AECOM

ALDINGTON & BONNINGTON

Design Guidelines and Codes

Final Report

August 2021

Quality information

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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Name	Position
4	17.08.21	Revision	Giuseppe Verdone	Principal Urban Designer
3	05.08.21	Review	Peter Setterfield Linda Harman Sheila Garrard Glyn Bryant	Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council
2	21.05.21	Review	Ben Castell	Director
1	20.05.21	Report, review	Giuseppe Verdone	Principal Urban Designer
0	19.05.21	Research, site visit, drawings	Stela Kontogianni	Urban Designer

Contents

Introduction

01

1. Introduction

This section provides context and general information to introduce the document and the area.

1.1 Background

Through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Neighbourhood Planning Programme led by Locality, AECOM has been commissioned to provide design support to Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council.

Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council has requested to access professional advice on design codes to ensure that new developments complement a highly distinctive Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The objective is to ensure that they remain sympathetic to the area's existing built and natural environment and historic character while leaving room for architectural innovation and retaining open space.

This document supports Neighbourhood Plan policies that guide the design of any future development proposals in order to create distinctive places that are well-integrated with the existing settlement and to promote high-quality built forms.

It must be noted that the area of study covers two parishes combined into one Neighbourhood Plan Area and served by one Parish Council. The area includes Aldington village, the small village of Bonnington and at least ten hamlets alongside numerous farmsteads. For the purpose of this report, all references to the parish, unless stated otherwise, are to the combined areas of both civil parishes.

1.2 Objectives

The main objective of this report is to develop design guidelines and codes for the Neighbourhood Plan that will inform the design of future planning applications and residential developments in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

1.3 Process

Following an inception meeting and a site visit with members of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, AECOM carried out a high-level assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The following steps were agreed with the Group to produce this report:

– Initial meeting between AECOM and the Aldington and Bonnington Neighbourhood Planning Group. As this was during the national Covid 19 lockdown, a joint virtual site visit was carried out via Microsoft Teams and Google Streetview;

– Site visit and local landscape and character analysis;

– Preparation of design guidelines and codes to be used to inform the design of the Neighbourhood Plan Area and future developments;

– Draft report with design guidelines and codes; and

– Submission of the final report.

1.4 Area of study

As noted above, Aldington and Bonnington comprises two civil parishes that have been administered jointly by a single Parish Council since 1979.

Aldington parish boundary extends to the north towards the railway line, whilst its north-east corner crosses the rail lines reaching M20 and cutting through the site of the Sellindge electricity converter station.

To the south the landscape falls steeply away into the Romney Marshes AoNB. From Ruffyns Hill at the end of Church Lane, Aldington to the Royal Military Canal and beyond its south bank to the parish boundary at Hurst Sewer and Hurst Farm, this area includes most of Bonnington. It prescribes approximately 30% of the joint parish as in the Romney Marshes AoNB.

Aldington village centre is formed along Roman Road and is situated approximately 12km south-east of Ashford town centre and 12.5km north-west of Folkestone.

Long distance views are expanding northwards and westwards towards arable farmland and the Kent Downs, whilst to the east views take in St. Martin's Church and to the south the steeply declining landscape gives vistas towards the coast, which on a clear day is visible on the horizon in an expanse that spans from Rye to Hythe Bay. The redundant Dungeness Power Station and the wind turbines near Camber Sands are clearly visible landmarks.

Bonnington is a smaller parish forming the south-west quadrant of the combined Aldington and Bonnington parish. There is no apparent centre in Bonnington village, but there is a cluster of homes, including the former school house, around a village green on which stands the ancient Law Oak, and along the picturesque Cherry Orchard Lane.

Bonnington is set in arable farmland and is roughly bisected by the Royal Military Canal, with about half of the parish lying on Romney Marsh.

The parish is connected through a network of secondary roads to the M20 to the north and A2070 to the west, whilst the closest train stations are Ham Street, Westenhanger and Ashford International with a distance of 7, 9 and 10 km respectively.

Aldington currently has a good range of facilities, including a post office/ convenience store, butcher/ fishmonger, public house, cafe and hairdresser via services in Quarry House, primary school, church, fire station, village hall and other meeting rooms in the Eco Centre. In addition, KCC's mobile library visits Aldington village weekly on a Thursday. There are no GP primary health care services available in the parish and the closest surgeries are located in Hamstreet or Sellindge.

In terms of public transport, Kent Coach Tours operates local bus services in the parish; the 125 bus service runs between Ashford Rail Station and Aldington 5 times each week day. The last return bus from Ashford to Aldington departs at 17.25pm. There is also a weekly 111 service between Ashford and Folkestone operated by Stagecoach on Thursdays. There are no bus services at weekends.

The limited bus services mean that the parish is very car reliant, with residents over predominantly commuting to and from work by car and regularly driving children into nearby towns for education, sport or social events.

Bonnington does not have any community services since 1985 the shop at Aldington Corner closed in 1985. Bonnington residents use the facilities in Aldington.
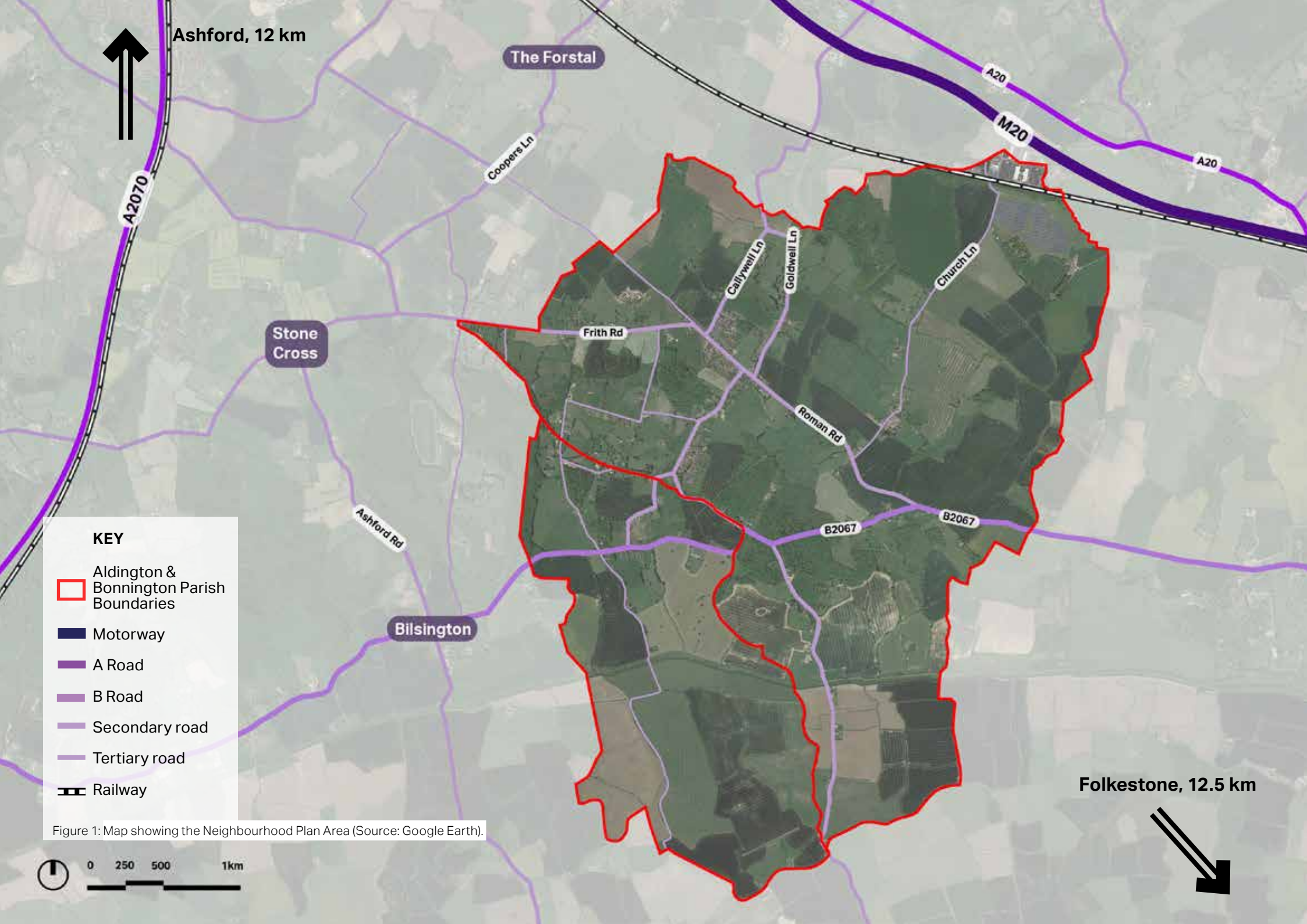
Ashford, 12 km

The Forstal

A20

M20

A20

Coopers Ln

Callywell Ln

Goldwell Ln

Church Ln

Frith Rd

Roman Rd

Stone Cross

B2067

B2067

A2070

Ashford Rd

Bilsington

KEY

Aldington & Bonnington Parish Boundaries

Motorway

A Road

B Road

Secondary road

Tertiary road

Railway

Figure 1: Map showing the Neighbourhood Plan Area (Source: Google Earth).

0   250   500   1km

Folkestone, 12.5 km
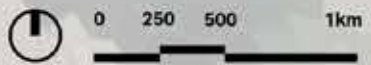
Local character analysis

02

2. Local Character Analysis

This section analyses the local context of the villages, the key constraints and opportunities, as well as the special characteristics.

2.1 Parish structure

The main settlements in Aldington and Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan Area are formed in linear patterns along, or leading off, Roman Road, which forms the core of Aldington village. In addition, clusters of homes, cottages and farmhouses are found along the many rural lanes that traverse the parish, whilst clusters of homes form hamlets that are a key characteristic of the area, such as in Church Lane, Stone Street Green and along Frith Road in Aldington, and Cherry Orchard and Mill Lane in Bonnington.

The area, as shown in F.2, is predominately rural with the built-up area located in the centre of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, with open fields and water courses to the north and south.

KEY

☐ Aldington & Bonnington Parish Boundaries

☐ Open Field

■ Woodland (Ancient & Priority Habitat Inventory)

■ Main settlement & hamlets

▬ Road network

Figure 2: Diagram showing the structure of Aldington and Bonnington Neighbourhood Plan Area.

F.2

2.2 Land uses & facilities

A wide range of facilities operate in the parish, mainly located along Roman Road and Forge Hill, Aldington. These are:

– **Community Facilities:** Aldington Village Hall located at the corner of Roman Road and Goldwell Lane is a focus for local community activities and events. The Eco Centre in Goldwell Lane provides serviced meeting rooms. In addition, Canterbury Oast Trust based in the Poulton Wood Nature Reserve provide employment and training for adults with learning disabilities.

– **Education:** Aldington Primary School on Roman Road is a single form entry school with 204 pupils between the ages of 4 and 11 years taught across 7 classes. There is nursery provision adjacent to the school in Kaleidoscope Care and a forest school , Led by the Wild, that operates from Whites Wood on Giggers Green Road.

– **Post Office & Shops:** The post office store is located along the western end of Roman Road. There is also a butcher and fishmonger, Aldington Fresh Foods, as well as The Egg Machine at Bank Farm that provides an automated farm shop offering free range eggs and other local produce.

– **Food & Drink:** The Walnut Tree public house located in the centre of Aldington at the corner of Roman Road and Forge Hill, is the only remaining pub in the parish. Quarry House, along Goldwell Lane, an assisted living facility, offers services for its residents that parish residents have access to. These include a cafe, hairdresser and a nail bar.

– **Religion:** In Aldington St Martin's Church is located east from the village, in Church Lane, whilst there is also an Evangelical church on Forge Hill. Bonnington church is St. Rumwolds and is located next to the Royal Military Canal on Frogmore Lane.

– **Business:** The main commercial activity is farming. There are three active farms, Bank Farm in Bank Road, Court Lodge on Church Lane and Rushfield in Giggers Green Road, Bonnington. There are business centres in Goldwell Lane in Aldington and in Mill Lane in Bonnington, with a third just outside the parish in Frith Road. The Sellindge Electricity Converter Station partially lies within the north-east corner of the parish. A recently installed solar farm is located at the bottom of Church Lane.

KEY

- Aldington & Bonnington Parish Boundaries
- Education
- Religion
- Community Facility
- Shop
- Food & Drink
- Post Office
- Sellindge Electricity Converter Station
- Farm (including Solar farm)
- Accommodation
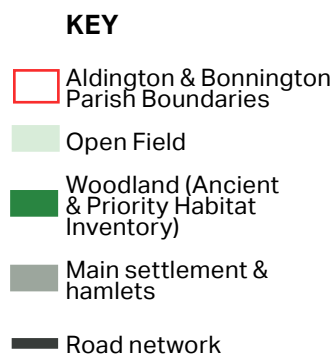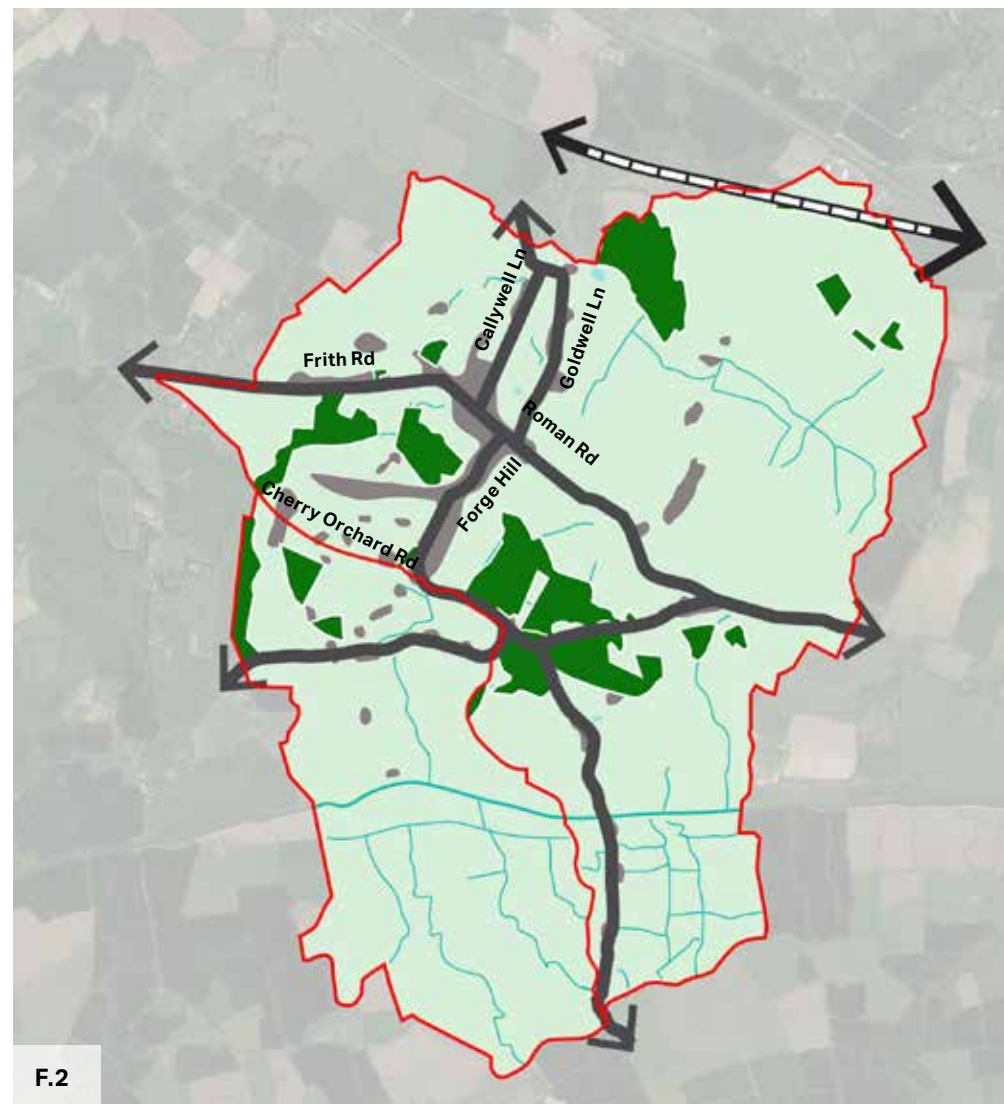- Motorway
- A Road
- B Road
- Secondary road
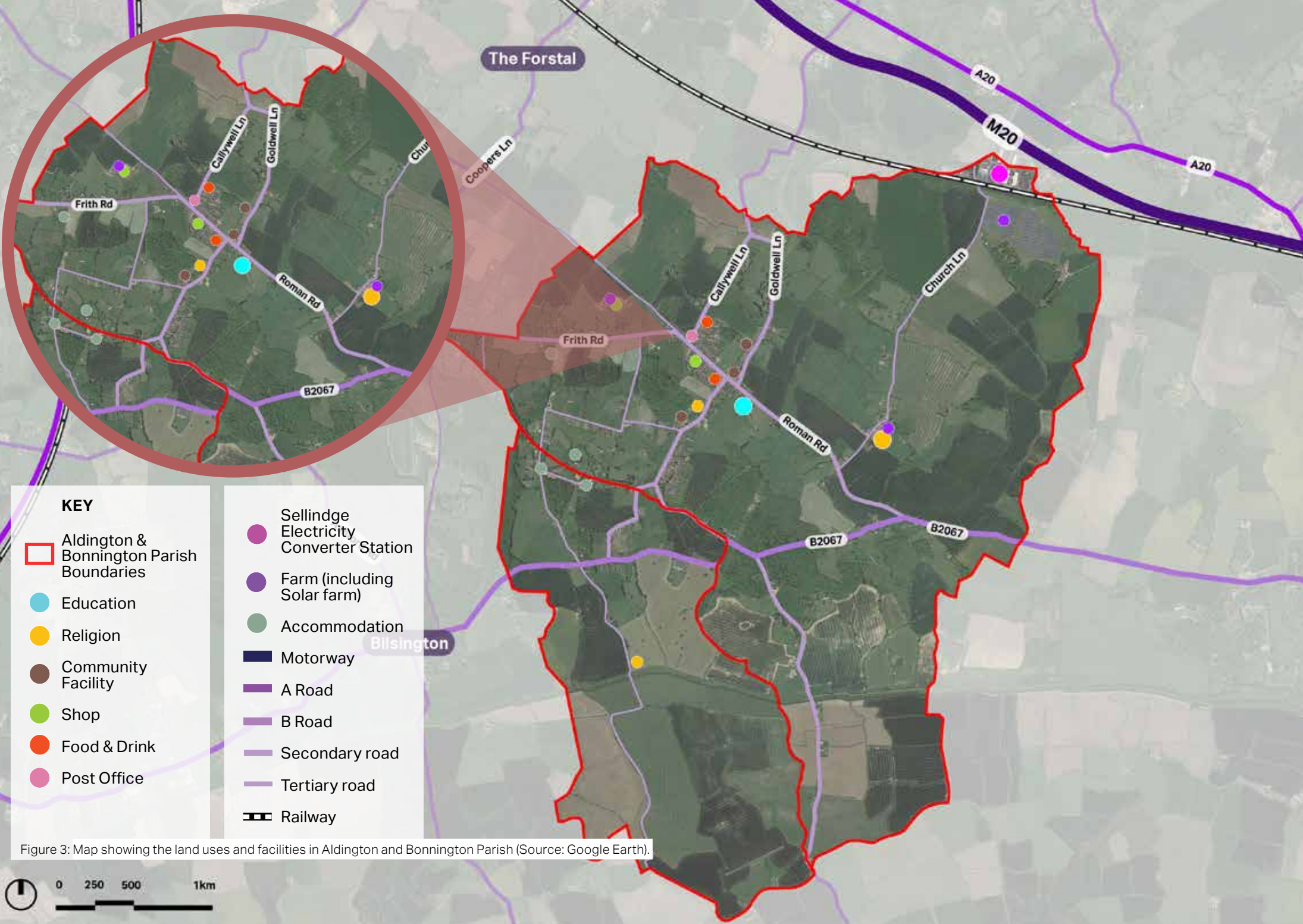- Tertiary road
- Railway

Figure 3: Map showing the land uses and facilities in Aldington and Bonnington Parish (Source: Google Earth).

0   250   500   1km
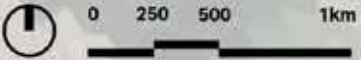
2.3 Heritage

There is plenty of history in the parish. In particular, there are more than 60 buildings of architectural and historic interest, most of them located in Aldington.

There are two conservation areas (designated in 1973); a small one, Aldington Clap Hill, to the western end of Roman Road and a larger one, Aldington Church, along Church Lane.

A distinctive characteristic of many buildings is the use of ragstone on the façades and boundary treatments. There was a ragstone quarry where Reynold's Playing Field now stands, which employed large part of the adult population up to the beginning of WW2.

There are two churches in the parish. St Martin's, grade I listed, dates from the 12th century, and its 16th-century tower, built in the perpendicular style, as well as St Rumwold's church which is located in Bonnington in close proximity to the Royal Military Canal. Both are considered important landmarks in the parish.

In addition, other elements of historic significance are the 2.8 km section of the Royal Military Canal which runs west to east through the southern section of the parish, on Romney Marsh and it is designated as a scheduled monument, as well as Aldington Knoll, the Archbishop's Palace and the old fishponds.

F.5

F.4

F.6

Figure 4: The distinctive ragstone church (St Martin's) is a local landmark in the area.
Figure 5: St Rumwold's church in Bonnington.
Figure 6: Conservation area to the west end of Roman Road.

KEY

Aldington & Bonnington Parish Boundaries

Conservation Area

Scheduled Monument

Listed Building: Grade I

Grade II

Grade II*

Motorway

A Road

B Road

Secondary road

Tertiary road

Railway
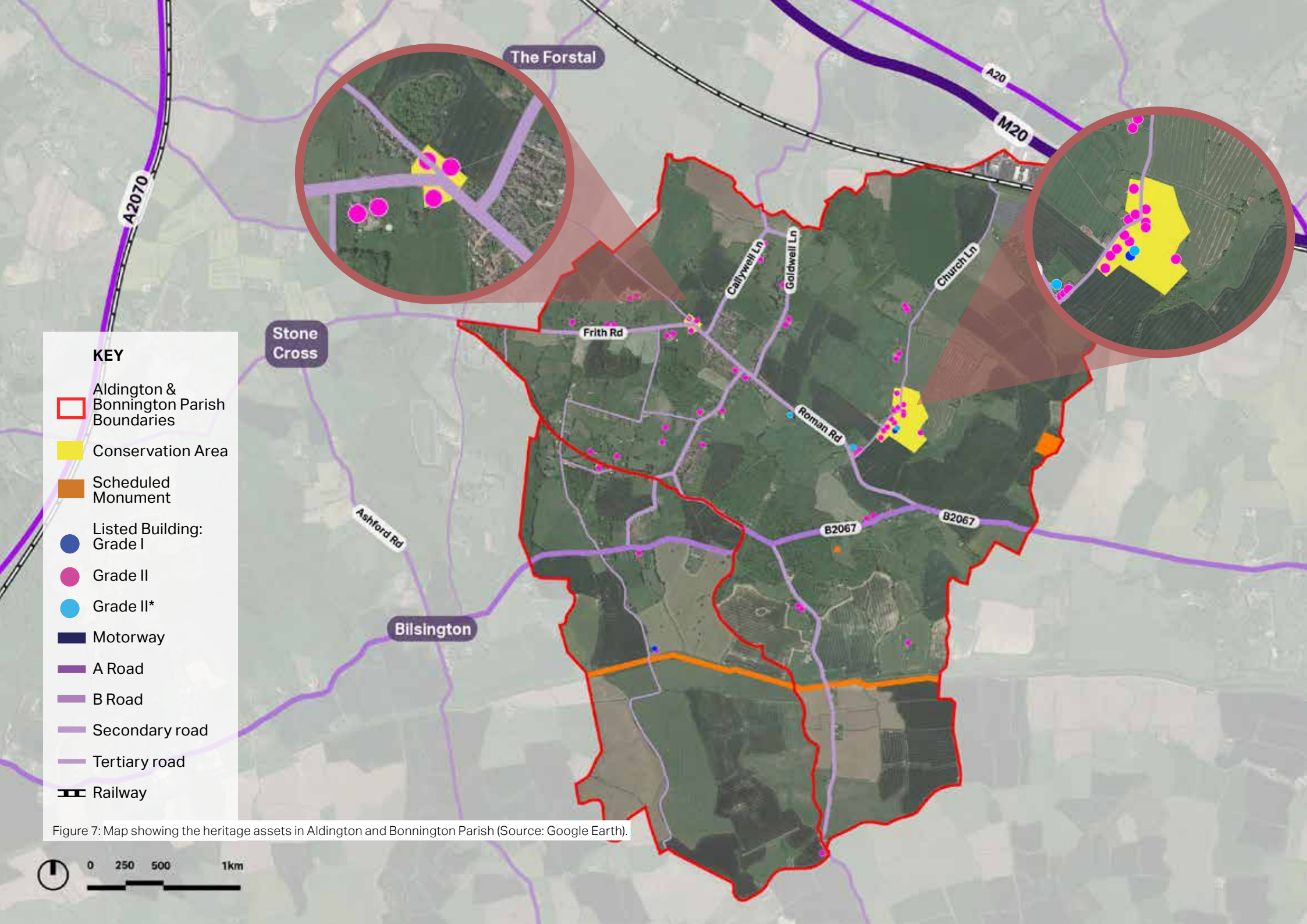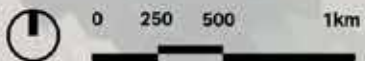
Figure 7: Map showing the heritage assets in Aldington and Bonnington Parish (Source: Google Earth).

0   250   500   1km

2.4 Architectural details & local vernacular

Aldington and Bonnington parish is full of important architectural interest. The local vernacular should be preserved and used as reference for future development in the area.

Most specifically the density and scale of traditional buildings form the local character, as does use of the materials such as the kentish ragstone that was quarried in the very centre of Aldington and thus features in many of the historic buildings. There are heritage assets, mentioned in <u>Section 2.3</u>, that date from the Roman period; St Martin's church and the church of St Rumwold's, not to mention the Royal Military Canal. There are numerous listed buildings and three scheduled monuments reflecting the rich history of the parish.

The next page is a showcase of some examples of architectural details and styles that are found within the parish. The focus is not only on the listed heritage assets, but also on other notable buildings of

architectural and historic interest. These could act as local landmarks in the parish.

In Aldington village, in particular, development has added a wide variety of architectural styles over the last 30 years and therefore, diversity is a key feature in the village.

F.8

Figure 8: Single storey building reflecting some architectural details (white painted brick and chimney) of the listed pub opposite, whilst the rest of the street follows a different style (red brick), Forge Hill. This offers a visual variety in the streetscene as well as defines some buildings as landmarks.
Figure 9: Use of a variety of different colours of tiles on the facade (off-white colour on the ground floor and buffed colour on the first floor) and local ragstone for the walls.

F.9

F.10

F.13

F.11

F.12

Figure 10: The Royal Military Canal, running from east to west, is an important asset for the area offering outstanding views to the surrounding countryside.

Figure 11: The half timbering technique, arranged in squares and triangles infilled with white painted bricks and the roof and window details makes this listed cottage a local landmark as it is easily recognised from the street, Cherry Orchard Lane.

Figure 12: The former school of Bonnington, located next to the village sign is a local landmark and it can be easily seen from the crossroads.

Figure 13: This corner building, located within the conservation area of Aldington village, is a positive example of the weatherboarding technique in the village.

2.5 Green infrastructure & footpaths

Aldington and Bonnington parish has a rich heritage of plant, wildlife and river courses.

There are many areas designated as priority habitat inventories[1] through the whole parish, as well as TPO orders.

In addition, there are several areas of ancient woodland[2] in the parish; Backhouse Wood, Poulton Wood, Backthorn Wood, South Hurst, Stockshill Wood, White's Wood, Knoll Wood, Great Crump Wood, Little Crump Wood, Finch Wood and Handen Wood.

Poulton Wood area is also designated as a local nature reserve[3].

All the above designated areas are connected to each other through a rich footpath network which extends across the whole parish. These footpaths provide opportunities for a walkable parish and easy access to the existing green infrastructure.

F.14

1. It includes the habitats and species which are of principle importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. For more information please visit this link: https://advantageous/dataset/4b6ddab7-6c0f-4407-946e-d6499f19fcde/priority-habitat-inventory-england
2. It is a woodland that has existed continuously since 1600 or before in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. For many species of animal and plant, ancient woodland sites provide the sole habitat and for many others, conditions on these sites are much more suitable than those on other sites. This designation is formally defined on maps by Natural England. For more information please visit this link: https://data.gov.uk/dataset/9461f463-c363-4309-ae77-fdcd7e9df7d3/ancient-woodland-england

3. Local Nature Reserves are designated by local authorities under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Figure 14: River courses can be found mainly to the north-east and south of the parish.
Figure 15: Footpaths, official public rights of way, are found throughout the parish and provide connection with the existing green infrastructure, the street network and village settlements.
F.15

KEY

- Aldington & Bonnington Parish Boundaries
- Local Nature Reserve
- Ancient Woodland
- Priority Habitat Inventory
- TPOs
- Footpaths
- River bodies
- Motorway
- A Road
- B Road
- Secondary road
- Tertiary road
- Railway
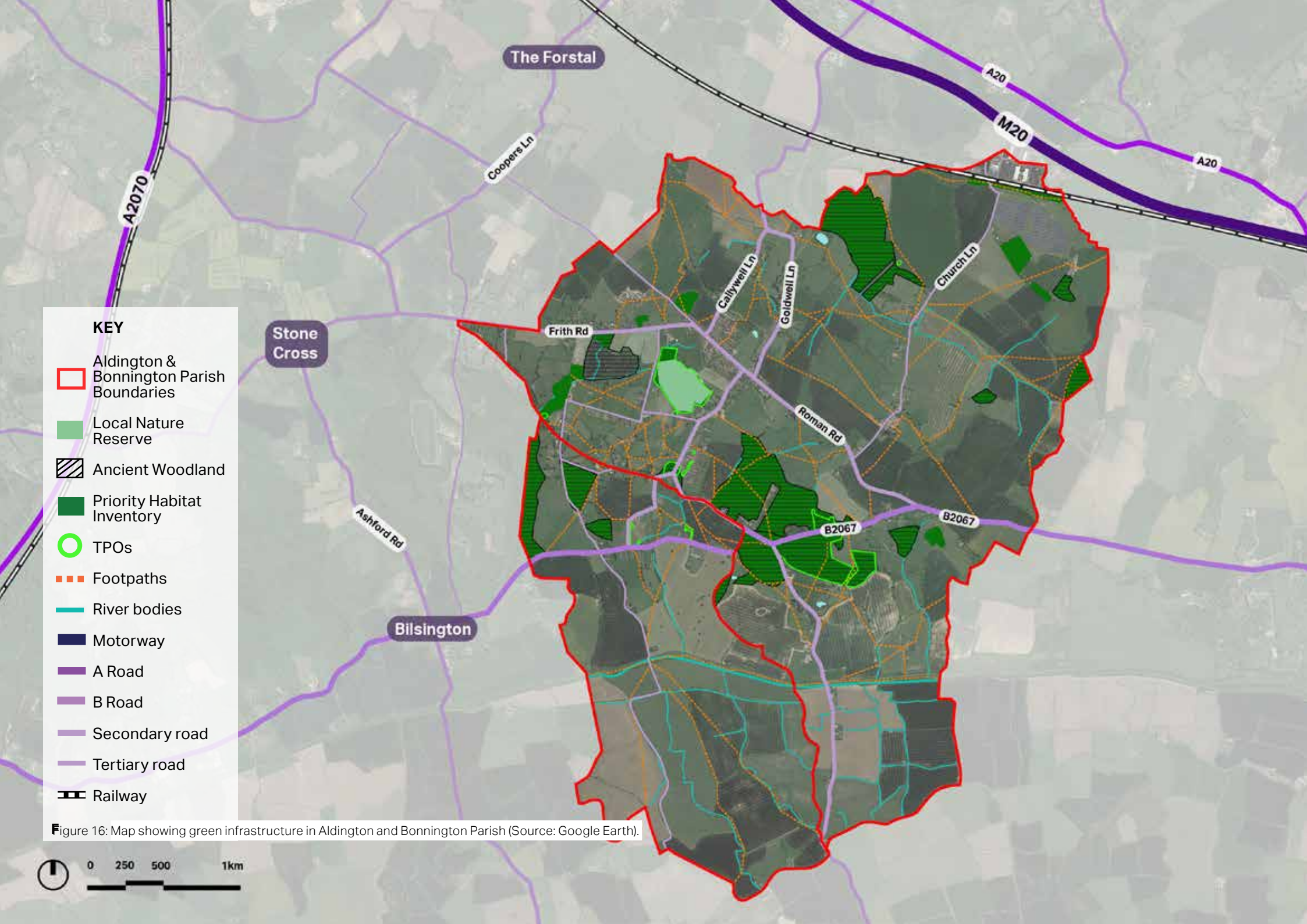
Figure 16: Map showing green infrastructure in Aldington and Bonnington Parish (Source: Google Earth).

0   250   500   1km
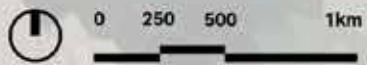
2.6 Other environmental & landscape designations

An extensive area, starting from Roman Road and covering parts of the Romney Marsh, is identified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

In addition, a key characteristic of the Neighbourhood Plan area related to the landscape is the Aldington Ridge which runs north-west to south-east overlooking the Marshes in places and straddling Roman Road. The high ridgeline topography allows for long distance views and, therefore, it is important to be considered and preserved in future development.

The whole area of Romney Marsh, as well as some parts of the northern parish boundary are within flood risk zones (2 & 3).

KEY

- Aldington & Bonnington Parish Boundary
- Flood zone 2
- Flood zone 3
- AONB
- Motorway
- A Road
- B Road
- Secondary road
- Tertiary road
- Railway

Figure 17: Map showing other environmental designations in Aldington and Bonnington Parish (Source: Google Earth).
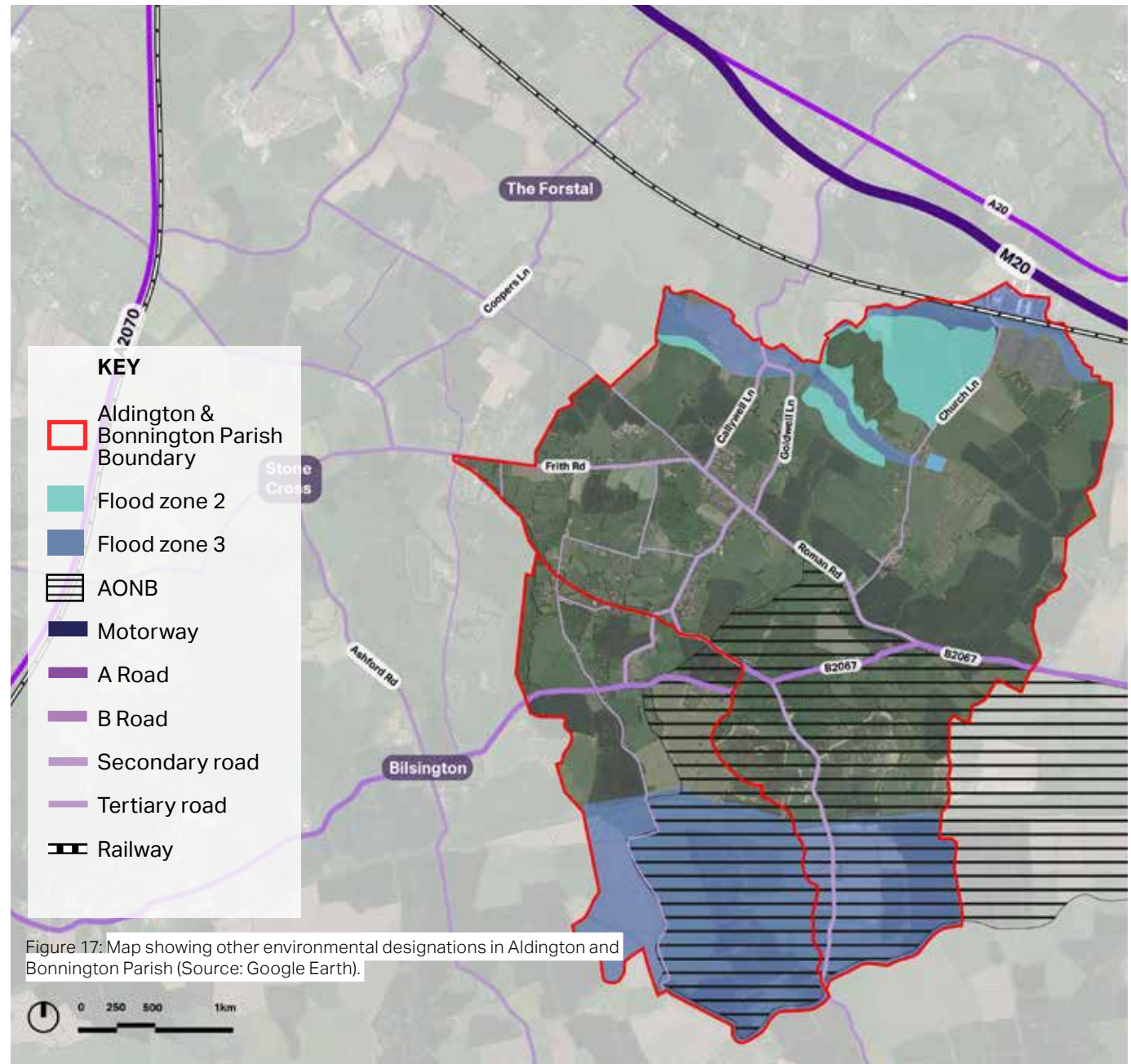
English Nature defines a Landscape Character Areas as a 'distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one place different from another'.

Based on the Landscape Character Assessment[1] carried out by Jacobs for Kent County Council, 10 landscape character areas were identified within Aldington and Bonnington parish, shown below and in F.18:

– East Stour Valley;

– Bonnington Wooded Farmlands;

– Old Romney Shoreline Settlements;

– Aldington Ridgeline;

– Evegate Mixed Farmlands;

– Aldington Ridge;

– Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Farmland;

– Upper Stour Valley;

– Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); and

– Royal Military Marshlands.

1. For more details for each landscape character area please refer to the Landscape Assessment of Kent, October 2004 and Landscape Character SPD for Ashford Borough Council.

KEY

☐ Aldington & Bonnington Parish Boundary

■ Upper Stour Valley

■ East Stour Valley

■ Aldington Ridge

■ Aldington Ridgeline

■ Old Romney Shoreline Settlements

■ Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Farmlands

■ Bonnington Wooded Farmlands

■ Evegate Mixed Farmlands

■ Royal Military Marshlands

▦ AONB

■ Motorway

■ A Road

■ B Road

■ Secondary road

■ Tertiary road

▥ Railway

Figure 18: Map showing other landscape character areas in Aldington and Bonnington Parish (Source: Google Earth).

0   250   500   1km
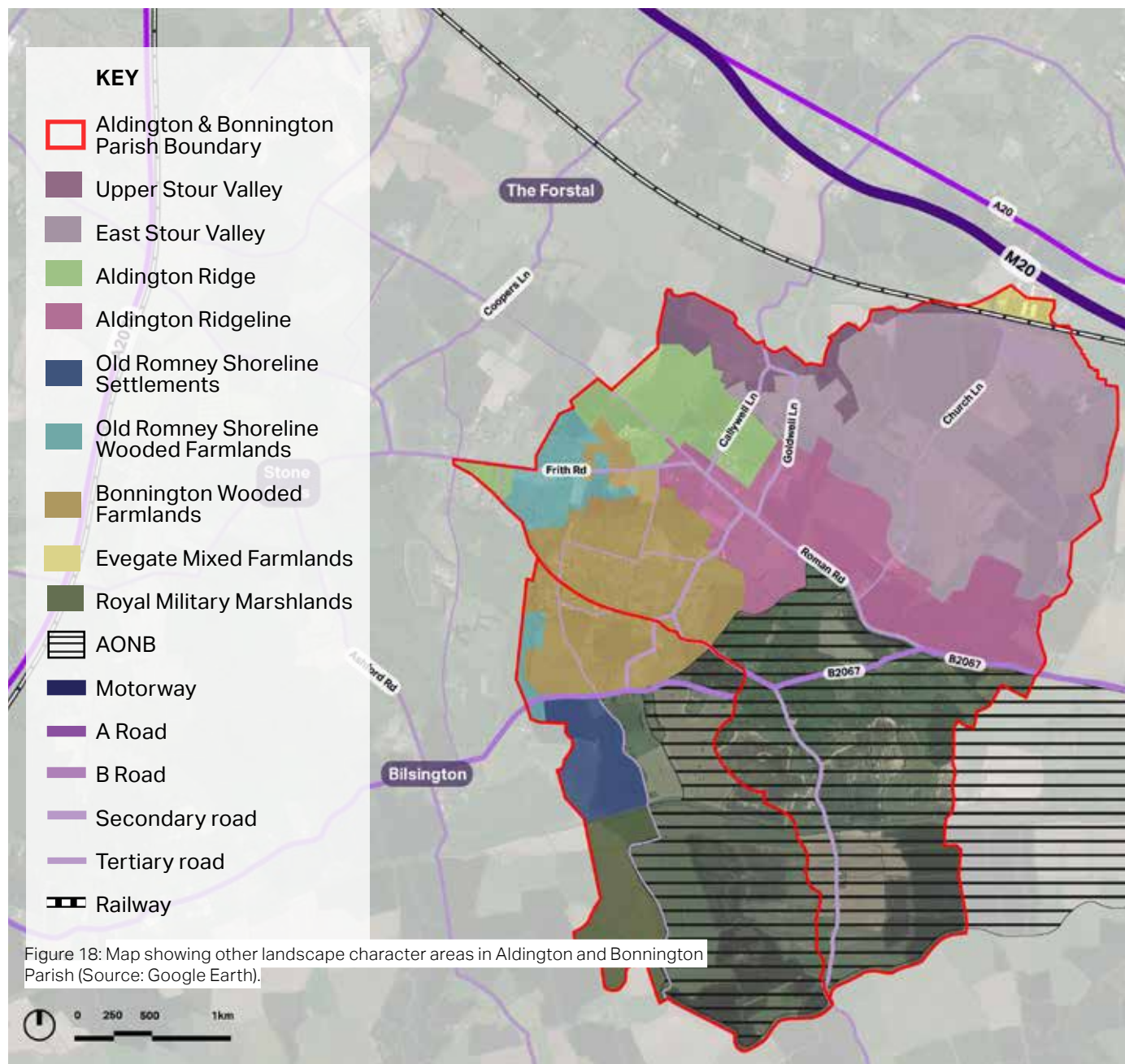
Some characteristics for each landscape
character area are summarised below:

EAST STOUR VALLEY	- Well vegetated East Stour River cuts through the valley with land rising to Bested Hill in the north; - Mosaic like pastoral field pattern; - Mixed and broadleaf woodland blocks; - Mature isolated oak trees within pasture; - Narrow lanes follow the undulations of the landscape, often hedgerow and ditch lined; - Some recent individual housing sporadically located along the lanes; and - Scattered farmsteads set back from the lanes.
BONNINGTON WOODED FARMLANDS	- Undulating landform which forms part of the immediate foreground to the Kent Downs AONB which rises to the east; - Mixed farmland with small fields; - Deciduous and evergreen enclosing woodland blocks; - Native hedgerows with large standard oak trees; - Isolated oaks trees set within pasture; - Strong sense of enclosure; - Equestrian grazing and land use; - Narrow and hedge lined roads; - The non nucleic settlement of Bonnington with traditional houses and stone farm buildings; and - Recent housing development arranged around closes.
OLD ROMNEY SHORELINE SETTLEMENTS	- Undulating landform slopes southwards towards Romney Marsh; - Open views out of the area across the Romney Marsh to the south; - Mixed land use; - Higher wooded ground to the west, which would have been an island prior to reclamation of the surrounding marshes; - Numerous small settlements along the former shoreline; and - Distinctive stone churches are prominent landmark features.

ALDINGTON RIDGELINE	- High ridgeline topography; - North Downs frame the views to the north; - Mixed farmland with enclosed pasture immediately surrounding settled areas; - Loss of historic field pattern where land is intensively farmed; - Small woodland copses, tree belts and native hedgerows; - Very distinctive ragstone church and remains of Archbishops Palace isolated from main settlement of Aldington; - Strong use of ragstone and locally distinctive chequered brick; - Farm building conversions; and - Recent housing developments within Aldington Village, along Roman Road and Forge Hill/New Road Hill.
EVEGATE MIXED FARMLANDS	- Undulating topography; - Intensively farmed landscape with small pockets of pasture; - Comprehensive network of tree cover provided by highway planting, hedgerows and a block of broadleaf ancient woodland; - Ponds and vegetation lined water courses; - Fragmentation caused by major infrastructure routes; - Large electricity sub station; and - Converted oast houses at Evegate Business Park.
ALDINGTON RIDGE	- Large open arable fields along the Aldington Ridge; - Traversed by Bank Road – a Roman Road with high hedges and localised tree cover; and - Extensive views north to Mersham, west and north west to Ashford and the North Downs and south to Dungeness.

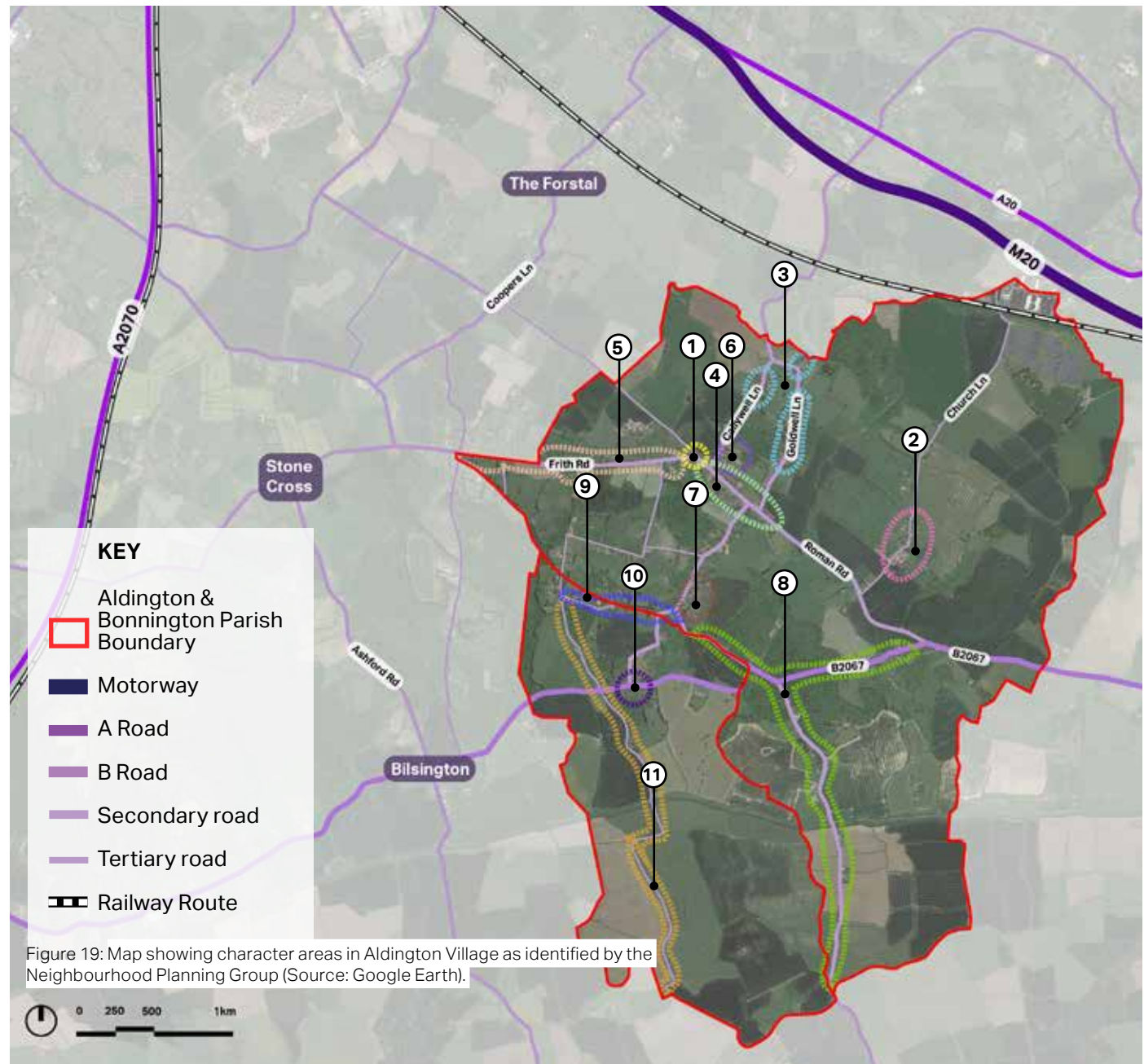|	
OLD ROMNEY SHORELINE WOODED FARMLANDS	- Rolling wooded mixed farmland to the south of Aldington Frith with grazing/ arable and variable field boundaries; - Tilelodge Wood is extensive former hornbeam coppice with oak standards set within a steep valley with streams; - Saxon Shore Way footpath cuts through Tilelodge Wood; and - Some rhododendron invasion.
UPPER STOUR VALLEY	- Large open arable fields along the Aldington Ridge; - Traversed by Bank Road – a Roman Road with high hedges and localised tree cover; and - Extensive views north to Mersham, west and north west to Ashford and the North Downs and south to Dungeness.
ROYAL MILITARY MARSHLANDS	- Flat, low lying marshland which forms part of the immediate foreground to the AONB which rise to the east; - Rising Downs to the east, and higher ground to the north provide enclosure to the marsh; - Large irregularity shaped arable fields divided by a network of reed filled drainage ditches; - Sporadic clumps of scrubby vegetation; - Open and unvegetated Royal Military Canal; - Recent, large scale agricultural buildings at Bridge Farm; - Narrow, unenclosed lane skirts the edge of the marsh to the east; and - Transmission towers.
KENT DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY	- Part of this AONB is situated south of the Aldington Ridgeline and east of the Bonnington Wooded Farmlands.

2.7 Character Areas

The Neighbourhood Planning Group
has identified 11 character areas within
Aldington and Bonnington Neighbourhood
area. These are:

1. Clap Hill Conservation Area;
2. Church Lane Conservation Area;
3. Stone Street Green - hamlet ends of
Calleywell Lane and Goldwell;
4. Aldington village centre (Roman Road and
all roads off it/ top ends of Calleywell and
Goldwell);
5. Frith Road;
6. Wheatfields;
7. Aldington Meadows;
8. Old 'Hurst' - Knoll Hill/ Giggers Green/
Boat Lane;
9. Cherry Orchard Lane, Bonnington;
10. Bonnington Green - hamlet by the Old
Law Oak; and
11. Rural Bonnington - Frogmore Lane.

The next pages will present a brief analysis
of those character areas based on street
patterns, layout and age of buildings,
rooflines, car parking layouts, landscape and
environment.

KEY

▢ Aldington &
Bonnington Parish
Boundary

▬ Motorway

▬ A Road

▬ B Road

▬ Secondary road

▬ Tertiary road

▭▭ Railway Route

Figure 19: Map showing character areas in Aldington Village as identified by the
Neighbourhood Planning Group (Source: Google Earth).

0 250 500 1km

CHARACTER AREA 1: CLAP HILL CONSERVATION AREA	
DESCRIPTIONS AND KEY FEATURES	This character area, located to the western end of Roman Road, was designated as a conservation area in 1973. This area is a former hamlet which formed, along with Aldington Corner hamlet, the area known today as village of Aldington. Key features in the area include the three Grade II listed buildings which reflect the medieval origins of Aldington settlement, the post office which has existed since 1985, as well as the strong use of two locally distinctive materials; the ragstone on boundary walls and the chequered bricks on building façades.
STREET LAYOUT & PUBLIC REALM	This character area includes the junction of Roman Road and Frith Road and it is therefore considered as the entrance to the village from the west. Both roads are linear, rural in character and with an approximate width of 5m. There are no pavements on Frith Road, whilst there is a pavement to the north side of Roman Road which is, however, often used unofficially as on-street car parking space.
PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT & LAYOUT OF BUILDINGS	The buildings follow a linear development pattern along both roads. The building setbacks vary in character, either fronting directly onto the street or having front gardens or narrow green verges in between the building line and the carriageway. This inconsistency offers a visual interest along the streetscape. Another characteristic of this area is the continuity in the building façades, either due to the terraced typology or lack of gaps between buildings. This creates good levels of enclosure and generates short distance views along the streetscape. However, the high ridgeline topography, due to the Aldington Ridgeline landscape, also allows for long distance views from the junction on Frith Road towards the south.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	There is rich vegetation bordering the properties along Frith Road, including hedgerows, trees, green verges and flowers. On Roman Road, on the other hand, apart from the buildings that face directly onto the street, there is a combination of hard and soft landscape including green verges or low ragstone walls with bushes and flowerbeds decorating the front gardens.
HEIGHTS & ROOFLINE	Building heights range between 2 and 2.5 storeys, however, due to the high ridgeline topography, some front gardens are elevated from the main street level, which also adds positively into the architectural interest of the village. The roofline is continuous, due to the type of building grouping mentioned above, and it is often interrupted by chimneys and dormers. There is a variety of roof type ranging between jerkinhead, gabled and hipped roofs,

Figure 20: Character area 1.

CHARACTER AREA 2: CHURCH LANE CONSERVATION AREA	
DESCRIPTIONS AND KEY FEATURES	This character area, located along Church Lane to the eastern side of the parish, was designated as a conservation area in 1973 and it is one of the oldest hamlets in the parish. Key features in the area include the Grade I listed church of St Martin's and its 16th century tower, the Grade II* listed Court Lodge Farmhouse and the remains of the Archbishop's Palace located behind the church. In addition, there are Grade II listed cottages, barns, as well as lychgate and quadrant walls attached to the churchyard. The use of ragstone is quite prevailing in this character area and can be found on boundary walls and building façades. Lastly, the Court Lodge farm, located adjacent to the church, is one of the two remaining working farms in the parish.
STREET LAYOUT & PUBLIC REALM	This character area includes part of the Church Lane, a rural road in character, meandering with approximate width between 3-4m. There are no pavements and the carriageway is bordered with green verges, large trees, hedgerows and vegetation. In terms of car parking, on-plot side and garage parking are the two typologies found in the area.
PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT & LAYOUT OF BUILDINGS	The buildings have a meandering development pattern following the layout of Church Lane. The building setbacks as well as the building rotations vary creating a different view along the streetscape. The building density in this character area is much lower compared to character area 1 and therefore, the gaps between the properties are more substantial offering west and east views to the surrounding open fields. In addition, this character area falls into the Aldington Ridgeline landscape which creates pleasant long distance views along Church Lane towards the North Downs.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	In this character area, which also falls into the East Stour Valley, the natural assets prevail with native hedgerows, tree belts and woodland copses bordering the street and the boundaries of properties. This richness in vegetation can be clearly seen to the south of this character area where the agricultural buildings are located. Moving to the north, some front gardens, of various widths, start to appear. These front gardens are bordered with a combination of soft and hard landscape; low ragstone walls, hedges, bushes and flowers. This inconsistency in the types of boundary treatments offers a visual interest along the streetscape.
HEIGHTS & ROOFLINE	Building heights for the residential buildings range between 2 and 2.5 storeys, whilst some agricultural buildings along with the St Martin's church surpass the 2.5 storeys height. However, rich vegetation set along the street mitigates the visual impact from the agricultural buildings, while helping the church to stand out, as a historic landmark at the same time. The roofline is inconsistent, due to the type of building groupings mentioned above. The prevailing roof type is hipped roofs.

Figure 21: Character area 2.

CHARACTER AREA 3: STONE STREET GREEN	
CHARACTER AREA 5: FRITH ROAD	
CHARACTER AREA 8: OLD 'HURST'	
CHARACTER AREA 9: CHERRY ORCHARD LANE	
CHARACTER AREA 11: RURAL BONNINGTON	
DESCRIPTIONS AND KEY FEATURES	These character areas share similar characteristics among them and include hamlets or isolated farm houses and individual dwellings situated along rural roads that traverse the parish. A key feature for each character area is the landscape within which they lie; Stone Street Green falls into Upper and East Stour Valley, Frith Road within Aldington Ridge, Old Romney Shoreline Wooded Farmland and Bonnington Wooded Farmland, Cherry Orchard Lane within Bonnington Wooded Farmland and Rural Bonnington falls into Old Romney Shoreline Settlements and Royal Military Marshlands. Other key features in those areas are the Grade II listed buildings, the Grade I listed church of St Rumwold's, as well as historic assets including the Bonnington bridge and Gigger's bridge along the Royal Military Canal and Aldington Knoll, a Roman barrow and later beacon. Lastly, the architectural interest of these character areas includes strong use of ragstone on boundary walls and building façades, as well as tiles, timber framing, off-white render and chequered bricks.
STREET LAYOUT & PUBLIC REALM	The rural lanes in these character areas are fairly linear and narrow with occasional meandering layouts. There are no pavements and there is rich vegetation, native hedgerows, tree belts and plantation bordering the streets on both sides. In terms of car parking, on-plot side and garage parking are the two typologies found in those areas.
PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT & LAYOUT OF BUILDINGS	The building lines are fairly inconsistent, due to the rural character of the hamlets and small settlements. The building setbacks vary as well as the buildings rotations. In particular, there are examples of buildings that directly front onto the street, whilst others have well-sized front gardens.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	There is a good combination between soft and hard landscape in the boundaries of the properties, with the former prevailing. Soft landscape includes hedges, plantation and large trees, whilst hard landscape mainly includes low ragstone walls.
HEIGHTS & ROOFLINE	Building heights range between 2 and 2.5 storeys, whilst the roofline is inconsistent, due to the sparse location of the buildings. Chimneys and occasionally dormers interrupt the roofline. There is a variety of roof types ranging between jerkinhead, gabled and hipped roofs.

Figure 22: Character areas 3,5,8,9 and 11.

CHARACTER AREA 4: ALDINGTON VILLAGE CENTRE	
DESCRIPTIONS AND KEY FEATURES	This character area includes the central core of the parish where the main settlement is. There is a good range of local facilities along the main road, Roman Road. A key feature in the area is the fact that the ridge, running north-west to south-east overlooking the Marshes in places, straddles Roman Road. This offers the opportunity for many long distance views over arable farmland to the north and west, as well as some fine vistas to the east towards St Martin's church. Other key features in this character area are the two Grade II listed buildings, as well as the Aldington Village Hall and the Primary School. The use of the ragstone and chequered bricks on building façades and walls is a characteristic technique in this character area too.
STREET LAYOUT & PUBLIC REALM	The street layout in this character area is linear with many cul-de-sac developments on both sides of the road. Most of the housing forming Aldington village was constructed as social housing in about 1965; Longfield, Ragstone Hollow, Quarry Wood, Walnut Ridge and Mount Pleasant, whilst Badgers Close and Saxon Heights are more recent additions. Roman Road, as the main road of the village, is wide enough with green verges and pavements. There are other elements decorating the public realm, for instance signage totems, light columns, street furniture as well as elements closely related to the history of the area, like the war memorial. In terms of car parking, the prevailing typologies are on-plot side and garage parking, while on-street car parking can be found too.
PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT & LAYOUT OF BUILDINGS	Historically most of the homes in the core of the village were smaller homes, terraced or single story in order to protect the long distance views to the surrounding countryside. However, new development also introduced larger homes into the core that were previously found outside of the centre. The buildings follow a linear development pattern along Roman Road, as well as along the cul-de-sac streets. The building setbacks have slight variations giving a sense of inconsistency along the streetscape. The building density in this character area is high compared to other areas in the parish. However, gaps between buildings, the open spaces next to the Village Hall and the Primary School, as well as some recessed open spaces in the corners offer a feeling of openness in the area.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	There is a good combination between soft and hard landscape. A good number of the houses along the main road, as well as Ragstone Hollow and Mount Pleasant, have well-sized front gardens, with low, mostly ragstone, walls and trees, whilst others are bordered with timber fencing, or hedgerows. Within the rest of the cul-de-sacs, there is less boundary treatment, either soft or hard, creating a less apparent separation between private and public space. Lastly, some properties front directly onto the pavement.
HEIGHTS & ROOFLINE	Building heights range between 2 storeys; there is a good number of bungalows that drops the average number of height. The roofline is mostly consistent and becomes inconsistent in places depending on the type of building grouping. The prevailing roof types are gabled and hipped roofs.

Figure 23: Character area 4.

CHARACTER AREA 6: WHEATFIELDS	
DESCRIPTIONS AND KEY FEATURES	This character area, located to the north of Roman Road and to the east of Calleywell Lane, includes a recent development of 41 houses and a 33-unit care home which was completed in 2013. A key feature in the area is that it sits within the Aldington Ridge which offers extensive views north to Mersham, west and north west to Ashford and the North Downs and south to Dungeness. It is apparent that there is a strong use of red brick and weatherboarding, whilst there is no example of the use of locally distinctive materials like ragstone and chequered bricks.
STREET LAYOUT & PUBLIC REALM	This character area includes cul-de-sac streets where buildings are laid out in a general linear pattern following the layout of the street. The public realm includes green verges, some street trees and pavements, as well as a well-sized open green space with mature trees that improves the environment whilst also connecting the properties with the existing adjacent woodland. In terms of car parking, the prevailing typology is on-plot side parking, whilst there are also examples of on-street, on-plot garage parking and parking courts in the area.
PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT & LAYOUT OF BUILDINGS	The buildings follow a general linear development pattern. The building setbacks and rotations are generally consistent in comparison to the older parts of the village, where some inconsistencies are noticed. This creates a less strong connection with the surrounding rural context.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	The front gardens are quite small in size and so vegetation is less than in older parts of the parish. However, the generous green verges, the open green space, as well as the views to the surrounding woodland and countryside improve the environment in the area. There are also examples of hard landscape in this character area.
HEIGHTS & ROOFLINE	Building heights range between 2 and 2.5 storeys, whilst the roofline is fairly continuous, due to the type of building grouping, and it is sometimes interrupted by chimneys. The roof types found in this character area are gabled and hipped roofs.

Figure 24: Character area 6.

CHARACTER AREA 7: ALDINGTON MEADOWS	
DESCRIPTIONS AND KEY FEATURES	This character area, located to the south of Forge Hill and to the east of New Road Hill, includes a recent development of 77 houses which was completed in 2010/11. A key feature in the area is the landscape, Bonnington Wooded Farmlands, which is characterised by narrow and hedge line roads creating a strong sense of enclosure. This creates a green buffer along the road limiting the views to the buildings and therefore, preserving the rural character of the parish. In addition, there is a Grade II listed farmhouse in this character area. There are allotments (9 in number) in this character area, located to the north, offered by the Parish Council, as well as a playground equipment for small children.
STREET LAYOUT & PUBLIC REALM	This character area includes Bill Deedes Way and some cul-de-sac streets. These streets have the character of a private shared lane where the carriageway is shared by all users leading directly to the front gardens. However, in places, along Bill Deedes Way, there are small segments of pavement. In terms of car parking, the prevailing typologies are parking courts, placed behind the building frontages, and on-plot side parking, while there are also examples of on-plot garage parking. There is no on-street car parking in the area which, combined with the limited on-plot car parking and the narrow carriageway, often causes congestion issues.
PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT & LAYOUT OF BUILDINGS	The buildings have a slight meandering development pattern following the layout of the roads. The building setbacks are generally consistent, however, the meandering character and the use of alternating materials on the façades, off-white weatherboards, bricks and tiles break the monotony and offer a positive visual impact.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	The front gardens are similar in size as in character area 6, although vegetation in this case is far richer which hedges, trees, bushes and flowers bordering the boundary lines. This supports the rural character of the area and preserves the level of greenness in the parish.
HEIGHTS & ROOFLINE	Building heights range between 2 and 2.5 storeys, whilst the roofline is fairly continuous, due to the type of building grouping, and it is sometimes interrupted by chimneys. The roof types found in this character area are gabled and hipped roofs.

Figure 25: Character area 7.

CHARACTER AREA 10: BONNINGTON GREEN	
DESCRIPTIONS AND KEY FEATURES	This character area, located to the north of Bonnington parish boundary, lies along the B2067. Key features in the area include a listed building of Grade II, Pinn Farmhouse, located behind the former school house, as well as the village sign and the ancient Law Oak.
STREET LAYOUT & PUBLIC REALM	This character area includes the B2067 road, a linear rural road along which the buildings are laid out in an inconsistent pattern. There are no pavements, hence its rural character. However, the generous; in size; green verge in front of the former school house is equipped with a bench offering opportunities for resting. In terms of car parking, on-plot side parking is the only typology found in the area.
PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT & LAYOUT OF BUILDINGS	The buildings, although set along a linear road, vary in terms of setbacks and building rotations. The building lines are inconsistent and the views to the buildings from the street vary due to occasional elevations from the street level. Buildings have generous gaps between them allowing vegetation to come in and prevail enhancing the rural character of the area.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	Both hard and soft landscape treatments are found in the area. Low ragstone walls combined with bushes, flowers, trees or hedgerows decorate the front gardens and offer a positive visual from the streetscape.
HEIGHTS & ROOFLINE	Building heights range between 2 and 2.5 storeys, however, due to the topography, some front gardens are elevated from the main street level, which also adds positively into the architectural interest of the village. The roofline is inconsistent, due to the sparse location of the buildings interrupted by chimneys. Dormers are also found decorating the roofline of the former school house. There is a variety of roof types ranging between jerkinhead, gabled and hipped roofs.

Figure 26: Character area 10.

National and local guidance

03

3. National and local guidance

3.1 National Design Guide

The National Design Guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It introduces 10 characteristics and 29 related principles that are common to well-designed places.

3.2 Building for a Healthy Life

Building for a Healthy Life (BHL) is the new (2020) name for Building for Life, the government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The new name reflects the crucial role that the built environment has in promoting wellbeing.
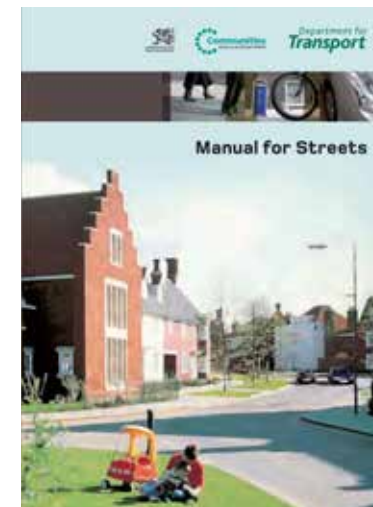
The BHL toolkit sets out 12 questions to help guide discussions on planning applications and to help local planning authorities to assess the quality of proposed (and completed) developments, but can also provide useful prompts and questions for planning applicants to consider during the different stages of the design process.

3.3 Manual for Streets

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

3.4 Landscape Assessment of Kent, Landscape Character SPD & Ashford Landscape Character Assessment

All three documents provide information about the landscape character of Kent County and Ashford Borough within which lies Aldington and Bonnington parish.

The characteristics and sensitivities of each landscape character area are important to guide future development in terms of preservation and conservation.

The Landscape Assessment of Kent
October 2004

Local Development Framework
Landscape Character SPD

Adopted April 2011   Ashford

Ashford Landscape Character Assessment

June 2009   JACOBS   Ashford

Design guidance and codes

04

4.   Design guidance and codes

This chapter introduces design guidelines and codes for future development that consider the local character and can enhance local distinctiveness.

4.1 General principles

The guidelines developed in the document focus on residential environments. However, new housing development should not be viewed in isolation. Considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context, considering not only the immediate neighbouring buildings but also the townscape and landscape of the wider locality.

The local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and natural environment should all help to determine the

character and identity of a development. It is important with any proposal that full account is taken of the local context and that the new design embodies the 'sense of place' and also meets the aspirations of people already living in that area.

As a first step, there are a number of design principles that should be present in any proposal. In particular, new development should:

- **Respect the existing settlement pattern** in order to preserve the character.

- **Integrate** with existing paths, streets, circulation networks.

- Reinforce or enhance the **established character** of streets, greens and other spaces.

- Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of **physical form, architecture and land use**.

- Retain and **incorporate important existing features** into the development.

- **Respect surrounding buildings** in terms of scale, height, form and massing.

- Adopt **contextually appropriate** materials and details.

- Incorporate necessary **services and drainage infrastructure** without causing unacceptable harm to retained features.

- Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are **well related to each other.**

- Aim for i**nnovative design and eco-friendly buildings** while respecting the architectural heritage and tradition of the area.

4.2 Vision for Aldington and Bonnington

The vision for Aldington and Bonnington parish, as developed by the Neighbourhood Planning Group, is stated below:

The rural parish of Aldington and Bonnington will, in **2035, be a better version of the place it is today**. The **distinctive, ridgeline landscape, ancient woodlands and open, rural farming character** will still yield **dramatic views, nature and dark skies** will be protected, and the area made **safely accessible for all** to enjoy. Any development live happily for generations in a **thriving, healthy, active and connected community.** We will have built with care, made a feature of our **heritage** and embraced more **sustainable ways of living**, along will prioritise homes for all ages that are **affordable on local wages**, and people will with modern technology to facilitate local enterprise. We will continue to be proud to call this parish our **home**.

The vision will be part of the baseline around which the design guidance and codes will be developed in the next pages.

4.3 General principles for Aldington and Bonnington

This section provides guidance on the design of future development, setting out the expectations that applicants for planning permission in this very distinctive and sensitive Neighbourhood Plan Area will be expected to follow.

The guidelines developed in this part focus on residential environments. However, new housing development should not be viewed in isolation. Considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context, considering not only the immediate neighbouring buildings, but also the villagescape and landscape of the wider locality.

The local pattern of streets and spaces, building traditions, materials and the natural environment should all help to determine the character and identity of a development, recognising that new building technologies are capable of delivering acceptable built forms and may sometimes be more efficient. It is important with any proposal that full account is taken of the local context and that the new design embodies the 'sense of place' and also meets the aspirations of people already living in that area.

There are a set of general design principles that are specific to Aldington and Bonnington. These are based on the analysis of village character presented in Chapter 2, on discussions with members of the neighbourhood plan steering group on the village walkabout, as well as on the vision for the area as stated in the previous page.

These guidelines and codes are organised in themes:

1. STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES & BEST DESIGN PRACTICE

3. PEDESTRIAN, CYCLE CONNECTIVITY & PARKING

2. BUILT FORM

4. ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY EFFICIENCY

1. STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES & BEST DESIGN PRACTICE

Consider the context

Provide meaningful connections to enhance walkability

Enable wayfinding

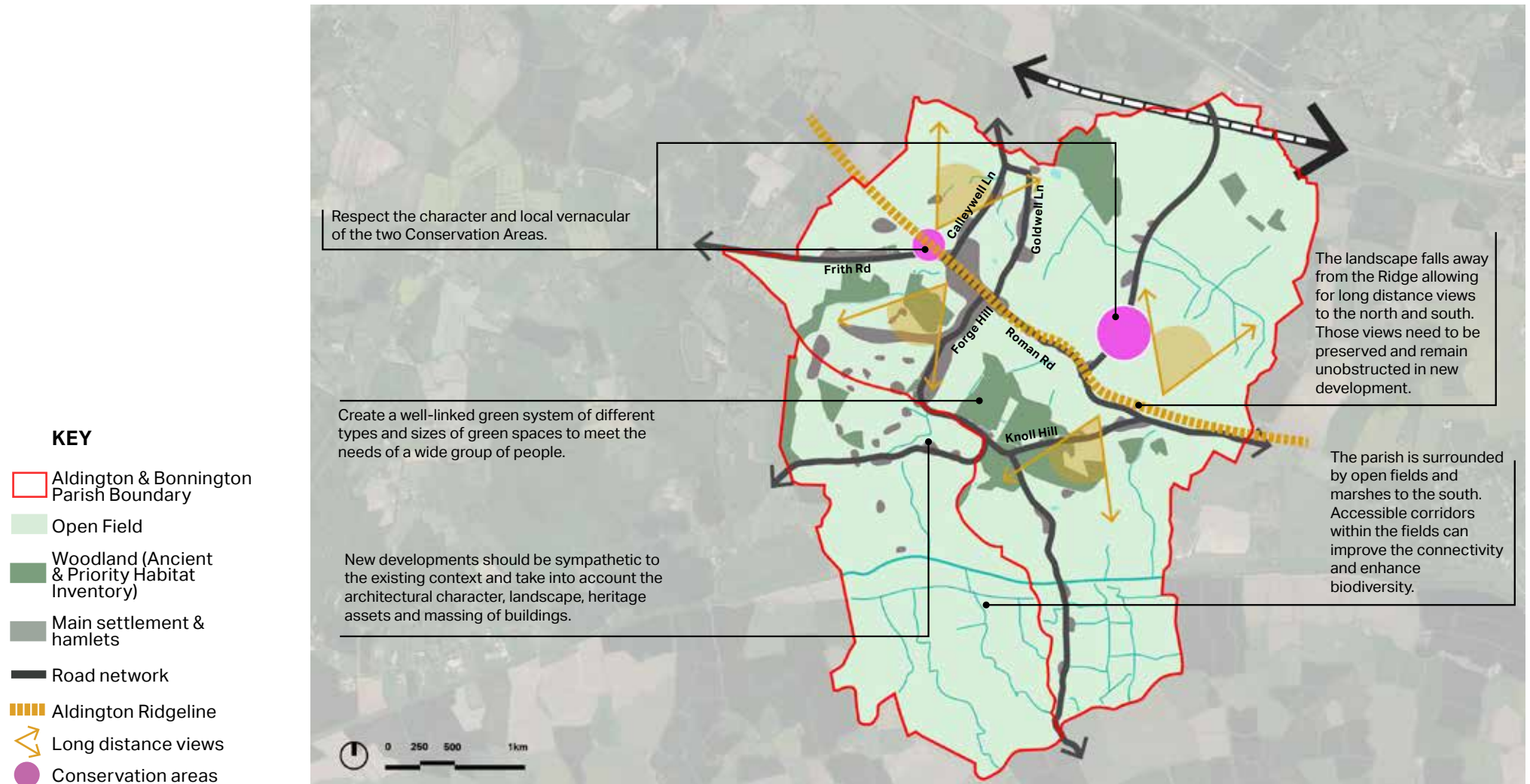
Retain and improve the green network

Strategic principles & best design practice

Consider the context

Aldington and Bonnington parish has a rural farming character and a rich architectural and archaeological history. These qualities need to be preserved and enhanced in the future in order to retain its attributes as well as become a better version of the place it is today. Some guidelines for future development are:

– New development must demonstrate an understanding of the landscape sensitivities and designations of the area, presented in chapter 2. Ancient woodlands, flood risk zones, local nature reserves, AONB and priority habitats, should all be protected and respected in future development;

– New development must demonstrate an understanding of the landscape character areas within the Neighbourhood Plan area and propose design that fits nicely into the existing context. More specifically, Aldington Ridge is a distinctive characteristic

in the area significantly affecting the topography and allowing for views to the north and south across the marshes. Therefore, any new development within the historic core of Aldington village, along Roman Road, needs to be sensitive in terms of massing to allow for long distance views along the ridgeline;

– New development should respect and retain the existing green assets of any form; trees, green spaces, woodlands, hedges, hedgerows, to preserve the rural character of the parish;

– New development should prioritise creating a well-connected green system and promote alternative ways of transportation. There is an abundance of existing green assets and public rights of way in Aldington and Bonnington villages, presented in Section 2.5, that could provide pleasant walking routes and improve connectivity and therefore, walking and cycling;

– New development should respect the historic character of Aldington and the listed buildings in both Aldington

and Bonnington villages. Heritage designations and architectural details, presented in Section 2.3, as well as local materials and techniques, presented later in the report, should be used as references for new development. Any new design should be a good fit to its surroundings in order to preserve the unique characteristics that are found in the parishes. This, however, does not rule out contemporary design. High quality contemporary buildings which, in time, will be recognised as heritage assets are encouraged. This approach is particularly encouraged for publicly accessible and community buildings; and

– The existing typologies should be reflected in the new development. In particular, there is a variety of building typologies in the parish; terraced housing, cottages, farmhouses, semi-detached and bungalows. It is important that this mixture of typologies is retained and promoted in new development in order to create variety and interest in the streetscape.

Strategic principles & best design practice

KEY

- ▭ Aldington & Bonnington Parish Boundary
- ▪ Open Field
- ▪ Woodland (Ancient & Priority Habitat Inventory)
- ▪ Main settlement & hamlets
- ▬ Road network
- ▦ Aldington Ridgeline
- ⌄ Long distance views
- ● Conservation areas

Respect the character and local vernacular of the two Conservation Areas.

Create a well-linked green system of different types and sizes of green spaces to meet the needs of a wide group of people.

New developments should be sympathetic to the existing context and take into account the architectural character, landscape, heritage assets and massing of buildings.

The landscape falls away from the Ridge allowing for long distance views to the north and south. Those views need to be preserved and remain unobstructed in new development.

The parish is surrounded by open fields and marshes to the south. Accessible corridors within the fields can improve the connectivity and enhance biodiversity.

Calleywell Ln
Goldwell Ln
Frith Rd
Forge Hill
Roman Rd
Knoll Hill

0 250 500 1km

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Figure 27: New development should gain a good understanding of the existing structure of the parish, the important assets in the area and aim to preserve and enhance them.

Strategic principles & best design practice

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Figure 28: Site adjacent to Calleywell Lane offers unobstructed long distance views to the surrounding woodland and open fields.

Figure 29: Existing woodland, in the background, located in close proximity to a recent development accessed via footpath.

Figure 30: The conservation areas within the parish are a showcase of the architectural details that need to be preserved and used as reference in new development in the village.

Figure 31: Gaps between buildings located along the ridgeline allow for extensive views to the surrounding countryside.

Strategic principles & best design practice

**Provide meaningful connections to enhance walkability**

Streets should be connected with each other and walking and cycling routes are expected to feature. Good practice favours a connected street layout that makes it easier to travel by foot, cycle, and public transport, as well as private car. A more connected pattern creates a 'walkable neighbourhood'.

Aldington and Bonnington villages consist of linear interconnected street networks, as well as some cul-de-sac layouts where new developments have been added. There is a good network of existing footpaths, although walkability and safety in the area needs to be improved. Some guidelines related to the street network are:

– New development should prioritise pedestrian movement to reduce car dependence and therefore traffic issues. Disabled access needs to be improved by implementing measures like dropped kerbs and ramps, where appropriate;

– New development should provide direct and attractive footpaths between neighbouring streets and local facilities. Streets must be designed to prioritise the needs of pedestrians. Establishing a robust pedestrian network is key in achieving good levels of connectivity among any part of Aldington and Bonnington villages;

– New development should propose routes laid out in a permeable pattern, allowing for multiple connections and choice of routes, particularly on foot. Any cul-de-sacs should be relatively short and provide onward pedestrian links, subject to community safety considerations; and

– New development should propose short and walkable distances that are usually defined to be within a 10 minute walk or a five mile trip by bike. If the design proposal calls for a new street or cycle/pedestrian link, it must connect destinations and origins.
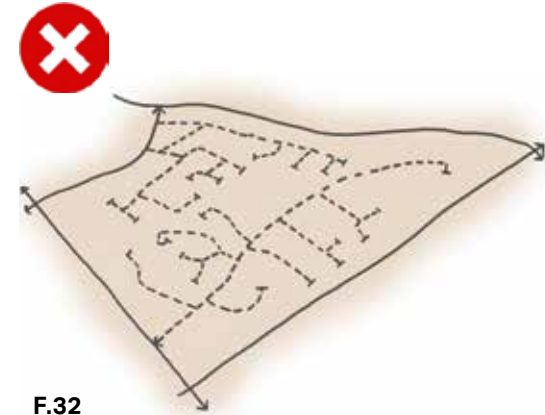

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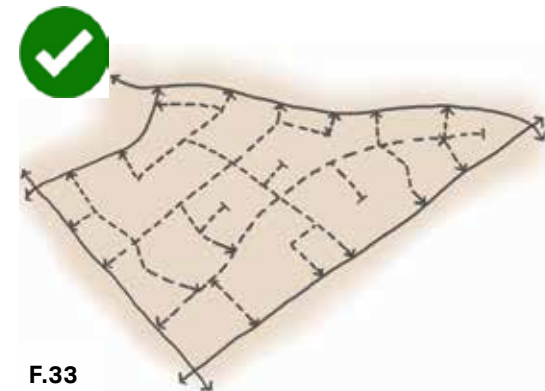
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Figure 32: A layout dominated by cul-de-sacs encourages reliance on the car for even local journeys.

Figure 33: A connected layout, with some cul-de-sacs, balances sustainability and security aims in a walkable neighbourhood.

Strategic principles & best design practice

Transform Aldington and Bonnington into a walkable place where people feel safe to walk, cycle or ride. Enhance footpaths and cycle links to promote sustainable means of transportation and an active lifestyle, providing healthy mobility choices.
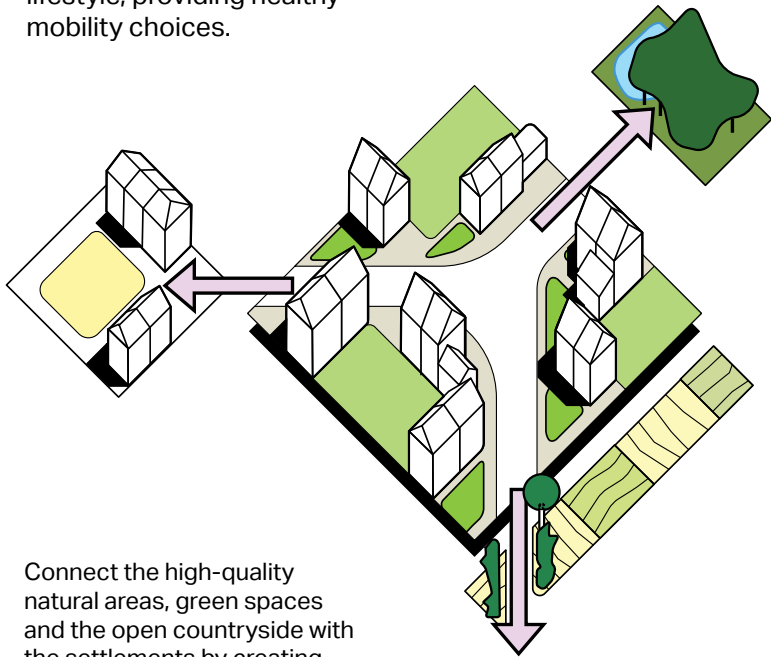
Connect the high-quality natural areas, green spaces and the open countryside with the settlements by creating natural corridors for residents to enjoy.

KEY

Aldington & Bonnington Parish Boundaries

Local Nature Reserve

Ancient Woodland

Priority Habitat Inventory

TPOs

Footpaths

M-Road

A-Road

Secondary road

Railway Route

F.34

One key objective for Aldington village is the upgrade of the existing footpath to better connect the village with St Martin's church and encourage walking and cycling.

There is a good network of public rights of way that provide connections with the main core of Aldington village as well as with existing green and blue infrastructure.
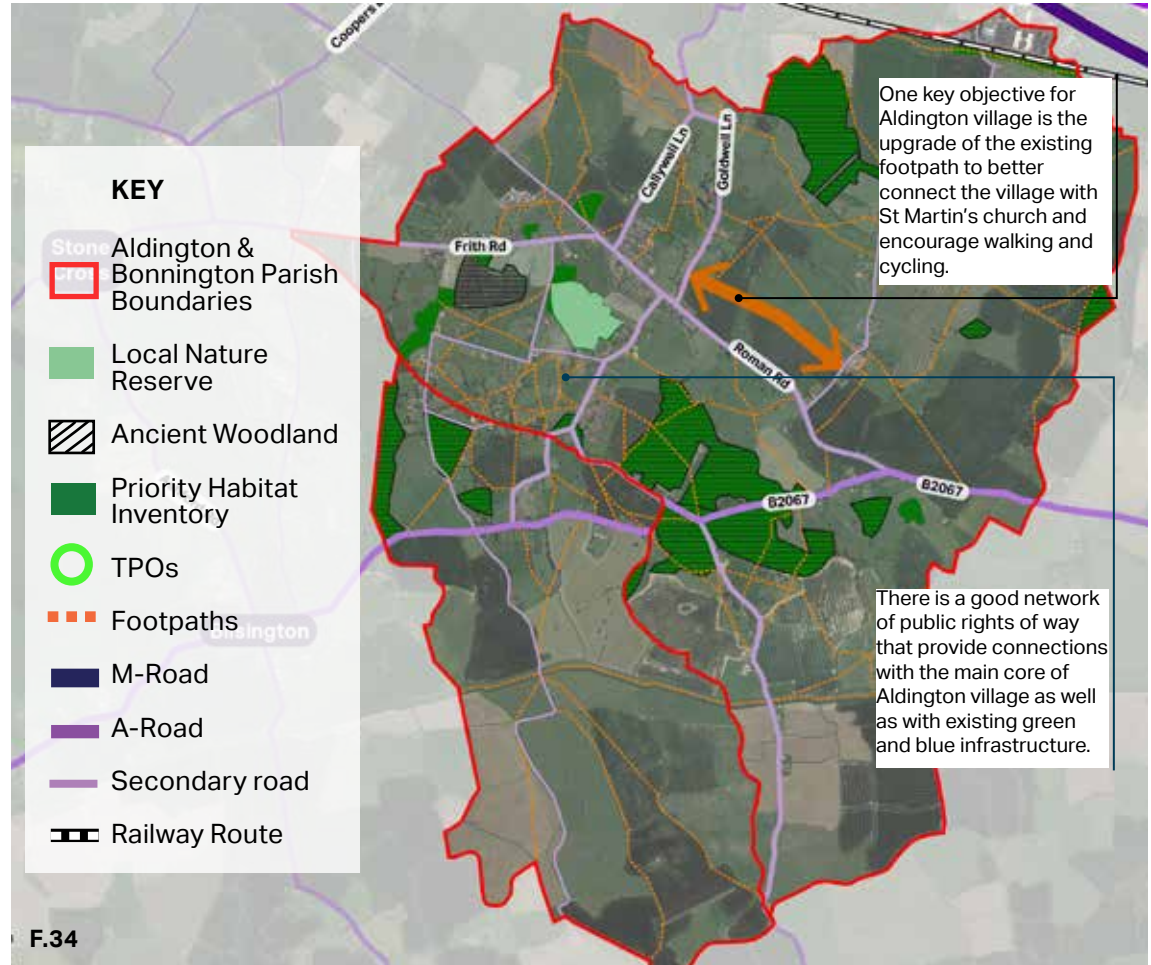
Figure 34: There is already an abundance of green spaces of various scales and types within the parish. New development should take advantage of the existing green assets and create a well-connected network of cycle lanes, footpaths and permeable streets that will encourage people walking and cycling, alleviating traffic along busy roads and bringing people closer to nature.

Strategic principles & best design practice

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Figure 35: Pavements, green verges and physical boundary treatments (trees, bushes hedges, flowers) create a soft property edge and enhance the natural character of the area encouraging people to walk.

Figure 36: There is a good network of footpaths in the area connecting the surrounding properties to the main road and existing facilities.

Figure 37: Properties with green and blue assets are points of attraction encouraging people to visit them, Cavalry Cabs.

Figure 38: Recent development that is well connected with the existing network and local facilities via footpaths encouraging walking over driving, Wheatfields.

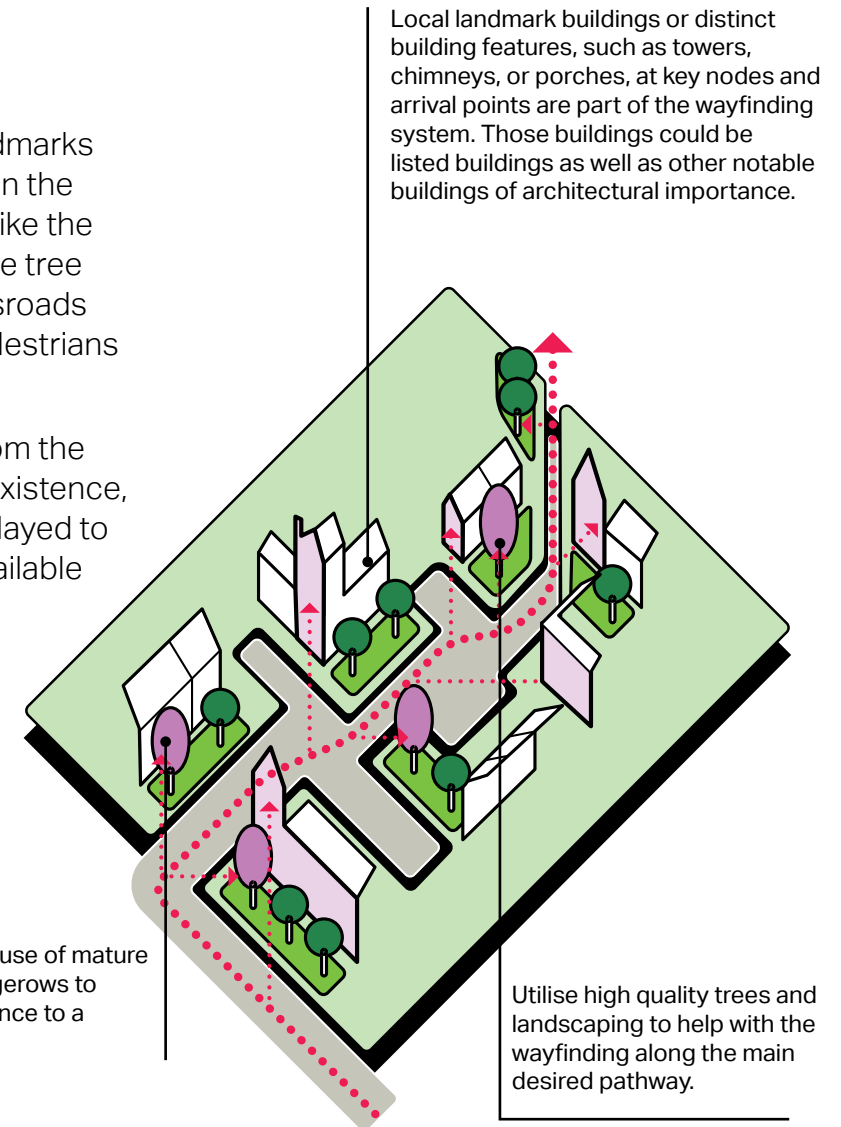# Strategic principles & best design practice

Enable wayfinding

Aldington and Bonnington villages do not need an extensive signage and wayfinding system since people can easily find their way around the area.

However, there is a need for some signage to indicate vehicular speed, footpaths or that multiple users, pedestrians, cyclists, horses or tractors, could be in the lane. This will better inform people of the available car-free routes as well as encourage a more courteous driving. Some guidelines for signage in new development are:

– New signage design should be easy to read. Elements likes languages, fonts, text sizes, colours and symbols should be clear and concise, and avoid confusion;

– Signage elements and techniques should be appropriate to the rural character of the area and be a nice fit to the existing architectural style and details;

– Green elements like trees can be placed along main roads, like Roman Road, to denote their role as the main access points;

– Buildings located at corners or crossroads could also act as landmarks and therefore enable wayfinding in the area. In addition, other elements like the village sign, public art or a sizeable tree can be placed in corners or crossroads to be easily visible by drivers, pedestrians and cyclists; and

– In the case of footpaths, apart from the use of signage to highlight their existence, location maps could also be displayed to provide information about the available car-free routes within the parish.

Local landmark buildings or distinct building features, such as towers, chimneys, or porches, at key nodes and arrival points are part of the wayfinding system. Those buildings could be listed buildings as well as other notable buildings of architectural importance.

Make the best use of mature trees and hedgerows to mark the entrance to a development.

Utilise high quality trees and landscaping to help with the wayfinding along the main desired pathway.

Strategic principles & best design practice

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Figure 39: Existing footpath that connects an open field adjacent to Calleywell Lane to the Roman Road.

Figure 40: Signage to indicate footpaths in a recent development in Aldington, Wheatfields.

Figure 41: Any element used for wayfinding purpose should respect the existing character of the village. Any proposal should be composed by local materials, aim to highlight key assets in the area (Nature sign design made from Forest Stewardship Council United Kingdom).

Figure 42: Any element used for wayfinding purpose should provide information about the green assets or the type of species that can be found in the area,Meadow garden Pennsylvania.

Strategic principles & best design practice

Retain and improve the green network

There are many green and blue assets within the parish like rich vegetation, open fields, marshes and woodlands that all together contribute to its rural character. It is important that new development preserves and improves the green network enhancing biodiversity. Some guidelines for new development should:

– Incorporate all the existing green assets into design and avoid unnecessary loss of flora. For example, the location of existing trees or woodlands can offer opportunities for proposals for open green spaces in the new development. Open green spaces not only do improve the green network but they also encourage civic pride and the sense of community hosting a diverse range of activities;

– Give emphasis to the maintenance and improvement of existing hedgerows and the planting of the new ones. Front and rear gardens should have soft boundary treatments to enhance the rural character as well as contribute to the green network;

– Propose new footpaths along existing hedgerows to promote a soft rural landscape. Those footpaths would act as wildlife corridors connecting to existing footpaths and creating an environment for native species and plants;

– Make sure that development adjoining public open spaces and important gaps either faces onto them to improve natural surveillance or includes a soft landscaped edge; and

– Propose new and existing landscapes and open spaces to be located within walking distance from their intended users. If possible, these could be linked via footpaths to form connected green networks.

Back gardens or buffers to the front, with sufficient permeable surfaces, can provide planting for local species of trees and shrubs.

Local green spaces can be a key element in guaranteeing connectivity of wildlife corridors. They should be well connected to the footpaths in the area.

Water bodies of any form (ponds, streams etc.) should be safeguarded in new development, integrated into design and connected to the footpaths in the area.

Agricultural fields can provide essential hedgerows and trees and contribute to the resilience of green networks. Those elements need to be preserved in future development.

AECOM

Strategic principles & best design practice

F.43

F.46

F.44

F.45

Figure 43: Open green space that hosts mature trees located to the centre of the development and overlooked by properties, Wheatfields.

Figure 44: Footpaths should be bordered with soft landscape to encourage walking and preserve the rural character of the village.

Figure 45: Open green spaces equipped with facilities encourage social gatherings reinforcing the sense of community in the village.

Figure 46: Front gardens with soft boundary treatments contribute to the green network whilst offering pleasant views along the streetscape.

2. BUILT FORM

Patterns of growth and layout of buildings

Extensions and infill development

Redevelopment and conversion of dwellings

Building lines and boundary treatment

Planting and vegetation

Dark skies and street lighting

Views and vistas

Materials

Built form

Patterns of growth and layout of buildings within the rural setting

Aldington and Bonnington villages have a strong rural character which needs to be preserved in future development. Any design needs to be sensitive to the surroundings and therefore, any proposal with urban/suburban character shall be avoided. Some guidelines to preserve this landscape and setting are:

1. Green infrastructure should be protected and enhanced where appropriate;
2. Front gardens, where possible, should be delineated with soft landscape elements and vegetation. Panel fencing should be avoided;
3. Green gaps between properties should be preserved, where possible, whilst tall masonry walls should be avoided;
4. Good sized back gardens with views to the countryside;
5. Variety in building lines should be preserved. Building setbacks should be irregular to enhance the rural character of the village;
6. Building heights should be around 2 storeys to be a good fit in the surroundings; and
7. Appropriate signage indicating speed limits should be included to encourage courteous driving.
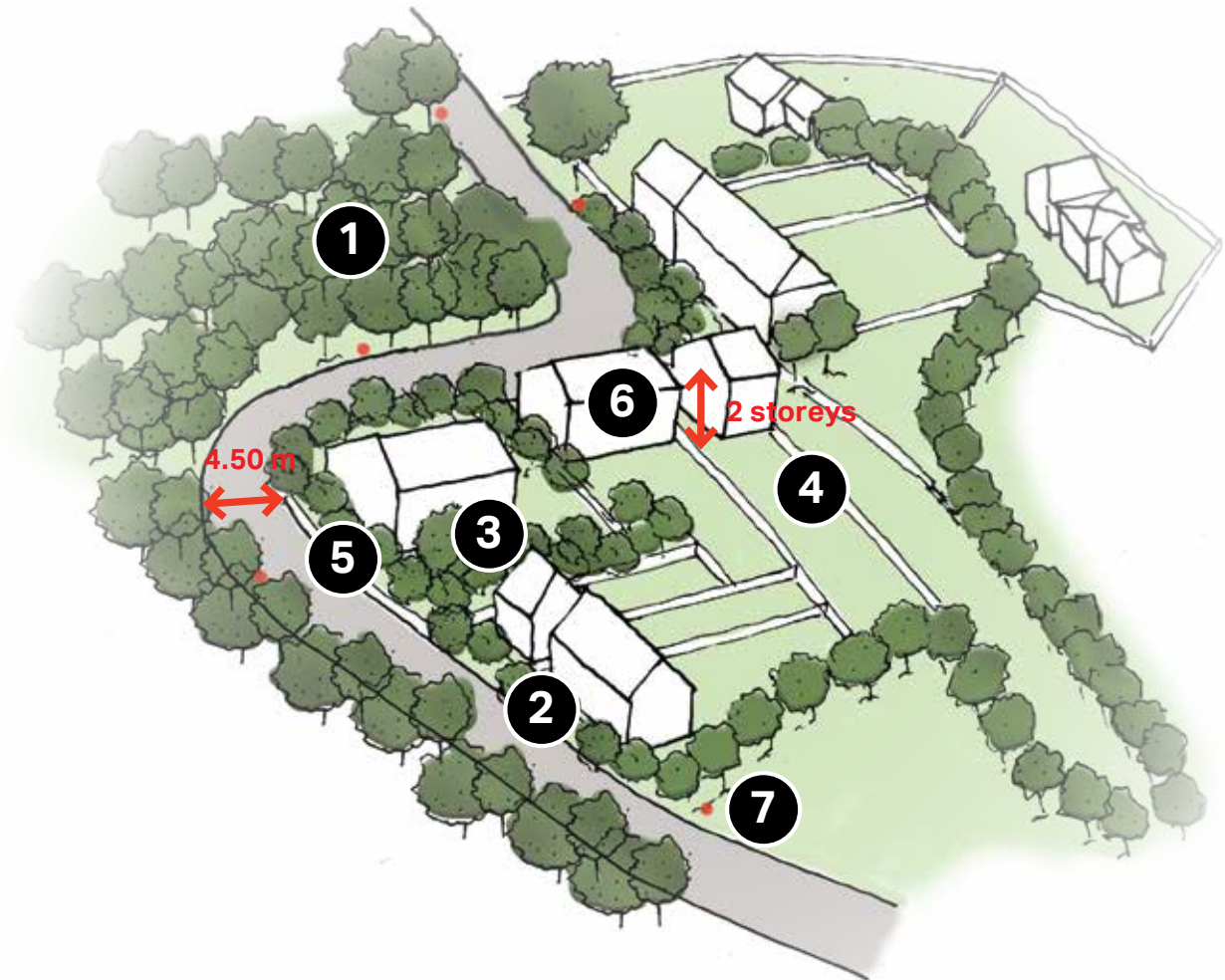
F.47

Figure 47: Illustrative plan for a rural edge development highlighting design elements, related to the pattern and layout of buildings.

Built form

F.48

F.51

F.49

F.50

Figure 48: Well-sized rear gardens bordered with rich vegetation improve the natural environment, whilst also offering extensive views the countryside.

Figure 49: Front gardens with rich vegetation create a pleasant visual impact for the street scene whilst improving the natural environment.

Figure 50: Trees and vegetation between buildings reinforce the rural character of the area.

Figure 51: Lack of pavements along the rural lanes is a distinct characteristic of a rural settlement.

Built form

Building modifications and extensions

There are some good examples of building extensions and modifications within the parish that respect the existing properties, both in terms of scale and materials. Extensions to dwellings can have a significant impact not only on the character and appearance of the building, but also on the street scene within which it sits.

The Planning Portal[1] contains more detailed information on building modifications and extensions, setting out what is usually permitted without planning permission (permitted development) as well as what requires planning permission. Some general principles of building modifications and extensions can be found below and are also illustrated in the form of diagrams:

– Extensions must be appropriate to the scale, massing and design of the main building, and should complement both the streetscape and the rural setting;

– Alterations and extensions of historic buildings within a conservation area should preserve and where possible enhance the character of the two conservation areas;

– Extensions are more likely to be successful if they do not exceed the height of the original or adjacent buildings. Two-storey extensions, where appropriate, should be constructed with a pitch sympathetic to that of the existing roof;

– The design, materials and architectural detailing of extensions should be high-quality and respond to the host building and the local character of the Neighbourhood Plan area, as shown in F.52; and

– The impact on the space around the building should avoid overlooking, overshadowing, or overbearing.

[1] Planning Portal. https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200234/home_improvement_projects

Figure 52: A positive local example of an extension that is sensitive to the architectural details of the existing building.
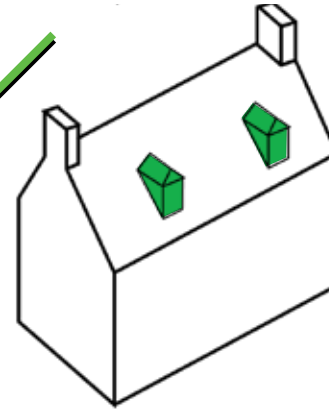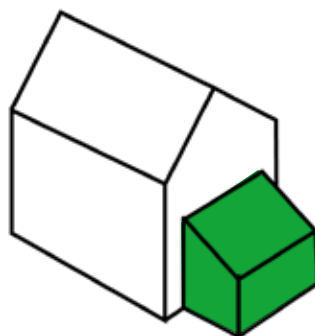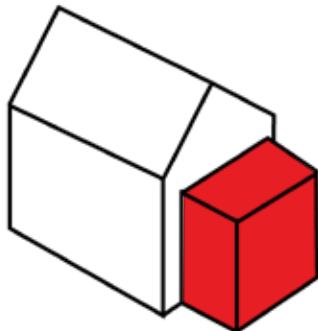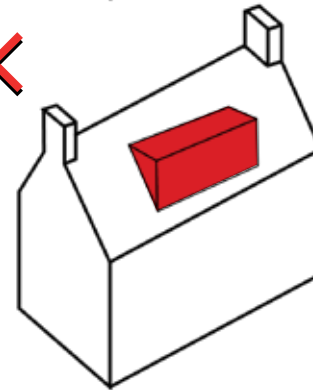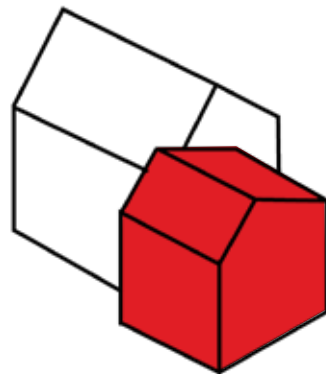

F.52

Built form
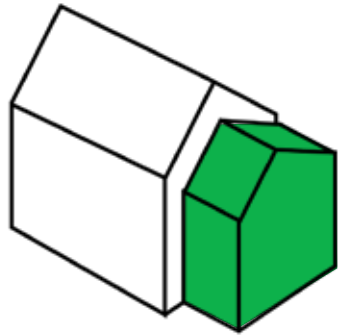
Good examples for side extensions, respecting existing building scale, massing and building line.
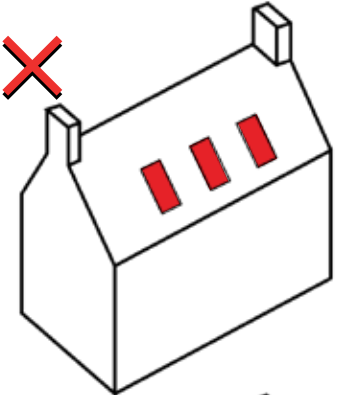

Loft conversion incorporating gabled dormers.

Both extensions present a negative approach when considering how it fits to the existing buildings. Major issues regarding roofline and building line.

Loft conversion incorporating a long shed dormer which is out of scale with the original building.

Loft conversion incorporating skylights can have a negative impact on preserving the dark skies zones.

Built form

Building scale and massing on infill development

There are several good examples of infill development in the parish, located in Aldington centre, and could be used as references for any future development of this type. Some guidelines are:

– Infill development should complement the street scene and rural setting into which it will be inserted. It does not need to mimic existing styles but its scale, massing and layout need to be in keeping. These also need to be considered in relation to topography, views, vistas and landmarks;

– New building lines should be reasonably consistent along a street with existing buildings. Some places in the parish have linear or regular meandering arrangements of buildings whilst others have random and irregular patterns; and

– The density of a scheme should reflect its context in terms of whether it is at the centre or edge of a town or village, or in a smaller settlement in the rural area. The optimum density will respond to surrounding densities whilst making efficient use of land, meaning that new development will usually be more likely to be higher in density than neighbouring areas.

F.53

F.54

Figure 53: Local example of infill development that is sensitive to the surrounding context in terms of scale, architectural details and materials and therefore, preserves the local vernacular.
Figure 54: A positive local example of infill development that respects the listed building opposite, Walnut Tree, in terms of materials and scale, Forge Hill.

Built form

Conversion of farm buildings into dwellings

Aldington and Bonnington villages were, and still are, largely agricultural areas and therefore, the main source of employment has been farm-related. For that reason, there are many agricultural buildings in the area which were originally designed for a specific purpose.

Today, due to the rise of housing needs, these farmhouses, as well as houses and bungalows in large grounds could potentially be targeted for redevelopment. This is an opportunity that would be welcomed by the locals in the parish, if done appropriately and with respect to the surroundings and the local context and density. Therefore some guidelines that future redevelopment proposals need to take into account are presented below:

Avoid domesticity

When converting an agricultural building it is of paramount importance that the building does not become domestic in appearance and retains its agricultural character regardless of its new use. Essentially, it should not look like a house. Some actions for this are:

– Avoid domestic add-ons such as chimneys, dormer windows, conservatories, porches, visual clutter such as satellite dishes, domestic external lighting, hanging baskets, using domestic windows or door styles and adding buildings such as sheds within the curtilage; and

– Retain features characteristic of historic working buildings such as the apertures (openings) which should not be partially or completely filled in, ventilation slots (often patterned) and any use-specific historic additions.

Windows & doors

Agricultural buildings are characterised by long façades with few asymmetrical openings. Therefore, it is important that:

– New openings should generally be avoided, and kept to an absolute minimum when necessary. They should never be planned in a regular or symmetrical pattern, as this is overly domestic. They should replicate existing proportions, construction and typical reveal; and

– Reduce the visual impact of new frames as much as possible, avoiding excessive transom and mullions and general window divisions, opting for simple and slender frames and glazing. They should also be set back into a reveal.

Large openings

– A key feature of agricultural buildings are big openings. This includes threshing, cart, and wagon doors. These large openings should not be partially or completely blocked or filled in, and should be retained.

Roofs

– Avoid features such as dormer windows. If rooflights are used, they should be used sparingly and sited discreetly so as to not become a feature in the landscape;

Built form

– Avoid accretion of visual clutter including ridge and roof vents;

– Local roofing materials include thatch, clay tiles and slate. These should be retained and re-used wherever possible; and

– If required, solar PV panels should integrate with the overall pitch, materials and feel of the roof. Unless this would hinder performance of the PV cells, avoid locating the panels in the main roof gable or façade.
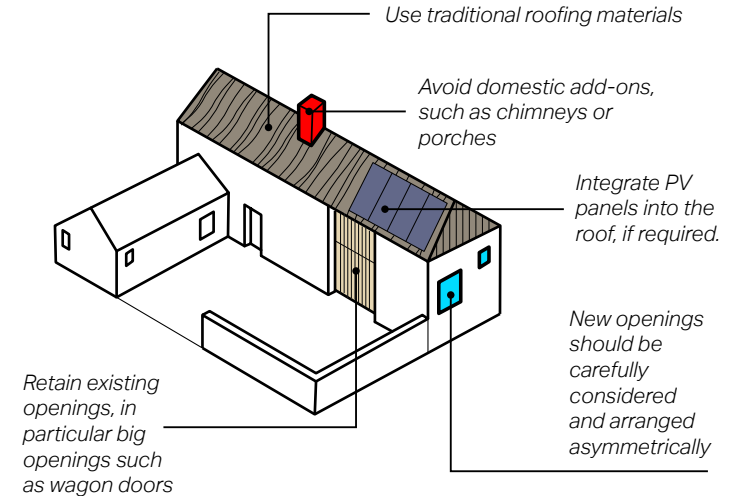
Materials

– Existing brickwork should be reused or reclaimed. Give consideration to the material source and matching the colour, texture, size and bond of the existing brickwork and use a lime-based mortar mix; and

– Historic fabric should be repaired where necessary. Timber-framing should be repaired by splicing in new elements in green oak, replicating historic joint methods. Exposed historic timbers should not be painted or stained.

Extensions

– It is usually not appropriate to extend an agricultural building or add new buildings in its curtilage. If they are included, extensions or additions should generally be simple, unobtrusive, and respect the plan-form of the building and group layout.

Rural setting

– Courtyards should be surfaced in a material that reflects its rural setting. Farmyards should remain open and not be divided by fences or walls. Parking spaces should not be formally marked out;

– Where the use of landscaping and boundary treatments can be justified, design cues should be taken from existing traditional features and will typically consist of metal agricultural or timber post and rail fencing, low brick or stone walls and native hedgerows; and

– Boundary brick walls should be left intact, and not chopped through or reduced for access.

Use traditional roofing materials

Avoid domestic add-ons, such as chimneys or porches

Integrate PV panels into the roof, if required.

New openings should be carefully considered and arranged asymmetrically

Retain existing openings, in particular big openings such as wagon doors

F.55

Figure 55: Local example of a barn converted into residential development, whilst preserving its former use and architectural style.

Built form

Building lines & boundary treatments

Building lines and boundary treatments vary greatly across the parish. To respect the existing context, both the building and the boundary feature should be consistent with neighbouring properties whilst enabling enough variations for visual interest. Some guidelines for future development are:

– Buildings should front onto streets. The building line should have subtle variations in the form of recesses and protrusions but should generally form a unified whole;

– Buildings should be designed to ensure that streets and/or public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance from buildings;

– Physical boundary treatments should reinforce the sense of continuity of the building line and help define the street, appropriate to the character of the area. They should be mainly continuous hedges and low walls, as appropriate, made of traditional materials found in the village, such as ragstone. The use of either panel fencing or metal or concrete walls in

these publicly visible boundaries should be avoided. Natural boundary treatments should still enable adequate natural surveillance; and

– On residential streets outside the historic core, front gardens should be provided. These should include some green elements, like flowers, hedges or trees if possible, and earthy paving materials.

Figure 56: Local examples of rich vegetation in the form of hedges, hedgerows, flowerbeds and trees that play a vital role in preserving biodiversity as well as the rural character of the village.

F.56

Built form

Planting and vegetation

The rich vegetation and woodlands are distinctive assets in the parish and their protection is important. Some guidelines for new development are:

– New planting and vegetation could help maintain the rural character in the villages. It is associated with better mental health and well-being by reducing stress and fewer heat islands;

– Flower beds, bushes and shrubs contribute to the livelihood of the streetscape. Normally planted within the curtilage boundary, ornamental species add interest and colour to their surroundings and become an identity and expressive feature of each dwelling; and

– If fencing is preferred for safety and security reasons, then they can be placed behind hedgerows. This will manage to ease their visual presence and preserve a rural character along the streetscene.

Trees

The abundance of trees is an important asset for a place. This is particularly important in Aldington and Bonnington due to their rural character. Trees provide shading and cooling, absorb carbon dioxide, act as habitats and green chains for species, reduce air pollution and assist in water attenuation. For these reasons, new developments should:

– Preserve existing mature trees, incorporate them in the new landscape design, and use them as landmarks where appropriate;

– Protect existing tree root zones to ensure that existing trees can grow to their mature size. Root barriers must be installed where there is a risk of damaging foundations, walls, and underground utilities;

– Carefully plan the tree planting in conjunction with all parts of the new development, parking, buildings, street lights etc; and
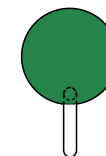
– New trees should be added to strengthen vistas, focal points, and movement corridors while retaining clear visibility of amenity spaces.

Loss of trees is only justifiable if they constitute hazard to visitors
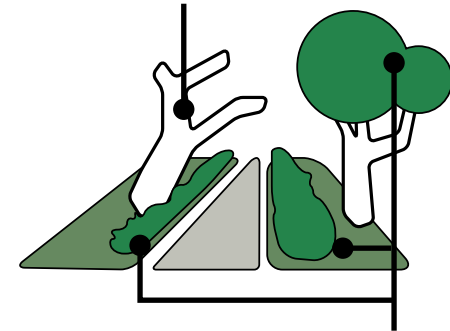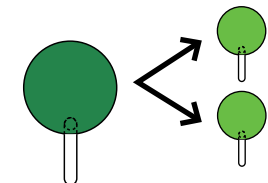

Protect veteran trees and hedgerows

Retain trees on development site

Justify the loss of trees, and replace each affected tree on a 2:1 ratio

Built form

Dark skies and street lighting

Dark night skies have been highlighted as an important feature in Aldington and Bonnington benefiting both people and wildlife. Therefore, the correct use of artificial light is important to avoid light pollution and any disturbance within the natural environment.

The following guidelines aim to ensure there is enough consideration given at the design stage:

- Street lighting should be avoided within areas of public realm, in line with existing settlement character, and be replaced with dim bollard lighting, as shown in F.57. This can offer a good level of light to create a sense of safety to the locals, while also avoiding causing any disturbance to the adjacent properties or unacceptable levels of light pollution;

- New development shall avoid the use of lighting, e.g blue LED light, that has a negative impact in health and wellbeing;

– Choice of lighting should be energy-efficient and sustainable. The installation of motion sensors on the lights should be encouraged. In addition, any external lighting within garden spaces should be switched off at 11.00pm to reduce impact on the wildlife;

– Any new developments and house extensions designs should encourage to use natural light sources;

– Bulbs should be covered to ensure light facing downwards; and

- Vegetation and planting on the front gardens should be dense to absorb light and avoid any disturbance to the dwellers.

More standards and guidelines relevant to the lighting fixtures are listed in the International Dark-sky Association website[1].

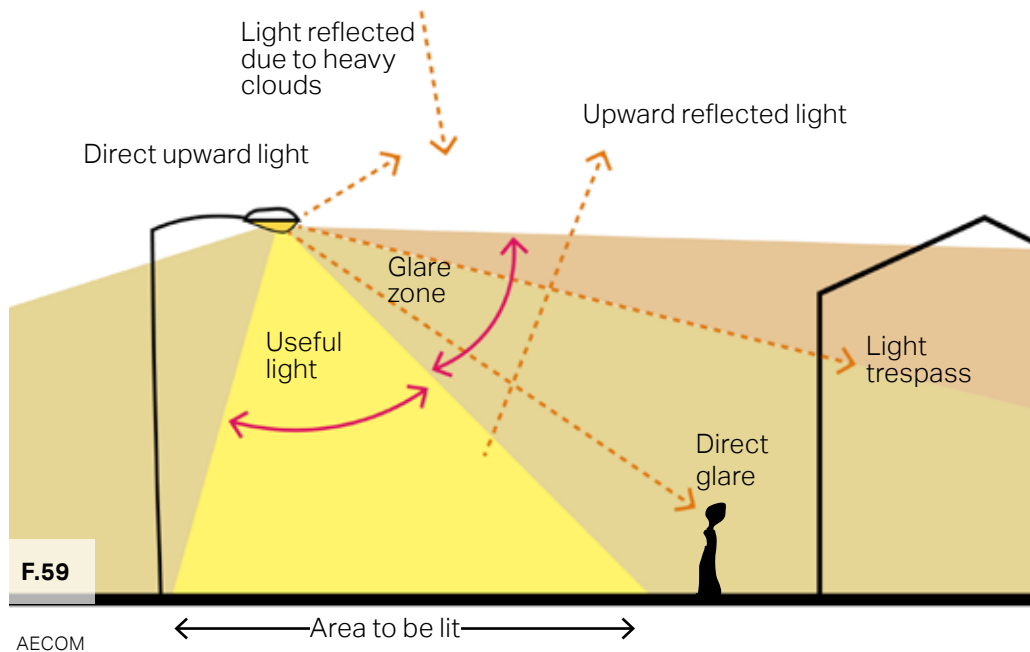1.International Dark-sky Association. *Outdoor Lighting Basics*. Available at: https://www.darksky.org/our-work/lighting/lighting-for-citizens/lighting-basics/

Built form

F.57

F.58

Light reflected due to heavy clouds

Upward reflected light

Direct upward light

Glare zone

Useful light

Light trespass

Direct glare

F.59

Area to be lit

Figure 57: Local example of dim bollard lighting in Wheatfields that provides good levels of lighting while protecting the dark skies.

Figure 58: Example of a foot/cycle path which is lit by solar cat's eyes providing some light for pedestrians and cyclists without creating any disturbance to the nearby properties or unacceptable levels of light pollution.

Figure 59: Diagram to illustrate the different components of light pollution and what 'good' lighting means.

Built form

Views and vistas

Views help legibility and orientation in an area. Therefore, creating short-distance views broken by buildings, trees, or landmarks helps create memorable routes along the area.

On the other hand, long-distance views, vistas, are also important offering pleasant sceneries along the footpaths, roads as well as through the gaps between buildings. In particular, the vistas to and from the Aldington Ridgeline is a key characteristic of the village. Those allow for a visual connection between places and encourage people to walk and cycle. Therefore, some guidelines for future development are:

- New houses should be appropriately oriented to maximise the opportunities for both short and long-distance views;

- New development along the Aldington Ridge should be of appropriate massing

to avoid blocking long distance views to the countryside;

- Development in ridge tops, upper valley slopes or prominent locations should be generally avoided; and

- Planning decisions should always attempt to maintain or where possible enhance key views and vistas.

F.60

Figure 60: Map including views and vistas that need to be protected in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The numbers refer to a list of names for each view and can be found in the Neighbourhood Plan.
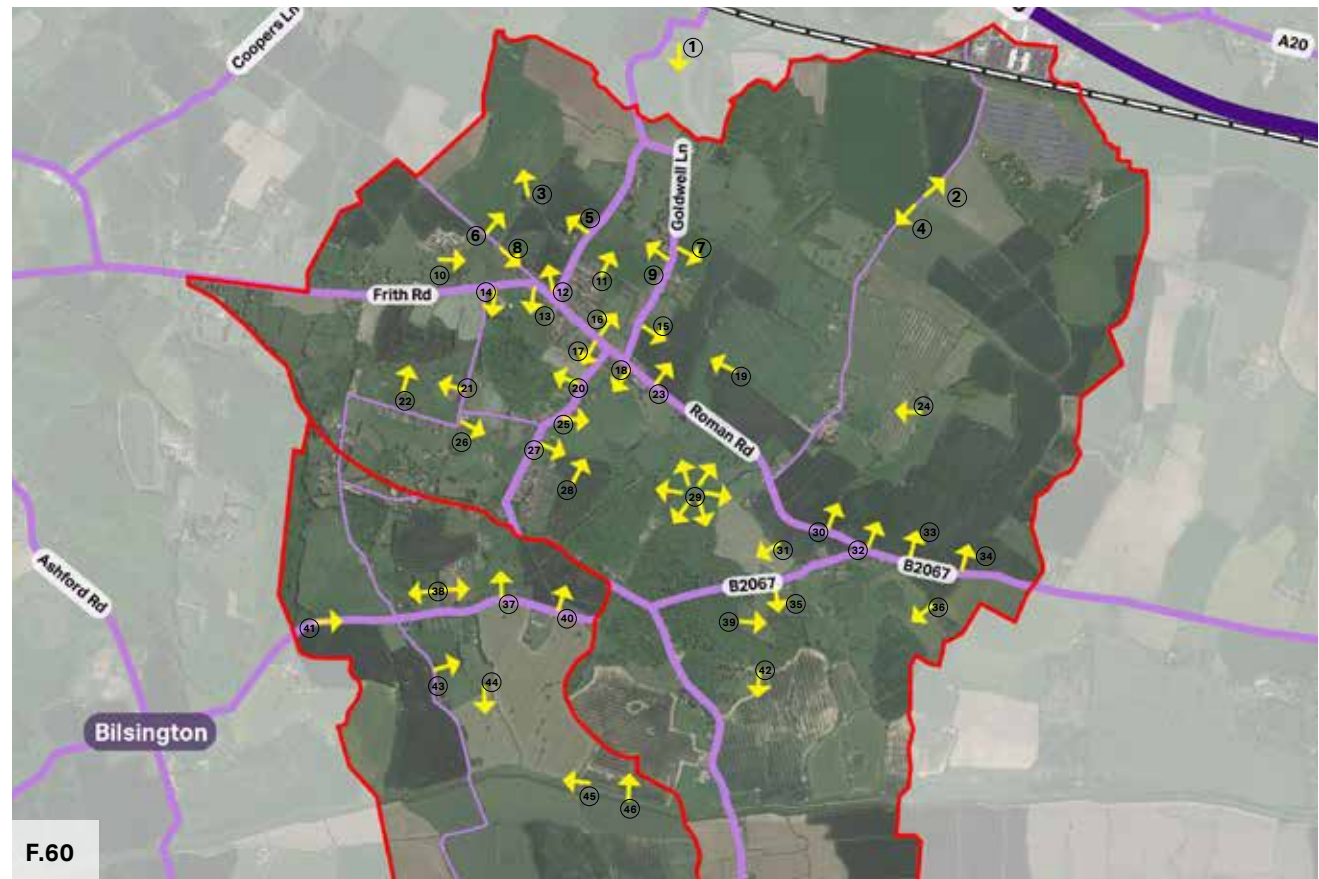
Built form

Materials and building details

The materials and architectural detailing used in the villages contribute to the historic character of the area and the local vernacular.

It is therefore important that the materials used in proposed development are of a high quality and reinforce local distinctiveness. Any future development proposals should demonstrate that the palette of materials has been selected based on a solid knowledge of the local vernacular style and traditions.

In new developments and renovations, locally sourced materials, like the ragstone, would be the most appropriate to preserve the local vernacular and to create a positive visual result.

Particular attention should be given to the bonding pattern, size, colour, and texture of bricks.

Generally, for inspiration and appropriate examples, the developers should look at the historic cores of the settlements and the surrounding area. Each development should be designed with the specific location in mind and its immediate surroundings.

This section includes examples of building materials that contribute to the local vernacular of the village and that could be used to inform future development.

RAGSTONE ON WALLS

RAGSTONE ON BUILDINGS

TILES ON THE FACADE

WEATHERBOARDING

CHEQUERED BRICK

OFF-WHITE PAINTED BRICKS

MANSARD ROOF

GABLED ROOF

HIPPED ROOF

CLAY PANTILES

CASEMENT WINDOW

RENDERED FACADE & GABLED DORMER

3. PEDESTRIAN, CYCLE CONNECTIVITY & PARKING

Pedestrian and cycle connectivitiy

Gateways and access features

Car parking solutions

Cycle parking solutions

Pedestrian, cycle connectivity and parking

Pedestrian and cycle connectivity

Aldington and Bonnington villages have a good number of footpaths that provide connection with the surrounding countryside. However, many of those connections need to be improved, including the footpath between Goldwell Lane and Church Lane to connect St Martin's Church to the main village and the footpath from Bank Road to Mersham to enable cycle routes that avoid the A20.

Some guidelines for future development are:

– Footways must be included in new developments and integrated with the existing pedestrian routes. New pedestrian connections between existing developments and blocks must also be sought where appropriate;

– All newly developed areas must provide direct and attractive footpaths between neighbouring streets and local facilities, as existing footpath shown in F.61;

– A permeable street network at all levels provides people with a choice of different routes and allows traffic to be distributed, in general, more evenly across the network rather than concentrated along heavily trafficked roads;

– Design features such as high fences along footpaths must be avoided;

– On high-traffic and/or high-speed roads, cyclists must be kept away from moving traffic and parked vehicles as much as possible through the use of traffic calming, physical separation, and road markings and signage. On streets with lower traffic and speed limits no higher than 20 mph, the road can be shared between different modes;

– New development should propose routes laid out in a permeable pattern, allowing for multiple connections and choice of routes, particularly on foot. Any cul-de-sacs should be relatively short and provide onward pedestrian links;

– New development should offer a variety of open spaces that can host a diverse range of activities and accommodate different users; and

– New development should enhance the character of the existing open spaces by either providing a positive interface (i.e. properties facing onto them to improve natural surveillance) or a soft landscaped edge.

F.61

Figure 61: Existing footpath connecting the site west of Calleywell Lane to the main road, Roman Road, and local facilities.

Pedestrian, cycle connectivity and parking

Gateways and access features

The entrances to the parish should be well highlighted and enhanced to help navigation around the area. In particular, Calleywell, Roman Road, Frith Road and Forge Hill are the main entrances to the parish.

Some examples to help signalise the main entrances to a place are the configuration of streets, the location of corner buildings, open spaces that act as welcome points, signage or welcome totems, or even large trees. All these elements create a gateway and a welcoming environment. Some guidelines, more specifically, on new residential developments are:

– Future design proposals should consider placing gateway and built elements to clearly mark the access or arrival to any new developed site. Those elements can either be historic assets found in the village, as the ones shown in F.65, or natural assets like a sizeable tree or open space located in a central arrival point, as

shown in F.62 and F64. This is particularly important for village extensions at the edge of existing settlements, for instance Calleywell Road, due to their location at the interface between the built-up area and the countryside;

– The sense of departure and arrival can often be achieved by a noticeable change in scale, enclosure, or road configuration. For example, as shown in F.63, the Village Hall and the Wallnut Tree Inn, important landmarks of the village, are placed in the corner along the east main entrance, Roman Road, to stand out;

– The gateway buildings or features should reflect local character. This could mean larger houses in local materials with emphasis on the design of chimneys and fenestration, or well-laid and cared for landscape. For example, as shown in F.63, the use of off-white render and buffed-coloured bricks on the façades are key architectural details in the village; and

– It must be noted that gateway features should mainly be placed to mark a sense of arrival and departure and help with orientation, not to exclude non-residents either physically or symbolically. New developments should also be designed with an open and legible layout rather than an enclosed one.

F.62

Figure 62: Example of how a sizeable tree can act as a gateway and access feature to new development, elsewhere in UK.

Pedestrian, cycle connectivity and parking

F.63

F.64

F.65

Figure 63: Buildings of historic importance or landmarks located along crossroads and corners can act as access features and gateways to the rest of the area.

Figure 64: Natural features like centrally located open green spaces and sizeable trees can act as welcoming points to a development site.

Figure 65: Open space along the main road hosts a heritage asset which can be easily seen from distance and act as a local landmark and access feature for the area.

Pedestrian, cycle connectivity and parking

Car parking solutions

The demand for private cars still remains high, at the time of writing, and therefore car parking has to be carefully integrated into neighbourhoods. There is no single best approach to domestic car parking. A good mix of parking typologies should be deployed, depending on, and influenced by location, topography and market demand.

The main types to be considered are shown on this page and the next ones:

– Vehicle parking should be mainly provided on-site. In general, the approach to the provision of parking should be flexible, not only with the types of parking solutions but also the use of parking spaces over time. For example, the use of off-site parking facilities may be adapted depending on the long-term evolution of parking demand to serve different mobility needs such as car clubs, scooters, or bicycle storage;

– Car parking design should be combined with landscaping to minimise the presence of vehicles. Parking areas and driveways should be designed to minimise impervious surfaces, for example through the use of permeable paving;

– For small pockets of housing a front or rear court is acceptable. For family homes, cars may be placed at the front or side of the property, however this parking typology should be minimised;

– When placing parking at the front, the area should be designed to minimise visual impact and to blend with the existing streetscape and materials. The aim is to keep a sense of enclosure and to break the potential of a continuous area of car parking in front of the dwellings by means of walls, hedging, planting, and use of differentiated quality paving materials;

– Provision for electric vehicle charging points for off-street parking in new development. Cluttered elevations, especially main façades and front elevations, should be avoided; and

– Cycle parking must be integrated into all new housing.

A very useful website that helps define appropriate car parking solutions depending on the type of development is http://www.spacetopark.org/. This resource should be used as a design tool in new developments.

F.66

Figure 66: Off-street mounted car charging points.

Pedestrian, cycle connectivity and parking

On-plot side or on front parking

There are many examples of on-plot side or on-front parking in the parish. Some guidelines for future development are:

– On-plot parking can be visually attractive when it is combined with high quality and well designed soft landscaping. Front garden depth from pavement back must be sufficient for a large family car;

– Boundary treatment is the key element to help avoid a car-dominated character. This can be achieved by using elements such as hedges, trees, flower beds, low walls, and high quality paving materials between the private and public space;

– Hard standing and driveways must be constructed from porous materials to minimise surface water run-off; and

– Provision for electric vehicle charging points as shown in F.66.

Figure 67: Local example of on plot front parking typology.
Figure 68: Local example of on plot side parking typology.
Figure 69: Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-plot front parking.
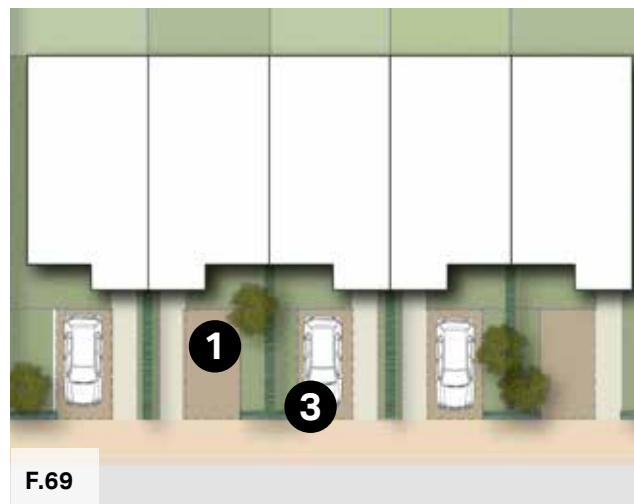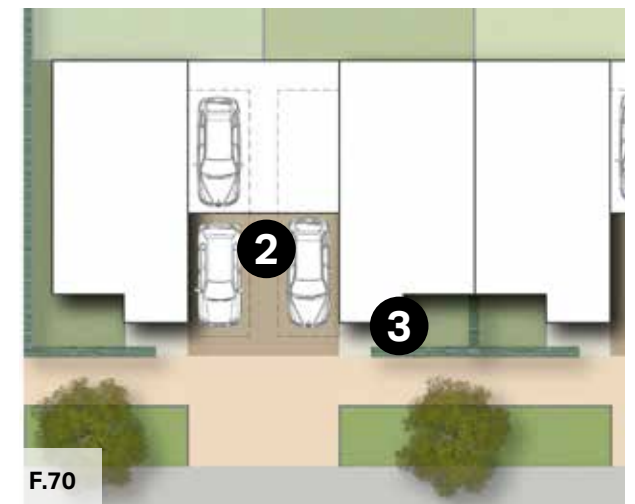Figure 70: Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-plot side parking.

F.67

F.68

1. Front parking with part of the surface reserved for soft landscaping. Permeable pavement to be used whenever possible.
2. Side parking set back from the main building line. Permeable pavement to be used whenever possible.
3. Boundary hedges to screen vehicles and parking spaces.

F.69

F.70

Pedestrian, cycle connectivity and parking

On-plot garages

On-plot garages is a prevailing parking typology in the parish. Some guidelines for future development are:

– Where provided, garages must be designed either as free standing structures or as additive form to the main building. In both situations, it must complement and harmonise with the architectural style of the main building rather than forming a mismatched unit;

– Often, garages can be used as a design element to create a link between buildings, ensuring continuity of the building line. However, it should be considered that garages are not prominent elements and they must be designed accordingly; and

– Considerations must be given to the integration of bicycle parking, electric vehicle charging points, and/or waste storage into garages.
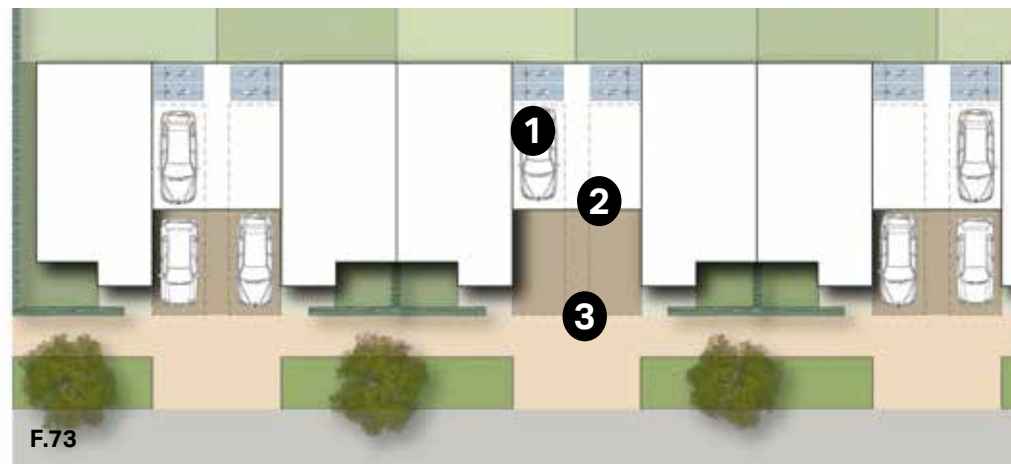
1. Side parking set back from the main building line. Permeable pavement to be used whenever possible.
2. Garage structure set back from main building line. Height to be no higher than the main roofline.
3. Boundary hedges to screen vehicles and parking spaces.

Figure 71: Local example of on-plot garage typology.

Figure 72: Local example of on-plot garage typology.

Figure 73: Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-plot parking with garages.

Pedestrian, cycle connectivity and parking

On-street parking

There are designated areas for on-street parking along Roman Road as well as along Longsfield Road. However, it is a general condition that many cars are parked on street as a result of the garages being used for other purposes. Some guidelines for future development are:

– On-street parking should be allowed along main roads, where most of the facilities are located, in order to support delivery and emergency vehicles. In any other residential street or rural roads on-plot parking should be encouraged;

– The streetscape should not to be dominated by continuous on-street parking spaces. Where possible, tree planting and other gaps between parking bays should be incorporated;

– On-street parking must be designed to avoid impeding the flow of pedestrians, cyclists, and other vehicles, and can serve a useful informal traffic calming function. In addition, on-street disabled car parking should also be provided and be well-integrated into car parking bays to avoid causing any obstruction in vehicular movement;

– Parking bays can be inset between kerb build outs or street trees. Kerb build outs between parking bays can shorten pedestrian crossing distances and can host street furniture or green infrastructure. They must be sufficiently wide to shelter the entire parking bay in order to avoid impeding traffic; and

– Opportunities must be created for new public car parking spaces to include electric vehicle charging points. Such provision must be located conveniently throughout the town and designed to minimise street clutter.

1. On-street parking bay inset between kerb extensions.
2. Footway - additional green verge if street width permits.
3. Planted kerb extensions - width to be sufficient to fully shelter parking bay. Trees are optional but would be positive additions.
4. Boundary hedges.

F.74

Figure 74: Example of on-street parking on Roman Road.

Figure 75: Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-street inset parking.
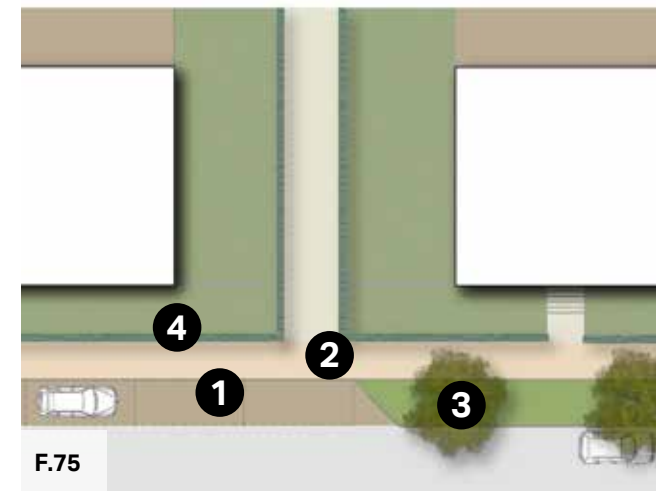
F.75

Pedestrian, cycle connectivity and parking

Cycle parking solutions

A straightforward way to encourage cycling is to provide secured covered cycle parking within all new residential developments and publicly available cycle parking in the public realm.

Houses without garages

– Cycle storage must be provided at a convenient location with an easy access;

– When provided within the footprint of the dwelling or as a free standing shed, cycle parking should be accessed by means of a door at least 900mm and the structure should be at least 2m deep;

– Parking should be secure, covered and it should be well integrated into the streetscape if it is allocated at the front of the house; and

– The use of planting and smaller trees alongside cycle parking can be used to mitigate any visual impact on adjacent spaces or buildings.

Houses with garages

– The minimum garage size should be 7mx3m to allow space for cycle storage;

– Where possible, cycle parking should be accessed from the front of the building either in a specially constructed enclosure or easily accessible garage;

– The design of any enclosure should integrate well with the surroundings; and

– The bike must be removed easily without having to move the vehicle.

F.77   **F.78**

F.79

KEY
- Cycle storage
- Bin storage
- Clear access path
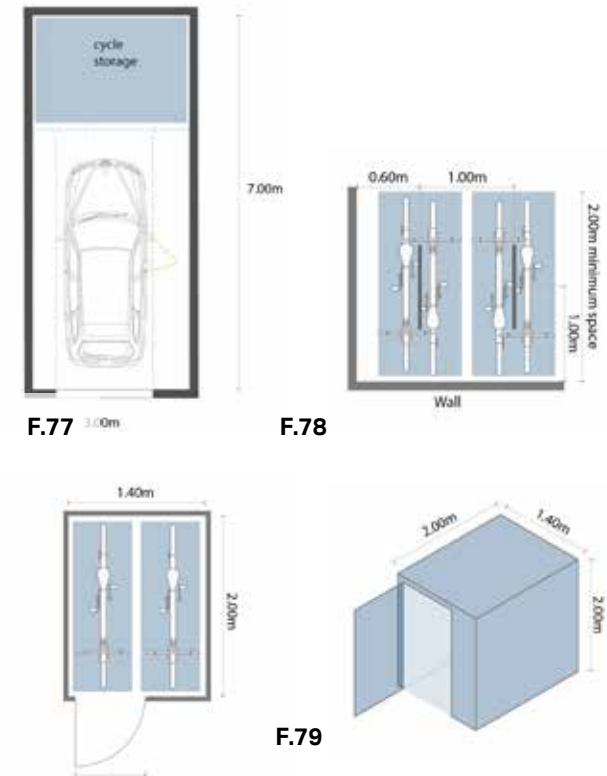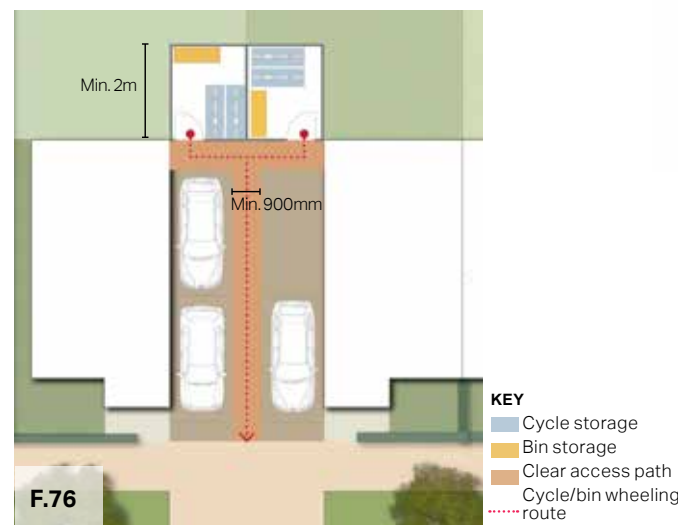- Cycle/bin wheeling route

F.76

Figure 76: Indicative layout of a bicycle and bin storage areas at the back of semi-detached properties.

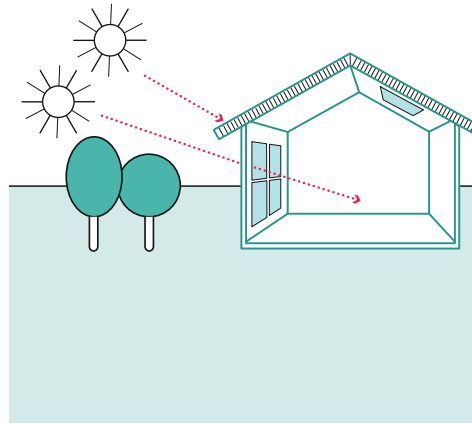Figure 77: Indicative layout of a garage with a cycle storage area.

Figure 78: Sheffield cycle stands for visitors and cycle parking illustration.

Figure 79: Secure covered cycle store for two cycle storage illustration.

4. ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY EFFICIENCY
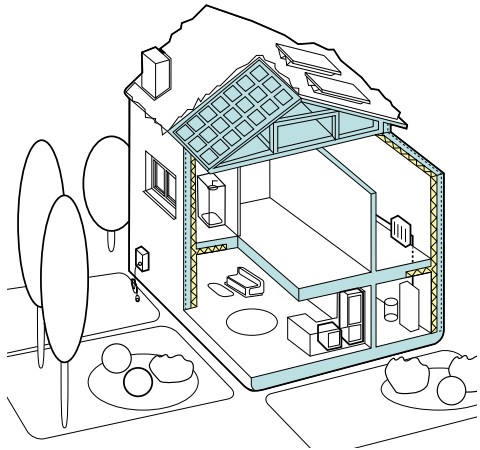
Sustainable design

Aspect and orientation

Renewable/low carbon energy

SuDs

Permeable pavements

Wildlife friendly environment

Storage and slow release

Servicing

Environment & energy efficiency

Sustainable design

An improtant characteristic of Aldington and Bonnington parish is that there is no mains gas. It is a general feeling amongst the locals that the focus should be on renewable sources that could improve the environment, the carbon footprint of each household and provide cost efficient solutions.

This section will elaborate on energy efficient technologies that could be incorporated in buildings. The use of such principles and design tools is strongly encouraged to futureproof buildings and avoid the necessity of retrofitting. Energy efficient or eco design combines all round energy efficient appliances and lighting with commercially available renewable energy systems, such as solar electricity and/or solar/ water heating.

Starting from the design stage there are strategies that can be incorporated to include technologies such as passive solar heating, cooling and energy efficient landscaping which are determined by local climate and site conditions.

The diagram opposite features an array of sustainable design features. Those on the left show the features that should be strongly encouraged in existing homes, while those on the right show additional features that new build homes should be encouraged to incorporate from the onset.
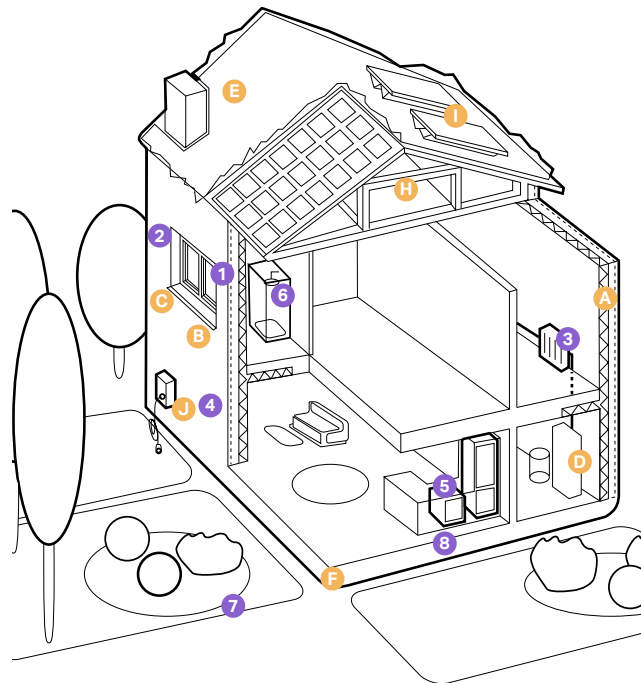
Existing homes

1 **Insulation** in lofts and walls (cavity and solid)

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

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

4 **Draught proofing** of floors, windows and doors

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

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

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

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

Additional features for new build homes

A **High levels of airtightness**

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

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

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

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

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

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

H **Solar panel**

F.80

Figure 80: Diagram showing low-carbon homes in both existing and new build conditions.

Environment & energy efficiency

Aspect and orientation

Buildings should be designed to maximise solar gain, daylight and sun penetration, while avoiding overheating. Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, they should be orientated to incorporate passive solar design principles. Those principles include:

- One of the main glazed elevations should be within 30° due south to benefit from solar heat gain. Any north-facing facades might have a similar proportion of window to wall area to minimise heat loss on this cooler side;

- If houses are not aligned east-west, rear wings could be included so that some of the property benefits from solar passive gain;

- Homes should be designed to avoid overheating through optimisation of glazed areas, natural ventilation strategies including high- and low- level openings, longer roof overhangs, deep window reveals and external louvres/ shutters to provide shading in hotter summer months; and

- North facing single aspect units should be avoided or mitigated with the use of reflective light or roof windows.

F.81
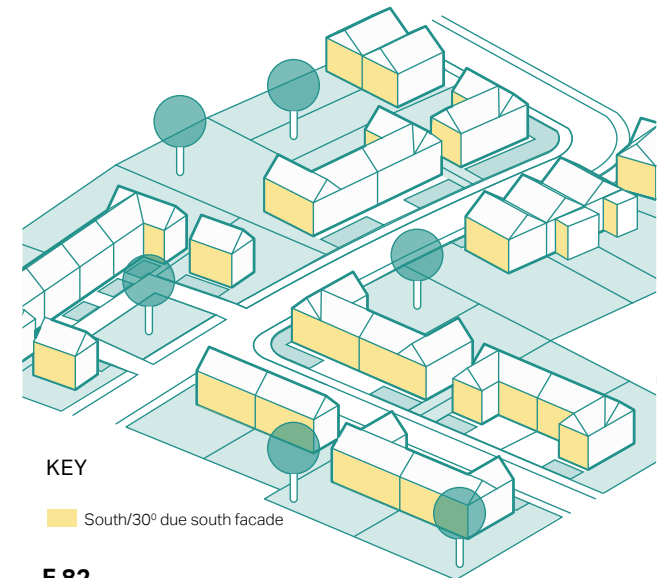
KEY
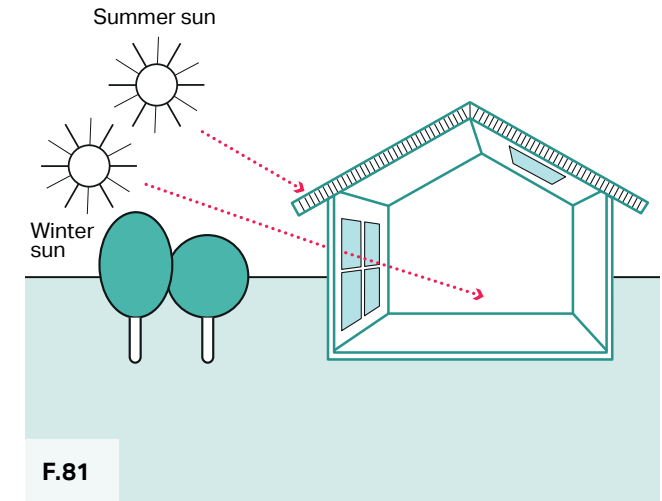
☐ South/30⁰ due south facade

F.82

Figure 81: The use of roof window, pitch roof, location and size of windows in favour of maximising solar gain
Figure 82: Elevations that would benefit from passive solar gain

Environment & energy efficiency

Renewable/low carbon energy

The use of renewable/low carbon energy solutions such as air and ground source heat pumps, district heating, and solar panels are strongly encouraged.

District heat networks may play an important role in the transition to low carbon energy. Centralised energy production systems are more efficient than individual heating systems and generate less carbon emissions.

The design and installation of solar panels should be done carefully considering potential implications within conservation areas. Preserving the character of the parish should be a priority.

Some solutions of sensitive implementation of solar roof panels are suggested as follows:

On new builds:

- Design solar panel features from the start, forming part of the design concept. Some attractive options are solar shingles and photovoltaic slates;

- Use the solar panels as a material in their own right; and

- Placement of the solar panels to the rear of the properties, if possible, to mitigate any visual impact.

On retrofits:

- Analyse the proportions of the building and roof surface in order to identify the best location and sizing of panels;

- Consider introducing other tile or slate colours to create a composition with the solar panel materials;

- Conversely, aim to introduce contrast and boldness with proportion. There has been increased interest in black panels due to their more attractive appearance. Black solar panels with black mounting systems and frames can be an appealing alternative to blue panels;

- Carefully consider the location of solar panels on buildings within the conservation area. It might be appropriate to introduce solar panels to areas of the building that are more concealed in order to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area;

- Solar panels can be added to listed buildings, but they need to be carefully sited and consent will be required; and

- Placement of the solar panels to the rear of the properties, if possible, to mitigate any visual impact.

F.83

Figure 83: Use of shingle-like solar panels on a slate roof, with the design and colour of the solar panels matching those of the adjacent slate tiles.

Environment & energy efficiency

Rainwater harvesting

SuDs

This section outlines a range of sustainable drainage solutions to potential drainage capacity and flooding problems in the parish. Although these design interventions can help improve drainage in the parish, other solutions might be needed to solve the main drainage issues.

The term SuDS stands for Sustainable Drainage Systems. SuDS work by reducing the amount and rate at which surface water reaches a waterway or combined sewer system. Usually, the most sustainable option is collecting this water for reuse, for example in a water butt or rainwater harvesting system. However, where reuse is not possible there are two alternative approaches using SuDS:

– Infiltration, which allows water to percolate into the ground and eventually restore groundwater; and

– Attenuation and controlled release, which holds back the water and slowly releases it into the sewer network. This reduces the risk of sewers overflowing.

The most effective type or design of SuDS would depend on site-specific conditions such as underlying ground conditions, infiltration rate, slope, or presence of ground contamination. A number of overarching principles can however be applied:

– Manage surface water as close to where it originates as possible;

– Reduce runoff rates by facilitating infiltration into the ground or by providing attenuation that stores water to help slow its flow down so that it does not overwhelm water courses or the sewer network;

– Improve water quality by filtering pollutants to help avoid environmental contamination;

– Form a 'SuDS train' of two or three different surface water management approaches;

– Integrate into development and improve amenity through early consideration in the development process and good design practices;

– SuDS are often as important in areas that are not directly in an area of flood risk themselves, as they can help reduce downstream flood risk by storing water upstream;

– Some of the most effective SuDS are vegetated, using natural processes to slow and clean the water whilst increasing the biodiversity value of the area;

– Best practice SuDS schemes link the water cycle to make the most efficient use of water resources by reusing surface water; and

– SuDS must be designed sensitively to augment the landscape and provide biodiversity and amenity benefits.

Environment & energy efficiency

Figure 84: Examples of SuDS designed as a public amenity and fully integrated into the design of the public realm in Stockholm, Sweden

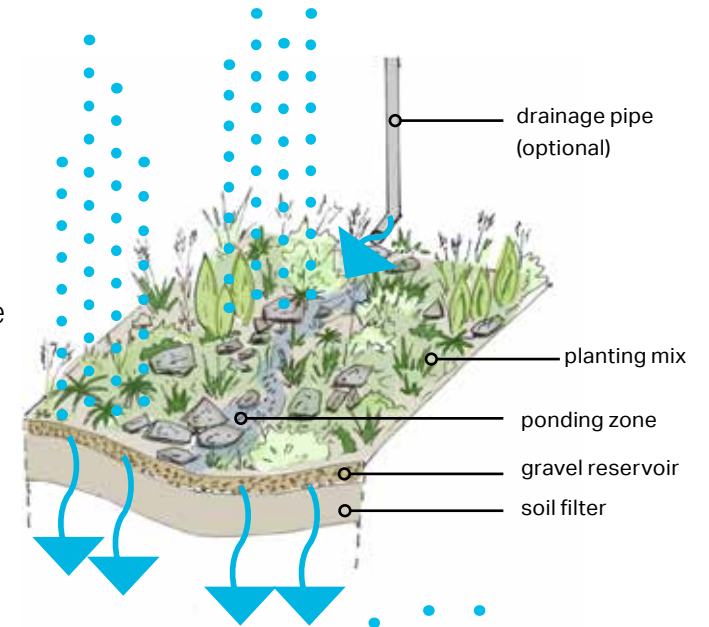Figure 85: Diagram that summarises some of the design principles.

F.84

Rainwater harvesting

Rain gardens

Swales

Permeable paving

Ponds

Green roofs & walls
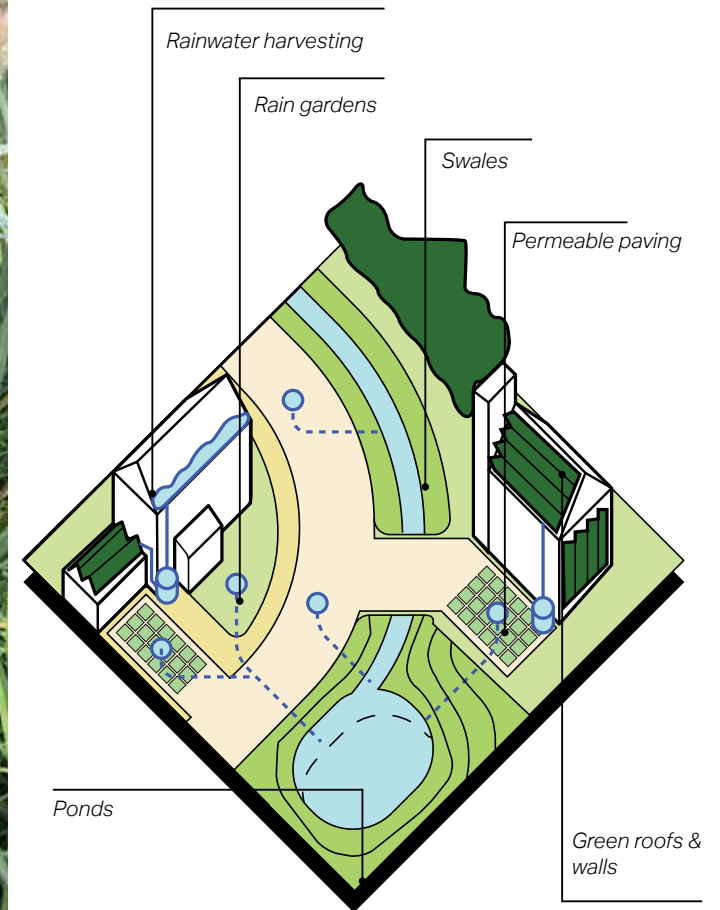
F.85

Environment & energy efficiency
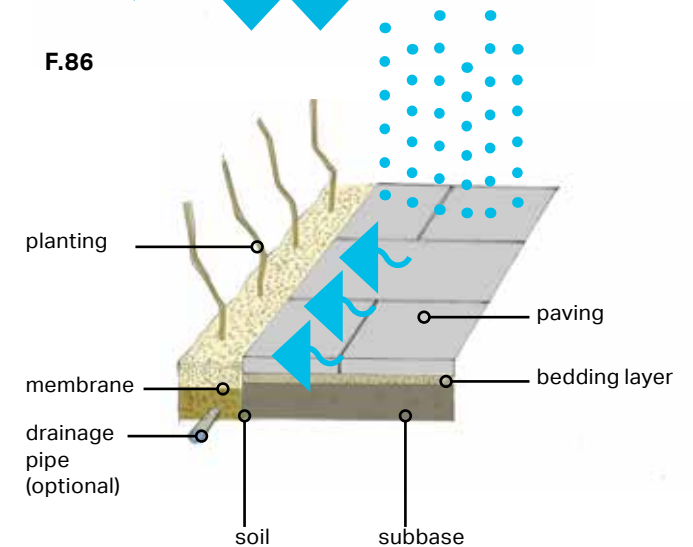
Bioretention systems

Bioretention systems, including soak away and rain gardens, can be used within each development, along verges, and in semi-natural green spaces. They must be designed to sit cohesively with the surrounding landscape, reflecting the natural character of the parish. Vegetation must reflect that of the surrounding environment.

They can be used at varying scales, from small-scale rain gardens serving individual properties, to long green-blue corridors incorporating bioretention swales, tree pits and mini-wetlands, serving roads or extensive built-up areas.

These planted spaces are designed to enable water to infiltrate into the ground. Cutting of downpipes and enabling roof water to flow into rain gardens can significantly reduce the runoff into the sewer system. The UK Rain Garden Design Guidelines provides more detailed guidance on their feasibility and suggests planting to help improve water quality as well as attract biodiversity.[1]

drainage pipe (optional)

planting mix

ponding zone

gravel reservoir

soil filter

F.86

planting

paving

bedding layer

membrane

drainage pipe (optional)

soil

subbase

F.87

Figure 86: Diagram illustrating the functioning of a rain garden

Figure 87: Diagram illustrating the functioning of a soak away garden

Environment & energy efficiency

Permeable paving

Most built-up areas, including roads and driveways, increase impervious surfaces and reduce the capacity of the ground to absorb runoff water. This in turn increases the risks of surface water flooding.

Permeable paving offers a solution to maintaining soil permeability while performing the function of conventional paving. The choice of permeable paving units must be made depending on the local context; the units may take the form of unbound gravel, clay pavers, or stone setts.

Permeable paving can be used where appropriate on footpaths, public squares, private access roads, driveways, and private areas within the individual development boundaries.

Some regulations, standards, and guidelines relevant to permeable paving and sustainable drainage are listed below:

– Sustainable Drainage Systems - non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems;[1]

– The SuDS Manual (C753); and[2]

– Guidance on the Permeable Surfacing of Front Gardens.[3]

[1] Great Britain. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2015). *Sustainable drainage systems – non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems.* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415773/sustainable-drainage-technical-standards.pdf
[2] CIRIA (2015). *The SuDS Manual (C753).*
[3] Great Britain. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2008). *Guidance on the Permeable Surfacing of Front Gardens.* Available at:https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7728/pavingfrontgardens.pdf

F.88

open graded bedding
permeable paving
open graded base
open graded subbase
drainage pipe (optional)
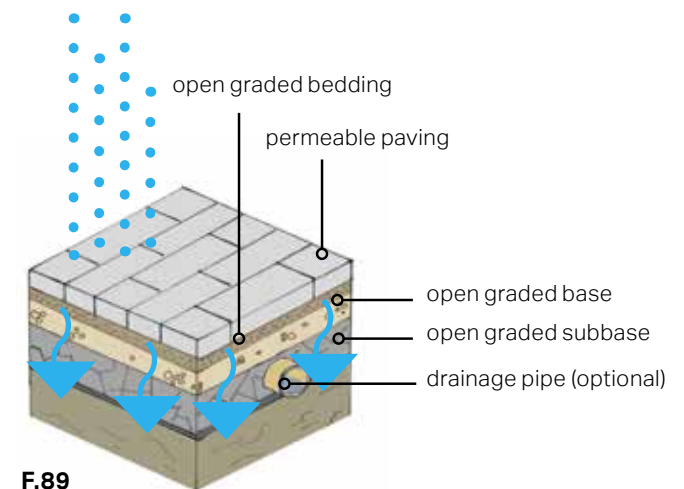
F.89

Figure 88: Example of a permeable paving option.
Figure 89: Diagram illustrating the functioning of a soak away.

Environment & energy efficiency

Wildlife-friendly environment

Maintaining and creating a wildlife-friendly environment is a top priority for the parish. The existing green and blue assets give the opportunity for wildlife sites which can be the home of native species and plants. Some guidelines for future development are:

– Biodiversity and woodlands should be protected and enhanced where possible. Hedges, trees, road verges along roads as well as natural tree buffers should be protected when planning for new developments;

– Abrupt edges to development with little vegetation or landscape on the edge of the settlement should be avoided and, instead, a comprehensive landscape buffering should be encouraged;

– New developments and building extensions should aim to strengthen biodiversity and the natural environment;

– Ensure habitats are buffered. Widths of buffer zones should be wide enough and based on specific ecological function; and

– New development proposals should include the creation of new habitats and wildlife corridors. This could be by aligning back and front gardens or installing bird boxes or bricks in walls. Wildlife corridors should be included to enable wildlife to travel to and from foraging areas and their dwelling areas.

F.90

F.91

Figure 90: Example of a bughouse located in an outdoor playground facility.
Figure 91: Example of a structure used as a frog habitat corridor located in an outdoor green space.

Environment & energy efficiency

Storage and slow release

Rainwater harvesting refers to the systems allowing the capture and storage of rainwater as well as those enabling the reuse in-site of grey water.

Simple storage solutions, such as water butts, can help provide significant attenuation. To be able to continue to provide benefits, there has to be some headroom within the storage solution.

If water is not reused, a slow release valve allows water from the storage to trickle out, recreating capacity for future rainfall events. New digital technologies that predict rainfall events can enable stored water to be released when the sewer has greatest capacity to accept it.

These systems involve pipes and storage devices that could be unsightly if added without an integral vision for design. Therefore, some design recommendations would be to:
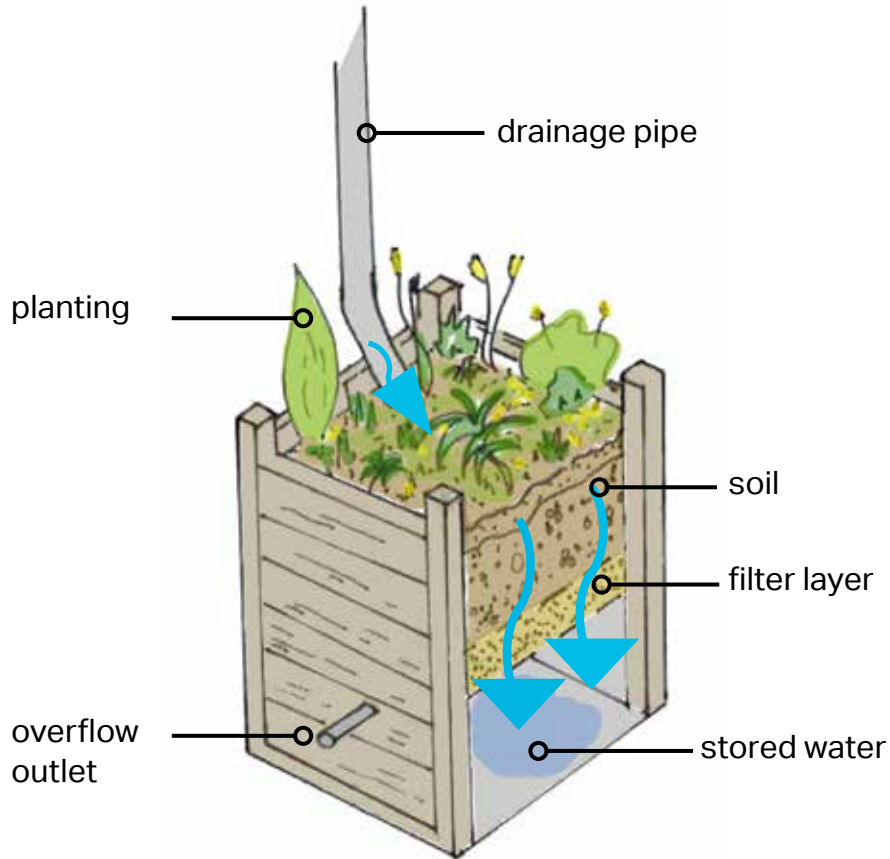
– Conceal tanks by cladding them in complementary materials;

– Use attractive materials or finishing for pipes;

– Combine landscape/planters with water capture systems;

– Underground tanks; and

– Utilise water bodies for storage.

Figure 92: Examples of water butts used for rainwater harvesting in Reach, Cambridgeshire

F.92

Environment & energy efficiency

drainage pipe

planting

soil

filter layer

overflow outlet

stored water

F.93

drainage pipe

er storage

water outlet valve

F.94

Figure 93: Diagram illustrating the functioning of a stormwater planter
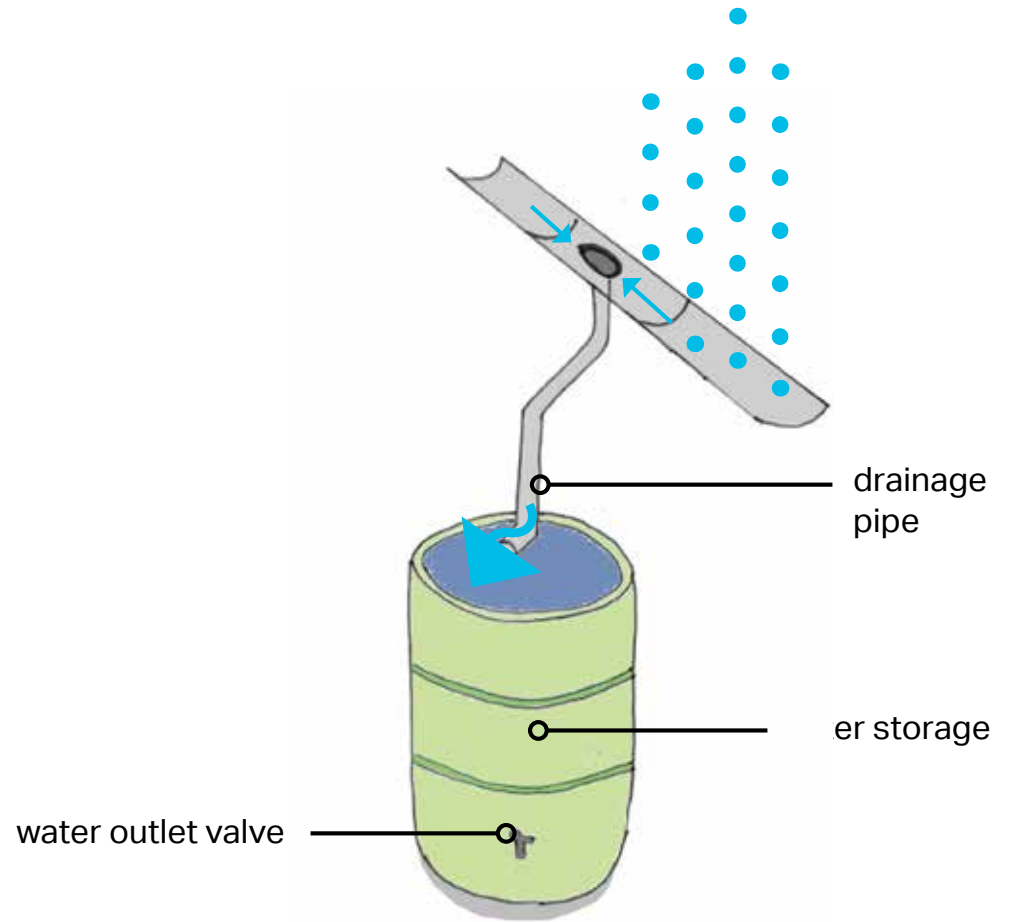
Figure 94: Diagram illustrating the functioning of a water butt

Environment & energy efficiency

Servicing

With modern requirements for waste separation and recycling, the number and size of household bins has increased. This poses a problem with the aesthetics of the property. Therefore, some guidelines for new development are:

– When dealing with waste storage, servicing arrangements and site conditions should be taken into account; in some cases waste management should be from the front of the building and in others, from the rear. It is recommended that bins are located away from areas used as amenity space;

– Create a specific enclosure of sufficient size for all the necessary bins;

– Bins should be placed as close to the dwelling's boundary and the public highway, such as against a wall, fence, hedge but not in a way as to obstruct the shared surface for pedestrian and vehicle movements;

– Place it within easy access from the street and, where possible, with the ability to open on the pavement side to ease retrieval;

– Refer to the materials palette to analyse what would be a complementary material;

– Add to the environmentally sustainable design by incorporating a green roof element to it; and

– It could be combined with cycle storage.

Electric vehicle charging points

Each new residential unit with dedicated parking facilities should provide electric vehicle charging points or have parking areas that can be easily adapted to incorporate electric charging points at a later date. Efforts should be made to cater for electric cars, mobility scooters, and bicycles.

F.95

Bin storage design, minimising the visual impact of bins and recycling containers.

Figure 95: Bin storage design solution

1

General questions to ask and issues to consider when presented with a development proposal

Because the design guidelines and codes in this chapter cannot cover all design eventualities, this section provides a number of questions based on established good practice against which the design proposal should be evaluated. The aim is to assess all proposals by objectively answering the questions below. Not all the questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment as to whether the design proposal has taken into account the context and provided an adequate design solution.

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

General design guidelines for new development:

- Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;

- Reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of streets, greens, and other spaces;

- Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;

- Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views;

- Reflect, respect, and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;

- Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;

- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;

- Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;

- Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;

- Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;

- Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other;

- Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation, and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours;

1 (continued)

- Positively integrate energy efficient technologies;

- Ensure that places are designed with management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities in mind; and

- Seek to implement passive environmental design principles by, firstly, considering how the site layout can optimise beneficial solar gain and reduce energy demands (e.g. insulation), before specification of energy efficient building services and finally incorporate renewable energy sources.

2

Street grid and layout:

- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity? If not, why?

- Do the new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?

- What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?

- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?

- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?

- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

3
—

Local green spaces, views and character:

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?

- Does the proposal maintain or enhance any identified views or views in general?

- How does the proposal affect the trees on or adjacent to the site?

- Can trees be used to provide natural shading from unwanted solar gain? i.e. deciduous trees can limit solar gains in summer, while maximising them in winter.

- Has the proposal been considered within its wider physical context?

- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?

- In rural locations, has the impact of the development on the tranquility of the area been fully considered?

- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?

- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?

- Can any new views be created?

- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?

- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?

- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?

- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how this will be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?

- Is there opportunity to increase the local area biodiversity?

- Can green space be used for natural flood prevention e.g. permeable landscaping, swales etc.?

- Can water bodies be used to provide evaporative cooling?

- Is there space to consider a ground source heat pump array, either horizontal ground loop or borehole (if excavation is required)?

4

Gateway and access features:

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

5

Buildings layout and grouping

- What are the typical groupings of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?
- What effect would the proposal have on the streetscape?
- Does the proposal maintain the character of dwelling clusters stemming from the main road?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?

- Subject to topography and the clustering of existing buildings, are new buildings oriented to incorporate passive solar design principles, with, for example, one of the main glazed elevations within 30° due south, whilst also minimising overheating risk?
- Can buildings with complementary energy profiles be clustered together such that a communal low carbon energy source could be used to supply multiple buildings that might require energy at different times of day or night? This is to reduce peak loads. And/or can waste heat from one building be extracted to provide cooling to that building as well as heat to another building?

6
—

Building line and boundary treatment

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

7
—

Building heights and roofline

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

8
—

Household extensions

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

8 (continued)

9

Building materials and surface treatment

- Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roof slope?

- Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?

- Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?

- Does the extension offer the opportunity to retrofit energy efficiency measures to the existing building?

- Can any materials be re-used in situ to reduce waste and embodied carbon?

- What is the distinctive material in the area?

- Does the proposed material harmonise with the local materials?

- Does the proposal use high-quality materials?

- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roof details been addressed in the context of the overall design?

- Does the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?

- Are recycled materials, or those with high recycled content proposed?

- Has the embodied carbon of the materials been considered and are there options which can reduce the embodied carbon of the design? For example, wood structures and concrete alternatives.

- Can the proposed materials be locally and/or responsibly sourced? E.g. FSC timber, or certified under BES 6001, ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems?

10

Car parking

- What parking solutions have been considered?

- Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?

- Has planting been considered to soften the presence of cars?

- Does the proposed car parking compromise the amenity of adjoining properties?

- Have the needs of wheelchair users been considered?

- Can electric vehicle charging points be provided?

- Can secure cycle storage be provided at an individual building level or through a central/ communal facility where appropriate?

- If covered car ports or cycle storage is included, can it incorporate roof mounted photovoltaic panels or a biodiverse roof in its design?

11

Architectural details and design

- If the proposal is within a Conservation Area, how are the characteristics reflected in the design?

- Does the proposal harmonise with the adjacent properties?

- This means that it follows the height massing and general proportions of adjacent buildings and how it takes cues from materials and other physical characteristics.

- Does the proposal maintain or enhance the existing landscape features?

- Has the local architectural character and precedent been demonstrated in the proposals?

- If the proposal is a contemporary design, are the details and materials of a sufficiently high enough quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?

- Is it possible to incorporate passive environmental design features such as larger roof overhangs, deeper window reveals and/or external louvres/shutters to provide shading in hotter months?

- Can the building designs utilise thermal mass to minimise heat transfer and provide free cooling?

- Can any external structures such as balconies be fixed to the outside of the building, as opposed to cantilevering through the building fabric to reduce thermal bridge?

Delivery

05

5. Delivery

The Design Guidelines and Codes will be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high quality development within Aldington and Bonnington. They will be used in different ways by different actors in the planning and development process, as summarised in the table.

ACTORS	HOW THEY WILL USE THE DESIGN GUIDELINES
Applicants, developers, and landowners	As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowing a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelines and Codes as planning consent is sought.
Local Planning Authority	As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning applications. The Design Guidelines and Codes should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.
Parish Council	As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Design Guidelines and Codes are complied with.
Community organisations	As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments on planning applications.
Statutory consultees	As a reference point when commenting on planning applications.

About AECOM
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