



Crowhurst Design Guide

Crowhurst Parish Council
Deeper Green

October 2023 / DRAFT
Rev. F

CIRCA 1805

Acknowledgements

Crowhurst Parish Council would like to thank the members of the Design Guide Task Group for giving up their time to help steer and develop this document:

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The Design Guide Task Group would also like to thank, Ian McKay RIBA of Deeper Green for his written, illustrative and photographic contributions to the Design Guide as well as compiling the graphic design layout.

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Appreciation of the context
- 3.0 Conservation of biodiversity and wildlife habitats
- 4.0 Sustainability
- 5.0 Siting of developments within the landscape
- 6.0 Physical and social cohesion
- 7.0 Layout, character, scale and density
- 8.0 Architectural detail
- 9.0 Use of local building materials
- 10.0 Applying these design criteria to the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan allocated sites



Above: Crowhurst is notable as a village set within a dominant landscape setting with pronounced topography, ancient woodland, medieval farms and fast running streams which were once used to power ironworks and later gunpowder production. Image credit: Deeper Green

1.0 Introduction

This Design Guide has been compiled to sit alongside the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan and specifies more precisely the criteria, which must be followed in development within the Village. It provides a closer focus of consideration to the special qualities and characteristics of the Parish, as distinct to the complementary but broader scale objectives of the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide.

The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and this design guide have been drawn up within the context of national and district design policy. Section 7 of the NPPF emphasises the importance of good design to achieve sustainable outcomes, which enhance the quality of people's lives. The Rother District Council Core Strategy Policy EN1 requires protection and where possible, enhancement of the locally distinctive landscape character, including features such as hedgerows, ancient route ways and the dark night sky. Policy EN2 references the importance of siting, scale, form, design and the use of local materials in reinforcing local character. Policy EN3 emphasises the requirement for good quality design, including the enhancement, wherever possible, of the quality of the built environment. Policy EN5 requires developers to protect wildlife habitats and integrate biodiversity into development schemes.

Most of Crowhurst, including the three main development sites (NP Policies CH1, CH2 and CH3) lies within the High Weald AONB or adjoins it. This Guide has drawn heavily on the design principles set out in the High Weald Housing Design Guide (November 2019), to ensure that this distinctive landscape character is recognised and respected at all stages of the design process.

The policy principles outlined in the above referenced national, regional and district level guidance have been taken by this Guide and applied to Crowhurst in a locally specific way. The existing architectural quality in the Village varies significantly. Application of the criteria specified in this Guide provides the opportunity for new development to enhance our

Village environment through contemporary, quality architecture, using high quality materials and incorporating the latest standards of sustainable design in the construction of properties.

As stated in the NP paragraph 4.3.3.1, the Design Policy CB1 applies to all developments within the Plan period, not only those specified in NP Policies CH1, CH2 and CH3. Accordingly, so do the criteria set out in this Guide.

There is one principle we wish to highlight from the outset. The High Weald Design Guide has been developed from the High Weald AONB Management Plan, which describes the character of the Area and sets objectives for its conservation. Objective S3 is:

To enhance the architectural quality of the High Weald and ensure development reflects the character of the High Weald in its scale, layout and design.

This does not mean that existing designs should be copied, rather that layout, scale and materials should be in keeping with the location and environment. The “enhancement” of architectural quality clearly implies adoption of quality, contemporary design, not plagiarising earlier styles. Small developments and buildings are an intrinsic part of the High Weald landscape. Their layout should draw from traditional settlement patterns. Their design quality should be such that they do not need to be hidden behind tall fences and hedges. We should be able to feel pride in their contribution to the enhancement of the physical and social environment of our Village.

Our design criteria have been drawn up under the following key headings:

- **Appreciation of the context**
- **Conservation of biodiversity and wildlife habitats**
- **Sustainability**
- **Siting of developments within the landscape**
- **Physical and social cohesion**
- **Layout, character, scale and density**

- **Architectural detail**
- **Use of local building materials**
- **Applying these design criteria to the Crowhurst NP allocated sites**

It is expected that the LPA will alert housebuilders and developers to this guide at the earliest stages of the application process. Crowhurst Parish Council (or delegated group) encourage developers to engage in early consultation with the village on housing development proposals and are keen to be part of the planning process.

2.0 Appreciation of the context

By Ian McKay RIBA of Deeper Green

In consideration of new development within the Parish of Crowhurst, it is first crucial to understand the local distinctiveness of the place in terms of its green and blue infrastructure, landform, built environment, social and economic networks, connectivity and history. This section outlines some of the key characteristics with a view to affording those tasked with creating built interventions into this context with an insight into the village's back story. This will better enable design teams to draw from the spirit of place and respond successfully to the setting. The following extract from **The High Weald Housing Design Guide** neatly applies to Crowhurst as it does for the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (HWAONB) as a whole.

The High Weald is one of the best-preserved Medieval landscapes in North West Europe. Despite its large size (1,500km sq.) and proximity to London, its landscape has remained relatively unchanged since the 14th century, surviving major historical events and social and technological changes. Its outstanding beauty stems from its essentially rural and human scale character, with a high proportion of natural surfaces and the story of its past visible throughout. The extensive survival of woodland and traditional mixed farming supports an exceptionally well-connected green and blue infrastructure with a high proportion of semi-natural habitat in a structurally diverse, permeable and complex mosaic supporting a rich diversity of wildlife.

From the High Weald Housing Design Guide, 2019. P.5.

2.1 A landscape dominated setting

When entering the village of Crowhurst, particularly from the south, one is immediately struck at the visual relationship between the landscape setting and the built interventions of the village. The buildings are seen to be set within a dominant landscape setting where woodland and field systems cloak the steep sided valleys and interspersed within this are set the various constructed forms of the village. It is notable too that at the cultural heart of the village, opposite the church and ruins of the 13th Century manor house, fields and farm buildings are very much prevalent. To the north, development is predominantly set back from the road and the roads are often tree lined. It is only in the south of the village, along the valley floor, where older cottages front up to the road.



Above: View northwards from Ballards Hill across the Powdermill Valley towards the historic core of Crowhurst which underlines how buildings are set within a landscape dominant setting. Image credit: Deeper Green

2.2 Pronounced landform and topography

The village of Crowhurst is set within a steep sided valley of the Powdermill stream. As such the views across and along the valley are

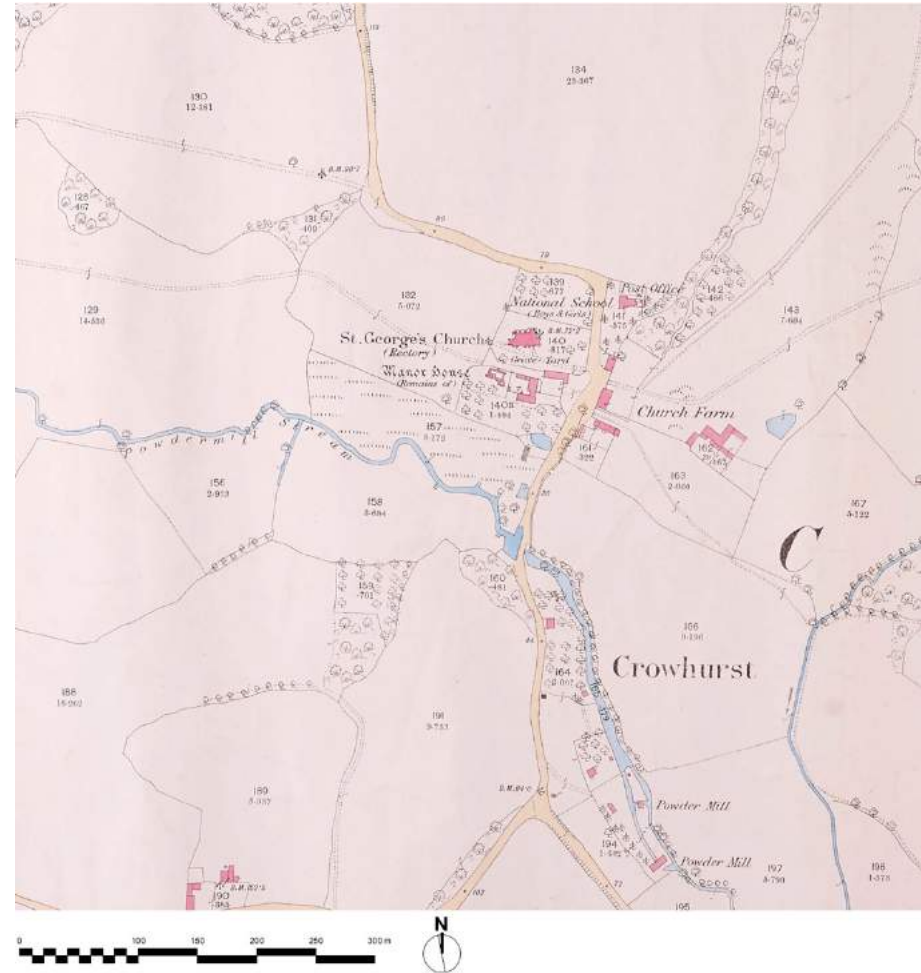
enlivened by buildings rising in staggered layers within the heavily wooded slopes. The interplay of roof and landscape forms is at once pleasing and dramatic but is also particularly sensitive to change and could easily be spoiled by poorly considered interventions. The landform gives rise to the confluence of the Asten (now known as the Powdermill) and Rackwell streams. The base of the valley is close to sea level and is prone to flooding (often multiple times per year). It is hard to picture it now, but at the time of the Norman conquest, the shoreline stretched far inland from the Cinque Port of Bulverhythe and the area immediately south of Crowhurst was once a tidal marshland.

2.3 Rich biodiversity and ancient woodland

The very name of Crowhurst (or 'Croherst') means "the wooded hill".¹ A few minutes' walk northwest of the church is Fore Wood which is a RSPB nature reserve which includes a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is famed for its sandstone outcrops, ghylls and rare ferns. There is also the Crowhurst Nature Reserve (also known as Quarry Wood) and another SSSI on the eastern edge of the Parish. To the South of the village lies the Combe Valley Countryside Park.² There are a number of other ancient woodlands scattered around the Parish as well as historic field patterns and hedgerows. This all constitutes a comprehensive / amazing resource of biodiversity which has been catalogued in the [Biodiversity Audit](#)³ undertaken by the Parish. Understanding how to link-in and enhance this bountiful array of green and blue infrastructure is of critical importance to the community of Crowhurst.

2.4 Adapting to a zero-carbon future

The village of Crowhurst is embracing the societal transition away from a reliance on fossil fuels towards a 'zero carbon' economy. As part of these efforts, the Parish is actively pursuing a community solar farm to provide clean electrical energy into the 21st Century.



Above: The 1875 Ordnance Survey map showing the historic core of the village, field delineations and position of the gun powder mills along the Powdermill Stream. Station Road was yet to be built at the time of this OS survey. Reproduced with the permission of Ordnance Survey.

¹ Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan Environment Description, Nov. 2017. P.3.

² Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan, 2019. P.21.

³ <https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/biodiversity#audit>



Above: This image from the 19th Century shows Church Farm extending agricultural life into the historic core of Crowhurst, as it still does today. Image credit: Martin White

2.5 The understated history of the Powdermill Valley

Such that any new development can draw authentically from place, it is important to appreciate the socio/economic history of the area and its reason for being in the first place. With Crowhurst that history is entwined in the woodland, the soils and fast-flowing streams flowing down from the ghylls and valleys. The architectural manifestation of that history is in many cases completely absent or visually understated and belies the fascinating and rich Crowhurst back story.

Settlements establish often as a result of a confluence of routes or opportunities to exploit natural resources. Crowhurst pertains to both. Evidently the adjacency of woodland, iron-rich sandstone, the fast-

flowing water of its hilly watershed and a navigable port a few miles to the south at Bulverhythe gave rise to the establishment of Roman ironworking and, from the 17th Century, the manufacture of gunpowder.⁴ Much of this architectural heritage is gone but the woodlands, quarries, ponds and streams remain.

Crowhurst is also famous as the village which was levelled by the invading Norman army of William the Conqueror. The manor house of the village belonged to King Harold and as Springford argues in his excellent, **Crowhurst; A Village in History**, this might be the one illustrated in the Bayeux Tapestry shown ablaze, "...it was this general ravaging that spurred on Harold for a fight – he would have done so much better to starve William out."⁵

It would be amiss for a historical overview to omit mention of the ancient yew in the churchyard. Springford recites how the tree is used in a 1943 historical novel by a distinguished scholar of the Conquest, Hope Muntz. It is used to embellish the sacking of Crowhurst. Harold's Reeve buries the King's hoard under the yew only to be hanged from it after capture.⁶ Whilst this maybe speculative fiction, the yew is very real and is said to be over 1300 years old and would have been an old tree even at the time of the Conquest.

Further illumination on the origins and descendances of farming and land use of Crowhurst can be found in Springford's 1993 recount and the well documented, **Historical Heritage of Crowhurst** produced in 2017 to support the Neighbourhood Plan. The village is surrounded by an ancient 'fieldscape' emanating from still extant medieval farmsteads dotted around the outskirts of the Parish.

⁴ Crowhurst; A Village in History, J. Springford, 1993. P.5.

⁵ Crowhurst; A Village in History, J. Springford, 1993. P.8.

⁶ Crowhurst; A Village in History, J. Springford, 1993. P.8.

2.6 Settlement pattern and the lack of a 'nucleated village'

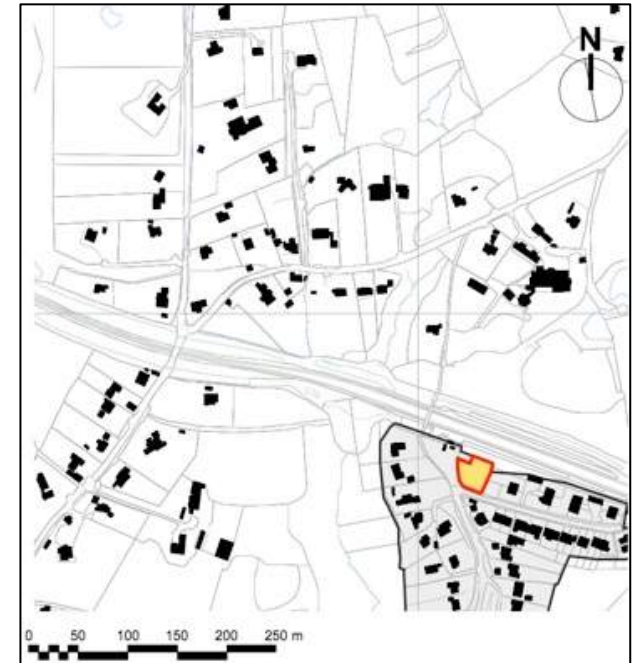
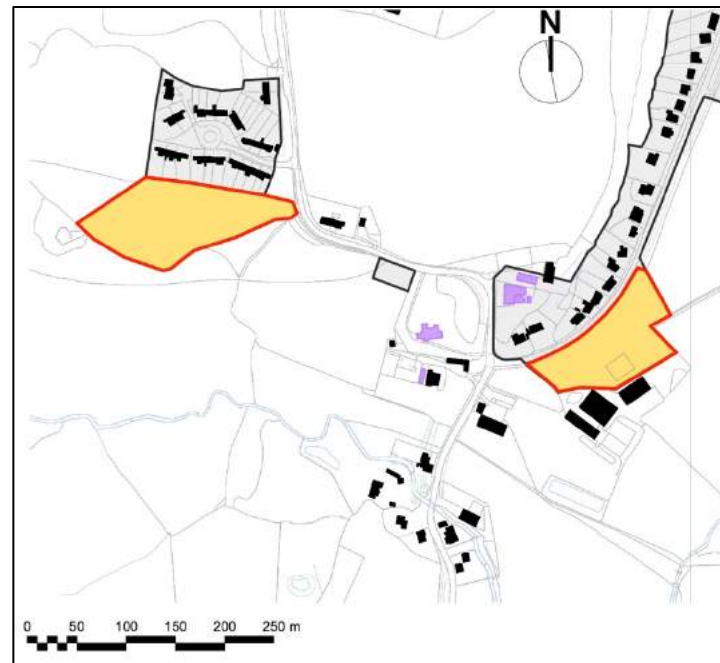
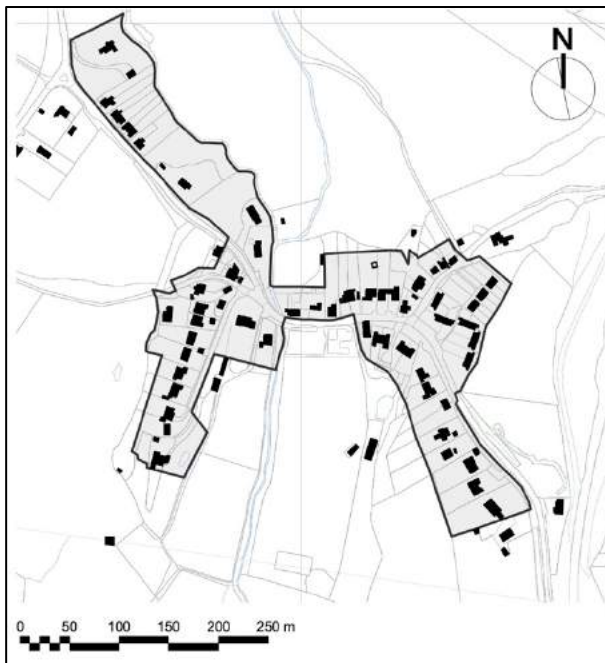
The violence of the conquest seems to have created a historical aftershock, the result of which is a strangely dispersed, almost absent, village core. Indeed, the village is widely described as a settlement of three distinct character areas:

- area to the north of the railway line consisting mainly of detached villas in generous gardens and set well back from the road;
- a central area consisting of the church, village hall, primary school, farmland and a long station approach road lined (to a large extent single banked) with dwellings;
- a southern area consisting of the Plough Inn, the recreation field and youth centre and a high proportion of Victorian era cottages

(some of which of former civic or retail purpose) and predominantly built close to the road.

The settlement pattern seems to have grown outwards from the floor of the Powdermill Valley, up the winding routeway of Forewood Lane to the north, connecting to Chapel Hill and Ballards Hill to the south and with a spur from the church up to the 1902 built station (now demolished) created for a second phase of railway building when the branch line to Bexhill was opened (also now demolished).

Below: Figure Ground Plans of the of southern, central and northern character areas with the development boundary highlighted in grey and the three allocated sites CH1, 2 and 3 shown in yellow (from left to right). Image credit: Deeper Green



2.7 A rich material hinterland

Vernacular forms of construction will exploit and translate their material hinterlands and the Wealden traditions of building are no exception. The Wealden landscape was (and still is) rich in a wide range of natural resources: clay for bricks and tiles, woodland for all forms of timber construction and sandstone for masonry walls and even roof tiling.

From the medieval period, Crowhurst is left with two significant stone constructions, the church of St. George's and the remains of de Scotney's manor house from the 13th Century. The church tower is 15th Century but the nave and apse were built from 1856.⁷ At Hye Farm, the walled garden looks to have made impromptu re-use of previously constructed sandstone piers to help show-up the brick walls.

On the outskirts of the village there are instances of medieval timber framed farmstead buildings such as Croucher's, Adam's and Sampson's (formerly known as Groundilly)⁸. Notably the village has few examples of timber clad structures although there are fine examples up Forewood Lane and Sampson's Lane. Historical photos however evidence a number of timber clad out-buildings in front of the Plough Inn suggesting timber cladding may have been more prevalent in recent history.

Brick, hung clay tiles and plain clay roof tiles predominate modern-day Crowhurst. There are instances of delightful brick detailing in some of the Victorian cottages such as Court Lodge Cottages, Blacksmith's Cottages and former police station, Powdermill Bank.

References:

- Further information on the nature of the Crowhurst context can be found in the following documents and publications as well as the full list of supporting evidence of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan available on the Parish website <https://www.crowhurstneighbourhoodplan.org>



Above: Historic dwelling on Chapel Hill exemplifying the placement of buildings in a landscape dominated setting as well as some of the diverse cladding materials used traditionally in the Crowhurst context. Image credit: Deeper Green

- Crowhurst; A Village in History, J. Springford, 1993
- Crowhurst Heritage and Character Assessment, AECOM, 2017
- The Historical Heritage of Crowhurst, Crowhurst Heritage Group with contributions from Casper Johnson. 2017
- Crowhurst Neighbourhood Development Plan Environment Description, Nov. 2017

⁷ The Historical Heritage of Crowhurst, Crowhurst Heritage Group. 2017. P. 10-11.

⁸ The Historical Heritage of Crowhurst, Crowhurst Heritage Group. 2017. P.14.



Above: A key guiding principle of the design guide is to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the Parish. The White Admiral butterfly is common in RSPB Fore Wood. Image © John Feltwell

3.0 Conservation of biodiversity and wildlife habitats

The following is to be read in conjunction with:
CE3 – Biodiversity

According to the globally recognised Biodiversity Inactness Index, the UK is one of the most nature depleted countries.⁹ This alarming realisation places an additional responsibility on development to conserve and enhance biodiversity in our landscapes and townscape. Within this context, the authority has made a declaration of a climate and ecological emergency. The design, disposition and scatter of meadows, fields, woodlands and ponds make for a better environment that our houses and hamlets are set within. Towards these ends, this design guide highlights the many ways in which new development can make informed use of trees, hedgerows, verges, gardens, the integration of wildlife habitats in buildings

⁹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/58863097>

and native species within their proposals. Get the layout of new habitats right and the wildlife will move in too to make a better world for everyone.

3.1 Aims/justification

All developments must follow all applicable wildlife laws, guidance and best practice
On Biodiversity BS 42020:2013 must be followed, as well as all the 'conserve and enhance' current guidance, including in the NPPF (2023) – and later updates and the Environment Act 2021 and later updates and its requirements for bio-diversity net gain.
BS 5837 Trees in relations to construction must be followed.
ESCC 2020 Environment Strategy and Sussex Local Nature Partnership 2019 to be used as well.
Following NPPF 2023
Following UK and EU law on protected species
Rother District Council's emerging Local Plan

3.2 Criteria

- A Biodiversity Calculation or Metric must be carried out (using a biodiversity calculator) to demonstrate Net (Ecological) Gain, following recommendations in Environment Act 2021 (or later amendments of)
- The cumulative environmental impact of a development project or in combination with all other developments in the area should not adversely impact the habitat of the site (as determined by the Local Planning Authority in carrying out an Appropriate Assessment (AA) or other such appraisal).
- The net loss of green space must be calculated (in square metres) and set against the compensation for that loss. A calculation must be made to demonstrate that the ecology has not been compromised, i.e. no net loss of green space. This can be achieved by enhancement of the surrounding buffer areas, or areas off-site
- Buffer areas around the site must be planted up with wildflowers (native species or of local provenance), trees (native species or of local provenance)

- The initiative of B-Lines must be adhered to with respect to wildflowers, and this must link in with the National Pollinator Strategy (NPS)
- Tree planting must be integrated with the demonstrable connectivity of habitat to be applied to the design, allowing for vistas across the parish to be continually assessed.
- Other physical enhancements to promote wildlife and biodiversity that must be incorporated into the design of all development sites include:
 - Bat boxes or Bat bricks
 - Bird boxes (swift, house martin, starling)
 - Insect hotels, Stag beetle buckets
 - Hedgehog homes
- Soil conservation is an important issue on any development and developers must ensure the minimum of hard standing around any new dwelling so as not to reduce quantum of exposed soil
- Any soft landscaping must be local/native and friendly to wildlife.
- Gardens to gain as much sunlight as possible
- Ensure wildlife friendly planting rather than hard surfaces
- Gardens must allow wildlife connectivity - no completely solid fencing
- As per CNP Policy CE3 where i) frontages of new builds, or ii) access roads to new developments, and iii) other perimeter curtilages e.g. back gardens etc, are planted up as hedgerows or screens, then this must be of native species only and those that are good pollinators/food sources for native species

Above right: Crowhurst has an extensive network of ecological corridors linking significant habitats around the Parish. This image is looking north up Forewood Lane from the junction with Ballards Hill. Image © John Feltwell

Below right: Crowhurst's community are proactive in enhancing the capacity of biodiversity of the village and its green corridor links to the surrounding nature reserves, SSSI's and country park. Image credit: © Dr. John Feltwell



References:

Biodiversity – Code of Practice for planning and development. BS 42020:2013. 88pp
NPPF, 2023. National Planning Policy Framework.
National Pollinator Strategy (NPS)
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<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/15589/east-sussex-environment-strategy-2020-technical-appendix.pdf>
Sussex Local Nature Partnership 2019 Natural Capital Investment Strategy for Sussex, 2019-2024.
Sussex Local Nature Partnership 2019. 83pp. http://sussexlnp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Natural-Capital-Investment-Strategy_ADOPTED_Final_Dec2019.pdf
Sustainable design
Biodiversity Audit 2022: <https://www.crowhurstpc.co.uk/biodiversity#audit>

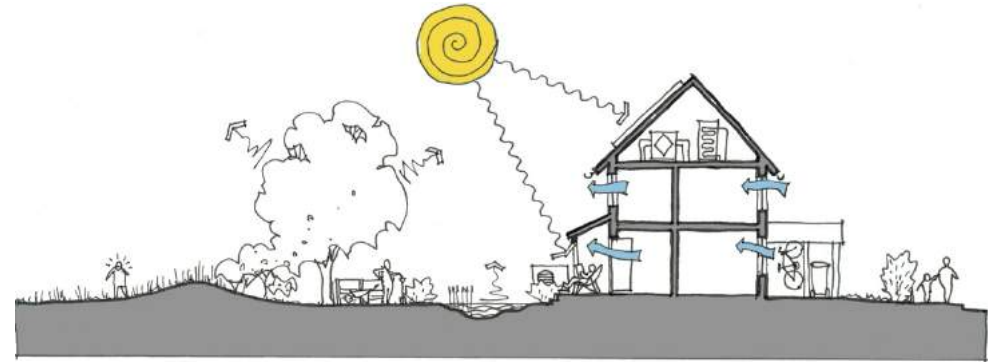
The following should be read in conjunction with CNP Policies:

CB1 - Design
CE5 - Blue Infrastructure



WINTER

Above: Sustainable design principles in a rural village setting might include using landscape form and planting to create a micro-climate around the dwelling, creating shelter belts, rain harvesting and absorbing surface water run-off, designing the building to minimise heat loss, optimise beneficial solar gains, adopting heat pump heating, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery and good storage for pushbikes / e-bikes, helping the village transition towards more active forms of transport and in so doing incentivise local shops and services. Image credit: Deeper Green



SUMMER

Above: Sustainable design principles in a rural village setting might include using planting and water features to provide evaporative cooling and biodiversity net gain, supporting occupiers to recycle food waste and grow their own produce, designing the building to be constructed with materials with low embodied environmental impacts and high re-use potentials, integrating shading to reduce overheating potentials whilst optimising on-site energy generation (ie. solar panels). Image credit: Deeper Green

Aims/Justifications

The Parish of Crowhurst have declared a climate and ecological change emergency, as has Rother District Council. The act of doing this requires a measured meaningful response and as far as the built environment is concerned this translates to guiding development towards net zero carbon impact in accordance with the Paris Climate Accord 2015.

Since the Code for Sustainable Homes was withdrawn, there remain many voids in sustainable design legislation with only some aspects of operational energy covered by the Building Regulations of England and Wales. Therefore, this design guide promotes the adoption of the Royal Institute of British Architects' Sustainable Outcomes along with their accompanying 'RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge'. Adoption of these benchmark metrics will help ensure development in Crowhurst is more capable of achieving net zero carbon impact in the truest sense of definition.

- To ensure that new development in Crowhurst is fit for the resource and energy challenges of the 21st Century and provides a Paris Climate Accord road map towards full compliance by 2050

4.0 Sustainable design

The following should be read in conjunction with CNP Policies:

- CB1 - Design
- CE5 - Blue Infrastructure

This design guide recognises the many challenges facing our own and future generations as regards the climate and ecological emergencies. Whilst aspects of operational energy use will continue to be regulated by Part L of the Building Regulations, many other aspects such as designing for low-environmental impact lifestyles, minimising embodied carbon impacts of the building materials and on-site energy generation are not. Whilst we look forward to the provisions of the Future Homes Standard and Future Buildings Standard, we encourage all development to adopt the sustainability benchmark metrics published by the Royal Institute of British Architects.

4.1 Criteria

The following benchmark metrics should be adopted for the various categories outlined and new development should be able to show both design stage and in use stage compliance of the targets.

RIBA Sustainable Outcome Metrics	2030 Targets	References
Operational Energy kWh/m ² /y	< 0 to 35 kWh/m ² /y	UKGBC Net Zero Framework 1. Fabric First 2. Efficient services and low carbon heat 3. Maximise onsite renewables 4. Minimum offsetting using UK schemes (CCC)
Embodied Carbon kgCO ₂ e/m ²	< 300 kgCO ₂ e/m ²	RICS Whole Life Carbon A-C) 1. Whole Life Carbon Analysis 2. Using circular economy Strategies 3. Minimum offsetting using UK schemes (CCC)
Potable Water Use Litres/person/day	< 75 l/p/day	CIBSE Guide G
Overheating	25-28°C maximum for 1% of occupied hours	CIBSE TM52, CIBSE TM59
Daylighting	> 2% av. Daylight factor, 0.4 uniformity	CIBSE LG10
CO ₂ levels	< 900 ppm	CIBSE TM40
Total VOCs	< 0.3 mg/m ³	Approved Document F
Formaldehyde	< 0.1 mg/m ³	BREEAM

Above: Measurable sustainability benchmarking standards for new development compiled and recommended by the Royal Institute of British Architects in The RIBA's 2030 Climate Challenge, 2019. Image © Deeper Green

The design guide also recognises other important and related design standards as regards sustainable design including:

- [LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide](#)
- [BRE Home Quality Mark](#)
- [Future Homes Standard](#)
- [Future Buildings Standard](#)

Note: the latter two documents are anticipated Government standards.

References:

- <https://www.architecture.com/about/policy/climate-action/2030-climate-challenge>
- https://www.leti.uk/_files/ugd/252d09_3b0f2acf2bb24c019f5ed9173fc5d9f4.pdf

5.0 Siting of developments within the landscape

The following should be read in conjunction with Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Policies (CNP):

- CE1 - Landscape Character of Crowhurst
- CE2 - The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- CE3 - Biodiversity
- CE4 - Natural Features
- CE5 - Blue Infrastructure
- CB2 - Heritage



Above: View towards Court Lodge Farm from Samson's Lane with the 1066 Bexhill Link Trail along the hedgerow on the left side of the photograph. Crowhurst has an intrinsic landscape-dominated setting where for some of these important views into the village it can be said the landscape 'holds' the buildings. Image credit: Deeper Green

5.1 Aim/justification

Crowhurst lies mainly within the setting of the AONB with connections to well established and valuable biodiverse habitats and it is essential that this distinctive landscape character and network of green and blue infrastructure is embedded in new development design, creating a natural and tranquil sense of place. New development must become an integral, positive component of the village, and its rural landscape context. In contrast, siting copybook designed structures with poor suburban 'could be anywhere' layouts are to be deterred. While some natural screening will be appropriate, the scale, style, configuration and materials used in the development should not require it to be hidden from view but should be visibly integrated into and enhance its landscape context.

- To ensure architectural forms of development pertain to Crowhurst's rural village character highlighting the best qualities of coexistence in nature
- To protect important views around the village from poorly considered built interventions which are discordant with the rural village character

Development should aim to exploit visual opportunities where practicable for the vertical layering of forms through the careful use of the site's changes of level.

- To ensure development follows rather than damages local topography, particularly where sites are sloping

New development should embed and enhance green corridors both with the existing settlement and the countryside beyond.

- To ensure continuity of habitat with adjacent sites and link in with 'B'Lines' connectivity of habitats (as per [Buglife.org.uk](https://www.buglife.org.uk))

Irregular shaping of sites should reflect and reference the surrounding medieval landscape.

- To anchor new development in the historical layering of land use

New development should be able to demonstrate a comprehensive strategy for managing foul and surface water discharge and utilising green and blue infrastructure where appropriate

- To ensure new development does not impair or exacerbate the flow of water through or adjacent to the site
- Identify measures to reduce the existing flooding risk at the bottom of Station Road



Above: An example of detached dwellings arranged along the pronounced contours, allowing the landscape context to flow through the development and creating a playful layering of roof forms when seen from afar. Image credit: Deeper Green



Above: There are a number of long-distance views around the village of Crowhurst, so studying similar settlements like this one (Iford, East Sussex), which are landscape dominated, provides cues of how to arrange built form, use contours and existing and proposed trees and hedgerows as well as pay special attention to the use of materials and colour. Image credit: Deeper Green

Criteria

- Identify existing views into, from and through the site that need to be maintained or enhanced by the development
- Consider any historic features/hedges/routeways that can be incorporated or re-introduced to reinforce the development's 'sense of place'
- Focus each site development plan on the creation of good quality public realm/green spaces, thus retaining and referencing the natural environment
- Place the development sensitively, but confidently within the landscape setting, with soft edges, to ensure connectivity with the surrounding rural areas and to minimise the need for screening
- Where appropriate, exploit opportunities for working with changes of level to create variations of roofline that work positively with the contours of the site
- Avoid significant alteration to the site topography and ensure any unavoidable retaining structures are not visible from outside the site
- Investigate water flows through and adjacent to the site via a Hydrology report, if required by Rother District Council, applying sustainable drainage principles. Should water retention measures be needed, create shallow sided, natural, unfenced, surface level ponds at the lowest point of the site, SUDs or swales
- Retain on-site mature trees and incorporate root protection zones. Create successional planting of native trees (no "forest" trees that would grow too large for the development)



Above: An example of settlement edge development in Ringmer East Sussex. It underlines a successful built response to a landscape-dominated setting with careful attention to building placement and form as well as choice of materials. Image credit: Deeper Green



Above: An example of where close-knit community networks have exploited opportunities for creating 'defensible space' in the public realm, Lewes, East Sussex. Image credit: Deeper Green

6.0 Physical and social cohesion

The following should be read in conjunction with CNP Policies:

CF2 - Rights of Way and Recreation
CB1 - Design

6.1 Aims/justification

One of the guiding principles behind the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan was that any new housing should be integrated and form a part of the community. This needs to be done both physically and socially. The aim is

that new developments should have good connections with the existing settlements and routes, to ensure physical and social cohesion. Links to existing routes (Public Rights of Way, for example) will allow easier access to other parts of the existing settlement (social integration) and make it easier to walk within the village (physical health improvements). Whilst new developments need to feel a connection to the existing village, the new development should also promote physical and social cohesion within itself. This can be done by ensuring different tenures of housing (ie. market value and affordable) are indistinguishable from each other. Public realm spaces should be used to reinforce the High Weald rural village sense of place, to enhance existing green infrastructure and afford opportunities for informal social interaction.

- To ensure that development is well connected to the physical and social infrastructure of Crowhurst
- Green public spaces are characteristic of High Weald settlements

The basic urban design tenet of 'public fronts and private backs' applies well in the High Weald, and streets without building frontage should be avoided. Public realm spaces in new developments must similarly be addressed by active building fronts

- To ensure development has recognisable 'public frontages and private backs' and provides inherent security to the inhabitants

6.2 Criteria

- Affordable housing should be spread throughout the applicable development and integrated with market value housing
- House sizes to be a mixture to ensure a mix of different family types
- Housing should be tenure blind so that it is not easy to differentiate market value and affordable housing
- Relate layout to existing or proposed footpaths, bridleways or cycle paths to enhance the sense of space and feeling of connection with the Village and the landscape
- Connections /footpaths/ bridleways/cycle paths should be in full view from the properties and easy to navigate so they feel safe

- Designate part of the site as an accessible shared green space (this may not be feasible on smaller sites, i.e. with fewer than 6 dwellings), with such features so as to create a sense of place and enhance linkages to the surrounding natural environment
- Lining green spaces with lanes and addressing them with building fronts is recommended, reinforcing the local character
- Any group of dwellings that incorporates a communal / public shared space should be designed for ease of maintenance with an agreed plan to maintain in the future
- Green spaces in the public realm should be designed to be multi-functional

- Minimise small "left-over" spaces within developments by utilising plot shape, disposition and building placement properly.
- The location of public green spaces (which are frequently triangular in plan form in the High Weald) may be determined by existing site landscape features and are best placed at the heart of the scheme, allowing them to function as community focal points



Above: A leftover area in this village provides little in the way of a 'sense of place' or any useful form of amenity to residents. Image credit: Deeper Green



Above: A small triangular area of grass creates an attractive component of public realm in a village setting around which dwellings are arranged and which affords a discernible 'sense of place'. Image credit: Deeper Green

7.0 Layout, character, scale and density

The following should be read in conjunction with CNP Policies:

- CB1 - Design
- CE4 - Natural Features
- CE2 - The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty **Management Plan**

7.1 General design considerations

Crowhurst is a High Weald settlement; a characteristically very 'green' place, with substantial soft landscaping; grass verges, lush hedgerows, woodland coppice and full tree canopies breaking up the built form. It has significant wooded ghylls and 3 streams which cut through steep hills, creating lush valleys and flowing into the flood plains at Combe Haven. The coming of the railway line in the late 19th century, divided the village, creating higher and lower village settlements.

7.1.1 Aims/Justifications

Development should be of high-quality design and have regard to its site and village context to reinforce and create a sense of place, to enhance the quality of the village environment and to ensure design plays an important role in the sustainable growth of the village.

- **To ensure any new development respects the Crowhurst setting in terms of character, scale, topography, architectural form, the wider settlement pattern and materiality (see recommendations of the Character and Heritage Assessment, 2017)**

Development should follow that outlined in Policy CE4 – Natural Features. New development will only be supported where it does not adversely affect or result in the loss of natural features which are important from a landscape or ecological perspective. This can include, but not be limited to, veteran and aged trees, ancient woodland, hedgerows and ponds.

- **To ensure development anchors layout to important existing features which integrate relevance and historical narrative for the community**

Development should follow that outlined in Policy CE2- The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Development within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will only be supported where it conserves or enhances the natural beauty of the parish and has regard to the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

- **To ensure new development respects the settlement pattern of the parish and uses local materials that enhance the appearance of development and will help to connect occupiers with the landscape.**

7.1.2 Criteria

- **Where practicable, incorporate patterns of development reflective of the local character areas of Crowhurst**
- **Incorporate high quality landscape design within the development which serves to underline the dominant landscape context of Crowhurst and exploits opportunities for bio-diverse habitat creation**

7.2 Street Layout in Crowhurst

The village settlement is characterised by its agricultural and wooded setting. Development follows the main routeway which winds between steep hills and fields, alongside flood plains, the Powdermill Stream and down to the Combe Haven Valley. Arterial lanes extend from this main routeway and on to high sandstone ridges (Swainham Lane) and valleys (Plough Pub, Recreation Ground, Sampson's Lane)

Streets and lanes in Crowhurst are generally formed of straight or gently curved segments, and where they do change direction, these changes are pronounced, as a response to topography, landscape features or built form. Overly 'wavy' streets that do not respond to natural contours should be avoided; they are not in character and can create layout problems with regard to plot definition and capacity for on-street parking.

7.2.1 Aims/Justification

Street placement and form should be linked to the site's topography, be reflective of routeways and circulation typologies seen in Crowhurst, farmsteads and other high Wealden examples. Make reference to existing field patterns and existing routes where appropriate.

- To ensure street layout of new development respects rural village typologies which pertain to the special qualities of Crowhurst



Above: The public realm of this cul-de-sac development is negatively impacted by the visual dominance of the car parking, either through the placement of on-street or front curtilage bays. Image credit: Deeper Green

While street design needs to anticipate the movement needs of current and foreseeable transport technologies, usage and safety considerations, the overall routing and form should be carefully handled to avoid the impression of edge of settlement suburban development. Street design should be ideally suited to pedestrians and cyclists in so far as being safe and convivial to use. Use of street hierarchy is encouraged.

- With the climate emergency response in mind, should private vehicle use become less prolific in use during the life of the development, street design is to prioritise the needs of pedestrians and cyclists

7.2.2 Criteria

- Access roads must open into the landscape - avoiding cul-de-sacs - to ensure rural lines of sight are incorporated into the design. Land to be designated community areas to ensure sight lines remain open in the future
- Access roads aligned to minimise glare from vehicle headlights
- Use layout features, such as placement of buildings, tree planting and street surfacing (material and/or colour) to calm traffic
- The character of the junctions off the main road should reflect that of the locality and the scale of development; access to smaller developments should be designed as lanes, using materials to make the distinction between pavements and roads.
- Design junctions to be pedestrian friendly and in accordance with Manual for Streets; to respond to local character and context, and to the scale of development
- Use the arrangement of buildings to support the street pattern and character



Above: A housing development opening onto the landscape beyond, Ringmer, East Sussex. Image credit: Deeper Green

7.3 Street Character

Crowhurst is a historic settlement with streets that reflect a long evolved and distinctive range of forms, designed around pedestrians rather than car movement, derived from their routeway origins. Many have wooded or hedge-lined banks and are sunken. Victorian and 19C development have led to additional routeways displaying characteristics such as straighter, wider streets, often tree-lined and without pavements or street lighting.

7.3.1 Aims/Justification

Discernible building lines should be established in new housing schemes.

In the northern part of Crowhurst, development is to reflect the surrounding pattern of development typified by tree lined streets,

no pavements but rather soft verges with buildings set well back from the road.

In the central part of Crowhurst development is likely to be more visible within key views and thus street typology should adopt forms appropriate to their immediate setting. To the east of the church adjacent existing farm buildings this might be farmstead-type with development focused on movement corridors of interlinked courtyards with shared surface treatment with a mix of parking including the use of 'parking barns'. To the northwest of the church, this might be in the form of short terrace cottages around a green public realm with twittens providing opportunities to create mews style dwellings around parking courts,

To the southern part of Crowhurst, development is to reflect the intimate streetscape where detached, semi and short terraced forms of dwellings are typically positioned close to the road sometimes with twittens leading to mews style courts behind the main line of buildings. Parking might typically be between, behind buildings or tucked away out of the line of site on the main routeway with on-street parking very limited so as not to dominate the streetscape.

- To ensure development draws from the immediate context to find patterns of development reflective of the setting.

7.3.2 Criteria

- Depending on the character area of Crowhurst the site is located within, the building lines should conform to either:
 - a) sitting tight on the back edge of the street or footway
 - b) sitting with a small defined front curtilage between building and street
 - c) sitting back behind a longer, enclosed front garden



Above: The southern character area of Crowhurst includes a higher concentration of Victorian and early 20th Century buildings with a predominance of well-crafted simple brickwork most often with plain clay tile roofs. This image is Sandrock Hill looking west across the base of the Powdermill Valley. Image credit: Deeper Green



Above: In addition to the historic cluster of buildings of the church, school and ruined manor house, the central character area of Crowhurst is characterised by the detached dwellings along Station Road, set back from pavement to varying depths of frontage and predominantly built within the 20th Century. Image credit: Deeper Green



Above: Also, within the central area but just south of Fore Wood is the council-built mid-20th Century housing on Forewood Rise, clustered around large expanses of grass verge and a roundabout island. It clearly draws from traditional forms of rural architecture, as applied to short terraces and enlivened in places with gables and cat slide roofs. Image credit: Deeper Green



Above: The northern character area of Crowhurst is distinctive for a lower density of housing, predominantly detached and of varying vintage. Notably the houses are set well back from the road with trees and hedges visually dominating the lanes. Image credit: Deeper Green

7.3.3 Twittens, Boundaries and Gardens

Crowhurst has various examples of terraced, semi-detached and individual dwellings which exhibit cut-throughs or 'twitten' style lanes between the buildings, characteristic in the High Weald. This also applies to 19C and early 20C dwellings.

EG. Sampsons Lane, Blacksmiths Field, Plough Lane (photos useful here)

Where there is private front curtilage, however small, as generally seen within the High Weald, it is typically enclosed, either by hedgerows, low walls, or picket fences.

EG. Sampson's Lane, Chapel Hill, Court Lodge Cottages, Forewood Rise



Above: A good example of a twitten in nearby Battle, East Sussex. Image credit: Sonia Plato

7.3.4 Aims/Justifications

Where appropriate, opportunities for incorporating 'twitten' style lanes should be incorporated. Such features can allow rear garden/yard access to properties on the main frontage particularly with a terraced format.

Opportunities for incorporating intimate semi-public frontages, often referred to as 'defensible space' are encouraged, particularly for development in the southern Crowhurst character area. Such zones provide a sense of ownership between the private realm of the householder which is outward facing to neighbours and the wider community. As such, these small parcels of landscape/streetscape can play an important social role in the community.

Rear gardens might typically back onto fields where the treatment of the boundary will need careful attention to ensure a sense of private enclosure and defensible space.

The design of front and rear gardens should aim to achieve a high degree of 'front and back' legibility with clearly defined approaches to dwelling entrances with all due regard to design for disability standards.

Bin and bicycle storage should be well integrated into the design.

- To authentically draw from traditional patterns of rural village development in the High Weald.
- To provide inherently secure development through means of natural surveillance
- To anticipate growing use of bicycles (particularly electric assisted type) which will need secure and preferably weather protected storage as society transitions towards a net-zero carbon economy
- To ensure the visual impact of bins do not dominate the public realm

7.3.5 Criteria

- Clearly delineate the boundary between public and private space, including front garden enclosure

- Provide high levels of 'front and back' legibility with clearly defined front entrance approaches
- Provide high levels of natural surveillance with careful attention paid to spaces around the sides and back of buildings particularly if there is public access to parking courts
- Private rear gardens to offer space for young families and big enough for a vegetable plot and composting
- Incorporate 'twitten'-style cut throughs to provide access to rear gardens, particularly in terraced format
- Provide dwellings with ample bin and secure bicycle storage, preferably with charging facility and weather protection

7.4 Density and form of developments

Crowhurst has various patterns of settlement including scattered rural buildings, medieval farms, terraced worker cottages, Victorian semi-detached and terraced buildings and larger residential buildings set in large gardens along main routeways. There are two 20th century social housing developments set around a central grassed or street area.

This variation of density across the site helps the character and place-making of the development, avoiding generic homogeneity. Crowhurst has scattered and irregular settlements reflecting the historic change in development from a mainly agricultural village to one with a busy railway interchange in the late 19C, bringing with it the establishment of a school, telephone exchange, inn and worker cottages.

Clusters of large, detached buildings of similar scale, massing, footprint and spacing are uncharacteristic of Crowhurst and the High Weald. Mid 20C executive residential properties are more common in the northern part of Crowhurst. Domestic buildings in Crowhurst as in the High Weald are typically 2 storeys in height, sometimes with attic storey accommodation within steeply pitched roofs.

E.g. Farmhouses, Worker cottages in Sampson's Lane, Chapel Hill, Swainham Lane, Court Lodge Cottages

The roofscape of villages within the High Weald is particularly distinctive, as it is in Crowhurst. Hipped or half-hipped roofs are commonplace up to the mid 20C, as are catslide roofs. Varying roof orientation, eaves height and angle can add to character. These are particularly in evidence in medieval farms e.g. Pye's Farm, Adam's Farm, Sampson's Farm, Crouchers, Park Farm, Stonebridge Farm and workers cottages in Sampson's Lane.



Above: New housing at Park Farm, Crowhurst. Dwellings are clustered around a courtyard in a manner reminiscent of a farmstead. Image credit: Sonia Plato



Above: An example of a traditional roof form, Oast House on the Catsfield Road. Image credit: Deeper Green

7.4.1 Aims/Justifications

New development should reflect the historic density of the area in which it is being proposed, so that the distribution of buildings supports the existing pattern of the settlement. Density should closely relate to street pattern.

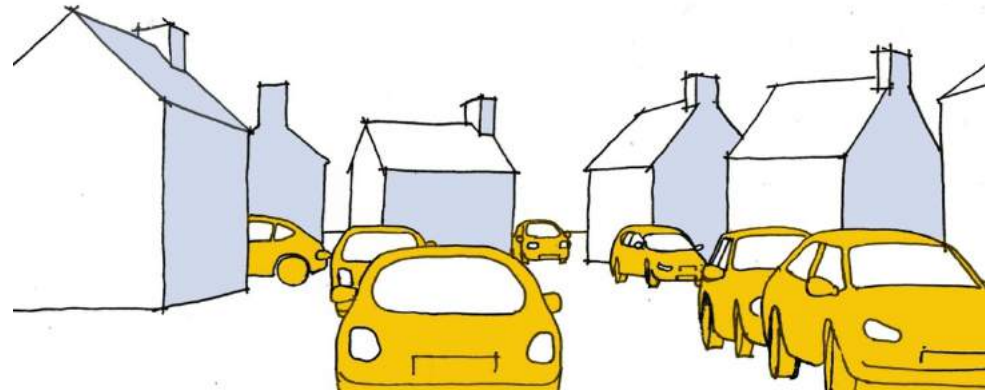
- To authentically draw from traditional patterns of rural village development in the High Weald and the particular site-specific contexts of Crowhurst

The selection of housing typologies and how they are clustered together should aim to 'hold' space in the public realm in contrast to sub-urban development which tends to leak space between dwellings where too many detached forms are squeezed into a layout with little or no perceived building line. Farmstead-style or mews court typologies may also be suitable.

Design should be high-quality and contemporary and not seek to copy traditional or earlier design details. It should relate to the village settlement

pattern and existing design topography, including through appropriate scale and use of local building materials.”

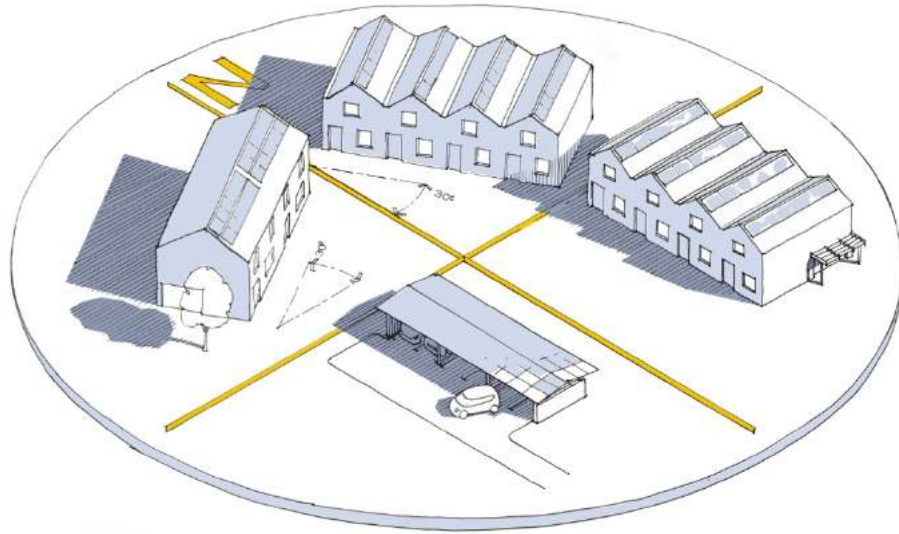
- To ensure development pertains to rural village typologies, responds meaningfully to the particular character areas around Crowhurst and steers clear of sub-urban forms of development using 'could be anywhere' standard house types and layouts.



Above: Proposals using overly compressed suburban layout typologies, 'could be anywhere' house types with little variation in parking solution, will likely not be supported. Image © Deeper Green

In the age of the climate emergency response, new development should aim to exploit opportunities for passive solar gain and roof mounted solar energy collection whilst ensuring against excessive internal heat gains in warmer seasons.

- To ensure development is optimised and easily adaptable for net zero-carbon operation.



Above: Generic principles for optimum solar orientation and form. Wide fronted units facing north or south should have a primary aspect within 30° of due south. East and west facing units should be within 30° of the north/south axis such that gabled roof profiles can present a major roof pitch to the south. Anticipating the need for electric vehicle charging, parking structures with roofs of 5° - 7° pitches can be used if aligned on the north/south axis and 30° pitch if aligned to face south. Image © Deeper Green

7.4.2 Criteria

- Place buildings so that they have a clear and purposeful relationship with the street. Front doors should be placed on the front elevation to help animate the street scene and to create an active and attractive edge
- Use plot disposition and building placement to support solar gain from the South, and to minimise left over space
- Buildings must have a reasonably consistent roof line so that the street scene is cohesive, except where responding to topographical changes of level
- Ensure that publicly accessible open space is lined with active edges and well overlooked (using Secured by Design principles)
- Design homes that offer good natural surveillance to improve crime prevention as per Secured by Design guidance and Manual for Streets
- Ensure a mix of housing sizes and spacing between properties, but with some common features, e.g. the roofline
- Maintain the dispersed character of Crowhurst, which has evolved according to historic development in agriculture, industry and other historical events such as the railway
- Avoid homogeneity of building spacing and form across the site.
- Demonstrate that the features can be protected and enhanced over the construction and lifetime stages of the development
- For optimising intelligent solar design, use of wide fronted dwelling typologies are appropriate when aligned to east-west oriented roads whereas narrower and deeper plans may be appropriate to line north-south oriented roads
- For optimising intelligent solar design, primary roof pitches to face within 30° of due south and special care is needed to avoid overshadowing from other buildings and vegetation (bear in mind growth over time)
- Simple roof forms allow for maximising energy collection whereas use of hips, valleys and dormers tend to limit this potential

7.5 Parking

In the age of the climate emergency response, new development should anticipate the changing needs of residents as society shifts towards a net zero carbon economy. This is likely to include less reliance on cars and possibly more use of bicycles, particularly EV bikes. That said Crowhurst is a relatively remote conurbation with limited key services within the village itself. There is no existing bus service, and the train connection is more suited to commuters than for food shopping. Therefore, car reliance is likely to remain high for some years to come. Other aspects to consider are the changing motor vehicle technologies we are likely to see in the coming decade with the phasing out of petrol, diesel and even hybrid electric vehicles. Electric only and hydrogen fuel cell power units are foreseen which will require specific technical features built into new development. Careful thought and planning will be needed to ensure for instance how EV charging is carried out for parking off the curtilage of the property and opportunities for solar energy collection on parking structures should be anticipated in the structural design and orientation of these.

7.5.1 Aims/Justifications

New development should aim to incorporate a range of parking solutions.

- To ensure no one parking typology dominates the public realm

New development should anticipate the changing technological needs of more carbon efficient forms of transport.

- To ensure the adoption of low carbon / net zero carbon transport technologies are cost effective and beautifully integrated into the design.

7.5.2 Criteria

- On-street parking should be kept to a minimum
- Some front apron parking can be appropriate on wide frontage dwelling typologies so long as no less than 50% of the frontage is footpath, planting area and/or refuse store

- Use of side and back lanes can open up opportunities for parking courts which might also include garage or parking barn solutions
- Garages must be set back from the building line so as to reduce the visual impact of garage doors on the public realm
- Garage sizing should consider additional sizing for cycle storage
- Include car charging facility
- Exploit opportunities for solar energy collection of parking structures
- Car spaces for the adoption of car clubs should be anticipated in the development proposals.



Above: Lyde End, Bledlow, Buckinghamshire (C. 1977) designed by architects Aldington and Craig is a fine example of rural village housing that not only speaks confidently about the time within which it was conceived, it also responds sensitively to its rural Chiltern setting which is now an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Now Grade II listed, Lyde End provides two- and three-bedroom houses around a parking court, reminiscent of a cluster of farm buildings. Image © Deeper Green



Above: Site Plan, Lyde End, Bledlow, Buckinghamshire (C. 1977. Image © Deeper Green



Above: Another useful precedent of housing layout which might be appropriate for a rural village setting is Corner Green, Blackheath by Eric Lyons / Span. It is notable for its grouping of houses around a well-landscaped communal green with parking tucked neatly behind rear gardens and benefitting from natural surveillance.

Image © Deeper Green

8.0 Architectural detail

The following should be read in conjunction with CNP Policies:

CB1 - Design

CB2 - Heritage

New development should imbue a sense of belonging to its landscape and settlement context. This need not be a result of copying traditional forms of development and construction. Indeed, successful built interventions should adopt architectural languages which speak confidently of their times.

Moreover, when dealing with a sensitive landscape and historically layered context such as Crowhurst, new development should seek to set a visual conversation of respect and delight with its surroundings.

Aims/Justification

Like most High Weald villages, Crowhurst is medieval in origin. Much of our medieval built environment is now gone and the building profile of the Village is largely from the late C19th onwards. All new developments should give regard to notable and high heritage value buildings sited nearby or within line of sight of the development such as the de Scotney manor house ruins and St. George's church. Each new development is distinctive in character but has themes and visual cues that link it to other development sites and the wider village. House types / styles must complement the local character and those of the listed buildings within the Parish. Features that may be suitable for inclusion include: Half hipped roofs in the style of Sussex Barns and tall pitched rooves as seen throughout other High Weald villages and present in Crowhurst.

Architectural details should enhance the street scene. Examples would include use of open eaves and open gable porches. Simplified lines are better with the cost savings used towards quality materials and sustainable building elements. Whilst drawing from the spirit of the place is important, it is recognised that new development should not mimic older architectural details where for instance they might inhibit aspects of sustainable operational energy performance particularly as regards to optimising passive solar design and the associated intelligent use of fenestration layout and sizing.

Criteria

- Adopt an architectural language which responds to the special qualities of the Crowhurst character areas, referencing local detailing where appropriate to enhance the sense of belonging to the context
- Use of a contemporary form of architectural detailing should seek to complement the immediate built environment
- When pertaining to rural idioms of agricultural worker's cottages and the like, exploit the opportunity for simplified architectural forms combined with the use of good quality and well-crafted building materials
- Exploit opportunities for incorporating habitats (nesting boxes etc) within the architectural detailing
- Street furniture to demonstrate local distinctive character and avoid features which are commonly associated with a suburban environment
- Soft edging of highways where possible
- No lap or panel fencing where visible from the public realm and allowances made to allow wildlife transit.
- Any hedging/soft boundaries must use native plants
- Traditional hedging materials or low picket fencing to demarcate property boundaries
- Timber post and rail fencing with hedging preferred as boundary treatment to rear gardens where leading on to meadow or field
- Drive gates should be low and open fronted, preferably made of wood or wrought iron, in-keeping with the rural context and they should be no more than 1 metre in height unless planning permission is gained
- Consider incorporating field gate/stiles to terminate route ways within new development sites to afford visual and physical links to open spaces and public rights of way beyond
- Concealed waste and recycling containers
- No streetlights in order to maintain optimum dark skies
- Exterior lighting to be downlighters only to maintain dark skies and conform to bat friendly guidelines



Above: A couple of examples of brick detailing in Crowhurst with Court Lodge Cottages on the left and Powdermill Bank (formerly the Old Police Station) on the right. Image credit: Deeper Green



Above: Many of the older cottages have a brick ground storey and timber clad upper storey as in this example on Sampson's Lane. Image credit: Deeper Green



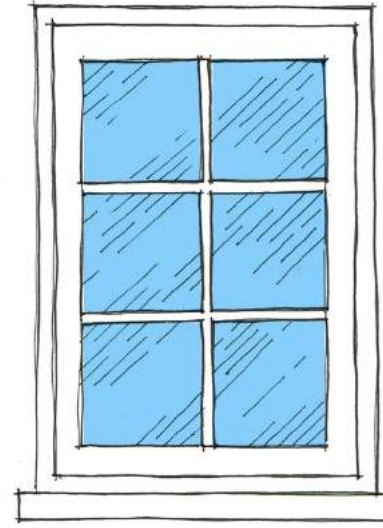
Above: The Plough Inn exemplifies the use of brick (here with contrasting bands of grey brick), plain clay roof tiles, hung clay tiles and a timber clad out-building. Image credit: Deeper Green



Above: A contemporary extension in a rural village. The additions are respectful to the context whilst exploiting opportunities for passive solar gain and an integrated solar roof (black finish). The cladding is Wealden-grown coppiced sweet chestnut. Image © Ian McKay / BBM Sustainable Design

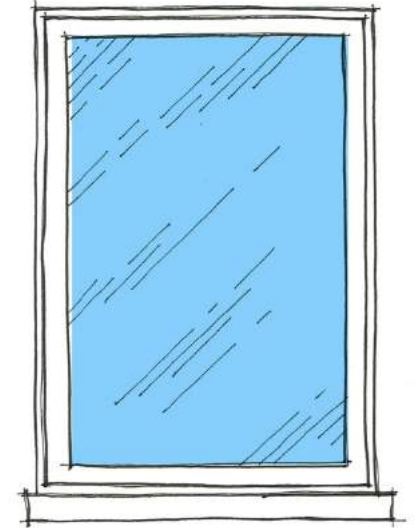


Above: Juxtaposing traditional and contemporary forms of materials with plain clay tiles and black patinated zinc. The Ditchling Museum by Adam Richards Architects. Image © Deeper Green



Typical PVC-U framed window with faux glazing bars

Example size: 840 x1200mm₂
Total area of glazing = 0.541m²



Typical high performance aluminium framed casement window with timber sub-frame

Example size: 840 x1200mm₂
Total area of glazing = 0.75m²

38% increased glazed area

Above: A simple comparison of fenestration mimicking traditional forms on the left relative to a simpler and thinner framed unit on the right which can better exploit passive solar gains. Image © Deeper Green

9.0 Use of local building materials

The built development of the Village is largely from the last 150 years. As a High Weald village, the historic industry of the area has been reflected in the materials used. This includes use of clay-based elements such as brick, hung clay tile and plain clay roofing tiles and even mathematical tiles, timber and iron and even sandstone. Of particular note in the region is the use of a contrasting header either with a glazed brick, a clamp fired brick (with a charcoal infused colouring) or a dark clay stock. Given Crowhurst's origins as a place of iron working, opportunities for incorporating metalwork features such as gates, signage, handrails etc is encouraged.

Many local construction material suppliers operate in the vicinity including a major brick manufacturer located on the outskirts of Bexhill-on-Sea, a hand-made brick supplier in Three Oaks near Hastings and there are a number of Wealden-grown timber suppliers particularly based around Flimwell and Golden Cross. Re-use of previously constructed materials is also to be encouraged.

Aims/Justification

Utilise a palette of materials which pertains to the material hinterland of the Crowhurst and High Weald context.

- To ensure the outward appearance of the development is imbued with a sense of belonging to its material landscape and extant built environment
- To reduce the environmental impact of the supply of materials to the site through minimising delivery miles
- To draw out narratives in the architectural handling to convey the origin and meaning associated with the history of Crowhurst

Adopt principles of design for deconstruction to maximise potentials for reusing construction materials as well as looking for opportunities for incorporating previously constructed materials (pertaining to use in the High Weald context) in the construction specification.

- To align the development to 'circular economy' principles both in the present day and for the benefit of future generations

Criteria

- Use local materials from local businesses wherever practicable, including clay tiles, bricks and timber towards the creation of a locally distinctive design
- Developments should reflect the material hinterland and historical links of Crowhurst: Timber, Ironwork, Sandstone, Clay
- Where finite mineral-based resources (e.g. clay, stone etc) are used, ensure specifications are aligned to principles of 'design for deconstruction', to allow for optimising re-use, using for instance hydraulic lime-based rather than cement-based mortars for masonry construction and 'reversible fixings' for steelwork
- Where renewable and bio-based resources such as timber are used, endeavour to use locally produced material wherever practicable and make use of 'reversible fixings' to optimise the re-use of constructed materials
- Developers/Contractors should be asked to demonstrate the 'added social value' within their proposals, for instance by utilising local supply chains and artisans
- Apply the High Weald Colour Palette and restrict the use of bright coloured materials, such as white painted weatherboarding, to locations which are less exposed to important views across the village, where sensitivity to change is more prominent
- Materials must be low maintenance to help maintain a good standard of upkeep



Top left: Hung clay tile shapes, Ditchling, East Sussex. Image © Deeper Green

Top right: Typical East Sussex brick patterning with a contrasting clamp-fired grey-coloured brick. Lewes, East Sussex. Image © Deeper Green

Above: Wealden-grown coppiced and glue laminated sweet chestnut. Image © Deeper Green



Top: A contemporary example of residential construction utilising a mix of different brick sources. Reminiscent of older forms of construction this technique avoids any one brick stock becoming visually overwhelming while anticipating a need to adopt circular resource use strategies. The Pheasantry, Crawley Down. Image © Deeper Green

Above: To make reference to Crowhurst's fascinating history as a place of ironworking, opportunities should be exploited for integrating metal work details into the architecture. Images © Deeper Green

10.0 Applying these design criteria to the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan allocated sites

10.1 CH1 - Land adjoining Station Road and Forewood Lane

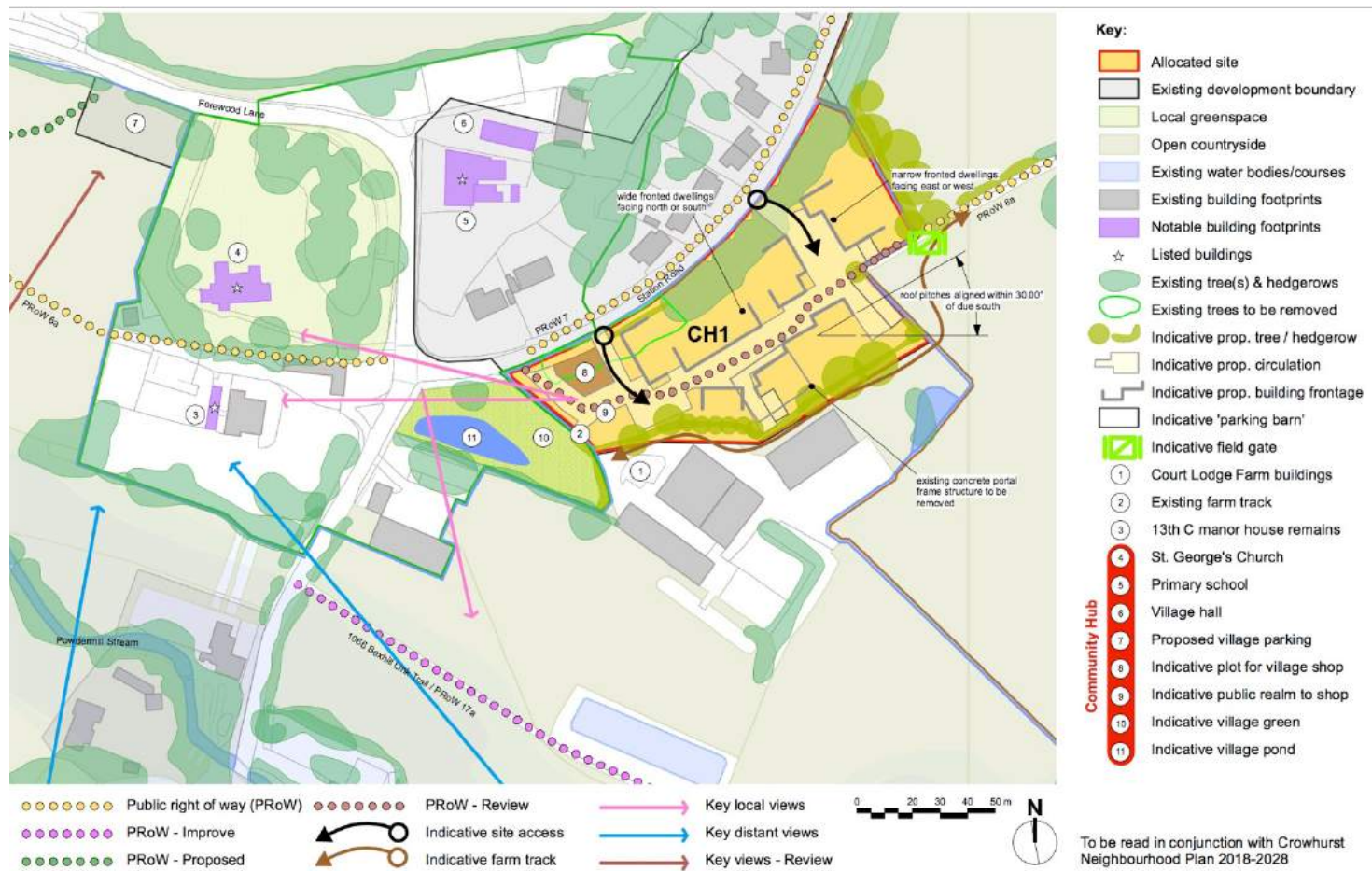


Image © Deeper Green

Bearing in mind the proximity of Court Lodge Farm, the adjacent listed buildings within the historic core of Crowhurst, its visibility within important views as well as being dissected by a right of way, CH1 will require special consideration of its placement, form and detailing.

Groupings of dwellings to create well-defined areas of public realm, reflecting the working courtyards of traditional farm typologies, might work best for CH1 and consist of dwelling clusters around a public realm / circulation space of interlinked courtyards with overlooked parking barns and some on-street parking. Access for fire and refuse vehicles as well as refuse and cycle storage and separation from farm vehicle access to Court Lodge Farm will need careful consideration.

The orientation of the dwellings should take into account the solar aperture to maximise beneficial solar gains and on-site energy generation, i.e. dominant roof pitches and glazing to face within 30° of due south.

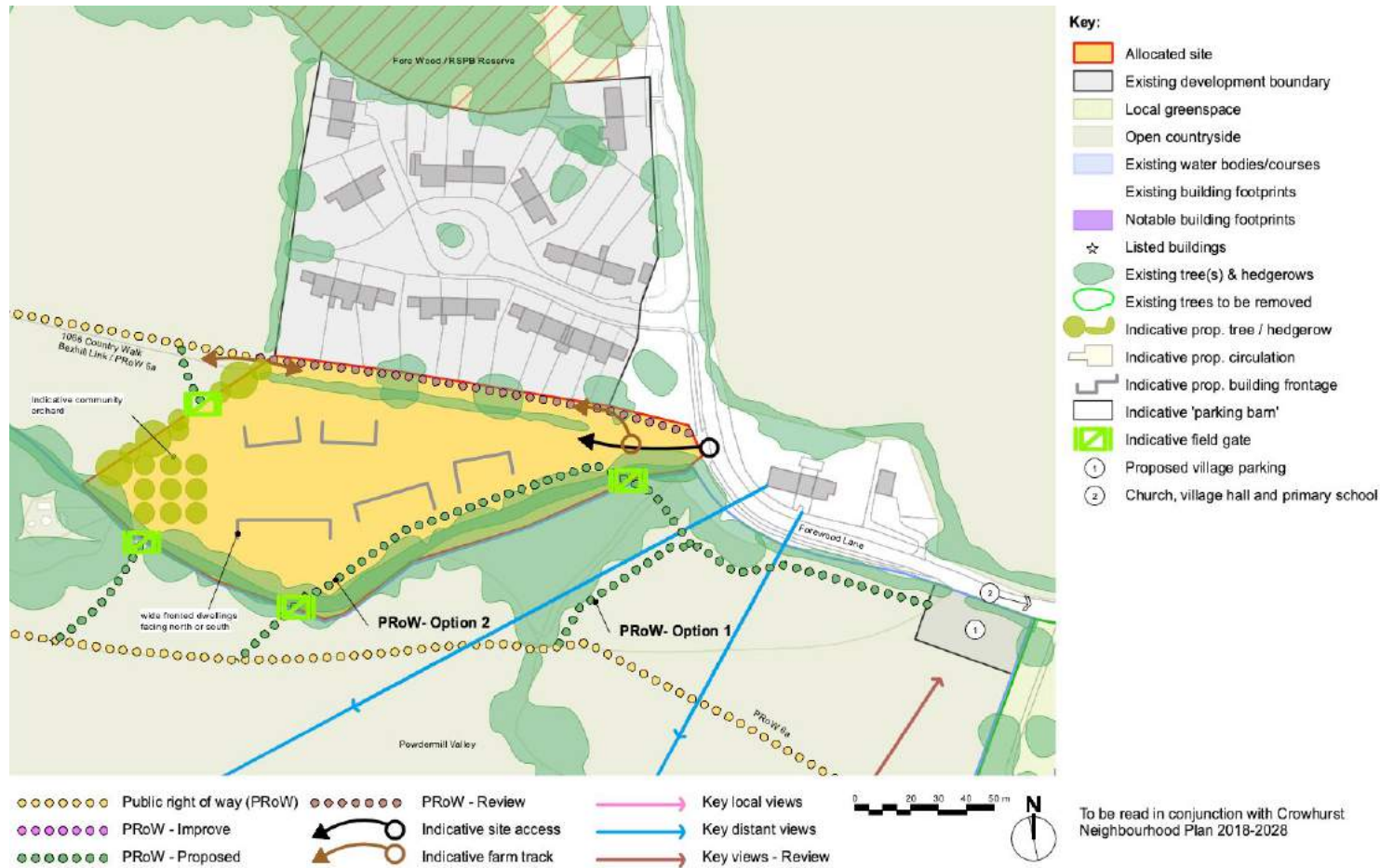
Careful selection and placement of tree and understorey planting should seek to improve connectivity of ecological corridors but also to create a planted buffer to the farm. Native species should be used, and dwarf deciduous varieties chosen where close to dwellings to avoid overshadowing of roofs. Opportunities for incorporating bird or bat boxes within the construction and hibernacula within the landscaping should be exploited.

Proposed 'Community Hub'

The proposed expansion of the existing core community hub, comprising the church, school and village hall, could provide in this central area of the village indoor and outdoor community amenities. It could potentially include a village shop / meeting or activity space, village green with pond and parking area.

It is proposed that this community hub concept be incorporated into the development plan for CH1. One of the issues to be addressed by the development is the requirement to achieve biodiversity metric gain. It is unlikely that this could be achieved within the confines of the CH1 development. Discussion should therefore take place with the landowners regarding the possibility of releasing the plot of land below the development site, marked indicative Village Green on the map. This would include a pond, which would serve as both an attractive natural feature, as well as an attenuation pond, to assist with water flow management. Other requirements should also be considered as part of this plan, including improving footpaths on Station Road.

10.2 CH2 - Land south of Forewood Rise



Rural village housing typologies might work best for CH2 and consist of dwelling clusters or short terraces around a public realm/circulation space. Solutions for parking might utilise tucked-away areas to the outer edges of the site with communal landscaped areas and pedestrian circulation forming the central focus of the development. Placement of a local area of play (LAP), access for fire and refuse vehicles as well as refuse and cycle storage will need careful consideration.

The orientation of the dwellings should take into account the solar aperture to maximise beneficial solar gains and on-site energy generation, ie. dominant roof pitches and glazing to face within 30° of due south.

Careful selection and placement of tree and understorey planting should seek to improve connectivity of ecological corridors. Native species should be used, and dwarf deciduous varieties chosen where close to dwellings to avoid overshadowing of roofs. Opportunities for incorporating bird or bat boxes within the landscaping should be exploited. Care must be taken to avoid disturbance to the bat colony in the trees, adjacent to the site.

Image © Deeper Green

10.3 CH3 - Land adjacent to the Station Car park



Flatted housing typologies might work best for CH3. Access for fire and refuse vehicles as well as refuse and cycle storage will need careful consideration. Given the constrained plot size and the need to retain some of the vegetation on the outer edges of the site, solutions for parking might utilise the footprint in either a basement or semi-basement format (platform lift and stair maybe required). External amenity might consist of south-facing private patio spaces above the parking podium with communal areas set perhaps a partial level below to improve privacy sightlines. Retained trees will need tightly controlled root protection zones. Opportunities for incorporating bird or bat boxes within the construction should be exploited.

The orientation of the dwellings should take into account the solar aperture to maximise beneficial solar gains and on-site energy generation, i.e. dominant roof pitches and glazing to face within 30° of due south.

The architectural handling of the building should respond to its proximity to the station and its associated opportunity to serve as a 'gateway' entry point for the village. Craig Close is a private road and Network Rail own the car parking in front of the station. Establishing the vehicular access onto the site will need further consideration.

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