides.

High Street amenities

Easthill Park
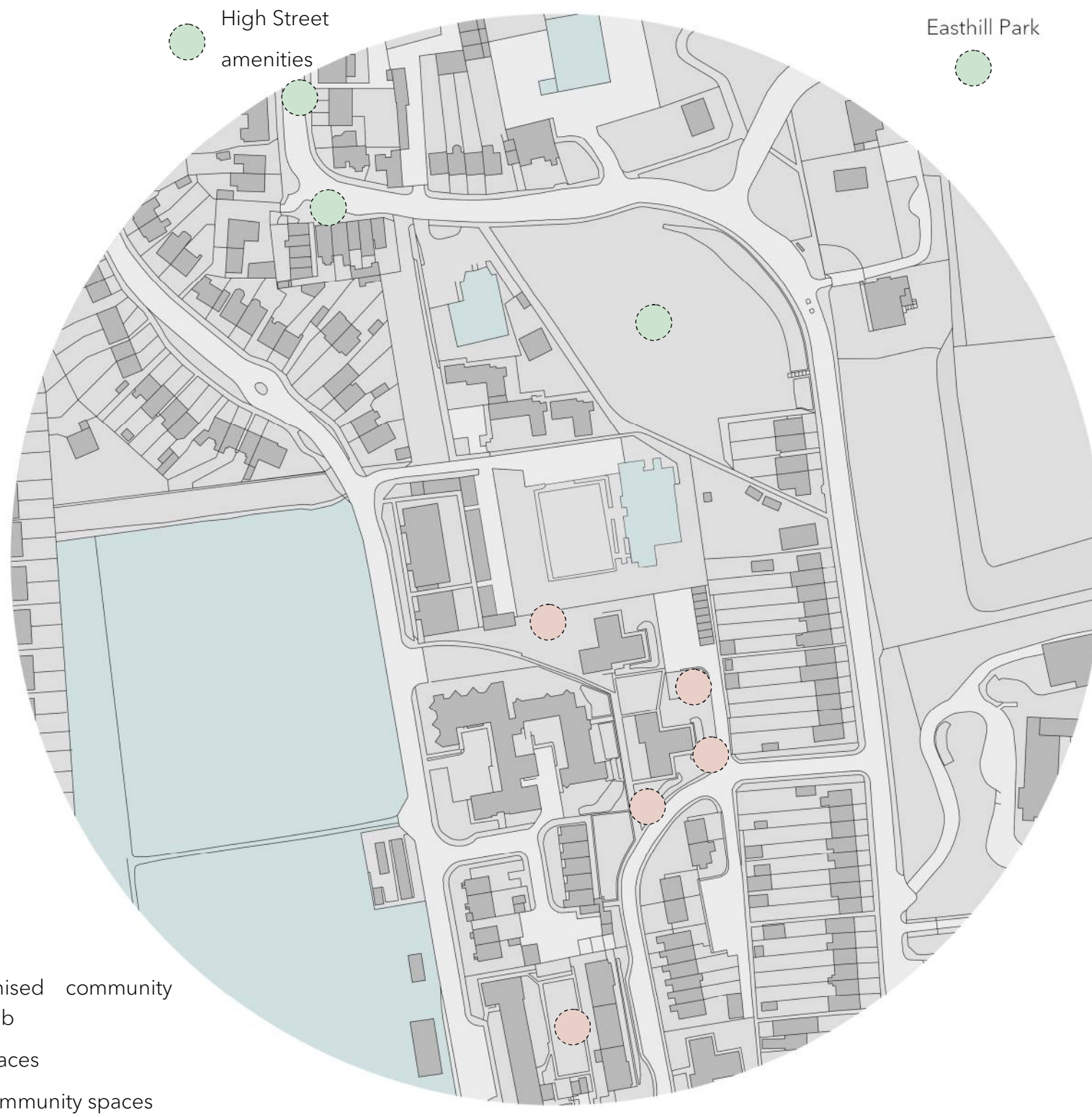
Formal / organised community activity / social club

Informal social spaces

Informal micro-community spaces

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.8 Community

Both the analysis and the ongoing public engagement / consultation have identified a strong and proud community presence within the area around the proposed development site. This example of community is an incredibly positive attribute, offering an abundance of opportunities for any potential development. Residents have demonstrated a real passion and care for the area in which they call home, and it is incredibly important to use this wealth of local knowledge, culture, history, and influence to help shape the future of the site.

For amenity, the area benefits from many local parks and recreation areas, including Easthill Park, Victoria Road Park, Mile Oak Road Park, Southwick Hill Recreation Ground, Warrior Park and the local Village Green. All of which are within a 15-minute walk. This selection of public realm and recreation offers residents a wide range of activities, from play parks, tennis courts, football pitches, woodland and rural walks. In addition to these recreation and public spaces, there are several hubs, such as pubs, a cafe and convenience stores which also present social interaction.

For organised / focused community groups and activities, there are several community buildings promoting classes and activities, including the existing Portslade Village Community Centre, the Parish Centre, the Baptist Church and the large Allotments located on Windlesham Close. However, many of these places are very socially focused and limit personal private amenity. Whilst private housing in the area accommodates for private amenity, the social housing cluster south of the proposed development lack dedicated external private amenity. Unfortunately, many social high-rise and low-rise buildings of the 20th century share similar issues with a lack of this private amenity space. However, there is a visible trend within the area to make use of the simple grass lawns around these blocks. Within these areas, residents have demonstrated a keen ambition to enhance small areas with planting and seating.
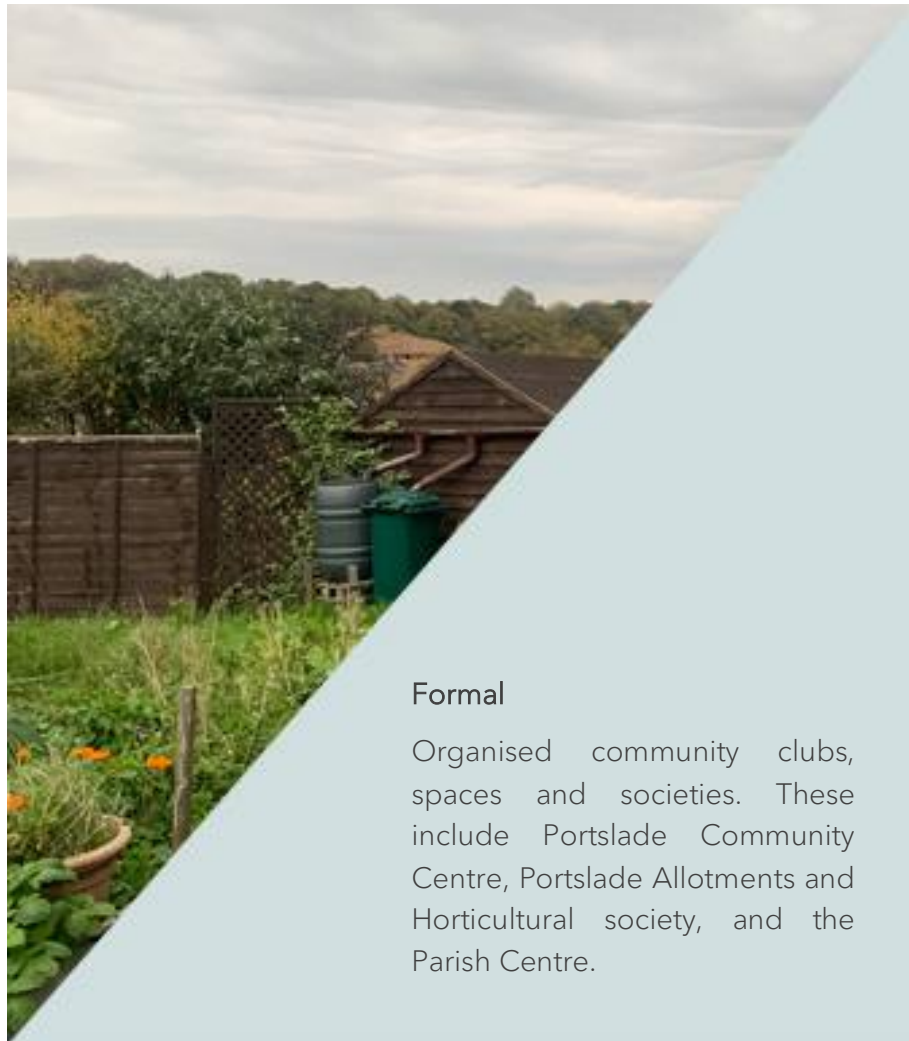
Formal

Organised community clubs, spaces and societies. These include Portslade Community Centre, Portslade Allotments and Horticultural society, and the Parish Centre.

Above | Portslade Allotments & Horticultural Society. The allotments feature approx. 146 plots and often hosts annual flower and vegetable shows, and the sale of garden supplies.
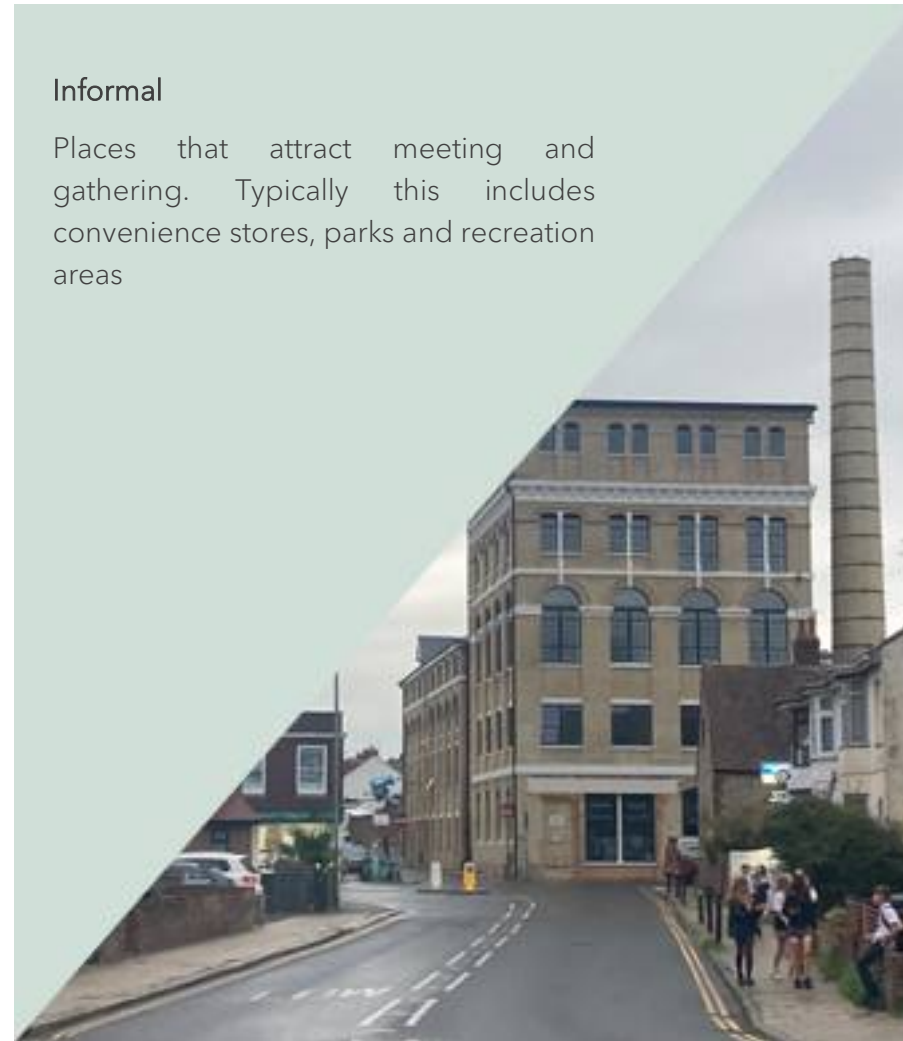
Informal

Places that attract meeting and gathering. Typically this includes convenience stores, parks and recreation areas

Above | South Street and High Street have several local shops and conveniences that provide an active hub for social encounters and meeting.

Informal–Impromptu

Small areas demonstrating territorial use of spaces outside land associated with residential blocks. These areas feature individual and shared space, with planting and seating.

Above | Example of impromptu garden created by local residents on what was otherwise an unused lawn, lacking interest, activity or biodiversity.

2.0 Identity of Place

2.2 Portslade in Context

2.2.9 Architecture
Contrast of materiality
There are many local architectural examples expressing a combination of traditional material use and construction techniques, often with complimentary results; articulating levels of detail and/or certain elements of a building. These include quoins, decorative detailing, and banding / cornices - defining storeys and even the functional aspects of a building. In other areas across the village these examples of material relationships can be seen to mark various layers in the history of a building, illustrating repairs, alterations and infills, each signifying the evolution of the village. The use of this contrast would be useful in denoting the two types of functions of residential and community within the proposed development.

Opening expression
Evidence of that contrasting relationship in materiality is found in the examples of expressed window, door, and opening surrounds, common to the area. Historically, this is seen within the use of flintwork, which relies on stone or brick to offer greater structural integrity and a more robust edging detail. Aesthetically, this type of feature neatly frames and articulates these openings, whilst creating a focal point to the arrival at a building. The same impression can be used in the proposal to create a type of ceremony for the arrival of residents and visitors, and/or simply used to neatly frame windows and balconies.

Examples of the use of contrasting materials and colours within Portslade Village