

Sandhurst Neighbourhood Plan

Appendix 5

Chapter 2

Sandhurst study area

The overall character of Sandhurst is formed by a patchwork of separate housing estates. These are of varying quality and character, depending when they were developed. This study highlights a few that are distinct in character and of positive quality. In between these lie areas defined by historic development clusters. Parts of areas B,C, D and E fall within 400m of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).



Structure and Landscape Setting

Area A: Little Sandhurst

- The pattern of streets and plot layout are evident on historic maps published between 1904 to 1939. Since then it has remained fairly undisturbed and many of the old buildings have been retained, although gaps have been filled by newer development;
- The layout is informal and irregular. Houses are not necessarily orientated towards the street which, together with steeply sloping topography, creates an interesting and varied streetscape;
- Some smaller lanes are in the form of unmade roads which emphasises their informal character;
- The area north of Forest End Road is informal with large houses set within plots and screened from streets/paths;
- Overall most houses in this character area are set behind a front garden with hedges and/or walls defining the boundary;
- Variation in plot sizes – from smaller and narrow in the older western part to larger grounds at Forest End; and
- The area is bounded to the south and west by modern residential development of a different character.

Landscape setting

- Remnant woodland cover retains link with historical landcover in the area;
- The backdrop to development is formed by dense tree planting;
- Strong link between Sandy Lane/Edgebarrow Rise and the surrounding woodland;
- A small length of the northern boundary abuts open countryside within the Wildmoor Lowlying Forest and Heaths (Entec 2006) part of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. This area is characterised by wet heathland, most of which is covered by nature conservation designations. Mixed broadleaved/coniferous woodland dominate the area north of character area A; and
- Wildmoor Lowlying Forest and Heaths and its woodland are important in providing physical and visual separation between Crowthorne and Sandhurst and a backdrop to character area A.

Area B: Long Down, Little Sandhurst

- The overall structure of the place corresponds to many 1960s housing estates. It is based around a layout of sinuous cul-de-sacs;
- The area is bounded to the south by modern residential development of a different character; and
- This estate has been developed on top of a hill, which allows for long views.

Landscape setting

- The northern boundary abuts open countryside within the Wildmoor Lowlying Forest and Heaths. It is characterised by wet heathland, most of which is covered by nature conservation designations. Mixed broadleaved/coniferous woodland dominate the area north of character area B;
- Wildmoor Lowlying Forest and Heaths and its woodland are important in providing physical and visual separation between Crowthorne and Sandhurst and a backdrop to character area B; and
- Unlike character area A, the area has a weak relationship with the heathland forest to the north.

Area C: Greenways

- This area comprises a coherent and distinct housing estate, developed in the 1930s. It is of high quality and unique within the area of Sandhurst;
- The area is bounded to the south by modern residential development of a different character; and
- Based on a simple rectangular loop of streets with cul-de-sacs extending from the corners. These predominately linear streets are lined either side by a consistent form of development.

Landscape setting

- The northern boundary abuts open countryside within the Wildmoor Lowlying Forest and Heaths. It is characterised by wet heathland, most of which is covered by nature conservation designations. Mixed broadleaved/coniferous woodland dominate the area north of character area C; and
- Wildmoor Lowlying Forest and Heaths and its woodland are important in providing physical and visual separation between Crowthorne and Sandhurst and a backdrop to character area C.

Area D: Central Sandhurst

- The streets to the south of Wellington Road are already shown on historic maps published between 1904 to 1939;
- A linear network of streets and regular plot layout is characteristic of this area. Together with some elements of Victorian development they evoke a coherent sense of character;
- The area is bounded to the south west and east by modern residential development of a different character;
- North of Wellington Road the few remaining Victorian houses have been infilled by 60s housing.

Landscape setting

- Remnant woodland cover retains link with historical landcover in the area;
- A small length of the northern boundary abuts open countryside within the Wildmoor Lowlying Forest and Heaths. It is characterised by wet heathland, most of which is covered by nature conservation designations. Mixed broadleaved/coniferous woodland dominate the area north of character area D;
- Wildmoor Lowlying Forest and Heaths and its woodland are important in providing physical and visual separation between Crowthorne and Sandhurst and a backdrop to character area D;
- To the south of Yorktown Road lies the Sandhurst Memorial Park and Shepherd Meadow Nature Reserve. This area lies within the Blackwater River Valley on Heathland (Entec 2006) and is designated as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace. It is formed by the broad river valley of the River Blackwater, with a predominantly pasture land use, turned to open recreation adjacent to the character area; and
- The openness of Blackwater River Valley on Heathland, lined by trees along Yorktown Road, provides a sense of place to Yorktown Road, not forthcoming from the built form.

Area E: College Town

- The street pattern is identifiable on historic maps published between 1904 to 1939;
- Based on a regular rectilinear plot layout, with some variation in plot widths, however in some areas this has been dissolved by infill development, particularly to the east of College Road;
- Although this area is very distinct on plan, there is little coherent character on the ground;
- Mixed residential to south, north and west; and
- Most houses have been redeveloped and/or extended so that no coherent development form remains.

Landscape setting

- Modern housing and Sandhurst Military College extend to the east; and
- Undulating landscape falling southwards towards the Blackwater Valley.



Area A: Little Sandhurst

Most of the area is based on historic settlement patterns that date back at least to the beginning of the 19th Century. A number of nodes have been identified where a group of buildings/features creates a particularly attractive townscape.

Landscape character

- Important roadside bank with tree and understorey vegetation along the north west side of Sandy Lane;
- Mostly limited views within and out of the area except for a long view down Allendale to the north west countryside and from higher ground at Forest End Road;
- North east end of Sandy Lane and Edgebarrow Rise have a strong rural wooded character with paths leading out;
- Area sits on higher ground at 80 to 90m AOD, with Sandy Lane at the highest point, with the landform dropping steeply away to the west and south. Long Down also sits on a local ridgeline;
- Local variations in landform with houses raised above the road level in places; and
- Dirt track at end of Sandy Lane reinforces rural character.

Townscape:

- Sandy Lane has a semi-enclosed intimate character, emphasised by the built form eg. around the junction with High Street, which forms a local gateway feature;
- Much of the area reflects the much older pre Victorian settlement centred around the Bird in Hand PH, Prince of Wales PH and along School Hill;
- Clusters of original, Victorian, development along High Street and Sandy Lane. These are mostly in the form of small terraces or small detached houses;
- The public houses form landmarks in the street scene; and
- The well and church on Scotland Hill create a local landmark and a focal point of interest.



Retaining wall creates distinct boundary treatment



Remnant of Victorian development

Vegetation and Hard landscape:

- The area is distinguished by its strong mixed broadleaved/ coniferous framework within the wooded landscape to the north, Long Down and at Hurts Hill. The latter are remnants of the extensive woodland that continued south from FH4;
- Evergreen planting, often enclosing the street as at Scotland Hill and Forest End Road;
- Some local front hedges – often privet, laurel or Lawson cypress;
- Dense laurel on Forest End Road and Scotland Hill; and
- Sett highway edging in older western part.

Built form:

- General building heights 2 storey;
- Variety of architectural approaches;
- Predominant building materials are red brick or white/off-white render;
- Development to the north side of Forest End Road comprises large individual villas set in generous gardens; and
- There is no recognisable building line, and little consistency between buildings in terms of form, style and size.

Boundary treatment:

- Varied boundary treatment with walls, fences and shrub planting, although the majority are low hedges and/or red brick walls;
- Boundary alignments are generally consistently placed at the back edge of pavement/road; and
- Local brick wall details including brick retaining wall frontages (eg Sandy Lane).

Summary:

The high quality character of this area is established by the informal plot pattern, boundary treatments and landscape rather than a distinctive form of development and/ or architecture.



Characteristic street scene, with varied development form and mature trees in the background



Newer development is of similar character due to the surrounding landscape and tree planting

Recommendations:

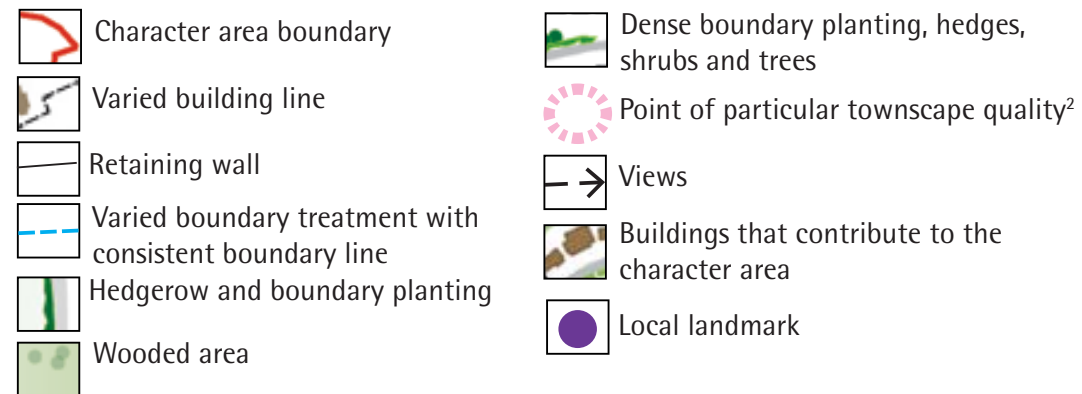
- Future development around High Street should be influenced by the characteristics of Victorian precedents, without being pastiche;
- Development should be in the form of short terraces and detached houses and their orientation can vary, i.e. sides of buildings can also face streets;
- An engineering driven change of road surface, for example to tarmac, should be avoided as it would alter the character of the northern edge and the transition between woodland and urban area would be weakened. Softer materials, such as stone paving or gravel should be given preference;
- The existing street pattern and focal points should be retained to maintain a sense of place;
- Development opportunity in the wooded area north of Forest End Road is limited and only individual houses set well within plots are appropriate. Vegetation should be retained and the visibility of any development minimised;
- The backdrop of woodland should be retained throughout the character area as it adds significantly to local distinctiveness;
- The characteristic setting houses above the road level should be retained as well as the use of brick retaining walls;
- Retain the townscape and plot pattern in the oldest part between Sandy Lane and High Street;
- Conserve and enhance the woodland cover and localised dense shrubbery;
- Retain gateway character of entrance to Sandy Lane over the railway bridge; and
- Retain and encourage greater use of brick walls to frontages.



Smaller lanes are not hard surfaced enhancing their informal character



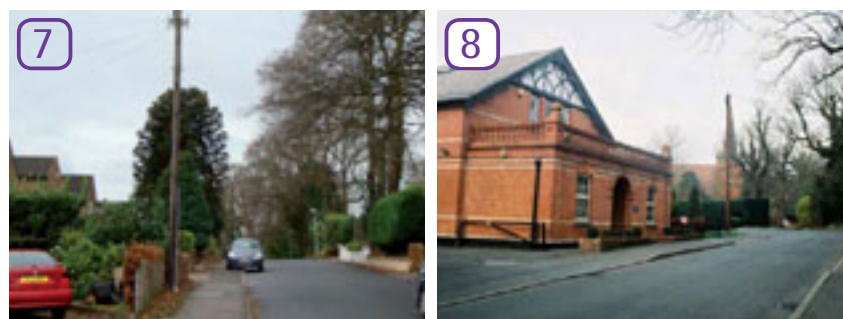
Large houses are set within dense shrub and tree planting



Typical section illustrated the varied building line, tree canopy and soft boundary treatments.



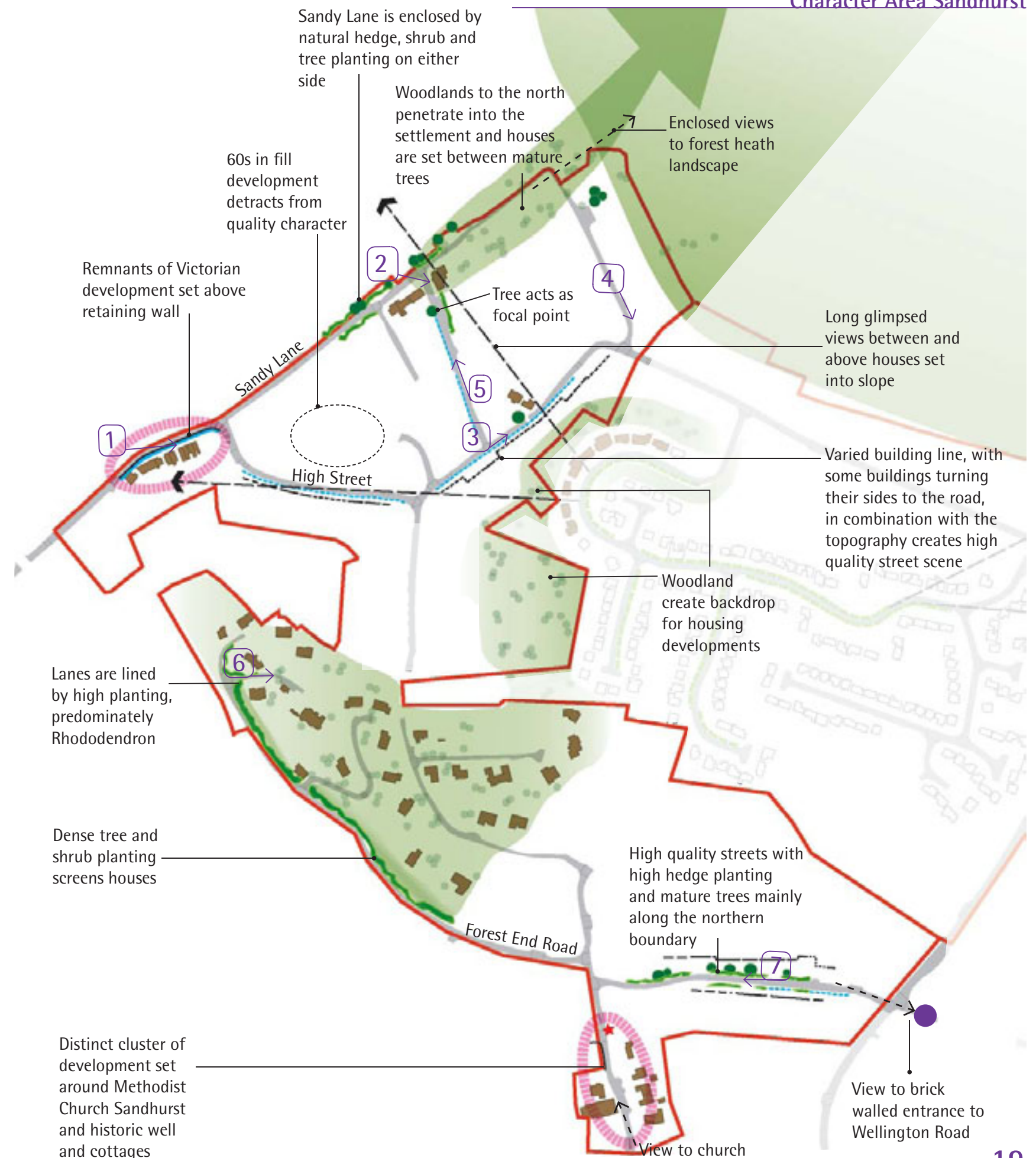
Typical plan of the area between Sandy Lane and High Street shows the irregular plot pattern and different orientation of houses.



Character of Harts Leap Road is defined by boundary treatment rather than development form.

Methodist Church

² 'Townscape', in contrast to landscape describes the grouping of buildings, taking into consideration setting, scale and massing.



Area B: Long Down, Little Sandhurst

This area comprises a comprehensively developed housing estate from the 1960s. Although much of the surrounding area is densely wooded the estate itself contains very few mature trees. This, together with its location on top of a hill, creates a surprising sense of openness.

Landscape Character:

- Belts of trees along the rear of back gardens; and
- Long views east from Mickle Hill.

Townscape:

- Uniform patterns of housing on similar plot size;
- Local landmarks on Crowthorne Road include the brick walls at the entrance to Wellington Road; and
- Housing groups form the focus of views within the development, but there are very few distinct landmark features.

Vegetation and Hard landscape

- Crowthorne Road is well lined with mature trees; and
- Woodland to rear of development extends into this area but with a lower impact than on character area A.

Built form:

- 1-2 storey detached houses;
- Simple building forms, i.e. no dormers or bay windows;
- Simple shallow pitched roofs, often asymmetric with ridge lines off centre;
- Mostly gables on street frontages with fewer ridge lines parallel to it;
- The prevailing materials are yellow and brown brick and white weatherboard;
- In particular the houses overlooking the valley to the north west are distinct and set a sense of character and quality; and
- The siting of individual houses relates to the topography.

Boundary treatment:

- No boundary treatments to identify boundaries except on either side of Crowthorne Road;
- Open plan front gardens with lawns; and
- Wide streets with patches of verges between carriageway and pavement.

Summary:

The area has a positive and distinct character. It is very consistent in terms of architecture, materials, street layout and boundary treatments.

Recommendations

- Piecemeal redevelopment should be avoided, unless it is in character with the existing form of development, as the area might lose its coherence;
- Proposals that come forward, including extensions, should relate to the architecture and materials palette;
- Front gardens should not be enclosed by boundary fences, walls or hedges, but should follow the existing open character;
- Roof extensions with dormer windows should be avoided;
- Retain tree lined rear garden boundaries; and
- Where within 400m of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA there is a general presumption against net new residential development.



Distinct house type sets sense of character for the development



No boundary treatments and defined front gardens



Mostly gable ends front onto street

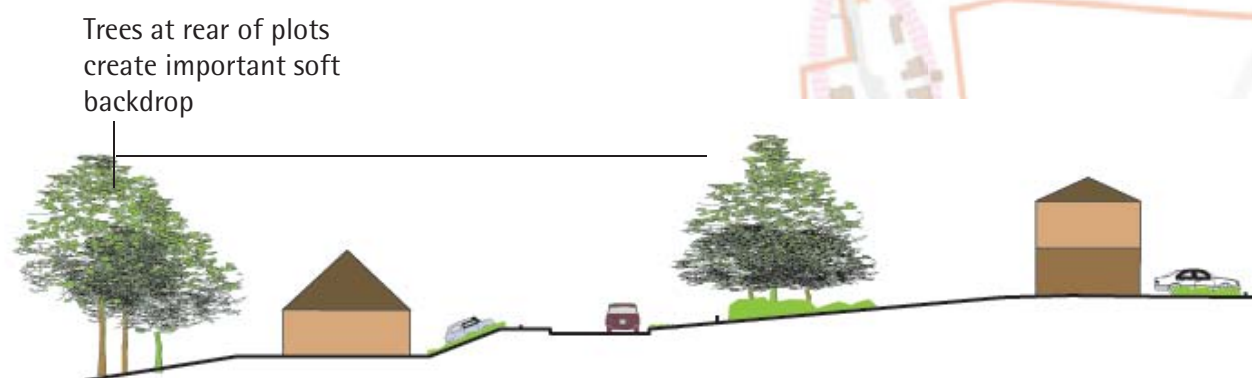


Typical architectural approach

-  Character area boundary
-  Consistent architectural approach
-  Grassed verge
-  Wooded area
-  Key views
-  Buildings that contribute particularly to the character



Typical plan showing the layout of the estate.



Section showing how houses relate to the street. It is typical that houses are set back behind verges and in many occasions either above or below street level.

Area C: Greenways

This character area is limited to the extent of a 1930s housing estate. At its time, this was comprehensively developed. Therefore it is distinct and coherent in terms of architecture, materials, street layout and boundary treatments. To the north lies a densely wooded area that formerly extended across this area. However only a few mature trees in key locations have been retained.

Landscape Character:

- Long views eastwards down Spring Woods; and
- Narrow verges between footway and gardens.

Townscape:

- A distinctive pattern of straight stretches of road and cul-de-sacs;
- Gateway feature off Crowthorne Road; and
- Uniform plot size and shape;

Vegetation and Hard landscape:

- Distinctive line of pines along shared rear boundaries to Broom Acres and Beech Ride;
- Mature trees in rear gardens; and
- Shrub planting predominantly evergreen.

Built form:

- Consistent architectural approach;
- Predominant building material is red/orange brick and clay tiles;
- Roof forms are pitched, including some roofs with hips and some with gables,
- Simple roof forms without dormers;
- Buildings are set in a consistent but informal building line; and
- All houses are detached 2 storey houses although many have a single storey element for instance, such as a garage.

Boundary treatment:

- Boundary treatment is very consistent in alignment and form. All front gardens are enclosed by low brick walls, sometimes with shrub and hedge or shrub planting behind; and
- The streets are wide due to the significant set back of buildings and small grassed verges either side between boundary wall and pavement.

Summary:

The area is of good and distinctive character. Its cohesiveness in terms of architecture, materials and landscape create a strong and positive development.

Recommendations

- Piecemeal redevelopment of part of this area should be avoided, unless proposals have a similar character to that which exists at present, because it would undermine the cohesiveness of the area;
- Should any proposals come forward, eg extensions, the same architectural approach should be taken and a similar materials palette used;
- Boundary treatments should be in keeping with the existing character, i.e. enclosed brick walls with shrub planting;
- Any remaining mature trees should be kept as they provide important focal points;
- Roof extensions with dormers are unsuitable and a more suitable approach should be sought, for instance gables would be more appropriate;
- Retain pattern of rear garden tree planting;
- Key views out to the wider landscape and tree cover should be protected;
- Retain narrow verges; and
- Where within 400m of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA there is a general presumption against net new residential development.



Typical architectural approach and boundary treatment.



Although the area itself is mostly bare of large trees, mature trees form a backdrop in the distance



Consistent low boundary treatment and wide streets create sense of openness.

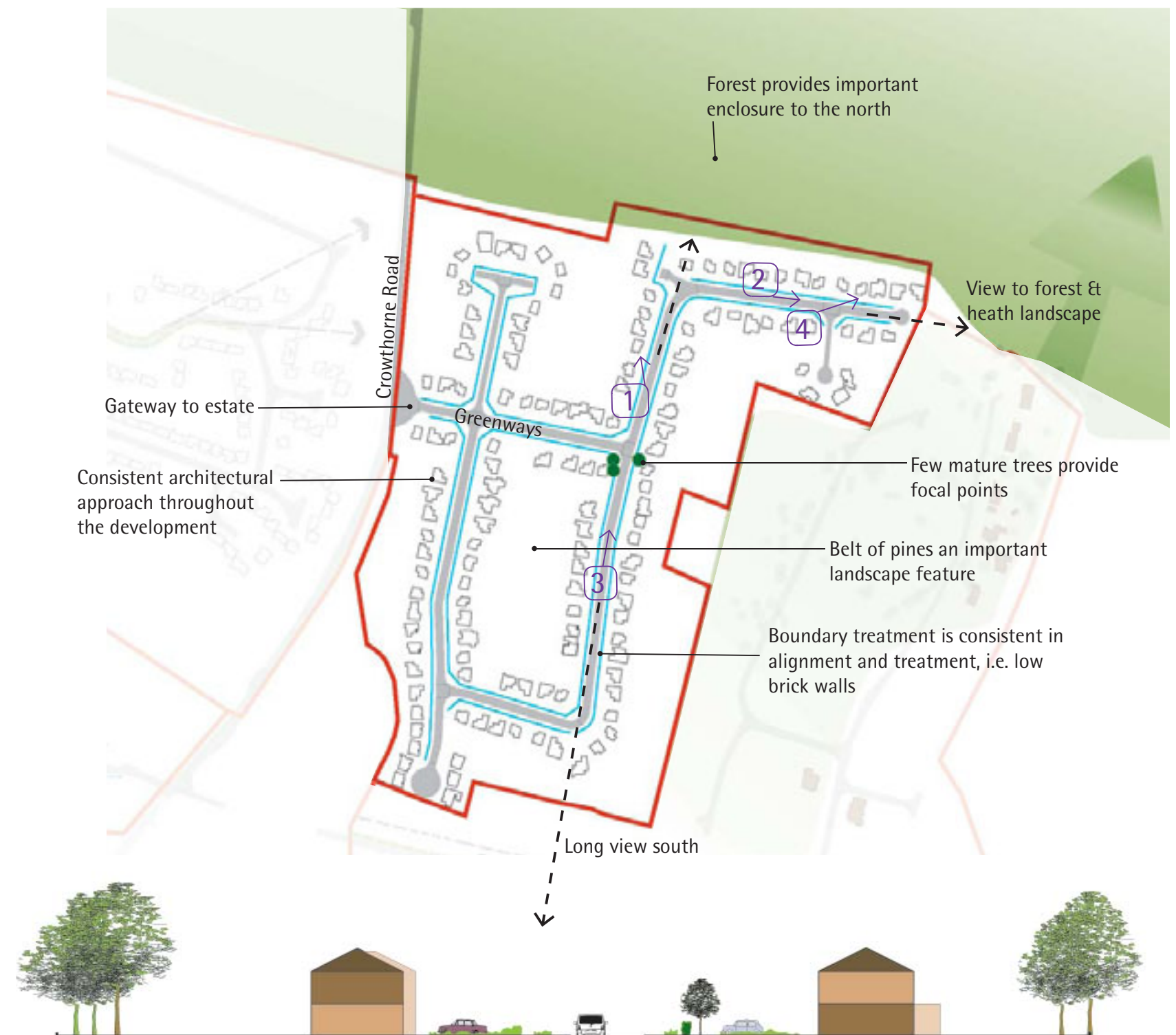


Consistent development form.

-  Character area boundary
-  Consistent architectural approach
-  Consistent boundary treatment and alignment
-  Forest
-  Key views



Typical layout



Typical street section

Area D: Central Sandhurst

This character area is more varied. However the main influences are elements of the Victorian development pattern, most importantly the linear street layout.

Landscape Character:

- In landscape terms the areas north and south of Wellington Street are different. To the north the area has a strong woodland character, while the south is much more urban;
- The track at the northern end of Thibet Road leads into the forest heathland and is heavily influenced by the woodland which extends into the character area; and
- Brookside follows a long linear stretch of land in a shallow valley from Wellington Road to Yorktown Road, following the route of the stream (now culverted) (a tributary of the River Blackwater to the south) which feeds Shepherds Meadow Nature Reserve.

Townscape:

- Although of similar age and development character, Albion Road and The Broadway are different street types. Broadway is a wide street with generous verges either side, while Albion Road has a greater sense of enclosure.
- The southern end of Thibet Road acts as a gateway to the northern part of this area;
- The most southerly section is a mix of commercial and residential with a less cohesive form;
- A small triangle of housing north of Yorktown and bounded by Brookside and Green Lane is tight knit with a very varied mix of plot sizes and shapes, bounded by a mix of landscape treatments. This area appears to have been developed from the early Victorian period; and
- Grid pattern of smaller plots in southern part of area.

Vegetation and Hard landscape:

- Mature oak along both sides of Wellington Road;
- Prominent lines of trees to rear gardens in the northern part;
- Tree cover thins substantially south of Wellington Road;
- Narrow verges between gardens and roadside; and
- Pine and oak with laurel and other evergreen shrub planting.

Built form:

- Building lines are varied throughout this character area, with the exception of a small, distinct development cluster north of the recreation ground;
- Generally architecture is inconsistent;
- Along the northern edge development becomes more informal with dirt tracks and individual houses set within large plots; and
- Materials are predominately red brick.

Boundary treatment:

- Varied but predominantly brick walls and hedges; and
- Boundary alignment is generally consistent for each street although there is variation between them.

Summary:

Due to the varied development style and form, this character area is predominately defined by street patterns, boundary treatments and landscape. The townscape structure and development pattern have been substantially lost along Yorktown Road in the southern part of this area.

Recommendations

- The tree cover in the north should not be lost as it would dilute its historic context;
- A change of road surface, for example to tarmac, should be avoided and would change the character of the northern edge and the transition between woodland and urban area would be weakened. Softer materials such as gravel or stone paving are more appropriate;
- Small and varied infill development and redevelopment of individual plots is acceptable and may not be detrimental to the character of this area;
- Frontage plots should be developed separately for houses and should be aligned according to their neighbours;
- Blocks of flats in locations other than street corners or along Yorktown Road should be avoided as they may influence the character negatively;
- The wooded landscape character to the north should be retained;
- The linear small scale plot pattern should be retained in the southern part, although higher density development may be appropriate along Yorktown Road;
- The townscape and landscape structure should be strengthened in the southern part through a high standard and unified approach to frontage treatment;
- Conserve the inter-relationship between the Brookside triangle and the river valley landscape to the south;
- Retain narrow verges to roadsides; and
- Where within 400m of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA there is a general presumption against net new residential development.



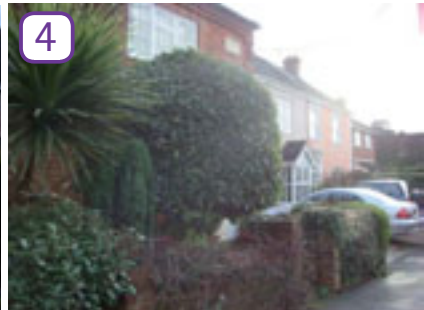
Detached houses alongside Wellington Road



Wellington Road, softer boundary treatment to the north.



Broadway, generous verges between pavement and boundary



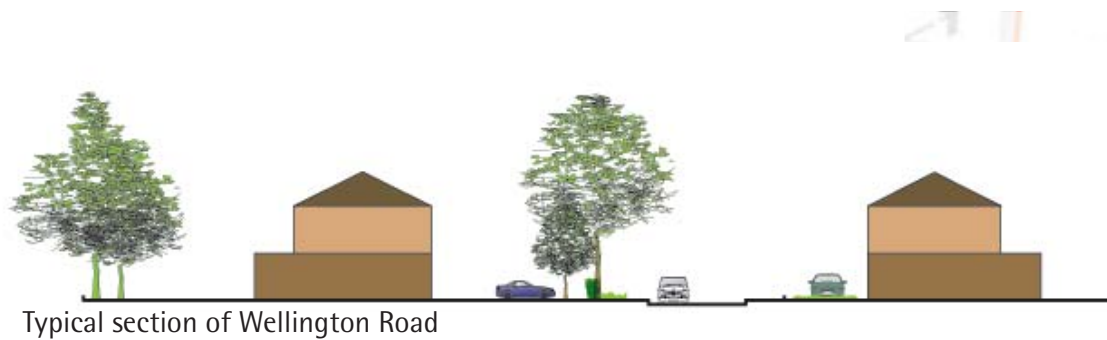
Albion Road, sense of enclosure with buildings closer to the pavement



Woodland character to the north of Wellington Road



Individual houses set between trees and accessed via an unmade road



- Character area boundary
- Grassed verge
- Varied building line and development form
- Consistent boundary treatment and alignment
- Varied boundary treatment with consistent boundary line
- Forest
- Buildings that contribute particularly to the character
- Recreation ground
- Views



Area E: College Town

College Town character area is defined by its distinct street and plot pattern. Historically this area extended further north, but development in the 1960s has left little of the original character. The area is defined by the long linear alignment of Branksome Hill Road and College Road.

Landscape Character:

- Views to east down Richmond Road and Yeovil Road to the adjoining Sandhurst Military College grounds;
- Scattered but not significant back garden tree and shrub cover;
- Long views down the straight roads towards the Blackwater Valley in the south; and
- Slight extension of the wooded area to the east into the rear gardens backing onto Sandhurst Military College.

Townscape:

- This area is distinguished by its long straight roads;
- Uniform long narrow plots, although with some variation in plot width, with small front gardens;
- No landmark elements or focal points; and
- Wide street with grass verges to both sides creates a high degree of openness.

Vegetation and Hard landscape:

- None of particular significance.

Built form:

- Very varied built form with a mixture of house styles and forms;
- Houses are of great variety with little coherent character;
- Material is predominantly red/orange brick; and
- Building heights 1-2 storeys.

Boundary treatment:

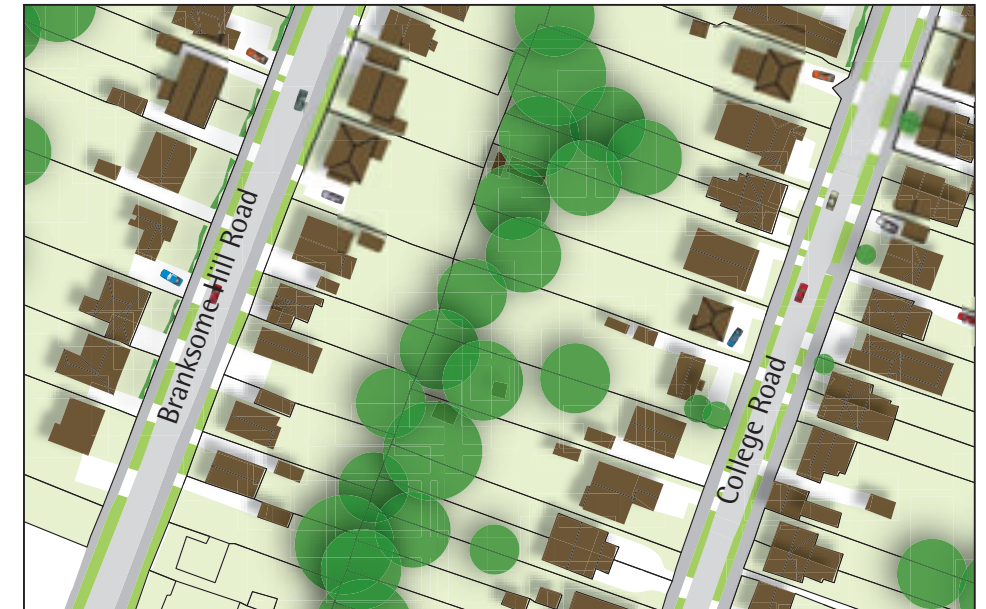
- Fairly consistent boundary line although the treatment varies dramatically; and
- Lack of cohesion to front boundary treatment.

Summary:

The plot pattern, very distinct in plan, is hardly visible on the ground, due to the wide variety of house types and architectural approaches. The only common denominator is the linear development pattern.

Recommendations

- Small infill development and redevelopment of individual plots may not be detrimental to the character of this area. However the number of cul-de-sac developments should be limited, so that they do not fragment the regular development rhythm. This has already happened on the east side of College Road.
- Infill development should be in character and set out around a orthogonal street pattern (i.e. not designed around typical highway requirements);
- Along the street frontage plots should be developed separately for houses;
- Blocks of flats, where several plots are developed together, should be located at the southern ends and in clusters rather than randomly positioned along the streets;
- Extensive wooded links with the landscape of Sandhurst Military College should be retained;
- Road frontage treatment should be enhanced;
- The road alignment and dominance of plot pattern should be maintained;
- Views across to the Blackwater Valley should be retained; and
- Where within 400m of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA there is a general presumption against net new residential development.

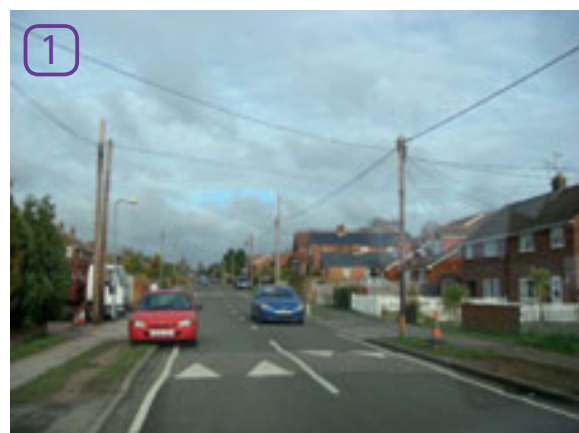


Typical plan



Typical section

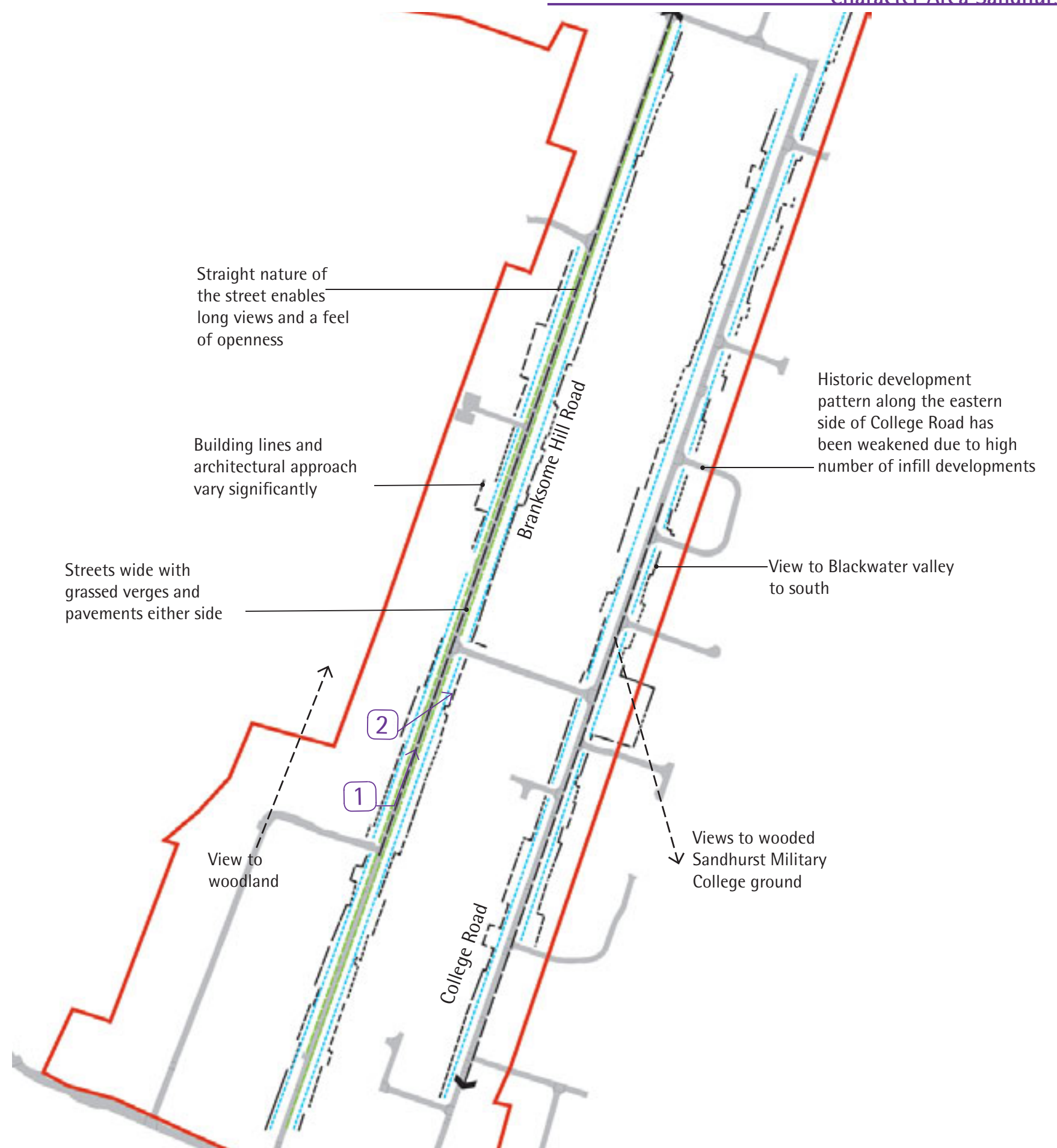
-  Character area boundary
-  Grassed verge
-  Varied building line and development form
-  Consistent boundary treatment and alignment
-  Varied boundary treatment with consistent boundary line
-  Views



Wide streets and low development creates sense of openness.



Houses are of great variety with little coherent character



Central Mixed Use Area

This area, located between character area A and D contains the majority of non residential uses within the Sandhurst study area. The local centre on Yorktown Road is well used, however the area is dominated by cars and has little distinctive character. The immediately adjacent areas are also very varied and contribute little to a sense of place. Despite the poor environmental quality the area creates a hub of activity. Along Yorktown Road development of higher density and flatted development are appropriate, as the area is close to the station and facilities. Public realm improvements and an overall development strategy would introduce a positive character and create a distinct identity for Sandhurst's centre.

Yorktown Road (east)

This small pocket of development consists of small Victorian houses. These contrast with larger scale flatted development on the corner to Marshall Road. Although the houses themselves are consistent in character, the overall area cannot be said to have a distinct character or quality. This is predominately due to the busy road and the fragmented development patterns on either side of the street.

