

4 coldean neighbourhood

context



key stages of historic development

Coldean is a mainly post-WW2 suburb lying in a deep valley between Hollingbury and Stanmer and located off one of the main sustainable transport corridors, the Lewes Road.

Prior to its development there were a few cottages and farm buildings near Lewes Road and along the track later to become Coldean Lane. These included the late 18th century flint barn of Coldean Farm also known as the Menagerie. This building partly survives as St Mary Magdalene's Church and community centre.

The first housing development started in 1934 at the southern end of the neighbourhood and was completed in 1948. The main council housing development took place in the post-WW2 era providing a mix of properties, mainly family homes. The most recent major development has been the detached student campus accommodation at Varley Halls for Brighton University.

typology

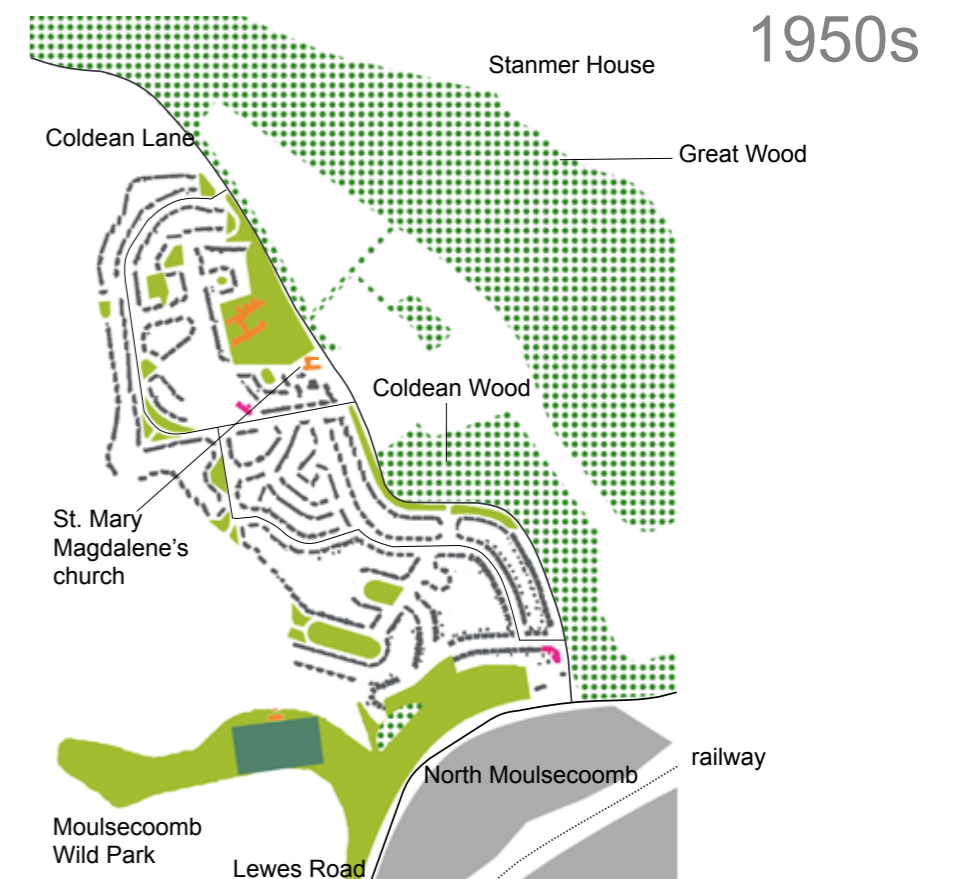
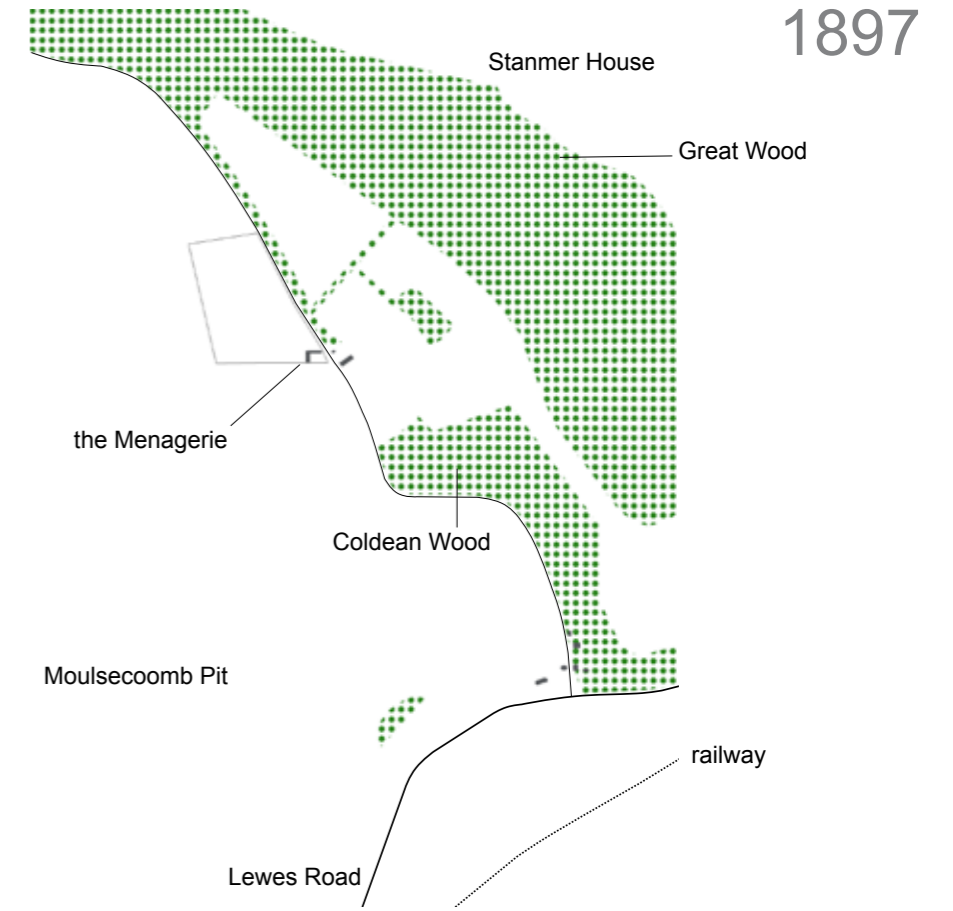
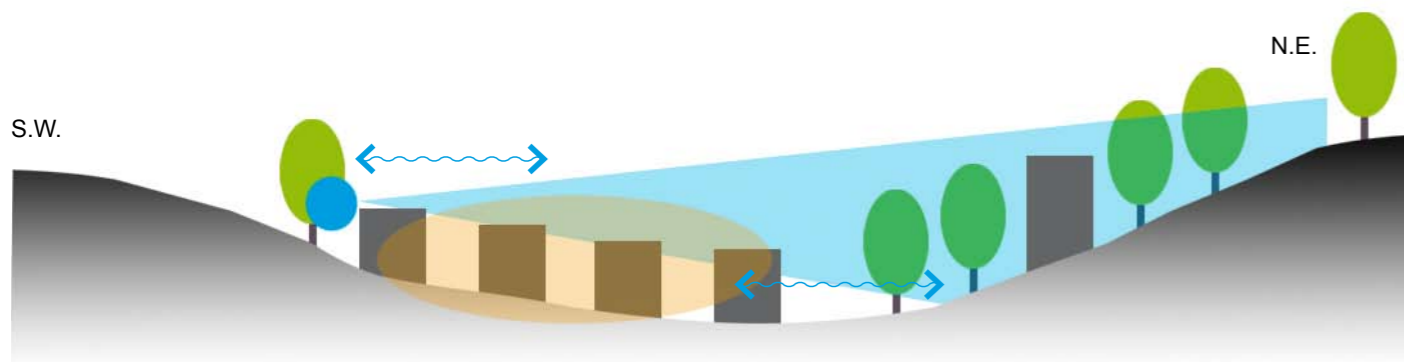
Coldean neighbourhood may be classified as suburban downland fringe with a 20th century residential suburb that was deliberately planned. Low rise, low density semi-detached and terraced housing much of which was built as public housing. Poor access to local services but strong identity.

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

topography & microclimate

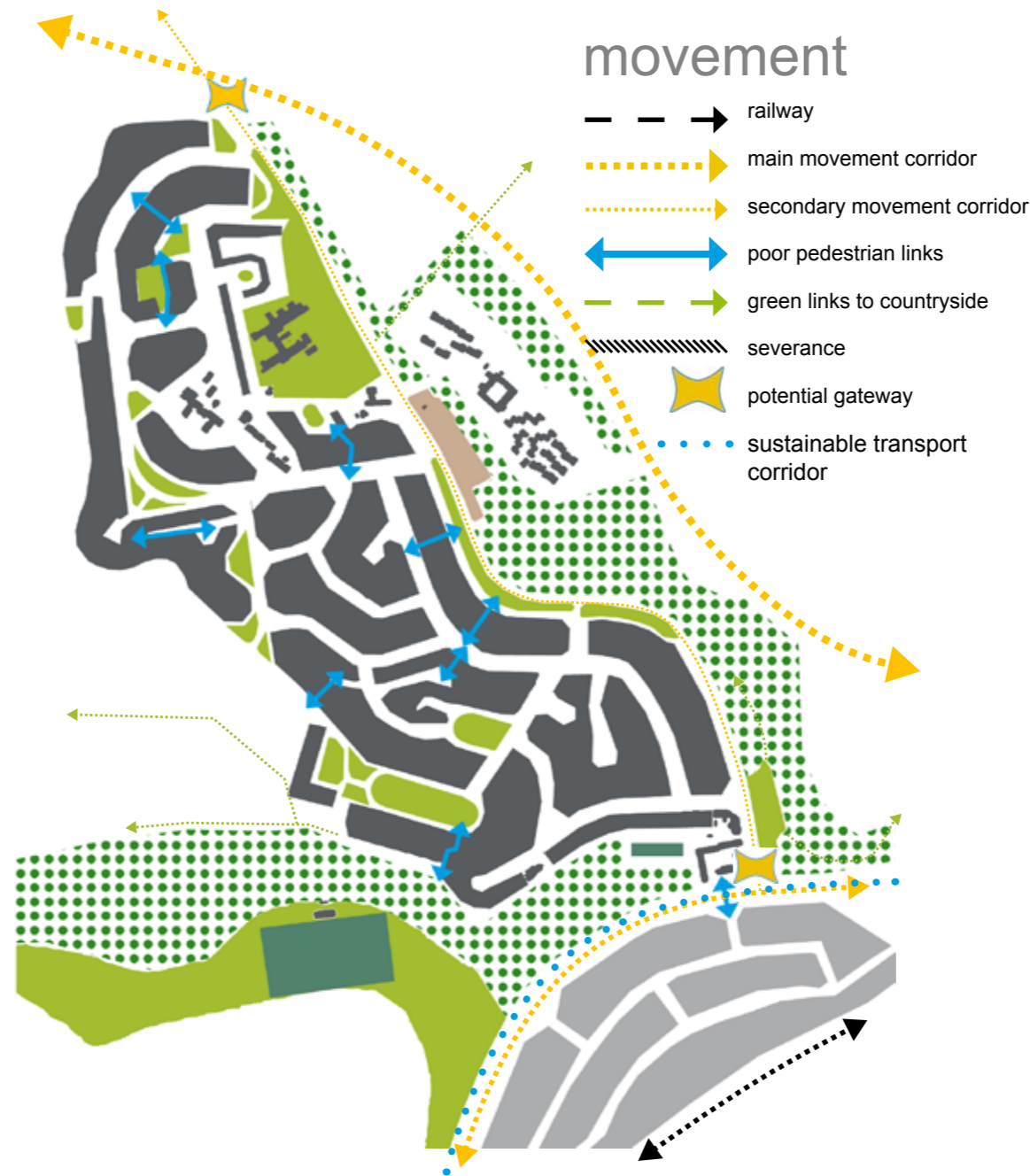
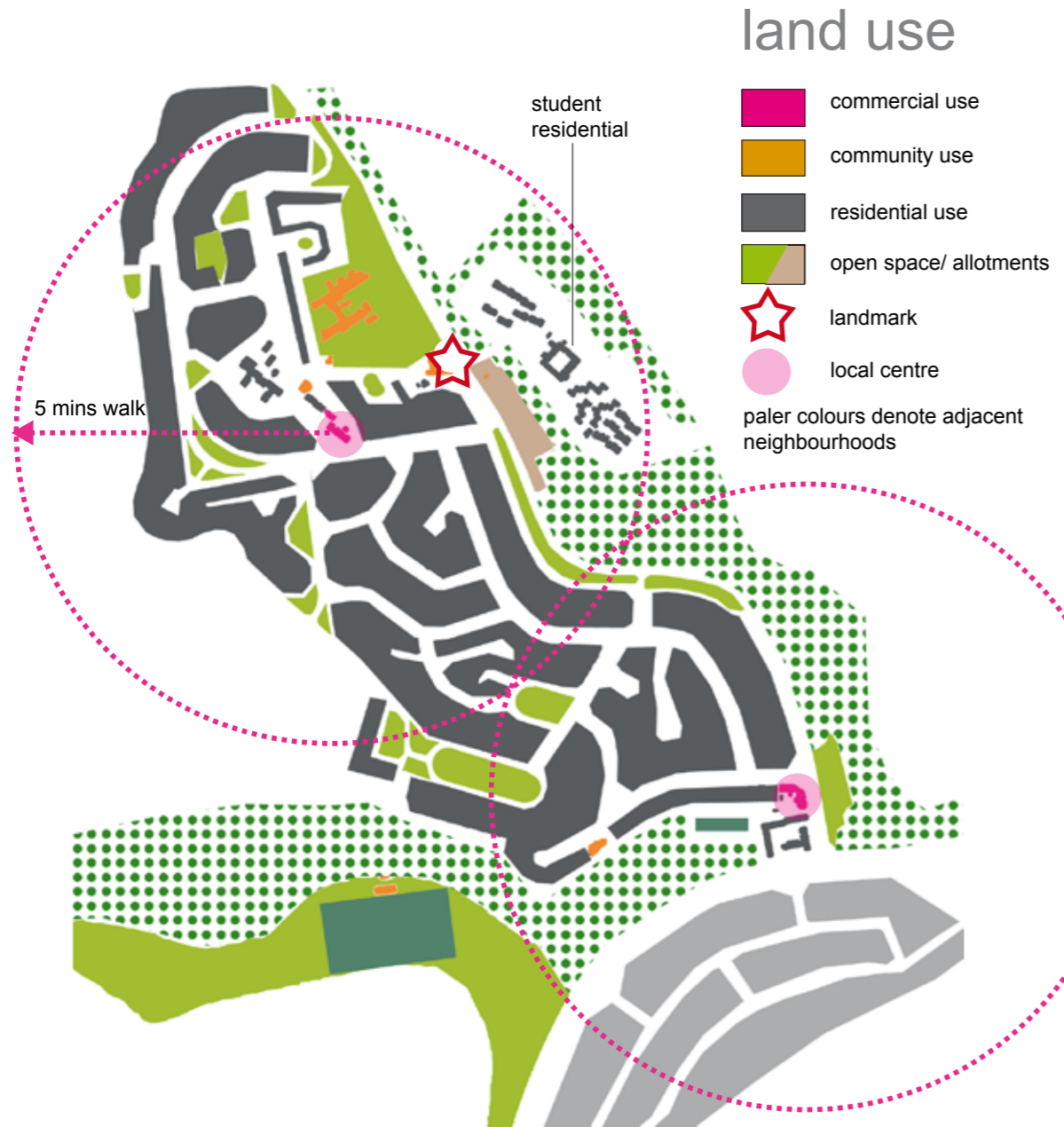
The topography has affected the character of the Coldean neighbourhood. Located within a deep valley, the neighbourhood is detached from neighbouring suburbs. The wooded and arable hillsides provide a rural setting.

The interior of the development appears sheltered whilst the fringes are more exposed to sea winds and northerly winds coming off the Downs. Almost every location offers excellent views of nearby woodland, high downland, the neighbourhood itself and panoramas across the main Lewes Road corridor to the settlements and downland beyond.



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key characteristics



• **Land use:** This neighbourhood is predominantly residential, with a school. There are a few local services including a post office, local shops, a local pub and a library.

• **Scale and density:** The area is dominated by two storey semi-detached residential development and contains high density student residential accommodation resulting in a gross density of approximately 24 dwellings per hectare. Growth in local services is unlikely with the current level of local population which can access a wider range of other services quite easily by car (see appendix 1).

• **Architecture:** Development is mainly in the form of plain, simple two storey houses with pitched roofs and brick or rendered elevations, set back behind small front gardens with low boundary walls. Some older houses are enlivened by bays, gabled fronts and tile hanging.

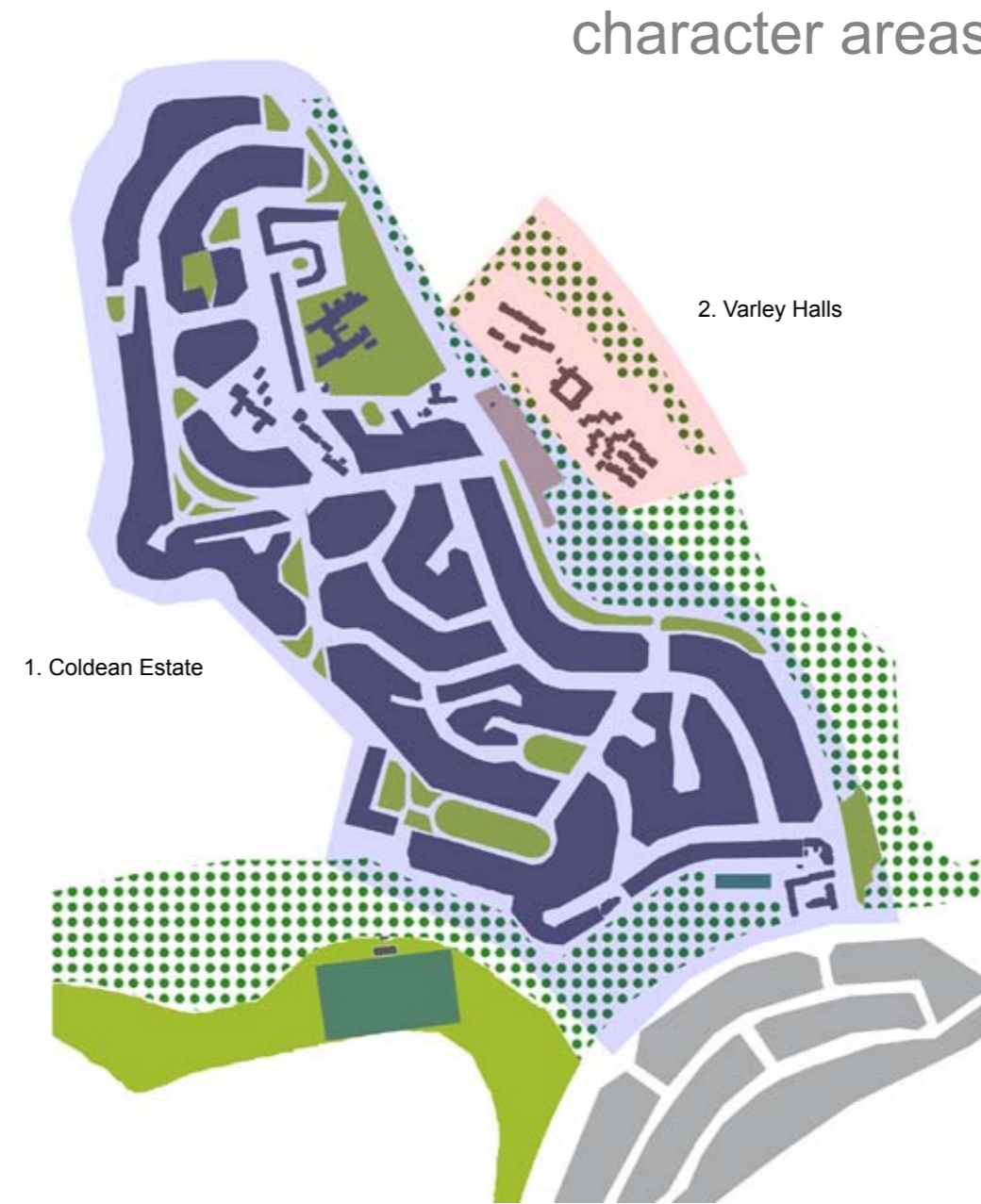
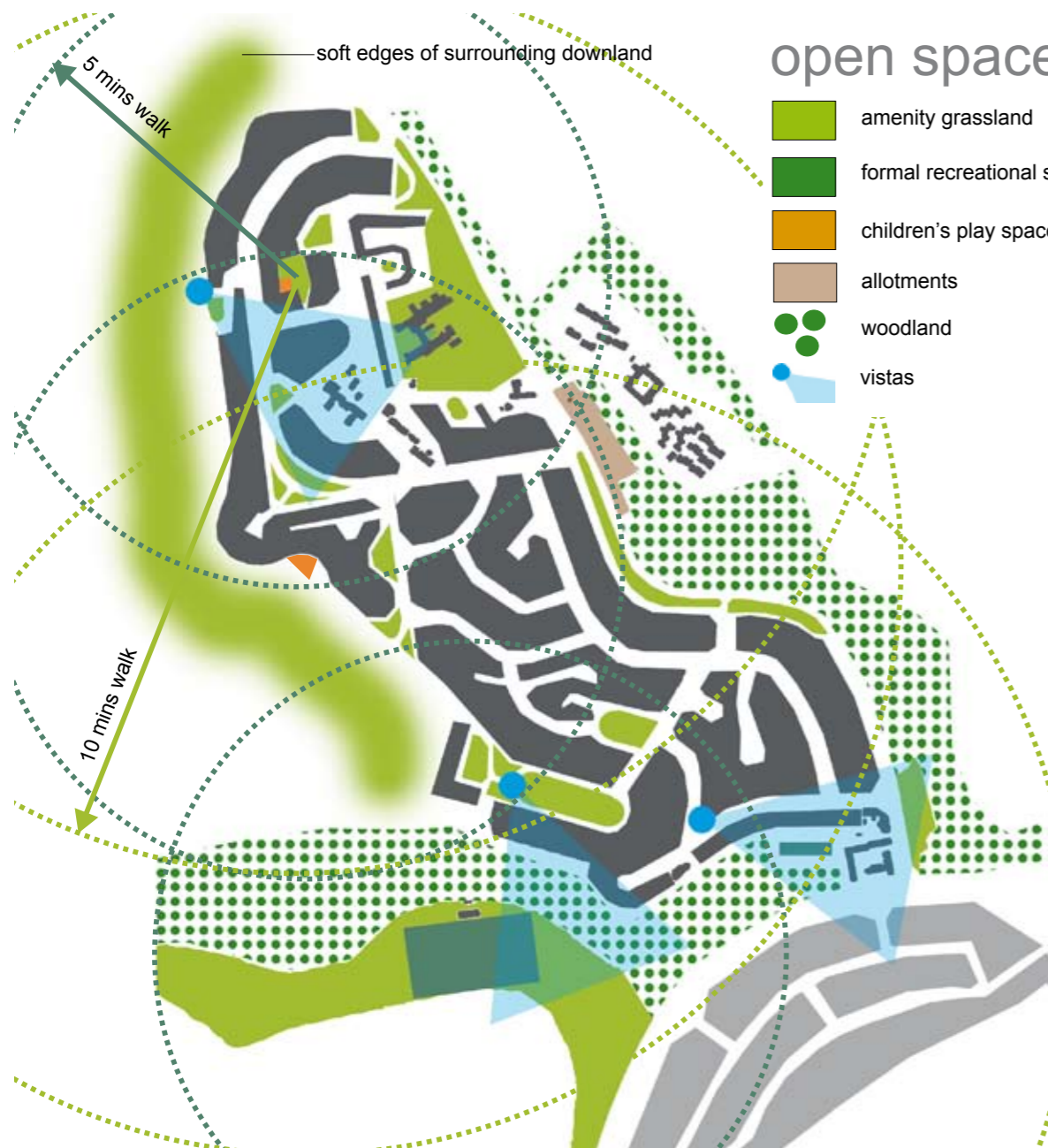
• **Movement:** The neighbourhood is located near the Lewes Road sustainable

transport corridor. Vehicular movement into the neighbourhood is accessed from the through-route of Coldean Lane which links Ditchling Road, the A27 bypass and the northern edge of Patcham and Hollingbury with its superstore and commercial centre. Apart from this road link the surrounding topography severs the neighbourhood from the nearby neighbourhood of Hollingbury and the Lewes Road acts as a pedestrian barrier to Moulsecoomb. The car is the most popular mode of transport to access work while the percentage of people using more sustainable forms of transport is very low (see appendix 2). The low traffic volumes during the day have a profound effect on the character of the neighbourhood, creating a quiet garden suburb with very little activity on the streets.

Pedestrian movement is sometimes impeded by the long blocks and much of the pedestrian access is located along the sides of houses creating unfriendly pedestrian routes with little surveillance. Coldean Lane is subject to fast-moving vehicles with pedestrian crossings provided neither to the allotments nor the student residences.



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• **Socio-economic characteristics:** Less than a quarter of the population is on a low income and around three quarters are owner occupiers (see appendix 3). There is a nearby employment hub in the form of Hollingbury's superstore and commercial centre.

• **Open space:** The neighbourhood's location within the Coldean valley with its wooded northeastern slopes gives the impression of an area isolated from the rest of Brighton. The steep incline of the valley sides to the north has rendered it undevelopable and left to regenerate as deciduous woodland and scrub. The valley sides are proposed for designation as a Local Nature Reserve. Other surrounding land use is arable, with pasture farm land softening the development into the surrounding landscape and contributing to the rural setting of the suburb. Within the neighbourhood itself there are a few large green spaces, several characteristic small grassed triangles where streets converge from different levels, and extensive grass verges. Regular mowing means that these grassed areas have little to contribute to local bio-diversity. However where the maintenance strategy has been reduced chalk land plant species have started to colonise.

There is formal recreation space provided within the neighbourhood, including a large and well used childrens playground which is within 10 minutes walking distance for nearly all the residents. There is a well used allotment between the housing and the student residences.

• **Character areas:** Until recently it could be said that as development took place over a short period of time the whole neighbourhood could be considered as one character area. However, with the addition of the student residences, two quite distinct character areas now exist:

1. Coldean Estate: A low density post-war public housing suburb lying in a deep valley on the edge of the downs. Almost entirely residential and consisting largely of semi-detached and terraced houses with limited local services.

2. Varley Halls: A small area of late 20th century purpose built student housing set amongst woodland, isolated from other development.



Typical footpath linking parallel streets



Typical stepped footway linking converging streets



Recreational space within residential block



Coldean Estate character area



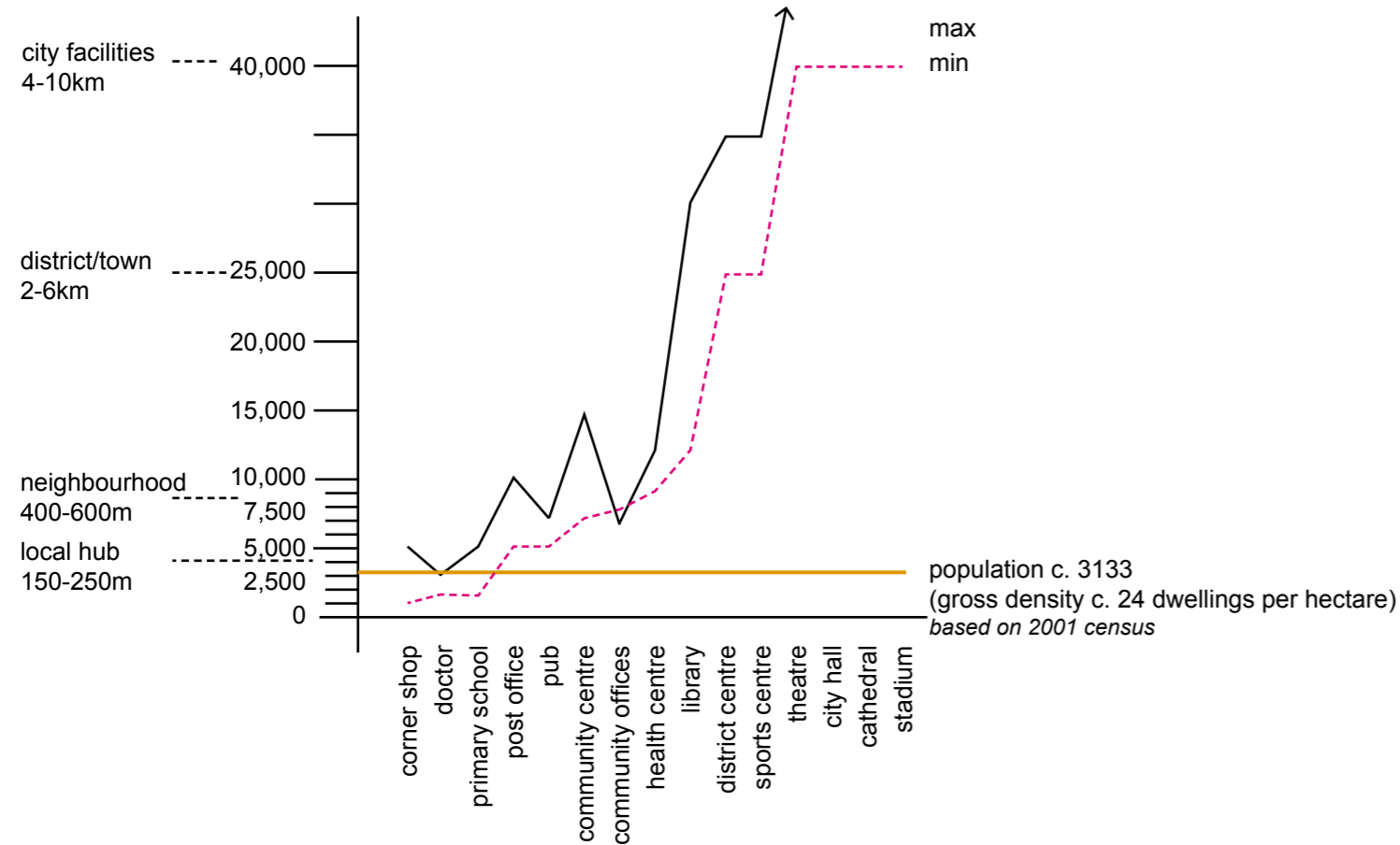
Varley Halls character area

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appendix 1: population & density

Population numbers able to support community facilities.

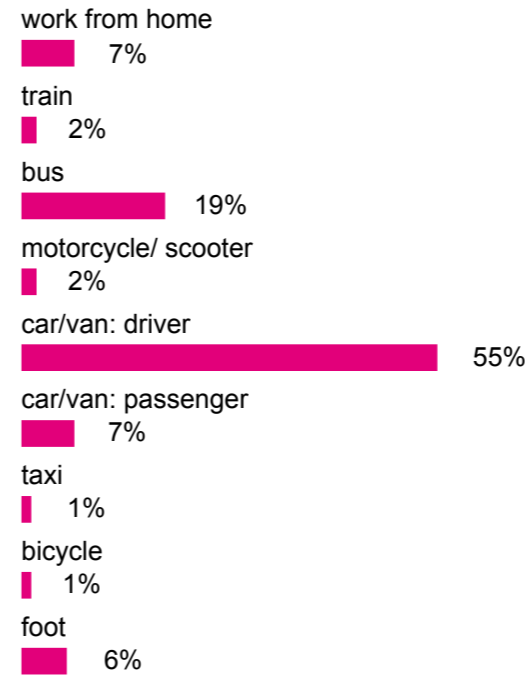
Source: Towards an Urban Renaissance, 2002



appendix 2: travel to work

Statistics illustrating methods of travel to work.

Source: City Stats, Census 2001

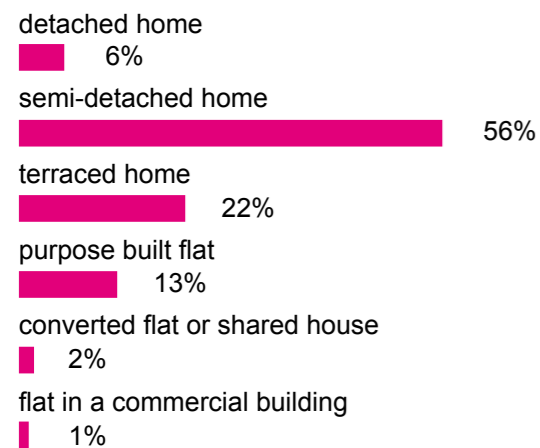


The information from the 2001 census and the Acorn profiles were based on the best fit of the smallest enumeration districts. This was obtained from Citystats website, which is now www.bhlis.org

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

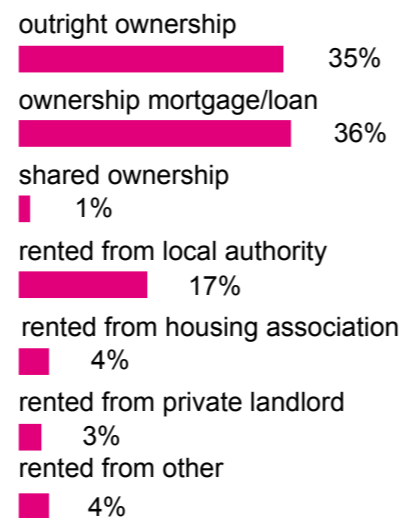
appendix 3: social mix accommodation types

Source: City Stats, Census 2001



tenure types

Source: City Stats, Census 2001



demographic types

Source: City Stats, Acorn data

- Clockwise, from the top:
- Mature Families in Suburban Semis
 - Established Home Owning Workers
 - Middle Income Older Couples
 - Skilled Older Families Terraces
 - Skilled Workers Semis and Terraces
 - Low Income Older People Smaller Semis
 - Mostly communal population

