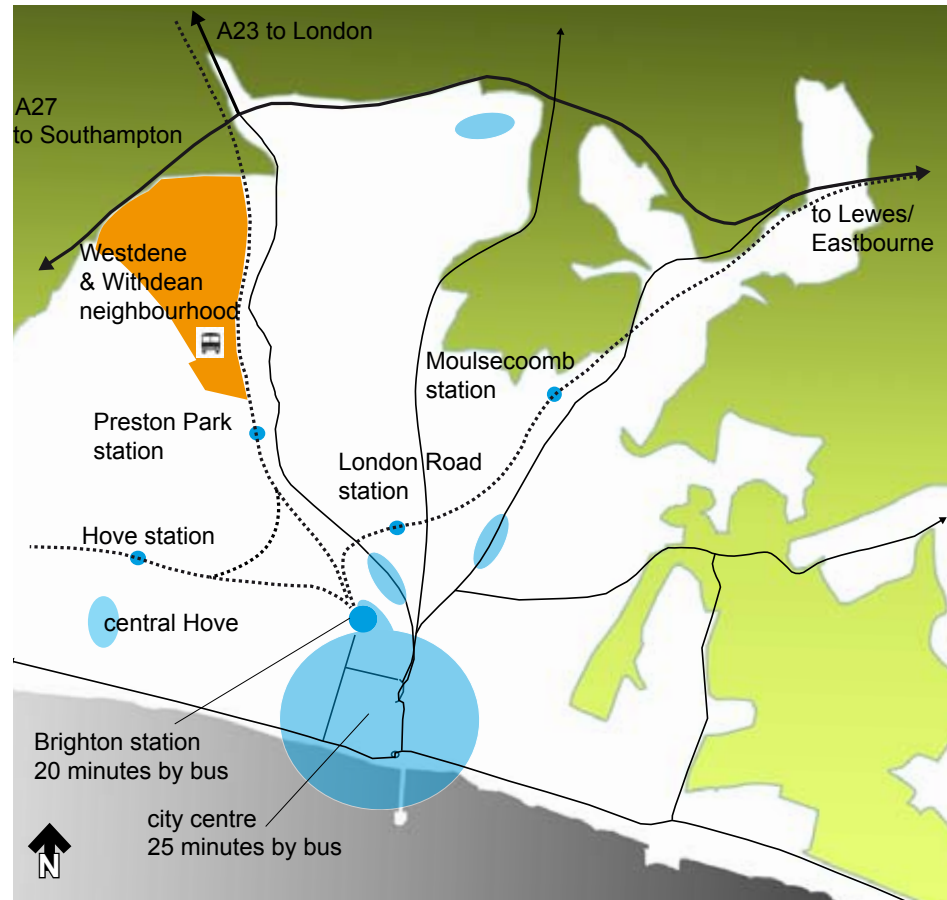


30 westdene & withdean neighbourhood

context



key stages of historic development

Westdene and Withdean neighbourhood is a post-WWII name for the area between London Road and Dyke Road Avenue out to the northern limit of Brighton. It lies approximately 5km from the city centre.

From 1905 suburban housing started to be built in the south of the neighbourhood. By the mid-1930s there were some major estates further north up towards the Dyke Road ridge and Red Hill. In 1938 Brighton Corporation and the builders Braybon Limited signed an agreement to develop a site for an estate which was 'known or intended to be known' as the Withdean Estate West. It was proposed to build houses and bungalows with a density of around 20 dwellings per hectare with two business areas. However, with the impending WWII, most of the building of the estate did not take place until the 1950s and 1960s. The business areas appear to have been forgotten.

A significant development was the Withdean Stadium which opened in 1936.

typology

Westdene and Withdean neighbourhood may be classified as suburban downland fringe with a 20th century residential suburb that has evolved over time, enveloping earlier villages and farmsteads. Low rise, low density houses arranged over a typical suburban layout. Weak architectural cohesion but cohesive public realm.

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

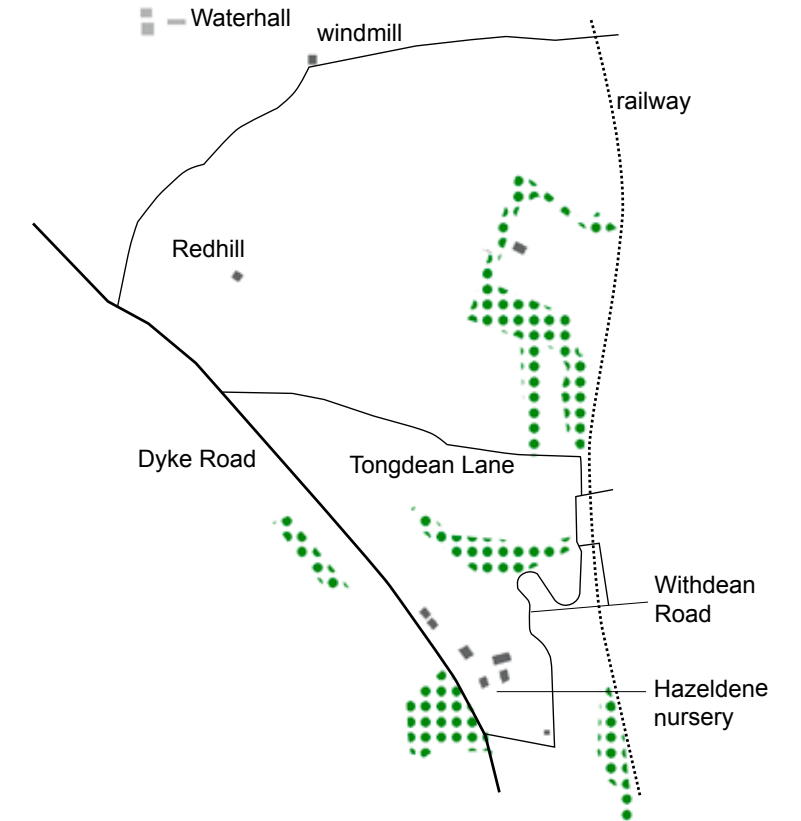
topography & microclimate

The bulk of Westdene and Withdean neighbourhood lies on and between three ridges sloping south-east towards the city centre. The looping distorted grid street layout mostly follows the contours, particularly in the north of the neighbourhood. The northern ridgetops offer often spectacular panoramic views both around and within the neighbourhood, but particularly northwards to the Downs and Westdene's landmark windmill and east across the main valley to Patcham and Hollingbury.

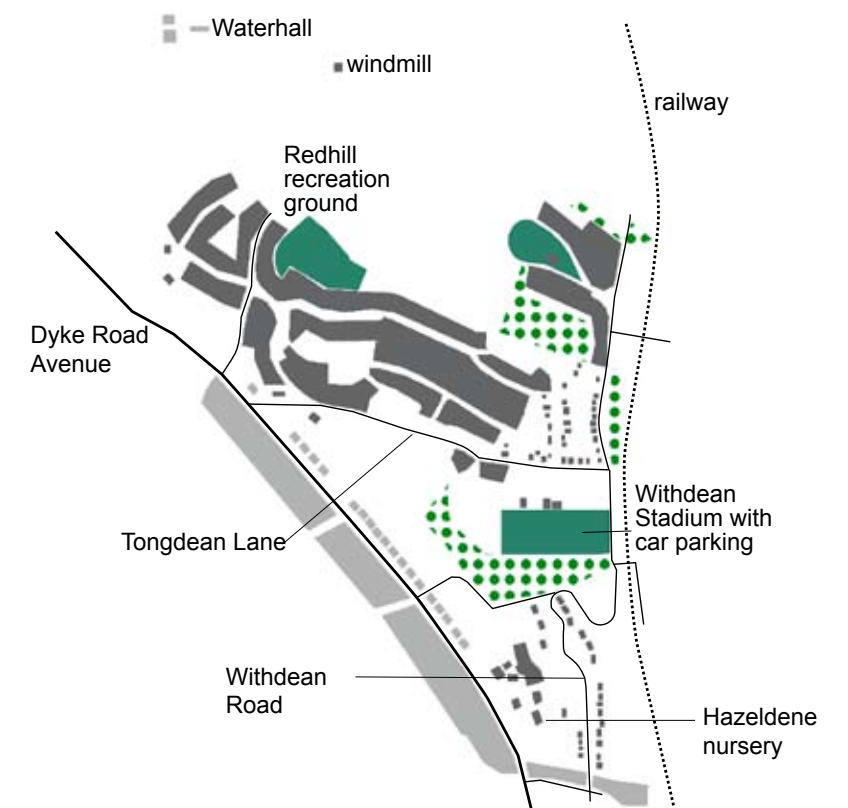
The ridgetops can suffer from exposure to prevailing winds and winds from the Downs whilst further south the valleys and the wooded areas appear to afford a good degree of shelter. Dyke Road Avenue can feel very exposed at times.



1897



1950s

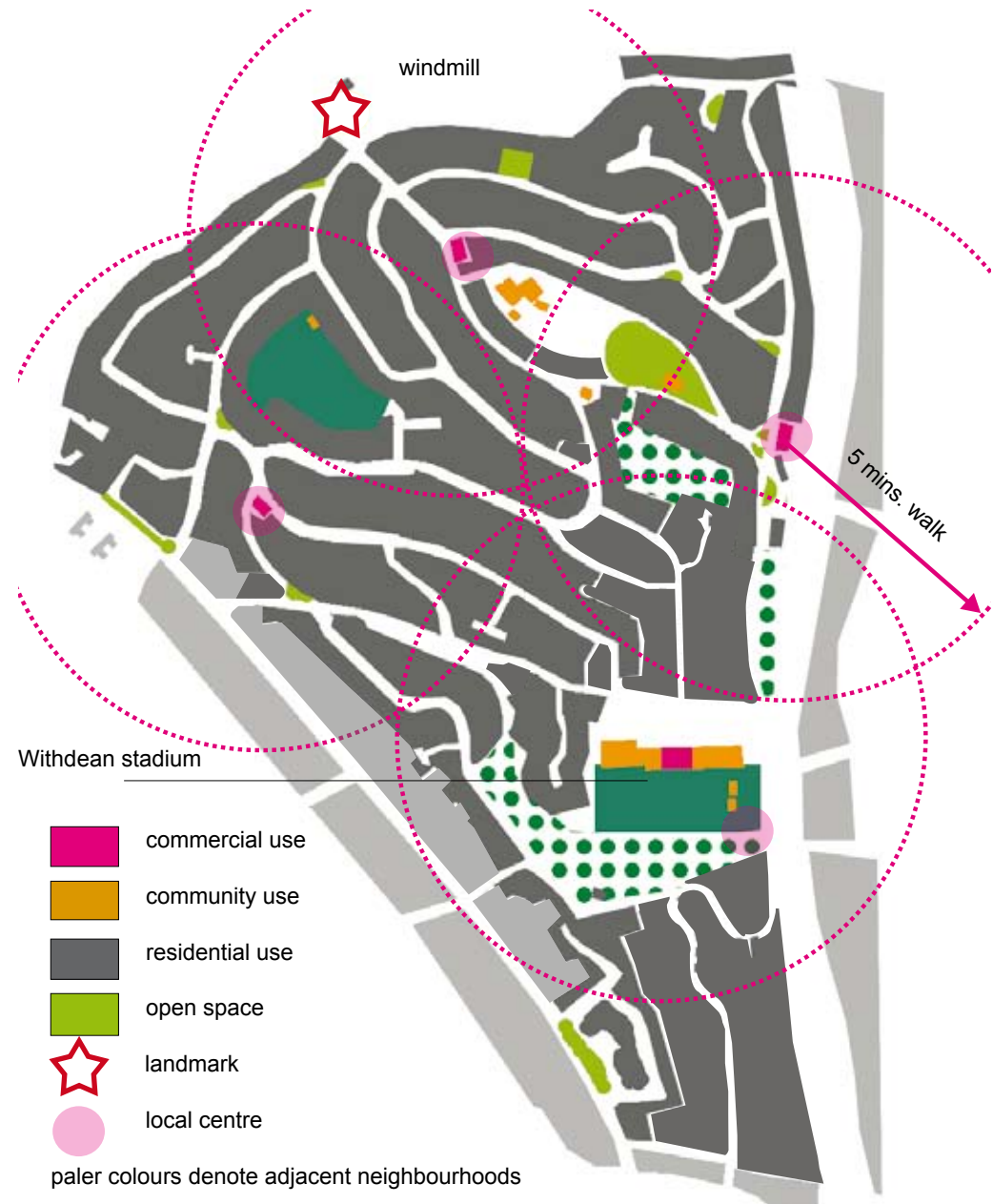


30 westdene & withdean neighbourhood

key characteristics

land use

movement



Landmark windmill



View across valley to flats



Low-rise housing on steep gradient



Typical small open space with bus stop



Main local shops & 'village green'

• **Land use:** The main land use in this area is private housing, with community uses for sport and education.

• **Scale and density:** The neighbourhood is dominated by one and two storey detached and semi-detached residential development, much of it in large plots, with a small number of three to four storey blocks of flats and some flats/maisonettes above retail, resulting in a gross density of approximately 10 dph. The lowest density development, consisting of detached villas in their own grounds is found to the wooded south of the neighbourhood, whilst a slightly higher density, more conventional inter and post-WWII 'loops and lollipops' layout occupies the north. Here also are to be found the flats and local shops. At the centre of the northern part of the neighbourhood are low rise community uses - a school and a library - in open space. To the south is Withdean Stadium, a major city-wide facility, currently the temporary home of Brighton and Hove Albion Football Club.

Local services are all located within the north of the neighbourhood offering comprehensive

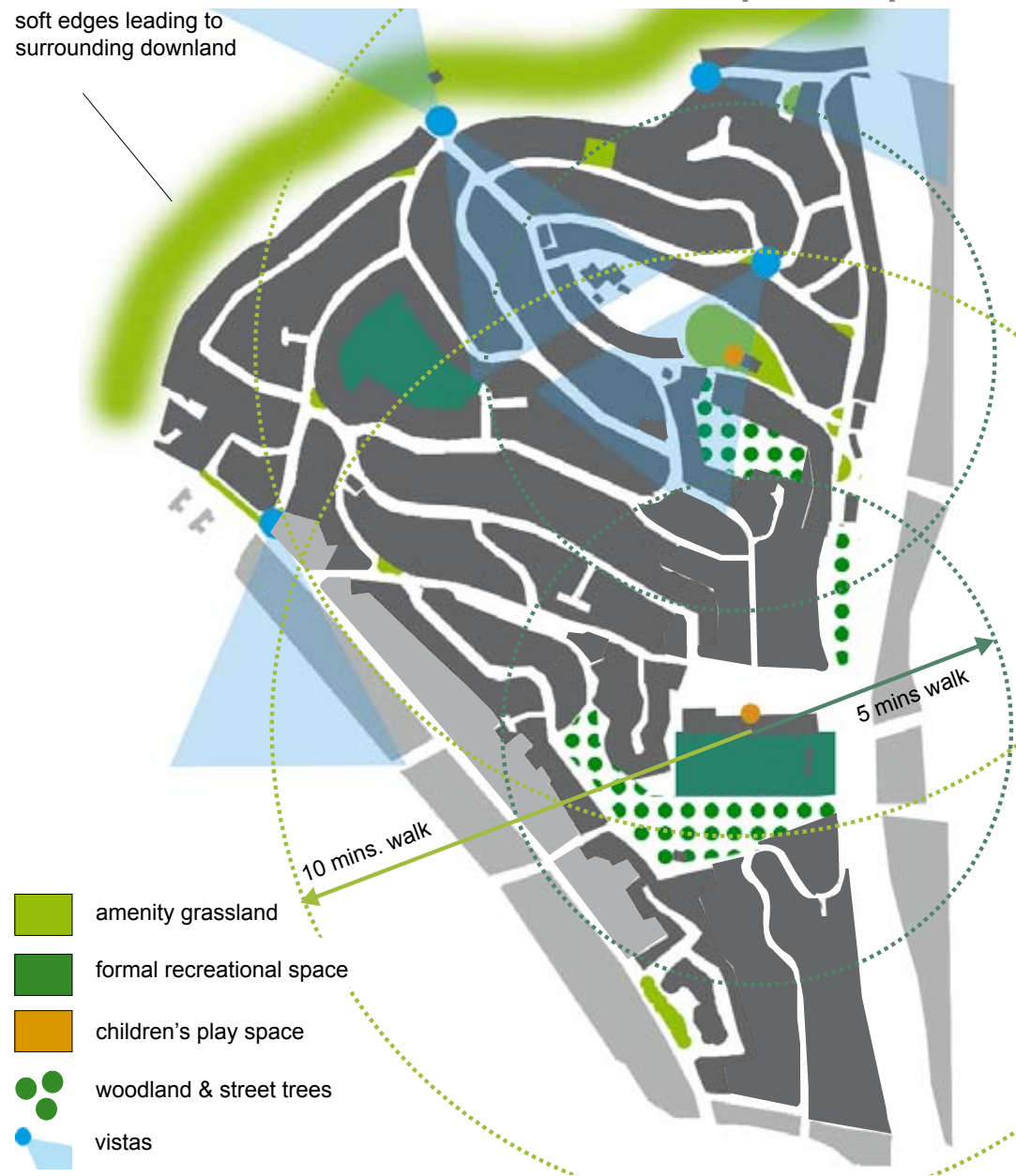
coverage only to this area. Withdean Stadium offers a public house and restaurant.

• **Architecture:** There is a mix of house styles from the inter-war and post war period, with streets or groupings in a particular style depending upon the period and developer. This includes 1930s Tudor-bethan and styles which hark back to Victorian designs as well as resolutely modernist, rendered flat roofed houses, but most are simpler brown brick houses typical of the post war years. Some more innovative and interesting modern designs with monopitch roofs exist in the Hazeldene area. The listed late 19th century windmill is a landmark feature to the north-west.

• **Movement:** The neighbourhood is located to the east of the Dyke Road Avenue and to the west of the main Brighton to London railway line. The nearest station lies outside the immediate neighbourhood to the south. Vehicular access is mainly off Dyke Road Avenue with minor routes crossing the railway line from the London Road. The car is by far the most popular mode of transport to access work (see appendix 2). The

30 westdene & withdean neighbourhood

open space

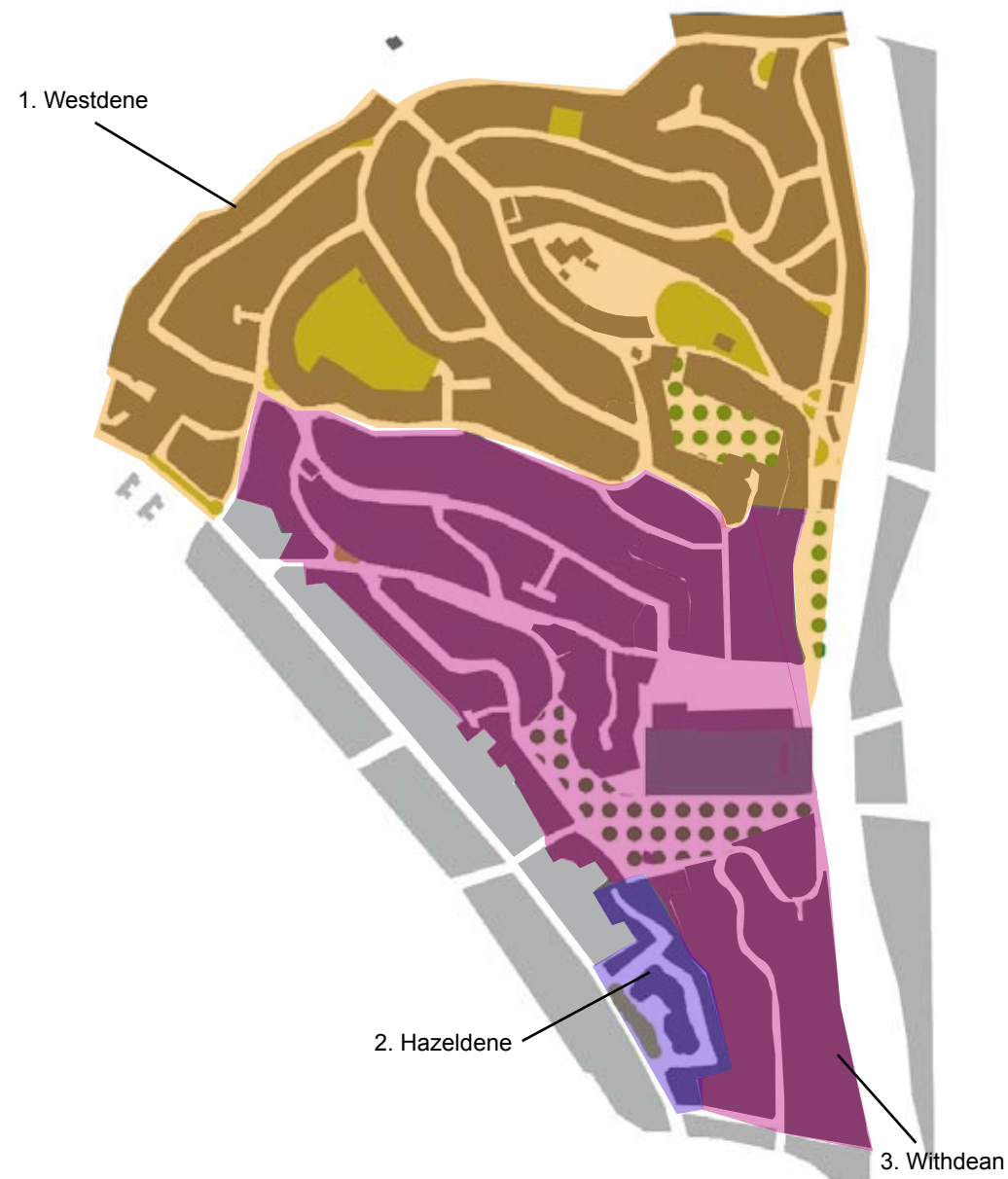


railway line creates some severance from Patcham and Surrenden to the east. The Downs to the north are partly severed from the neighbourhood by the by-pass, with only one green link remaining. Traffic noise can be a major issue near the by-pass. Narrow and long footpaths linking parallel streets along the sides and backs of houses, poorly lit and not overlooked, hamper pedestrian movement.

• **Socio-economic characteristics:** Almost all the homes in the neighbourhood are owned in some form with a mere handful rented privately with no local authority presence (see appendix 3). Westdene and Withdean is one of the city's most affluent neighbourhoods.

• **Open space:** The northern edge of the neighbourhood is bounded by downland with spectacular views all around though with only one link to the countryside. Within the neighbourhood there are two species-rich wooded areas, part of a Local Nature Reserve, with formal nature trails and organised visits. There are also the characteristic small triangular spaces where streets converge from different levels and substantial grass verges. Formal

character areas



recreation space is provided at Withdean Stadium and in the Redhill Sports Ground to the northwest. Children's play areas can be found in the small park to the northeast and at the Stadium. The west of the neighbourhood is poorly served.

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

1. Westdene: a low density residential suburb, lying between two major transport routes, dating mainly from the inter-war and post war years. A typical suburban layout of bungalows and two storey houses, much of it in large plots, with a few low rise blocks of flats and a cluster of community uses. Architecturally mixed.

2. Hazeldene: a small, very low density enclave of 1960s/1970s detached and semi-detached houses accessed only from Dyke Road and not directly connected to the other character areas.

3. Withdean: a very low density residential area of large detached houses in their own grounds surrounded by extensive mature trees bordering woodland, with an almost rural feel.



Large houses on Valley Drive



Recent private apartment development



Westdene character area



Hazeldene character area



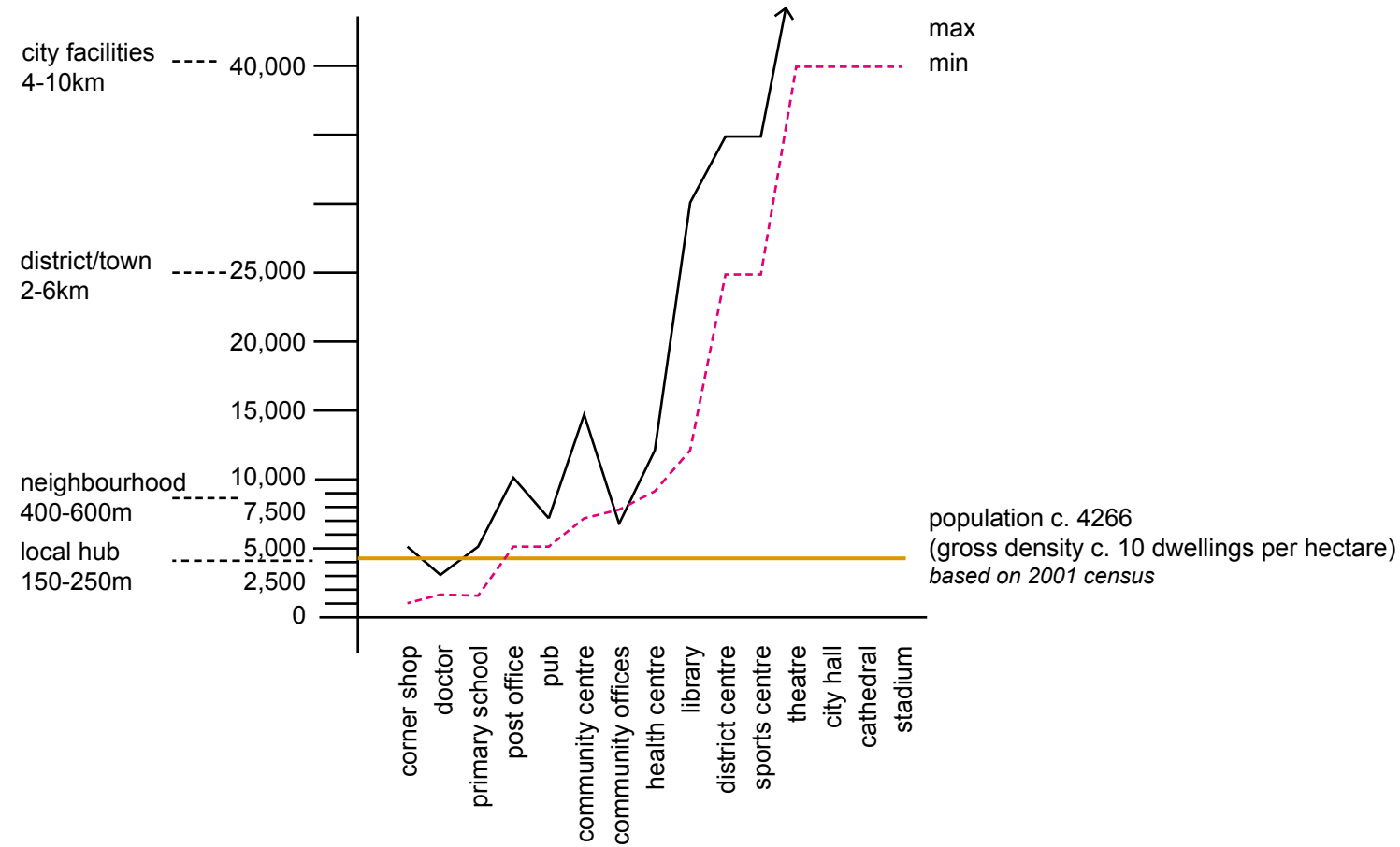
Withdean character area

30 westdene & withdean neighbourhood

appendix 1: population & density

Population numbers able to support community facilities.

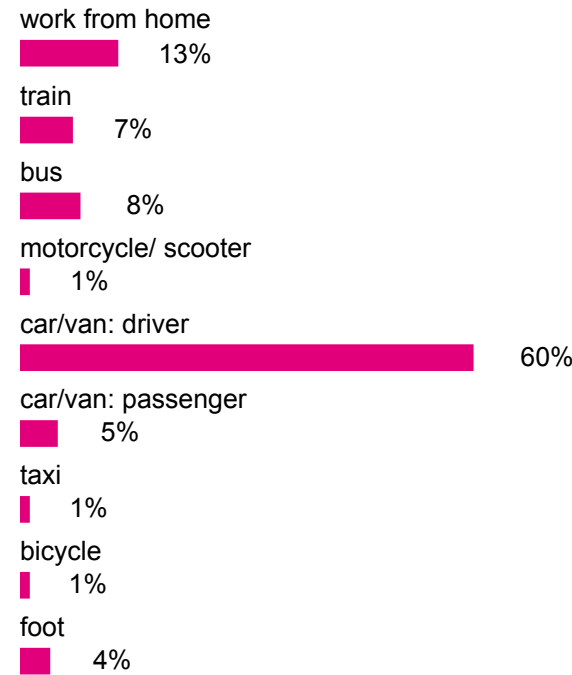
Source: Towards an Urban Renaissance, 2002



appendix 2: travel to work

Statistics illustrating methods of travel to work.

Source: City Stats, Census 2001

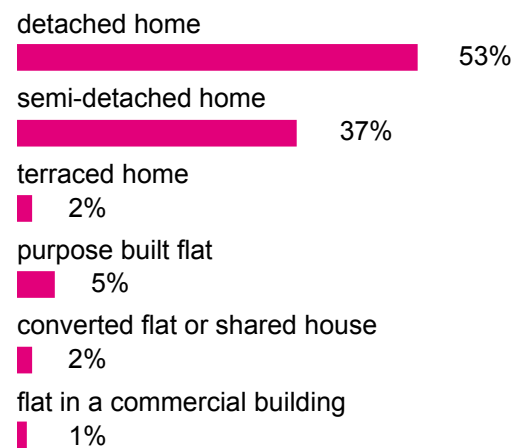


The information from the 2001 census and the Acorn profiles were based on the best fit of the smallest enumeration districts. This was obtained from Citystats website, which is now www.bhlis.org

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

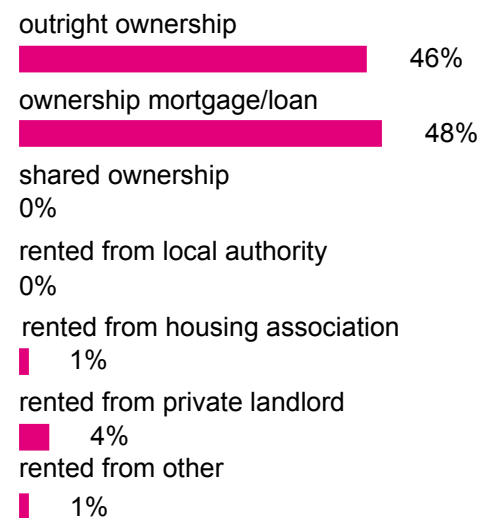
appendix 3: social mix accommodation types

Source: City Stats, Census 2001



tenure types

Source: City Stats, Census 2001



demographic types

Source: City Stats, Acorn data

