

Design: South East Design Review Panel

3.2.9 The masterplan proposal for the Great Grovehurst Farm site was reviewed by Design South East on 19 October 2017.

3.2.10 The review was part of a day of meetings including a review of the overarching Development Framework for the North West Sittingbourne Allocation and included three individual presentations by the respective design teams.

3.2.11 The panel welcomed the thorough analysis and the quality of the design thinking in the proposal for the GGF site, and expressed the following recommendations:

Layout and built form

- The panel supported the approach to layout and built form and suggested the testing of a more conventional approach of larger buildings fronting onto Swale Way to act as a buffer to the road.

Access and connectivity

- An alternative access solution to the currently proposed roundabout was suggested to ensure easy pedestrian and cycle connectivity from GGF to the Pheasant Farm site.
- The panel stressed the need for the link through the site connecting Grovehurst Road with Swale Way to be well overlooked and legible.

Mix of uses

- It was recommended to keep open the possibility of a mix of uses or live-work accommodation within the scheme

Play area

- The panel raised concerns about the location of the play area south of Swale Way, and recommended its relocation deeper into the development providing a stronger sense of enclosure and overlooking on all four sides.

Comments raised by the design review panel have been addressed; the children's play area is now relocated to the southern part of the site away from main traffic noise, and is positively enclosed and overlooked by development.



Figure 3.3: Illustrative masterplan presented to design review panel on 19 October 2017.

4 Development Framework

4.1 The concept

4.1.1 The concept behind the development of the Great Grovehurst Farm site is to create a sustainable high quality development that - while relating well to its suburban, edge of town location, - will also assist in creating a positive first impression of Sittingbourne on entry from the strategic highway network at the Grovehurst junction.

4.1.2 The development will therefore:

- Be visually attractive to enhance the existing character of the area.
- Provide a well connected network of routes within the site and connect with the rest of the NW Sittingbourne allocation to the south west, with the Ridham/Kemsley employment area further north, and with the Godwin Close/Grovehurst area to the south. These links should be accessible for cyclist, pedestrians and people with reduced mobility.
- Create an attractive green setting formed from a green envelope around the periphery of the site. This green envelope will add character and amenity space to the development and function as an important mitigation space for the various constraints affecting the site.
- Preserve the setting of the Grade II listed Great Grovehurst Farmhouse building with careful planting adjacent to the boundary and the off-setting of buildings away from his boundary.
- Provide a sustainable surface water storage solution that can be part of the open space provision and provide excellent opportunities for wildlife habitats.

The purpose of the Development Framework

4.1.3 This section sets out the design principles for the Great Grovehurst Farm site and shows how the parameter plans are intended to illustrate the location and form of the development.

KEY

-  Potential for main entrance to be in broadly same location as existing access to farmyard
-  Existing cycle routes
-  Potential for new pedestrian and cycle links
-  Potential for a green buffer around development
-  Opportunity for gateway entrance into development
-  Potential for landmark frontage at entrance to development and potential for extending Godwin Close frontage
-  Views
-  Potential for a well connected network of streets

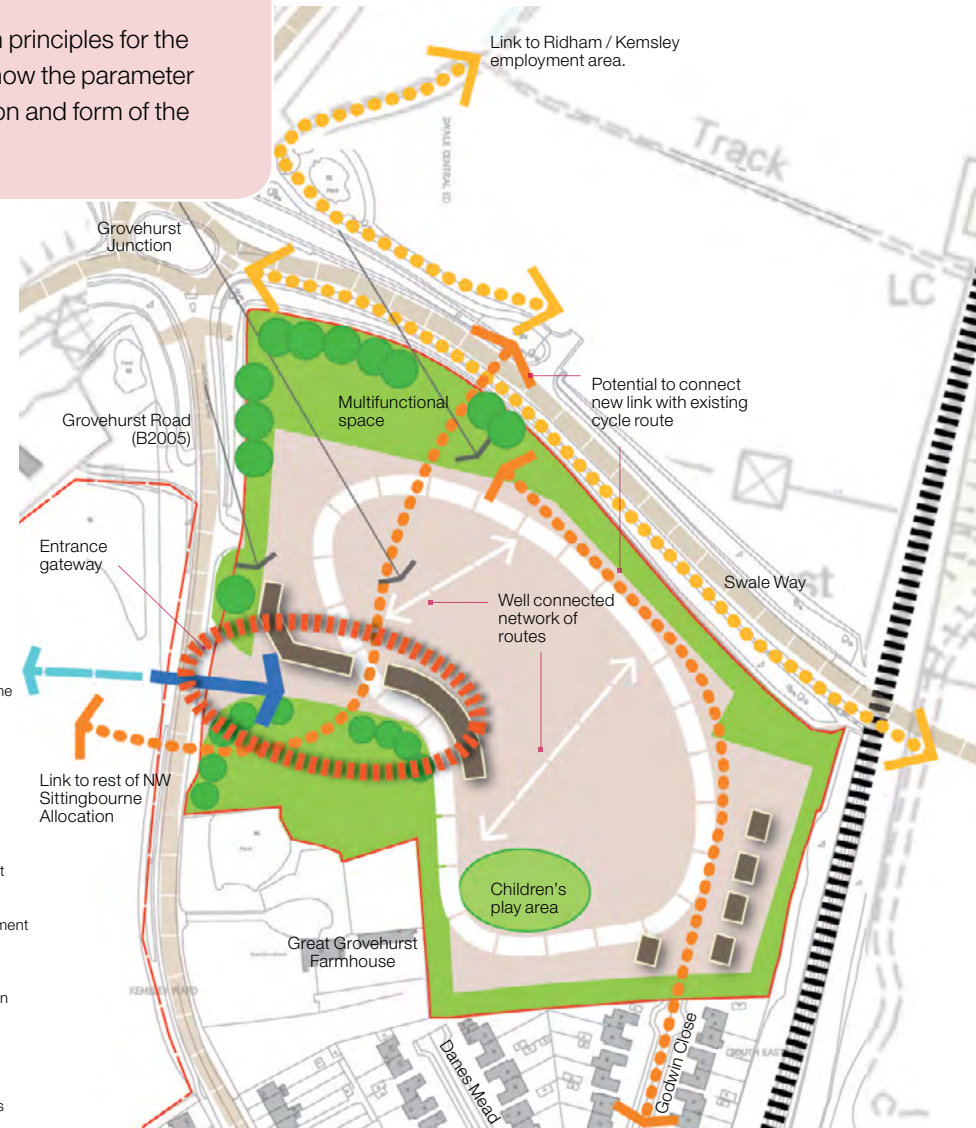


Figure 4.1: Concept plan

4.2 Land use and density

4.2.1 Residential development is the proposed land use for the GGF site being the most likely to facilitate the preservation of the setting of Great Grovehurst Farmhouse and the creation of a good first impression of Sittingbourne.

4.2.2 After considering the land-take required to mitigate the constraints, the site has the capacity to accommodate about 110 dwellings. This corresponds to a gross density of about 23 units per ha which is considered appropriate to the location and the context of the site.

4.2.3 Family housing is expected to make up a large proportion of the new homes with a small element of apartments. The houses are likely to be semi-detached with groups of terraced dwellings.

4.2.4 The majority of new houses are likely to be 2 storeys in height (with the potential for a further room within roof level) with some 3 storey buildings. Three storey buildings would be located in places where they help define spaces as landmarks; e.g. at the entrance of the development or fronting onto a green space. They should not be placed next to the Godwin Close / Danes Mead bungalows or in close proximity to Great Grovehurst Farmhouse garden wall where they would be visually intrusive.

4.2.5 Buildings to the east of Great Grovehurst Farmhouse would be a maximum of 2 storeys in height to minimise any visual impact on the setting of the listed building. The likely general reduction in site levels of about 600mm will further positively assist this relationship.

Affordable housing

4.2.6 In accordance with Local Plan policy DM8, some 10% of units will be provided as affordable housing.

4.2.7 The mix of affordable housing units will reflect the final market mix and the identified requirements of Swale BC. It is probable that the affordable housing will be delivered by one of the Council's preferred housing associations.

4.2.8 The development will therefore, provide a range of house types, sizes and tenures to maximise choice for potential new residents.

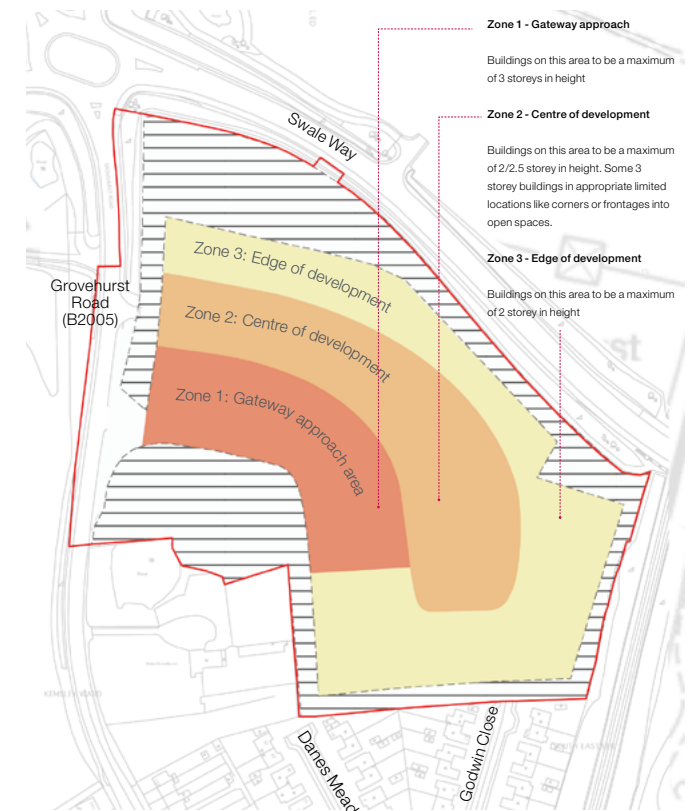


Figure 4.2: Land use and density framework plan

4.3 Access and movements

4.3.1 Access to the GGF site would be obtained via Grovehurst Road generally at the existing point of access to the former farmyard. Initially, access will be in the form of a priority junction capable of subsequent alteration to a roundabout to include the main access into the housing and open space allocations west of Grovehurst Road as part of the Pheasant Farm development. This approach has been agreed by Kent Highway Services.

4.3.2 A secondary access for pedestrians, cyclists and emergency vehicles only would be provided via Godwin Close (land ownership prevents such a link via Danes Mead). This link would connect the GGF site with the Godwin Close/ Grovehurst area to the south and further south with the Kemsley area and its community facilities to the east of the railway line.

4.3.3 A new cycle and pedestrian link would be made to connect with the existing strategic cycle route along Swale Way and further north into the Ridham/Kemsley employment area. This link would also connect with the rest of the NW Sittingbourne allocation to the south west of Grovehurst Road.

4.3.4 New links would be designed taking into consideration the most convenient and accessible routes with regard to topography to ensure they are accessible for cyclist, pedestrians and people with reduced mobility.

4.3.5 There would be a mix of street types within the development. Some streets would be traditional streets with a clear distinction between carriageway and footway and some would be lower status shared surface streets.

4.3.6 Traditional streets would be located at the entrance into the development, off Grovehurst Road and on minor routes leading from this access.

4.3.7 Small shared surface streets are likely to be located north and south of the main access street, they are likely to be in the form of mews or private drives where cyclist drivers and pedestrians will have equal priority over the space.

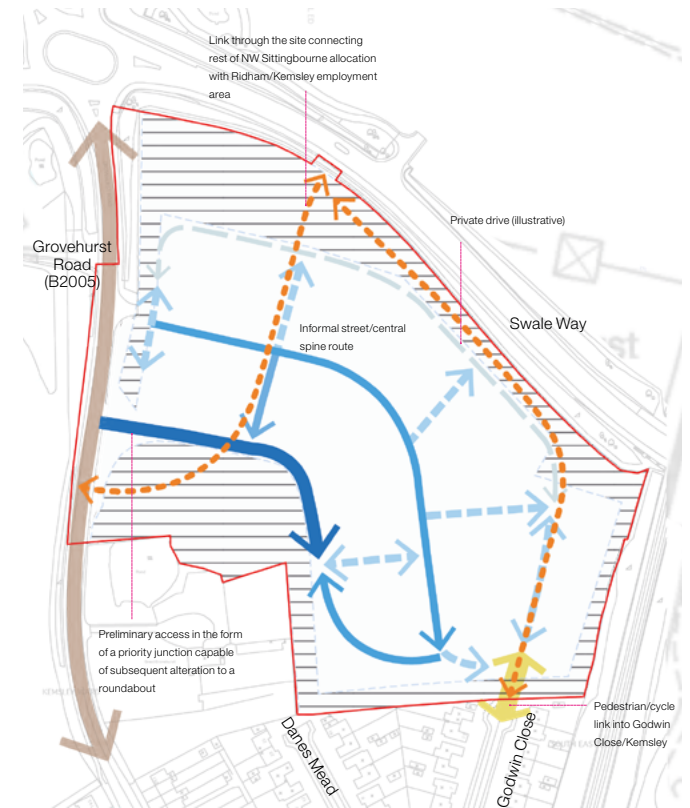


Figure 4.3: Access and movements framework plan

KEY

- Application site boundary (red line)
- Main access street
- - - Informal street/mews (illustrative)
- Private drives (illustrative)
- - - Approximate location of cycle and pedestrian connections through the site
- Grovehurst Road
- ↔ Pedestrian/ cycle/ emergency vehicle access to Godwin Close
- Landscape buffer

4.4 Open space and ecology

4.4.1 Provision of open space (on and off-site) has been assessed on the basis of the typologies set out in the Local Plan. On-site provision would include:

- A multi-purpose area of amenity and natural green space along Swale Way. This area of about 0.55ha, would include a surface water attenuation feature, mitigate against noise, create a buffer (with controlled landscaping) between the dwellings and the electricity lines, new habitat and contribute to the visual setting of the development.
- A multi purpose area of amenity and natural green space to the north of Great Grovehurst Farmhouse. This space of approximately 0.46ha, will also function as GCN mitigation habitat.
- A GCN mitigation corridor to the east of the Great Grovehurst Farmhouse garden wall along the southern boundary of the site and along the railway. The latter would also provide an easement for the gas pipe.
- A further 0.07 ha of children's open space in addition to the spaces above, this would be located so that it is easily accessible to all residents. A detailed location for the open space would be agreed at reserved matters stage.

4.4.2 These spaces will aim to encourage a variety of uses and activities, create a focus within the development and provide important ecological mitigation.

4.4.3 Off site provision – provision of natural and semi natural green space for the GGF site is met by existing provision. In particular, at 52 ha and lying with 2 Km of the site, the Milton Creek Country Park with large expanses of

meadow, grassland, scrub, ponds, reed beds and a network of paths provides an existing dog walking destination. There are proposals to extend the Country Park by about 13 ha.

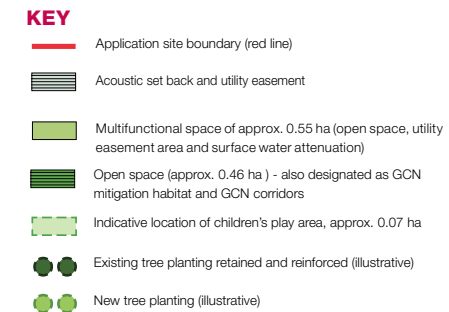
4.4.4 Also, the circa 22ha linear park within the Policy MU1 allocation, designed on SANG principles, would provide additional leisure opportunities as would the proposed Country Park east of Iwade just across the A249, again to be designed on SANG principles.

4.4.5 In addition, it is anticipated that a financial contribution will be required to SAMMS as a means of mitigating potential recreational impacts of the development at GGF on the protected areas.

4.4.6 Furthermore, for formal outdoor sport a financial contribution to improve existing facilities off-site in lieu of provision of new facilities is anticipated, secured via a S106 obligation.



Figure 4.4: Open space and ecology framework plan



4.5 Urban design Framework

4.5.1 The urban design framework plan (Fig 4.6) sets out the principles of development in terms of frontages, edges and the creation of a clear and legible street network. It merges the principles explained previously in this section which have been developed in line with good practice.

4.5.2 In summary, the framework promotes:

- a development that will address this important entrance into Sittingbourne by fronting onto Swale Way and Grovehurst Road to allow for glimpses into this high quality place
- a land use, scale and density that is appropriate for the site and its local context, with a residential development of 2 / 3 storey houses that will not detract but complement the existing residential areas
- a permeable and connected network of routes within the site that link also into its wider context
- a network of open spaces that fulfil not only their role as amenity spaces but also as mitigation areas and important ecological habitats.
- a development form that is characteristic of Kent towns and Sittingbourne, with predominantly semi-detached and terraced buildings of simple form that will present a simple material-palette including traditional materials such as brick, weatherboarding and white or light-coloured paint and render

- a masterplan structure developed around 3 character areas that will add interest and variety;

Character area 1- Gateway approach

- Access and main street enclosed by buildings and landscape (new trees enclosing open space and GCN mitigation habitat)
- Buildings create a formal continuous frontage
- Larger scale buildings of maximum 3 storey
- Buildings have strong consistent roofline



Character area 2-Centre of development

- Less formal streets / mews with greater level of built enclosure
- Buildings create an informal frontage
- Mid-scale buildings of predominantly 2/2.5 storey with some larger buildings (3 storeys) defining corners or enclosing open spaces.
- Buildings have consistent roofline



Character area 3- Edge of development

- Less formal streets / private drives enclosed by buildings and open space / landscape
- Buildings create a staggered but continuous frontage to northern boundary with buildings of smaller scale and generally longer front gardens. For noise attenuation there would be no gaps between buildings thus screening the site in general and private amenity areas in particular.
- Small scale buildings of maximum 2 storeys
- Buildings have varied roofline



Figure 4.5: Images showing desired character / appropriate architecture for each character area

4.5.3 This urban design framework plan sets out the principles for future development on the GGF site. Together with the site specific design guidance it provides a robust basis for more detailed development proposals for the site.

KEY

- Application site boundary (red line)
- Formal continuous building frontage with street enclosed by buildings and landscape (trees)
- Informal building frontage with streets having a greater level of built enclosure
- Staggered continuous frontage with street enclosed by buildings and landscape
"In Character Area 3 for noise attenuation there would be no gaps between buildings thus screening the site in general and private amenity areas in particular."
- Main street into the development
- Less formal streets/mews (illustrative)
- Private drives (illustrative)
- Children's play area
- Key views from Grovehurst junction



Figure 4.6: Urban design framework plan

5 Site specific design principles

5.1 Approach to creating a good first impression

5.1.1 The GGF site has an important location at the northern entrance into Sittingbourne and as such, new development should contribute to the creation of a good first impression of the town when approaching from the A249.

5.1.2 In identifying the best way to create a good first impression, the following issues were considered:

- Views/visibility into the site from Grovehurst Junction and Grovehurst Road (See section 2.10)
- Site topography (See section 2.10)
- Precedents of good local edge of town developments and gateways (See section 2.11)

5.1.3 The views and topographic analysis has shown that the visibility of the site from the Grovehurst junction and north of Grovehurst Road is limited. This is due to:

- considerable level difference between these roads and the site (the site being lower than the roads), this will be accentuated following the removal of brickearth, and
- off-site vegetation along the site boundary creating a discontinuous visual screening

5.1.4 The visibility of the site opens up in some areas, further east along Swale Way and further south along Grovehurst Road at approximately the same location as the current access into the former farmyard.

5.1.5 Given these visual and level constraints, the approach to creating a good first impression will focus on designing a high quality development that will be seen from the Grovehurst Junction as a coherent and attractive

compositions of buildings and landscape. This composition would be achieved by:

Creating a dynamic roof line

5.1.5 Creating a dynamic roof line within the development with buildings increasing in height as they approach the centre of the site. This roof line would be perceived within the gaps in the peripheral vegetation and over it where it would be possible to see subtle layers of roofs from the Grovehurst Junction and Swale Way.

- Buildings fronting onto the multi-purpose open space to the north would have a maximum of 2 storeys in height, perhaps with part of the first floor being within the height of the roof.
- Frontage onto this open space should be staggered and have larger front gardens to emphasize their edge of town location and to allow for new vegetation in front of buildings to assist in creating a softer green edge.

- Some buildings along this frontage could have different roof orientation (gable fronted roofs) to create accents along the frontage and add variety.
- Buildings towards the centre and along the main access road would ideally be 2.5/3 storey except in those areas where they may compromise the setting of Great Grovehurst Farmhouse or the bungalows in Godwin Close/ Danes Mead. This increase in building heights towards the centre of the site together with changing site levels, will create subtle layers of roofs that will add interest and variety to the development when viewed from the Grovehurst Junction and Swale Way.

Illustrative material

5.1.6 The illustrative material used in this section is intended to serve only as an example of how the design specific principles could be implemented in a particular design solution.



Figure 5.1: Illustrative overview showing how a dynamic roof line and enhanced landscaping may look - view from the north side of Swale Way

Protecting and enhancing landscape structures

5.1.7 The peripheral vegetation is an important feature of edge of town development and in this case provides an important visual foil and acoustic screen from nearby traffic.

- New development should protect existing peripheral screening, removing incongruous leylandii and replanting with indigenous more wildlife friendly species where appropriate.
- New landscaping along Swale Way and Grovehurst Road would be carefully designed to retain small gaps of lighter screening in vegetation to allow for glimpses into the development.
- Landscape structures (trees and planting) within the open space area north of Great Grovehurst Farmhouse would be carefully designed to create high quality green space, that assists in defining the entrance into the development and reinforces the screening of the setting of the listed building

Creating an entrance gateway into the development

5.1.8 Creating an entrance gateway into the development from Grovehurst Road.

- Buildings fronting onto Grovehurst Road at the entrance into the site, should be of larger scale (3 storey) than the rest of the development and create a more continuous less fragmented building line to accentuate the entrance into the development

- Buildings on the northern side of the new access road, together with a landscape structure south of it, would create a pinch point at the entrance to the development to give/provide a sense of arrival .

5.1.9 A strong frontage in this location will assist in defining the entrance into the development.

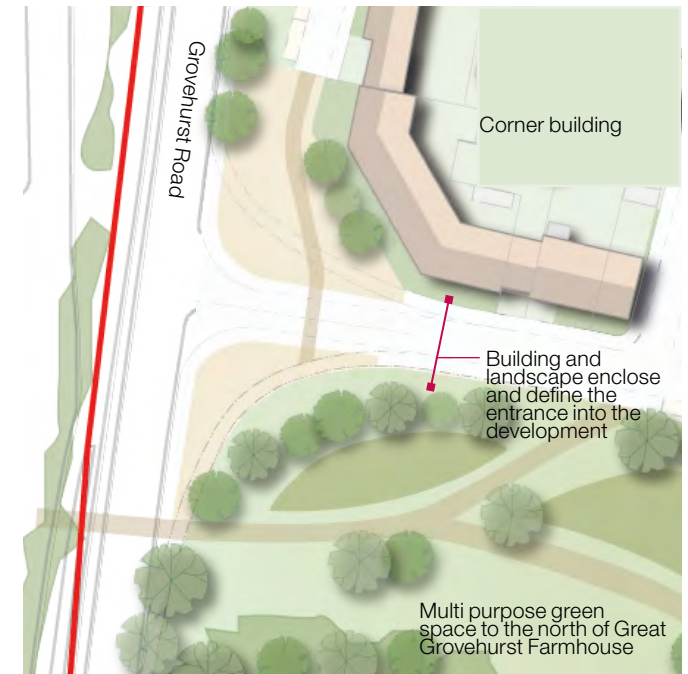


Figure 5.3: Building and landscape features defining the entrance into the development



Figure 5.2: Illustrative sketch showing a gateway entrance into the GGF site defined by buildings and landscape

5.2 Layout

Streets and routes

5.2.1 The new development proposes a layout of well connected streets that maximise access within the site and connections to the wider neighbourhood.

5.2.2 It will provide a variety of street types with traditional streets at the entrance to the development (off Grovehurst Road) and lower status, less formal streets (mews or private drives) on the northern and eastern parts of the site.

5.2.3 Streets will be designed to accommodate service vehicles except for those potential private drives along the northern boundary that may only serve as access to a small number of units (no more than 6 houses).

5.2.4 The layout will aim to avoid 'Cul de sacs' and dead ends where possible. Generally private drives will have restricted vehicular movements but they would facilitate pedestrian and cycle routes where appropriate.

5.2.5 The new cycle and pedestrian link connecting Swale Way with the rest of the NW Sittingbourne allocation to the south west, will be designed to follow the shortest most convenient route within the development and ensure it is inclusive and well overlooked by development. This route is likely to cross Grovehurst Road south of the proposed junction; cross the open space area north of Great Grovehurst Farm and skirt the open area at the northern corner of the site.

5.2.6 A secondary access (for cycle, pedestrians and emergency vehicles only) connecting to Godwin Close, is intended to follow the continued alignment as the existing

street and link further north into the green buffer along Swale Way. This link will be designed as an attractive path that is well protected from Swale Way traffic by improved landscape structures.

5.2.7 Routes within the site will create distinctive development blocks. In the southern part of the site, there is the potential to create perimeter blocks that have a more continuous building line, in particular the blocks fronting onto the open space area north of Great Grovehurst Farm.

Parking

5.2.8 The local parking standards are set out in Kent County Council's Interim Guidance Note 3, "Residential Parking" Nov 2008.

Type	Spaces per unit	Form
1 & 2 bed flats	1	Not allocated
1 & 2 bed houses	1.5	1 space per unit
3 bed house	2 independently accessible spaces per unit*	Allocation of one of both spaces possible
4+ bed houses	2 independently accessible spaces per unit*	Allocation of both spaces possible

**Best provided side by side, or in another independently accessible form. Tandem parking arrangements are often under-utilised*

5.2.9 Most houses should have parking on plot either in the form of a garage or as areas of hard standing. On plot parking should ideally be arranged side by side or, where this is not possible, in tandem.

5.2.10 Parking for terraced houses will generally be provided within a short distance to each house either on street or as part of a well over looked parking court.

5.2.11 Cycle parking will be provided in a covered and secure location. Ideally within garages or in areas where they will not have a negative visual impact on the street scene.



Figure 5.4: Private drive at the edge of development



Figure 5.5: Shared surface street

5.3 Built form and mass

5.3.1 The building form of the new development will reflect the local context (See Section 2.11 Character influences) and create a coherent composition across the site.

Buildings

5.3.2 Buildings will front onto Grovehurst Road and the proposed open spaces. On the southern and eastern edges, where the site backs onto rear gardens and the railway line, new development will back onto these boundaries (supported by new mitigation corridors), respecting neighbouring privacy and promoting a safer more secure environment.

5.3.3 At the entrance into the site, there is the potential for buildings to be 3 storey in height. A 3 storey corner building or a more consistent frontage on this location will help define the entrance into the development.

5.3.4 Other areas with potential to accommodate 3 storey buildings include the frontage opposite the open space area north of Great Grovehurst Farm. This frontage is at a reasonable distance away from Great Grovehurst Farmhouse and its garden wall and has the potential to create a pleasant crescent of development fronting onto the open green space. Buildings further south (east of the garden wall) due to their proximity with Great Grovehurst Farmhouse however, will be a maximum of 2 storey so as not to impact on the setting of the listed building.

5.3.5 Buildings fronting onto the multi-purpose area south of Swale Way would be of smaller scale no more than 2 storeys in height to reflect a down grade in mass and

scale from buildings towards the centre of the site. Buildings along this frontage will be designed to create an attractive staggered but continuous frontage. Larger front gardens with trees and landscape structure will help to soften this edge of the development with building form used to screen the site generally and private amenity areas in particular from noise from Swale Way.

5.3.6 This frontage will help create a dynamic roof line within the overall development and be viewed or glimpsed between the gaps in vegetation from the Grovehurst junction and Swale Way.

5.3.7 Buildings located at the centre of the development would be ideally 2.5 storeys in height with the half storey integrated as part of the roof.

5.3.8 On the south-eastern part of the site, new buildings are to extend the existing Godwin Close frontage and relate as much as possible to existing buildings. New buildings in this location should not be higher than 2 storeys with the landscape of the GCN corridor and the potential level difference after brickearth extraction (approximate 600mm below existing site levels) assisting in the transition between the existing bungalows on Godwin Close and the new 2 storey houses. (See figure 5.7)

Refuse storage and other interface elements

5.3.9 The detailed design will need to carefully integrate permanent accommodation for 2 wheelie bins per dwelling to avoid a negative impact on the street scene.

5.3.10 Other elements like cycle storage, electricity/ gas meters and inspection boxes will need to be carefully



Figure 5.6: Sample of buildings and roof types appropriate for the site including 2.5 and 3 storeys houses

integrated so as not to detract from the overall quality of the streets.

Roofs

5.3.11 A coherent development will be achieved through roofs being generally consistent within the site. There is potential to introduce different approaches in corner locations or where buildings address important routes or spaces.

5.3.12 Along the frontage south of Swale Way, roofs can provide a more varied and interesting form (to assist with creating a good first impression) by rotating roof pitches and integrating gables and bays into the street scene.

Materials

5.3.13 A simple palette of materials is intended throughout the development. This will be consistent with the local context and could include the use of:

- Brick in the local clay colour (yellow or red);
- Timber or other weatherboarding in white or light colours; and
- Render painted in white or light-colour

5.3.14 Landmarks or important groups of buildings could introduce a slight variation of material compared with the rest of buildings on site, but retaining a consistent treatment within them. This could be the case for buildings fronting onto Grovehurst Road or addressing the proposed open spaces.



Figure 5.7: Illustrative sketch showing new development from Godwin Close



Figure 5.8: Sample of buildings and roofs appropriate for the site

5.4 Open space and landscape

Open spaces

5.4.1 Open spaces within the GGF site are a key asset of the development and an important generator of character.

- The open spaces provided on site will be designed to allow for a range of activities (informal play and for passive leisure activities like walking and sitting).
- They will be easily accessible from most parts of the development and their design should contribute positively to the visual setting of the development.
- They will be well overlooked by residential development and routes within them will be designed to feel safe and secure

5.4.2 New planting along Swale Way and Grovehurst Road will assist in screening the site from nearby traffic. However, it should be carefully designed to retain some small gaps of lighter screening in vegetation to allow for glimpses into the development. This less-dense screening will be acceptable provided it does not affect the quality of the environment of nearby spaces.

5.4.3 In other areas and the GCN corridors next to Great Grovehurst Farmhouse and its garden wall, improved high level planting is to be introduced to add visual richness to the open space and assist in maintaining the screening of the setting of the listed building.

5.4.4 This planting will be of indigenous species replacing the incongruous leylandii.

5.4.5 About (0.07ha) of open space for children will be located within easy reach of most houses ideally, where the main routes converge.

5.4.6 GCN corridors adjoining the Godwin Close boundary and the railway line will not be publicly accessible

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but will have access for service and maintenance purposes. New houses will back onto these corridors to ensure there are no unsupervised areas of land that could encourage crime and bad behaviour.

5.4.7 Landscaping within these corridors should assist in minimising the visual impact of the new development on the amenity space /gardens of existing properties on Danes Mead and Godwin Close.

5.4.8 Changes in levels as a result of brickearth extraction (approx. 600mm) will be absorb as part of the edge of open spaces, in the form of a small landscaped embankment or accommodated at the centre of the development blocks between back gardens.

Boundary treatments

5.4.7 Front gardens have a significant affect on the character and enclosure of the street. To respond to the local character, new development will provide boundary treatments that are:

- predominantly in the form of soft green grassed areas with small trees and hedges.
- delimited by subtle landscape structures (ideally no built structure).

5.4.8 Most homes within the development will have reasonable sized front gardens of 2-5m (except for those houses that form part of a mews or shared surface street).

5.4.9 The largest front gardens may be more appropriate on the edge of the development fronting onto the multi purpose open space south of Swale Way. Larger gardens in this location will add to the green character of the space and assist in creating a softer environment in contrast to a more formal one at the entrance to the development.

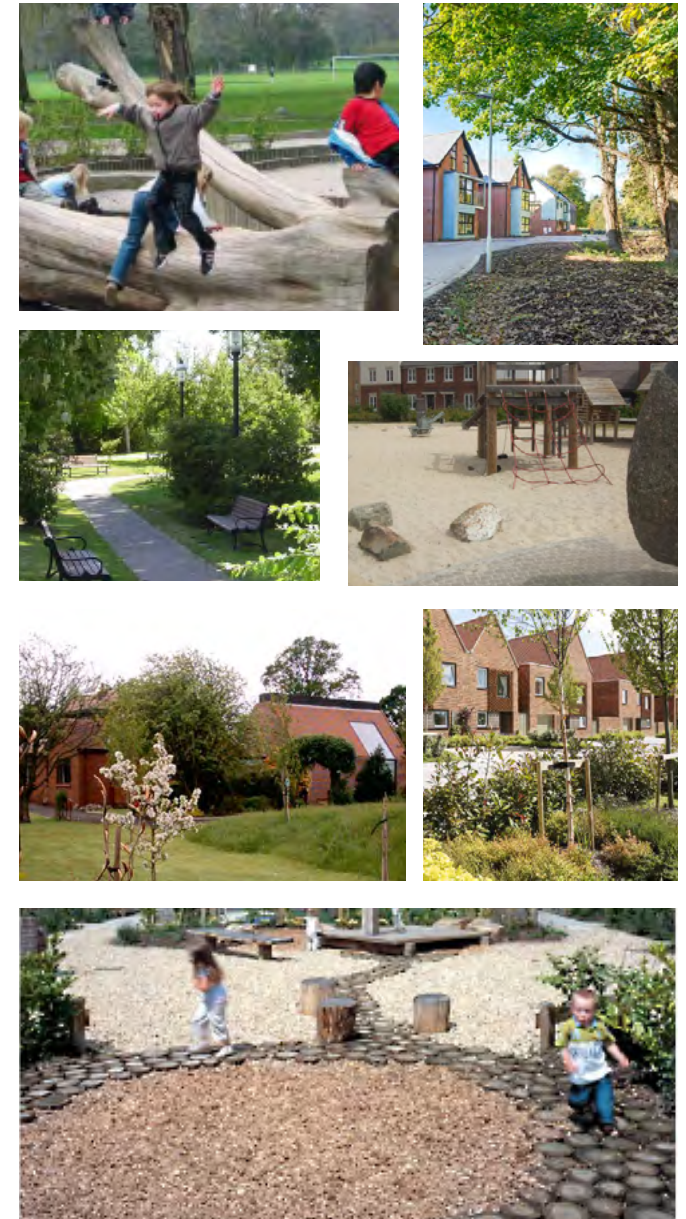


Figure 5.9: Sample of landscape character appropriate for the site

5.5 Illustrative masterplan

5.5.1 The proposal for the Great Grovehurst Farm site has been led by the desire to create a high quality development that provides an attractive and safe environment for its new residents, is sensitive to its context and positively addresses important views into Sittingbourne from the Grovehurst junction.

5.5.2 The strengths of this masterplan approach result in a distinctive development that would:

- Create a soft green envelope around development providing high quality open spaces
- Create a well connected network of routes and spaces that link into existing pedestrian and cycle networks
- Provide variety in character through the definition of 3 character areas
- Set a strong approach to how development can positively address this important gateway into Sittingbourne

Illustrative material

5.5.3 The illustrative masterplan is intended to serve as an example of how the design specific principles could be implemented in a particular layout and design solution.

5.5.4 Its purpose within this Design and Access Statement is to illustrate and bring to life the design principles in a more “people friendly” - easy to understand manner.



Figure 5.10: Illustrative masterplan

