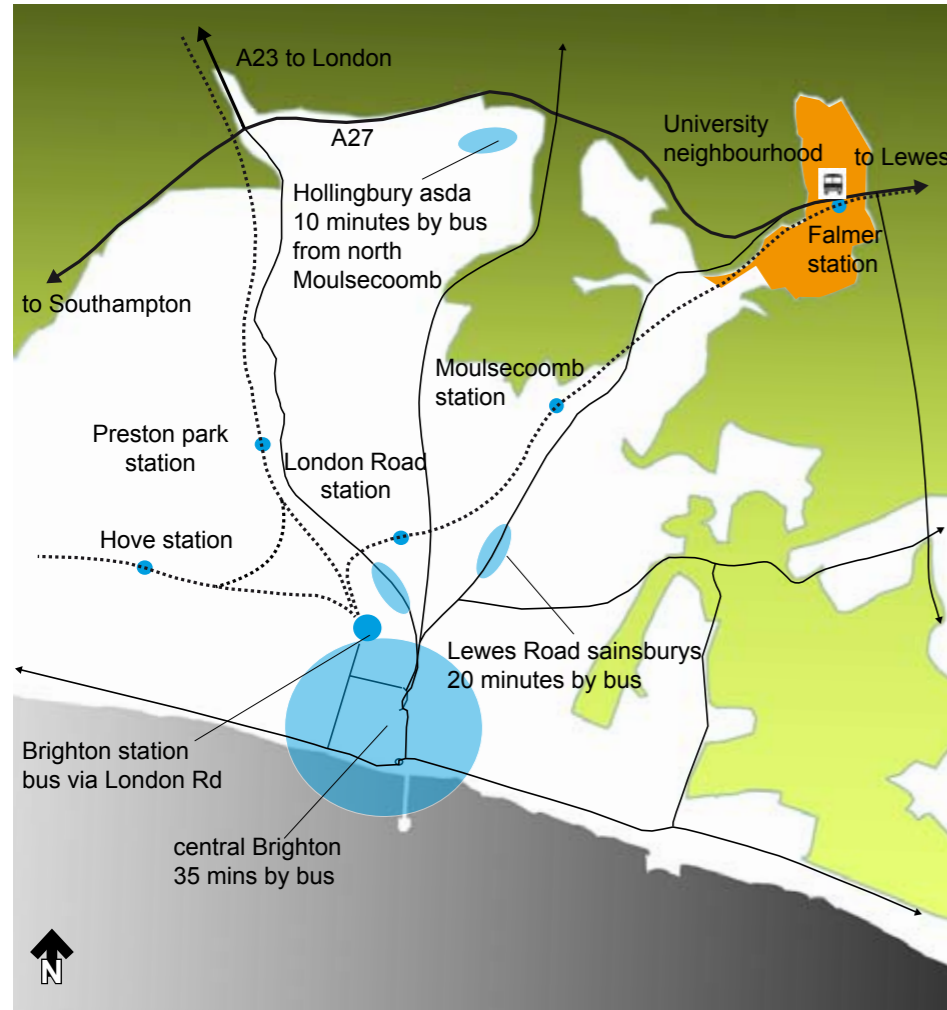


27 university neighbourhood

context



key stages of historic development

The University neighbourhood consists almost entirely of the campuses of Brighton and Sussex Universities and adjoining Falmer School and lies a little over 6 kilometres from the city centre on the Lewes Road sustainable transport corridor.

The neighbourhood remained unchanged from the mid-19th century until a water utility was developed in 1904 (rebuilt with new offices in 1967). Sussex University was established north of Lewes Road in the 1960s and the Falmer High School in 1974. The construction of the A27 Brighton by-pass in 1981 had a significant landscape impact.

As with many 1960s 'red brick' universities the new campus was developed within the parkland setting of a country house, in this case Stanmer owned by Brighton Council. The first phases were designed by Sir Basil Spence, and the designs drew from and were scaled to fit into the downland landscape.

The gateway and landmark Falmer House (listed Grade I), now used for administration and student activities and recreation, opened in 1962. Its central quadrangle was a reminder of more traditional university built forms. The main educational buildings and library were opened between 1963 and 1967. The Meeting House was opened in 1966 on the site of Tenantlain Barn, Tenant Lain Cottages still stand by the university approach road. This early phase is shown on the 1969 map. Further developments are still being added. The campus now covers an area of some 70 hectares.

The Brighton University campus to the south of Lewes Road, originally Brighton College of Education, opened in 1965.

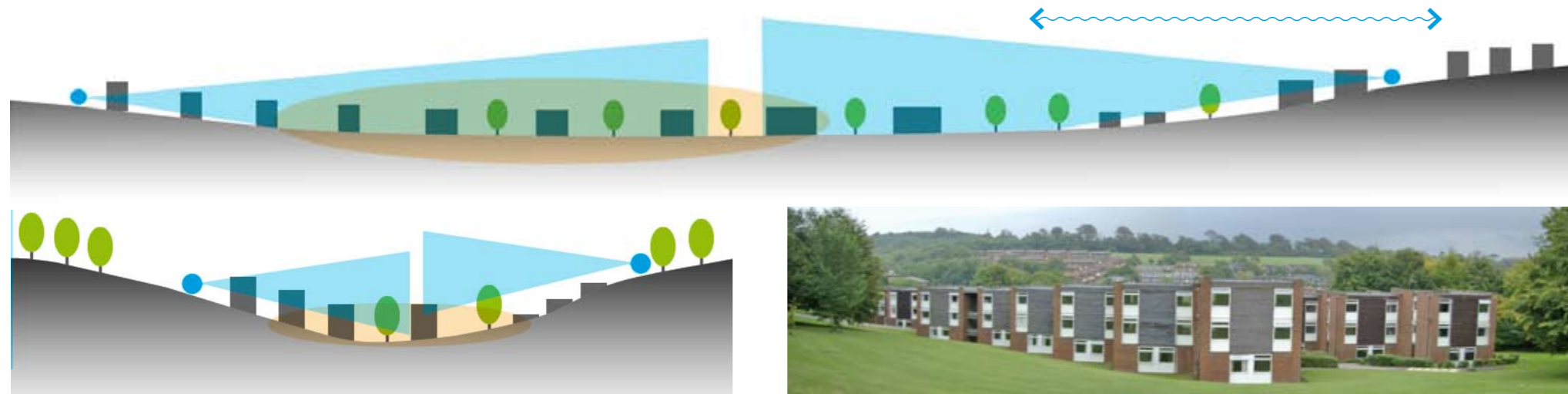
topography & microclimate

University neighbourhood essentially lies north-south across the main Lewes Road valley and extends northwards up a smaller steep-sided valley towards the Downs. The views from the surrounding higher ground, particularly those from the south, are sometimes degraded by unsympathetic building development. Much of the central area, occupied by the bulk of the Sussex University campus and the recreational grounds south of Lewes Road, is relatively level and where built-up is mostly sheltered from winds.

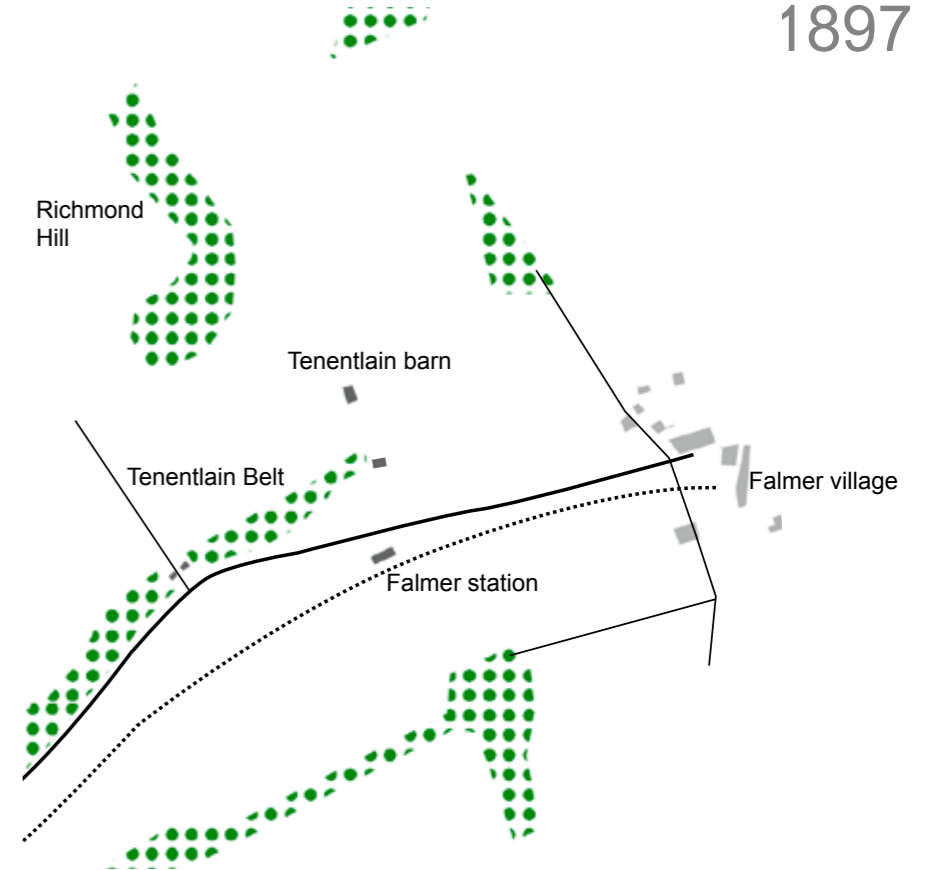
typology

University neighbourhood may be classified as suburban downland fringe with educational use. Compact, low rise self-contained campus development with strong landscape focus.

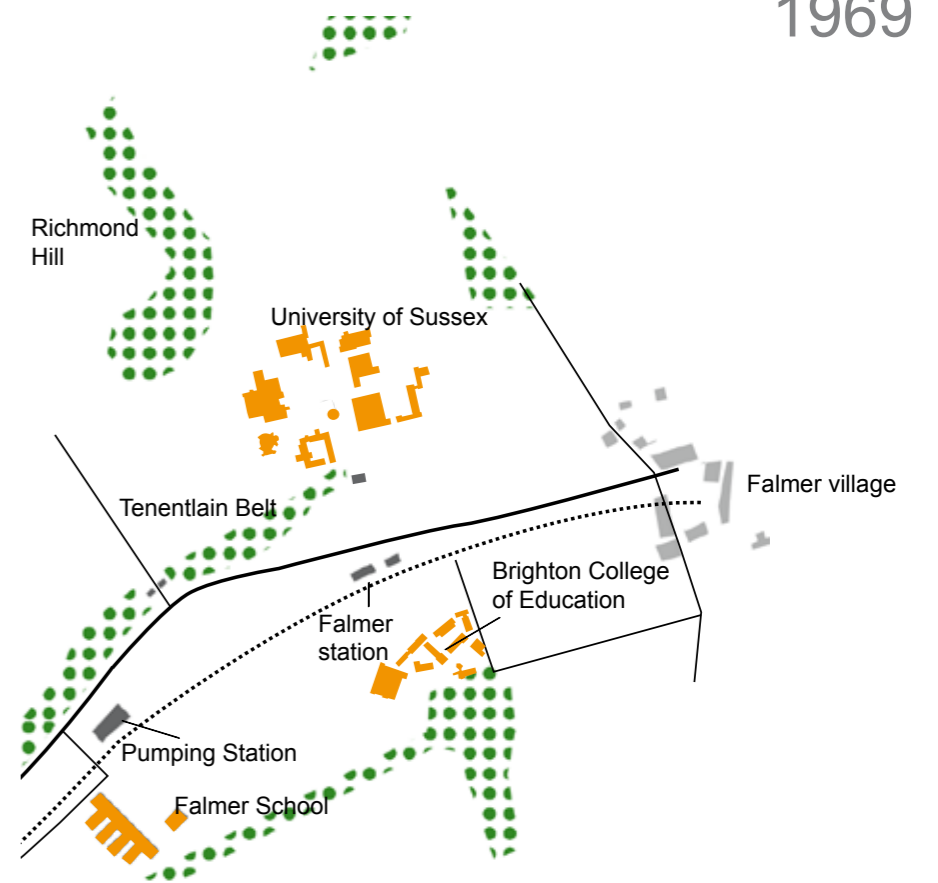
Refer to the introduction and summary for more information on landscape character types.



1897



1969



27 university neighbourhood

key characteristics



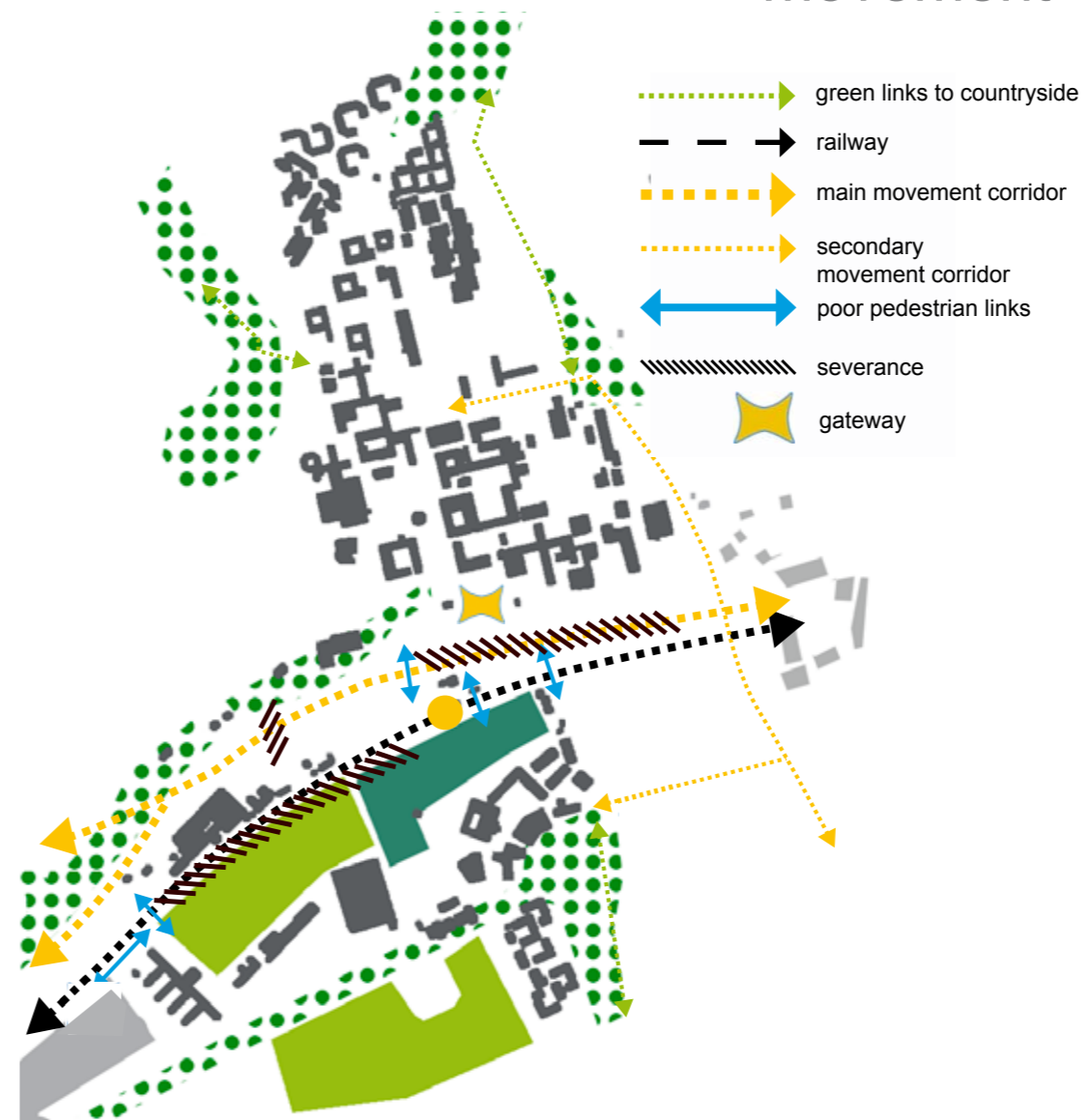
• **Land use:** The land use in this neighbourhood is educational, with associated housing.

• **Scale and density:** The neighbourhood is dominated by large two to four storey blocks in modernist style, some with internal courtyards. The Sussex University buildings to the north are generously spaced on a loose grid and mostly of a height deliberately intended to let the parkland tree setting dominate, although there are some notable exceptions. The buildings of Brighton University to the south follow the contours but with a much less coherent layout and in a less generous landscape setting.

The residential accommodation on both campuses is, effectively, a substantial area of suburban housing albeit in a different form from the city norm, and exhibits some interesting solutions to steeply sloping sites. There has been some new housing next to Falmer station and plans have been approved to use the old goods yard and adjacent market garden ground as student housing for Sussex University. To the west of Falmer Station is a major complex of buildings occupied by Southern Water with a large secondary school and a sports centre nearby. Local student-oriented services are located within both campuses and offer comprehensive coverage to the neighbourhood.

land use

movement



• **Architecture:** The original Sussex University campus of the 1960s is a unified composition designed by the renowned architect Sir Basil Spence. It is a loose grid of flat roofed, rectilinear buildings set around courtyards and using a limited palette of red brick and exposed board-marked concrete. The heights respect the undulating contours of the downland setting and are largely two to three storeys. The layout preserved established tree belts and separated the pedestrian and vehicle routes in a generous parkland setting. Placed within this landscape are some geometrically complex landmark buildings such as the Meeting House and Gardner Arts Theatre. These and seven of the earlier buildings are now listed Grade II*. Falmer House is Grade I. Later development on this campus diverted from the original concept and pays much less heed to the rural context although recent additions demonstrate a return to the original concept. The Brighton University campus developed later to no strong plan and the large buildings stand out starkly in the landscape. Recent buildings have begun to establish a more coherent and sinuous linear campus. Some early buildings on both campuses are already being considered for redevelopment within carefully considered estate layouts.

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



Flint cottages near Falmer Station



No pedestrian way along Lewes Road



Poor pedestrian links north-south



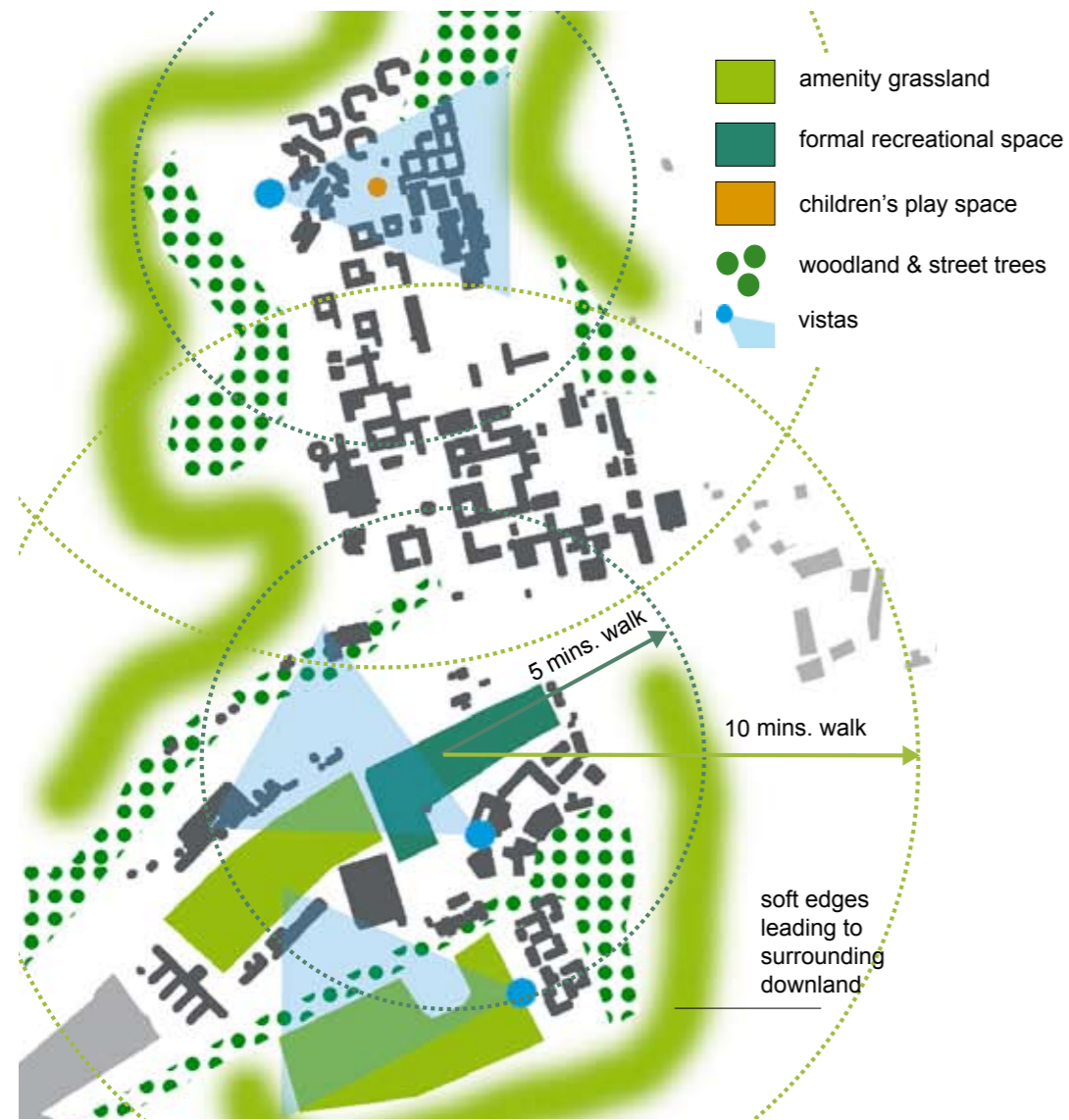
Designated fly-posting, subway north-south



Typical University of Brighton building & landscaping

27 university neighbourhood

open space



character areas



corridor and the Brighton to Lewes (and ultimately Ashford) railway line, with Falmer Station at the centre of the neighbourhood. Vehicular access is constrained and complex and involves roundabouts, overpasses, double-backs and one-way systems. After the construction of the A27 Brighton by-pass this length of road experienced increases in traffic volume with congestion problems at rush hour. The railway line and main road create severe severance between the two campuses. The pedestrian links across the railway line are particularly poor. It is not possible to walk westwards along the Lewes Road on the south side. There are good links to the surrounding downland. The extension of the Sussex campus northward, especially the location of the residential buildings at the northern end of the site has moved the centre of gravity away from the Falmer House gateway although the educational focus is still based around Fulton Court.

- **Open space:** The entire neighbourhood is bounded by downland with fine views particularly from the higher ground to the north and to the south. Stanmer Park, a proposed Local Nature Reserve, lies to the west. The design of the Sussex campus has allowed for a range of well-defined formal spaces with both hard and soft landscaping. The spaces within the Brighton campus are less well-defined but new developments have begun to

establish more attractive and coherent spaces between buildings. Large areas of formal and informal recreation space are provided to the south of the neighbourhood.

- **Socio-economic characteristics:** The 'Acorn' type identified for this neighbourhood is 'mostly communal sharers' which is a unique classification for this area, which has most of the population living in communal establishments. The large proportion of students can be seen in the 'travel to work' data which shows that 71% of residents either work at home or travel to work by sustainable methods. The smallest census area also includes Stanmer Village which is not considered to be part of this neighbourhood nor study. This has made the housing figures confusing, which have therefore not been included.

- **Character areas:** The neighbourhood can be divided into two character areas:

- 1. The Universities:** compact, low rise self-contained educational campuses on the edge of the Downs, with mixed late 20th century building styles and a strong landscape focus.
- 2. Waterworks:** a small 'island' of water company commercial buildings between the A27 and the railway line.



Public space, University of Brighton campus



Student housing, University of Brighton campus



Landmark/gateway building to University of Sussex



The Universities character area



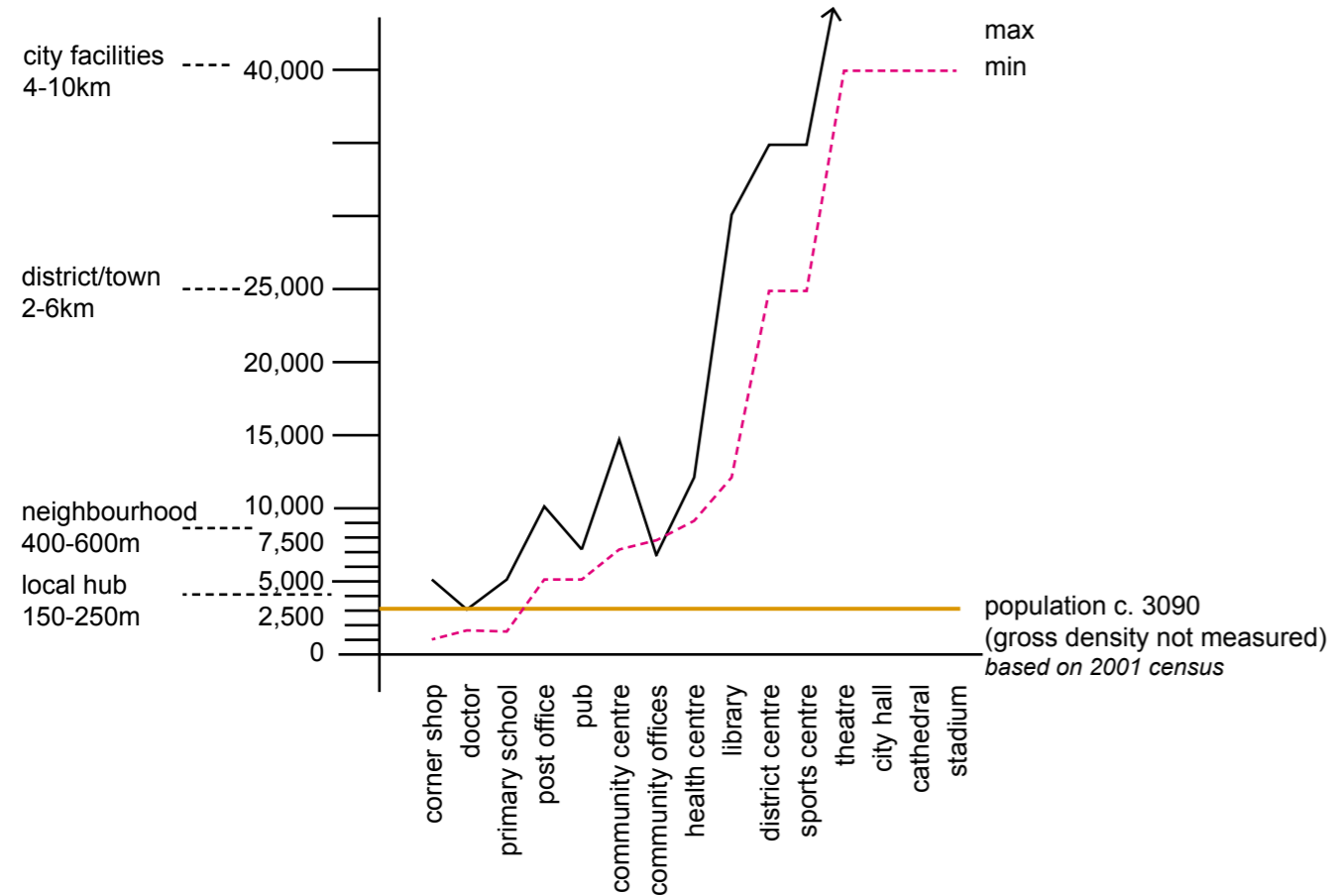
Waterworks character area

27 university neighbourhood

appendix 1: population & density

Population numbers able to support community facilities.

Source: Towards an Urban Renaissance, 2002

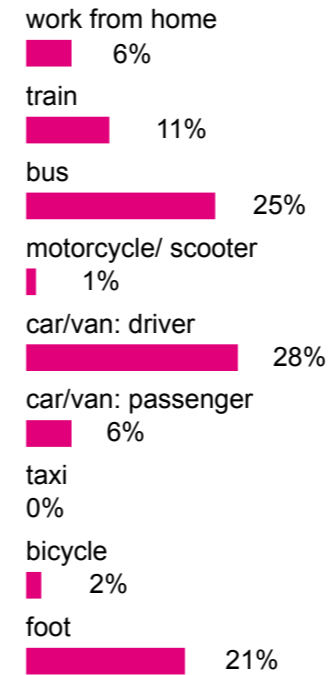


N.B. Accommodation types and tenure type data has not been included for this neighbourhood. Please see 'socio-economic characteristics' on page 129 for further information.

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

demographic types

Source: City Stats, Acorn data

Acorn Data has a special classification for this part of the city, of 'mostly communal population'. This is a unique classification which is only used for this area of the city. The Census enumeration area also includes Stanmer Village (which is not included in the Urban Characteristic Study). As 84% of the population of the enumeration area are identified in the 2001 census as living in communal establishments, the classification is a valid one, but does not further identify any other Acorn groups which may live in the neighbourhood.

100% mostly communal population

