

6.0 URBAN DESIGN

6.3 ROAD HIERARCHY & CYCLING PROVISION

6.3.1 A new access for the development is proposed via a roundabout junction on Old Wokingham Road in the east and on the west via the Nicholas King Homes neighbouring development site, with onwards connections to the Heathlands Link and the wider SWDR network. These two points would be connected with a new primary route running through the development. This new connection, would incorporate active travel as well as a proposed bus route, all running through the centre of the development and within easy access of all the neighbourhoods.

6.3.2 The proposed pedestrian and cycle access strategy has been devised to provide a permeable network within the development and by creating direct routes through it allowing for a pedestrian / cycleway access that will be created onto Easthampstead Road.

6.3.3 To the west of the site, access can be gained onto the Byway 30 corridor which continues towards Waterloo Road. As part of a separate planning application for the adjacent development at Pudner Land, to the north of our site, there are also proposed improvements works to the northern section of Byway 30.

6.3.4 It is also proposed as part of these development proposals to implement a point closure for vehicular traffic on Easthampstead Road which will therefore not be a through route eastwards. Properties to the east of the closure will still continue to access the wider highway network via Old Wokingham Road (they will not be able to route westwards).

6.3.5 As a result of the point closure a secondary access to the development from Easthampstead Road is proposed to enable egress to the east for users of Holme Grange School.

6.3.6 Further information can be found in the Transport Assessment.

Key

Primary Off-Site Road

Primary Internal Street

Primary with 3m shared cycling

Primary (with treeline)

Primary with 3m shared cycling and treeline

Secondary

Secondary (with treeline)

Secondary with 3m shared cycling

Tertiary

Tertiary (with treeline)

Tertiary with 3m shared cycling

Green Edge

Green Edge (cycling on shared surface)

Courtyards

Shared Surface

Off street 3m Cycling route, refer to EDP drawings

Cyclable public Right of Way

Cycling along Easthamspteard Road

Urban Blocks

SuDS

Green Open Space

Allotments

Ordinary watercourses

Application ref: 191068 (resolution to permit)

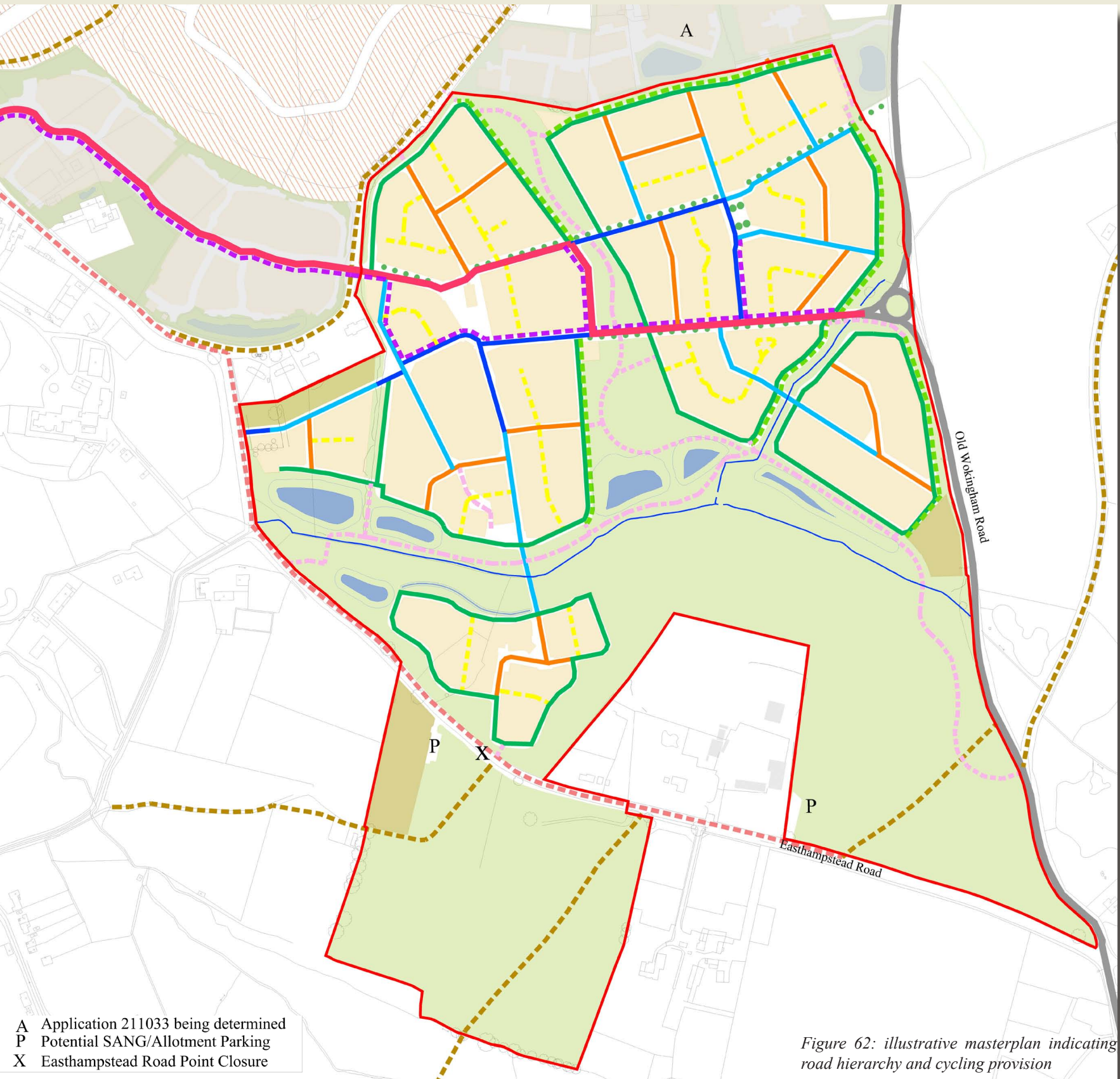


Figure 62: illustrative masterplan indicating road hierarchy and cycling provision

7.0 KEY DESIGN CRITERIA

7.1 CHARACTER AREAS

7.1.0.1 The Masterplan for the South Wokingham Extension phase 4C was designed to maximise the benefits of its location. Green open space forms an integral part of the design with a large Park located between two main neighbourhoods, as well as a SANG and the enhanced existing watercourse sited between them. This careful integration of the green open space, designed around the existing landscape features like mature trees, hedges and the watercourse provides a transition between more urban SDL to the North of the site and the more rural areas to the South. This transition is to be further underlined by the introduction of two Character Areas, as shown on figure 63:

- Character area one “Wokingham Urban Edge” applies to two northern neighbourhoods sited above the watercourse and
- Character area two “The Village” covers a small part of the development located between the watercourse and the Easthampstead Road

7.1.1 WOKINGHAM URBAN EDGE

7.1.1.1 Character area one “Wokingham Urban Edge” is to be more urban and built around a tight network of interconnecting streets and squares, with a character and feel rooted in that of the historic centre of Wokingham as well as the immediate locality. A series of public spaces, located in neighbourhood centres and the main Square serving the whole development, will be defined by terrace buildings creating a protected, enclosed space for gatherings and meetings, which could become a focal point for the community. The architecture of the “Wokingham Urban Edge” zone should be rooted in the best traditions of Wokingham, drawing on its history and development

patterns going all the way back to its silk trade industry, when typical elements such as the covered passages to courtyard areas were developed. Deploying the same solutions within the “Urban Edge Zone” combined with the typical architectural details developed in later eras would ensure that this part of the site feels like an integral part of Wokingham. A new linear park located between the two main neighbourhoods forms the heart of “Wokingham Urban Edge” area. Landscaping around this part of the site is kept relatively open maximising views of the green open space for the houses located along the edges of the Park and overlooking the watercourse.

7.1.2 THE VILLAGE

7.1.2.1 “The Village Character” area is to be located South of the watercourse. It effectively replaces the existing Hambridge Farm, which in its current form is rather unsightly and visually detrimental to the setting. The proposed development would address this problem by creating a more rural, village like, feel for this part of the development. The local public space would take a form of a small village square and would be much less formal than those in the “Urban Edge Zone”. This effect would be achieved by introducing greenery within the space, in the form of grass and varied tree planting, as well as a rather organic, less geometric, L shape form of the space itself. Surrounding it with the variety of building types such as small terraces, detached houses and a “converted barn house”, would further underline this informality in a manner typical of a rural village. A new building type, based on the local vernacular and designed to look like a “converted” barn would be introduced for this character area only, once again underlining the rural setting of the Village and tying it closely with the immediate surroundings where



structures such as Lock’s Barn or the Barn at Pearce’s farm can be found. In contrast to the landscaping around the “Urban Edge Zone” the masterplan proposes surrounding the village with trees and shrubs which would create a softer transition from the built-up areas to the countryside, enveloping it, so that

one can only ever see glimpses of the Village and never be fully aware of its modest overall size. Proximity to the watercourse, the SANG and good links to the existing Public Right of Way network would further enhance this part of the development.

7.0 KEY DESIGN CRITERIA

7.2 WOKINGHAM URBAN EDGE

UNDERSTANDING HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT PATTERN, CONTEXT AND CHARACTER OF WOKINGHAM

7.2.0.1 A study into the history of Wokingham was carried out to inform the proposed development and ensure that it fits in with character and feel of the town.

7.2.0.2 This chapter explains how the silk industry influenced the form of the urban blocks in the historic centre of Wokingham and resulted in appearance of specific architectural forms that you encounter time and time again as you walk along the streets. These are what gives Wokingham its unique character and should be the basis for a future Design Code for the SDL extension site “Wokingham Urban Edge Character” zone.

7.2.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF WOKINGHAM

7.2.1.1 Wokingham is a town situated on the Emm Brook in the Loddon Valley in central Berkshire and is 33 miles (53.1 km) west of Central London. It is set between the larger towns of Bracknell and Reading and has a population of approximately 30,500 today. However, whilst Wokingham was largely an understated settlement until the late 18th century, the town has been subject to great development and industry since then and continues to grow to this day. The first written mention of Wokingham was in 1146 and means ‘Homestead of the family or followers of a man called Wocca’. He was likely a Saxon lord who also farmed lands in Wokefield and Woking but this is unconfirmed by local historians.

7.2.1.2 In 14th century, the town consisted of Le Rothe Strete (Rose Street), La Schete (Shute End), Peach Street and Le Don Strete (Down Street later renamed Denmark Street). The High Street was where Broad Street and The Terrace are today and many of Wokingham’s most historic buildings are situated in these locations. These include 15th Century Overhangs on Peach Street and the timber framed buildings, some dating from 14th century, on Rose Street. One of the earliest houses in Wokingham is said to be at 15 The Terrace which is considered



Figure 64: 1816



Figure 65: 1898



Figure 66: 1969



Figure 67: Houses in historic town centre



Figure 68: House with a wide archway leading to the court and garden beyond



Figure 69: Victorian Town Hall

(by its architectural style) to have been built in the early 14th century.

7.2.1.3 Some of the finest buildings in Wokingham are the almshouses, built in 1665, and named Lucas Hospital (a Grade I listed building) after their benefactor. The property was sold in 2001 and is now privately owned. Henry Lucas Hospital is Wokingham’s only Grade I Listed Building.

7.2.1.4 Later into 18th century, whilst Wokingham doesn’t boast great profits in the form of fine town houses, Broad Street did feature the ‘Elms’; a dower house built around an older building for the Pitts of Swallowfield Park around 1730. Additionally, into 19th century, the Montague House of 1820 was built on the site of an earlier school and the magnificent Baptist Church (first built in 1774) was reconstructed and designed in 1861. This meant there were more genteel people frequenting the town.

7.2.1.5 Wokingham’s market has existed on Broad Street since they were granted a Market Charter in 1227, which enabled it to hold a market every Tuesday, a practice continued to this day.

7.2.1.6 However, first accounts of industry in Wokingham were its Bell Foundry which operated from the mid-1300s until 1622. It was run by the Landen family during 15th century, who marked their bells with a symbol consisting of a lion’s head. Many local churches and churches in the south of England still have Wokingham bells. However, the industry relocated to Reading in the late 16th century and the only remnant left in the town of its existence is Bell Foundry Lane where the Landen family were known to own a farm called Bell Founders Farm. The actual foundry was in Smyths Place in the centre of town behind Broad Street.

7.2.1.7 Wokingham is arguably best known for its successful silk industry. Founded by Flemish weavers fleeing from religious persecution during

7.0 KEY DESIGN CRITERIA

7.2 WOKINGHAM URBAN EDGE UNDERSTANDING HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT PATTERN, CONTEXT AND CHARACTER OF WOKINGHAM



Figure 70: Historic map coloured to indicate how the silk manufacture shaped the physical environment of Wokingham: long land parcels with houses and shops facing the street, mews courts with workshops and cottages accessed through wide archways, and gardens for Mulberry tree growing beyond.

the 16th century, the industry flourished and dominated the town until the early 19th century. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, Wokingham became particularly famous for its manufacture of hand knitted silk stockings. In 1625, an order existed that anyone residing in Wokingham and having no other trade should work in knitting. Queen Elizabeth I is said to have visited Wokingham several times and, in 1583, she granted Wokingham its first Charter. Some of the houses involved in the industry can still to be seen in Rose Street.

7.2.1.8 Before the Industrial Revolution, the creation of a patterned silk textile required a skilled weaver and a considerable investment in equipment and raw materials. As a result, patterned silks and velvets were produced in relatively few major centres in Europe where raw materials, specialised looms, and skilled artisans could be gathered efficiently.

7.2.1.9 The process of raising silkworms to produce silk is called sericulture or silk farming. Its Latin name translates to “silkworm of the black Mulberry tree”, which were trees commonly found growing in people gardens along Peach and Rose Street as the silkworm feeds on the leaves of this tree species.

7.2.1.10 When the larvae are old enough to start spinning their own silk, they were removed from the trees and placed in manmade devices called “mountages”. These were frames, similar in appearance to cubbyholes, which allowed silkworms to comfortably spin their cocoons ready for metamorphosis into silkmooths. Once the cocoons were fully formed after two to three weeks, just before they were about to hatch, the cocoons would be stifled - meaning to steam or dry out the cocoons. This would kill the larvae as the hatching of the silkmooths would cause the cocoon to break, making it unsuitable for silk fabric production.

7.2.1.11 After stifling the cocoons, the silk would go through a process called “reeling” which turned the threads of silk into yarn. Reeling is the unrolling of the

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7.2 WOKINGHAM URBAN EDGE

UNDERSTANDING HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT PATTERN, CONTEXT AND CHARACTER OF WOKINGHAM

cocoon and the combining of multiple silk filaments into one single strand of silk. Reeling was done by hand at this time but was replaced by automated processes using machines during the industrial revolution. Once the material was reeled, it could be dyed and wound into spools of thread called “skeins” and either sold as thread or woven into fabric. There was a silk factory in the 18th century based in South Place, which used to reside just off Peach Street. However, the trade declined as the town was resistant to introducing knitting machines due to cost and luddite attitudes. Instead, cheap French imports and the use of silk machines in major industry towns such as Macclesfield and Stockport, caused the factory to shut down in 1831. The factory was later converted into a row of terraced cottages and demolished in 1980.

7.2.1.12 The townspeople had to turn to alternatives, taking their hand to lesser-known and short-lived industries such as “fatted fowls” (which were bought for resale in London), leatherworking, wool-dealing, and brewing. However, the two biggest industries from the beginning of the Victorian era were its brick production and coach-making businesses. There were two major brickyards in the town, the largest owned by Thomas Lawrence (which was situated just off Fishponds Road) and a smaller one was on Oxford Road. Additionally, ‘The Lush Brothers’ founded their coach-making business, which ran until 1849, taking people between London and Reading, stopping at Wokingham. They also made coaches for King Edward VII, Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein and Empress Eugenie of the French.

7.2.1.13 After this business ceased, the Reading and Guildford railway opened, and passengers were able to travel to London via Reading. In 1856, the Staines to Reading line was completed, affording a more direct service. In 1920, there was also a regular bus service through Wokingham run by The Thames Valley Traction Company.

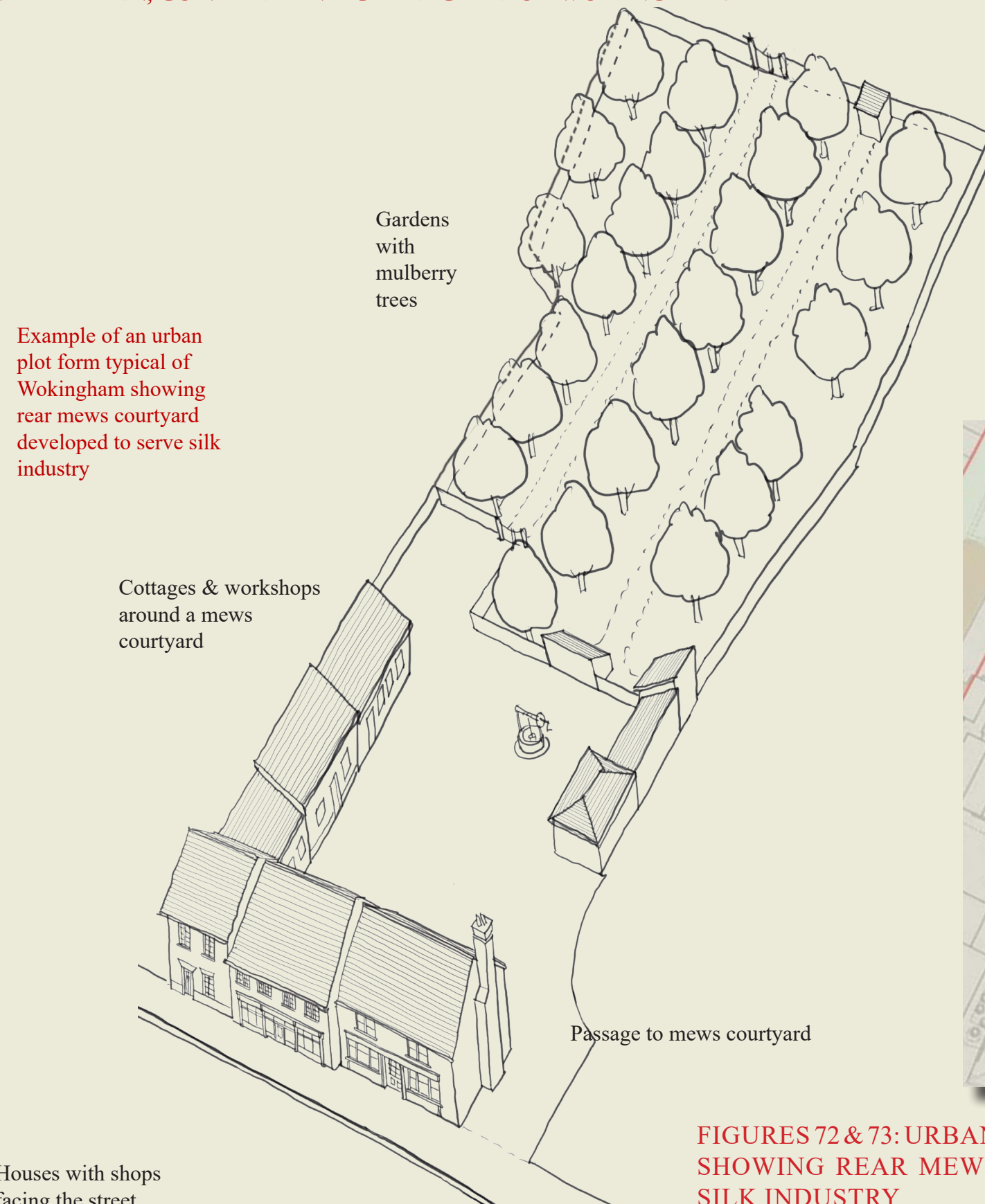


Figure 71: Typical covered passageway leading to courtyard



FIGURES 72 & 73: URBAN PLOT FORM TYPICAL OF WOKINGHAM SHOWING REAR MEWS COURTYARD DEVELOPED TO SERVE SILK INDUSTRY

7.0 KEY DESIGN CRITERIA

7.2 WOKINGHAM URBAN EDGE

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7.2.2 HISTORIC BLOCK STRUCTURE

- 7.2.2.1 At the time when silk industry was thriving, a typical Wokingham urban block was organised to provide space behind the houses which were facing the street, so that subsidiary buildings such as cottages and workshops could be arranged around a courtyard accessed through arched passageways from the street.
- 7.2.2.2 In addition the original block structure also provided space at the back of the blocks for groves of Mulberry trees that were connected with the production of silk. As the silk industry waned these were subsequently infilled and redeveloped and have shaped the character of subsequent development within Wokingham.
- 7.2.2.3 Blocks around Peach Street and Rose Street are the best examples of this block type still in existence.
- 7.2.2.4 It is envisaged that the design of the “Urban Edge” character area in SDL extension will pick up on this development form and organisation of blocks incorporating a passageway leading off the street to a rear courtyard at the heart of each block.

Figure 74: In order to give each centre a character that relates to Wokingham, a likely historic block structure resembling that of Old Wokingham should be considered as the basis from which the layout of the buildings evolves.

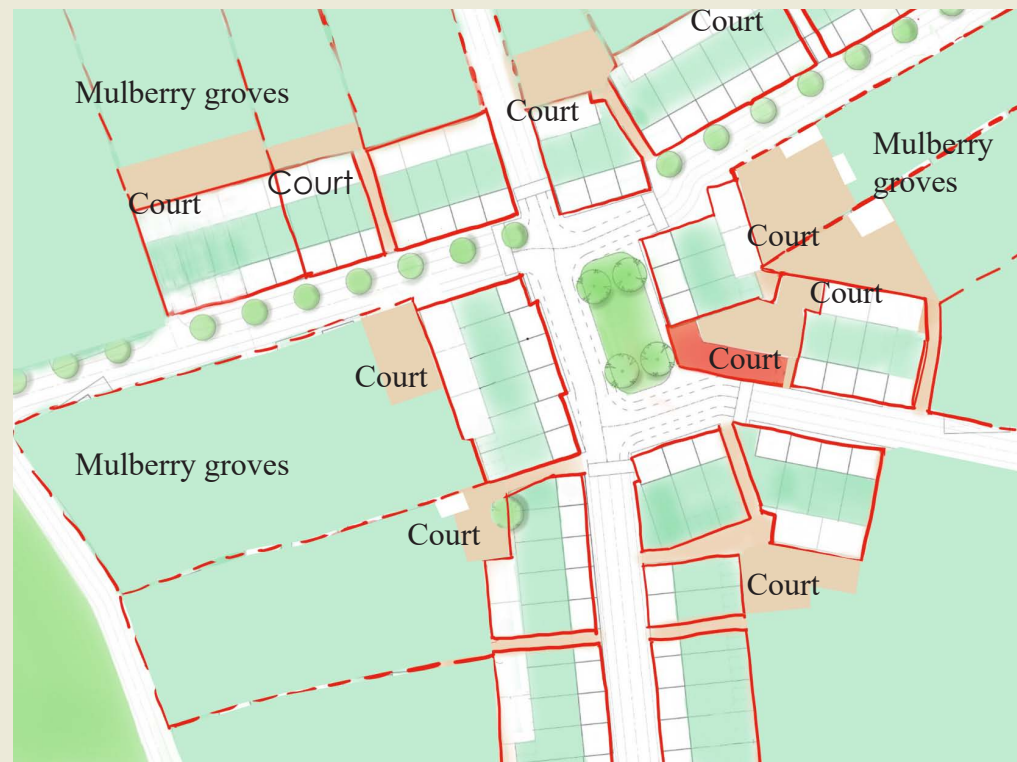


Figure 75: Developed block structure with new infill retaining the characteristic access to courtyards through passageways from the street.

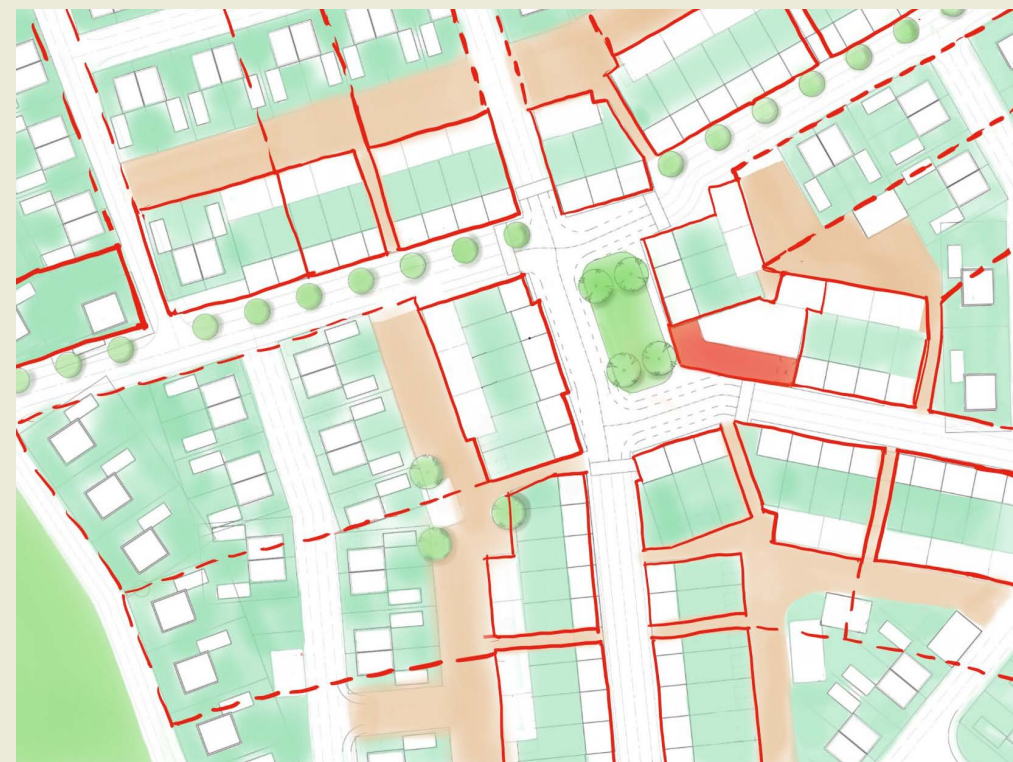


FIGURE 76: HISTORIC BLOCK

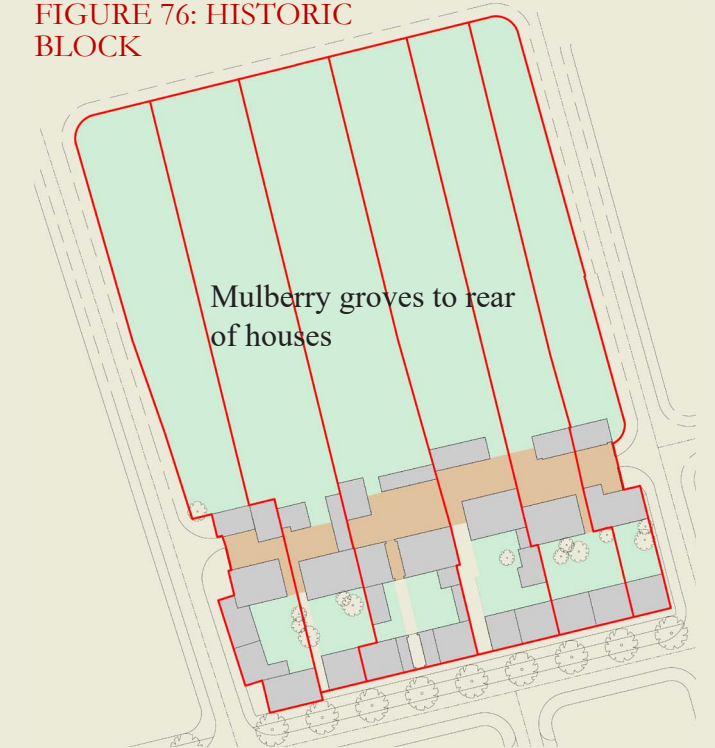
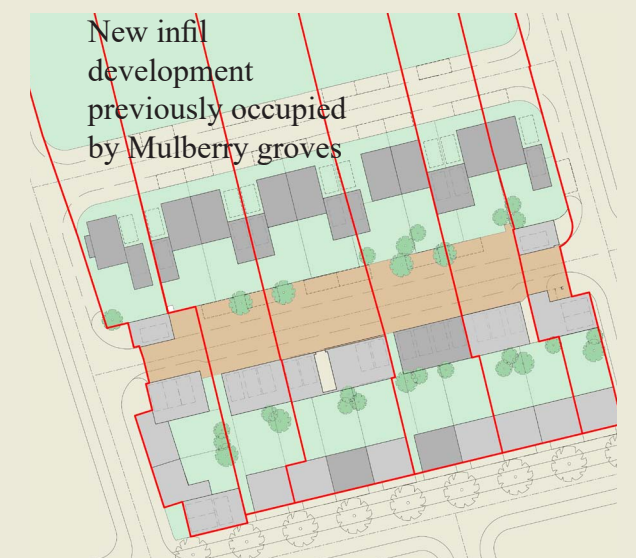


FIGURE 77: POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORIC BLOCK



7.0 KEY DESIGN CRITERIA

7.3 THE VILLAGE CHARACTER AREA

7.3.1 LOCAL DESIGN GUIDANCE

7.3.1.1 The Village Character Area south of the watercourse is anticipated to be a more rural part of the development, surrounded by green open space and designed to fit in and enhance its location.

7.3.1.2 The Council provides extensive guidance on the design of such a development which informed our approach and is contained within the following documents:

- South Wokingham Strategic Development Location Supplementary Planning Document
- Wokingham Borough Council Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document
- The Crowthorne Village Design Statement

7.3.1.3 The SWSDL SPD highlights the following points in relation to more rural interfaces within Section 4 of their document- Key Design Principles:

- *Development should front onto and address open space and the surrounding landscape. Rural edges should be carefully considered to reflect the rural context. Development should not back onto open space or surrounding countryside, to ensure a positive address of these areas*
- *Larger, wider plots with larger semidetached and detached forms and more spacing between plots will generate a more informal, looser feel in response to the immediate rural context and*



FIGURES 78, 79 & 80: VILLAGE PRECEDENT PHOTOGRAPHS

should enhance the relationship between development and the open countryside. Two storeys. Sizeable gardens and more informal layout should also reinforce this character.

- *[Approach to streets should be] Strong reference to the rural context. Emphasis on informal and soft landscape. Very informal tree planting regime with greatest mix of species.*
- *On-plot parking, with some informal onstreet visitor parking.*
- *[Residential boundary treatment should be] Very informal, predominantly hedges or rural fencing. Where properties are located at the edges of the SDL hedges should always be used.*

7.3.1.4 The Crowthorne Village Design Statement, highlights the following architecture recommendations:

- *All new development should reflect the character and architectural style of the immediate area*
- *Regard should be given to the existing landscape within areas. Measures for maintaining or enhancing the landscape character, including boundary treatments, should be provided. Trees and vegetation should be retained.*

7.3.1.5 In addition, the Vision recommendations outline the following:

- *Development should seek to provide a balance in types and mix of accommodation.*

7.3.1.6 And the concluding point notes that:

- *New developments should reflect and blend with key architectural styles in the immediate vicinity*