

# Sea Mills

## Character Appraisal & Management Proposals

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January 2011



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A conservation area is ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ (Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act, 1990).
- 1.2 Since the designation of the first conservation areas in 1970, Bristol City Council has undertaken a comprehensive programme of conservation area designation, extension and policy development. There are now 33 conservation areas in Bristol, covering approximately 30% of the city.
- 1.3 The statutory framework places Bristol City Council under a duty of care to recognise the significance of its built environment and positively manage change within it. The City Council is now underway with a comprehensive programme of producing a Character Appraisal for each conservation area.
- 1.4 The Conservation Area Character Appraisals follow recent national guidance set out in English Heritage’s Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals (2006), which require detailed appraisals of each conservation area in the form of formally approved and published documents.
- 1.5 A character appraisal accounts for the need to make informed decisions about the special interest of conservation areas and provides a point of reference for the planning authority, developers and communities in managing change appropriately. The consultation and adoption process values the specialist knowledge of local groups and is intended to ensure that features that communities value about a place, or feel are under threat, are properly considered.
- 1.6 Once adopted a character appraisal provides a tool for development management officers, developers, residents and others to recognise the special interest of the area in order that it can be preserved or enhanced.

## 2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 Planning Policy Statement 5 (March 2010) sets out the Government’s national policies relating to the historic environment. This document underpins the local planning policy framework and is the foundation upon which the local authority will assess schemes affecting the historic environment.
- 2.2 In exercising its planning functions in a conservation area, the local planning authority is under a duty to pay “special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance” of the area (s.72 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Bristol’s conservation areas are the subject of policies in the Bristol Local Plan (1997). Once adopted, policies in the emerging Core Strategy, and any future Development Plan Documents, will replace those in the Local Plan.
- 2.3 The Core Strategy is a key document in the emerging Bristol Development Framework. Once adopted the Core Strategy will become the key overarching policy document within the Bristol Development Framework. It will include a Core Policy on Conservation and the Historic Environment.
- 2.4 Within the character appraisals, references to the Bristol Local Plan are highlighted within blue boxes in order to relate specific sections of the appraisal with relevant policies and guidance.
- 2.5 Sea Mills was designated as a Conservation Area on 18 February 1981 and extended on 17 March 2008. Each adopted character appraisal will replace the relevant Conservation Area Enhancement Statement for that area.
- 2.6 The Sea Mills Conservation Area Character Appraisal was adopted by David Bishop, Strategic Director (City Development) on 14 July 2010.



### 3.1 LOCATION & SETTING

#### 3.1 Location & Context

- 3.1.1 The Sea Mills Conservation Area is one of Bristol's north western residential suburbs, where the urban density of the city starts to open out into a more rural setting. The Conservation Area lies approximately 5km from the city centre, sited on the north bank of the River Avon and within the basin of the River Trym, and bounded on the north-western side by the wooded Kings Weston ridge.
- 3.1.2 The Conservation Area's eastern boundary runs along the valley of the River Trym, then southwards along Sea Mills Lane towards the mouth of the River Trym. The southern tip includes the 18th century Riverside House and the remains of a Roman villa; then extends across the Portway to include Hadrian Close, a small post WW2 estate of pre-fab bungalows. The western boundary follows the county line with North Somerset, along the bank of the River Avon before reaching the boundary of the Kings Weston and Trym Valley Conservation Area to the north, which it follows until it reaches Haig Close.
- 3.1.3 The northern boundary encloses a mix of high quality townscape that includes Haig Close, almshouses for disabled servicemen and their families, and three bungalows which are coeval and of the same historic and economic context as the Garden Suburb. These, and the detached houses to their east, additionally provide an important setting area for the Garden Suburb and merge seamlessly with the character of the houses of the adjoining Kings Weston and Trym Valley Conservation Area.

#### 3.2 Landscape Setting

- 3.2.1 Sea Mills sits on sloping land between the low-lying Trym Valley and the higher ground of the Kings Weston ridge. The lowest points, the east and south west sides of the Conservation Area, are just 10m above sea level. The land to the north and west of this gradually rises up to 35m near Sylvan Way and then more steeply up to 50m at Westbury Lane. The 95m high Kings Weston ridge forms a wooded backdrop beyond.
- 3.2.2 The western edge of the Conservation Area looks over Shirehampton Park Golf Club, part of the Grade II Registered parkland of Kings Weston House. Largely rural and undeveloped, it provides an open or wooded landscape setting. Towards the south-west it looks over the River Avon to the agricultural landscape of North Somerset.
- 3.2.3 Immediately north of Westbury Lane is the suburb of Coombe Dingle; though built up, this low-rise development allows clear views to the densely wooded Kings Weston ridge rising above it. The winding Trym Valley is a mix of open land and copses, with Sea Mills Lane providing a clear distinction between the Conservation Area and the residential areas of Stoke Bishop and Westbury-on-Trym to the east.
- 3.2.4 The topography and landscape setting of Sea Mills are important factors in its special interest. These allow extensive views into and out of the Conservation Area and contribute to the sense of Sea Mills being a detached suburb.



### 3.3 Approaching Sea Mills Garden Suburb

3.3.1 The gateways to the Garden Suburb are clearly defined. Approaching from the east across the Trym Valley are three bridges: Dingle Road, Shirehampton Road, and Trym Cross Road, the span of each emphasises that Sea Mills Garden Suburb is a defined, separate place.

3.3.2 The approaches from Shirehampton, Henbury or Lawrence Weston, which converge at the Shirehampton Road/ Westbury Lane junction, all involve crossing a wide expanse of green open or wooded space before entering into Sea Mills. Notable also are the two pairs of houses with a “butterfly” plan which frame the gateway to the Garden Suburb when entering Hallen Drive from Westbury Lane. Westbury Lane is marked by a focal green at either end.

3.3.3 Approaching the Garden Suburb from the south-west, along Sylvan Way, green open space flanks both sides of the road, Shirehampton Golf Course on the left and Three Acre Covert and adjacent meadow on the right.

### 3.4 Geology

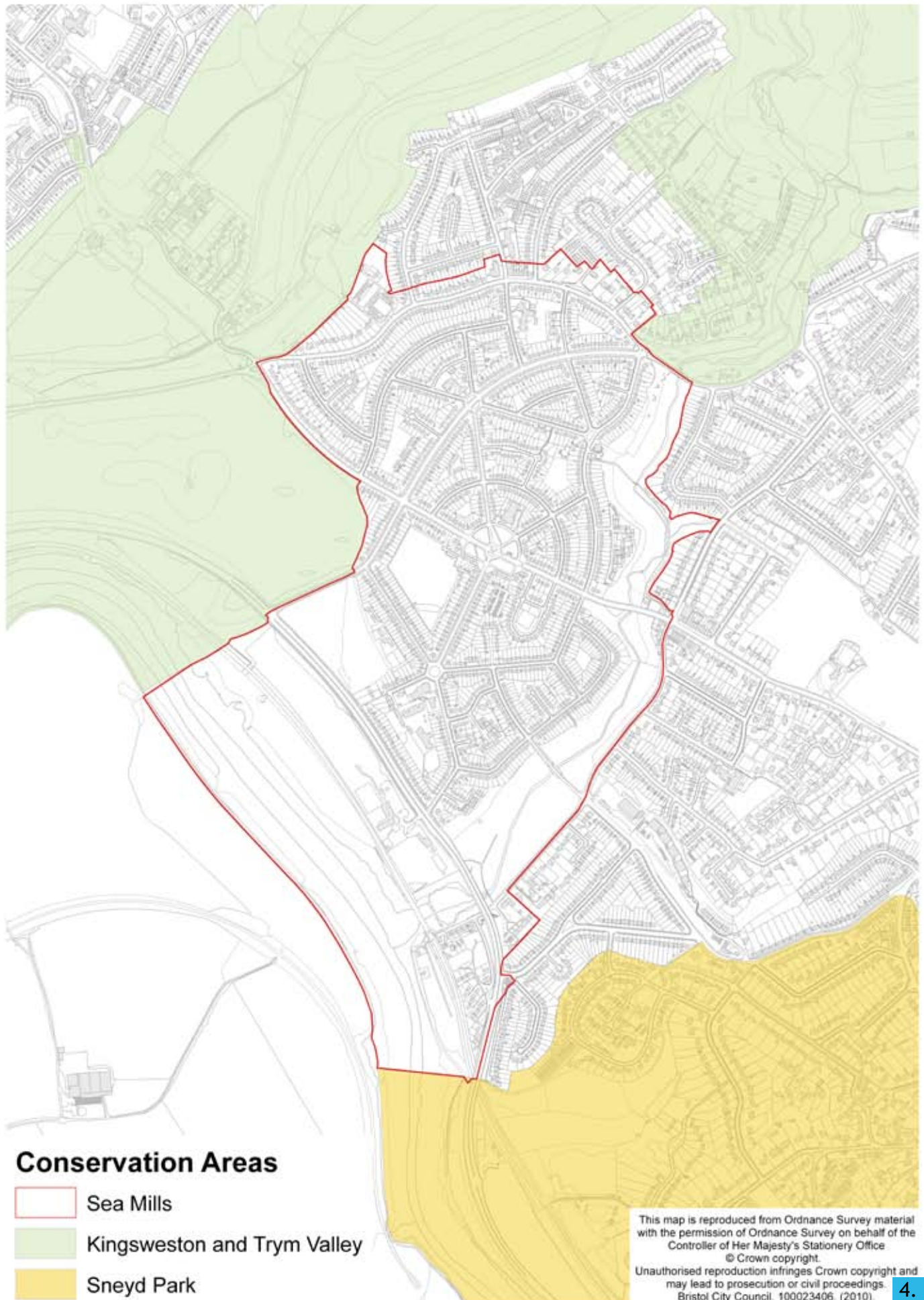
3.4.1 The bedrock of the Conservation Area is Triassic Dolomitic Conglomerate; a limestone rubble with a sandy matrix, the result of clays mixing with harder carboniferous limestone. The rock varies widely in consistency and in some situations it can be quarried and used as a decorative building material, e.g at Temple Meads.

#### Map 1: Sea Mills Conservation Area within its local context



**Figure 1:**  
Sea Mills Garden Suburb in its current context  
©Tim Wallis

# Map 1: Sea Mills Conservation Area in Local Context





#### 4. SUMMARY OF CHARACTER & SPECIAL INTEREST

- 4.1 The special interest of Sea Mills, and the reason for its designation as a conservation area, relates to the significance of the Garden Suburb. It is an intact example of Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin's model of a planned Detached Garden Suburb, and Bristol's finest example of planned post-WWI municipal housing.
- 4.2 All the elements that define it as a garden suburb combine to give Sea Mills its special interest. This includes: the planned layout and interrelationship between buildings and spaces; the low density; the simple, cottage-style houses given uniformity through their architectural details; the verdant and spacious character; the relationship to local topography, and picturesque landscape setting; and the extent of green spaces, especially the gardens, which are what make it a "garden" suburb. The overall uniformity of character and appearance in all these respects is a fundamental characteristic of the Garden Suburb and Sea Mills Conservation Area.
- 4.3 Sea Mills Garden Suburb was holistically planned as a single homogeneous design in its own right. Individually the built fabric is unremarkable, but the uniformity of design is a defining characteristic of the area. Apart from occasional infill and rebuilding, the buildings are largely of a uniform age and character. At the time of its designation in 1981, Sea Mills was one of the earliest council housing estates to be made a conservation area.
- 4.4 Following the principles of the garden cities and suburbs movement, the Sea Mills Garden Suburb was designed as a sustainable, self-contained community. Its allotments, extra gardens, recreational areas, library, shops, schools and churches are all fundamental elements of its character.
- 4.5 The layout in particular sets the Garden Suburb apart; based on an axial framework centred on Sea Mills Square, softened by concentric curving roads which follow the contour lines and roads that follow the adjacent topography of the Trym Valley. Focal greens, public green spaces and enclosed open spaces, and local landmark buildings punctuate the Suburb. The main characteristics of the Garden Suburb are detailed at section 4A.
- 4.6 Outside the Garden Suburb, the Conservation Area includes other features of significance: an important stretch of the River Avon; Roman remains of a villa and the port of Abona; the old Sea Mills Docks; the original and replacement signal stations, and Sea Mills Railway Station; as well as the Trym Valley. To the north are the almshouses of Haig Close and the high quality townscape of Westbury Lane houses and bungalows.
- 4.7 The geographical setting of the Conservation Area, within the basin of the River Trym, provides extensive views outwards. It is the quality and variety of views both within the area and outwards from it that add to its quality and sense of place. The charm of the area is accentuated by the way in which the planned pattern of development moulds itself to the undulating topography.



## 4a Main Characteristics of the Garden Suburb

- 4a.1 A garden suburb is distinguished from any other leafy suburb by the way it has been meticulously and harmoniously planned. Every element is balanced with every other, in order to maximise the suburb's beauty and attractiveness.
- 4a.2 The design, layout, and interrelationship of all elements of the design of Sea Mills Garden Suburb are based on the principles established by Raymond Unwin (Town Planning in Practice, 1909, and Nothing Gained by Overcrowding, 1912); the Tudor Walters Report, 1918 and the Manual on the Preparation of State-aided Housing Schemes, 1919. The main principles are summarised in the Garden Suburb Glossary (Section 13.3).
- 4a.3 The following elements define the character and appearance of Sea Mills Garden Suburb:-
- **A detached suburb** with defined boundaries and zones of open space surrounding it
  - **A holistic design** with an overall framework which relates to local topography, laid out to optimise views, and with a well-defined centre and subsidiary centres
  - **Views along streets** terminated by the curve of the road closing the view, or, at the end of straight streets, by the planned placement of houses or a prominent public building;
  - **Road junctions designed to be attractive features**, with a deliberate clear line of vision across corner plots to enhance the spacious and verdant appearance
  - **Planned public open spaces and enclosed open spaces** with designated functions that include allotments, play spaces, a recreation ground, other recreational space, such as tennis courts, a formal green space, and open space surrounding public buildings
  - **A spacious and verdant feel or quality**
  - **Public buildings placed at centres or secondary centres**
  - **Key-hole cul-de-sacs, focal greens, grass verges, and tree-lined streets**
  - **Houses laid out with strong front and rear building lines** to allow views along them, with occasional set-backs to enhance the street picture, with a regularity or rhythm of the spaces between houses and a regularity or rhythm of plot and garden sizes
  - **Houses laid out to achieve the best outlook**, including occasional grouping, for example around focal greens, to improve both the outlook from houses and the street picture;
  - **Occasional short terraces**, with a passageway in the middle of terraces of four houses
  - **Two-storey cottage style family houses** of simple uniform design with a limited palette of materials and minimal external ornament, built at a low density of 12 units per acre or less, with good-sized front and rear gardens enclosed with green privet hedges
  - **Predominantly semi-detached flat fronted and flat backed houses** of a simple block form of rectangular or square plan. With front and rear elevations being of equal importance in design and attractiveness
  - **Uniformity is a fundamental characteristic of the area**





## 4b Main Threats to the Character of the Garden Suburb

4b.1 The meticulous planning of the Sea Mills Garden Suburb makes it particularly sensitive to physical alterations, which in other areas may have little or no impact. The following summarise the type of interventions that could undermine the character or special interest of the Garden Suburb:

- New developments and infill that fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area
- Extensions or alterations to houses that undermine the simple uniformity of their size or appearance; or the symmetry of pairs or terraces; or alterations that affect the uniform appearance or form of the roofscape
- Extensions or alterations that undermine the planned layout of the front and rear building lines; the regularity or rhythm of gaps between houses; or the spaciousness of corner plots
- Loss or unsympathetic alteration of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area
- Loss or material changes to traditional architectural details e.g. windows, doors, door surrounds, chimneys, external finish etc.
- Loss of family houses to flats that compromises traditional character, original architectural features, or original garden sizes
- Loss of green character and sense of enclosure by the removal of traditional green privet hedges and substitution by other forms of enclosure, or loss of street trees
- Loss of front gardens and boundary treatments and their replacement by hard-standing or loss of grass verges through being incorporated into private front gardens
- Loss of or harm to views within, into and out of the Conservation Area from extensions or new developments
- Loss of green setting to the Conservation Area

by any reduction of surrounding open spaces, park or woodland

- Loss of original planned open spaces and enclosed open spaces to infill development
- Poorly maintained public, private and recreational spaces and facilities
- Loss or lack of maintenance, or inappropriate replacement, of traditional street furniture
- Alterations to the original plan form or character of Sea Mills Square
- Unsympathetically designed or sited communal recycling facilities, traffic calming measures, and road signs
- Unauthorised works that have a negative impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area
- Unsympathetically sited small-scale additions e.g. satellite dishes, alarm boxes, mobile phone and other masts, solar panels etc.
- Unsympathetic shop signs and changes to shop fronts

4b.2 The impact of elements that detract from the special character of the Conservation Area are detailed in Section 8 on Negative Features.



# SEA MILLS CONSERVATION AREA

## Character Appraisal

### 5. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT & ARCHAEOLOGY

5.1 Gaining an understanding and appreciation for the historic development of an area can be critical in establishing its significance. Marking key periods in a locality's history, and highlighting the survival of historic buildings, streets, layouts or events, can help determine the form of the Conservation Area and any features that are worthy of protection.

5.2 The area covered by the present Sea Mills Conservation Area is one that for much of the last 2000 years has remained uninhabited. Although there are signs of early development, in particular the Roman settlement of Abona, following its decline development in the area was sporadic, apart from some 18<sup>th</sup> century development around Sea Mills Dock. It was not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that a comprehensive programme of development was undertaken, creating the Bristol suburb of Sea Mills.

#### The Romans 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD

5.3 A military town and port, Abona's existence can be traced back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, when it was established as a legionary station. Abona grew considerably over the following 300 years and the remains of some of its buildings are still visible. There is as yet no evidence of 5<sup>th</sup> century occupation on the site and it is possible that Abona, like other Romano British settlements in the area, experienced a decline from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards and was eventually abandoned.

#### Sea Mills in the Medieval Period

5.4 The Domesday survey of 1086 does not mention Shirehampton or Sea Mills by name. The historic manor is thought to have been part of the Domesday manor of Westbury on Trym. The civil parish of Westbury on Trym was until the later 19<sup>th</sup> century part of the Hundred of Henbury in Gloucestershire. Westbury-on-Trym was

mostly incorporated into the City of Bristol in 1904; the north side of Westbury Lane and Blaise Estate in 1927; by 1910 nos. 16 - 24 Westbury Lane were still recorded as being in Gloucestershire.

5.5 The lower reaches of the River Trym appear to have formed part of the boundary between Westbury on Trym, and a detached part of Henbury; as evidenced by the parish boundary marker that still exists at the mouth of the Trym.

5.6 The name Sea Mills is first recorded in 1411 as Semmille, then in 1461 as Ceemulle, and in 1484 as Cemille; in 1779 the name was given as Say-Mills. The standard interpretation is 'mill by the sea' but it has been suggested that the primary element derives from *saye*, a cloth made from wool and silk (Smith 1964, 132). An alternative derivation is that the first word is *seam*, an old word for the load that a single packhorse could carry. Most probably the Mill, driven by the River Trym, was a place where there was a limit on the amount of grain that could be taken to it for grinding: just one horse load.



Figure 2:  
Clack Mill  
early 20<sup>th</sup>  
Century © BRO

## 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries

5.7 The three River Trym water mills: Coombe Mill, Clack Mill and Sea Mill, were in their time quite substantial and as an industry must have required a number of workers as well as many flocks of sheep to provide labour and materials. What impact the construction of a dock at Sea Mills in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century would have had on these mills is unclear, but it has been suggested that it would have put them out of action. Even if this were the case at least one of the mills survived until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was not until 1937 that Clack Mill was demolished.

## Sea Mills Dock

5.8 Sea Mills Dock is generally considered to be the third “wet dock” to be built in Britain (after Howland Dock at Rotherhithe and the Old Dock at Liverpool). The construction of a dock at Sea Mills began in 1712 on land leased from the Kings Weston Estate for the term of 999 years at an annual rent of £81. Commissioned by the Bristol merchant Joshua Franklyn and a team of 32 investors, their aim was to provide a repair and ‘laying up’ facility for ships docking at the congested and vastly overcrowded quays further up river in Bristol.

5.9 With a combined area of more than 12 acres, the outer and inner basins of Sea Mills Dock provided space for a very large quantity of shipping. Around 1730 a shipwright, William Tregoe, leased a plot of land from the Dock Company in order to build a dwelling for himself - the present Riverside House on Sea Mills Lane.

5.10 The Dock maintained a modest but significant level of activity until at least the late 1750s. By the early 1760s business had faltered and the Dock was abandoned and fell into disrepair. In 1793, as part of legal action by Lord de Clifford, the Dock and the land that had been leased with it were returned to the Kings Weston Estate, in whose ownership its decline continued.

5.11 By the early 1800s Sea Mills Dock was a ruin and as the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed most of the remaining dock buildings were destroyed. The area to the north of the Dock, where the present Sea Mills Garden Suburb lies, remained agricultural. It was to stay that way until 1919 when work began on one of Bristol's first post WW1 housing schemes.



Figure 3: Sea Mills Dock, showing Riverside House. Samuel Jackson c. 1823  
© Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery

### Sea Mills Farmhouse

5.12 Sea Mills Farmhouse was extant by 1772, shown on Isaac Taylor's plan of the Southwell Estate. By the time of the Henbury tithe survey of 1840 it was owned by Philip John Miles of Kings Weston House.

An original stone boundary wall belonging to the Farmhouse is recorded as being disrupted when nos. 5 & 7 Ableton Walk and 6 Bowerleaze were built. A new wall was laid, constructed using the original stones.

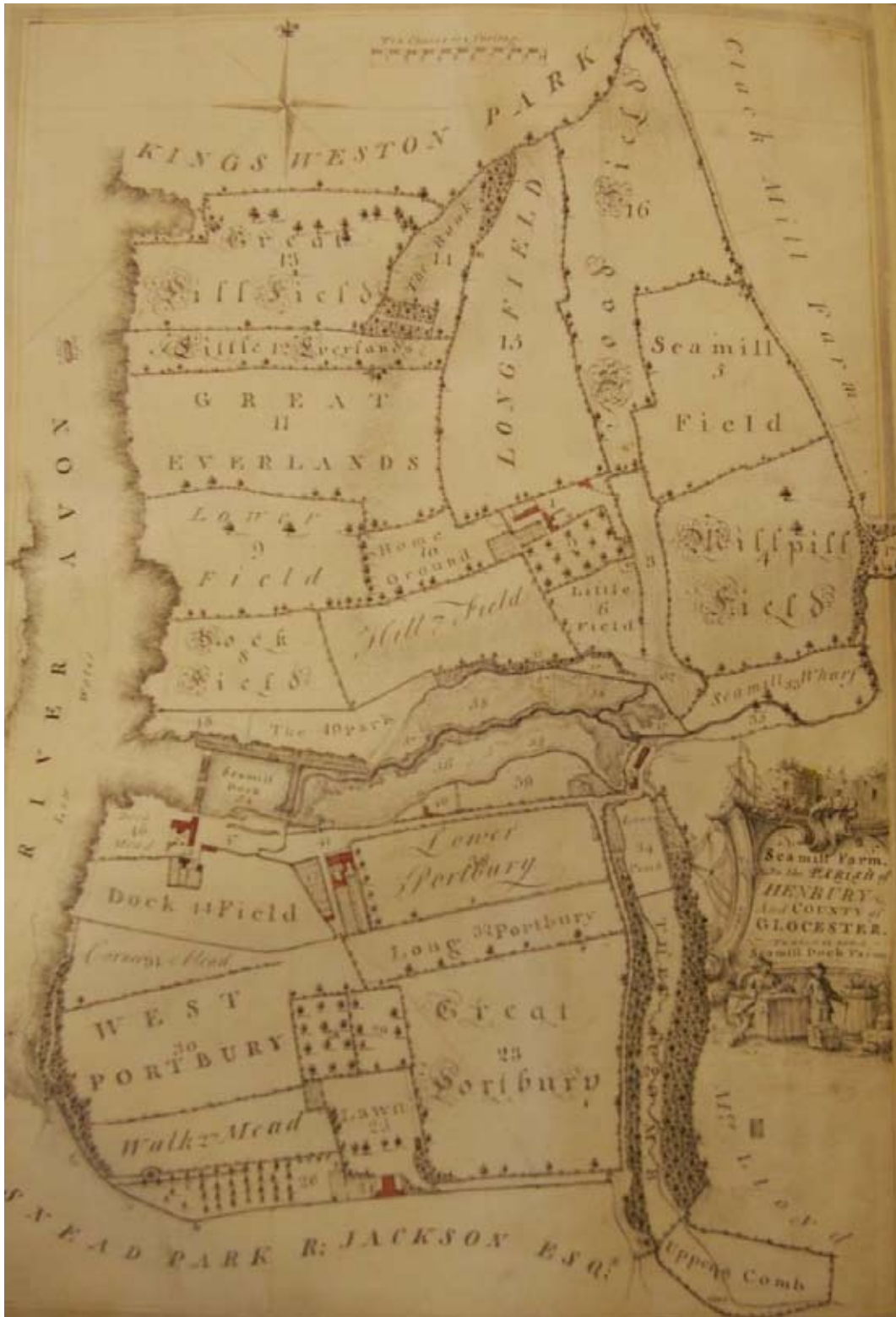


Figure 4:  
Estates belonging to  
Edward Southwell by  
Isaac Taylor 1772 ©BRO





## The Garden Suburb Movement

- 5.13 Garden Suburbs were part of the wider Garden City movement which evolved in reaction to the haphazard, overcrowded and unhealthy growth of cities. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century there had been a movement to provide better standards of housing for the working class and lower paid.
- 5.14 Port Sunlight and Bournville housing developments of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century influenced the garden cities and suburbs movement. Designed to be self-contained communities for factory employees, they included good sized gardens, allotments, recreational areas, and communal facilities such as schools, a social institute and shops.
- 5.15 Giving the garden cities and garden suburbs movement its impetus was Ebenezer Howard's book *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Reform*, 1898. Howard envisioned towns which enjoyed the benefits of both the city and the countryside, where working people would have the benefit of fresh air and sunlight, with both a closeness to nature and nearness to work. In 1899, he founded the Gardens Cities Association.

## Raymond Unwin

- 5.16 Raymond Unwin had a profound influence on the design of garden suburbs. In 1902, he and Barry Parker were appointed to design a new industrial village, New Earswick; where the houses and the plan were designed by one architectural firm. This was the opportunity for Unwin and Parker to implement their ideas about site planning and houses designed to maximise fresh air and sunlight.
- 5.17 Unwin believed 'every house could be planned so that there should be a sunny aspect for the chief rooms and a pleasant outlook both front and back'. His New Earswick houses had a square plan, moving away from the deep and narrow plan of the time. These became a general model for the garden city and suburb housing later built in Letchworth, Hampstead, and in post-WW1 local authority cottage estates like Sea Mills Garden Suburb.
- 5.18 Unwin's *Town Planning in Practice: An introduction to the art of designing cities and suburbs*, 1909 became the defining work on the planning and layout of garden cities and suburbs. His pamphlet *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding!*, 1912 provided the economic justification for low density garden suburb layouts.

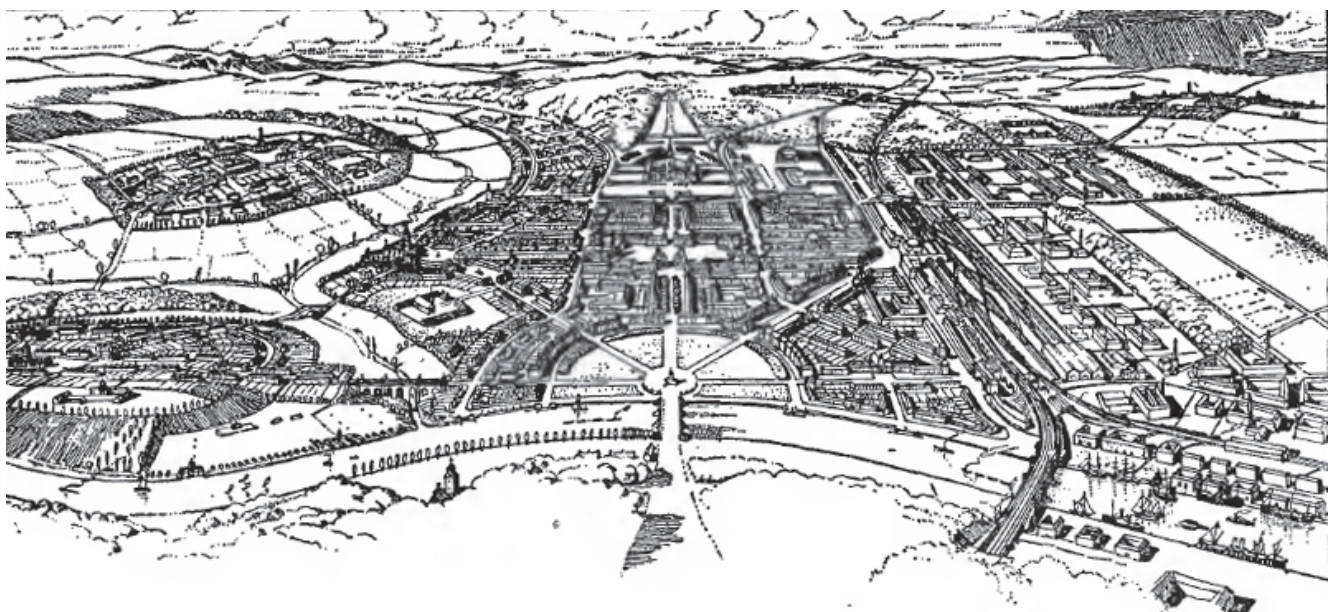


Figure 5: Sketch by A Hugh Mottram from Raymond Unwin's pamphlet *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding!*, 1912. It is likely that this perspective was highly influential on the design of Sea Mills Square, and Sea Mills Garden Suburb as a whole

5.19 During WWI, Unwin worked on low-cost housing for the Ministry of Munitions. The programme of state-subsidised house building became a model for the mass state housing programme after the war. Shortages of traditional materials like timber led to the experimentation of materials in house building, such as the use of concrete and steel. The need to build economically led to a simplified architectural style.

### Homes Fit for Heroes

5.20 Before the end of WWI it was realised that the pre-war housing shortage, especially rented properties affordable to the working class, would be exacerbated by men returning from the trenches. There was an expectation that new houses should be of improved standards of design, comfort and convenience: Lloyd George's "homes fit for heroes".

### Tudor Walters Report

5.21 In 1917, the Government commissioned a report into the best way to provide post-war housing. Chaired by MP Sir John Tudor Walters, the committee included Raymond Unwin, who is credited with providing much of its content. Most of the Report's recommendations were adopted in the Local Government Board's *Manual on the Preparation of State-aided Housing Schemes*. This, and the Tudor Walters Report, were highly influential in the planning of Sea Mills Garden Suburb.

### Post WW1 Housing in Bristol

5.22 On 1<sup>st</sup> March 1918, the Housing Extensions and Town Planning Committee, chaired by E.W.Savory, met to implement the national housing scheme in Bristol. C.F.W.Dening was appointed as an advisory architect to assist the Committee and the City Engineer, Lessel S. McKenzie, in preparing plans.

5.23 Sea Mills was one of Bristol's first post-war housing schemes to be implemented. Chief Architect in charge of layout of the national housing scheme, Unwin would have had ultimate responsibility for approving the layout of Sea Mills.

### Philip Napier Miles

5.24 By 1918, agricultural land around Clack Mill and Sea Mills Farm was identified as suitable for housing. The land was part of the Kings Weston Estate owned by Philip Napier Miles who agreed to sell approximately 205 acres to Bristol City Corporation at £160 per acre. Two covenants restricting the use of the land, included the following conditions:-

1. "that no part of the said lands...shall be used for any purpose other than that of a Garden Suburb";
2. that the density "shall amount on an average to not less than 8 and not more than 12 per acre;
3. "that the said lands...shall be laid out and built upon in accordance with a scheme which shall be previously prepared in consultation with the Surveyor and Architect employed by the Vendor".

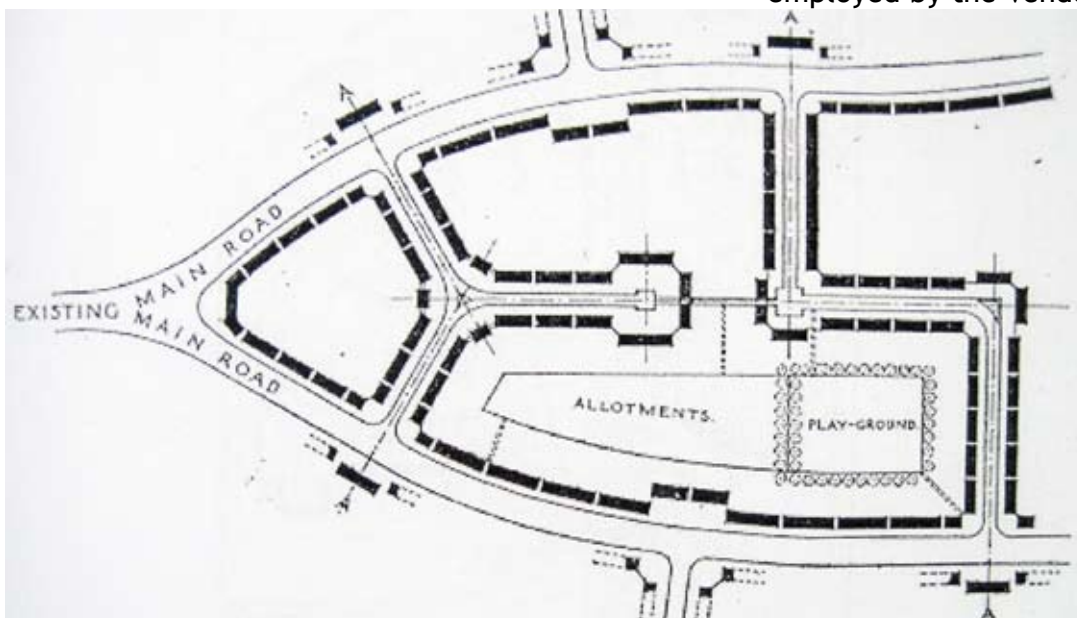


Figure 6: Tudor Walters Diagrammatic Layout





- 5.25 Napier Miles clearly took a personal interest in the future development of Sea Mills. Reserving 6.93 acres of the north-west corner for small-holdings; he also suggested to the Housing Committee that five acres of the Garden Suburb should be reserved for football and cricket, probably accounting for why the size of the Recreation Ground was roughly doubled in later blueprints.
- 5.26 The sale of land for Sea Mills Garden Suburb was completed in April 1919. Napier Miles also gave Three Acre Covert as a 'Public Pleasure Ground'. In 1918 he had given Shirehampton Park to the National Trust; the grassed open space between Three Acre Covert and Sylvan Way was originally part of Shirehampton Park, separated when Sylvan Way was constructed. He also gave land for building the new 'low lying road', now The Portway, together with the land lying between that and the railway for 'industrial purposes'.

#### The 1919, 1923, and 1924 Housing Acts

- 5.27 The Housing and Town Planning Act, 1919 initiated the provision of state-aided housing, offering substantial Government subsidies to local authorities to build low-rent houses for working class people. The Housing (Additional Powers) Act, 1919, was later passed to provide a lump-sum subsidy for every house built within certain specifications. 250 houses were built in Sea Mills between 1920 and 1922 under these Acts.
- 5.28 The Housing Acts of 1919 became known as the Addison Acts, after government minister Dr. Christopher Addison. The national housing scheme became known as the "Addison Scheme" and the houses built under this scheme as "Addison Houses".
- 5.29 In the 1923 Act, the Conservative Government introduced new subsidies to encourage private building. In 1924, the new Labour Government introduced an Act providing subsidies to restore the role of local authorities in providing working-class housing. Under all the Acts subsidies were provided for private building within the size restraints of each Act.

#### Development of Sea Mills Garden Suburb

- 5.30 Following the principles and traditions of the garden cities and suburbs movement, Sea Mills was designed to be a sustainable, self-contained community. Land was reserved for specific uses to ensure self-sufficiency including provisions for work places, through land reserved for industrial development, and for food production. Areas were reserved for small-holdings; for allotments and extra gardens; and the gardens were made large enough to be worked by a family for vegetables and fruit and the keeping of animals such as chickens. Play spaces, a recreation ground, tennis courts, schools, churches, shops, and a library safeguarded the health and well-being of the community. Sea Mills was given excellent transport links, including its own railway station.



Figure 7: Dening's Master Plan for Sea Mills from the Architects' Journal 1920. This original layout shows space allocated for industrial developments and an area for small-holdings. The former was never used for this purpose and became used instead for recreation. The latter was developed for housing in the early to mid-1930s.



Figure 8: Plan of the northern part of Sea Mills c. 1928 ©BRO (See Garden Suburb Glossary for larger plan, and southern plan c. 1932)

5.31 On 14<sup>th</sup> October 1919, the Housing Committee approved the Master Plan for Sea Mills. This initial plan was refined and improved during the development of the Garden Suburb. Overall the final layout was more cohesive and less dense, as well as softer and more informal, helped by reducing the number of right-angles and squares. The size of the Recreation Ground had almost doubled and there were a greater number of enclosed open spaces. The improved layout of the northern half of the Garden Suburb, in particular, followed the contour lines more closely and became better linked with the axial framework of the southern half.

5.32 Dr. Christopher Addison cut the first sod at Sea Mills on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1919, inaugurating Bristol's whole post-WW1 Housing and Town Planning Scheme. A commemorative oak tree planted at the event still flourishes in Sea Mills Square.



Figure 9: Addison's Oak, Sea Mills Square ©John Roberts

5.33 Bristol was at the forefront of the national housing scheme, Sea Mills Garden Suburb being one of the earliest of the post-war garden suburb layouts. A total of 1279 houses were built, the first ready by 1920 and the development completed in 1931. 1030 of the houses were Corporation-built and let, 156 (including 12 shops) were leased, and 93 were erected under private enterprise and leased.



- 5.34 In 1937, John Betjeman wrote of the new Sea Mills Estate as having *“a surprising beauty showing off in the evening sunlight; and vistas of trees and fields and pleasant cottages that that magic estate has managed to create”*.



Figure 10: Woodleaze c. 1923 © BRO

### Changes since 1931

- 5.35 Since completion of the Garden Suburb in 1931, a number of the planned enclosed open spaces, allotment areas, and an area designated for play space have been lost to infill development. These losses have had a negative impact on the overall design of the Garden Suburb. In addition, many infill developments have failed to reflect its character and appearance (See Negative Features).
- 5.36 An exception is the area originally designated as “Reserved by Mr. Miles for Small Holdings”, developed in the early to mid-1930s. This development has generally made a positive contribution to the character and appearance as the houses are superficially similar in design, plot size, and layout to those of the Garden Suburb. The area originally “reserved for industrial development” was never developed for this purpose, instead being used as sports grounds with related buildings.

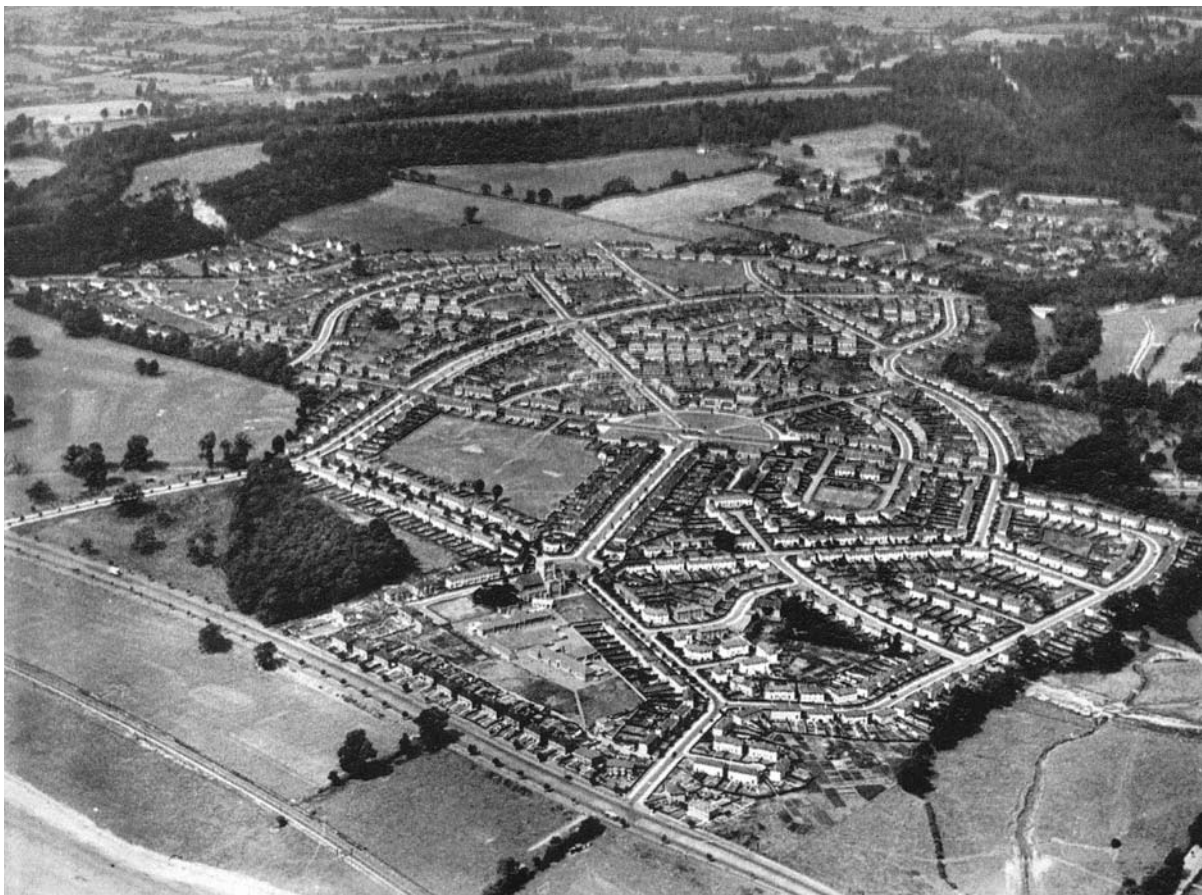


Figure 11: Sea Mills Garden Suburb, July 1935 © English Heritage NMR Aerofilms Collection



- 5.37 Most post-WW2 infill developments have failed to reflect the character and appearance of the Garden Suburb, whether by ignoring prevalent plot size, layout, scale, massing, rhythm or materials. Some developments, such as Garden Close and the flats in Compton Drive, are of a modern design completely alien to the Garden Suburb. Others, such as Silklands Grove and Abona Court, have introduced disproportionate roof forms or alien elements that have impacted negatively on the wider area. The infilling of planned enclosed open spaces, and loss of houses and plots to enable infill, e.g. 9/10 Clapton Walk and 44/46 West Parade, has also been a detrimental post-WW2 change.
- 5.38 From the 1980s, many of the houses were bought by Council tenants under the Right-to-Buy scheme. Currently, approximately 50% of the houses of Sea Mills are Council-owned and 50% private.
- 5.39 Many newly privately owned houses underwent material alterations since the 1980s, notably changes to windows, doors, external finishes, the addition of porches or extensions, and front gardens and hedges being replaced by parking areas.
- 5.40 In the late 1980s, PRC (Prefabricated Reinforced Concrete) houses were identified as having potential structural faults. In Sea Mills, these included all the Dorlonco type houses and the houses of Parkinson PRC construction (See housing types CNA2, MGB2, and WSB2). The City Council undertook repair of the Dorlonco-types in 2005. However, the Parkinson houses were considered to have more serious faults.
- 5.41 The 1984 and 1985 Housing Defects Acts gave grants for private owners to undertake licensed repairs. At the time, the Parkinson houses were considered to be too expensive to repair. 132 Parkinson houses, private and Council-owned attached to a privately-owned property, were demolished and rebuilt (refer to p. 22-23 Sea Mills Planning Brief 2008 see Sources of Further Information). As the replacement houses were rebuilt in the simple, flat-fronted and flat-backed, cottage-style characteristic of the original houses of the Garden Suburb, on the original footprints, these houses still make a positive contribution to the character of Sea Mills. Some have a half-render, half-brick finish; a compromise between the Planning Department, who wanted all-render to match existing houses, and the Housing Department, who wanted a low-maintenance brick finish.
- 5.42 A survey of the remaining Council-owned Parkinsons in Sea Mills, 2009/10, revealed there to be considerably less structural deterioration than had been anticipated in the 1980s. It is now known that all the Parkinsons are repairable, an extensive programme of repair by the City Council is immanent (246 in total). In addition to their inherent structural frame problems, many Parkinson houses have ground floor bathrooms, poor internal access and are small, making them difficult to be adapted to meet lifetime home standards. When the Council-owned Dorlonco houses were repaired and overclad in the mid-2000s, the original neo-classical door surrounds were removed and not replaced, to the detriment of the original design. In most cases a pitched canopy over the main door was introduced instead.
- 5.43 Sea Mills was designated as a Conservation Area in February 1981, one of the earliest council housing estates to be given such recognition. Following an extensive campaign by the local community, the boundaries were subsequently reviewed and extended in 2008 to cover the full extent of the Garden Suburb.



5.44 Sea Mills Garden Suburb remains a low density garden suburb today, at a level below 12 houses per acre. Consequently, it still conforms to what is one of the chief characteristics of garden suburb layout and its character as a post-WW1 garden suburb is unblemished in this respect.

## Relevant Policy References

### National Guidance

#### Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment

**Policy HE9.1** 'There should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be. Once lost, heritage assets cannot be replaced and their loss has a cultural, environmental, economic and social impact. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.'

### Local Policy

**Bristol Local Plan Policy B13:**  
'Development should preserve Listed Buildings, their features and settings, and preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the city's designated Conservation Areas... Development which conflicts with these objectives will not be permitted.'

**Bristol Local Plan Policy B22 (I-II)**  
'There will be a presumption in favour of preserving any archaeological features or sites of national importance, whether scheduled or not.'



## 6. SPATIAL ANALYSIS

### 6.1 Routes & Spaces

- 6.1.1 The historic street layout and the relationship of built form to open space define the framework of an area. The traditional pattern of development, front and rear building lines, planned open spaces, enclosed open spaces, street layout, and plot sizes should be respected.
- 6.1.2 Much of what makes Sea Mills so distinctive is its sophisticated layout, fundamentally influenced by Raymond Unwin and the Garden Suburb movement. (See Garden Suburb Glossary Appendix for terminology and principles.) The Suburb has an holistic design, complete in itself, in which every facet relates both to every other, and to the whole, in a harmonious way. Given the way in which it was meticulously planned, Sea Mills is particularly sensitive to change.
- 6.1.3 Sea Mills is a detached suburb with well-defined boundaries of open space on all sides except the north where previously agricultural land has been developed. The gateways or “points of entrance” to the suburb are also clearly defined. The defining spatial characteristic of Sea Mills Garden Suburb is its low density.
- 6.1.4 The charm of the area is accentuated by the way in which the planned pattern of development moulds itself to the undulating topography. Conforming with garden suburb principles, the relationship of layout to contour lines and topographical features is clearly evident.
- 6.1.5 The layout of the estate is based on an axial framework centred on Sea Mills Square, placed where the topography is level. From this point are concentric curving roads that follow the contour lines, and roads which follow the adjacent topography of the Trym Valley. Coombe Dale and Trymside run roughly north/south and follow the natural line of the Trym

Valley. High Grove, Sylvan Way, Ashcroft Road, and Ableton Walk follow the curving contours running east and west. The axial roads of, for example, East and West Parade and Sunny Hill deliberately cut across the contours at right angles.

- 6.1.6 This radial and axial route system, combined with the topography, results in a legible area which, together with a number of footpaths, creates a relatively permeable layout.

#### Sea Mills Square

- 6.1.7 The centre or central “place” of Sea Mills Garden Suburb is Sea Mills Square, a formal square influenced by an aerial sketch of an imaginary garden city/ suburb, which is central to and influences the whole layout of Sea Mills.

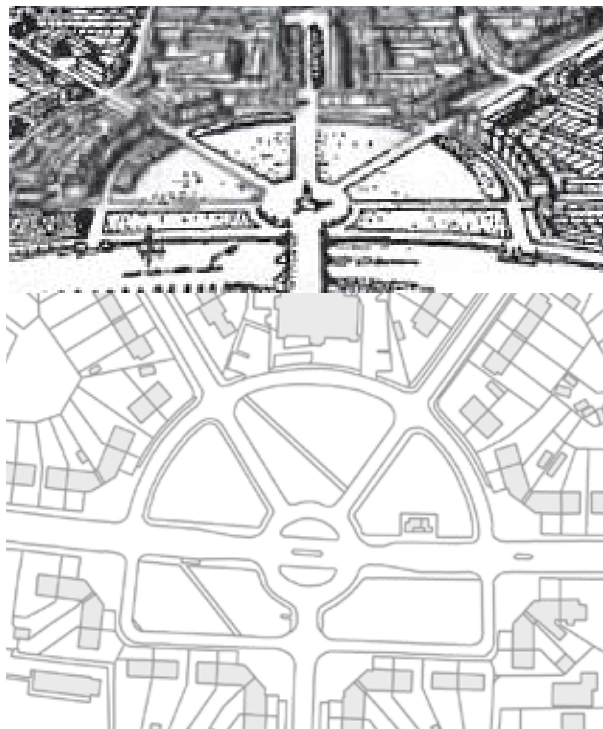


Figure 12: **Above** - detail from Hugh Mottram's *'The Garden City Principle applied to Suburbs'* which is believed to have inspired similar post-WWI semi-circular designs of open spaces, e.g. Dormanstown and Welwyn Garden City. **Below** - OS detail of Sea Mills Square. The layout is closer to the original sketch than other designs and is a striking example of its use as a civic centre. The word “Square” reflects its function not its shape; being the closest translation to French *place*, German *platz*, or Italian *piazza*.

6.1.8 Sea Mills Square functions as an enclosed space which, at the same time, has a sense of openness. The Square is enclosed by a perimeter of two-storey houses and shops with the Methodist Church sited at the centre of the northern perimeter of the semi-circle. The central green open space, together with the views out along the axial roads, gives the Square a sense of openness. West Parade and East Parade lead away from the Square, and are terminated by semi-detached houses, with respectively the vistas of Kings Weston Hill and the trees of the Trym Valley rising behind.



Figure 13: Terminated view - St Edyth's Road looking northeast to the Methodist Church © Tim Wallis

6.1.9 The views into the Square along St. Edyth's Road, West Parade, and East Parade are all terminated, the latter two by shops on the other side of the green. The view along St. Edyth's Road into the Square is terminated by the imposing Methodist Church, a classic Unwinesque terminal feature. Similarly, looking back down St. Edyth's Road, away from the Square, the view is terminated by St. Edyth's Church, so that the two churches "look" at each other.

6.1.10 From much of the Square the backdrop of Kings Weston Hill is visible and, because the houses of Sea Mills Garden Suburb are all two-storey with gaps between, the sky is very open, adding to the feeling of both enclosure and openness.

### Secondary Centres

6.1.11 The layout of the Garden Suburb has three main subsidiary or secondary centres, two of which are linked by a straight road to Sea Mills Square, but topography prevented a direct link from the third to the Square. These are located at:

- The Pentagon - where five roads converge where St. Edyth's Church is sited
- Where Sunny Hill and West Parade cross Sylvan Way - six roads converge where Sea Mills Library is sited
- The focal green where four roads converge at the point where Sunny Hill and Dingle View meet Coombe Dale. This position was determined mostly for topographical reasons.



Figure 14: Secondary centre - Sunny Hill and Dingle View meet Coombe Dale. Axial routes aiming towards the high ground of Kings Weston ridge © Tim Wallis

6.1.12 From the secondary centres further axial routes spread outwards; this framework binding together the whole layout of the Garden Suburb. From The Pentagon, two axes run straight to two triple-junctions, the roads radiating from which continue the axial framework. From the other two secondary centres, axes run from each in a similar way to the two axes that run from Sea Mills Square.

### Streetscape

6.1.13 Houses are all placed back from the road behind generous front gardens, and frequent grass verges, creating a spacious streetscape with a strong rhythm of gaps between the houses. Occasionally, the building line is deliberately set-back in places, sometimes behind a focal green, to enhance the street picture. Street widths vary according to the hierarchy, and number, of properties they serve. The widest main route, Sylvan Way, has deep grass verges with tree planting. The narrowest routes are within cul-de-sacs.

6.1.14 There are a number of wholly or partially tree-lined streets within the Garden Suburb, including Shirehampton Road, Sylvan Way, Westbury Lane, The Portway, West Parade, St. Edyth's Road, Avonleaze, The Pentagon, Sea Mills Square, Woodleaze, Brookleaze, and Riverleaze. Trym Cross Road and Sea Mills Lane are also partly tree-lined.

6.1.15 Houses on curved streets are predominantly semi-detached, which allows the units to address the street line.



Figure 15: Coombe Dale houses are all semi-detached and follow the curve of the road

6.1.16 Terraces tend to be sited along straight streets, such as Woodleaze, or on straight stretches of roads, such as Sylvan Way. The intermixing of terraces and pairs adds variety to the street scene. An exception is the terrace in the middle of The Crescent, designed to mark the centre of the semi-circle and to terminate the view down Blaise Walk.

### House Plots

6.1.17 Most plots are rectangular, deeper than they are wide. Corner plots are more square or triangular in shape, to allow for the characteristic open space at road junctions, and a clear line of vision across the corners. Openness at junctions is an important element that contributes to the Garden Suburb's verdant and spacious character. At road junctions, houses are sometimes positioned to allow the building line to "turn" the corner whilst, at the same time, adding to the variety of corner treatments.

6.1.18 Rear gardens are generally substantial, particularly in length, adding to the spacious and verdant character and appearance of the Garden Suburb. Where house plots differ in shape to the norm, the garden is often increased to the side to maintain the regular overall plot size. Plots range between 180 - 350m<sup>2</sup>, averaging around 250m<sup>2</sup> in size.

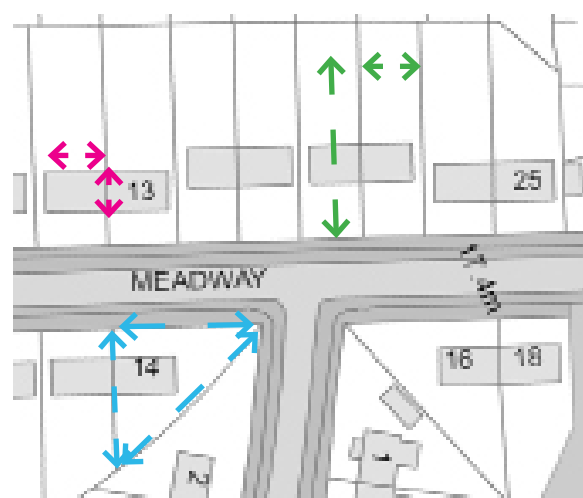


Figure 16: Houses are simple block forms without projections; plots tend to be deeper than wide with substantial rear gardens; corner plots are square or triangular



## Cul-de-sacs

6.1.19 There are six cul-de-sacs within the original Garden Suburb. Five are a classic Tudor Walters “key-hole” design, where the last units on each side are set back from the building line with a generous gap between these and the end pair. These important gaps allow openness and light into the cul-de-sac, and glimpses outwards from the end of the cul-de-sac between the houses, so alleviating any stifling sense of enclosure. Whilst these cul-de-sacs appear to be enclosed spaces they are, in fact, deliberately planned to be very open.

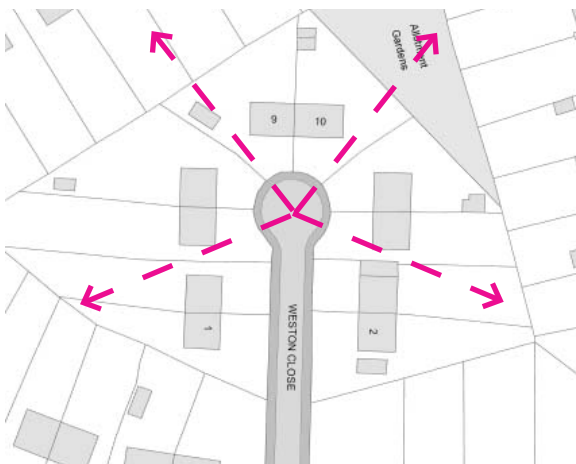


Figure 17: Key-hole cul-de-sac with generous gaps between houses to allow glimpsed views (e.g Weston Close)

## Corner Plots

6.1.20 In Sea Mills, houses occupying corner plots are usually sited in the plot in such a way as to allow space next to the road junction, leaving a clear line of vision across the corner plots. In this way the corner is more open, making a feature of the road junction whilst adding to the spacious feel of the garden suburb.

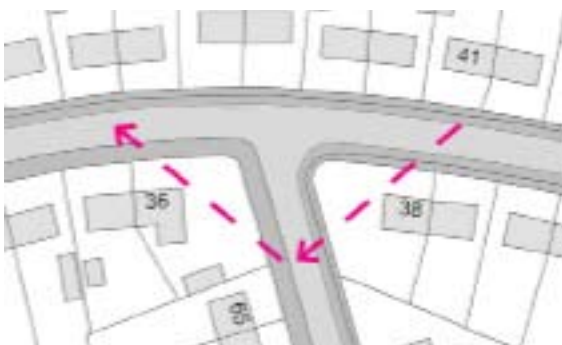


Figure 18: Views across corners (e.g High Grove/Sunny Hill)

6.1.21 Where houses ‘turn’ or are placed across corners there are a variety of treatments, such as, placing a pair of houses across a corner in a straight line e.g at the junction of Westbury Lane and Compton Drive, or alternatively, a pair of houses may be concave in plan e.g at the corner of Hallen Drive and Westbury Lane; or convex e.g at the junction of Bowerleaze with Riverleaze. Convex terraces of four are sited around Sea Mills Square, and two convex terraces of five at The Pentagon.

6.1.22 At some corners, particularly at the secondary centre in front of the Library and at the junction of Sylvan Way with Compton Drive, the catslide roofs of the HBA5 houses (see Garden Suburb Housing Types Plan) visually emphasise the openness of the corners.

## Junctions

6.1.23 At ‘triple-junctions’, the view down each road towards the junction is terminated by a pair of semi-detached houses placed at an angle across the corner opposite, e.g where Brookleaze, Trymleaze and Meadway meet or where Riverleaze meets Trym Side.

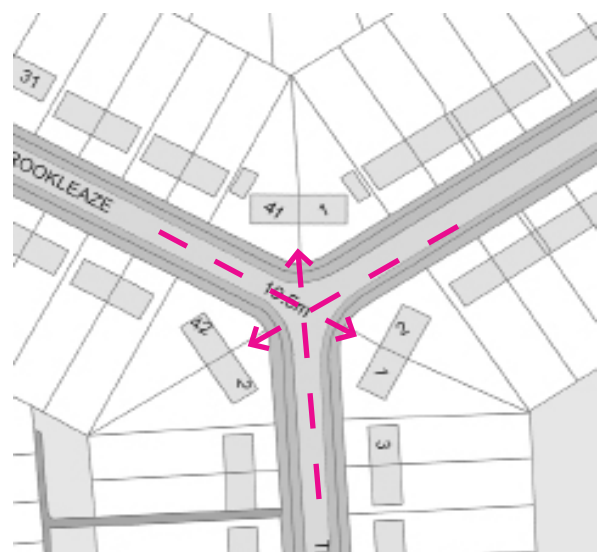


Figure 19: Terminated views at a triple junction (e.g Brookleaze/Meadway/Trymleaze)

- 6.1.24 At T-junctions, a terminal feature, usually a pair of houses or a terrace of 4, frequently closes the view down the adjoining street. In High Grove, the Methodist Hall closes the view down Elberton Road. For the occupants of the houses of the terminal feature there is an “extended outlook” down the street opposite.
- 6.1.25 Occasionally the houses of the terminal feature are set-back from the building line, which, together with open corner plots, produces something similar to a small square. Setting-back houses opposite a junction also provides a variation to the street picture looking in either direction down the through-road. In Sea Mills houses are frequently set back in this way.

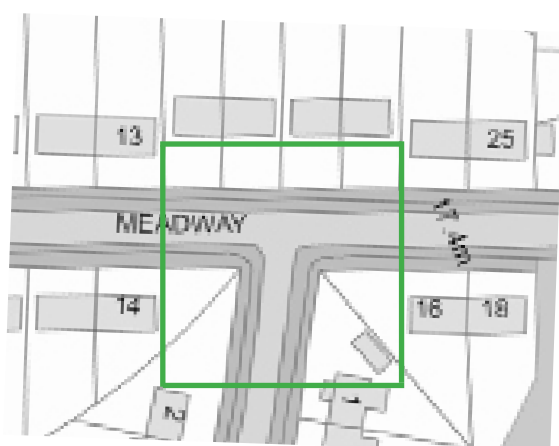


Figure 20: Road junctions designed as minor centres or “squares” (e.g Meadway/Trym-side)

- 6.1.26 The grouping of houses also adds variety to the street scene. The simplest way is by setting a small group, such as two pairs of semi-detached houses, back from the building line, as may be seen in Blaise Walk. Alternatively, they may be grouped around a focal green e.g at Trym Side, Sunny Hill, and Brookleaze, or there may be a larger grouping e.g. around the tennis courts in Dingle Close.

## Enclosed Open Spaces

- 6.1.27 Enclosed open spaces are spaces which are fully surrounded by a perimeter of houses, whose fronts face outwards away from the space, and whose gardens back onto the space. They are accessible by footpaths or from residents’ rear gardens or via narrow roads.
- 6.1.28 Enclosed open spaces are important, and are a defining characteristic of a garden suburb. They may be seen in the layouts of both pre- and post-WW1 garden suburbs, as well as the industrial villages like Port Sunlight and Bournville. Recreational space, like the tennis courts in Dingle Close, the Recreation Ground, play spaces or extra gardens, and allotments define the character of a garden suburb.

## Achieving the best outlook from houses

- 6.1.29 The suburb is laid out in such a way as to achieve the best possible outlook from both the front and the rear of the houses. In the original conception of Sea Mills Garden Suburb, the outlook on to the backs of houses was given equal importance to the fronts. The houses had a rear aspect of the same design and architectural quality as the front. This is an especially important characteristic of the area.
- 6.1.30 Achieving the best outlook was accomplished in a number of other ways: grouping houses around greens or open spaces; improving the street picture by arranging breaks in the building line; or planning roads to lead to a distant view, some open space, or a terminal feature.
- 6.1.31 Careful arrangement of buildings at corners and road junctions allows for extended outlooks from the houses at junctions, and also makes them features of interest in their own right. The end houses of cul-de-sacs have an extended outlook back down the street.



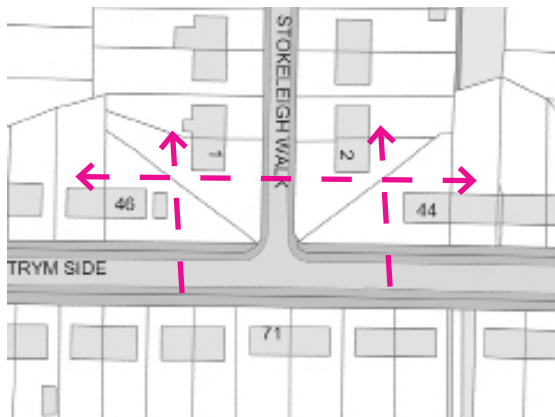


Figure 21: Glimpses and views between houses along the rear building line (e.g Trymside/Stokeleigh Walk)

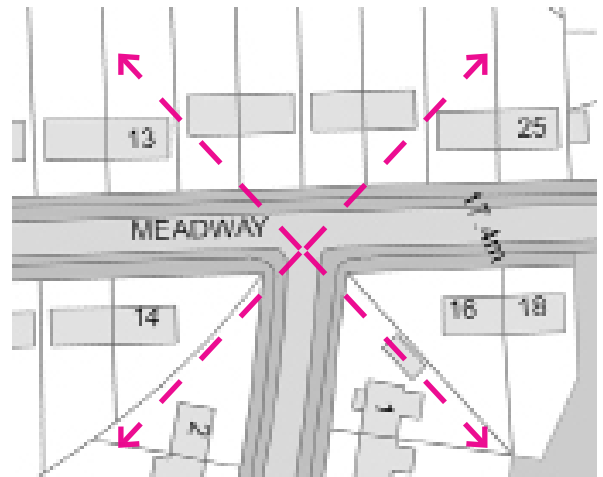


Figure 22: Glimpses and views between houses (e.g Meadway/Trymside)

### Regularity or Rhythm in the Spacing of Houses

- 6.1.32 The backs of houses around the perimeter of an enclosed open space provide a picturesque frame for it. The backs of houses are especially important around these spaces, and also where they are visible from other open spaces such as the Trym Valley and Shirehampton Golf Course, or where houses form a perimeter around public buildings.
- 6.1.33 The good size gaps between houses improves the amount of sunlight and air reaching each house, and also improves the outlook by providing gaps to look through.
- 6.1.34 Throughout the Garden Suburb, streets are laid out with a regularity or rhythm in the spacing of houses.
- 6.1.35 The painstaking planning that went into the layout and interrelationship of the Sea Mills Garden Suburb makes the area of special interest in this respect. The Conservation Area is therefore particularly sensitive to change or unsympathetic alteration that fails to respect the precise nature in which the suburb relates to topography, streets and spaces, views and buildings.

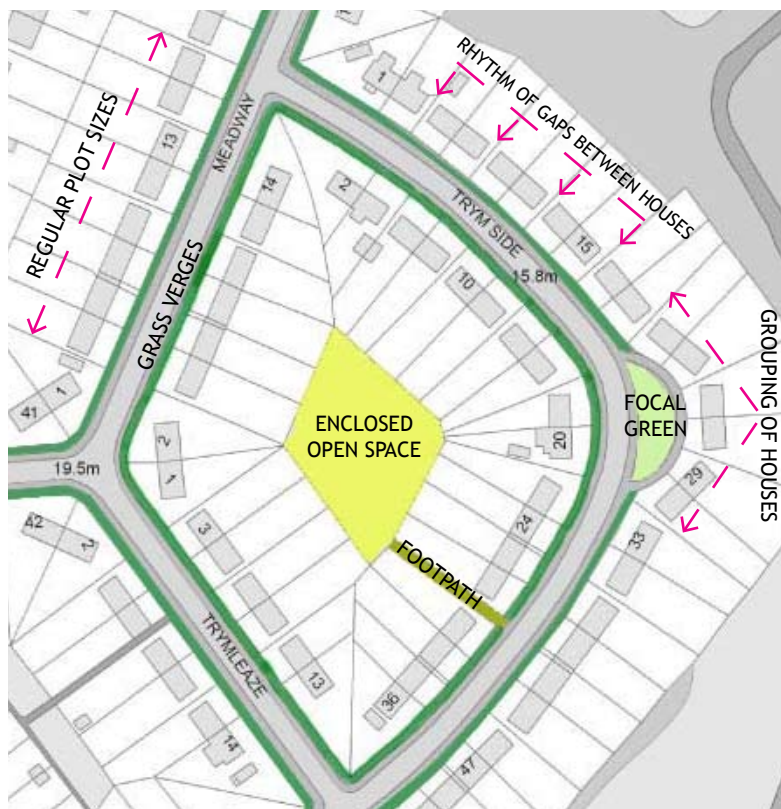


Figure 23: Elements of garden suburb design in Sea Mills



### Routes outside the Garden Suburb

- 6.1.36 The Portway runs through part of the Sea Mills Conservation Area, linking central Bristol with Avonmouth. The route runs parallel with the Avon along low lying land and separates open space to the west from the Garden Suburb to the northeast. The construction of this trunk road in 1919 - 1926 was synchronous with that of the Garden Suburb. Despite being a major, heavily trafficked route, its impact on the Conservation Area is minimal.
- 6.1.37 Sea Mills Lane is an historic route that carries traffic along the south eastern side of the Conservation Area. It separates Sea Mills from the suburb of Stoke Bishop. The meandering line of Sea Mills Lane follows that of the Trym, terminating at Sea Mills Dock.
- 6.1.38 Westbury Lane is the northernmost east/west route across Sea Mills Conservation Area. It separates the Garden Suburb from the more recent suburb of Coombe Dingle to the north. On its southern side houses and plots belong to the Garden Suburb. On the northern side of Westbury Lane houses tend to sit centrally to substantial garden plots.

### Footpaths

- 6.1.39 There are a number of footpaths within the Conservation Area, from minor local paths to sections of long-distance footpaths. These include the public footpath across Three Acre Covert; ones on both sides of the River Avon; across the Recreation Ground; and along and across the Trym Valley. These routes are important as they add a permeability through the area and a legibility that is as important by foot as it is by car.

**Map 2 shows the Routes & Spaces in the Conservation Area**

### Local Policy References

#### **Bristol Local Plan Policy B15:**

(I) 'Townscape and landscape features that contribute to the character or appearance of streets and open spaces within Conservation Areas should be preserved or enhanced.'

(II) Development will not be permitted where it would unacceptably harm landscapes, open spaces and gardens that contribute to the character of the area.

(III) The introduction of car parking into areas historically used as gardens and forecourts will not be permitted where it erodes either the character of the street and/or the setting of historic buildings.



# Map 2: Routes & Spaces A3



### 6.2 Views

6.2.1 The topography of the City is unique and views across it make an important contribution to Bristol's townscape and character. The spectacular city-wide views enjoyed from the Sea Mills Conservation Area are fundamental to its special interest. For the purpose of Character Appraisals, four types of views have been identified:

**Panoramic Views** - are wide-reaching views that extend across the city and beyond.

**Long Views** - are long-distance views across the City, to key features or landmark buildings. Views both into and out of the Conservation Area fall within this category.

**Local Views** - tend to be shorter and confined to a specific locality such as within the Conservation Area. They include views to skylines, local landmarks, attractive groups of buildings, views into open spaces, and squares, and along streets.

**Glimpses** - allow intriguing glances along intimate routes or into spaces. They make an important contribution to local character.

6.2.2 The undulating landscape of the Conservation Area and surrounding areas means views of all types in all directions are ubiquitous. Within Sea Mills, there is a near continual back-drop of views: Kings Weston ridge towards the north and north-west. To the west, there are views over the Golf Course and Shirehampton Park. To the south and south-west there are views of the River Avon and beyond to Somerset, to farmland and to the ridge that runs from Leigh Woods north-westwards via Abbots Leigh, the church and houses of which can be seen from Sea Mills.

6.2.3 **Panoramic views** reach up and down the Avon from various vantage points. Towards the east, south-east and north-east, there are views of Stoke Bishop, Sneyd Park,

and parts of the Sneyd Park Conservation Area. Wills Hall and other listed University buildings may be seen in distant views up to the edge of the Downs.



Figure 24: Views across the River Trym to the Kings Weston ridge beyond

6.2.4 Sea Mills is visible in numerous panoramic views from outside the estate, including views and panoramas from the Kings Weston and Trym Valley Conservation Area and the Sneyd Park Conservation Area.

6.2.5 Far-reaching views beyond the extent of the Conservation Area's boundaries play an important part in defining its special interest. The low-density, low-rise dwellings around its periphery and to the south of the Portway allow far-reaching views into and out the Conservation Area and across the Avon. Preserving the setting and views out from, as well as views into the Conservation Area, is vital in protecting its character and significance.



Figure 25: Long view into Sea Mills from Stoke Bishop © Tim Wallis

**6.2.6 Long views** are the main distant views of the undulating landscape of the Garden Suburb and include front and rear elevations, the roofscape and setting of the estate and the pockets of vegetation, both of private gardens and public green spaces, within and surrounding the estate. The tower of St. Edyth's Church is visible in a great number of these views. Occasionally, the Methodists Church on Sea Mills Square may be seen in distant views.

**6.2.7 Local views** are numerous, the precise nature of the Garden Suburb's layout having been deliberately planned to allow the best possible views and outlook by purposely taking best advantage of the contour lines and local topography. Many of the key local views include views along streets where the siting, height and mass of the houses and the means of enclosure to their front gardens frame views. Rear gardens and the trees they contain are equally important as they are often visible from the public realm.

**6.2.8** The volume and quality of views in the Garden Suburb is in large part due to the garden suburb principle of enclosed openness having been applied throughout the layout, including the streets, cul-de-sacs, and open spaces. A street, for example, which may be enclosed either by the curve of the road itself, or by a building which terminates the view, is given openness through glimpses out via the generous gaps between the houses.



Figure 26: View framed by houses

**6.2.9** Other examples of local views include the views across and along the Trym Valley open space, or the view from Coombe Dale, looking south-west to the nearby enclosed open space where the land rises and which also includes views of the trees in the rear gardens and the rear elevations of houses along The Crescent.

**6.2.10 Glimpses** are common throughout the Conservation Area and add greatly to its special interest. Many are via the planned gaps between houses. These include views across private gardens or enclosed open spaces; along the rear building line which carries the eye along and across the gardens to include glimpses of rear elevations; or more distant glimpsed views that include both front and rear elevations, the roofscape, and hills and landscape beyond.



Figure 27: View of St Edyth's Church tower ©John Roberts

**6.2.11** The preservation of all types of views both within and out from the Conservation Area is vital in protecting its character and special interest.

### Local Policy Reference

**Bristol Local Plan Policy B2 (i-v)**  
'Development should be designed with regard to the local context. Proposals which would cause unacceptable harm to the character and/or appearance of an area, or to the visual impact of historic buildings, views or landmarks will not be permitted.'

### 6.3 Landmark Buildings

6.3.1 Landmarks are buildings or structures that due to their height, location or detailed design stand out from their background. They contribute to the character and townscape of the area and provide navigation or focal points or key elements in views. There are three categories of landmarks in Sea Mills: landmark buildings, community landmarks and historic landmarks.

6.3.2 **Landmark Buildings** are larger, more conspicuous buildings that stand out due to their scale, prominent location, specific function or architectural style. These include:

- St Edyth's Church\*
- Sea Mills Methodist Church\*
- Sea Mills Library\*
- The Iron Bridge (former Progress Inn) PH\*
- Portway Bridge
- Sea Mills Farmhouse\*
- Riverside House\*
- Sea Mills Junior School\*
- Sea Mills Infants School
- New Signal Station\*
- Old Signal Station\*

6.3.3 **St Edyth's Church** is one of the most distinctive buildings in the Conservation Area. Designed by Sir George Oatley, its foundation stone was laid in 1926 and it was consecrated in 1928. The red pennant stone tower is clearly visible on the skyline, it features in many views, both distant and local. Within the Conservation Area it provides a focal point for one of the Garden Suburb's secondary centres, as well as being a terminal feature at the end of St. Edyth's Road.

6.3.4 **Sea Mills Methodist Church**, also by Sir George Oatley, was constructed in 1930. Located on the northern side of Sea Mills Square, it is the main focal point for the formal centrepiece of the Garden Suburb. It is also an important terminal feature in local views up St Edyth's Road. Abona Court is a recent large extension to the rear elevation of the Church.



Figure 28: St Edyth's Church



Figure 29: Sea Mills Methodist Church

6.3.5 **Sea Mills Library** (by C.F. Dawson, Chief Architect in the City Engineers Dept.) was constructed in the early 1930s and is located at another of the Garden Suburb's secondary centres.



Figure 30: Sea Mills Library

6.3.6 **The Iron Bridge (former Progress Inn) PH** occupies a prominent corner plot on Westbury Lane. Built by the Bristol Brewery Georges & Co Ltd. in 1938, it was one of the largest pubs built by the company and is a characteristic 1930s design. At the time, City Council policy did not permit the building of pubs on its housing estates, hence its siting just beyond. The building was included in the Conservation Area following the 2008 boundary extension.





Figure 31: The Iron Bridge (former Progress Inn) PH, Westbury Lane © Tim Wallis

6.3.7 **Portway Bridge** (constructed 1919 - 1926) carries the Portway over the River Trym as it runs from Bristol to Avonmouth. The massive grey pennant stone structure, with its 6 segmental archways terminates views looking south down Sea Mills Lane.

6.3.8 **Sea Mills Farmhouse** is one of the oldest buildings within the Conservation Area, and the only building to predate 1920 within the Garden Suburb itself. The building dates back to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, though it has later additions.



Figure 32: Sea Mills Farmhouse, Bowerleaze ©John Roberts

6.3.9 **Riverside House** is an impressive 18<sup>th</sup> century merchant's house, which stands out along Sea Mills Lane for its age and architectural quality. The three-storey Classical building (formally part of a pair but now attached to visually insensitive flats) is stucco rendered with fine sash windows and a double height canted stone bay.



Figure 33: Riverside House, 79 Sea Mills Lane

6.3.10 **Sea Mills Junior School**, Riverleaze by Alfred Oaten. First block opened 1928, a second block opened in 1931, contemporary with the building of the Garden Suburb. The architecture reflects and complements that of Sea Mills, being a simple, mostly unornamented, neo-Georgian style. The red pennant stone of the buildings is the same as that used for the nearby landmark building St Edyth's Church.



Figure 34: Sea Mills Junior School, built 1928 ©John Roberts



Figure 35: Second block for infants, built 1931 ©John Roberts

6.3.11 **Sea Mills Infants School**, off Hallen Drive, is distinctive in Sea Mills as it breaks the otherwise small-scale residential character of the northern part of the Garden Suburb. Although distinctive in its 1950s architectural style, reflecting the educational values of its period, it is nonetheless out of character with the architecture and appearance of the Garden Suburb.



Figure 36: Infants School, off Hallen Drive

6.3.12 **The Old Signal Station** is situated where the River Trym meets the River Avon at the far end of Sea Mills Lane, beyond the railway bridge. It is a prominent landmark, significant for its late 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture and its location at an important point in the navigational control system of the River Avon.



Figure 37: Old Signal Station

6.3.13 **The New Signal Station** c.1950s, located further along the bank of the Avon from the Old Signal Station, is virtually invisible by land but highly conspicuous from the River Avon, and from the opposite bank. The flat roof form with a rendered turret sets it apart from its surroundings.



Figure 38: New Signal Station

6.3.14 **Community landmarks** feature in the Conservation Area as buildings that do not necessarily stand out physically, though function as a hub or community focus and are well-known and recognised by local residents. These include:

- Sea Mills Community Centre
- Doctors Surgery
- Portway Rugby Development Centre
- Scout Club
- High Grove Church Hall
- Sea Mills Station Booking Hall\*
- Mill House Public House

6.3.15 **Sea Mills Station** opened in 1865. The stationmaster's house was built in 1894. In 1907 the station was enlarged and a booking hall, now occupied as business premises, built in an unusual domestic style.



Figure 39: Sea Mills Station Booking Hall  
©John Roberts

6.3.16 **Historic landmarks** are a point or structure that is of historic interest outside the Conservation Area. These include:

- Sea Mills Harbour Walls
- Remains of a Roman villa
- Original railway bridge over the River Trym

6.3.17 The maritime history of Sea Mills is of significance. The only listed structures within the Conservation Area are the original harbour walls, which function as a historic landmark.



Figure 40: Grade II listed harbour walls

6.3.18 The remains of a Roman villa lie just east of the Portway, opposite Hadrian Close. This is the earliest historic landmark in the Conservation Area, though it is unlisted and unscheduled.

**Landmark Buildings are identified at Map 3**

\* Unlisted Buildings of Merit (Relative Merit of Unlisted Buildings Map 6)

### Local Policy References

#### Bristol Local Plan Policy B2 (I - IV)

'Development should be designed with regard to the local context. Proposals which would cause unacceptable harm to the character and/or appearance of an area, or to the visual impact of historic buildings, views or landmarks, will not be permitted.'





# Map 3 Landmark Buildings (A3)



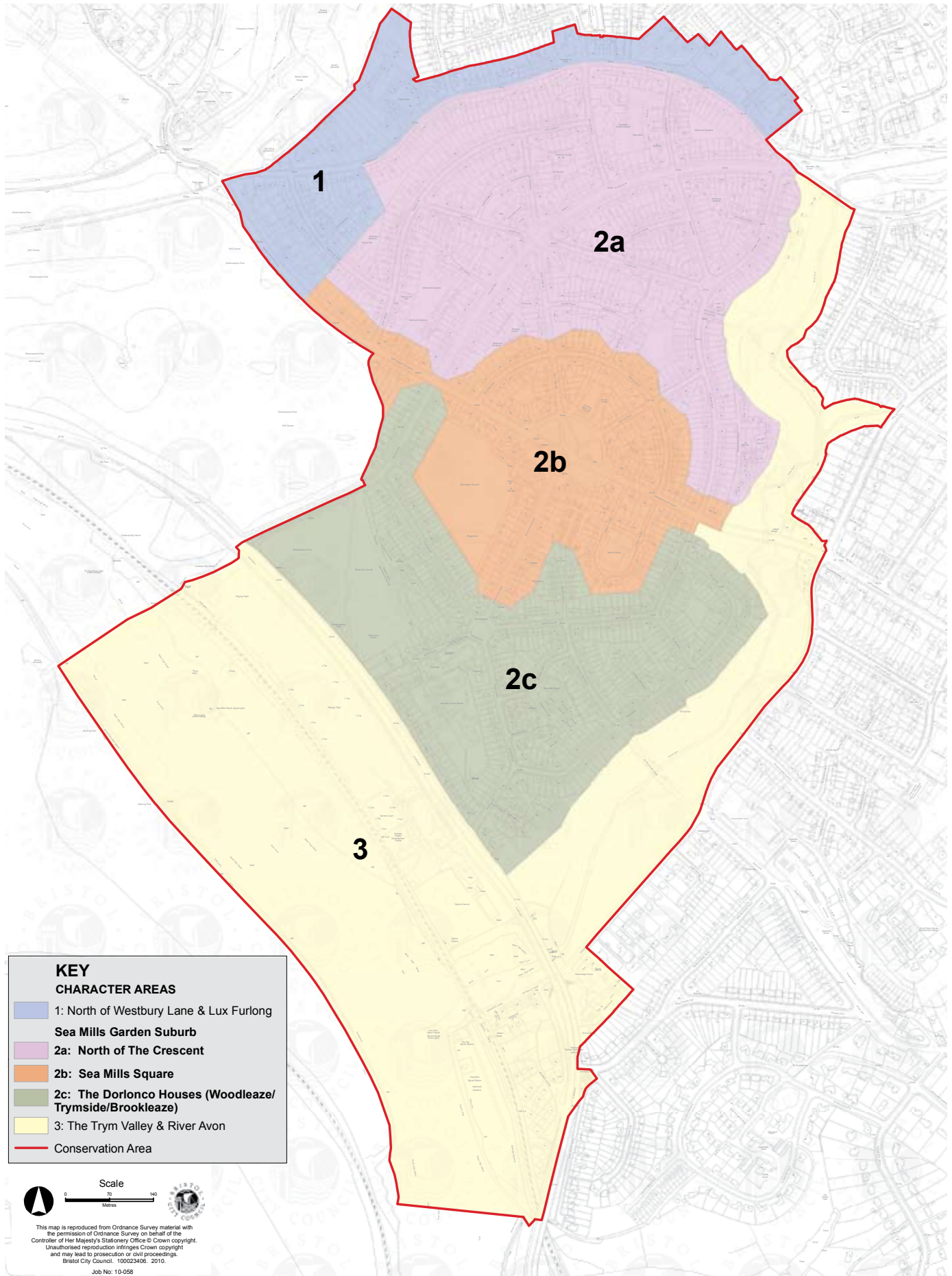
## 7. CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### 7.1 Overview & Character Areas

- 7.1.1 Sea Mills Garden Suburb was holistically planned as a unified whole. The area has a spacious and verdant character and setting. The building plots, houses and gardens have a regular size, form and spatial rhythm, with gaps between houses through which glimpses may be had of gardens, green spaces, buildings and vistas beyond.
- 7.1.2 The verdant character includes planned open and enclosed open spaces, grass verges, focal greens, and tree-lined avenues. Within the uniformity of the spatial layout, however, there is variety, which at the same time maintains the “harmony of the whole”. The Conservation Area also includes small areas to the north and south which are outside the boundaries of the Garden Suburb.
- 7.1.3 The Conservation Area can be divided into a number of areas of distinct character, each reflecting a particular aspect that goes beyond planned layout and built form.

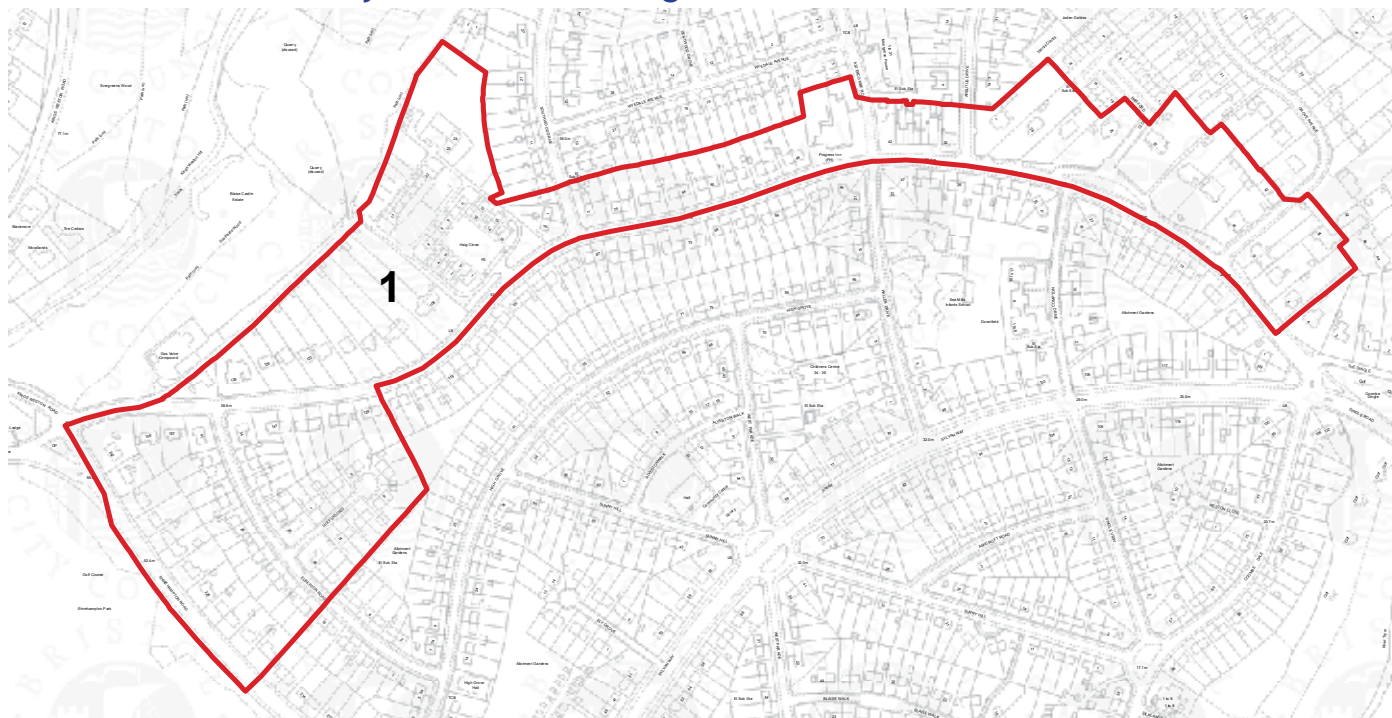
An overview of Character Areas is shown at Map 4

# Map 4: Sea Mills Conservation Area Character Areas



## 7.1.1 Character Area 1

### North of Westbury Lane & Lux Furlong



Map 4a: Character Area 1

7.1.1a This character area forms the northernmost portion of the Conservation Area; including the area marked as 'Reserved for Mr. Miles for Small Holdings' on the original Garden Suburb plan (see Historic Development) together with an area beyond the northern boundary of the original Garden Suburb, marked by the middle of Westbury Lane. It is an essential 'setting area' of the Garden Suburb, which continues the verdant, spacious and low density character and broadly consistent building style, but with noticeable differences.

7.1.1b The area was previously farmland owned by the Kings Weston Estate, apart from east of and including 24 Westbury Lane, which was once part of the Blaise Castle Estate, owned by the Harford Family - reflected in the name of 24 Westbury Lane '*Harford Lodge*'.

7.1.1c Overall, there is a high quality townscape characterised by general low density, bungalow or 2 storey dwellings set in large garden plots. The dwellings are

more varied than in the Garden Suburb, but have an overall cohesiveness through having a fairly consistent building line, regular gaps between dwellings, and mostly inter-War housing types. Seen as a whole, the buildings make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

7.1.1d **Nos. 6-24 Westbury Lane, c.1910**, predate the Garden Suburb and have a similar character to the adjacent houses of the Kings Weston and Trym Valley Conservation Area to the east. These detached family houses sit in large plots containing many mature trees (some with Tree Preservation Orders), on the same building line. Arts & Crafts influenced, they have projecting gables with decorative barge boards, and clay tiled roofs, their windows are an early modern example of side hung timber casements. Originally pebble-dash rendered with stone quoins, they are now mainly colour washed.





Figure 41: Edwardian house, Westbury Lane

7.1.1e The Kings Weston Estate largely influenced the inter-war development of this area, with house plans either drawn up by the Estate or designed by the firm W.G.Newton & Partners in conjunction with it. William Godfrey Newton was the son of Ernest Newton, the assessor for the 1919 Bristol Housing Competition (see Garden Suburb Housing Types).

7.1.1f **Nos. 108-130 (evens) Westbury Lane** are mostly detached individually architect-designed 1930s houses in considerably larger plots than those of the Garden Suburb. These contribute positively to the high quality spacious and verdant townscape of this side of Westbury Lane and to the Conservation Area, with the exception of no. 128 & 130.

7.1.1g At the west end of Westbury Lane, the area 'Reserved for Mr. Miles for Small Holdings' on the original Garden Suburb plan was developed between 1929 and 1937; including nos. 220 - 242 (evens) Shirehampton Road, 127-145 (odds) Westbury Lane, 14-34 (evens), 17-41 (odds) Elberton Road, and Lux Furlong.

7.1.1h In the main, the area was developed by various builders working to architectural plans drawn up or commissioned, and ultimately approved, by the Kings Weston Estate. These developments are similar to the Garden Suburb, though not part of the original plan and with subtle differences.

7.1.1i **Nos. 220 - 242 (evens) Shirehampton Road** are mostly detached, sitting on a slightly raised bank with views over the road to the golf course in Shirehampton Park. The houses were designed for the Kings Weston Estate by W.G.Newton and built in 1929-30. There were two types of detached house, the Type L2 and the Type T, together with two semi-detached pairs which were "Type T Double".



Figure 42: Shirehampton Road houses  
©John Roberts

7.1.1j **Lux Furlong** was built in 1934, and 14-32 (evens) and 17-39 (odds) **Elberton Road** in 1935-7. Nos. 34 and 41 Elberton Road were built in 1931/2 and are the same "Type L2" found on Shirehampton Road. Nos.18 & 20 Elberton Road are detached houses of some merit, adopted from elevations by W.G.Newton, on the corners of Lux Furlong. The semi-detached Lux Furlong and Elberton Road houses, have a similar plot size, building line, and rhythm of gaps between them as in the Garden Suburb. In some instances, the uniformity of size and appearance and the front building line has been spoiled by extensions and porches.

7.1.1k **Nos. 48 - 74 (evens) Westbury Lane**, built in 1935/6, are the same design as the Elberton Road houses, but with some variants of materials and finish. Sitting on a slight bank they form a group with the former Progress Inn though are similar in size to the Garden Suburb houses and have a similar rhythm of gaps between them.

7.1.1l **The Iron Bridge public house**, formerly the Progress Inn, is a Landmark Building and an Unlisted Building of Merit.

7.1.1m To the east is a row of 1930s

shops, which offer an opportunity for sympathetic improvement or reinstatement of their shopfronts. East of the shops are three bungalows built at the same time as the Sea Mills estate (c. 1927). They share the same building line as adjacent houses to the east and occupy similar plot sizes. Architecturally, they complement the Garden Suburb houses opposite.



Figure 43: Haig Close

**7.1.1p Haig Close** is a small estate on a slope towards the western end of Westbury Lane that complements the character and appearance of the Garden Suburb and is of special merit in the contribution it makes to the wider Conservation Area. Built as almshouses for disabled ex-service men of the City of Bristol and their families, on land given by Philip Napier Miles. Originally ‘Douglas Haig Mens Homes’, 16 houses were built in 1929-30 in a symmetrical layout around a focal green. Six cottages, by W.G.Newton, were added in 1936 and two in 1955. The front range is decorated with a bust of General Haig.

either end. A green close to its junction with Harford Close marks the original line of the lane before it was widened and realigned in the early 1930s. The greens, hedges, trees, and gardens of this character area complement the character and appearance of Sea Mills Garden Suburb.

**7.1.1r** Roughly 60m above sea level, this area enjoys excellent views into the Garden Suburb, as well as far-reaching views towards Stoke Bishop, city, the Avon, and beyond. It is also important in views from these places towards the Kings Weston ridge.

**7.1.1q** Westbury Lane has a focal green at

Strengths	Opportunities
High quality townscape	Sympathetic replacement or reinstatement of traditional architectural details or boundary treatments
Verdant, spacious and low density	Improved signage and shopfront design for the group of 1930s shops
Cohesive architectural character	Appropriate refurbishment and re-use of the former Progress Inn public house
Complements the character and appearance of Sea Mills Garden Suburb	
Survival of the original layout with original plots, building lines, greens, trees and hedges	
Weaknesses	Threats
Loss of traditional architectural details, notably the group of shopfronts	Unsympathetic redevelopment of dwellings, public house, or the shops
Loss of traditional garden plots and boundary treatments	Loss of traditional architectural details, hedges, and garden plots, out of character accretions
Large satellite dish associated with the pub	Out of character extensions and dormers
	Over-development of single plots or amalgamation of plots, and/or alterations to the building line



## 7.1.2 Character Area 2a

### Sea Mills Garden Suburb - North of The Crescent



Map 4b: Character Area 2a

**7.1.2a** Although the Garden Suburb was designed as a homogenous entity, there are subtle but discernible character differences within it. North of The Crescent, the area has an undulating landscape. It comprises curving streets which generally follow the contour lines, straight axial roads which cross these, and the curving Coombe Dale which follows the topography of the Trym Valley.

**7.1.2b** This area includes two secondary centres: one at the focal green in Coombe Dale, the other where West Parade and Sunny Hill cross Sylvan Way in front of the Library.

**7.1.2c** This area has an unblemished red roofscape, which is a significant part of its character. Apart from some 2-storey extensions, the original simple square or rectangular roof forms mostly remain, with no dormers.

**7.1.2d** **Sylvan Way**, a tree-lined boulevard with wide grass verges, forms the main artery through the area. Although slightly spoiled by extensions, porches, some material alterations, and loss or alterations to front boundary treatments, it is one of the most attractive roads in the Garden Suburb. Many of the original privet hedges remain, which, together with the trees and grass verges, give the road a very verdant appearance.

- 7.1.2e **Sylvan Way** and the south side of Westbury Lane have similar house types: semi-detached WDB5s and CNA5s, punctuated by occasional terraces of WDA5s (see Garden Suburb Housing Types), all in red brick. Some of the WDA5s attractively step down to follow the slope of Westbury Lane.



Figure 44: Westbury Lane © Tim Wallis

- 7.1.2f Sylvan Way also includes Arts & Crafts style HBA5 houses, which flank some of the road junctions. The catslide roofs emphasise the openness of the corners, e.g near the Library, and at the junction with Compton Drive.
- 7.1.2g Attractive “butterfly” houses, CBE5s, the only ones of this type in the Garden Suburb, flank the junction of Westbury Lane with Hallen Drive.



Figure 45: Hallen Drive/Westbury Lane © Tim Wallis

- 7.1.2h Numbers 3/5 and 5/7 Westbury Lane, built privately in 1929, were designed by Alfred E. Oaten who also designed Sea Mills Junior School.

- 7.1.2h Other than the main through-routes, and occasional traditional brick houses in High Grove and Compton Drive, the remaining houses are mainly Parkinson PRC type. A number of the original Parkinsons were demolished and sympathetically rebuilt in the 1990s; though others have recently been repaired in a finish which is out of character with the rest of the Garden Suburb.

- 7.1.2i Relatively small individual changes to houses, cumulatively threaten the character and appearance of the area. No. 79 Coombe Dale was recently demolished and rebuilt; it now has a much larger footprint, and the finish and door surrounds are out of character with its neighbours. The two front door openings are out of character with the whole of the Garden Suburb. The front garden has been overlain with block paving. (See Negative Features).
- 7.1.2j This character area includes a number of planned open spaces and enclosed open spaces, including a number of allotment areas still used for their original purpose, although a number have been lost to infill development, or have become overgrown (see Section 5).

- 7.1.2k The **Coombe Dale enclosed open space**, bounded by Coombe Dale, East Parade, Blaise Walk, and Sunny Hill, contributes positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. On a slope in an undulating landscape, it is visible from Coombe Dale as it winds down from Weston Close; from the focal green where Sunny Hill; Dingle View and Coombe Dale meet; and in more distant views. This space is currently overgrown, and its restoration would enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- 7.1.2l The enclosed open space bounded by Compton Drive, Sylvan Way and Westbury Lane is an attractive well-used allotments area accessed by a footpath.





**Figure 46: Coombe Dale enclosed open space**

**7.1.2m** The enclosed open space bounded by Sylvan Way, High Grove, Shirehampton Road and Ely Grove, marked “Play Space” on the original blueprints, and “Allotment Gardens” on the 1950’s O.S. Map, is currently mostly overgrown with some allotment use and garaging.

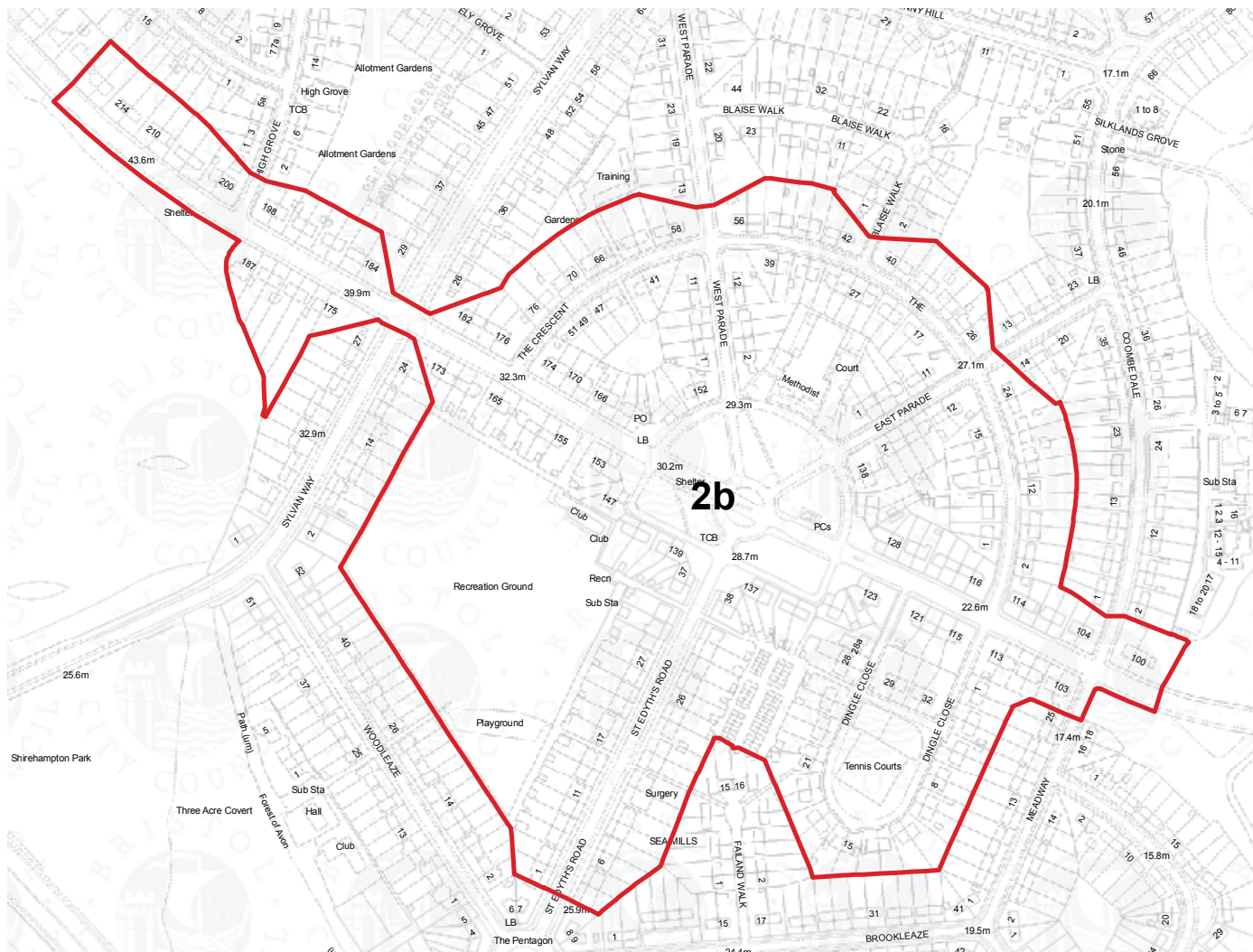
**7.1.2n** A pair of semi-detached houses, nos. 46 & 48 West Parade were lost to provide an entrance to the Children’s Centre, built in an enclosed open space originally designated for extra gardens, to the detriment of the designed layout of the Garden Suburb.

**7.1.2o** The Infants School building off Hallen Drive is of architectural interest in its own right, being a typical example of a 1950s “coastline” plan, reflecting the educational values of its period. It sits well within its site. Nonetheless its design is alien to that of the original Garden Suburb, having none of the characteristics which define the Suburb’s character and appearance.

**7.1.2p** Other post WWII developments have also failed to respect the otherwise consistent scale, plot sizes, massing, materials, layout and overall character of the area. E.g Silklands Grove, Wood End Walk, the Training Centre, the Community Centre. There is an unattractive electricity substation with unattractive metal railings in Coombe Dale (see Negative Features).

Strengths	Weaknesses
The survival of the original street layout with the original plots, greens, trees and hedges	Electricity sub-station on Coombe Dale and associated palisade fencing
Uniform red roofscape of simple square or rectangular roof forms	Some overgrown enclosed open spaces
Good use of some enclosed open spaces as allotments	Extensions and loss of traditional architectural details, finishes, privet hedges and front gardens
The area is very important in views from the river Avon and the more southerly part of Sea Mills towards Kings Weston ridge	Loss of original planned enclosed open spaces to infill development and uses other than originally designated
The way the streets relate to natural topography	Lack of play space and informal open space
Opportunities	Threats
Increase use and community function of allotment gardens and enclosed open spaces	Loss of enclosed open spaces and allotments to unsympathetic development
Sympathetic replacement/reinstatement of architectural details, privet hedges, front gardens	Continued loss of privet hedges and front gardens
Protection of focal greens near the Library from moving traffic	Loss of local views and glimpses into gardens and to rear elevations
New boundary treatment or visual improvements to electricity substation	Possible unsympathetic redevelopment when Infants School becomes redundant
	New extensions, porches, unsympathetic alterations, replacement windows and doors in non-traditional materials; loss or alteration to the uniform red roofscape or roof forms

### 7.1.3 Character Area 2b Sea Mills Garden Suburb - Sea Mills Square



Map 4c: Character Area 2b

**7.1.3a** This character area centres on Sea Mills Square and the streets that radiate from it. It is at the heart of the Conservation Area physically, as well providing the main shopping area for the local community.

**7.1.3b** **Sea Mills Square** is the formal centrepiece of the Garden Suburb, sited where the topography is level. The Square is geometrically laid out with five greens. North of the main road through the Square, a semi-circular green is divided into thirds by West Parade and East Parade. South of the main road, a rectangular green is bisected by St. Edyth's Road running southwards. The perimeter of the five greens is framed by another road which encloses them.

**7.1.3c** Where Shirehampton Road crosses the centre of the Square there are two semi-circular features, the northern one has an early lampstandard. An attractive Millennium stone of lettered Cornish granite is sited in the southeastern green. Adjacent to the red telephone box in the southwestern green is Addison's oak tree (see Historic Development section).

**7.1.3d** From much of the Square the backdrop of Kings Weston Hill is visible. As the houses of the Garden Suburb are all two-storey with gaps between, the sky is very open, creating a feeling of both enclosure and openness. A recent planting of oak trees has provided a spatial framework that reinforces the Square's formal layout.

7.1.3e The two arms of **West Parade and East Parade** lead the eye away from the Square to be terminated by semi-detached houses but with the vistas of, respectively, Kings Weston Hill and the trees of the Trym Valley behind and rising above the houses.

7.1.3f The Square is enclosed by a perimeter of two-storey houses and shops with the Methodist Church sited at the centre of the northern perimeter of the semi-circle. Sea Mills Square is a formal square, that should be sensitively treated in order to preserve its status as the heart of the Garden Suburb.

7.1.3g 12 shops arranged in pairs are located around the Square; their fronts, neo-classical door surrounds, and use, are important features contributing to the character of the area. Three shops have been changed to residential use; and two have been joined from a pair to form one shop; another has been extended into its neighbouring residential property. Originally, each pair had a central rear access passageway, only one now remains. Illuminated box signs and over-size fascias; modern shopfronts, and unsightly security shutters are unsympathetic features detracting from the quality of this group.



Figure 47: Original drawing of shops elevations in Sea Mills Square, showing open passageway with pedimented surround between shops, and attached to WDB5 type house to the left ©BRO

7.1.3h A 1950s concrete toilet block in the northeastern green interrupts the original composition of the Square and the balance of the intended layout. A recent planning application has been approved to turn the block into a community facility and cafe.

7.1.3i **Abona Court**, a residential extension to the north side of the **Methodist Church**, undermines the Church's architectural integrity, especially when viewed from the north. The roof form and dormers relate poorly to the simple square or rectangular roofs of the Garden Suburb. Its mass and height makes it relate poorly to the neighbouring cottage-style houses, it also dominates glimpsed and local views between houses. The hardstanding and modern lampstandards are also out of character.

7.1.3j Undermining the Square is the recycling bin unsympathetically located in the centre of the Shirehampton Road. Parking on paved areas in front of shops, on pavements, and with wheels occasionally on the green, is detrimental, notably around the Post Office.

7.1.3k **Shirehampton Road** has red-brick houses which are all either WDB5s or WDA5s except for a few CNA5s north-west of Sylvan Way. Along Shirehampton Road all the WDB5s have bay-windows on both the ground and first floors. The Crescent also includes these house types, without bay windows, but also groupings of the more Arts & Crafts style HBA5s.

7.1.3l **Dingle Close** is a grouping of rendered WDB5s that surround the Garden Suburb's tennis courts.



Figure 48: Dingle Close tennis courts



**7.1.3m St Edyth's Road** was built as private housing, and is architecturally distinct from the rest of the Garden Suburb. Half rendered, half brick, with canted bays with tiled roofs. Unusually, there are terraces of three, terraces of four and paired cottages. The street's charm is accentuated by the landmark buildings that terminate views at either end.



Figure 49: St Edyth's Road houses

**7.1.3n** Between St. Edyth's Road and Dingle Close are 74 garages, built 1924-9. The group makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

**7.1.3o** The uniform red roofscape and simple square or rectangular roofs contribute to the character and appearance of this area. The original forms mostly remain, apart from Abona Court and some 2-storey extensions.

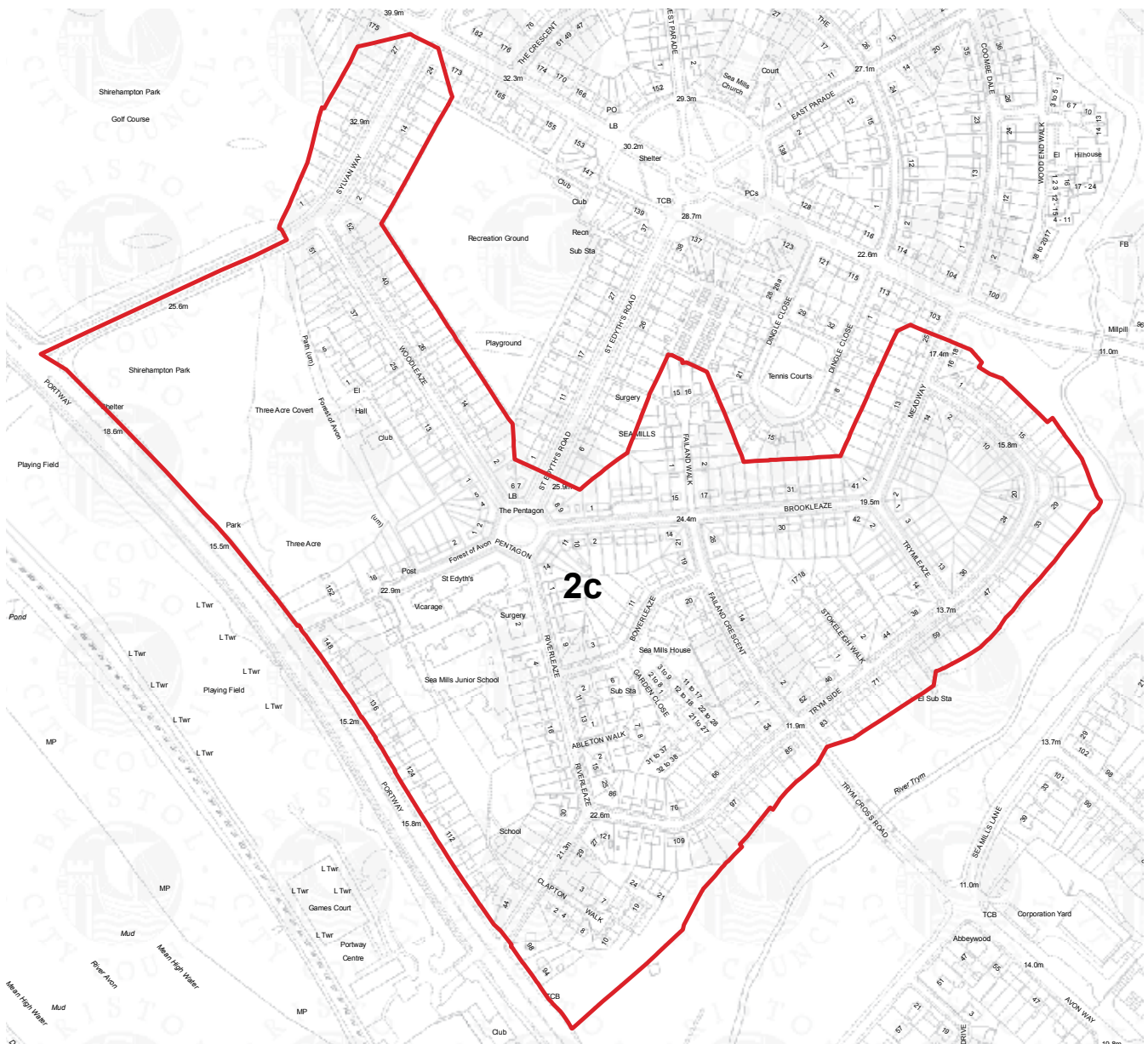
**7.1.3p** The Recreation Ground is the largest enclosed open space in Sea Mills containing the only children's play space in the Conservation Area. The equipment and surfaces are poorly maintained and offer an opportunity for enhancement.

**7.1.3q** The enclosed open space bounded by The Crescent, Shirehampton Road and West Parade was originally designated for extra gardens, now lost to provide a car park for the Training Centre.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Attractive formal centrepiece of Sea Mills with a backdrop of views of the Kings Weston ridge	Street clutter: recycling bin and unsympathetic traffic calming in Shirehampton Road
Original purpose-built shops define this character area as the community 'hub' of Sea Mills	Poor maintenance of traditional street furniture
Sense of openness owing to low-rise development and position within the landscape	Damage to grass areas of the Square owing to off street parking
Important local views down/up St Edyth's road and other roads leading off the Square and relationship between the two churches	Loss of traditional shopfronts and unsympathetic signage, security features and ATM machines
Volume of green space and recreation facilities including tennis courts off Dingle Close	Loss of an enclosed open space to a car park
Uniform red roofscape of simple square or rectangular roof forms	Extensions, porches, loss of traditional architectural details, privet hedges, and garden plots and external finishes
	Recreation facilities: lack signage, require upgrading and maintenance
Opportunities	Threats
Enhancement of recreational facilities and public green spaces	Further loss of traditional shopfronts and increase in unsympathetic signage
Removal of recycling facility and reduction of street clutter	Threats to the formal character of the Square, unsympathetic alterations to its layout or design
Sympathetic reinstatement of traditional architectural details or and privet hedges	Threats to setting through unsympathetic development in surrounding areas
	Extensions and continued loss of privet hedges/unsympathetic alterations etc.

## 7.1.4 Character Area 2c

### Sea Mills Garden Suburb - The Dorlonco Houses



Map 4d: Character Area 2c

**7.1.4a** This character area is the southernmost portion of the original Garden Suburb, and the lowest geographically - just 15-20m above sea level. It includes all the original 250 Dorlonco houses built during the earliest phase of the Garden Suburb, 1920-1922. Nos. 21-27 Sylvan Way (odd) were the first to be ready for occupation, on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1920.

**7.1.4b** There is a sophisticated plan form, notably at The Pentagon and streets radiating from it. There is a particular charm and verdant character in this portion of the Conservation Area, contributed to by the tree-lined streets

including Woodleaze, Brookleaze and Meadway and the green edge of the valley of the River Trym to the south-east.



Figure 50: Tree-lined Woodleaze

7.1.4c The area also includes some houses of Parkinson PRC construction, mostly in Trymside and Stokeleigh Walk, and some red brick houses such as the WDB5s along the Portway. The roofscape of the Dorlonco houses is dark grey natural slate, although the roofscape of the remainder of this character area is the predominant red tiles of the rest of the Garden Suburb. Nos. 4 - 18 (even) Riverleaze are an interesting “broken terrace” arrangement of 8 houses which is unique within Sea Mills.

7.1.4d This character area contains some of Sea Mills’ most significant unlisted buildings including: St Edyth’s Church, also a valuable local landmark; Sea Mills Junior School; and Sea Mills Farmhouse - the only pre-20th century building extant within the Garden Suburb. There are also some surviving rubble boundary walls within the c. 1960s Garden Close development off Bowerleaze, which are an important remnant worthy of preservation.



Figure 51: Sea Mills Junior School with the tower of St Edyth’s Church behind

7.1.4e The buildings of Garden Close are out of character with the Garden Suburb, both in layout and design, and make a negative contribution. The sheltered housing development at the end of Clapton Walk is similarly out of character and has detrimentally replaced the end pair of houses (9 and 10) of this cul-de-sac. The buildings of Bluebell Close are also out of character although less so.

7.1.4f Privately built in 1932, nos. 10-20 (even) Avonleaze and 150/152 Portway are WDB5s with bay windows on both floors. Finished in “Catty Brook Brindle” bricks, not the typical red brick finish

of this building type. No. 22 Avonleaze is a detached house, also in Catty Brook Brindle bricks. These houses form an attractive group which are in keeping with and make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Garden Suburb.

7.1.4g From the Trym Valley, the rear building line and rear boundary treatments of houses on the south-east side of Trym Side form an important visual line marking the boundary of the Garden Suburb. Maintaining the uniformity of these rear elevations and their appearance is essential in views from this important open space.

7.1.4h Rear extensions, currently few in number, to the original flat backed simple architecture of the original houses are particularly noticeable here as they interrupt what should be a continuous curving and undulating rear building line. This boundary line has a “gateway” midway along where Trym Cross Road crosses the valley from Sea Mills Lane to enter the Garden Suburb.

7.1.4i Between Woodleaze and The Portway, Sylvan Way is flanked by green open space on both sides with extensive views from the road south-west over the River Avon across agricultural land on the Somerset side towards Abbots Leigh beyond. The approach from The Portway up, the appropriately named, Sylvan Way is one of the green “gateways” to the Garden Suburb.

7.1.4j The open space adjacent to Three Acre Covert is part of Shirehampton Park, part of the Grade II Registered parkland of Kingsweston House, although now separated from the rest of the park by Sylvan Way. This open space is one of the best meadows in Bristol and has been designated a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. Both the meadow and Three Acre Covert need to be made more welcoming for public use.



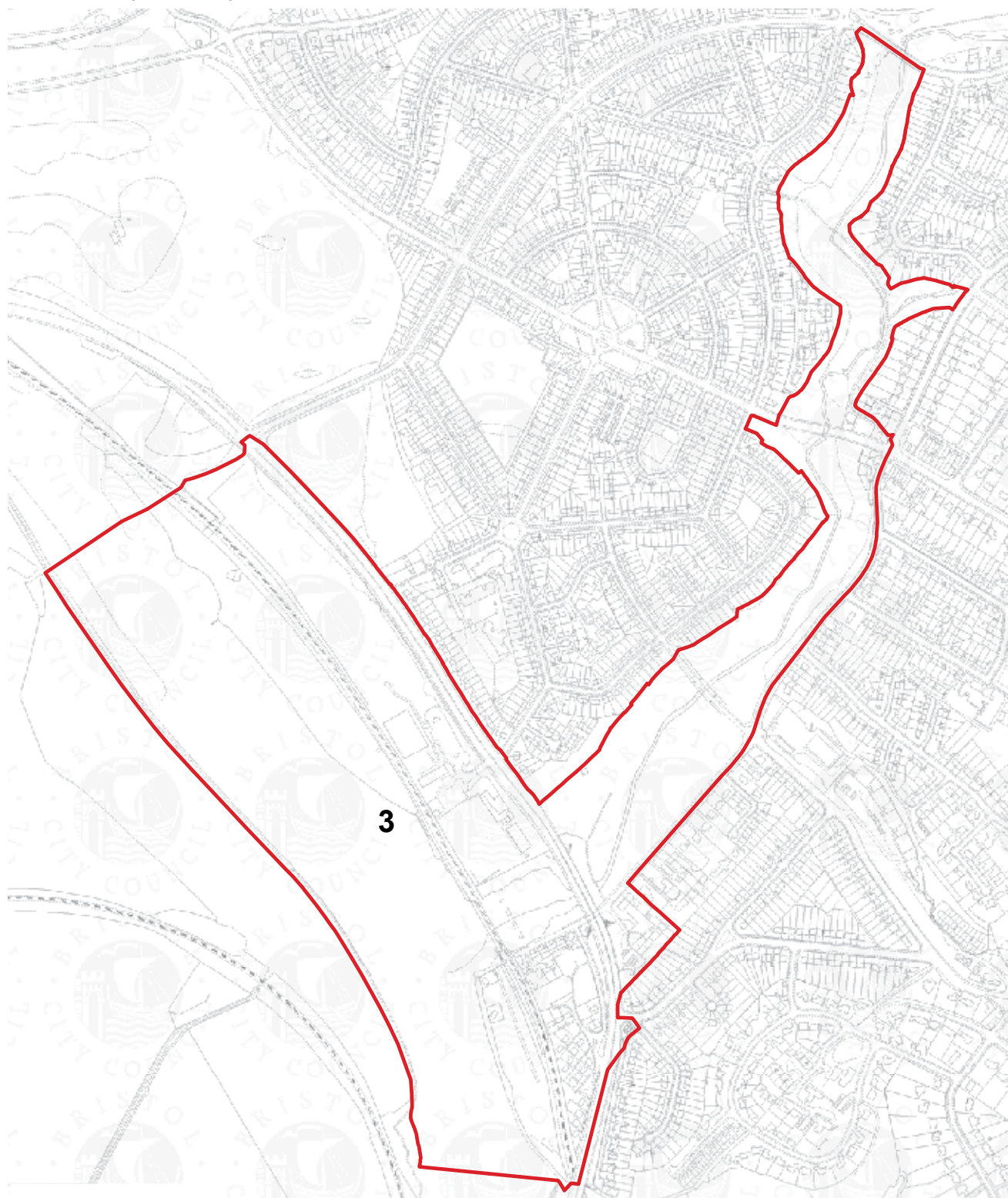


7.1.4k The Community Forest Path, a 46-mile recreational route around Bristol, passes along the north-east side of Three Acre Covert before crossing Sylvan Way. Views from this important scenic footpath towards and across the River Avon from Three Acre Covert should be protected and preserved.

7.1.4l This character area has been slightly spoiled by extensions, porches breaking the front building line, some alterations to original finish, some loss of front gardens to hard standing, and loss of privet hedges to other front boundary treatments.

Strengths	Weaknesses
The survival of the original street layout with the original plots, greens, trees and hedges	Volume of on-street parking detracting from the tree-lined streets
Sophisticated layout	Extensions, porches, and loss of traditional architectural details, privet hedges, and garden plots and external finishes
Charming character	c. 1960s Garden Close and Clapton Walk developments out of keeping with the Garden Suburb architecture
Quality and importance of key unlisted buildings	
Important views down Avonleaze and Sylvan Way across the Avon and glimpsed views off Trymside towards the River Trym	
Opportunities	Threats
Enhancement of green spaces to increase their value within the community	Under-used extra gardens which may present redevelopment threat in the future
Sympathetic replacement or reinstatement of traditional architectural details, privet hedges and front gardens	Out of character changes to rear elevations spoiling glimpsed views
Sympathetic tree planting scheme could further improve quality of the environment	Sea Mills Junior School currently vacant and may be lost to redevelopment and replacement by an unsympathetic alternative
The sympathetic adaptive reuse of the existing Junior School buildings	Continued loss of privet hedges and front gardens.
	New extensions, porches, unsympathetic alterations, replacement windows and doors in non-traditional materials
	Loss of local views and glimpses into gardens and to rear elevations through extensions and new development

### 7.1.5 Character Area 3 The Trym Valley and River Avon



Map 4e: Character Area 3

7.1.5a This area forms a green boundary to the east, south-east and south-west of the Garden Suburb, and is the lowest portion of the Conservation Area at just 10m above sea level. The character is verdant and open, and largely undeveloped apart from the pocket of low-density, low-rise housing in the southernmost point.

7.1.5b This character area is extremely important in providing a green 'buffer' to the Garden Suburb but also has significance in its relationship with Sea Mills Dock and the maritime history of the area. It is an area of outstanding scenic beauty, part of Bristol's network of green corridors, and important for wildlife and biodiversity.

7.1.5c **The River Trym** runs north to south until it reaches Sea Mills Dock and joins the Avon. This creates a green buffer between the Garden Suburb and neighbouring suburbs. Views are a vital component of the significance of this area, with local views up the River Trym and across towards the Garden Suburb.

7.1.5d The northern limit of this area is marked by a white bridge, with attractive balustrading, over the Trym where Dingle Road crosses it. It is one of the “gateways” to the Garden Suburb.

7.1.5e The south end of **Sea Mills Lane** has an interesting mix of buildings, with some valuable unlisted buildings including an 18<sup>th</sup> century cottage, Sea Mills Station booking office and Station House, as well as the old and new Signal Stations alongside the River Avon (see Landmark Buildings). The unlisted building of merit, Riverside House, is undermined by the insensitive 1960s flats block to its side (see Negative Features).



Figure 52: 18<sup>th</sup> century cottage, Sea Mills Lane

7.1.5f Footpaths are important as a through-route for walkers along both sides of the Avon and up the Trym Valley to the Blaise Castle Estate, as are local footpath connections across the valley, for example from Coombe Dale to Bell Barn Road. Paths have become overgrown in places, particularly the upper part of the valley, while poor signage, overgrowth and lack of woodland management make parts uninviting.



Figure 53: The verdant Trym Valley viewed from Trym Cross Road

7.1.5g This character area also includes the area between the Portway and the city boundary on the Somerset side of the River Avon. It is part of a continuous succession of parts of conservation areas along the course of the River Avon which protect both banks, running from the Horseshoe Bend via the Avon Gorge to the centre of Bristol.

7.1.5h The Avon’s Somerset bank includes the River Avon Trail, formerly the towing path. The Severn Way footpath between the railway line and the banks of the Avon is also significant, given the extensive views north and south along this part of the path. The Bristol bank invites enhancement as the flotsam and jetsam deposited by the river, combined with the rough-growing vegetation over the footpath, makes walking this part of the path hazardous.

7.1.5i Views are a vital component of the significance of this area, which has important and continuous views both into and out from the Conservation Area and into and away from the adjacent parts of the Avon Valley as it passes through the



Kings Weston and Trym Valley and Sneyd Park Conservation Areas. Far-reaching views extend across the Avon to North Somerset. The Severn Beach Railway line, successor to the Bristol Port and Pier Railway, is renowned for its scenic views.



Figure 54: View through Portway Bridge towards Severn Beach Line and Avon beyond

7.1.5j Views from this area towards the Garden Suburb, either from the footpaths, boat traffic, or from trains, are to a low-lying panorama of two-storey cottage-style houses and their slate or reddish roofs,

rising gently away, with the Kings Weston ridge visible beyond towards the north. The only building punctuating the skyline is the pennant stone tower of St. Edyth's.

7.1.5k The area originally “Reserved for Industrial Development” was never developed for industrial use and is now used as playing fields and sports grounds. Views within and across this area are partly spoiled by the mobile phone masts and floodlights (particularly at night) that surround the sports ground, as well as the out of character sports buildings.



Figure 55: View across Sea Mills Dock ©John Roberts

Strengths	Weaknesses
Verdant character providing an important green buffer to the Garden Suburb	Poorly maintained and overgrowing vegetation of green spaces on Bristol side of river Avon
Views across the Garden Suburb, across, up and down the Avon; and across and along the Trym	Out of character flats adjoining Riverside House
Historical connections with the sea and Bristol's maritime history	Lighting and masts associated with the sports ground detracting from views; sports buildings out of character and visually unattractive
Footpaths for pleasure and access and scenic views from the Severn Beach railway line	Poor signage and uninviting entrances to footpaths, lack of seating, planting, and maintenance, notably of white bridge
Archaeological importance as Roman port of Abona and remains of a Roman Villa	Deterioration of the Harbour Walls, core being eroded by flowing water and silt
Important mix of unlisted buildings	
Opportunities	Threats
Possible improvement to long-distance footpath on Bristol side of river	Loss of views from developments that would disturb the setting of the Conservation Area
Improved maintenance of green spaces, management of woodland, signage and facilities could increase public use and enjoyment	Unsympathetic development of Hadrian Close and public conveniences next to the Portway Bridge
Restoration of Harbour Walls and removal from BCC Buildings at Risk Register	Further deterioration and eventual loss of Harbour Walls
	Unsympathetic alteration of unlisted buildings

### 7.2 ARCHITECTURE

7.2.1 Sea Mills Garden Suburb is a mainly residential area whose essential purpose and character is family housing. It is notable for the layout of its streets and public open spaces which are defined by two storey cottage-style houses with pitched, mostly hipped, roofs, chimney stacks and pots, arranged in symmetrical pairs or occasional short terraces. The overall scale of these buildings is modest, with mainly paired cottages sitting in generous plots with low hedges defining the front and side boundaries.

7.2.2 There is a notable cohesiveness within the Conservation Area, reinforced by the common front and rear building lines, similar or matching building forms, and the matching eaves heights and roof forms. Apart from some original bay windows, all the paired cottages are flat fronted and flat backed, creating simple blocks of rectangular or square form, without “back projections” or rear or side extensions or porches, a design fundamental to the character and appearance of the Garden Suburb. Those of rectangular plan have the longest face facing the street.

7.2.3 Terraced houses are similarly flat fronted and flat backed, although some have pronounced original wing-features at either end. Terraces of four have a central passageway, some with an arched opening,

through the middle to provide access to the rear. Rear elevations were designed to be as attractive and equally important as the fronts.

7.2.4 Materials include a finish of all white or cream painted roughcast render or red brick. The two finishes are used in conjunction in St. Edyth's Road.

7.2.5 Other than the natural slate of the Dorlonco houses, roofs are clad in red clay double Roman tiles. Most properties have shallow hipped roofs, occasionally with a cat-slide to one side. The houses are simply detailed with shared red or grey brick axial chimney stacks and occasional separate elongated side stacks, some with their original clay pots punctuating the skyline. Many of the buildings have deeper or ‘sprocketed’ eaves, created by a change in roof pitch close to the base of the slope.

7.2.6 The most common detailing is simple, neo-classical in style. Windows are largely timber painted white, either sashes divided by profiled glazing bars, or casements, mostly side-hung pairs or three-light. Crittall steel windows were used for house types HBA5, MGB2 and WSB2. Original fixed timber shutters on some house types are an important part of the proportions of windows to doors. Many windows have incrementally been altered and replaced in non traditional materials, altering the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



Figure 56: Typical Garden Suburb architecture, Coombe Dale



Figure 57: Original Crittall windows and neo-classical door surround



Figure 58: Shopfronts, Sea Mills Square

- 7.2.7 Original doors are all either timber or glazed panels over timber panels. A common detail of the Garden Suburb, is a simple neo-classical door surround, timber and painted white. These usually have a moulded architrave stopped on plinths with flat hood on shaped brackets. The HBA5s, with their cat-slide roofs, and the houses of St. Edyth's Road have a more rustic, Arts and Crafts appearance.
- 7.2.8 In the early 1990s, 132 of the Parkinson PRC houses (types CNA2, MGB2, and WSB2), were demolished and rebuilt. Most of the new replacement houses were finished in half render and half red brick. The half-render, half-brick, or wholly brick finish, was out of character with the all-render finish of the original Parkinson houses, though it does distinguish them as rebuilds. In the earliest phase of rebuilding, all the houses had timber-framed windows, but in subsequent phases uPVC windows with plastic glazing bars and concrete roof tiles were introduced.
- 7.2.9 Sea Mills Square has a number of purpose-built shops with good quality timber fronts, and original windows with a main glazed panel topped by three small fixed lights, surmounted by a timber fascia. The neo-classical door surrounds originally enclosed timber doors with a six pane glazed panel. Between each pair is a pedimented door surround to rear access passageway (only one between 137 Shirehampton Road and 38 St. Edyth's Road remains open). Each pair of shops has a pair of WDB5s, with bay windows on both floors, attached on either side, creating a broadly "butterfly" plan.

## Policy References

### Bristol Local Plan

**4.4.51** 'In Bristol, a wide variety of urban landscapes exist. The character of Conservation Areas may be varied and informal, such as the village development of Montpelier, or more formal such as the spacious suburbs of Sea Mills. The essential character lies not in the individual merit of each building, but in their contribution to the character of the area, including landscaping, traditional boundary walls and other attractive details.'

**B16** 'In a group of historic buildings, where a formal and unified design forms an essential part of the character, new buildings which reproduce the appearance of these architectural elements that contribute to the overall design of the group will be permitted.'

**B18 (i-vi)** 'Traditional materials should be retained, repaired and where necessary replaced, and not covered with paints or cladding which would be harmful to the appearance of the conservation area'.

**B18 (v)** 'Prominent original windows' should be 'retained and repaired. Where this is not possible, replacement windows should be constructed to match the original in terms of style, proportions, colour and materials. Proposed new window openings should not disturb a balanced or composed elevation and should respect the size, proportion, material and decoration of existing windows.'





### 7.3 GARDEN SUBURB HOUSING TYPES

- 7.3.1 The house-types of Sea Mills Garden Suburb display influences current at the time, from the purely neo-Georgian Dorloncos to the more Arts & Crafts, neo-vernacular style of the HBA5s and St. Edyth's Road houses. Within the overall architectural uniformity of houses there is considerable variety, the differences in style nonetheless contributing to the "harmony of the whole".
- 7.3.2 In June 1919, the Housing Extensions and Town Planning Committee organised a competition to design houses for the new Bristol housing scheme, engaging Ernest Newton, a significant architect in the Arts & Crafts Movement, to be the assessor alongside their advisory architect C.F.W Denning.
- 7.3.3 Houses in Sea Mills were either designed by four of the premium entrants to the competition, Benjamin Wakefield, W.H.Watkins, and Heathman & Blacker from Bristol and E.C.H. Maidman & W.A. Greener of Parkstone or were designed by the Architectural Services Section of the City Engineer's Department.
- 7.3.4 Each house type was identified by a code, the first two letters identified the designer and the third identifying the design:  
HB = Heathman & Blacker ; MG = Maidman & Greener; WD = Benjamin Wakefield;  
WS = William Henry Watkins; CN = Corporation; CB = Corner Block, designed by the Corporation
- 7.3.5 Due to a shortage of traditional materials, the original architects' designs were superseded by "Dorlonco" houses: steel-framed houses finished in render, by architects of the 'Liverpool School' during WWI for the industrial village of Dormanstown, to house workers at the Dorman Long Company's iron and steelworks.
- 7.3.6 The first phase of building, 1920-1922, was of 250 "Dorlonco" houses. Erected by William Cowlin & Son Ltd, these were the only Dorlonco houses built in Bristol. Though all are of the same essential construction, there are a number of different designs. "DL" stands for Dorman Long.
- 7.3.7 After the initial phase of building, apart from St. Edyth's Road, 1923-4, and Dingle Close, 1924-1927, the main phase of building was between January 1927 and March 1929, with a final phase in 1930-31.
- 7.3.8 Apart from the Dorloncos and the St. Edyth's Road houses, house types built in Sea Mills were:- CBA5, CNA2, CNA5, E5 (i.e. CBE5), HBA5, MGB2, MGD2, WDA5, WDB5, WSA2, and WSB2.
- 7.3.9 The houses of Parkinson PRC (Prefabricated Reinforced Concrete) construction were types CNA2, MGB2 and WSB2; all finished in roughcast render, except four red brick pairs of type CNA2 in Failand Crescent. All other types were built with traditional materials.
- 7.3.10 All terraces of 4 houses have a characteristic central passage, some with an arched opening (e.g. types WDA5, DLB5, DLB2, DLC5, DLD2, and St. Edyth's Road terraces). The WDA5 and the DLB5 groups also have pronounced wings, the two end houses are a little larger than the two in between. The DLB5s have the end pair with wings projecting both forwards and rearwards, making the whole terrace a dumbbell shape in plan. Each forward projecting wing has a ground floor front bay-window.
- 7.3.11 There is only one DLD2 type, which forms an interesting arrangement of a broken "terrace" at 4 - 18 Riverlease (even). The DLD2 is flanked with a semi-detached DLD5 on either side, also unique within Sea Mills. Apart from the terraces of four, there are two terraces of three facing each other in St. Edyth's Road and two terraces of five opposite each other at The Pentagon.
- The Garden Suburb Housing Types are detailed on Map 5



## Map 5: Garden Suburb Housing Types (A3)

### 7.3.10 A summary of the characteristic features of each Garden Suburb Housing Type is outlined below:

DLA2	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Semi-detached Rectangular
Main Door & Door Surround	Georgian timber with six panels, painted blue. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows & Shutters	Timber, 12 pane vertically sliding sash with profiled glazing bars, except for small side-hung casements, painted white.
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, natural slate; Chimneys: Grey brick, central and end stacks, clay pots.
Finish	Roughcast render, coloured cream.



Figure 59: DLA2 type (Original drawing ©BRO photo ©John Roberts) House on left is a good example with original timber sash windows; house on right has uPVC top-hung casements with wide meeting rail, although the glazing bars maintain some character. Out of character doors. Shutters and end chimney stacks lost

DLA5	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Double-fronted, semi-detached Rectangular
Main Door & Door Surround	Front elevation, Georgian timber with six panels, painted blue. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows & Shutters	Timber, 12 pane vertically sliding sash with profiled glazing bars, painted white. Shutters: Decorative to both ground floor front windows, painted blue.
Roof & Chimneys	Gabled in Sylvan Way, hipped elsewhere, natural slate; Chimneys: Grey brick, central and end stacks, clay pots.
Finish	Roughcast render, coloured cream.



Figure 60: DLA5 type (Original drawing ©BRO photo ©John Roberts) Windows now uPVC top hung casements with wide meeting rails, although the glazing bars maintain some character. Replacement doors. Shutters and end chimney stacks lost. House on left has out of character pitched canopy over door



DLA6	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Semi-detached Square
Main Door & Door Surround	Side elevation, Georgian timber with six panels, painted blue. Door Surround: None.
Windows & Shutters	Timber, 12 pane vertically sliding sash with profiled glazing bars, main rooms have additional four pane fixed sidelights, painted white. Shutters: None.
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, natural slate. Chimneys: Grey brick, central and end stacks, clay pots.
Finish	Roughcast render, coloured cream.



Figure 61: DLA6 type (Original drawing ©BRO) All windows uPVC casement windows with no glazing bars. End chimney stacks lost. House on left has pebble-dash pinkish render

DLB2	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Terrace of four with centre passageway. Plan: Four in line, rectangular.
Main Door & Door Surround	Front elevation, Georgian timber with six panels, painted blue. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows & Shutters	Timber, 12 pane vertically sliding sash with profiled glazing bars, except for small side-hung casements, painted white. Shutters: Decorative to large ground floor window, painted blue.
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, natural slate. Chimneys: Grey brick, five stacks, including end ones, clay pots.
Finish	Roughcast render, coloured cream.

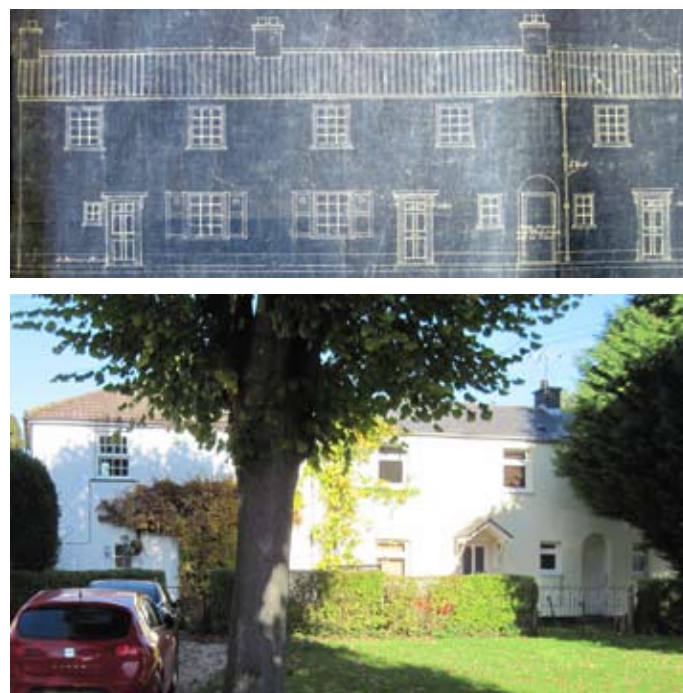


Figure 62: DLB2 type (Original drawing ©BRO photo ©John Roberts) End chimney stacks and shutters lost. uPVC casement windows, one house lacking glazing bars. House on right has non-original pitched canopy over door

DLB5	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Terrace of four with centre passageway. Plan: Centre two in line, end houses project to front and rear.
Main Door & Door Surround	On front elevation of two centre houses, side elevation of end houses, Georgian timber with six panels, painted blue. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows & Shutters	Timber, 12 and 16 pane vertically sliding sashes, painted white, bay window on ground floor front elevation of end houses. Shutters: Decorative to ground floor windows of centre houses, painted blue.
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, natural slate. Chimneys: Grey brick, five stacks, three along centre line with one on rear roof slope of each end house, clay pots.
Finish	Roughcast render, coloured cream.

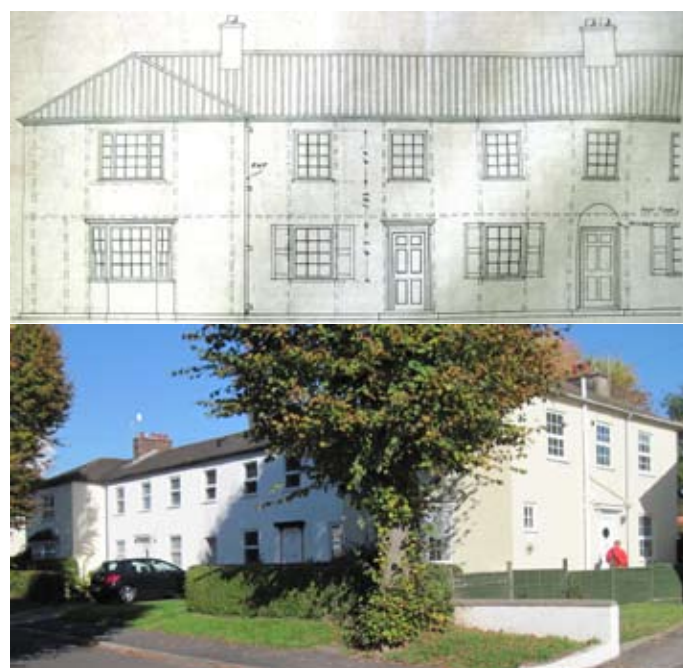


Figure 63: DLB5 type(Original drawing ©BRO photo ©John Roberts) Windows uPVC top-hung casements with over-wide meeting rails, although the glazing bars of the right-hand house maintain some character. Out of character doors. Shutters lost

DLC5	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Terrace of four with centre passageway, each house double-fronted. Plan: Four in line, rectangular.
Main Door & Door Surround	Front elevation, Georgian timber with six panels, painted blue. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows & Shutters	Timber, 12 pane vertically sliding sash with profiled glazing bars. Shutters: Decorative to ground floor windows, painted blue.
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, natural slate. Chimneys: Grey brick, five stacks, including end ones, clay pots.
Finish	Roughcast render, coloured cream.



Figure 64: DLC5 Timber first floor sash windows, ground floor windows uPVC with out of character top hung vents and no glazing bars, timber door. Shutters lost



DLD5	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Semi-detached. Plan: T-shape.
Main Door & Door Surround	On front elevation of one house, side elevation of other, Georgian timber with six panels, painted blue. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows & Shutters	Timber, 12 and 16 pane vertically sliding sashes, upper window of front elevation of projecting house has additional 4 pane fixed sidelights and a ground floor flat roof bay window with 8 pane sliding sash sidelights, no shutters, adjoining house has blue-painted decorative shutters to ground floor windows.
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, natural slate. Chimneys: Grey brick, three stacks, clay pots.
Finish	Roughcast render, coloured cream.



Figure 65: DLD5 type (Original drawings ©BRO photo ©John Roberts)

All windows uPVC with top hung vents and no glazing bars. House on left has been overclad with loss of original door surround, replaced by a pitched canopy



CBA5	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Semi-detached. Plan: L-shaped with chamfered corner
Main Door & Door Surround	Front elevation, timber, six pane glazed panel over lower two panels. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows & Shutters	Timber, 6 and 8 pane side hung and fixed casements, painted white. Shutters: Decorative to ground floor windows on corner elevation, painted white, or blue if rendered.
Roof & Chimneys	Roof: Hipped, double-Roman red clay tiles. Chimneys: Brick, three stacks, clay pots.
Finish	Red bricks or cream coloured render

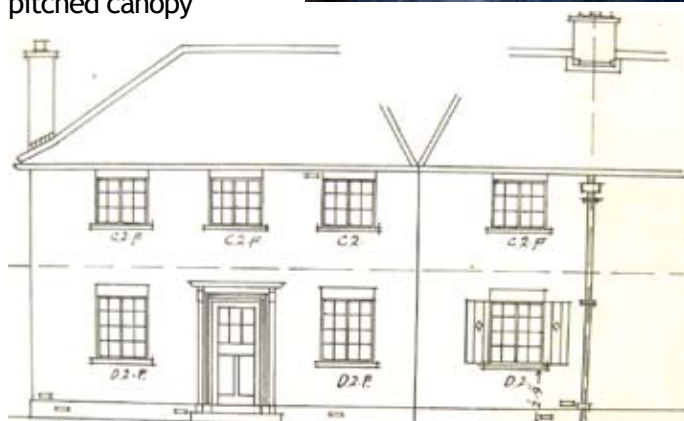


Figure 66: CBA5 type (Original drawing ©BRO) uPVC windows, g-f windows of left house have top hung vents, f-f side-hung casements & glazing bars give some character. Shutters lost



CBE5	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Semi-detached. Plan: "Butterfly"
Main Door & Door Surround	Position as shown in drawing and photograph, timber, nine pane glazed panel over lower three panels. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows & Shutters	Timber, three and two light side-hung and fixed casements, 8 panes on main ground floor windows, remainder with 6 panes, painted white. Shutters: As shown in drawing, painted white
Roof & Chimneys	Gable ends, double-Roman red clay tiles. Chimneys: Brick, three stacks, clay pots
Finish	Red bricks

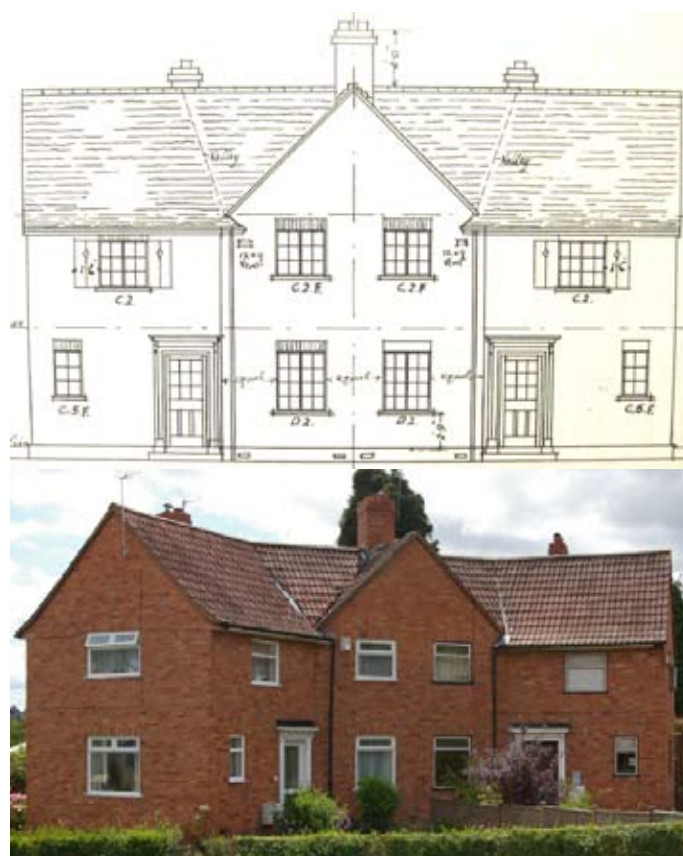


Figure 67: CBE5 type uPVC (Original drawing ©BRO) and aluminium windows with out of character top hung vents and no glazing bars. Both doors are out of character

CNA2	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Semi-detached. Plan: Rectangular.
Main Door & Door Surround	Front elevation, timber, nine pane glazed panel over lower two panels. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows & Shutters	Timber, 12 pane vertically sliding sashes, painted white. Shutters: Decorative, see drawing, painted white
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, double-Roman red clay tiles, sprocketed eaves. Chimneys: Brick, three stacks, clay pots.
Finish	Most examples roughcast render coloured cream, but a few in Failand Crescent are red brick.

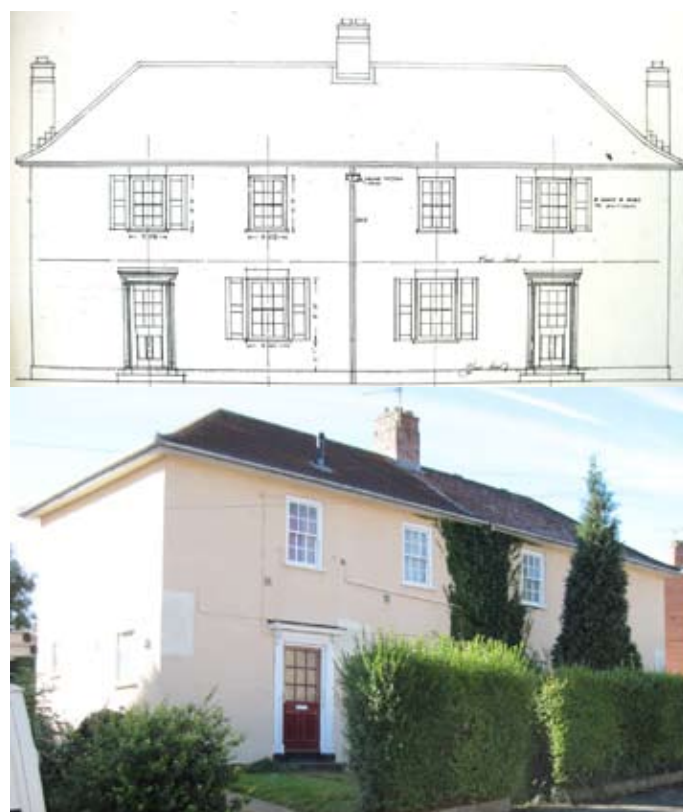


Figure 68: CNA2 type (Original drawing ©BRO photo ©John Roberts) Shutters and end chimney stacks lost, otherwise a very good example, both pairs having original timber sash windows and original timber doors

CNA5	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Double fronted semi-detached. Plan: Rectangular
Main Door & Door Surround	Front elevation, timber, nine pane glazed panel over lower two panels. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows & Shutters	Timber, 12 and 8 pane vertically sliding sashes, painted white. Shutters: As shown in drawing, painted white
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, double-Roman red clay tiles, sprocketed eaves. Chimneys: Brick, three stacks, clay pots
Finish	Red brick

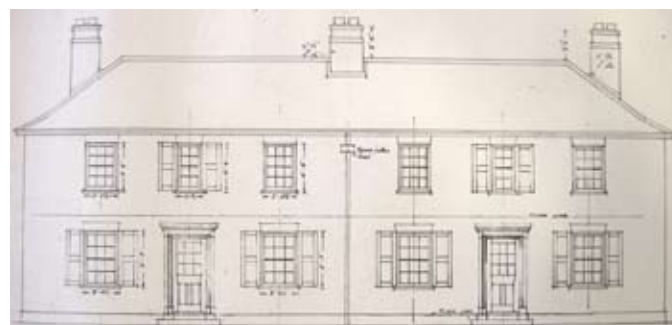


Figure 69: CNA5 type (Original drawing ©BRO photo ©John Roberts) House on left is a very good example with original timber sash windows. House on right has uPVC windows with no glazing bars. Both doors are out of character. Shutters lost

HBA5	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Semi-detached. Plan: Square.
Main Door & Door Surround	Side elevation, timber, nine pane glazed panel over lower two panels. Door Surround: None.
Windows	Metal, ground floor 8 pane side hung and fixed casements, first floor 6 pane, painted white.
Roof & Chimneys	Catslide, double-Roman red clay tiles. Chimneys: Brick, three stacks, clay pots
Finish	Roughcast render, on five course red brick base.



Figure 70: HBA5 type (©John Roberts) House on right is a very good example with original metal windows. House on left has uPVC windows with no glazing bars. End chimney stack lost



<b>MGB2</b>	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Semi-detached. Plan: Square.
Main Door & Door Surround	Side elevation, timber, nine pane glazed panel over lower two panels. Door Surround: None.
Windows	Metal, 8 pane side-hung and fixed casements, painted white.
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, double-Roman red clay tiles, sprocketed eaves. Chimneys: Single central position, clay pots.
Finish	Roughcast render, coloured cream



Figure 71: MGB2 type House on right is a good example with original metal windows

<b>MGD2</b>	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Semi-detached. Plan: Square.
Main Door & Door Surround	Front elevation, timber, nine pane glazed panel over lower two panels. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows & Shutters	Timber, 8 and 6 pane side hung and fixed casements, painted white. Shutters: Decorative to window above door.
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, double-Roman red clay tiles, sprocketed eaves. Chimneys: Single central, clay pots
Finish	Red bricks

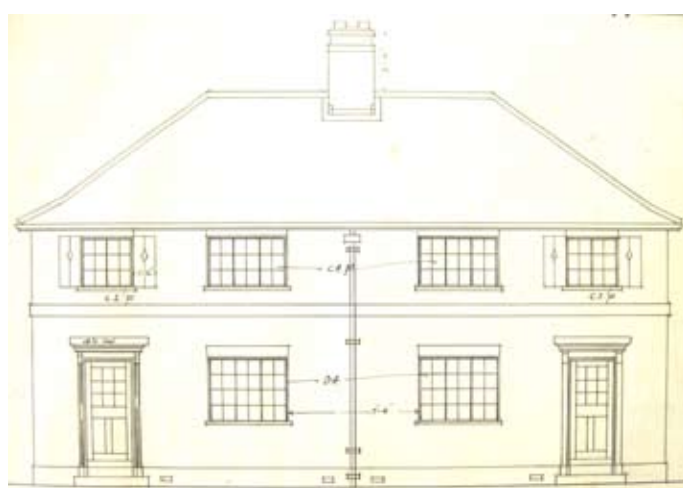


Figure 72: MGD2 type (Original drawing ©BRO photo ©John Roberts) Both houses have uPVC windows. The side hung casements and glazing bars of left-hand house maintain some character, but house on right has out of character casements with no glazing bars



WDA5	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Terrace of four with centre passageway. Plan: Straight, two in line end houses project to front.
Main Door & Door Surround	On front elevation of two centre houses, side elevation of end houses, timber, nine pane glazed panel over lower three panels. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows	Timber, ground floor 12 pane vertically sliding sashes, first floor 6 pane side hung and fixed casements, painted white.
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, double-Roman red clay tiles, sprocketed eaves. Chimneys: Red brick, five stacks, complex centre stack, clay pots.
Finish	Red bricks

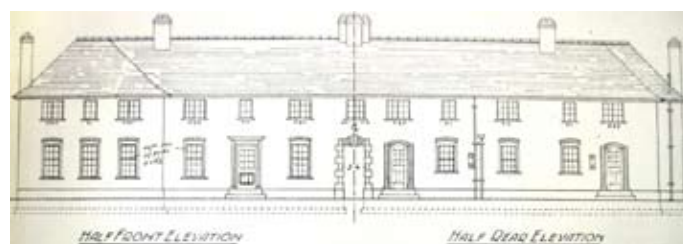


Figure 73: WDA5 type (Original drawing ©BRO photo ©John Roberts) Shows WDA5 “stepping down” the hill of Westbury Lane. The house to the immediate left of centre is a very good example with both original timber windows and door. All other windows are uPVC with out of character means of opening and without glazing bars

WDB5	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Semi-detached. Plan: Square
Main Door & Door Surround	Front elevation, timber, nine pane glazed panel over lower single panel. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows & Shutters	Timber, ground floor bay 16 and 8 pane vertically sliding sashes, first floor 6 pane side hung and fixed casements, painted white. Examples along main roads have front bay windows on both floors, otherwise without bay windows. Shutters: Decorative to window above main door.
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, double-Roman red clay tiles, sprocketed eaves. Chimneys: Single central, clay pots.
Finish	Mostly red brick, although those in Dingle Close are render coloured cream

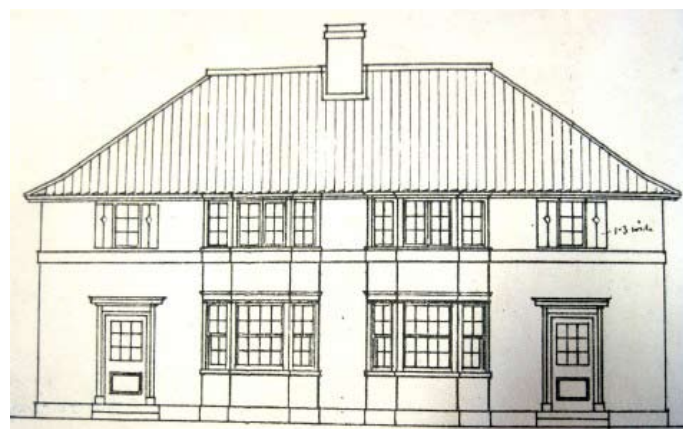


Figure 74: WDB5 type (Original drawing ©BRO) uPVC windows with non-original means of opening, although the glazing bars maintain some character. Doors are out of character

WSA2	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Semi-detached. Plan: Rectangular
Main Door & Door Surround	Front elevation, timber, nine pane glazed panel over lower two panels. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows	Timber, 8 and 6 pane side hung and fixed casements, painted white
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, double-Roman red clay tiles, sprocketed eaves. Chimneys: Three stacks, clay pots
Finish	Red bricks.

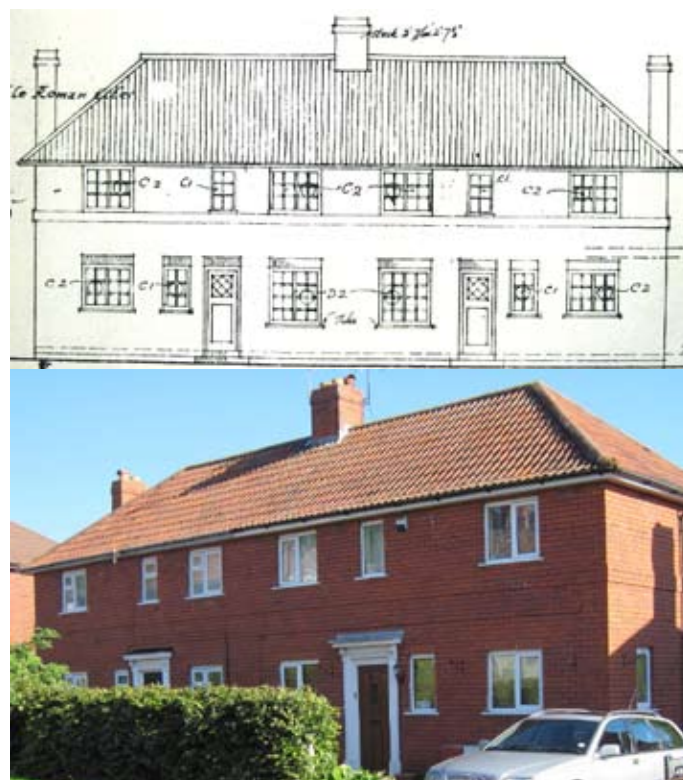


Figure 75: WSA2 type (Original drawing ©BRO photo ©John Roberts) uPVC windows with no glazing bars. End chimney stack lost on right

WSB2	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Semi-detached. Plan: Rectangular
Main Door & Door Surround	Front elevation, timber, nine pane glazed panel over lower two panels. Door Surround: timber, neo-classical, architraves on plinth blocks with flat hood on shaped brackets, painted white
Windows	Metal, 6 pane side-hung and fixed casements, painted white
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, double-Roman red clay tiles. Chimneys: Red brick, single central stack, clay pots.
Finish	Roughcast render, coloured cream



Figure 76: WSB2 type (photo ©John Roberts) Good examples with original metal windows

St Edyth's Road	Original Details*
Form & Plan	Three types: semi-detached, terrace of three in line, and terrace of four in line with centre passageway. Plan: Square.
Main Door	Front elevation, timber, 12 pane glazed panel over lower single panel, painted white.
Windows	Timber, 8 and 6 pane side hung and fixed casements, painted white, bay windows on ground floor.
Roof & Chimneys	Hipped, double-Roman red clay tiles. Chimneys: Varies with type, all have end stacks, red brick, clay pots
Finish	Cream-coloured roughcast render over red bricks



Figure 77: St Edyth's Road type (Original drawing ©BRO photo ©John Roberts) uPVC windows, although the means of opening and glazing bars maintain some of the character

\*Some details shown on the original drawings were altered prior to execution, especially the Dorlonco (DL) types; e.g door surrounds shown as painted blue were painted white; natural slate was used instead of red tiles in some instances; some roof forms were hipped instead of gable-ended etc.



### 7.4 Relative Merit of Unlisted Buildings

7.4.1 In the main, the Conservation Area comprises the holistically planned Garden Suburb, consequently the majority of buildings are significant in the positive contribution they make to the wholeness of Sea Mills.

7.4.2 For the purpose of this character appraisal, buildings within the Conservation Area have been categorised according to their special interest and the degree of contribution they make to the character of Sea Mills.

7.4.3 **Buildings of Merit** are unlisted buildings that make a special contribution to the Conservation Area. These are usually of particular architectural or historic interest. The identification of a building within the Conservation Area as being of particular merit will be of material consideration in future planning decisions. Buildings of Merit include:

- St Edyth's Church (original)
- Vicarage, Avonleaze
- Sea Mills Methodist Church (original building)
- Sea Mills Junior School (original buildings)
- Sea Mills Library
- The Iron Bridge (formerly Progress Inn) PH
- Sea Mills Farmhouse
- Old Sea Mills Signal Station
- New Sea Mills Signal Station
- Sea Mills Railway Station Booking Office
- Station House
- Farmhouse near Sea Mills Station
- Riverside House, no. 79 Sea Mills Lane
- No. 2 Sea Mills Lane



Figure 78: Sea Mills Station House ©John Roberts

7.4.4 **Grouped Buildings of Merit** are buildings that form an attractive group and are collectively of significance. It may be their method or date of construction, or consistent architectural treatment, that is of interest, making them sensitive to changes that would undermine their group value. Grouped Buildings of Merit include:

- Haig Close
- Nos. 6 - 24 (even) Westbury Lane
- Nos. 47 Westbury Lane / 22 Hallen Drive & 49 Westbury Lane / 21 Hallen Drive
- Nos. 18 & 20 Elberton Road
- Garages off St Edyth's Road
- Sea Mills Square shops
- The Pentagon houses
- 4 - 18 Riverleaze

Other significant groupings are those around focal greens:

- 13 - 19 (odds) Sunny Hill
- 21 - 31 (odds) Trym Side
- 5 - 11 (odds) Brookleaze

7.4.5 **Character Buildings** are buildings that make a positive contribution to the overall character and sense of place of the Conservation Area. Their value is in their overall scale, form, materials or date, which helps form the built backcloth for the area. Character Buildings include:

- All original and rebuilt houses within the Garden Suburb
- The late 1920s / 1930s dwellings built on land reserved for Philip Napier Miles (Lux Furlong and parts of Elberton Road, Shirehampton Road and Westbury Lane)
- Nos. 10-20 (evens) Avonleaze
- 1920s and 1930s houses and bungalows on the north side of Westbury Lane
- Methodist Church, High Grove
- Mill House PH

7.4.6 **Neutral Buildings** are buildings that make neither a positive nor negative contribution. They include:-

- Medical Centre, Riverleaze.
- Children's Centre, off West Parade



- Training Centre off The Crescent
- Bluebell Close
- Nos. 35-41 (odds) West Parade & 10/12 Alveston Walk
- Toilet block, Sea Mills Square

7.4.7 **Negative Buildings** are buildings that, due to their location, scale, materials, form or detailed design detract from the special character of the Conservation Area. As such, these buildings offer a potential for beneficial change (see Negative Features).

Individual Negative Buildings are:

- Abona Court
- 79 Coombe Dale
- Changing room building, Sea Mills Recreation Ground
- Newbridge House, Sea Mills Lane
- Silklands Grove, Coombe Dale
- Electricity Substation, Coombe Dale
- Rugby Centre buildings, south of The Portway

Groups of Negative Buildings are:

- Wood End Walk
- Garden Close
- Three blocks of sheltered housing in Compton Drive
- Sheltered housing at end of Clapton Walk

**The Relative Merit of Unlisted Buildings has been identified at Map 6**

## Policy References

### PPS5 HE7

### Bristol Local Plan

### B18 (i-vi); B21

‘Applications for planning permission which would involve the demolition of buildings, walls and other minor structures which make a positive contribution to the character of a conservation area will not be permitted unless there are overriding environmental, economic or practical reasons.’



## Map 6: Relative Merit of Unlisted Buildings Map A3



# SEA MILLS CONSERVATION AREA

## Character Appraisal



### 7.5 Townscape Details

7.5.1 Other features and details in the townscape also contribute to a sense of local distinctiveness. These can range from distinctive boundary treatments and street furniture, to trees and hard landscaping. Individually and collectively they contribute to the overall quality of Bristol's streetscape.

7.5.2 Sea Mills retains some original street furniture that cumulatively gives interest and quality to the street scene and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Where they remain, these details must be preserved or repaired or refurbished as their degradation and disappearance gradually undermines the quality of the area (see Negative Features below).



Figure 79: George V postbox, contemporary with the Garden Suburb



Figure 80: Original K6-type telephone kiosk designed by Giles Gilbert Scott. In a poor state of repair



Figure 81: Ornate cast-iron lampstandard in Sea Mills Square provides a focal feature in this space (original lantern lost)



Figure 82: Original Garden Suburb street signs are a rare surviving original feature in the Conservation Area. Where they remain they should be preserved and repaired if possible



Figure 83: Wooden telegraph poles although not original when the suburb was built, their replacement by modern ones would be detrimental ©John Roberts

7.5.3 Traditional or quality shopfronts are of great importance in contributing to the character and appearance of both individual buildings and the Conservation Area as a whole, and can be of historic and architectural interest in their own right. The shopfronts, and their function are particularly important in Sea Mills Square, as the only examples of their type and providing a community focus.

### Policy References

#### Bristol Local Plan

#### B15(I)

'Townscape and landscape features that contribute to the character or appearance of streets and open spaces within the conservation area should be preserved or enhanced'

### 7.6 Landscape

- 7.6.1 Sea Mills is a rare example of a “detached” garden suburb, its boundary being well-defined on three sides by green open spaces and on the fourth by Westbury Lane. The area north of Westbury Lane, mostly farmland at the time the suburb was built, has since been developed to become Coombe Dingle. Together Sea Mills and Coombe Dingle form a detached “island” completely surrounded by green open space zones, the northern boundary being the Kings Weston ridge.
- 7.6.2 The geographical setting of Sea Mills, within the basin of the River Trym, provides extensive views out of the Conservation Area to the skyline formed by the wooded Kings Weston ridge, towards the green belt land of North Somerset beyond the Avon, as well as views over parts of the city to the west and south-west. There are also views from the River Avon Trail footpath and towing path on the Somerset bank of the River Avon across Sea Mills to the Kings Weston ridge.



Figure 84: Landscape setting of Sea Mills  
©Tim Wallis

- 7.6.3 The Conservation Area has an undulating, spacious and verdant character. The building plots and gardens of the Garden Suburb have a regular size, form and spatial rhythm, with gaps between houses through which glimpses may be had of gardens, green spaces, and vistas beyond. The verdant character includes planned open and enclosed open spaces, grass verges, focal greens, and tree-lined avenues.
- 7.6.4 The characteristic that most defines a garden suburb, and gives it its name, is that the houses have gardens, both good-size front gardens and larger rear gardens. These gardens, designed to be big enough to make their cultivation worthwhile whilst not being too large for a family to manage, are of similar size and shape, contributing to a uniform pattern and regularity or rhythm of garden spaces. The spacing of houses with their garden plots are a significant feature in the formal layout of the Garden Suburb. The gardens also contribute to the spacious feel or quality of the area and its verdant appearance.
- 7.6.5 Green privet boundary hedges are a defining feature of the original Garden Suburb. A large number have been detrimentally replaced with alternative boundary treatments such as walls or fencing, or removed altogether, although a great many remain and contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the area.



Figure 85: Privet hedges

7.6.6 ‘Extra gardens’ or ‘allotment gardens’ are also a defining feature of the Garden Suburb and significant parcels of land were originally allocated for this purpose. As well as contributing to the self sufficiency in food production of the suburb, allotments were seen as providing opportunities for social interaction, physical exercise and fresh air. Although there are some allotments within the estate, it would be beneficial to the character and appearance of the Garden Suburb if some of the other land originally designated for allotment gardens were returned to this purpose.

7.6.7 Green spaces and trees are vital to the quality of urban environments and contribute significantly to the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. These provide a soft edge within an urban context as well as bringing significant amenity or environmental benefits.

7.6.8 There are a variety of green spaces within the Sea Mills Conservation Area. As well as gardens and allotments there is a large formal space at Sea Mills Square, and smaller focal greens, for example the small grass island where Sunny Hill and Dingle View meet Coombe Dale. Focal greens break up the building line and enhance the street picture. They can create a focus for buildings to cluster around as well as providing an improved outlook for individual houses.

7.6.9 Sea Mills also has a number of ‘enclosed open spaces’, an important feature of garden suburbs. These are open spaces that are enclosed by a perimeter of houses which face outwards away from the space. One example in Sea Mills is the Recreation Ground, a large green space which is bounded by Woodleaze, St Edyth’s Road, Shirehampton Road and Sylvan Way; others include, for example, the allotments that are bounded by Westbury Lane, Compton Drive and Sylvan Way. These areas contribute significantly to the spacious and verdant feel of the Garden Suburb.

7.6.10 The largest ‘enclosed open space’, The Recreation Ground, provides sports facilities and also serves as the only childrens’ play area within the Garden Suburb (See Negative Features).



Figure 86: Recreation Ground ©John Roberts

7.6.11 Grass verges are also a characteristic feature found on many of the streets in Sea Mills, immediately in front of the privet hedging that separates the gardens from the street. These council-owned verges vary in depth, but all contribute to the character and unified appearance of the Garden Suburb, as well as adding to the sense of greenness. Most of the grass verges in Sea Mills are intact though some have been destroyed through being incorporated into front gardens by the introduction of hard standing.

7.6.12 Single tree specimens can be a focal point in local views or formal landscaped compositions; while groups of mature trees may form part of a historic planting scheme. ‘Addison’s Oak’ in Sea Mills Square has a Bristol-wide historical significance. There are a number of wholly or partially tree-lined streets within the Garden Suburb, including Shirehampton Road, Sylvan Way, Westbury Lane, The Portway, West Parade, St. Edyth’s Road, Avonleaze, The Pentagon, Sea Mills Square, Woodleaze (lined with lime trees), Brookleaze, and Riverleaze. Trym Cross Road and Sea Mills Lane are also partly tree-lined. The combination of trees, verges and gardens on streets such as Brookleaze create a green ‘corridor’ effect.





Figure 87: 'Green corridor', Brookleaze

## Policy References

B15 (ii), NE2, NE3, NE9

'Historic parks and gardens and other designed landscapes of national and local importance... will be protected. Development which would adversely affect the character or appearance of historic landscapes and, in the case of nationally important sites, their setting, will not be permitted.'

7.6.13 The Conservation Area makes a considerable contribution to wildlife, biodiversity and green infrastructure both locally and to Bristol as a whole. Part of the Avon Gorge green corridor to the Severn Estuary (link 24 of Bristol's Strategic Green Infrastructure Network - see Diagram 4.9.1 of Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy) passes through the Conservation Area. In addition, two further green corridors lead from the Avon on either side of, and partly through, the Conservation Area, completely enclosing it, one via Shirehampton Park and Kingsweston Park to the north, the other via the Trym Valley to the south.



Figure 88: Trym Valley, has important biodiversity value

7.6.14 The Conservation Area's considerable contribution to green infrastructure and biodiversity includes its planned green open spaces, enclosed open spaces and recreation areas, its private gardens and hedges, its grass verges and tree-lined streets, its allotments, and its footpaths.



## 8. NEGATIVE FEATURES

- 8.1 The value or importance of a Conservation Area can be vulnerable to harm as negative elements detract from the local environment, and threaten to undermine its special interest. This can include small-scale alterations, loss of traditional features, or large-scale developments. Negative features and threats present an opportunity for enhancement or restoration, as detailed in Section 9.
- 8.2 Designed and built in just over a decade, Sea Mills Garden Suburb is a single unified and uniform entity. Holistically planned and formally laid out following Garden City and Garden Suburb principles, it is a single homogeneous design. Unlike Conservation Areas of varied construction that have evolved over centuries, where it may be possible to introduce new designs, provided they are sympathetic, Sea Mills is particularly vulnerable to change of this kind, uniformity being a fundamental characteristic. Even minor changes can have a detrimental effect.

### Extensions & Infill Developments

- 8.3 Extensions and unsympathetic infill are a significant threat to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, which can undermine the fundamental principles of Garden Suburb design and layout. Extensions or infill are especially damaging where they ignore predominant mass, scale, fenestration, materials, local architectural features, the simple square or rectangular block form of the architecture and roofscape, planned gaps between buildings, and traditional front and rear building lines.
- 8.4 The merging of plots within the Conservation Area threatens to undermine traditional layout patterns and the regularity of plot and garden sizes.

### Side/Rear Extensions

- 8.5 Side and rear extensions may conflict with the principle that the beauty of the backs and fronts of buildings are of equal importance (see Garden Suburb Glossary Appendix 1); and detrimentally alter the simple square or rectangular block form of the architecture and the overall uniformity and cohesiveness of the Garden Suburb.
- 8.6 As they are frequently visible from the public realm, including views and glimpses, rear elevations which fail to match the design and fenestration of the front elevations and the simple square or rectangular block form of the architecture, threaten the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 8.7 Rear extensions, which interrupt or break the rear building line of domestic properties, may also have a negative impact on the public realm owing to the frequent views along rear building lines. They may also threaten the consistency of a group arrangement.
- 8.8 The flat-fronted and flat-backed simple rectangular or square plan form character of the original houses is a fundamental feature of Sea Mills, and particularly sensitive to the detrimental impact of new additions.
- 8.9 Side extensions which close the gap between houses threatens the sense of spaciousness that characterises the layout of the Garden Suburb, and disrupts the rhythmic pattern of the spacing of houses in a street. Side extensions also undermine the planned symmetrical form of paired houses or terraces.
- 8.10 Side extensions to buildings on corner plots threaten the designed openness of these plots. Side extensions also have a detrimental impact on glimpses and views of open spaces or gardens seen between the houses or across corner plots, so diminishing the verdant and spacious appearance and character of the Garden Suburb.



## Roofscape and Roof Extensions

- 8.11 The consistent roofscape that characterises much of Sea Mills is under threat from gradual change due to roof level extensions or alterations to the original roof form, or changes to the predominant roof colour.

## New Developments & Public Buildings

- 8.12 When new developments and public buildings fail to adequately reflect the local context and its fundamentally uniform character, appearance, and roofscape, they threaten to undermine the cohesiveness of the area.

- 8.13 The twin pitched roofs and dormers of Abona Court, a private residential extension to the rear of the Methodist Church, have introduced a new roof form. This, together with its massing and height in relation to adjacent small cottage-style houses has, to some extent, spoiled local glimpses of the building as seen via the gaps between adjacent houses, and also in more distant views from the north. Partial use of timber panelling, not part of the original palette of materials used in the construction of the Garden Suburb, is also out of character.

- 8.14 Given the way in which the Garden Suburb was intrinsically planned, and the way public buildings feature within the overall layout, there is also a threat that current public buildings may be altered in an unsympathetic way that impacts negatively on the wider area.

## Windows and Doors

- 8.15 Windows and doors are crucial in establishing the character of a building's elevation. Original doors and windows, including their detailing, materials and method of opening make a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.
- 8.16 Where out-of-character replacement doors and windows have been inserted, these have had a significant and detrimental cumulative impact on the architectural integrity of the houses as well as adversely affecting the homogeneity of the wider

Conservation Area. The omission of glazing bars from windows, where they were original to the building, is particularly detrimental to character.

- 8.17 Where wholesale replacement is needed, the detail of doors and windows must match the originals in terms of glazing patterns and method of opening. Poor quality replacement doors and windows have a detrimental impact on the integrity of individual buildings, and the character of the Conservation Area as a whole.

## External Finish

- 8.18 There have been unsympathetic changes to the original external finishes. For example, some original red brick houses have been painted or rendered and painted; some originally rendered Parkinson houses have been repaired with a finish that is alien both to the original finish and to the character and appearance of the Garden Suburb. In addition, some extensions unsympathetically have a finish that does not match that of the house to which it is adjoined.

## Porches

- 8.19 The addition of porches can have a negative impact on the front building line as well as on the original design of the street scene, whether by the breaking of a deliberately plain curving front building line or by adding clutter to a straight street picture where the set-backs and variations have been deliberately planned. Porches may also hide, and sometimes damage, the original door surround and canopy.

## Loss of Traditional Architectural Details

- 8.20 Removal of traditional details, for example door canopies and surrounds and original side chimney-stacks, has had a detrimental impact, and similarly, the gradual replacement of original clay roof tiles by concrete ones. Where they remain, traditional architectural details should be preserved and restored; and reinstatement of lost features sought wherever possible.





### Small-scale Accretions

8.21 Small-scale additions, although relatively minor in themselves, can build up to have a negative impact. Individually they may detract from the building itself or be insensitively sited so that they impact on the wider street scene. The impact of satellite dishes, telephone wires and poles, external gas and electricity boxes, solar panels, radio masts, boiler flues etc. can be reduced through careful siting and choice of materials and colours, and removal when redundant or upgraded.

### Loss of Gardens, Privet Hedges & Grass Verges

8.22 The loss of front garden plots to off-street parking; the loss of traditional green privet hedges, or their replacement by other boundary treatments; and the incorporation of grass verges into private hardstanding or front gardens is beginning to undermine the landscape quality, verdant appearance and biodiversity value of the area.

8.23 The use of a mixture of non-traditional surface materials, block paving, and boundary treatments is also gradually eroding the uniformity of the Conservation Area.

8.24 Rear and side gardens may also be detrimentally lost, subdivided or reduced in size by provision of flat conversions or infill developments.

### Shops, Shopfronts & Signage

8.25 Local shops make an important contribution to the quality of life, the sustainability, and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As the centrepiece of the Conservation Area, Sea Mills Square is particularly sensitive. There is a potential for detrimental loss of shopfronts if local businesses are changed to residential/corporate uses.

8.26 There is also a potential loss of residential character if houses adjacent to shops on Sea Mills Square are incorporated into shops as storage or as an extension to the

internal size of the shop. In addition, there is a potential loss of front gardens and traditional privet hedging front boundaries if houses are converted from residential use.

8.27 Poor quality replacement shopfronts, signage, and ATM machines can undermine the quality of the street scene, especially if of an inappropriate scale, material or internally illuminated. Where they remain, the original shopfronts and neo-classical door surrounds and canopies in the Conservation Area should be preserved. Unsightly and poorly positioned security features can also have a visually detrimental effect on shop fronts.

### Loss of Single Family Dwellings

8.28 As the provision of family housing was a fundamental characteristic of Sea Mills Garden Suburb, the diminution of this due to flat conversions, threatens to undermine this. Poorly executed and insensitive conversions also has a negative impact on the original architectural integrity of buildings and the wider street scene.

## Public Realm

### Public Green Spaces

8.29 A number of the Garden Suburb's planned open spaces and planned enclosed open spaces have been detrimentally lost to infill development or other uses. The loss of original planned open spaces or enclosed open spaces within Sea Mills to unsympathetic development, infill, change of layout, or change of use, will further undermine the designed historic character of the Garden Suburb.

8.30 Given its function as the centrepiece to the Garden Suburb, Sea Mills Square is particularly sensitive to change. Any change to its designed layout or formal character would be highly detrimental to the Conservation Area.



- 8.31 Public green spaces such as Sea Mills Square and the focal greens in front of the library are also susceptible to damage from cars either parking or driving across them.
- 8.32 A few of the planned enclosed open spaces, particularly Coombe Dale and the one adjacent to Ely Grove, have become overgrown. There is currently an under supply of allotment plots in the area. The enhancement of these spaces would impact positively on the character of Sea Mills Garden Suburb.
- 8.33 Some of the public open spaces such as Three Acre Covert and the Trym Valley, particularly between Dingle Road and Shirehampton Road, suffer from lack of maintenance, which limit their use and value. The white bridge that spans the Trym Valley via Dingle Road is particularly in need of regular care of its appearance. The north side of this bridge lies within the Kings Weston and Trym Valley Conservation Area and the south side within the Sea Mills Conservation Area.

#### Street Furniture

- 8.34 Traditional street furniture, such as lamp standards, wooden telegraph poles, telephone kiosks, post boxes and original street signs adds to the quality and special interest of the environment and their loss or damage threatens to undermine this.
- 8.35 Unsympathetically sited or non-traditional street furniture can be highly detrimental to the public realm, especially in sensitive areas such as Sea Mills Square.

#### Street Trees

- 8.36 Street trees are vital to the quality of the local environment and their loss through felling or damage gradually undermines the quality of the area.

#### Recreation and Play Facilities

- 8.37 Poor signage and uninviting entrances to recreation facilities and footpaths, and the lack of seating, planting, and maintenance, currently make these spaces un-welcoming. In addition, an original entrance path to the Recreation Ground (between numbers 33 and 35 St. Edyth's Road) has been blocked. These factors combine to reduce their use and have an impact on visual as well as physical amenity. The tennis courts in Dingle Close require upgrading and maintenance.
- 8.38 Play-space facilities in the Conservation Area currently fail to meet the Council's requirements for quantity and distance; that which does exist is undermined by the poorly maintained equipment and surfaces.

#### Views & Vistas

- 8.39 The high quality views in the vicinity of the sports grounds located between the Portway and the River Avon are spoiled by the mobile phone masts and floodlight masts. These masts are out-of-character with the conservation area and the surrounding area. Light spillage from the floodlights also impacts on the quality of the Conservation Area.
- 8.40 It is important to the roofscape of the Garden Suburb that no more buildings are permitted to punctuate the skyline as this would detract from the skyline as originally planned with just the two churches punctuating it.



## 9. MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

9.1 It is expected that the effective management of the Sea Mills Conservation Area can, for the most part, be met through an effective policy framework and the positive use of existing development management and enforcement powers. The analysis of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area within this Character Appraisal therefore identifies those elements the Council will seek to protect, as well as negative features, which may present opportunities for enhancement.

9.2 The following table provides a list of proposals related specifically to those features identified as 'negative' in Section 8. The implementation of the Potential Actions may depend on the existing and future financial and staff resources that Bristol City Council departments work within.

### Negative Feature

**Loss of Gardens, Privet Hedges and Grass Verges**

### Potential Action

9.3 Where consent is required, resist proposals to remove boundary treatments that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

9.4 Encourage appropriate reinstatement of privet hedges and front gardens in future development management negotiations.

9.5 Seek enforcement action against unauthorised removal of gardens and boundary treatments where a breach of planning control has occurred and there is a negative impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

9.6 Investigate individual concerns that are raised, with a view to taking enforcement action if appropriate, where Council land has been taken into the curtilage of a property without consent.

9.7 Increase awareness of conservation issues and understanding of the character of the Conservation Area through promotion of this Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

### Negative Feature

**Out-of-Character Replacement Doors and Windows**

### Potential Action

9.8 Where consent is required, resist proposals for windows or doors that do not respect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

9.9 Encourage appropriate reinstatement of unsympathetic alterations to windows and doors in future Development Management negotiations.

9.10 Seek enforcement action against unauthorised replacement windows or doors where a breach of planning control has occurred.

### Negative Feature

**Extensions & Unsympathetic Alteration**

9.11 Where consent is required, resist unsympathetic alterations through positive use of existing Development Management powers.

9.12 Encourage appropriate reinstatement of unsympathetic alterations in future Development Management negotiations.

9.13 Seek enforcement action against, and potentially removal of, unauthorised extensions and unsympathetic alterations where a breach of planning control has occurred.





### Negative Feature

#### Loss of Traditional Architectural Details

#### Potential Action

- 9.14 Where consent is required, resist the loss of traditional architectural details through positive use of existing development control powers.
- 9.15 Encourage appropriate reinstatement of traditional architectural details in future development control negotiations.
- 9.16 Seek enforcement action against unauthorised removal of traditional architectural details where a breach of planning control has occurred.

### Negative Feature

#### Unsympathetic Infill & Over Intensive Developments

#### Potential Action

- 9.17 Resist unsympathetic applications which would harm the pattern of open spaces, enclosed open spaces, gardens, low density, plot sizes and rhythm, and planned layout. Any new development should be sensitive to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. High quality design and materials will be encouraged through existing development management powers.
- 9.18 Seek enforcement action against any breach of planning permissions of conditions where there is a negative impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 9.19 Ensure that predominant height, scale, massing, footprint, layout, materials, details, roofscape and front and rear and building lines are respected in line with the BLP/LDF policies and findings within the Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

- 9.20 Where Conservation Area Consent for demolition of a building that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is allowed, seek like-for-like replacement on the same footprint.

### Negative Feature

#### Unsympathetic New Public Buildings & Unsympathetic Alterations or Additions to Existing Public Buildings

#### Potential Action

- 9.21 Ensure new public buildings are sensitive to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through positive use of existing development management powers.
- 9.22 Where consent is required, resist unsympathetic alterations or additions through positive use of existing development control powers.
- 9.23 Encourage appropriate reinstatement of traditional architectural details in future development control negotiations.

### Negative Feature

#### Loss of Single Family Dwellings to Flats & Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs)

- 9.24 Where conversions occur, ensure development is sensitive to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through positive use of existing development management powers.
- 9.25 Encourage appropriate reinstatement of single-family dwellings, where appropriate, in future development management negotiations.
- 9.26 Seek enforcement action against unauthorised conversions where a breach of planning control has occurred and there is a negative impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.



## Negative Feature

### Loss of Shops to Residential Use

#### Potential Action

- 9.27 Resist the conversion of shops to residential use where this threatens to undermine the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, or threatens the sustainability of the local area.

## Negative Feature

### Poor Quality Shopfronts & Signage

#### Potential Action

- 9.28 Where a breach of planning control has occurred, seek enforcement action against unauthorised removal/alteration of shopfronts or signage that has a negative impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 9.29 Encourage appropriate reinstatement of shopfront and signage design (following guidance in Policy Advice Note 8) in future development management negotiations.
- 9.30 Investigate the possibility of updating existing shopfront/advertisement design guidance.

## Negative Feature

### Threat to Views & Vistas

#### Potential Action

- 9.31 Where applications for new development arise, ensure this is sensitive to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area through positive use of existing development management powers.
- 9.32 Seek enforcement action, where appropriate, against unauthorised development that has a detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

## Negative Feature

### Small-scale Accretions

#### Potential Action

- 9.33 Encourage removal of redundant wires, alarm boxes, air conditioning units etc. in development management negotiations or seek enforcement action where a breach of planning control has occurred and the item has a negative impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

## Negative Feature

### Threats to Public Green Spaces

#### Potential Action

- 9.34 Investigate appropriate ways to reduce damage to edges of Sea Mills Square from cars.
- 9.35 Seek improved maintenance of the Trym Valley and other open spaces to encourage their use and value within the Conservation Area.

## Negative Feature

### Loss of traditional street surfaces and street features

#### Potential Action

- 9.36 Encourage retention/reinstatement of cobbles, setts, stone kerbing, Pennant paving etc.; where those materials are 'fit for purpose'.
- 9.37 Encourage like-for-like replacement, provided material is 'fit for purpose'.
- 9.38 Where wholesale replacement is proposed work should be undertaken to ensure consistency and quality of replacement materials.



### Negative Feature

#### Loss or Poor Maintenance of Traditional Street Furniture & Signs

#### Potential Action

- 9.39 Retain or reinstate, and ensure good maintenance of, traditional street furniture where appropriate.
- 9.40 Retain and maintain traditional street signs where appropriate.
- 9.41 Support local conservation groups and amenity societies who may seek to maintain or reinstate traditional street furniture in their local areas..

### Negative Feature

#### Recreation & Play Facilities

#### Potential Action

- 9.42 Seek removal and appropriate replacement of dangerous/redundant play equipment.
- 9.43 Seek to bring the quantity and distance standards of recreational and play facilities up to the minimum adopted in the Council's Parks and Green Spaces Strategy.
- 9.44 Seek to improve access, signage, planting and seating in recreation areas to increase their use and sense of safety.

### Negative Feature

#### Unauthorised works

#### Potential Action

- 9.45 Seek enforcement action against unauthorised works where a breach of planning control has occurred and there is a negative impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 9.46 Increase awareness of conservation issues and understanding of the character of the Conservation Area through promotion of the Character Appraisal.

### Negative Feature

#### Lack of Street Trees

#### Potential Action

- 9.47 Consult with the Tree Forum to address issues concerning street trees and to prevent the removal of trees in the public realm without prior consultation with interested parties.
- 9.48 Seek enforcement action where a breach of conservation area consent or planning control has occurred

### ADDITIONAL POTENTIAL ACTIONS

#### Increase Awareness

- 9.49 Increase awareness of conservation issues and understanding of the character of the Conservation Area through the promotion of this Character Appraisal and other means.
- 9.50 Investigate the possibility of producing a leaflet for house owners advising them on what is and is not covered by Permitted Development rights and how best to maintain their property in a way that is consistent with the character of the Conservation Area as identified in this Appraisal.

#### Direction Controlling Permitted Development

- 9.51 Investigate the possibility of implementing a Direction to remove certain Permitted Development rights in order to protect features considered important to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.





## 10. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 10.1 The first involvement with the community was in October 2009 when officers first contacted the Save Sea Mills Garden Suburb Group (SSMGS) regarding the forthcoming Appraisal. A small working group made up of SSMGS members was then established and a pre-meeting and initial walk-about the Conservation Area was held, in which the appraisal process was explained and the key issues raised.
- 10.2 Prior to document drafting an initial public meeting was advertised in the Bristol Evening Post (11.11.09); Sea Mills Community Voice - a community newsletter; Posters in the Sea Mills Public Library, Bristol Central Library and elsewhere throughout the Conservation Area; Bristol City Council website; Bristol Consultation Finder (uploaded 26.10.09). BCC Councillors were notified through an e-mail dated 23.10.10.
- 10.3 This initial public meeting was held on Wednesday 18.11.09 at the Sea Mills Community Centre, Sunny Hill. Topics covered included:
- What a character appraisal is and why BCC undertakes them
  - The general format for character appraisals and the national guidance followed
  - The types of features that make a conservation area special
  - The types of features that detract from a conservation area
  - The importance of reviewing boundaries, and identifying unlisted buildings of merit
  - The projected timescale for the document production
  - Details on how and when to make representations and contact officers
- 10.4 The first-stage public consultation ran until 18.12.09. During which time feedback from interested parties on any issues relevant to any aspect the appraisal document were welcomed.
- 10.5 Regular e-mail contact with the SSMGS working group was maintained as a draft document evolved, with a first draft reviewed in January 2010. An interim meeting was held with the SSMGS working group on 09.02.10 to discuss progress of the first draft document.
- 10.6 Once the draft document had been compiled, a second public meeting was held on 30.03.10 at the Sea Mills Community Centre. This meeting was advertised in the Bristol Evening Post notice (26.03.10), a BCC Press Release, and on the BCC website. A letter/e-mail was written to all who expressed an interest during the first-stage consultation notifying of the meeting. The draft character appraisal was available to download from the BCC website along with details of the public consultation and ways to make representations.
- 10.7 This second public meeting provided an opportunity to present the main findings of the draft document including: Streets & Spaces, Views, Landmark Building, Unlisted Buildings of Merit etc.; and proposed boundary alterations. There was an opportunity for questions and discussion and details of the subsequent consultation period in which representations were invited were given. Copies of the draft document and draft maps were available to take away from the meeting.
- 10.8 This second public consultation period closed on 30.04.10.
- 10.9 In addition to the community consultation, BCC's Landscape Design, Strategic & City-wide Policy, North Area Planning Team, Planning Enforcement, and Highways, the Conservation Advisory Panel, North Area Planning Committee, English Heritage, and other statutory bodies, were consulted and invited to comment on the draft.

- 10.10 Once the second public consultation period had closed, all comments and suggested amendments were reviewed and the document and maps updated as necessary. The Strategic Director, City Development, adopted the findings within the draft Appraisal on 14 July 2010 in principle. Work and meetings to discuss the draft continued with SSMGS and BCC Housing and Strategic Policy Teams prior to the Appraisal being published in December 2010.
- 10.11 The Sea Mills Character Appraisal is available for reference from the Sea Mills and Bristol Central Libraries and is available to down-load at: [www.bristol.gov.uk/conservationareas](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/conservationareas); hard copies can be purchased via [conservation@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@bristol.gov.uk)
- 10.12 The Sea Mills Character Appraisal is available to down-load at: [www.bristol.gov.uk/conservationareas](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/conservationareas) or hard copies purchased via [conservation@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@bristol.gov.uk)

## 11. Local Guidance, Publications & Sources of Further Information

There are a number of sources that provide information on the history of Sea Mills from Roman times until the creation of the Garden Suburb. These include:

- Rosamund Jevons & John Madge. Housing Estates: A Study of Bristol Corporation Policy and Practice between the Wars. N.d. c. 1946
- Julian Bennett, Sea Mills: The Roman Town of Abonae. Excavations at Nazareth House 1972. Bristol 1985
- John Betjeman quote on Sea Mills. Extract from a radio talk on Bristol from the series 'Town Tours' April 12 1937 printed in 'Trains and Buttered Toast' by Stephen Games 2006 p.59-60
- Geoffrey Body, Past Bristol Times, Bristol 2008
- Peter Harris, The Lower Trym Valley: A History of the River Trym and the Valley from the Junction of the Hen and the Trym to the Harbour at Sea Mills. 1993
- James Russell, Sea Mills Dock, Bristol, in the Journal of the Council for British Archaeology South West No 21 pp. 26-46, 2008
- James Russell, Sea Mills Dock, Bristol - A Postscript, in the Journal of the Council for British Archaeology South West No 22 pp. 36-37, 2008
- James Russell, Mixing Business with Pleasure. An 18th Century Garden Layout at Sea Mills, Bristol.
- Jim Constant, Sea Mills, Bristol Archaeological Research Group, Volume 6, No 7 April 1979.

### Unpublished Works

- Dr. Mervyn Miller. Sea Mills Garden Suburb in Context. 2007.
- John Roberts. The Definition and Characteristics of a Post-WW1 Garden Suburb with Particular Reference to Sea Mills Garden Suburb, Bristol. Save Sea Mills Garden Suburb, 2007.



- Keith J. Skilleter. Bristol's Garden Suburbs: A History of Housing Reform, Town Planning and the Corporation's 'Cottage Estates' 1890-1939.
- Tim Wallis. Conserving Sea Mills Garden Suburb. Sea Mills & Coombe Dingle Community Project, 2006.
- J and D Fisher, Bygone Bristol: Shirehampton, Sea Mills on Old Postcards, Bristol 1977
- Francis Greenacre and Sheena Stoddard, The Bristol Landscape: The Watercolours of Samuel Jackson 1794 -1869, Bristol 1986
- J.S. Fry and Sons, English City: The Story of Bristol, Bristol 1945
- William Cowlin and Son Ltd, A Record of Building, Bristol 1928

Reports, books and articles relating to the Garden Suburb and 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture include:

- Ebenezer Howard. Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Reform. 1898
- Raymond Unwin. Town Planning in Practice. 1909
- Raymond Unwin. Nothing Gained by Overcrowding. 1912
- The Tudor Walters Report 1918 - Report of the Committee appointed by the President of the Local Government Board and the Secretary for Scotland to consider Questions of Building Construction in Connection with the Provision of Dwellings for the Working Classes in England and Wales, and Scotland, and Report upon Methods of Securing Economy and Despatch in the Provision of Such Dwellings.
- Manual on the Preparation of State-aided Housing Schemes (1919).
- Anthony D King, The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture, London 1984
- C and A Williams-Ellis, The Pleasures of Architecture, Jonathan Cape Ltd London 1924
- Mark Swenarton, Building the New Jerusalem: Architecture, Housing and Politics 1900 - 1930, 2008
- John Burnett. A Social History of Housing 1815 - 1985. Methuen, 1986, 2nd ed.
- Peter Malpass & Jennie Walmsley. 100 Years of Council Housing in Bristol. BCC/UWE Faculty of the Built Environment, 2005.
- Dr Mervyn Miller. English Garden Cities: An Introduction. English Heritage, 2010

Images of Sea Mills at various times in its history can be found in:

- F.C. Jones and W.G. Chown, History of Bristol's Suburbs: 78 Photographs from the Reece Winstone Collection, Bristol 1977

Sources from Bristol Record Office include:

- Maps of Sea Mill Farm in the Parish of Henbury and County of Gloucester and Clack Mill Farm together with Bowdown Field in the Parish of Henbury and the County of Gloucester from Maps of several estates, belonging to Edward Southwell esq, surveyed in 1771 and the drawings completed in 1772 by Isaac Taylor. [BRO 26570]
- Blueprint of Sea Mills Garden Suburb [BRO Red Label 36(5) Housing Estates pre 1944]
- Photograph of new houses (Woodleaze, Sea Mills) [43207/9/23/80]
- Photograph of Sea Mills 1911 [43207/9/24/2]

Further information on the Sea Mills Conservation Area can be sought from:

- Save Sea Mills Garden Suburb
- Bristol Parks Forum [www.bristolparks.org.uk](http://www.bristolparks.org.uk)

For further information on Conservation Area Character Appraisals or conservation issues in general, contact:

Urban Design & Conservation  
City Design Group

Planning Services Division

Bristol City Council

Tel: 0117 922 3097

Fax: 0117 922 3101

E-mail: [conservation@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@bristol.gov.uk)

Adopted and consultation draft character appraisals and details of the programme for reviewing conservation areas can be viewed at [www.bristol.gov.uk/conservationareas](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/conservationareas)

For advice on alterations to buildings or new development within the Sea Mills Conservation





Area, contact:

North & West Area Planning Team

Planning Services Division

Bristol City Council

Tel: 0117 922 3097

Fax: 0117 922 3417

[development.management@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:development.management@bristol.gov.uk)

The Sea Mills Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Proposals will form part of the emerging Local Development Framework and should be considered within the context of existing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs), Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), and Planning Advice Notes (PANs) including:

- City Centre Strategy and Action Plan
- SPD 7 'Archaeology and Development'
- PAN 6 - Off-street Residential Parking in Conservation Areas
- PAN 7 - Conservation Policies
- PAN 8 - Shopfront Design Guides
- PAN 15 - Responding to Local Character - A Design Guide
- PAN 17 - Control of Food and Drink Uses

Bristol's Environmental Access Standards, 2006 should also be used by those who are planning, designing and implementing schemes in the built environment.

Bristol City Council's planning policies are set out in the adopted Bristol Local Plan (BLP) 1997 and 2003 Proposed Alterations to the Local Plan. These documents can be viewed at [www.bristol.gov.uk/planning](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/planning)

Further information on listed buildings, conservation areas, and guidance on character appraisals can be obtained from:

National Policy Guidance:

- [Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment \(2010\)](#) and accompanying Practice Guide (2010)

English Heritage Publications:

- [Guidance on conservation area appraisals \(2006\)](#)
- [Guidance on the management of conservation areas \(2006\)](#)
- [The Heritage of Historic Suburbs \(2007\)](#)

- [Suburbs and the Historic Environment \(2007\)](#)
- [Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessment - Principles and Practice \(2010\)](#)

English Heritage (Head Office)

1 Waterhouse Square

138 - 142 Holborn

London EC1N 2ST

General Enquiries: 020 7973 3000

[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

English Heritage (South West)

29 Queen Square

Bristol BS1 4ND

Tel: 0117 950 0700

For technical guidance and lists of specialist suppliers relating to historic buildings, contact:

[The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings \(SPAB\)](#)

37 Spital Square

London E1 6DY

Tel: 020 7377 1644

[www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)

[The Georgian Group](#)

6 Fitzroy Square

London W1T 5DX

Tel: 0871 750 2936

[www.georgiangroup.org.uk](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk)

[The Victorian Society](#)

1 Priory Gardens

Bedford Park

London W4 1TT

Tel: 020 8994 1019

[www.victorian-society.org.uk](http://www.victorian-society.org.uk)

[The Twentieth Century Society](#)

70 Cowcross Street

London EC1M 6EJ

Tel: 020 7250 3857

[www.c20society.org.uk](http://www.c20society.org.uk)

[Institute of Historic Building Conservation \(IHBC\)](#)

[www.ihbc.org.uk](http://www.ihbc.org.uk)



## 12. Glossary

### 12.1 Glossary of Architectural Terms

#### Aesthetics

Relating to, or sensitive to, visual beauty

#### Accretions

A gradual build-up of small additions and layers

#### Bay

A vertical division of the exterior of a building marked by fenestration, an order, buttresses, roof compartments etc.

#### Bay Window

An angular or curved projecting window

#### Barge Board

Board fixed to the gable end of a roof to hide the ends of the purlin timbers

#### Canted

Term describing part, or segment, of a façade, which is at an angle of less than 90° to another part of the same façade

#### Casement Window

A metal or timber window with side hinged leaves, opening outwards or inwards

#### Catslide

A wedge-shaped dormer or outshut roof which slopes in the same plane as the main roof

#### Chamfer

A bevelled edge connecting two surfaces. When the surfaces are at right angles the chamfer will typically be symmetrical at 45 degrees

#### Chimney Stack

Masonry or brickwork containing several flues, projecting above the roof and terminating in chimney pots

#### Console

An ornamental bracket with a curved profile and usually of greater height than projection

#### Coursing

Continuous horizontal layer of masonry, such as brick or coursed stone

#### Crittall

The name commonly given to metal casement windows, originally developed by British manufacturer, Crittall Windows Ltd, in the period after the First World War

#### Cul-de-sac

Literally meaning “bottom of the bag”, term referring to a dead end, close or no through road (see also Garden Suburb Glossary Appendix 1).

#### Door Surround

Timber assembly around a door, usually based on the classical motif of column, frieze and cornice

#### Dormer Window

A window placed vertically in a sloping roof and with a roof of its own. Name comes from French to sleep

#### Façade

The frontage of a building

#### Fascia

A flat board, usually of wood, covering the ends of rafters or a plain strip over a shop front, usually carrying its name

#### Fenestration

The arrangement of windows in a building's façade

#### Gable

The upper portion of a wall at the end of a pitched roof; can have straight sides or be shaped or crowned with a pediment (known as a Dutch Gable)



### Gibbs Surround

The surround of a doorway or window consisting of alternating large and small blocks of stone, or of intermittent large blocks; sometimes with a narrow raised band connecting up the vertical and along the face of the arch. Named after the influential church architect of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century James Gibbs (1662 - 1754).

### Glazing Bars

Bars which subdivide a casement or sash window

### Hipped Roof

A roof with sloped instead of vertical ends

### Pantile

Roofing tile, of clay, with curved 'S'-shaped or corrugated section. Double Roman tiles are flat in the middle, with a concave curve at one end at a convex curve at the other, to allow interlocking.

### Pennant Stone

Hard, fine-grained, blue/grey or red coloured sandstone. Quarried in South Wales and the Bristol area and commonly used, throughout the country, as a stone roofing or street surface material; or, as in Sea Mills, as a dressing or facing stone

### Pitched Roof

A roof consisting of two halves that form a peak in the middle where they meet

### Render

Covering material, e.g plaster, over a stone or brick surface

### Reveal

The wall structure exposed by setting-back window or door joinery from the face of the building

### Ridgeline

The apex of the roof continued along the length of the roof span

### Roof Pitch

Angle at which rafters form an apex from the supporting walls

### Roofscape

View resulting from a blend of roof pitches, sizes and heights within the built environment

### Sash Window

A window formed with sliding glazed frames running vertically

### Segmental Arch

A curved arch above an opening constructed from shaped bricks or stones

### uPVC

Unplasticized Polyvinyl Chloride. A cheap, durable and low-maintenance plastic widely used in construction, commonly as a substitute for painted wood in double-glazing.

### Vernacular

Term used to describe methods of construction which use locally available resources and traditions to address local needs and circumstances





## 12.2 Glossary of Planning Policy Terms

### Article 4 and Article 4 (2) Directions

Restrict the right of landowners to carry out certain categories of development which would otherwise be automatically permitted; where that type of permitted development would have a particularly unfortunate effect on the appearance of the area. The Secretary of State's approval is not required in the case of a direction made under Article 4 (2) relating to land in a conservation area

### Building at Risk Register

Listed buildings "at risk" are those in danger of being lost due to: lack of use; under-use; disrepair; or dereliction. Alongside a national Register, maintained by English Heritage, the city council also produces a Register of Buildings at Risk, which is revised and updated every two years. Buildings are categorised (1-3) according to their state of disrepair

### Character

The design, materials and pattern of land use of the built environment provide character and definition to a locality and can enable local planning authorities to better understand the appropriateness of proposed development. (PPS5 Practice Guide para. 34.) It is a government objective that the positive contribution of the historic environment and its heritage assets to local character and sense of place is recognised and valued

### Conservation Area

"An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Set out in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The planning authority has extra powers to control works and demolition of buildings to protect or improve the character or appearance of the area

### Curtilage Listing

"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". This would mean listed building consent is required for its demolition, in whole or in part, and for any works of alteration or extension which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest

### Discontinuance Notices

Where an advertisement is being displayed with the benefit of deemed consent, any authority may serve a discontinuance notice on the owner and occupier of the land and on the advertiser, requiring the advertisement to be removed

### Heritage Asset

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment. They include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process

### Historic Environment

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora. Those elements of the historic environment that hold significance are called heritage assets

### House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

A house which is occupied by three or more unrelated persons, who do not form a single household - this definition is supported by Sections 254, 257 and 258 of the Housing Act 2004



### Listed Building

A building, object or structure that has been judged to be of national importance in terms of architectural or historic interest and included on a special register, called the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

When a building is listed, it is listed in its entirety, which means that both the exterior and the interior are protected. Listed buildings are classified into grades as follows:

Grade I - buildings of exceptional interest (approximately 2% of all listed buildings)

Grade II\* - particularly important and more than special interest (approximately 4%)

Grade II - buildings of special interest, warranting every effort being made to preserve them (94%)

### Landmark Building

A conspicuous building or structure that, whether due to its height, location, specific use or detailed design, stands out from its background. May also be a navigation or focal point, or a key element in views, both locally and in the wider context

### Listed Building Consent

Listed building control is a type of planning control, which protects buildings of special architectural or historical interest.

The controls apply to any works for the demolition of a listed building, or for its alteration or extension, which is likely to affect its character as a building of special architectural or historical interest

### Negative Features

Elements within a locality that detract from its special character or appearance, which offer a potential for beneficial change

### Permitted Development

There are a number of categories of minor works for which a planning application is not normally needed for certain works to enlarge, improvement, or other alter a dwelling house as they are automatically permitted by a general or special development order as in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No. 2) (England) Order, 2008'

### Planning Policy Statement: 5 (PPS5)

Sets out planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment. The policies are a material consideration which must be taken into account in development management decisions, where relevant

### Register of Historic Parks and Gardens

Historic parks and gardens are designed landscapes which, because of their layout, features and architectural ornament, are of special historic interest. Many significant parks and gardens, which were originally identified in a Register compiled by the Avon Gardens Trust, are protected by Policy NE9 of the Bristol Local Plan. English Heritage also maintains a Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Entries are Graded I, II\* or II

### Regulation 7 Directions

A local planning authority may seek a direction under regulation 7 restricting the display of advertising of: various official signs and advertisements; miscellaneous small signs; estate agents' boards; site boards; signs on business premises; advertisements on flags; posters on hoardings etc. If a Direction is in place it means that the particular category of advertisement can be displayed, but only if it has been the subject of a grant of express consent

### Section 106 Agreement

Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority (LPA) to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner in association with the granting of planning permission.

These agreements are a way of delivering or addressing matters that are necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. They are used to support the provision of services and infrastructure, such as highways, recreational facilities, education, health and affordable housing



### Setting

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral

### Significance

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic

### Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

The SHLAA aims to identify as many of the potentially developable housing sites in Bristol as possible. Developable sites are those which are considered to be in a suitable location for housing development and have a reasonable prospect of being developed before 2026

### Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and associated Regulations enables the local authority to protect trees in the interests of amenity, by making tree preservation orders (TPOs). The making of an order, in general, makes it an offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot, willfully damage or willfully destroy a tree without our permission





### 12.3 Garden Suburb Glossary

12.3.1 The following glossary defines terms peculiar to garden suburbs and cities, as well as including other definitions and fuller details relevant to Sea Mills Garden Suburb:

#### Allotments & Allotment Gardens

Allotments are a defining characteristic of a garden suburb being part of what makes a garden city or garden suburb what it is. On plans and layouts, allotments were sometimes referred to as “allotment gardens”, “additional gardens”, or “extra gardens”. The 1922 Allotments Act described an allotment garden: “as an allotment not exceeding 40 poles (or 1,000 square metres) which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of fruit or vegetables for consumption by himself and his family.”

#### Back Projections

What we would today call ‘rear extensions’. Raymond Unwin had an almost vehement aversion to what he called back projections. The Tudor Walters Report advised the need “to avoid excrescences and projections which often result from indolent planning.” “Back projections should generally be avoided.” (Tudor Walters Report. Part XII, para 66).

#### Backs as beautiful as or even more beautiful than the fronts

“The planner...must not forget the spaces behind the buildings...it seems to be forgotten that from all the houses around such a space the outlook of the inhabitants must be on to the backs of their neighbours' houses opposite, but just because these are not seen from the public street outside all attempts to make them even passably decent ... has been neglected. The removal of the excessive back projections will of itself be a great improvement, but a little care in the arrangement of the houses and in their design may very often make the spaces at the backs as beautiful as or even more beautiful than the fronts.” (Raymond Unwin. Town Planning in Practice, p.329)

#### Boundaries, Approaches and Gateways

Unwin had studied the layout of ancient cities, noting how old city walls formed a distinct boundary between the town and country. He applied this model to the boundaries of modern towns and suburbs. “Though we shall not copy the fortified wall of the old city, we may take from it a most pregnant suggestion of the value of defining and limiting towns, suburbs, and new areas generally.” (Raymond Unwin. Town Planning in Practice). “In large towns or areas it would be desirable to secure wide belts of park land, playing fields, or even agricultural land.” “These belts might well define our parishes or our wards, and by so doing might help to foster a feeling of local unity in the area.” “Having found suggestions in the ancient wall, we must not forget the gateway and the importance of marking in some way the entrances of our towns, our suburbs, and our districts. ... For example, some little forecourt of green surrounded by buildings and led up to by an avenue of trees would strike at once the necessary note; and many other simple devices will occur to the designer for giving the required emphasis and dignity to these points of entrance.”

#### Centres and Subsidiary Centres

Raymond Unwin took his model of what a centre should be from the French “place”, and the equivalent Italian piazza and German platz. “The English word ‘square’”, he wrote, “besides limiting the shape to a regular form, denotes something often quite different.” To ensure that “they shall be genuine centres where people will be likely to congregate, they must either be themselves the focal points of the main traffic lines, or must lie very near to these points.” “Even in districts, suburbs, parishes, and wards it is desirable that there should be some centre. There should be some place where the minor public buildings of the district may be grouped and where a definite central effect on a minor scale may be produced.” He emphasised the wisdom “at a very early stage in our planning to select suitable sites for the main and subsidiary centres.” (Town Planning in Practice. P.187).



“The idea of the centre should not be confined even to centres of districts, parishes, or wards. Each area should have its special central feature or point of interest round which its plan should be grouped, and up to which it should lead. At the point where several roads converge there should always be something of an open space arranged, to give freedom for circulation of traffic, and architectural effect to the various road junctions.” (Town Planning in Practice. P.193). See also Enclosures and Vistas.

### Clear Line of Vision Across Corners

A clear line of vision across corner plots is a defining feature of garden suburbs.

### Contour Lines and Topographical Features

Raymond Unwin believed that to holistically plan a layout it was necessary to first commission a detailed site survey with contour lines. The aesthetics of a site “can only be secured if the lay-out be based on a carefully prepared contour plan of the existing views and features of interest and beauty.” (Tudor Walters Report, para 56). In this way “by so planning the lines of the roads and disposing the spaces and buildings as to develop the beauty of vista, arrangement and proportion, an attractiveness may be added to the dwellings at little or no extra cost, which we consider should not only not be omitted, but should be regarded as essential to true economy.” (Tudor Walters Report, para 56).

### Cottages

Two-storey cottage-style houses, not flats, are characteristic features of garden suburbs designed under post-WW1 Housing Acts. The Tudor Walters Committee considered the pros and cons of flats as opposed to houses (see Tudor Walters Report, para 85) and decided that “the two-storey cottage is the type which should generally be adopted subject to the exceptional circumstances”. The ‘exceptional circumstances’ being where “the population have formed the habit of living in flats and are so attached to having their whole dwelling on one floor, that it would form too sudden a break with habits and traditions to attempt to build nothing but the two-storey cottage.” (Tudor Walters Report, para 85). The Housing Manual of 1919 followed this

recommendation.

### Cul-de-sacs

Cul-de-sacs are a definitive feature of garden suburbs. They evolved as part of the garden city and garden suburb movement as an economic way to develop backland areas. The use of cul-de-sacs considerably reduced road building costs. Cul-de-sacs also fulfilled many of the ideals of the movement, giving a sense of community on a small scale, while, with careful planning, a sense of both openness and enclosure. The most typical layout, both in Sea Mills and other garden suburbs, is the “key-hole” cul-de-sac. See Key-Hole Cul-de-sac.

### Detached Suburb

In *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1902), Ebenezer Howard had proposed that the size of a Garden City should be limited and that any further growth should be via satellite towns outside the green belt of the city, each surrounded by its own green belt. Yet each new town would be close enough to the city to easily enjoy its full amenities. In Howard’s ideal “The distance from any town to the heart of Central City is only three and a quarter miles”. Raymond Unwin extended this idea to garden suburbs. In *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding* he wrote of the desirability “to secure definite belts of open space around existing towns and encourage their development by means of detached suburbs grouped around some centre and separated from the existing town by at least sufficient open ground to provide for fresh air, recreation and contact with growing nature.” Sea Mills is three and a half miles from the centre of Bristol.

### Dorlonco Houses

First designed by the Liverpool School of Architects during WW1 for the industrial village of Dormanstown (Redcar and Cleveland), built to house workers at Dorman Long’s iron and steelworks. This form of construction was approved by the Ministry of Health in its list titled *Particulars of Systems of House Construction* Approved up to April 1920, where it is referred to as “The ‘Dorlonco’ Steel frame System of House Construction”. According to



this document, “The steel structure is formed of light rolled sections, which are all prepared and clearly marked before despatch to the site, so that the assembling can be readily carried out by any intelligent workman, no special skill being necessary.” The site connections were made by means of bolts, no riveting being required. The Dorman Long Company was responsible for the manufacture and erection of the steel frame, the completion of the houses being carried out by local contractors or Local Authority direct labour. The original Dorlonco houses built in Dormanstown were all demolished in 1979.

### Economy of Design

The Tudor Walters Committee stressed the need for a scheme that was feasible in economic terms. Throughout the Report it was emphasised that good quality housing and aesthetically pleasing design could both be achieved economically.

### Enclosed Open Spaces

Enclosed open spaces are a planned feature and a defining characteristic of pre- and post-WW1 garden suburbs both in Britain and abroad. Enclosed open spaces are spaces which are fully surrounded by a perimeter of houses, whose fronts face outwards away from the space, and whose gardens back onto the space. They are usually only accessible by footpaths or from rear gardens or via narrow roads. The term “enclosed open space” encapsulates Unwin’s themes of enclosure coupled with openness, and spaces where the distinction between public and private use is blurred. In *Town Planning in Practice*, Raymond Unwin described how they can be used as a more aesthetically pleasing solution to the alternative of fences meeting at some central point. “Where the gardens diminish in width almost to a vanishing point, the concentration of fences at such a point is most unpleasing; but if all these useless strips of ground as they near this point, instead of being separated, could be thrown together to produce a small orchard, a lawn, a hazel copse, a playground for the children, or an allotment garden, a sense of orderly design would at once be given to the ground, and the fences or hedges between the remaining portions of the garden plots would lose much of the ugliness arising from their concentration near the central point.” (*Town*

*Planning in Practice*, p.359).

### Enclosures and Vistas

Closely related to Unwin’s idea of a centre (see above), are his notions of enclosure and vistas. He had noticed that, in old cities, “in how very few cases can any one entering a *place* by one of the streets get any extended view out of it along another street”, as a consequence of which the *place* had an enclosed feel to it. Often the view down a street entering the *place* would be towards a church or one of the municipal buildings, so closing the view with a feature. Conversely he noticed that the view looking along a street leading away from a place, sometimes led towards a distant view such as a mountain or the sea. He applied these ideas to his notion of a designed centre that encompassed these features of enclosure and vistas. “A *place*, then, in the sense in which we wish to use the word, should be an enclosed space. The sense of enclosure is essential to the idea; not the complete enclosure of a continuous ring of buildings ... but a general sense of enclosure resulting from a fairly continuous frame of buildings, the breaks in which are small in relative extent and not too obvious.”

This combined sense of both enclosure and openness is a constant theme. On a large scale there is the enclosure of a garden suburb by the surrounding zones of parkland, playing fields, or other open green space, which in turn provides its open aspect. On a smaller scale, there is a *place*, which has both a sense of enclosure and openness, and, on a smaller scale still, the sense of enclosure with designed openness in the treatment of key-hole cul-de-sacs.

### Extended Outlook

“It is for the site planner who is engaged in laying out sites for smaller homes ... to secure for as many as possible of these houses some extent of outlook by arranging breaks in the street line, by setting the houses back round greens, by planning his roads so that they may command some distant view or may lead on to some open space.” (*Town Planning in Practice*, p.330). Similarly, houses which close the end of a cul-de-sac have an “extended outlook” back down the street, as do houses which close a view back down the street they terminate. Deliberate gaps between houses allow for an extended





outlook via the gap.

### External Ornament Minimised

“Considerable economy may be practiced advantageously in the external design.... Ornament is usually out of place and necessarily costly both in first execution and in upkeep.” (Tudor Walters Report, para 146).

### Family Houses

The principle of providing family housing is fundamental to the character of a garden suburb.

### Focal Greens

Focal greens are used in a number of different ways. They are used to break up the building line to improve the street picture; or by clustering houses around them to improve the outlook for each house which may otherwise have simply faced another house across the street; or to emphasise centres and subsidiary centres. They are also used as terminal features, for example at right-angled bends. Unwin recommended “breaks arranged in the road lines by means of greens ... by which there is secured for a great number of houses a much more extended outlook than if it were limited by the distance to the houses immediately across the street.” (Town Planning in Practice, p.332).

### Gardens

The characteristic that most defines a garden suburb is that the houses have good-sized gardens. The size defined by Raymond Unwin as most suitable being one that is “large enough ... To be worth cultivating seriously for the sake of the profits, and not too large to be worked by an ordinary labourer and his family.” Unwin. Town Planning in Practice. P.320.

### Gateways

See Boundaries and Approaches.

### Grouping of Houses

“In residential districts one of the greatest difficulties to be contended with is the constant multiplication of buildings too small in scale to produce individually an effect in the road, and every opportunity should be taken to group buildings so that units may be

produced of a larger scale. Even where it is not possible to avoid much repetition of semi-detached or detached houses, they should be so arranged as to give some sense of grouping. The setback of three or four pairs of houses and the arrangement of a continuous green in front of them, with the proper treatment of the houses at each end, which are set forward again to the building line, will of itself produce some grouping; or the street may be widened and a double avenue of trees planted on this length.” (Town Planning in Practice p. 350). Grouping helps to produce “interest and variety in the street pictures”, whilst at the same time maintaining a “general sense of unity”. The occupiers of the houses in a group obtain the benefit of an improved outlook. “Greater enjoyment to each householder can be secured by grouping the buildings so that they may share the outlook over a wider strip of green or garden.” Houses may be grouped by the simple method of setting them back from the building line, or around focal greens, or, where there are subsidiary roads, around larger greens or open spaces for bowling greens or tennis courts.

### Harmony of the Whole

The phrase that best sums up Raymond Unwin’s philosophy of design is his “harmony of the whole”. The garden cities and garden suburbs movement envisioned a way in which people could live together harmoniously in a community; in a setting that was harmonious with nature; in a place designed holistically to harmonise both with its external setting and within its own plan and design; in houses harmoniously designed to be best sited within the overall plan and their relationship to adjacent houses and natural surroundings in order to make the best possible use of fresh air and sunlight, whilst having the best possible outlook onto their surroundings. “The Garden City movement, as the name implies, stands for a more harmonious combination of city and country, dwelling house and garden” (first sentence in Nothing Gained By Overcrowding).

### Holistic Design

A design, complete in itself, in which consideration is given to how every facet relates



both to every other facet and to the whole.

#### Key-hole Cul-de-sac

A key-hole cul-de-sac has a short, straight, key-hole shaped layout. At the enclosed end, the last house units on each side are set back from the building line with a generous gap between these and both the end pair and the adjacent pair. These gaps allow openness and light into the cul-de-sac, and glimpses outwards between the houses, so alleviating any stifling sense of enclosure. Whilst these cul-de-sacs appear to be enclosed spaces they are, in fact, deliberately planned to be very open. The houses which close the end of the cul-de-sac also have another feature avowed by Unwin, which is an “extended outlook” back down the street.

#### Low Density

The chief characteristic of the layout of garden suburbs and cities is the low density. “This figure of 12 houses to the acre has now been fairly well tested, having been adopted in the main at Bournville, ... at Earswick, at the Garden City at Letchworth, at Hampstead, and at many other places.” (Town Planning in Practice. P.320). “... the number of houses should not exceed 12 to the acre in urban and 8 to the acre in rural areas.” (Tudor Walters Report Part XII para 7). The Housing Manual of 1919 states the same.

#### Nothing Gained by Overcrowding and its Influence on the Layout of Sea Mills Square

Raymond Unwin’s highly influential Nothing Gained by Overcrowding, 1912, provided the economic justification for low density garden suburb layouts. The design of Sea Mills Square is believed to be based on the central feature of an illustration in this pamphlet of an aerial perspective of an imaginary garden city/suburb by A. Hugh Mottram entitled The Garden City Principle applied to Suburbs. Highly influential in its own right, this illustration was reprinted in various books and articles down to the present day. A model of it was displayed at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, London, in 1924.

#### Outlook

See Extended Outlook.

#### Passageways in Short Terraces

See Terraces.

#### Place, Platz, Piazza

See Centres and Subsidiary Centres.

#### Plan of Houses

“Simple rectangular plans including all accommodation within the main walls should generally be adopted.” Outbuildings should be avoided. Back projections should generally be avoided. (Tudor Walters Report, part XII, paras 66 & 67.) In the writings of Raymond Unwin, the Tudor Walters Report, and the Housing Manual, the frontage of houses always exceeds the depth, except when the plan of the house is square.

#### Rear Aspects of Houses of Equal Importance to Frontages

Unwin believed with regard to the rear elevations of houses that “their design may very often make the spaces at the backs as beautiful as or even more beautiful than the fronts.” (Town Planning in Practice. P.329). Only considering the public face of a garden suburb represented by its street frontage is to misunderstand the special character of a post-WW1 garden suburb where the rear aspect is of equal importance to the front. “The planner, having considered the placing of his buildings with a view to the street pictures and the frontage lines, must not forget the spaces behind the buildings. Nothing more thoroughly expresses the shoddy character of our modern town development and the meanness of the motives which have inspired it than the treatment of the spaces at the backs of houses. It seems to be forgotten that from all the houses around such a space the outlook of the inhabitants must be on to the backs of their neighbours’ houses opposite, but just because these are not seen from the public street outside all attempts to make them even passably decent ... has been neglected. The removal of the excessive back projections will of itself be a great improvement, but a little care in the arrangement of the houses and in their design may very often make the spaces at the backs as beautiful as or even more beautiful than the fronts.” (Town Planning in Practice. p.329).

#### Rear Extensions



See Back Projections.

### Recreation Ground / Recreational Space

Throughout the history of garden cities and garden suburbs, the provision of recreational facilities was emphasised. A recreation ground is a defining characteristic of a garden suburb. Other recreational space, frequently either a bowling green or tennis courts or both, was also usually included.

### Regularity or Rhythm in the Spacing of Houses

“Where detached or semi-detached buildings stand by themselves some regularity or rhythm in their spacing is an important matter to secure.” “But the uneven spacing of the distance between the pairs in an irregular manner is anything but pleasing”. (Town Planning in Practice p.351).

### Road Junctions

Raymond Unwin’s detailed explanations for the treatment of corners and road junctions in Town Planning in Practice are too extensive to go into here. His essential principle was that, with proper arrangement, corners and junctions allow a dual purpose, firstly, of extended views from the houses at junctions, and, secondly, that corners and junctions should be features of interest in their own right. “The junction of the road is developed and emphasised as a feature of interest, and is taken advantage of to give extended outlook from the windows.” Within his general principles there is flexibility allowing for much individual variation. He believed that “some liberty should be allowed in the treatment of corner sites”. However, the principle of a clear line of vision across corners is a common feature to all corners in garden suburbs. See also T-junctions, Triple Junctions, Terminal Features, Clear Line of Vision across Corners, and Centres and Subsidiary Centres.

### Self-contained Community

The idea of a self-contained community was a fundamental ideal of the garden city and garden suburb movement. “It is not enough merely to cover the ground with streets and houses. The site should be considered as the future location of a community ... Their social, educational, recreational and other requirements should, therefore, be considered ... In the planning of

housing schemes suitable sites should, therefore, be reserved for larger houses, shops and business premises, schools, places of worship, clubs, institutions, and for open spaces, playgrounds, &c.” (Tudor Walters Report para 53).

### Semi-detached Houses

“The idea of ‘garden’ development calls for low density of houses, for two-storey houses with front and back gardens, for trees and grass verges; these requirements encourage the building of semi-detached houses.” (Jevons & Madge. Housing Estates: A Study of Bristol Corporation Policy and Practice Between the Wars. P.19). Raymond Unwin felt that streets consisting entirely of semi-detached houses lacked sufficient variety in the street scene. However, he acknowledged that “there is strong prejudice on the part of the public in favour of detached or semi-detached houses” (Town Planning in Practice. P.349).

### Street Pictures

“Where the purpose of the buildings will allow of such treatment, it is possible, by judicious variation of the building line, to build up a street picture in a straight street, in which a long vanishing perspective is very largely replaced by portions of the sides of buildings seen in front elevation, and in this way quite picturesque street effects may be arrived at.” (Town Planning in Practice. P.254). Not all straight streets require this treatment, however, “where the street picture is closed by some terminal feature of special beauty and interest, a more simple and monotonous treatment may be permitted, and will even serve to enhance the effect by contrast with the more ornate centre.” Similarly, curving streets require less of this treatment as the curves of a road bring a visual sense of enclosure to the street.

### Terminal Feature

A building or object that terminates or closes a view down a street. This may be something ordinary like a pair of semi-detached houses, or a “terminal feature of special beauty and interest”, such as a church.

### Terraces





Whilst acknowledging the necessity of semi-detached houses, Unwin felt that some groupings of 4, 6, or 8 houses in the form of terraces would make for more variety. In order for these to have the same advantages of a semi-detached house, he proposed that these longer groups should have a passageway between each pair in order to gain access to the rear garden and to negate the need for a back access road. "Back roads should not be provided, but access from the front should be arranged to the back garden of each house; such access is best secured in intermediate houses of groups of four or six by means of a passage on the ground floor between each pair of houses." (Tudor Walters Report. Part XII para 12). See also Wing Features of Terraces.

### T-junctions as Small Squares

At T-junctions, "the junction may be emphasised by breaking the building lines opposite, and so producing something in the nature of a small square." (Town Planning in Practice p.334). This is produced by setting back the houses opposite the junction and leaving a space on each opposite corner with a clear line of vision across it.

### Triple Junctions

Where three roads meet "the houses forming the terminal features to the roads are set forward, and their angles form a frame to the terminal feature opposite, down whichever of the roads the view is taken." (Town Planning in Practice p.335).

### Uniformity

A fundamental characteristic of Sea Mills Garden Suburb.

### Variety

The Tudor Walters Report stressed the need for economy. Minimising those external features of houses that were merely ornamental would reduce costs, but there was a danger that this would result in an external appearance that was too plain and too uniformly repetitive. To counter this, the Tudor Walters Report recommended "well-considered variations in the designs to suit their different positions", as well as variations in materials. However, "the variety of each must be dominated by the harmony of

the whole".

"Considerable economy may be practised advantageously in the external design.... Ornament is usually out of place and necessarily costly both in first execution and in upkeep. The best effects can be obtained by good proportion in the mass and in the openings, by careful grouping of the various parts of each cottage, by grouping the cottages themselves, and by well-considered variations in the designs to suit their different positions and the different materials used." (Tudor Walters Report, para 146).

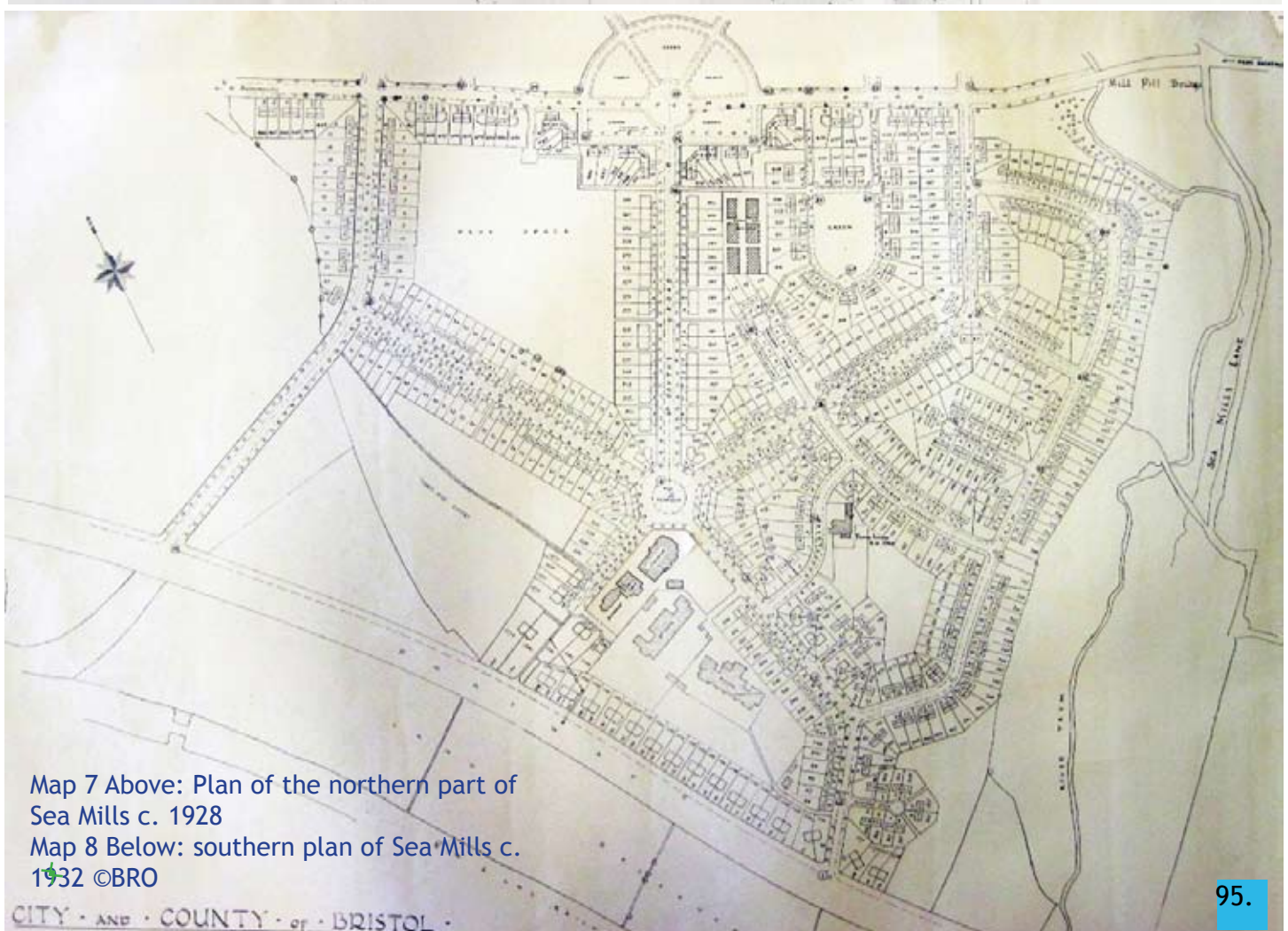
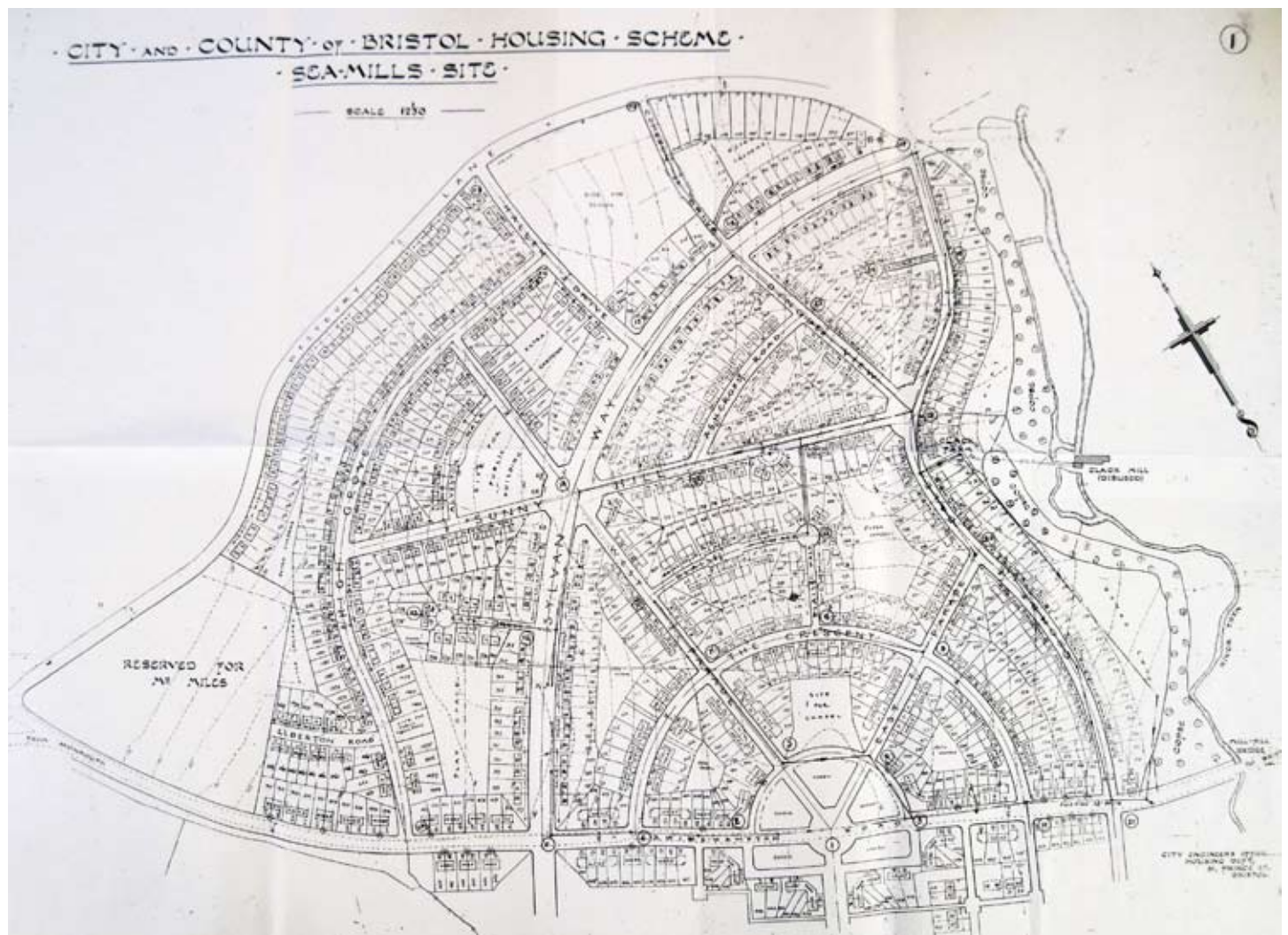
The Housing Manual took a similar line. "By so planning the lines of the roads and disposing the spaces and the buildings as to develop the beauty of the vista, arrangement and proportion, attractiveness may be added to the dwellings at little or no extra cost. Good exterior design in harmony with the surroundings and adapted to the site should be secured ... By the choice of suitable local materials, and the adoption of simple lines and good proportion and grouping of buildings, with well-considered variation in design and in the treatment of prominent parts, good appearance may be secured within the limits required by due economy."

### Vista

See Enclosures and Vistas.

### Wing Features of Terraces

To give a coherence to the whole of a terrace, Unwin suggested pronounced wing features at the ends of the side blocks. He also suggested that "in groups of 4 or 6 cottages ... the two at the end may well be somewhat larger, and will thus materially help the design by giving the opportunity for breaks in the frontage line and perhaps a different treatment of the roof." (Town Planning in Practice. p.373).



Map 7 Above: Plan of the northern part of  
Sea Mills c. 1928  
Map 8 Below: southern plan of Sea Mills c.  
1932 ©BRO

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with special thanks to Save Sea Mills Garden Suburb

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