

SUMMARY OF KEY CONSTRAINTS

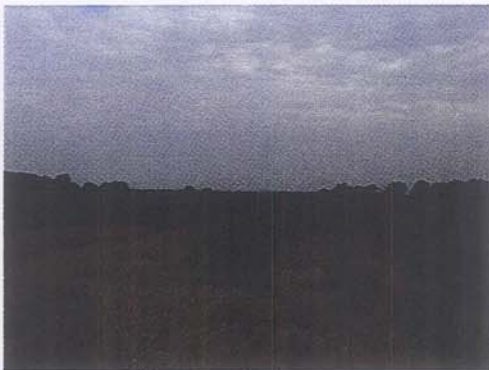
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Listed buildings at Finn Farm



Topography gently sloping



Existing boundary with Park Farm

4.0 SUMMARY OF KEY CONSTRAINTS

Introduction

- 4.1 The physical site constraints identified by the research carried out by the consultant team has influenced the development of the Master Plan for Park Farm South and East. The key constraints to the development of the site are shown as Figure Five.

Ecology

- 4.2 Areas of ecological potential are restricted to the watercourses and banks of the Ruckinge and Bilham Dykes which fall within the South Willesborough Dykes Site of Nature Conservation Interest and drain to the north where they connect with the East Stour River. There is currently no ecological significance in the areas between the dykes because they are subject to a regime of intensive arable farming. The most significant hedgerows are associated with the dykes and are acknowledged to be of high value, primarily because they support a good diversity of wildlife. One protected species has been found in the vicinity of the site. The potential ecological impacts of the proposed development are dealt with in detail in the Environmental Statement accompanying the planning application.

Archaeology

- 4.3 An archaeological desktop study and walkover reconnaissance has been undertaken of the site which has identified limited areas considered to have some potential for archaeology. It is proposed to undertake a selective field evaluation (trial trenching) in locations and the methodology will be agreed with Kent County Council Archaeological Unit. On the basis of the results of the survey it is proposed that further investigative field work would be undertaken, where agreed. It is proposed that the initial field evaluations be completed by early 2002, so that the extent of any additional archaeological assessment can be identified and undertaken, prior to the approval of reserved matters. Any amendments to the Development Brief resulting from the results of this investigation will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval before submission or as part of the first submission of reserved matters.

Listed Buildings

- 4.4 A group of former agricultural buildings at Finn Farm are listed Grade II and have been converted to residential use. The closest part of the proposed development would be approximately 50 metres from the listed buildings. Potential impacts on the setting of the listed buildings are addressed in detail in the Environmental Statement accompanying this application.

Topography

- 4.5 Park Farm South is traversed by a low ridge, with the topography of the land sloping down from the top of the ridge to the north and the east. The topography of the land at Park Farm East slopes down gently from west to east towards the floodplain. The proposals have been designed to reflect the existing topography of the site.



View of Park Farm East site

Agricultural Land Quality

- 4.6 A survey of the site has been carried out by CPM and was assessed in accordance with the revised MAFF guidelines. This survey concluded that the site contains only ALC Grade 3b land. The loss of this land for development would not have a significant impact on national agricultural interests. The potential impact of the proposals on agricultural land is dealt with in detail in the Environmental Statement accompanying this application.



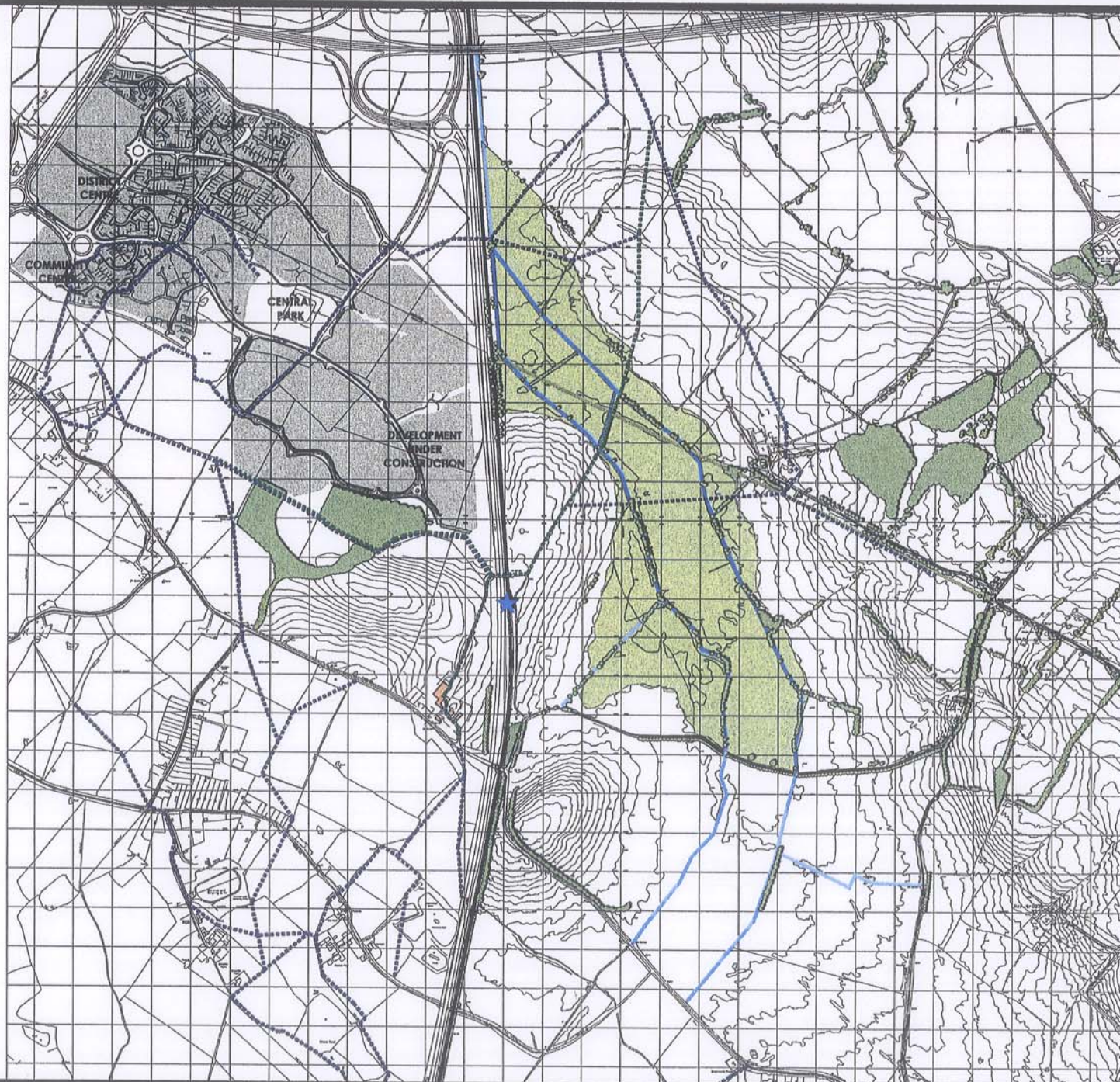
Existing pedestrian connection

Public Rights of Way

- 4.7 The site is traversed by a number of public footpaths and a bridleway. Diversion orders and temporary closure orders will be applied for, where necessary, in order that the existing public rights of way are fully integrated into the development proposals.

Noise

- 4.8 The Ashford to Hastings railway line and the A2070 Hamstreet Road traverse the land at Park Farm South and Park Farm East. Both are in cutting at this location. Noise attenuation measures will be put in place, as necessary, to ensure that there are no adverse impacts as a result of the proposals. Noise impacts are dealt with in detail in the Environmental Statement accompanying this application.



EXISTING CONSTRAINTS

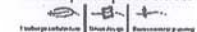
Figure five

-  Existing ditches
-  Existing trees and hedgerows
-  Roman road
-  Station location
-  Flood plain
-  Listed buildings
-  Existing footpath
-  SNCI
-  Existing bridleway



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5.0 URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

Introduction

- 5.1 The urban design strategy for the development at Park Farm South and East sets out a framework of design principles which will create a high quality environment with a strong sense of place. The strategy seeks to achieve this by reflecting the character of local towns and villages within Kent and the Ashford area. The urban form of these towns and villages is explained in the 'Analysis of Urban Form' in section six and the proposed use of materials and architectural details are covered in 'Architectural Style' in section nine.



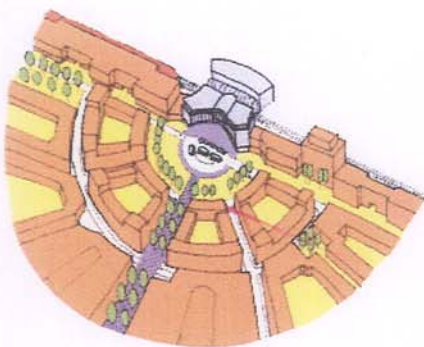
Central space with character



Continuity and enclosure, corner buildings and terraces



Attractive quality public spaces



Permeable, public transport based movement (Urban Design Compendium)

Urban Design Objectives

- 5.2 As stated in the recent government guidance, notably By Design (2000 and 2001) and the Urban Design Compendium, it is important to establish urban design objectives for any new development which will influence the form of development and lead to a high quality development with a strong sense of place. By Design lists the Urban Design Objectives as follows:

Character

A place with its own identity to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture.

Continuity and Enclosure

A place where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished to promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas.

Quality of the Public Realm

A place with attractive and successful outdoor areas to promote public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people.

Ease of Movement

A place that is easy to get to and move through to promote accessibility and local permeability by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport.

Legibility

A place that has a clear image and is easy to understand to promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around.

Adaptability

A place that can change easily to promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

Diversity

A place with variety and choice to promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.

- 5.3 In response to these design objectives the Park Farm South and East development seeks to address these objectives as follows.

Character

The character of the new development will be influenced by a number of factors which are explored in several sections of this report. The character will be established through the form of development and its response to key issues affecting the site. The character of locally distinctive places is explored in section six and will influence the design of the proposals. Character Areas within the development will ensure a variety of spaces each with their own identity is established. The new development will have a distinctive character which will respond to the existing context and establish a strong pattern of development.

Continuity and Enclosure

The new development will follow a traditional pattern of streets and squares distinctive to the locality, establishing well defined public spaces and secure private spaces with a clear distinction between the two.

Quality of the Public Realm

To promote successful and attractive public spaces a hierarchy will be established reached by a network of clearly defined safe pedestrian routes providing easy access for all members of the community, both new and existing.



Legible town edge



Adaptable live/work units



Focal point, widened main street



Diverse rear spaces and places



Legible urban streets



Accessible pedestrian circulation



Varied built form within an overall framework



Linkages clearly defined

Ease of Movement

A network of streets and spaces following a permeable pattern of development will ensure that all the requirements of the new and existing community are easily accessible particularly by pedestrians and cyclists. Priority will also be given to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport over private car use.

Legibility

Clearly defined routes along a hierarchy of streets and spaces with distinctive characteristics will ensure that routes for the existing and new communities are easily read and recognised.

Adaptability

The new development will provide a wide range of dwelling types and sizes for mixed tenure built with potential for adaptation or conversion as family structure changes. The proposed local centre will be mixed use utilising robust buildings that can adapt to changes in market demands. These aspects will ensure that the new development can adapt to change, helping to establish a sustainable community.

Diversity

Through creating a mixed use development which integrates with the existing community of Park Farm, this will increase the diversity and choice for both the existing and new residents.

Key Issues Influencing Development Form

- 5.4 There are a number of key issues which will influence the development form of the proposals. These are set out below.

Landscape Character

- 5.5 Park Farm South and East is situated within the Low Weald Character Area as identified in the 'Character of England' map produced by the Countryside Agency. The landscape of the Low Weald is characterised by small field size, enclosed by hedgerows and small woodlands. Grassland predominates in the heavy clay soils whilst lighter soils on higher ground support arable cropping.
- 5.6 The site itself exhibits a larger field size than that typical for the Low Weald and also a reduction in the density and frequency of hedgerows. The site is affected by the urban area of Ashford, elements of which can be clearly seen from the site. The site is currently used for intensive arable farming, which is contained within blocks of woodland and hedgerows.

Access and Circulation

5.7 The circulation through the proposed development will work on a clear and logical hierarchy of routes linking in with the surrounding area and based upon the network found in traditional settlements. The details will be based upon Design Bulletin 32 (2nd revision) and will broadly follow the following hierarchy:

- Access roads;
- Village Streets;
- Rural lanes;
- Pedestrian priority areas, including areas with home zone characteristics; and
- Courtyards/mews areas.

5.8 The principal point of vehicular access is via a new junction on the A2070 Hamstreet Road, as shown on Figure Nine. Where the road enters the proposed development, it will form a gateway which will need to establish a sense of arrival.

Public Rights of Way

5.9 A number of Public Rights of Way cross the site, providing important routes between the proposed development and land to the east, south and west, as well as the existing Park Farm development which lies to the north. These existing public rights of way have been retained, albeit with the aid of some diversions, and will be incorporated into the design of the master plan ensuring that these local routes are not lost. This helps to retain visual cues from the local area retaining a sense of place for new and existing residents.

Linkages

5.10 New links formed with the existing public rights of way will help to integrate the development with the surrounding area. Some of these links will be for pedestrians and cyclists only and provide clear, well defined routes to Park Farm, Cheeseman's Green and the urban area of Ashford.

Topography

5.11 The topography of the area is an important factor which has influenced the positioning of the development in the first instance and the overall form which the development will take. At Park Farm South, development has been focused to the north and east of the low ridge that adjoins the western edge of the site. At Park Farm East, development has been located on the higher ground adjoining the Ashford to Hastings railway line and avoids the lower lying ground to the east which lies within the undefended 1:100 year floodplain.

Local Identity

5.12 The new development will have a distinctive sense of place which will draw upon the local identity of towns and villages in the area. The intention is to create an identity for the new development that fits with that within the locality and one that is also unique to the development. Local identity will be established through the creation of character areas which will provide diversity and richness throughout the development. The character areas are described in greater detail in section seven.



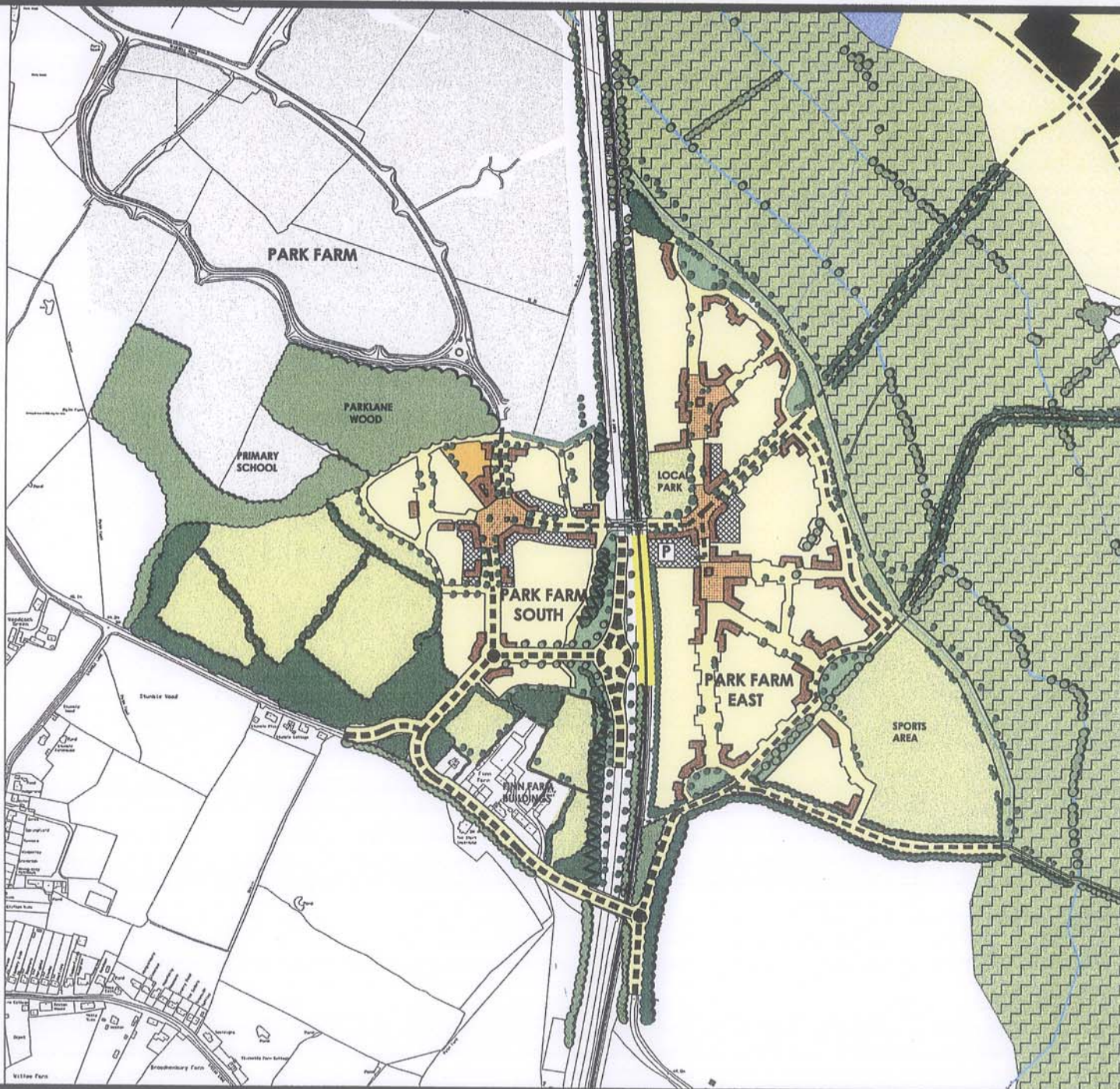
Character areas such as rear courts



Rear overlooked parking garages



Landmark buildings adding to local identity



DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Figure six

- Access roads / bus routes
- New rail halt
- Street
- Rail halt car park
- Proposed housing
- Pub / restaurant
- Local centre
- Square
- Landmark building
- Flood plain
- Existing woodland
- Proposed tree planting
- Grassland
- Landscape buffer
- Water courses/bodies
- Noise attenuation barrier



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landscape architecture urban design environmental planning



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ANALYSIS OF URBAN FORM

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Key Spaces
Linkages
Focal Points
Key Frontages
Existing Park Farm
Kingsnorth
Wye
Ashford Town Centre
The Proposed Development
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The Gateways

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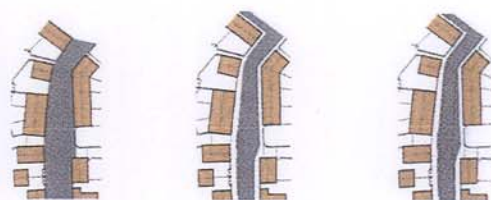
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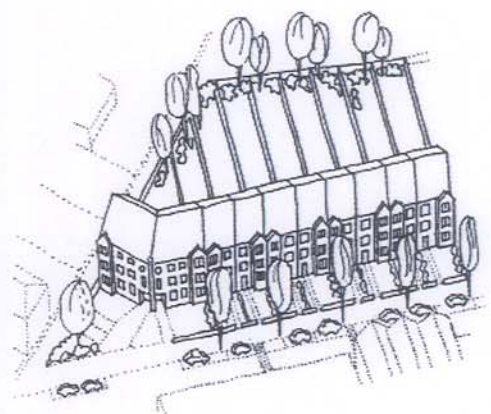
6.0 ANALYSIS OF URBAN FORM



Urban form principles, Poundbury



Spaces, buildings, roads hierarchy
(Places Streets and Movement)



Higher density development
(Urban Design Compendium)



Integrated, continuous terraced facades

Introduction

6.1 The analysis of urban form is important to create a distinct sense of place that is in character with the towns and villages surrounding Ashford.

6.2 In order to create a successful and distinct urban form for Park Farm South and East it is necessary to understand how the urban form of existing successful places in the locality have formed and work. Places were chosen with particular characteristics similar to the proposed character areas in terms of size, its position in relation to the surrounding landscape and with a similar range of facilities. These villages have urban design characteristics which are appropriate to replicate or adapt to create an attractive environment that is in keeping with the area.

6.3 The study of urban form involves looking at the difference between public and private space through Figure Ground drawings. They highlight the structure of the urban form by outlining the blocks of development and illustrating the pattern of streets and spaces. The urban form illustrations have identified the following features in addition to the basic patterns of urban form.

Centres

6.4 The focus of the settlement and the area of highest concentration of activity. Usually the most well connected space in terms of linkages, streets and footpaths leading into it.

Key Spaces

6.5 In addition to the settlement extra centre key spaces are formed around other significant centres in the settlement, such as primary schools, churches and community halls.

Linkages

6.6 Linkages comprise the connections between the centres, key spaces and surrounding parts of the settlement. They are the movement corridors from access roads, primary streets, footpaths and cycleways.

Focal Points

6.7 These are key points in the urban form that stand out from the surroundings. They can be landmark buildings that have a distinct architectural style or function, or features set within a space such as a war memorial. Focal points add to the character of a space and draw you into them.

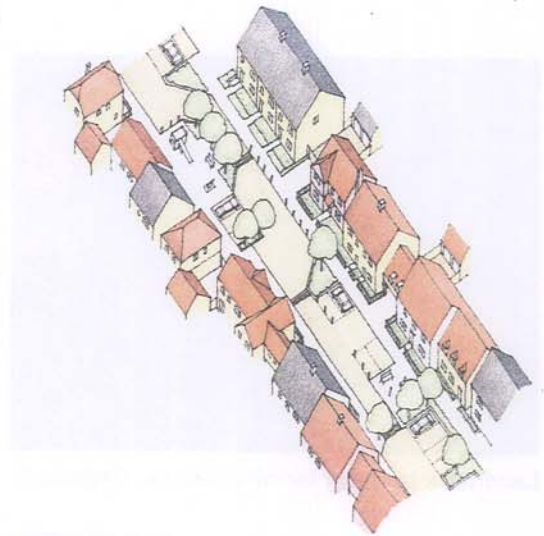


Key Frontages

- 6.8 These make up the built form that creates the spaces, often of continuous frontage forming streets which lead into the key spaces. Architectural style and form of built edge can vary but key frontage provides a distinct boundary between public and private space.

Existing Park Farm

- 6.9 The existing development at Park Farm does not have a strong 'urban' form, in part due to the highway led design principles which held a strong currency when it was designed. Traditional villages and hamlets in the area such as Kingsnorth and Stubbs Cross were also formed in response to movement corridors. However, the villages evolved at key intersections and crossroads around which the majority of development clustered. This resulted in the strengthening of local characteristics of the place.
- 6.10 South Ashford is currently a series of dispersed settlements of various types and sizes. As new development increases, the need for a main central place increases. This gives the opportunity to develop an area of public realm to be shared by the wider settlements.



Pedestrian dominated key frontage streets



Park Farm South urban form

Kingsnorth



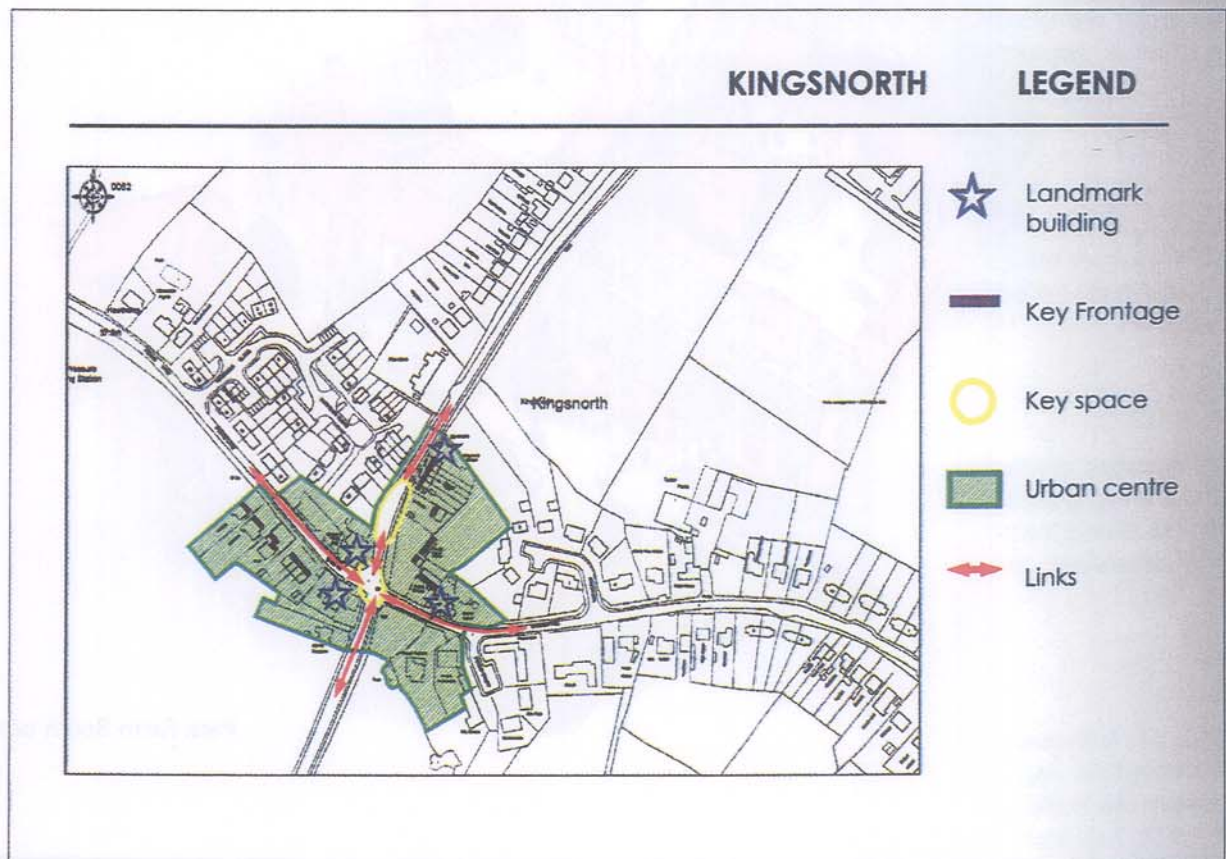
Landmark building forming centre, Kingsnorth



Terraced development at the centre, Kingsnorth

6.11 Kingsnorth is a small hamlet to the north-west of the proposed development at Park Farm South and East. It has a loose form based at a junction between a main north/south route and a secondary east/west route. These routes dominate the place in that Kingsnorth is not of sufficient size to have developed areas of public space which maximises the benefits of being located at a cross roads (for trade etc.). The main core of the hamlet has landmarks which include a local shop, local public house and places of worship. The character of the centre is not improved by the motorbike salesroom which has located in response to the dominance of the roads. The chapel does, however, form a distinctive gateway feature and announces the entrance to the place.

6.12 The pub is well located and terminates a number of key vistas and is the focal point of the core area. The only space is formed by a widening of the road to accommodate a bus lay-by which, whilst functional in traffic terms, is poor in pedestrian connectivity and access by foot. Residential buildings in the centre include terraced properties which are close to the footpath edges in comparison with the outer areas of Kingsnorth which is made up of detached properties set back from the road. The outer areas of Kingsnorth follow the typical ribbon development pattern of growth along transport routes. The school and church form a gateway to the east but have little connection with the main centre.





Wye

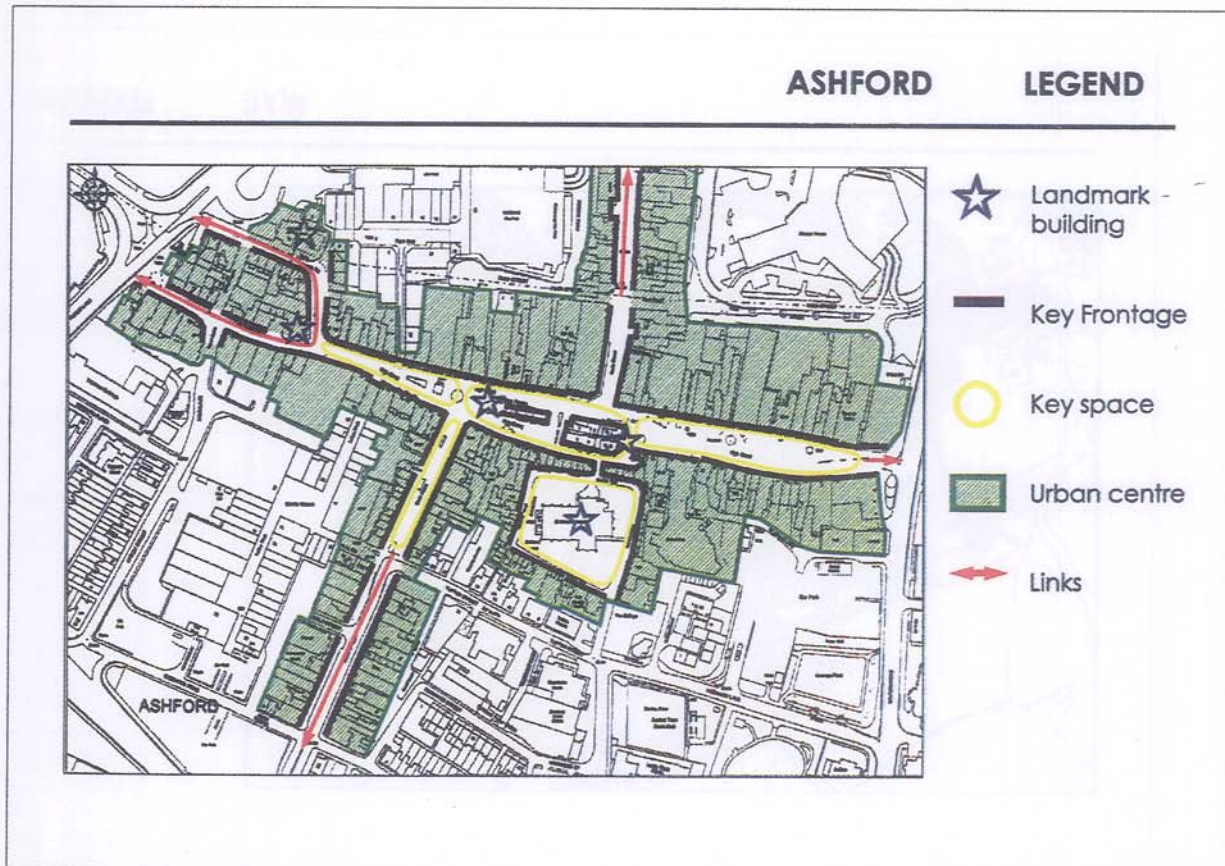
- 6.13 Wye is a large and prosperous village to the north-east of Ashford. The village has a railway station and has, like so many villages in Kent, developed along movement routes. Again a main north-south road forms a crossroads, with a secondary east-west road, which dictates the central point of the village. The village as a whole benefits from being slightly off to one side of the main A28 which links Ashford and Canterbury.
- 6.14 Wye has developed to be a larger settlement than Kingsnorth and has formed a strong urban cluster at its centre. This cluster is surrounded by streets of varying sizes and forms in response to the importance of the connection. For example, Church Street has the benefit of the church which terminates a widening street and thus forms one of the key spaces in Wye. Other spaces occur at junctions where the streets widen to allow movement to occur. Bridge Street connects the main centre with the crossing of the Great Stour River and the railway station. The street has a tight urban form made up of 2/3 storey buildings which front directly onto the street and which undulate to create interest along the length of the route. A strong gateway is formed at the western edge of Wye where the bridge over the river is a focus for movement and the adjoining buildings announce entry to the village with landmarks such as the public house. Variety within an overall structure is an overwhelming feature of Wye. The village has a strong sense of place as a result.



Tight urban form, Wye



Strong gateway, Wye





Ashford Town Centre

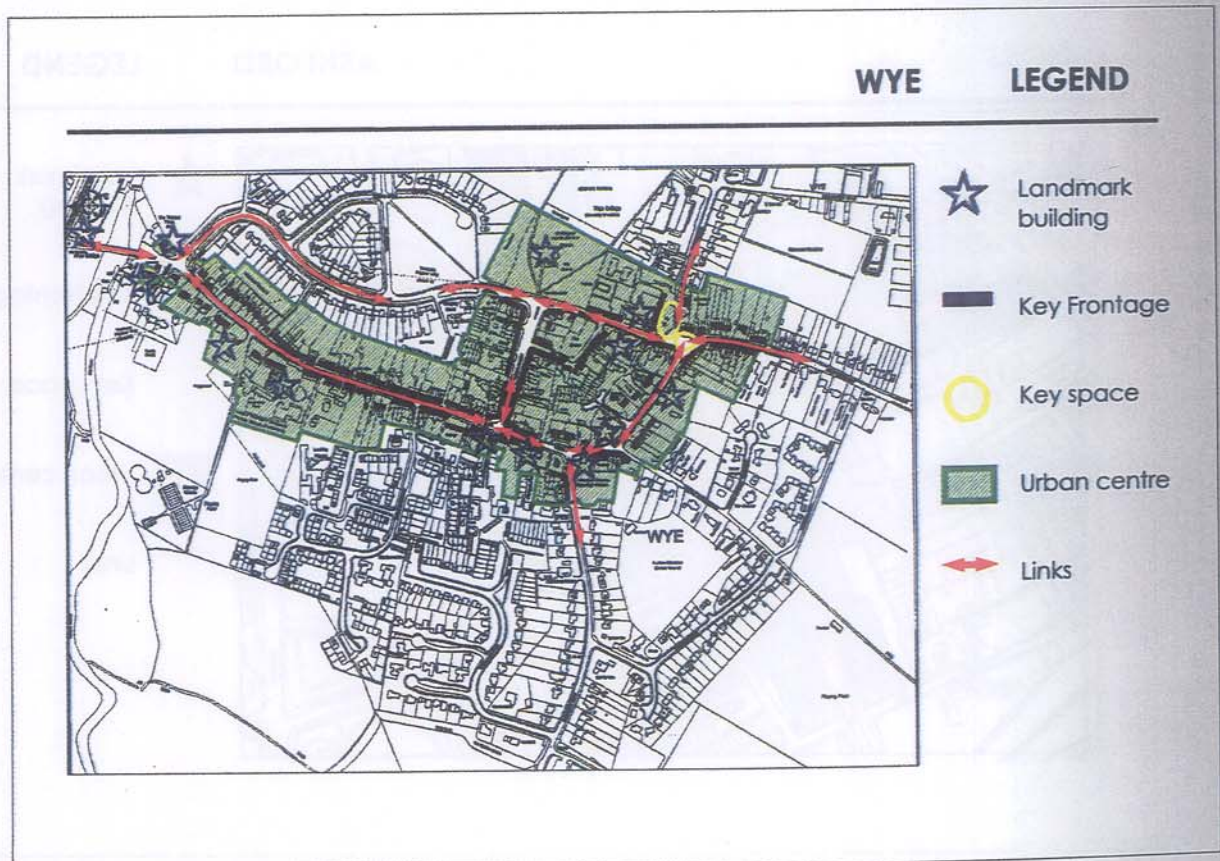


High Street, Ashford Town Centre



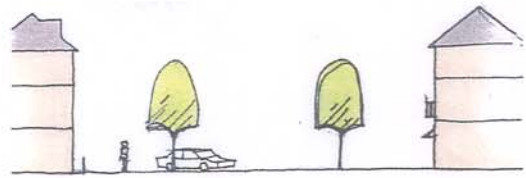
Pedestrian dominated space, Ashford Town Centre

6.15 Ashford Town Centre is clearly defined by the ring-road which encircles it. Within this area, a quality core historic area formed at an intersection between north-south and east-west roads. What makes Ashford a 'town' centre is the scale of buildings and spaces combined with a dominance of commercial/retail use over residential. The High Street comprises a long space which widens so much at the intersection points between Bank Street and North Street that encroachment took place over time and buildings were built within the central space. The result is a network of seemingly tight intricate spaces which are highly pedestrian dominated due to the fact that traffic cannot pass. The High Street has retail units along its whole length which extend a significant way back from narrow frontages. In general, all three main streets are straighter and have more formal buildings than are typically found in villages. A greater number of landmark buildings also appear as people try to out-do their neighbours resulting in less legibility than within a village. Ashford town centre has been partially pedestrianised over time and attempts have been made to incorporate the car into the central spaces whilst maintaining pedestrian dominance. Changes in materials and use of hard and soft landscaping help to delineate the public realm. Ashford town centre has a strong sense of place due to its historic fabric and strong retail base. Lessons can be drawn for the smaller scale mixed use elements within the proposals for Park Farm South and East.



The Proposed Development

- 6.16 Elements from the study of the urban form of Kingsnorth, Wye and Ashford Town Centre have been used to influence the design of Park Farm South and East. The development will have an urban form which provides a network of streets and spaces with a clearly identifiable and viable centre. The following explains how lessons learned from the traditions of the area have influenced the proposal and Figure Six shows how these have been embodied on the latest Development Principles drawing. This is developed further in the 'Character Areas' section of the brief.



Proportions based on historic example

The Local Centre

- 6.17 The local centre is located as a link across the A2070 Hamstreet Road and railway line in order to positively connect Park Farm South to Park Farm East. The concept of a main local centre connected by a street over a bridge to a railway connection in some respects reflects the structure found at Wye. This connection is tempered by the fact that the existing bridge is to be retained as a key feature. Wye also has a one way system over a very narrow bridge controlled by traffic lights. Retaining the bridge allows a strong pedestrian connection whilst discouraging vehicular traffic to use it as a main route. The centre itself will comprise a broad and long street with key frontage buildings of suitable proportions and mix of use enclosing the space. Reference to Ashford Town Centre is made but on a less grand scale. Squares have been used at key junctions between north-south and east-west routes. The streets leading into the square in Park Farm South for example will narrow and twist before entering the square to heighten the sense of arrival and act as a traffic calming device slowing vehicles down before they enter the public space. This staggering is a common and well developed device to form a central feature. Landmark buildings and features of similar form to those seen in the villages studied will provide focal points to draw people into the space.



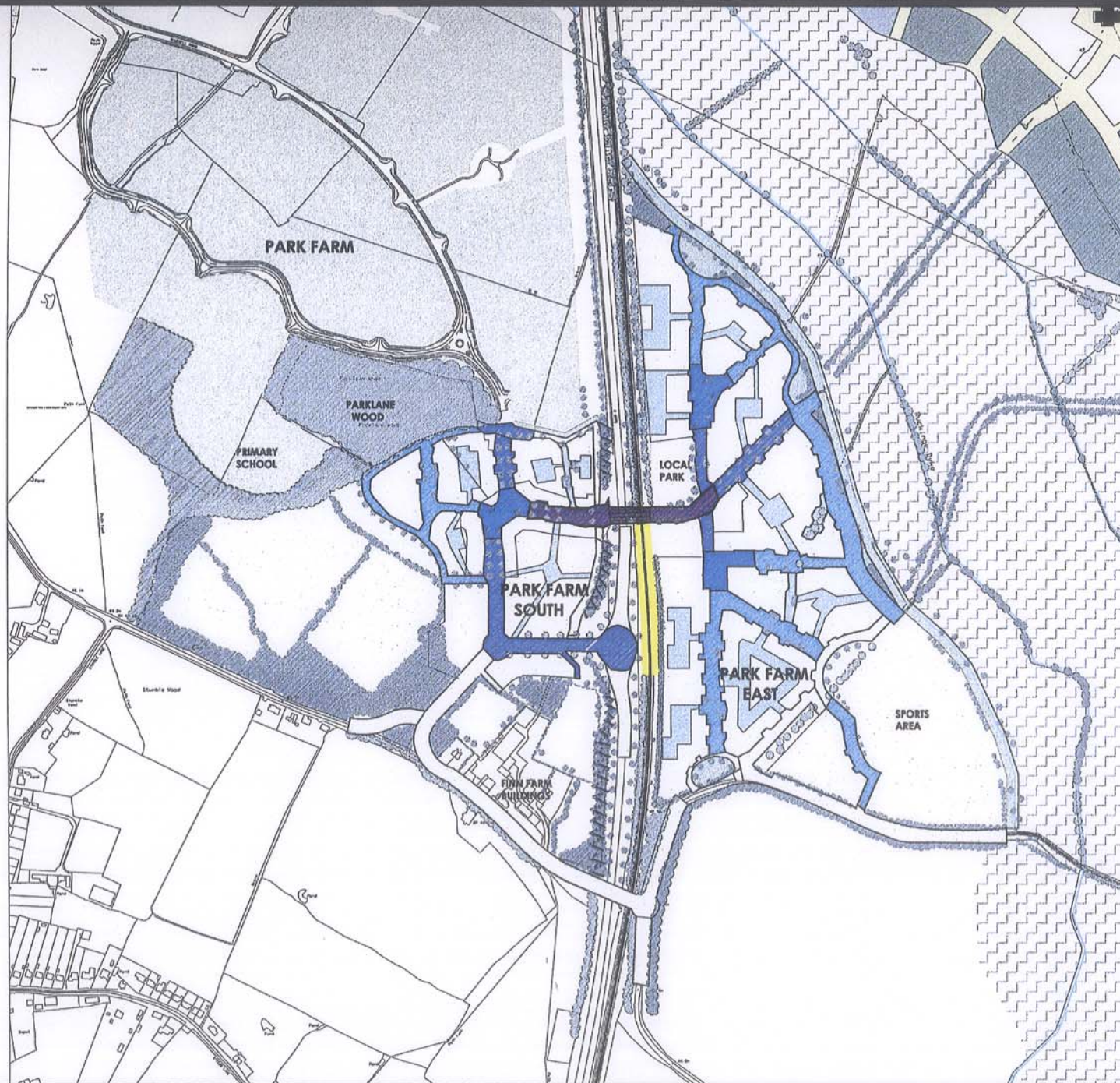
Local Centre, Park Farm South

The Gateways

- 6.18 The gateways into the development all respond to their particular contextual opportunities. The main vehicular gateway from the A2070 Hamstreet Road into Park Farm South is marked by buildings framing the entrance to the development taking note from Kingsnorth's traffic dominated entrance. This is shown on Figure Nine. This road is not a main street in the development and is treated accordingly. The road is formed by key frontage buildings set back at first and becoming tighter through a series of spaces towards the centre. Park Farm South has a centre formed by a square with landmark buildings and is one of the key spaces which form the street connecting Park Farm South to Park Farm East.



Gateway,
Park Farm South



HIERARCHY OF URBAN STREETS Figure seven

- Primary street
- Secondary street
- Square
- Residential street
- Court



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