

DEVELOPMENT BRIEF – LAND AT HORTON ROAD, SOUTH DARENTH

Reference	Settlement	Address
ST4-44	South Darenth	Land at Horton Road, South Darenth



Introduction

The Council has prepared development briefs to set out high-level aspirations and design principles to guide future proposals, helping to ensure that development is both sensitively designed and appropriately ambitious for local communities. 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.

For the purposes of development briefs, allocated sites have been grouped into three categories according to scale. Smaller sites, comprising fewer than 50 dwellings, are supported by high-level guidance. Medium-sized sites, accommodating between 50 and 350 dwellings, are subject to more detailed guidance and may include a framework plan to illustrate key spatial principles. Larger sites, delivering more than 350 dwellings, are supported by more comprehensive guidance to reflect their scale and complexity, and may include additional spatial diagrams covering movement, nature and built form.

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.

Development briefs have been prepared for sites which are allocated for development, as listed in Policy ST2 Urban Site Allocations – Housing and Mixed-use in Chapter 01 of the Local Plan, and they will be adopted as part of the Local Plan. Any future planning application relating to all or part of the site 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 Local Plan and all relevant National and Local Plan policies applicable to the site and type of development.

Development Brief Guidance

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 identifies the proposed net density range for the site, based on Policy H7 Housing Density and Intensification detailed within Chapter 2 of the Local Plan document. In accordance with this policy, the density ranges may differ if it has been considered that there could be a detrimental impact on local character or amenity. The site-specific net density will be determined as part of the development management process.

Proposed Residential Capacity

This is the proposed residential capacity range calculated using the net density range from Policy H7 and the developable area. The developable area is calculated using the formula in from evidence-base document Settlement Capacity Study Sevenoaks District Council Addendum May 2022. In some circumstances this may take into account site-specific constraints, for example ancient woodland, flood zones and proximity to designated heritage assets. The site-specific developable area will be established as part of the development management process.

Delivery Timeframe

This outlines the proposed timescales for when development on the site will be delivered, as defined by the Housing Trajectory for the Plan period.

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.

Infrastructure Requirements

The infrastructure requirements set out in each development brief reflect the site-specific projects identified as necessary to support new development, either as required by policy or identified through engagement with the relevant infrastructure provider(s). Further detail on these projects is set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which will be kept under regular review. Where a need for on-site infrastructure has been identified, the development briefs consider the most appropriate location, design and integration of that infrastructure within the site. In such cases, the development will be expected to deliver or contribute land towards the required provision, ensuring it is coordinated with the wider masterplanning and phasing of the site.

The development briefs focus on the key physical infrastructure that requires land to be safeguarded within each site, such as new schools, open space, children's play space and active travel routes. Infrastructure that is to be delivered off-site is not included within the

development briefs, as this will be secured through the mechanisms set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and through planning obligations. Infrastructure planning is a dynamic and iterative process, and engagement with infrastructure providers will continue throughout the lifetime of the Local Plan to ensure that requirements remain up to date, deliverable and aligned with the most up-to-date evidence.

Infrastructure requirements should be read alongside Chapter 9 of the Local Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which together provide a comprehensive overview of infrastructure priorities across the District and the mechanisms for their delivery.

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. Proactive, meaningful and ongoing community engagement should help shape the detailed design vision for the development

Design Requirements

Some briefs include 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 elements of the design requirements into a clear visual format. The annotations are indicative and diagrammatic.

Housing Types and Mix

For all sites promoted for residential development, the Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs Jan 2025 should be used to guide the type and mix of housing delivered on the site.

Glossary

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.

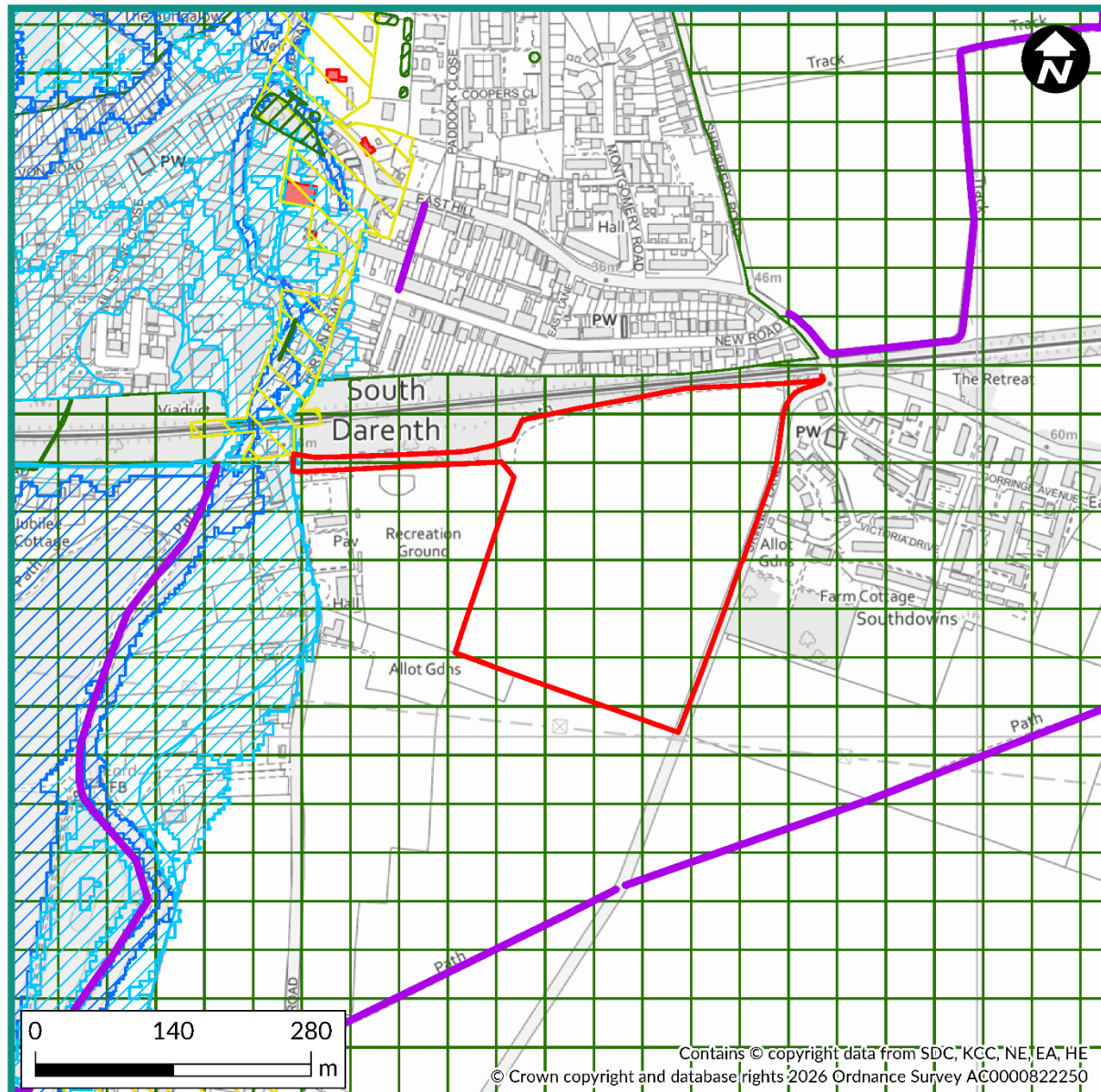
Active travel routes: Route designed specifically for walking, wheeling and cycling.

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.

Recontouring: The reshaping of existing ground levels to achieve design, landscape or heritage objectives.

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.

LAND TO THE WEST OF CHILDSBRIDGE LANE, KEMSING



Legend:

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|  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	ST4-44
Address	Land at Horton Road, South Darenth
Site Description	This is a large greenfield site adjacent to South Darenth. The site is currently in agricultural use. The site is bound by the railway line and South Darenth urban confines to the north, Skinney Lane and Southdowns Retirement Community to the east, agricultural land and allotments to the south and a Recreation Ground and Horton Road to the west. A strip of land extends to the west, facilitating a vehicular access point from Horton Road.
Site Area	8.19 ha
Proposed Use	Residential & Community Use
Proposed Net Density Range	40 - 60 dph
Proposed Residential Capacity	184 - 276 Units Up to 5, 000m ² Community Use
Delivery Timeframe	6-10 Years
Policy Priorities	• Affordable housing (H2) – provision of grey belt policy compliant affordable housing in sustainable location • Infrastructure (IN1) – provision of improvements to local infrastructure in accordance with grey belt policy • Open Space provision (OS1) – new or improved open space in accordance with grey belt policy – connections to community facilities (rec, playground, hall, bowling green etc) to the west • Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment (HEN1) – potential to affect designated and non-designated heritage assets • Sensitively managing change in the Historic Environment (HEN2) • Sustainable Movement and Movement Network (T1 and T2) – prioritising public transport and active travel, and ensuring good site access • Biodiversity in New Development (BW3) – must align with the LNRS • Environmental Nuisance and Pollution (noise) (HW3) in relation to adjacent railway • Sustainable Design and Construction (CC2) – ensuring new development is built to reduce carbon emissions and be adaptable and resilient to a changing climate • Community Engagement (DE1) • Agricultural Land and Soils (AGS1)

Site Specific Infrastructure Requirements	• Open space provision in accordance with Policy OS1 • Children and young people's play space provision in accordance with Policy OS2
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SDC Vision

The vision responds to the site's unique position within the settlement, bridging its industrial heritage to the north and the softer rural landscape to the south. Development will respect and celebrate key heritage landmarks, including the South Darent railway viaduct and the former paper mill chimney, ensuring they remain prominent in long-distance views. Built form will be carefully arranged to respond to the site's undulating topography, framing views towards the viaduct arches and reinforcing a strong sense of place rooted in local history. The elevated north-eastern corner will be retained as open space, with its function shaped through community engagement, while a network of well-overlooked streets and spaces will provide active frontages, enhancing safety and vitality, including opportunities to increase natural surveillance of the adjacent Heathside Recreation Area.

A strong east-west pedestrian and cycle connection will form the backbone of the scheme, linking existing communities to Horton Road, the riverside Public Rights of Way towards Horton Kirby, and the train station to the west, supporting a shift towards sustainable travel. The landscape strategy will draw on the site's rural character, retaining and enhancing wooded boundaries, and introducing new planting and attractive green spaces that are inviting to the local community.

Community Engagement

The applicant will be expected to undertake proactive, meaningful and ongoing engagement with the local community. They will demonstrate that they have secured the views of the local community and that they have been incorporated into the scheme.

Design Requirements

Context	
Landscape Character	• The site is within the Darent Valley - South Darent to Farningham landscape character area as defined within the <u>Sevenoaks District Landscape Character Assessment 2017</u>. The development will positively respond to the landscape character area through responding to the valued and sensitive characteristics described within the report.
Heritage	• The site is within the setting of South Darent Conservation Area and the railway viaduct, The Bridges public house, Former Mission Room and South Downs Church which are non-designated heritage assets; development on the site will need to respond positively to the local historic character. • Development should be underpinned by a robust understanding of the designated and non-designated heritage assets that may be affected. This includes an assessment of how change within their setting may impact that significance. The findings of this assessment must be clearly articulated in a Heritage Statement, which

	should demonstrate how the proposal responds to and seeks to conserve or better reveal the significance of these assets. • The site affords long views towards the Grade II* listed Church of St Mary in Horton Kirby.
Archaeology	• Archaeological potential: Pre-determination assessment will be required to understand the archaeological significance, in accordance with policy HEN3, and to inform the master planning of the site. Early engagement with Kent County Council Archaeology is recommended.
National Grid Infrastructure	• The development will include a strategy for responding to the NGET Overhead/ Underground Cable Route present within/ adjacent to the site which demonstrates how the NGET Design Guide and Principles have been applied at the masterplanning stage and how the impact of the assets has been reduced through good design.
Identity	
Local Character	• Two prominent Victorian-era landmarks, the South Darent railway viaduct and Horton Kirby Paper Mill, symbolise the settlement's 19th-century industrial origins. The paper mill formed the primary node from which the settlement emerged and evolved, accompanied by the development of terraced housing with low-pitched roofs to accommodate the workforce. • The site occupies a transitional zone, shifting from the more industrial character associated with the Victorian infrastructure and architecture to the north to the softer, rural qualities of the open landscape to the south.
Public Spaces	
Open Space	• The north-eastern corner of the site is the highest and most prominent part of the site and will remain as open space- its purpose and use to be determined through engagement with the local community. • In accordance with Policy OS2, the scheme must provide a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP), a Local Area for Play (LAP), and an informal playspace.
Active Frontage	• All open spaces and streets will have active frontage along its edges, provided by entrances and windows overlooking the public space, creating a safe and attractive route through and around the development. There is an opportunity to provide active frontage along the western boundary to increase natural surveillance of the existing Heathside Recreation Area.
Movement	
Active Travel & Permeability	• An east-west pedestrian and cycle route will be provided through the site that connects existing development to the west of site to Horton Road, creating a more direct route to the train station further west, and the riverside PRoW route south to Horton Kirby. • The development will be designed to prioritise sustainable travel as per Policies T1 and T2, through clear, direct and safe walking and cycling routes through the site toward local public transport services.

	All new homes must provide (and demonstrate) easy and convenient cycle parking facilities to prioritise active travel, preferably at the front of properties. Cycle parking facilities are required at key public spaces.
Car Parking	- Car parking will be designed to be attractive, well landscaped and sensitively integrated into the built form so that it does not dominate the development or the street scene, particularly along key movement routes and surrounding open spaces. - Strips of landscaping which include trees will be incorporated into rows of continuous car parking.
Built Form	
Key Views	A striking feature of the site is its undulating topography, which dips to reveal long views across the site towards the brickwork arches of the South Darent viaduct in the distance. Built form will be arranged to celebrate these key views, ensuring the viaduct arches remain a prominent and valued landscape feature.
Nature	
Landscape Design	- The landscape design will capture the rural character found within and surrounding the site and introduce areas of small woodland, re wilding, new tree/shrub planting within new green spaces. - The landscape design will capitalise on and respond positively to the site's existing landscape features, celebrating their character and identity to create a distinctive and site-specific identity. - Wooded boundaries are to be retained and enhanced where possible, alongside the provision of new trees within the development to aid climate resilience and contribute to the a high-quality landscape setting. - Potential to provide allotments within the site for local community use.
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)	- Drainage systems must be designed as positive landscape features: swales, rain gardens, wetlands, and permeable paving integrated into streets, squares, and open spaces. - SuDS elements should be designed to provide habitat and informal play space.

Framework Plan

A site plan indicating spatial design guidance such as key routes, active frontages and open space. These diagrams translate elements of the design requirements into a clear visual format. The annotations are indicative and diagrammatic.

