



Design & Access Statement

Watermead, Cowfold

D7543_P2

London
76 Great Suffolk Street
London, SE1 0BL
T 0207 928 2773

Sussex
64-68 Brighton Road, Worthing
West Sussex, BN11 2EN
T 01903 248 777

19.12.2025

Bristol
Beacon Tower, Colston Street,
Bristol, BS1 4XE
T 0117 214 1101

W www.ecearchitecture.com

E hello@ecearchitecture.com

Project Team

Client Earlswood Homes
Architect ECE Architecture
Planning Consultant ECE Planning
Highways Consultant Paul Basham Associates
Landscape Consultant.....Clive Warwick Landscape Design
Arboriculture Consultant David Archer
Ecology Consultant.....ACD
Drainage Consultant GTA Civils

Revisions

Revision	Notes	Issue Date	By	Checked By
P1	Draft Issue	25.11.25	JW	PJ
P2	Updated to Internal QA Comments	19.12.25	JW	PJ
P3	Planning Submission	14.04.26	JW	PJ
P4	Updated to Comments	04.06.26	JW	PJ



Contents

Contents

1.0 Introduction	4
1.01 Site Description	5
1.02 Site Photos	7
1.03 Local Context	8
2.0 Design Development	9
2.01 Constraints	10
2.02 Opportunities	11
2.03 Initial Layout	12
2.04 Pre-App Comments	13
2.05 Proposed Site Layout	15
2.06 Landscaping	16
2.07 Access	17
2.08 Ecology, Drainage & Sustainability	18
3.0 Scale & Appearance	19
3.01 Scale & Appearance	20
3.02 Materiality	21
4.0 Conclusion	22
6.01 Conclusion	23



Introduction 1.0

1.1 Site description

Application Summary and Documents

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Earlswood Homes to accompany a Detailed Planning Application for the proposed development at Watermead, Cowfold. The statement outlines an analysis of the existing site and its context, the evolution of the design, and the proposed concept for the site's development.

The application seeks planning permission for the demolition of existing commercial buildings on the 0.57-hectare site located at Summer Meadow, off the A281, Cowfold. The proposal is for a residential development (Use Class C3) comprising:

- Nine new build dwellings
- Footpaths and internal roads
- Associated parking, landscaping, and planting
- Utilities and drainage infrastructure, including connection to the strategic foul network
- Associated infrastructure and groundworks

The proposed development will deliver the following benefits:

- Replacement of outdated and unutilised commercial buildings with high-quality homes appropriate to the character of Cowfold village.
- Retention and enhancement of existing boundary tree belts and hedgerows, maintaining natural screening to surrounding properties.
- A landscape-led design that respects and enhances existing site features.
- Efficient use of a sustainable location, supporting local housing needs within built-up area.



Aerial Image of Existing Site





1.2 Site Photos

Site Location

The site is located within a sustainable location to the west of the A281 in Cowfold and to the north of the relatively new development known as 'Summer Meadow'. The site contains vacant commercial buildings and vacant amenity land. To the south, the site benefits from an existing vehicular access point and is secured via metal gates. The site is within walking distance of local shops, recreation grounds, and regular bus services providing sustainable travel connections to nearby villages and towns.

Cowfold village is situated approximately 6.7 miles south of Horsham and 8.2 miles west of Haywards Heath. The nearest mainline railway stations are located at Horsham (7.0 miles) and Haywards Heath (8.0 miles).

Residential dwellings back onto the site's northern and eastern boundaries. The field to the west is used for agricultural purposes, while to the south there is a mix of residential and commercial uses, including a Volkswagen commercial vehicle dealership.

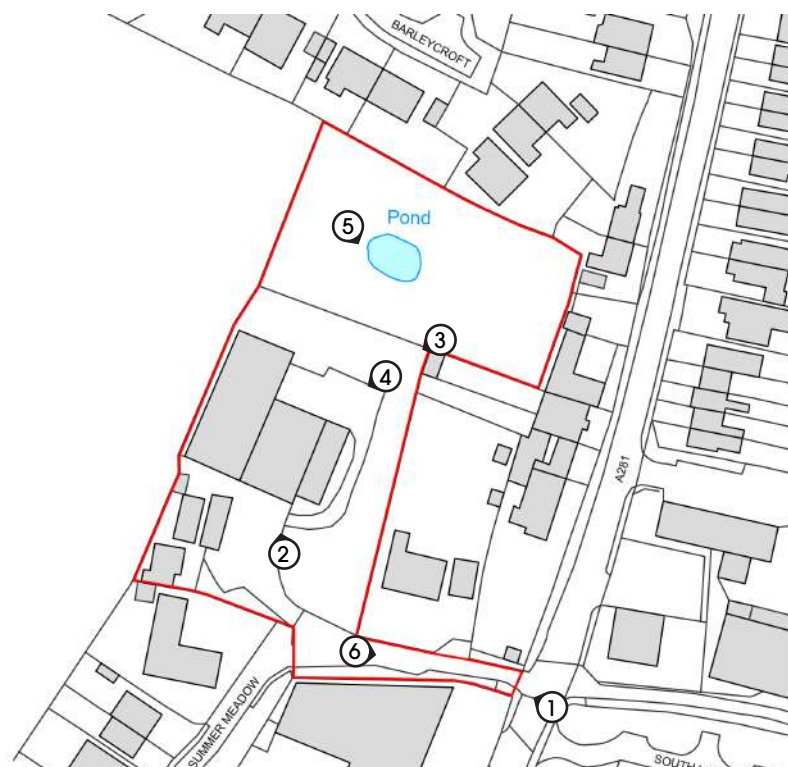


Image 01



Image 02



Image 03



Image 04



Image 05



Image 06



1.3 Local Context

Local Character

Cowfold comprises a diverse range of residential dwellings; however, the majority are traditional in character, particularly those situated along Bolney Road and the A281. These homes typically feature red or brown brickwork, prominent gable forms, and subtle accents of complementary materials such as tile hanging or timber boarding.

Architectural detailing across the village is varied, with examples including brick banding at ground and/or first-floor level, a mix of window headers and cills, and a variety of porch styles. Roof forms are generally front-to-back pitches with feature gables, while chimneys remain a consistent element within the village's traditional vernacular.

Built Form

The prevailing built form within the village is two storeys; however, there is also an abundance of bungalows within the residential developments off Bolney Road and the A281, including one-and-a-half-storey dwellings featuring dormer windows in adjacent Barleycroft.



A281



Barleycroft



Thornden



Barleycroft



A281



A281



a281



Station Road



Alley Groves



Design Development^{2.0}

2.01 Constraints

Site Constraints

The highest point of the site is located towards the northernmost corner, gradually sloping down towards the east and south-western boundaries, with a level change of approximately 4 metres between the highest and lowest points.

Further site constraints include:

- Reuse of the existing access point from Summer Meadow.
- Existing mature trees and their Root Protection Areas (RPAs).
- Neighbouring dwellings.
- The existing pond, situated towards the northern portion of the site.

While there are neighbouring dwellings in close proximity to the north-eastern boundary, their elevations have no openings overlooking the areas proposed for residential development.

Key

-  Vehicular Access Point
-  Main Road (A281)
-  Summer Meadow
-  Residential Interactions
-  Green Interactions
-  Commercial Buildings
-  Outbuildings
-  Existing Trees
-  Existing Pond
-  Overhead Cables
-  Concrete/Gravel Driveway



Constraints Plan

2.02 Opportunities

Site Opportunities

Following a thorough assessment of the existing site and its surrounding context, together with a review of national and local planning and design guidance, the following opportunities have been identified for the development:

- The existing access from Summer Meadow will be retained and used to inform the layout of the internal road network.
- The mature group of trees and existing pond at the northernmost part of the site will be retained and enhanced, creating a feature Open Space for residents.
- Enhanced green buffers will be provided along the site boundaries, particularly to the north and east, to reinforce natural screening.
- A SuDS (Sustainable Drainage System) strategy can be incorporated to manage surface water sustainably.
- Green connectivity around the site will be promoted through high-quality landscaping and planting.
- The development represents a more efficient use of brownfield land.
- Scenic views to the west will be maintained for the majority of proposed private gardens.

Key

-  Vehicular Access Point
-  Access Road
-  Potential Developable Area
-  Enhanced Public Open Space
-  Green Views Out
-  Building Frontages
-  Green Buffer
-  Proposed Trees



Opportunities Plan

2.03 Initial Layout

Description

The initial layout presented at the pre-application meeting (2nd September) proposed demolishing the existing vacant commercial and storage buildings on the site and constructing nine new residential dwellings, ranging between 1.5 and 2 storeys in height.

Plots 1–7 comprised two-storey dwellings, while Plots 8 and 9 were proposed as bungalows. All dwellings included sufficient on-site car parking in accordance with West Sussex County Council Parking Standards.

As part of the proposal, the existing man-made pond would be retained, with the surrounding open space and the landscape buffers along the site boundaries enhanced.

The design process looked to adopt a traditional vernacular that reflected the character of the local context, including massing and roof forms typical of a rural village. The proposal therefore incorporated gabled roof forms, car barns, and shared-surface streets that would encourage pedestrian activity.



Initial Site Layout

2.04 Pre-App Comments

Pre-App Comments

Below are the planning officer's comments on the initial site layout, taken from the pre-application report, followed by the design team's responses explaining how these comments have been addressed in the proposed site layout.



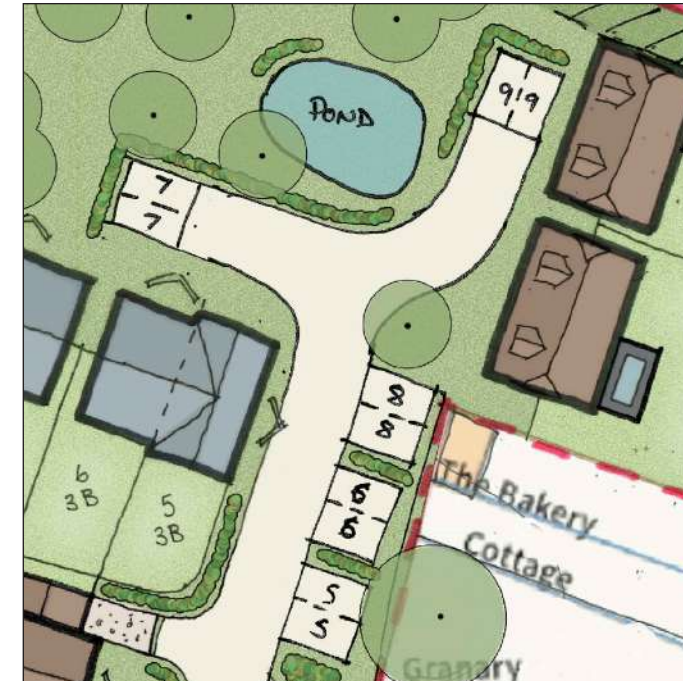
1. Initial Site Layout

Planners Officer: There appears to be a lack of consideration given to pedestrian access.



1. Proposed Site Layout

Design Response: A designated zone within the shared surface will be delineated for pedestrians.



2. Initial Site Layout

Planners Officer: A large amount of hard surfacing has been used to provide the parking spaces for plots 7 and 9.



2. Proposed Site Layout

Design Response: The parking spaces for plots 5 - 9 have been relocated to within the curtilage of their dwelling making more efficient use of the hard surfacing.

2.04 Pre-App Comments (continued)

Pre-App Comments

Below are the planning officer's comments on the initial site layout, taken from the pre-application report, followed by the design team's responses explaining how these comments have been addressed in the proposed site layout.



3. Initial Site Layout

Planners Officer: Thought should also be given to re-locating the parking for plot 6, which is set away from the property frontage, ensuring it has a suitable relationship with the dwelling.



3. Proposed Site Layout

Design Response: The parking for plot 6 has been relocated to be within the curtilage of the dwelling.



4. Initial Site Layout

Planners Officer: Further attention however, should be paid to the boundary planting, treatments and landscaping of the site.



4. Proposed Site Layout

Design Response: The green buffers along the northern and eastern boundaries will be enhanced to maintain privacy as well as providing light and noise protection between proposed Plots 8 and 9 and the neighbouring properties to the site.

2.05 Proposed Layout

Design Principles

1. Site Access off of Summer Meadow.
2. Shared Surface with delineated zone for pedestrian use.
3. Green buffer between neighbouring properties to the East and proposed dwellings.
4. Gable and Barn Hipped roof forms informed by the architectural language of Cowfold village and pre-app comments.
5. Knee-high post and rail fencing defining private/public spaces.
6. Combination of timber fencing, hedgerows and brick walls to define proposed dwelling boundaries.
7. Orientation of proposed dwellings well-considered to provide optimal surveillance and outlook onto green spaces.
8. Bungalows position to North-East corner, proposing reduced massing, sensitive to neighbouring dwellings.
9. Existing vegetation maintained and enhanced where possible.
10. Green buffer proposed along the Northern and Eastern boundaries.
11. Existing pond retained as a feature of Open Space.
12. Turning head well integrated into road design as well as providing an access road for plots 6 and 7.

Mix

2 x 3 Bedroom Bungalow	139.9 sqm
2 x 2 Bedroom Houses	102.6 sqm
2 x 3 Bedroom House	115.6 sqm
2 x 3 Bedroom House	145.6 sqm
1 x 4 Bedroom House	176.0 sqm



Proposed Site Layout

2.06 Landscape

The proposed landscape scheme indicated in drawing : Project CWLD-EH-2616-01 features a balanced integration of built and natural elements, designed to enhance the site's aesthetic, ecological, sustainability and functional values.

With the landscape at its core, the proposed landscape scheme evolved from a thorough analysis of the site, which also included its surrounding location and its potential to lock into the natural framework and surrounding habitats. The design therefore, respects the landscape fabric and networks of the surrounding trees and hedgerows that form the boundaries. The design maximises the opportunities for new planting within the site, increasing tree cover and creating strong green infrastructure links across all boundaries, softening the built environment and integrating it fully into the landscape.

The landscaping has been designed to compliment the proposed new dwellings. From the ornamental planting and hedging of the front gardens to the extensive rear garden lawns, the scheme sets out to provide visual relief and recreational space for the residents. To the North Western quarter, a meadow habitat and new natural pond link into the local habitat networks, while to the eastern flank, another meadow and a ribbon perennial planting provide further open space and sustainable ecological value to support biodiversity. Mature trees have been strategically placed across the site, to offer long term green infrastructure, shade, privacy, and ecological benefits across the site.

The landscape scheme thoughtfully integrates both the new architecture and landscape, demonstrating a commitment to ecological and aesthetic values which support local flora and fauna, promoting sustainability, clear functionality and accessibility for users long term.



Proposed Landscape Masterplan

2.07 Access

The proposed development site is currently a commercial and light industrial space, previously used by a garden machinery company. The site is accessed via a private vehicular route shared with 10 existing residential properties. It is also located in close proximity to local bus stops, providing connections to the surrounding rail network and enhancing accessibility to the wider area.

In addition, the site benefits from good-quality pedestrian infrastructure within the local area and nearby National Cycle Route 223, further extending opportunities for sustainable travel and improving connectivity to surrounding destinations.

The development is served by a shared access road which connects to Henfield Road (A281) via a simple dropped kerb arrangement. Discussions with West Sussex County Council (WSCC), undertaken in support of the relatively recent Summer Meadows development, which also utilises this access road, confirmed that the existing access arrangement, visibility plays, vehicle tracking, and ATC data were agreed and considered acceptable to serve that 8-dwelling scheme. This development has since been constructed and is now occupied.

As the access road and the surrounding area have remained largely unchanged since those assessments were undertaken, it is proposed that no further updates to the access arrangements are required.

Vehicle trips for the sites existing industrial use have been calculated, totalling 91 vehicular movements per day. When compared against the proposed residential development, it is anticipated that this total will be reduced by 44 daily trips. In addition, peak-hour movements are forecast to decrease by four vehicles during the AM peak and two vehicles during the PM peak.

This reduction in overall traffic generation demonstrates that the proposed development is likely to have a positive impact on the local highway network. As such, the proposed scheme is not considered to reflect a detrimental impact on the current situation, in relation to the current adopted National Planning Policy Framework.





2.08 Ecology, Drainage and Sustainability

Ecology

The proposed development within the Application Site will comprise of nine new residential dwellings and related infrastructure and will result in the loss of grassland and some individual scattered trees.

Mitigation for invertebrates will involve the retention or sensitive relocation of valuable habitat features, with the creation of new log piles once development has been completed. For reptiles, vegetation clearance will be undertaken sensitively and under the supervision of an ecologist.

To protect nesting birds any scattered trees, sections of tree line, and scrub to be removed will be subject to a nesting bird check prior to any works, or will be carried out outside of the nesting bird season (March - August inclusive).

For bats, general measures such as timing restrictions will apply and a sensitive lighting strategy will be implemented to protect suitable foraging and commuting features for bats on-site and maintain dark corridors for bats during the construction and operational phases of the development.

The Application Site is considered likely to support foraging and commuting badgers, and as such additional considerations need to be made. Measures will be implemented to protect badgers and other mammals from harm during the construction phase of the proposed development as well as an additional site walkover prior to the construction phase to check for new badger setts.

The proposed development will result in a loss of 43.28% in habitat units and a 635.53% gain in hedgerow units. It is recommended that, offsite biodiversity enhancement and habitat creation options are explored. Alternatively, biodiversity credits can be purchased to compensate for the shortfall in habitat units.

Assuming the implementation of the mitigation and enhancement measure set out in this report, the proposed development would conform to relevant Local Planning Policies and has the potential to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with the NPPF and Local Planning Policies."

Please refer to the accompanying report for further information.

Drainage

The proposals are supported by a Flood Risk Assessment which has been prepared by GTA Civils & Transport Limited.

As set out within the accompanying Statement, the site lies wholly within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of fluvial flooding. The assessment also concludes that flood risk from other sources, including groundwater and reservoirs, is negligible, with only limited localised surface water ponding associated with the existing pond and around the current building.

The report confirms that the proposed residential development is appropriate in flood risk terms and accords with the sequential approach in the NPPF. A sustainable drainage strategy is proposed comprising permeable paving, bioretention features and an attenuation tank, with surface water discharge restricted to 1 l/s, providing a significant reduction compared with existing runoff characteristics. Surface water is proposed to discharge at a controlled rate to the existing highway drainage network, subject to the relevant approvals.

Foul drainage is proposed to connect to the existing network serving the adjacent Summer Meadow development.

The FRA concludes that the development complies with the NPPF (2025), relevant planning practice guidance and the National Standards for SuDS (2025).

Please refer to the accompanying report for further information.

Sustainability

The proposed development demonstrates how opportunities to reduce energy demand and carbon emissions have been considered throughout the design process. This has been achieved through the incorporation of enhanced building fabric performance, energy-efficient measures, and renewable energy technologies, resulting in a sustainable and energy-conscious development.

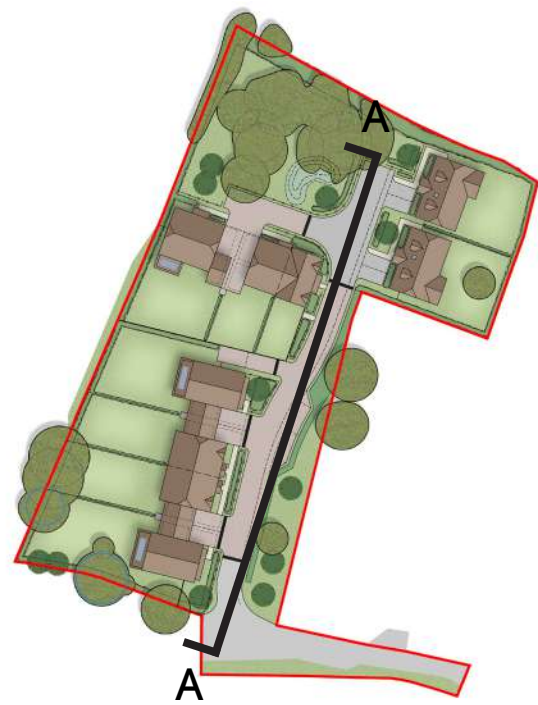
A series of commitments and goals are set out to facilitate the delivery of a well rounded sustainable development. These include:

- High quality housing that is representative of the local vernacular, sourcing local materials where possible
- Operational carbon reduced through energy efficiency measures, including reduction of waste during construction and sourcing of materials
- Installation of Air Source Heat Pumps to all plots, providing heating and hot water, further reducing carbon emissions
- Increased air tightness with reduced thermal bridging
- Dwellings designed to ensure natural daylight to habitable rooms
- Natural ventilation
- Water efficiency measures to ensure that the development can meet the more stringent water efficiency standard of 110 litres/person/day
- All the homes will be provided with a 7kW Electric Vehicle Charge Point - In accordance with Building Regulations (Part S),



Scale & Appearance 3.0

3.1 Scale & Appearance



Scale

The proposed dwellings range in scale from one-and-a-half to two storeys and comprise a mix of bungalows, semi-detached, and detached homes. Gable and barn-hipped roof forms have been incorporated to reflect the architectural language of the village while also reducing the overall massing of the proposed development.

Appearance

Following a pre-application meeting with Horsham District Council, the comments received regarding the character, design, and appearance of the scheme have been carefully considered and integrated into the proposal. The material palette incorporates brick and tile hanging to the elevations, with gable ends designed to reflect the existing character along the A281. Architectural detailing inspired by the village's traditional vernacular has been included, featuring brick banding, quoining, simple tile-hanging features, and timber porches.



Street Scene AA



3.2 Materiality

Materials Palette

A carefully considered and succinct material palette has been chosen to provide continuity across the small site, with selections guided by a contextual analysis of the existing local environment.

Key

1. Red Multi-Stock Brick
2. Tile Hanging
3. Brick Quoining
4. Plain Clay Roof Tiles
5. Brick Banding
6. Brick Headers/Cills
7. Front-Back Porch Canopy
8. Gabled Porch Canopy
9. Timber Porch with Brick Plinth



1. Red Multi-Stock Brick



2. Tile Hanging



3. Brick Quoining



4. Plain Clay Roof Tiles



5. Brick Banding



6. Brick Window Headers/Cills



7. Front-to-back Porch Canopy



8. Gabled Porch Canopy



9. Timber Porch with Brick Plinth



4.0 Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

Conclusion

This Design & Access and Planning Statement illustrates how the design has arisen from a firm understanding of the local character and full grasp of the constraints and opportunities. The proposal has incorporated all of the planning officers comments received from the pre-application meeting into the finished outcome. This has resulted in an appropriate proposal that meets all the development criteria and makes efficient use of the brownfield land.

During the pre-application meeting held in September 2025, planning officers confirmed that the site is suitable for redevelopment, making appropriate use of land that has been vacant for some time and is no longer viable for commercial purposes, as set out in further detail within the supporting Planning Statement.

The scheme has been assessed against all relevant National and Local Planning Policy and guidance. The design solution is appropriate, reflecting a high-quality, landscape-led residential development within Cowfold. The scheme will contribute towards meeting the housing need in the area, in line with local and national policy aspirations. The Council is therefore respectfully requested to grant permission for this development.





Creativity. Quality. Commerciality.
Reimagine what's possible.