6 Making the Connections

The Transport Assessment Report prepared by The Bellamy Roberts Partnership, which accompanies the planning application provides details of the traffic generation characteristics of the scheme and the integration of a package of new transport infrastructure and sustainability measures recommended by the South of Ashford Transport Study (SATS). The Borough Council used the results of the Transport Study to formulate Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) as a means of securing contributions from developments towards the highway and transport infrastructure costs necessary to implement the Local Plan allocations to the south of Ashford. The Church Commissioners are fully supportive of this approach.

6.1 Movement Framework

The access and transport proposals which form the Movement Framework presented overleaf are based on the principles defined in "Places, Streets and Movement", the companion guide to "Design Bulletin 32" and "The Urban Design Compendium" prepared for English Partnerships and The Housing Corporation.

The aim of the Movement Framework is to make it as easy and attractive to walk, cycle or take the bus in East Stour Village, as it is to travel by car. The street and footpath networks proposed have been designed to achieve the following objectives, as defined in "The Urban Design Compendium".

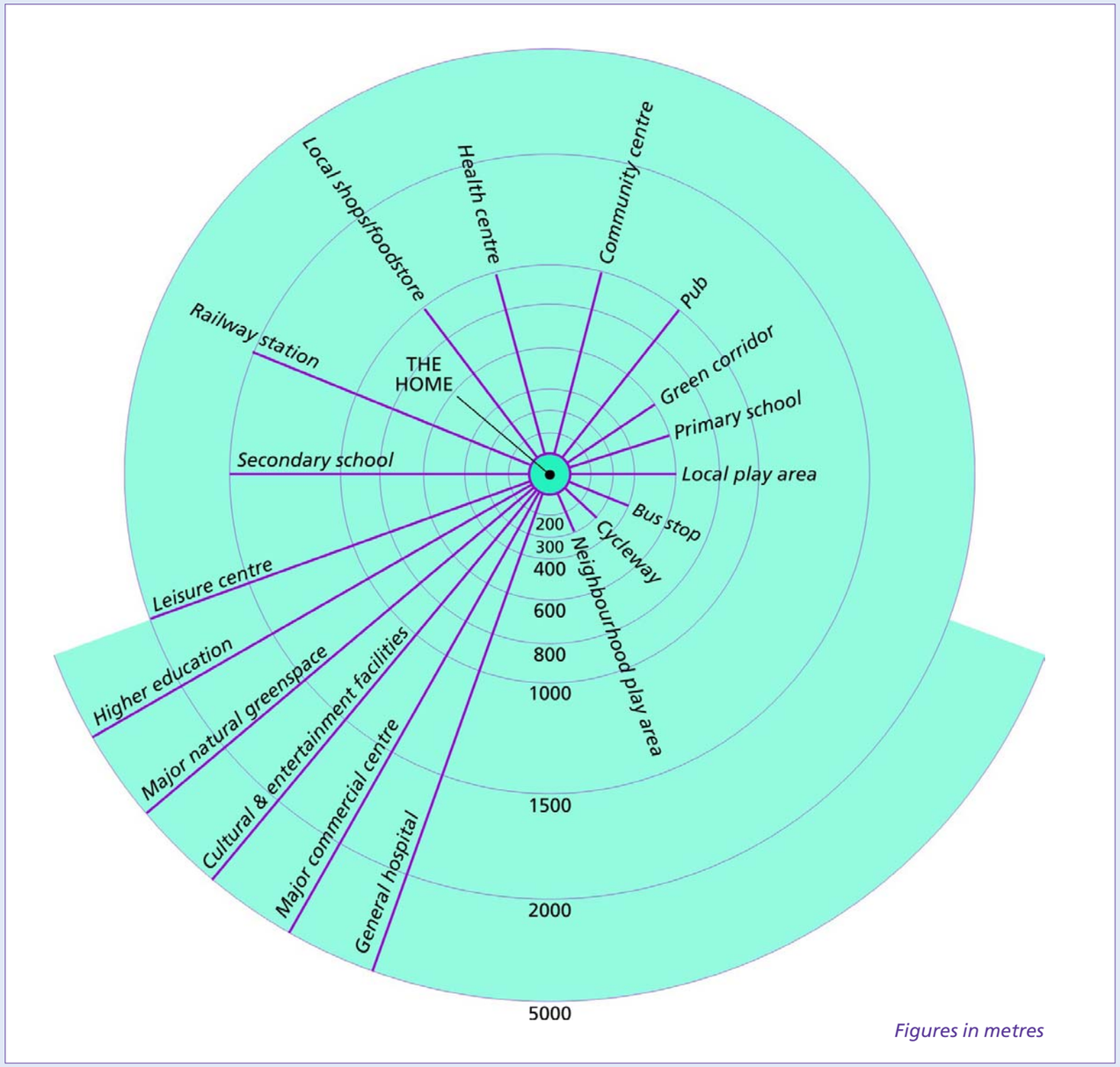
A successful Movement Framework:

- Provides the maximum choice for how people will make their journeys;
- Takes full account of the kinds of movement a development will generate;
- Makes clear connections to existing routes and facilities.

Design for Ease of Walking

The location of shops, community facilities, workplaces, and the primary school have been designed for ease of walking, with the majority of facilities within a 5-10 minute walk from home. The proposed walking distances from home to local facilities are shown in the diagram below.

Accessibility to Local Facilities



Figures in metres

Access to the Site

The principal access is to be taken from a new at-grade junction on the Southern Orbital Road, with a road crossing the open land either side of the East Stour to the development area itself. A secondary access linking to the proposed development at Park Farm East across the Ruckinge Dyke and thence onto the southern leg of the A2070 will also be created.

The Street Network

The configuration of streets either side of Captain's Wood creates an irregular block structure, reflecting the form of traditional villages in Kent with the creation of focal points, such as greens and squares. There is a clear distinction between public fronts and private backs, with primary access from the street, the principal frontage.

Within the employment/mixed use area, the structure is more formalised with a series of blocks radiating out from the central "oval".

The design and arrangements of the network of streets and routes which form the movement framework are based on the following principles:

Street configuration:

- Buildings should front onto the streets;
- Streets will give priority to pedestrians;
- Street spaces should be subject to natural surveillance with doors onto the street at no more than 15m intervals.

Permeability:

- All streets should lead to other streets;
- Streets should encourage through movement;
- There should be a variety of routes available;
- The grain of streets should be finer around nodes of activity.

Traffic Calming:

- The urban form and arrangement of buildings and streets should be the principal means of ensuring low traffic speeds;
- Physical traffic calming measures should be supplementary and integrated;
- An average speed of 20 mph should be achieved within residential neighbourhoods in order to achieve "Home Zone" guidelines;
- The use of surfacing material can be used to mark the transition to shared surface streets and squares;
- Sensitively located on-street parking can be used to further control vehicle speeds.

6.2 Public Transport

A fundamental aspect of SATS is the emphasis on the early delivery and implementation of priority bus routes linking together the proposed major developments to the south of Ashford. A high quality bus-only route is therefore proposed from the High Street with its community facilities in East Stour Village, across the open land either side of the Bilham and Ruckinge Dykes to the rail halt in Park Farm East, and then onto Ashford town centre. This route will also be available for pedestrians and cyclists.

The internal road layout will allow for buses entering the site from the principal access route to circulate through the High Street, en route to the road across to Park Farm East, thereby giving direct access to the school and all of the community facilities. The layout will also allow for buses to enter the development directly from Waterbrook Park (without returning to the Southern Orbital Road), via a link across the East Stour River. This link will also be restricted to bus-only and be available for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Church Commissioners will liaise with Eurotunnel Developments Limited with a view to creating the link up to the boundaries of their respective land either side of the East Stour. As there is a presumption under case law that ownership of the bed of a non-tidal river belongs in equal halves to the owners of the land on either side, The Church Commissioners would enter into an agreement with Eurotunnel Developments Limited for one of the parties to construct the bridge with the consent of the other. Such an agreement could be enshrined in the s106 Agreements pertaining to both East Stour Village and Waterbrook.

In addition, the network of major access roads are 6m wide and form a series of loops linking the development either side of Captain's Wood. This will facilitate the possibility in the future of buses circulating through the residential areas to further improve accessibility.

As all roads used as bus routes (local distributor roads and major access roads, as shown in Figure 6.1) will be adopted by the Highway Authority, the provision of bus stops will be made in accordance with KCC standards; this will ensure consistency with those used elsewhere in Ashford. All shelters will be capable of accommodating the standard display unit used for Real Time Information in Kent.

The proposed rail halt at Park Farm East, on the Ashford to Hastings line, will also serve the new community at East Stour Village. Linked bus and train timetables will be promoted.

6.3 Footpaths, Cycleways and Bridleways

The overall layout of the development incorporates a number of strategic cycleway and footpath routes designed to provide a high standard of permeability through the village as well as direct connections to neighbouring communities and employment areas. The routeing of the main cycleways is based on the Cycleway Network Diagram which forms part of the Proposals Map to the Local Plan.

Radiating out from the employment/mixed use area will be a series of footpaths/cycleways providing links to:

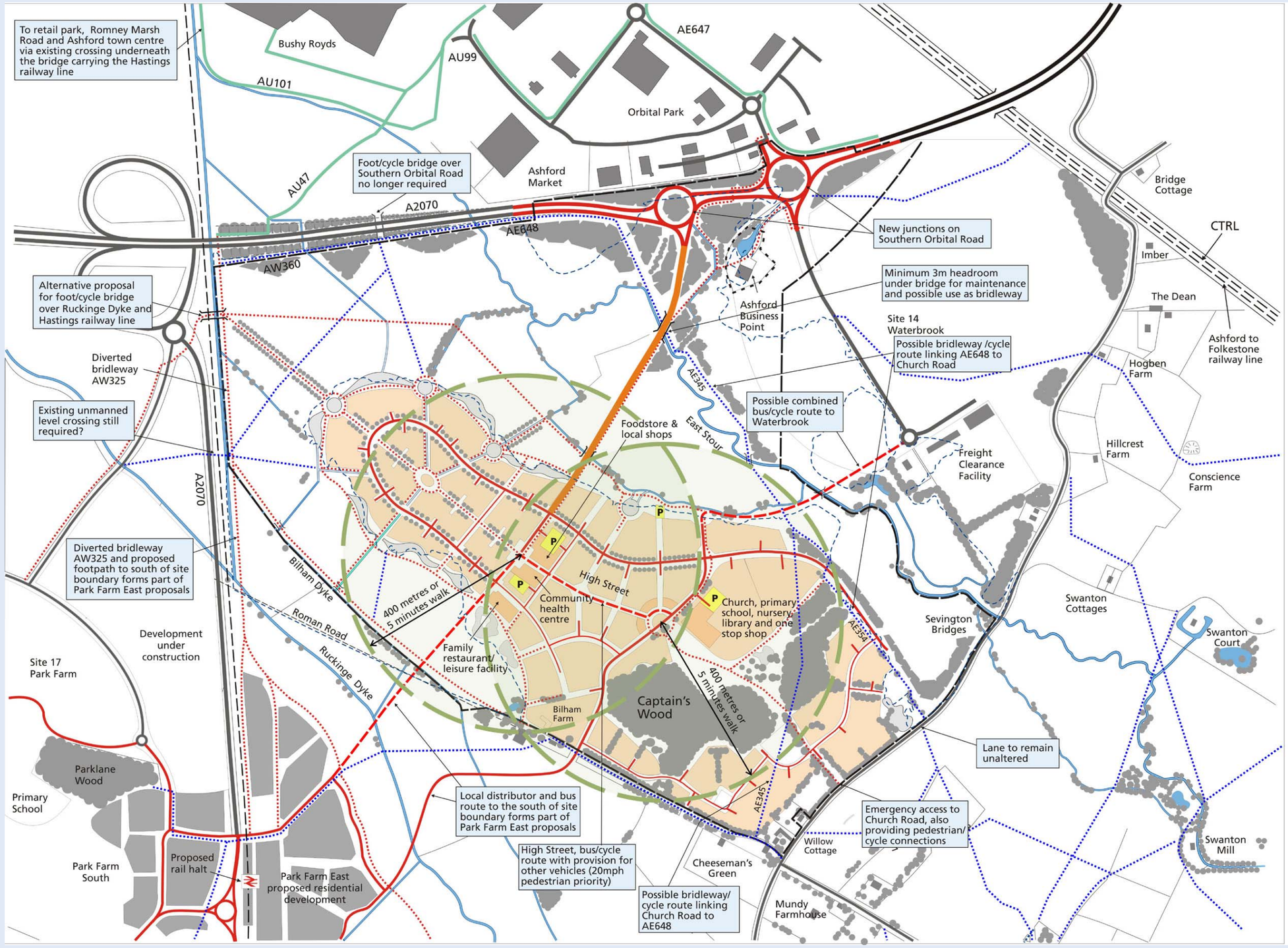


FIGURE 6.1
Movement Framework

- Site boundary
- Principal access road from Southern Orbital Road
- Proposed local distributor/bus route
- Proposed major access road/bus route
- Proposed bus/cycle route
- Existing public right of way
- Proposed footpath/cycleway (including diverted bridleway AW325)
- Existing/proposed surfaced public right of way
- P Public car park

See also Figure 4.4, Public Realm, for hierarchy of street spaces

- Park Farm, via the existing crossings over the Ruckinge Dyke, the Hastings railway line and the A2070; or via a new bridge as discussed below;
- Park Farm East, crossing the line of the Roman road which forms the south western boundary of the site;
- The proposed rail halt on the Hastings line, within Park Farm East;
- A proposed link for pedestrians and cyclists under the Southern Orbital Road adjacent to the Hastings railway line, connecting to the existing network serving Bushy Royds, Orbital Park and the town centre; and
- The green corridors alongside the course of the East Stour and the Ruckinge Dyke.

In order to cross the Hastings railway line, the link to Park Farm could utilise an existing unmanned level crossing. An alternative proposal, which emerged out of one of the Planning and Design workshops, is for a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the Ruckinge Dyke and the railway line at a point north of the unmanned crossing. At the same Planning and Design workshop, a representative of KCC Highways suggested that such a bridge would be more useful than the link over the Southern Orbital Road referred to in the Ashford Borough Local Plan (page 38 and para S13.15), as the latter could be provided under the existing wide span bridge which carries the Southern Orbital Road over the Hastings railway line. As there is considerable merit in this suggestion, the provision of a new foot/cycle bridge over the Southern Orbital Road is deemed to be no longer necessary and further consultation will take place with Network Rail and KCC, after the grant of outline planning permission, to determine the precise location and design of a new bridge over the Ruckinge Dyke and the Hastings railway line.

The Church Commissioners are committed to maintaining all existing public rights of way (including those in the vicinity of the proposed employment area) until such time as they may be required to be diverted and/or improved.

Any diversions and improvements that may be necessary to facilitate development will be undertaken in accordance with a programme, relating to the phasing of both residential and employment land, to be agreed with Ashford Borough Council and KCC. With respect to the proposed new bridge over the Ruckinge Dyke and the Hastings railway line, the consultations with Network Rail and KCC referred to above will be undertaken with a view to providing the bridge at an early stage in the overall development programme: it is envisaged that the new bridge will be the subject of a s106 Agreement.

Within the development area, the links radiating out from the employment area all converge at the "oval" around which the inner mixed use area is grouped. This focal point lies at the head of the pedestrian/cycle route which runs throughout the scheme, linking the High Street and nearby mixed use areas to the residential neighbourhoods either side of Captain's Wood. Connected by a network of footpaths and cycleways linking into this spine route, most neighbourhoods are located within an easy walking distance of the facilities at the district centre.

In addition to being located alongside the pedestrian/cycle spine route, the primary school is served by the local distributor road network, which (as illustrated on page 60) contains provision for off-carriageway pedestrian/cycle ways.

Following the grant of outline planning permission, consultation will take place with KCC (and in the case of bridleways with the British Horse Society) to determine the width, surfacing and landscaping requirements of the different users of the public rights of way on and in the vicinity of the site.

All employment, shopping and leisure facilities, together with buildings used by the general public, will be provided with secure bicycle parking in accordance with the standards set down in policy TP6 of the Local Plan. This policy states that proposals for employment, shopping and leisure development and for any buildings used by the general public should provide secure parking for a minimum of two bicycles for the first ten car parking spaces provided and thereafter, one space for every ten car spaces. At local centres within major new housing areas, provision should be made for at least as many cycle spaces as car spaces needed. In addition to the above, provision will be made for secure cycle parking at all flats and terraced residential properties, which would particularly apply to the High Street.

6.4 Parking and Servicing

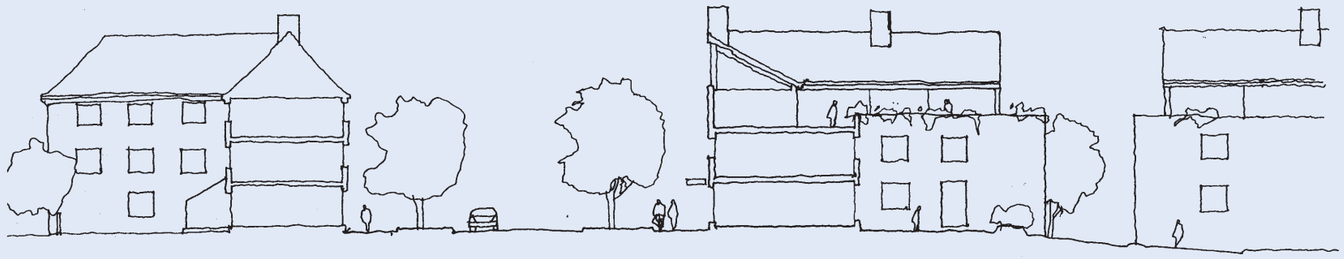
Parking Standards

Car parking for residential areas will be in accordance with PPG3 (para 62) with an average off-street provision of 1.5 spaces per dwelling. In order to achieve this overall provision, typically, one car parking space will be provided for every 1, 2 or 3 bed dwelling and two car parking spaces will be provided for larger dwellings. Special needs housing in or close to the High Street and public transport services will be provided with less parking, such as one space per every four units of sheltered accommodation for the elderly. Based on the house size mix set out on page 33, about 240 further spaces will be provided for casual visitor's parking, bringing the overall level of provision up to the average of 1.5 spaces per dwelling.

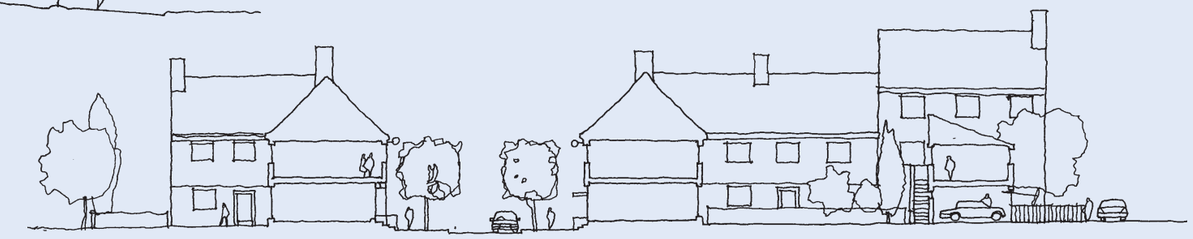
Opportunities for sharing/dual use of car parking facilities will be explored including, for example, the use by residents of spaces allocated for commercial facilities.

One of the SATS recommendations was that employment floorspace should have restricted car parking provision and that there should be a high quality bus service linking the various development sites south of Ashford with the town centre. In support of this approach, car parking for the employment area will be limited to a level of 80% of the calculated free demand (in accordance with the SATS Recommended Transport Plan) or not more than 80% of Kent Vehicle Parking Standards. Green Travel Plans will also be required for all developments in the employment area. These travel plans will need to identify targets for trip generation and modal split and will also need to set out procedures for monitoring, together with remedial action if targets are not being met.

Street Hierarchy

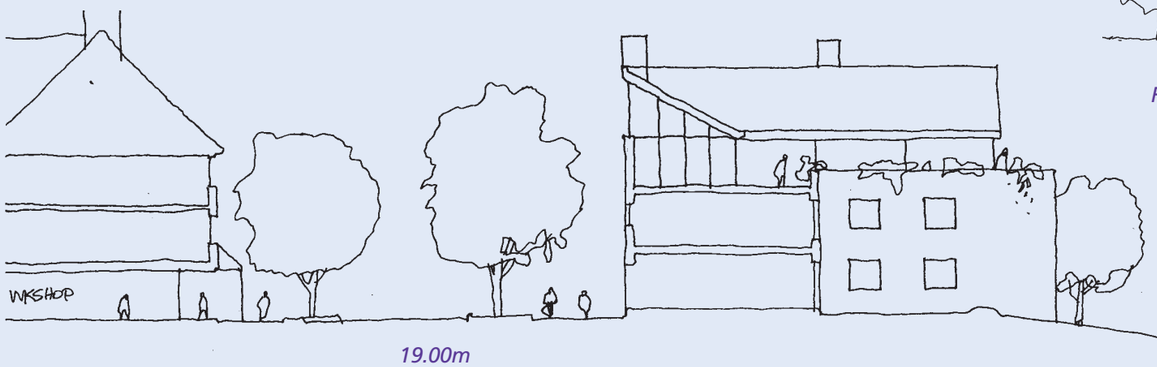


22.50m
Local distributor (with pedestrian/cycleway on either side of carriageway)

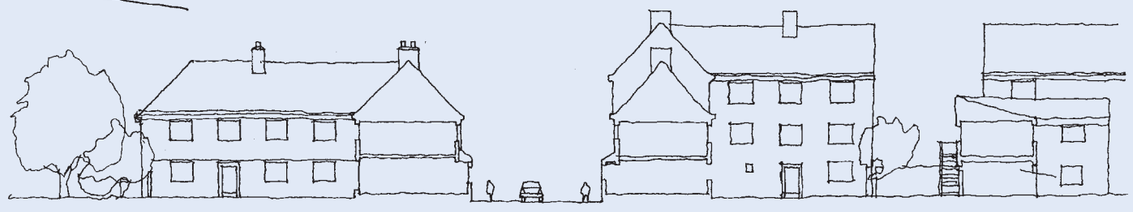


Rear parking court

15.80m
Minor access road mixed use areas



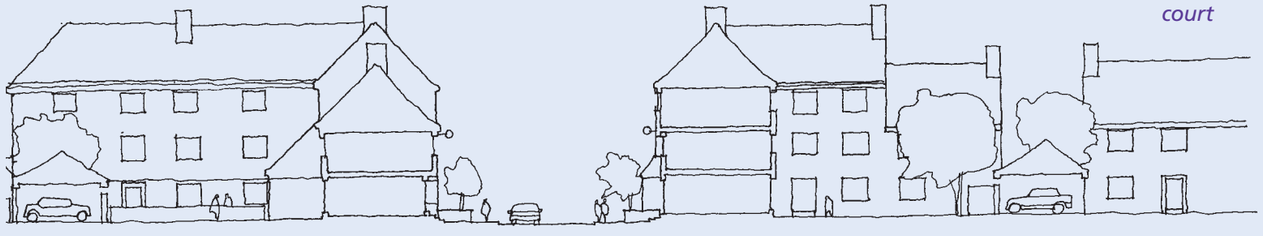
19.00m
Major access road mixed use areas (with pedestrian/cycleway on either side of carriageway)



Rear parking court

9.60m
Minor access road residential areas

Rear parking court



Garages

14.40m
Major access road residential areas

Garages

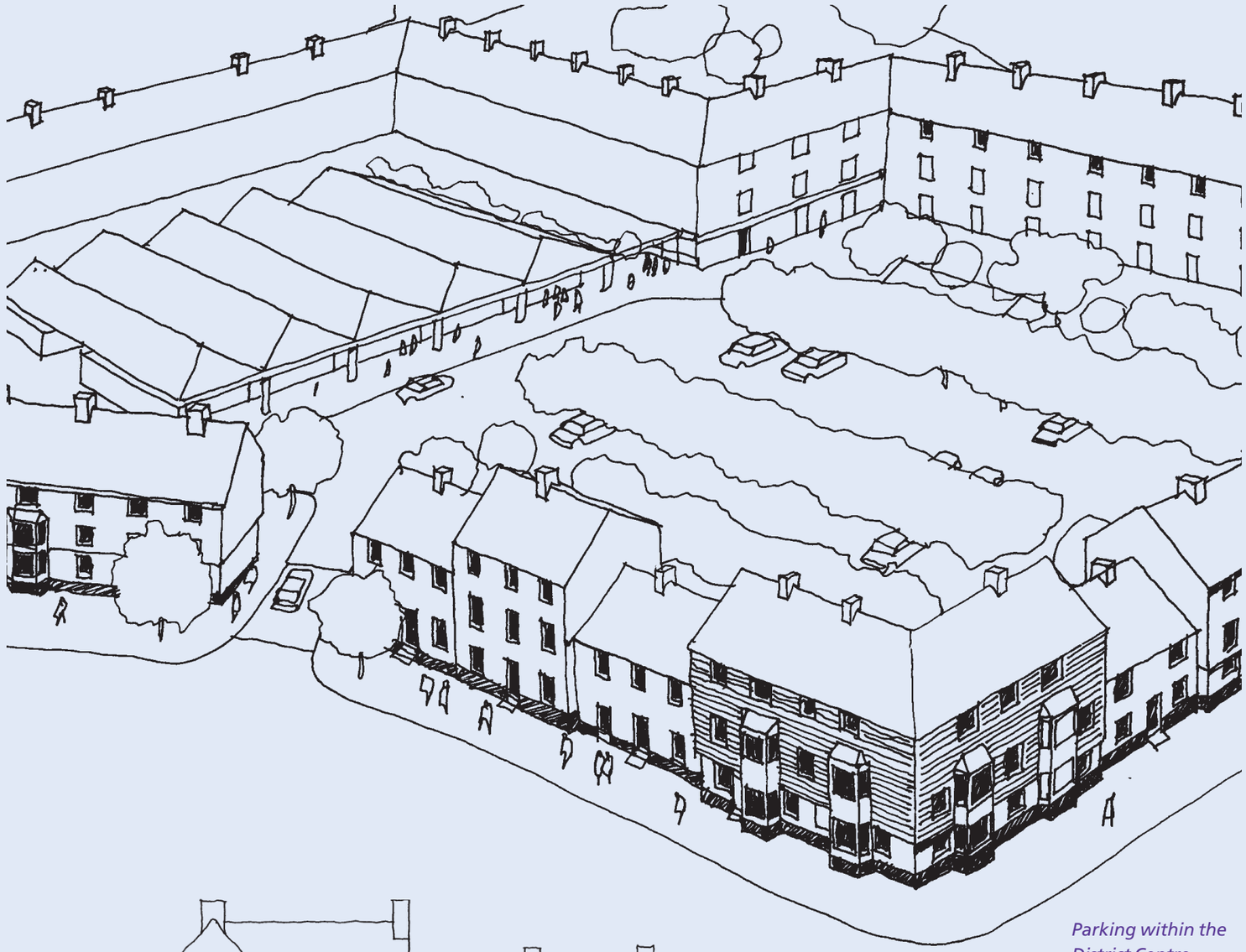
Rear car parking court

The Location of Parking

The location of parking in relation to the house has a fundamental effect on the quality of the environment. The preferred locations for car parking are in secure rear courtyards, where these are well overlooked; alternatively within a car port or to the side of a building. Parked vehicles should not be allowed to dominate the street and on-street parking should generally be limited to visitor parking. Parking can be incorporated within a widened carriageway that allows room for street trees and gives pedestrians sufficient space to pass.

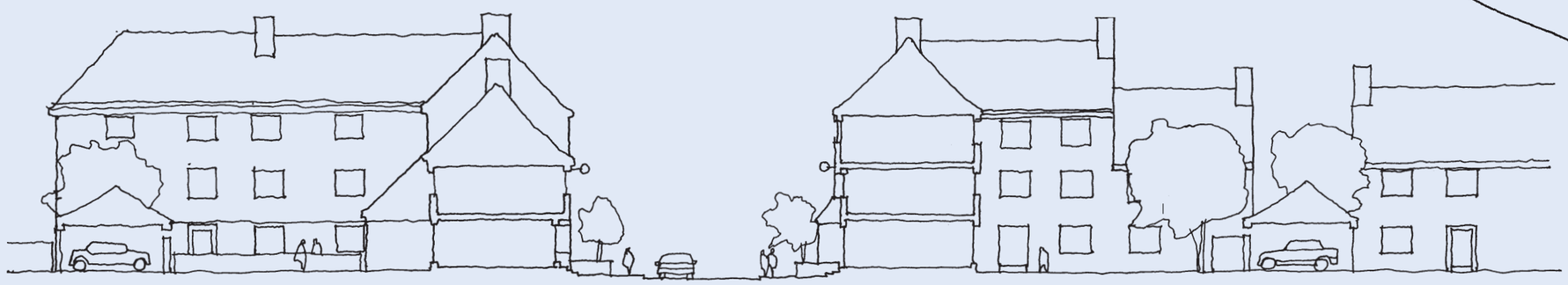
The visual impact of larger areas of car parking within the district centre and employment/mixed use area will be alleviated by creating a strong landscape framework. Hedging and the canopies of trees will be used to screen vehicles and sub-divide parking into a series of compartments, connected by direct footways.

The foodstore in the High Street and buildings in the employment area will require delivery and storage yards. These will be sited at the rear of buildings to ensure they are not visible from the street, or the countryside edge of the development. The arrangement of buildings, walls and planting can help enclose these invariably unsightly spaces from view.



Parking within the District Centre

Location of Parking



Garages *14.40m Major access road residential areas* *Garages* *Rear car parking court*

6.5 Utilities Infrastructure

Foul Water Drainage and Sewage Treatment

With respect to the previous proposed development at Ashford Great Park, the National Rivers Authority (now the Environment Agency) indicated that it would be unlikely to grant consent for the discharge of treated sewage effluent into the East Stour, as the additional effluent might cause deterioration in water quality. It is proposed, therefore, that sewage flows from the development will be treated by Southern Water at its existing Bybrook sewage treatment works some 3km north of the site.

As with the surface water system, the foul sewerage system (including the necessary pipes and pumping stations) will be designed and built to the standards of Southern Water which are mainly set out in "Sewers for Adoption". Southern Water has indicated that it will adopt the system as designed and built to those standards; the discharge into the Great Stour at Bybrook being governed by the consent for the treatment works. The company, however, has indicated that there is no spare capacity within its existing system which could be used to allow the development to proceed in advance of implementation of an overall sewerage strategy which the company is developing for the South Ashford area.

Surface Water Drainage

Detention ponds will be provided on-site into which storm flows will be held prior to discharge to the East Stour and Ruckinge drainage systems. These ponds enable surface water run-off to be controlled and treated as near to the source as possible, using the natural processes of sedimentation, filtration, adsorption and biological degradation.

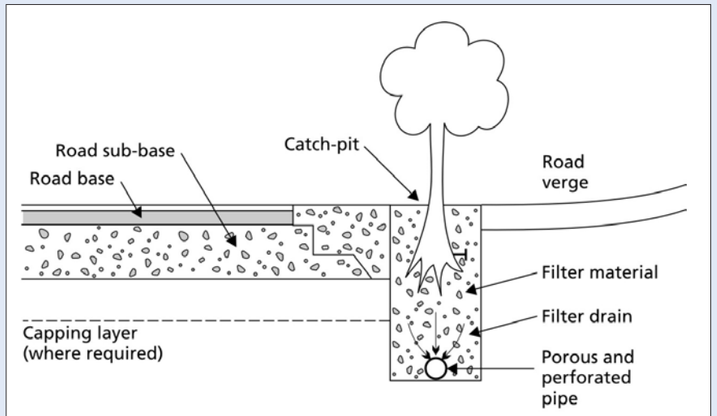
In addition to the ponds, other SuDS techniques will be adopted to reduce surface water run-off to the greenfield run-off site,from the new development and thus further reduce the risk of flooding in receiving watercourses. As illustrated on this page, techniques that may be appropriate to the soils and geology of the site and the nature of the urban form proposed include the collection of roadside drainage to tree catch-pits (for example alongside the circular road in the employment/mixed use area); the use of permeable (porous) pavements (collecting into drains) as an alternative to conventional paving in car parking areas, driveways, footways and possibly carriageways; and the use of filter swales on the edge of the built-up area.

The precise form of the techniques to be used on-site will be determined at the detailed design stage in accordance with current best practice as recommended by the Environment Agency and the Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA).

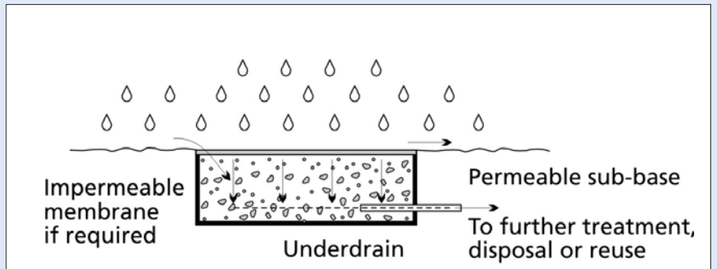
Any part of a traditional surface water system will be designed and built to the standards set out in "Sewers for Adoption" and other relevant standards produced by Southern Water, who would wish to approve the design prior to adoption. The company has, however, stated that whilst it will adopt pipelines and free discharges and pumping stations, this does not extend to swales, balancing ponds or other SuDS. Arrangements for adoption of the SuDS to be used on-site will be determined after outline planning permission has been granted, taking account of the advice given in PPG25 (para 61).

Water Supply

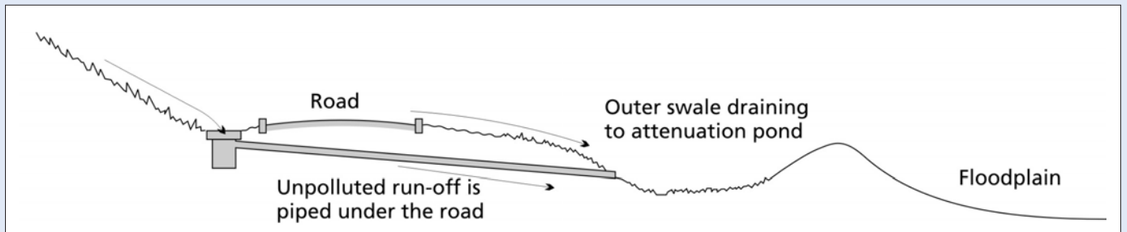
Mid Kent Water has confirmed that it has sufficient water resources available to supply the proposed development. The Company's current intention is that the water will be supplied from Potters Corner Reservoir, situated about 3km north west of Ashford. A requisition order will be submitted after the grant of outline planning permission and the supply will be provided jointly with Park Farm East.



Cross-section through a filter drain
Source: CIRIA



Permeable pavement used for storage
Source: CIRIA



Road run-off passing through a filter strip and into a swale
Source: CIRIA