

Annex 1 Masterplan and Development Brief for the Former Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, Magdalen Road

Table of contents

1. Introduction - Page 3
2. The Site Vision and Opportunities - Page 5
3. Site Context - Page 7
4. Planning Policy Context - Page 20
5. Project Context - Current Site Conditions - Page 23
6. Guiding Principles for Development - Page 26
7. Landscape Strategy - Page 43
8. Summary - Page 48

1. Introduction

The Former Convent of the Holy Child Jesus is one of Hastings' most significant heritage assets, occupying a prominent position within the town's suburban hillside landscape. The purpose of this Masterplan and Development Brief is to celebrate and safeguard the distinctive character of the Former Convent site while guiding its evolution within a broader vision for Hastings and its relationship with neighbouring St Leonards.

- 1.1. Hastings is a historic coastal town on the south coast of England, known for its distinctive topography, rich architectural heritage, and long-established cultural identity. Its dramatic landscape has shaped not only the town's physical form but also the pattern of its neighbourhoods, movement routes, and green infrastructure.
- 1.2. Established in the late 19th century as part of the international network of schools and religious institutions run by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, the site developed over time into a distinctive educational campus. Its architecture, grounds, and spatial composition reflect both its ecclesiastical origins and its long-standing role as a place of learning.
- 1.3. Today, the now derelict Former Convent stands at a moment of transition. By reinforcing the convent's unique qualities and ensuring they play a central role in shaping future development, this guidance seeks to ensure the historic complex enriches its surroundings and strengthens the area's wider sense of place.
- 1.4. As an annex to the Hastings Local Plan and linked to **Policy HS25: Former Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, Magdalen Road**, this annex complements policy HS25 and provides detailed guidance on design, heritage, and landscape considerations, helping to ensure that proposals respect the site's historic significance, architectural character, and relationship with the surrounding area. By setting out clear expectations, the annex supports decision-making, promotes high-quality design, and facilitates the sustainable and sensitive reuse of this important heritage asset.
- 1.5. This heritage- and landscape-led approach is firmly evidence-based, drawing on a comprehensive programme of research, analysis, and engagement with both Hastings Borough Council and Historic England. Technical assessments underpin the recommendations, including detailed topographic surveys, a conditions survey of the existing buildings, a heritage assessment, and a market assessment conducted in order to understand development viability. In addition, a planning policy review was carried out to ensure that the proposals are consistent with emerging Local Plan objectives and wider regeneration ambitions.
- 1.6. This robust evidence base analysis provides a sound foundation for the masterplan and development brief a supporting informed, sustainable, and sensitive decision-making for the Former Convent of the Holy Child Jesus site.



Site Photograph - North East - White Rock Gardens, parallel to Bohemia Road A21.

Ref: Historic England, DP528407, 2025.



Site photograph - North East - White Rock Gardens, parallel to Hastings Skate Park.

Ref: Historic England, DP528345, 2025.

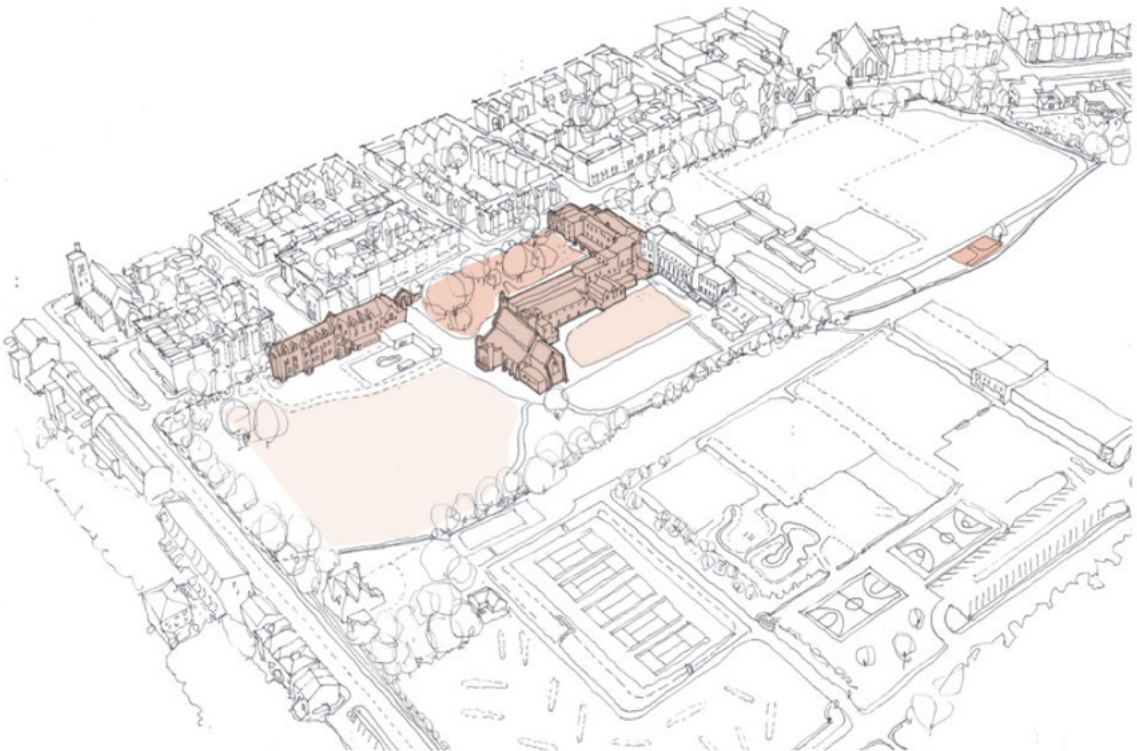
2. The Site Vision and Opportunities

The Former Convent of the Holy Child Jesus site presents a significant opportunity to create a revitalised heritage campus that celebrates and enhances its exceptional architectural, landscape, and townscape significance within Hastings. The site offers the potential to secure the long-term repair, conservation, and viable reuse of its Grade II* and Grade II listed buildings - particularly the landmark chapel - through a carefully balanced programme of adaptive reuse and sensitively integrated new development.

- 2.1. The transformation of the site presents a significant opportunity to unlock its full potential, supporting new and compatible uses that sustain its historic fabric, strengthen community engagement, and deliver lasting public benefits. The overarching vision is to create a high-quality, mixed-use environment that supports the long-term stewardship of heritage assets while providing meaningful benefits for the wider community.
- 2.2. Future development should be guided by a heritage-led and landscape-led approach, ensuring proposals respond sensitively to the site's character and historic significance. This includes the restoration of historic gardens, enhancement of green infrastructure, and improvements to sustainable travel links. Development should minimise harm to heritage assets, actively seek opportunities to enhance their significance, and conserve and enhance the Magdalen Road Conservation Area while protecting the setting of neighbouring conservation areas and White Rock Gardens.
- 2.3. High-quality design, enhanced landscaping, measurable biodiversity gains, and well-considered public realm improvements should reconnect the estate with its surroundings and encourage public access, engagement, and enjoyment.
- 2.4. Proposals should also identify viable and sustainable options to secure the long-term repair, restoration, and maintenance of the listed buildings, including the Grade II* listed Pugin chapel, ensuring their continued use and responsible management.
- 2.5. Collectively, the site vision will be safeguarded through a series of guiding principles that provide a clear framework for delivering sustainable, inclusive, and heritage-led regeneration that reinforces the site's distinctive identity, improves accessibility and connectivity, and secures a resilient and sustainable future for the site within its wider context of Hastings and St Leonards-on-Sea.



Opportunities to maximise sea views, improve site access, porosity and connections with the neighbouring community. Ref: Haworth Tompkins, 2025.



Opportunities for adaptive reuse within the existing Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings and heritage significant landscape. Ref: Haworth Tompkins, 2025.

3. Site Context

Location and site boundary

- 3.1. The Former Convent site occupies a dramatic 4.78-hectare cliff top location between St Leonards-on-Sea and Hastings. It lies east of Magdalen Road and west of Hastings Skate Park, beyond which are Falaise Road and White Rock Gardens, a locally identified Historic Park and Garden.
- 3.2. The site is bounded to the south by St Margaret's Road and to the north by St Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, with Hastings to the east and St Leonards to the west. The seafront promenade lies less than 100 metres to the south, offering extensive sea views.



Site analysis – Red line boundary former convent site, bounded by Magdalen Road and St Margaret's Road. Ref: Aerial Site Photograph, Google Earth, 2025.

Heritage significance

- 3.3. The Former Convent site sits within the Magdalen Road Conservation Area. This area historically formed part of the speculative development of land outside Burton's exclusive spa resort, which was largely complete by the 1850s. The majority of buildings in the Magdalen Road Conservation Area date from the 1850s–60s. On the steep slope rising from the seafront, the character of Church Road, Magdalen Road, and the cross streets from Blomfield Road to St Margaret's Road is defined by spacious, 3–3.5-storey Victorian housing set back from the road, with the churches of St Mary Magdalene and St Thomas of Canterbury providing prominent townscape markers.
- 3.4. Key heritage assets within the area include:
- The Former Convent of the Holy Child Jesus (chapel and college buildings): Grade II* and Grade II listed buildings forming a major landmark on the conservation-area edge and central to its historic identity. Not all elements are of historic interest, as noted in the Statement of Significance.
 - Church of St Thomas of Canterbury & the English Martyrs: A Grade II listed church of architectural and historic importance, serving as an ecclesiastical focal point.
 - The Old Penny School House (31 Magdalen Road): A locally prominent Grade II listed historic school building with listed features contributing to the street-scape.
 - In addition to the listed buildings, the site is in proximity to White Rock Gardens, a locally identified Historic Park and Garden.
- 3.5. Together, these assets define the historic character of the Magdalen Road Conservation Area and provide a framework for sensitive future development of the Former Convent site.



Site analysis – ConservationArea Plan Ref: Haworth Tompkins, 2025.

The Former Convent of the Holy Child Jesus is a site of considerable historic significance, featuring a collection of Grade II* and Grade II listed buildings that reflect its architectural, cultural, and educational importance within Hastings.

The Chapel (Grade II*)

- 3.6. The Chapel to the former convent of the Holy Child Jesus is an outstanding example of High Victorian Gothic architecture. While Historic England's listing credits A.W.N. Pugin as the original architect, current scholarship suggests that Charles Parker likely prepared the initial design, with construction beginning in the 1840s and completion undertaken by E.W. Pugin (A.W.N. Pugin's son) in 1868. This interpretation is reflected in Pevsner's description of the building.
- 3.7. The chapel is of considerable historic interest due to its close association with the Holy Child Jesus Convent, which played a pivotal role in Catholic education and religious life in 19th-century England. It is also an example of an increasingly rare survival of a Roman Catholic chapel retaining the nun's choir. Architecturally, it is distinguished by its intact High Victorian Gothic interior, designed in part by Pugin and Pugin, and its remarkable stained glass by Hardman & Co, which contributes to the richness of its decorative scheme.
- 3.8. The combination of design sophistication, craftsmanship, and historical association with a pioneering religious institution underscores the building's significance. As a Grade II* listed building, the chapel is recognised for its high heritage importance. Its inclusion on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register since 2017 highlights the need for careful conservation to preserve its architectural and historic values for future generations.



Site Photograph - Southern elevational view of the former chapel, with historic site photographs.
Ref: Historic England, DP528364, 2025



Site Photograph - De-consecrated former chapel, Grade II* listed.

Ref: Historic England, DP528376, 2025.

The Former Convent (Grade II)

- 3.9. The Former Convent building is a notable mid-19th century Catholic convent, initially designed by Charles Parker in the 1830s and completed by the distinguished Catholic architect William Wilkinson Wardell in the late 1840s, a close associate of A.W.N. Pugin. The building presents a sophisticated blend of Italianate, Gothic, and classical architectural elements, including arcaded elevations, a loggia, and a west wing, much of which remains attributable to Parker's original design. Internally, murals painted by Cornelia Connelly enhance its artistic and spiritual significance.
- 3.10. Historically, the convent is highly significant as the original mother house of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, founded by the Venerable Cornelia Connelly. This congregation was the first new native community of religious women established in England since the Reformation, marking an important moment in the revival of Catholicism and female religious life. The site functioned both as a religious centre and an educational institution, reflecting the society's mission to provide holistic education and spiritual formation for young women.
- 3.11. The association with Wardell further adds architectural and cultural value, linking the convent to the wider story of 19th-century ecclesiastical architecture in England. Together with Parker's contributions, the building exemplifies the collaboration of prominent architects in producing a structure of aesthetic refinement and social purpose. The convent retains a high degree of integrity, with many original features still legible, offering insight into mid-19th century convent life and architectural practice. Its combination of historic, architectural, and artistic interest underpins its designation as a Grade II listed building, reflecting its heritage importance locally and nationally.



Site Photographs - Former convent, and historic image of the convent gardens to the west of the site 1887. Left - Historic England, DP528396, 2025. Right - Society of the Holy Child Jesus Archive.

Gate Lodge and Gateway (Grade II)

- 3.12. The Gate Lodge and Gateway on Magdalen Road, designed by the prominent Catholic architect William Wilkinson Wardell in 1849–1850, are notable early examples of Gothic Revival architecture. Built for the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, the Gate Lodge originally functioned as a Girl's Poor School, reflecting the convent's broader educational and social mission.
- 3.13. Architecturally, the structure demonstrates characteristic Gothic Revival features, including pointed arches and a gabled parapet on the adjoining stone entrance gateway, which together enhance its visual and stylistic significance. The design of the Gate Lodge and Gateway illustrates Wardell's skill in combining functionality with the ecclesiastical Gothic style, contributing to the overall historic character of the former convent complex.
- 3.14. As a Grade II listed building, the Gate Lodge and Gateway hold heritage importance, representing both the social history of Catholic education in Victorian England and the early work of a significant 19th-century architect.



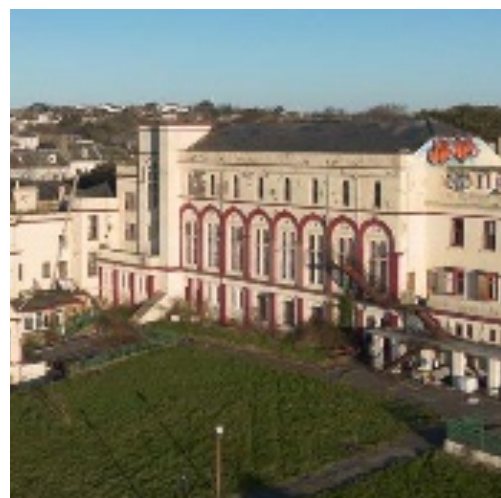
Site Photographs - Gate Lodge historic site entrance, with historic site photographs, Grade II listed.

Ref: Left - Geoff Wolfe Collection, 1066Online. Right - Society of the Holy Child Jesus Archive. Bottom - Historic England, DPDP528331, 2025.

New Building

- 3.15. The 'New Building' is an early 20th-century extension to the principal Convent complex, arranged over four storeys with a narrow, rectangular plan. It reads as a subsidiary element to the main convent building while dominating parts of the campus due to its scale and massing.
- 3.16. Historic records indicate that an east dormitory wing was added to the convent in 1895. This was later replaced by the larger 'New Building', which incorporated a gym, concert and assembly hall, studio, and bedrooms, with further extensions or rebuilds occurring in the 1920s–1930s. The building is finished in cream render with red-painted detailing. Its south faade is characterised by a bold round-arched arcade embracing tall cross-windows, accompanied on the left by a staircase tower originally surmounted by a square domed roof, now lost. Historic mapping suggests that elements of the 1895 wing may survive within the current fabric, albeit heavily altered and extended.
- 3.17. Architecturally, the 'New Building' presents an eclectic mix of Italianate, Gothic, and Art Deco influences, which have been generally assessed as unsuccessful in creating a coherent aesthetic. Despite this, the building has historic interest for its association with the expansion of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus and its contribution to the creation of quadrangles and courtyards within the convent campus.
- 3.18. As the New Building lies within the curtilage of the statutory listed buildings on the site, it is considered to be a curtilage listed structure. It therefore forms part of the setting and significance of the adjacent Grade II listed former convent and other listed buildings within the site. While the building is of more recent construction than the principal historic structures, it contributes to the understanding of the site's development and the evolution of the convent complex over time. Its heritage significance is therefore primarily derived from its historic and contextual relationship with the other listed buildings within the curtilage rather than from its individual architectural merit.

Note: since the compilation of the masterplan and development brief, a significant fire at the site caused considerable damage to the New Building, the full extent of which is yet to be determined. Any future development proposals brought forward would therefore need to consider whether alterations and restoration would be viable or whether an application for demolition would be required.



Site Photographs - 'New building' southern elevation prior to July 2026 fire, with historic image 1927.

Ref: Left - Cornelia Connelly Digital Library Resource. Right - Historic England, DP528388, 2025.

Training College / Gothic Building (Grade II)

- 3.19. The former purpose-built Training College also known as the Gothic Building, located to the south of the Gate Lodge, is a three-storey building of relatively narrow, rectangular plan form. Designed by William Wilkinson Wardell and completed around 1856, it is an example of mid-19th century Gothic educational architecture and reflects the expansion of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus during this period.
- 3.20. The building is of historic interest as it represents the Society's commitment to education and the professional training of women within the convent's mission. Architecturally, the college exhibits characteristic Gothic detailing, including ogee-headed double lancet windows, trefoil headed windows, towers, and gables, which enhance its stylistic significance and demonstrate Wardell's design expertise in combining functionality with Gothic Revival principles. As a Grade II listed building, it holds high heritage importance.
- 3.21. Later additions to the Training College (Gothic Building) include single-storey extensions attached to the ground floor, comprising a late 20th-century lean-to structure and early 20th-century cream-rendered additions with features such as period windows and a corrugated iron roof. The listing description notes that "the later buildings attached to the ground floor are not of special interest." While these extensions have limited architectural and historic value, they provide evidence of the growth and adaptation of the educational buildings over time.
- 3.22. Although these extensions are not identified as structures of particular special interest in their own right, they have not been excluded from the relevant statutory list entries. As a result, they form part of the listed building via attachment. While their individual architectural and historic significance is limited, they contribute to the overall composition and evolution of the listed building complex.



Site Photograph - East elevation of the Grade II listed Training College (Gothic Building) and Gate Lodge.
Ref: Historic England, DP528338, 2025.



Site Photographs - View of the southern gable to the Grade II listed Training College (Gothic Building), with historic site photographs. Ref: Top - Historic England, DP528339, 2025. Left & Right - Cornelia Connelly Digital Library Resource.

Planning history

- 3.23. The site was built and used as a convent and school from the 1840s until 1974. From 1976 until 2020 it became a summer language school, before becoming a young persons' football training school until recently. Today the site sits unused. The site's planning history goes back to 1950 where the site is described as a 'convent school'. Between 1950 and 1968 there were various planning permissions in connection with the school including extensions and buildings for classrooms, laboratories, staff rooms, gymnasiums, dormitories, a boiler room and several permissions for ablution/bathroom facilities.
- 3.24. Later planning applications comprise:
- Erection of a classroom, approved in 1972.
 - Outline housing proposal, refused in 1975.
 - Erection of a residential school building, approved in 1987.
 - Erection of a security fence on boundary walls, approved in 1988 & 1989.
 - A proposal for 32 dwellings, submitted in 2010 but never determined.
 - There were two applications to determine whether use of the Dickens Building (the Gate Lodge) as a dwelling is lawful from a planning perspective (one in 2023 one in 2024). These were both refused.
 - HS/FA/10/00207- Restoration and conversion of the gothic building, gate lodge, priory and former convent building to residential comprising 32 dwellings and associated parking areas. Demolition of 20th century buildings, former laundry building and part of listed former convent building (south wing), arcade building to east of gothic building, east wing to convent building, prefabricated and converted classrooms, and club house. Development of 135 new dwellings comprising 70 houses and 65 apartments with associated parking areas. Restoration of the chapel. External works and landscaping and creation of a new access. Application undetermined.
 - Listed building consent application HS/LB/10/00206 and conservation area consent application HS/CA/10/00301. Application undetermined.

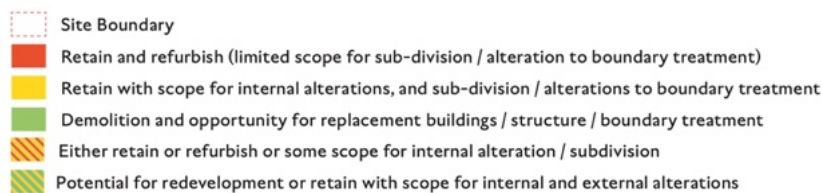


Historic site photograph / illustration of the terraced convent gardens 1861. Ref: Society of the Holy Child Jesus Archive.

- 3.25. As part of the evidence based site analysis, a RAG (red, amber and green) assessment was carried out in order to identify the significance of the varying historic buildings and landscape. This is used to inform future development opportunities.



Site analysis – Heritage significance RAG rating plan. Ref: Litchfields Planning Consultants



Site analysis – Heritage assessment. Ref: Litchfields Planning Consultants



Surrounding context

- 3.26. St. Leonards was initially developed from 1828 onwards by James Burton and his sons, including the architect Decimus Burton, as an exclusive seaside spa resort for the wealthy. James Burton acquired 10.1 hectares of land, including one kilometre of seafront, from the executors of Charles Eversfield. The Burton estate was largely completed by the 1850s.
- 3.27. From the 1850s onwards, areas to the east and north of the Burton estate, largely associated with the Eversfield Estate, were developed speculatively. Land and building licences from the Eversfield Estate were sold after Charles Eversfield's death. This period saw the construction of stuccoed terraces, particularly in the grid of streets bounded by Edward Road, Church Road, and Magdalen Road, now part of the Magdalen Road Conservation Area. This marked the first extensive development outside the Burton estate.
- 3.28. The main shopping streets, London Road and Kings Road, were established in the late 1850s and 1860s, contributing to the transformation of St. Leonards from an exclusive spa resort to a thriving town. By around 1914, the town's development was largely complete. The surrounding streets are predominantly characterised by Regency and early Victorian seaside terraces, typical of St. Leonards and Hastings seafront architecture.
- 3.29. The predominant style of the surrounding streets is formed largely of Regency / early Victorian seaside terrace style that characterises much of St Leonards and Hastings seafront.
- 3.30. Typical features include:
- Stucco (plastered) facades, painted light colours.
 - Symmetrical sash windows with classical surrounds.
 - Balconies with cast-iron balustrades.
 - String courses and cornices dividing the floors.
 - Rusticated ground floor (stonework effect on the lower level).
 - A sense of grandeur and uniformity, designed for fashionable seaside living.
- 3.31. This style was very much influenced by the Burtons' Regency planning of St Leonards in the 1820s–30s, and then continued into the Victorian Italianate style, which explains the added decoration (like window pediments and quoins on the corners).
- 3.32. To the north of the site Arts and Crafts / Edwardian suburban domestic architecture (c.1890s–1910s) is found, as seen a lot in the residential parts of St Leonards and Hastings beyond the seafront.
- 3.33. Typical features include:
- Red brick construction (not stucco, unlike the seafront).
 - Steeply pitched tiled roof with complex, asymmetrical shapes.
 - Large prominent gable facing the street.
 - Casement windows with small panes, including a big round-headed/arched window (a typical Arts and Crafts flourish).

- Chimneys integrated into the design, giving a solid, homely look.
- Use of natural materials (brick, tile, stone).
- Slate roofs.

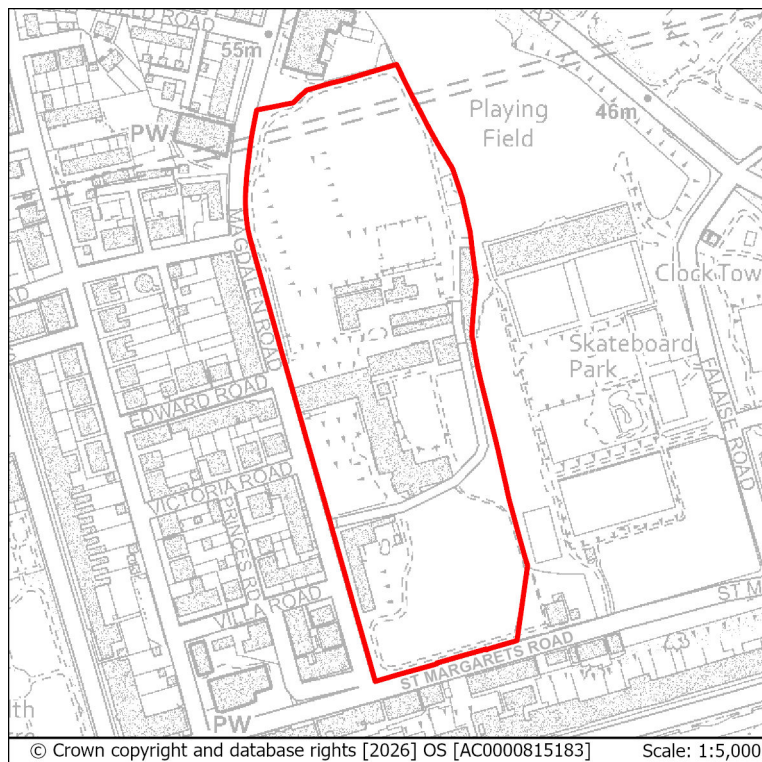


Site analysis - Surrounding residential architectural character analysis. Ref: Haworth Tompkins Site Photographs, 2025

4. Planning Policy Context

This annex carefully considered the relevant national and local planning policies as set out below, as well as taking account of wider objectives in relation to sustainable development, environmental protection, economic growth and community well-being. By integrating these priorities within the guidance, the annex seeks to support a high-quality development that responds positively to its context.

- 4.1. Planning Policy; Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan “unless material considerations indicate otherwise”. Sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard and attention to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting and of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 4.2. The statutory development plan comprises the:
 - The Hastings Local Plan
 - Waste and Minerals Plan (2013)
 - Waste and Minerals Sites Plan (2017)
 - Waste and Minerals Local Plan Review Revised Policies (2024).
- 4.3. The relevant Local Plan Policies that will need to be addressed include: Former Convent of Holy Child Jesus (Policy HS25), Heritage (Policies SP7, SC5, SC6 and SC7), Green and Blue infrastructure, biodiversity, trees and open space (Policies SP8, SC10, SC11, SC12, SC13 and SC14, Ground Behaviour and Stability (Policy SC15).
- 4.4. The site provides an opportunity for sensitive residential and mixed-use development: Residential development should be designed in accordance with the policies of this Plan, including Policies SP2, SC1, SC2, SC3, ID1 and ID2, reflecting local housing mix, tenures, unit sizes, and affordable housing requirements. Opportunities exist for a range of dwelling types, including family housing and later living accommodation, designed to respond to the site’s topography and protect views, sightlines, and heritage settings. Parking, refuse, and cycle provision should comply with Development Plan standards, ensuring that design solutions do not compromise landscape quality or heritage significance.
- 4.5. The site should be considered in relation to Local Plan policies on visitor accommodation, employment, sustainable design, children’s play space, planning obligations and development contributions, including Policies SC1, SC2, SC3, E5, ID1 and ID2
- 4.6. Listed Building Consent would be required for works which would affect the character of the Grade II* Chapel to the Former Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, the Former Convent Building to the North West of Chapel at the Former Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, the Grade II listed Gate Lodge and Gateway to the Former Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, the Training College, Former Convent of the Holy Child Jesus, or any object or structure within the curtilage of the building which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948.



Site Analysis: Extract from Policies Map

- 4.7. The later additions to the Training College remain part of the listed building and Listed Building Consent would be required for works to these extensions if they affect the character of the listed building as a whole.

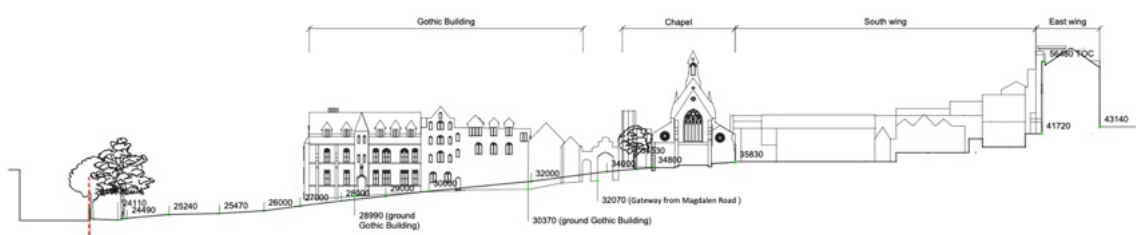
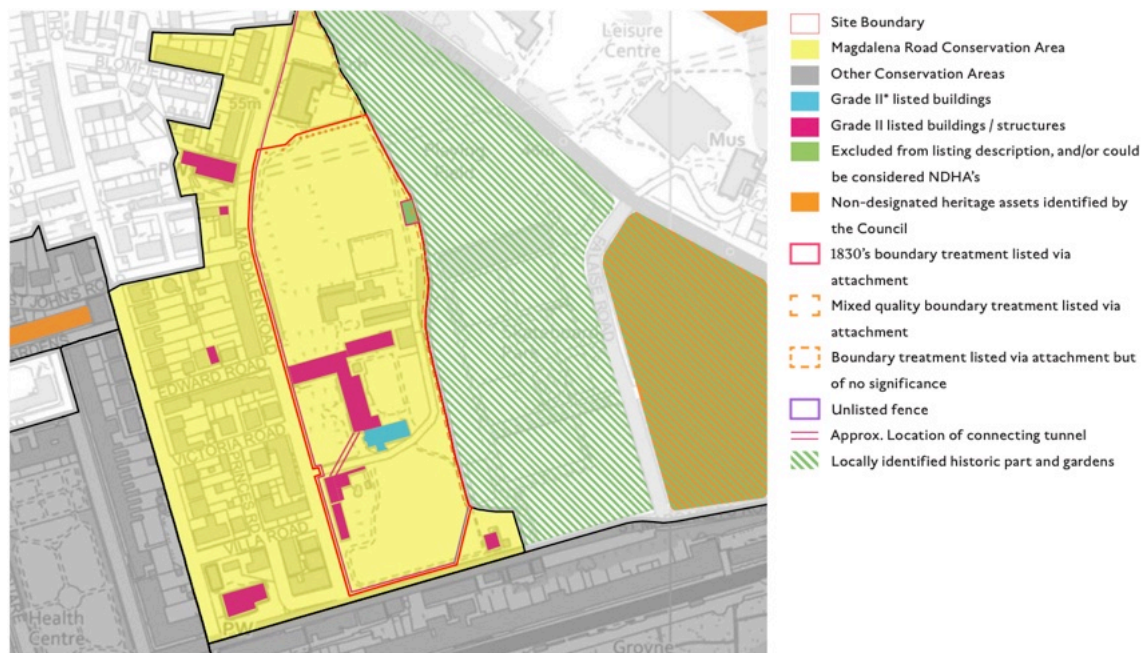
Key planning policy constraints and opportunities are set out below:

- 4.8
- The effect of development on the Private Open Space designated to the south of the site is a key constraint. Any reduction in size of this area will need to demonstrate that the nature of the open area has not been prejudiced in terms of heritage, visual, recreational, amenity or ecological value or equivalent open space is provided in the locality.
 - The visual effect of the proposal on the setting of listed buildings within and surrounding the site and on the character and appearance of the conservation area is a constraint.
 - Proposals should ensure the existing natural environment (trees, biodiversity, existing landscaping) should not be harmed or adequately mitigate, or compensate, for unavoidable damage and that the need for development outweighs the nature conservation interest.
 - The heritage designations (including listed buildings and conservation areas) and the need to give great weight to the preservation of designated heritage assets and their settings are a key constraint.
 - Development will need to seek the restoration of, and secure the long-term future of, the listed buildings. It should seek to remove the Grade II* listed Pugin Chapel from the Heritage At Risk Register. Any heritage harm would need to be justified and outweighed by public benefits

- Demolition of buildings which contribute positively to a conservation area will need to be justified (including a structural report) and evidence of redundancy and marketing of the building will be required.
- Housing proposals will need to meet the adopted policy requirements in terms of mix of housing types, tenures, size of units, affordable housing requirements and general design, landscaping and car and cycle parking standards guidance.
- Any future planning application would need to be supported by a land stability assessment.

4.9. Redeveloping the Former Convent represents a strong strategic fit within Hastings' wider renaissance narrative, aligning regeneration needs with the statutory requirement to conserve the town's exceptional heritage. The Planning Policy Appraisal highlights that while the site is subject to significant policy constraints, most especially in relation to heritage, it also offers a major opportunity to deliver meaningful public benefits.

4.10. Sensitive redevelopment can secure the long-term future of the site's listed buildings, remove the Grade II* Pugin Chapel from the Heritage at Risk Register, and reinstate the integrity of a historically significant landscape. At the same time, new development can help meet identified housing needs, improve access to high-quality open space, enhance biodiversity, and contribute to wider placemaking ambitions. By balancing conservation with positive, plan-led change, the site can support Hastings' regeneration objectives while safeguarding the cultural, architectural, and environmental assets that define the character of the area.



5. Project Context - Current Site Conditions

The existing buildings are generally in a poor and deteriorating condition, reflecting prolonged periods of under use and limited maintenance. Defects to the external fabric and structural elements are evident, including areas of water ingress, material decay, and localised structural movement. Roof coverings, rainwater goods, and openings are compromised in places, increasing vulnerability to further deterioration. Without timely intervention, these issues present an ongoing risk to the integrity and heritage significance of the buildings, underscoring the need for comprehensive repair and stabilisation works as a priority.

- 5.1. As part of the evidence based analysis for the existing site, a comprehensive building condition survey was undertaken to assess the current state of the listed and historic buildings on the site. The building condition survey identified areas of fabric deterioration that pose a risk to the significance of the listed and historic buildings. Whilst the condition report supports a heritage led approach, it will require updating to support any development proposals brought forward to ensure that repair and restoration works are prioritised in accordance with national and local heritage policy.
- 5.2. The survey established the condition of the buildings' fabric and structural elements in order to inform an outline scope of repair and restoration works. The findings provided an evidence base to understand the scale and nature of interventions required to secure, conserve, and restore the heritage assets.
- 5.3. The survey focused on the external and structural fabric of the buildings, including roofs, walls, windows, doors, chimneys, and other significant architectural features. Particular attention was given to areas vulnerable to deterioration, such as water ingress, material decay, and structural movement, which are commonly associated with mid-19th and early-20th-century historic buildings. The assessment identified priority areas for repair, highlighted risks to the integrity and significance of the heritage assets, and established a framework for a phased and managed approach to restoration.
- 5.4. The survey did not extend to internal fit-out works, building services, or alterations required to facilitate new or alternative uses. These matters are addressed separately within the development brief and subsequent design stages. A clear distinction is therefore drawn between essential fabric and structural repairs necessary to preserve the historic and architectural significance of the buildings, and future fit-out works associated with their adaptation for contemporary use.
- 5.5. Overall, the condition survey provided a robust understanding of the existing buildings and their conservation needs at that point in time. It supports a heritage led approach to future development, ensuring that repair and restoration works respond appropriately to the historic character of the site while enabling its long-term sustainability and reuse. Given the identified condition of the buildings, this annex supports a phased approach to repair and reuse, with early works focused on weatherproofing and structural stabilisation.



Site Photograph - Deconsecrated former chapel, Grade II* listed.
Ref: Historic England, DP528359, 2025.



Site Photograph - 'New Building' a Pre-1948 curtilage listed building prior to the fire in July 2026.

Ref: Historic England, DP528390, 2025.

6. Guiding Principles for Development

Any future development of the site should be shaped by five interrelated guiding themes: adaptive reuse, a landscape-led approach, public benefit, improved site connectivity, and sensitive redevelopment. Together, these principles will ensure that change is managed in a coherent, sustainable, and heritage-led manner that responds positively to its setting within Hastings.

- 6.1. This annex sets out the guiding principles for the site through a masterplan, translating high-level planning policies into a clear spatial framework that demonstrates how development could be arranged, designed, and delivered while respecting the site's heritage and landscape significance. The guiding principles have been developed using a landscape-led approach, with the site divided into three distinct character areas: the Southern Lawn, Central Area, and Northern Area. Each area offers a unique opportunity to respond positively to its immediate context, heritage assets, and relationship with the wider landscape. This approach ensures that future development is shaped by the site's spatial character, historic value, and environmental qualities, allowing proposals to be sensitively tailored to each area while contributing to a coherent and integrated overall vision.

Southern Lawn

- 6.2. The Southern Lawn presents an opportunity to create a high-quality, publicly accessible open space that serves as a central visual and social focus for the development. Through carefully considered building heights, massing, and layout, new development can be integrated sensitively within the landscape and its historic setting. Particular regard will be given to the Grade II listed Priory Building, ensuring that its architectural character and prominence within key views are preserved and enhanced. Strategically placed gaps in built form and the retention of the Grade II listed wall can provide connections to St Margaret's Road while safeguarding important vistas towards the Priory Building to the southeast and the gable of the Grade II* listed Chapel. Key approach routes, including the historic Gate Lodge entrance, offer further opportunities to enhance wayfinding, reinforce legibility, and celebrate the site's heritage significance.

Central Area

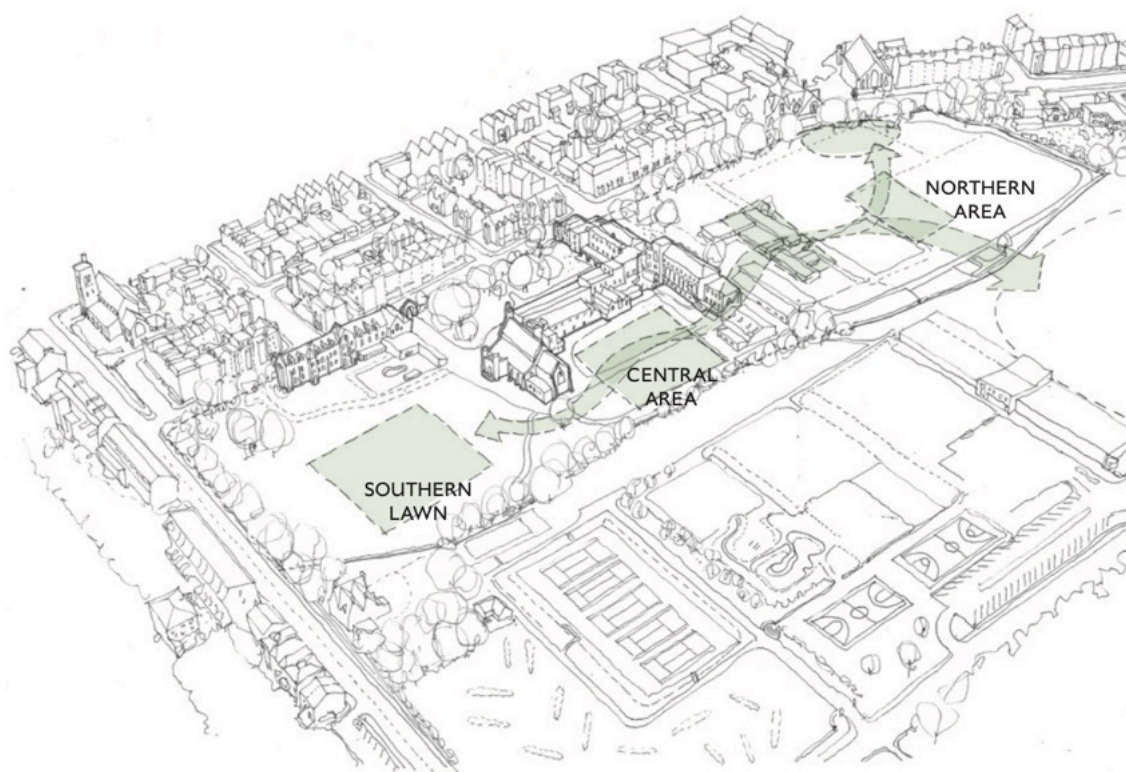
- 6.3. The Central Area provides an opportunity to respond to the historic cloistered pattern of development, reflecting the site's incremental and layered evolution. The restoration and reuse of the Grade II* listed Chapel is a central component of the development strategy, enhancing public access to, and understanding of, the site's heritage significance. The Chapel is proposed to be refurbished and repurposed as a community and cultural venue, capable of accommodating performances, exhibitions, heritage interpretation, educational activities, artisans village, and related events.
- 6.4. The retention, restoration, and adaptive reuse of the former convent buildings, including the East and Southern Wings connecting to the Chapel, present a significant opportunity to conserve and reintegrate key elements of the historic built fabric into the future use of the site. Through sensitive refurbishment, deep retrofit, and appropriate adaptation, these

interconnected wings could continue to contribute to the spatial coherence and architectural integrity of the former cloister arrangement.

- 6.5. The retention of the West Garden ensures the preservation of landscape character and spatial structure, maintaining the site's historic setting while providing a high-quality, generous, and accessible outdoor environment. The East Gardens provide an opportunity to accommodate a series of residential buildings that define and contain the garden edge while maintaining appropriate separation distances. This arrangement should safeguard views of the Chapel's eastern gable and maintain visual connections to key heritage assets.

Northern Area

- 6.6. The Northern Area presents an opportunity to deliver a cluster of low-rise residential dwellings arranged around shared landscaped spaces, in accordance with the Development Brief and Local Plan policies. The layout should prioritise pedestrian movement and permeability, minimising the visual and functional dominance of vehicles within the public realm. This area offers an opportunity to introduce contemporary homes organised around communal gardens. The scale and grain should reflect the character of residential streets to the west of Magdalen Road, establishing a distinctive yet contextual identity. The arrangement should promote social interaction, community cohesion, and long-term residential amenity.



Guiding principles of development - Three distinct but interconnected landscape areas, each designed to support a sustainable and regenerative approach to development.

Ref: Haworth Tompkins, 2025.

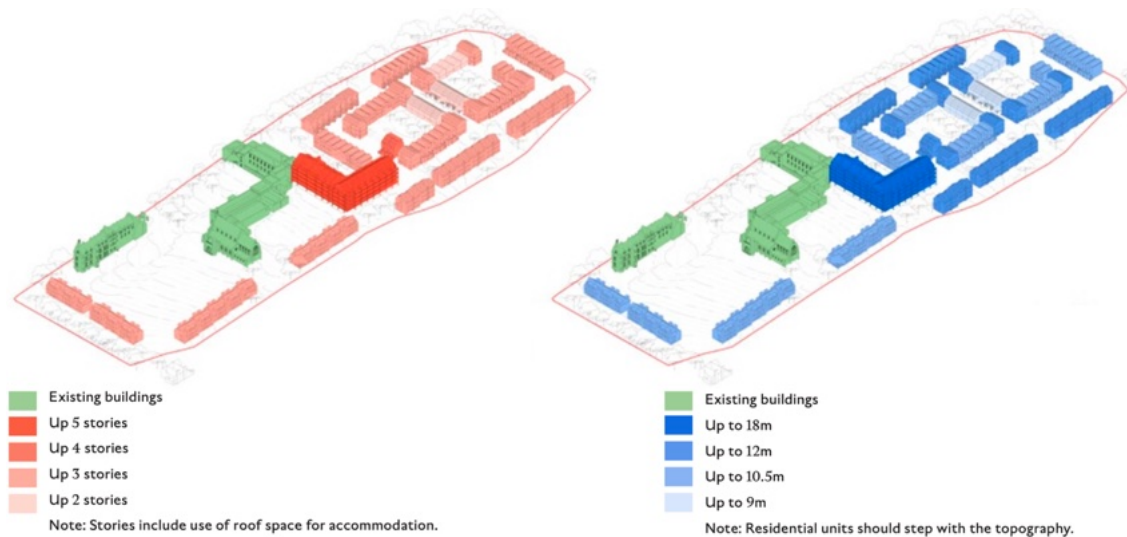
Options for New Uses within the Listed Buildings and Tenures Across the Site

- 6.7. The identified locations for new residential development offer suitable opportunities that can be accommodated without compromising the overall landscape structure or heritage setting. New buildings should be carefully sited, scaled, and designed to respond to the mature trees, historic sightlines and existing topography which steeply drops from the north of the site down to the southern lawn. Their form, materials, and massing should reinforce local character and ensure that new development is clearly legible as contemporary, while remaining sympathetic to the historic context.
- 6.8. The housing mix should support a balanced community, including homes for sale and potentially later living accommodation, promoting choice, flexibility, and long-term sustainability. Any viable residential development on the site should provide units ranging from one-bedroom, two-person homes to three-bedroom, five-person homes. Buildings should generally be 2–4 storeys, staggered to follow the topography and maximize sea and landscape views. Roofs should reflect the Victorian and Gothic Revival local vernacular with pitched forms and dormers. Setbacks between buildings should prevent overlooking, with layouts that may include shared garden clusters and integrated parking courts accessed from primary or secondary roads. Home Streets should run alongside developments, accommodating low- to medium-low-density parcels of 20–30 metres in width.



Guiding principles of development - New residential or later living development opportunities to the site perimeter, respecting the Grade II listed garden wall, with the majority of the development focused on the existing northern playing fields.

Ref: Haworth Tompkins, 2025.



Guiding principles of development - New residential development, building stories and heights appropriate to the existing heritage setting and topography. Ref: Haworth Tompkins, 2025.

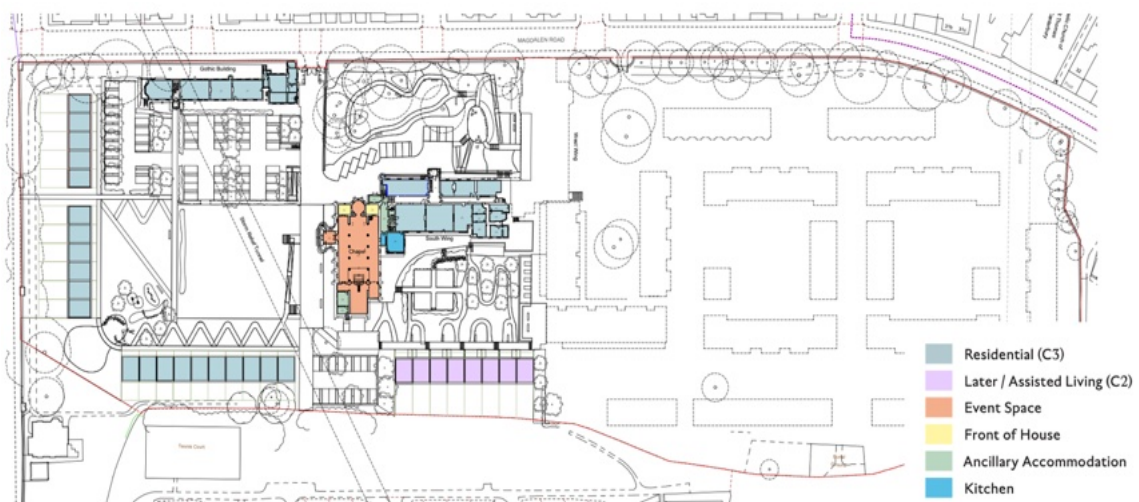
- 6.9. The restoration and reuse of the Chapel is a central element of the development strategy, offering a key opportunity to enhance public access to and appreciation of the site's heritage significance. Sensitive refurbishment and repurposing of the Chapel would provide an opportunity for the existing building to be used as a community and cultural venue, capable of hosting performances, exhibitions, heritage interpretation, educational activities, and related events. The adaptive reuse of the existing East and South Wings presents further opportunities to accommodate complementary community, educational, workspace, or ancillary uses, strengthening functional connections with the Chapel and supporting the long-term sustainability of the site. The potential inclusion of a café or refreshment facilities would support the venue's viability and encourage broader public engagement. Supporting spaces, including storage, catering, and servicing areas, are proposed within the connecting node to the South Wing, minimising intrusive alterations to the main Chapel space. Taking into account both the temporary and permanent condition of the site, proposals should follow conservation principles to retain and enhance significant architectural features, spatial qualities, and historic fittings, guided by detailed conservation management plans and consultation with relevant heritage stakeholders.
- 6.10. To meet the sites guiding principles future site proposals should demonstrate:
- A clear strategy for the sensitive reuse and repair of the listed buildings
 - A sustainable and viable reuse of the Chapel
 - Robust long-term maintenance and management arrangements
 - High-quality design including sustainable landscaping, appropriate biodiversity enhancements, incorporating existing trees and permeable landscape
 - Connectivity to surrounding neighbourhoods, greenspaces and local services, through new strategic openings within the existing perimeter walls
 - Sustainable construction methodologies
 - Compliance with parking, refuse and recycling strategies, compliance with the Local Plan

Southern Lawn

6.11. Guiding principles:

- Provision of private open space, green/blue infrastructure and urban greening on the southern lawn in accordance with Policies SP8, SC12 and SC134.

- Opportunities to create a more porous site layout and integrate sustainable landscape strategies
 - Adaptive reuse of the existing Grade II listed Training College (Gothic Building)
 - Retention of key views and visual connections to the Grade II listed Priory and the Grade II* listed Chapel
 - Residential massing should be informed by the heritage significance of existing buildings, remaining subordinate and respectful in height, scale, and form
- 6.12. Along the eastern boundary of the site, new residential development should respond positively to existing topography. Dwellings are to be arranged in a stepped and terraced form, enabling the built form to sit comfortably within the landscape. This approach ensures that building massing remains visually subordinate to the natural landform and supports a harmonious relationship between development and adjacent open spaces.
- 6.13. Dwellings within the southern area, located on the lower plateau, should be positioned to maintain uninterrupted views across the principal lawn. This arrangement reinforces the openness of the southern landscape and sustains visual connectivity between key areas of the site. At the south-eastern corner, building spacing and orientation should be carefully designed to protect important sightlines towards the Priory. These views should be retained from principal approach routes and publicly accessible viewpoints, in accordance with heritage and landscape policy objectives.
- 6.14. Car parking is to be primarily accommodated within the footprint of the existing swimming pool and associated ancillary structures, which are proposed for removal. The reuse of this previously developed area represents a sustainable and efficient use of land and enables existing site levels to be retained.
- 6.15. This location positions parking below the principal lawn, allowing natural changes in level and new landscape planting to provide effective visual screening. This approach minimises the visual and physical impact of vehicles on the character of the landscape and the setting of the listed buildings. Detailed design of parking areas should incorporate high-quality planting, appropriate surface materials, and sensitive boundary treatments. These elements should be used to soften the appearance of hardstanding, enhance biodiversity, and ensure that parking provision integrates seamlessly with the wider landscape framework, heritage context, and overall masterplan structure.



Southern Lawn - Site usage and landscape led strategy, ground floor. Ref: Haworth Tompkins, 2025.

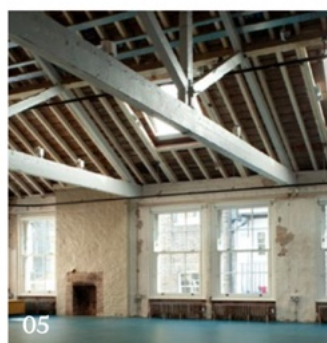
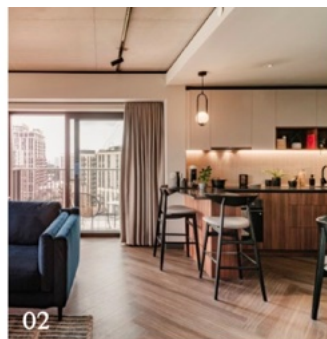


Architectural precedents - The development should adopt a sensitive, architectural style that reflects Hastings' historic character and coastal setting, with stepped and terraced forms that respond to topography, respect key views, and integrate harmoniously with the surrounding landscape and heritage assets. Ref: Left - Almenbolig+ (JAJA Architects), Centre - Lovedon Fields (BDP), Right - Tingbjerghusene (Vandkunsten Architects).

- 6.16. The proposed townhouses addressing the Southern Lawn offer an opportunity to create a compact, distinctive, and cohesive residential cluster that responds positively to the site's heritage setting and landscape framework. Development in this location should balance privacy, residential amenity, social interaction, and engagement with surrounding open spaces and heritage assets.
- 6.17. Dwellings should be designed with dual principal frontages addressing both the Southern Lawn and the listed boundary wall and its curtilage. This dual-aspect arrangement supports natural surveillance, encourages active frontages, and strengthens visual and physical connections with the wider site context.
- 6.18. Building height, massing, and roof form should respond sensitively to site topography and the scale of the adjacent Training College (Gothic Building). Stepped massing is encouraged to reduce visual impact and integrate new development with existing land levels. Principal elevations facing the Southern Lawn should incorporate articulated rooflines and chimney features to create visual interest and establish a coherent architectural identity, reflecting traditional almshouse typologies and reinforcing relationships with the historic roofscape.
- 6.19. Car parking should be accommodated within a discreet shared court to the rear of the dwellings, minimising visual intrusion and supporting a pedestrian-prioritised environment. Parking, servicing, and refuse storage should be integrated within the landscape framework and designed to avoid dominance within public spaces.
- 6.20. Overall, townhouse development should reinforce the landscape-led and heritage-sensitive principles of the masterplan, contributing positively to townscape quality, residential amenity, and long-term placemaking objectives.
- 6.21. The former Training College, with its elongated plan form and multiple stair cores, provides a flexible framework for conversion into high-quality residential accommodation. Its linear structure supports dual-aspect dwellings and a range of apartment sizes, enabling adaptability in residential mix and tenure.
- 6.22. The conversion strategy should retain and work with primary structural and architectural elements. Existing cross walls, chimney breasts, and load-bearing features should be preserved wherever possible, with new party walls aligned to established structural lines. This approach limits intrusive intervention, protects historic fabric, and maintains the building's original proportions and spatial hierarchy.
- 6.23. All alterations should follow conservation best practice and be informed by detailed heritage assessments. Interventions should be proportionate, reversible where feasible, and clearly legible as contemporary additions while remaining sympathetic to the building's character. By balancing conservation and adaptation, the proposals should secure the building's long-term future as a distinctive and desirable residential asset within the wider masterplan.



Adaptive reuse - Indicative residential layouts for the Grade II listed Training College (Gothic Building)
Ref: Haworth Tompkins, 2025.



Opportunity for deep retrofit within the existing training college, to create new residential accommodation / workspace and / or cafe.

Ref: 01 - Historic England, DP528339, 2025. 02-06 - Haworth Tompkins.

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Central Area

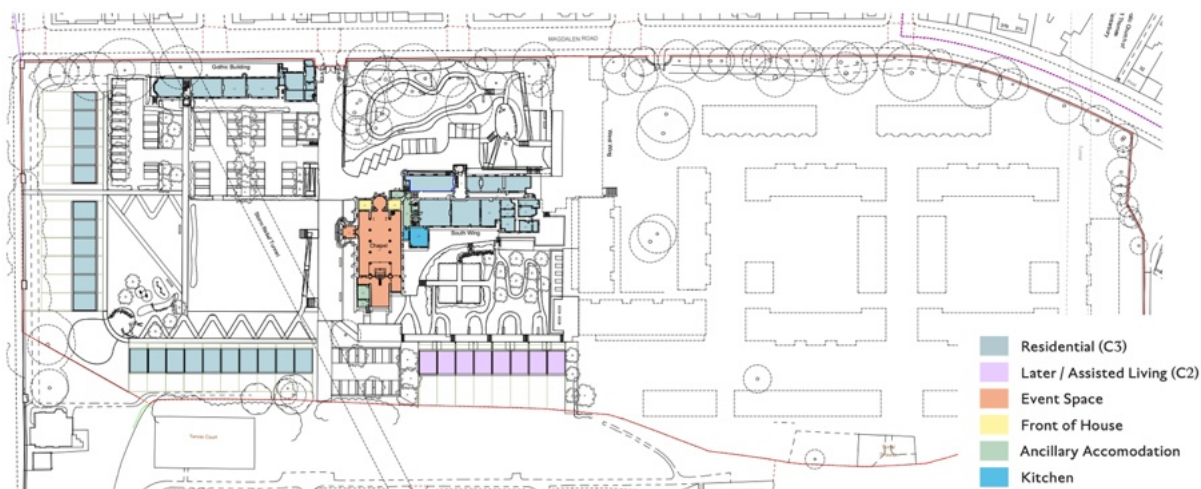
6.24. Guiding principles:

- Adaptive reuse of the existing Grade II* listed Former Chapel, East and South Wings, Heritage led approach
- Opportunities for community / event space within the heart of the site
- Retention of the eastern garden
- Opportunities to create a more porous site layout and integrate sustainable landscape strategies
- Retention of key views and visual connections to the Grade II* listed Chapel
- Residential massing should be informed by the heritage significance of existing buildings, remaining subordinate and respectful in height, scale, and form

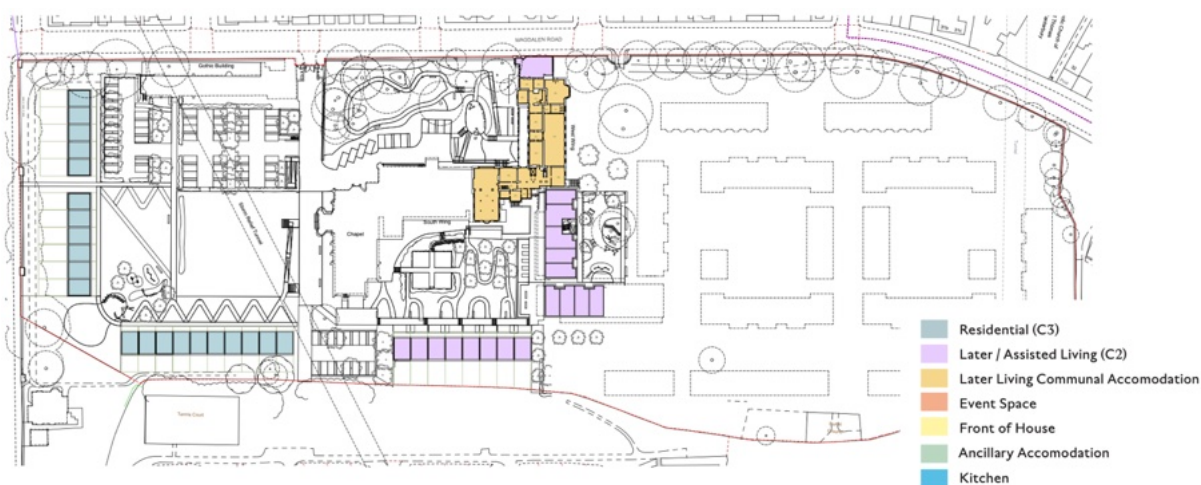
6.25. The Grade II* listed Chapel requires a viable and sustainable long-term use that secures its conservation, reinforces its architectural prominence, and strengthens its role within the landscape framework.

6.26. Any proposed use should be compatible with the building's significance, spatial qualities, and setting, and supported by a comprehensive conservation strategy. The preferred approach is for the Chapel to function as a community, cultural, or event space capable of accommodating a range of public and semi-public activities, subject to detailed design and operational considerations.

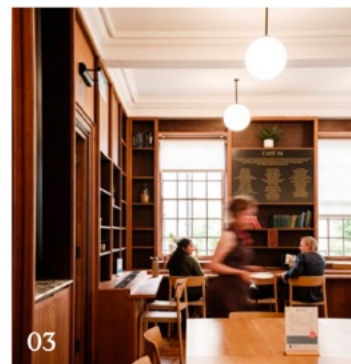
6.27. It is recognised that event-related uses are unlikely to accommodate all required parking within the site boundary in accordance with adopted standards. As a result, the masterplan discourages extensive surface-level parking, which would undermine landscape quality and the heritage setting.



Central Area - Site usage and landscape led strategy, ground floor. Ref: Haworth Tompkins, 2025.



Central Area - Site usage and landscape led strategy, upper ground floor. Ref: Haworth Tompkins, 2025.



Opportunity for deep retrofit within the East Wing, to provide new residential / later living ancillary communal accommodation. New residential accommodation reinstating the historic courtyard garden.

Ref: Left - Cornelia Connelly Digital Library Resource. Centre - Almshouse (Witherford Watson Mann Architects), Right - Pembroke College, Cambridge (Haworth Tompkins).

Options for New Uses for the Listed Buildings

- 6.28 Development proposals should explore the use of existing off site parking facilities, including those east of White Rock Gardens and the public car park accessed from St Margaret's Road. These facilities should form part of the overall access strategy and be supported by clear signage and effective management. Enhanced pedestrian routes along the southern and eastern boundaries should provide safe, convenient, and legible connections between on-site uses and off-site parking, reinforcing sustainable travel patterns and reducing reliance on private vehicles.
- 6.29. The eastern garden is proposed as an active, multifunctional landscape that supports community use, ecological enhancement, and visual amenity. It should form a key component of the site-wide green infrastructure network and contribute to environmental and placemaking objectives.
- 6.30. The retention and adaptive reuse of the existing South and East Wings presents an opportunity to provide supportive accommodation for cultural, later living, or residential developments, including flexible spaces for community, wellbeing, management, or ancillary uses that complement the surrounding landscape and built form.
- 6.31. A kitchen garden serving the adjacent public building will provide opportunities for education, food production, and community engagement. This will be complemented by orchard planting and meadow grasslands, strengthening biodiversity and ecological connectivity across the site.
- 6.32. Landscape design should respond sensitively to site topography, particularly in areas of steeper gradient. Residential development in this zone should be integrated with the landscape structure to create a layered environment that supports informal recreation, enhances visual interest, and improves the experience of the eastern edge of the masterplan.
- 6.33. The existing 'New Building' is proposed for demolition to enable the delivery of more efficient and higher-density residential development within established height parameters, improving overall site viability.
- 6.34. Replacement development should maximise functionality, accessibility, and accommodation quality, informed by detailed design studies. Efficient internal layouts will support improved space standards, flexibility, and high-quality living environments.
- 6.35. The new building arrangement should prioritise dual-aspect units where possible, allowing principal living spaces to face south and maximise daylight and sea views. This approach supports high-quality residential provision and enhances the character and setting of the site.
- 6.36. New development should be positioned to retain mature trees and existing landscape features wherever possible. In this instance, the proposed arrangement preserves two mature trees that define the centre of a shared landscaped courtyard.

- 6.37. This courtyard should function as a focal point for residents, providing a sheltered and attractive outdoor amenity space. It should support both informal recreation and social engagement, contribute to microclimatic comfort, and reinforce the landscape-led principles of the masterplan.
- 6.38. High-quality materials, planting, and management arrangements should be secured through detailed design and planning conditions, ensuring that shared spaces remain attractive, functional, and well-maintained over the long term.



Former Chapel - Opportunities for adaptive reuse, deep retrofit for event space, music hall, exhibition centre and community use.

Ref: 01 - Mercato Mayfair (Greig & Stephenson Architects). 02&03 - Battersea Arts Centre (Haworth Tompkins). 04 - St. Barnabas Jericho. 05 - LSO St. Luke's (Levitt Bernstein). 06 - Yinka Shonibare MBE at the Fitzrovia Chapel.

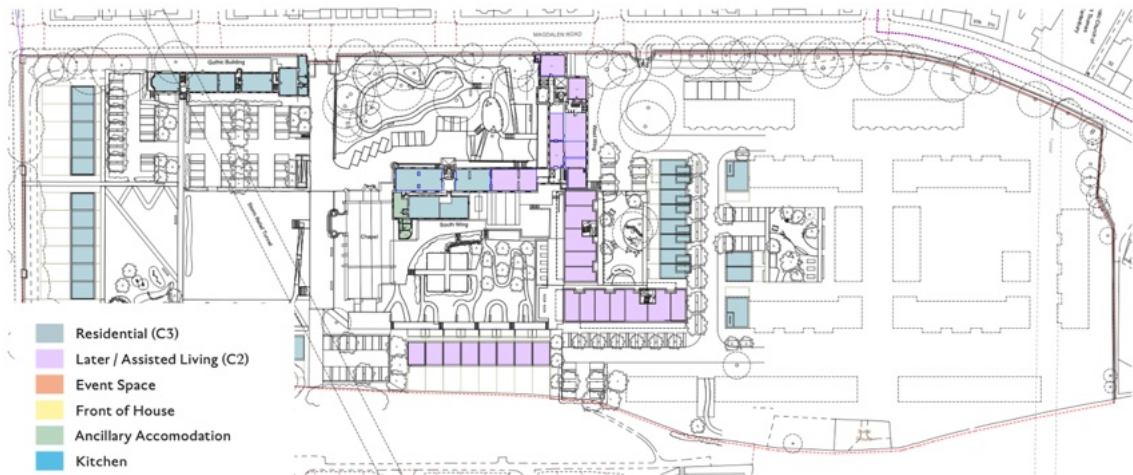
Northern Area

6.39. Guiding principles:

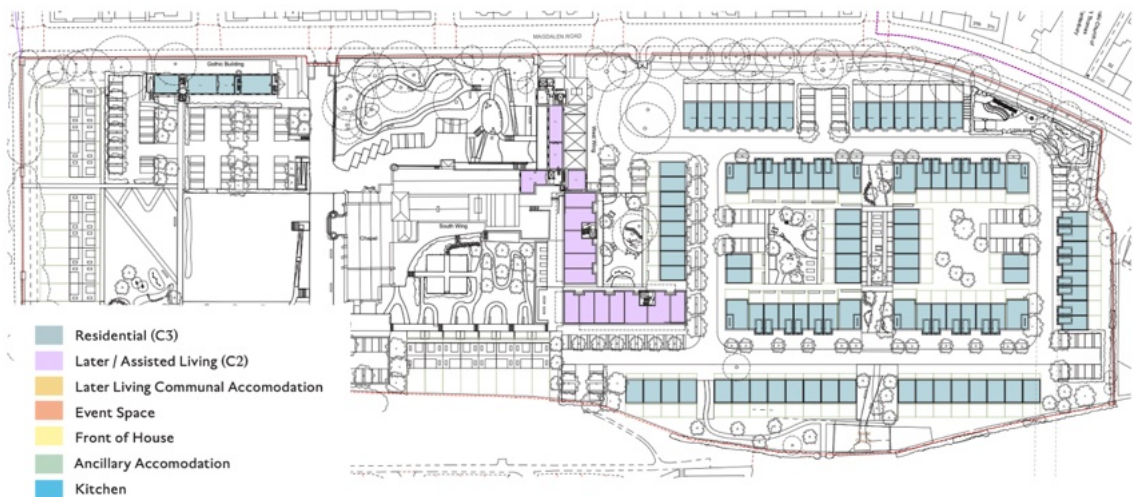
- A landscape-led approach incorporating shared gardens, community interaction spaces, and clustered parking provision
- A series of interlinked landscape courtyards to create connected and legible outdoor spaces;
- Retention of the former Nuns' Cemetery, integrated into a perimeter landscape route around the site
- Retention and protection of existing mature trees along the site boundaries
- Development massing informed by the scale and alignment of the existing railway tunnel in consultation with Network Rail
- Massing along Magdalen Road to reflect the local urban grain and respond to the adjacent listed building;

6.40. Proposed developments should adopt a spatial strategy that responds sensitively to the site's heritage context and delivers a high-quality residential environment in accordance with the principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, the National Design Guide, and Manual for Streets. The scheme should seek to promote sustainable development, high-quality placemaking, and the efficient use of land, while conserving and enhancing the historic environment, in line with national policy objectives.

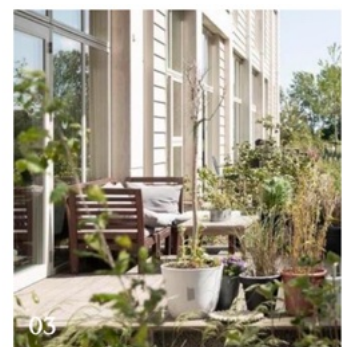
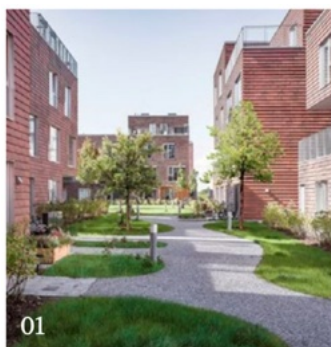
6.41. Conventional speculative housing layouts frequently prioritise vehicular access and plot efficiency, often resulting in repetitive cul-de-sac arrangements, extensive areas of hardstanding, and limited functional open space. Such approaches can restrict permeability, undermine residential amenity, and diminish the quality of the public realm through the dominance of vehicle infrastructure. These outcomes are inconsistent with national guidance promoting walkable, inclusive, and characterful neighbourhoods.



Northern Area - Site usage and landscape led strategy, ground floor. Ref: Haworth Tompkins, 2025.



Northern Area - Site usage and landscape led strategy, upper ground floor. Ref: Haworth Tompkins, 2025.



Residential development - Contemporary Townhouses and Terraced Housing Inspired by Local Vernacular.

Ref: Left - Almenbolig+ (JAJA Architects), Centre - South Gardens Townhouses (Maccleanor Lavington) and Right - The South Harbor of Køge (SLA Architects).



Site illustration - Northern development communal gardens and private landscaped entrances.
Ref: Haworth Tompkins, 2025.



Residential development - Contemporary Townhouses and Terraced Housing Inspired by Local Vernacular. Ref: 01&04 - Lovedon Fields (BDP). 02 - South Gardens Townhouses (Maccreanor Lavington). 03 - Cobham Bowers (Coffey Architects). 05&06 - Silchester Housing (Haworth Tompkins).

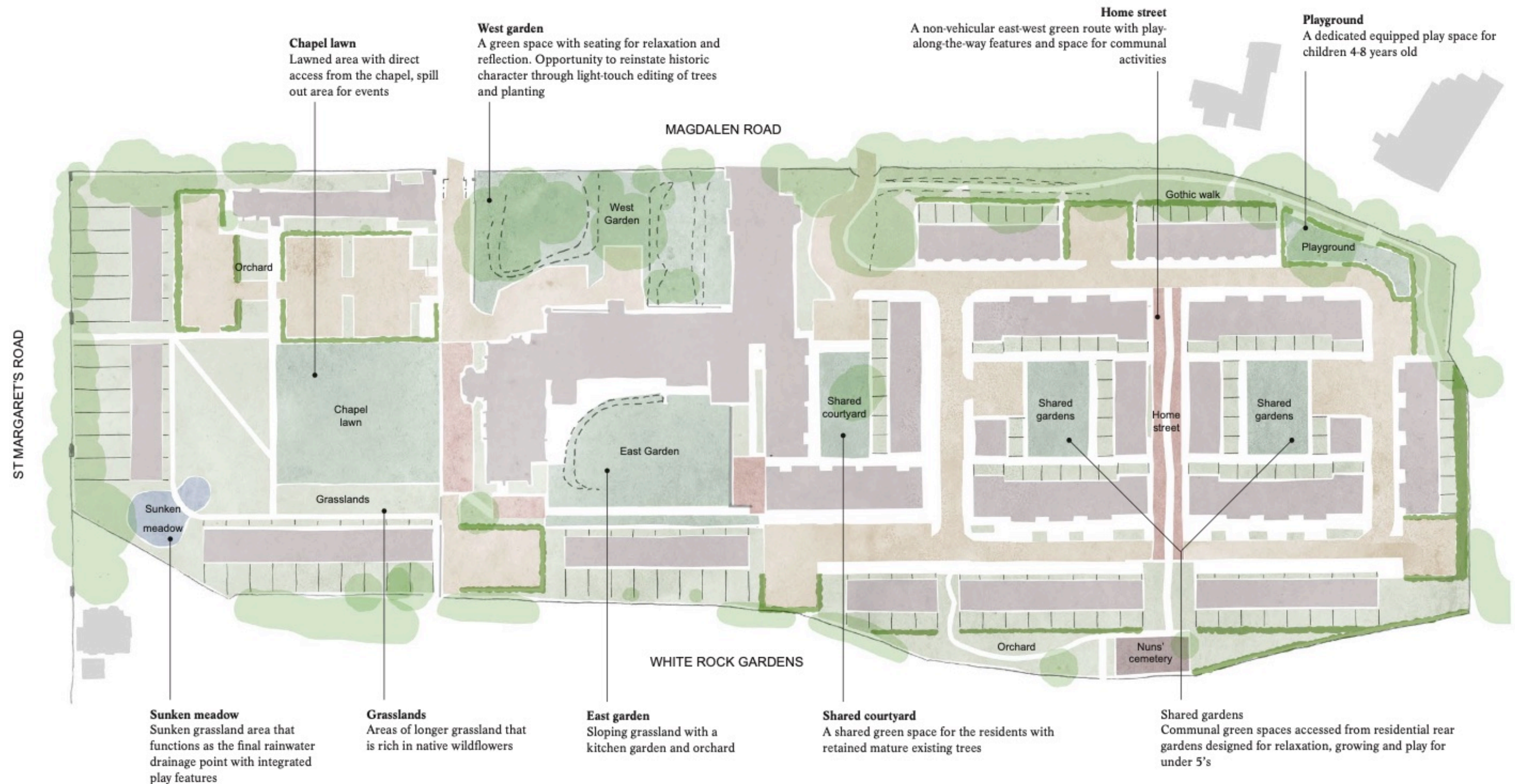
- 6.42. In contrast, the development should be guided by a clear set of design principles that reflect both national and local planning policy priorities, as outlined below. Opportunities exist to respect and reinforce the established character of the conservation area through careful consideration of building heights, massing, and orientations.
- 6.43. New development should respond sensitively to existing rooflines, spatial rhythms, and heritage assets, ensuring that built form complements the surrounding townscape. There is scope to limit vehicular access to essential points, reducing traffic movement within the site and minimising the visual and functional dominance of vehicles. This creates opportunities to establish safe, legible, and attractive internal routes that prioritise walking, cycling, and social interaction, in line with sustainable transport objectives.
- 6.44. Significant areas of the site offer potential for high-quality communal and private amenity spaces, including landscaped gardens, shared green areas, and informal recreational spaces. These can enhance residential wellbeing, social cohesion, biodiversity, and sustainable drainage, while supporting a positive microclimate.
- 6.45. Design approaches should also ensure practical deliverability and long-term viability. Plot arrangements and building typologies can be shaped to allow efficient construction using established methods, supporting cost-effectiveness without compromising design quality or contextual responsiveness.

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7. Landscape Strategy

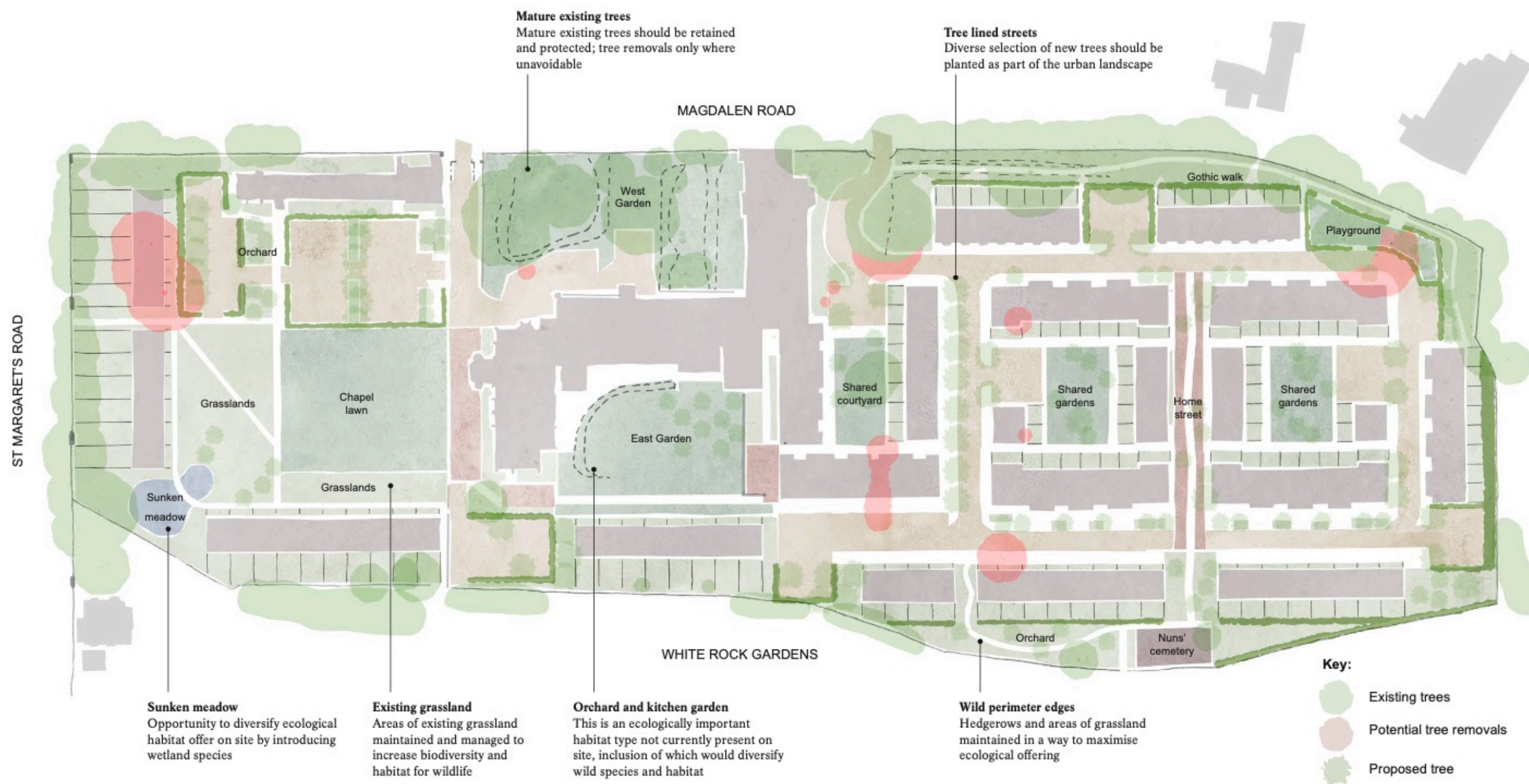
Green Space and Landscape Character

- 7.1. A landscape led approach to development of this site will ensure provision of well-located and carefully thought through series of green open spaces to benefit new residents, visitors and the local community. The typology of these green spaces will vary from newly established semi-private shared gardens to sensitively restored historic gardens that would become accessible to the public.



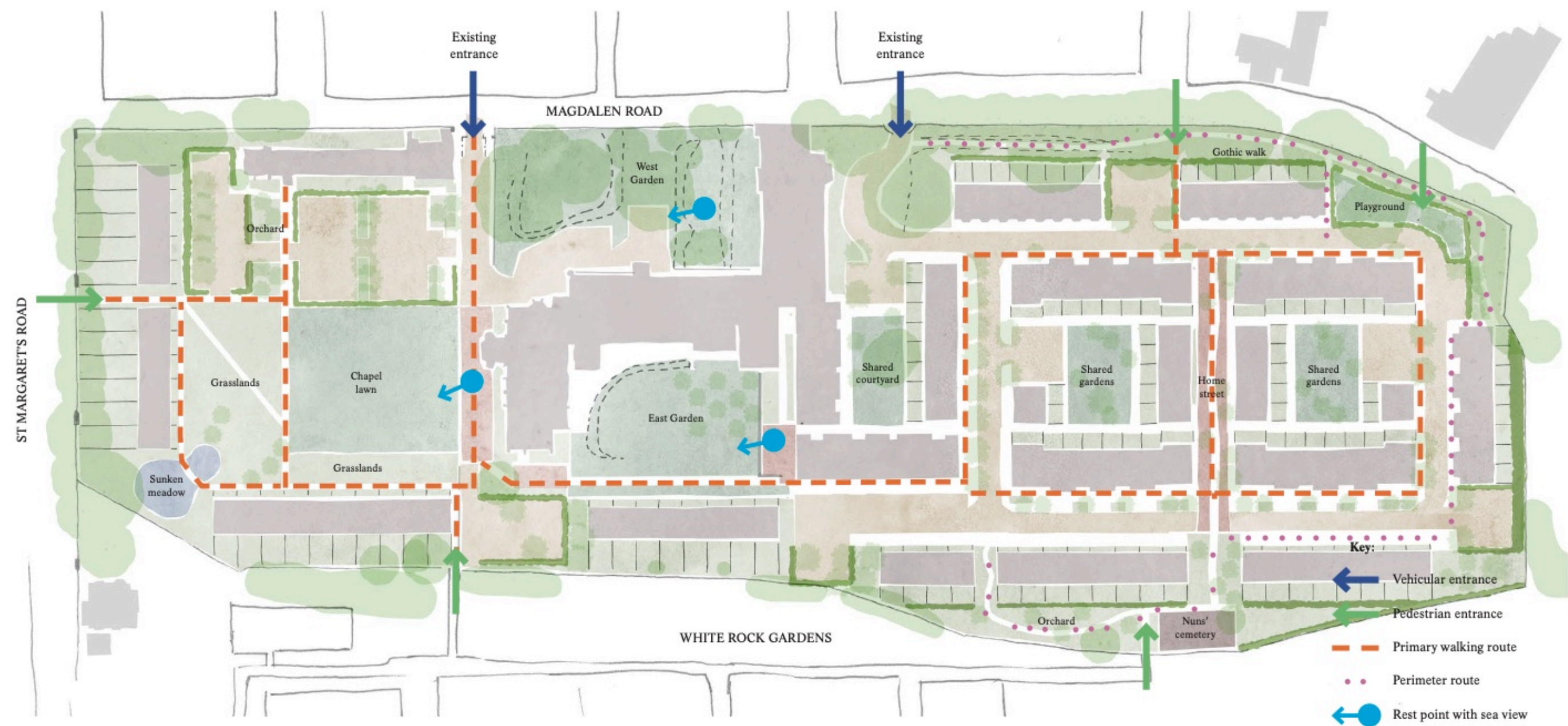
Trees and Ecology

- 7.2. Development of this site will need to ensure a mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG). As such the new green spaces should prioritise inclusion of ecologically beneficial habitat typologies to mitigate the loss of areas of existing grassland due to built form and infrastructure. There is a great number of mature existing trees which should be protected.



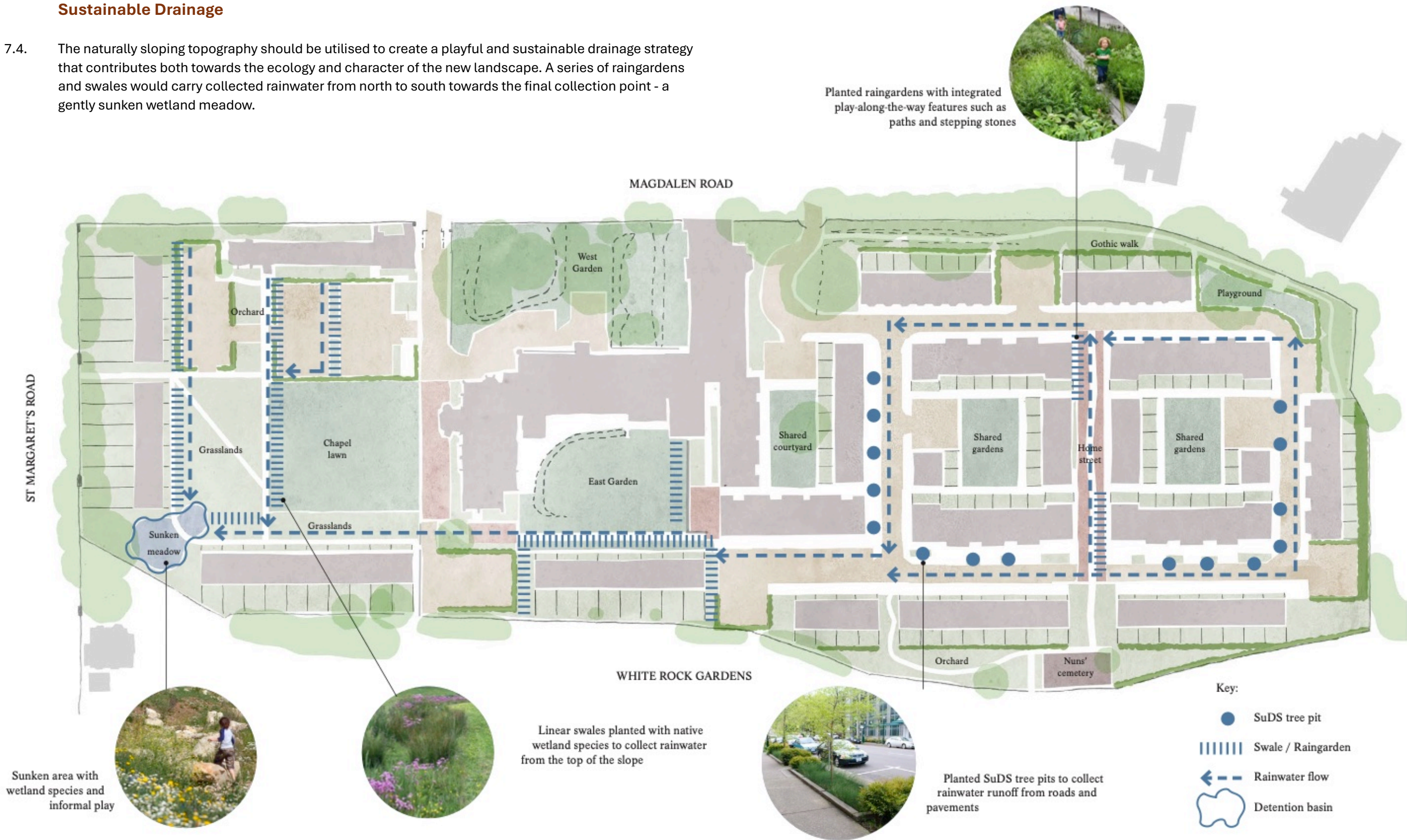
Access and Path Networks

7.3. A number of new access points would need to be created to facilitate pedestrian and vehicular movement and improve connections to nearby sites. Due the site’s natural topography it is key that walking routes are well thought out in order to accommodate a range of mobility levels. There are several points where existing sea views from within the site could become publicly accessible rest points.



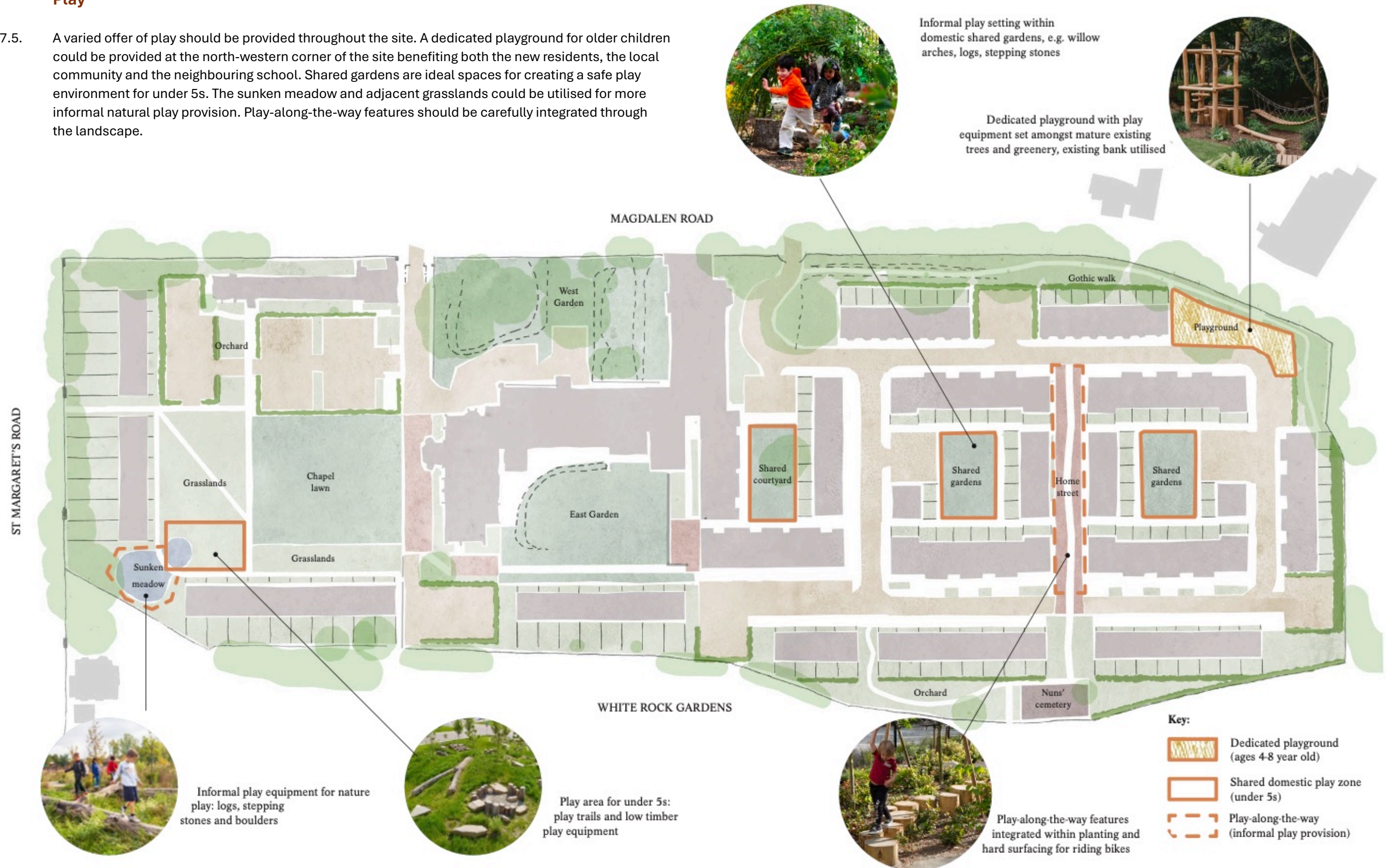
Sustainable Drainage

7.4. The naturally sloping topography should be utilised to create a playful and sustainable drainage strategy that contributes both towards the ecology and character of the new landscape. A series of raingardens and swales would carry collected rainwater from north to south towards the final collection point - a gently sunken wetland meadow.



Play

- 7.5. A varied offer of play should be provided throughout the site. A dedicated playground for older children could be provided at the north-western corner of the site benefiting both the new residents, the local community and the neighbouring school. Shared gardens are ideal spaces for creating a safe play environment for under 5s. The sunken meadow and adjacent grasslands could be utilised for more informal natural play provision. Play-along-the-way features should be carefully integrated through the landscape.



8. Summary

- 8.1. This masterplan and development brief establishes a comprehensive, heritage-led framework for the sensitive regeneration of the former convent site. The strategy is guided by a clear set of principles that balance conservation, landscape enhancement, and potential new development, ensuring that any future change responds positively to the site's topography, historic fabric, and wider context within the Magdalen Road Conservation Area. These principles are informed by an appraisal of site-specific constraints and opportunities.

Guiding Principles and Opportunities:

- 8.2. **Heritage-Led Development:** The site contains multiple designated heritage assets, including the Grade II* Pugin Chapel and the Grade II Training College (Gothic Building), all within the Magdalen Road Conservation Area. Guiding principles emphasise the retention, sensitive repair, and adaptive reuse of these assets, ensuring long-term viability. Opportunities exist to remove the Pugin Chapel from the Heritage at Risk Register through heritage and landscape-led interventions. Any interventions should preserve historic fabric, maintain architectural legibility, and enhance public appreciation of the site's heritage. Demolition or alteration of buildings contributing positively to the conservation area must be justified, including structural evidence and marketing for redundancy, in line with national and local heritage policies.
- 8.3. **Landscape-Led Approach and Ecological Enhancement:** The site's Southern Lawn, Eastern Garden, orchards, and meadowed grasslands offer opportunities for a coherent network of public, semi-private, and private spaces that reinforce biodiversity, sustainable drainage, and recreational use. Trees, hedgerows, and other existing landscape features are key assets. Guiding principles emphasise their protection, or where unavoidable impact occurs, suitable mitigation or compensation. Development should enhance visual and ecological links with the surrounding area, reinforcing the site as an accessible, outward-facing community asset.
- 8.4. **Public Benefit and Access:** Opportunities exist to enhance public access and appreciation of heritage assets, including the Chapel and associated gardens, consistent with national planning policy and conservation guidance. Public benefit considerations may include cultural, educational, recreational, and community uses, provided they respect heritage and landscape sensitivities.
- 8.5. **Connectivity and Integration:** The site should be connected to its surrounding neighbourhoods, key streets, and open spaces, enhancing permeability and promoting walking and cycling. Layout and design should minimise the visual and functional dominance of vehicles, aligning with sustainable transport objectives and local planning policy.
- 8.6. **Sensitive Residential and Mixed-Use Opportunities:** Residential development should be designed in accordance with the policies of this Plan, including Policies SP2, SC1, SC2, SC3, ID1 and ID2, reflecting local housing mix, tenures, unit sizes, and affordable housing requirements.

Opportunities exist for a range of dwelling types, including family housing and later living accommodation, designed to respond to the site's topography and protect views, sightlines, and heritage settings. Parking, refuse, and cycle provision should comply with Development Plan standards, ensuring that design solutions do not compromise landscape quality or heritage significance.

8.7. Development proposals will need to address the following plan policies:

- Former Convent of Holy Child Jesus (Policy HS25)
- Heritage (Policies SP7, SC5, SC6 and SC7)
- Green and blue infrastructure, biodiversity, trees and open space (Policies SP8, SC10, SC11, SC12, SC13 and SC14.
- Ground Behaviour and Stability (Policy SC15)
- The site should be considered in relation to Local Plan policies on visitor accommodation, employment, sustainable design, children's play space, planning obligations and development contributions, including Policies SC1, SC2, SC3, E5, ID1 and ID2.
- Sustainability and Long-Term Viability: Guiding principles emphasise sustainable construction methods, energy efficiency, and long-term management of landscape and heritage assets. Proposals should demonstrate that the need for development outweighs any unavoidable harm to ecological or heritage interests and that appropriate mitigation or compensation measures are in place.

More detailed planning policy considerations are set out in section 4.

8.8. Conclusion: This document, informed by guiding principles and opportunities provides a clear framework for the site's sensitive regeneration. It ensures that future change:

- Celebrates and safeguards heritage assets;
- Enhances landscape, biodiversity, and public amenity;
- Integrates sustainably with the surrounding townscape; and
- Delivers a balanced, inclusive, and resilient community

8.9. Collectively these principles align with local and national planning policies, conservation requirements, and the strategic vision for Hastings, providing a robust and adaptable framework for the site's future.