



Major Home Builders Forum

24th October

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Design Champion + Specialist Services Manager



East Suffolk Place Review





Land Budget



East Suffolk
Place Review

Site Audits

Approach

We don't know what our design code will look like...



...we want to do something that addresses the challenges in the district...

...but what are the challenges we face?

Approach

Learn from others mistakes...



...we have resource and capacity...

...we want data and evidence to drive this forward!

Approach

As Built

Public Sector

Private Sector

Community

Members

Site Audit

Design Skills
Audit 2024

Practice
Questionnaire

Priority
Questionnaire

Priority
Questionnaire

Photo
Record

Regen and
Assets

Developer
Interviews

Engagement
Event

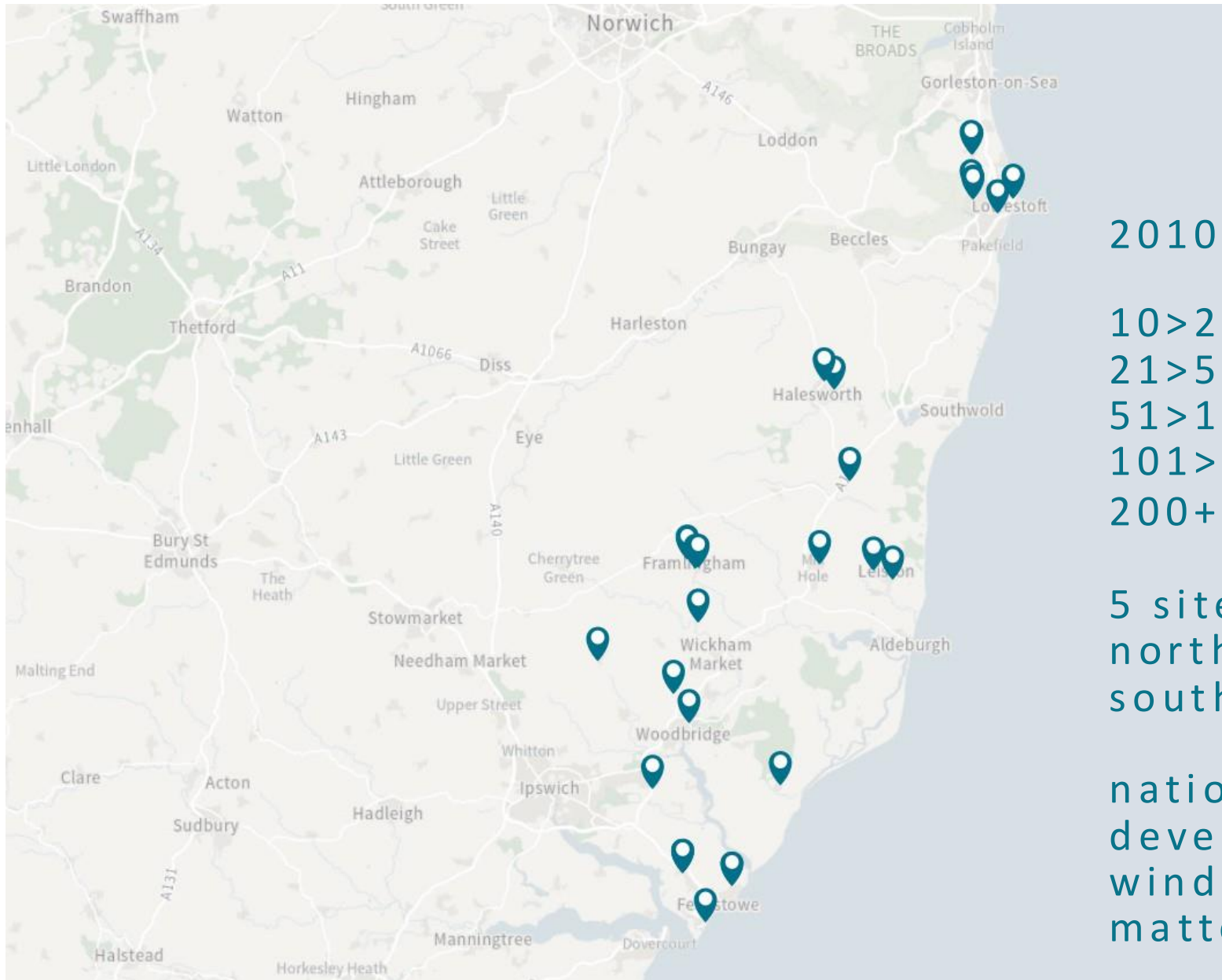
Engagement
Event

Planning
Data

ESC
Housing

Consultee
Questionnaire

Site Audits



2010>present (completed)

10>20

21>50

51>100

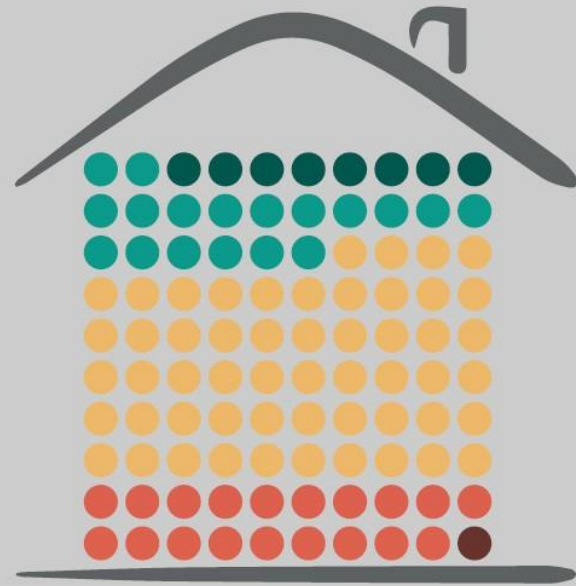
101>200

200+

5 sites per category
north / central /
south

national + regional
developers allocated vs
windfall full>reserved
matters

A HOUSING DESIGN AUDIT FOR ENGLAND



1. FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

WHAT ARE WE GETTING RIGHT AND WRONG? ✓ X

Designing for safety and security ✓

Of the seventeen design considerations, designing for safety and security fared best, suggesting that the Secured by design parameters of recent decades have been successfully mainstreamed across much of the country.

A variety of housing types ✓

Most of the schemes assessed – even those scoring predominantly in the poor and very poor categories – tended to provide a range of housing types, both physically in their size and design and with a well integrated mix of tenures.

Highways, bins and parking ✗

The least successful design elements nationally relate to overly engineered highways infrastructure and the poor integration of storage, bins and car parking. These problems led to unattractive and unfriendly environments dominated by large areas of hard surfaces (tarmac or brick pavements), parked cars and bins.

Character and sense of place ✗

Low-scoring schemes performed especially poorly in the categories of the architectural response to the context and establishing a positive new character for development. Developments often had little distinguishing personality or 'sense of place', with public, open and play spaces being both poorly designed and located for social interaction. Housing units are frequently of an obviously standard type with little attempt to create something distinctive.

Streets, connections and amenities ✗

Some design considerations were marked by a broad variation in practice nationally. These include how well streets are defined by houses and the designed landscape, and whether streets connect up together and with their surroundings. Also whether developments are pedestrian, cycle and public transport friendly and conveniently served by local facilities and amenities.

Walkability and car-dependence ✗

The combination of the preceding factors influence how 'walkable' or car-dependent developments are likely to be. Many developments are failing in this regard with likely negative health, social and environmental implications.

Environmental impacts ✗

Whilst the majority of schemes are achieving the basic minimum energy efficiency requirements set out in legislation², significant numbers are still falling below. This, combined with the known and persistent performance gap between 'designed' and 'as built' energy performance in new homes and the failure to deliver a green and bio-diverse landscape in many projects, amounts to a sub-standard response to the environmental challenges we face.

² Recognised as too low by Government in their proposals for a far more ambitious Future Homes Standard to cut carbon emissions.

4. WHAT ARE WE GETTING RIGHT AND WHAT WRONG?



4.3.2 Existing and New Landscape

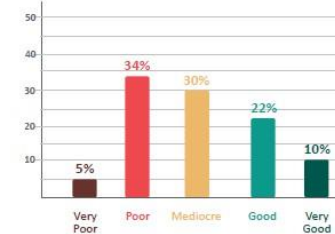
Does the scheme exploit existing landscape or topography and create a new bio-diverse landscape?

- The development takes advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including watercourses), wildlife habitats, site orientation and microclimates
- SUDs are fully integrated within the development and the scheme is / will be ecologically rich
- Street trees are provided throughout the development

The green landscape is often viewed as the forgotten dimension of urban design, applied after-the-fact in an attempt to obscure ugly architecture and parking or alternatively removed from masterplans prior to their development in an attempt to save on maintenance costs. Green infrastructure (the network of green spaces and other environmental features), both as a context into which development should fit, and as designed in new developments, is fundamental to creating a pleasant and healthy external environment in which residents will wish to spend time. It can play a vital role in encouraging bio-diversity and compensating for any habitat loss, as envisaged in the NPPF (2012 and 2019). Auditors considered the total landscape from the integration of existing landscape features to the planting of street trees and the creation of SUDs.

Whilst some regions exhibited some excellent practice, the headline is that too often green landscape and bio-diversity was sacrificed for a hard over-engineered environment. This was reflected in an average score of just over the 300 (100% mediocre) mark. Again, in this area, there was considerable variation across the regions with the North East (227) where there was no 'good' or 'very good' scores for landscape bringing up the rear, whilst the South East (351) was out in front. The key difference was between schemes that exploited the existing landscape as a bio-diverse resource – retaining existing mature trees, water features, hedgerows, and so forth – and those which did not, and which instead delivered seemingly leftover bits of green with no obvious function, either social or environmental.

EXISTING AND NEW LANDSCAPE (ALL ENGLAND)





Integrated Neighbourhoods	National Planning Policy Framework	National Design Guide
Natural connections	91a; 102c and e; 104d; 127b; 127f	B3; M1; M2; N1; R3
Walking, cycling and public transport	20c; 91a; 91c; 127e	B1; B3; M1; R3
Facilities and services	102; 103	B1; B3; N1; P3; U1; U3
Homes for everyone	60-62	B1; B2; U2; U3
Distinctive Places		
Making the most of what's there	122d; 127c; 127d; 153b; 184	C1; C2; I1; B2; R3
A memorable character	122d; 127c; 127d	C2; I1; I2; I3; B3
Well defined streets and spaces	91a	B2; M2; N2; N3; P1; P2; H2; L3
Easy to find your way around	91b; 127b	I1; M1; M2; U1
Streets for All		
Healthy streets	91b; 102c and e; 110a-d	M1; M2; N3; P1; P2; P3; H1; H2
Cycle and car parking	101e; 127f; 105d	B2; M1; M3
Green and blue infrastructure	20d; 91b; 91c; 127f; 155; 170d; 174	C1; B3; M1; N1; N2; N3; P1; P3; H1; R3; L1
Back of pavement, front of home	127a-b; d; f	M3; H3; L3
Generally	7; 8; 124; 125; 126; 127; 130	15; 16; 17; 20-29; 31-32
Using the tool as a discussion tool	39; 40-42; 125; 128; 129	

The relationship between Building for a Healthy Life, the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Design Guide.

Using Building for a Healthy Life



What 'red' looks like

- Using a predetermined sequence of house types to dictate a layout.
- Attempting to create character through poor replication of architectural features or details.
- Arranging buildings next to each other in a way that does not create a cohesive street scene.
- Referencing generic or forgettable development nearby to justify more of the same.

red = stop & rethink

A Memorable Character

Criteria

1. Natural connections
2. Facilities and services
3. Homes for everyone
4. Making the most of what's there
5. Memorable character
6. Well defined streets and spaces
7. Easy to find your way around
8. Healthy streets
9. Cycle and car parking
10. Green and blue infrastructure
11. Back or pavement, front of home
12. Design quality

Site Visits



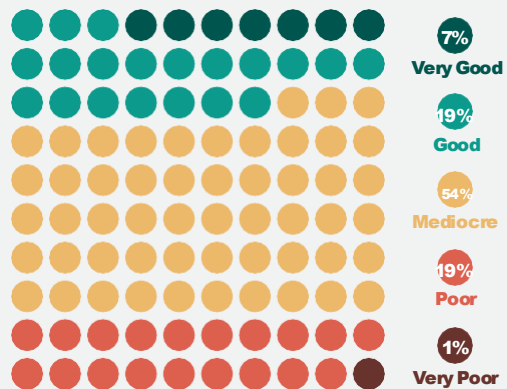
Site Visits



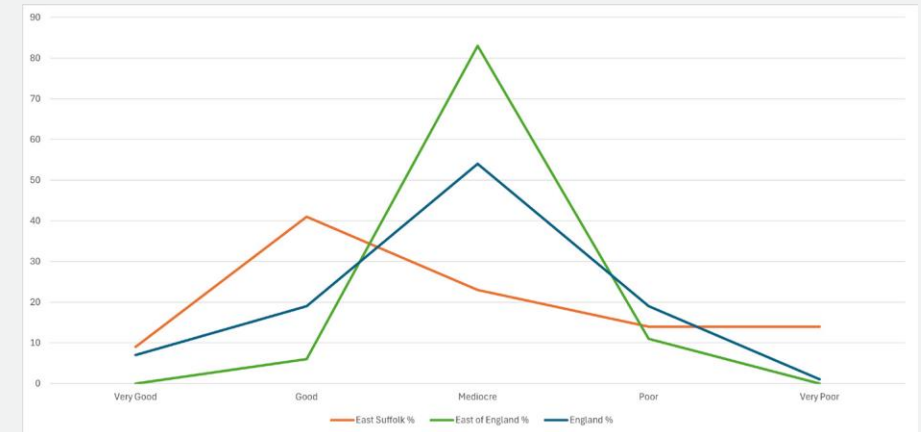
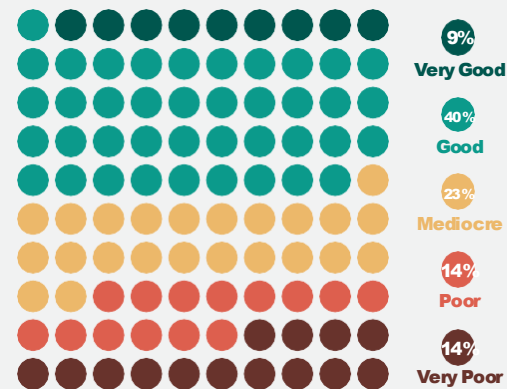
Headlines Site Scores

	East Suffolk	East of England	England
Very Good	9%	0%	7%
Good	40%	6%	19%
Mediocre	23%	83%	54%
Poor	14%	11%	19%
Very Poor	14%	0%	1%

National Scoring



East Suffolk Scoring



Headlines Themes

- 1 Homes for everyone
- 2 Facilities and services
- 3 Well defined streets and spaces
- 4 Easy to find your way around
- 5 Back or pavement, front of home
- 6 Design quality
- 7 Healthy streets
- 8 Cycle and car parking
- 9 Memorable character
- 10 Making the most of what's there
- 11 Natural connections
- 12 Green and blue infrastructure

Often Successful

Varied

Problematic

Headlines

Keytakeaways...

Little difference between >

National and regional developers

Full and Reserved Matters

Allocated and Windfall

Local Plan areas

Headlines

Keytakeaways...

Difference we DID notice >

Variation between North and South

Sites that did and didnt delivery affordable housing

Under 50 homes - **Varied**

50-100 homes - **Often Successful**

100+ homes - **Varied or problematic**

Headlines

Keytakeaways...

Difference we DID notice >

Top 3 scoring sites were by two national housing developers

The 3 **lowest** scoring sites were by one national housing developer

Headlines

Key takeaways...

Onsite observations>

- >Death by timber knee rail!!!
- >Material selection to defines places.
- >Landscape maintenance matters.
- >Materials do matter.
- >Pedestrians are royalty.
- >Young people are not catered for.
- >Parking courts can be designed well.
- >Highways design isn't consistent.

East Suffolk Land Budget



Approach

What proportion of land is being used for what?

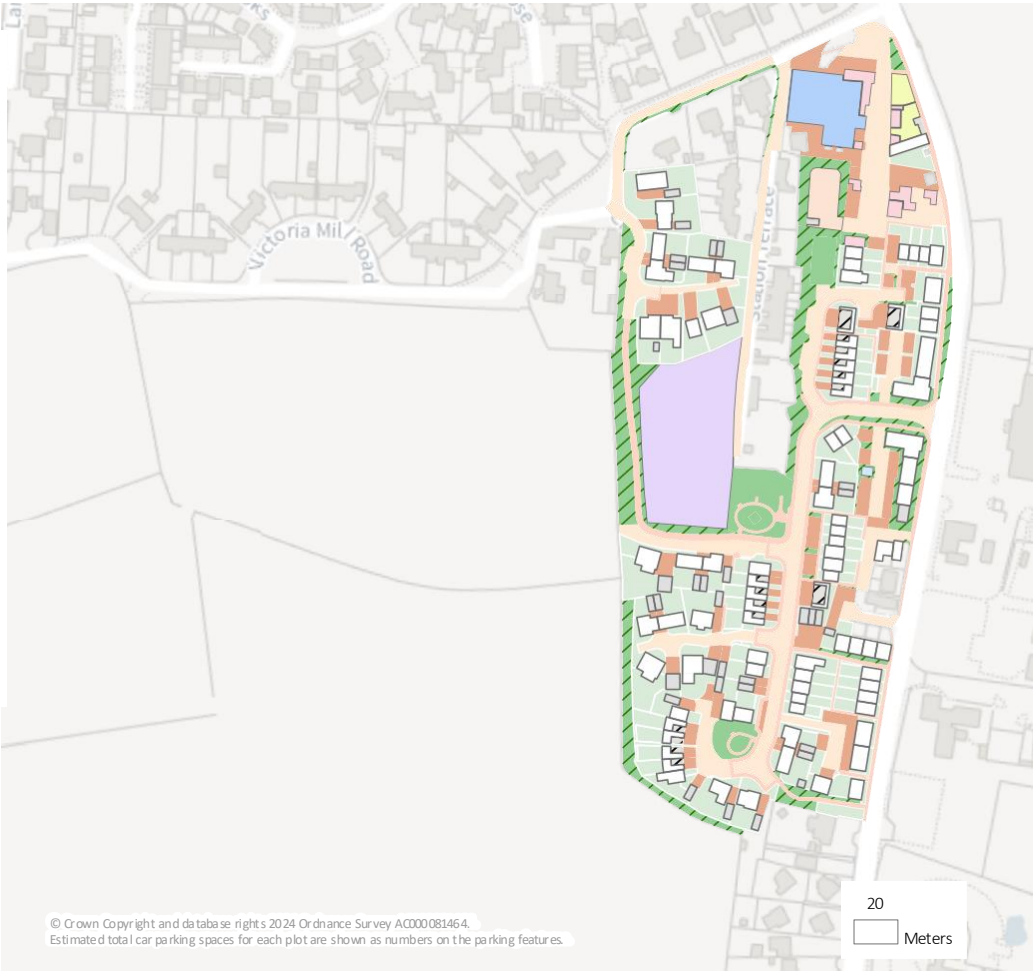
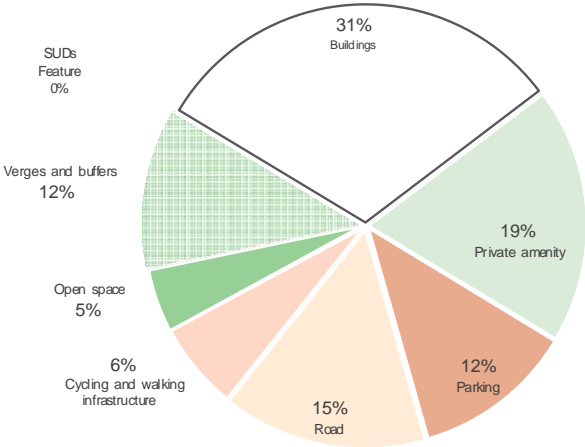
How do these vary and why?

Does density and parking ratios impact open space?

Can land budgeting help influence coding and policy?

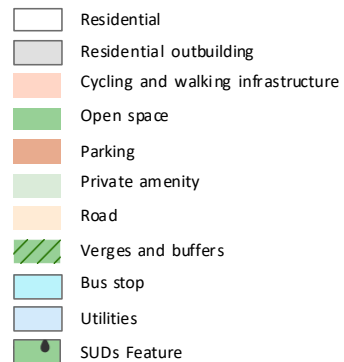
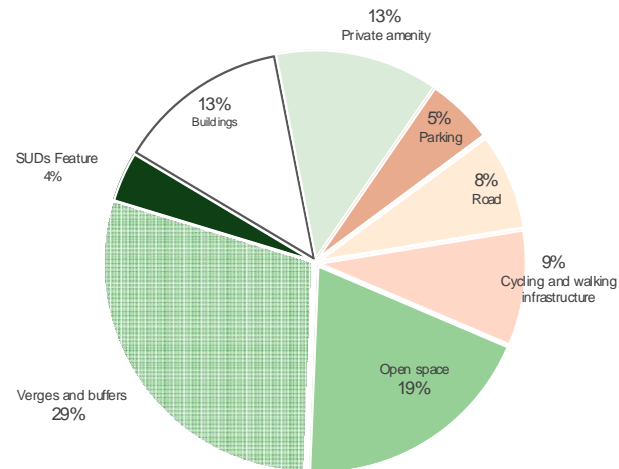
Example 1

Site area 3.08 hectares
Number of homes 99
Density 32 dwellings per hectare
Parking ratio 2 spaces per dwelling (215 total)



Example 2

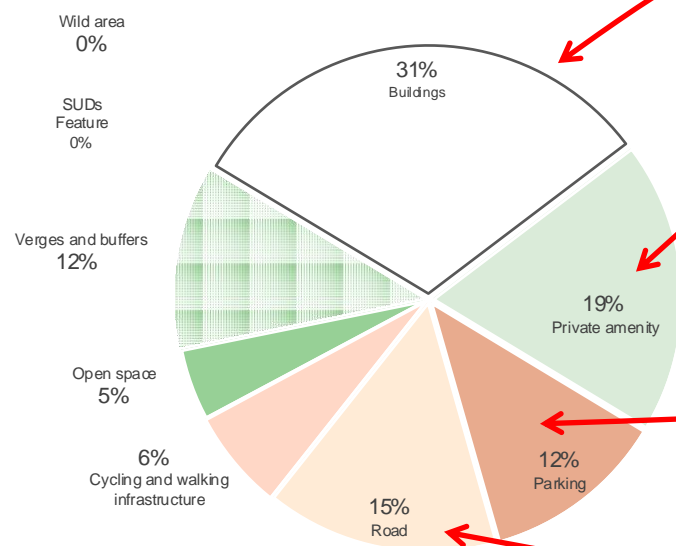
Site area **3.1 hectares**
Number of homes **107**
Density **35 dwellings per hectare**
Parking ratio **2 spaces per dwelling (215 total)**



Example

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Number of homes **99**
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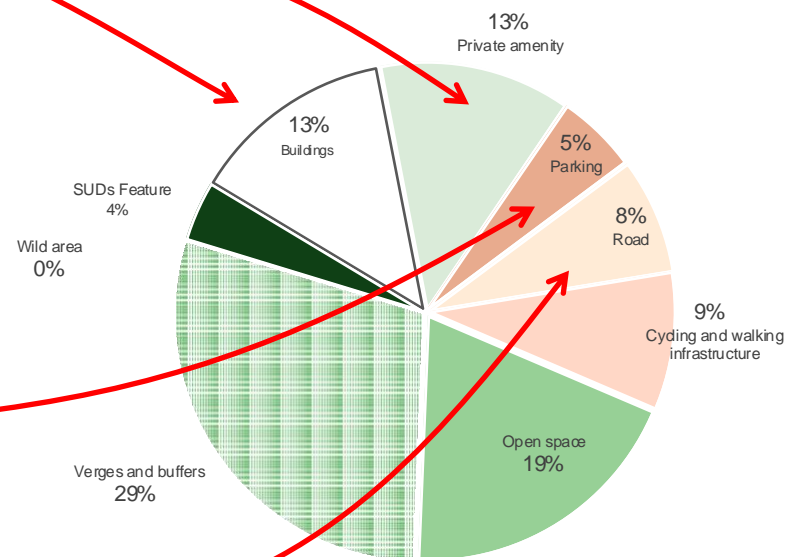
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example 1

Site area **3.1 hectares**
Number of homes **107**
Density **35 dwellings per hectare**

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example 2



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