

Ringmer

Design Guidance & Codes

Final Report

April 2025

Delivering a better world

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by
Jimmy Lu Associate Urban Designer	Ben Castell Director	Annabel Osborne Locality
Giuseppe Verdone Associate Director Urban Designer		
Nicola Jurkiewicz Graduate Urban Designer		

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Introduction

01

Photo credit: Ringmer Parish Council

1. Introduction

Through the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) programme led by Locality, AECOM was commissioned to provide design support to Ringmer Parish Council. The support is intended to provide design guidance and codes based on the character and local qualities of the parish to help ensure future development, particularly forthcoming housing, coheres with and enhances Ringmer.

1.1 About this document

Design guidance and codes documents are created to support the design objectives outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan. These documents provide detailed design guidance and codes tailored to the local character and needs to guide development in Ringmer, ensuring alignment with the plan's vision.

The Ringmer Design Guidance and Codes document achieves this by analysing the existing character of Ringmer and presenting an assessment of character areas in accordance with the Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's (NPSG) vision. It provides comprehensive design guidance and codes applicable to the entire parish, as well as tailored recommendations for the identified character areas.

The steps undertaken in preparation of this document are as follows:

1. Initial contact;
2. Site visit and meeting with the NPSG;
3. Preparation of the design code document;
4. Issue of the draft version;
5. Review, and final report issue.



Figure 01: View of the village sign (source: Ringmer Parish Council).

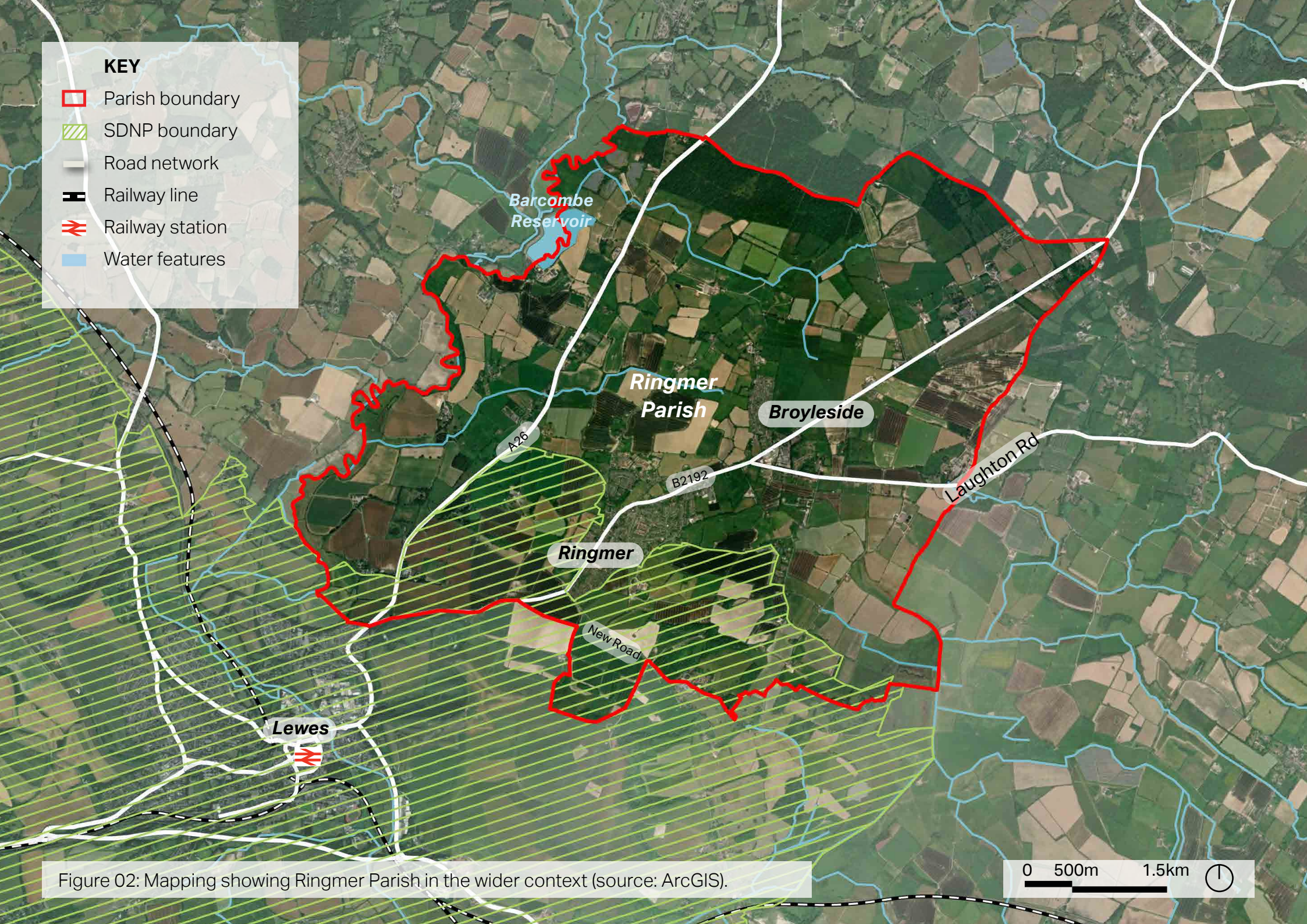


Figure 02: Mapping showing Ringmer Parish in the wider context (source: ArcGIS).

1.2 Area of study

Ringmer is a village and civil parish located in Lewes District in East Sussex. Located just northeast of the town of Lewes, Ringmer is characterised by its blend of heritage and rural landscape. Large areas in the south of the parish are located in the South Downs National Park as illustrated in Figure 04).

Ringmer boasts a rich history, reflected in its architecture and layout. It is home to several Listed Buildings, including the Grade I Listed Church of St. Mary the Virgin, which dates back to the 13th century.

The parish offers a range of amenities, including local shops, schools, and recreational facilities, contributing to a vibrant community life. At the heart of Ringmer is the Village Green, a focal point for recreation and community events. It is surrounded by traditional Sussex cottages and serves as a central gathering place for residents.

Ringmer is surrounded by scenic open fields, wildlife habitats, and views of the South Downs to the south. The proximity to natural landscapes provides opportunities for outdoor activities and enhances the parish's rural character.

Transport is a key issue in the parish, which remains highly car-dependent due to the lack of viable travel alternatives. The main road that cuts through the village is the B2192, while the A26 runs west of it. As a largely car-dependent community, car ownership in Ringmer is much higher than in the District or the UK as a whole. Many properties do not provide sufficient residential parking. While public transport options exist, including services to Lewes and neighbouring destinations, they are insufficient to meet the needs of a population that depends on vehicles for essential travel, such as shopping and accessing Lewes train station.

The Ringmer Neighbourhood Area (as illustrated in Figure 04) encompasses all land within the parish boundary, including the main village of Ringmer, Broyleside, and the surrounding countryside. The boundary lines define the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan, ensuring that all policies and guidelines are tailored specifically to Ringmer's unique context.



Figure 03: View of the tower of St. Mary the Virgin (source: Ringmer Parish Council).

1.3 Policy and design guidance

The following documents provide guidance at national, district and local level and have been used to inform this report.

Any new development application should be familiar with these documents and make explicit reference to how each of them is taken into account in the design proposals.

NATIONAL LEVEL

2024 - National Planning Policy Framework
MHCLG

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

2021 National Model Design Code
MHCLG

This report provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes to promote successful design. It expands on 10 characteristics of good design set out in the National Design Guide.

2020 - Building for a Healthy Life
Homes England

Building for a Healthy Life is the government-endorsed industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The toolkit sets out principles to help guide and assess planning applications.

Future Homes Standard (from 2025)
MHCLG

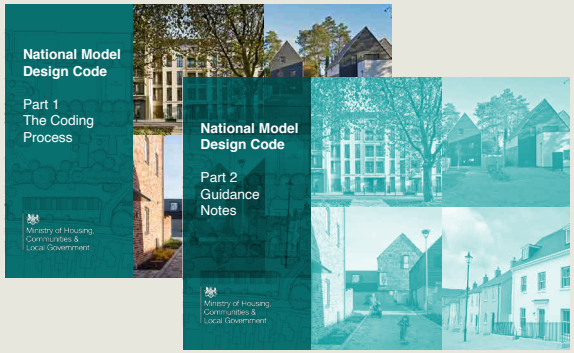
The Future Homes Standard will require new build homes to be future-proofed with low carbon heating and world-leading levels of energy efficiency.

2019 - National Design Guide
MHCLG

The National Design Guide (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019) illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice.

2007 - Manual for Streets
Department for Transport

Any development is expected to respond positively to the Manual for Streets, the guidance on how to design, construct, adopt and maintain new and existing streets.



LOCAL & NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

2016 - Adopted Lewes District Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1)

2020 - Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Part 2)

Lewes District Council

The adopted Local Plan sets out the spatial strategy and development management policies for Lewes for the period up to 2030. It establishes a planned housing growth level of 215 dwellings (Policy SP2) at Ringmer and Broyle Side outside of the National Park, including housing growth identified through 'made' neighbourhood plans. Several residential areas in Ringmer are designated as 'Areas of Established Character' due to their special character and quality, including Gote Lane and Lewes Road (Policy DM34).

Policy DM25 (Design) provides specific guidance on design, requiring development to contribute to local character and distinctiveness through high-quality design, including:

1. Its siting, layout, density, orientation and landscape treatment respond sympathetically to the characteristics of the development site, its relationship with its immediate surroundings and, where appropriate, views into, over or out of the site;

2. Its scale, form, height, massing, and proportions are compatible with existing buildings, building lines, roofscapes and skylines;

3. It incorporates high quality, durable and sustainable materials of an appropriate texture, colour, pattern and appearance that will contribute positively to the character of the area;

4. Existing individual trees or tree groups that contribute positively to the area are retained;

5. Adequate consideration has been given to the spaces between and around buildings to ensure that they are appropriate to their function, character, capacity and local climatic conditions;

6. Any car parking or other servicing areas are appropriate to the context and sensitively located and designed so as not to dominate the public realm;

7. There will be no unacceptable adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties in terms of privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight, noise, odour, light intrusion, or activity levels;

8. Major developments will promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through and have recognisable landmark features;

9. Residential developments of 10 or more dwellings should demonstrate how the 'Building for Life 12' criteria have been taken into account and would be delivered by the development.

Emerging - Lewes Local Plan 2040

Lewes District Council

Lewes District Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan to 2040. Once adopted, this plan will replace both Part 1 and Part 2 of the adopted Local Plan. The council recently consulted on a Regulation 18 version of the Plan in February 2025. The current version seeks views on draft development management policies and early site

allocation proposals. However, at this phase, the relevant development levels and potential allocations for Ringmer and Broyle Side are not included due to delays in transport modeling to assess the cumulative impacts of development.

The emerging Plan designates Ringmer as a Tier 2 Service Centre and Broyle Side as a Tier 4 Village (Draft Policy SDS3 Settlement Hierarchy). Additionally, land to the north of Ringmer and west of Broyle Side is proposed as a Strategic Green Gap (Draft Policy NE5 Strategic Green Gaps) to provide long term protection of the settlements from coalescence; retain their separate settlement identities; and protect their open and rural settings.

With regards to design, the emerging Local Plan sets outs requirements for all development proposals to respond to the climate emergency; improves connectivity; enhances the character of the district and respond to the communities (Draft Strategic Policy D1 Development Principles). This includes responding positively to Neighbourhood Plan Design guidance, Codes and identified Character Areas within Neighbourhood Plans. Draft Policy D2 Achieving High Quality Design in Development further requires development to meet the highest standards of design, layout and construction; and positively respond to the context, townscape, landscape, public realm and the needs of the community. It requires development to:

a. Provide a comprehensive design approach that contributes to local distinctiveness and sense of place through successful integration of adjoining buildings, routes and topography;

b. Be of an appropriate scale, height, mass, orientation, bulk, layout, and form in its site and context;

c. Complement streetscape rhythm and associated landscapes (including boundary treatments) through coherent building lines, roof lines and setbacks;

d. Use high-quality design, materials (natural where possible) and finishes to ensure buildings are robust, efficient and fit for the life of the development;

e. Consider the use of colour to respond contextually to the character of surrounding areas;

f. Integrate positively with existing development in the surrounding area, including having regard to the existing urban grain and established plot division.

The Regulation 18 version of the Local Plan is expected to undergo further consultation in Autumn 2025, with submission scheduled for 2026.

2019 - South Downs Local Plan

South Downs National Park (SDNP) Authority

The document works alongside adopted Neighbourhood Plans, to ensure all planning applications align with the park's strategic aims. It applies in areas in the south of the parish shown in Figure 04.

Strategic Policy SD5 Design requires development proposals to adopt a landscape-led approach and respect the local character, through sensitive and high-quality design that makes a positive contribution to the overall character and

LOCAL & NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL (continued)

appearance of the area. The Plan sets out the following design principles:

a) Integrate with, respect and sympathetically complement the landscape character by ensuring development proposals are demonstrably informed by an assessment of the landscape context;

b) Achieve effective and high-quality routes for people and wildlife, taking opportunities to connect GI;

c) Contribute to local distinctiveness and sense of place through its relationship to adjoining buildings, spaces and landscape features, including historic settlement pattern;

d) Create high-quality, clearly defined public and private spaces;

e) Incorporate hard and soft landscape treatment which takes opportunities to connect to the wider landscape and is consistent with local character;

f) Utilise architectural design which is appropriate and sympathetic to its setting in terms of height, massing, density, roof form, materials, night and day visibility, elevational and, where relevant, vernacular detailing;

g) Provide high quality, secure, accessible, and where possible, integrated storage for general and recycling waste, heating fuel, and transport related equipment;

h) Provide high quality outdoor amenity space appropriate to the needs of its occupiers or users;

i) Ensure development proposals are durable, sustainable and adaptable over time, and provide sufficient internal space to meet the needs of a range of users;

j) Give regard to improving safety and perceptions of safety, and be inclusive and accessible for all; and

k) Have regard to avoiding harmful impact upon, or from, any surrounding uses and amenities.

2021 - South Downs Design Guide

SDNP Authority

Amended in August 2022, the Design Guide provides further design principles related to layout; character; development in the conservation area; household extensions; development type; public realm; parking and services; green and blue infrastructure; residential amenity; boundaries; materials; architectural detail; social and environmental sustainability and dark skies.

2015 - Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan

Ringmer Parish Council

'Ringmer to 2030' contains strategies for employment and residential growth in the parish. It describes four key principles that should be respected by all new development. The plan has involved hundreds of residents and various stakeholders. The 2015 Ringmer NP Design Statement was the first design guide produced in East Sussex.

Other Planning Documents:

- East Sussex Guidance on Parking at New Developments
- East Sussex Local Design Guide for Residential Development
- Lewes Sustainable Building Design
- Ringmer Tree Planting Policy
- Ringmer Biodiversity Policy



Baseline study

02

Photo credit: Ringmer Parish Council

2. Baseline study

This chapter describes the local context and key characteristics of Ringmer Parish related to built forms, heritage, the built environment, streetscape, land use and green infrastructure.

2.1 Parish structure

Ringmer Parish is structured around its central village, characterised by a mix of historic buildings, open green spaces, and modern developments. The parish encompasses a diverse range of environments, with the main uses being residential and few industrial units.

The A26 and B2192 are the access roads to and from Ringmer, facilitating connectivity to nearby towns and cities. Bus services link Ringmer to Lewes, Brighton, and Eastbourne. Residents rely on private vehicular links to Uckfield and most of the employment sites within the parish.

The South Downs National Park (SDNP) occupies large areas of the parish. More information on the land uses in the parish can be found in Appendix 2 of Ringmer NP.

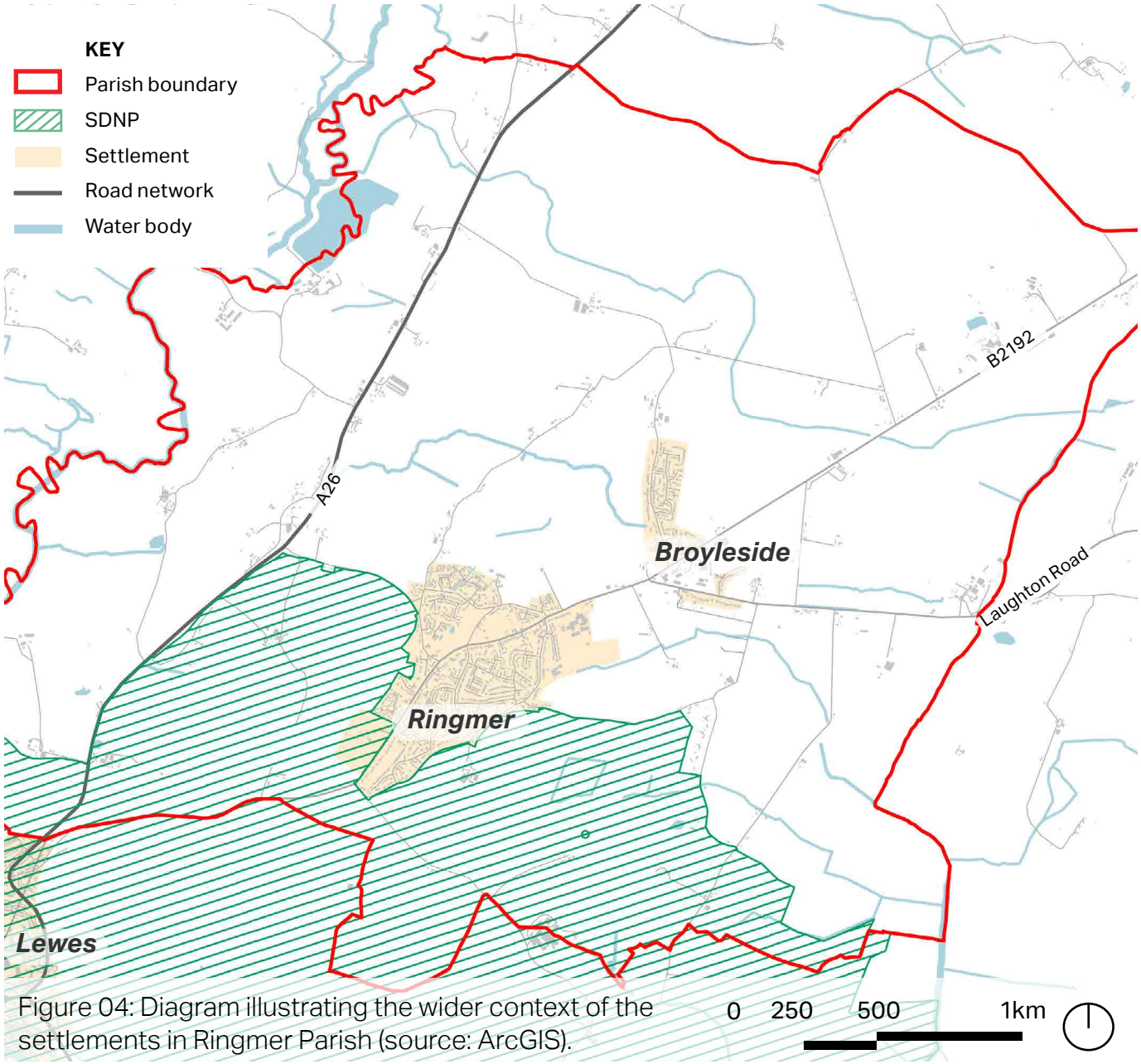


Figure 04: Diagram illustrating the wider context of the settlements in Ringmer Parish (source: ArcGIS).

2.2 Heritage

Ringmer Parish is steeped in historical and architectural significance, evident within its Conservation Area, Village Green and distinct smaller settlements along rural lanes to the north of the main village.

There are 49 Listed Buildings within the parish, including one Grade I and one Grade II* Listed structures. Ringmer NP provides a list of important heritage buildings that meet criteria for listing. Appendix 5 of the NP also includes 20 unlisted important heritage buildings, for example Ringmer Village Hall.

At its heart stands the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, a Grade I Listed Building and the parish's most prominent historic landmark. Originating in the 13th century, it exemplifies the traditions of medieval ecclesiastical architecture.

The Grade II Listed Ringmer War Memorial and the Village Well House are strategically located on the Village Green. Together, they serve as key landmarks along Lewes Road, offering both residents and visitors a sense of place and historical significance.

Another notable feature within the parish is the remains of Glyndebourne Windmill, a Grade II Listed structure. Although the windmill itself is no longer intact, the central post remains as a lasting symbol of its historical significance.

Ringmer has two Scheduled Monuments, the medieval ringwork at Clay Hill and the medieval settlement site on eastern side of Saxon Down that lies across the Ringmer-Glynde parish boundary.



Figure 05: View of the Grade II Listed Village Well House and Pump On The Green (source: Ringmer Parish Council).

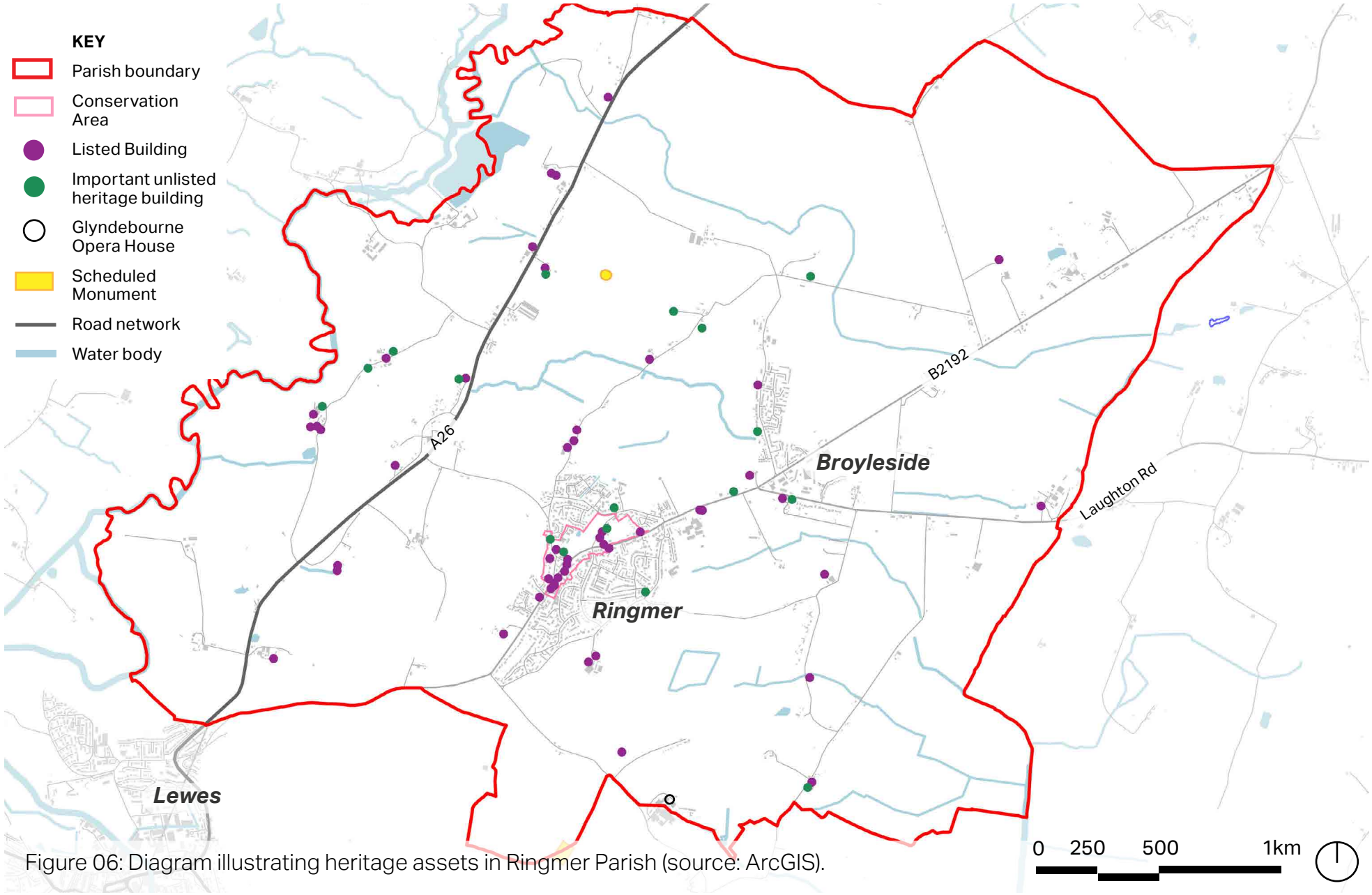


Figure 06: Diagram illustrating heritage assets in Ringmer Parish (source: ArcGIS).

Examples of Listed Buildings



Figure 07: View of The Briars (Grade II Listed) along Lewes Road.



Figure 08: Little Manor (Grade II* Listed).



Figure 09: The Yews (Grade II Listed), Lewes Road (source: Ringmer Parish Council).



Figure 10: Sylvester Cottage (Grade II Listed), Lewes Road.



Figure 11: Grade II Listed Sylvester Cottage and Old Cottage (source: geograph.org.uk).



Figure 12: Grade II* Listed Little Manor (source: Ringmer Parish Council).

Examples of important unlisted heritage buildings



Figure 13: Wellingham Vane (source: Ringmer NP, Ringmer Parish Council).



Figure 14: Back Green Cottage (source: Ringmer NP, Ringmer Parish Council).



Figure 15: Lea Cottage & Sarnic (source: Ringmer NP, Ringmer Parish Council).



Figure 16: Little Thatch (source: Ringmer NP, Ringmer Parish Council).



Figure 17: Nos.1-4 North Road, Ringmer Green (source: Ringmer NP, Ringmer Parish Council).

2.3 Facilities

The heart of Ringmer features the highest concentration of historic and locally important buildings. This area is marked by its compact layout, narrow roads, and intimate scale, preserving the parish's historic character.

The centre of the main village serves as a focal point for commercial and community activities. It includes local shops, cafés, pubs, and essential services that cater to residents' daily needs, contributing to the village life. However, residents rely on the neighbouring towns for shopping. The parish also contains healthcare facilities and a pharmacy on Anchor Field.

There are multiple business, agricultural and industrial clusters scattered outside the settlements of Ringmer and Broyleside, which are mostly residential.

Ringmer's open spaces, including the central Village Green, play a crucial role in defining its settlement structure. These areas offer recreational opportunities, enhance the parish's aesthetic appeal, and serve as community gathering places.

Other recreational facilities include Broyle Lane skatepark and Fingerpost Field playground, Ringmer Cricket Club, Bowls Club, Swimming Pool, Ringmer AFC and Glider Club field.

The sense of rurality and tranquility are reinforced by the open views to the SCNP and green buffers, which are strategically placed throughout the parish to delineate boundaries, provide wildlife corridors and maintain a sense of rural openness.



Figure 18: View of the Anchor Inn pub on Lewes Road.



Figure 19: View of houses on Harrisons Lane, with green boundaries.

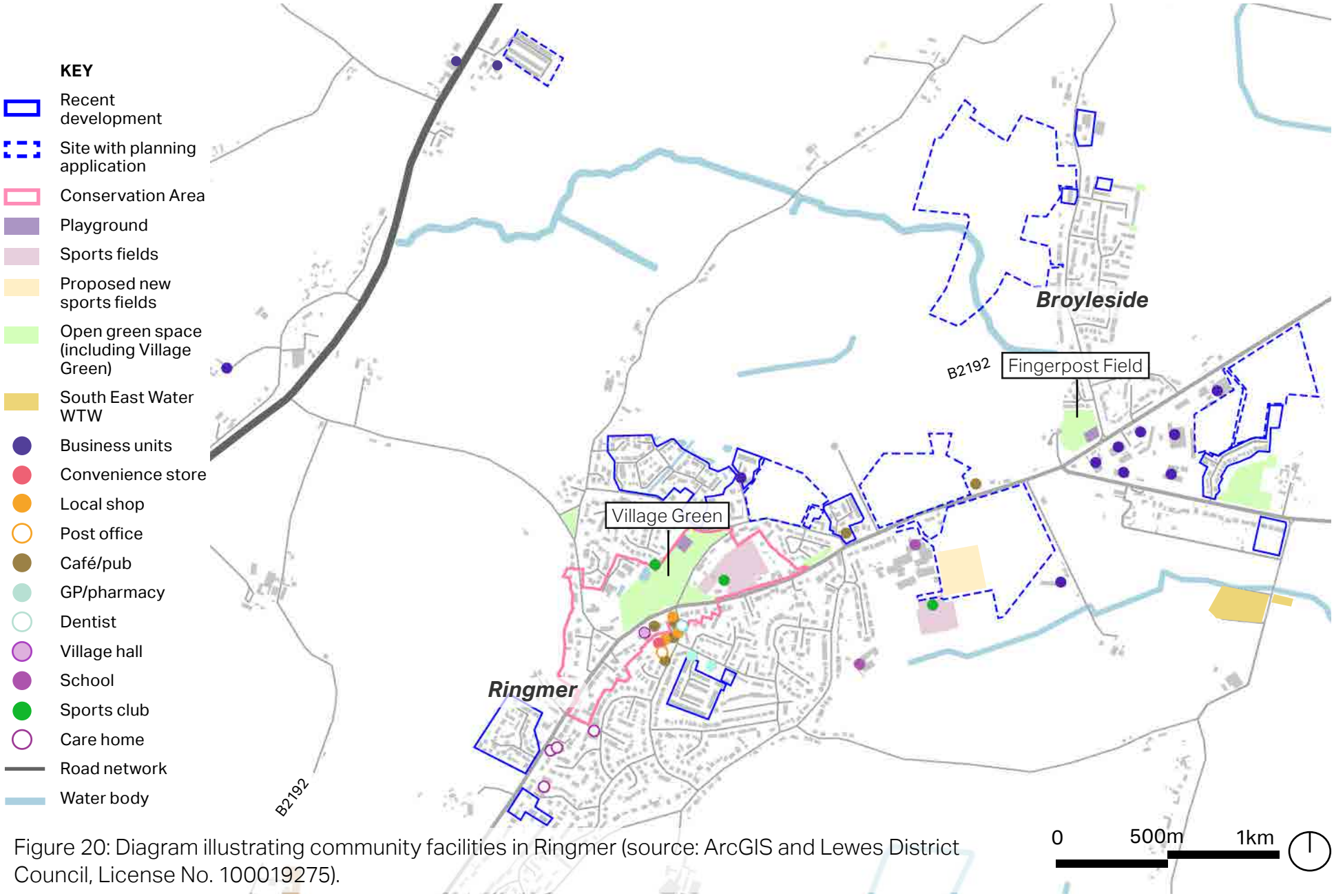


Figure 20: Diagram illustrating community facilities in Ringmer (source: ArcGIS and Lewes District Council, License No. 100019275).

2.4 Green infrastructure

The South Downs National Park (SDNP), Plashett Park and various open spaces such as Ringmer Green, Cheyney Field and Delves House grounds, are valuable green assets that are central to Ringmer's identity.

Plashett Park holds significant historical and ecological importance. Historically, it was a deer park owned by the Archbishops of Canterbury, reflecting its medieval heritage.

The presence of ponds, such as those on the Village Green and within Cheyney Field, plays a critical role in supporting aquatic life and providing breeding grounds for amphibians. These water bodies also contribute to flood resilience and the scenic beauty of the parish.

Various hedgerows and mature trees are the key green elements seen in more built-up areas and contribute to the visual appeal of the parish. More detailed analysis of green assets is provided in Ringmer NP (Appendix 4).

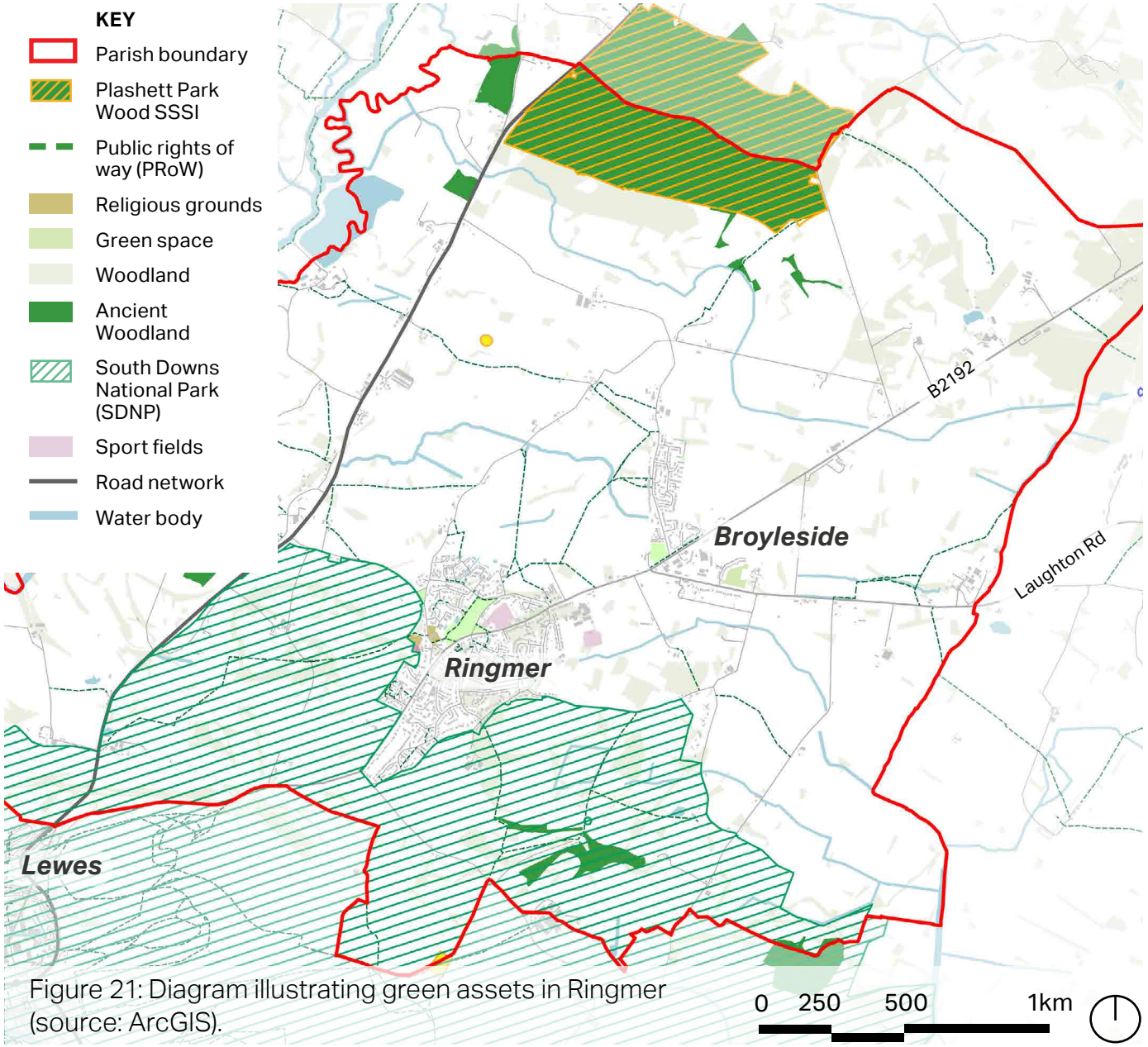


Figure 21: Diagram illustrating green assets in Ringmer (source: ArcGIS).

The Village Green



Figure 22: Ringmer Green towards the War Memorial (source: Ringmer Parish Council).



Figure 23: Ringmer Green looking towards the Small House (source: Ringmer Parish Council).



Figure 24: Aerial view of the southern part of the Village Green and the church tower (source: Ringmer Parish Council).

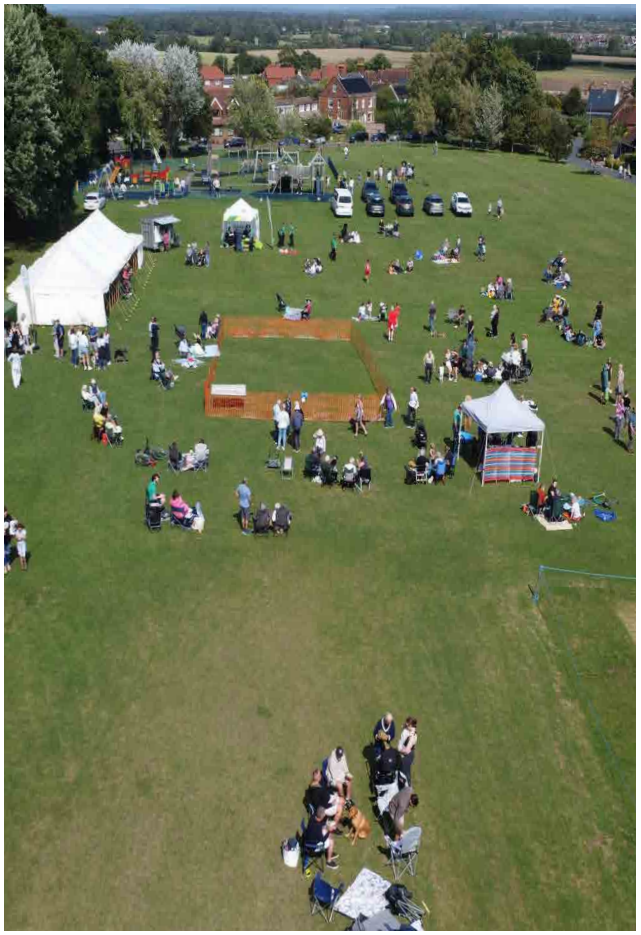


Figure 25: Aerial view of a community event at the Village Green (source: Ringmer Parish Council).

2.5 Flood risk

The River Ouse forms the western boundary of Ringmer and Glynde Reach runs along part of the eastern boundary. Both waterways are prone to flooding, especially during periods of heavy rainfall and tidal events. The floodplain areas along these rivers are particularly vulnerable, affecting agricultural land and infrastructure near the watercourses.

The Ringmer sewage works, located near Glynde Reach, sits just below 5 meters above sea level, making it susceptible to tidal flooding. This facility plays a crucial role in managing wastewater for the parish, highlighting the need for robust flood defences to protect essential services.

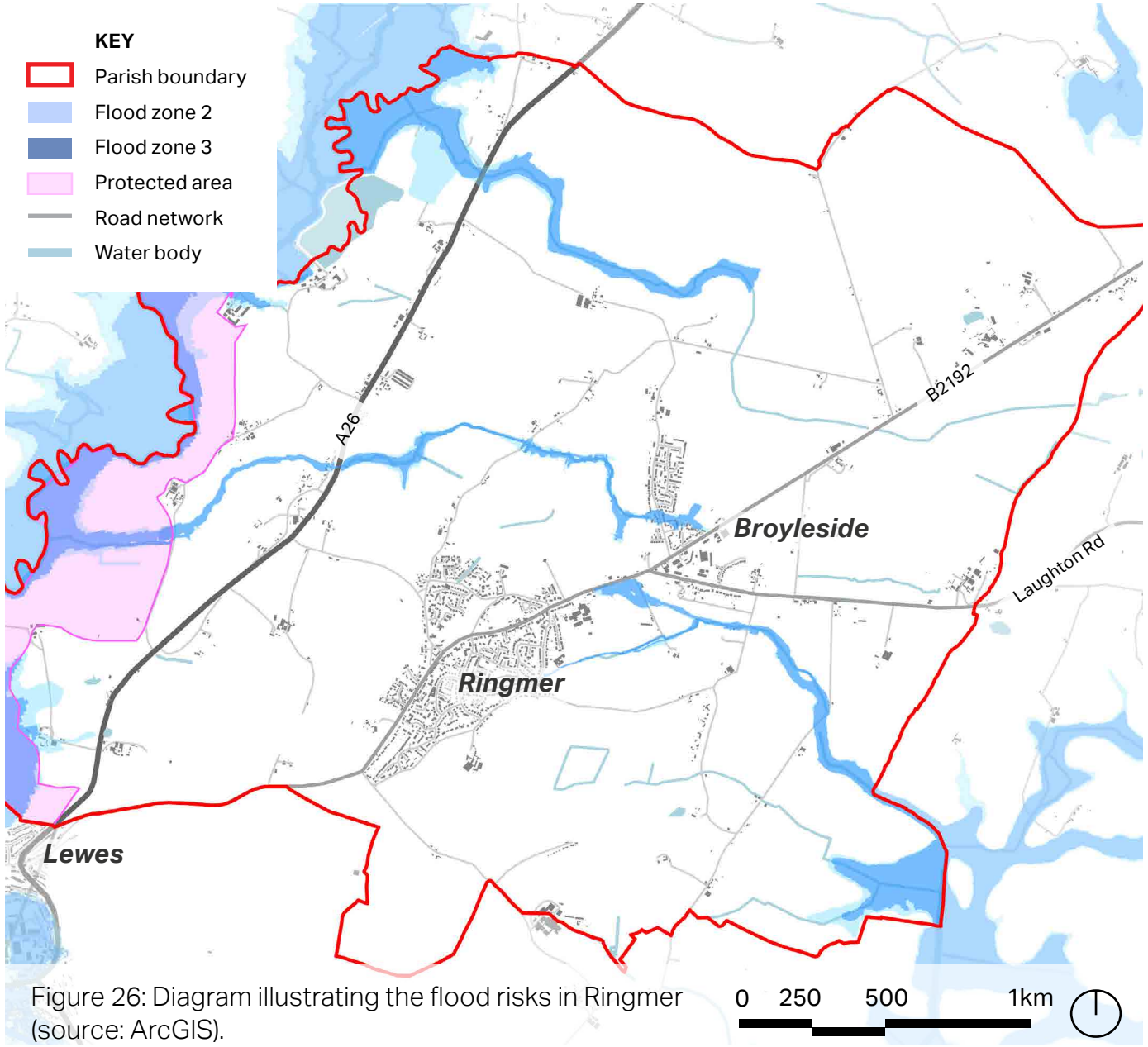


Figure 26: Diagram illustrating the flood risks in Ringmer (source: ArcGIS).

2.6 Transport

Residents are reliant on Lewes and larger settlements for shopping, employment, and access to rail service. This results in high levels of out-commuting and a heavy reliance on private vehicles.

The strategic roads in Ringmer are the A26, which runs west of the main village, and Lewes Road (B2192), which runs through the centre of the main village. Due to the latter's location, most residents in the parish rely on the B2192 to travel to Lewes and beyond, resulting in significant levels of congestion.

Ringmer has bus services to Lewes, Brighton & Eastbourne that run along Lewes Road. However, their frequency and reliability are insufficient for public transport to constitute a viable alternative to driving. Cycling also remains an unattractive option due to limited provisions in cycling infrastructure. As a result, Ringmer remains heavily car-dependent, and Census data confirm higher levels of car ownership in Ringmer compared to neighbouring Lewes.

Parking is a major transport issue in Ringmer. The parish contains a significant share of older properties that were built without off-street parking as well as later developments that provide insufficient levels of parking. This has resulted in high occurrences of on-street parking which exacerbates congestion on residential roads.



Figure 27: View along Lewes Road showing on-street parking (source: Ringmer Parish Council).

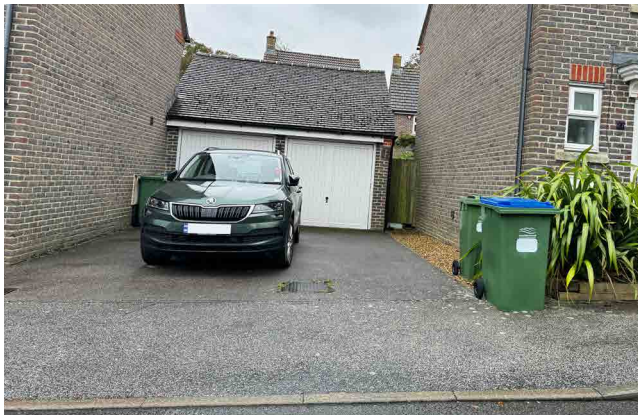


Figure 28: Photo showing a garage built with insufficient size for modern vehicles.

Character area guidance and codes

03

Photo credit: Ringmer Parish Council

3. Character area guidance and codes

This chapter provides design principles which are specific to the individual character areas demarcated across the parish of Ringmer. These principles aim to provide highly context-specific design recommendations.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the specific character areas identified within Ringmer, as agreed upon with the NPSG, and explains how this analysis informs the design guidance and codes for each area. The design guidance and codes are tailored to each character area and are intended to guide any future changes or developments within the Neighbourhood Area, ensuring that local character is preserved while still allowing room for innovation in the built environment. These recommendations should be read in conjunction with the parish-wide guidance and codes in Chapter 4, which apply to the entire Neighbourhood Area.

3.2 Character area codes

There are five recognised character areas within the parish. These areas have been categorised based on their architectural heritage, historic features, and distinct built patterns. The Character Area (CA) codes offer detailed recommendations for each of these areas, addressing their prominent features, opportunities, and challenges. The character areas are listed below and illustrated in Figure 29 on the following page.

1 Conservation Area

2 Medieval settlements

3 Inter-war development

4 Post-war development

5 21st century development

3.3 Understanding design guidance & codes

Both design codes and guidance are contained within this chapter, highlighted within the box shown below. The difference between codes and guidance is as follows:

Codes: Design codes are mandatory requirements for design issues and are expressed with the word **MUST**.

Guidance: Design guidance set out aspirations for design that is expected to be delivered and are expressed with one of two words:

SHOULD reflects design principles that are strongly encouraged.

COULD reflects design principles that are suggestions.



A reference to an existing local policy or guidance will be hyperlinked alongside this icon.

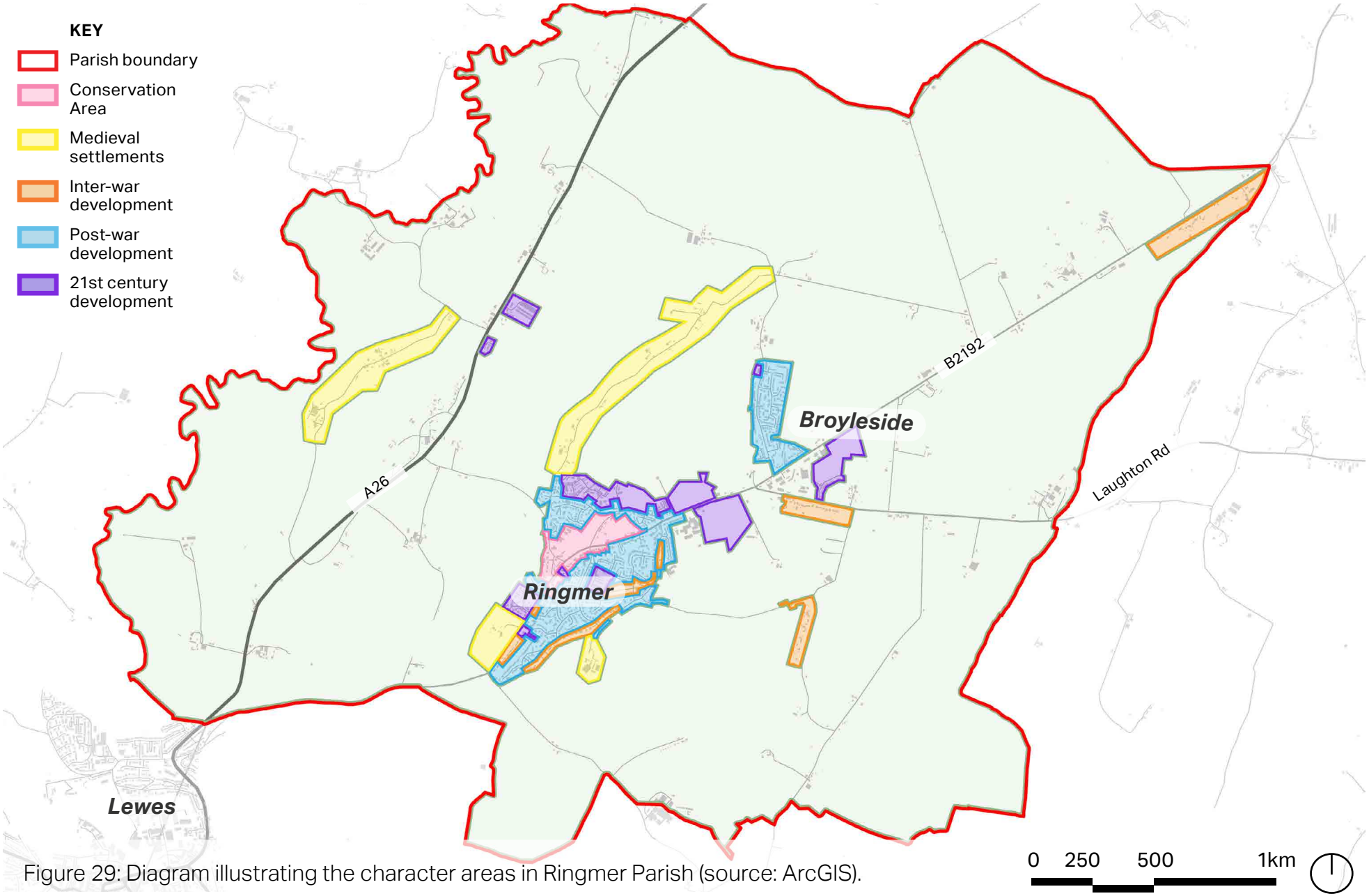


Figure 29: Diagram illustrating the character areas in Ringmer Parish (source: ArcGIS).

CA1 - Conservation Area

Introduction

Ringmer Conservation Area encompasses the historical core of the village, reflecting its rich heritage with a blend of medieval structures and green spaces that define its traditional rural character.

Layout

This area features a higher building density and is predominantly residential, interspersed with open green areas and recreational spaces that enhance its rural ambiance. Housing is typically arranged within generous plots, with instances of deep and narrow plots along Lewes Road as a result of historic development and infill. The Village Green acts as a focal point, surrounded by traditional cottages on larger plots with generous gardens.

Heights

The building heights in the Conservation Area are predominantly low, contributing to the area's traditional village character. Most structures are 1 or 2 storeys tall, contributing to the rural character.

Roads and movement

Apart from Lewes Road which forms the main spine, the road network comprises mainly low-traffic narrow residential lanes, contributing to a tranquil village atmosphere. Footpaths weave through the area, providing pedestrian access to key locations. There is limited on-street parking, maintaining the area's open feel and unencumbered road.

Landscape

The landscape is characterised by the expansive openness of the Village Green, a flat and inviting space. Plots are bordered by mature hedgerows, interspersed with occasional clusters of trees, adding depth and texture to the scenery. The natural environment stands out as a defining feature, offering glimpses of the surrounding fields, enriching the area's serene charm.

Buildings and landmarks

Key heritage buildings include the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, a medieval structure with significant historical importance, and several timber-framed houses. Modern buildings mostly respect the traditional materials which include red brick, hanging tile and flint with timber elements.

Views

The area is located on an incline and offers sweeping views towards the South Downs and the open countryside, with glimpses of distant farmsteads and wooded areas, reinforcing its rural character.

Village Green

The Village Green features a pond, a playground, sports pitches and a well-preserved belt of tree along its northern side. It is an important natural and historic asset around which the village developed over the centuries. Serving as a key space for community events and recreation, it also provides important views of the surrounding built and natural environments.

CA1 - Conservation Area guidance and codes



Figure 30: Terraces along Lewes Road feature uniform building line and short set-back (source: Ringmer Parish Council).



Figure 31: Vicarage Way features a strong sense of enclosure despite larger building setbacks due to reinforced boundaries.

Theme	Rationale	Design guidance and codes
CA1.1 Consider the immediate context	*The Conservation Area core acts as a focal point for Ringmer. The area is rich in built heritage and is successful in relaying the area's historic context.*	• New developments **must** respect the existing historic character and Listed Buildings of the area. The design proposals **must** align with the local vernacular (show in Figure 56).
CA1.2 Views and sight lines	*The landmarks and historic assets of the Conservation Area help to assist in creating memorable routes, allowing users to orient themselves.*	• New development **should** be positioned in a way to retain and enhance valuable sight lines through the area and **must** respect the prominence of nearby landmarks.
CA1.3 Enclosure and building line	*Some residential lanes within the Conservation Area are made up of fine grain development with a continuous building line. This creates a sense of enclosure and dictates a direction of flow through the area.*	• Building façades **should** face the street and reinforce the existing building line. Subtle variations **could** be incorporated to improve visual interest. • Enclosure along individual street **should** be maintained. Enclosure **could** be achieved by planting, however it **should** not obstruct existing sightlines.
CA1.4 Scale and massing	*Depending on the location, buildings are often clustered close together with small gardens or set within large (undivided) plots.*	• The building density of Conservation Area is of medium density **should** be maintained and not increased. The area offers opportunity for infill where appropriate.

Theme	Rationale	Design guidance and codes
CA1.5 Materials and architectural detail	*The Conservation Area core benefits from a sense of architectural unity and cohesion due the established material palette.*	• New development **must** provide a sympathetic response to the existing character and architectural details. • New development **should** utilise the traditional materials, like red brick, hanging tile or flit, which contribute to the local vernacular. • Rooflines **should** be pitched with the use of clay tiles or slate, reflecting traditional Sussex styles. Windows **should** be sash on façades or dormer on rooflines.
CA1.6 Windows and doors	*The Conservation Area core has a restrained language of architectural detail. This is evident across the fenestration of Conservation Area buildings.*	• New developments **should** have high-quality fenestration. UPVC **should** be discouraged on street-facing elements. • Fenestration on new development **should** show consideration for rhythm and layout that are appropriate for the Conservation Area, taking reference from surrounding context.



Figure 32: View of houses on Lewes Road featuring similar ornamental brick lintels, quoins and timber barge boards.



Figure 33: Peartree Cottages on Lewes Road feature local materials and detailing such as timber-framed gables and hanging tiles.

CA2 - Medieval settlements

Introduction

This character area covers the linear medieval settlements of Norlington and Wellingham (along Norlington Lane and Wellingham Lane respectively), as well as the Middleham and Gote Farm clusters. These settlements are among the oldest in the parish, with their origins tracing back to the medieval period. The area is characterised by its historic layout, where houses and farmsteads are arranged in a linear pattern along the lanes, surrounded by the open landscape.

Layout

The area contains residential properties and agricultural structures arranged along Norlington Lane and Wellingham Lane. The layout reflects the traditional medieval settlement pattern, where farmsteads and cottages are spaced along the roads, often with large plots of land extending behind them, oftentimes forming housing clusters. The large plots and gaps between properties result in low building density. The surrounding fields are integral to its built context.

Heights

Buildings in this area are generally low-rise, with most structures being one to two storeys in height.

Roads and movement

Norlington Lane and Wellingham Lane are narrow, rural roads bound by hedgerows and trees that wind through the countryside, following the natural contours of the land. These lanes are characteristic of the medieval period, with minimal alterations over the centuries. Norlington Lane is commonly used for leisure and recreation due to its attractive location and green assets.

Landscape

The landscape is dominated by the remnants of the medieval Open Field system, with large, open fields bordered by hedgerows and punctuated by ancient trees. The overall landscape is gently rolling, with the lanes offering views across the fields, Plashett Park and towards the distant South Downs.

Buildings and landmarks

The buildings in this area are typically traditional farmhouses, cottages, and barns, many of which have medieval origins. Constructed from local materials such as flint, brick, and timber, these buildings often feature pitched roofs with clay tiles. Architectural details are modest, reflecting the functional nature of rural buildings from the period. Notable landmarks include several historic farmsteads and medieval barns, which are key elements of the area's heritage. Notable landmarks include the grade II listed Norlington Farmhouse, Holly Tree Cottage and Norlington Gate.

Views

Views within this area are expansive, with long sightlines across the open fields that characterise the medieval landscape. Key views include those towards the South Downs and across the Open Field systems.

CA2 - Medieval settlements guidance and codes

Theme	Rationale	Design guidance and codes
CA2.1 Consider immediate context	*Character Area 2 is defined by its linear medieval settlement pattern surrounded by open countryside.*	• New development **must** demonstrate an understanding of immediate context and design proposals **must** respect the existing historic and landscape character of the area.
CA2.2 Views and sight lines	*The expansive views across the Open Field systems and towards the South Downs are key features of this character area.*	• New development **should** be positioned in a way to retain and enhance valuable sight lines through the area. • Proposals **should** avoid blocking or interrupting key views along the lanes or across the fields.
CA2.3 Enclosure and building line	*The linear nature of the settlements along Norlington Lane and Wellingham Lane creates a clear building line, with houses and farmsteads set along the roadsides.*	• Where appropriate, new developments **should** follow the established building line, maintaining the linear arrangement that is characteristic of the area. • Façades **should** face Norlington Lane, Wellingham Lane or private access lanes. The spacing between buildings **should** be consistent with the existing pattern within the immediate context, preserving the traditional sense of openness and guiding the flow through the settlements.



Figure 34: View of Norlington Lane, with little sense of enclosure due to low building scale and density (source: Geograph.org.uk).



Figure 35: Distant view of Dural Farm on Wellingham Lane (source: Geograph.org.uk).



Figure 36: View of Norlington Gate Farm with green boundaries that soften the presence of taller buildings (source: Geograph.org.uk).



Figure 37: View of boundary hedgerows on Norlington Lane that soften the transition between the road and the surrounding countryside (source: Geograph.org.uk).

Theme	Rationale	Design guidance and codes
CA2.4 Scale and massing	*Buildings in this are typically low-rise, with modest scale and massing that reflects their medieval origins and rural context.*	• New developments **should** adhere to this established scale, ensuring that any new structures do not overwhelm the existing buildings or the landscape. This includes building extensions, which **should** be subordinate to the original building. • The area's low density **should** be preserved, with new buildings designed to fit within the existing framework without disrupting the rural balance.
CA2.5 Materials and architectural detail	*The architectural character of the character area is defined by the use of traditional materials.*	• New development **should** use materials that match or complement the existing palette, ensuring consistency with the area's historic character. • New developments **should** use traditional door and window solutions and avoid synthetic materials. • Rooflines **should** be pitched and covered with clay tiles, while architectural details **should** remain simple and in keeping with the traditional rural aesthetic. • New buildings or renovations **should** respect the historical craftsmanship and contribute to the overall sense of continuity within the area.

CA3 - Inter-war development

Introduction

Character Area 3 covers the inter-war development prominently located along Laughton Road, parts of Neaves Lane, parts of Harrisons Lane and Gote Lane, part of Broyle Lane (Broyleside Cottages), parts of the B2192 (country bungalows and ribbon development to the east) and Mill Path & Mill Mead near Rushey Green. Some of these have seen significant redevelopment and infill during the 21st century, resulting in a mix of architectural styles and forms.

Layout

The area is primarily residential, with the original inter-war houses set back from the road on large plots. These homes were originally modest in size, but many have been expanded or replaced with larger dwellings over time. The layout is informal, with houses generally arranged along the main roads and lanes, creating a linear pattern of development. The spacious plots contribute to a semi-rural character, with a sense of openness that contrasts with the denser village centre.

Heights

Buildings in this area are predominantly one or two storeys in height, reflecting the original inter-war design. However, redevelopment has introduced a variety of forms, with some properties now featuring extensions.

Roads and movement

Some roads in this area such as Neaves Lane are relatively narrow and maintain a rural quality, with minimal street lighting and roadside vegetation contributing to the rural character. Laughton Road is wider, similarly to Harrisons Lane, Mill Path and Mill Mead which originally adjoined open countryside.

Landscape

The landscape is characterised by large garden plots and significant amounts of greenery contributing to its charm. Many properties have well-established gardens with mature trees and hedgerows that provide privacy and reinforce the area's green character.

Buildings and landmarks

The architecture in this character area is varied, reflecting both the original inter-war designs and more recent developments. Traditional inter-war houses often feature simple, modest designs with pitched roofs and brick or rendered façades. Some notable buildings include the typical of estate workers houses on Harrisons Lane and bungalows on Gote Lane. The Grade II listed Ringmer Kennels stand as prominent landmarks along Laughton Road, showcasing their historical and architectural significance.

Views

The views in this area are primarily the open views of the surrounding countryside and the filtered views between buildings. The linear arrangement of houses along the roads and lanes allows for glimpses of the rural landscape beyond, with fields and hedgerows framing many of the vistas.

CA3 - Inter-war development guidance and codes



Figure 38: Houses on Harrisons Lane with adjoining out-built garages, designed to accommodate modern car ownership needs.



Figure 39: View of a property on Harrisons Lane screened by hedgerows (source: Ringmer NP, Ringmer Parish Council).

Theme	Rationale	Design guidance and codes
CA3.1 Housing mix and variety	*The area is defined by its variety in building form, style, scale, and typology. Dwellings are a mix of single and two storey structures with ranging heights.*	• New development proposals **should** provide a variety of house types, sizes, and tenures to support the area's architectural variety. • Building form and style **should** be varied by design to reflect the current juxtaposition of building types in the area.
CA3.2 Frontage	*Dwellings within the area are generally set back from the street which helps to retain a semi-rural character.*	• New development proposals **should** be set back at slightly varied distances from the street, reinforcing the existing building line.
CA3.3 Front gardens	*Planted front gardens help to maintain the semi-rural feel of the area.*	• New development **should** incorporate a front garden for each new dwelling, while back gardens **should** be larger than front gardens.
CA3.4 Boundary treatments	*Front gardens are well utilised in this area to allow for variety in the streetscape as well as facilitate planting and natural elements. Boundary treatments tend to be low in height to allow for visual connections across the area.*	• New developments **should** have appropriate boundary treatments which reflect those of neighbouring properties, such as hedges or fences. • New developments **should** include front gardens capable of housing ornamental shrubs and trees.

Theme	Rationale	Design guidance and codes
CA3.5 Materials and architectural detail	*The area benefits from a sense of architectural variety. However, the materials and colours used reinforce a consistent palette.*	• New development **should** provide a sympathetic response to the existing character and architectural details found in the character area. • New development **should** utilise the traditional materials, red brick, flint or weatherboard, which contribute to the local vernacular. • Rooflines **should** be pitched with the use of clay tiles or slate, reflecting traditional Sussex styles. Windows **should** be sash on façades or dormer on rooflines.
CA3.6 Parking	*The area is free of roadside vehicular clutter. The majority of dwellings benefit from on-plot parking facilities which prevent the need for on-street car parking and therefore vehicular street clutter.*	• New developments **must** include on-plot parking. On-plot parking **should** be screened with planting or positioned strategically to avoid negative visual impact on the semi-rural atmosphere. • Visitor parking **should** be considered in multiple dwelling developments. Such parking provision **should** be sensitive to the natural character of Ringmer.
CA3.7 Connection and accessibility	*The area contains multiple vehicular routes and through roads.*	• New developments in the area **should** reinforce permeability in the area to support active transport. • New developments **must** consider the impact on local traffic capacity to minimise congestion.



Figure 40: Larger building setbacks and hedgerows are defining features of the streetscape within this character area.



Figure 41: Properties in this area incorporate front gardens with on-plot parking screened by rich vegetation.

CA4 - Post-war development

Introduction

Character Area 4 encompasses parts of the village of Ringmer, including the areas between Lewes Road and Gote Lane, Lewes Road and Bishops Lane, The Elms, and the settlement of Broyleside, which is separate from the main village and surrounded by open countryside. This area is primarily composed of post-war housing estates, characterised by brick and tile construction. These estates vary in layout, representing the typical residential expansion of the mid to late 20th century.

Layout

This character area is almost entirely residential, with a mix of market and social housing. The layout varies, with some estates featuring a more rigid, grid-like pattern, while others have a more informal, curvilinear street design. Properties typically include detached, semi-detached, and terraced houses, with most homes set back from the road on small to medium-sized plots. Front gardens and driveways, as well as communal green pockets, contribute to a more suburban feel.

Heights

Buildings in this area are generally two-storeyed, reflecting the standard residential architecture of the post-war period. Some single-storey bungalows are also present.

Roads and movement

The road network consists of main routes, such as Lewes Road and Broyle Lane, alongside quieter residential streets. Many cul-de-sacs branch off these main roads. Some residential areas were built with limited parking, or with garages that are too small for modern cars, leading to congestion from on-street parking. Roads on the edge of settlements, like Broyle Lane and Gote Lane, border open countryside, creating edge lanes where properties overlook the open countryside.

Landscape

The area features well-kept gardens and occasional green pockets. The landscape lacks prominent natural features, however, trees and hedgerows along lanes and in private gardens help connect it to the countryside.

Buildings and landmarks

Buildings are primarily constructed from brick, with tile roofs being the most common feature. Architectural detailing is minimal, reflecting the functional nature of post-war housing. From the late 1940s to the 1970s, identical houses in rows were common in Ringmer, but from the 1980s onwards, greater variation was expected, leading developers to mix housing types across estates, with further diversity introduced through later extensions. Notable buildings include the Grade II Listed Old Farmhouse.

Views

Views in this area are generally contained within the streetscape, focusing on rows of uniform houses and the occasional green space. Due to the density of the housing and the lack of significant elevation changes, long-distance views are limited. However, in some locations, there are glimpses of the surrounding countryside, particularly from the edges of the area, and throughout Broyleside, where the settlement meets the open fields.

CA4 - Post-war development guidance and codes

Theme	Rationale	Design guidance and codes
CA4.1 Consider Immediate Context	*The area consists of post-war housing estates that are defined by their uniformity and functional design, representing typical mid-to-late 20th-century residential development.*	• New development **should** demonstrate an understanding of its context and respect the established residential character. • Design proposals **should** consider the existing street layout, density, and building forms, ensuring that new structures integrate seamlessly with the surrounding environment.
CA4.2 Views and sightlines	*The views are primarily contained within the streetscape, focusing on rows of similar houses and occasional green spaces.*	• New development **should** be positioned to preserve these sightlines, particularly in maintaining the continuity of the streetscape, and along edge lanes. • Where applicable, development **should** also seek to enhance any available views toward the surrounding countryside, ensuring that these glimpses are not obstructed by new structures.
CA4.3 Enclosure and building line	*The layout features houses set back from the road, with consistent building lines that contribute to a cohesive suburban environment.*	• New developments **should** respect these established building lines and maintain the existing sense of enclosure. Façades **should** generally face the street, following the patterns set by existing homes. • While minor variations in frontage may be allowed to introduce architectural interest, these **should** not disrupt the overall uniformity that characterises the area.



Figure 42: View of Springett Avenue which is lined with green verges that provide pedestrian safety.



Figure 43: Properties typically feature consistent building lines and setbacks from the street with on-plot parking, Broyle Lane.



Figure 44: Buildings in this character area feature red brick, hanging tiles and dark clay roof tiles.



Figure 45: An example of sensitive building extension, which is subordinate to the original building and use the same materials.

Theme	Rationale	Design guidance and codes
CA4.4 Scale and massing	*Buildings are predominantly two-storey, with some single-storey bungalows. The scale and massing reflect the post-war design principles focused on functionality and density.*	• New developments **should** adhere to the established height and scale, ensuring that the massing remains consistent with the existing structures. • Overly large or high-density developments **should** be avoided, as they would disrupt the existing scale and character of the area.
CA4.5 Materials and architectural detail	*The architectural character is defined by the use of traditional post-war materials, such as brick and hanging tiles, with minimal architectural detailing.*	• New developments **should** use materials that match or complement the existing palette. Synthetic and low-quality materials **should** be avoided. • Architectural details **should** remain simple and functional, in keeping with the existing housing. Despite the presence of rows of identical housing, new frontages **should** introduce a variety to create visual interest to the streetscape.
CA4.6 Parking	*The original housing was designed without the consideration for vehicular parking. On-street parking often leads to congestion and should be reduced.*	• New development **must** provide required on-plot parking provision and adequately sized garages, if included in the design. • New development **should** aim to provide on-plot parking spaces for larger vehicles and visitors that are common in Ringmer, and **should** not add pressure to the current on-street parking.

CA5 - 21st century development

Introduction

This character area consists of the highest density housing in Ringmer. Located outside the Conservation Area, it represents the most recent additions to the parish (as of the time of this report), such as The Forge, Danforth Way, Kings Road, Clarks Croft & Round House Road. The developments are almost entirely residential, incorporating modern energy-efficient technologies. Newer building materials are also more commonly used compared to older parts of the parish.

Layout

This area is of medium density, with variety of plot and house sizes. The cul-de-sac developments have organic and meandering layouts, which help to reinforce the village character. In more central locations, such as Danforth Way, a grid-like layout is evident, with a more uniform building line that aligns with surrounding post-war building layouts.

Heights

Buildings in this area are predominantly two storeys in height, making an efficient use of land while still reflecting the rural character of the area. Some areas located along open green spaces and at the edge of settlement, such as Broyle Close, tend to have lower heights resulting in gradual transition between built-up areas and the countryside.

Roads and movement

The roads in this area are often bordered by verges and planting. The use of tarmac, while common, is not fully in keeping with the traditional aesthetic of the parish. On-street parking is limited as the developments have various on-plot parking options to accommodate modern family needs. The area offers good connections to the surrounding open countryside.

Landscape

The open countryside beyond the main settlement can be visible from the edges of the built-up areas. While planting is well-maintained, front gardens tend to be small, reflecting the higher building density.

Buildings and landmarks

Buildings in this area are typically semi-detached or detached, with a variety of sizes offering more affordable options. Building materials are in keeping with the local material palette of Sussex, with modern adaptations. The majority of the area is residential in use, with an exception for the healthcare facilities on Danforth Way accompanied by courtyard parking.

Views

Outward views are limited, due to smaller gaps between buildings and planting. Views towards the open landscape, can be observed from the edges of the development.

CA5 - 21st century development



Figure 46: The Forges use a local material palette and planting and organic building orientation, reinforcing the rural character.



Figure 47: Some areas feature smaller gaps between buildings restricting views towards the landscape beyond, which may not be appropriate.

Theme	Rationale	Design guidance and codes
CA5.1 Form and massing	*CA5 is made up of smaller plots with closely spaced buildings. Generally, rooflines are pitched and do not rise above two storeys in height.*	• New buildings **must** be 2 storeys maximum. The scale and pitch of the roof **should** reflect the surrounding roofscape, reflecting traditional pitches. • New dwellings **should** be laid out in a manner which reflects the surrounding typologies. However, consideration **should** be given to the amenity and garden spaces, which **should** be appropriate for the rural context and proportional to the bulk of the building.
CA5.2 Density	*CA5 is of medium density with smaller spacing in-between buildings.*	• New developments **should** respect the surrounding density, while higher densities **should** not be accepted towards the open countryside.
CA5.3 Rural character	*The meandering cul-de-sac layouts of the area generate a distinct charm and contributes to placemaking.*	• New developments **should** have subtle variations in setback and building orientation to maintain the semi-rural character.
CA5.4 Connection to landscape	*Most of the character area has a relationship with the surrounding landscape, which is enriched by broad views and soft planted boundary treatments.*	• New development **should** be positioned in a way to retain and enhance valuable sight lines towards the countryside. • New developments **should** incorporate low-medium height natural boundary treatments, such as trees and hedges.

Theme	Rationale	Design guidance and codes
CA5.5 Materials and architectural detail	*The area benefits from architectural unity due the established material palette. Well-designed variety among frontages create an attractive visual effect.*	• New development **should** provide a sympathetic response to the architectural mix in the parish. New development **should** utilise traditional materials, which contribute to the local vernacular (Figure 56), without synthetic and 'copy and paste' designs.
CA5.6 Green connections	*CA5 acts as one of the arrival points for the main village and north of Broyleside. These areas form a gateway on approach to the settlement.*	• New developments **must** maintain and, where possible, provide links to the open countryside to support leisure. • New development **must** not impede views outwards to the surrounding landscape. Proposals **should** show consideration for long-distance views onto the development as well as anticipated tree heights.
CA6.6 Parking	*On-plot and garage parking dominate new developments, often with parking spaces located in front of properties.*	• Developments **should** provide on-plot parking with garages large enough for modern vehicles. Parking spaces in front of homes **should** be set back from walls and windows and incorporate soft landscaping to screen parked vehicles from the streetscape. • On-street visitor parking, where introduced, **should** be sensitively designed to avoid causing congestion and obstructions for other vehicles.



Figure 48: The amenity space and gardens along Round House Road are well-vegetated, providing a good transition towards the countryside.



Figure 49: The development on Clarks Croft provides an onward footpath to the countryside, supporting connectivity and recreation.



Neighbourhood Area-wide guidance & codes

04

Photo credit: Ringmer Parish Council

4. Neighbourhood Area-wide guidance & codes

This chapter outlines the positive physical, historic and contextual characteristics of Ringmer and how these features should be factored into new development or retrofit of existing buildings.

4.1 Guidance & codes themes

This chapter supports developers and other applicants when producing or reviewing planning applications within the Neighbourhood Area (NA). The following guidance and codes will apply to all proposals within the Ringmer NA including infill and extensions. This chapter should be read with reference to the character area analysis in Chapter 3 that informs area-specific features. This is to ensure that the guidance and codes are responsive to Ringmer's specific development pressures over the course of the Neighbourhood Plan period. It must be noted that the policies of the South Down National Park also apply in the areas of the parish shown in Figure 04.

The following guidance and codes within this chapter follow the analysis set out in the previous chapter and are arranged under the established key design quality themes:

Village character (VC): focusing on appropriate architecture, colours and materials, boundary treatments and views that have major impact on the local character of Ringmer. This section will aim to align designs with the sustainability and connectivity objectives.

Built form (BF): outlining appropriate building design in terms of scale, layout and density, as well as parking solutions that are sensitive of the rural character and respectful of the natural and historic heritage of Ringmer.

Wildlife and nature (WN): defining appropriate strategies for the preservation of nature and wildlife habitats and methods of enhancing the local biodiversity. This section will also instruct on climate resilience and water management.



A reference to an existing local policy or guidance will be highlighted alongside this icon.

4.2 Understanding design guidance & codes

Both design codes and guidance are contained within this chapter, highlighted within the box shown below. The difference between codes and guidance is as follows:

Codes: Design codes are mandatory requirements for design issues and are expressed with the word **MUST**.

Guidance: Design guidance sets out expected design strategies and aspirations to be delivered and is expressed with one of two words:

- **SHOULD** reflects design principles that are strongly encouraged.
- **COULD** reflects design principles that are suggestions.

4.3 Village character (VC)

The Parish owes much of its character to the historic development and layout of the roads and buildings and its relationship with the surrounding countryside.

Unlike other central locations with a more grid-like pattern, the linear and cul-de-sac developments that have occurred over time have dominated locations close to the countryside. Most of these developments have low-medium density and low building heights that allow for outward views from many properties.

Future developments should seek to reflect this character by adhering to the following guidance and codes on:

VC.1. Preservation of village character;

VC.2. Regaining sustainability;

VC.3. A rural network; and

VC.4. Settlement edge.

VC.1. Preservation of village character

VC.1.1. Boundary treatments

- Boundary treatments **must** be used at the edge of the plot and **should** aim to provide a sense of cohesion along the street as well as providing separation between individual plots.
- Boundary treatments **should** be designed to respect the character of Ringmer, including materials, colours, and plant species used.
- The scale and length of boundary treatments **must** be sensitive to the surrounding context and appropriate for the character area that they are located in. The resulting level of enclosure **should** respect the character of the rest of the street.
- Tall and impermeable walls to the front boundary **must** be avoided, as they create an unwelcoming effect and obstruct wildlife movements.

See Village Design Statement policies in the Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for more guidance.



Figure 50: Permeable timber fencing support wildlife movement.



Figure 51: Dense planting and hedgerows support local wildlife and biodiversity and reinforce the rural character of Ringmer.

See Village Design Statement in the Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for more guidance.

VC.1.2. Views

- The design of new development **must** not obstruct key views and vistas in and out of the development, especially those contributing to the area's visual and natural significance. Views from and onto the Village Green and the South Downs National Park are especially valued and **must** be preserved.
- The roofline of new development **should** be set lower than the belt of mature trees, where applicable. New development **should** avoid creating long and uninterrupted skylines that could create a more suburban character. For this reason, developers **should** consider the future heights of existing and new vegetation.
- New landscape features **should** be incorporated to strengthen views and vistas and create landmarks at the gateways to new developments, helping with legibility. For example, trees or flower beds at entrances to new lanes **could** provide a positive experience and visual landmarks that aid residents and visitors with orientation. Additionally, no development **should** obstruct or diminish the visual connection between the Church and the Village Green.
- Development heights **should** adapt to topographical changes in a positive manner in order to maximise important views and avoid obstructing the overall skyline.
- Opportunities to preserve and enhance views from developments and roads towards the Village Green **should** be maximised.



Figure 52: Glimpse of the open countryside from Harrisons Lane.



Figure 53: View onto the open countryside between buildings.

See Village Design Statement policies in the Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for more guidance.

VC.1.3. Vernacular architecture and materials

- New development **should** complement the parish's existing architectural character and materiality, and fit well within the character area it is located in. Urban and suburban designs may not be appropriate within Ringmer, especially in close proximity to the Conservation Area and where adjoining open landscape. Well-designed modern interpretations of the traditional styles **could** offer a good solution, where appropriate.
- New development **should** harmonise with the detailing and fenestration abundant within the Neighbourhood Area, considering the proportion, symmetry and rhythm. Designs within and adjoining the Conservation Area, and in any new street **could** utilise more detailing and complexity.
- Proposals involving multiple houses **should** ensure a variety of detailing is utilised across the development to provide visual interest. 'copy and paste' designs **should** be avoided unless a 'terracing' effect is desired.
- Where fenestration is street-facing in new developments, timber fittings **should** be preferred. Plastic windows **should** be avoided, especially if replacing traditional windows.
- New development **should** reference or complement the existing material and colour palette in Ringmer as displayed on the following page. Materials that are not sympathetic to the local vernacular, as well as low-quality and synthetic imitations, **should** be avoided. Consideration **should** be given to long-distance impressions of the development.



Figure 54: Example of local architecture using red brick façade with stone quoins and timber sash windows.



Figure 55: Example of local architecture featuring hung clay tiles with green climbers and a twin-gabled roof with white fascia.

Façades



Red brick



White or black weatherboarding



Hanging clay tile



Flint with red brick dressing



Timber frame elements



White or cream render

Roof



Clay tiles



Slate tiles

Fenestration



Painted door and timber windows



Sash windows



Casement window with white muntins

Colour palette

Cream

White

Beige

Stone

Red brick

Figure 56: Vernacular material and colour palette.

See Lewes Sustainable Building Design SPD and South Downs Design Guide for more guidance.

VC.2. Regaining sustainability

VC.2.1. Sustainable home strategies

- New developments **should** achieve net-zero standard, which **could** be achieved with the use of strategies illustrated in Figure 59.
- New developments **should** use building orientation and location and size of openings to maximise solar gain and passive cooling.

VC.2.2. Sensitive PV design

- Sustainable features, such as photovoltaic (PV) panels, **must** be incorporated from the design phase and **should** be seamlessly integrated into the built fabric.
- In case of retrofit, interventions **should** minimise their impact on the historic and landscape value and not be visually obtrusive. This **could** involve using similar materials and colours to the original structure, or green buffering.



Figure 57: On ground PV panels at the back of the plot with green buffer to reduce visual impact (source: ruralandcountry.energy).



Figure 58: PV panels discreetly installed on the rear side of the outbuilding (source: ruralandcountry.energy).

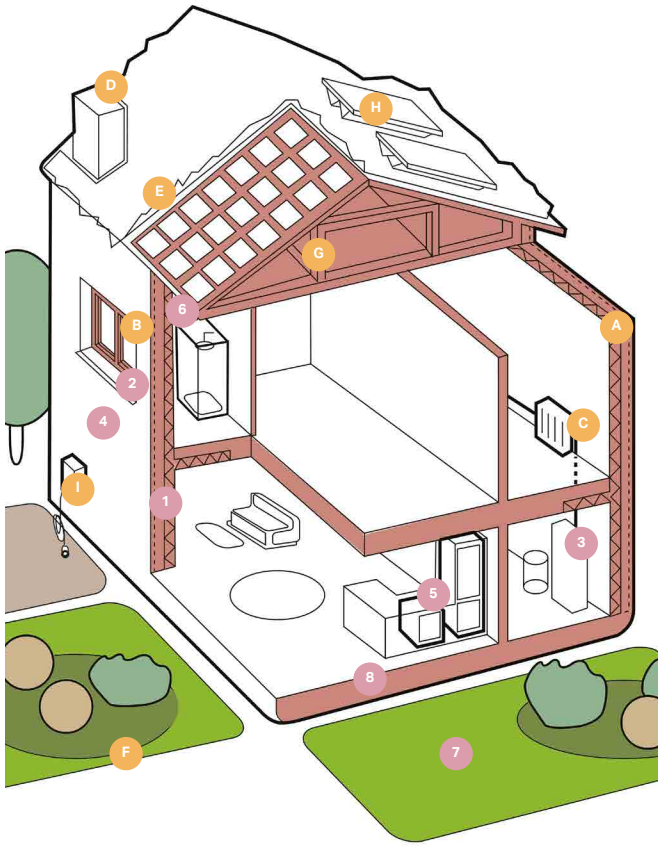


Figure 59: Diagram illustrating common domestic net-zero strategies.

Existing homes

1. Insulation in lofts and walls (cavity and solid)
2. Double or triple glazing with shading (e.g. tinted windows, blinds, trees)
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 water- efficient devices with low-flow showers and taps, insulated tanks and hot water thermostats
7. Green space to help reduce the risks of flooding and overheating
8. Flood resilience and resistance with removable air back covers, relocated appliances (e.g. washing machines upstairs), treated wooden floors

Existing and new build homes

- A High levels of airtightness in wall and floor junctions and around openings
- B Triple glazed windows and external shading (e.g. timber louvers)
- C Low-carbon heating (e.g. renewable energy) and no new homes relying on the gas grid
- D Fresh air with mechanical ventilation and passive cooling/heating
- E Water management and cooling more ambitious water efficiency standards, reuse of grey water, green roofs etc.
- F Flood resilience and resistance (e.g. domestic ponds and raised floors)
- G Construction and site planning timber frames, recycled materials, sustainable transport to the site
- H Solar panels that are integrated well into the overall design
- I EV charging point that is integrated well into the exterior wall

See Infrastructure Requirements in Lewes Local Plan (Core Policy 7 and 13), ESCC Design Guide, and ESCC Local Transport Plan 4. Readers may also refer to Dorset National Landscape Traffic in Villages for case studies of active travel improvement schemes in rural settings.

VC.3. A rural network

VC.3.1. Network of footpaths

- The accessibility and connectivity of the existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) network **should** be reinforced. For example, developments of 20+ houses **should** provide links to the narrow footpaths known as twittens that run between or behind houses.
- New developments **should** ensure pedestrian access to key facilities such as shops and schools. Resting points such as benches **should** be provided along longer-distance connections.
- New developments **should** be designed for public access. Thus, features that hinder pedestrian and cycle movement such as gated developments and barriers should be **avoided**. Footpaths **must** be wide enough to facilitate the movement of wheelchair users and families with buggies.

VC.3.2. Pedestrian accessibility

- New roads, lanes and pavements **must** conform to the statutory technical requirements and **must** be designed to be safe and inclusive of all users, in particular those with disabilities. Therefore, interventions such as raised pedestrian crossings and contrasting surface materials for pavements **could** be considered.
- While tarmac and asphalt are commonly used among new developments, they **should** not form the main surface material, as these materials do not suit the rural character of Ringmer. Instead, permeable gravel and block paving **could** offer more suitable solutions.
- Any future development **must** maintain an active frontage that enables natural surveillance of the public realm for pedestrian safety.



Figure 61: View of a densely vegetated footpath that creates positive pedestrian experience of rural Ringmer.



Figure 60: View of contrasting surface material, texture and pattern, which offer a clear indication of a driveway.

- Opportunities **should** be sought to link new development with the existing network of footpaths and PRoW to improve active travel connectivity in the form of green links.
- Strategically placed signposts **should** assist pedestrians and cyclists with orientation and increase awareness of publicly accessible paths and destinations beyond the settlements.
- The design and placement of signposts **should** respect the local character and avoid creating visual clutter.
- Cycle parking that meets the local adopted standards **should** be provided on key routes and destinations.



Figure 62: Example of cycle parking using appropriate materials and providing greenery (outside the parish).



Figure 63: Example of signpost using appropriate materials (outside the parish).



Figure 64: Example of cycle path through South Downs Way (source: cyclinguk.org).

See Village Design Statement in the Ringmer NP (Neighbourhood Plan).

VC.4. Settlement edge

VC.4.1. Transition between village and open nature

- New development **must** avoid creating harsh or abrupt edges between built-up and open green areas by incorporating green buffers and strategic gaps.
- The use of green buffers **should** be considered to help transition between individual lager scale developments and new neighbourhoods. This **could** include areas of dense vegetation or dedicated open green spaces.
- Existing green settlement edges **must** be maintained. Any necessary loss of trees and vegetation **must** be replaced, with additional requirement for biodiversity gain in mind.
- Developments on the settlement edge **should** prioritise lower-density development to retain the visual quality of the landscape.
- Significantly sized developments **must** undertake a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to ensure the impact on views is minimised and mitigation measures are implemented successfully. The transition between the settlement edge and the landscape **should** be gradual, using green buffers (dense vegetation) and topography to soften the visual impact of development.
- Where possible, dwelling frontages **should** be orientated toward public realm corridors. Non-vegetated rear boundaries facing public realm areas **must** be avoided. This enables a gradual transition between the settlement and the landscape and provides attractive views to the residents.



Figure 65: Aerial view showing properties rear gardens acting as green buffers to the Village Green (source: ArcGIS).



Figure 66: Aerial view showing properties on North Road facing and overlooking the Village Green (source: ArcGIS).

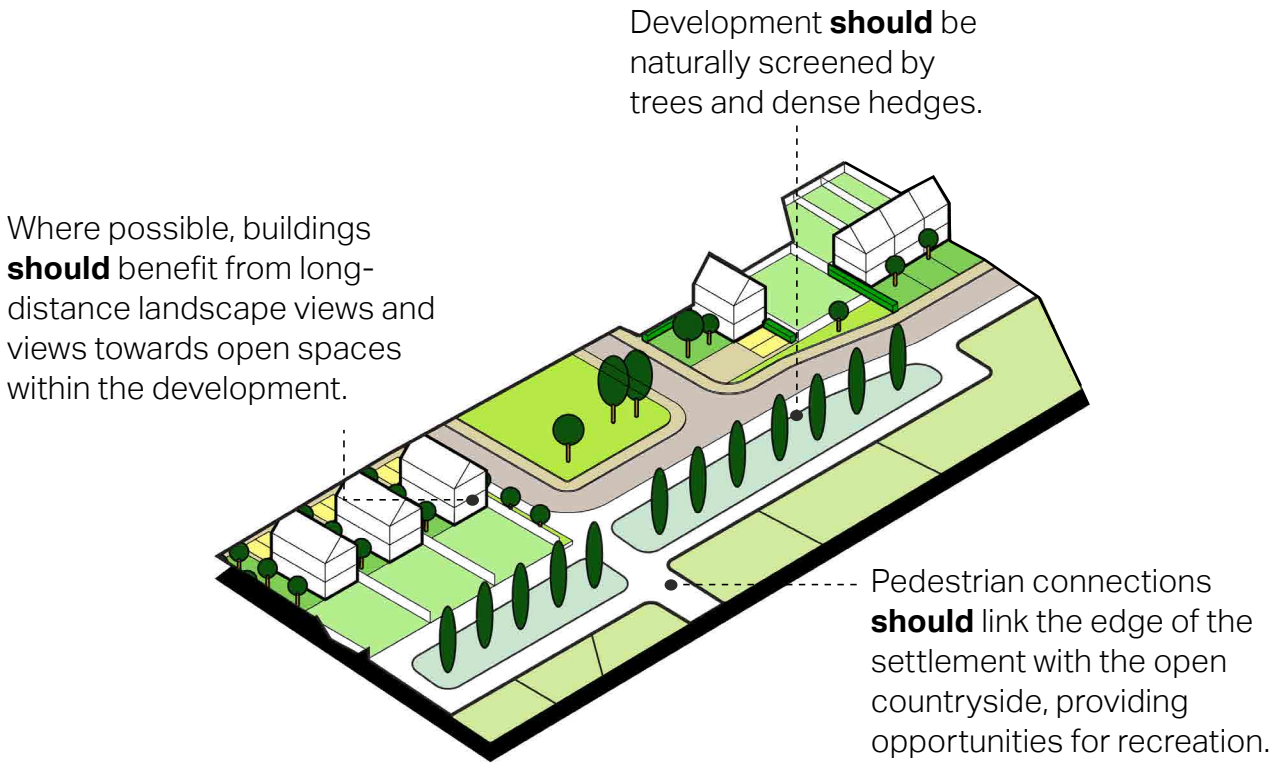


Figure 67: Indicative diagram of strategies for well-designed settlement edge (example of built form facing surrounding landscape).



Figure 68: View of tall trees and vegetation behind The Forges acting as green buffers to the open landscape.



Figure 69: View of properties facing South Downs along Gote Lane, which feature front gardens with dense boundary planting.

4.4 Built form (BF)

As is outlined in Chapter 3, Ringmer features a rural and semi-rural settlement pattern and varied built forms that differ between each character area. The scale and proportions of buildings in relation to the surrounding landscape also make up much of what makes the Neighbourhood Area distinct.

Future development should seek to reflect the specific requirements of the character area they are located in by adhering to the following guidance and codes on:

BF.1. Massing and scale;

BF.2. Density and layout;

BF.3. Infill development; and

BF.4. Preservation of historic character; and

BF.5. Off-street parking and EV charging.

BF.1. Massing and scale



See Village Design Statement in Ringmer NP, Lewes Local Plan (Core Policy 1 and 2) and ESCC Design Guide.

BF.1.1. Building massing and scale

- New development **should** be built on a small scale using, where possible, infill or brownfield sites that contribute positively to the existing settlement pattern.
- The built form of any new development **should** reflect and contribute to the character of Ringmer. As such, the overall scale, mass, and spacing between buildings **should** be responsive to the location of a proposal and contribute to a cohesive built environment. Detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows **should** be considered most appropriate.

BF.1.2. Building heights and roofline

- The roofline **should** be set lower than the mature tree canopy.
- The height of any new development **should** respond to the scale of surrounding buildings, street width, sense of enclosure, and topography. It **must** not exceed 2.5 storeys to reflect the existing heights of buildings across Ringmer.
- Roof forms **should** be sympathetic to the surrounding context to respect the local character. The scale and pitch of the roof **should** be in proportion with the dimensions of the building and neighbouring properties. Pitch **should** normally be close to 45 degrees. If applied, dormers **should** also be proportionate and sensitively designed.

See Village Design Statement in Ringmer NP, Lewes Local Plan (Core Policy 1 and 2) and ESCC Design Guide.

BF.2. Density and layout

BF.2.1. Building density and pattern

- Development densities **must** normally be between 20 and 30 dwellings per hectare. They **should** reflect the character of the parish and the immediate area it is located in. For this reason, development **must** maintain strategic development gaps.
- Building setbacks **must** be of an appropriate ratio between the width of the street and the building height, to achieve a sense of enclosure that is appropriate for its setting. Trees, hedges, and other landscaping features **could** help create a more enclosed streetscape in addition to providing shading and weather protection.
- The provision of open spaces, including gardens, recreation grounds and pocket parks, **must** comply with green space policies in the Lewes Local Plan.

BF.2.2. Development layout

- New developments **must** employ layouts that are easy to navigate and enable onward pedestrian connections between developments.
- The street layout of new developments **should** be informed by the historic settlement patterns that are prevalent in their area. In outer areas located closer to the settlement edge, a more informal network of cul-de-sacs with a more meandering character **could** also be introduced. The arrangement of buildings **should** be decided in coordination with the layout of the plot, with a greater degree of flexibility for building orientation.
- The size of plots and their pattern **should** be varied to contribute to the informal rural character of the parish.



Figure 70: View of a linear development with a meandering street layout and informal building orientations, Harrisons Lane.

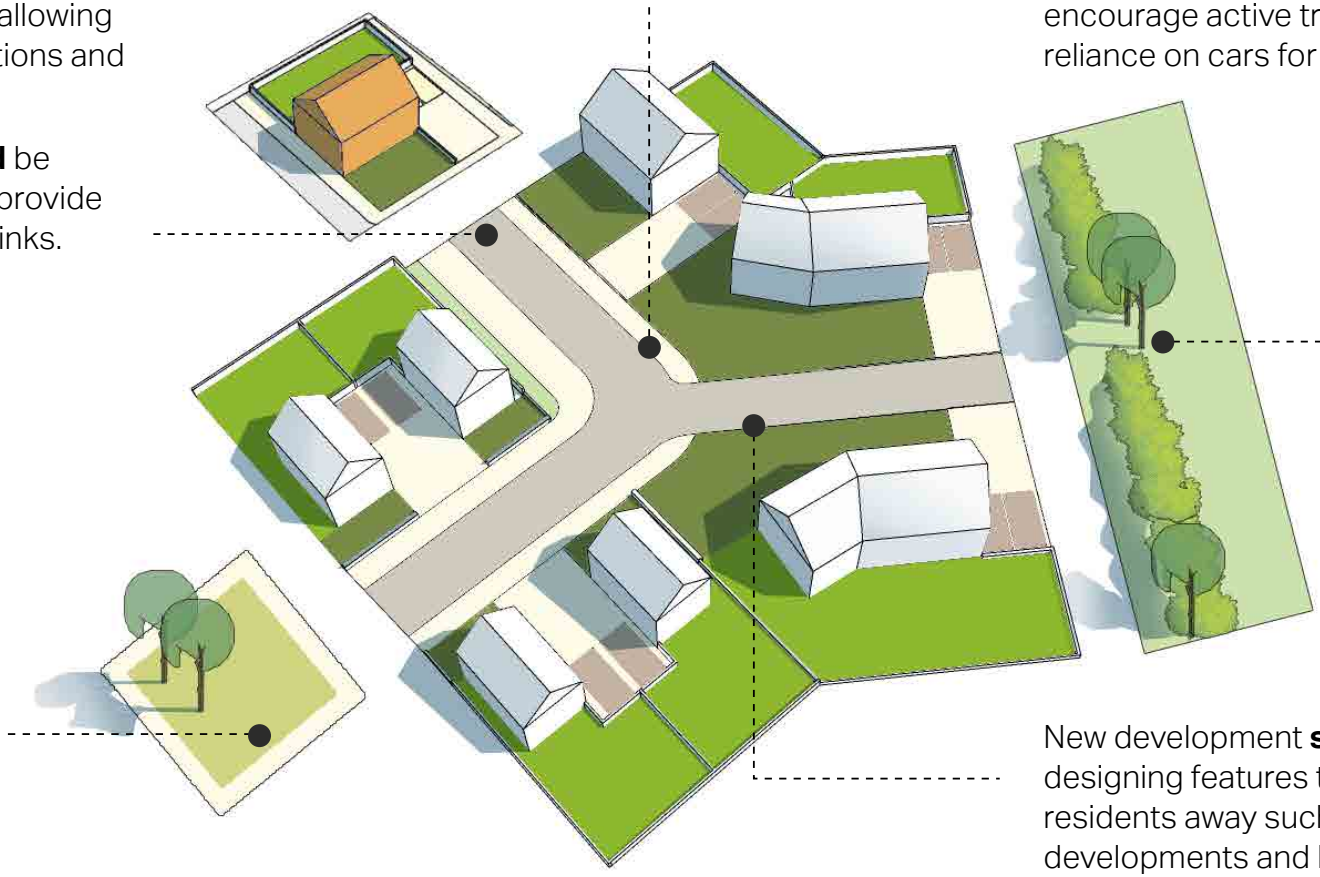


Figure 71: View of cul-de-sac development with meandering street layout and informal building orientations, The Forges.

New development **should** propose routes laid out in a permeable pattern, allowing for multiple connections and choice of routes.

Cul-de-sacs **should** be relatively short and provide onward pedestrian links.

Lanes and pathways **should** be designed to be attractive and convenient to encourage active travel and reduce reliance on cars for short trips.



New development **should** connect to the open countryside and existing footpath network.

New development **should** connect to local open spaces and recreational fields.

New development **should** avoid designing features that keep non-residents away such as gated developments and barriers.

Figure 72: Indicative diagram of strategies for well-designed street layout.

BF.3. Infill development

BF.3.1. Scale and location of infill

- Any new infill development **should** complement the surrounding building scale, orientation, street enclosure, and roofline.
- The scale and massing of infill development **should** be subservient to that of any adjacent heritage asset.
- Infill development **should** not create dense and town-like neighbourhoods in order to preserve Ringmer's rural character. Therefore, outside of the historic core, back of plot infill development **must** be avoided.
- Where back of plot infill development is introduced, its scale **should** remain subservient to the main building and the existing settlement pattern.

BF.3.2. Sensitive infill design

- New infill development **should** be designed to integrate visually with neighbouring buildings by using a complementary material and colour palette.
- Where introduced, back of plot developments **should**:
  a. Introduce multiple access points where possible.
  b. Utilise street materials, street furniture, and signage that respect the character of the area;
  c. Ensure that principal façades positively address access routes and footpaths; and
  d. Provide adequate parking that meets local standards.

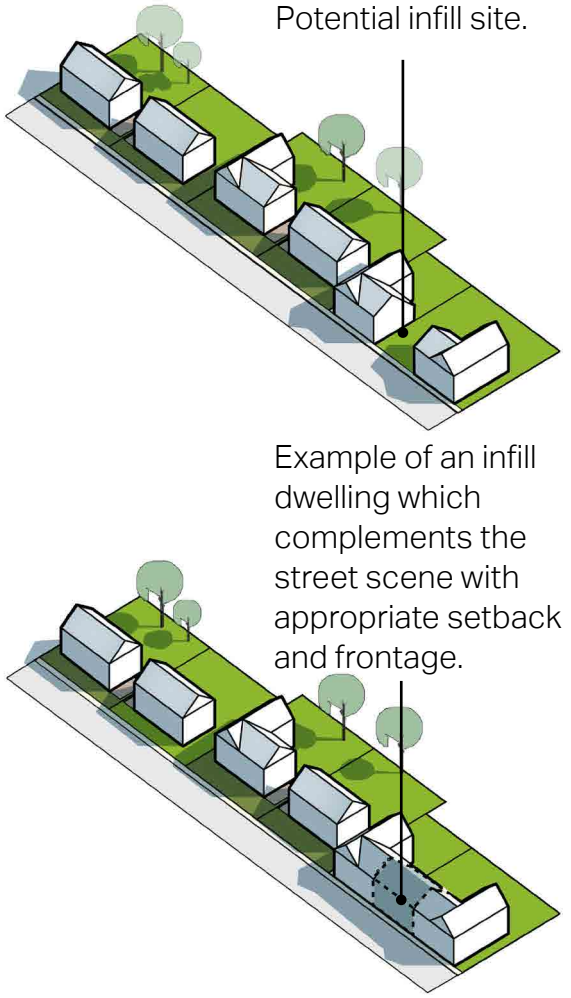


Figure 73: Diagram an example of a positive infill development along a road.

BF.4. Preservation of historic character

BF.4.1. Retrofit and conversions

- Extensions, conversions and retrofit **should** respect the neighbouring character by using similar colours, forms, and materials, and **should** seek to complement both the streetscape as well as the original building.
- Extensions, conversions and retrofit **should** avoid creating privacy issues and overshadowing.
- Extensions **should** be subservient in scale to the original building and **must** not obstruct existing views.
- The general layout and original features of the building's setting which indicate its historic use **should** be retained. For instance, this may refer to loose courtyard arrangements of buildings, physical boundary treatments or original window openings.

BF.4.2. Sensitive design near historic assets

- New developments within or nearby historic assets and the Conservation Area **should** adhere to the local traditional materials, textures, and hues to protect the local heritage value.
- New development **must** include a substantial setback or green buffering from the historic asset and adopt a massing and scale that aligns sensibly with neighbouring structures.
- Developments outside the Conservation Area **should** also harmonise with the key design features of the local vernacular.
- Artificial materials and bright colours **should** be avoided to maintain the historic character of the Conservation Area.

See Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (Policy 4.7), and Lewes Local Plan (Core Policy 11) for more guidance.



Figure 74: View of a garage next to an old estate workers house on Harrisons Lane that is distant from the original building and uses planting to blend into the garden area.



Figure 75: View of a building retrofitted with PV panels positioned away from the street-facing elevation.

BF.5. Off-street parking and EV charging

BF.5.1. Off-street parking solutions

- Parking **should** be well integrated into design of new development to avoid negative visual impact and mobility issues within the public realm. This means using high-quality and well-designed soft landscaping, hedges, foliage and trees to screen hard parking surfaces and vehicles.
- Hard standing and driveways **must** be constructed from porous materials, to minimise surface water run-off and therefore help mitigate potential flooding.
- Garages **should** not dominate the appearance of dwellings and **should** not reduce the amount of active frontage to the street.
- Garages **must** provide minimum 3m x 6m internal space to park and access the vehicle, in addition to space for extra storage.
- Community and employment site parking **must** accommodate expected vehicle types as per Ringmer NP, Policy 8.3. New residential developments require:
  - 1 space per 1-2 bed home for older residents,
  - 2 spaces per 1-3 bed home,
  - 3 spaces per 4+ bed home.
- Extensions **must** not reduce parking below these levels. New developments **must** also provide off-road visitor and cycle parking as per ESCC guidelines.

BF.5.2. EV charging design

- Electric Vehicle (EV) charging ports and other add-ons, where introduced or retrofitted into properties, **should** be incorporated into the exteriors in a way that minimises their visual impact.

See ESCC Local Design Guide for Residential Development & Guidance for Parking at New Residential Development.

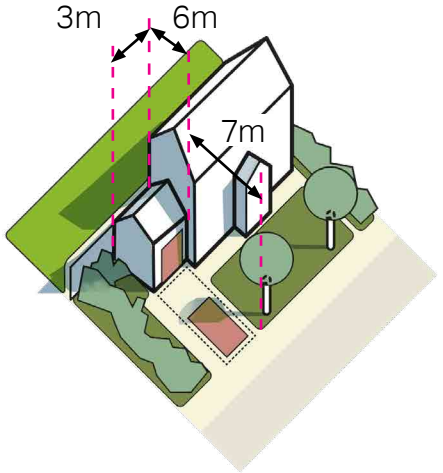


Figure 76: Diagram illustrating minimum garage and front parking dimensions.



Figure 77: Example of built-in EV charging device on side wall of a building.

4.5 Wildlife and nature (WN)

Many properties in Ringmer directly adjoin open green space or open countryside while others incorporate planting in their private garden spaces. A high number of residences also benefit from generous views onto nature. Therefore, green infrastructure plays a major role in establishing the verdant and tranquil character of Ringmer and providing wildlife habitats.

Blue infrastructure such as rivers and ponds also provide important habitats for aquatic species. In addition, the preservation and enhancement of blue infrastructure can support climate resilience.

Future developments should seek to reflect this character by adhering to the following guidance and codes on:

WN.1. Biodiversity and wildlife;

WN.2. Dark Skies; and

WN.3. Water and drainage.

WN.1. Biodiversity and wildlife

WN.1.1. Biodiversity and wildlife

- New developments **should** protect and enhance the existing habitats and wildlife corridors. In particular, they **should** improve movement between isolated populations and provide shelter from harsh weather and predators.
- Wherever possible, biodiversity **should** be supported by the inclusion of features such as hedgehog corridors, bird/bat boxes, or bee bricks.
- Planting **must** include a variety of native species.
- Existing mature trees and hedges **should** be preserved by incorporating them in the new landscape design. If removal is necessary, new planting **must** aim for minimum 10% biodiversity net gain.

See Ringmer Biodiversity Policy, Tree Planting Policy, Lewes Local Plan (Core Policy 8 and 10), ESCC Design Guide, South Downs Local Plan, and South Downs Design Guide SPD.

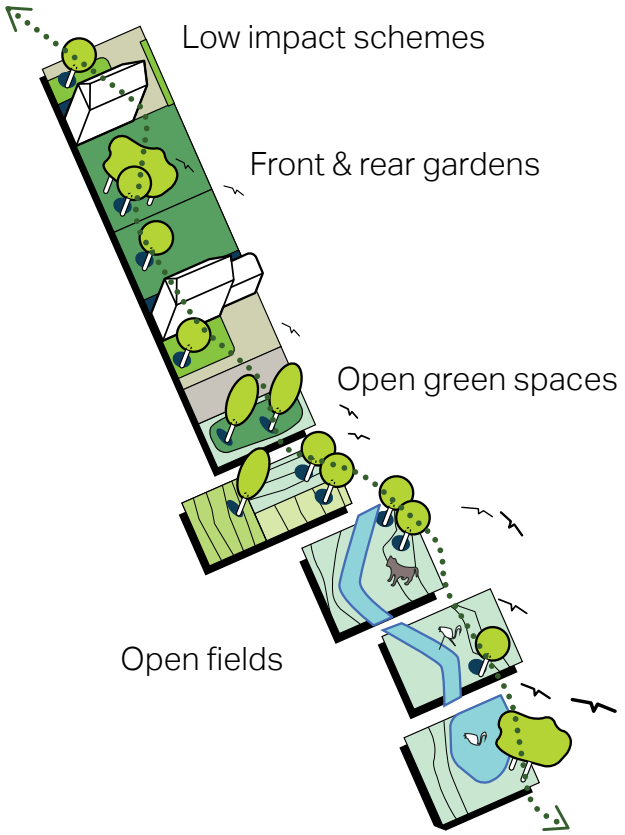


Figure 78: Diagram illustrating landscape elements that help create wildlife corridors.

See Ringmer Neighbourhood Plan (Policy 4.11) & South Downs Design Guide for more guidance.

WN.2. Dark Skies

WN.2.1. Lighting solutions

- Lighting schemes **must** not cause light pollution, especially in intrinsically dark areas.
- Lighting **should** be turned off when not needed ('part-night lighting') to reduce any potential adverse effects.
- Foot/cycle path lighting **should** be appropriate for the surrounding rural landscape. Solar cat's-eye lighting, reflective paint and ground-based lighting are recommended.
- The choice of lighting **should** be energy-efficient and sustainable and **should** involve motion sensors, if appropriate.



Figure 79: Example of up-lighting: Focus light and attention on an object or tree from a low fixed location.



Figure 80: Example of backlighting: Fixtures placed at the back of an object to create a 'glowing' effect.

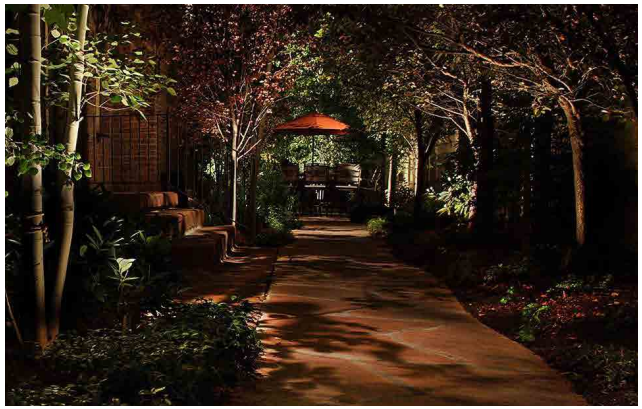


Figure 81: Example of downlighting: Bullet type fixture placed well above eye level on an object or tree.



Figure 82: Example of path lighting: Use of low fixtures which direct illumination downward and outward.

See the ESCC Design Guide for more guidance.

WN.3. Water and drainage

WN.3.1. SuDS in public realm

- Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) **should** make attractive additions to the new and existing streetscape and green open spaces where possible. Example of SuDS that are appropriate of the rural character of Ringmer are illustrated in Figure 84.
- SuDS **should** be located in appropriate areas along roads and within green communal spaces, positioned away from children's facilities or separated by barriers.
- Permeable paving **should** be employed where appropriate on footpaths, private access roads, driveways and car parking spaces. The choice of paving **should** be made depending on the local context and sensitive of any adjoining historic or natural assets.

WN.3.2. Domestic SuDS design

- Any rainwater collected **must** be treated via filtration, disinfection, or desalination, to remove contaminants and make it safe for domestic uses.
- Gardens **could** use water-efficient plants, irrigation systems, and landscaping techniques to minimise water usage.



Figure 83: Example of footpath and cycling surface lined by SuDS that are attractive and climate resilient (outside the parish).

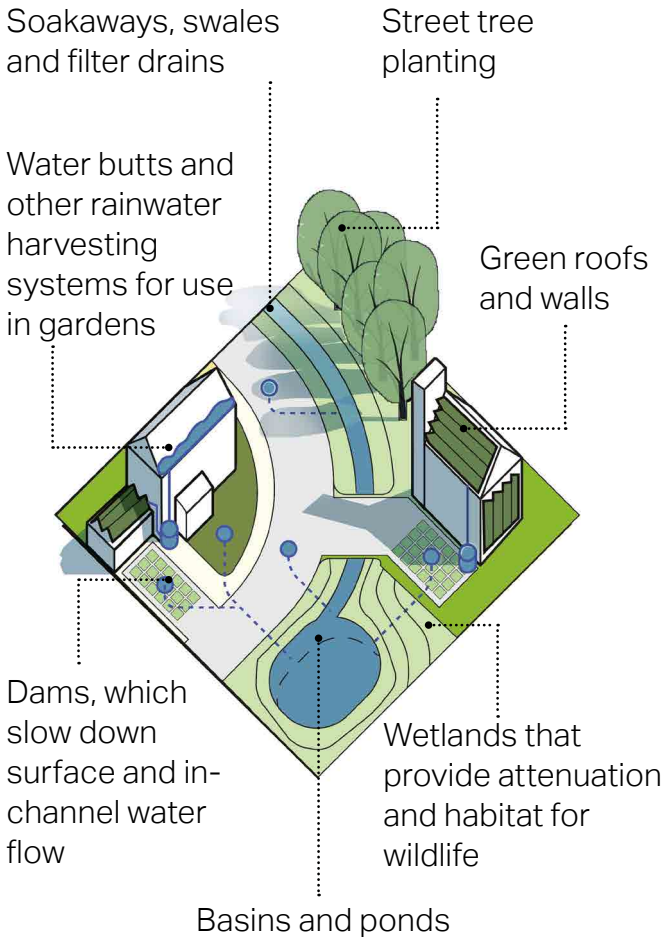


Figure 84: Diagram illustrating water management strategies in a semi-rural context in public space and private land.

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Appendix

A

Photo credit: Ringmer Parish Council

A. Appendix

A.1 Checklist

Because the design guidance and codes in this document cannot cover all design eventualities, this chapter 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 considered 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 guidance for new development'. Following these ideas and principles, several questions are listed for more specific topics on the following pages.

1

General design guidelines for new development:

- Does new development integrate with existing paths, lanes, circulation networks and patterns of activity to allow accessibility and connectivity?
- Is there an opportunity to reinforce or enhance the established settlement character of lanes and other spaces?
- Does the proposal harmonise with and enhance the existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use?
- Does the proposal relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long-distance views?
- How can the local architecture and historic distinctiveness be reflected, respected, and reinforced?
- Have important existing features been retained and incorporated into the development?
- Does the proposal adopt contextually appropriate materials and details?
- Have surrounding buildings been respected in terms of scale, height, form and massing?
- Are all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space well related to each other?
- Has adequate open space been provided for the development in terms of both quantity and quality?
- Does the proposal incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features?
- Has management, maintenance and the upkeep of utilities been considered by the proposal?
- Where does ecology/habitat measure fit into design? Eg. Bat Boxes, eaves venting simulation, owl boxes/loft house?
- A re energy-efficient technologies like heat pumps, rainwater harvesting, and solar energy appropriately integrated?
- Does the proposal ensure sustainable waste management without harming the street scene, landscape, or neighbours' amenities?
- Does the design optimise site layout, reduce energy demand, and incorporate renewables?

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?
- 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 tranquillity 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?
- 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, and how will it be managed?

3 (continued)

Local green spaces, views & character:

- 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?

5 (continued)

Buildings layout and grouping:

- 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'?
- 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?

9

Building materials & surface treatment:

- 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?
- Do 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?

9 (continued)

Building materials & surface treatment:

- 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?

A.2 How to use this document

The design guidance and codes will be a valuable tool in securing context-driven, high-quality development in Ringmer Parish. 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 guidance & codes
Applicants, developers, & 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 guidance 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 guidance & 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 guidance & 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.

Table 01: Table describing the delivery of this document.

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AECOM

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