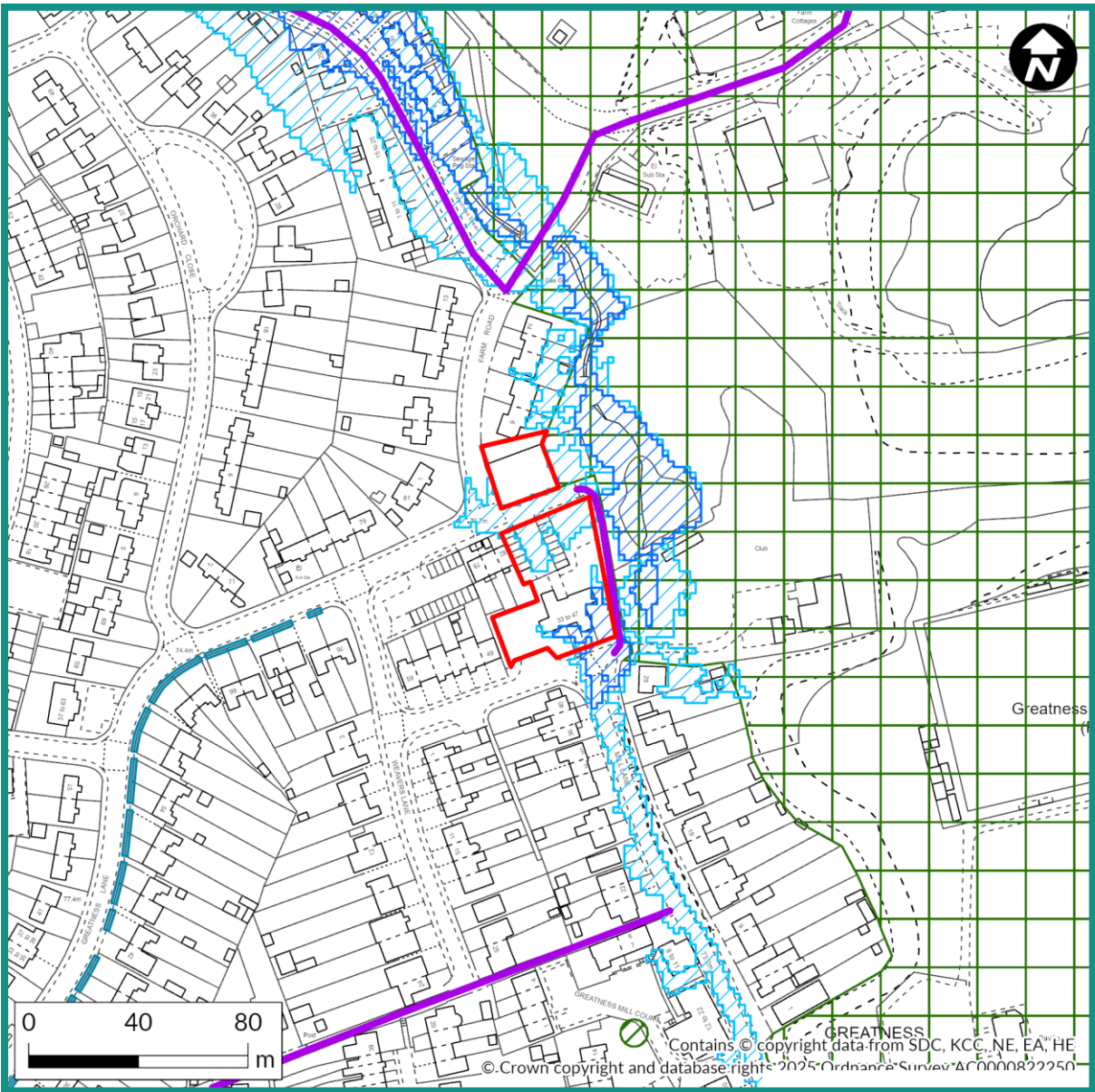


DEVELOPMENT BRIEF – ABACUS FURNITURE

Reference	Settlement	Address
SEV2 (SHELAA ref: HO/21/00059))	Sevenoaks Urban Area	Abacus Furniture Farm Road Garages Greatness Lane Flats Mill Lane, TN14 5BQ



Introduction

The Council has prepared development briefs to provide detailed guidance on how a specific site should be developed. Development briefs help ensure that proposals for a site are well thought out, align with strategic planning goals, and respond to local needs and constraints. They are used to guide developers, inform planning applications, and support community engagement.

Development Brief Objectives:

- Promote the delivery of design excellence;
- Support an efficient planning process for both applicants and the Council by outlining the Council's requirements for the sites at an early stage; and
- Provide stakeholders, developers and the local community with the opportunity to input into the development vision through consultations.

For this 2025 Regulation 18 consultation, draft development briefs have been prepared for certain sites which are considered potential allocations for development, as listed in Chapter 01, Policy ST2 Housing And Mixed-Use Site Allocations within the Local Plan document. The sites for which development briefs have been produced have either featured within previous Local Plan consultations or have the potential for significant positive impact due to their scale. Further development briefs will be produced for the next Regulation 19 consultation planned for Summer 2026.

These are draft briefs which will be subject to change following responses from this consultation and ongoing work towards the emerging Local Plan. The final development briefs will be adopted as part of the Local Plan.

Policy Context

High quality design is central to the delivery of the strategic objectives in this plan. All development is expected to prioritise design quality and adhere to the relevant Design Policies outlined in Chapter 5 of the Local Plan document. The development briefs provide additional and more specific policy and place-based guidance for allocated sites. They identify important overarching design principles which ensure successful development will be delivered.

They form a starting point for shaping development on sites and will be developed in detail through the planning and design process, informed by community engagement, the Community Review Panel and the Design Advisory Panel where relevant.

Once adopted, the brief becomes a material consideration in determining any future planning application relating to all or part of the site and proposals will be expected to demonstrate accordance with the development brief for that site. Where a proposal does not wholly comply with the development brief, the applicant must provide a clear and robust justification within the application, demonstrating how the alternative approach still achieves the overarching design and policy principles and provides significant benefits to the development.

The development brief should be read alongside the emerging Local Plan and all relevant Local Plan policies applicable to the site and type of development remain in force.

Development Brief Content

The content and headings used throughout the development briefs are explained below.

Reference

This is the code used by the Council to identify the site.

Proposed Use

This outlines the use(s) proposed for the site, such as residential or commercial.

Proposed Net Density Range

This describes the proposed density range for the site, based on Policy H7 Housing Density and Intensification detailed within Chapter 2 of the Local Plan document, as well as site specific considerations such as surrounding local character. This relates to the number of dwellings per hectare that should be achieved. Densities should be measured in relation to the developable area which includes:

- Private and communal open space;
- Internal streets;
- Multi-functional public space intended principally for the benefit and enjoyment of occupiers of the development; and
- Non-residential uses within a mixed-use building that also contains residential accommodation.

Net density excludes public open space, the streets along the boundary of the site that serve a wider area and any non-residential uses that are not located above or below residential accommodation.

Promoted Residential Capacity

A development brief will either state a promoted or proposed residential capacity. This states the residential capacity of development suggested by the party promoting the site for development through the call for sites process. This is the number of residential units stated within Chapter 01, Policy ST2 Housing And Mixed-Use Site Allocations within the Local Plan document for each site. This is noted where the Council has yet to define the proposed residential capacity, pending further clarification regarding the site.

Proposed Residential Capacity

This is the proposed residential capacity defined by the Council based on the density range promoted within Policy H7 Housing Density and Intensification within Chapter 2 of the Local Plan document. This also takes into account the character of the surrounding area, site sensitivities and proximity to public transport and local services.

Delivery Timeframe

This outlines the estimated timeline for when development on the site will be delivered as defined by the site promoter.

Policy Priorities

All sites are expected to be fully policy compliant; however, this section outlines the key policies for the specific development and delivery of this site. All the policies noted can be found within the Local Plan Regulation 18 2025 document.

Infrastructure Requirements

The infrastructure requirements set out in each development brief reflect the identified needs that the proposed development will be expected to contribute towards. For this consultation infrastructure requirements are stated for the wider settlement - specific site contributions will be confirmed at the Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation in summer 2026. These requirements have been informed by engagement with key infrastructure providers during summer 2025 and represent the position at this point in time. This has helped us identify emerging infrastructure requirements and also any existing pinch-points and capacity constraints that need to be addressed.

It is important to note that infrastructure planning is an ongoing process. Engagement with providers remains active, and further projects will be identified and refined as the Local Plan progresses. The absence of a specific infrastructure requirement – such as transport improvements – at this stage does not imply that none will be necessary. In many cases, providers are unable to confirm detailed needs until the preferred growth strategy and site allocations are finalised and refined through the Local Plan process.

In addition, many of the infrastructure needs identified to date stem from the cumulative impact of development across the District, including all proposed Green Belt sites, rather than solely from the sites currently subject to a development brief. As such, the requirements should be viewed in the wider strategic context.

All infrastructure requirements should be read alongside Chapter 9 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan Regulation 18 and the accompanying Infrastructure Delivery Plan Statement (October 2025), which together provide a broader overview of infrastructure priorities and delivery mechanisms.

SDC Vision

This is a high-level statement that outlines the long-term aspirations and guiding principles for how the Council wish the site to evolve to support the Local Plan. It sets the tone and direction for future development by describing the key design considerations and overarching goals including connectivity, uses, public realm, character and landscape. When community engagement is undertaken to shape the proposal—such as through a Community Review Panel—their input should help shape the detailed design vision for the development.

Design Requirements

This outlines a set of site-specific design principles that development on the site should follow in order to align with National and Local design policy. The design requirements have been structured around the 10 characteristics of a well-designed place from [The National Design Guide \(2021\)](#). Other local guidance used to inform these design requirements include [Sevenoaks District Character Study](#), [Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment](#), [Edenbridge Character Area Assessment](#), and [Sevenoaks District Landscape Character Assessment](#).

Framework Plan

Some briefs include a site plan indicating spatial design guidance such as key routes, active frontages and open space. These diagrams translate the vision and listed Design Requirements into spatial features across the site.

Housing Types and Mix

For all sites promoted for residential development, the Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs Jan 2022 should be used to guide the type and mix of housing delivered on the site.

Terminology

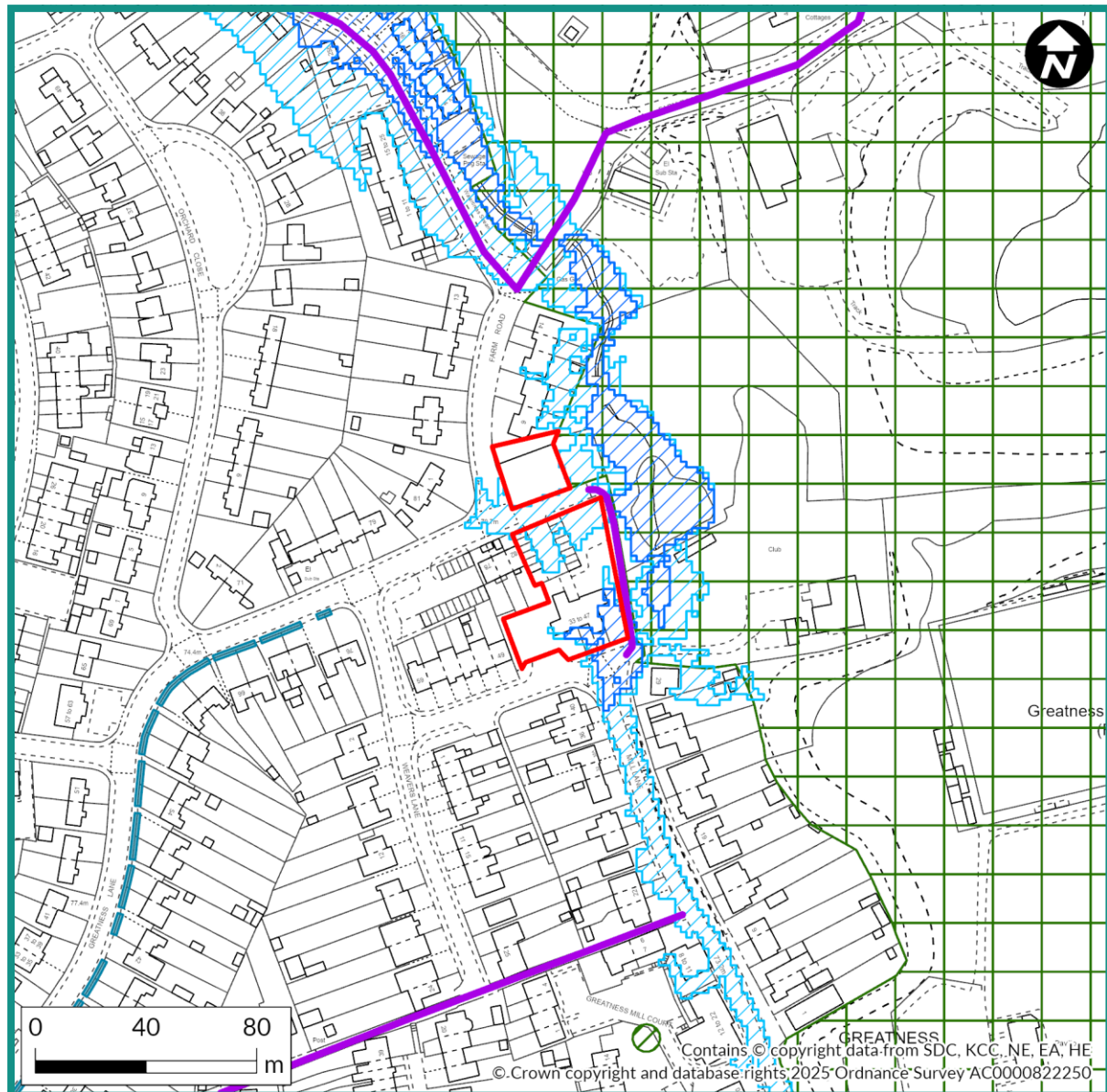
Active frontage: The front of buildings have doors and windows onto public space to generate activity and engagement between the building interior and the space outside, particularly entrances.

Natural surveillance: When buildings around a space are designed with features that are likely to lead to people overlooking the space. These may be windows, balconies, front gardens or entrances. This helps to prevent anti-social behaviour within those spaces.

Active travel routes: Route designed specifically for walking, wheeling and cycling.

Landscape-led: An approach to planning and design that places the landscape at the heart of the development process. Rather than treating landscape as an afterthought or a decorative element, it is used as the primary framework for shaping places. The layout for a landscape-led scheme should be driven by existing landscape features such as topography, trees, water features etc.

SuDs (Sustainable Drainage Systems): Sustainable Drainage Systems are a set of water management practices designed to align modern drainage with natural water processes. They aim to manage surface water runoff in a way that mimics natural drainage, reduces flood risk, improves water quality, and enhances biodiversity and amenity.



Legend:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Site Boundary | Tree Preservation Order |
| Listed Building | Flood Zone 2 |
| Conservation Area | Flood Zone 3 |
| Locally Listed Asset | Metropolitan Green Belt |
| Ancient Woodland | Public Right Of Way |
| National Landscape (Formerly AONB) | |

Site Overview

Reference	SEV2 (SHELAA ref: HO/21/00059)
Address	Abacus Furniture Farm Road Garages Greatness Lane Flats Mill Lane, TN14 5BQ
Site Description	Industrial unit, garages and four-storey flats.
Site Area	0.22 Ha
Proposed Use	Mixed Use – Residential + Employment
Proposed Net Density Range	50 - 75 dwellings per hectare
Proposed Residential Capacity	9 – 13 dwellings
Delivery Timeframe	6-10 Years – Available now
Policy Priorities	• Housing – smaller sites (H6) • Retaining and Optimising Existing Employment Land (EMP3) • Sustainable Movement (T2)
Wider Settlement Infrastructure requirements (as per emerging IDP)	• Additional primary school places (either through the expansion of existing schools and/or provision of new) • Additional capacity for primary and community healthcare currently under review including future use of Sevenoaks Hospital • Improvements to the local walking and cycling network, as evidenced in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), to ensure safe and convenient access for walkers, wheelers and cyclists • Local Public Rights of Way improvements • Sevenoaks Railway Station improvements • Potential for the capacity of the waste water network to be increased/upgraded

Design Requirements

Context	
Flood Risk	• Part of the site falls within Flood Zone 2 and 3. The proposal will be designed to incorporate flood protection, resilience and mitigation measures appropriate to the nature and scale of the risk. It will incorporate measures which avoid an increase in flood risk, and where possible reduce the overall level of flood risk, both on the site and elsewhere.

Uses	
Mix	To support Policy EMP3, retaining and optimising existing employment use, development will be expected to provide a mixed-use scheme retaining employment use on the northern parcel and residential units within the southern parcel. The Abacus Furniture Project is considered a valuable local asset and it's loss or relocation will need to be justified following the criteria described in Policy EMP3.
Identity	
Local Character	The proposal should explore innovate design solutions which incorporate the retention of the existing ragstone wall forming the base of the existing Abacus furniture building which currently contributes to the local sense of place and is historically rooted.
Built Form	
Building Line	The proposal within the southern parcel should create a stronger building line which reflects the surrounding context, enhances the streetscape.
Public Spaces	
Public Realm	The development will provide public realm enhancements through improved street edges, incorporating active frontage and soft landscaping throughout.
Resources	
Embodied Energy	The proposal should first consider innovate design solutions which explore how the existing buildings can be retained and repurposed.
Movement	
Street Network	Development on the site should consider the long term context as a result of the Sevenoaks Quarry development and potential increase in vehicle and foot traffic through passed and through the site.
Active Travel	The proposal will improve the quality and safety of the PRow such as by introducing active frontage, passive surveillance and reducing the enclosure along the route.
Parking	Parking will be discreetly integrated to ensure cars do not dominate streetscapes or public realm.