

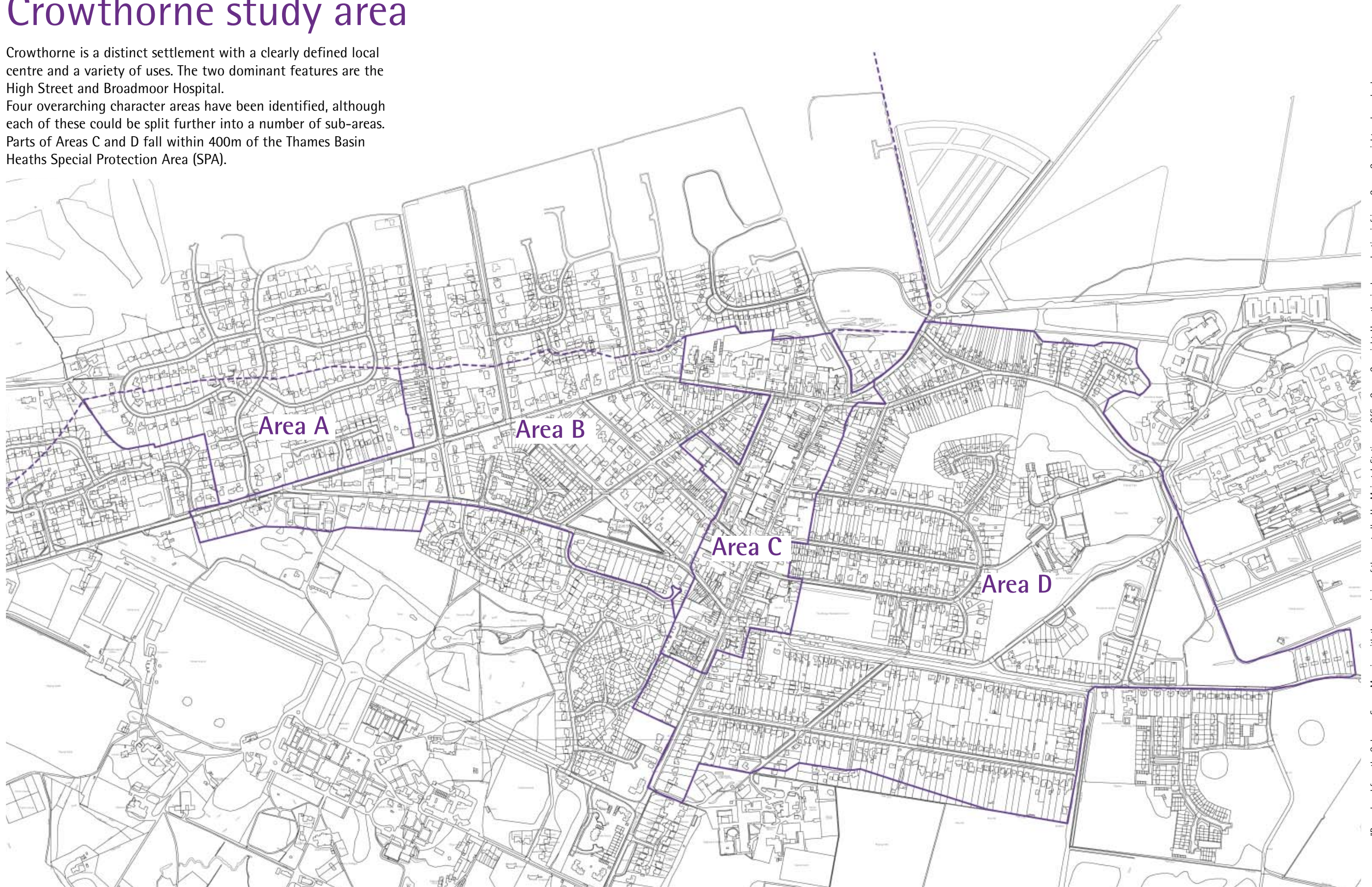
Chapter 3

Crowthorne study area

Crowthorne is a distinct settlement with a clearly defined local centre and a variety of uses. The two dominant features are the High Street and Broadmoor Hospital.

Four overarching character areas have been identified, although each of these could be split further into a number of sub-areas.

Parts of Areas C and D fall within 400m of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).



Structure

Area A: Edgumbe Park

- This area consists of a comprehensively developed housing estate;
- It is of relatively low density and well integrated into its woodland setting;
- Houses are set around winding estate roads and the undulating topography enhances the distinct character of this area;
- The Edgumbe Park development straddles the boundary of Bracknell Forest Council and Wokingham Borough Council and a consistent approach across borough boundaries would be desirable; and
- Strong links with continuation of estate into Wokingham district.

Area B: West Crowthorne

- This area is characterised by a grid pattern that overlays older converging roads, such as Dukes Ride, Waterloo Road and Church Street;
- To the east the area is contained by the village centre;
- The area has strong links with similar housing to the north in Wokingham Borough; and
- Despite being close to the village centre, some of the streets in this area are very informal in terms of design.

Area C: Crowthorne Centre

- This area is formed around Crowthorne High Street;
- It provides a strong linear spine with a variety of uses;
- The building frontage appears continuous and urban in character and overall this area is of higher density and larger building blocks;
- The east end of Dukes Ride, within character area C, subtly contrasts with the residential section and the grounds of Crowthorne C of E School, marking the entrance to the village centre;
- The village centre is framed on all four sides by residential development in character areas B and D, the form of which strongly contrasts with the centre. This feature is particularly distinctive of the area; and
- An area along Church Street and the High Street is designated as a conservation area.

Area D: East Crowthorne

- Immediately to the east of the High Street development is consistent in character, although individual houses are varied in design;
- It is formed around a linear street pattern based on a series of parallel east west orientated roads;
- The elevated position of Broadmoor is a strong influence on this area and its high walls and historic buildings terminate many of the local vistas; and
- Further to the east the development form becomes less cohesive and split into smaller development pockets separated by woodlands. This character change is influenced by the topography.



Landscape setting

Area A: Edgumbe Park

- The area is enclosed by residential areas. To the north an area of similar character continues some way into Wokingham borough;
- Character area B sits to the south separating the area from Wellington College grounds; and
- The area sits on rising and undulating ground on the north side of a shallow valley through which the B3348 road runs.

Area B: West Crowthorne

- The character area is bounded to the south by Wellington College but its influence on the character area is fairly low;
- Wellington College lies within landscape character area Wellington College Large-scale Enclosed Forest and Heaths (Entec 2006). This is a low-lying flat area which extends into character area B. The northern part which abuts character area B is dominated by woodland which abruptly stops at the boundary. The original heathland landscape is now much altered by the parkland landscape of the college; and
- There is a marked contrast with Edgumbe Park estate, character area A.

Area C: Crowthorne Centre

- The centre is not particularly influenced by the surrounding landscape beyond the residential areas;
- Narrow views to tree groups beyond the residential areas at the southern and northern ends of the High Street;
- The area sits on gently undulating ground at the base of the more pronounced topography to the east; and
- The area has the strongest link with Church Street and the conservation area.

Area D: East Crowthorne

- The area closely abuts the Thames Basin Heath SPA, separated by a slither of open land within the Broadmoor Estate Farmed Enclosed Forest and Heaths (Entec 2006) to the north and east;
- The Broadmoor Estate Farmed Enclosed Forest and Heaths lie on the sands of the Bagshot Beds, on a hilly and hummocky topography. Key features are these hillocks, topped with tree cover, which form a distinctive setting to character area D. Woodlands and tree belts characterise this area and extend into the character area;
- This character area is dominated by the Grade II Historic Park and Garden at Broadmoor which extends into the character area to include the road access along Lower Broadmoor Road, the land around Chaplain's Hill, School Hill, and the eastern end of Lower Broadmoor Road. The eastern end of the character area is influenced by the walls of Broadmoor Hospital, above a steep hill. Lower Broadmoor Road and its lime avenue form the former western approach off the High Street, continuing up Chaplain's Hill, flanked by woodland to the north and distant views to the south over the open playing fields. Upper Broadmoor Road formed the north western approach, flanked by woodland. At the top of Upper Broadmoor Road lies Kentigern House, the grounds of which contribute to the setting of the character area west of the hospital;
- South of the area lie the Wildmoor Low-lying Forest and Heaths (Entec 2006) part of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA which form a rolling landscape on sand of coniferous and deciduous woodland and heathland. There is a clear boundary with the houses on Pinehill Road, with views out to the woodland forest;

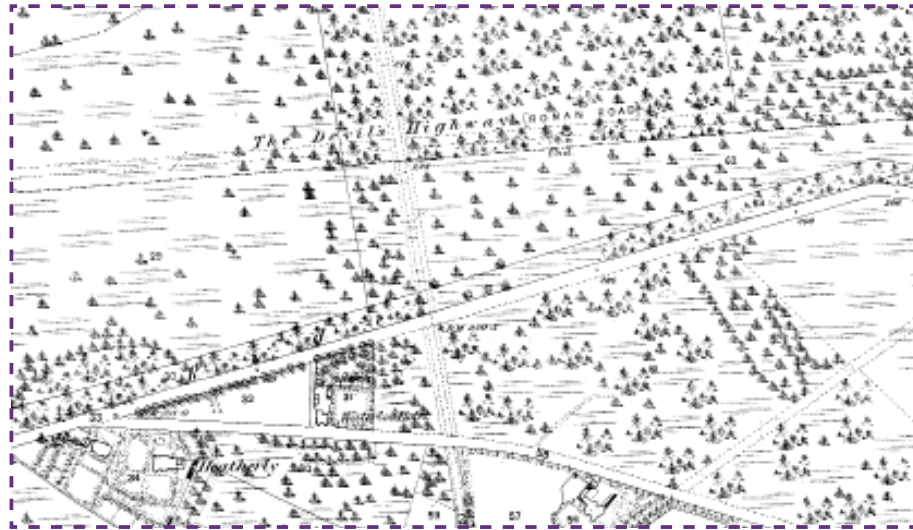
- The wooded triangle between properties on Brooke Corner/ Upper Broadmoor Road is an important buffer between the SPA and the town, linking the woodland of the SPA with that to the east and within the character area. This woodland is an important northern setting;
- The higher open and wooded land of Broadmoor Hospital and Lodge Hill is important as a setting to the hospital buildings and the residential development on the slopes and to the west; and
- The western boundary with character area C reflects a marked change of character from the commercial and larger scale centre to the rural suburban of character area D. This is a particular characteristic of East Crowthorne.



Image illustrating prominence of Broadmoor boundary wall



Image illustrating woodland setting



Historic map 1 1881-1912

Remaining evidence of historic northern approach to Wellington College down Old Wokingham Road as far as Waterloo Road and the north-eastern approach down Church Road West to Church Road East. Extensive mature tree planting along Dukes Ride and Wellington Road. Tree planting along Dukes Ride is a remnant of historic planting dating back to the early 19th century.



Historic map 2 1881-1912



Area A: Edgcumbe Park

Edgcumbe Park is a leafy suburban neighbourhood with a generous layout and a different feel to other parts of Crowthorne. In contrast to other areas it is coherent in terms of architecture, landscape and boundary treatments.

Landscape Character:

- Strongly cohesive character;
- Open front gardens with small lawns and groups of trees and shrubs;
- Topography gives prominence to the siting of some dwellings;
- No communal open space; and
- Uniform garden sizes.

Townscape:

- Winding estate roads curve around plot frontages,
- Informal feel to the development although it is laid out to a clear pattern;
- Uniform development with no landmark features; and
- Short views and high degree of enclosure due to topography, winding streets and landscape treatment.

Vegetation and Hard landscape:

- Significant front garden planting in loose varied pattern;
- Numerous mature trees in front gardens;
- Mature evergreen hedgerows to some frontages;
- Mix of predominantly pine, oak and birch tree planting; Holly, laurel, and Cyprus are the main hedging species;
- Pavements and open front gardens; and
- Fencing is particularly unobtrusive.

Built form:

- Predominately semi-detached and detached houses, with some bungalows;
- Buildings are not rigidly orientated towards the street, creating an informal street layout with varied relationships between houses and the road;
- Majority of houses are 2 storeys;
- Predominant materials are weatherboarding in dark timber or reddish tone and yellow brick;
- Simple building and roof forms with clear lines; and
- Steep pitched roofs, with accommodation in roof storey.

Boundary treatment:

- Timber fences and hedges onto Edgcumbe Drive; and
- No boundary treatment in other parts, houses set behind open front gardens with small lawns and group of trees and shrub.

Summary

The area has a positive and coherent character, which is unique within the study areas, due to its landscape setting and architecture.

Recommendation:

- More detailed design guidance for this area should be prepared to guide future development and protect the cohesion in the future;
- Discussions should be held with Wokingham borough to identify joint character area guidance for Edgcumbe Park;
- Piecemeal redevelopment of individual plots or infill proposals should be avoided as it will dilute the uniform character unless it is carefully designed to respond to the existing character;
- Extensions, should be built in the same architectural language and of similar materials as the existing development;
- Roof extensions should be in keeping with existing design;
- There should be no hard enclosing features to front gardens and extensive paved areas, as the loss of planting would significantly downgrade the area;
- The existing tree canopy is important and should be retained;
- The existing pattern of open landscaped frontages should be retained;
- Development that puts pressure on the need for more parking or ground floor privacy should be avoided, because it may result in material changes to front gardens; and
- Retain simple hard paving treatment (tarmac) and avoid over engineered, i.e. delineated carriageways.



1 Houses are set in between woodland



2 Edgcumbe Park Drive with hedges either side



3 Lush woodland character



4 Houses set behind open lawn without formal boundary treatment

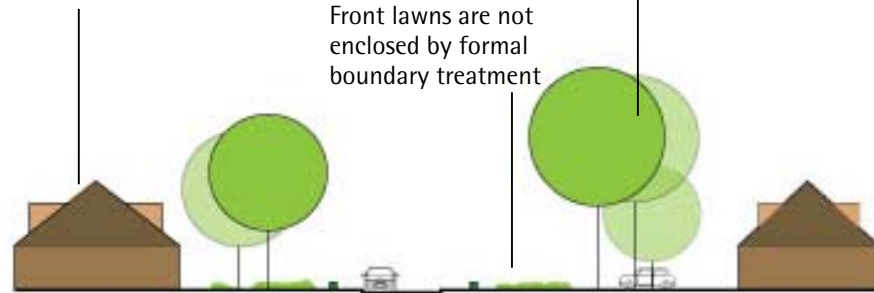


5 Typical architectural treatment

Houses are predominately 1 storey high with a steep pitched roof that allows further floor space.

Houses set in between woodland planting

Front lawns are not enclosed by formal boundary treatment



Typical section

Houses are carefully set between existing woodland character

Road frontages are open without clear definition of public and private






Houses are differently orientated creating an informal feel



Typical detail



Key

-  Character area boundary
-  Woodland
-  Hedge
-  Plot boundaries
-  Road

Area B: West Crowthorne

Landscape Character:

- Important open space around St John the Baptist Church as a setting to the church, Waterloo Road as it approaches the town centre, and the houses on Church Street;
- Woodland in Wellington College forms a backdrop in views down Edgcombe Park Drive, and Old Wokingham Road ;
- Old Wokingham Road is distinguished by medium size verges between the pavement and roadside, with gardens mainly bounded by neat evergreen or beech hedges; and
- Boundary treatment is generally a key feature of the area, blending different plot sizes and buildings styles into a cohesive character.

Townscape:

- Development densities and greater massing in the form of blocks of flats, are located along Dukes Ride, an important approach road;
- St John the Baptist Church forms an important focal point with links to the Victorian housing opposite, the street pattern to the north and the commercial area on the boundary with character area C;
- The urban form varies from west to east, with the plots becoming increasingly smaller towards the town centre; and
- The area is dominated by a grid pattern overlaying the older converging road pattern of Dukes Ride, Waterloo Road and Church Street.

Vegetation and hard landscape:

- Cluster of mature trees associated with St John the Baptist Church;
- Back garden trees – mostly within the western part of the area;
- Evergreen hedgerows and patchy grass verges enclose Church Road and other parts of the unmade road system;
- Holly, laurel, and Cyprus are the main hedging species;
- Oak, beech, and pine dominate, with younger birch street planting;
- Gravel unmade roadways north of and including Church Road; and
- Bollards used to create vehicular cul-de-sacs to the unmade roads.

Built form:

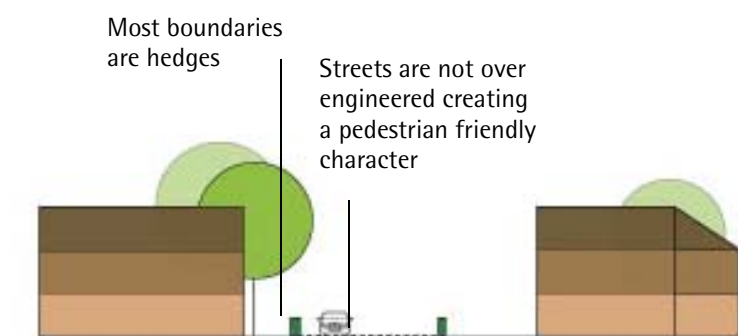
- Houses are predominately 2 storey, with occasionally 2.5 storey houses and bungalows;
- Mostly terraced or semi-detached houses, with occasional cul-de-sac infills;
- Building materials are predominantly red brick, with the odd use of yellow brick and render;
- Church and adjacent houses create high quality townscape setting;
- Church also acts as local landmark; and
- Unmade roads create a special semi-rural character close to the local centre.

Boundary treatment:

- Hedges and low walls are the predominant boundary treatment; and
- Mixed fencing styles.













Typical detail showing informality of carriageway treatment, but formal street layout



Typical section



Key

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Character area boundary |  Road |
|  Building line |  Buildings that contribute particularly to the character |
|  Backs |  Dirt Road |
|  Hedge |  Landmark |
|  Node of particular townscape quality ² |  Key Views |

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

'Node', in terms of urban design describes an important intersection of routes/streets or a central connecting point..

Summary:

The orthogonal street layout creates regular street scenes that vary mainly due to boundary treatments and variety of buildings. Towards the town centre, the coherence of the external landscape has been lost, leading to a deterioration in the character of this part of the area. The lack of a strongly distinctive character to the eastern part of the area makes it very vulnerable to inappropriate design.

Recommendation:

- As larger buildings and parking areas spread out from the village centre, the close knit form of the eastern edge of this area will potentially be undermined and care should be taken to retain the prevailing structure;
- The subtle variations in local character should be retained—plot sizes, road widths, tree cover;
- Views down the principal roads to the tree cover in Wellington College should be retained; and
- Introduction of over engineered roads may impact on the distinct character near the village centre and should be avoided.



St John the Baptist Church



Unmade roads create distinct character



Variety of development and architectural languages



Hedges are the predominant boundary treatment



Dukes Ride

Area C: Crowthorne Centre

This area is focused around the local high street with a variety of uses. In addition to the High Street there are more non-residential uses on King's Road and Duke's Ride. Recent flatted development has introduced residential units into the centre.

Landscape character:

- Strongly linear form along the High Street but views down the road curtailed by undulations in the topography;
- Contained streetscape;
- Little vegetation cover or open space;
- Small focal points such as the Millennium Garden; and
- Semi-enclosed views in the main with views down residential roads framed by buildings up to the back of, or close to, the pavements.

Townscape:

- Either end of the High Street a high quality townscape node marks the arrival into Crowthorne and form a gateway to the town;
- Victorian houses on Lych Gate are particularly important;
- Several small scale parking areas throughout the area; and
- Local landmarks include the Iron Duke PH and the library.

Vegetation and Hard landscape:

- Few street trees or other vegetation which have an impact on the character;
- Concrete block paved pavements along High Street;
- Scatters of cast iron bollards;
- Raised tables along highway;

- New front forecourt to library; and
- Bespoke lighting columns and lanterns.

Built form:

- Local High Street with fairly consistent building line and 2-4 storeys;
- Many buildings have active/civic ground floor uses;
- Car parking and service areas are generally located behind buildings;
- The building line appears continuous;
- Building materials are predominately red/orange brick with light render; and
- Buildings are set at the back of wide pavements.

Boundary treatment:

- Most buildings border directly onto the public realm without private spaces at the front; and
- On Duke's Ride many larger institution and office buildings are set back within larger plots and car parking areas.

Summary:

Generally this area has a positive character as a centre for Crowthorne. In some places street clutter and poor detailing of car parking and service yards, have a negative impact on the quality of the High Street environment.

Recommendation

- Development should not be set back from the building line as this would adversely affect the linear, well framed, character of the area;
- Public realm should be consistent, free of clutter and unnecessary level changes;
- New planting should be limited to simple bold use of large street trees;
- Retain existing palette of hard materials unless the street furniture/paving is replaced throughout;
- Enhance focal points through high standards of hard landscape treatment;
- The Victorian village character at the bottom of High Street should be kept;
- External details to all development (including car parking) should be to a high standard of design to enhance the local character;
- New developments should contribute to active ground floor uses and upper floor uses to create an appropriate town centre scale of development;
- Aim to create a continuous street frontage within the town centre;
- Parking should be sensitively integrated into the town centre and where possible, situated at the rear and screened from view in the High Street; and
- Where with 400m of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA there is a general presumption against net new residential development.



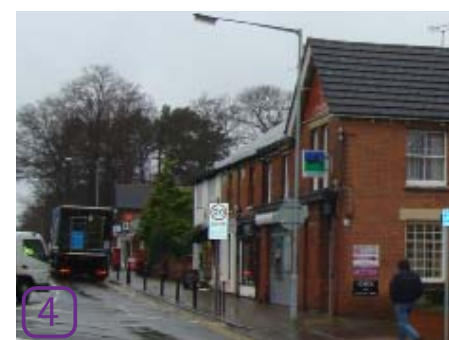
1 New Library Square



2 Degree of enclosure with buildings set at back of pavements, recent flatted development in right corner



3 The Prince Pub marks southern gateway into Crowthorne










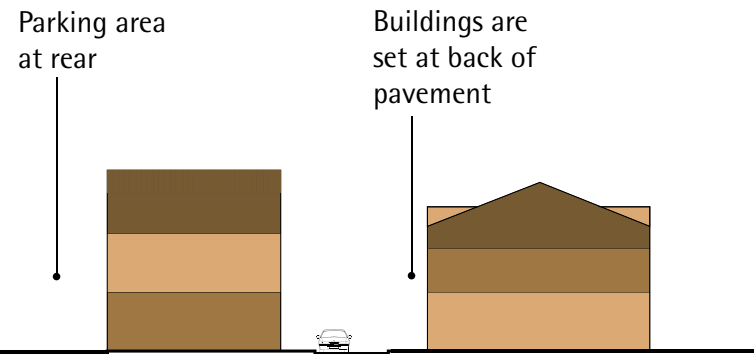
4 Remnant of the Victorian Village structure



5 Victorian houses on Lynch Gate

Key

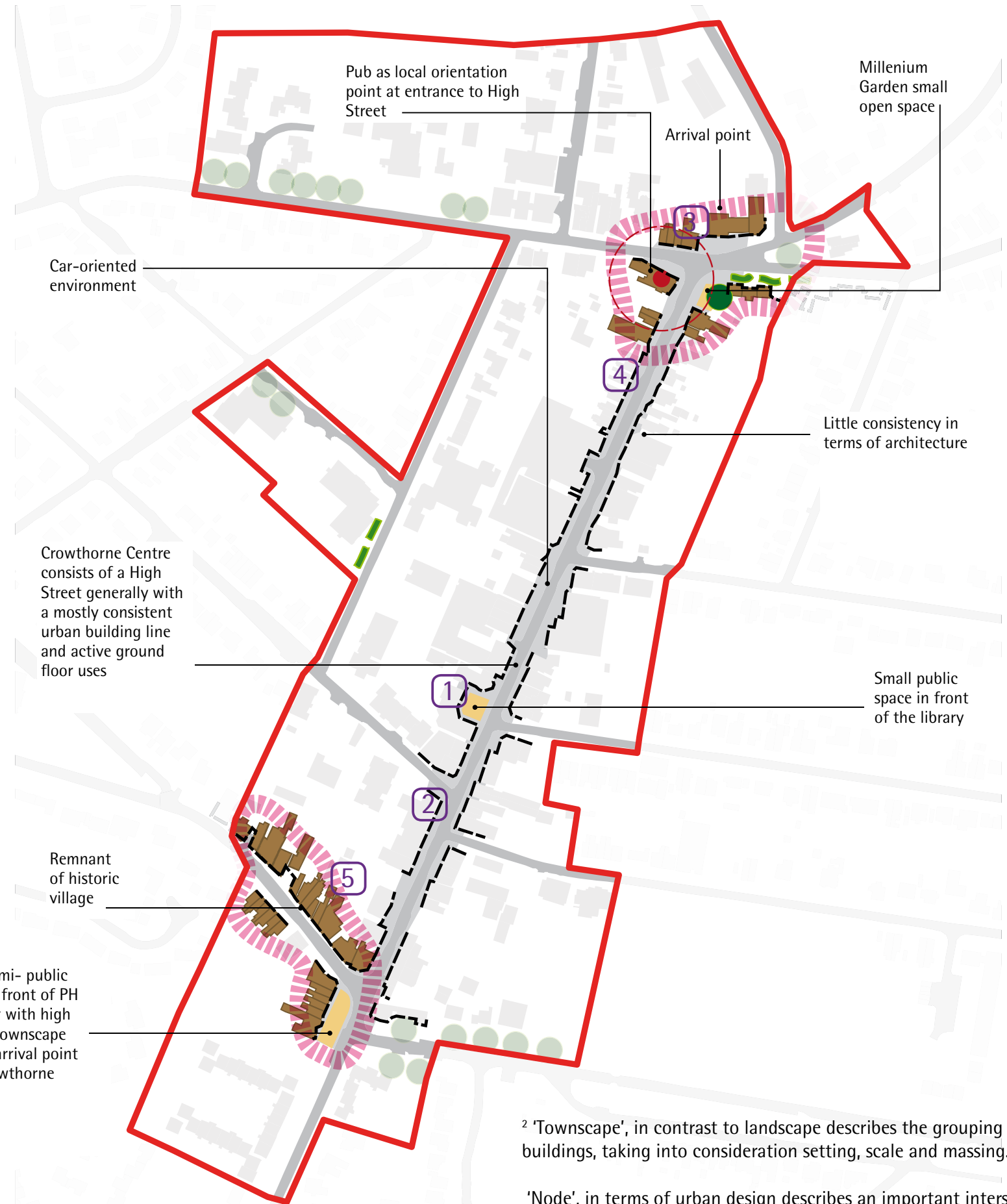
-  Character area boundary
-  Building line
-  Hedge
-  Node of particular townscape quality²
-  Road
-  Street space
-  Hard open space
-  Buildings that contribute particularly to the character
-  Landmark



Typical section illustrating a high degree of enclosure



Typical detail showing the continuous frontage and higher development density along the High Street.



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

'Node', in terms of urban design describes an important intersection of routes/streets or a central connecting point.

Area D: East Crowthorne

East Crowthorne is defined by a series of parallel streets overlaid on an undulating topography. Broadmoor Hospital influences the area to the east.

Landscape Character:

- Surviving distinctive rural character to Broadmoor Road, Addiscombe Road, and Gordon Road;
- A key feature is the extensive high canopy coniferous and deciduous tree cover of the whole area, within woodlands, tree belts, avenues of trees (particularly the limes along Lower Broadmoor Road, and trees to School Hill, Gordon Road, Wellington Road, and Napier Road) and within gardens;
- Long good sized gardens are a common feature of the outer periphery of the area, with smaller gardens in the centre;
- The Morgan Recreation Ground forms an important and well-managed central feature to the area and open setting to the historic lime avenue approach to Broadmoor. The playing fields create an open core within the wooded hillside, allowing views out of the area;
- The playing fields on Cricket Field Grove create an open core within the wooded hillside, allowing views out of the area;
- The character area is clearly bounded by tree cover to the north, east and south;
- Views out from the character area to the surrounding woodland;
- Woodland south of Upper Broadmoor Road is a local landmark with a strong influence on the whole character area; and
- Area still retains appearance of being carved out of the forest landscape.

Townscape:

- Based on historic street pattern;
- A cohesive area with a strong sense of place, based on a series of long east - west parallel roads;
- The wooded areas act as separators for the different pockets of development and provide an important visual backdrop;
- Undulating topography contributes to interesting long views;
- Broadmoor Hospital walls are a landmark feature framing the east of the character area;
- Straight street alignments; and
- Remnant historic townscape features and routes add to the

quality, such as the alignment of Addiscombe Road.

Vegetation and Hard landscape:

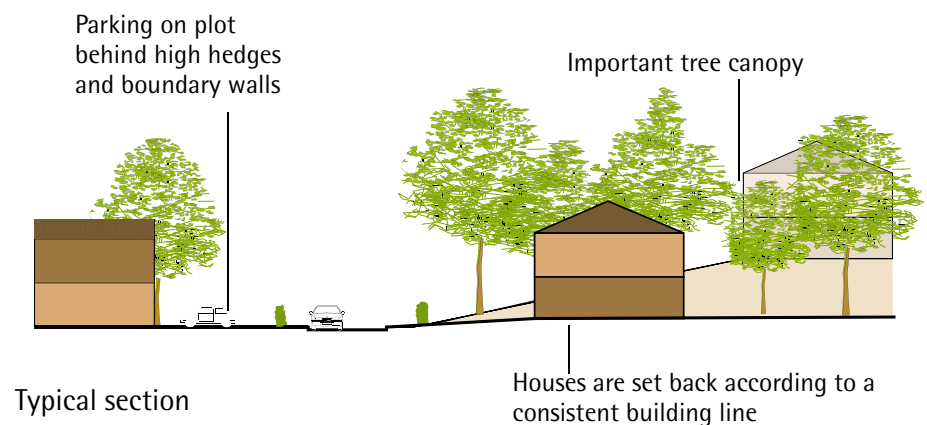
- The landscape is dominated by scots pine and oak with birch and overgrown laurels and rhododendrons in the wooded area;
- Prominent stands of pine on higher ground;
- Garden planting is an important feature, linking the residential development with its wooded setting;
- Mature and low evergreen hedgerows and hedges of laurel, holly, conifers, rhododendrons and some privet dominate front boundaries;
- Avenues of limes along Lower Broadmoor Road, and other trees (predominantly oak) to School Hill, Gordon Road, Wellington Road, and Napier Road;
- Front gardens of older properties commonly sub-divided by low evergreen hedges; and
- Occasional open grass verges of local distinction.

Built form:

- Mostly 2-storey houses, occasionally 2.5-storey houses and bungalows;
- Mostly terraced or semi-detached houses, occasional cul-de-sac infills;
- Generally consistent building lines, however places where there are level changes do not conform to these; and
- Building materials are predominantly red brick, with the occasional use of yellow brick and render.

Boundary treatment:

- Hedges and low walls are the predominant boundary treatments;
- The Broadmoor Hospital wall is a feature that dominates its vicinity;
- Low brick walls survive to the front of many older properties (for example along Napier Road and Cricket Field Grove);
- Higher boundary brick walls to Sandhurst Road; and
- Mixed fencing treatments including picket fences and low close boarded fences.














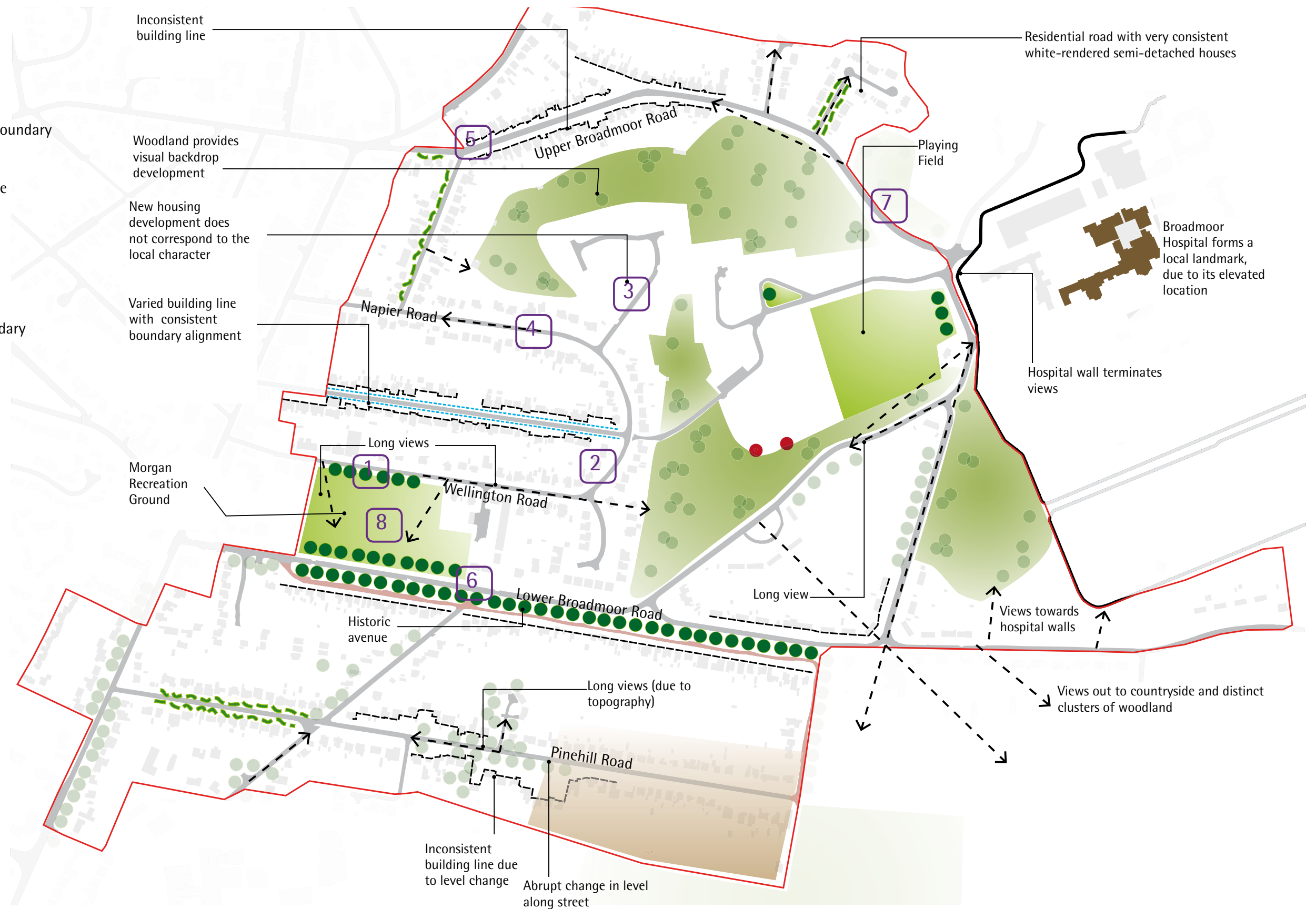
Typical section



Typical detail of Pinehill Road

Key

-  Character area boundary
-  Building line
-  Green open space
-  Woodland
-  Hedge
-  Long view
-  Road
-  Consistent boundary treatment
-  Unmade Road
-  Landmark
-  Key views





Hedges and trees add character along the streets



Backdrop of woodland



New cul-de-sac development that is out of character with the surrounding area.



Views along straight, undulating streets.



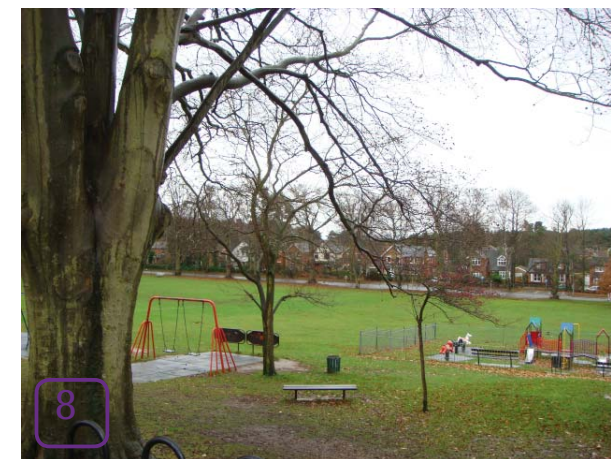
Materials are predominately red brick and light render.



Historic avenue tree planting



Forest planting in background on northern historic approach to Broadmoor Hospital



Morgan Recreation Ground

Summary:

The area is diverse in terms of architecture and there is no prevailing design approach. However newer cul-de-sac developments are out of character with their surroundings, mainly due to their boundary treatments and highway design led layouts. Some front gardens have been paved over as car parking areas along busier routes such as Upper Broadmoor Road and close to the town centre. This has a negative impact on the character of the area.

Recommendations:

- Buildings should follow a consistent building line and front gardens should be bounded by high quality treatment, walls and/or hedges and retain identity of front garden scale and pattern;
- Retain existing extent and character of the tree cover;
- Retain views out to wider landscape and key features such as Broadmoor Hospital, the pine topped hills and knolls, and down avenues of trees;
- Maintain the character of the surviving rural roadways;
- Landscape planting treatment to new frontages should be predominantly evergreen;
- The characteristics of Broadmoor historic park and garden, its immediate setting and historic links with the village centre should be conserved and enhanced;
- Retain the contrast in character with the higher density town centre; and
- Where within 400m of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA there is a general presumption against net new residential development.
