

11 Lewes Road

context



key stages of historic development

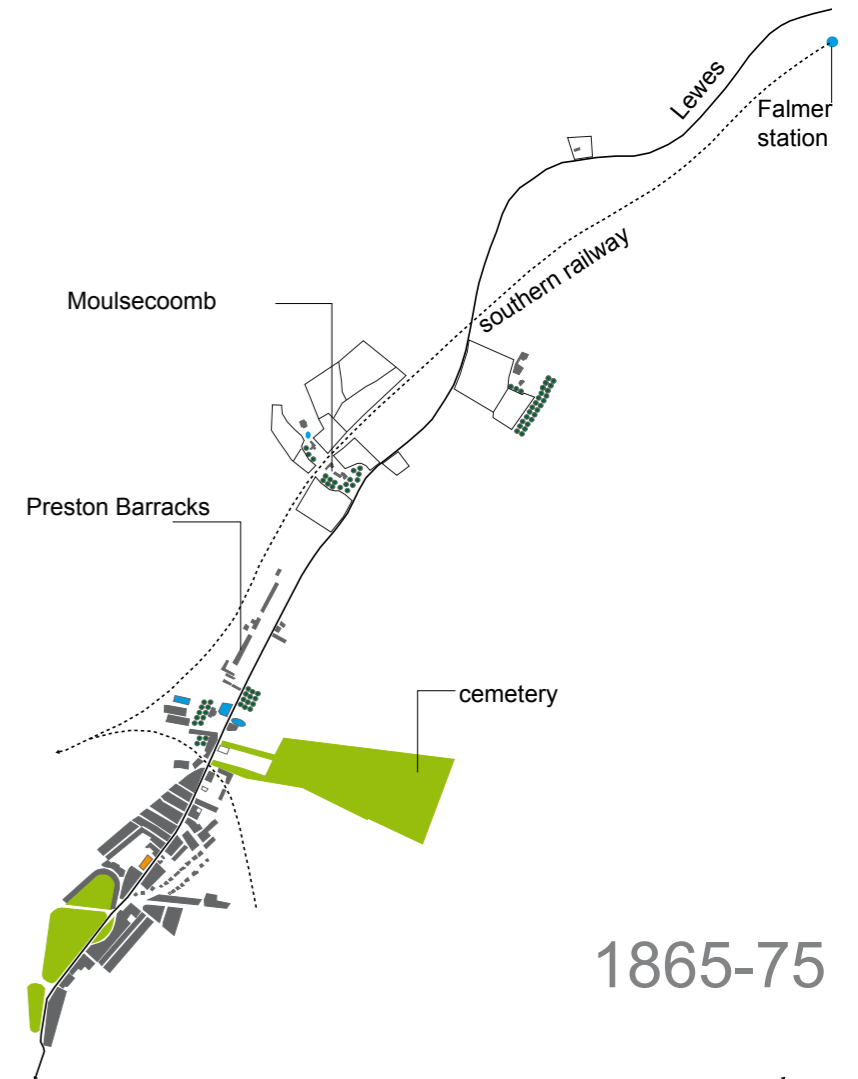
The Lewes Road is one of the four main routes into central Brighton. Stretching from the A27 Brighton & Hove bypass, through the city to Brighton Palace Pier and the sea, along a dry valley floor. For many visitors it is their first impression of the city. Travelling along the route the city gradually reveals itself passing some of Brighton's famous landmarks until reaching the sea.

Since medieval times this route has been used by fishermen's wives to take their catch to the market town of Lewes helping to establish Brighton as a successful fishing town. Up until 1910 the route ran through open downland and past small farmsteads.

The first development along the route was the Preston Cavalry Barracks around which small communities grew up. Open space along the route allowed for industrial uses to establish themselves including diamond and engineering factories. This allowed for small existing communities to grow bringing with them shops and services.

The introduction of the railway in 1841 also brought with it industrial and commercial development along its route helping to establish the Lewes Road as a commercial corridor.

It wasn't until the 1920s that saw the large scale residential development of the Lewes Road. The South Moulsecoomb estate, inspired by the garden village movement, was built to house people displaced by the slum clearance of Albion Hill. However rents were too high and so tenants came from further afield, including London, following advertising campaigns.



1865-75

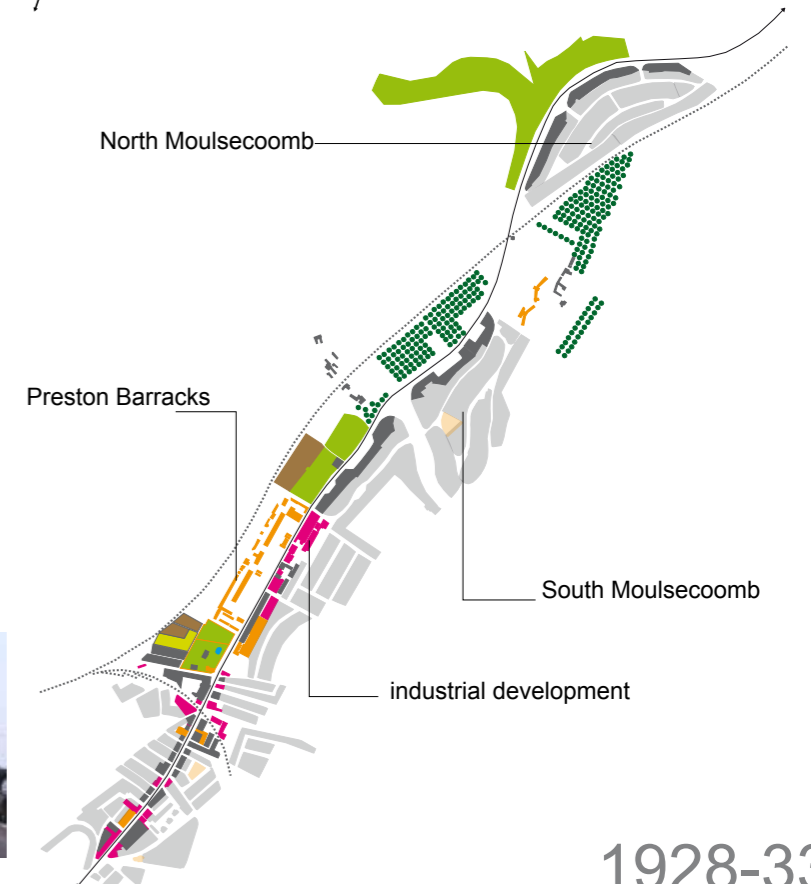
topography and microclimate

The route follows the floor of a dry valley, moving from the flat open land along the coast up into the rolling hills of the surrounding downland. As such its visual envelope is contained within the rising valley sides. Sight lines are restricted along the route as the city gradually reveals itself until the route moves into the central conservation areas. Here, views open up over The Level and Valley Gardens and the traveller experiences a succession of landmarks of city wide importance until reaching Brighton Palace Pier and the sea. Sitting at the bottom of a valley the route is sheltered from prevailing winds. However, there are some issues with wind tunnelling along the route and the development that rises up on either side of the valley can cause overshadowing creating harsh pedestrian conditions in winter.

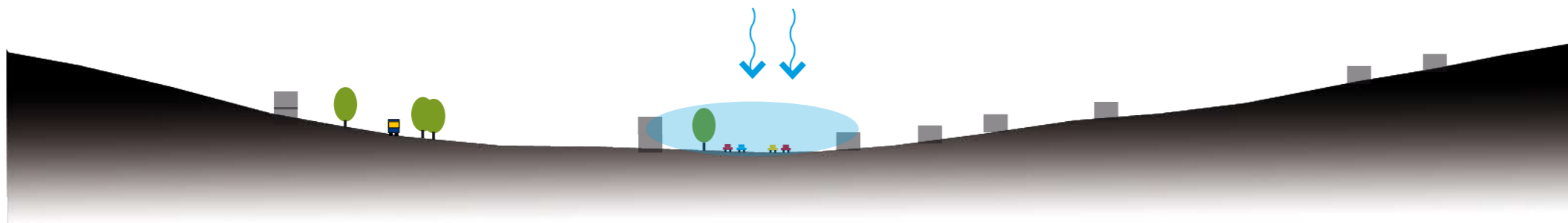
typology

Lewes Road may be classified as a major corridor into the city encompassing a mix of uses, scale and building form whose character changes as it passes from edge of downland, through suburban into urban development.

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



1928-33



Series of views and landmarks experienced along Lewes Road from the Downs to the sea

11 Lewes Road

key characteristics

- The Lewes Road is one of the four key movement corridors into the city centre. There are frequent bus services into the city from the universities, and towns and villages beyond. This is reflected in a high use of buses as a mode of transport to work and the level of traffic along the route. Although the route accommodates cycle lanes, the percentage of people using the bike to travel to work is comparatively low (see appendix 2). However the cycle routes do appear to be well used by students to access the different university campuses.

- The route accommodates a range of uses: large and small scale retail space, industrial and business parks and large and small educational institutions. Many of these services not only serve surrounding neighbourhoods but also a wider city community making the route itself an economic driver.

- Lewes Road is also known as the 'Academic Corridor' because the two universities, Brighton and Sussex, are largely located along, or adjacent to, this route.

- The route passes through some of the most deprived wards in Brighton as well as more affluent ones. The area attracts a large number of students living in privately rented accommodation. The high provision of purpose built flats and terraced housing owned by the local authority and located along the route also attracts a high proportion of low income families and single parents (see appendix 3).

- The quality of street life and pedestrian accessibility is severely impeded by the level of traffic along the route. Streets are designed for fast moving traffic creating severance and barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement.

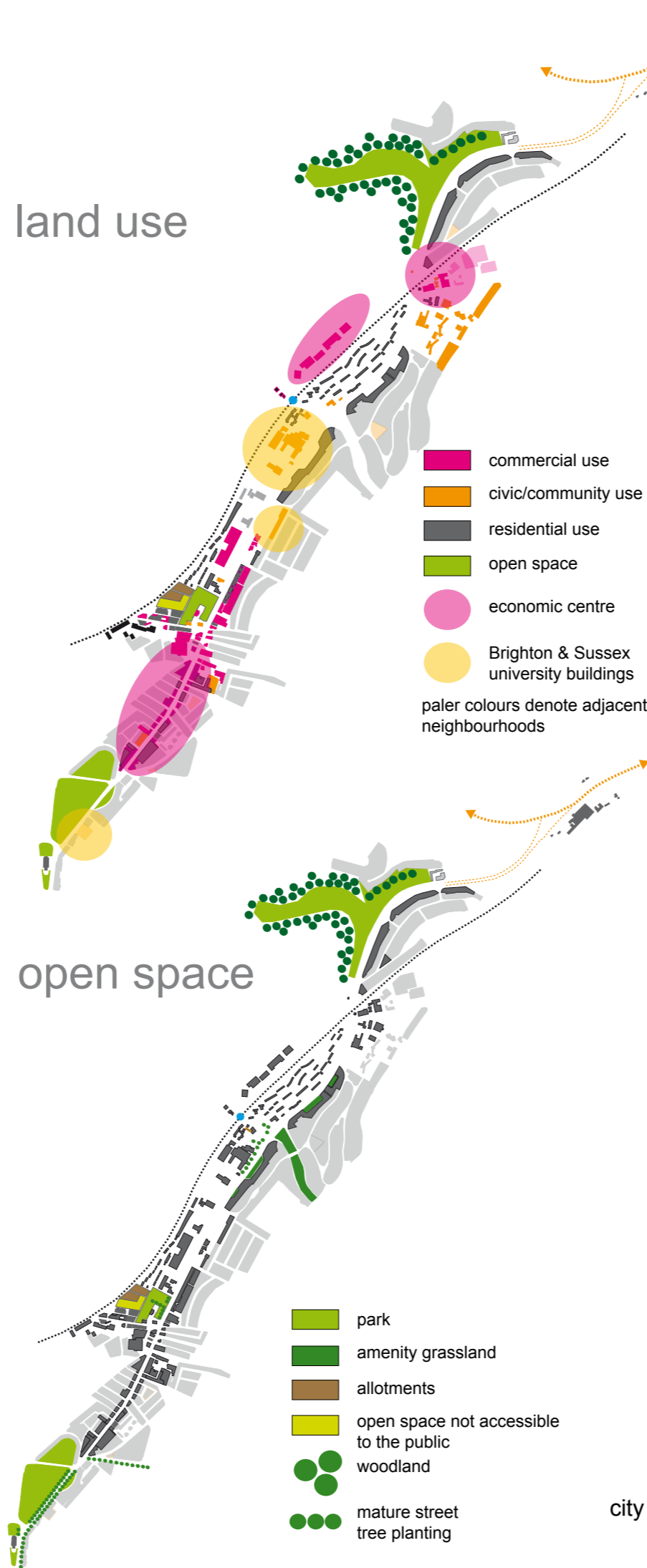
- Although the route is experienced as a whole while travelling along it, the Lewes Road passes through seven different neighbourhoods. This has a profound effect on the changes in scale, use, and activity along the route helping to define it into three clear sections. These are:

1. Outer Suburban: a mix of mainly 20th century residential, commercial and educational buildings separated from the road by substantial grass verges and green spaces. Architecturally mixed but with many large scale, tall buildings.

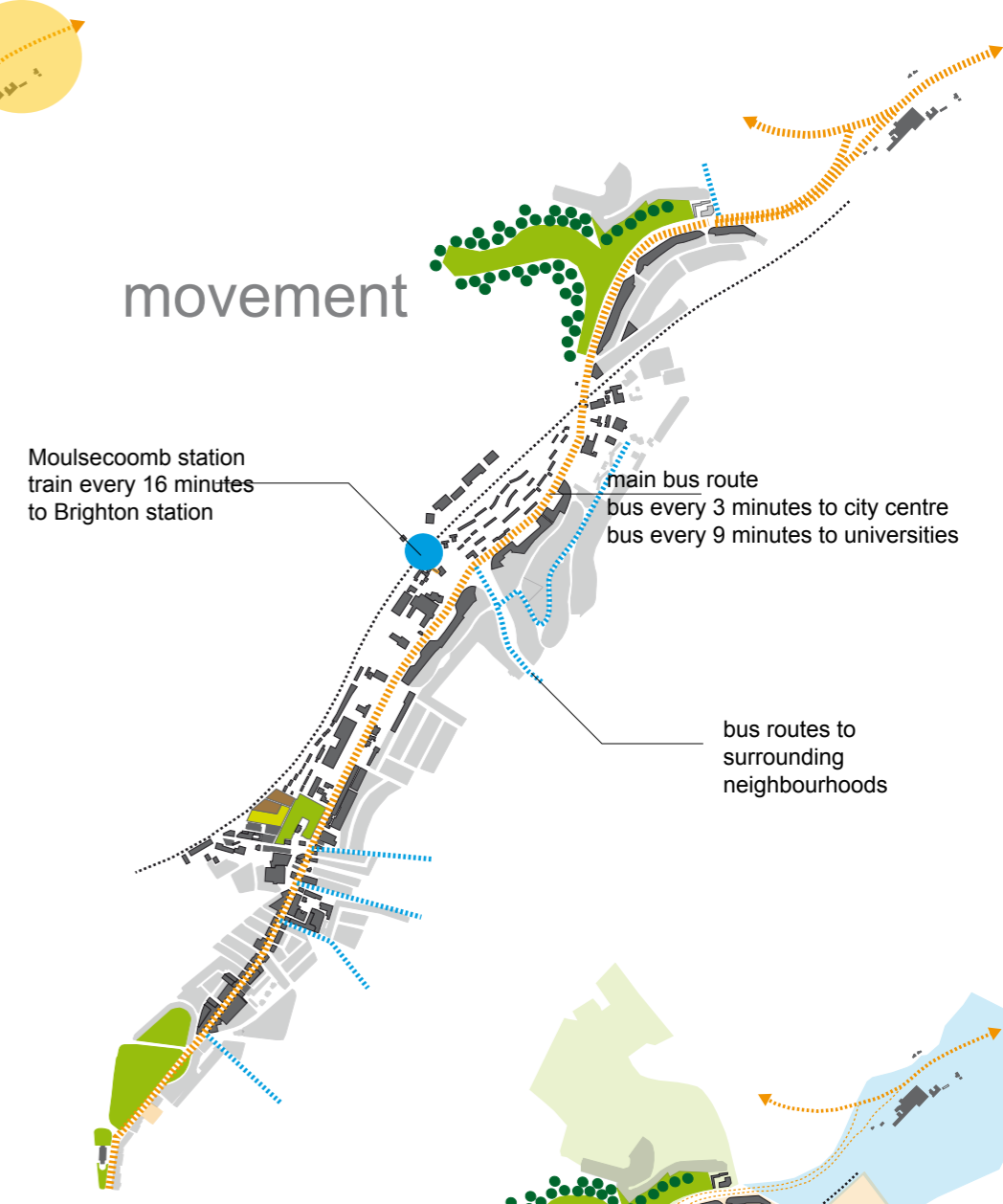
2. Inner Suburban: dominated by large scale educational and commercial uses interspersed with vacant land and small scale residential and retail uses. No consistency or cohesion, and hostile to pedestrians.

3. Central Fringe: an architecturally mixed retail and residential area of two to four storey buildings hard onto the street. Mainly late Victorian but with poor quality 20th century infill. An uncoordinated urban realm.

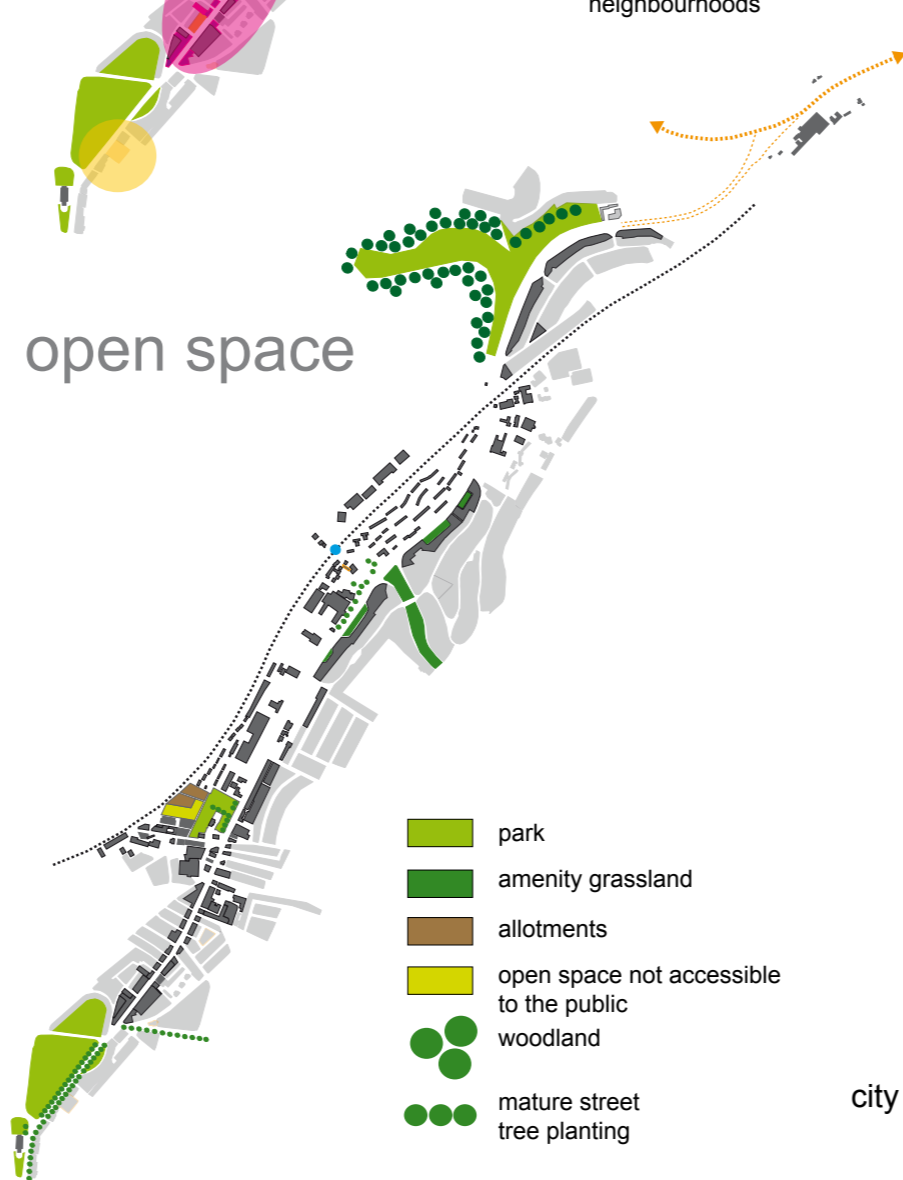
land use



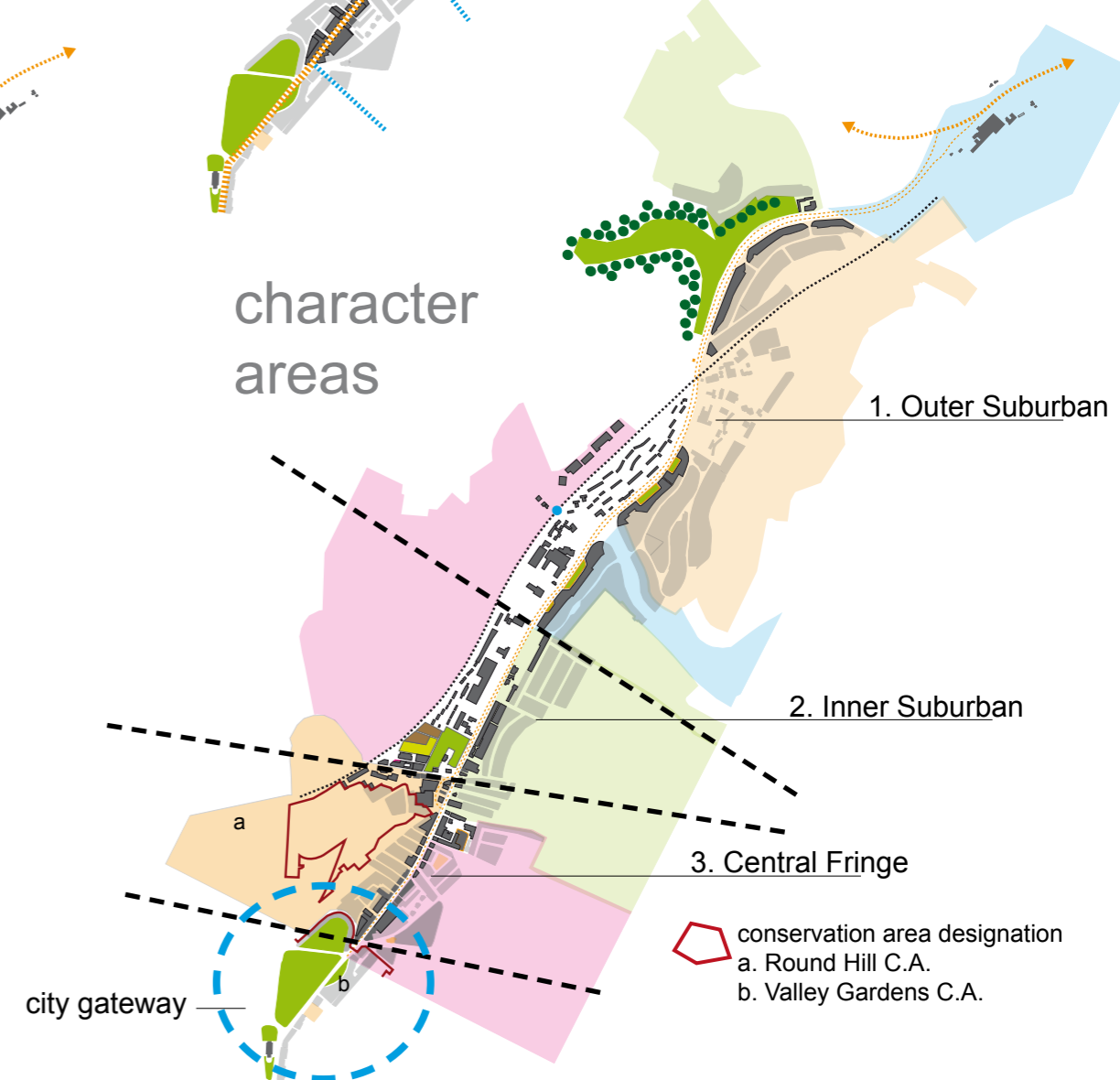
movement



open space



character areas



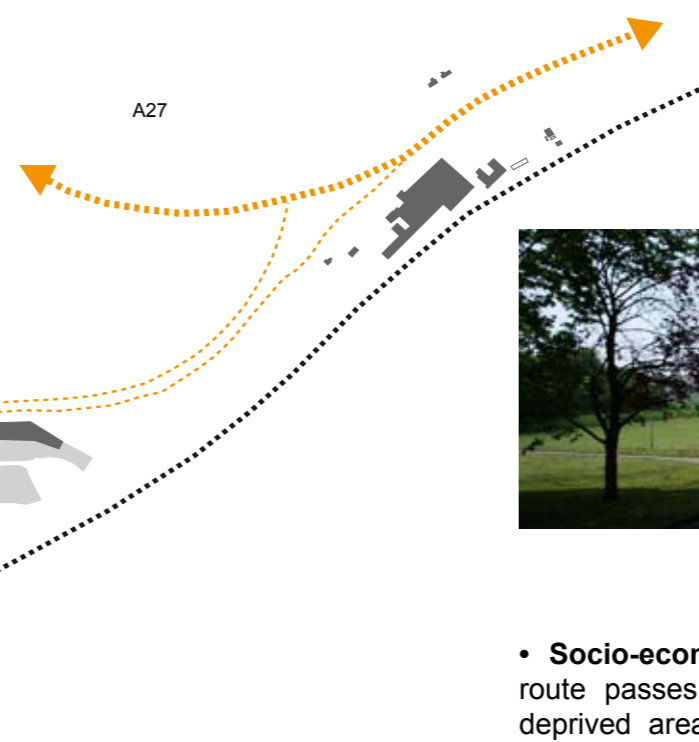
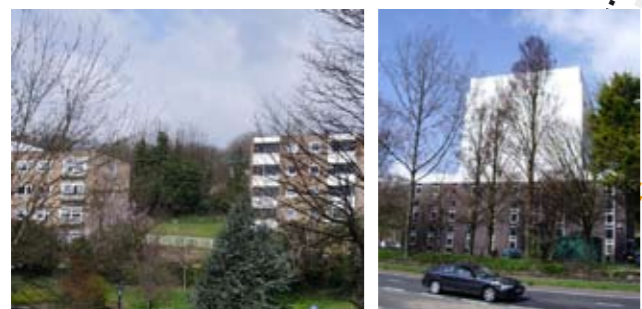
11 Lewes Road outer suburban

settlement analysis

- **Scale and density:** Predominately residential, educational and industrial uses are located along the outer suburban section of the Lewes Road. This has a bearing on the scale and density along this part of the route. This section appears less dense even though it contains tall buildings (see section a-a' below). The gross density along the route is approximately 21 dwellings per hectare.



- **Architecture:** The route contains large high rise buildings within the university campuses against low rise terraced housing. Much of the local authority housing that faces the carriageway appears in good repair, however the low rise appears uncared for and in a state of poor repair. Moulsecoomb Place, which is Grade II listed, and the viaduct provide strong prominent landmarks along the route.



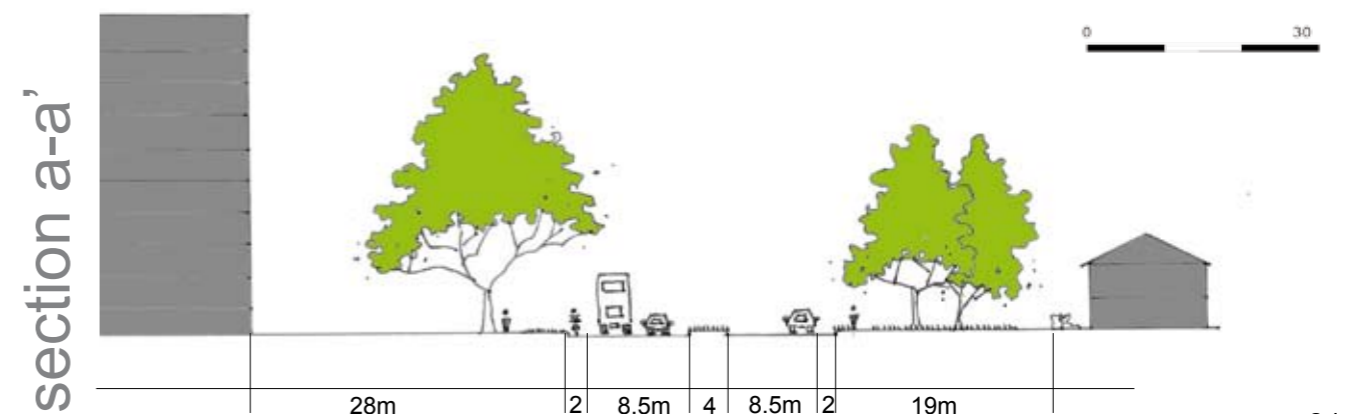
- **Open space:** The carriageway is bounded by wide grass verges and small greens that open out from the housing estates. These contain some mature tree planting, but regular cutting means that these grassed areas have little to contribute to local bio-diversity. At the northern end is the Moulsecoomb Wild Park Local Nature Reserve that rises up the side of the valley. This creates the overall impression of a very green approach into the city.



- **Socio-economic characteristics:** The route passes through some of the most deprived areas of Brighton and Hove in terms of income, employment and health, (see LR2 Issues, Scoping Report, August 2005, p.18). Residential accommodation is predominately rented from the local authority or housing associations attracting low income families.



- **Movement:** The four lane carriageway accommodates cycle lanes, and a frequent bus service runs between the city centre and the universities, and on to surrounding towns and villages. Buses to Brighton station are not so frequent (see appendix 2). The carriage way is designed for fast moving traffic restricting pedestrian movement especially access to Moulsecoomb Station and Moulsecoomb Wild Park for those living in the Moulsecoomb Estate. Moulsecoomb Station provides rail links from Brighton to Lewes and Hastings.



11 Lewes Road

inner suburban settlement analysis

• **Scale and density:** This section of the Lewes Road is dominated by large scale educational buildings, retail sheds and derelict land which overshadow the two storey retail and residential uses. This creates a lack of continuity in scale and density along the route. The gross density of residential accommodation along the route is low at 15 dwellings per hectare.



• **Movement:** The four lane carriageway, with cycle lanes, continues through this section of the Lewes Road. There are few pedestrian crossings meaning that there are more informal crossings across the road for people wishing to access bus stops and shops and Brighton University's Mithras House.



• **Socio-economic characteristics:** The four indices of deprivation differ greatly from one side of the route to the other. The majority of housing on the west side is of mid rise flats owned by the local authority attracting low income families. The eastern side of the route is made up of terraced housing which is privately owned or rented from private landlords, (see Bear Road Neighbourhood). The western side suffers from higher unemployment, lower incomes, worse health and lack of education and training (see LR2 Issues Scoping Report, August 2005, p.18).

- formal crossing
- informal crossing
- poor street frontage
- crime hotspot
- significant view



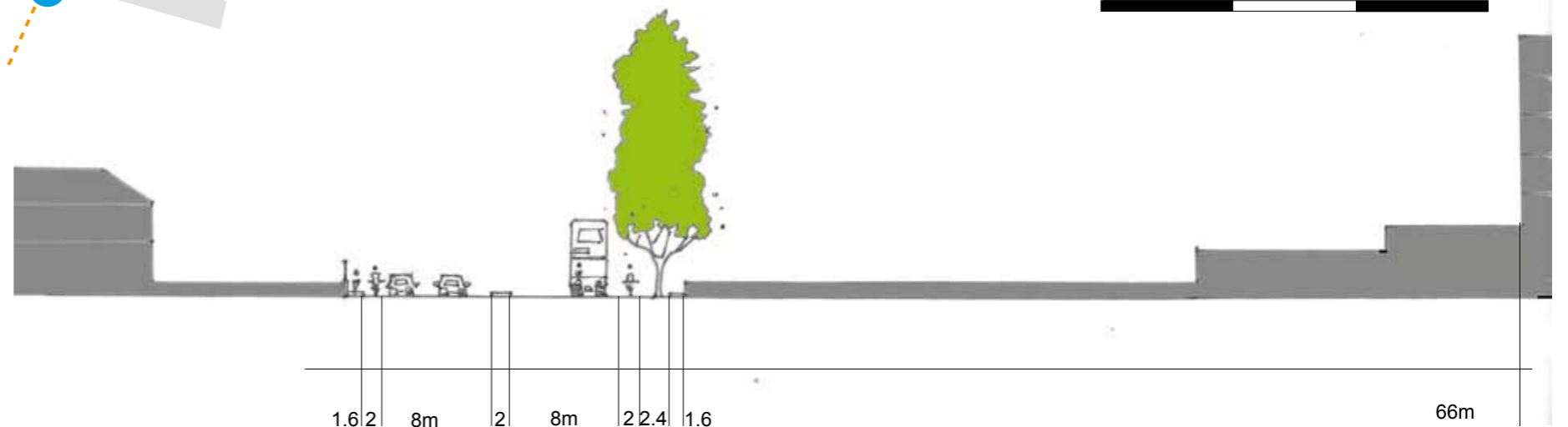
• **Open space:** Pedestrians and trees compete for space with on-street parking, cycle routes and the four lane carriageway. For much of its length the route is bounded by high walls and hedges creating an inactive street frontage that is not overlooked. In places buildings are set back from the street behind large car parks. These tend to attract crime. Saunders Park is the only green space along the route but is underused by small children. This is probably due to the location on a busy road and to the lack of informal surveillance. It is severed from most surrounding residential development and is not overlooked.



• **Architecture:** Many of the factories, dating from the turn of the last century, still exist and now accommodate other uses, such as the Brighton University Campus and storage. Some have been converted for residential use. On the whole the building quality is poor and many of the two storey terraced shops and housing are in bad repair.



section a-a'



11 Lewes road central fringe settlement analysis

• **Scale and density:** The scale along this section of the route becomes more human. Two to four storey buildings come up to the pavement with little or no set backs presenting a consistent building line and defining the street. The visual envelope becomes more enclosed and directs vistas to landmarks along the route. This section of the route is mixed use with predominately ground floor retail with residential accommodation above.



• **Movement:** The four lane carriage way reduces to two lanes, whilst retaining the cycle lanes along this section. The point at which this happens, known as the gyratory, is a busy road junction with indirect pedestrian crossings and a sea of traffic islands and lights creating a negative gateway. The increased levels of slow moving traffic and the confined nature of the buildings has created high levels of air pollution. This has a negative impact on health, and gives the buildings and street furniture a dirty and tarnished appearance.



• **Socio-economic characteristics:** The figures for deprivation improve along this section of the route. Income and employment levels are relatively low, as are health indicators, but the education and training indicators are relatively high, suggesting that part of the route is predominately inhabited by students (see LR2 Issues Scoping Report, August 2005, p.18). Much of the accommodation is in converted flats, owned by private landlords, and its proximity to the universities and the city centre makes it popular with students and young sharers (see appendix 3). A questionnaire undertaken by the LR2 Scoping Report identifies St. Peter's Church and the The Level as 'problem areas for drug related crime, street drinking, drunken behaviour and begging'.



• **Open space:** Pedestrians and trees compete for space with illegal parking and a variety of street clutter. Many of the shops display their wares on their forecourts creating interest along the route. Unnecessary bollards and signage reduce access for pedestrians. The Lewes Road opens out at The Level. This is a significant open space within the city surrounded by some fine Regency buildings. The Level is a popular recreation facility, despite being severed from its surroundings by heavy traffic (Brighton and Hove CADDIE Analysis 2005). St. Peter's Church sits isolated from surrounding retail and employment areas due to fast moving traffic and fencing, yet still retains considerable landmark status within the linear green strip that runs through to the city centre.



• **Architecture:** Late Victorian and Edwardian terraces with some poor 1960s infill flank the Lewes Road along this section. As the route opens out at The Level the building quality improves. Residential and commercial development from the Regency and Victorian periods enclose the open space creating a potentially grand gateway into the city centre. There are many Listed Buildings within or close-by, and the 'Central Fringe' includes the edges of both the Valley Gardens and Roundhill Conservation Areas.

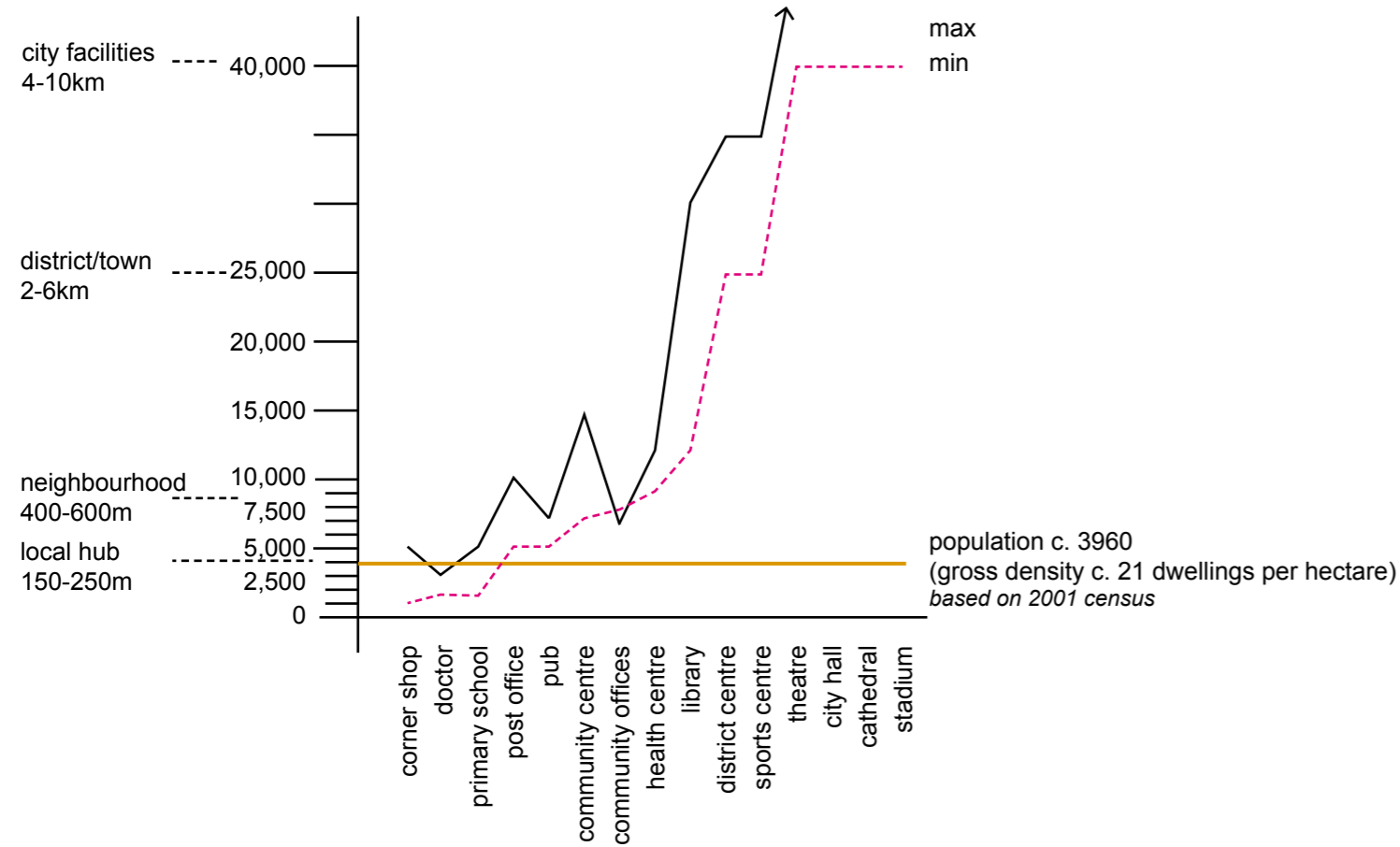


11 Lewes Road

appendix 1: population & density

Population numbers able to support community facilities.

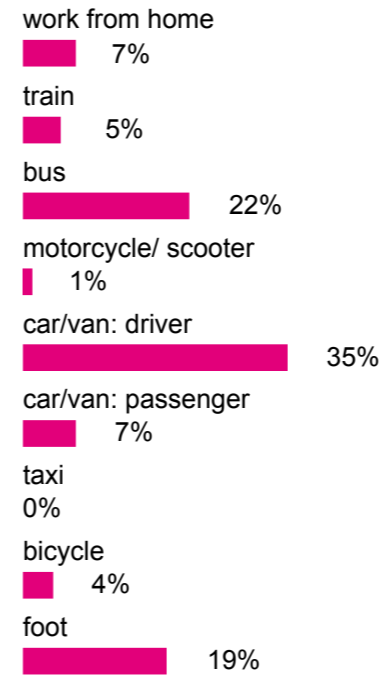
Source: Towards an Urban Renaissance, 2002



appendix 2: travel to work

Statistics illustrating methods of travel to work.

Source: City Stats, Census 2001

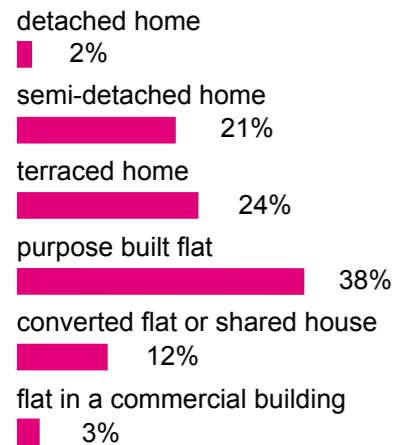


The information from the 2001 census and the Acorn profiles were based on the best fit of the smallest enumeration districts. This was obtained from Citystats website, which is now www.bhlis.org

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

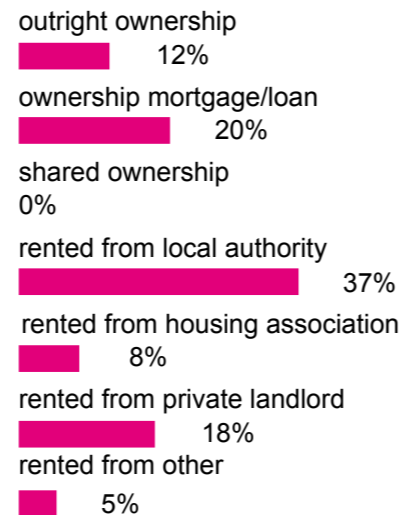
appendix 3: social mix accommodation types

Source: City Stats, Census 2001



tenure types

Source: City Stats, Census 2001



demographic types

Source: City Stats, Acorn data

