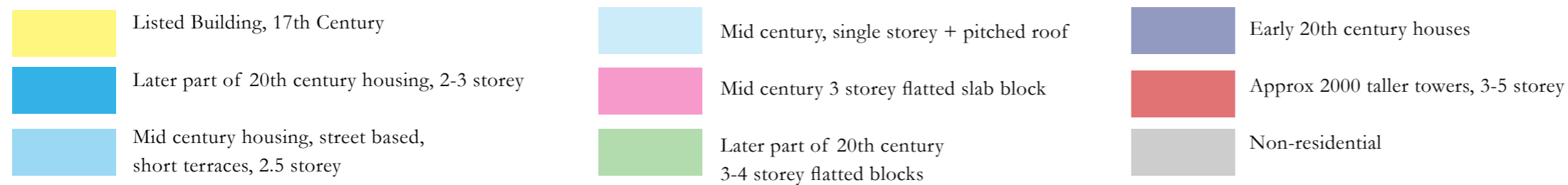
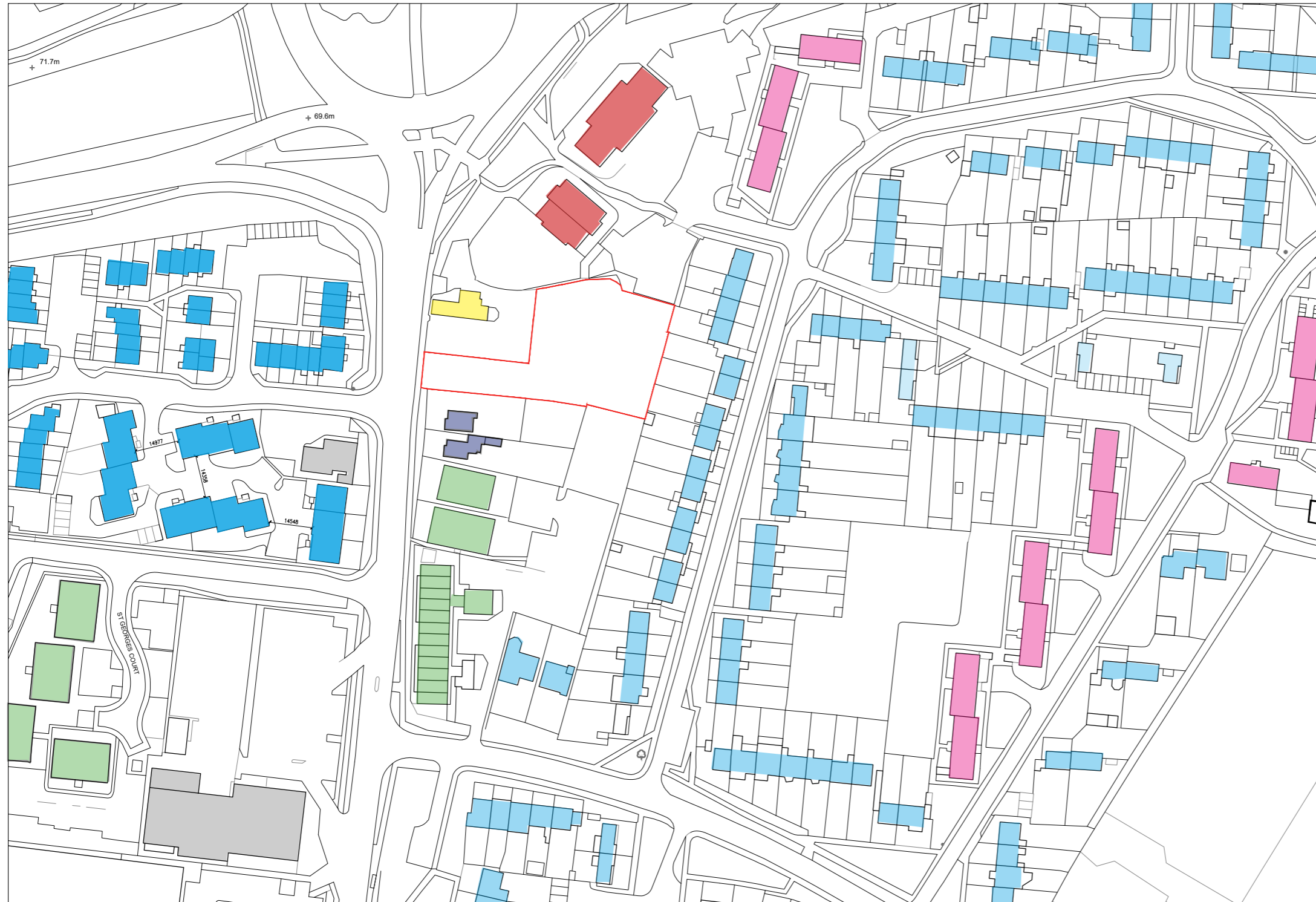


3.0 Character Study :



3.0 Site Character :

Our project aim to reflect the character of the surrounding area, maintaining the neighbourhood structure of the town with a clear pattern of land uses and arrangement of open spaces and landscape feature in accordance with policy CH1.

Therefore we have undertaken a study of the surrounding area.

Below shows the site location and various types of development in the area. The area is overwhelmingly residential in character with various ages of development. The main part of the development of the area occurred in the mid 20th century as part of the Crawley New Town.

More recent developments, shown in green and red, have generally been taller, flatted blocks and not the more traditional street based housing that was typical in the wider area.

As shown by the opposite diagram our site is surrounded by very different types of development.

These range from a 5 storey tower to the north to the listed house to the west. To the east is the coherent, street based housing, typical of the new town development.



3.0 Site Character : House Types

Overall the most coherent forms of development in the area are the street based houses. These are generally short terraces of houses access from their own front gardens with private amenity space to the rear.

This street based layout, as shown to the east and west of our site provides a relatively coherent, lower rise neighbourhood with a very clear delineation between the public and private spaces with the houses used to define the routes through the sites.

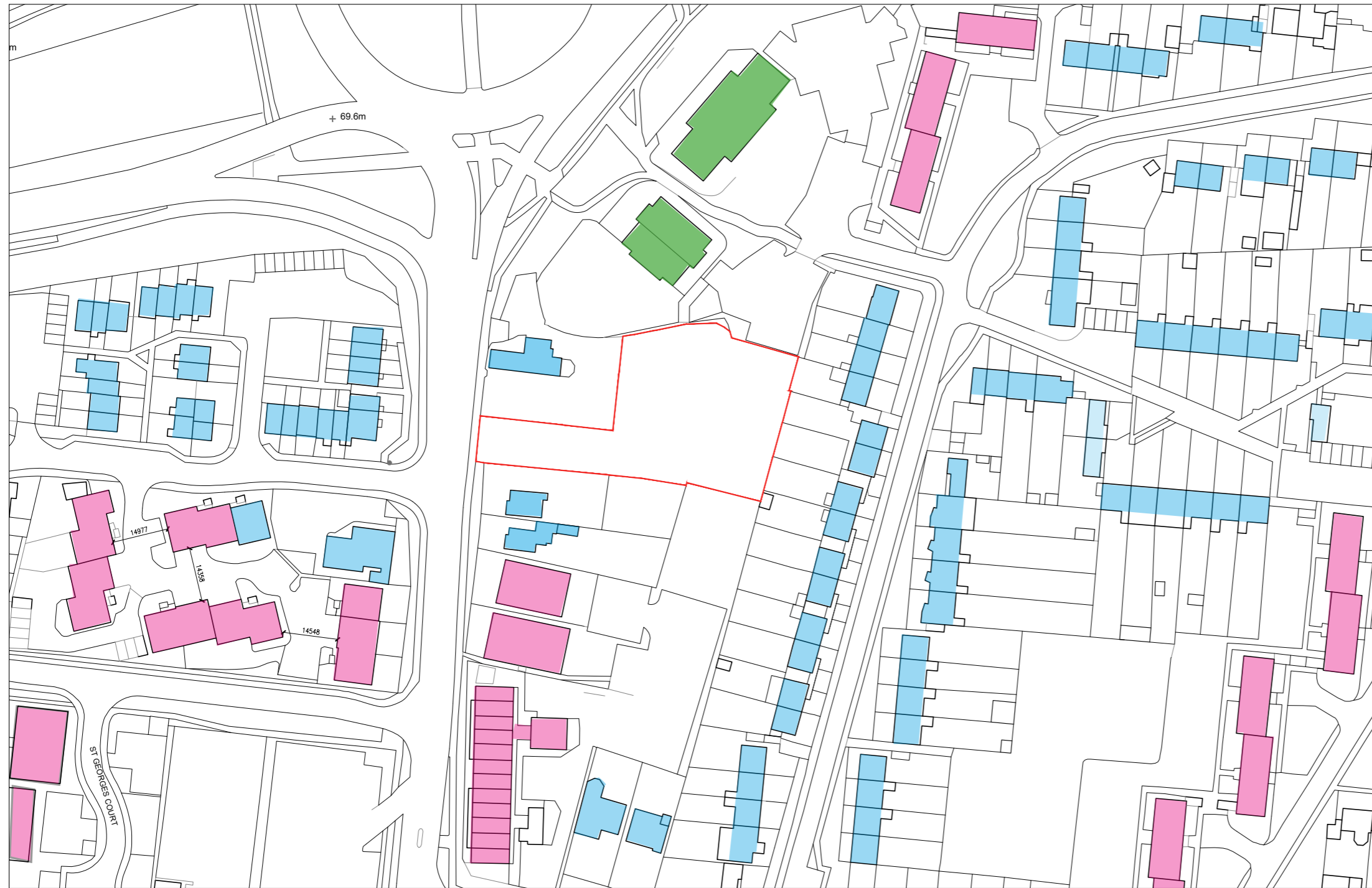
This principle of development can also be used to provide a gentle density at a very domestic scale. The development to the north of our site show what to avoid; taller blocks surrounded by car parks and hardstanding.

We are therefore reflecting the intentions of the Crawley Compact Residential Development guide.

“High structures, as well as long, impermeable repetitive perimeter apartment blocks, are only one way to increase density. Higher residential densities can be achieved in low rise developments with average heights of three- storeys which use innovative ways of providing outdoor amenity space.”



The listed house to the west of our site is to be protected with our scheme designed to minimise any impact onto the house, its setting and the trees that surround it.



3.1 Site Character : Building Height

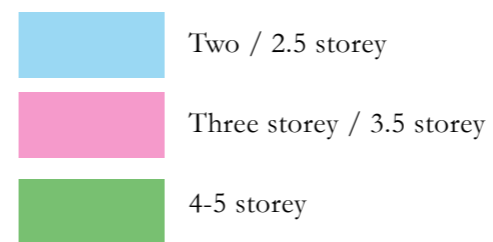
As is typical of the wider new town development, the majority of the housing in the area is two or 2.5 storeys tall. These are generally short terraces or semi-detached houses with pitched roofs.

Built at the same time as the houses are relatively small flatted blocks. These are taller at 3 and 3.5 storeys. These are typical mid century slab blocks arranged orthogonally and set within semi public grassed areas.

More recent housing in the area has either been provided as 3-4 storey flatted blocks facing London Road or in cul-de-sacs with the individual houses between 2-3 storeys tall.

To the north of our site area the taller, more recent flatted blocks. These range between 4-5 storeys tall.

Generally our proposal will keep to the 2.5 storey average in the wider area but also reflect the differing heights of buildings that surround our site. This may include stepping up the height to the north near the taller buildings but well away from the houses to the west and east.





3.2 Site Character : Distancing

One of the main factors in designing the new scheme that fits well within the existing area is to reflect the existing distancing between residential developments, therefore reflecting the urban design and grain of development.

In the local area there are a variety of house types and urban design arrangements. We have highlighted four areas local to our site and have shown the various distances between the front of the houses and also between some side and front elevations.

1. On Five Acres, immediately to the east of our site the distance front to front is between 17-19m.
2. Windmill Court to the west of our site is a more recent residential development. The front to front distances here are between 13-15m. In some places the front to flank distances are between 7-9m.
3. Connaught Gardens features taller, three storeys blocks. Here the front to front distances are generally around 14m.
4. The western edge of Windmill Court also reflects the general front to front distance of around 14m.

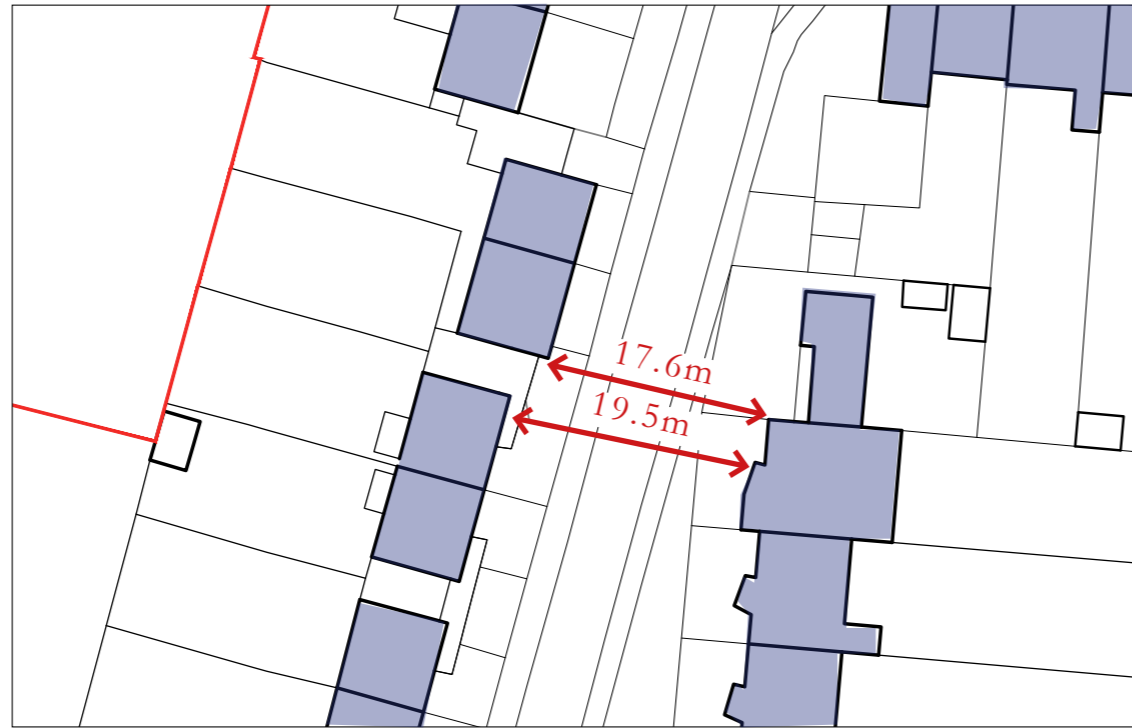
Pictures of these areas are shown on the following pages. These relatively close front to front distances create a low rise, relatively high density neighbourhood where each house is accessed via their own front garden.

We aim to reflect this type of development in our proposal.

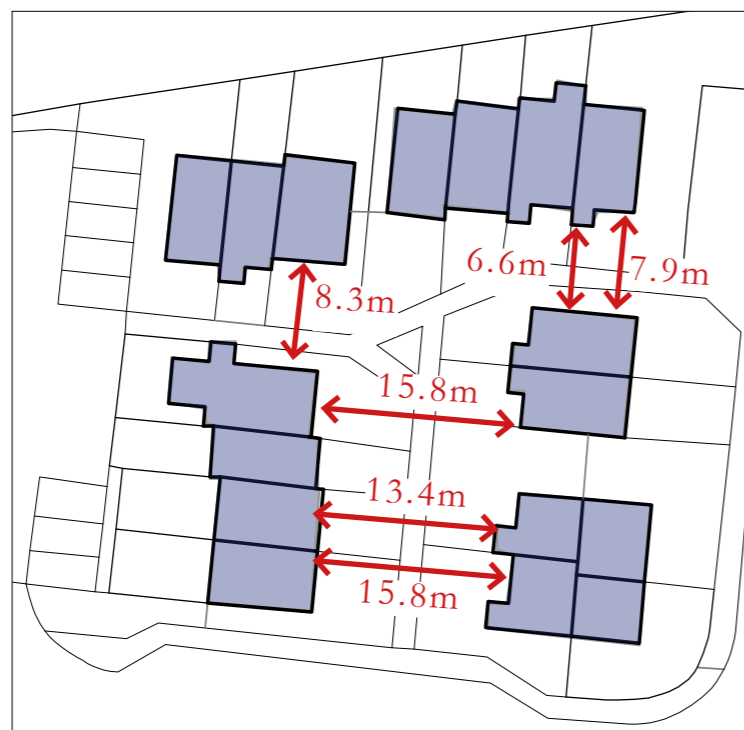
The rear facing elevations will also have to reflect the distances given in the Crawley Urban Design SPD that provides clear guidance on the distances between new and existing rear facing elevations at various heights.

3.2 Site Character : Distancing

01. Five Acres : 2 storey + pitched roof

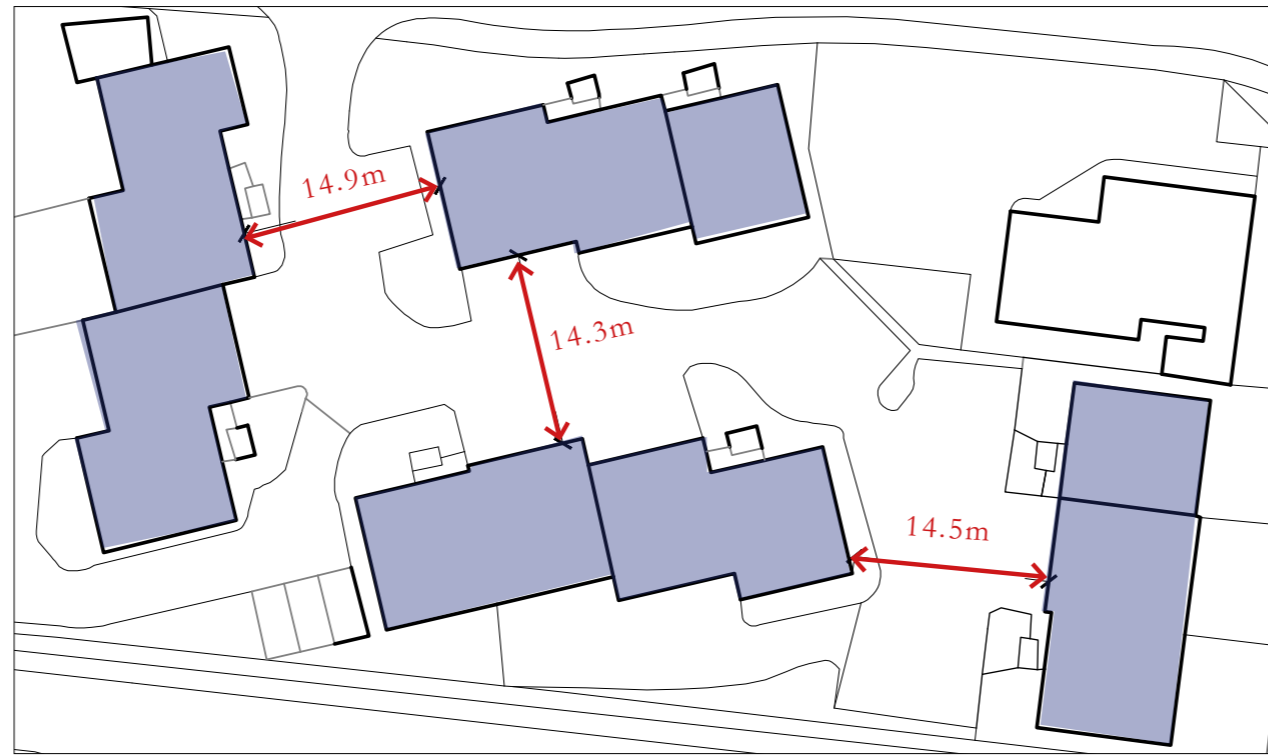


02. Windmill Court : 2 storey + pitched roof



3.2 Site Character : Distancing

03. Connaught Gardens : 3 storey + pitched roof



04. Windmill Court : 2 storey + pitched roof





3.3 Site Character : Materials and Detailing

The majority of the surrounding buildings are finished in brick. The older, post war terraced houses are generally in a red brick with the flatted blocks in a yellow stock.

More recent developments, both flatted blocks and houses have used a brown brick with red brick to highlight key details. This is similar to the early 20th century houses on London Road that sit next to our site.

To the front of the homes are front gardens and areas of planting.

We would aim to reflect the slightly older housing with a red brick used as the main material and elements highlighted in contrasting colours. Planting would be provided to the front of the new dwellings.



3.4 Site Character : Crawley New Town

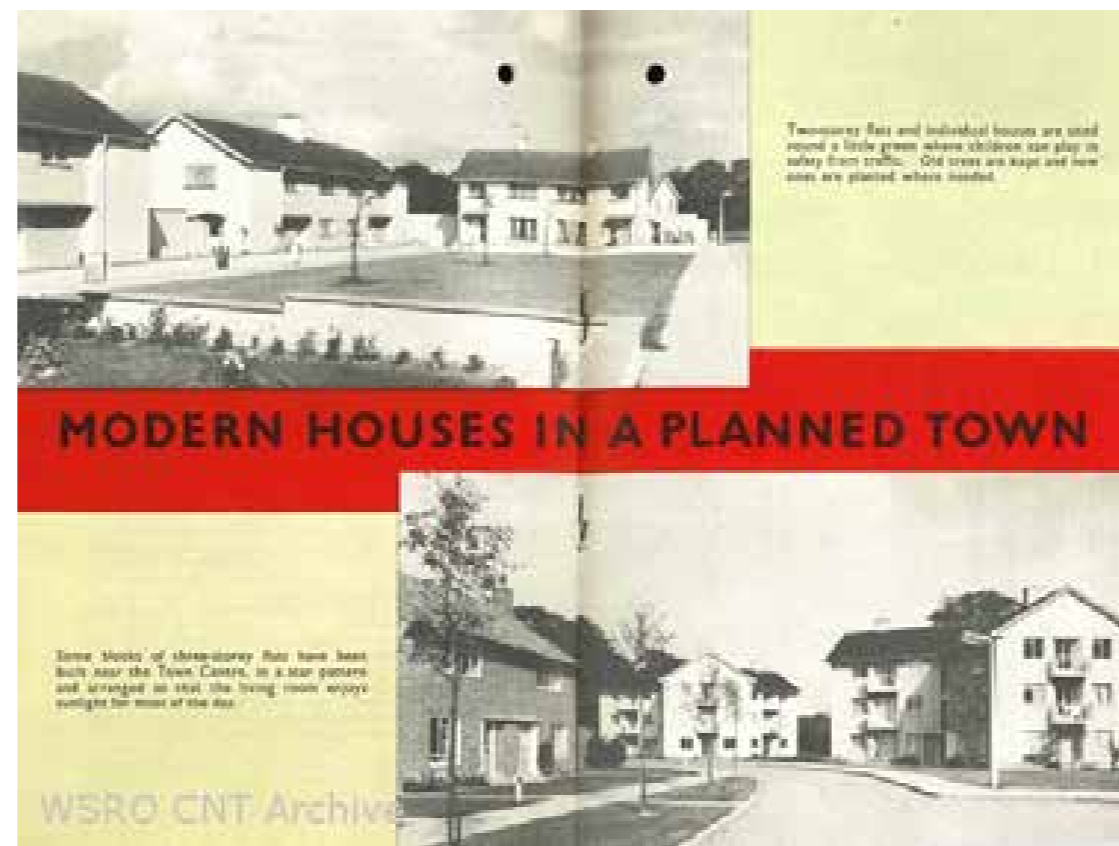
The majority of Crawley was built post war as a new planned town. These parts of Crawley have a distinctive post war design that is repeated throughout the town.

The new housing and municipal buildings are characterised by a type of domestic, gentle density, typically between 2.5 and 4 storeys even in the centre of town.

The elevations are relatively simple and pared back particularly when compared to a typical Victorian elevation. The material palette is simple with typically either a yellow stock brick or a red brick being used.

The elevations have standard arrangements of windows that are repeated over the length of the elevations. The windows and balconies are nearly always in white.

Balconies stack in elevation and provide recesses and depth to the elevations. Any detailing is very minimal and is usually only a simple horizontal concrete banding or projecting window boxes.



Tilegate Parade, maisonettes above shops



Three Bridges shopping parade

3.4 Site Character : Crawley New Town Housing

The form and massing of the larger municipal buildings in Crawley New Town is also shown in the typical housing of the time. These homes are of a similar scale, between 2.5 and 4 storeys tall, built in the same simple palette of materials and share similar details.

The image to the left is on Five Acres, immediately adjacent to our site and shows typical Crawley housing blocks faced in a typical yellow stock brick with white window frames and simple recessed balconies with small planters.

Housing of this time also emphasised the importance of green space and planting around the housing in contrast to the earlier more urban street based housing.

This approach is also typical of the other examples below.

We intend to reflect this New Town aesthetic in the design of our elevations as well as the overall layout of our scheme



Housing on Five Acres to the rear of our site



Typical New Town Crawley Housing



3.5 Site Character : Dyers Almshouses

To the south of our site, towards the centre of Crawley are the Dyers Almshouses. These almshouses were built during the mid 20th century and follow many of the principles of more historic almshouses.

The site is laid out with the buildings around the edge of the site with a central landscaped garden. Each dwelling has their own front door and the large majority of the dwellings have windows and doors opening directly onto the central landscape garden.

In addition to the central landscaped garden each dwelling has their own small private garden space.

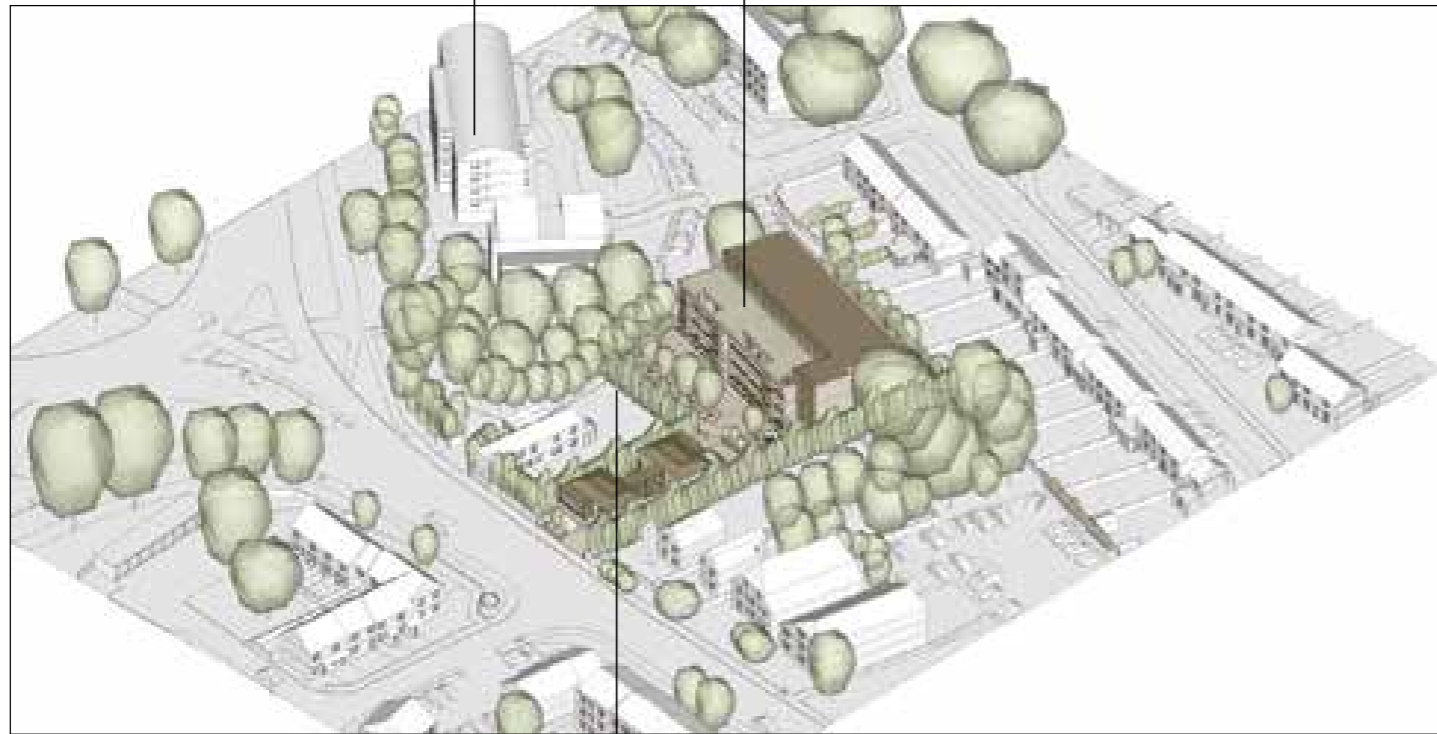
They are a collection of smaller dwellings arranged with no internal communal circulation spaces and they present a form of urban design that pre-dates cars and the requirements of parking. The scheme is designed at a domestic scale.



Dyers Almshouses

Large 4-5 storey flatted developments

Proposed new building



Aerial of the proposal in context

Existing dense hedge

2023 Proposals for the site :

This scheme was submitted for pre-application advice. The design approach has since been reconsidered after initial comments. The scheme proposed a full width slab block of four storeys on this backland site.

Please note these were by a different Architect.

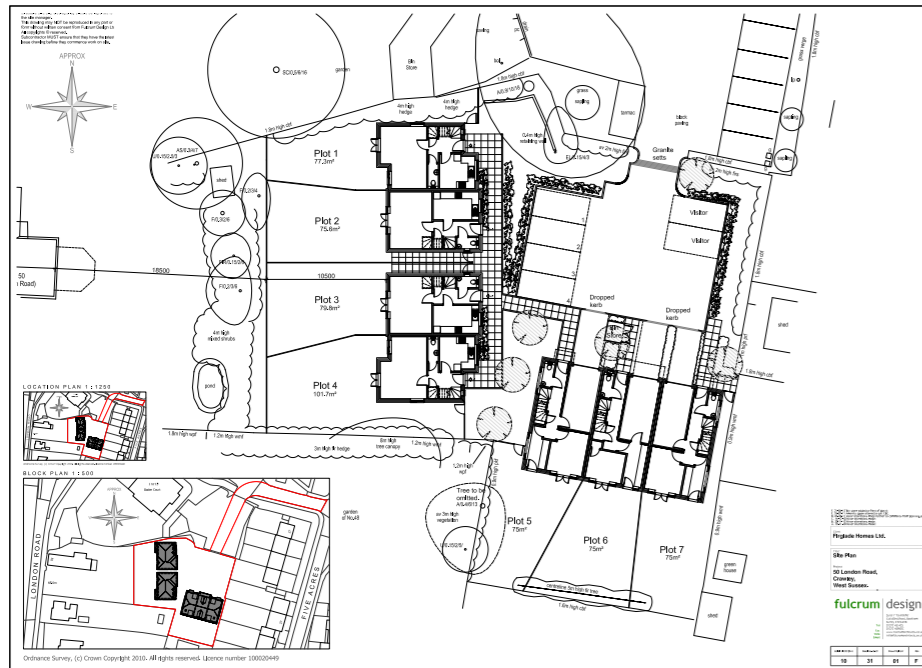
3.6 Site Character : Site History

There have been a number of recent applications and pre-application discussions about the site.

Overall the site was thought to be a potential development site, providing much needed new housing. The earlier scheme proposed three blocks of large family homes. These were 2.5 / 3 storeys tall and were located very close to the eastern boundary to the site. This scheme relied on gaining access to the site through the parking area of the flatted schemes to the north of our site. There were no reasons for refusal that concerned the scheme height, massing, footprint or design.

The later scheme from 2022 / 2023 proposed a very large flatted block that stretched across the site. This was up to four storeys. This scheme was submitted for pre-application advice. The design approach has since been reconsidered after initial comments.

Our approach will be very different from the 2022 / 23 scheme.



2012 Proposals for the site :

This scheme was refused at planning with only a single reason given for its refusal. The elements of the design, footprint and massing were not given as reasons for refusal.