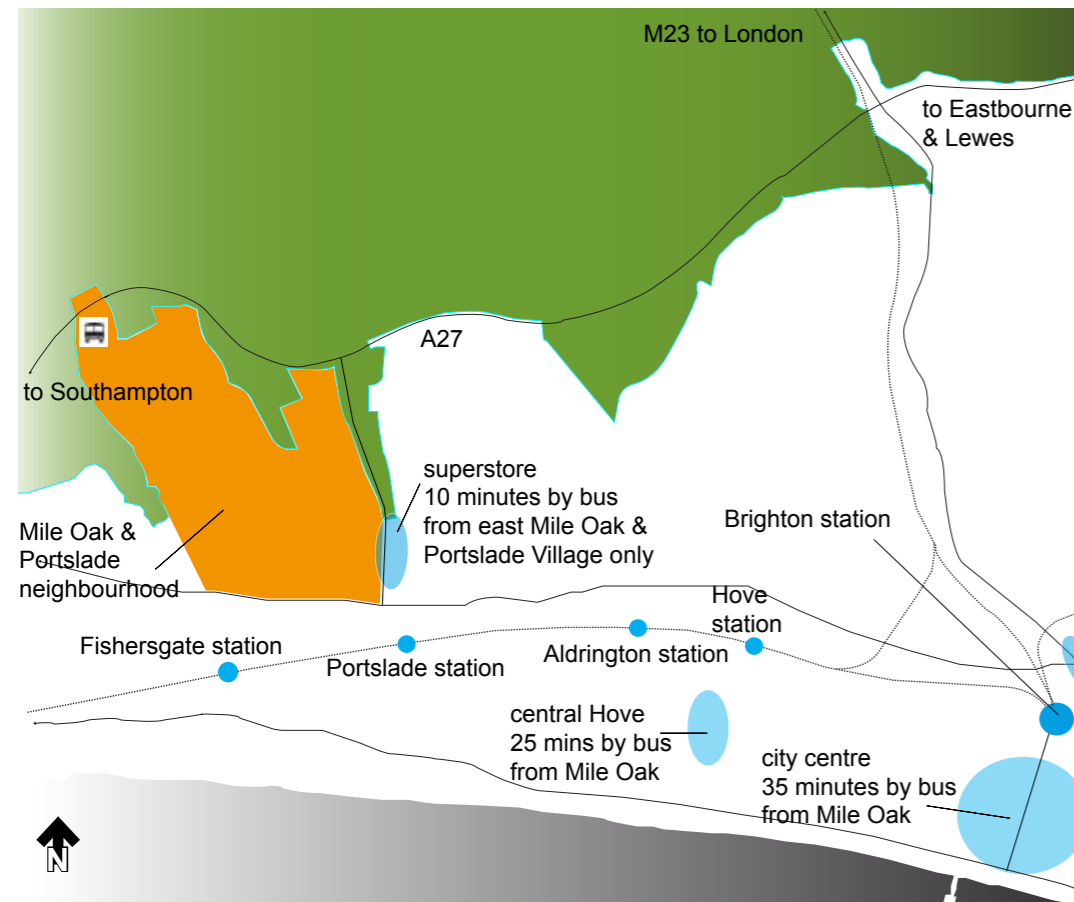# 13 mile oak & portslade village neighbourhood

context

key stages of historic development

Mile Oak & Portslade Village neighbourhood lies 6 km from Brighton and Hove city centre, north of the Old Shoreham Road sustainable transport corridor.

Mile Oak was originally an area of sheep down, corn and market gardens, with small groups of farm buildings. During the 1920s scattered suburban housing started to creep up the valley. Major changes came in the 1960s with the demolition of the Portslade-by-Sea dockside housing, and its replacement by local authority flats and houses, high on the South Downs, beyond Portslade village. This area had seen considerable further development of private housing, much of it in the form of bungalows.

The coming of the A27 Brighton & Hove by-pass in the 1990s blocked much of Mile Oak from access to the Downs. However this severance has limited suburban sprawl and more recent housing has been in the form of denser infill schemes. The most recent development has been to either side of a new road along the eastern edge of the neighbourhood.

Portslade Village, centred on the High Street and with its landmark church and former convent, retains many elements of the downland village it once was, with flint walls, some early manor house ruins, tree lined park and grounds. The village street runs east-west across the hollow, and the flint housing runs downhill from the church and manor. The present manor house has some twelfth century ruins in the gap between it and the church. In the early twentieth century the village area attracted incomers to build some fine villas. The slightly later collapse of land values resulted in the village being surrounded by less sympathetic buildings.
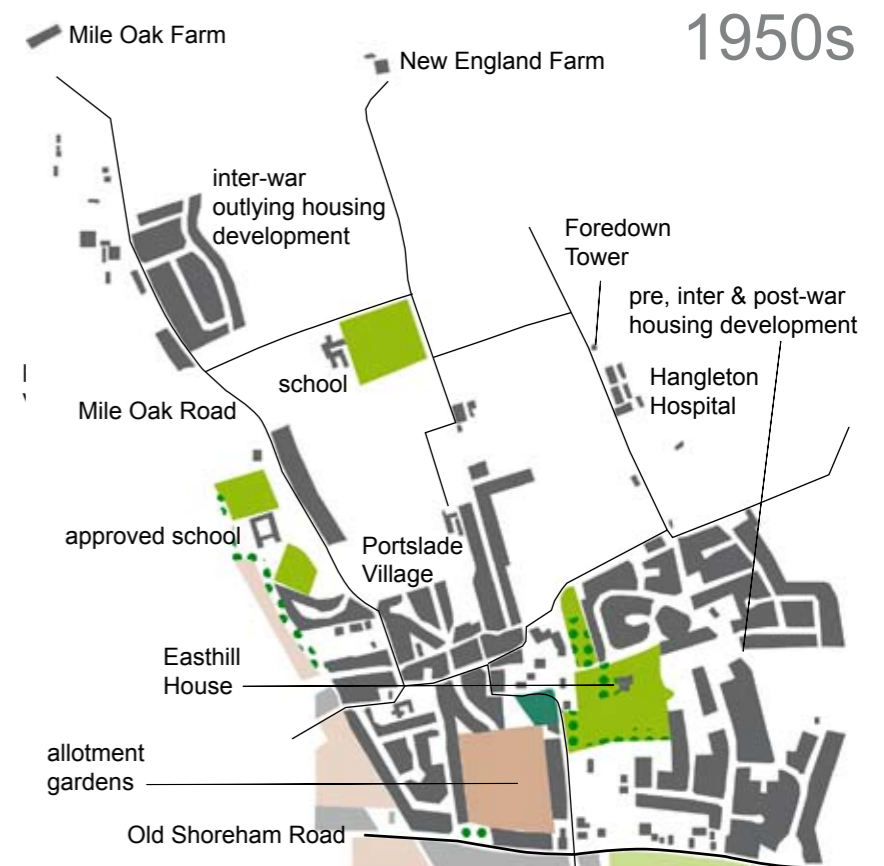

1897
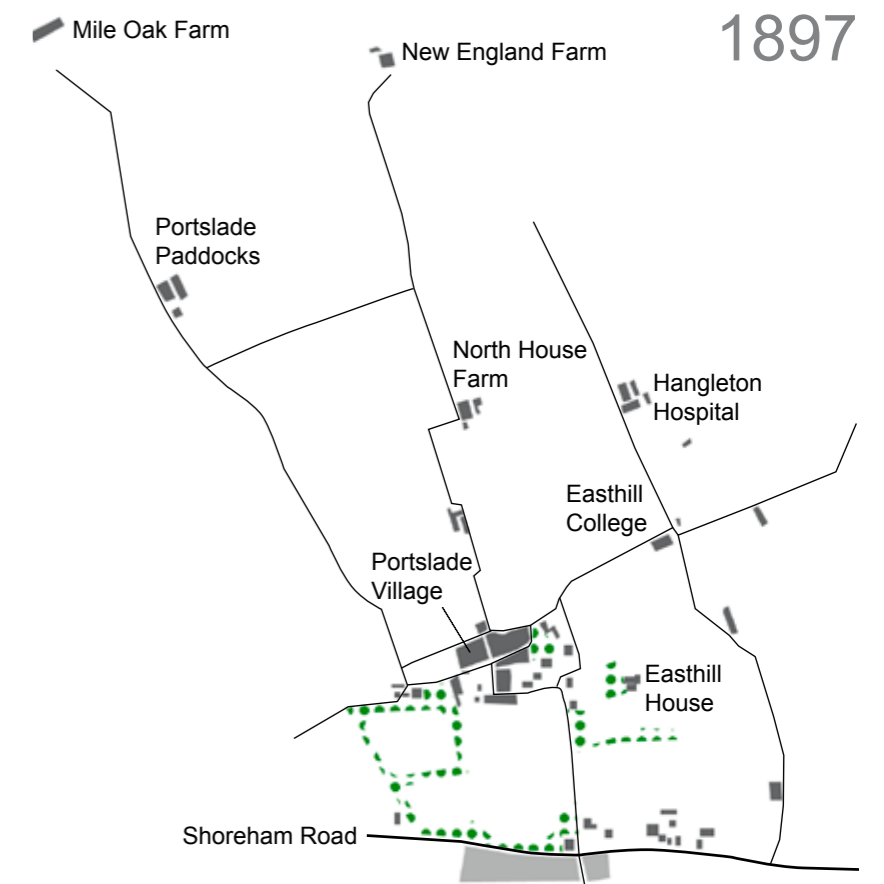
topography & microclimate

Portslade Village lies at the southern seaward-facing opening of a downland valley which rises gently, but steep-sidedly northwards through the developments of Mile Oak to the Downs. The most recent developments lie to the east of both the Village and Mile Oak, on and around a narrow south-sloping ridge with Mile Oak and Benfield valleys on either side. From this ridge, with its landmark Foredown Tower, may be experienced some of the most panoramic views of and around the neighbourhood.

The many street and parkside trees and relatively higher density of Portslade Village, along with its valley-bottom location and protection from the sea, afford it good shelter. Naturally, higher up the valley, in Mile Oak, exposure to wind is greater, though this is mostly experienced along the more gradual, less-protected slopes of the eastern side and the Foredown ridge. Perhaps not surprisingly, the relatively steep sides of the western side of the valley appear to offer considerable protection from prevailing south-westerly winds.
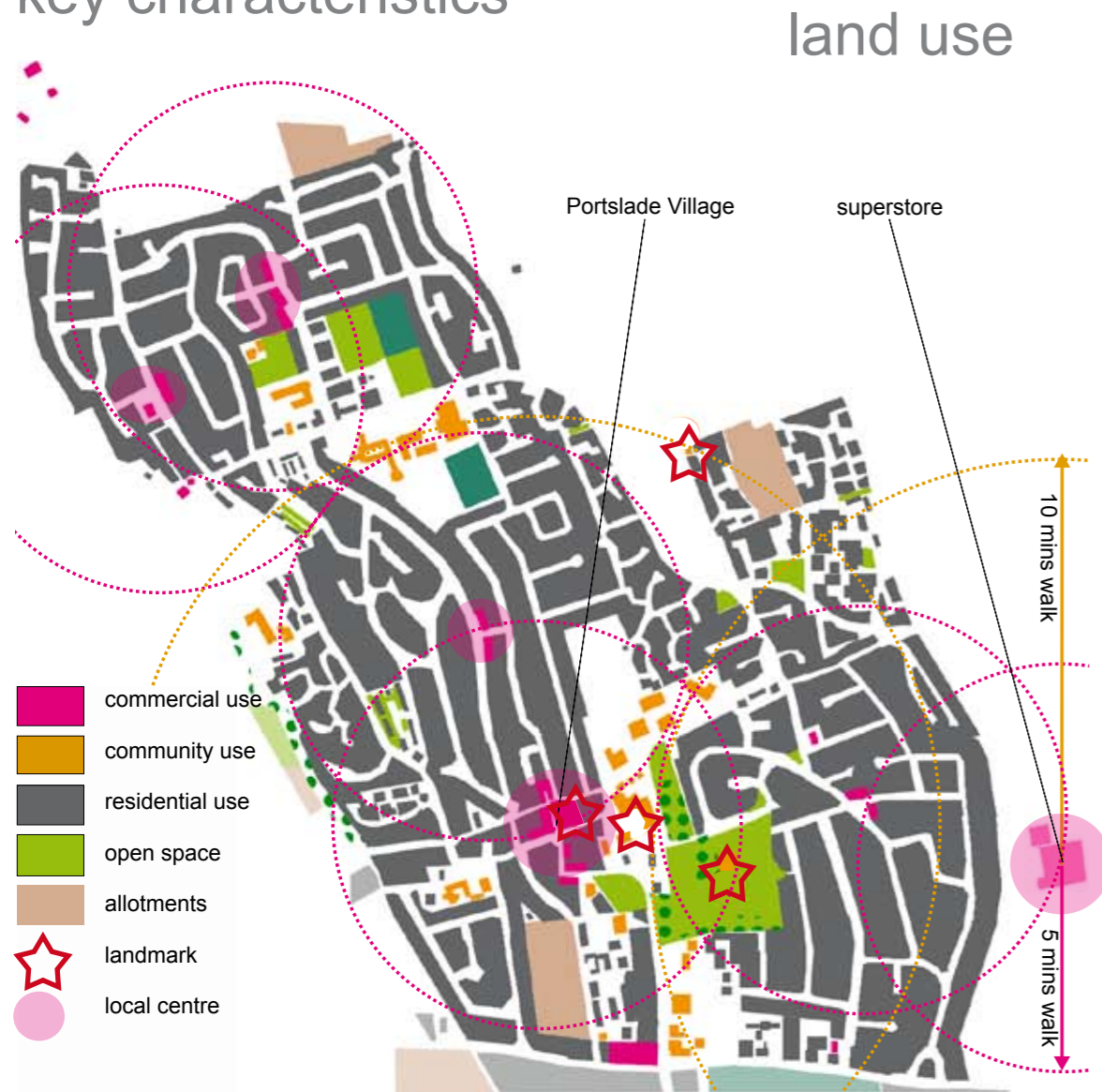
typology

Mile Oak & Portslade Village neighbourhood may be classified as suburban downland fringe with a 20th century residential suburb, part of which was planned and part of which has evolved over time, enveloping earlier villages and farmsteads. Low rise, low density houses arranged over a typical suburban layout. Weak architectural cohesion but cohesive public realm.

Refer to the introduction and summary for more information on landscape character types.

1950s

13 mile oak & portslade village

key characteristics

land use

Portslade Village

superstore

10 mins walk

5 mins walk

Legend:
- commercial use
- community use
- residential use
- open space
- allotments
- landmark
- local centre

movement

- green links to countryside
- main movement corridor
- secondary movement corridor
- poor pedestrian links
- severance
- potential gateway

Portslade Village dominated by old brewery

Flint school building, Portslade Village gateway

Portslade Village centre with shops

Shops & bus-stand, Mile Oak, view north to Downs

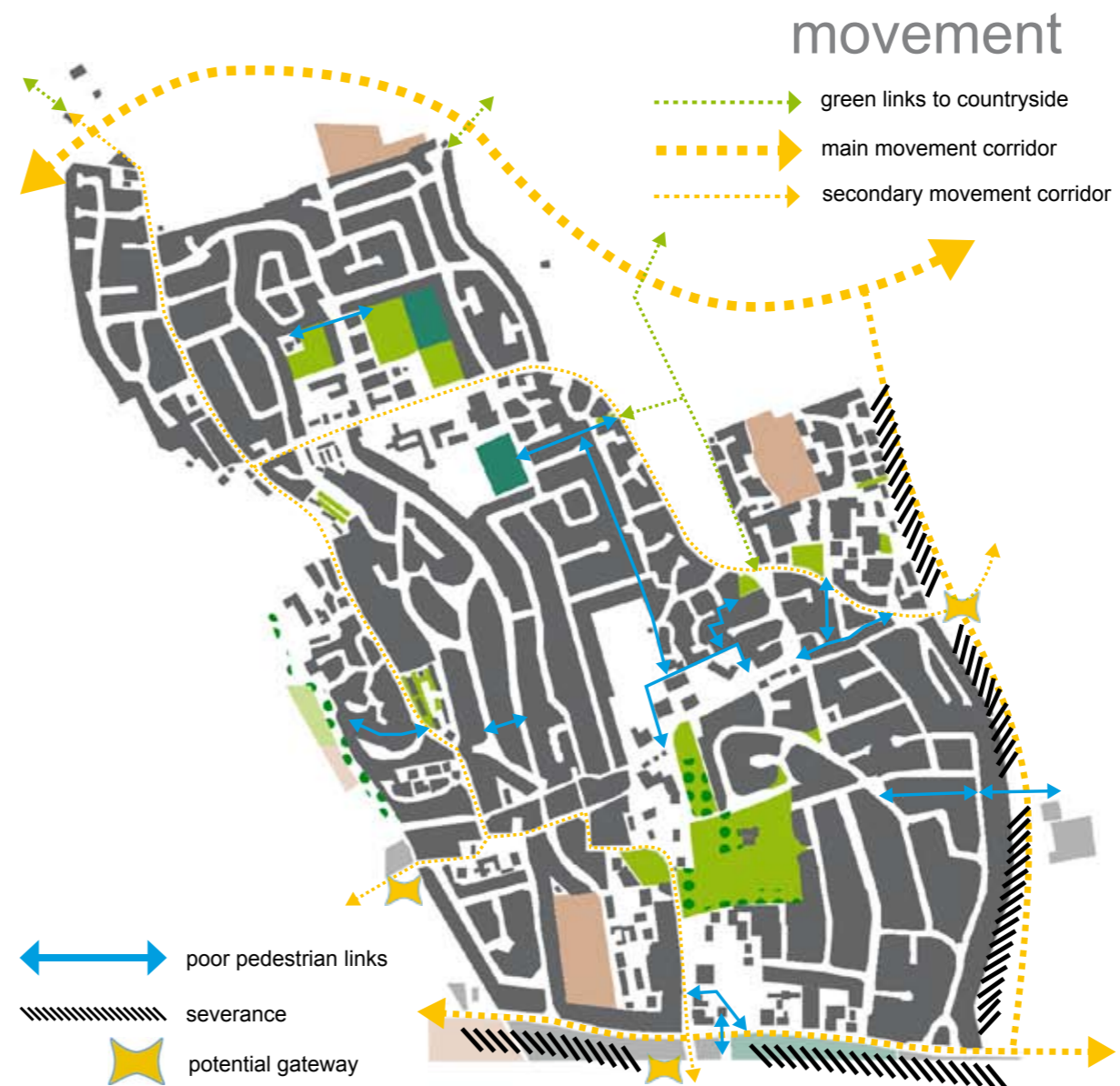Busy Old Shoreham Road with pedestrian subway

• **Land use**: The major land use is housing, with commercial and community uses on single use sites within the neighbourhood. The centre of Mile Oak, to the north, is dominated by low rise community uses, including a college and a leisure centre. Portslade Village, to the south, is dominated by the Victorian yellow brick former brewery, now a factory, with a finer grain of narrow streets and landmark historic buildings in their own grounds. There is a cluster of light industrial and small business uses.

• **Scale and density**: The neighbourhood features a mix of two storey terraced and semi-detached residential development with more semi-detached and detached bungalows to the north and a peppering of three and four storey linear flat blocks, resulting in a gross density of approximately 23 dwellings per hectare. There is some more recent town house and perimeter block infill and, to the east, two estates of mixed-types in cul-de-sac layouts with many small open spaces. Local services are strategically located throughout the neighbourhood affording reasonably comprehensive coverage to all but the more extreme northeastern parts of the newer developments. Most of the neighbourhood lies well outside of the 10 minute walking distance from the superstore.

• **Architecture**: Portslade Village is a varied historic core with buildings of different periods dating back to the 16th century but unified by traditional brick and flint elevations and boundary walls with steep clay-tiled roofs. There are landmark historic buildings such as the church and former brewery. The later architecture of the bulk of the neighbourhood is similarly varied but much less distinctive. Most of it is plain brick housing with pitched roofs interspersed with some simple flat roofed buildings. Portslade Old Village is a conservation area, including many listed buildings.

• **Movement**: The neighbourhood is located to the north of the Old Shoreham Road sustainable transport corridor and to the west of the by-pass link road with only one access point. Vehicular movement through the neighbourhood is facilitated via the main routes of Mile Oak Road from the south and the much more recent Fox Way, from the east, leading to the main cross-route of Chalky Road. Access into and through Portslade Village is intricate and poorly suited to large vehicles despite the industrial and commercial presence there. The car is the most popular mode of transport to access work though the percentage is not as high as that for more affluent outlying neighbourhoods (see appendix 2).

Heavy traffic and poor pedestrian crossings create severance along the Old Shoreham Road from Portslade-by-Sea. Likewise neighbouring Hangleton, to the east, is severed

13 mile oak & portslade village

open space
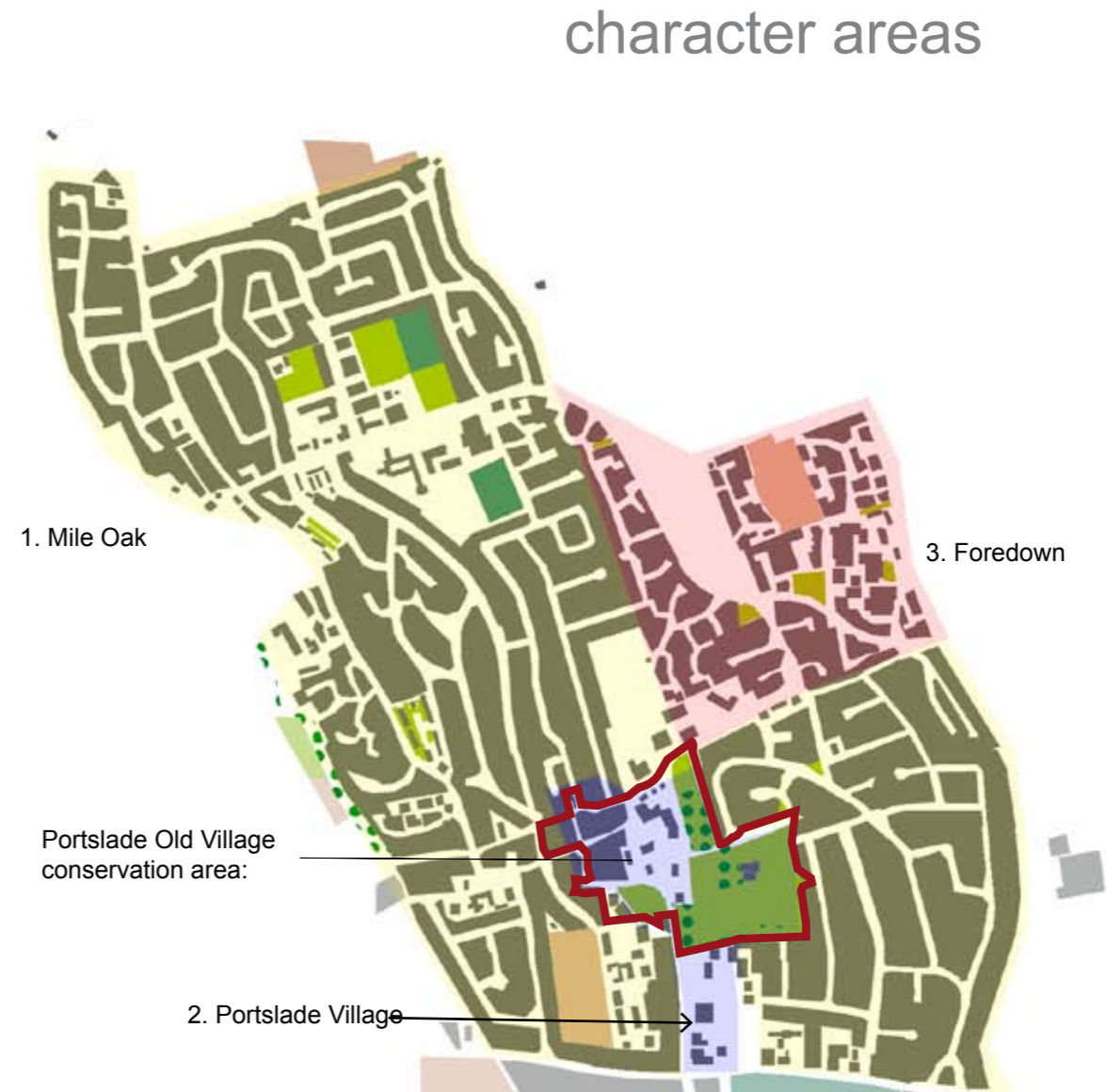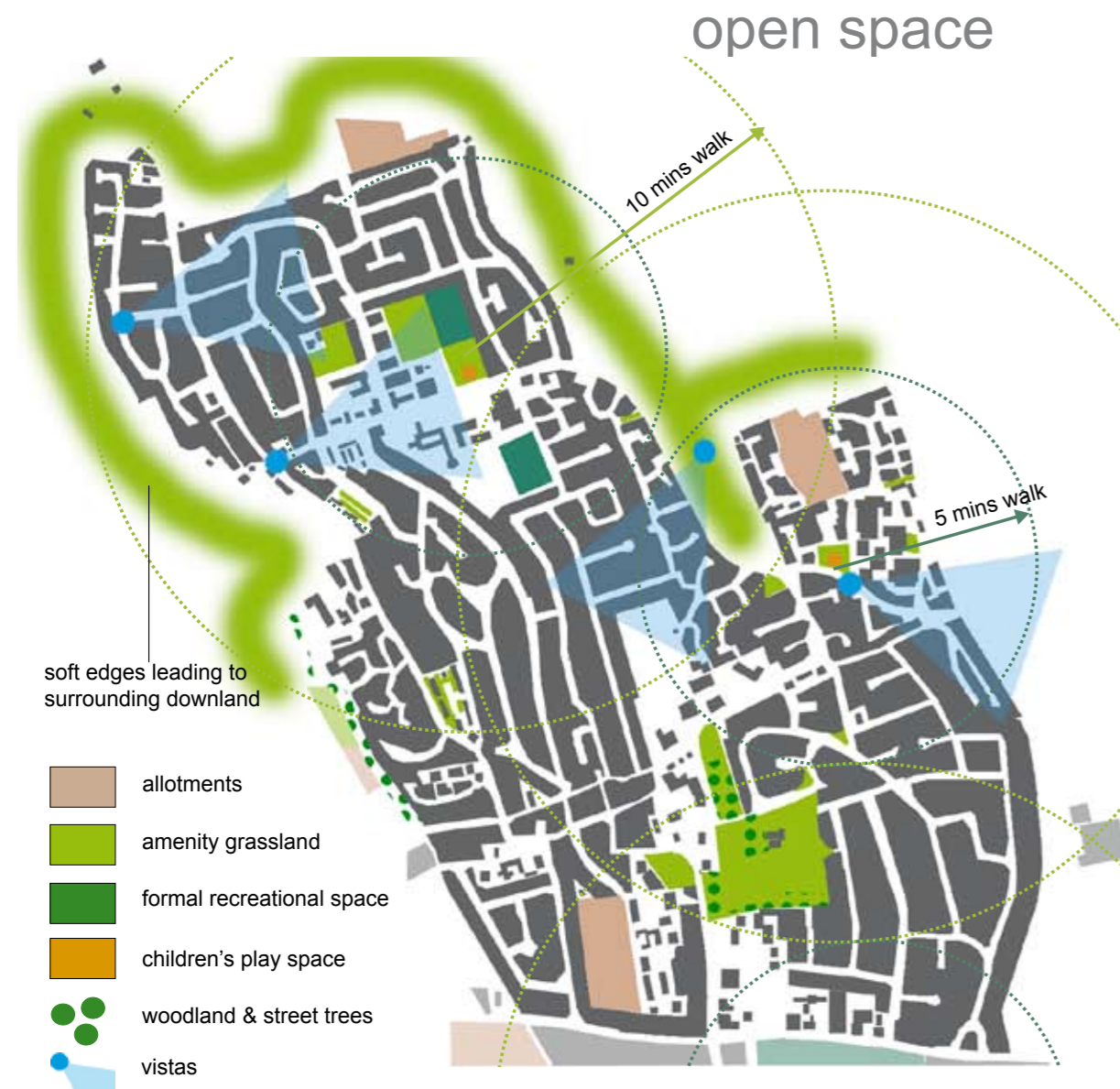
1960s flat development, with amenity grass

Overgrown footpath between dwellings

10 mins walk

5 mins walk

soft edges leading to surrounding downland

allotments

amenity grassland

formal recreational space

children's play space

woodland & street trees

vistas

character areas

1. Mile Oak

3. Foredown

Portslade Old Village conservation area:

2. Portslade Village

Mile Oak character area

Portslade Village character area

Foredown character area

from the neighbourhood by the by-pass link road. Pedestrian movement is often made unattractive, particularly in the more recently developed east of the neighbourhood, by long and sometimes overgrown footpaths along the sides of houses, that are poorly lit and not overlooked. Despite the coming of the by-pass some green links from Mile Oak to the South Downs have been preserved.

• **Socio-economic characteristics**: Perhaps due to its size and history, Mile Oak and Portslade Village neighbourhood has a wide social mix though there are large pockets of homogeneity, with the most affluent to the more rural northern end of Mile Oak and around the Village. Whilst the majority own their homes in some form, almost a quarter rent their homes, mostly from the local authority and housing associations (see appendix 3). The area has little in the way of direct employment. It is therefore a commuter suburb of the city, but with a high proportion of self-employed tradespeople. There is a lack of facilities for young people, who make up a higher than average proportion of the population.

• **Open space**: Portslade Village is characterised by its tree-lined and flint-walled open spaces. Whilst architecturally attractive the walls limit through routes, and restrict overlooking. Mile Oak is characterised by its surrounding and, with pedestrian links over

the by-pass, accessible downland. There are panoramic views from the east near Foredown Tower. This is a good starting point for walks into the Downs. The western edge is flanked higher up by trees.

Children's play areas and formal recreation space are provided in Mile Oak and across the busy Old Shoreham Road in Southern Cross. A smaller children's play area can be found in the newer eastern development of Mile Oak. For such a large area, however, this is only adequate. Allotments are well-located around the neighbourhood.

• **Character areas**: The neighbourhood can be divided into three character areas:

1. **Mile Oak**: a low rise, low density suburban housing area on the edge of the downs but with some low rise community uses clustered together. Varied inter-war and post war development in generous streets with grass verges.
2. **Portslade Village**: fine grained historic streets with a mix of uses and dominated by the former Victorian brewery. A conservation area with a strong sense of place.
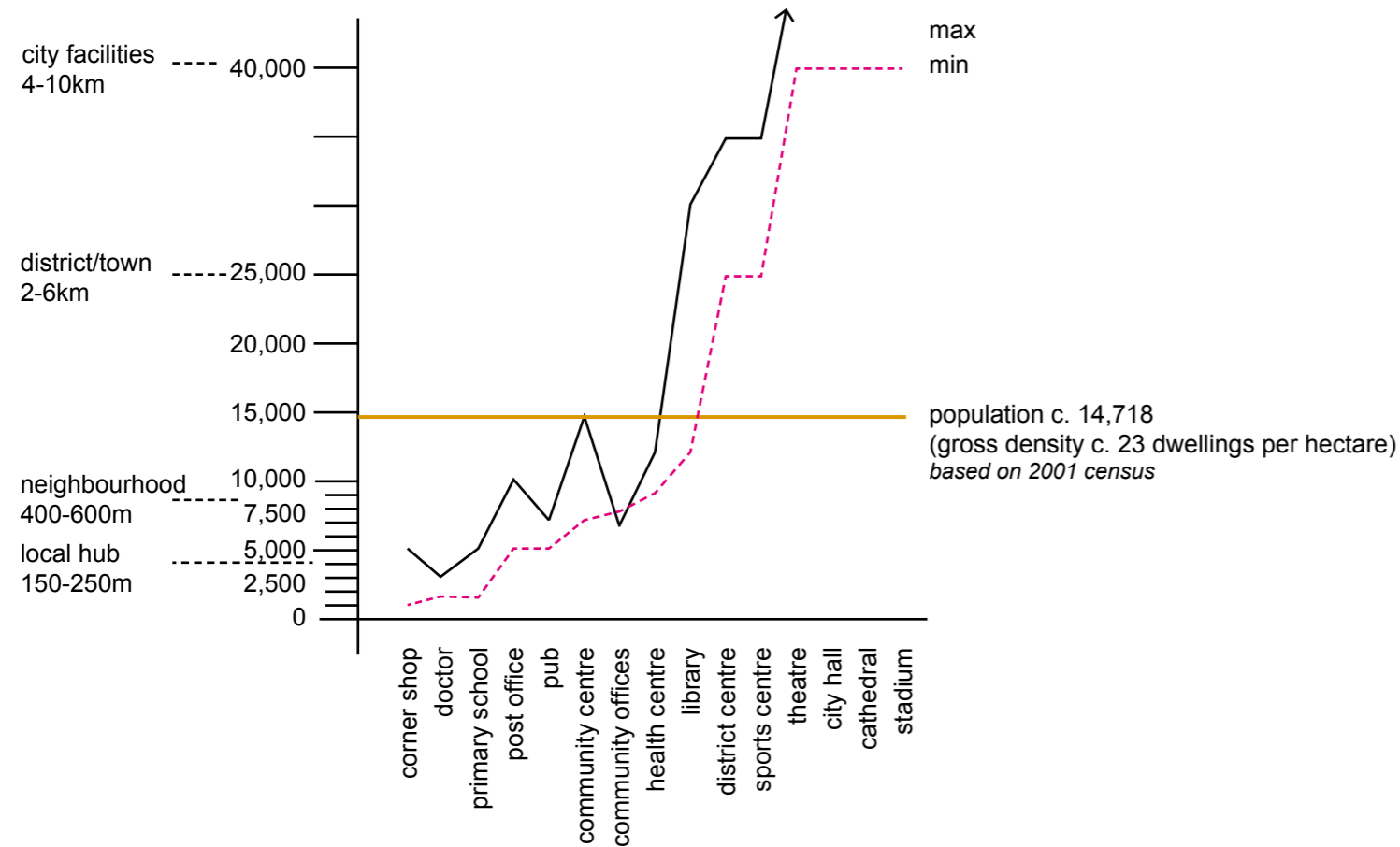3. **Foredown**: late 20th century, low density residential development on a cul-de-sac street pattern set high on the valley slope with mixed low rise housing types.

73

13 mile oak & portslade villageneighbourhood

appendix 1: population & density

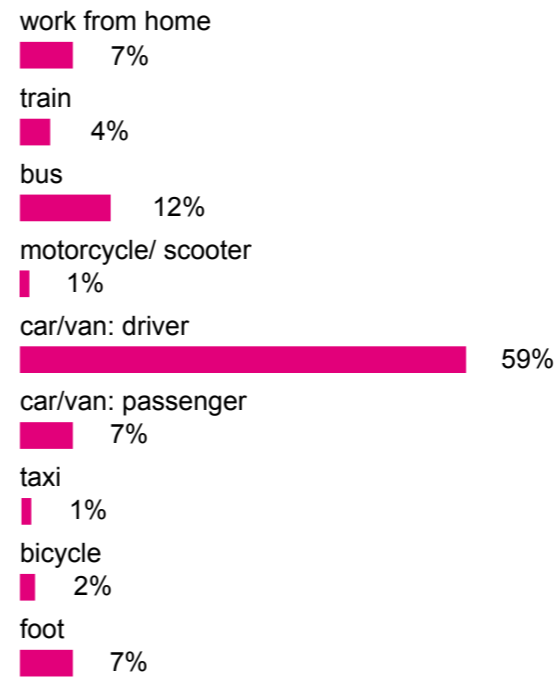Population numbers able to support community facilities.   Source: Towards an Urban Renaissance, 2002

city facilities 4-10km — 40,000   max / min

district/town 2-6km — 25,000

20,000

15,000   population c. 14,718
(gross density c. 23 dwellings per hectare)
based on 2001 census

neighbourhood 400-600m — 10,000 / 7,500

local hub 150-250m — 5,000 / 2,500

0

corner shop · doctor · primary school · post office · pub · community centre · community offices · health centre · library · district centre · sports centre · theatre · city hall · cathedral · stadium

appendix 2: travel to work

Statistics illustrating methods of travel to work.   Source: City Stats, Census 2001

work from home — 7%
train — 4%
bus — 12%
motorcycle/ scooter — 1%
car/van: driver — 59%
car/van: passenger — 7%
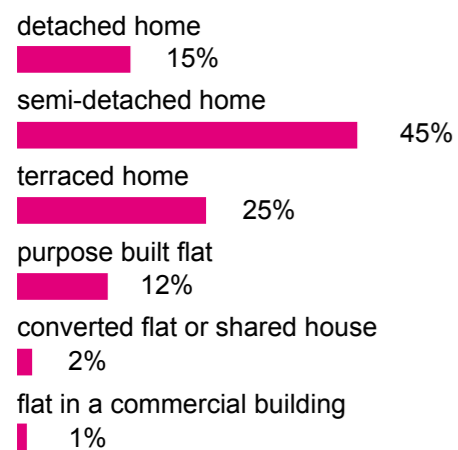taxi — 1%
bicycle — 2%
foot — 7%

The information from the 2001 census and the Acorn profiles were based on the best fit of the smallest enumeration districts. This was obtained from Citystats website, which is now www.bhlis.org

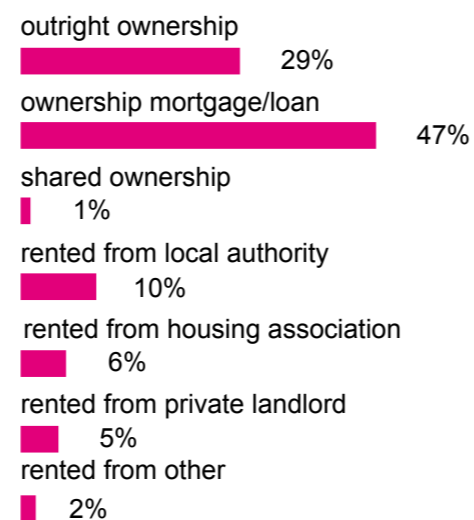See pages 8 and 11 for city-wide comparisons and more information

appendix 3: social mix

accommodation types

Source: City Stats, Census 2001

detached home — 15%
semi-detached home — 45%
terraced home — 25%
purpose built flat — 12%
converted flat or shared house — 2%
flat in a commercial building — 1%

tenure types

Source: City Stats, Census 2001

outright ownership — 29%
ownership mortgage/loan — 47%
shared ownership — 1%
rented from local authority — 10%
rented from housing association — 6%
rented from private landlord — 5%
rented from other — 2%

demographic types

Clockwise, from the top: Source: City Stats, Acorn data

- Well-Off Managers Detached Houses
- Younger White-Collar Couples with Mortgages
- Working Families with Mortgages
- Mature Families in Suburban Semis
- Established Home Owning Workers
- Retired Home Owners
- Middle Income Older Couples
- Lower Income Older People Semis
- Skilled Older Families Terraces
- Young Working Families
- Skilled Workers Semis and Terraces
- Older People Rented Terraces
- Low Income Larger Families Semis
- Low Income Older People Smaller Semis
- Large Families and Single Parents Many Children
- Single Elderly People Council Flats
- Families and Single Parents Council Flats
- Single and Single Parents High-Rise Estates